

★  
**LEARNING  
HEROES**

# Parents 2021 | Going Beyond the Headlines

*Responding to What Parents, Teachers & Principals Really Want*

Findings from Surveys of K-12 Parents, Teachers & Principals

DECEMBER 8, 2021

Research Conducted by Edge Research



# Methodology



## Parent Survey

- ☆ Nationwide sample of **1,481 parents and guardians** with children in public school, grades K-12, including:
  - 662 elementary school parents
  - 367 middle school parents
  - 452 high school parents
  - Oversamples among Black and Hispanic parents
- ☆ Fielded September 7th-27th, 2021
- ☆ Offered in both English and Spanish
- ☆ Data were weighted to be representative of public school parents in the U.S.

### With Additional Data from:

- Learning Heroes 2021 Survey - Out-of-School-Time Programs: Paving the Way for Children to Find Passion, Purpose & Voice
- Learning Heroes Parents 2020 - COVID-19 Closures: A Redefining Moment for Students, Parents & Schools
- Learning Heroes Parents 2019 - As the Stakes Get Higher, Why Do We Lose Parents?



## Educator Survey

- ☆ Nationwide sample of **305 teachers and 304 Principals** in public schools, grades K-12, including:
  - 192 elementary school educators
  - 223 middle school educators
  - 219 high school educators
- ☆ Fielded September 8th-28th, 2021
- ☆ Data were weighted to be representative of public school teachers and principals in the U.S.

Throughout this report, **blue/red** indicates statistically **higher/lower** differences between audiences

# Key Insights

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## Parents Want an Accurate Picture of their Child's Achievement – Even if it's Difficult

When communicating between schools and homes, parents and educators alike prioritize having a clear picture of how a student is achieving and trust between families and teachers. Parents also prioritize having educators be direct and truthful about their child's performance – even if things aren't going well.



## Despite Greater Involvement, Parents Still Have an Inflated View

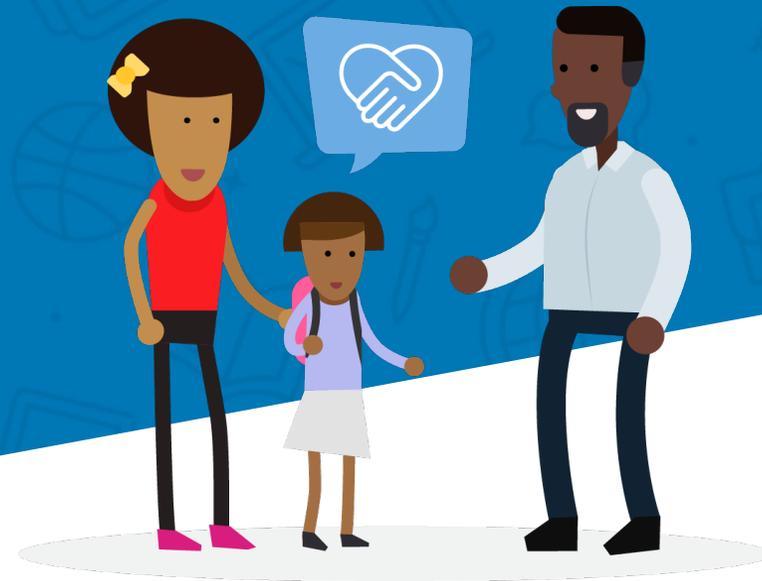
Significant gaps remain between what parents think and teachers know about student performance. Even after a year of remote and hybrid learning, more than 9 in 10 parents (92%) think their child is at/above grade level, while only 44% of teachers believe their students are prepared for grade level work.



## The Window of Opportunity is Now for Meaningful Family Engagement

With increased engagement between families and schools, strong agreement on priorities for this school year, and funding available for recovery efforts, there are unprecedented opportunities for meaningful, culturally-relevant family engagement focused on teaching and learning.

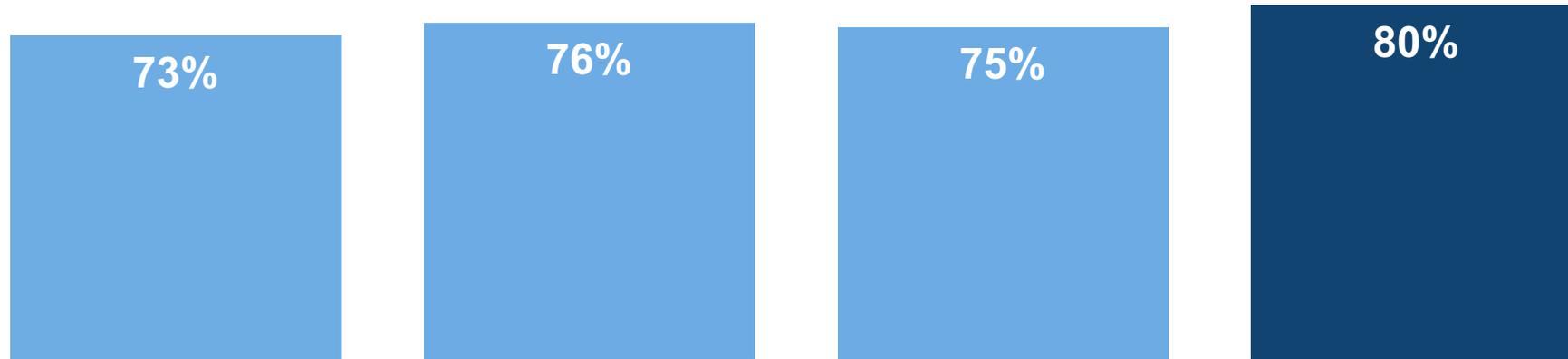
# Back in Class | Parent, Teacher & Principal Mindsets



# Parents' hopes & dreams for their children remain high

How important is it to you that your child goes to college?

Absolutely essential/Very important



2019

2020

Feb 2021

Sept 2021

2019

2020

Feb 2021

Sept 2021

Black

81%

82%

76%

78%

Hispanic

87%

87%

81%

87%

White

69%

72%

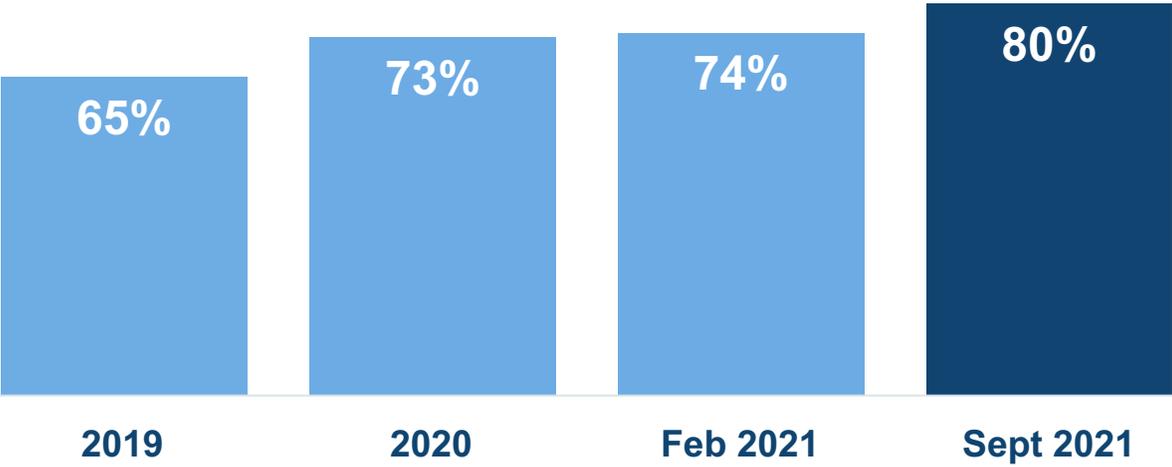
72%

78%

# As do their confidence levels

How confident are you that your child will be well prepared for entrance into and success in college upon graduation from high school?

