

How Can Schools Develop Caring, Justice-Minded, and High Achieving Students?

Florida Council of Independent Schools | November 7, 2019



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MAKING
CARING
COMMON
PROJECT

The Plan...

1. Are we preparing students to care about others, justice, and the common good?
2. How can schools reduce achievement pressure and promote meaningful achievement?
3. What can schools do to promote moral character, including concern for others, justice and the common good?



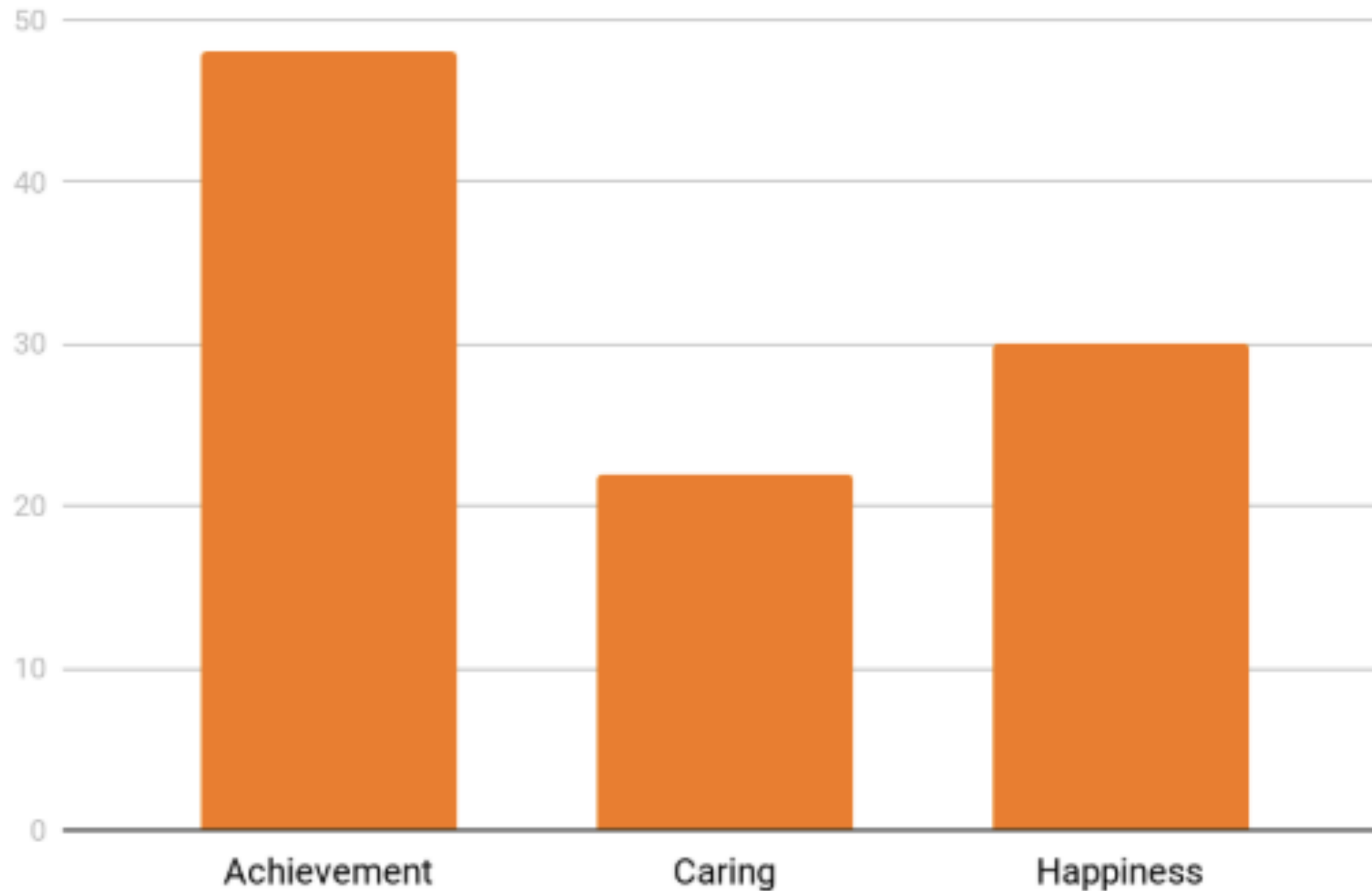
Do children
and parents
prioritize
concern for
others?

The Research

We surveyed
over 10,000
diverse middle
and high school
students from
every region of
the country

WHAT WE
LEARNED...

