PSIA-AASI Member School Survey



2024 Results

RRC ASSOCIATES

RESEARCH METHODS

- The 2024 PSIA-AASI Member School Survey was sent via email to all valid member school email addresses. In total, 421 member schools were invited to participate. A total of 174 Member School's responded with an overall response rate of 41%.
  - 135 responses completed from email (Response Rate: 30%)
  - 35 responses completed from direct PSIA-AASI follow-up email.

- The questions on the 2024 PSIA-AASI Member School Survey asked about topics such as ski area/snowsports school characteristics, the PSIA-AASI certification approach and assessments specific to the Level I certification process.
  - As the first year of conducting the Member School survey, these results will allow for benchmarking against future years of PSIA-AASI Member School research.

RESPONSE LEVELS & RATES BY REGION

Region	Total Membership	Survey Sample Size	Response Rate	Margin of Error*
Central	55	23	42%	15.7%
Eastern	117	59	50%	10.7%
Intermountain	31	19	61%	14.2%
Northern Intermountain	6	2	33%	62.0%
Northern Rocky Mountain	23	6	26%	35.2%
Northwest	68	24	35%	16.2%
Rocky Mountain	57	26	46%	14.3%
Western	33	11	33%	24.5%
Other	31	4	-	-
Total	***421***	***174***	***41%***	5.7%

- **Maximum margin of error reported at 95% confidence interval with an assumed response distribution 50%.*
- *Because the margin of error is too large for many individual regions, the results segmented by region do not have a large enough sample size to be statistically representative.*

RRC

MEMBER SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

This section presents the highlights of the responses, along with some breakout by the school's region and other characteristics.

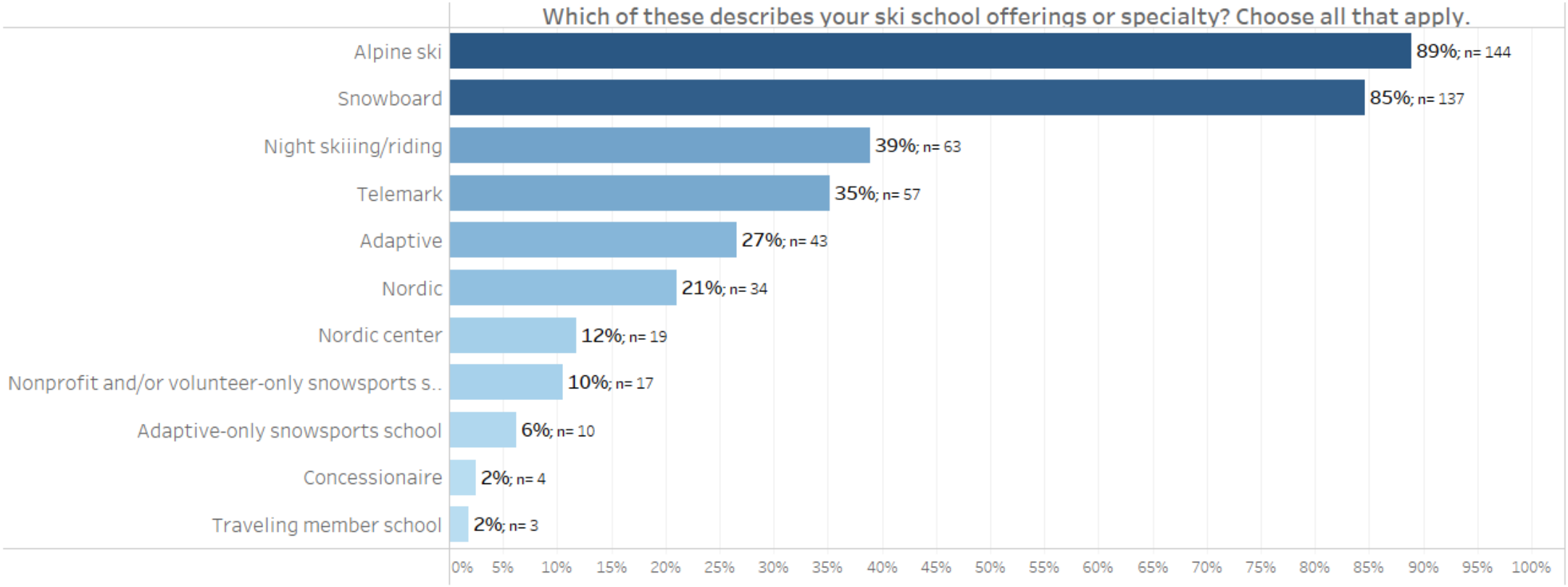
- The questions on the 2024 PSIA-AASI Member School Survey asked about topics such as ski area/snowsports school characteristics, the PSIA-AASI certification approach and assessments specific to the Level I certification process.

- In addition to snowsports school process questions, the 2024 survey also asked satisfaction ratings related to PSIA-AASI impact and the sufficiency of the Level I program.

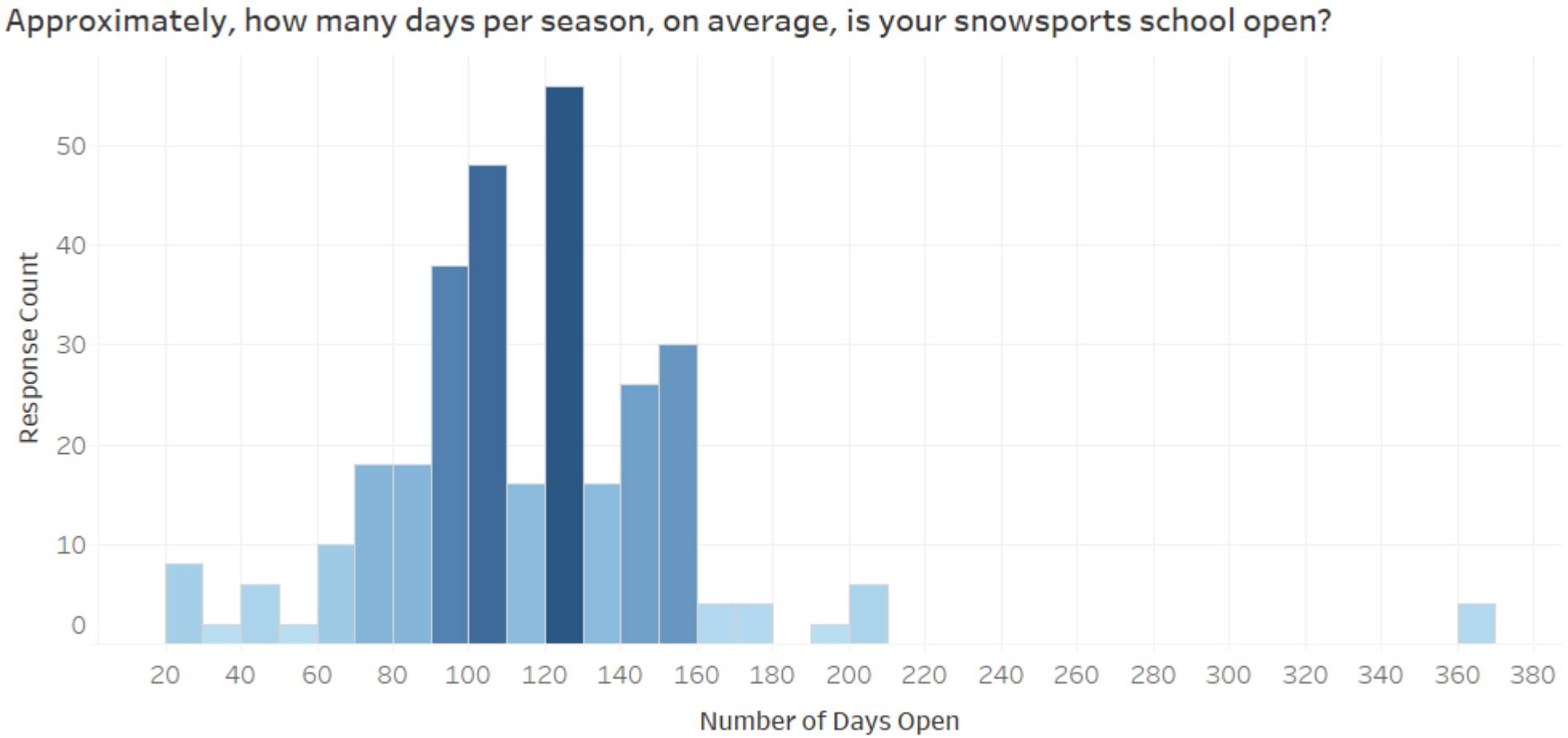
- Lastly, the open-ended comments were summarized into the predominant themes, which focus on the primary challenges encountered in snowsports schools and feedback on what would enrich the PSIA-AASI membership experience.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

