

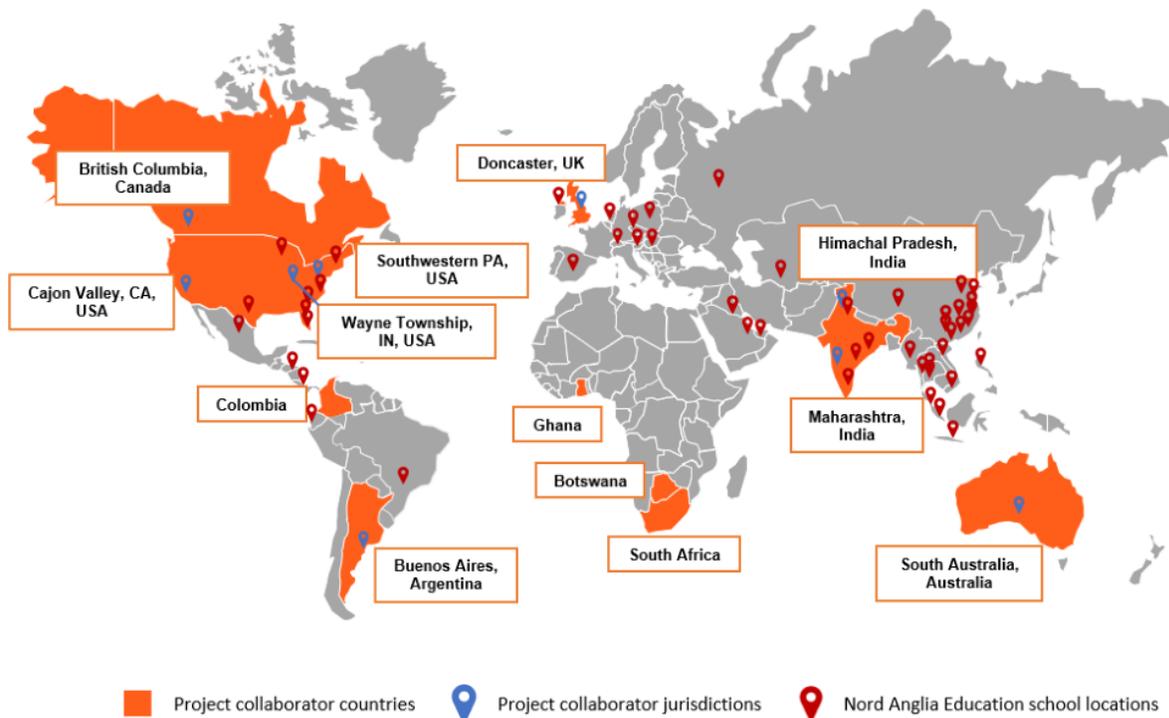
PERSPECTIVES FROM PARENTS IN THE CAJON VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION NETWORK

In January 2020, the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at Brookings launched a new project focused on family and parent engagement in education.¹ The project emerged out of CUE’s work on harnessing [education innovations](#) to address inequality and help all young people, regardless of the community in which they are born, develop the full breadth of competencies and skills they will need to thrive in work, life, and citizenship in the 21st century. In 2019, CUE conducted a consultation across 15 countries with over 50 education decision makers—from ministers of education to school leaders—that were focused on advancing teaching and learning strategies that supported whole child development, or as some call it, the development of academic plus 21st century skills. A recurring theme from the consultations was a desire of decision makers to have more and better strategies for engaging parents and families. Together with 34 project collaborators across 10 countries, members of CUE’s [Family Engagement in Education Network](#), CUE has been exploring what it takes to build strong family-school partnerships, especially in contexts striving to address inequality and deliver a broad suite of skills and competencies for their children.

EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The COVID-19 pandemic caused mandatory shutdowns and mass disruption of schooling worldwide. In the United States of America, over 50 million students enrolled in pre-kindergarten to grade 12 were affected. Educators responded to the crisis by rapidly shifting their in-class lessons online so that students could continue to learn remotely. As a result, parents and families have been given a front row seat to how and what their children learn ‘in school,’ and academic outcomes and student success hinge on parent involvement now more than ever before. The coronavirus-related school closures propelled new and necessary ways of teaching and learning, but despite

¹ The suggested citation for this report is: Winthrop, R., Ershadi, M., Alongi, J., & Partington, S. (2021, March). *Family engagement in education network technical report: Perspectives from parents in the Cajon Valley Union School District, California, United States of America*. Center for Universal Education at Brookings.

² We use the term parent throughout to denote a child’s parent, guardian, or caregiver.

educator’s efforts, [statewide polls](#) show that 90% of parents are worried that their children are falling behind academically.

CAJON VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Cajon Valley Union School District (CVUSD) is located in El Cajon city in San Diego County, California. It serves 17,340 students from kindergarten to grade 8. Table 1 lists the racial and ethnic distribution of the CVUSD of the students, as well as the proportion of students receiving special services (Ed-Data, n.d.):

Table 1. Demographics of CVUSD student population. Data from 2018-19.

Race/Ethnicity	% of Students
White	46.3
Hispanic	36.5
Black	5.9
None reported	4.5
Asian	3
Multiracial	2.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.7
Filippino	0.5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.2
Special services	
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	68
English Learners	35.1

Approximately 27% of the population of children ages 5-17 in the CVUSD live in poverty, according to federal standards (“SAIPE,” 2019). Between 2014 and 2018, the median household income in El Cajon city was \$52,593 (“Quick Facts,” n.d.).

District mission

The CVUSD vision statement reads: “Happy kids, engaged in healthy relationships, on a path to gainful employment.” CVUSD fosters 21st century skills and competencies in

students through curriculum which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal and socio-emotional skills, digital and computer science skills, and systematic career development (McHugh, 2020).

Schools

There are 28 schools in the CVUSD: 16 standard K-5 elementary schools, one K-5 computer science magnet elementary school, one K-6 fine arts magnet elementary school, five standard 6-8 middle schools, one 6-8 computer science and media arts magnet middle school, one K-8 dual language computer science school, one K-8 virtual education school, one K-8 special education school, and one special education preschool (“Our Schools,” n.d.; Public School Review, n.d.).

CVUSD schools have an average math proficiency score of 32% and an average reading proficiency score of 42%, compared to the statewide averages of 37% and 48%, respectively (Public School Review, n.d.).

Average daily attendance for the 2018-19 school year across all CVUSD schools was approximately 91% of the total student population. 12.3% of all students were considered chronically absent, which is defined as being absent for more than 10% of the school year (Ed-Data, n.d.).

SURVEY OF PARENTS

From May 14, 2020 to July 27, 2020, CUE distributed a 34-item online survey to parents and caregivers of students enrolled in CVUSD. A total of 502 primary caregiver responded to our survey. To collect data representative of the population at CVUSD, we determined our sample sizes before commencing data collection by assuming that the student population in this jurisdiction was equal to the parent population, thus using a conservative approach, which dismissed the possibility of siblings. We set our confidence level at 95% and margin of error at 5% according to guidelines for research activities (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Based on our apriori calculations, we aimed to collect 376 responses from primary caregivers in the CVUSD. All survey items were optional such that respondents could choose to provide a response to a subsequent

question without having responded to a previous question. As a result, the response proportions per survey item options do not always sum to 100%.

SURVEY AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

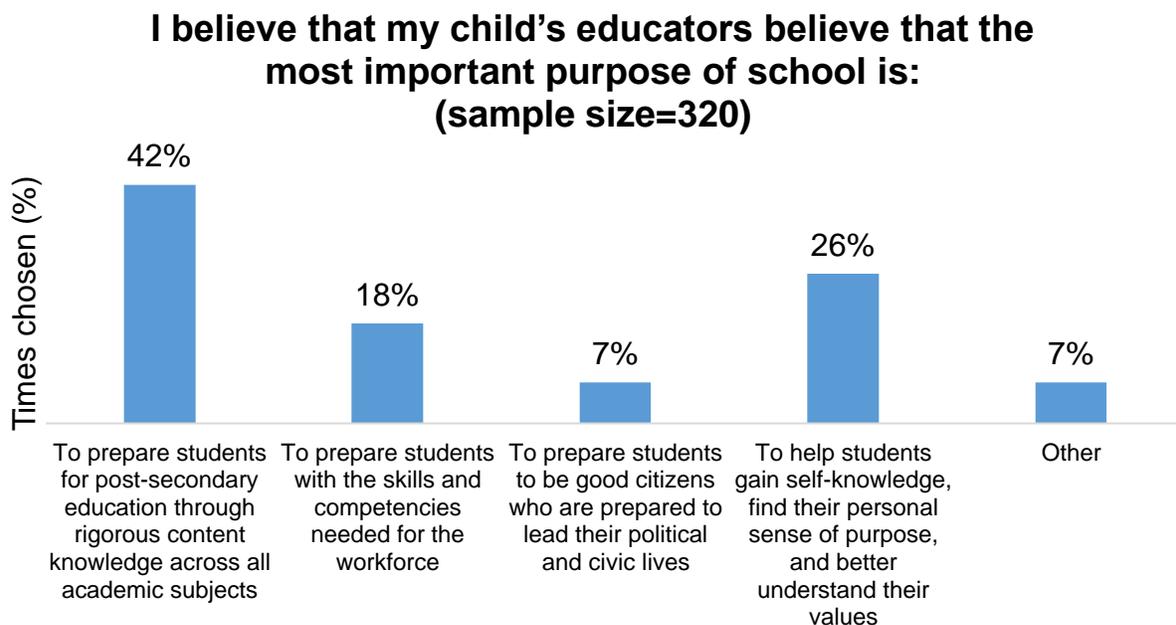
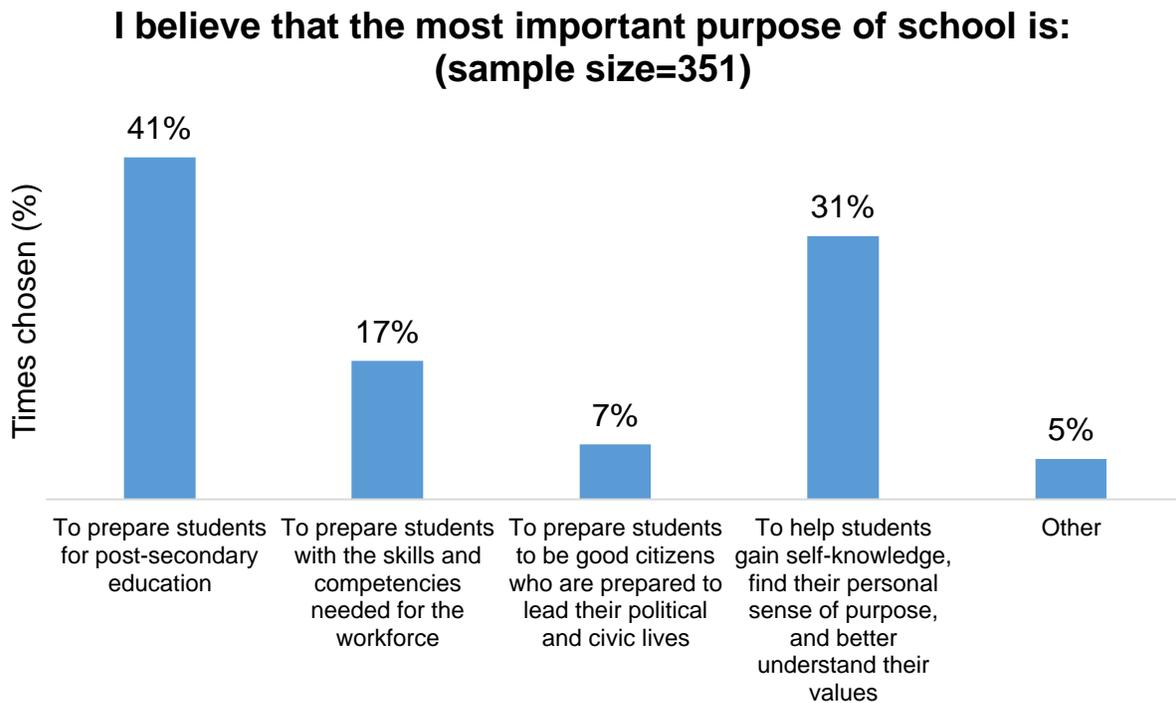
A selection of survey responses is presented below. The order in which the results are presented here does not reflect the order in which the respondents completed the questions on the survey. However, CUE will share the survey instrument upon request. Please send inquiries to: leapfrogging@brookings.edu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our project collaborators at the Cajon Valley Union School District, without whom we would not have been able to conduct this survey.

