

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' MOTIVATION, SATISFACTION, AND PERSISTENCE

EDUCATOR CAREER AND PATHWAY SURVEY (ECAPS) FOR TEACHERS
2019 RESULTS

PREPARED BY THE
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Introduction

The Educator Career and Pathway Survey (ECAPS) for Teachers was developed by the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) at the University of Utah in 2016. The ECAPS for Teachers addresses issues of teacher supply and demand, working conditions for educators, and influences on educator decision-making. Specifically, the ECAPS for Teachers explores teachers' decisions to enter the teaching profession; the influence of various factors on their decision to remain in, move within, or leave education; satisfaction with working conditions; and career intentions. Again, the ECAPS for Teachers offers a unique perspective on these issues as it draws directly from the voices and experiences of Utah's teaching core. Findings from the survey can be used to inform policies and practices in recruiting, developing, and supporting teachers.

The ECAPS for Teachers, which was first administered in Fall 2017, provides insight into Utah's teaching force. Now, in its second administration and again in partnership with the Utah State Board of Education (USBE), we advance our understanding of the factors that contribute to educators' career-related decisions.

This report is a companion to the UEPC's primary report on the 2019 ECAPS for Teachers – *Educator Motivation, Satisfaction, and Persistence*.¹ Our previous report contains further details on survey administration and overall educator results. The purpose of this current report is to provide insight into the experiences of special education teachers in Utah. As such, results presented in this report are either specific to special education teachers or are comparisons between special education and non-special education teachers. This report offers initial insights into the unique experiences of special education teachers and seeks to serve as a launching point for future work on this group of educators

Survey Respondents from Special Education

In this report, we focus on special education teachers who participated in the 2019 ECAPS for Teachers. These individuals were identified as special education teachers by their assignment core codes in the *Comprehensive Administration of Credentials for Teachers in Utah Schools* (CACTUS) database.²

In total, 858 of the 8,816 ECAPS respondents were special education teachers and the remaining 7,958 were other educators, referred to as non-special education teachers throughout this report. As noted in the introduction, the analyses presented here serve as a follow-up to the UEPC's primary report on the 2019 ECAPS for Teachers – *Educator Motivation, Satisfaction, and Persistence*.³ For additional details on how the ECAPS for Teachers was administered and how teaching categories were identified, we encourage readers to review this report.

¹ See [Hyperlinks for the Educator Motivation, Satisfaction, and Persistence Primary Report. Why Utah Teachers Enter, Remain, or Leave the Profession Data Narrative](#).

² See <https://www.schools.utah.gov/file/95fbc2ac-0531-488c-a91d-6cc5a9d77727> for special education designations.

³ See <https://uepc.utah.edu/our-work/ecaps-2020/>.

Table 1. ECAPS Respondents provides a summary of respondents' characteristics disaggregated by special education teaching status. These characteristics were measured using CACTUS data records. Special education ECAPS respondents were slightly more likely to be female (85% vs. 79%), slightly less racially diverse (92% vs. 90% White), and slightly less experienced (24% vs. 19% early-career teachers) than non-special education ECAPS respondents. Fewer special education respondents were found to teach in a STEM area (9% vs. 16%).

We found relatively few differences when comparing the types of schools that special education teachers worked in as compared to non-special education ECAPS respondents. Most notably, special education respondents were slightly less likely to teach in an elementary school (44% vs. 49%) and slightly more likely to teach in a school with some other grade level structure (11% vs. 5%).

When comparing respondents' teaching categories by special education status, we found that special education teachers were slightly less likely to be stayers than non-special education respondents (81% vs. 84%) and more likely to be movers (11% vs. 6%). As described in our previous report, we categorized ECAPS respondents into one of the following groups based on CACTUS data records and survey responses:

- Stayers:** taught in a public school setting in Utah in 2018-19 and continued teaching in the same school in 2019-20
- Movers:** taught in a public school setting in Utah in 2018-19 and began teaching in a different school in 2019-20
- Leavers:** taught in a public school setting in Utah 2018-2019 and did not return to teaching in Utah in 2019-20
- Returning Teachers:** stopped teaching at some point in their careers but returned to teaching in Utah in 2019-20
- New Teachers:** taught in a public school setting in Utah in 2019-20 for the first time

Table 1. ECAPS Respondents

Characteristic	Special Education ECAPS Respondents (n=858)	Non-Special Education ECAPS Respondents (n=7,958)
Male	15%	21%
Female	85%	79%
White	92%	90%
Of Color	8%	10%
Advanced Degree	39%	38%
Average Years of Experience	9.6 years	11.0 years
Early-Career Teacher (1-3 years)	24%	19%
Teaches a STEM Subject	9%	16%
<i>Teaches in a(n)...</i>		
Elementary School	44%	49%
Middle School	22%	21%
High School	23%	25%
Other School (e.g., K-12, Pre-K)	11%	5%
<i>Teaching Category</i>		
Stayer	81%	84%
Mover	11%	6%
Leaver	0%	<1%
Returning	2%	2%
New	7%	6%
New or Returning*	0%	1%

*These respondents did not specify whether they had previously taught, only that they had not taught in 2018-29.

Why Do Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession?

We asked ECAPS respondents to specify the extent to which various factors influenced their decision to become a teacher. Respondents selected their top five reasons for entering teaching from among 18 factors and ranked them in order of importance on a scale of 1 to 5. We counted the frequency with which each factor was cited as one of the top five reasons for entering teaching and then order these factors from most frequently cited as the top reason for entering teaching to least frequently cited.

Mirroring our main report, *Figure 1. Top Ranked Reasons that Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession* provides a summary of responses to this set of items for special education ECAPS respondents. Findings in this figure demonstrate that the top reason special education teachers enter the profession is a desire to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of children. Other commonly cited motivations for entering the teaching profession included the convenience of the annual work schedule, experience working with children and young adults, and a desire to contribute to the greater societal good. The least commonly cited reasons included a moral obligation, salary, and a lack of other job opportunities.

Respondents also specified the extent to which all 18 factors influenced their decision to become a teacher, using a scale of 1 (“not at all influential”) to 5 (“extremely influential”). We conducted a factor analyses of these factors to better understand the broader reasons that individuals chose teaching. Through these statistical analyses, we found that teachers’ reasons for entering the profession fell into two major areas – intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Depicted in *Figure 2. Intrinsic Reasons that Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession*, intrinsic reasons for entering the teaching profession include factors such as making a difference, contributing to society, inspiring teachers, and respect for the profession. Values in this figure represent the average response that special education respondents gave to each factor on a scale of 1 to 5. For special education ECAPS respondents specifically, a desire to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of children was once again the top reason for entering teaching. On average, special education respondents rated this factor just above “very influential” (4.3). Other highly influential intrinsic reasons included a desire to contribute to the greater societal good (3.9) and experience working with children and young adults (3.9). Inspiring teachers, respect and value of the profession, and moral obligation were the least influential intrinsic factors (2.4-3.1, or “slightly influential” to “somewhat influential”).

Turning to extrinsic reasons for entering the profession, *Figure 3. Extrinsic Reasons that Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession* mirrors *Figure 2* in its interpretation. Special education ECAPS respondents identified schedule (both annual and weekly/daily) as highly influential (3.9-4.3, or “very influential”). In contrast, insurance benefits, retirement benefits, and salary were substantially less influential extrinsic factors (2.4-3.1, or “slightly influential” to “somewhat influential”).

Figure 1. Top Ranked Reasons that Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession

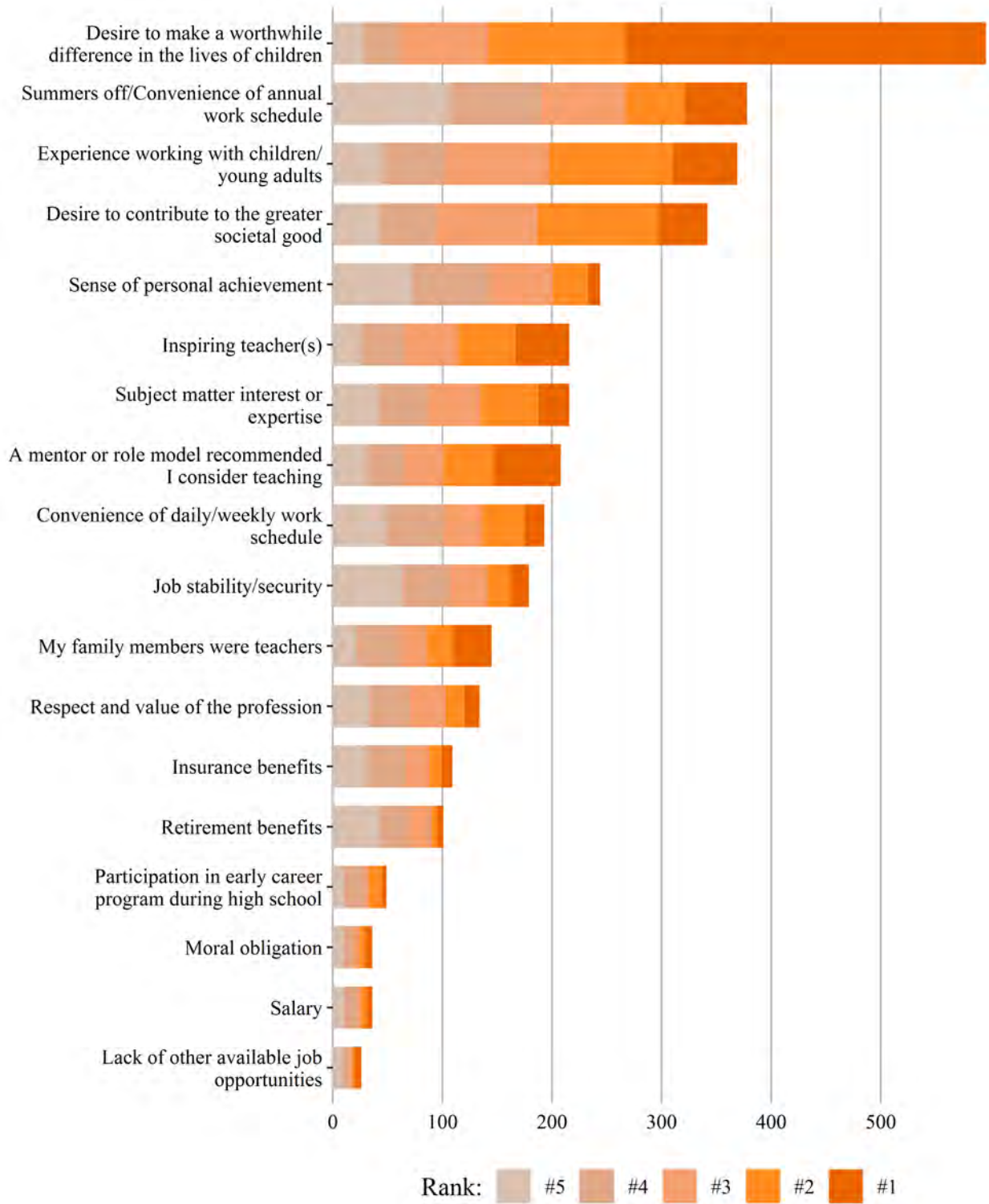


Figure 2. Intrinsic Reasons that Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession

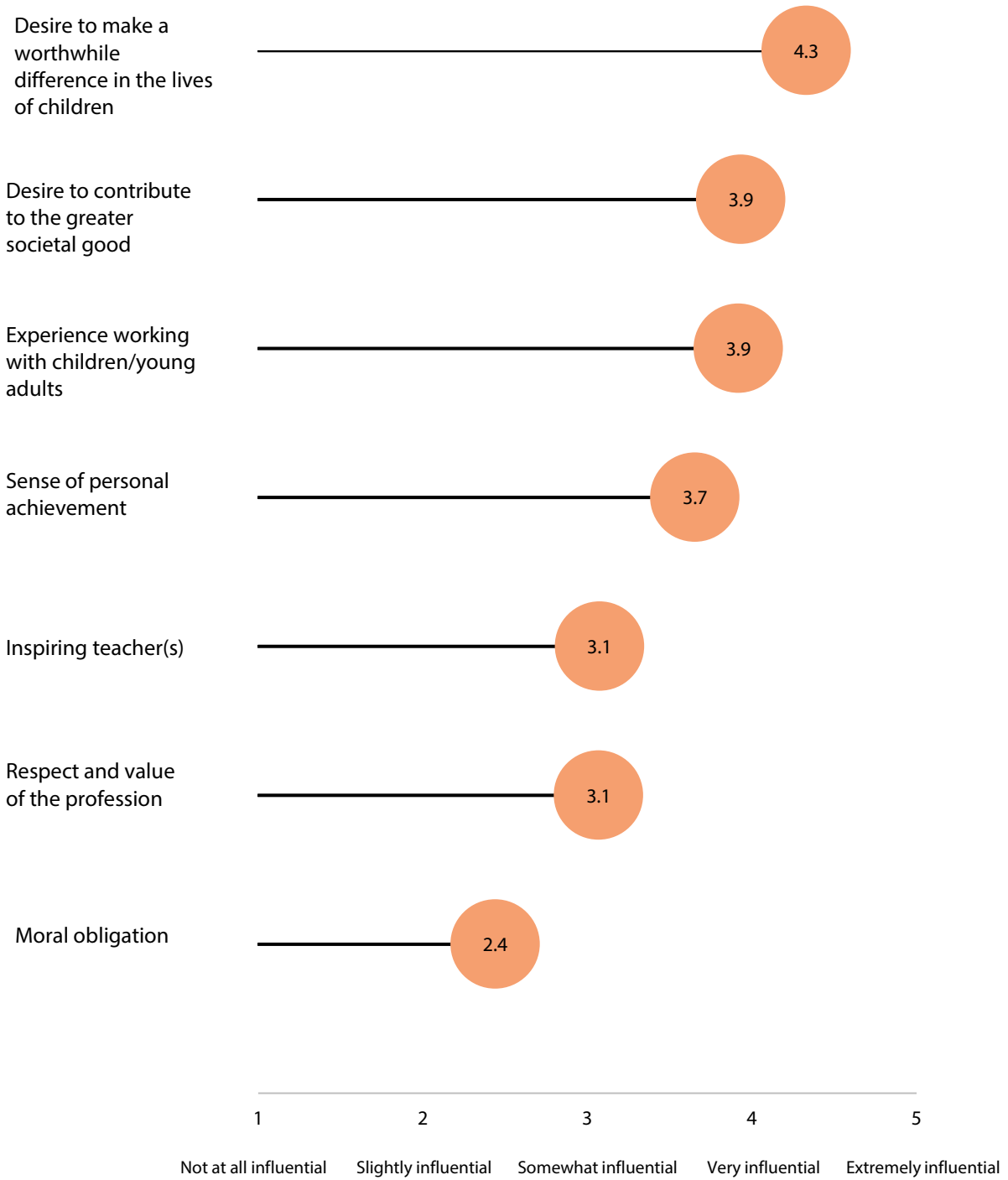
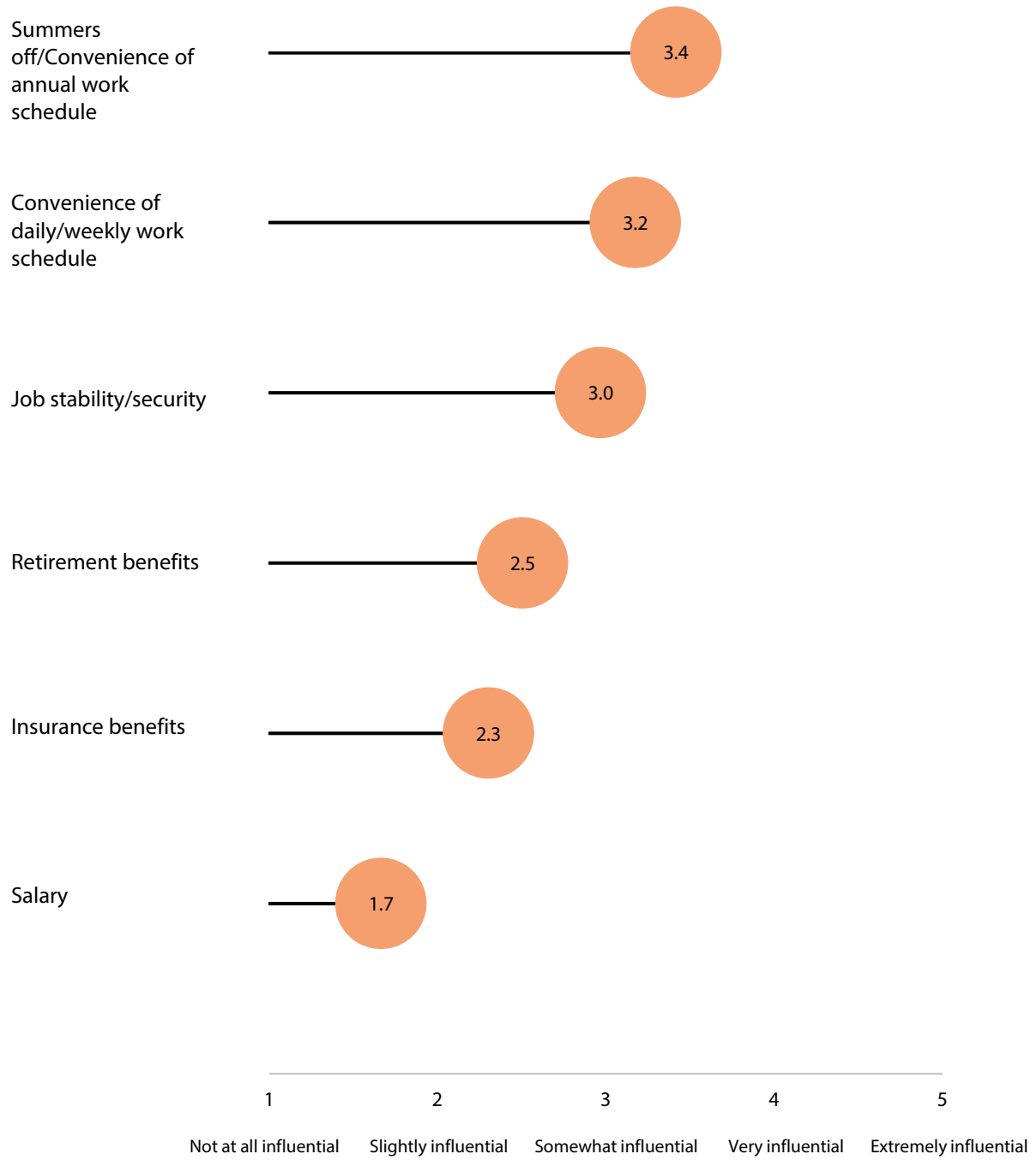


Figure 3. Extrinsic Reasons that Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession

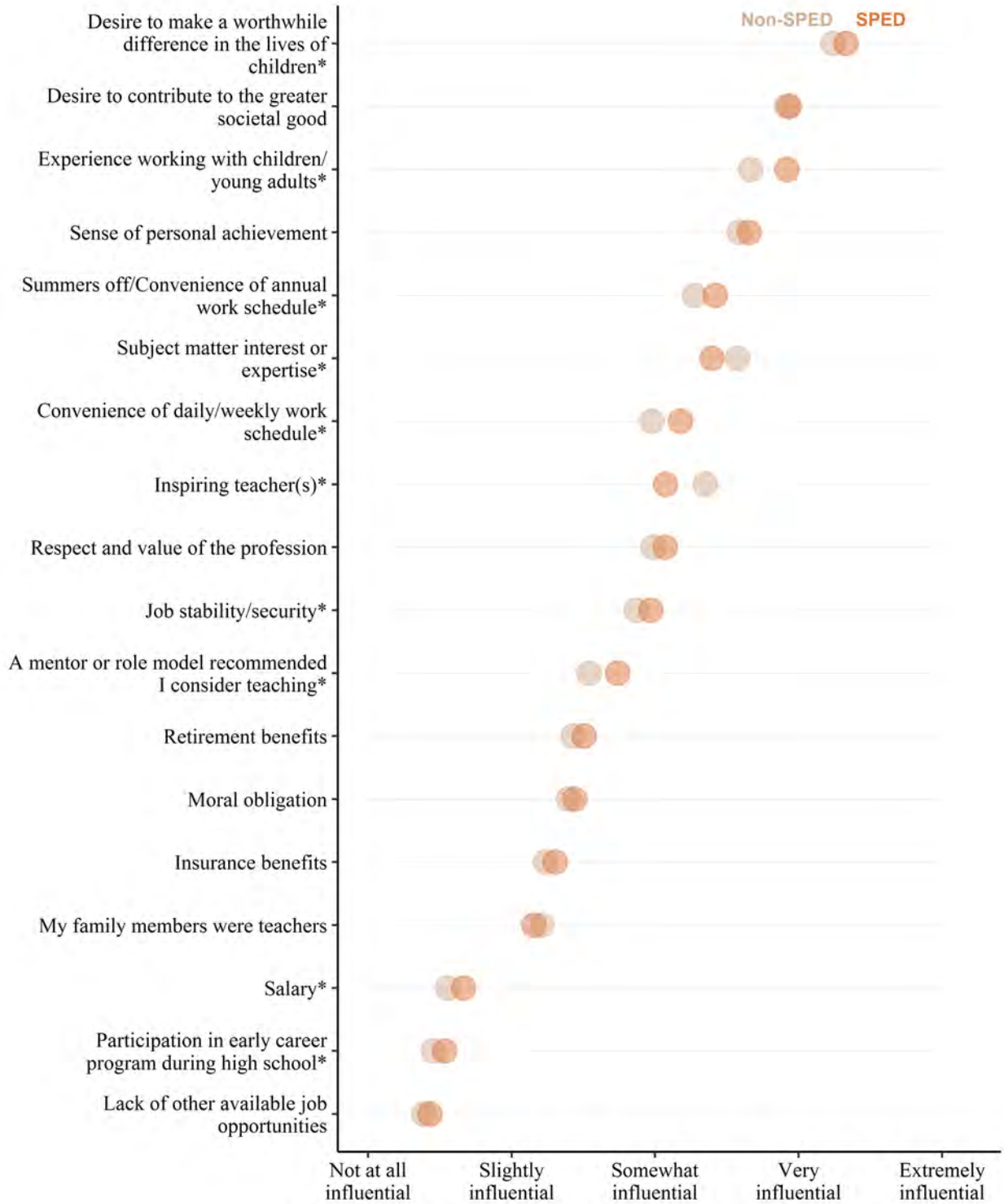


To contextualize special education teachers' motivations for entering teaching, we compared their responses to non-special education ECAPS respondents. In *Figure 4. Comparison of Reasons that Special Education and non-Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession*, we compared the average level of influence reported by each group of respondents across 18 factors. While specific values are not displayed in this figure, the intention is to provide an overall sense of how similar these two groups are. We conducted a series of two-sample t-tests to determine whether differences between responses given by special education and non-special education teachers were statistically significant.

Factors with an asterisk(*) in Figure 4 are those that we found to be significantly different across the two groups of teachers. The topmost item ("Desire to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of children") is one such example. Special education teachers cited the desire to make a difference in children's lives as a more influential reason for entering teaching than non-special education teachers.

Similarly, special education teachers rated experience working with children and young adults as more influential than non-special education teachers. Special education teachers also rated schedule (annual and daily/weekly), job security, mentorship, salary, and high school career programming as more influential than non-special education teachers. In contrast, non-special education teachers rated subject matter interest/expertise and inspiring teachers as more influential than special education teachers.

Figure 4. Comparison of Reasons that Special Education and non-Special Education Teachers Enter the Profession



Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups (p<.05).

Why Do Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession?

We asked ECAPS respondents to specify the extent to which various factors influenced their decision to remain in the teaching profession. As with items related to reasons for entering the teaching profession, respondents selected their top five reasons for entering teaching from among 30 factors and ranked them in order of importance on a scale of 1 to 5. We counted the frequency with which each factor was cited as one of the top five reasons for remaining in teaching and then order these factors from most frequently cited as the top reason for remaining in teaching to least frequently cited.

Mirroring Figure 1, *Figure 5. Top Ranked Reasons that Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession* provides a summary of the top ranked reasons special education ECAPS respondents remain in the teaching profession. We found that, as with reasons to enter teaching, the top reason special education teachers remain in the profession is a desire to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of children.

Other commonly cited motivations were convenience of the annual schedule, a desire to contribute to the greater societal good, and experience working with children and young adults. The least commonly cited reasons included a sense of empowerment, a sense of personal recognition, and available resources.

Figure 5. Top Ranked Reasons that Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession

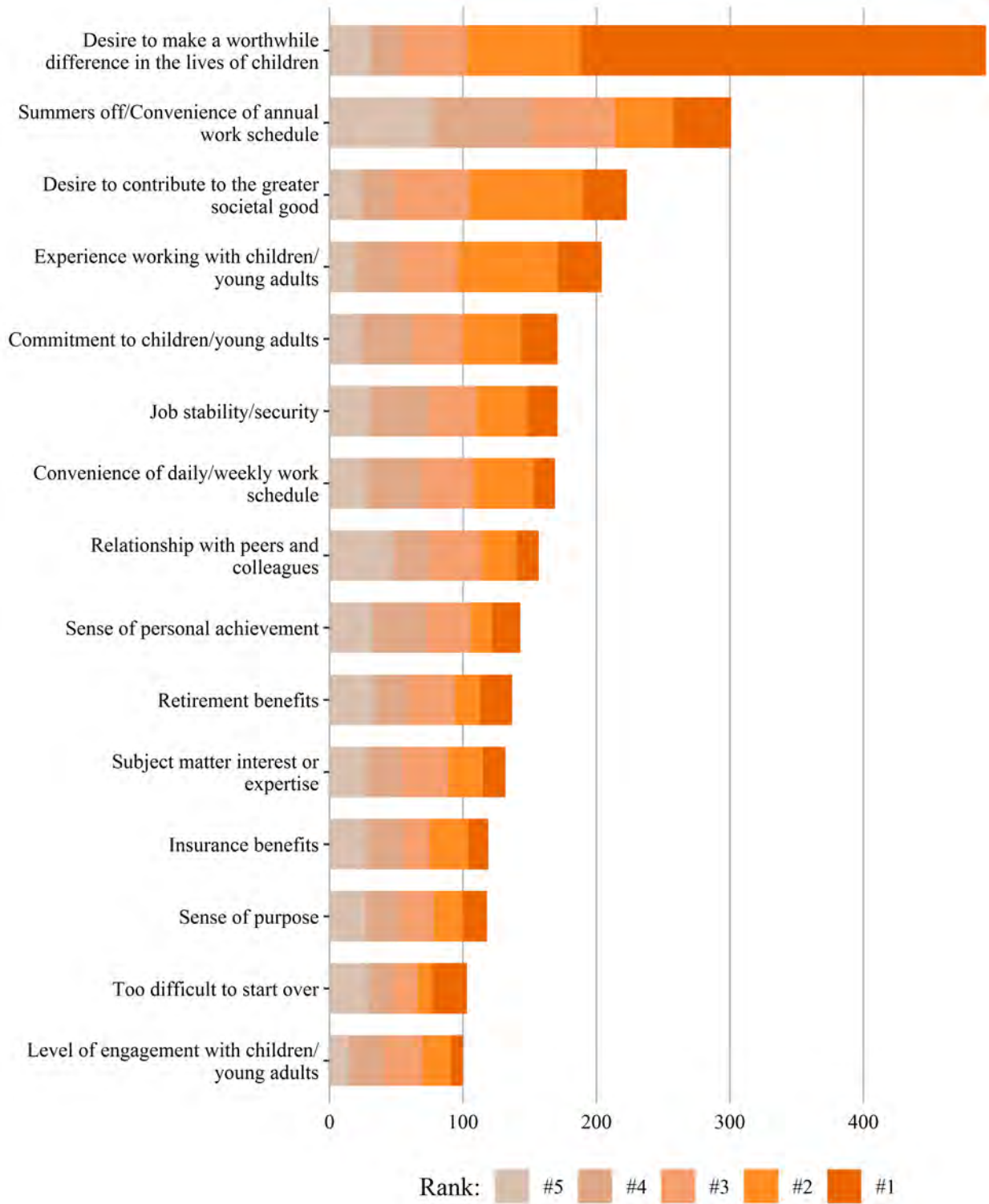
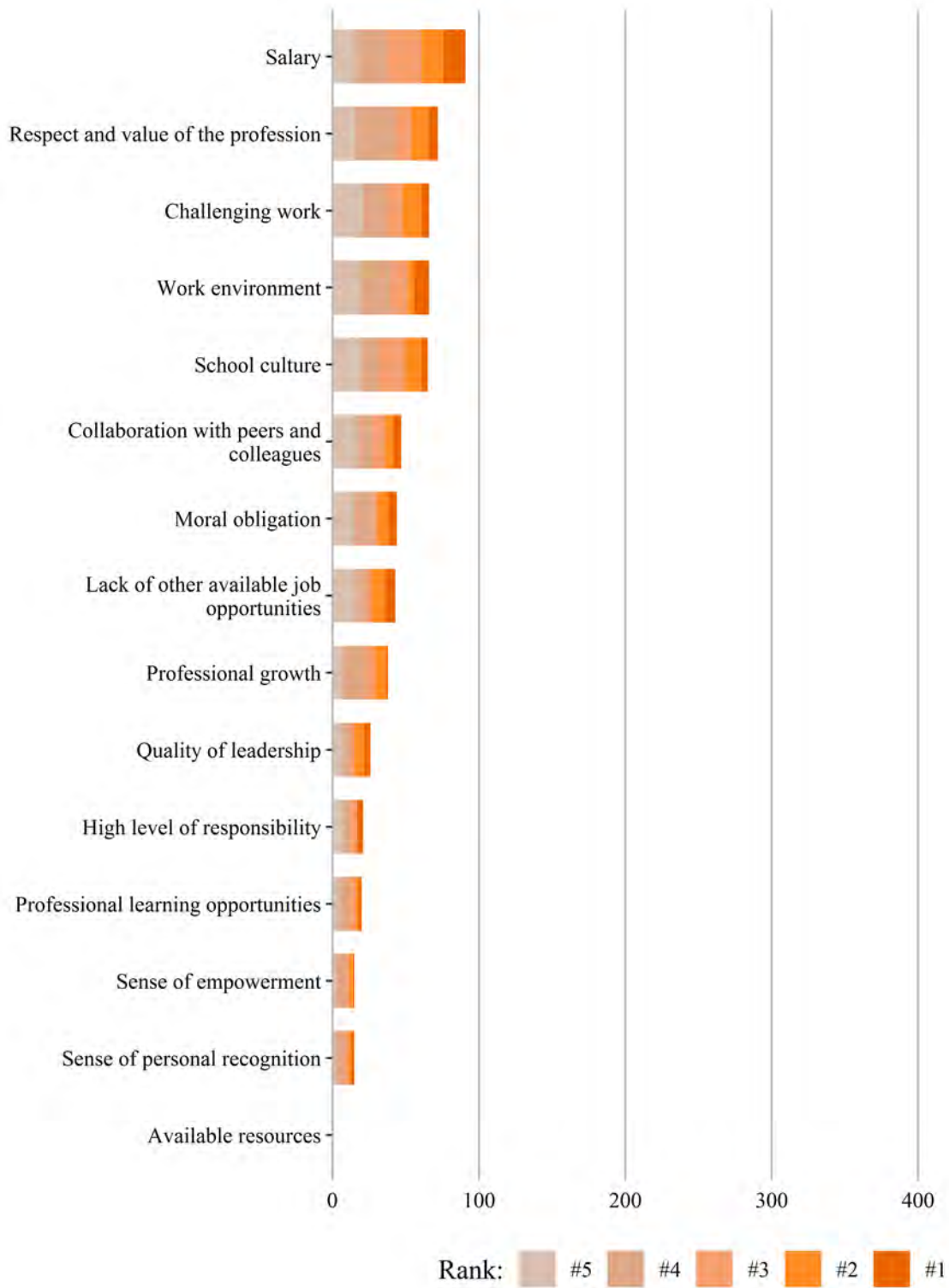