Extremely/Very confident



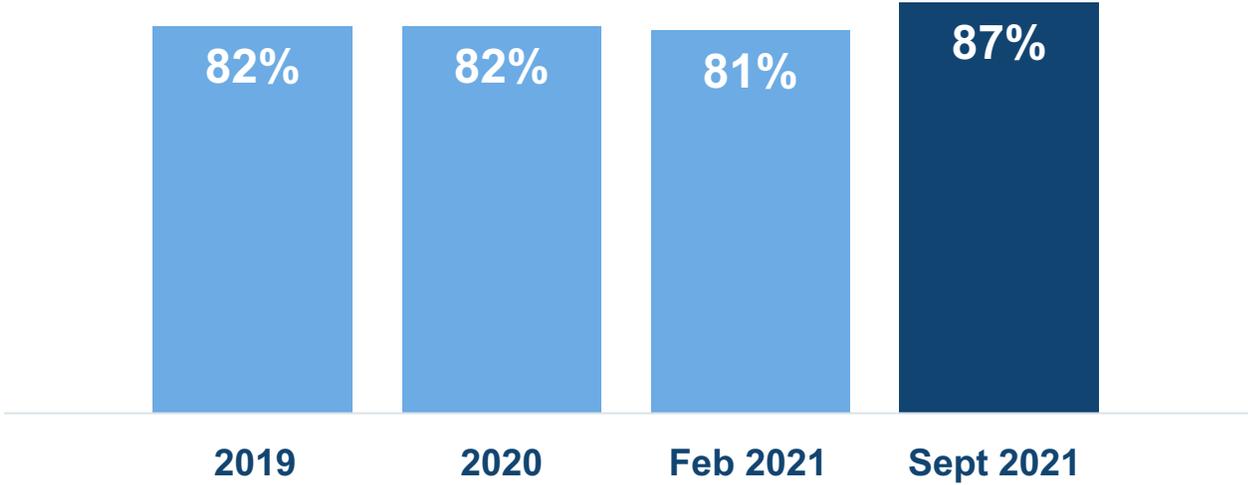
**50%**  
of Teachers think *most or all* students at their school will be prepared for college-level work when they graduate.

	2019	2020	Feb 2021	Sept 2021
<b>Black</b>	72%	80%	79%	80%
<b>Hispanic</b>	73%	74%	77%	77%
<b>White</b>	62%	72%	71%	80%

# Parents report that they have a clear understanding of their child's achievement

How confident are you that you have a clear understanding of how well your child is achieving academically?

Extremely/Very confident

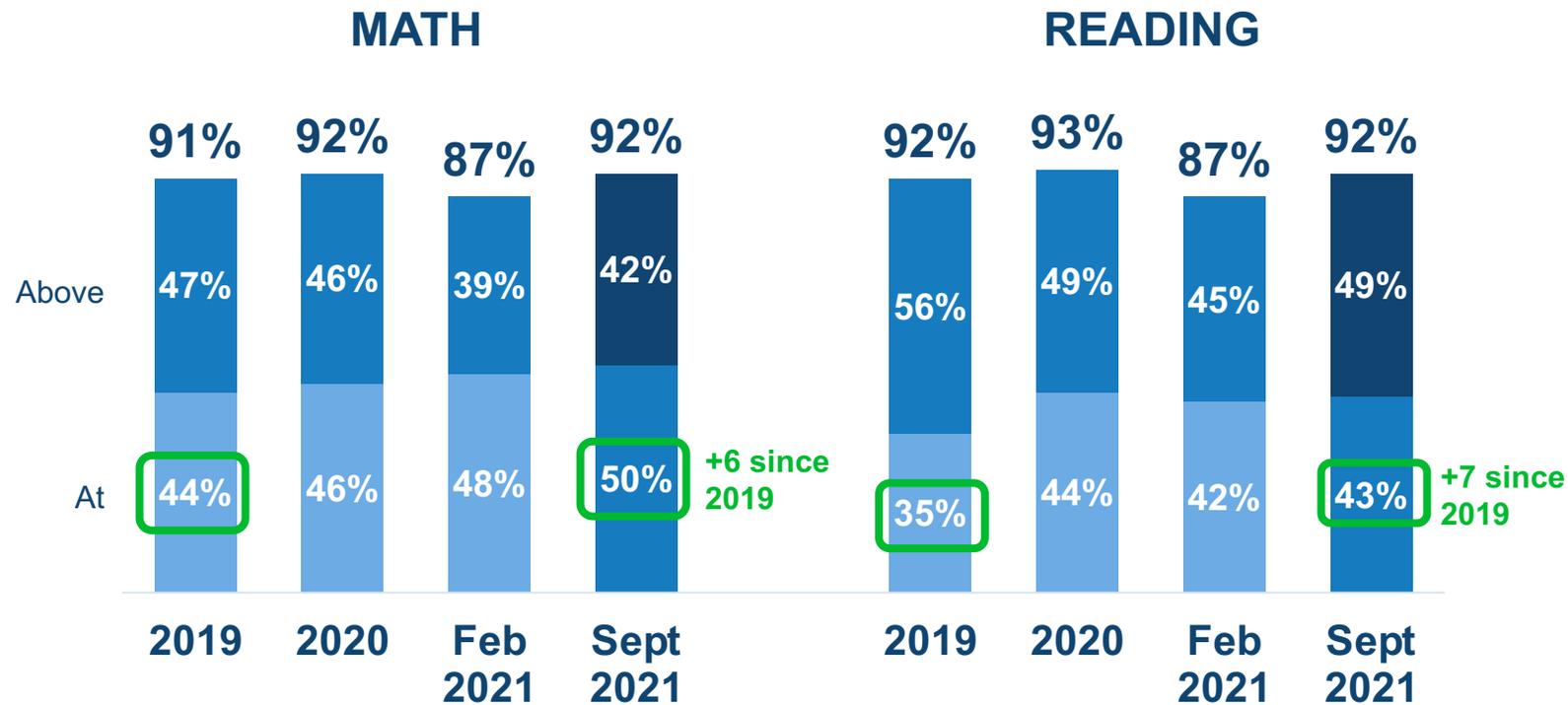


Only **69%** of Teachers think *most or all* of their students' parents have a clear understanding of how their child is achieving academically.

	2019	2020	Feb 2021	Sept 2021
<b>Black</b>	85%	85%	83%	86%
<b>Hispanic</b>	85%	85%	85%	87%
<b>White</b>	81%	82%	79%	87%

# With most believing their child is at/above grade level

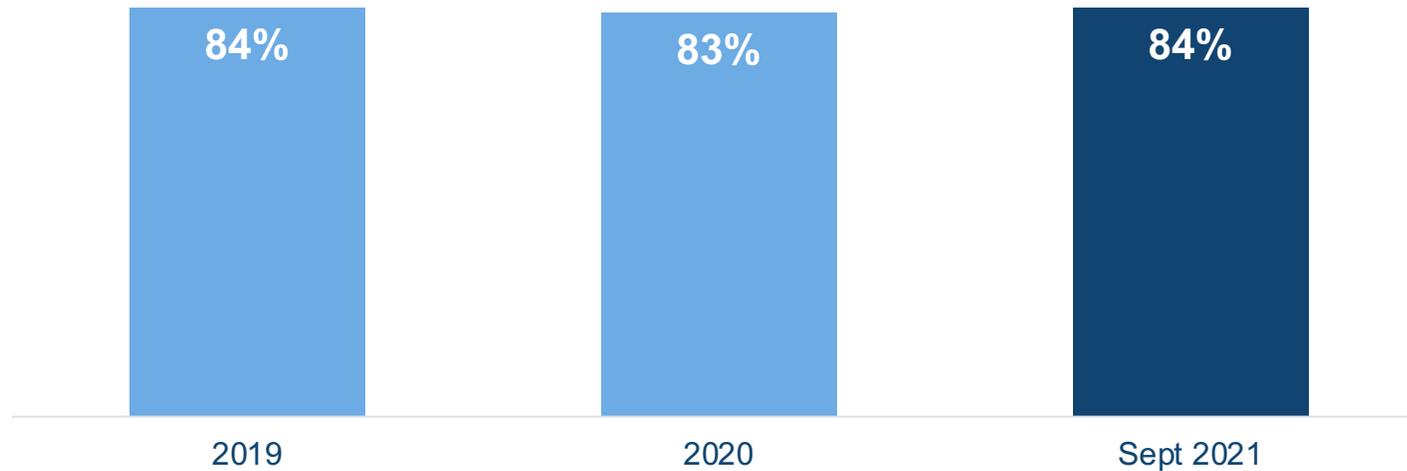
## Believe Child is At/Above Grade Level



Only **44%** of Teachers think *most* students will show up prepared for grade-level work this year.

