

ACPS 2020 Community Survey: Division Report

Results and Analysis

Alexandria City Public Schools

May 16 – June 6, 2016



Purpose of the Study

The Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) 2020 Community Survey asked parents and the community for feedback on the division's new strategic plan, ACPS 2020, to collect stakeholder opinions and perceptions of the division. Results will be used to inform decisions and prioritize which division priorities and initiatives to continue in the future.

K12 *Insight* partnered with division leadership to develop the survey, which addressed the following topics:

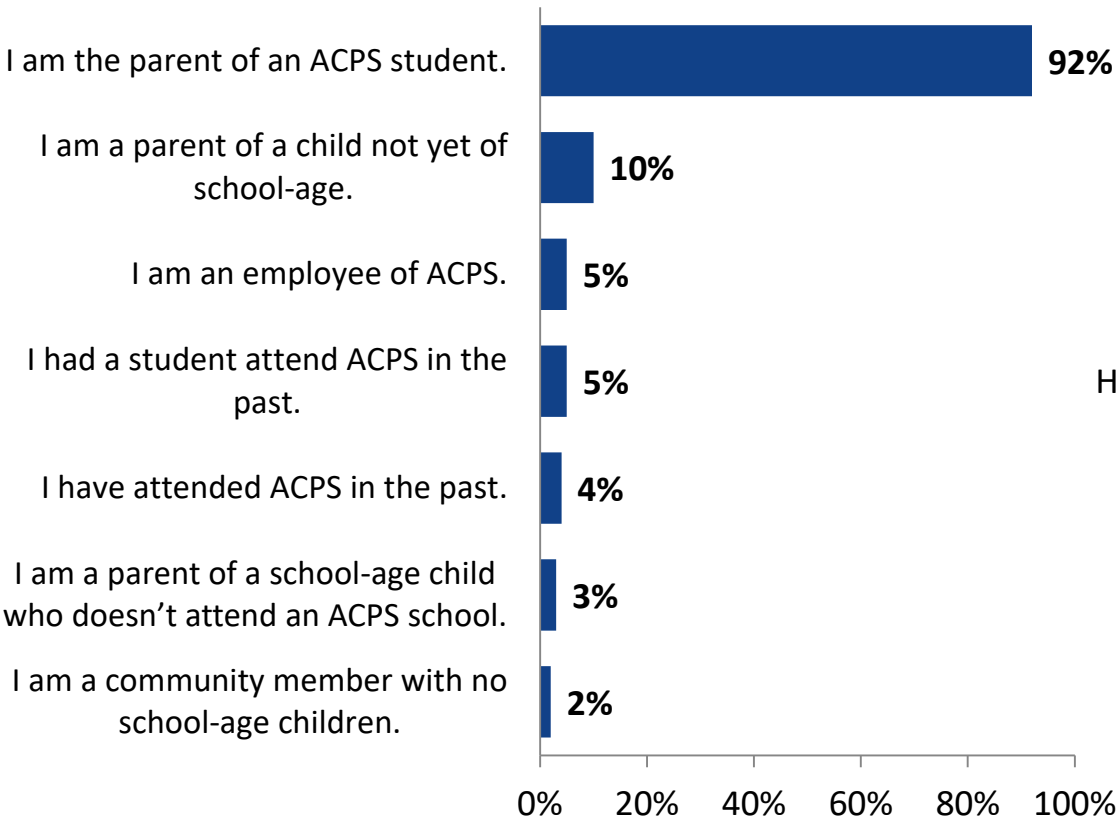
- Mission
- Family and Community Engagement
- Community Relations
- Communication
- Facilities and Learning Environment

Details of the Study and Understanding the Results

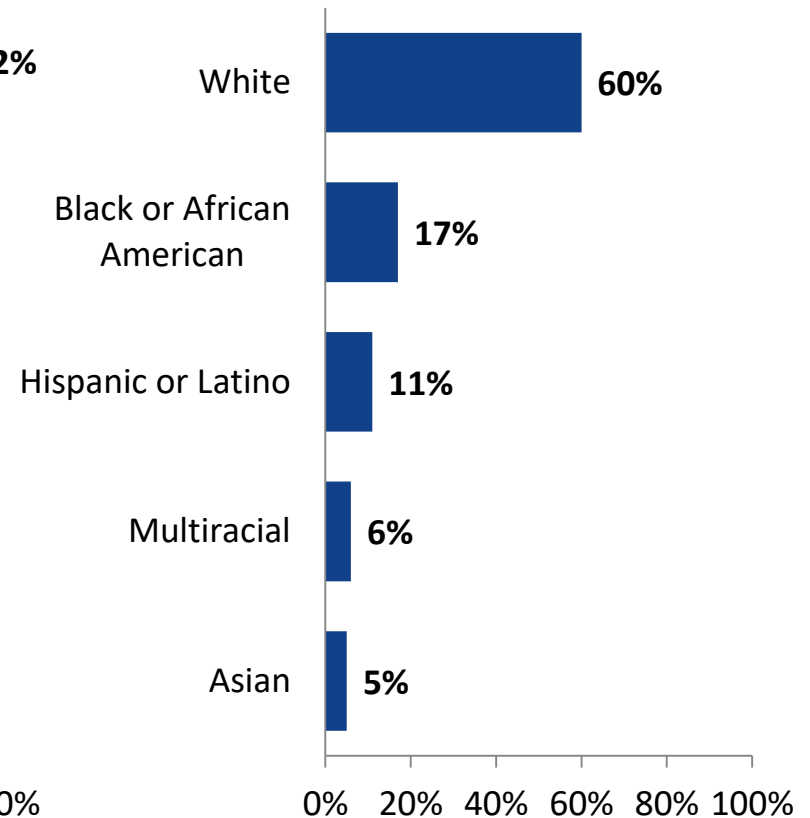
- This report summarizes results and is disaggregated by various groupings to show any discrepancies in perception among stakeholder groups, where applicable. A supplemental report will be provided to the division illustrating disaggregations by these respective groups.
- Limitations to the survey results and findings include:
 - **Generalizability:** This is a census survey and does not represent a random sample. Therefore, results are not generalizable to the entire Alexandria population.
 - **Representation of Targeted Population:** While this survey was deployed to a variety of stakeholders, 92% of survey participants identified as current parents. Therefore, survey respondents are not representative of the intended population.
- Email invitations with unique survey links were sent to parents of ACPS students. Stakeholders also could participate via a public link on the division's website. A total of 1,599 people participated in the survey, however, results only show the 1,581 participants who submitted their survey. The strong majority of participants (82%) found out about the survey via email.
- The online survey was translated into Spanish and Arabic. Paper surveys were available on request. Paper surveys were translated into Spanish, Arabic, and Amharic. The majority of participants (1,527) took the survey in English, 39 participants took the survey in Spanish, 11 in Arabic, and 4 in Amharic.
- The survey was open from May 16–June 6.
- Participants learned about the survey via letters to parents and the community, social media posts, phone calls, the ACPS newsletter, and posters/fliers. Reminders were sent May 19, 25, 28, 31, and June 3.
- There are comparisons between current and non-current parents of ACPS students:
 - Non-current parents included parents of children not yet of school age, parents of school-age children who do not attend an ACPS school, community members, employees of ACPS, former ACPS students, and parents of former ACPS students.
 - Results from parents of current ACPS students were also broken down by school level (elementary, middle, and high) and by type of services their children receive (English Language Learner, Special Education Services, and Talented and Gifted Services).

