



School Funding Reform and Parent Engagement:

Key Findings From a Statewide Survey of Public School Parents

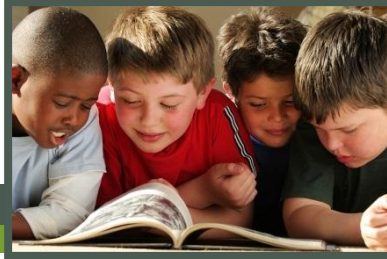
November 5-12, 2013

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates - FM3

Public Opinion Research & Strategy

Methodology

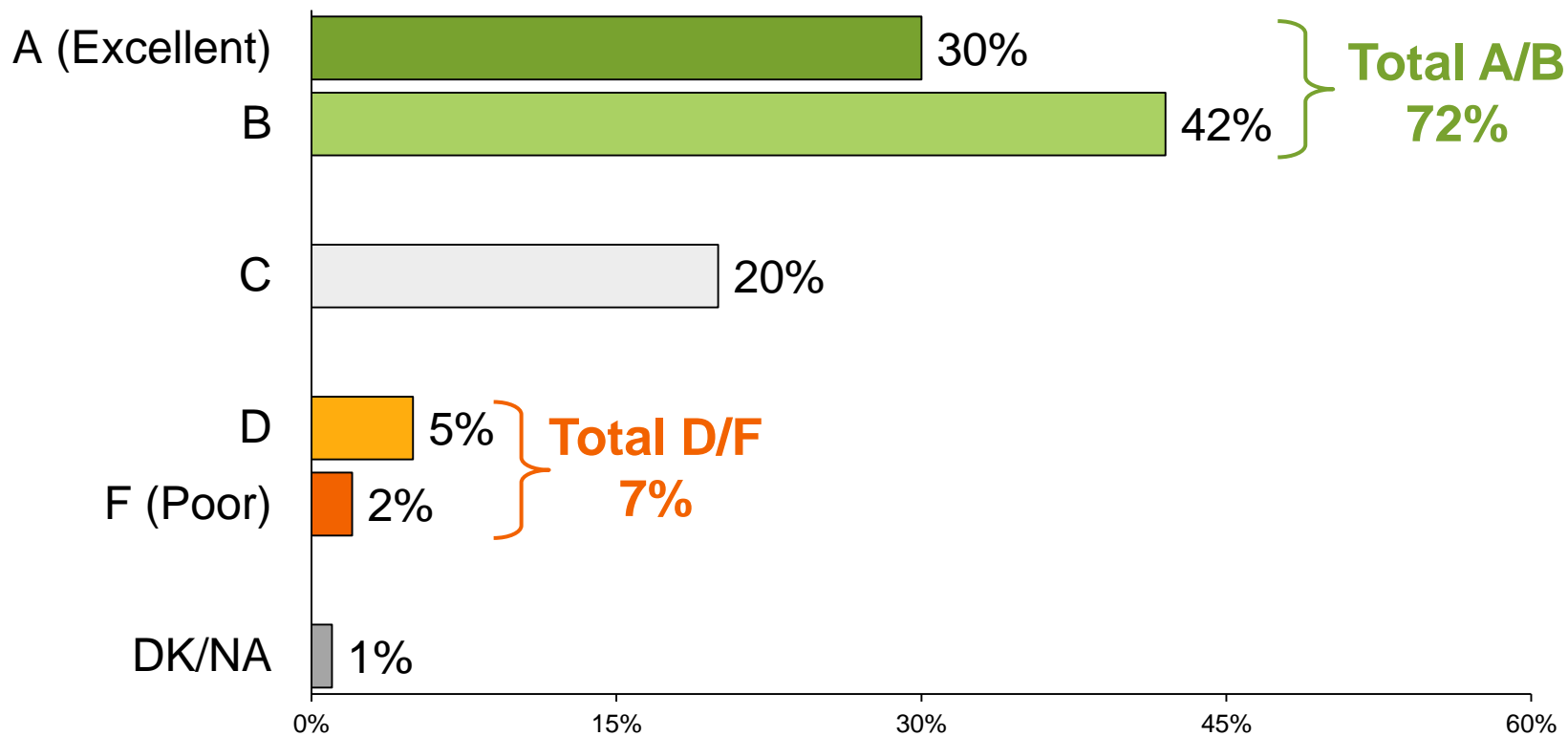
- 1,003 telephone interviews with parents of public school children in California
 - *Interviews conducted between November 5-12, 2013*
 - *Interviews on both landlines and cell phones*
 - *Random sample of 601 parents statewide, plus oversamples of 202 parents with household incomes of \$30,000 or below and 200 parents of children in ESL programs*
 - *Data weighted to reflect the true demographic characteristics of public school parents in California*
- Margin of sampling error of +/- 4.0%
- Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding



Context for Parental Engagement in Schools

Most parents grade their school's overall performance as an "A" or "B."

How would you grade the overall quality of public schools in your community – would you grade it an A, B, C, D, or F, with an "A" grade being excellent, and "F" being poor?



