



June 2010

NHPS SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT SURVEY 2009-2010

DISTRICT RESULTS

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Executive Summary

As part of its ongoing School Change efforts, NHPS has conducted its first annual School Learning Environment Survey. The survey collected feedback from students in grades 5-12, teachers and parents about their individual schools. Each group was asked similar questions about academic expectations, communication, engagement, safety and respect, and collaboration.

82% of teachers, 88% of students, and 23% of parents responded to the survey. Although New Haven's parent response rate compares favorably with similar efforts in other districts, an improved parent response will be a priority for future survey administrations.

Highlights include:

- **Students generally feel connected, challenged and cared about at school.** 76% of students indicated that there is at least one adult in their school that knows them well, ranging among schools from 89% to 56% (Slide 15)
- **Overall, parents are satisfied with important aspects of their child's education**, including their child's teacher (86.1% very satisfied or satisfied) and the education their child is receiving (83% very satisfied; or satisfied) (Slide 17)
- Generally, parents are satisfied with communication from and opportunities to get involved in their child's school; however **parent involvement remains a challenge**. The majority of parent respondents indicate that they rarely or never participate in key school-based activities (Slides 18,19)
- Overall, **teachers feel supported and work collaboratively with their colleagues** (86% indicate that they feel supported by other teachers at their school); however there is a need to continue to build a collaborative culture among teachers and administrators (29.2% of teacher respondents do not feel they are invited to play a meaningful role in school-level goal-setting and decision-making) (Slides 21, 22)

Overall, survey results were positive, but important opportunities for development were identified. Beginning this year, the district and schools will use this valuable input for ongoing improvement.

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Participation: A Collaborative Process

Survey Development

- The Learning Environment Surveys were designed by a Survey Committee comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators.
 - The committee is one of three committees formed as part of the historic teacher's contract with the district last fall.
- The Survey Committee worked collaboratively to craft three surveys – one each for parents, teachers, and students – based on national models and local experience and needs.
- Once completed, surveys were tested with focus groups to ensure the questions asked were relevant, easy to understand, and would provide concrete guidance to schools on how to improve school climate.

Survey Administration

- Parent, Teacher and Student Learning Environment Surveys were anonymous.
- Costs associated with the surveys were paid for through contributions from the local philanthropic community and the New Haven Federation of Teachers
- The Children's Institute of Rochester, NY, an independent survey firm, was engaged to administer the survey and report the results.

Participation: A Collaborative Process

Outreach Efforts

- All teachers and 5th-12th grade students were given the opportunity to participate in the survey online during the school day
- Paper surveys were mailed to parents, who had the option of completing a paper or online version of the survey
- To increase parent participation, multiple strategies and outreach efforts were employed, including:
 - Engagement of **CT Parent Power**, a non-profit organization specializing in parent engagement to work with schools and PTOs
 - Training and technical assistance provided by the **Citywide PTO** to PTO leaders
 - An **advertising campaign** which included ads in local newspapers and on the back of CT Transit Buses
 - Parents received a reminder **post card**, multiple reminder **phone calls**, and most schools held **survey events** to make sure that all parents had the opportunity to let their voice be heard

Participation: Response Rates

- **55%** of the New Haven Public School community participated in the survey.
- **13,631** Parents, Teachers and Students filled out a Learning Environment Survey.
- This is the **largest number of participants** ever surveyed by the New Haven Public School System.
- All survey responses were counted in survey scores and publicly reported.

Participation: Response Rates

Group	Number of Surveys Completed	Response Rate
Parents*	2,848	23%
Teachers	1,511	82%
Students (Grades 5-12)	9,272	88%
Total	13,631	55%

* Parent response rate varies significantly by school, from as low as 3% to as high as 72%.

Participation: Response Rates by School Type

Group	Elementary / Middle School	High School
Parents*	26%	18%
Teachers	93%	82%
Students (Grades 5-12)	97%	79%

*156 teachers and 27 parents did not identify which school they were affiliated with. These responses were excluded from the calculation of response rate by school type.

Participation: Response Rates in Context

New Haven's parent response rate compares favorably with efforts in other districts to obtain school constituents' views on school issues:

- 18% parent response rate in New York City's first Parent Survey in 2001
- 15% parent response rate on Baltimore, Maryland's 2005 School Climate Parent Survey
- 26% parent response rate on Oakland, California's 2006 "Use Your Voice" Survey