- When asked to describe offerings of the snowsports school, majority of schools selected alpine skiing (89%) and snowboarding (85%).

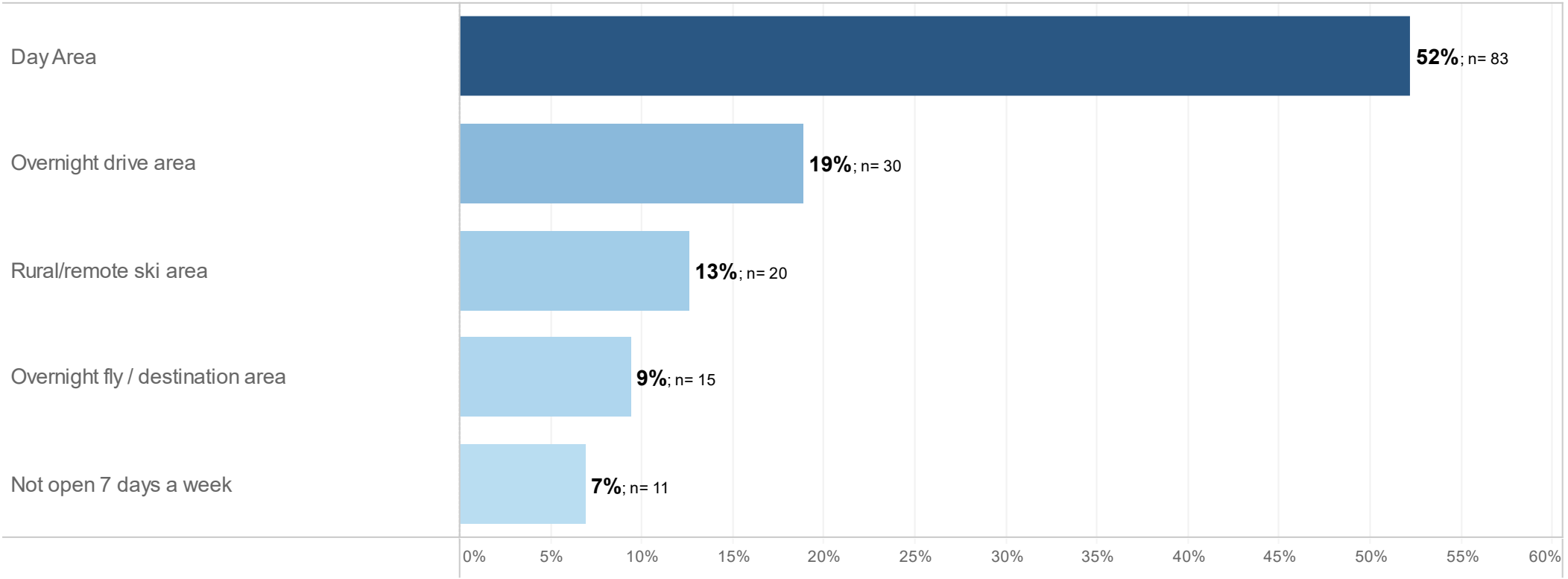


- The average number of days opened for snowsports schools was 110.7.
- The median number of days opened for snowsports schools was also 110.



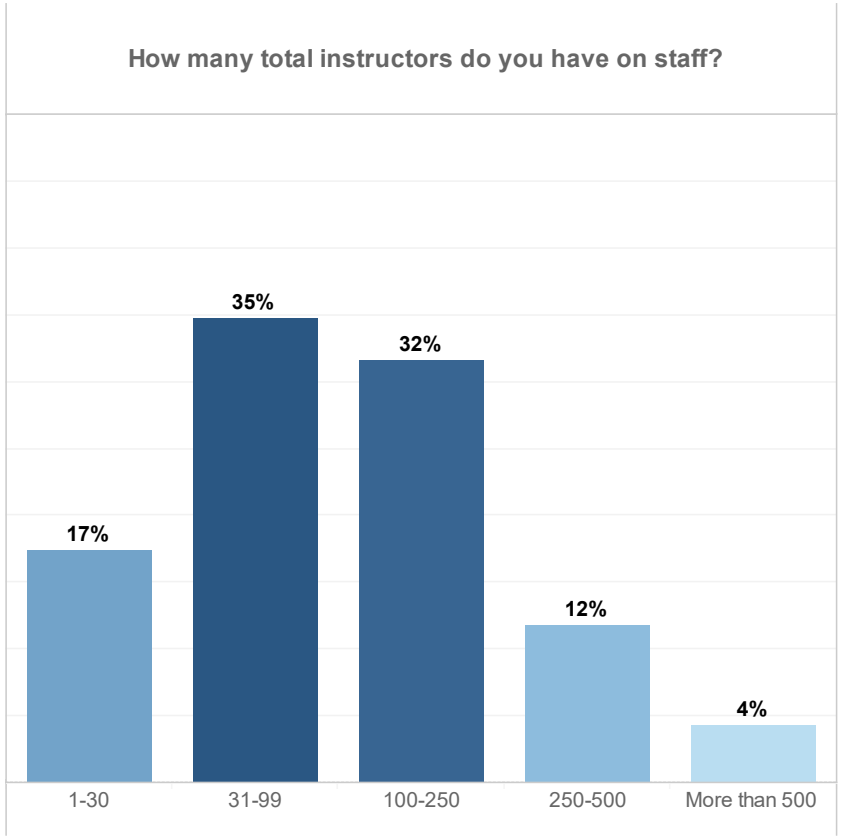
- Half of all responding schools (52%) consider themselves day areas.
  - Ski areas where overnight, dining, and after-ski facilities are limited, since they primarily serve a day-skier market.
- The subsequent most popular ski area type was overnight drive areas (19%).
- Rural/remote ski areas make up 13% and overnight fly/destination areas only constitute 9% of the snowsport school respondents.

Which of the following best describes your ski area/resort?

