

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
AUGUST 21, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.  
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11**

Mission Statement: Our mission is teaching and learning.

Board Goals: In richness of cultures and with a respect for all, (1) Provide Dynamic Rigorous Curriculum, (2) Ensure Effective and Engaging Instruction, and (3) Embrace Excellent Learning Environment

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Review July 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Attachment #1)
3. Discussion re: School Climate Survey (Attachment #2)
4. Discussion re: Lottery & Enrollment Data to Date
5. Adjournment

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 17, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.  
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson, Dean Antipas (Remote), Elizabeth Porter, Matthew Shulman, Rita Volkmann (Remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: William Horgan, Beverly Washington, Jay Weitlauf

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Phil Piazza, Sam Kilpatrick, Rebecca Beyus

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Shepardson Watson called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. REVIEW OF June 12, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Porter, Shulman: To approve the June 12, 2023 meeting minutes.  
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

III. UPDATE RE: THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SEARCH

Superintendent Austin noted that Dr. Mary Broderick has put together the survey and posting. Dr. Broderick noted a timeline (**ATTACHMENT #1**) for the Board to meet to discuss the posting with the focus groups. These dates are July 31<sup>st</sup> and July 24. Dr. Broderick will meet with the focus groups and teachers and administrators.

IV. DISCUSSION RE: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Mr. Shulman read a statement (**ATTACHMENT #2**). Dr. Piazza noted that there are 5 strategies that are the key elements of the plan and gave a brief overview of each.

V. DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION ON THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

Superintendent Austin noted 6 goals as prescribed by CABE/CAPSS:

1. Student achievement and growth
2. Educational Leadership
3. Organizational management
4. Community relations
5. Board of Education
6. Personal and professional qualities

V. DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION ON THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR – cont.

Superintendent Austin reflected on GPS accomplishments for the year:

- Measured student growth and recognition of two schools of distinction (NEA and CB)
- Improved communication, Board communication committee, and District communication plan
- The Board worked diligently with the Superintendent regarding the FY24 Budget; including numerous grants.
- The negotiation of the new bus contract.
- With the Board's DEI vision, progress continues at the district and building level. She also noted revolutionary policy around student equity and access in high level classes was put into place.
- Focus on Shifting the Balance with the Science of Reading K-3
- Supported health and well-being of students, staff, and community for third year due to Covid19; prioritized goals around social emotional learning.
- Revival of the 25 year Mentor program
- Commitment of teachers, administrators and staff for summer learning through participation in summer schools, summer camps, tutoring, curriculum work, professional learning, and professional learning communities and book talks.

Superintendent Austin applauded the summer work in the district because of the commitment of teachers, administrators and staff with their participation in summer schools, summer camps, tutoring, curriculum work, professional learning, and professional learning communities and book talks.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Porter:

To adjourn at 6:49 p.m.

**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**



## FITCH HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SEARCH

### Invitation to participate in Focus Groups and Survey

The Fitch Principal Search Committee invites members of the school and broader community to participate in the search process for a new Principal.

Mary Broderick, a consultant working with the Groton Public Schools, will conduct a survey and series of focus groups (via ZOOM) in late-July. The purpose is to gauge the community's perspectives on the qualities, experiences, and characteristics desired in a new high school principal. We encourage students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and community members to participate.

### *Survey:*

An anonymous survey will be available at this site **until July 28th:**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FitchPrincipalSearch>**

**Or scan this QR code:**



### *Focus Group Schedule:*

Stakeholder	Date	Time
Teachers	Tuesday, July 25	9:00 am
Staff (non-certified/support)	Tuesday, July 25	10:00 am
Parents & Community Members	Tuesday, July 25	6:00 pm
Administrators	Wednesday, July 26	9:00 am
Students	Wednesday, July 26	7:00 pm

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4381110381>**

Feedback from the focus groups and survey will be incorporated into a leadership profile that will guide the Principal Search Committee in identifying high-quality candidates who best fit the needs of the Groton Public Schools. "We encourage the community to be a part of this important process and look forward to incorporating the results of their participation into the Search Committee's work," said Susan Austin, Superintendent of the Groton Public Schools.

July 17, 2023

Good evening.

At last month's June 26<sup>th</sup> Communications Committee meeting, we adopted a Strategic Communications Plan for 2023-24. This plan was submitted to the full Board at its Regular June meeting and thereafter distributed to all Board members for review prior to tonight's discussion.

As articulated in the Committee *Statement of Purpose*, the Committee's principal function is to "strengthen positive interactive relationships" with our entire community (both internal and external audiences) about Groton Public Schools.

To help frame tonight's discussion for the listening/viewing public, the five key elements of the Strategic Plan include:

1. A concise statement of the Communication Committee's vision for fostering awareness of our District's mission, the educational opportunities and support functions available to our students, and the work being done by the Board, Administrators and Staff to attain our goals;
2. Presentation of the Communication Committee's guiding principles upon which annual communication goals will be set to support and align with the Board and Superintendent's goals;
3. An inventory of internal and external stakeholders that communications strategies should strive to inform in an interactive fashion that encourages stakeholder feedback;
4. A directory of communication methods and tools; and
5. **Specific communication strategies** to achieve GPS's mission and the Committee's guiding principles to both enhance stakeholder engagement and improve internal and external communications.

