

Elementary Retention: Elementary Educators' Perception and Experience



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Angie Bisnauth, Deborah Cassella, & Jennifer Schoof

Indiana University South Bend



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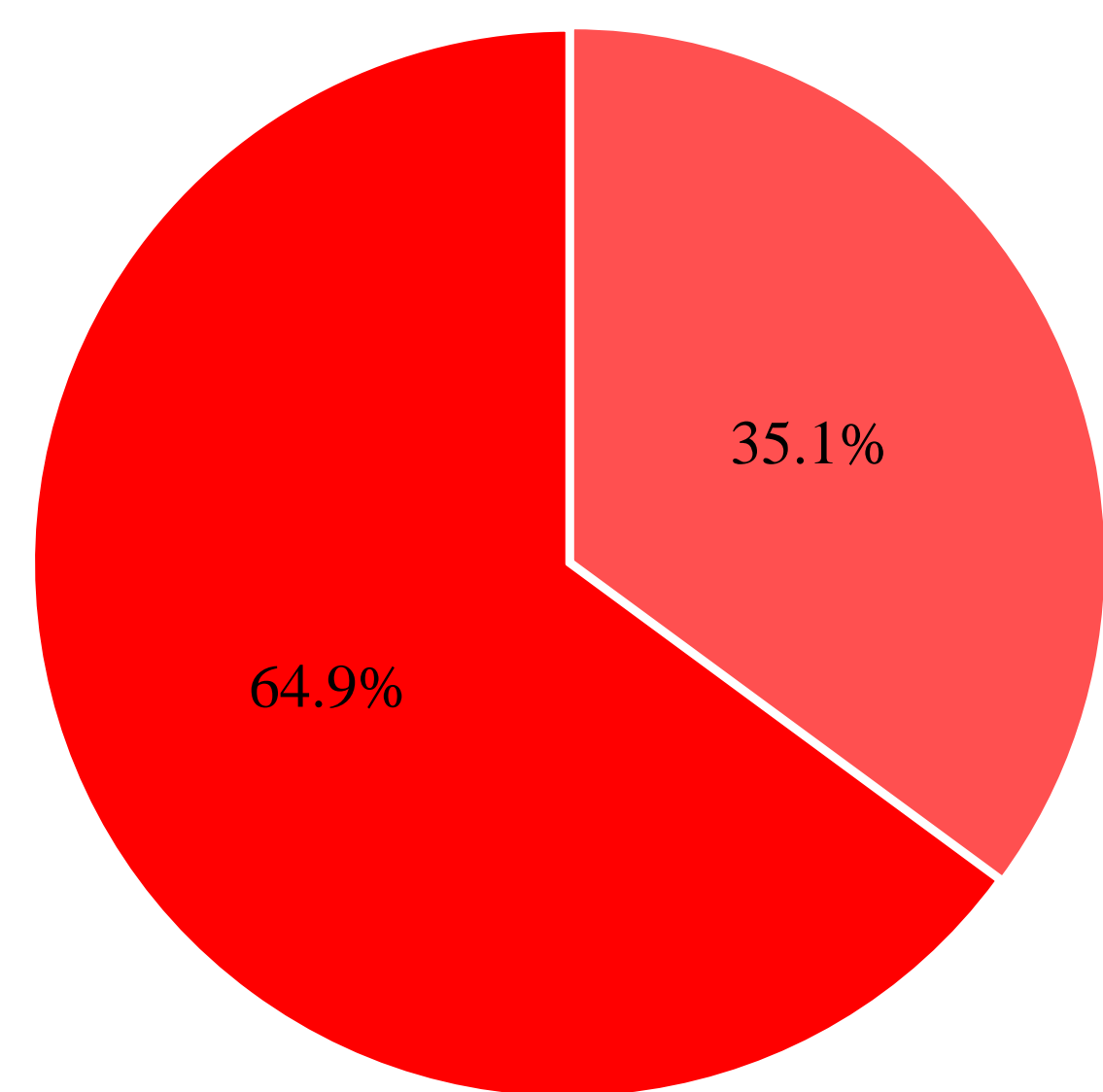
Introduction

