

# Helena Business and Industry Survey

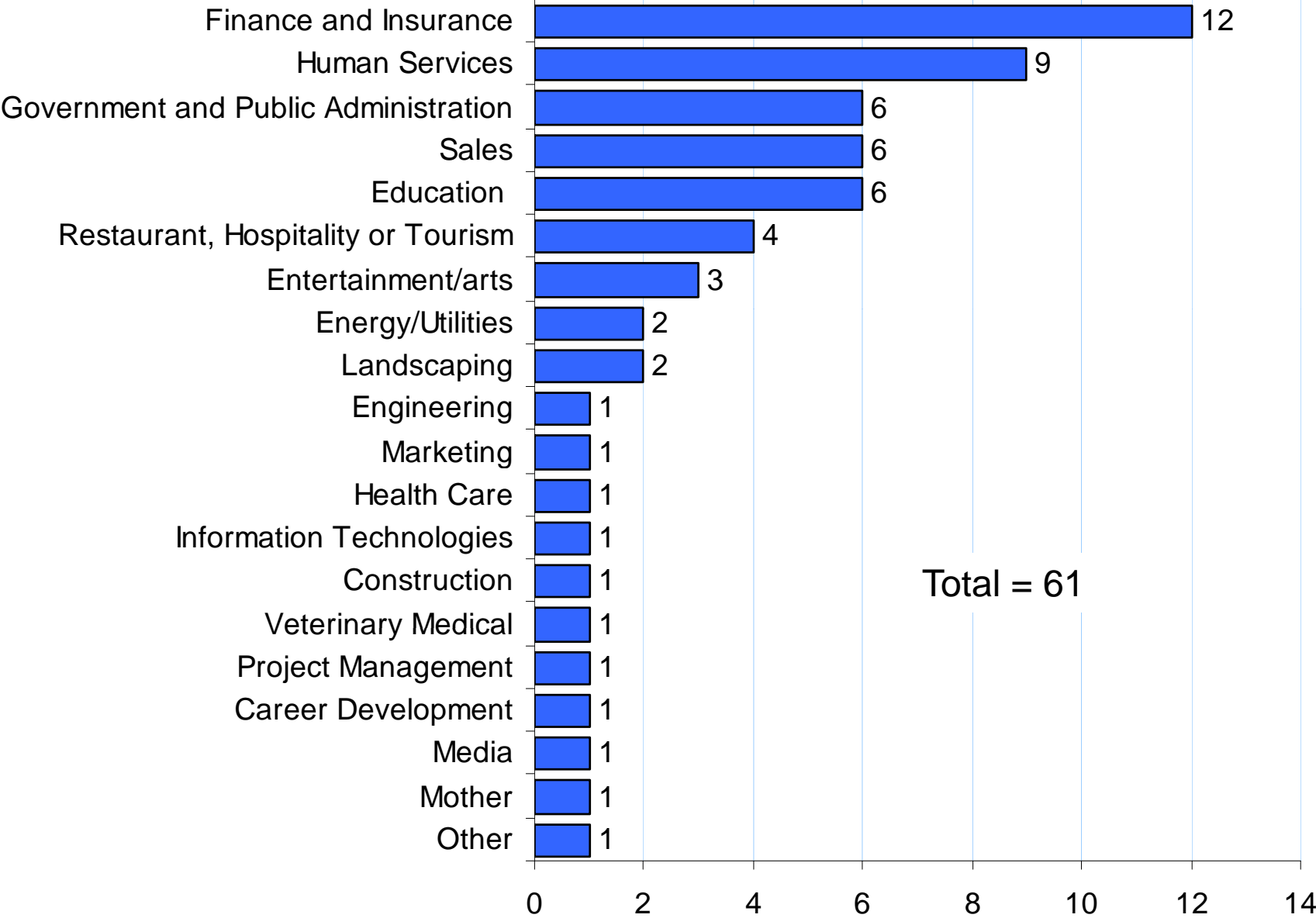
Conducted by the Helena Education  
Foundation