**...but improved parent response will be a priority
for 2010-11**

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Survey Categories

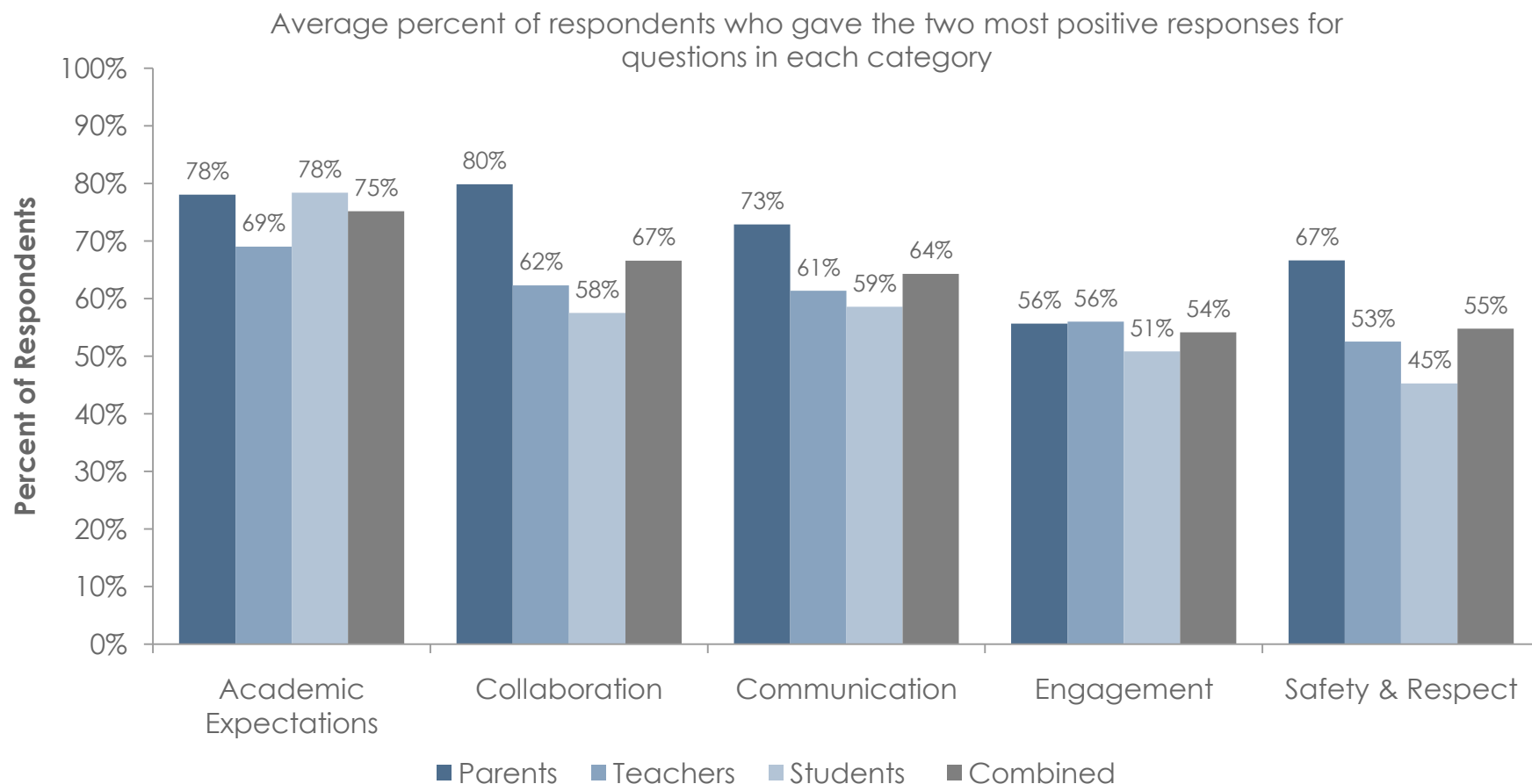
Survey questions were included in one of five categories, each representing a key aspect of a school's learning environment:

- Academic Expectations
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Engagement
- Safety and Respect

Survey Scores by Category

Generally, participants rated schools as positive across all categories. Parents tend to rate schools higher than teachers and students.

For all stakeholder groups, Safety & Respect and Engagement show the greatest need for improvement.



Survey Scores by School Type

Elementary school parents, teachers, and students tend to rate schools higher than middle and high school parents, teachers, and students.

For example, Engagement:

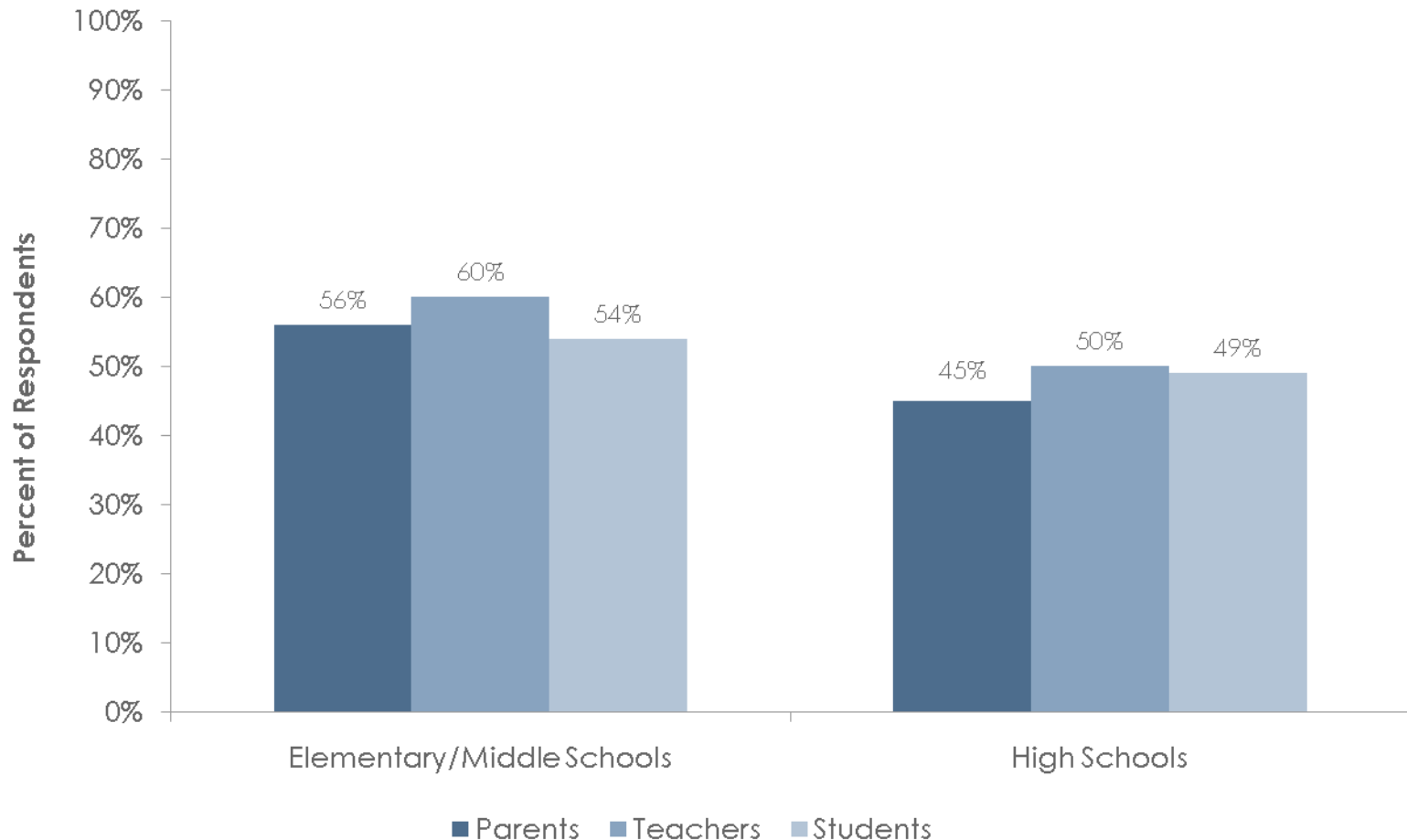
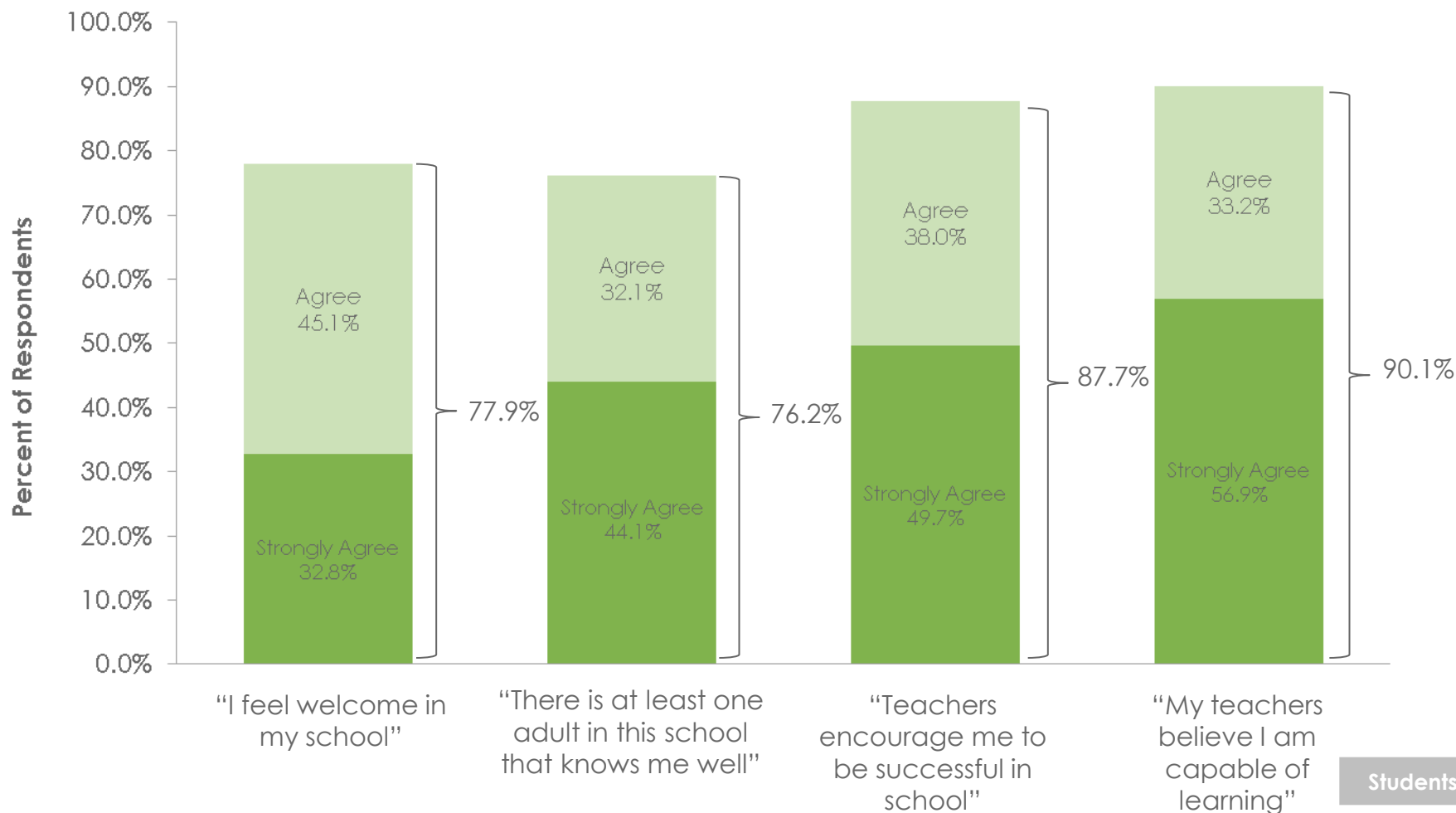