Over the last century and a half, grade retention, a controversial intervention, has been used as a strategy to improve academic achievement with at-risk students (Beebe-Frankenberger, Bocian, MacMillan, & Gresham, 2004). Previous research has shown more drawbacks than benefits for those students that have been retained, especially when considering the long-term effects (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003). Retained students are affected in a multitude of ways throughout their educational career, both socially and academically (Stearns, Moller, Blau, & Potuchnick, 2007). This study sought to learn about educators' perceptions of grade retention and how different variables affect faculty members decisions in the retention process. In addition, it sought to find interventions used with at-risk students throughout the academic process. This research addressed these questions: What are the risk factors and procedures of retaining a student in Northern Indiana public school districts according to school faculty members and are they consistent? What are the school faculty members' perceptions of retention on students academically and socially within Northern Indiana public school districts? Are there interventions used in Northern Indiana public schools that faculty members choose prior to retaining students?

Methods

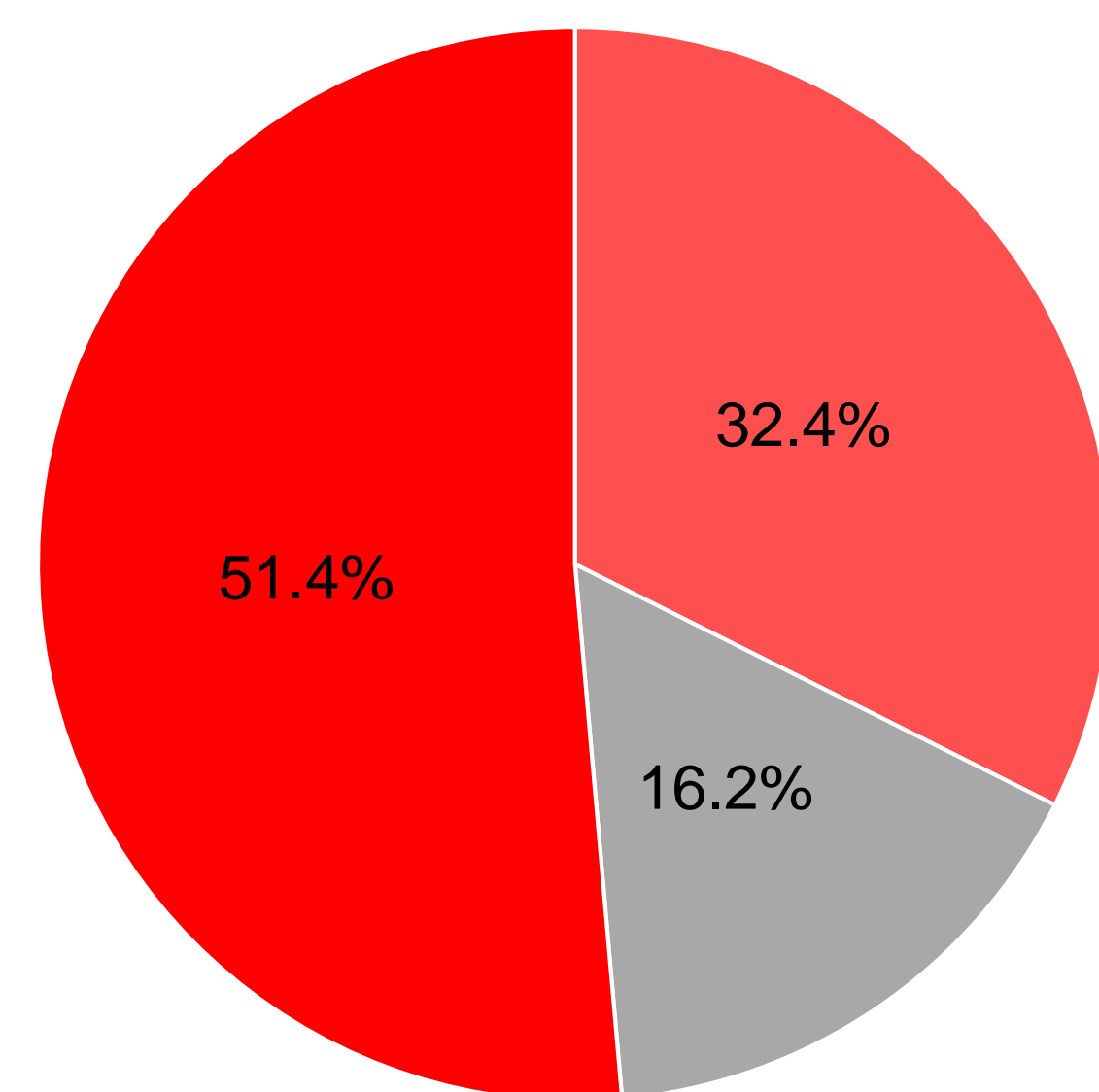
The design used for this research was non-experimental using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The data collection instrument was an on-line survey created by the research team using SurveyMonkey. The Convenience sampling was used with this research and included three Northern Indiana public school districts, selected based on location in Northern Indiana and corporation size. Data was collected from two of the three Northern Indiana public school districts. From the 153 potential participants, 37 took part in the survey. The survey's purpose was to determine Elementary Educator's perspectives on retaining students (holding back or flunking) in elementary school settings.

