



THE STATE OF FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Findings from a Survey of Public-School Parents

November 2022

Research Conducted by Edge Research

➤ Methodology

Parent Survey

- Nationwide sample of **1,588 parents and guardians** with children in public school, grades K-12, including
 - 860 elementary school parents
 - 300 middle school parents
 - 428 high school parents
 - 395 Black parents
 - 407 Hispanic parents representing a mix of acculturation levels
- Fielded online Sept. 14 - Oct. 7, 2022
- Offered in both English and Spanish
- Data were weighted to be representative of public-school parents in the U.S.

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

➤ Top Takeaways

1

As schools show signs of reopening their doors to the community, families share positive ratings of their school environment and communications. Families see value in family engagement, and for the most part, feel welcomed and respected.

2

However, there is room for improvement. Few see schools as doing an “excellent” job on any aspect of family engagement. In addition, the positive experience is not consistent for all families, especially Hispanic families, those who primarily speak a language other than English, and parents/families with a disability. More so, middle and high school parents/families have significantly lower ratings on key metrics like feeling welcome, feeling like they belong at school, two-way communication, and engaging with teachers and staff.

3

One area where schools are falling short is in communicating effectively to support student success. Parents/families want less reliance on technology like apps and texting and more honest conversations about their children. There is also interest in more and better parent-teacher conferences than are currently offered—this is the top engagement channel that parents/families report, and they may be under-used as opportunities for real conversations between schools and families.

4

Strengthening how schools collaborate with families so they can speak up for their child and all children is key. Most parents/families are not very confident of where to turn when they have a question, and many say reaching administrators and teachers could be easier. Further, schools receive relatively low scores on asking parents for insights about their children or offering transparency in decision-making. While most say input is welcome, there are signs it is not necessarily sought out by schools—and the latter is necessary to improve two-way communication and share power with families.

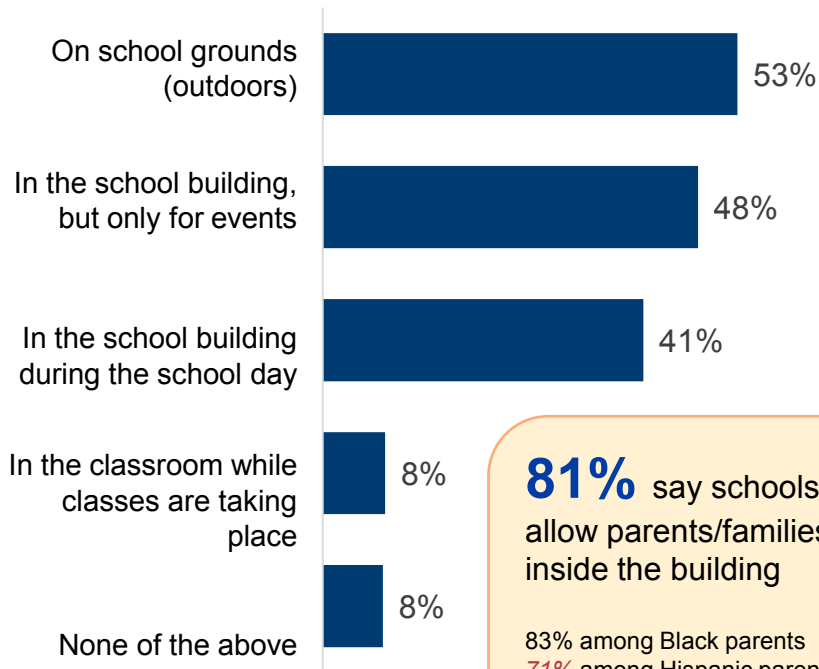


Schools Are Open to Families

➤ Schools are Opening

Data reveal schools loosening campus policies to allow more parent/family access, and that building access is consistent across elementary, middle and high school.

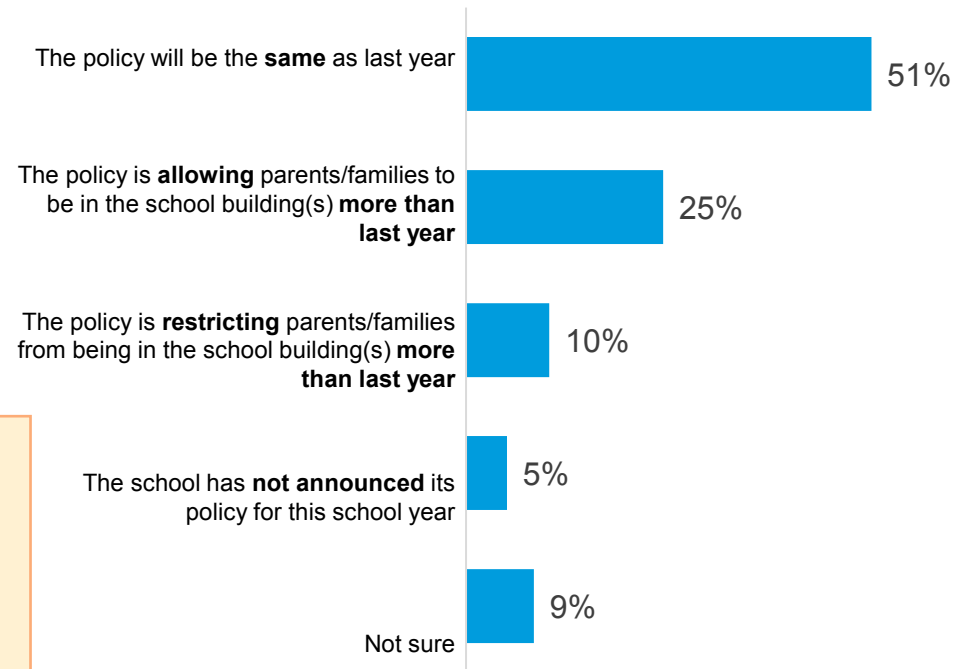
Parent/Families Allowed on School Grounds
(select all that apply)



81% say schools allow parents/families inside the building

83% among Black parents
71% among Hispanic parents
86% among White parents

School Policies This School Year



➤ Parents Feel Respected and Welcomed

Most parents/families report a positive experience interacting with their child's school, though experiences vary by audience.

