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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

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➤ **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.

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Schools Are Open to Families

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➢ **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)

On school grounds (outdoors)	53%
In the school building, but only for events	48%
In the school building during the school day	41%
In the classroom while classes are taking place	8%
None of the above	8%
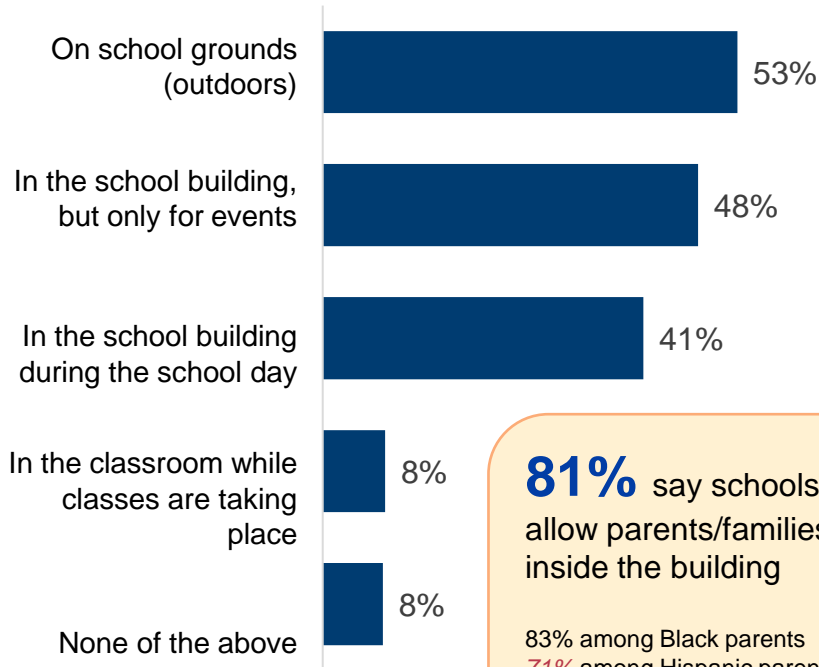
81% say schools allow parents/families inside the building

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

School Policies This School Year

The policy will be the **same** as last year	51%
The policy is **allowing** parents/families to be in the school building(s) **more than last year**	25%
The policy is **restricting** parents/families from being in the school building(s) **more than last year**	10%
The school has **not announced** its policy for this school year	5%
Not sure	9%

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➢ 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

	Describes Perfectly	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

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➤ Parents Trust the School

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

Agree with Statement?

% Strongly + Somewhat Agree

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

Statement	Strongly Agree	Total	Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White	
I trust my child's school.	41%	82%	86%	81%	75%	82%	82%	81%	
I feel like the teachers, faculty, and staff at my child's school respect me.	40%	81%	86%	77%	78%	84%	85%	80%	Parents w/ Disability (75%)
My child's school welcomes input from all parents/families equally.	34%	73%	75%	70%	70%	77%	72%	72%	
I feel like I'm in partnership with my child's school to support my child's learning and development.	34%	76%	80%	71%	73%	81%	78%	74%	
I feel like I belong in the school community at my child's school.	30%	71%	74%	68%	69%	73%	73%	70%	Parents w/ Disability (64%)
When I share feedback or concerns with my child's school, I feel like my input is heard and listened to.	30%	70%	74%	66%	69%	77%	76%	68%	

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➤ **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?

Total
White
Hispanic
Mean: *2.9*

Black
Mean: **3.4**

High School
Middle School
Mean: *2.7*

Elementary
Mean: **3.2**

5%	14%	33%	48%
Unwelcoming (-5 to -2)	Neutral (-1 to 1)	Somewhat Welcoming (2-3)	Very Welcoming (4-5)

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But There Is Room For Improvement

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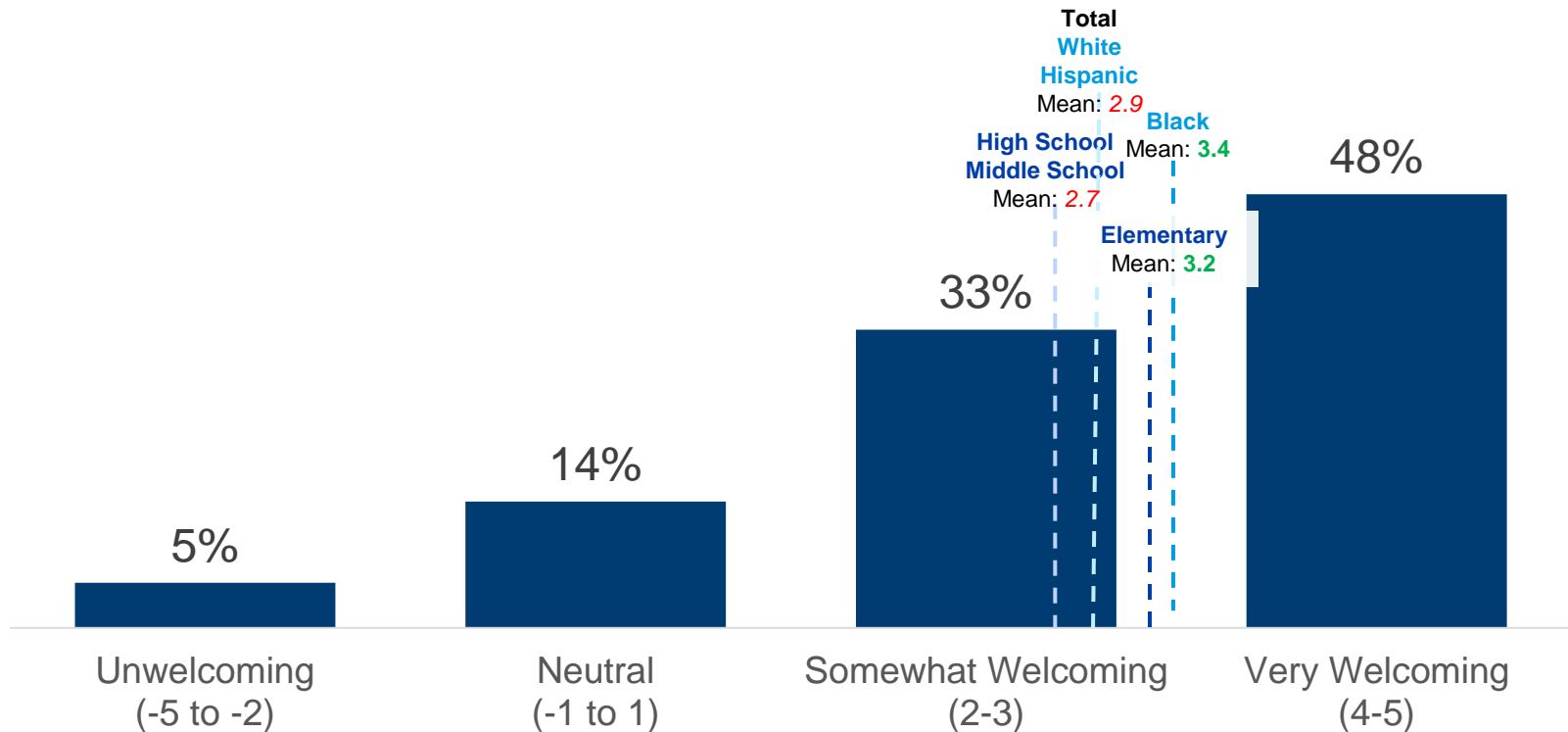
➢ Few See Schools Doing an "Excellent" Job