Figure 5. Top Ranked Reasons that Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession *continued*



Respondents also specified the extent to which all 30 factors influenced their decision to remain a teacher, using a scale of 1 (“not at all influential”) to 5 (“extremely influential”). We conducted a factor analyses of these factors to better understand the broader reasons that individuals chose teaching. Through these statistical analyses, we found that teachers’ reasons for remaining in the profession fell into three major areas – student-focused, professional, and extrinsic motivations.

Student-focused reasons for remaining in teaching are summarized in *Figure 6. Student-Focused Factors that Influence Special Education Teachers to Remain in the Profession*. The values in this figure represent the average response given by special education teachers when they were asked how influential various factors were on their decision to remain in teaching. Again, these findings show that a desire to make a difference and experience working with children are influential for special education teachers (4.0-4.3, or “very influential”).

Professional reasons for remaining in teaching are summarized in *Figure 7. Professional Factors that Influence Special Education Teachers to Remain in the Profession*. Special education teachers identified relationships with peers and colleagues, work environment, and collaboration as influential professional reasons for continuing to teach (3.2-3.5, or “somewhat influential” to “very influential”). The least influential professional factors influencing special education teachers’ decisions to remain in teaching included professional learning opportunities, sense of personal recognition, and available resources (2.2-2.6, or “slightly influential” to “somewhat influential”).

Figure 8. Extrinsic Factors that Influence Special Education Teachers to Remain in the Profession provides a summary of the extrinsic reasons that motivate special education teachers to continue to teach. Similar to our findings on extrinsic motivations to enter teaching, schedule (annual and daily/weekly) is highly influential (3.5-3.7, or “somewhat influential” to “very influential”) and retirement benefits, insurance benefits, and salary are less so (2.3-3.0, or “slightly influential” to “somewhat influential”).

Figure 6. Student-Focused Factors that Influence Special Education Teachers to Remain in the Profession

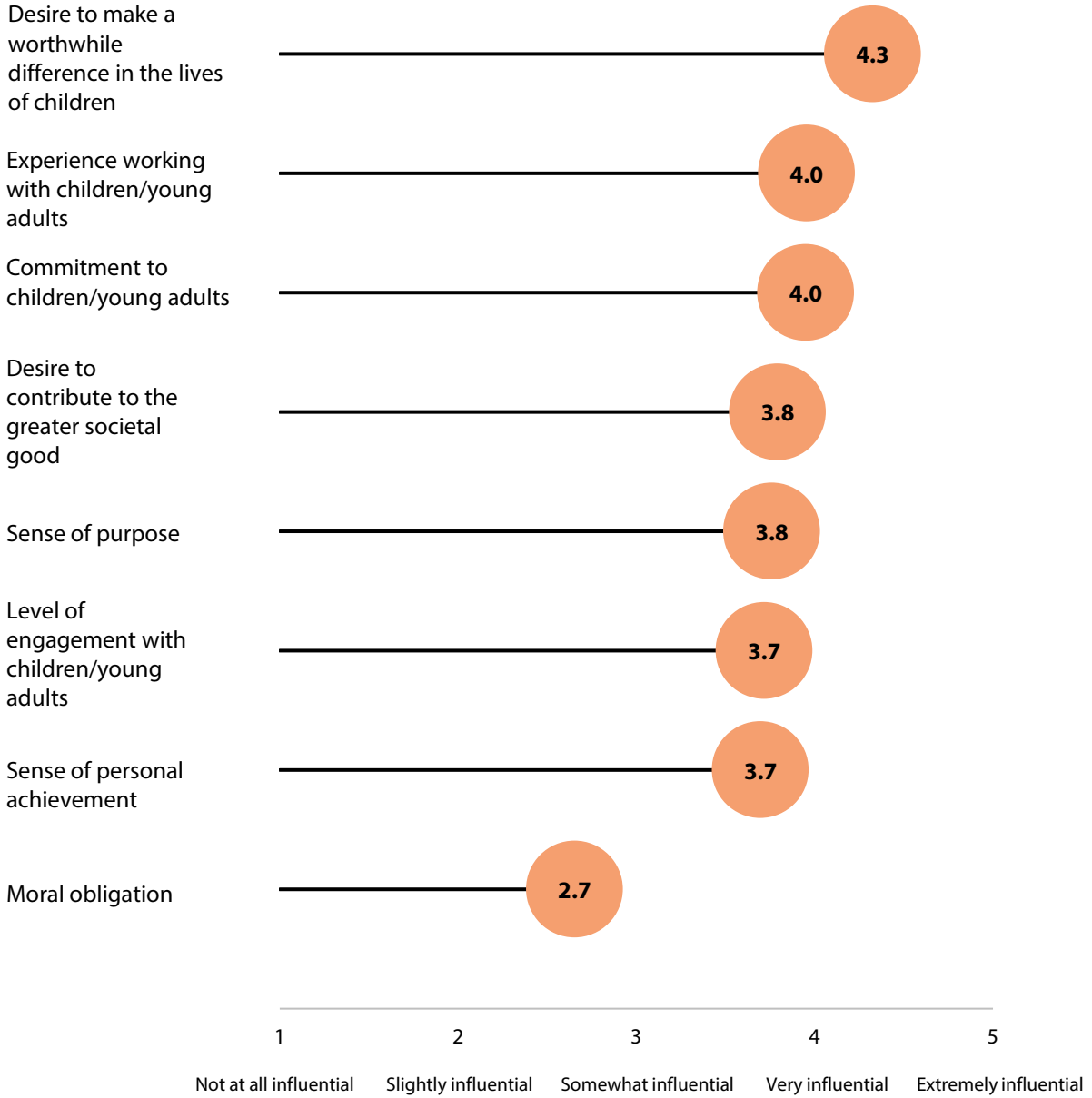


Figure 7. Professional Factors that Influence Special Education Teachers to Remain in the Profession

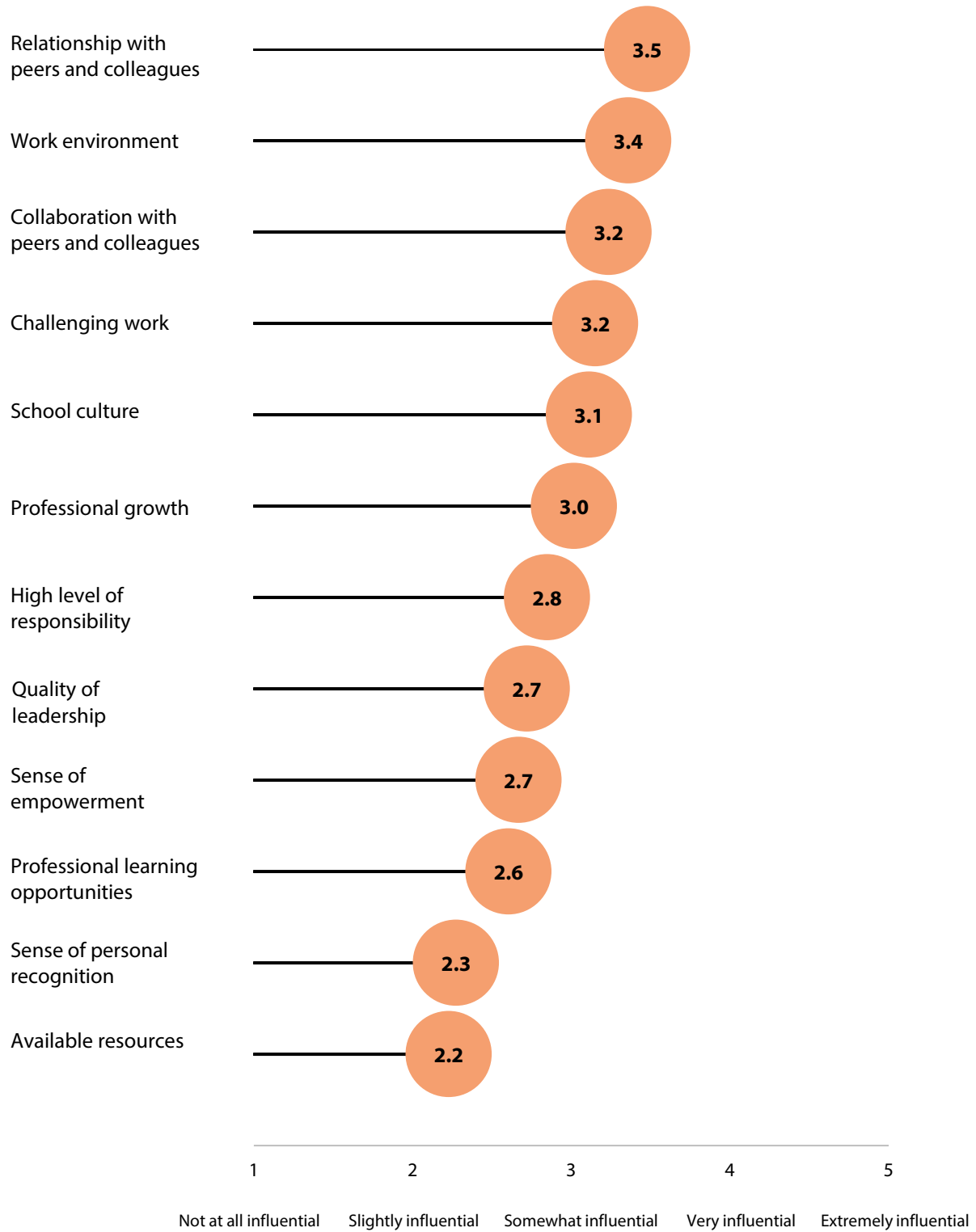
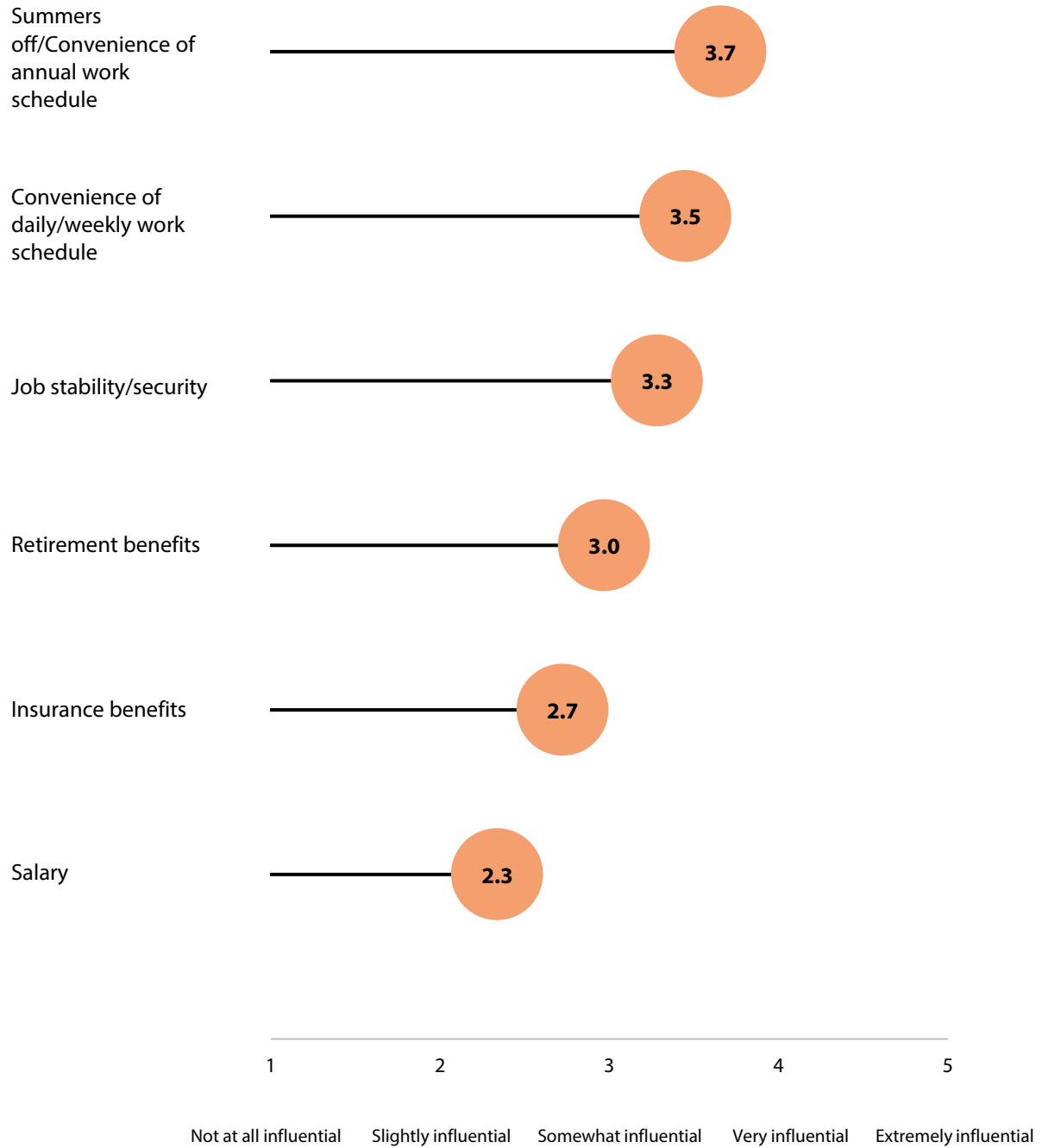