# Based largely on grades as a reflection of grade-level achievement

## Grades are Mostly B's or Better



**24%**  
Say their child's grades from last year were higher than typical

	2019	2020	Sept 2021
<b>Black</b>	82%	78%	82%
<b>Hispanic</b>	84%	83%	85%
<b>White</b>	85%	83%	85%

# Yet, parents value measures beyond grades

How helpful are each of the following to you when it comes to understanding how well your child is performing academically?

■ Extremely helpful □ Very helpful

Tests designed to determine how much academic progress students have made during the year



Tests students take based on instructional materials they are studying



Projects students complete that are assigned by their teacher(s)



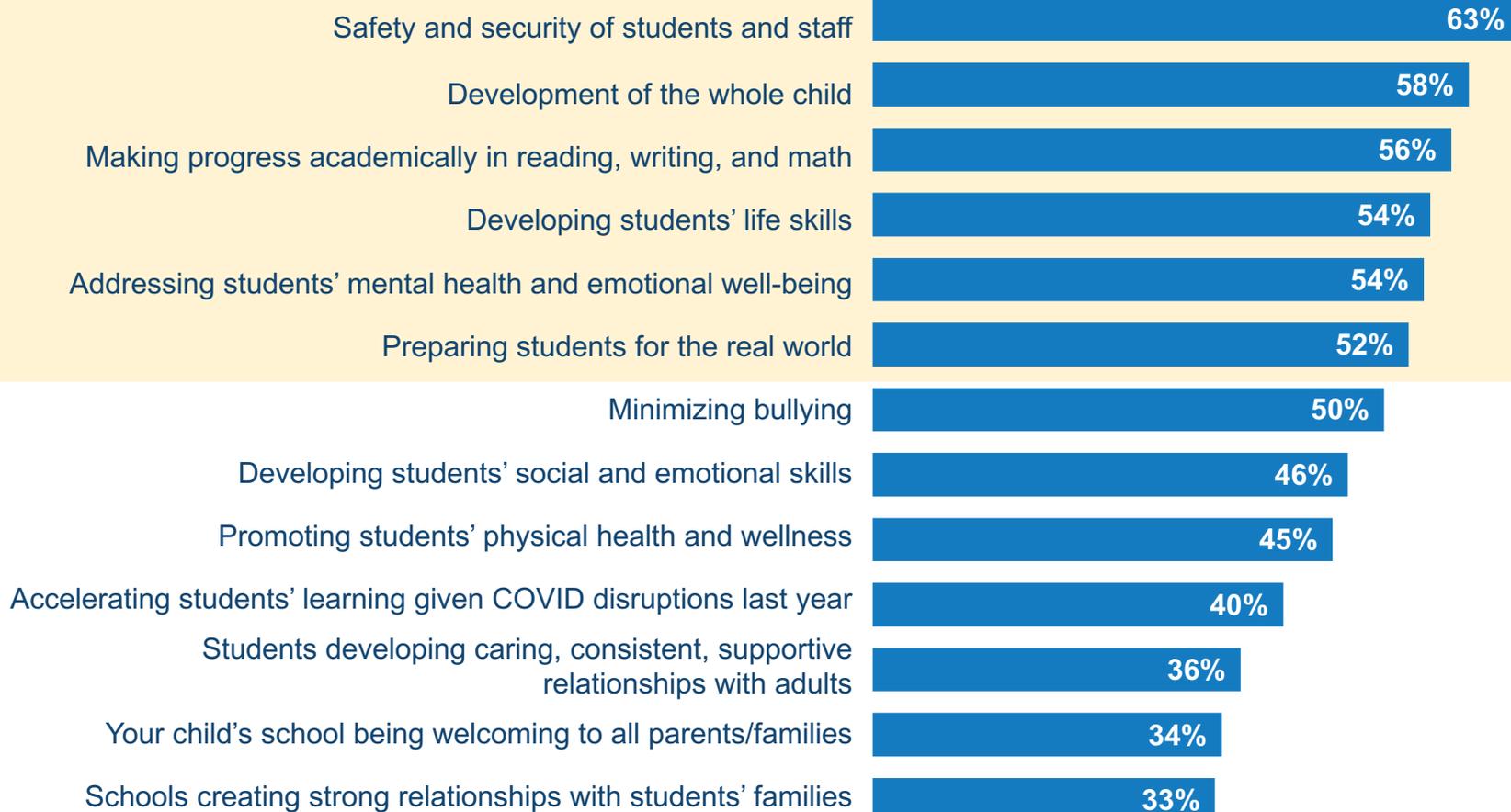
Year-end state tests



# Parents say safety & security, academics, social & emotional needs are their top priorities

How important is each of the following when you think about this school year?

(% top priority)



	Black	Hispanic	White
Safety and security of students and staff	67%	67%	61%
Development of the whole child	66%	64%	55%
Making progress academically in reading, writing, and math	64%	64%	51%
Developing students' life skills	53%	55%	54%
Addressing students' mental health and emotional well-being	58%	62%	49%
Preparing students for the real world	59%	61%	46%
Minimizing bullying	57%	62%	44%
Developing students' social and emotional skills	48%	49%	44%
Promoting students' physical health and wellness	48%	53%	41%
Accelerating students' learning given COVID disruptions last year	46%	43%	37%
Students developing caring, consistent, supportive relationships with adults	39%	36%	34%
Your child's school being welcoming to all parents/families	43%	34%	32%
Schools creating strong relationships with students' families	40%	36%	31%

# Parents and educators agree about what is *most important*

How important is each of the following when you think about this school year?

Parents

Teachers

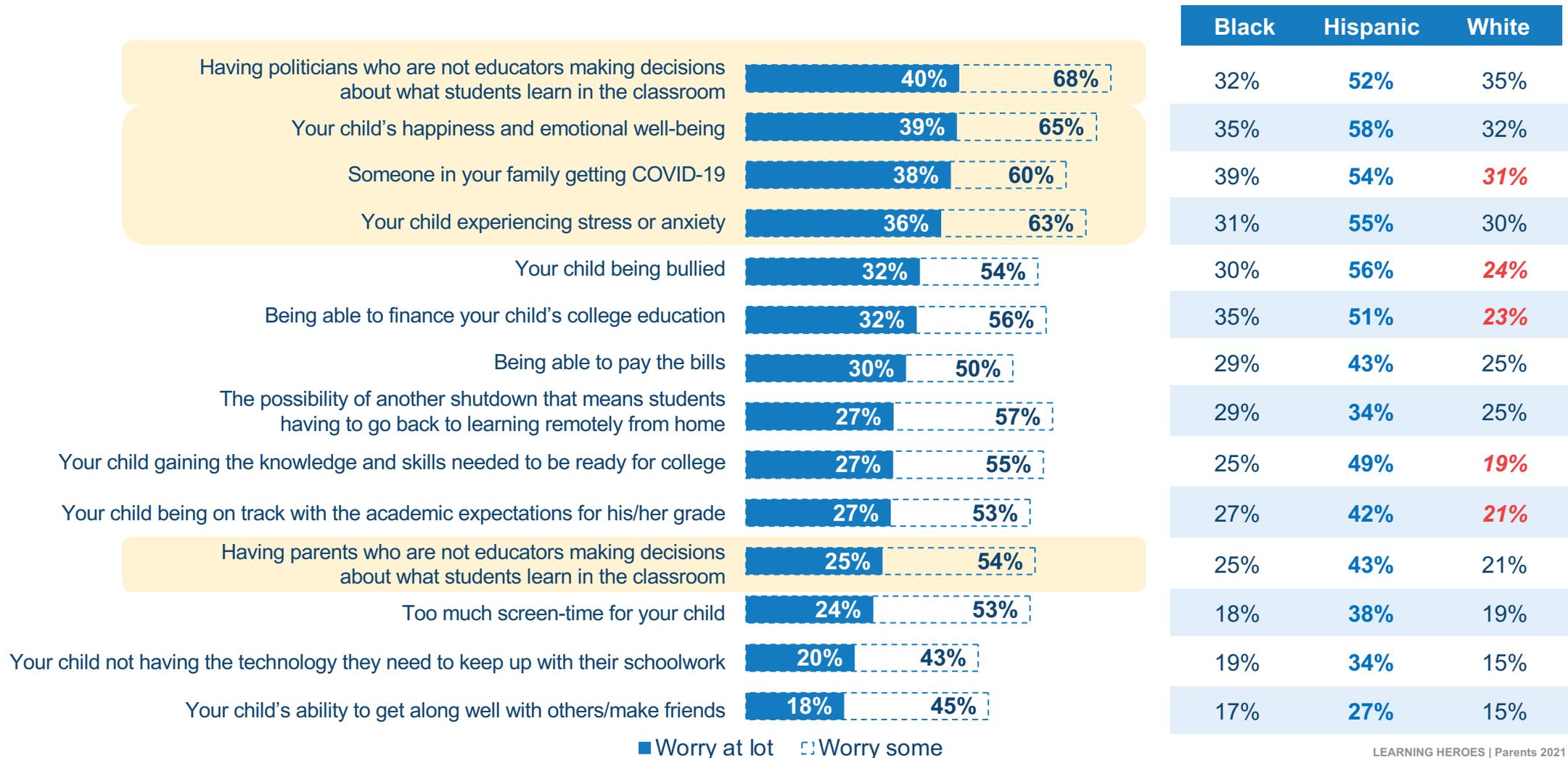
Principals

% Top Priority  
(Only Choose One)

