

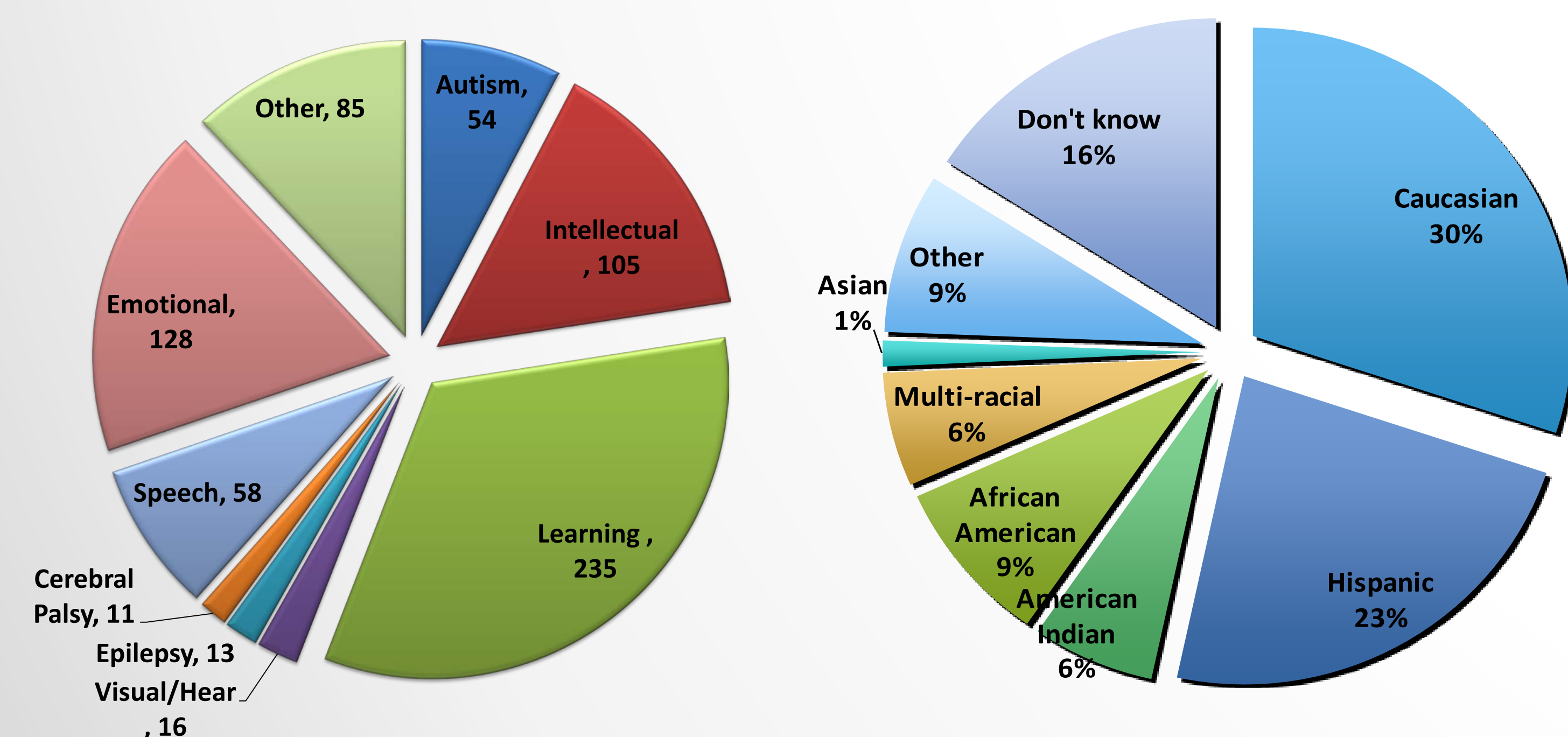
What We Know

- High school students' levels of self-advocacy predict post-high school education, employment, and independent living outcomes.
- The IEP planning process provides an opportunity for students to learn and practice self-advocacy and self-determination skills.
- Self-determination and self-advocacy can enhance personal capacity by creating awareness of rights, considering goals, and developing meaningful opportunities for youth to practice decision making and problem solving skills.