Participation

Which of the following applies to you? (N=1,569)



Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity? (N=1,465)

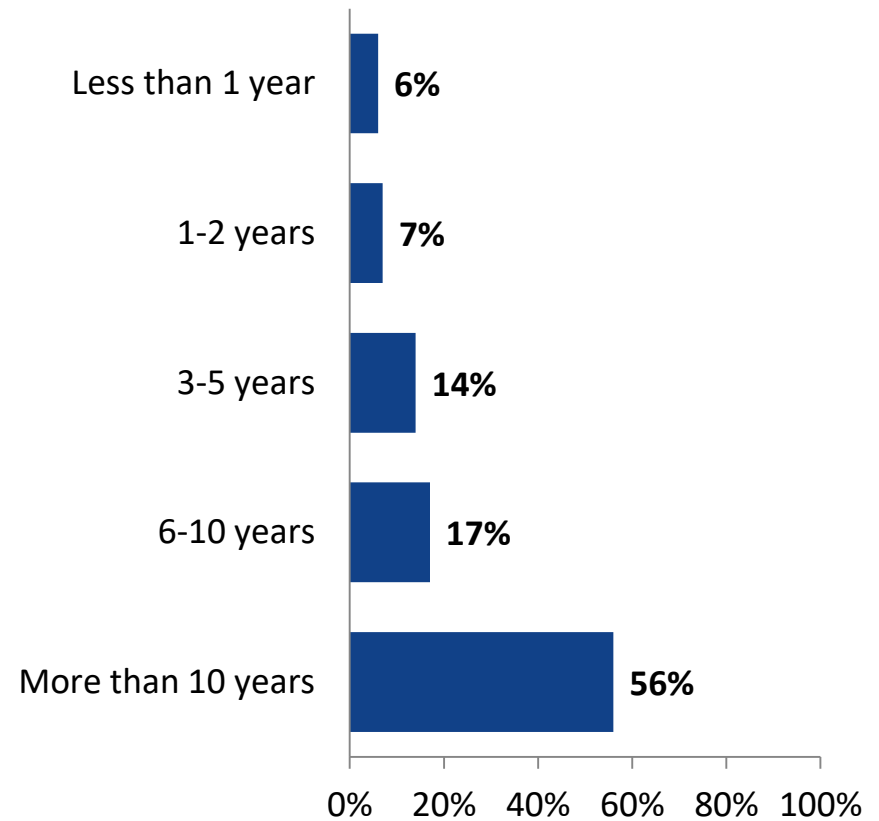
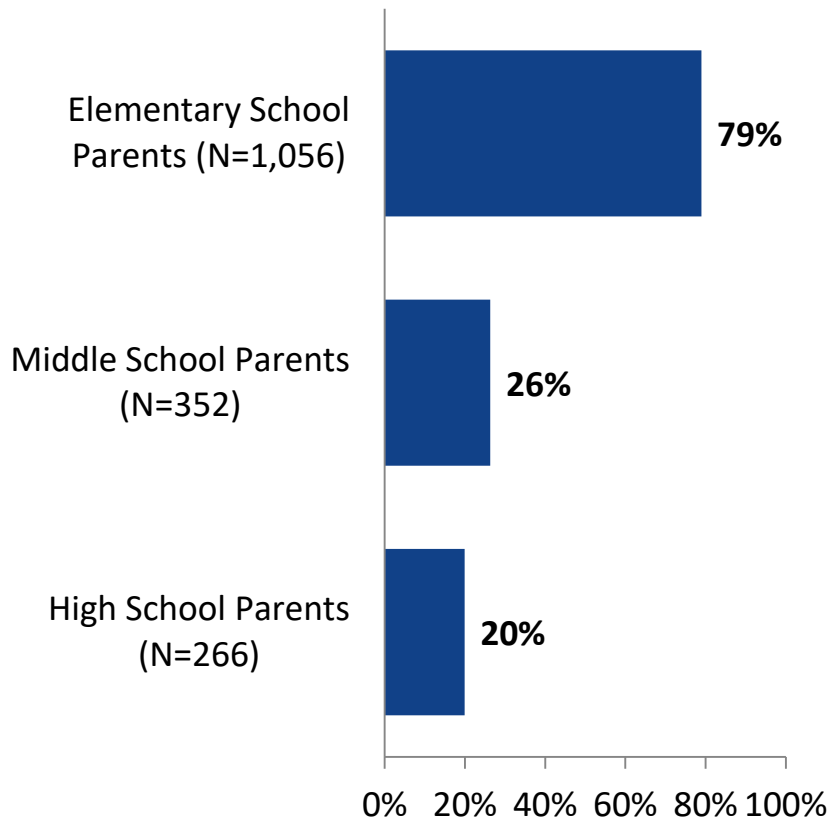


4 **Note:** Percentage total may exceed 100 since participants could select more than one answer.

Participation (Continued)

Which school does/do your child/children attend? (N=1,338)

How long have you lived in Alexandria? (N=1,404)

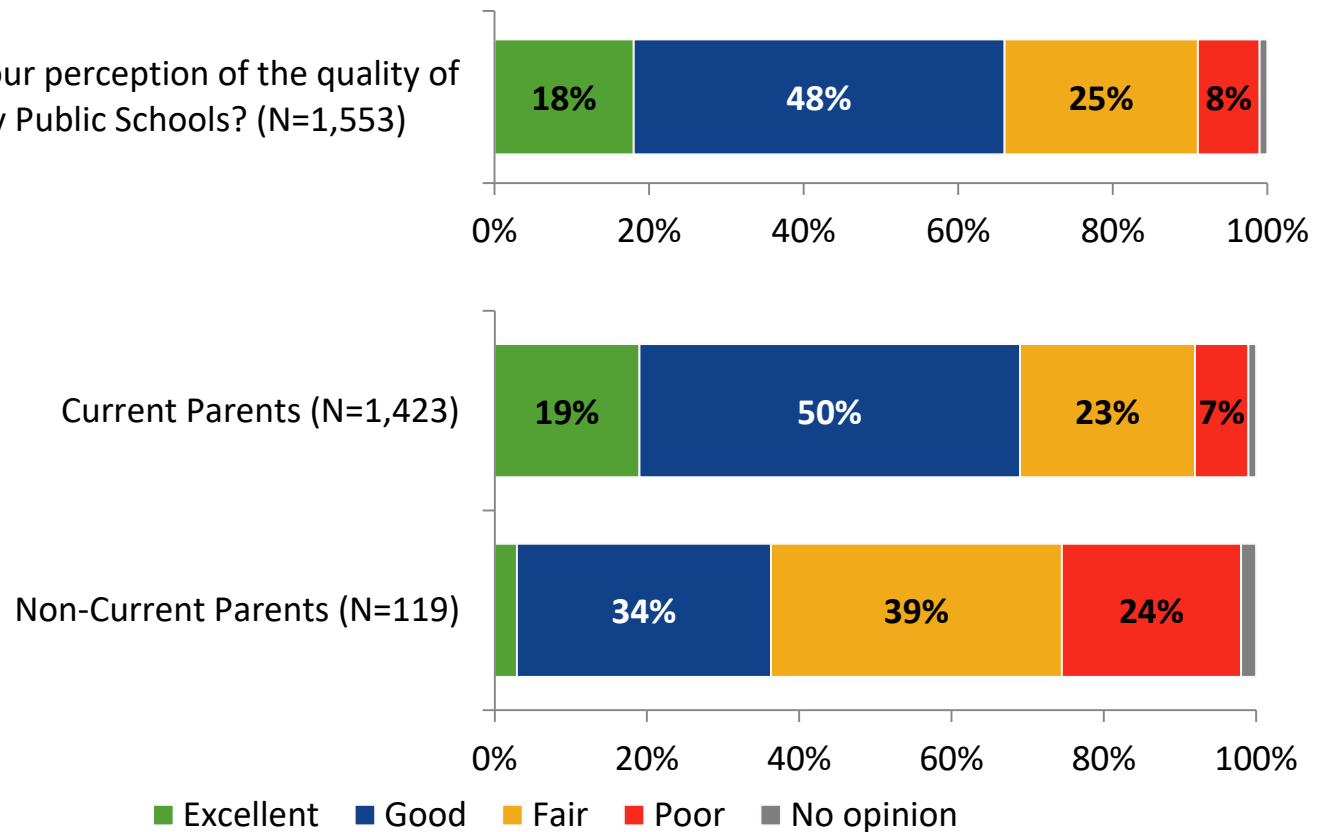


⁵ **Note:** Percentage total may exceed 100 since participants could select more than one answer.

