

# Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student

Report of the  
Minister's Panel on Education

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*Chair's Message,*

*I am pleased to present the public with a summary of the survey data and emails received by the panel. The panel made extensive use of this data in their review of the public school system. Key findings included in this technical report are reflected in the Panel's Report to the Minister. The panel's recommendations were formed as a response to specific points of data or the larger issues that the panel was able to identify by taking a holistic look at what Nova Scotians were telling us about the system.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Myra A. Freeman". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

**The Honourable Myra A. Freeman, CM, ONS, MSM**  
*Chair, Minister's Panel on Education*

## Minister's Panel on Education – Technical Report

Section			
1	Introduction		
2	Print Survey		
		Descriptive Statistics from Survey Responses	Summary of Survey Comments
3	Overall Strengths		✓
4	Areas for Improvement		✓
5	Overall Satisfaction	✓	
6	Teaching and Learning	✓	✓
7	Curriculum	✓	✓
8	Secondary Options and Transitions	✓	✓
9	Supports for Students with Special Needs	✓	✓
10	Equity and Human Rights	✓	✓
11	School and Classroom Climate	✓	✓
12	Partnerships	✓	✓
13	School Organization 1	✓	✓
14	School Organization 2	✓	✓
15	Final Comments		✓
16	Concerns and Solutions		✓
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## Introduction

The panel was asked to design and develop a consultation process to gather responses from as many Nova Scotians as possible. To that end, the panel employed both traditional (targeted emails, lead organizations, press releases) and social media (Facebook) to reach individuals and groups. Particular attention was given to reaching minority groups through formal and informal distribution networks. Close to 300 businesses and not-for-profit organizations were contacted directly, an email invitation was sent to all teachers in public education system and a dedicated website for the public to access different options for providing input was created. Nova Scotians were invited to contribute in any of the following ways:

1. completing an online survey with directed-response questions and open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide personal comments;
2. sending an e-mail or letter directly to the panel;
3. submitting a formal report;
4. facilitating a group discussion and submitting a response form;
5. calling a toll-free number and leaving a voice message for the panel.

During an extended consultation period (seven weeks) the panel reached out regularly through local events, media releases, and social media to encourage Nova Scotians to be a part of changes ahead for education in the province. To ensure that the voices of students were well represented, a survey day was also organized in junior high and high schools for principals and teachers to join in encouraging students to complete the online survey.

The consultation process included the following methods for collecting and analyzing input from Nova Scotians:

Source (description)	Number of Submissions	Method of analysis
Survey items (see Appendix B of the report):	18,785 surveys completed in	Data was extracted from survey software into Excel. Descriptive statistics were generated for each item including

<p>30 Likert items with 5 responses (Don't Know, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree)</p>	<p>whole or in part</p>	<p>the number of respondents selecting each response, as well as the percentage of those respondents who selected one of the four levels of agreement (that is, the denominator for calculating percentage excludes both "don't know" and those who did not respond to the item). Pivot tables and other Excel tools (Slicer) were used to inspect the data more closely; for example, what percentage of high school students in the Strait Regional School Board agreed with a particular item.</p>
<p>Open-ended survey items: 13 comment prompts were provided, each following a set of related Likert items. The number of respondents who submitted ideas varied by topic, from 2605 up to 15626</p>	<p>113,582 written comments</p>	<p>Comments were coded by one of four coders working independently but sharing a common catalogue of codes that was generated from the data during an initial coding exercise. Content reports (see sections 3 through 16, excluding 5 of this technical report) were prepared for the panel deliberations on major and minor themes.</p>
<p>Emails to panel; ranged from several sentences to an email with an attached document of between 1 and 50 pages</p>	<p>462 emails</p>	<p>All emails were read by all panel members; major and minor themes were identified. Coding of email content was also done independently of panel members to identify major and minor themes and contribute to the panel's deliberations.</p>
<p>Reports to the Panel: various organizations and individuals chose to submit a more formal document</p>	<p>46 reports</p>	<p>All reports were read by panel members. In addition, a reference document was prepared for the panel that identified which reports spoke to which survey topics.</p>
<p>Group discussion reports (including a province-wide series of meetings organized by the Office of African Nova scotia Affairs)</p>	<p>27 reports</p>	<p>All reports were reviewed by analysts following the coding of open-ended survey responses (see above) and prior to identifying major themes and contributing factors; content of the discussion reports informed the development of the content reports (sections 3 through 16, excluding 5 of this technical report).</p>
<p>Voice messages</p>	<p>44 messages</p>	<p>All voice messages were transcribed, and the written transcripts provided to and read by panel members. In addition, the transcripts were reviewed by analysts following the coding of open-ended survey responses (see above) and prior to identifying major themes and contributing factors; content of</p>

		the discussion reports informed the development of the content reports (sections 3 through 16, excluding 5 of this technical report).
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The panel members had available to them shortly after the closing of the consultation period the following information, either in a digital form (folders and documents on a Sharepoint site) or paper form (assembled in binders), depending on personal preference:

- Emails, organized by week submitted
- Voice message transcripts
- Reports to the panel

In addition, panel members were provided the following information in paper form, organized in binders, in preparation for and accessed throughout their deliberations:

- Survey data: quantitative tables and charts – reproduced within this technical report, located within sections 5 through 14.
- Qualitative data reports – reproduced within this technical report, located within sections 3 through 16.

*Survey data: quantitative tables and charts*

Six pages of data are provided for each Likert item on the survey. The name of the item is at the top of each page, and is exactly as the item appears in the survey itself, with the exception of items 8, 16, 17 and 19. These four items are shown with ellipses to indicate omissions from the statement to allow the statement to fit on a single line. The distinct focus of each of the six pages devoted to each Likert statement is indicated by the title of Column A of the table at the top of the page. Column A is the first column of the table and the title is in bolded font. The order of the six pages does not change throughout sections 5 through 14:

- Respondent type (each row represents those respondents who had selected this respondent type in completing this prompt in the survey “I am doing this survey primarily as a ...” – please note that each row is the total of this respondent type; in other words all the students, and all the parents.
- Age group (each row represents those respondents who selected this age band from the list provided in response to this survey question: “What is your age?”)
- Ancestry (each row represents those respondents who selected this ancestry group from the list provided in response to this survey prompt: “Please indicate the ancestry with which you most identify” or who selected the “yes” radio button in response to the question: “Are you an Aboriginal person (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)?”)
- Parent of a child in ... (each row represents those respondents who first identified as a parent (see respondent type above) and then on the next screen selected from the drop menu the grade band of this row (for example, “Child in Preschool”). Please note that parents were provided one drop menu for each of their children; therefore one parent may be counted in this table as many times as the parent entered a child. However, the parent’s survey responses are counted only once for each item, regardless of the number of children entered on this screen.
- Student responses by grade (each row represents those respondents who first identified as a student (see respondent type above) and then on the next screen selected from the drop menu the grade band of this row.
- Teacher responses by grade (each row represents those respondents who first identified as a teacher (see respondent type above) and then on the next screen selected from the drop menu the grade band of this row in response to this survey question: What grade level are you currently teaching in?)

For the first three pages of the descriptive statistics for each Likert item (respondents, age and ancestry) the total number of survey respondents within each table will be close to but not equal to the total number of survey respondents: 18,785. This is because only two fields were set as mandatory within the survey: respondent type and school board – all the others were optional. However, the total number of respondents for the other three pages will not be close to 18,785 because each of these is a subgroup – parents/guardians only (about 8600), students only (about 5200), and teachers only (about 3200).

### *Qualitative Data Reports (see sections 3 – 16)*

An analytic report was prepared for the panel summarizing the comments respondents entered to each of the open-ended survey items. The first two and the last two of the open-ended prompts were independent of any of the Likert items:

- What are the strengths of our school system? (first open-ended prompt)
- What needs to be improved? (second open-ended prompt)
- What three things concern you most about the public school system? and What suggestions do you have for each of these concerns? (beginning of section 3 of the survey: Closing Comments and Suggestions)
- If there is an important topic that we have not asked about in this survey, please write about it in the space below. (final prompt of the survey)

All other open response items were linked to and followed immediately after two or more Likert items that shared a common focus, such as Curriculum. The prompt encouraged additional comments in relation to the issues raised by the preceding Likert items: "If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here."

Each analytic report begins by referencing the prompt and reproducing the Likert items the prompt follows (where relevant). Next follows a table breaking out the number of comments received by respondent group (students, teachers, etc.), and the total number of comments coded.



The second page of each report provides a summary table of key themes. Each theme is a category of similar issues and topics identified within the comments reviewed. The theme is then broken into the particular issues or topics that are nested within that theme, as well as the number of respondents whose comments fell within each. An example of page 2 of each analytic report illustrates this presentation:

### KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

Response Category	Subcategories	Number of Responses
<b>Increase Commitment to Equity and Human Rights</b>	Schools generally need to increase their commitment to these issues	846
	Bullying is still a problem in schools	99
	There is too much focus on too few cultures	138
	Inequalities related to gender and for LGBT students still exist	98
	More diversity needs to be shown amongst teachers hired and school curriculum	271
	More resources need to be dedicated to this area	98
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1550</b>
<b>Equity and Human Rights Should Not be a School Priority</b>	Equity and human rights are not issues that should be addressed by schools	283
	Families should play a greater role in educating about these issues	45
	Schools have become too preoccupied with being politically correct	131

From the third page on, the analytic report fills in detail, with each section devoted to the “Response Category” (see above), and each bolded sub-heading being the “subcategory” (see above). Each sub-heading is followed by a bulleted list of the comments pertaining to this issue or topic (these are summary statements and not verbatim from the comments received). The sidebar of each page is used to provide representative or illustrative quotes from the comments received; some of these quotes were used in the report itself. All statements within the analytic report reproduce the perspective of the respondents’ comments; that is, where there are value judgments, they are the values of the respondents and not those of the analysts nor the panel members. So, in the example above, the statement that “there is too much focus on too few cultures”, this indicates that 138 respondents expressed this attitude.

The analytic reports were prepared to assist the panel in its deliberations; the support team organized a large volume of information (over 100,000 comments) in ways that

enabled the panel members to consider and discuss the input received from Nova Scotians. While the analysis was diligent in reproducing faithfully the views expressed, it should also be understood that not every comment received in the survey was included in the analytic reports. Frequency and presence among different respondent groups were used to determine how any one topic was presented within the analytic reports.

One of the Qualitative Data Reports, Areas for Improvement (page 46), represents coding and analysis of just over one-half of the responses to this prompt – the 15,600 responses were first randomized, and the first 8,000 were coded in preparation for this report. This strategy was adopted as a matter of necessity to ensure the Panel had the report in time for its deliberations. The method of randomizing responses was used to improve the probability that no category within the responses was missed. Subsequent to the production of this Qualitative Data Report, and while the Panel was still deliberating the input, analysts read the remaining responses to ensure that no critical comment was missed. No additional category or sub-category emerged from this secondary review. Therefore the report as presented to the Panel was not altered.

The survey was designed to provide multiple opportunities for respondents to register their comments; respondents were provided general prompts at the beginning of the survey (What are the strengths? What needs to be improved?); specific prompts tied to specific aspects of the education system (Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, Transitions, etc.); and a final set of prompts under Closing Comments (Concerns and Solutions, and anything else you'd like to comment on). This redundancy was intended to ensure that the analytic processes would accurately capture all concerns and comments provided by respondents regardless of wording or placement within the survey.



## Minister's Panel on Education Consultation Survey

**Thank you for being a part of the changes ahead for education in Nova Scotia.**

The Minister's Panel on Education wants to hear Nova Scotians' ideas about the public education system. This survey will let us know if you believe our schools are meeting the needs of students—what is working well and what can be improved.

The survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.

So that we know a bit about who is completing the survey, you will be required to complete questions 1 and 2. Otherwise, all questions in the survey are optional. You can skip any question that you do not want to answer. You can also go back if you would like to change your answers at any time.

Thank you for taking the time to complete a survey. Your views are very important to us.

*The Honourable Myra Freeman*

Chair,  
Minister's Panel on Education

### **To submit your survey to panel, please mail it to:**

Minister's Panel on Education  
c/o Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
2021 Brunswick Street,  
PO Box 578  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 2S9

## Section 1 – Your Profile

### 1. I am doing this survey primarily as a ...

a. **Student**

What grade are you in?

P – 3

4 – 6

7-9

10-12

Are you homeschooled? Yes  No

b. **Parent or Guardian**

What grade is your child in? (please respond for each child)

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Preschool or younger				
Primary–3				
Grades 4–6				
Grades 7–9				
Grades 10–12				
Post-Secondary (university, college, etc.)				
No longer attending school				

Are any of your children homeschooled? Yes  No

c. **Teacher**

What grade level(s) are you currently teaching?

P – 3

4 – 6

7-9

10-12

d. **School Administrator**

e. **Student Support Staff**

f. **Regional School Board Staff**

g. **Community Member**  (Please tell us your role(s) in the community)

2. What school board do you associate most closely with?

3. What community is nearest to where you live?

4. What is your age?

- 10 years or younger
- 11–15
- 16–20
- 21–24
- 25–30
- 31–40
- 41–50
- 51–60
- 61 or older

5. Are you an Aboriginal person (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)?  Yes  No

If **NO**, please go to question 6.

If **YES**, please check the group that best applies:

- Status On-Reserve
- Status Off-Reserve
- Non-Status On-Reserve
- Non-Status Off-Reserve
- Inuit – please specify community \_\_\_\_\_
- Métis – please specify community \_\_\_\_\_

First Nation (Band) – please identify: [drop down]

- Acadia       Annapolis Valley       Bear River
- Eskasoni       Glooscap       Indian Brook
- Membertou       Millbrook       Paq'tnkek
- Pictou Landing       Potlotek       Wagmatcook
- We'koqma'q
- Non-Nova Scotia Band – please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Please indicate the ancestry with which you most identify:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acadian descent                         | <input type="checkbox"/> African descent (Black) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian descent                           | <input type="checkbox"/> East Asian descent      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> European descent                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern descent  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not listed above – please specify _____ |  |

## Section 2 – Assessing the Public School System

Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Not satisfied
- Very dissatisfied

What are the strengths of our school system?

What needs to be improved?

## Teaching and Learning

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes.					
Students are engaged in their learning (for example: students are curious, interested, and see connections between their schoolwork and daily life).					
Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork (for example: assessment helps students understand how they can improve).					
Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students (for example: teachers have the right skills for the grade levels or subjects they are teaching).					
Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school (for example: physical activity, healthy eating, healthy relationships).					
Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies (for example: access to computers and devices, integrated with learning, distance education courses, Virtual school).					
Schools provide the right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (for example: volunteering, student leadership, community service for learning).					
Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade.					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**



## Curriculum

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most (for example: students have access to the right courses, students are learning the right skills).					
Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics.					
Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing.					
Students are becoming effective problem solvers (for example: learning to think critically, creatively, and independently).					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

**Student Transitions after High School**

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
High school students have the right program options available to them (for example: Co-op, Skilled Trades, Options and Opportunities).					
Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures.					
Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate from high school are well prepared to do so.					
Students who want to attend college or university after they graduate are well prepared to do so.					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

## Supports for Students

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
Special programs and services are meeting the needs of <i>all</i> students (for example: through inclusion; resource options; speech-language, behavioral supports).					
The appropriate programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues (for example: elementary guidance, health services in schools, school psychologists).					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

## Equity and Human Rights

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know
Students and their families see their cultures reflected in their schools and classrooms.					
Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights.					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

**Partnerships**

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child's learning (for example: report cards, parent-teacher conferences).					
Schools develop positive relationships with parents (for example: parents feel welcomed, schools are responsive to parents' questions and concerns).					
Community organizations and businesses support student success (for example: with partnerships and support for school programs, such as co-op or Junior Achievement).					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

**School Climate**

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Relationships between students and teachers are respectful.					
Students and staff feel safe in schools.					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

**Organization of Schools (1)**

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Schools are organized to meet the needs of today's students (for example: the length of the school day, school year, and semestering).					
Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services.					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

## Organization of Schools (2)

### Time to Learn

Students are engaged in learning for 1,500 minutes a week. Of this time, what percentage should be assigned to different subject areas?

	What percentage of the time that students spend in school should be assigned to each subject area?
English Language Arts (Reading and Writing)	%
Mathematics	%
Science and Technology	%
Second Languages	%
Social Studies, History, Geography	%
Physical Education/Health	%
Arts (Music, Visual Arts)	%
Life and Work Skills (for example: financial literacy, volunteering, family studies, workplace skills)	%
Other (please specify) [insert text box]	%
<b>100%</b>	

#### For example,

**1%** = 15 minutes a week

**5%** = 75 minutes a week

**10%** = 150 minutes a week  
(2.5 hours)

**15%** = 225 minutes a week

**25%** = 375 minutes a week

**50%** = 750 minutes a week  
(12.5 hours)

Please indicate the grade levels that you were primarily thinking of when completing the question above:

- Elementary (Grades Primary–6)
- Junior High (Grades 7–9)
- Senior High (Grades 10–12)



**Organization of Schools (3)**

Please read each of the statements below and indicate how much you agree.

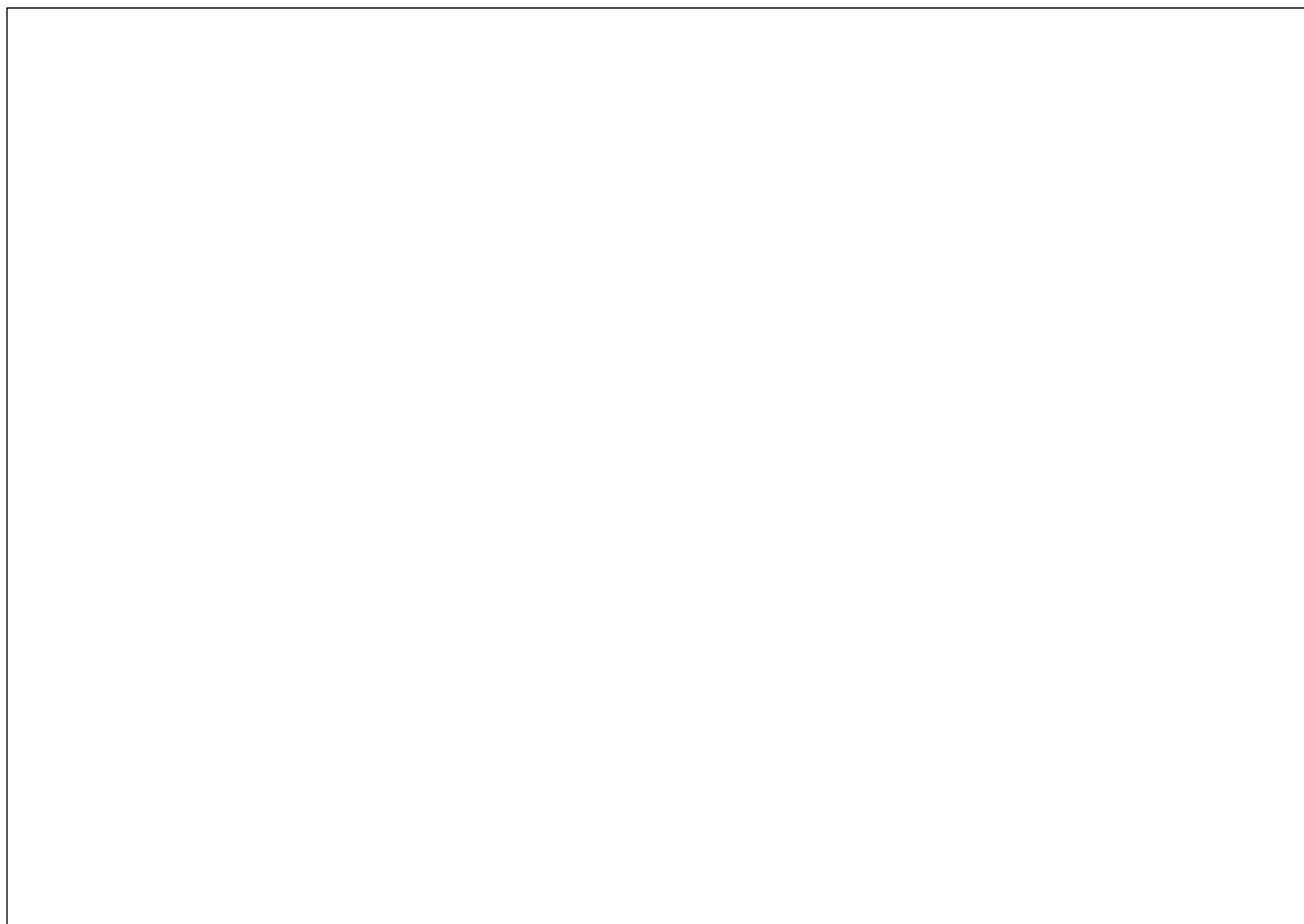
	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Regional school board staff provide effective supports to schools (for example: finance, human resources, student programs and services, addressing parent questions and concerns).					
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development staff provide effective supports to school boards (for example: students services, curriculum development and implementation, policy development).					

**If you would like to say more about a particular question or questions, please write your comments here.**

### Section 3 – Closing Comments and Suggestions

What three things concern you most about the public school system?	What suggestions do you have for each of these concerns?
1.	
2.	
3.	

If there is an important topic that we have not asked about in this survey, please write about it in the space below.



Thank you for completing this survey.

**Please mail your completed survey to the following address by Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.**

Minister's Panel on Education  
c/o Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
2021 Brunswick Street,  
PO Box 578  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 2S9

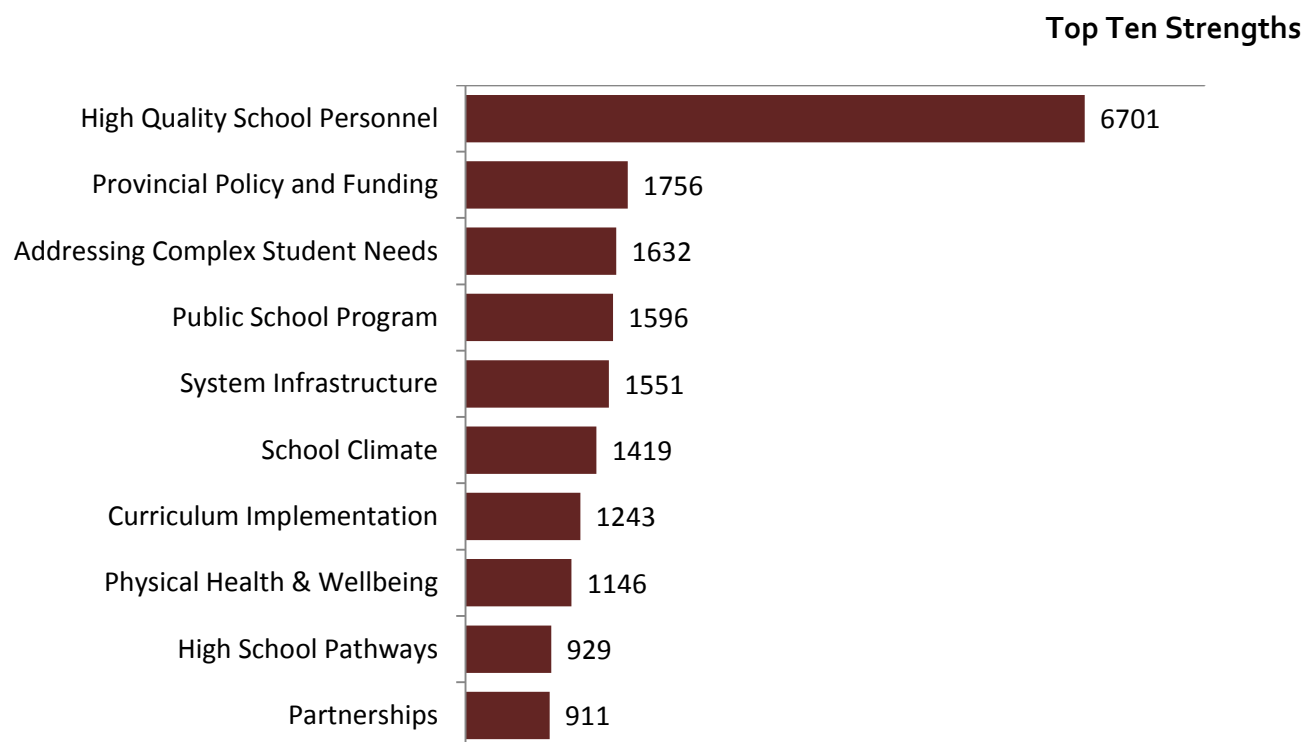
## Strengths

The following section contains answers to the survey question: “What are the strengths of our school system?” This question had about 13,100 responses. All the responses were coded and yielded approximately 20,000 codes in about 130 categories (many responses touched on more than one area).

**Table 1: Number of responses by respondent group.**

Guardian/Parent	4355
Student	3493
Teacher	2544
Student Support Staff	310
School Administrator	263
School Board Staff	150
Community Member	2047
Total	13162

As part of the analysis, the categories were aggregated into key themes. This report captures the top ten themes.



Comments in this section of the survey did not vary by respondents' satisfaction levels (i.e., people who were satisfied and dissatisfied spoke to similar topics)

However there were differences in the areas for improvement mentioned by different respondent types (see Table 2): students were much more likely than other groups to mention school climate, for example and student support staff were more likely to mention addressing complex student needs (as were administrators and school board staff). Parents and community members were most likely to mention curriculum delivery.

**Table 2: Percentage of codes for each respondent type by theme.**

	Guardian/ Parent	Student	Teacher	Student Support Staff	School Admin	School Board Staff	Comm Member
High Quality School Personnel	38%	27%	33%	37%	27%	37%	36%
Provincial Policy and Funding	12%	6%	9%	8%	13%	10%	13%
Addressing Complex Student Needs	8%	7%	11%	16%	13%	11%	9%
Public School Program	8%	10%	10%	5%	9%	6%	8%
System Infrastructure	9%	9%	7%	7%	6%	9%	10%
School Climate	8%	13%	6%	7%	8%	5%	5%
Curriculum Implementation	3%	4%	14%	8%	13%	9%	4%
Physical Health & Wellbeing	5%	16%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%
High School Pathways	4%	8%	4%	3%	4%	4%	5%
Partnerships	6%	1%	5%	6%	7%	4%	6%
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## 1. High quality school personnel (6701)

By far the most common comment Nova Scotians made when asked about the strengths of the school system was to highlight the strengths of school personnel, especially our teachers.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- Many teachers are caring, effective, student focused, and go above and beyond.
- School staff are caring and dedicated, including custodial staff, admin staff, support staff, and faculty.
- Administrators are strong leaders, good communicators, care about students, parents.
- Teachers are highly trained and qualified for their jobs.
- Staff make do with limited resources.
- EAs are caring and support student success.

## 2. Provincial policy and funding (1756)

This theme dealt with “provincial” or systematic policy issues – accessibility, consistency and structure across the province as well as Department policy decisions.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- It is invaluable to have an education system that is universal, accessible, and free to end users.
- Class caps and low class sizes are great for students and teachers.
- We are proud of our bilingual education system (French Imm and CSAP)
- The system has high ideals and is working toward change.
- The system has consistency across the province and is structured.
- Department and boards are doing a good job

### 3. Addressing complex student needs (1632)

This theme dealt with the supports that are available for vulnerable, struggling or exceptional students in the system, including the inclusion policy and mental health supports.

#### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- Inclusion is beneficial not just for students with special needs but for all students, and programming for inclusion is important.
- There is good support (extra help) available for students who are struggling academically.
- There is good support available for students with special needs (adaptations, technology, support workers).
- Schools provide supports for the whole student and their family (e.g. SchoolsPlus)
- It is good that schools provide some access to specialists such as resource teachers, guidance, and education/psych professionals.
- Early Literacy intervention (including Reading Recovery) is effective and needed.

### 4. Public school program (1596)

This theme looks at the content and structure of the public school program (curriculum).

#### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- The curriculum is generally strong, particularly those parts that have been updated/refreshed.
- It is positive that art and music are still offered in our schools as these are an important component of a well-balanced education and allow students to express themselves.
- The public school program provides a good basic education.
- The curriculum is well rounded.
- The new math curriculum is strong and students' math skills are generally good.
- Literacy (particularly reading) is strong for most students.
- The outcomes-based curriculum and approach to education is good.

## 5. System infrastructure (1551)

This theme looked at the physical infrastructure and classroom size, composition in the school system.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Technology to support teaching and learning is available in schools and is relatively up to date.
- School facilities are adequate or good. Maintenance and cleanliness are up to standard.
- Small schools (particularly at the elementary level) offer a personal experience and sense of community for students, parents and staff.
- Local community schools benefit communities and children.
- PowerSchool and Tienet increase communication in school and to home and promote accountability.
- The transportation network is dependable, safe and makes schools accessible. Shorter rides are better, particularly for young students.
- New/updated schools are high quality, contain good resources to support teaching and learning and are visually pleasing and pleasant to be in.

## 6. School climate (1419)

This theme looked at social/emotional feeling of schools.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- The environment at school is positive, there is a community feeling at school.
- Schools are student centered and focused on student success.
- Schools are safe places for children and adults.
- The recent focus on antibully initiatives has been positive.
- The student-teacher relationship is respectful.
- Students are engaged and enjoy school.



## 7. Curriculum implementation (1243)

This theme looked at the effectiveness of teaching and learning and the support available to teachers and schools to implement the curriculum.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- PD is appropriate, readily available, and promotes best practices.
- Students benefit from a focus on hands on, out-of-classroom, self-directed learning.
- Teachers differentiate instruction and are successful in teaching to diverse learners.
- Teachers use best practices and creative, modern teaching methods.
- Teacher collaboration, mentors and coaches are effective in improving teaching practice.
- Classroom and curriculum support materials are available.

## 8. Student physical health & wellbeing (1146)

This theme looked at the interaction between the school environment and curriculum and students' physical health.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- Schools provide good opportunities for students to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities.
- Physical education is essential and must continue to be part of curriculum.
- Breakfast and lunch programs are appreciated, as is tasty healthy cafeteria food.
- Health promoting schools and curriculum (e.g. nutrition curriculum) are important and valued.
- Outdoor learning and recreation is essential for student health.

## 9. High school pathways (929)

This theme looked at the role of the high school years in preparing students for career or future education, and the importance of the different options available to students in high school.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- There is a good variety of courses available in high school, which supports student interests and future plans.
- Career and vocational programs are valuable and effective for all students and particularly those who are less academically inclined (CEP, O2, vocational programs, technical training).
- Options for advanced students (AB, IP, advanced) are important to keep them challenged and prepare them for university.
- It is essential to have a variety of options in high school, especially for less academic students, to keep students in school and motivate them.

## 10. Partnerships (911)

This theme looked at the role of different stakeholders and partners in the education system.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- Parents feel welcome, are supportive, engaged, involved (SAC, PTA, volunteers)
- The students are wonderful (and make all the hassle worth it).
- Connections with the local community are strong, community members support schools through programs and volunteering. Schools support communities with space and having opportunities available locally for students.
- The school system enjoys strong public and community support.

## **SAMPLE QUOTES**

## HIGH QUALITY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

One strength in our school system is some of the teaching staff. Some teachers are there to help kids and make sure we as students know what we are learning and are very helpful, kind and genuinely love their job. - *Student*

Teachers who give their all despite more and more being piled on their plates. - *Guardian/Parent*

The teachers, we have amazingly committed and hardworking teachers! Many of my sons teachers really showed they cared about them as people and this made a huge difference on how my sons viewed their own responsibility towards learning. One teacher from a previous year cared so much she made a point to phone us at the beginning of a new school year in a new location just to see oh well my son transitioned. Another teacher in Middle school would see that my youngest had an excessive amount of energy for any learning to be achieved and so she would give him 5 mins to run around the school ...he would come back and settle into his work... These are innovative and caring problem solvers and I have gone on to thank them for their service to my sons. Teachers needs are important, without our commitment to them our children's needs will be more difficult to face head on!! - *Guardian/Parent*

There are some (too few) teachers who absolutely love their job and love to teach our children! They need to be called out and recognized for their contribution to our children's learning :) - *Guardian/Parent*

There are some strong teachers/support staff who truly care about their students and give us amazing opportunities both academically and outside of academics. - *Student*

The Educational Assistants for the special needs kids are wonderful; - *Guardian/Parent*

Both the P-8 and the high school have outstanding Principals/Administrators who are great leaders and have an open door policy and keep the parents very much informed. It is very nice to see that they are approachable. - *Guardian/Parent*

We have many passionate teachers who work very hard and care deeply about our children (despite constant criticism from public). I feel for the teachers as they do a job that not many people can/would do, yet they are rarely given the respect that they deserve. - *Guardian/Parent*

People who don't see what all teachers do may disagree, but we love our students as if they were our own children and give up countless hours and dollars trying to give them the best education that we possibly can. I only hope that you take advantage of this strength in our school system and listen to our voices - voices of teachers who are currently teaching in classrooms and dealing with current issues; not retired teachers who taught 15, 10, or even 5 years ago, or board members who are no longer in the classroom. - *Teacher*

## PROVINCIAL POLICY AND FUNDING

The fact that our school system is free and available to all Canadians is a privilege and something we should be proud of. - *Student*

The fact that my children can and could attend school without paying out of pocket. Our taxes are high but I work two jobs and my husband is employed so we work hard to ensure that they get a good education and health care. - *Guardian/Parent*

The overall public education system is a high priority for Nova Scotians - people are willing to pay taxes to support high quality education experiences and outcomes. - *Community Member*

Our CSI process is a strength as schools continue to improve student achievement in math and literacy. - *Teacher*

The classes are smaller so you can get more one-on-one time with the teachers. - *Student*

Our system is open to different ways of doing things, is invested in improving and looks to research. - *School Administrator*

The Acadian school system is a jewel. - *Guardian/Parent*

Teachers are paid well thereby attracting good people. - *Teacher*

On demande souvent l'avis des enseignants pour construire de nouveaux programmes, faire des changements nécessaires, etc. Les enseignants ont la chance de faire partie de nombreux comités visant à améliorer l'éducation. - *Teacher*

That everyone now is working from the provincial outcomes instead of doing their own thing. It makes transferring students easier to incorporate into the classroom. - *Teacher*

The dedication to professional development and creating and maintaining consistency in regards to curriculum, assessment policies, school climate and code of conduct. - *Teacher*

As a teacher, I like that I have opportunities to be involved at the DoE level through marking sessions, item writing, curriculum development - although we can always use more teacher input. - *Teacher*

The classes that I have taken throughout my education are a fair size that allows the teacher to teach all students and even spend individual time with students who have questions or concerns. The teachers are extremely dedicated and are willing to commit time outside of class time to help their students succeed. - *Student*

## ADDRESSING COMPLEX STUDENT NEEDS

Both of our school aged sons have benefited strongly from the inclusive environment fostered in NS schools. Our older son has really enjoyed having class with another boy with autistic spectrum disorder (supported by an EPA) and we feel that this has really made him empathetic to the fact that everyone is different but that differences are positive. - *Guardian/Parent*

At Cole Harbour High the disabled students are very included in classes and social activities at school. For the most part, excluding the immature students, everyone in the learning center has lots of friends and always has someone to sit with at lunch. My praise goes to the Best Buddies program for really integrating the students. - *Student*

i have to say that the school has helped me alot this year so much. they have people you can talk to if your havin problems and if you have no food you can talk to someone and they will be there to pay to make sure they are fed and they will use there own money if they have to. the teachers i have are so nice and there to make sure you understand and give up their lunch time to help you. i was having a real bad time with work and my teachers and the pricable and high people could see that i was trtying to work and understand but what was happining outside of home was affecting me at school and they could notice and so they were able to help me to switch over to the other class and ever since my grades have gotten so much better. they could see that i have improved alot.the point is the staff is there to support you trough all of it and try rto get you to succeed. they encouredge you alot and its so joyfull. - *Student*

Home/student support teacher helped get my son through junior high, was his advocate, and helped save his life. Please don't cut funding for these types of teachers-we need more. - *Guardian/Parent*

we support down syndrome like me because our school rocks GO PA - *Student*

We are becoming more able to accommodate diversity in learning styles. We are much better at accepting people with special needs (my son who is 20 and is at Sydney Academy) has autism. It is incredible to see the strides in the inclusive model we have witnessed since he began in the system. - *Guardian/Parent*

They always have programs with extra help for students that need it. - *Student*

In Cumberland we have youth health centres in almost every school and schools plus in Amherst. There is good communication between the schools and other community groups, such as the health authority, DCS, police - *Community Member*

Incorporating more government departments and services under one roof; health, justice, public health, community services, etc - *Guardian/Parent*

Our school system is beginning to understand the importance of inter-agency cooperation and support initiatives such as Health Centers, Schools Plus, early childhood. We take a comprehensive and holistic view of child development and education. - *Student Support Staff*

One of my sons has multiple diagnoses and his teachers have handled these things very well. There is a balance of pushing him, with empathy and understanding. - *Guardian/Parent*

Our strengths are our committments to teaching the 'whole' child. What I mean is that our schools are not just committed to academics, but to the social, emotional and behavioral well being of our students. Most often these challenges need to be addressed before a student can begin to learn. - *School Administrator*

When I went to school, there was little or no mental health, learning disability or bullying support. I have been doing my research and this has greatly improved. - *Community Member*

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The courses I teach are very relevant to students, in my opinion, and much of the curriculum I've seen reflects this. Some has to be updated or changed, such as grade 9 Social Studies - *Teacher*

I think the new option for math at high school is a major step in the right direction. (2credit math10 -> pre cal 11 -> pre cal 12 -> calculus 12) I was worried about being behind in math at university but i feel this will help a lot. - *Student*

Despite what we read in the press the students I teach are exposed to much more mathematics than I was in high school. Calculus wasn't an option for many Nova Scotians 20-30 years ago and now it is being offered in almost every school. - *Teacher*

In Halifax, the biggest strength is the music programs. All City Music is a reason that we moved back to the area. I cannot stress enough the value that these programs bring to our students and the community as a whole. - *Guardian/Parent*

Variety being maintained: French, arts, music, phys ed etc in addition to the basics like math and English and science - *Guardian/Parent*

We have the chance to learn not only academic things. For example, Tech Ed (we build things from wood. Like a wood lab) Family studies, (we sew in grade 7, we cook in grade 8) - *Student*

The changes in the math curriculum look promising and we will have more time for practice and consolidating student understanding. - *School Administrator*

Our fine arts programs have produced hundreds of young band and string students, vocalists, theatre arts performers and such. Speaking as a parent whose children have benefited from these programs, and from the standpoint of a teacher as well, our fine arts programs have literally saved the lives of children who had no other opportunity (or financial support) to express themselves through the arts. These fine arts programs have given students a network of people on whom they can rely for support and friendship (throughout many years, in some cases). - *Teacher*

As an English teacher, I love the flexibility of the curriculum so that I can create diverse lessons to meet the needs of many students and help them both feel and experience success in my classroom. - *Teacher*

## SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

Historically, the primary strength of our school system was how close it was to the communities it served. Small schools in communities allowed for teachers, parents, students and community members to all play a role in the development of students and programming at the school. - School Board Staff

We just moved to a bigger school and the gym is bigger. There is a place where we can eat instead of staying in the rooms and getting them dirty. There is a place to play when it is raining out. - *Student*

Neighbourhood schools reflect the community - values, neighbours, friends, local entrepreneurs. - *Guardian/Parent*

My child's school has an excellent amount of computer and electronic technology. My daughter is very interested in a career in computer science and her school's emphasis on that area has definitely added to her excitement and interest in that field. - *Guardian/Parent*

The access to information has improved significantly with the implementation of Power School. This allows parents to closely monitor their child's progress and attendance. Most teachers are using it consistently and this is far more helpful than a report card twice a year. - *Guardian/Parent*

The integration of technology and the principles of 21st Century learning in the past 5 years have been paramount in dealing with engagement and inclusion of middle school students. - *Teacher*

I am fortunate to live near a small neighbourhood elementary school - small schools are great for small kids. - *Guardian/Parent*

It does not bother me that I am in an older school as long as it is clean and kept up. Show pride in what you do have. Everything does not have to be bigger and better. - *Student Support Staff*

Our schools are up to date with concerns with technology. I have a LCD projector, Mimeo, access to class I pads or Ipad minis. Our classrooms are well taken care of. - *Teacher*

PowerSchool allows me as a parent to stay on top of my children's progress and provide some help as soon as possible when they may struggle with course work. - *Guardian/Parent*

The ability to be able to view your current marks on the parent portal is very useful I believe. It helps us to figure out what we missed and how to bring it in to improve your grades. - *Student*

We are very fortunate to have access to so many different learning tools. We have books, computers, iPads, etc. Not every school is lucky enough to have all of these learning tools available. - *Student*



## SCHOOL CLIMATE

It is a largely safe, caring, and stable place for our children -- for some, it is the most safe, caring, and stable place in their life. - *Guardian/Parent*

The family atmosphere of our staff/ student environment. People care about each other and the school atmosphere. - *Guardian/Parent*

the strengths of are school is that is it a family and if a child is having a hard time they are right there to fix the problem. You feel like you are apart of the school and that you can go to them for anything. - *Guardian/Parent*

we are strong when it comes to making decisions as a group together. We have very nice staff most of the time and the after school programs that we put on for kids of all ages is awesome. - *Student*

I feel the teachers have a strong understanding and do a very well job connecting with students one to one, and creating good relationships. It helps in my education and helps with my skills as a person. - *Student*

The teachers are great, there is a zero tolerance for swearing and back talk, strong against bullies and good environment within our school system - *Guardian/Parent*

they are really organised and they are really understanding they are a great team of people who will do anything to help there students to get there work done in the run of a school year they are very helpful if any student is going through a rough time. They have a really good understanding of what the student can and can not do and they will do anything to help the student understand there work. - *Student*

The movement towards student-centered programming and working with the strengths of our kids rather than focusing on their weaknesses. Involving kids in their education keeps them (and their parents!) engaged for success! - *Guardian/Parent*

They produce happy, well-rounded children that are a pleasure to be around. The schools foster pride and encourage team players. - *Guardian/Parent*

## **CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

Professional development opportunities have become more relevant and effective. - *Teacher*

PD Sessions that are selected by school staff - depending upon school need and interest. Although many are board mandated there is some opportunity to plan PD. - *Teacher*

Valuable inservices for teaching staff keep them motivated throughout the system. - *Teacher*

The school where our son attends really encourages all the grades to help each other. Our son is in primary and the Grade 4, 5, & 6 classes come and help the younger children with their reading. It has really helped our son with confidence in his reading. I find that it has helped him to want and continue learning to read daily!! - *Guardian/Parent*

Students are provided a far richer, flexible and more diverse learning experience than I remember in my public school days. In contrast to the bias of remembering the good old days, the current system, with French Immersion, IB programs, a respect for diversity and inclusion of disabled students is head and shoulders superior when compared to what I saw as a student of the 70's and 80's. - *Guardian/Parent*

In my current role (P-8), I am in and out of classrooms constantly and I see much more engagement of students AND teachers - not sitting at the back of the room while kids do sheet work, but engaging with them through instruction/questioning, technology (smart boards especially), hands-on activities or general support. - *Teacher*

Now, more than ever, I am noticing changes taking place within the schooling system. For example, they are starting to put more focus on learning things outside the classroom, not just from a textbook, and also learning skills that go beyond the classrooms use. - *Student*

Our school system lets the students learn in many ways using technology (ex. Mimio) and it is easier for us all to learn new things in many different ways instead of just opening up a book, reading from it and being tested on it. - *Student*

The role of the in-school mentors has added a tremendous amount to our school. The support for new and more experienced teachers is invaluable. - *School Administrator*

The implementation of the mentoring movement within the province has been a wonderful addition to our schools. Young and more experienced teachers are benefiting tremendously from the wealth of expertise the Language Arts and Math Mentors. - *School Administrator*

The way learning skills in the classroom is connected to the wider world, ie. there is as much non-academic but nevertheless essential learning going on through things like the school musicals, the DARE program, the role grade 5 students play in helping with the school jobs (sorting waste, helping at the cafeteria, reading to younger children etc.), different awareness programs and so on (the list is long). I think this is valuable and makes the school experience very varied. - *Guardian/Parent*

Changes in the past years have created more accountability for teachers in planning, teaching, and assessing the outcomes. Recent curriculum reviews are a start. - *School Administrator*

Elementary classrooms allow for different types of learning styles -- there is group work, experiential learning, art, educational field trips, real life examples are used in math. All of this seems to work very well for students in elementary school and from my experience most students in my child's school are engaged and like school. - *Guardian/Parent*

## **STUDENT PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELLBEING**

We have a new respect for physical education and health. - *Guardian/Parent*

The extra curricular activities and sports associated with the school. That is where good teachers or community members help students learn teamwork and students begin to treat each other nicely. Each student gains confidence if there are good leaders here. Each student should be in some activity to have something to be proud of so they are included. - *Guardian/Parent*

The breakfast program is fantastic! Thank you! I can not get my children to eat in the morning despite my best efforts. They will however, go to the breakfast program. I truly believe that giving them this fuel impacts the rest of their school day in such a postive way. - *Guardian/Parent*

I also think a major strength of our school system is the breakfast program, I use it everyday and I love how accessible it is. - *Student*

When you are hungry you get to have something to eat-you get to play on the playground with your friends-meet new friends-you can chat with your friends-you get to have nice teacher-you get to do fun Science experiments-you get to try new things-cool art things-fun activities-DPA-I love phys. Ed. and music-recess and lunch-fun teachers-learn new games and play them at home - *Student*

The Excel childcare program is amazing and greatly appreciated.The local programers are friendly and effective. The programming isexciting and fresh. - *Guardian/Parent*

There is a very good range of extracurricular activities offered by the schools that supplement the education and help improve the quality of the experience in school. - *Student*

Very good breakfast program everyday, by volunteers in our community. Great after school athletic programs, such as sports. - *Student*

## HIGH SCHOOL PATHWAYS

Our school system has a reasonable ability (at the high school level) to provide different levels of teaching for students of varying ability on a subject by subject basis, which is better than the brutal academic/non-academic streaming that exists in some other places. - *Guardian/Parent*

There are many courses available to students. There are different pathways you can take to graduate and get your high school diploma. - *Student*

I think the success of programs like O2 are showing us we need alternative streams for students as they transition to work and post-secondary opportunities. - *School Administrator*

Our school system does a great job at providing meaningful education for those who may struggle academically. Offering more basic math courses allows students to learn practical math skills instead of struggling in a class they hate. Programs like Co-op and O2 give students real job experience, allowing them to build a resume and help choose a career path. - *Student*

The program that I am directly involved in is the Options and Opportunities program that is excellent - I wouldn't change a thing besides give it more funding and try to allow for all students to get a similar opportunity. The career exploration that occurs truly develops students and prepares them for the workforce. - *Teacher*

As the parent of a student graduating in two weeks, I am happy he is finished his schooling because I fear the cuts to such programs as the O2 program, (which made him successful) would limit the chances of him completing his high school certification. - *Guardian/Parent*

The option and opportunities program (O2) is an amazing program, I think there should just be more opportunities for more kids to join it. In our school they only accept 20 people every year. - *Student*

The course range provides a decent way for students to fully prepare themselves for Post - Secondary endeavors. Access to courses such as Law, Sociology, and Psychology (and in some cases Political Science) allow students to experiment with these classes before deciding to take them in College or University. - *Community Member*

The investment that has been made into additional programming, such as Skilled Trades and O2 has been a great addition to our high school. I think that these programs have been able to meet the educational needs of many of our students, who perhaps wouldn't have felt that school recognized and supported their skills and abilities. - *Teacher*

The only strength of the Nova Scotian Education system is the fact that they accept the International Baccalaureate program. Honestly, if it wasn't for IB i would probably be making 100% in every class and learning nothing. - *Student*

The recent additions of programs like Skilled Trades and Options and Opportunities, which are meeting the needs of students who have many skills but didn't fit in to the traditional academic student mold. - *Teacher*

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Wonderful students to work with. They are our future and a gift to society. We owe it to them and our world to improve Nova Scotia's educational system. - *Teacher*

Parents are encouraged to work with teachers to set goals for their children. - *Guardian/Parent*

There are a lot of opportunities for parent involvement in the school systems through home and schools, school advisory councils and as a volunteer. - *Guardian/Parent*

Les écoles de langue française ont des liens étroits avec les parents et la communauté. L'implication des parents contribuent au succès des élèves. - *School Administrator*

Also some of the programs and agencies that come to the schools to work with the students have excellent programs. For example Addiction Services recently did a program called Active 8 and it was well received and opened the lines of communication between our child and us as parents. Some of the topics discussed were not necessarily those that we would have talked about otherwise. - *Guardian/Parent*

In my school, the teachers and students work together to find new and innovative ways to learn. - *Teacher*

How helpful and determined the kids are to succeed in school events and how everyone is nice and helpful and are great friends - *Student*

A great community of learners and I work in a school where students, parents, teachers ,administrators are part of a great team - *Teacher*

We have wonderful students who are, for the most part, hard-working, appreciative, and just plain fun to be around. - *Teacher*

The strengths of our school system are that we are very community oriented. There are a lot of options for the younger grades and there is always a project going on that involves everyone. - *Student*

Community oriented- as a Family Resource Centre we offer programs to local schools, use space in schools and have the opportunity to partner with local schools. We have been involved in the enrichment program offered in a few of the schools- when schools reach out to the community they are allowing the village to raise the child - *Community Member*

ÉcolesPlus - Bravo! Amener les intervenants ensemble à l'école permet à mieux répondre aux besoins des élèves. - *Guardian/Parent*

Le projet du développement scolaire et communautaire et des écoles communautaires citoyennes sont inovateurs et devraient aussi inspirer nos confrères des conseils régionaux. - *School Administrator*

The local elementary has several partnerships with external citizens that greatly benefit her educational experience. There is a local artist who volunteers and teaches teh children. - *Guardian/Parent*

## Areas for Improvement

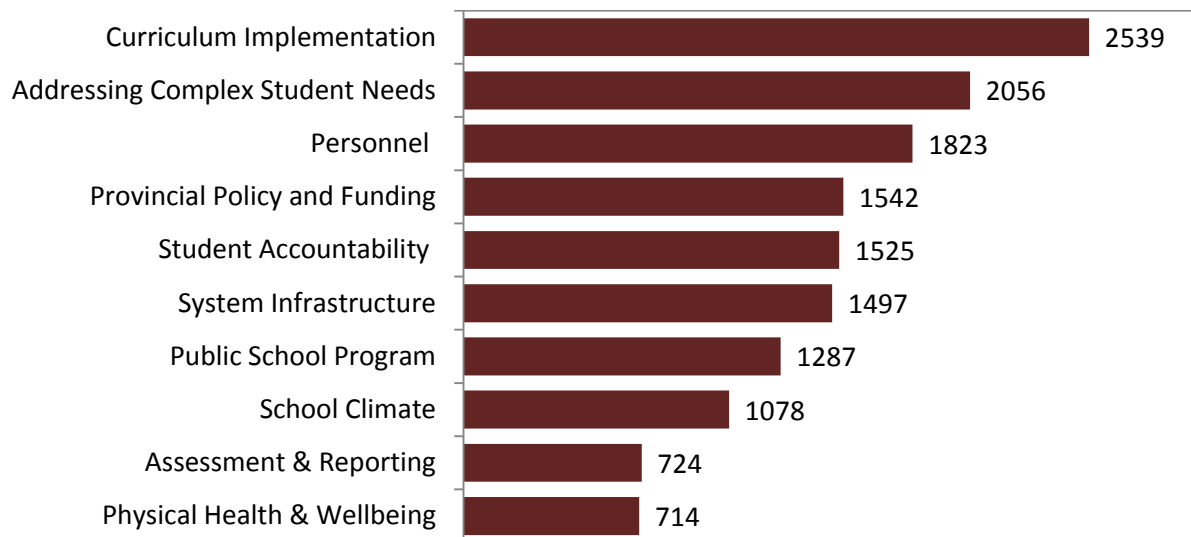
The following section contains answers to the survey question: “What needs to be improved?” (in our school system) This question had about 15,600 responses. In order to complete the survey analysis in a timely manner, just over half the responses were sampled for a total of 8000 responses coded. Those 8000 responses yielded approximately 20,000 codes in about 200 categories (many responses touched on more than one area).

**Table 1: Number of responses by respondent group.**

Guardian/Parent	5477
Student	3968
Teacher	2869
Student Support Staff	377
School Administrator	272
School Board Staff	166
Community Member	2499
Total	15628

As part of the analysis, the categories were aggregated into key themes. This report captures the top ten themes.

### Top Ten Areas for Improvement



Comments in this section of the survey did not vary by respondents' satisfaction levels (i.e., people who were satisfied and dissatisfied spoke to similar topics)

However there were differences in the areas for improvement mentioned by different respondent types (see Table 2): students were much more likely than other groups to mention school climate, for example and student support staff were more likely to mention addressing complex student needs (as were administrators and school board staff). Parents and community members were most likely to mention curriculum delivery.

**Table 2: Percentage of codes for each respondent type by theme.**

	Guardian/ Parent	Student	Teacher	Student Support Staff	School Admin	School Board Staff	Comm Member
Curriculum Implementation	20%	16%	9%	14%	8%	13%	19%
Addressing Complex Student Needs	12%	5%	18%	31%	23%	22%	11%
Personnel	11%	13%	14%	10%	14%	13%	13%
Provincial Policy and Funding	10%	8%	12%	8%	13%	14%	11%
Student Accountability	10%	4%	10%	9%	8%	6%	12%
System Infrastructure	11%	14%	13%	9%	10%	14%	6%
Public School Program	8%	10%	8%	6%	11%	7%	12%
School Climate	7%	16%	5%	10%	4%	5%	7%
Assessment & Reporting	7%	2%	7%	3%	7%	3%	4%
Physical Health & Wellbeing	5%	12%	3%	2%	3%	3%	5%
<b>TOTALS</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## 1. Curriculum Implementation (2539)

This theme dealt with the way the curriculum is taught and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Students aren't learning "the basics" – graduates don't know how to read, write, multiply or divide
- Academic rigor is lacking. Teachers need to have higher expectations of students and challenge them in the classroom.
- Literacy concerns include acquisition of basic skills (some asked for explicit instruction in phonics, spelling, grammar), and a desire to focus on life skills (e.g. resume writing) and university preparation (e.g. essay writing).
- Math concerns include lack of focus on basic skills (students need to learn to add/subtract/multiply/divide before moving on), too many outcomes in curriculum which leads to just touching on the fundamentals, and confusing methods (e.g. discovery learning in mathematics and "new math" in elementary).
- Traditional pedagogy (rote, cursive) has a place alongside discovery learning and there is too much emphasis on technology integration in the classroom (e.g. searching for answers on internet as opposed to thinking them through, using calculators instead of memorizing times tables).
- Experiences outside of the traditional classroom are important (extracurricular activities, hands on, student directed projects, outdoor time, field trips).
- Teachers need more training on inclusion and differentiated instruction for the full range of students (learning disabled, gifted, etc) and need to practice differentiation.
- Technology should be better integrated into the classroom to familiarize students with technology, to increase student engagement and to aid instruction.



## 2. Addressing complex student needs (2056)

This theme dealt with the many supports schools are asked to provide for students with learning disabilities, mental health issues, problems at home, behavioral issues, etc.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Inclusion is a good idea but needs a lot more support to work well: Many parents, teachers and school personnel thought that full inclusion is a good ideal but in that in practice, without adequate supports it is not working for the included students, their classmates, or teachers.
- Students with learning disabilities need more support and more early intervention.
- More educational assistants (EAs) are needed for learning, behavioral and other support. It seems in some places EAs are only in place for medical needs and teachers would like to see their role expanded and have access to many more EAs in the classroom.
- More guidance and/or mental health support is needed for vulnerable students and families
- A significant minority of respondents felt streaming and special needs classes are preferable to full inclusion. This included bright students who wished for more advanced educational opportunities.
- Some struggling students (especially in math and literacy) feel they are allowed to fall behind and are offered little extra help, particularly if they do not have behavioral issues.
- Caseloads and waiting lists for ed/psych professionals (school psychologists, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, autism specialists, etc.) are way too big. Parents mention waiting years for assessments and professionals mention having far too many cases to treat effectively.
- Some mentioned a need for more resource time and teachers, often mentioning learning centres.

### 3. Personnel (1823)

This theme dealt with the human resources in the system, most particularly teachers but also administrators and staff.

#### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Teacher hiring and firing should be merit based, not seniority based, and there should be a method for getting rid of bad teachers.
- Teacher morale is low and workload is high - too much paperwork, too many new initiatives (insufficiently supported), too little respect and autonomy
- Teachers should be qualified for the courses they teach and need better methods to reach a variety of students.
- Administrators should be leaders (educational, personnel, standing up to parents) and should have their performance assessed.
- The union protects bad teachers and administrators should be in a separate union.
- Substitutes and leave: teacher leave hurts the students and the AESOP system for substitute hiring should go.

### 4. Provincial Policy and Funding (1542)

This theme dealt with “provincial” issues – equity, consistency and structure across the province as well as Department policy decisions.

#### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Better equity between rich, poor schools. Rural schools deserve the same opportunities as urban schools. Consistency in expectations, opportunities and resources across the province is important.
- Funding - inject more funding, recognize greater student needs in the funding formula instead of just funding by head.
- The system is top heavy, resources should go to the classroom instead of administration, consider reducing the amount of school boards or streamlining the staff in boards.
- The system should be student centered, focused on individual student needs and should prioritize engaging students.
- Issues related to schools: school closures (some recommended underused schools be closed), school review process (should be more transparent and responsive to the community), keep small elementary schools, enforce school boundaries in HRM.
- DOECD should research best practices, show leadership, set a few important priorities and support these priorities fully.
- Decisionmakers are too out of touch with classroom.
- Trust and respect teachers and schools, allow more flexibility and autonomy.

## 5. Student Accountability and Responsibility (1525)

This theme deals with the notion that the school system has a role to play in the social development of students, particularly in encouraging responsibility and accountability as important traits for life.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Students must become responsible and accountable partners in their education to prepare for life, post secondary and workforce.
- The “no fail” policy (both no zeros on assignments and no retention through grades) is bad preparation for life and demotivating both for those students who complete the work and those who are not compelled to finish their work.
- Deadlines and strict due dates for independent work would help students develop a work ethic and a sense of consequences for actions.
- More homework allows students to develop study and time management skills and is a communication tool for parents/guardians to know what their children are working on in school.
- Strict attendance policies beginning in elementary will emphasize the importance of school to students and families, prevent truancy, and prepare students for work life.
- Schools play an important role in the social development of students.

## 6. System infrastructure (1497)

This theme looked at the physical infrastructure and classroom size, composition in the school system.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Lower class size and/or implement class caps in higher grades similar to those in place in lower grades. Concerns about class size are closely tied to class composition, with many claiming the demands of programming for and teaching to a wide variety of student abilities reduce teacher effectiveness in large classes.
- Maintain or replace older schools: some schools are very dirty and ill-kept.
- Technology in schools is outdated, sparse or broken (many noted there is inequity in technology access across schools, with newer or wealthier schools having much better access to technology resources).
- Split classes are unfair to students and teachers (who have to navigate double the outcomes and curriculum with no specialized curriculum support).

## 7. Public School Program (1287)

This theme looked at the content and structure of the public school program (curriculum).

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- Curriculum should be updated, of higher quality
- There should be more emphasis on art and music for brain development and expression
- The curriculum contains too many outcomes, is not sufficiently flexible
- We should teach practical life skills (e.g., financial literacy, cooking)
- We should promote 21<sup>st</sup> century learning (self-directed, critical thinking, problem solving, STEM)

## 8. School climate (1078)

This theme looked at social/emotional feeling of schools.

### **Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):**

- Behaviors in school can be at best disruptive, at worst unsafe. Class management and discipline should be supported by DOEECD policy (for example, Positive Effective Behavioral Supports, Restorative Justice are promising)
- Bullying remains a problem at school.
- Vulnerable groups should be more supported in school (African Nova Scotians, Mi'kmaq students, LGBTI, low socioeconomic status, boys)
- The dress code is unfair, should be enforced evenly (there were a few calls for uniforms)
- We must develop respectful relationships between students and teachers.

## 9. Assessment and reporting (724)

This theme looked at issues related to the assessment of student learning and reporting on student achievement.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- Report cards make no sense: they are impersonal, jargon filled, and unhelpful for parents who want to know specific information about where their child has gone wrong and strategies for improvement.
- Parents would like better, more prompt communication to home about their child, especially when problems first arise.
- Outcomes based education is ineffective: reporting in performance levels on outcomes is unclear, subjective, and meaningless.
- Standardized testing is cumbersome, a waste of time and money, and not a good reflection of the individual student.

## 10. Physical Health and Wellbeing (714)

This theme looked at the interaction between the school environment and curriculum and students' physical health.

### Common threads in this theme included (from most to least prevalent):

- More gym (every day, or at least more than twice a week) and/or daily physical activity for all students would help students' physical health, mental health and behavior regulation.
- Food in school should be more nutritious and/or tastier. There should be more free breakfast programs (lunch programs were mentioned a few times).
- Health and nutrition education should be emphasized, more schools should have health centres and/or school nurses for students' medical needs.

# **SAMPLE QUOTES**

## CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

We need to go back to the basics of reading and math so that the core competencies are learned and solidified in Elementary school. The assumption that kids can learn to read well without phonetics and repetition is not working for too high a number of kids. Kids also no longer learn to spell or do multiplication by rote and lack of solid knowledge of basic math facts makes higher math much more difficult. - *Guardian/Parent*

The philosophy of just convey your ideas - grammar is not important - does not exist in the world outside of the public school system. A resume with multiple spelling errors will be discarded immediately. Attention to detail DOES matter - but we teach our students that it does not. - *Teacher*

Somehow children cannot read, spell, write, add, subtract, multiply or divide numbers. This is a travesty. - *Community Member*

It feels like the curriculum gets changed so that everyone can do well, but it means that a lot of people are not being challenged or properly prepared for their future. – *Student*

I believe music, art, and gym are important in any learning environment, and two thirty-minute gym classes a week seems entirely inadequate. - *Guardian/Parent*

Need to encourage them to strive for great instead of just ringing the bell on a learning outcome. - *Guardian/Parent*

Individualization of programs as opposed to 'one fits all' mindset. Students should be allowed to move at a pace that suits them, as opposed to being forced to learn too slowly and become bored or too quickly and become frustrated. Students should not be punished for having strengths and weaknesses, and in the current system, it's a bad thing both to excel and to struggle. Education in Nova Scotia is tailored to the mediocre. - *Student*

The emphasis on class lessons chained to technology in the classroom loses much in the outcome. Children learn much from walking through the woods and trips to the seaside, experiencing and learning from Nature first hand. So far as general science lessons are concerned these are the classes often most remembered with fondness, and for many it is often the first time they've learnt about the different trees they see through the leaves and nuts they find. - *Guardian/Parent*

The low academic expectations placed on our kids is completely unacceptable. Average students cruise through with virtually no effort. For good students, our public school system is a complete joke. I've never been so disappointed or upset by an institution in my life. We are raising a generation where laziness and lack of expectations is the norm. - *Guardian/Parent*

Teachers should not be expected to search through numerous text books and computer sites to find materials to cover the curriculum, this is a waste of their time, materials should be readily available at their fingertips then they can plan their lessons effectively using the materials. - *Guardian/Parent*

## ADDRESSING COMPLEX STUDENT NEEDS

Classrooms and staff are overwhelmed by the number of students with special needs, behavioral challenges, learning disabilities, social, emotional and attentional problems, physical challenges, and mental health issues. We need to improve our menu of choices and services for these individuals in a proactive, timely fashion with minimal wait times for students and families to get the support they need. - *Student Support Staff*

In the past, we had larger classes, but students who couldn't behave, couldn't focus, couldn't learn were excluded. Now teachers (even though with smaller classes) are trying to provide a far more individualized (differentiated) program to many students, while helping the class as a whole achieve the outcomes. Add to that fewer Teacher assistants, and a narrowed range of responsibility for them, and many students are left without attention in trying to meet so many diverse needs. - *School Administrator*

The way we approach inclusion in our schools is not effective to meet student needs. More support is necessary in order for to serve the needs of the students. Doling out supports (resource, LC, EAL, EPA, etc) according to student population is ludicrous. It must be based on student needs and not school population. - *Teacher*

Special needs students need to have EPAs who are highly trained, paid more, and provided with more break and prep time. Time should also be available for EPAs and teachers to meet and program together outside of the classroom so that time in the classroom can be focused on students. - *Teacher*

I think teachers need more support and training in the areas of inclusion and exceptionalities and need easier access to support from qualified psychologists and experts in the fields of mental illness and various exceptionalities. Right now, many of us feel kind of left to our own devices and a bit ashamed to ask for help. We do not have specialized training in many of these regards right now. - *Teacher*

The lack of support with mental health is beyond frustrating. It doesn't seem to matter how many agencies are involved when you are dealing with a violent child. You as the teacher and the Teacher's Aide are the ones dealing with the destruction of classrooms, the having to ask fellow colleagues to take on teaching your other students, and the aftermath. These students need a special program as soon as they are identified, not when they reach a certain age or at the end of a school year. They are hurting others and themselves - *Teacher*

The introduction of inclusion was meant to be a positive change. Since it's inception, the support systems that were meant to be in place have dwindled to the point where most children with special needs receive little or no support ) half an hour each day is considered the norm in many schools). – *Teacher*

I am a Speech-Language Pathologist and I carry a caseload of 130+ students across 5 schools. It is impossible for me to provide the support needed to these students. This caseload number is much higher than in other provinces. There are too many students with needs for me to be able to properly treat them. - *School Board Staff*



## PERSONNEL

Teachers need to be able to be held accountable for their teaching methods- I have had a worrying number of questionable teachers throughout junior high and high school, and nothing ever seems to be done about it. I have had teachers that bullied students (in one specific case we were forced to sit in a circle and tell one student what we did not like about him. This teacher also referred to us as scum from the earth and threatened anyone who was in the vicinity of her desk) Despite complaints, nothing changed. There were no repercussions and we even had the same teacher again two years later. - *Student*

Teachers need support in the classroom! We are drowning and left feeling like we are never doing our jobs well enough because of all the demands. Class numbers are high and meeting the needs of all our students doesn't feel attainable. - *Teacher*

Either less paper work for teachers, or increased time to address this workload-for example when a student misbehaves I have to fill out something on PEBS and submit it, fill out a behavior incident form on Power Teacher, call home and discuss the issue with the parents, email the office to let them know about the incident report, enter the phone call into a phone log, and then spend whatever time is required with that student to work on correcting the behavior. - *Teacher*

Improve the subject-matter competence of teachers, especially in senior high school. Strong students are often frustrated by their teachers' disappointing level of expertise and the defensiveness that comes with it. Producing teachers more competent in their subjects may require an overhaul of the teacher-education system. - *Guardian/Parent*

I feel the number of substitute teachers ALL of my children have had to endure, EVERY year, is almost laughable. I understand there will be parental and sick leaves but the quality and quantity of the short term substitute teachers is absolutely unacceptable. As well, the popularity of deferred leaves is affecting the consistency of education when one of my children had 5 homeroom teachers in 1 year in grade 5! - *Guardian/Parent*

There should be a better way for choosing principals and vps than their level of education. Many principals may be well educated but not good at dealing with conflicts, problems or school administration. This affects the entire climate of the school. - *Guardian/Parent*

Management must improve the bad teaching. I've heard management blame the union for protecting the teacher, but I also hear the frustrated teachers who see the bad teachers continue with no consequences. Better training for management to deal with unions is desperately needed. Other organizations remove bad employees within unions - management needs to manage! Overall grades will improve once the teaching is improved. - *Community Member*

The teachers that are retired need to stay retired and leave space for new, younger, fresher teachers to teach within the school systems, especially in the Grade Primary - 6 range. The teachers need to be young and full of energy with this group - not retirement age with no patience for younger children. - *Guardian/Parent*

## PROVINCIAL POLICY AND FUNDING

Consistency between schools, both in terms of the structures and amenities, and also in terms of the quality of educators. There should be no good or bad schools/catchment areas in Nova Scotia. Instead of good schools driving demand for real estate in certain areas, the calibre of schools in Nova Scotia should drive demand from other areas of the country and abroad. Let's make Nova Scotia THE place to send your kids to school. - *Guardian/Parent*

There is a great discrepancy between schools in HRM. There are have and have not schools. - *Teacher*

The cuts being made. More and more teachers are being cut and being replaced with online courses, causing a decline in grades. It isn't right. - *Student*

Many areas need improvement beginning with a top heavy and expensive management system. There is a real disconnect between some administrators and school boards and those delivering the services to the students. One may ask why we need so many boards with positions that don't really support students. Many feel board offices, and as such administration, have become nepotistic havens for incompetence which only increases the disconnection between those involved in the system. - *Teacher*

When cuts were made in recent years at the board, they were governed by the people who weren't going to cut their own jobs, or jobs of their fellow higher up administrative positions. When cuts are being made there should be a third party unbiased opinion included. The government just said cut \$X ....then cuts were made inappropriately to save jobs that should have been cut. - *School Board Staff*

I have been involved with numerous DOE initiatives and am always shocked to see how removed from classrooms DOE curriculum staff are. Many have not taught in a classroom for ten plus years. This is true for many of our consultants. It is difficult to take direction from leadership that really are not aware of what it is like in a typical classroom. - *Teacher*

The public deserves honest assessments of the quality of each school. The UK government annually inspects schools, reports publicly test marks, and intervenes with additional resources for failing schools. Then if turnarounds are not forthcoming, responsible parties are dismissed and replaced. - *Guardian/Parent*

We need to do our own research before adopting a program or curriculum from the US or Alberta. We need resist the sale pitch approach to program acquisition. We need to make sure that a program has had at least a decade of document success before we consider piloting the program. - *Teacher*

We are education, community services, department of justice, health and wellness, etc. all rolled into one. We can't do it all well but God bless the teachers and support staff, they are trying. - *School Administrator*

Our system is one that has been cobbled together without a vision. - *Teacher*

Schools also need to be given some professional autonomy and the ability to make professional decisions. At times it feels like too many people who have no experience in education, other than being a student 30 years ago, have their hands in the pot. - *Teacher*

## STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Also, the kids need to be encouraged to take risks, both in the classroom and out on the playground. There are far too many rules (no play swords at Halloween for instance), or don't walk on the icy patches at recess. Kids are far more resilient and they need to test limits. They also need to learn how to lose. Being right is great. Being wrong is a great learning experience. - *Guardian/Parent*

Our students need to be allowed to fail, and to learn about failure and how to deal with it. It prepares them for the rest of life. I have heard teachers are not allowed failing and have to allow perpetual retakes of tests and assignments. This allows a culture of entitlement and laziness to perpetuate. We should not pass students to the next grade if they are not ready academically, they will only fall further behind, which will also lead to social and psychological issues along with academic ones. - *Guardian/Parent*

We need to start failing kids who don't do their work, Because they're holding back the whole class. - *Student*

That people can do nothing all day and nothing happens to them. It seems to be very easy all through grade primary to 12 is easy. It seems that anyone can pass even when they dont come to school. - *Student*

We are not preparing our students for the reality of the work world. There are no such things as 'late slips' and endless extensions on due dates in the 'real world'. Ask a teacher such as myself who places students on work terms: not all, but a great deal of students, experience 'culture shock' when they realize an employer is not willing to tolerate tardiness or poor behaviour. - *Teacher*

Kids who don't have parents who can teach them how to be successful stand a higher change of being left behind. They need to be given more homework. They need clearer guidelines on what is expected. They need to be taught how to study, how to organize their work, how to plan ahead. They need tips on how to go from a 3 to a 4 on a rubric (simple things that everyone can do like using a ruler, using color, explaining why/how, proof reading out loud, etc. These are things that show pride and attention to detail and do make a difference). - *Guardian/Parent*

We are allowing them to miss great amounts of class time, hand in assignments weeks after the due dates, and have adaptations made at every turn, WITHOUT allowing them to put more effort into solving problems themselves. In other words, we are creating a generation of otherwise vital young people who have been enabled in rationalization and excuse making. - *Teacher*

There are no consequences to poor study habits. A deadline has become a joke. Hand things in later, get extensions, do it when you feel like it. demand from other areas of the country and abroad. Let's make Nova Scotia THE place to send your kids to school. - *Guardian/Parent*

They need to prepare us for university or any kind of post-secondary education more. Or even prepare us more for the real life. They treat us like children and if we are treated like children we will act like children and we will be completely screwed come time for university where it is no longer acceptable to rely on your teacher, or other people to give you all the help you need whenever you need it. They need to teach us to be more responsible and independent. - *Student*

## SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

First and above all class sizes need to shrink, the limit of students in any one class is 29 but I often see classes that surpass that, with class sizes as large as they are students often feel left out because teachers have no time to help them. - *Student*

No soft caps. As has been seen in previous years soft cap is basically the same as no cap. - *Teacher*

I think that the class sizes are way to big and the teacher can't always get to me. - *Student*

How funding is decided - cannot be based on # of students - needs to be based on needs of the students .... - *Teacher*

I teach 28 students in a 3/4 classroom and there are so many behavioural/mental health/ and academic needs in my classroom. We have 1 student with autism an additional 3 students with provisional diagnosis. Although I truly believe in inclusion, the class size is not conducive to meeting the needs of all the students. - *Teacher*

Combined classes are a reality in most rural areas- teachers should be able to plan over 2 years in order to properly cover the curriculum- not try to cover all let's say science outcomes for 2 grades in 1 year. - *School Administrator*

Our schools are in poor repair. We do not have the abilities or space to offer proper gymnasium faciities or any additional cirriculum. It is difficult to have school pride when the buildings and grounds are falling apart around you. - *Guardian/Parent*

Schools in my area are too old. My son will be going to the same school ( Prince Arthur) as my 72 year old mother went to for junior high. It looks like a prison. Both of my children have already gone through elementary at Shannon Park which looks like a bombed out city.I think teachers and administration do their best but the environment is so unpleasant. We deserve at least a new school for more than just the suburbs and French schools. - *Guardian/Parent*

Underfunded. We have one piece of playground equipment for the entire school. It was purchased after fundraising all year. When I asked my daughter what they play at recess her response was that the children play with rocks . I couldn't believe what I was hearing. There isn't even a swing. There is no grass. There is nothing. - *Guardian/Parent*

I understand that funding is limited but schools, especially rural schools, do not have the technology necessary to have effective classes. The computers at my school are old, slow and break often. With the advancements and importance of technology in this generation it is necessary for students to have suitable equipment and programs. Technology is a resource that can be used for great things in education and will most certainly be used in the future. I see that improving the resources available to schools by providing Smart Boards to at least all science and math teachers (especially at the high school level), providing labs and classrooms with computers that work, and having updated versions of Microsoft programs would be very beneficial. – *Student*

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The curriculum seems to be somewhat scattered and a moving target. At the higher grade levels, the objectives are not met, mainly because they are unrealistic. - *Guardian/Parent*

I would like to see our curriculum be based on brain studies for age appropriate content. For example most boys are not ready to learn to read in grade Primary. The expectations in grade primary is a set up for many children to be turned off to school. - *Teacher*

Stop spending millions of the newest flavour-of-the-month program. Keep it simple. At the end of the day, our kids still can't read, write or do math. - *Teacher*

I think we can improve on gym time and music time as well as art class because I think kids that are young should have more gym time than what we have and more music and art time because some kids feel happy doing these things and if their happy they will do better in school but if you give them only short classes in music, art and gym they may not feel happy and misbehave. - *Student*

I feel that everything in this school system needs to be improved, the topics covered in classrooms have little to no use within the outside world. Instead of learning how to write resumes properly, how to file taxes and money management, we learn about bullshit things like Shakespeare that can only help outside of high school if you plan on becoming an english teacher - *Student*

Students need to perform better in communication (written, oral) and math. One obvious way to get more time in these areas is to get rid of what is not important right now. There are way way too many Outcomes in science, health, social studies, and art that can not possibly be met - especially since every other grade in elementary school is a combined class. It is foolish and irrelevant to be spreading learning time so thinly. - *Guardian/Parent*

The rigor of the curriculum - strengthen fundamental skills and enhancement critical thinking skills and reduce the peripheral learning related to the too-broad, too vague curriculum outcomes. - *School Administrator*

We need to focus on literacy and math skills at the early grades, along with exploration-based play that allow students to grow into a structured education system. I think the time we invest in other teaching and reporting on other curriculum areas is wasted. We also need to simplify outcomes in literacy and math at ALL grade levels. Current curriculum is too dense. - *School Administrator*

The way outcomes are given to teachers without many descriptors makes it hard to figure out what should really be thought. Often interpreted many different ways by different teachers. Just frustrating that some outcomes are so vague! - *Teacher*

## SCHOOL CLIMATE

I find one of the biggest problems with our system is there is no accountability on the part of the student for continuous behavior issues or lack of work. They can be rude, disrespectful, not participate or do assignments and still do the fun stuff, like dances and trips. It's sad but students, even our high achievers, are discovering that they can come to school, be rude to teachers and administration, do the minimum or not do a single bit of work and get away with it. - *Teacher*

Without a doubt, a better way to deal with classroom disruptions. Too much time during a classroom session is spent dealing with students who constantly disrupt the education of others. While I believe in education for all, I do not believe that the education of many should be sacrificed because of constant classroom misbehavior. - *Guardian/Parent*

When did it become wrong to expect things from our children ? When did it become optional to follow rules ? When did excuses become the norm and the expectation ? When did drugs in school get no more than a 3 day suspension ? When did it become ok to move the good kid, disrupting his life, and everything go on as usual for the bully ? - *Guardian/Parent*

The teachers should be more in control of what students do. For example they should call the vice principal in the class if someone is not behaving properly. Sometimes I think students are allowed to wander around school without any consequence. - *Student*

Low academic achievement and engagement of Black learners and other at risk learners. Improved teaching practices that are non-Eurocentric in nature. Cultural proficiency with staff and teachers, my children having daily opportunities to see themselves reflected in the curriculum (books, authors, mentor texts for writing and reading, author studies, contributions in all subject areas, learning about Black contributions to Canada before high school african studies). - *Teacher*

Seems strange that exposure to issues related to diversity (e.g., African Nova Scotian History, Acadian History, Gaelic History, Multiculturalism) is minimal in the classroom, despite attention to it in Department of Education public relations material. - *Community member*

I believe that one of the biggest problems with our school system is the fact that staff of our schools claims that they will do everything in their power to end bullying yet, I see people getting picked on daily. I've met people that don't even want to come back to school because they are so bothered by people and won't stand up for themselves because they are afraid of being the 'rat' and therefore making the person even more mad. - *Student*

On a regular basis I see the majority of others in the class look worried, sad, angry, and even bored that the students who disrupt just get to do it again and again and again. The teacher must waste countless minutes and hours of classes dealing with these behaviour issues. During the years countless students have spoken to me and told me how disheartened they are and they ask me why is nothing done about this, especially those who are bullied. - *Teacher*

## ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

I want to look at the report card and say, OK, it says here you need to focus on multiplication or spelling or talking less in class, etc. and then take those comments to make improvements. How can we improve things if we can't figure out what the issue is? When I asked the teachers why they can't include this information, they tell me they are not allowed to comment on the student's behaviour. I've heard it all now. Why bother? - *Guardian/Parent*

And those Learner Profiles! I'm not even sure what they mean and I am filling them in. And this silly rule that behavior can't be mentioned in comments. We want to draw more and more attention away from how behaviour affects academic success and yet behaviour is often the linchpin. - *Teacher*

We need to get rid of the rubric system. No one likes it. Children realize that they don't have to strive to make more than to outcomes required because if there friend who barely puts in any effort but still meets the outcomes and they put in a ton of effort but still only reach the required outcomes then they don't feel that they should have to try harder. It creates mediocrity. - *Guardian/Parent*

I have two sons the same age, one who is very conscientious and goal oriented so has always put effort into his studies, the other doesn't care and the lack of effort is obvious to us when we compare the quality of their reading, the quality of their penmanship, their spelling, their math aptitude, however, until they hit grade 9, their report cards were exactly the same - both were meeting expected outcomes. Now that we see actual grades it is obvious that one was exceeding expected outcomes (has a 97% average) and the other was barely meeting expectations (has a 67% average). Had this been clear through the elementary and middle school reports, we would have made sure our son got the extra help that he could have used. - *Guardian/Parent*

This system does not truly express the abilities or lack thereof of the students. An A is not a true reflection of what the student is truly capable or for the most part incapable of doing. My administration is not happy to send home any report card with C's and definitely D's are not to be present. Therefore how does a student and/or parent truly understand that they are not meeting required outcomes. Students see a 2 on an assignment and are happy because they do not understand that it is a failing grade. They do not comprehend that it is not meeting an outcome. But 2/3 is pretty good!!!!!! We need marks to truly reflect what the student is achieving and that is a return to the % system. - *Teacher*

The only real class year data that is collected is in the form of our provincial exams... recorded forever as a percentage mark. How has critical thinking, writing ability, reading literacy, math literacy, biology literacy, etc. improved year on year? What outcomes are consistently challenging the students in this province? Which ones are unanimously reached by all students? We have no idea. No one does, and that is a very sad thing. Having access to such data would allow the province to create a better curriculum. It would also help the province communicate with teachers and students alike. If we are going to do an outcome based system we need to fully commit. - *Teacher*

I feel that there is too much emphasis on assessments at the elementary level. Assessment drives our teaching and I would rather see more time for teachers at the elementary level to work on social development. I really feel that we have taken the joy out of learning and out of teaching. Teachers are focusing on ways to improve scores and, as a result, they are no longer able to make learning as exciting as it should be. - *School Administrator*

While we recognize the diversity of learning and ways of knowing we have not yet moved our assessments to match what we know. We still use a one-size-fits-all approach to assessment and at very early ages or grade levels we begin sorting and judging young learners on grade level expectations or benchmarks. If a child does

not yet meet early benchmarks we look at this as a deficit and forget that in the early years so much is developmental. Schools, teacher, and students are judged on the principle that every child has to be at a particular point at a particular grade level.... As classrooms today reflect wide diversities we also need to value social and emotional learning- along with academic growths- but value the child for his/her own growth and not measure the whole child against a factory model of learning. Could we do more to assess the growth and not just the product? – *Teacher*

Bring back the red pen and stop being afraid to tell our children where they erred. If there is only one correct answer to a question and the student gets the answer wrong, mark an X and be clear; there should be no ambiguity or there can be no improvement. - *Guardian/Parent*

## **PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

A big area of concern for me is the lack of physical education that our students receive. The Time To Learn Strategy guidelines are not even being met in many schools and students are limited to two gym classes per week. Students need to be moving and be active! I'd like to see more programming for outdoor learning and opportunities for students to get outside and get more active. We teach that they need to get outside and away from the consoles of video games...then we need to spend our days indoors trying to meet the massive number of outcomes that are expected. We are not practicing what we preach. - *Teacher*

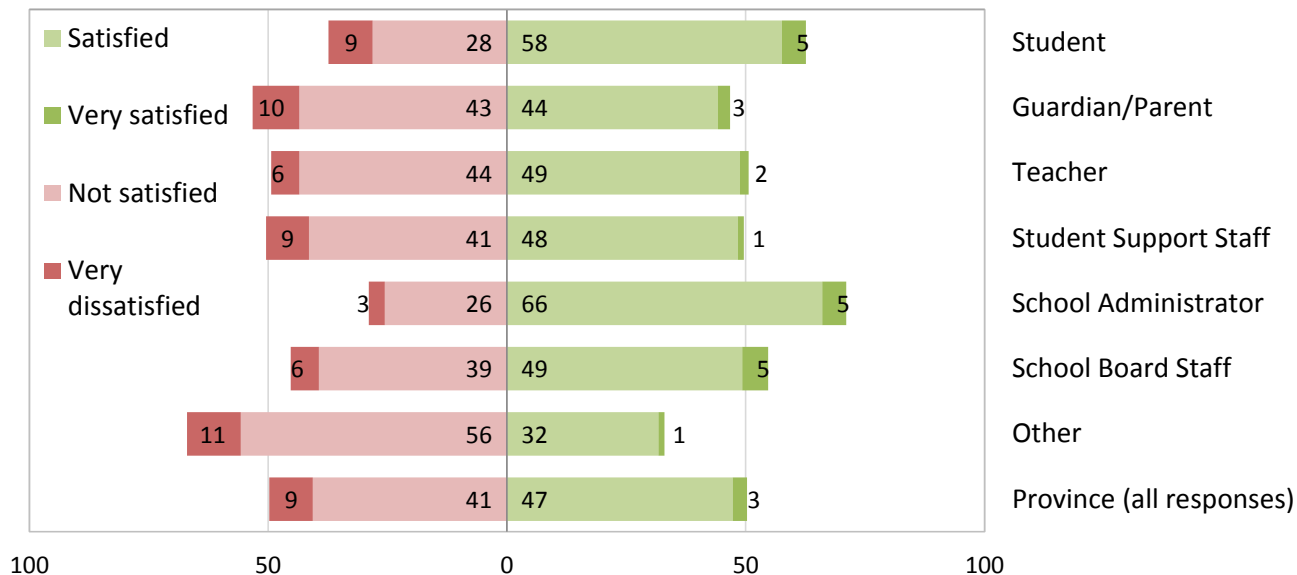
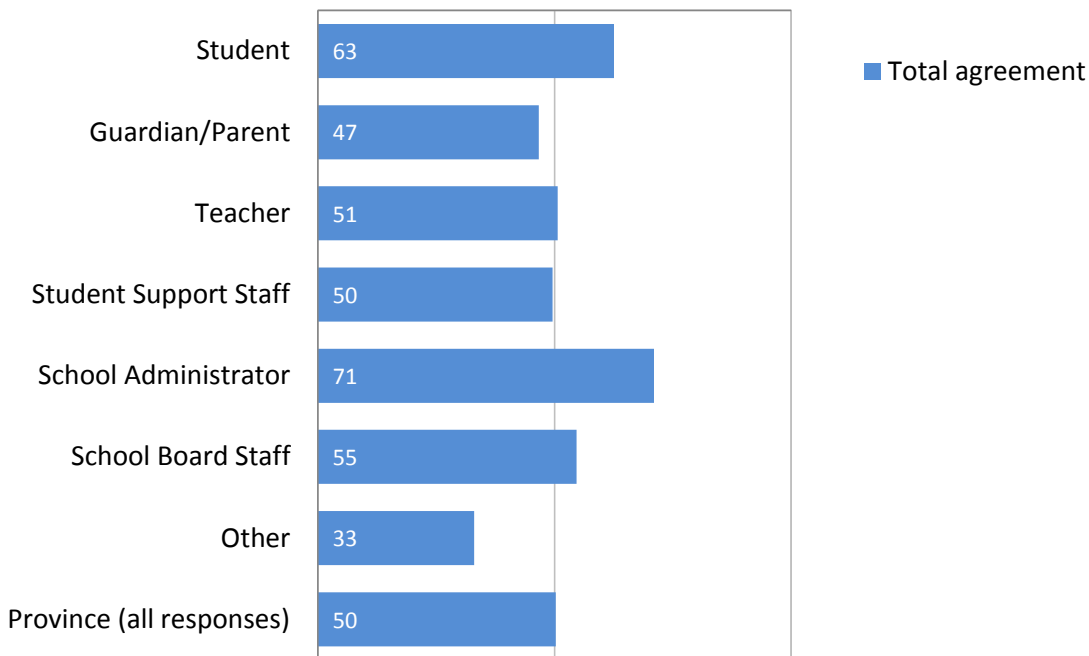
I also feel the physical education program need to be seriously improved. Right now I dread phys ed class because it's really not educational at all and super intimidating and exclusive. I think physical education should be teaching you how to keep healthy in everyday life, but we just play games everyday and do a dance or gymnastic project one a year. We're often made to demonstrate our physical capabilities in front of the class and I find this really unfair, stressful and unnecessary. - *Student*

Given that Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in Canada, children in grades P-6 should have a 20-30 minute outdoor recess during the mornings, and/or three classes of physical education each week. - *Teacher*



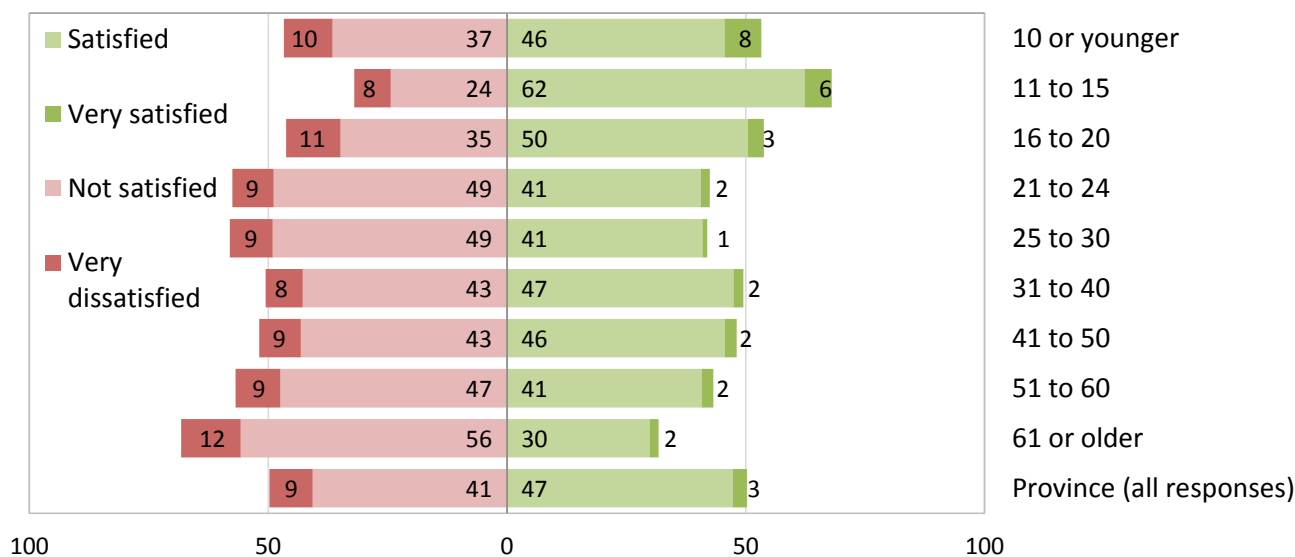
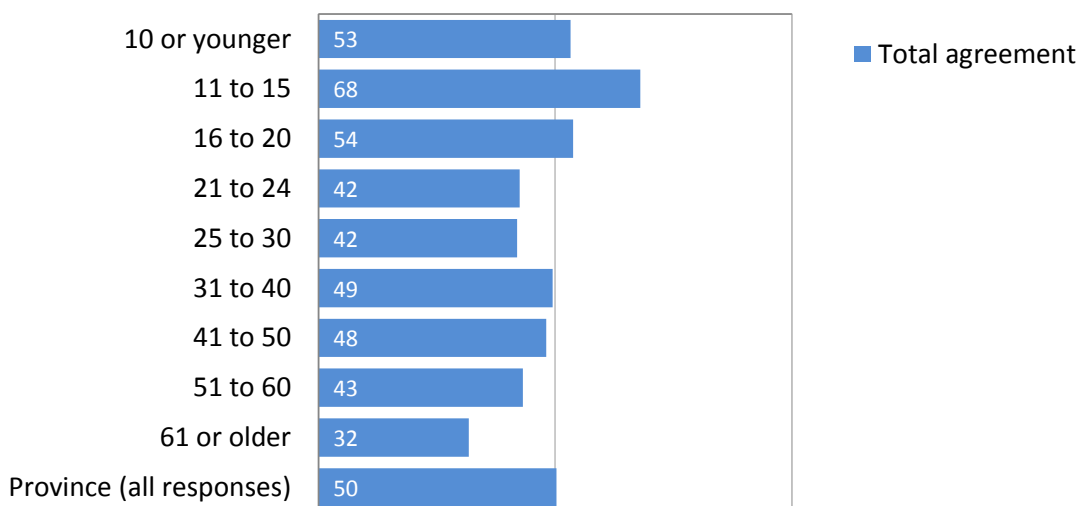
01 Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia? (Satisfaction)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of satisfied/dissatisfied responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total agreement
Student	5207	43	9	28	58	5	<b>63</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	87	10	43	44	3	<b>47</b>
Teacher	3198	68	6	44	49	2	<b>51</b>
Student Support Staff	489	19	9	41	48	1	<b>50</b>
School Administrator	306	9	3	26	66	5	<b>71</b>
School Board Staff	205	2	6	39	49	5	<b>55</b>
Other	2942	89	11	56	32	1	<b>33</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>



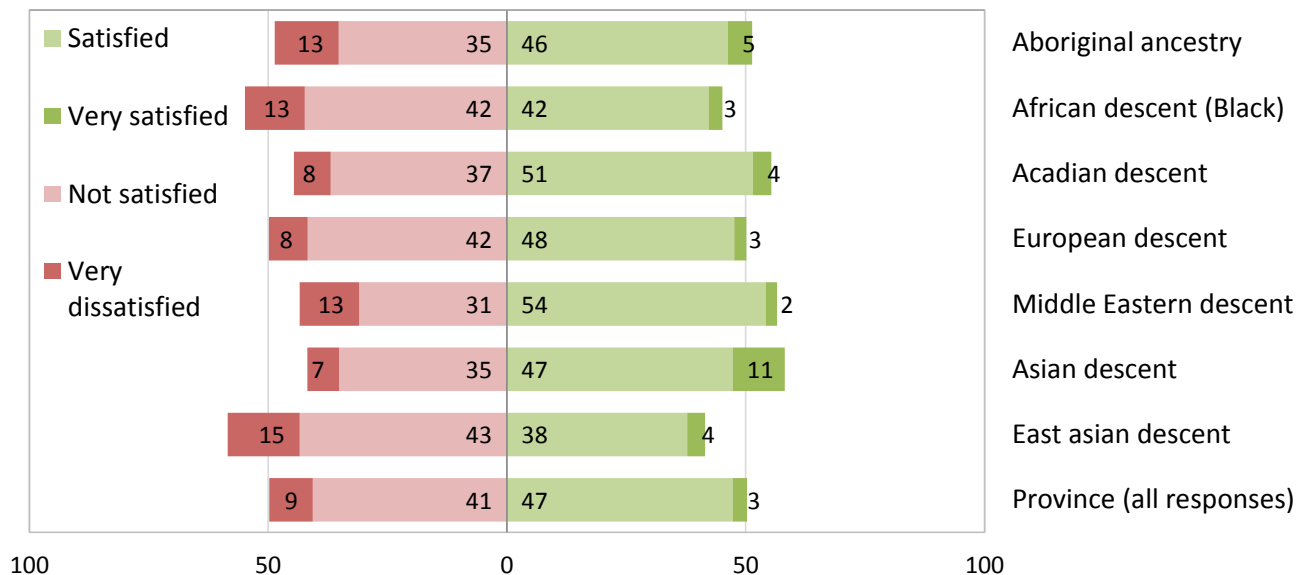
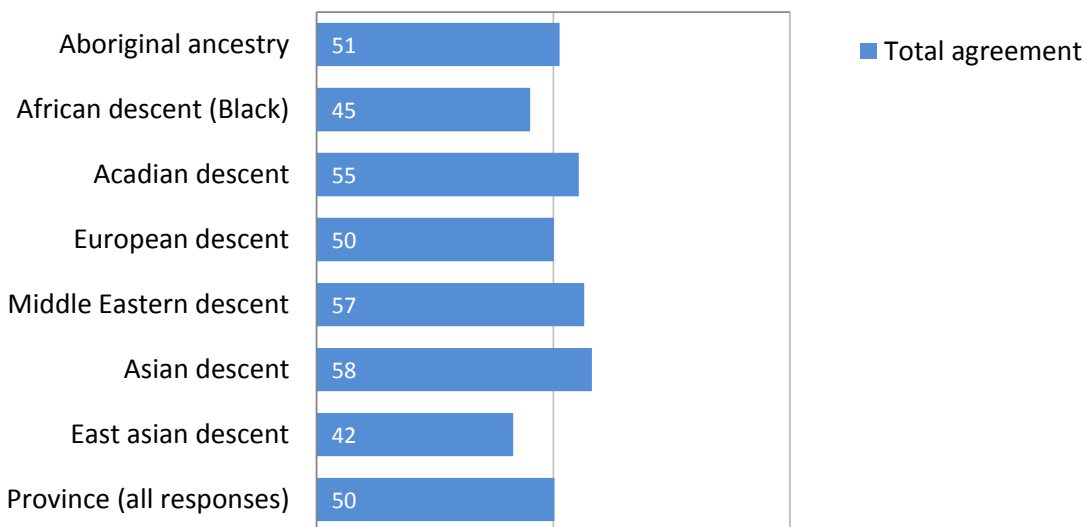
**01 Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia? (Satisfaction)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of Very dissatisfied/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total agreement
10 or younger	325	2	10	37	46	8	<b>53</b>
11 to 15	2862	29	8	24	62	6	<b>68</b>
16 to 20	2549	16	11	35	50	3	<b>54</b>
21 to 24	319	6	9	49	41	2	<b>42</b>
25 to 30	1018	14	9	49	41	1	<b>42</b>
31 to 40	3776	62	8	43	47	2	<b>49</b>
41 to 50	4190	66	9	43	46	2	<b>48</b>
51 to 60	2545	64	9	47	41	2	<b>43</b>
61 or older	1102	50	12	56	30	2	<b>32</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>



**01 Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia? (Satisfaction)**

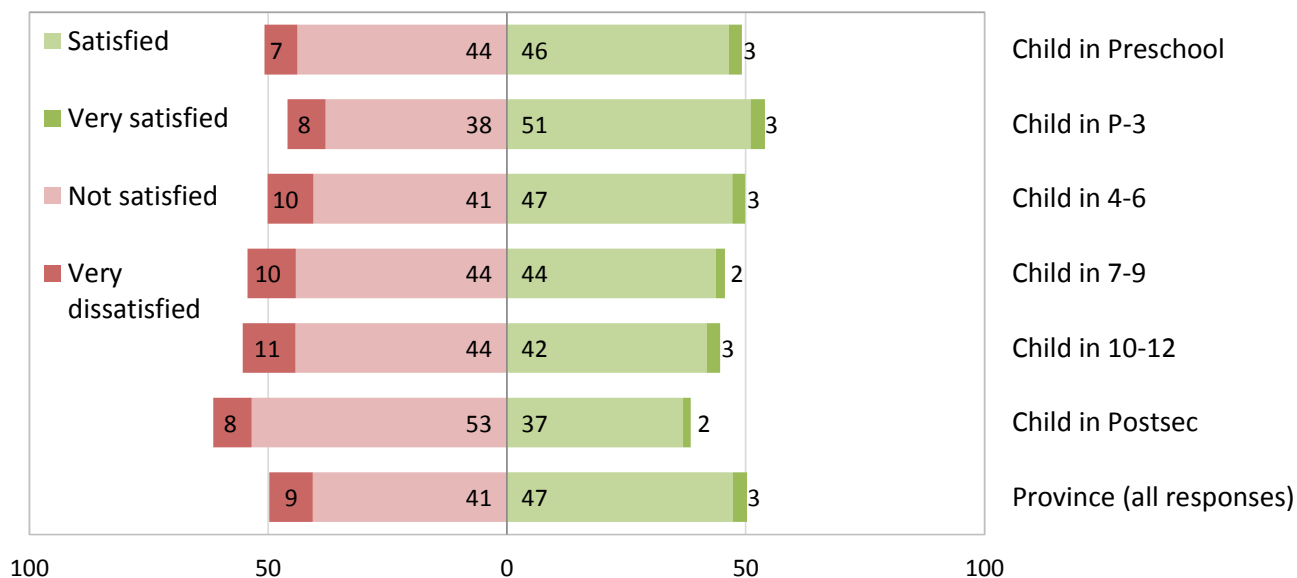
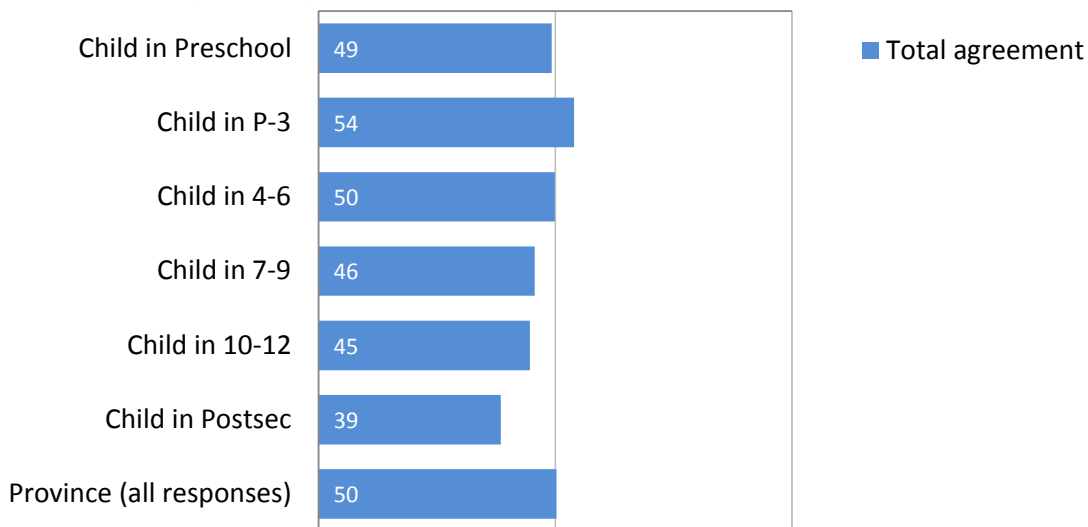
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of Very dissatisfied/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	13	13	35	46	5	<b>51</b>
African descent (Black)	399	2	13	42	42	3	<b>45</b>
Acadian descent	2232	23	8	37	51	4	<b>55</b>
European descent	12054	206	8	42	48	3	<b>50</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	2	13	31	54	2	<b>57</b>
Asian descent	168	3	7	35	47	11	<b>58</b>
East asian descent	54	1	15	43	38	4	<b>42</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>



**01 Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia? (Satisfaction)**

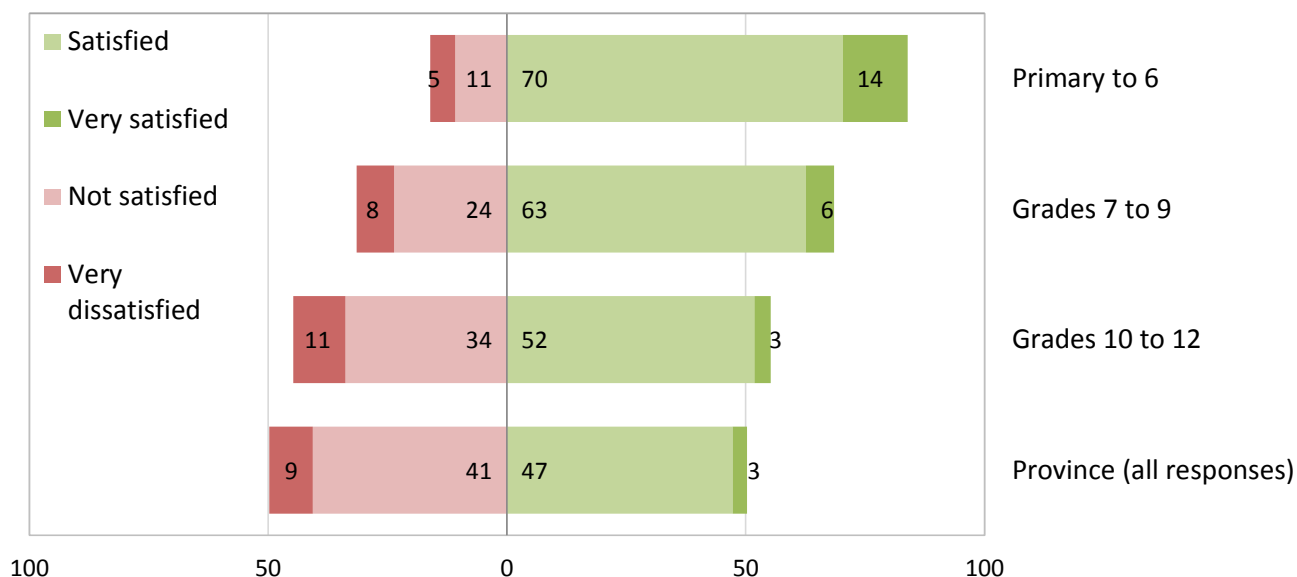
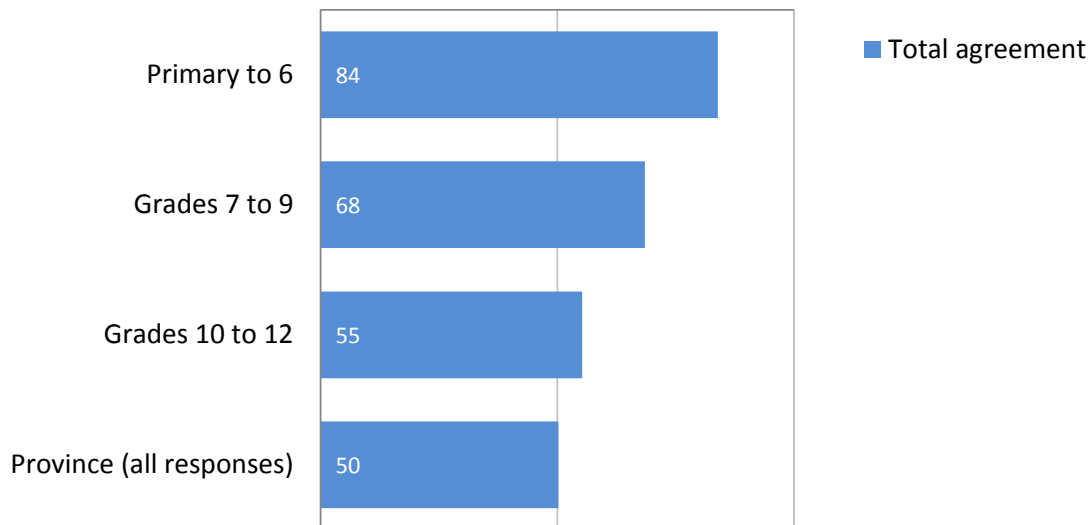
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of Very dissatisfied/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total agreement
Child in Preschool	777	11	7	44	46	3	<b>49</b>
Child in P-3	2263	28	8	38	51	3	<b>54</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	22	10	41	47	3	<b>50</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	17	10	44	44	2	<b>46</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	20	11	44	42	3	<b>45</b>
Child in Postsec	365	4	8	53	37	2	<b>39</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



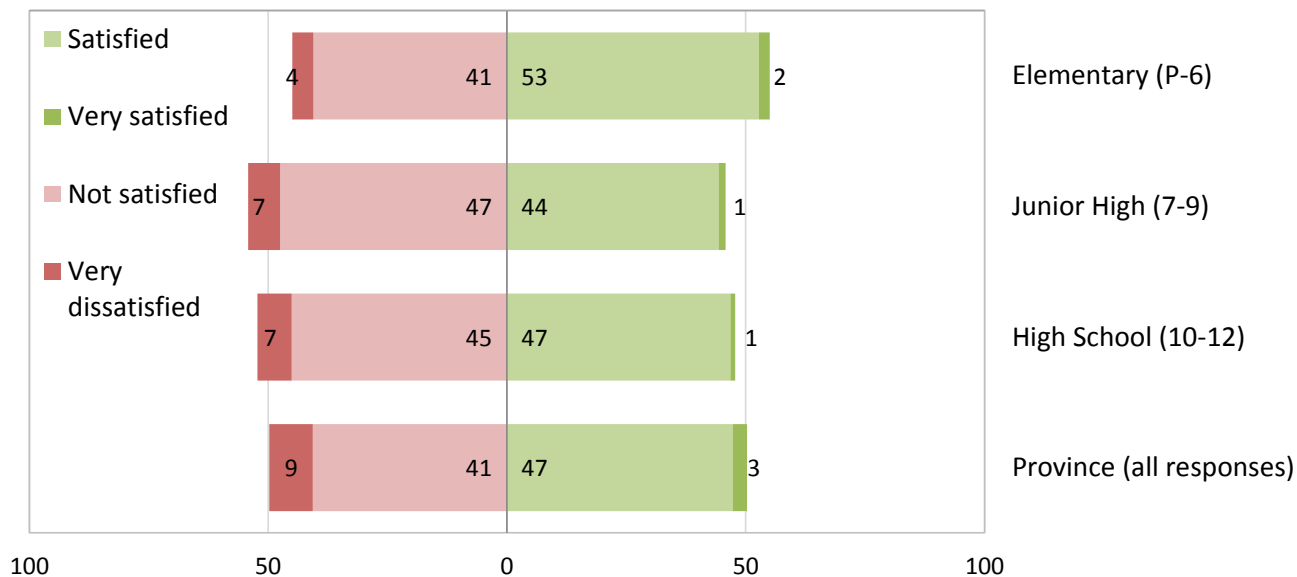
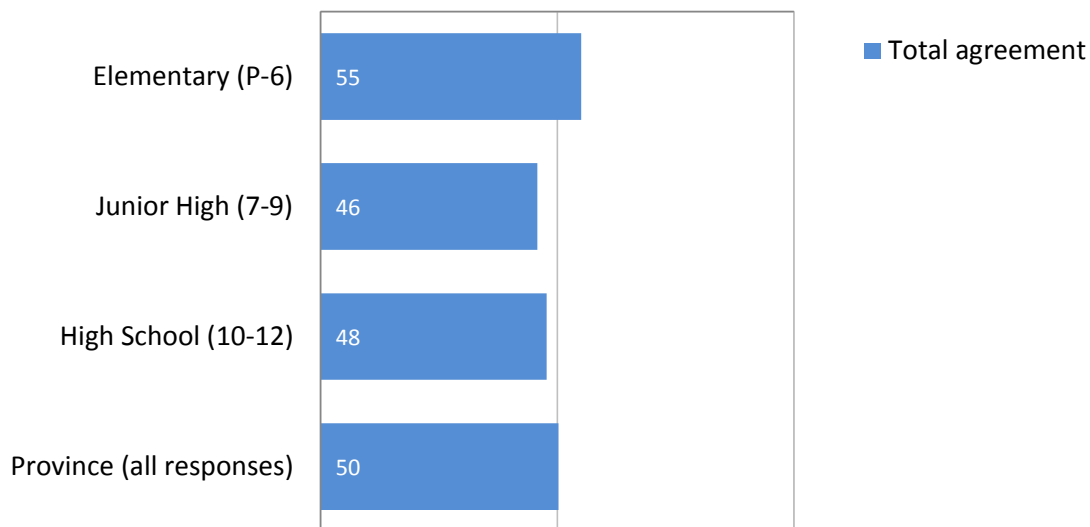
**01 Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia? (Satisfaction)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of Very dissatisfied/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total agreement
Primary to 6	254	5	5	11	70	14	<b>84</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	21	8	24	63	6	<b>68</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	17	11	34	52	3	<b>55</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>



**01 Overall, how satisfied are you with the public school system in Nova Scotia? (Satisfaction)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of Very dissatisfied/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	38	4	41	53	2	<b>55</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	15	7	47	44	1	<b>46</b>
High School (10-12)	911	15	7	45	47	1	<b>48</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes.
2. Students are engaged in their learning.
3. Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork.
4. Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students.
5. Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school.
6. Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies.
7. Schools provide the right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities.
8. Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade.

<b>Parents and Guardians</b>	2594
<b>Teachers</b>	1484
<b>Community Members</b>	1205
<b>Students</b>	970
<b>Student Support Staff</b>	189
<b>School Administrator</b>	139
<b>School Board Staff</b>	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	6658

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Barriers to effective teaching</b>	Teaching quality varies greatly.	491
	Some teachers are not qualified for their assignment, hiring practices may not favor the most qualified teachers.	302
	Class size, composition are barriers to individualized instruction.	235
	Standards are too low; academics should be valued more.	200
	Unwieldy or poorly supported curriculum can be a barrier.	157
	Performance management, mentoring and collaboration are essential to improving teaching skills.	130
	Behavioral issues and discipline consume disproportionate amounts of class time/teacher attention.	126
	Teacher workload is high and morale is low.	121
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1762</b>
<b>Students unprepared for next grades</b>	Students are pushed through grades without meeting outcomes.	1161
	Students lack basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.	332
	Struggling students do not receive the extra help they need.	181
	The transition to high school from junior high is difficult.	80
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1754</b>
<b>Access to technology</b>	Technology in schools is outdated and insufficient.	437
	There are significant inequalities in school access to technology.	227
	Technology should be integrated into learning.	137
	Use of technology should be discouraged, especially in younger grades.	108
	Technology must be integrated with caution, teaching students about digital citizenship is essential.	50
	Teachers need guidance/pd on how to integrate technology.	40
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>994</b>
<b>Healthy living opportunities</b>	Daily exercise essential: time to learn guidelines on PE should be enforced as well as playground time, other opportunities.	418
	Barriers include poor food available at school, transportation for extracurriculars, infrastructure (gyms, playgrounds, cafeterias).	203
	Health curriculum needs overhaul, should include healthy eating, healthy living, social development, healthy relationships.	158
	More intramurals, extracurricular activities especially for non-athletes.	79
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>858</b>



<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Student engagement matters</b>	Students must be accountable partners in their learning and need consequences/incentives.	426
	Many students are disengaged, reaching them is key.	203
	Teaching should be more student centered and individualized to engage students.	119
	Students need more hands on opportunities and need to get outdoors, out of the classroom.	76
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>824</b>
<b>Feedback is ineffectual</b>	Feedback should be more frequent and effective. Homework can be important feedback.	206
	Report cards should be clear and honest.	153
	Parents must be partners in child’s learning and need more regular feedback to do so.	100
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>459</b>
<b>Student needs are going unmet</b>	Students with additional needs are not receiving the supports they need.	185
	Students have complex needs that cannot be addressed by teachers alone (e.g. mental health, trauma).	156
	Inclusion does not benefit students with major needs.	48
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>389</b>
<b>Community engagement</b>	Community service, volunteer opportunities and work terms are beneficial but not widespread especially at younger grades.	246
	Barriers include distance (rural schools), transportation, staff time, and red tape – excessive permissions, records checks.	95
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>341</b>

## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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*I feel that teachers do not have enough time to talk about what the kids ask questions about. If it is not in the curriculum then the Teachers do not have the freedom to go down another avenue. I know there needs to be a base line of what is thought but there needs to be some freedom to teach what kids are asking about*

- Guardian/parent

*I still see a lot of whole class teaching without a great deal of differentiation rather than small group and learning centres. Teachers need reassurance that movement and noise isn't a bad thing. Students are naturally curious and need opportunities to investigate for themselves.*

- School Administrator

*If they really cared they would be striving everyday to help them improve. Instead some teachers are slack in their efforts and don't have the patience or integrity to work with the kids. It becomes a moral and then a morale issue.*

- Teacher

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**Teaching quality varies greatly** – student experience varies year to year and class to class.

- Some teachers are excellent and engaging, however this experience is not universal.
- Some teachers appear disengaged and/or act unprofessionally.
- Teachers may continue to use outdated teaching methods, e.g. do not differentiate instruction.
- Underperforming colleagues affect staff morale.
- Some teachers do not care about children.

**Some teachers are unqualified for their assignment** – and hiring practices may be contributing to this.

- It is important that teachers have specific qualifications especially for math and literacy.
- Hiring practices mean teachers with seniority get positions for which others are better qualified.
- Substitutes are hired for classes they are not qualified to teach, leading to time wasted in class.
- Cutbacks and shuffles mean teachers get moved too often to develop mastery in courses or grades.
- Younger teachers may have more enthusiasm and up to date teaching methods but are not able to substitute due to the hiring of retired teachers.

**Class size and composition are barriers to effective teaching** – teachers are unable to provide individual attention and support.

- Adaptations and individualized program plans mean teachers must effectively teach multiple curricula at once.
- With large class sizes teachers do not have time to give quality feedback and assessment to each student.
- Instructional methods cannot be effective when there is a wide spectrum of need/ability in the classroom.
- Quieter or medium students are left to fend for themselves.
- Teachers cannot manage the multiple curricula for split classes.

**Standards are too low and academics should be more valued**

- Having to accommodate all ability levels in the classroom means curriculum gets watered down to lowest common denominator.
- Parents and students do not value education.

- Sports/extracurriculars/social life take priority over schoolwork.
- Nova Scotian students are not prepared to complete nationally or globally.

**Unwieldy or poorly supported curriculum can be a barrier.**

- Too many curriculum outcomes; nothing is covered in depth.
- Stretching to cover a bloated curriculum means students are rushed through.
- Poorly defined outcomes are difficult to assess and provide feedback on.
- Lack of curriculum implementation support means overworked teachers must reinvent the wheel.

**Performance management, mentoring and collaboration are essential to improving teaching skills.**

- There must be a way to fire ineffective/disengaged teachers.
- Teachers should have annual evaluations.
- Teachers should be accountable for student performance.
- Administrators must monitor and provide effective feedback to teachers.
- Observation should be ongoing and lead to collaboration.

**Behavioral issues and discipline consume disproportionate amounts of class time/teacher attention.**

- Behavioral issues can disrupt the learning of other students, sometimes severely.
- Teachers lack support from parents and administration to deal with discipline issues.
- Students that are regularly disruptive need additional support outside of the classroom setting.

**Teacher workload is high and morale is low.**

- Teachers do the best they can but are overwhelmed.
- Classrooms are too diverse and teachers are unable to attend to all students' needs, particularly with lack of EA time and other supports for inclusion in the class.
- Too much paperwork/documentation, not enough time to teach.
- Prep time is minimal compared to courseload.

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***It is increasingly hard to teach to the range of abilities that are in today's classrooms. Inclusion makes this difficult, as do the mental health issues that are increasing year by year it seems.***

- Teacher

***Certain teachers are more organized and helpful than others. I believe teachers should have to completely finish their lesson before moving on to another unit.***

- Student

***Because many of our curriculum documents are out of date or are comprised of too many outcomes to cover, and because classroom composition leaves many students in each class unable to work at grade level and therefore unable to meet these outcomes, teachers are in an untenable situation.***

- Teacher

***My daughter's class has to leave the room at least once, almost every day in the middle of class because of a student who is violent and misbehaving. They have to evacuate to the cafeteria.***

- Guardian/parent

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## SECTION 2: STUDENTS ARE UNPREPARED FOR THE NEXT GRADES

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*Students never seem to fail anymore, they know this, and they play the system. I have students who have skipped 95% of the school year, who will pass, despite not meeting many of the outcomes for the year. I have students who put in a poor effort, who never get their work done, who are failing with 30%'s, who will be passed onto the next grade.*

- Teacher

*Teachers don't really help the students that are obviously struggling, they just praise the ones that do well and somewhat puts down the others.*

- Student

*Teachers assess kids continually and work very hard to prepare them for the next level however it is really a waste of their time because kids are just pushed through anyway. I am sure that the testing that is done doesn't ever show the amount of kids that are really leaving school without knowing how to read or write.*

- Guardian/parent

*We are all terrified about high school, exams, expectations, but nobody ever prepares us for any of those.*

- Student

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### **Students are pushed through grades without meeting outcomes.**

- Students are almost never retained in NS.
- There are many students in class (grades 1-12) who have not met the outcomes of the previous year.
- These students do not receive the help they need to catch up and have an ever-increasing achievement gap with their peers.
- Student engagement is low when they are not working at grade level.
- Students know they can do no work and still pass (until high school): removing retention removes an accountability mechanism for the student.
- Some students may benefit from being retained until they are ready to move on.

### **Students lack basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.**

- Students are entering higher grades unable to read, write and particularly unable to do mathematics.
- Lack of these fundamental skills can impede student progress in high school and impair future career options.
- Gaps in Mathematics are widespread.
- Spelling and grammar fundamentals are not being mastered.

### **Struggling students do not receive the extra help they need.**

- Both average students who need a little help and students who are struggling do not receive individualized attention and support.
- Some teachers do not provide extra help when it is requested by students.
- Teacher assistant positions have been removed from those students who needed a little extra support.

### **The transition to high school from junior high is difficult** - students feel unprepared for increased homework and exams.

- Junior High is not sufficiently challenging as to prepare for high school.
- Students are not prepared for the increased accountability (studying, exams, homework) that comes with high school.
- Student engagement is low in Junior High and students might benefit from more program choices.

### SECTION 3: ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

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#### **Technology in schools is outdated and insufficient.**

- Hardware is often broken, old, and poorly maintained.
- Access to tech support is spotty.
- Software is often out of date and internet connections can also be unreliable.
- Only two or three computers per classroom is not enough to teach technology outcomes.

#### **There are significant inequalities in school access to technology.**

- There is a clear divide between have and have not schools when it comes to technology.
- Some of the difference is due to fundraising (schools in wealthier areas have more resources from fundraising).
- Newer schools have better technology than older schools.
- Some boards have put more emphasis on technology rollouts than others.

#### **Technology should be integrated into learning.**

- Technology is a way to engage students.
- Students need to know technology to make their way in tomorrow's world.
- Technology opens up new pedagogical areas and helps with self-directed learning.
- Personal technology is beneficial for many students with adaptations.

#### **Use of technology should be discouraged, especially in younger grades.**

- Technology can be distracting and lead to superficial learning.
- Screen time should be limited at younger ages.
- Students must learn to interact face to face (without technology).
- Technology is expensive and the funds could be better spent on human resources.

#### **Technology must be integrated with caution; teaching students about digital citizenship is essential.**

- It is important to ensure technology is being implemented in support of learning.
- Students must learn how to use technology responsibly and ethically.

#### **Teachers need guidance/pd on how to integrate technology.**

- Many teachers need support in the use of technology, and also in implementing curriculum related to the technology outcomes.

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*The technology in many elementary schools is deplorable. The technicians can't keep up, even the computers that do work don't have the required drivers for printing, or software for watching educational videos (Flash Player), and if the technician can't get to it we have to install it every time as the computers have deep freeze.*

*- School Administrator*

*There is inequality across school for the technology available to students. Allowing personal devices just puts another divide between social economic status and another thing to bully others about. Tech devices for learning should be provided by the school to everyone.*

*- Guardian/Parent*

*It would be more helpful to the teachers if there were computer labs in schools. That way, the teacher could actually teach a lesson in technology to the whole class.*

*-Teacher*

*It is hard to learn with technology because all the computers in our schools are from 1989 and are full with garbage useless programs.*

*- Student*

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## SECTION 4: HEALTHY LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

***We need to teach kids the importance of healthy activity. Also, if you look at any study on learning, it will tell you that students who have daily school physical activity perform better, are better able to settle into school work, are more cooperative, and are less stressed.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***I am 50 years old and some of the best memories is intermurals with all the children in my school. It was lots of fun playing with friends who didn't play organized sports. Obesity is a huge problem today, schools can do something about this!!***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***Outside agencies that work in cafeterias are still serving highly processed junk food.***

*- School Board Staff*

***i find that we need to have more physical activity in gym class like all we do is play games that require little running and exercise because all kids need at least 1 hour of real physical activity a day and i dont think that very many kids get that much.***

*- Student*

### **Daily exercise is essential for all students**

- Many students only have PE once or twice a week. Time to learn guidelines on daily PE should be enforced.
- Elementary students should have breaks long enough at lunch and recess to take advantage of playground time.
- Other opportunities for activity could be capitalized on e.g. walks for science, activity breaks in the classroom. Outdoor time is important for students.
- Students should be moving in gym class – less time devoted to theory and more to getting heart rates up.
- 30 minutes may not be enough time for PE including class transition, changing clothes, etc.
- PE may need to incorporate a wider variety of activities for life long active living.

### **There are barriers to healthy living opportunities provided by schools**

- Food offered by some school cafeterias does not adhere to the nutrition guidelines (pizza, fries, chicken fingers).
- Many older schools lack infrastructure such as gyms, cafeterias, or even playground equipment.
- Transportation for extracurricular activities is a serious barrier to participation for students, especially in rural areas.
- Teachers indicate they are too overworked to volunteer for monitoring extracurricular activities.
- “Red tape” e.g. criminal records checks can prevent community and parent volunteers from facilitating extracurriculars.

### **The Health curriculum needs an overhaul**

- The health curriculum is outdated and lacks supporting documents.
- Students should learn about healthy eating, cooking in school as well as healthy living habits.
- Schools should foster positive social development, conflict resolution and healthy relationships.
- Health education is needed at the high school level.

### **More intramurals, extracurricular activities especially for non-athletes.**

- There are not enough spots at some schools for all students who are interested to play sports competitively.
- There are few non-competitive opportunities to play sports at school. Non-athletic students or those who didn't ‘make the team’ should benefit from the health benefits of sport.

## SECTION 5: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

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### **Students must be accountable partners in their learning and need consequences/incentives.**

- Students need structure/support to become invested in their learning.
- Giving no consequences for unfinished work, attendance issues, etc. removes motivation.
- Students are not motivated to try their best when they know anyone doing the minimum will pass (and get good marks).
- Students with unaddressed attendance issues will also fall far enough behind that they become disengaged without intervention.

### **Many students are disengaged, reaching them is key.**

- Curriculum content is out of date or not relevant to students.
- Courses should offer more concrete connections to life and life skills.
- Some teachers go out of their way to make content lively for students but this is not consistent.
- Students are apathetic and do not value academic achievement.

### **Teaching should be more student centered and individualized to engage students.**

- Students learn in their own way and at their own pace.
- Students would benefit from being able to pursue topics of their own interest.
- Teachers play a key role in supporting students to learn and demonstrate what they know.

### **Students need more hands on opportunities and need to get outdoors, out of the classroom.**

- Hands on opportunities invite all different types of learners to participate.
- Activities with both an outdoor component and link to the curriculum are engaging (e.g. growing gardens, monitoring fish).
- Hands on activities help students see the connection between the classroom and the real world.

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*HOW in the world can we expect students to be engaged in learning when it doesn't matter if they learn the content or not. In grade 10 we see students not succeeding, dropping out, skipping MANY classes (and nothing is done) and it is because they have been trained from elementary and jr. high that they don't need to do the work to pass.*

- Teacher

*Don't grade them like eggs. Some kids need more time, others less. This is not a race. It's childhood!*

- Community Member

*SOME students are engaged. Unfortunately we do little for those who are not. A high school student who is not particularly academically inclined has few options for their interests.*

- Teacher

*Students spend much too much time inside the classroom and much too little exploring the outside world, even if it would be close to their schools, in the yards, in the forests, in a school garden...*

- Guardian/Parent

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## SECTION 6: FEEDBACK IS INEFFECTUAL

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*My daughter has done math homework all year...and not once has it been handed back to see what was wrong.*

*- Guardian/Parent*

*I have very little Idea what teachers actually teach at school. My son has never had homework, never studied for a test ,never had a test as far as I know, never brought a test home, never had a project for school to complete at home, If you get the picture we never see any school work and when my wife went to parent teacher night only a few teachers bothered to show up.*

*- Guardian/Parent*

*Teachers are not allowed to give quantitative grades (percentages for example) on tests/quizzes...projects can not be assigned out of school hours... Students need a very clear picture of where they rank in terms of their classmates-- this current system of no deadlines, and 1,2,3,4 in terms of meeting outcomes has little to no meaning for students and does not give them specific areas in which to improve.*

*- Teacher*

*I think that all students benefit from regular feedback, which is abundant with some teachers, but I feel many teachers do not .*

*- Student*

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### **Feedback should be more frequent and effective.**

- Corrected homework can be important feedback but many homework assignments are not marked or not returned in a timely manner.
- Some parents and students feel feedback only occurs at report card time.
- The parent portal in Powerschool is underused by some teachers.
- Class size and workload prevent some teachers from providing detailed feedback.
- Rubric and performance levels may be confusing to students and parents.

### **Report cards should be clear and honest.**

- Some teachers and parents feel teachers are not allowed to be honest in report cards.
- There is a perception that report cards are full of jargon.

### **Parents must be partners in child's learning and need more regular feedback to do so.**

- All parents (parents, students and teachers) must be responsible for education.
- Parents and students may not be acting on feedback when it is given.
- Some parents feel like they are not well informed or up to date with their children's performance. Some parents indicated that they were not informed their child was having trouble until late in the school year.



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***Students of African Nova Scotian descent are not encouraged to engage in their OWN communities at all. Any volunteering/student leadership/community service learning happens in the larger community.***

*- Student Support Staff*

***Doing things in the community is becoming increasingly difficult due to policies and SIP that bubble wrap risk taking for kids. Yes, we say these things are important, but increasingly threat of liability makes it difficult to even access volunteers (child abuse checks etc...).***

*-Teacher*

***This year the leadership group at our school provided a lot of opportunities for the students. Like going to the first Atlantic WE DAY; also helping people in our community like helping at the Saint James church soup kitchen, playing games with the residents at the RK nursing home. Also we helped people outside of our community such as going to the soup kitchen in Halifax, going to the IWK to visit sick students in our school and meeting Scott Jones ( the man who got stabbed in new Glasgow for all who don't know) so to wrap it up the leadership group is a very good program at our school.***

*- Student*

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## **SECTION 7: STUDENT NEEDS ARE GOING UNMET**

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Please see the detailed section on Supports for Students in this report.