Describes **How Your School Interacts with Families**

% Describes Perfectly + Pretty Well

■ Describes Perfectly ■ Describes Perfectly + Pretty Well

Elem. Middle High Black Hispanic White

	Describes Perfectly	Describes Perfectly + Pretty Well	Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White	
Respectful	37%	81%	85%	77%	78%	89%	77%	80%	
Welcoming	36%	78%	85%	73%	72%	84%	76%	78%	Parents w/ Disability (71%)
Genuine	27%	69%	76%	64%	63%	74%	67%	69%	
Makes me feel like I belong	26%	67%	71%	65%	61%	72%	69%	65%	Parents w/ Disability (59%)
Brings people together	23%	61%	67%	62%	49%	64%	67%	57%	Parents w/ Disability (52%)
Transparent	22%	61%	65%	57%	58%	65%	63%	59%	Parents w/ Disability (48%)
Only listens to certain parents/families	7%	19%	17%	21%	20%	18%	26%	15%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (30%)
Difficult	5%	15%	13%	18%	15%	11%	24%	12%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (40%)
Unfair	4%	11%	9%	14%	13%	15%	19%	8%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (28%)
Unresponsive	4%	13%	12%	16%	13%	16%	19%	11%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (30%)

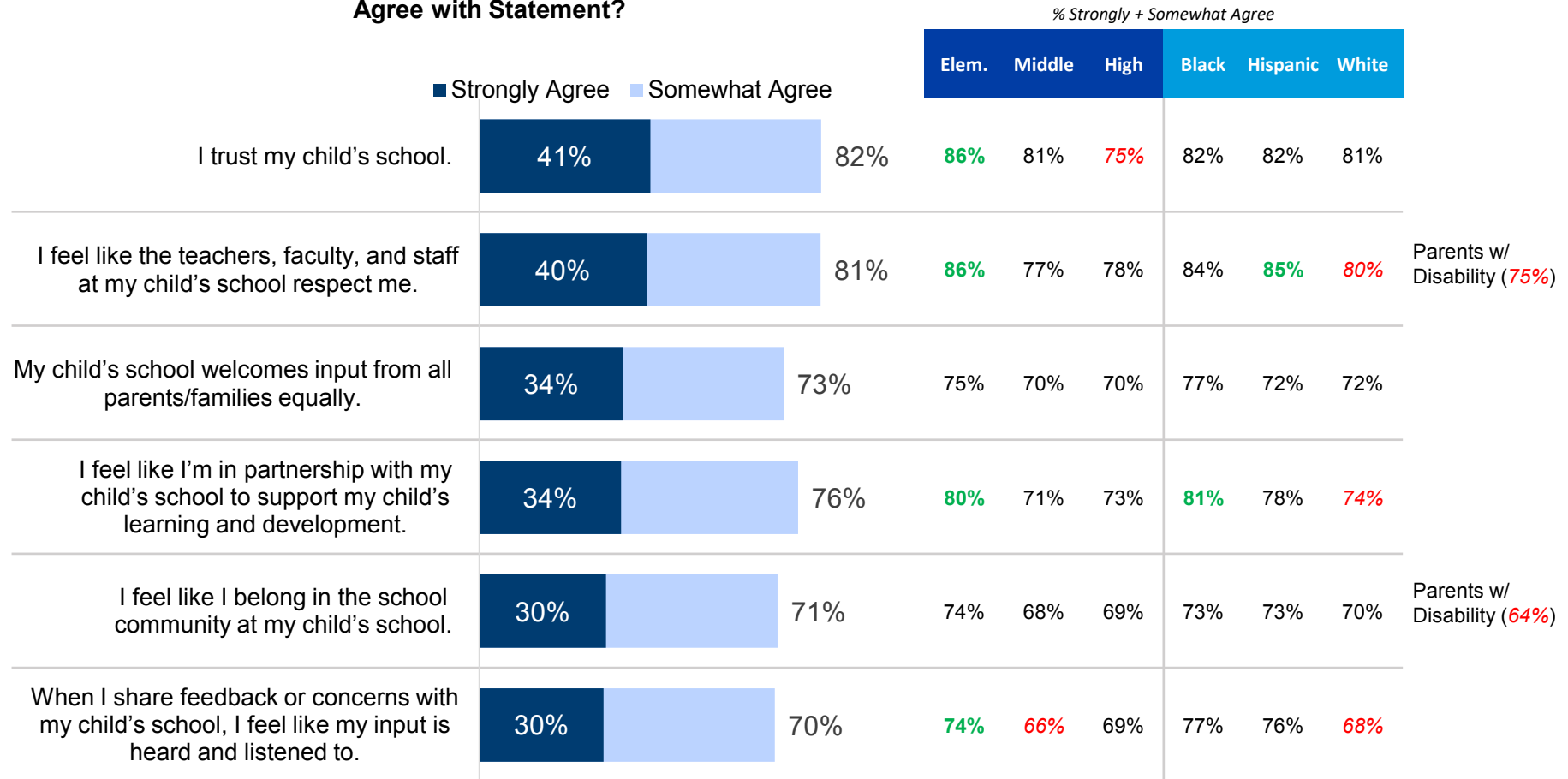
Positives

Negatives

➤ Parents Trust the School

In addition, majorities feel in partnership with the school and that their input is welcome.

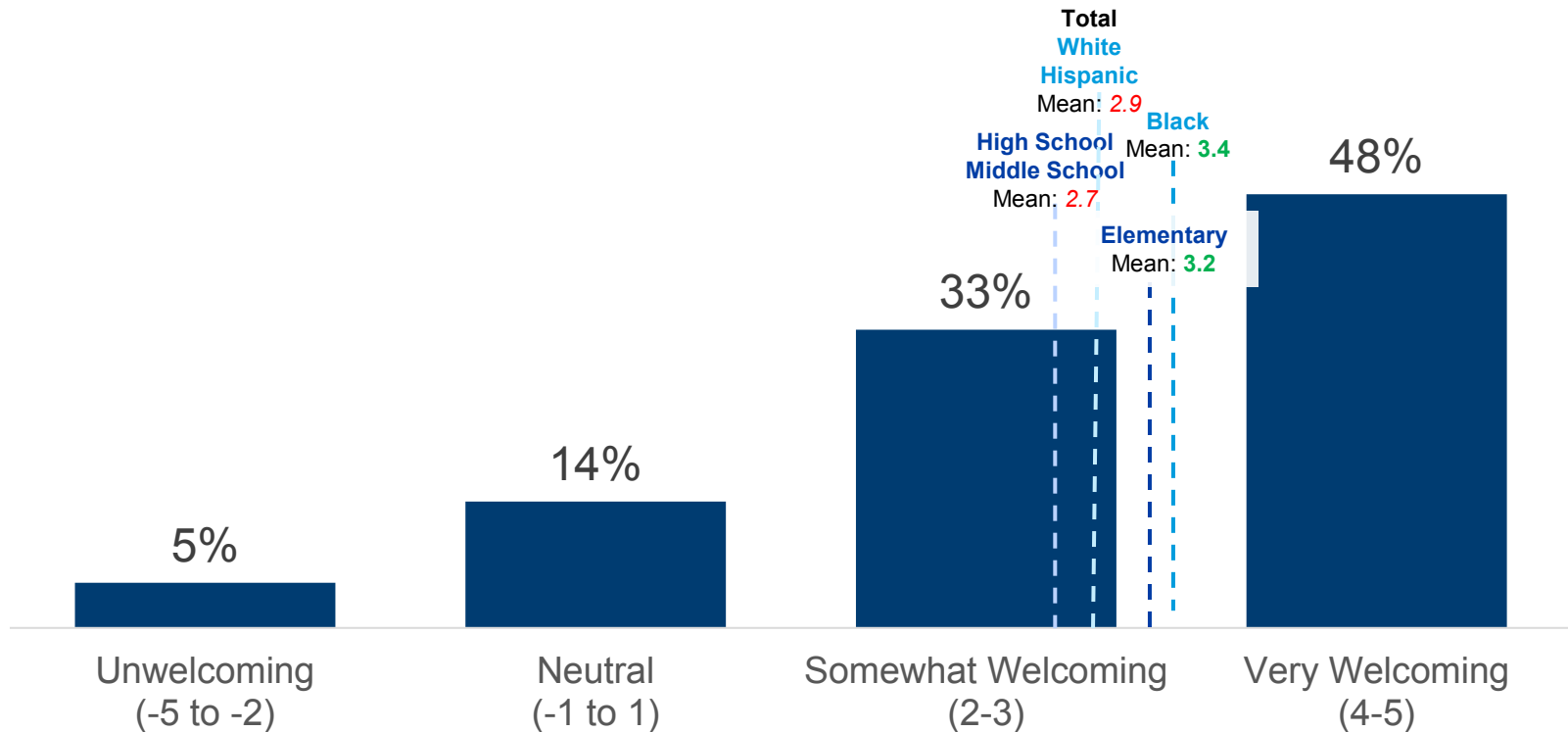
Agree with Statement?