Figure 8. Extrinsic Factors that Influence Special Education Teachers to Remain in the Profession



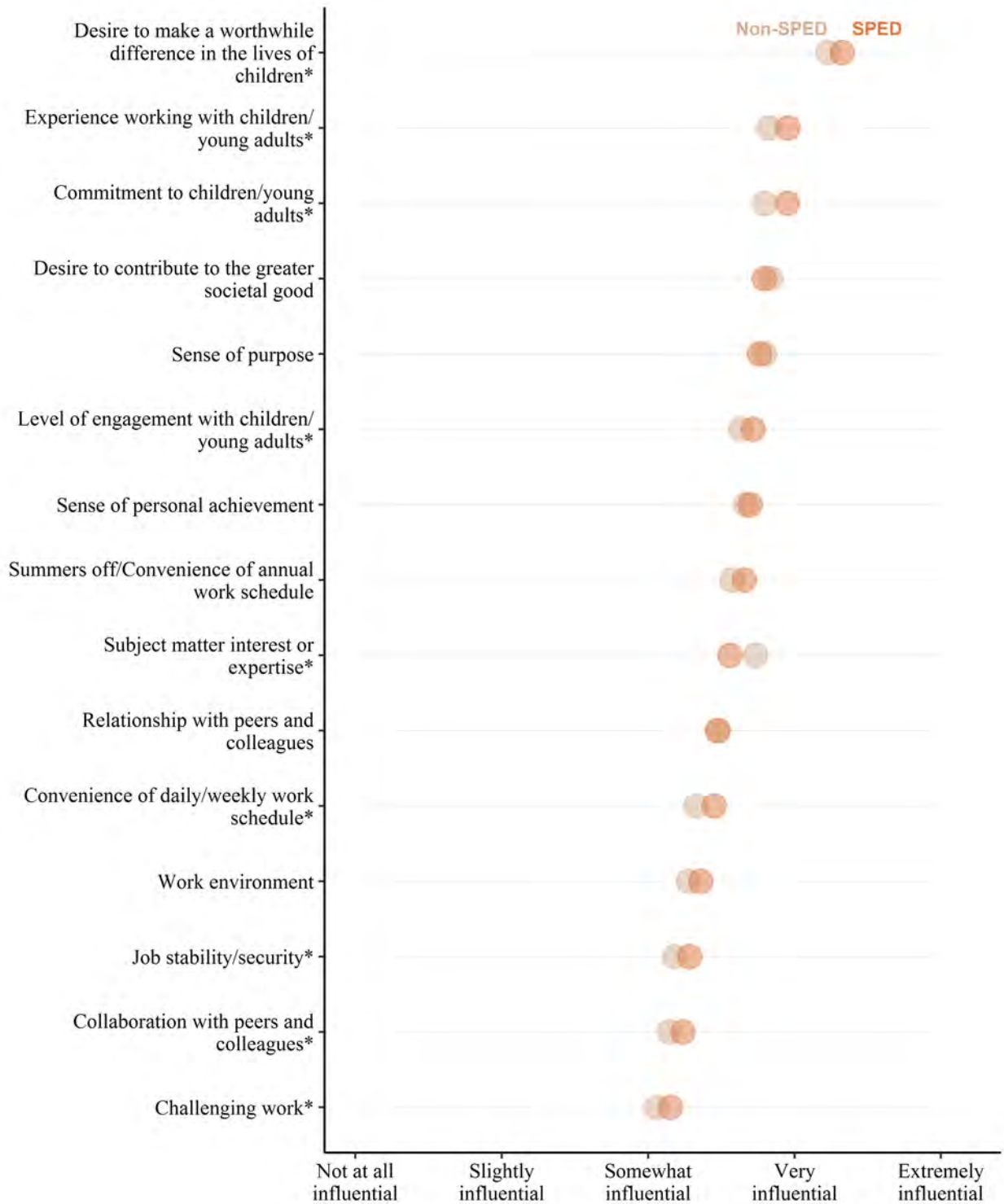
As with our analyses of the reasons that special education teachers enter teaching, we compared special education teachers' responses to non-special education teachers' responses to contextualize our findings on their decision to remain. In *Figure 9. Comparison of Reasons that Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession*, we compared the average level of influence reported by each group of respondents across all 30 factors. The intention of this figure is to provide an overall sense of how similar these two groups are; as such, specific values are not displayed in this figure. To determine whether differences between responses given by special education and non-special education teachers were statistically significant, we conducted a series of two-sample t-tests.

Similar to Figure 4, factors with an asterisk (*) indicate significant differences across the two groups of teachers. For example, the topmost item (“Desire to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of children”) is a case where special education teachers gave significantly different responses than non-special education teachers about the factors that influence their decision to remain. In this instance, special education teachers rated the desire to make a difference as more influential in their decision to remain than non-special education teachers did. Special education teachers also rated the following factors as more influential than non-special education teachers:

- Experience working with children/young adults
- Commitment to children/young adults
- Level of engagement with children/young adults
- Summers off/Convenience of annual work schedule
- Convenience of daily/weekly work schedule
- Job stability/security
- Collaboration with peers and colleagues
- Challenging work
- Quality of leadership
- Salary

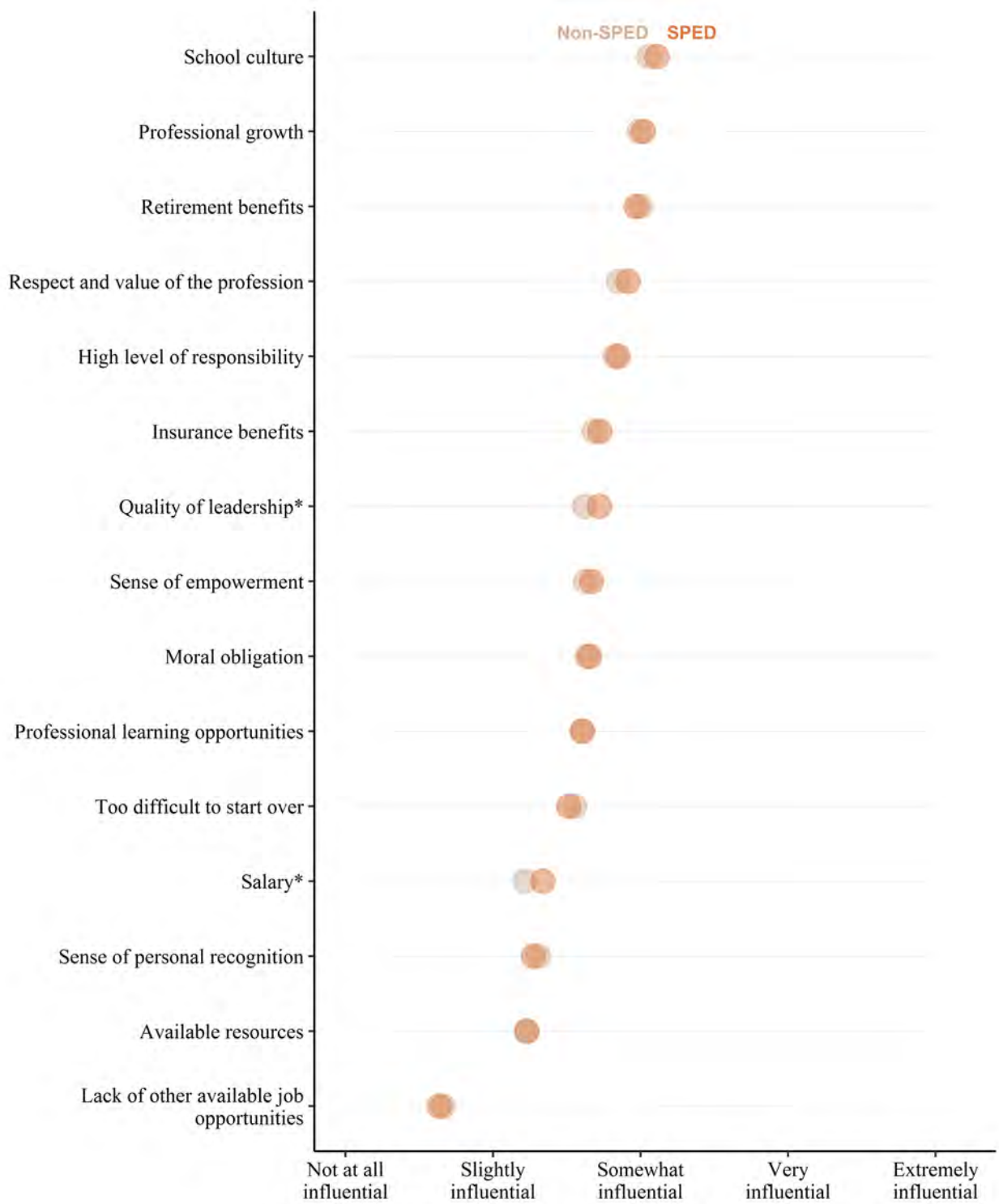
In contrast, there was only one factor—subject matter interest or expertise—that was rated as more influential to remain by non-special education teachers than special education teachers.

Figure 9. Comparison of Reasons that Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession



Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups (p<.05).

Figure 9 Comparison of Reasons that Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers Remain in the Profession *continued*



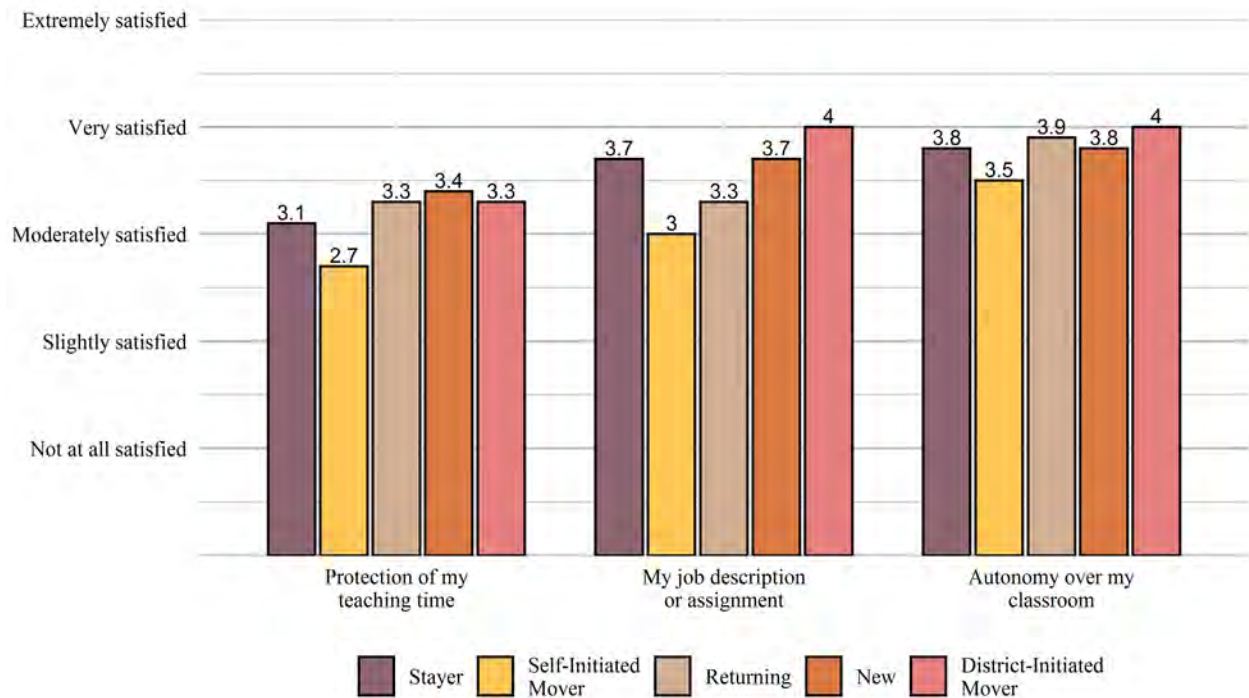
Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups (p < .05).

Special Education Teacher Satisfaction

ECAPS respondents rated their level of satisfaction with different aspects of their work, including their classrooms, professional support, student performance, economic factors, their schools, and administration. Stayers and movers were asked to reflect on the 2018-19 school year, and new and returning teachers described their perceptions of the initial months of the 2019-20 school year. In this set of analyses, we disaggregate movers into two groups—self-initiated movers and district-initiated movers—because these pathways to transfer likely represent different experiences. Participants rated their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents “not at all satisfied” and 5 represents “extremely satisfied.”

Figure 10. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Classroom Factors by Teaching Category displays the mean level of satisfaction by teaching category among special education respondents for each of the three survey items measuring classroom satisfaction. Overall, special education teachers’ responses tended to range from “moderately satisfied” to “very satisfied” within this domain. Although satisfaction with autonomy was relatively similar across groups (3.5 to 4.0), there was more variation in satisfaction with protection of teaching time and assignment. In these two instances, self-initiated movers were the least satisfied, with responses ranging from 2.7 to 3.0. In contrast, new teachers and district-initiated movers tended to be a bit more satisfied.

Figure 10. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Classroom Factors by Teaching Category



Figures 11-15 mirror Figure 10 and summarize special education teachers' satisfaction with professional support, student performance, economic factors, their schools, and administration. Respectively. Beginning first with *Figure 11. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Professional Factors by Teaching Category*, we find variation both within and across survey items. Stayers, for example provided average responses in this domain ranging from 3.2 to 3.9. For stayers, satisfaction with opportunities for professional advancement and duties and responsibilities outside of the classroom were area of relative weakness (3.2-3.3), while collaboration with colleagues and working relationships were more satisfying (3.8-3.9). As with classroom factors, self-initiated movers were the least satisfied across all items. New and returning special education teachers tended to be the most satisfied.

