# PARENT AND CHILD MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY

Findings from a Survey of
Public School K-12 Parents
March-April 2024

**ACTION** FOR HEALTHY KIDS

**CDC** Foundation
Together our impact is greater

# Methodology

Nationally representative sample of **1,067 parents and guardians** with children in public school, grades K-12, including:

**Race/Ethnicity**

- 592 White parents* (55%)
- 193 Hispanic parents (18%)
    - **Acculturation status** [among Hispanic sample]
        - 81 acculturated (42%)
        - 86 bi-cultural (45%)
        - 26 unacculturated (13%)
- 175 Black/African American parents* (16%)
- 41 Asian or Pacific Islander parents* (4%)
- 30 Multiracial parents* (3%)
- 14 Native American parents* (1%)
- 22 parents preferred not to answer (1%)

Fielded March 1 – April 13, 2024 via a 56-question online survey using SurveyMonkey in English, Spanish, and Korean

Sample comprised of the AFHK parent network

Throughout the report, **brown**/**blue** indicates statistically **higher**/**lower** differences between audiences (i.e., $p \leq .05$)

# Parent Demographics (N=1,067)

## Relationship to Child

- **Mother / Father / Biological Parent**
- **Step-parent / Legal guardian / Foster parent**
- **Relative or 'Other'**

5%
2%
93%
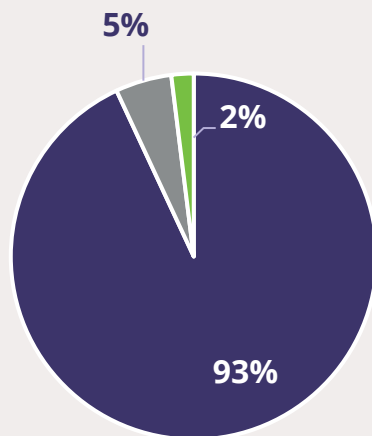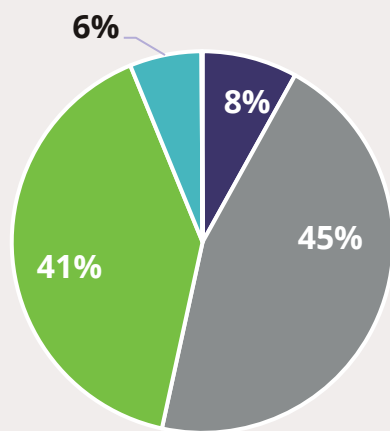
## Educational Attainment

- **Less than high school/high school graduate**
- **Some college/vocational training**
- **Four-year college degree**
- **Postgraduate degree**

1%
6%
21%
30%
42%

## Age

- 18-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

6%
8%
45%
41%
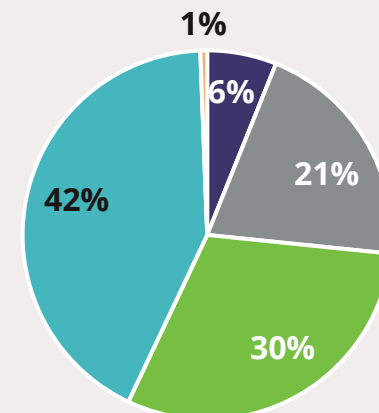
## Immigration Status

- **Born in U.S.**
- **Born outside U.S.**
- **Prefer not to answer**

1%
11%
88%

# Parent Demographics (N=1,067)



Parents' Location by State

Density
112
0
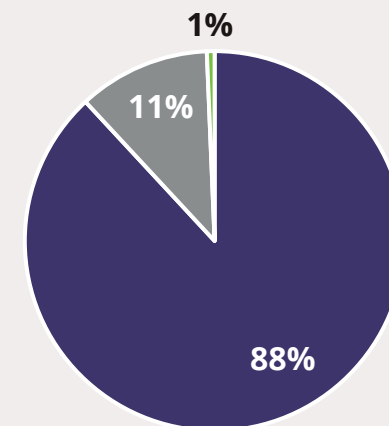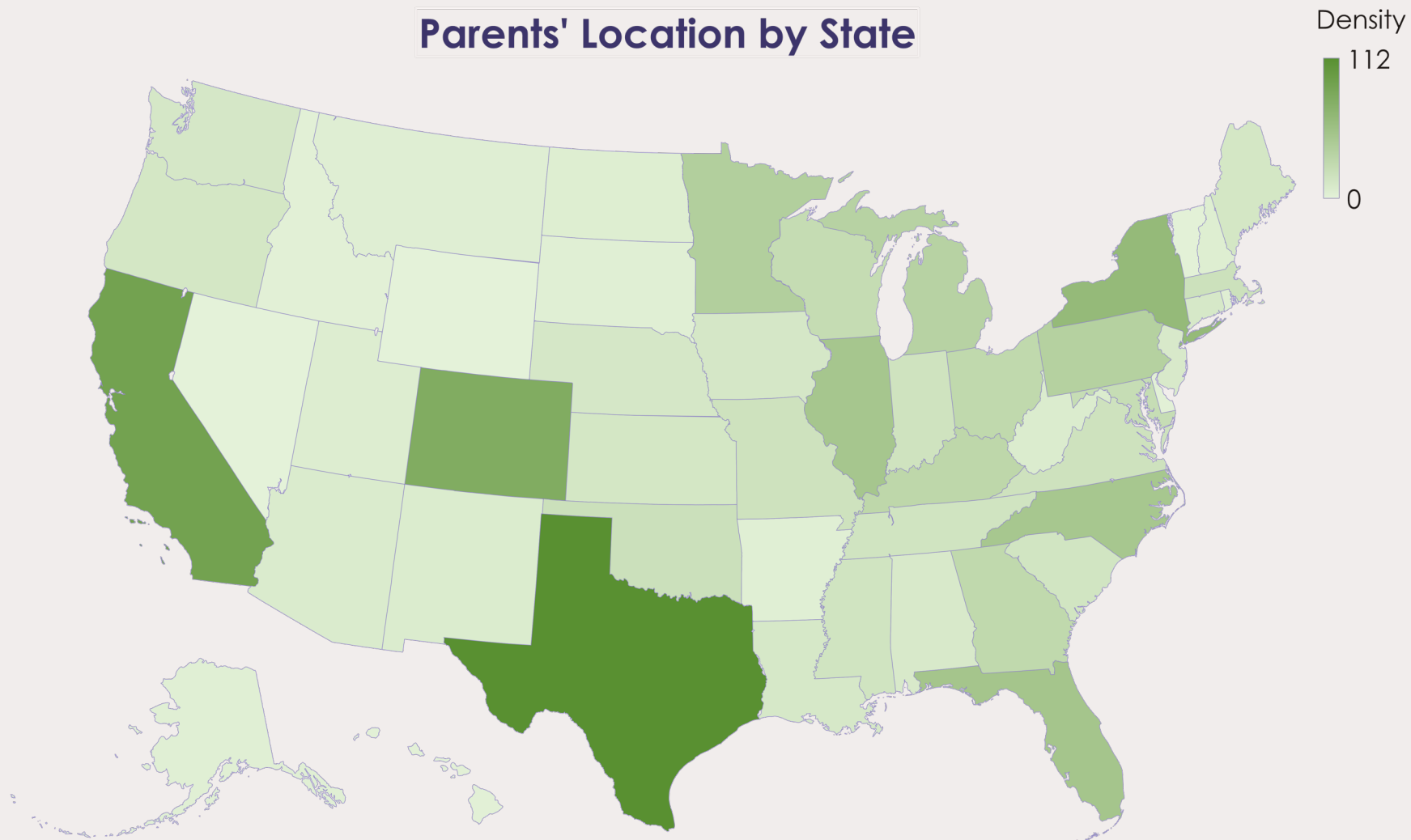
# Demographics of Parents' Child

## Grade Level

- Elementary school
- Middle school

31%
26%
43%
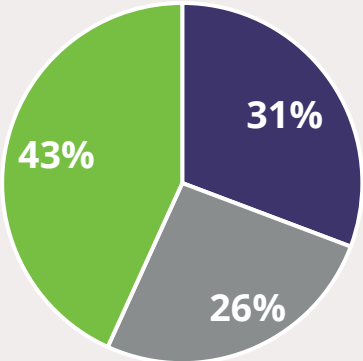
## Gender

- Girl
- Boy
- Nonbinary/Gender Nonconforming
- Prefer not to answer

1% 1%
47%
51%
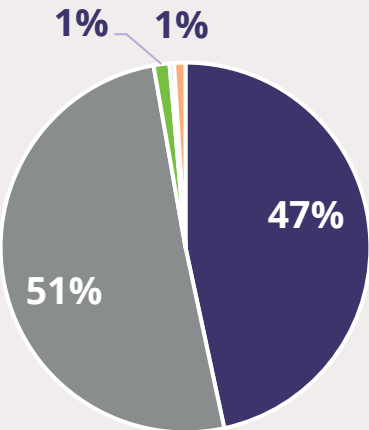
## Free/Reduced-Cost Lunch

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

2%
46%
52%
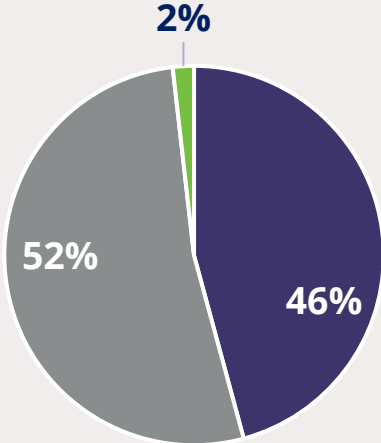
## Individualized Education Plan (IEP)/504

- IEP
- 504
- None

18%
13%
69%
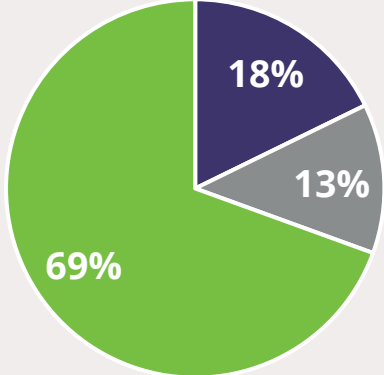
# Main Takeaways From Parental Feedback

**1** — **Parents worry most about** their child's time spent on **electronics**, **physical safety**, and **mental heath**.