Perception of Quality

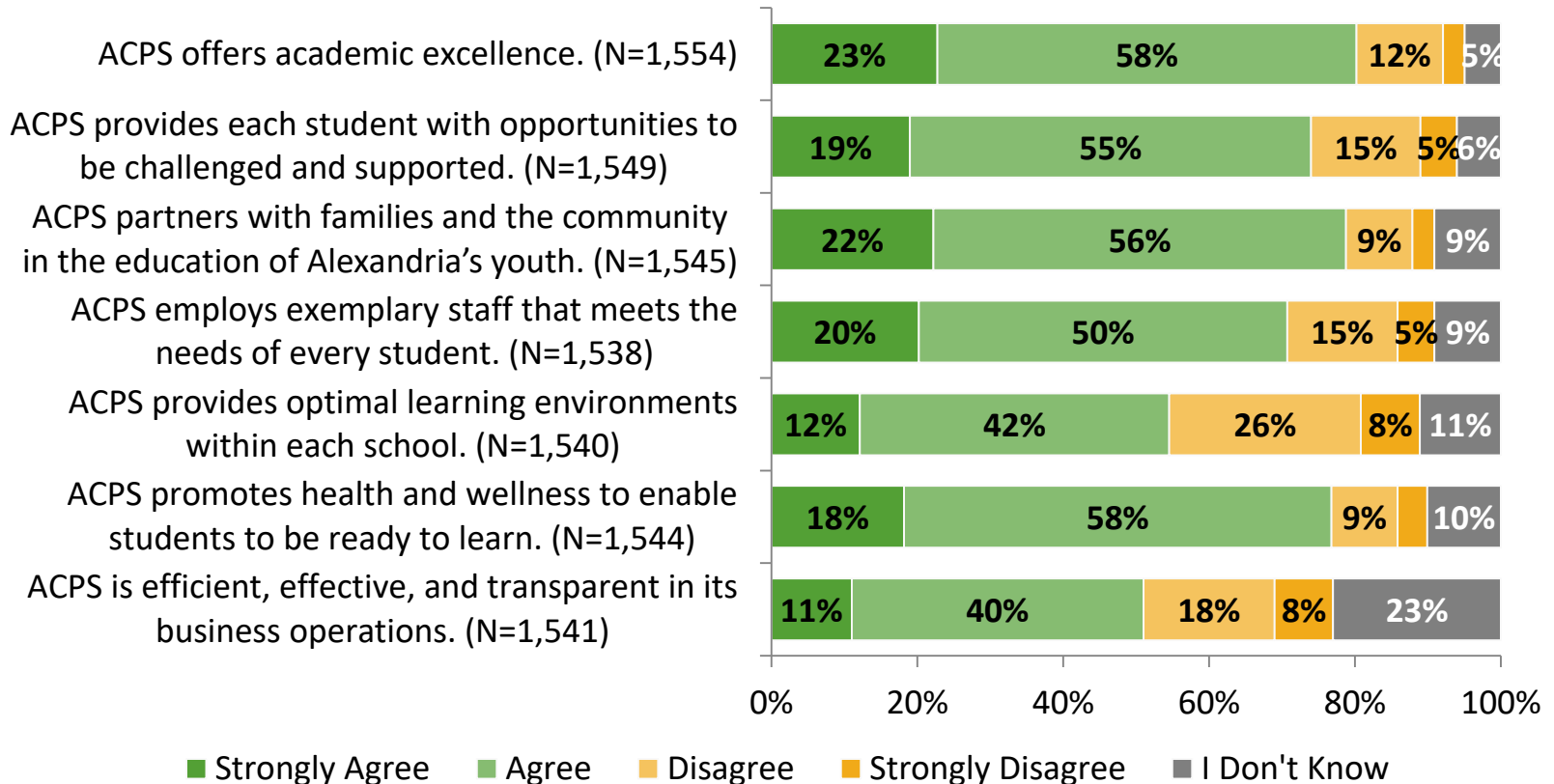
Overall, 66 percent of participants perceive the quality of ACPS schools to be excellent or good. Current parents were more likely to rate the schools as excellent or good compared with non-current parents.

Overall, what is your perception of the quality of Alexandria City Public Schools? (N=1,553)



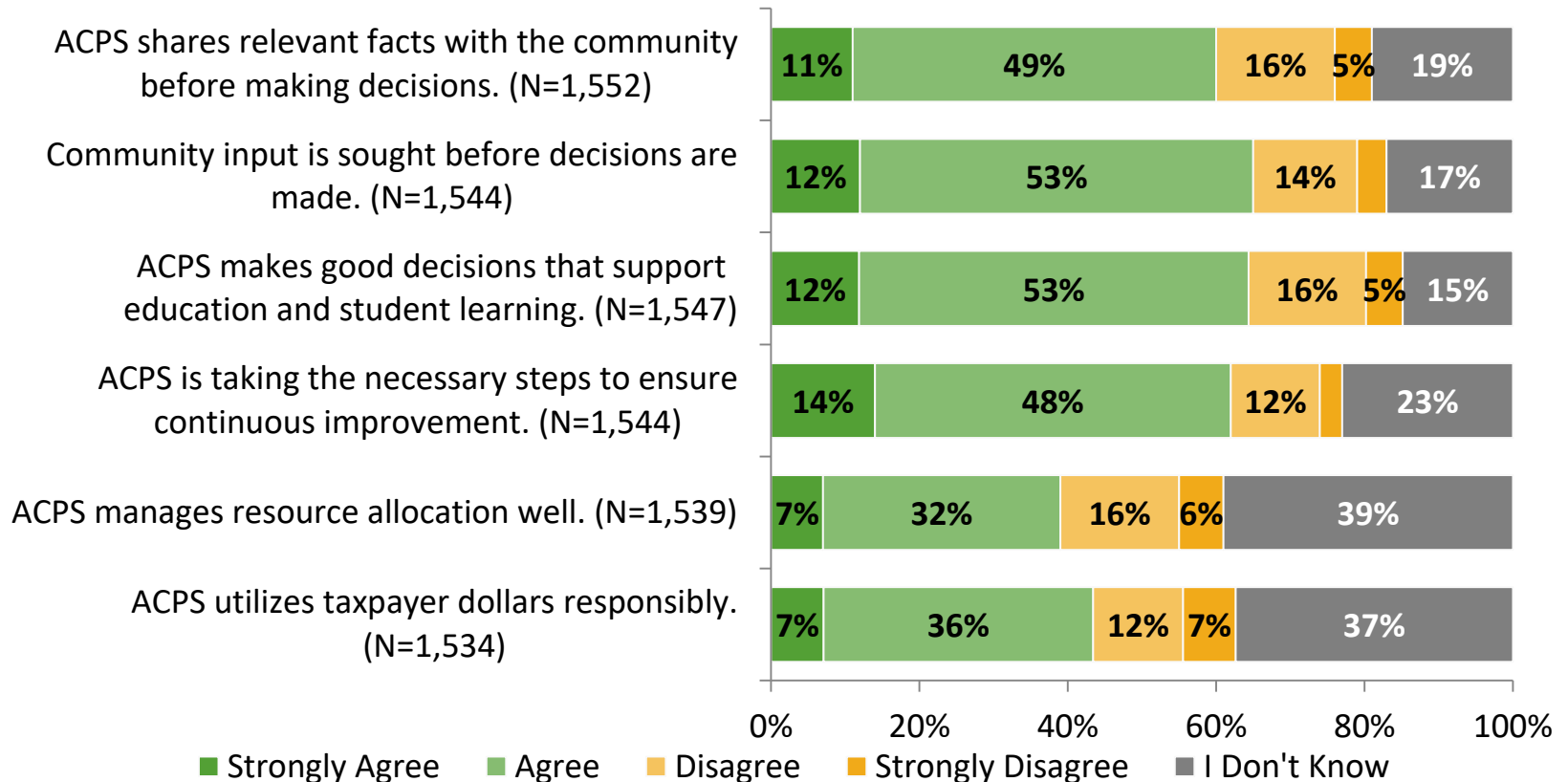
Decision-Making

The mission statement of Alexandria City Public Schools is, "Every student succeeds: Educating lifelong learners and inspiring civic responsibility." Please rate the following statements with your level of agreement based on your experience with ACPS during the current school year.