Figure 12. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Student Performance Factors by Teaching Category provides a summary of special education respondents' satisfaction with issues related to student performance. Across all groups, satisfaction with compensation linked to student performance was an area of relative dissatisfaction. Satisfaction with other aspects of student performance were relatively consistent. Among stayers, average responses ranged from 2.9 to 3.1. New teachers were more satisfied than other teaching categories in all cases.

Special education respondents' average satisfaction with economic factors is summarized in *Figure 13. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Economic Factors by Teaching Category*. Here we see a fair amount of variation across items. Among stayers, for example, average responses range from 2.7 to 3.8, where stayers tend to be less satisfied with salary and more satisfied with job security.

Figure 14. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with School Factors by Teaching Category summarizes special education teachers' satisfaction with various aspects of their schools. We found quite a bit of variation across these items. For example, stayers' average responses ranged from 2.6 (reform measures) to 4.1 (colleagues). New special education teachers frequently indicated the highest levels of satisfaction with school factors, along returning teachers and stayers in some cases.

Lastly, *Figure 15. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Administrative Factors by Teaching Category* summarizes special education teachers' satisfaction with administration. While responses across items are relatively consistent (3.4-3.8 for stayers), there was again variation between teaching categories. New and returning teachers tended to report the highest levels of satisfaction with administration, while self-initiated and district-initiated movers were the least satisfied.

In all comparisons of special education teachers by teaching category, we caution the reader against overinterpreting findings. As a reminder, there are relatively few movers, new teachers, and returning teachers and statewide conclusions should not be drawn based upon these responses. Discussed in further detail in the next section of this report, we also note that many district-initiated movers transferred due to restructuring and reassignment related to new positions and programs. As such, their higher levels of satisfaction are not necessarily surprising. District-initiated movers appear to be individuals in good standing with their districts who have been moved for strategic staffing reasons.

Figure 11. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Professional Factors by Teaching Category

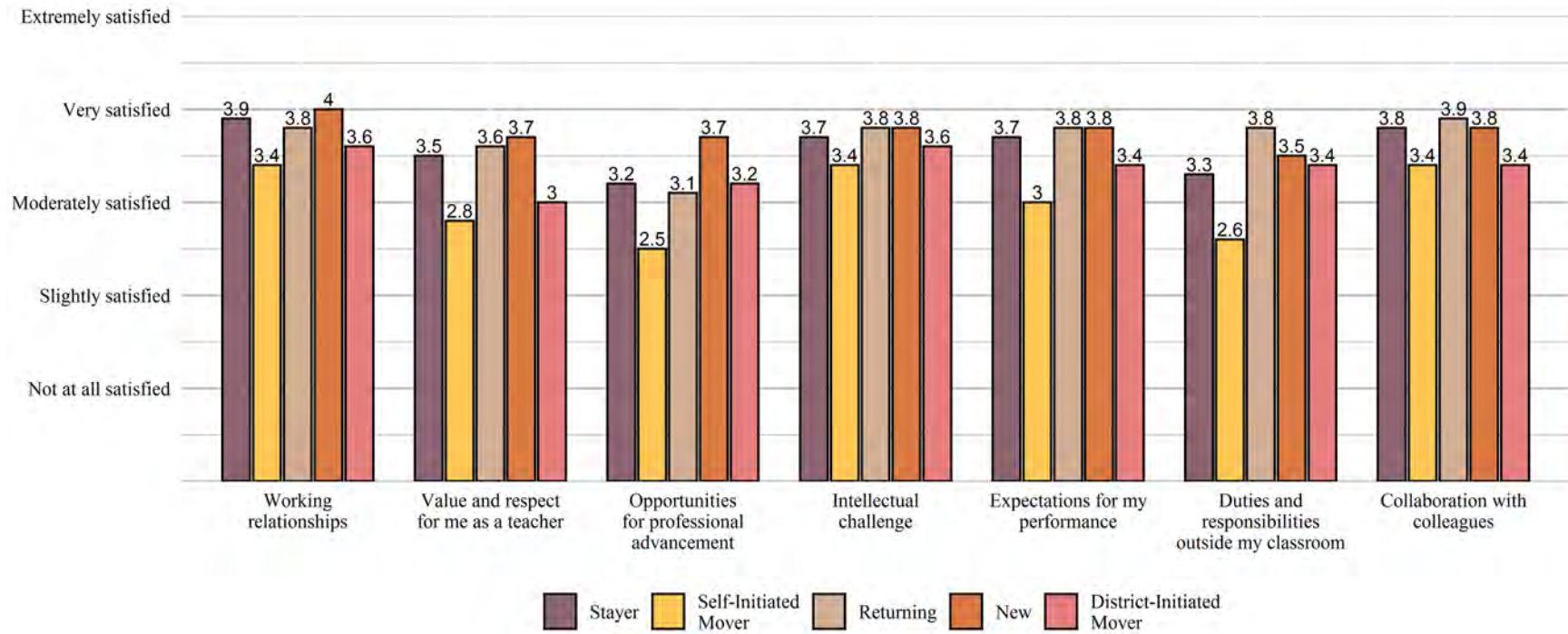


Figure 12. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Student Performance Factors by Teaching Category

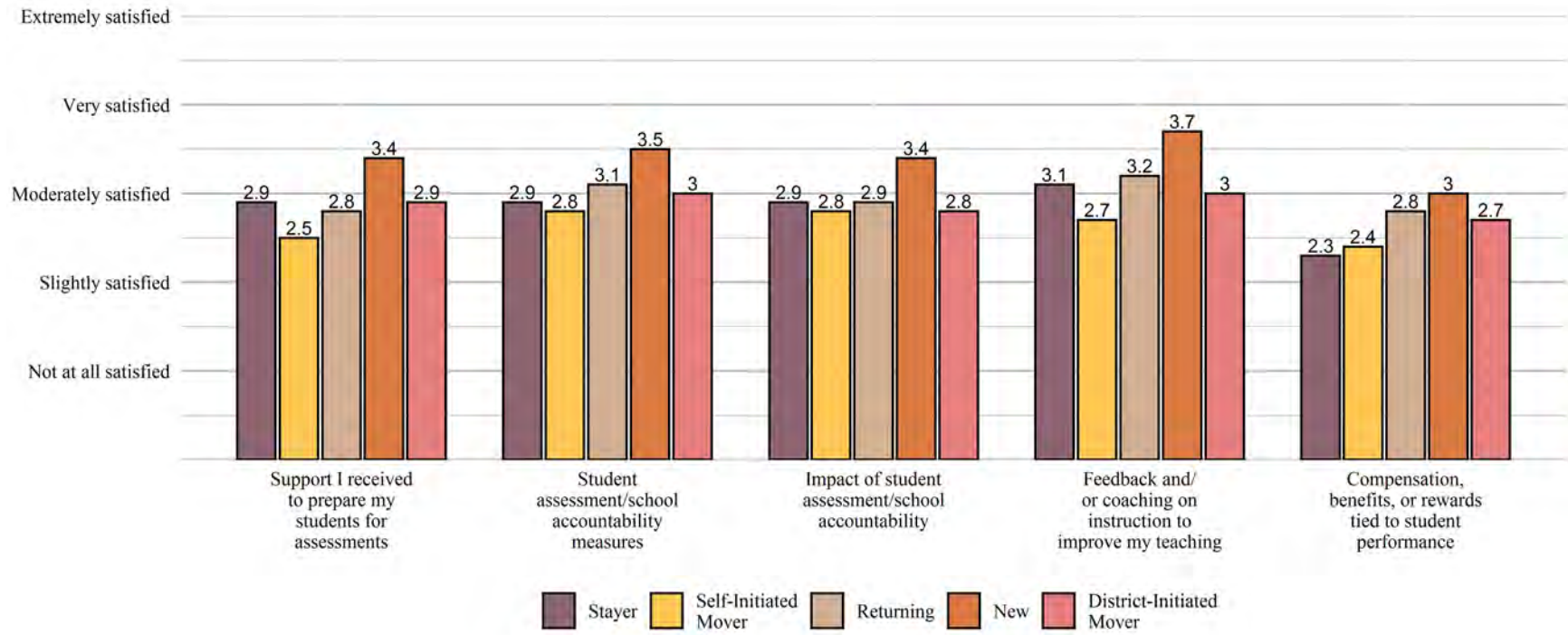


Figure 13. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Economic Factors by Teaching Category

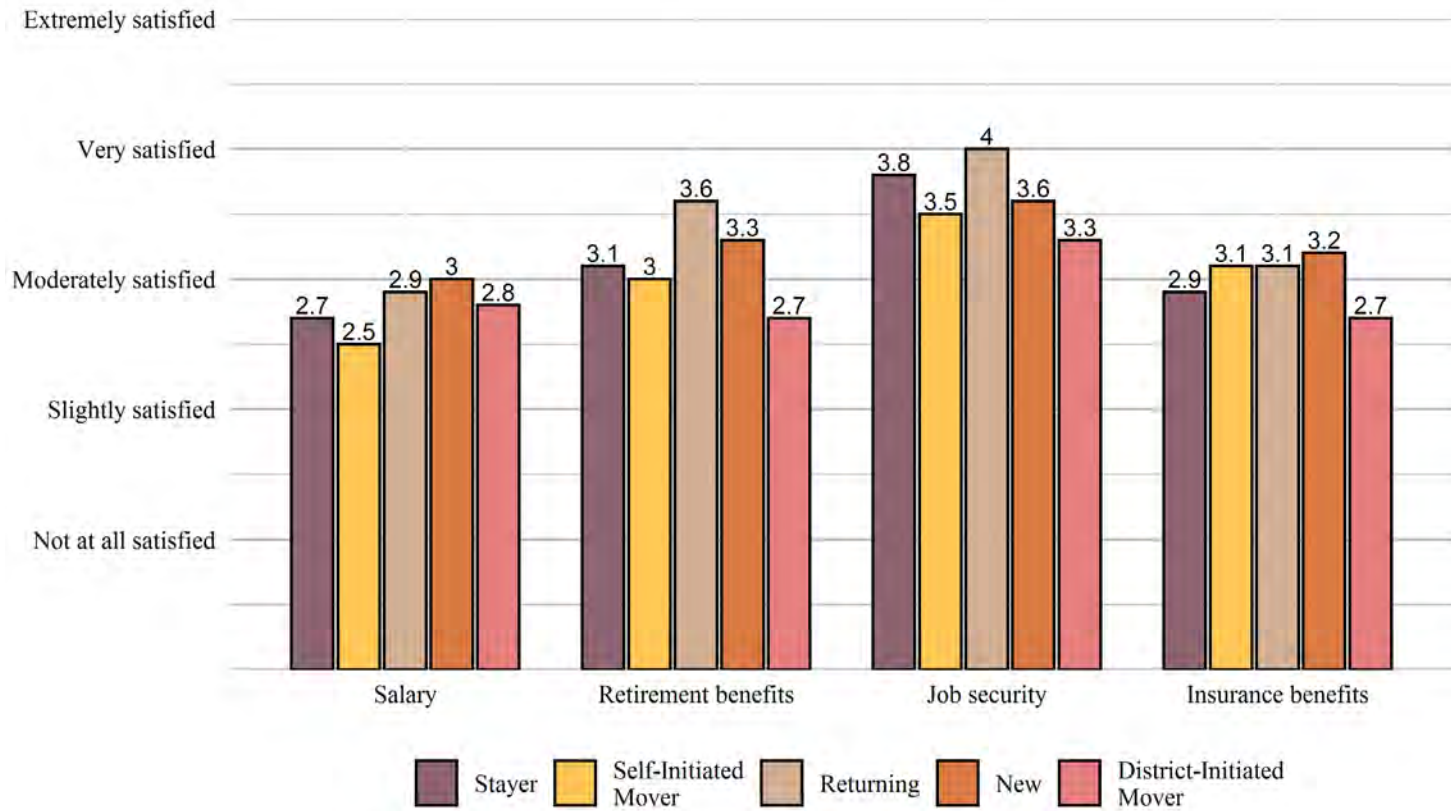


Figure 14. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with School Factors by Teaching Category

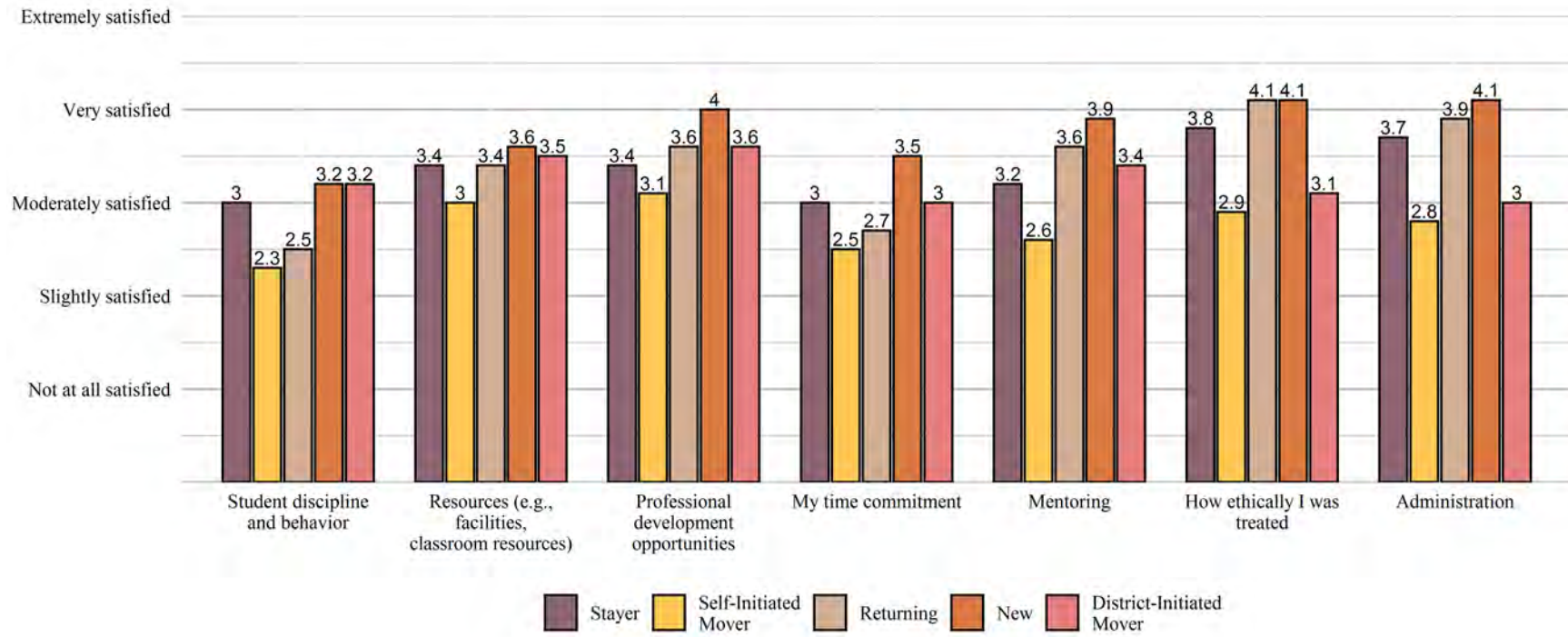


Figure 14 Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with School Factors by Teaching Category *continued*