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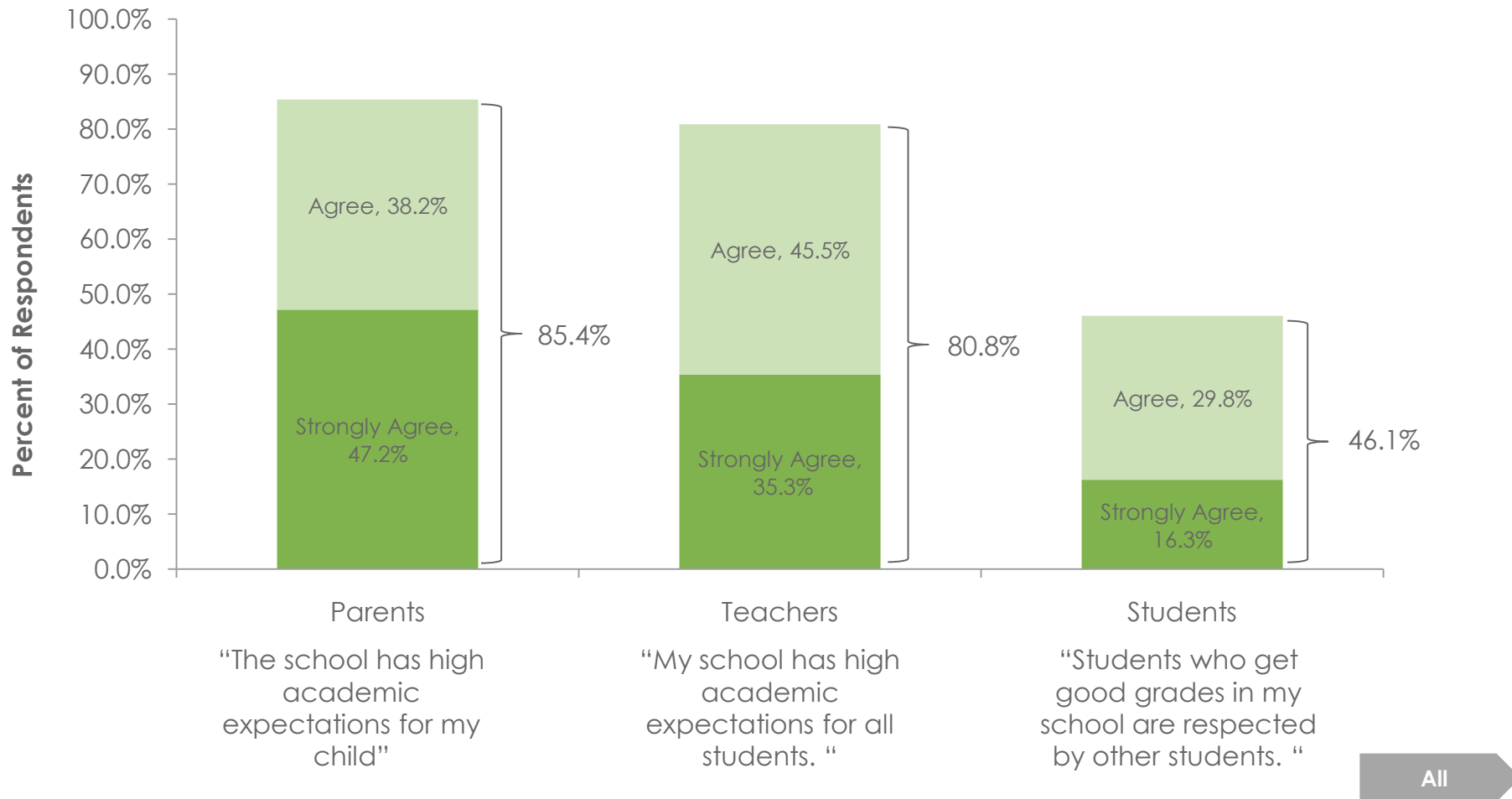
Students Generally Feel Connected, Challenged and Cared About at School

76% of students feel that there is at least one adult in their school that knows them well. This number varies by school, ranging from 89% to 56%.



Parents and Teachers Believe Schools Set High Expectations for Students

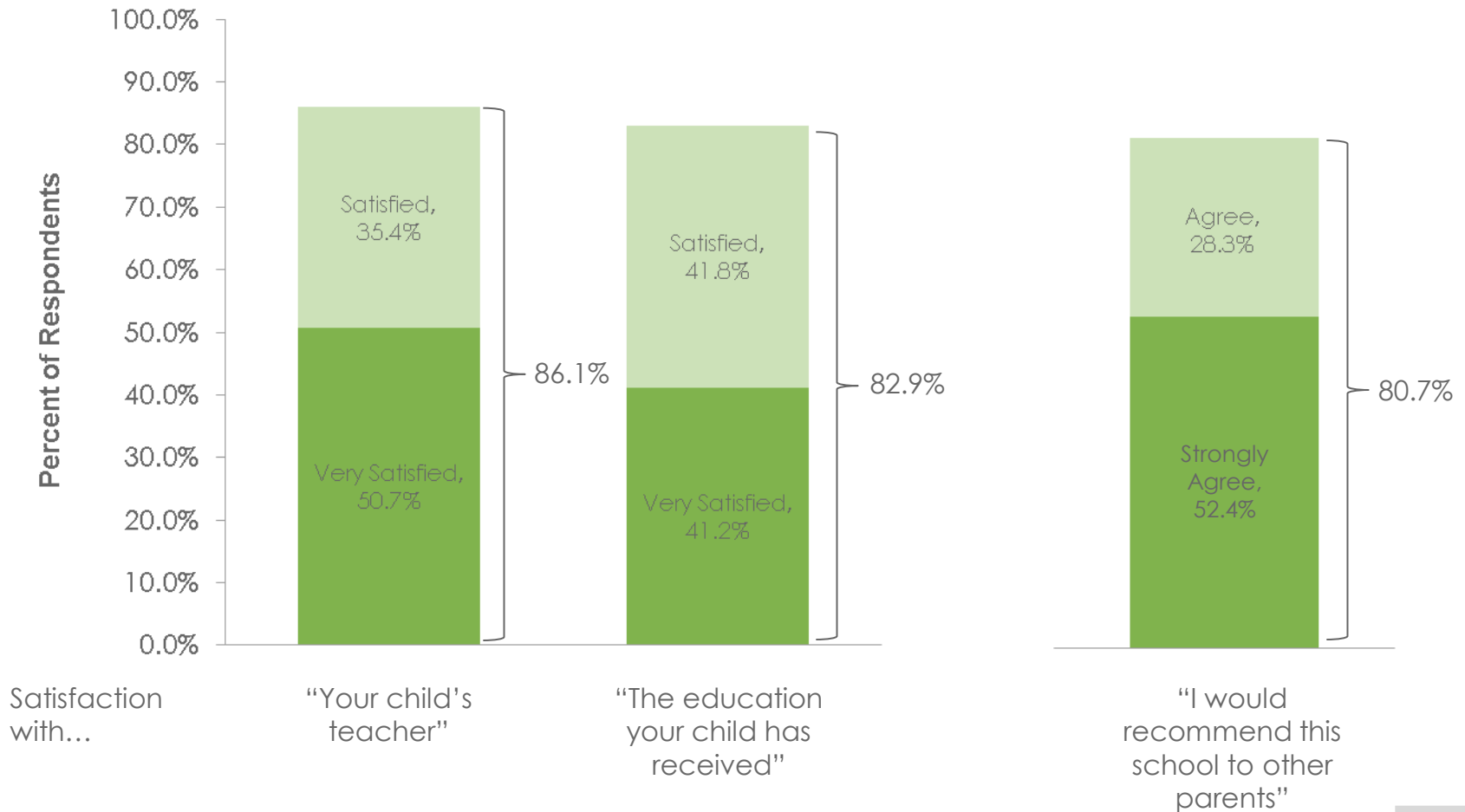
...But student results show a need to improve student culture around academic performance.