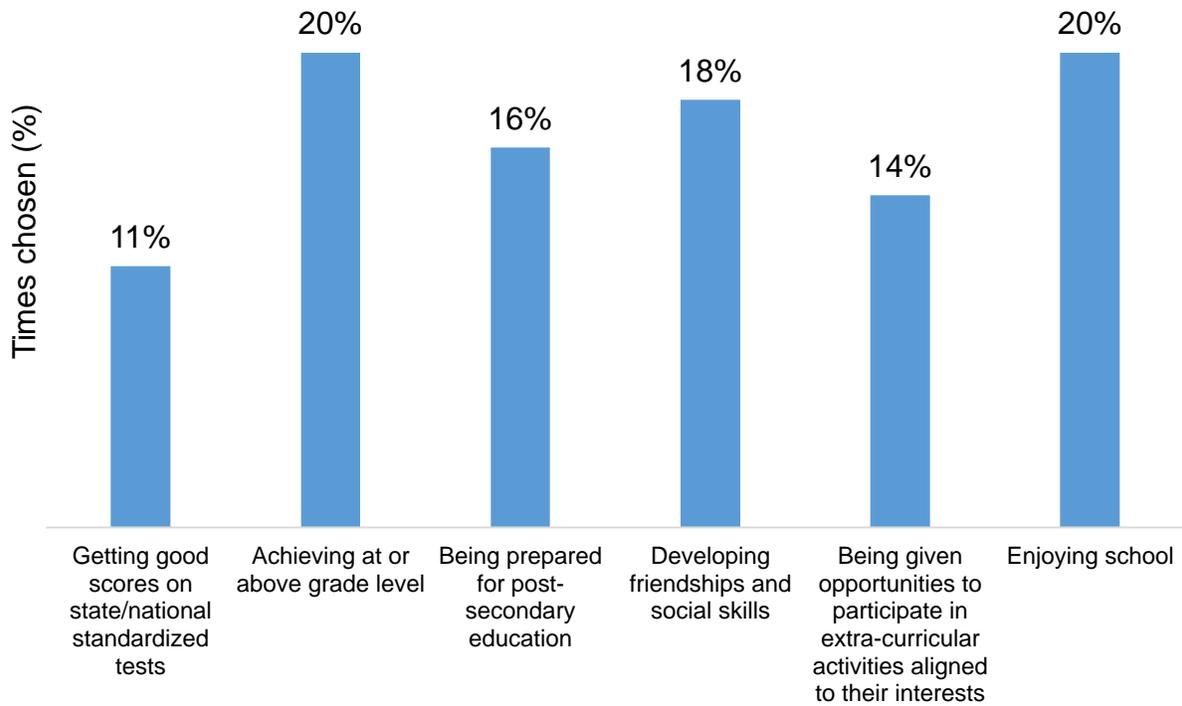
SURVEY FINDINGS

Parents' beliefs on the purpose of school and perceived alignment with teachers



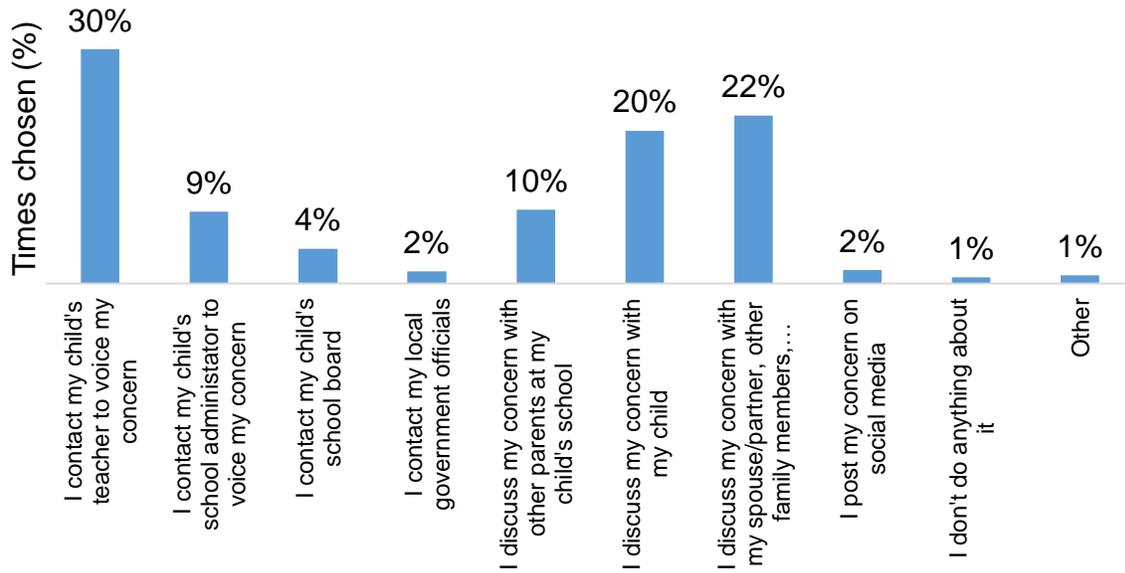
Parents' indicators of quality and perceived alignment with educators

I am satisfied with my child's education when my child is:
(sample size=324)

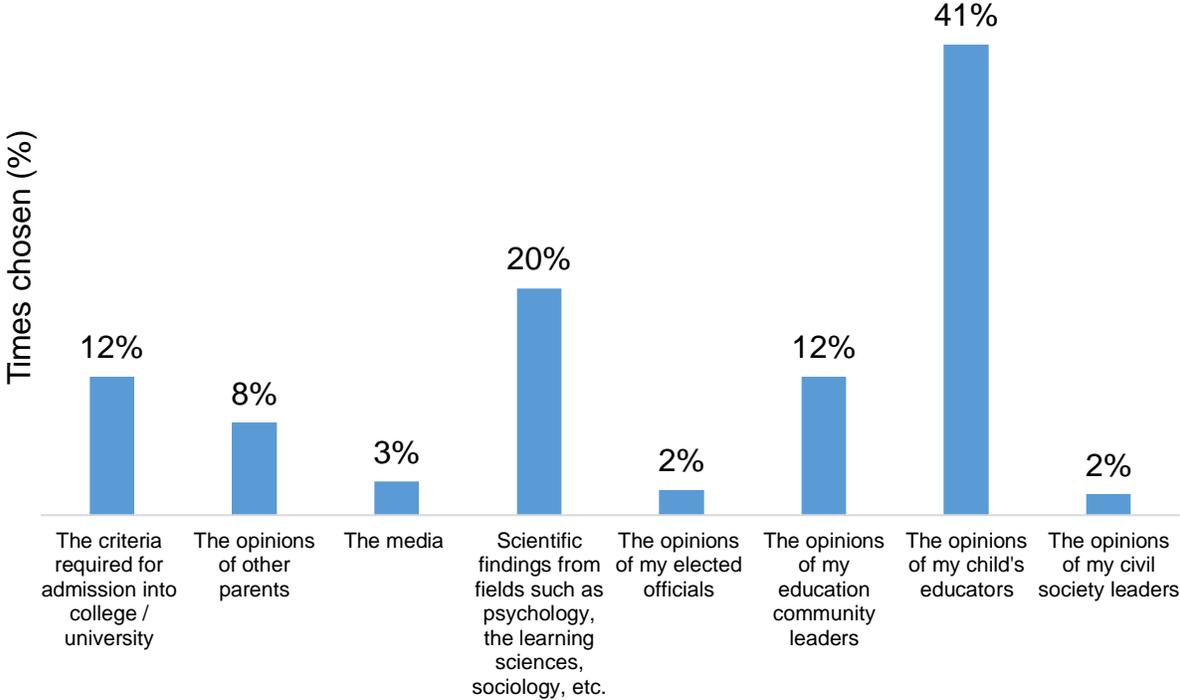


Parents' sources of information

How do you react when something about your child's education bothers or upsets you?
(sample size=756)