**2** — Parents think **schools should provide** a **mental health professional, a safe space for children** to go to, and a **school counselor who can have one-on-one conversations.**

**3** — Parents report the **most common barrier** to accessing mental health-related resources is that **youth believe they're fine.**

**4** — The most common ways **parents are involved in their child's school** is through attending **general school meetings and parent-teacher meetings.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Parental Worries and Concerns



## We asked parents:

How much do you worry about various aspects of your child's mental health and well-being?

# Parents worry most about their child's time on electronics, weapons at school, and mental health.

## How much do you worry about the following?

| | % of parents who "worry a little bit," "worry some," or "worry a lot" | Elem | Middle | High* | Black | Hispanic | White* | West | Midwest | Northeast | South* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My child spending too much time on a computer, television, or tablet | 76% | 80% | 77% | 73% | 72% | 73% | 77% | 75% | 77% | 76% | 76% |
| A student or another individual brought a weapon to school | 70% | 66% | 69% | 72% | 69% | 66% | 70% | 70% | 68% | 68% | 71% |
| My child struggling with their mental health | 67% | **64%** | 65% | 71% | 62% | 63% | 71% | 71% | 68% | 69% | 64% |
| My child feeling stressed if they don't make good grades in their academic work | 66% | 63% | 66% | 68% | 68% | 68% | 65% | 66% | 65% | 67% | 66% |
| My child not talking to me about their mental health | 65% | **63%** | 62% | 69% | 63% | 62% | 68% | 64% | 67% | 64% | 65% |

*analytic comparison group used throughout the report

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Overall, **parents' worries are similar** across race / ethnicity and region.

## How much do you worry about the following?

*% of parents who "worry a little bit," "worry some," or "worry a lot"*

|  | % | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My child spending too much time on their phone | 63% | **35%** | 74% | 76% | 62% | 61% | 64% | 58% | 71% | 59% | 62% |
| A student or another individual threatened a school shooting or mass attack | 62% | 60% | 60% | 65% | 58% | 64% | 61% | 62% | 63% | 60% | 62% |
| My child spending too much time on social media platforms | 60% | **42%** | **63%** | 72% | 59% | 64% | 59% | 60% | 66% | 63% | 56% |
| My child being bullied at school | 56% | **66%** | 55% | 49% | 59% | 55% | 54% | 62% | 55% | 51% | 55% |
| My child feeling overwhelmed by homework | 51% | **45%** | 48% | 56% | 47% | 51% | 51% | **55%** | 54% | 52% | 46% |

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Parents identifying as Black and Hispanic **worry more** about their child **being behind academically**, **experiencing racism**, and **not feeling safe at school due to their religious beliefs, and sexual and gender identities**, compared to those identifying as white.

| How much do you worry about the following? | | Elem. | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My child not getting together with friends in-person | 50% | 50% | 47% | 51% | 53% | 42% | 52% | 49% | 56% | 52% | 45% |
| My child being behind academically | 45% | **51%** | 43% | 42% | **54%** | **50%** | 40% | 50% | 40% | 48% | 45% |
| My child using drugs (e.g., marijuana, vaping)* | 36% | - | 33% | 37% | 37% | 38% | 34% | 40% | 28% | 40% | 36% |
| My child drinking alcohol* | 33% | - | **27%** | 36% | 28% | 37% | 33% | 35% | 32% | 34% | 32% |
| My child experiencing racism at school | 30% | 33% | 31% | 26% | **55%** | **39%** | 15% | 33% | **21%** | 29% | 33% |
| My child not feeling safe at school because of their religious beliefs | 18% | 21% | 17% | 16% | **28%** | **22%** | 13% | 22% | 14% | 17% | 18% |
| My child not feeling safe at school because of their sexual orientation* | 17% | - | 19% | 15% | **24%** | **23%** | 12% | 20% | 16% | 21% | 14% |
| My child not feeling safe at school because of their gender identity* | 14% | - | 16% | 13% | **19%** | **24%** | 9% | 16% | 15% | 13% | 13% |

*% of parents who "worry a little bit," "worry some," or "worry a lot"*

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

*Item presented only to parents of children in middle and high school

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# Most parents worried about their child not feeling safe due to their religious beliefs **identify as Christian.**

Among parents (*N* = 115) who indicated that they *"worry a little bit," "worry some,"* or *"worry a lot"* about their child not feeling safe due to their religious beliefs, we asked: **Which religion do you identify with?**
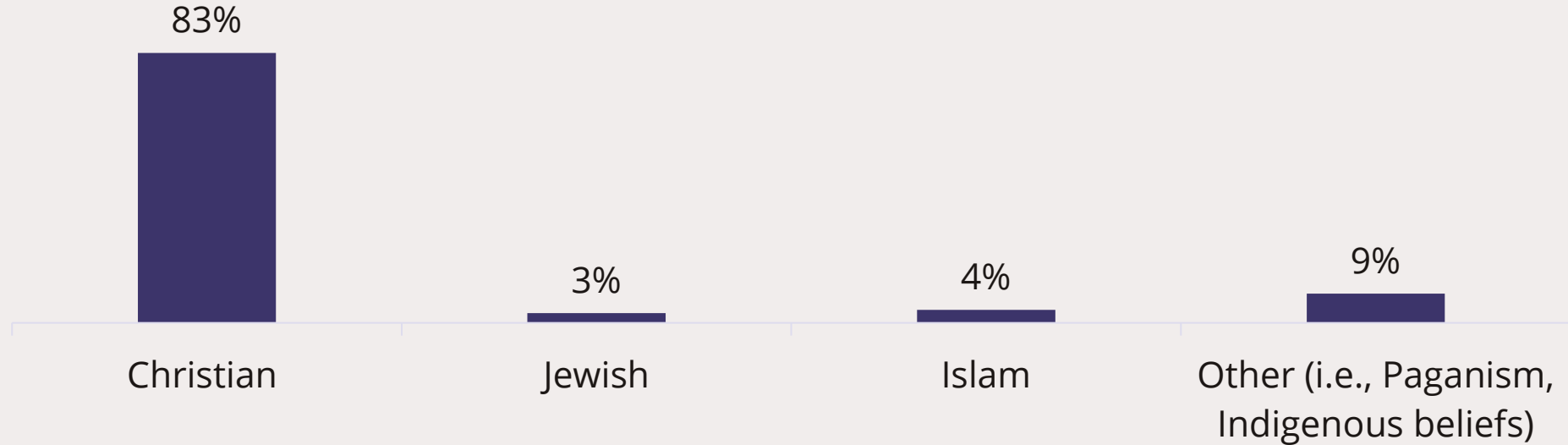


*Note.* Only parents who indicated that they "worry a little bit", "worry some" or "worry a lot" about their child not feeling safe at school because of their religious beliefs received this question.

# Parents also told us they worry about **social situations** and **academics**.

## Social Situations

- "my child being involved with bad [friends] in schools"
- "…not included fully in school-based projects or events due to his disability…"
- "anxiety over social situations…"
- "…concerned about bullying due to lack of religious affiliation"
- "My child feeling isolated/invisible and alone"
- "…peer pressure"
- "…[my child] feels like he doesn't fit in anywhere…"

## Academics

- "The teachers are too burdened by challenging behaviors and disruptive challenges which results in less instruction time or positive attention…"

- "…worry a lot about by child passing state tests and graduation requirements…"

- "My child's school not providing accelerated opportunities to best meet his needs for challenging work and future success."

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# School Resources



## We asked parents:

If you support schools providing resources and services to support your child's emotional and mental health.

What resources should schools provide / are schools providing to help support your child's mental health and well-being?

What resources does your child want schools to provide to support their mental health and well-being?

How aware are you of the different resources your child's school provides?

# Do you support or oppose the idea of schools providing resources and services to support your child's emotional and mental health?



**Grade Level**

Legend: ■ Elementary school  ■ Middle school  ■ High school

| | Elementary school | Middle school | High school |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly support | 83% | 84% | 81% |
| Somewhat support | 10% | 9% | 12% |
| Neutral | 5% | 5% | 5% |
| Somewhat oppose | 2% | 0% | 1% |
| Strongly oppose | 1% | 0% | 0% |

**Race/Ethnicity**

Legend: ■ Black parents  ■ Hispanic parents  ■ White parents

| | Black parents | Hispanic parents | White parents |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly support | 84% | 80% | 85% |
| Somewhat support | 11% | 11% | 10% |
| Neutral | 4% | 7% | 4% |
| Somewhat oppose | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Strongly oppose | 1% | 0% | 1% |

**Region**

Legend: ■ West  ■ Midwest  ■ Northeast  ■ South

| | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly support | 82% | 78% | 87% | 84% |
| Somewhat support | 11% | 13% | 6% | 10% |
| Neutral | 5% | 7% | 6% | 4% |
| Somewhat oppose | 0% | 2% | 0% | 2% |
| Strongly oppose | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% |

**Parents do not differ** in their support for schools providing resources for their child's emotional and mental health **across grade level, race/ethnicity, and region.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# What resources *should* **schools provide** as it relates to supporting youth mental health and well-being?