Overall, Parents Are Satisfied With Their Child's School

Most parents are satisfied or very satisfied with important aspects of their child's education...

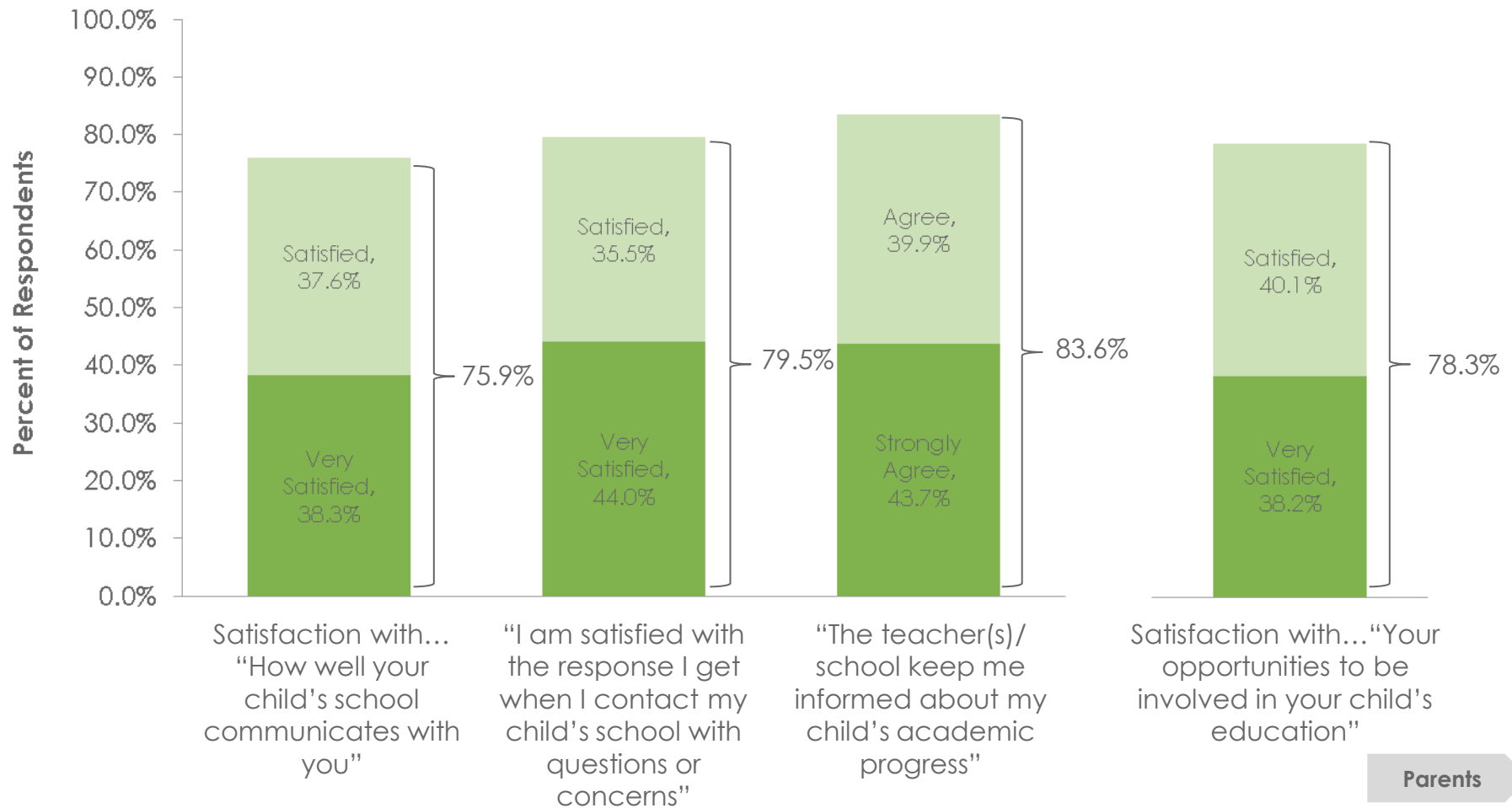
...and would recommend their child's school to other parents.