How Teens Rank Caring, Achievement, and Happiness

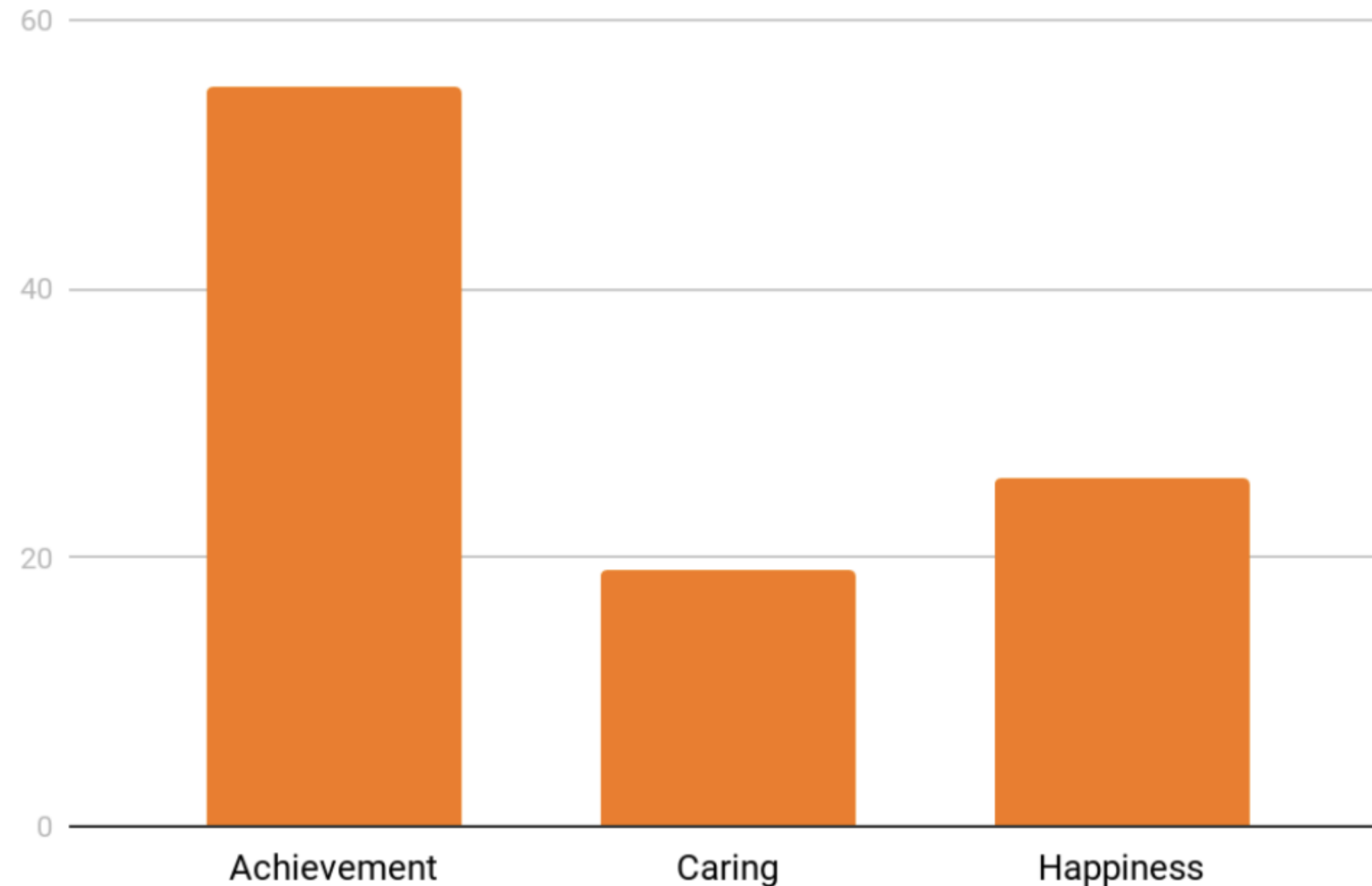


PERCENTAGE OF
STUDENTS RANKING
VALUE FIRST

Parents say they value their children's caring over achievement... but how do youth perceive parents' priorities?