## **SECTION 8: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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**Community service, volunteer opportunities and work terms are beneficial but not widespread especially at younger grades.**

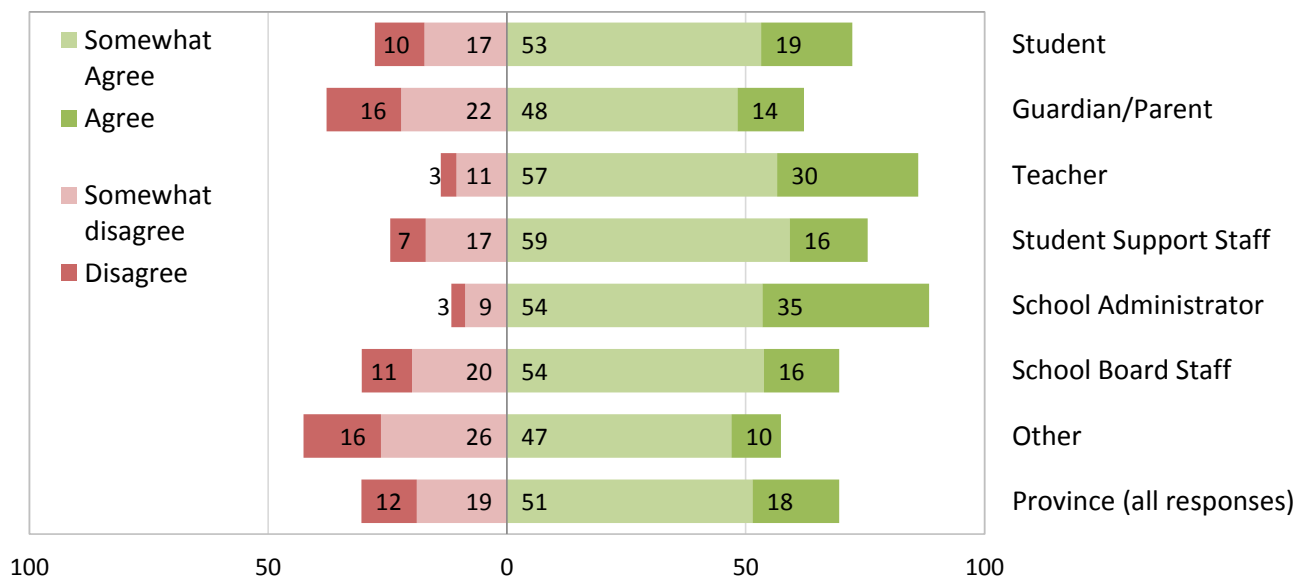
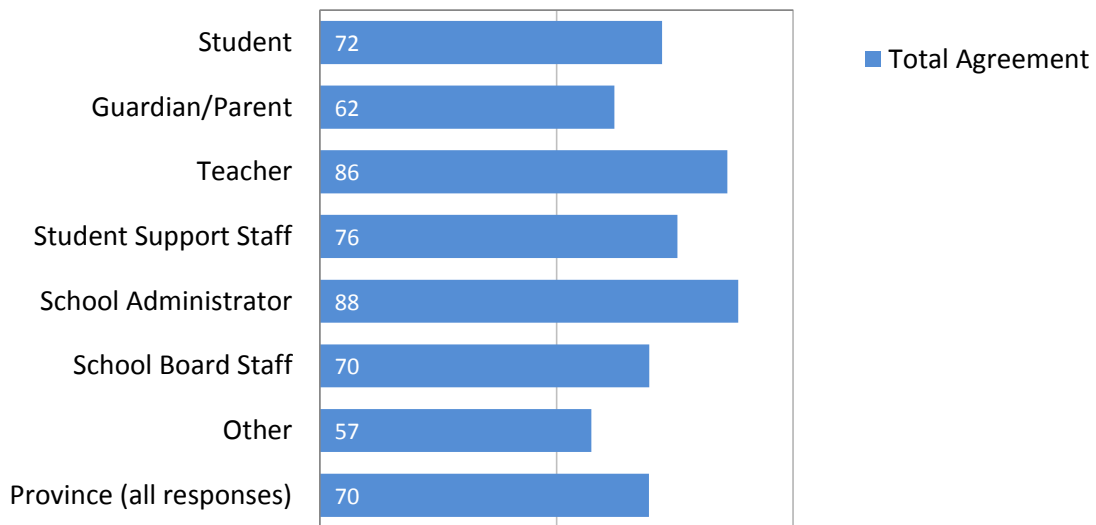
- Community service or volunteering should be a mandatory graduation requirement.
- Many high schools offer volunteerism or community oriented programs. This may depend on interested staff members.
- Some students may take advantage of volunteering and leadership opportunities but many would not unless encouraged.

There are some barriers to community involvement in schools and school involvement in the community

- In rural schools in particular, bus schedules and transportation costs can be a major barrier to getting out of the classroom.
- Initiatives that rely on staff volunteers are vulnerable as staff may feel they do not have the time.
- Bureaucracy – liability forms, permission slips and criminal records checks -- may prevent community members from volunteering in schools.

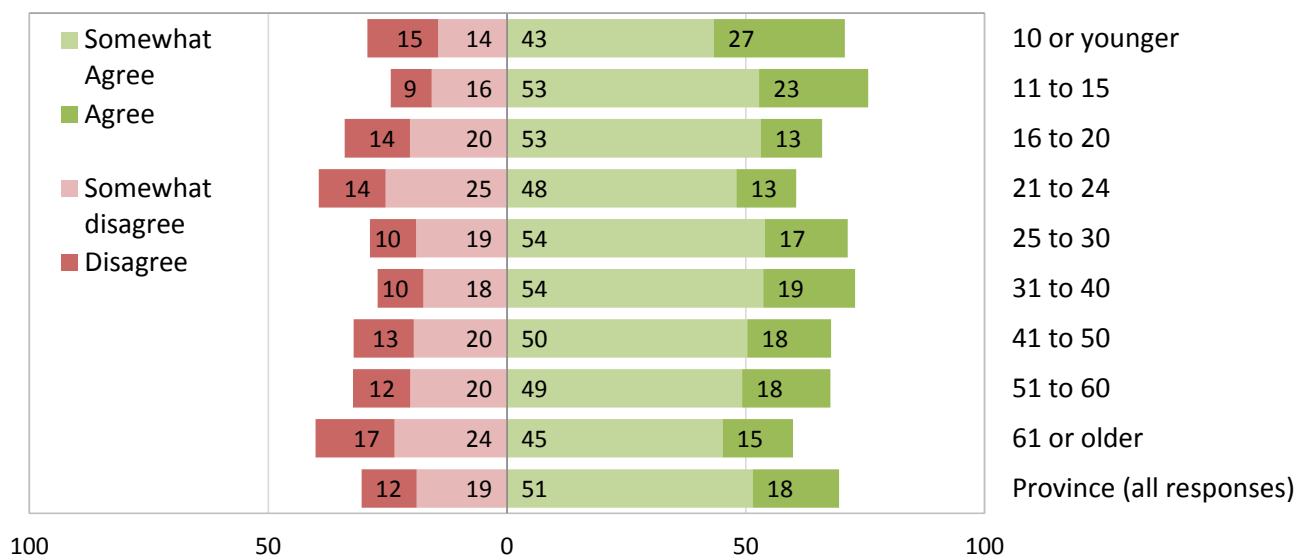
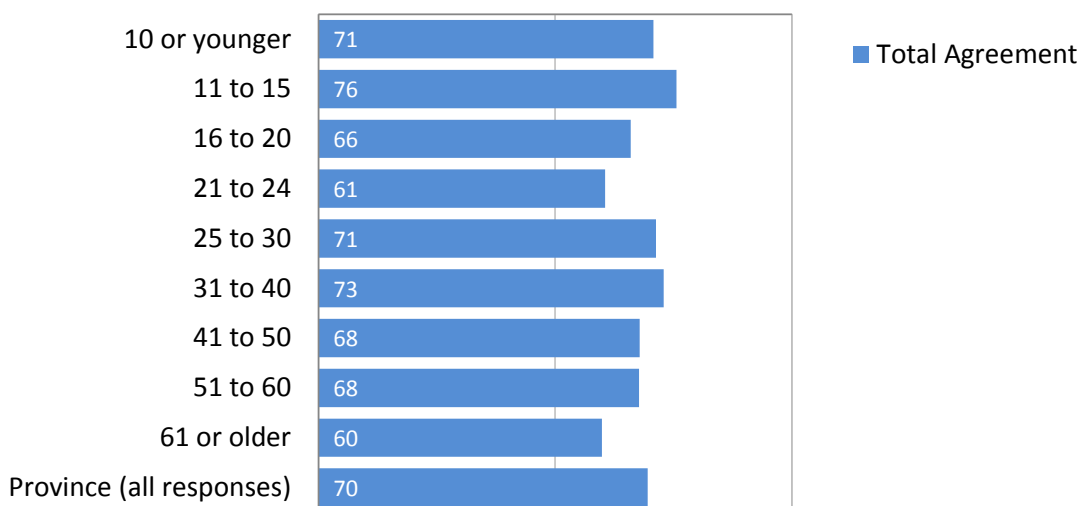
**02 Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes. (TchLrn)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	330	10	17	53	19	<b>72</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	737	16	22	48	14	<b>62</b>
Teacher	3198	267	3	11	57	30	<b>86</b>
Student Support Staff	489	60	7	17	59	16	<b>76</b>
School Administrator	306	22	3	9	54	35	<b>88</b>
School Board Staff	205	34	11	20	54	16	<b>70</b>
Other	2942	615	16	26	47	10	<b>57</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>



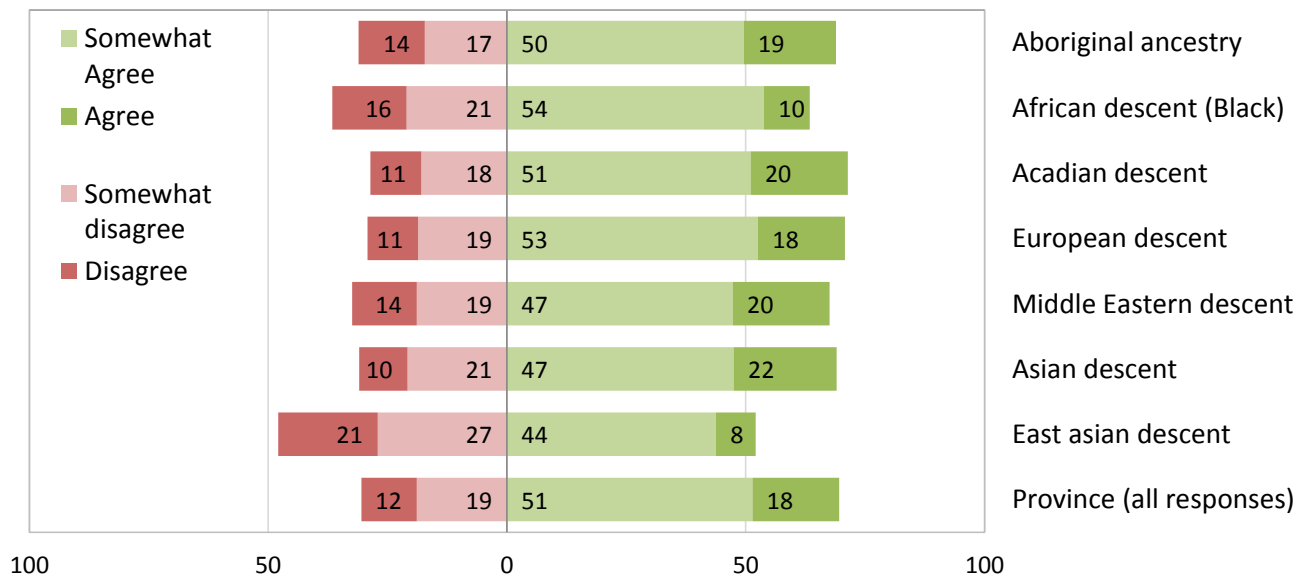
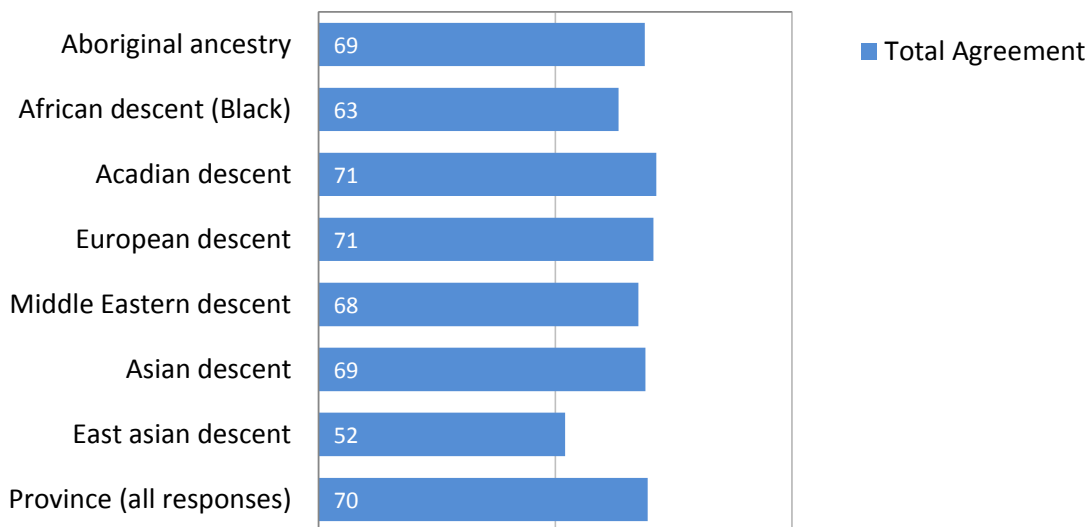
02 Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes. (TchLrn)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	48	15	14	43	27	<b>71</b>
11 to 15	2862	156	9	16	53	23	<b>76</b>
16 to 20	2549	185	14	20	53	13	<b>66</b>
21 to 24	319	40	14	25	48	13	<b>61</b>
25 to 30	1018	164	10	19	54	17	<b>71</b>
31 to 40	3776	491	10	18	54	19	<b>73</b>
41 to 50	4190	405	13	20	50	18	<b>68</b>
51 to 60	2545	336	12	20	49	18	<b>68</b>
61 or older	1102	222	17	24	45	15	<b>60</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>



02 Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes. (TchLrn)

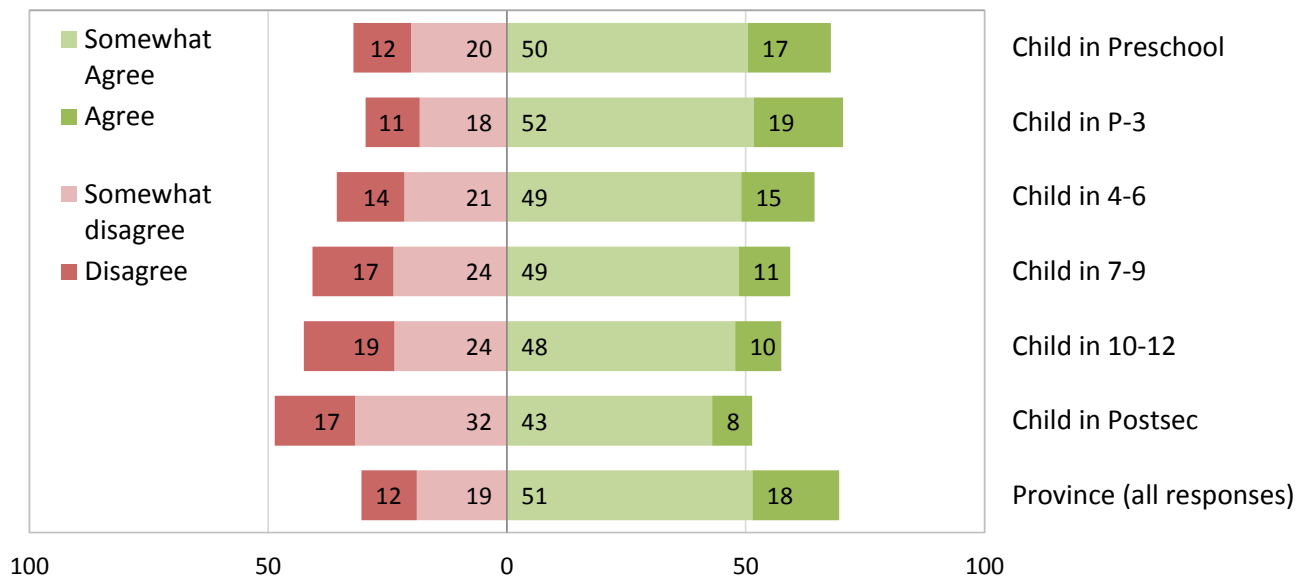
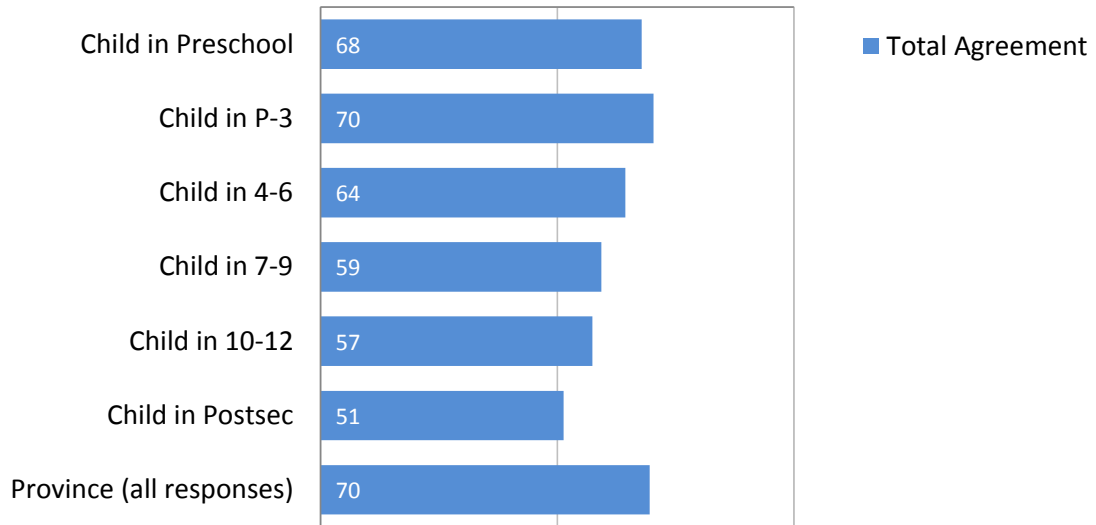
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	94	14	17	50	19	<b>69</b>
African descent (Black)	399	33	16	21	54	10	<b>63</b>
Acadian descent	2232	230	11	18	51	20	<b>71</b>
European descent	12054	1281	11	19	53	18	<b>71</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	22	14	19	47	20	<b>68</b>
Asian descent	168	29	10	21	47	22	<b>69</b>
East asian descent	54	6	21	27	44	8	<b>52</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>



**02 Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes. (TchLrn)**

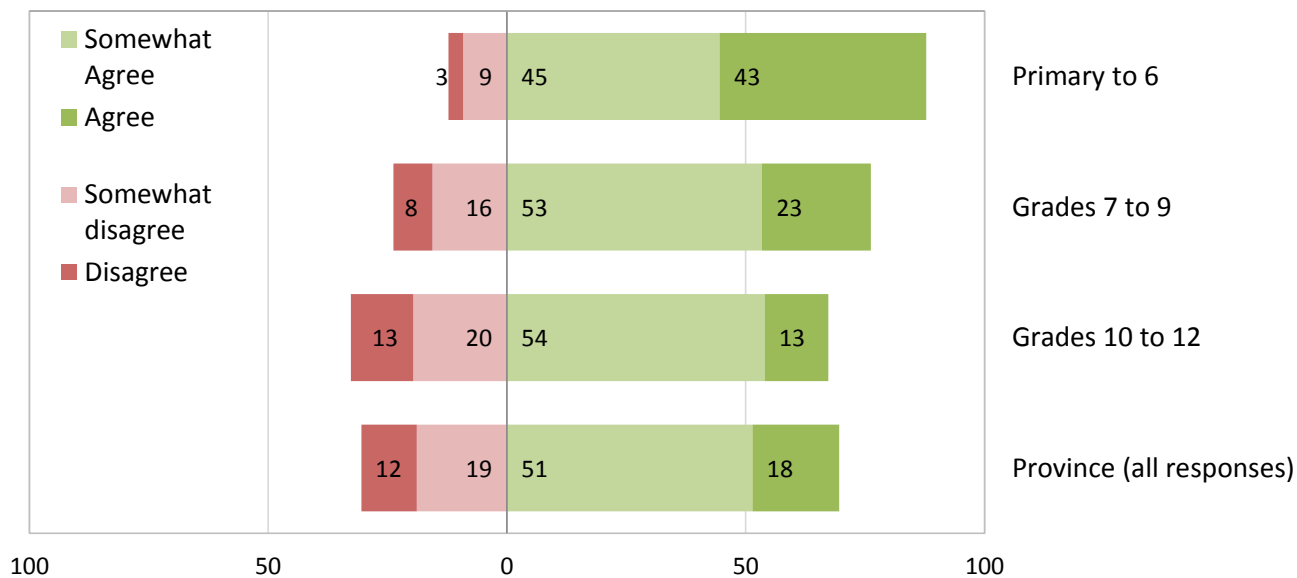
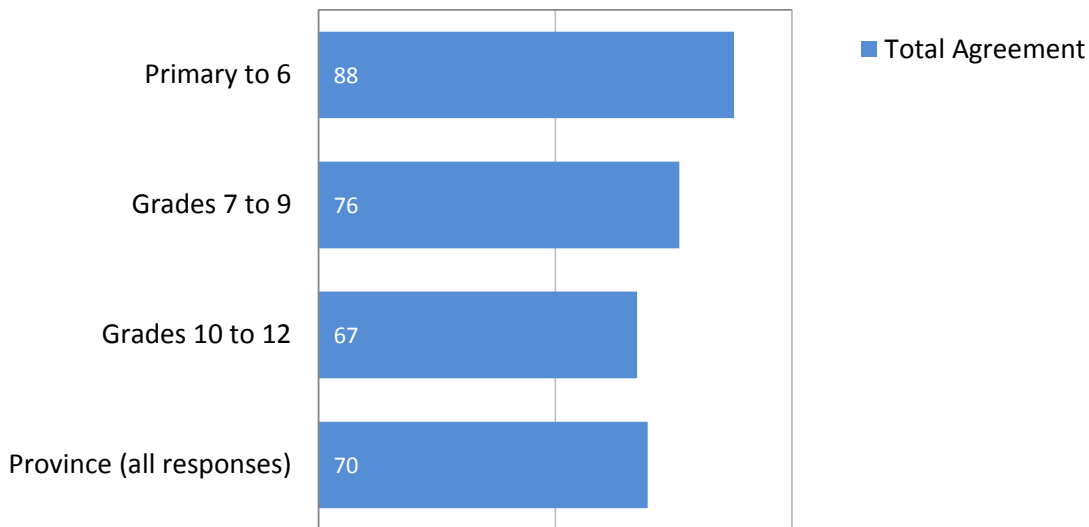
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	164	12	20	50	17	<b>68</b>
Child in P-3	2263	215	11	18	52	19	<b>70</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	157	14	21	49	15	<b>64</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	149	17	24	49	11	<b>59</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	134	19	24	48	10	<b>57</b>
Child in Postsec	365	32	17	32	43	8	<b>51</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



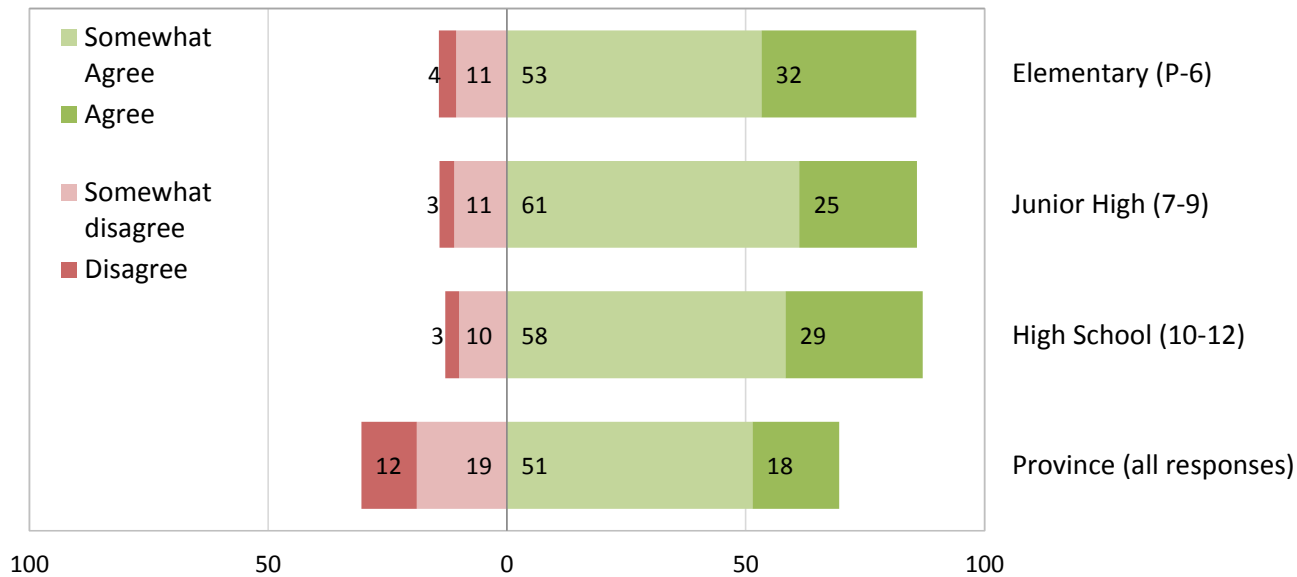
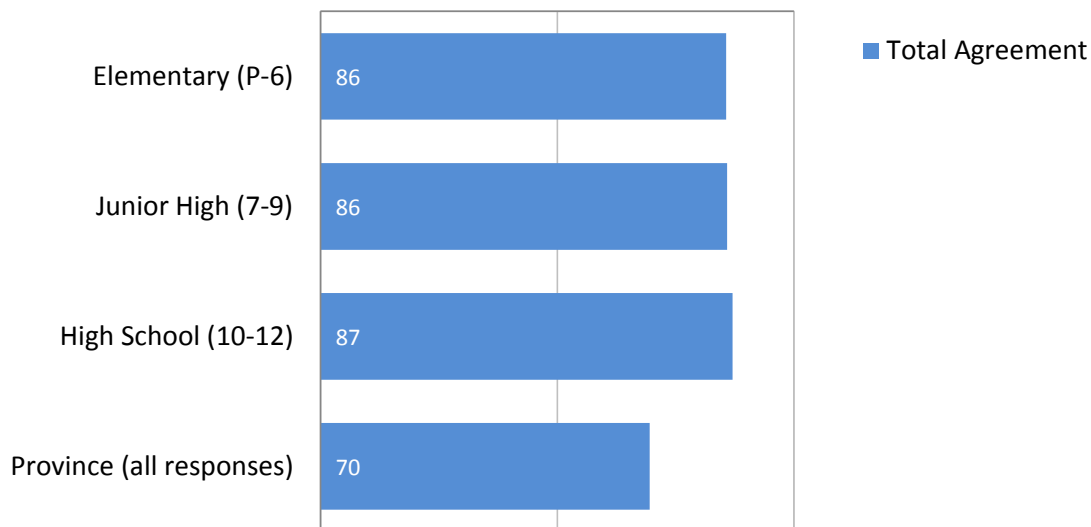
**02 Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes. (TchLrn)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	25	3	9	45	43	<b>88</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	120	8	16	53	23	<b>76</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	185	13	20	54	13	<b>67</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>



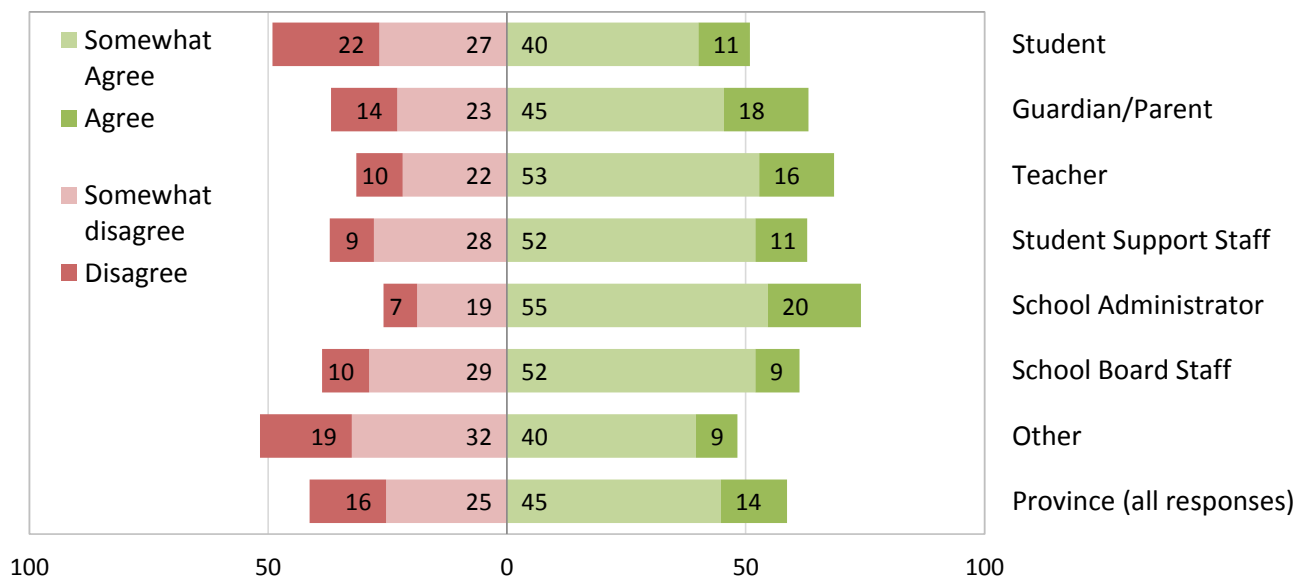
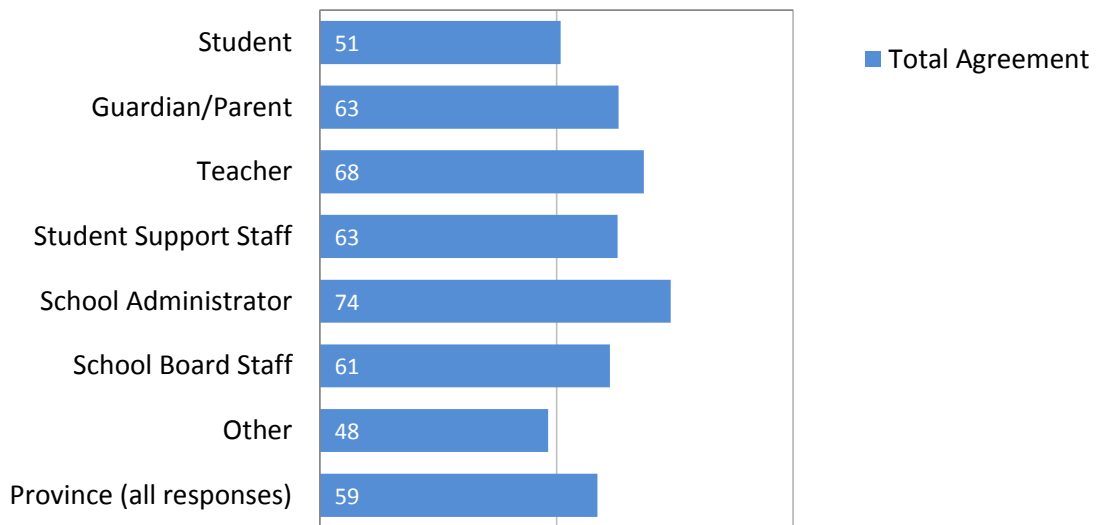
**02 Students receive highly effective teaching in their classes. (TchLrn)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	129	4	11	53	32	<b>86</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	60	3	11	61	25	<b>86</b>
High School (10-12)	911	76	3	10	58	29	<b>87</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>70</b>



### 03 Students are engaged in their learning. (TchLrn)

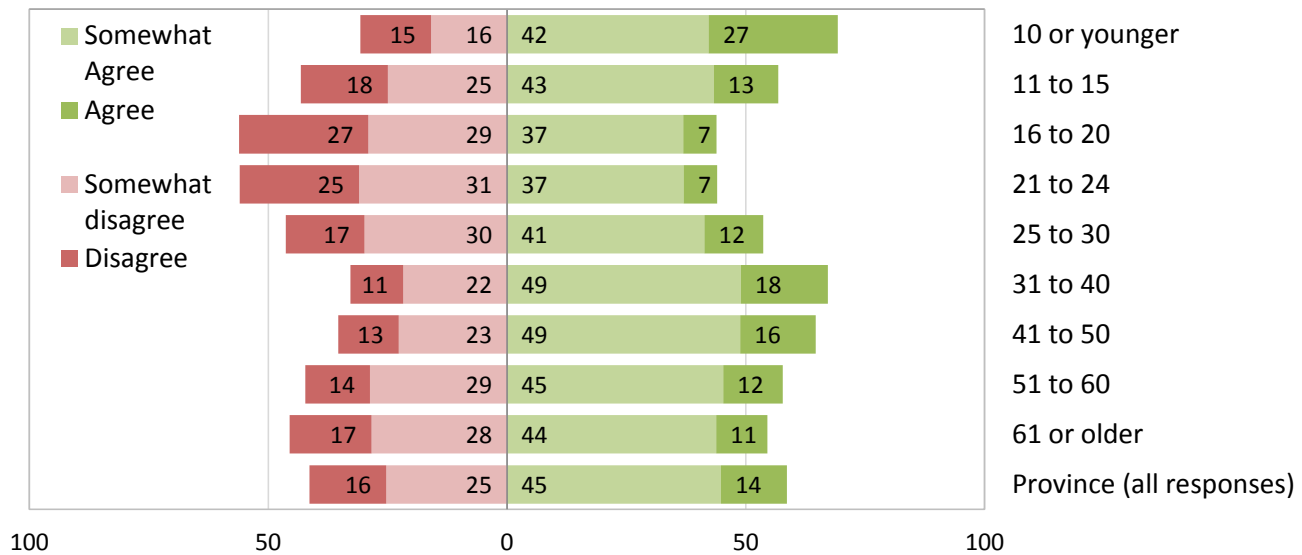
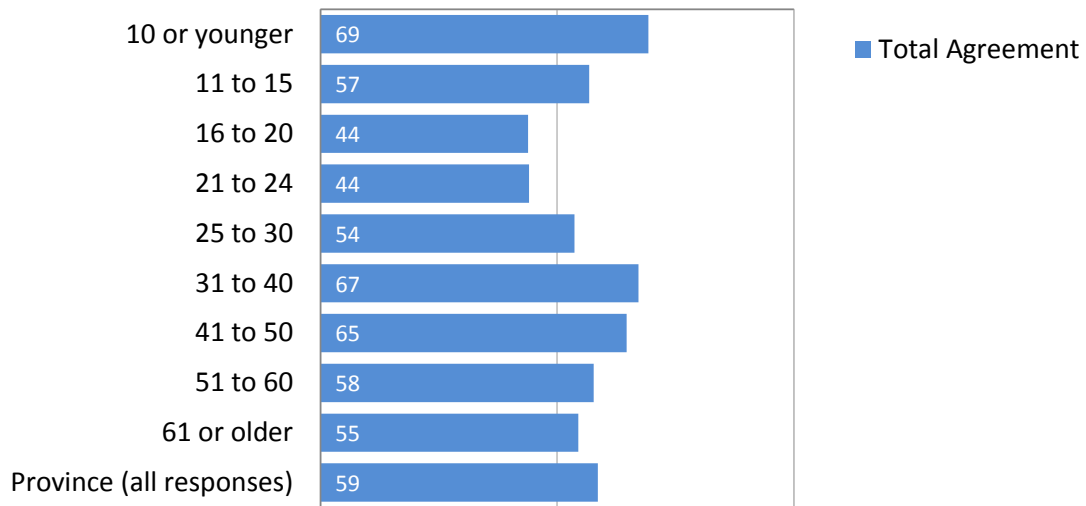
Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	411	22	27	40	11	<b>51</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	787	14	23	45	18	<b>63</b>
Teacher	3198	277	10	22	53	16	<b>68</b>
Student Support Staff	489	66	9	28	52	11	<b>63</b>
School Administrator	306	24	7	19	55	20	<b>74</b>
School Board Staff	205	32	10	29	52	9	<b>61</b>
Other	2942	658	19	32	40	9	<b>48</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>59</b>





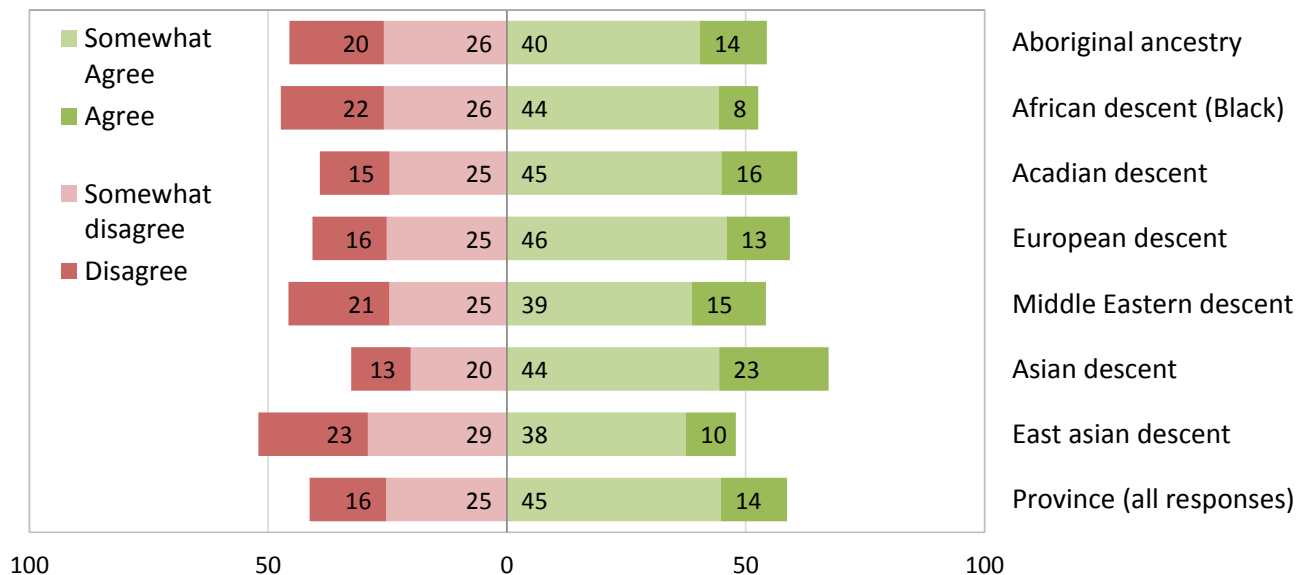
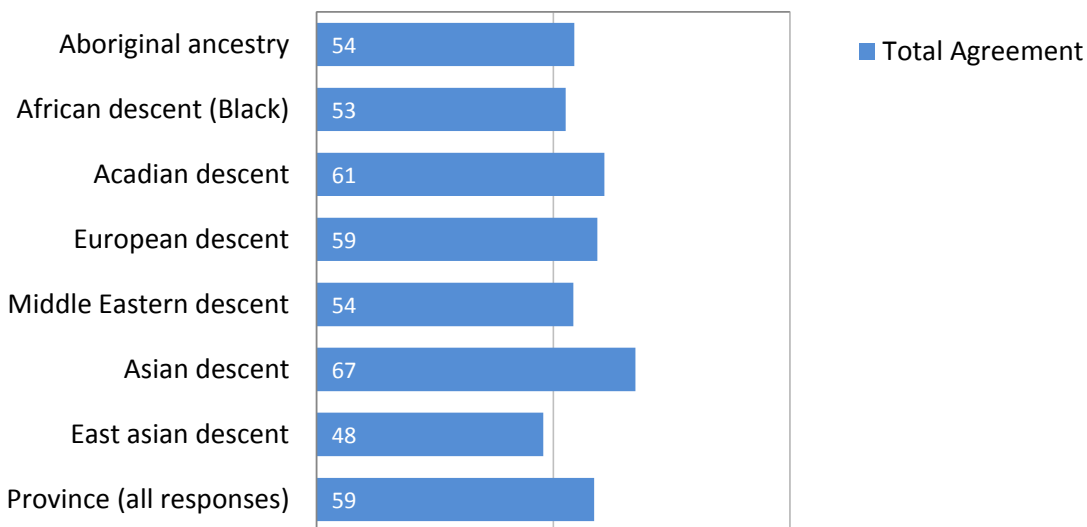
**03 Students are engaged in their learning. (TchLrn)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	55	15	16	42	27	<b>69</b>
11 to 15	2862	207	18	25	43	13	<b>57</b>
16 to 20	2549	211	27	29	37	7	<b>44</b>
21 to 24	319	51	25	31	37	7	<b>44</b>
25 to 30	1018	176	17	30	41	12	<b>54</b>
31 to 40	3776	523	11	22	49	18	<b>67</b>
41 to 50	4190	430	13	23	49	16	<b>65</b>
51 to 60	2545	359	14	29	45	12	<b>58</b>
61 or older	1102	225	17	28	44	11	<b>55</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>59</b>



03 Students are engaged in their learning. (TchLrn)

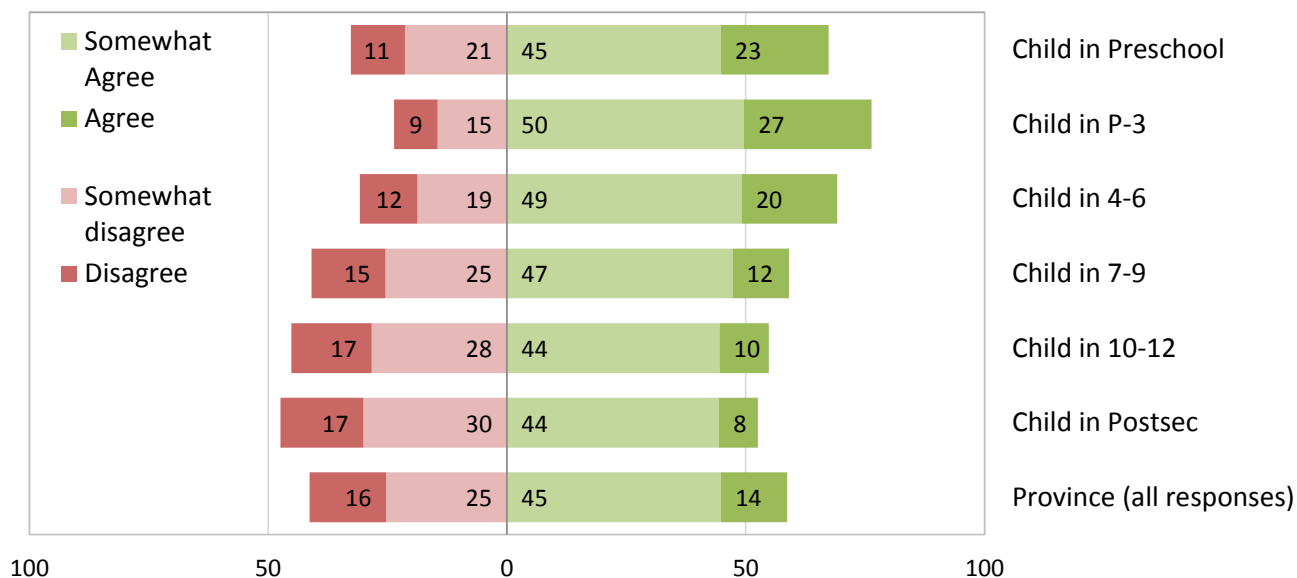
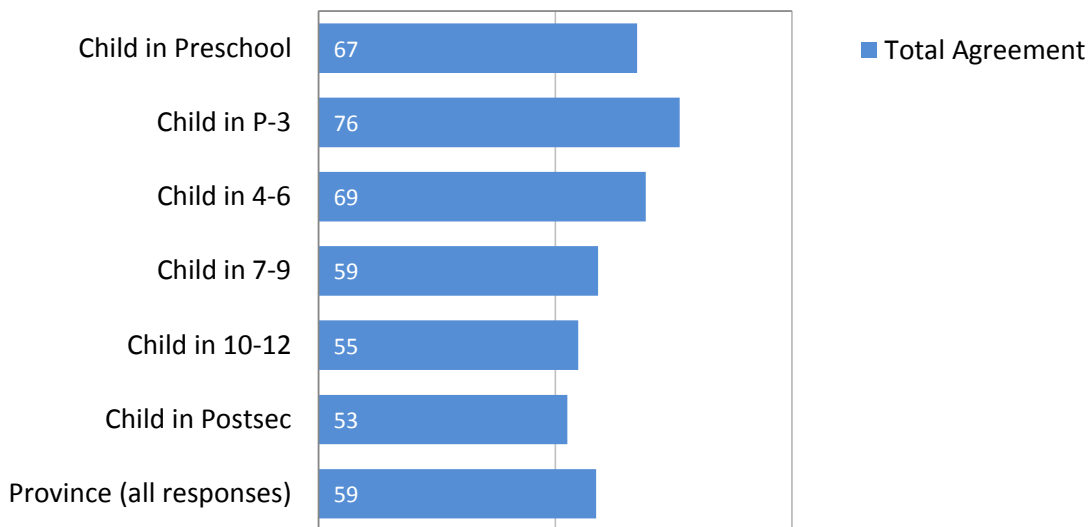
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	104	20	26	40	14	<b>54</b>
African descent (Black)	399	38	22	26	44	8	<b>53</b>
Acadian descent	2232	274	15	25	45	16	<b>61</b>
European descent	12054	1387	16	25	46	13	<b>59</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	28	21	25	39	15	<b>54</b>
Asian descent	168	24	13	20	44	23	<b>67</b>
East asian descent	54	6	23	29	38	10	<b>48</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>59</b>



**03 Students are engaged in their learning. (TchLrn)**

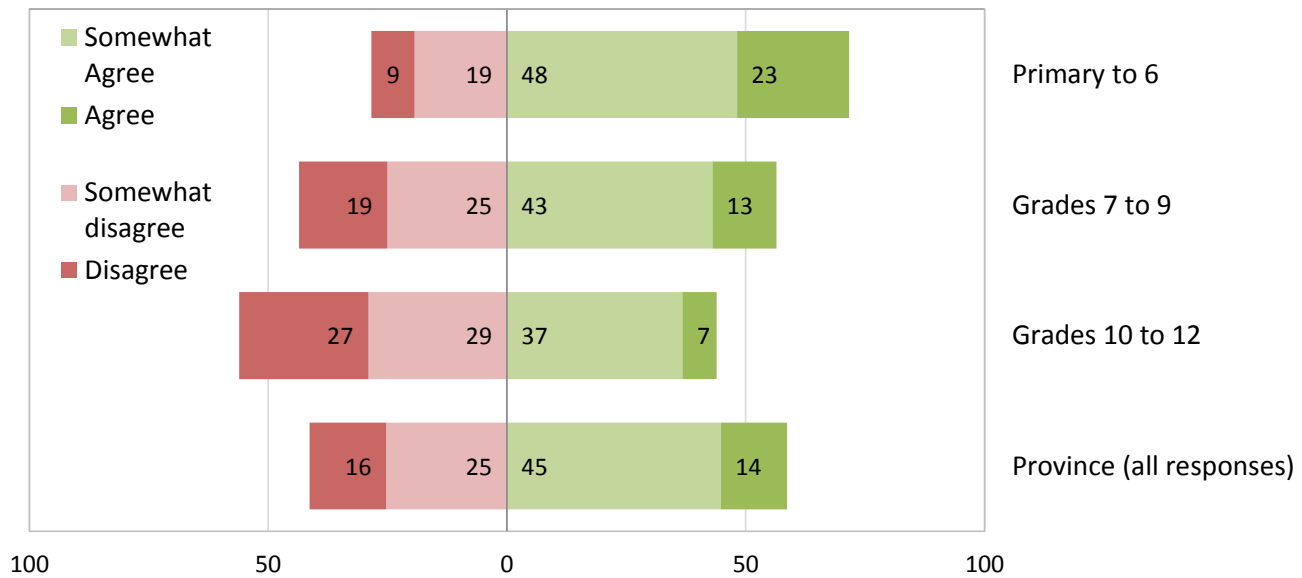
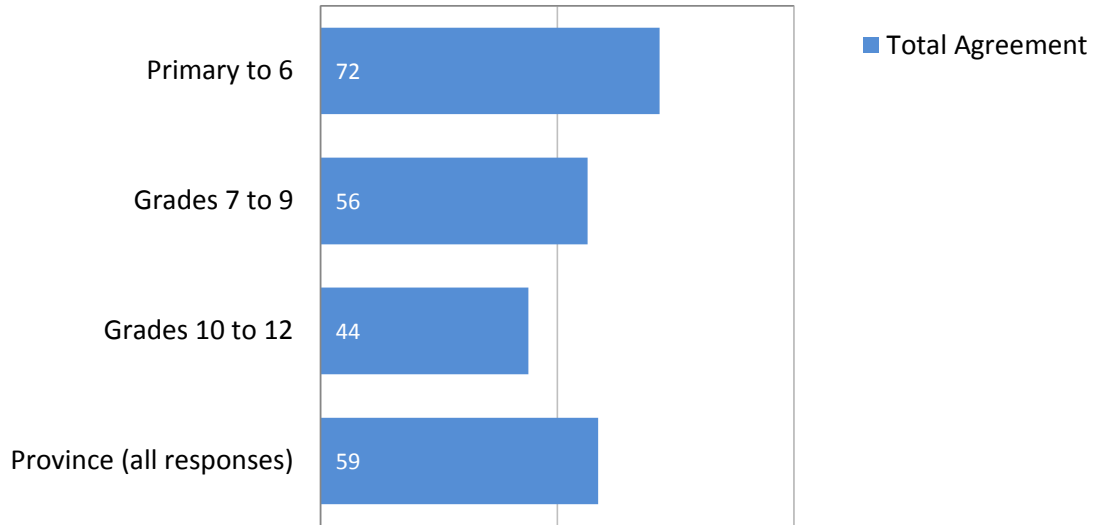
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	174	11	21	45	23	<b>67</b>
Child in P-3	2263	231	9	15	50	27	<b>76</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	165	12	19	49	20	<b>69</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	165	15	25	47	12	<b>59</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	148	17	28	44	10	<b>55</b>
Child in Postsec	365	36	17	30	44	8	<b>53</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>59</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



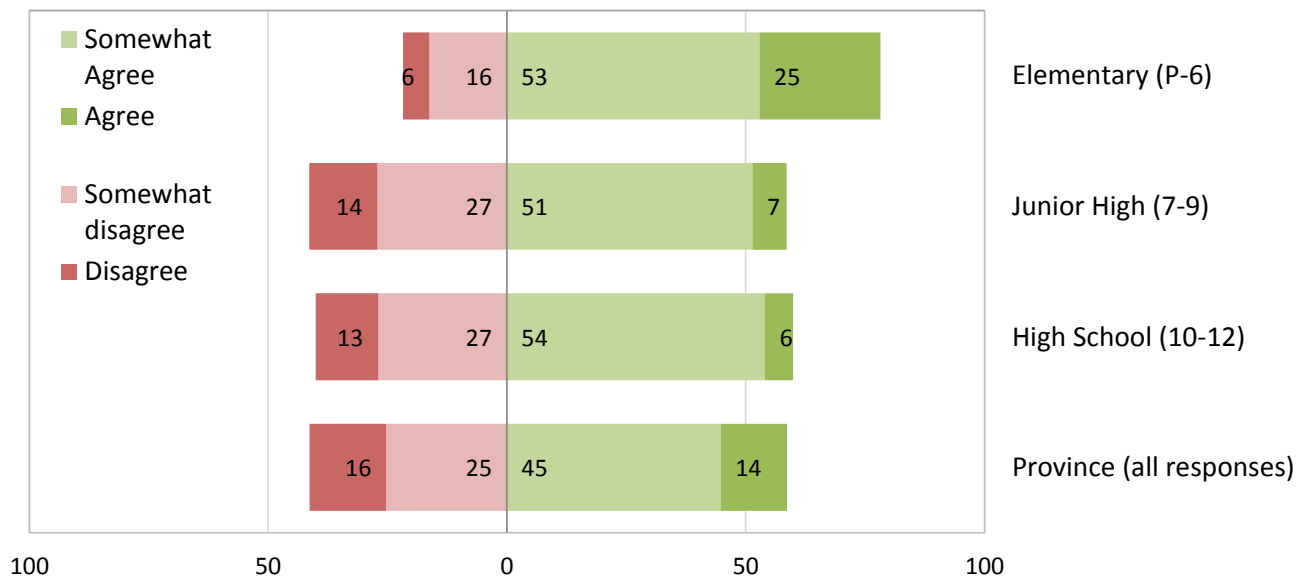
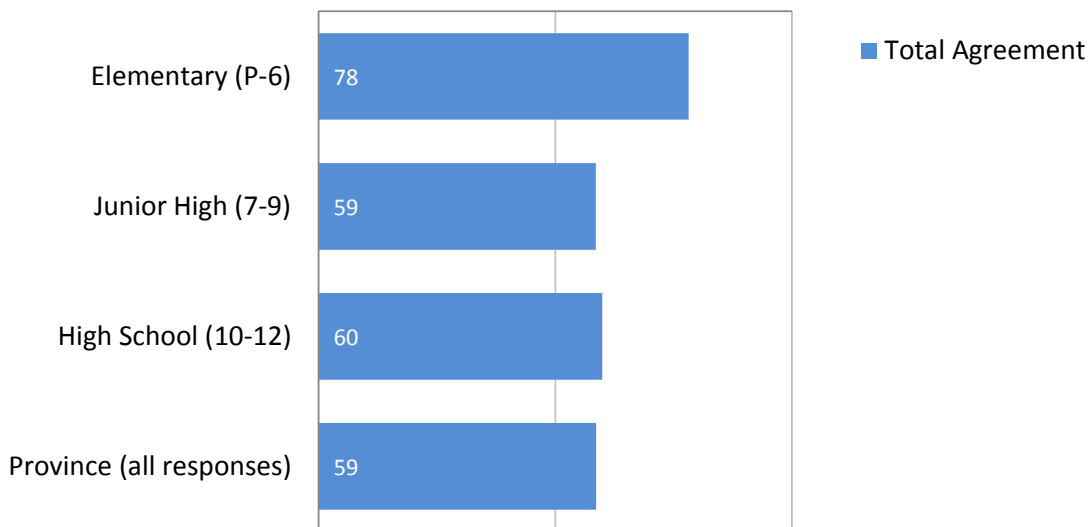
**03 Students are engaged in their learning. (TchLrn)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	32	9	19	48	23	<b>72</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	162	19	25	43	13	<b>56</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	217	27	29	37	7	<b>44</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>59</b>



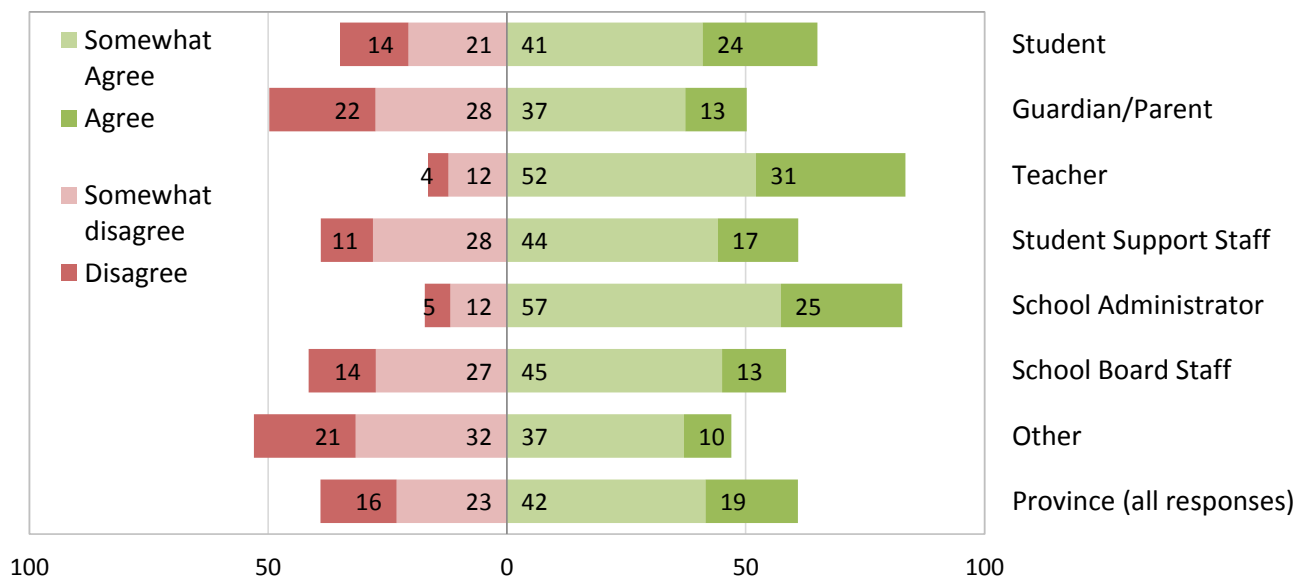
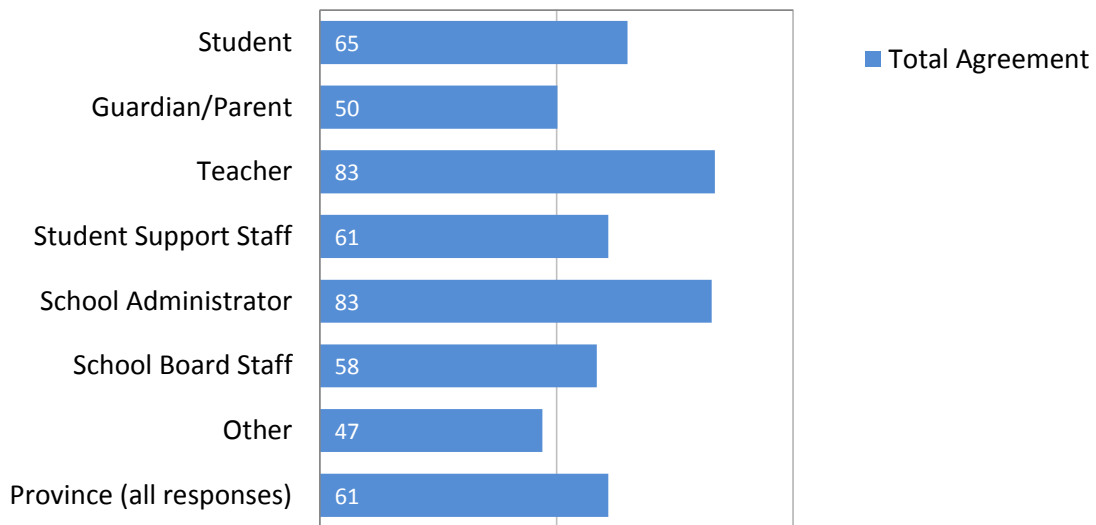
**03 Students are engaged in their learning. (TchLrn)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	136	6	16	53	25	<b>78</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	60	14	27	51	7	<b>59</b>
High School (10-12)	911	80	13	27	54	6	<b>60</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>59</b>



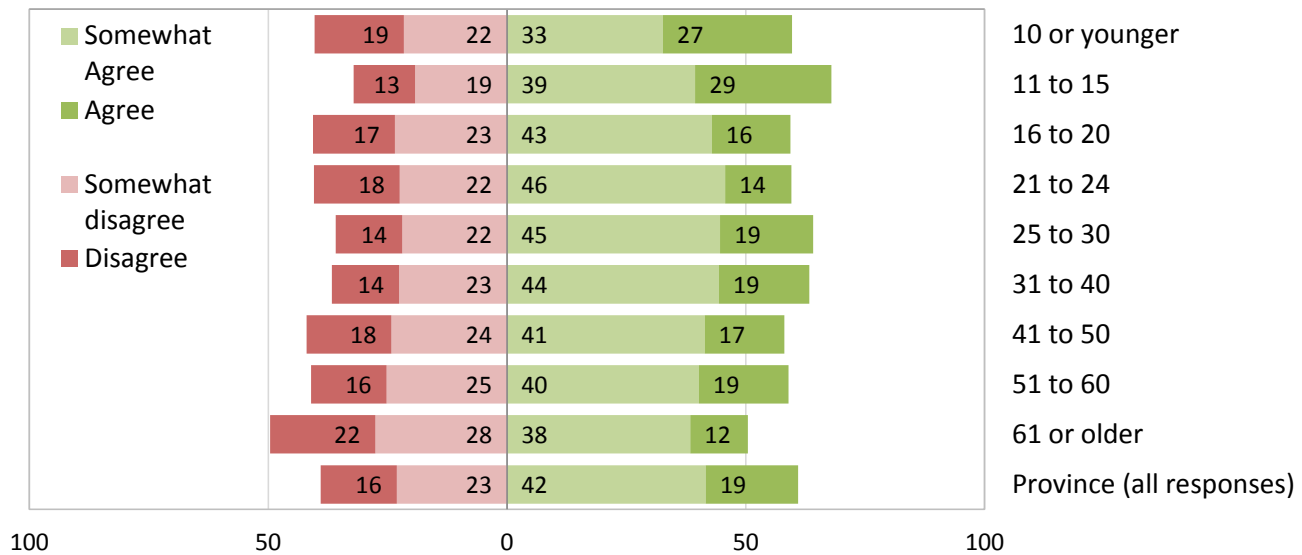
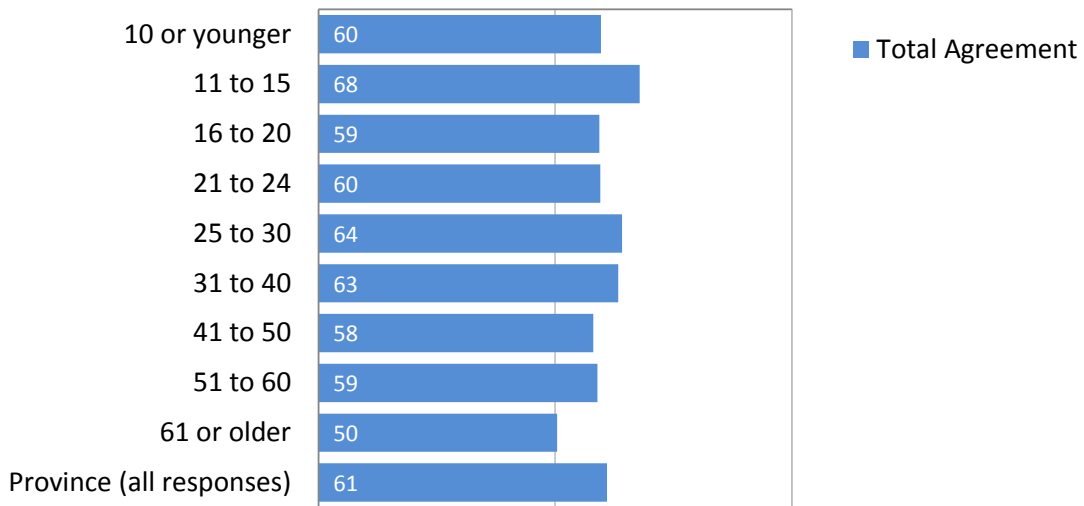
**04 Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork. (TchLrn)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	400	14	21	41	24	<b>65</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	840	22	28	37	13	<b>50</b>
Teacher	3198	291	4	12	52	31	<b>83</b>
Student Support Staff	489	79	11	28	44	17	<b>61</b>
School Administrator	306	27	5	12	57	25	<b>83</b>
School Board Staff	205	34	14	27	45	13	<b>58</b>
Other	2942	757	21	32	37	10	<b>47</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>



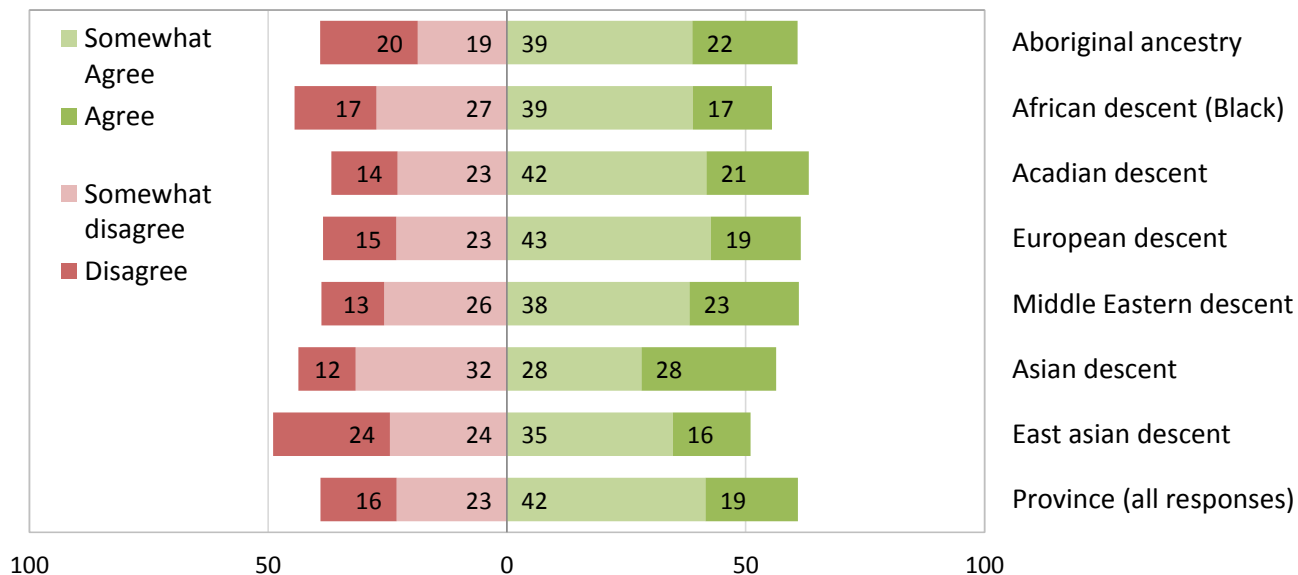
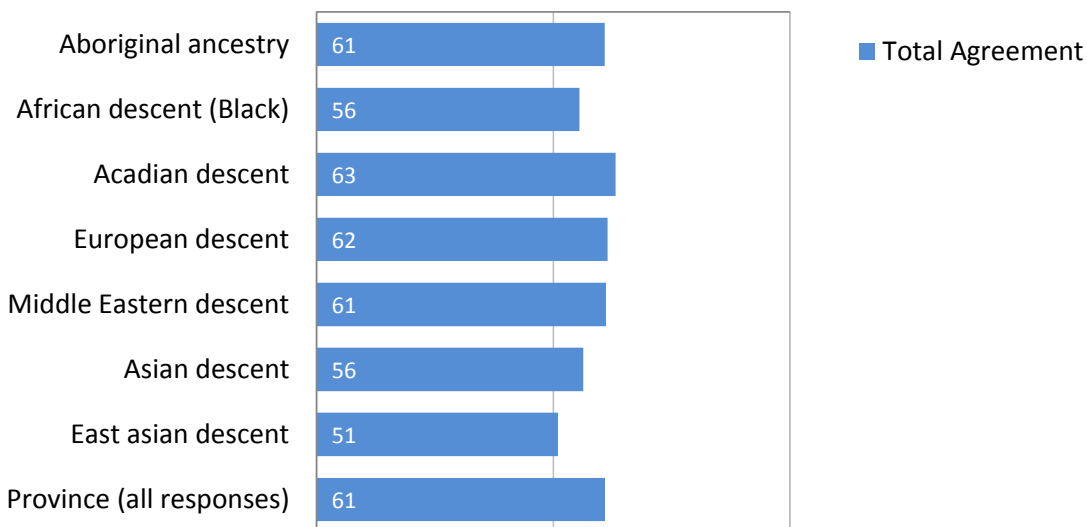
**04 Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork. (TchLrn)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	52	19	22	33	27	<b>60</b>
11 to 15	2862	196	13	19	39	29	<b>68</b>
16 to 20	2549	217	17	23	43	16	<b>59</b>
21 to 24	319	52	18	22	46	14	<b>60</b>
25 to 30	1018	207	14	22	45	19	<b>64</b>
31 to 40	3776	571	14	23	44	19	<b>63</b>
41 to 50	4190	465	18	24	41	17	<b>58</b>
51 to 60	2545	392	16	25	40	19	<b>59</b>
61 or older	1102	257	22	28	38	12	<b>50</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>



04 Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork. (TchLrn)

Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	112	20	19	39	22	61
African descent (Black)	399	37	17	27	39	17	56
Acadian descent	2232	279	14	23	42	21	63
European descent	12054	1515	15	23	43	19	62
Middle Eastern descent	170	26	13	26	38	23	61
Asian descent	168	26	12	32	28	28	56
East asian descent	54	5	24	24	35	16	51
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>

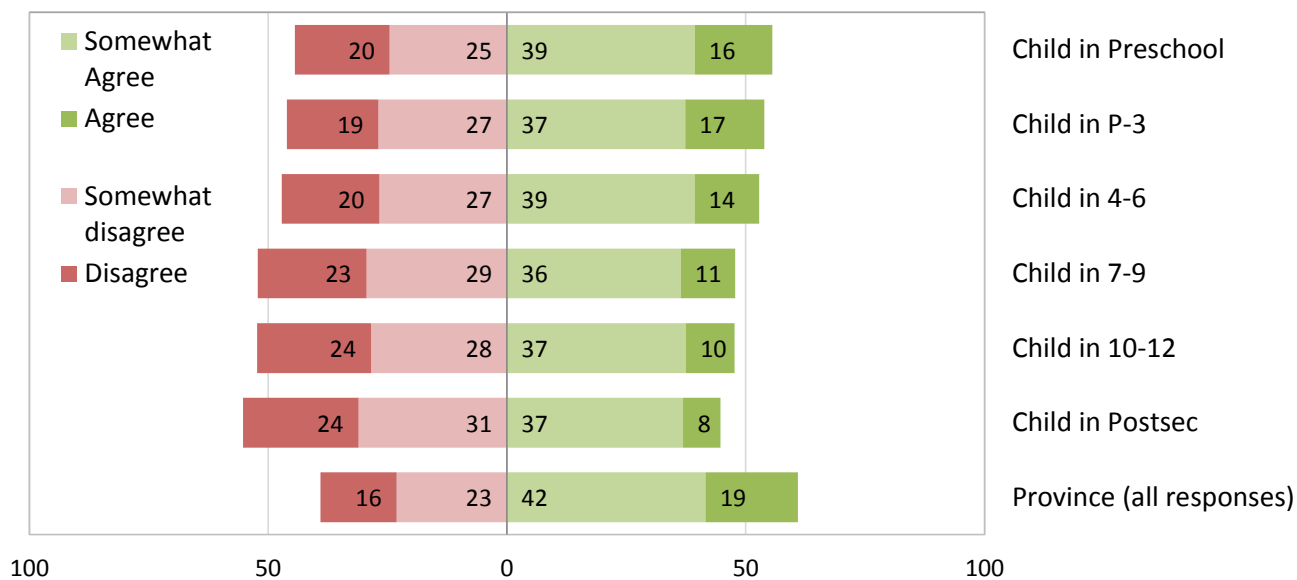
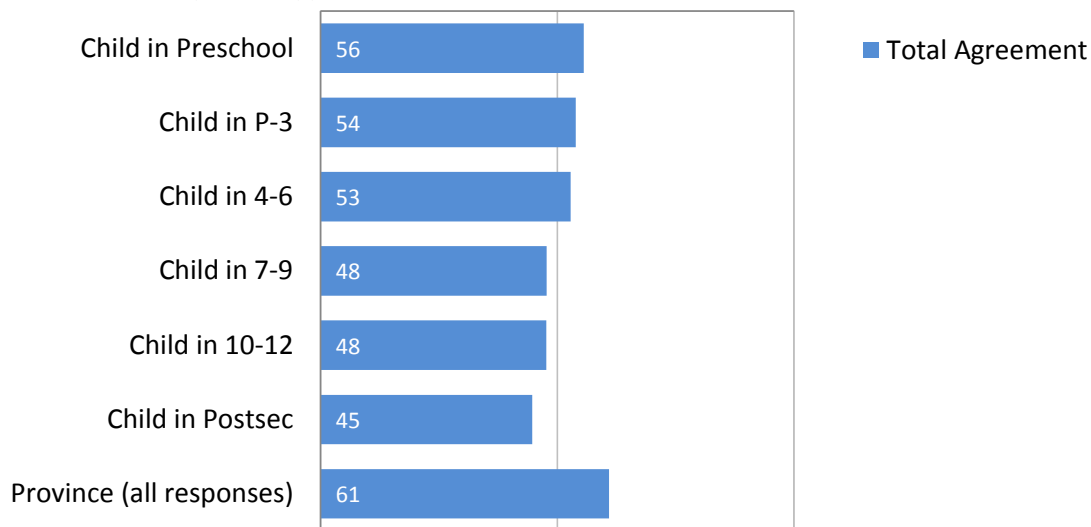




**04 Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork. (TchLrn)**

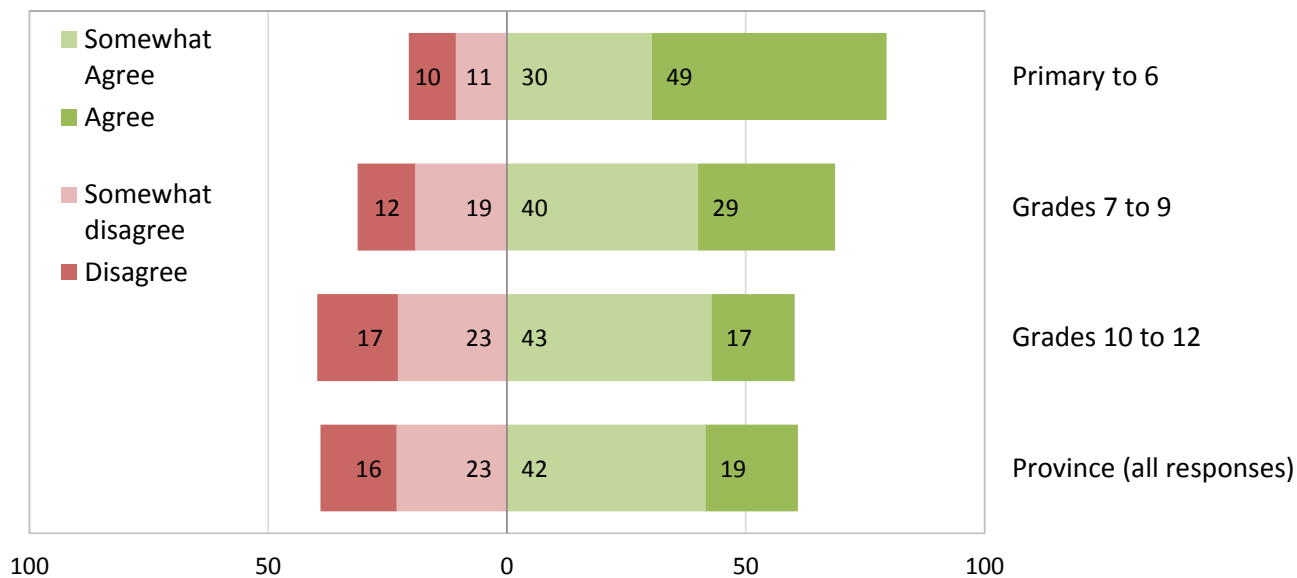
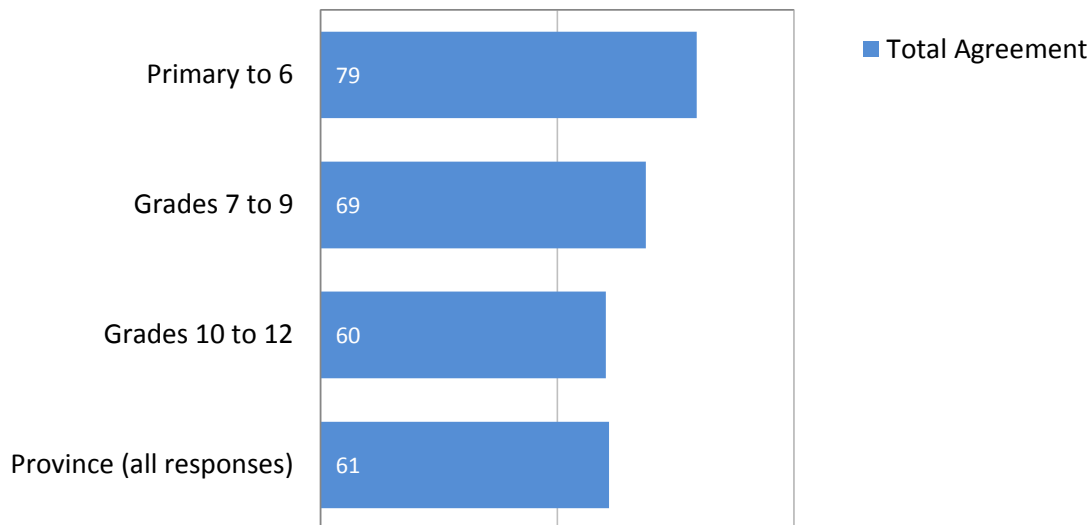
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	187	20	25	39	16	<b>56</b>
Child in P-3	2263	253	19	27	37	17	<b>54</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	177	20	27	39	14	<b>53</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	166	23	29	36	11	<b>48</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	141	24	28	37	10	<b>48</b>
Child in Postsec	365	34	24	31	37	8	<b>45</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



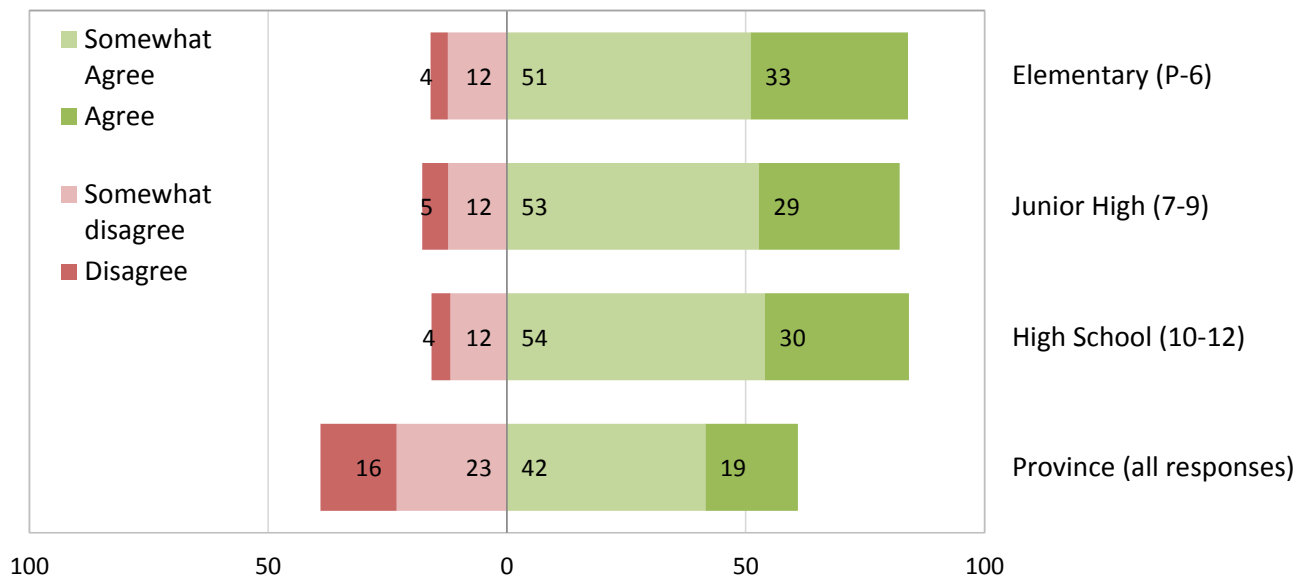
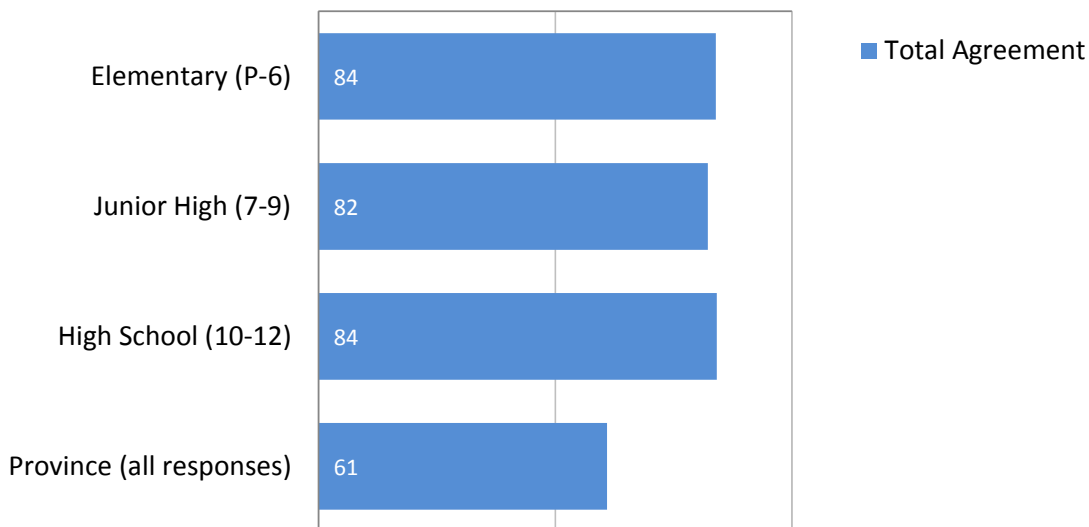
**04 Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork. (TchLrn)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	30	10	11	30	49	<b>79</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	150	12	19	40	29	<b>69</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	220	17	23	43	17	<b>60</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>



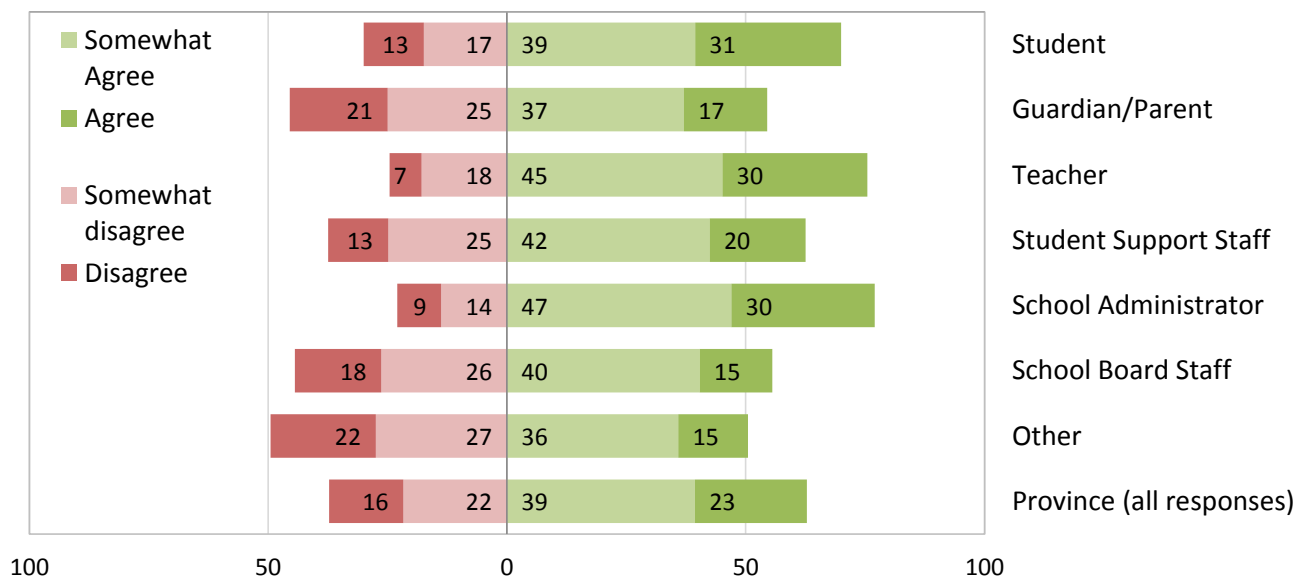
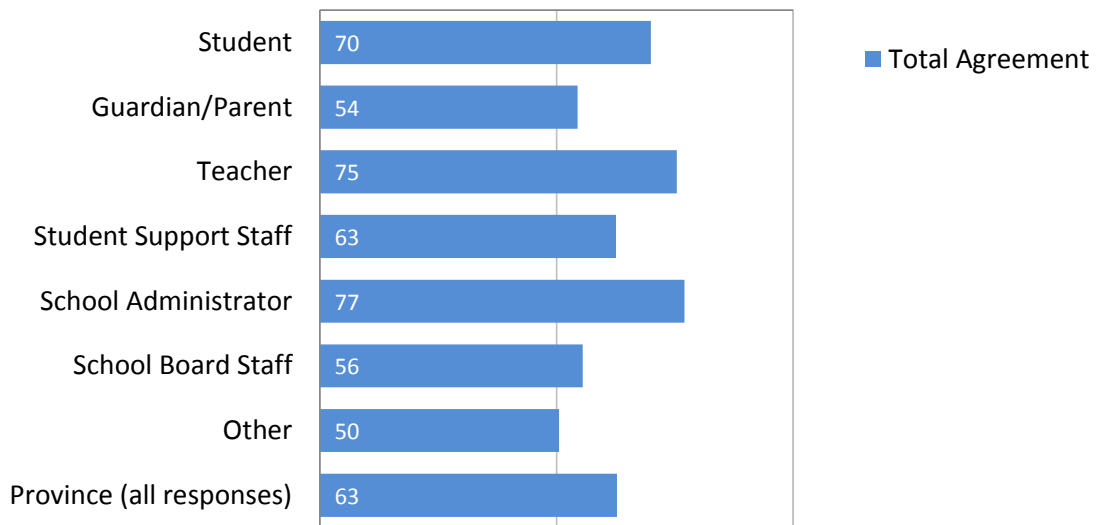
**04 Students receive helpful feedback about the quality of their schoolwork. (TchLrn)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	141	4	12	51	33	<b>84</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	64	5	12	53	29	<b>82</b>
High School (10-12)	911	84	4	12	54	30	<b>84</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>



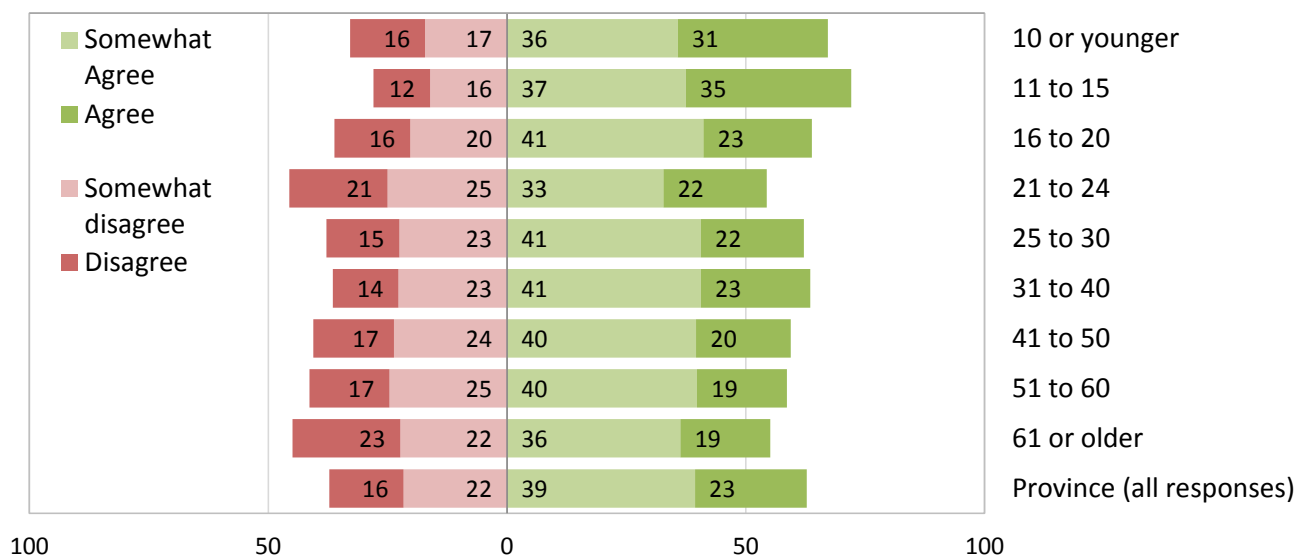
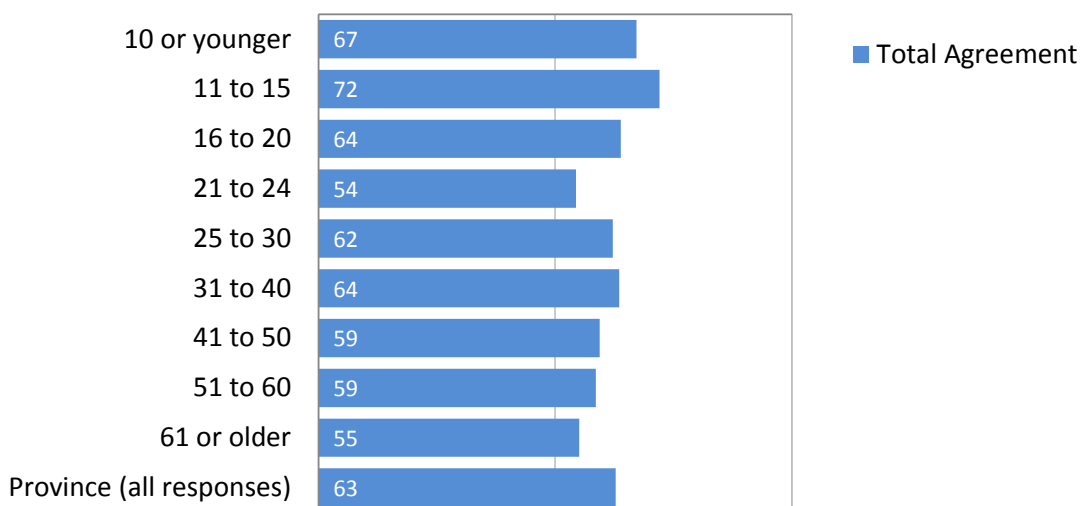
**05 Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students. (TchLrn)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	378	13	17	39	31	<b>70</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	873	21	25	37	17	<b>54</b>
Teacher	3198	274	7	18	45	30	<b>75</b>
Student Support Staff	489	67	13	25	42	20	<b>63</b>
School Administrator	306	23	9	14	47	30	<b>77</b>
School Board Staff	205	34	18	26	40	15	<b>56</b>
Other	2942	639	22	27	36	15	<b>50</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63</b>



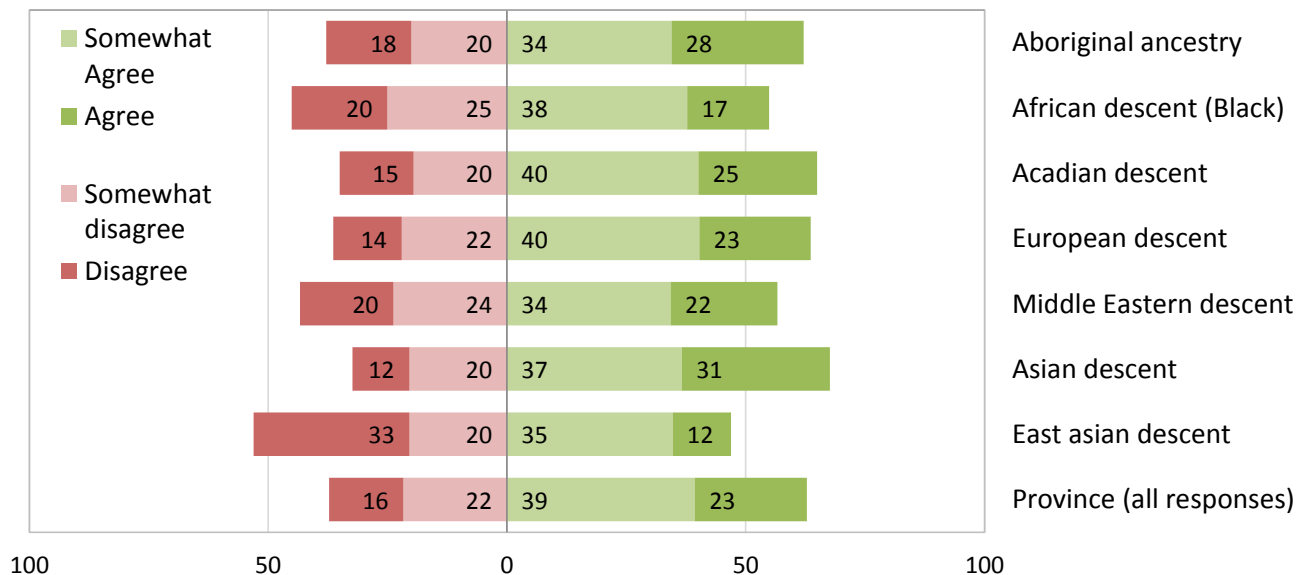
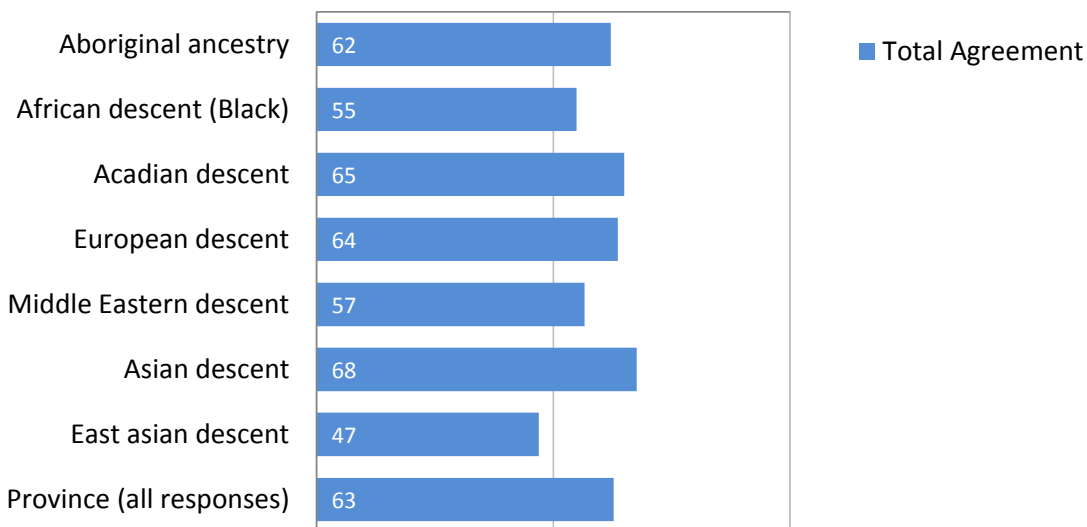
05 Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students. (TchLrn)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	51	16	17	36	31	<b>67</b>
11 to 15	2862	175	12	16	37	35	<b>72</b>
16 to 20	2549	219	16	20	41	23	<b>64</b>
21 to 24	319	47	21	25	33	22	<b>54</b>
25 to 30	1018	175	15	23	41	22	<b>62</b>
31 to 40	3776	537	14	23	41	23	<b>64</b>
41 to 50	4190	481	17	24	40	20	<b>59</b>
51 to 60	2545	361	17	25	40	19	<b>59</b>
61 or older	1102	220	23	22	36	19	<b>55</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63</b>



05 Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students. (TchLrn)

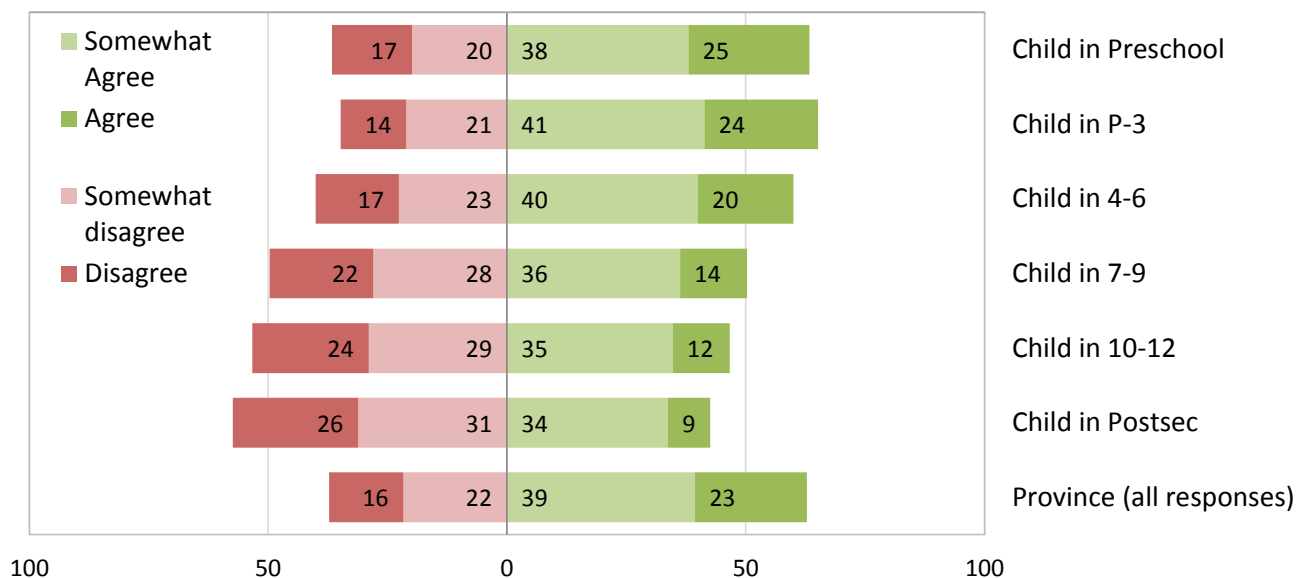
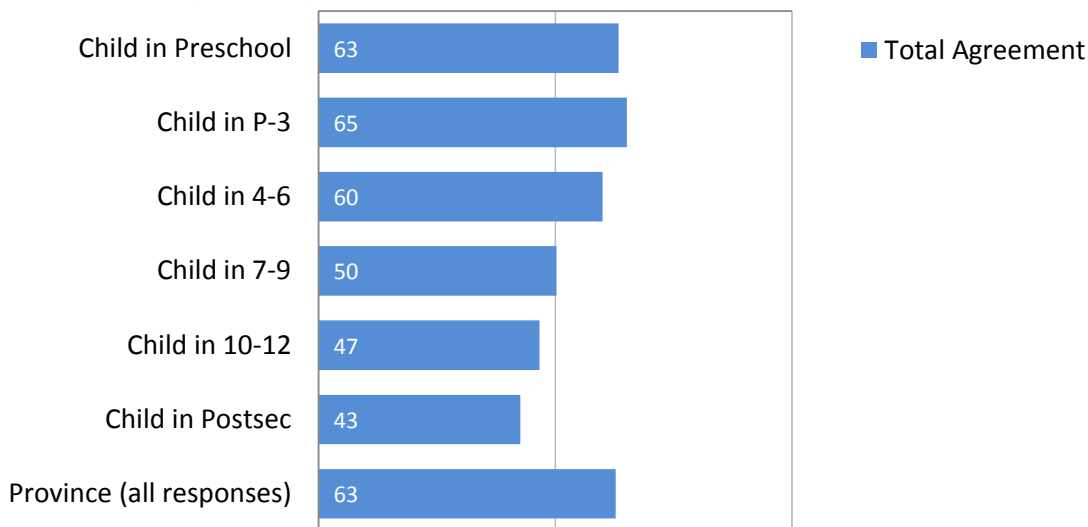
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	102	18	20	34	28	62
African descent (Black)	399	44	20	25	38	17	55
Acadian descent	2232	253	15	20	40	25	65
European descent	12054	1420	14	22	40	23	64
Middle Eastern descent	170	27	20	24	34	22	57
Asian descent	168	26	12	20	37	31	68
East asian descent	54	5	33	20	35	12	47
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63</b>



05 Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students. (TchLrn)

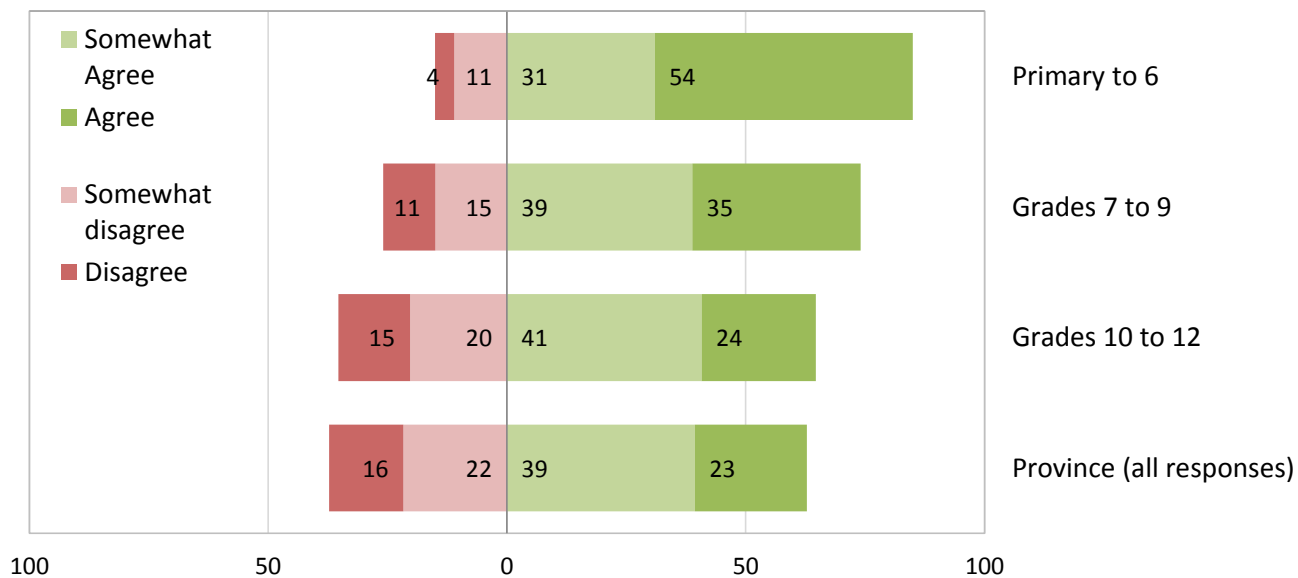
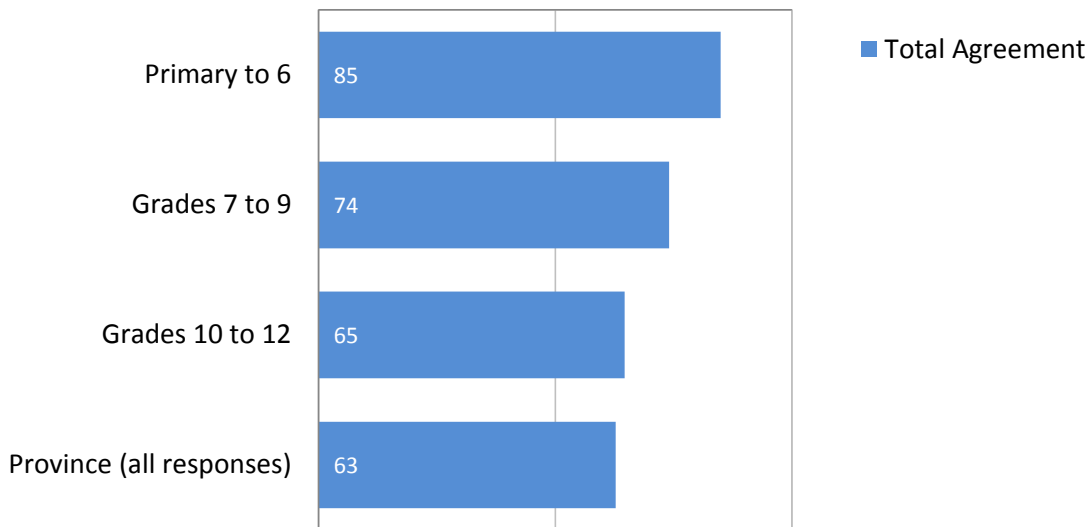
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	174	17	20	38	25	<b>63</b>
Child in P-3	2263	272	14	21	41	24	<b>65</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	196	17	23	40	20	<b>60</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	196	22	28	36	14	<b>50</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	169	24	29	35	12	<b>47</b>
Child in Postsec	365	41	26	31	34	9	<b>43</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



05 Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students. (TchLrn)

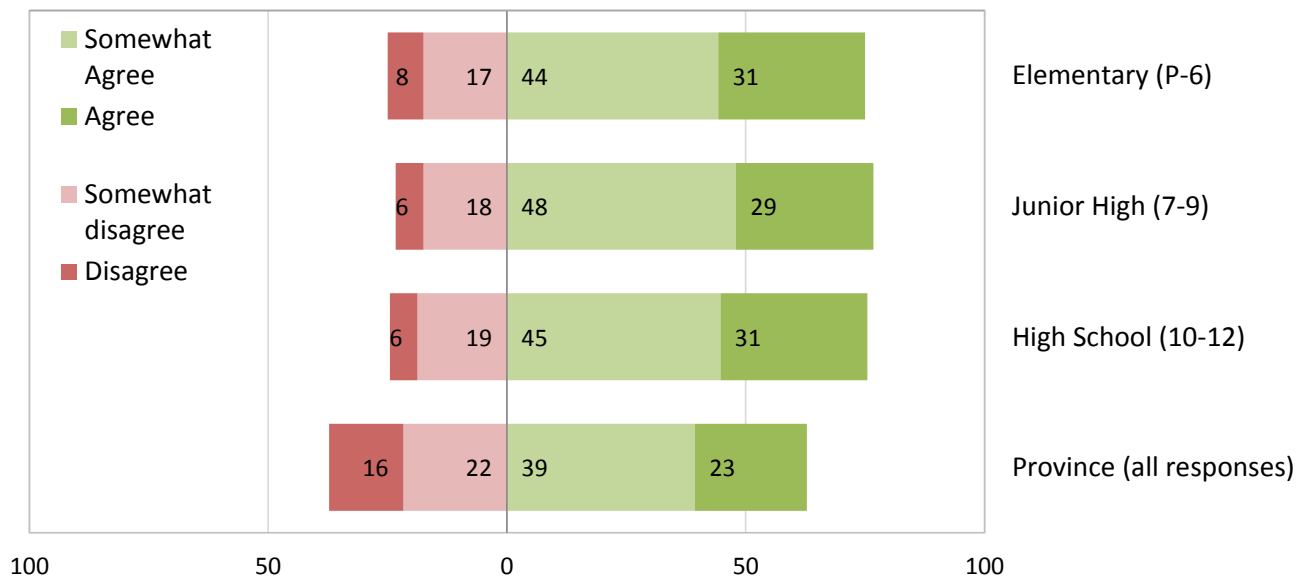
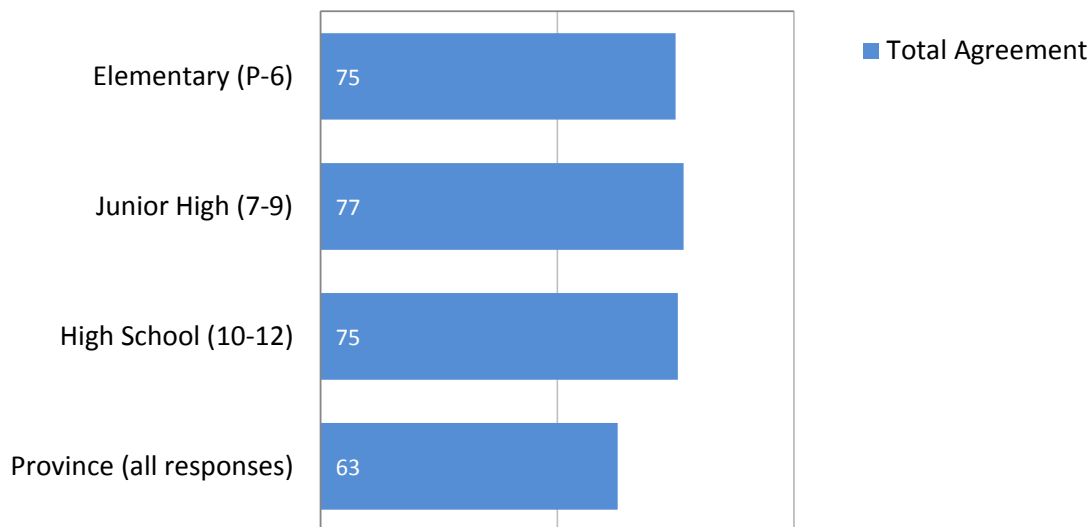
Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	28	4	11	31	54	<b>85</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	123	11	15	39	35	<b>74</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	227	15	20	41	24	<b>65</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63</b>





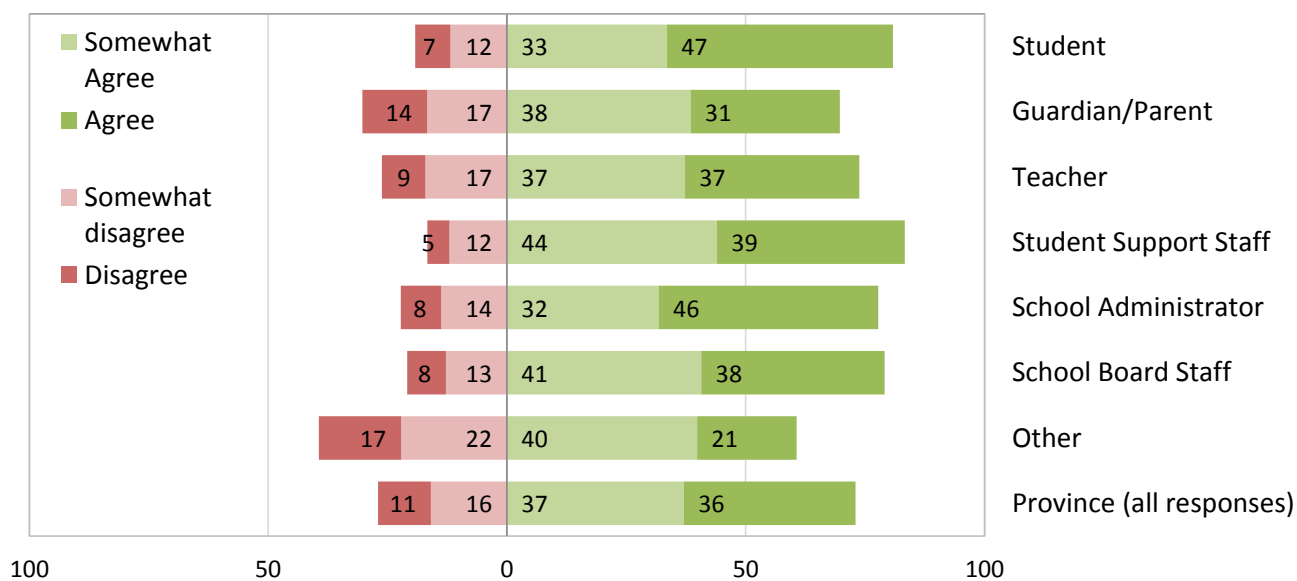
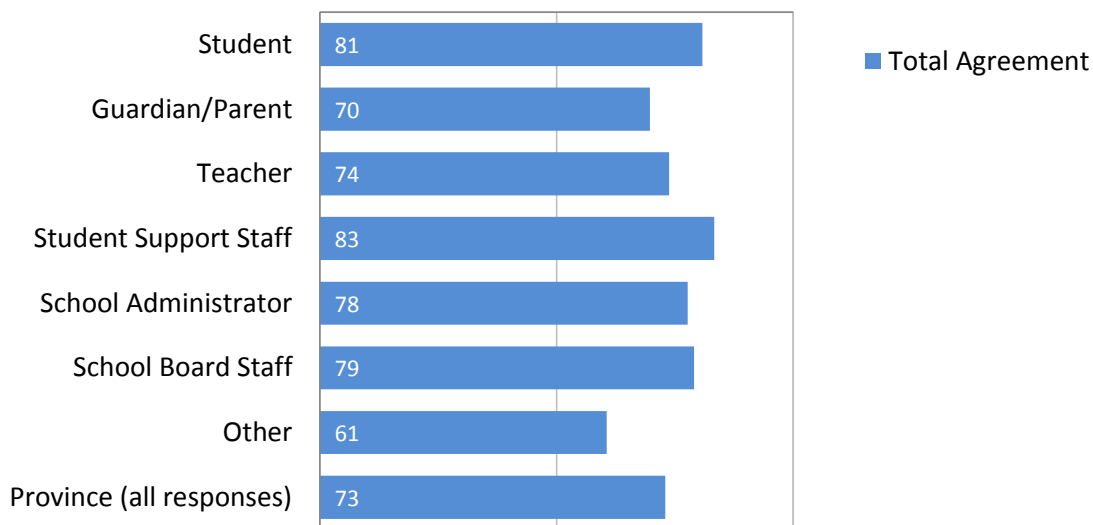
05 Teachers today are well prepared to respond to the needs of students. (TchLrn)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	140	8	17	44	31	<b>75</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	55	6	18	48	29	<b>77</b>
High School (10-12)	911	79	6	19	45	31	<b>75</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2288</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>63</b>



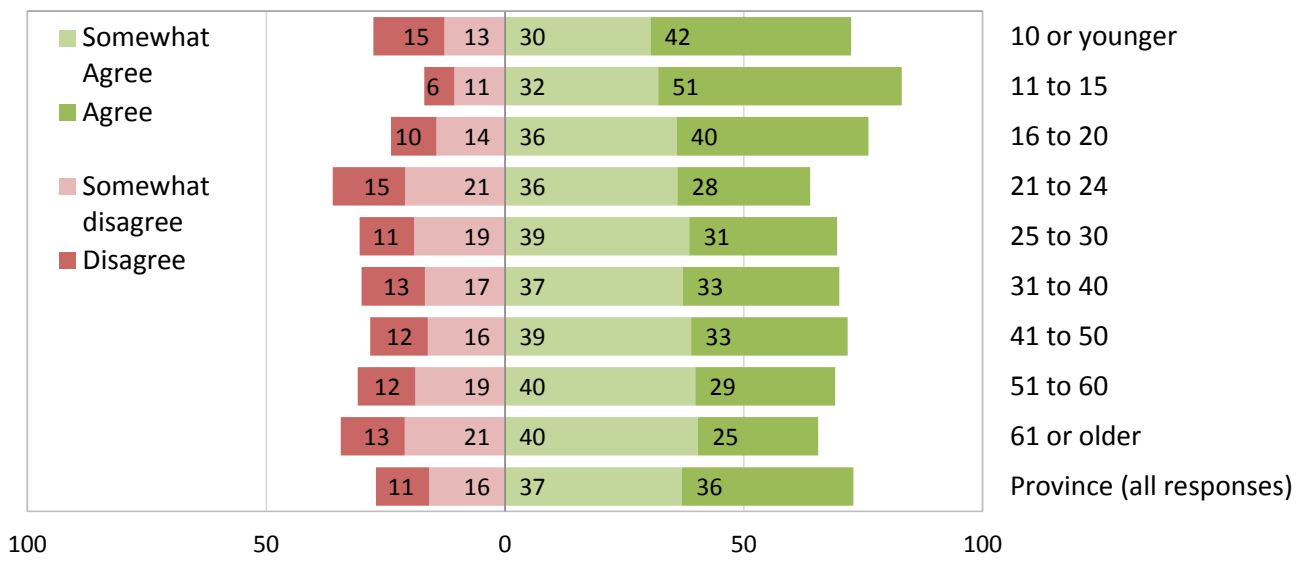
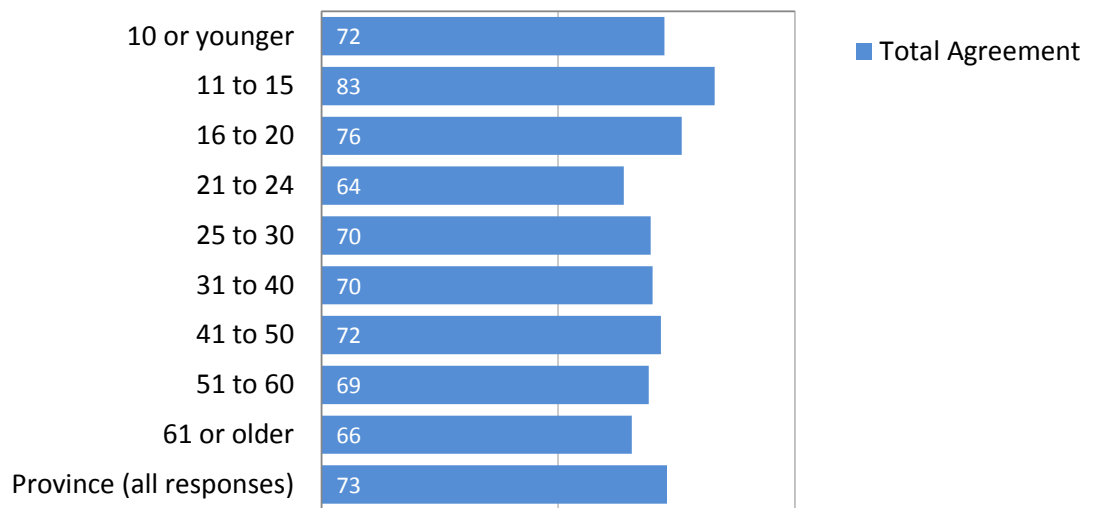
**06 Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school. (TchLrn)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	346	7	12	33	47	<b>81</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	721	14	17	38	31	<b>70</b>
Teacher	3198	280	9	17	37	37	<b>74</b>
Student Support Staff	489	57	5	12	44	39	<b>83</b>
School Administrator	306	23	8	14	32	46	<b>78</b>
School Board Staff	205	33	8	13	41	38	<b>79</b>
Other	2942	605	17	22	40	21	<b>61</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>



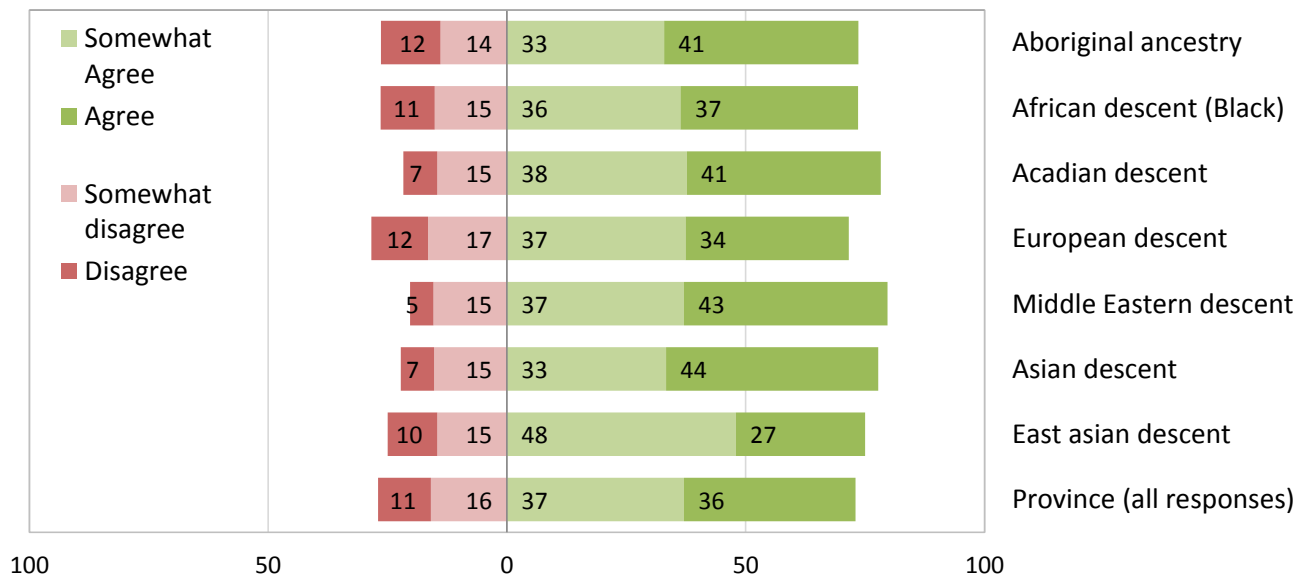
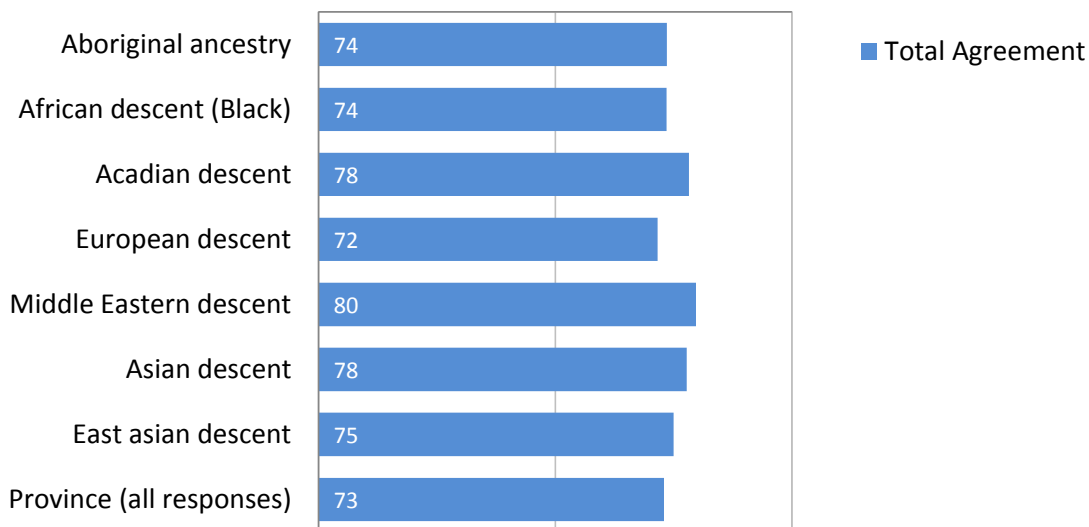
**06 Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school. (TchLrn)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	49	15	13	30	42	<b>72</b>
11 to 15	2862	154	6	11	32	51	<b>83</b>
16 to 20	2549	204	10	14	36	40	<b>76</b>
21 to 24	319	42	15	21	36	28	<b>64</b>
25 to 30	1018	168	11	19	39	31	<b>70</b>
31 to 40	3776	469	13	17	37	33	<b>70</b>
41 to 50	4190	404	12	16	39	33	<b>72</b>
51 to 60	2545	340	12	19	40	29	<b>69</b>
61 or older	1102	216	13	21	40	25	<b>66</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>



**06 Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school. (TchLrn)**

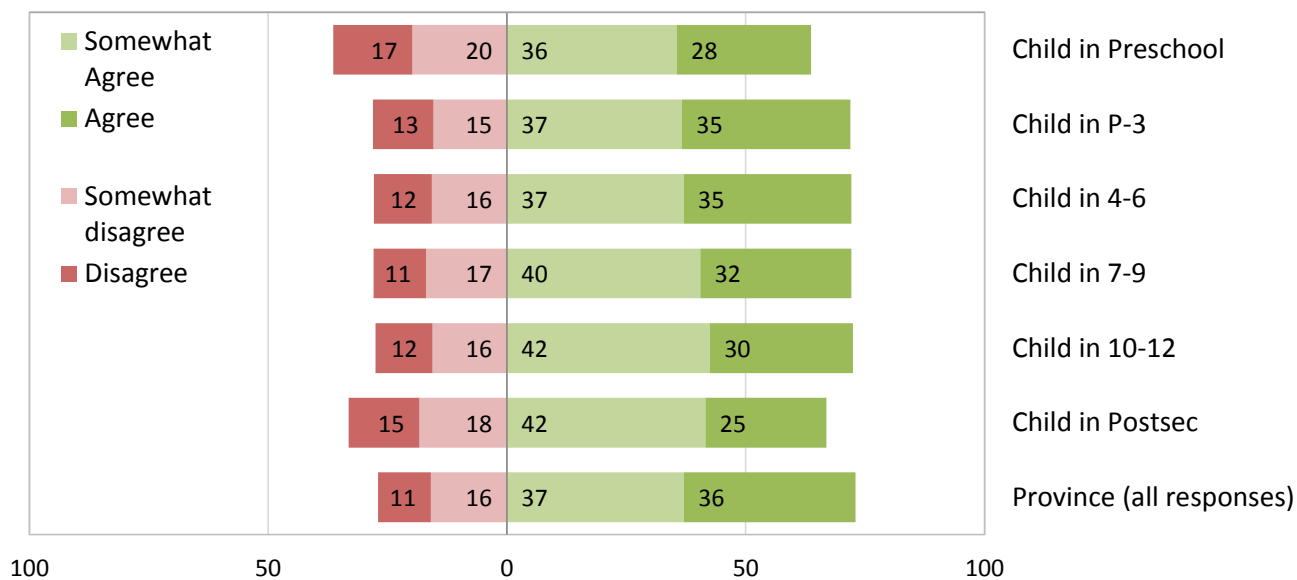
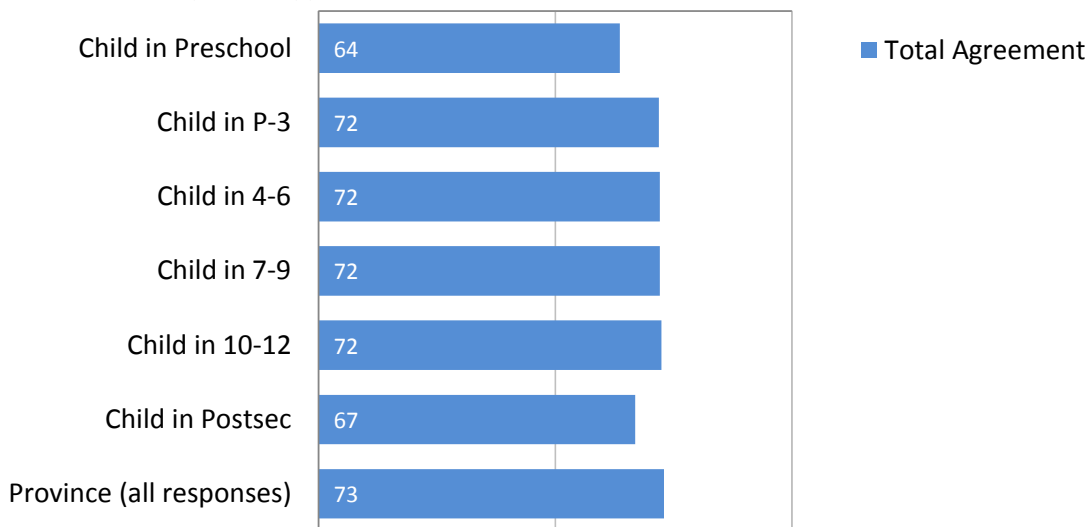
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	97	12	14	33	41	<b>74</b>
African descent (Black)	399	36	11	15	36	37	<b>74</b>
Acadian descent	2232	238	7	15	38	41	<b>78</b>
European descent	12054	1281	12	17	37	34	<b>72</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	27	5	15	37	43	<b>80</b>
Asian descent	168	24	7	15	33	44	<b>78</b>
East asian descent	54	6	10	15	48	27	<b>75</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>



**06 Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school. (TchLrn)**

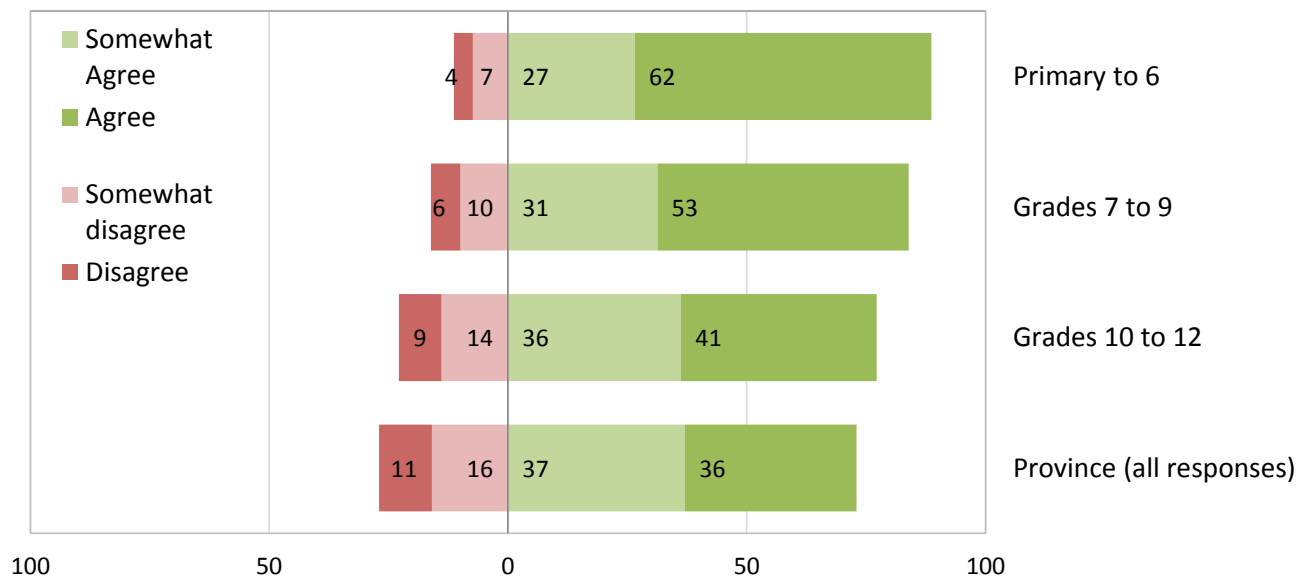
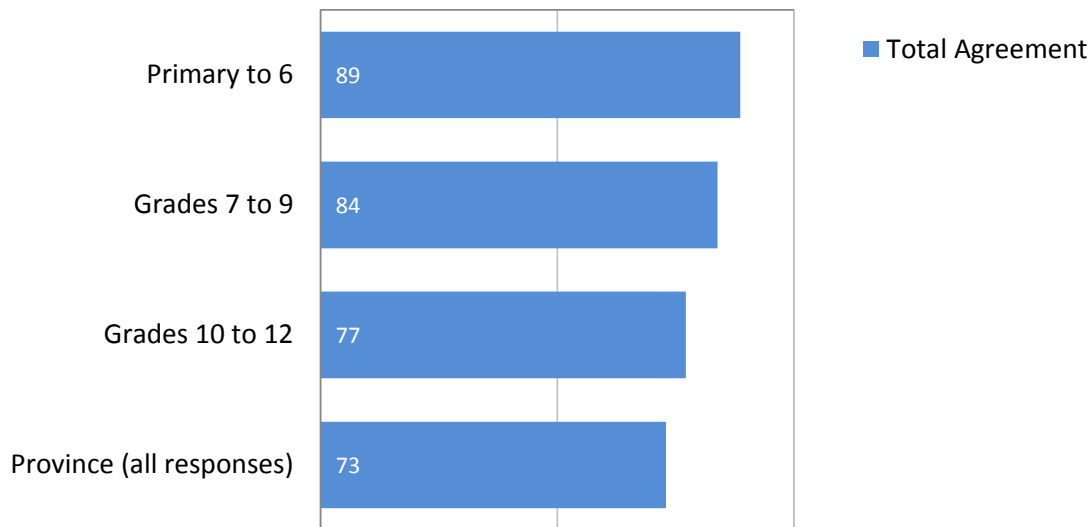
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	147	17	20	36	28	<b>64</b>
Child in P-3	2263	202	13	15	37	35	<b>72</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	155	12	16	37	35	<b>72</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	145	11	17	40	32	<b>72</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	136	12	16	42	30	<b>72</b>
Child in Postsec	365	33	15	18	42	25	<b>67</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



