

**LEARNING  
HEROES**

# Parents 2019:

As the Stakes Get Higher for Kids,  
Why Do We Lose Parents?

Research conducted by Edge Research

SEPTEMBER 2019



# Context



## PARENTS DESERVE AN ACCURATE PICTURE

Learning Heroes' research reveals **that nine in ten K-8 parents – regardless of race, income, education levels – believe their child performs at or above grade level in reading and math**, despite national data that shows barely a third of students perform at grade level.



## EXPLORATIONS

1. What is the perception of parents of high school children in understanding achievement?
2. How does this perception shape behaviors and attitudes towards their children's educational success?
3. Is there a different or bigger role for the education community in serving parents of high schoolers?



# Insights

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## RESPONSIBILITY HAS SHIFTED

Starting in elementary school, parents now place primary responsibility for school success squarely on their child, not themselves or their child's teachers.



## DISCONNECT DEEPENS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS

Despite additional data, such as PSAT, SAT, ACT, and a focus on post secondary plans, the disconnect is deeper among high school parents.



## A LITTLE INFORMATION GOES A LONG WAY

When parents of high school children are presented with achievement data, many change their perceptions about their child's achievement.

# Methodology



## NATIONAL ONLINE PARENT SURVEY:

- Nationwide sample of **2,952 parents and guardians** with children in public school, grades K-12, including:
  - 1,403 elementary school parents
  - 645 middle school parents
  - 903 high school parents
  - Oversamples among African Americans, Hispanics
- Fielded April 15-May 5, 2019
- Offered in both English and Spanish
- Data were weighted to be representative of public school parents in the U.S.



## NATIONAL ONLINE HS TEACHER SURVEY:

- Nationwide sample of 505 public school teachers in grades 9-12
- Fielded May 2-9, 2019
- Quotas set so representative by key demographics

### WITH ADDITIONAL DATA FROM:

- Learning Heroes 2018 Parent Survey
- Learning Heroes 2018 Teacher Survey (all elementary and middle school teacher data is from this survey)

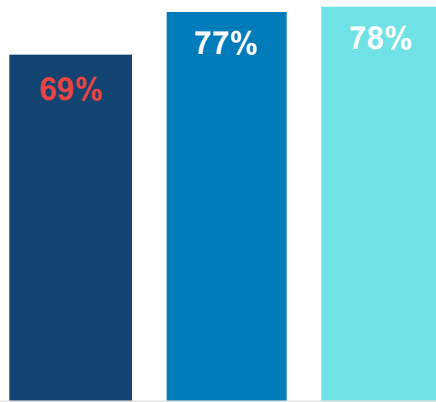
Throughout this report, **blue/red** indicates statistically **higher/lower** differences between audiences

# Parents of High School Students: Greater Responsibility, High Aspirations, Less Worry



# As students enter high school, expectations remain high for college graduation ...

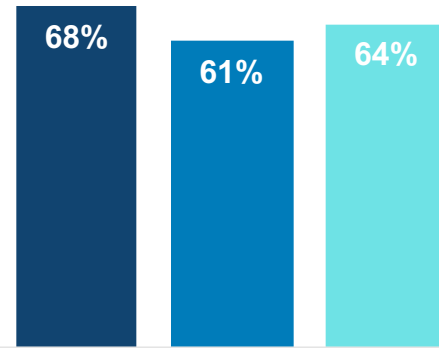
How Important that Your Child Goes to College?



Essential/Very Important

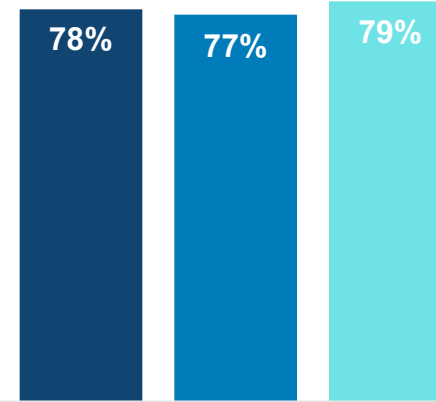
How Confident Your Child Will Be Prepared for College?

■ Elementary ■ Middle ■ High



Extremely/Very Confident

How Likely Your Child Will Graduate from College?



Extremely/Very likely

Time in school results in **no change** in parent perspectives that their child will graduate from college

	73%	65%	78%
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>Higher Among</b>	Hispanic <b>87%</b> African American <b>81%</b> HH Income \$100k+ <b>79%</b> Urban <b>80%</b>	Men <b>67%</b> HH Income \$100k+ <b>69%</b> Urban <b>71%</b>	Men <b>80%</b> Hispanic <b>86%</b> African Americans <b>84%</b> HH Income \$100k+ <b>86%</b>
<b>Lower Among</b>	White <b>69%</b> Rural <b>66%</b>	Women <b>62%</b> White <b>62%</b> Rural <b>57%</b>	Women <b>76%</b> White <b>75%</b> Rural <b>70%</b>

# College preparation and happiness become more important than grade level achievement

Elementary		
What's most important right now?	Mean	% #1
Child enjoying school	3.0	35%
<b>Achieving at/above grade level</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>21%</b>
Getting A's & B's on report card	3.9	13%
Being prepared for good job opportunities after high school	4.8	11%
Being prepared for college	4.8	9%
Being involved in activities like music, sports, Scouts	4.9	3%
Taking the highest level/in highest group of a subject	5.6	4%
Getting good scores on the ACT/SAT	5.6	4%

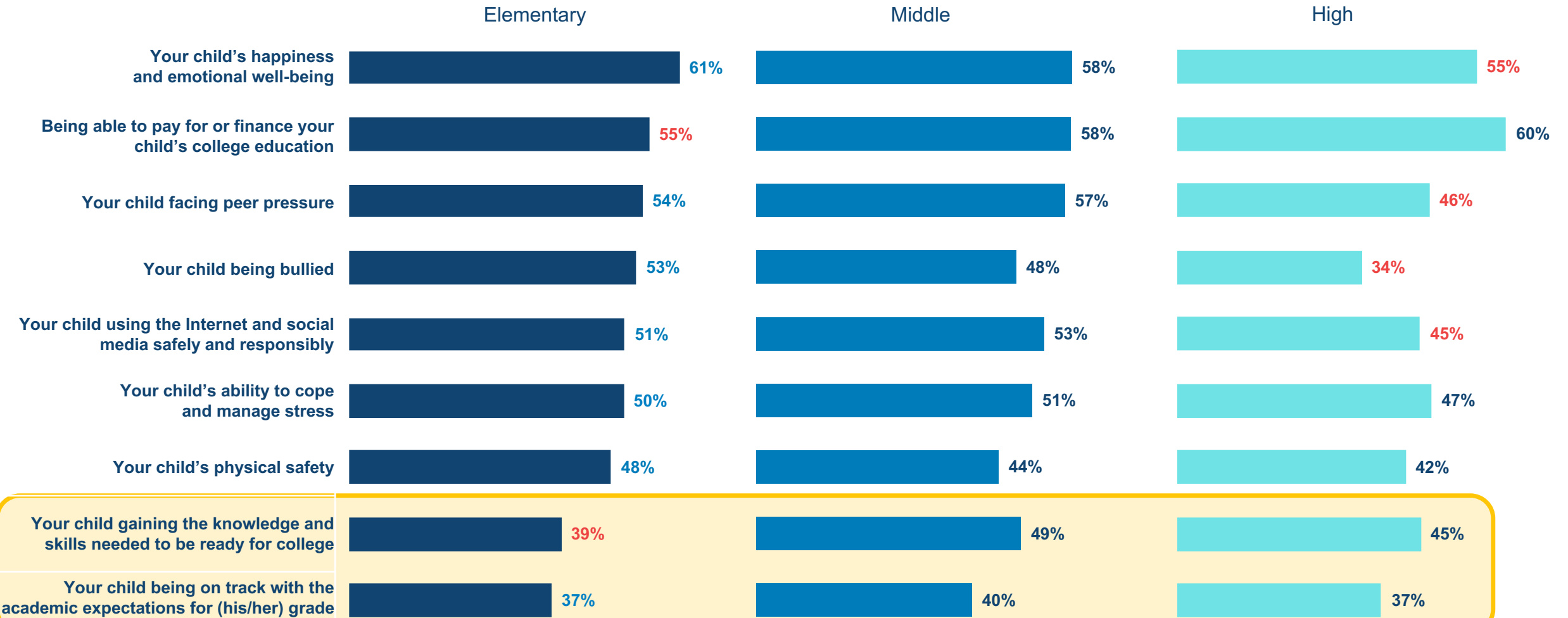
Middle		
What's most important right now?	Mean	% #1
Child enjoying school	3.6	22%
<b>Achieving at/above grade level</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>19%</b>
Getting A's & B's on report card	3.9	16%
Being prepared for college	4.1	16%
Being prepared for good job opportunities after high school	4.6	14%
Getting good scores on the ACT/SAT	5.2	4%
Taking the highest level/in highest group of a subject	5.4	6%
Being involved in activities like music, sports, Scouts	5.5	2%