➤ Overall, the Environment is Welcoming

While there are some differences by key audiences, all have a generally positive view of the overall school environment.

On a sliding scale...How **Welcoming or Unwelcoming** is the Environment?



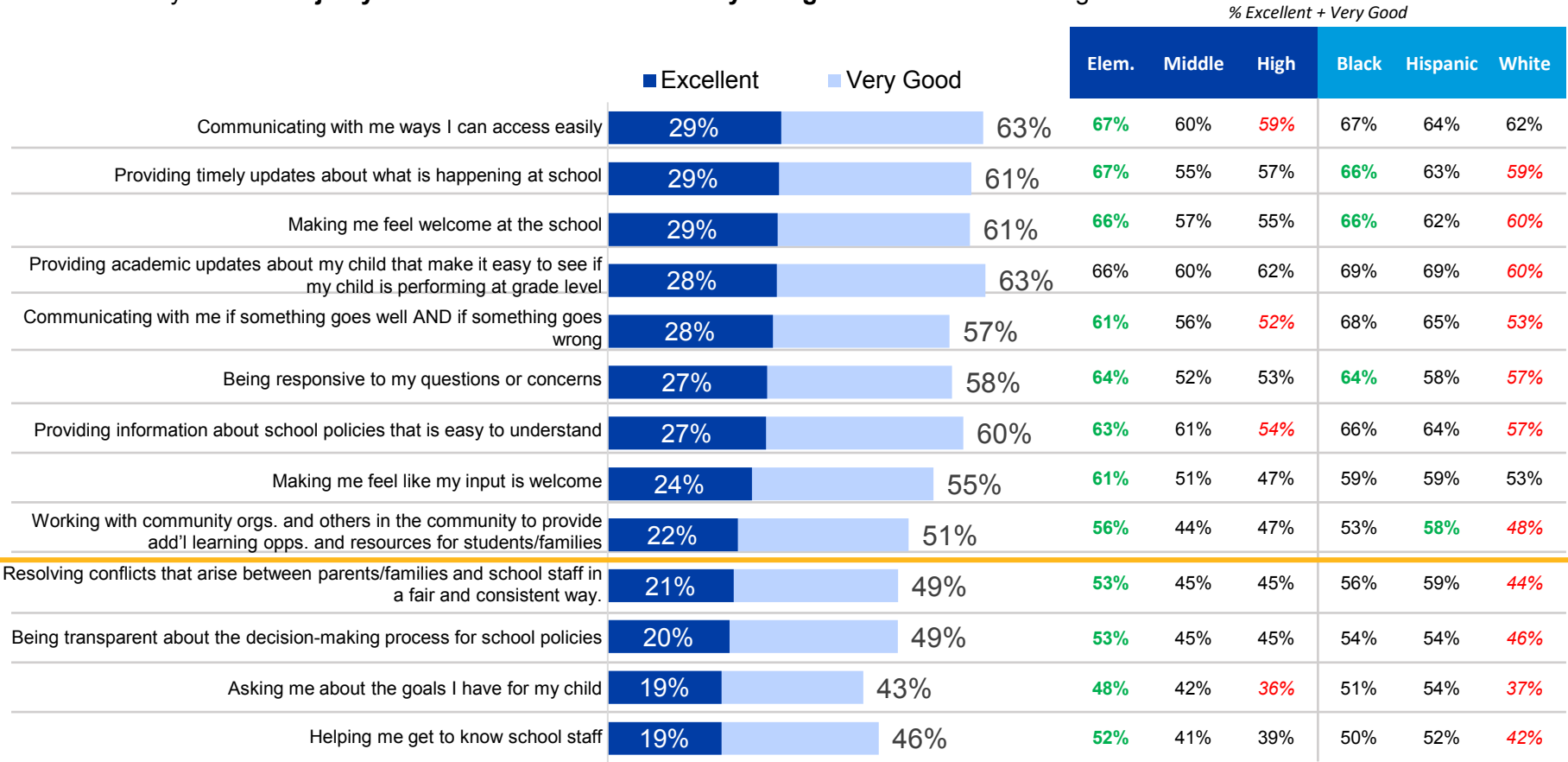


But There Is Room For Improvement

➤ Few See Schools Doing an “Excellent” Job

And fewer than half give schools’ high marks on important elements of two-way relationships like conflict resolution, asking them for input, and helping them get to know staff.

