

**PARENT
PANDEMIC
PULSE II
SURVEY
SPRING
2021**

**REPORT OF
FINDINGS**



Overview

This report prepared for the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) is based on the third of four surveys distributed during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2021. It sought to capture the experiences and perceptions of parents of K-12 students near the end of the 2020-2021 'back to school' phase.

Methods

This is report 3 of 4 being released on ASCA's parent voices during COVID-19 surveys. A total of 631 parents responded to ASCA's third survey, the Parent Pandemic Pulse II Survey, conducted in the Spring of 2021. We are using pseudonyms to represent parent voices.

Key Findings

79% of parents reported that their children were back to learning face-to-face only.

69% preferred their children to return to face-to-face learning in September 2021.

41% found it more difficult than expected when asked, "How challenging was it for your child(ren) to learn this year (face to face or online)?"

66% of students were in a cohort model at school in Fall 2020.

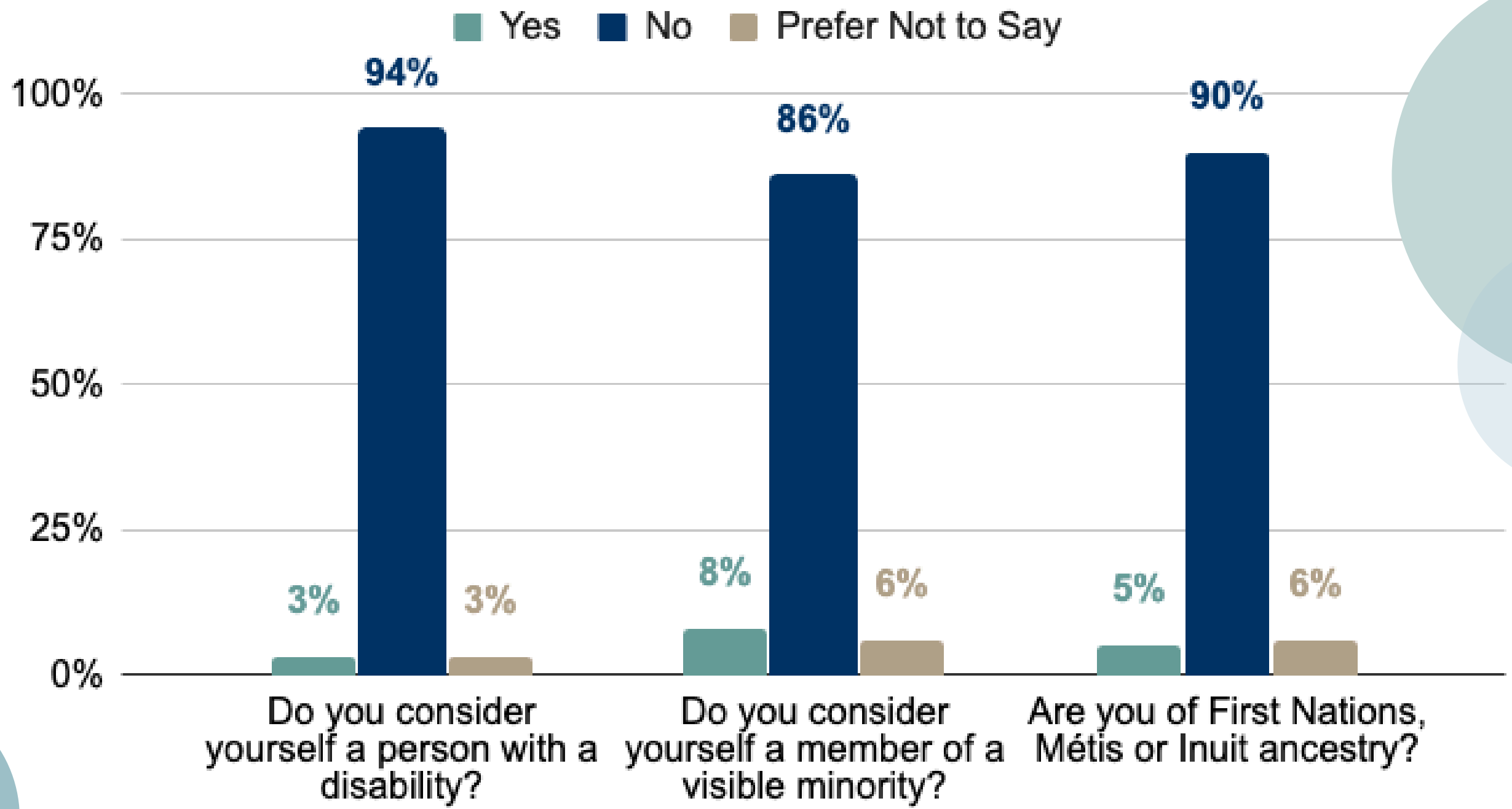
66%

of those cohort models included only interacting with the same people within their group.

39%

of parents and caregivers had confidence that the cohorting model in place at their child's school had prevented/contained and/or would prevent or contain COVID-19 infections.

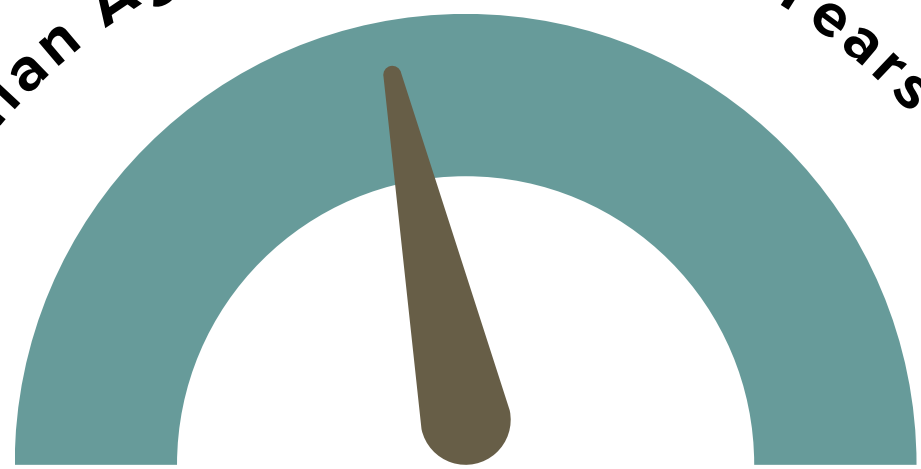
Demographics: Parents and Caregivers



**Average Household Income:
\$90,000-99,999**

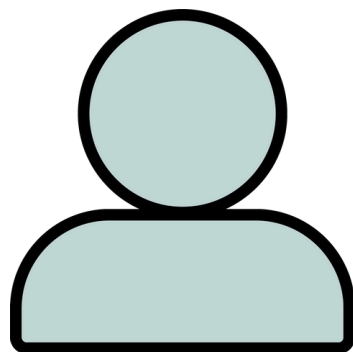


Median Age: Between 41-45 Years Old

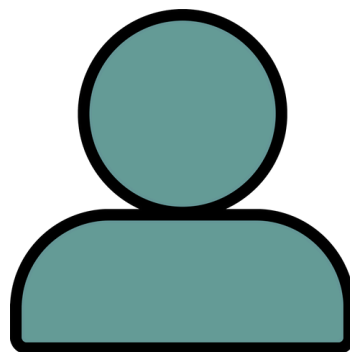


How Do You Identify?