Before opening the process of Board discussion, I'd like to recognize fellow committee members Elizabeth Porter and Dr. William Horgan, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Phil Piazza and the District's Communication Specialist Rebecca Beyus – without whom our work would have suffered. Finally, a tip of the hat to former Committee Chair Katrina Fitzgerald who helped conceptualize and launch this effort.

Matthew Shulman

# **Groton Public Schools Climate Survey**

**2022-2023**

# Climate Survey Overview

## Surveys Provided

- Early elementary students
- Upper Elementary Students
- Elementary Parents
- Elementary staff
- Secondary students
- Secondary Parents
- Secondary Staff

## Survey Completion

- 71%
- 81%
- 29%
- 77%
- 63%
- 12%
- 71%



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# Safety

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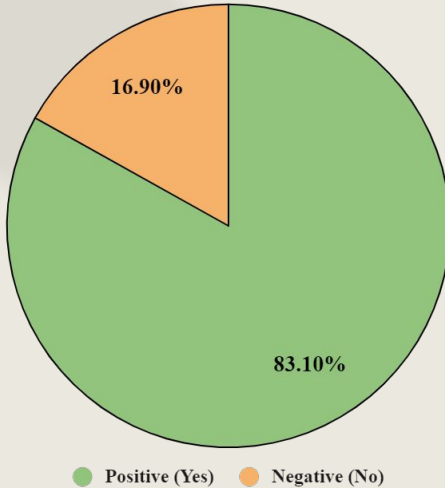
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# Elementary School Students