Parents

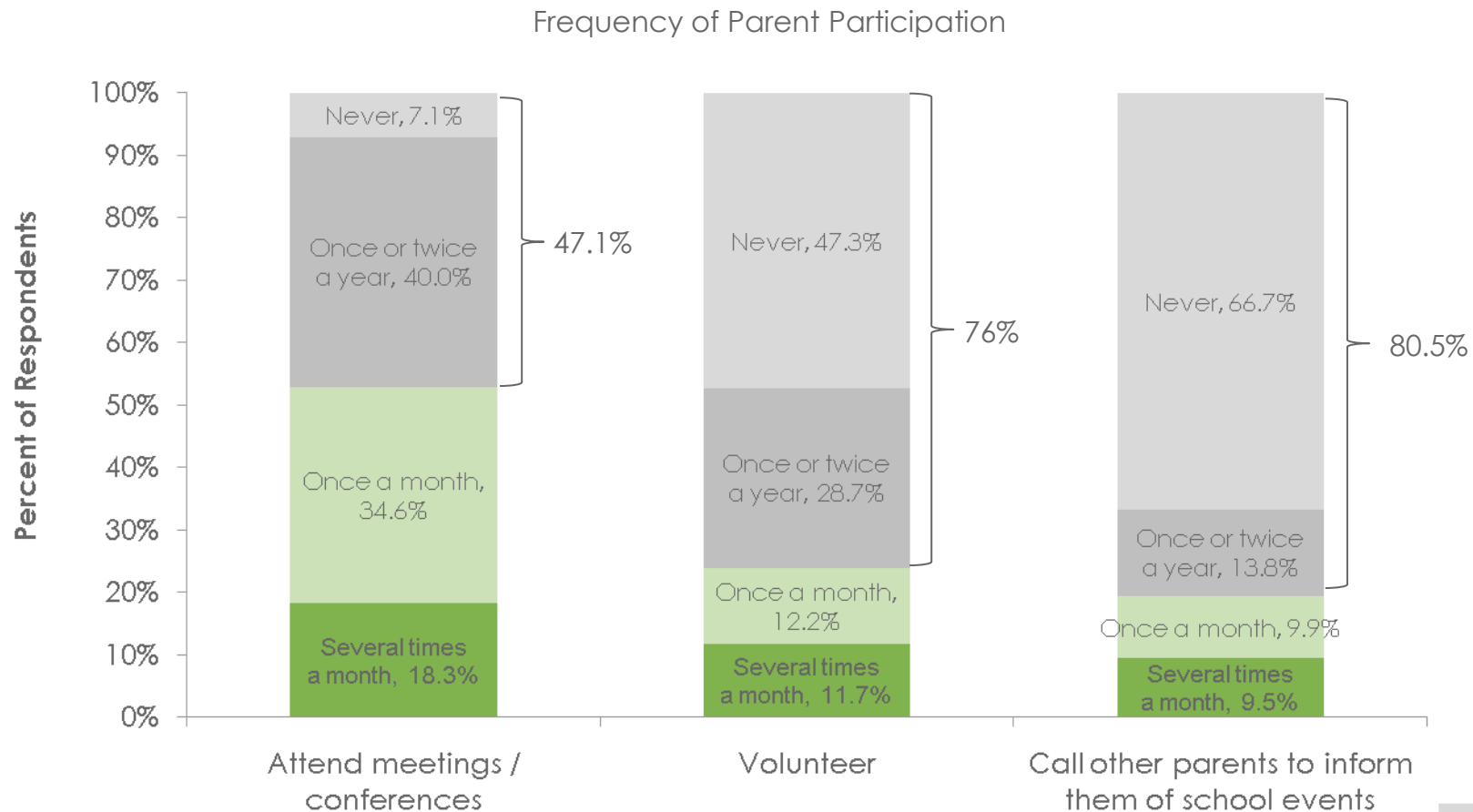
And Feel Positive About Communication and Opportunities to Be Involved

Over 75% of parent respondents are satisfied with the communication they receive from their child's school. A similar number feel positive about opportunities available to be involved.



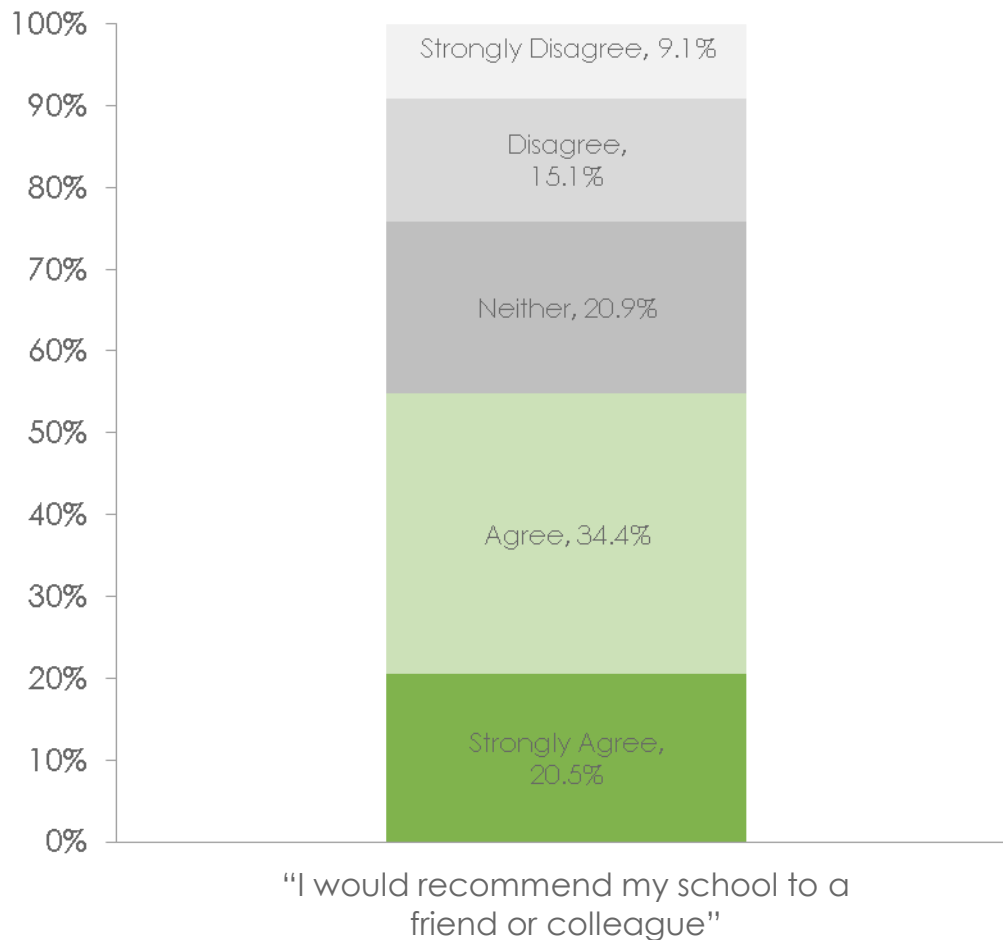
However, Parent Involvement Continues to Be a Challenge