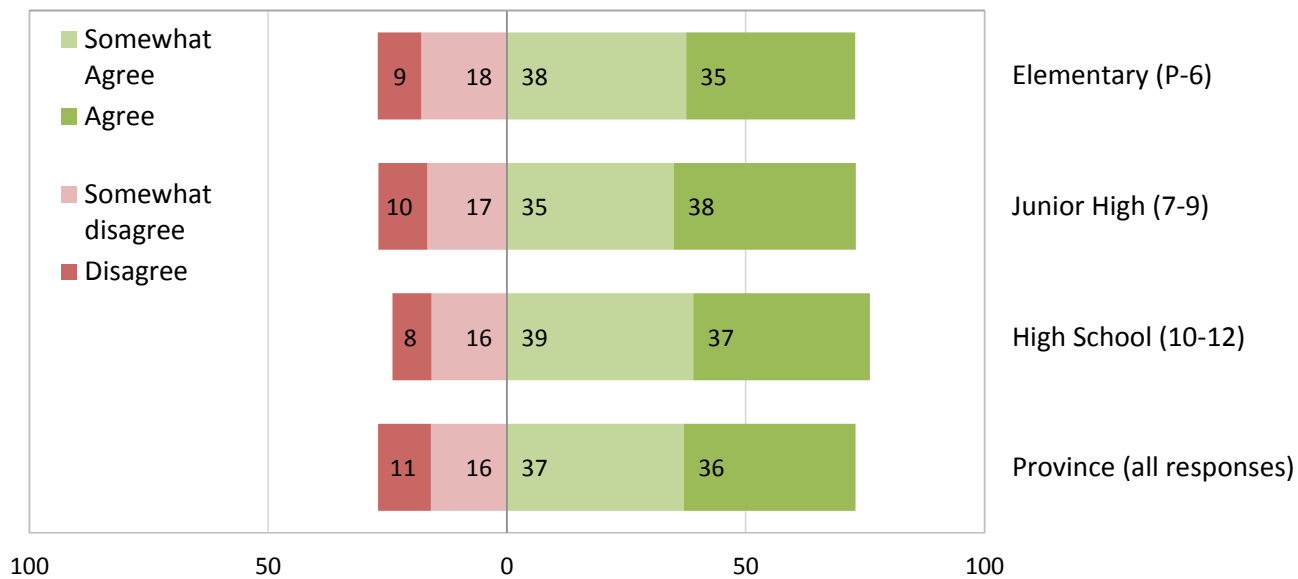
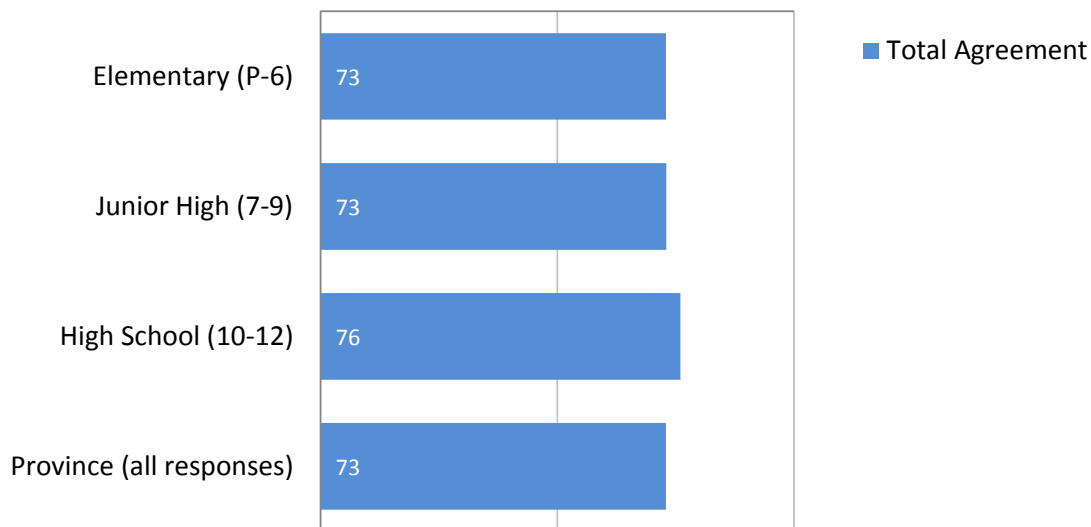
**06 Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school. (TchLrn)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	24	4	7	27	62	<b>89</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	116	6	10	31	53	<b>84</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	206	9	14	36	41	<b>77</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>



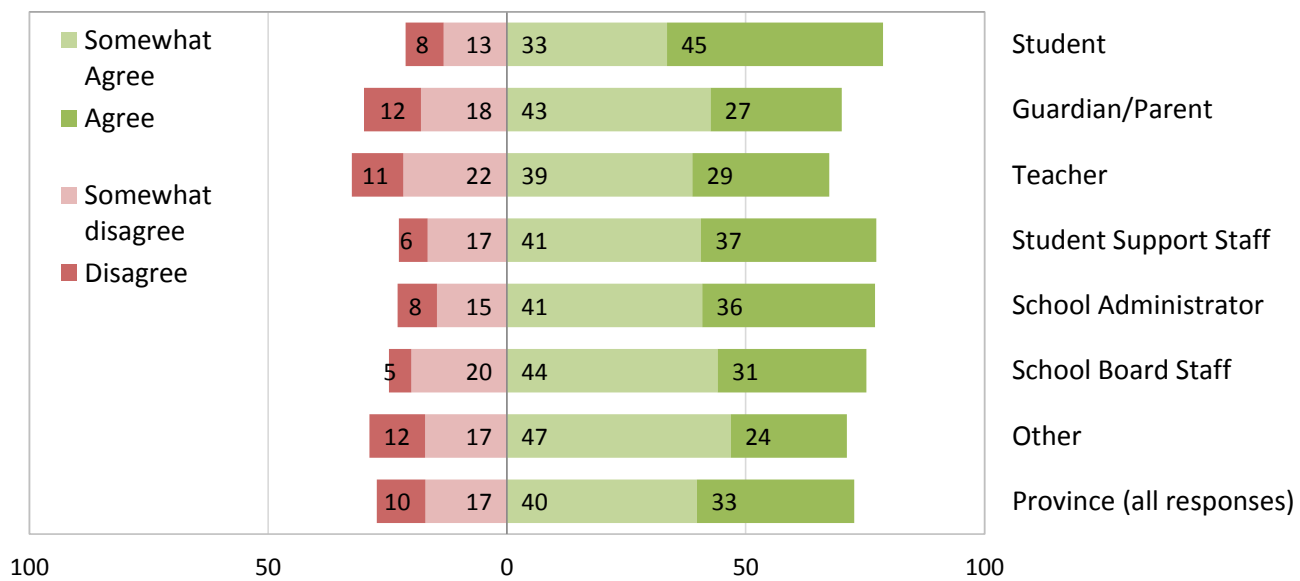
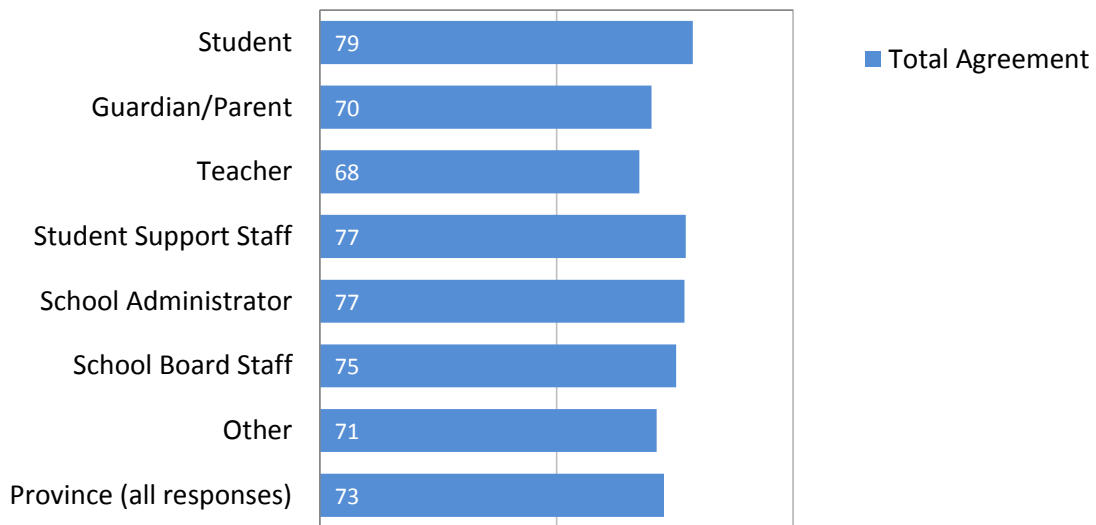
06 Students have the right opportunities to participate in healthy living activities at school. (TchLrn)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	139	9	18	38	35	<b>73</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	59	10	17	35	38	<b>73</b>
High School (10-12)	911	81	8	16	39	37	<b>76</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2065</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>73</b>



**07 Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies. (TchLrn)**

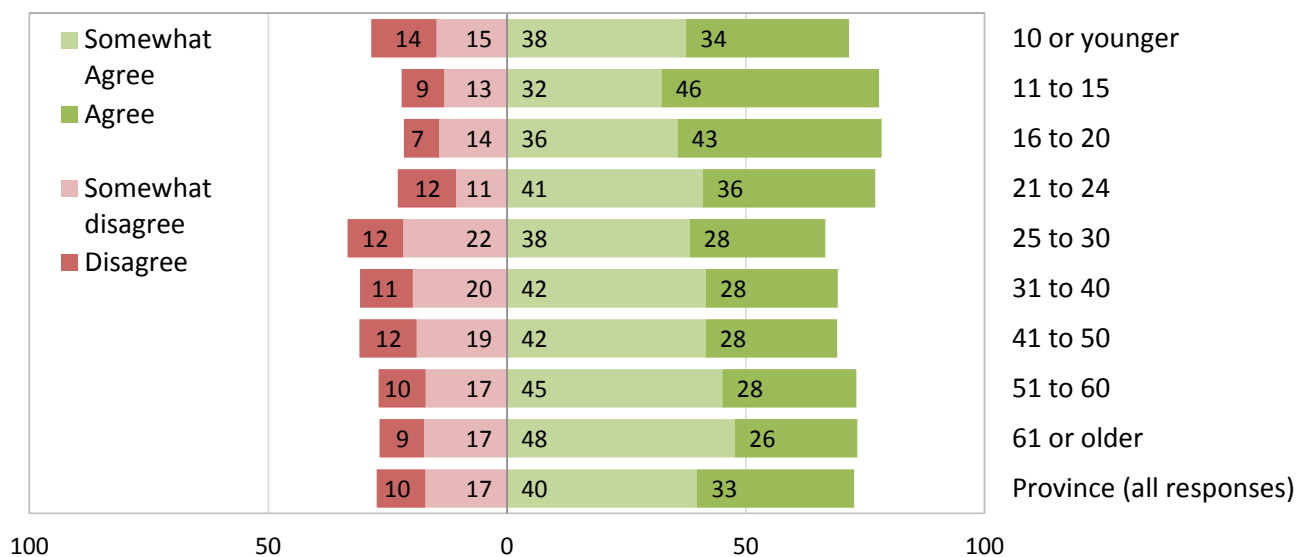
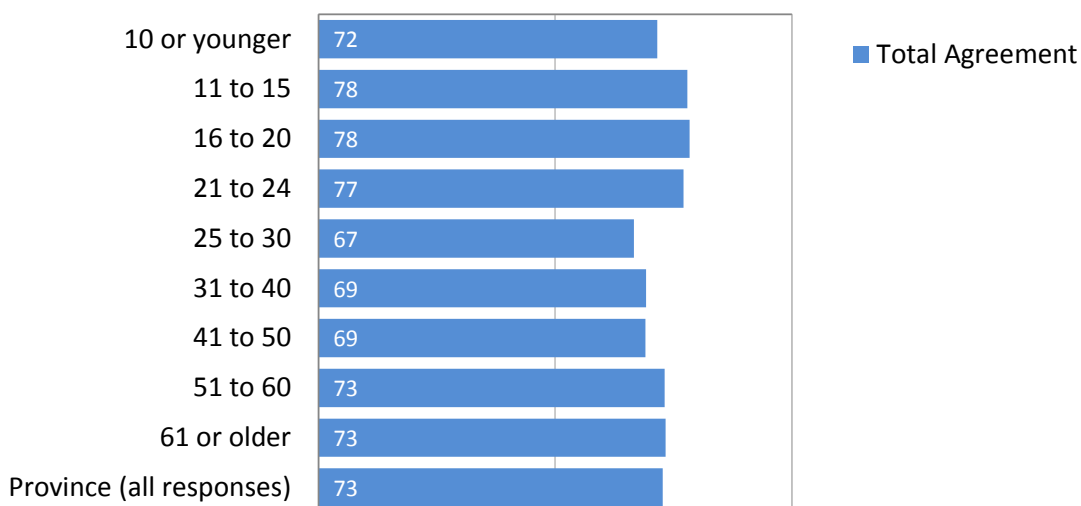
Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	358	8	13	33	45	<b>79</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	906	12	18	43	27	<b>70</b>
Teacher	3198	294	11	22	39	29	<b>68</b>
Student Support Staff	489	61	6	17	41	37	<b>77</b>
School Administrator	306	27	8	15	41	36	<b>77</b>
School Board Staff	205	35	5	20	44	31	<b>75</b>
Other	2942	659	12	17	47	24	<b>71</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>73</b>





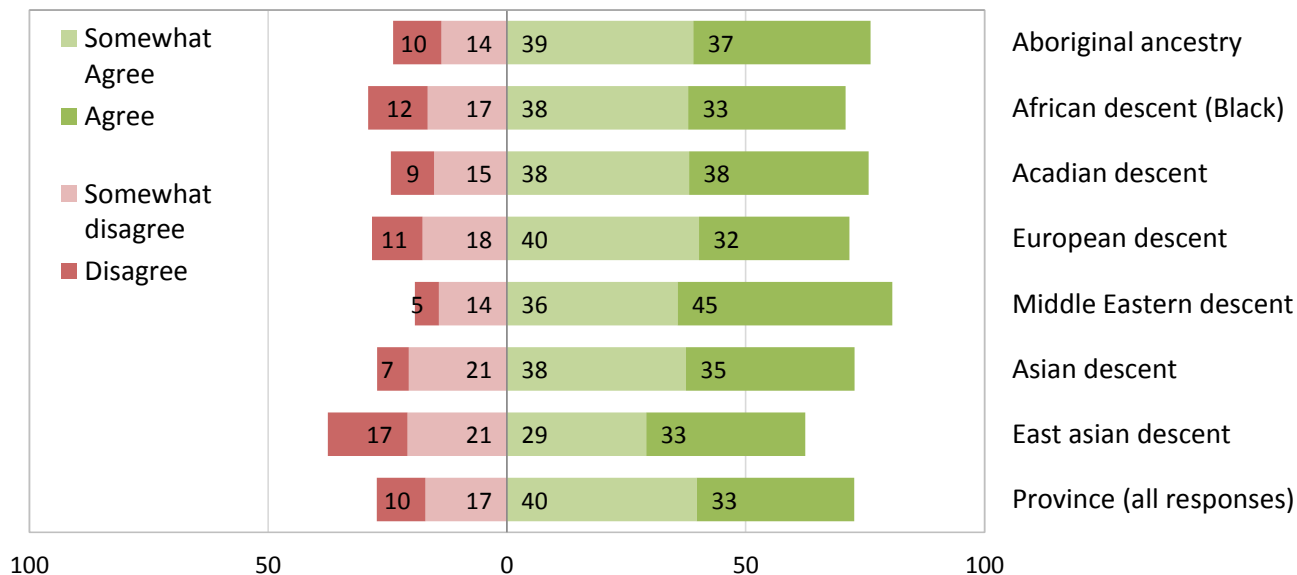
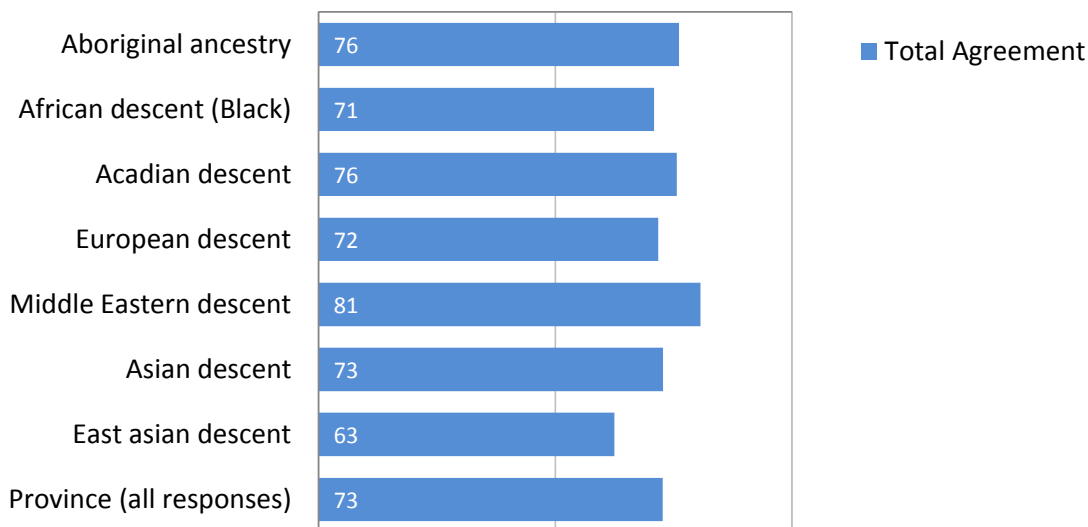
07 Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies. (TchLrn)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	61	14	15	38	34	<b>72</b>
11 to 15	2862	164	9	13	32	46	<b>78</b>
16 to 20	2549	213	7	14	36	43	<b>78</b>
21 to 24	319	48	12	11	41	36	<b>77</b>
25 to 30	1018	194	12	22	38	28	<b>67</b>
31 to 40	3776	549	11	20	42	28	<b>69</b>
41 to 50	4190	485	12	19	42	28	<b>69</b>
51 to 60	2545	372	10	17	45	28	<b>73</b>
61 or older	1102	232	9	17	48	26	<b>73</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>73</b>



07 Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies. (TchLrn)

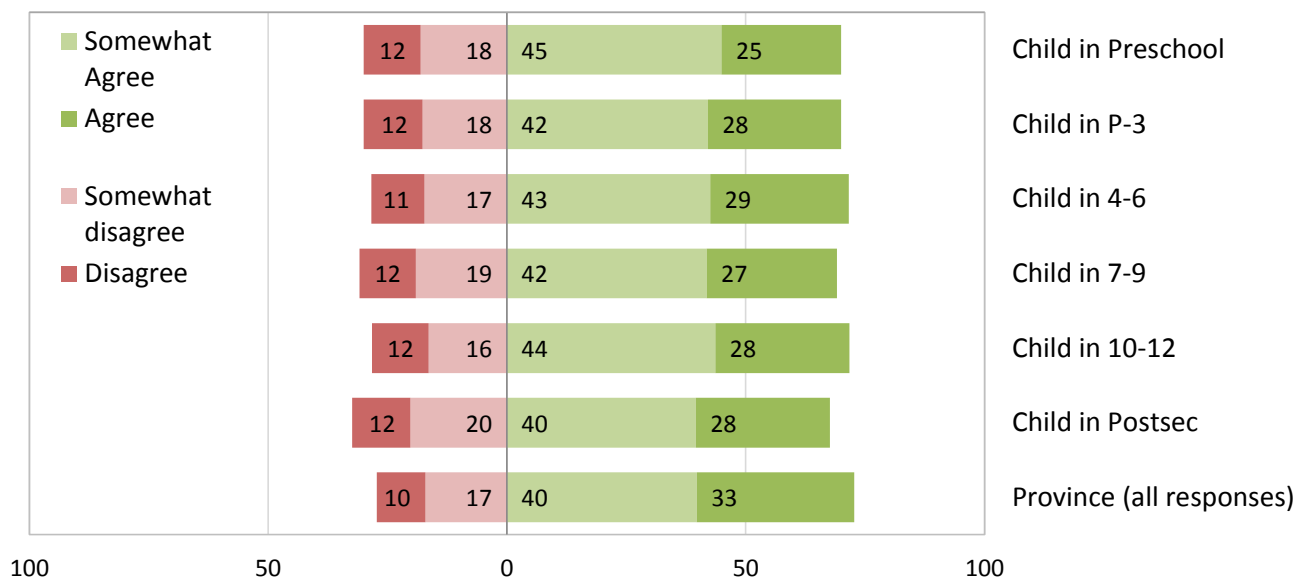
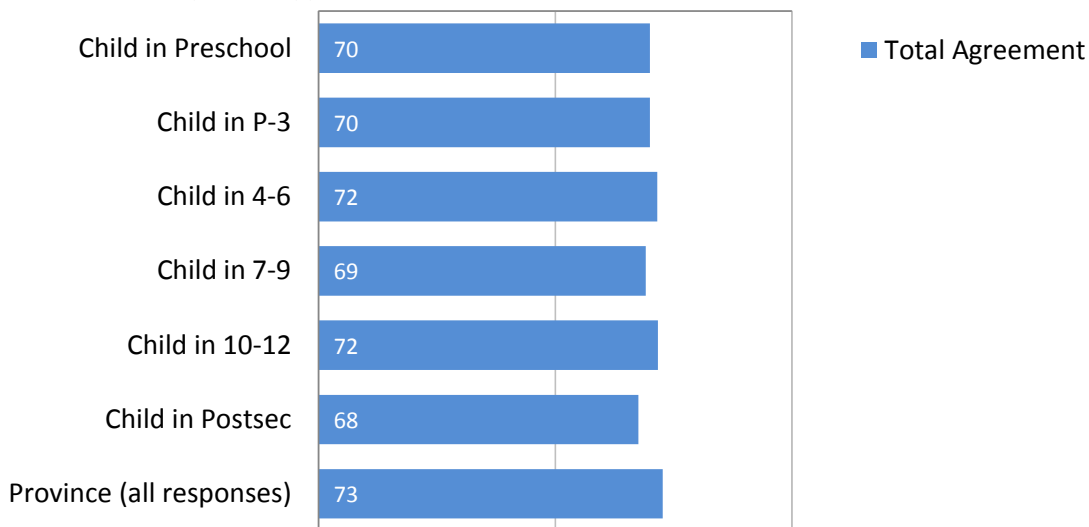
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	102	10	14	39	37	<b>76</b>
African descent (Black)	399	38	12	17	38	33	<b>71</b>
Acadian descent	2232	264	9	15	38	38	<b>76</b>
European descent	12054	1479	11	18	40	32	<b>72</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	30	5	14	36	45	<b>81</b>
Asian descent	168	32	7	21	38	35	<b>73</b>
East asian descent	54	6	17	21	29	33	<b>63</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>73</b>



**07 Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies. (TchLrn)**

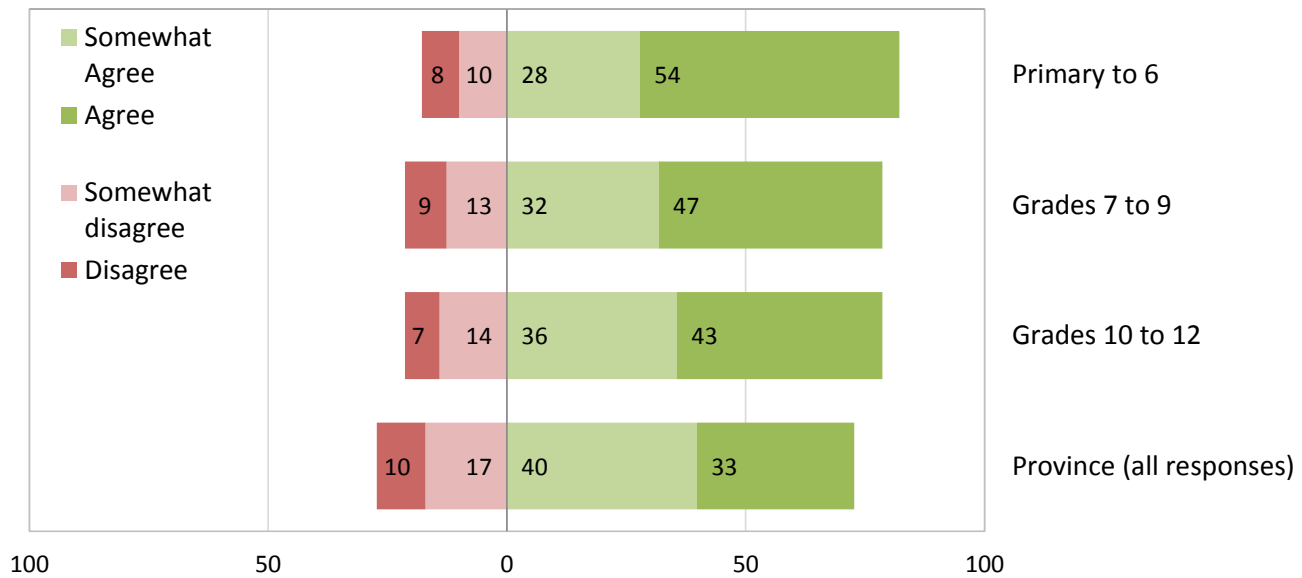
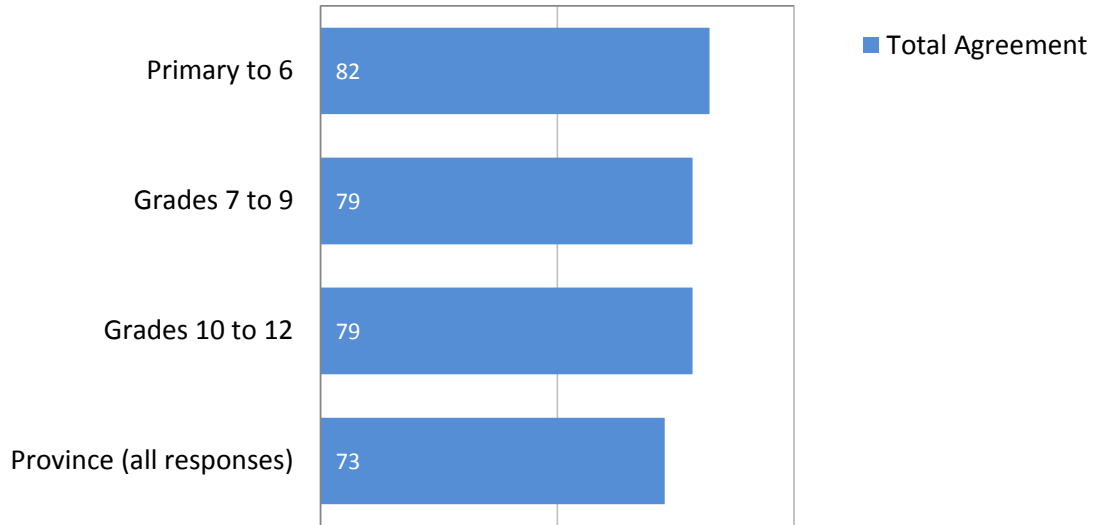
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	174	12	18	45	25	<b>70</b>
Child in P-3	2263	288	12	18	42	28	<b>70</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	191	11	17	43	29	<b>72</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	170	12	19	42	27	<b>69</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	170	12	16	44	28	<b>72</b>
Child in Postsec	365	44	12	20	40	28	<b>68</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>73</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



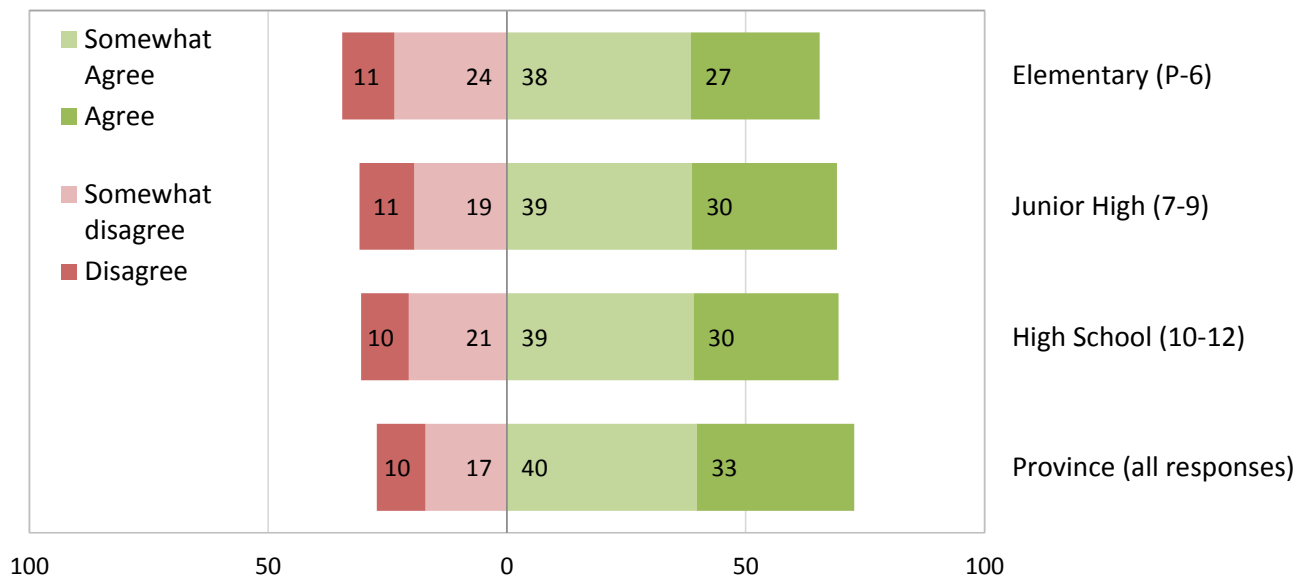
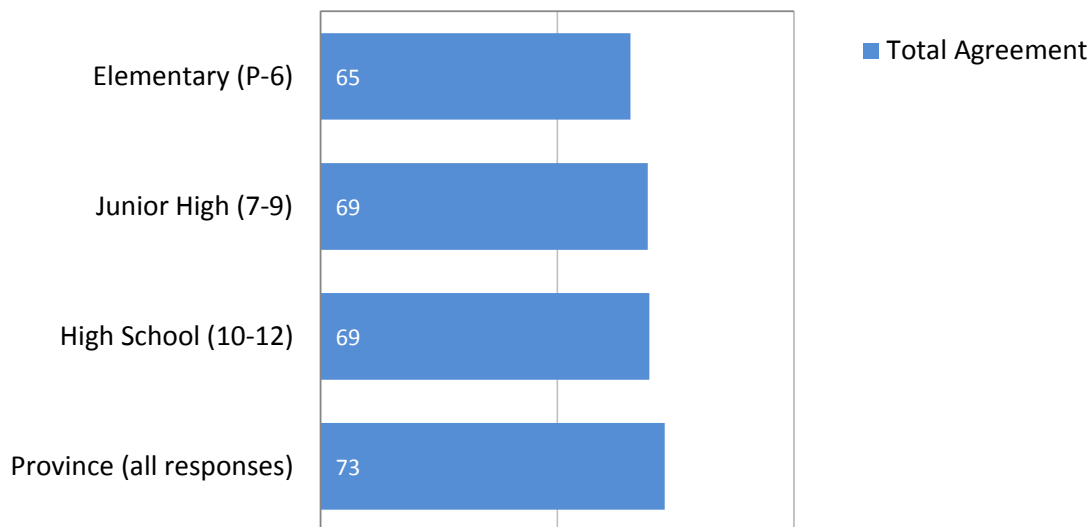
**07 Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies. (TchLrn)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	35	8	10	28	54	<b>82</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	113	9	13	32	47	<b>79</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	210	7	14	36	43	<b>79</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>73</b>



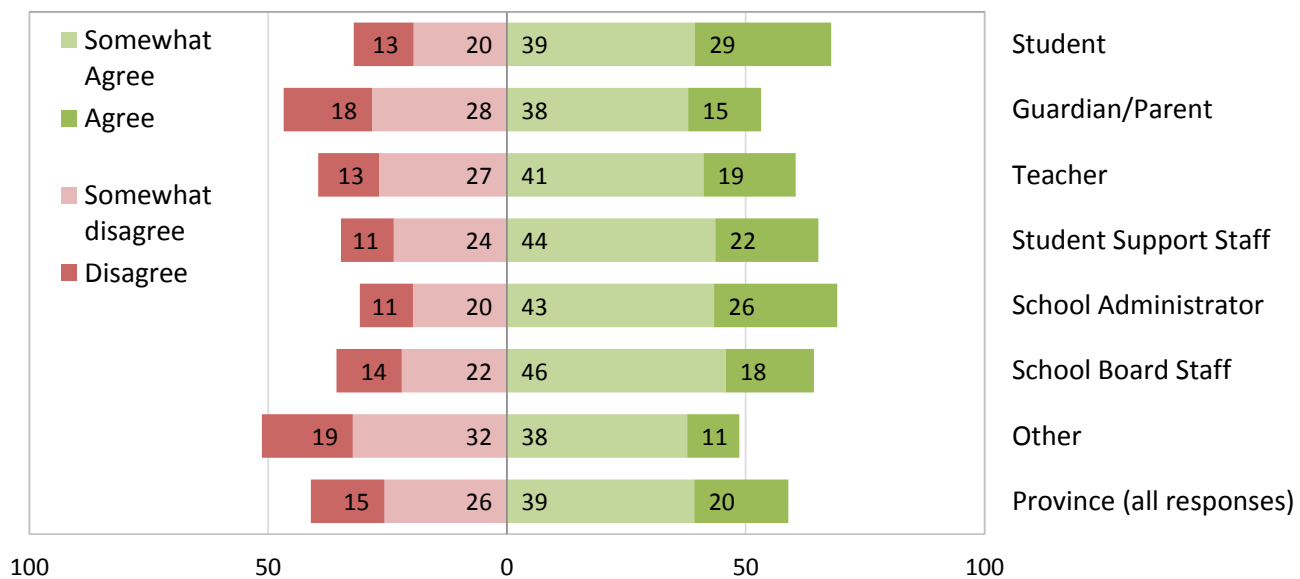
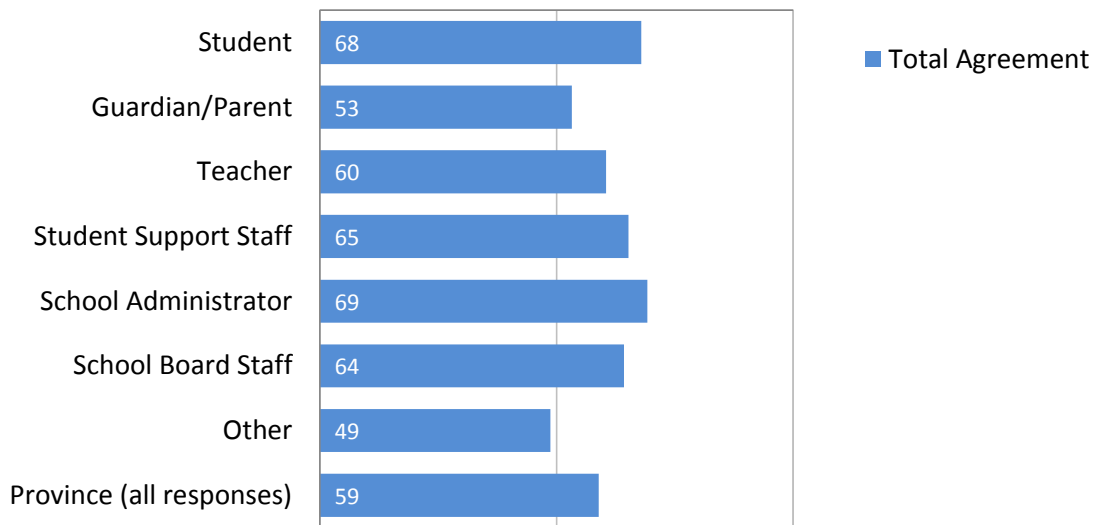
07 Students have the right opportunities to learn with technologies. (TchLrn)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	148	11	24	38	27	<b>65</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	64	11	19	39	30	<b>69</b>
High School (10-12)	911	80	10	21	39	30	<b>69</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2340</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>73</b>



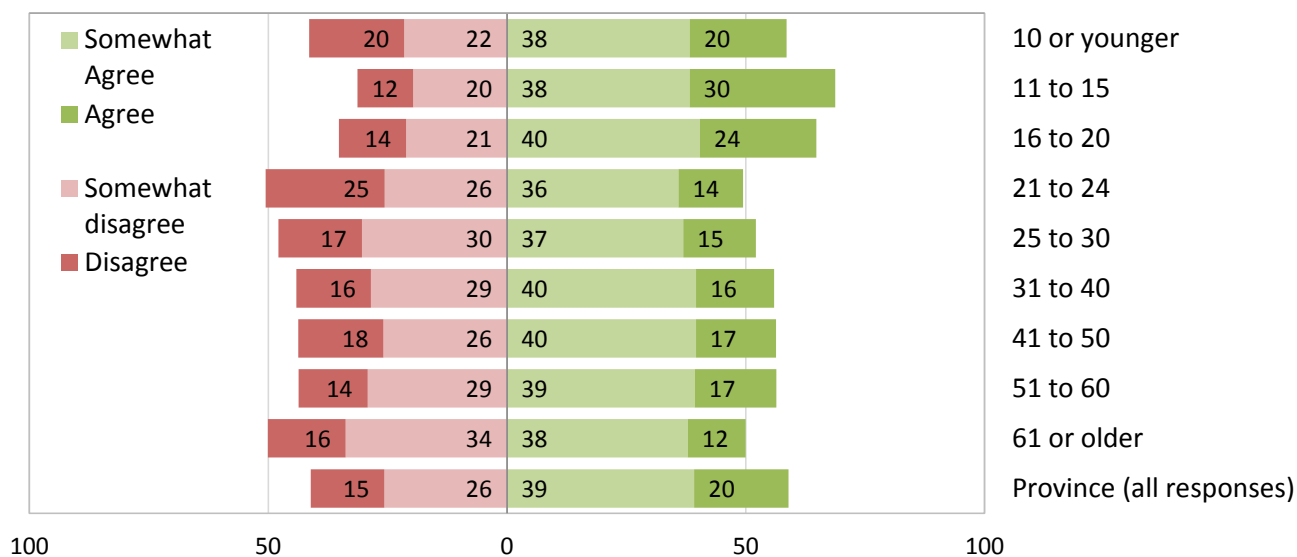
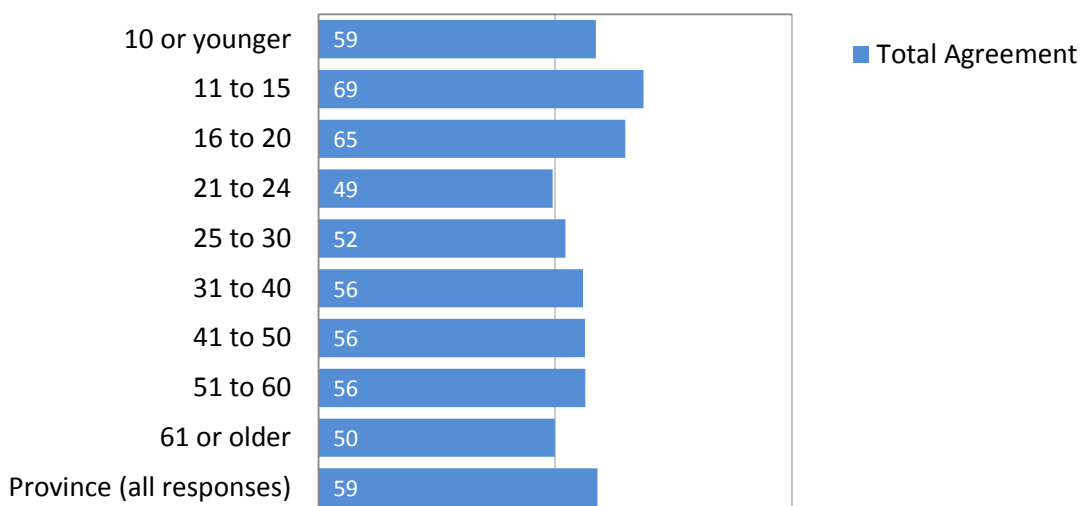
08 [...]Right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (TchLrn)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	485	13	20	39	29	<b>68</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1084	18	28	38	15	<b>53</b>
Teacher	3198	361	13	27	41	19	<b>60</b>
Student Support Staff	489	72	11	24	44	22	<b>65</b>
School Administrator	306	27	11	20	43	26	<b>69</b>
School Board Staff	205	37	14	22	46	18	<b>64</b>
Other	2942	720	19	32	38	11	<b>49</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>



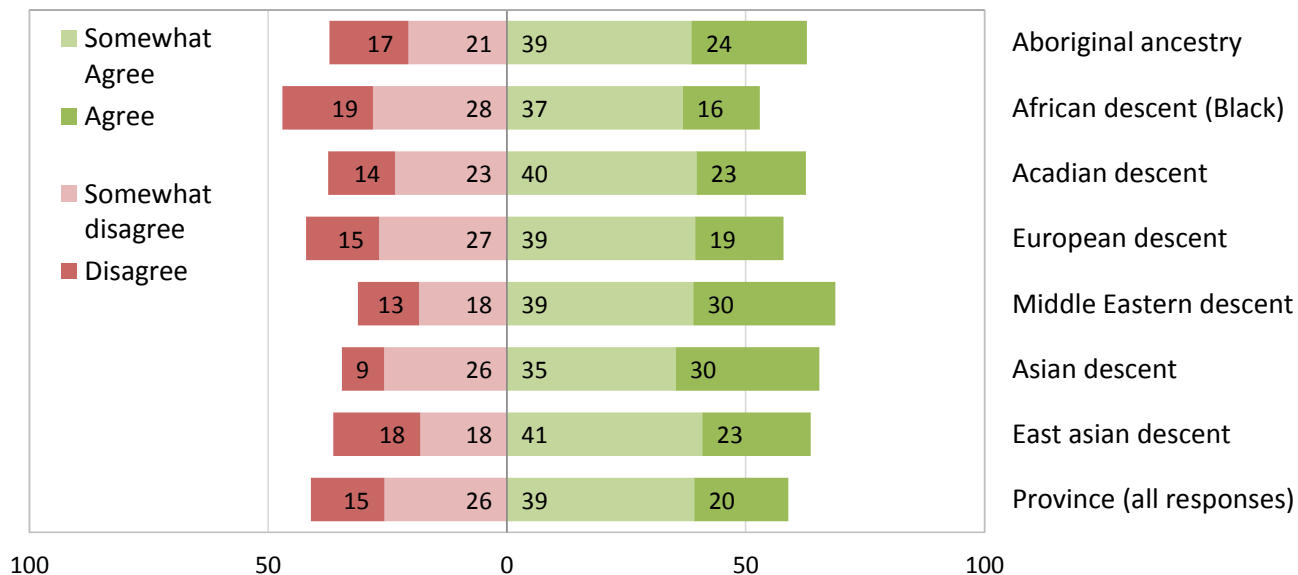
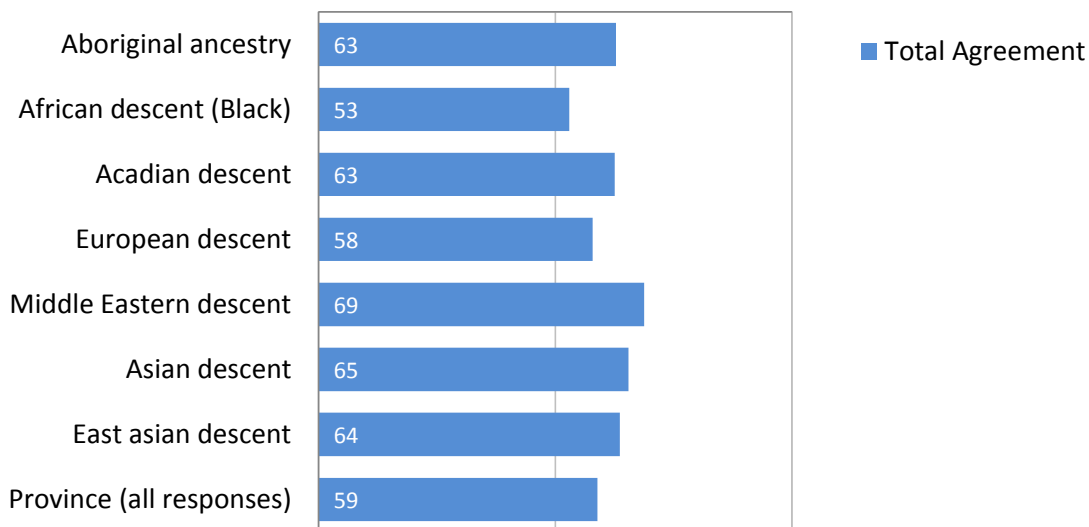
08 [...]Right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (TchLrn)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	74	20	22	38	20	<b>59</b>
11 to 15	2862	248	12	20	38	30	<b>69</b>
16 to 20	2549	262	14	21	40	24	<b>65</b>
21 to 24	319	46	25	26	36	14	<b>49</b>
25 to 30	1018	199	17	30	37	15	<b>52</b>
31 to 40	3776	689	16	29	40	16	<b>56</b>
41 to 50	4190	567	18	26	40	17	<b>56</b>
51 to 60	2545	415	14	29	39	17	<b>56</b>
61 or older	1102	267	16	34	38	12	<b>50</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>



08 [...]Right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (TchLrn)

Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	124	17	21	39	24	<b>63</b>
African descent (Black)	399	46	19	28	37	16	<b>53</b>
Acadian descent	2232	319	14	23	40	23	<b>63</b>
European descent	12054	1751	15	27	39	19	<b>58</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	29	13	18	39	30	<b>69</b>
Asian descent	168	32	9	26	35	30	<b>65</b>
East asian descent	54	10	18	18	41	23	<b>64</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>

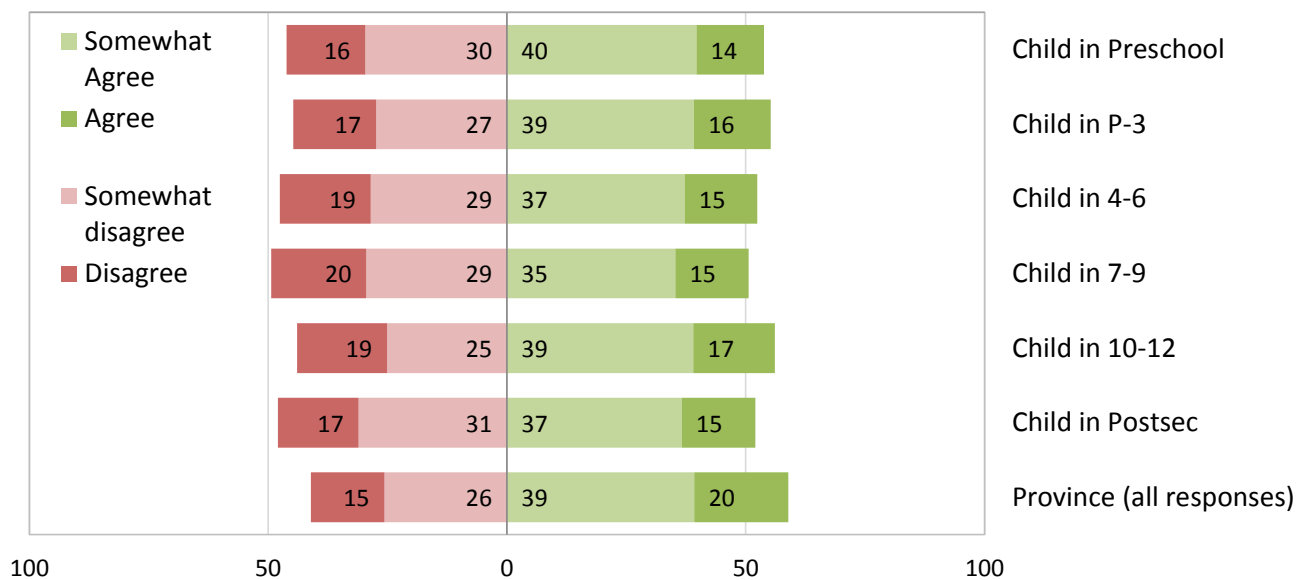
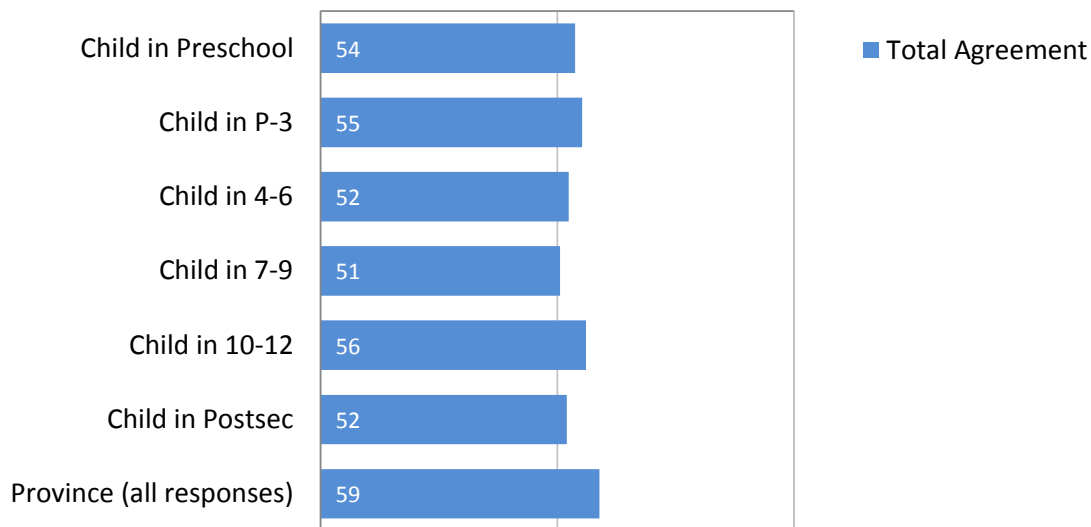




08 [...]Right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (TchLrn)

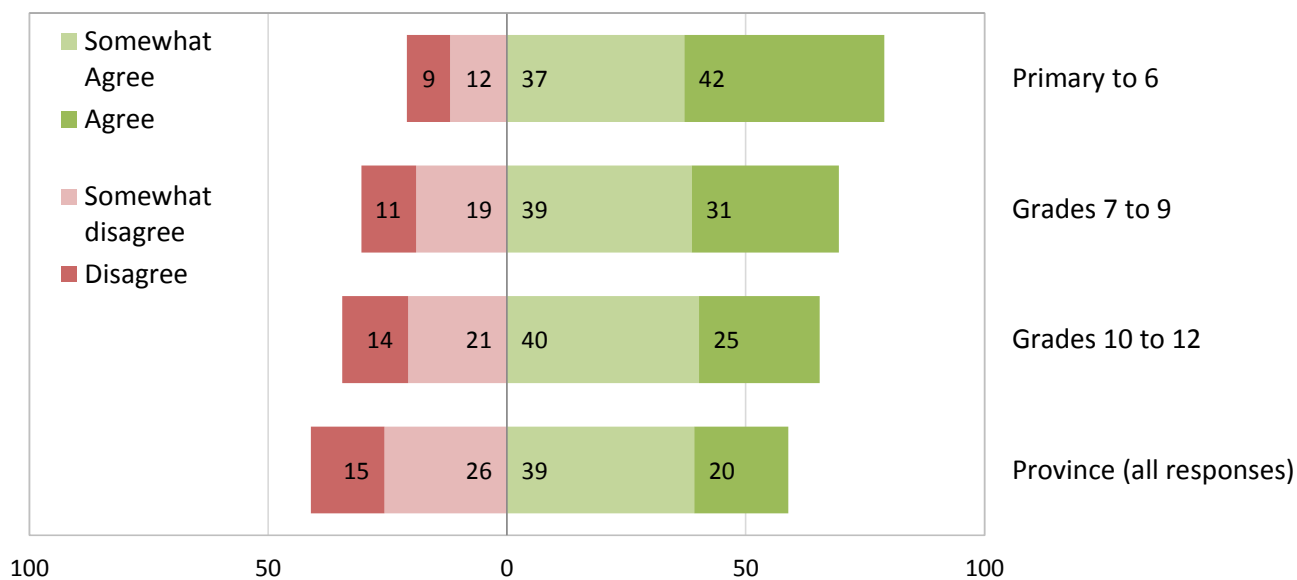
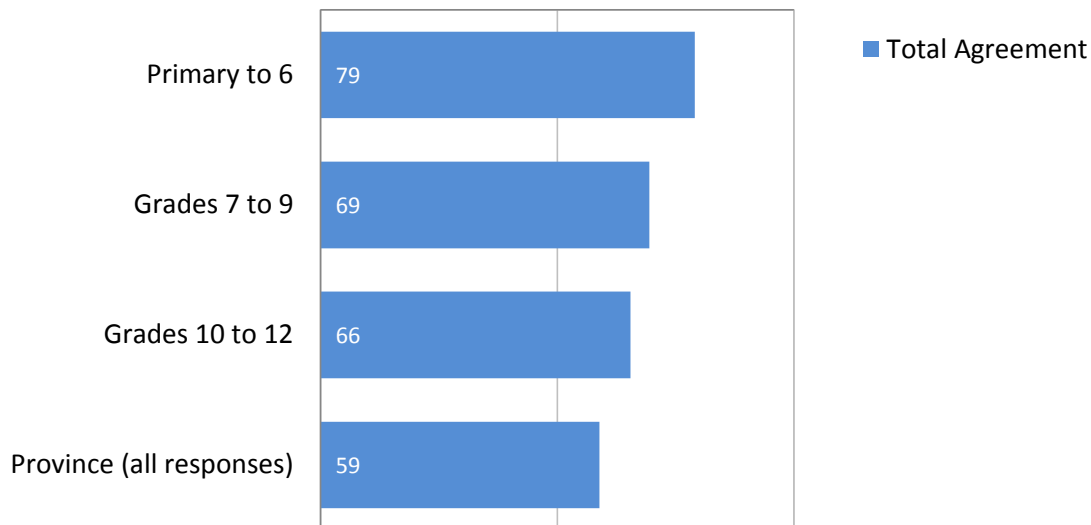
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	225	16	30	40	14	<b>54</b>
Child in P-3	2263	393	17	27	39	16	<b>55</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	244	19	29	37	15	<b>52</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	206	20	29	35	15	<b>51</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	177	19	25	39	17	<b>56</b>
Child in Postsec	365	40	17	31	37	15	<b>52</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



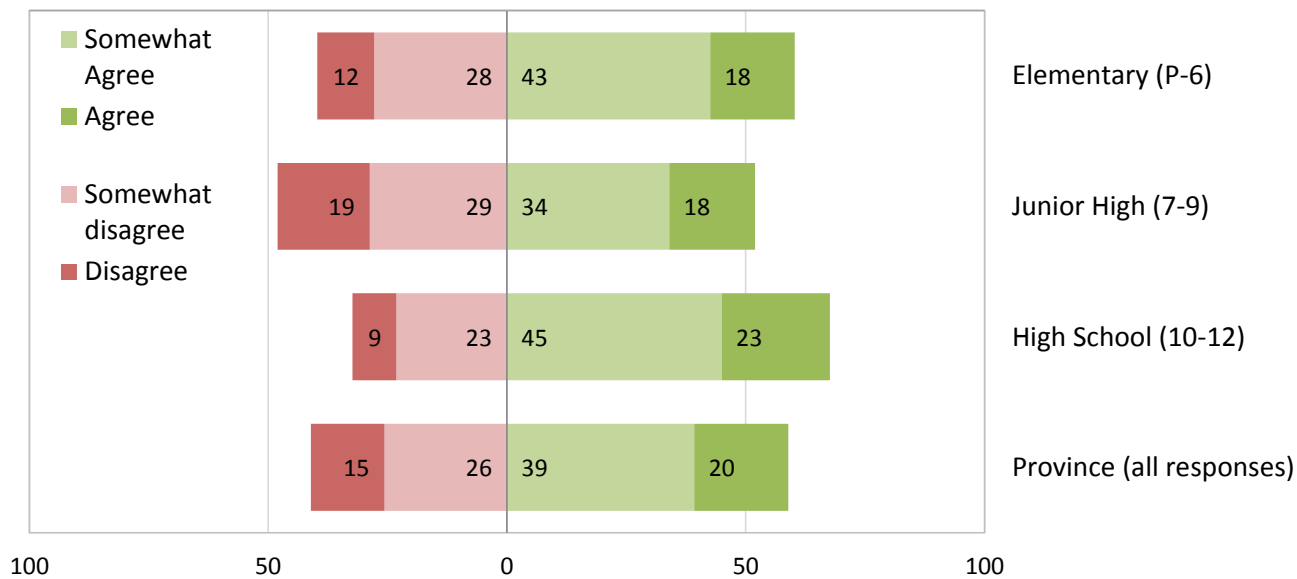
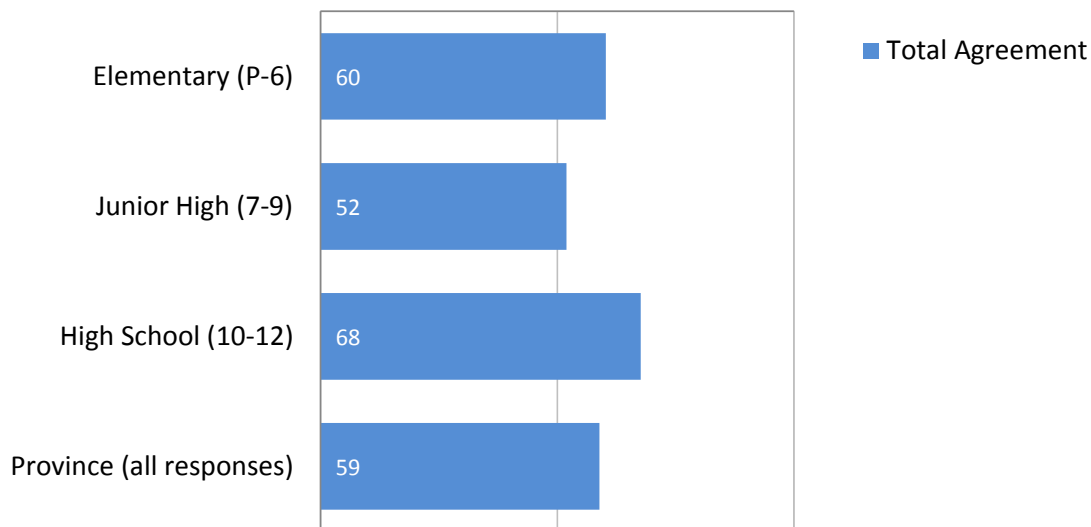
08 [...]Right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (TchLrn)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	44	9	12	37	42	<b>79</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	184	11	19	39	31	<b>69</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	257	14	21	40	25	<b>66</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>



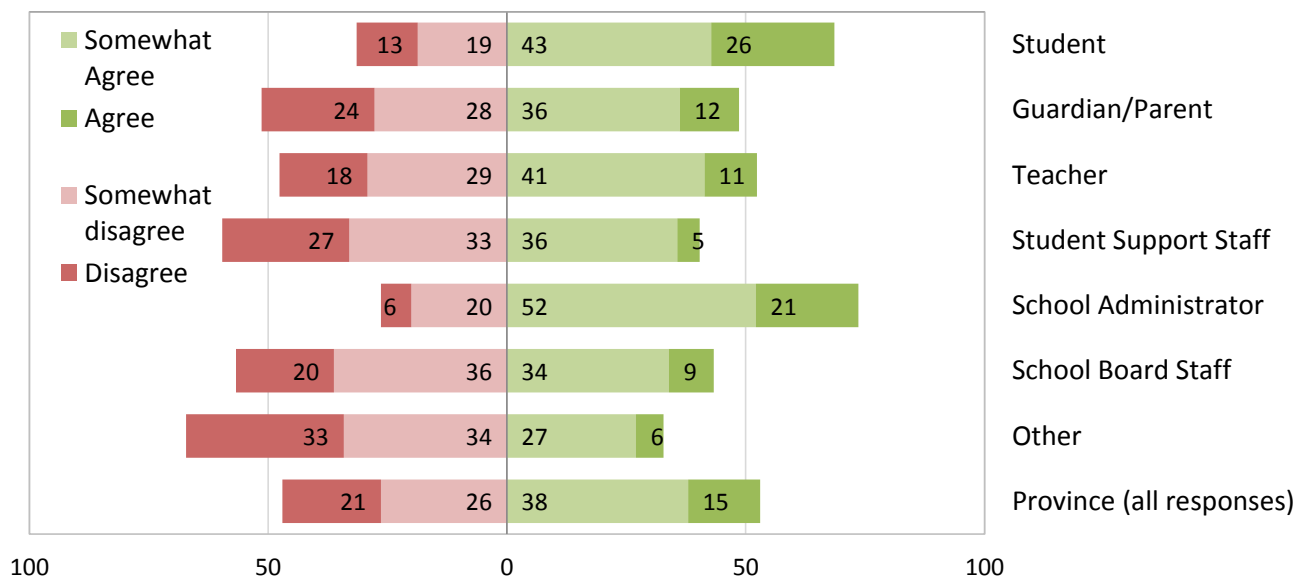
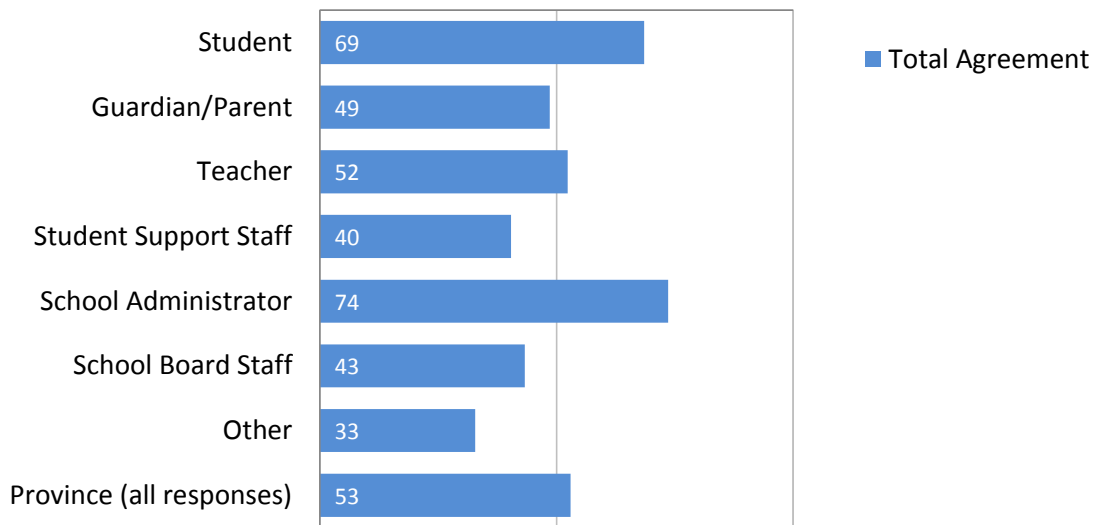
08 [...]Right opportunities for students to connect learning in school with learning in their communities (TchLrn)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	207	12	28	43	18	<b>60</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	65	19	29	34	18	<b>52</b>
High School (10-12)	911	86	9	23	45	23	<b>68</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2786</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>



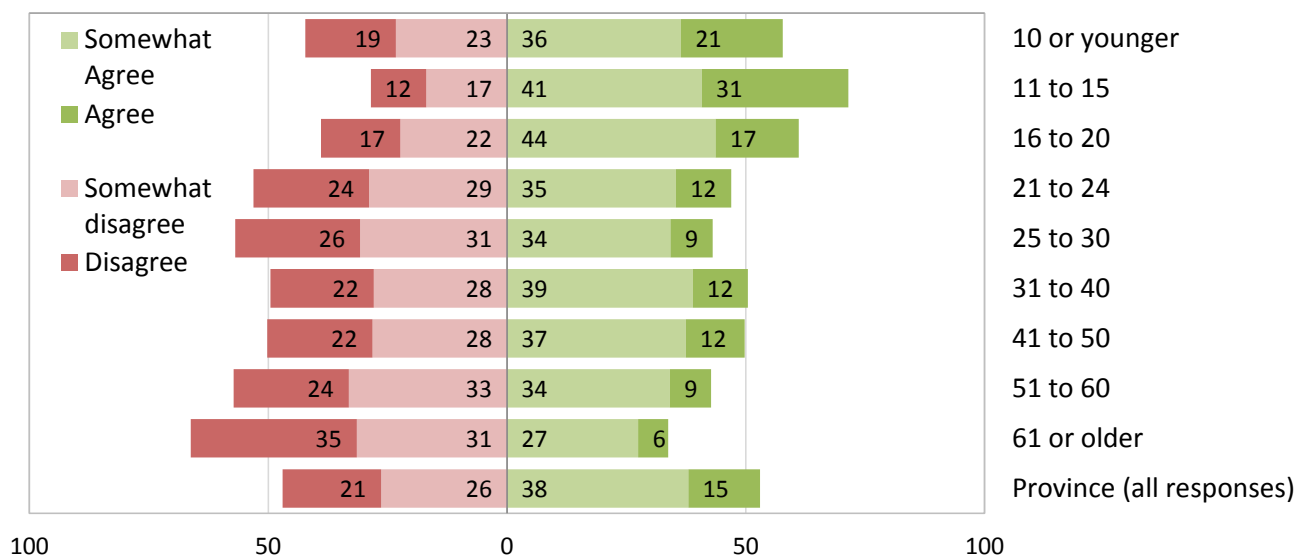
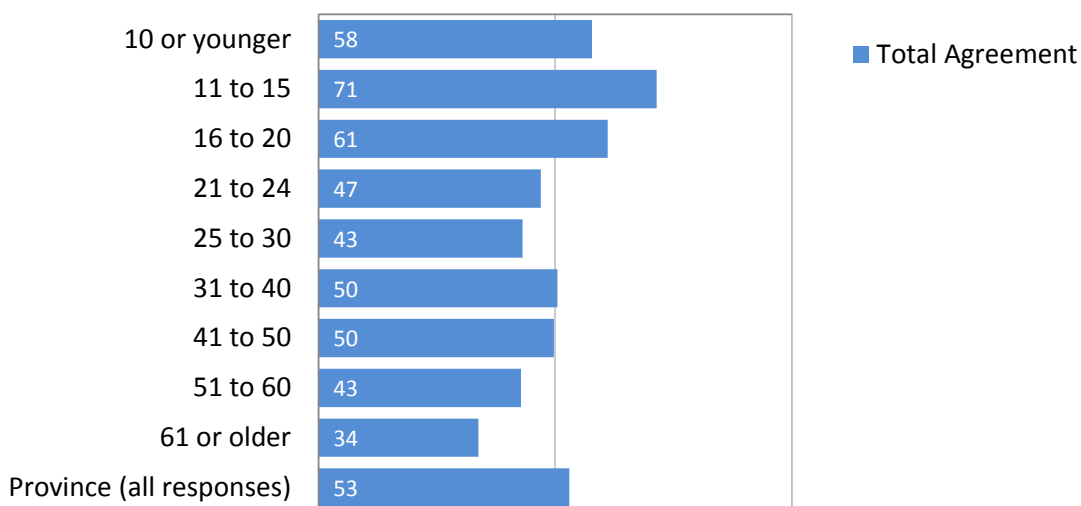
**09 Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade. (TchLrn)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	442	13	19	43	26	<b>69</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	858	24	28	36	12	<b>49</b>
Teacher	3198	301	18	29	41	11	<b>52</b>
Student Support Staff	489	68	27	33	36	5	<b>40</b>
School Administrator	306	26	6	20	52	21	<b>74</b>
School Board Staff	205	34	20	36	34	9	<b>43</b>
Other	2942	633	33	34	27	6	<b>33</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2362</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>



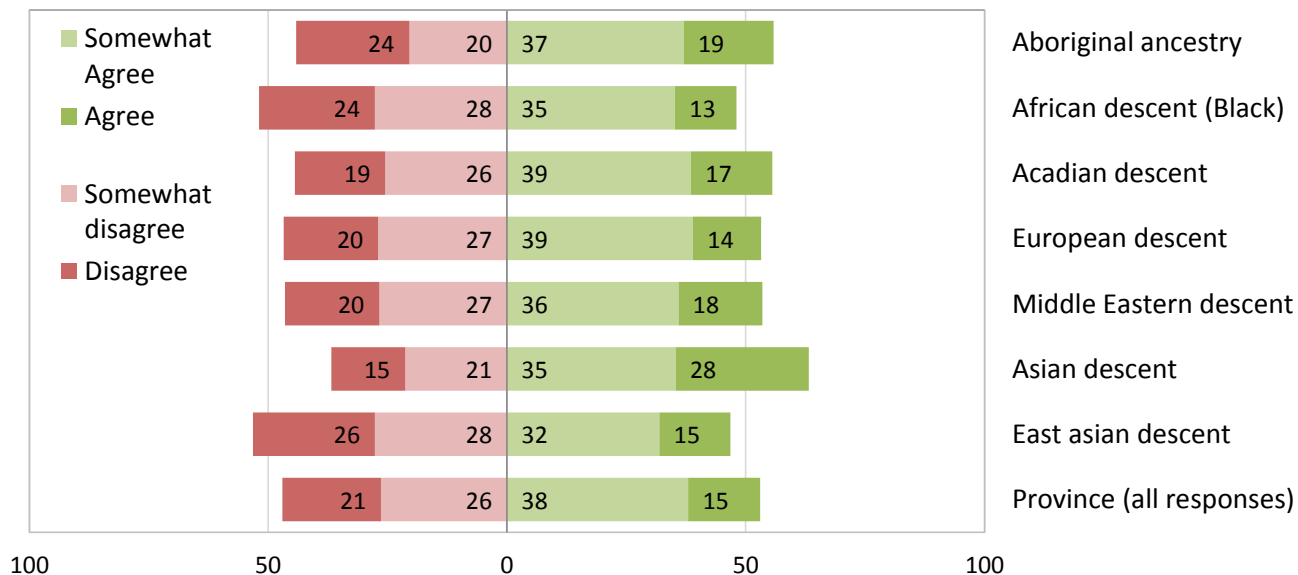
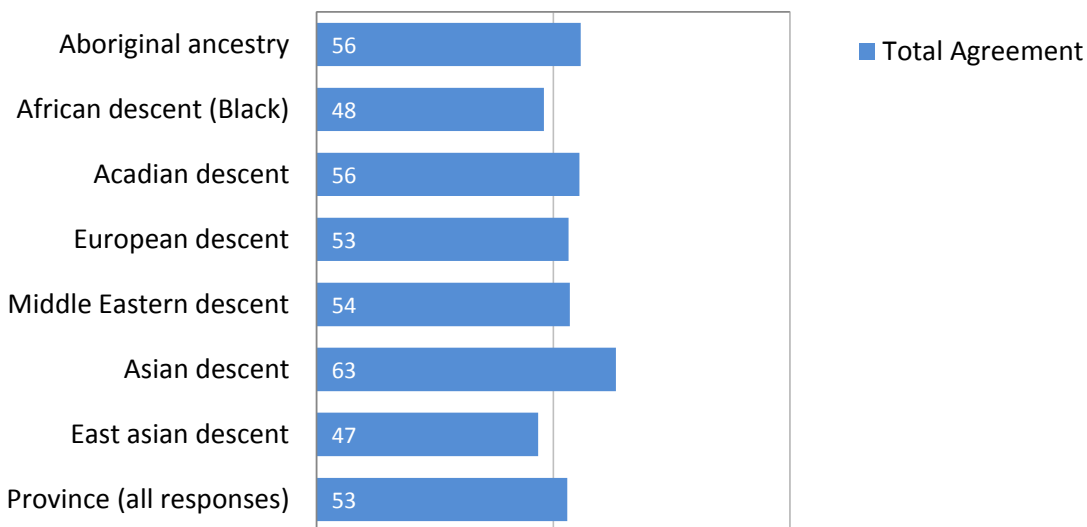
09 Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade. (TchLrn)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	67	19	23	36	21	<b>58</b>
11 to 15	2862	209	12	17	41	31	<b>71</b>
16 to 20	2549	242	17	22	44	17	<b>61</b>
21 to 24	319	42	24	29	35	12	<b>47</b>
25 to 30	1018	180	26	31	34	9	<b>43</b>
31 to 40	3776	556	22	28	39	12	<b>50</b>
41 to 50	4190	460	22	28	37	12	<b>50</b>
51 to 60	2545	362	24	33	34	9	<b>43</b>
61 or older	1102	225	35	31	27	6	<b>34</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2362</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>



09 Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade. (TchLrn)

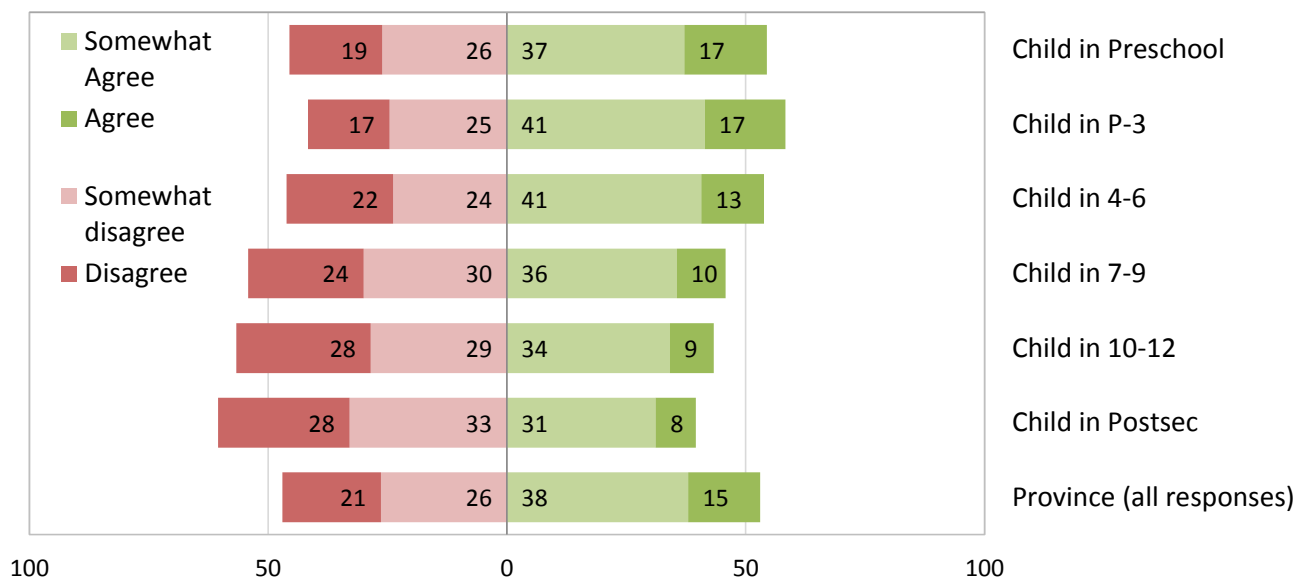
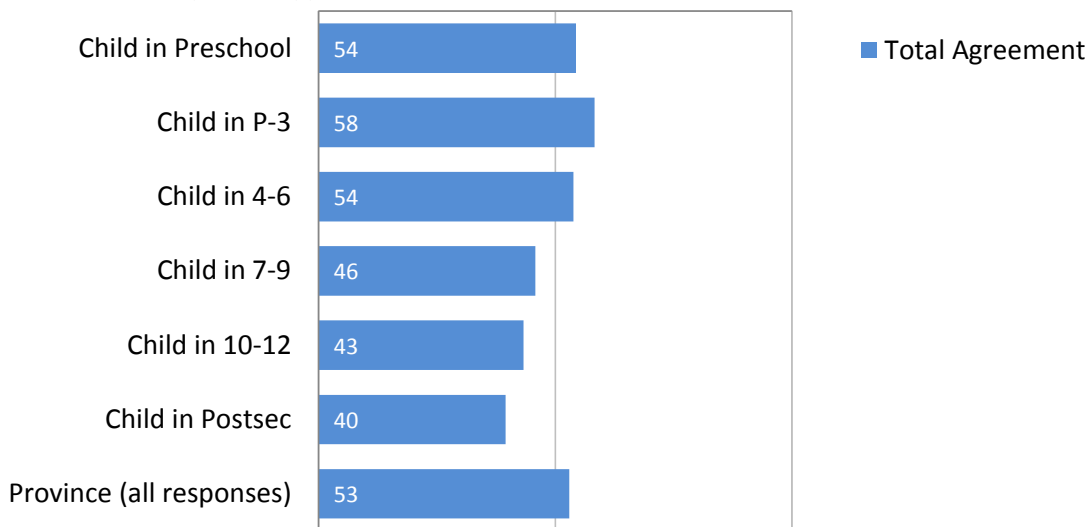
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	107	24	20	37	19	56
African descent (Black)	399	41	24	28	35	13	48
Acadian descent	2232	268	19	26	39	17	56
European descent	12054	1467	20	27	39	14	53
Middle Eastern descent	170	28	20	27	36	18	54
Asian descent	168	32	15	21	35	28	63
East asian descent	54	7	26	28	32	15	47
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2362</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>



09 Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade. (TchLrn)

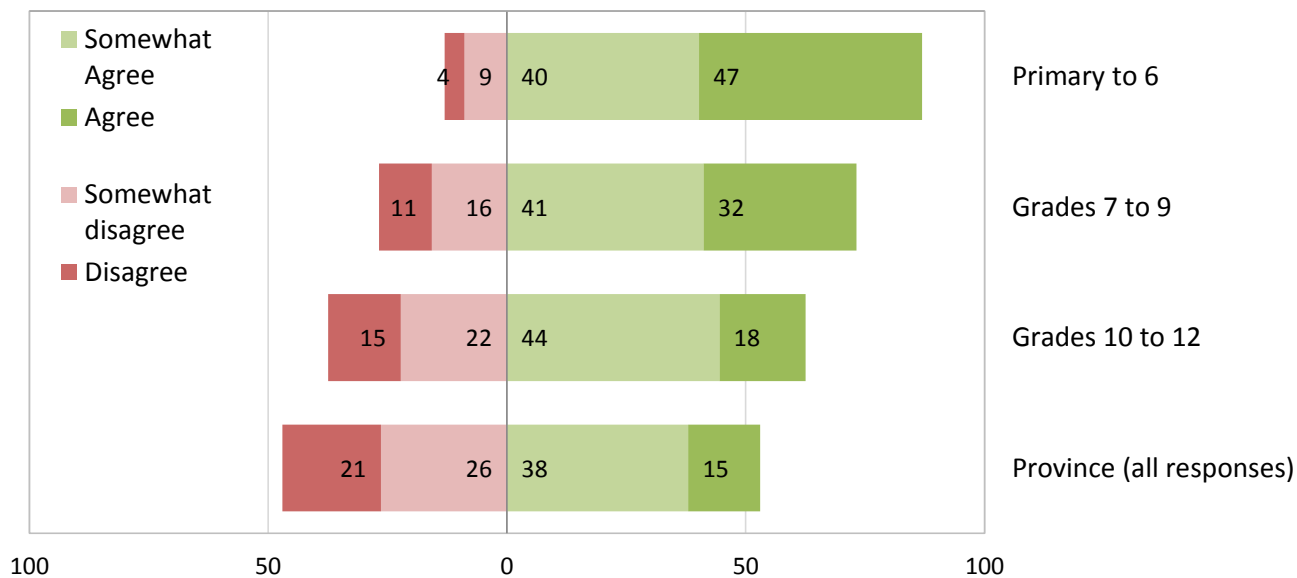
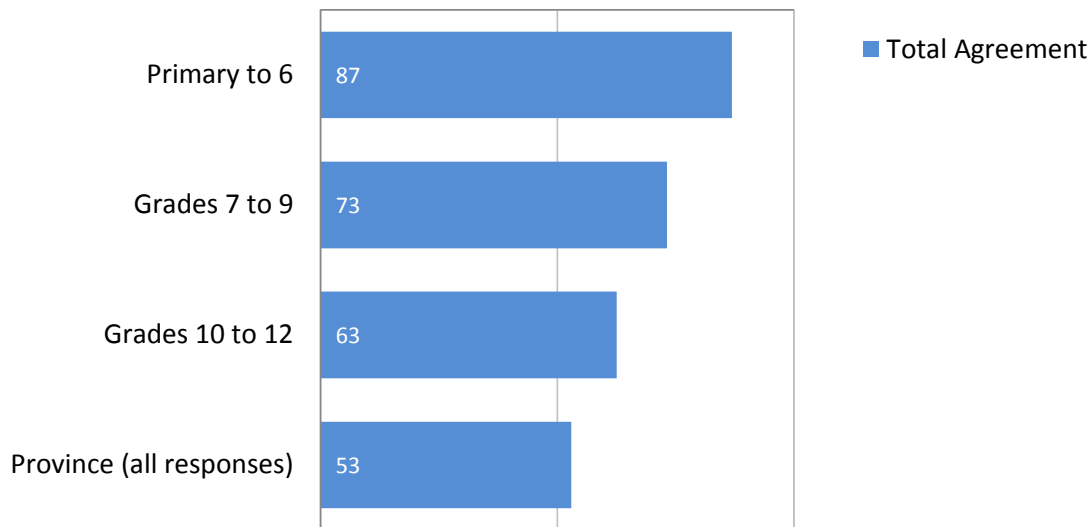
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	176	19	26	37	17	<b>54</b>
Child in P-3	2263	270	17	25	41	17	<b>58</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	187	22	24	41	13	<b>54</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	173	24	30	36	10	<b>46</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	157	28	29	34	9	<b>43</b>
Child in Postsec	365	31	28	33	31	8	<b>40</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2362</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



**09 Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade. (TchLrn)**

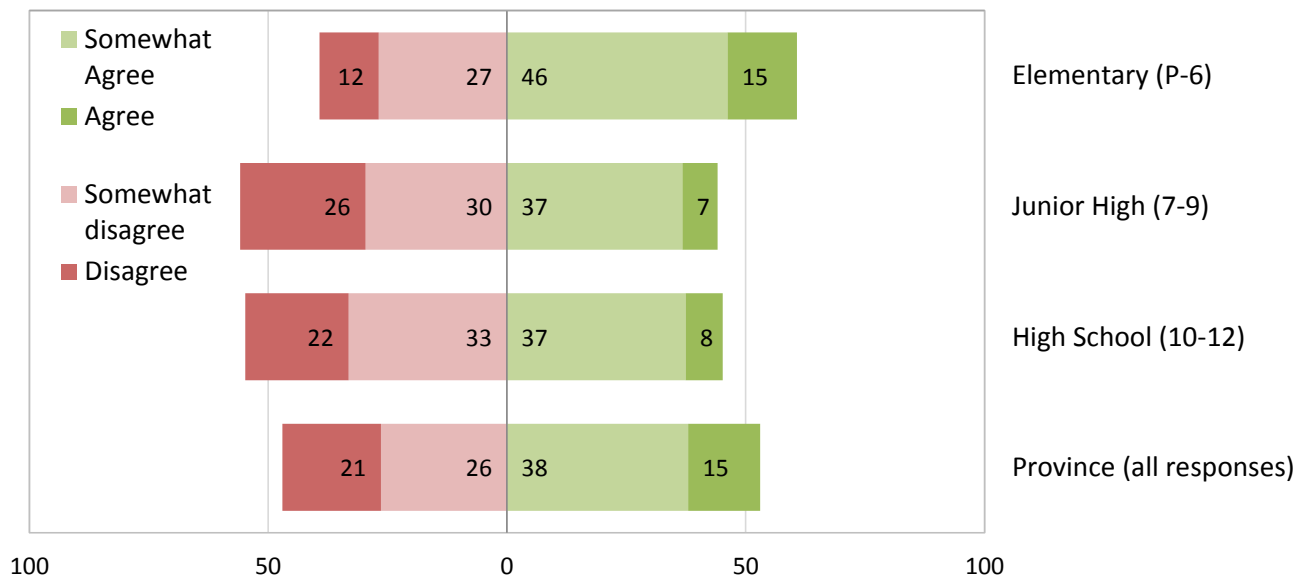
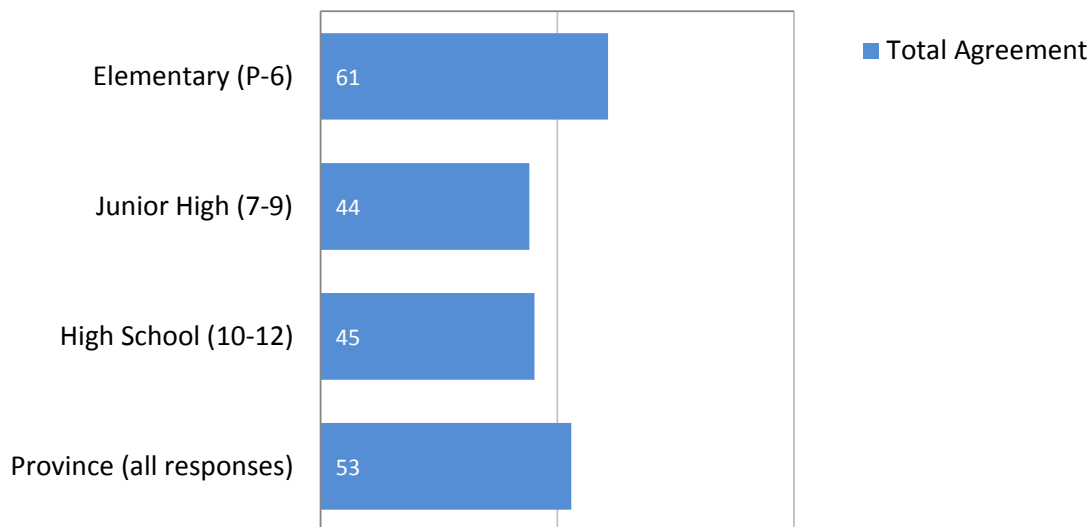
Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	40	4	9	40	47	<b>87</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	161	11	16	41	32	<b>73</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	241	15	22	44	18	<b>63</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2362</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>





09 Students are well prepared to move on to the next grade. (TchLrn)

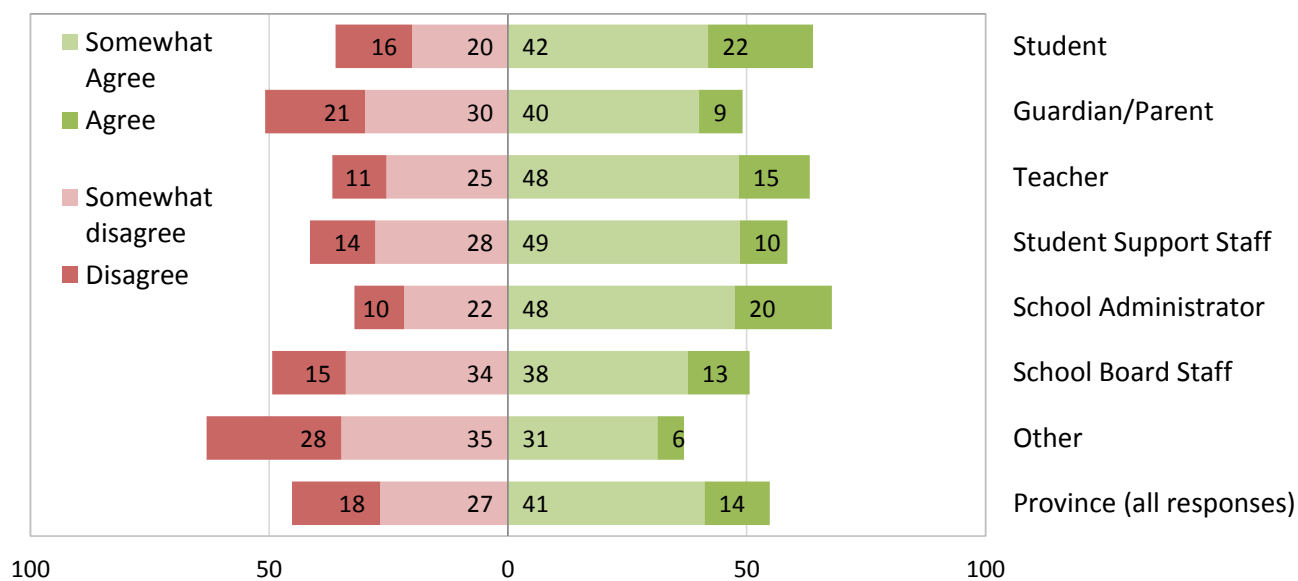
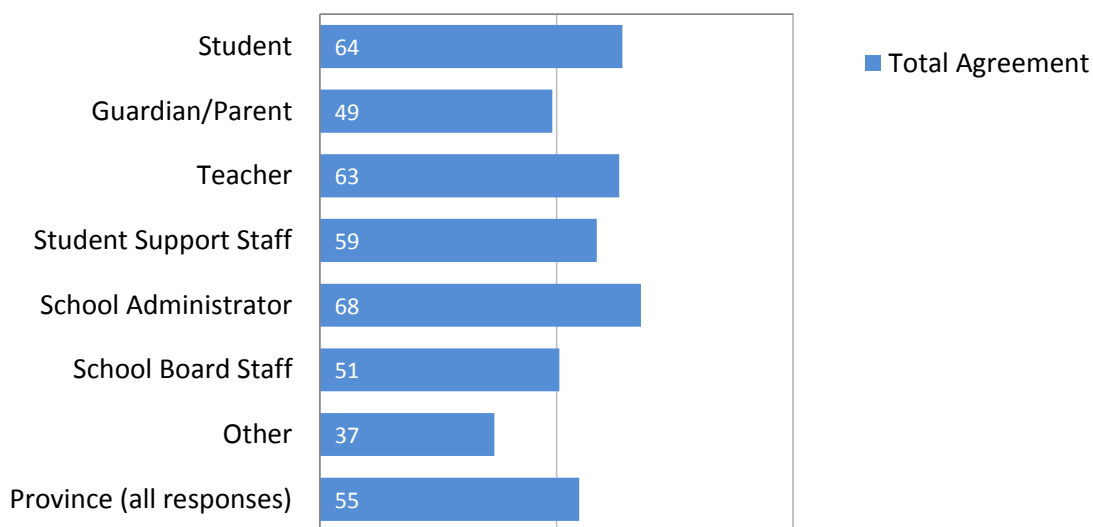
Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	154	12	27	46	15	<b>61</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	61	26	30	37	7	<b>44</b>
High School (10-12)	911	85	22	33	37	8	<b>45</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2362</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>53</b>



To Follow

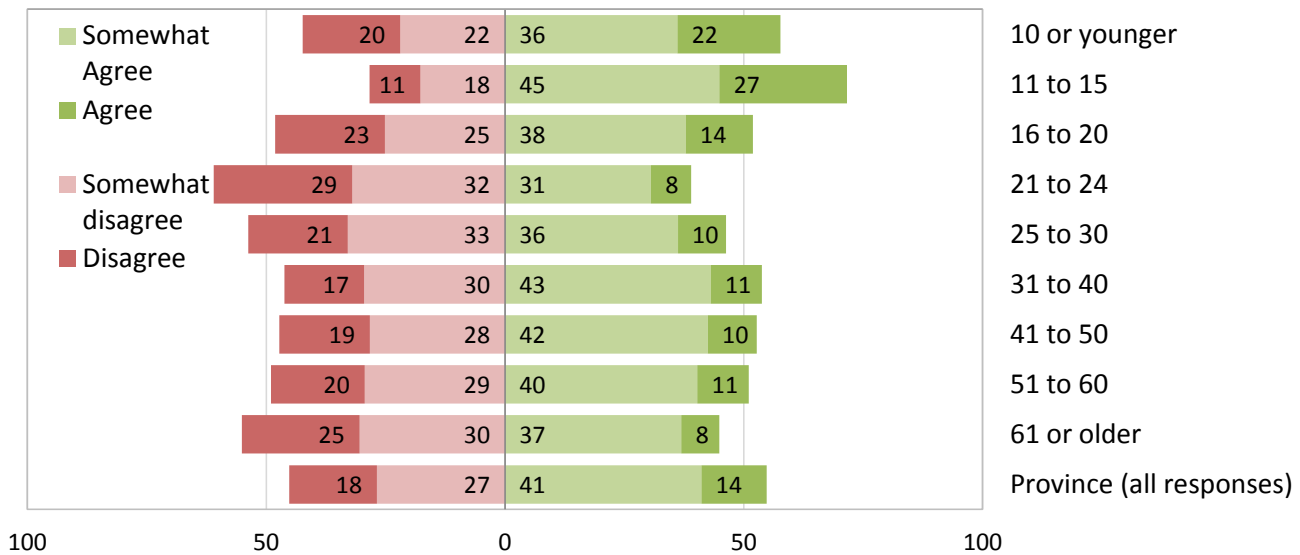
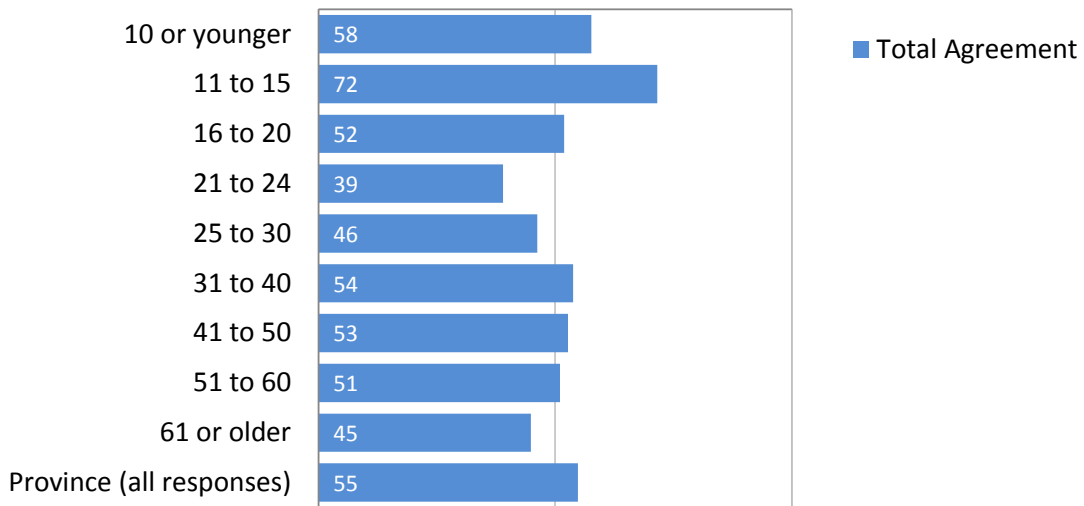
**10 The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most. (Curr)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	505	16	20	42	22	<b>64</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	980	21	30	40	9	<b>49</b>
Teacher	3198	323	11	25	48	15	<b>63</b>
Student Support Staff	489	79	14	28	49	10	<b>59</b>
School Administrator	306	26	10	22	48	20	<b>68</b>
School Board Staff	205	43	15	34	38	13	<b>51</b>
Other	2942	679	28	35	31	6	<b>37</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>



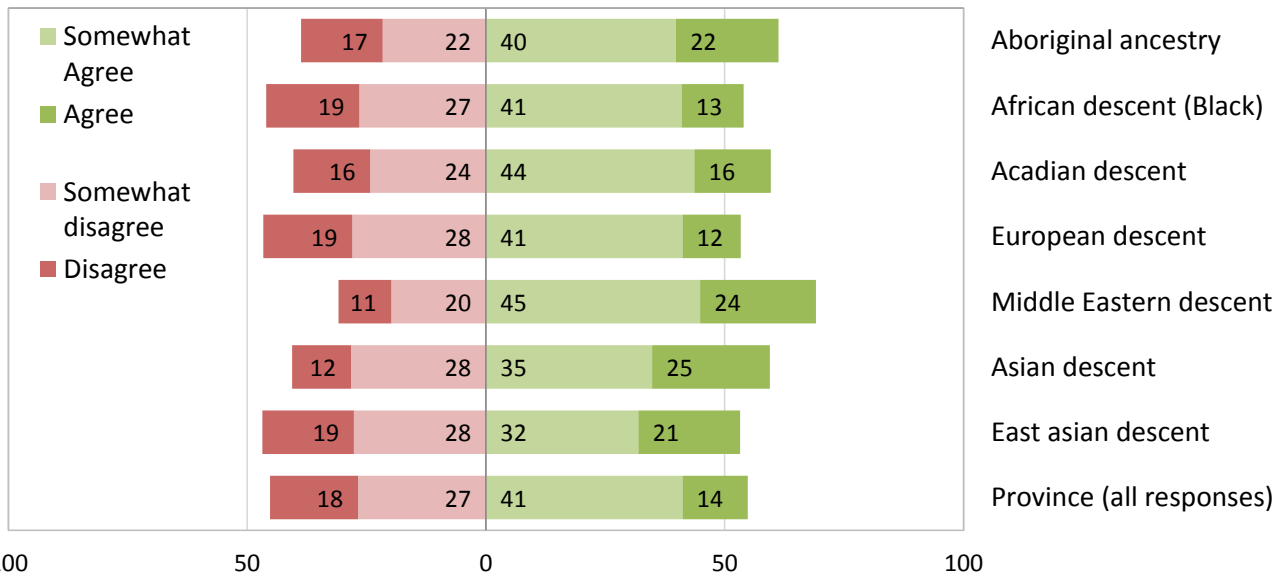
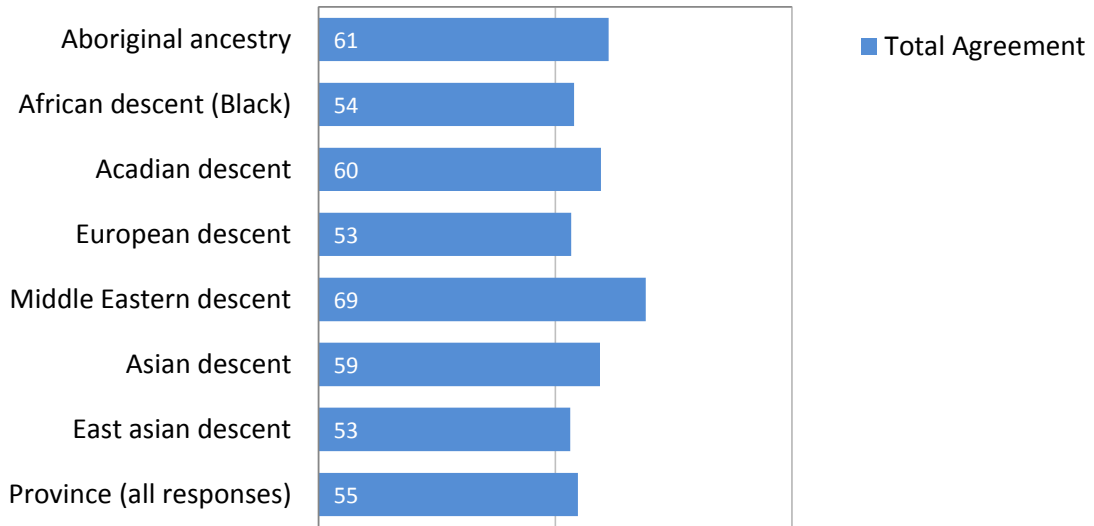
**10 The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most. (Curr)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	70	20	22	36	22	<b>58</b>
11 to 15	2862	256	11	18	45	27	<b>72</b>
16 to 20	2549	269	23	25	38	14	<b>52</b>
21 to 24	319	47	29	32	31	8	<b>39</b>
25 to 30	1018	192	21	33	36	10	<b>46</b>
31 to 40	3776	596	17	30	43	11	<b>54</b>
41 to 50	4190	518	19	28	42	10	<b>53</b>
51 to 60	2545	412	20	29	40	11	<b>51</b>
61 or older	1102	251	25	30	37	8	<b>45</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>



**10 The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most. (Curr)**

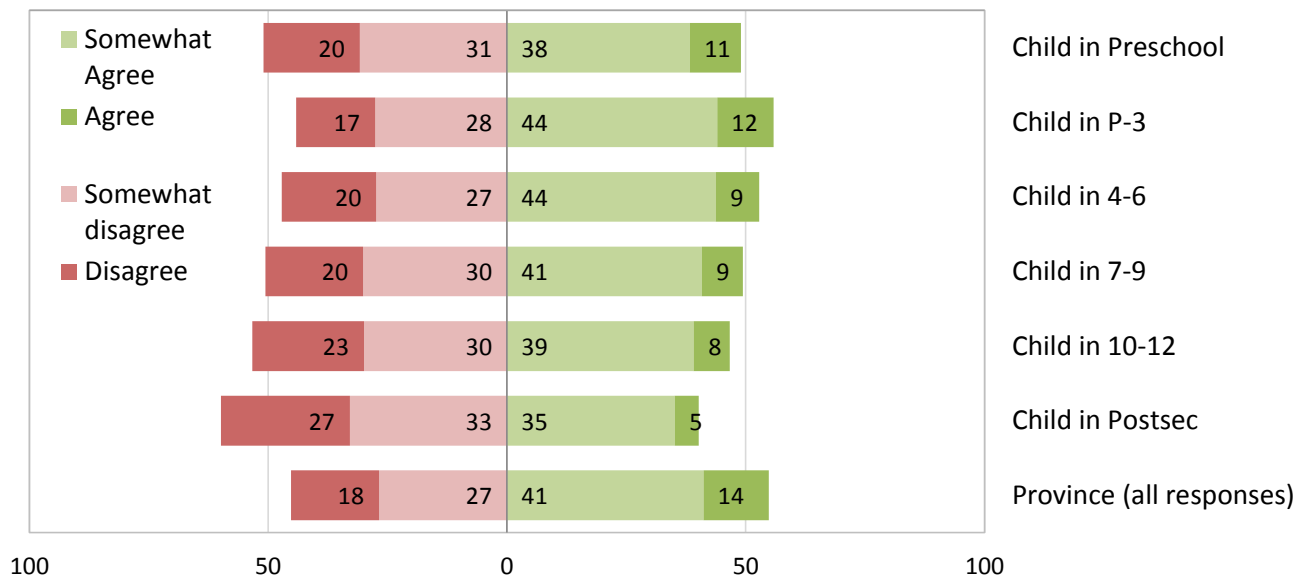
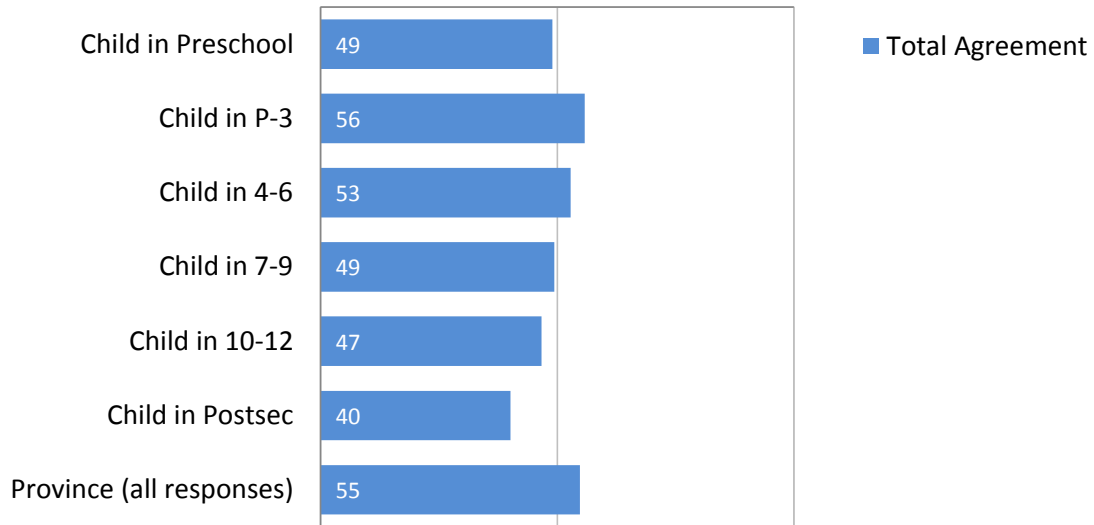
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	123	17	22	40	22	<b>61</b>
African descent (Black)	399	45	19	27	41	13	<b>54</b>
Acadian descent	2232	306	16	24	44	16	<b>60</b>
European descent	12054	1623	19	28	41	12	<b>53</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	34	11	20	45	24	<b>69</b>
Asian descent	168	30	12	28	35	25	<b>59</b>
East asian descent	54	7	19	28	32	21	<b>53</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>



**10 The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most. (Curr)**

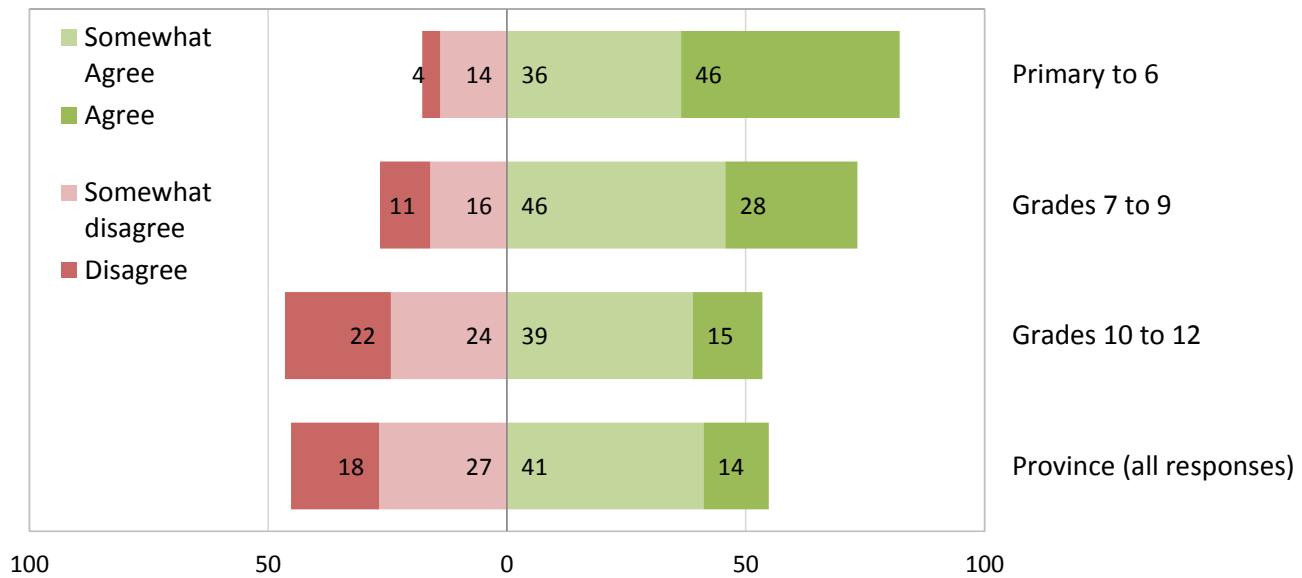
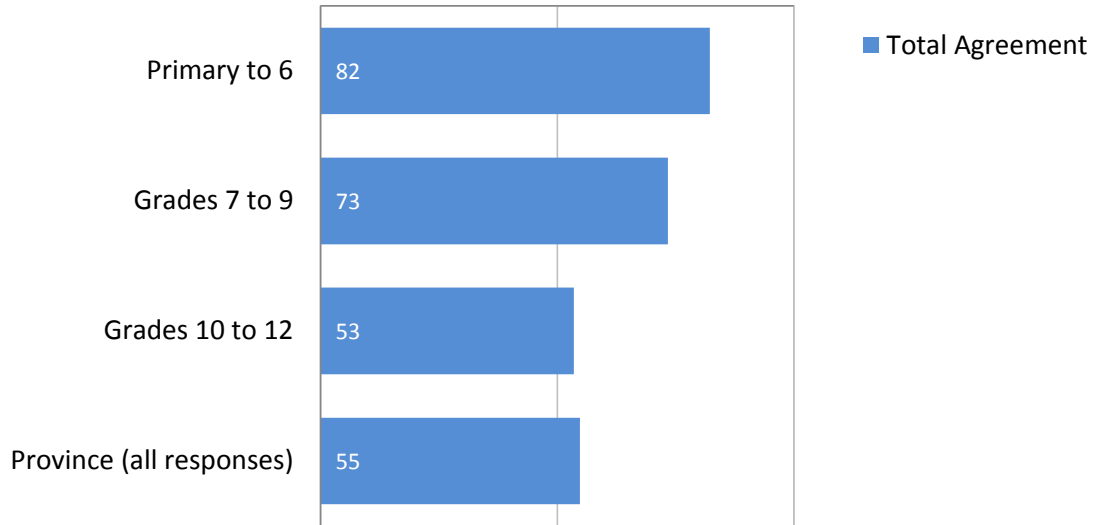
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	187	20	31	38	11	<b>49</b>
Child in P-3	2263	334	17	28	44	12	<b>56</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	239	20	27	44	9	<b>53</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	207	20	30	41	9	<b>49</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	179	23	30	39	8	<b>47</b>
Child in Postsec	365	46	27	33	35	5	<b>40</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



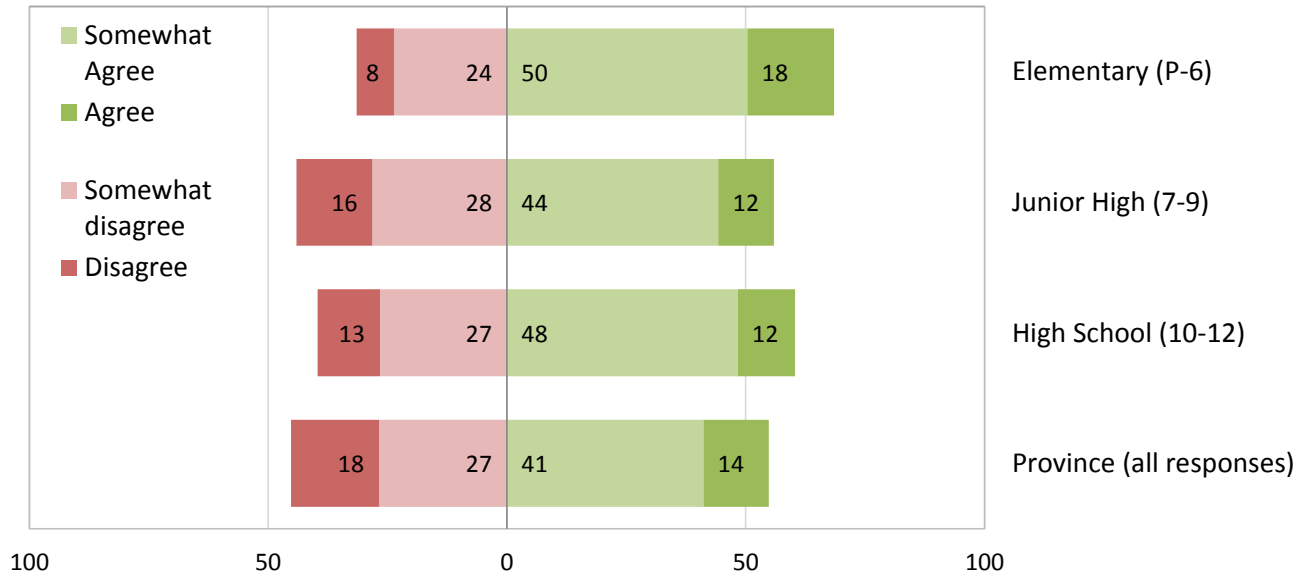
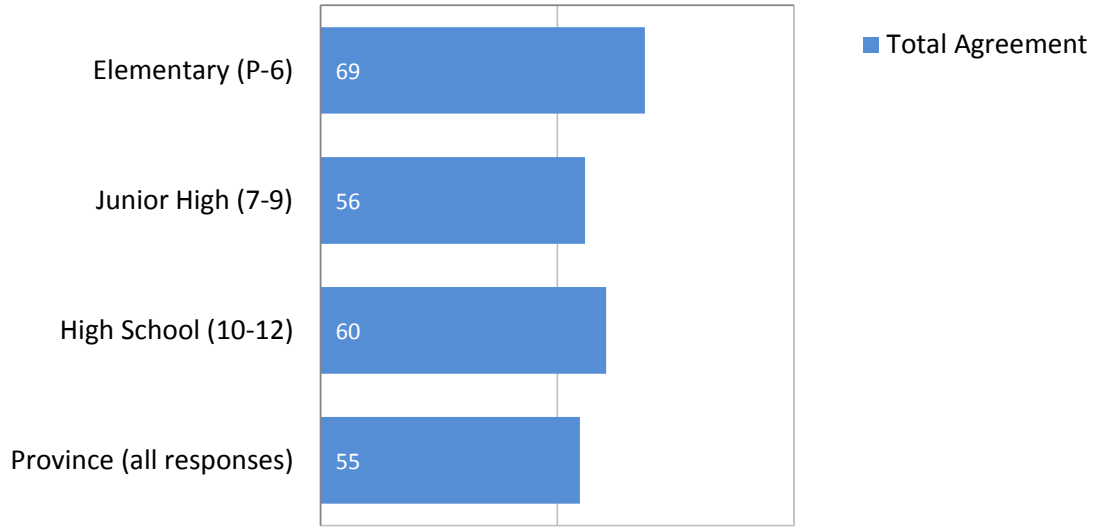
**10 The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most. (Curr)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	40	4	14	36	46	<b>82</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	192	11	16	46	28	<b>73</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	273	22	24	39	15	<b>53</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>



**10 The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most. (Curr)**

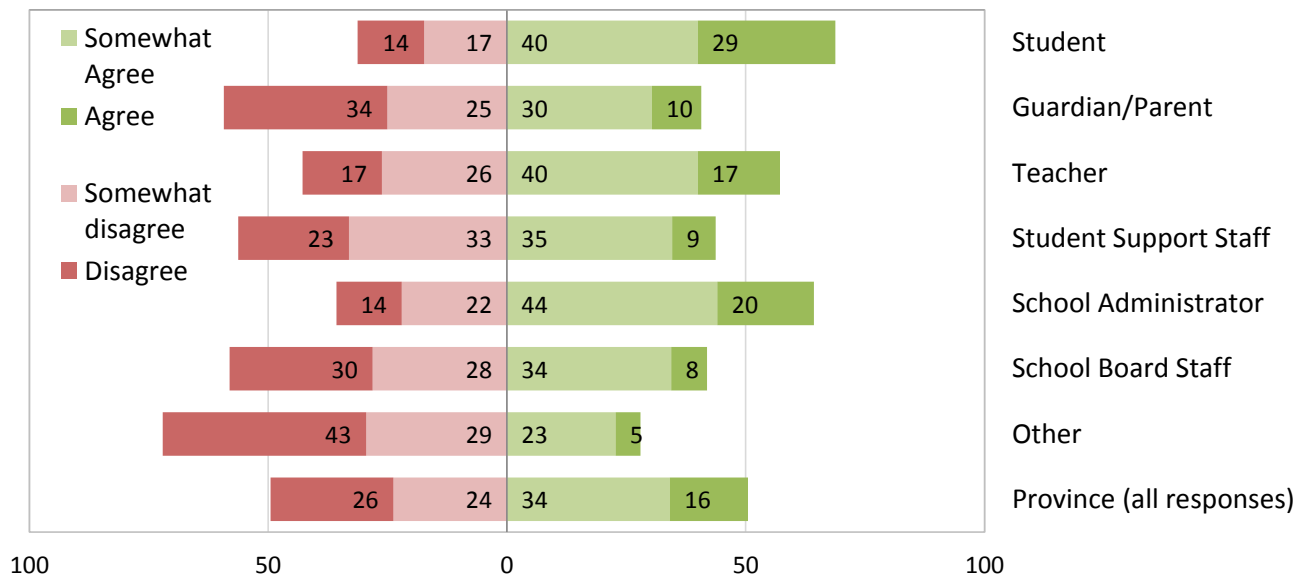
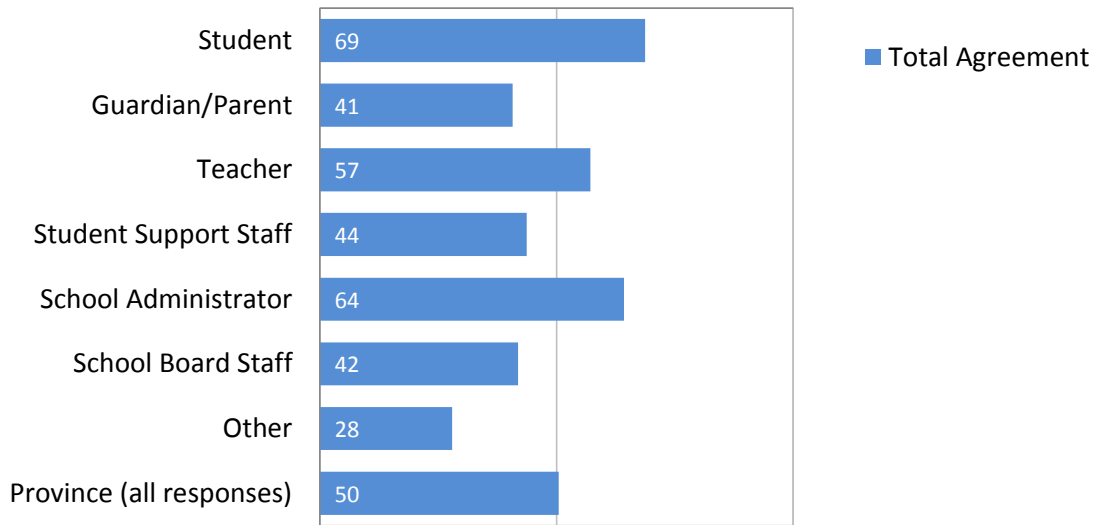
Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	169	8	24	50	18	<b>69</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	66	16	28	44	12	<b>56</b>
High School (10-12)	911	87	13	27	48	12	<b>60</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2635</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>





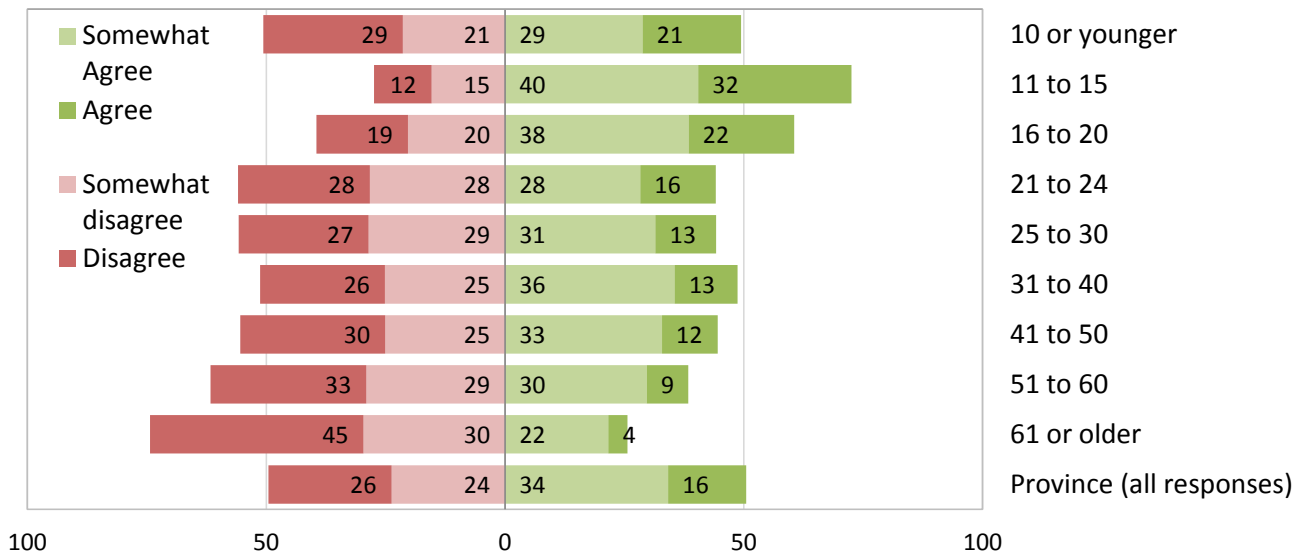
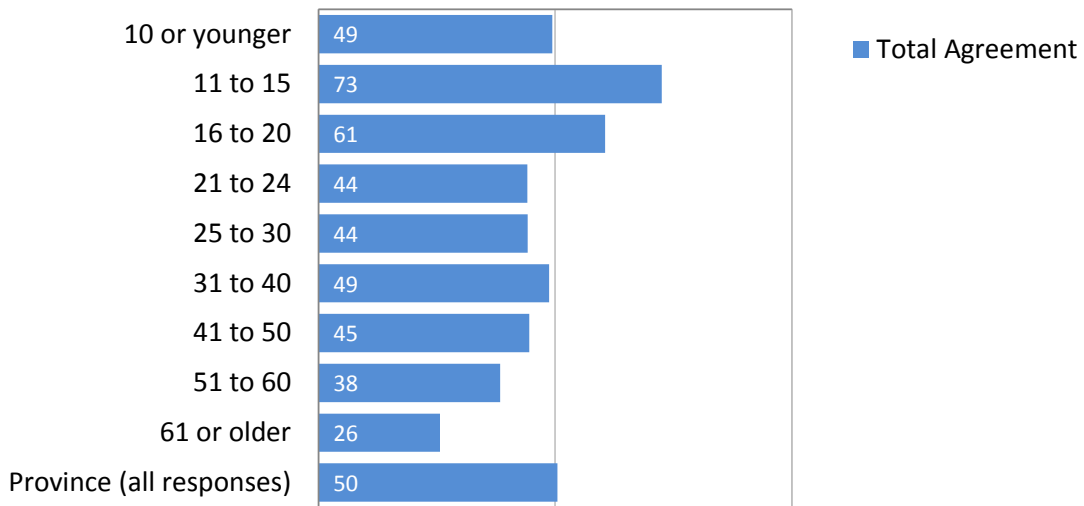
**11 Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics. (Curr)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	469	14	17	40	29	<b>69</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	944	34	25	30	10	<b>41</b>
Teacher	3198	452	17	26	40	17	<b>57</b>
Student Support Staff	489	93	23	33	35	9	<b>44</b>
School Administrator	306	29	14	22	44	20	<b>64</b>
School Board Staff	205	45	30	28	34	8	<b>42</b>
Other	2942	686	43	29	23	5	<b>28</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>



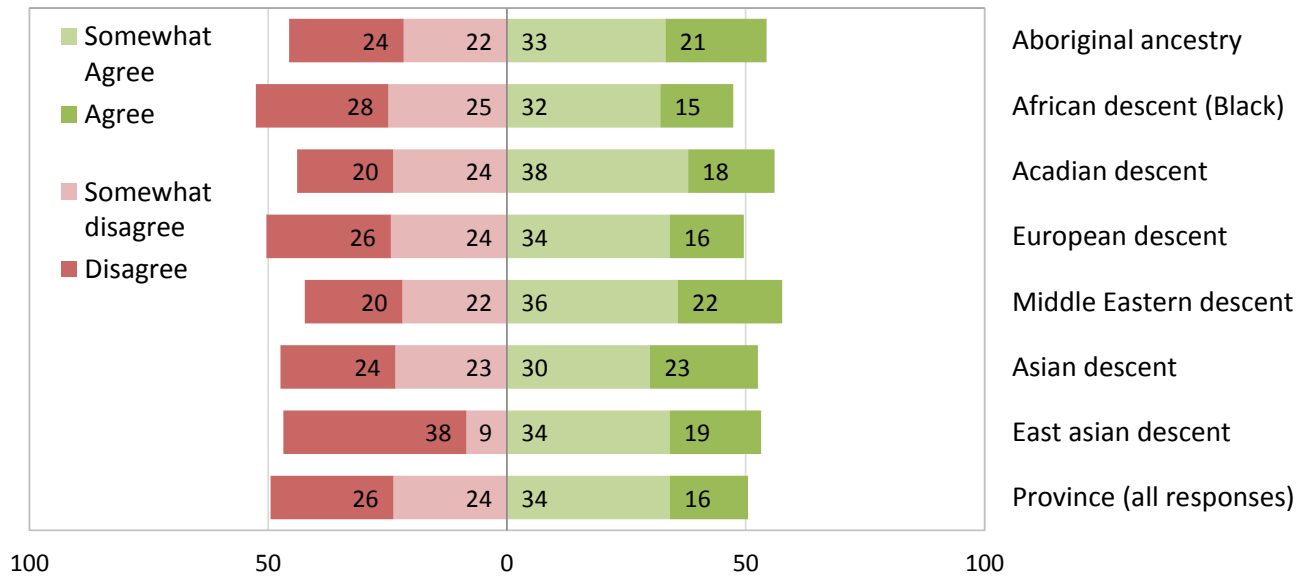
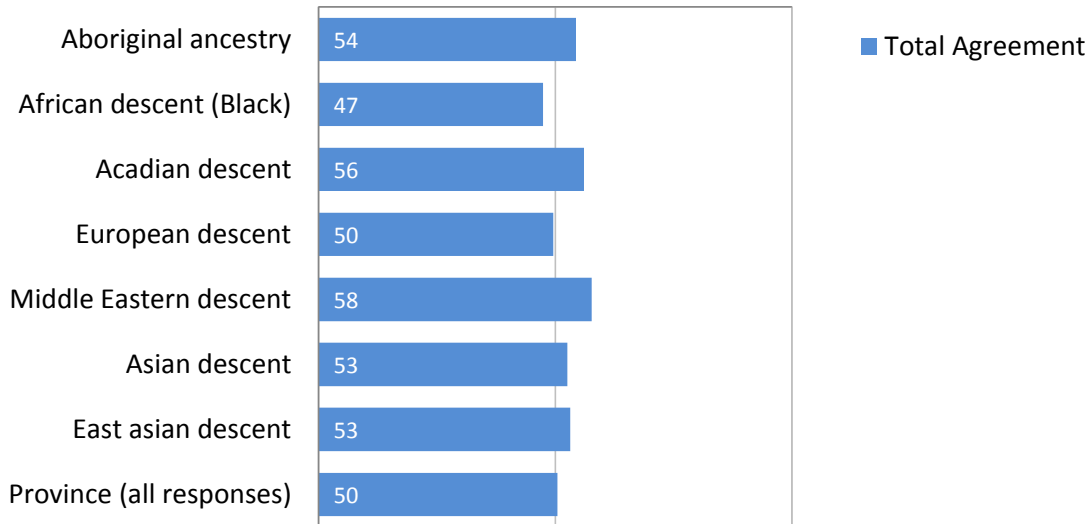
**11 Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics. (Curr)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	68	29	21	29	21	<b>49</b>
11 to 15	2862	218	12	15	40	32	<b>73</b>
16 to 20	2549	271	19	20	38	22	<b>61</b>
21 to 24	319	47	28	28	28	16	<b>44</b>
25 to 30	1018	224	27	29	31	13	<b>44</b>
31 to 40	3776	662	26	25	36	13	<b>49</b>
41 to 50	4190	547	30	25	33	12	<b>45</b>
51 to 60	2545	417	33	29	30	9	<b>38</b>
61 or older	1102	241	45	30	22	4	<b>26</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>



**11 Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics. (Curr)**

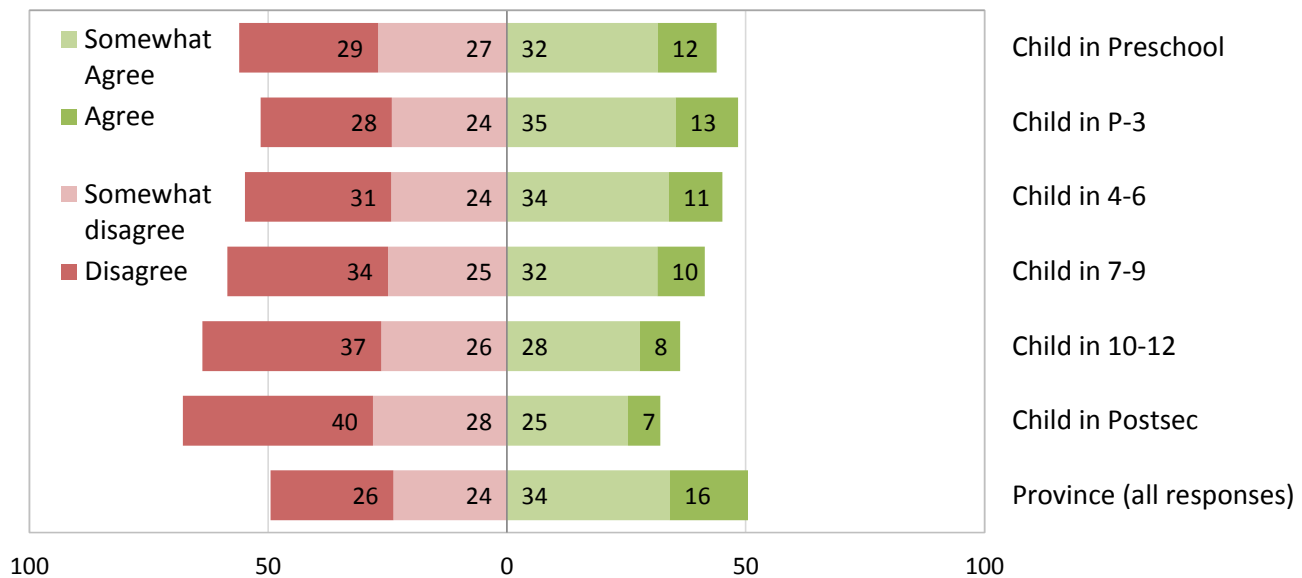
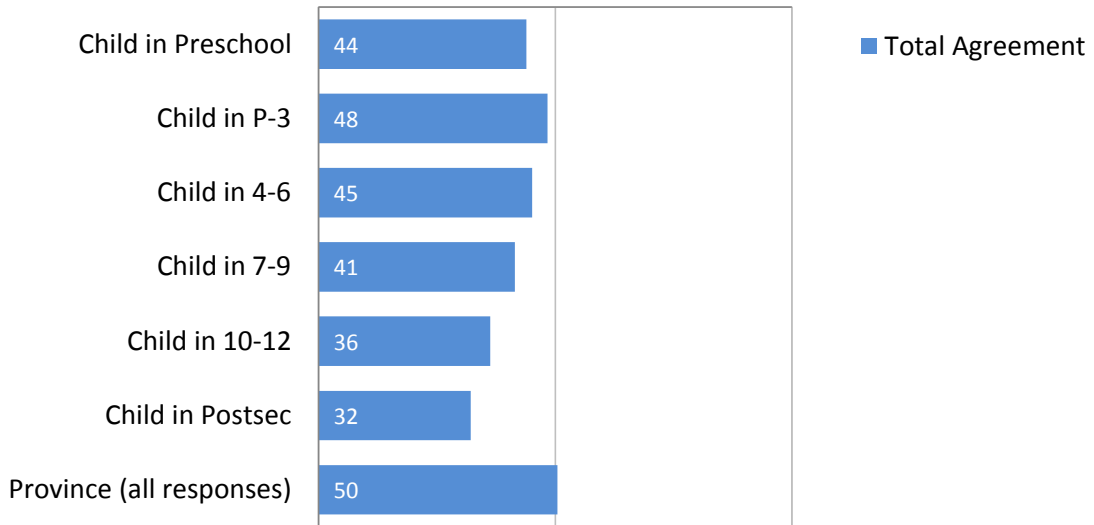
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	127	24	22	33	21	<b>54</b>
African descent (Black)	399	53	28	25	32	15	<b>47</b>
Acadian descent	2232	309	20	24	38	18	<b>56</b>
European descent	12054	1694	26	24	34	16	<b>50</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	33	20	22	36	22	<b>58</b>
Asian descent	168	31	24	23	30	23	<b>53</b>
East asian descent	54	7	38	9	34	19	<b>53</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>