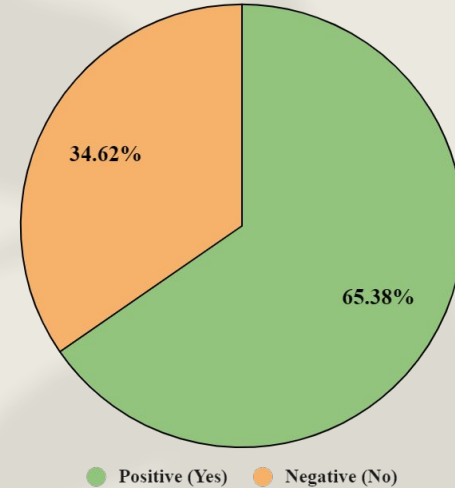
I feel safe in my classroom at school

Student Survey: Early Elementary



I feel safe in my classroom at school

Student Survey: Upper Elementary

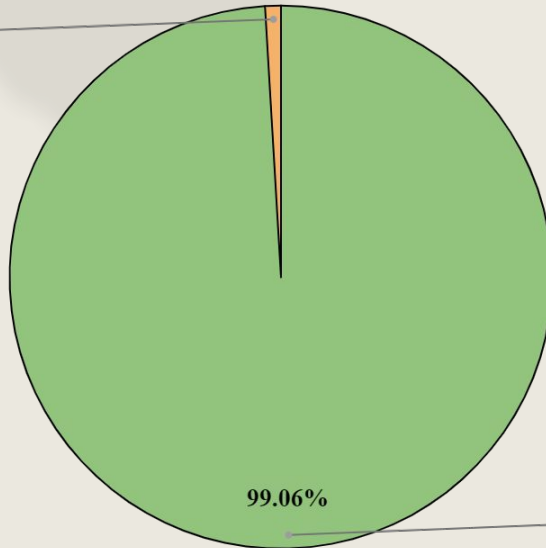


# Elementary School Adults

The school is a safe and secure place  
for my child to learn

Parent Survey: Elementary

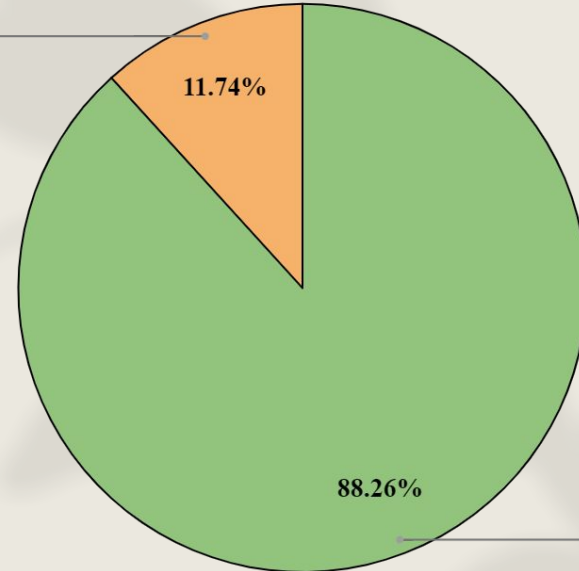
Negative  
0.9%



My building is safe and secure

Staff Survey: Elementary

Negative  
11.7%

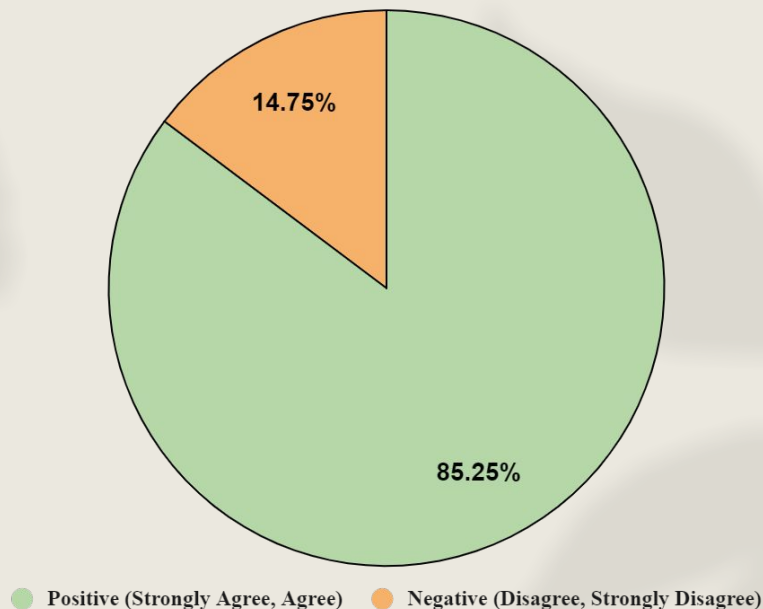


Positive  
99.1%

Positive  
88.3%

# Secondary School Students

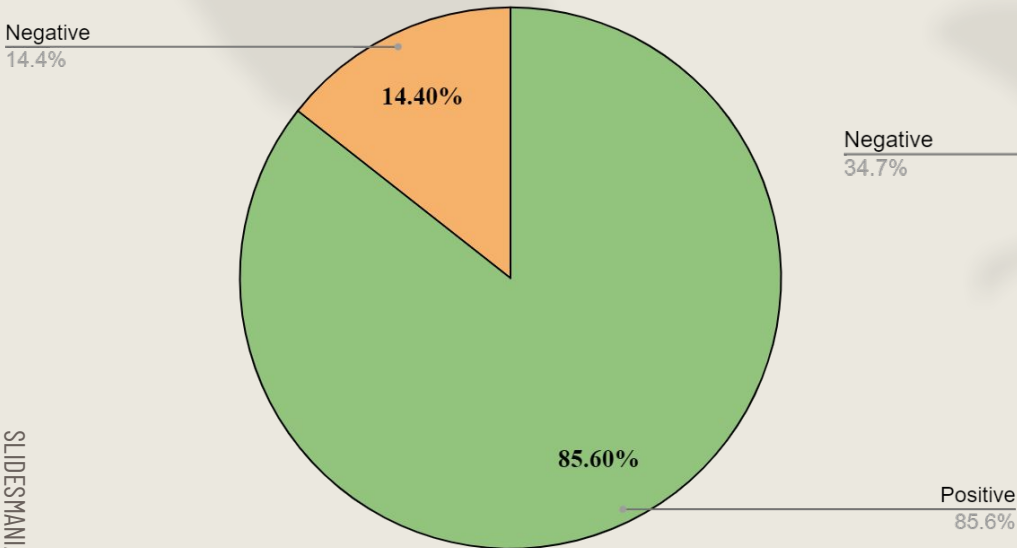
I feel safe when I ride the bus



# Secondary School Adults

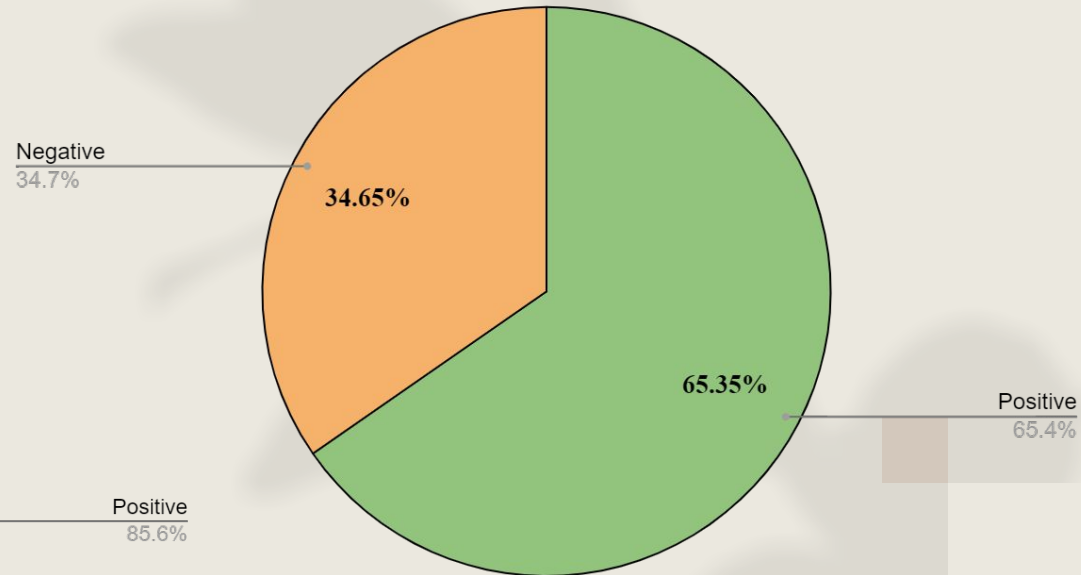
The school is a safe and secure place  
for my child to learn

