

Thetford Town School District 2023 Family Survey Data

Hello!

Thank you for taking the time to look at the 2023 Thetford Town School District Family Survey results. The charts shown here reflect answers to all of the multiple choice questions. Because many free responses shared information that might have revealed the identity of a child or family, we have not included all free responses. Instead, we selected feedback from each section that captured ideas and feelings that came up repeatedly throughout that section's responses.

The Board sends its sincere thanks to everyone who took the time to respond to the survey. All of your responses were tremendously valuable, and we appreciate your time, candor, and thoughtful reflections. This information is being already being used to help guide decisions about educational funding and policies in our district.

Sincerely,

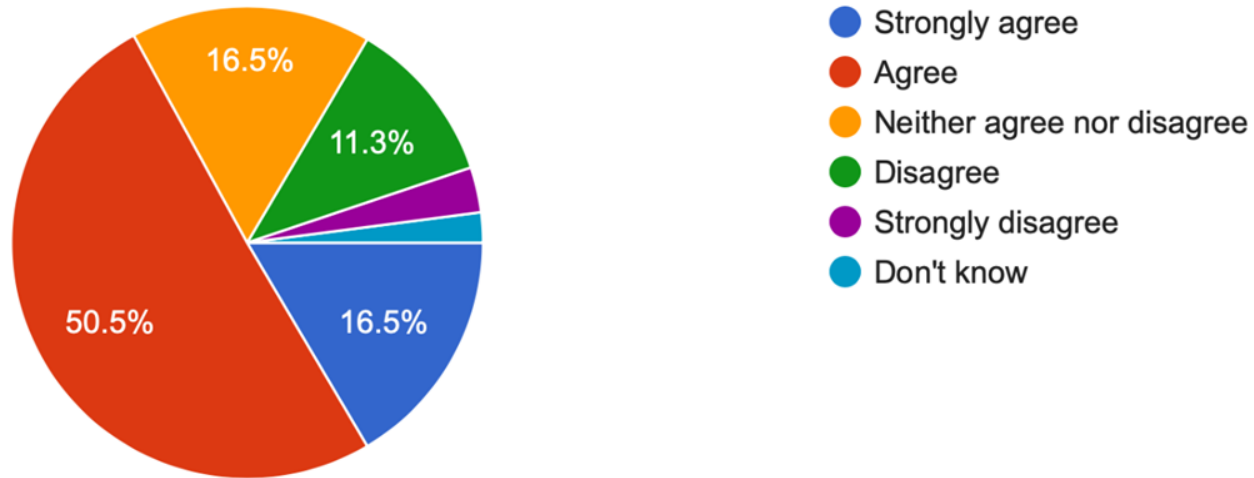
Mary Chin, Nic Cook, Jeff Jamele, Greta Marchesi, and Megan Snider (chair)

Thetford Town School Board

Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 1

Thetford schools help my child(ren) do their best.

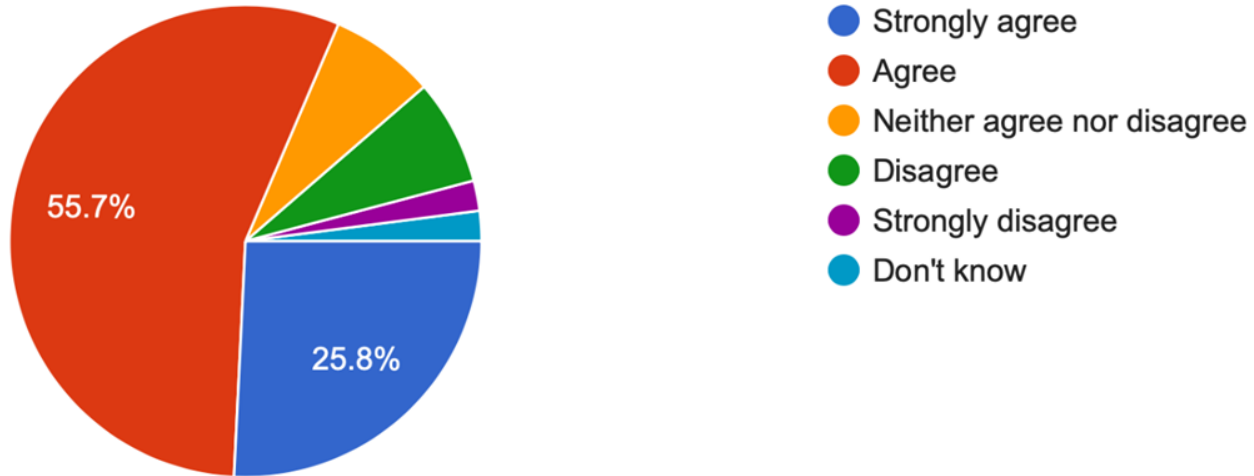
97 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 2

My child(ren) are learning and growing as readers in Thetford schools.

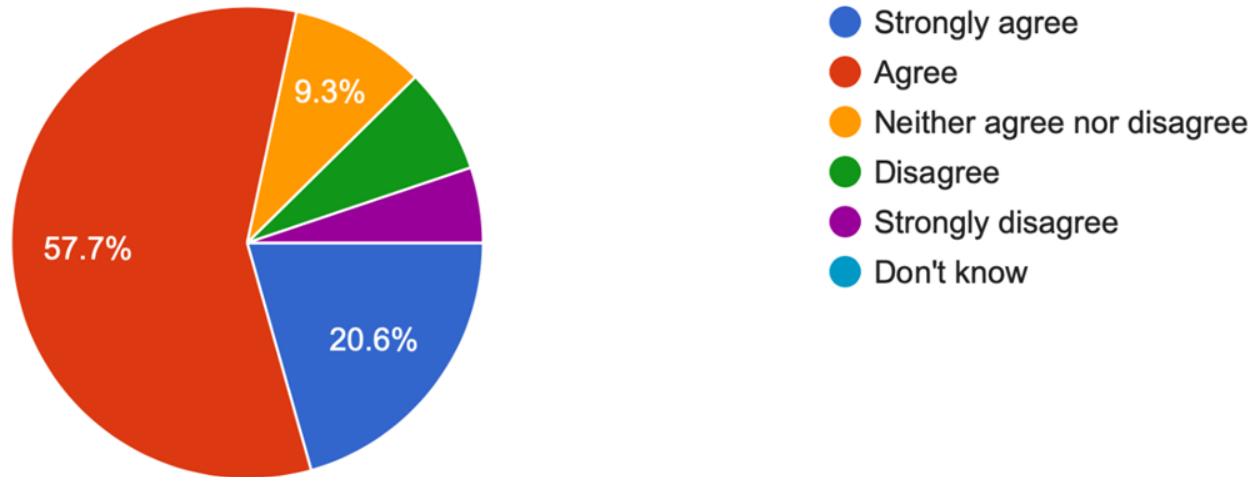
97 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 3

My child(ren) are learning and growing in mathematics in Thetford schools.