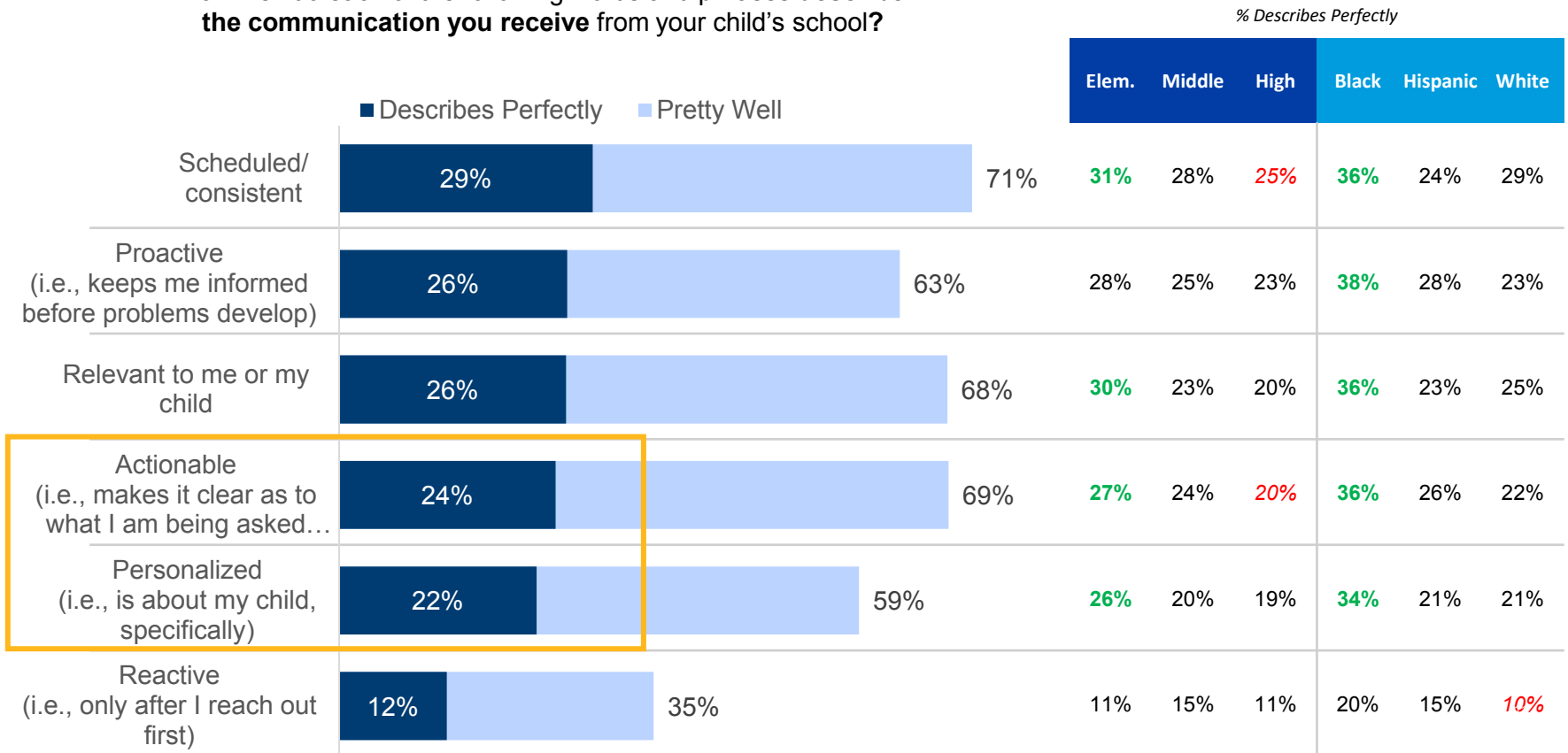
How would you rate the job your child’s school is currently doing on each of the following?



➤ Communication Could Be Better on a Few Measures

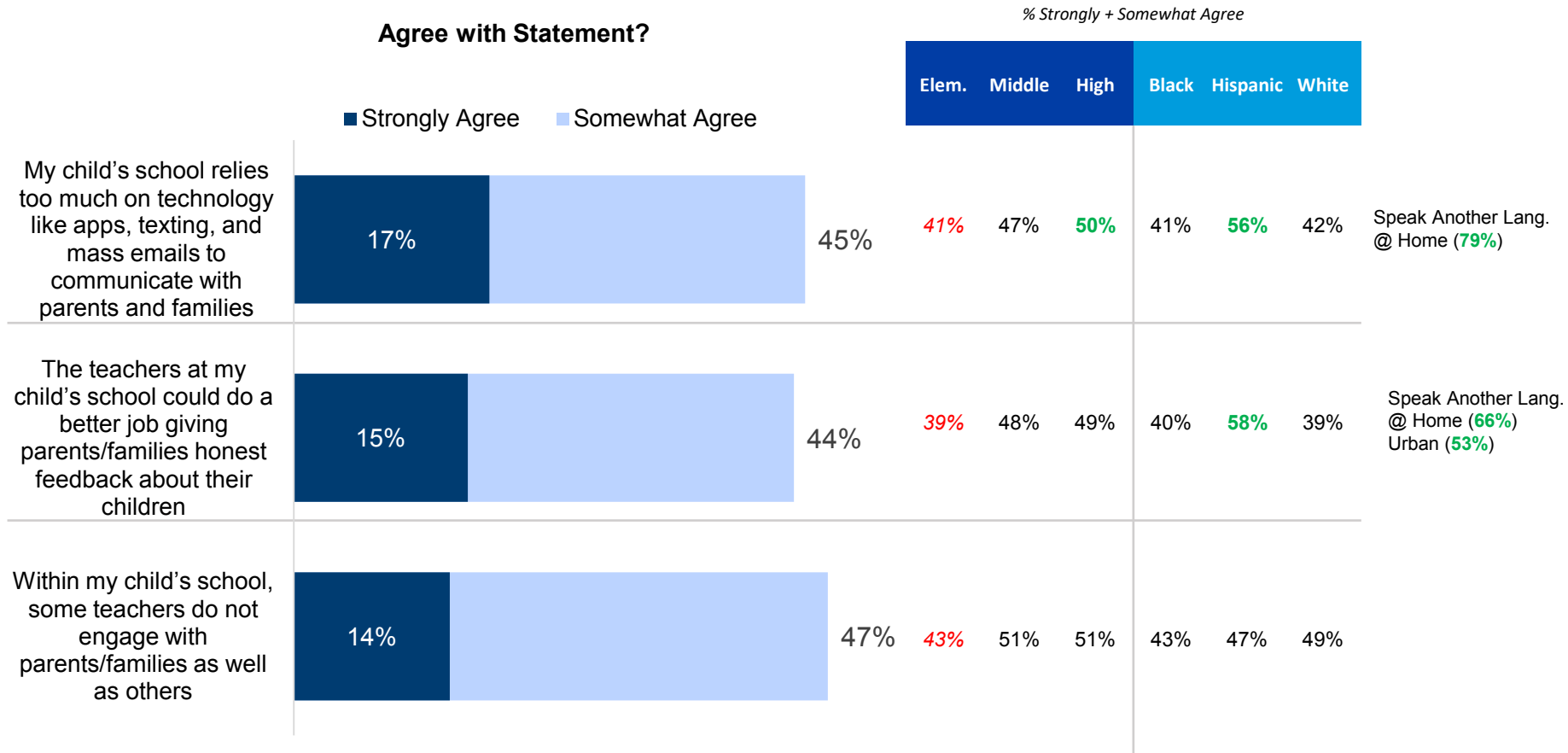
Less than a quarter say their schools are delivering communication that is actionable or personalized.