July-August, 2008

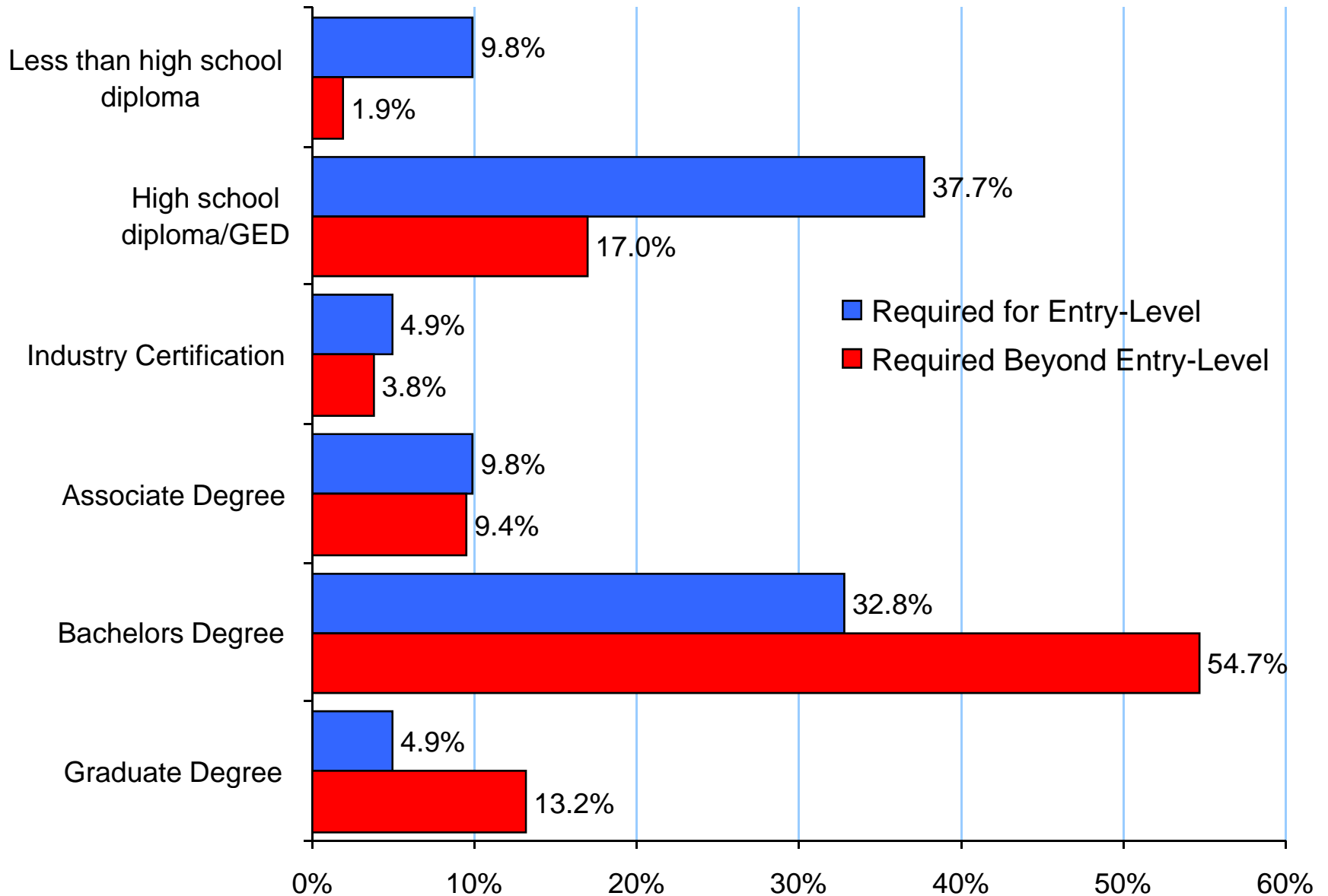
Summarized by:

Patrick Kelly, National Center for Higher Education  
Management Systems

# Helena Business and Industry Survey – Respondents by Industry



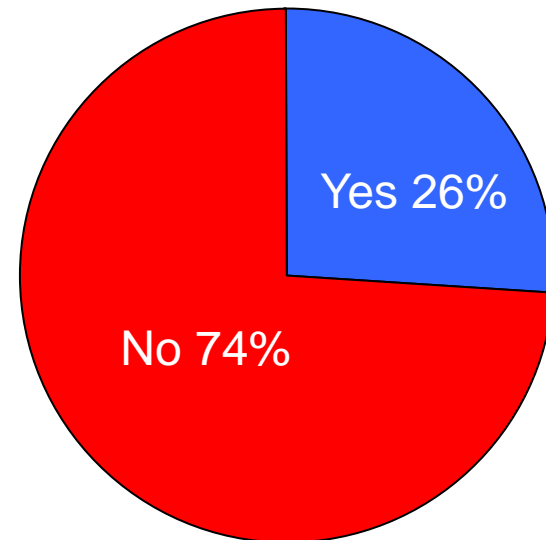
# Levels of Education Required for Entry-Level Work vs. Levels Required for Positions Above Entry-Level



# Are You Aware of Any Current Employees (20 and Older) Who Lack a High School Diploma or GED?

## Comments

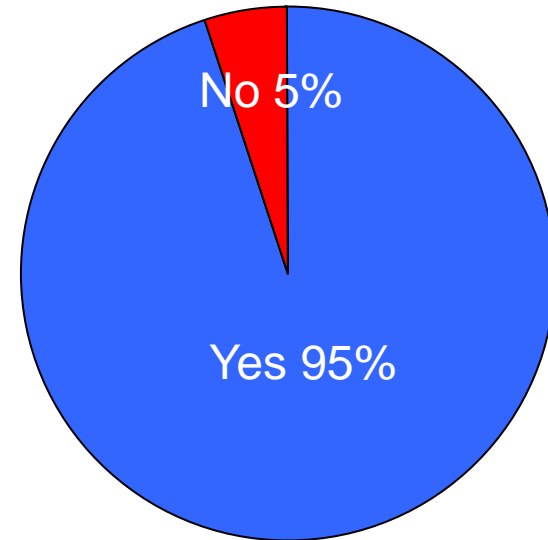
- ❖ Will not hire a person without a high school diploma – GED is not sufficient
- ❖ Will hire a person without a high school diploma or GED with hesitancy – generally lack problem solving, language, and communication skills
- ❖ We require a high school diploma or GED and verify their credentials



# Would You Support Efforts by the Helena Educational Community to Help Adults Earn a GED?

## Comments

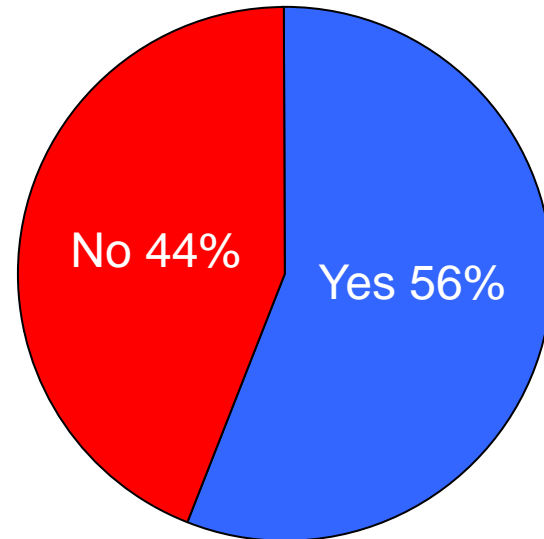
- ❖ Yes – but would rather see more focused efforts on preventing dropout – reconnecting adults is reactionary rather than proactive
- ❖ Yes – it is failing our nation when we have such high dropout rates – our nation is no longer the leaders as a result of high dropout rates
- ❖ As long as testing criteria for the GED is relevant for what is needed in the workforce