	Parents	Teachers	Principals
#1	Safety and security of students and staff 20%	Academics (including reading, writing, and math) 18%	Addressing students' mental health and emotional well-being 12%
#2	Making progress academically in reading, writing, and math 17%	Safety and security of students and staff 16%	Safety and security of students and staff 11%
#3	Addressing students' mental health and emotional well-being 11%	Addressing students' mental health and emotional well-being 12%	Accelerating students' learning given COVID disruptions last year 9%

# Parent worries reflect the broader backdrop

How much do you worry about each of the following as a parent?



# Yet, it comes down to health and happiness across groups

How much do you worry about each of the following?

Parents

Teachers

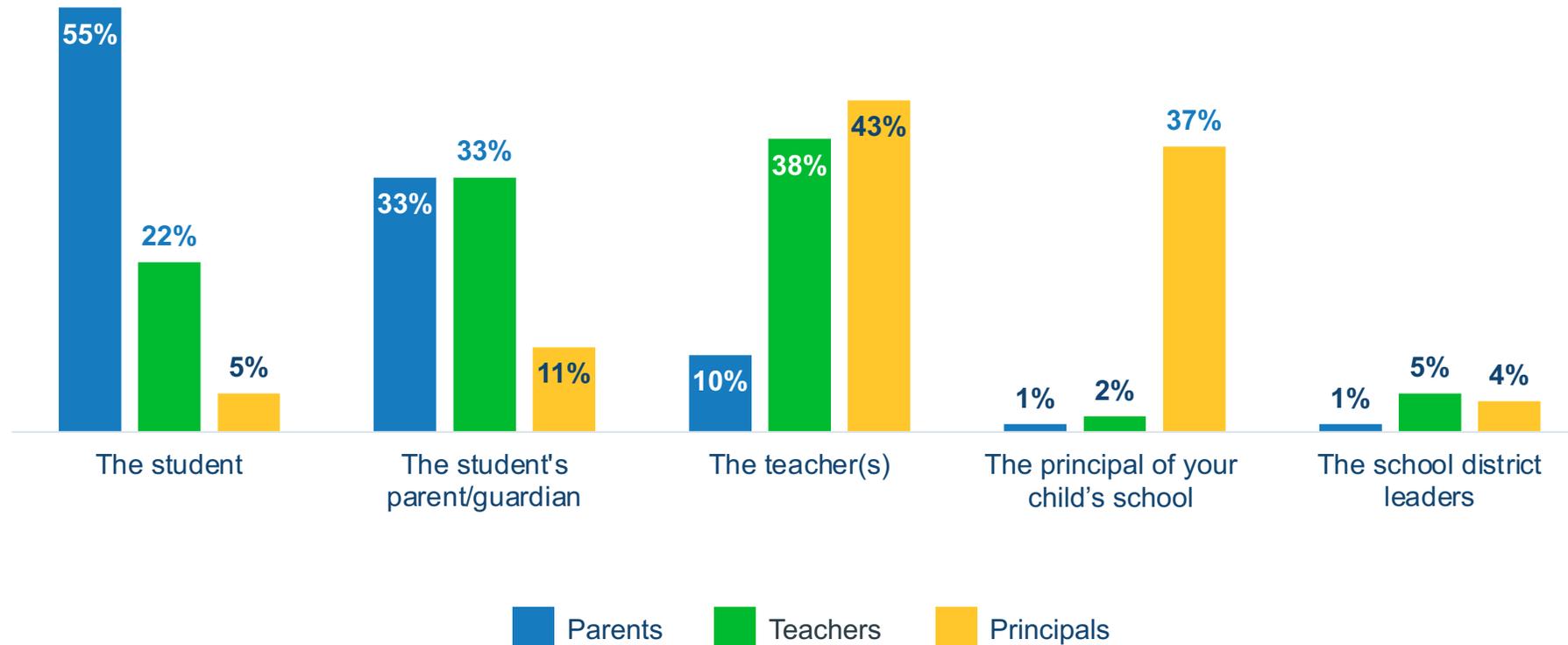
Principals

% Worry a lot

	Parents	Teachers	Principals
#1	<b>Having politicians who are not educators making decisions about what students learn in the classroom</b> 40%	<b>Students getting COVID</b> 38%	<b>Contracting COVID at school</b> 45%
#2	<b>My child's happiness &amp; emotional well-being</b> 39%	<b>Students' receiving academic support from families</b> 38%	<b>Staff contracting COVID</b> 40%
#3	<b>Family member getting COVID</b> 39%	<b>Students' happiness &amp; emotional well-being</b> 38%	<b>Safety of students while in school</b> 39%

# In terms of who is most responsible, educators put it on themselves, parents put it on themselves, parents put it on their children

Who has the greatest responsibility for a child's success in school?



# Parents | Taking Action



# Parents want a clear picture of their child's achievement – Teachers & principals agree

How important is each of the following when it comes to how your child's school attempts to engage or communicate with you?