How well do each of the following words and phrases **describe the communication you receive** from your child's school?



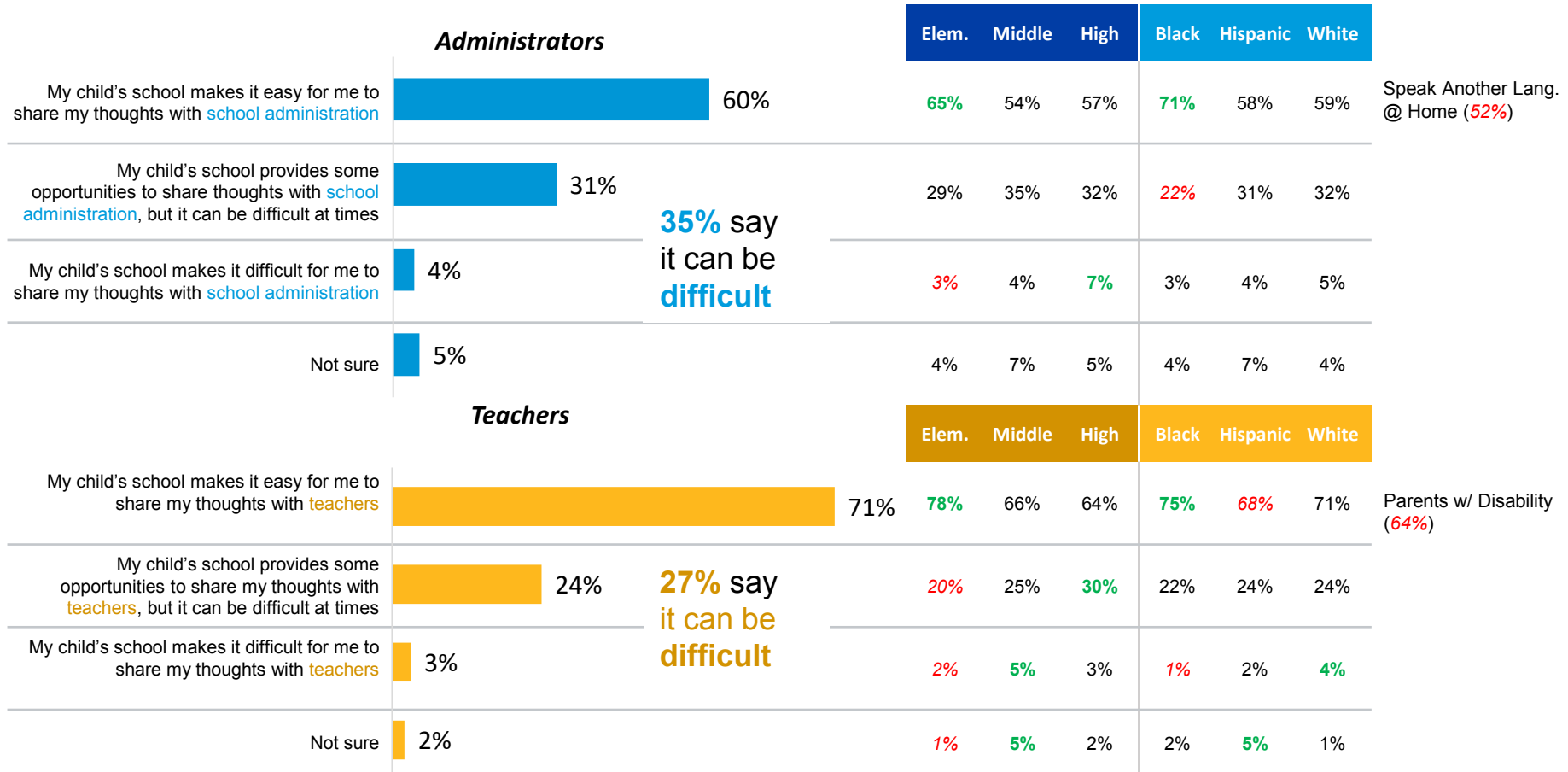
➤ Communications *Tactics* Fall Short in Some Areas

Nearly half want less reliance on technology, more honesty from teachers, and a more consistent experience from all their child’s teachers.



➤ Sharing Thoughts with Schools Could Be Easier

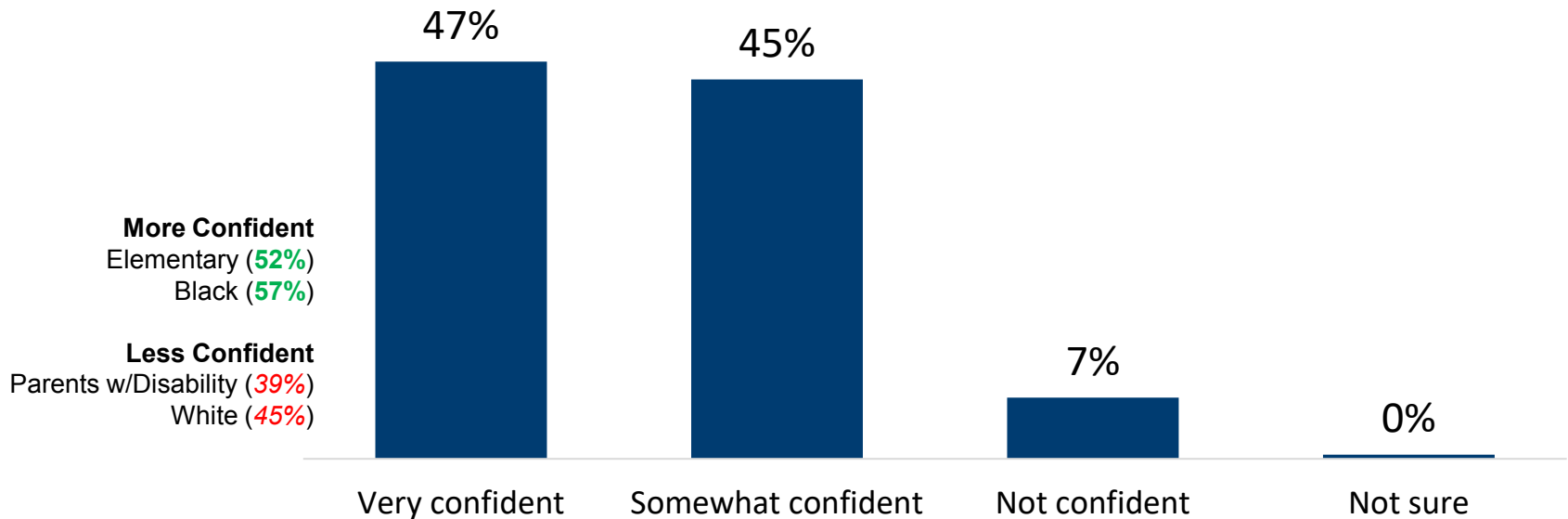
This is especially true with administrators, and for middle and high school parents.