Parent Survey: Secondary



My building is safe and secure

Staff Survey: Secondary



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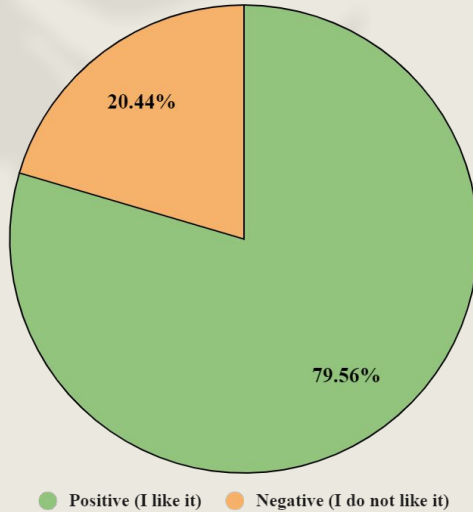
# Belonging

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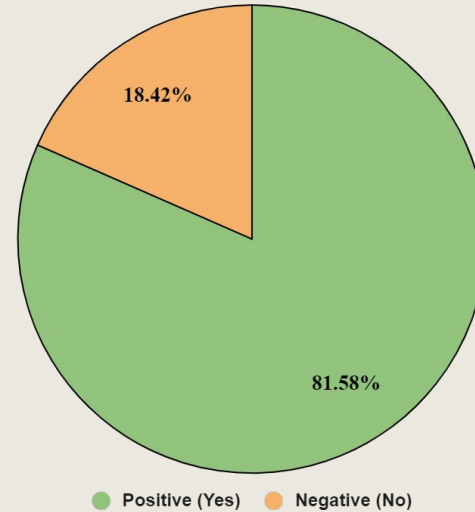
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# Student Survey: Early Elementary