How Teens Perceive Parents' Priorities



PERCENTAGE OF
STUDENTS RANKING
VALUE FIRST FOR
PARENTS

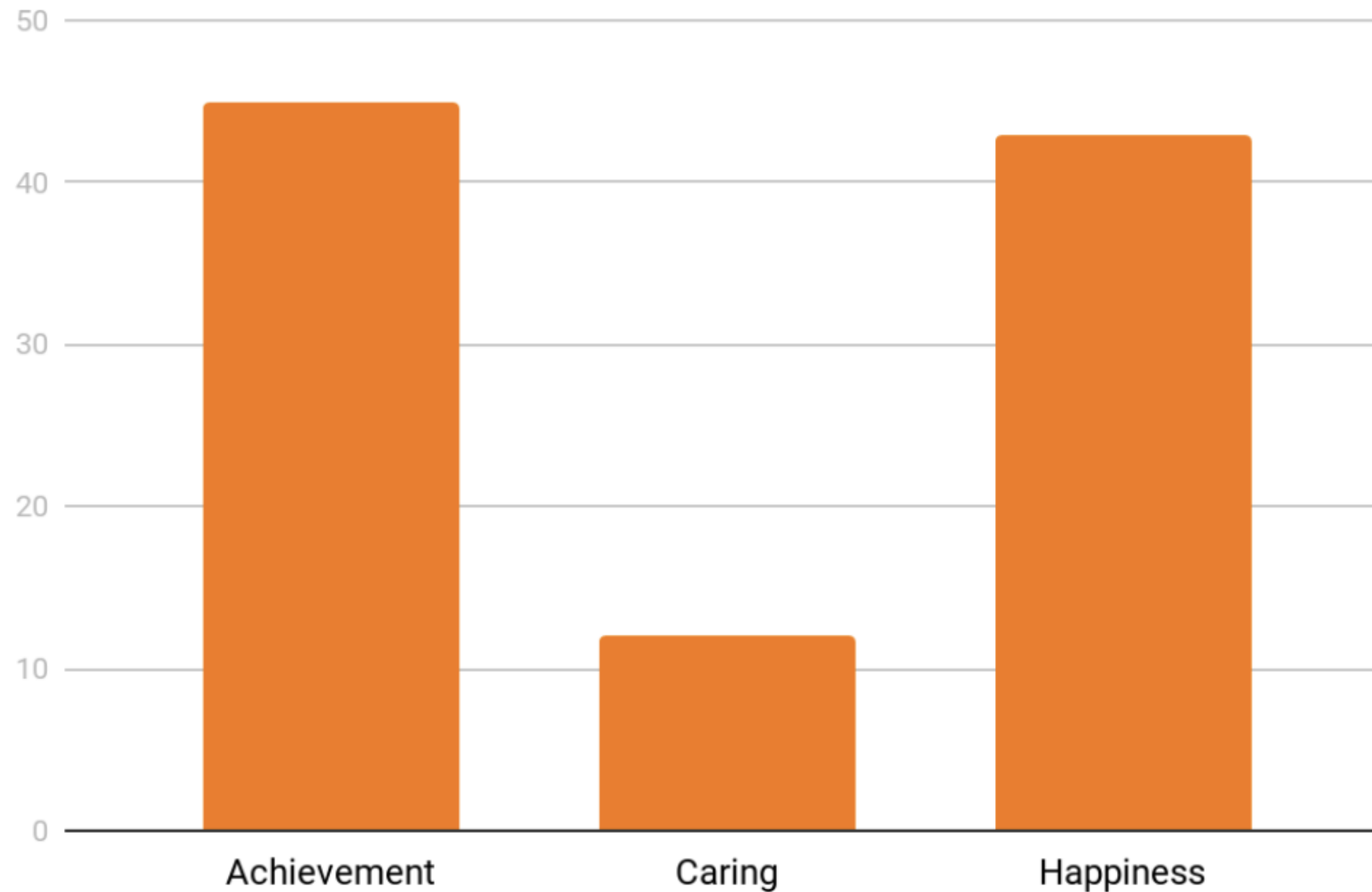
YOUTH WERE 3X MORE LIKELY TO
AGREE THAN DISAGREE WITH THIS
STATEMENT ON THE SURVEY:

**“[My parents] are
prouder if I get good
grades in my classes
than if I’m a caring
community member in
class and school.”**