% parents who chose this item

| | | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A mental health professional who works at the school | 85% | 83% | 83% | 87% | **80%** | **80%** | 89% | 86% | 83% | 83% | 86% |
| A safe space at school to go if they feel overwhelmed or need help | 80% | 77% | 80% | 81% | **72%** | **75%** | 84% | 73% | 82% | 85% | 80% |
| A school counselor who is available to have one-on-one conversation with students | 76% | **71%** | 77% | 78% | **66%** | **65%** | 84% | 72% | 76% | 80% | 76% |
| The ability to talk with a trusted teacher or other adult at school (e.g., coach, counselor) | 68% | **63%** | 70% | 71% | **49%** | **56%** | 79% | 67% | 69% | 72% | 66% |
| Programs that connect students to community resources | 66% | 65% | 63% | 69% | **53%** | **62%** | 72% | 62% | **72%** | 70% | 63% |
| Training for parents/caregivers to be able to better understand and support their child's mental health | 63% | 64% | 62% | 64% | **55%** | **58%** | 67% | 59% | 64% | 69% | 63% |

Parents identifying as White were more likely than those identifying as Black and Hispanic to believe schools should provide a **mental health professional / school counselor** for one-on-one conversations with students, a **safe space, access to a trusted adult, programs to connect students to community resources,** and **training for parents.**
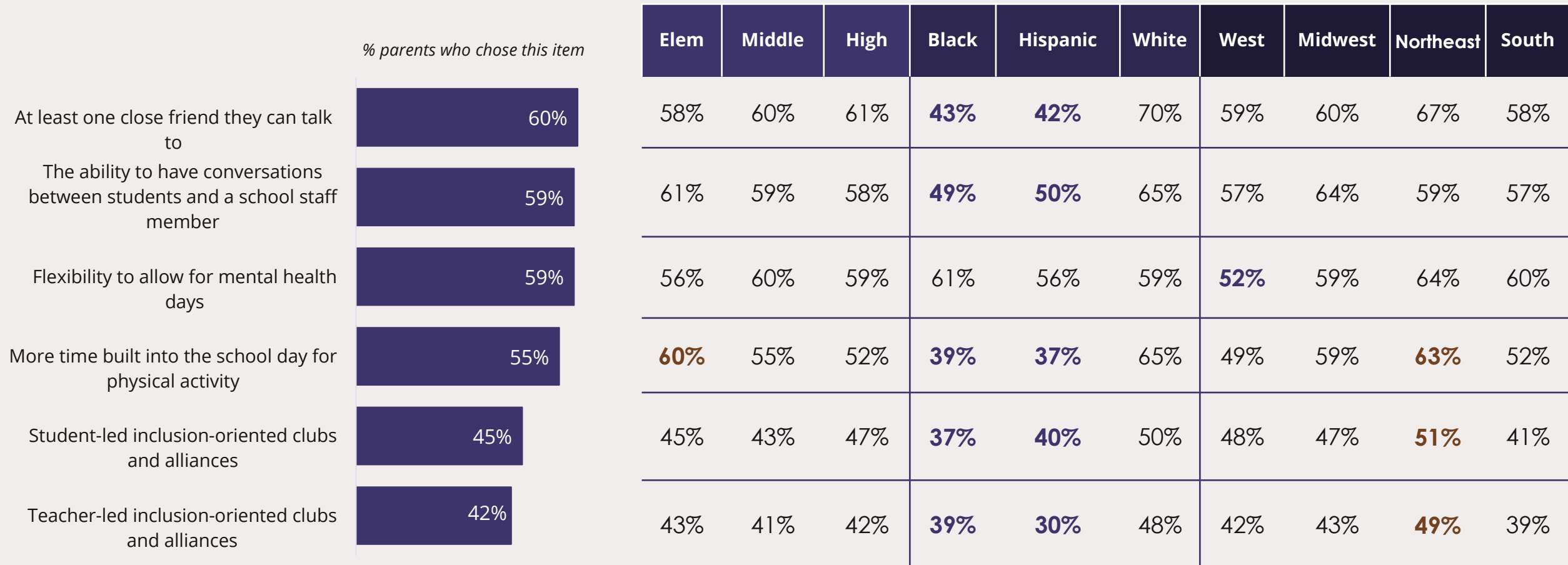
ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# What resources *should* **schools provide** as it relates to supporting youth mental health and well-being?

% parents who chose this item

| | % | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At least one close friend they can talk to | 60% | 58% | 60% | 61% | **43%** | **42%** | 70% | 59% | 60% | 67% | 58% |
| The ability to have conversations between students and a school staff member | 59% | 61% | 59% | 58% | **49%** | **50%** | 65% | 57% | 64% | 59% | 57% |
| Flexibility to allow for mental health days | 59% | 56% | 60% | 59% | 61% | 56% | 59% | **52%** | 59% | 64% | 60% |
| More time built into the school day for physical activity | 55% | **60%** | 55% | 52% | **39%** | **37%** | 65% | 49% | 59% | **63%** | 52% |
| Student-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances | 45% | 45% | 43% | 47% | **37%** | **40%** | 50% | 48% | 47% | **51%** | 41% |
| Teacher-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances | 42% | 43% | 41% | 42% | **39%** | **30%** | 48% | 42% | 43% | **49%** | 39% |

**Parents living in the Northeast are more likely** than parents living in the South to believe schools should provide **time for physical activity** and **student- and teacher-led clubs.** Parents identifying as White were more likely than those identifying as Black and Hispanic to believe schools should provide **a close friend** their child can talk to, the ability for **conversations between students and staff, more time for physical activity, and student- and teacher-led inclusion-oriented clubs.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# What resources *are* schools providing as it relates to supporting youth mental health and well-being?

| | % parents who chose this item | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A school counselor is available to have one-on-one conversation with students | 67% | 65% | 65% | 69% | **49%** | **59%** | 74% | **60%** | 64% | 74% | 69% |
| The ability to talk with a trusted teacher or other adult at school (e.g., coach, counselor) | 60% | 62% | 57% | 60% | **42%** | **49%** | 68% | 59% | 61% | 61% | 59% |
| At least one close friend they can talk to | 49% | 45% | 53% | 50% | **28%** | **37%** | 59% | 53% | 48% | 49% | 48% |
| The ability to have a conversation between the student and a school staff member | 43% | 43% | 38% | 45% | **33%** | **32%** | 49% | 45% | 45% | **32%** | 44% |
| A safe space at school to go if they feel overwhelmed | 35% | 38% | 35% | 33% | 33% | 31% | 37% | 34% | 34% | 39% | 34% |
| Programs that connect students to community resources | 32% | **31%** | 27% | 35% | 29% | 32% | 34% | 32% | 31% | 33% | 32% |

Parents identifying as Black and Hispanic are less likely than those identifying as White to report that schools are providing **school counselors**, access to a **trusted adult**, a **close friend** their child can talk to, and the ability for **conversations between students and staff.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# What resources *are* **schools providing** as it relates to supporting youth mental health and well-being?

% parents who chose this item

| | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A mental health professional who works at the school — **31%** | 29% | 34% | 30% | 33% | 31% | 31% | 33% | 33% | **35%** | 27% |
| Teacher-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances — **28%** | **21%** | 28% | 34% | **16%** | 28% | 31% | 29% | 29% | 31% | 27% |
| Student-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances — **24%** | **13%** | **21%** | 33% | **15%** | 24% | 26% | **25%** | **30%** | **27%** | 18% |
| Training for parents/caregivers to be able to better understand and support their child's mental health — **17%** | 20% | 16% | 15% | 14% | 22% | 16% | 22% | 13% | 16% | 16% |
| Flexibility to allow for mental health days — **12%** | **10%** | **9%** | 15% | 14% | 11% | 11% | 11% | 14% | 14% | 10% |
| More time built into the school day for physical activity — **8%** | **12%** | 7% | 6% | 6% | **12%** | 7% | 12% | 6% | 6% | 9% |

**Less than 1-in-5 parents** report that schools provide **training for parents to better understand and support their child's mental health.**
High school parents are **more likely** than elementary and middle school parents to report schools provide **student-led inclusion-oriented clubs.**

# What resources **does your child want schools to provide** as it relates to supporting youth mental health and well-being?

| | % parents who chose this item | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flexibility to allow for mental health days | 33% | **23%** | 37% | 38% | 30% | 32% | 34% | 34% | 33% | 35% | 32% |
| More time built into the school day for physical activity | 33% | **39%** | **37%** | 25% | **22%** | **25%** | 39% | **26%** | 33% | 33% | 36% |
| At least one close friend they can talk to | 31% | 30% | 32% | 30% | **22%** | 29% | 34% | 32% | 32% | 33% | 29% |
| A safe place they can go at school if they feel overwhelmed | 31% | 33% | 30% | 30% | 28% | 36% | 30% | 31% | 30% | 33% | 30% |
| A school counselor who is available to have one-on-one conversations with students | 23% | 25% | 20% | 23% | 19% | **31%** | 23% | 29% | 21% | 20% | 22% |
| A mental health professional who works at the school | 22% | 19% | 24% | 24% | **31%** | **30%** | 19% | 25% | 21% | 20% | 23% |

**Parents identifying as Black and Hispanic are more likely** than parents identifying as White to report their **child wants their school to provide a mental health professional.**

# What resources **does your child want schools to provide** as it relates to supporting youth mental health and well-being?
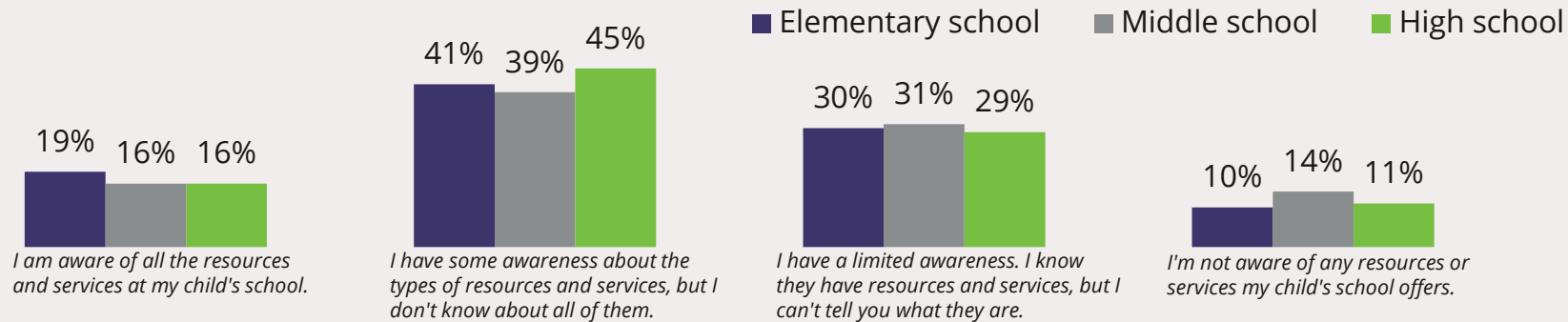
% parents who chose this item

| | % | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The ability to talk with a trusted teacher or other adult at school (e.g., coach, counselor) | 21% | 23% | **17%** | 23% | **13%** | 27% | 22% | 22% | 22% | 21% | 21% |
| Student-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances | 13% | 13% | 13% | 14% | 17% | 15% | 12% | 14% | 13% | 12% | 13% |
| Programs that connect students to community resources | 11% | 10% | 10% | 13% | 11% | **20%** | 8% | 13% | 10% | 13% | 10% |
| The ability to have conversations between the student and a school staff member | 10% | 12% | 9% | 10% | 11% | **15%** | 8% | 14% | 8% | 10% | 9% |
| Teacher-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances | 8% | 9% | 8% | 8% | 7% | 12% | 8% | 8% | 7% | 10% | 8% |
| Training for parents/caregivers to be able to better understand and support their child's mental health | 7% | **4%** | 6% | 9% | 7% | **11%** | 5% | 7% | 6% | 7% | 7% |