Our Questions

- Among transition-age Arizonans with disabilities, who has opportunities for self-advocacy and self-determination?
- What is the relationship between IEP decision making and choices made in school and at home?
- How does self-determination and self-advocacy impact future aspirations?

Participants (n = 690)



What We Did

Surveyed 690 Arizona high school students with all types of disabilities on their transition experiences and future aspirations.

What We Learned

- While most students attend their IEP meetings, they rarely have choice in their IEP development. Choice was linked to support needs (Figure 1 & Figure 2).
- Students who have confidence in their ability to solve problems by themselves are more likely to feel prepared for life after high school (Figure 2).
- Self-determination is linked to self-advocacy: Students who feel their voices are heard at school are more likely to report they can solve problems by themselves (Figure 3).
- Self-determination/self-advocacy skills have a significant positive effect on a sense of hope about their futures.
- Students report few opportunities for decision-making at school or in the IEP process.

Figure 1. Amount of Choice on IEP by disability

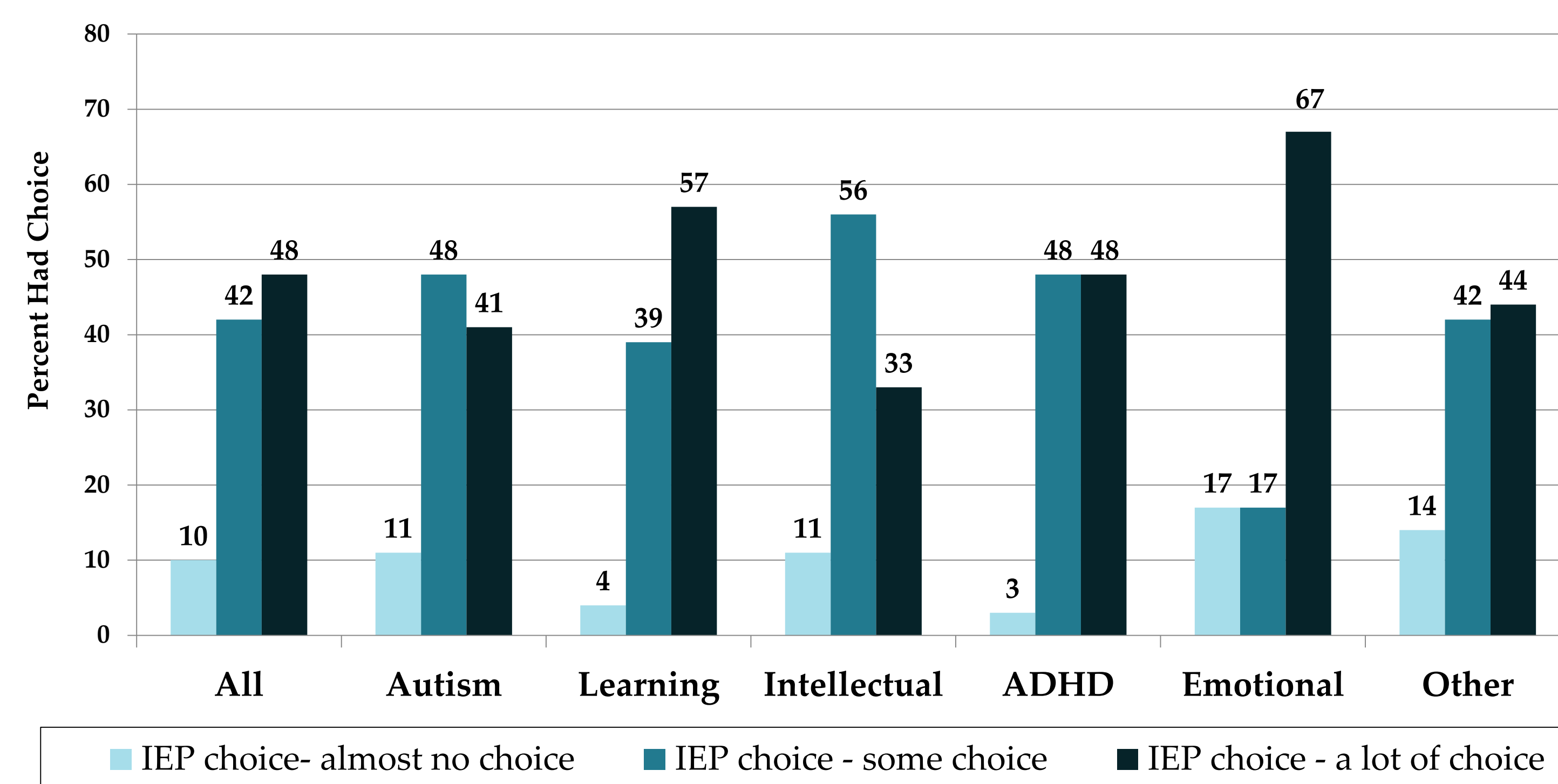
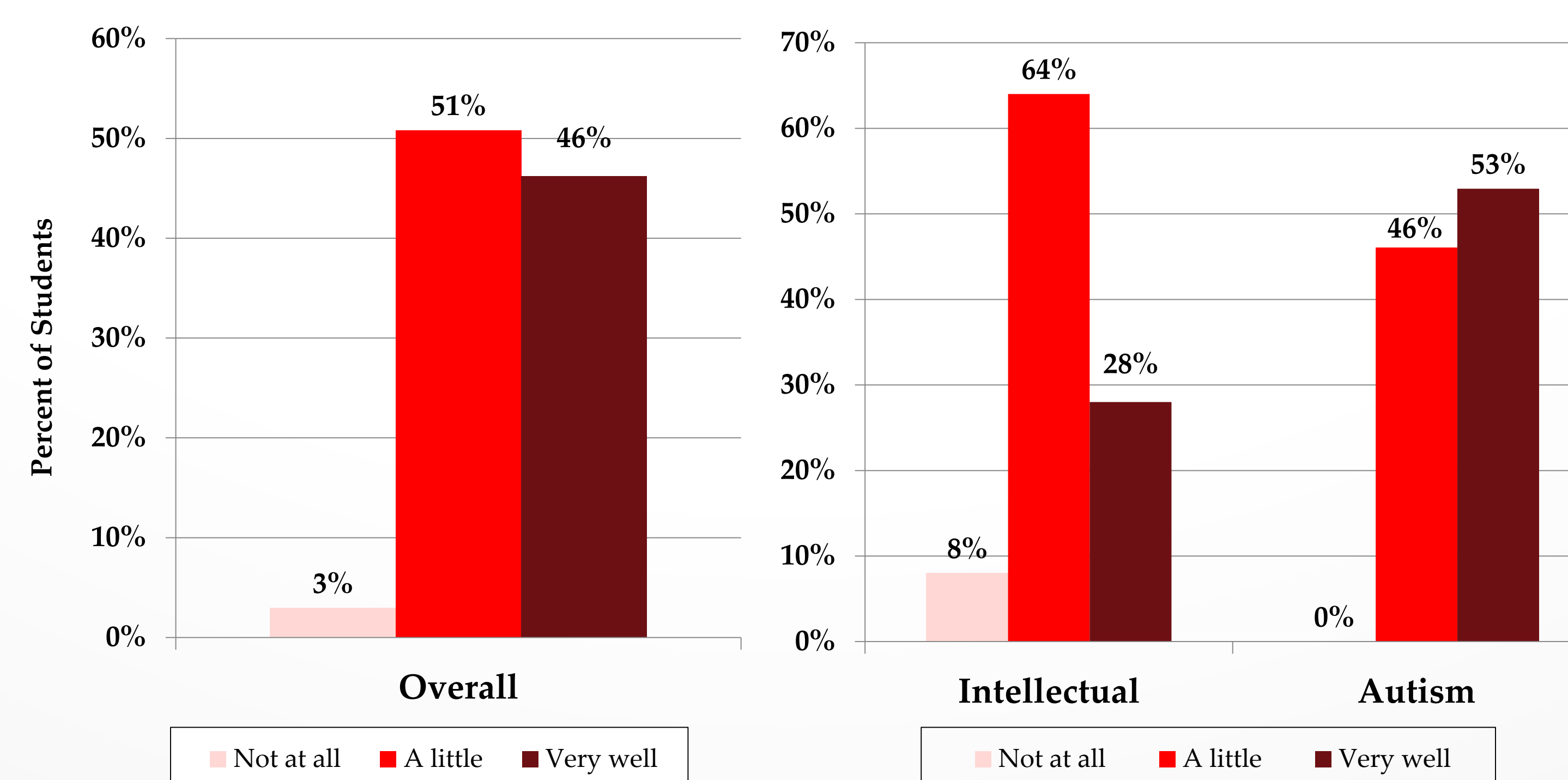


Figure 2. Ability of solving problem by myself – among students who feel they can get school staff and other adults to listen to them very well



Using my voice

“With the accommodations, if I need extra time on my homework cuz of a doctor’s appointment or just an overload, I can always ask for extra time. Pretty much all the teachers I’ve had that I’ve had to ask for extra time, are very willing to let me have that time.”