# Is the Helena Educational System Adequately Preparing Students for Postsecondary Education and Work?

## Comments

- ❖ Yes – postsecondary, but need to focus more on those not planning to attend college
- ❖ Do well with more advanced students but need to improve with those more likely to enter the workforce
- ❖ The school district is not meeting the needs of those interested in vocational careers
- ❖ Some students are better prepared than others . . . Due as much to parental influence and home environment
- ❖ Need to do better with those struggling – improve drop-out rate
- ❖ Not keeping up with the changing demands of employers
- ❖ Writing and math skills are lacking

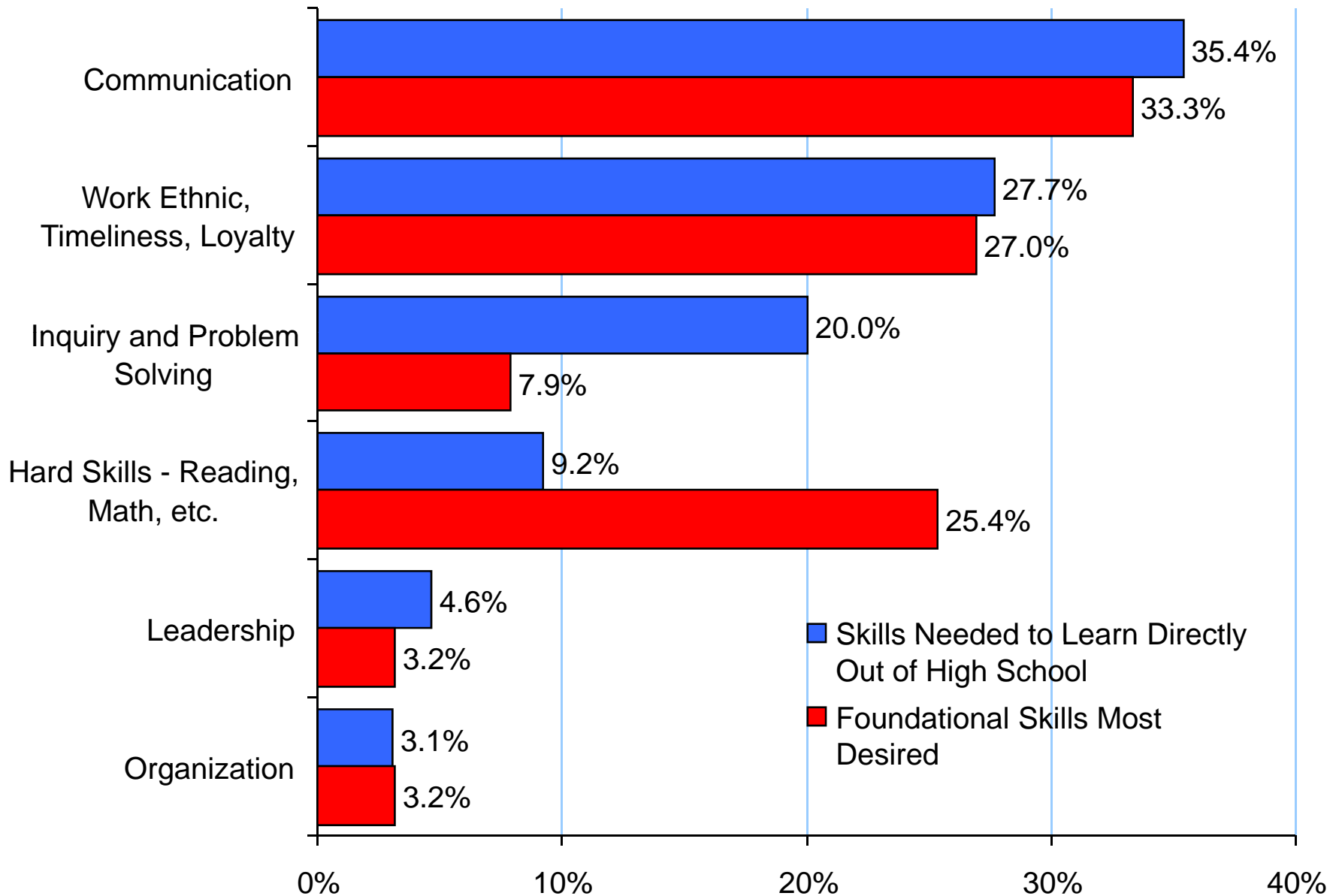


# What Could be Done to Better Prepare Students for Postsecondary Education and the Workforce?

## Suggestions for Improvement

- ❖ More rigor – raise expectations among students and parents, more effective use of the senior year, expand opportunities for dual enrollment
- ❖ More effective interaction (for students) between schools and businesses – work study, internship, apprenticeships, job shadowing programs, customized programs developed by educators and employers
- ❖ More effective communication of career opportunities, realistic wages, associated with directly entering the workforce vs. continuing into college
- ❖ Focus more on reading, writing, and math skills (and their application in the workforce)
- ❖ More specific courses designed for success in the vocational trades – e.g. applied vs. traditional mathematics
- ❖ More emphasis on communication, social, and life skills