Parents

Teachers

Principals

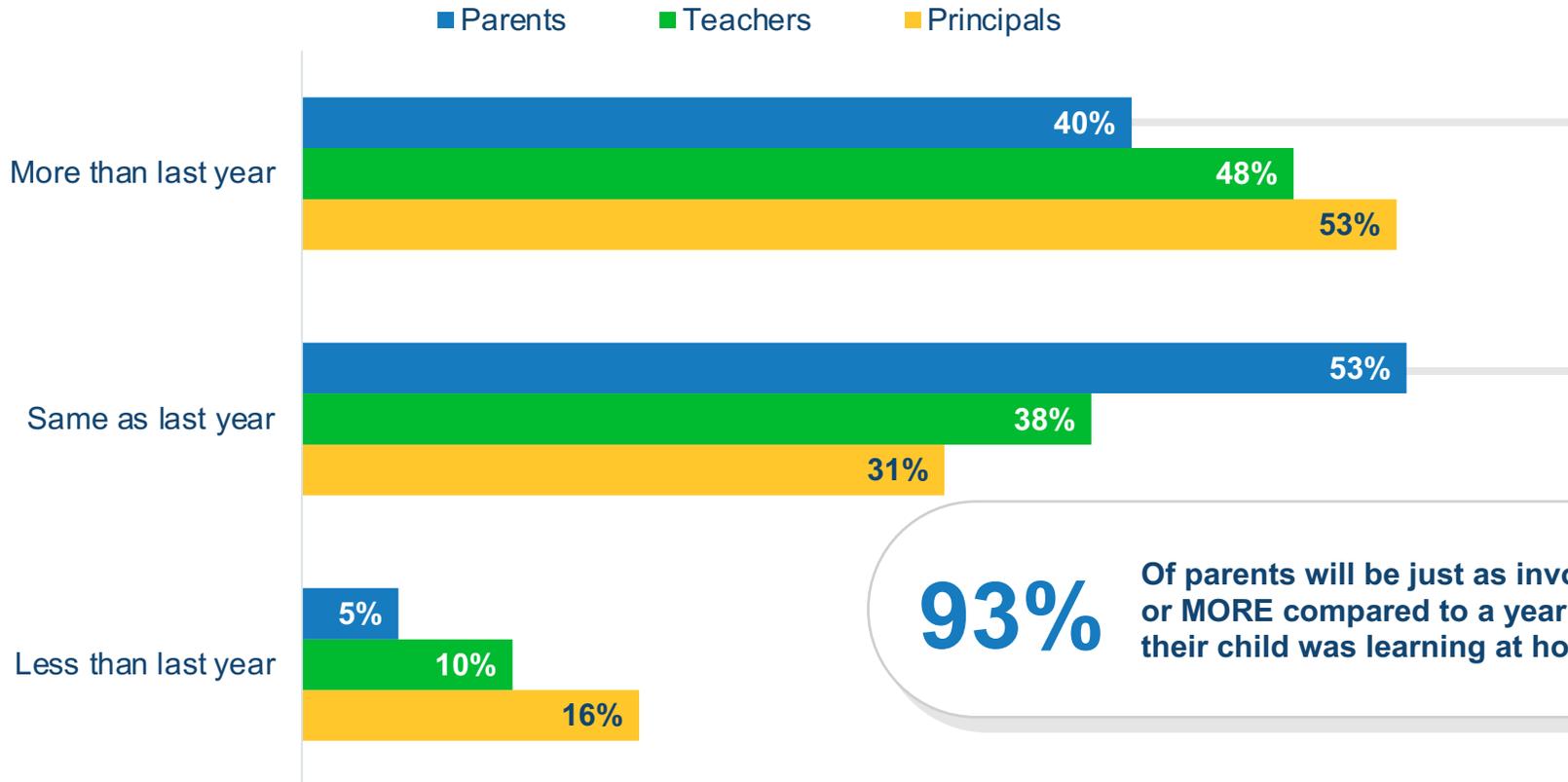
% Top Priority

	Parents	Teachers	Principals
#1	Making sure you have a clear picture of how child is achieving academically 55%	Building trust with families of your students 49%	Making sure families have a clear picture of how their child is achieving academically 44%
#2	Being direct and truthful about child's performance 54%	Being authentic when communicating with families of your students 49%	Actively seeking feedback and incorporating input from the families of your students 42%
#3	Teachers/staff following through on your requests, questions 48%	Making sure families have a clear picture of how their child is achieving academically 46%	Building trust with families of your students / Making yourself easily accessible to all of the families of your students 38%

# Pandemic push | High levels of engagement are here to stay

**Parents:**  
More, Same or Less *involvement in your child's education* this year?

**Teachers and Principals:**  
More, Same or Less time and effort on *Family Engagement* this year?



Black	Hispanic	White
42%	42%	39%
52%	48%	55%

**Sig. higher among parents who intend to enroll their child in an OST program.**

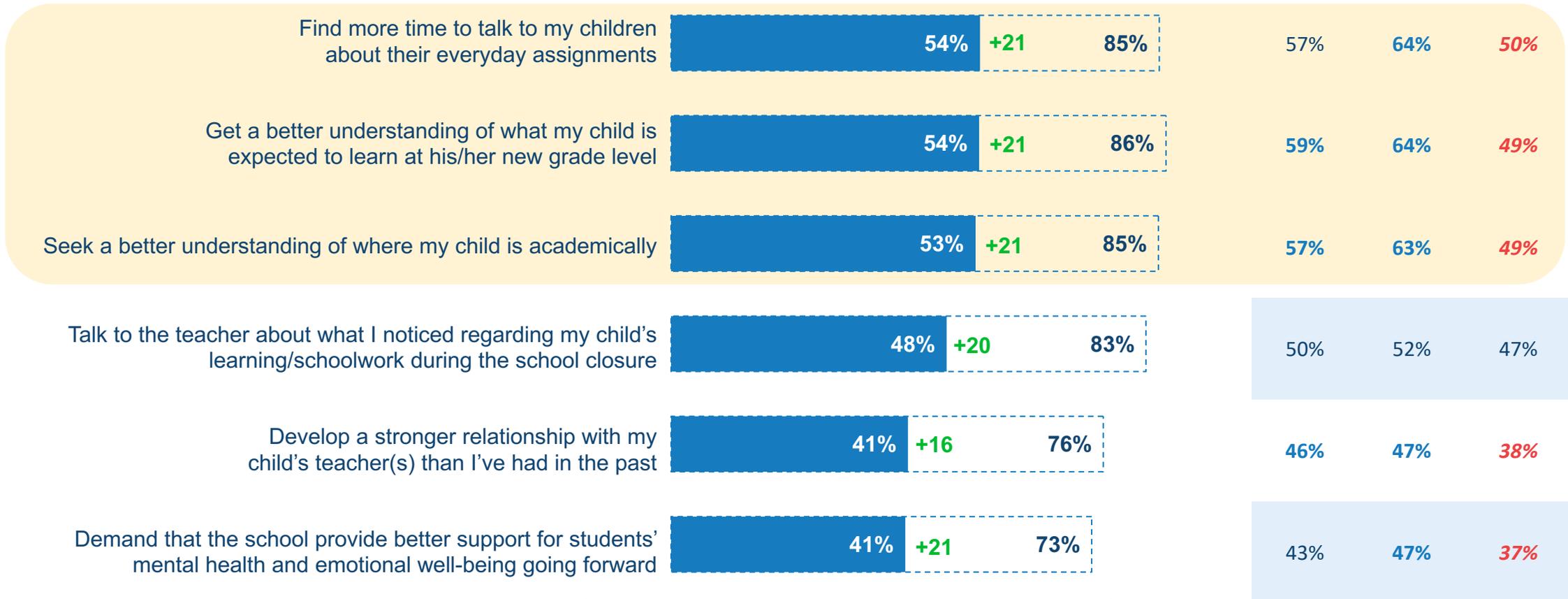
# Since 2020, parents are much more likely to take actions in support of their children's learning

How likely are you to do each during this school year that began this fall?

■ Very likely □ Somewhat likely

% Very Likely

Black Hisp. White



+ = increase from May 2020

“Very likely” sig. higher among parents who intend to enroll their child in an OST program.