High		
What's most important right now?	Mean	% #1
Being prepared for college	3.5	24%
Child enjoying school	3.9	17%
Getting A's & B's on report card	3.9	16%
<b>Achieving at/above grade level</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>14%</b>
Being prepared for good job opportunities after high school	4.7	15%
Getting good scores on the ACT/SAT	4.7	6%
Taking the highest level/in highest group of a subject	5.5	5%
Being involved in activities like music, sports, Scouts	5.6	3%

Ranked by mean score and % selected #1  
 The survey asked parents to rank each item from 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. For the mean scores, **lower numbers are higher on parents' lists of importance.**

# By high school, parents worry less overall, with more focus on college

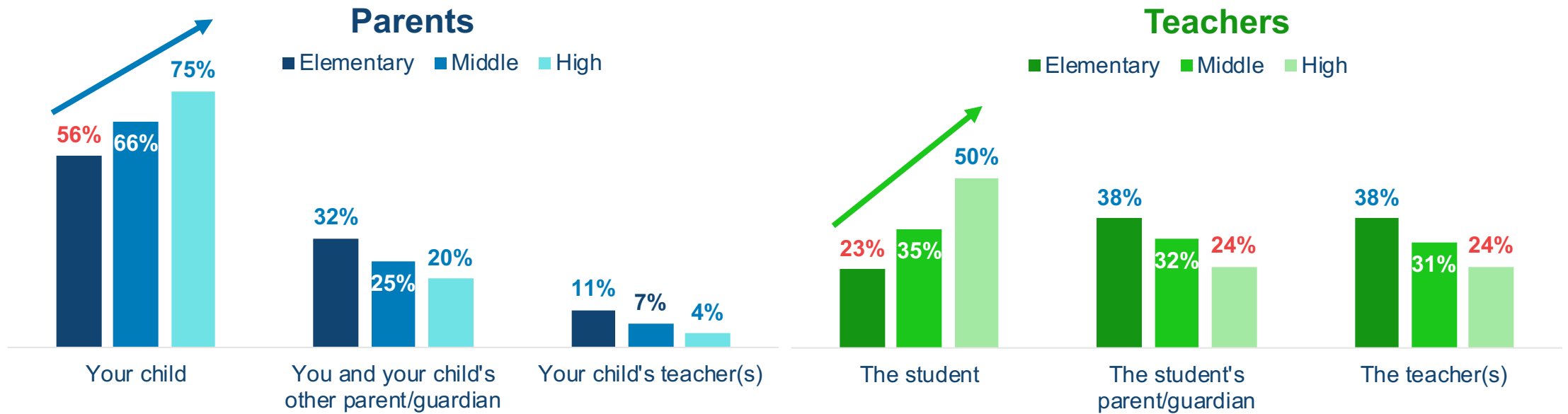
How much do you worry about each of the following? (Top 2 Box)





# Parents now place responsibility on the child, yet teachers are divided

Which of the following individuals do you think has the greatest responsibility for a child's success in school?



TOTAL	64%	27%	8%
<b>Higher Among</b>	White 66% College Degree+ 67%	African American 35% Hispanic 34%	Child has an IEP 11% Income <\$37K 13%
<b>Lower Among</b>	Income <\$37K 59%	Small town/Rural 23%	

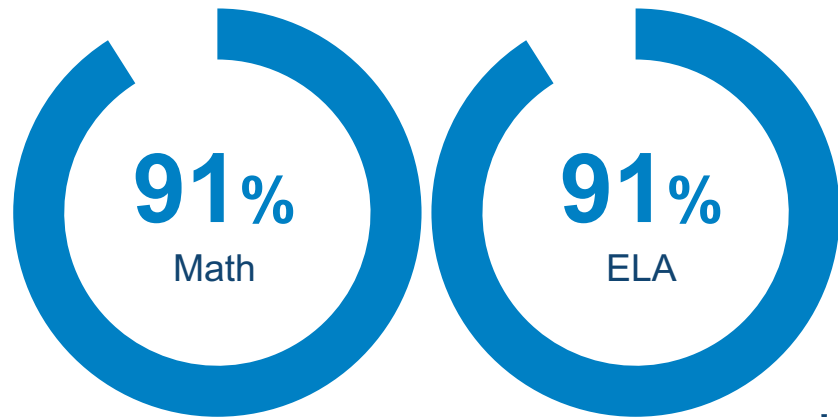
# The Disconnect Deepens



# In high school, parent views of child's success increase

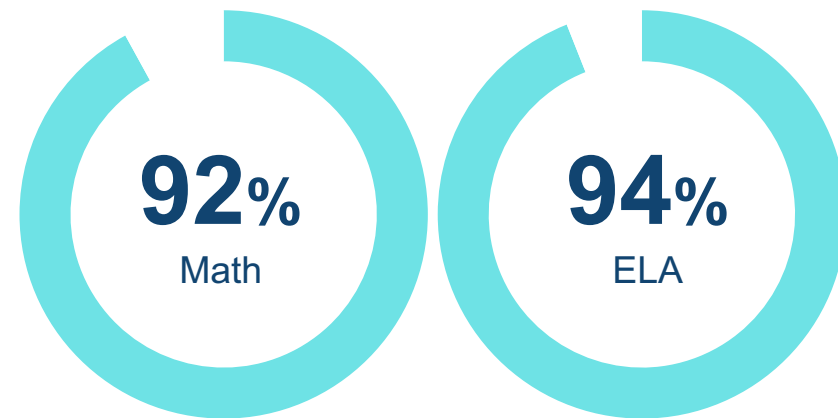
## K-8 Parents

Believe Their Child is At/Above Grade Level

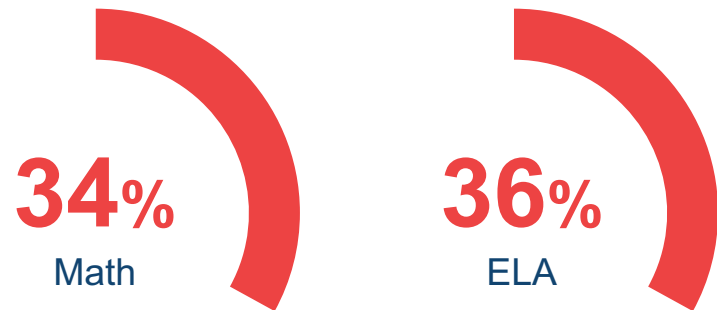


## High School Parents

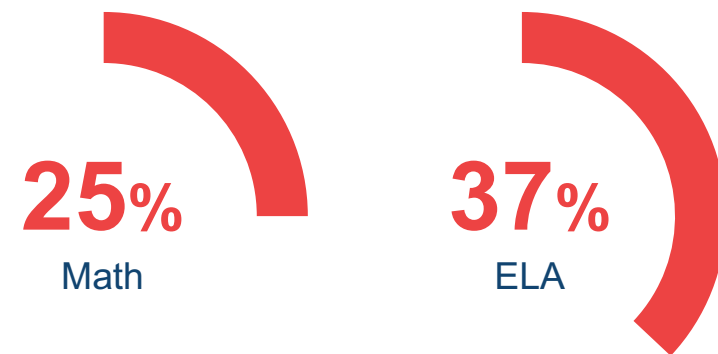
Believe Their Child is At/Above Grade Level