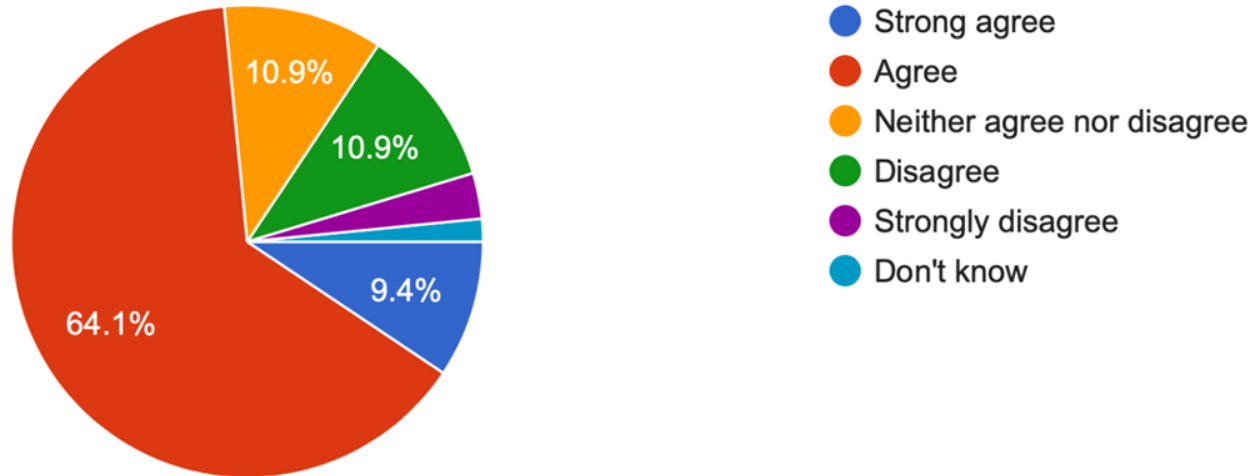
97 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 4

My child(ren) are learning and growing in science and social studies in Thetford schools.

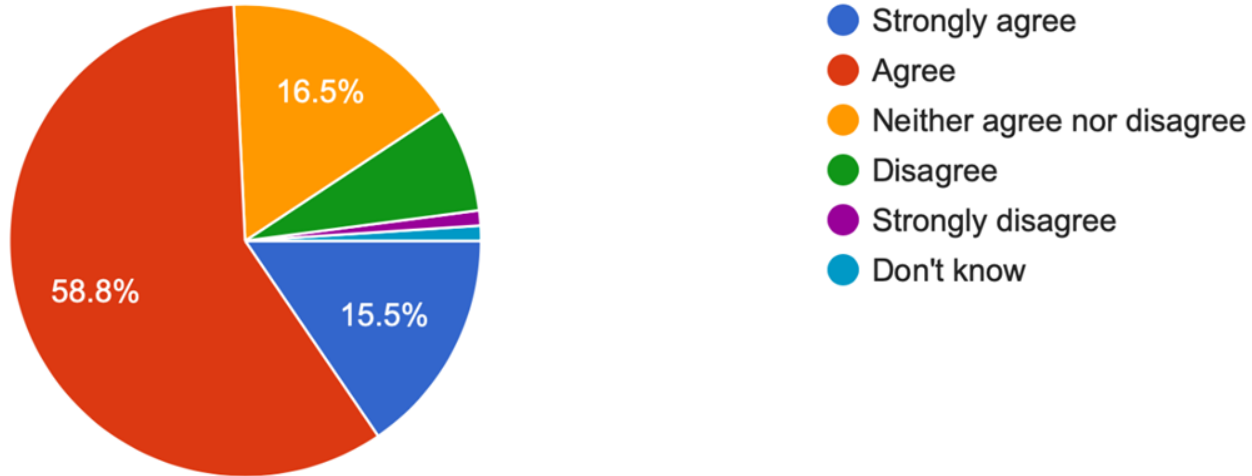
64 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 5

My child(ren) are learning and growing in their co-curricular education (e.g. art, music, world languages, physical education, etc) in Thetford schools.

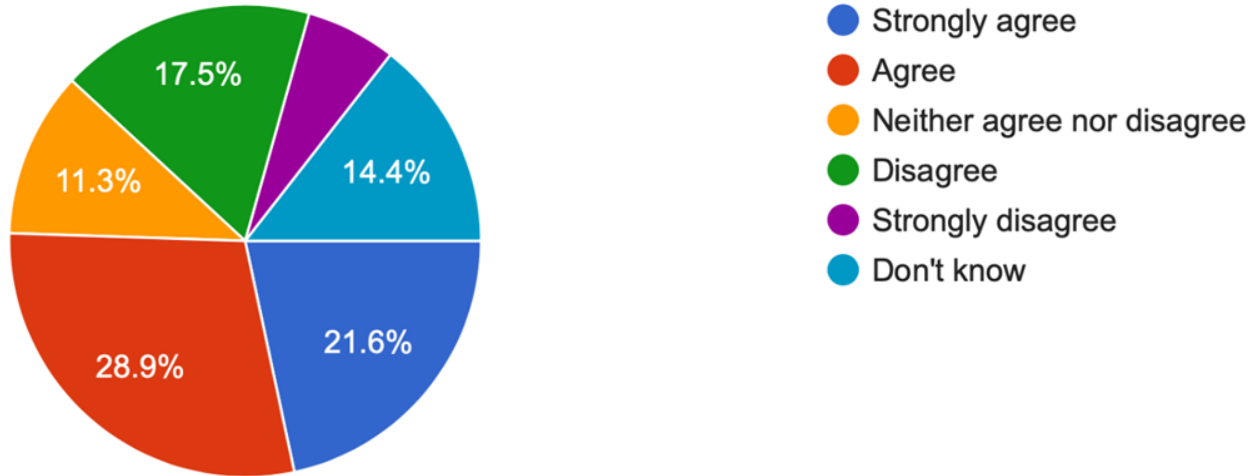
97 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 6

Thetford schools do their best to meet the needs of all students, including those with physical or learning differences.

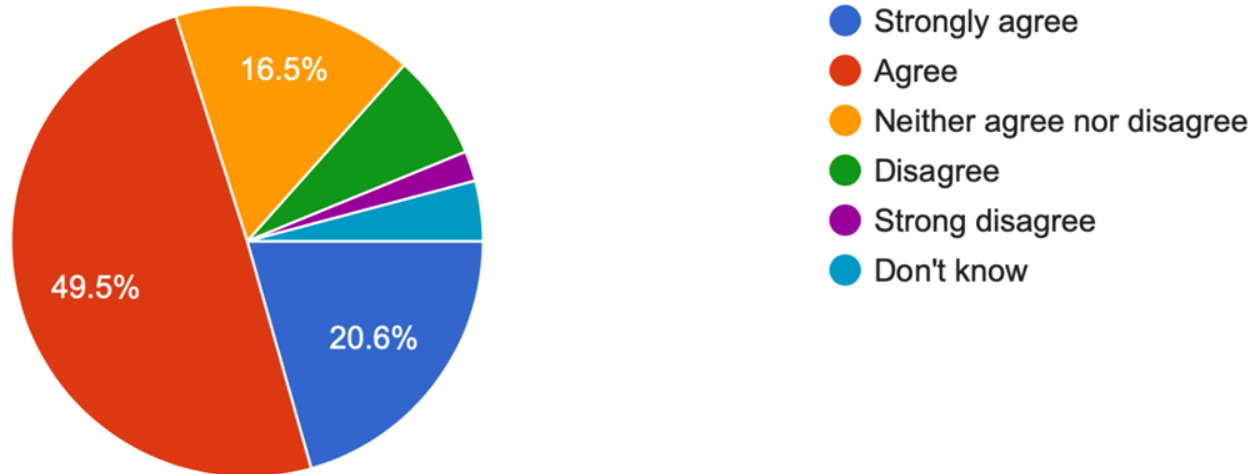
97 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 7

Thetford schools help my child(ren) learn about the world beyond their classroom.