# Parents and teachers are on the same page about how parents should be involved

**Parents**

% Very Likely to Do

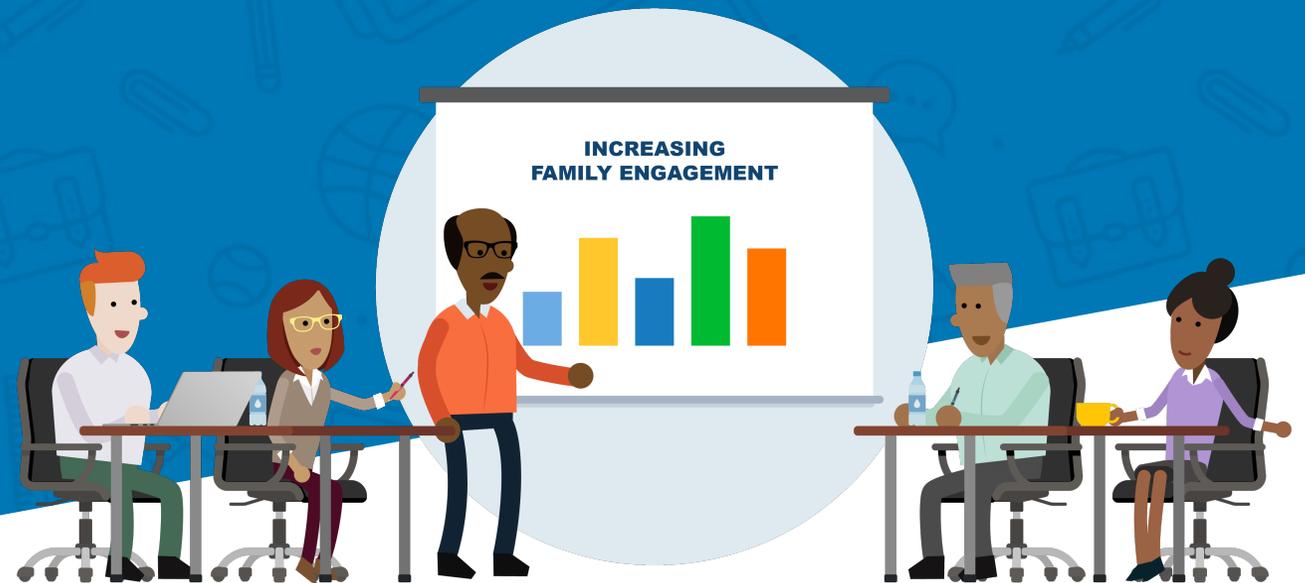
**Teachers**

% Extremely Important for Families to Do

**Principals**

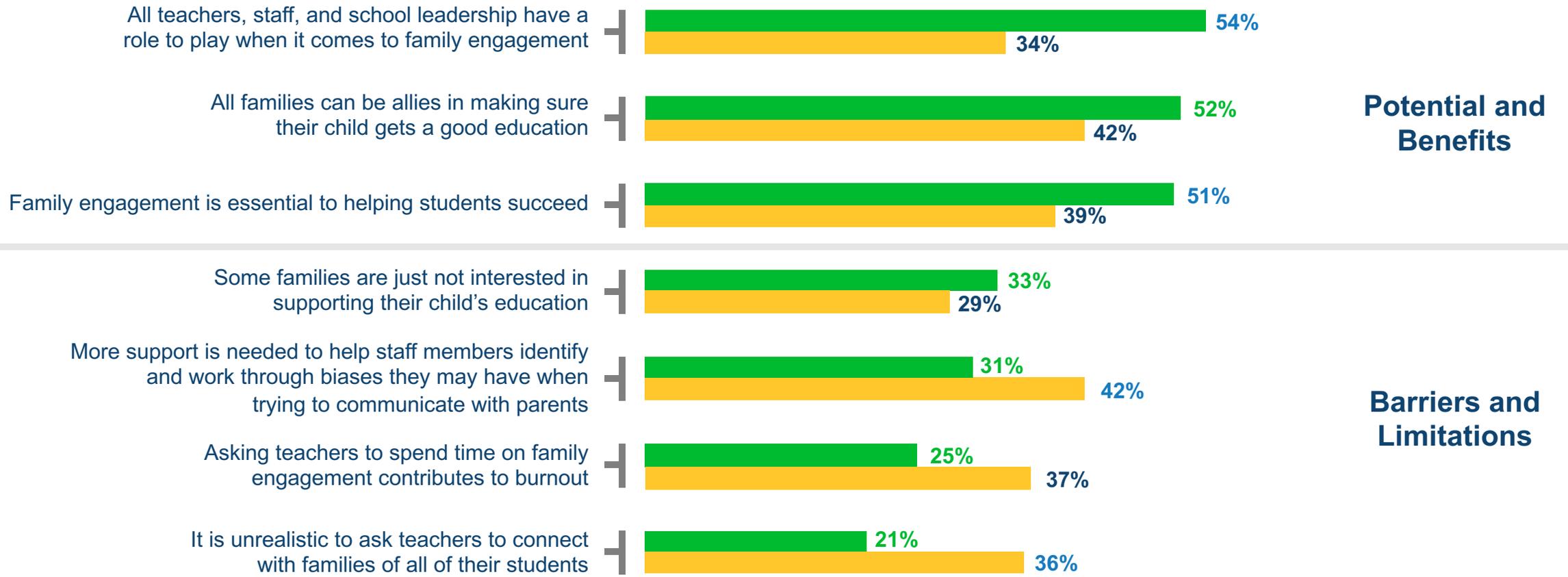
	Parents	Teachers	Principals
#1	<p>Checking your child's assignments and academic progress</p> <p>65%</p>	<p>Checking their child's assignments and academic progress</p> <p>56%</p>	<p>Helping with homework / Sharing their observations about their children's learning at home with their children's teachers</p> <p>40%</p>
#2	<p>Helping your child with homework</p> <p>60%</p>	<p>Communicating regularly with their child's teacher</p> <p>49%</p>	<p>Providing input on school curriculum and what is taught to students / Visiting the classroom to see what their child is learning or experiencing at school / Communicating regularly with their child's teacher</p> <p>39%</p>
#3	<p>Participating in parent-teacher conferences in person</p> <p>51%</p>	<p>Participating in parent-teacher conferences in person</p> <p>46%</p>	<p>Participating in parent-teacher conferences in person</p> <p>38%</p>

# Turning Agreement into Opportunity



# Teachers and principals see family engagement as essential but barriers remain

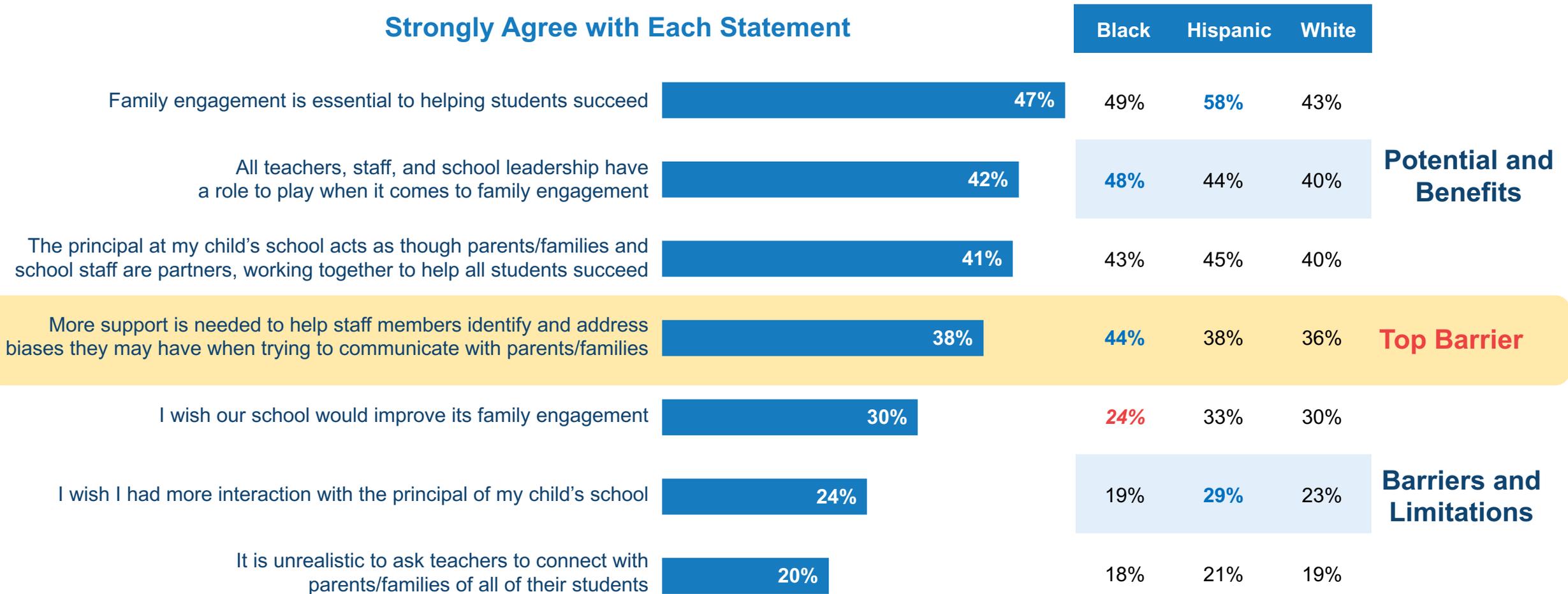
## Strongly Agree with Each Statement



■ Teachers
 ■ Principals

Blue indicates statistically higher results for the corresponding audience.