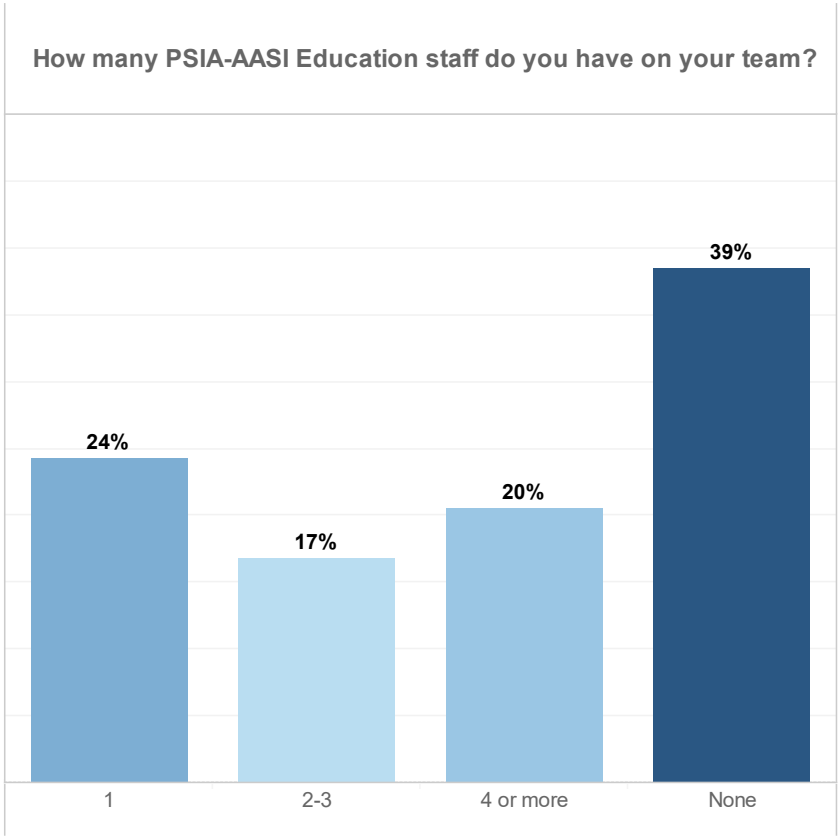


- Two-thirds of these ski areas have 31-250 instructors on staff with the remaining third split evenly between the under 31 and over 250 instructor cohorts.
- Most ski areas have no PSIA-AASI education staff (39%) or one member (24%), while only 37% of responding schools have 2 or more.