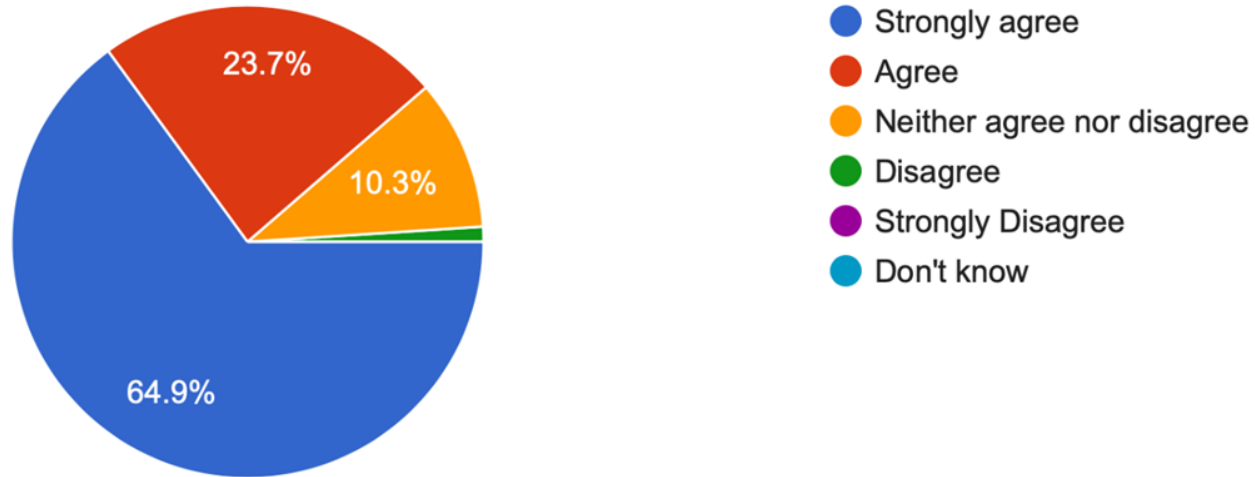
97 responses



Section 1: Academic Expectations- Question 8

Outdoor and environmental education should be an important part of learning in the Thetford schools.

97 responses



Academics: What's Going Well?

I love that you meet each child where they are and encourage a community approach to learning. The motto of TES -Together Everyone Succeeds is more than just words. I love the emphasis on Kind Safe and Responsible behavior. The world needs more of this.

Our daughter has excelled in reading during her initial years at TES. She also seems engaged in all the other subject areas she's learning about and seems to particularly enjoy time in the outdoor classrooms and outside in general.

The outdoor parts have been dialed back since COVID, but composting, animals, outdoor classrooms, wetlands projects and walks, hunger walks up Mimi's trail...good stuff! Our kids have grown and learned much through the school system so no complaints. They are lovely and pretty average kids, so no real high learning needs one way or the other.

TES has been hugely supportive of my unique learner's emotional needs. I have always felt supported as a parent and I have always felt that my child is being supported as an individual.

The science curriculum in particular is so fantastic and one of the things we value most about TES. We really appreciate all the hands-on learning, especially when it's mixed into their outdoor classroom time.

What Thetford does well - welcomes and includes all children in all activities, prepares neurotypical children for state standardized testing, genuinely loves and cares for my children and their well-being.

There are so many great opportunities for our students. The teachers are fantastic. I loved all of the special events that have happened this year. Concerts, Science Fair, Wax Museum, sporting events, field trips, whole school celebrations, art club, band, chorus, book clubs, and more. My child loves coming to school every day.

Everyday my children come home from school, and they can actually talk about what they have learned in a conversation. The teachers are a huge influence, along with support staff. My children thrive everyday with the huge support of TES staff. The staff is on top of any issue that arises, and really praises the children when they have done a good job, and it shows.

The physical education program is particularly strong with introducing kids to new activities and helping them succeed.

Academics: What Could Go Better?

I'm not sure my child is taking math assessments beyond the ones included in Bridges, which would make it hard to determine if he needs more attention in math. I'm not sure my kid is being appropriately challenged, and I'm not confident that there is a system in place between TA and TES to appropriately challenge students who need it. I'm also concerned that there is only one interventionist in the entire building for math..

There is almost no meaningful communication about curriculum and assessment of that curriculum from TES.

Per conversations with other parents, many who have students with IEPs or 504s have a very strong opinion that the school is not providing the services that their students need in order to succeed.

Parent-teacher conferences with the students present might be fine if your kid is doing really great and there aren't any issues that need to be discussed, but not everybody's kid is doing totally awesome, so the student led parent teacher conferences are really not helpful for parents of kids who are struggling.

Its telling when TES value statement (as sent home to families this year) has "Academic Outcomes" listed last. I want a well-rounded student body of responsible and care citizens, but is academics really last on the list for school priorities?!

I don't believe in elementary and middle school that smart students are challenged and have opportunities to succeed. There appear to be lots of programs to help kids who are struggling. But it appears that the smart kids are "smart enough" and there is no interest in making smart kids smarter or expanding their knowledge.

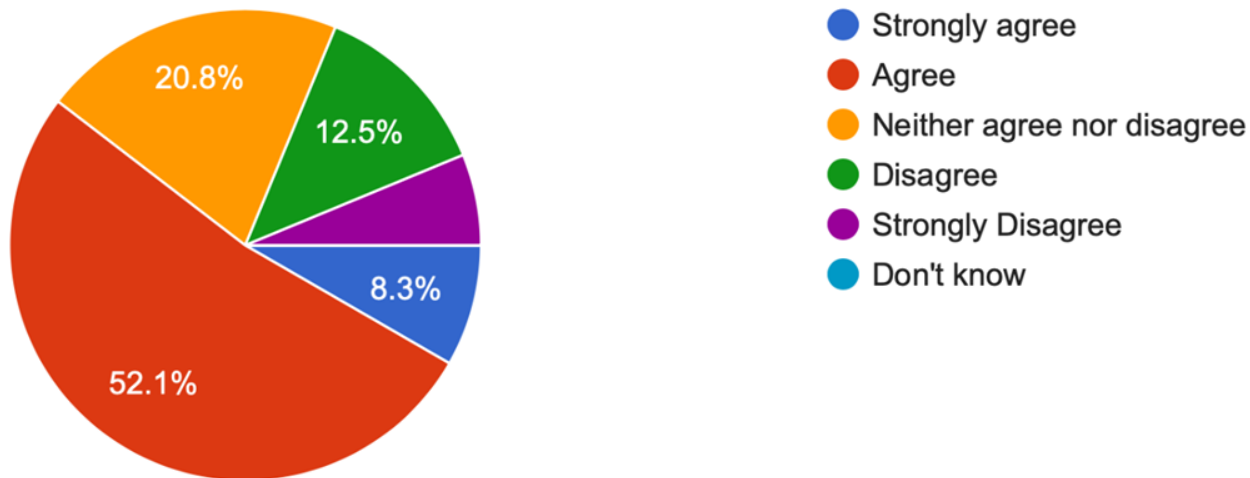
Some teachers take the kids outside regularly- either to work with Cat or into the forest- but some of them almost never take them out. It seems unfair that some kids are getting these fantastic opportunities and others even in the same grade are not. Setting some kind of consistent school-wide expectation would be helpful, especially since the community made such an effort to make all those outdoor spaces available.