**11 Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics. (Curr)**

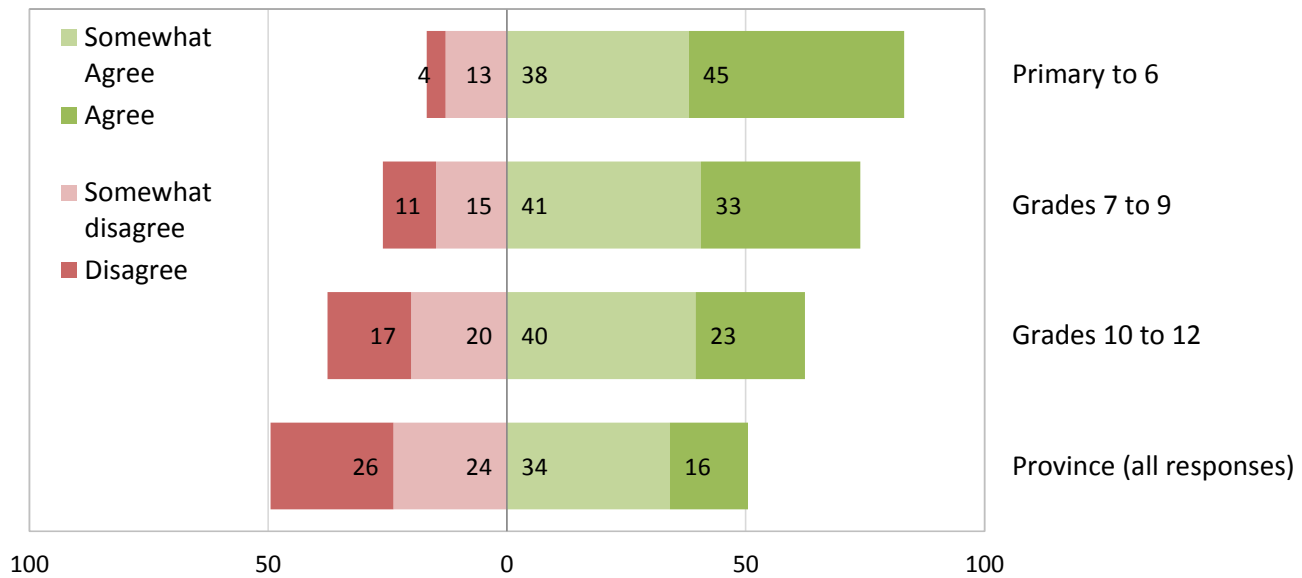
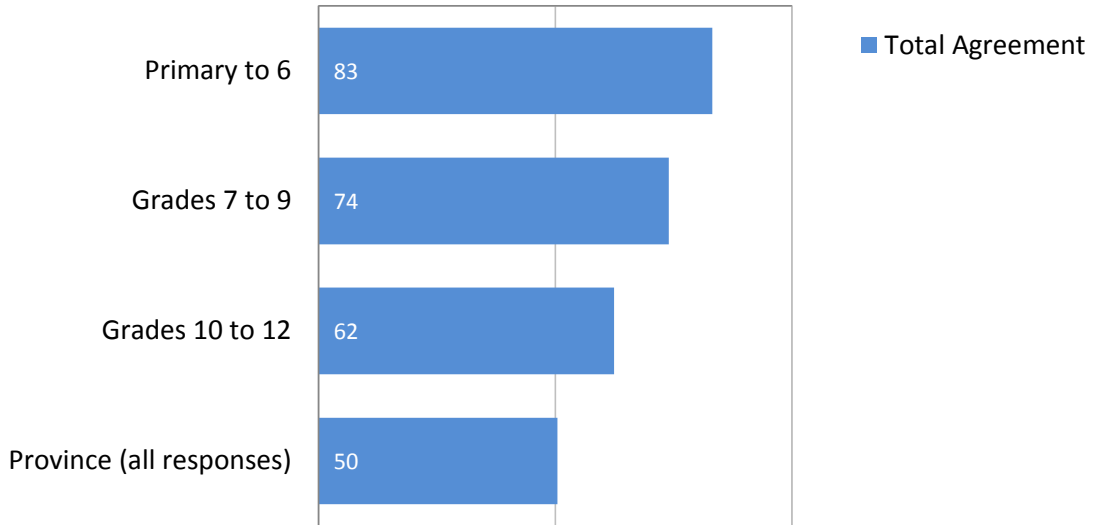
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	185	29	27	32	12	<b>44</b>
Child in P-3	2263	316	28	24	35	13	<b>48</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	221	31	24	34	11	<b>45</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	197	34	25	32	10	<b>41</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	160	37	26	28	8	<b>36</b>
Child in Postsec	365	41	40	28	25	7	<b>32</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



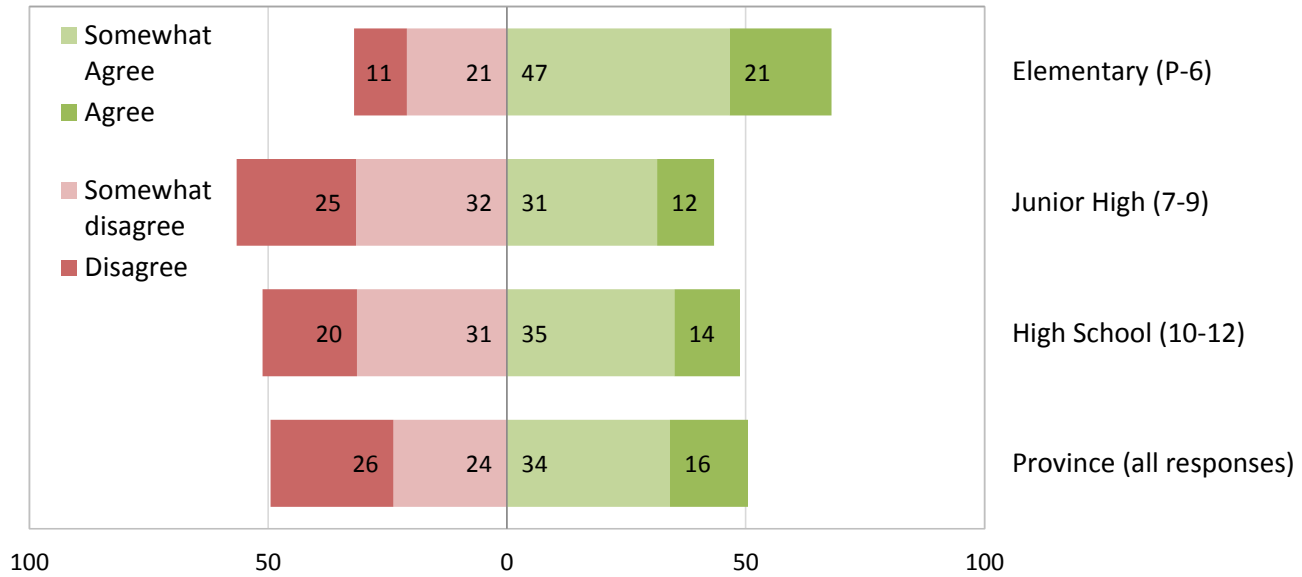
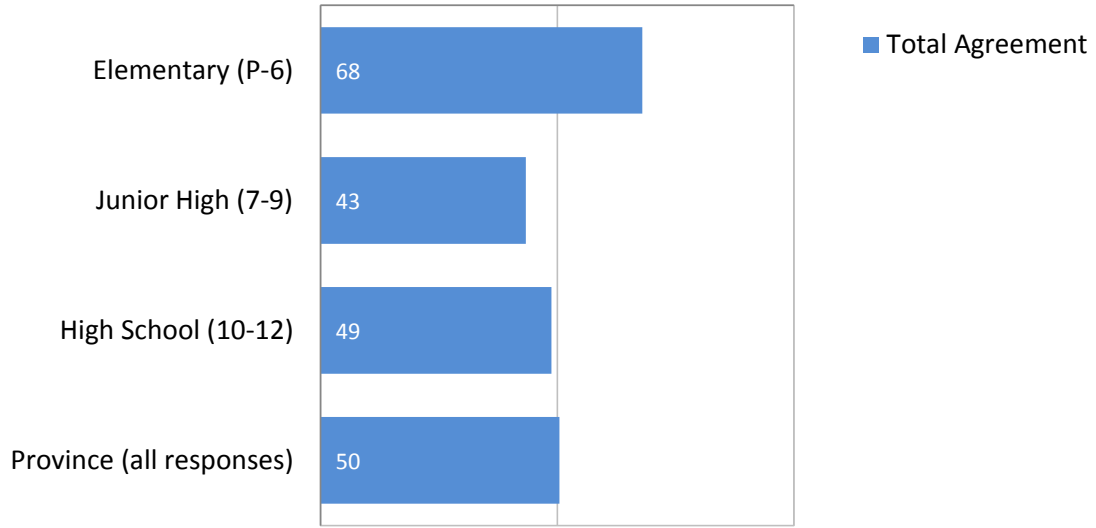
**11 Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics. (Curr)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	28	4	13	38	45	<b>83</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	169	11	15	41	33	<b>74</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	272	17	20	40	23	<b>62</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>



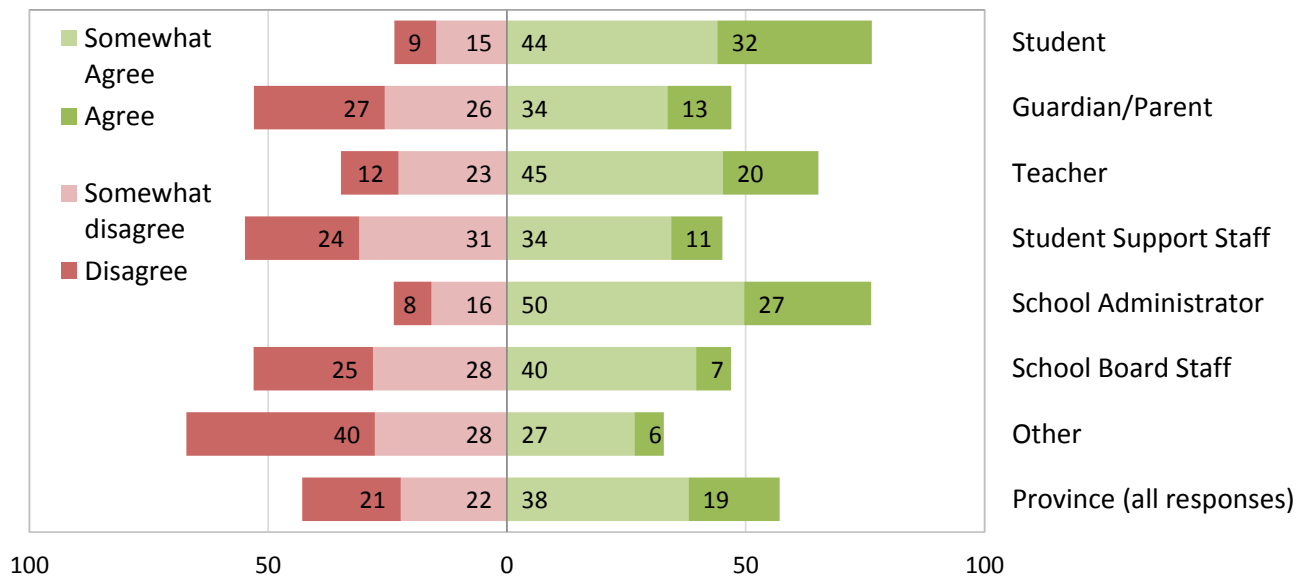
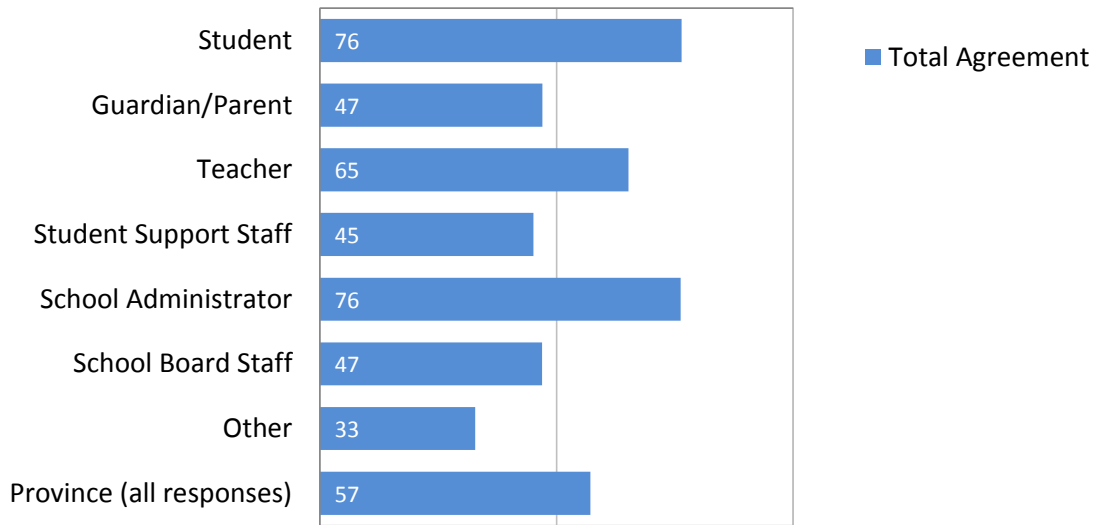
**11 Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics. (Curr)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	179	11	21	47	21	<b>68</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	108	25	32	31	12	<b>43</b>
High School (10-12)	911	163	20	31	35	14	<b>49</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2718</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>



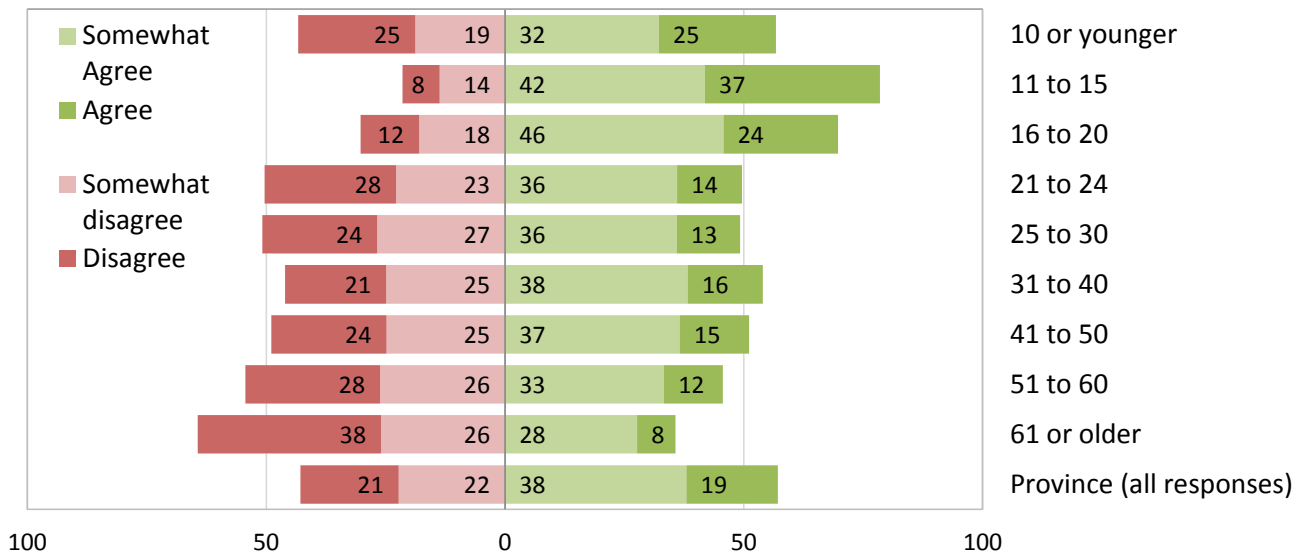
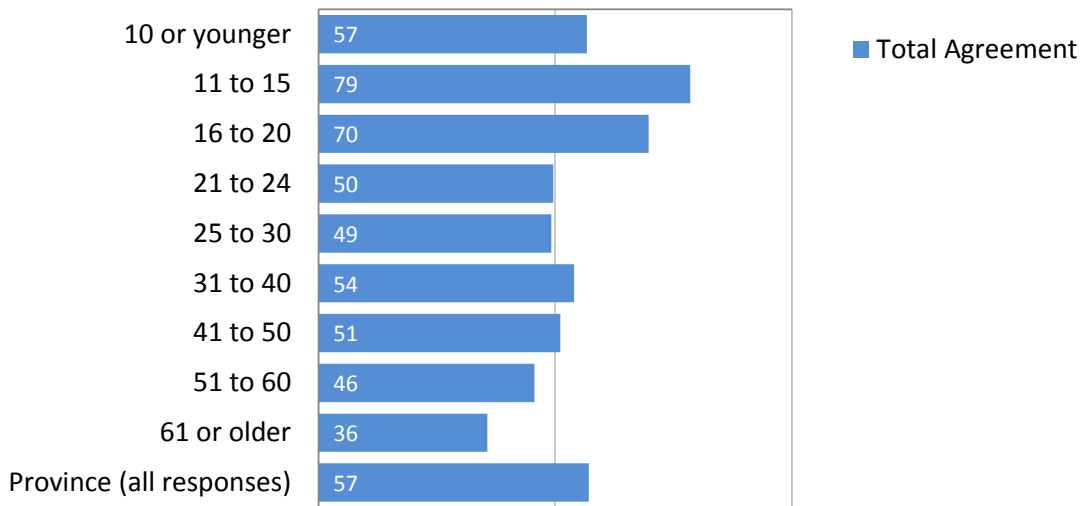
**12 Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing. (Curr)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	473	9	15	44	32	<b>76</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	868	27	26	34	13	<b>47</b>
Teacher	3198	348	12	23	45	20	<b>65</b>
Student Support Staff	489	79	24	31	34	11	<b>45</b>
School Administrator	306	28	8	16	50	27	<b>76</b>
School Board Staff	205	41	25	28	40	7	<b>47</b>
Other	2942	612	40	28	27	6	<b>33</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>



**12 Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing. (Curr)**

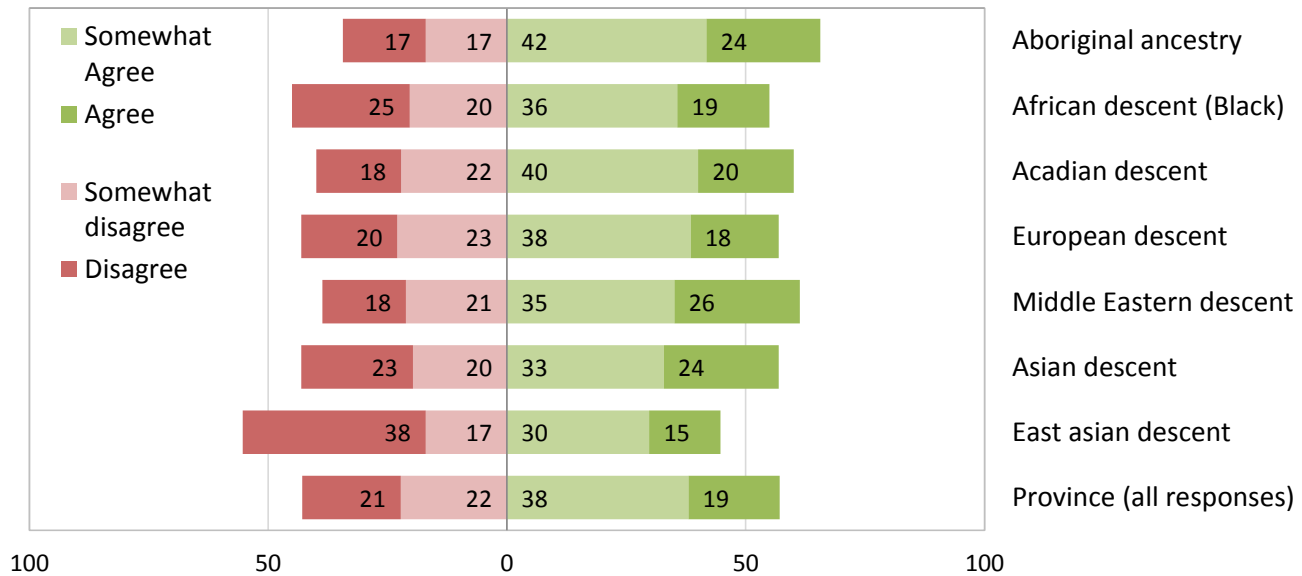
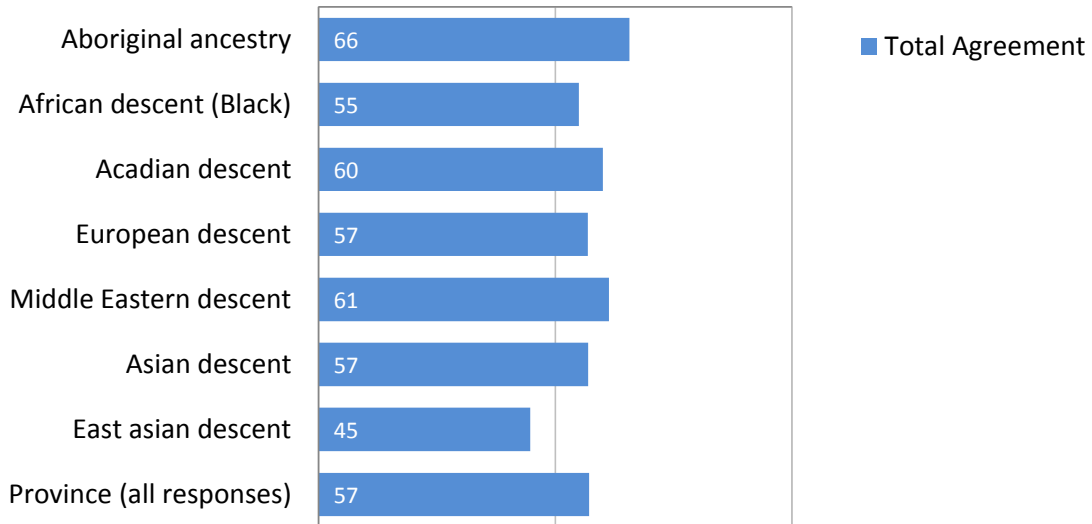
Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	64	25	19	32	25	<b>57</b>
11 to 15	2862	227	8	14	42	37	<b>79</b>
16 to 20	2549	261	12	18	46	24	<b>70</b>
21 to 24	319	47	28	23	36	14	<b>50</b>
25 to 30	1018	195	24	27	36	13	<b>49</b>
31 to 40	3776	561	21	25	38	16	<b>54</b>
41 to 50	4190	481	24	25	37	15	<b>51</b>
51 to 60	2545	373	28	26	33	12	<b>46</b>
61 or older	1102	219	38	26	28	8	<b>36</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>





**12 Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing. (Curr)**

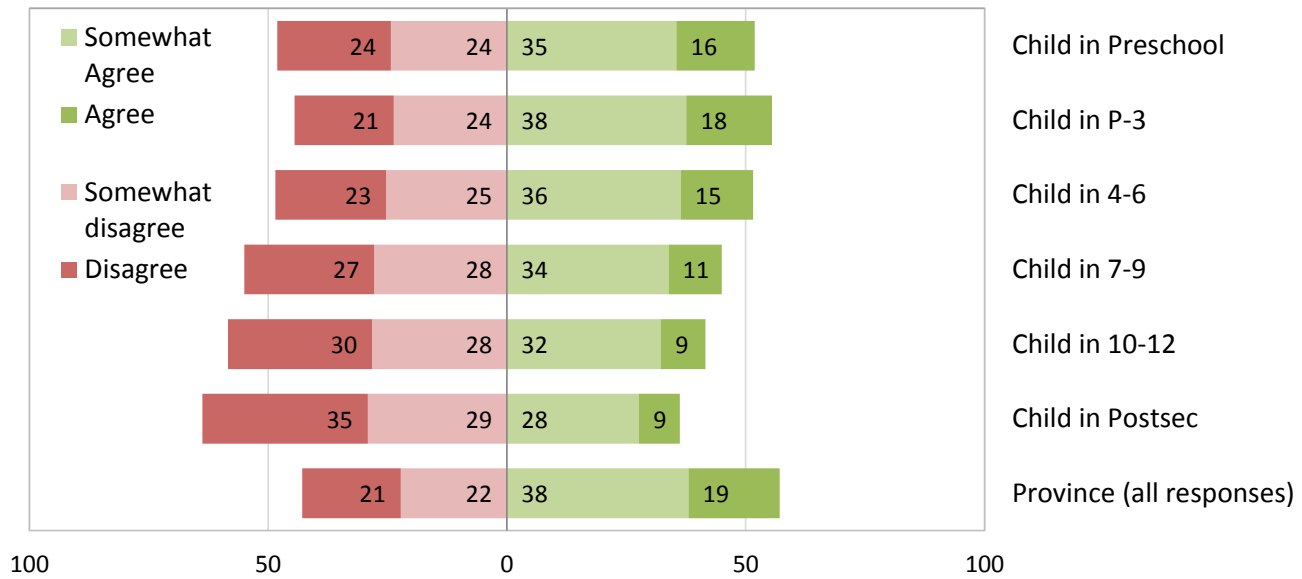
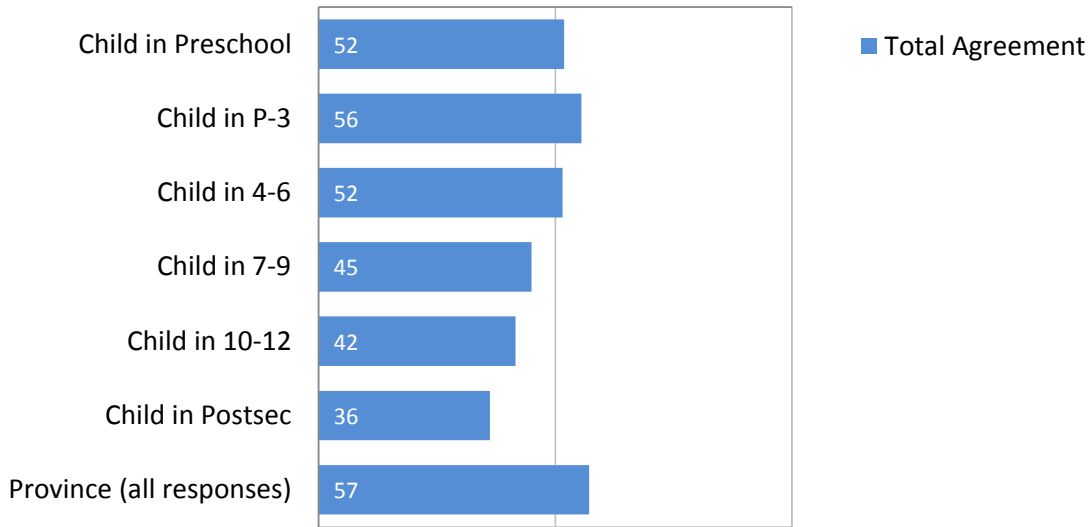
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	115	17	17	42	24	<b>66</b>
African descent (Black)	399	46	25	20	36	19	<b>55</b>
Acadian descent	2232	282	18	22	40	20	<b>60</b>
European descent	12054	1505	20	23	38	18	<b>57</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	33	18	21	35	26	<b>61</b>
Asian descent	168	31	23	20	33	24	<b>57</b>
East asian descent	54	7	38	17	30	15	<b>45</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>



**12 Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing. (Curr)**

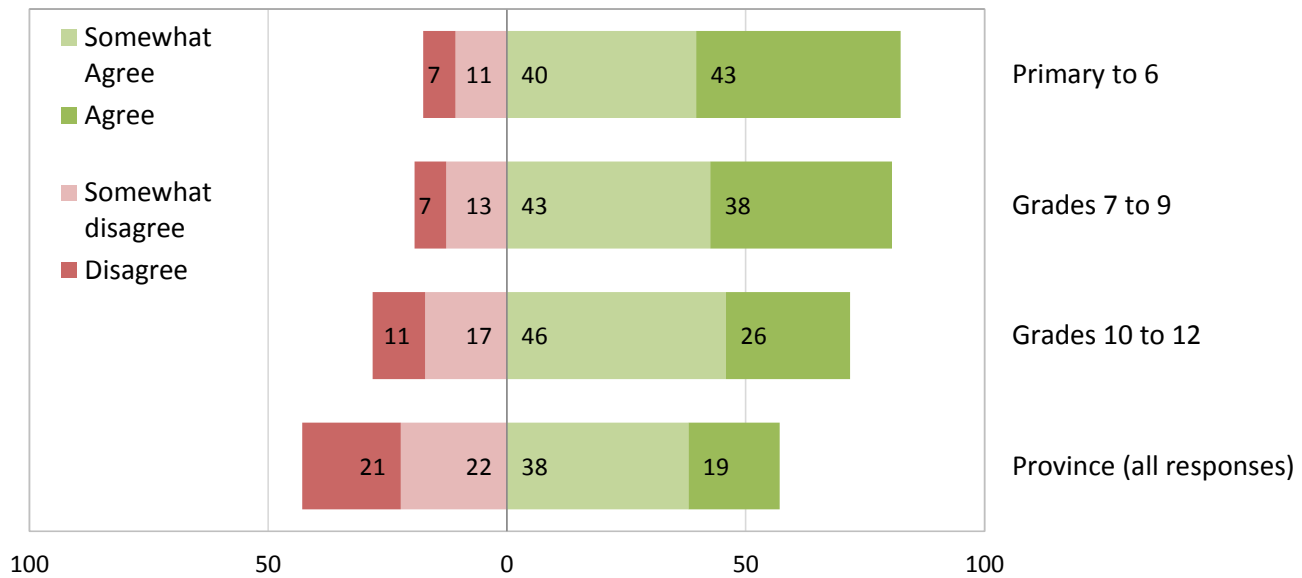
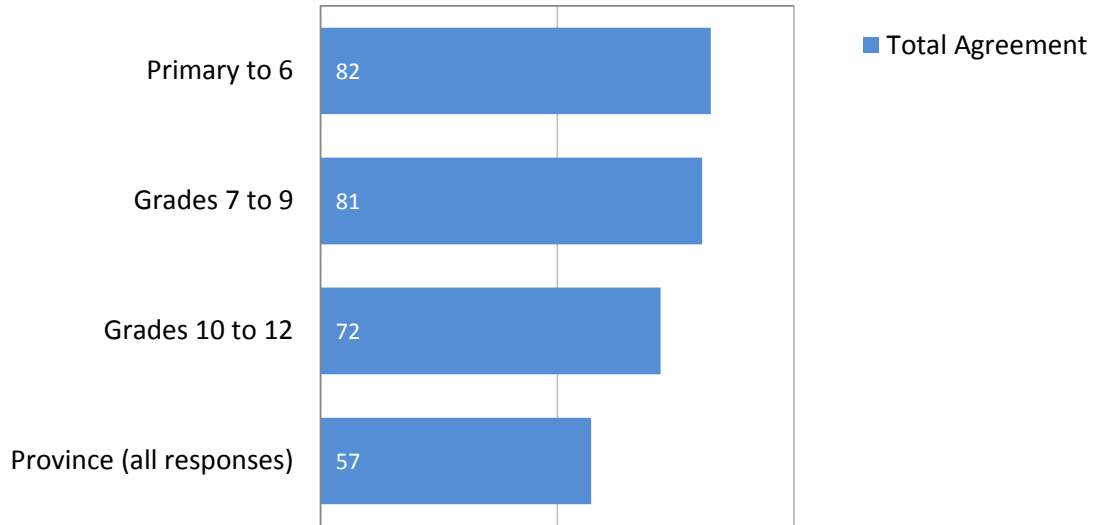
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	168	24	24	35	16	<b>52</b>
Child in P-3	2263	276	21	24	38	18	<b>56</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	200	23	25	36	15	<b>52</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	184	27	28	34	11	<b>45</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	159	30	28	32	9	<b>42</b>
Child in Postsec	365	39	35	29	28	9	<b>36</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



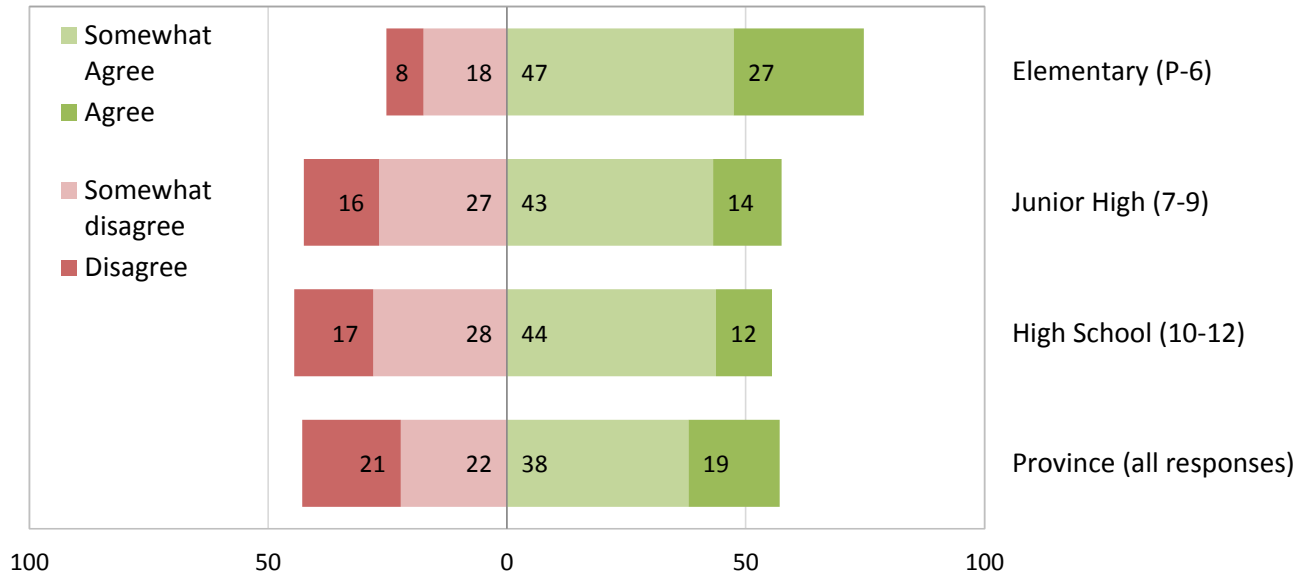
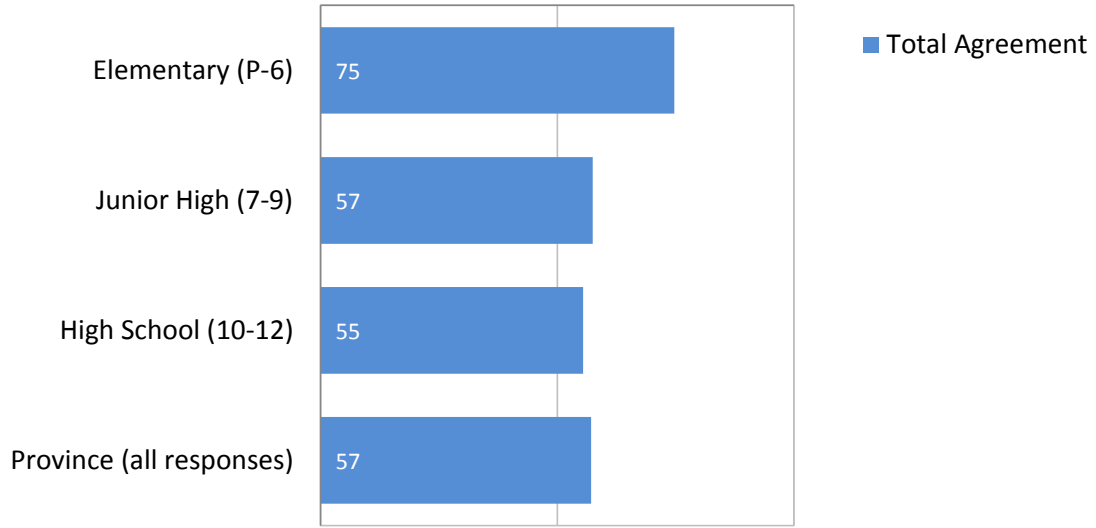
**12 Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing. (Curr)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	32	7	11	40	43	<b>82</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	168	7	13	43	38	<b>81</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	273	11	17	46	26	<b>72</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>



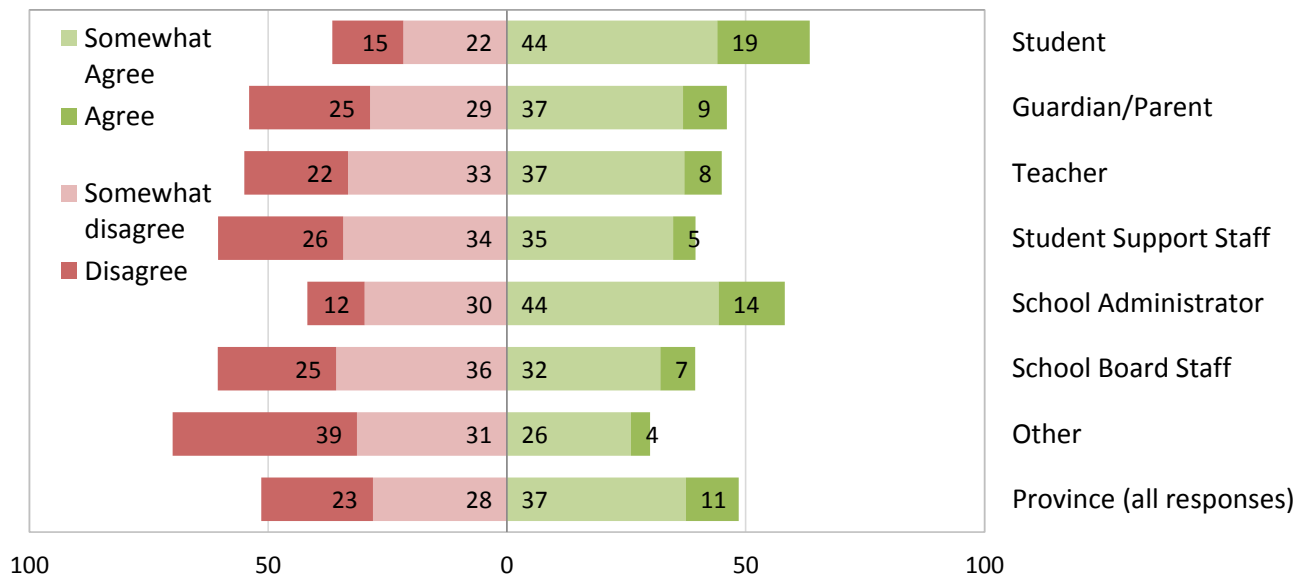
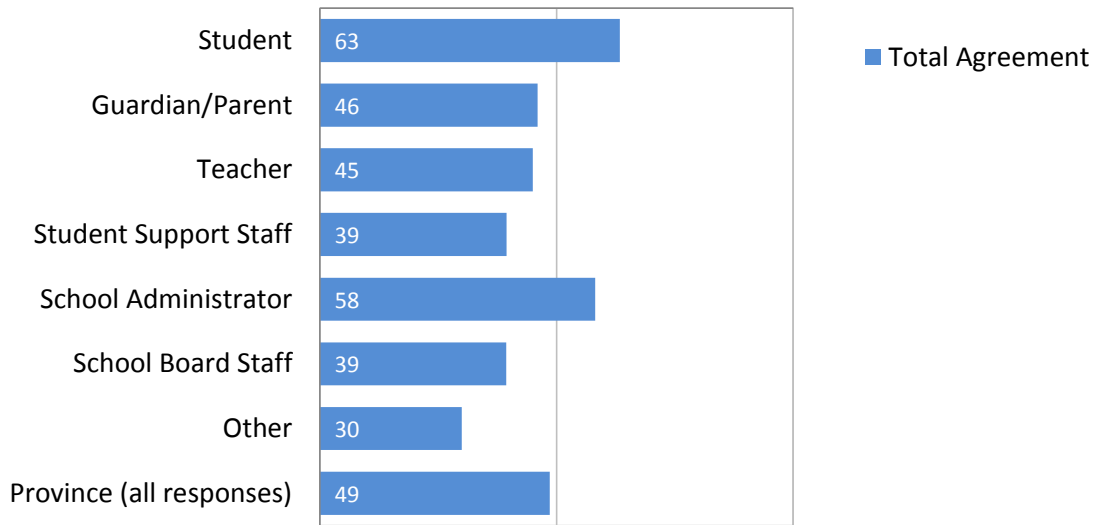
**12 Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing. (Curr)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	162	8	18	47	27	<b>75</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	77	16	27	43	14	<b>57</b>
High School (10-12)	911	107	17	28	44	12	<b>55</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2449</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>57</b>



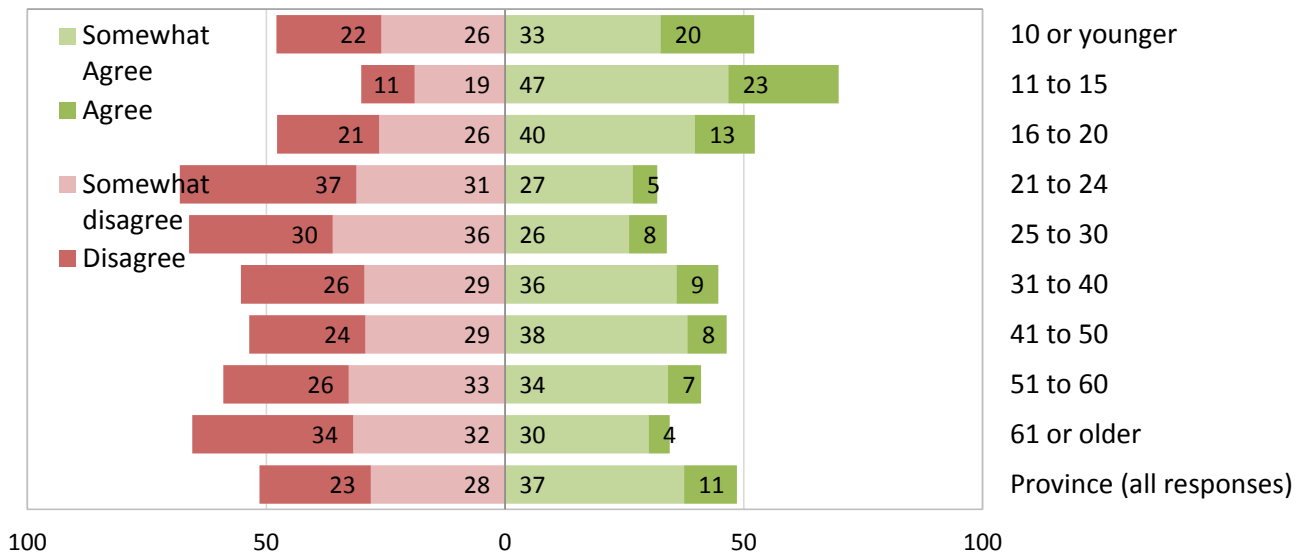
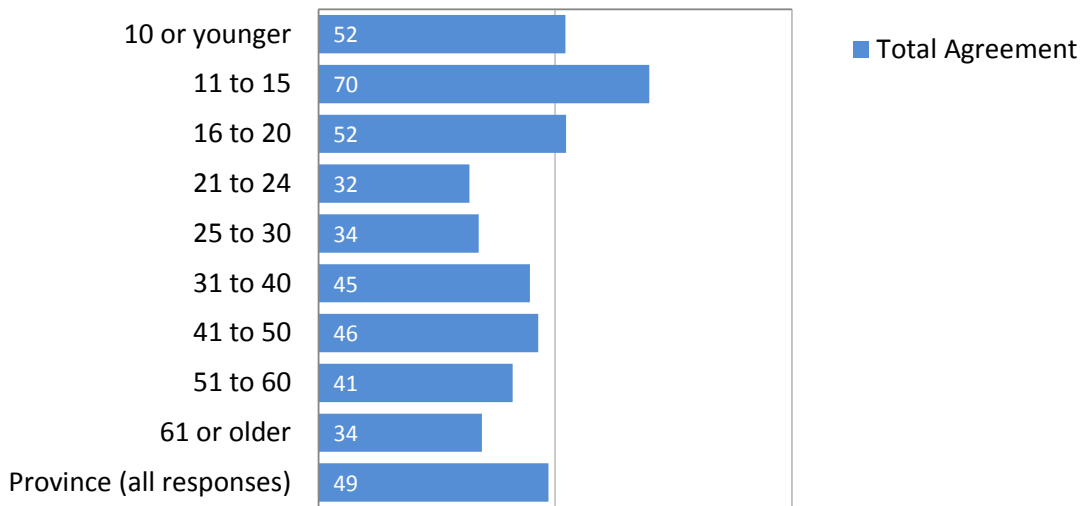
**13 Students are becoming effective problem solvers. (Curr)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	552	15	22	44	19	<b>63</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	960	25	29	37	9	<b>46</b>
Teacher	3198	343	22	33	37	8	<b>45</b>
Student Support Staff	489	81	26	34	35	5	<b>39</b>
School Administrator	306	24	12	30	44	14	<b>58</b>
School Board Staff	205	40	25	36	32	7	<b>39</b>
Other	2942	659	39	31	26	4	<b>30</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>



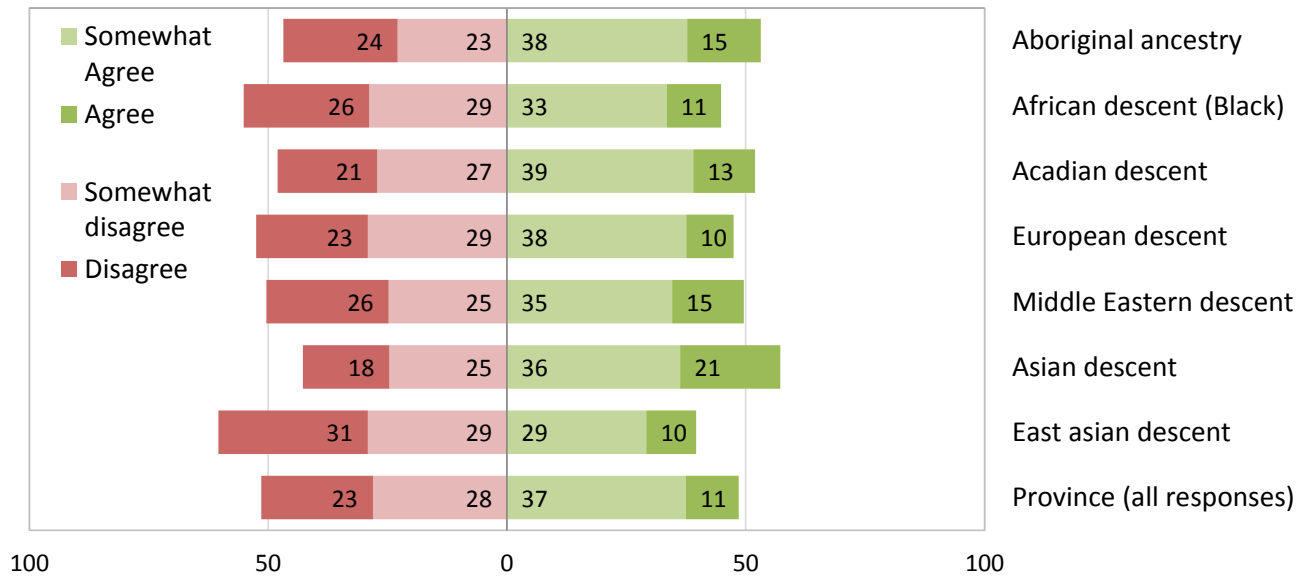
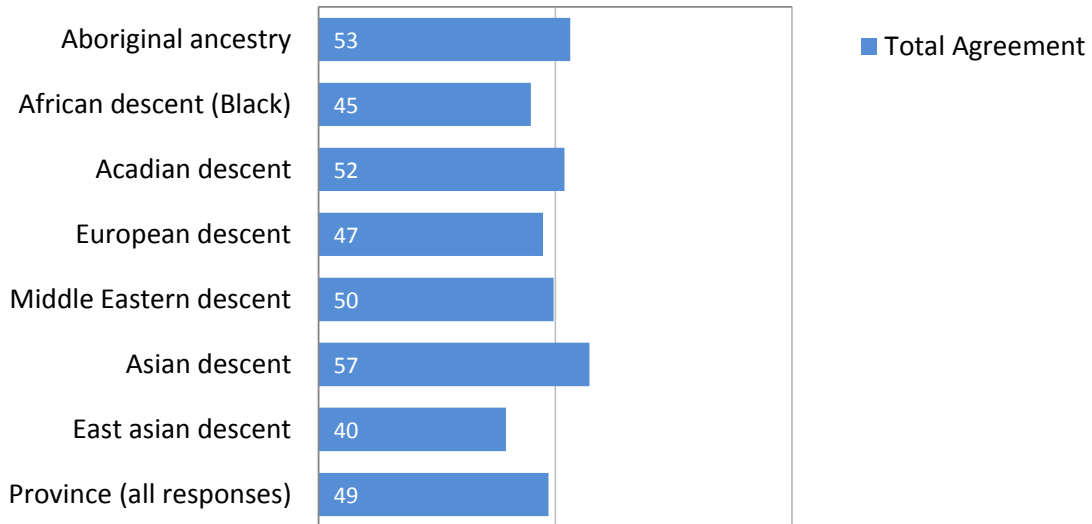
**13 Students are becoming effective problem solvers. (Curr)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	70	22	26	33	20	<b>52</b>
11 to 15	2862	270	11	19	47	23	<b>70</b>
16 to 20	2549	296	21	26	40	13	<b>52</b>
21 to 24	319	46	37	31	27	5	<b>32</b>
25 to 30	1018	197	30	36	26	8	<b>34</b>
31 to 40	3776	581	26	29	36	9	<b>45</b>
41 to 50	4190	527	24	29	38	8	<b>46</b>
51 to 60	2545	408	26	33	34	7	<b>41</b>
61 or older	1102	244	34	32	30	4	<b>34</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>



**13 Students are becoming effective problem solvers. (Curr)**

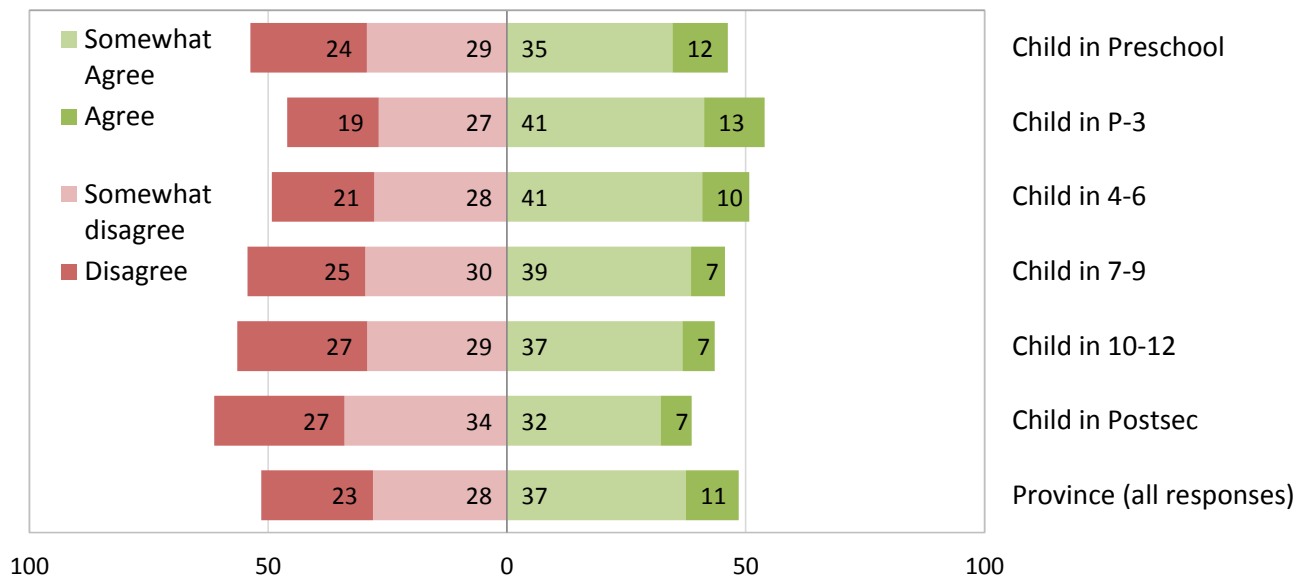
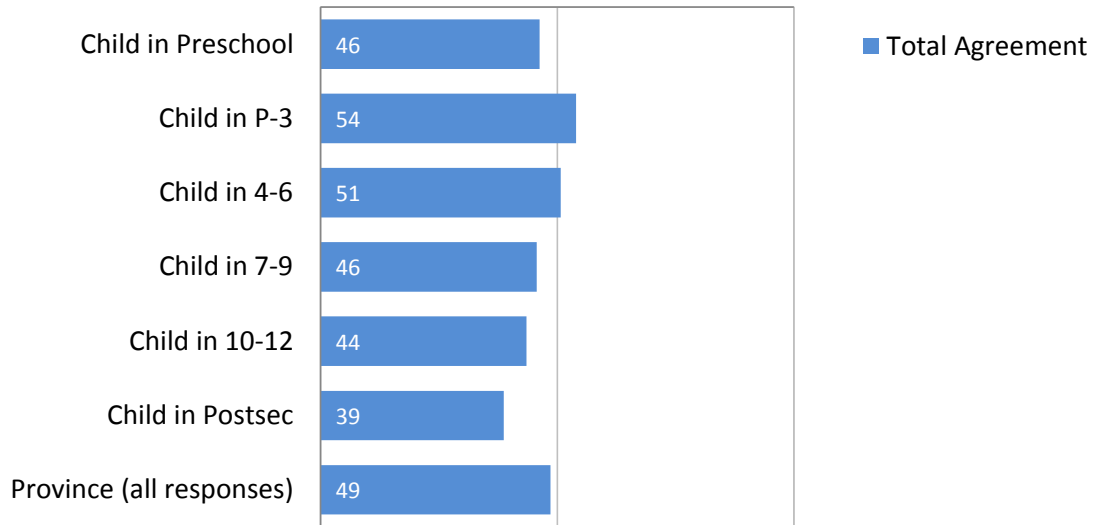
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	134	24	23	38	15	<b>53</b>
African descent (Black)	399	49	26	29	33	11	<b>45</b>
Acadian descent	2232	317	21	27	39	13	<b>52</b>
European descent	12054	1622	23	29	38	10	<b>47</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	37	26	25	35	15	<b>50</b>
Asian descent	168	30	18	25	36	21	<b>57</b>
East asian descent	54	6	31	29	29	10	<b>40</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>



**13 Students are becoming effective problem solvers. (Curr)**

Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	180	24	29	35	12	<b>46</b>
Child in P-3	2263	317	19	27	41	13	<b>54</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	233	21	28	41	10	<b>51</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	198	25	30	39	7	<b>46</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	177	27	29	37	7	<b>44</b>
Child in Postsec	365	42	27	34	32	7	<b>39</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>

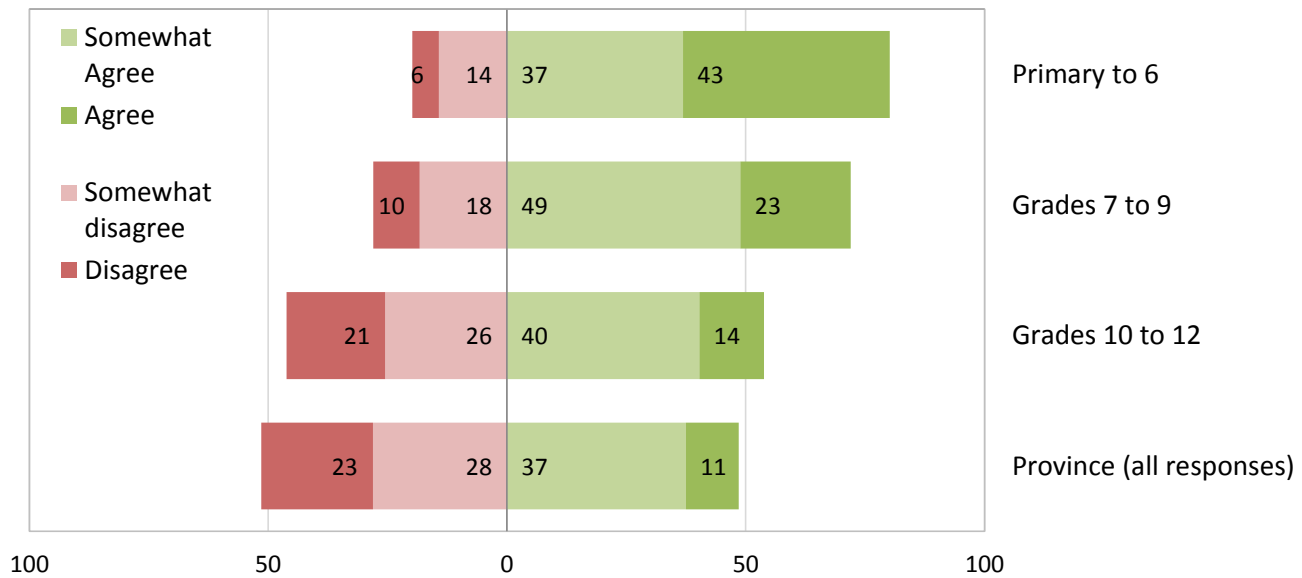
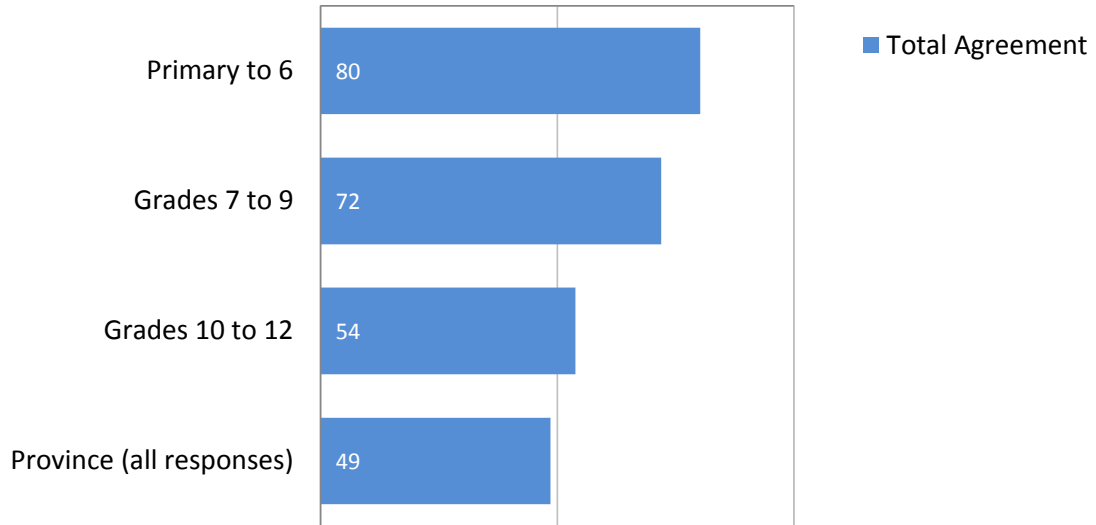
\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.





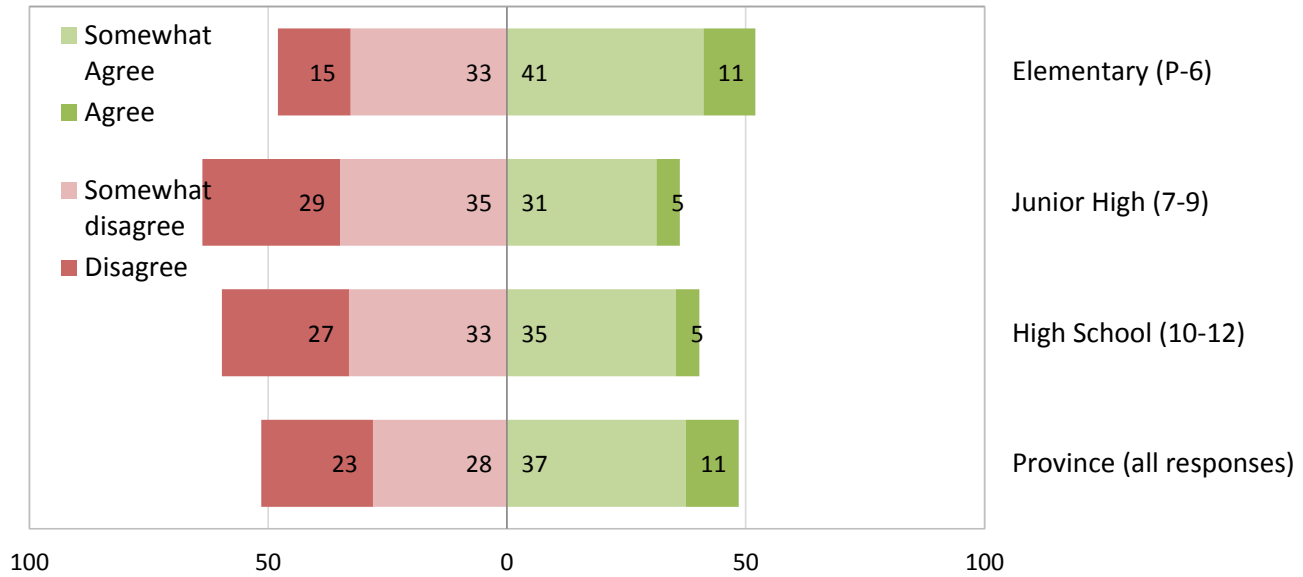
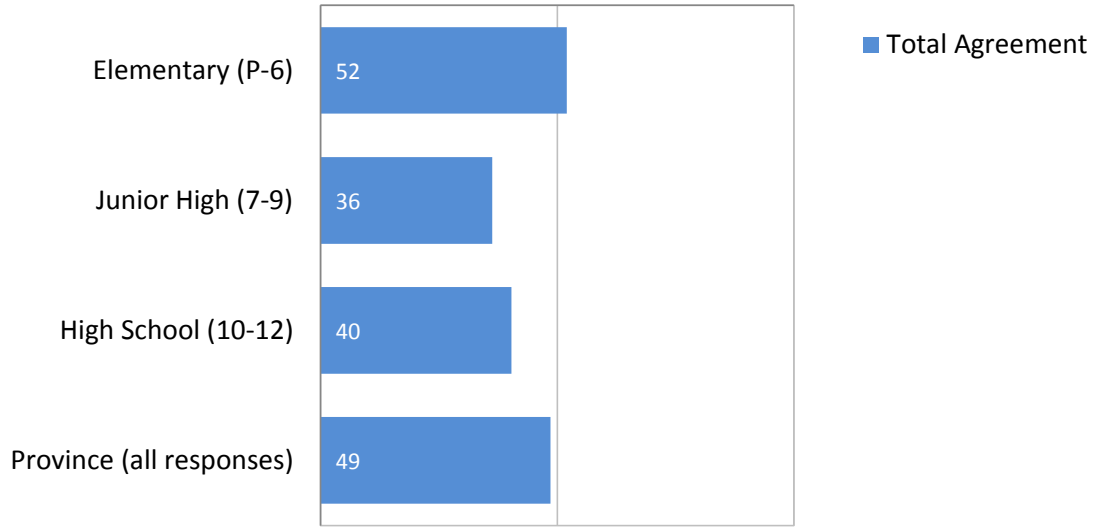
**13 Students are becoming effective problem solvers. (Curr)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	37	6	14	37	43	<b>80</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	212	10	18	49	23	<b>72</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	303	21	26	40	14	<b>54</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>



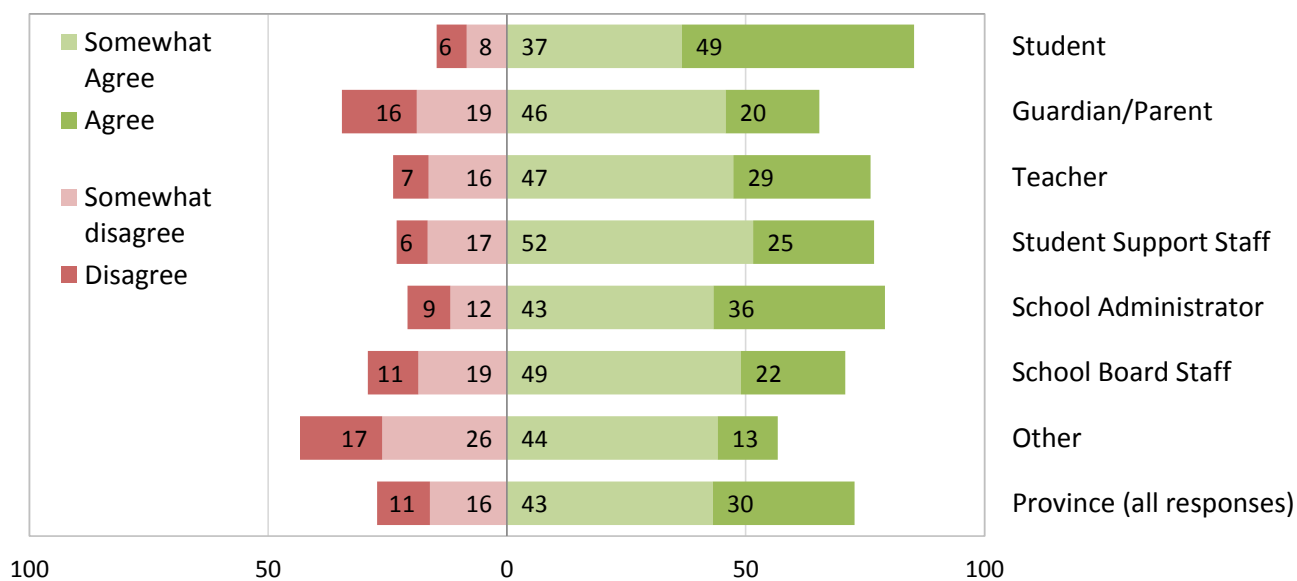
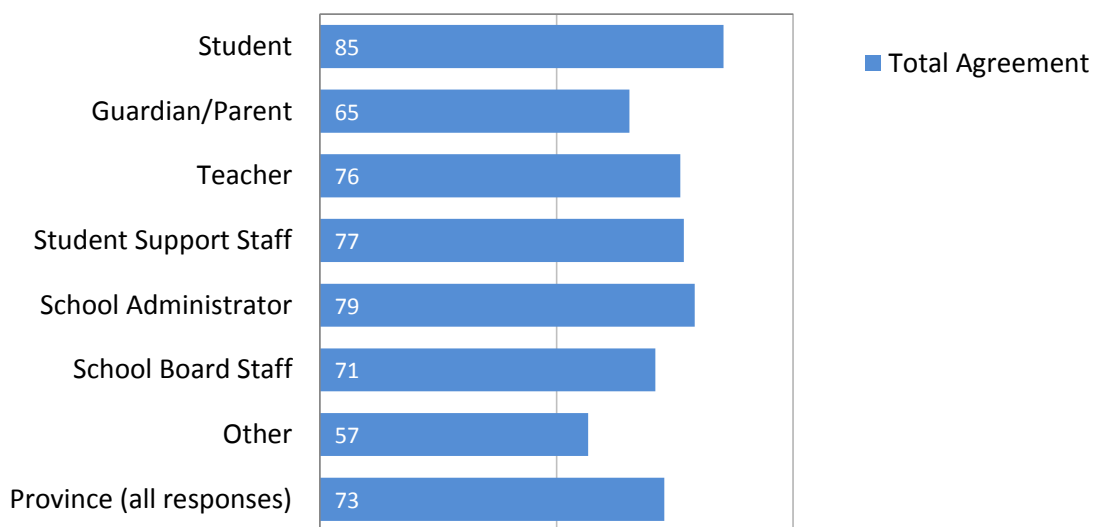
**13 Students are becoming effective problem solvers. (Curr)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	173	15	33	41	11	<b>52</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	77	29	35	31	5	<b>36</b>
High School (10-12)	911	92	27	33	35	5	<b>40</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>2659</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>49</b>



**14 High school students have the right program options available to them. (Trans)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1293	6	8	37	49	<b>85</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2821	16	19	46	20	<b>65</b>
Teacher	3198	954	7	16	47	29	<b>76</b>
Student Support Staff	489	134	6	17	52	25	<b>77</b>
School Administrator	306	61	9	12	43	36	<b>79</b>
School Board Staff	205	54	11	19	49	22	<b>71</b>
Other	2942	920	17	26	44	13	<b>57</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6237</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>73</b>



## CURRICULUM

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. The provincial curriculum is focused on what students need to learn most (for example: students have access to the right courses, students are learning the right skills).
2. Students are gaining a strong foundation in mathematics.
3. Students are gaining a strong foundation in reading and writing.
4. Students are becoming effective problem solvers (for example: learning to think critically, creatively, and independently).

### Number of Comments by Respondent Group

Parents and Guardians	2320
Teachers	1333
Community Members	1120
Students	760
Student Support Staff	155
Principals	129
School Board Staff	67
Total	5884

## Key Themes and Frequencies

Theme	Frequency
<b>Establishing a Strong Foundation for Learning</b>	<b>733</b>
• Students are not gaining a strong foundation for learning	488
• Students are moving to next grade without meeting outcomes	245
<b>Literacy</b>	<b>909</b>
• Students are not learning basic literacy skills (reading and writing)	350
• Schools need to teach (and correct) spelling	213
• Concerns with quality of curriculum – literacy	166
• Schools need to teach cursive writing	180
<b>Math</b>	<b>1086</b>
• Concerns with quality of curriculum - math	403
• Students are not learning basic math skills (basic functions)	339
• Financial literacy – courses and curriculum	129
• Student achievement in math	115
• “New math” approach in elementary schools is too complicated	100
<b>Preparing Students for the “Real World”</b>	<b>1009</b>
• Students not becoming effective problem solvers	405
• Curriculum is not relevant to the world students are growing up in	222
• Students are/are not learning 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills	215
• Students are not learning important life skills	167
<b>General Quality of Curriculum</b>	<b>693</b>
• Overall quality of curriculum	258
• Secondary Options - Trades	329
• Structure of curriculum (i.e., what students learn when)	106
<b>Quality of Curriculum for Students</b>	<b>1039</b>
• A one size curriculum is not working for students	330
• Class Composition	175
• Curriculum and teaching lack rigor – students not challenged	204
• There are too many outcomes	168
• Students need more support to establish a strong foundation for learning	162

## WHAT WAS SAID

### Students are not achieving a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy

- 7 out of 10 community members and 5 out of 10 parents/guardians who responded to the survey do not feel students are gaining a strong foundation in English and Mathematics. Overall, teachers are generally felt this foundation is being established, but those in agreement tend to be elementary teachers.
- Overall, the basics (3 Rs) are not receiving the attention they require – they are not actively taught and the curriculum is not directed at the skills students need for the real world. More would argue that these skills need to be more of a priority.
- A number of teachers and some community members have mentioned that the new math curriculum may be a step in the right direction in providing greater focus (fewer outcomes) and returning somewhat to targeted instruction for basic skills.
- This theme links to comments about the standardized curriculum (one-size) and class composition in comments that suggest that some students are getting a strong foundation (especially those with a lot of support at home) while others are not.
- There is a strong perception among respondents in this area that the basics of counting, multiplication, printing, grammar, etc. are still valuable skills and need to be learned as a foundation for everything else that students will encounter
- For many, whether or a not a student gains a strong foundation depends on a) the quality of teaching and b) the school a student attends – a number of comments outline how that teaching quality, resources, availability of programs can make a big difference to how well students master core skills.
- Time to learn (and practice) core skills is limited because there are too many outcomes and too many other subjects/activities that take away from time to learn in mathematics and language arts ... teachers are “plowing

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*Curriculum needs to keep pace with today's world ... but the basics ... reading, writing, and arithmetic are always important.*

*Way too many outcomes, no time for developing fundamentals like spelling, grammar and multiplication.*

*Foundations are not a priority. Writing is no longer taught or spelling. Math foundations are being glossed over and then going into more complex concepts without the understanding of the basics.*

*Change the system back a little so that we may move forward.*

*We are failing in reading and math. We need to get back to the basics. This is not complicated. Teach our students reading, writing, math. The rest will come.*

*BACK TO BASICS – it is shocking how many high school students cannot write a simple letter or do basic math!!!*

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through lessons” to be able to cover everything and do not have time to ensure that all students have a strong understanding ... the skills are being taught, but not understood.

- Too much focus is placed on problem solving and creativity; not enough on practice of basic skills (in class and through homework assignments)
- Some feel that technology is used too often to replace these skills (e.g. spell check and calculators)

**Areas of the curriculum that need to be improved**

	Elementary	Secondary
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teach and Correct Spelling</li> <li>- Cursive Writing needs to be put back in the Curriculum</li> <li>- Students are not learning to read</li> <li>- Schools need to actively teach grammar</li> <li>- Curriculum directs too many ways for students to learn to read</li> <li>- Outcomes for early literacy are too vague</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing is not enough of a focus (e.g. graduating without ability to write an essay)</li> <li>- Not learning the fundamentals of grammar</li> <li>- Courses lack real world relevance</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Missing basic computation skills</li> <li>- No clear strategies (new math) for students to master</li> <li>- No right answer</li> <li>- No memorization (multiplication)</li> <li>- Too focused on language versus operations and therefore, hard for students who struggle with reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial Literacy – students want to learn about skills they will use after graduation (how to do their taxes, how to manage money, small business skills etc.)</li> <li>- Students are graduating without the basics (e.g. making change, times tables)</li> </ul>

## Students are moving forward without the skills they need to be successful

- The 245 comments in this theme largely speak to student experiences in elementary school where it is expected that they will gain a strong foundation for future learning. There is a sense that teachers are making too many adaptations and modifying the curriculum to allow students to “pass” instead of challenging them to do their best – in the views of some this establishes a sense of complacency in students.
- Too many students reach secondary school without the skills they need. Too many go on to graduate without these same skills – reading, writing and basic math functions.
- When students advance without having met expectations of the previous years the diverse needs in a classroom grow considerably because the gap between students who have a strong foundation and those who don’t gets larger over time.
- The effects of being advanced to the next grade are compounded over time – learning gets more and more difficult and students are “forever behind their peers”.
- Many respondents also felt that students were not learning important life lessons – protecting students’ self-esteem is winning out over the lessons they could learn through failure.

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*Many students are very well prepared but there are too many falling through the cracks*

...

*Failure is no longer an option, which gives children a false sense of reality.*

*Children are no longer encouraged to learn, but to just be pushed through.*

*Teachers should be allowed to grade a student based on their ability and outcomes. If a student is not ready to graduate to the next level, they should not be able to do so.*

*Allowing students to advance when they are not fully comprehensive in math and English skills are a disservice to our students, our teachers, and our community at large.*

*How does a student learn to deal with problems like failure when they are not allowed to fail? This is not prep for the real world.*

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## More supports are required for students who are struggling

Some respondents indicated that the provincial curriculum is sound overall. From this perspective the issues are very complex:

- Teachers are working with too many diverse needs in a large class (class composition) – students are struggling don't get the support they need, average students are not challenged and can't get extra help when needed, while advanced students are missing opportunities for enrichment ... all of which require regular additional planning and support from teachers.
- Teachers have to modify the curriculum to accommodate all students – “watered down”
- There are too few resources (e.g. Education Assistants, Resource Teachers)
- There is too little time (i.e. too many students, too many outcomes) to allow teachers to provide individualized support
- Behaviour issues are disrupting time to teach and time to learn
- Students are not engaged and accountable for their learning (i.e., there is an element of student effort that needs to be considered in looking at outcomes in the classroom)

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*I feel that the curriculums are well designed and in an ideal classroom I would answer agree to each [survey question]. Teachers are trained and prepared to teach students all of these skills – but the system continues to make it more difficult for us to do our job, with is ultimately to TEACH KIDS.*

*I feel there are so many outcomes to cover that if you have a student who struggles at all there isn't enough time to give student the extra time to master these outcomes before you have to move on.*

*Classes are too large. The teachers cannot address the needs of all students.*

*I hope a lot of high school students write to the committee about the excellent learning experiences they had when they had teachers who wouldn't let them fail and I hope you also hear from the capable students who did not realize their potential because they just happened to get the teachers who let them fail. We truly have an educational lottery going on in our schools. Many of our students have excellent experiences during their 13 years in school but many do not.*

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## A “One Size Fits All” Curriculum is not serving students well

- Some students need *more* time than afforded by the curriculum, others need *less*
- Learning is *too hard* for some students and *too easy* for many – these two ends of the spectrum receive the most attention in classrooms while average students (“kids in the middle”) are
- Who does the curriculum serve?
  - a. A tightly structured curriculum and diverse student needs in the classroom leave teachers having to “teach to the lowest common denominator” ... students who are able to meet the outcomes faster than their peers are not challenged
  - b. The curriculum works for “some” students; however, the needs of students who struggle academically are not being met ... too often teachers have to move on to the next set of outcomes before many students understand
  - c. The students the curriculum works for students who have supports at home, have no learning challenges, and are able to make schoolwork their first priority.
- Curricula prescribe one way to learn (e.g. “new math”) – this doesn’t work for the range of student learning styles *and* development stages.
- More options are required from Junior High onward – hands on, vocational, creative, life skill focused courses especially for students who are not working toward post-secondary learning or have intellectual disabilities.
- The curriculum is too focused on university entrance as the outcome of schooling from P-12, relies on a particular way of learning and idea of skills and knowledge.

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*A single set of outcomes does not serve too many people well.*

*Every student can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way.*

*I find that some things are explained and that everyone assumes we automatically understand what they are trying to teach us, but not everybody learns like that so it’s hard to say that all of us are strong ...*

*Teachers are spread so thin trying to get to everyone, that none of the students get the grade level focus they need.*

*In our push for higher literacy and numeracy standards, I think we go too fast, cover too much material too shallowly.*

*Many options for the extremely gifted or poor students but the majority are clumped into one size-fits-all group.*

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## Students are not becoming effective problem solvers

### *Learning to Problem Solve*

- Students are less likely today than in the past to think independently or critically.
- Students struggle to solving problems and thinking critically because ...
  1. They are not taught these skills at school (Teachers don't know how or discourage it)
  2. They are not taught these skills at home ("Helicopter Parents)
  3. They rely too much on technology to provide answers (Students do not want to put the effort into critical thinking when they can get the answer by searching the Internet)
- With the number of curriculum outcomes, it is hard to find the time for in-depth problem solving (a small number see problem solving as enrichment in learning rather than a cross-curricular skill)
- Problem-solving is a challenge when students do not have a strong foundation in core subject areas (e.g. mathematics or science)
- There is too much focus on the process in early elementary and the product in junior and senior high
- Focus is on reaching the right answer and "getting the grade" instead of engaging in the process of inquiry.
- Focus is on memorizing, not thinking.
- Thinking outside of the box is discouraged by teachers & students are not encouraged to think for themselves
- Creativity is less developed as students have fewer opportunities to take courses in the Arts

### *Problem Solving as a Life Skill*

- Parents and teachers are too often expected to solve problems for students
- "Students are provided with opportunities to become effective problem solvers within the classroom, but not always expected to put those skills in practice when it comes to thinking and acting critically in their own lives.

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*Children in schools are not critical thinkers. They, in general, want teachers and other adults to give them answers and solve all of their problems- from social to academic.*

*Critical thinking and problem solving opportunities are often suggested in the curriculum documents, but there is often not enough time because we are so focused on trying to meet all outcomes. Teachers need more real life example.*

*I was not given the opportunity to think critically until University. This is something that should start early, and develop*

*... more work to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently is paramount to preparing our children for life after graduation.*

*Many teachers themselves do not think critically*

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They are often not held responsible in any real way for inappropriate behaviours, not learning to solve real life problems.”

- Students tend to be reluctant to take risks - “... so many students beginning in Primary & right on up, are not expected to solve problems on their own in real life. This deters them from taking chances in class as well. So many students wait to be told what to do rather than try to figure it out on their own first. Some seem to be afraid to make a mistake.”

## Students are not learning the skills they need for life (also see Transitions)

This theme captured comments from two different streams: life skills and real life as a context for learning. In the first instance, comments centered on the types of skills respondents felt all young adults needed as they went out world after high school. These include,

- Telling time on an clock
- Counting (e.g. change)
- Multiplication
- Cursive writing
- Spelling
- Paying Bills
- Completing tax forms
- Financial planning
- Healthy Living
- Cooking and Nutrition
- Social-emotional Skills (e.g. resiliency)
- Stronger connections to the community

In the second instance comments spoke to the need for students to be able to experience real life situations, not just to hear about them at an assembly or in class. Many people who wrote about this topic discussed the relevance of the high school math curriculum and suggested that it was disconnected from real world applications except when a student wants to specialize in math at the post-secondary level.

There are strong connections between this theme and comments about high school options and students' readiness for work and post-secondary learning. Many students and parents want more experiential or "hands on" learning opportunities for students – sometimes this reflects the need to give students different options in high-school (e.g. skilled trades), but also to allow all students to gain a more well-rounded experience ... to be ready to work, to know what to do day-to-day in College or University, to be able to solve every day problems etc.

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*It is great that we are offered things that we need to graduate high school, but we aren't taught some things that are actually valuable in life.*

*Still too much emphasis on what's in the textbook and not enough on experiential learning.*

*Curriculum, especially at the secondary level, needs to be more practical.*

*We need more co-ops, career development courses, and career exploration.*

*The focus on the academics can turn some students off school. There is a place for more practical skills.*

*No one is ever prepared to go out into the world and make a good go for themselves because we have not taught them to deal with real life situations.*

*High school students are given work relevant to the subjects but I am not sure the subjects are relevant to the available work force.*

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When students do not experience the curriculum as relevant they also begin lost interest and are less engaged. Students want to learn “useful life-long knowledge” and to apply skills in different situations. They want experiences that are practical and less theoretical, especially in mathematics but also in Language Arts (e.g. Shakespeare).

## Overall Quality of the Curriculum

The curriculum is being changed too often in subjects such as math. It is becoming dated in other areas.

There are too many outcomes which forces teachers to “rush” through key areas in a shallow versus deep way – if students do not meet the outcomes there is rarely time to return for additional help.

- Many of the comments about the quality of the math curriculum also noted concerns about the high number of outcomes; however, there is optimism that the new curriculum will be a big improvement in this area.
- This is a very complex issue - the theme of “too many outcomes” is often also mentioned in comments about,
  - a. there being too many courses overall;
  - b. students not having enough time to learn what they need to before the class moves onto another topic; and,
  - c. the range of needs that students bring to learning (not all students learn the same way or at the same pace)

The curriculum is not structured properly to support learning. The main emphasis of this section was learning in Grades Primary to 2 or 3. There were 2 lines of thinking here, with the first representing the majority of comments.

- The curriculum is crowded by too many different subject areas in early elementary schools – P to 3 should focus on literacy and math and other subjects such as social studies and science should be introduced in grade 4 after a strong foundation is established. Issues of students struggling with core skills in junior and senior high could be solved if the “problems” of reading, writing and mathematics were addressed in the early elementary years (preventative).

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*I think our time in the lower grades P-2 would be more effective if we had a basic language and math curriculum, and waited to introduce the other core subjects formally at grade 3.*

*In many cases the curriculum does not address the developmental stages of the children, especially now since the entrance age has been lowered ...*

*In some cases, there is pressure to get through outcomes prior to a student fully grasping the concepts.*

*Too often it seems that whatever society thinks children should know gets expected to teach it to them in school.*

*... the current outcomes require an enormous amount of work to be completed in a limited amount of time. As a result, outcomes are not covered, teachers are stressed and student anxiety levels have increased!*

*Curriculum is very dated and does not reflect our current world ... Problem solving and critical thinking skills need to be drastically improved.*

*I think there is a bit of a miss match between what the province thinks are the right courses and what students think are the right courses.*

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- There is too much emphasis on mathematics and literacy in early elementary grades to the detriment of other cross-curricular skills such as problem solving and creativity as well as developing a foundation for healthy living (physical education, connecting with the community)

The curriculum is not developmentally appropriate

- outcomes are too advanced in Grade Primary - 3 classes
- assumptions are made about all students being able to learn at an age and grade level instead of where they are at individually
- Grade Primary outcomes have not been adjusted to address needs of 4 year olds

Respondents disagree on whether the curriculum is focused on the “right things” – there are at least three ideas about restructuring the curriculum,

- a. It needs to focus more on the basics (Mathematics and Language Arts)
- b. It should focus on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills such as critical thinking and problem solving
- c. It should focus on the Arts, Physical Education, technology



## “It all depends on the teacher” – Curriculum Implementation (also see Secondary Rigor)

Implementation of the curriculum is inconsistent among classes and schools and therefore, many students are not:

- gaining a strong foundation in elementary school, or
- learning to master subject areas in high schools

Teachers are not receiving the support they need to implement the curriculum effectively (see also Teaching and Learning)

The crowded curriculum makes it difficult for students and teachers to explore ideas in depth or to provide time for practice of basic skills – everyone is accommodating the idea that a certain amount of teaching and learning is “good enough” since there is too little time to set higher expectations.

Many comments under this theme reflect a strong sense that students are losing out on important academic and life experiences because the curriculum (and its implementation) are not as rigorous as they could be. For some this idea is especially relevant to students who would benefit from enrichment in their learning (gifted students), but many comments overall indicate that all students in general would benefit from fewer accommodations in their learning.

There is a lack of rigor in the way the curriculum is taught and outcomes are assessed:

- as more students advance without a strong foundation of basic skills the bar is being set lower for learning
- students and teachers both understand that students will advance to the next grade with their peers
- teachers are focused on students struggling most and tend to simplify lessons versus challenging all students

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*There is little standard in this province – each school does as each school wants.*

*It is very hard to judge as the main problem is inconsistency.*

*Every year the curriculum becomes easier and more vague.*

*I think material covered should be deeper and there should be more of it. Students need to earn a sense of accomplishment.*

*There is an attitude of “good enough” that is pervasive and challenging to overcome when time and outcomes leave us little time to go back and re-assess to improve quality when we need to move on the next section.*

*Education is becoming all about feeling good. If we make the curriculum easier everyone will be happy and have high marks, but not be educated.*

*I feel that school is not challenging students.*

*I was bored all throughout my schooling years because the curriculum was too easy.*

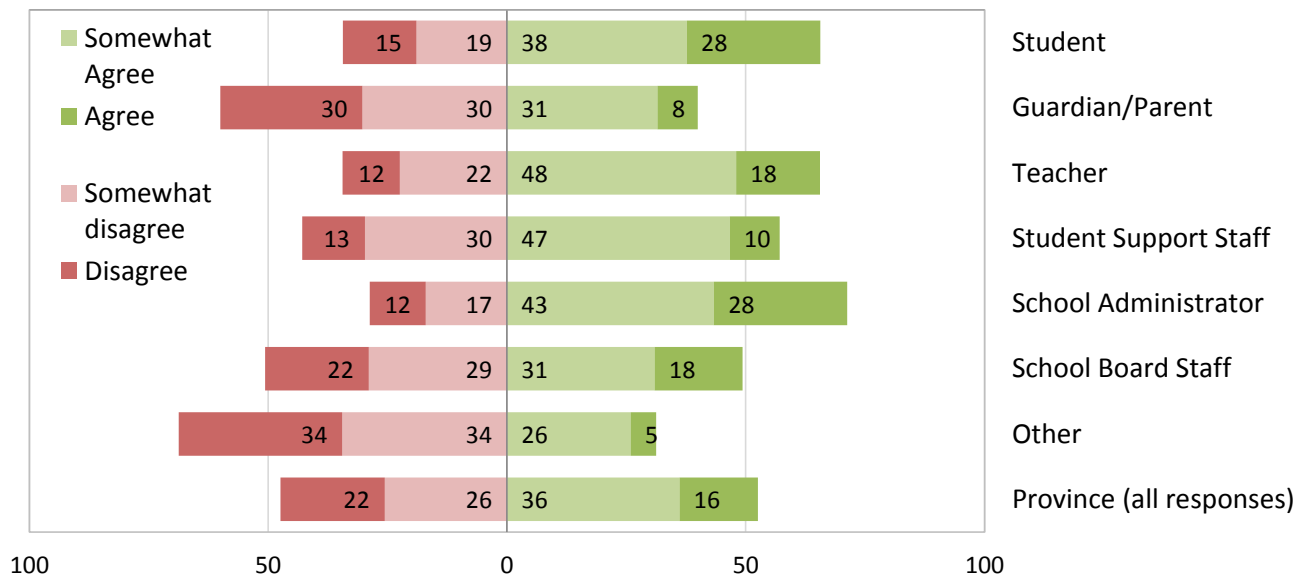
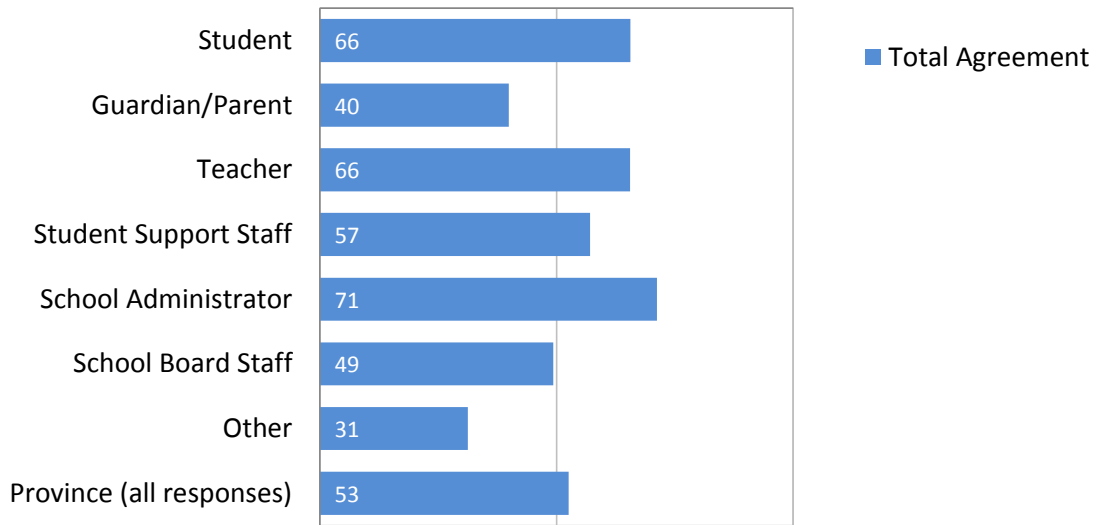
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## Other Themes

Technology and Learning	104
We need to get back to basics	71
Quality of new math curriculum	71
Student achievement in Language Arts	66
Arts – courses and quality of curriculum	50
More resources needed to implement curriculum effectively	44
French immersion – quality of curriculum	41
Social-emotional skills need to be part of the curriculum	40
Students learning to be effective problem solvers	39
Not enough time to teach/learn everything	30
Need to return to phonics as an early literacy strategy	29
Social studies – curriculum and courses	22
Create more volunteer opportunities in the curriculum	22
Career and Life Management Curriculum	21
Science – courses and curriculum	21
Bias in curriculum	20
Physical education – curriculum and courses	19
Second languages – courses and curriculum	19
Need to bring back reading recovery	16
Computer Science – courses and curriculum	15
Teachers are teaching to the test	12
Technology	9
History – need for improved curriculum and foundation	8
Healthy Living Curriculum	5
Environment – courses and curriculum	5
Need to teach digital citizenship	4
Quality of African Canadian Studies curriculum	2

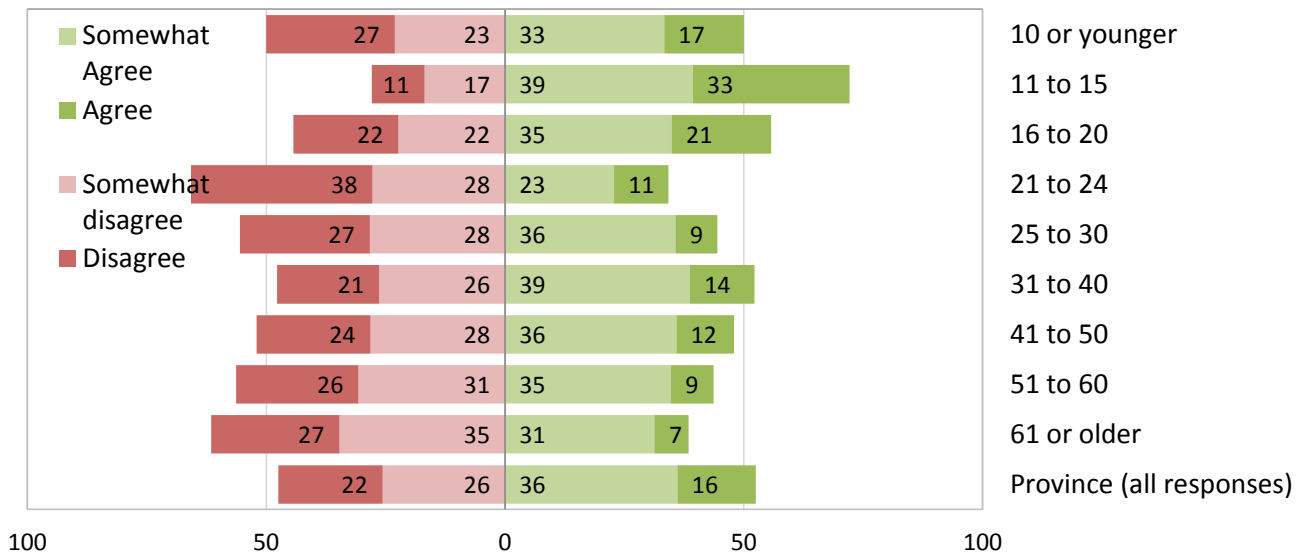
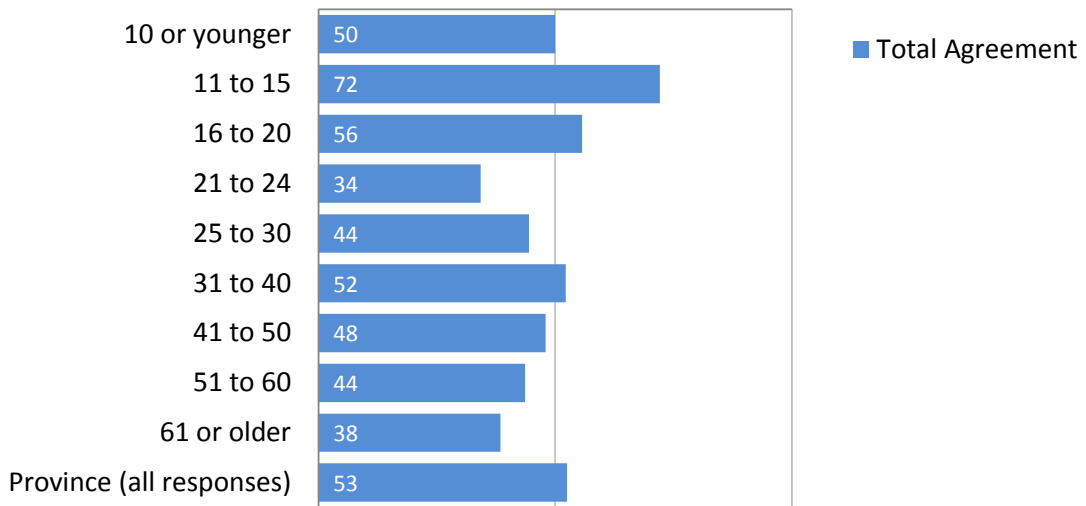
**15 Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures. (Trans)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	814	15	19	38	28	<b>66</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2569	30	30	31	8	<b>40</b>
Teacher	3198	866	12	22	48	18	<b>66</b>
Student Support Staff	489	116	13	30	47	10	<b>57</b>
School Administrator	306	59	12	17	43	28	<b>71</b>
School Board Staff	205	53	22	29	31	18	<b>49</b>
Other	2942	828	34	34	26	5	<b>31</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>



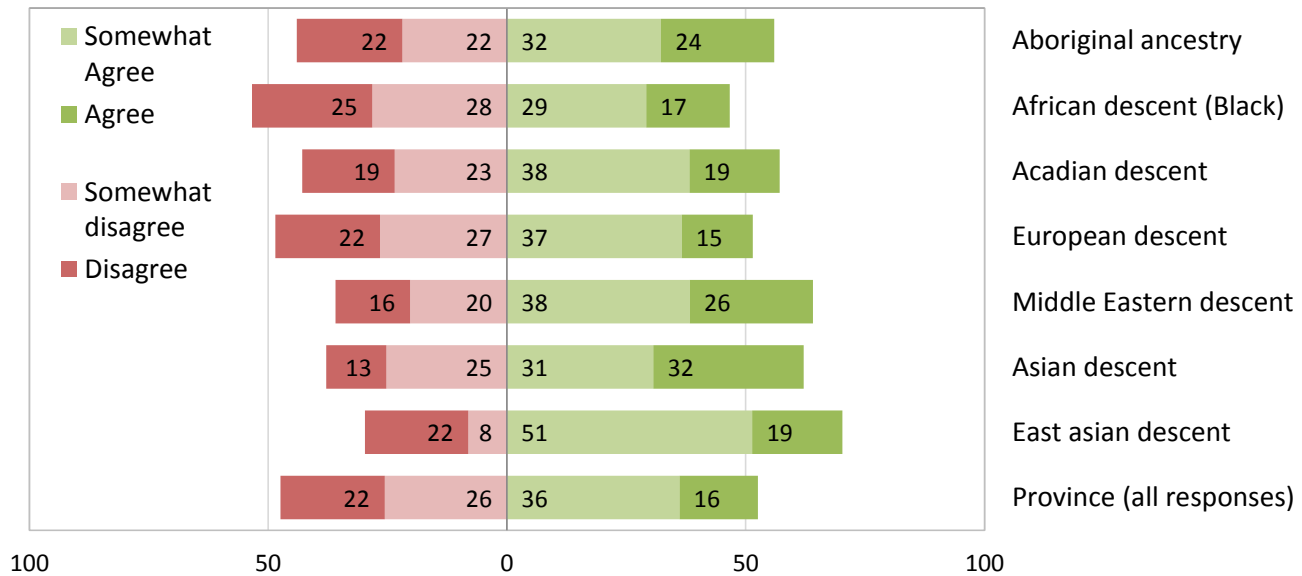
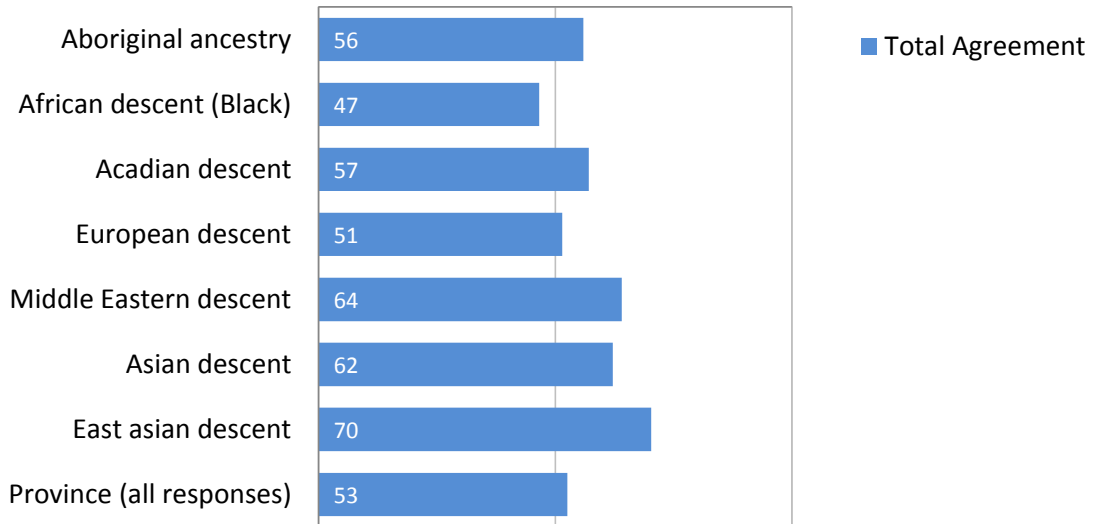
**15 Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures. (Trans)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	169	27	23	33	17	<b>50</b>
11 to 15	2862	560	11	17	39	33	<b>72</b>
16 to 20	2549	301	22	22	35	21	<b>56</b>
21 to 24	319	56	38	28	23	11	<b>34</b>
25 to 30	1018	301	27	28	36	9	<b>44</b>
31 to 40	3776	1581	21	26	39	14	<b>52</b>
41 to 50	4190	1355	24	28	36	12	<b>48</b>
51 to 60	2545	617	26	31	35	9	<b>44</b>
61 or older	1102	332	27	35	31	7	<b>38</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>



**15 Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures. (Trans)**

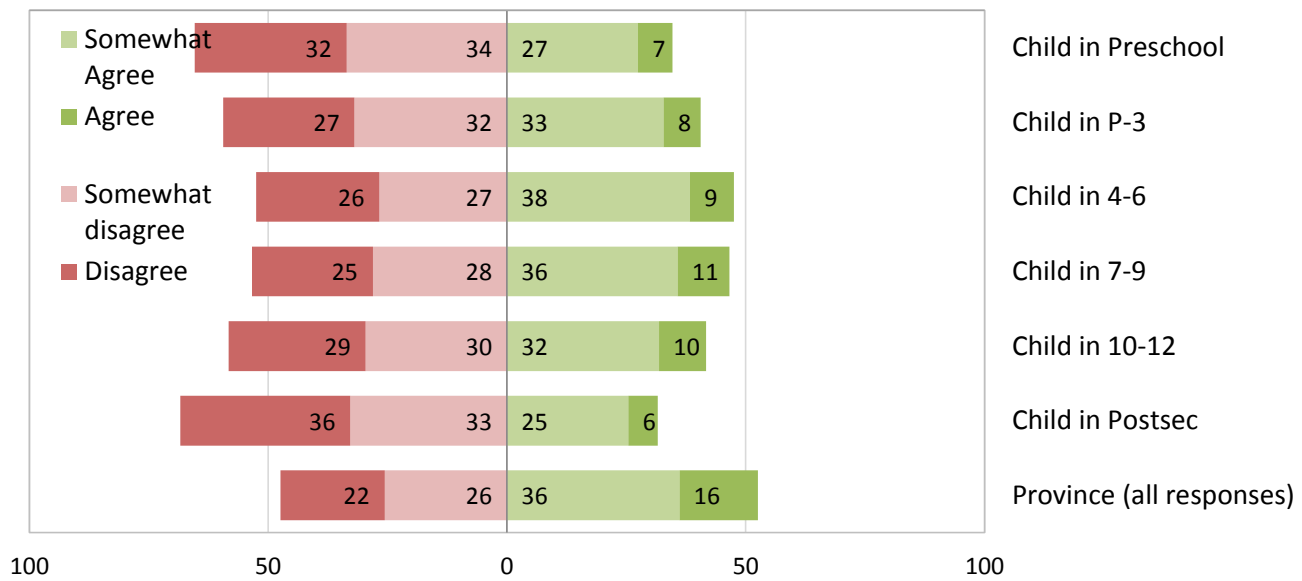
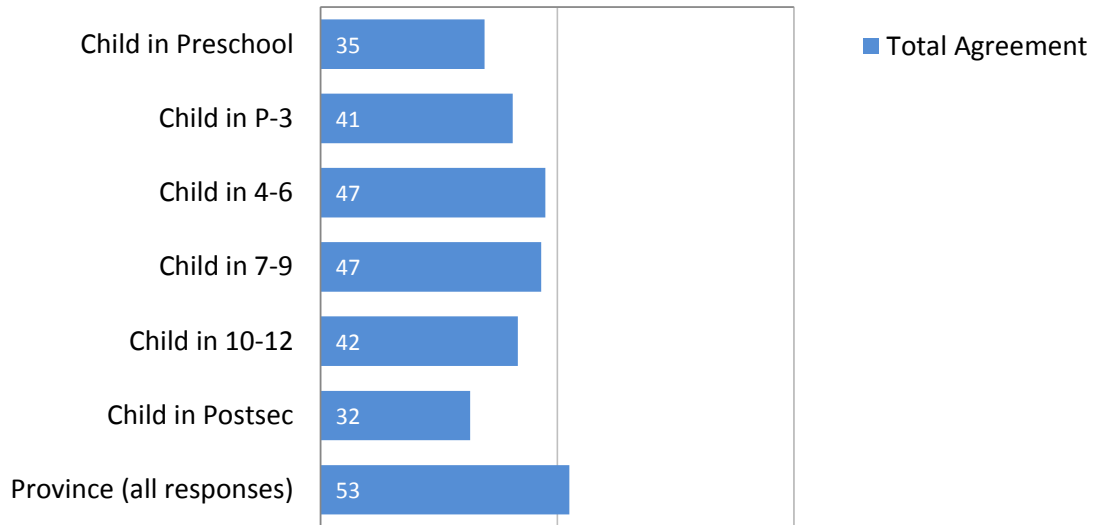
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	182	22	22	32	24	<b>56</b>
African descent (Black)	399	73	25	28	29	17	<b>47</b>
Acadian descent	2232	644	19	23	38	19	<b>57</b>
European descent	12054	3433	22	27	37	15	<b>51</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	42	16	20	38	26	<b>64</b>
Asian descent	168	57	13	25	31	32	<b>62</b>
East asian descent	54	17	22	8	51	19	<b>70</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>



**15 Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures. (Trans)**

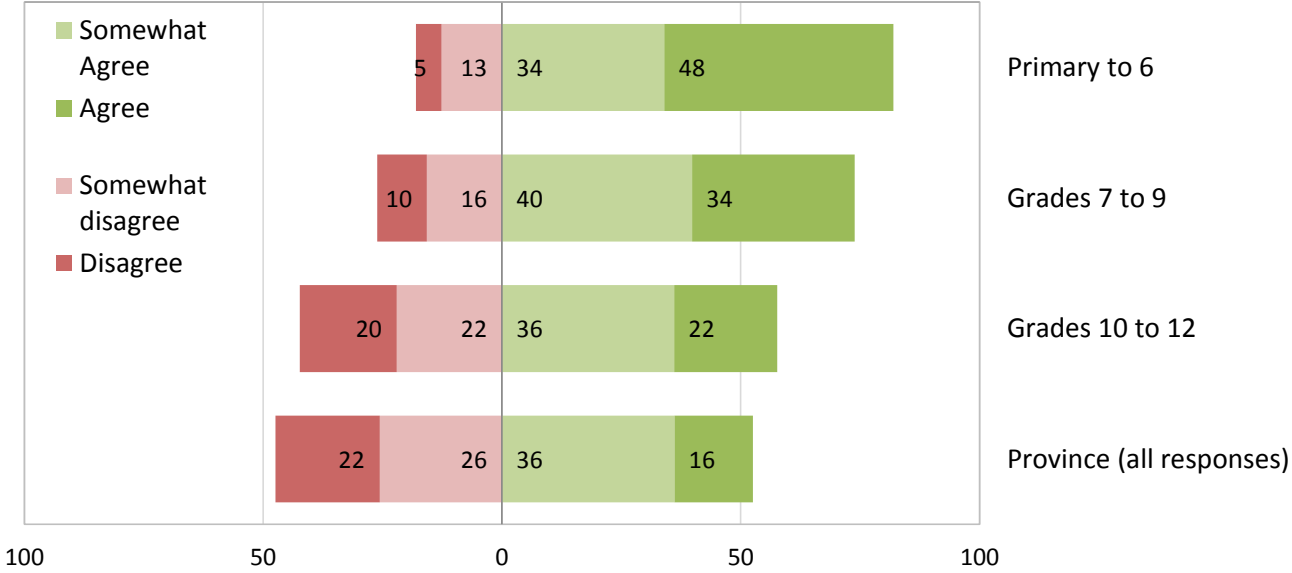
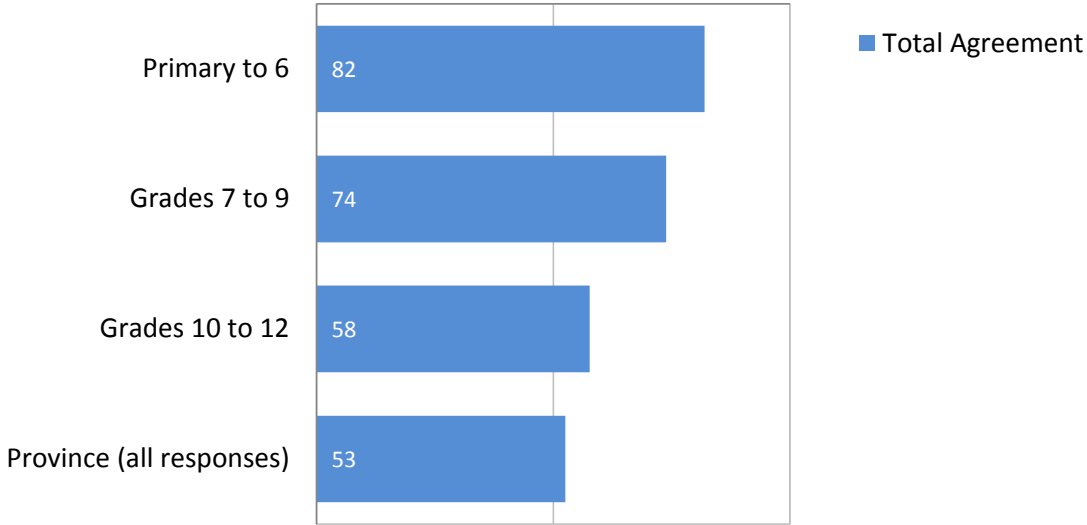
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	390	32	34	27	7	<b>35</b>
Child in P-3	2263	1292	27	32	33	8	<b>41</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	954	26	27	38	9	<b>47</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	536	25	28	36	11	<b>47</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	208	29	30	32	10	<b>42</b>
Child in Postsec	365	42	36	33	25	6	<b>32</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



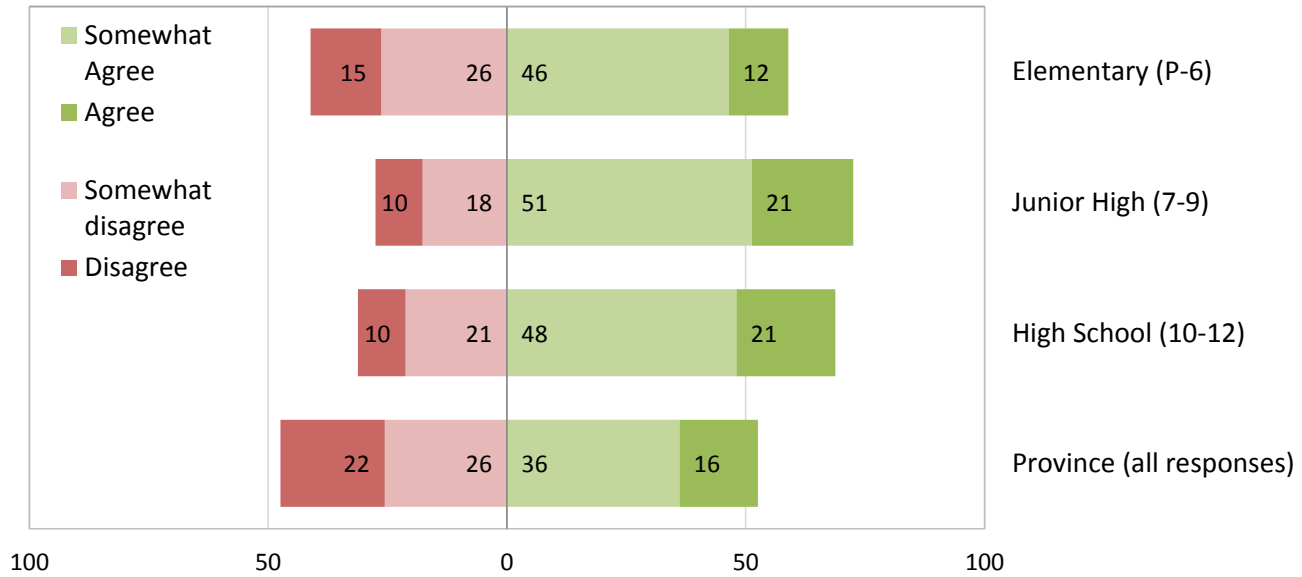
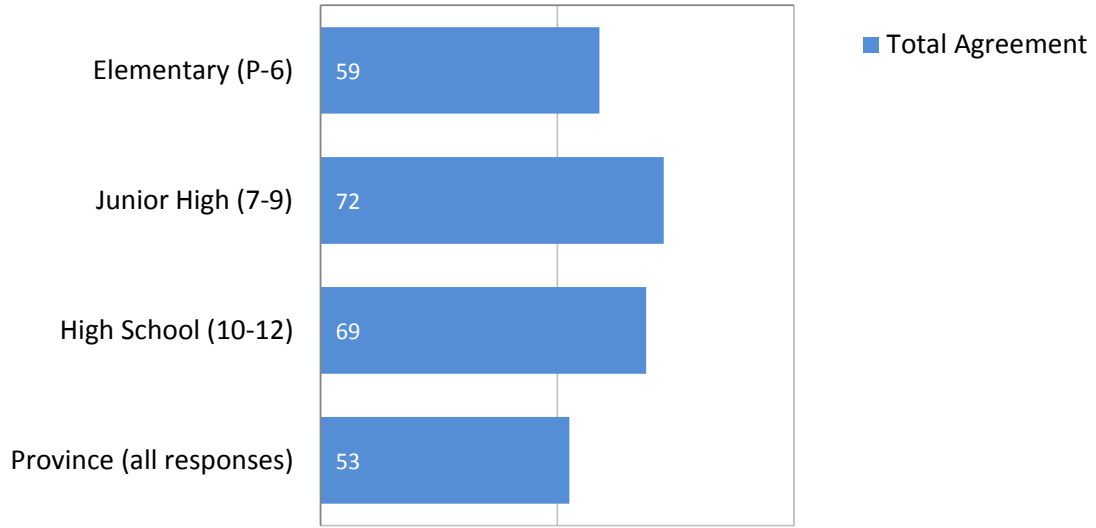
**15 Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures. (Trans)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	104	5	13	34	48	<b>82</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	411	10	16	40	34	<b>74</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	298	20	22	36	22	<b>58</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>



**15 Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures. (Trans)**

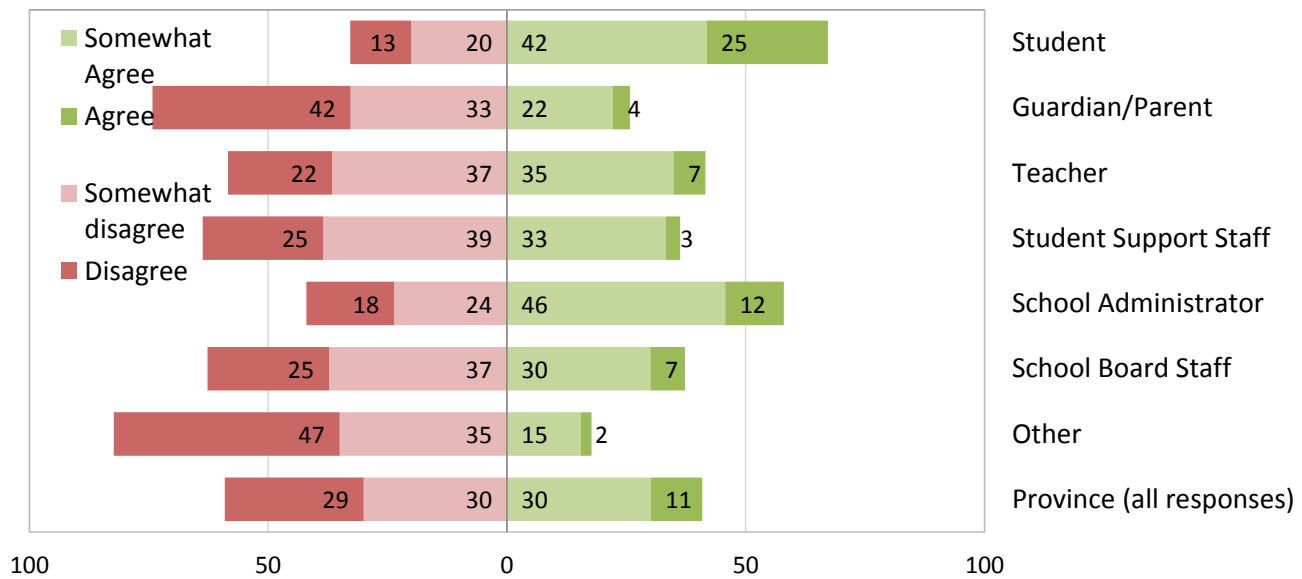
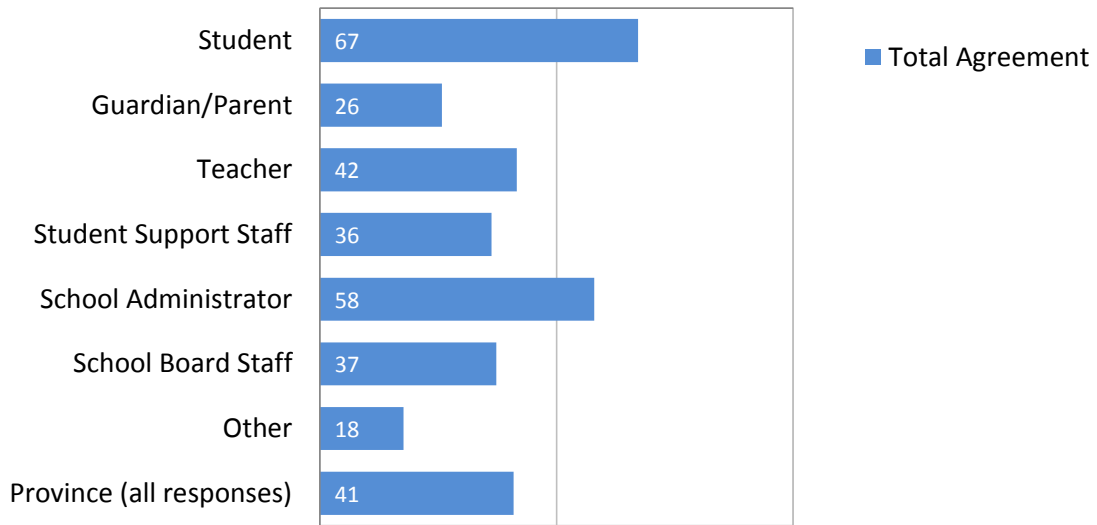
Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	644	15	26	46	12	<b>59</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	123	10	18	51	21	<b>72</b>
High School (10-12)	911	97	10	21	48	21	<b>69</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5305</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>





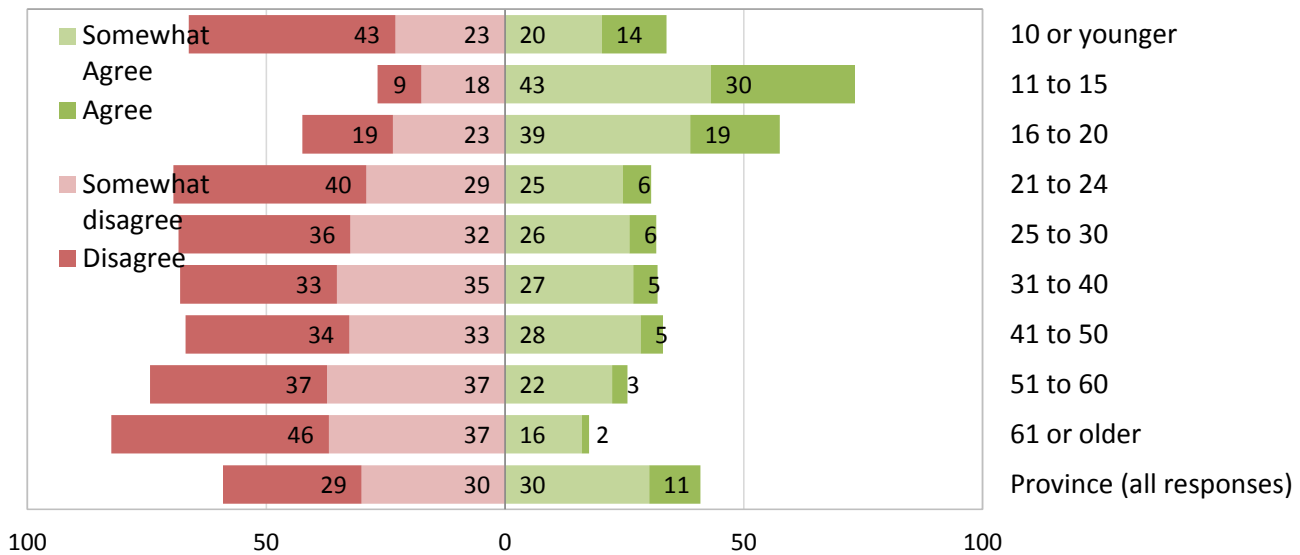
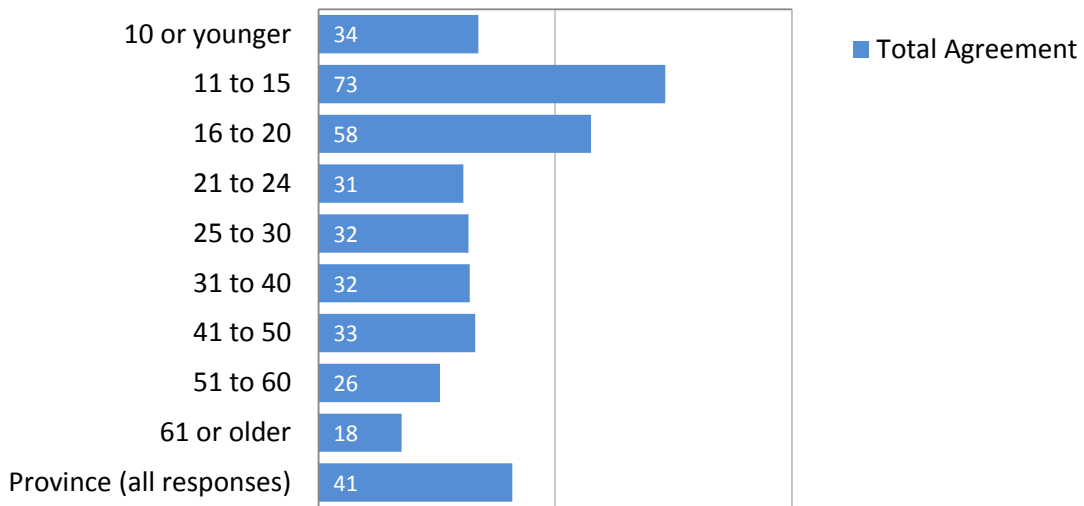
16 Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1286	13	20	42	25	<b>67</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2714	42	33	22	4	<b>26</b>
Teacher	3198	887	22	37	35	7	<b>42</b>
Student Support Staff	489	128	25	39	33	3	<b>36</b>
School Administrator	306	61	18	24	46	12	<b>58</b>
School Board Staff	205	52	25	37	30	7	<b>37</b>
Other	2942	786	47	35	15	2	<b>18</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5914</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>



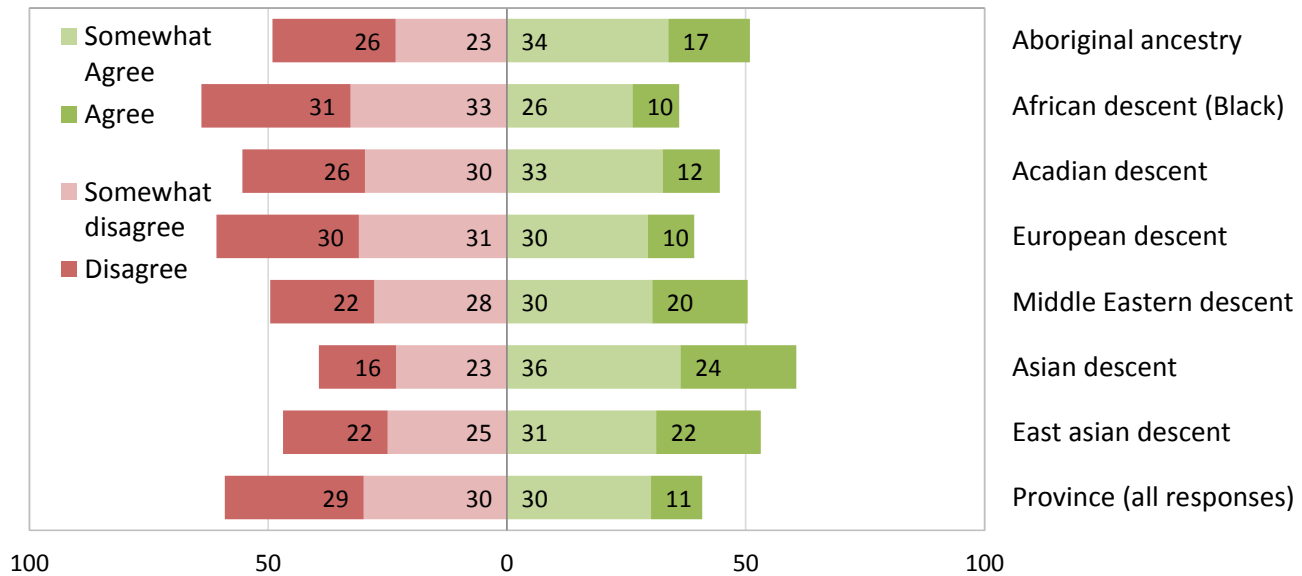
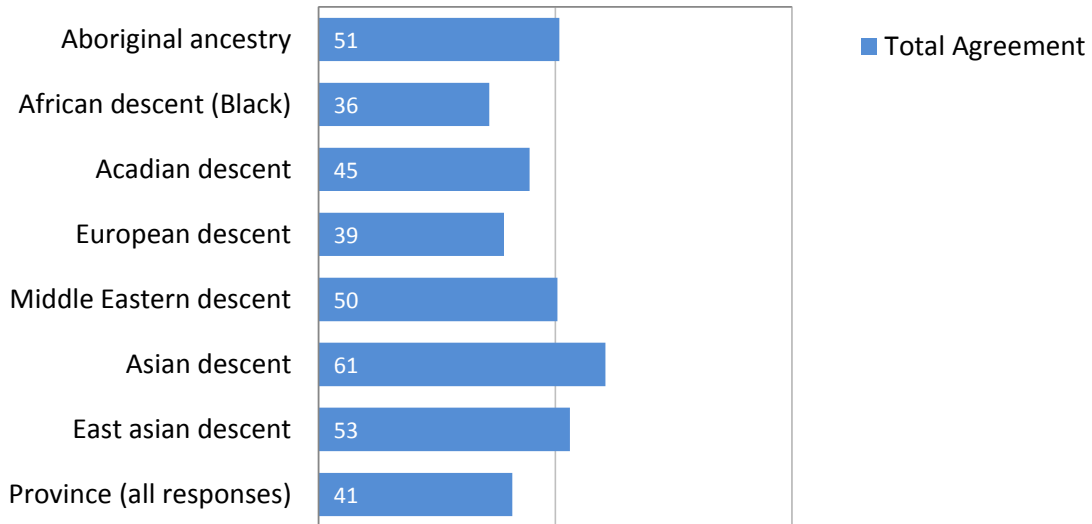
16 Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	177	43	23	20	14	<b>34</b>
11 to 15	2862	871	9	18	43	30	<b>73</b>
16 to 20	2549	464	19	23	39	19	<b>58</b>
21 to 24	319	64	40	29	25	6	<b>31</b>
25 to 30	1018	320	36	32	26	6	<b>32</b>
31 to 40	3776	1547	33	35	27	5	<b>32</b>
41 to 50	4190	1492	34	33	28	5	<b>33</b>
51 to 60	2545	634	37	37	22	3	<b>26</b>
61 or older	1102	305	46	37	16	2	<b>18</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5914</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>