I feel good about my school

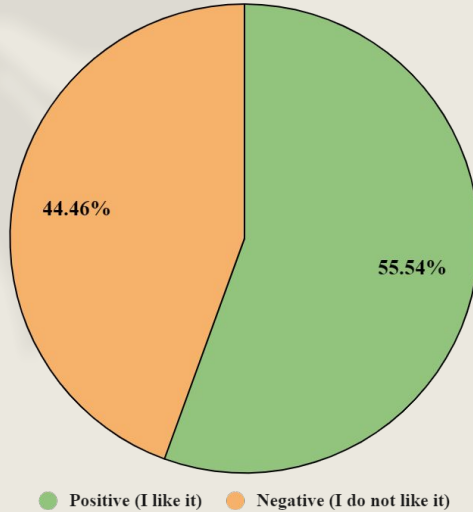


If I am upset, there is an adult who can help me

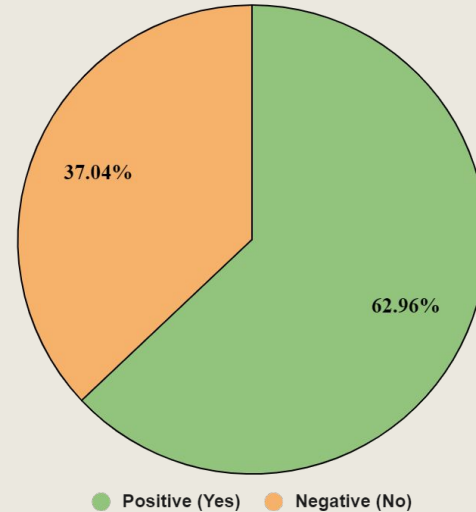


# Student Survey: Upper Elementary

I feel good about my school

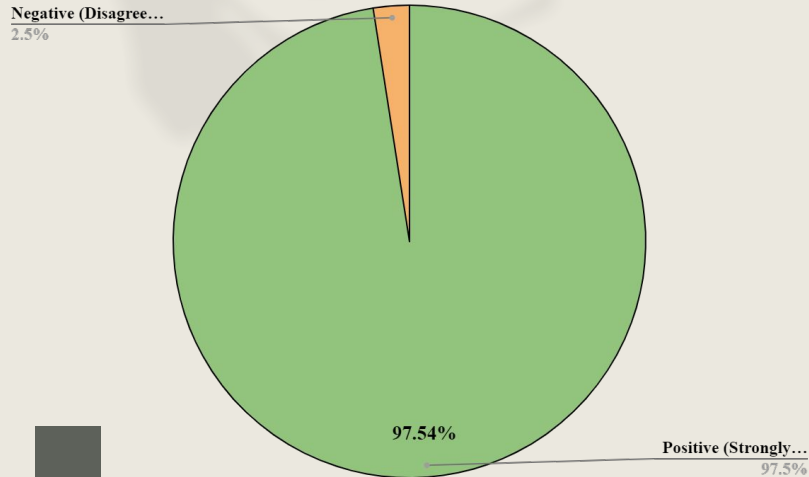


If I am upset, there is an adult who can help me

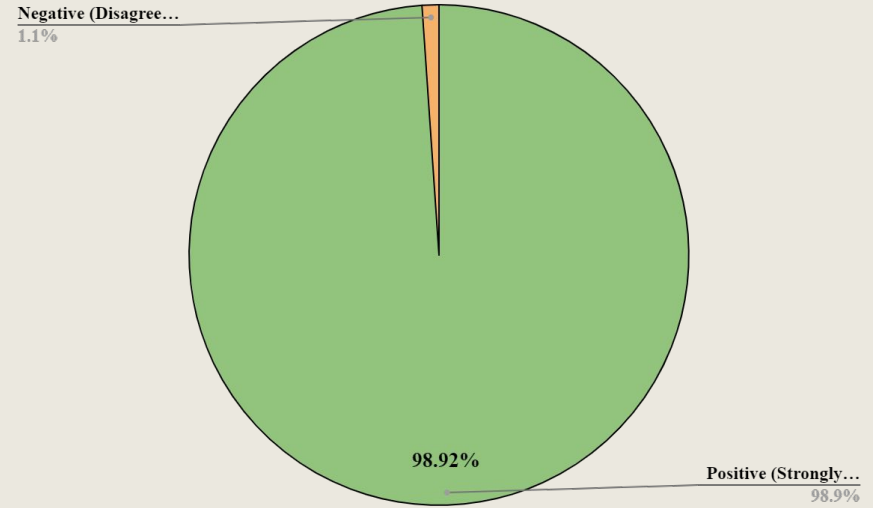


# Elementary School Parents

At my child's school, there are opportunities for parental involvement



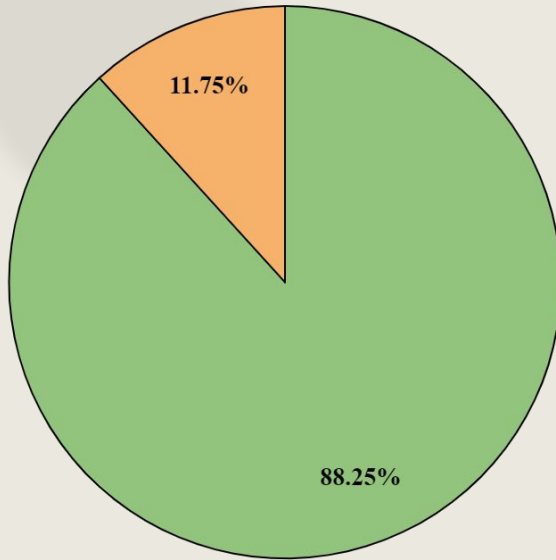
I am comfortable talking to my child's teacher



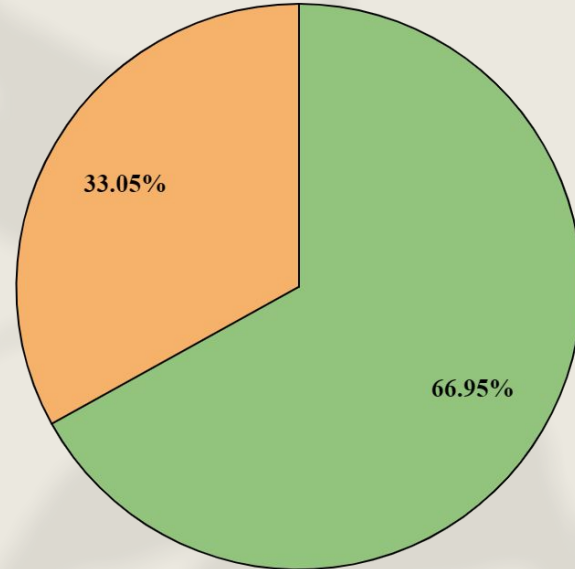


# Secondary Students

There are trusted adults in my school



I am involved in extracurricular activities at some point during the school year.



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)

● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)

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# Respect & — Inclusion —

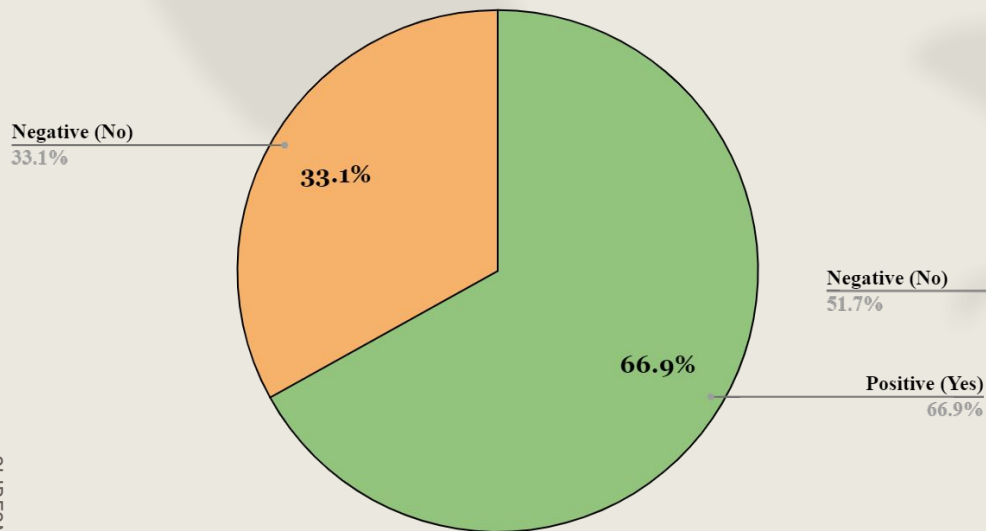
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# Elementary Students