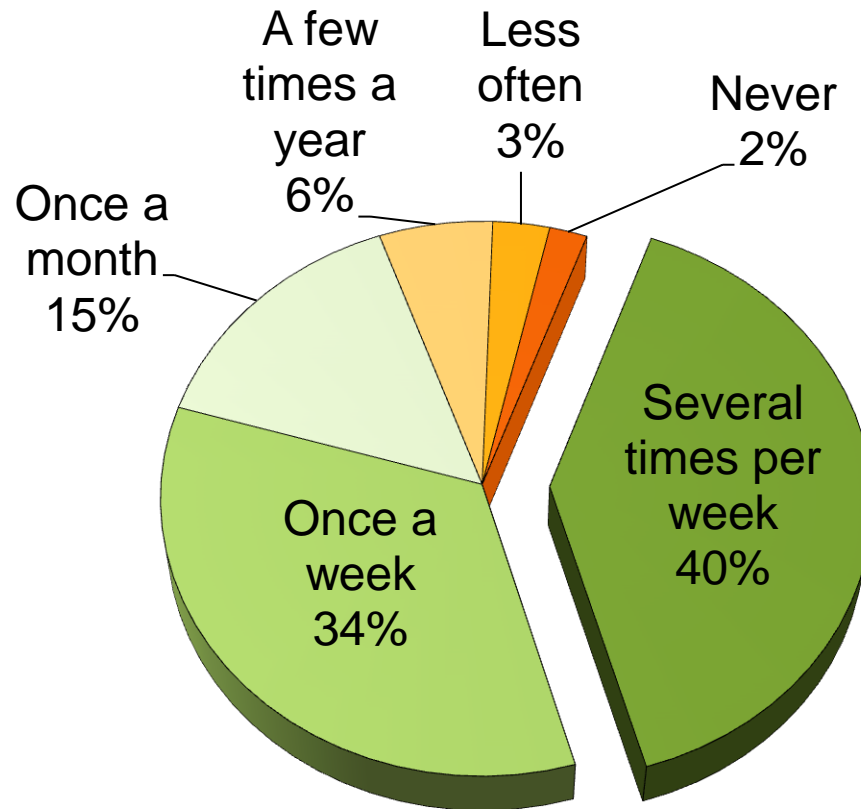
Evaluations of school quality are generally good, but vary somewhat by household income level.

How would you grade the overall quality of public schools in your community – would you grade it an A, B, C, D, or F, with an “A” grade being excellent, and “F” being poor?

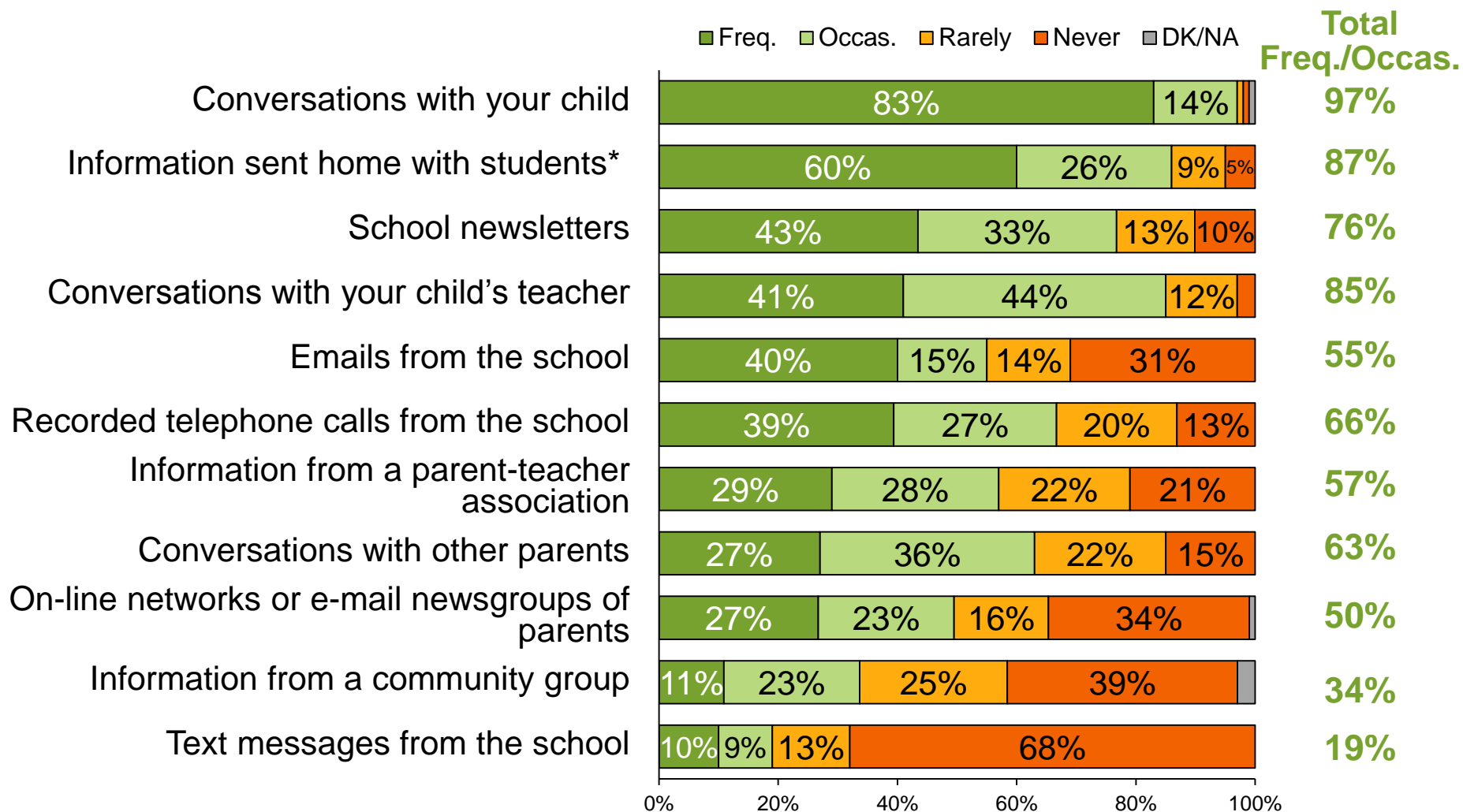
Grade	<\$30,000	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$100,000	\$100,000+
A (Excellent)	25%	17%	34%	43%
B	41%	49%	36%	40%
Total A/B	67%	67%	69%	82%
C	25%	24%	22%	14%
D	3%	6%	6%	2%
F (Poor)	4%	3%	0%	1%
Total D/F	7%	9%	6%	4%
DK/NA	1%	1%	2%	0%