# First Skills Needed to Learn Directly Out of High School vs. the Most Desired Foundational Skills

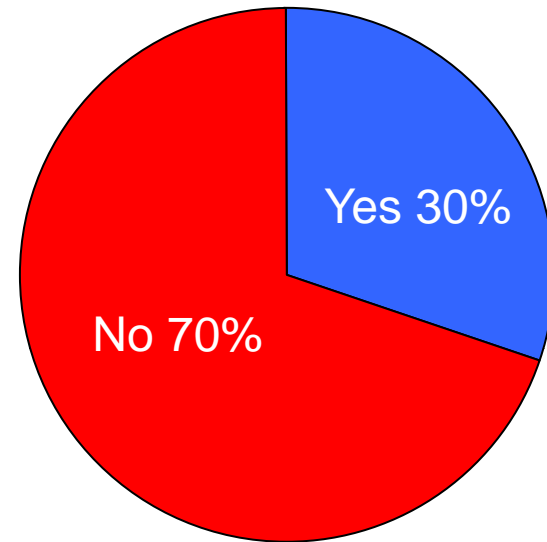


Note: Could include more than one response

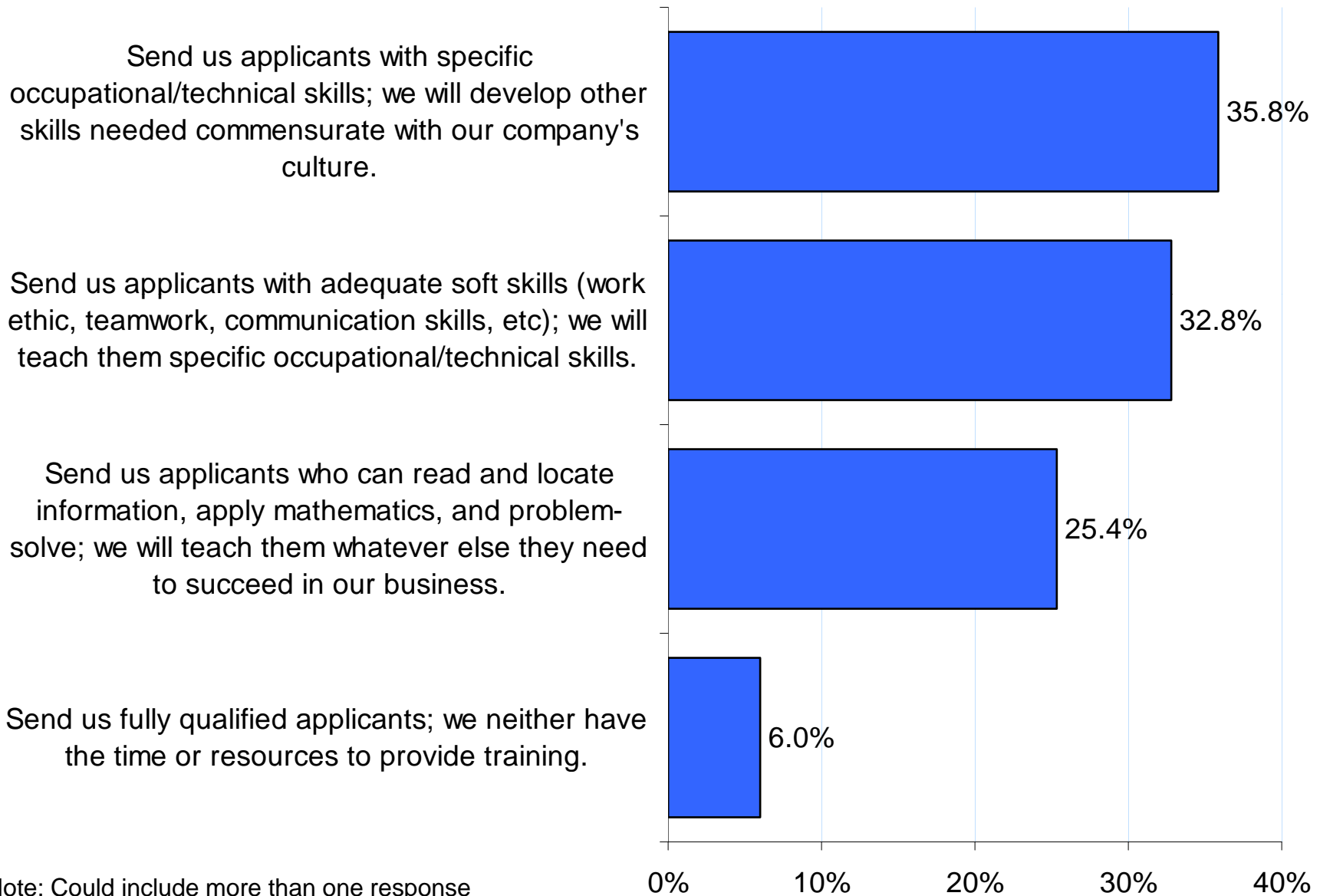
# Are Students Given Sufficient Guidance and Preparation in Making Career Choices?

## Comments

- ❖ Too many demands on teachers and counselors – opportunity to incorporate career education is limited
- ❖ More focused on four-year degree
- ❖ Guidance counselors tend to discourage kids from attending college outside of Montana and are not helpful in guiding students toward specific careers – teachers and employers do a much better job of this
- ❖ Counselors deal more with crisis/disciplinary action than career counseling – not enough time to deal with both
- ❖ Struggle with home environment for some kids
- ❖ Counselors should be able to distinguish – and guide accordingly – between students going to college vs. directly into the workforce
- ❖ Counseling system seems reactive rather than proactive