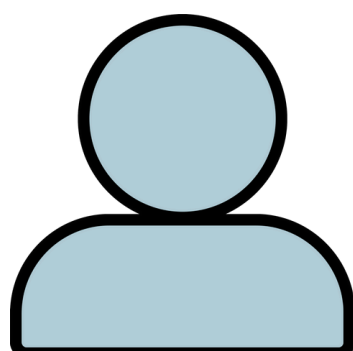
85% Female



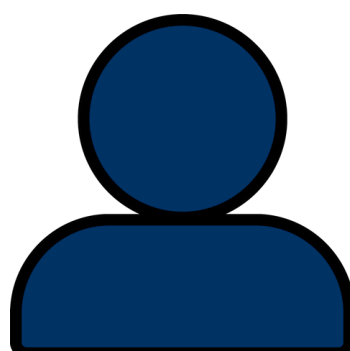
12% Male



3% Prefer Not To Say



0.4% Not Listed



Location

59% City

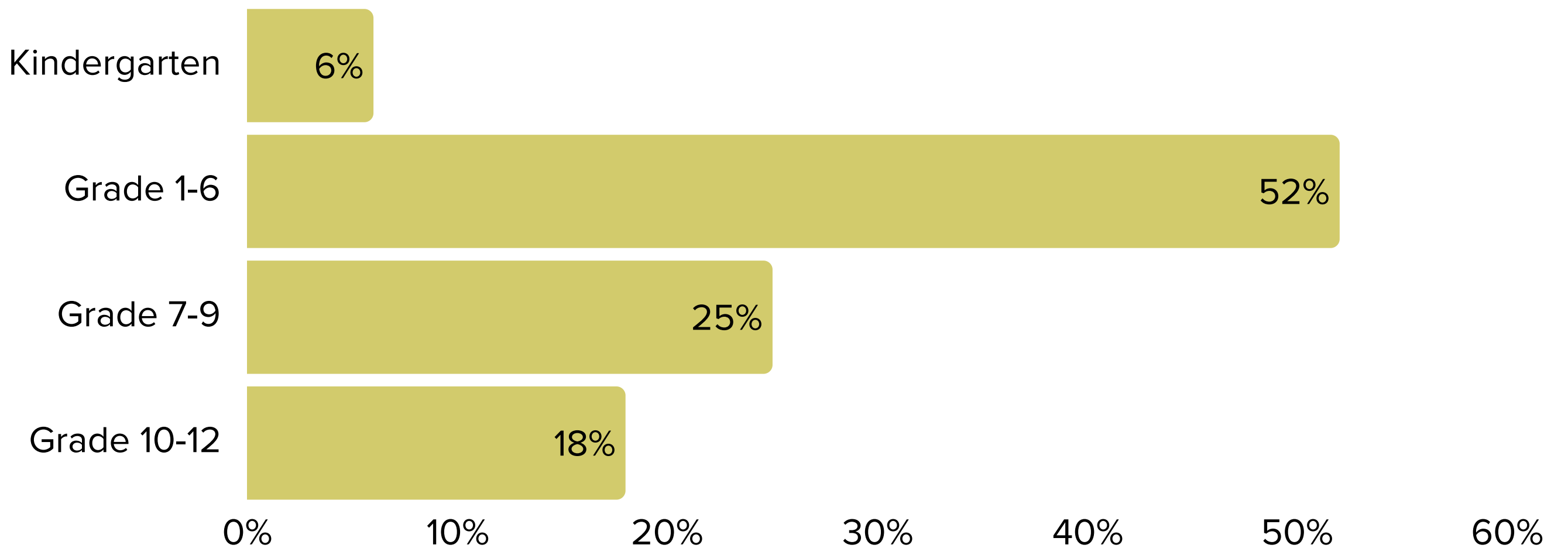
16% Town