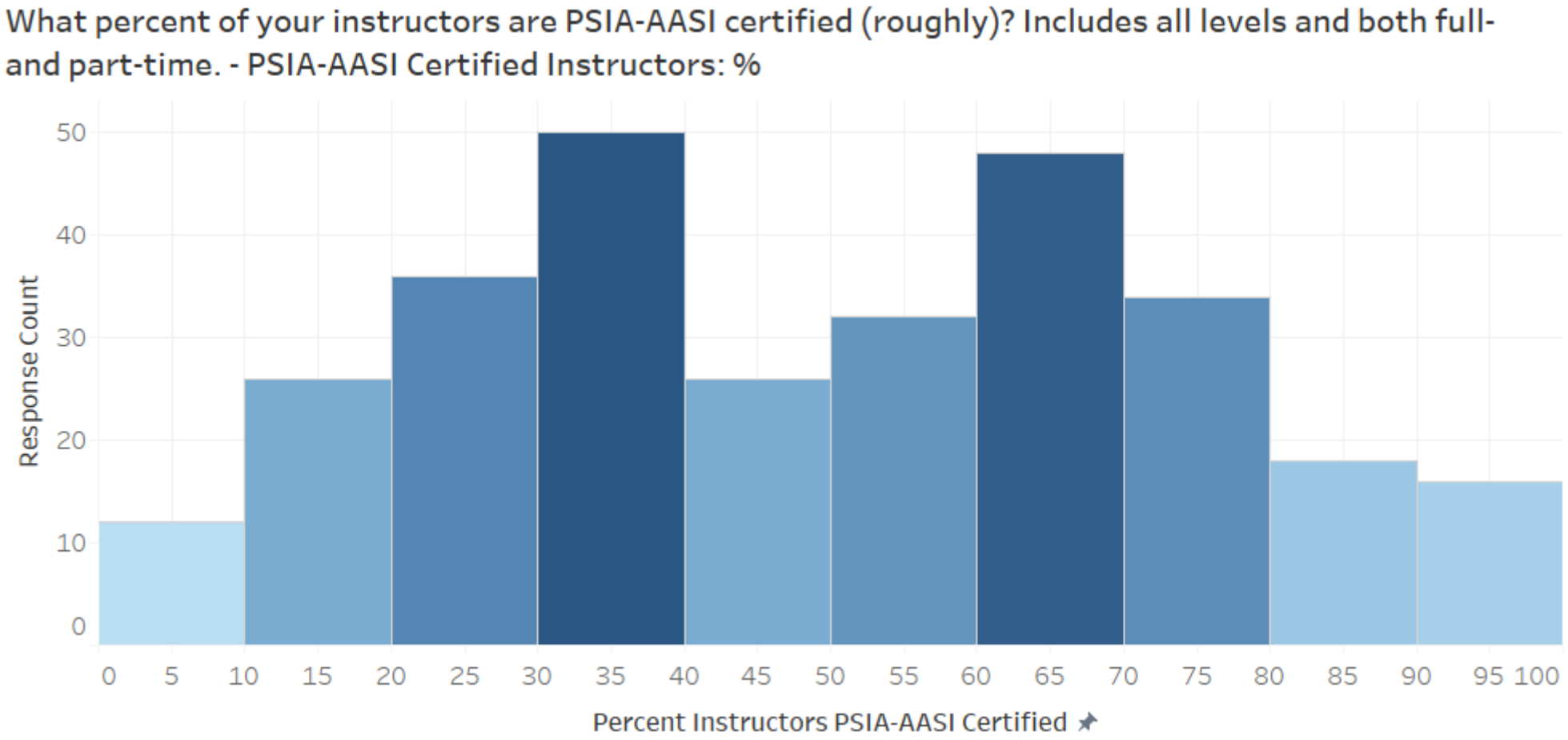
Total Instructors



PSIA-AASI Staff

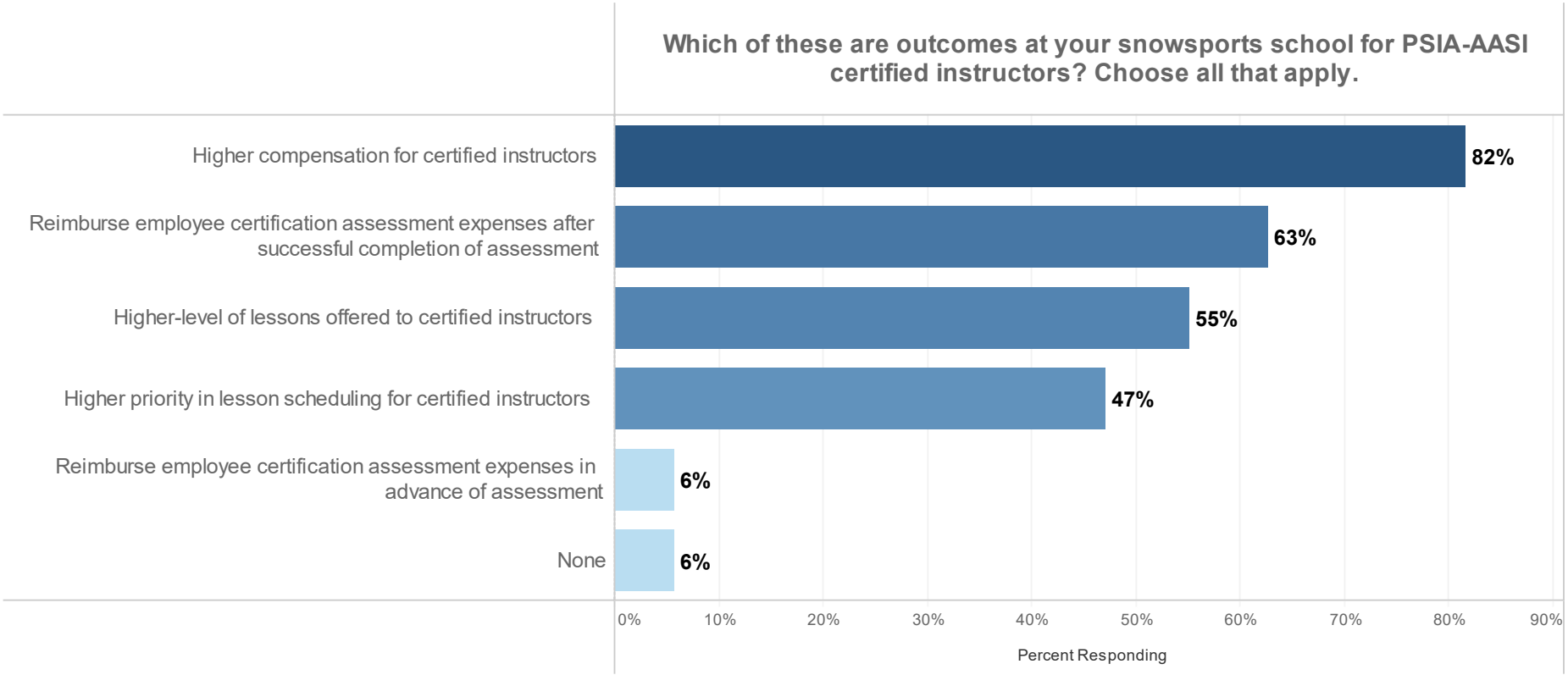


- On average, approximately 50% of instructors in responding schools are PSIA-AASI certified.



CERTIFICATION INCENTIVES

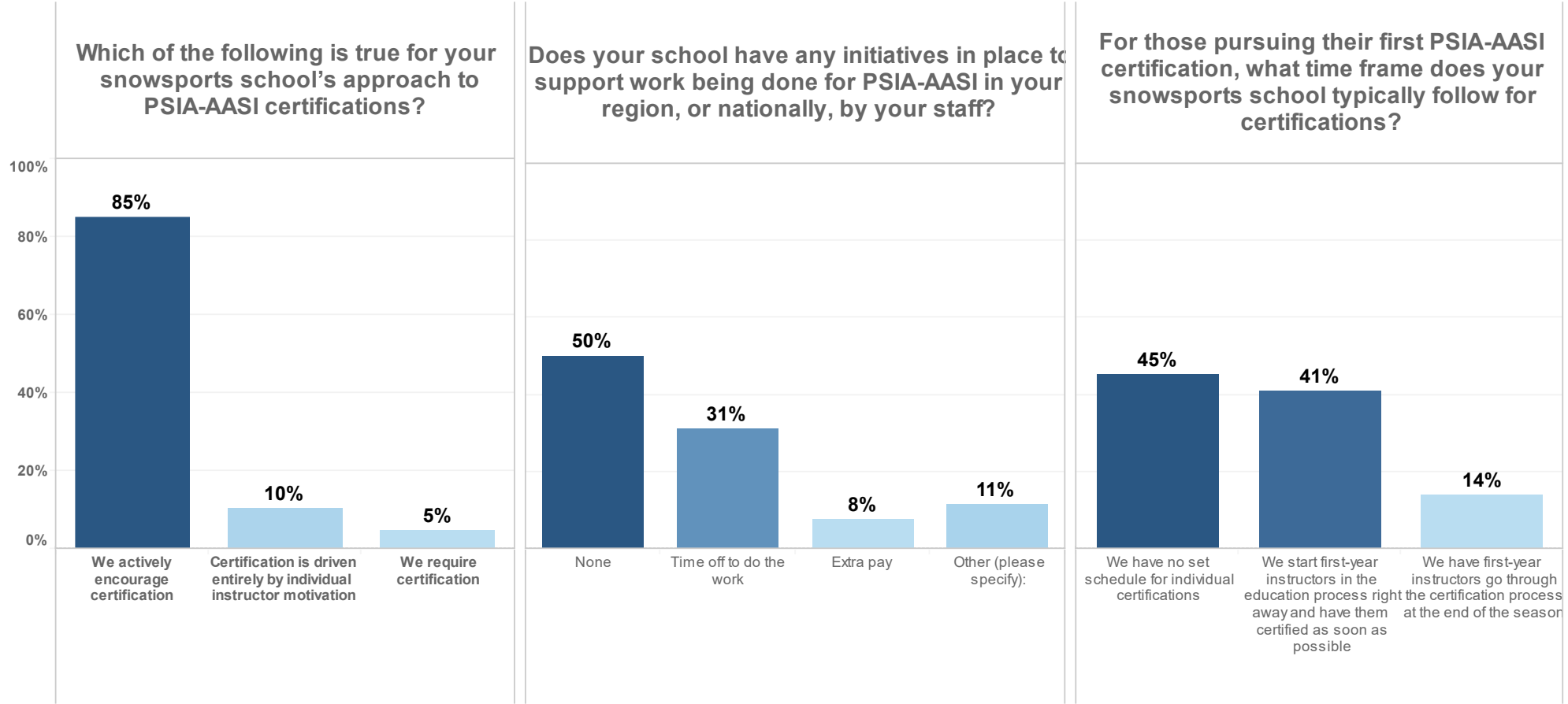
- The most popular outcome for PSIA-AASI certified instructors is higher compensation (82%), followed by reimbursement of employee certification after successful completion of assessment (63%).
- Of the schools that incentivize certification in one of the ways listed below, 46% indicated they reimburse for Level I certification.
  - Only 22% of this group reimburse for all levels of certification.



Percents represent the associated share of survey responses

CERTIFICATION APPROACH

- While most snowsport schools actively encourage certification (85%), only 5% of responding schools require it.
- Half of schools (50%) do not have any initiatives in place to support work for PSIA-AASI while 31% allow time off to do the work.
- 45% of schools have no set schedule for the individual certifications.