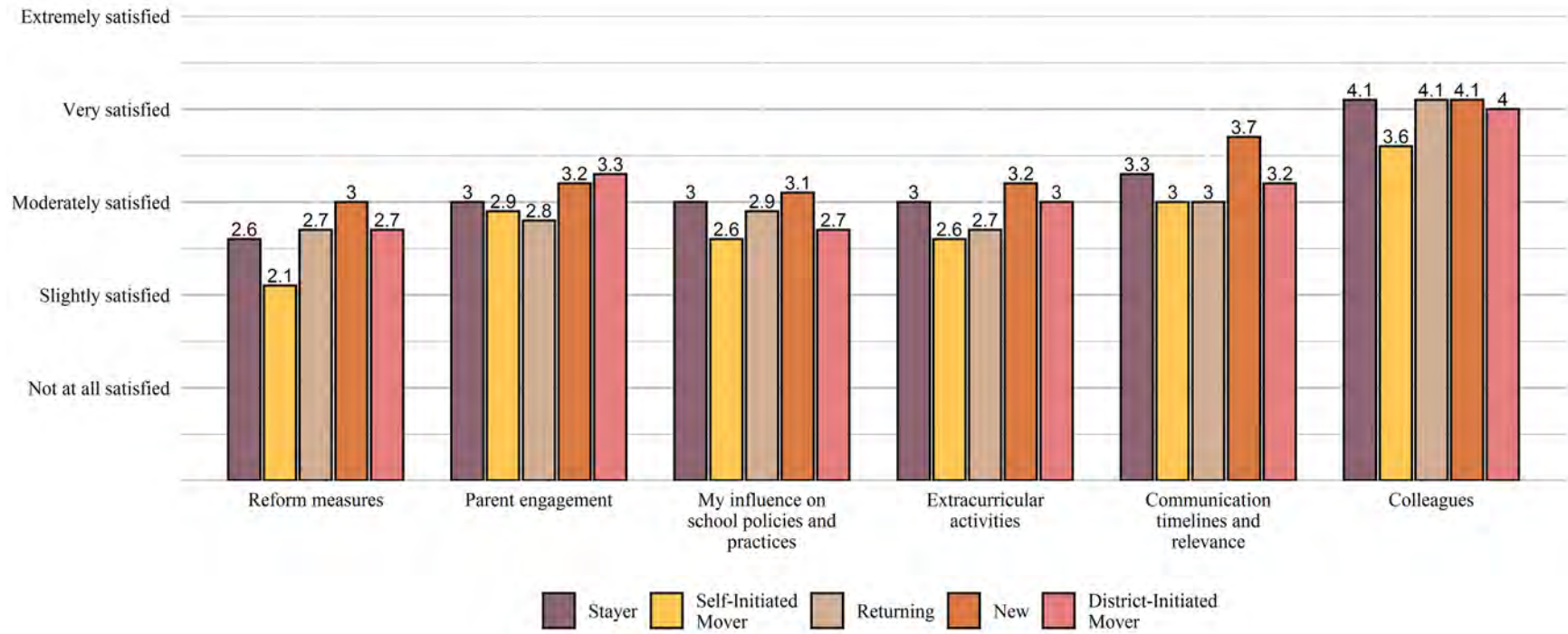


Figure 15. Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Administrative Factors by Teaching Category

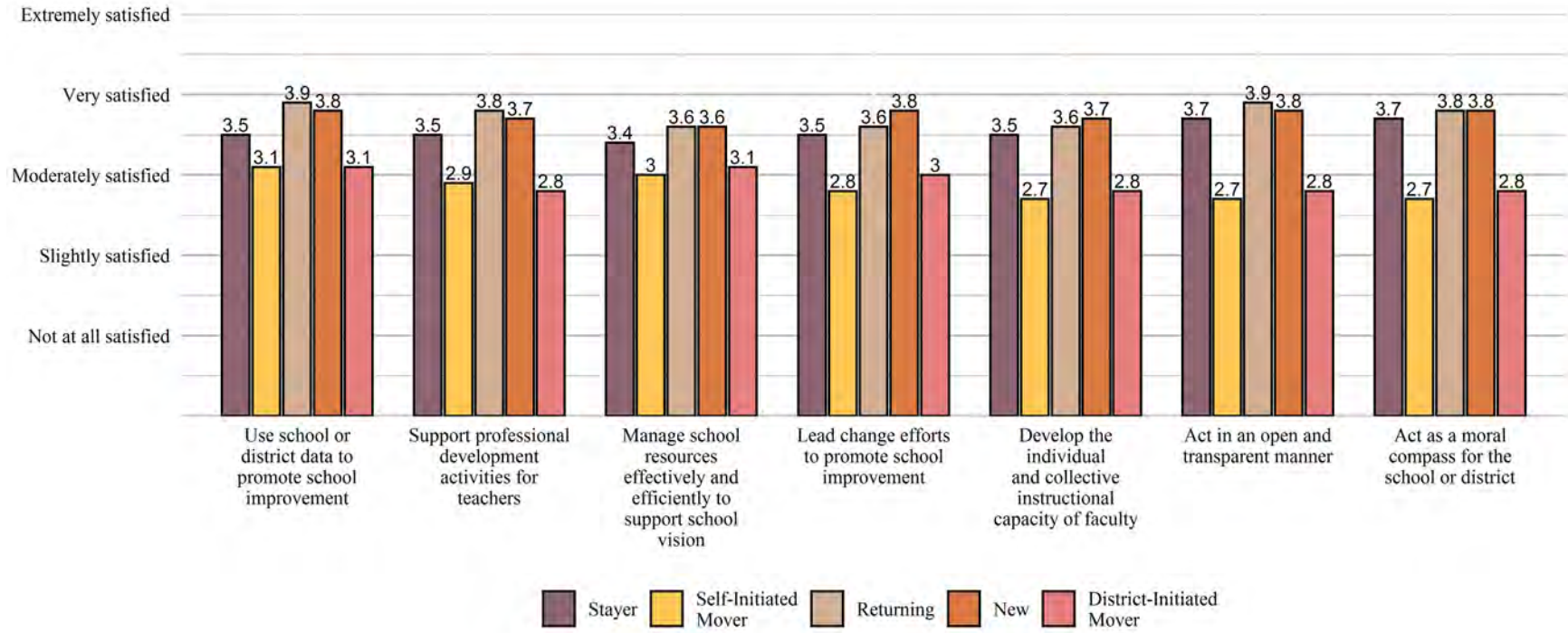
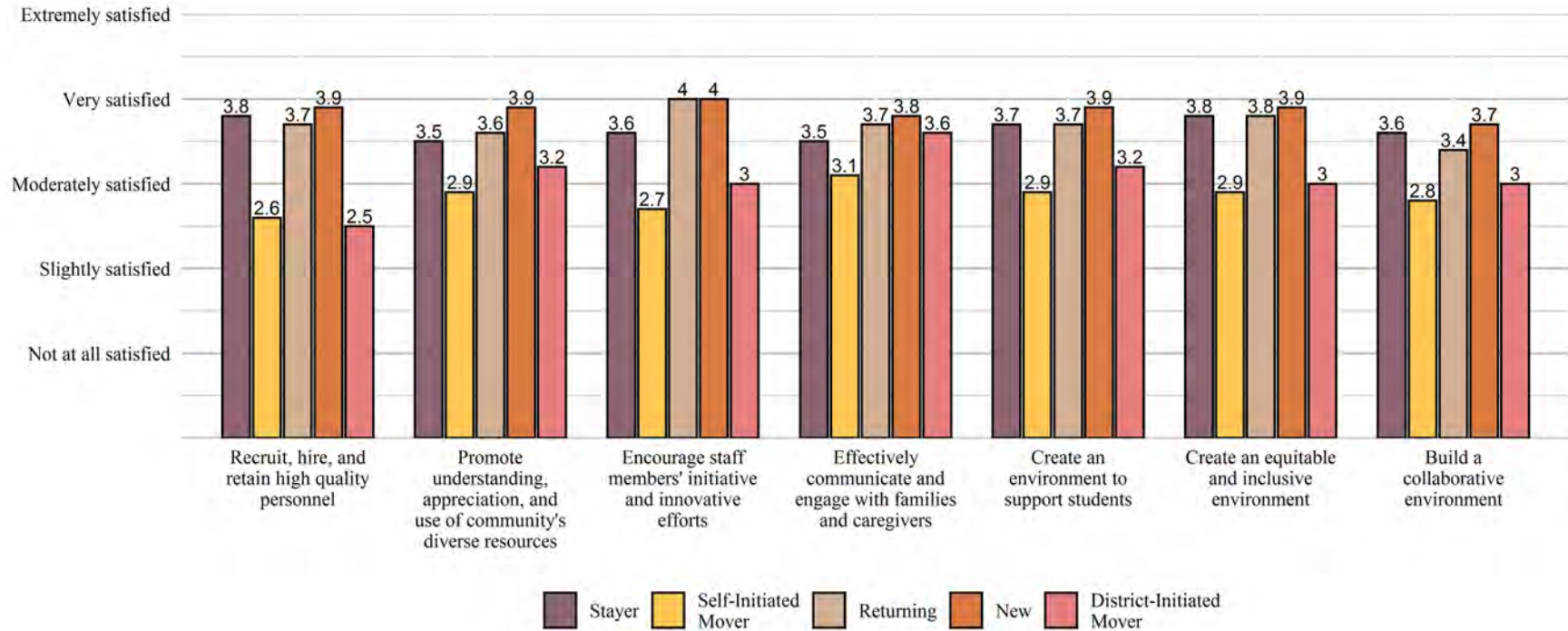


Figure 15 Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Administrative Factors by Teaching Category *continued*



To contextualize our findings related to satisfaction among special education teachers, we also compared these results with those of non-special education teachers. We approached this comparison differently than the strategy we used to compare reasons to enter and remain in teaching. Instead, we identified the top five factors that special education teachers most commonly rated as “very satisfied” (4) or “extremely satisfied” (5), along with the top five factors that special education teachers most commonly as “dissatisfied” (1) or “slightly satisfied” (2).

In *Table 2. Factors Most Commonly Reported as “Highly Satisfied” by Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers*, we have provided a summary of the factors most commonly rated as “very satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” by special education teachers and non-special education teachers. In the context of this report, we refer to these categories collectively as “highly satisfied.” We found that special education and non-special education respondents share several areas of satisfaction. First, both groups were most satisfied with their colleagues; in each case, 76% of respondents rated their satisfaction as either “very satisfied” or “extremely satisfied.” We also found that autonomy over one’s classroom, ethical treatment, and working relationships were areas of high satisfaction for both groups.

The factors with which special education and non-special education teachers are highly satisfied differed in one way. Specifically, collaboration with colleagues was ranked number five among special education teachers but was not rated among the top five for non-special education teachers. Instead, satisfaction with one’s job description or assignment was ranked number two among non-special education teachers but was not rated among the top five for special education teachers.

Overall, differences between these two groups are minimal. Both special education and non-special education respondents were highly satisfied with their colleagues, autonomy, and ethical treatment.

Table 2. Factors Most Commonly Reported as “Highly Satisfied” by Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers

Rank	Special Education Teachers		Non-Special Education Teachers	
		%		%
#1	Colleagues	76%	Colleagues	76%
#2	Working relationships	73%	My job description or assignment	71%
#3	How ethically I was treated	68%	Working relationships	71%
#4	Autonomy over my classroom	67%	How ethically I was treated	67%
#5	Collaboration with colleagues	66%	Autonomy over my classroom	66%

Note: In the context of this report, “highly satisfied” includes those who selected either “very satisfied” (4) or “extremely satisfied” (5) on a scale of 1-5.

Table 3. Factors Most Commonly Reported as “Dissatisfied” by Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers has a similar interpretation to Table 2. We identified the five factors most commonly rated as “not at all satisfied” or “slightly satisfied” for both special education and non-special education teachers. Collectively, we refer to these two categories as “dissatisfied” in the context of this report. Again, we found that special education and non-special education respondents shared several areas of dissatisfaction. For both groups, compensation related to student performance, reform measures, and salary were factors that respondents were commonly dissatisfied with. Over half of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with compensation related to student performance, and nearly half were dissatisfied with reform measures. Around 40% of respondents from both groups were dissatisfied with salary.

Special education and non-special education respondents differed in two of five factors. Special education teachers were most often dissatisfied with their time commitment (35%) and the support they received to prepare students for assessments (34%), while non-special education teachers were most often dissatisfied with student discipline and behavior (37%) and their influence on school policies and practices (36%).

Table 3. Factors Most Commonly Reported as “Dissatisfied” by Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers

Rank	Special Education Teachers	%	Non-Special Education Teachers	%
#1	Compensation, benefits, or rewards tied to student performance	53%	Compensation, benefits, or rewards tied to student performance	57%
#2	Reform measures	44%	Reform measures	47%
#3	Salary	38%	Salary	41%
#4	My time commitment	35%	Student discipline and behavior	37%
#5	Support I received to prepare my students for assessments	34%	My influence on school policies and practices	36%

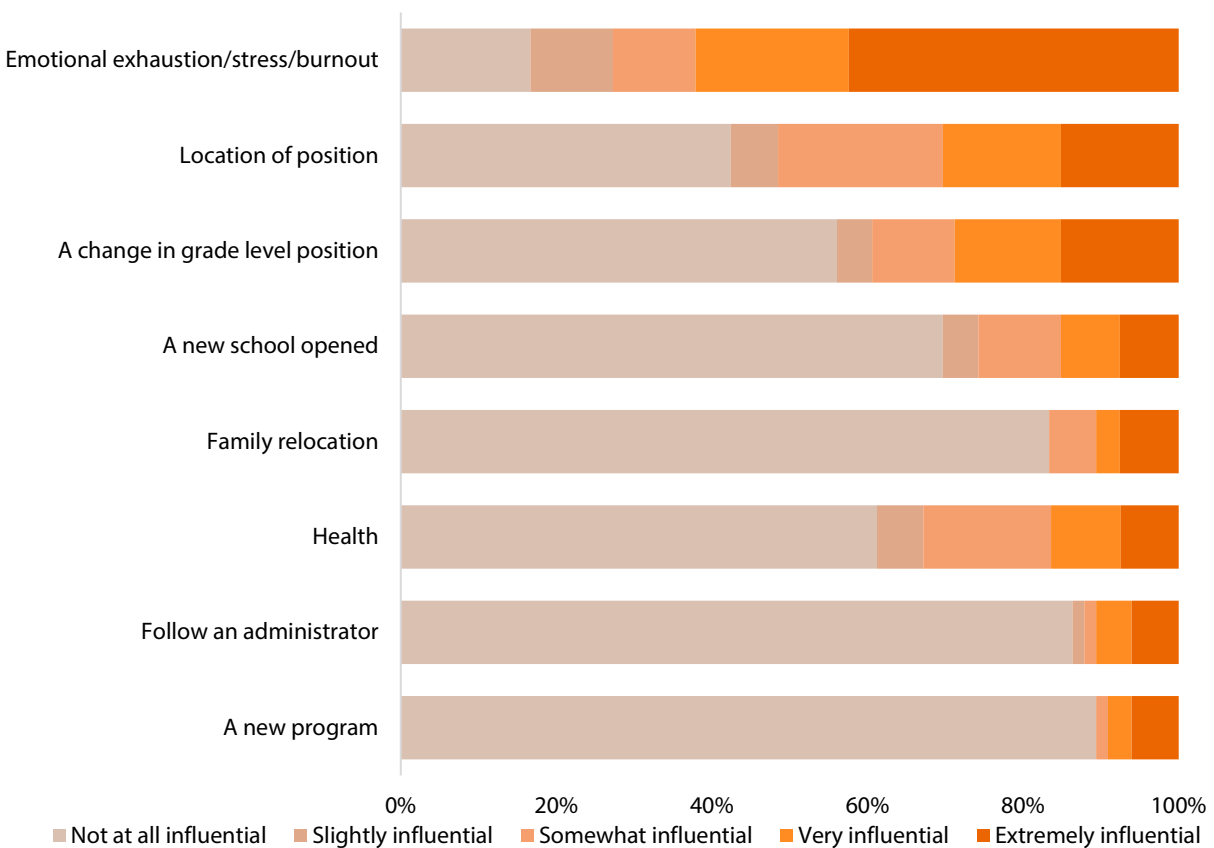
Note: In the context of this report, “dissatisfied” includes those who selected either “not at all satisfied” (1) or “slightly satisfied” (2) on a scale of 1-5.