**\*NAEP Data Says...**



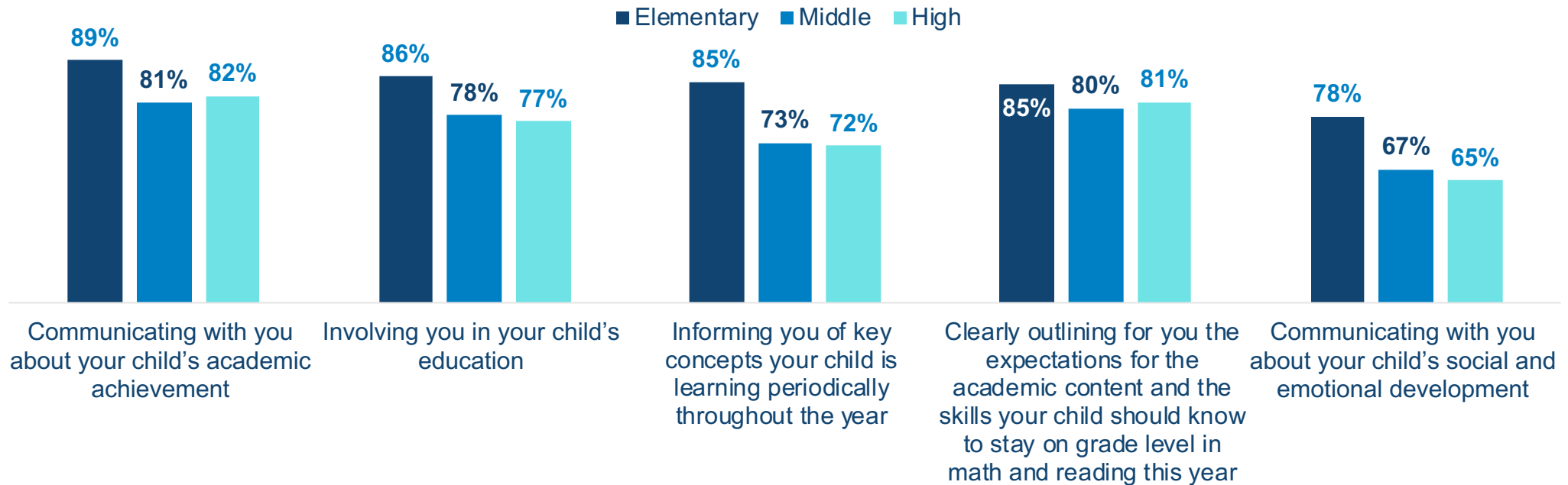
\*2017: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



\*2015: 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

# While perception of school declines in high school, a majority still rate them positively

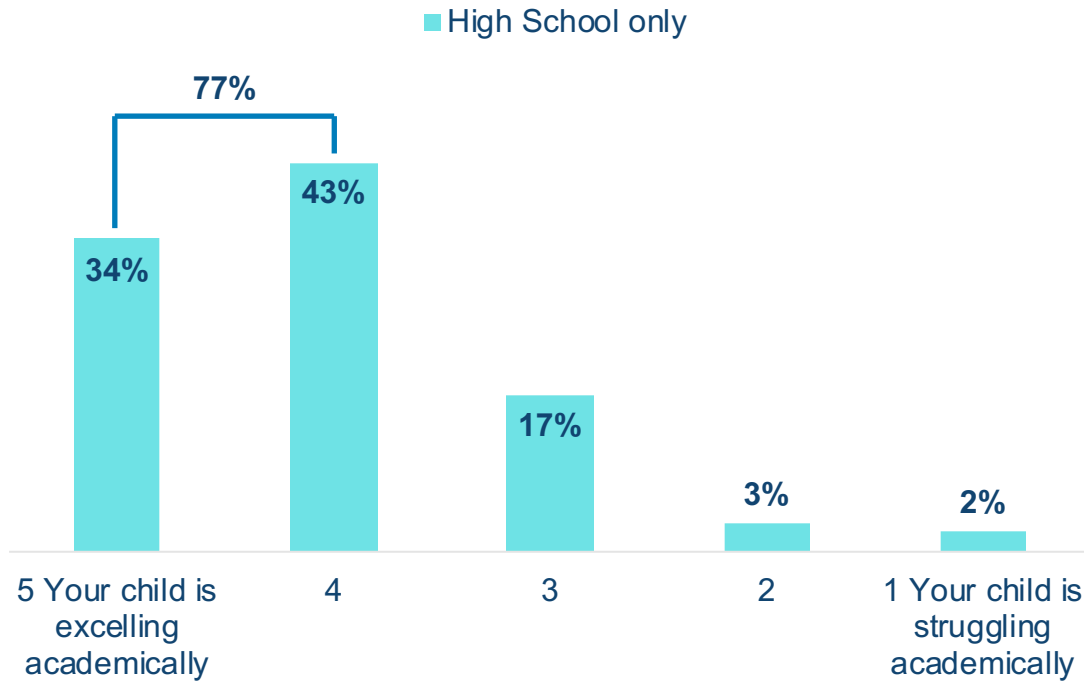
How would you rate the job that your child's school is doing when it comes to each of the following? (% excellent/pretty good)



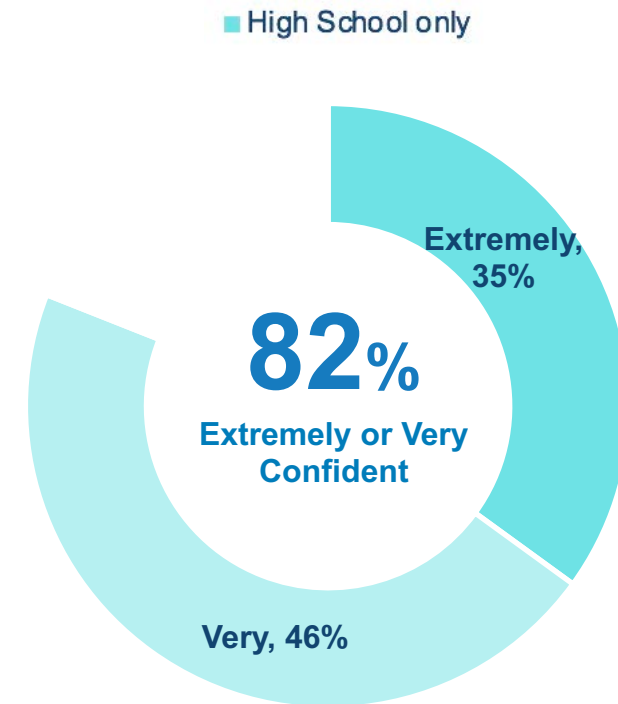
*\*No statistically significant differences by income*

# Perceptions of academics remain strong in high school

How do you feel your child is doing academically in school?



How confident are you that you have a clear understanding of how well your child is achieving academically?