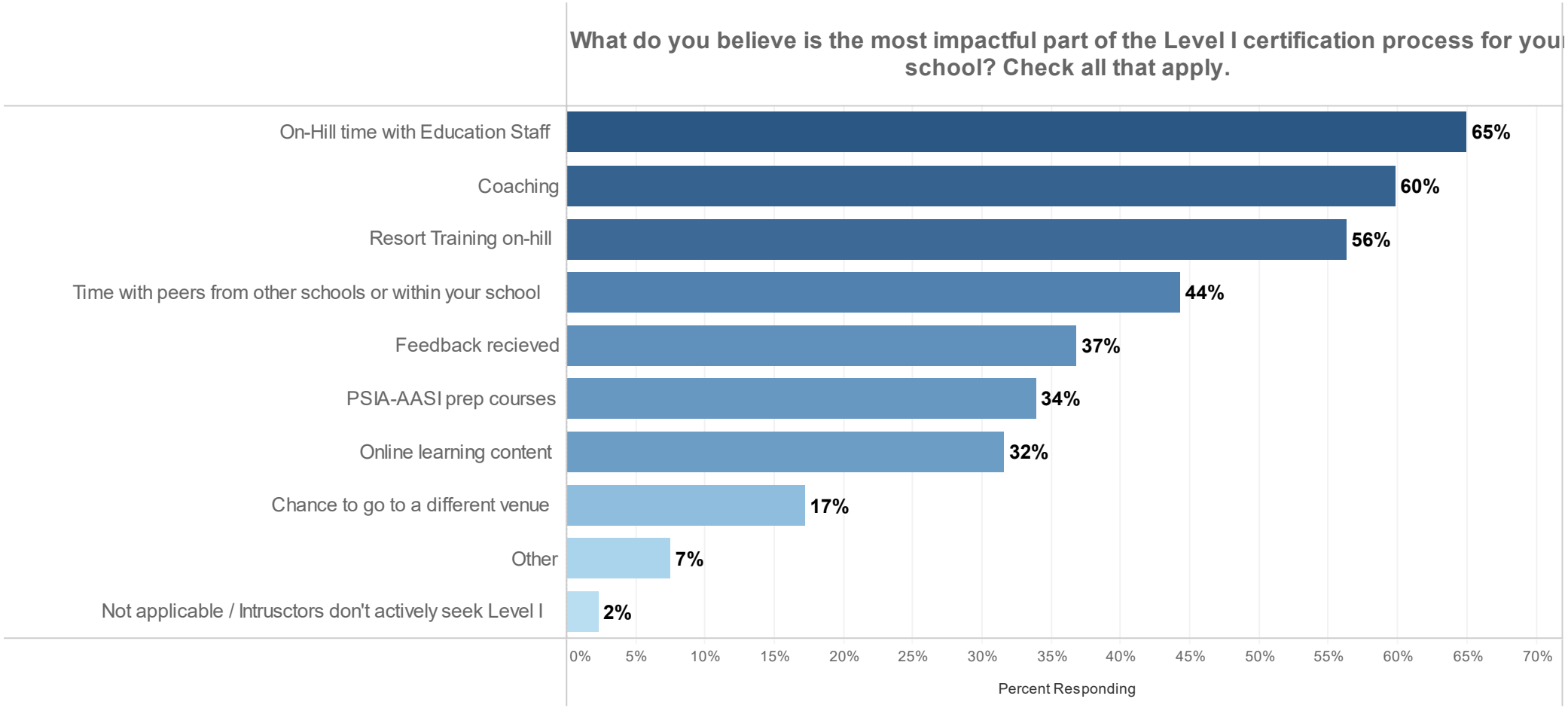
Percents represent the associated share of survey responses

LEVEL I Certification

This section presents information regarding the current value of the Level I Certification and insights on if the Level I process changes.

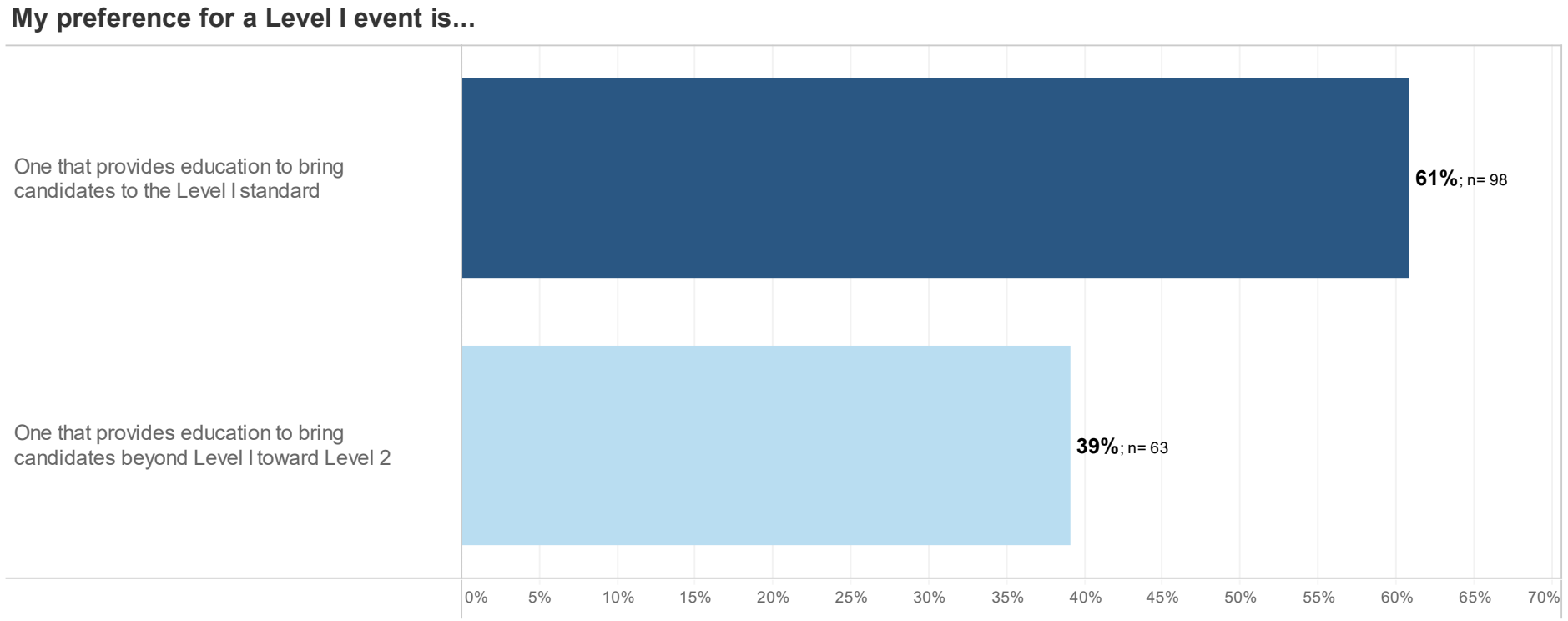
IMPACT OF LEVEL I CERT.

- The most impactful aspects of the Level I certification process for responding schools was on-hill time with education staff, coaching, and resort training on-hill.