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**?**

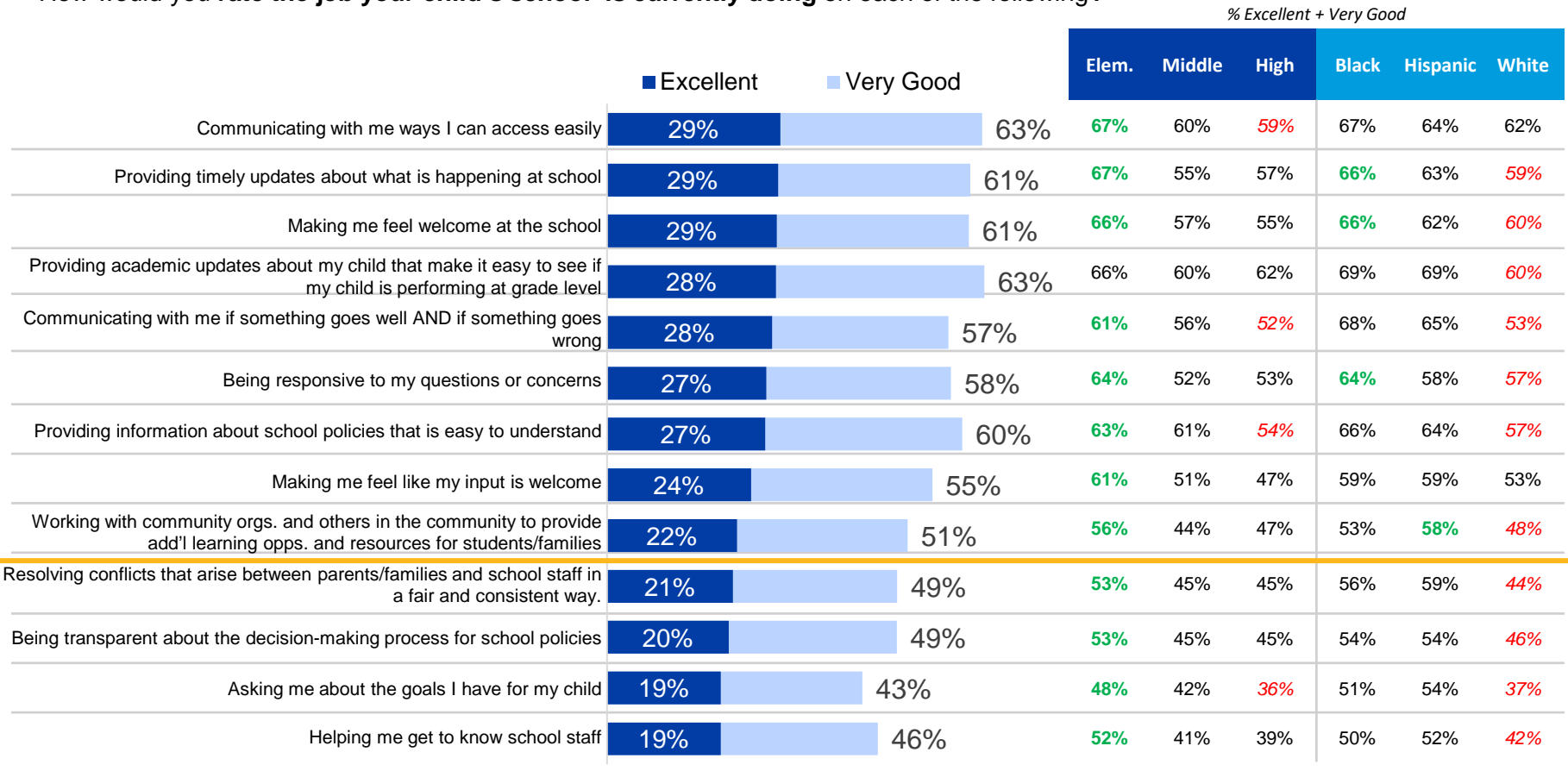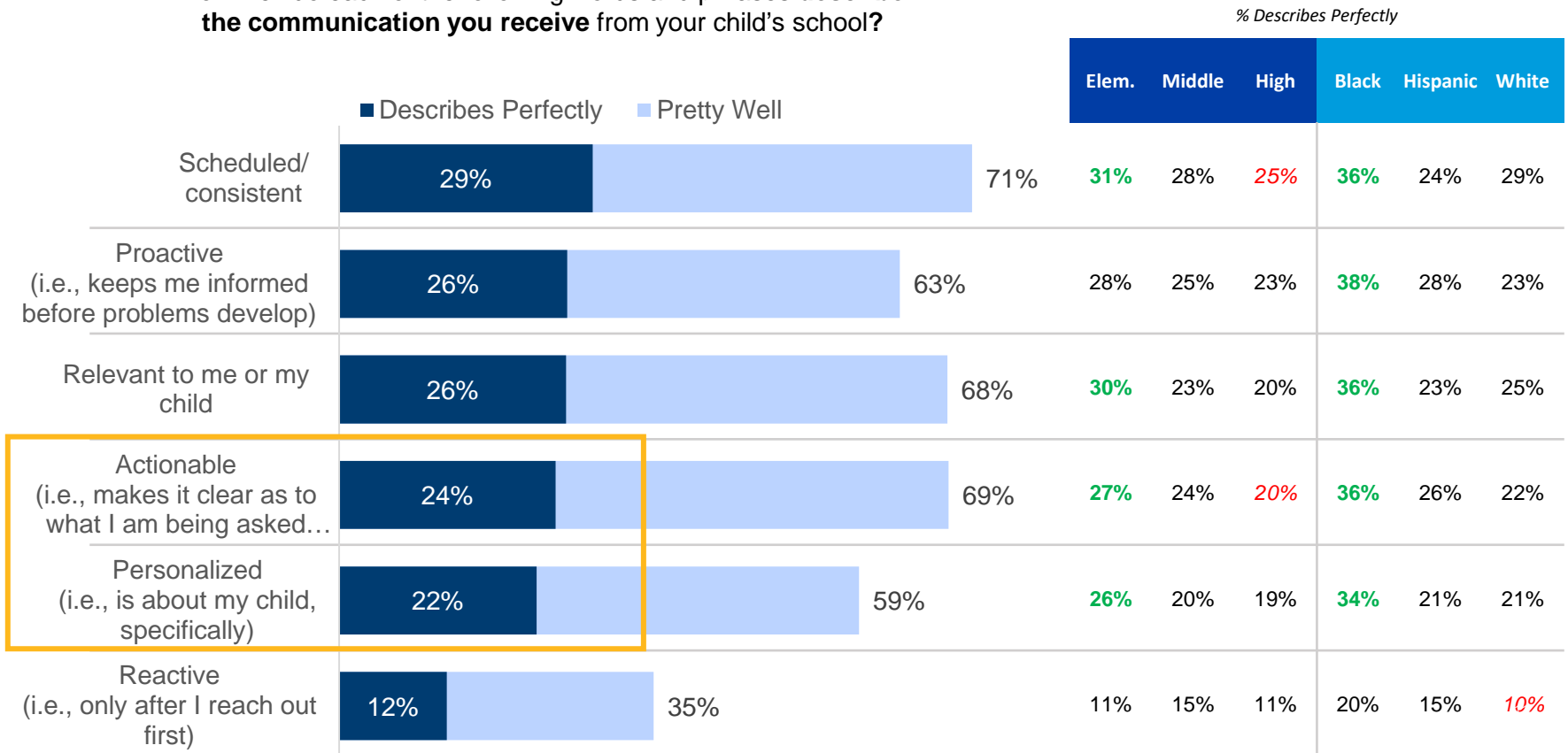*% Excellent + Very Good*

■ Excellent ■ Very Good

	Excellent	Very Good	Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White
Communicating with me ways I can access easily	29%	63%	67%	60%	59%	67%	64%	62%
Providing timely updates about what is happening at school	29%	61%	67%	55%	57%	66%	63%	59%
Making me feel welcome at the school	29%	61%	66%	57%	55%	66%	62%	60%
Providing academic updates about my child that make it easy to see if my child is performing at grade level	28%	63%	66%	60%	62%	69%	69%	60%
Communicating with me if something goes well AND if something goes wrong	28%	57%	61%	56%	52%	68%	65%	53%
Being responsive to my questions or concerns	27%	58%	64%	52%	53%	64%	58%	57%
Providing information about school policies that is easy to understand	27%	60%	63%	61%	54%	66%	64%	57%
Making me feel like my input is welcome	24%	55%	61%	51%	47%	59%	59%	53%
Working with community orgs. and others in the community to provide add'l learning opps. and resources for students/families	22%	51%	56%	44%	47%	53%	58%	48%
Resolving conflicts that arise between parents/families and school staff in a fair and consistent way.	21%	49%	53%	45%	45%	56%	59%	44%
Being transparent about the decision-making process for school policies	20%	49%	53%	45%	45%	54%	54%	46%
Asking me about the goals I have for my child	19%	43%	48%	42%	36%	51%	54%	37%
Helping me get to know school staff	19%	46%	52%	41%	39%	50%	52%	42%