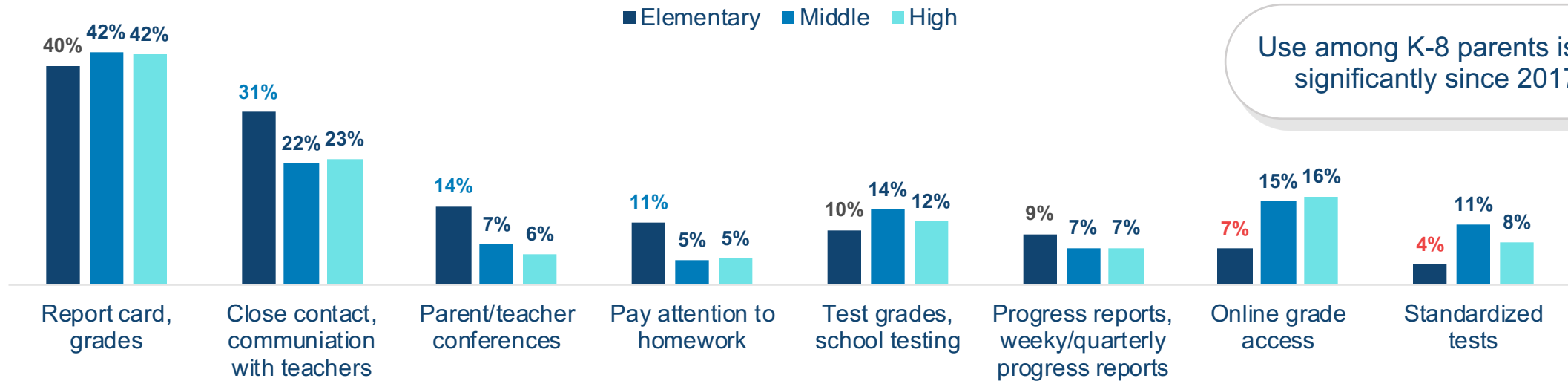


# For parents, achievement is defined by grades...

84%

say their child is getting A's and B's

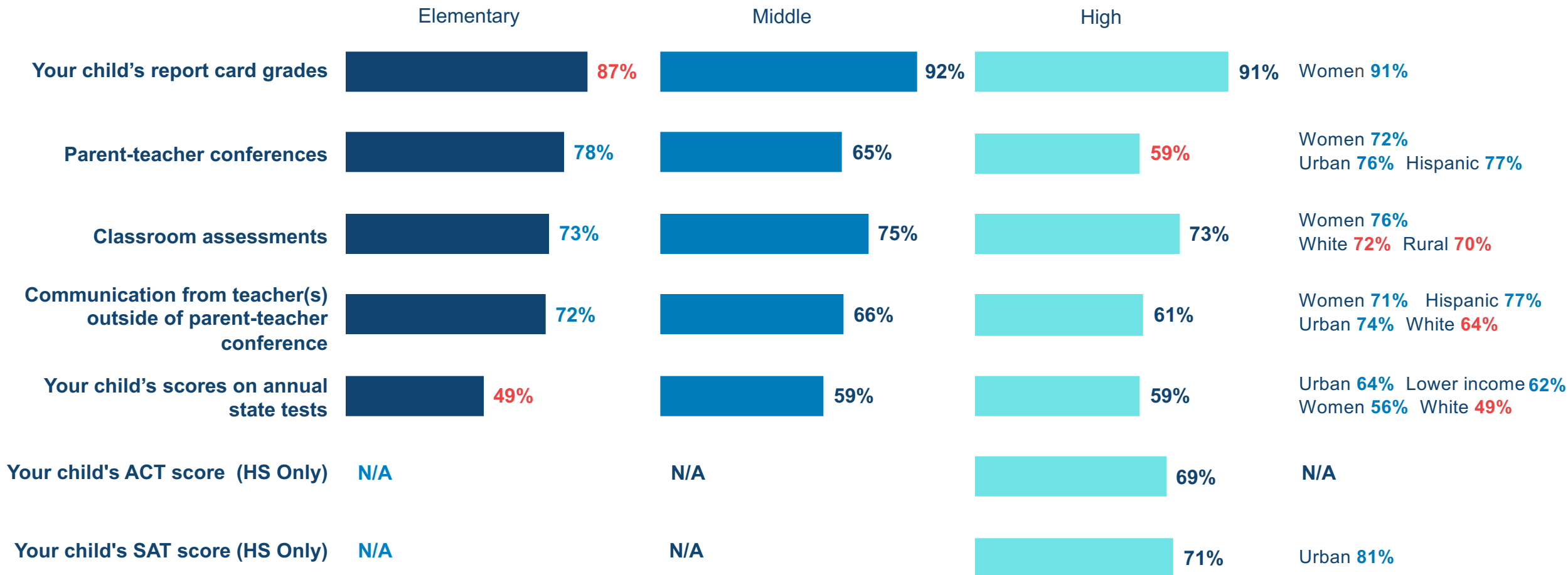
## What information, sources, or evidence help you to know whether your child is achieving at his/her grade level? (Coded Open End Responses)



Use among K-8 parents is up significantly since 2017

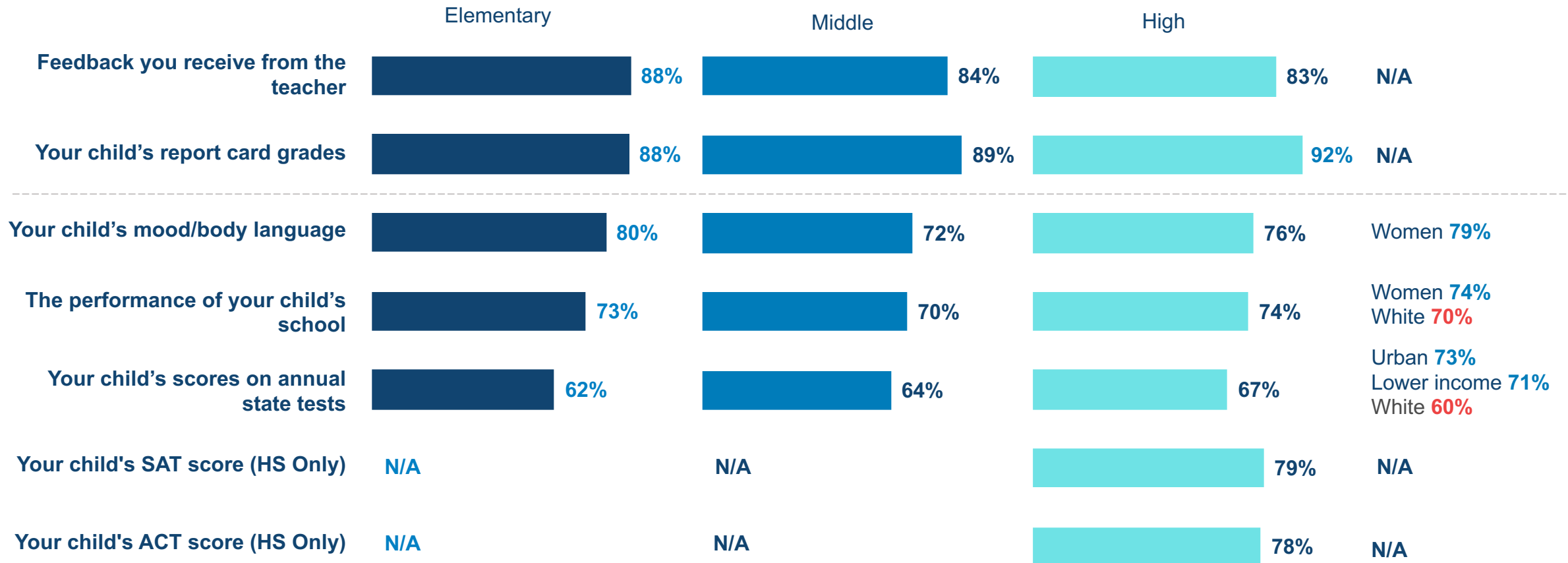
# ...and report card grades are seen as the most reliable measure

How much do you *rely* on each of the following resources to know whether or not your child is achieving at his/her grade level? (Rely a lot/Rely a fair amount)



# Despite more measures in high school, report cards viewed as most accurate in defining achievement

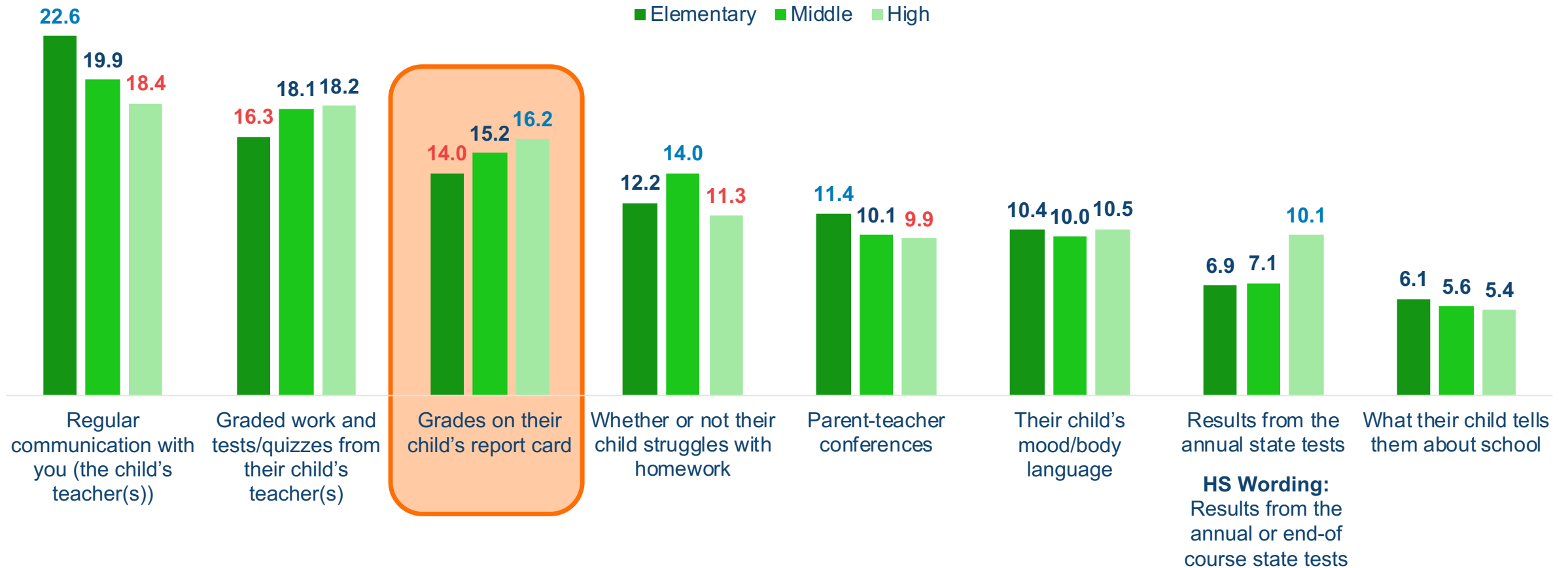
How *accurately* do you think each of the following reflects your child's level of academic achievement? (Very/Fairly accurately)