LEVEL I EVENTS

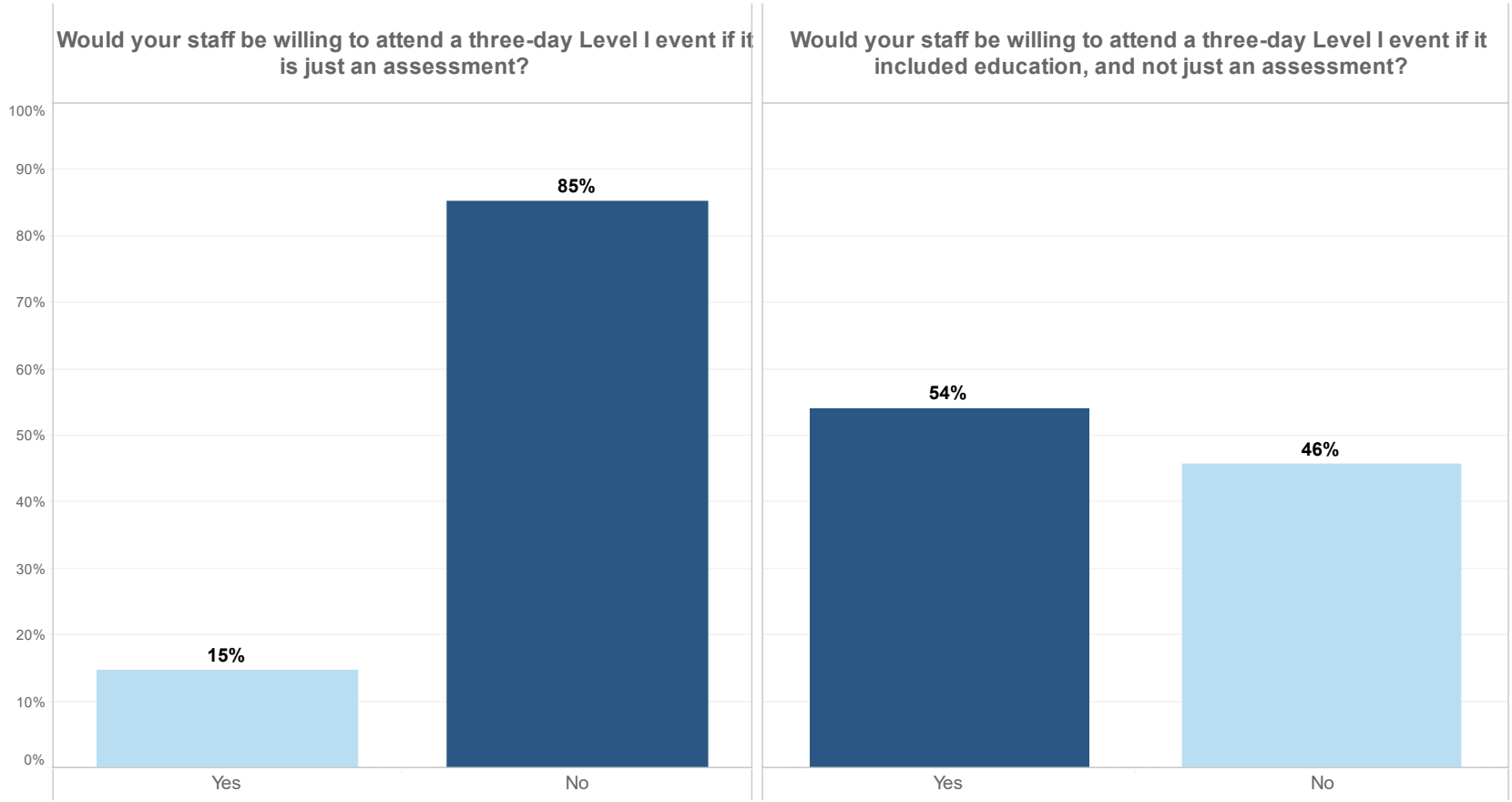
- Majority of snowsport schools (61%) prefer that Level I events provide education to bring candidates to the Level I standard rather than beyond towards Level II.



Percents represent the associated share of survey responses

3-DAY EVENTS FOR LEVEL I

- An overwhelming majority (89%) answered their staff would not be willing to attend a three-day Level I event for just an assessment.
- However, when asked if their staff would be willing to attend a three-day Level I event if it included education, they response was split evenly with 54% responding ‘yes’.



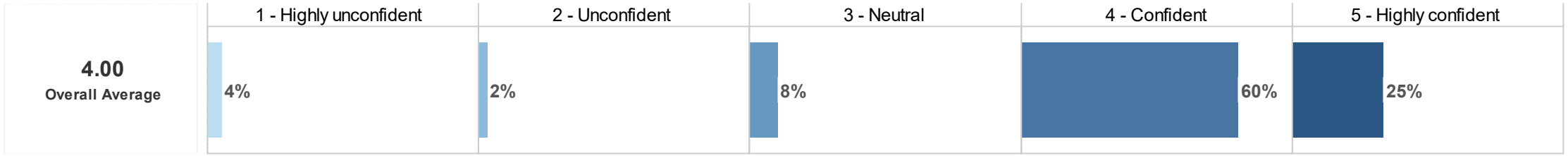
*This sample excluded the Rocky Mountain region
Percents represent the associated share of survey responses

LEVEL I SUFFICIENCY

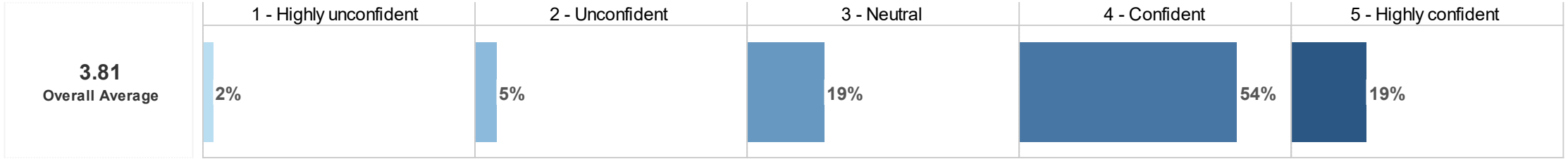
- Respondents, on average, are confident (4.0/5) that the current Level I certification process affirms instructors can teach in the “green” zone.
- When asked about confidence in **previously obtained** PSIA-AASI certifications, the average confidence rating was slightly lower at 3.81/5.

Level I certification is meant to affirm that an instructor can teach in the "green" zone, encompassing beginnger to novice (or Levels I - IV) lessons.

Are you confident that the current Level I certification process affirms that?



Are you confident that an instructor coming to your ski area with a Level I PSIA-AASI certification that they obtained previously can teach beginner to novice lessons at your ski area?



SATISFACTION RATING RESULTS

This section presents the highlights of satisfaction ratings from snowsport schools across all PSIA-AASI divisions.

- Respondents were asked to rate various aspects of the impact that PSIA-AASI has on their snowsport school with some specific to the Level I certification process.
- Overall findings suggest there is generally positive sentiment around PSIA-AASI outcomes with most opportunity for improvement around equipping instructors with the skills to provide the desired customer service levels required for lessons.
- It is most important to note the satisfaction ratings segmented by region do not have large enough sample sizes in each region for statistical significance.

PSIA-AASI IMPACT

- On average across all regions, respondents rated PSIA-AASI's impact on giving employees more skills to be successful a 3.8/5.
- The average rating for equipping instructors with the skills to provide the desired customer service levels required for lessons, the overall average was 3.7/5.

Question: Please rate each of the following aspects of PSIA-AASI's impact on your school.