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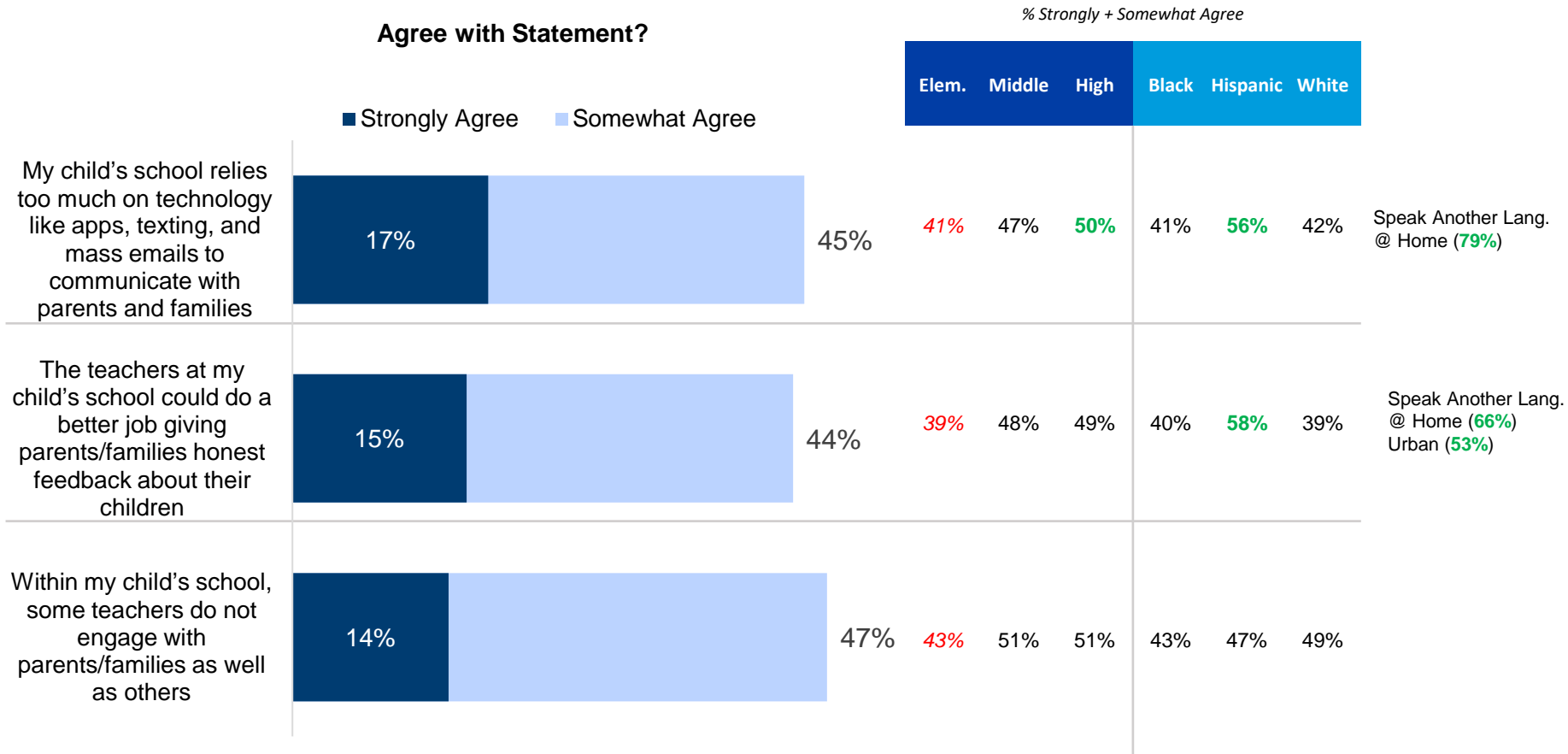# ➤ Communication Could Be Better on a Few Measures

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**?**

■ Describes Perfectly   ■ Pretty Well

% Describes Perfectly

	Describes Perfectly	Pretty Well total	Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White
Scheduled/ consistent	29%	71%	31%	28%	25%	36%	24%	29%
Proactive (i.e., keeps me informed before problems develop)	26%	63%	28%	25%	23%	38%	28%	23%
Relevant to me or my child	26%	68%	30%	23%	20%	36%	23%	25%
Actionable (i.e., makes it clear as to what I am being asked…)	24%	69%	27%	24%	20%	36%	26%	22%
Personalized (i.e., is about my child, specifically)	22%	59%	26%	20%	19%	34%	21%	21%
Reactive (i.e., only after I reach out first)	12%	35%	11%	15%	11%	20%	15%	10%