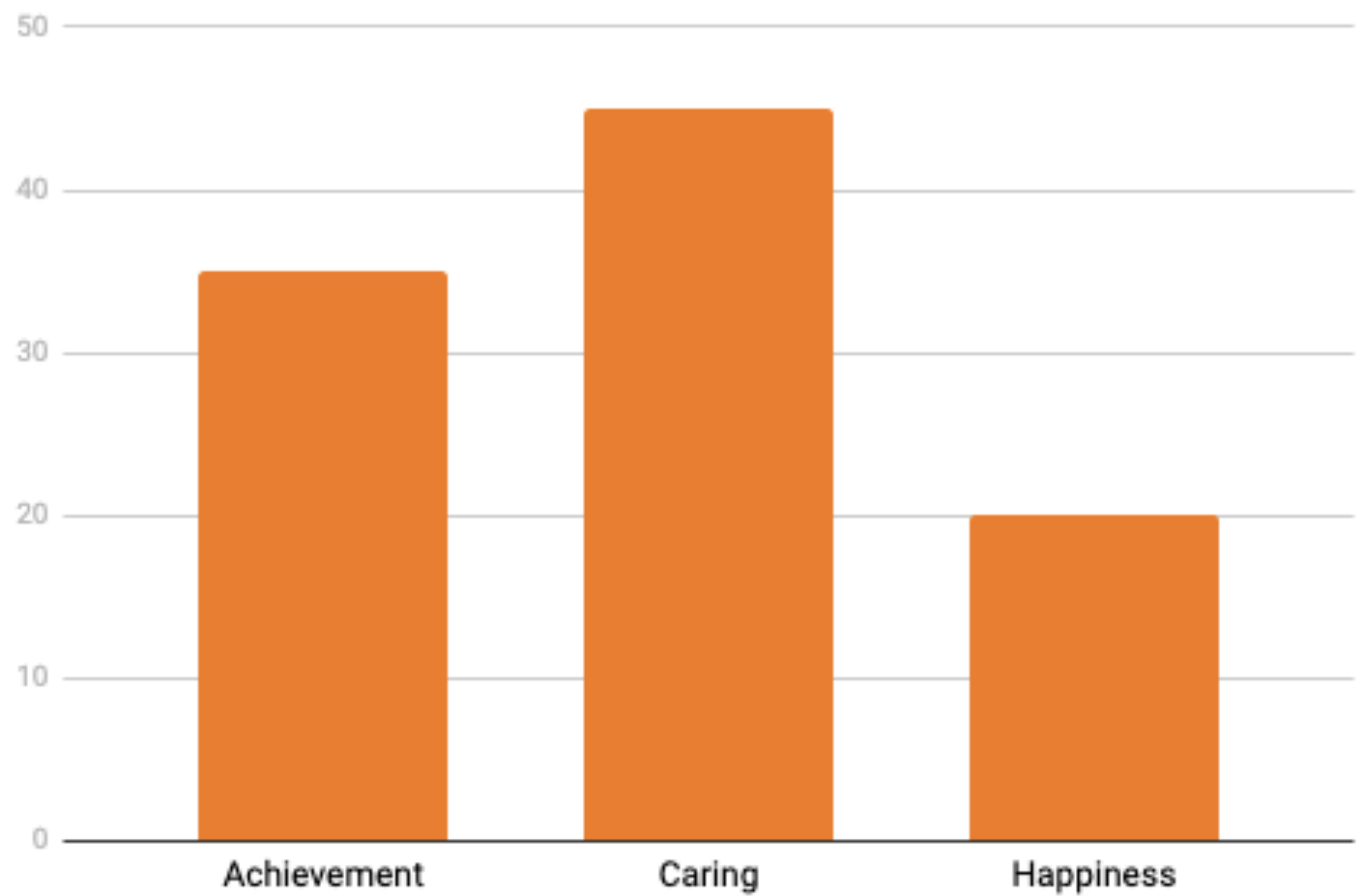
How do parents
perceive other
parents' child-
raising
priorities?