Decision-Making (Continued)

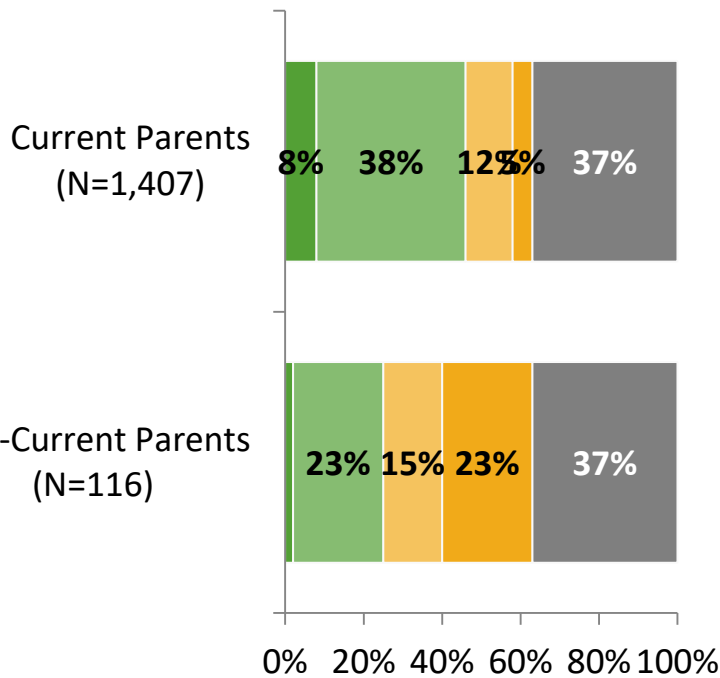
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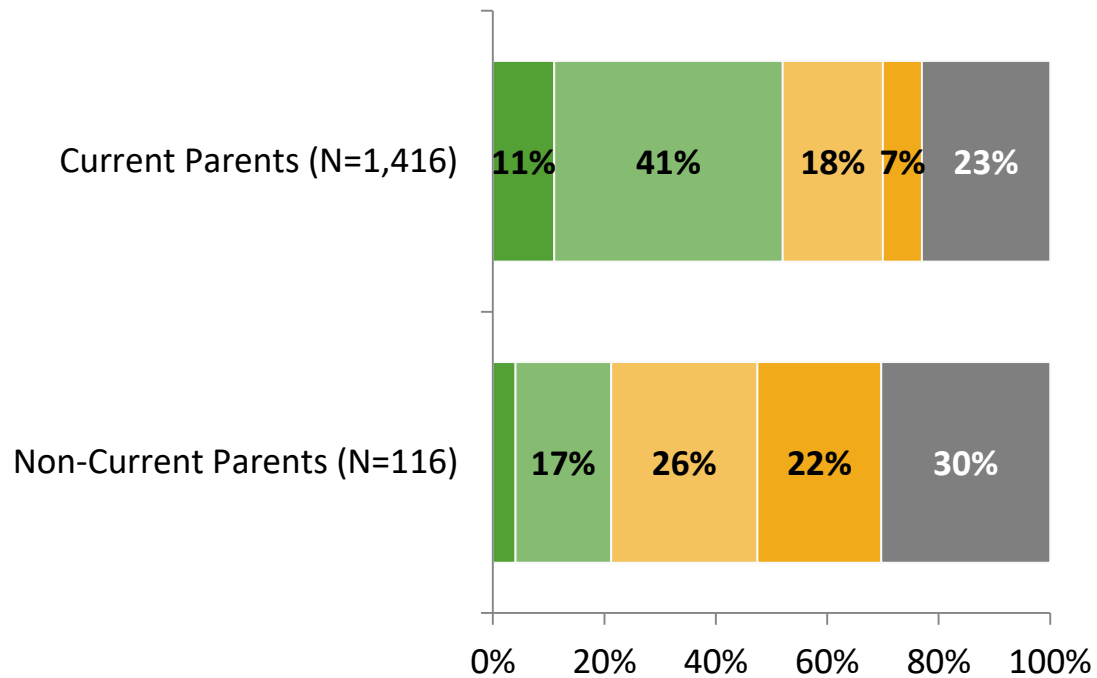
Decision-Making (Continued)

While current parents were slightly more likely to perceive that ACPS utilizes taxpayer dollars responsibly and that ACPS is efficient, effective, and transparent in its business operations than non-current parents, the highest percentage of participants responded “I Don’t Know” to these items.

ACPS utilizes taxpayer dollars responsibly.



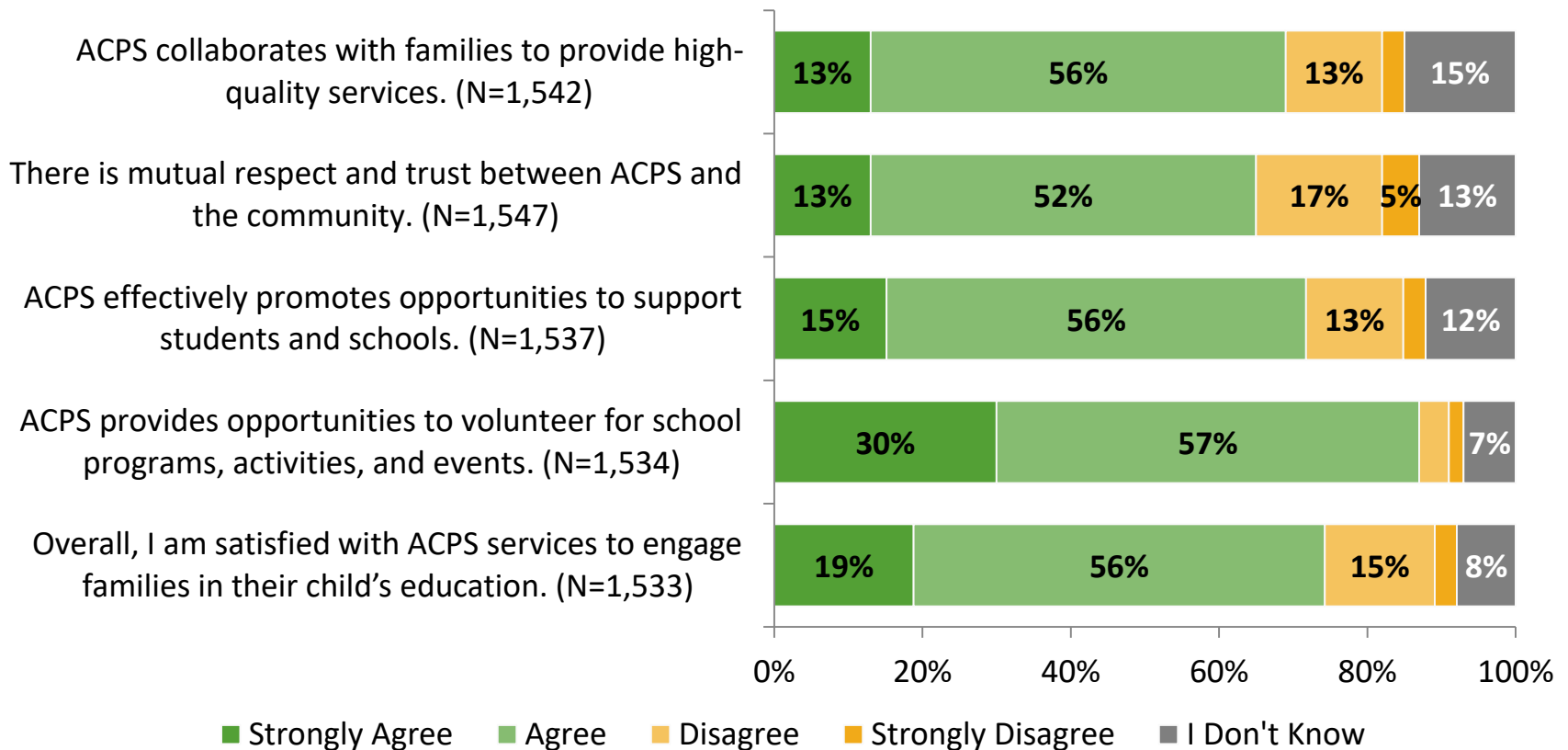
ACPS is efficient, effective, and transparent in its business operations.