I had to put disagree or strongly disagree for developing reading since the TES curriculum seems very stuck with methods that are not research based and adaptable for kids like mine who struggle with reading. The national realization that these kids need to be taught skills to have it "click" has grown but this school district seems slow to really embrace this revelation and is adding in little bits that aren't fixing what is a true problem for a lot of kids. So far there has not been adequate interventions for my child, which is very frustrating to see.

Section 2: Respect and Engagement- Question 1

I have confidence in our school's leader and their ability to support an effective inclusive learning community.

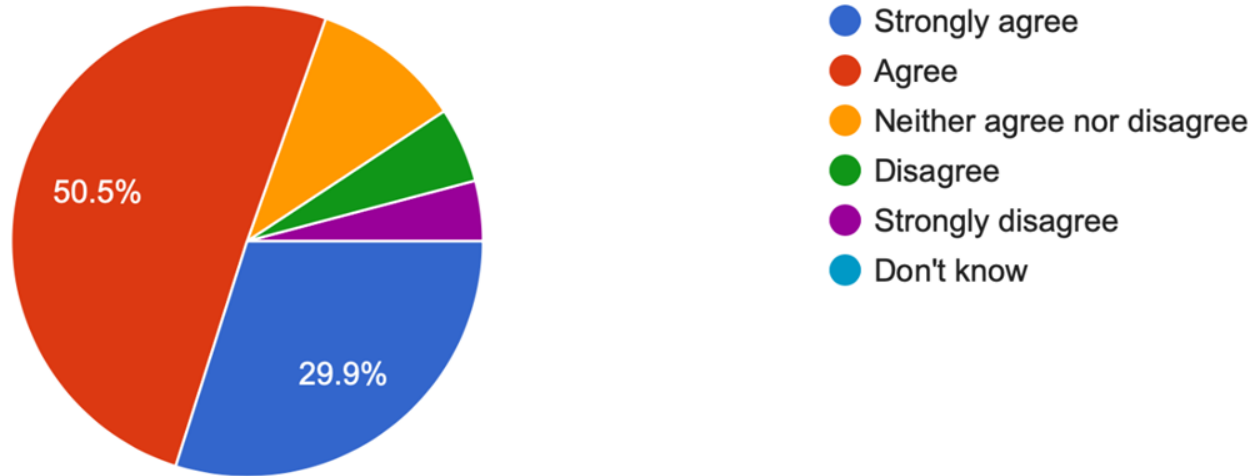
48 responses



Section 2: Respect and Engagement- Question 2

My child(ren) feel welcomed and included at school.

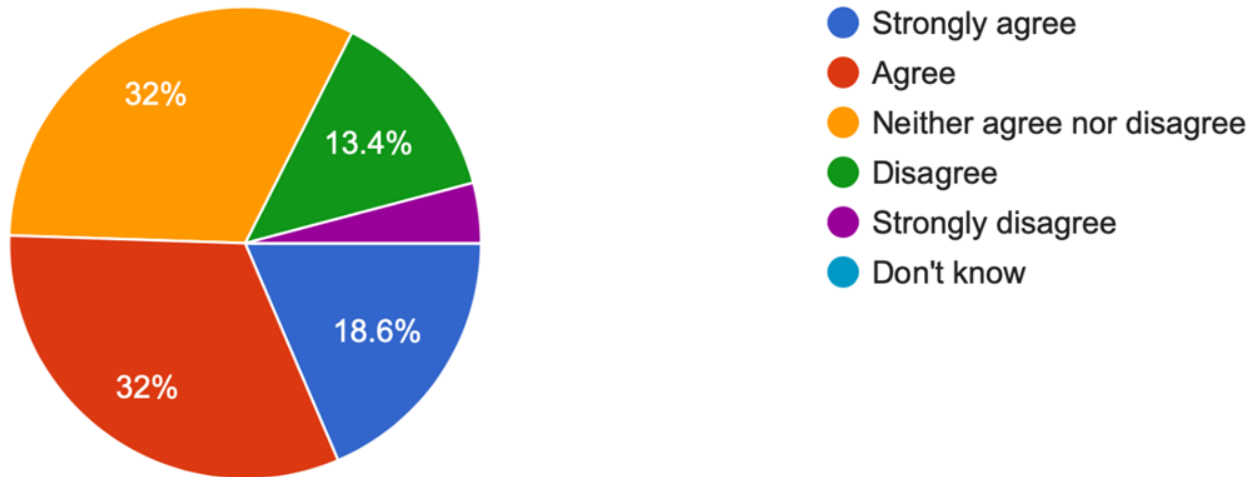
97 responses



Section 2: Respect and Engagement- Question 3

My family feels like an important part of the school community.

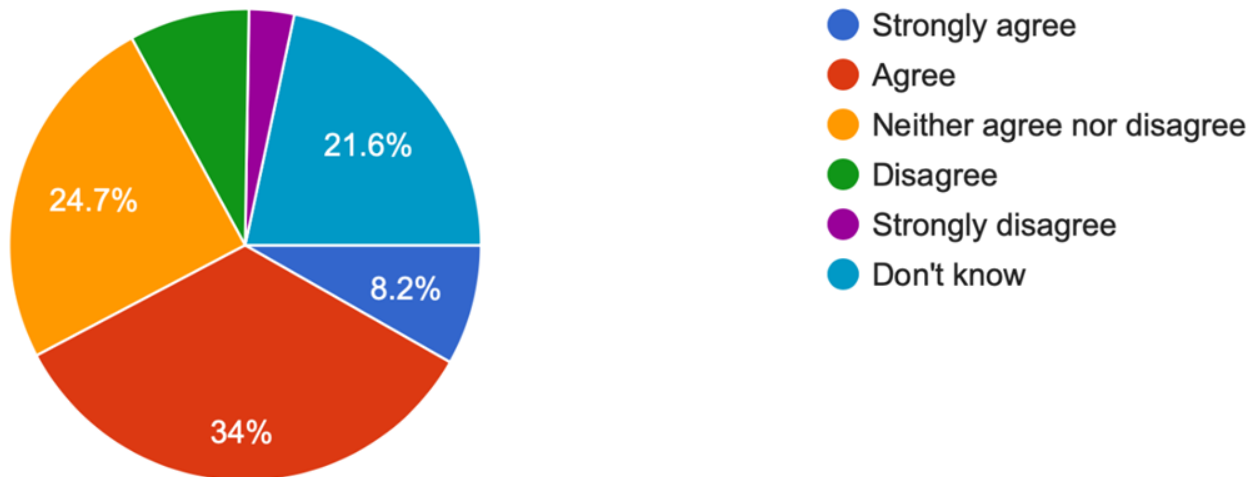
97 responses



Section 2: Respect and Engagement- Question 4

In your experience, do Thetford schools consider the needs of families from underrepresented or historically marginalized groups, including racial, c...ily structures, or families with income challenges?

97 responses



Respect and Engagement: What's Going Well?

My student enjoys coming to school and feels welcome and seen.

The staff are welcoming, accommodating, and helpful, When my kids have had challenges, we have always found a listening ear and cooperative solutions.

TES has been such a fantastic, warm, welcoming environment. We have appreciated how our kids' teachers have made an effort to include diverse perspectives in their literacy and social studies work.

All the staff and teachers go above and beyond to welcome students into the school. With Covid it has been a challenge to feel like a part of the school community at times. That has certainly improved this year.

We have felt welcomed and invited in to participate as much as we wanted to. We are not folks of color so I am not sure about their experience. We have appreciated the engagement with difference in many curricular aspects, but not sure what the lived experience is for folks.

Respect and Engagement: What Could Go Better?