Parents identifying as Hispanic are **more likely** than those identifying as White to report their child wants schools to provide **programs to connect students to community resources,** the ability for **conversations between students and staff,** and **training for parents.**
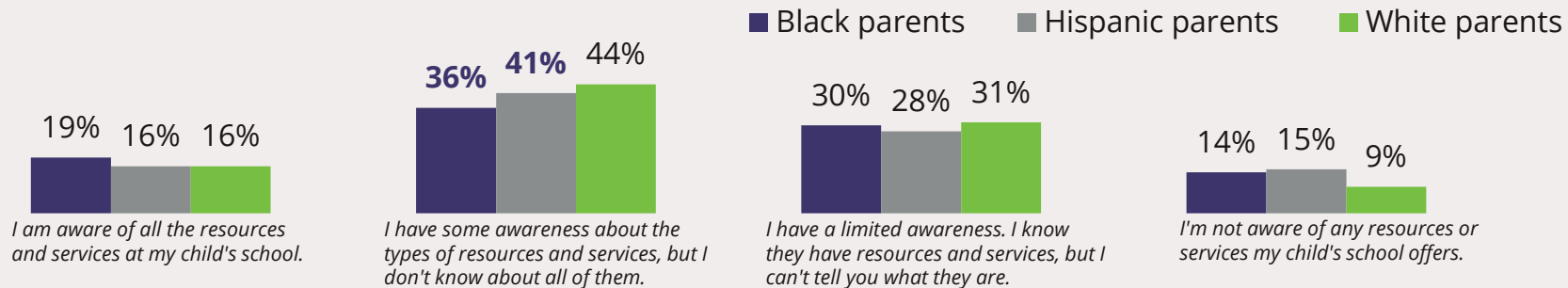
ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# How would you describe your level of awareness about the types of resources and services your child's school offers?
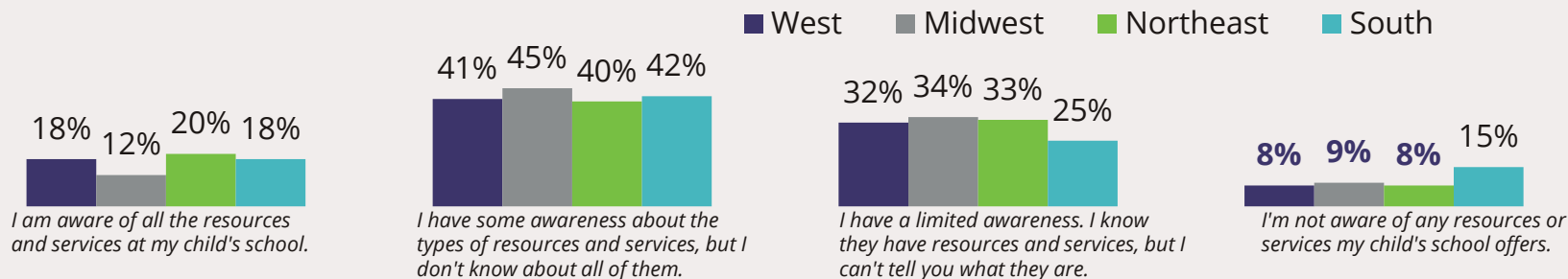
## Grade level

**Legend:** ■ Elementary school ■ Middle school ■ High school

| | I am aware of all the resources and services at my child's school. | I have some awareness about the types of resources and services, but I don't know about all of them. | I have a limited awareness. I know they have resources and services, but I can't tell you what they are. | I'm not aware of any resources or services my child's school offers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary school | 19% | 41% | 30% | 10% |
| Middle school | 16% | 39% | 31% | 14% |
| High school | 16% | 45% | 29% | 11% |

No differences were documented based on grade level.

## Race/Ethnicity

**Legend:** ■ Black parents ■ Hispanic parents ■ White parents

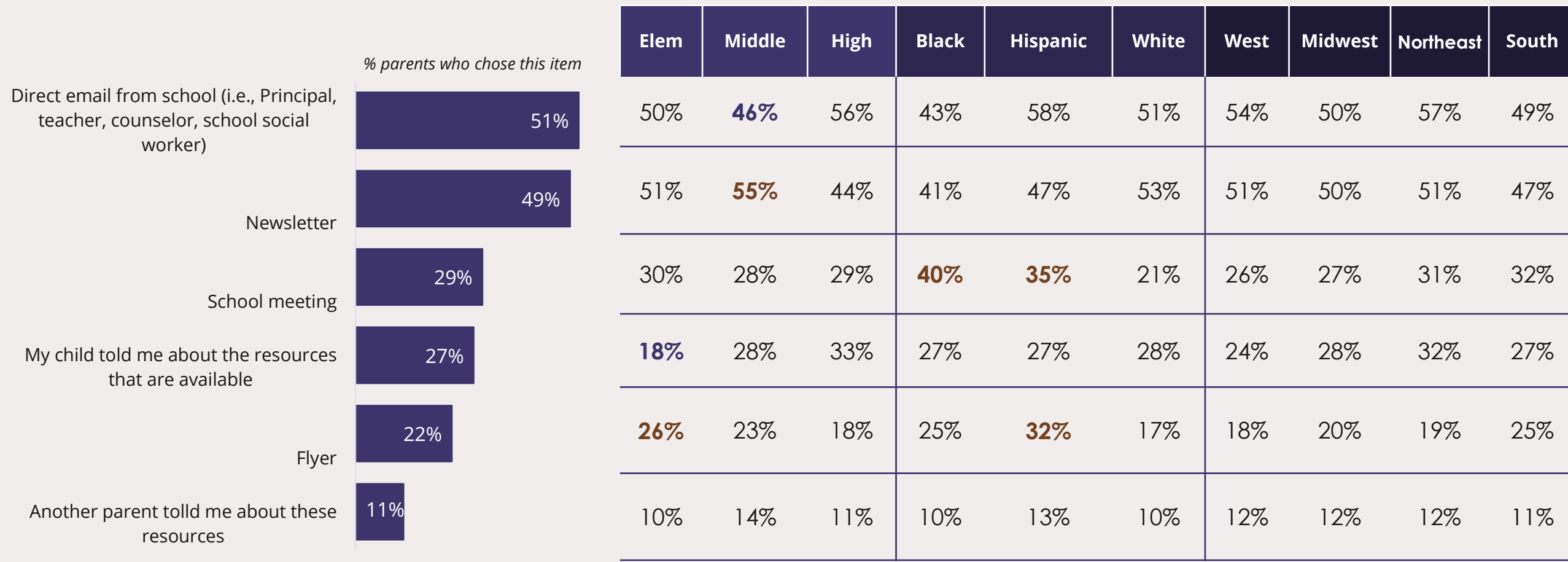| | I am aware of all the resources and services at my child's school. | I have some awareness about the types of resources and services, but I don't know about all of them. | I have a limited awareness. I know they have resources and services, but I can't tell you what they are. | I'm not aware of any resources or services my child's school offers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Black parents | 19% | **36%** | 30% | 14% |
| Hispanic parents | 16% | **41%** | 28% | 15% |
| White parents | 16% | 44% | 31% | 9% |

Parents identifying as White are **more likely** than those identifying as Black and Hispanic **to have some awareness of the resources their child's school offers.**

## Region

**Legend:** ■ West ■ Midwest ■ Northeast ■ South

| | I am aware of all the resources and services at my child's school. | I have some awareness about the types of resources and services, but I don't know about all of them. | I have a limited awareness. I know they have resources and services, but I can't tell you what they are. | I'm not aware of any resources or services my child's school offers. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| West | 18% | 41% | 32% | **8%** |
| Midwest | 12% | 45% | 34% | **9%** |
| Northeast | 20% | 40% | 33% | **8%** |
| South | 18% | 42% | 25% | 15% |

Parents living in the South are **more likely** than those living in other regions **to not be aware of resources.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# About **half of all parents who have at least some awareness of the resources and services at their child's school** have been notified by school about these resources via **direct emails and newsletters.**

% parents who chose this item

| | % | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direct email from school (i.e., Principal, teacher, counselor, school social worker) | 51% | 50% | **46%** | 56% | 43% | 58% | 51% | 54% | 50% | 57% | 49% |
| Newsletter | 49% | 51% | **55%** | 44% | 41% | 47% | 53% | 51% | 50% | 51% | 47% |
| School meeting | 29% | 30% | 28% | 29% | **40%** | **35%** | 21% | 26% | 27% | 31% | 32% |
| My child told me about the resources that are available | 27% | **18%** | 28% | 33% | 27% | 27% | 28% | 24% | 28% | 32% | 27% |
| Flyer | 22% | **26%** | 23% | 18% | 25% | **32%** | 17% | 18% | 20% | 19% | 25% |
| Another parent told me about these resources | 11% | 10% | 14% | 11% | 10% | 13% | 10% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 11% |

*Note.* Only parents who indicated their level of awareness about the types of resources and services their child's school offers as, "I am aware of all the resources and services at my child's school" or "I have some awareness about the types of resources and services, but I don't know about all of them" received this question.