■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ I Don't Know

Family and Community Engagement

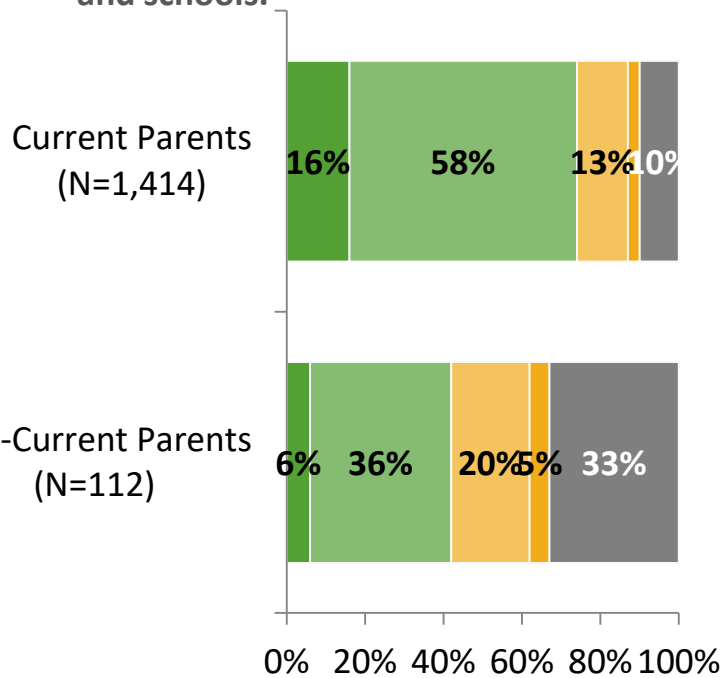
Please rate the following statements with your level of agreement based on your experience with ACPS during the current school year.



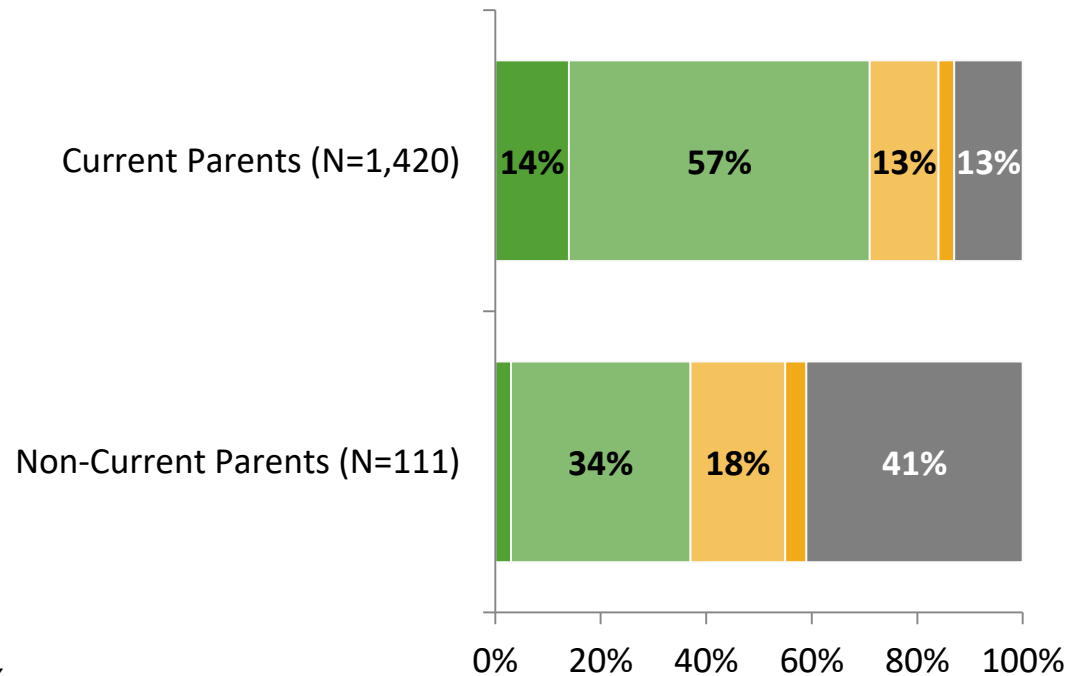
Family and Community Engagement (Continued)

Current parents were more likely to perceive that ACPS effectively promotes opportunities to support students and schools and collaborates with families to provide high-quality services than non-current parents. The highest percentage of Non-Current Parents responded “I Don’t Know” to both of these items.

ACPS effectively promotes opportunities to support students and schools.



ACPS collaborates with families to provide high-quality services.

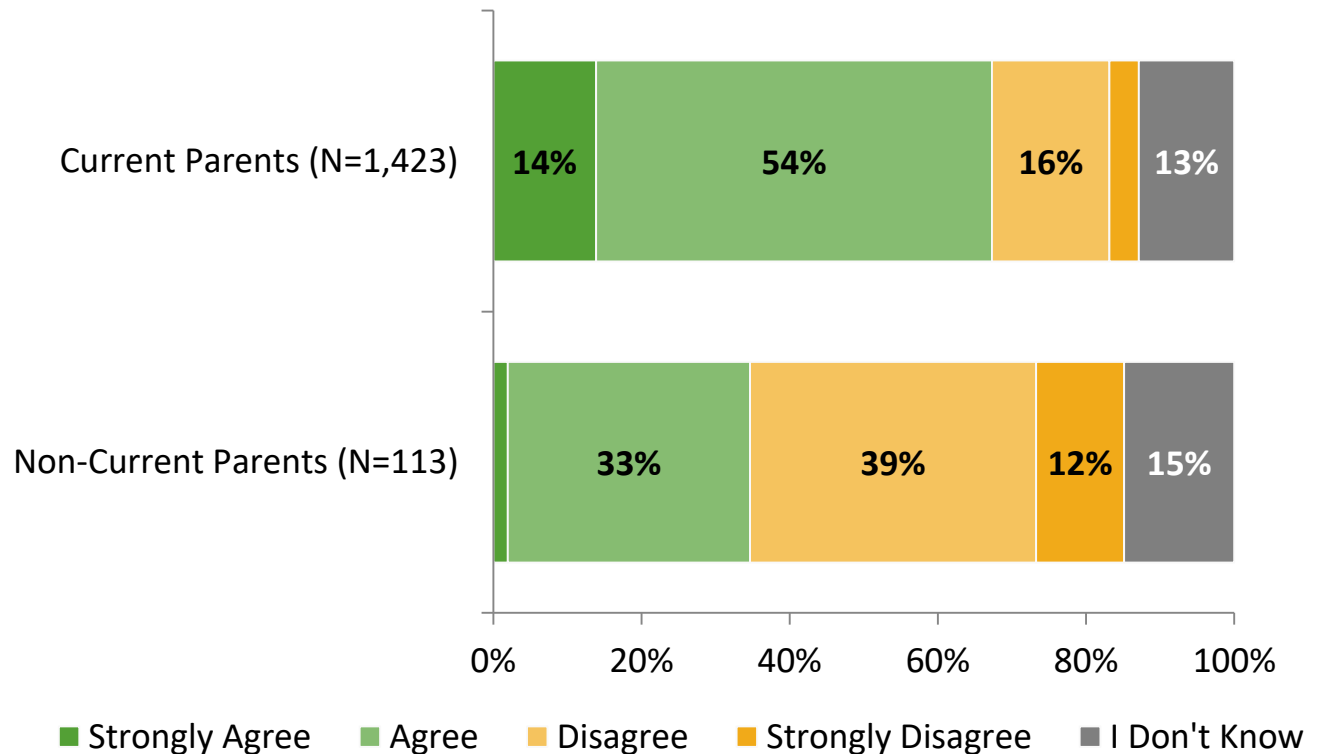


■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ I Don't Know

Family and Community Engagement (Continued)