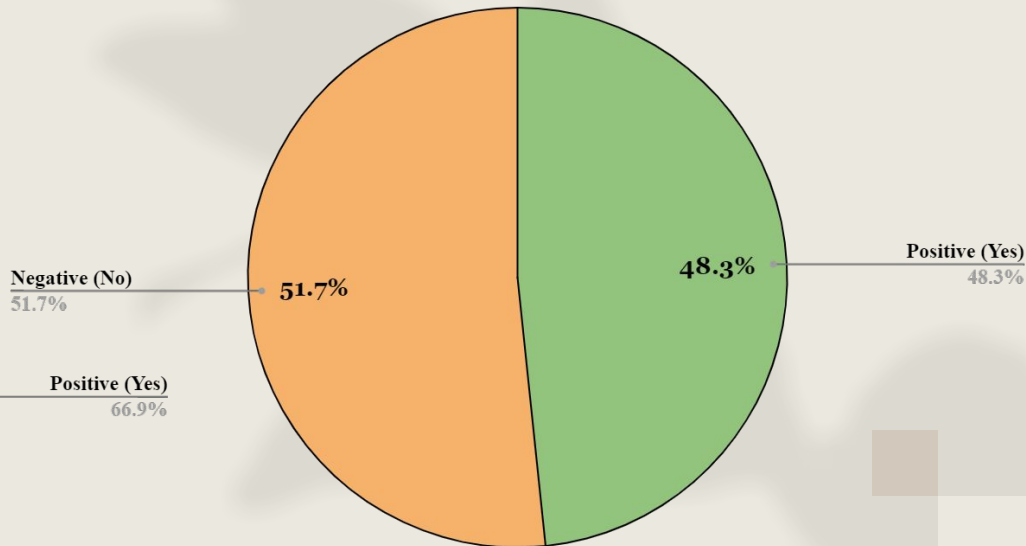
This school provides books that show different types of families

Student Survey: Early Elementary



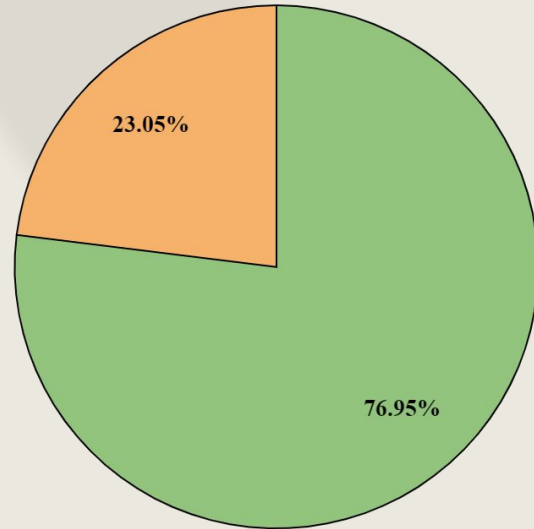
This school provides books that show different types of families

Student Survey: Upper Elementary



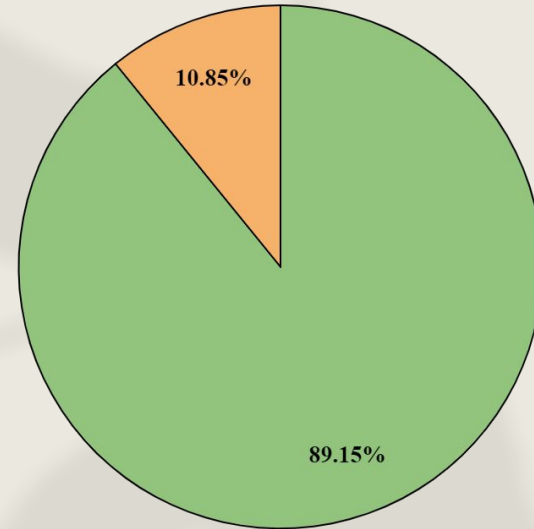
# Secondary Students

I am able to select high level courses



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)

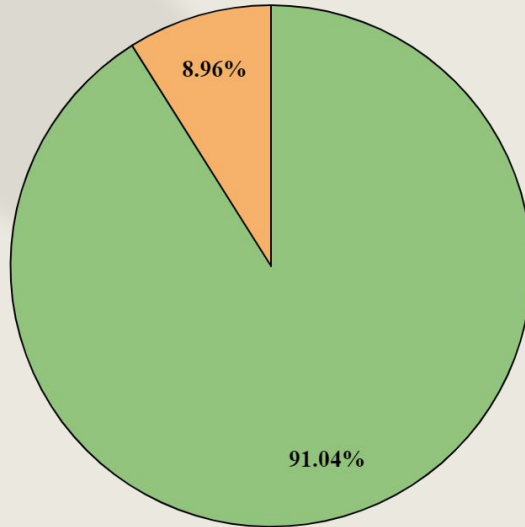
My teachers help me to try my best



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)

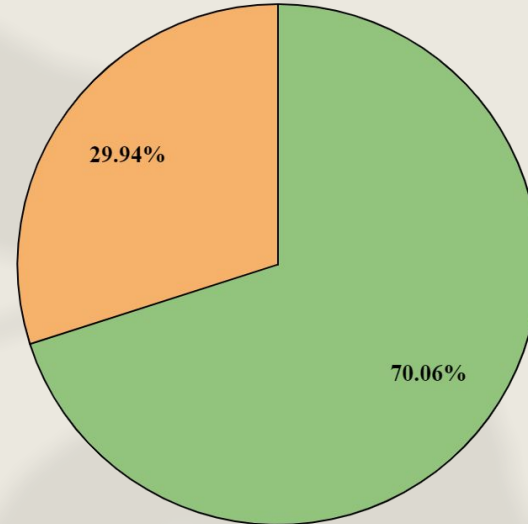
# Elementary School Staff

Our building fosters an appreciation of student diversity and respect for each other