Education of Participants



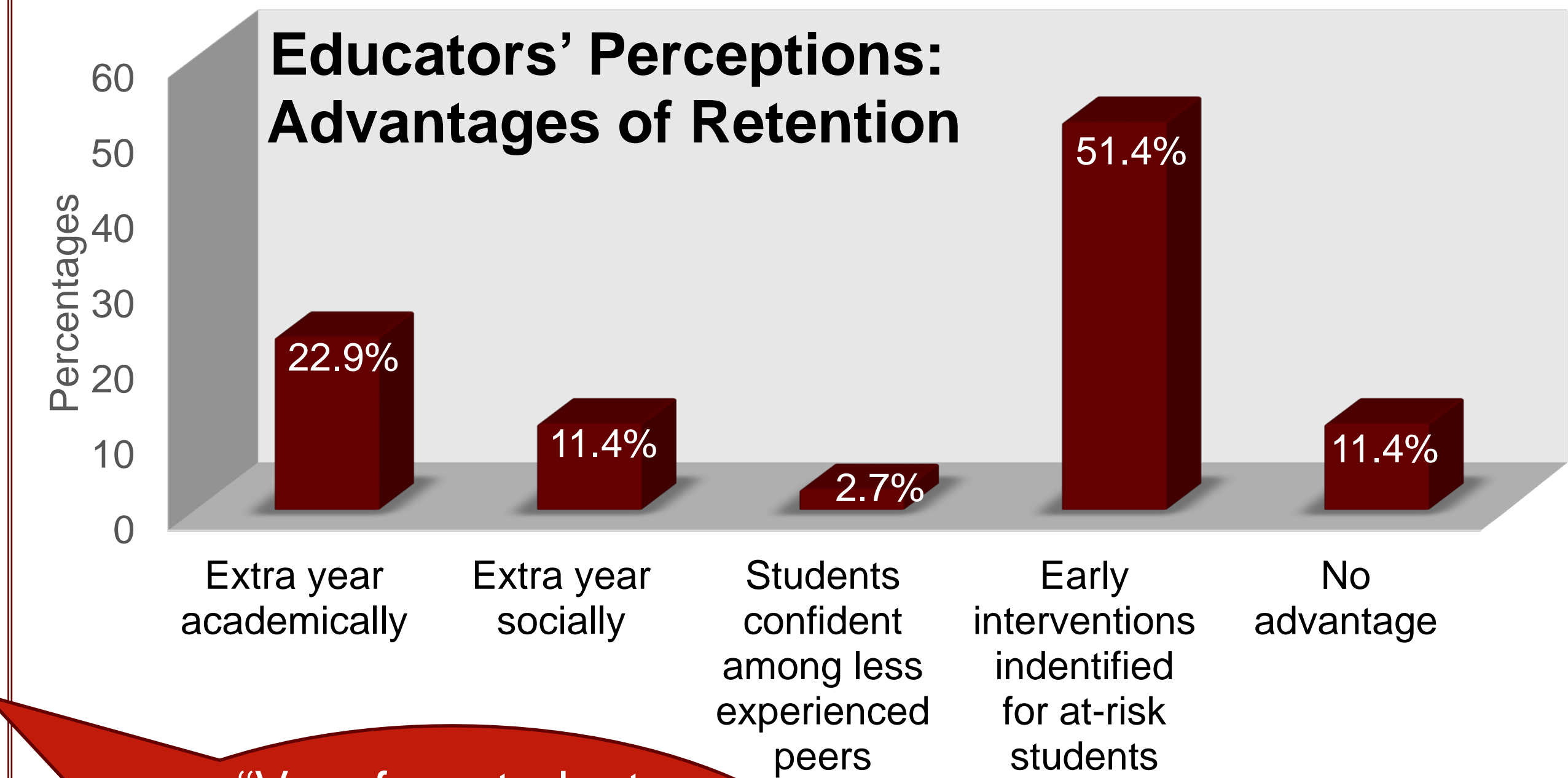