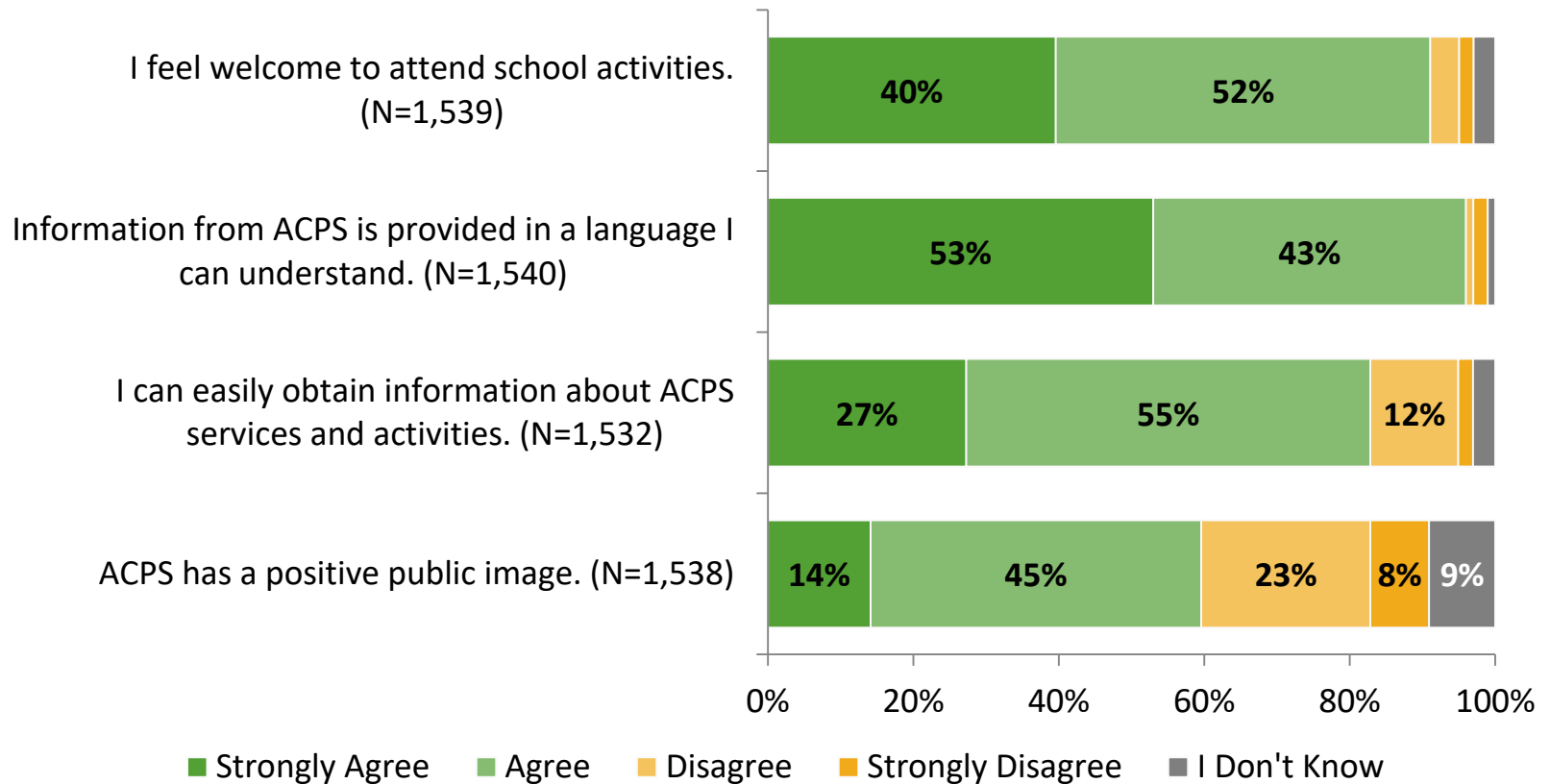
Current parents were also more likely to perceive that there is mutual respect and trust between ACPS and the community than non-current parents.

There is mutual respect and trust between ACPS and the community.



Community Relations

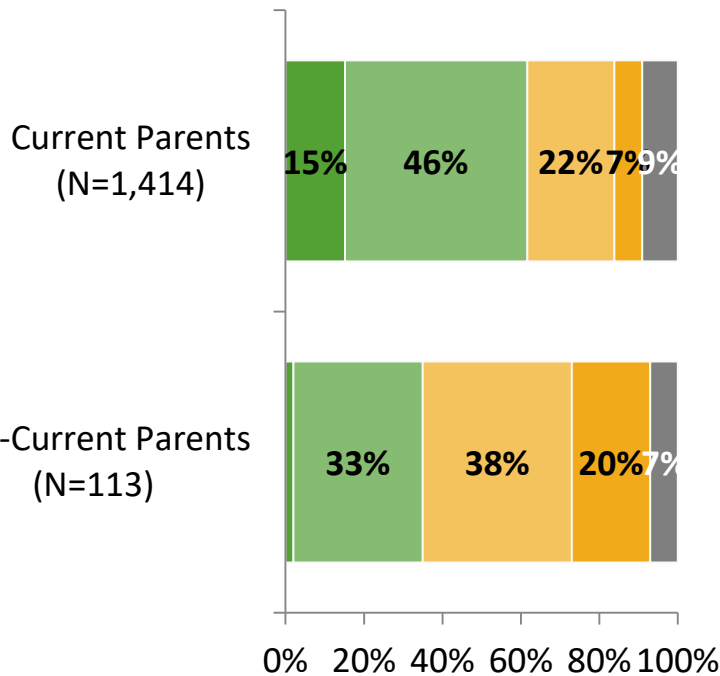
Based on your experience this school year, how strongly do you disagree or agree with the following statements?



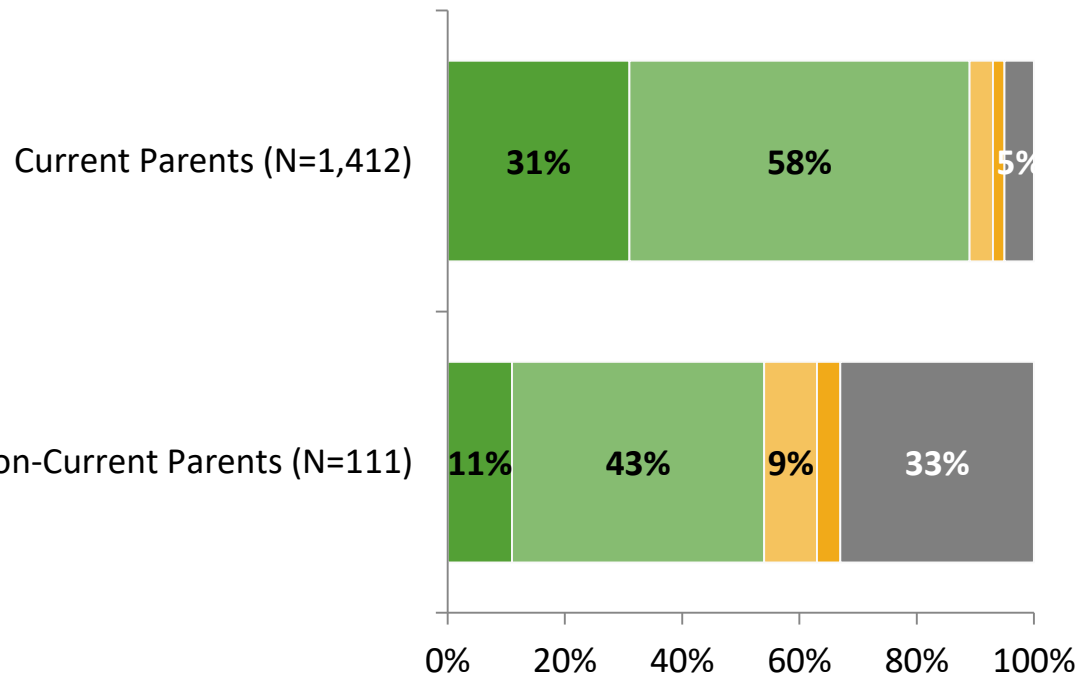
Community Relations (Continued)

Current parents were more likely to perceive that ACPS has a positive public image and provides opportunities to volunteer for school programs, activities, and events than non-current parents. The highest percentage of Non-Current Parents (33%) responded “I Don’t Know.”

ACPS has a positive public image.



ACPS provides opportunities to volunteer for school programs, activities, and events.