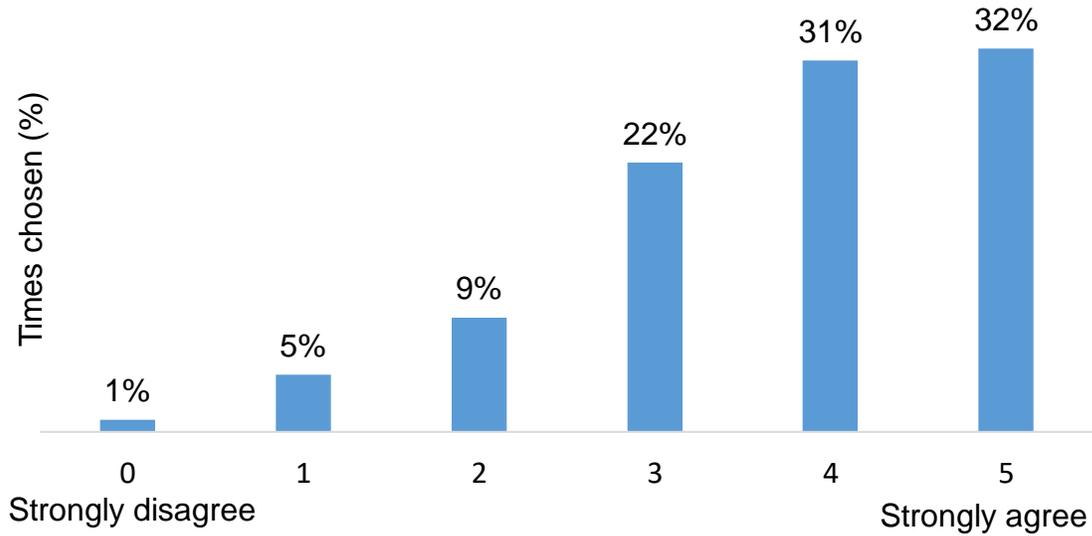


**What influences your perspective about what makes for a good quality education for your child?
(sample size=273)**

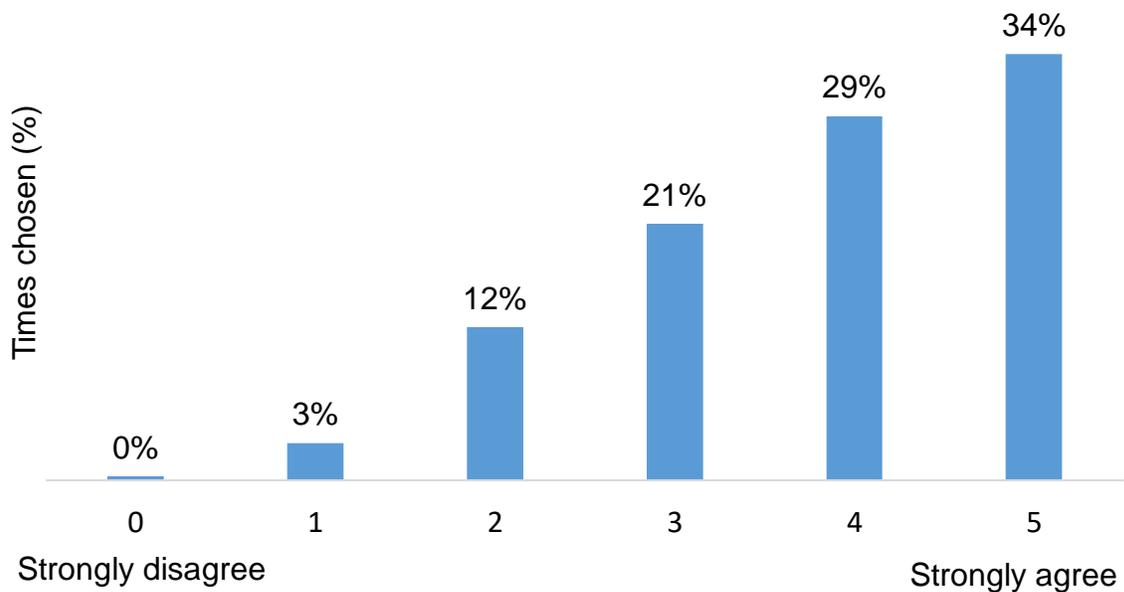


Parents' trust of and perceived alignment with teachers

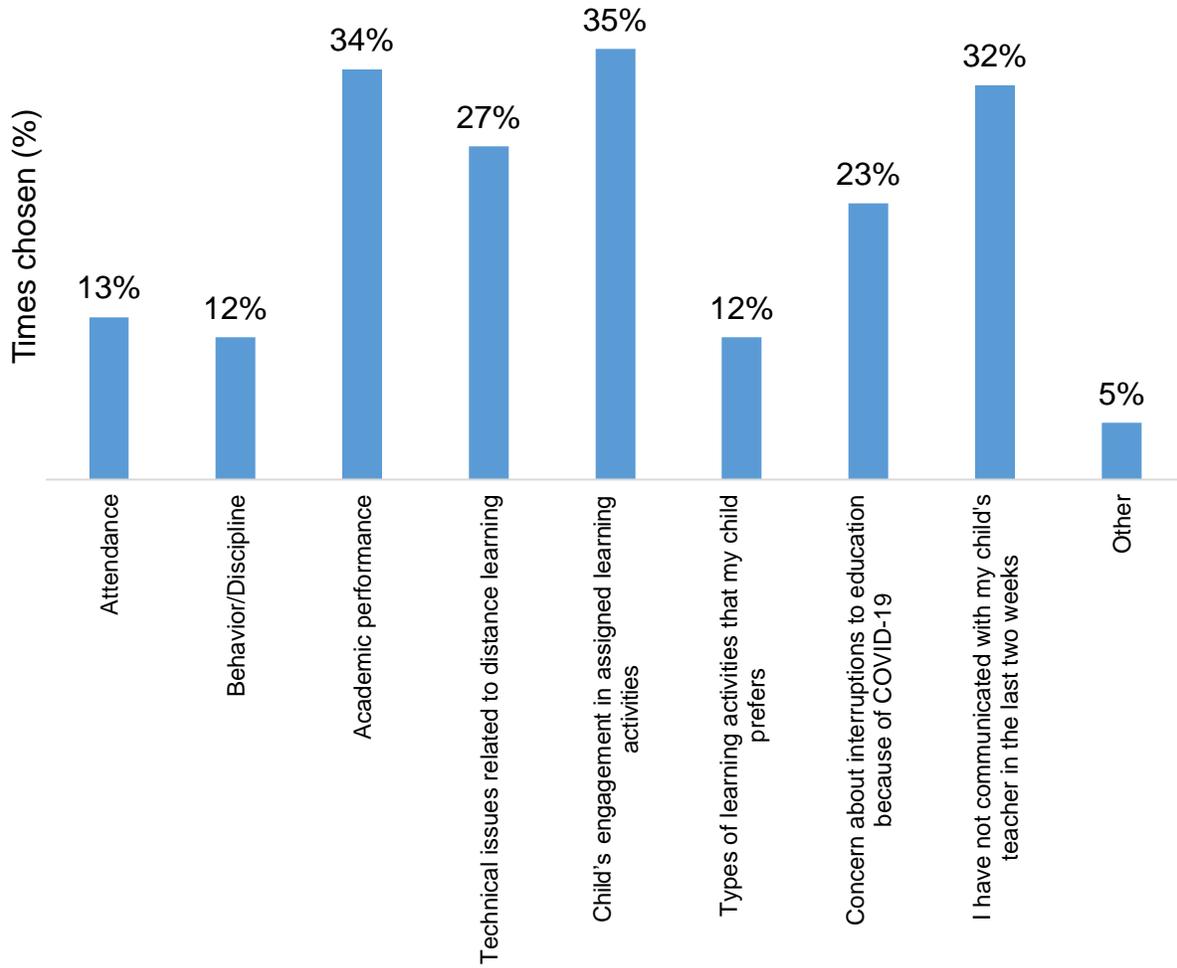
My child's teachers share my beliefs about what makes a good education.
(sample size=296)



My child's teachers are receptive to my input and suggestions.
(sample size=300)