Three-quarters of parents get information from their child's school at least weekly.

More specifically, how often does your child's school contact you with information about what is going on there:



Parents most frequently get information through their children.



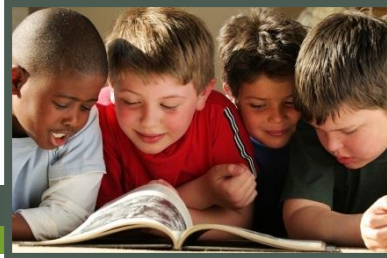
10. I am going to read you a list of different sources of information that parents could use to find out about issues at their children's school. Please tell me how often you use these sources of information to find out what is going on in your child's school: frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never. *Not Part of Split Sample

Use of a few information sources varies notably by income level.

(Percent Who Responded “Frequently”)

Information Source	<\$30,000	\$30,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	\$100,000+
Conversations with your child	79%	81%	82%	88%
Information sent home with students*	59%	57%	66%	63%
School newsletters	48%	39%	36%	45%
Conversations with your child’s teacher	42%	43%	41%	48%
Emails from the school	18%	26%	40%	61%
Recorded telephone calls from the school	51%	22%	44%	44%
Information from a parent-teacher association	30%	24%	30%	28%
Conversations with other parents	28%	16%	32%	33%
On-line networks or e-mail newsgroups of parents	19%	16%	32%	32%
Information from a community group	14%	10%	7%	10%
Text messages from the school	3%	14%	9%	14%

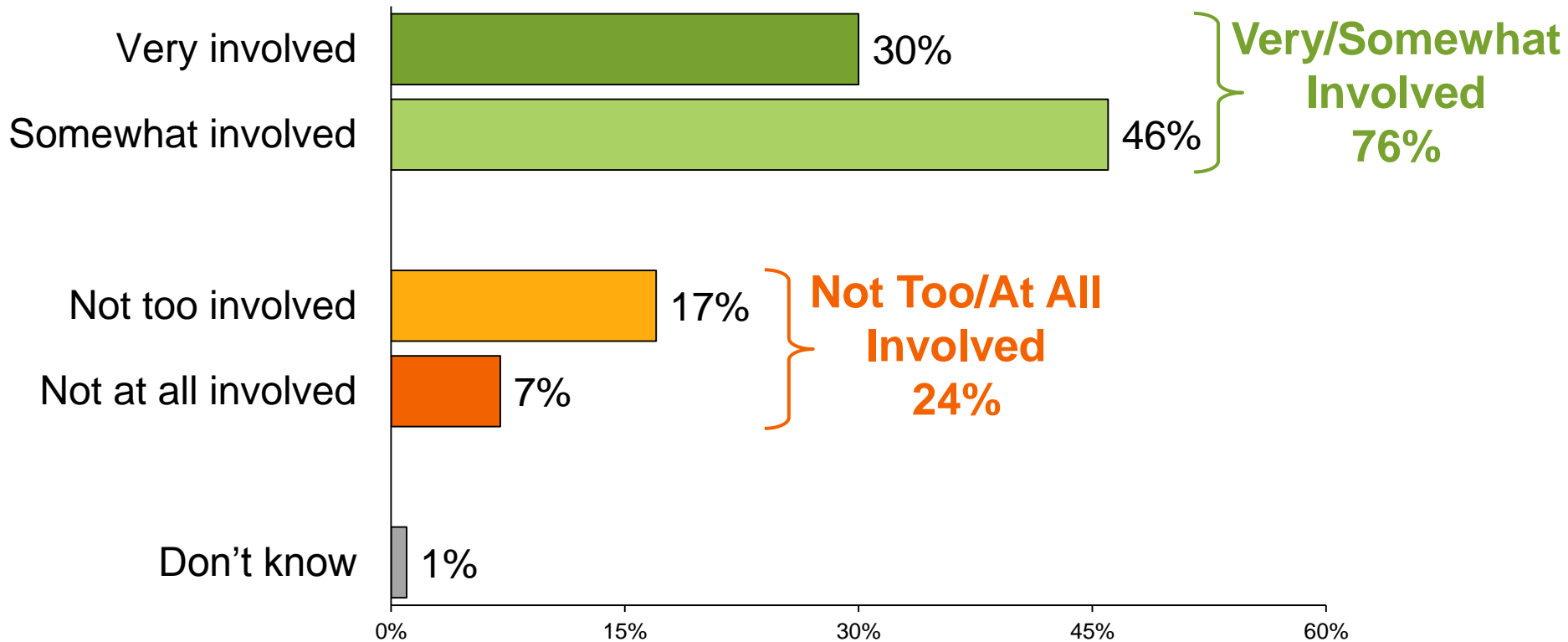
Q10. by Income. I am going to read you a list of different sources of information that parents could use to find out about issues at their children’s school. Please tell me how often you use these sources of information to find out what is going on in your child’s school: frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never. *Not Part of Split Sample