16 Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

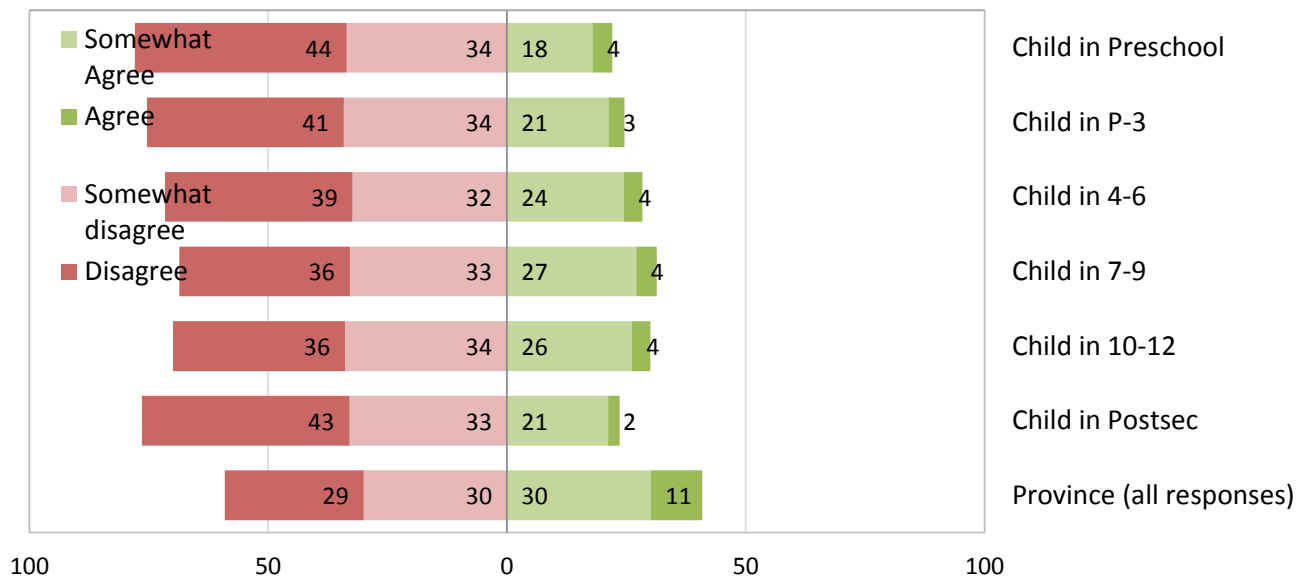
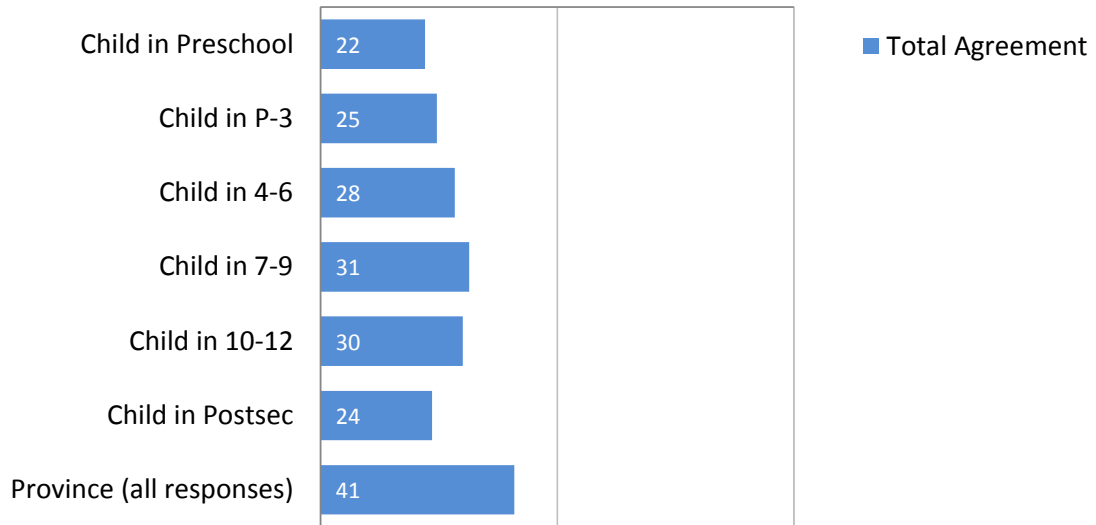
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	228	26	23	34	17	<b>51</b>
African descent (Black)	399	91	31	33	26	10	<b>36</b>
Acadian descent	2232	696	26	30	33	12	<b>45</b>
European descent	12054	3803	30	31	30	10	<b>39</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	55	22	28	30	20	<b>50</b>
Asian descent	168	69	16	23	36	24	<b>61</b>
East asian descent	54	22	22	25	31	22	<b>53</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5914</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>



**16 Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)**

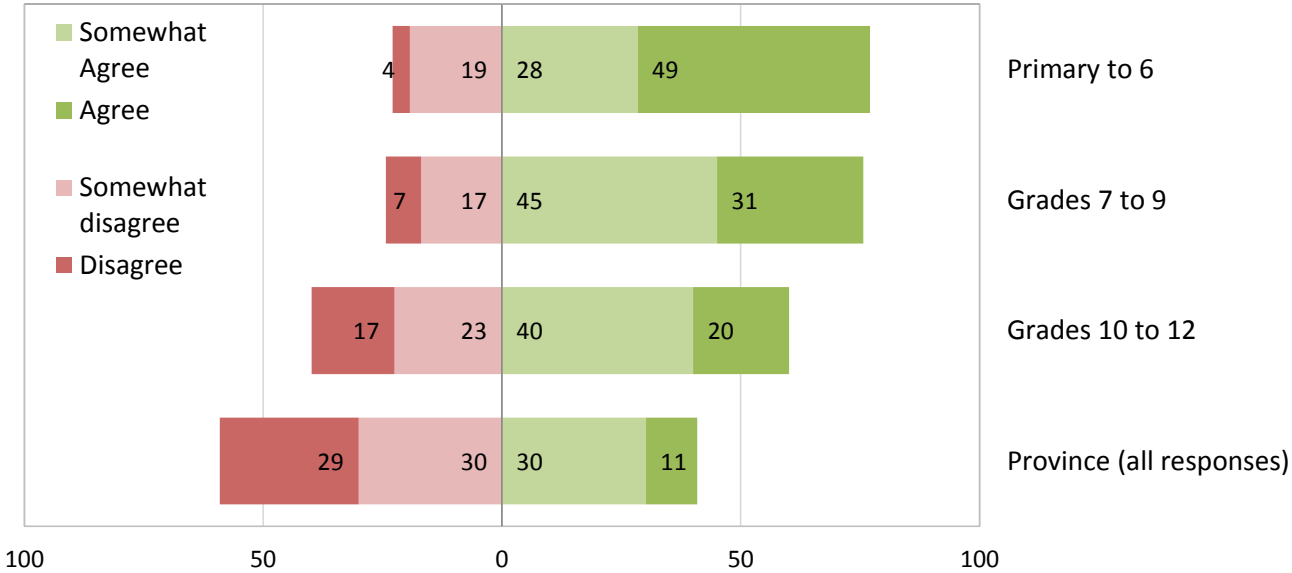
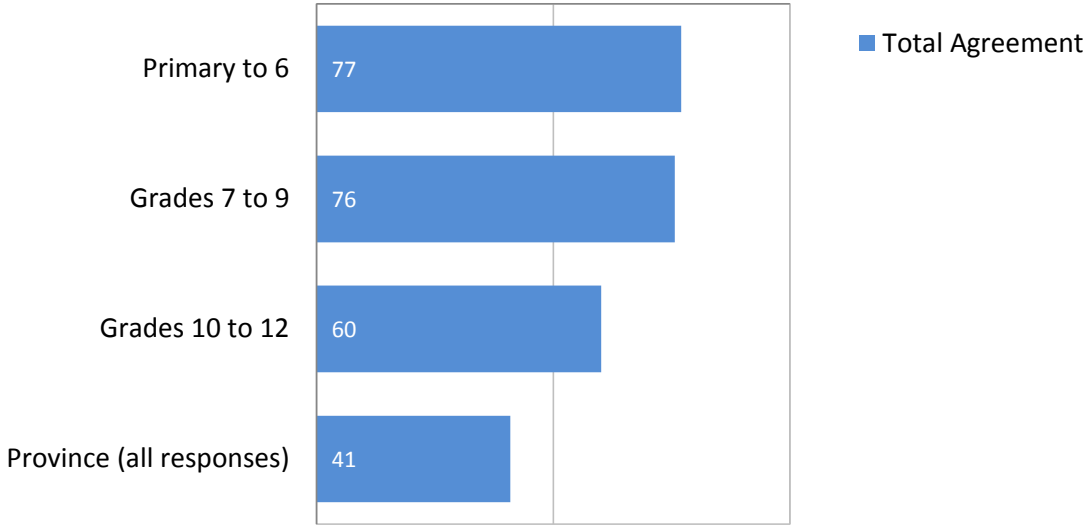
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	369	44	34	18	4	<b>22</b>
Child in P-3	2263	1242	41	34	21	3	<b>25</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	981	39	32	24	4	<b>28</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	694	36	33	27	4	<b>31</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	388	36	34	26	4	<b>30</b>
Child in Postsec	365	68	43	33	21	2	<b>24</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5914</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



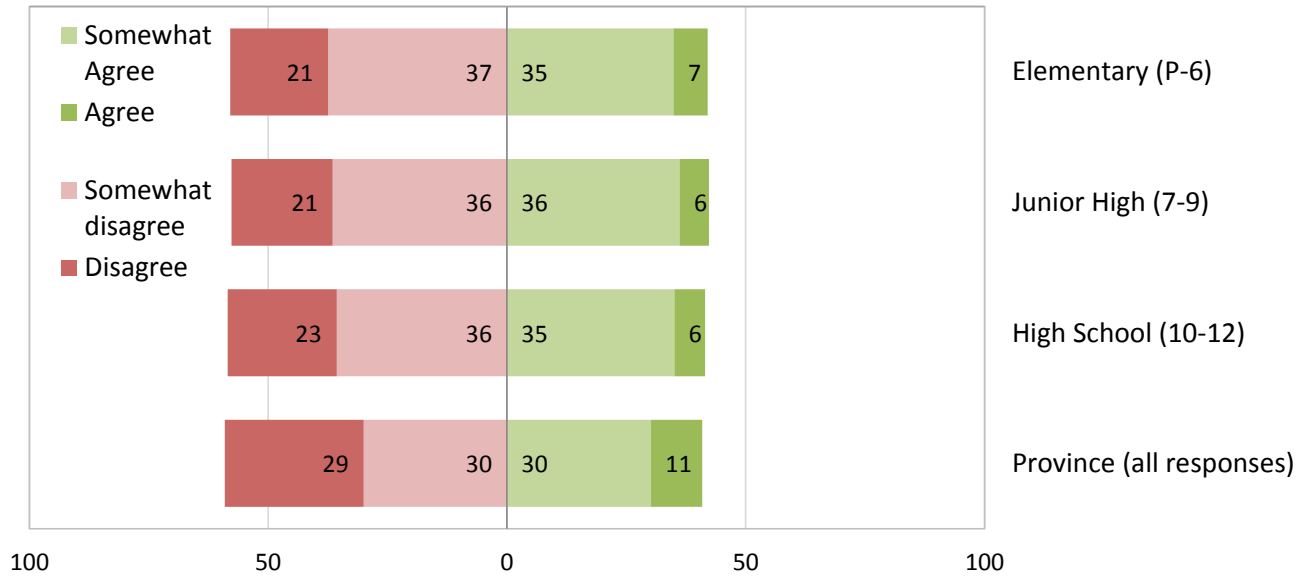
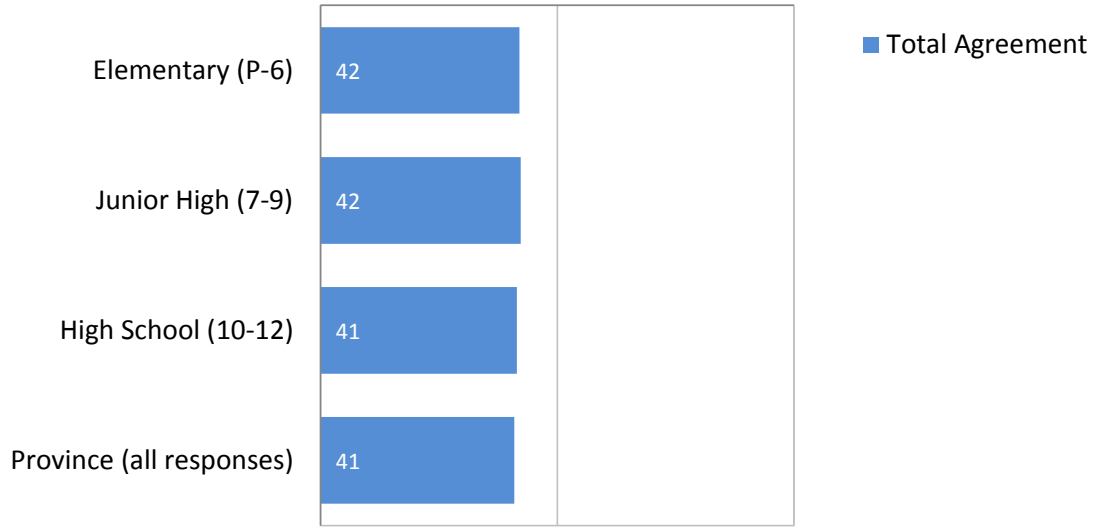
16 Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	145	4	19	28	49	<b>77</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	675	7	17	45	31	<b>76</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	465	17	23	40	20	<b>60</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5914</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>



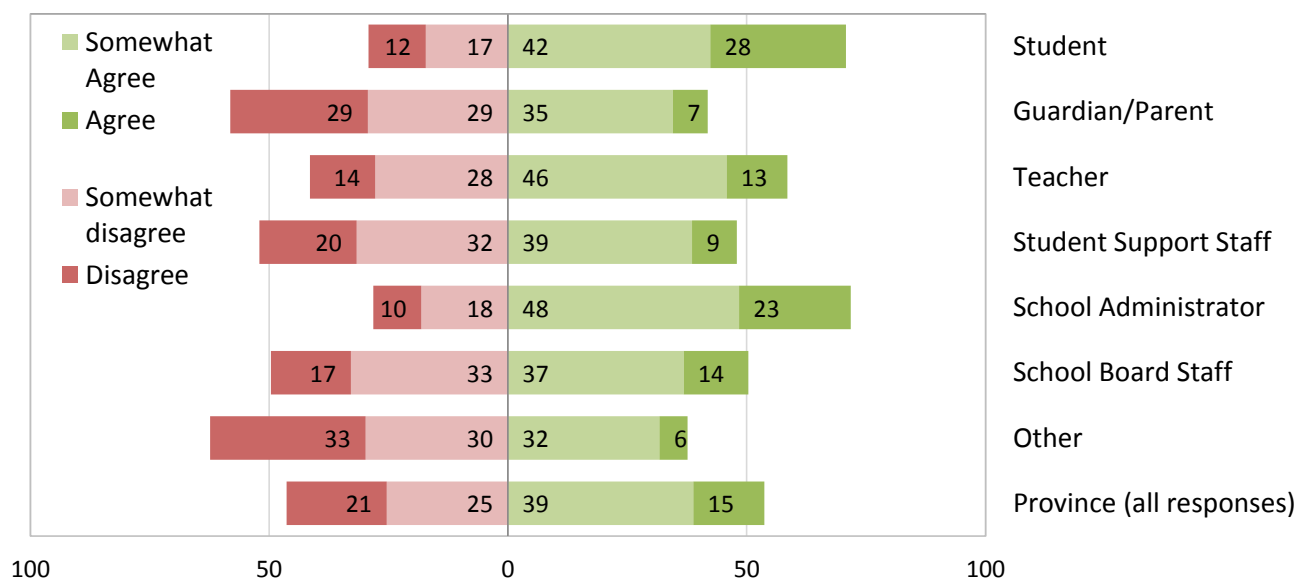
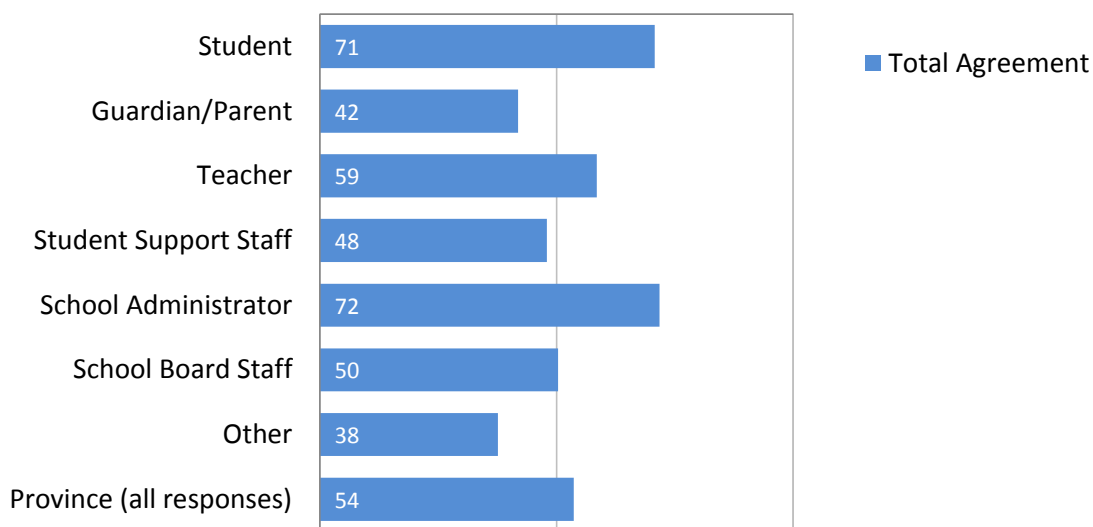
16 Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	637	21	37	35	7	<b>42</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	142	21	36	36	6	<b>42</b>
High School (10-12)	911	106	23	36	35	6	<b>41</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5914</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>



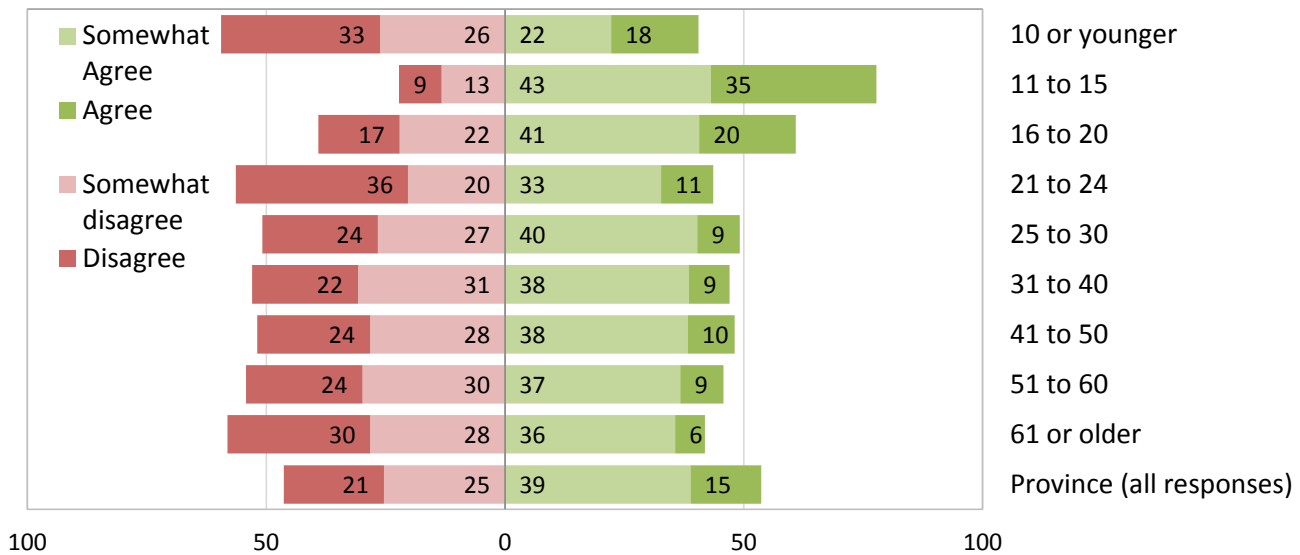
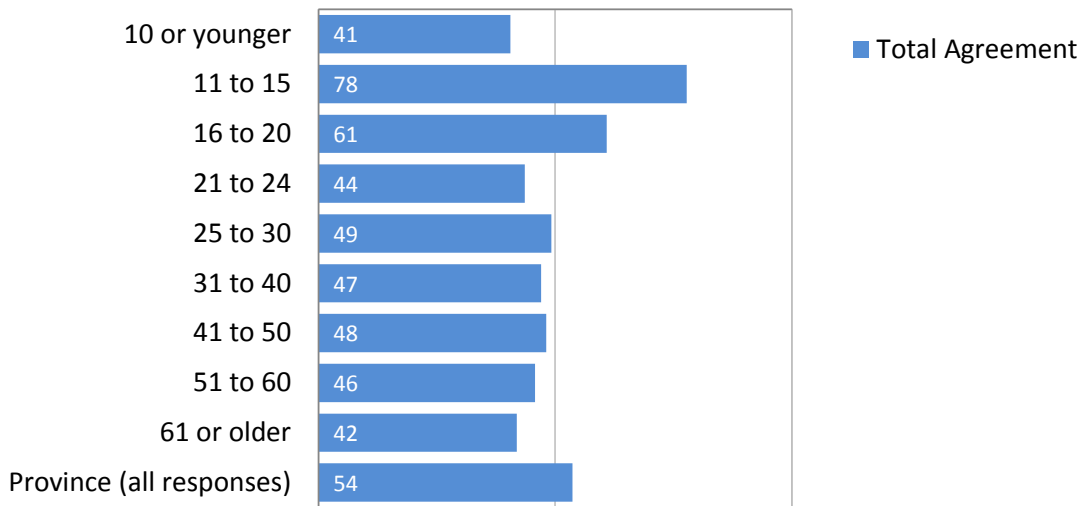
17 Students who want to attend college or university[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1165	12	17	42	28	<b>71</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2482	29	29	35	7	<b>42</b>
Teacher	3198	812	14	28	46	13	<b>59</b>
Student Support Staff	489	126	20	32	39	9	<b>48</b>
School Administrator	306	58	10	18	48	23	<b>72</b>
School Board Staff	205	50	17	33	37	14	<b>50</b>
Other	2942	707	33	30	32	6	<b>38</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>



17 Students who want to attend college or university[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

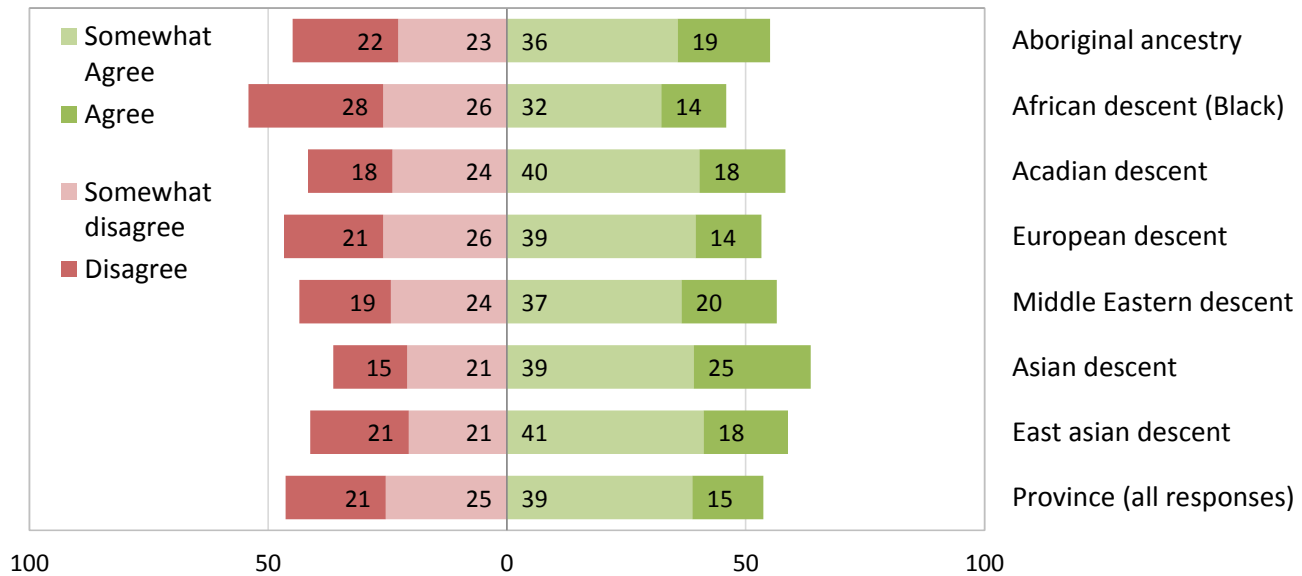
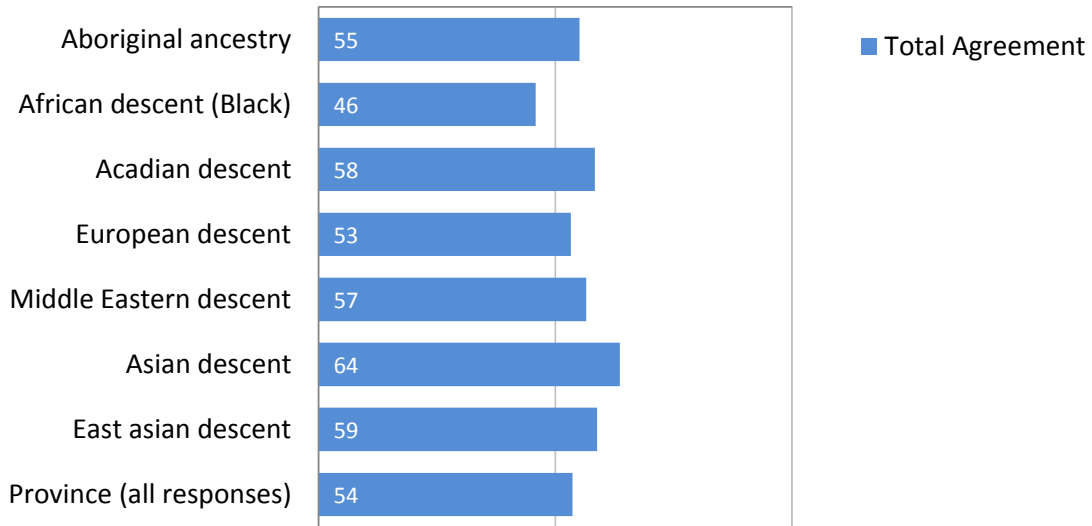
Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	172	33	26	22	18	<b>41</b>
11 to 15	2862	831	9	13	43	35	<b>78</b>
16 to 20	2549	376	17	22	41	20	<b>61</b>
21 to 24	319	53	36	20	33	11	<b>44</b>
25 to 30	1018	290	24	27	40	9	<b>49</b>
31 to 40	3776	1485	22	31	38	9	<b>47</b>
41 to 50	4190	1317	24	28	38	10	<b>48</b>
51 to 60	2545	549	24	30	37	9	<b>46</b>
61 or older	1102	290	30	28	36	6	<b>42</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>





17 Students who want to attend college or university[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

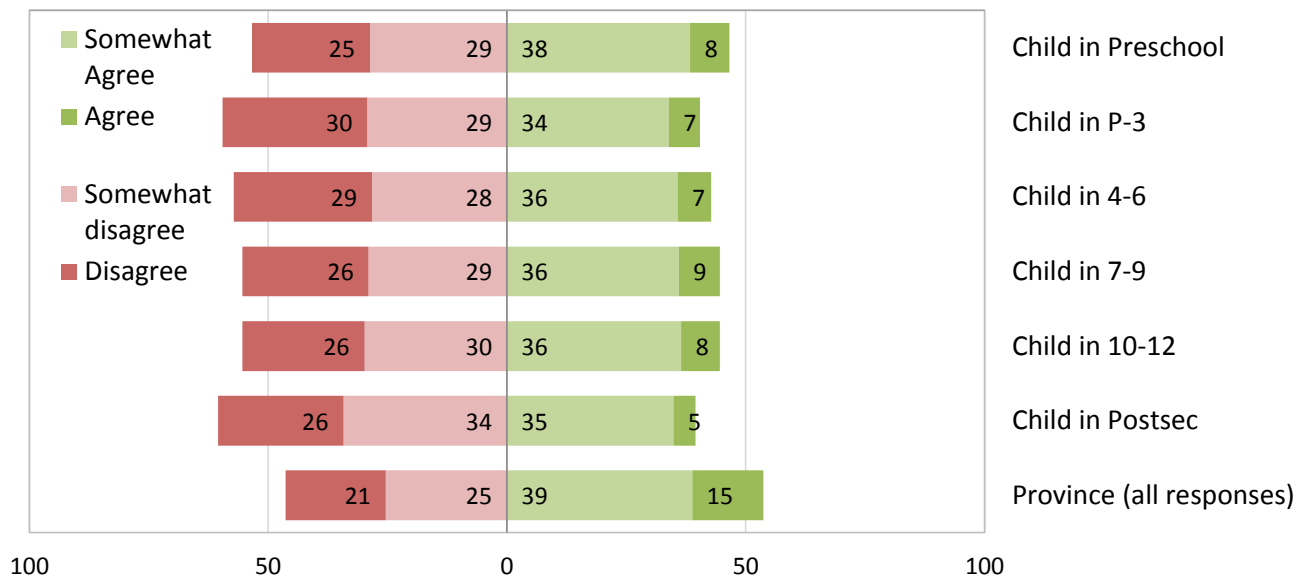
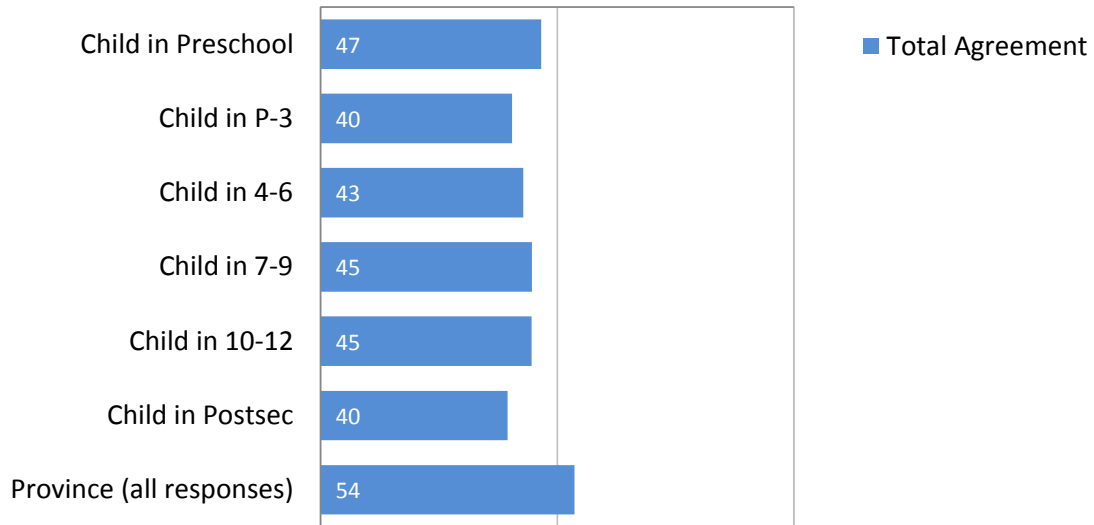
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	214	22	23	36	19	<b>55</b>
African descent (Black)	399	83	28	26	32	14	<b>46</b>
Acadian descent	2232	662	18	24	40	18	<b>58</b>
European descent	12054	3420	21	26	39	14	<b>53</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	55	19	24	37	20	<b>57</b>
Asian descent	168	58	15	21	39	25	<b>64</b>
East asian descent	54	20	21	21	41	18	<b>59</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>



17 Students who want to attend college or university[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

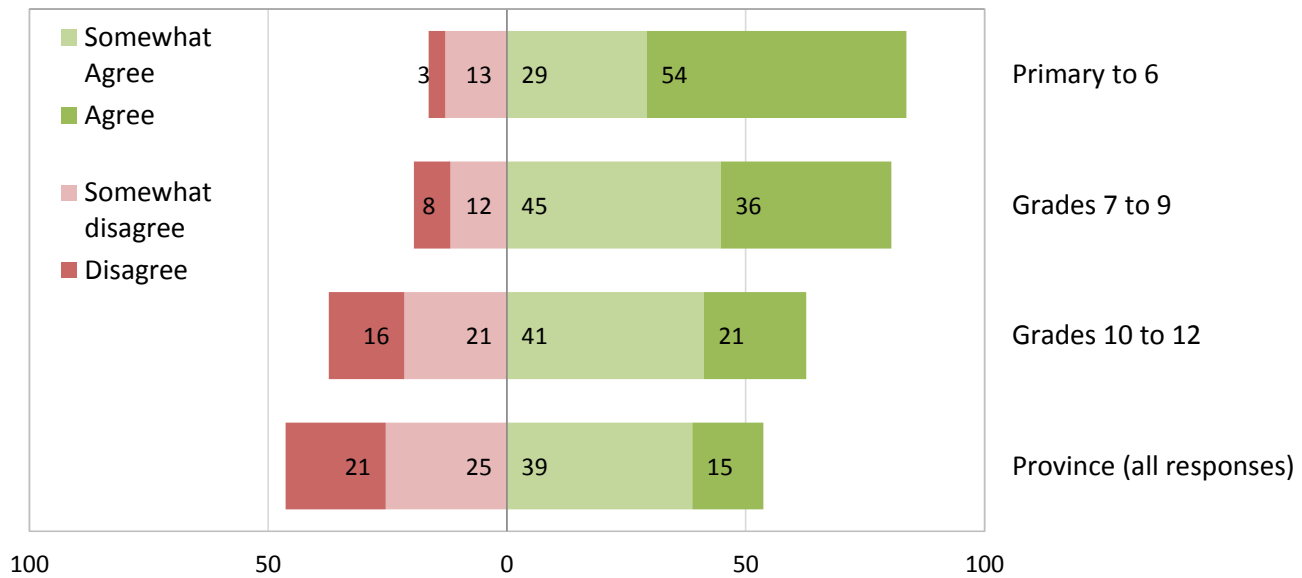
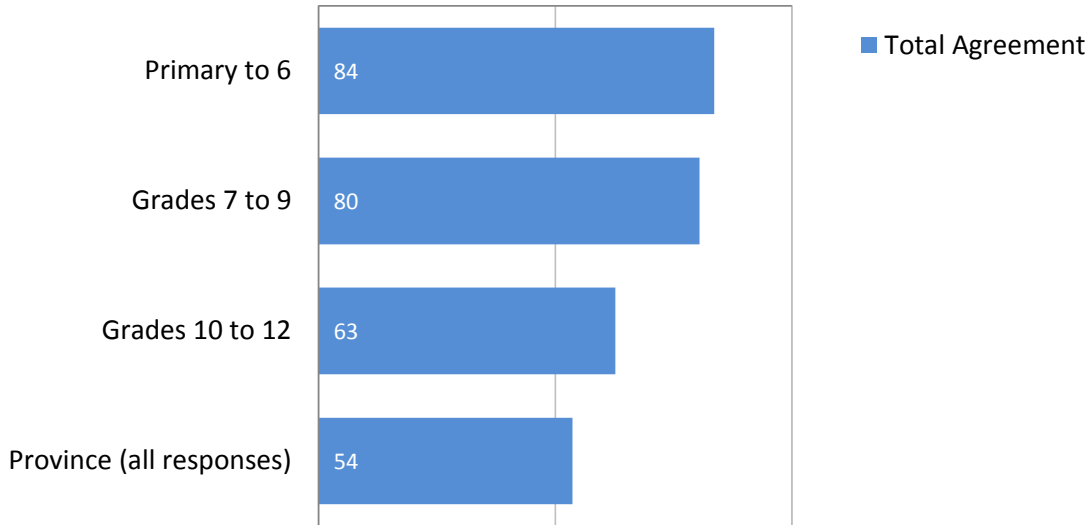
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	352	25	29	38	8	<b>47</b>
Child in P-3	2263	1207	30	29	34	7	<b>40</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	940	29	28	36	7	<b>43</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	577	26	29	36	9	<b>45</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	258	26	30	36	8	<b>45</b>
Child in Postsec	365	41	26	34	35	5	<b>40</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



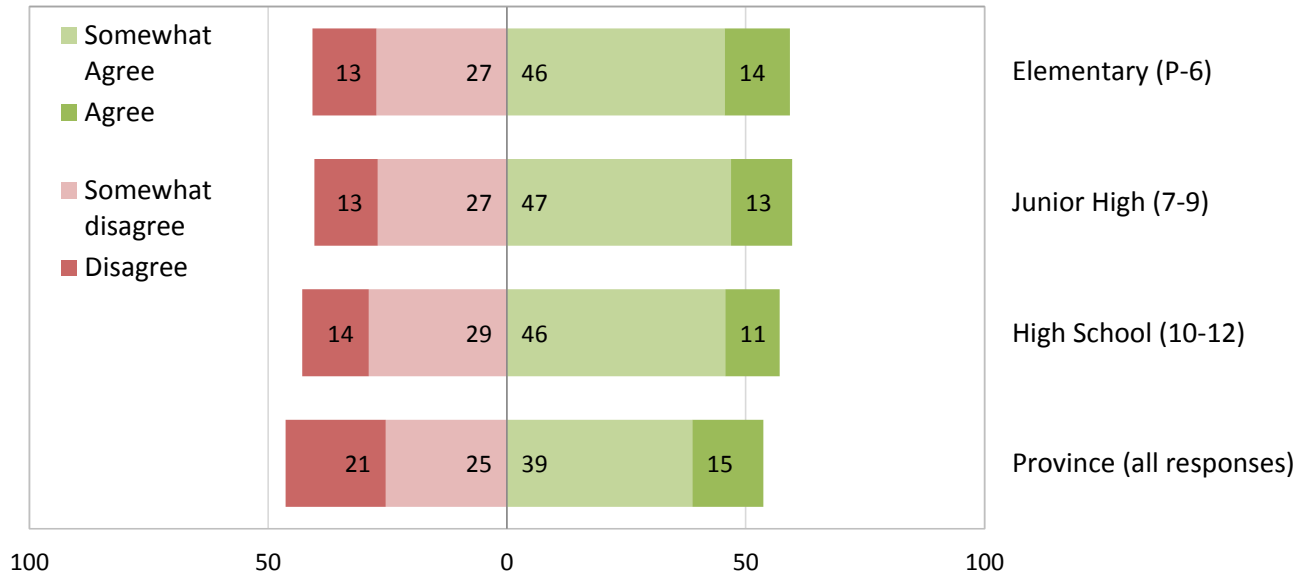
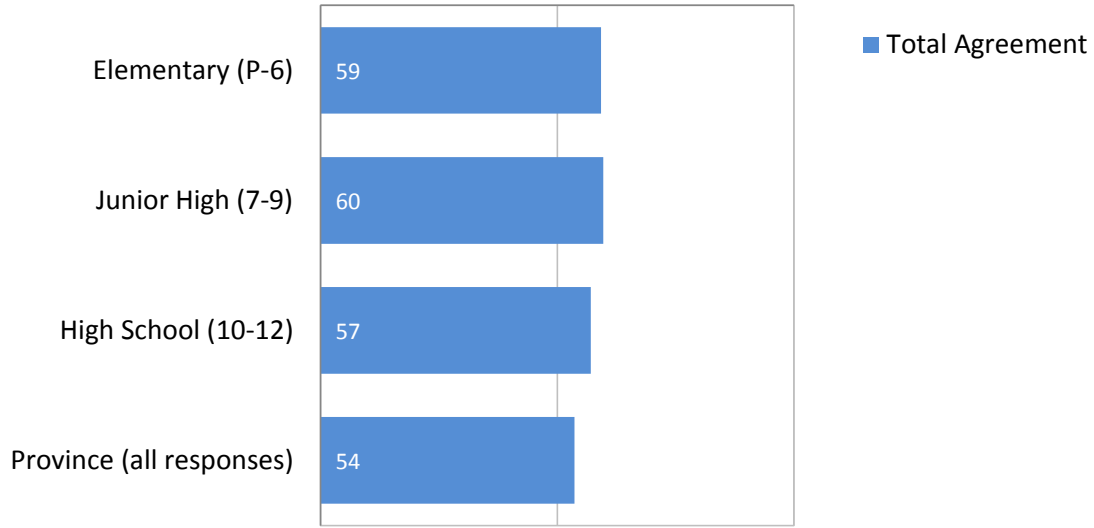
17 Students who want to attend college or university[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	138	3	13	29	54	<b>84</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	647	8	12	45	36	<b>80</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	379	16	21	41	21	<b>63</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>



17 Students who want to attend college or university[...]are well prepared to do so. (Trans)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	592	13	27	46	14	<b>59</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	124	13	27	47	13	<b>60</b>
High School (10-12)	911	93	14	29	46	11	<b>57</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>54</b>



## SECONDARY OPTIONS AND TRANSITIONS

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. High school students have the right program options available to them (for example: Co-op, Skilled Trades, Options and Opportunities).
2. Students get the support they need at school to make informed decisions about their futures.
3. Students who want to enter the workforce after they graduate from high school are well prepared to do so.
4. Students who want to attend college or university after they graduate are well prepared to do so.

### Number of Comments by Respondent Group

Parents and Guardians	1820
Teachers	984
Community Members	1016
Students	674
Student Support Staff	121
Principals	103
School Board Staff	60
Total	4778

## Key Themes and Frequencies

<b>Rigor in Secondary School Programs</b>	<b>449</b>
<b>Student Accountability</b>	<b>731</b>
<b>Guidance For the Future</b>	<b>1565</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are not getting the guidance they need to make good choices about their careers post-secondary options</li> </ul>	1377
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance Counsellors are sometimes biased in providing advice</li> </ul>	105
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with Special Needs are not getting the support they need to make successful transitions</li> </ul>	83
<b>High School Programs</b>	<b>2364</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course Options</li> </ul>	1195
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skilled trades (General)</li> </ul>	339
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-op</li> </ul>	219
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- O2</li> </ul>	205
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities in Small and Rural schools</li> </ul>	131
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IB or AP</li> </ul>	100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high school experience is too focused on preparation for University</li> </ul>	175
<b>Graduates are not ready for life after high school</b>	<b>2920</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready for College or University</li> </ul>	1277
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ready for Work</li> </ul>	596
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life Skills</li> </ul>	499
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic Academic Skills</li> </ul>	548

## WHAT WAS SAID

### High Schools need to set higher standards for learning – “*Graduating high school is MUCH too easy*”

This theme highlights the belief among some respondents that students are not reaching their potential – in this section the focus was directed at high schools and the expectations they set for students before they graduate. There is significant cross-over between this set of comments and comments about students’ readiness for University - many feel that the current secondary school curriculum is not academically rigorous compared to the learning climate students will encounter in University. The idea that high school needs to be more challenging is not universal – many respondents feel that high schools are too focused on University standards and therefore, often exclude those who do not want to follow an academic path after graduation.

Key comments about rigour in Nova Scotia’s high schools include,

- we are not aiming for excellence - the secondary school system needs to work toward higher standards
- the curriculum needs to be more demanding and include more challenging materials (i.e., “we need to ask more of our students”)
- assessment policies need to hold students accountable for high quality work and deadlines
- we need to challenge (and support) students to work outside of their comfort zones
- we are allowing students to get high marks even when they don’t put their full effort into it
- we need to let students fail if they do not meet standards
- the pace is too slow (for what students will encounter in university)
- students in Nova Scotia are falling behind their peers from other provinces in what they know and can do after graduating
- the marks students receive in Nova Scotia do not reflect how well students will do in post-secondary learning (e.g. many students with high marks struggle in university). There is a sense that many graduate feeling over-confident about their capacity because the expectations of them are too low.

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*I entered university directly after high school and wasn’t prepared for what was to come at all. It’s like getting thrown in the deep end without floaties. I struggled through, but it wasn’t easy, high school shouldn’t be easy.*

*High school has gotten a lot easier with fewer expectations.*

*... by hand holding our students and not striving to challenge them we are not preparing them for whatever future endeavours they may pursue.*

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## Schools need to (be able to) hold students accountable for their decisions

The need to hold students more accountable is a key theme across a number of questions in the survey. Of the top ten areas for improvement in the school system, for example, student accountability is number five.

Comments about students being more accountable suggest that they too have a role in their own success – the things people want students to be accountable for largely about personal habits: getting to school on time, handing in their assignments on time, participating in class, showing initiative, making an effort to do well, learn to think for themselves. In the absence of these skills respondents are concerned that students will not be ready for life after school where failure, deadlines, expectations for high quality work etc. are part of the learning or work culture.

Lack of accountability among students is typically described as,

- not taking personal initiative to succeed
- not taking advantage of opportunities available at school
- not working to their highest capacity
- showing disrespect for peers and teachers in classrooms (e.g. it is too easy for them to “opt out” of learning and still pass, disrupting the learning of other students)
- taking too much advantage of policies that allow them to hand in work late, get exempted from exams, redo work for a higher mark, etc.
- depending too much on the teacher and other adults instead of learning to think independently and using their own judgment.

While these behaviours rest with students there is a sense that schools could do a better job of teaching them to students - changes to Board attendance (exam exemptions) and assessment policies (lack of consequences for late assignments) are viewed as two mechanisms for starting to hold students more accountable.

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*I feel we are doing ourselves a disservice by allowing them [students] to hand in work whenever they want without it being penalized when it's late. This is not what will happen to them in university or in their adult life.*

*In high school, it is important to emphasize more than just knowledge. Work habits are also very important, but teachers cannot deduct marks for work handed in late etc., we are not making students accountable.*

*Students are not being taught self-discipline, work ethics or the value of all work, regardless of ability or interest. They are increasingly graduating with a heightened sense of entitlement, inability to stay organized and confusion about direction.*

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## To plan for learning and their careers, students need access to stronger guidance

Just over 1,500 Nova Scotians commented on the quality of guidance that students are receiving in high schools. The majority (1377) expressed concerns that students are not getting the guidance they need to make good choices about their careers and post-secondary options. There are a few reasons for this:

1. Guidance counsellors do not have enough time to meet with individual students – there are too few and they are being pulled in too many directions
2. Guidance counsellors are not providing some students with accurate advice about the courses they need to take in high school to meet admissions requirements for College or University.
3. Guidance counsellors do not have the knowledge they need to provide high quality advice on skills, careers and post-secondary learning options.
4. There is a perception among some that guidance counsellors provide more assistance to students who are academically successful – average students, students working toward outcomes on IPPs and students with special needs often feel like they have less of a clear plan at the end of high school.
5. There is a noticeable bias among guidance counsellors that favours the university stream of courses and little effort to dispel the stigma attached to other options such as skills trades, professional services, and entry into the workforce.

Some recognize that schools cannot be asked to carry out all roles of parent, guidance counsellor, coach etc. Others also recognize that making the “right” choices about one’s future in grade nine and ten is really difficult since many students are unsure of what they want to do. Teachers and guidance counsellor are also accurate in pointing out that parents and students do not always follow their advice.

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*There is a great need for better guidance in course selections, exposure to post graduate opportunities, personal decision-making. Perhaps we just need more guidance counsellors ... perhaps with specialization of skills ...*

*Students who plan to attend university get the most guidance, there is a stigma of being less important if you choose Community College or work.*

*More focus is needed on matching students to industry so students can really see the opportunities that are available to them. Many students go into College or University without any real direction of what they would like to do or what they are actually good at.*

*Need to have more focus and training opportunities in skilled trades and cooperative education experiences, knowledge and environments that inform high school students at every academic level.*

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A significant number of comments speak to the need for guidance counsellors to bring a much stronger skill set to counselling students about skills and career information and in helping students to make effective course selections.

Students and parents are concerned that students sometimes take courses that that are not in their best interest:

- They might be pressured into or encouraged to take advanced courses even when University may not be the best post-secondary option for them
- If a student wants to pursue a trade or Community College program, guidance counsellors are less aware of program options and the courses they need to take
- Sometimes students who aspire to taking a program in University are directed to “less challenging” courses

## Students need more options in high school, especially those not heading for University

High schools need to have a clearer sense of purpose:

- Some feel too much time is spent preparing students for University while others say high schools are structured too much around the needs of the workforce.
- Many feel that students spend too much time in academic courses and students who aspire to careers that do not require a university degree (e.g. trades, entrepreneurship) struggle to stay connected to learning. There are many calls in the data for a return to two streams: academic and vocational.
- A much smaller minority feel that no matter what their focus, schools need to support students in learning 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.

Equity of access to programs and courses need to improve:

- Many respondents said that the right course options are available in high schools but access to them depends on where you live in the province. *Small rural high schools* are unable to hire enough staff to offer the full range of high school courses and while students now have access to more options through the Provincial Virtual School, not all students feel they learn well in online courses.
- Enrollment in music and French Immersion programs limits the range of courses students can take, due to scheduling conflicts.
- Very few placements are available to students with disabilities.
- The International Baccalaureate is an excellent program, but not available to many students.
- \*Co-operative Education, O2 and Skilled Trade programs received overwhelming praise in the data for providing students with alternatives to university preparation. The programs are seen to have a lot of value, but access for many students is limited since the programs are only offered in designated schools. There are a significant number of calls for creating more opportunities for “students not heading to university” and for working against the stigma that is attached to choosing a trade’s based program.

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*... now all students are pressured to succeed by focusing on university only.*

*We need more co-ops, career development courses, and career exploration. We need more programs like Options and Opportunities to get students excited, engaged and able to connect their schooling to careers.*

*I believe you have stepped up and really reached out to the broad range of abilities and needs of our population. The Co-op and Skilled Trades are an amazing opportunity and you should be commended for making these programs available to all.*

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There needs to be a better balance between required and optional courses:

- For some, the high school program is too focused on math and science.
- Students who wish to pursue the Arts following high school do not feel they are well prepared
- Students sometimes struggle to design a program that fits with their current and future interests
- The courses students are required to take are not always the ones they need for admission to College or University

## Graduates are not ready for life after high school

### *a. College or University Readiness*

Just over 1,200 Nova Scotians feel that many high school graduates are ill-prepared for the “realities of higher learning.” Based in the range of comments, students transitioning to post-secondary destinations need:

- Stronger academic skills in reading, writing, and basic mathematics
- An ability to think critically and work independently
- A stronger sense of accountability (e.g., to meet deadlines)
- Better time management, organization, and study skills

University and College faculty voiced frustration with students’ lack of ability to write a traditional essay or skills in the math and sciences. Many young adults noted how they struggled during their first year of University because of the workload and the need to “catch up” on content in their courses.

For some, the question of readiness is too general. They feel that it all depends on a number of factors: the student, the school they attended, courses they took, etc. However, some students – such as those enrolled in the IB program – are better prepared than others. The high rate of attrition in first year university is noted as an indicator that many students need more preparation in skills and knowledge.

### *b. Workplace Readiness*

With the exception of students who experience Co-op or O2, most respondents said that graduates are not prepared for the workforce after graduation. In some cases students lack the guidance they require to find their place in the workforce after graduation, but most comments refer to students working part-time while completing additional training or education. Employers, parents of young adults, and other community members suggest that most recent graduates lack the skills they need for the workplace:

- Basic skills: reading, spelling, counting change, cursive writing
- Work skills: writing a resume, prepare for a job interview
- Work ethic: arriving on time, meeting deadlines,
- Independent thinking and problem solving
- Communication skills for working with the public

As mentioned elsewhere, readiness depends on the student; however, there is also a strong perception that attendance and assessment policies are contributing to young people’s difficulty in the workplace because they lower expectations for students and create what some respondents describe as a “sense of entitlement.”

## Young adults lack the skills they need to be successful

Many respondents feel that the school system could do more to help students learn real life skills. More than 500 respondents agree that, “there are things that should be taught in school but are not.” Some students feel that they are academically prepared for life through the emphasis on mathematics and science in high school; however, many feel they lack real life, practical skills such as,

1. Financial literacy skills – managing credit, applying for a loan, budgeting, paying bills, filing a tax return, comparison shopping
2. Job skills – job searches, writing a resume, filling out a job application, time management, project management
3. Life skills – cooking, shopping, fitness and nutrition, stress management
4. Civics – politics, elections and voting

Students in particular feel that school can feel artificial and cut off from what happen in the real world. They want exposure to practical skills and an opportunity to experience.

Parents and community members agree that students would benefit from “life courses” in school (e.g. Career and Life Management, Home Economics, Workplace Math). As well, some feel that the culture of schools should change so that students have more real world experiences, where they are held accountable, challenged and experience failure if they do not complete their work (also see page 4 – student accountability).

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*There should be more emphasis on how to handle your finances, how to get a job, etc. More focus needs to be on how to deal with real life.*

*More classes on things like civics and home economics need to be taught. Skills like how to apply for a student loan, how to apply for a mortgage, how to pay income tax, how to vote, how to calculate interest on investments, how to read a credit card statement should all be taught in schools.*

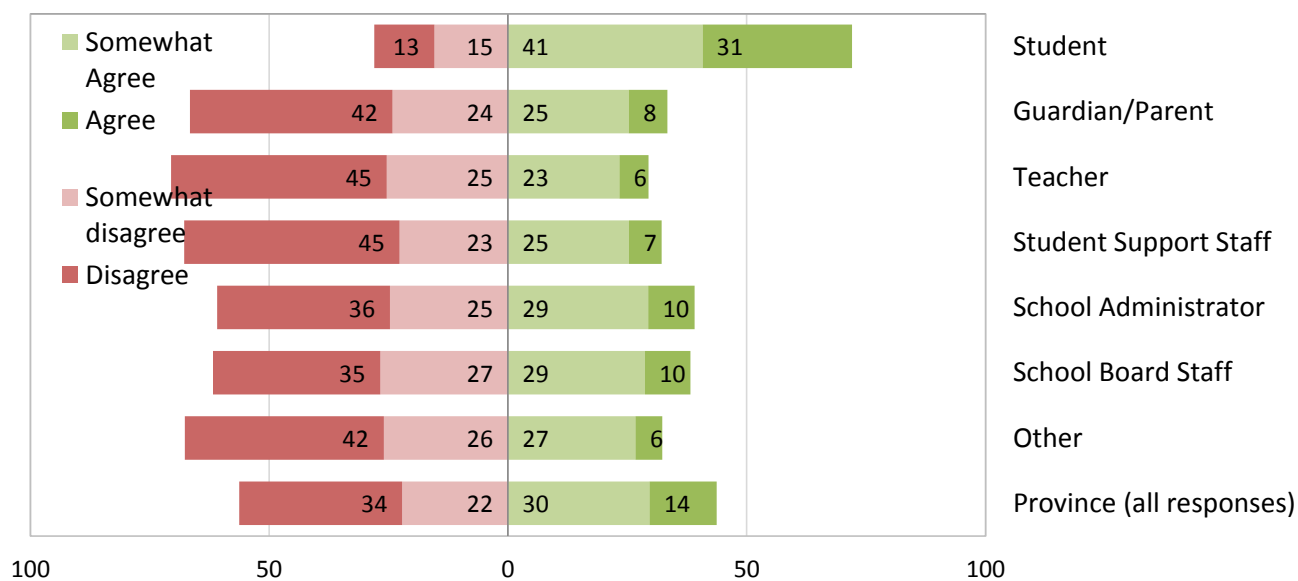
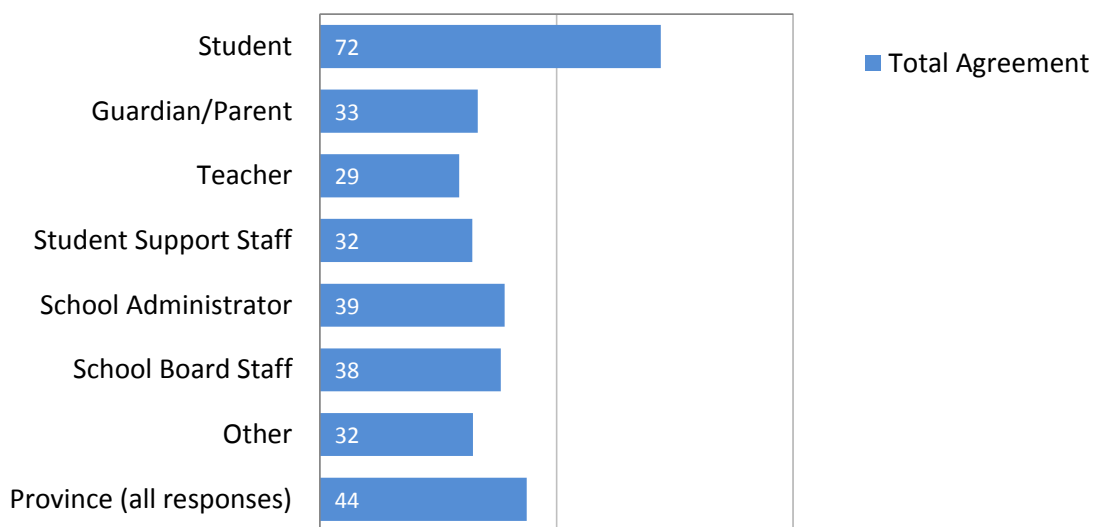
*Students are given a false sense of how the world works. There are some who are taught that if “I don’t do my work, show up late, and misbehave, I get chances galore to make it up, and I still get passed.”*

*We prepare our students to meet the requirements of postsecondary courses but we do not prepare them enough for non-academic life after they have finished high school.*

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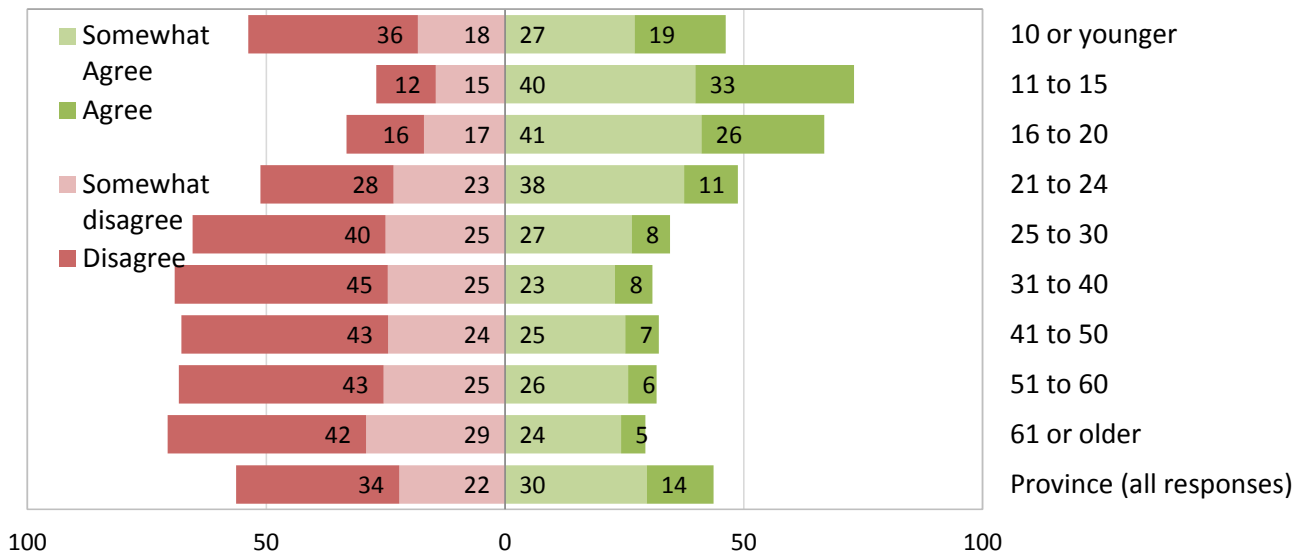
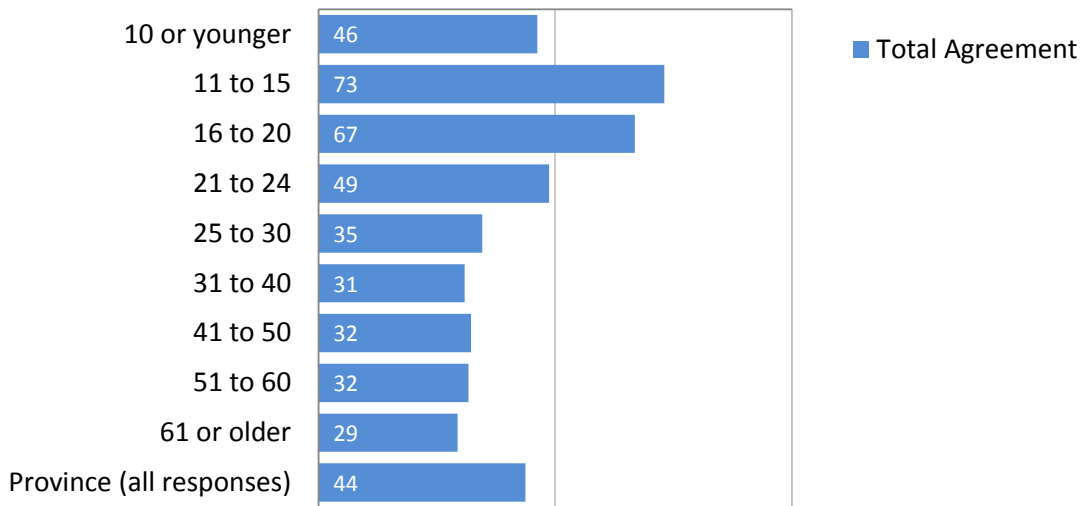
### 18 Special programs and services are meeting the needs of all students. (StSup)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1057	13	15	41	31	<b>72</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1817	42	24	25	8	<b>33</b>
Teacher	3198	391	45	25	23	6	<b>29</b>
Student Support Staff	489	79	45	23	25	7	<b>32</b>
School Administrator	306	27	36	25	29	10	<b>39</b>
School Board Staff	205	48	35	27	29	10	<b>38</b>
Other	2942	901	42	26	27	6	<b>32</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>



**18 Special programs and services are meeting the needs of all students. (StSup)**

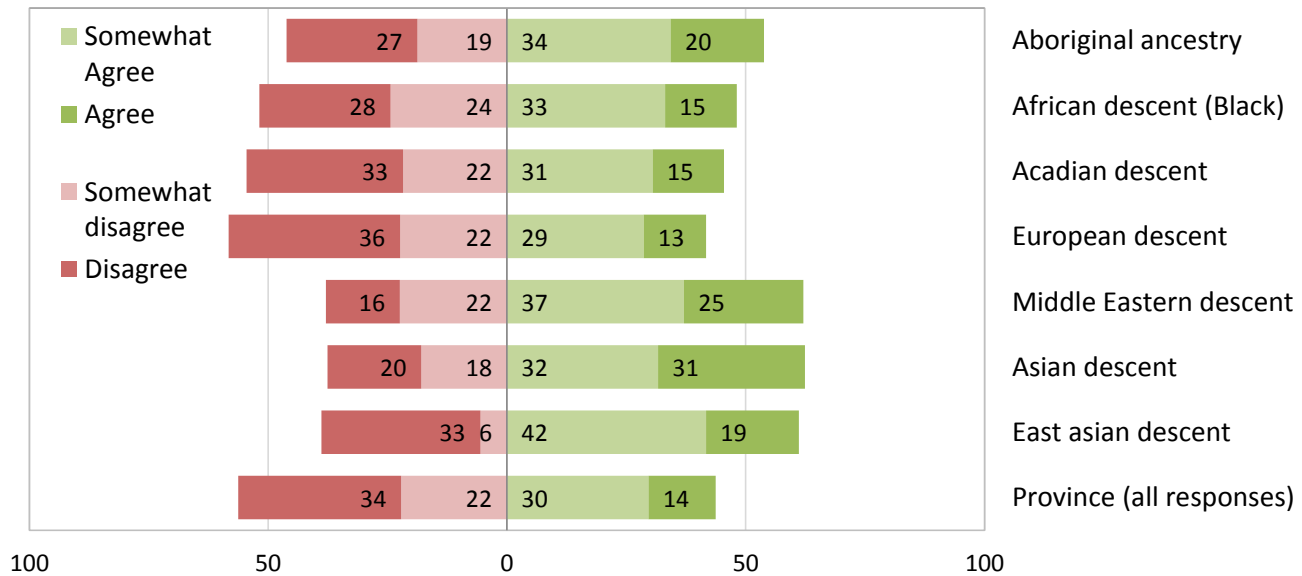
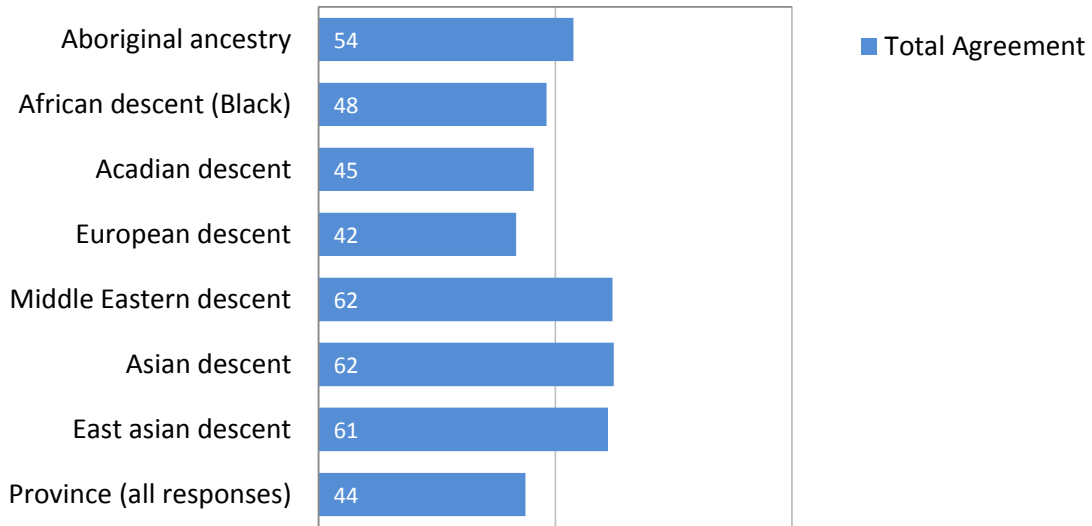
Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	100	36	18	27	19	<b>46</b>
11 to 15	2862	512	12	15	40	33	<b>73</b>
16 to 20	2549	592	16	17	41	26	<b>67</b>
21 to 24	319	79	28	23	38	11	<b>49</b>
25 to 30	1018	286	40	25	27	8	<b>35</b>
31 to 40	3776	865	45	25	23	8	<b>31</b>
41 to 50	4190	983	43	24	25	7	<b>32</b>
51 to 60	2545	577	43	25	26	6	<b>32</b>
61 or older	1102	295	42	29	24	5	<b>29</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>





**18 Special programs and services are meeting the needs of all students. (StSup)**

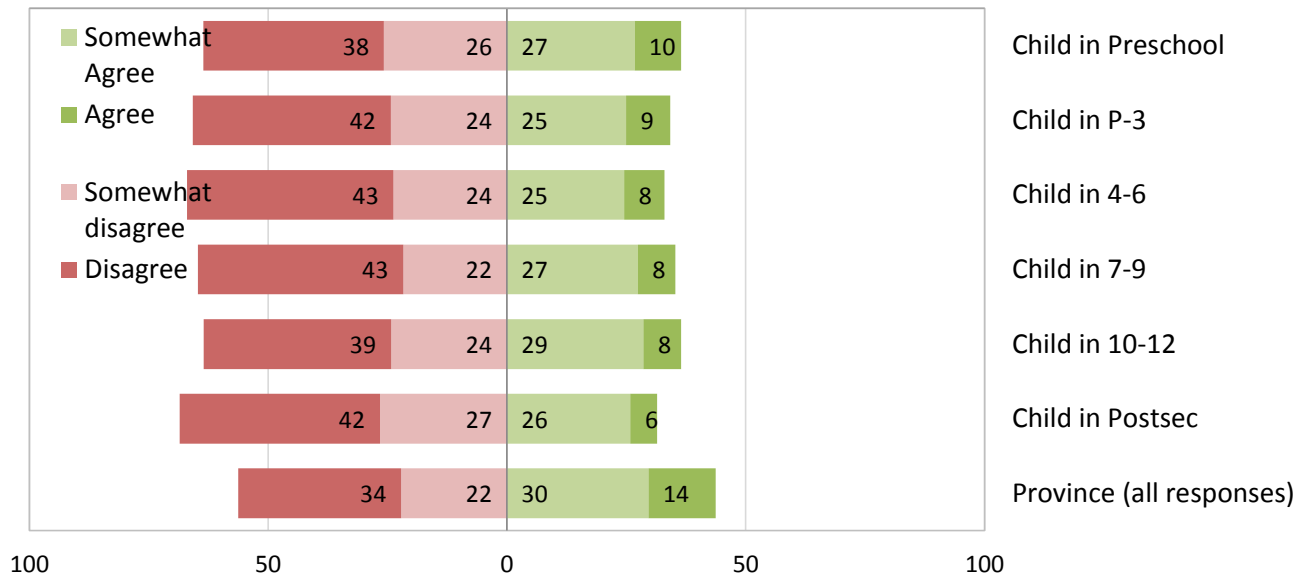
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	163	27	19	34	20	<b>54</b>
African descent (Black)	399	79	28	24	33	15	<b>48</b>
Acadian descent	2232	498	33	22	31	15	<b>45</b>
European descent	12054	2710	36	22	29	13	<b>42</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	54	16	22	37	25	<b>62</b>
Asian descent	168	51	20	18	32	31	<b>62</b>
East asian descent	54	18	33	6	42	19	<b>61</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>



**18 Special programs and services are meeting the needs of all students. (StSup)**

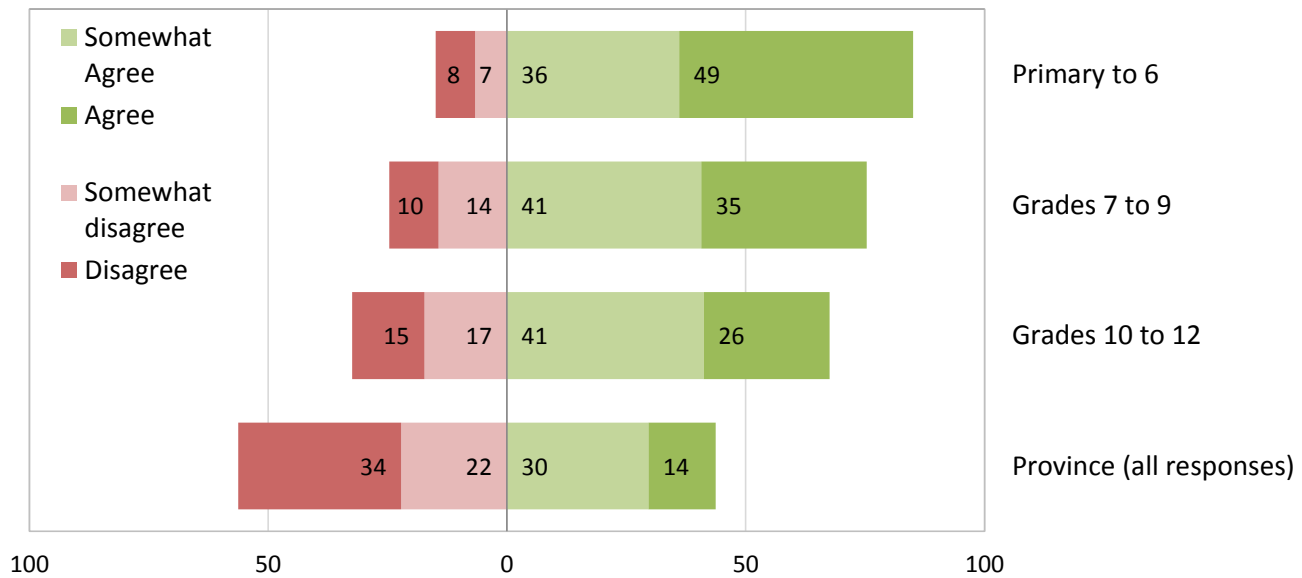
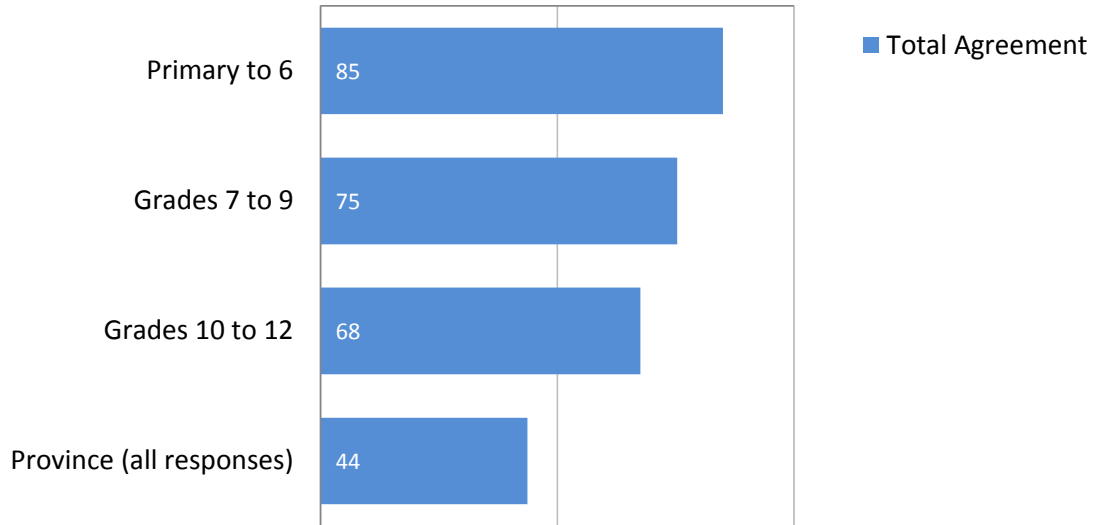
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	261	38	26	27	10	<b>36</b>
Child in P-3	2263	577	42	24	25	9	<b>34</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	468	43	24	25	8	<b>33</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	474	43	22	27	8	<b>35</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	451	39	24	29	8	<b>36</b>
Child in Postsec	365	98	42	27	26	6	<b>31</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



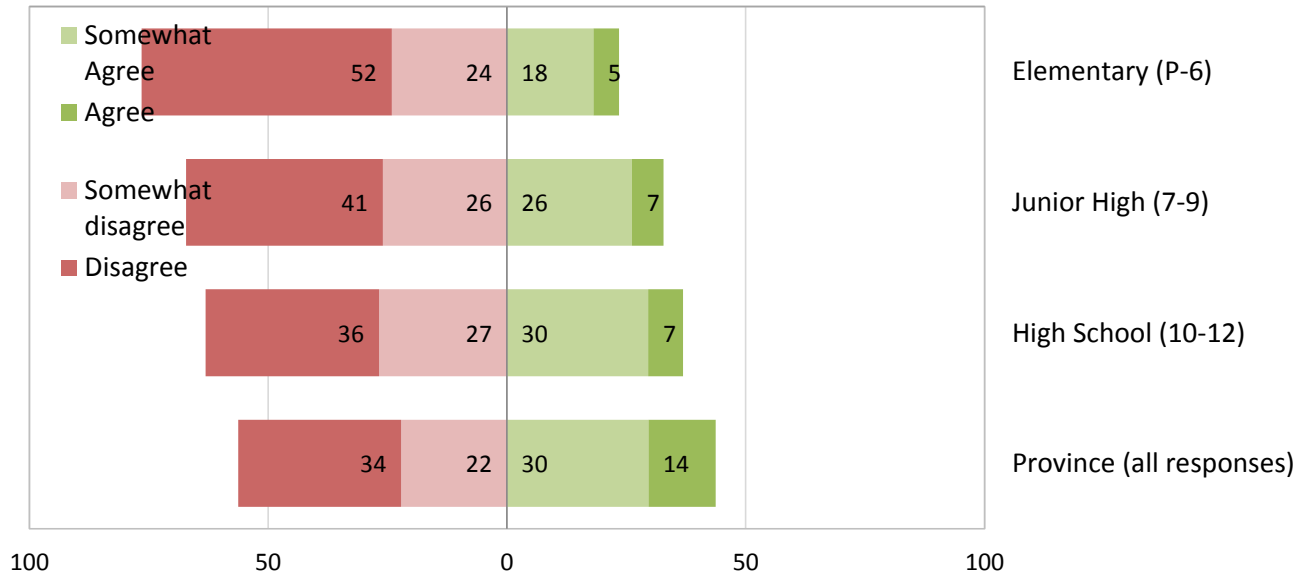
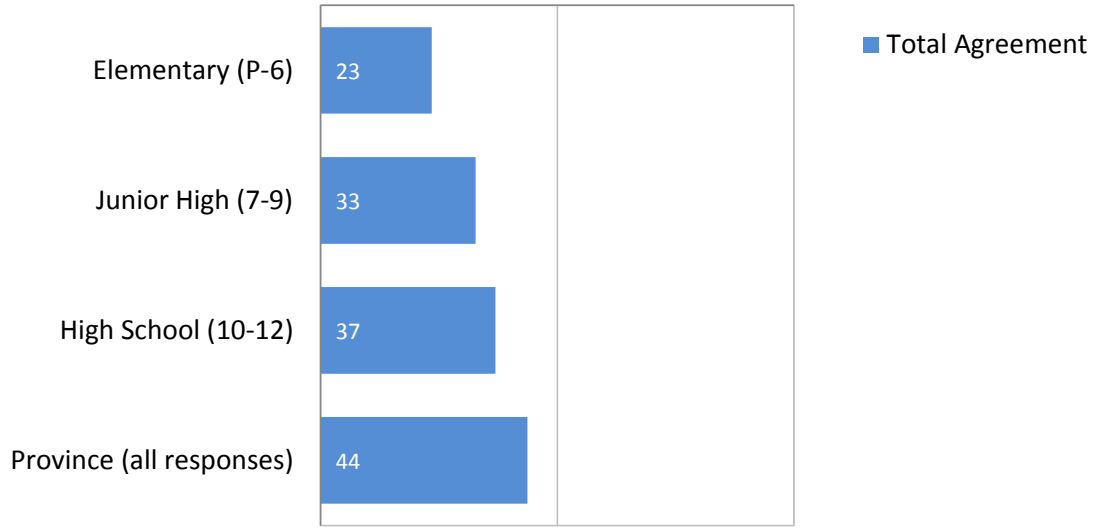
**18 Special programs and services are meeting the needs of all students. (StSup)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	60	8	7	36	49	<b>85</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	402	10	14	41	35	<b>75</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	595	15	17	41	26	<b>68</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>



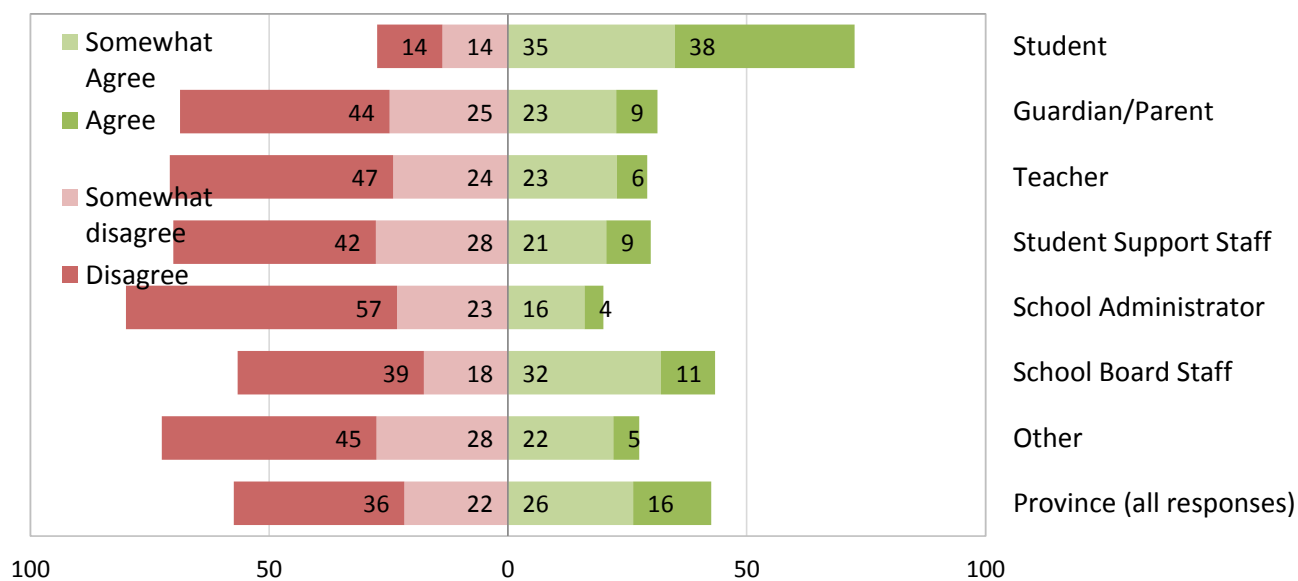
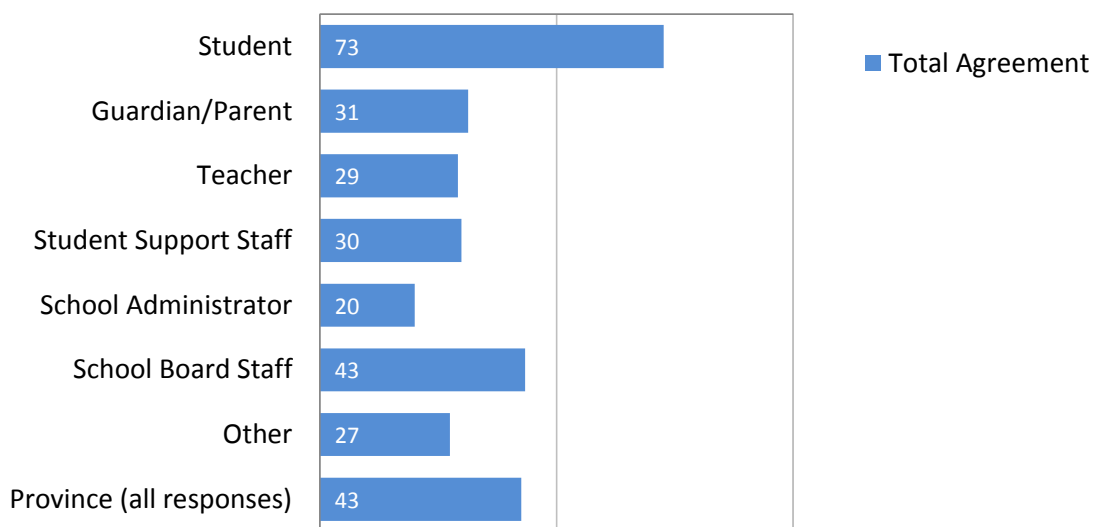
**18 Special programs and services are meeting the needs of all students. (StSup)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	196	52	24	18	5	<b>23</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	74	41	26	26	7	<b>33</b>
High School (10-12)	911	117	36	27	30	7	<b>37</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4320</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>



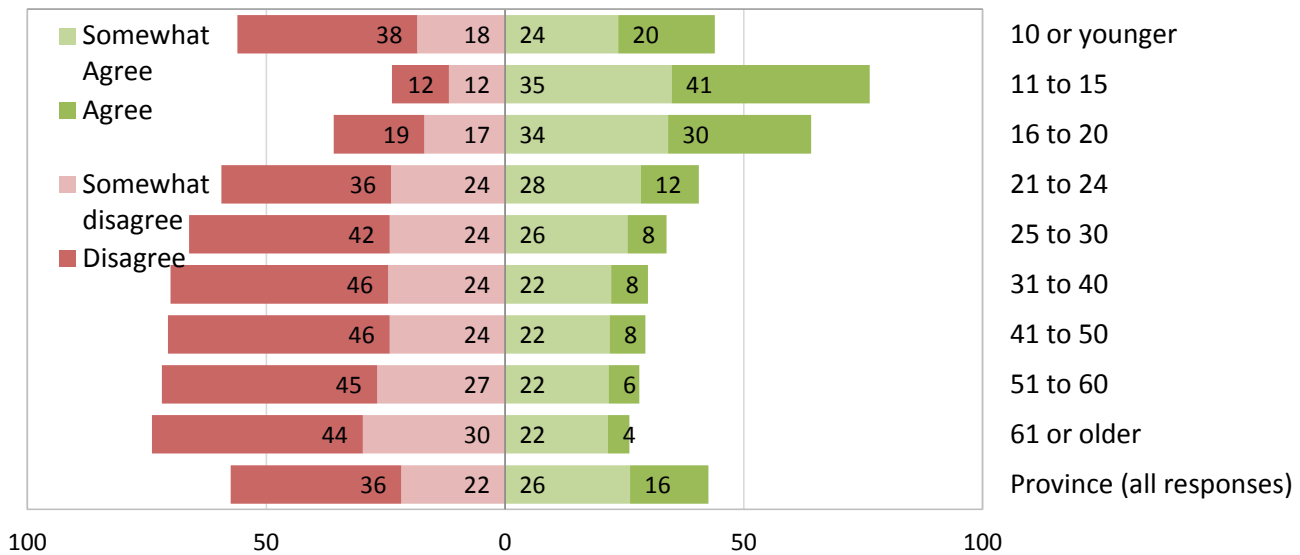
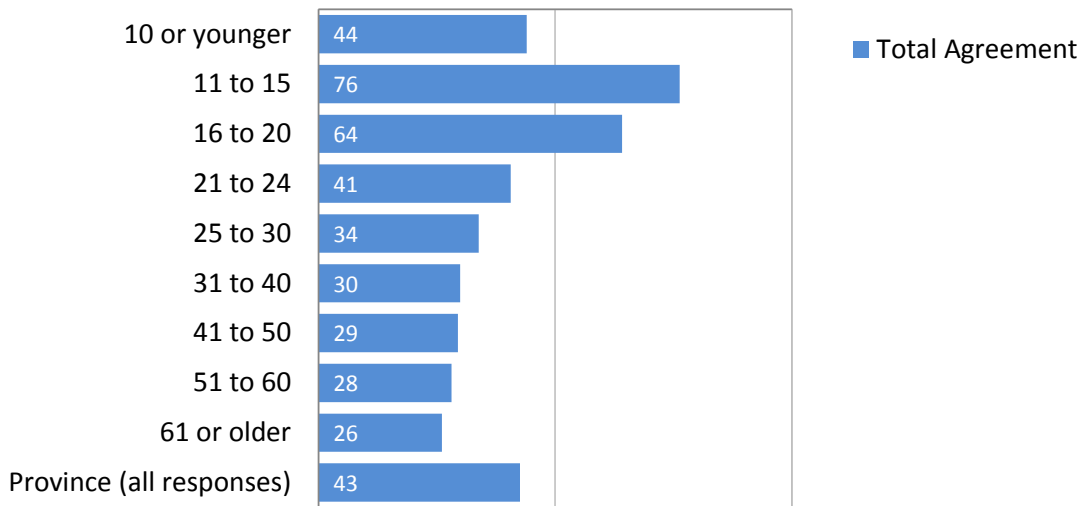
19 [...]Programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues. (StSup)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	975	14	14	35	38	<b>73</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2139	44	25	23	9	<b>31</b>
Teacher	3198	418	47	24	23	6	<b>29</b>
Student Support Staff	489	81	42	28	21	9	<b>30</b>
School Administrator	306	31	57	23	16	4	<b>20</b>
School Board Staff	205	46	39	18	32	11	<b>43</b>
Other	2942	937	45	28	22	5	<b>27</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>



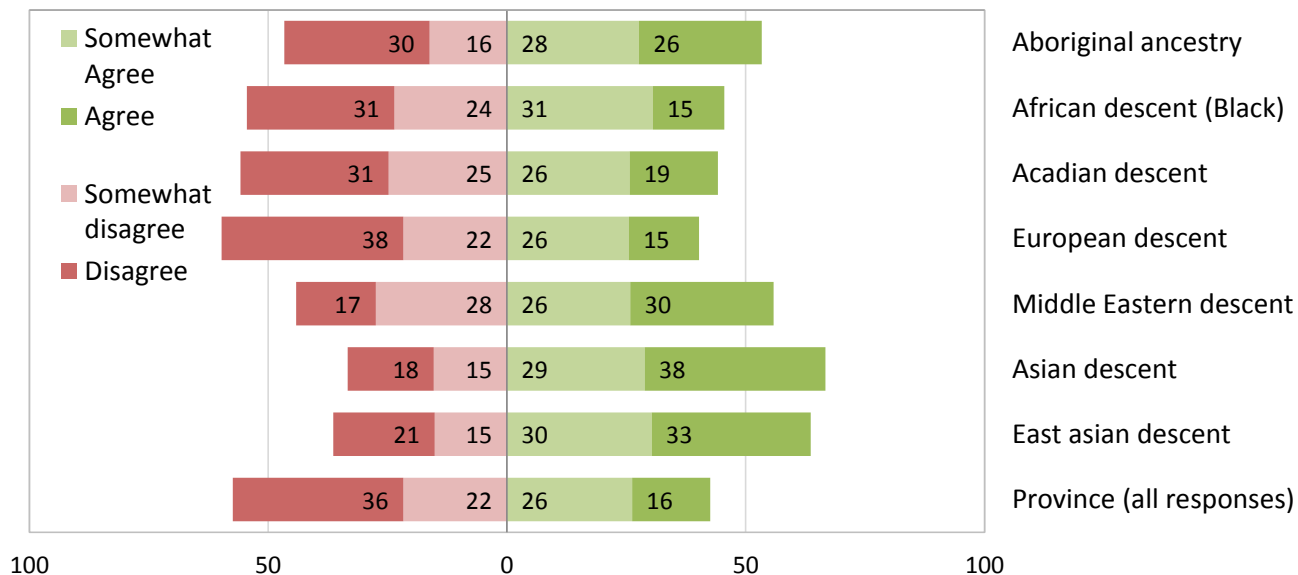
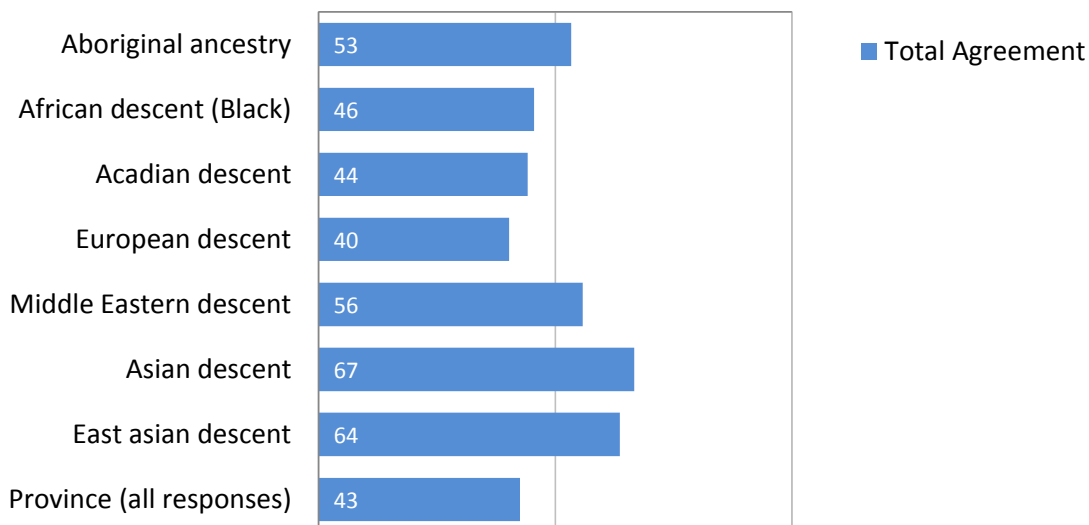
19 [...]Programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues. (StSup)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
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11 to 15	2862	524	12	12	35	41	<b>76</b>
16 to 20	2549	512	19	17	34	30	<b>64</b>
21 to 24	319	80	36	24	28	12	<b>41</b>
25 to 30	1018	297	42	24	26	8	<b>34</b>
31 to 40	3776	1021	46	24	22	8	<b>30</b>
41 to 50	4190	1114	46	24	22	8	<b>29</b>
51 to 60	2545	610	45	27	22	6	<b>28</b>
61 or older	1102	319	44	30	22	4	<b>26</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>



19 [...]Programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues. (StSup)

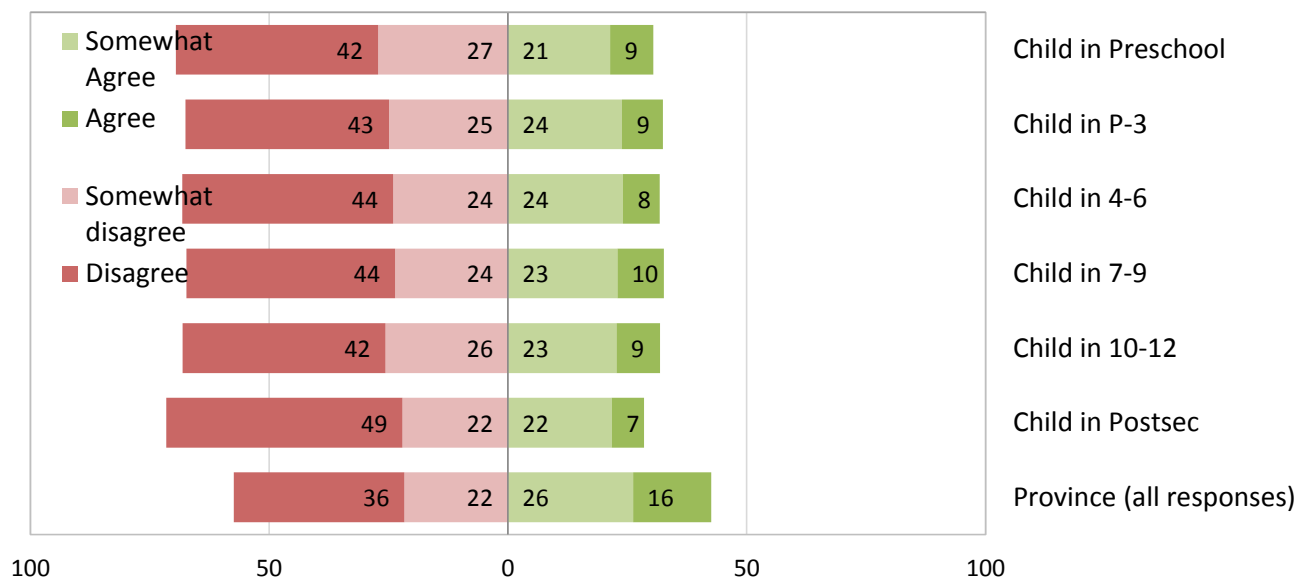
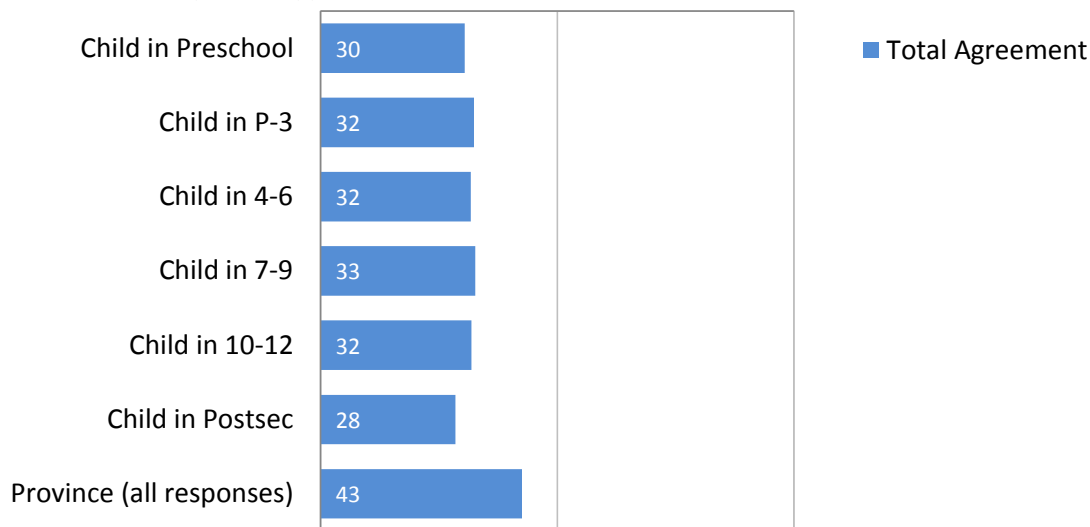
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	180	30	16	28	26	<b>53</b>
African descent (Black)	399	85	31	24	31	15	<b>46</b>
Acadian descent	2232	526	31	25	26	19	<b>44</b>
European descent	12054	2925	38	22	26	15	<b>40</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	50	17	28	26	30	<b>56</b>
Asian descent	168	57	18	15	29	38	<b>67</b>
East asian descent	54	21	21	15	30	33	<b>64</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>



19 [...]Programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues. (StSup)

Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	314	42	27	21	9	<b>30</b>
Child in P-3	2263	752	43	25	24	9	<b>32</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	583	44	24	24	8	<b>32</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	535	44	24	23	10	<b>33</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	479	42	26	23	9	<b>32</b>
Child in Postsec	365	112	49	22	22	7	<b>28</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>

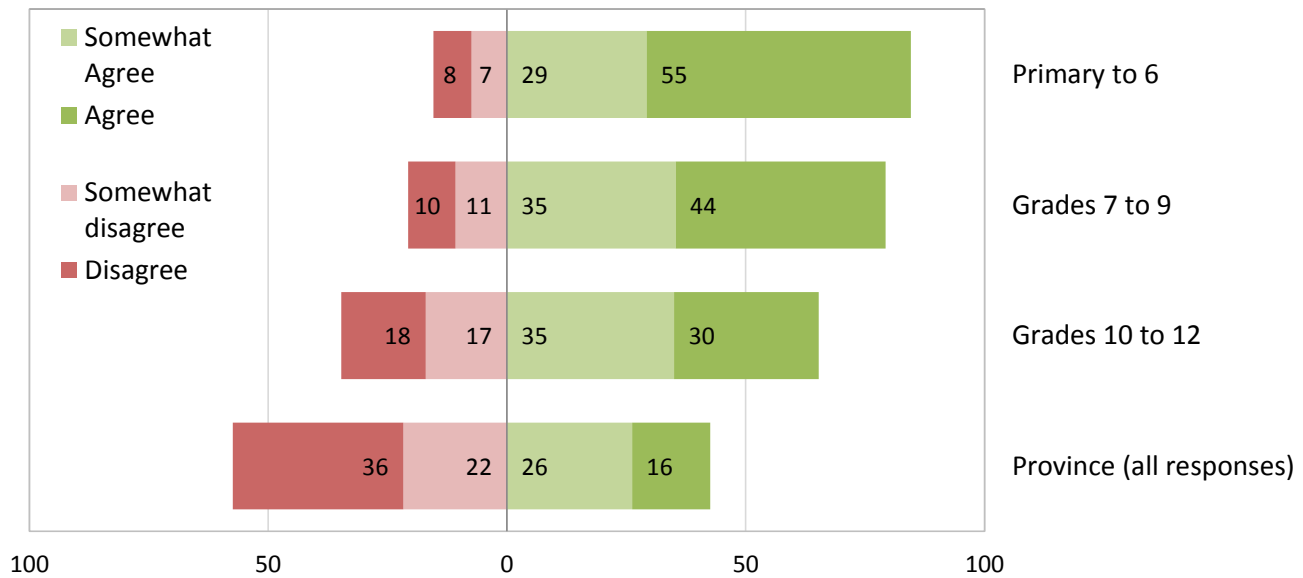
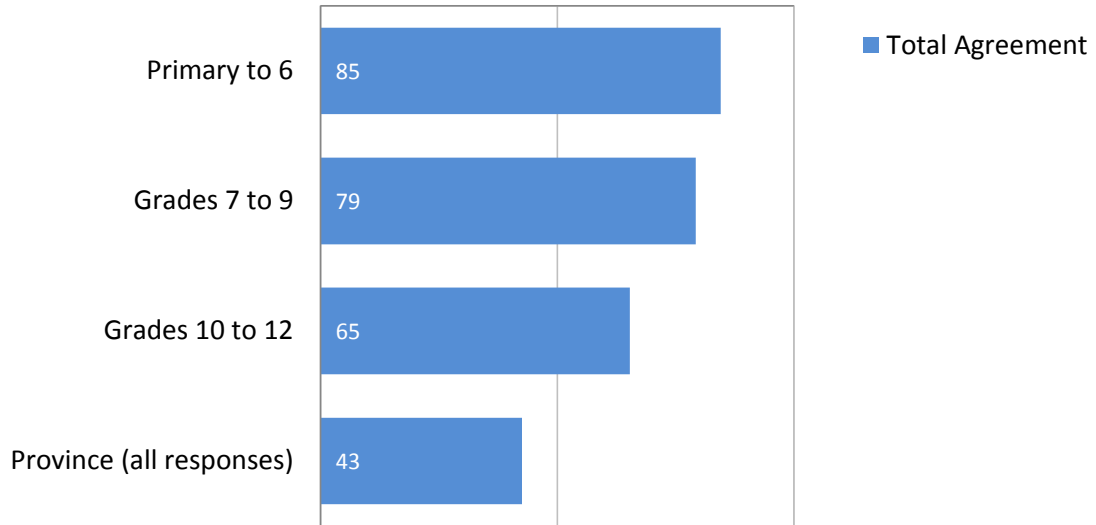
\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.





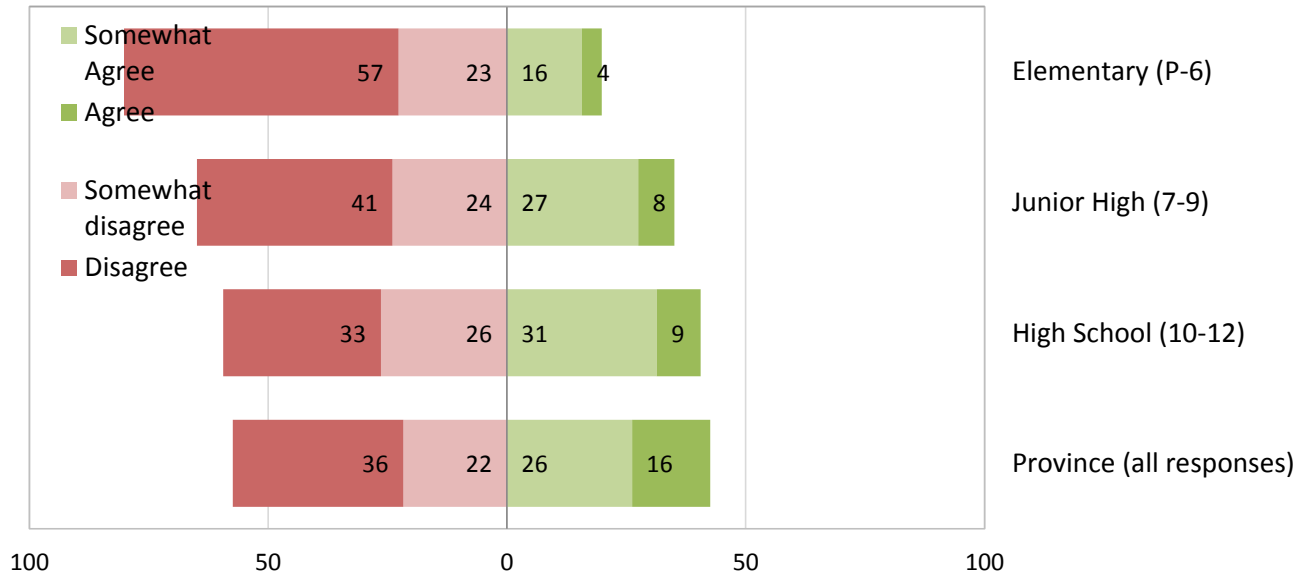
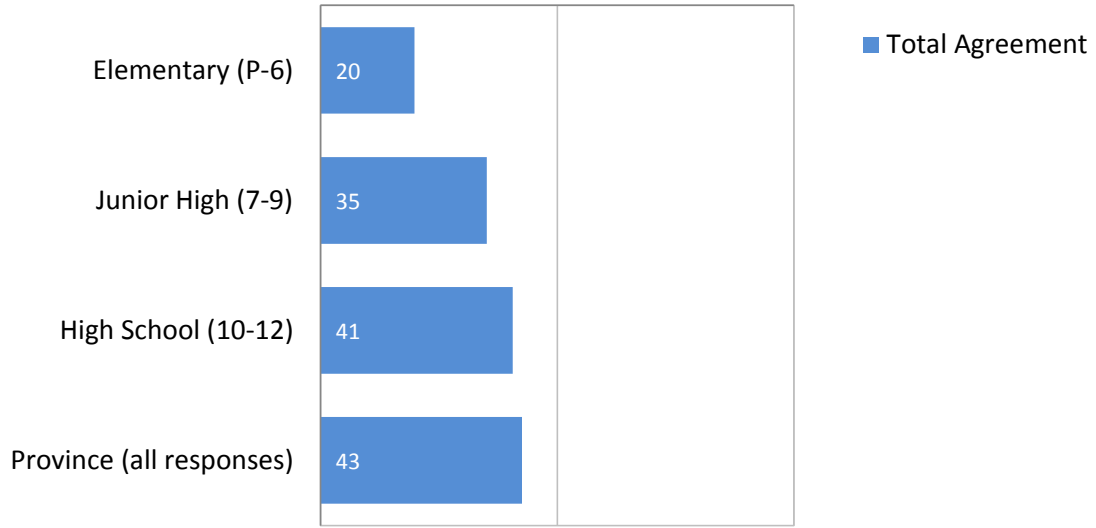
19 [...]Programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues. (StSup)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	66	8	7	29	55	<b>85</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	397	10	11	35	44	<b>79</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	512	18	17	35	30	<b>65</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>



19 [...]Programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues. (StSup)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	207	57	23	16	4	<b>20</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	82	41	24	27	8	<b>35</b>
High School (10-12)	911	127	33	26	31	9	<b>41</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4627</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>



## SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Special programs and services are meeting the needs of *all* students (for example: through inclusion; resource options; speech-language; behavioral supports).
2. The appropriate programs and services are available in schools to help children and youth with mental health issues (for example: elementary guidance, health services in schools, school psychologists).

### NUMBER OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

Parents and Guardians	2217
Teachers	1580
Community Members	951
Students	481
Student Support Staff	198
School Administrator	181
School Board Staff	84
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5692</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Student Supports are Insufficient</b>	Access to student supports needs to generally be improved	422
	More resources need to be allocated to student supports	2050
	More work is needed in the area of mental health	653
	Inclusion has not been successful	693
	Wait times for assessments are too long	468
	Student supports are only available for very severe cases	83
	A better model is needed for provision of student supports	454
	Student supports should be available earlier for young students	172
	More supports are needed for gifted and average students	338
	More guidance counselors are needed	171
	Attitudes from teachers and school administrators need improvement	61
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5565</b>
<b>Student Supports are Accessible</b>	There are adequate student supports in place	422
	SchoolsPlus is a valuable resource	88
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>510</b>
<b>General Comments</b>	Provision of student supports extends beyond the responsibility of the school system	154
	The availability of student supports varies based on the school	117
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>271</b>

## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: STUDENT SUPPORTS ARE INSUFFICIENT

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***I think most of the processes are in place but the capacity is inadequate.***

- Community Member

***This is one of the biggest areas of need.***

- School Administrator

***My child has not had access to any of these services.***

- Guardian/Parent

***More behavioural support/ specialists are needed.***

- Teacher

***These programs and services are not adequately funded. In most cases it's a Band-Aid on a gaping wound.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Our struggling students need more support. There are services to a limited degree. They certainly do not meet the need of all students.***

- Teacher

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#### **Access to student supports needs to generally be improved**

- more supports are needed for students with special needs.

- There are more student needs today and more resources are required; programs exist but there are not enough of them.
- Schools are not meeting the needs of children.
- Only children of parents with the strongest voices are getting their needs addressed.
- Programs should be easier to access and more information should be available about how to access them/ what's available.
- Children being bullied aren't being supported.
- There are some inequalities in regards to access to services (urban vs. rural, high vs. low socioeconomic status).

#### **More resources need to be allocated to student supports**

- Budget constraints impact the availability of student supports.
- Specialists are spread too thin and across multiple schools.
- The lack of resources in this area represents a short-sighted attitude and results in students not getting what they need to be successful.
- Lack of resources is resulting in parents having to fund supports out-of-pocket (leads to socioeconomic inequalities).
- More speech language pathologists and psychologists in particular are needed.
- More supports for teachers are needed in classrooms (TAs, etc.).
- Inclusion is not being funded appropriately.
- English as a second language (ESL) supports are limited.
- Increased health services are needed (e.g. school nurse, teen health centres).
- Although programs do exist, there are not enough staff to run them or not enough programs overall.

- More education is needed for teachers in regards to how to deal with these issues.
- Too much money is being spent on programs for few gifted students (IB specifically).

#### **More work is needed in the area of mental health**

- Information about and supports for mental health are lacking (including teacher education)
- Schools are not equipped to deal with needs related to mental health issues
- More professional with expertise in mental health are needed; too much is falling on the shoulders of teachers
- Guidance counselors do not have enough formal training in mental health
- Stigmas still exist around mental health issues – including amongst teachers and administrators
- Work around self-esteem and dealing with effects of bullying is needed

**Inclusion has not been successful** - there are problems with the current inclusion model that need to be addressed.

- Although inclusion exists and has potential – i.e. it is great in theory, there are not enough supports for its effective implementation (or supports are inconsistent).
- The “one shoe fits all” approach is not effective – inclusion does not work for everyone, including some special needs cases.
- Inclusion is failing – resource classes should be brought back/ special needs students should be removed from regular classrooms.
- Class sizes are too large and there are not enough teacher supports for inclusion to be effective.
- The inclusion policy needs to be reviewed.
- There is a time and a place for inclusion – it can be a good thing, but not 100% of the time.
- More consideration should be given to hybrid models of inclusion.
- Placing all students together regardless of their needs is unfair to all - students should be in environments where they are set up for success.
- Inclusion does not work and should not be enforced.

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***Not nearly enough is being done to address our mental health concerns.***

- Teacher

***Mental health services are next to nothing for the needs in our schools.***

- Teacher

***I have grade 4 students with anxiety, depression and other issues, yet no time for seeing the guidance department.***

- Teacher

***With so much attention on so many different special needs, the focus on basic academics is being watered down. This is not fair to kids who don't have special needs.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Inclusion only works when enough resources and personnel are available. Students sitting in a classroom together does not equal inclusion in the real sense of the word.***

- Guardian/Parent

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***Wait times for psychological services are too long.***

*- Community Member*

***School psychologists seem to focus mainly on assessment, not intervention.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***Wait times for special services are sometimes two years or longer. For example, speech and language, occupational therapy.***

*- Student Support Staff*

***Unless the issue is profound, there is no support. There are so many extreme cases, the staff is spread too thin.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***Departments of Education/ Justice/ Social Services/ Health and others must work hand in hand here to develop a better model.***

*- Teacher*

- Teacher focus on special needs cases are taking away from other students.
- Streaming would help to reduce time spent by teachers on administration for struggling students.
- We should go back to a streamed model (with adjustments based on lessons learned from the past) with differentiated outcomes.

**Wait times for assessments are too long** - includes general comments pertaining to issues related to assessments for special needs students.

- Long wait times are an ongoing issue for special needs students.
- Wait lists for psychologists and speech language pathologists are particularly long.
- Again, some parents feel forced to pay out-of-pocket for private assessments due to long wait times.
- Receiving supports depends on having an official diagnosis and assessments can be difficult to access.
- School psychologists seem to spend more time on doing assessments than actually helping students.
- Private testing is expensive but is sometimes the only route available within an acceptable timeframe.

**Student supports are only available for very severe cases** - more supports should be available for students who are struggling but whose needs may not be as severe as some of their peers.

- Unless issues are very severe students don't get supports, which can result in them falling through the cracks.
- Children with learning disabilities and difficulties learning are not having their needs met.

**A better model is needed for provision of student supports**

- Cross-departmental collaboration (e.g. Justice, Health, Community Services) is needed with EECD to better manage issues; services are not in synch with each other.
- Need a collaborative and inclusive process for addressing needs – engage communities better, provide education alternatives.

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***The whole Special Services Division needs revamping.***

*- School Administrator*

***Programs and services are available. But they are tacked on as an afterthought to the system. We need to completely rethink how we do all this stuff.***

*- Teacher*

***Elementary schools lack support and access to appropriate programs.***

*- Teacher*

***We do not have elementary guidance (but NEED it).***

*- Teacher*

***Not enough is spent on the average struggling learner that has potential to be an independent productive member of society.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***There are even less services for children who are successful at school and need a challenge.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***Our guidance counselors are often very busy with course registration. A full time guidance counselor whose only responsibility was health issues would be fully utilized.***

*- Teacher*

- Need to be more proactive/preventative in our approach.
- The current model of inclusion is not working.
- Pushing children through the system is not helpful.
- Despite efforts, problems are persisting (teen suicide/depression, bullying, anxiety, etc.).
- There is a need for more differentiated instruction for different learning styles.
- The funding formulas should be adjusted for special needs children.
- There needs to be better approaches than relying on medication.

#### **Student supports should be available earlier for young students**

- Discussion about issues such as mental health need to happen early to reduce stigma.
- Elementary schools require more supports.
- Guidance counselors in elementary are lacking.
- Emphasis should be on prevention rather than reaction.
- Early testing of learning disabilities should be available.

#### **More supports are needed for gifted and average students**

- Students who are more advanced tend to be overlooked.
- Too much money is spent on special needs – more needs to be directed towards average learners.
- Programming for gifted students is lacking and can result in students becoming bored/ not reaching their full potential.
- Inclusion requires that teachers spend more time with special needs children and average learners do not receive the attention they need.

#### **More guidance counselors are needed**

- More guidance counselors are needed – especially in elementary schools.
- Guidance counselors are often stretched too thin and responsible for too many areas (health, employment, special needs, teaching).



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***Instead of helping the student or trying to make them successful they suspend them too much – especially biracial students.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***I believe there are supports in place for the students with identified special needs.***

*- Community Member*

***We are extremely grateful for the support and input of the guidance counselor and school psychologist as well as the grade 3 teacher in our son's development.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***SchoolsPlus is a very successful model that needs to be expanded across NS.***

*- School Board Staff*

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- Every school should have its own guidance counselor.
- Some comments indicate a lack of satisfaction with the quality of guidance counselors.

#### **Attitudes from teachers and school administrators need improvement**

- Attitudes of intolerance exist amongst school administrators.
- Students with disabilities are not treated as they should be (babied, judged, treated like problem children, etc.).

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## **SECTION 2: STUDENT SUPPORTS ARE ACCESSIBLE**

**There are adequate student supports in place** – in some cases, the programs are available but students are not taking advantage of them.

- There are good programs in place but more are still needed.
- Supports are in place but students choose to opt out/ not participate (they feel uncomfortable, there is an associated stigma, etc.).
- Students are aware that supports are available if they need them.
- Services are excellent.
- The Province is making a strong effort to helping students with special needs.
- Positive comments about the recent decision to extend guidance counsellors to elementary schools.

#### **SchoolsPlus is a valuable resource**

- SchoolsPlus is an excellent program, but is needed in more schools.
- This program represents an exemplary model for providing supports collaboratively but is applied inconsistently and requires more supports.
- SchoolsPlus has been very positive.

### SECTION 3: GENERAL COMMENTS

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**Provision of student supports extends beyond the responsibility of the school system** - it should not be up to the education system to provide the supports needed for special needs students.

- Severe special needs cases should not be attending regular schools.
- Too much responsibility is being placed on schools in this area and by trying to do too much educational priorities are being neglected.
- Some of this is the responsibility of the healthcare system.

**The availability of student supports varies based on the school**

- Some schools are better equipped than others and services vary between schools.
- It is not possible to generalize across schools.