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

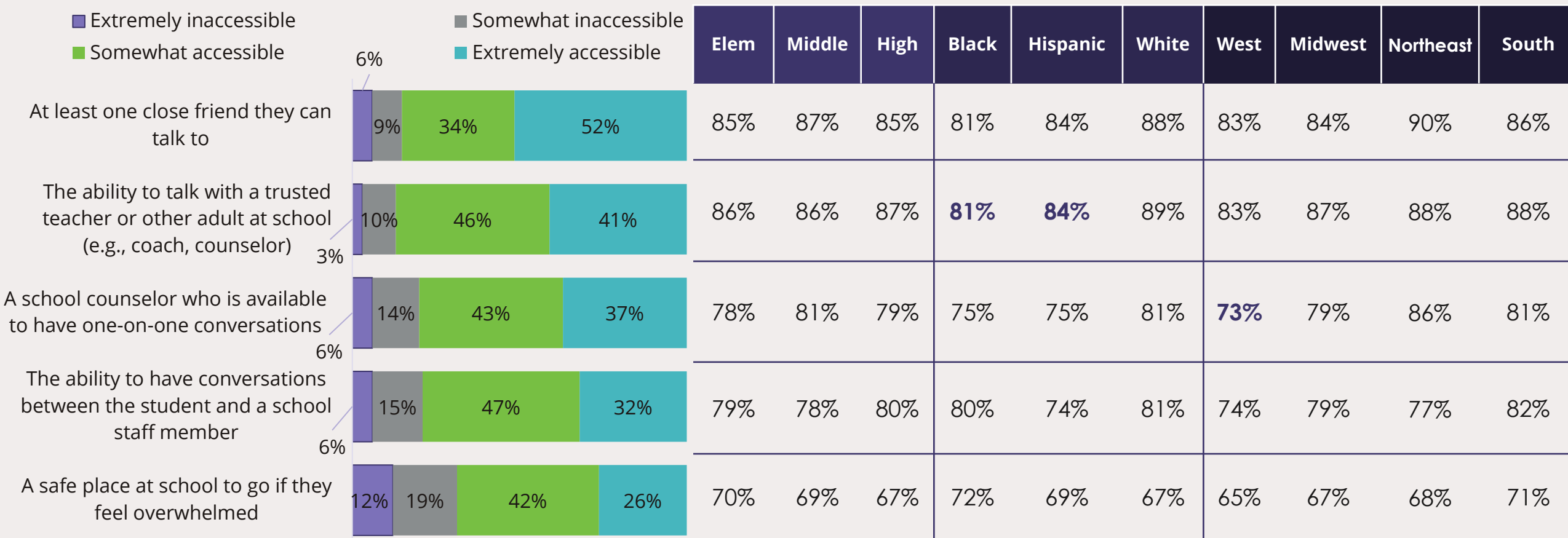# Perceived Barriers to Access for Resources



**We asked parents:**

How accessible to your child are school resources that can help their mental health and well-being?

What barriers does your child encounter when trying to access mental health and well-being resources provided by their school?

# How accessible are the following resources to your child?



| | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **At least one close friend they can talk to** | 85% | 87% | 85% | 81% | 84% | 88% | 83% | 84% | 90% | 86% |
| **The ability to talk with a trusted teacher or other adult at school (e.g., coach, counselor)** | 86% | 86% | 87% | **81%** | **84%** | 89% | 83% | 87% | 88% | 88% |
| **A school counselor who is available to have one-on-one conversations** | 78% | 81% | 79% | 75% | 75% | 81% | **73%** | 79% | 86% | 81% |
| **The ability to have conversations between the student and a school staff member** | 79% | 78% | 80% | 80% | 74% | 81% | 74% | 79% | 77% | 82% |
| **A safe place at school to go if they feel overwhelmed** | 70% | 69% | 67% | 72% | 69% | 67% | 65% | 67% | 68% | 71% |

*Note.* Percentages in this table represent parents who responded "somewhat accessible" and "extremely accessible"

89% of parents report that having a close friend to talk to is accessible to their child. Parents identifying as White are **more likely** than those identifying as Black and Hispanic to report that the **ability to talk to a trusted adult at school is accessible to their child.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

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# How accessible are the following resources to your child?

**Legend:**
- ■ Extremely inaccessible
- ■ Somewhat inaccessible
- ■ Somewhat accessible
- ■ Extremely accessible

| | Chart (Ext. inacc. / Somewhat inacc. / Somewhat acc. / Ext. acc.) | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances | 11% / 19% / 40% / 30% | **63%** | 71% | 74% | 70% | 70% | 70% | 67% | 71% | 76% | 68% |
| A mental health professional who works at the school | 17% / 20% / 41% / 23% | 63% | 64% | 63% | **68%** | 67% | 61% | 63% | 66% | 68% | 61% |
| Student-led inclusion-oriented clubs and alliances | 16% / 20% / 41% / 23% | **46%** | **61%** | 77% | 63% | **74%** | 61% | 63% | 67% | 71% | 60% |
| Programs that connect students to community resources | 7% / 24% / 49% / 19% | 63% | 65% | 75% | 66% | 72% | 69% | 68% | 67% | 69% | 70% |
| Flexibility to allow for mental health days | 35% / 26% / 24% / 15% | 39% | 35% | 42% | 45% | 45% | 38% | 42% | **47%** | 41% | 32% |

*Note.* Percentages in this table represent parents who responded "somewhat accessible" and "extremely accessible"

**Parents of high school** students report **student-led inclusion-oriented clubs are more accessible** than parents of elementary and middle school students.
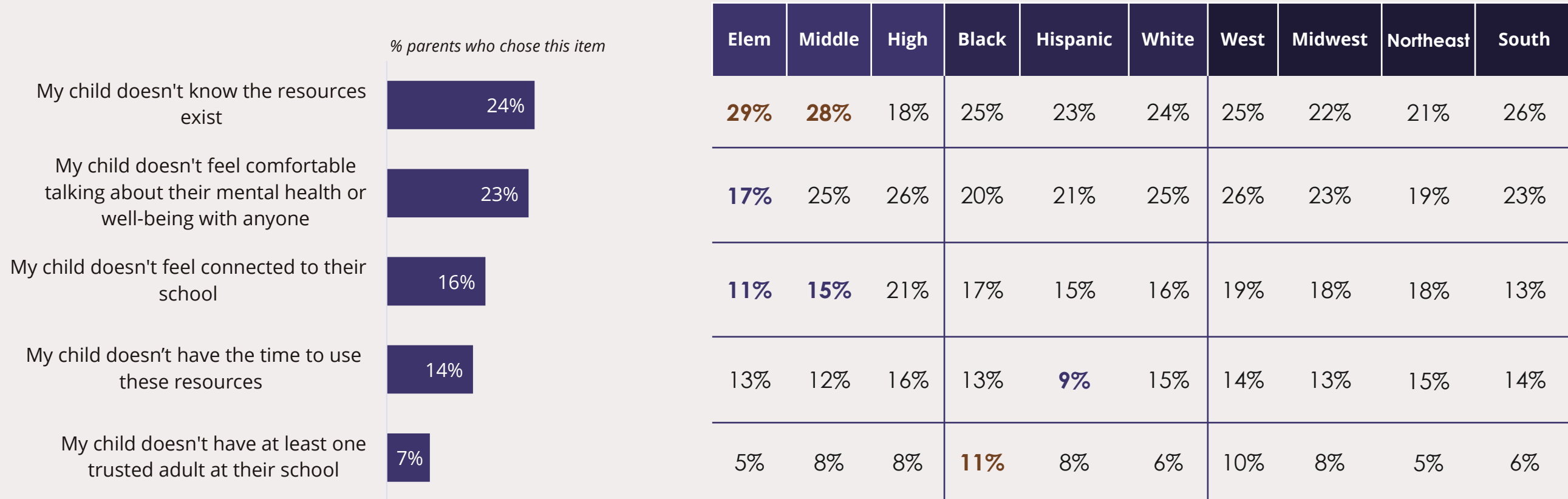
ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Which of the following are barriers for your child accessing mental health and well-being resources provided by their school?

*% parents who chose this item*
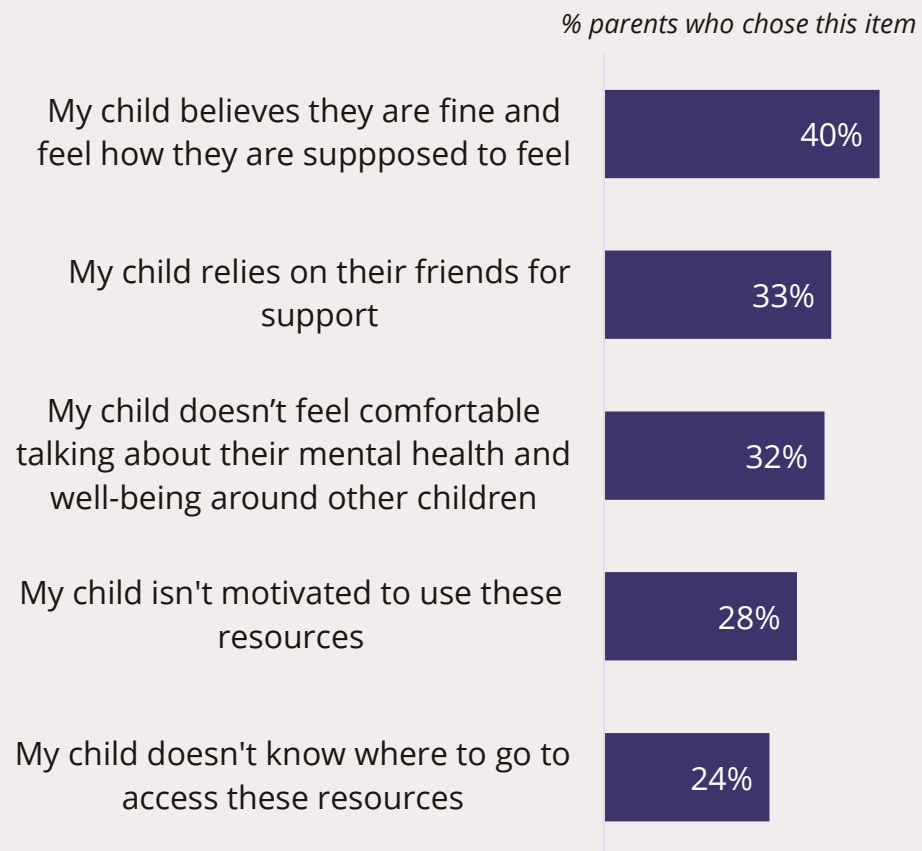
| Barrier | % | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My child believes they are fine and feel how they are suppposed to feel | 40% | **33%** | 41% | 45% | 37% | **34%** | 44% | 37% | 43% | 40% | 41% |
| My child relies on their friends for support | 33% | **20%** | 39% | 39% | **23%** | 30% | 37% | 30% | 33% | 32% | 35% |
| My child doesn't feel comfortable talking about their mental health and well-being around other children | 32% | **25%** | 40% | 33% | 36% | **25%** | 33% | **40%** | 27% | 33% | 32% |
| My child isn't motivated to use these resources | 28% | **19%** | 31% | 32% | 27% | 24% | 30% | 31% | **32%** | 27% | 24% |
| My child doesn't know where to go to access these resources | 24% | **28%** | **27%** | 20% | 23% | 26% | 24% | 28% | 23% | **17%** | 26% |

The **most common barrier** to accessing mental health-related resources is that **youth believe they're fine.** High school parents are **more likely** than elementary school parents to report that the following **are barriers** for their child accessing mental health resources from school: **child feels fine, relies on friends, isn't comfortable talking about mental health around others, and lack of motivation.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Which of the following are barriers for your child accessing mental health and well-being resources provided by school?