➤ Parents Are Not Confident in Where to Turn

Less than half are very confident they would know how or who to reach out to at their child's school if they have a question—creating a challenge even before they try to engage.

How confident are you that you **know who to ask or how to find the information** you are looking for?



➤ Many Opportunities Are Under-Used by Parents

There is room for growth in providing information about and garnering participation in family engagement opportunities.

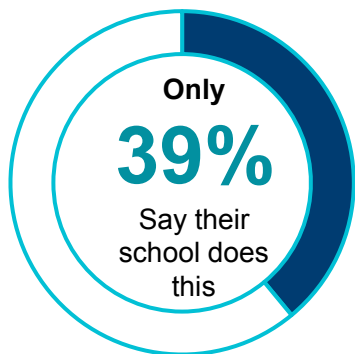
Have Done/Participated in Last 12 Months		% Have Participated						
		Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White	
Participated in a parent-teacher conference	73%	76%	73%	68%	78%	71%	72%	Parent w/ Disability (80%)
School walk through or class visit	62%	71%	61%	50%	64%	60%	63%	
Attended event to give families guidance to support their...	47%	47%	47%	47%	56%	52%	43%	Rural/Small town (40%)
Attended a PTA/PTO meeting	38%	39%	38%	36%	50%	44%	33%	
Attended event designed for families to give feedback	37%	38%	36%	38%	46%	43%	34%	Speak Another Lang @ Home (47%)
Volunteered at a school event	36%	39%	32%	34%	38%	31%	39%	Parent w/ Disability (29%)
Provided feedback on what is taught to your child's teacher(s)	32%	32%	30%	34%	35%	36%	30%	
Provided feedback on school policies	30%	30%	31%	31%	43%	33%	28%	
Provided feedback on what is taught to school administrators	24%	26%	28%	20%	34%	34%	20%	
Attended school board meeting	23%	20%	25%	25%	29%	37%	17%	
Volunteered in the classroom	22%	27%	21%	16%	24%	24%	23%	

➤ Access is Uneven When It Comes to Language & Disability

Parents who speak a different language or have a disability are not as well-served by schools and feel very differently about the relationship.

Among Families Who **Speak Mostly/Only Another Language** at Home...

Providing **interpretation services and translated materials** for parents/families whose first language is not English...to engage with the school

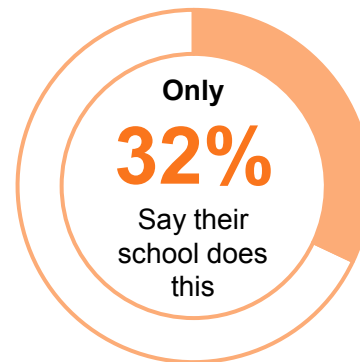


Communicate with Them in Their Native Language



Among Parents/Family Members Who **Have a Disability**...

Providing **accommodations** to allow parents/families with ...to engage with the school



Families who mostly/only speak a language other than English at home are more likely to:

- Find their school's engagement difficult, unfair, and unresponsive;
- Feel there is too much reliance on technology like email or text;
- Want more honesty from teachers/schools

Parents/family members with a disability who have a disability are less likely to:

- Feel welcome, respected, and like they belong
- Feel confident about or find it easy to reach out to schools

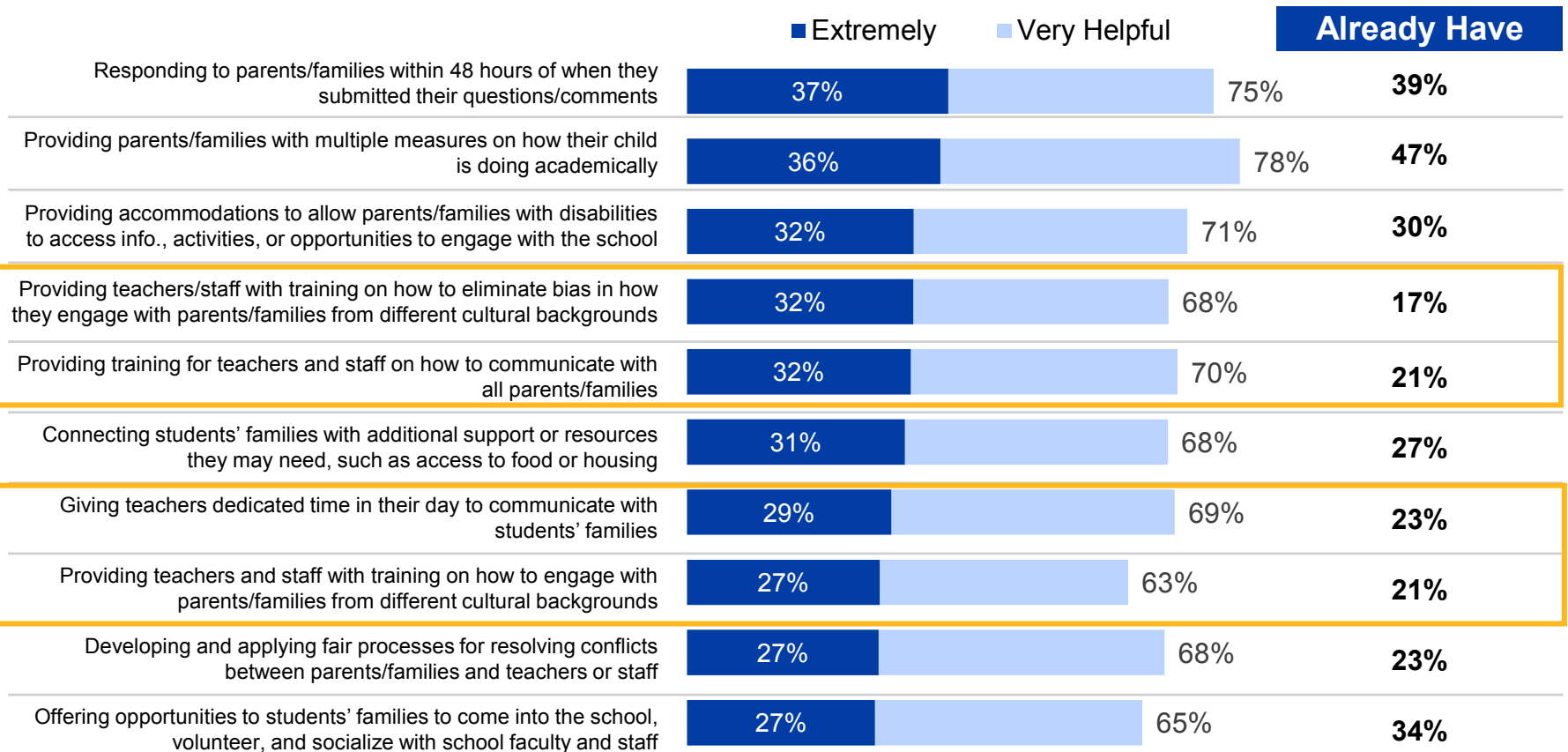


Closing The Gap

➤ Parents See Many Approaches as Helpful

However, most parents say these policies or programs do not exist at their schools, especially teacher training.