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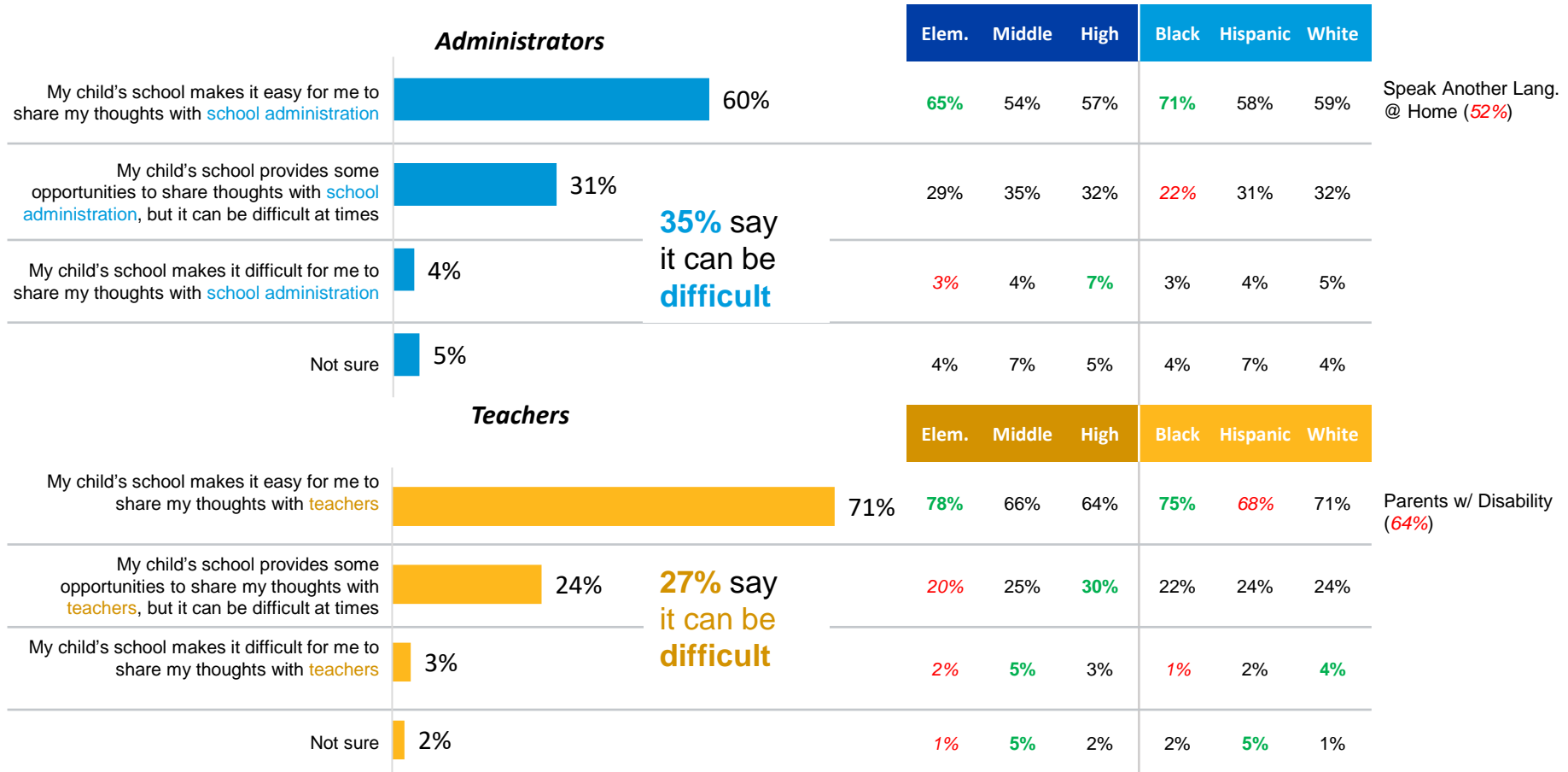National Standards *for* **FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

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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.

Agree with Statement?

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree

% Strongly + Somewhat Agree

Statement	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Total	Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White	
My child's school relies too much on technology like apps, texting, and mass emails to communicate with parents and families	17%		45%	*41%*	47%	**50%**	41%	**56%**	42%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (**79%**)
The teachers at my child's school could do a better job giving parents/families honest feedback about their children	15%		44%	*39%*	48%	49%	40%	**58%**	39%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (**66%**) Urban (**53%**)
Within my child's school, some teachers do not engage with parents/families as well as others	14%		47%	*43%*	51%	51%	43%	47%	49%	

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Sharing Thoughts with Schools Could Be Easier

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

Administrators

	%		Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White	
My child's school makes it easy for me to share my thoughts with school administration	60%		65%	54%	57%	71%	58%	59%	Speak Another Lang. @ Home (52%)
My child's school provides some opportunities to share thoughts with school administration, but it can be difficult at times	31%		29%	35%	32%	22%	31%	32%	
My child's school makes it difficult for me to share my thoughts with school administration	4%	**35%** say it can be **difficult**	3%	4%	7%	3%	4%	5%	
Not sure	5%		4%	7%	5%	4%	7%	4%	

Teachers

	%		Elem.	Middle	High	Black	Hispanic	White	
My child's school makes it easy for me to share my thoughts with teachers	71%		78%	66%	64%	75%	68%	71%	Parents w/ Disability (64%)
My child's school provides some opportunities to share my thoughts with teachers, but it can be difficult at times	24%	**27%** say it can be **difficult**	20%	25%	30%	22%	24%	24%	
My child's school makes it difficult for me to share my thoughts with teachers	3%		2%	5%	3%	1%	2%	4%	
Not sure	2%		1%	5%	2%	2%	5%	1%	

➤ **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**?**

More Confident
Elementary (**52%**)
Black (**57%**)

Less Confident
Parents w/Disability (*39%*)
White (*45%*)

Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not confident	Not sure
47%	45%	7%	0%