# Statements that Most Closely Fit Business's Needs



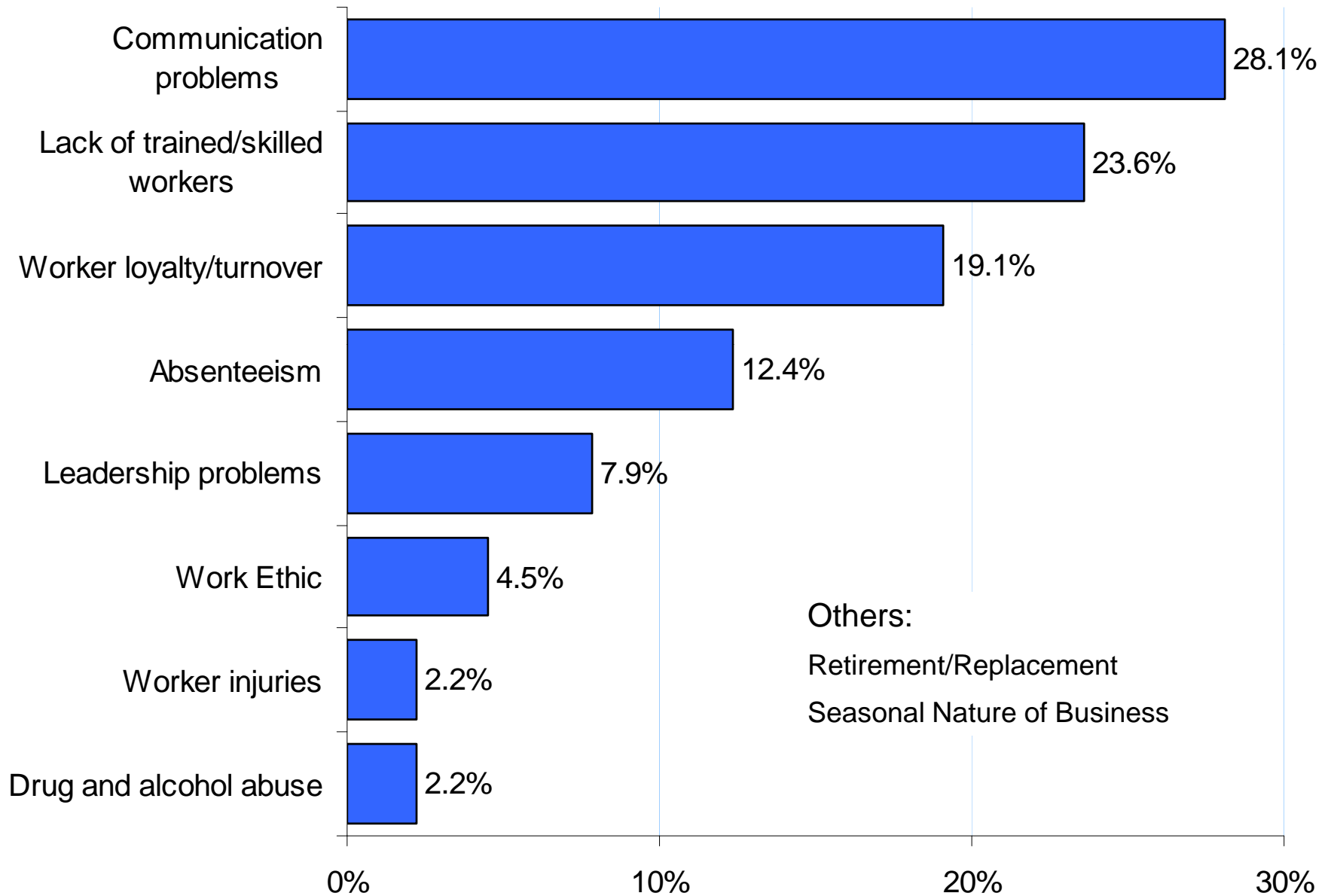
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# Difficulty Hiring/Filling Positions with the Following Skills

Most Common Examples (from 50% of Respondents who Indicated Difficulty)

- ❖ Nursing
- ❖ Health Technology
- ❖ Information Technology
- ❖ Other Technology – Auto, Electric
- ❖ Engineering
- ❖ Management
- ❖ Sales and Customer Service Skills
- ❖ Writing Skills
- ❖ Math Skills – Teaching and On-the-Job