# Parents also see a need to address biases school staff may have

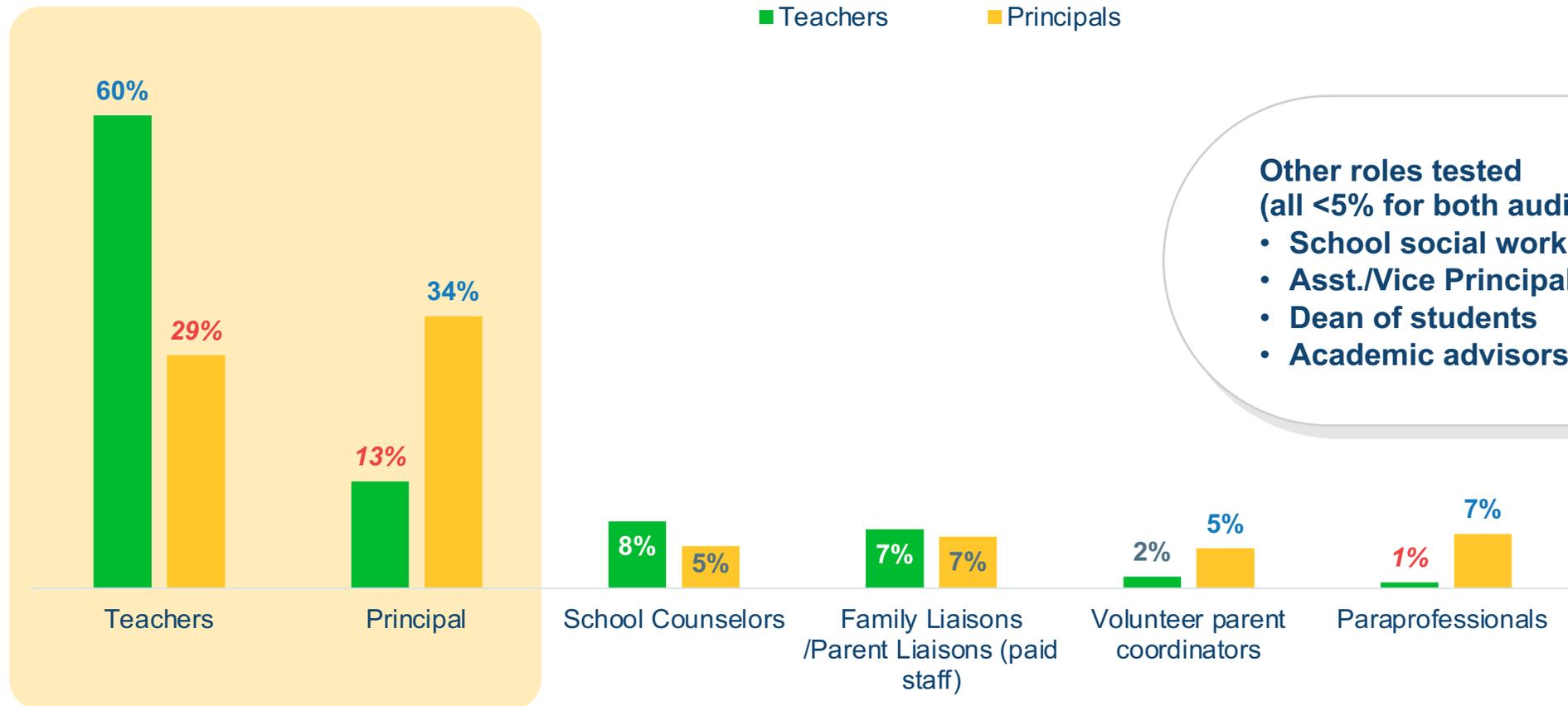


**“Strongly agree” sig. higher among parents who intend to enroll their child in an OST program.**

Blue indicates statistically higher results for the corresponding audience.

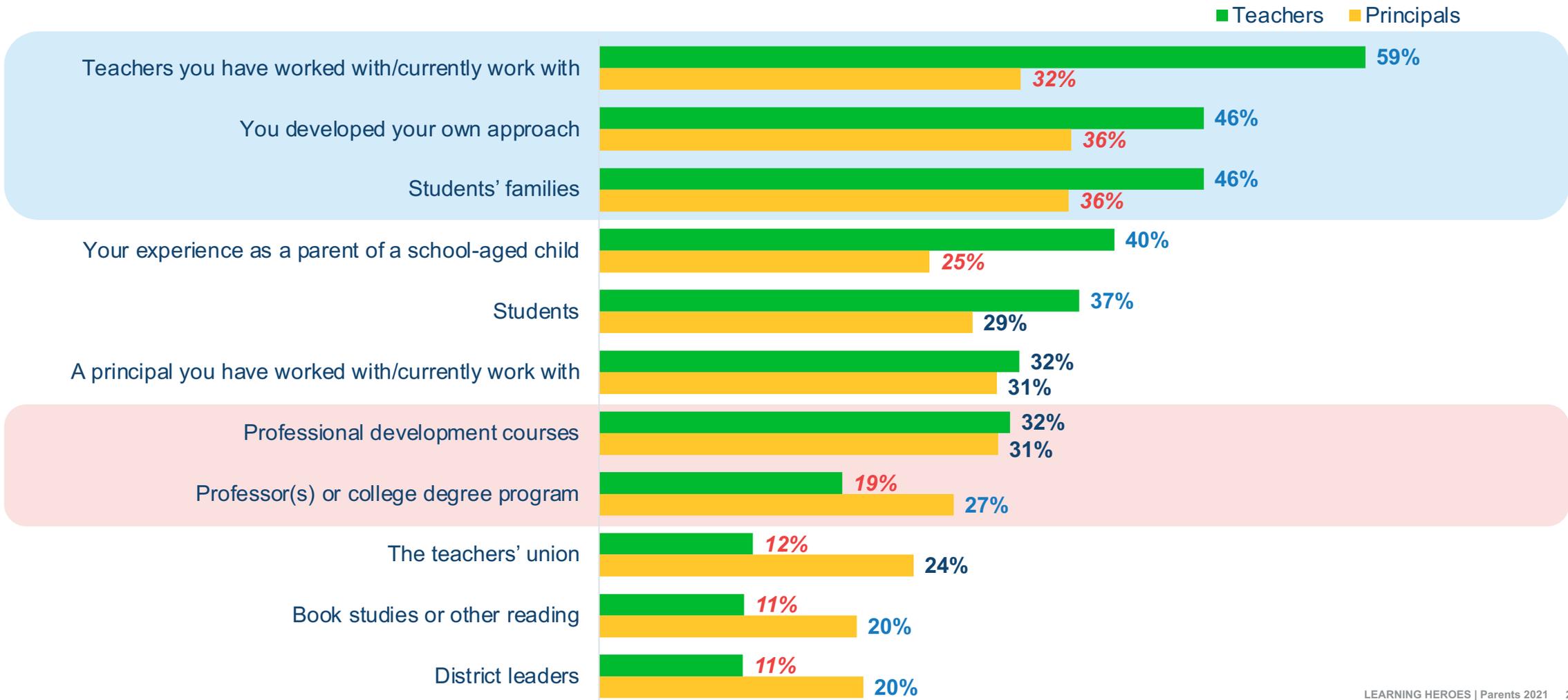
# Teachers and principals split on who is most responsible

Who has the primary responsibility for family engagement at your school?



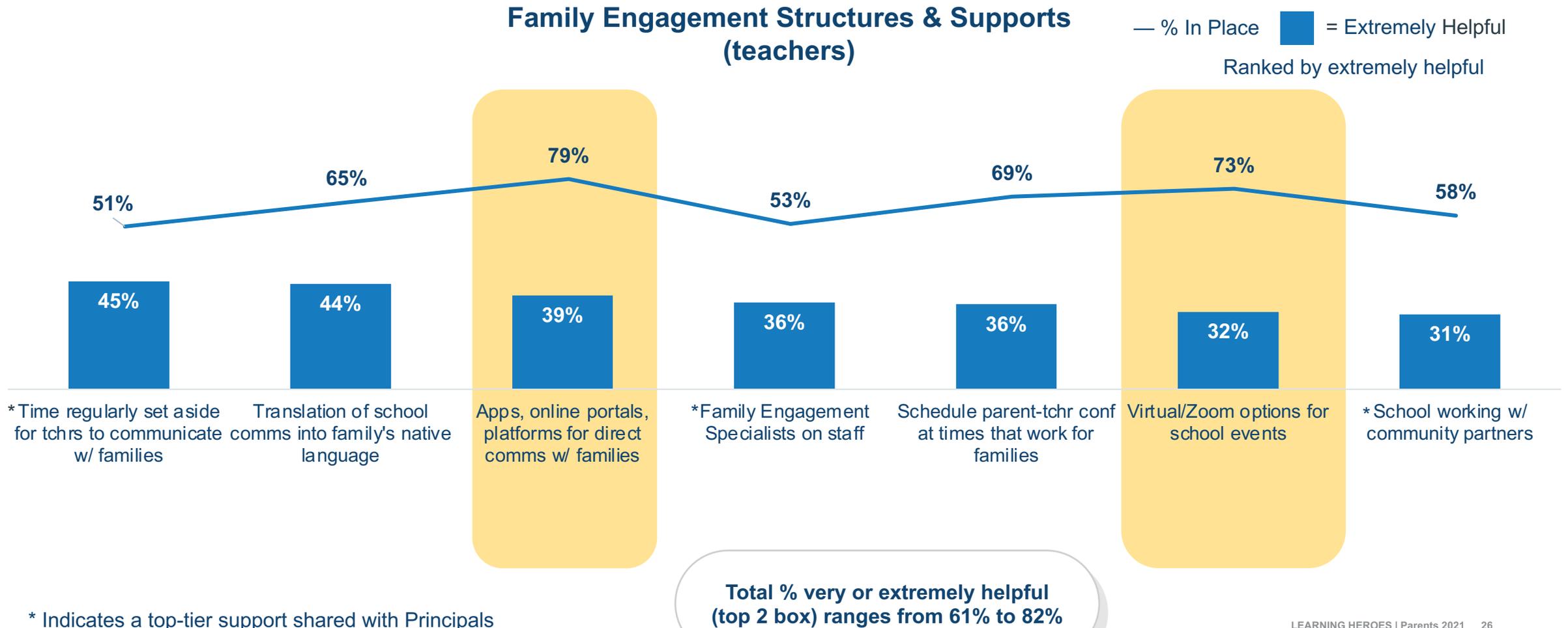
# Reliance on “informal” influences underscores need for more and better PD on family engagement

Which of influenced your approach to family engagement?