- Student

Figure 3. How often do you decide for yourself which school activities to join?

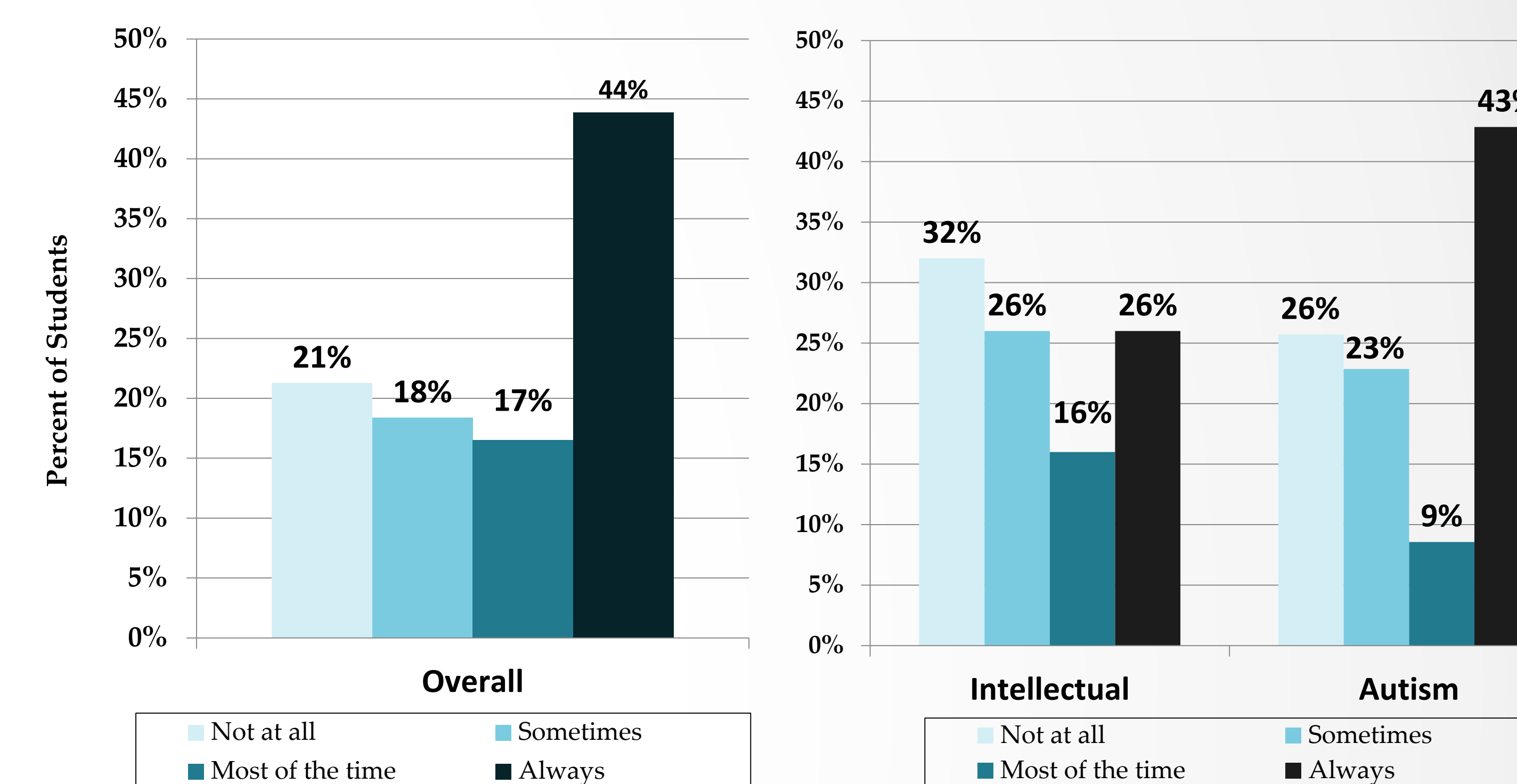
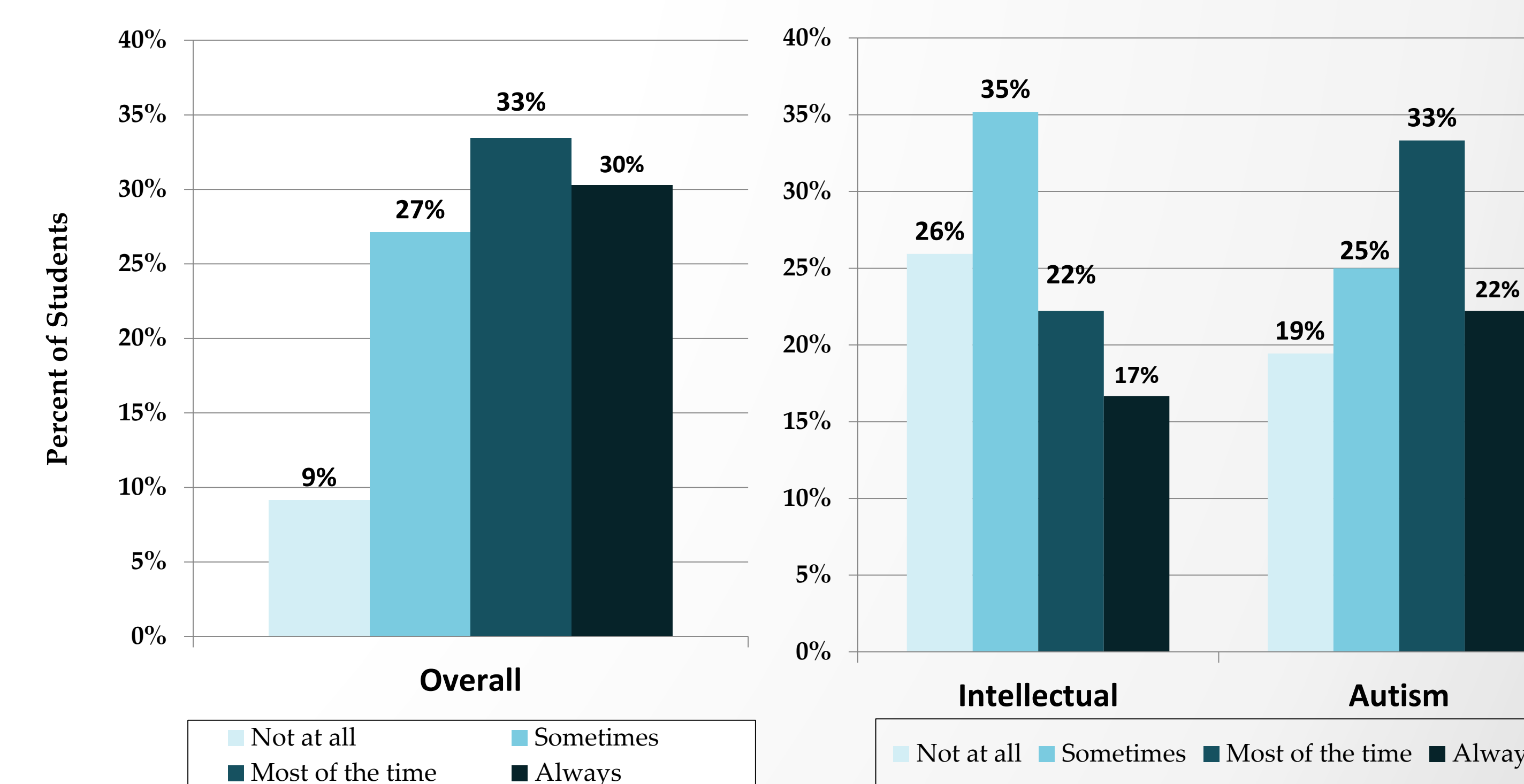


Figure 4. How often do you decide for yourself which classes to take?



Implications

- ✓ Implement person-centered planning training within the transition planning process
- ✓ Embed decision making skills within daily opportunities like deciding courses and social activities