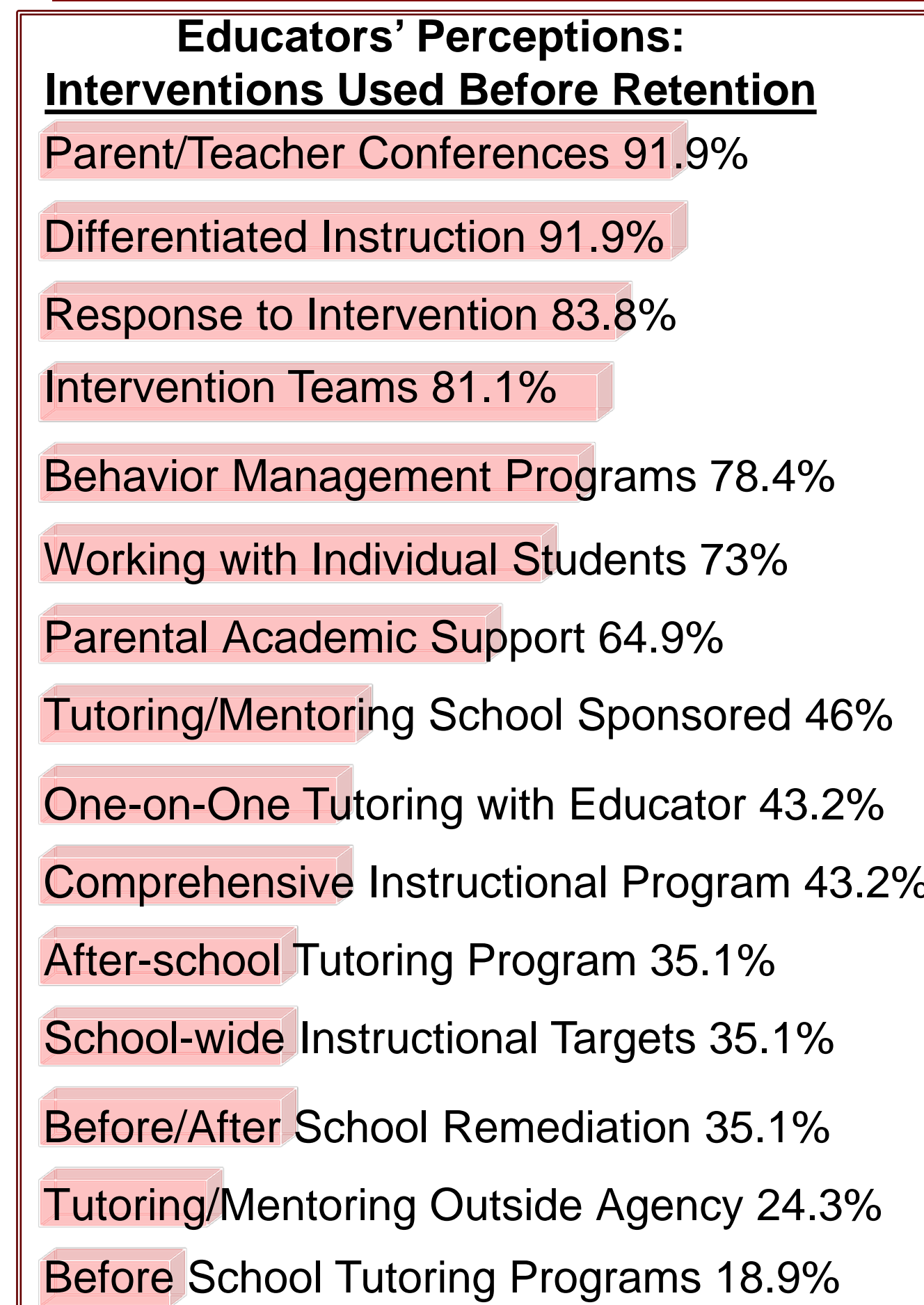
■ B. S. Ed. or High School Diploma ■ M.S. Ed. or higher