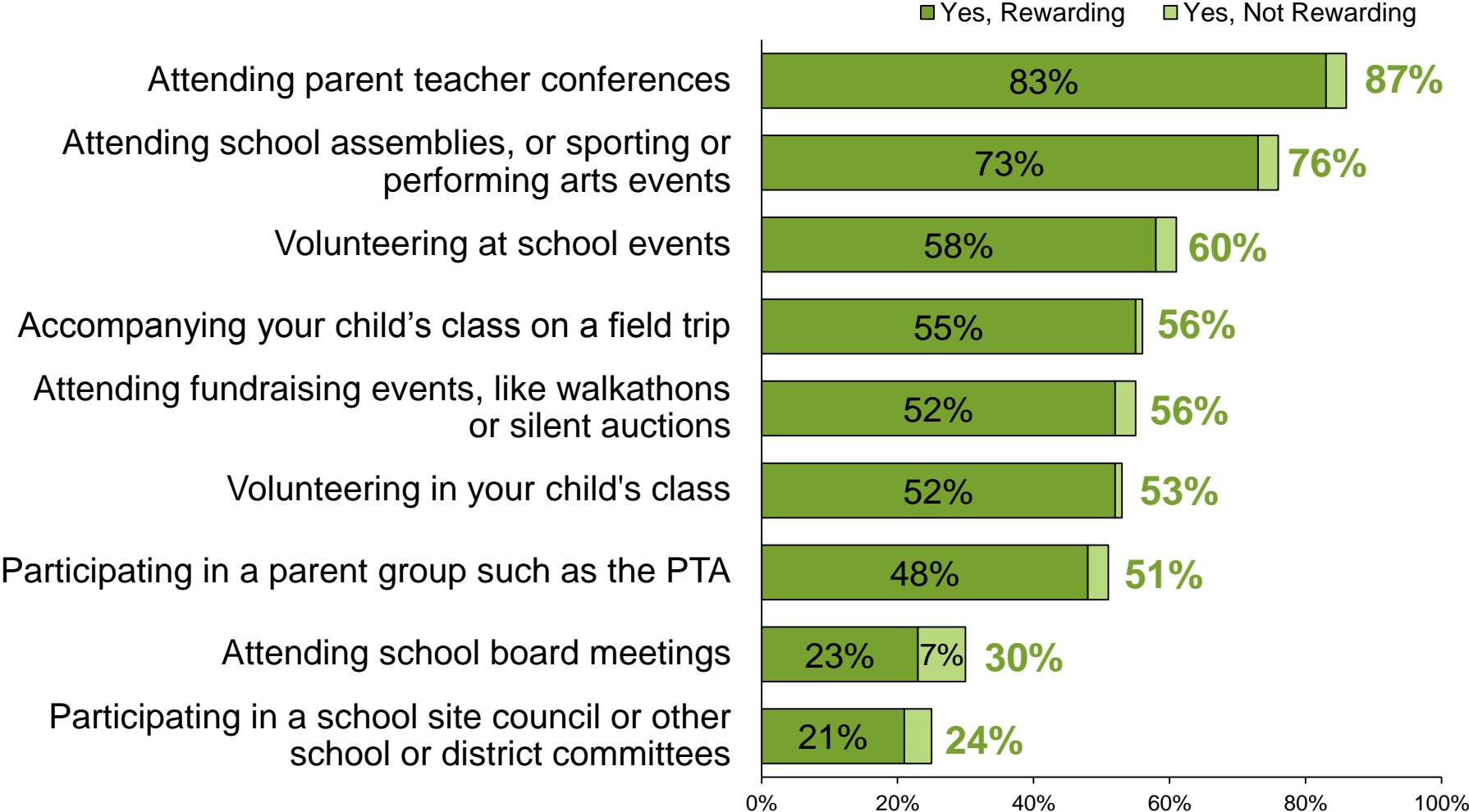
Current Levels of Parental Engagement in Public Schools

Three-quarters of parents characterize themselves as “involved” in their child’s school.