25% Rural Area

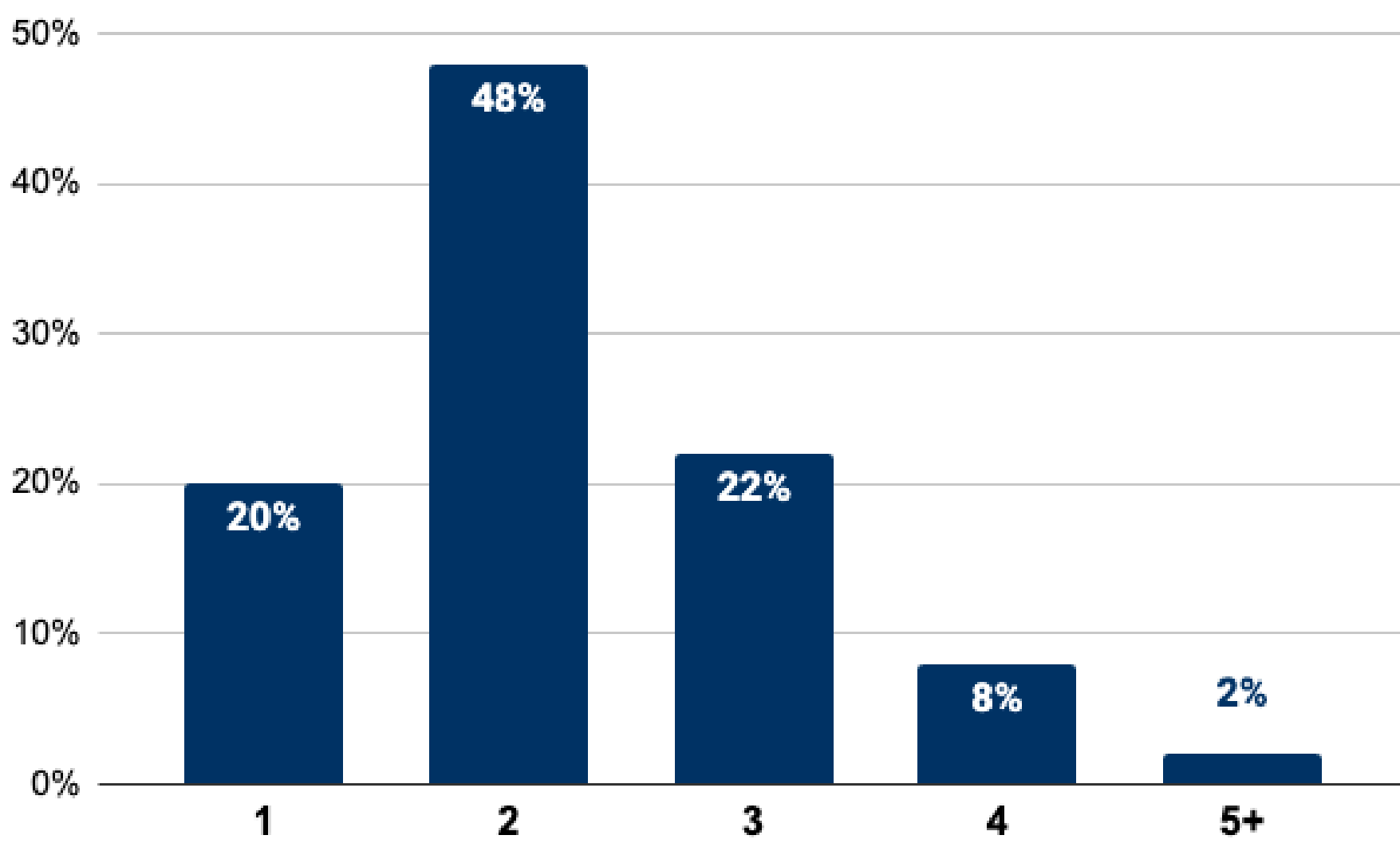


Demographics: Students

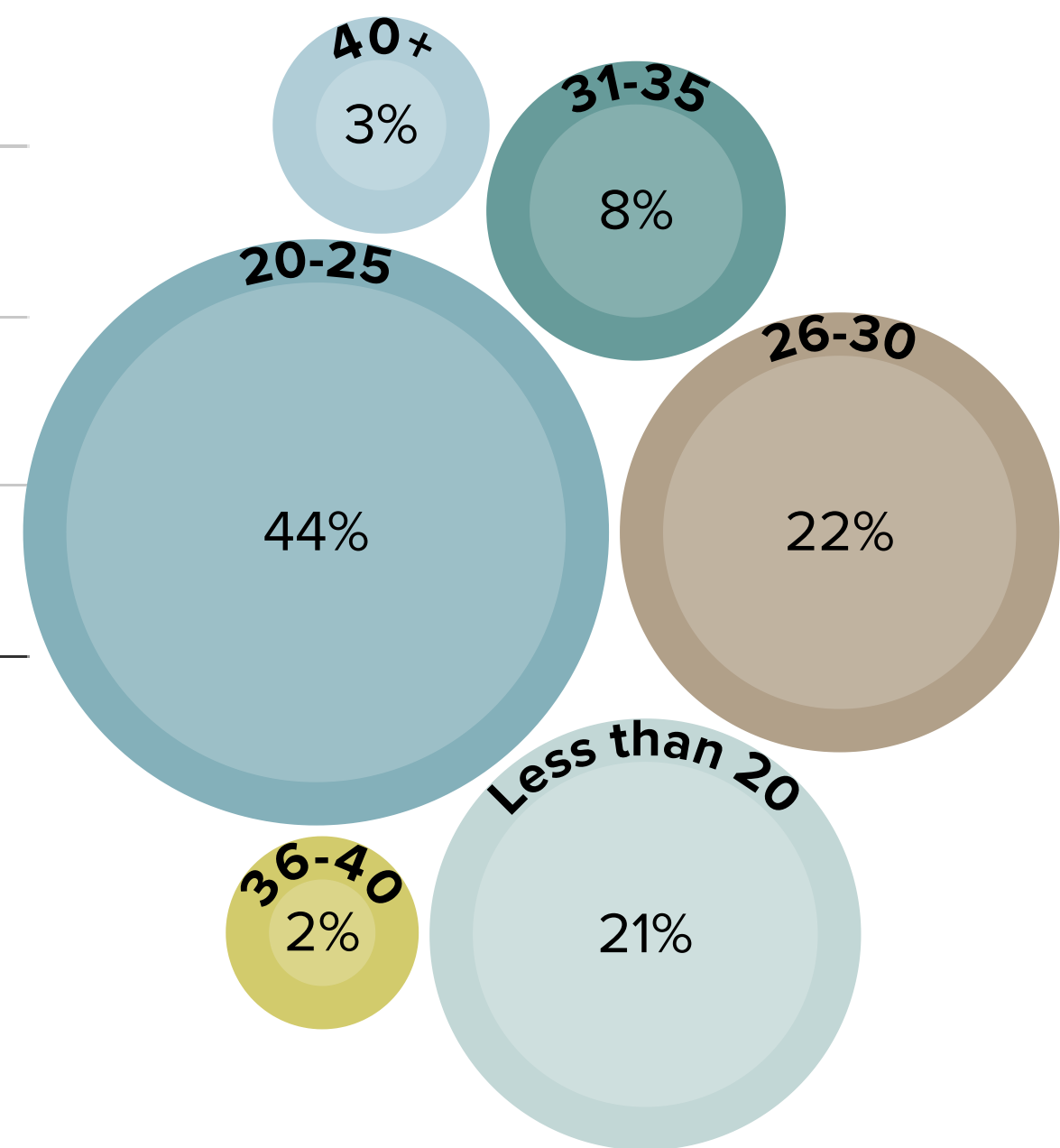
Child's Grade Level



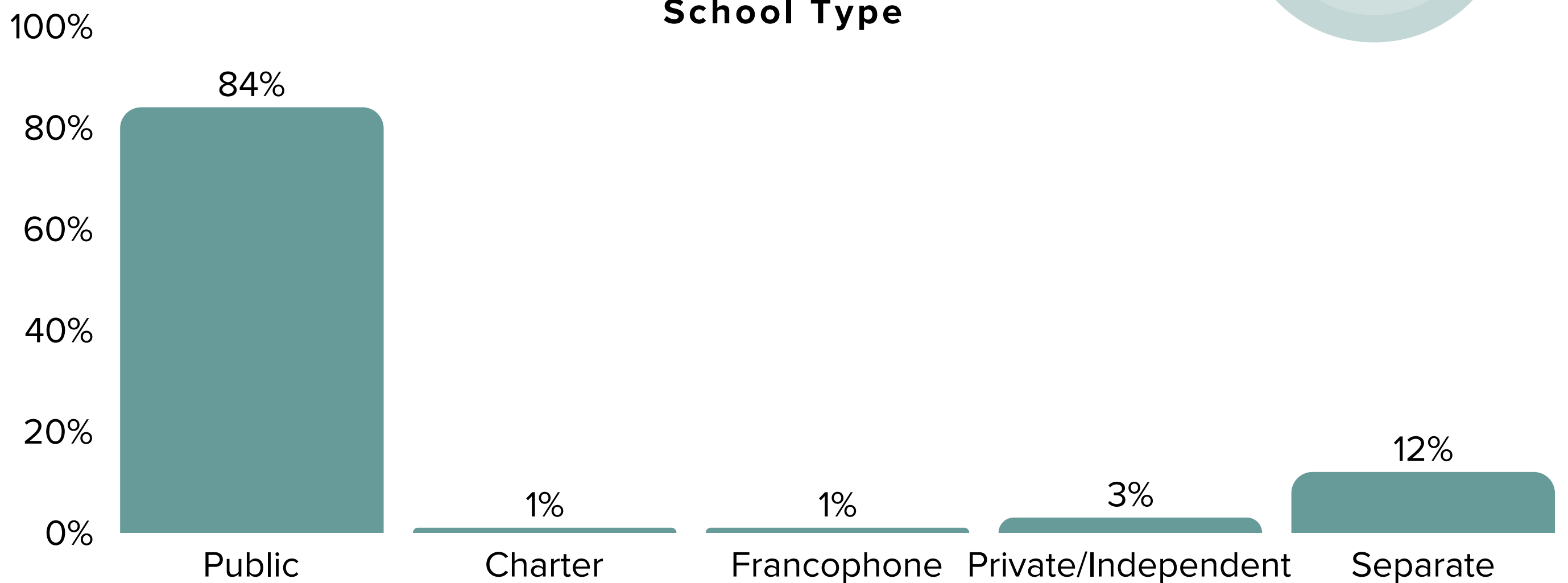
Number of Children in Household