Participants Employment in Elementary Schools



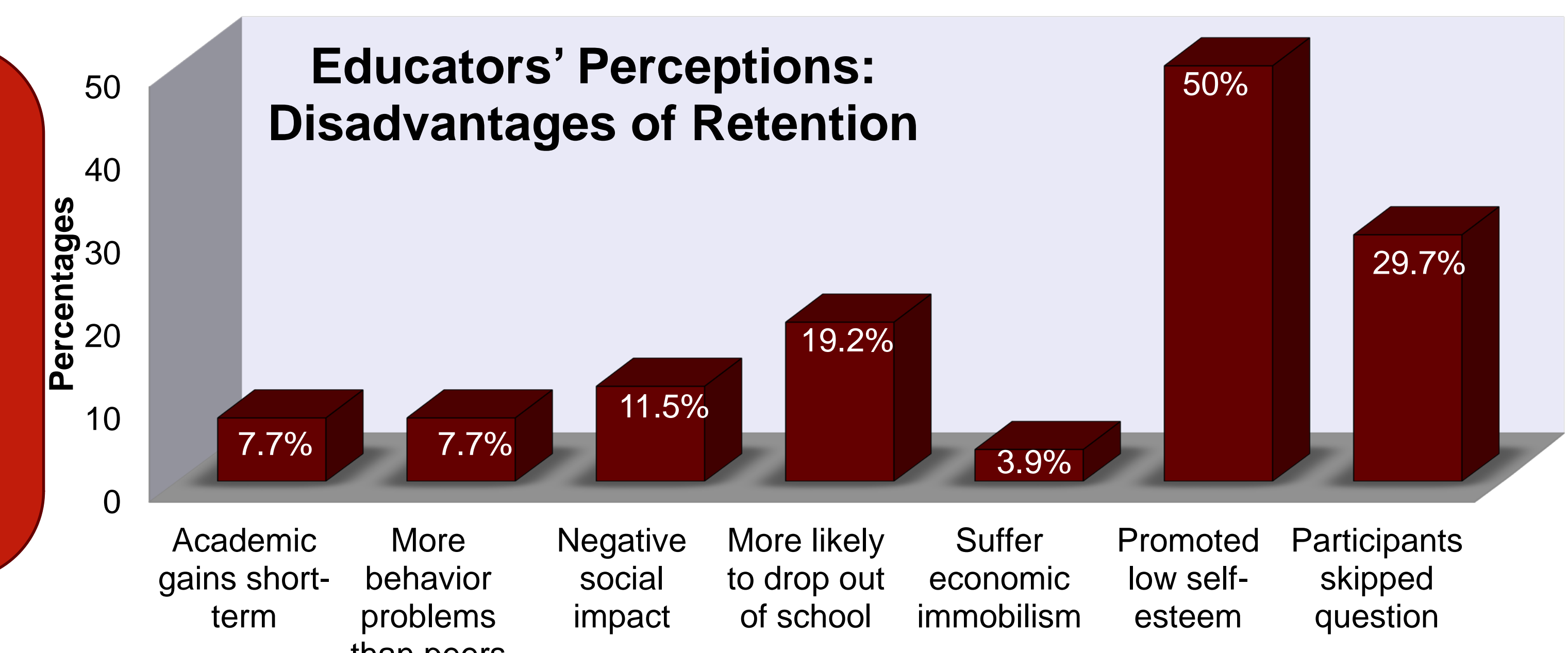
■ 0-5 years ■ 6-15 years ■ 15 or more years

Results



"Very few students are retained each year thanks to the impressive interventions we have beginning right away every year." - Ms. B

"I feel retention is the last resort. We try many ways first to get the student prepared for the next year. It is a joint decision, including the Stat team as well as the parents. Ultimately, it is the parents decision." - Mr. C



Discussion

The quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed that elementary educators employed in Northern Indiana public schools supported the use of student grade retention. The findings were in disagreement with results of previous studies. This investigation found:

- A majority of educators believed retention did not effect retained students socially or increase behavior problems.
- A majority of educators believed retention had permanent long term gains.
- This study revealed participants had not stayed current with retention research.

Limitations:

This study was conducted with only two small Northern Indiana school corporations, thus limiting the number of participants who self-reported the data and cannot be generalized to other school districts. Researchers were unable to email potential participants directly due to district policies.