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

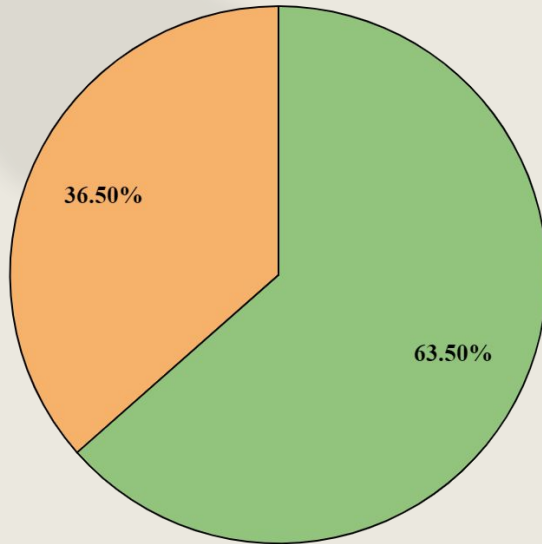
Students treat each other with respect



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

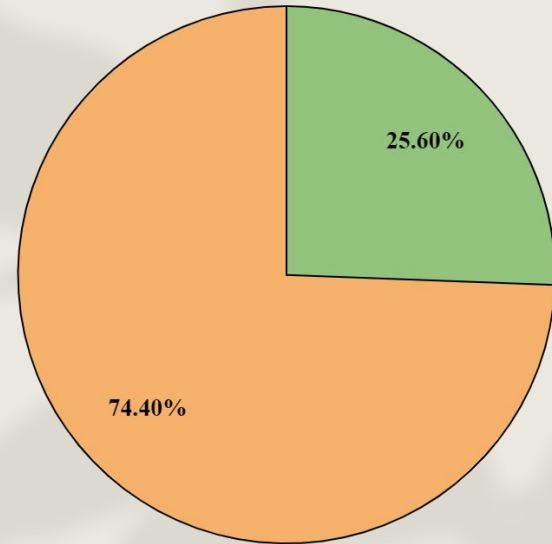
# Secondary School Staff

Our building fosters an appreciation of student diversity and respect for each other



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)

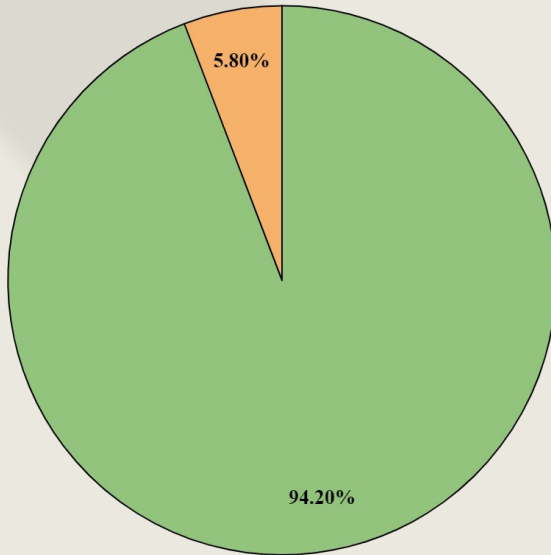
Students treat each other with respect



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Strongly Disagree, Disagree)

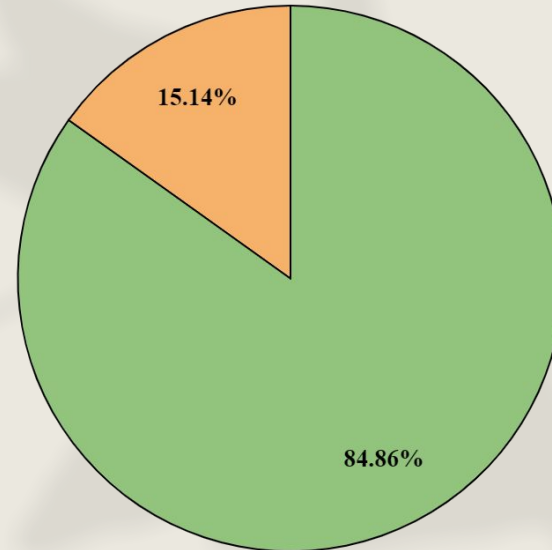
# Elementary School Staff

The staff respects all colleagues regardless of their ethnicity, culture or diversity



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Administrators foster a respectful climate and culture



● Positive (Strongly Agree, Agree) ● Negative (Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