Classroom Size

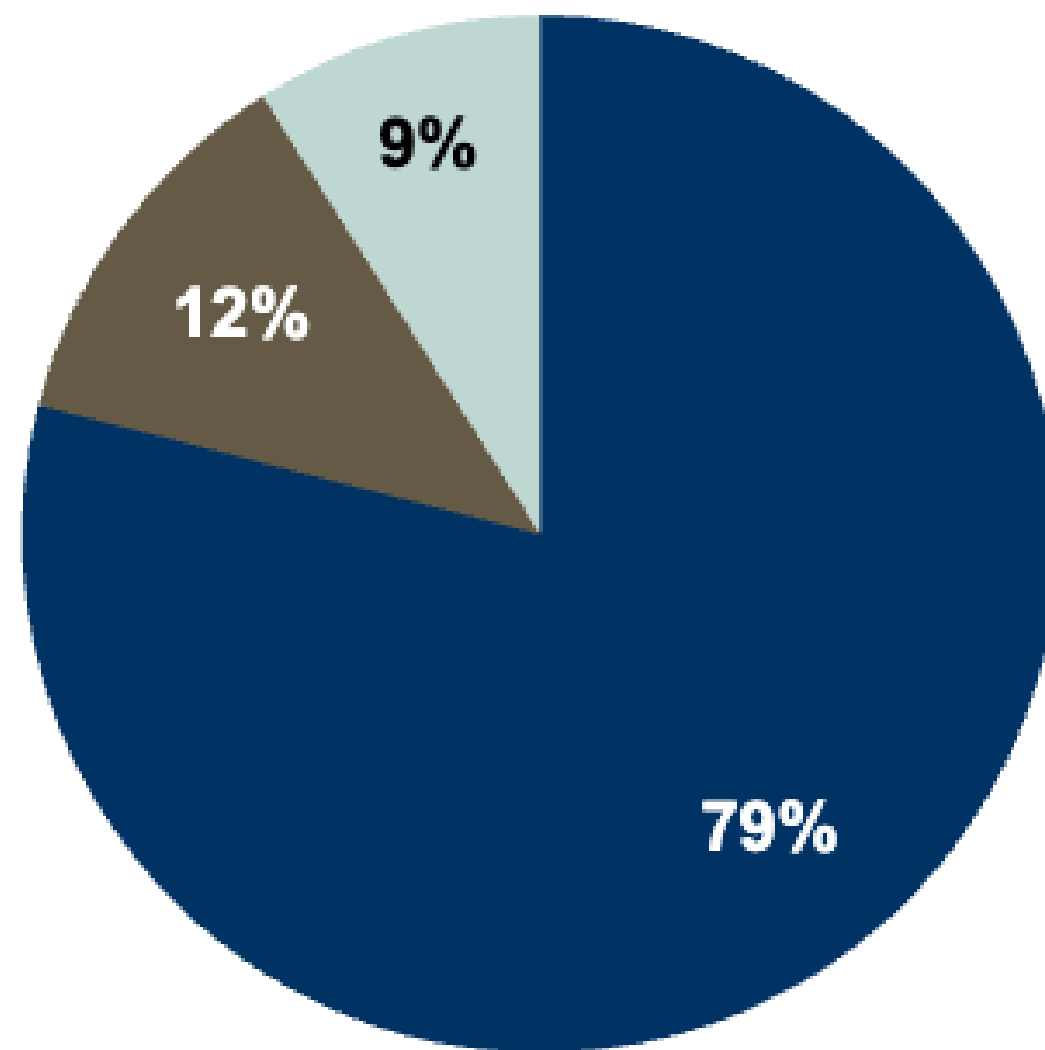


School Type



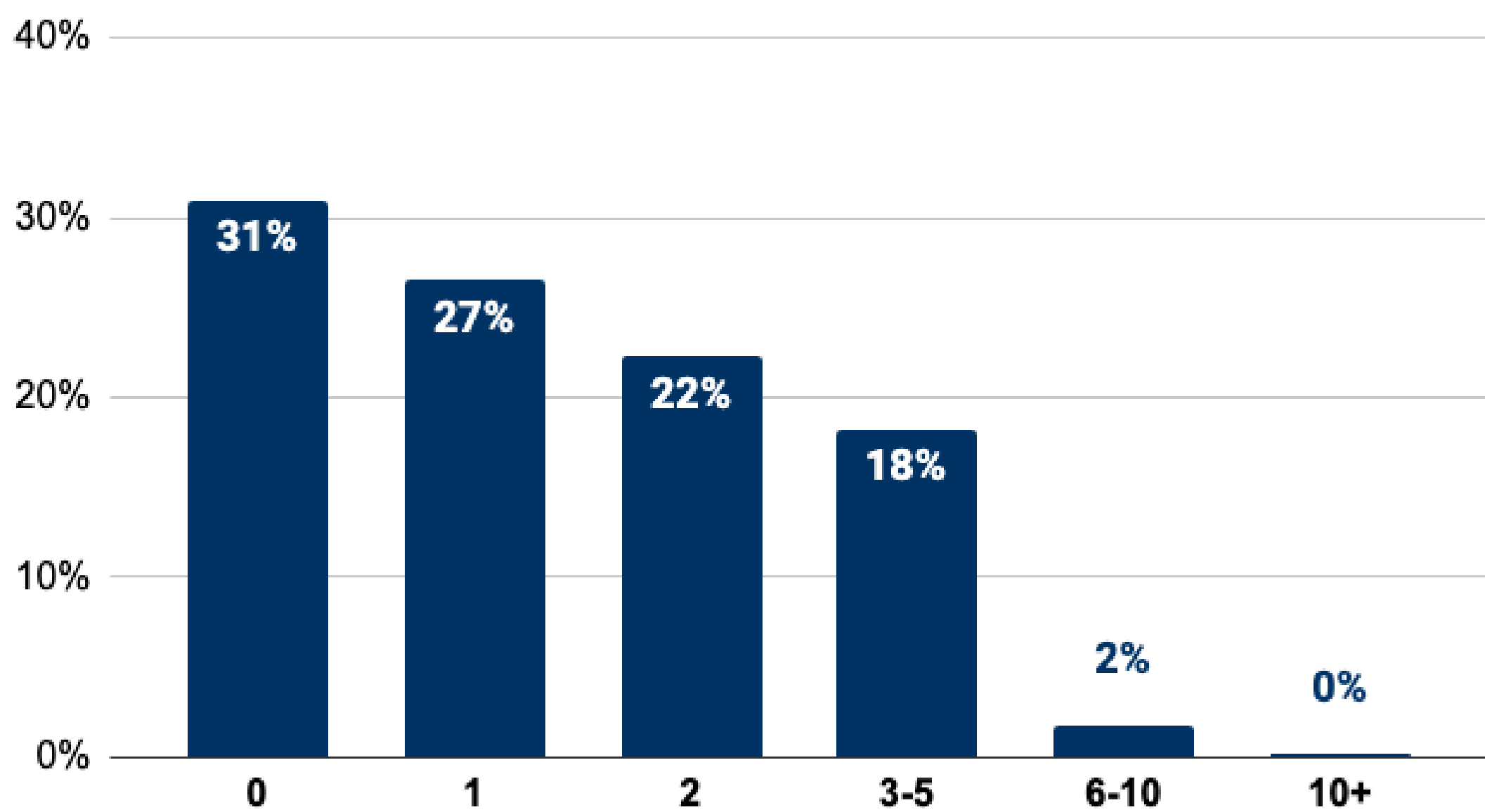
School Delivery Methods and Academics

How is your child learning in school at this time?