Our school has supports in place only for low income families, but doesn't have much in place for racially diverse or immigrant/refugee families.

Ski Friday is not supportive of families and their diverse financial needs.

There is not enough attention to difference in family structures, ability, sexuality, and race.

The school has a duty to open students to a world outside of their own, and this is where I believe the school falls short. Students from all cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds deserve to be seen in the curriculum.

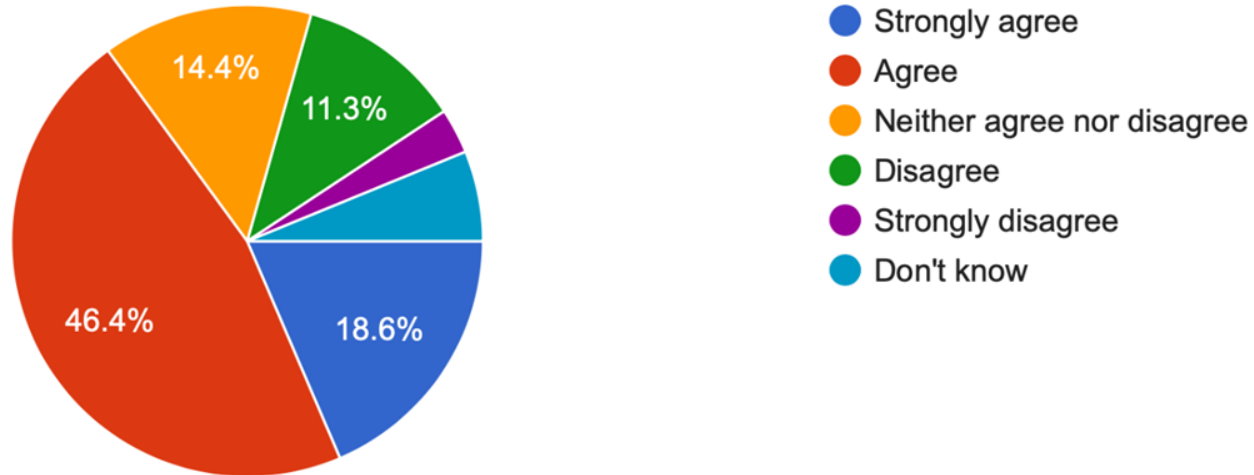
[The school] talks about how community will improve as parents have more in-person interactions in the post covid world, but where does this leave parents who cannot be present from 8:00-2:45?

[My child's] teacher was particularly inattentive/indifferent to his [physical disability] and how that really affected him socially in the classroom.

Section 3: Safety and Behavior- Question 1

My child(ren)'s school's rules for behavior and discipline are fair and equitable.

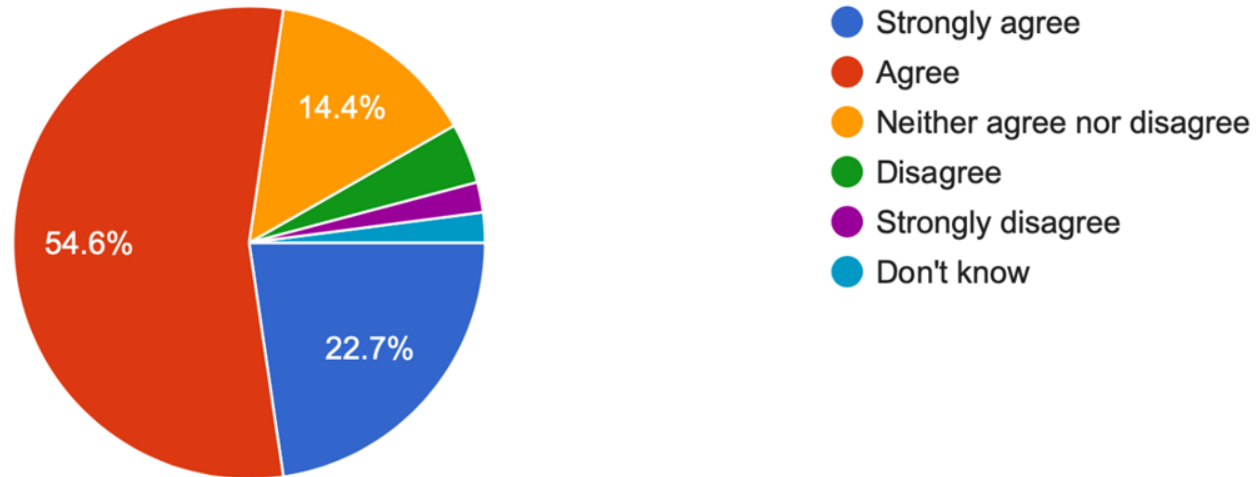
97 responses



Section 3: Safety and Behavior- Question 2

Our school helps my child(ren) learn to be kind, safe, and responsible.

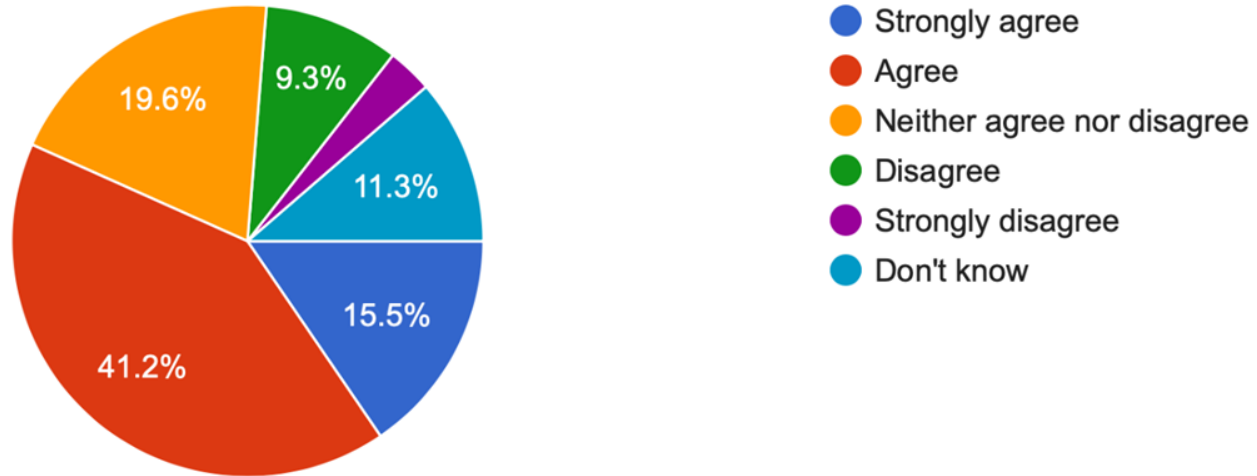
97 responses



Section 3: Safety and Behavior- Question 3

Teachers and other adults at my school work to stop hurtful encounters and bullying.

97 responses



Safety and Behavior: What's Going Well?

My students' teacher has followed up with me immediately when my son has had a challenging day. She always supports him when he struggles with the school rules and he knows the expectations clearly.

I think the emphasis on kindness, safety, and responsibility is really impactful at TES.

I feel as though the new social emotional program and the consistency of SCC has been a large part of creating a caring, safe, and responsible community at TES.

Our kids' teachers have clear expectations and follow-through around behavioral stuff.

My student was experiencing bullying this year and the teachers and administrators actively worked to help support my student and stop the bullying.

My child talks about PBIS and how she and her classmates practice being safe, kind, and responsible.

My child has had some tantrums since starting and they have done amazing job helping him calm down and helping him to not get so worked up.