The majority of parent respondents indicate that they rarely or never participate in key school-based activities.



Parents

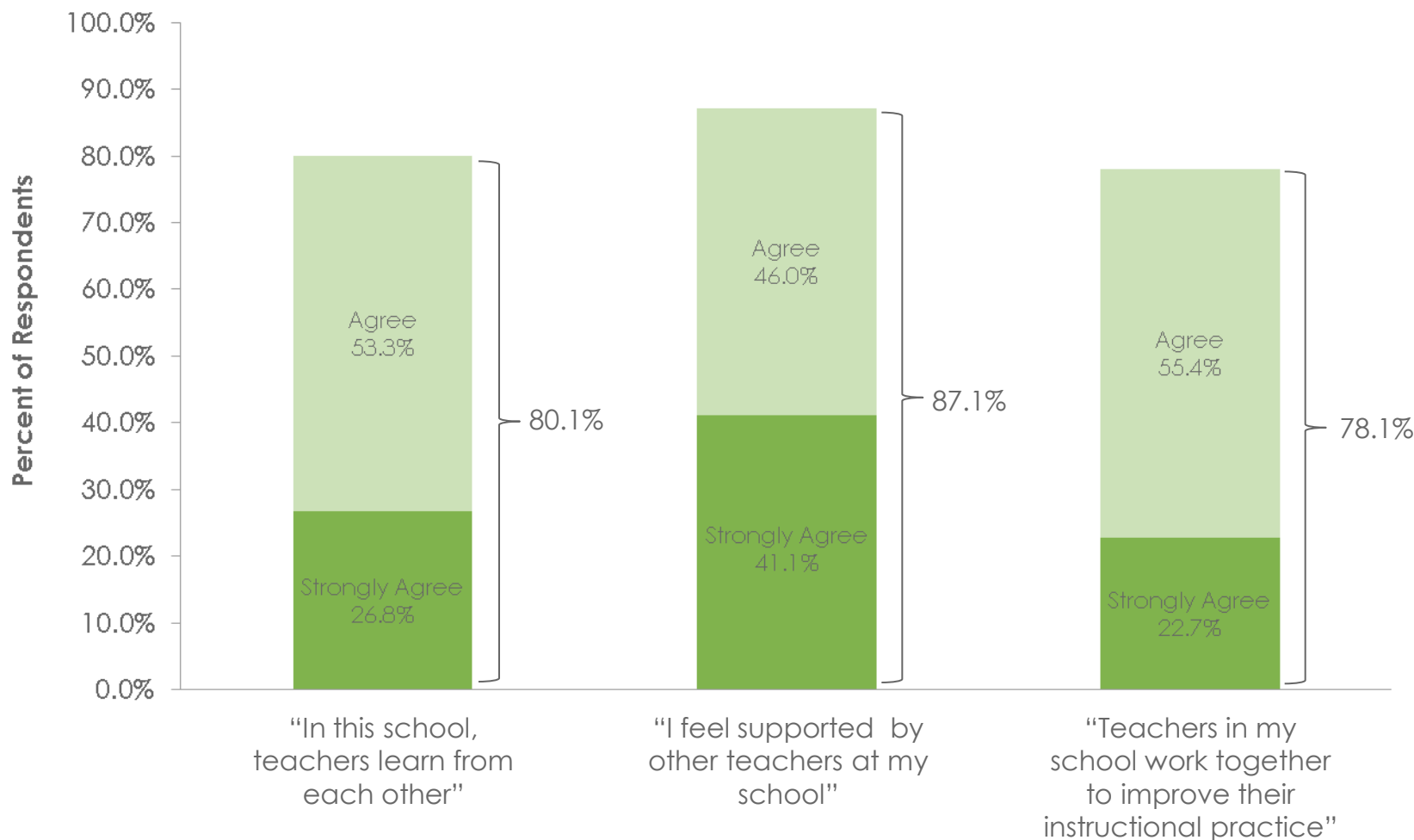
There is Significant Variation in Teachers' Opinions About Their Schools



- In 10 Elementary/Middle schools and 5 High Schools, **75% or more teachers** strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend their school.
- In 11 Elementary/Middle schools, **34% or fewer teachers** strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend their school.
- In one school over **95.5%** of teachers recommended their school.

Teachers

Overall, Teachers Feel Professionally Supported by and Work Collaboratively with Their Colleagues



Teachers

But Highlight a Need to Continue to Build a Collaborative Culture Among Teachers and Administrators

29.2% of teacher respondents do not feel that teachers are invited to play a meaningful role in school-level goal-setting and decision-making.