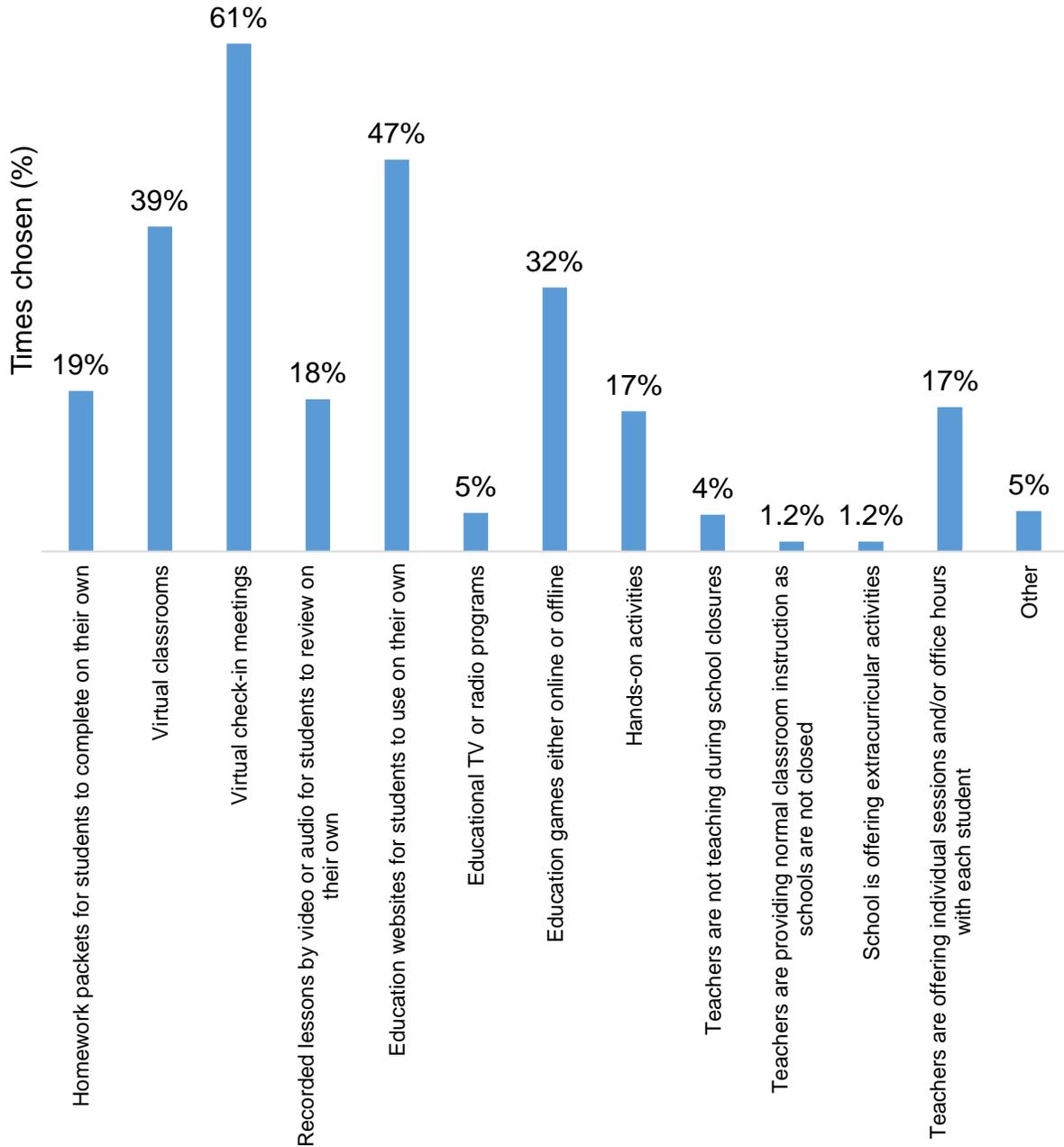


**In the last two weeks, what have you communicated to your child's teacher about:
(sample size=300)**

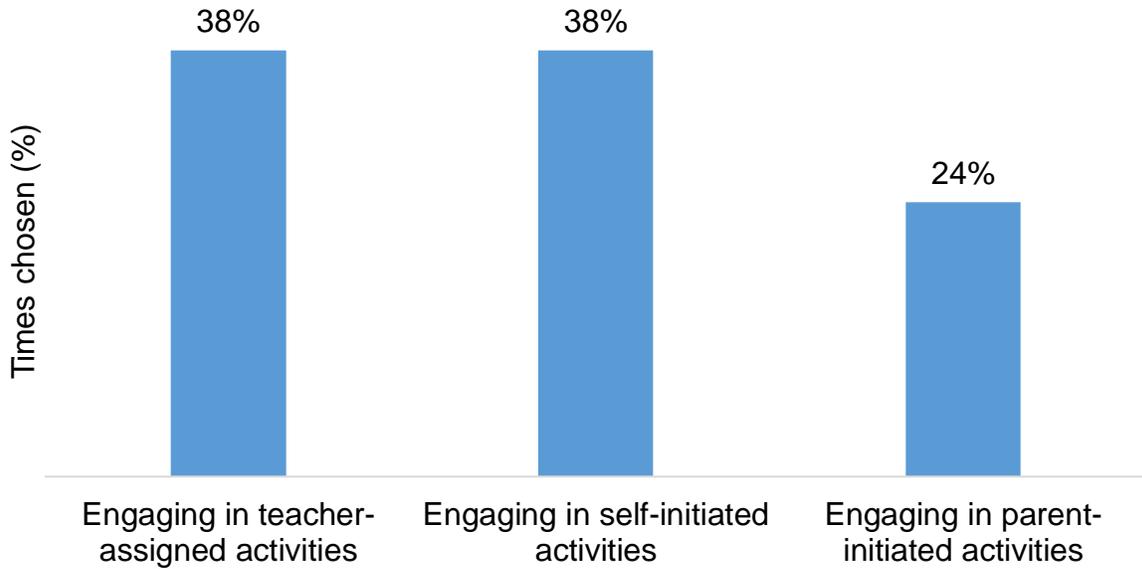


Parents' opinions on pedagogy

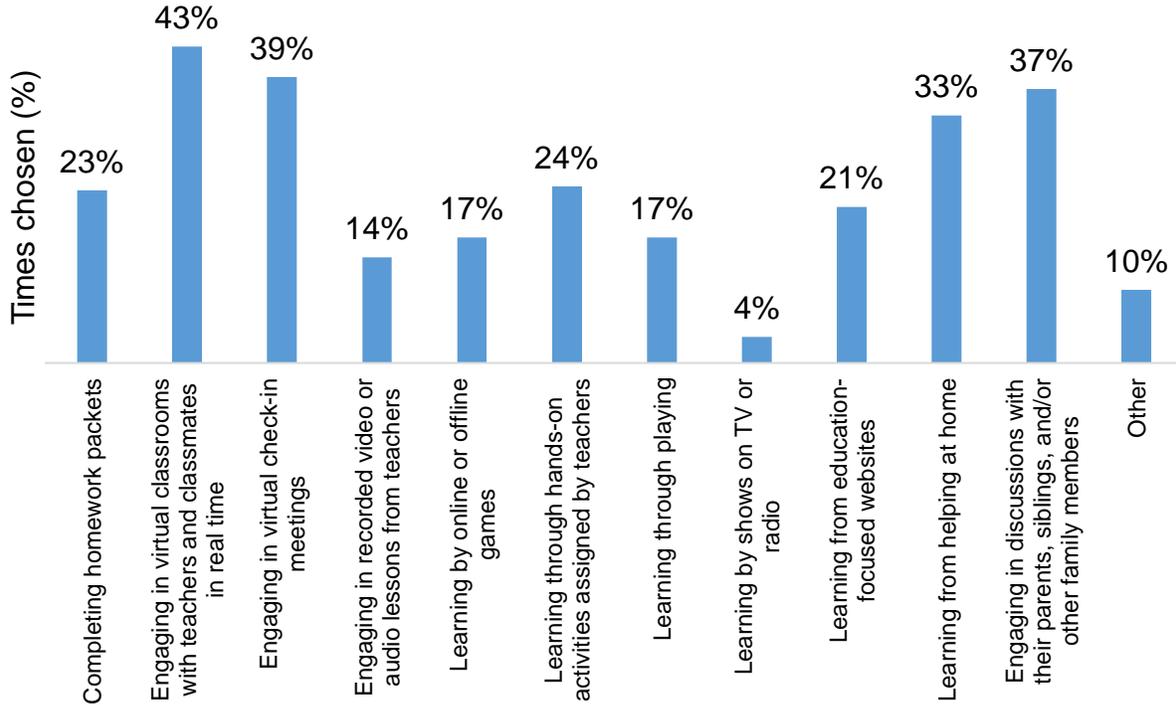
In the last two weeks, how are your child's teachers continuing to teach right now?
(sample size=411)



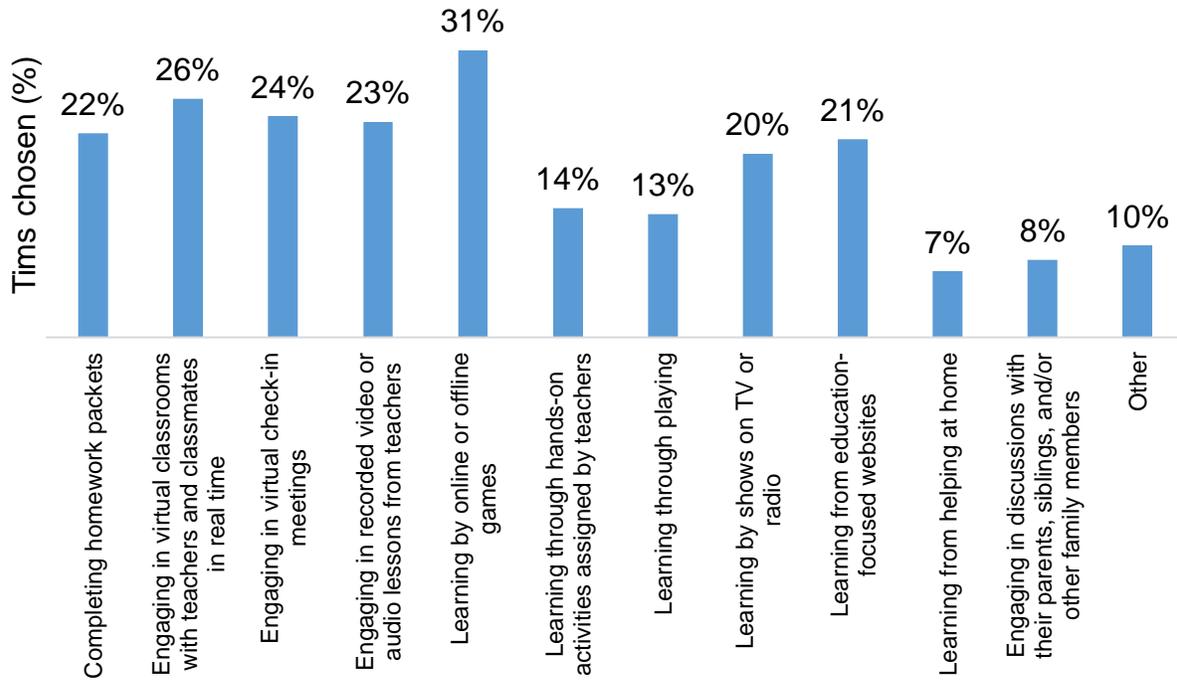
**How is your child spending the majority of their time right now?
(sample size=386)**