● Face-to-Face Only ● Blended (Online and Face-to-Face) ● Online Only

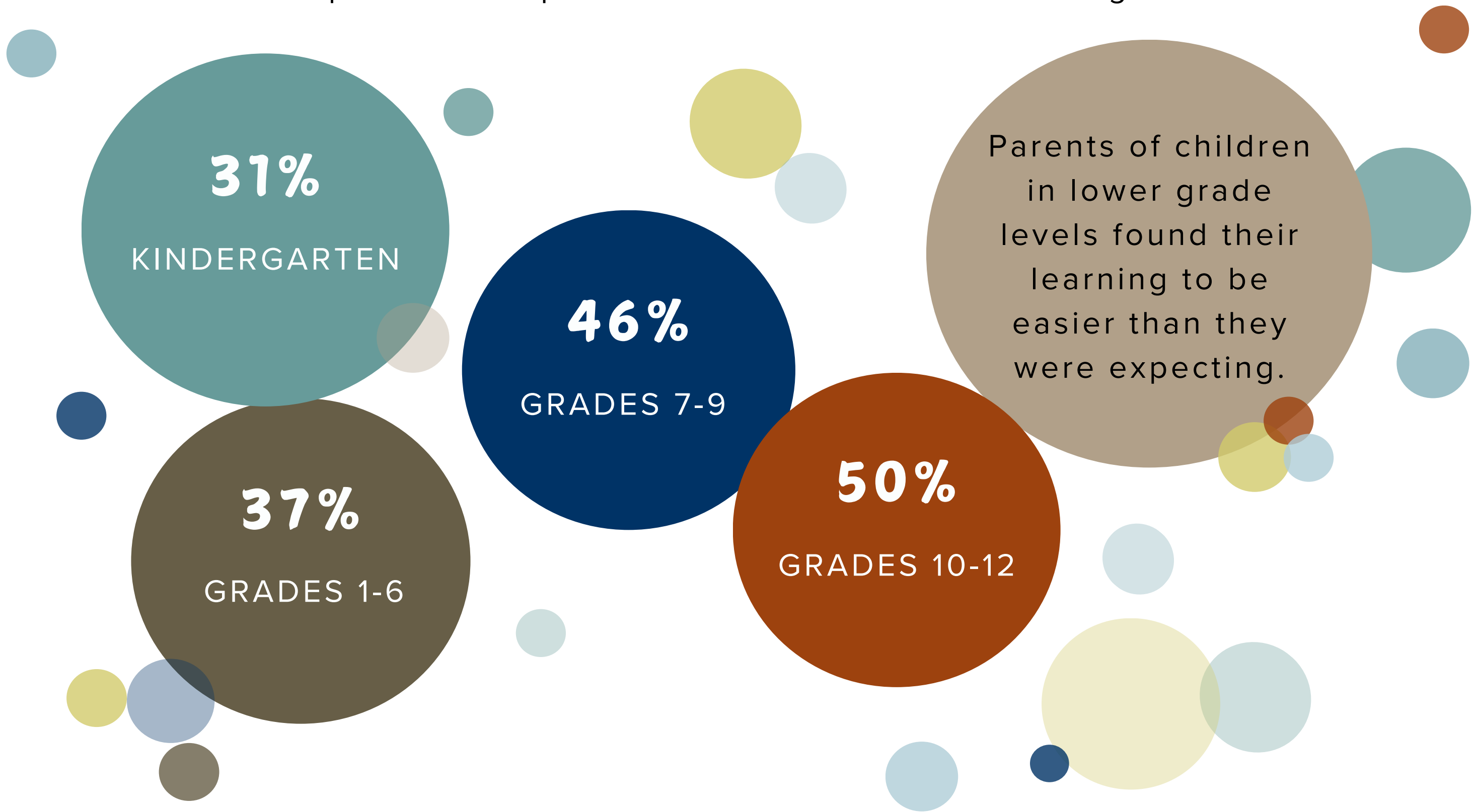
Excluding the periods of time when all learners in Alberta had to learn online (December/January/May), **how many times did your child need to move to online learning due to COVID-19 related quarantine, isolation, or local case counts?**



	Yes	No	Unsure	Not Applicable
Is the school council at your child's school an Alberta School Councils' Association Member?	42%	4%	54%	0.6%
Do you keep in contact with the school council at your child's school?	46%	49%		5%

Back to School and Learning Challenges

Parents reported how challenging it was for their child(ren) to learn this year (face-to-face or online). The percentages of parents who selected “more difficult than expected” are presented based on their child’s grade level.



Preference for September 2021 and how challenging it was for your child(ren) to learn this year.

Back to school preference					
		Face-to-face only	Blended	Face-to-face with online option	Online only
Difficulty with online learning	About what I expected	47%	35%	40%	31%
	Different children had different experiences	0%	12%	13%	13%
	Easier than I expected	12%	7%	18%	31%
	More difficult than I expected	41%	46%	29%	25%

Emotional Impact of COVID-19

Parents were asked to identify their level of agreement with the following statements when thinking about their child's past year of learning (face-to-face or online). The percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement is reported below. They *frequently*...

71% FELT STRESSED

66% FELT EXHAUSTED

56% FELT ANXIOUS

55% FELT RESPECTED AS A PARTNER IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING

54% FELT APPROPRIATELY INFORMED

54% FELT FRUSTRATED OR HELPLESS

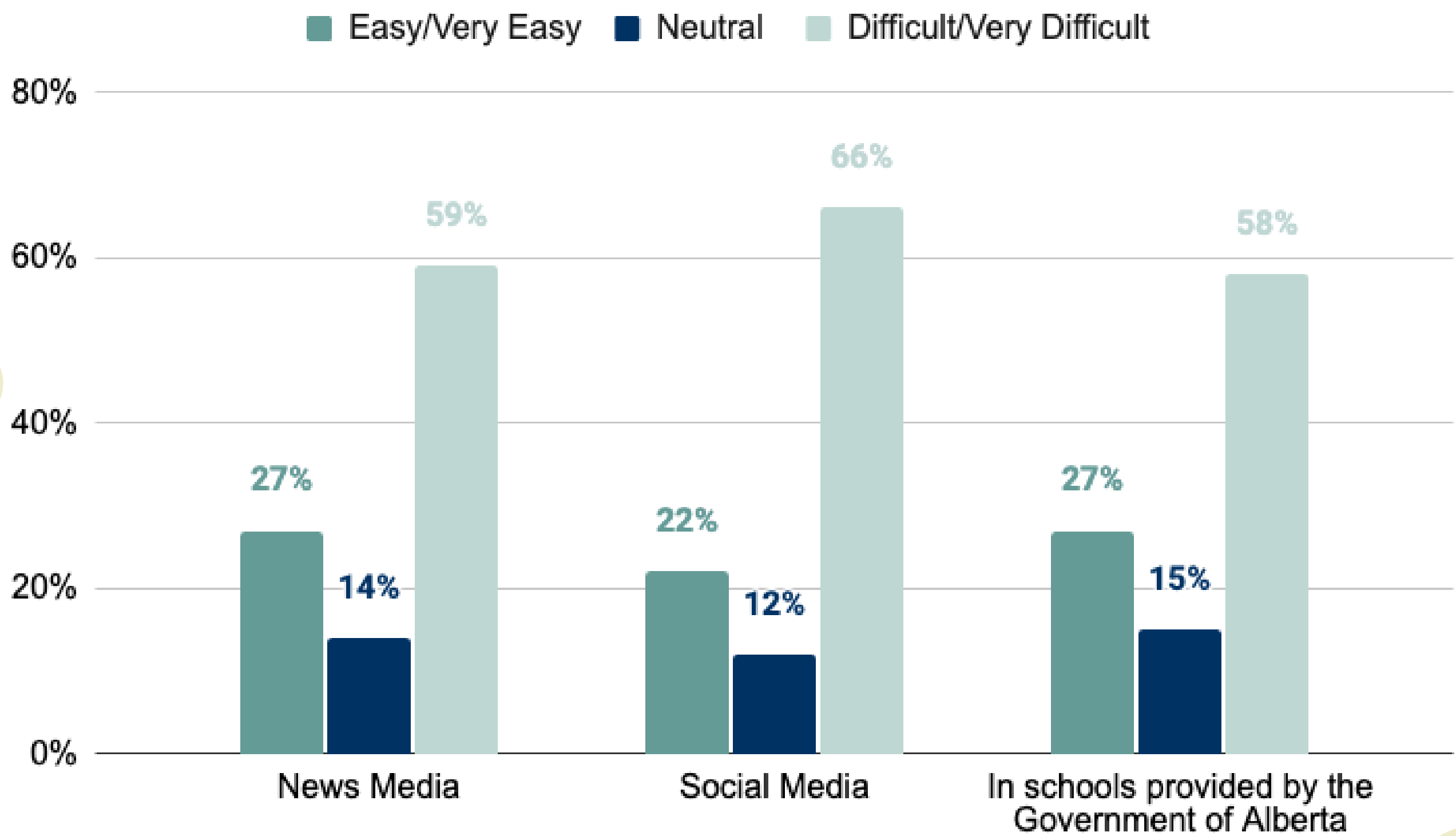
47% FELT ENGAGED AND/OR INCLUDED

41% FELT APPRECIATED

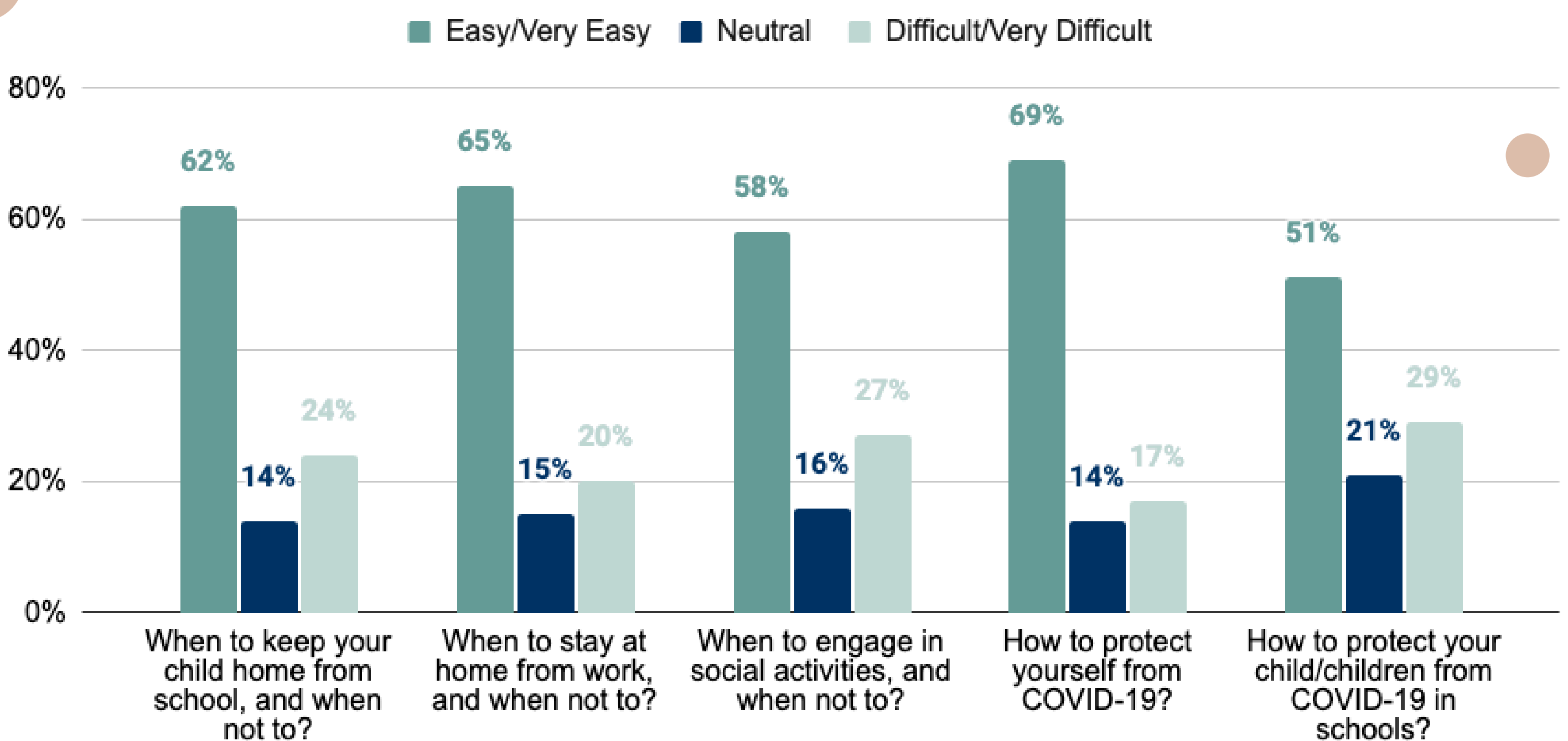
35% FELT LEFT OUT OR UNINFORMED

Understanding Information about COVID-19

How easy would you say it is to judge if information is reliable in...