How Parents Perceive Other Parents' Priorities



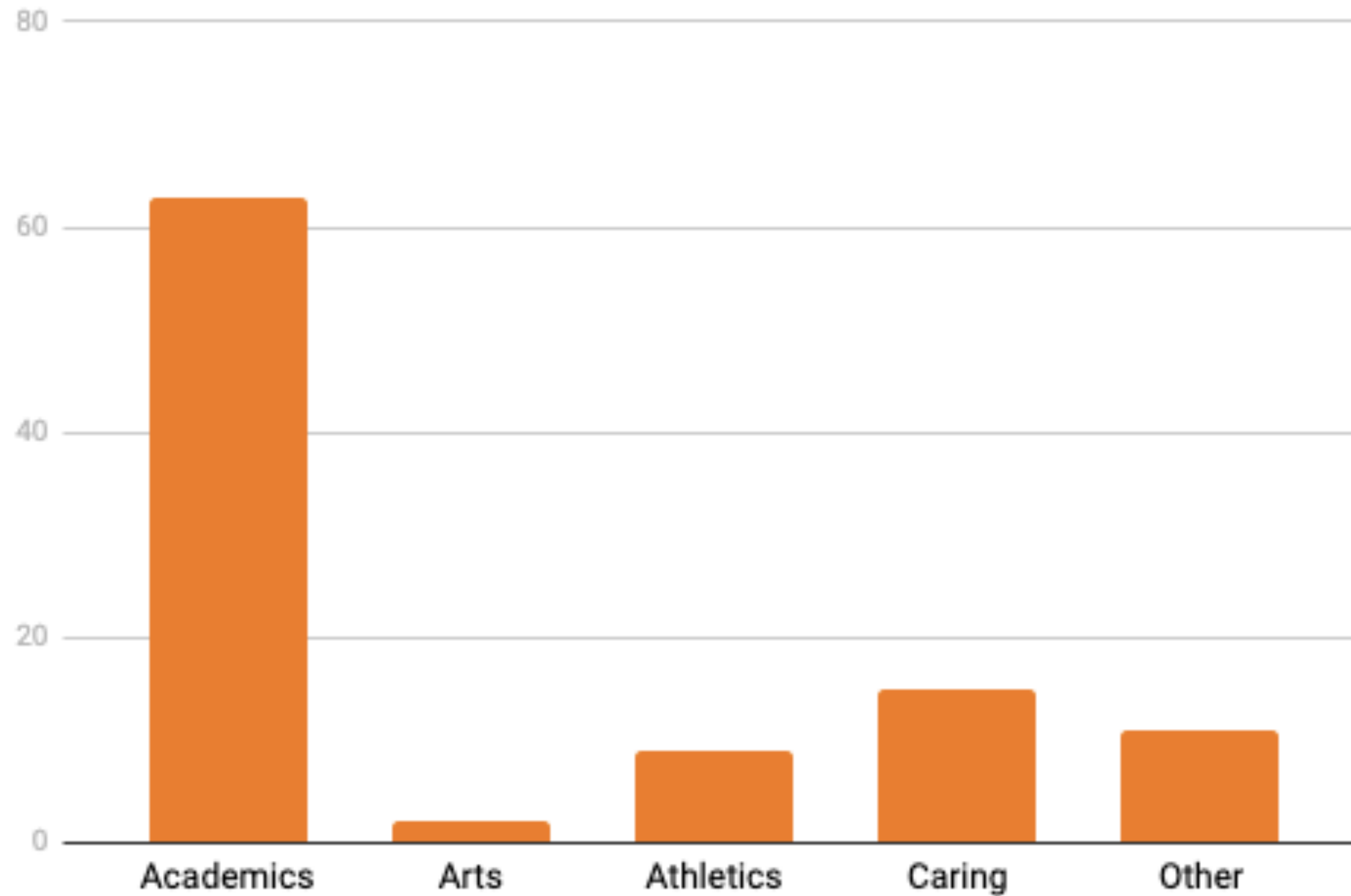
PERCENTAGE OF
PARENTS RANKING
VALUE FIRST FOR
OTHER PARENTS

School Adults' Priorities



PERCENTAGE OF
SCHOOL ADULTS
RANKING VALUE
FIRST

What Students Perceive



VALUE STUDENTS
RANK FIRST AS A
PRIORITY FOR
SCHOOL ADULTS

The Rhetoric- Reality Gap

Parents' and schools' day-to-day messages may stress achievement and happiness over caring.



The irony

All the focus on happiness and achievement may be compromising both happiness and achievement.