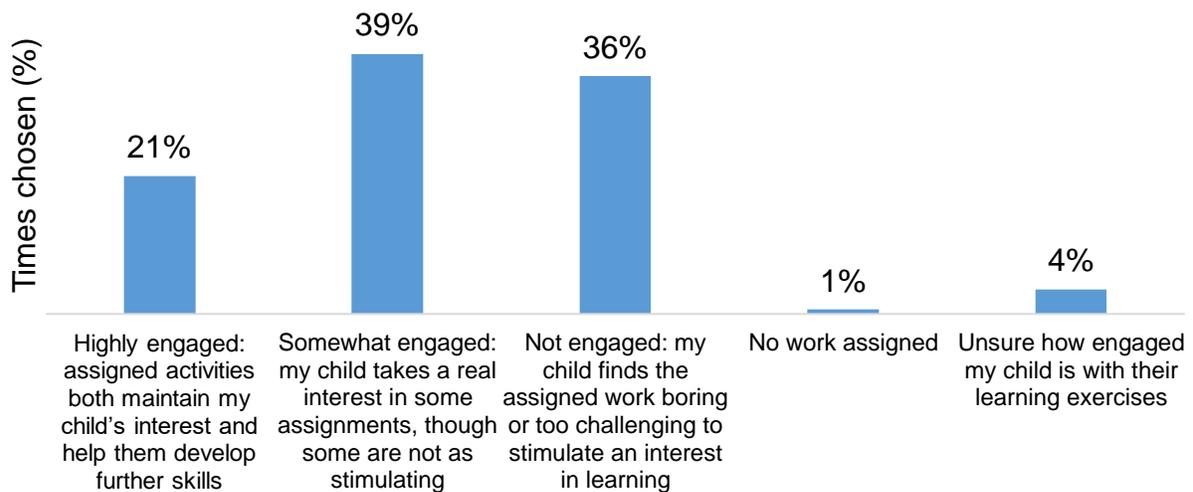
**When you think about the different ways in which your child is or was learning during their school closure, which are you the MOST satisfied with?
(sample size=365)**



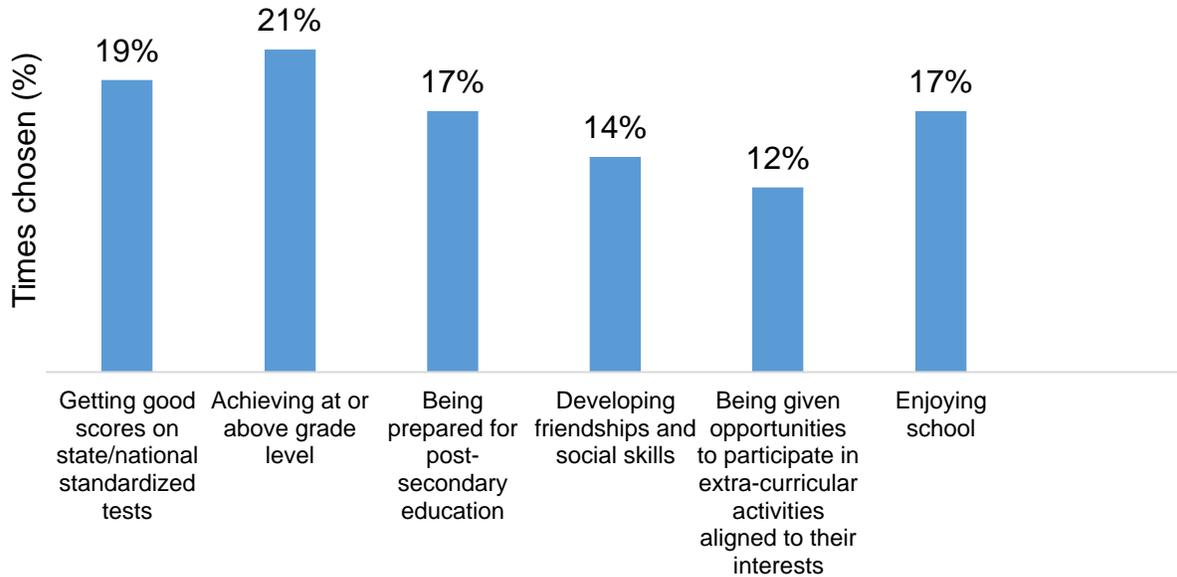
When you think about the different ways in which your child is or was learning during their school closure, which are you the LEAST satisfied with? (sample size=324)



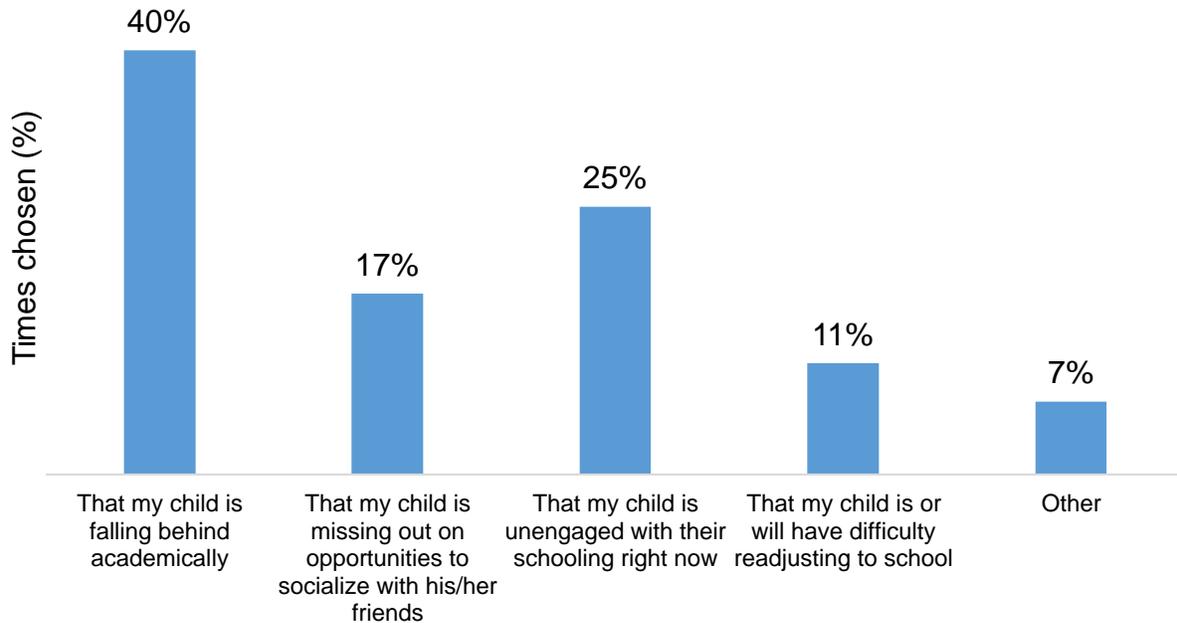
How engaged is your child with the activities their teacher has assigned (given what you view as an expected level for their age)? (sample size=299)



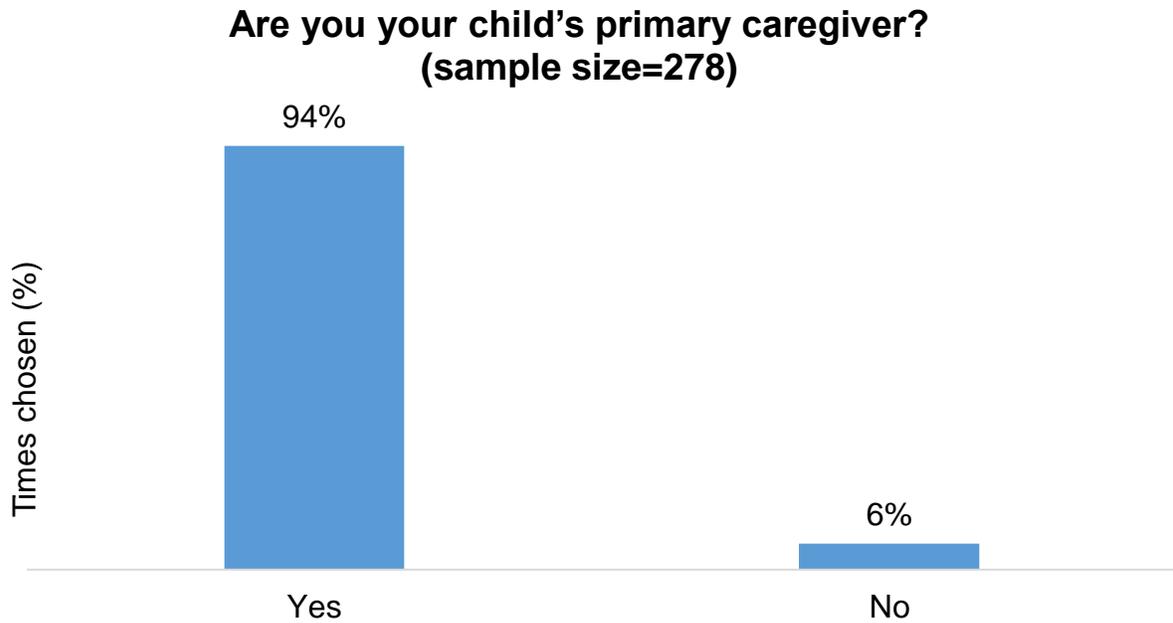
**I believe that my child’s educators are satisfied with their students’ education when their students are:
(sample size=292)**