Paralleling Figure 4 and Figure 9, Appendices A-F display all comparisons between special education and non-special education ECAPS respondents for survey items measuring satisfaction. These appendices provide a more nuanced opportunity to compare the two subsets of ECAPS respondents.

Why Do Special Education Teachers Transfer Schools?

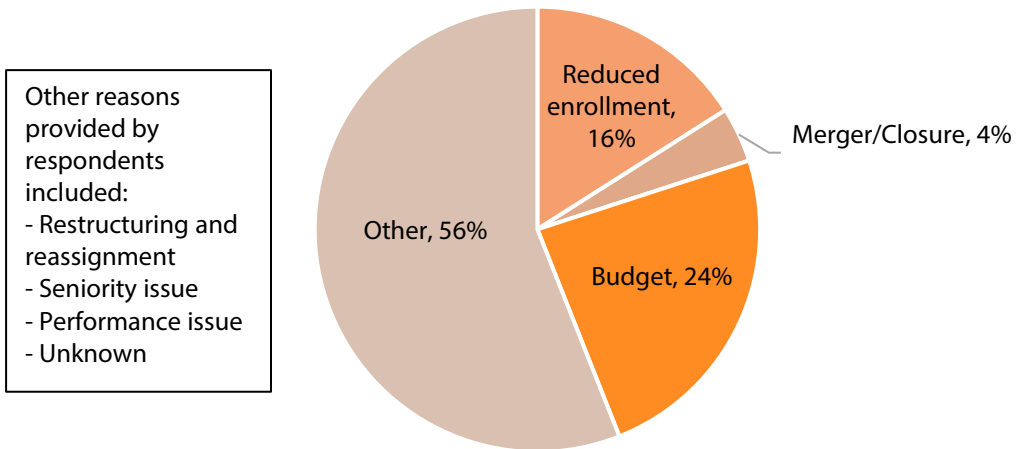
To better understand why teachers choose to transfer to different schools, we asked both self-initiated movers and district-initiated mover about their reasons for changing schools. *Figure 16. Personal Reasons for Self-Initiated Transfers among Special Education Teachers* summarizes the extent to which various personal factors influenced special education teachers to choose to transfer. Most commonly, respondents cited emotional exhaustion/stress/burnout, followed by location of position, and a change in grade level as their reasons for transferring. Respondents also had the opportunity to provide open-ended respondents describing why they changed schools. In many cases, special education teachers cited a lack of support or issues with school environment. Respondents also noted that they transferred for better pay or a change in position that was not specific to grade level.

Figure 16. Personal Reasons for Self-Initiated Transfers among Special Education Teachers



We also asked special education teachers who were transferred due to their districts reassigning them about the reasons for their transfers. As shown in *Figure 17. Reasons for District-Initiated Transfers among Special Education Teachers*, many teachers selected the “other” answer choice and identified restructuring and reassignment, seniority, and performance issues as the reasons they were moved to a different school. Nearly one quarter of teachers identified budgetary issues as the reason for their transfer. Around 16% cited reduced enrollment and 4% cited a school merger/closure as the reason they were transferred to a different school.

Figure 17. Reasons for District-Initiated Transfers among Special Education Teachers



Special Education Teachers' Career Intentions

We asked ECAPS respondents to describe how long they plan to remain in teaching. *Table 4. Career Intentions of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers* compares special education teachers' responses to those of non-special education teachers. We found relatively similar responses across the two groups. Nearly the same proportion of respondents indicated that they would remain as long as they were able to (34% vs. 32%) or until eligible for retirement benefits (22% vs. 25%). Less common responses fell with two percentage points of each other. Overall, these findings suggest that special education teachers did not differ from non-special education teachers in their reported career intentions.

Table 4. Career Intentions of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers

Plans	Special Education ECAPS Respondents	Non-Special Education ECAPS Respondents
As long as I am able	34%	32%
Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from this job	22%	25%
Undecided at this time	17%	19%
Until I get a promotion within education	6%	5%
Other	5%	6%
Until I am eligible for Social Security benefits	5%	4%
Until a specific life event occurs, s..	5%	6%
Until I get a job within another field	4%	3%
Until my loans or debt are paid off	1%	1%
Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from a previous job	0%	0%

We also asked respondents about their job seeking behaviors both within and outside of education (*Table 5. Job Seeking Within Education* and *Table 6. Job Seeking Outside of Education*). As with reported career intention, we found no differences in the responses given by special education and non-special education teachers. For both groups, about two thirds of respondents reported that they had not applied for another job within education and nearly three quarters indicated they had not applied for another job outside of education.

Table 5. Job Seeking Within Education

Applied for a Job within Education?	Special Education ECAPS Respondents	Non-Special Education ECAPS Respondents
No	66%	67%
Yes, but not in the past 12 months	18%	18%
Yes, in the past 12 months	16%	15%

Table 6. Job Seeking Outside of Education

Applied for a Job Outside of Education?	Special Education ECAPS Respondents	Non-Special Education ECAPS Respondents
No	71%	73%
Yes, but not in the past 12 months	22%	19%
Yes, in the past 12 months	7%	8%

Summary of Findings

Special education ECAPS respondents were overwhelmingly motivated to enter the teaching profession by their desire to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of children. Other motivations included convenience of the annual work schedule, experience working with children and young adults, and a desire to contribute to the greater societal good. Special education teachers' reasons for entering the profession largely mirror those of non-special education teachers, with a few exceptions. Special education teachers were significantly more influenced by a desire to make a difference, experience working with children and young adults, schedule, job security, mentorship, salary, and high school career programs than non-special education teachers. In contrast, non-special education teachers were more motivated by their subject matter interest/expertise and inspiring teachers.

Turning to reasons to remain in the teaching profession, we found similar results. Special education ECAPS respondents reported that their desire to make a difference, the convenience of the annual work schedule, experience working with children and young adults, and a desire to contribute to society were again their top reasons for persisting in the profession. Comparing special education teachers and non-special education teachers, we found that special education teachers indicated higher levels of influence across many factors relative to non-special education teachers. Subject matter interest/expertise was the only factor that non-special education teachers were more influenced by.

Comparing satisfaction levels among special education teachers by teaching category, we found that movers were often less satisfied, while new and returning teachers reported higher satisfaction levels. We also found variation across some domains of satisfaction. In the case of professional support, for example, special education teachers were generally much more satisfied with collaboration than opportunities for professional advancement and duties outside of the classroom. Within the economic satisfaction domain, special education teachers were less satisfied with salary and more satisfied with job security. Among school factors, respondents were highly satisfied with their colleagues and less so with reform measures.

Comparing satisfaction levels between special education teachers and non-special education teachers, we found relatively few differences. The top five areas of satisfaction for special education respondents were colleagues, working relationships, ethical treatment, autonomy, and collaboration. Non-special education teachers matched in four of these five areas. The only exception was high satisfaction with their assignment rather than collaboration.

Similarly, areas of dissatisfaction were similar across the two groups. Both special education and non-special education teachers were dissatisfied with compensation related to student performance, reform measures, and salary. The groups differed in two areas. Special education respondents were dissatisfied with their time commitment and support to prepare students for assessments, while non-special education teachers were dissatisfied with student discipline and behavior and their ability to influence school policies.

Looking specifically at the reasons that special education teachers transfer schools, we found that self-initiated movers most commonly cited emotion exhaustion, followed by location of position,

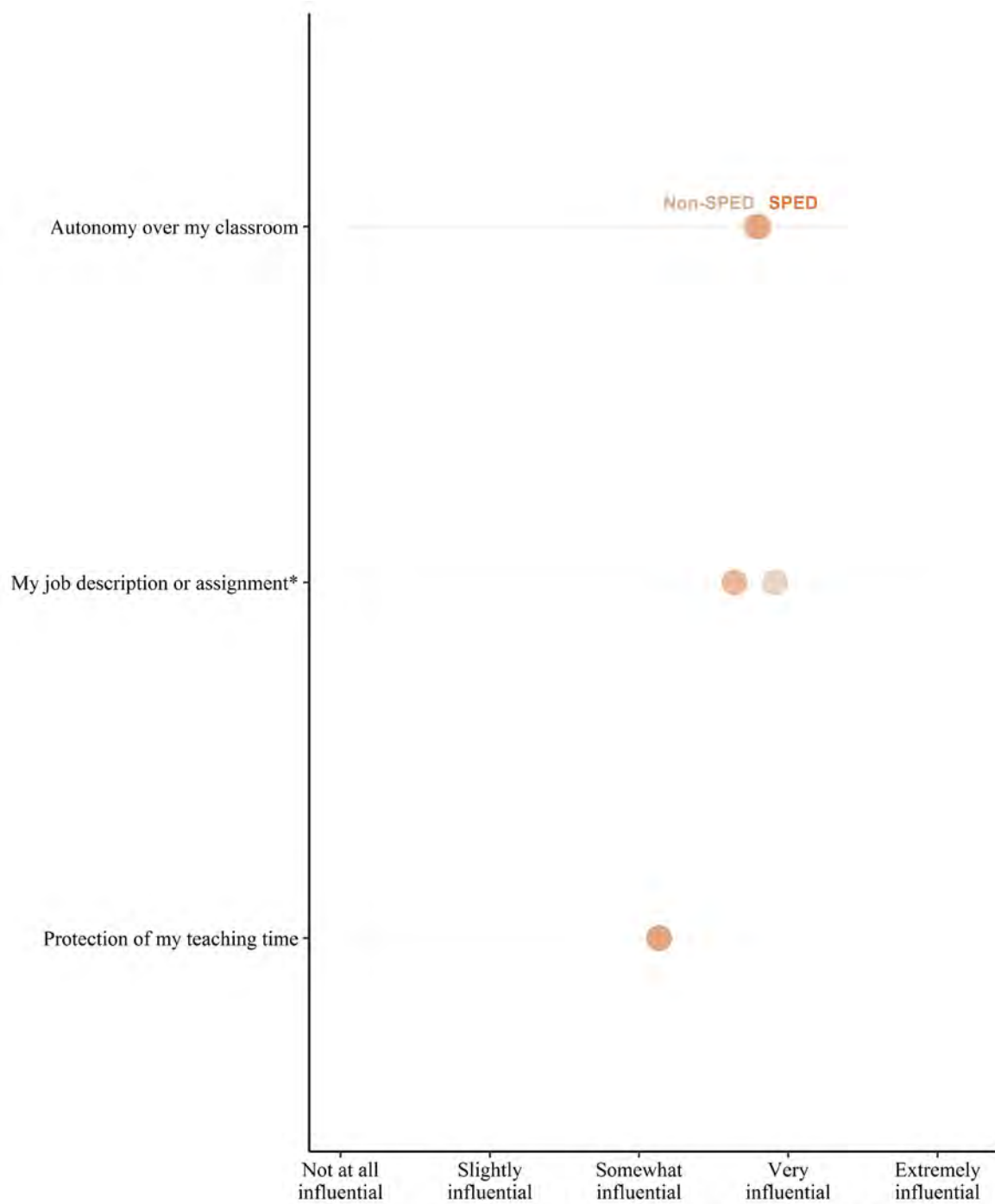
and a change in grade level. Open-ended responses indicate that special education teachers often transferred due to a lack of support or issues with school environment. Among district-initiated transfers, many respondents indicated that restructuring and reassignment, seniority, and performance were the reasons they were transferred. Others cited budgetary issues, reduced enrollment, and a school merger/closure.

Lastly, turning to special education teachers' career intentions, we did not find any meaningful differences between special education and non-special education respondents. About a third of respondents stated that they plan to remain in teaching as long as they are able, and about a quarter specified that they would remain until eligible for retirement benefits. Teachers from both groups generally did not indicate they were searching for other positions.

Collectively, these findings suggest that special education teachers are similar in many ways to their peers who do not teach special education. They share many of the same motivations to enter and remain in teaching and report similar levels of satisfaction. Notably, we did find that special education teachers' satisfaction varies by teaching category. Those that moved were less satisfied with many aspects of their work, while new and returning teachers tended to be more satisfied. These findings suggest that there is work to be done to address lower satisfaction levels that may ultimately lead to teachers transferring positions. Overall, however, special education teachers and non-special education teachers share similar career intentions.