Safety and Behavior: What Could Be Better?

I would strongly suggest more social-emotional support out on the playground at recess.

Our experience with a child who has behavior problems is that he is not given the supports and especially the adult supervision and attention he needs.

I feel that my son is allowed too much latitude when he misbehaves at school due to his special needs.

Sometimes I am not told about what [my child] does and feel that I should be addressing/disciplining him for that bad behavior at home.

Inappropriate behavior during upper grades lunches. The buses are out of control and not safe.

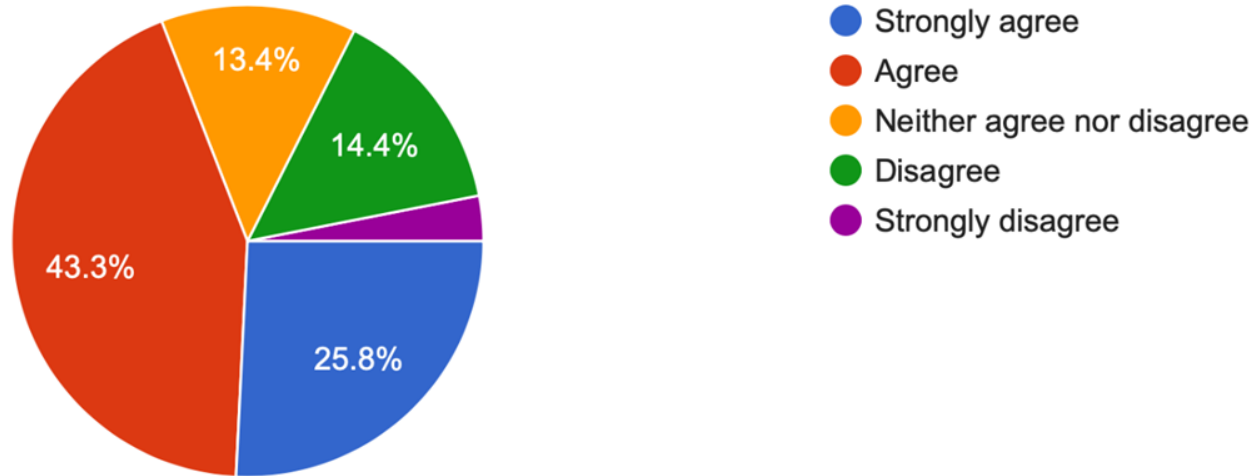
Acknowledge and reward students who normally behave and do their work. It seems only those with behavior problems get special privileges (i.e. treats, extra recess time, etc.) if they behave well.

I do not understand PBIS and overall do not feel it is consistently applied.

Section 4: Communication- Question 1

My child(ren)'s teachers keep me informed about how they are doing in school.

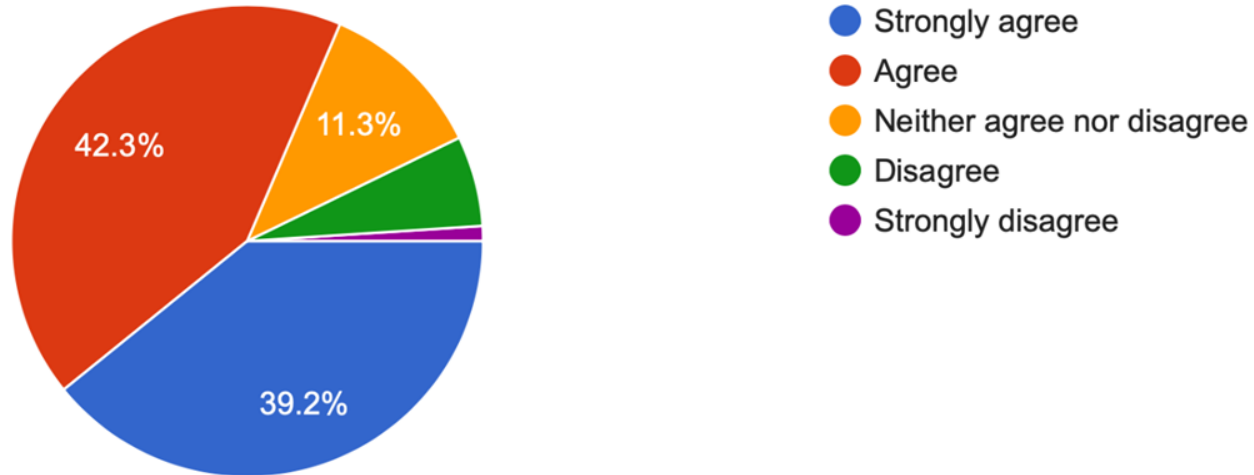
97 responses



Section 4: Communication- Question 2

My child(ren)'s teachers respond to my questions and concerns.

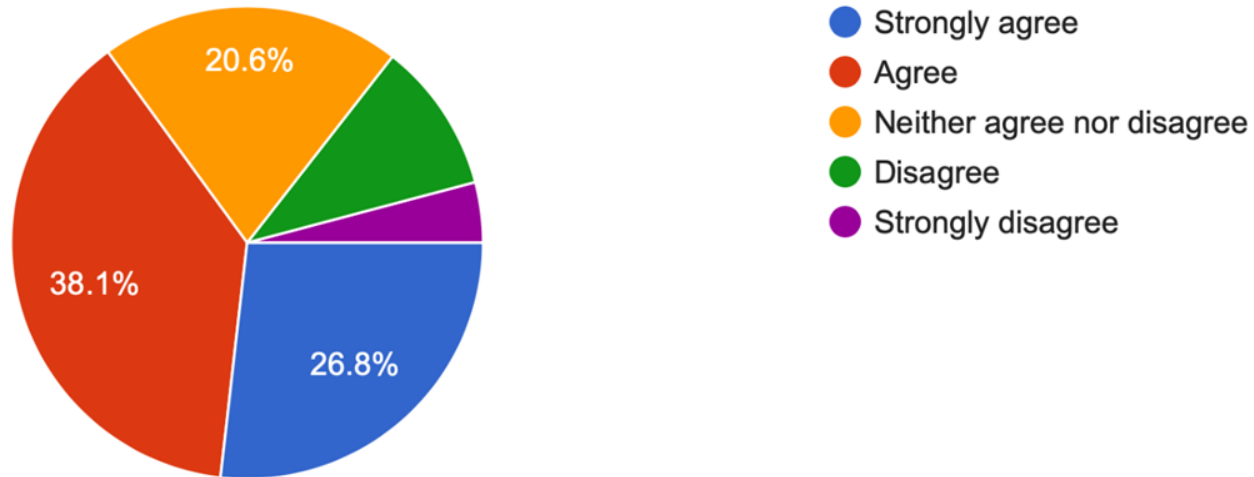
97 responses



Section 4: Communication- Question 3

Thetford school administrators respond to my questions and concerns.

97 responses



Communication: What's Going Well?

Our experience has only been with the lower wing, but all of the teachers have been extremely responsive when we've reached out. This year in particular we've really appreciated regular communications about what's going on in the classroom- please keep them coming!

Teachers are very responsive to concerns when raised which is great and they all seem to care.

Overall I think communication from TES is strong. Weekly newsletters, emails from teachers, and the principal's emails are all helpful.

We do not get much in terms of regular proactive classroom updates but folks are responsive when we reach out.

This has gotten better this year but is far from ideal. Regular communication from teachers is hit or miss and far less than what I would hope for. Teachers are very responsive to concerns when raised which is great and they all seem to care.