PSIA-AASI IMPACT

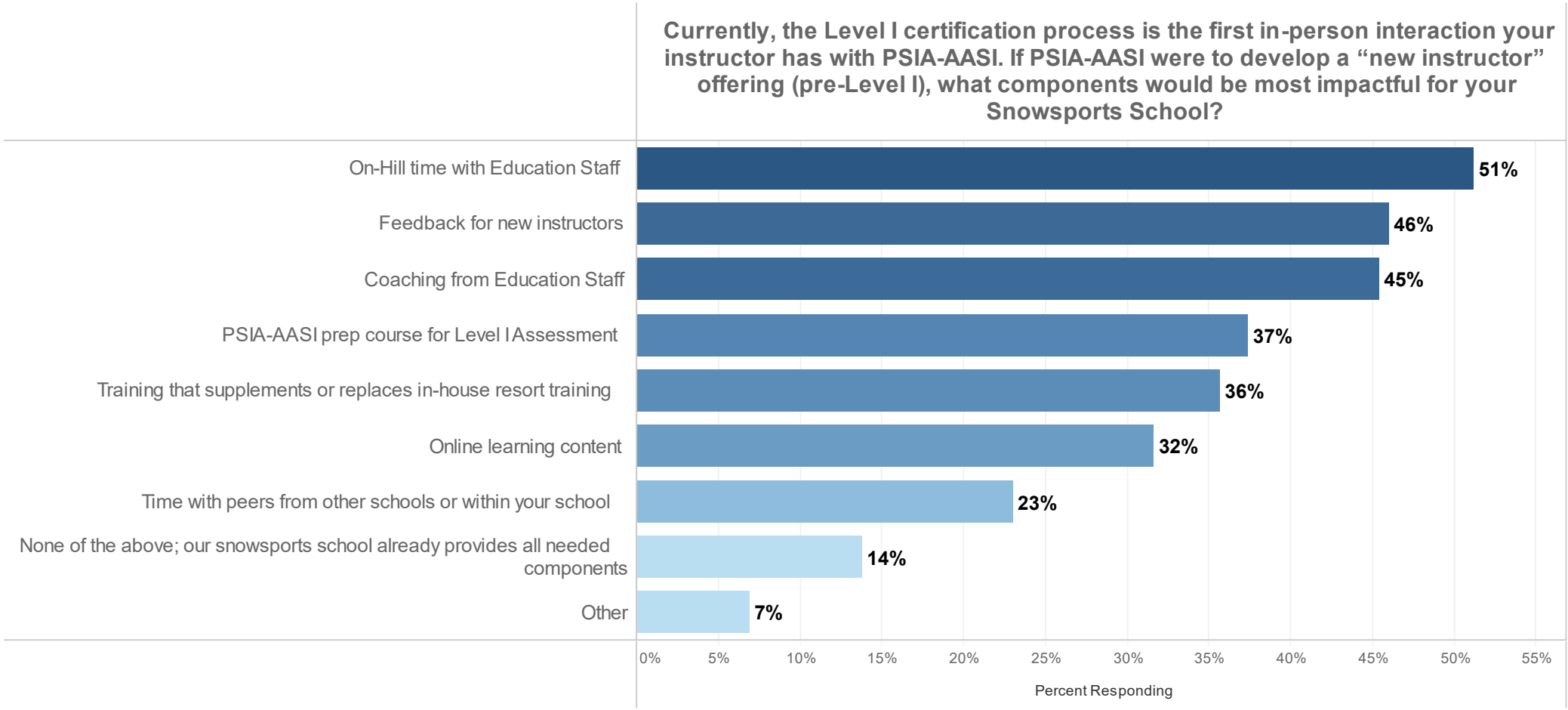
- On average across all regions, the highest rated statement was that PSIA-AASI trained or certified instructors have a positive effect on overall guest experience (4.5 on rating scale).
- The lowest rated statement was that having PSIA-AASI trained or certified instructors increases the return rate or conversion rate of guests (4.0/5 on rating scale).

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	1 - Strongly disagree	2 - Disagree	3 - Neither agree nor disagree	4 - Agree	5 - Strongly agree	Avg.
Having PSIA-AASI trained or certified instructors has a positive effect on overall guest experience	1%	1%	9%	35%	55%	4.48
PSIA-AASI provides value to my school	1%	1%	4%	37%	56%	4.47
PSIA-AASI curriculum increases safety awareness through education	1%	2%	9%	53%	35%	4.18
Having PSIA-AASI trained or certified instructors contributes to a higher rate of year-over-year retention of instructors at your ski area	4%	2%	20%	37%	36%	4.09
Having PSIA-AASI trained or certified instructors increases the return rate or conversion rate of our guests	3%	3%	28%	40%	26%	4.01

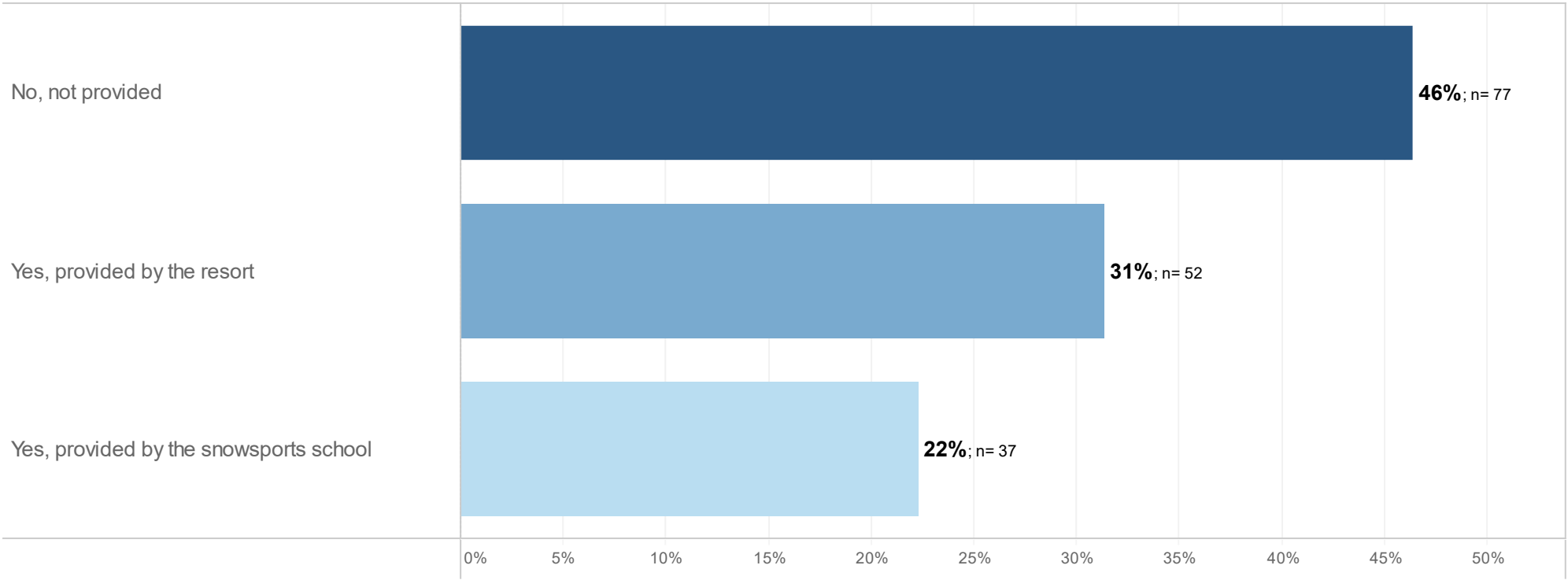
IMPACT OF LEVEL I CERT.

- If PSIA-AASI were to conduct a “new instructor” offering, respondents believe on-hill time with education staff, feedback for new instructors, and coaching from education staff would be most valuable.



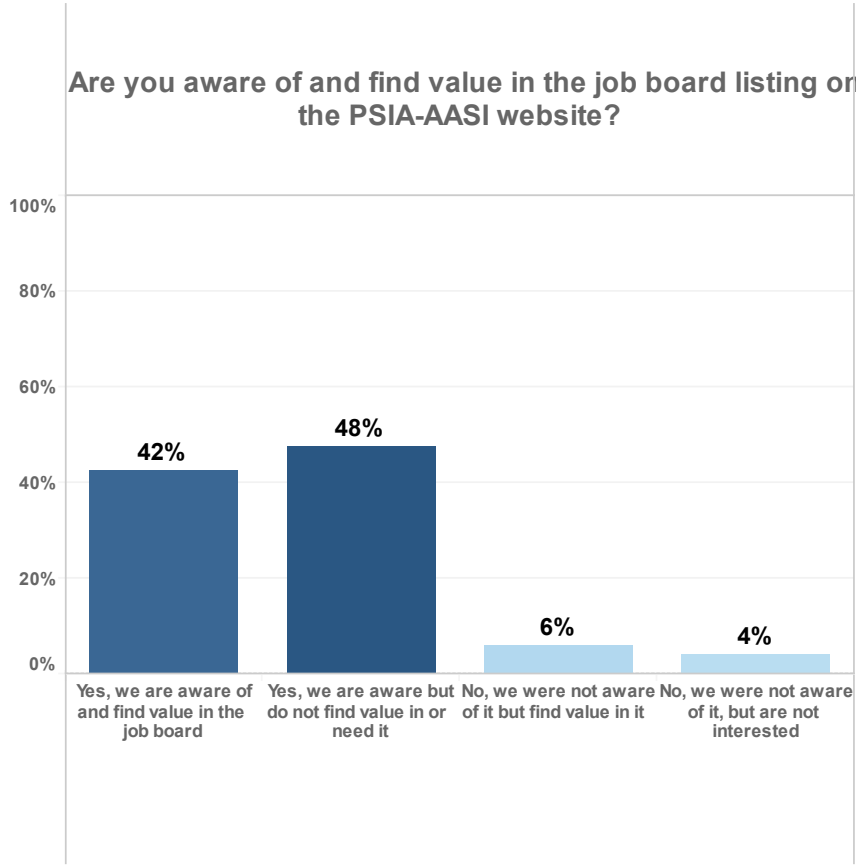
- 46% of respondents indicated their resort/school does not provide and DEI-related instruction or programs.
  - Out of the 54% that do, 23% are provided by the snowsports school vs. 31% provided by the resort .