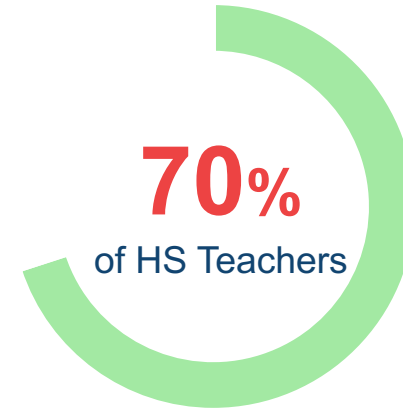
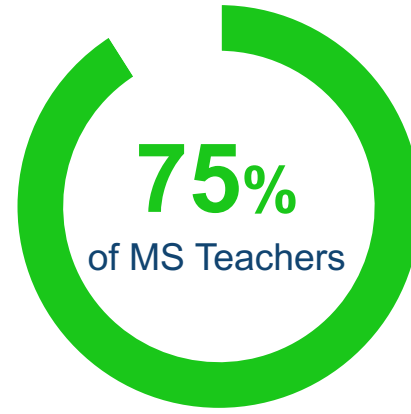
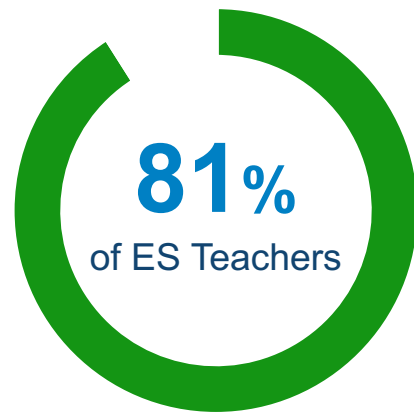


# Yet, teachers rank report cards as less important than ongoing communications with the teacher

## Most Important for Parents to Look at in Assessing How Well Their Child Is Achieving Academically



# In fact, teachers view communication with parents as important and linked to student success...



## AGREE THAT...

The students whose **parents regularly communicate with me** tend to do better academically than students whose parents do not communicate with me.

# ...as well as to their own success, but with a caveat

## Most Important for You to Be Successful as a Teacher?

**49%**

Parents actively supporting their children's education

**VS.**

**20%**

Regular and open communication with the parents of your students

## What's most important for your success as a teacher?

Select up to two

Parents actively supporting their children's education 49%

A supportive administrative team (e.g., principal, assistant principal, team leaders) 48%

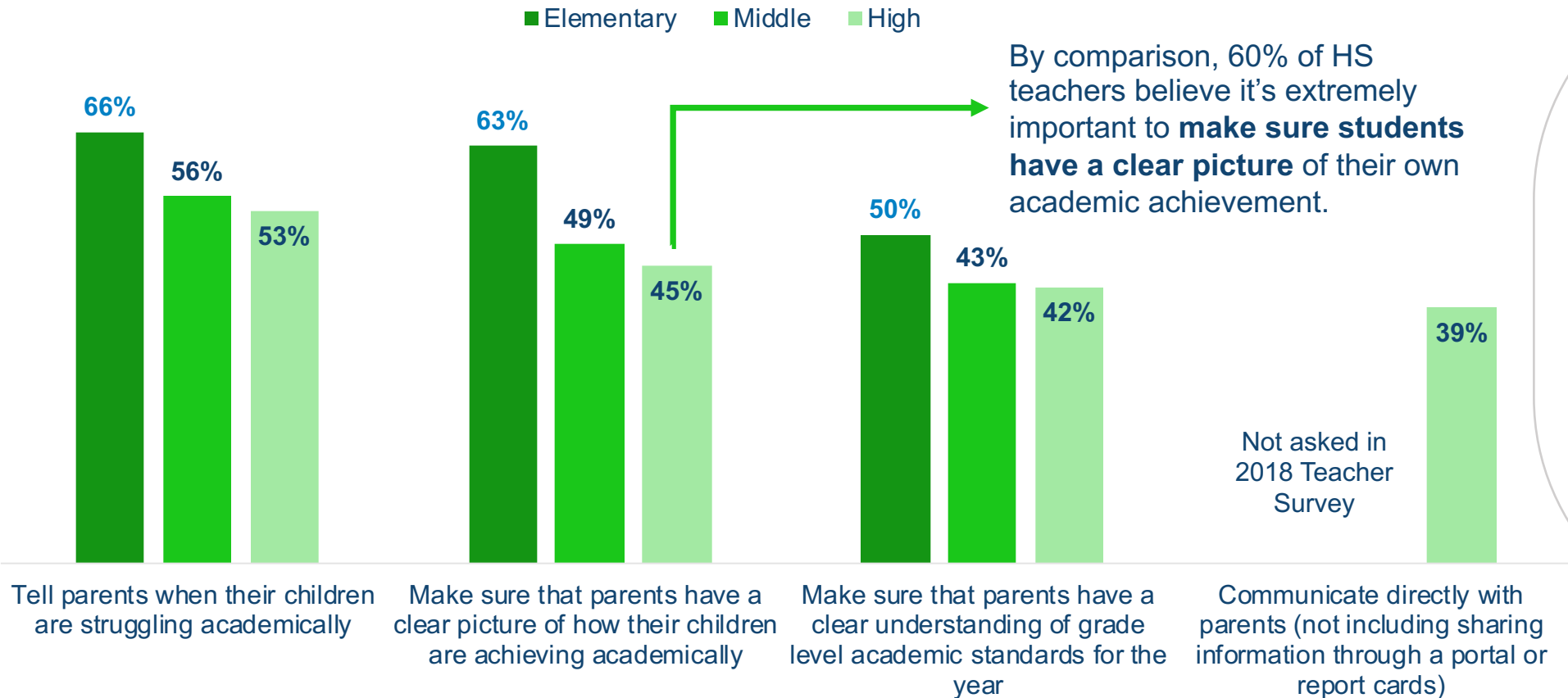
School-provided academic supports for students who are struggling 37%

School-provided supports to assist with students' social and emotional development 23%

Regular and open communication with the parents of your students 20%

# Despite its importance, communicating with parents is not a job expectation for middle and high school teachers

## How Important Are These Expectations in Doing Your Job? (% extremely important)

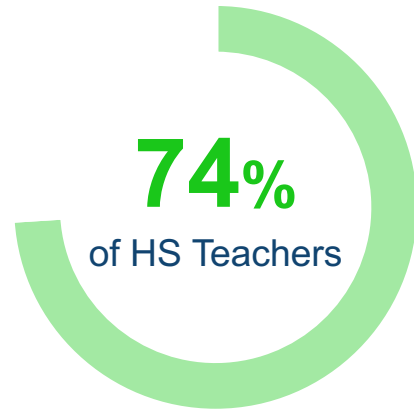


What % of parents did you communicate with during the school year, beyond an annual parent-teacher conference?

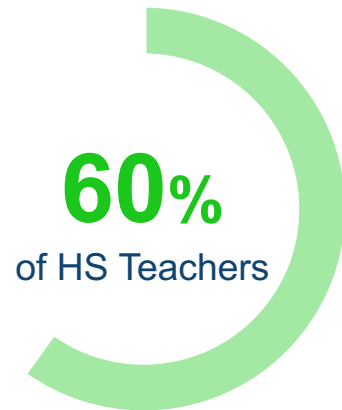
**60%** of ES teachers  
**50%** of MS teachers  
**38%** of HS teachers  
have talked/  
communicated  
with all or most.

# When tough conversations happen, teachers don't always feel supported

Would definitely contact parent if...



The student is in  
danger of not  
graduating



The student is in  
danger of failing  
your class

Only  
**23% of HS  
Teachers**

Are very satisfied with the level of  
support they receive from their  
school for communicating difficult  
information to parents.

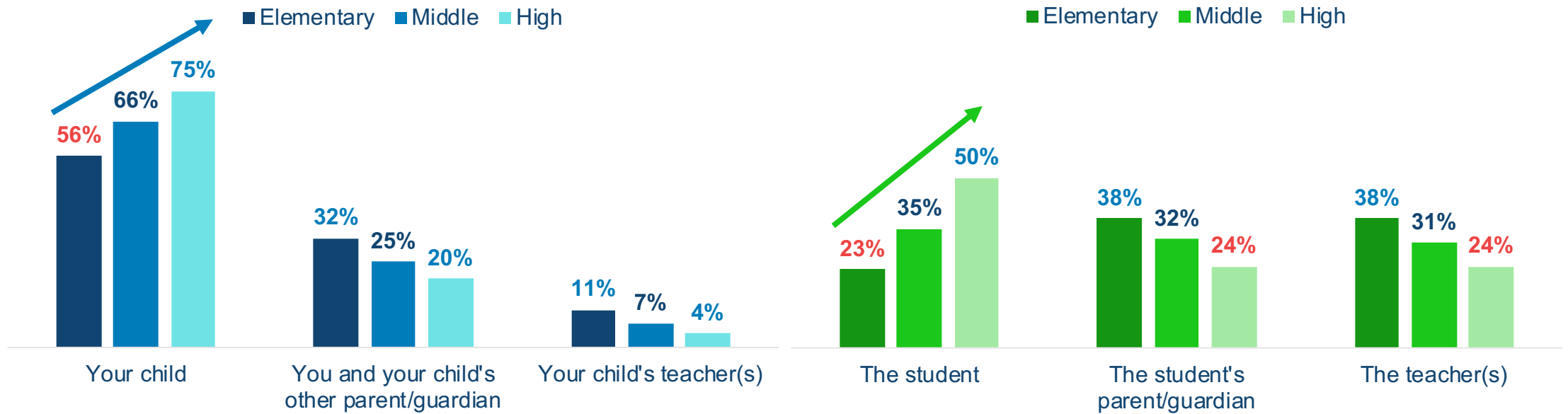
Compared to  
**31% among ES teachers** and  
**25% among MS teachers.**