*% parents who chose this item*

| | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My child doesn't know the resources exist — **24%** | **29%** | **28%** | 18% | 25% | 23% | 24% | 25% | 22% | 21% | 26% |
| My child doesn't feel comfortable talking about their mental health or well-being with anyone — **23%** | **17%** | 25% | 26% | 20% | 21% | 25% | 26% | 23% | 19% | 23% |
| My child doesn't feel connected to their school — **16%** | **11%** | **15%** | 21% | 17% | 15% | 16% | 19% | 18% | 18% | 13% |
| My child doesn't have the time to use these resources — **14%** | 13% | 12% | 16% | 13% | **9%** | 15% | 14% | 13% | 15% | 14% |
| My child doesn't have at least one trusted adult at their school — **7%** | 5% | 8% | 8% | **11%** | 8% | 6% | 10% | 8% | 5% | 6% |

# Which of the following are barriers for your child accessing mental health and well-being resources provided by school?

% parents who chose this item

| | | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It's hard for my child to talk about mental health because our family doesn't talk about mental health a lot | 7% | 8% | 4% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 5% | 6% | 8% |
| My child is worried about being denied access because of their identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, religion, sexual or gender identity) | 4% | 6% | 5% | 3% | 7% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 7% | 3% | 4% |
| The mental health and well-being resources provided by my child's school are beyond my child's reading ability or comprehension | 4% | 9% | 3% | 2% | 7% | 7% | 3% | 5% | 2% | 4% | 5% |

**Only 4% of parents** report that their child **being worried about being denied access due to their identities is a barrier** to their access of mental health resources from school. **Elementary school parents** are **more likely than** high school parents to report available resources being above their child's reading comprehension as a barrier to resource access.

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Parental Connectedness to the School Community



**We asked parents:**

In what ways are you involved in your child's school?

How satisfied are you with the communication strategies used by your child's teachers, school staff/administrators, and school district?

Are there any communication strategies you want your child's school to use that they are not already using?

# In what ways are you involved in your child's school?

*% parents who chose this item*

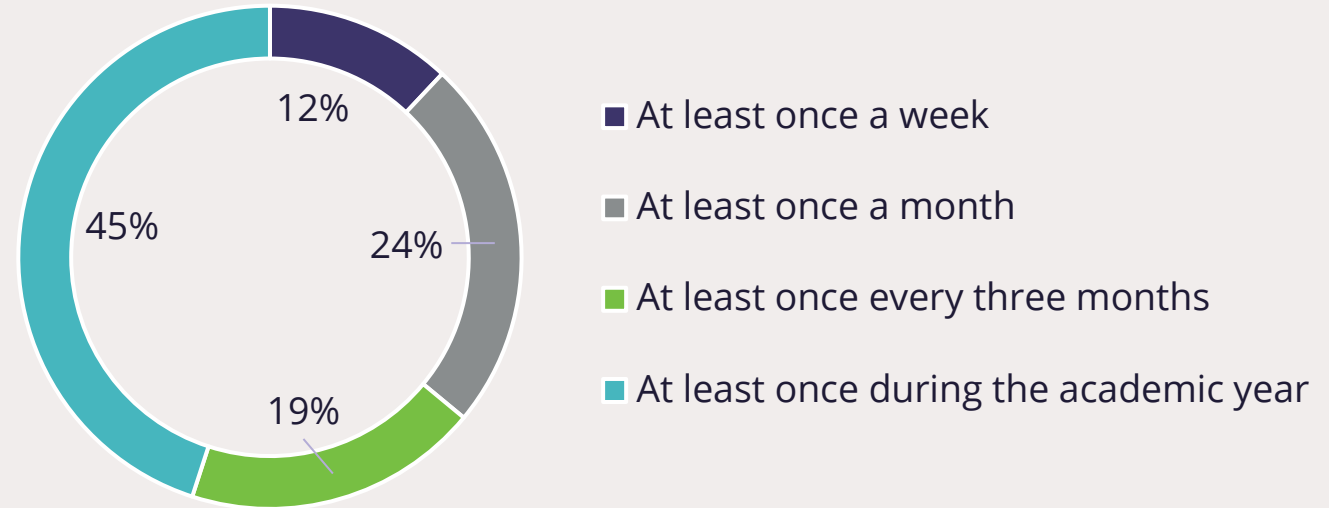| | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I attend general meetings about school-related matters — 64% | 64% | 65% | 63% | 59% | 63% | 65% | 61% | 69% | **54%** | 67% |
| I attend parent-teacher meetings — 61% | **71%** | 61% | 55% | **68%** | 63% | 58% | 60% | 60% | 61% | 63% |
| I volunteer — 37% | **45%** | 37% | 32% | 30% | 40% | 38% | 36% | 35% | 33% | 41% |
| I am a part of a Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization or other parent… — 36% | **46%** | 33% | 31% | 38% | 35% | 35% | 35% | **26%** | 38% | 42% |
| I am a room parent — 6% | **13%** | 3% | 3% | 5% | 5% | 7% | 3% | 8% | 7% | 6% |

**Few differences** were documented in parent's school involvement based on **race/ethnicity and region.** Elementary school parents are **more likely** than high school parents **to attend parent-teacher meetings, volunteer, and be a PTO/PTA member or room parent.**

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Among parents who volunteer, **more than half volunteer at least every three months.**

*% parents who chose this item*

I attend general meetings about school-related matters
**64%**

I attend parent-teacher meetings
**61%**

I volunteer
**37%**

I am a part of a Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization or other parent...
**36%**

I am a room parent
**6%**
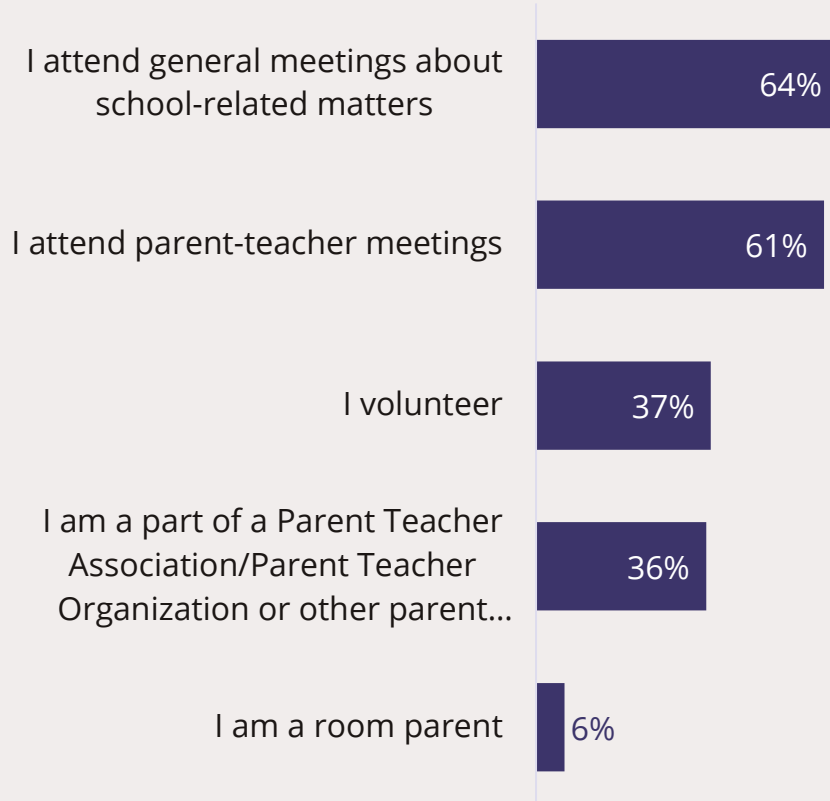
## How often do you volunteer?