I appreciate Bridget's communications and her attempt to keep things smoothly sailing.

Bernice met with me right away to talk about my concerns earlier in the year.

Communication: What Could Be Going Better?

I rarely get responses from the teacher or principal when I request information, even repeatedly.

Because I don't really know what to ask in the first place, it makes it really hard to feel informed. I know some teachers do their best and will communicate more with families in their classes, but without consistent support and guidance from the administration it is very piecemeal.

Rarely do I see any class work come home, so I feel quite in the dark about what work he is completing and how he is completing it. Frankly, the lack of communication from the classroom and school in general is troubling.

We have two yearly parent-teacher conferences and that's about it for information.

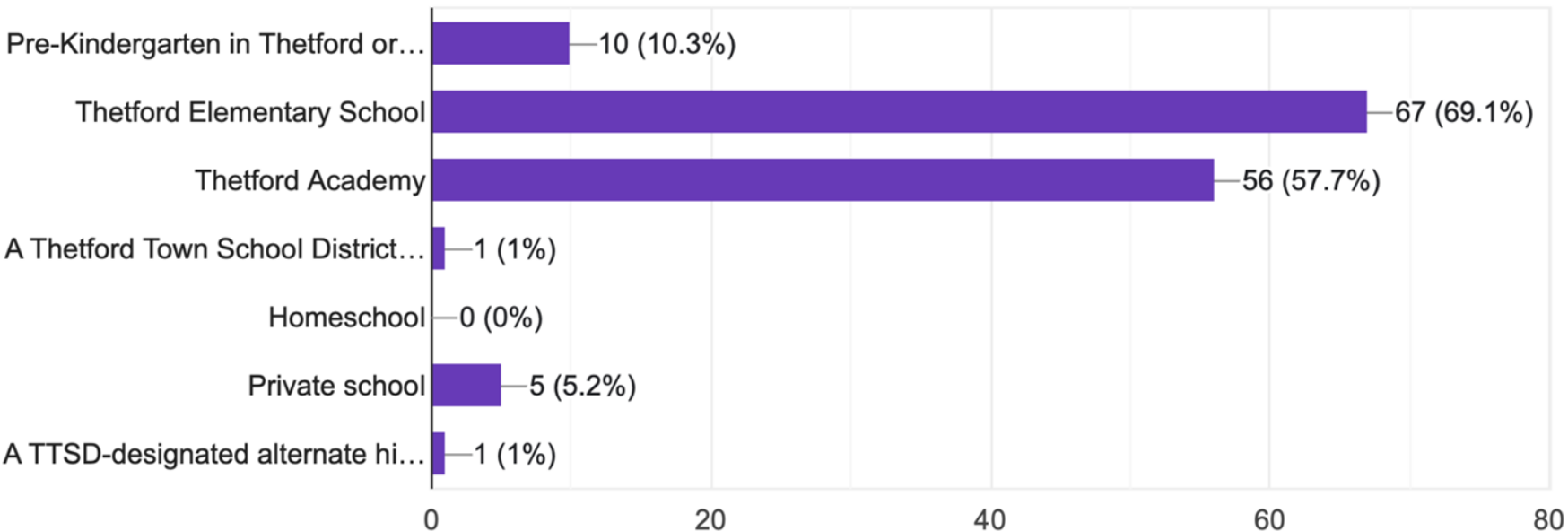
I understand that it's difficult running a school, however if you're contacting me... about my child and you're part of their team to help improve, I expect some sort of reply to emails and check-ins.

Honestly, the school feels like a black box. No work is sent home by the teacher, unless you make a special request, so you literally have No Idea what your kids is working on or how they are doing on that work. We received one classroom update/newsletter from the teacher last week -in mid May. In fairness, I did feel like communication was much better last year with a different teacher.

Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 1

My child(ren) attend the following school (check all that apply):

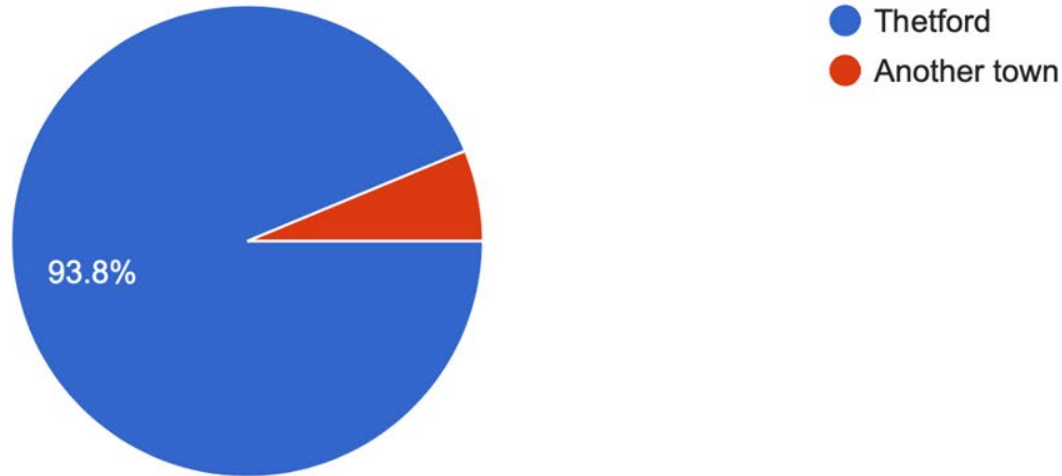
97 responses



Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 2

My family lives in:

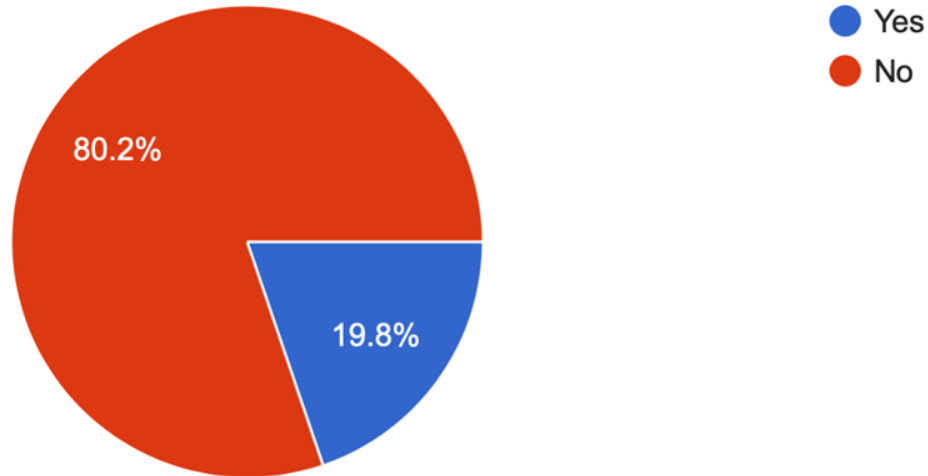
64 responses



Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 3

My household qualified for free and reduced lunch in the last year.