# Expectations and Involvement Change Over Time



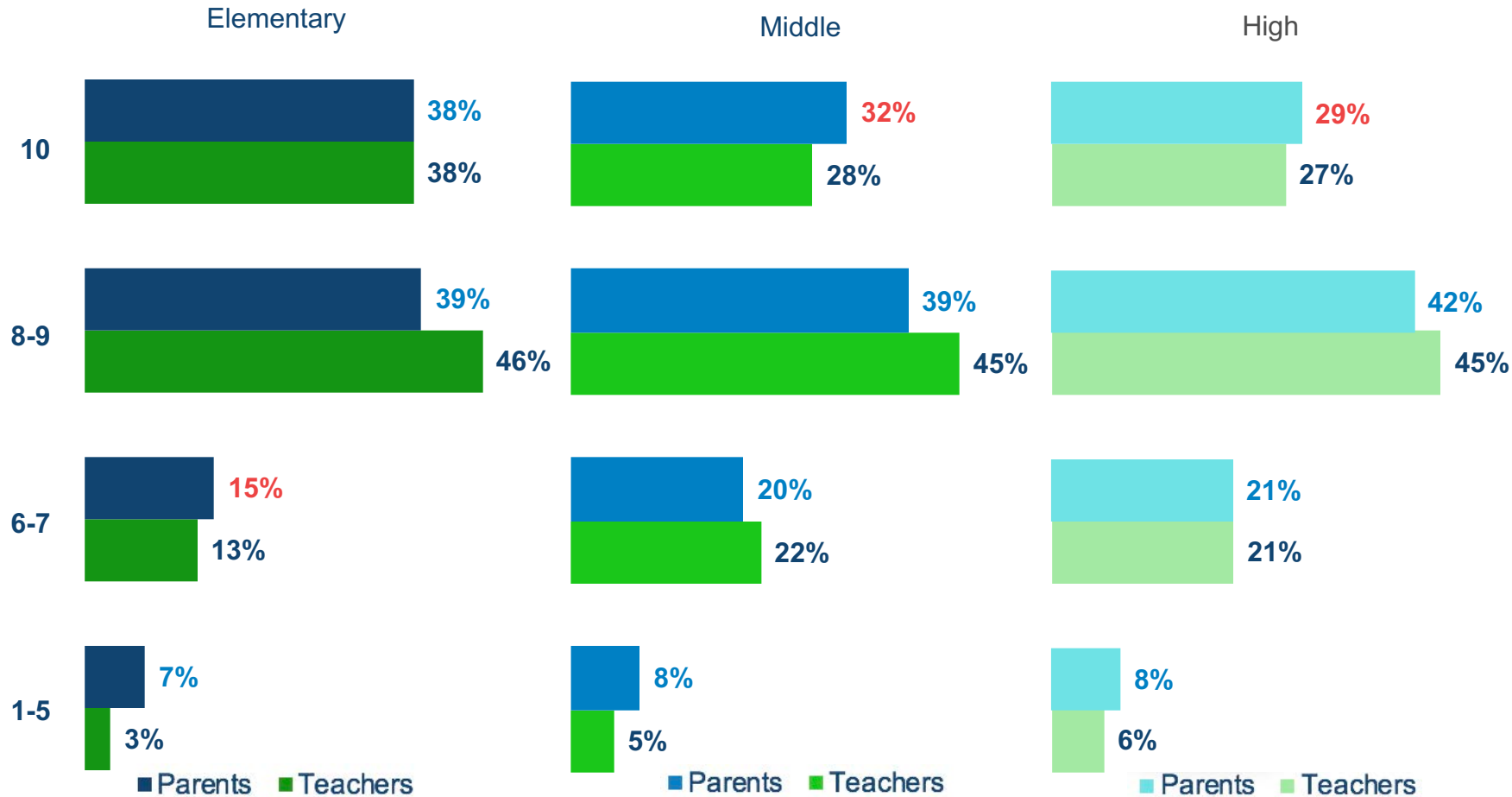
# Recall, as children progress, responsibility shifts

Which of the following individuals do you think has the greatest responsibility for a child's success in school?