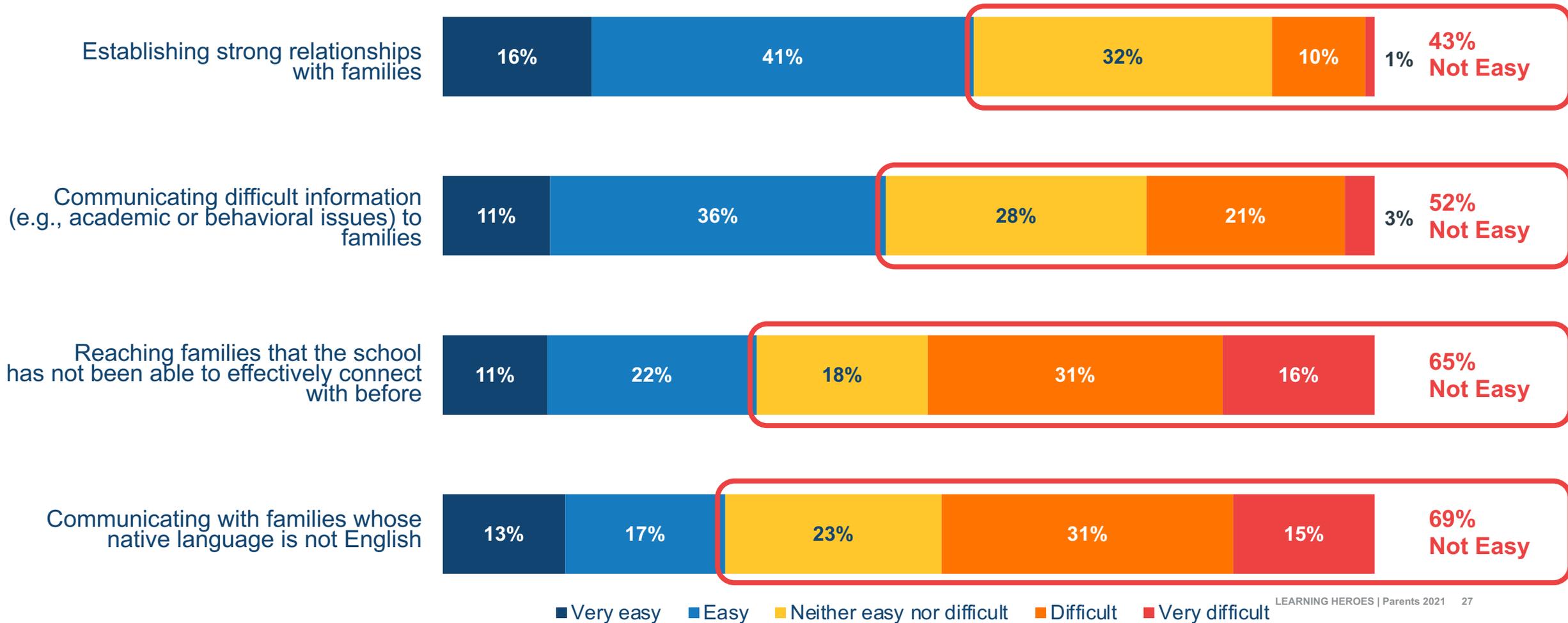
# Teachers really want dedicated time for family engagement

Translation services are also in teachers' top-tier of most helpful family engagement supports.



# Teachers identify several areas for support

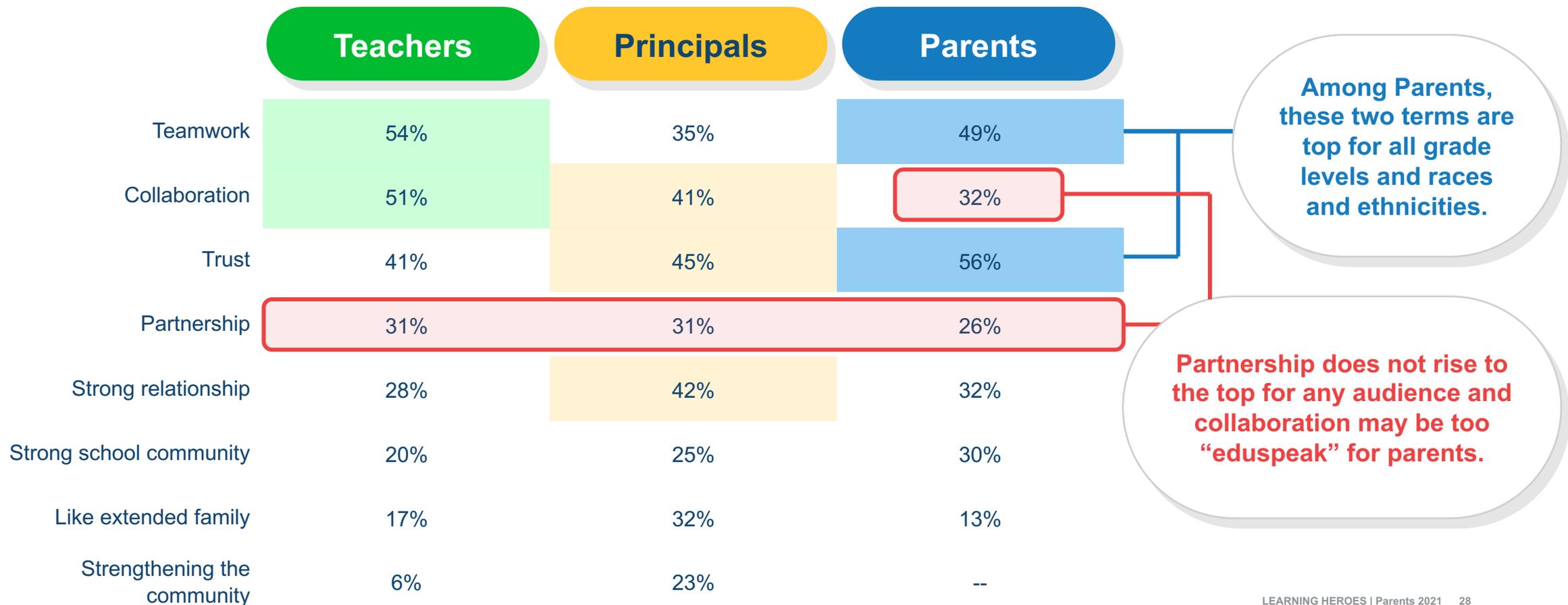
For each of the following, please indicate how easy or difficult it is for you to do/ to provide support for teachers for that task.



# Trust and teamwork resonate across audiences

Which of the following terms or phrases best represent the language you use when describing your goal for family engagement?

Top terms shaded for each



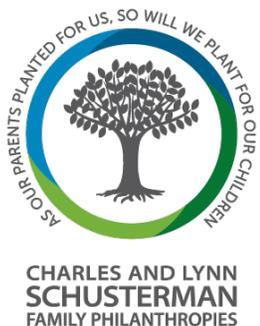
# Thank You To Our Research Partners

We are grateful to these organizations for their time and expertise which shaped and informed this research project.

## Partner Organizations



## Funders



# Citing This Research

Learning Heroes. (2021). *Parents 2021 | Going Beyond the Headlines*. <https://bealearninghero.org/research/>

# LEARNING HEROES



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