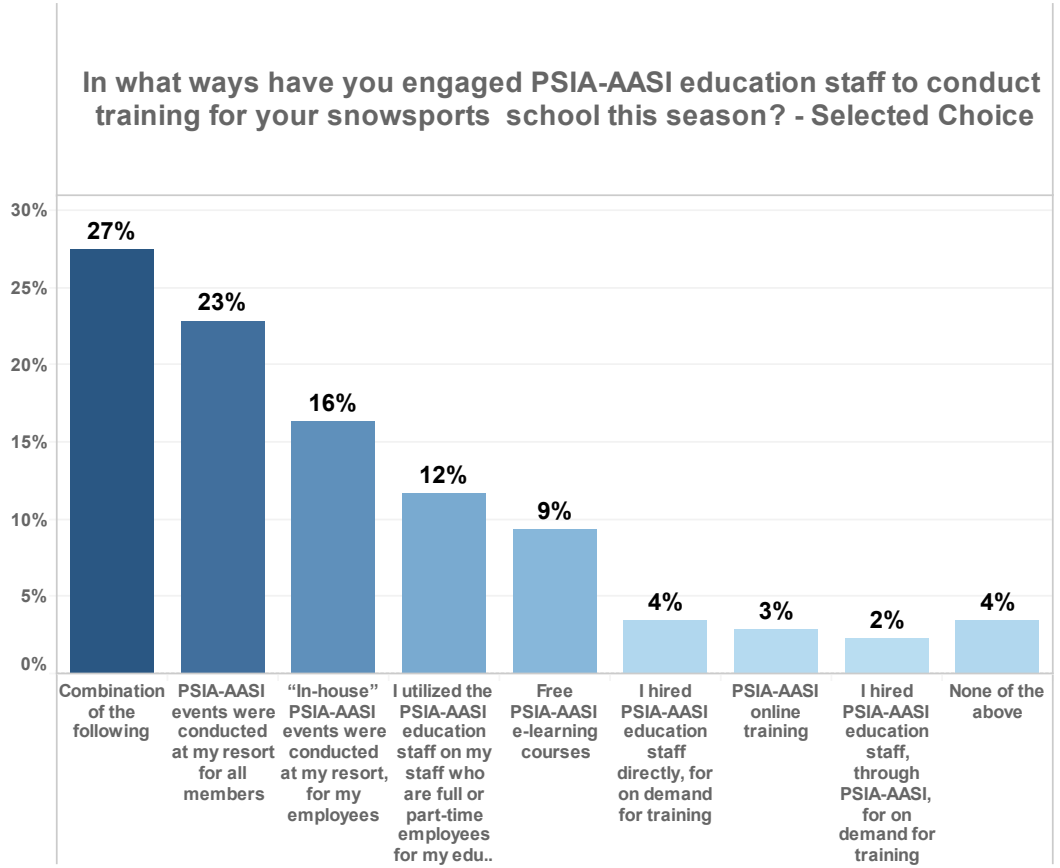
Does your resort/school do any DEI-related work/instruction/programming?



PSIA-AASI UTILIZATION

- While 90% of responding schools were aware of the job board only 42% of aware schools indicated they find value in it.
  - Half of the total schools indicated awareness but do not find value in or need it.
- Multiple methods of engaging PSIA-AASI staff to conduct trainings were utilized by 27% of respondents. The most popular singular choice selection was that 'PSIA-AASI events were conducted at their resort for all members' making up 23% of responding schools."
- Most common ‘other’ response not included in the survey was TTP trainings.





Percents represent the associated share of survey responses

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS RESULTS

This section presents the main themes of the open-ended comment questions on the 2024 survey:

- ‘What are your biggest challenges as a snowsports school?’
- ‘What would bring more value to your school’s PSIA-AASI membership?’
- ‘Please let us know any other ideas or concerns regarding PSIA-AASI Level I Certification, training, and/or assessment’

SCHOOL CHALLENGES

- When asked **'What are your biggest challenges as a snowsports school?'** - the responses are generalized into three main themes.

1. **Staffing and Retention**
   - These comments relate to the challenges of hiring an adequate number of instructors, finding qualified individuals and retaining staff year to year. Many comments also include mention of addressing housing issues for staff.
2. **Training/Certification Opportunities**
   - These comments discuss the difficulties in providing sufficient training opportunities, especially for younger staff members. There are comments relating to the challenges of balancing training with operation demands and addressing the cost/accessibility of certification programs.
3. **Financial Constraints**
   - These comments relate to the limited budgets allocated for training, education, and certifications for snowsport staff members in addition to time constraints.

RRC

ADDITIONAL VALUE

- When asked **‘What would bring more value to your school’s PSIA-AASI membership?’** the responses are generalized into three main themes.

1. **Accessibility/Affordability of Certification**
   - These comments focus on the need for more affordable membership options, discounted pricing for young instructors/part-time staff, as well as reduced cost of certification exams.
2. **Enhanced Education**
   - These comments discuss the desire for more on-hill clinics, updated resources (i.e. Matrix videos) and more robust continued education opportunities beyond basic certification topics.
3. **Registration Process and Event Organization**
   - Many comments highlight the challenges with the registration process for events and certifications, including difficulties signing up and events filling up quickly. There is a desire for a smoother registration process and improved event organization.

RRC

‘Please let us know any other ideas or concerns regarding PSIA-AASI Level I Certification, training, and/or assessment’

- 1. **Certification Process Concerns**
  - Specific concerns within this theme include the length of the certification event (with many expressing reservations about extending it to three days), the cost associated with certification, and the need for alignment between different regions.

- 2. **Desire for Improved Education**
  - This theme focuses on the need for enhanced training and educational resources for instructors, particularly regarding teaching skills, instructional techniques, and beginner progression.

  - Comments within this theme advocate for a balance between assessment and education during the certification process and the importance of providing structured training programs, possibly through online platforms or pre-certification courses.

Percents represent the associated share of survey responses

CONCLUSIONS

- The 2024 PSIA-AASI Member School Survey was successful in indicating overall trends in participating snowsport school characteristics, certification guidelines, and satisfaction among varying aspects within PSIA-AASI.
- Collecting the first year of Membership School survey data paves the way for benchmarking future year's sustained success and progress.
- Looking ahead to 2025, increased response rates in some of the smaller regions will allow for more accurate comparison across divisions.


THANK YOU
PROFESSIONAL SKI INSTRUCTORS OF AMERICA
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SNOWBOARD INSTRUCTORS
RRC
ASSOCIATES