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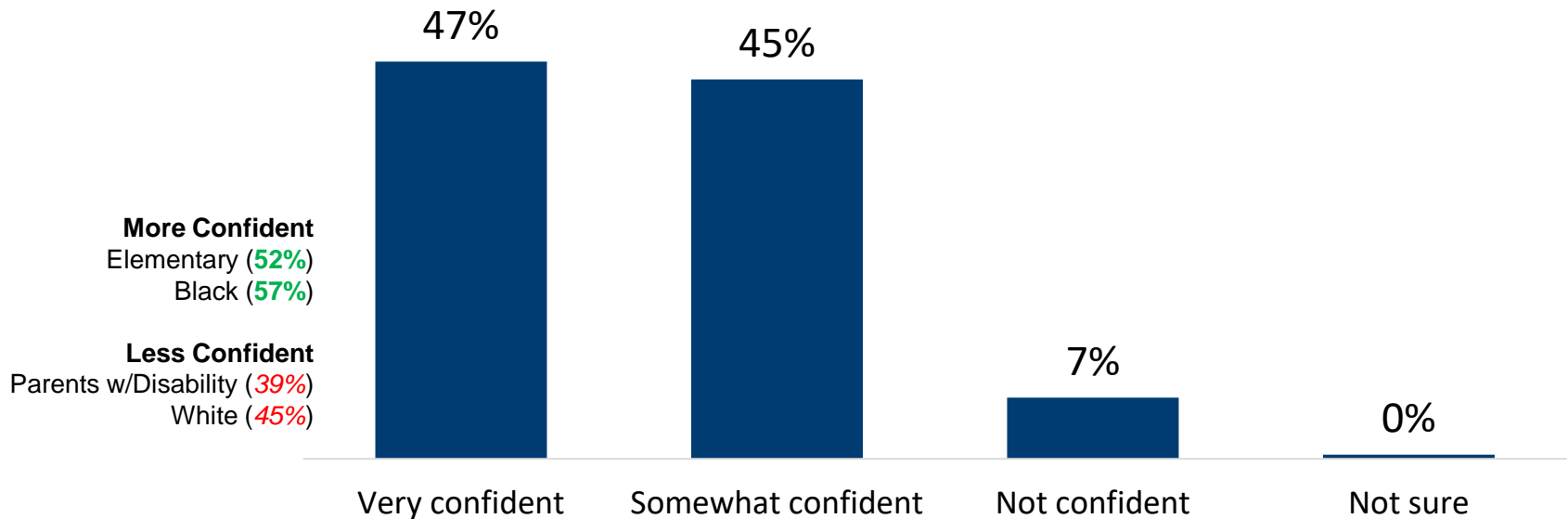
Many Opportunities Are Under-Used by Parents

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%	

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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… | Among Parents/Family Members Who **Have a Disability**… |

Providing **interpretation services and translated materials** for parents/families whose first language is not English…to engage with the school
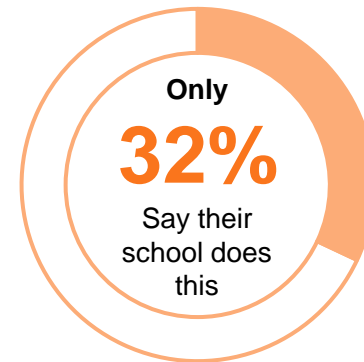
Only
39%
Say their school does this
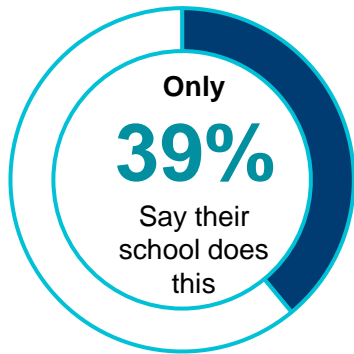
Communicate with Them in Their Native Language

Only
32%
Say their school is "Excellent" at this

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

Only
32%
Say their school does this

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
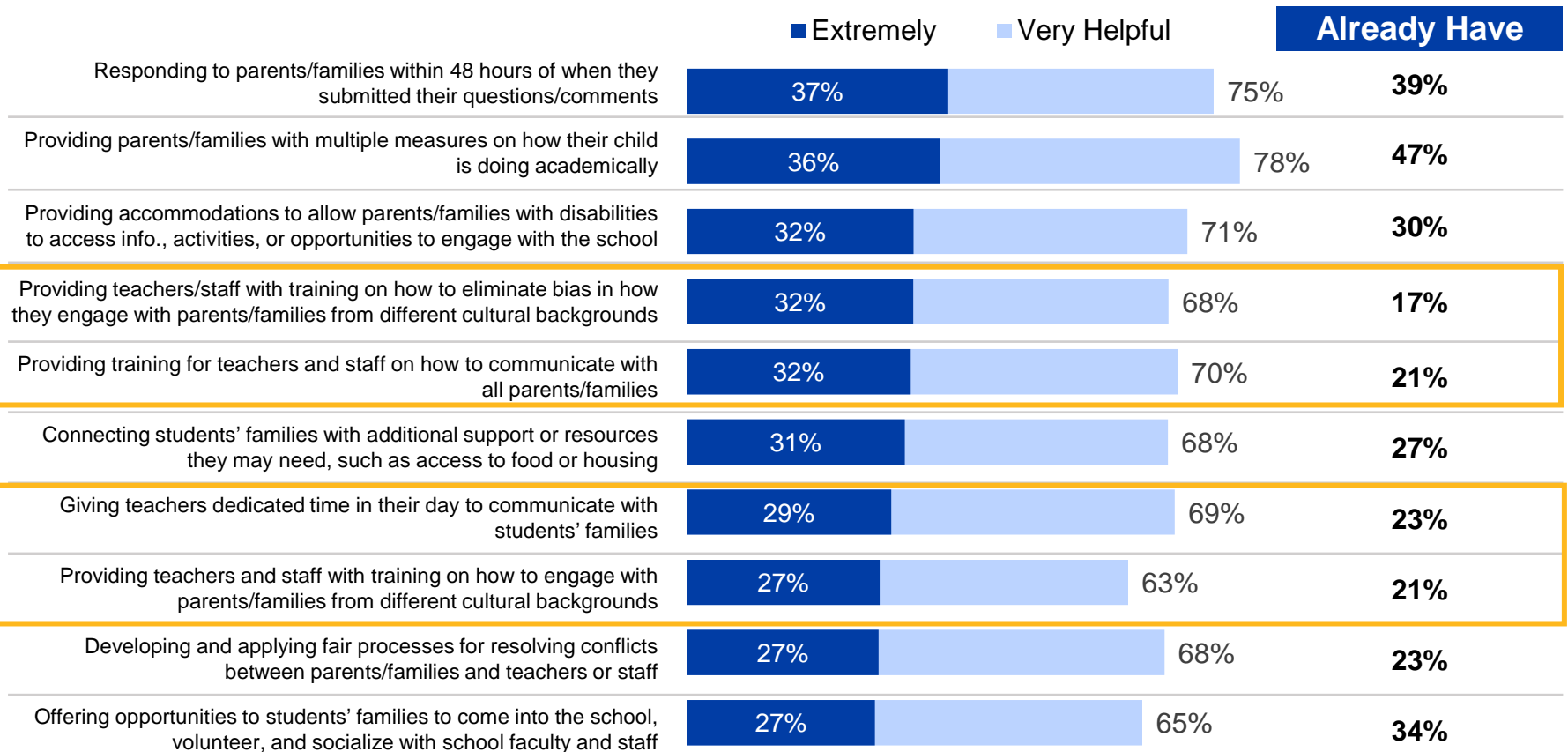- Feel confident about or find it easy to reach out to schools