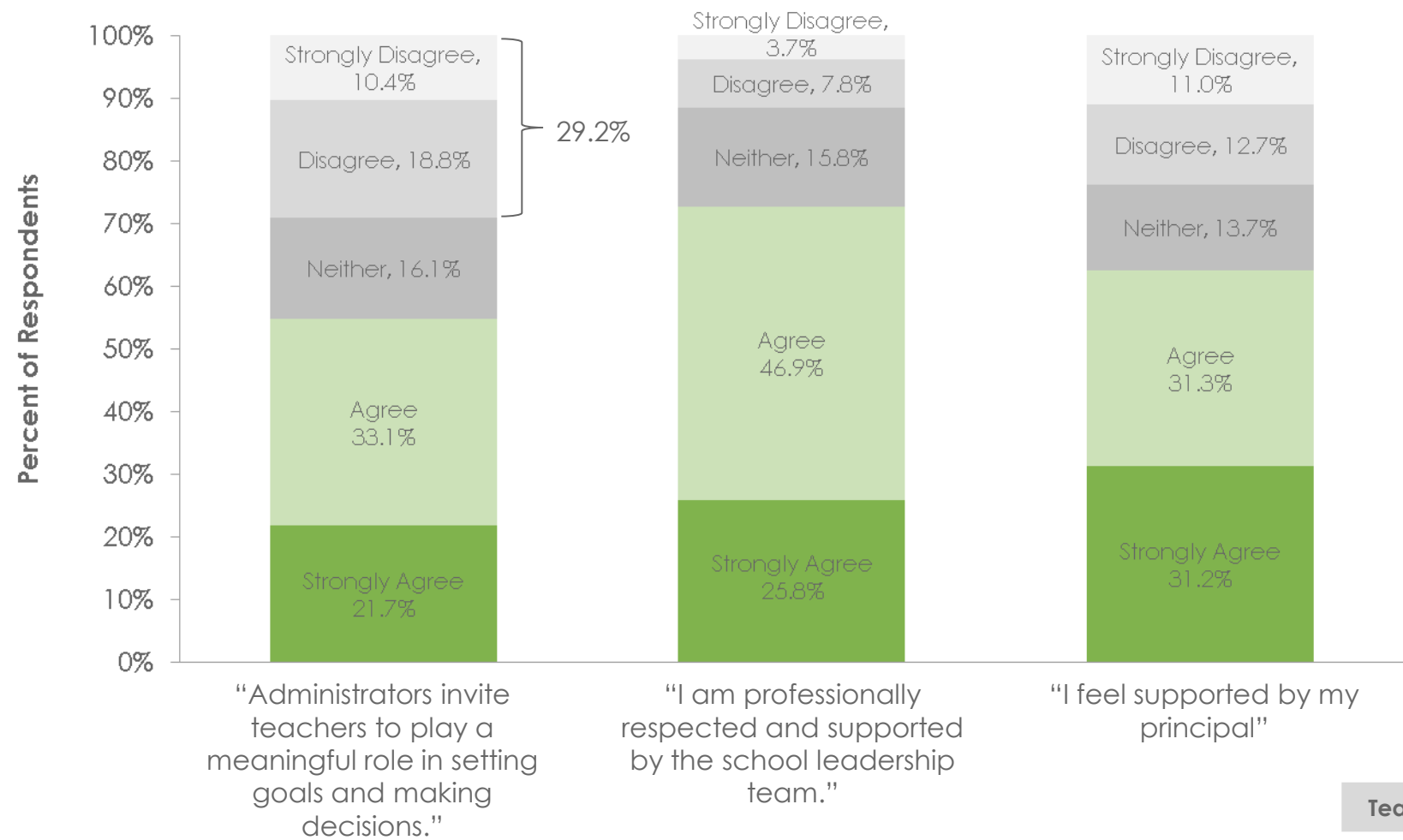


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How Survey Results Can Help Schools Improve their Learning Environments

- On **July 19, 2010 school level Survey Reports will be published** on the New Haven Public Schools website at www.nhps.net.
- The Survey Reports are designed to give school leaders and members of school communities constructive information they can use to improve programming, attitudes, engagement, communication, safety, and respect at their schools.
- Prior to release, principals and their leadership teams will have an opportunity to review data pertaining to their school and to **develop a process for addressing results**.
- Prior to the beginning of the school year, principals will assemble a team of teachers, parents and other school leaders to **revise their school improvement plans**, incorporating feedback received through the surveys.
- Survey Reports will also be used as a **significant factor in the tiering of the schools** each fall.
- Going forward, each school's annual review of its school improvement plan will take into account **how well schools use their survey results to make improvements**.

Next Steps: Lessons Learned

As with any first time endeavor, this first year of the School Learning Environment Survey was not perfect. Lessons learned have been tracked throughout the process, including:

Timing

Allow a longer window for survey completion

Strategies for Parent Engagement

Launch surveys earlier and in conjunction with school events – potentially February Report Card night – to allow more parents the opportunity to take the survey at their school

Parents of Multiple Students

Allow parents to complete a survey for each school in which they have a current student

Inclusion of All Staff

Expand teacher survey to include all school based staff personnel.

Confidentiality

Move to confidential rather than anonymous surveys for parents.

- Anonymous surveys created difficulties for parents who lost or never received a survey.
- All survey responses will continue to be confidential, with an external vendor collecting the surveys and calculating the aggregate responses. No one at a school or the Board of Education will be able to see an individual's answers, but it will be easier for parents to receive a replacement survey.

Surveys in Context

As the district implements its School Change Initiative, the data collected in the survey process will serve to inform planning and practices at both the district and school levels.

The data from this survey complement many other sources of feedback and input regarding the district and schools, including:

- The New Teacher Project (TNT) Survey (administered to teachers and principals, 2009)
- Central Office Survey (administered to principals and APs, 2010)
- The strengthened teacher and principal/AP evaluation and development system (implemented beginning fall 2010)

The administration of the school learning environment surveys completes this year's efforts by the district to obtain stakeholders' views on key school issues.

As with other tools employed in 2009 – 2010, the district will use these survey results to develop strategies and responses to areas in need of improvement.