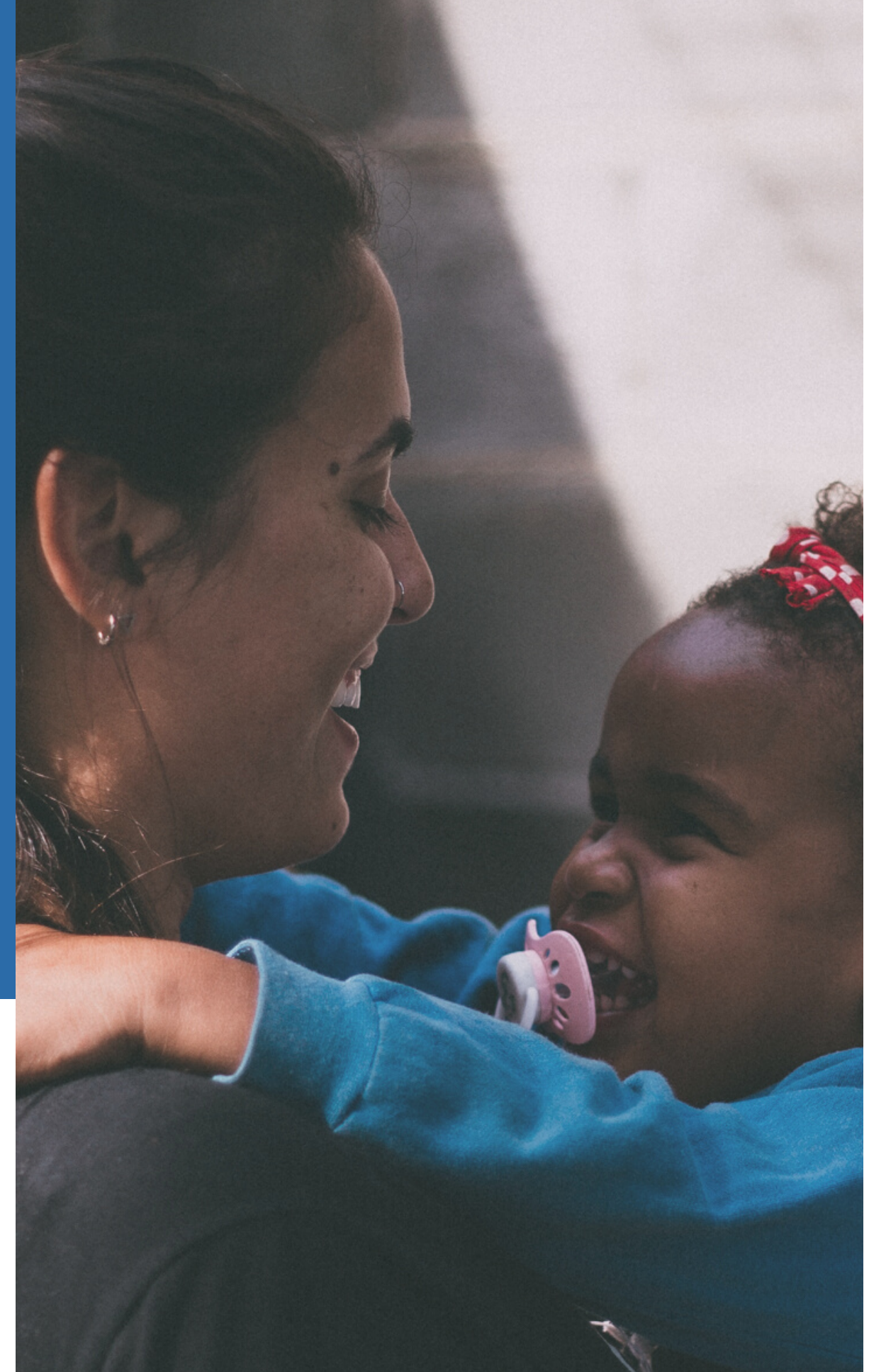
Depriving kids of coping strategies





Mood meteorologists

But let's not tell
children to be caring
because it will make
them happy



The contexts of moral development are evaporating

Schools



Colleges



Religious Institutions



Caveats

Caring is still important.
And happiness, achievement, and
caring/ethics are certainly not
mutually exclusive.