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Closing The Gap

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Parents See Many Approaches as Helpful

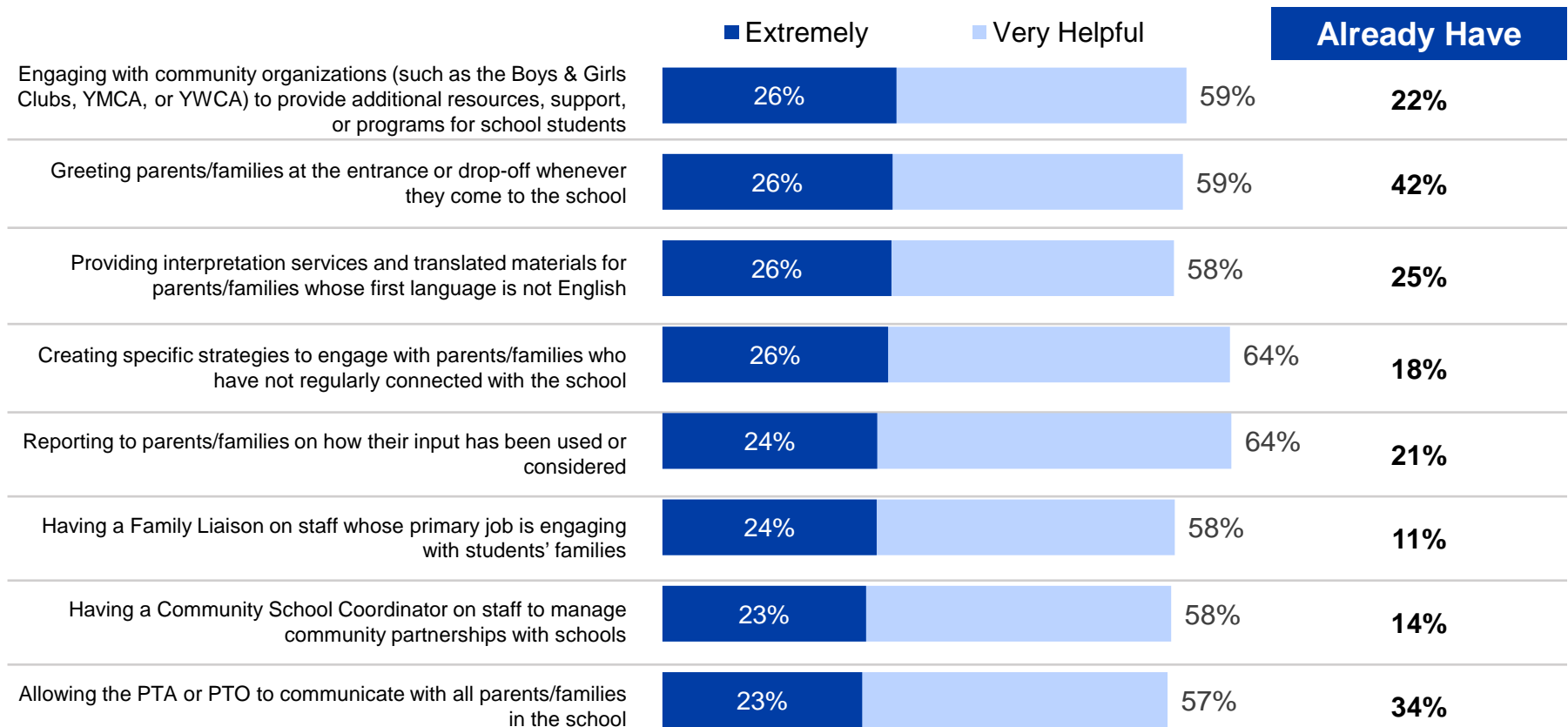However, most parents say these policies or programs do not exist at their schools, especially teacher training.