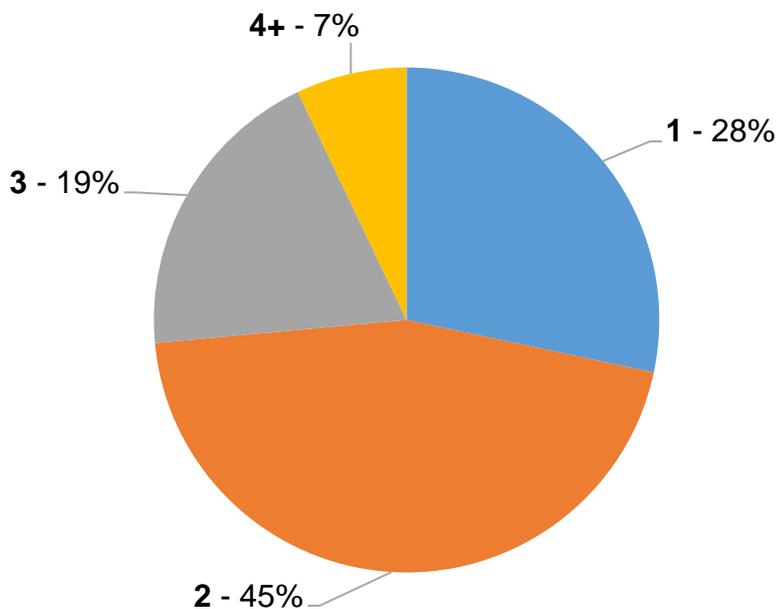
**With regards to your child’s education right now, what worries you the MOST?
(sample size=304)**



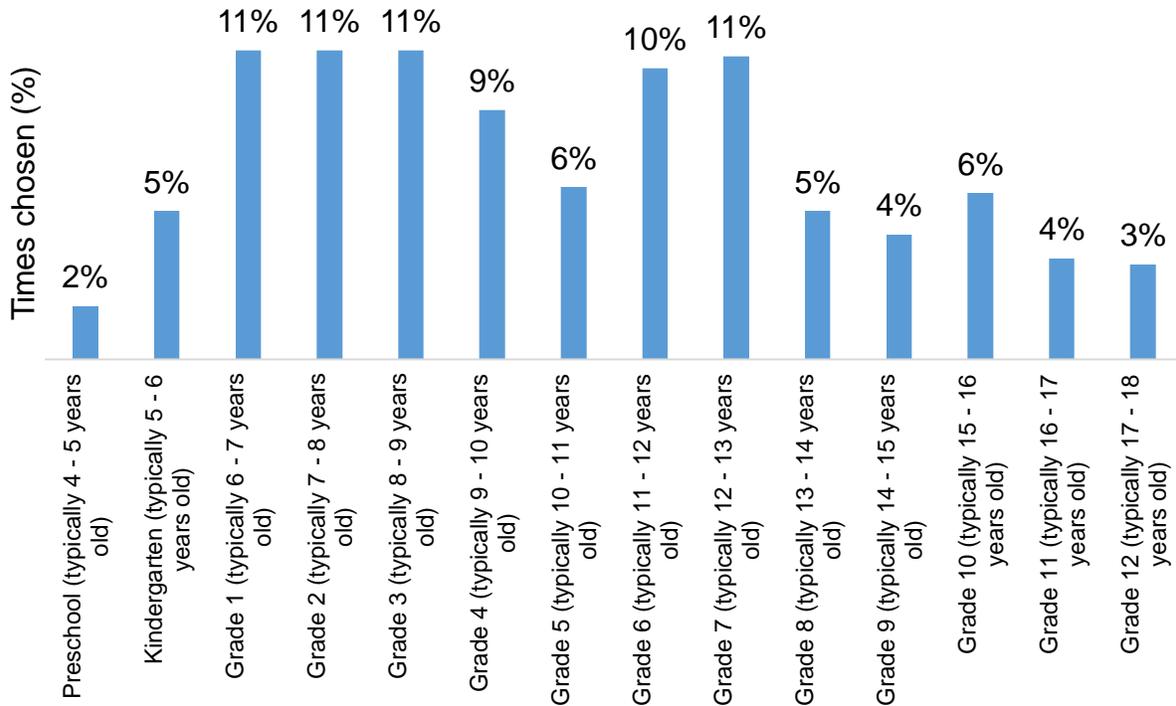
Demographics of survey respondents from the Cajon Valley Union School District



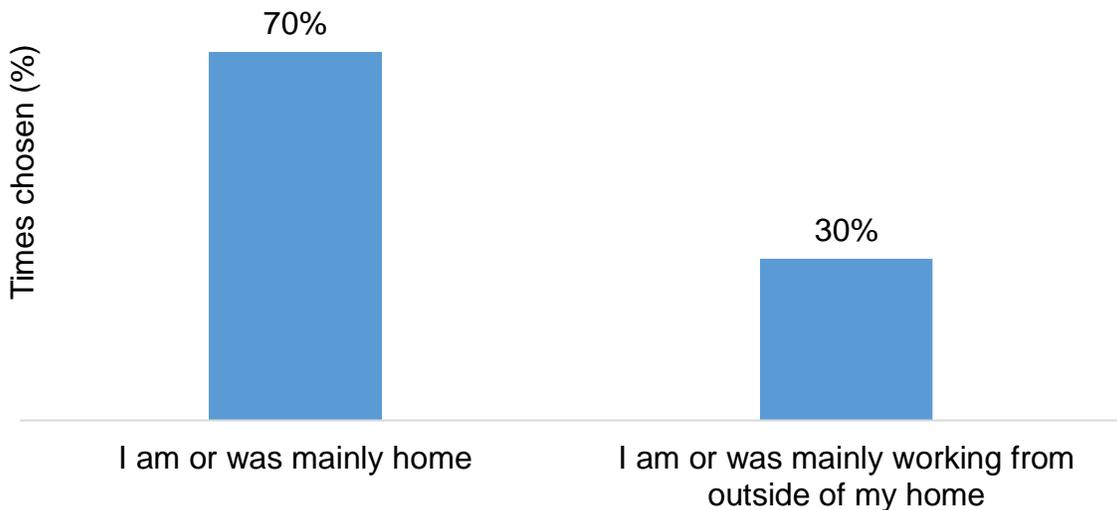
**How many children do you have who are currently in preschool through grade 12 in school and live at home with you?
(sample size=480)**



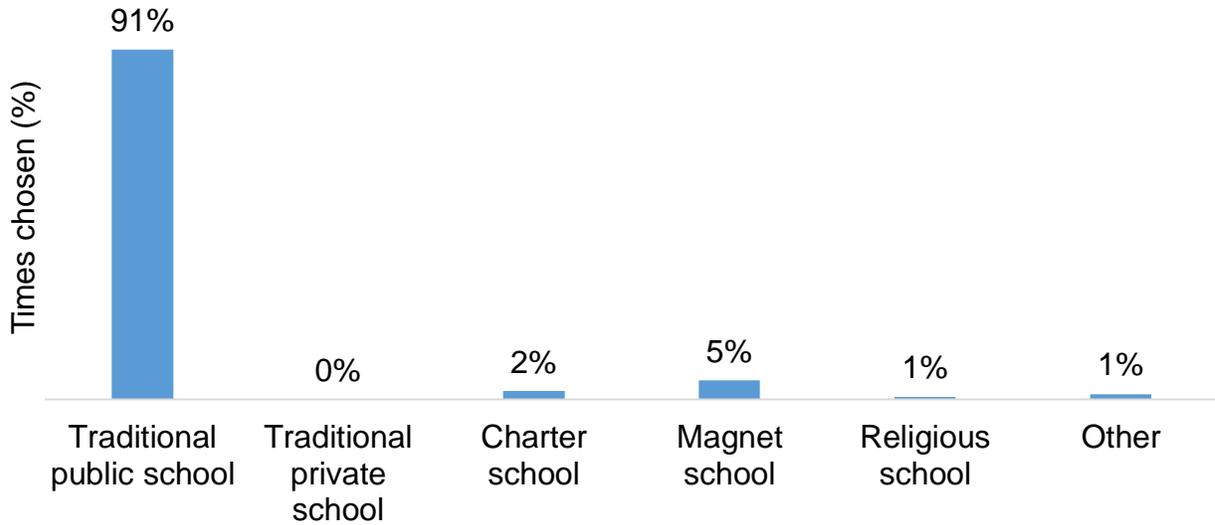
**In which grade is your oldest child who is enrolled in school?
(sample size=468)**



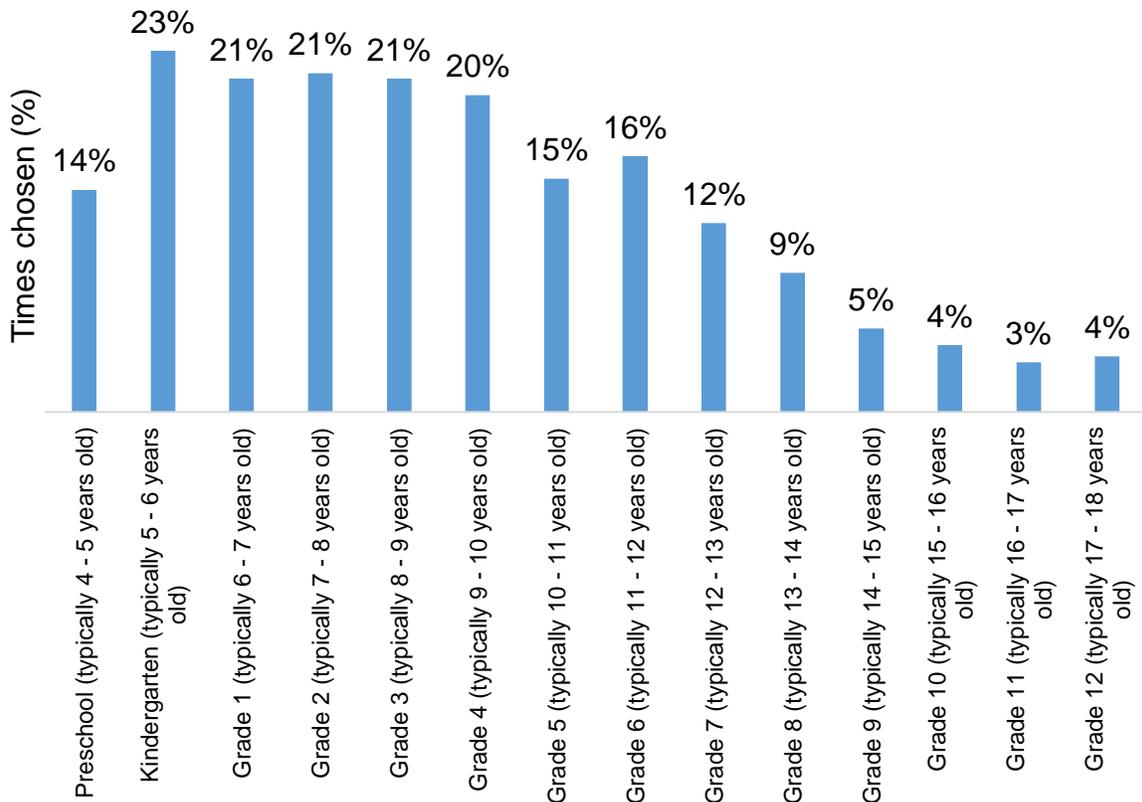
**During your child's school closure, are or were you mainly home (whether employed or unemployed) or are or were you mainly working from outside your home?
(sample size=279)**