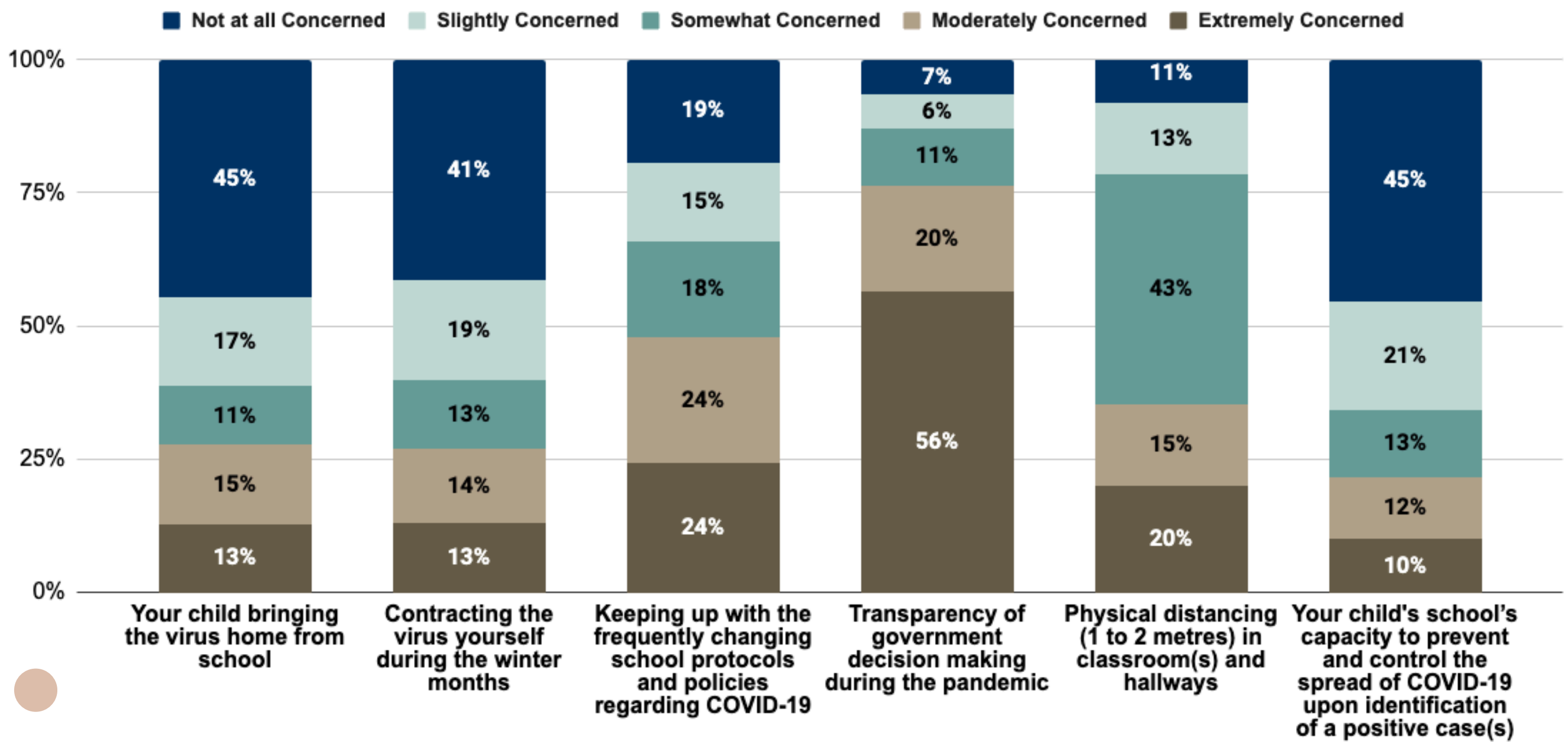


How easy would you say it is to understand Alberta Health Services recommendations for...



COVID-19 Perceptions

Please identify the level of concern you experienced this past year with the following:



Parents were asked to identify their level of agreement with various statements about COVID-19 in recent months. Below is the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements listed.

51%

COVID-19 FEELS CLOSE TO ME.

31%

COVID-19 FEELS LIKE IT IS SPREADING SLOWLY.

82%

COVID-19 IS STRESSFUL.

65%

COVID-19 IS MEDIA HYPED.

59%

COVID-19 IS SOMETHING I THINK ABOUT ALL THE TIME.

39%

COVID-19 IS **NOT** FEAR-INDUCING.

44%

COVID-19 IS SOMETHING THAT MAKES ME FEEL HELPLESS.

63%

AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT LOOKING FORWARD, COVID-19 WILL BECOME LESS STRESSFUL.

25%

OF CHILDREN HAD RECEIVED THEIR FIRST VACCINE DOSE OR HAD AN APPOINTMENT TO.

59%

OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS HAD RECEIVED THEIR FIRST VACCINE DOSE.

32%

OF CHILDREN WERE TOO YOUNG.


42%

OF CHILDREN HAD NOT.


COVID-19 Protocols

Parents were asked about the frequency of their COVID-19 prevention methods. From most often to least often, parents reported engaging in the following measures:

“Over the past weeks and months, which of the following measures have you taken to prevent infection from COVID-19?”

- 
- Wore a mask in public.
 - Frequently washed your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Wore a mask in your workplace.
 - Used disinfectants to clean your hands when soap and water were not available.
 - Ensured physical distancing in public.
 - Avoided touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Avoided a social event you wanted to attend.
 - Disinfected surfaces in your home.
 - Stayed home from work.
 - Worked from home.

“Over the past weeks and months, thinking about the one child in your family you are describing in this survey, which of the following measures have they taken to prevent infection from COVID-19?”

- 
- Wore a mask while in the hallways at school.
 - Wore a mask within the classroom/cohort when interacting with other students.
 - Used disinfectants to clean hands when soap and water were not available.
 - Washed their hands at school with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Physically distancing (1 to 2 metres) while in public.
 - Disinfected their desk or other classroom surface(s).
 - Avoided group gatherings outside their classroom (or cohort).
 - Avoided touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Physically distancing (1 to 2 metres) while on playgrounds or outside.

35%

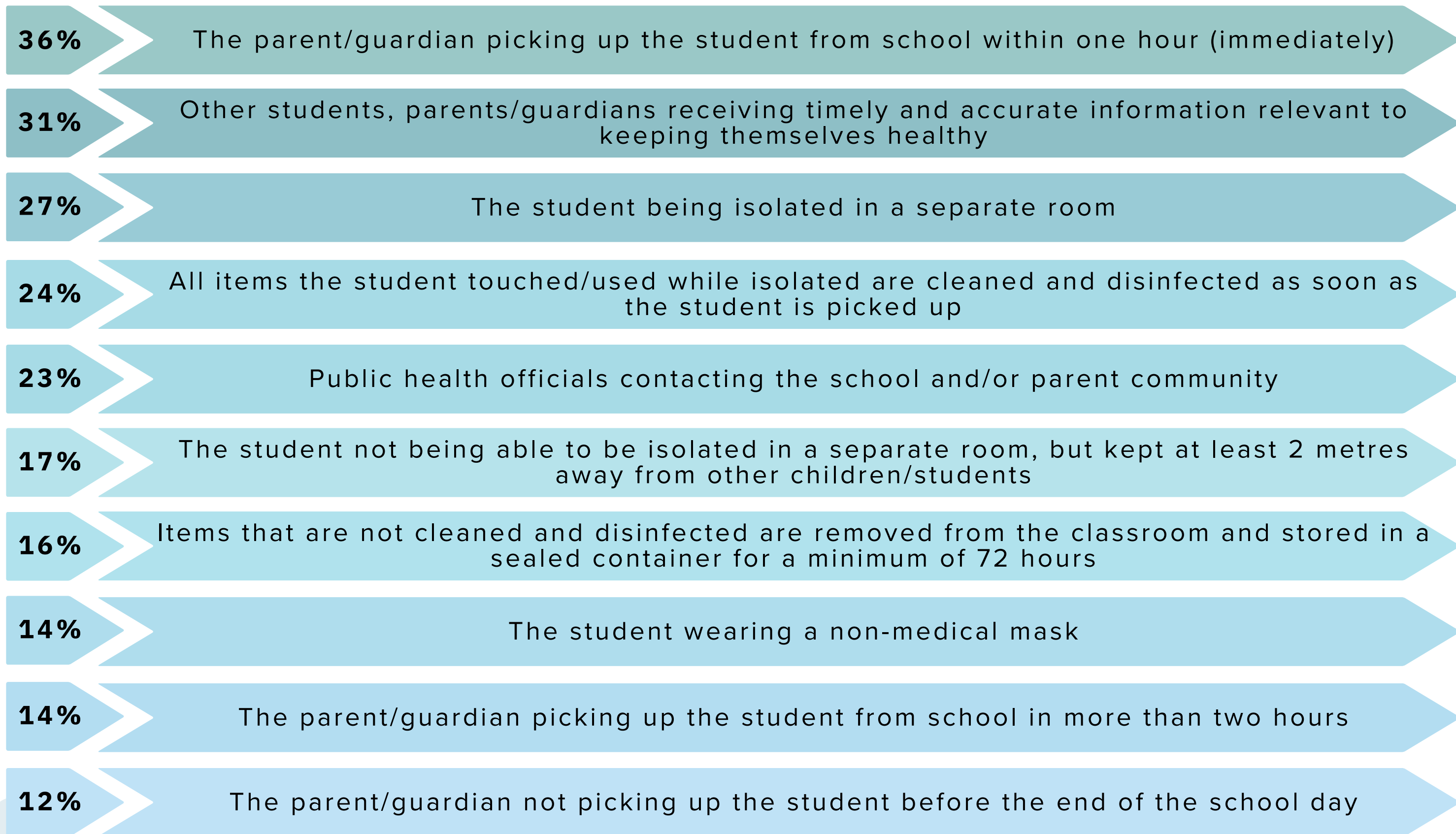
agreed the Minister of Education should maintain Grade 12 Diploma Exams for the 2021-2022 school year.