- 12%
- 24%
- 19%
- 45%

- ■ At least once a week
- ■ At least once a month
- ■ At least once every three months
- ■ At least once during the academic year
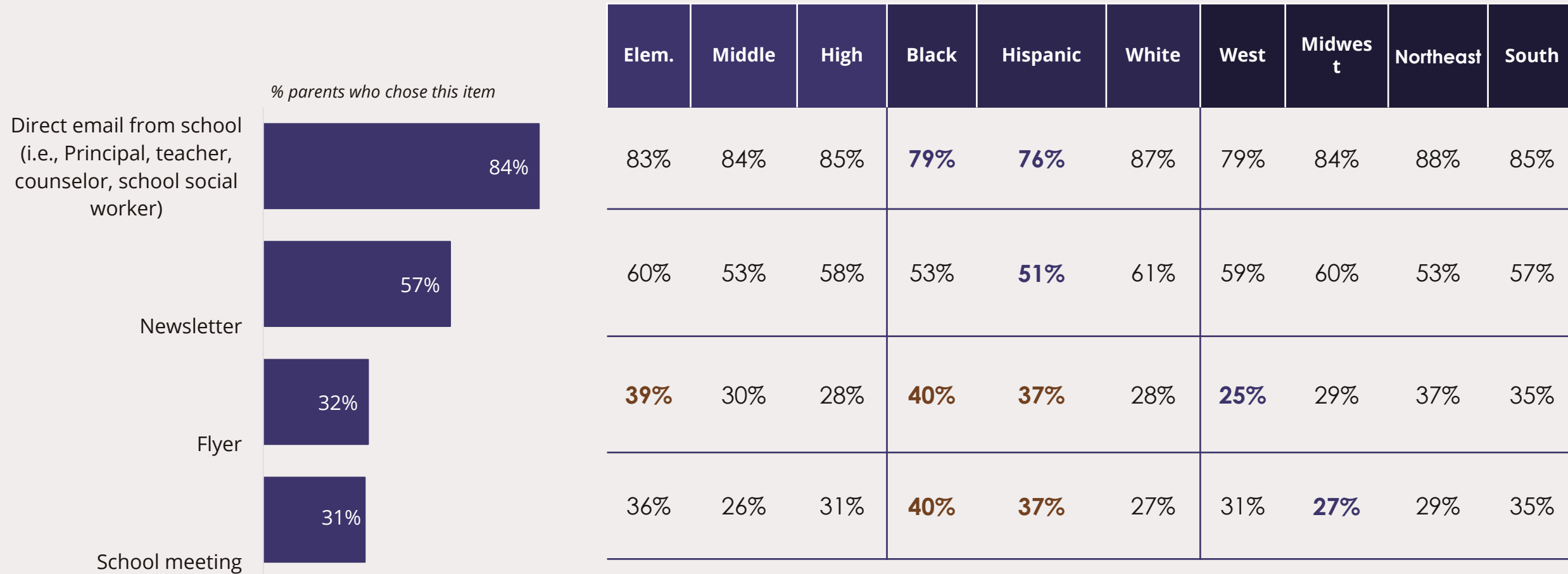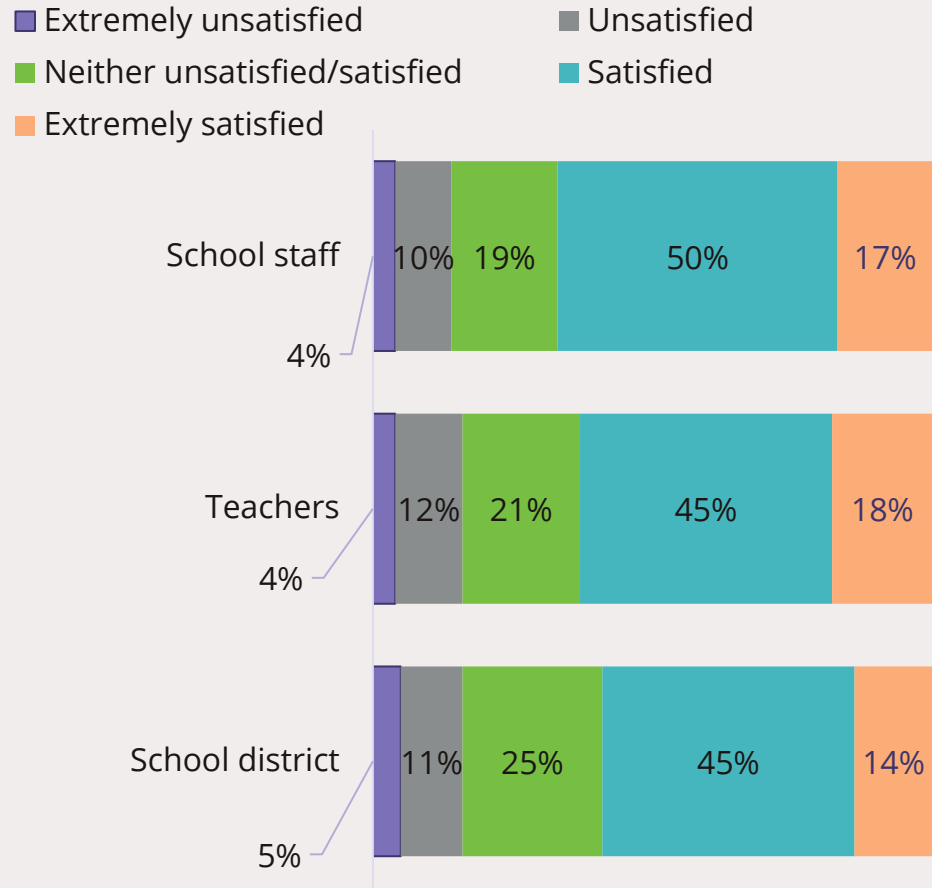
*Note.* Only parents who indicated "I volunteer" received this question.

# Which communication strategies do you prefer when learning about activities or important information from your child's school?

% parents who chose this item

| | % | | Elem. | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Direct email from school (i.e., Principal, teacher, counselor, school social worker) | 84% | | 83% | 84% | 85% | **79%** | **76%** | 87% | 79% | 84% | 88% | 85% |
| Newsletter | 57% | | 60% | 53% | 58% | 53% | **51%** | 61% | 59% | 60% | 53% | 57% |
| Flyer | 32% | | **39%** | 30% | 28% | **40%** | **37%** | 28% | **25%** | 29% | 37% | 35% |
| School meeting | 31% | | 36% | 26% | 31% | **40%** | **37%** | 27% | 31% | **27%** | 29% | 35% |

Compared to parents identifying as White, those identifying as Black and Hispanic are **more likely** to prefer schools providing information via **flyers and school meetings** and are **less likely** to prefer schools providing information using **direct emails**.

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# How satisfied are you with the communication strategies used by your child's...

**Legend:**
- ■ Extremely unsatisfied
- ■ Unsatisfied
- ■ Neither unsatisfied/satisfied
- ■ Satisfied
- ■ Extremely satisfied

**School staff:** 4% | 10% | 19% | 50% | 17%

**Teachers:** 4% | 12% | 21% | 45% | 18%

**School district:** 5% | 11% | 25% | 45% | 14%

| | Elem | Middle | High | Black | Hispanic | White | West | Midwest | Northeast | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School staff | **71%** | 67% | 65% | 67% | 72% | 67% | 68% | 61% | 69% | 70% |
| Teachers | **72%** | **66%** | 55% | 66% | 68% | 62% | 62% | 61% | 65% | 64% |
| School district | 58% | 59% | 59% | 60% | 54% | 61% | 56% | 60% | 60% | 59% |

*Note.* Percentages in this table represent parents who responded "extremely satisfied" and "satisfied"

**No differences** in parents' satisfaction with communication strategies used by their child's school staff, teachers, or district **across race/ethnicity and region.** Elementary and middle school parents are **more satisfied** than high school parents with the communication strategies used by teachers at their child's school.

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Are there any communication strategies you want your child's school to use that they are not already using?

**Direct communication**

• Less social media
• Less broad newsletters

**Text messages**

**Phone calls**

From:
• Teachers/counselor/school staff
• Robocall

**Emails**

**Social media**

**Communication apps**

• Dojo

**In-person or virtual meetings**

**Improve what is available to be:**

• Timely
• Up to date with information

# LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Clubs

## We asked parents:

Does your LGBTQIA+ child feel their school provides an inclusive and supportive learning environment?
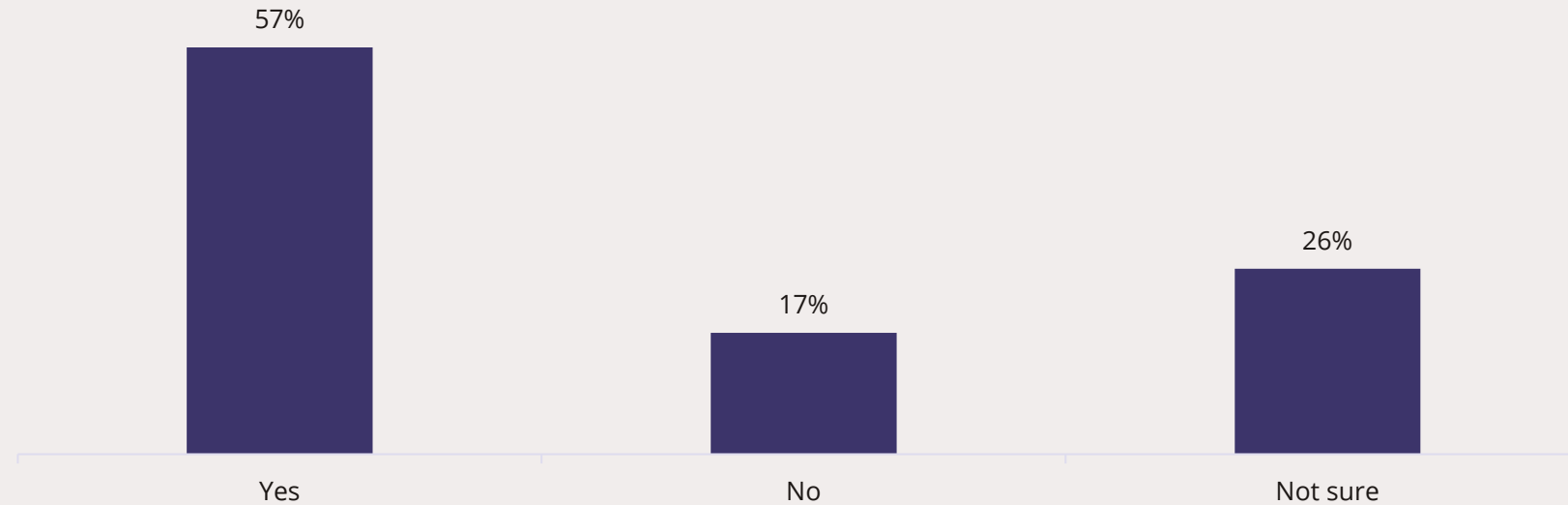
Does your child's school have a Gay/Straight Alliance, Gender/Sexuality Alliance Group (GSA) or similar clubs?

Does your child attend a GSA or other club or group at their school that supports LGBTQIA+ students?

*Note.* This section of questions related to LGBTQIA+ inclusion and clubs was presented only to parents of middle and high school children who identify as LGBTQIA+.