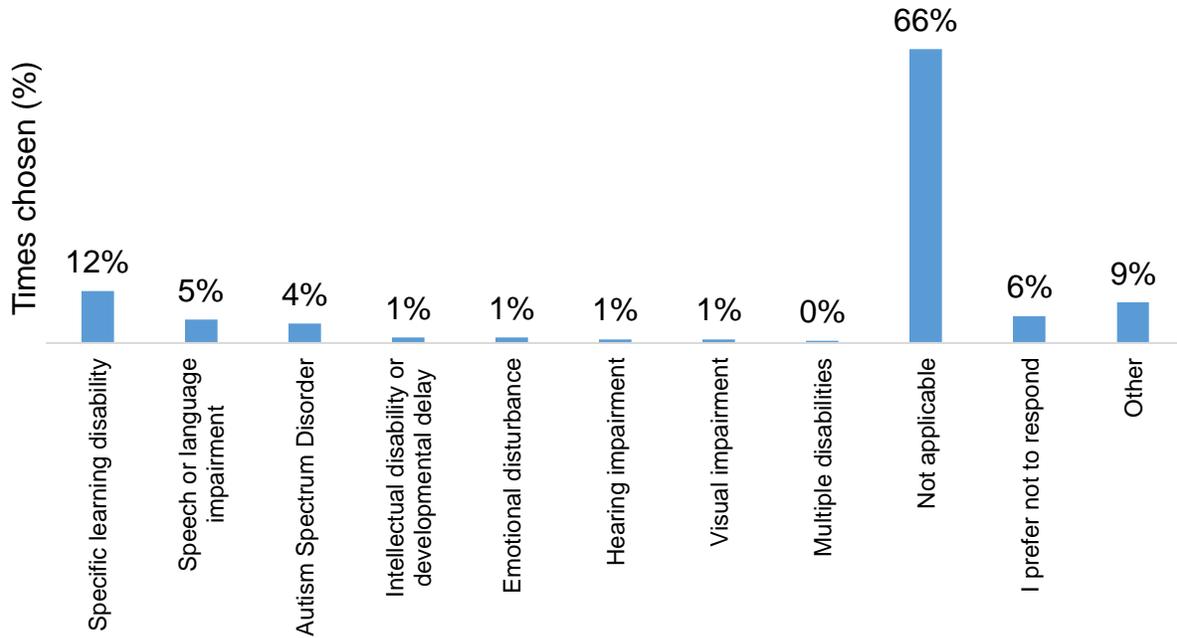
**In what type of school is your child enrolled?
(sample size=282)**



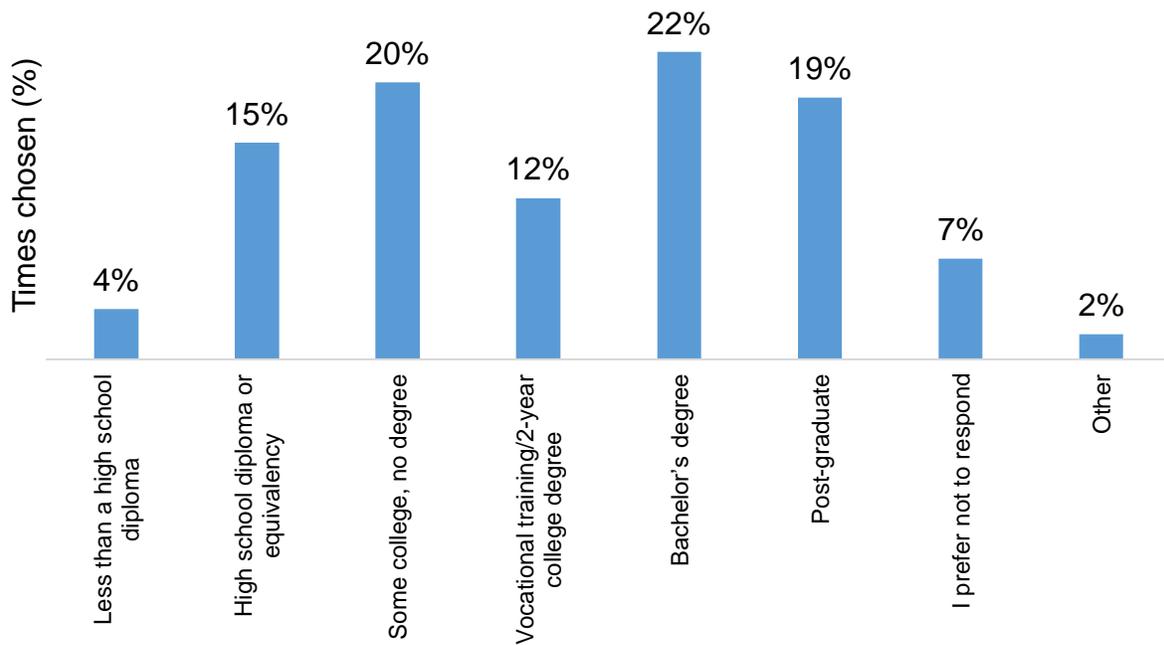
**In what grade(s) is/are all your school aged children?
For this question, please consider all your children.
(sample size=284)**



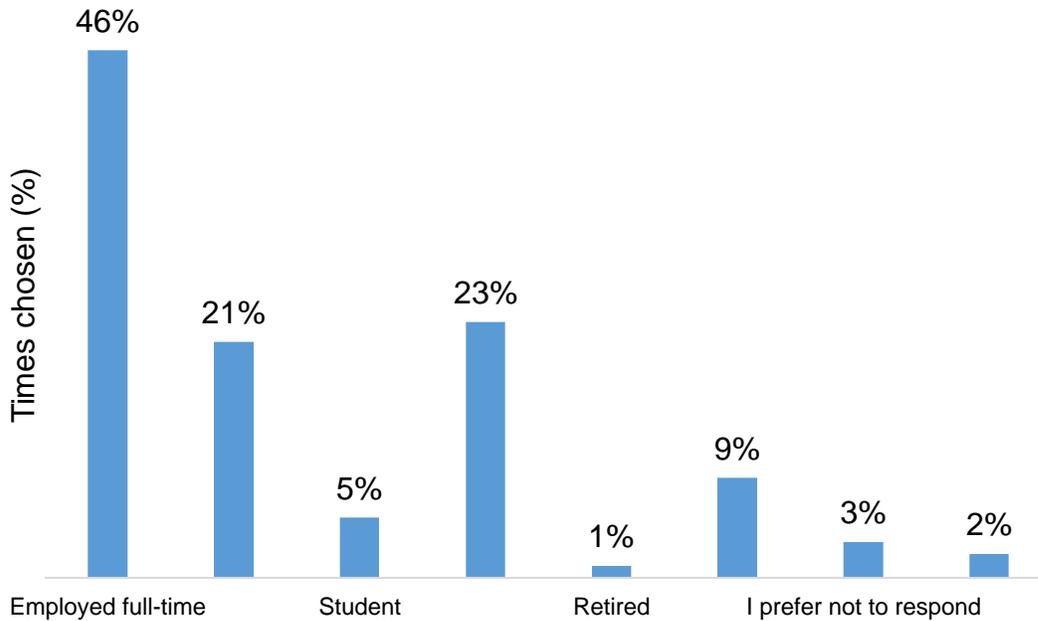
**Has your child been diagnosed with any of the following?
(sample size=247)**



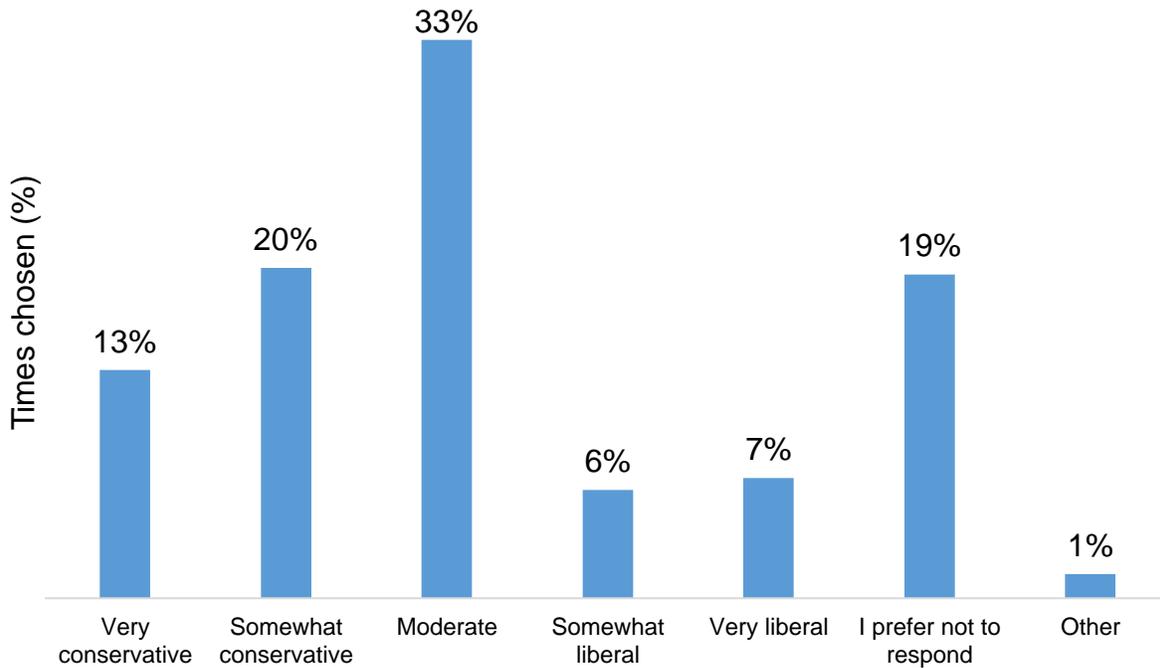
**What is your highest level of education attained?
(sample size=278)**