# Parents and teachers agree on “ideal” level of involvement for parents...

## IDEAL involvement in a child’s education?



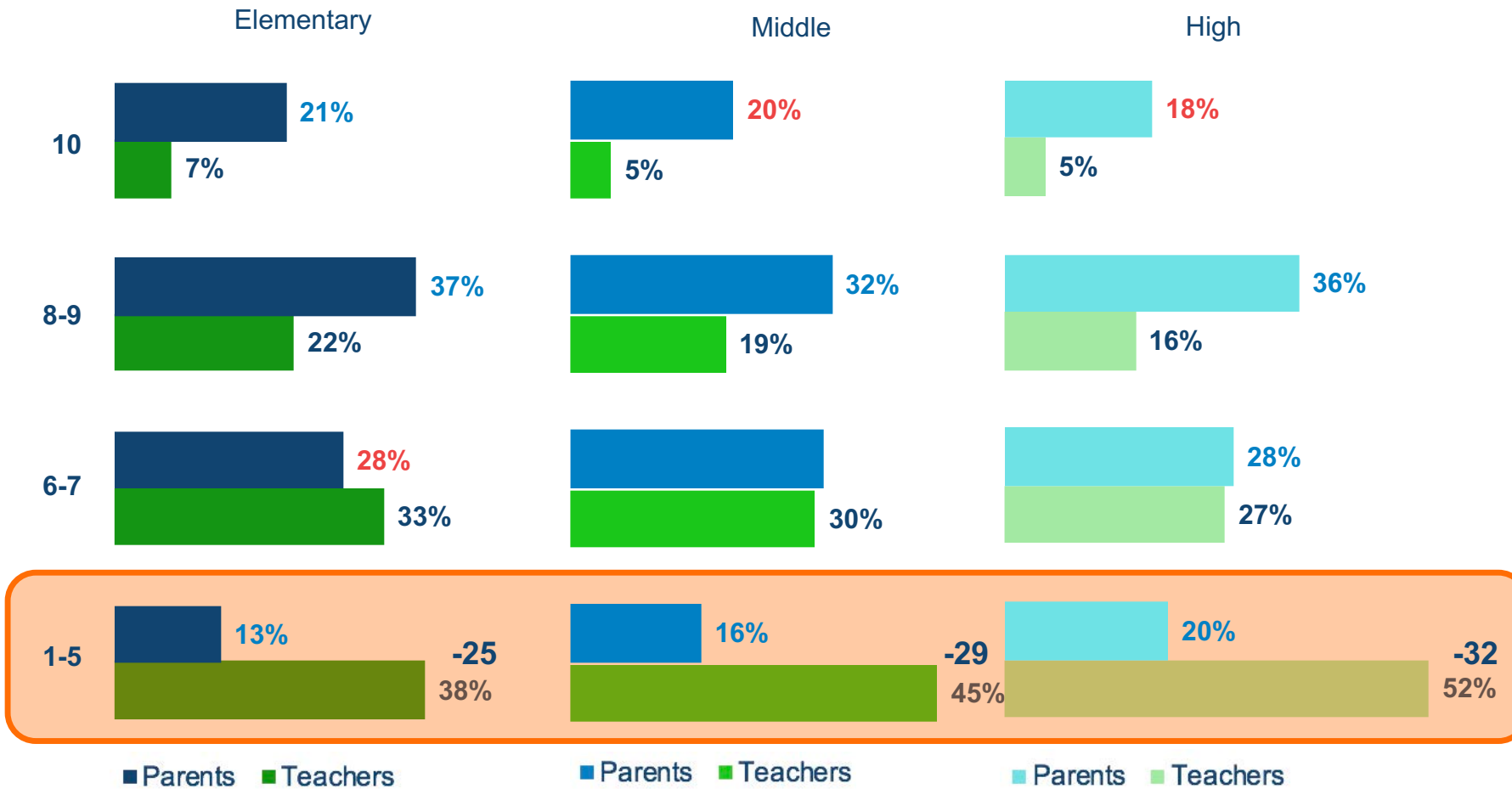
**For Parents, Highest Among...**

- Women
- African Americans
- Hispanics
- Household Income <\$37K
- Urban



# ...but the gap between parents and teachers on “actual” involvement widens as students progress

## ACTUAL involvement in a child’s education?

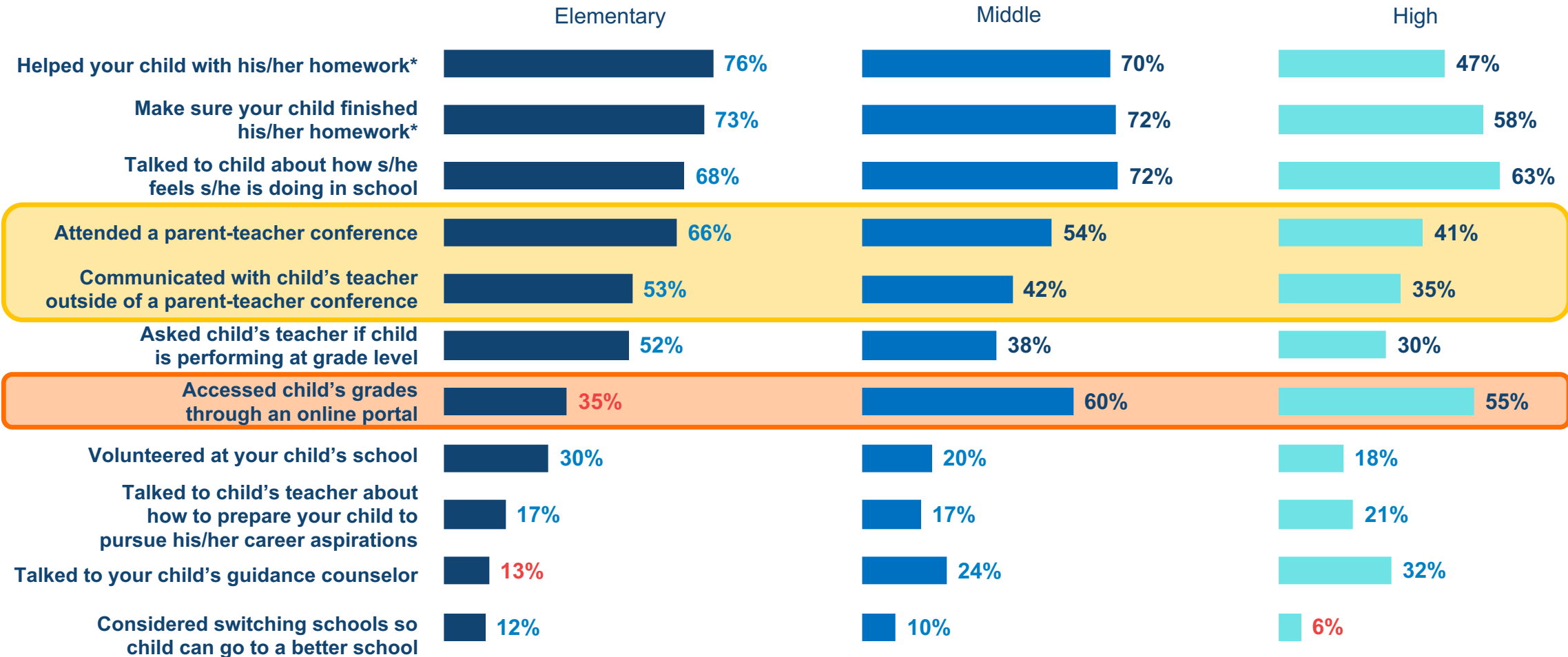


**For Parents, Highest Among...**

- Women
- African Americans
- Hispanics
- Urban

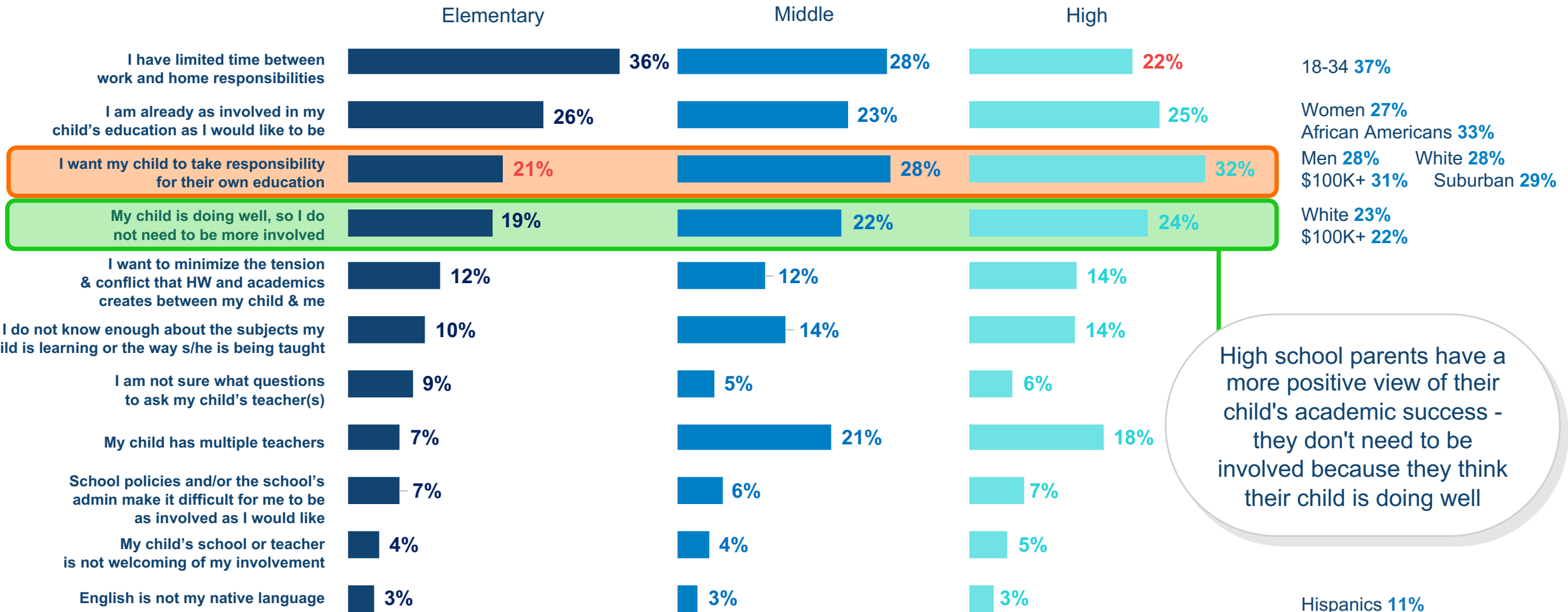
# High school parents less involved overall, with just over half using online portals

Please indicate which of the following, if any, you have done during the recent 2018-2019 school year.



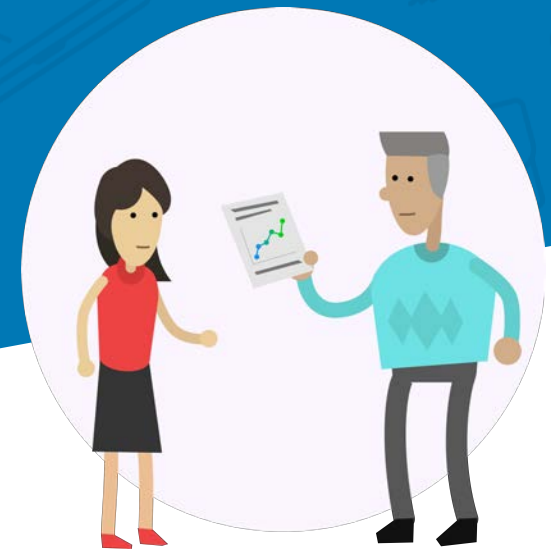
# Increased responsibility on the child contributes to lower involvement levels

Which of the following prevents you from being as involved in your child's education as you would like to be?



High school parents have a more positive view of their child's academic success - they don't need to be involved because they think their child is doing well

# A Little Information Goes a Long Way: Parents Deserve an Accurate Picture



# Perceptions shift when presented with information – even if it isn't about their child

## Info Shared with HS Parents

A 2018 national parent survey found that nine in ten parents of middle schoolers believe their child is at or above grade level in math and reading. Yet, a nationally representative assessment of American students shows only 25% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students meet or exceed expectations in math, and only 37% meet or exceed expectations in reading. And, only 43% of high school teachers say their students start the school year prepared for grade level work.

These results mean that most parents think that their children in high school are performing at a level higher in the classroom than they likely are.