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# Professional — Growth —

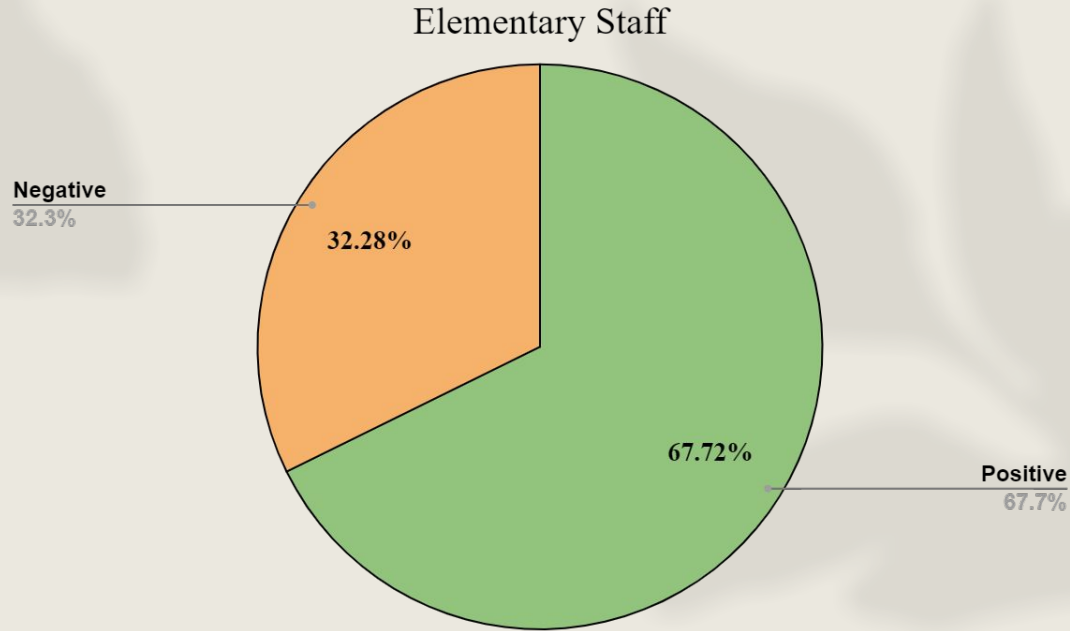
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# Building-Level Supports

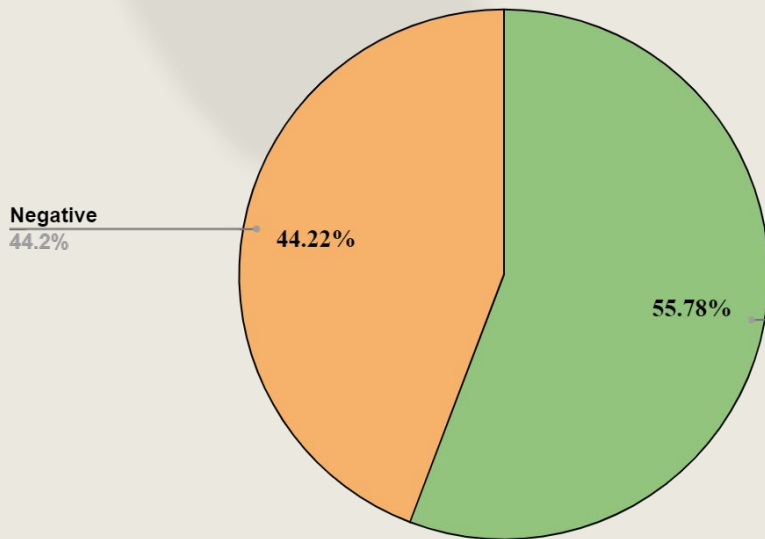
Professional development at the building level meets my needs to be successful in my position



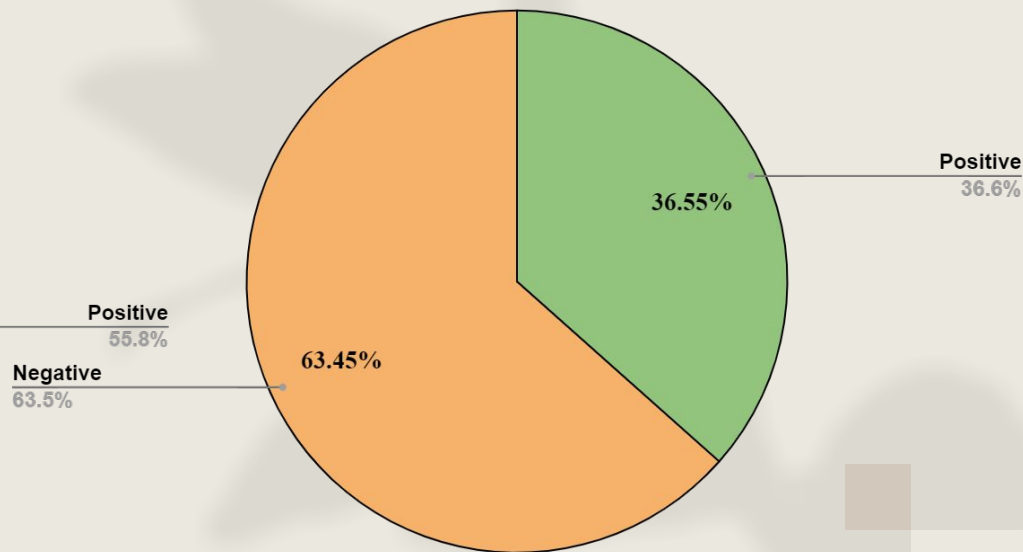
# District-Level Supports

Professional development at the district level meets my needs to be successful in my position

Elementary Staff



Secondary Staff



# Takeaways

## Safety

- Safety will always be a priority. Monitoring and improving systems is ongoing.
- Parents/guardians overwhelmingly agreed students were safe and the schools are secure
- Inconsistencies were noted among staff and students

## Respect & Inclusion

- DEI is an ongoing focus as GPS works to ensure all students are seen, heard and provided every opportunity to find their passion and pick their path
- Our work continues to strengthen curriculum in a way that allows students to connect with and explore a wide range of perspectives

## Professional Growth

- Professional learning and growth will remain as an area of focus
- Survey results indicate a need for a laser-like focus at the elementary level (depth, not breadth)
- There is a need for adjustments to department collaboration at the secondary level