# Among parents of middle/high school students who identify as LGBTQIA+ (n=63), **more than half** report their **child feels their school is inclusive and supportive.**

## Does your child feel their school provides an inclusive and supportive learning environment?*



* Only parents of middle and high school children who identify as LGBTQIA+ received this question (*n* = 63)

# 27% of secondary school parents (*n*=697) report that their child's school has a GSA.*

Does your child's school have a Gay/Straight Alliance, Gender/Sexuality Alliance Group (GSA) or similar clubs?

| Yes | No | Not sure |
|-----|-----|----------|
| 27% | 35% | 38% |
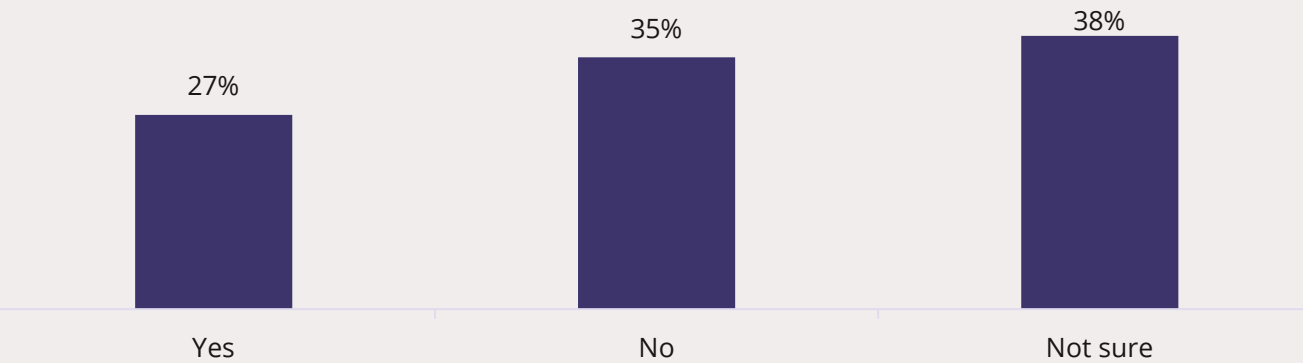
# 48% of parents whose child's school has a GSA report that their secondary school student who identifies as LGBTQIA+ **attends a GSA or other LGBTQIA+ supportive club at school**.* **

Does your child attend a GSA or other club or group at their school that supports LGBTQIA+ students?**

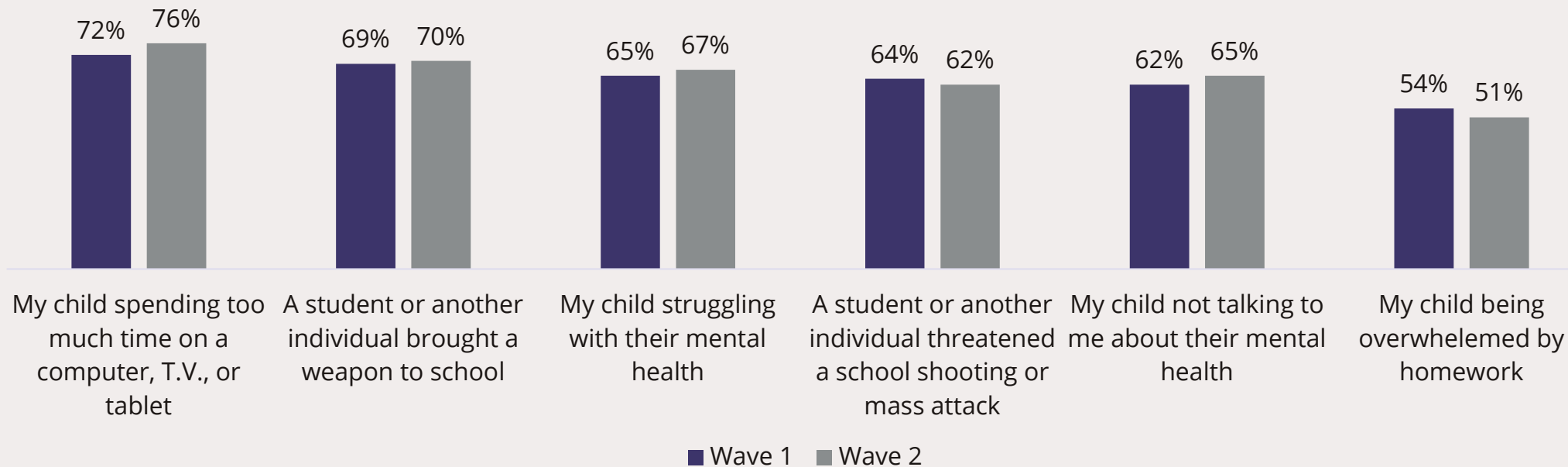| Yes | No | Not sure |
|-----|-----|----------|
| 48% | 45% | 6% |
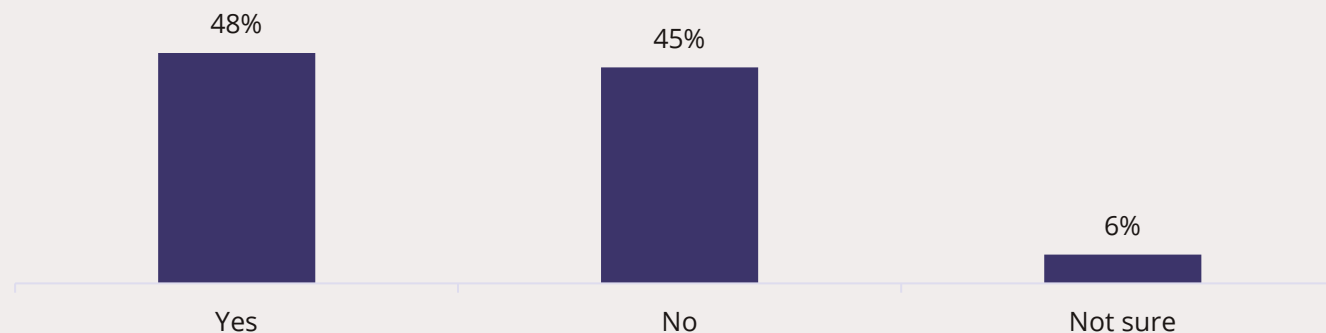
*Only parents of middle and high school children received these questions (*n* = 697).
**Percentages represent parents whose child identifies as LGBTQIA+ and whose school has a GSA (*n* = 33).

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ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

# Comparison between parents' responses in Wave 1 and Wave 2

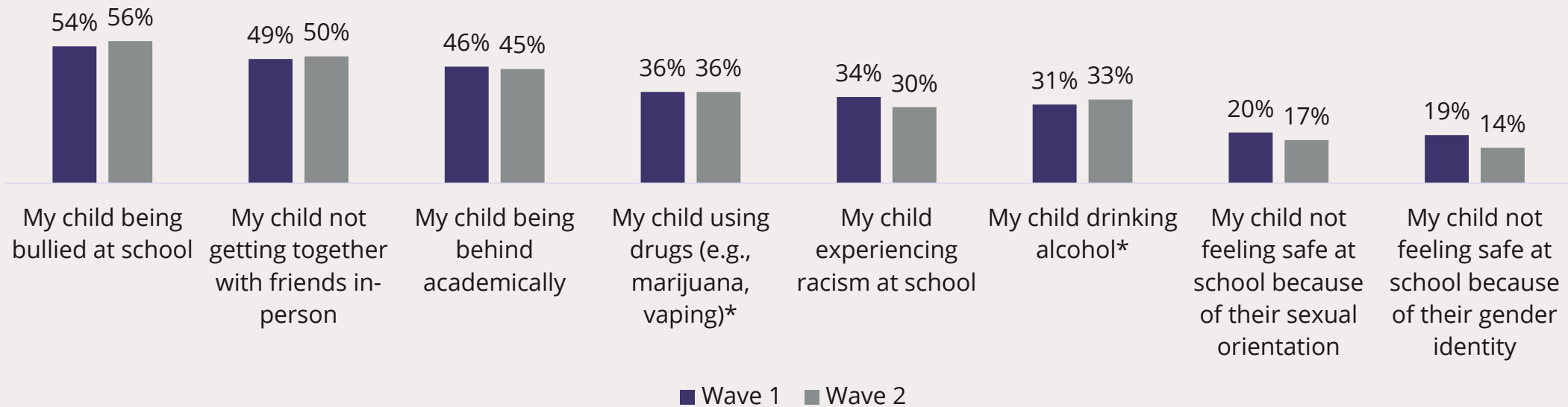## How much do you worry about the following?*



*Note.* The sample of parents in Wave 1 is independent from the sample of parents in Wave 2. Therefore, results should not be interpreted as changes (or lack thereof) in parents' thoughts and opinions across the two reports.

| Category | Wave 1 | Wave 2 |
|---|---|---|
| My child spending too much time on a computer, T.V., or tablet | 72% | 76% |
| A student or another individual brought a weapon to school | 69% | 70% |
| My child struggling with their mental health | 65% | 67% |
| A student or another individual threatened a school shooting or mass attack | 64% | 62% |
| My child not talking to me about their mental health | 62% | 65% |
| My child being overwhelmed by homework | 54% | 51% |

■ Wave 1    ■ Wave 2

*\* % of parents who "worry a little bit," "worry some," or "worry a lot"*

# Comparison between parents' responses in Wave 1 and Wave 2

## How much do you worry about the following?**



| Category | Wave 1 | Wave 2 |
|---|---|---|
| My child being bullied at school | 54% | 56% |
| My child not getting together with friends in-person | 49% | 50% |
| My child being behind academically | 46% | 45% |
| My child using drugs (e.g., marijuana, vaping)* | 36% | 36% |
| My child experiencing racism at school | 34% | 30% |
| My child drinking alcohol* | 31% | 33% |
| My child not feeling safe at school because of their sexual orientation | 20% | 17% |
| My child not feeling safe at school because of their gender identity | 19% | 14% |

■ Wave 1  ■ Wave 2

*Note.* The sample of parents in Wave 1 is independent from the sample of parents in Wave 2. Therefore, results should not be interpreted as changes (or lack thereof) in parents' thoughts and opinions across the two reports.

\* Item presented only to parents of children in middle and high school

\*\* % of parents who "worry a little bit," "worry some," or "worry a lot"

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

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ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS♡

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