**What is your current employment status?
(sample size=313)**



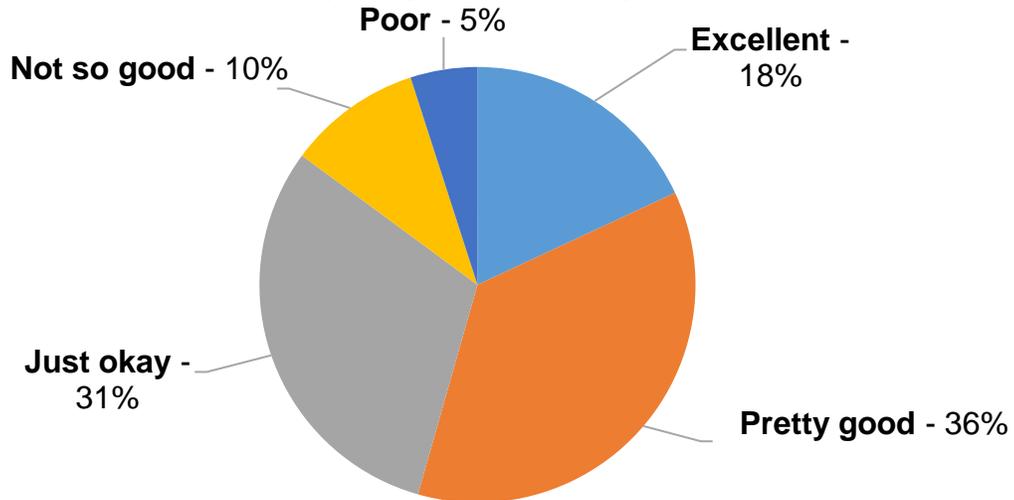
**When thinking about social issues, do you consider
yourself to be:
(sample size=282)**



Parents' satisfaction with their children's education

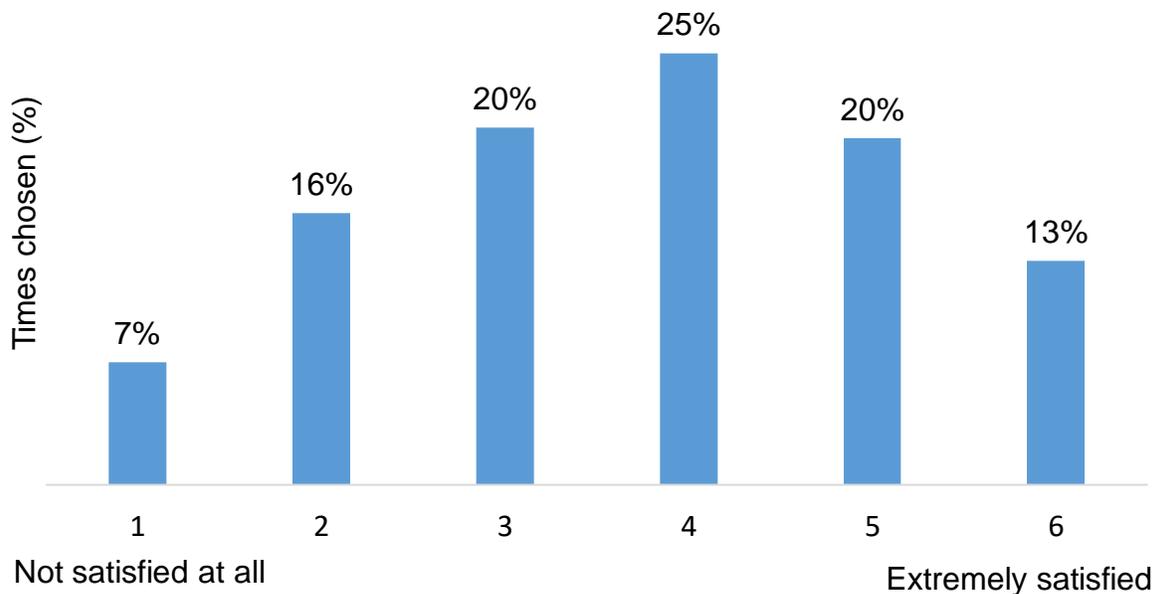
How would you rate the education that your child is getting from their school right now?

(sample size=443)

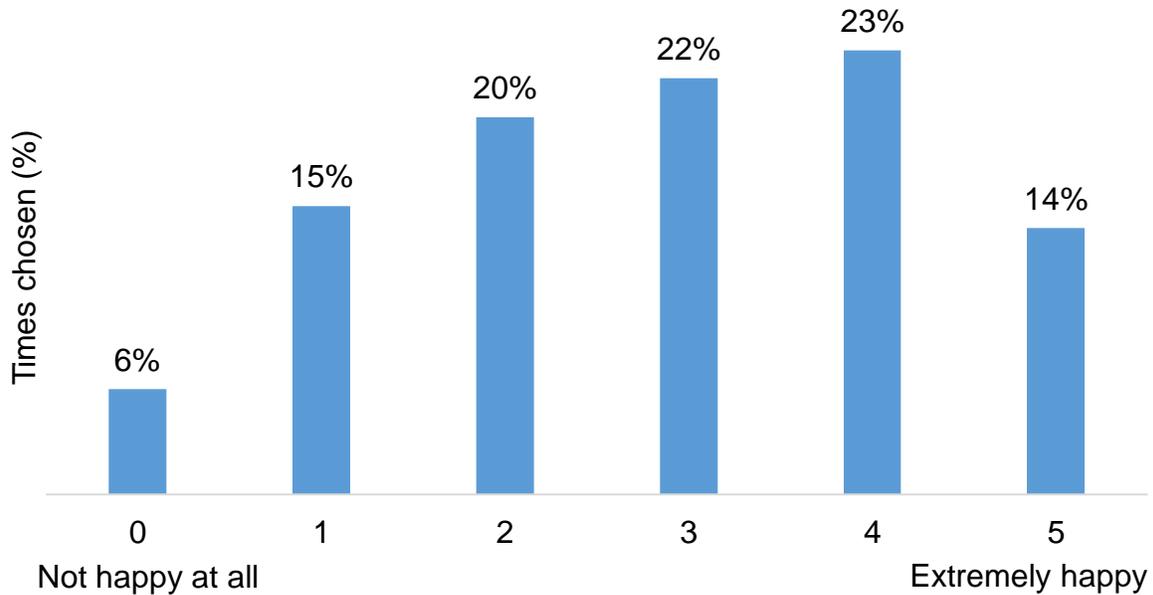


At the time of this survey, how satisfied are you with your child's education?

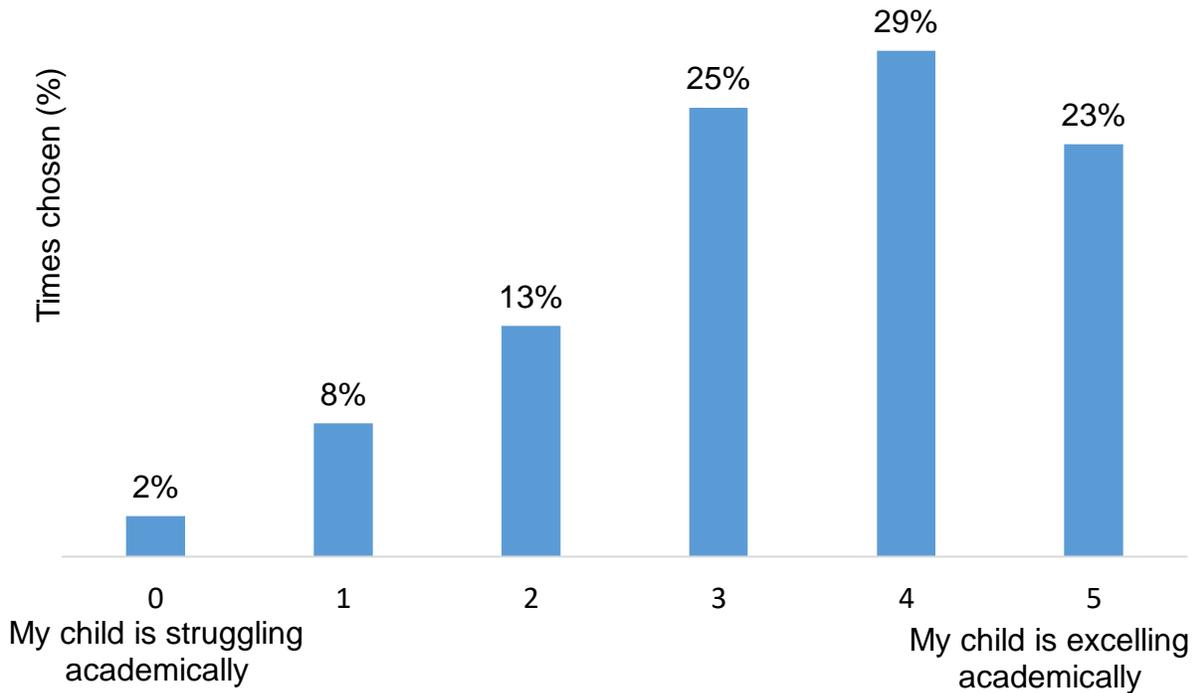
(sample size=329)



**At the time of this survey, how happy is your child with their education?
(sample size=342)**



**How well do you believe your child is doing academically right now?
(sample size=438)**



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