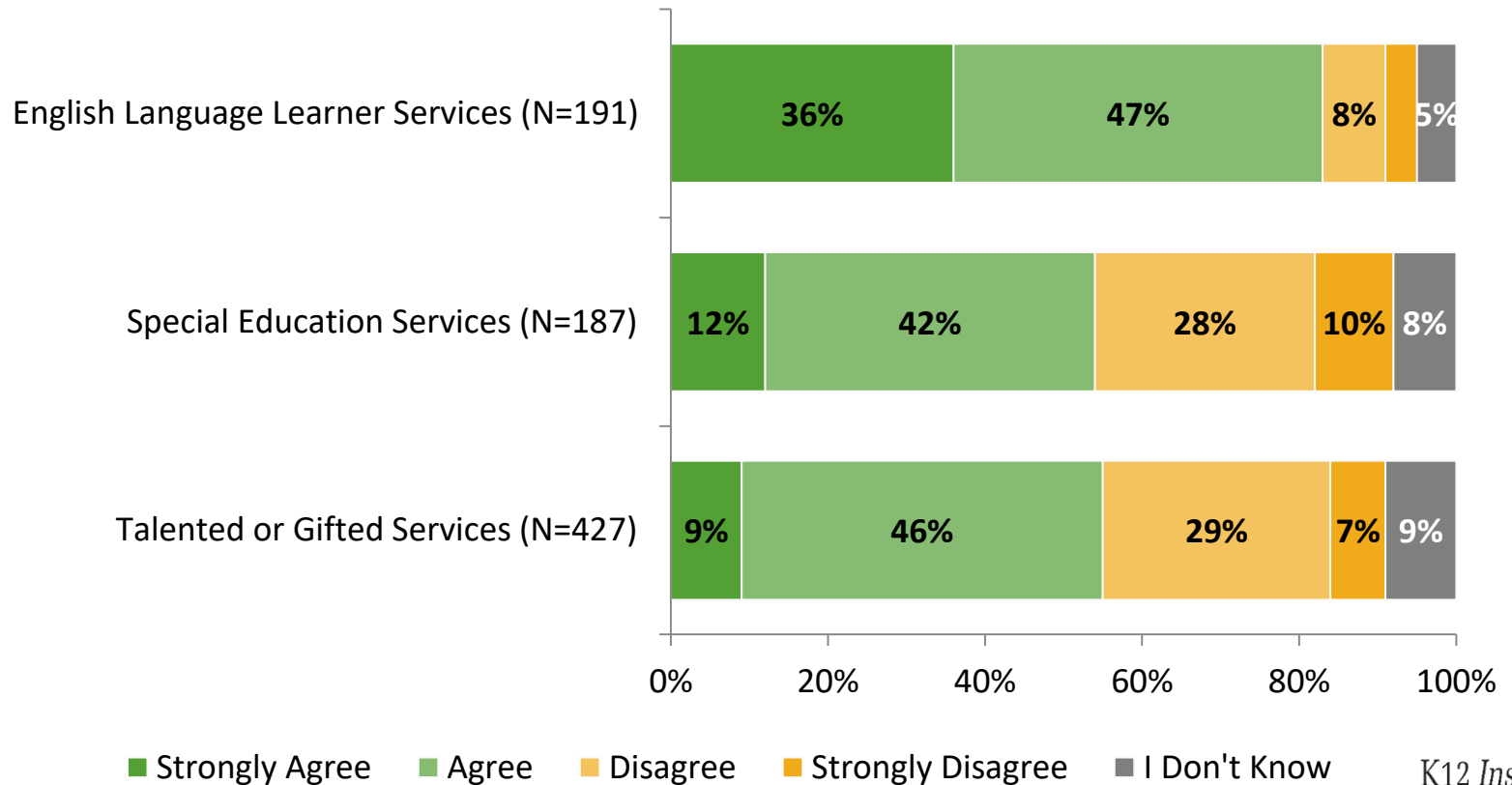


■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ I Don't Know

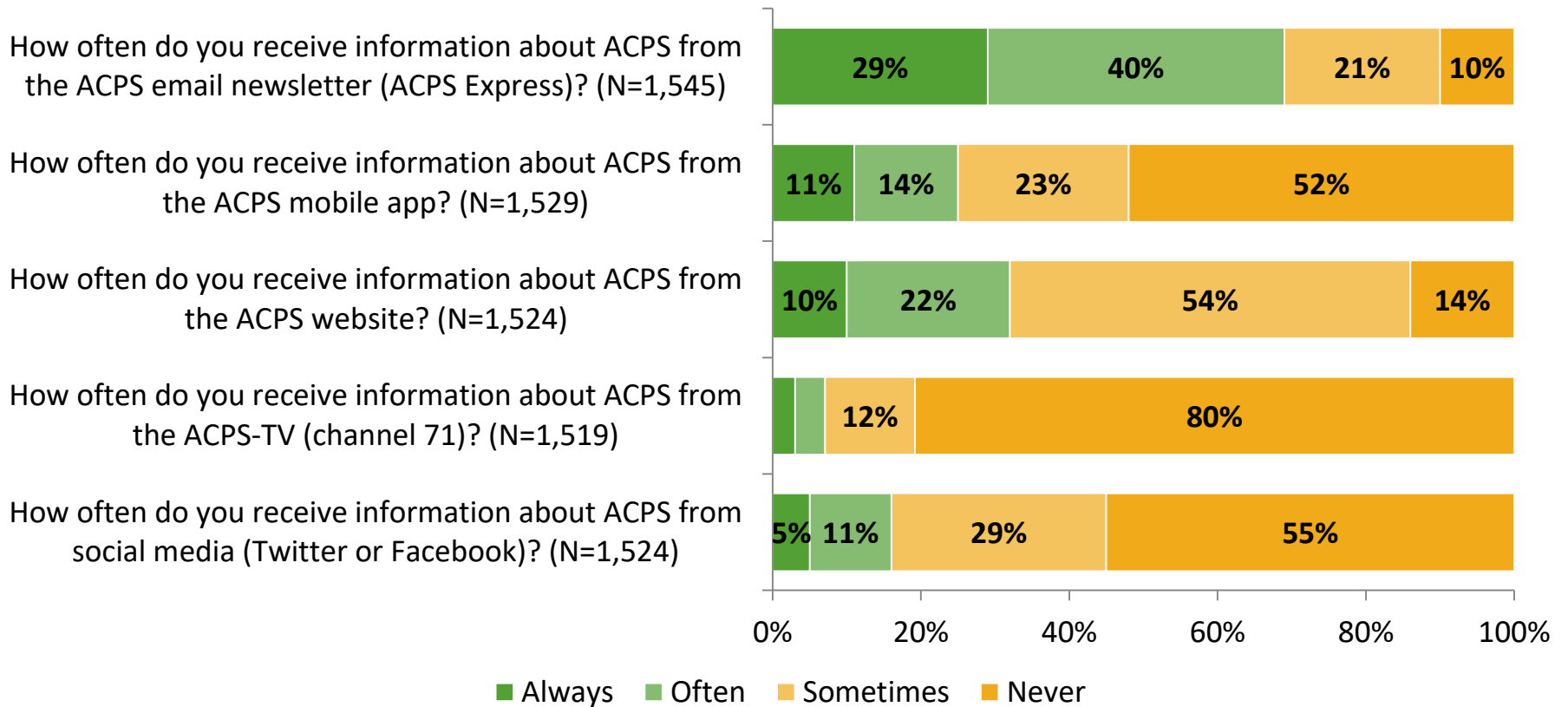
Community Relations (Continued)

Current parents of English Language Learners were slightly more likely to perceive that ACPS has a positive public image than parents of students receiving Special Education or Talented or Gifted services.