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***I don't believe it is the school's place to deal with these issues. That is what parenting and our health care is for.***

- Guardian/Parent

***The education system needs to focus on EDUCATION and not parenting, and that means we need to assess and advance kids as they deserve and not just continue with the social passing of everyone.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Some schools have great services and others not so much.***

- Community Member

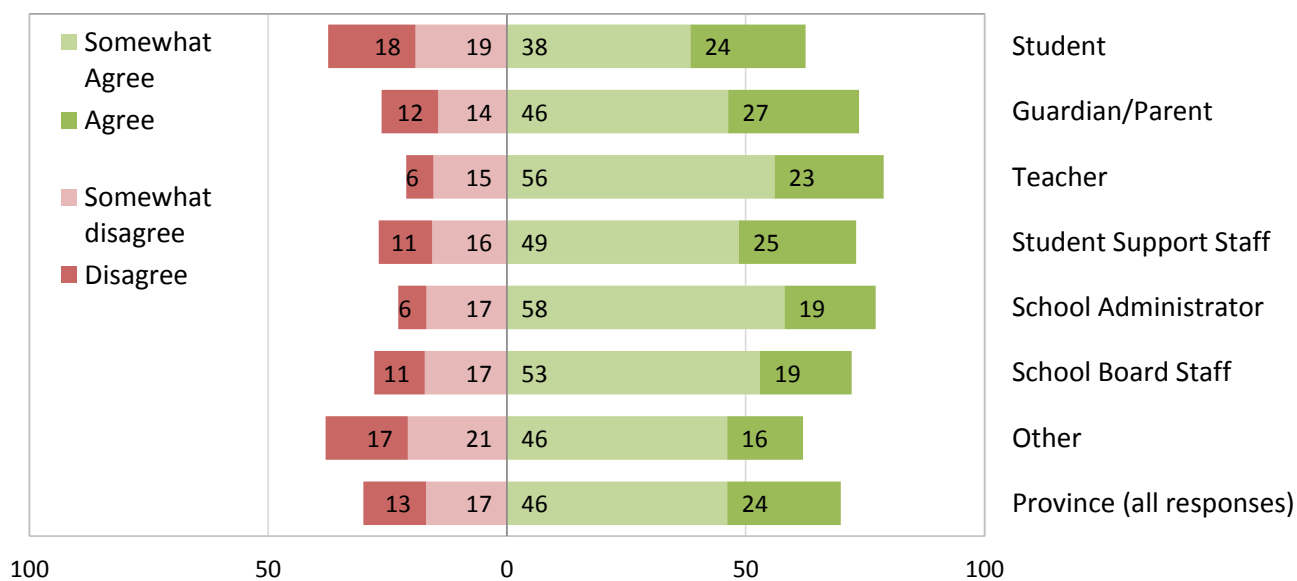
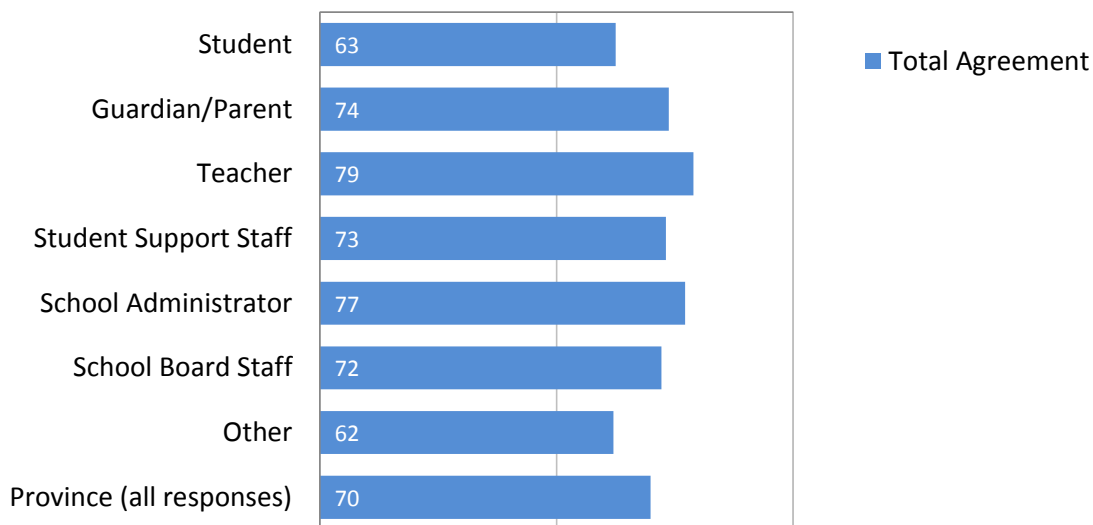
***Smaller schools further from the Halifax area seem to be suffering from lack of this.***

- Guardian/Parent

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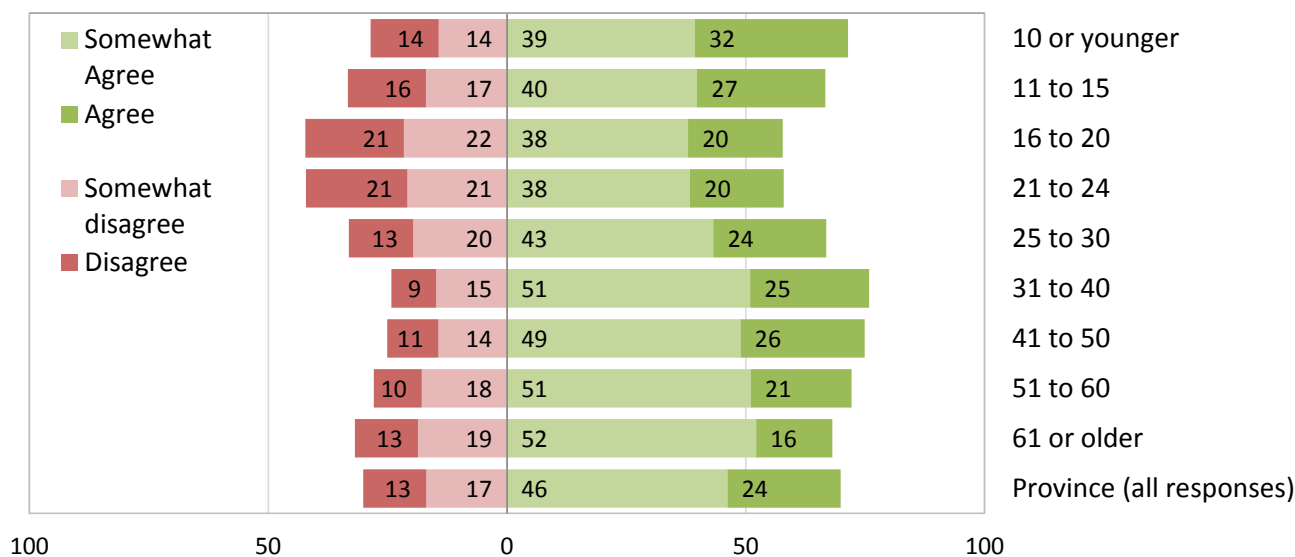
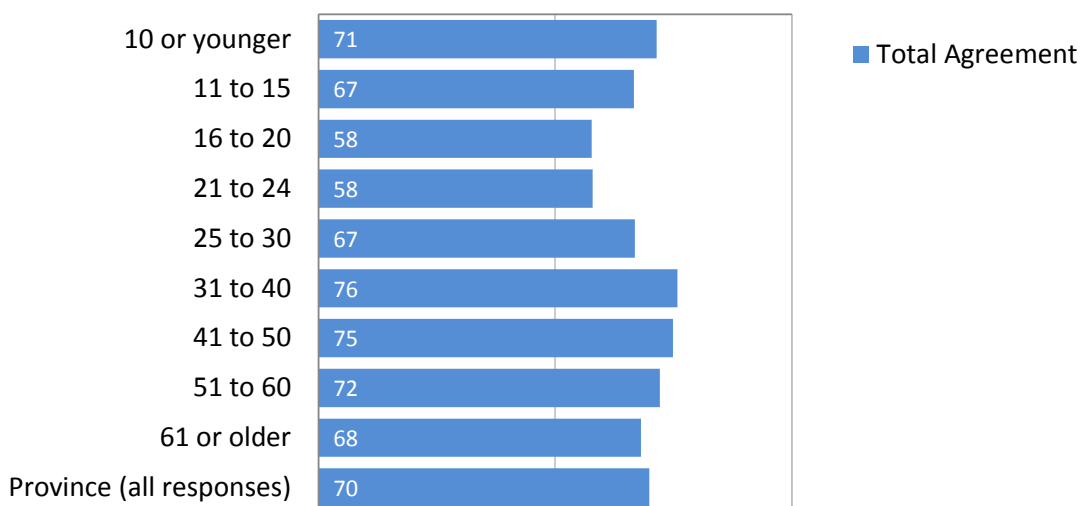
**20 Students and their families see their cultures reflected in their schools and classrooms. (EqHR)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	960	18	19	38	24	<b>63</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1741	12	14	46	27	<b>74</b>
Teacher	3198	461	6	15	56	23	<b>79</b>
Student Support Staff	489	87	11	16	49	25	<b>73</b>
School Administrator	306	34	6	17	58	19	<b>77</b>
School Board Staff	205	54	11	17	53	19	<b>72</b>
Other	2942	1026	17	21	46	16	<b>62</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4363</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>70</b>



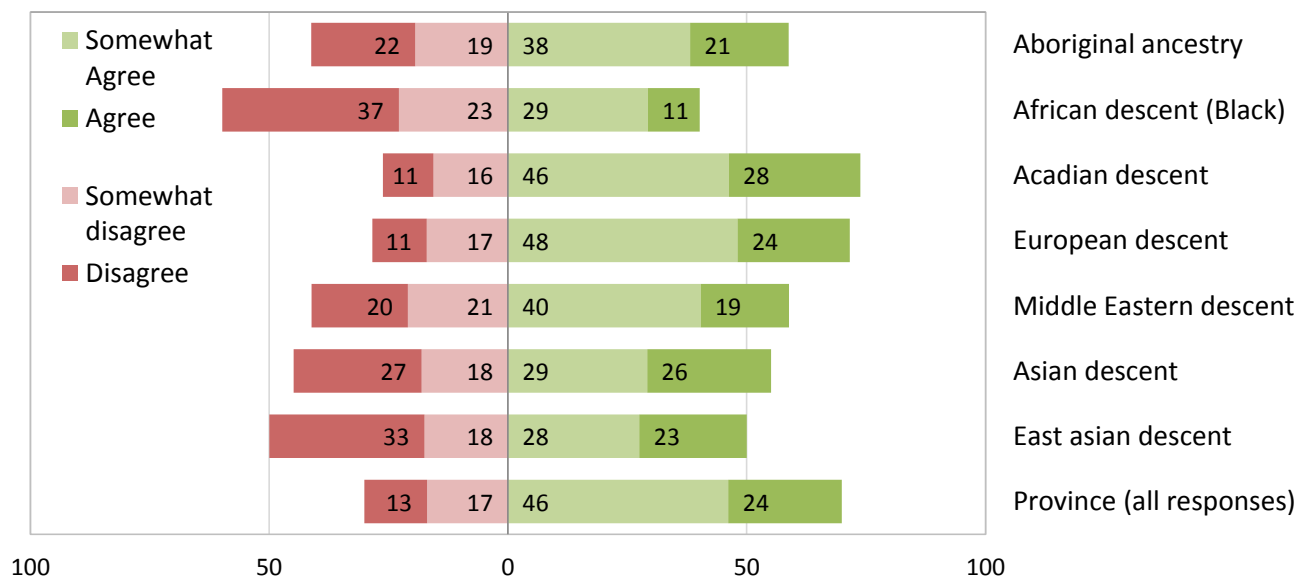
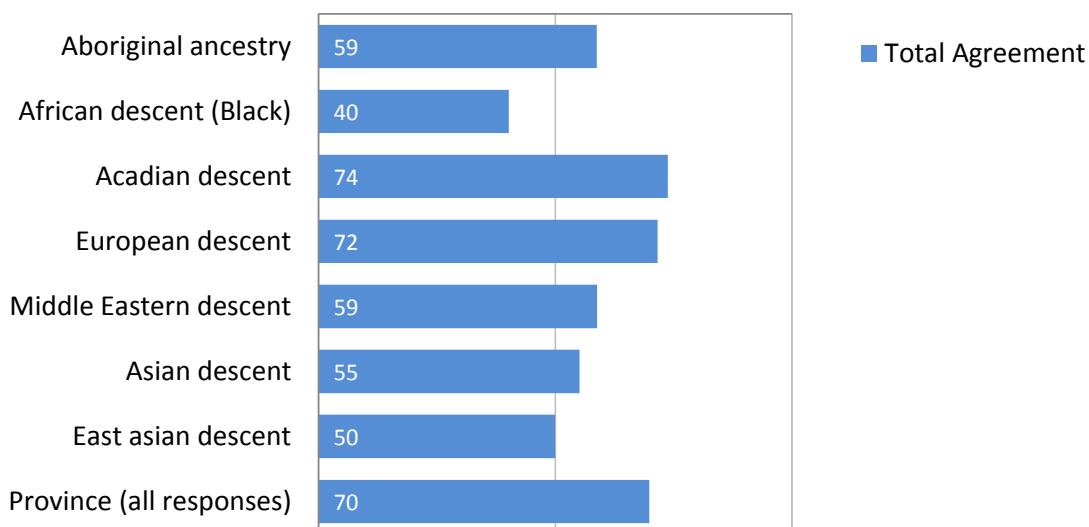
**20 Students and their families see their cultures reflected in their schools and classrooms. (EqHR)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	101	14	14	39	32	<b>71</b>
11 to 15	2862	493	16	17	40	27	<b>67</b>
16 to 20	2549	514	21	22	38	20	<b>58</b>
21 to 24	319	79	21	21	38	20	<b>58</b>
25 to 30	1018	312	13	20	43	24	<b>67</b>
31 to 40	3776	911	9	15	51	25	<b>76</b>
41 to 50	4190	926	11	14	49	26	<b>75</b>
51 to 60	2545	637	10	18	51	21	<b>72</b>
61 or older	1102	358	13	19	52	16	<b>68</b>
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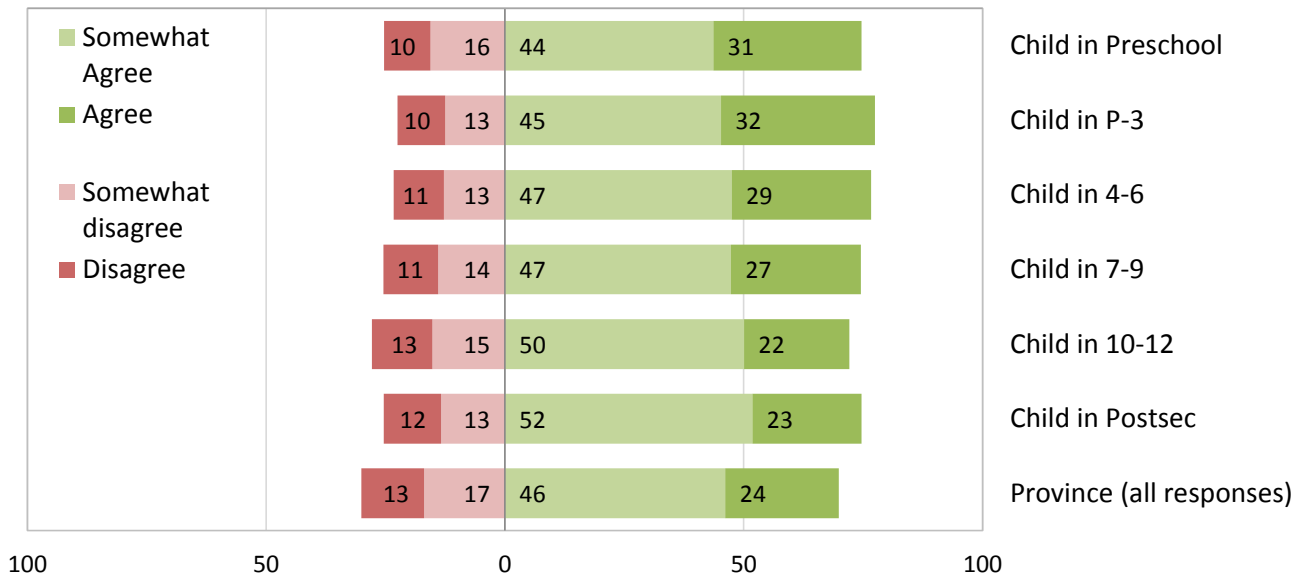
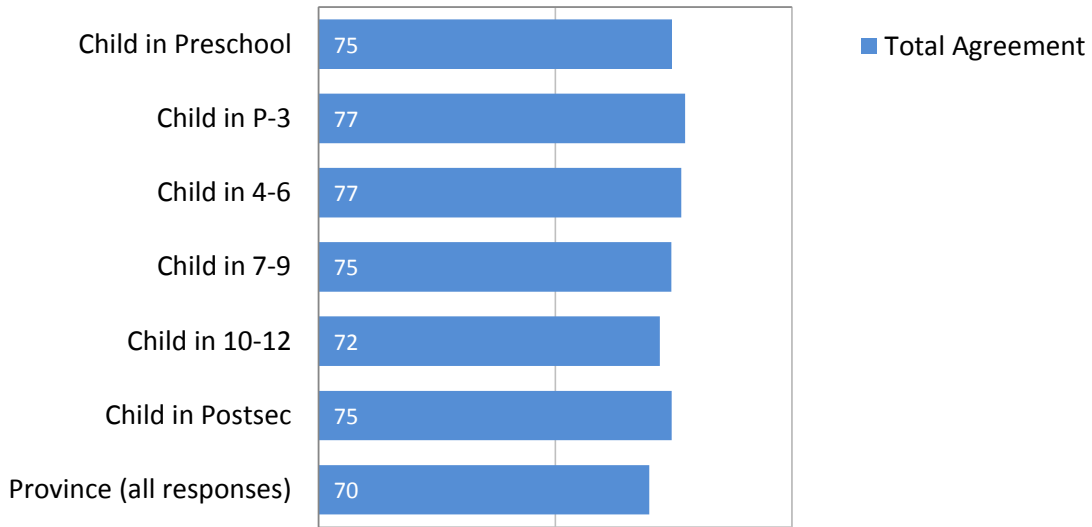
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European descent	12054	2749	11	17	48	24	<b>72</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	46	20	21	40	19	<b>59</b>
Asian descent	168	41	27	18	29	26	<b>55</b>
East asian descent	54	14	33	18	28	23	<b>50</b>
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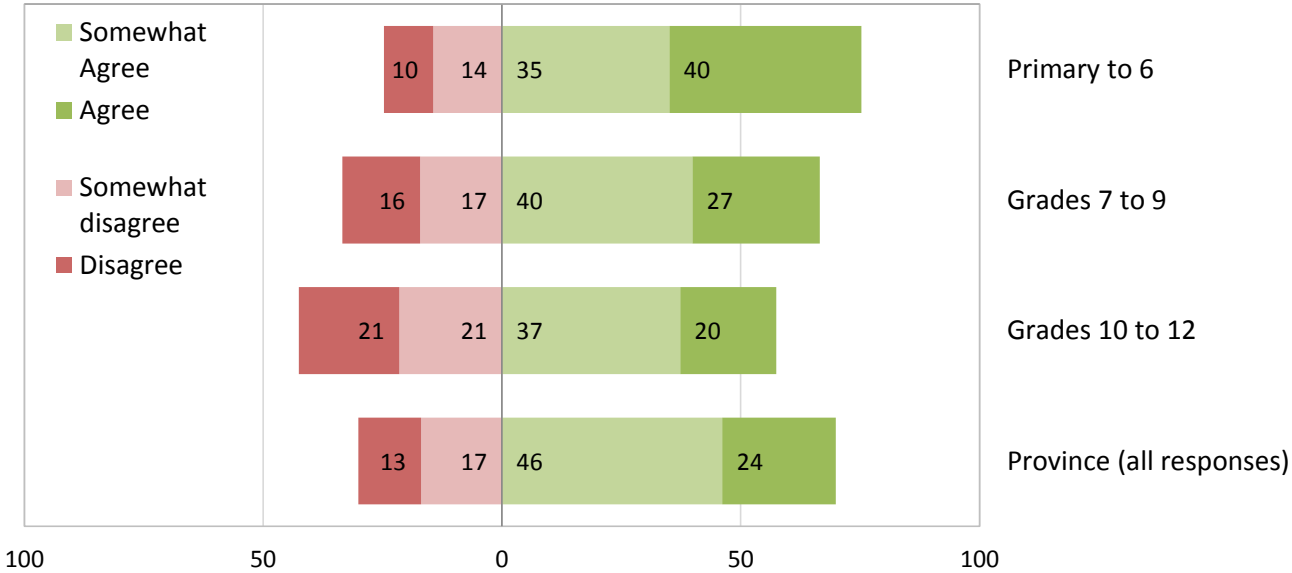
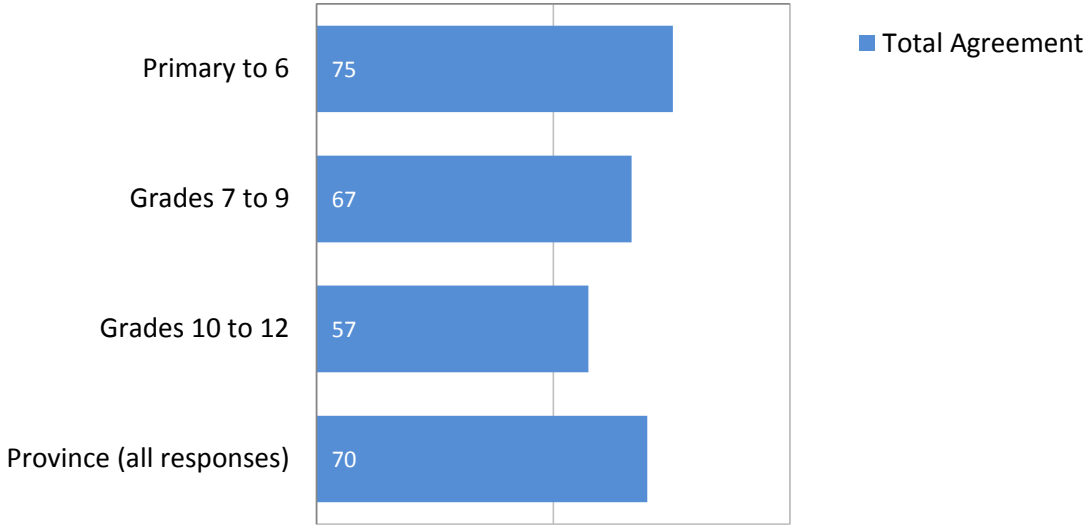
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	252	10	16	44	31	<b>75</b>
Child in P-3	2263	527	10	13	45	32	<b>77</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	421	11	13	47	29	<b>77</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	413	11	14	47	27	<b>75</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	443	13	15	50	22	<b>72</b>
Child in Postsec	365	89	12	13	52	23	<b>75</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4363</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>70</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



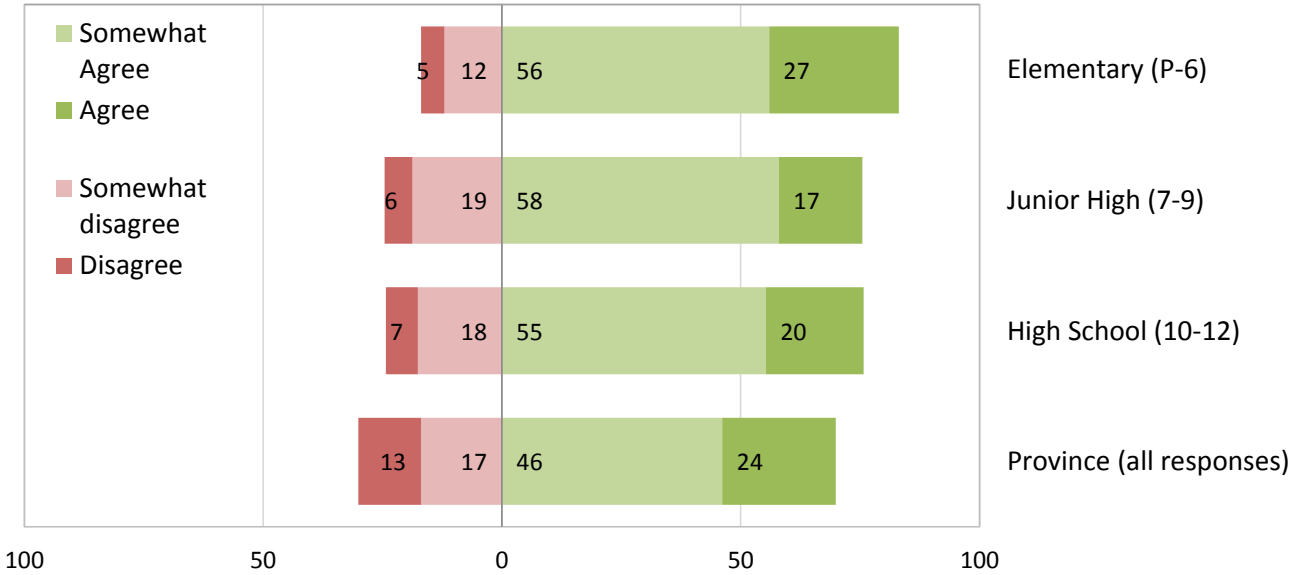
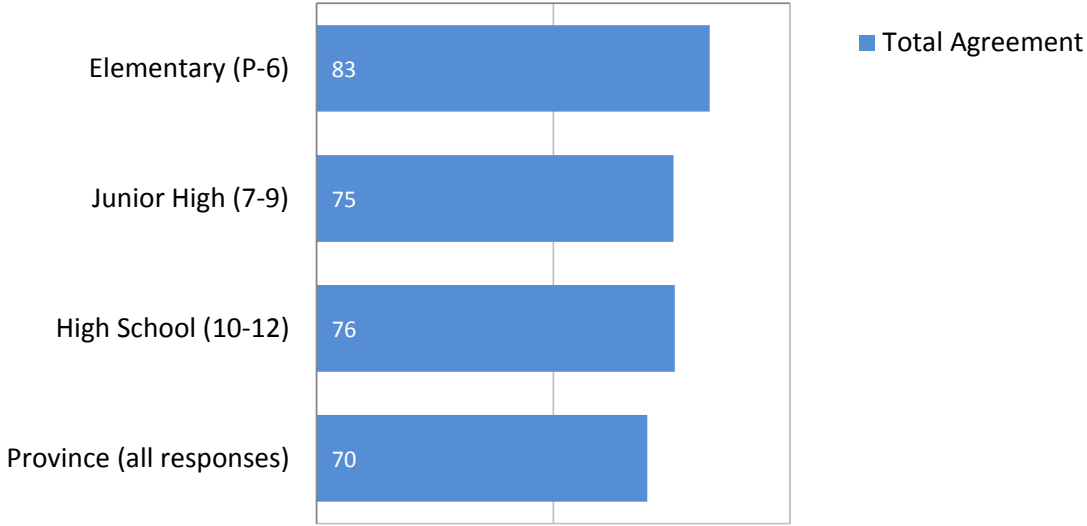
**20 Students and their families see their cultures reflected in their schools and classrooms. (EqHR)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	60	10	14	35	40	<b>75</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	372	16	17	40	27	<b>67</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	528	21	21	37	20	<b>57</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4363</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>70</b>



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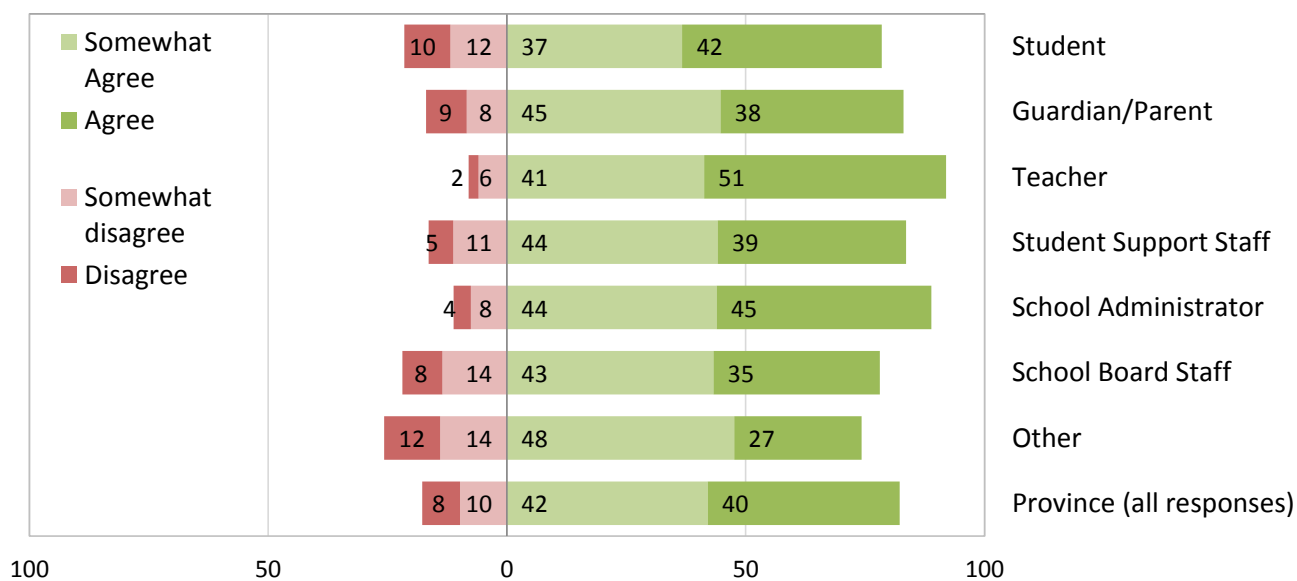
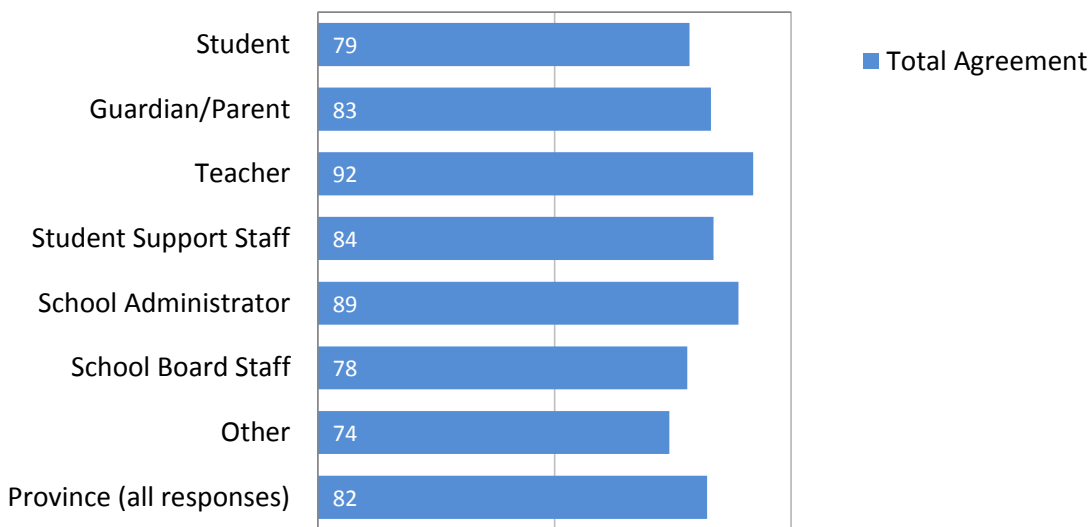
Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	232	5	12	56	27	<b>83</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	93	6	19	58	17	<b>75</b>
High School (10-12)	911	133	7	18	55	20	<b>76</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4363</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>70</b>





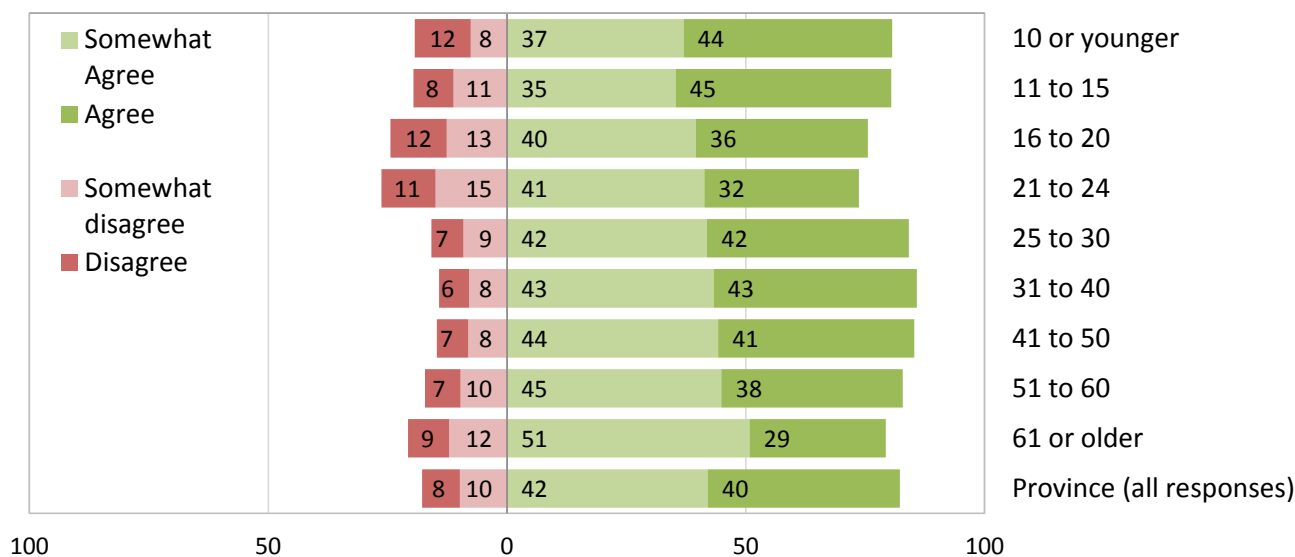
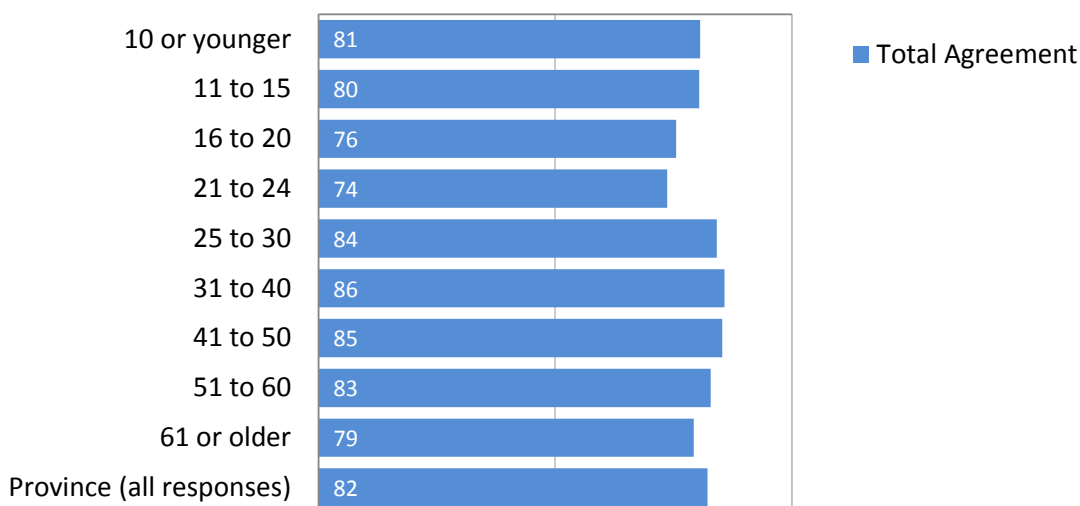
**21 Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights. (EqHR)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	708	10	12	37	42	<b>79</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1512	9	8	45	38	<b>83</b>
Teacher	3198	412	2	6	41	51	<b>92</b>
Student Support Staff	489	81	5	11	44	39	<b>84</b>
School Administrator	306	28	4	8	44	45	<b>89</b>
School Board Staff	205	50	8	14	43	35	<b>78</b>
Other	2942	918	12	14	48	27	<b>74</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3709</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82</b>



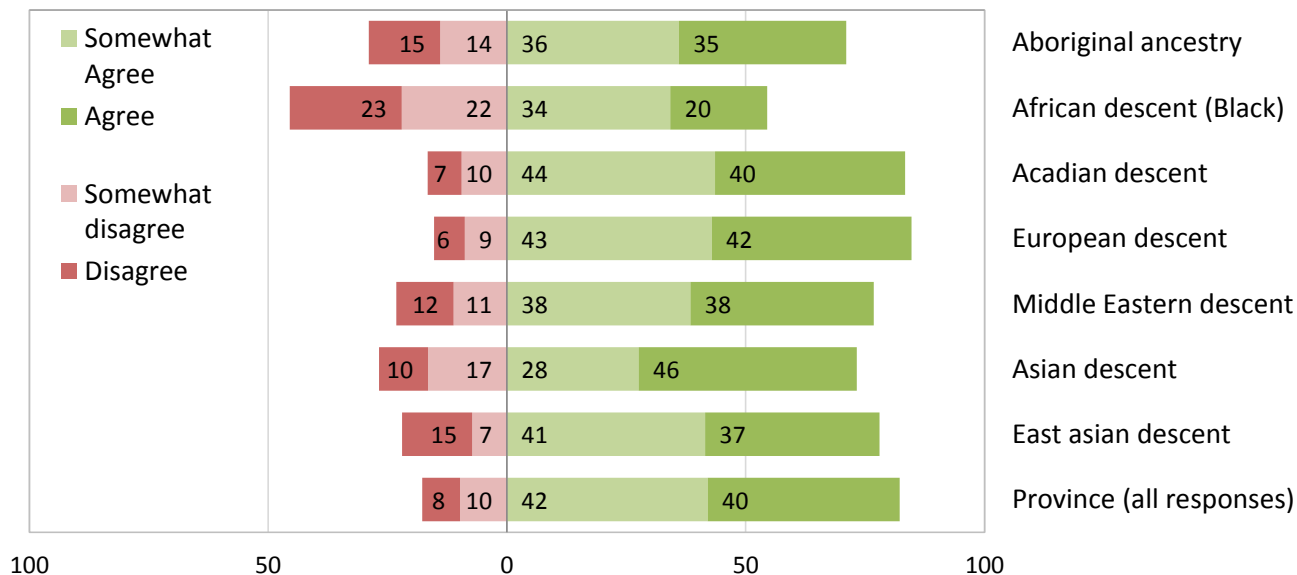
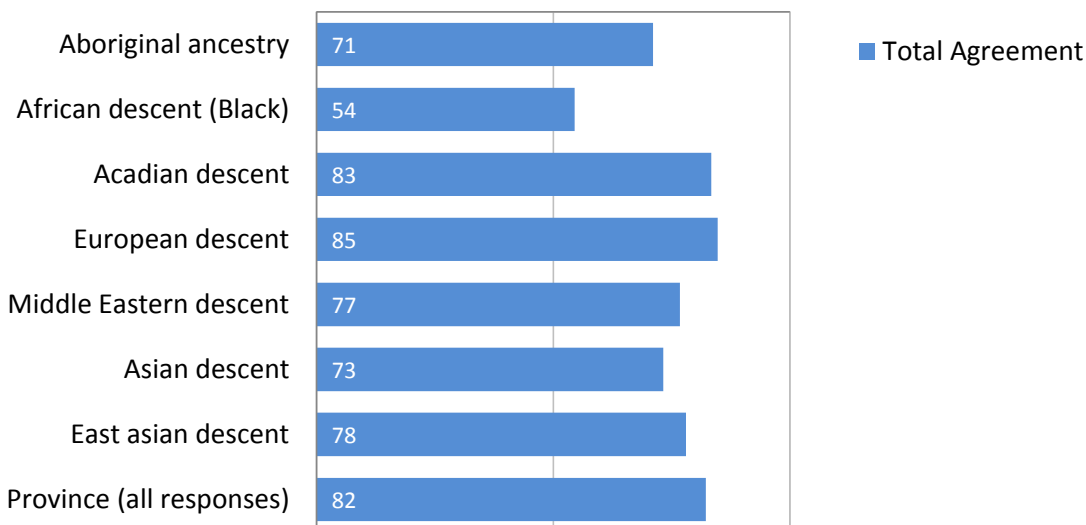
**21 Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights. (EqHR)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	87	12	8	37	44	<b>81</b>
11 to 15	2862	349	8	11	35	45	<b>80</b>
16 to 20	2549	399	12	13	40	36	<b>76</b>
21 to 24	319	72	11	15	41	32	<b>74</b>
25 to 30	1018	273	7	9	42	42	<b>84</b>
31 to 40	3776	833	6	8	43	43	<b>86</b>
41 to 50	4190	806	7	8	44	41	<b>85</b>
51 to 60	2545	545	7	10	45	38	<b>83</b>
61 or older	1102	320	9	12	51	29	<b>79</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3709</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82</b>



**21 Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights. (EqHR)**

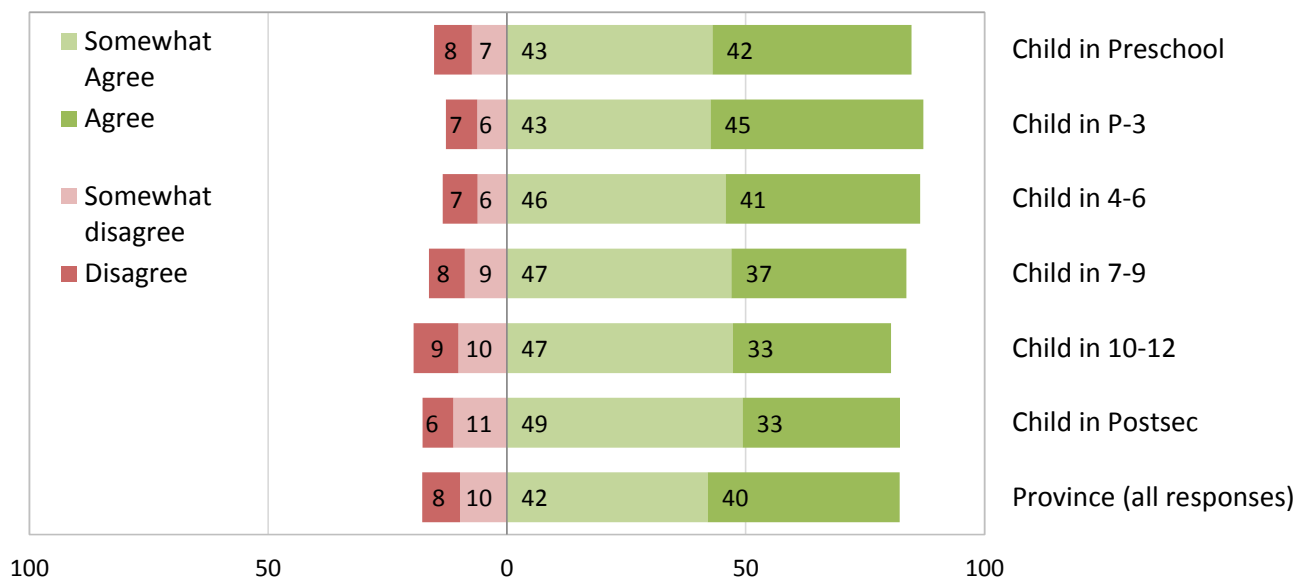
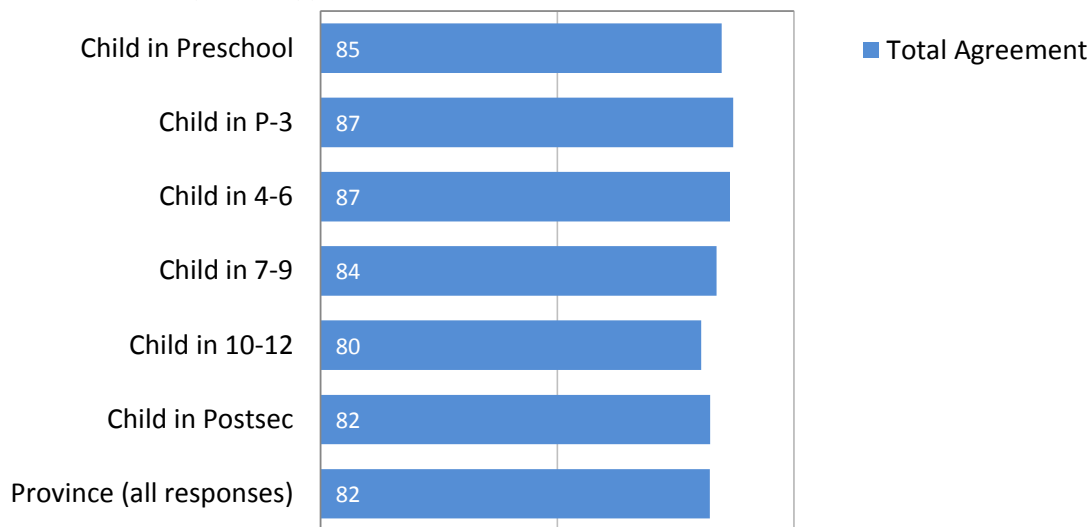
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	152	15	14	36	35	<b>71</b>
African descent (Black)	399	54	23	22	34	20	<b>54</b>
Acadian descent	2232	437	7	10	44	40	<b>83</b>
European descent	12054	2256	6	9	43	42	<b>85</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	45	12	11	38	38	<b>77</b>
Asian descent	168	41	10	17	28	46	<b>73</b>
East asian descent	54	13	15	7	41	37	<b>78</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3709</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82</b>



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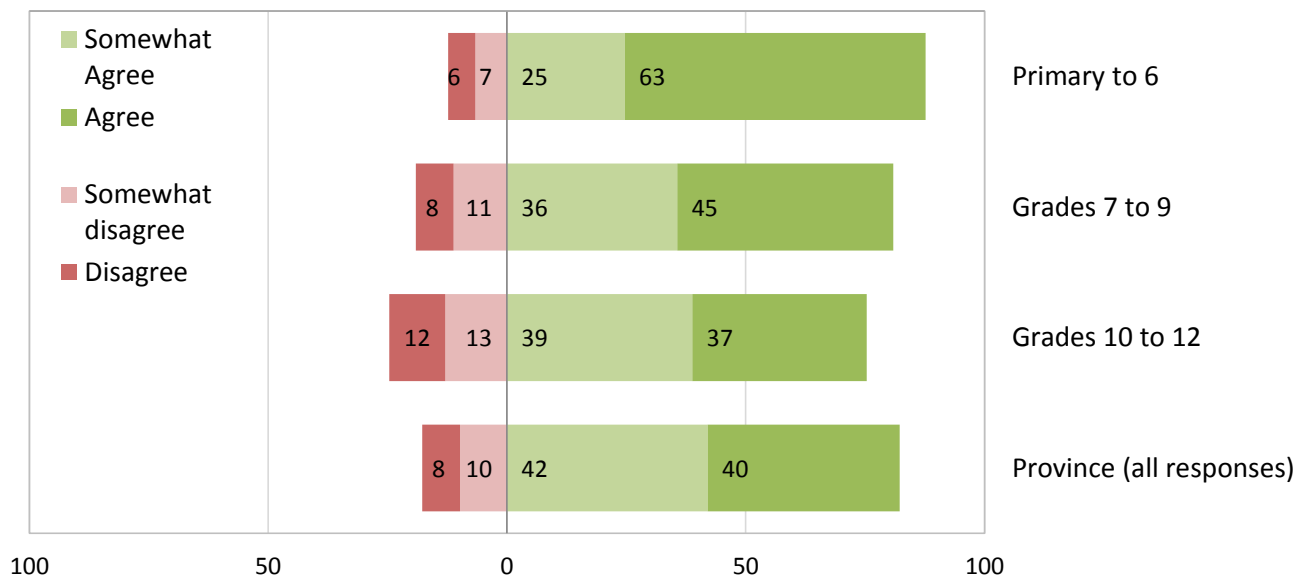
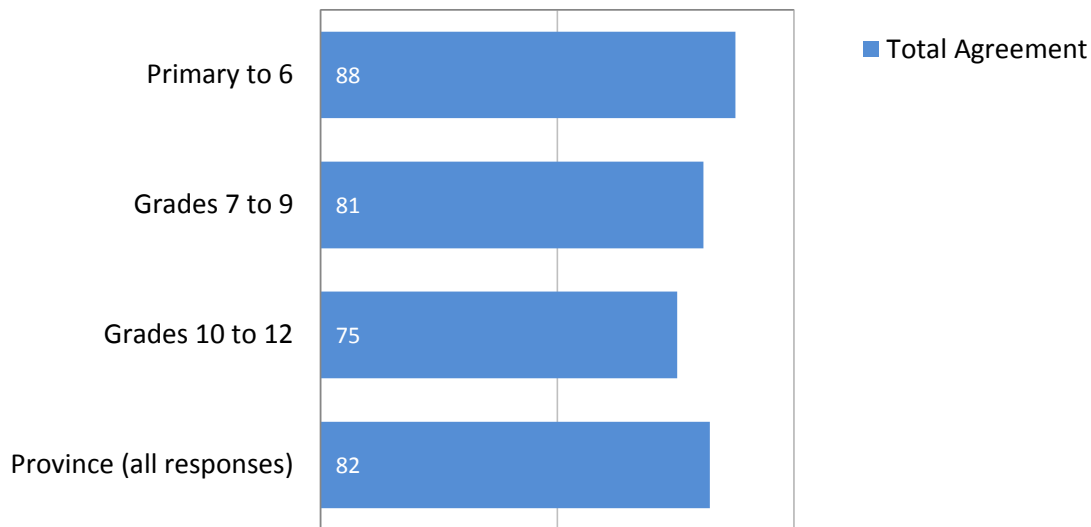
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	233	8	7	43	42	<b>85</b>
Child in P-3	2263	484	7	6	43	45	<b>87</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	374	7	6	46	41	<b>87</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	336	8	9	47	37	<b>84</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	348	9	10	47	33	<b>80</b>
Child in Postsec	365	71	6	11	49	33	<b>82</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3709</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



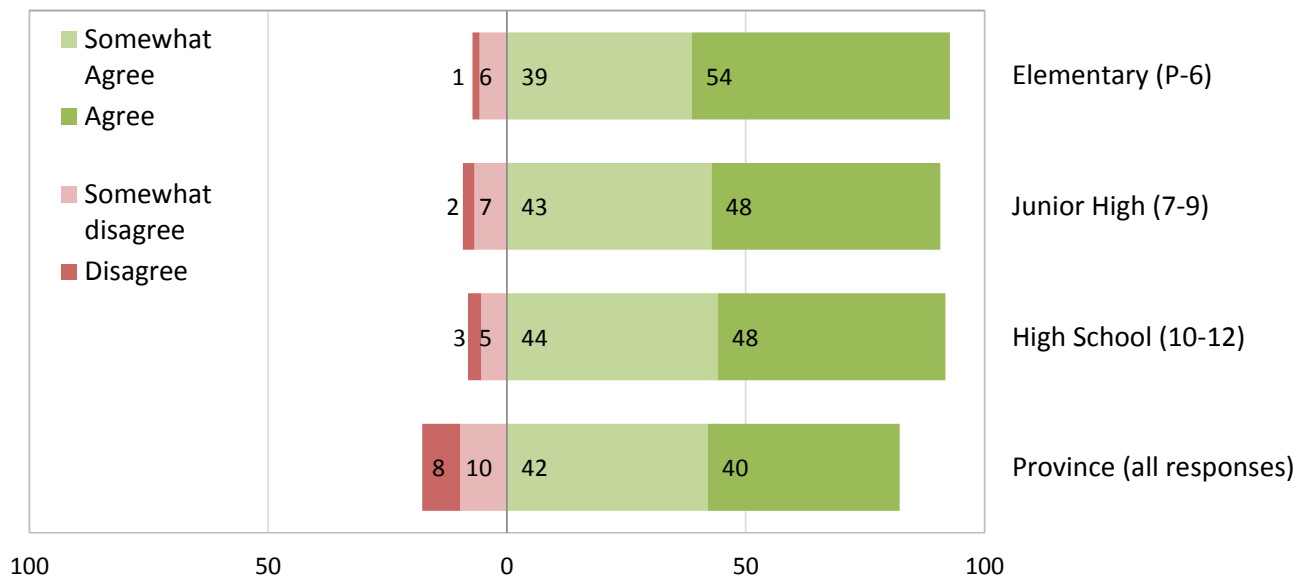
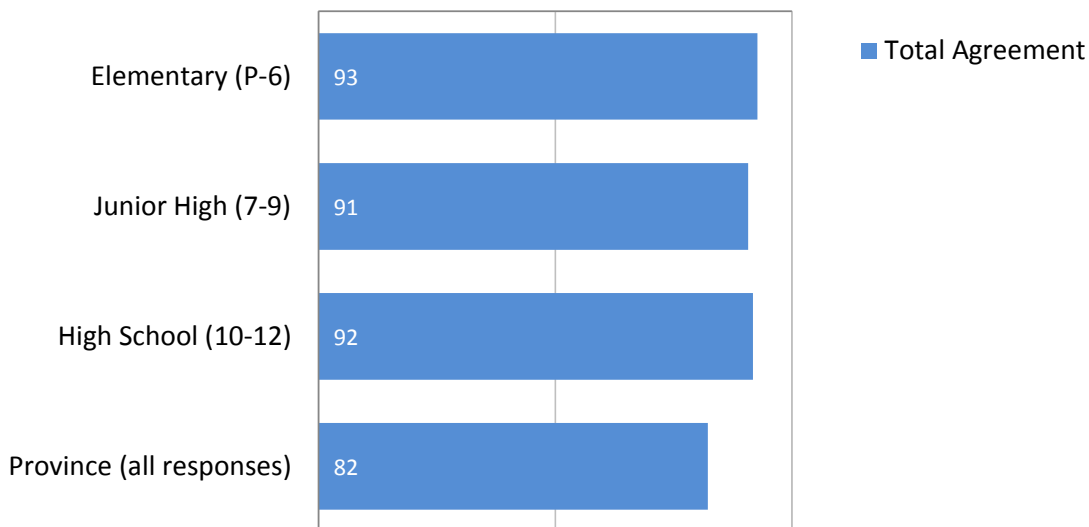
**21 Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights. (EqHR)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	43	6	7	25	63	<b>88</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	269	8	11	36	45	<b>81</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	396	12	13	39	37	<b>75</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3709</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82</b>



**21 Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights. (EqHR)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	208	1	6	39	54	<b>93</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	84	2	7	43	48	<b>91</b>
High School (10-12)	911	118	3	5	44	48	<b>92</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3709</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>82</b>



## EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Students and their families see their cultures reflected in their schools and classrooms.
2. Schools and classrooms show a commitment to equity and human rights.

### NUMBER OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

<b>Parents and Guardians</b>	1001
<b>Teachers</b>	471
<b>Community Members</b>	556
<b>Students</b>	433
<b>Student Support Staff</b>	62
<b>School Administrator</b>	71
<b>School Board Staff</b>	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2625</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

Response Category	Subcategories	Number of Responses
<b>Increase Commitment to Equity and Human Rights</b>	Schools generally need to increase their commitment to these issues	846
	Bullying is still a problem in schools	99
	There is too much focus on too few cultures	138
	Inequalities related to gender and for LGBT students still exist	98
	More diversity needs to be shown amongst teachers hired and school curriculum	271
	More resources need to be dedicated to this area	98
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1550</b>
<b>Equity and Human Rights Should Not be a School Priority</b>	Equity and human rights are not issues that should be addressed by schools	283
	Families should play a greater role in educating about these issues	45
	Schools have become too preoccupied with being politically correct	131
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>459</b>
<b>Schools are Committed to Equity and Human Rights</b>	Schools generally show a commitment to these issues	402
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>402</b>
<b>Lack of Diversity in Schools</b>	Schools are homogeneous, making it difficult to focus on diversity	89
	Uncertainty about whether schools are committed to these issues	49
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>138</b>



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***Despite many attempts to raise it with schools in Halifax many still have not only significant cultural competency issues, but are actually committing human rights violations. Complaining about it makes your child a target. This is particularly true for non-Christian students.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Why are there heritage months for certain groups and not others? Is European heritage not worth celebrating? Should it be hidden?***

- Guardian/Parent

***I am shocked at the level of racism that exists in the school and on the playground.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I don't believe that cultural diversity was well reflected in my school, nor greatly addressed.***

- Community Member

***There's a lot of talk and many cultural fairs, but real evidence of cultural competency is very limited.***

- Community Member

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## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: INCREASE COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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**Schools generally need to increase their commitment to these issues** – improvements are needed in terms of building equity and respecting human rights.

- We are failing to represent all cultures in the classroom.
- Not enough is being done in the classroom on these issues – especially from a cultural perspective.
- There is a high focus on Eurocentric cultures.
- Students are not exhibiting a sense of equity/diversity - there is still a high level of racism on the playground and amongst students.
- Although lip service is played to these issues, there is a lack of action (e.g. posters, awareness months, policies that aren't enforced, etc.) – these comments apply to all levels, i.e. teachers, administration, curriculum, EECD.
- Despite a commitment to these issues, we have a long way to go to successfully addressing them.
- In some cases (fewer), it was felt there is a visible lack of commitment from administrators and teachers; this manifested in terms of lack of respect felt in some cases.
- There is a lack of consistency in regards to how different races are treated.
- More could be done from a professional development (PD) perspective for teachers.
- Feeling that the onus should not be left solely with teachers, and that curriculum materials and other supports should be in place that cover these issues.
- There is a need for greater diversity in the classroom, e.g. via immigration.
- Not all cultures/backgrounds are covered equally.
- Most comments relate to racial issues, but some refer to needs for students with physical/ mental health issues in regards to equity and human rights.

**Bullying is still a problem in schools** – this represents a lack of respect for human rights (see also reference to bullying under School Climate).

- Frequent comments about how the persistent prevalence of bullying is an indicator that equity and human rights are still issues that are not being addressed.
- There is a lack of resources available to staff for addressing bullying and administering consequences.
- Schools are not equipped to deal with bullying – there are not enough staff resources, training and tools.
- Despite zero bullying policies, more enforcement is needed.
- Lack of understanding amongst bullies of how their behaviors affect others.
- Examples cited of teachers being the bullies, as well as staff being the victims of bullying.

**There is too much focus on too few cultures** – cultural awareness should be broader.

- Multiple references to schools’ tendencies to focus programming and events on a specific culture for a specific timeframe (e.g. Black History month, Aboriginal months) - the pursuit for cultural awareness should be ongoing and better integrated.
- Comments also pertain to tendencies to focus on select cultures over others (e.g. Acadian, black, Aboriginal).
- Feeling that this approach ends up making cultural awareness feel forced/ superficial.
- Feeling that Christian holidays and traditions are not allowed in schools.
- In French schools, there is some sense that Acadian cultural traditions are taking priority over those of Anglophone students, and that Francophone families are being neglected.
- There are many references to a lack of emphasis on other European cultures such as Dutch, Scottish, German, Irish, etc. and a feeling that too much emphasis is being placed on Mi’kmaq and African-Nova Scotian cultures.
- There is a desire for more emphasis on Gaelic cultural traditions and language.

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***In spite of all the discussion around bullying, some teachers/ principals choose to turn their back.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Still a lot of bullying and I don't believe the schools are equipped to handle it.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Diversity and cross cultural awareness should be a continuous support and not just a specific month or week. Inclusive attitudes and appreciation for multiculturalism should always be reflected in our schools.***

- Student Support Staff

***I never see any teacher ever talk about Scottish or Irish cultures – it is always on cultures that aren't in our school.***

- Student

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**Inequalities related to gender and for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students still exist** – their human rights should be respected.

- Need for increased recognition of LGBT issues and communication in classrooms about them (including recognition that families with same-sex parents exist).
- Need for increased support for LGBT students.
- Several comments applauding schools for their recognition of LGBT rights and supports for these students.
- There is a need for gender neutral washrooms.
- Sexism is present in schools (multiple references were made to the story related to proper clothing in Truro as an example of sexism - <http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/05/13/nova-scotia-school-says-jeans-shorts-too-distracting-for-boys-gives-girl-detention-for-fashion-crime/>).
- There is some feeling that girls are given preferential treatment over boys by teachers; on the other hand, some feel that boys are given more respect.
- There is a lack of male teachers in schools.
- More awareness is needed about gender stereotypes.

**More diversity needs to be shown amongst teachers hired and school curriculum** – also, the extent to which these issues are promoted/ addressed varies based on the teacher and school/community.

- Teachers should be more culturally diverse to reflect student diversity.
- Some teachers lack knowledge about minority issues and culture and therefore do not have the skills to teach about these issues.
- Curriculum does not reflect cultural diversity; or, if it does, it is not done in an effective way.
- It is difficult to have the time to teach about cultural diversity given that the curriculum is already heavy.
- Additional language courses should be available (could be online).
- Teachers do not prioritize equity and human rights, and in some cases turn a blind eye to these issues.
- Much of how these issues are dealt with in schools depends on the teacher.

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***No equity in the way that diversity education is delivered. Some principals are still uncomfortable with discussions around the LGBTQ community.***

- Teacher

***Same sex families are not represented in schools. Many children struggle to see themselves or identify with their environment or curriculum.***

- Guardian/Parent

***With most teachers being of European descent there is a lack of understanding of different cultures that are not their own.***

- School Administrator

***We promote diversity and the principle of social justice. Unfortunately, students see few examples of ethnic diversity in teaching staff.***

- Teacher

***The curriculum itself is where the equity is missing.***

- Teacher

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***Expertise in these areas is not available.***

- Teacher

***Teachers would use better resources if they were available.***

- Teacher

***There is a lot of space for improvement here. Teachers should have tools related to cultural competency and teaching diverse groups of children, including children with special needs or with disabilities, as well as immigrant children who have the advantage of knowing additional languages.***

- Guardian/Parent

***We are getting there. Again, too many priorities and not enough time and support.***

- School Administrator

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- Racism exists amongst some teachers.
- The level of priority placed on equity and human rights varies by school/community; some schools seem more open to multiculturalism than others
- This is difficult to generalize to all Nova Scotia schools.

**More resources need to be dedicated to this area** - better supports are needed in order to integrate equity and human rights in classrooms.

- More knowledge/training and expertise are required amongst school staff.
- Cost can be prohibitive to engaging community members to provide education.
- More staff is required to be able to have the time to dedicate to these issues.
- There should be some budget allocation to these issues.
- Resources could be provided that are dedicated to creating more culturally rich environments – e.g. music, art, cultural awareness.
- Need more diverse teaching materials.
- Need sensitivity training for students.

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## SECTION 2: EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SHOULD NOT BE A SCHOOL PRIORITY

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***Make an effort but not a priority.***

- Teacher

***There are too many cultures to try to address.***

- Teacher

***A person's culture is not going to give them skills and training for a job.***

- Community Member

***These are societal issues and are, at the best, peripheral to the primary duties of the public schools.***

- Teacher

***This should not be taught just at school – it starts at home and the schools do a good job of developing a culture where they strive to be open.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I agree with human rights but is this the responsibility of the school or the home? When did parents stop holding responsibility for this?***

- Student Support Staff

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### **Equity and human rights are not issues that should be addressed by schools**

- Some feel that a focus on culture and human rights has little to do with education, and that by covering them in the classroom it is confusing for students and distracting from core education priorities.
- Feeling that emphasis should be on teaching a Canadian culture rather than cultural diversity.
- Cultural diversity, like religion, should be kept separate from the school system.
- Curriculum should focus on Canadian studies.
- Feeling that the system is becoming too accommodating of others' cultures.
- Some note that with all of the other priorities for funding and focus in the school system, this one should not be high on the list.
- Lack of relevance to educational outcomes and goals.
- Feeling that Christian culture is being rejected (specific reference to Christmas traditions).
- There is too much focus on issues related to equality and human rights – to the point of distraction.

**Families should play a greater role in educating about these issues** - schools can't be expected to be responsible for everything.

- Schools need to define their purpose in a more proactive way and be clear about what is and isn't within their responsibility
- Attitudes that stem from the home environment are very difficult to alter in a school setting
- Increased parental involvement in school initiatives and efforts would be helpful
- Racism is a societal issue and shouldn't be blamed on schools
- Cultures should be taught at home in the family context
- Schools should do more to educate parents on these issues
- Desire for increased parental/community engagement in relation to cultural events

**Schools have become too preoccupied with being politically correct** - can result in perceptions that some groups are favoured.

- Political correctness has swung so far that now Christians/ the majority feel discriminated against (most comments related to Christianity refer to Christmas concerts and feelings that traditions are not being allowed); feeling that this has also resulted in minority groups having greater opportunities/respect than others.
- Diversity programs can exaggerate differences and end up creating discrimination as a result.
- Feeling that there is some fear of offending certain groups, therefore more emphasis is placed on educating about them.
- There is discrepancy in tolerated behavioural standards amongst students (and teachers) of different cultural groups.

### **SECTION 3: SCHOOLS ARE COMMITTED TO EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

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**Schools generally show a commitment to these issues** - also includes statements that acknowledge although some schools are improving, more work is needed in this area.

- Agreement that diversity and equity are stressed in schools.
- Improvements have been made from past experiences.
- Parents are impressed with stories from their children about how other students are treated, and are pleased their children are exposed to cultural initiatives.
- Teachers are working hard on this area.
- Parents feel their children are getting the supports they need to feel included.

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***Students do learn about other cultures – sometimes it seems they become more important than our own Canadian culture.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Sometimes schools go too far in their efforts to be inclusive (discouraging Christmas concerts). Political correctness is pervasive in very negative ways.***

- Teacher

***It's wonderful to see schools embracing diversity. There are so many opportunities for students to learn about different cultures.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Very impressed with how this has become more than an isolated theme. It is now integrated year-long.***

- Teacher

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## SECTION 4: LACK OF DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS

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***My school is 98% white. There is not much diversity happening.***

- Teacher

***My school system had very little diversity due to geographical location so this question doesn't apply to me.***

- Community Member

***We are not in an area with a very diverse group. Having exchange students helps somewhat but unfortunately our children aren't exposed to the cultures a child in an urban area would be.***

- Guardian/Parent

***There is lots of talk. Not sure what actually happens and what students actually learn.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I don't know what a commitment to equity and human rights means...***

- Guardian/Parent

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**Schools are homogeneous, making it difficult to focus on diversity** - difficult to feel that multiculturalism is present, or that students have awareness of equity and human rights issues (Note: all comments in this section relate to diversity in terms of multiculturalism, vs. other potentially marginalizing issues).

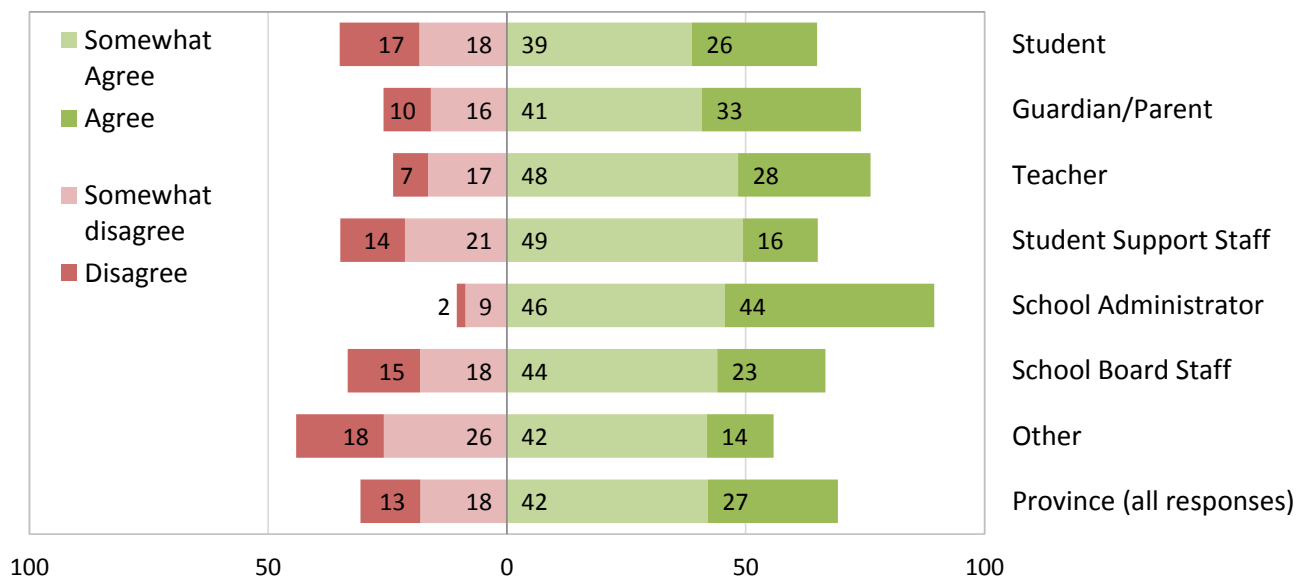
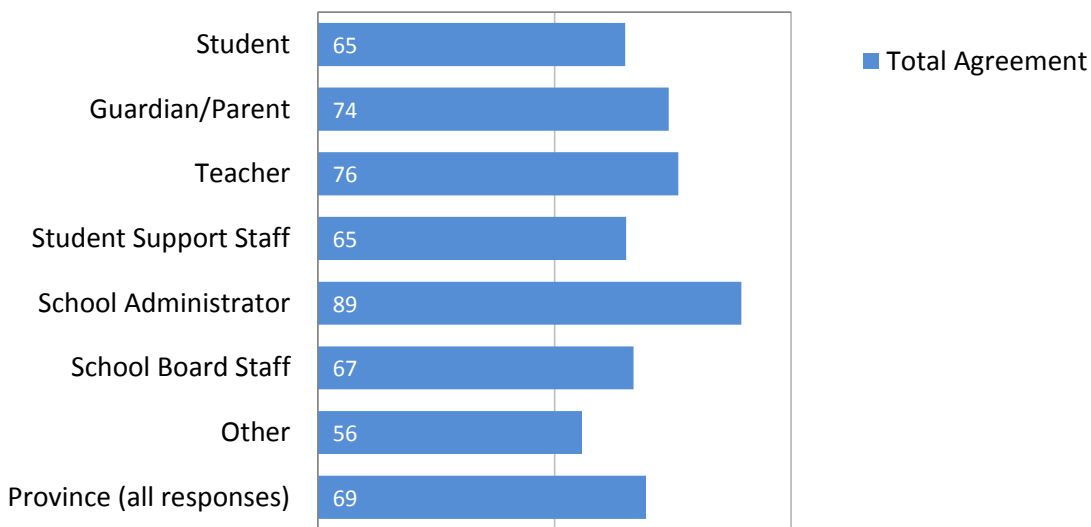
- Comments emphasize that the vast majority of students in some schools are white, so although it is felt that racism is not an issue, there is also a lack of cultural awareness.
- Some note that in cases where there is a low population of visible minorities there is a feeling that these issues are irrelevant, and that more needs to be done to change this perception and engrain it in teaching methods.
- It is difficult to capture students' interests when they feel disconnected from the issues.
- Where students are not exposed to other cultures they can be less accepting when minorities move into the area.

**Uncertainty about whether schools are committed to these issues** - some felt unsure about their ability to respond.

- Several comments related to difficulty understanding the question (may have been valuable to define equity/ human rights).
- Although there is a lot of talk, there is some uncertainty about how much is actually taught/ absorbed.
- There were several comments regarding feeling a lack of communication with parents about this, or lack of awareness based on feeling shut out of schools.

**25 Relationships between students and teachers are respectful. (Climate)**

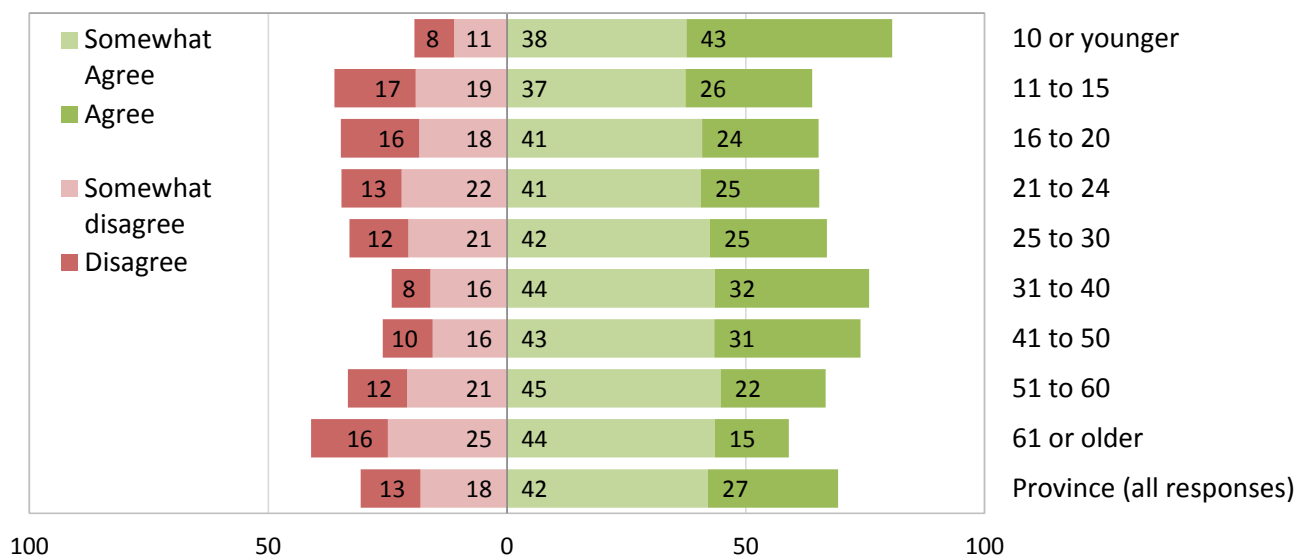
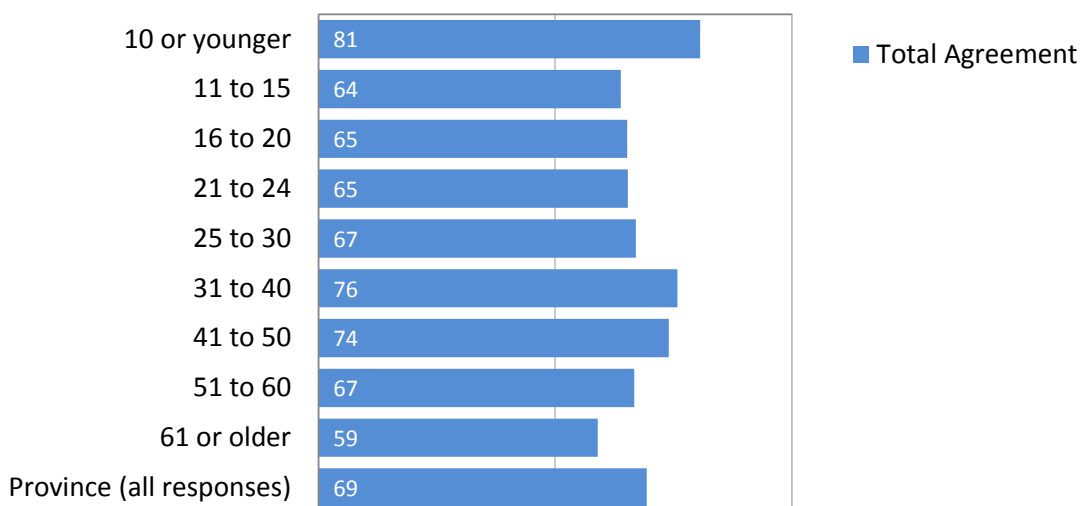
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School Administrator	306	30	2	9	46	44	<b>89</b>
School Board Staff	205	46	15	18	44	23	<b>67</b>
Other	2942	859	18	26	42	14	<b>56</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3173</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>





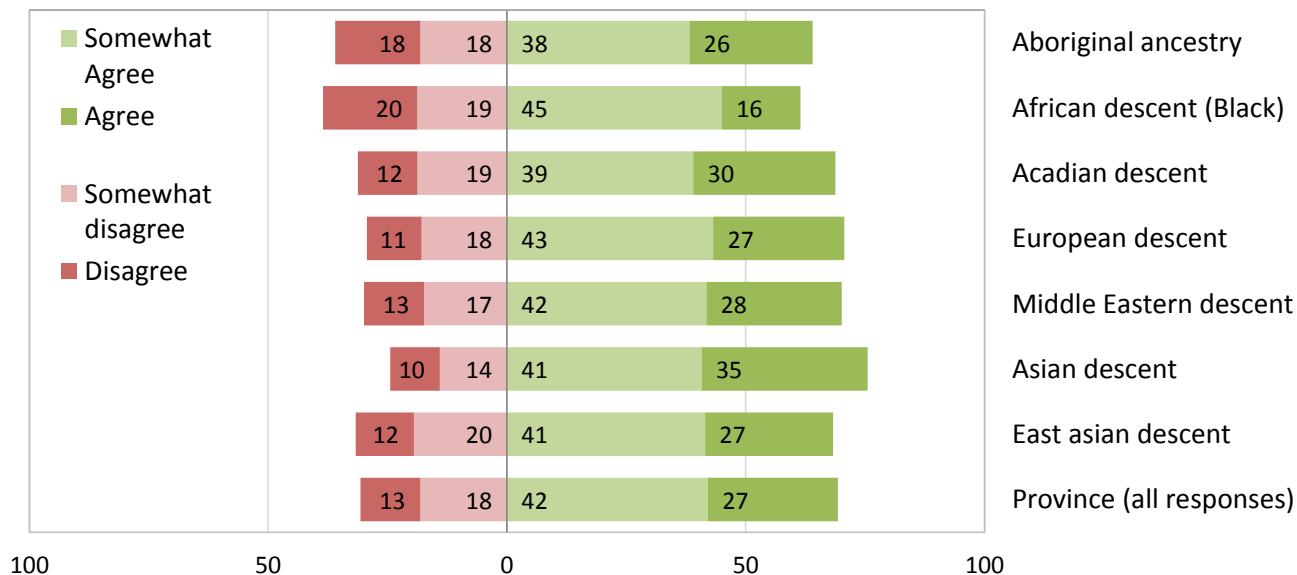
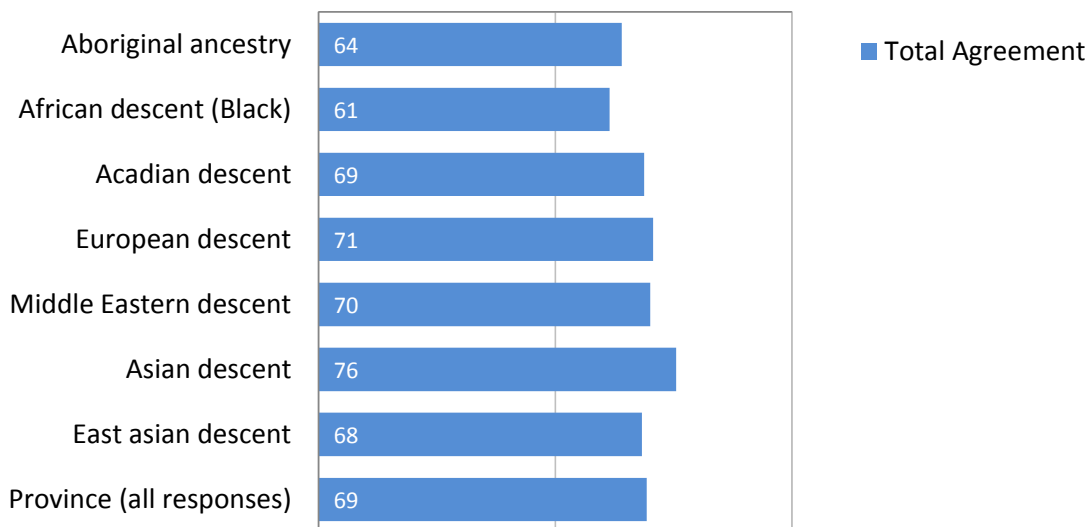
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31 to 40	3776	690	8	16	44	32	<b>76</b>
41 to 50	4190	632	10	16	43	31	<b>74</b>
51 to 60	2545	492	12	21	45	22	<b>67</b>
61 or older	1102	300	16	25	44	15	<b>59</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3173</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>



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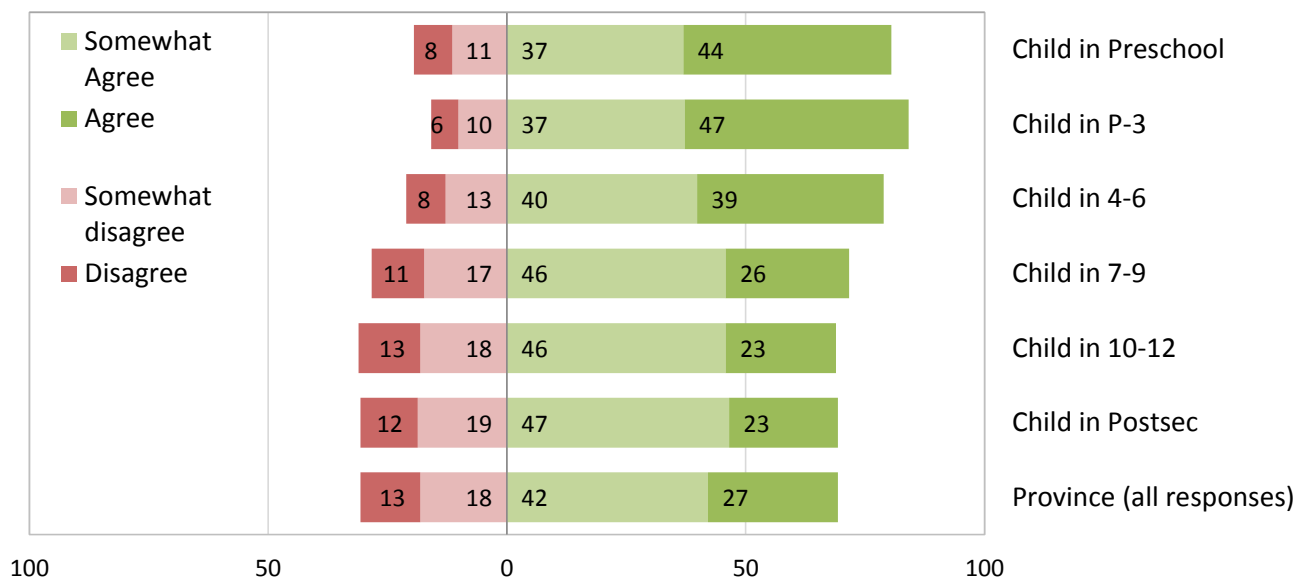
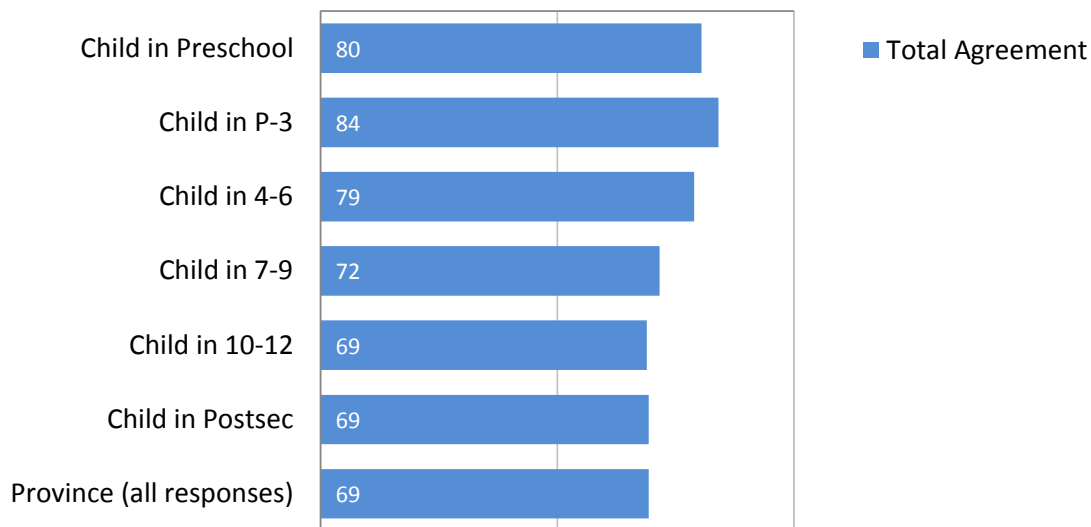
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	129	18	18	38	26	<b>64</b>
African descent (Black)	399	59	20	19	45	16	<b>61</b>
Acadian descent	2232	375	12	19	39	30	<b>69</b>
European descent	12054	1928	11	18	43	27	<b>71</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	43	13	17	42	28	<b>70</b>
Asian descent	168	33	10	14	41	35	<b>76</b>
East asian descent	54	13	12	20	41	27	<b>68</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3173</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>



**25 Relationships between students and teachers are respectful. (Climate)**

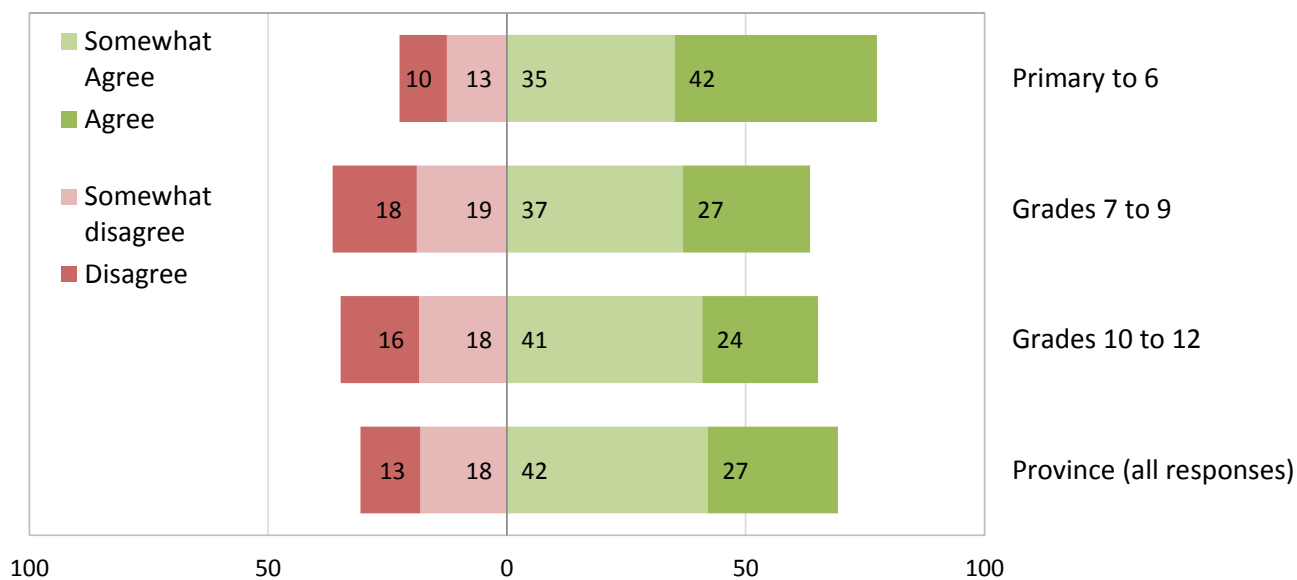
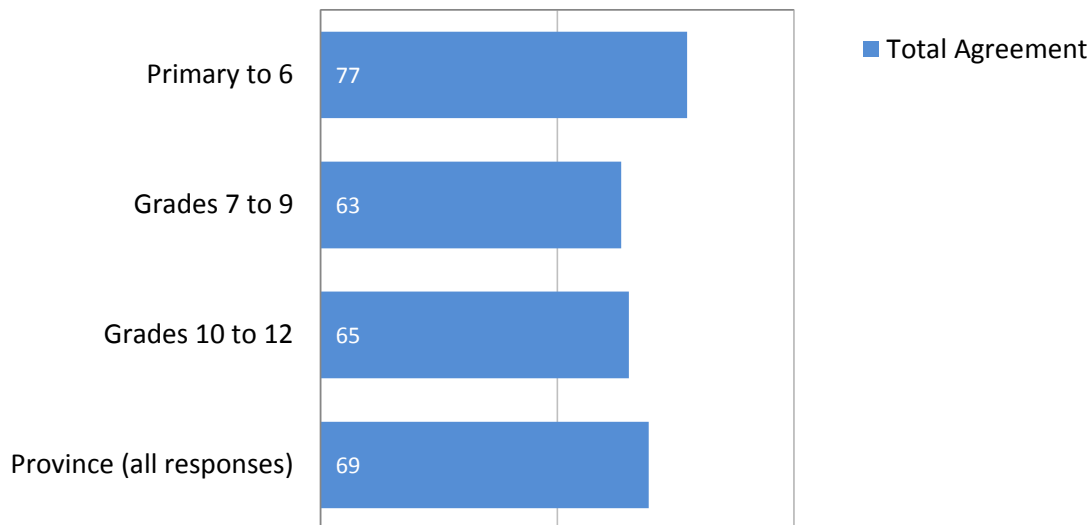
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	208	8	11	37	44	<b>80</b>
Child in P-3	2263	358	6	10	37	47	<b>84</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	267	8	13	40	39	<b>79</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	237	11	17	46	26	<b>72</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	239	13	18	46	23	<b>69</b>
Child in Postsec	365	49	12	19	47	23	<b>69</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3173</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



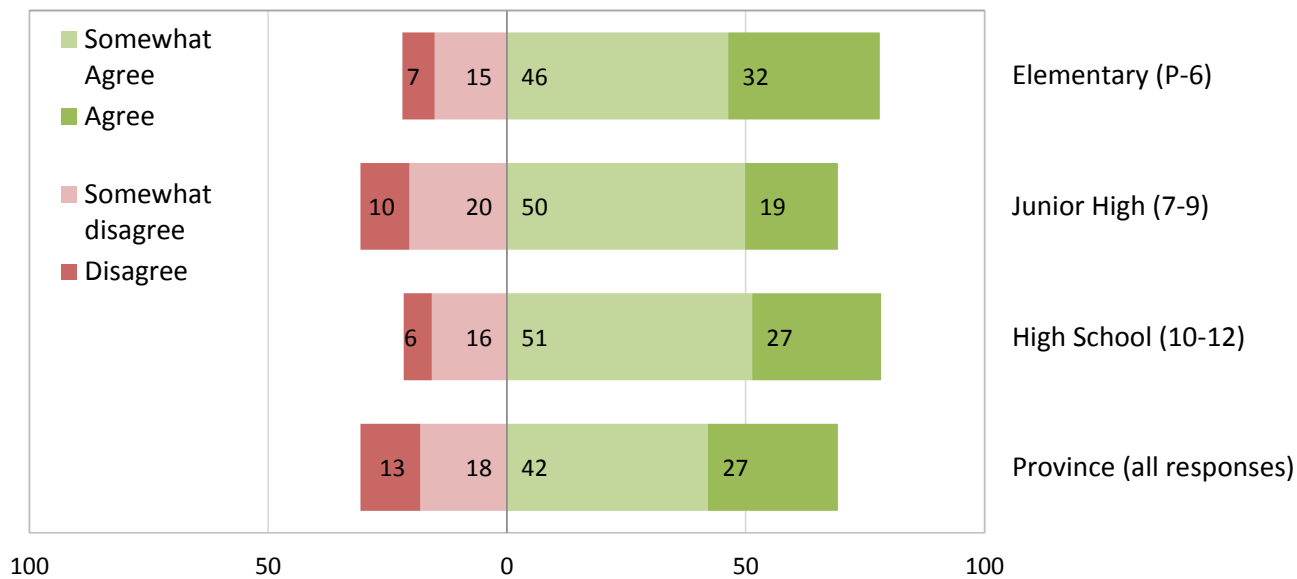
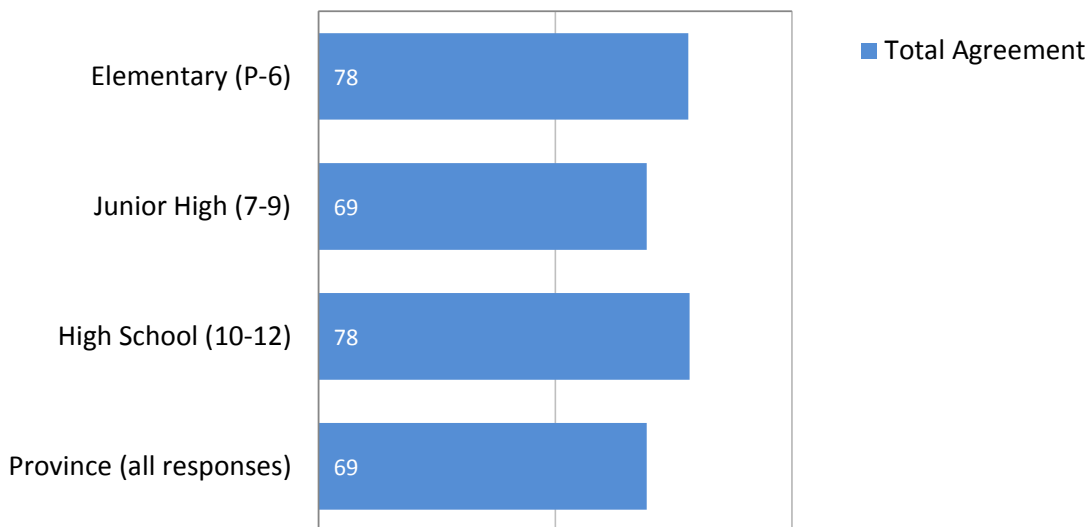
25 Relationships between students and teachers are respectful. (Climate)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	32	10	13	35	42	<b>77</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	211	18	19	37	27	<b>63</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	374	16	18	41	24	<b>65</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3173</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>



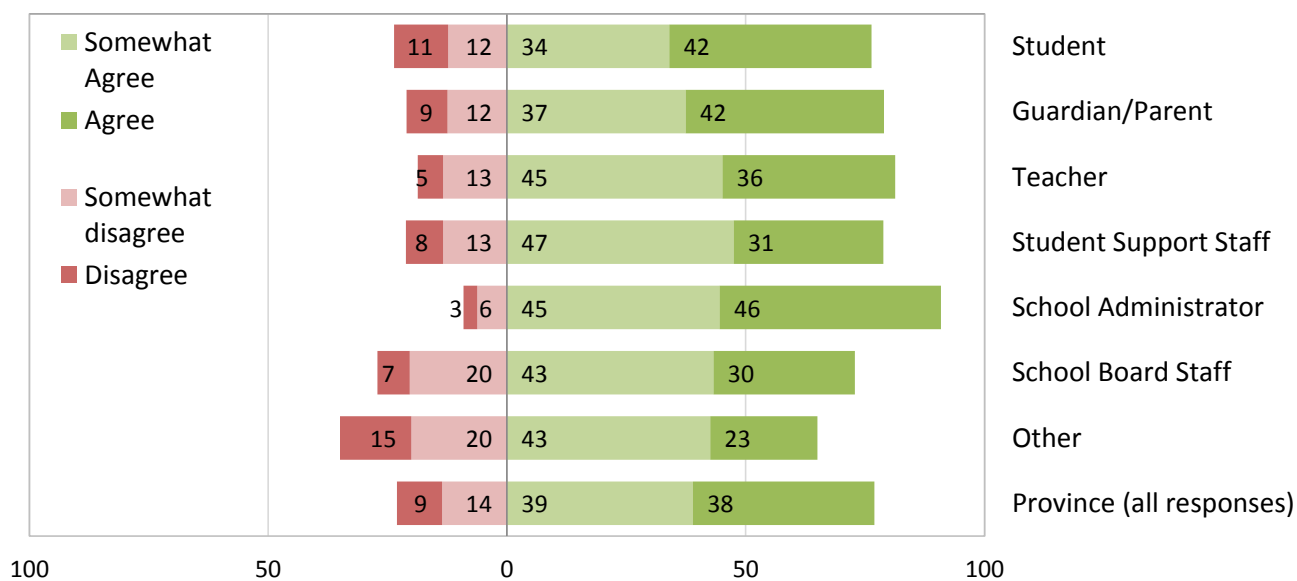
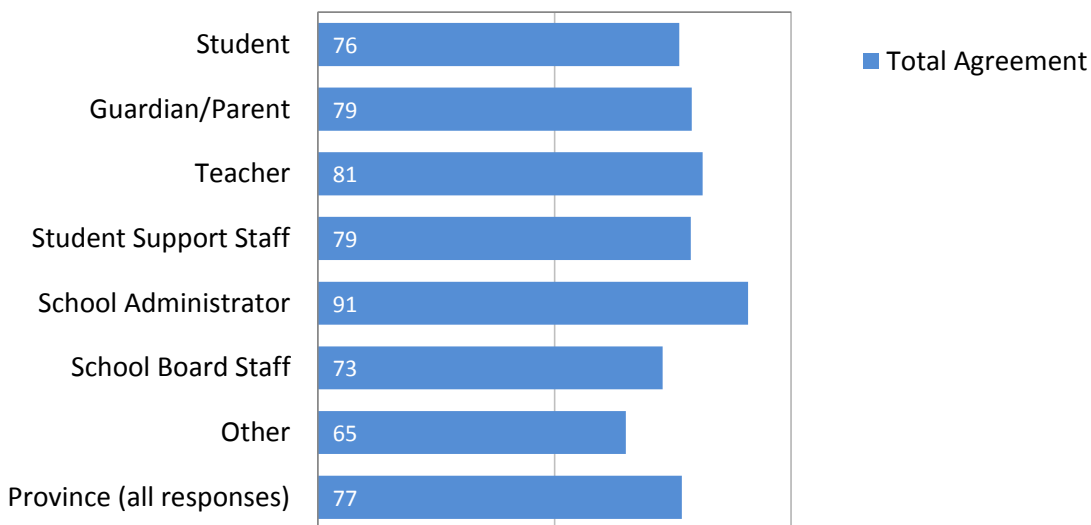
25 Relationships between students and teachers are respectful. (Climate)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	205	7	15	46	32	<b>78</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	80	10	20	50	19	<b>69</b>
High School (10-12)	911	116	6	16	51	27	<b>78</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3173</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>69</b>



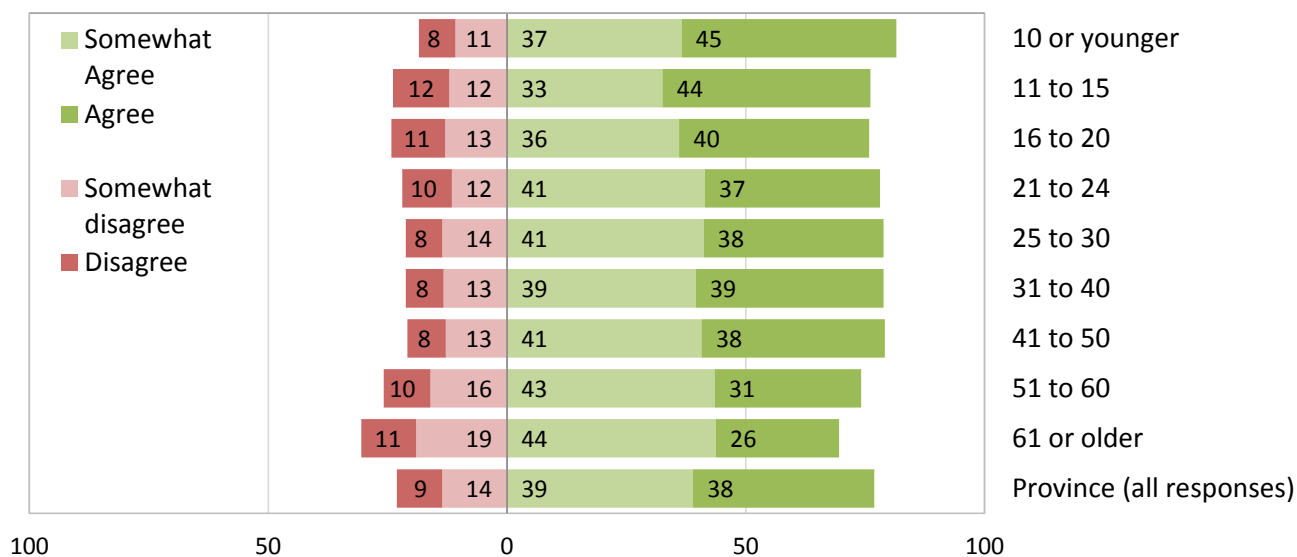
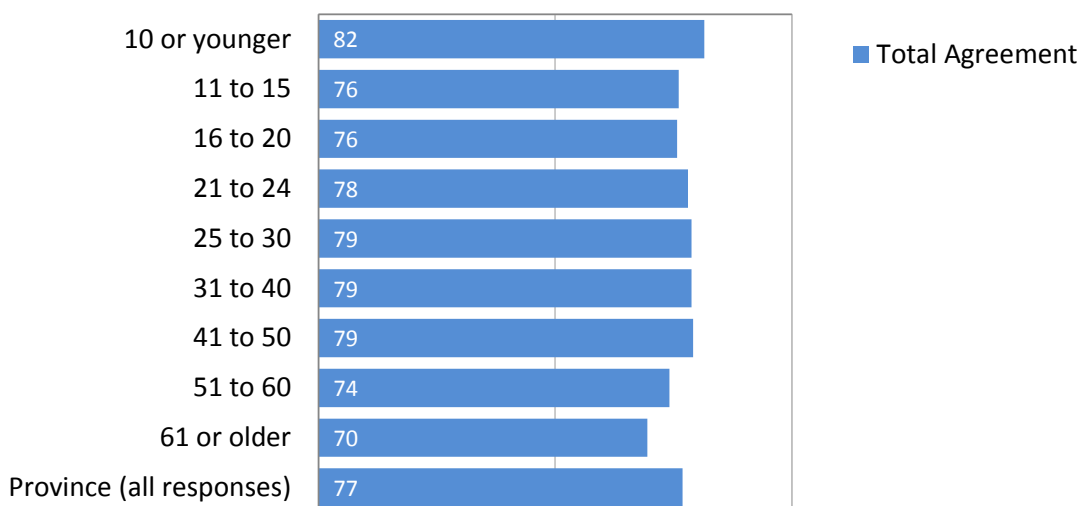
26 Students and staff feel safe in schools. (Climate)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	684	11	12	34	42	<b>76</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1272	9	12	37	42	<b>79</b>
Teacher	3198	408	5	13	45	36	<b>81</b>
Student Support Staff	489	78	8	13	47	31	<b>79</b>
School Administrator	306	32	3	6	45	46	<b>91</b>
School Board Staff	205	43	7	20	43	30	<b>73</b>
Other	2942	911	15	20	43	23	<b>65</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>77</b>



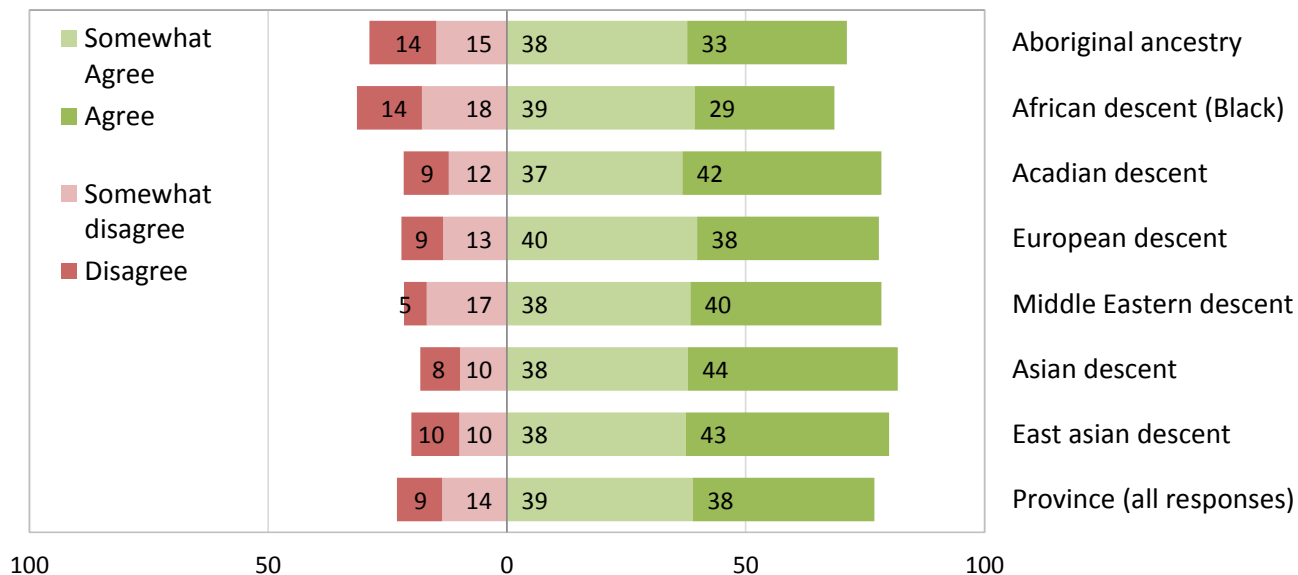
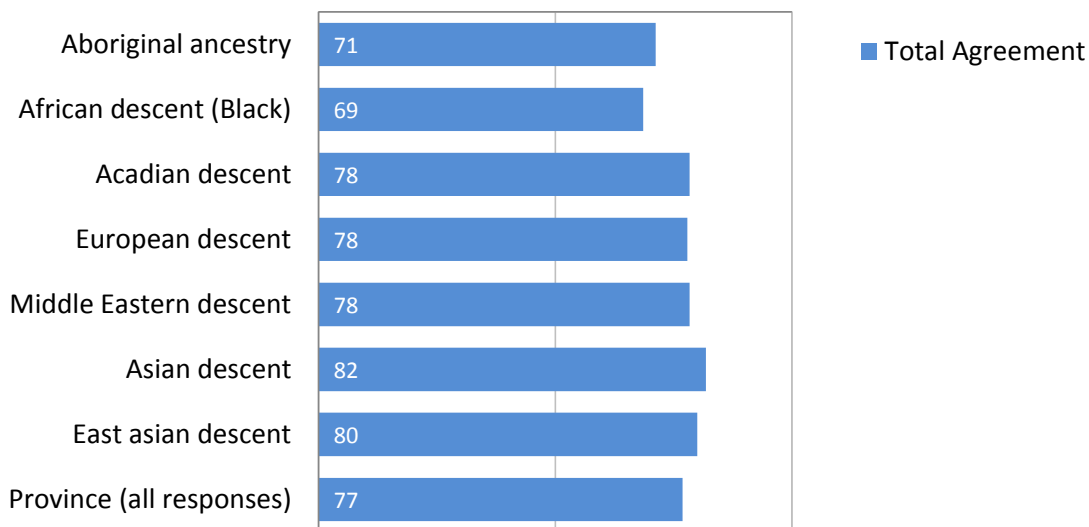
26 Students and staff feel safe in schools. (Climate)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	76	8	11	37	45	<b>82</b>
11 to 15	2862	329	12	12	33	44	<b>76</b>
16 to 20	2549	384	11	13	36	40	<b>76</b>
21 to 24	319	68	10	12	41	37	<b>78</b>
25 to 30	1018	272	8	14	41	38	<b>79</b>
31 to 40	3776	748	8	13	39	39	<b>79</b>
41 to 50	4190	683	8	13	41	38	<b>79</b>
51 to 60	2545	528	10	16	43	31	<b>74</b>
61 or older	1102	315	11	19	44	26	<b>70</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>77</b>



26 Students and staff feel safe in schools. (Climate)

Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	139	14	15	38	33	<b>71</b>
African descent (Black)	399	68	14	18	39	29	<b>69</b>
Acadian descent	2232	404	9	12	37	42	<b>78</b>
European descent	12054	2093	9	13	40	38	<b>78</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	45	5	17	38	40	<b>78</b>
Asian descent	168	36	8	10	38	44	<b>82</b>
East asian descent	54	14	10	10	38	43	<b>80</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>77</b>

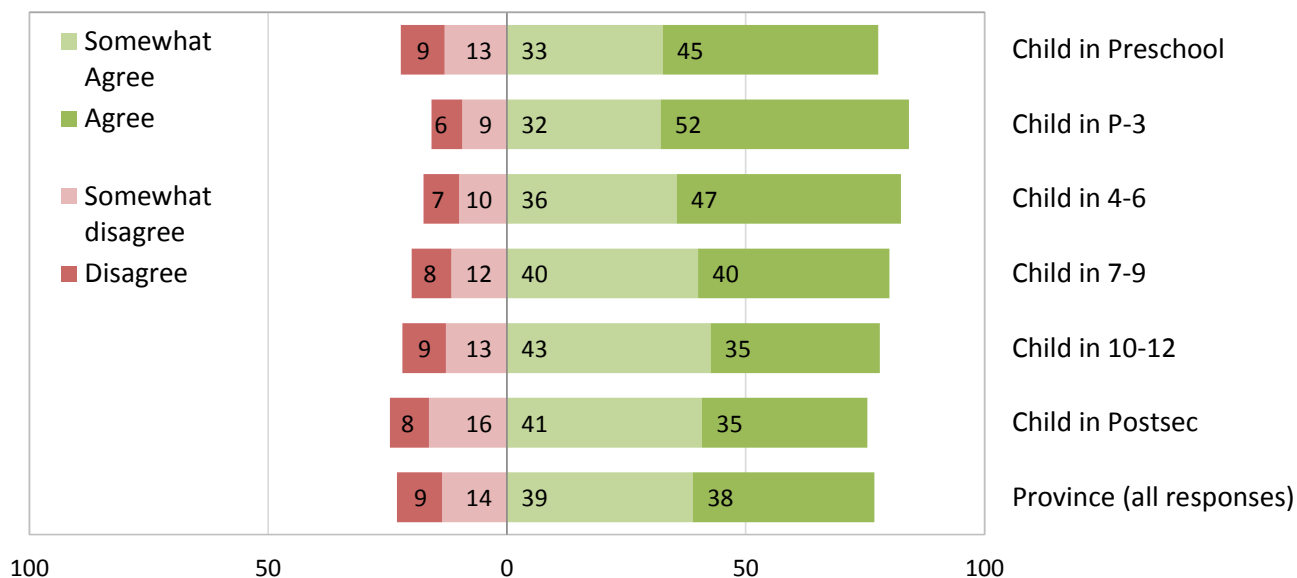
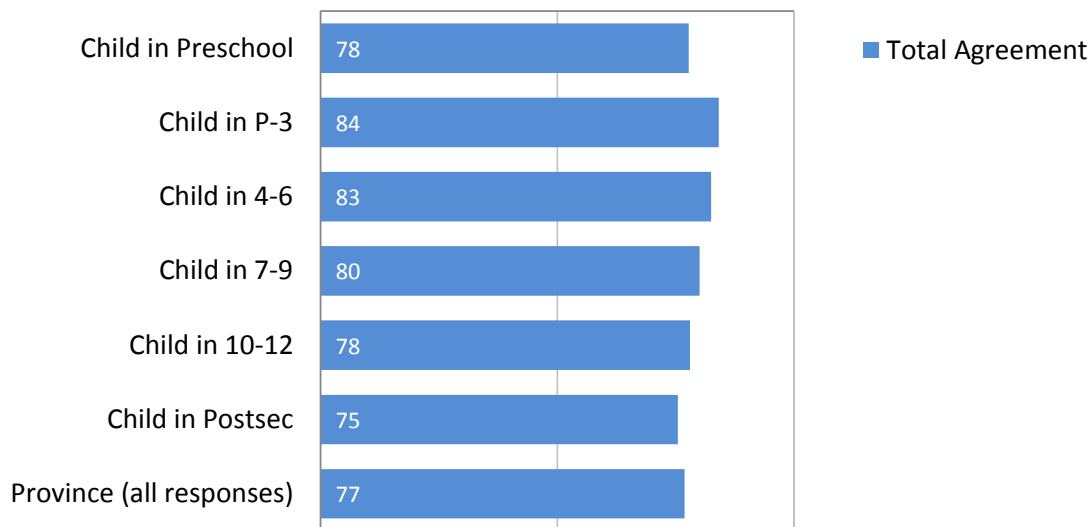




**26 Students and staff feel safe in schools. (Climate)**

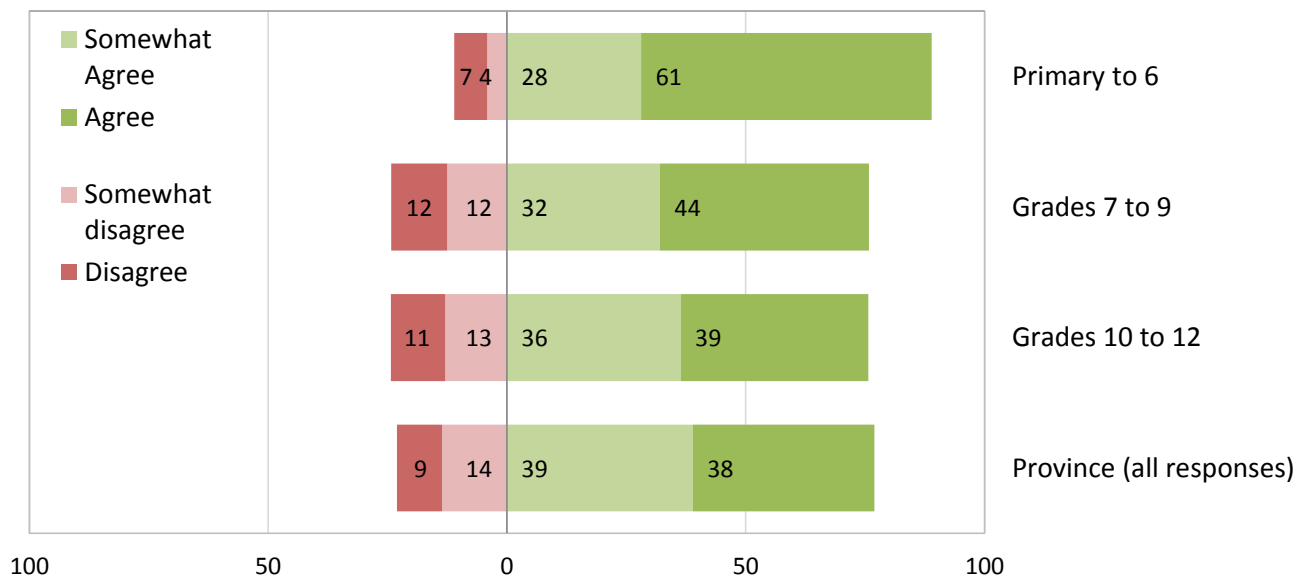
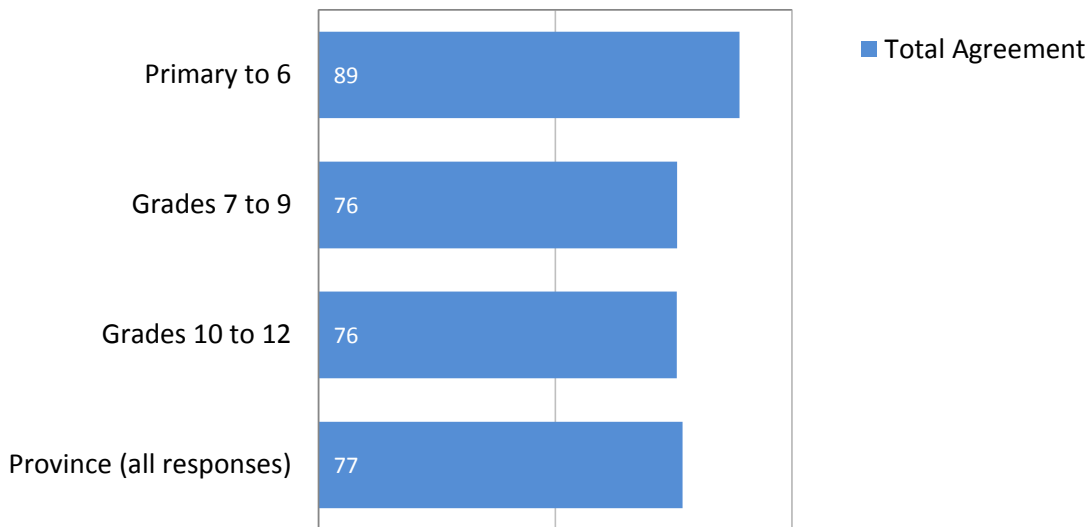
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	219	9	13	33	45	<b>78</b>
Child in P-3	2263	406	6	9	32	52	<b>84</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	305	7	10	36	47	<b>83</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	266	8	12	40	40	<b>80</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	264	9	13	43	35	<b>78</b>
Child in Postsec	365	59	8	16	41	35	<b>75</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>77</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



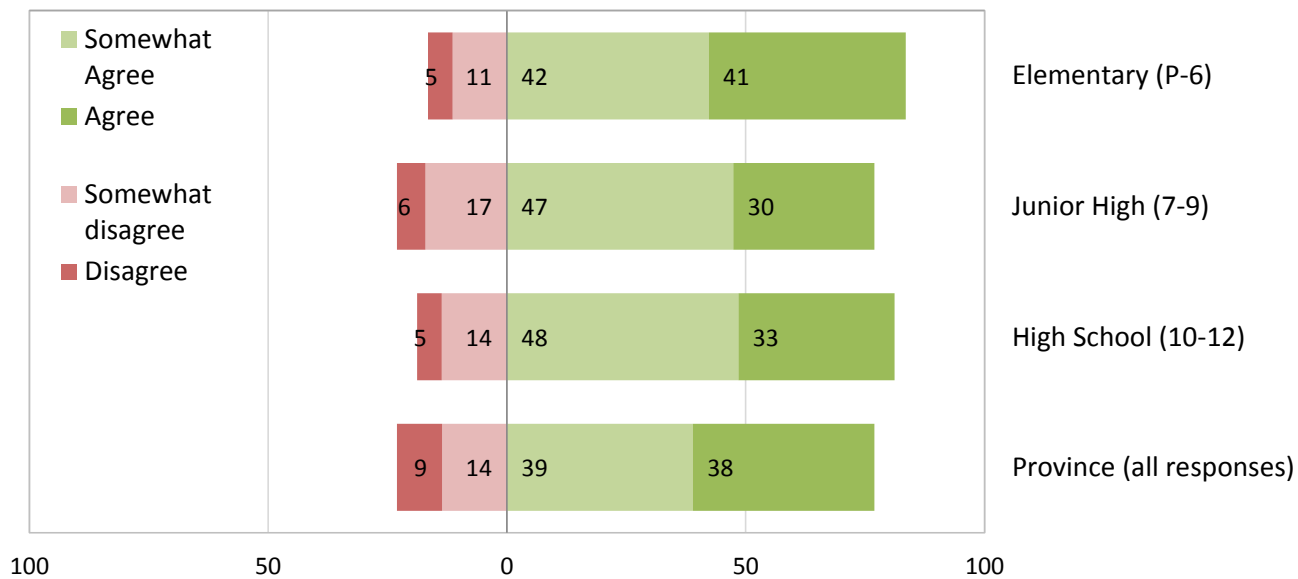
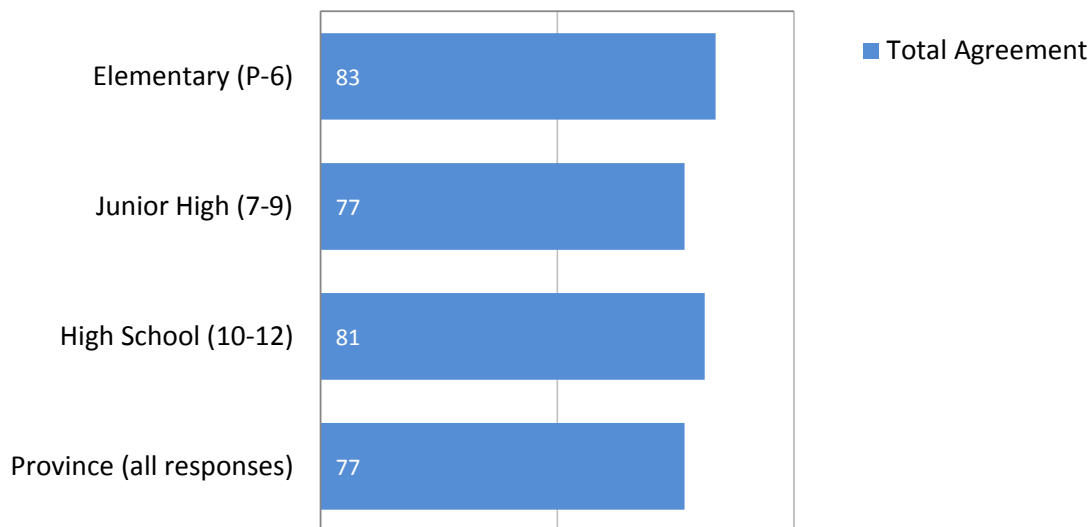
**26 Students and staff feel safe in schools. (Climate)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	37	7	4	28	61	<b>89</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	255	12	12	32	44	<b>76</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	392	11	13	36	39	<b>76</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>77</b>



26 Students and staff feel safe in schools. (Climate)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	212	5	11	42	41	<b>83</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	79	6	17	47	30	<b>77</b>
High School (10-12)	911	114	5	14	48	33	<b>81</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3428</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>77</b>



## SCHOOL CLIMATE

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Relationships between students and teachers are respectful.
2. Students and staff feel safe in schools.

### NUMBER OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

Parents and Guardians	1303
Teachers	858
Community Members	665
Students	580
Student Support Staff	120
School Administrator	90
School Board Staff	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3659</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

Response Category	Subcategories	Number of Responses
<b>Respect in Schools</b>	Relationships are generally respectful in schools	226
	Students are disrespectful towards teachers and school staff	722
	Teachers show disrespect towards students	321
	Bullying remains persistent in schools	311
	Respect needs to be taught in schools via curriculum and by example	198
	Parents have a role to play in teaching respect	162
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1940</b>
<b>School Safety</b>	Schools generally feel safe and safety should be a priority	240
	Schools generally feel unsafe	502
	The presence of police, drills and other security measures are being used in schools to increase safety	63
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>805</b>
<b>General Comments</b>	The complexity of student needs in today's classrooms affects school climate	166
	There are not enough discipline measures/ consequences for unacceptable student behavior	321
	The school climate is dependent on the individual school, staff and principal	183
	More support needs to be given to teachers	126
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>796</b>

## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: RESPECT IN SCHOOLS

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*I have taught at both rural high schools and elementary schools. Relationships were very good between students and teachers because of the support given by the administration.*

*- Community Member*

*It is my view that more could be done to establish and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and teachers.*

*- Community Member*

*Teachers have to put up with a lot of disrespectful behaviours and attitudes from students. Students should have more consequences for their behaviours.*

*- Parent/Guardian*

*The atmosphere in the school hallways is not one of respect. Poor language, lack of regard for school rules, and cleanliness are constantly apparent.*

*- Parent/Guardian*

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**Relationships are generally respectful in schools** - includes responses that speak positively about respect in schools and/or note the importance of building a climate of respect.

- Relationships between most students and teachers are respectful.
- More respect is needed in the classroom – this is a major problem but it is difficult to know how to resolve it.
- More could be done to establish a climate of respect in schools.
- The level of respect varies between courses, age level (respect is more evident in elementary) and schools.
- Teachers have to demand respect in order to get it.

**Students are disrespectful towards teachers and school staff** – student behaviors need improvement.

- Students show little respect for teachers (swearing, using cell phones in the classroom, engaging in violent behavior and rudeness).
- Sometimes it just takes a few students who are very disrespectful to upset the climate of the classroom.
- Despite teachers' efforts to be respectful to students, the respect is not reciprocated.
- The level of disrespect from students seems to be on the rise.
- There is a general sense of entitlement amongst students and lack of demand for accountability for actions in schools, which contributes to lower respect for authority.
- This problem is societal and goes beyond the classroom.

**Teachers show disrespect towards students** – teacher behaviors need improvement.

- Teachers show disrespect in the classroom (singling out students and berating them, making students feel stupid, using intimidation, making inappropriate remarks).
- Respectful relationships require respect from both sides and teachers do not always exhibit this.
- Teachers are reaching their breaking points due to lack of support and lack of options for dealing with bad behaviors.
- Some teachers no longer like their jobs and shouldn't be in the classroom.

**Bullying remains persistent in schools** – bullying is contributing to a negative school climate.

- Parents should be better informed about incidents of bullying affecting their children.
- Bullying remains a safety concern and contributes to student anxieties.
- The “zero tolerance” policy on bullying involves more words than action; bullying campaigns have not been effective.
- Bullying of teachers and school staff is also a serious issue.

**Respect needs to be taught in schools via curriculum and by example** – teachers in particular need to be role models.

- Teachers are role models and should act accordingly (e.g. how they dress, how they develop relationships with students, how they interact with other teachers, avoiding favoritism).
- Respect should be taught.

**Parents have a role to play in teaching respect** – respect begins at home.

- Parents should encourage their students to respect teachers.
- Some parents are disrespectful to teachers and do not set a good model for their children.
- More parent education about how to deal with bullying/ disrespect would be helpful.
- Parents have too much power.

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***There are so many stories about bullying that I sometimes wonder about safety.***

- Community Member

***Bullying, although being addressed, is still an issue.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Teachers have to earn respect through academic integrity and compassion rather than being buddies.***

- Teacher

***Unfortunately parents and teachers often blame each other for the students' problems, whether related to achievement or behavior. Principals seem scared to set limitations for parents' requests.***

- Guardian/Parent

***This again is more of a society issue where parents, and not the students and teachers, are failing.***

- Community Member

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## SECTION 2: SCHOOL SAFETY

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***Schools are generally safe but the outside world comes into play every day for students. They don't feel safe in that world.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I think that schools are places where safety prevails.***

- Community Member

***Staff safety can be an issue. We have many students who are violent with adults and there is very little that we can do to ensure student and staff safety.***

- School Administrator

***I don't feel we have strong enough rules in place to keep the school safe and free from dangerous people.***

- Teacher

***Lockdown drills should be more regular. Locked doors should be strictly enforced.***

- School Board Staff

***The reason I feel unsafe in this school is because of the police officers in the school. If the school was safe we would not need them.***

- Student

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**Schools generally feel safe and safety should be a priority** - includes responses that speak positively about the level of safety in schools and/or note the importance of increasing safety.

- Schools are generally safe environments.
- Students and staff feel safe in schools.
- The world outside schools is becoming less safe, which is translating to what students feel.
- Safety issues are becoming increasingly important.
- There has been so much emphasis on school security that they do not feel welcoming.

**Schools generally feel unsafe** – improvements need to be made to improve school safety.

- Violence, bullying and weapons in schools lead to decreased student safety.
- Students and staff do not feel safe.
- Doors are left unlocked, making schools feel unsafe.
- Some school buildings are structurally unsafe (lack of proper ventilation, unsafe structures).
- Psychological safety is at risk due to cyberbullying and other threats in schools.
- Security is lacking in schools.

**The presence of police, drills and other security measures are being used in schools to increase safety** – comments pertain to the degree to which they are effective.

- Lockdown drills and the presence of police officers can contribute to feelings of being unsafe in schools.
- More police/ security officers should be present in schools and more drills practiced.
- Better safety policies should be developed and enforced.



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***There are small children with serious behavioural issues that put other children and adults at risk for injury and nothing is done about it.***

- Teacher

***Administrators are dealing with students with complex emotional/ physical/ behavioural needs that are outside their expertise.***

- Teacher

***The consequences they receive are often inadequate and do not deter the offending students from repeating their behavior, nor do they deter other students from being disrespectful.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Violent students are returned to classes continually after short suspensions, if any.***

- Teacher

***It all depends on the administration and the culture they create in their schools.***

- Teacher

***There is definitely a lack of respect for teachers by students and parents. Professionalism has been lost and as a result morale is low.***

- Teacher

### SECTION 3: GENERAL COMMENTS

**The complexity of student needs in today's classrooms affects school climate** – teachers are faced with many diverse needs.

- Mental health issues (and lack of supports for dealing with them) can have an effect on students and safety –more dialogue and awareness is needed.
- Physically aggressive special needs students can make teachers and other students feel unsafe.
- Schools where students with criminal records are being reintegrated can feel unsafe.

**There are not enough discipline measures/ consequences for unacceptable student behavior** – school staff does not have tools for correcting poor behaviors.

- There should be better enforcement of the no bullying policy.
- Teachers often have no recourse when students are disrespectful or violent, which only exacerbates the problem.
- Teachers and administrators need to be able to implement consequences for bad behavior; students are aware of the lack of consequences and act accordingly.
- Teachers feel powerless.

**The school climate is dependent on the individual school, staff and principal** – it is difficult to make comments about schools in general.

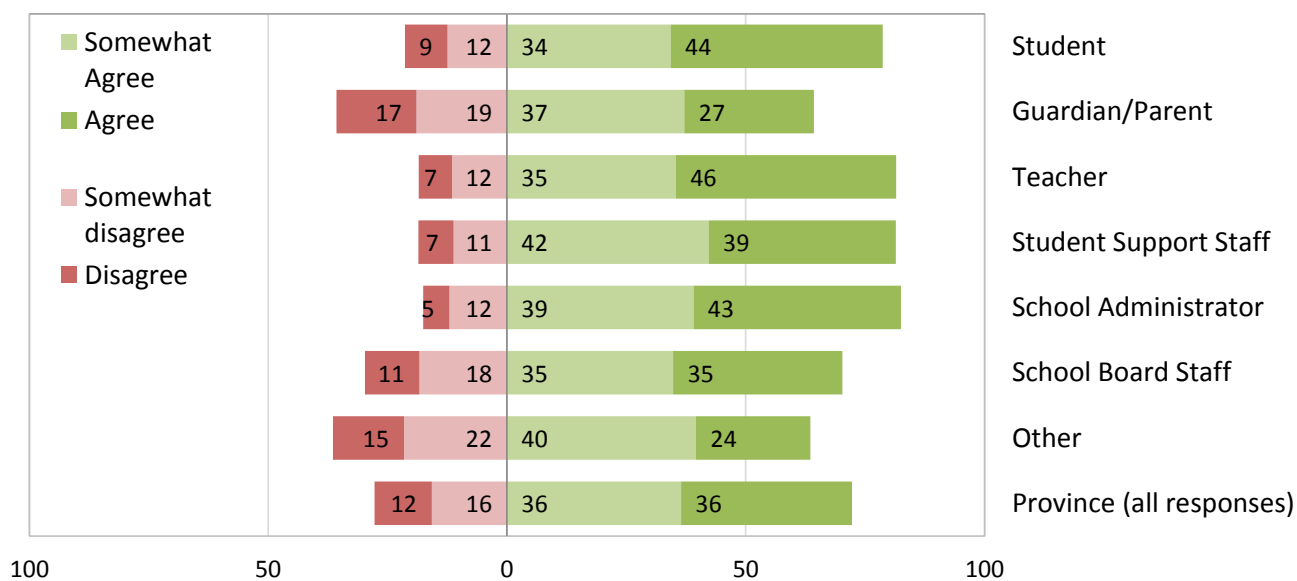
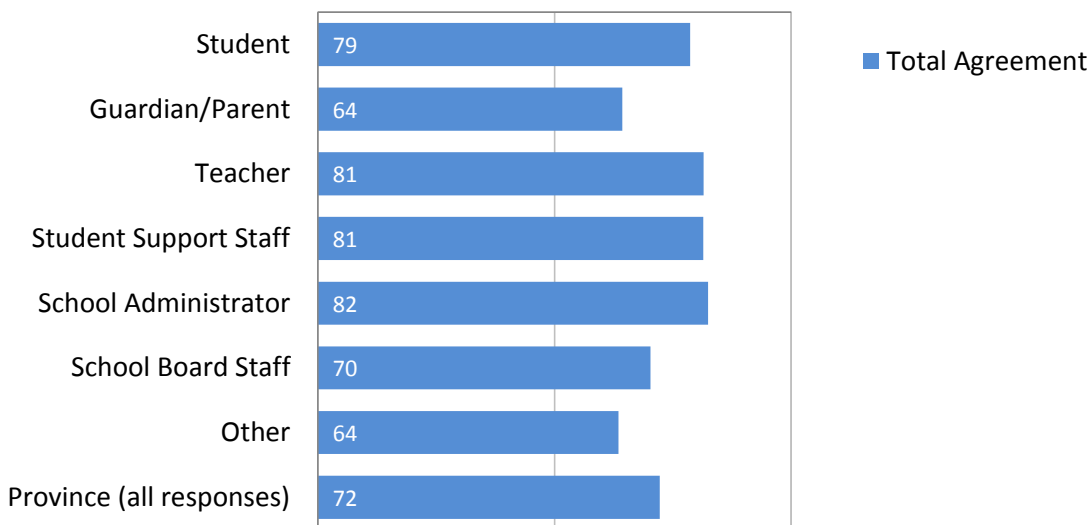
- Relationships depend on the student and teacher.
- Difficult to generalize – depends heavily on the school, community and other factors.

**More support needs to be given to teachers** – teachers need to feel their interests are valued.

- There is a lack of supports in place for teachers when they are mistreated.
- Teachers need the backing of Boards and EECD in difficult situations.
- Staff morale is low due to the high number of challenges they face and lack of support.