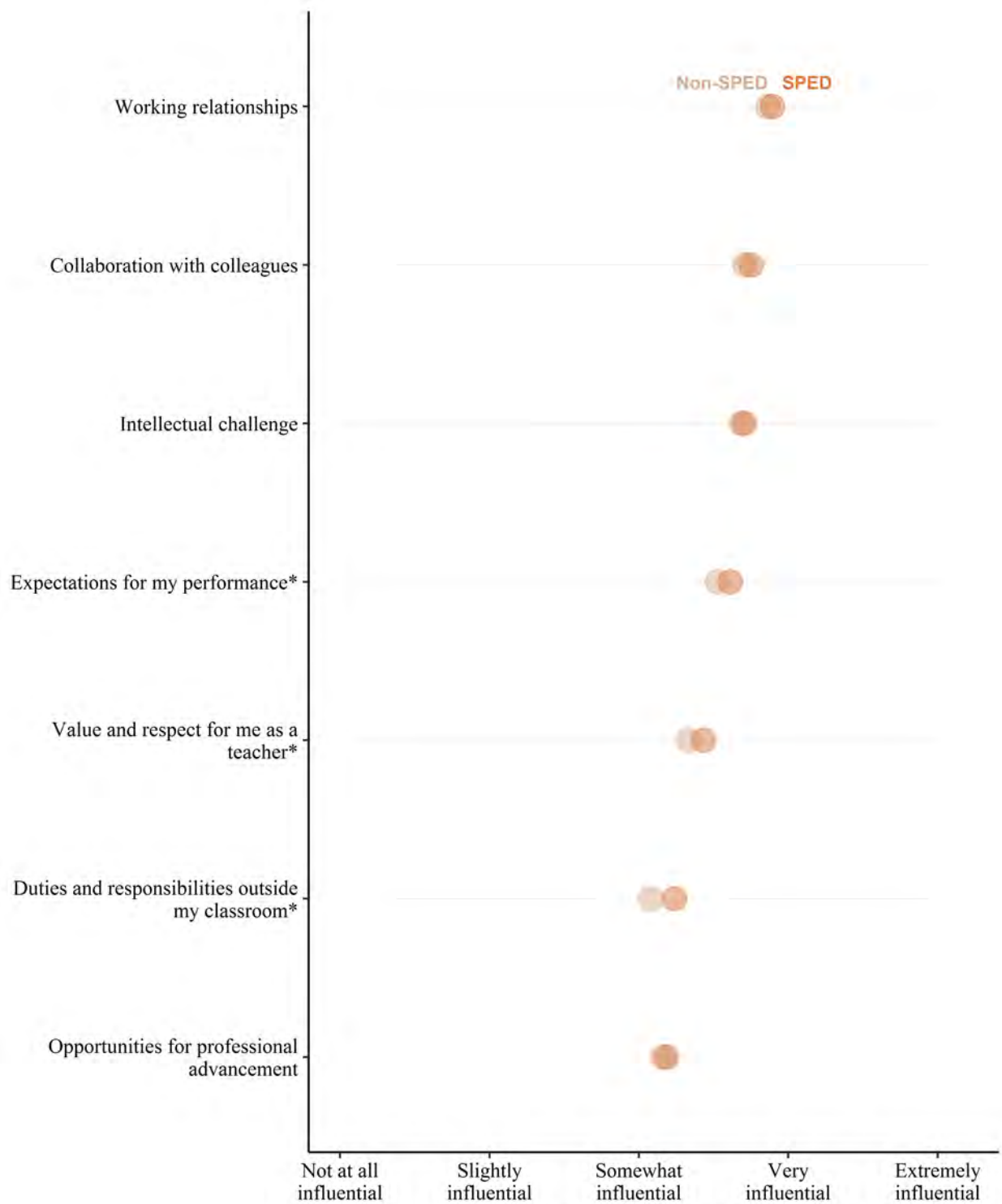
Future work that could provide insight into special education teachers' career paths might include: deeper exploration and qualitative analysis of special education teachers' open-ended survey responses, additional interview and/or survey data collection focused on special education teachers across Utah, and a longitudinal analysis of special education teacher' career paths using CACTUS data.

Appendix A. Comparison of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Classroom Factors

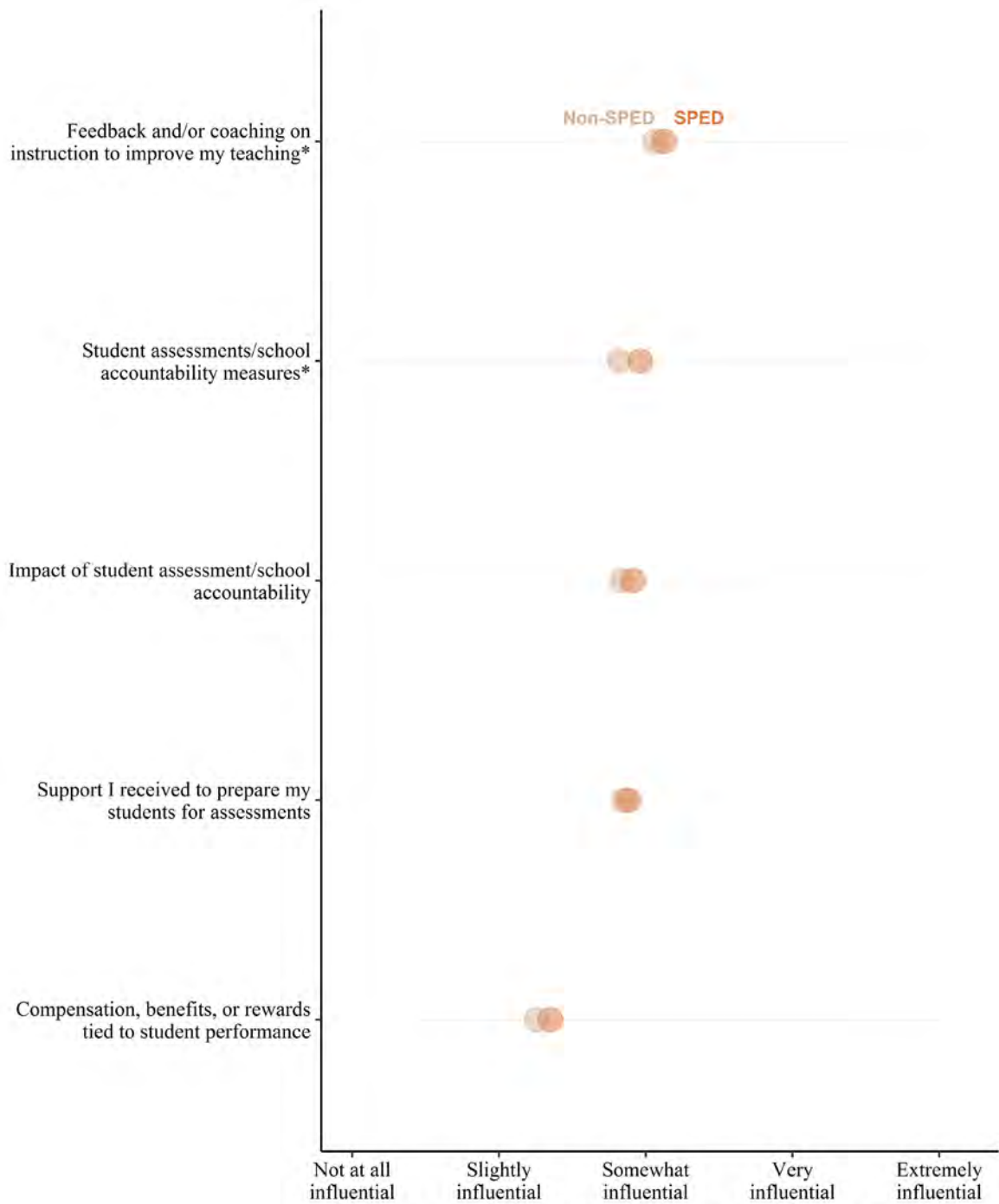


Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($p < .05$).

Appendix B. Comparison of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Professional Factors

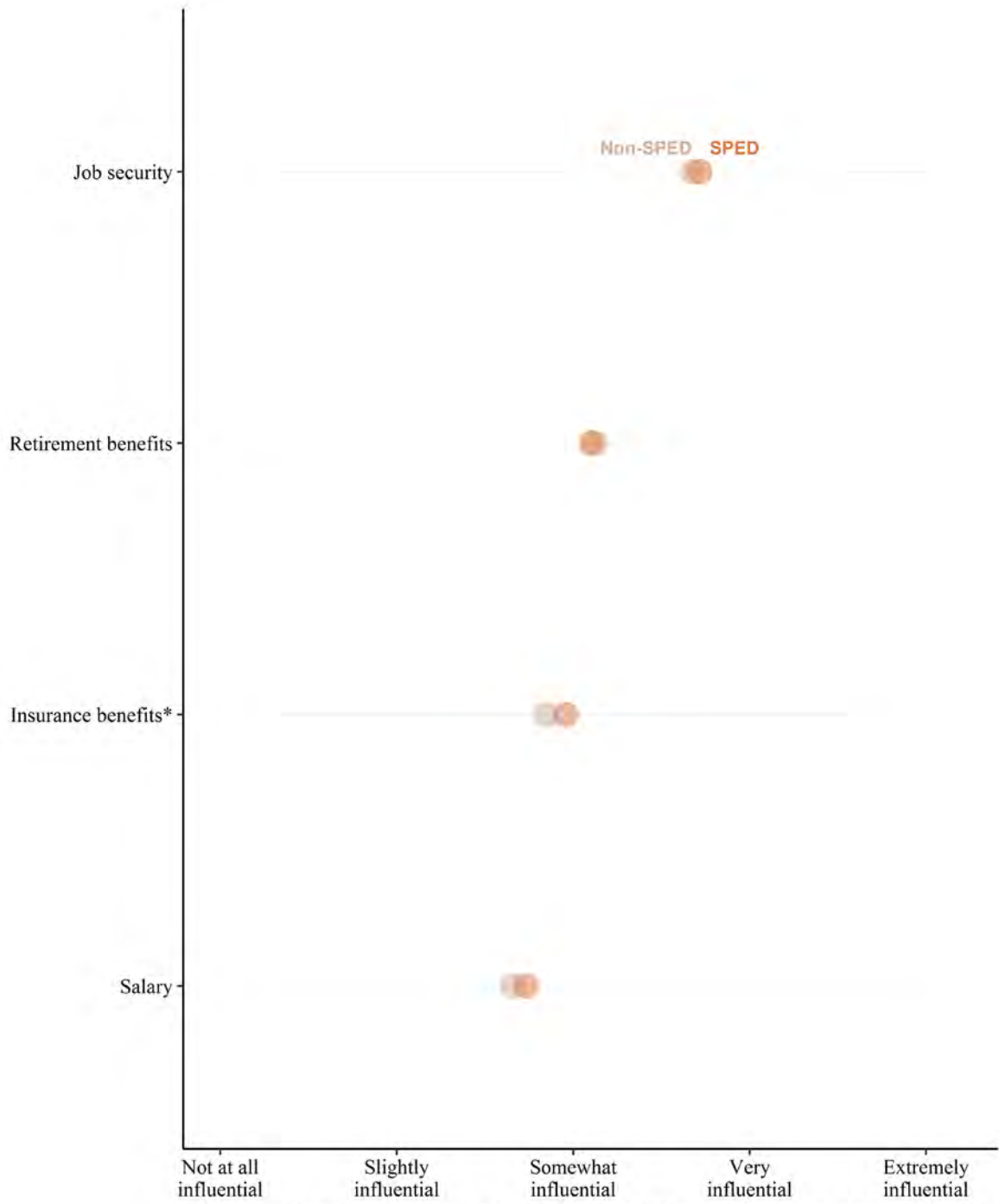


Appendix C. Comparison of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Student Performance Factors



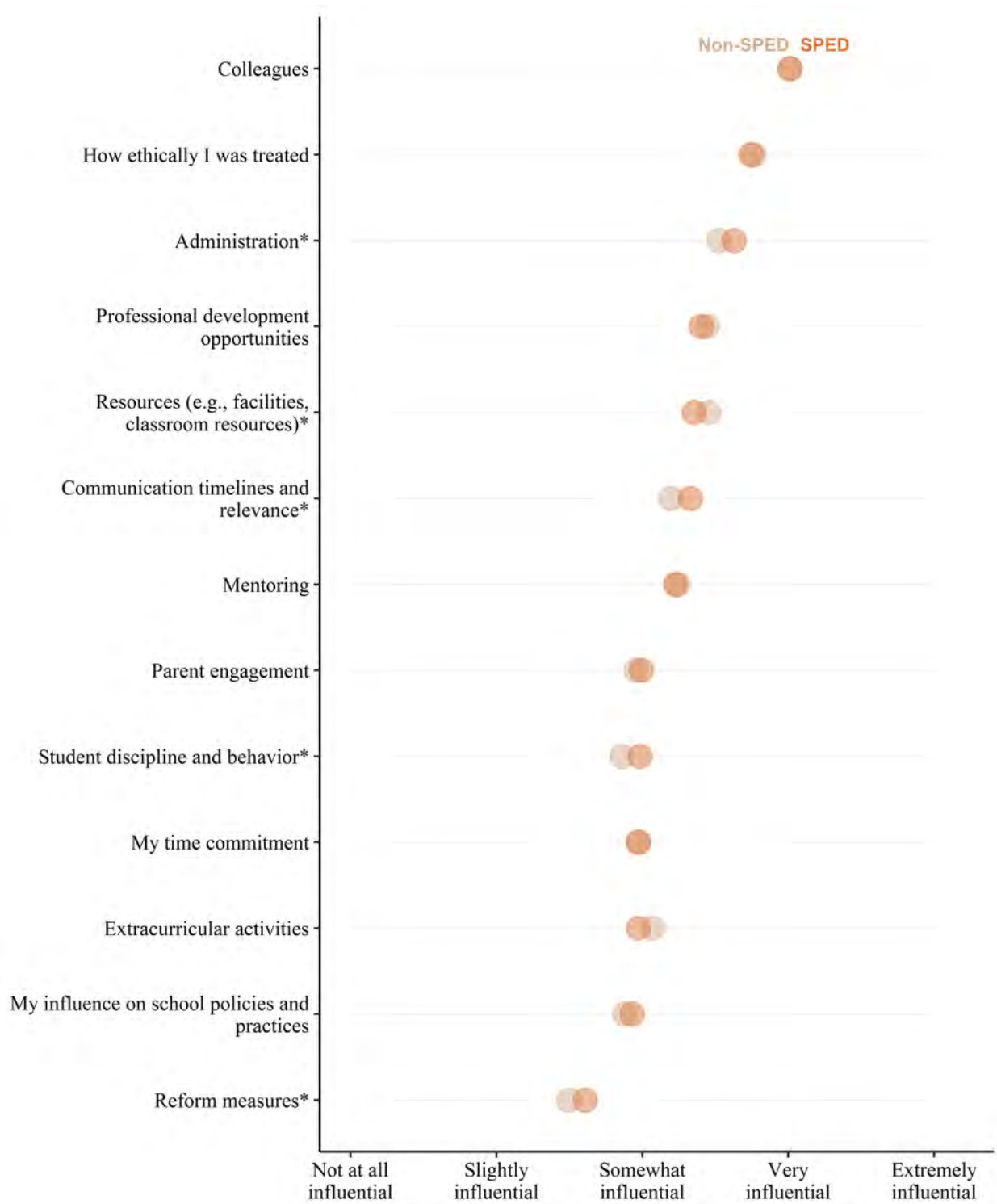
Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups (p < .05).

Appendix D. Comparison of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Economic Factors



Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($p < .05$).

Appendix E. Comparison of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with School Factors



Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($p < .05$).

Appendix F. Comparison of Special Education and Non-Special Education Teachers' Satisfaction with Administrative Factors



Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups (p < .05).