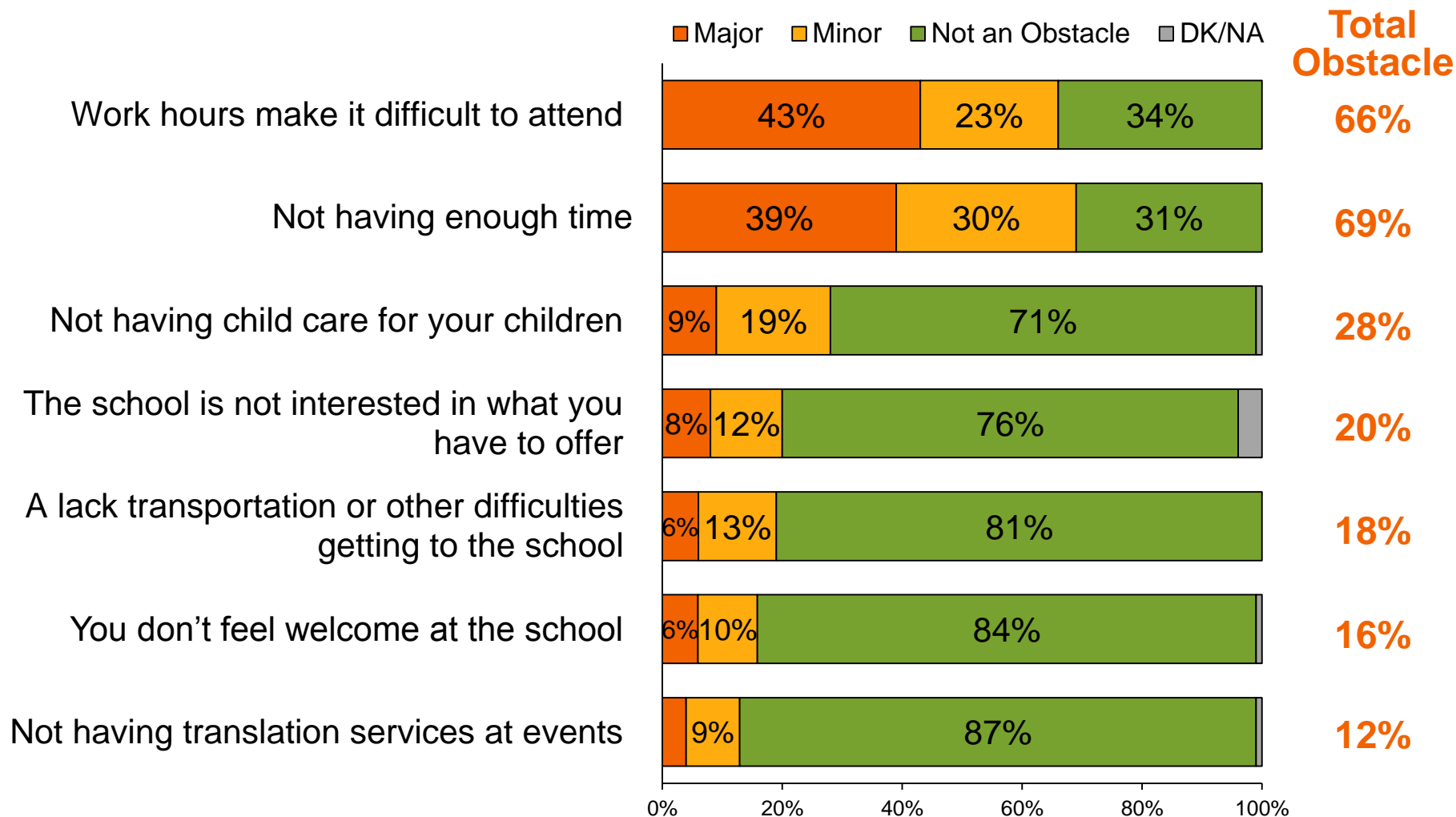
And how *involved* would you say you are with activities at your children’s schools:



Parent participation is high, but typically directly related to their child's education.



Work schedules and lack of time are the primary obstacles to participation for most parents.



A substantial number of lower-income parents says only a small group is offered the chance to participate in decision-making.

“Only a small group of parents are offered the opportunity to participate in school decision-making, while most are excluded.”