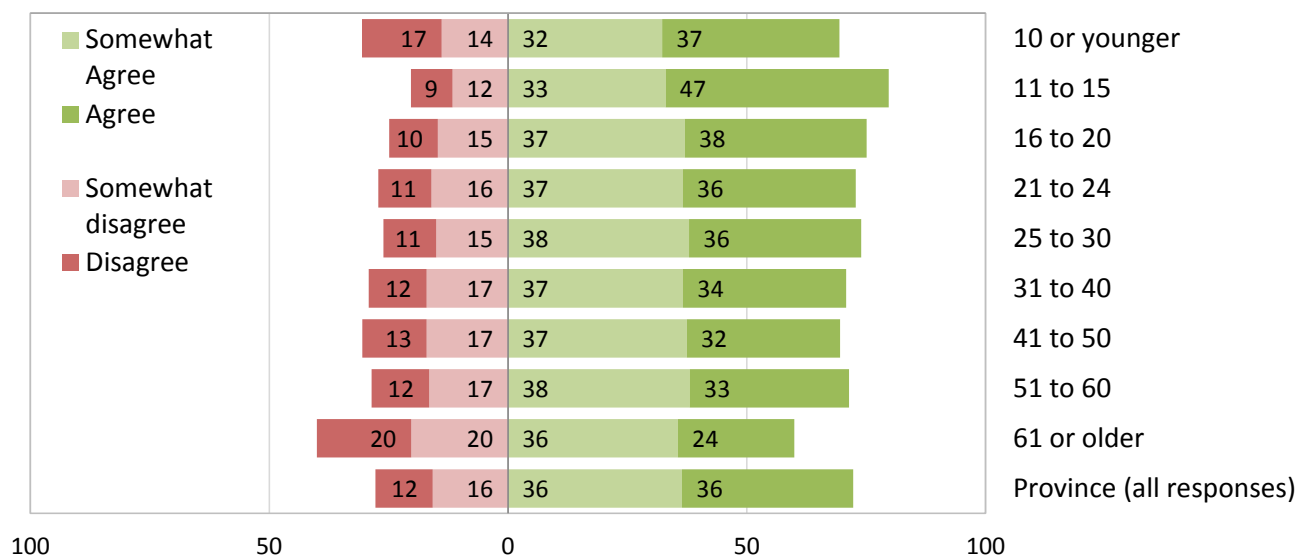
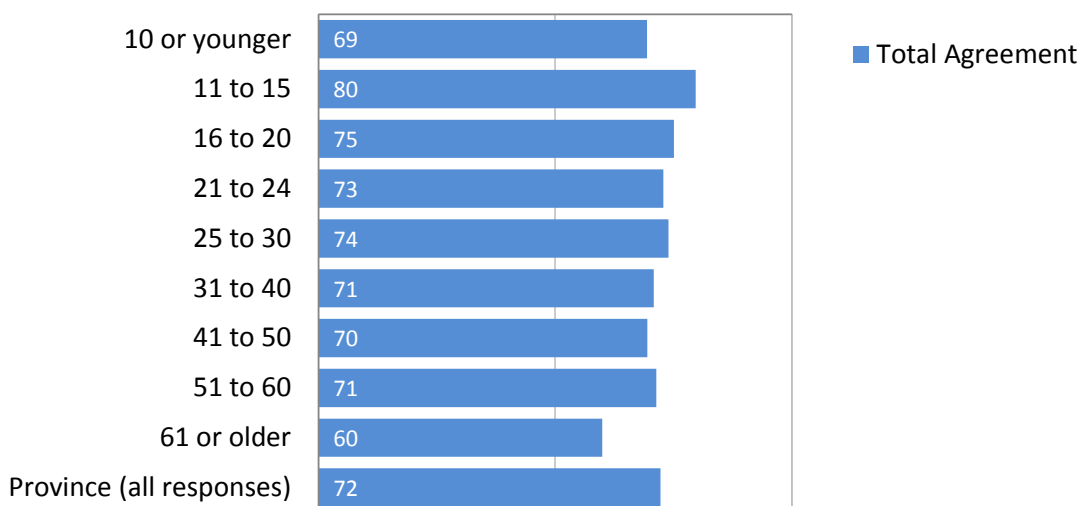
**22 Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child’s learning. (Partner)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	750	9	12	34	44	<b>79</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1038	17	19	37	27	<b>64</b>
Teacher	3198	405	7	12	35	46	<b>81</b>
Student Support Staff	489	96	7	11	42	39	<b>81</b>
School Administrator	306	32	5	12	39	43	<b>82</b>
School Board Staff	205	47	11	18	35	35	<b>70</b>
Other	2942	956	15	22	40	24	<b>64</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>



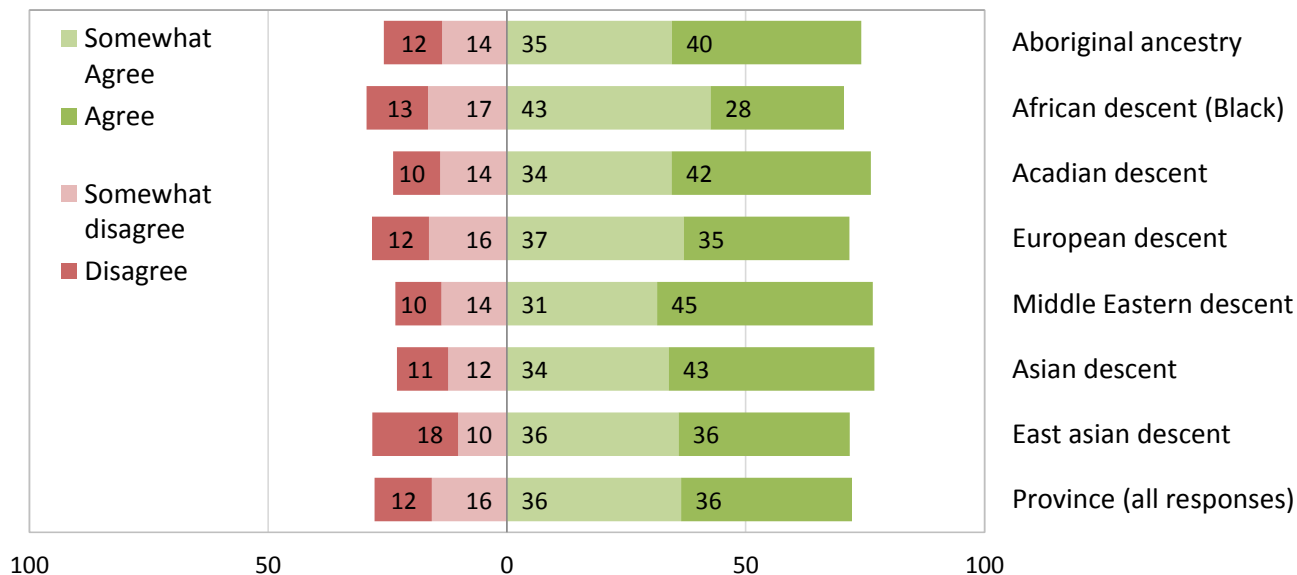
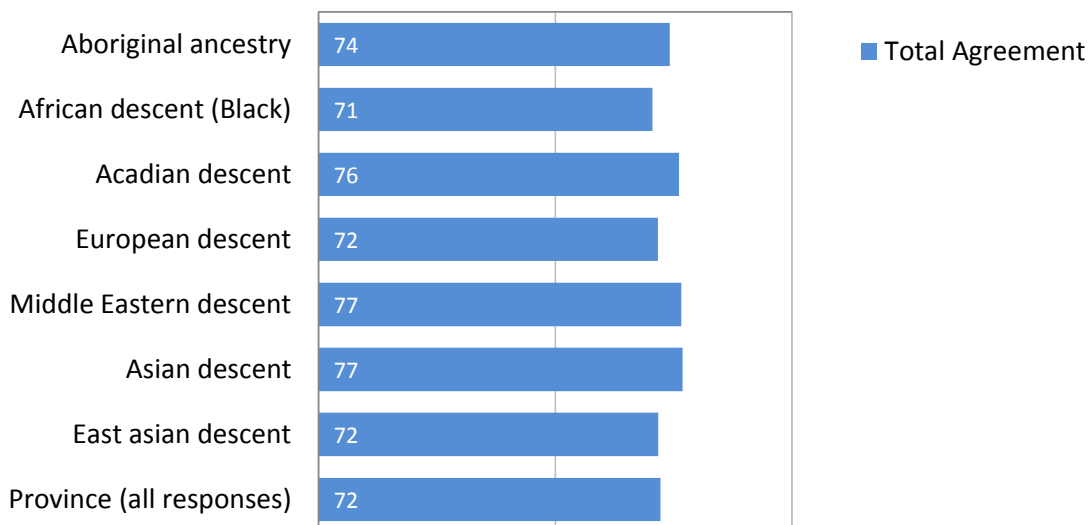
22 Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child’s learning. (Partner)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	80	17	14	32	37	<b>69</b>
11 to 15	2862	340	9	12	33	47	<b>80</b>
16 to 20	2549	433	10	15	37	38	<b>75</b>
21 to 24	319	76	11	16	37	36	<b>73</b>
25 to 30	1018	293	11	15	38	36	<b>74</b>
31 to 40	3776	715	12	17	37	34	<b>71</b>
41 to 50	4190	579	13	17	37	32	<b>70</b>
51 to 60	2545	482	12	17	38	33	<b>71</b>
61 or older	1102	303	20	20	36	24	<b>60</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>



**22 Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child’s learning. (Partner)**

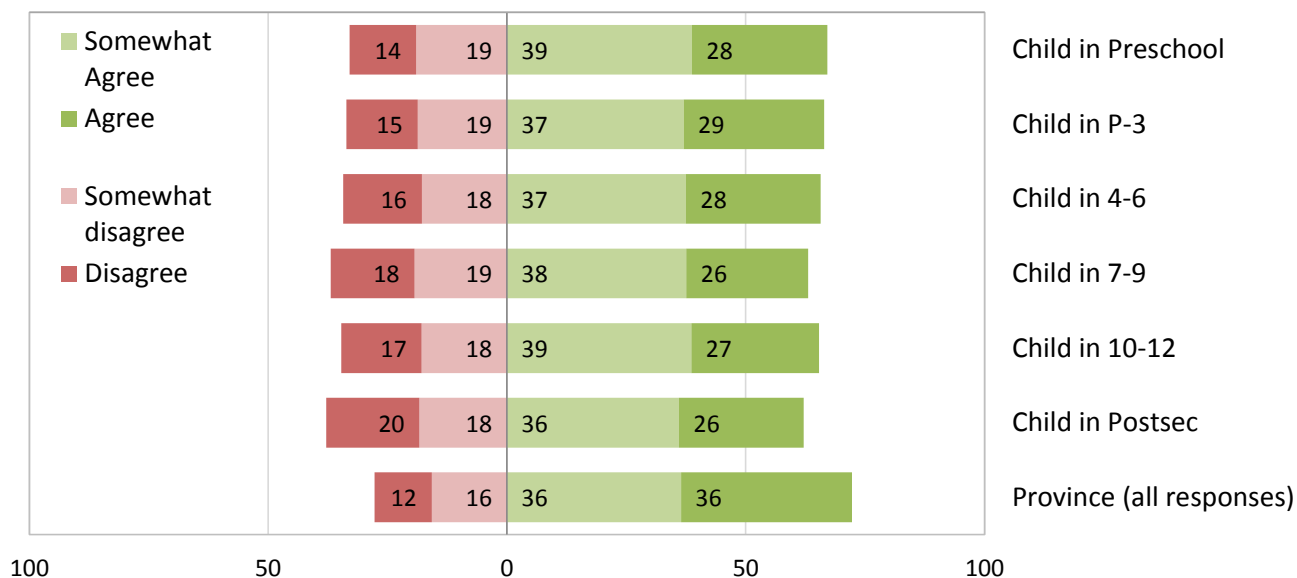
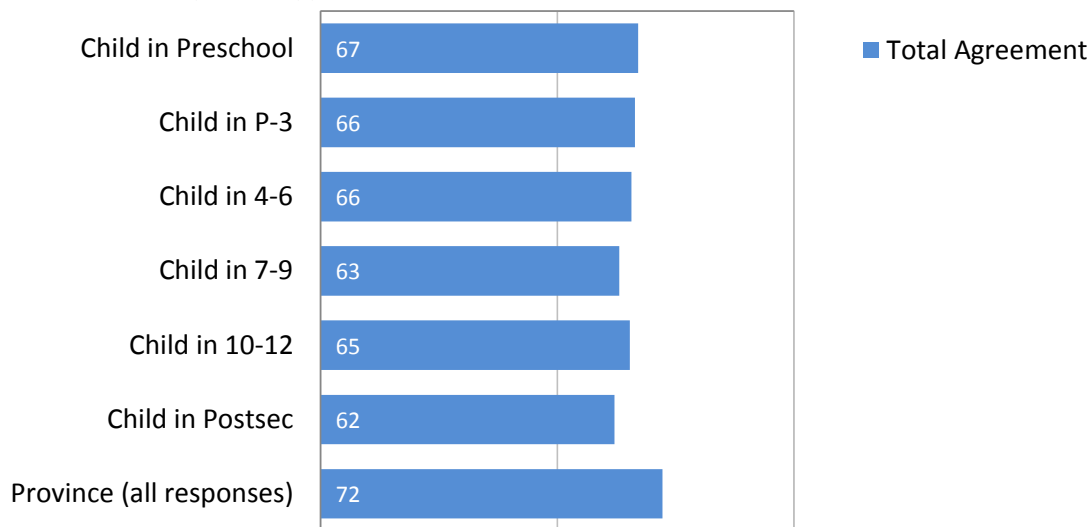
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	139	12	14	35	40	<b>74</b>
African descent (Black)	399	66	13	17	43	28	<b>71</b>
Acadian descent	2232	385	10	14	34	42	<b>76</b>
European descent	12054	2022	12	16	37	35	<b>72</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	46	10	14	31	45	<b>77</b>
Asian descent	168	38	11	12	34	43	<b>77</b>
East asian descent	54	15	18	10	36	36	<b>72</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>



**22 Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child’s learning. (Partner)**

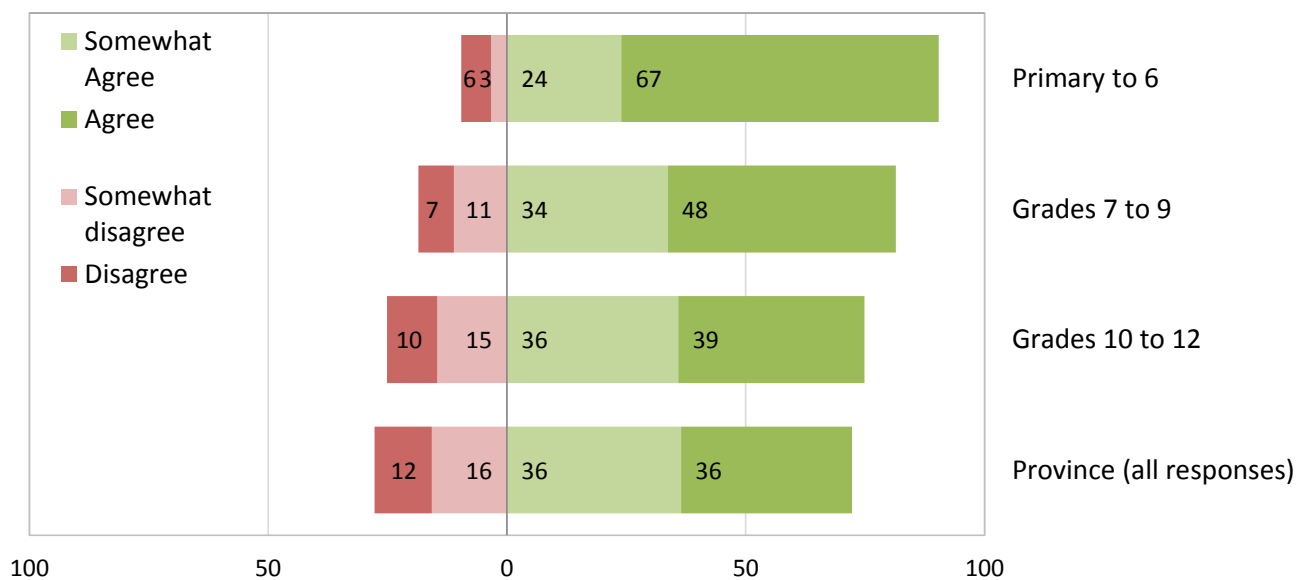
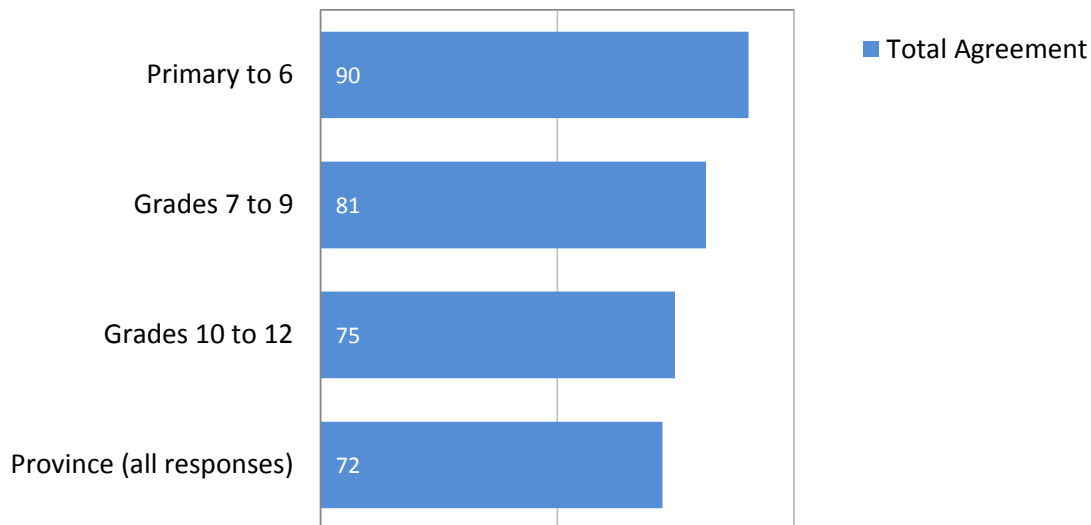
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	194	14	19	39	28	<b>67</b>
Child in P-3	2263	317	15	19	37	29	<b>66</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	242	16	18	37	28	<b>66</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	202	18	19	38	26	<b>63</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	199	17	18	39	27	<b>65</b>
Child in Postsec	365	43	20	18	36	26	<b>62</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



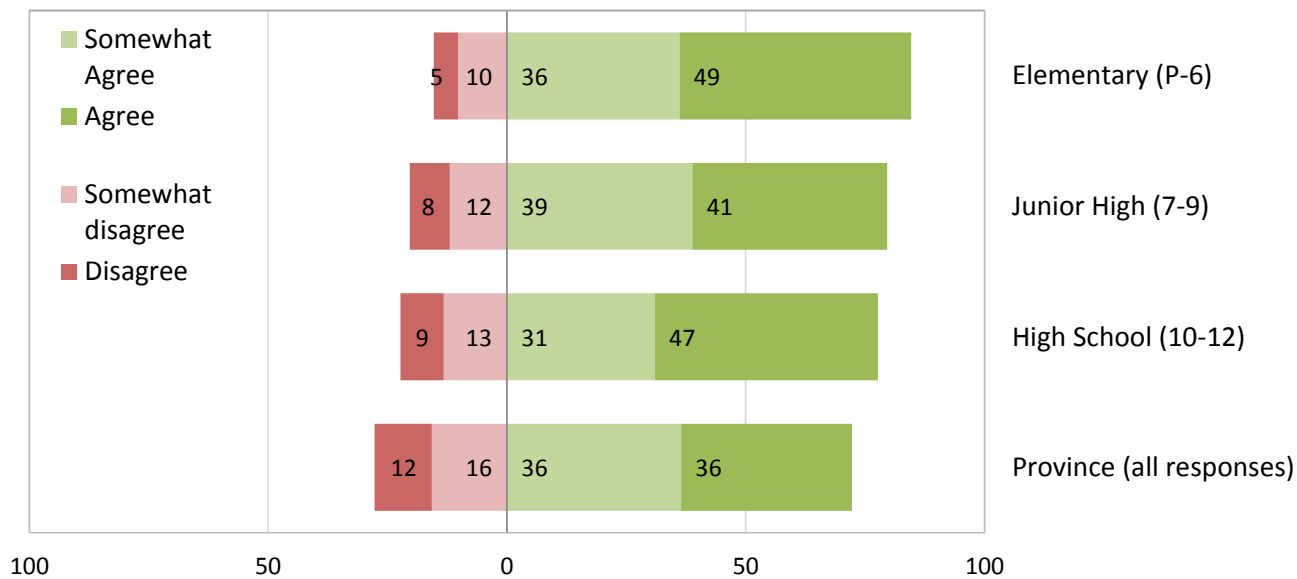
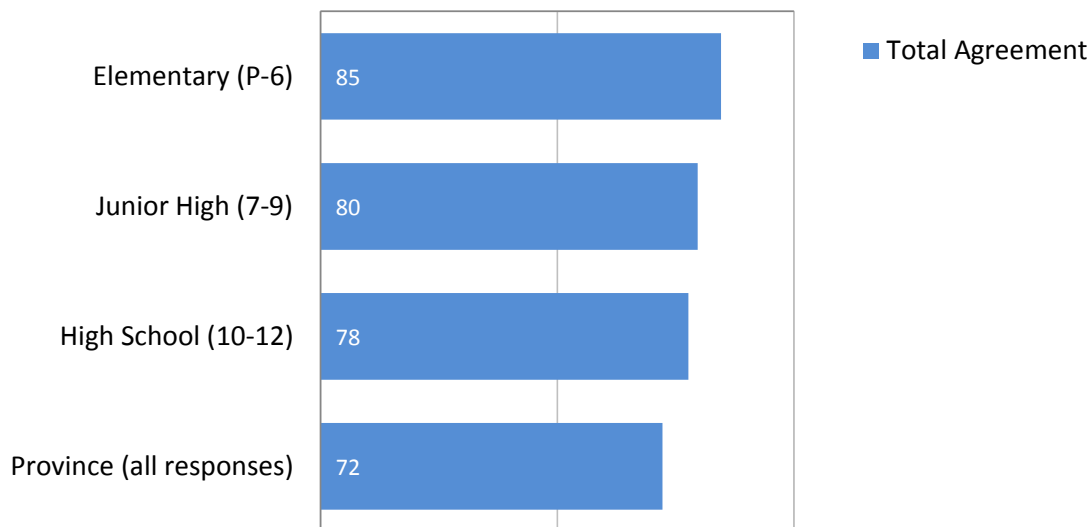
**22 Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child’s learning. (Partner)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	45	6	3	24	67	<b>90</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	272	7	11	34	48	<b>81</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	433	10	15	36	39	<b>75</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>



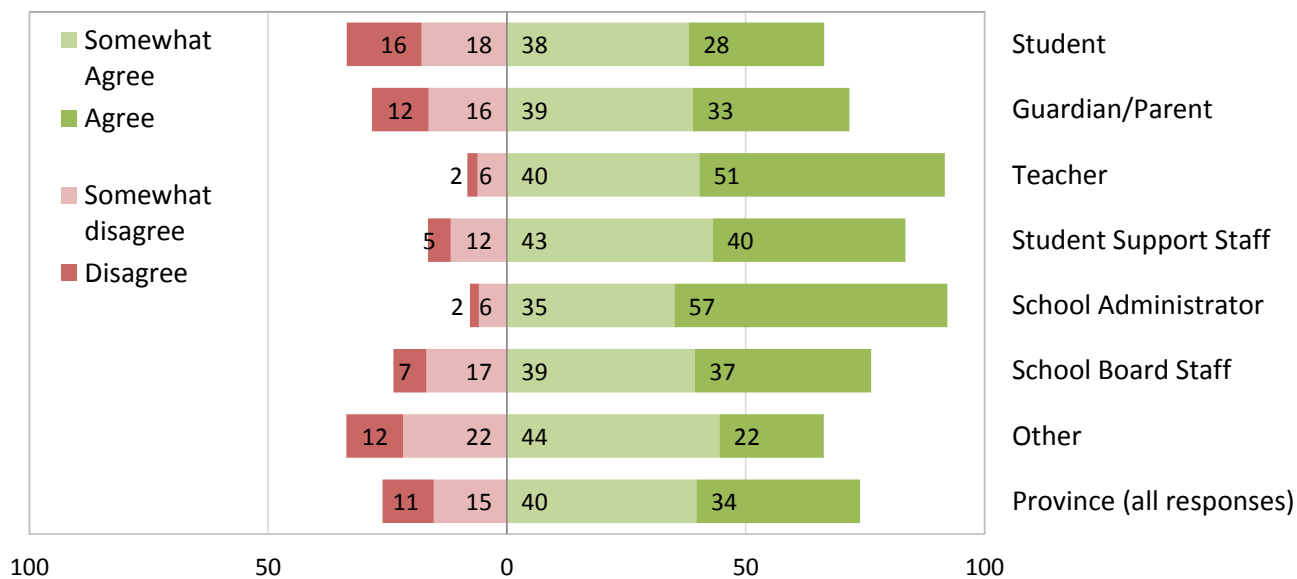
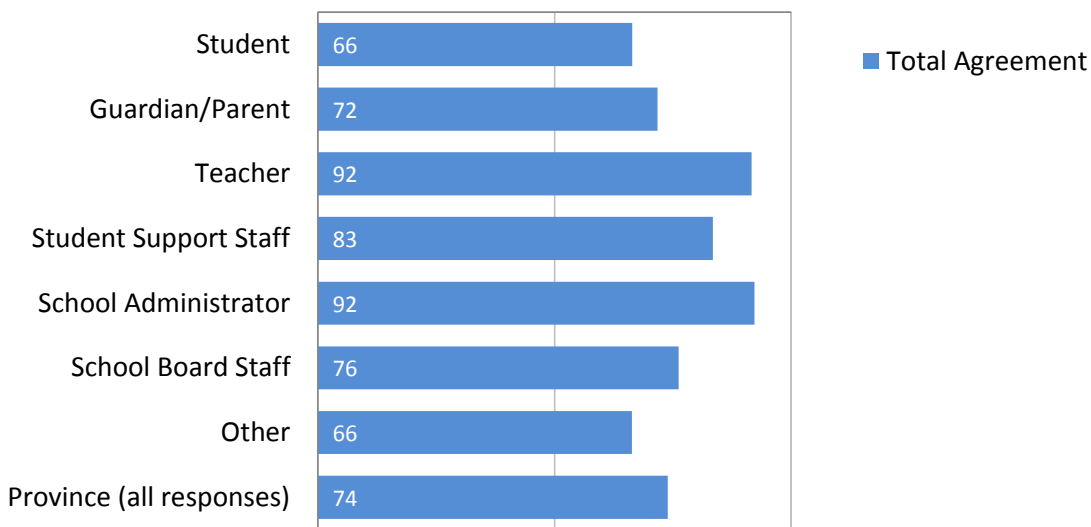
**22 Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child’s learning. (Partner)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	210	5	10	36	49	<b>85</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	78	8	12	39	41	<b>80</b>
High School (10-12)	911	113	9	13	31	47	<b>78</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3324</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>72</b>



**23 Schools develop positive relationships with parents. (Partner)**

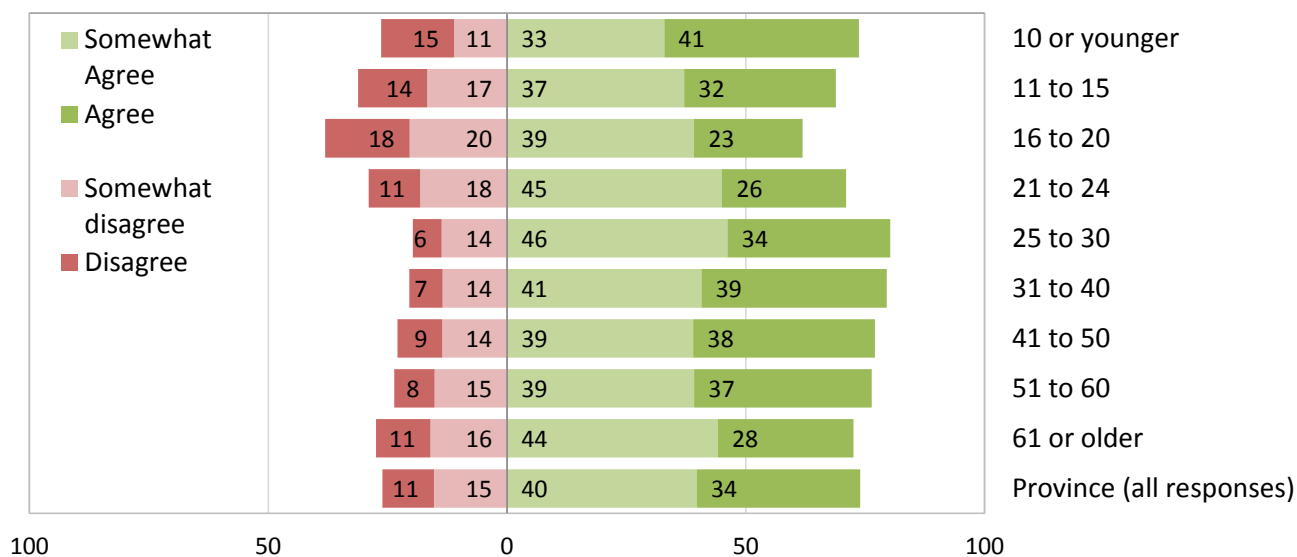
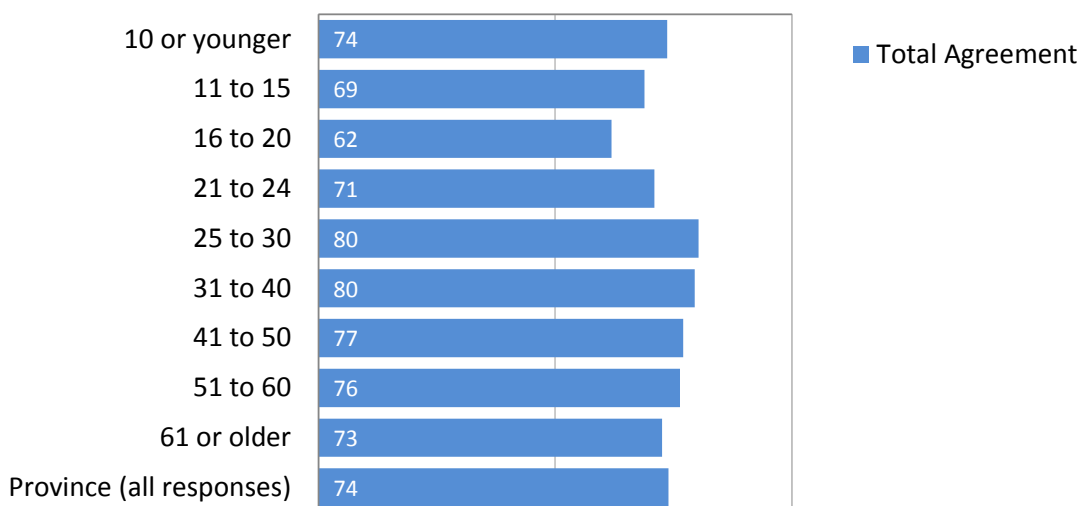
Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	963	16	18	38	28	<b>66</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1075	12	16	39	33	<b>72</b>
Teacher	3198	426	2	6	40	51	<b>92</b>
Student Support Staff	489	90	5	12	43	40	<b>83</b>
School Administrator	306	35	2	6	35	57	<b>92</b>
School Board Staff	205	45	7	17	39	37	<b>76</b>
Other	2942	1011	12	22	44	22	<b>66</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74</b>





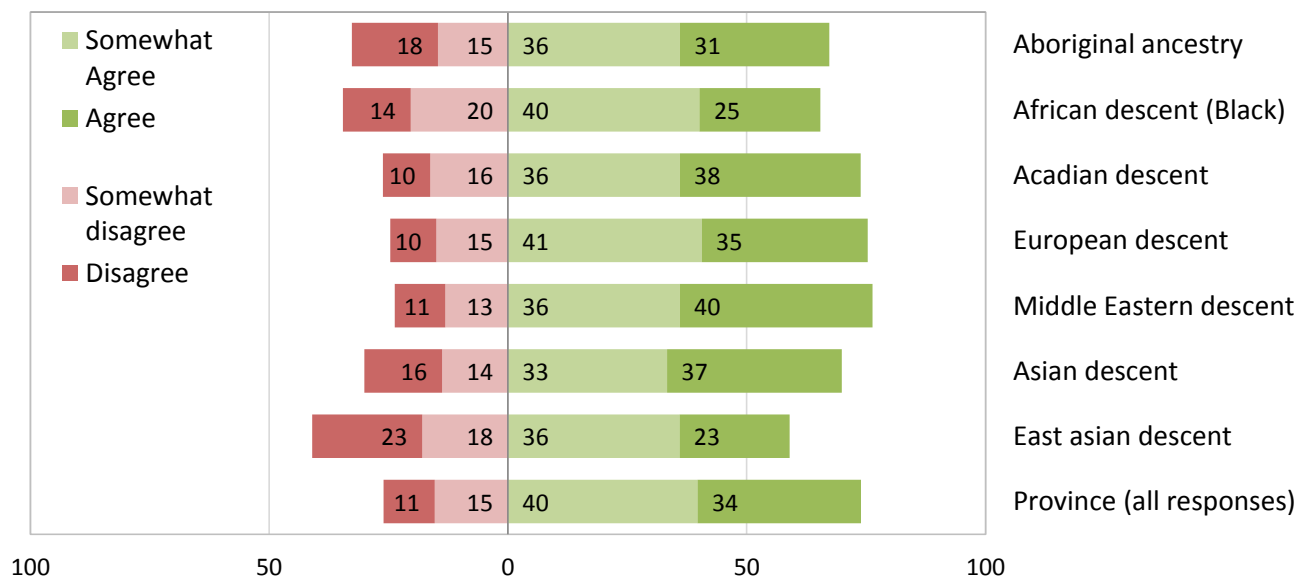
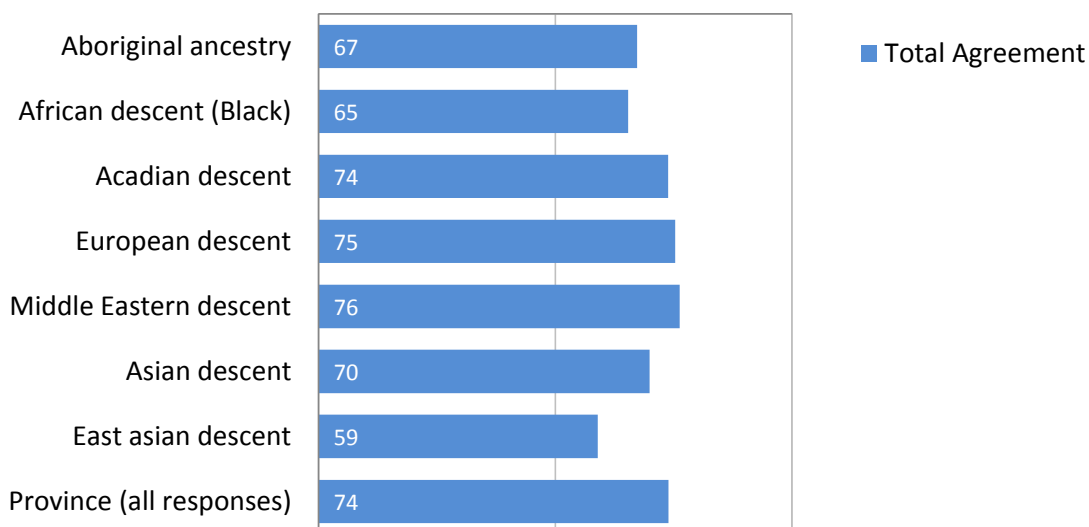
**23 Schools develop positive relationships with parents. (Partner)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	82	15	11	33	41	<b>74</b>
11 to 15	2862	464	14	17	37	32	<b>69</b>
16 to 20	2549	520	18	20	39	23	<b>62</b>
21 to 24	319	88	11	18	45	26	<b>71</b>
25 to 30	1018	303	6	14	46	34	<b>80</b>
31 to 40	3776	726	7	14	41	39	<b>80</b>
41 to 50	4190	603	9	14	39	38	<b>77</b>
51 to 60	2545	505	8	15	39	37	<b>76</b>
61 or older	1102	329	11	16	44	28	<b>73</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74</b>



### 23 Schools develop positive relationships with parents. (Partner)

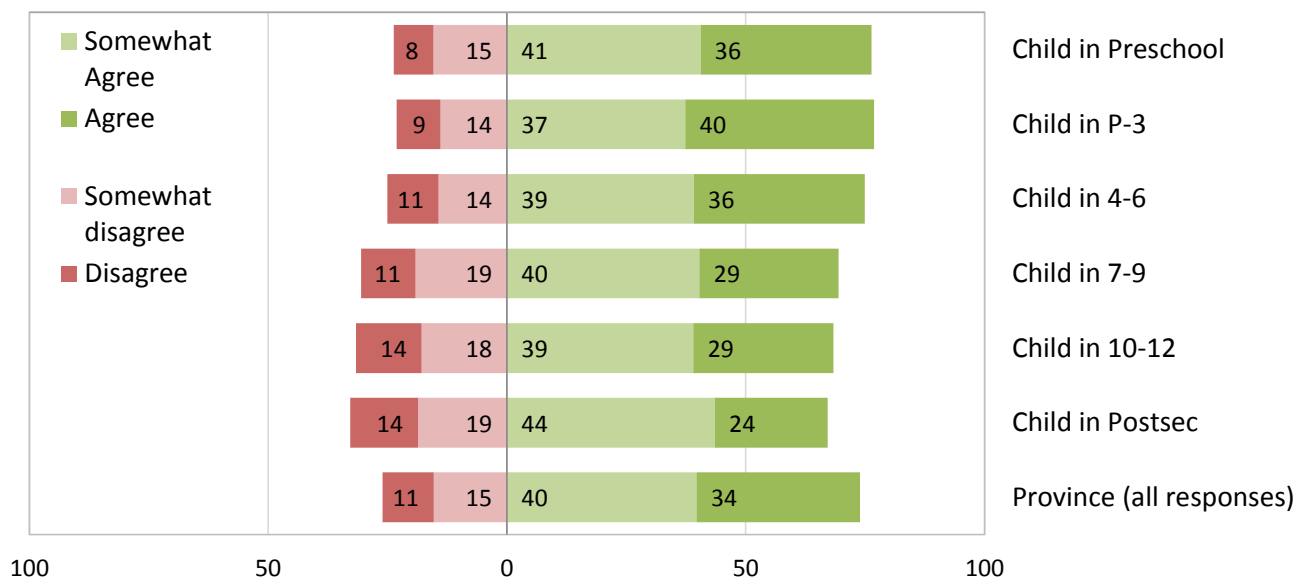
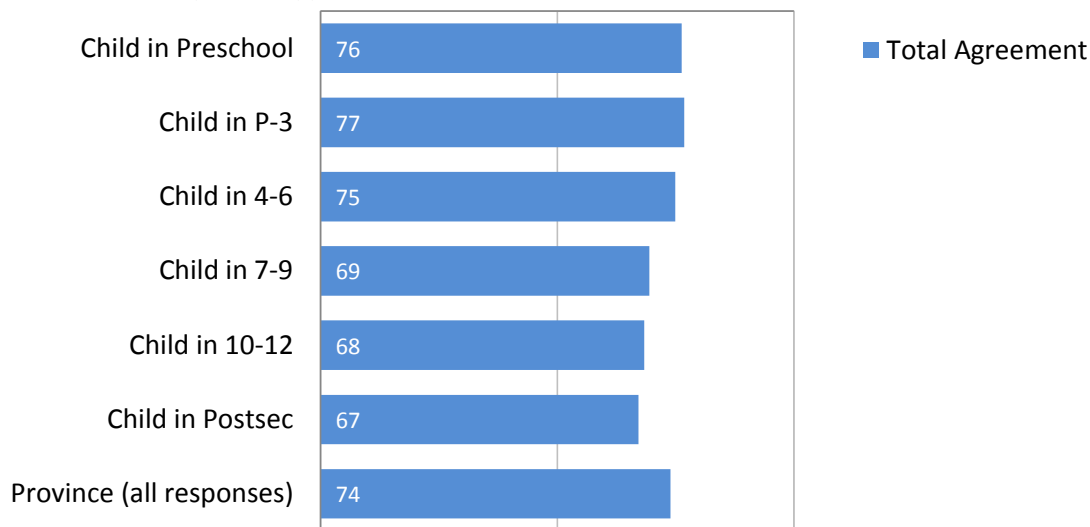
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	169	18	15	36	31	<b>67</b>
African descent (Black)	399	55	14	20	40	25	<b>65</b>
Acadian descent	2232	417	10	16	36	38	<b>74</b>
European descent	12054	2244	10	15	41	35	<b>75</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	56	11	13	36	40	<b>76</b>
Asian descent	168	45	16	14	33	37	<b>70</b>
East asian descent	54	15	23	18	36	23	<b>59</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74</b>



**23 Schools develop positive relationships with parents. (Partner)**

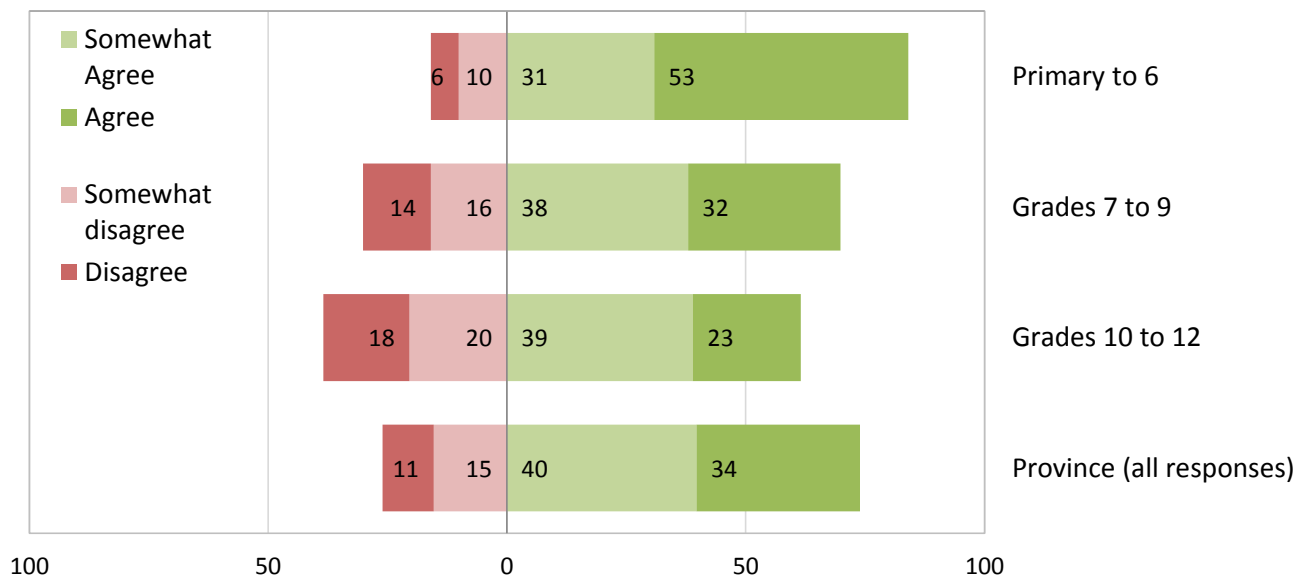
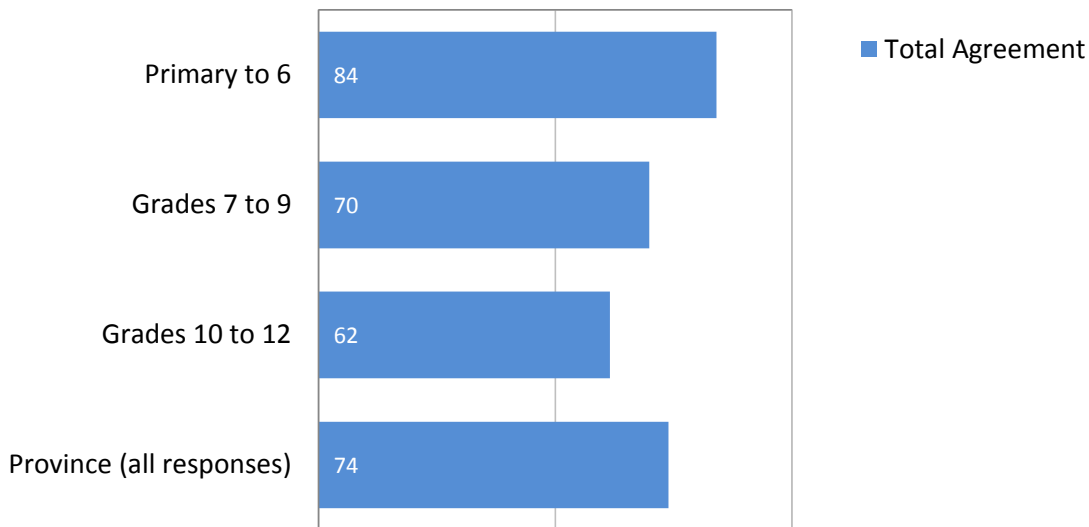
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	207	8	15	41	36	<b>76</b>
Child in P-3	2263	322	9	14	37	40	<b>77</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	243	11	14	39	36	<b>75</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	217	11	19	40	29	<b>69</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	212	14	18	39	29	<b>68</b>
Child in Postsec	365	48	14	19	44	24	<b>67</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



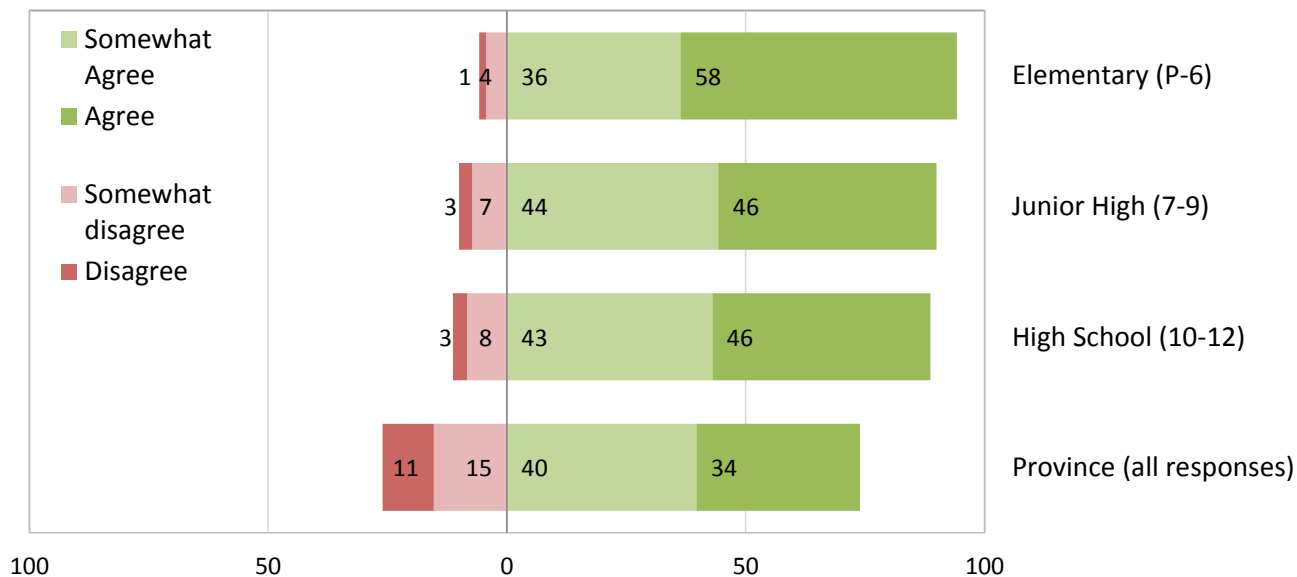
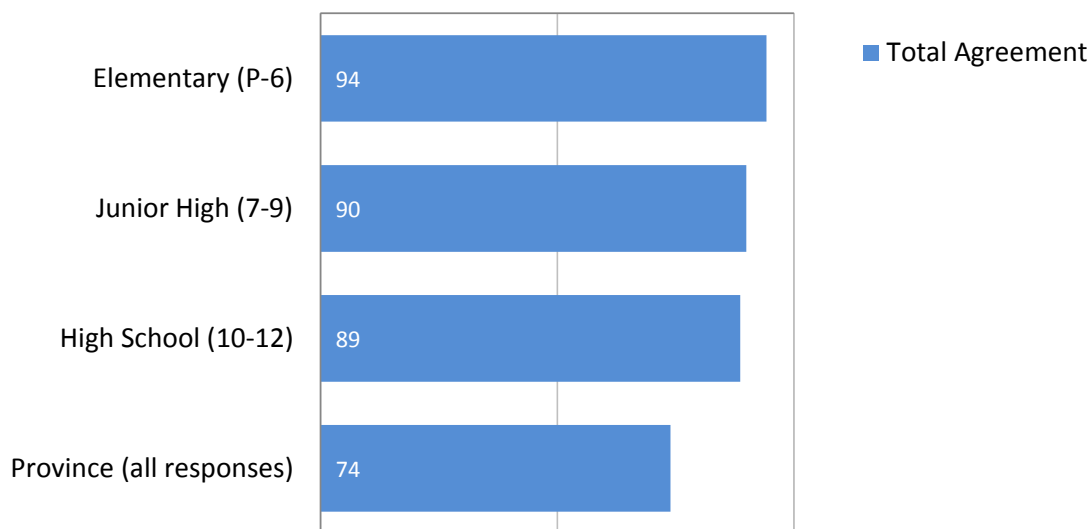
**23 Schools develop positive relationships with parents. (Partner)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	66	6	10	31	53	<b>84</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	366	14	16	38	32	<b>70</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	531	18	20	39	23	<b>62</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74</b>



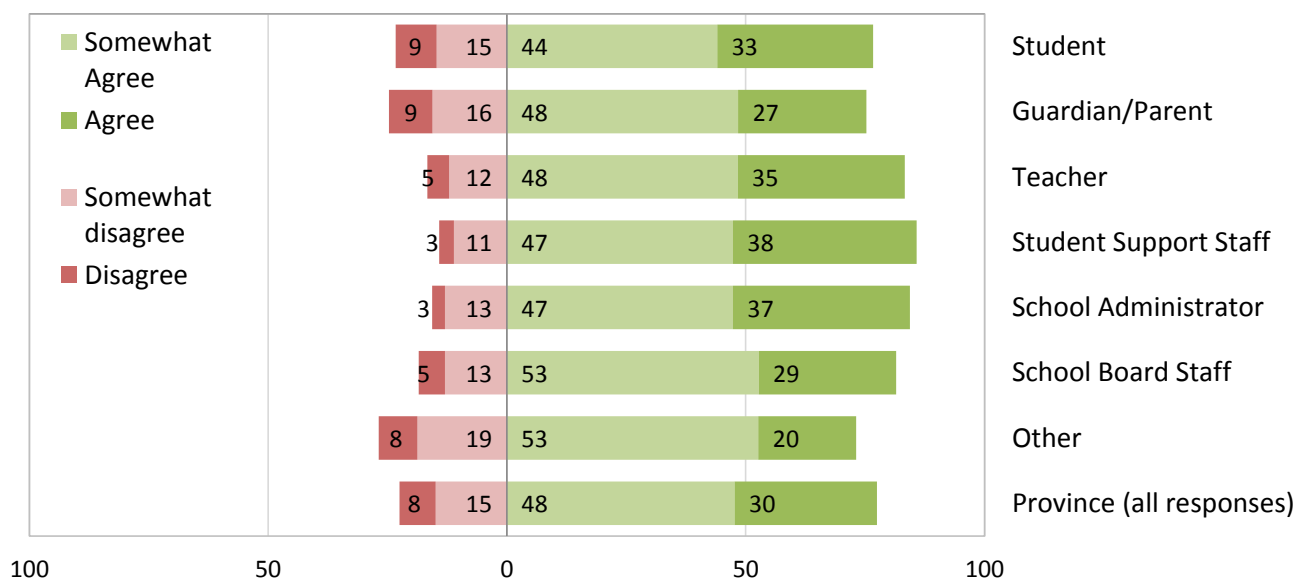
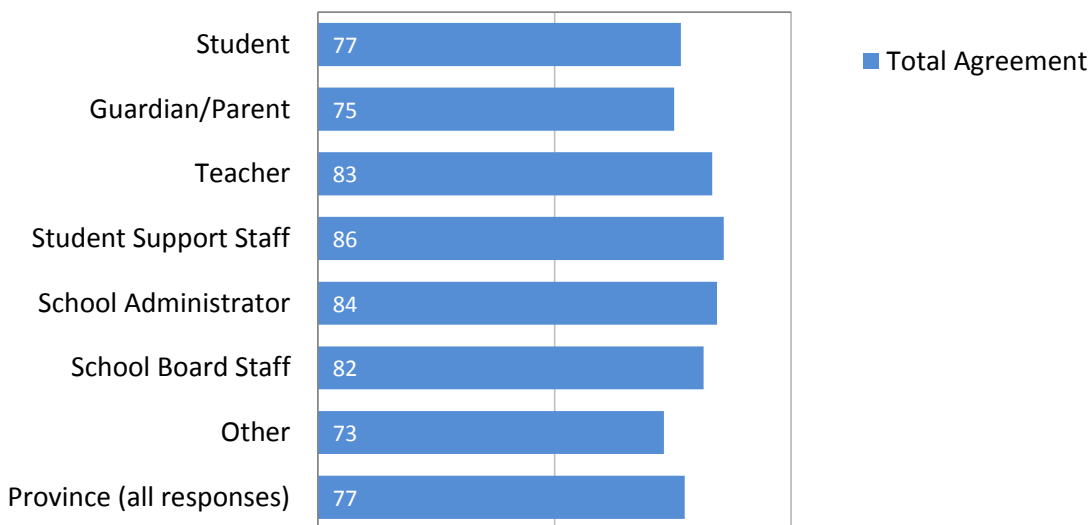
**23 Schools develop positive relationships with parents. (Partner)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	215	1	4	36	58	<b>94</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	84	3	7	44	46	<b>90</b>
High School (10-12)	911	123	3	8	43	46	<b>89</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3645</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>74</b>



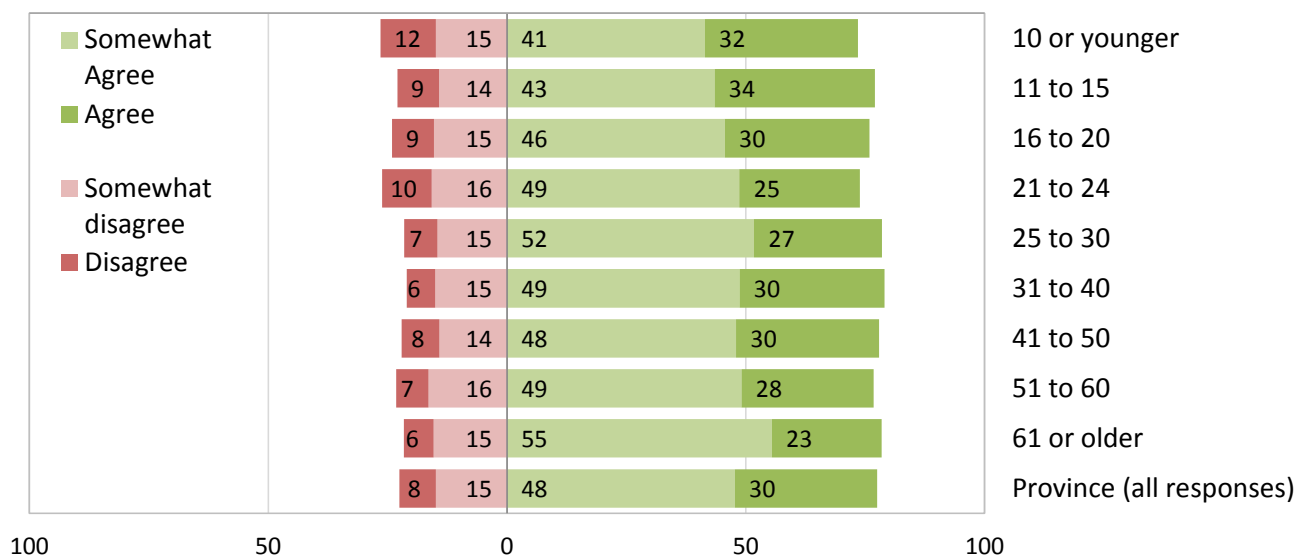
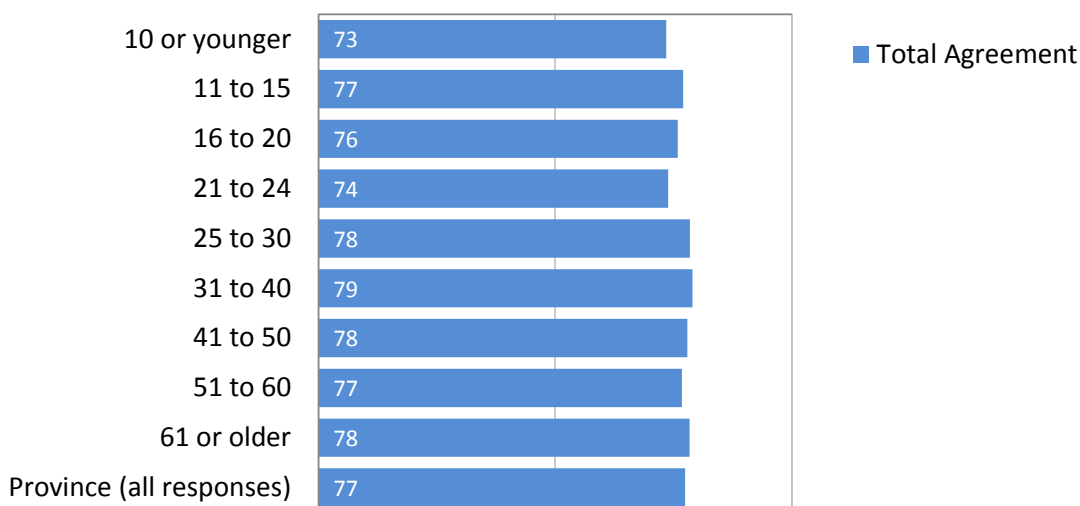
24 Community organizations and businesses support student success. (Partner)

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1256	9	15	44	33	<b>77</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2500	9	16	48	27	<b>75</b>
Teacher	3198	705	5	12	48	35	<b>83</b>
Student Support Staff	489	130	3	11	47	38	<b>86</b>
School Administrator	306	44	3	13	47	37	<b>84</b>
School Board Staff	205	59	5	13	53	29	<b>82</b>
Other	2942	1078	8	19	53	20	<b>73</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5772</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77</b>



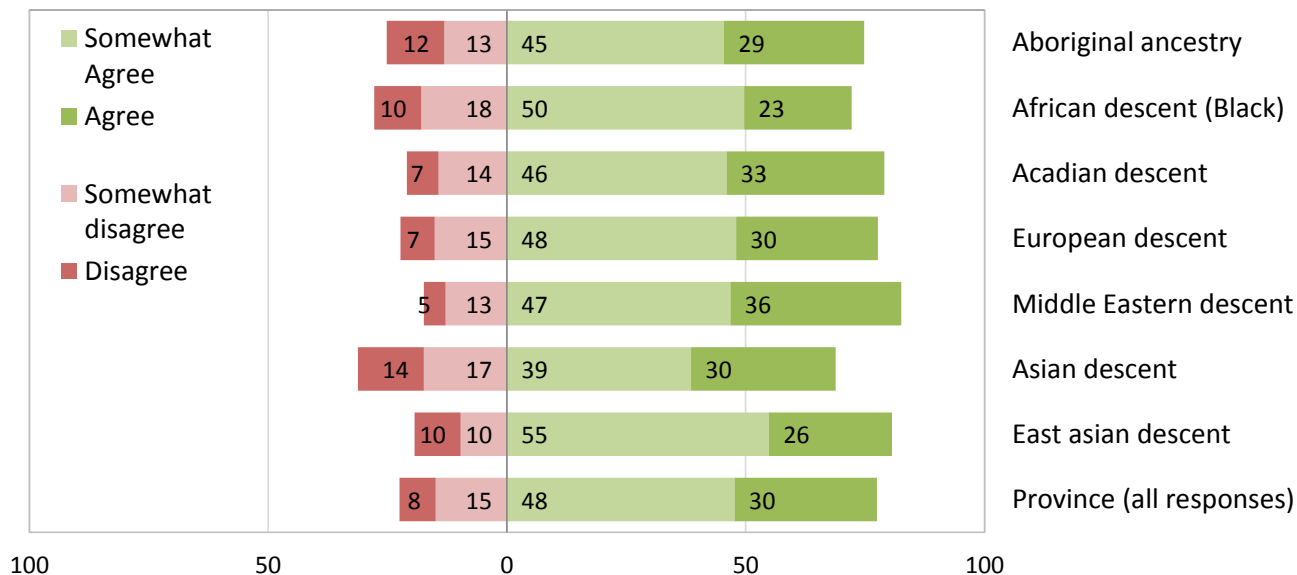
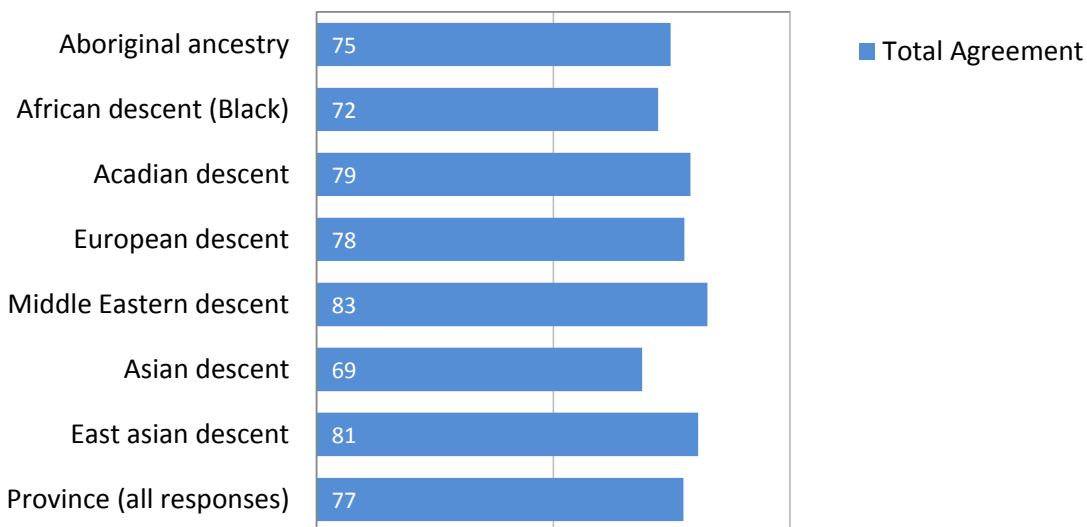
24 Community organizations and businesses support student success. (Partner)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	144	12	15	41	32	<b>73</b>
11 to 15	2862	722	9	14	43	34	<b>77</b>
16 to 20	2549	598	9	15	46	30	<b>76</b>
21 to 24	319	97	10	16	49	25	<b>74</b>
25 to 30	1018	353	7	15	52	27	<b>78</b>
31 to 40	3776	1346	6	15	49	30	<b>79</b>
41 to 50	4190	1338	8	14	48	30	<b>78</b>
51 to 60	2545	736	7	16	49	28	<b>77</b>
61 or older	1102	393	6	15	55	23	<b>78</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5772</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77</b>



24 Community organizations and businesses support student success. (Partner)

Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	230	12	13	45	29	<b>75</b>
African descent (Black)	399	115	10	18	50	23	<b>72</b>
Acadian descent	2232	650	7	14	46	33	<b>79</b>
European descent	12054	3647	7	15	48	30	<b>78</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	61	5	13	47	36	<b>83</b>
Asian descent	168	59	14	17	39	30	<b>69</b>
East asian descent	54	23	10	10	55	26	<b>81</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5772</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77</b>

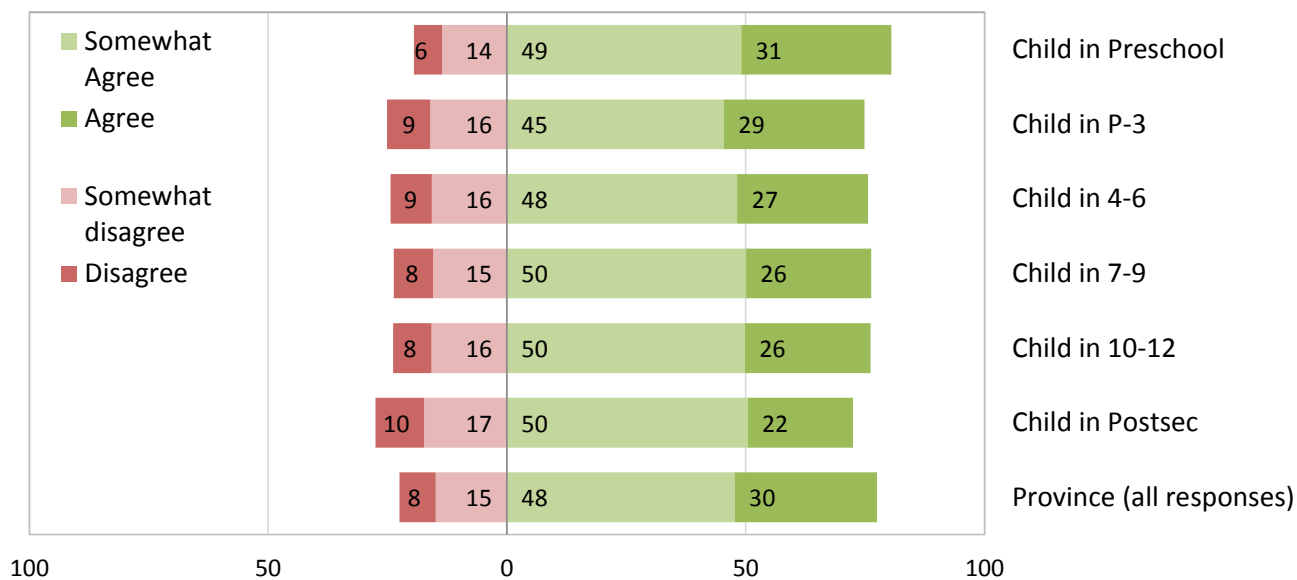
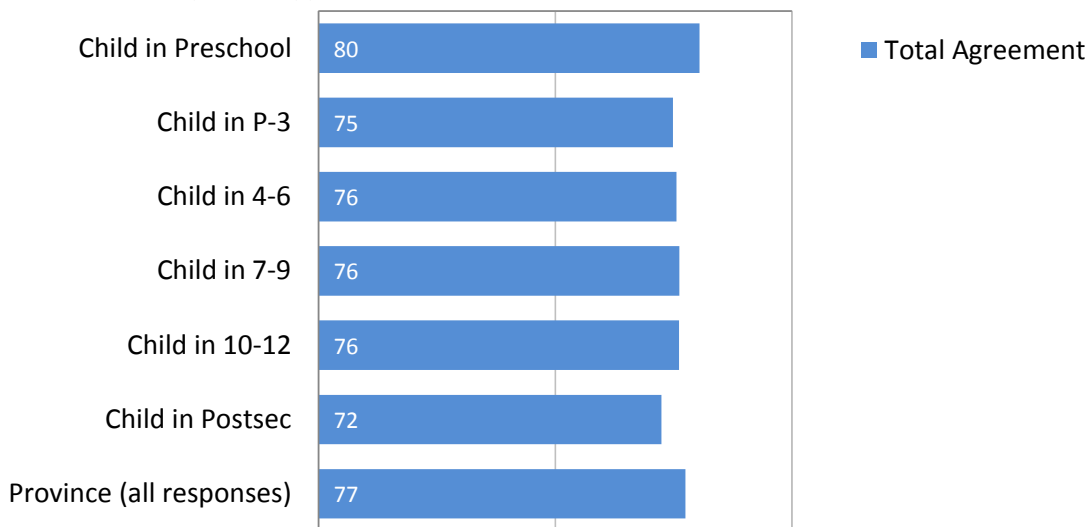




**24 Community organizations and businesses support student success. (Partner)**

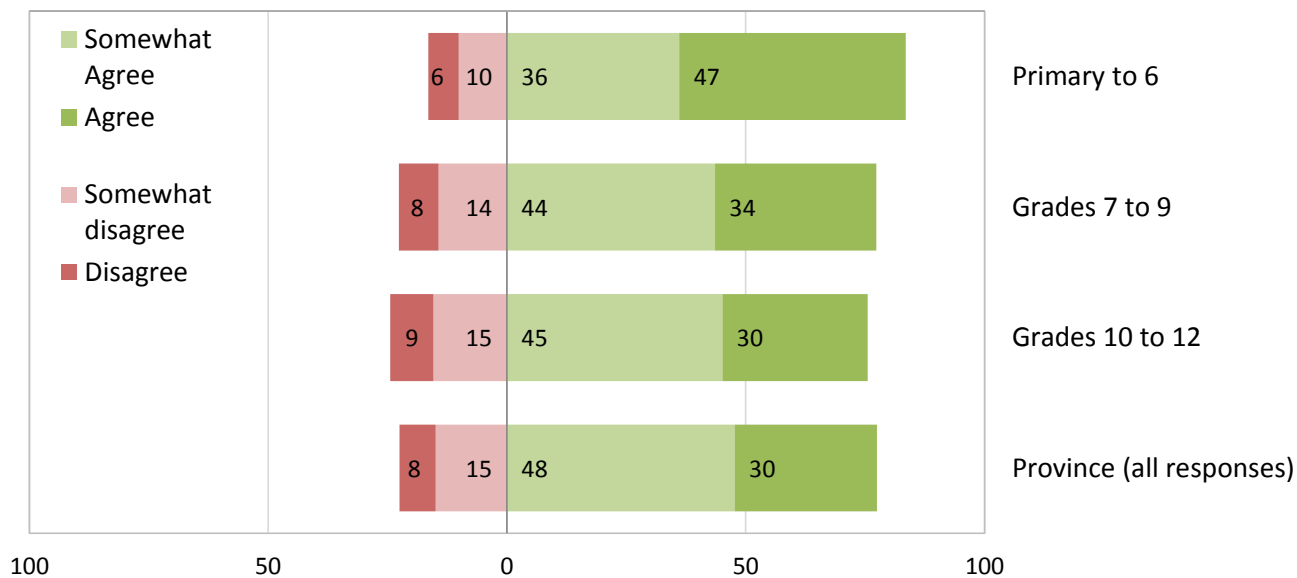
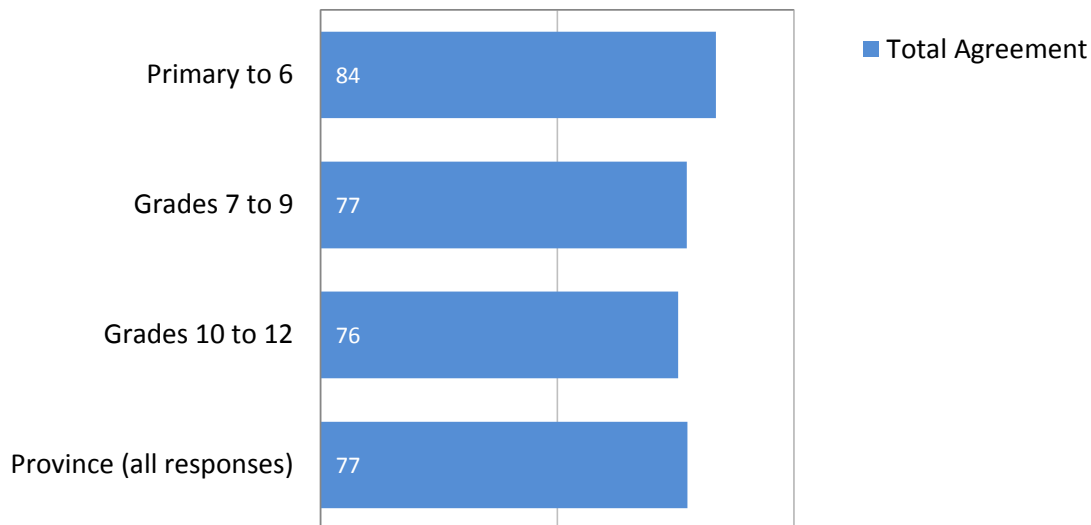
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	357	6	14	49	31	<b>80</b>
Child in P-3	2263	930	9	16	45	29	<b>75</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	728	9	16	48	27	<b>76</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	637	8	15	50	26	<b>76</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	523	8	16	50	26	<b>76</b>
Child in Postsec	365	111	10	17	50	22	<b>72</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5772</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



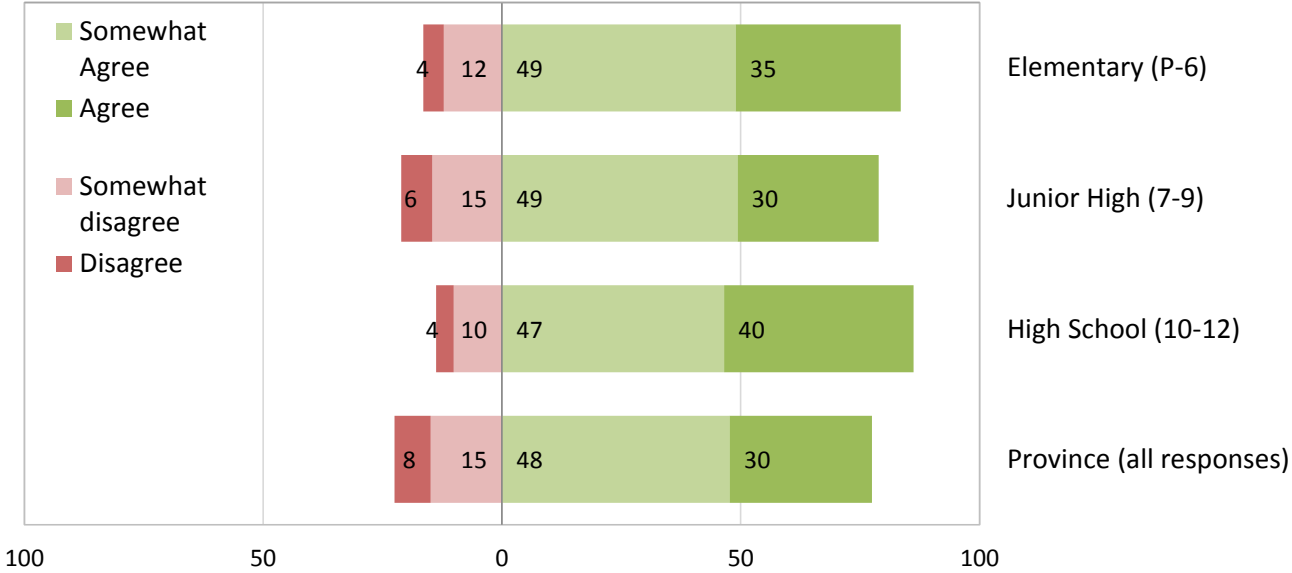
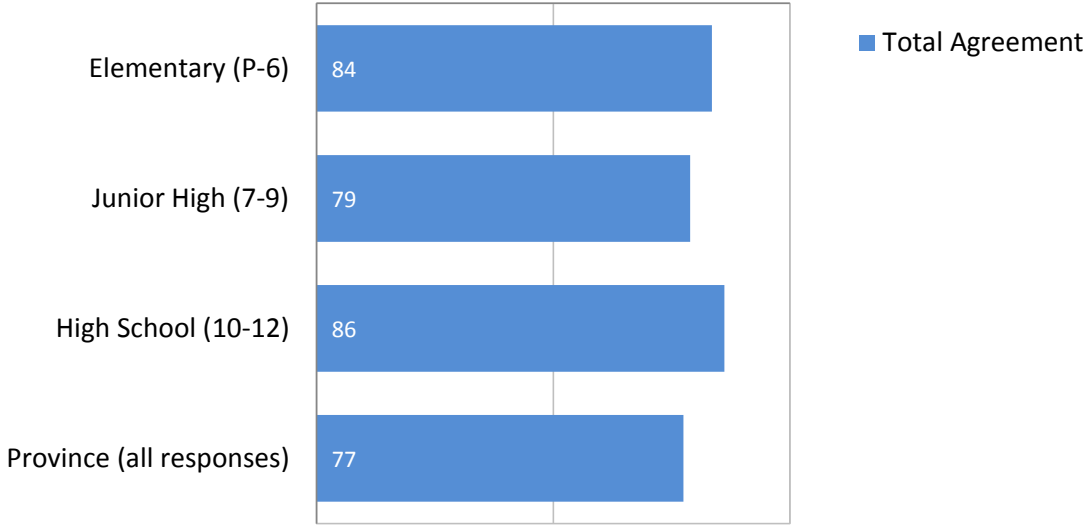
24 Community organizations and businesses support student success. (Partner)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	96	6	10	36	47	<b>84</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	568	8	14	44	34	<b>77</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	592	9	15	45	30	<b>76</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5772</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77</b>



24 Community organizations and businesses support student success. (Partner)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	426	4	12	49	35	<b>84</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	124	6	15	49	30	<b>79</b>
High School (10-12)	911	150	4	10	47	40	<b>86</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>5772</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77</b>



## SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Parents get the information they need from teachers to support their child's learning (for example: report cards, parent-teacher conferences).
2. Schools develop positive relationships with parents (for example: parents feel welcomed, schools are responsive to parents' questions and concerns).
3. Community organizations and businesses support student success (for example: with partnerships and support for school programs, such as co-op or Junior Achievement).

### NUMBER OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

<b>Parents and Guardians</b>	1738
<b>Teachers</b>	860
<b>Community Members</b>	688
<b>Students</b>	312
<b>Student Support Staff</b>	91
<b>School Administrator</b>	103
<b>School Board Staff</b>	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3835</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Reporting</b>	Report cards are in need of a change	1510
	Parent Portal is a positive tool	119
	Parent Portal needs improvement	66
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1695</b>
<b>Positive Relations Need Improvement</b>	Schools generally need to improve their relations with others	114
	Schools need to improve relations with community organizations	309
	Schools need to improve relations with parents	718
	Parents are disengaged from school activities	295
	Parents are too involved in school activities	73
	There is a role for increased business involvement in schools	78
	There are issues at the macro level of the education system affecting partnerships	57
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1644</b>
<b>General Comments</b>	Partnerships depend on individual schools and staff	273
	More resources are needed to build partnerships	111
	Partnerships with external organizations are beyond the scope of school priorities	48
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>432</b>
<b>Positive Relations</b>	Schools have generally succeeded in developing positive relations	102
	Schools have positive relations with community organizations	92
	Schools have positive relations with parents	101
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>295</b>

## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: REPORTING

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***Report cards are extremely unclear in respect to a child's progress. If you want to know how your child is doing you have to speak to their teacher directly.***

- Guardian/parent

***Report cards do not reflect a student's progress. The wording is vague and difficult for parents to understand.***

- Teacher

***Report cards are still not parent-friendly enough. They have actually become more full of jargon and non-personal.***

- Teacher

***Outcomes-based report cards do not provide parents with easy-to-understand information on their child's progress.***

- Teacher

***Get rid of the generic report cards. Teachers should be writing out specific strengths and weaknesses making both students and parents aware of them.***

- Guardian/Parent

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**Report cards are in need of a change** – also includes some feedback about parent-teacher interviews.

- Report cards are confusing and lack a personal touch in terms of teacher comments.
- The current format does not provide adequate/effective information to parents and do not seem to be child-specific (i.e. too vague).
- Report cards do not reflect children's progress or provide information about whether student is living up to potential/ how they compare to peers.
- Parents don't understand outcome-based reporting; report cards are not designed with parents in mind and don't provide parents with the information they need to support their children.
- Parent-teacher interviews are not effective – there is not enough time and communication is one-way.
- Language used on report cards is confusing.
- Working with percentages is easier than the A,B,C,D format.
- Report cards should be produced electronically – they are a waste of paper.
- Two parent-teacher sessions per year is inadequate.
- Need more reporting periods; December and June are not good times of year for addressing feedback since breaks follow.
- Report cards should be handed out more often to provide more timely feedback.
- Report cards are too long and, at the same time, do not provide enough information.
- It is difficult to know if report cards are helping parents support their children.
- Parent-teacher interviews are more effective than report cards for feedback.
- Report cards are onerous for teachers, especially given their lack of real value.
- Some progress was made with the last set of report cards.
- Support for the fact that report cards are getting an overhaul.
- Report cards have become a joke.

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***Schools have Parent Portal in place and it is rarely updated. Some teachers choose to use agendas and some do not. This is a resource tool that should be used every day.***

*- Guardian/Parent*

***PowerSchool has helped many parents and students with understanding how the student is doing.***

*- Teacher*

***The SIS, PowerSchool and so on are way too much for teachers with little or no benefit. This time could be utilized in a much better way.***

*- School Administrator*

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- Parent teacher conferences are not well organized and feel rushed, making it difficult to get adequate time with teachers.
- Student-led conferences are not effective.
- There is a lack of customized feedback for students.
- Report cards should cover behavioural issues.
- Teachers feel limited by boundaries around what they can cover.

**Parent Portal is a positive tool** – it has been a useful tool for school-home communications (note: Parent Portal and PowerSchool are the same).

- Many comments noted that the Parent Portal is a useful tool, but that the degree to which it is useful is highly dependent on whether or not teachers update it regularly.
- Parent Portal is a great tool, but more education needs to be done with parents about how to use it.
- Positive comments about the Parent Portal as a communication tool.
- Some feel that report cards are not necessary now that PowerSchool is in place.
- Very helpful in terms of receiving regular progress updates.
- With PowerSchool there is no reason parents should feel they don't have information about their children – however, they have to commit to checking it.

**Parent Portal needs improvement** - it has not been an effective tool for school-home communications.

- With the introduction of PowerSchool, parents feel they no longer need to come to schools.
- This tool is very time consuming for teachers with little overall benefit.
- The lack of consistency regarding its use takes away from the potential benefit.
- Technical problems have been encountered (including password-related).

## SECTION 2: POSITIVE RELATIONS NEED IMPROVEMENT

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**Schools generally need to improve their relations with others** - includes responses that generally express the need to do better in terms of developing positive relations.

- Schools should be more welcoming to community members and parents.
- Relationships can be good when things are going smoothly, but when issues arise they break down (feeling of defensiveness).
- Schools can feel unwelcoming to visitors (including parents) – e.g. treated as threats, unwelcoming staff attitudes.
- Positive relations with students could be improved – e.g. dealing with special needs, students that require extra attention, celebrating positive behaviours.
- Not enough work is done to promote good relationships.
- Limited interaction with teachers leads to frustration and lack of good relationships.
- Teachers should have to notify parents when issues occur.
- Some parents express a sense of disrespect when interacting with teachers and administrators; parents are considered an annoyance rather than a resource.
- There is a lack of consistency in this area.
- More activities to engage parents (outside parent-teacher conferences) would be helpful.

**Schools need to improve relations with community organizations** - relationships with community members in particular should be improved.

- Limited support from outside organizations is seen in schools.
- More afterschool programs would be helpful.
- Schools need to be more appreciative of the role that communities play.
- Some community groups have made attempts to get involved with schools and were not responded to or felt it was difficult to work with schools.
- Feeling that schools don't take advantage of available community resources.

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*Schools have to be a more welcoming place for the community and the parents.*

*- Teacher*

*There needs to be a vast improvement in this area. Principals and schools do not always welcome parents and community into the school. School Advisory Councils (SACs) need more support from EECD. Many SAC meetings continue to be held after school at the convenience of teachers, not of parents.*

*- Community Member*

*The attempts are made on the part of businesses and various community organizations to engage students, but in my experiences this always seems to be deterred by the various admin and boards I've dealt with. There is a lack of willingness to engage with these groups from the administrative end.*

*- Community Member*

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***Community organizations could do so much more.***

- Guardian/Parent

***With limited resources it is a win-win to partner with the County and others to share resources.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Teachers are hesitant to talk to parents – they become defensive.***

- Guardian/Parent

***High schools are lacking the communication skills that elementary schools have. There is little interaction and communication unless the parent initiates it.***

- Guardian/Parent

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- Need more communication from schools to the community.
- It would be good to see more community-led programs in schools (ex. Junior Achievement, Business is Jammin, Lions Club, Red Cross, 4H, police, universities).
- There is not a level playing field between higher and lower income areas or urban and rural areas.
- Community programs should be better communicated to students to build interest and help generate awareness of their value.
- Barriers exist to the community use of schools.
- School administrators are influential in regards to how much community groups feel welcome in schools; leadership in this area should be encouraged.
- Need an increase in real partnerships – not just fundraising initiatives.

**Schools need to improve relations with parents** - more work needs to be done to improve relationships with parents.

- Parents do not feel welcome and are discouraged/ ignored.
- More needs to be done to involve parents in the school system.
- Parents should be able to sit in on some activities in schools (e.g. workshops, special activities).
- Communications with parents at higher grade levels are very limited.
- Communications seem to be limited to negative feedback.
- It is difficult for low income parents without phones/Internet to communicate with schools.
- Parents' concerns are often not addressed or responses take a long time to come.
- Parents do not feel welcome in schools.
- In some cases, parents expressed particular frustration with communications from administrators.
- Parents who raise concerns can become ostracized by schools.

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***Teachers/admin are scared of parents. I have seen parents bully their way into marks/courses.***

- Teacher

***It is sometimes difficult for teachers to develop positive relationships with parents when the parents are always blaming the teachers for their children's shortcomings.***

- Teacher

***I think the business community could be doing a lot more to work with the Province to determine skills that students need.***

- Community Member

***I do not think that enough importance is placed on the important input of community organizations and businesses.***

- Community Member

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- Parent-teacher conferences and report cards are limited in how much they can communicate to parents – need more communication vehicles and more immediate notice when children are struggling/ absent from class.
- Anglophone parents can feel unwelcome in French schools (CSAP).
- Some teachers express that it is difficult to engage with parents and that they are not responsive to feedback received; need to find better ways of interacting.
- In cases where children have divorced parents, communications often do not make it to both parents.
- More information about dealing with children experiencing difficulties would be appreciated.
- Some parents are intimidated by teachers and more should be done to make them at ease; need more family support resources.
- Parents' working hours should be kept in mind when school functions are organized.
- Communications regarding progress/ issues for students with special needs should be improved.
- Using students to bring home information to parents is not always effective since the information doesn't make it to them.
- Teachers should take the initiative in contacting parents when issues arise, not the other way around.

**Parents are disengaged from school activities** - some families do not want to be involved and that is out of the school's control.

- Schools can only do so much to promote parental involvement.
- Many parents do not show up to parent-teacher night so they do not get teacher feedback.
- Many parents do not proactively seek feedback – instead, they wait for teachers to contact them.
- Information is available but parents don't seem to be engaged.
- There is a disconnect between families and educators.

- Parents seem too busy to be involved in their children's education.

- As teachers put more work into preparing information for parents, parents seem to be less engaged.
- Parents need to be accountable as well as educators (e.g. returning phone calls, checking Power School).
- Sometimes it is the parents of the children who need their involvement most who are not engaged.
- Some note that engagement decreases at higher grade levels.
- Some parental disengagement may be attributable to their negative experiences with the school system as students.

**Parents are too involved in school activities** - parents are too heavily involved in schools and are having a negative impact on the school environment.

- Teachers and administrators are fearful of parents and can go overboard in trying to please them (e.g. adapting school policies).
- Interfering parents can make it difficult for teachers to do their jobs.
- Some parents bully teachers.
- Only parents who are actively involved in schools or who voice their concerns loudest are addressed.

**There is a role for increased business involvement in schools**

- More importance should be placed on engaging business and the local community.
- Businesses may not be aware of how needy schools are – they could play a greater financial role.
- Business people could be engaged as guest speakers in classrooms.
- Businesses should be helping more with co-op placements.
- Businesses could help with early labour market exposure – especially for high-risk students.
- Schools should not ban business donations.

**There are issues at the macro level of the education system affecting partnerships**

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***Schools tend to protect the system over the student or family more often than not.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Teachers are limited by the system and cannot provide the feedback that parents want and need.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Information from teachers is hit or miss. Some teachers are great and some should have chosen a different career.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Principals make a huge difference in terms of the relationship between parents and schools.***

- Guardian/Parent

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- Teachers hands are tied by school board policies and decisions (re: what can be communicated, discipline, no fail policy, etc.).
- Schools tend to protect the system over individual families.
- The system is driven from the top without meaningful feedback from the bottom (lack of input considered from school staff by boards and EECD).
- Need to get away from a one size fits all approach.
- There is a general disconnect occurring between parents and schools.

### **SECTION 3: GENERAL COMMENTS**

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#### **Partnerships depend on individual schools and staff**

- Some teachers are great at providing information/ feedback and others are not.
  - Relationships are heavily dependent on the particular school and can vary within boards.
  - High teacher turnover rates contribute to lower quality relationships.
  - The quality of relationships changes based on grade level (tendency to note better relationships at the elementary level than in junior high/high school).
  - Relationships with the local community are heavily dependent on the school principal and vary based on openness, etc.
  - Some schools are welcoming of parental input and some are not (comments that the tone of whether the school is welcoming or not is set by the principal).
  - Much inconsistency exists amongst parent-teacher relationships.
  - An attempt to standardize these things may be beneficial.
  - It is difficult to answer these questions in a general way.
- 
- Relationships are often good until issues arise, then they can quickly deteriorate.
  - Some parents felt that the degree to which they are welcomed in the school depends on their level of involvement (e.g. volunteering).

**More resources are needed to build partnerships** - comments relate mainly to teacher-parent relationships.

- More apprenticeship programs, co-op opportunities and programs like Junior Achievement would be beneficial to have.
- Large class sizes and varying student needs have teachers stretched thin.
- Teachers are responsible for too many students, making it difficult to communicate/ establish relationships.
- New ways to connect home and school should be explored.
- Children with special needs require extra supports.
- Resources need to be put in place to help educate parents about how to best support their children (e.g. workshops about how to help with math).
- More supports are needed to help parents understand reporting measures, how to access online resources, etc.
- School web sites are not very good and should be updated more often.
- More support is needed for teachers.

**Partnerships with external organizations are beyond the scope of school priorities** - schools should focus on academics rather than prioritizing relationship-building.

- Additional programs and supports distract from the core academic foci of schools.
- Most of the comments in this section relate to feelings that businesses should not be supporting schools and corporate sponsorship does not have a place in schools (includes several comments about fast food enterprises in particular).

#### SECTION 4: POSITIVE RELATIONS

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**Schools have generally succeeded in developing positive relations**

- This is a priority for schools and relationships are strong.
- Schools do the best they can with the resources they have.

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***The staff at schools are not the issue, the teachers, principals and aids are underpaid and overworked.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Too large of class sizes to effectively have ongoing relationships.***

- School Board Staff

***The more additional programs schools try to offer/support, the more basic skills are lost. Schools cannot do it all and their focus should be on academic skills.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I strongly disagree with for-profit organizations having any involvement in the public school system. It is a straightforward conflict of interest.***

- Guardian/Parent

- Relationships are positive and teachers are friendly and welcoming.

#### **Schools have positive relations with community organizations**

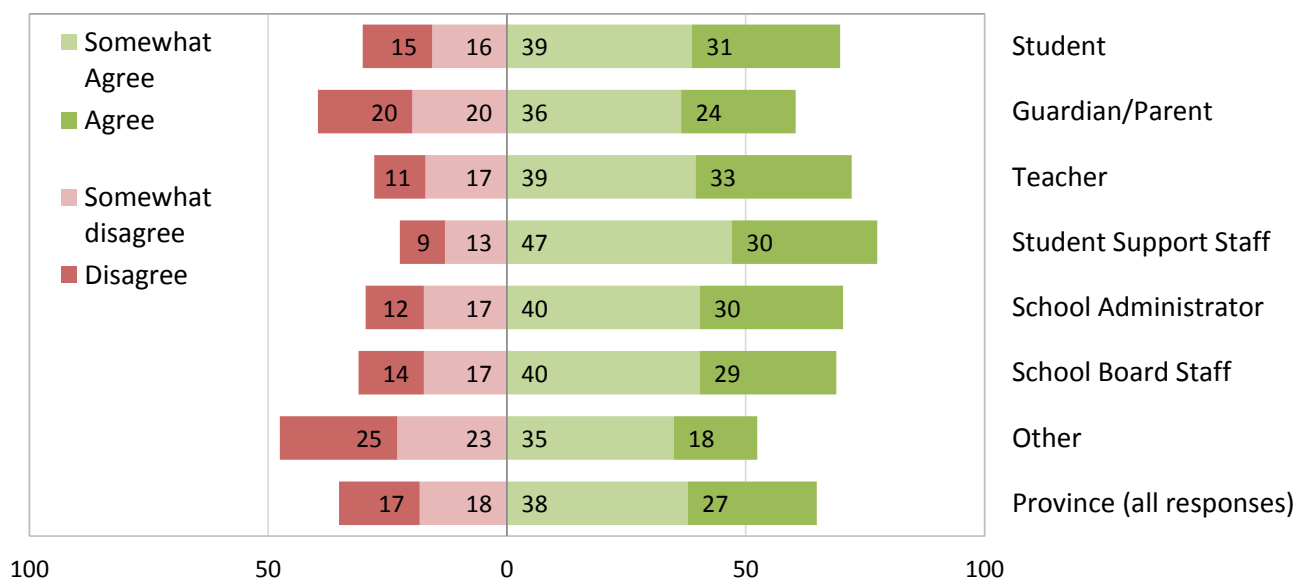
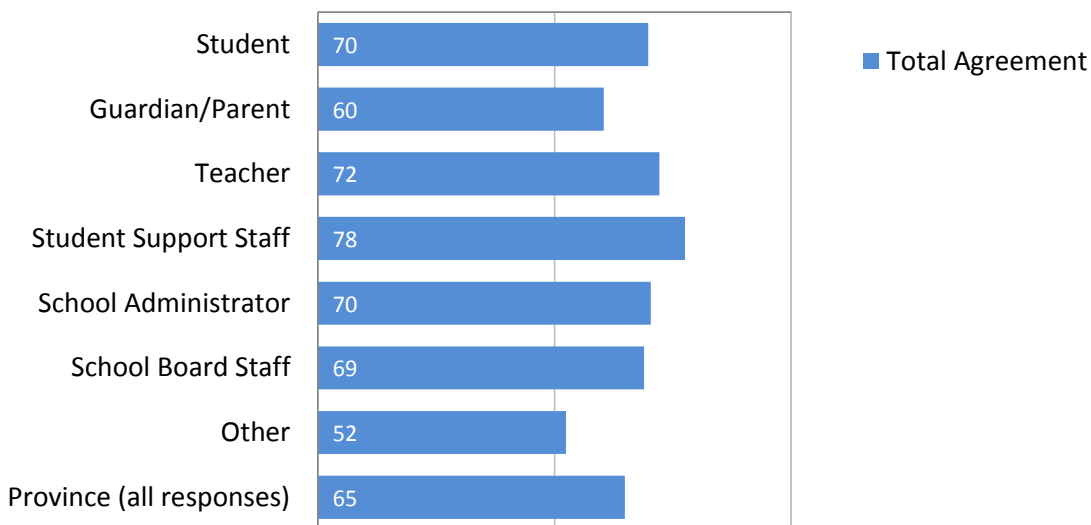
- There is a strong relationship between the school and community groups.
- Support is received from community organizations.
- Students are supported in the community.

#### **Schools have positive relations with parents**

- There is a concerted effort to include parents by schools.
- Parents feel welcome in schools.
- Parents feel they are receiving adequate information about their children.
- Parent-teacher interviews are effective.
- Parent cafés are an effective addition to some schools.

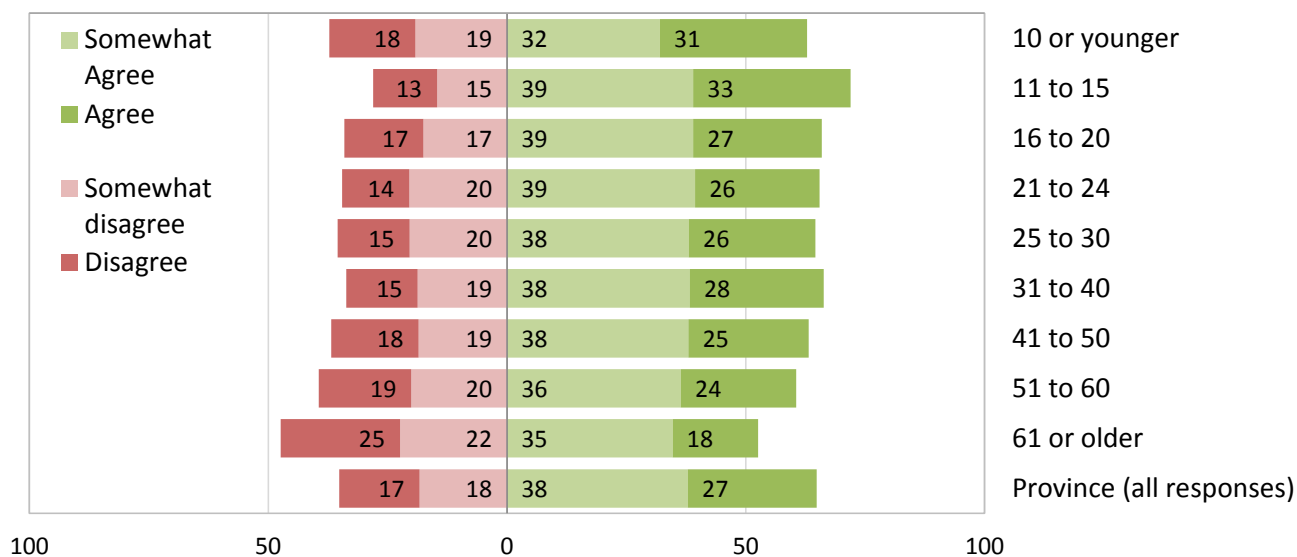
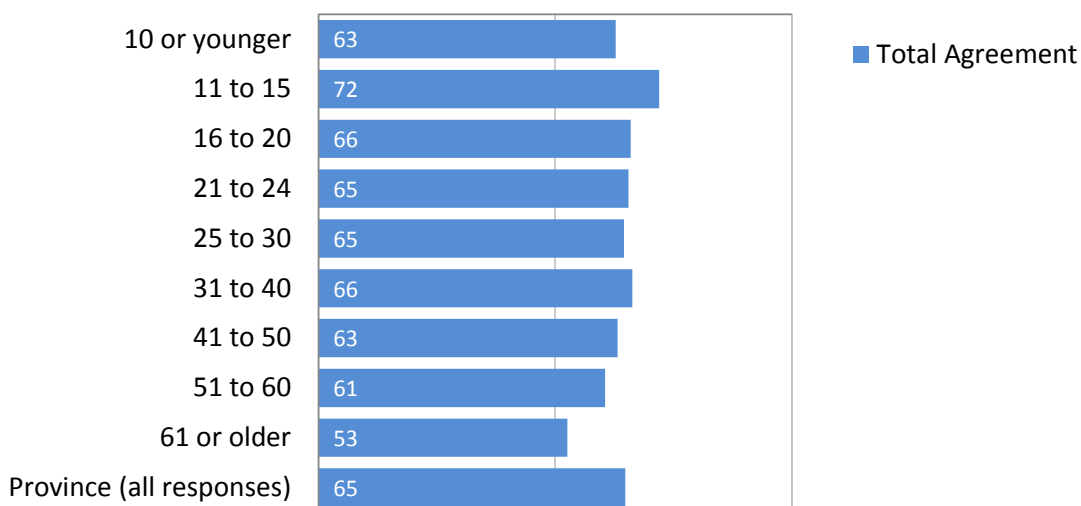
**27 Schools are organized to meet the needs of today's students. (SchOrg)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	752	15	16	39	31	<b>70</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1171	20	20	36	24	<b>60</b>
Teacher	3198	443	11	17	39	33	<b>72</b>
Student Support Staff	489	88	9	13	47	30	<b>78</b>
School Administrator	306	36	12	17	40	30	<b>70</b>
School Board Staff	205	44	14	17	40	29	<b>69</b>
Other	2942	834	25	23	35	18	<b>52</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>



27 Schools are organized to meet the needs of today's students. (SchOrg)

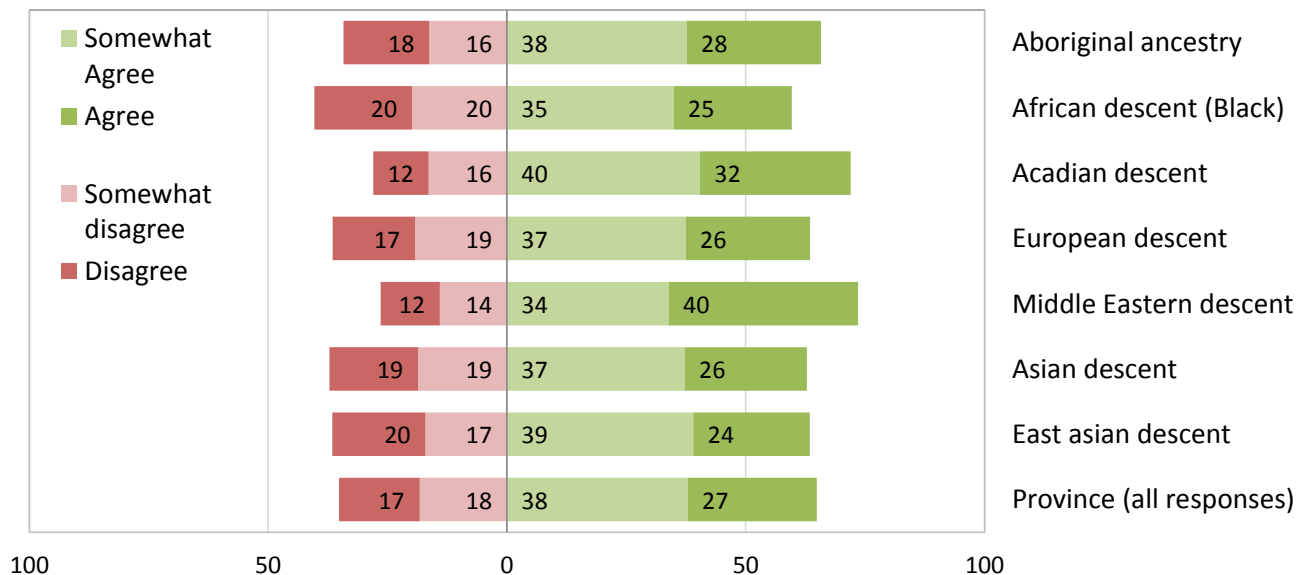
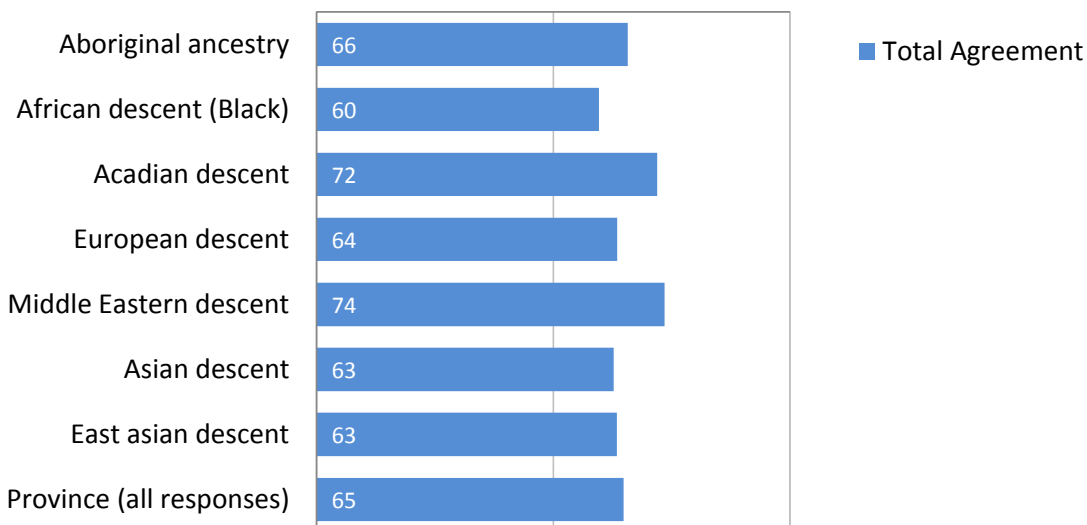
Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	75	18	19	32	31	<b>63</b>
11 to 15	2862	376	13	15	39	33	<b>72</b>
16 to 20	2549	400	17	17	39	27	<b>66</b>
21 to 24	319	70	14	20	39	26	<b>65</b>
25 to 30	1018	248	15	20	38	26	<b>65</b>
31 to 40	3776	716	15	19	38	28	<b>66</b>
41 to 50	4190	655	18	19	38	25	<b>63</b>
51 to 60	2545	503	19	20	36	24	<b>61</b>
61 or older	1102	294	25	22	35	18	<b>53</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>





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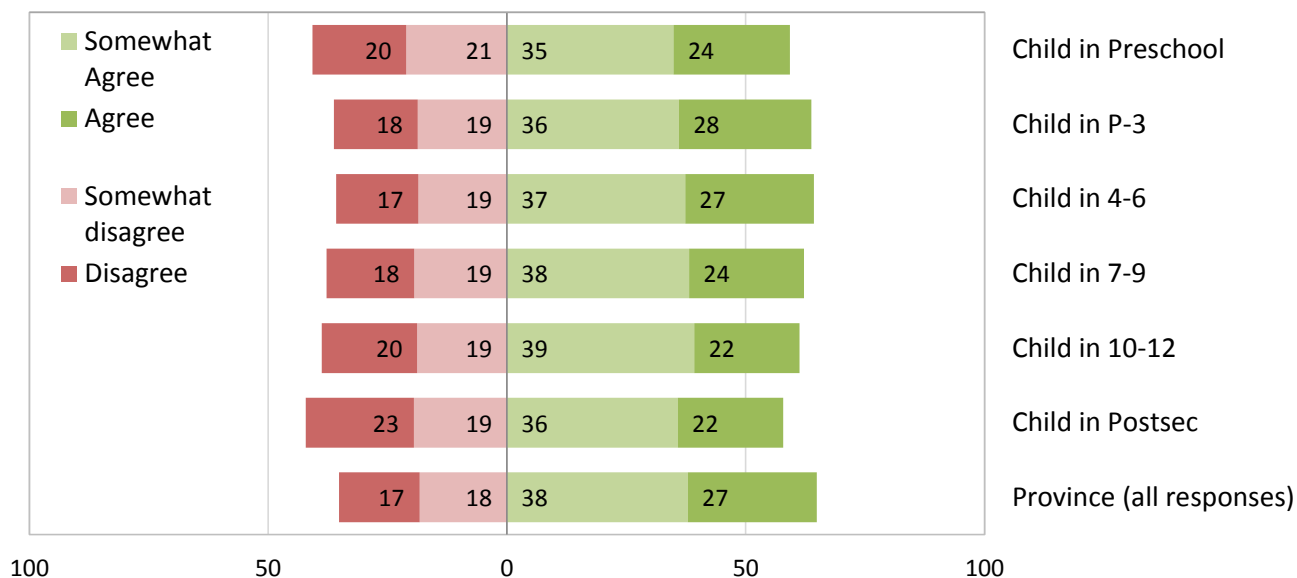
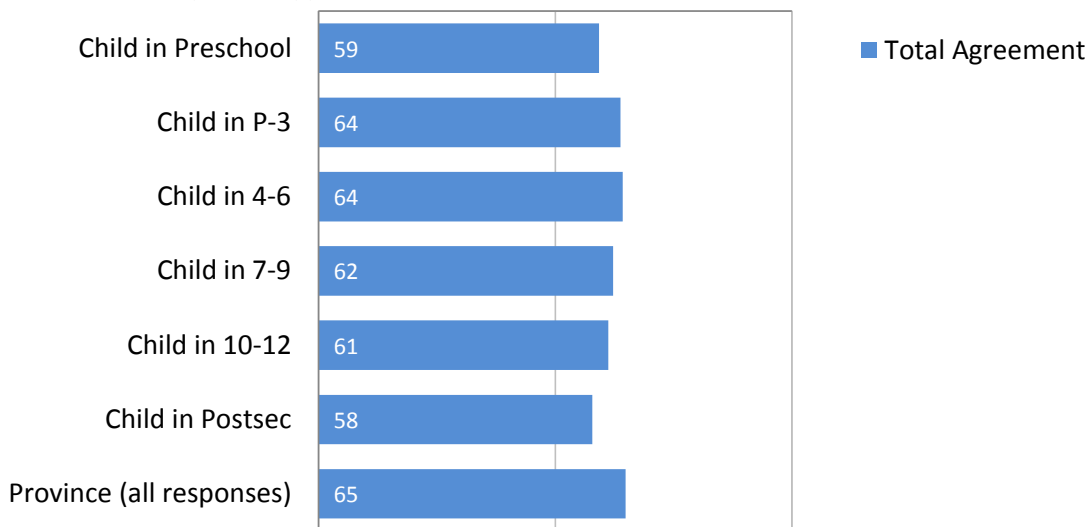
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	151	18	16	38	28	<b>66</b>
African descent (Black)	399	67	20	20	35	25	<b>60</b>
Acadian descent	2232	407	12	16	40	32	<b>72</b>
European descent	12054	2040	17	19	37	26	<b>64</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	49	12	14	34	40	<b>74</b>
Asian descent	168	39	19	19	37	26	<b>63</b>
East asian descent	54	13	20	17	39	24	<b>63</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>



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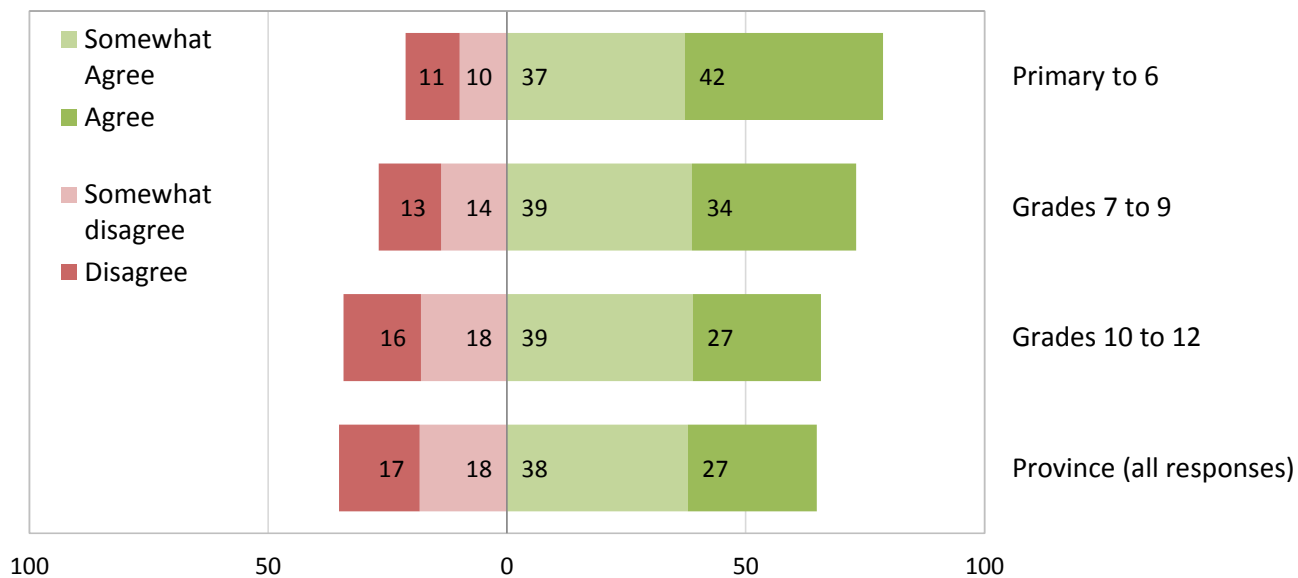
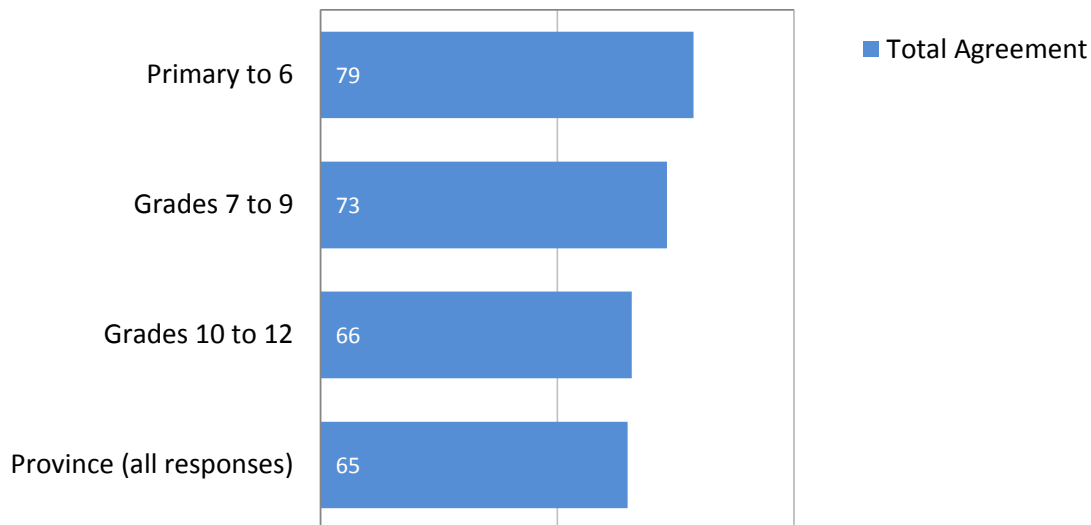
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	198	20	21	35	24	<b>59</b>
Child in P-3	2263	386	18	19	36	28	<b>64</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	301	17	19	37	27	<b>64</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	257	18	19	38	24	<b>62</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	247	20	19	39	22	<b>61</b>
Child in Postsec	365	52	23	19	36	22	<b>58</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



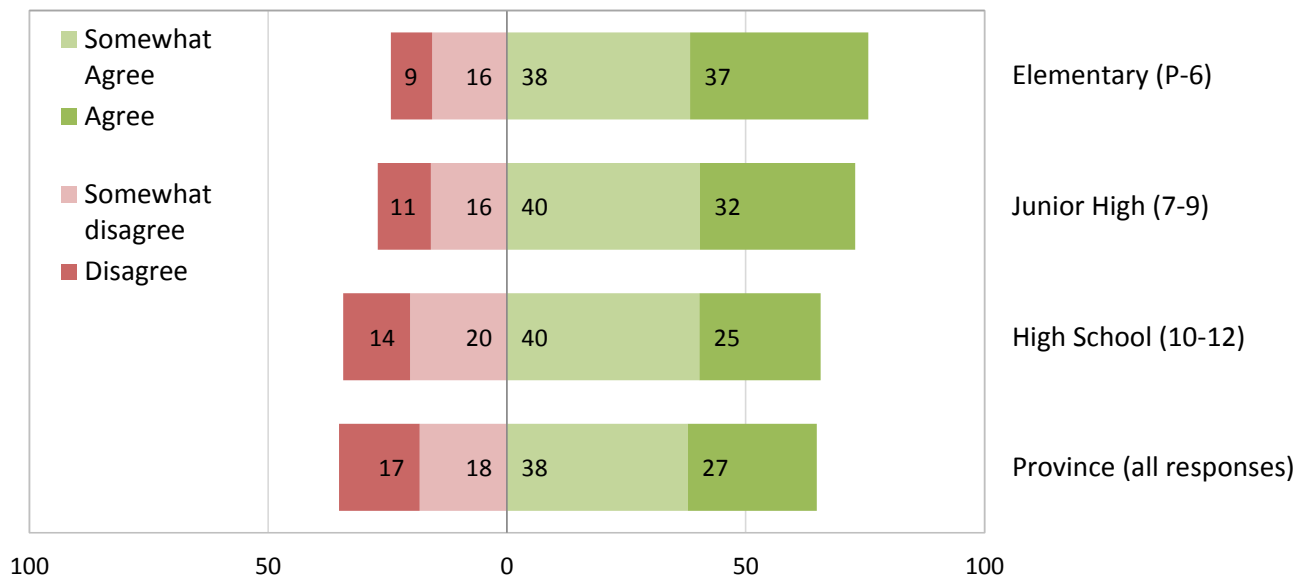
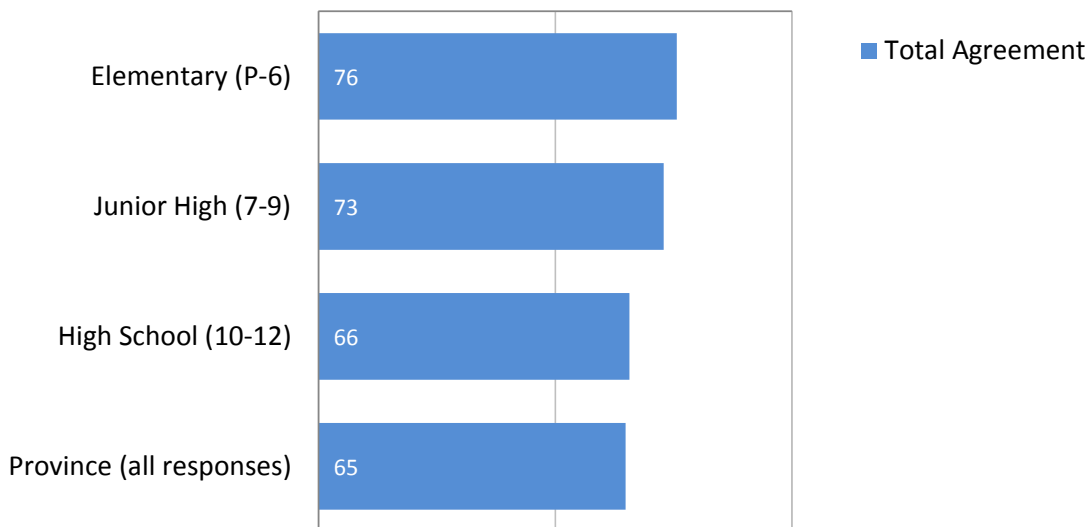
27 Schools are organized to meet the needs of today's students. (SchOrg)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	42	11	10	37	42	<b>79</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	299	13	14	39	34	<b>73</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	411	16	18	39	27	<b>66</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>



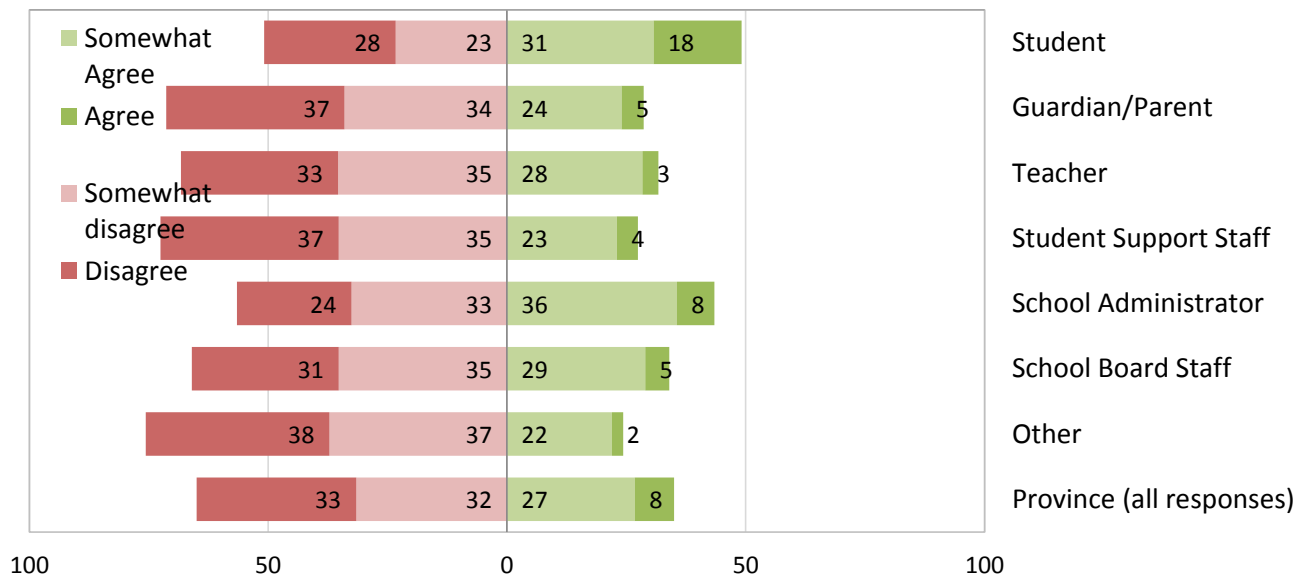
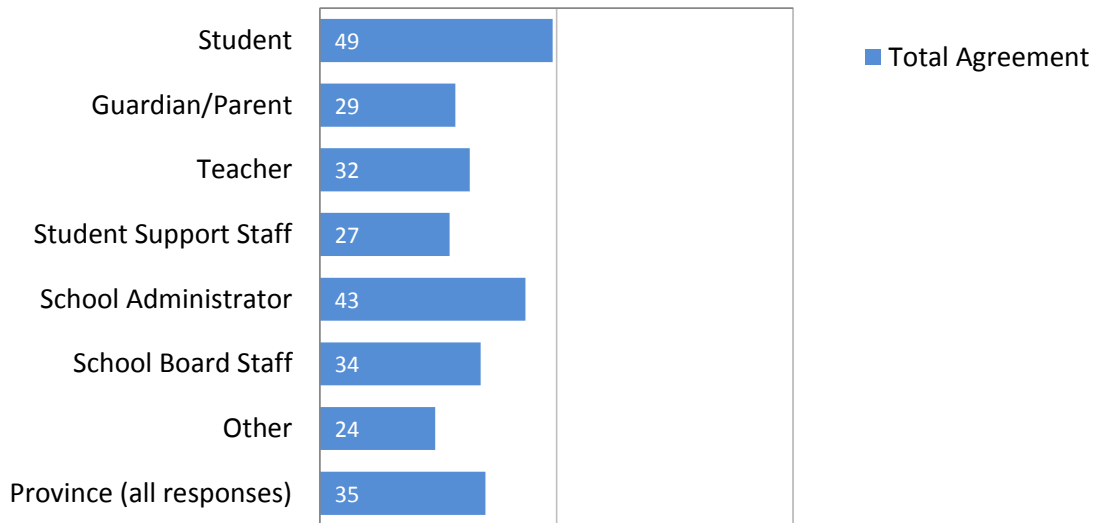
27 Schools are organized to meet the needs of today's students. (SchOrg)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	229	9	16	38	37	<b>76</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	84	11	16	40	32	<b>73</b>
High School (10-12)	911	127	14	20	40	25	<b>66</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>3368</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>65</b>



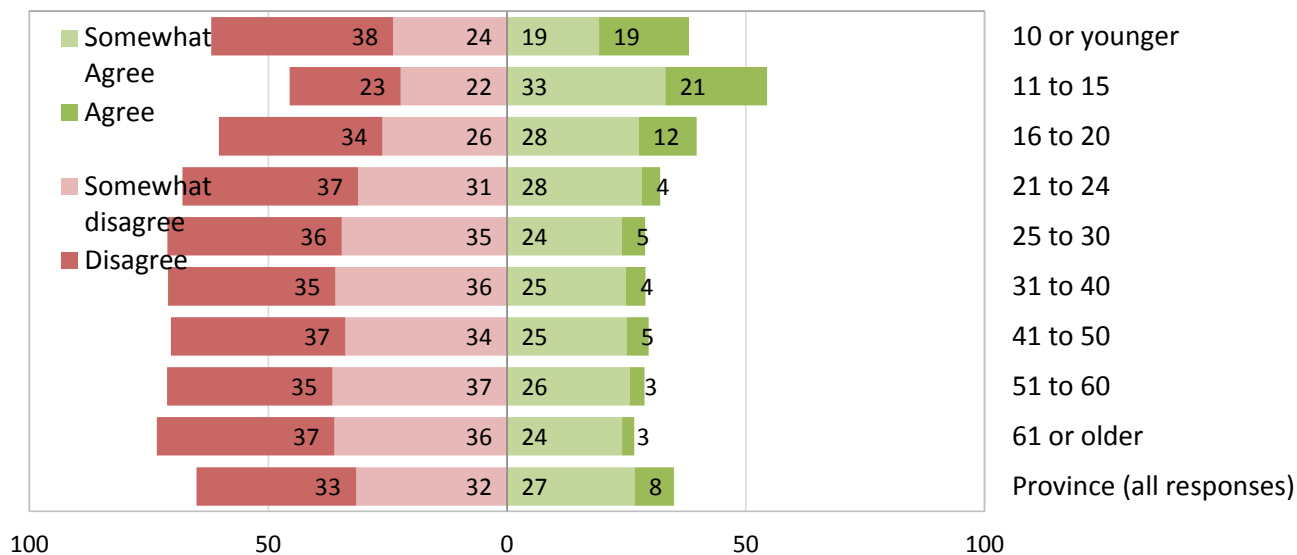
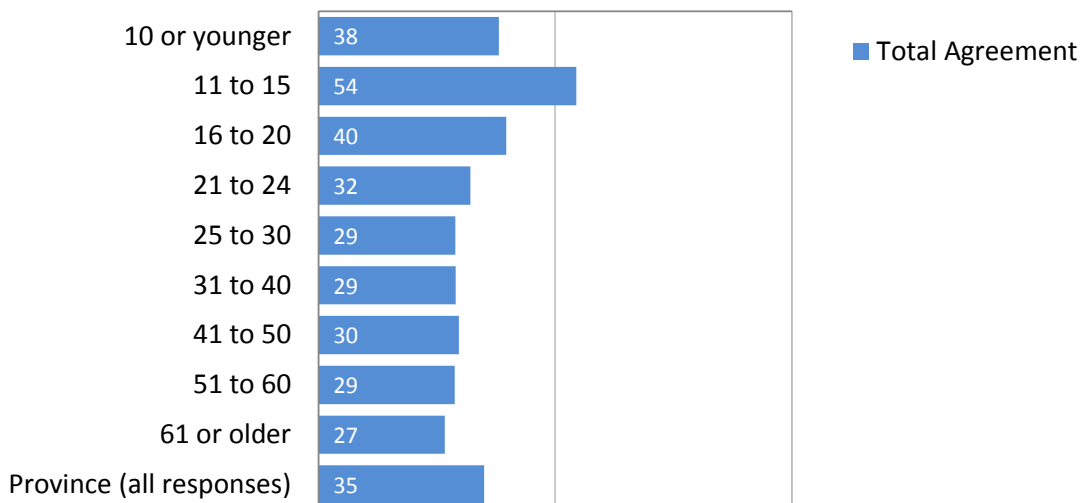
**28 Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services. (SchOrg)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	914	28	23	31	18	<b>49</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	1757	37	34	24	5	<b>29</b>
Teacher	3198	506	33	35	28	3	<b>32</b>
Student Support Staff	489	106	37	35	23	4	<b>27</b>
School Administrator	306	39	24	33	36	8	<b>43</b>
School Board Staff	205	46	31	35	29	5	<b>34</b>
Other	2942	902	38	37	22	2	<b>24</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>



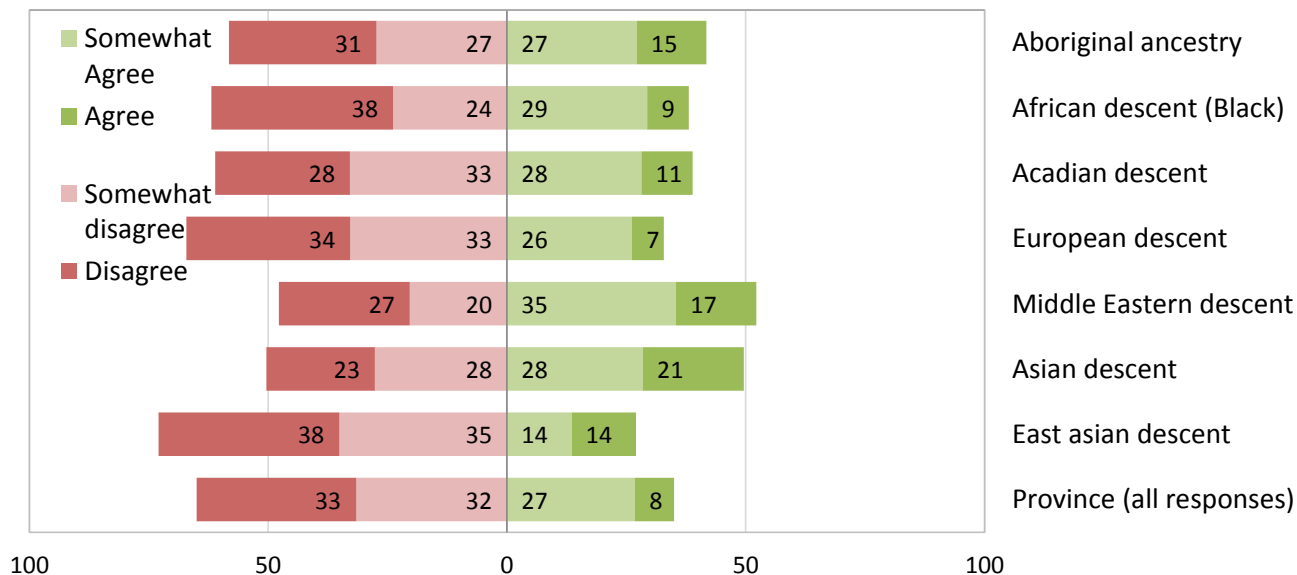
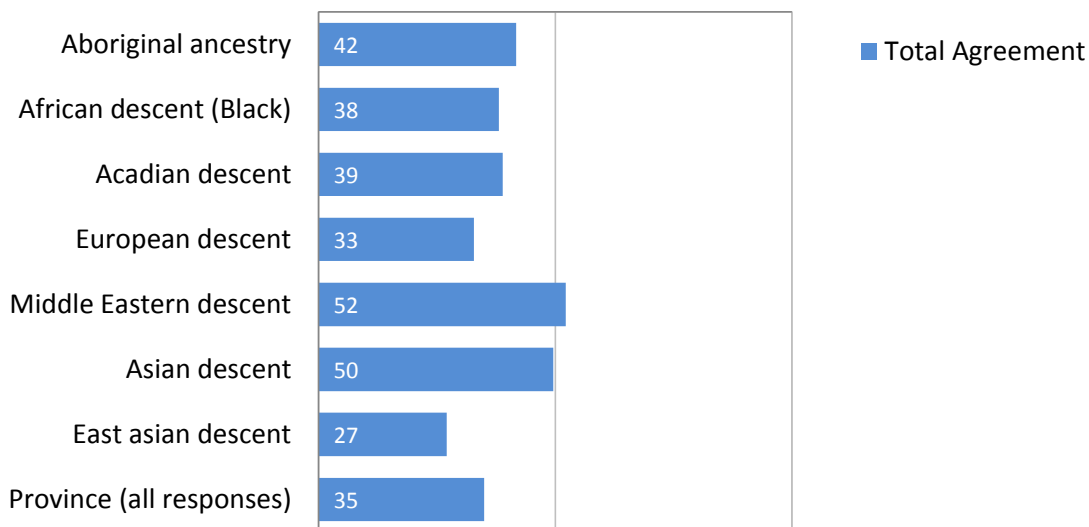
28 Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services. (SchOrg)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	107	38	24	19	19	<b>38</b>
11 to 15	2862	464	23	22	33	21	<b>54</b>
16 to 20	2549	495	34	26	28	12	<b>40</b>
21 to 24	319	85	37	31	28	4	<b>32</b>
25 to 30	1018	281	36	35	24	5	<b>29</b>
31 to 40	3776	926	35	36	25	4	<b>29</b>
41 to 50	4190	960	37	34	25	5	<b>30</b>
51 to 60	2545	600	35	37	26	3	<b>29</b>
61 or older	1102	322	37	36	24	3	<b>27</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>



28 Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services. (SchOrg)

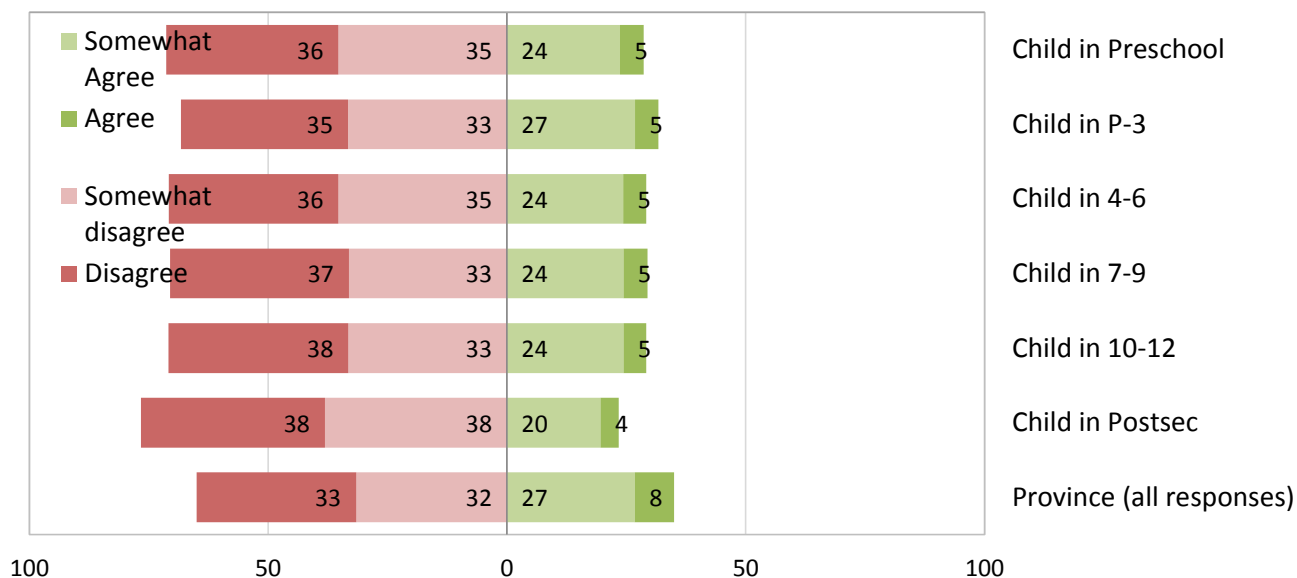
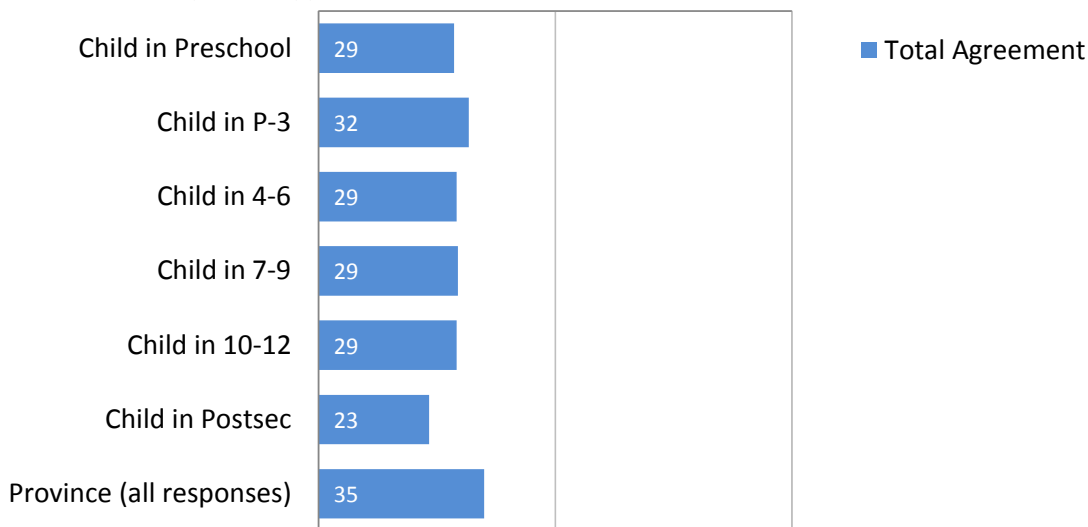
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	184	31	27	27	15	<b>42</b>
African descent (Black)	399	89	38	24	29	9	<b>38</b>
Acadian descent	2232	505	28	33	28	11	<b>39</b>
European descent	12054	2588	34	33	26	7	<b>33</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	57	27	20	35	17	<b>52</b>
Asian descent	168	45	23	28	28	21	<b>50</b>
East asian descent	54	17	38	35	14	14	<b>27</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>



**28 Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services. (SchOrg)**

Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	253	36	35	24	5	<b>29</b>
Child in P-3	2263	636	35	33	27	5	<b>32</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	479	36	35	24	5	<b>29</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	417	37	33	24	5	<b>29</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	387	38	33	24	5	<b>29</b>
Child in Postsec	365	74	38	38	20	4	<b>23</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>

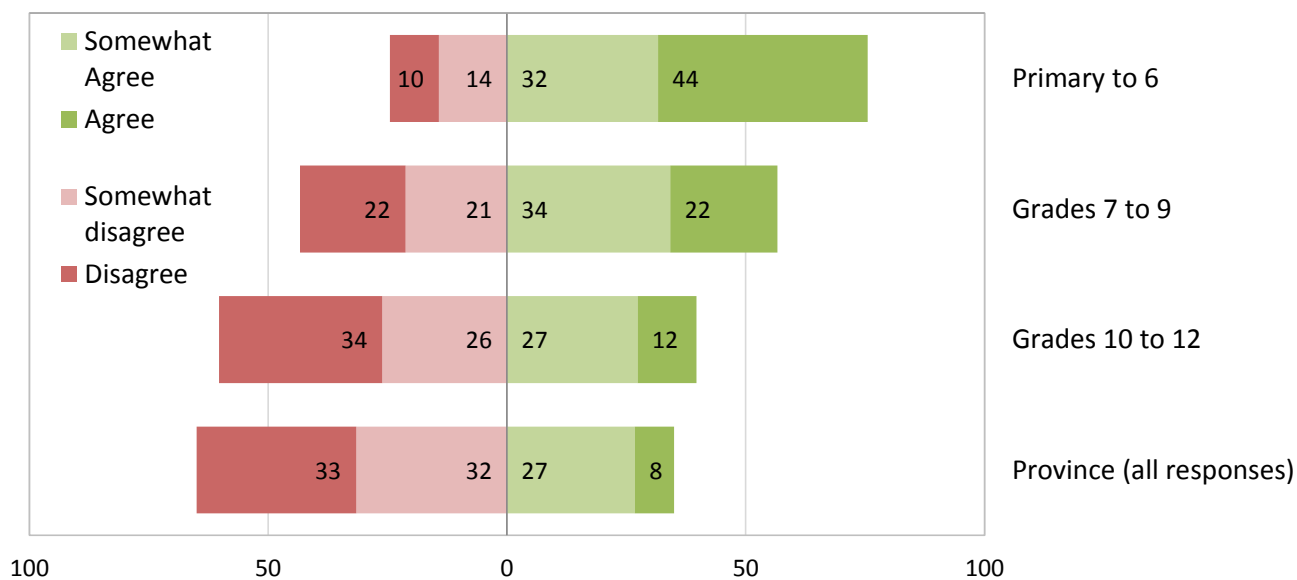
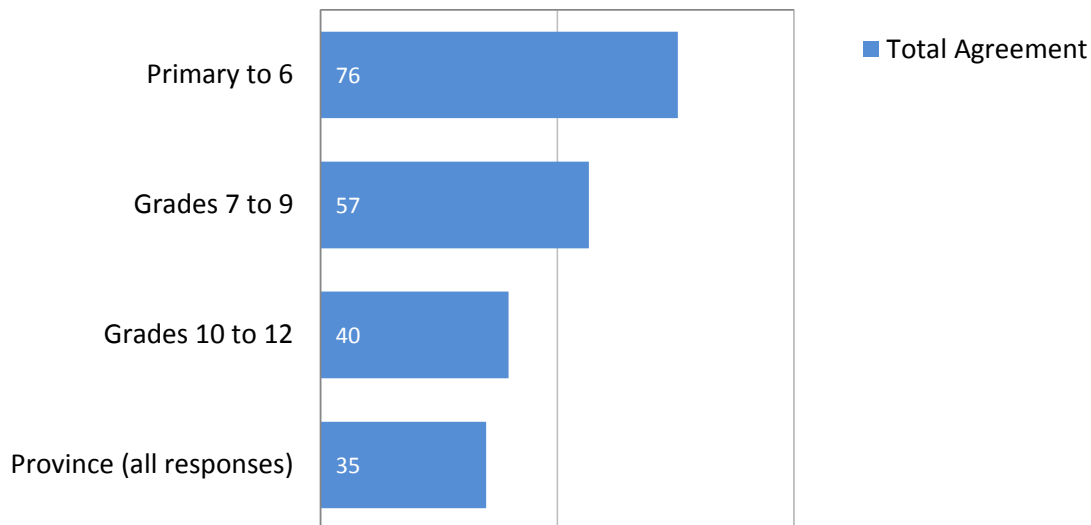
\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.