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

■ Extremely   ■ Very Helpful   **Already Have**

Approach	Extremely	Very Helpful (total)	Already Have
Responding to parents/families within 48 hours of when they submitted their questions/comments	37%	75%	**39%**
Providing parents/families with multiple measures on how their child is doing academically	36%	78%	**47%**
Providing accommodations to allow parents/families with disabilities to access info., activities, or opportunities to engage with the school	32%	71%	**30%**
Providing teachers/staff with training on how to eliminate bias in how they engage with parents/families from different cultural backgrounds	32%	68%	**17%**
Providing training for teachers and staff on how to communicate with all parents/families	32%	70%	**21%**
Connecting students' families with additional support or resources they may need, such as access to food or housing	31%	68%	**27%**
Giving teachers dedicated time in their day to communicate with students' families	29%	69%	**23%**
Providing teachers and staff with training on how to engage with parents/families from different cultural backgrounds	27%	63%	**21%**
Developing and applying fair processes for resolving conflicts between parents/families and teachers or staff	27%	68%	**23%**
Offering opportunities to students' families to come into the school, volunteer, and socialize with school faculty and staff	27%	65%	**34%**

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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)

■ Extremely   ■ Very Helpful   **Already Have**

	Extremely	Very Helpful	Already Have
Engaging with community organizations (such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, or YWCA) to provide additional resources, support, or programs for school students	26%	59%	**22%**
Greeting parents/families at the entrance or drop-off whenever they come to the school	26%	59%	**42%**
Providing interpretation services and translated materials for parents/families whose first language is not English	26%	58%	**25%**
Creating specific strategies to engage with parents/families who have not regularly connected with the school	26%	64%	**18%**
Reporting to parents/families on how their input has been used or considered	24%	64%	**21%**
Having a Family Liaison on staff whose primary job is engaging with students' families	24%	58%	**11%**
Having a Community School Coordinator on staff to manage community partnerships with schools	23%	58%	**14%**
Allowing the PTA or PTO to communicate with all parents/families in the school	23%	57%	**34%**

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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%

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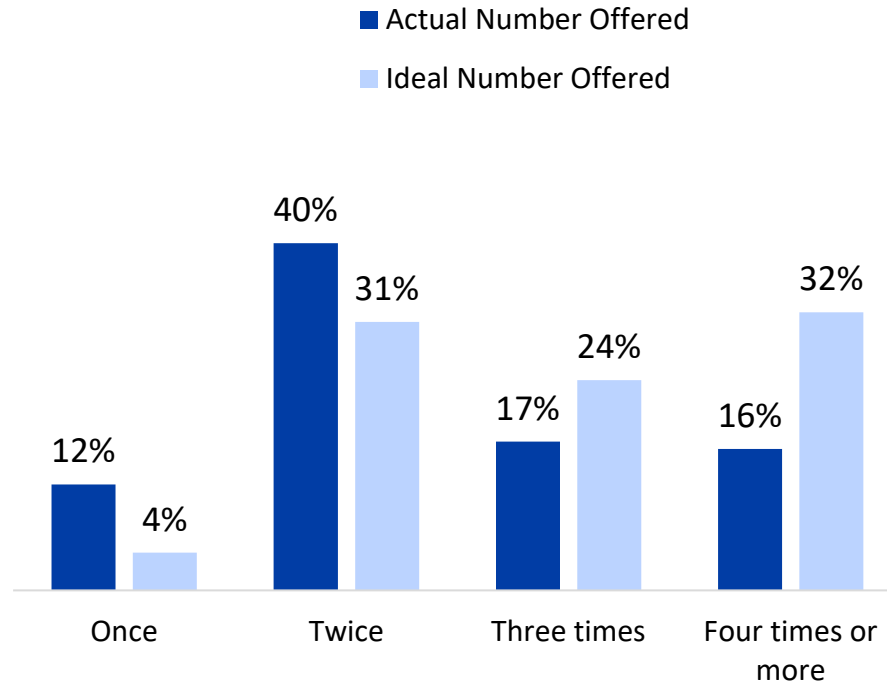# ➤ Parent-Teacher Conferences Reach the Most Families

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

73%
Have Participated in last 12 mos.

Black parents (78%)

■ Actual Number Offered
■ Ideal Number Offered

	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times or more
Actual Number Offered	12%	40%	17%	16%
Ideal Number Offered	4%	31%	24%	32%
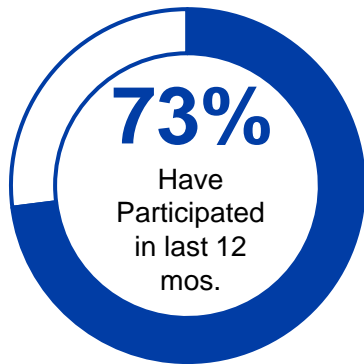
Black (45%) and **Hispanic** parents (**36%**) are most likely to say they want 4+ conferences

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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.

■ Excellent ■ Very Good

Overall, how would you rate the parent-teacher conferences you participated last school year?

22% | 55%

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

How would you rate them in the following areas?

% Excellent + Very Good

			Black	Hispanic	White

Giving you a clear picture of where your child was performing academically

31% | 67% → **74%** | 69% | *65%*

Encouraging you to share your perspectives on your child's growth/progress

30% | 64% → **72%** | 66% | *62%*

Giving you a clear picture of how your child was doing socially and emotionally

28% | 61% → **68%** | 64% | *58%*

Giving you the sense that your child's teacher was valuing your perspectives

27% | 62% → 67% | 66% | 60%

No statistically significant differences among grade bands.

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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

Not Enough Communication on…	% 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%

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National Standards *for* FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

EDGE research

National Standards *for*
FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

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FamilyEngagement@PTA.org

National Standards *for* FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

WELCOME ALL FAMILIES
COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
COLLABORATE WITH COMMUNITY
National PTA *every child. one voice.*
SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS
SHARE POWER
SPEAK UP FOR EVERY CHILD

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A National PTA® Initiative
The Center *for* Family Engagement®

Karen Emmerson | emmerson@edgeresearch.com

Adam Burns | burns@edgeresearch.com

Claudia Calicho-Mamani | calicho@edgeresearch.com

Edge Research
1560 Wilson Blvd, Suite 475
Arlington, VA 22209
www.edgeresearch.com

Helen Westmoreland| hwestmoreland@pta.org

National PTA
1250 North Pitt St
Alexandria, VA 22314
www.pta.org