	<\$30,000	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$100,000	\$100,000+
Total Agree	39%	34%	34%	19%
Total Disagree	52%	56%	62%	76%
DK/NA	9%	11%	4%	5%

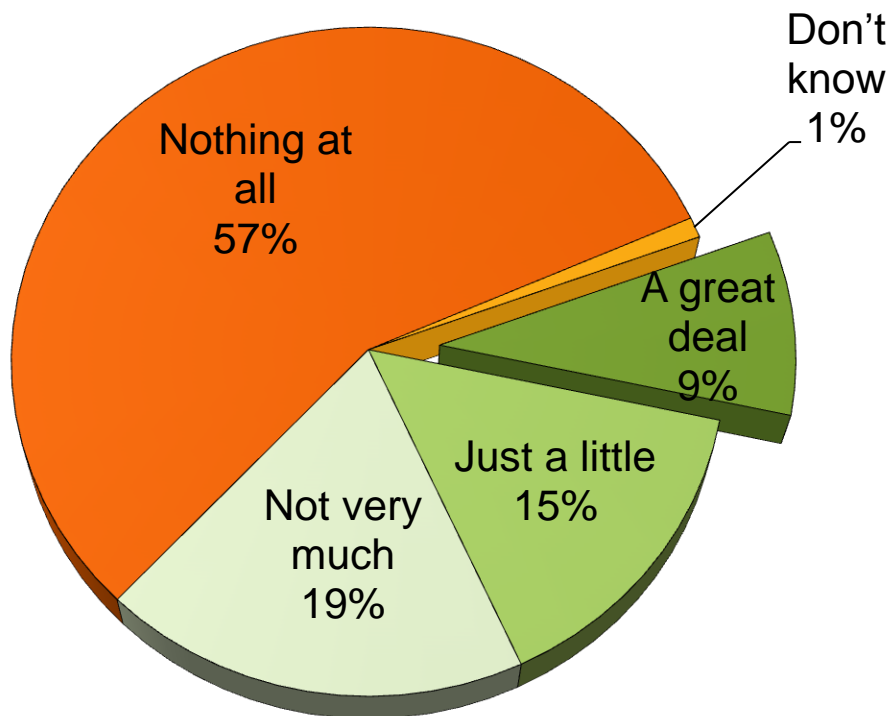


The Local Control Funding Formula and Opportunities for Further Engagement

Only one in four have heard anything about the LCFF.

As you may know California recently changed the way it funds public schools, through something called the Local Control Funding Formula. How much have you heard about this new way of funding schools:

Total Aware: 24%



LCFF Description Tested

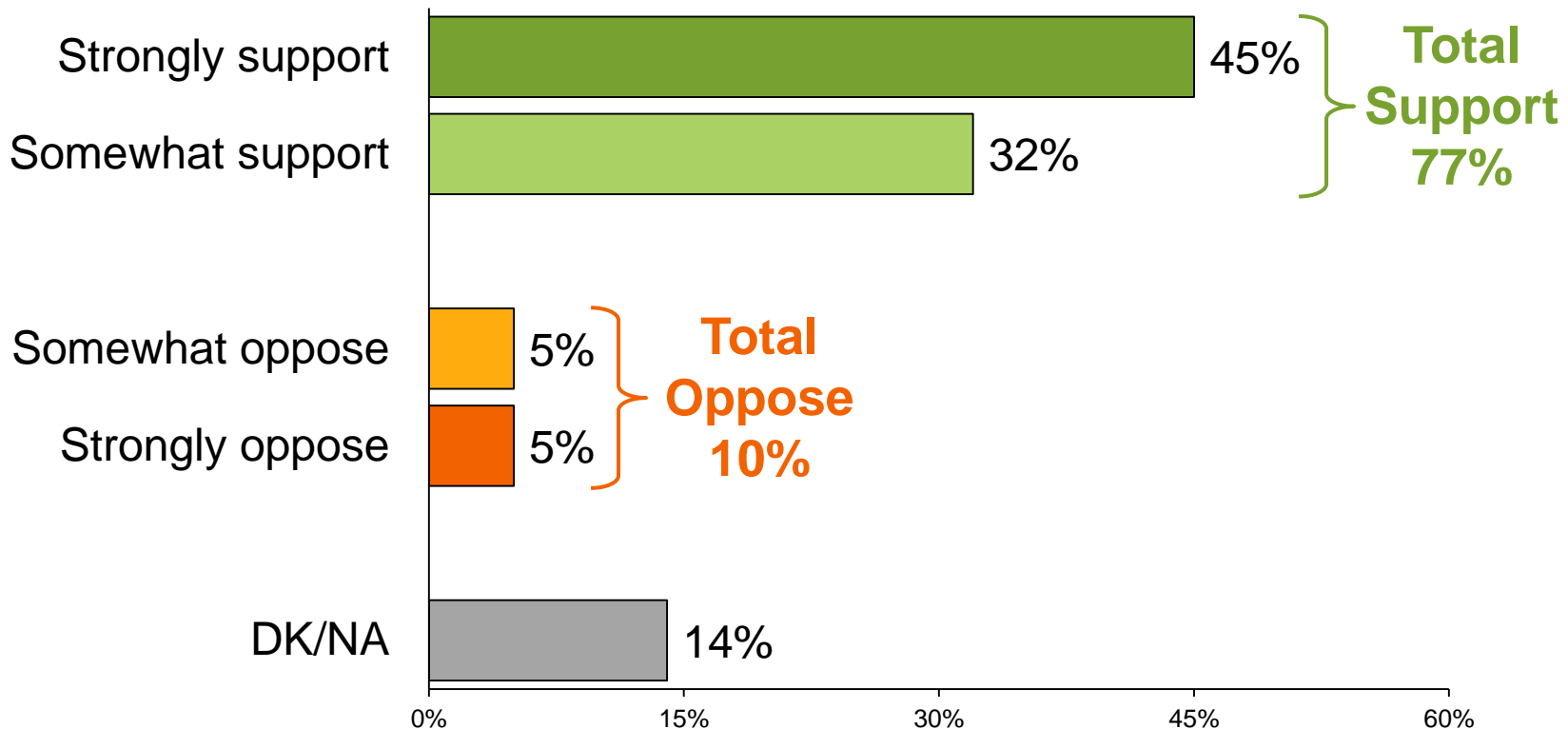
The local control funding formula will be phased in over eight years, and changes the ways that California public schools are funded:

- It increases funding for nearly all districts, with extra funds for low-income and English language learners;
- It measures school success in a way that goes beyond just test scores; and
- It gives local school districts more options on how to best use funds.

The new funding formula requires active parent involvement in decision-making on how funds will be spent.

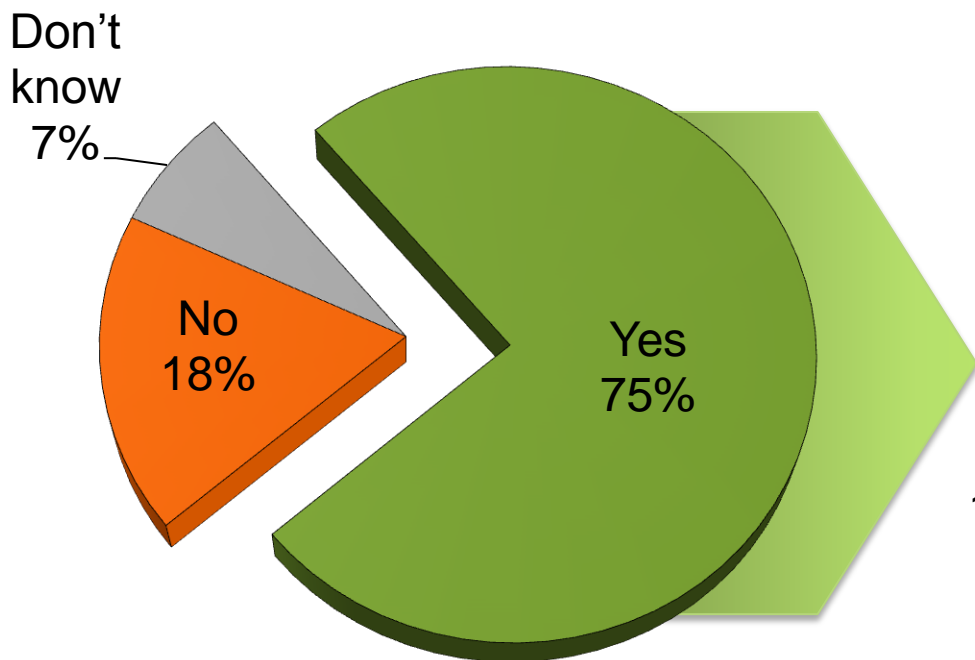
More than three-quarters of parents support the LCFF.

Having heard this, would you say you generally support or oppose the Local Control Funding Formula?

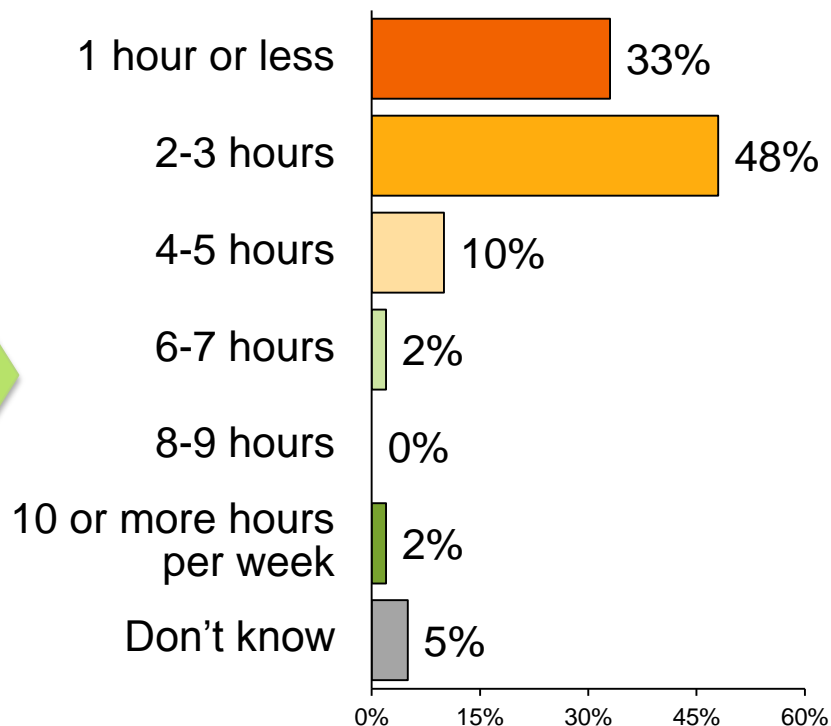


Three-quarters of parents would be willing to give time to participate in LCFF decisions.