42%

agreed the Minister of Education should maintain Grade 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Testing (PAT) for the 2021-2022 school year.

COVID-19 Protocols Continued

Parents were asked, “In the event of a confirmed or presumptive (likely) student case of COVID-19, which of the following action(s) in the outbreak plan do you believe were, or will be, challenging for your child's classroom/school environment?” They selected all that they felt applied to them. From most selected to least selected:



52% completed the daily COVID-19 screening checklist before their child entered their school.

15% agreed that the daily COVID-19 screening checklist was being completed by other parents before their children entered their school.

31% agreed that the daily COVID-19 screening checklist was being completed by staff before entering the school.

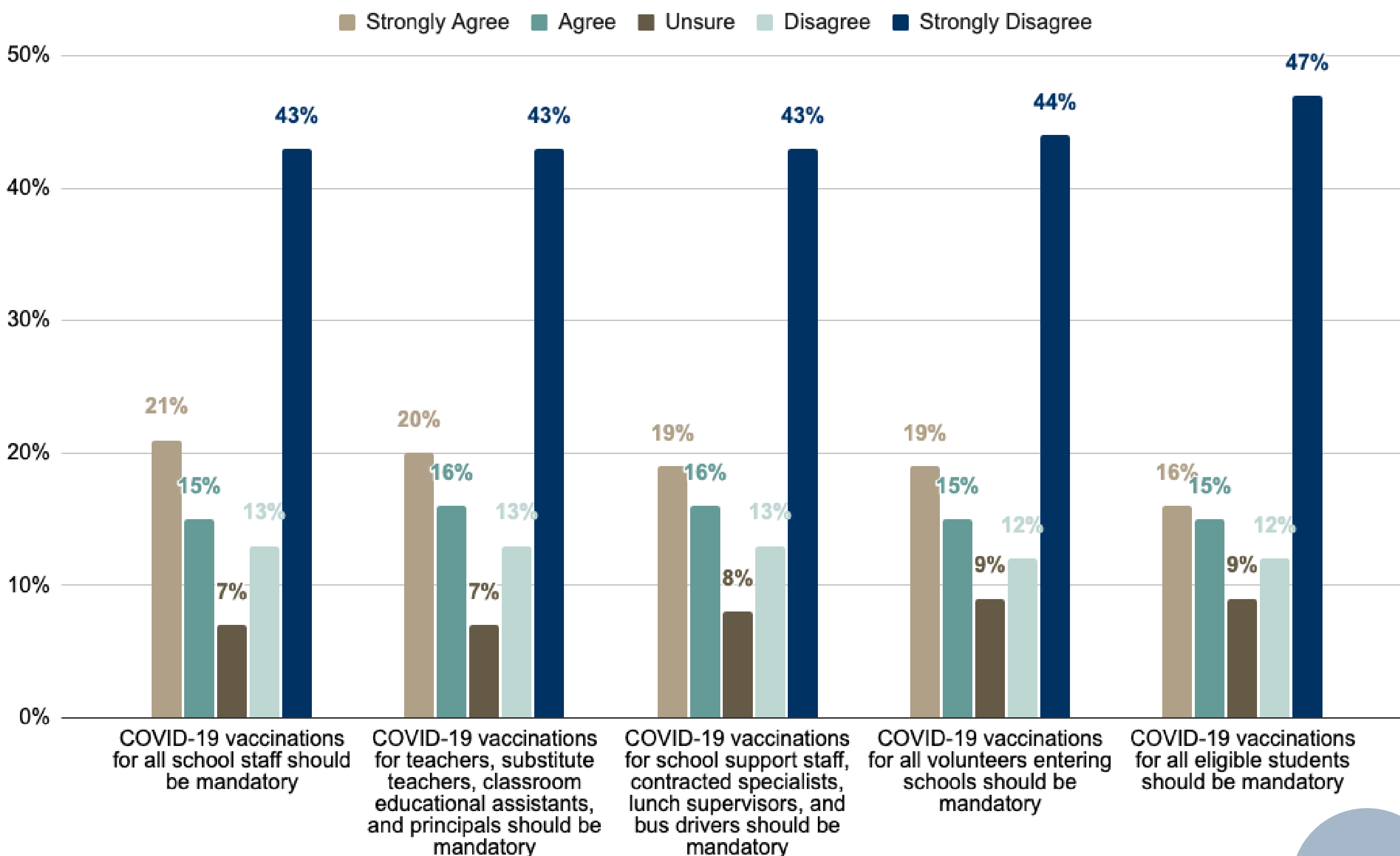
35% agreed that the daily COVID-19 screening checklist was an effective tool to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among students/staff in Alberta schools.

COVID-19 Protocols Continued

Parents were asked, “Thinking of the 2021-2022 school year, what practices or protocols used this year would you like to see carried forward/used?” They selected all that they felt would apply. From most selected to least, they selected:

- Enhanced cleaning practices (52%)
- Enhanced personal hygiene practices (frequent hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizers) (49%)
- Use of the daily health screening tool for teachers/school staff (43%)
- Use of the daily health screening tool for students (38%)
- Parent choice for virtual meetings with teachers/school staff (35%)
- Parent choice to temporarily change to online learning if needed (35%)
- Use of masks when a student or staff member is unwell (cold or flu-like symptoms) (31%)
- Parent choice to participate in school events (school council meetings, assemblies, celebrations) virtually (30%)

Thinking about school start up in September 2021, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.



Educational Concerns

Parents were asked: "Thinking about your child's learning experience this past school year, to what extent do you agree with each of the following statements related to your child having received what they need(ed) to be successful (equity)". Below are the percentages of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements.

65%

I am concerned with my child's engagement and motivation in school (online or face-to-face).

76%

I am concerned about learning losses/curricular gaps for my child occurring this school year as a result of COVID-19.

86%

My child has had access to a reliable internet connection and a computer/device to complete their assignments.

51%

A loss of support staff and educational assistants has negatively impacted my child's ability to learn at school or at a distance.

87%

My child has had a quiet/safe space to do their school work when they are home.

82%

I am concerned about supports for vulnerable populations, child poverty and/or growing inequity.

70%

I am concerned that online learning has created new cost burdens for my child and/or other Alberta families.

32%

I have not been able to get my child what they need to be successful (equity) with online instruction.

81%

I am concerned with my child's mental well-being resulting from COVID-19.

16%

of parents and caregivers had hired a private tutor or paid for outside educational services/support for their child.

Concluding Thoughts

In the spring of 2021, parents were still adjusting to their children returning to face-to-face learning or dealing with new blended learning schedules. At the same time, they were grappling with the reliability of information disseminated around COVID-19 and had a growing skepticism about the transparency of government decision-making. They reacted differently to COVID-19 protocols and policies established by school boards and schools. Many parents expressed concern for their child(ren)'s mental well-being, curricular gaps resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and growing inequities that may have amplified during this contentious time. Parents and caregivers also felt stress from COVID-19, while wondering if it was media hyped. Tensions between balancing their child(ren)'s mental and physical well-being were paramount. Overall, parents again took in the information and protocols and tried to do what was best for their student(s).



Prepared by Samantha Mullin and Erica Fae Thomson
for the Alberta School Councils' Association

January 2025