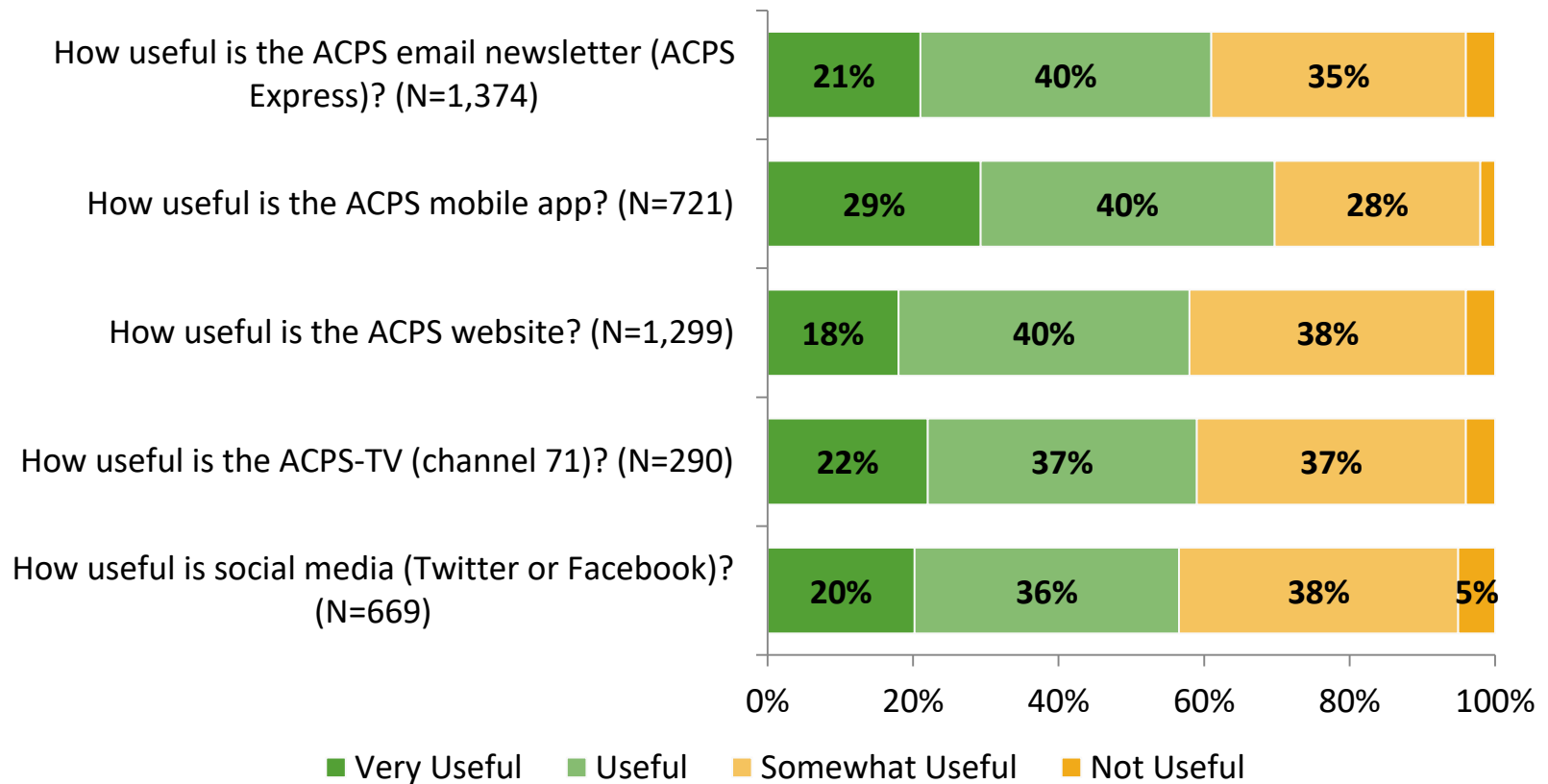
ACPS has a positive public image.



Communication

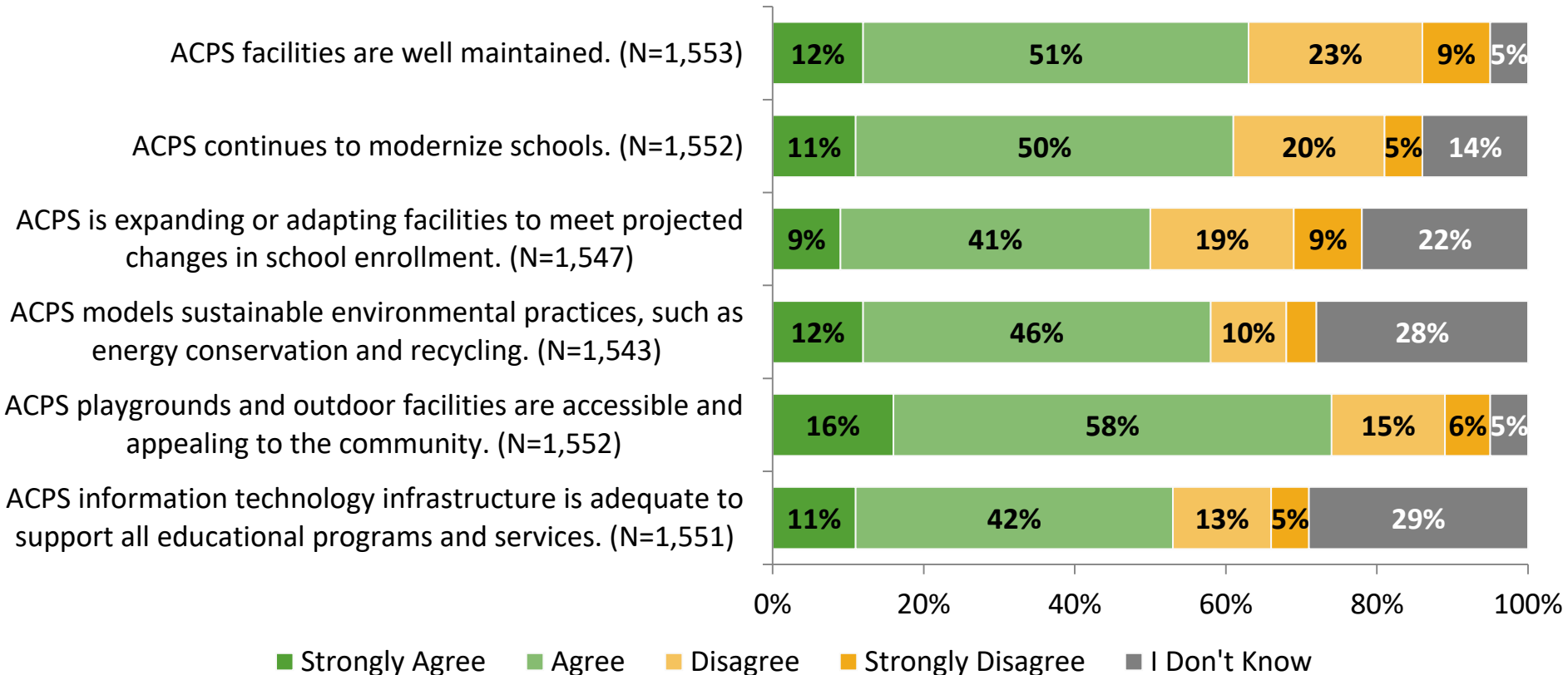


Communication (Continued)



Facilities and Learning Environment

Facilities and the Learning Environment: The physical environment of school buildings and school ground is a key factor in the overall health and safety of students, staff members, and visitors. Based on your experience this school year, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Theme Analysis

Please tell us what ACPS can do to improve. (N=813)

Support all students' achievement (e.g. improve criteria for the Talented and Gifted program, support disadvantaged students, ensure access to rigorous courses and opportunities for high-achieving students)

There was negative perception held among participants of the middle and high schools as well as perception that there is poor leadership at the school administrator level, district-level, and with the School Board.

Address quality of facilities and overcrowding

Ensure access to high-quality teachers

Focus on instruction because there is a perception that there is too much emphasis on testing and disciplining students

Improve communication from school staff to parents

Ensure equity across the school division

Gather feedback about school climate (stakeholders were critical of the survey because it did not allow them to provide input about their particular school site)

Other issues focused on perceptions of the Special Education program, uncertainty about redistricting, dissatisfaction with school lunches, desire for smaller class sizes, increased transparency especially as it relates to decision making, access to programming, and accountability for acting upon input from stakeholders.

Key Insights

- Overall, 66% of participants perceive the quality of schools in ACPS to be excellent or good.
- While the strong majority of participants (81%) perceive that ACPS offers academic excellence, several participants (39%) don't know whether or not ACPS manages resource allocation well.
- Findings indicate that 87% of participants either strongly agree or agree that ACPS provides opportunities to volunteer for school programs, activities, and events.
- In terms of division communication, the ACPS email newsletter is the delivery method most frequently read among survey participants.
- Division leadership may want to explore opportunities to improve ACPS' public image, especially among non-current parents. *K12 Insight* staff recommend that the division consider conducting focus groups to identify what areas would help improve their perception of ACPS.
- Another area that may warrant further investigation is improving stakeholder perception in the area of facilities and learning environment. This could be initially addressed by increasing division communication about current efforts to modernize schools and expand or adapt facilities.
- Several survey participants noted that the survey addressed their perceptions at the division level and would like opportunities to provide feedback about individual schools. *K12 Insight* staff recommend administering the School Quality Survey with parents, staff, and students to identify actionable strategies principals could implement to improve their school environment based on stakeholder perception data.



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