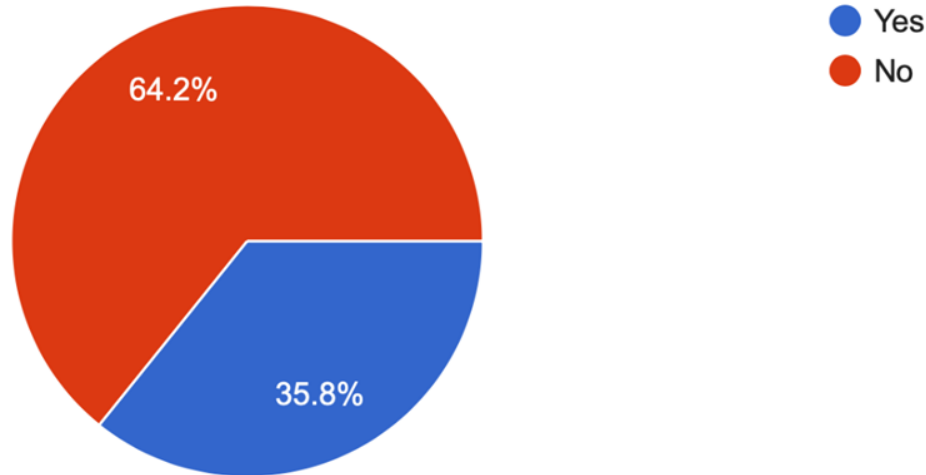
91 responses



Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 4

One or more children in my family receives accommodations and/or services through an Individualized Education Plan (e.g.- special education, occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc).

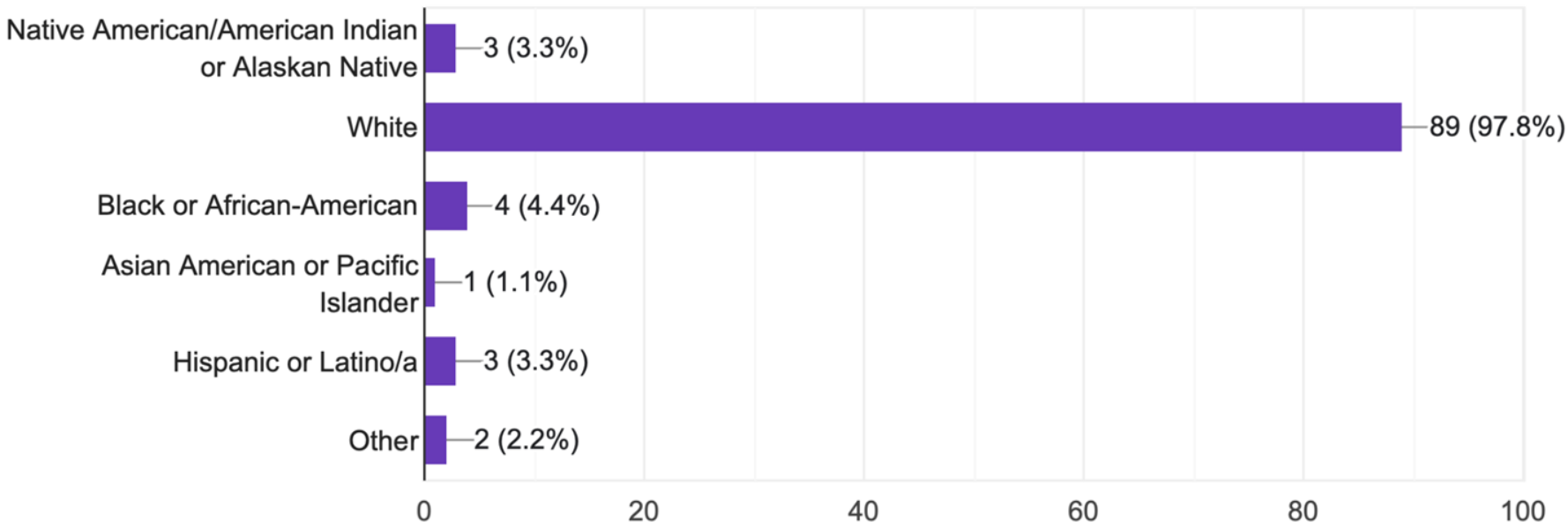
95 responses



Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 5

The child(ren) in my family identify as the following race or ethnicity (check all that apply):

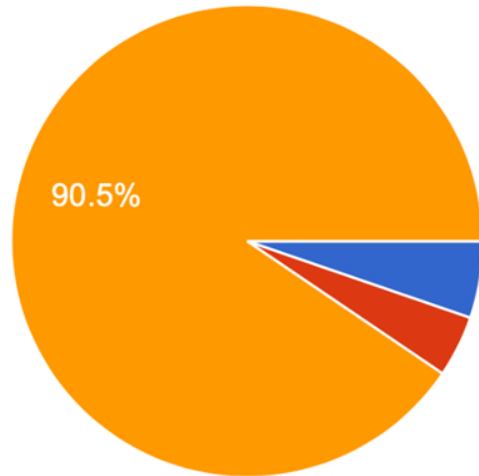
91 responses



Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 7

In my household, we speak:

95 responses

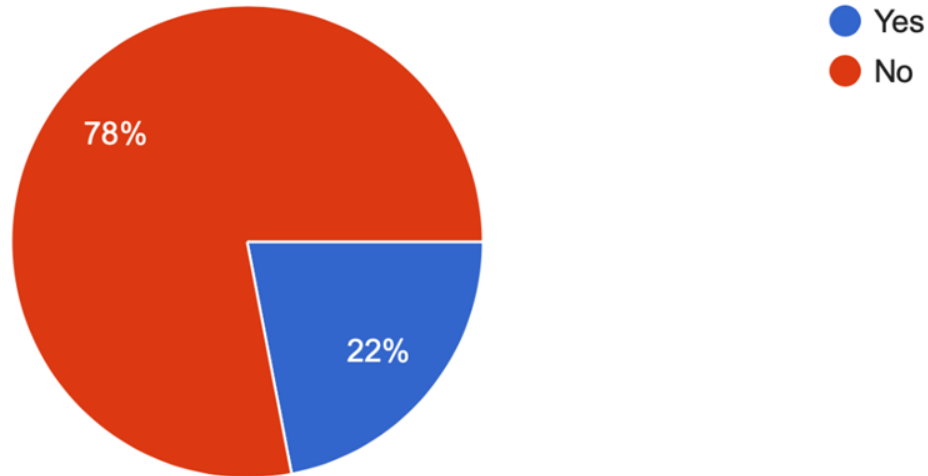


- Only a language other than English
- English and another language
- Only English

Section 5: Family Demographics- Question 6

One or more of my children identifies as LGBTQI+.

91 responses



Family Survey: Themes for Improvement

Academics: Families would like more information about what their students are learning and how it is going. Some families feel that children who meet academic expectations are not being challenged. While Special Education assessments have been going well, many families have expressed frustration about inadequate services/enforcement once assessed. Many families highly value outdoor education and expressed frustration that some classes rarely incorporate it into their learning (though other classes do so more successfully).

Respect and Engagement: Many families report that their children feel welcomed at school; however, more attention needs to be paid to difference, both in terms of representation and in terms of thinking about students' different experiences. Some teachers are doing a good job, but there is room for improvement overall. Families who are unable to come to the school for meetings or events during the school day need to be better included. Ski Fridays should be more inclusive.

Family Survey: Themes for Improvement

Behavior: While many families feel their children receive clear, consistent behavioral support, there is a feeling that spaces outside of the classroom (recess, bus, lunch room) need more adult attention. Other families expressed frustration that they were not alerted about significant behavioral issues even in the case of major infractions. Some families expressed concern that significant behavioral issues were interfering with classroom learning.

Communication: School is a “black box” for many families, particularly in regards to instruction. Families want more information about curriculum, learning, and classroom experience. Communication is highly uneven across classrooms/offices. Many teachers are responsive to direct family queries, but not all families are empowered or have sufficient background knowledge to seek information.