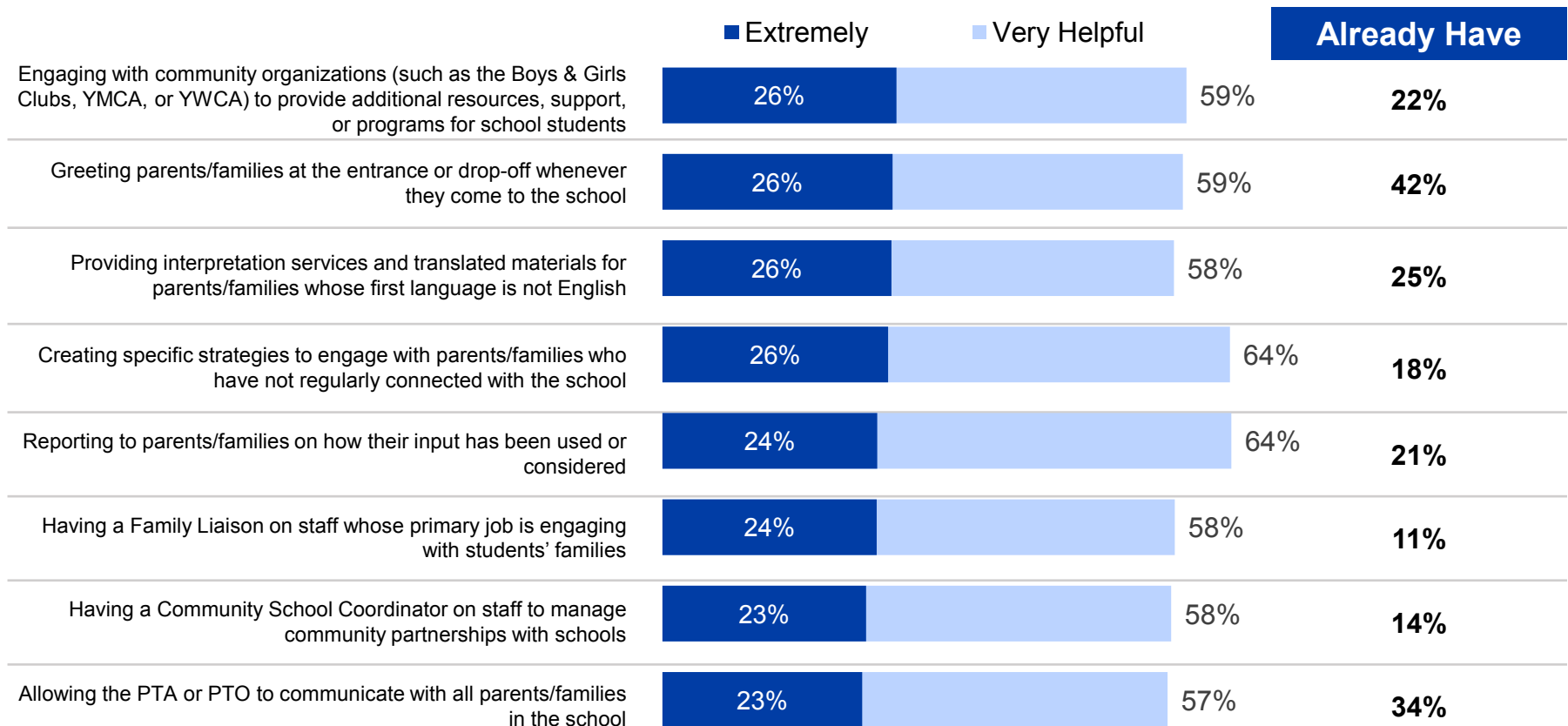
How **helpful** would each one be for you to engage with school staff?
(Top Tier)



➤ Even Second Tier Approaches Have Potential

However, parents are less clear about how specific family engagement roles like “Family Liaison” or “Community School Coordinator” can support schools’ efforts.

How **helpful** would each one be for you to engage with school staff?
(Second Tier)



➤ Top Approaches by Key Audiences

% Extremely Helpful

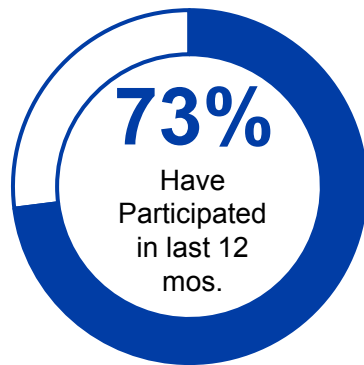
Policy or Approach	ES	MS	HS	Black	Hispanic	White	Urban	Sub-urban	Small Town/Rural	Speak Another Lang. @ Home	Parents w/ Disability
Responding to parents/families within 48 hours of when they submitted their questions/comments	36%	40%	36%	42%	35%	37%	39%	36%	38%	34%	45%
Providing parents/families with multiple measures on how their child is doing academically (e.g., tests, standardized assessments, teacher comments, report cards, etc.)	33%	42%	35%	45%	36%	35%	44%	32%	35%	41%	39%
Providing accommodations to allow parents/families with disabilities to access information, activities, or opportunities to engage with the school	30%	39%	31%	43%	37%	29%	38%	28%	33%	44%	42%
Providing teachers and staff with training on how to eliminate bias in how they engage with parents/families from different cultural backgrounds	30%	38%	30%	39%	32%	31%	38%	29%	33%	29%	39%
Providing training for teachers and staff on how to communicate with all parents/families	30%	35%	32%	42%	35%	28%	39%	28%	31%	35%	37%
Connecting students' families with additional support or resources they may need, such as access to food or housing	29%	38%	28%	39%	33%	29%	36%	29%	30%	37%	42%
Giving teachers dedicated time in their day to communicate with students' families	27%	34%	28%	32%	29%	29%	34%	27%	27%	26%	36%
Providing teachers and staff with training on how to engage with parents/families from different cultural backgrounds	24%	30%	30%	43%	32%	23%	30%	27%	24%	35%	34%
Engaging with community organizations (such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, or YWCA) to provide additional resources, support, or programs for school students	25%	34%	23%	36%	35%	22%	35%	23%	25%	39%	33%
Providing interpretation services and translated materials for parents/families whose first language is not English	24%	31%	25%	35%	36%	21%	33%	23%	24%	46%	28%

➤ Parent-Teacher Conferences Reach the Most Families

And many parents want more of these opportunities than they are getting—especially parents of color.