Be mindful of
differences

Key differences across race,
culture, and class





Four failures in moral education

Four failures in moral education

1. Heavy focus on performance character
and light focus on moral character



Four failures in moral education

2. SEL overlaps with -- but is not -- moral development



Four failures in moral education

3. The failure to teach basic ethical principles of justice and human rights



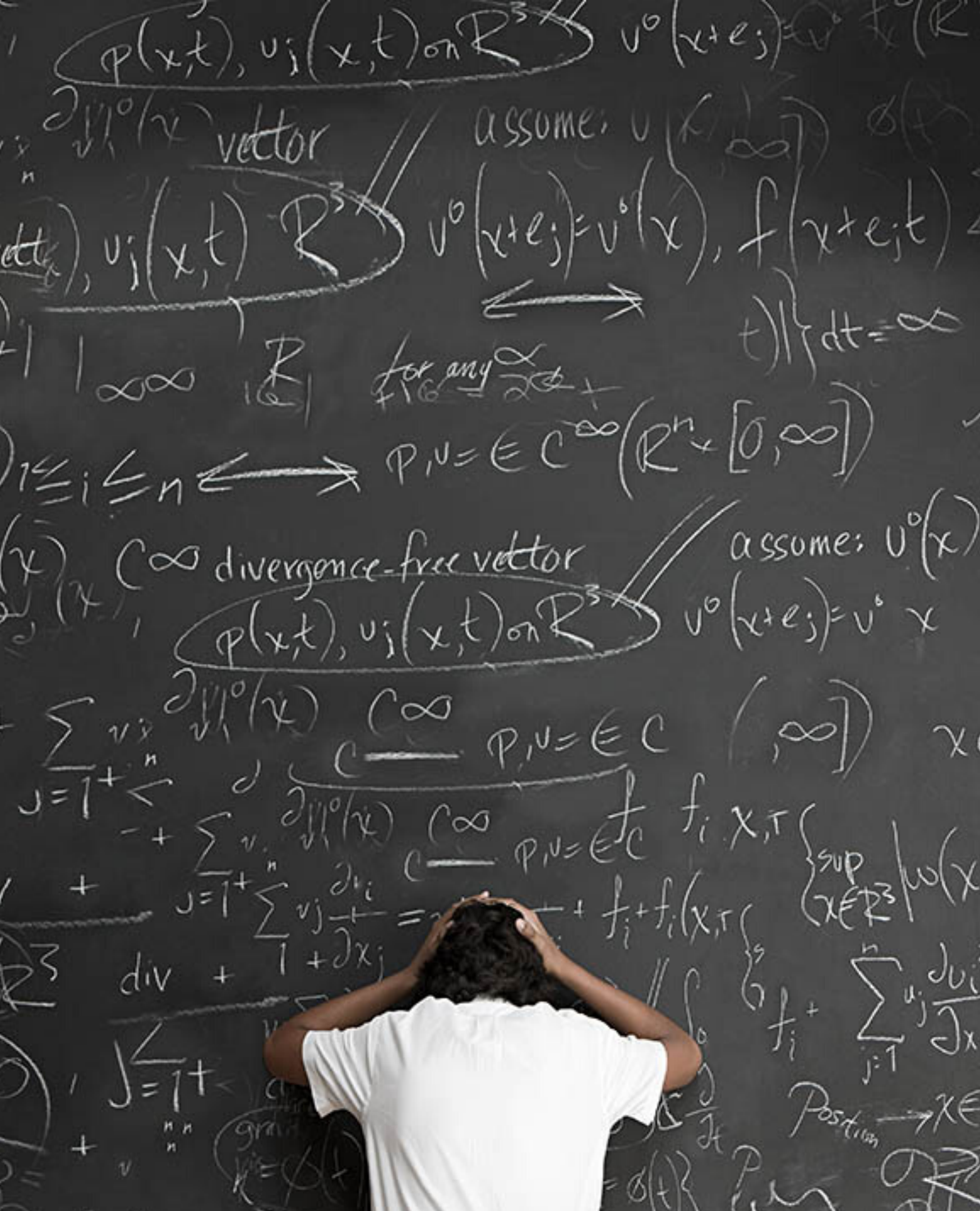
Four failures in moral education

4. The failure to teach students how to constructively engage those who don't share their religious and political views





The “Praise Craze”



Dialing down
achievement
pressure and
promoting
meaningful
achievement

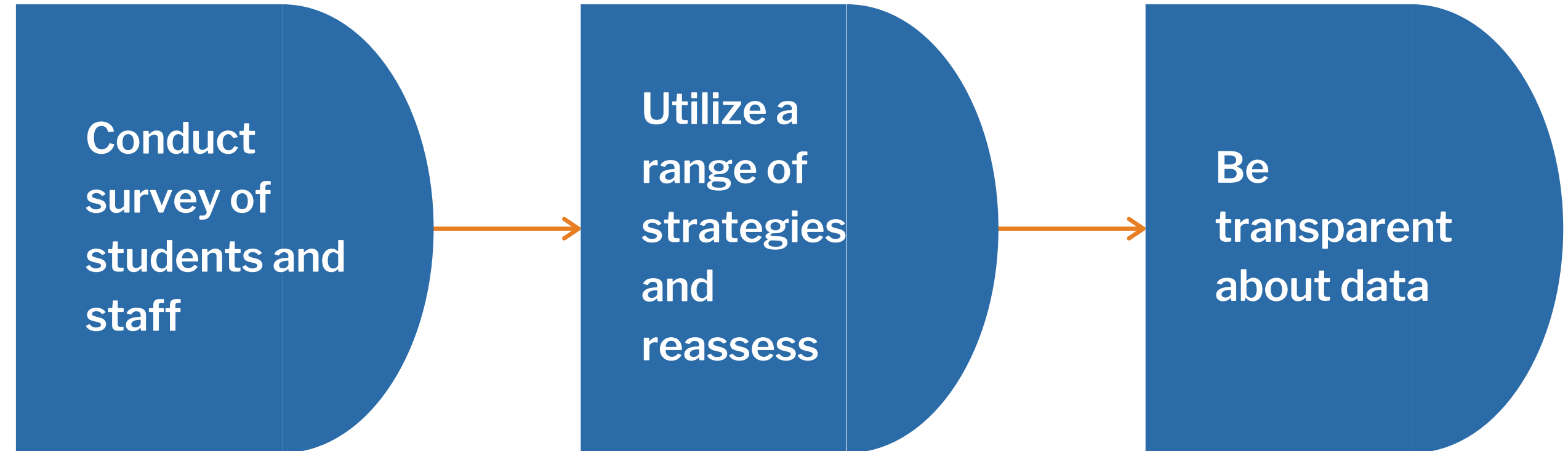
6 key school strategies for promoting caring for others and the common good