### Before Information



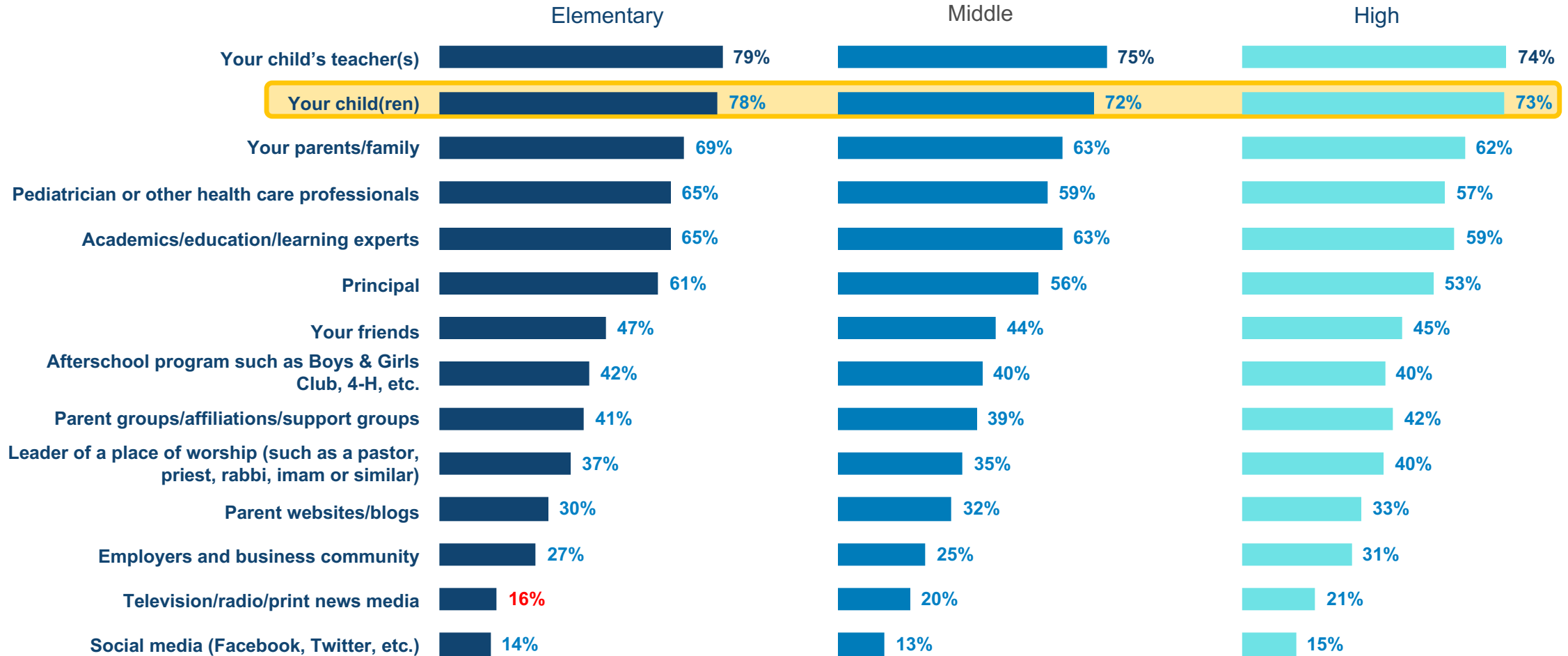
### After Information



**that they have a clear picture of how their child is doing academically**

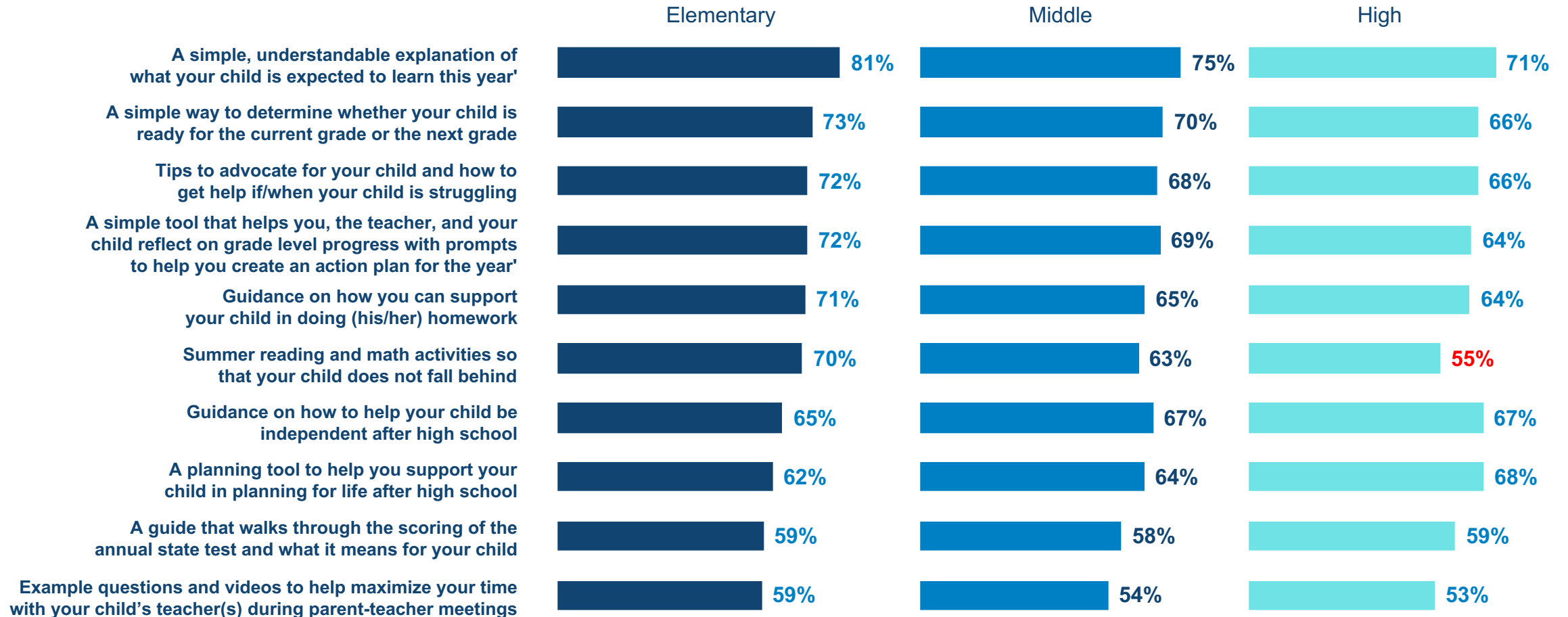
# To get information, parents look to teachers and their children

## How Much Do You Trust Each for Information on Developing Child's Academic Skills? (% rated 4-5)



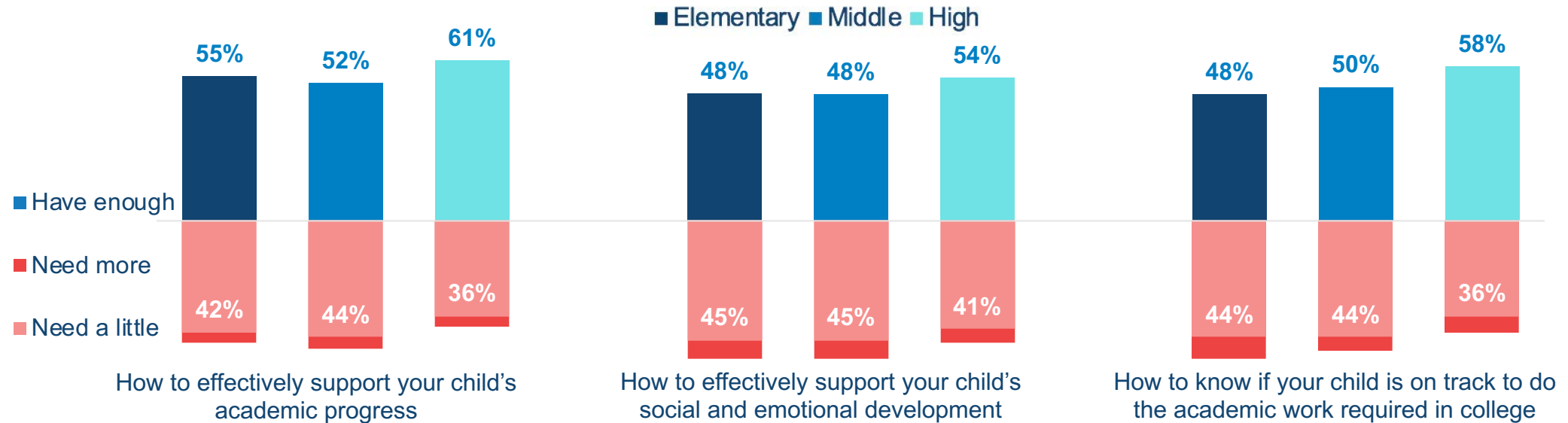
# Parents find different resources helpful at each stage

## How Helpful Would You Find Each? (% extremely/very helpful)



# Parents prioritize information on social & emotional development

## Have the Knowledge and Information They Need on Each





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**Thank you!**