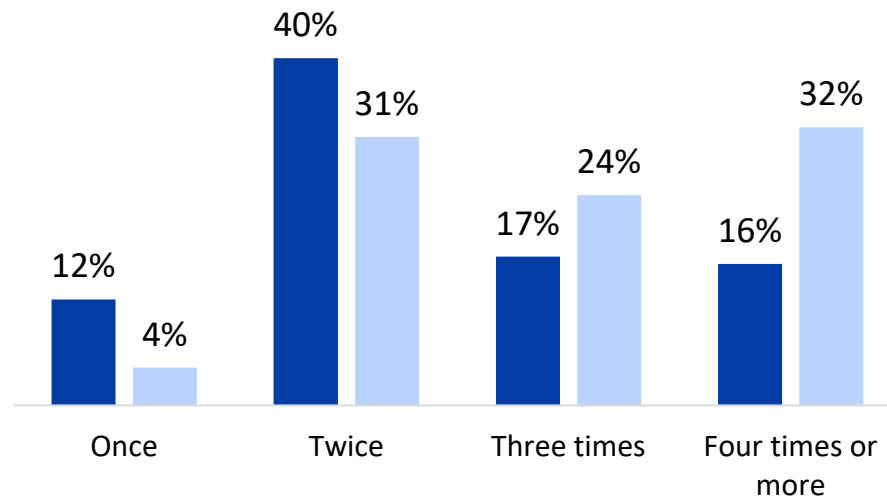
Number of Conferences They Get vs. What They Want

Attendance at Conferences



Black parents
(78%)

■ Actual Number Offered
■ Ideal Number Offered



Black (45%) and Hispanic parents (36%) are most likely to say they want 4+ conferences

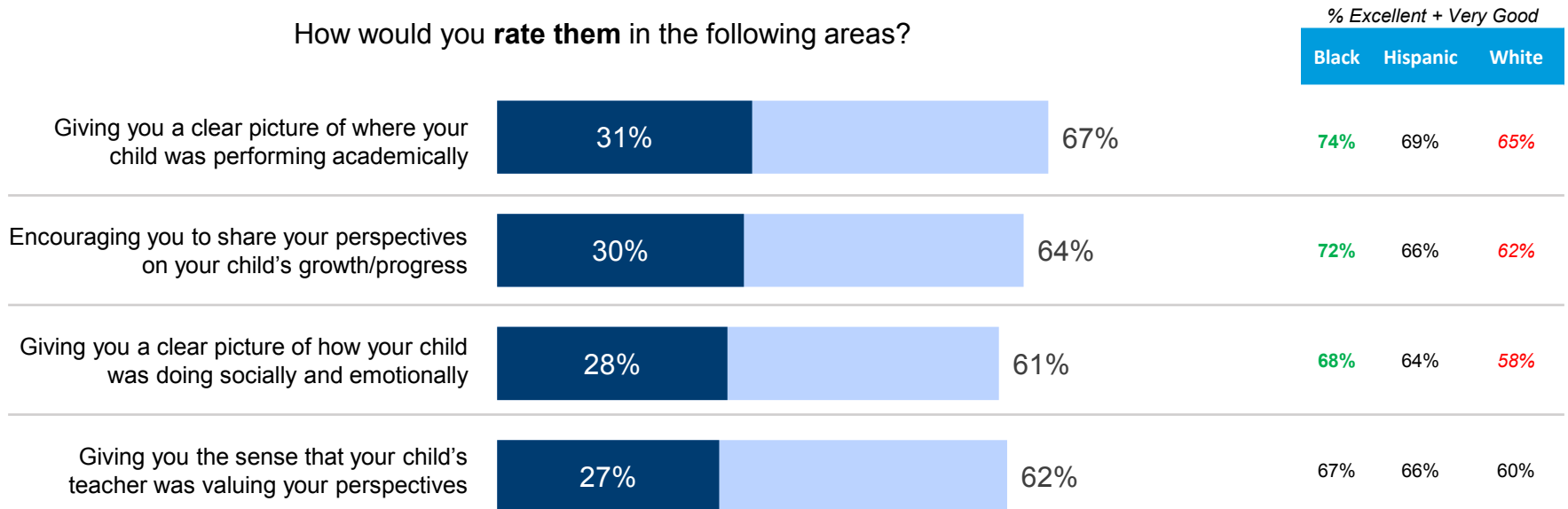
➤ Conferences Could be Better

Just over half rate them excellent/very good, and feedback is weak in key areas like giving parents a clear picture and encouraging parents to share their perspectives.



Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White
58%	57%	48%	63%	58%	52%

How would you **rate them** in the following areas?



**No statistically significant differences among grade bands.*

➤ Parents Want More Info on Spending

While very few parents say they get “too much” information on anything, 3-in-10 want to know more about spending overall and of COVID dollars.

Not Enough Communication on...	% Saying “Not Enough”	% Saying Not Enough					
		Elem. (n=860)	Middle (n=300)	High (n=428)	Black (n=395)	Hispanic (n=407)	White (n=743)
How your child’s school spends its budget	29%	26%	23%	40%	35%	18%	32%
How additional funding for COVID needs was being used at your child’s school	27%	27%	27%	27%	29%	24%	28%
How your child was doing in their social and emotional wellbeing	26%	23%	26%	32%	22%	16%	31%
What curriculum was being used in my child’s classroom	24%	23%	23%	28%	23%	19%	27%
Tips for what you could do at home to help your child’s learning	23%	22%	22%	26%	21%	20%	25%
Ways to share your input or perspectives	23%	21%	22%	28%	21%	19%	25%
Opportunities to volunteer	19%	19%	18%	21%	19%	14%	22%
How your child was doing academically	17%	16%	16%	20%	15%	14%	20%
School discipline policies	16%	14%	17%	18%	15%	14%	17%
School safety policies	15%	13%	14%	18%	17%	14%	15%
Invitations for events and activities for students and families	14%	13%	14%	18%	13%	15%	15%
School logistics (e.g., absences, school meals, drop-off & pick-up procedures)	12%	11%	11%	15%	17%	13%	11%
School health policies and COVID protocols	11%	10%	9%	15%	14%	11%	11%
Requests for donations	10%	10%	10%	12%	12%	12%	10%



National Standards *for* _____ **FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

LEARN MORE AT **PTA.ORG/STANDARDS**

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National Standards *for* _____ **FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**



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