1. Students have different starting points and challenges based on race, class, and culture



2. Utilize data: What gets assessed gets addressed



3. Prioritize both caring and achievement

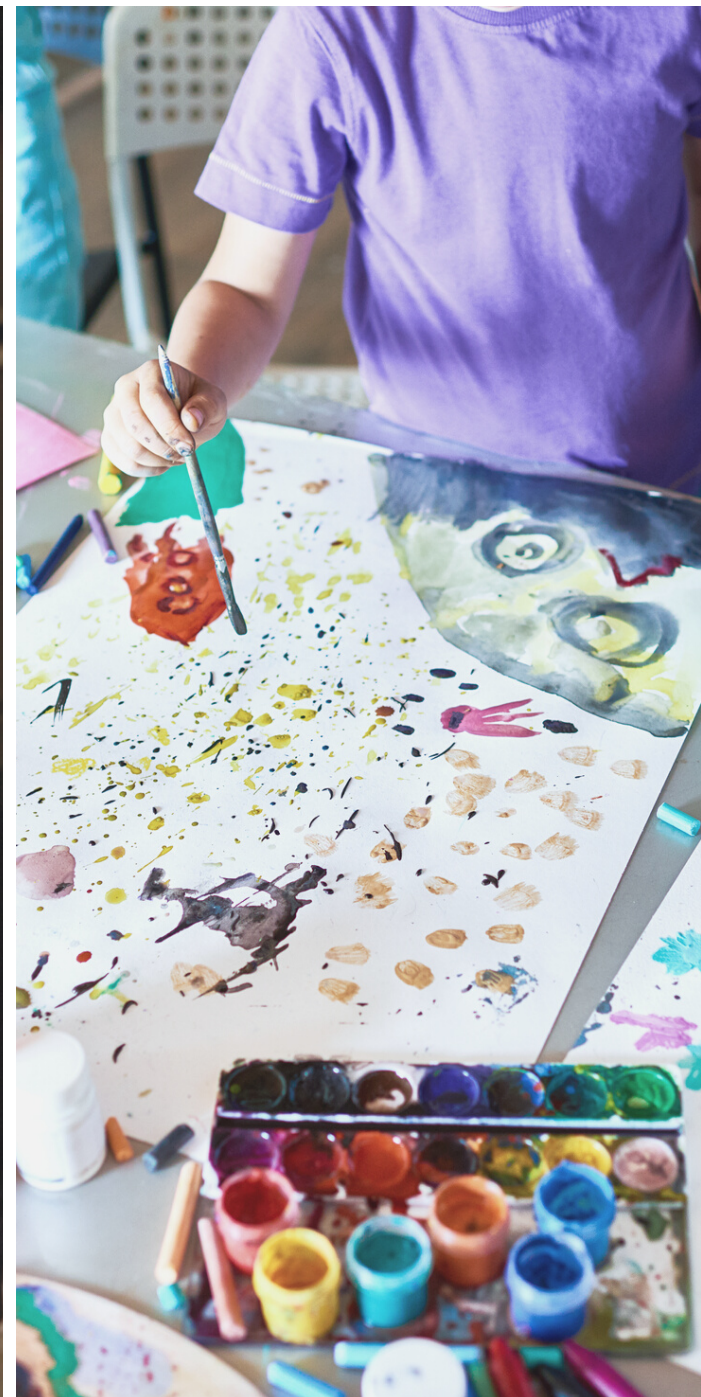
- Ethical values that aren't just posted on walls but live and breathe in the school
- Light-lift, engaging strategies that build empathy and gratitude in schools and homes
- Checking in with students to see what values are prioritized
- Using "small" strategies with "big" impact

Examples of “small” strategies with “big” impact

Greet Students



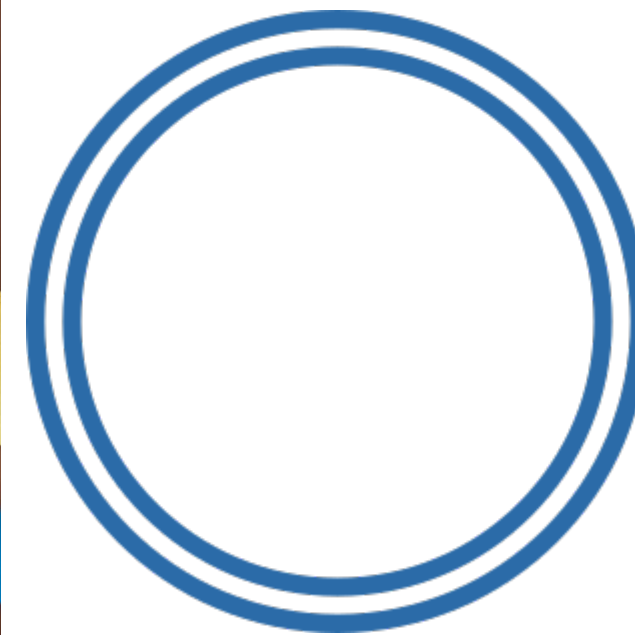
Use of Arts



Meditation



Circle of Concern



4. Focus on relationships and adult development

- Relationship mapping
- Asking teachers to identify 3 strengths in every student
- Supporting adult resilience and moral development
- Hiring teachers and administrators who care about moral character development

5. Mobilize energy and wisdom of youth



6. Engage parents in a caring, moral community



- Cultivate a sense of “We”
- School-parent compacts
- Expect more from fathers

Key Takeaway

There's nothing more important than raising children who care about others and the common good.

At the heart of this work is developing children's capacity to have empathy for children who are different from them in background and character.

Evidence- based SEL and character development programs

<http://casel.org/in-schools/selecting-programs/additional-resources-for-safe-and-sound>

<https://characterandcitizenship.org/>

<http://www.devstu.org/page/research-child-development-project>

<https://www.facinghistory.org>

<http://www.open-circle.org>

<http://www.playworks.org>

Caring Schools Network

Reduce bias and bullying in your school
with Making Caring Common's Caring
Schools Network.

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/caringschools>
or call Glenn Manning at 617.495.4976.

Registration ends this week.



Thank you!

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