“Given the opportunities that the new law provides for parents to get involved in school funding decisions, do you think you would be willing to spend some time at your child’s school helping to guide decisions about how local funds will be used?”

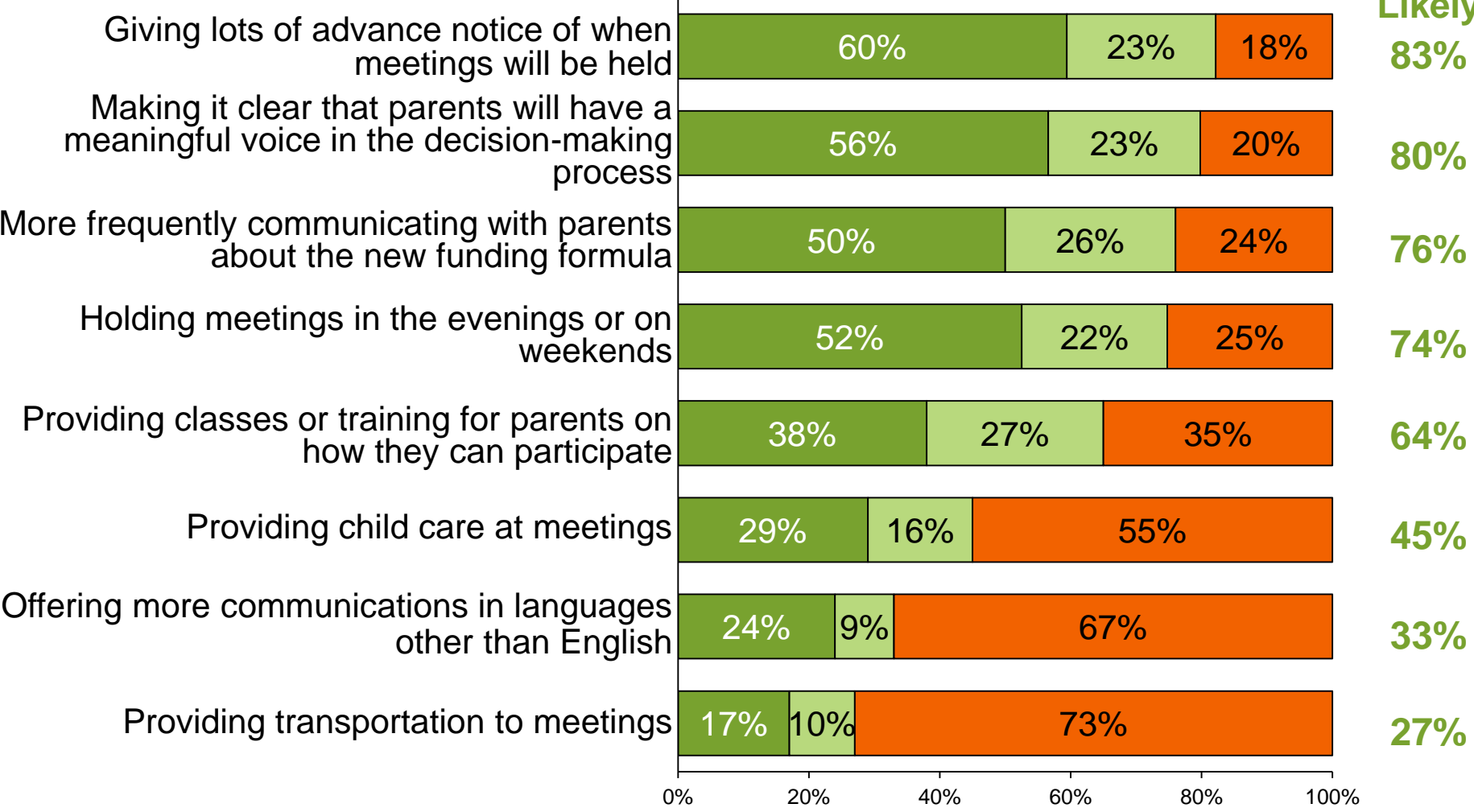


“And about how many hours per week would you be willing to spend at the school helping guide decisions about how funds will be used?”

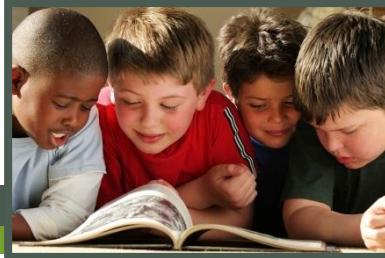


Schools can enhance participation in LCFF through better communications and other means.

■ Much More Lkly. ■ Smwt. More Lkly. ■ No Diff./Less Lkly./DK/NA **Total More Likely**



20. Here are some ways that schools might encourage parents to get involved in the decision-making process around this new way of funding schools. Please tell me whether you would be more likely to get involved if your school took that step. If it would make no difference to you, you can tell me that too.



For more information:

<http://edsource.org/today/parent-engagement>

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