# Most Serious Personnel Issues in Businesses



Note: Could include more than one response

# Adequate Input Into Our Local Education System?

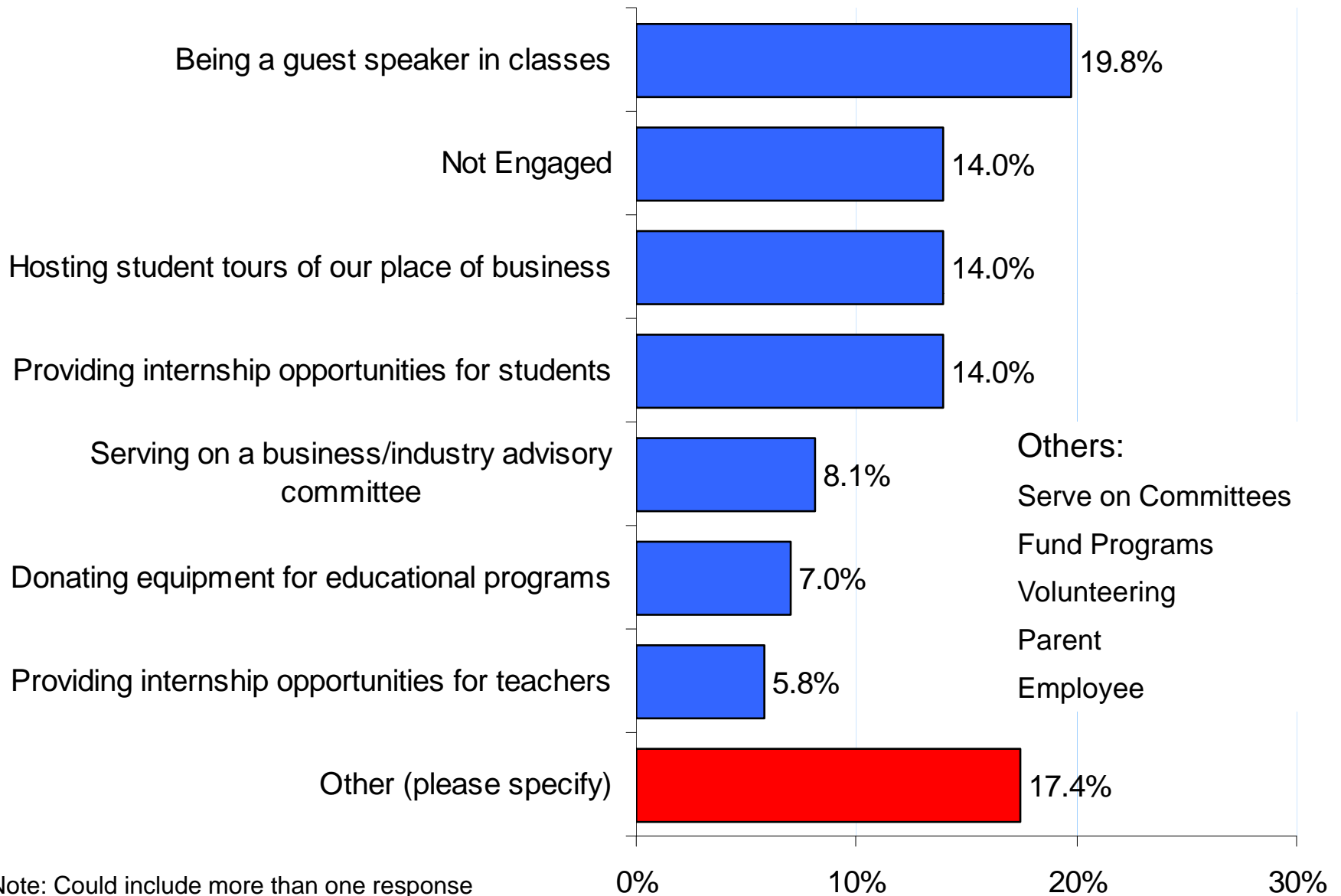
## Yes: What is the Best Way to Provide Input?

- ❖ Contact District Administrators
- ❖ Through Committee Process
- ❖ Through Teachers
- ❖ Contacting School Board Members

## No: How Could the School District Facilitate Input?

- ❖ “Never heard of school district asking for what we need in employment skills”
- ❖ Provide contact person for employment, training, and feedback
- ❖ Community Forums
- ❖ Consider using small business owners as guest lecturers
- ❖ Expose teachers to more business activities

# How are You Engaged with a Local K-12 Education Program?



# Business would Be Willing to Partner with a Local Education Program in the Following Areas?