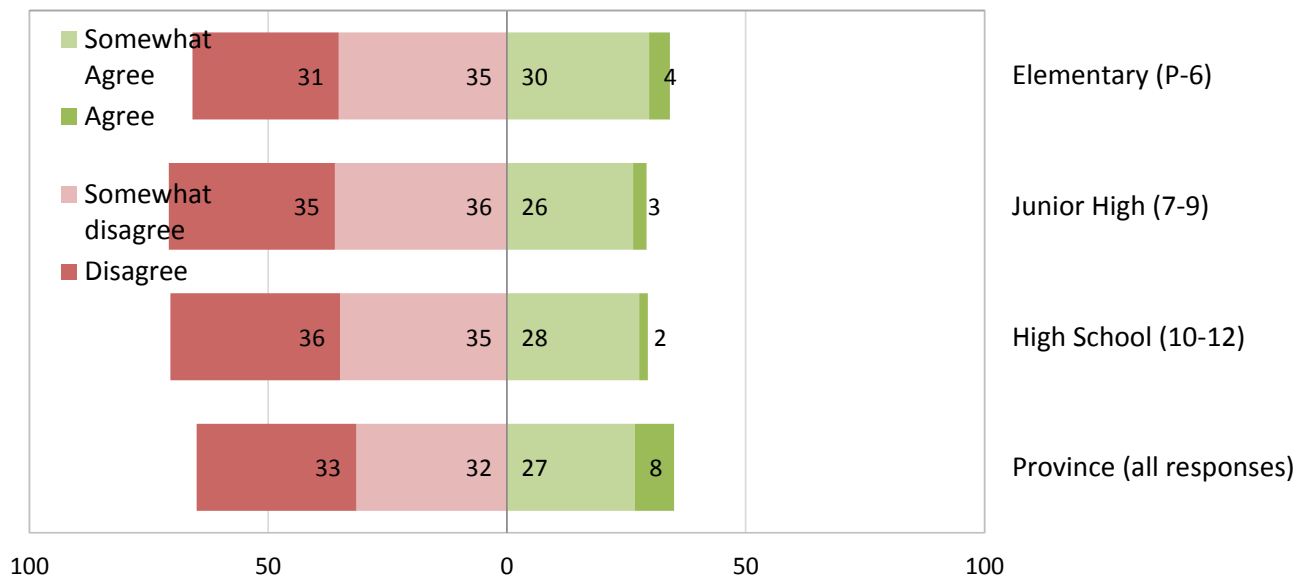
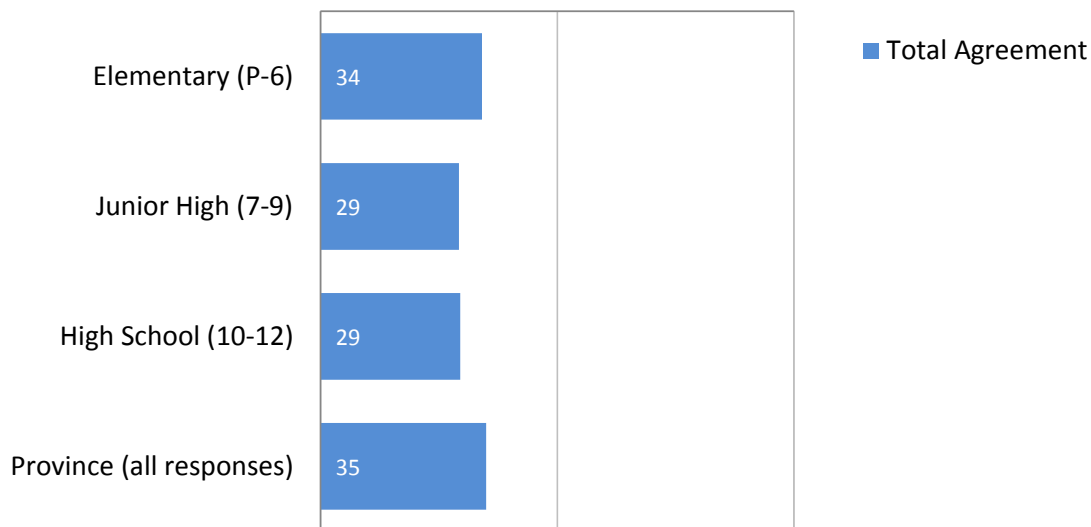
28 Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services. (SchOrg)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	58	10	14	32	44	<b>76</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	364	22	21	34	22	<b>57</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	491	34	26	27	12	<b>40</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>



**28 Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services. (SchOrg)**

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	254	31	35	30	4	<b>34</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	99	35	36	26	3	<b>29</b>
High School (10-12)	911	148	36	35	28	2	<b>29</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>



## ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS (1)

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Schools are organized to meet the needs of today's students (for example: the length of the school day, school year, and semestering).
2. Funding for education is spent on the right programs and services.

### NUMBER OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

<b>Parents and Guardians</b>	2001
<b>Teachers</b>	1149
<b>Community Members</b>	848
<b>Students</b>	708
<b>Student Support Staff</b>	147
<b>School Administrator</b>	133
<b>School Board Staff</b>	64
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5050</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

Response Category	Subcategories	Number of Responses
<b>Funding</b>	Funds are being spent in the right areas	43
	Too much funding goes to administration and/or political priorities	536
	Funding is being directed at the wrong areas	599
	More funding should be dedicated to special needs	355
	Funding needs to be increased generally	784
	More funding is needed for the arts and physical activity	351
	More funding is needed for core areas (math, literacy, science)	80
	System-level change is needed for how funding is distributed	355
	Funding varies based on the school	101
	More funding is needed for technology	124
	More accountability and transparency is needed around funding decisions	159
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3487</b>
<b>Time in School</b>	The school year and/or day should be lengthened	567
	The school year and/or day should be shortened	257
	The school year needs to be examined	221
	The length of the school year is adequate	118
	Semestering is not working	424
	The school day needs to be examined	208
	Bussing has too much impact on the school day	91
	Schools hours should be better aligned with brain productivity	185
	There are too many storm days affecting time in school	82
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2153</b>

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***In recent years we have been devoting more funding to human resources, which is very beneficial to meeting students' needs.***

- Teacher

***The limited funds we do have are spent quite fairly.***

- Student

***Politics control the funding of programs and services, not actual needs.***

- Community Member

***Seems more money is spent on administrative functions than directly in the classroom, i.e. teachers, educational assistants, and resources.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Budgets and priorities do not always align. More school-based decision-making would be an improvement within broader school boundaries.***

- Community Member

## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: FUNDING

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**Funds are being spent in the right areas** – includes other general remarks about funding.

- Funding is distributed effectively and/or improvements are underway in regards to education funding.
- Funds are well-spent given the reality of fiscal restraints.
- Sometimes funding decisions are appropriate, and sometimes not.

**Too much funding goes to administration and/or political priorities**

- Too much interference in the education system is based on political drivers and collective agreements.
- Too much money is spent outside the classroom (board-level, EECD, administration).
- There is not enough consultation with school staff and teachers in decision-making.
- Too much money is spent on PD and sending teachers to conferences throughout the year.
- Reference to issues with spending on Masters programs for teachers (Drake in particular).
- Too much money is spent at the top (high salaries and benefits, boards, EECD) – need to direct more at the classroom level.

**Funding is being directed at the wrong areas** - funds are not being allocated/ spent effectively.

- Misalignment between budgets and priorities – funds are not targeted effectively (e.g. buildings vs. learning, core subjects vs. arts/sports).
- Funding for the education system doesn't seem to make it into schools and a lot of money is wasted on things that are not needed (books not asked for, communications materials, unnecessary renovations, iPads/ technology).

- Some programs do not represent an effective use of funds – Reading Recovery, IB, Book Bureau, French programming.
- Too much is spent on PD and teacher education (e.g. graduate programs).

**More funding should be dedicated to special needs** - also includes some comments regarding too much funding focused on special needs/inclusion.

- More funding is needed for TAs and other supports to assist teachers in dealing with inclusion.
- Too much funding is targeted at inclusion, to the detriment of average learners.
- More funding is needed to help deal with mental health issues and learning disabilities.
- More funding is needed for differentiated learning programming.
- Funding is needed to decrease class sizes so teachers have more time to address individual student needs.

#### **Funding needs to be increased generally**

- Not enough funding is allocated to the education system.
- More funding is needed for infrastructure needs (space, renovations, sport facilities/ equipment, air conditioning, libraries).
- More human resources are required for schools (teachers, TAs, librarians).
- More funding for programming and associated supports is required (core subjects, class trips, career planning, programs for gifted students, improved curriculum, trades programs, languages, textbooks, lab supplies, paper/ photocopying).
- Funding cuts are negatively impacting students.

#### **More funding is needed for the arts and physical activity**

- There should be more time/ resources for physical education and emphasis on healthy lifestyles in schools, especially considering obesity issues.
- More hands-on learning and life skills (money management, communication, job training) opportunities are needed.

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***Decisions about funding programs and services are not research-informed, often leading to adoption of inadequate programs and services.***

- Community Member

***More funding is required to intervene with at-risk students.***

- Teacher

***More funding is needed for students with special needs and those who need mental health help.***

- Teacher

***Funding. We need more. More teachers, more resources, more space.***

- Teacher

***The school system is built on a very old traditional way of doing things. Funding should be increased. Period.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Fund health education. I am open to a longer school day if it means physical activity every day for one hour.***

- Teacher

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***Education funding should be reallocated to focus on core educational outcomes. Non-core curriculum and extra-curricular activities should be dropped or funded by communities.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Schools could be organized differently to better address student engagement and summer lapse. Schools have been cut drastically over the past three years. There is enough to dole out to meet the needs.***

- School Administrator

***We've got an education system designed for the needs of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We need a total makeover.***

- Teacher

***Decide what the point of education is in this province and spend money accordingly.***

- Teacher

***It depends on what school board you are in and the pecking order your school falls in.***

- More funding for arts/ music programs and school clubs is needed.
- Resources for French are lacking.

#### **More funding is needed for core areas (math, literacy, science)**

- More funding and time should be spent on core subjects (math, sciences, English, technology).
- Too much is spent on non-core subject areas.

#### **System-level change is needed for how funding is distributed** - organizational changes should be made to facilitate better funding allocations.

- Many societal changes have taken place since the education system was established, but it has not evolved to reflect this.
- School organization should be more reflective of student needs.
- The funding formula is too complicated and outdated.
- More funding is not necessarily the answer – it just needs to be distributed more effectively.
- Need to make more fundamental changes to the education system – too many issues have been addressed with a Band-aid approach; we shouldn't just continue doing things because they've always been done that way.
- Schools need greater flexibility (alternative programming, online opportunities).
- Alternative schools should be given more consideration (or, setting up alternative models in sections of existing schools).
- We need to look at other education models for inspiration (e.g. European – Finnish, Dutch; New Zealand, etc.).

#### **Funding varies based on the school** – there are many differences between schools.

- Funding is based solely on enrolment vs. need, which negatively affects rural schools; the funding system is not fair.
- There are “have” and “have not” schools.

- There are funding discrepancies between schools, even within the same board.
- Not enough control of funds at the local/ school level.

#### **More funding is needed for technology**

- More money is needed for technology; computers are outdated.
- Too much money is spent on technology – it is resource-intensive to maintain and keep up-to-date; I pads are a waste of money.
- Funding on technology is misdirected/ misspent.

#### **More accountability and transparency is needed around funding decisions**

- Regular evaluations of funding decisions should be conducted.
- More consultation needs to be done with teachers and others in schools to determine best funding decisions.
- Not enough information is available about funding decisions - how they are made, how much is spent, outcomes, etc.

## **SECTION 2: TIME IN SCHOOL**

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**The school year and/or day should be lengthened** - most comments advocate for longer school days.

- School days are too short – there should be more hours for teaching, breaks for physical activity (or, some say shorter breaks).
- The school year should be longer; summer vacation is too long.
- There are too many PD days and storm days throughout the year, taking away from teaching time.
- Short school days are not adequately preparing secondary students for the workforce.

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***Our school board continually gets less and less funding. The system is not fair province-wide.***

- Teacher

***I would like to see more funding for technology since it is the way of the future.***

- Community Member

***I feel the education system should be evaluated on a regular basis.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I think the government needs to reach out to teachers and ask them what they want and need to see in the schools.***

- Teacher

***Children are not spending enough time in the classrooms learning.***

- Guardian/Parent

***I would be on board with having a slightly longer school day if we could provide more enrichment opportunities.***

- Teacher

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***The school year is looking too long. Students are becoming disengaged in late May and June becomes more of a student management month, rather than teaching.***

- School Administrator

***The school year format as it is at present no longer makes sense. The school year should be year round with semesters and no more than two weeks maximum between semesters.***

- Community Member

***Breaks need to be split up more. Such as having a shorter summer but having more weeks off during the year, especially in winter.***

- Community Member

***The length of the school year is great.***

- Student

***Lengthening the school day or year is ridiculous. When something isn't working doing that same thing for a longer period is foolish.***

- Teacher

### **The school year and/or day should be shortened**

- Days are too long for young students (P-2).
- Lunch hours are too short (note: this seems to vary from 45 min. (too short) to 1.5 hours (too long).
- Some class times are too long to hold students' attention (75/80 minutes).
- The school day is too long.
- The school year is too long – students become disengaged by June and more breaks are needed throughout the year.

**The school year needs to be examined** - majority of the focus is on the notion of year-round schooling.

- The change in age for Primary enrolment (to age 4 up to Dec. 31) has caused issues; children are not ready for school at such a young age (note: this was a prior node with 14 responses).
- The school year should be year-round with breaks spaced equally; the agrarian model with summer vacation is outdated and no longer relevant – summer break is too long.
- The school year needs review – too much time is lost to PD and storm days.
- The school year should have more flexibility.
- There is little productive time in June.

### **The length of the school year is adequate**

- The school day and year are already long enough, especially when considering time spent on buses – anything longer would be a disservice to students.
- The current school year works well.

**Semestering is not working** – most comments pertain to secondary schools.

- Semesters do not allow for enough time spent in-depth on subjects and too much is trying to be crammed in.

- Semesters do not work (especially for math and English) – there is not enough time and breaks between subject levels are too long, which negatively affects student experiences and preparedness for post-secondary.
- Very few comments supportive of semesters (less than 10).

### **The school day needs to be examined**

- Days should be longer and incorporate more time for physical activity and learning curriculum.
- The school day is too long for Primary students.
- School days are not structured effectively for working parents.
- There is a lack of consistency with school start and end times.
- School days should be longer and the school week should be reduced by a day.
- Split grades are not effective for students.
- Grade 3 students should be released at the same time as P-2 students.

### **Bussing has too much impact on the school day**

- Long bus rides result in long school days and early pick up times.
- Bus schedules dictate school start and end times, rather than what is best for students.

**Schools hours should be better aligned with brain productivity** - school days are not conducive to students' naturally best learning times.

- Research has shown that teenagers do not work most effectively early in the morning and school days should be reflective of this knowledge (reference to Dr. Stan Kutcher's work).
- Early starts are fine for elementary students.

### **There are too many storm days affecting time in school**

- Teachers should have to work on storm days.
- There has been an increasing number of storm days without a plan to make them up, which reduces students' learning opportunities.

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***The semestering system in high school doesn't provide adequate time for students to learn subjects in-depth. Semestering should be eliminated and core subjects should be offered all year in high school.***

- Guardian/Parent

***The length of the school day should be looked at.***

- Guardian/Parent

***The school day is too short to properly address the demands of the curriculum.***

- Teacher

***I think bussing schedules determine the length of schools days.***

- Student Support Staff

***The school day is not right for a teenager. We are programmed to stay up late and wake up late.***

***This leaves us at a disadvantage.***

- Student

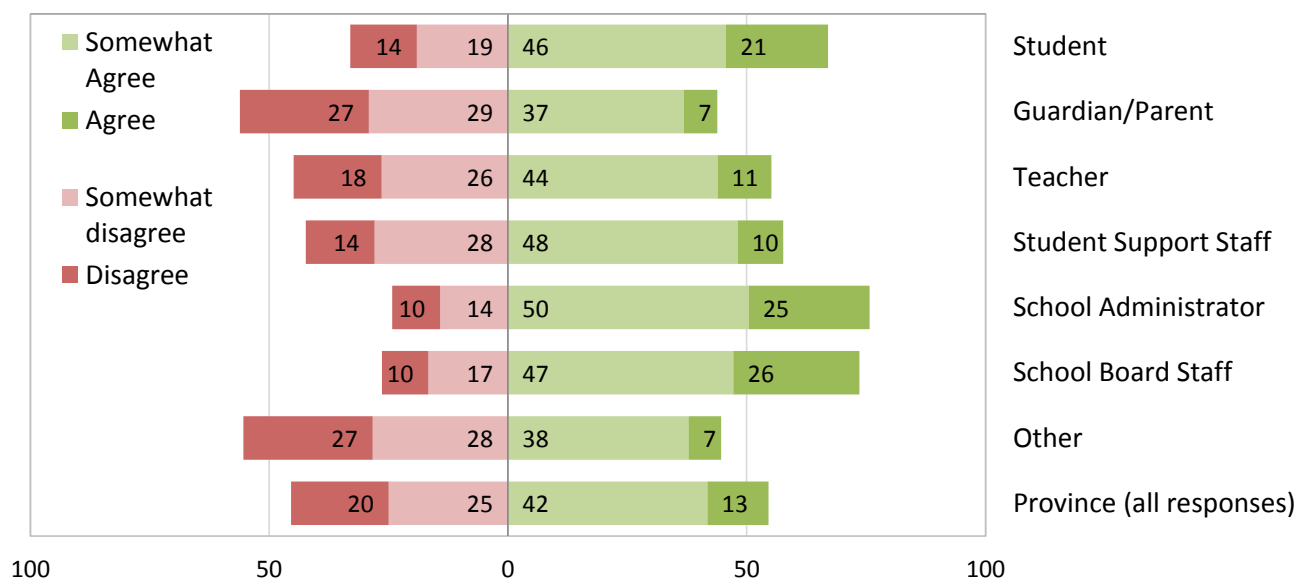
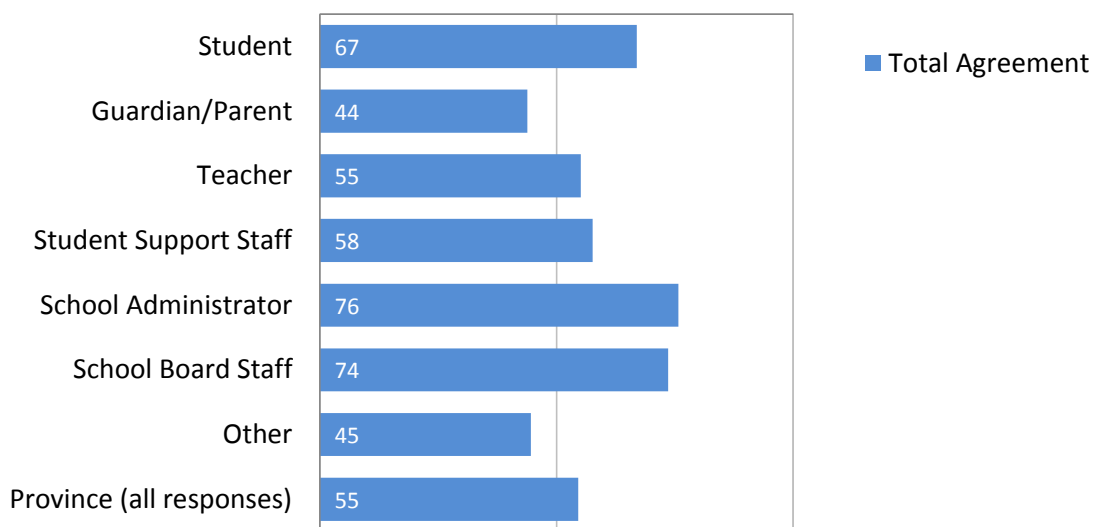
***Storm days need to be made up, even at the expense of teacher professional days.***

- Guardian/Parent

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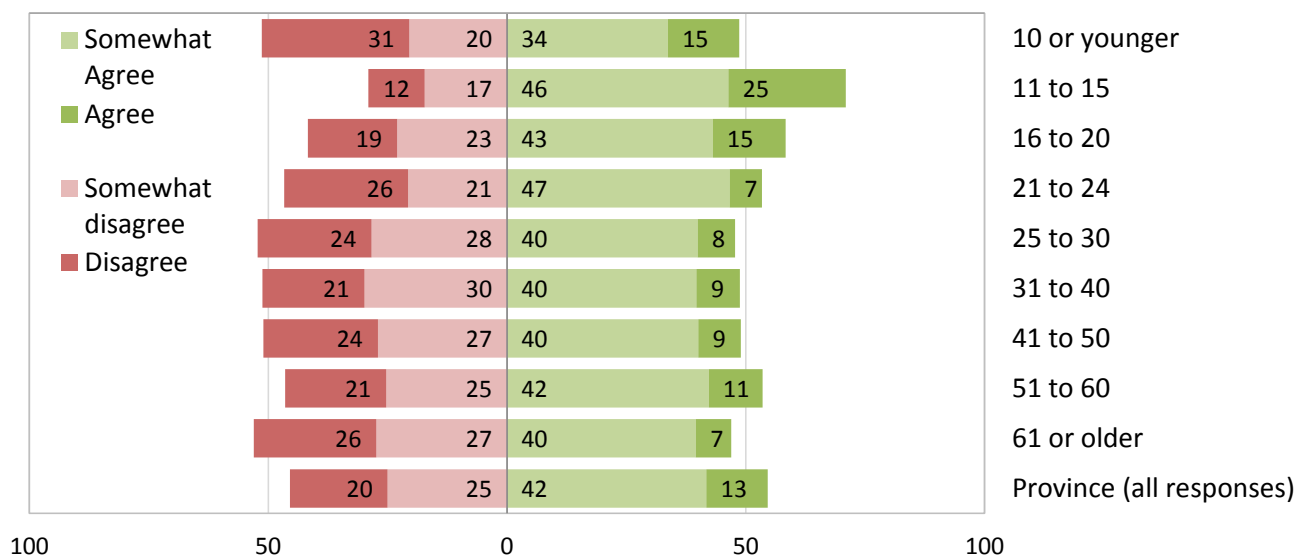
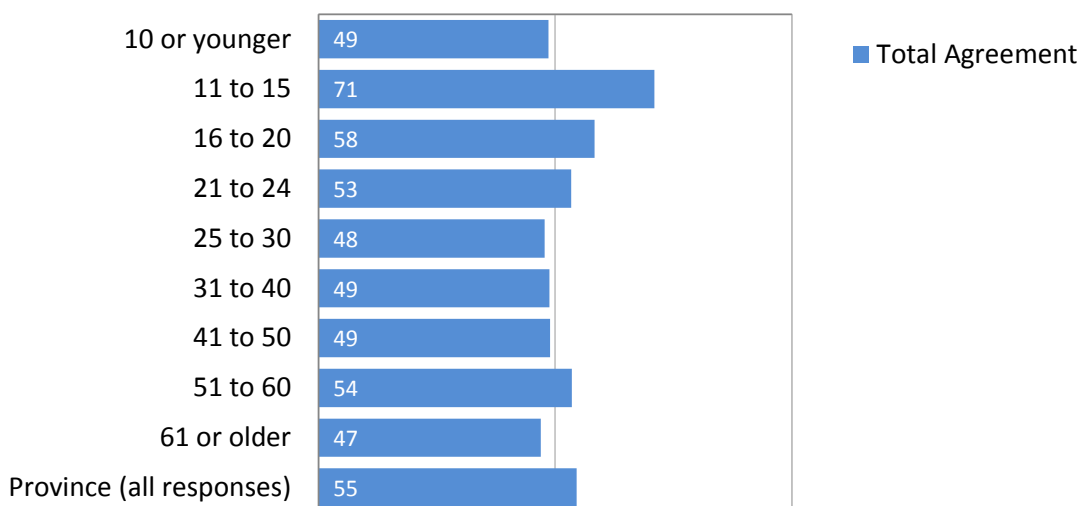
**29 Regional school board staff provide effective supports to schools. (SchOrg)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1477	14	19	46	21	<b>67</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	2650	27	29	37	7	<b>44</b>
Teacher	3198	675	18	26	44	11	<b>55</b>
Student Support Staff	489	142	14	28	48	10	<b>58</b>
School Administrator	306	46	10	14	50	25	<b>76</b>
School Board Staff	205	61	10	17	47	26	<b>74</b>
Other	2942	1281	27	28	38	7	<b>45</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>



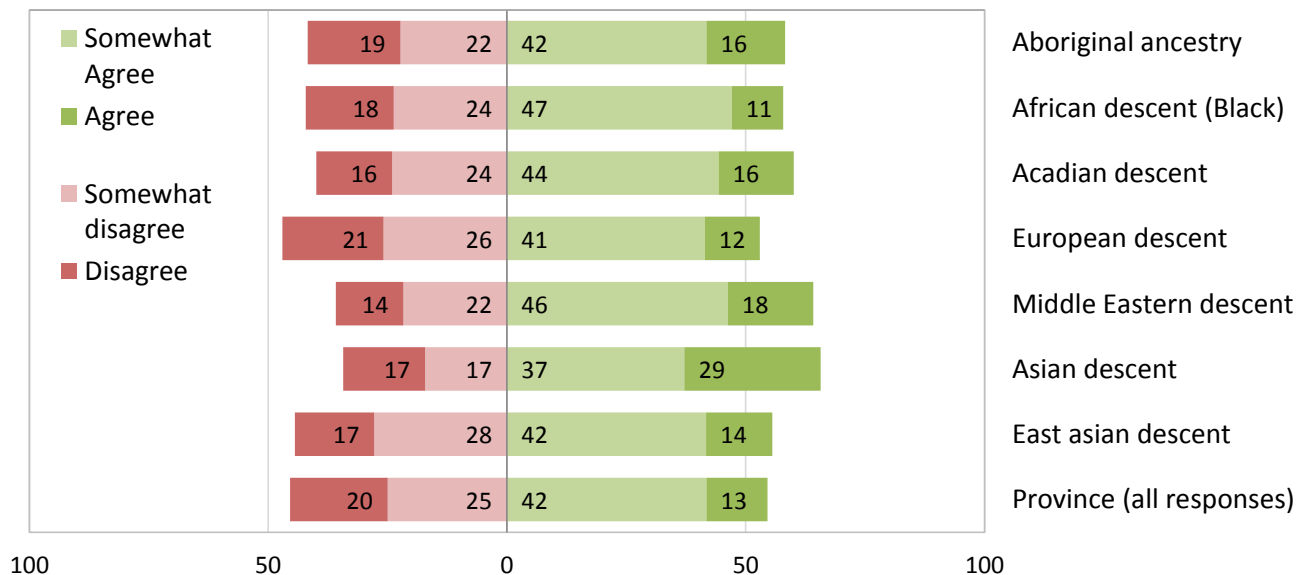
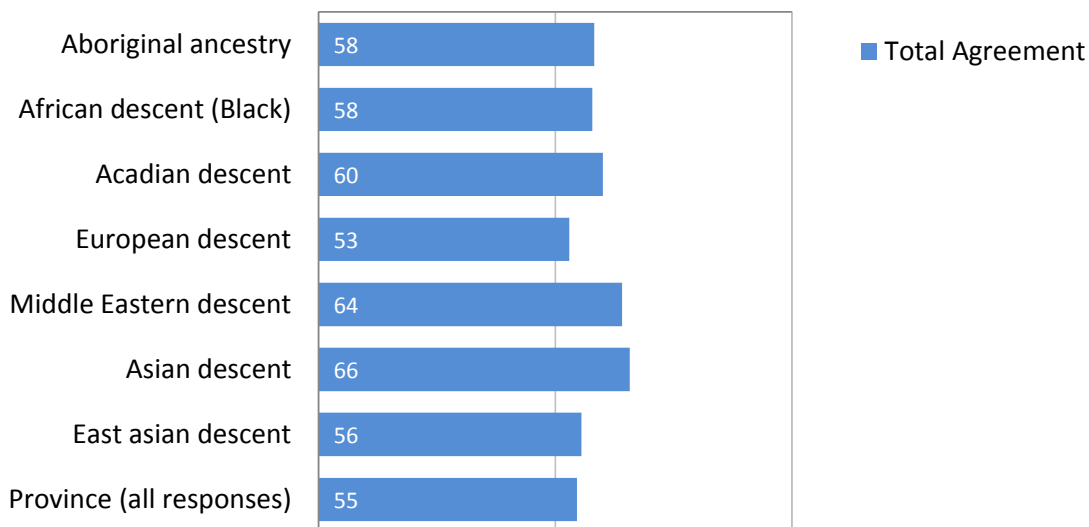
29 Regional school board staff provide effective supports to schools. (SchOrg)

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	144	31	20	34	15	<b>49</b>
11 to 15	2862	752	12	17	46	25	<b>71</b>
16 to 20	2549	793	19	23	43	15	<b>58</b>
21 to 24	319	126	26	21	47	7	<b>53</b>
25 to 30	1018	419	24	28	40	8	<b>48</b>
31 to 40	3776	1388	21	30	40	9	<b>49</b>
41 to 50	4190	1426	24	27	40	9	<b>49</b>
51 to 60	2545	813	21	25	42	11	<b>54</b>
61 or older	1102	429	26	27	40	7	<b>47</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>



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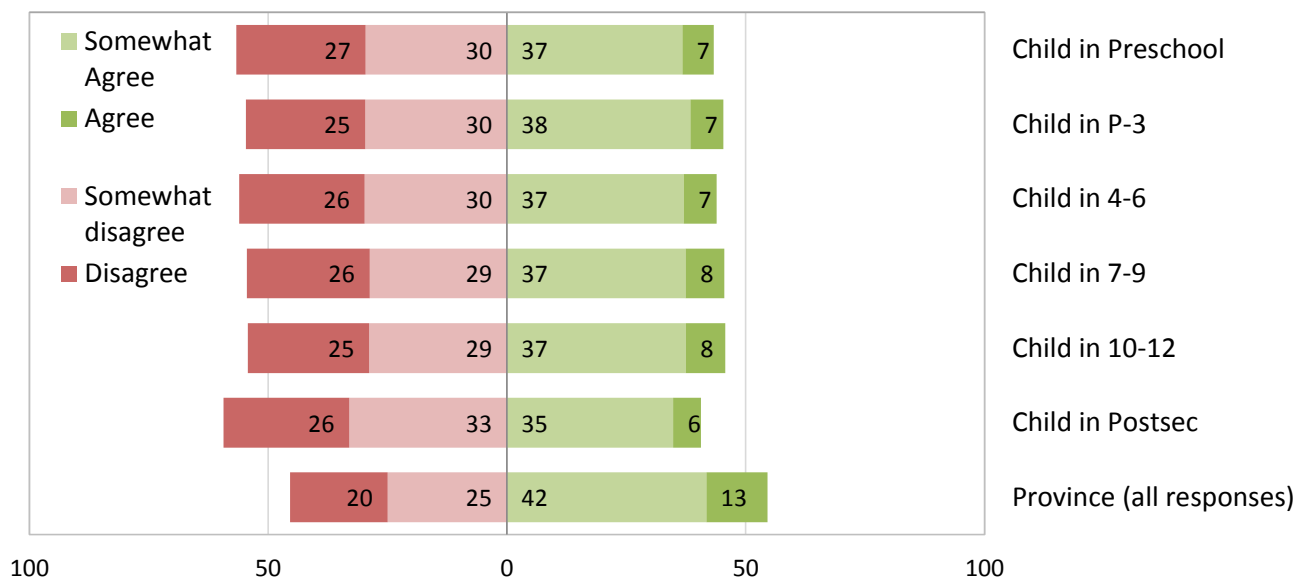
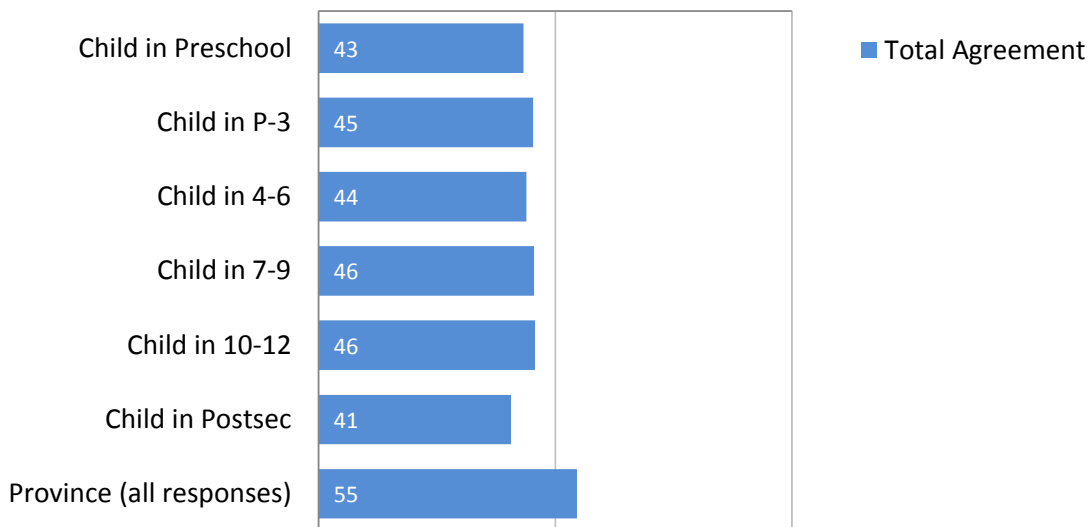
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	273	19	22	42	16	<b>58</b>
African descent (Black)	399	112	18	24	47	11	<b>58</b>
Acadian descent	2232	728	16	24	44	16	<b>60</b>
European descent	12054	4002	21	26	41	12	<b>53</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	64	14	22	46	18	<b>64</b>
Asian descent	168	63	17	17	37	29	<b>66</b>
East asian descent	54	18	17	28	42	14	<b>56</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>



29 Regional school board staff provide effective supports to schools. (SchOrg)

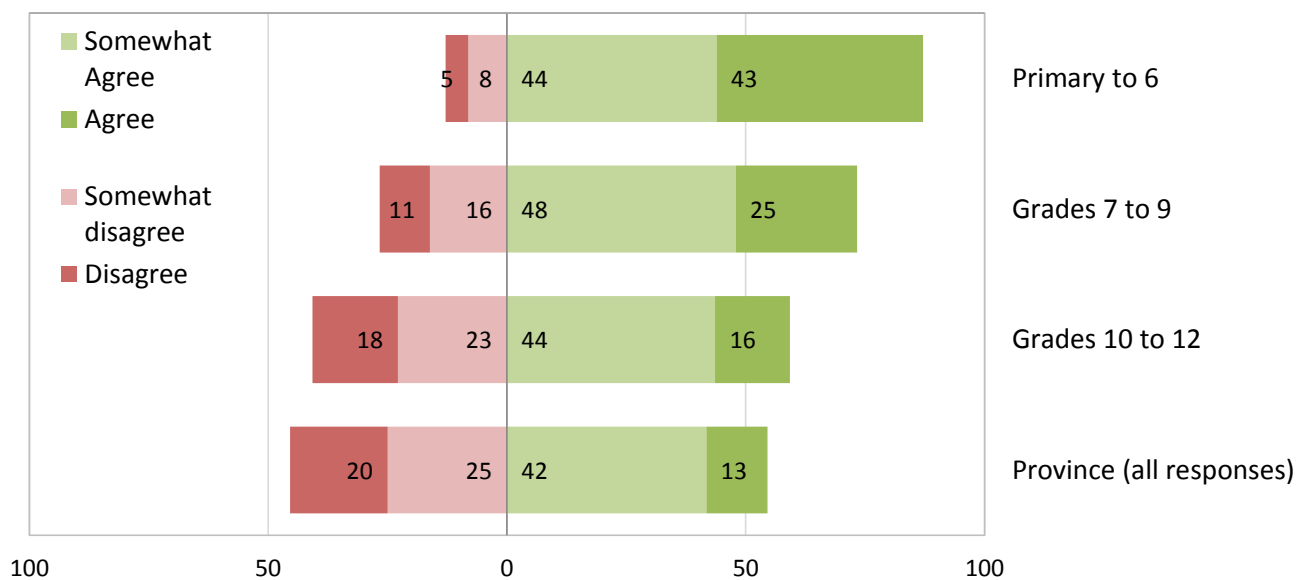
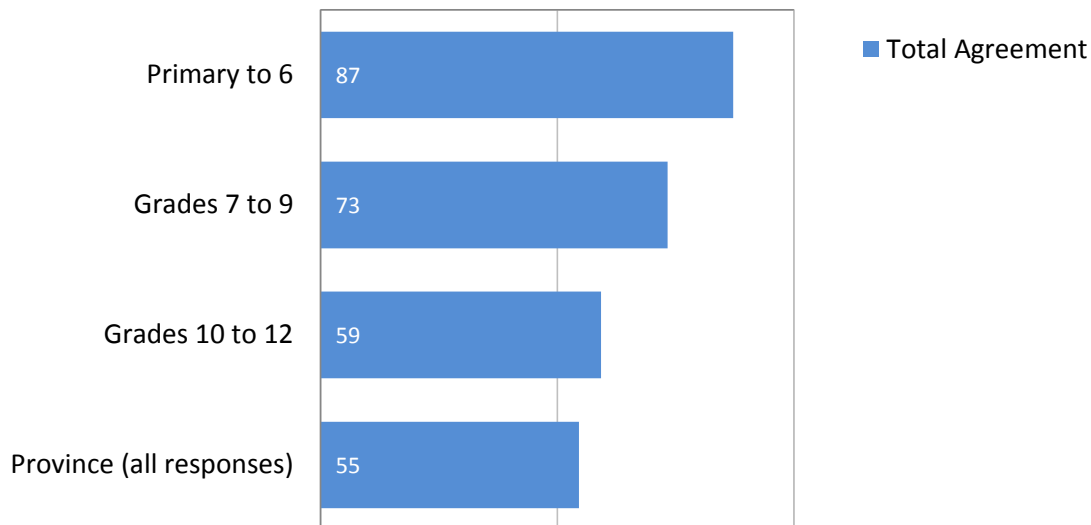
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	382	27	30	37	7	<b>43</b>
Child in P-3	2263	942	25	30	38	7	<b>45</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	737	26	30	37	7	<b>44</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	675	26	29	37	8	<b>46</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	611	25	29	37	8	<b>46</b>
Child in Postsec	365	141	26	33	35	6	<b>41</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



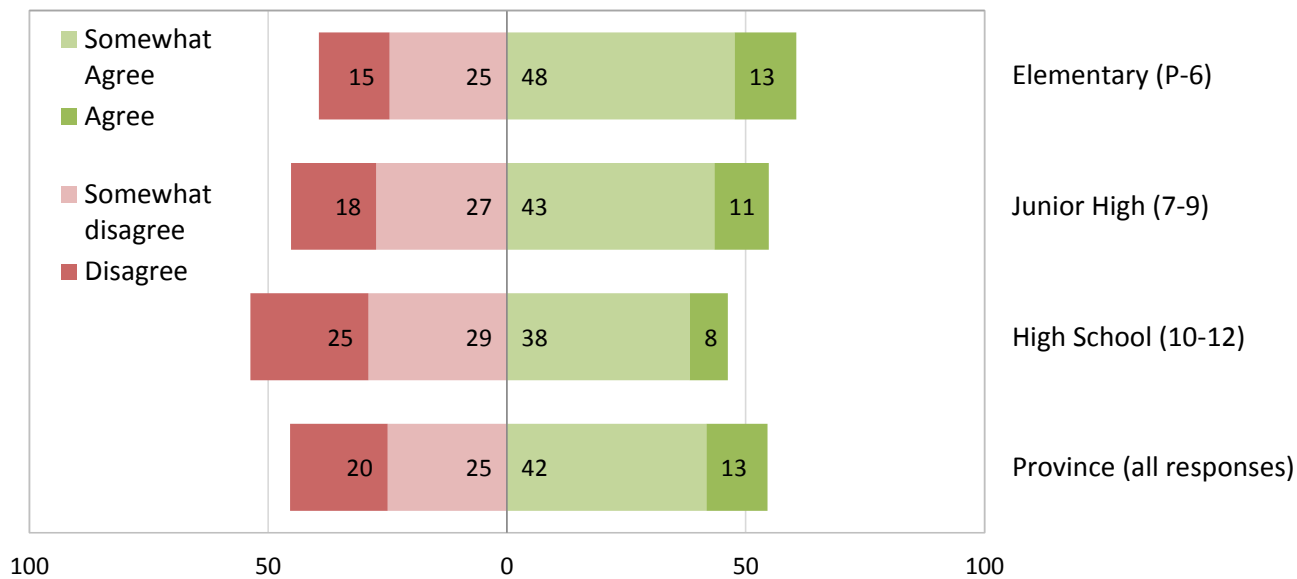
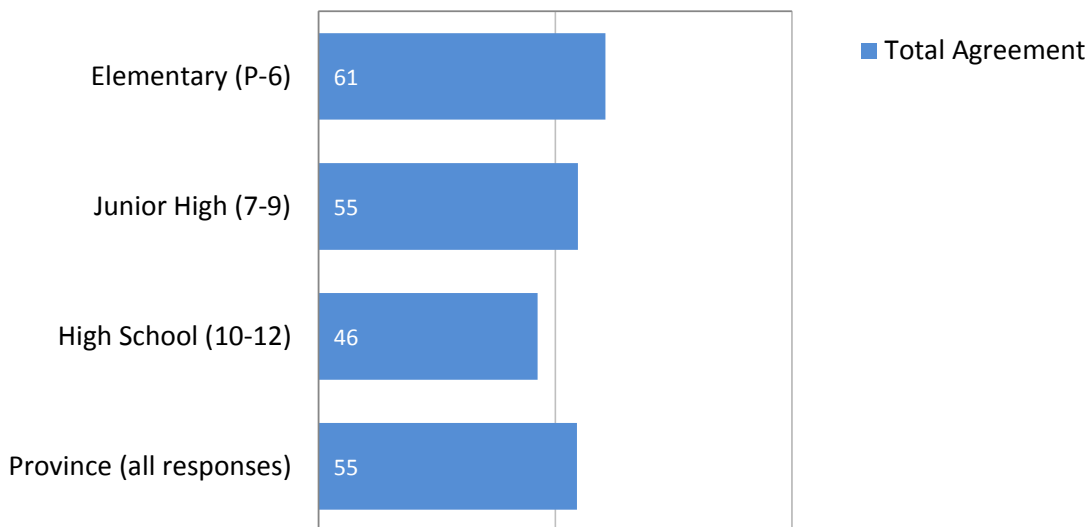
29 Regional school board staff provide effective supports to schools. (SchOrg)

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	106	5	8	44	43	<b>87</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	583	11	16	48	25	<b>73</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	787	18	23	44	16	<b>59</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>



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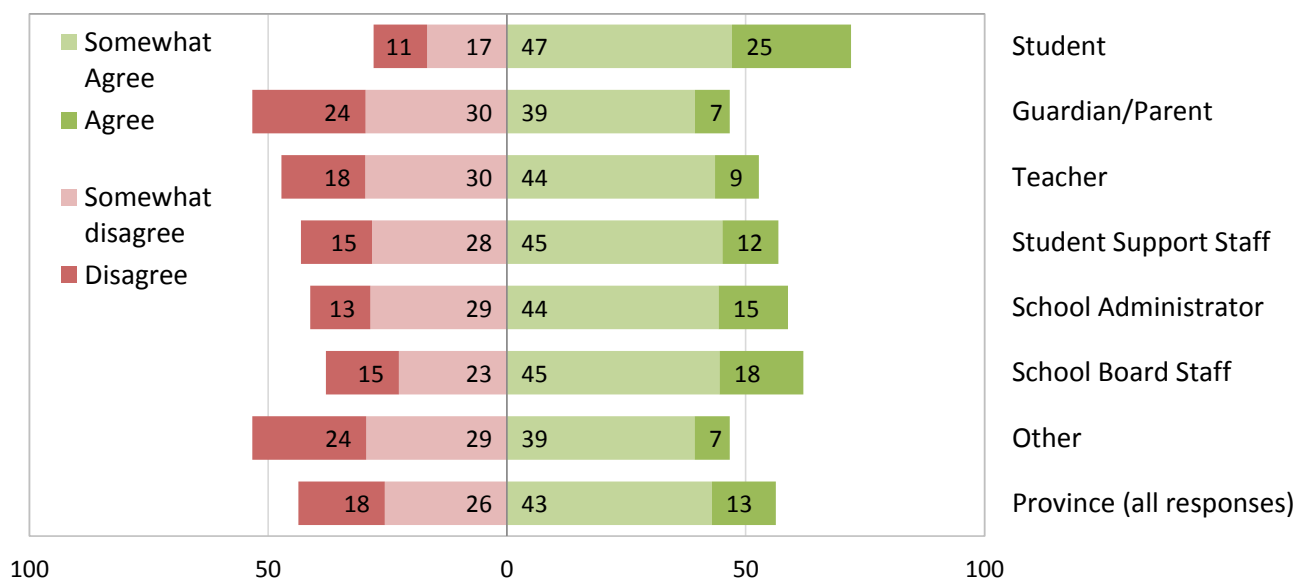
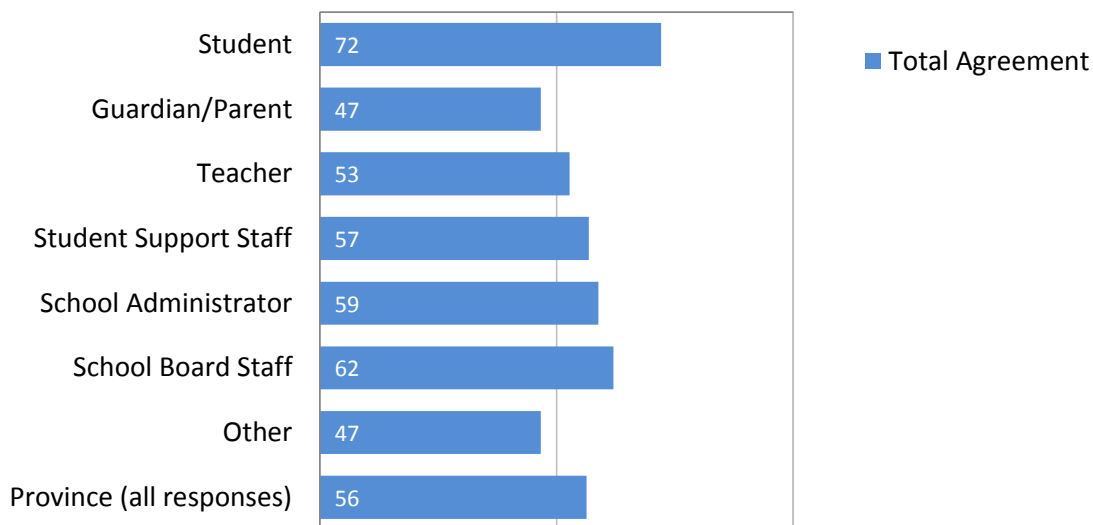
Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	348	15	25	48	13	<b>61</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	139	18	27	43	11	<b>55</b>
High School (10-12)	911	180	25	29	38	8	<b>46</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>6332</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>





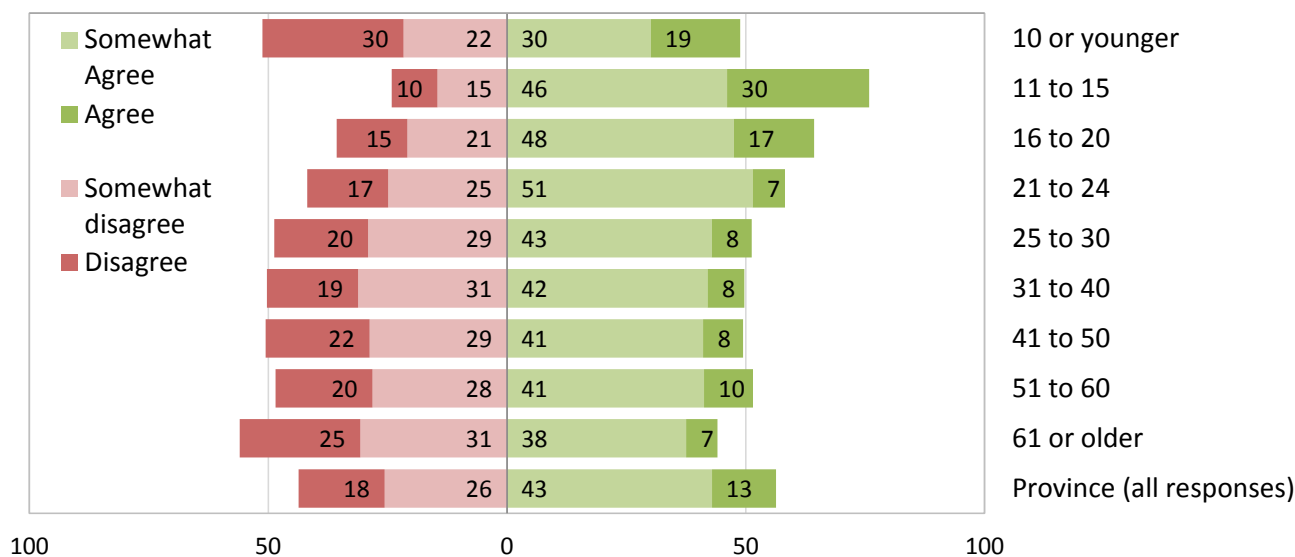
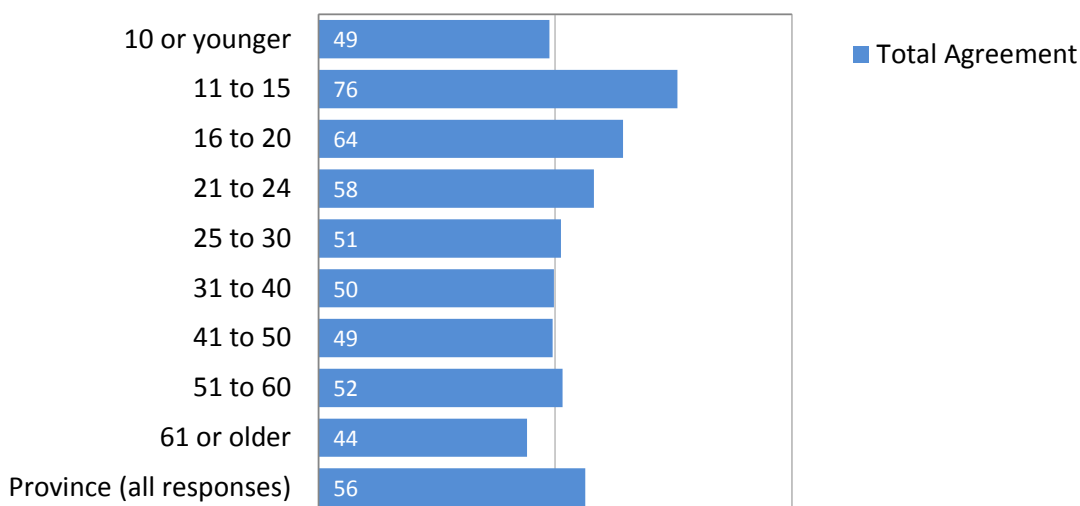
**30 DOEECD staff provide effective supports to school boards. (SchOrg)**

Respondent type	Number of responses		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Student	5207	1783	11	17	47	25	<b>72</b>
Guardian/Parent	6438	3098	24	30	39	7	<b>47</b>
Teacher	3198	843	18	30	44	9	<b>53</b>
Student Support Staff	489	174	15	28	45	12	<b>57</b>
School Administrator	306	51	13	29	44	15	<b>59</b>
School Board Staff	205	68	15	23	45	18	<b>62</b>
Other	2942	1404	24	29	39	7	<b>47</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>7421</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>



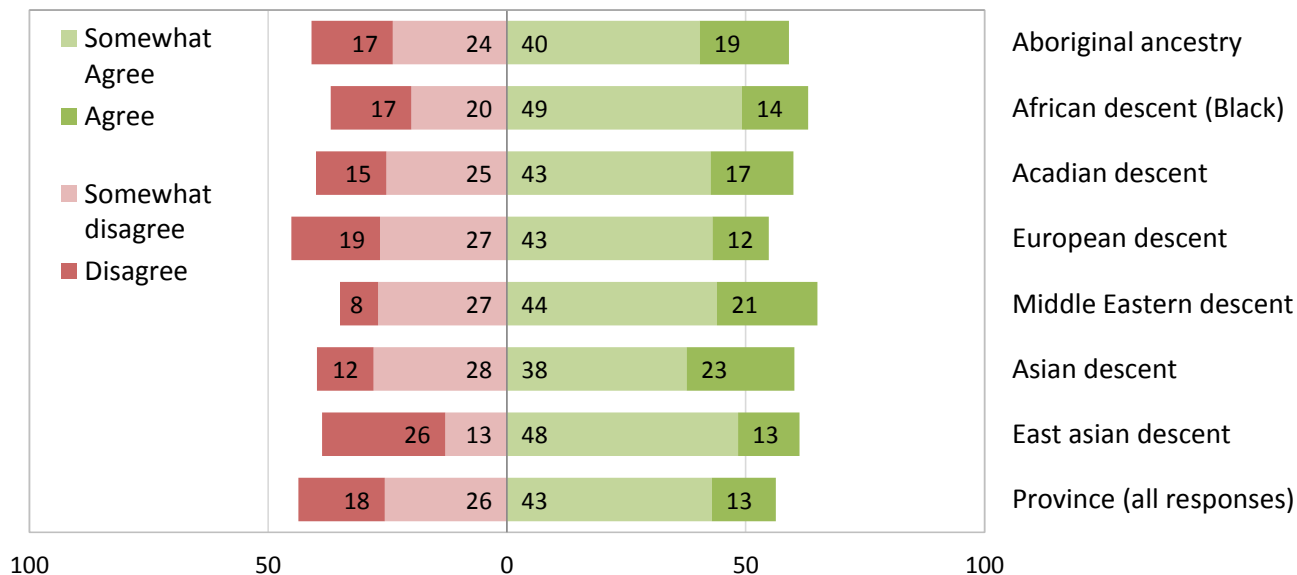
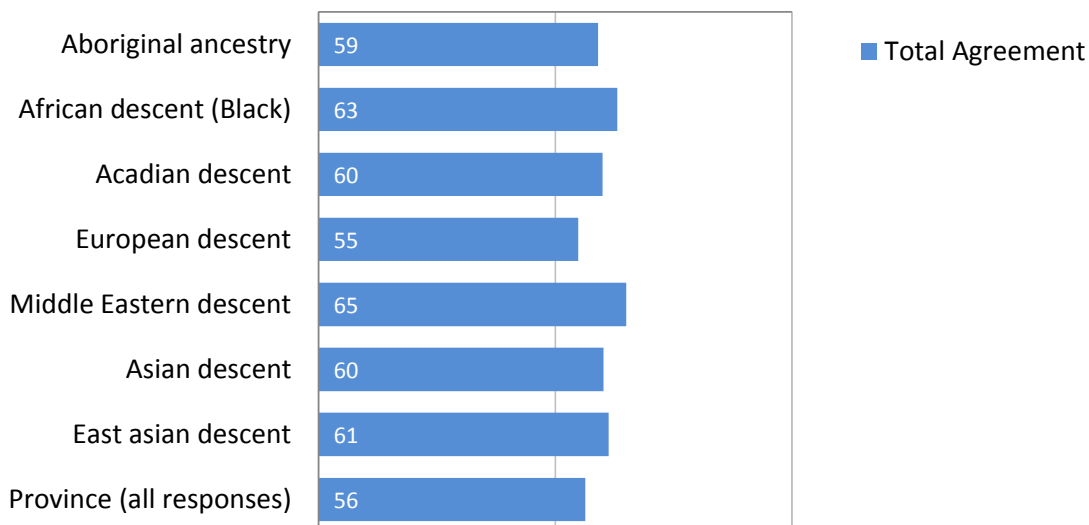
**30 DOEECD staff provide effective supports to school boards. (SchOrg)**

Age group	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
10 or younger	325	159	30	22	30	19	<b>49</b>
11 to 15	2862	942	10	15	46	30	<b>76</b>
16 to 20	2549	926	15	21	48	17	<b>64</b>
21 to 24	319	142	17	25	51	7	<b>58</b>
25 to 30	1018	458	20	29	43	8	<b>51</b>
31 to 40	3776	1592	19	31	42	8	<b>50</b>
41 to 50	4190	1731	22	29	41	8	<b>49</b>
51 to 60	2545	950	20	28	41	10	<b>52</b>
61 or older	1102	473	25	31	38	7	<b>44</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>7421</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>



**30 DOEECD staff provide effective supports to school boards. (SchOrg)**

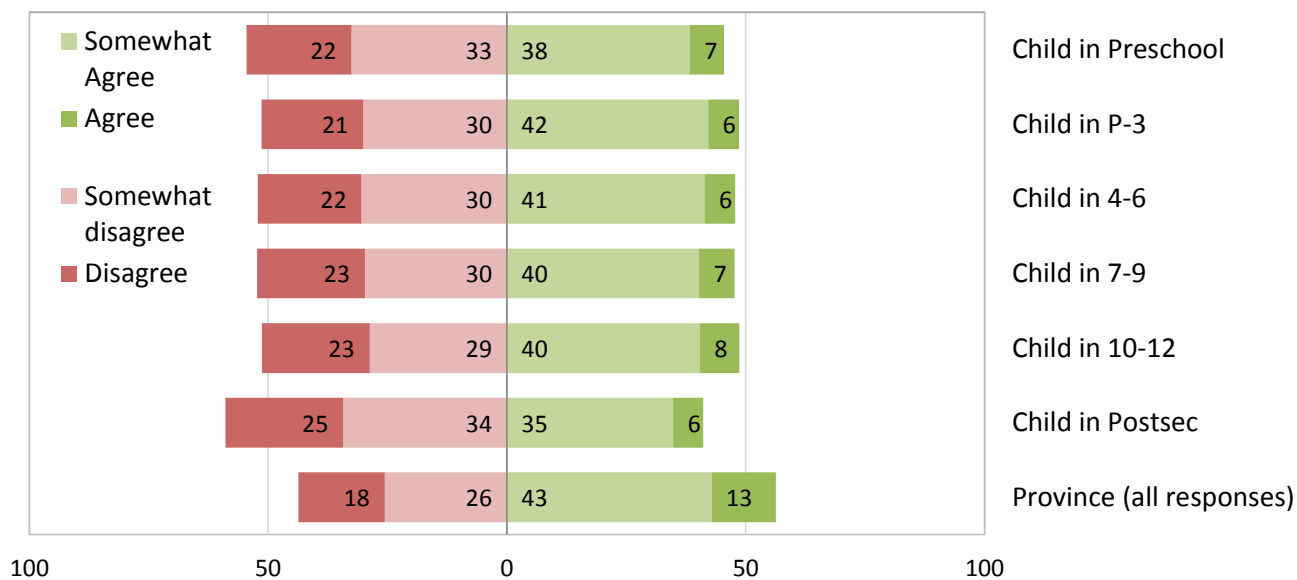
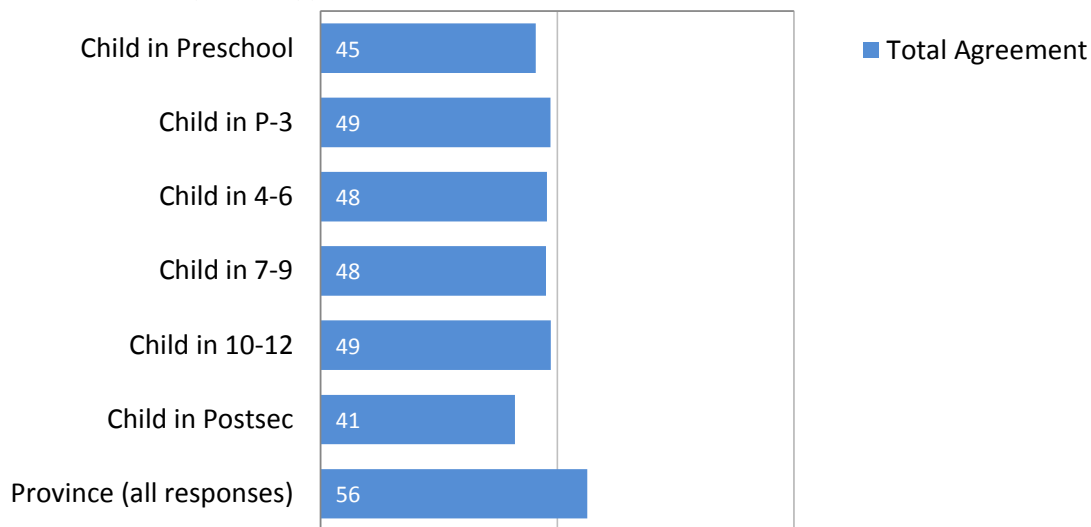
Ancestry	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Aboriginal ancestry	802	304	17	24	40	19	<b>59</b>
African descent (Black)	399	139	17	20	49	14	<b>63</b>
Acadian descent	2232	815	15	25	43	17	<b>60</b>
European descent	12054	4777	19	27	43	12	<b>55</b>
Middle Eastern descent	170	70	8	27	44	21	<b>65</b>
Asian descent	168	75	12	28	38	23	<b>60</b>
East asian descent	54	23	26	13	48	13	<b>61</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>7421</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>



**30 DOEECD staff provide effective supports to school boards. (SchOrg)**

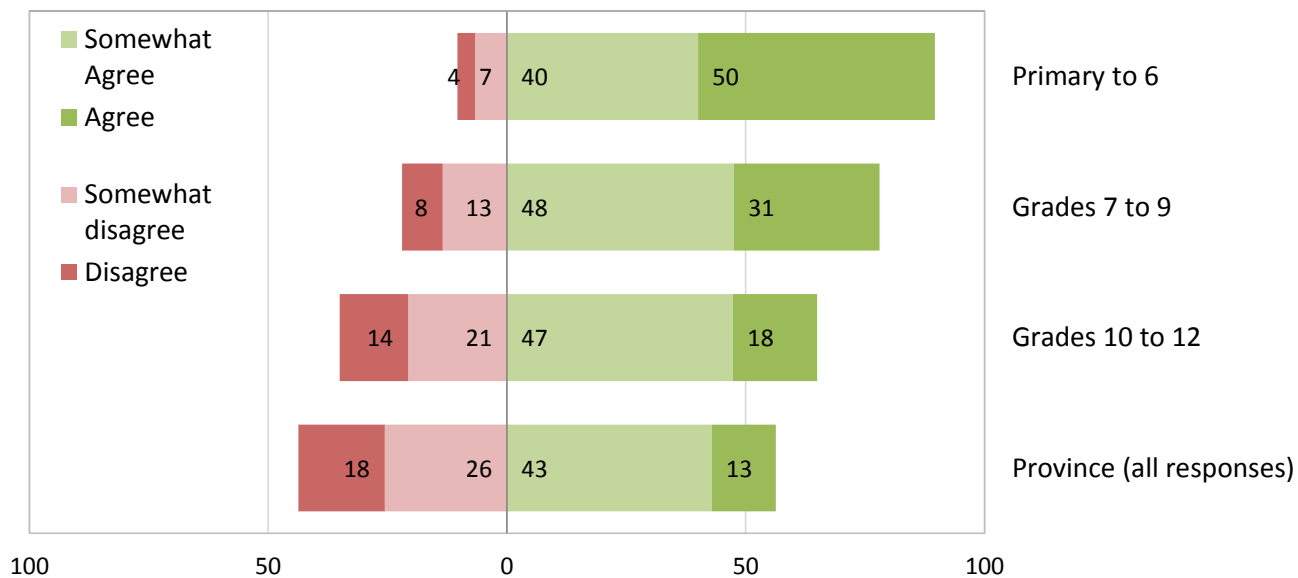
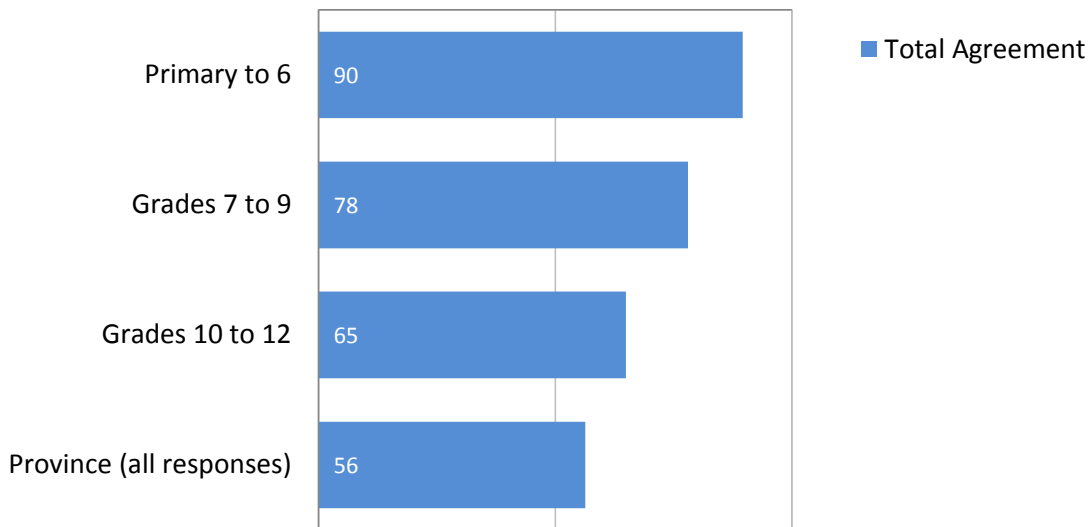
Parent of child in....	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Child in Preschool	777	427	22	33	38	7	<b>45</b>
Child in P-3	2263	1098	21	30	42	6	<b>49</b>
Child in 4-6	1912	904	22	30	41	6	<b>48</b>
Child in 7-9	1736	821	23	30	40	7	<b>48</b>
Child in 10-12	1609	754	23	29	40	8	<b>49</b>
Child in Postsec	365	158	25	34	35	6	<b>41</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>7421</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>

\* NOTE: Parents can have children in more than one grade, therefore some parents appear more than one time in the above table.



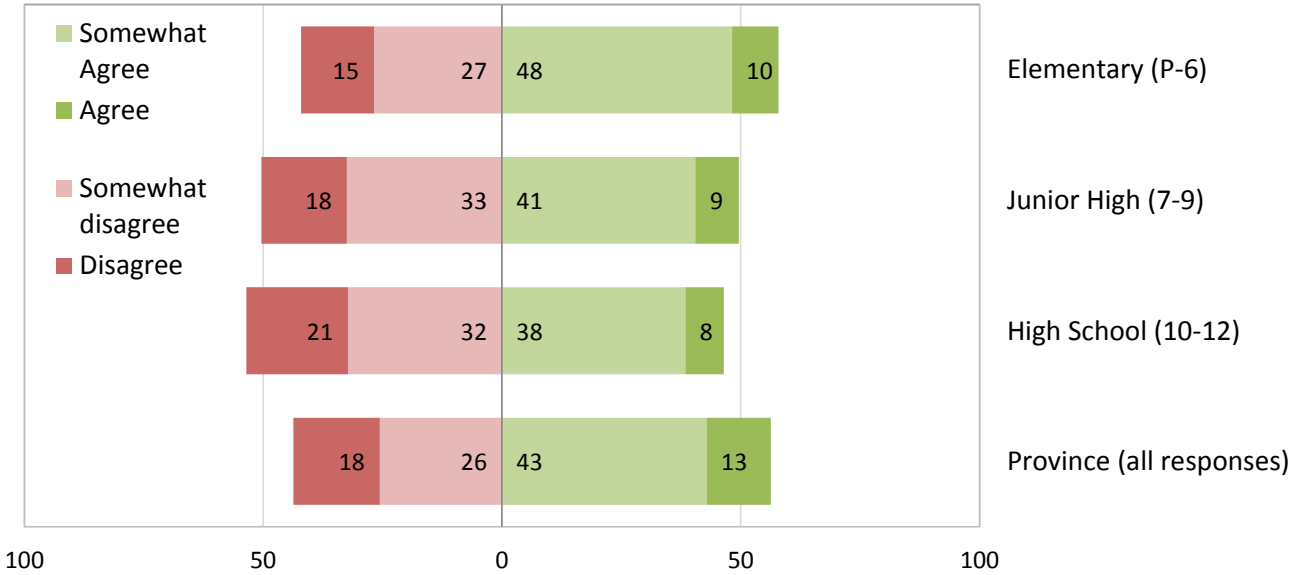
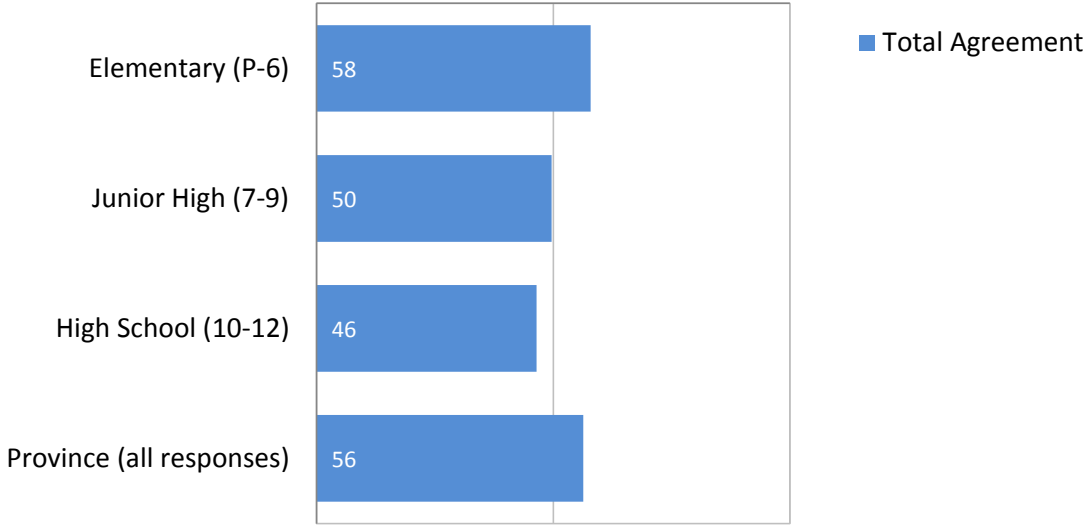
**30 DOEECD staff provide effective supports to school boards. (SchOrg)**

Student responses by grade	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/ blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Primary to 6	254	119	4	7	40	50	<b>90</b>
Grades 7 to 9	2344	732	8	13	48	31	<b>78</b>
Grades 10 to 12	2608	931	14	21	47	18	<b>65</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>7421</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>



30 DOEECD staff provide effective supports to school boards. (SchOrg)

Teacher responses by grade taught	Number of respondents		Percentage of disagree/agree responses				
	Total	Don't know/blank	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Agreement
Elementary (P-6)	1544	413	15	27	48	10	<b>58</b>
Junior High (7-9)	712	174	18	33	41	9	<b>50</b>
High School (10-12)	911	244	21	32	38	8	<b>46</b>
<b>Province (all responses)</b>	<b>18785</b>	<b>7421</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>



## ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS (2)

### Relevant Survey Questions:

1. Regional school board staff provide effective supports to schools (for example: finance, human resources, student programs and services, addressing parent questions and concerns).
2. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development staff provide effective supports to school boards (for example: students services, curriculum development and implementation, policy development).

### NUMBER OF COMMENTS BY RESPONDENT GROUP

<b>Parents and Guardians</b>	961
<b>Teachers</b>	687
<b>Community Members</b>	517
<b>Students</b>	228
<b>Student Support Staff</b>	70
<b>School Administrator</b>	99
<b>School Board Staff</b>	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2605</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

Response Category	Subcategories	Number of Responses
<b>Boards and the Department</b>	More accountability and transparency is needed	118
	Board and Department relations need improvement	52
	General comments about school boards	307
	The number of boards should be reduced	110
	General comments about EECD	165
	Curriculum development and supports need improvement	256
	These organizations place extra burdens on school staff	50
	There is a disconnect between these organizations and classrooms	211
	These organizations are too top heavy	219
	Parent and teacher inquiries do not receive adequate responses	82
	Teachers do not feel supported by these organizations	60
	School staff and parents are not engaged enough in decision-making	138
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1768</b>
<b>Funding</b>	More funding is needed for the education system	342
	More funding is needed for special needs and early childhood education	181
	Funding is being spent in the wrong areas	180
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>703</b>
<b>Organization of Schools (2): Time to Learn</b>	The survey question “What percentage of the time that students spend in school should be assigned to each subject area?” needs improvement	132
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>132</b>



## WHAT WAS SAID

### SECTION 1: BOARDS AND THE DEPARTMENT

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***How would the average person know? Administration and strategic planning are important but it is difficult to assess value.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Lack of consistency and communication here.***

- Guardian/Parent

***There is a big gap between the Province and the boards. Materials arrive out of nowhere. Often schools have purchased materials that are distributed by the Province later.***

- School Administrator

***School boards spend too much time having to budget crunch and not enough time worrying about the best interests of a student's education.***

- Teacher

***As someone who works in a board the structure does not provide for the most optimal use of taxpayer funds. Money is ill-spent based on funding rules from government.***

- School Board Staff

**More accountability and transparency is needed** - there is a lack of transparency and accountability about Board and Department activities and investments.

- There is a lack of consistency and communication about the roles of these groups, their priorities, and how investment decisions are made.
- The lack of information makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of decisions; information can be difficult to obtain.

#### **Board and Department relations need improvement**

- There is an uncomfortable and negative rift between these two groups and too much blame is passed between them.
- Boards and the Department need to work better together.

#### **General comments about school boards**

- There are too many school boards and they are ineffective in supporting schools.
- School boards tend to align more with parents than with teachers.
- There is not enough communication between Boards and teachers – too many directives are top-down.
- Boards are preoccupied with funding rather than providing the best supports for schools.
- Some Board departments are effective and do the best they can with the funds they have.
- Boards are overstaffed and/or have unqualified staff.
- There is too much variation between boards.

**Curriculum development and supports need improvement** – also refers to how money is wasted on curriculum development or more funding is needed for curriculum development.

- There is redundancy across the country in having each province develop its own curriculum – more collaboration should take place.
- Curriculum should not vary from Board to Board.
- Curriculum documents take too long to be published/ received by teachers (too many draft documents, lack of course guides, lack of PD support).
- Quality of curriculum is low (outdated, not meeting needs).

**These organizations place extra burdens on school staff**

- There are too many initiatives that are not well thought out and place unnecessary burdens on teachers and school administrators.
- Boards and EECD get in the way more than help.
- There are too many initiatives and not enough time/resources to implement them properly.

**There is a disconnect between these organizations and classrooms** - Boards and the Department are too far removed from the classroom.

- Board and Department staff are out of touch with the realities of the classroom and this is reflected in the supports they provide.
- Staff are not visible in schools and there is a lack of communication from them.
- Too much bureaucracy can lead to these groups being out of touch.

**These organizations are too top heavy** - there are too many people in high paid positions in boards and the Department.

- There is too much middle management and too many employees generally – this is a waste of money and should be directed back to the classroom.
- Too much money is spent on administrative tasks.
- Too much duplication exists between boards.

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***NS should save money by sharing curriculum with other provinces and only focus on adding NS cultural content.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Curriculum should no longer vary from school board to school board.***

- Guardian/Parent

***Too many initiatives are introduced by the Department and none taken off the workload of teachers, effectively undermining the productivity of all initiatives.***

- School Administrator

***I think most teachers feel disconnected from the EECD and do not see how the work there directly impacts their classroom work.***

- Teacher

***It is obvious that teachers are not writing the curriculum.***

- Teacher

***I feel school boards are too top heavy and too much of the resources go into salaries at the board level.***

- Teacher

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***When you need support it can take days to get a call back and weeks or even months to get a meeting to solve issues.***

- Teacher

***As a teacher we don't feel supported and our jobs feel impossible a lot of the time.***

- Teacher

***There is simply not enough support for teachers. More EAs are needed.***

- Student Support Staff

***We seem to have very little input into the decisions that are made at the Board and Department level. It is a very top down system.***

- School Administrator

***Financing is poor. Budget cuts have ruined some aspects of education.***

- Student

***Schools are stretched very thin with human resources and services in comparison to the student needs of the school.***

- Guardian/Parent

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- The union should have less control over decisions related to teacher performance.
- The union has too much power.

**Parent and teacher inquiries do not receive adequate responses** – most comments pertain to school boards.

- Responses can take a long time to come or not come at all.
- Boards are difficult to get in touch with and can be dismissive.
- Emails are often not answered.

**Teachers do not feel supported by these organizations**

- Parents concerns are addressed more than teachers.
- Teachers feel disposable and like their needs and concerns are not a priority.

**School staff and parents are not engaged enough in decision-making**

- Teachers have little input in decision-making – more communication is required.
- Parents are seen more as a pain than as a resource.
- More consultation should be done in determining curriculum content, funding decisions, etc.

## **SECTION 2: FUNDING**

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**More funding is needed for the education system**

- Schools are underfunded and cuts are being made continuously.
- Too much money spent in the wrong places – administration, studies/reports, etc.
- Need more funding and supports in classrooms; money for more teachers/ smaller class sizes.

### **More funding is needed for special needs and early childhood education**

- More funding is needed for student services, TAs, assessments, training for teachers working with special needs children.
- Includes several broader comments about positive impacts of efforts to provide supports for special needs, and need for programs for gifted children.
- ECE programs need more recognition and support.

### **Funding is being spent in the wrong areas**

- Too much time is spent trying to crunch budgets rather than meeting classroom needs.
- Too many initiatives/ documents are presented and not used – need more engagement with schools to determine what is really needed.
- Too many consultants/ focus on administration.
- Need to reassess priorities for the education system and fund accordingly.

### **SECTION 3: ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS (2): TIME TO LEARN**

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#### **The survey question “What percentage of the time that students spend in school should be assigned to each subject area?” needs improvement**

- The lack of comment box for this questions was frustrating.
- The format of the question was irrelevant/ generic – school days cannot be broken down in that way (not so black and white, too restrictive, didn’t allow for individualized learning).

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***More psychologists and guidance counsellors are needed.***

- Guardian/Parent

***There should be more support for Early Childhood Educators and Education.***

- Teacher

***Too many programs and policies are implemented for appeasement and are not well thought out.***

- Teacher

***Didn’t answer the percentage that time should be spent in each subject area because it is irrelevant.***

- Guardian/Parent

***The previous questions about percentages show that once again we are going about it all wrong. There should not be a percentage on reading, writing, art, math, etc.... Why is it we cannot begin to have pieces of all of that in everything they do?***

- Guardian/Parent

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## FINAL COMMENTS

<b>Climate</b>	<b>1474</b>
• Bullying	158
• Respect	108
• Complex Student Needs	136
• Support for teachers	119
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>1461</b>
• Arts	87
• Literacy	116
• Life Skills	91
• Math	121
• General	143
<b>Structure</b>	<b>1166</b>
• Boards	280
• Funding	212
- Resources	107
• Union	104
• Staffing	
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<b>770</b>
• Effectiveness	132
• Teacher Evaluation	105
• Demands	120

### Number of comments by respondent group

Community Member	846
Parent/Guardian	1593
School Administrator	96
School Board Staff	56
Student	1120
Student Support Staff	102
Teacher	818
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4631</b>

## SECTION 1: Climate

### Bullying continues to be a problem that affects everyone.

- Seven in ten (71%) comments related to bullying came from parents or students.
- There are concerns that a culture of bullying and inaction exists in some school environments (school grounds, buses and by extension online). While most comments relate to bullying of students by other students there are perceptions that bullying or intimidating behavior occurs in parent-teacher interactions and administration-teacher interactions. How pervasive these other forms of bullying are is uncertain as the survey didn't specifically address bullying as a primary topic area. What is clear is that those who took the time to mention bullying in all its forms feel passionately about the issue.
- While there is the perception that some high profile cases have brought a lot of attention to the subject of bullying, some feel that the school system itself is ill-equipped to take real preventative action. There is a sentiment that the period for discussion/building awareness is over and that real action is now required. While there is some uncertainty as to what "actions" should be taken, some suggestions put forward include:
  - Starting anti-bullying education and campaigns at a younger age before it becomes a problem.
  - Better training for teachers/staff to dealing with bullying situations.
  - Empowerment of teachers/staff to deal with bullying situations.
  - Harsher punishments for bullying behavior.
  - Involvement from staff, administration, health care, parents, students and law enforcement.
- While bullying at school and on buses is an area of concern, many perceive the bullying behavior and responsibility of the school system extends beyond the "physical" environments. Social media and online environments are an area of great concern for some parents. Programs aimed at addressing the bullying issue need to encompass cyber-bullying.

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*Bullying! ... Schools have to walk the walk, not just talk about how they are anti-bully and really do something about it.*

*Bullying was never addressed throughout this survey. Teachers should be properly trained on how to act when hearing a student being bullied.*

*Bullying is out of hand... and I think you need to take the responsibility from teachers to correct this and to have guidance, parents, principals, student peers and police involved ...*

*Cyber bullying is a huge problem, it is not getting better... much of it starts by allowing students to have continual access to their pocket technology and phones in the school environment.*

*Workplace bullying ... Many good teachers have transferred schools to get away from a principal that bullies them.*

*Bullying of teachers by students - making fun of them, disrespecting them, threatening them, etc. There is no recourse or support system out there for teachers.*

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## Lack of respect towards teachers can lead to stressful work environments.

- Respect in the classroom was equally raised by parents, teachers and community members.
- Teachers must balance and maintain constructive relationships with administration, peers, students and parents. This at times can become stressful, especially when dealing with difficult issues like student behavior or performance.
- There is a perception by some that changes in attitudes, beliefs systems and social values has placed teachers in a position where they are frequently challenged by both parents and students. They are no longer perceived to be respected authority figures but someone whose judgment should be questioned. Although anecdotal this can sometimes result in student-teacher conflict situations where the teachers behavior escalates as opposed to deescalates the situation.
- There is the perception that the administration is failing to support/empower teachers and in some cases contributes to stress levels through their own behaviour. The administration, and government in general, can help by:
  - Creating programs to assist teachers in managing workload and burn-out.
  - Empowerment/training in how to deal with difficult parents/students.
  - Greater participation/support from school principals.
  - Greater appreciation/recognition for contributions made by teachers.
  - Greater public awareness around the role/contributions made by teachers.

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*Teachers are teaching in a time of extreme stress where accountability has become more important than time with students. Teacher burn out is on the rise and respect for our position is at an all-time low. It is time for drastic change.*

*Teacher morale is at an all-time low. Teachers are being made to feel like our profession is second class and second rate. Administrators need to create a better atmosphere for staff at all levels. Administrators need training on how to show appreciation of staff as well.*

*Teachers tend to be the latest punching bag in the general public. We are seen to have a cushy job, lots of time off. It would be great if the DOE could support us, inform the public as to what teachers are doing, and give us public support.*

*The level of respect (both ways) and the quality of teachers and programs have diminished significantly since I went to school (long time ago). I can remember having a great deal of pride and respect for many of my teachers who reflected the same back to their students. They actually cared if you understood subjects and took the extra time to make sure you did understand. Today it is almost the complete opposite.*

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**While everyone recognized that the education system needs to accommodate complex student needs, there is some disagreement as to the best approach.**

- There appears to be a high level of agreement that the education system needs to be inclusive and accommodate all students regardless of their needs. The support and resources need to be in place to address students from different cultural backgrounds, lifestyle choices, disabilities and other complex needs. It is clear, based on feedback from some parents, that when the system works it makes a significant positive impact on the lives of students and parents alike.
- Based on comments, however, it would appear that some feel the system today is simply not working. There are concerns that the current policy of inclusion, for example, is not creating an ideal learning environment for all involved. While there is agreement that the system needs to support children with complex needs, people are split whether these students should be in the same classroom as those who don't have special requirements. While some argue that inclusion is a right, others voice concerns that inclusive environments do not allow for the attention these children need and that teachers are ill-equipped to handle the more complex cases. There are also concerns that other students might suffer as a result of the time/resources required to adequately support those with more complex requirements.
- Even those critical of inclusion can agree with the philosophy but feel the process today needs to be reviewed. Some specific recommendations on how to improve the current learning environment are:
  - Increased awareness/understanding of the types of problems youth are dealing with today.
  - Support and training for teachers/EAs on working with children with special needs.
  - Additional resources/specialized resources for teachers.
  - Greater partnerships between education and health care professionals (i.e. Mental Health).

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*Support and training for the teachers and EA's working with children with special needs; or behaviour problems; learning differences; ADHD and anxiety disorder. The number of children with these needs are growing.*

*The school system and the mental health system really should be working together to support the entire family units of the students currently in the education system.*

*Inclusion is a practice I agree with, but I have felt abandoned in years past when it comes to knowing that I am equipped to best serve the needs in my room. The challenge is especially overwhelming for newer teachers. A proper, supportive, collaborative training scheme with people coming into our rooms is essential.*

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**Some teachers are feeling overwhelmed and not supported by administration. As a result, learning in the classroom suffers.**

- Over half the comments on this subject come from teachers themselves, however, this also seems to be of concern to parents.
- Few would argue that success in the classroom is dependent on the effectiveness of the teacher. Some people feel that the workload and stress load carried by teachers today is not being adequately supported. The perception is that teachers are doing more than in the past and must deal with more complex student's needs and classroom dynamics.
- As a result, some fear the current system leads to low morale/jadedness, teacher burnout and an inability to be as effective as they can be in the classroom. This results in a system where staff and students are "just getting by" as opposed to delivering excellence.
- There are concerns amongst teachers who are near retirement that the current teaching environments and workloads may dissuade young people from pursuing careers in education. They believe the administration should be concerned about keeping the best and brightest to ensure the future of quality of education.
- Some feel that administration and government are out of touch and quick to say no when asked for more support and additional resources. Some recommend that the solution should start with administration and government becoming more aware and involved in understanding the day-to-day expectations of teaching staff. With a greater appreciation for teacher contributions this would lead to a willingness to allocate resources where they are most needed.

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*Teachers are being asked to do more each year and workplace stress is a real concern.*

*Many teachers work extremely hard and go well beyond their call of duty to ensure the needs of their students are being met. Unfortunately, many are becoming overwhelmed and are secretly crying for support.*

*Administrators, school boards and DOE and ECD staff need to become more engaged to what is happening within our classrooms. These individuals' needs to become more visible in our classrooms so that they see firsthand the many concerns and issues teachers are facing on a regular basis. Teachers do not want to hear there is no money, no support, no resources, no time to help them. Realistically, there is funding, support, resources, and time available. These individuals need to be more accountable to ensure teachers are receiving what they need. The system needs to stop solely relying on classroom teachers to get the job done. There are several layers to our system and more need to become accountable for their roles within the system!*

*Administrators no longer have time to support teachers, evaluate teachers or give helpful feedback.*

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## SECTION 2: Curriculum

The Arts and music are important to a well-rounded education, but some feel they are underappreciated and vulnerable to cuts.

- Arts related comments were voice by community members, parents, teachers and students.
- There is a strong belief amongst some stakeholders that arts and music programs are integral to a well-rounded education and facilitate creative/critical thinking which in turn has residual benefits in all aspects of a student's academic life (e.g. math, science. Literacy). These people feel that arts and music need to be a fundamental part of the curriculum right from the first day of school.
- There is a perception by some that arts and music has traditionally been perceived as secondary curriculum by decision makers and government. Even when compared to other extracurricular activities like sports, some feel the arts are seen as being less important. As a result, there are concerns that historically these subjects have been underfunded and the most affected by budgetary cut-backs. Of all the programs, Arts are perceived by some to be in a vulnerable state. There is a fear that decision makers, without a full appreciation for the importance of arts/music, will continue to target them when forced to make program reductions.
- There is some concern that the lack of support for arts marginalizes students who have an interest in the subject. The system seems to be biased against those interested in arts and music in favour of academic and athletic pursuits. As a result some students may be discouraged from pursuing these activities.
- In addition to maintaining the existing programs some would like to see the education system invest more in arts and music programs and provide additional support for students interested in pursuing arts related post-secondary activities and career paths.

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*Preparing our students for the future: If you look at research, you will find that students who can collaborate, create and know the value of art, music, sport, play, innovation do well later in life. Our current system does not address this adequately and the dis-valuing is felt all the way through the school system.*

*Physical activity, art and music are critical to a well-balanced mind and creative expression. Let's get our kids active and allow them to express themselves through art and music without criticism. The system is failing us.*

*When ranking classes everyone of course will choose math, literacy as being the most important. What is not included in this page is a description where subjects like art and music include and help to improve skills in mathematics, literacy, global thinking, psycho-motor skills, etc. Simply having the public rank music or any other specialist subject behind the core subjects is not an acceptable reason to continue as we have.*

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## Literacy continues to be an issue that extends beyond the education system and affects all aspects of society.

- Literacy as an issue is commented on by all stakeholder groups, especially parents.
- Some people perceive literacy to be a real issue in Nova Scotia and in the education system. Some cite that literacy is fundamental to a healthy economy and breaking the cycle of poverty. Factors that are contributing to literacy as an issue include:
  - Adult literacy rates amongst some parents are low. As a result reading is not encouraged in the home and there may be negative attitudes by parents towards a system that failed them.
  - The school system is not adequately addressing the issue of literacy. Some feel that students are able to slip through the cracks of the system without learning fundamentals like reading, grammar and spelling.
  - Students with literacy issues are not being identified early enough and given the additional support they need to recover.
  - Cut-backs to literacy resources like school libraries are hindering students from fostering a love of reading.
- Many feel it is very important to catch literacy issues at a young age. There is strong support for programs like Reading Recovery and dedicated teaching resources for early assessment and coaching. Some parents, frustrated by the public system not addressing reading issues soon enough have turned to private schools and tutoring.
- Some respondents are split on how much emphasis should be placed on cursive writing. Some see it as a fundamental component of literacy while others perceive it to be irrelevant in modern times and would prefer to see more emphasis on the development of strong typing skills.
- Some feel a focus on English is not enough and would like to see the education system provide more support for French and other languages.

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*Elementary school should be entirely about getting the three major skills (Rs) absolutely solid. Throw everything at reading, basic arithmetic skills, and correct writing.*

*School Libraries are key to meeting educational needs at all levels: promoting Reading for pleasure and a twenty-first century learning environment for skills development, collaboration, creation, critical thinking, and communication. Libraries support digital students and learning. Funding and staffing is key to achieve this.*

*It may sound trivial, but even the fact that children are not expected to learn cursive writing or that they are not graded on participation or performance in school is troubling to me*

*Poverty and low literacy levels are well documented in our community, and schools are a critical pillar in changing the lives of students and families with every interaction.*

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## Life skills are fundamental to being successful in life and should be taught in the school system

- Comments related to life skills came mostly from parents and community members.
- If the goal of the education system is to prepare students for success and to make positive contributions to society than more emphasis on life skills development is necessary. Academic skills are not enough to prepare students for the realities of living in “the real world”. While some believe these skills should be taught at home the reality is that some parents are ill-equipped or lack the skills themselves.
- There are three main areas of life skills that respondents feel would be of benefit to students:
  - Financial Well Being: These skills will help students on their career path and manage their personal finances. They encompass financial management/budgeting, loans/credit awareness, universal/relevant job skills (e.g. job safety), resume/interviewing tips etc.
  - Cultural/Social Well Being: Education in these skills benefits society as a whole and include subject areas like volunteerism, civic responsibilities (e.g. voting), culture and environmental awareness.
  - Health and well-being: These skills focus on the physical and mental well-being of students and encompass a wide variety of topics including nutrition, physical activity, teen pregnancy and stress management.
- While it is understood that resources are limited and the focus of the education system needs to be academics, additional education in life skills could be achieved through workshops, partnerships with community members/leaders/volunteers and after school/lunchtime programs.

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*More emphasis should be placed on the preparation to get out into the working world, i.e. student loans application, interest on loans, banking, budgeting, grocery shopping and how to shop wisely. Basic car maintenance, any daily routine. It should be taught at home, however some homes do not provide basic living habits.*

*Students should have opportunities to receive training programs that will help with securing employment, whether these opportunities could be available after school or on weekends, lunch hours, etc., Programs such as First Aid, WHMIS, Safe Food Handling, Traffic Control, etc.*

*We have a tremendous opportunity with kids to begin a dialogue in their earliest years, help them see life here in a highly positive way, help them to realize how they belong here, and to give them the skills (farming, etc) and experience necessary to help them be contributing members of NS society in their adult years and even in their teen years.*

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**The system is failing some students when it comes to mathematics. The extent to which math should be emphasized should depend somewhat on the students aptitude for the subject.**

- Community members, parents, teachers and students identify math as an area that requires additional attention. There are a wide variety of concerns about the way math is taught, performance evaluations and its relevance post-graduation.
- Some people feel that the system is failing to provide a solid foundation in mathematics in the early grades. This is partially attributed to the belief that curriculum has become diluted across too many subject areas. Some would like to see the early grades focus exclusively on the fundamentals (math and literacy). Other courses can be made available at later grades.
- Performance evaluations in mathematics are perceived to be contributing to poor mathematics performance in later grades. Students who are underachieving in math are still being pushed through the system, which basically sets them up for failure. Furthermore, some parents feel the way tests are marked is not a true reflection of the student's ability in the subject.
- Some stakeholders recognize that not every student is going to excel at mathematics and feel there should be more options in the system. In cases where it is clear that a student has no need of advanced mathematics more practical or basic applications should be explored (e.g. life skills mathematics like budgeting, finance management etc). Some feel that in these cases students should be allowed to emphasize other subject areas of competence rather than struggling in mathematics. It is important, however, to note that some parents recognize easier math courses may limit the post-secondary options for their child and are concerned with the criteria by which a student may be recommended for one level of math over another.

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*Brain research continues to show us that the early years are the most crucial in a child's development in all domains. Many concepts and skills, if not grasped prior to age 7 when the brain is making its neural connections, will either not be grasped or will require far more work, or will never be achieved to the full potential. Putting additional funding into grade 9 mathematics because there is a problem there is the wrong approach. Had the money been put into the early years when children MUST grasp the fundamentals, then the problems would be lesser in the later years.*

*I wonder that, if in our zeal to offer students a rich and varied curriculum, we have added so much that it may not be reasonable to expect to cover everything well. I worry that we are doing a lot in many areas but little very well (particularly at the elementary level, where students should be gaining a solid foundation in Math, Reading, Writing, and Problem Solving. Should we be focusing more on ensuring our students master basic skills? Once this is achieved we can broaden and add richness to the program.*

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**Curriculum taught in schools must reflect the needs of modern society. Some question whether it's past time to review what is being taught today in schools.**

- Some respondents feel strongly that the curriculum taught in schools needs to be under regular review to ensure it is relevant for modern society. Some have the perception that there are gaps in the curriculum being taught today and feel it is time for a review. More specifically:
  - The current teaching model is outdated and needs to be more experiential
  - Lack of a global perspective and world views
  - Perception that students have limited knowledge of historical events both global and Canadian in nature.
  - Belief that some scientific concepts being taught are outdated.
  - Lack of second language immersion opportunities
  - Belief that curriculum in private school is superior to that of public system
- There is an expectation from some that those in charge of the curriculum are looking to both the current and future job markets when making decisions about curriculum (e.g. the value of computer skills).
- Some feel that the current curriculum is lacking content related to ethics, social justice and good citizenship.
- There is some divisiveness on the extent to which curriculum should be standardized. Some question whether too much standardization has minimized the role of the teacher. These individuals feel the teacher in the classroom is in the best position to make curriculum-based decisions.

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*Drop the 19th century teaching model. Teachers should facilitate learning. Change classroom spaces into learning spaces with options for students to engage with content in meaningful ways. More problem based and experiential learning with a high degree of technology integration. More online and blended learning options and more self-paced individualized learning.*

*Let teachers be the driving force behind school programming , not teachers who are not in schools, involve teachers who are currently teaching and know what is really happening in schools today.*

*I would really like NS to look at other models of educational systems were they have been some huge success. For example, the education system in Finland. Realizing that the geography and demographics are different, however, I think we can learn much from these examples.*

*Education needs to be reset. We broke a beautiful process by trying to make it standardized. Realize the mistake we made. Restore public education and allow for the individuals directly involved to assume the professional responsibility that has been stripped from them by our bloated bureaucracy.*

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## SECTION 3: Structure

### School boards should be reduced to increase funding going to schools.

- Comments on the school board system came largely from parents, with teachers also commonly expressing concern.
- Most respondents feel that the issues of funding and school boards are intricately linked. There is a perception that school boards are top heavy and that administrators are paid too much.
- Many respondents feel that eliminating or reducing the school boards would help to increase funding for schools and for the students.
- However, a small minority feels that increasing the number of staff at school boards would help in providing more supports to teachers.
- Respondents also express concern that not enough money is making it to the schools and individual students. Many worry that this money goes to the school board and very little “trickles down” to the individual schools.
- In addition to eliminating or reducing the boards, respondents suggest that streamlining the Department of Education and school boards may help to reduce the “top heavy” nature as well as decreasing the amount of funding needed for administration.

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*Cut waste at board level spend our dollars on our children. Consultants are making 6 digit salaries. What do they do?*

*WE should not have regional school boards. We already have a Ministry of Education. There should be one board, and regional representation on that board. It avoids the replication we see now, and would streamline the budgeting issues. If there is one board, it is responsible and aware of the issues of all it's areas, and does not get to hide behind the illusion of ignorance over how funds are spent and where the needs are. Yes it is politicized, but we vote members into the regional school boards now...it would be ridiculous to think that it isn't already politicized.*

*Almost 20 years ago, school boards amalgamated to reduce overhead costs. If cost cutting needs to be made, it really needs to be made at the administration level of the school boards and not in the classroom. I think if one were to look at our school boards, those cost cutting measures of 20 years ago have crept back up. Perhaps, it is time to revisit the administration of school boards and not the classroom.*

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## More funding is needed at the classroom level

- When it comes to funding, respondents worry that funds are not making it directly to schools and classes.
- These funds are required for various resources, including educational assistants, classroom supplies, and teacher.
- There is strong concern about the amount of support teachers receive in the form of EA's; as noted in other areas of the survey, the adequate funding and hiring of EA positions is integral to the success of students, both those with special needs and those without.
- At the very least, classrooms need to have supplies and textbooks in adequate amounts to serve the students. This is seen as a basic need that should not need to be filled by students, especially where some families may not be financially able to provide these resources.

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*There is a ton of work to be done in the education system after the disastrous cuts from our last government. Money must be returned to the education system to improve teacher health, classroom resources, opportunities for improved/appropriate PD for teachers, hands-on opportunities for our students, smaller class sizes at all grade levels (P-12).....I could go on forever.*

*Resources need to be provided to teachers- that is the bottom line. What happened to the days, when paper was provided, kids didn't have to bring resources to fill the gap for other students who dont have. What is the gov's responsibility to ensuring everyone gets access to a good education? This is what I want to know.*

*All students who require additional support classroom teachers are not able to provide alone in the classroom should be able to have access to it. It is not fair to allow some students the resources, but not all, whether they are just below grade level, or far below grade level.*

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## Teachers union is too strong

- The majority (79%) of these comments came from parents and community members.
- Many respondents feel that teachers unions possess too much power and that they frequently protect bad teachers. Many parents feelings of helplessness that there is no recourse if they have concerns about a teachers ability or actions.
- Concerns arise that if a bad teacher holds a permanent status, it is very difficult to reprimand or fire them.
- Similarly, respondents worry that once teachers achieve a permanent status, the job security may encourage complacency and less effective teaching.
- This theme is highly related to the issue of teacher evaluations. Many respondents feel that teacher evaluations need to be implemented and that these should be acted upon to encourage accountability.
- Some respondents also express concern that the teachers' union, as well as other governing bodies, are concerned more about the "business" side of things than the welfare of students. Many respondents reiterate that the focus of the educational system should be on the welfare and edification of the students.

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*Yes ... the teachers union too strong. Once a teacher makes it full time, it doesn't matter if he\she is a good educator in later years because they do not have to meet performance standards. In many cases it becomes a job, not a career.*

*... I understand the challenges that our teachers face on a daily basis. However, I feel the Teachers Union has gone too far in protecting the rights of teachers and not holding teachers accountable for good performance. In any other profession (outside government jobs), job performance is evaluated on a regular basis and workers are rewarded/reprimanded accordingly.*

*The NSTU protects its permanent teachers, absolutely; however, it does nothing to benefit students' education. The union really only protects bad teachers. Once you are a permanent contract teacher, it is almost impossible to be fired, regardless how lazy, incompetent, or unprofessional you are. Teachers become complacent because of this. Good teachers don't need the union to protect their jobs.*

## Staffing practices are ineffective

- Concerns about staffing were expressed equally by community members, parents, and teachers.
- Staffing concerns are varied, with some respondents worried about substitute teacher processes, some about hiring processes, and others concerned about staffing needs.
- There is concern that the processes surrounding hiring new teachers and substitutes are ineffective or damaging to the system.
- This is especially evident in comments about substitute teachers, where parents and guardians express concern that substitute teachers often have little knowledge of the students or the topics and that each time a substitute teacher fills in, it is a new person, which compounds the problem.
- On the hiring side, many worry that new and young teachers are not receiving adequate chances to secure positions. This leads to concern that the province as a whole may suffer by losing educated and trained young people to other provinces.
- Some respondents also worry that administration at the school level is lacking, leading to inadequate supports for teachers and students.
- Similarly, increased staff are needed in areas of supervision (e.g., lunchtime) and building management. Not having the proper staff means teachers and administrators need to take on these roles, which detracts from their primary functions.
- Staffing of libraries is another issue that comes up frequently, along with the larger problem of needing more access to libraries. Many respondents feel this issue also relates to the larger issue of students' literacy levels.

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*Substitute teacher hiring system is ridiculous. Some teachers have been subbing for years without even a hope of a term position. The hiring system is flawed, allowing affirmative action, and favouritism take precedence over quality educators. Yet another reason why the quality of education and instruction is dipping and failing students.*

*Administrative responsibilities have not been discussed. It is difficult to be an educational leader when you also have to act as a building/site manager.*

*When a teacher is absent in school the system that is being used to replace that teacher (aesop) is not helping to keep consistency in the classroom. Having a different replacement each time a teacher is absent is confusing for the students. More emphasis needs to be put on knowing the students and the routine of the school by having substitutes assigned to maybe a couple of schools.*

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## SECTION 4: Teaching & Learning

**The current system is not effective at dealing with poor teacher performance. Students and parents want input into teacher evaluations.**

- Seven in ten (72%) comments related to teacher evaluations and performance came from parents and students.
- There is a clear expectation from parents that the education system provide a learning environment that gives their children the best opportunity to succeed. How successful their children are, to a great extent, depends on the performance and effectiveness of teachers.
- While many acknowledge there are great teachers here in Nova Scotia, there is a perception by some that the system is ineffective at identifying and dealing with poor teacher performance. Some people associate this difficulty with the fact that teachers, especially those with seniority, are protected by the union environment. It is generally accepted that most jobs come with the expectation of good job performance and that there needs to be a system in place to ensure teachers are held accountable for delivering a quality educational experience. There is an expectation that those unable to meet the requirements of their job be removed from their position.
- Some parents and students feel they don't have an adequate medium through which they can voice both praise and concerns related to teacher performance. Some would like to see an official evaluation system put in place that solicits annual feedback and can be used to identify areas of recognition and improvement.

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*There needs to be a system by which teachers can be evaluated on the performance - if they are not effectively educating our children then they are holding them back and this is something that we cannot afford.*

*I support with the utmost respect those teachers with integrity, who work in a profession that they feel strongly about, however I do feel some teachers do not possess the same professional levels of dedication and the standards may be compromised.*

*Parents should be able to weigh in on teachers and principals - give them a grade so to speak. ... If they are ineffective in their job then they should know that so they can improve or in some cases so the school board can find a replacement for them.*

*Teachers need to have regular performance reviews attached to their raises and status. Basing their promotions on seniority alone leads to a few terrible slackers (one or two) dragging down the average school. There are so many under-employed young teachers out there surely a partly performance based promotion system will get rid of teachers who should not be in a classroom and bring in some eager educators*

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**Teachers need to be qualified and interested in the subjects they are assigned to teach. There is also an expectation that teacher development and education is ongoing.**

- The majority of these comments came from parents and students.
- Some people question the effectiveness of some teachers and believe that there should be more alignment between teacher expertise/interests and the subjects they teach. The teacher should either have the educational background in the subject or should have to qualify to teach the material. The belief is that teachers who are interested and educated will be more effective and enthusiastic in the classroom.
- This concept is supported by some students who define their worst learning experiences as being with teachers who simply cover a chapter, give a test/homework and then move on to the next chapter. Students are looking for a deeper understanding of the subject matter and more involvement from the teacher.
- There is an expectation by some that ongoing education and development for teachers be a priority. Parents and community members want students to be taught by professionals who are expert educators and who are qualified to deliver a meaningful learning experience.
- Some parents question the effectiveness when exam exemptions are based on attendance rather than the students understanding of the curriculum.

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*One other concern that I have is that the teachers are not always well suited to teach the subjects that they teach. I believe that teachers should have to take a test in the course that they are going to teach and they should have to score in the 90's.*

*Teachers need to be excited to teach their subjects. See the bigger picture. Make students engaged!*

*The teachers need to be doing professional development courses for at least 2 - 3 weeks when school is not in session - all of these Friday and Monday PD days do not develop or increase their abilities. If we had the money, our child would be sent to private school - I have been horrified by the low quality of teaching and the poor curriculum that the teachers have to deliver.*

*How teachers teach. Some teachers all they do is give busy work, give homework, test us on it, and move on. Students don't learn this way!! My teacher is the best teacher I've had simply because he waits until the class understands before he gives a couple quizzes and then a follow up test. I don't look forward to busy work classes.*

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**The demands on teachers make it difficult to adequately prepare, which negatively impacts the classroom experience.**

- Almost every comment related to teacher demands was put forward by teachers.
- There is a perception amongst some that there are significantly more demands on teachers' time today than in the past. These demands include a wide variety of activities from managing the IPP student program, paperwork and emails, lesson planning/preparation, managing student behavior and student performance assessment/marking.
- The activity that is mentioned as being the most negatively affected by teacher workload is preparation time. Arguably this is one of the most important tasks in ensuring that the quality of the classroom experience is in line with parent/student expectations. For those teachers that are committed to their students they find the time to prepare (on their own time), however, there are concerns that current workloads and expectations may lead to teacher burn-out.
- There is the perception that the policies and practices of the administration are primarily responsible for creating the additional workload and that they are not overly sympathetic towards the current demands on teachers. As opposed to looking for ways to make things better or providing additional resources teachers are expected to simply do the best they can which, in the opinion of some, is not sustainable for either the teacher or the students.

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*As I am a teacher, I would like to address the issue of time. If given more time to prepare valuable learning opportunities for students, teachers may be able to create a learning environment that is more effective. Classroom expectations are high, but without ample time, teachers can't prepare, implement, correct, make attendance phone calls, answer parent emails, properly make adaptations for students, fill out administrative paperwork, photocopy, implement technology, just to mention some of the daily demands placed on teachers. The issue of ample time and teaching standards most definitely needs to be addressed.*

*Our system is full of professionals who want to see student success and they work at the expense of their personal health and well-being to do so. The more teachers are stretched, the less quality education students receive.*

*One item that is increasingly difficult for teachers is the increased number of accommodated and IPP students in our classes. This is a double edged sword. It is good we are identifying them but sometimes there are too many of them with no added support and the classroom teacher is the one who is left to deal with the added preparation time.*

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## (#1) CONCERNS AND SOLUTIONS

### Survey Question

- a. What \*three things concern you most about the public school system?
- b. What suggestions do you have for each of these concerns?

\*Data presented here are for the number one concerns only\*

### Number of Comments by Respondent Group

Community Member	2060
Parent/Guardian	4881
School Administrator	245
School Board Staff	137
Student	3303
Student Support Staff	351
Teacher	2487
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13 464</b>

## KEY THEMES AND FREQUENCIES

Curriculum	2867
Teaching and Learning	1603
School Climate	1582
Supports for Students	1495
Funding and Infrastructure	1297
Assessment and Reporting	927
Class Size	904

## CURRICULUM (2867)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
General Curriculum Concerns (462)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on the basics</li> <li>- Curriculum needs a total overhaul</li> <li>- Education should align with students' career aspirations and also on employable skills in general</li> <li>- There need to be fewer outcomes</li> </ul>
Math (464)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Math education needs to get back to the basics; students need to learn to multiply, divide, add, subtract before moving on to other topics.</li> <li>- The curriculum needs to either return to the "old way" of teaching math or to be revised by researching most effective methods</li> <li>- Math teachers need to be highly skilled in the area; elementary schools could have dedicated math teachers who teach only math (as they do with music/arts teachers)</li> </ul>
Literacy (406)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spelling needs to be taught in schools</li> <li>- More time spent focused on the "basics" (especially in early grades)</li> <li>- Students need to be held back if they have not met grade outcomes in literacy (and need to be corrected on their work)</li> <li>- Bring back phonics, teaching of phonetic/phonemic awareness</li> <li>- Spend more time on reading, writing, spelling in early years</li> </ul>
Students aren't learning "the basics" (377)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Curriculum needs to get back to focusing on the basics/3 R's</li> <li>- Students need to master foundational skills before moving on to other subjects</li> </ul>
Physical activity and health (357)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More physical education/gym classes (twice a week is not enough)</li> <li>- More physical activity incorporated into the day (e.g., incorporated into lessons, through sports, etc)</li> </ul>
Life Skills (209)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students need to learn practical life skills and incorporate real life scenarios into curriculum (e.g., using personal finance scenarios in math)</li> <li>- There should be a course that covers necessary life skills like personal finances, filing taxes, writing resumes, keeping a job</li> </ul>
Course Options (191)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There needs to be a wider range of courses offered to students, especially core courses like science, math, etc.</li> <li>- There must be less of a reliance on online courses, especially for core courses like science, math, etc (these should be offered in school)</li> </ul>
Technology (157)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respondents are split on their opinions about technology with equal proportions wanting less technology and more technology:</li> <li>- There needs to be less reliance on technology on schools, there should be a return to reading and writing manually</li> <li>- There should be more training in technology so that students learn basic technical literacy to prepare for today's world</li> </ul>



## TEACHING AND LEARNING (1603)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
Ineffective teachers (262)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers need to be evaluated regularly, including feedback from students and classroom observation by supervisors</li> <li>- Hiring practices need to ensure that good teachers are being hired and for the appropriate position</li> </ul>
Teacher Quality (232)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers should teach only classes they are qualified to teach and should have a high level of knowledge in the area as well as strong teaching skills</li> <li>- Teachers need to be evaluated regularly, including feedback from students and classroom observation by supervisors</li> <li>- Hiring practices need to focus on hiring teachers who are qualified and skilled in teaching and less on seniority</li> </ul>
Too many demands on teachers (162)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduce teacher workload; introduce fewer new initiatives and give teachers more time to actually teach</li> <li>- Increase the amount of prep time teachers get</li> <li>- Reduce class sizes and number of higher needs children per class</li> <li>- Hire more support staff for teachers (e.g., TAs )</li> </ul>
Low levels of student engagement (141)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lessons need to be more interesting and fun; work with students interests; hands-on and exploratory learning; connect learning with real life applications</li> <li>- Students need to be challenged more</li> </ul>
Are students learning what they need to know? (123)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Curriculum needs to be focused on the fundamentals and information that kids need to succeed</li> <li>- Students should be able to align their courses and learning with their career plans</li> <li>- Students need to be challenged and pushed to learn</li> </ul>
Homework (89)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents feel students need to be given more homework, especially in elementary/junior high – this helps prepare students for high school and informs parents on what the student is learning</li> <li>- Students feel that they are given too much homework, adding stress and conflicting with other activities they may be involved in (e.g., sports, band, etc.)</li> </ul>

## SCHOOL CLIMATE (1582)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
Bullying (504)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harsher punishments and consequences for bullies</li> <li>- More programs, classes, and assemblies that educate students about bullying</li> <li>- Greater supervision and action from teachers and school staff</li> </ul>
Discipline (407)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There need to be consequences for student behaviours</li> <li>- Students uniformly feel that dress codes are too harsh and that they are stricter for females than for males</li> <li>- Students need to be held more accountable – enforce deadlines, learn to work independently</li> </ul>
Safety (220)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Greater security measures at schools: locked doors, surveillance, metal detectors</li> <li>- Greater consequences for student behaviours</li> </ul>
Respect (139)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Greater consequences for student behaviours</li> <li>- Educators need to be more respectful of students (which would in turn engender respect for the educators)</li> </ul>

## SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS (1495)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
Special needs and struggling students (357)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For inclusion to work, there need to be more EA/EPAs in school to support children with special needs</li> <li>- More specialists need to be hired to support children with special needs (i.e., psychologists, speech language pathologists, specially trained teachers)</li> </ul>
Support (355)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More support staff are needed in schools (EAs, psychologists, resource teachers, guidance counselors)</li> <li>- All schools need to have full time guidance counselors who can provide support as well as career guidance to students</li> </ul>
Meeting student needs (294)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More support staff are needed in schools (EAs, psychologists, resource teachers, guidance counselors)</li> <li>- Small class sizes for all grades (not just P-2)</li> </ul>
Inclusion (211)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current inclusion model needs to change; children with extreme needs should be in their own learning environment and inclusion of students with special needs should be decided on a case-by-case basis taking into account what is best for that student as well as the other students in the class</li> <li>- If inclusion is going to work, there need to be more support staff provided</li> </ul>
Mental health (184)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools need more psychologists and guidance counselors</li> <li>- There needs to be more training and knowledge about mental health issues for both teachers and students</li> </ul>

## FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE (1297)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
Funding (890)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase the funding of education</li> <li>- Reducing the number of boards and/or amalgamating boards would free up more funds to be put towards school needs</li> <li>- Funds need to be allocated based on need, not on the number of students</li> </ul>
School Boards (97)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Either reduce (fewer boards and/or fewer staff) or amalgamate school boards</li> </ul>
Closing schools (86)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep small rural schools open – these keep children within the community and prevent overcrowding (also students shouldn't be spending 1+ hours on the bus)</li> </ul>
School equality (71)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All schools should offer the same programs and resources so that all students have equal opportunities, regardless of the size of the school or the income level of the community</li> </ul>

## ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING (927)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
Student Accountability (351)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students need to learn basic responsibility: learn how to adhere to deadlines, show up for class, and do their work</li> <li>- If students don't do their work and hand things in on time, they need to fail the assignment/class/grade to learn responsibility</li> <li>- Students need to be held to higher standards and challenged; pandering to the lowest common denominator just teaches students they don't need to do anything to get by</li> </ul>
Promoting Students Who Don't Meet Grade Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students should repeat grades if requirements are not met</li> <li>- Students need consequences to hold them accountable for schoolwork and behaviours.</li> <li>- Teachers should have the power (and support from administrators) to retain a student in their current grade.</li> </ul>
Report Card Formats (88)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write report cards in ways that parents understand and with information about how they can support their child's learning</li> <li>- Teachers need to be able to provide parents with an honest report of a student's progress, both academically and personally</li> </ul>

## CLASS SIZE (904)

CONCERNS	SOLUTIONS
Class Sizes (904)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There needs to be a cap on class sizes</li><li>- More teachers should be hired</li><li>- Classes should be smaller</li></ul>

## OTHER CONCERNS

<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>		
	Time (to teach)	68
	Hiring	62
	Teachers	46
	Expectations	41
	Teacher Evaluation	39
	Teacher Absenteeism	12
	Consistency	37
<b>CURRICULUM</b>		
	Outcomes	85
	Arts	74
	French/Immersion	38
	Science	12
	Trades	35
<b>TRANSITIONS</b>		<b>387</b>
	Preparation	340
<b>SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS</b>		
	Gifted	51
	Student Stress/Pressure	43
	Meeting Student Needs	294
<b>EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS</b>		<b>45</b>
	Racism	29
	LGBT	9
	First Nations	7
<b>SCHOOL CLIMATE</b>		
	Absenteeism	70
	Communication	62
	Parents	61
	Culture	61
	Drugs	58
<b>SCHOOL ORG</b>		
	Staff	60
	Administration	58
	School Day	36
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## 1. Curriculum

**Large numbers of students are underachieving in literacy. While there are some contributing social factors some people place blame or responsibility on the education system itself.**

- There is a perception amongst some that reading and writing levels amongst youth in Nova Scotia is at a crisis level. Various statistics and anecdotal evidence are presented that point to the fact that a sizeable number of students are underachieving in reading, spelling, grammar and basic writing.
- One of the factors perceived to be contributing to the crisis is that lack of emphasis on reading in the home due to low literacy rates amongst parents. There is perceived to be strong linkage between literacy and poverty which places children from households where literacy is an issue at a disadvantage.
- Despite factors in the home environment many believe there are no excuses for current reading levels and place blame and or responsibility on the education system. A variety of issues raised by stakeholders include a lack of emphasis in curriculum on basic writing and grammar, removal of cursive writing instruction and a generally lack of initiative amongst decision makers to make changes. The most frequently mentioned issue, however, is the perception that students are pushed through the system whether they can read or not. One stakeholder metaphorically described the school system as a production line in a factory.

*The Dartmouth Learning Network has frequently expressed the view that educational initiatives arising from concerns with low literacy in children are directly related to low literacy levels in the home. Children do not live and develop in isolation. They are part of a family. There is extensive research that demonstrates that children of low literate parents and children from low income homes are at a serious disadvantage in the school system. They are at risk of becoming one of the increasing numbers of low literate adults.*

*Children really need to be taught how to write, I find it hard to grasp. That someday these same kids may run our Country and they can't even spell. Things should go back to the basics, instead of just pushing the kids through school. We pay for an EDUCATION system NOT a production line child.*

*I have heard that grammar is not given a priority in school. I think that this is not a "grammar" issue but a communication issue. Schools need to teach students how to communicate in written form in a proper way - how else can they get their ideas across if they cannot communicate them in writing?*

*Cursive writing needs to come back into the system - it provides a great way of developing fine motor skills, eye hand contact, and muscle control.*

*The Spring 2014 Literacy statistics show that 30% of grade three students in our province are not meeting grade level reading outcomes and 50% of African Nova Scotian and low income students in this grade are not meeting grade level outcomes. This is unacceptable and needs to be a main priority of the Review Panel.*

**Some students are graduating from the system without basic mathematics skills. Some blame the new math principles being taught in school today and want to see a return to the basics.**

- Some respondents are critical of the approach to mathematics today. Their comments tend to revolve around three main themes:
  - Some students are graduating/going through the system without learning basic math skills. To some extent this is blamed on “technology” but many feel strongly that knowing the basics of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication is fundamental. Without this foundation there are concerns that the lack of math skills places Nova Scotia (and Canada) at a disadvantage on the global stage.
  - The way math is taught in schools today is not as effective as older methods. Some parents are critical of “new math” and find it confusing and complicated. Some parents don’t feel that how an answer is arrived at is important, only that it is the correct answer.
  - The demands on students in mathematics are too difficult/have too many outcomes which is contributing to poor performance. Different students have different aptitude levels for mathematics and the system should accommodate.

*I feel as a province we are lacking in our strategies for development in the math and science areas. With the progressive advancement in these fields in other Countries I feel we are far far below the standard that is now being upheld.*

*They need to go back to some of the older strategies that worked and forget this new way of doing things (new math) - students cannot remember things - University students I work with cannot multiply by 2 or 4 to get respirations for a minute - a vital component of our health system Yes students need to be taught concepts and how to think strategically but they also need to memorize.*

*Numeracy, in this age of electronic aids, should still be emphasized and the requirement for long hand addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication is necessary in cases where their work computer systems crash. Algebra and calculus should not be electives as all students need the basics before post secondary learning.*

*A review of current math curriculum and the number of expected outcomes at each level. Fewer outcomes, allowing more time and practice to create greater understanding of each concept.*

*We asked our daughter’s teacher if it mattered how she got an answer in math as long as she was right and didn’t cheat. After a lot of back and forth, we finally were told that it didn’t matter as long as she knew what she was doing. We actually had to push for that answer because it meant possibly rejecting “new math” guidelines.*



**There are too many outcomes which some feel is a contributing factor to poor performance amongst both students and teachers. Some would like to see a thorough review conducted and the number of outcomes reduced to only the most meaningful.**

- Some people are critical of an outcomes based education system. The most common problem cited is the sheer number of outcomes in each subject. This is especially difficult for students/teachers in younger grades. With so many outcomes teachers feel they don't have the time to do a good job at them all. So they either rush through them diminishing the quality of education for the students or are forced to prioritize on their own which can lead to inconsistencies between classrooms.
- Some are concerned that the outcomes approach and the number of outcomes might be the reason why students are underachieving and being pushed through the system without learning the basics. Some would like to see a review conducted of outcomes across all subjects (as was conducted in mathematics) and the number reduced to a meaningful and manageable level.

*Focus on whole-child, still too many outcomes -Way too much expected within the outcomes: we'd rather do a thorough job covering less than a poor job while trying to cover too much -Where do we fit it all in?*

*The decrease in the math outcomes for the province are a step in the right direction, but that needs to be done across all subject areas. Teaching in-depth is much more effective than exposure to a variety of things. Students are not able to process the curriculum at the speed which it needs to be taught to cover all outcomes.*

*A further problem is that there were entirely too many outcomes, in particular for the younger students, and there was never time to introduce the concepts, let alone master them.*

*Curriculum has been a moving target. We all know learning is maximized when the targets are clear and attainable. For my 29 years in education we have discussed that there are too many outcomes. This leaves each teacher to decide on priorities.*

**Due to lack of resources the policy of inclusion is not working and students with complex needs may be better served outside the standard curriculum.**

- While people endorse the idea of supporting students with different needs, some are critical of the practice of inclusion in the classroom. Some feel that while the philosophy behind inclusion is correct, the system is under resourced making the reality of inclusion impractical and ineffective.
- The policy of inclusion places demands on teachers who feel they don't have the time or training required to adequately meet the requirements of students with complex needs. There is a perception amongst some that every year the number of students with complex needs is increasing, while resources to meet those needs are not.
- Some people argue that some students simply aren't suited for mainstream curriculum. As opposed to being pushed through a system where they are constantly underachieving they should be placed in special programs that help identify and accommodate their areas of competencies. This could include life skills development, trade skills, coop opportunities and apprentice programs.

Those who don't fit in the normal stream we cannot continue to drag them through the system. Support them through discovery of what they are talented in and open their lives to co-op programs, apprenticeships, or whatever is needed.

The second area that needs improvement is in the provision, in middle school and high school, for trades-based, vocational education. I have seen too many of my students, either in upper elementary school or in middle school, languishing in classes that are entirely inappropriate to their needs. There are some students who will *never* meet the academic outcomes set for their grade level. Despite adaptations, psychological assessments, intensive resource and other interventions, and good support at home, these students continue to receive C's and D's on their report cards: *approaching* expectations, or *not meeting* expectations. We teachers manage to get these students through the system as best we can, but surely a lifetime of C' and D's must have a terrible effect on their self-esteem.

Inclusion was introduced in 1987 with the government's promise of money and resources to support students with special learning needs. However, the current system is underfunded and under resourced with personnel.

It seems every year there are more students with exceptionalities. Teachers receive very few instructional hours in their Bachelor of Education to learn how to support inclusive learning environments. Teachers do not have the time to offer the attention and support these students need to be successful.

**Some feel that curriculum based decisions need to be more transparent and in consultation with the public. Some feel the current curriculum is not adequately preparing students for success.**

- Some stakeholders are critical of the current curriculum and feel that curriculum-related decisions need to be more transparent and made with public consultation. Stakeholders had a wide variety of curriculum related comments and suggestions including:
  - Computer skills and coding should be a standard part of the curriculum.
  - Foster entrepreneurship and business skills.
  - More French immersion opportunities.
  - More interactive/experiential learning as opposed to lectures.
  - More focus on Canadian/Nova Scotia/Global geography and history.
  - Emphasis on responsibilities as a Canadian citizen (e.g. voting).
  - More choice in subjects.
  - Reviews of programs like drug education and sex education.

This should not be a secret group of political appointees. This is an important role, that should be public hiring based on clear qualifications. Then, the hires should define the curriculum based on a public process and clear goals and data.

I hated when they used that word 'cover' because it denoted to me the bare minimal experience ... shouldn't the experience been 'taught' and therefore more engaging? admitting that there was too much unnecessary parts to the curriculum to 'cover'. Curriculum needs to be meaningful and progressive.

Who decides the curriculum? I find many of the recent graduates do not know or seem interested in what is currently going on in the world. They lack basic knowledge of how our country is run, world issues, etc. I recall taking a course on "Modern World Problems" but did not see anything similar offered at the local high school.

I would like to urge you to review the current school curriculum regarding "drug education". Recent scientific findings demonstrate impressively that age appropriate drug education at younger ages may be of paramount importance.

Encourage an entrepreneurial mindset so our youth will succeed whether they pursue higher education, enter the workforce, or become entrepreneurs.

A key component to improving junior high and to better prepare students for their adult lives is teaching basic and intermediate computer programming.

In some schools, there are very limited offerings in high school in French. It would be nice to see an option for students as in offering integrated French.

**Some stakeholders feel the education system needs to get back to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic.**

- Some stakeholders feel the current curriculum has moved too far away from the basics of education; reading, writing and arithmetic. They point to lack of basics as a primary reason for student underachievement and poor academic performance of students today.
- Some factors that stakeholders mention as being issues with the current system include the elimination of cursive writing, teaching of new math techniques (elimination of times tables for example), reliance on technology and a general shift in the principles of learning.

When my son started school many years ago the education dept introduced whole language. I believe that is what it is called. He struggled through every grade because he never learned the proper way to read. I believe that phonics is the only proper way to learn to read.

Traditionally schools were charged with ensuring students were proficient in the three "r's" reading, writing and arithmetic. Today, unfortunately, nothing could be closer to the truth. I feel its time to abandon the current model and revert back to what should be at the core of our education system.

I am outraged that some schools are not teaching cursive writing anymore. This is disgraceful and deplorable. Exactly what skills are we replacing the ability to read and write with? Math skills? Oh wait we've already replaced long hand mathematics with calculators.

Times tables- make all the excuses you want, the fact remains, kids cannot add, subtract, multiply or divide, yet you expect them to advance in math.

Reading, writing and basic math are still important skills. If you have a good background in these three you can educate yourself on other things you don't know.

**Some believe that art and music are essential components of creating well-rounded individuals but feel that decision makers undervalue these subjects.**

- Many people feel that the arts and music are important to child development and a well-rounded education. Many reference studies that demonstrate how arts and music enhance learning and have other emotional and social benefits. There are also societal/cultural benefits in that it fosters interest in the arts, which helps support the arts community.
- There is a perception that arts/music programs have historically been the first areas targeted during budget cuts. There are concerns of inconsistencies in arts/music programs across schools and that any future budget cuts will disproportionately affect these programs.
- One of the main concerns is that some decision makers don't have an appreciation for arts/music, which is why they are more vulnerable than other programs.

*In the 'normal' stream, the cut back of teachers means no art, music only as an extra-curricular,*

*There is ample evidence that early music education has cognitive, social and emotional benefits to children's development. Like physical activity, music exposure should be an intrinsic part of the daily school curriculum in elementary years, and an integral part throughout junior and senior high. Please make this a priority in your considerations regarding curriculum.*

*I have always wondered why some elementary schools receive a specialty art teacher? Within the HRSB, there are some elementary schools that receive an hour of art a week by someone that specializes in art and can give students their time and expertise. In the same school board, and often just across the harbor, other elementary classroom teachers have to teach art to their students, even though it may be outside their realm of expertise.*

*To encourage, foster and entrench arts curricula in the education system at all levels. Studies and research in this area have concluded that this sort of activity enhances learning, promotes self awareness and responsibility, and generally supports learning and growing at all levels.*

*I believe that our supervisors place value in music education. However, I am also well aware that music educators make up a very small percentage of the overall teacher population, and therefore the needs of our music programs and staff are easily overlooked.*

**Stakeholders feel there should be more discussion on the approach to education. The current approach is not as effective as it could be and there are concerns that decision makers are out of touch.**

- Some stakeholders feel there needs to be a discussion on the philosophies that drive decisions in the education system. Some perceive that current decision makers are out of touch with the day-to-day classroom environments and adopt new teaching methods without a full appreciation of their effectiveness or impact. Some examples cited by stakeholders include:
  - Open concept teaching/classrooms.
  - Abandonment of traditional teaching methods like cursive writing, time table memorization, language instruction techniques, spelling practices etc.
  - New teaching practices (e.g. new math).
  - Curriculum as opposed to teacher driven learning environments.
- Some people are critical that the current system promotes mediocrity and does not adequately prepare students for expectations in the “real world”.

*With respect to style of teaching, there is too much time spent lecturing in the high school years. It is the interactive, creative part of learning that sticks, more than the 5 things we need to know for an exam.*

*I find that the whole system is too curriculum driven. Teachers need far more freedom to teach the material they know and love.*

*My teaching philosophy is that "school" should mimic "real life." And yet, we allow mediocrity, celebrate everyone's achievements no matter what their effort and are moving away from competition. I do not see how this helps children to transition into adult life.*

*In terms of both subject areas, memorization, which has fallen from grace over the years, should not be a discouraged. Particular examples are math timetables, proper language instruction, and spelling patterns.*

*Please stop adopting new 'strategies' for learning.*

*Department of Education and School Board employees: There is a perception among many teachers that "the Board" and "the Department" are over-staffed and out of touch with the realities of actual schools and classrooms. The frequent introduction of a new teaching approach (often referred to as "the flavour of the month") and the use of trendy buzzwords encourages teachers to regard both the Board and the Department as out-of-touch interferences.*

## 2. Teaching and Learning

### Assessment and report card procedures don't adequately communicate a student's progress.

- Concerns about assessment practices primarily focus on two issues: how students are assessed on report cards and whether the assessment materials (i.e., tests) are measuring the right things.
- The switch from letter grades in junior high to percentage grades in high school appears to be a notable issue. Many respondents suggest eliminating letter grades altogether as they have little meaning, especially to parents who may not understand how the letters apply to their child's learning or achievement.
- Similarly, teachers and parents are frustrated with the "boilerplate" nature of the report cards and the focus on outcomes. Both groups feel that it is more important for teachers to be able to write candidly about the student's behaviour and social development than to provide unclear outcome-based reports.
- Many also express concern that standardized tests and multiple-choice exams may not in fact adequately measure learning. There may be aspects of these assessment methods that could impede students' ability to score appropriately. For instance, readability and vocabulary could impact a student's ability to understand the test materials, even if their understanding of the topic is there.
- Finally, a number of respondents feel that there is too much focus being put towards assessment, where the focus of education should be on learning and exploration.

*Students in grade 9 struggle as this is the first year in which they are receiving marks. We feel that these marks are necessary as students are moving into a credit system in high school. However, to prepare them for grade 9 we would like some marks in a percentage system given in grade 8. Student and parental/guardian understanding of the current ABCD system is varied and not a clear indication of their current skill base.*

*Teacher focus has shifted from engaging and teaching students to constant assessment and accountability (many studies are available showing the focus on assessment takes students focus away from learning and exploring and placing their attention on what assignments are worth and what does the teacher want).*

*Language used on report cards. It is great that teachers are using professional language that shows our commitment to our outcomes; however it is not what parents understand and want to know. It does not allow teachers to communicate what is truly happening with their student in the course. We have taken away honest feedback and replaced it with outcome based responses that are mechanical and cold.*

## **The teacher training and professional development system needs to be revised.**

- All respondents feel that teacher training and professional development is integral to the career. Many feel especially that teachers need much more training in special education, given the number of children with special needs in today's classrooms.
- While training is important, there are concerns around the particulars of this training. Many respondents feel that professional development days, while necessary, should not interfere with class time. Some propose having professional development days during the summer or other times that it would not require students missing a day of school.
- Many teachers explain that professional development days are often not used for the development of teacher skills, but rather for continuing school improvement (CSI). These teachers feel that this time could be better spent doing other things; of the five professional development days teachers receive a year, most of these should be used towards actual professional training, rather than CSI.
- Many respondents also perceive there to be unfair promotions and pay raises made for teachers taking courses or additional training. These individuals feel it is too easy for teachers to take courses that may not directly benefit their students in order to receive a pay raise. Others are concerned that teachers may intentionally take "bird courses" (very easy courses) simply to achieve the career benefits.

*Teachers are provided with 5 "Professional Development" days each year, one of them being the Conference Day. Most people in the public think that these PD days are used to improve our teachers. I think they would be surprised to find out that this is not the case. There is an overwhelming focus on School Board initiatives like Continuing School Improvement (CSI), formerly Planning for Improvement (PFI). From my experience, this involves gathering data from surveys of students, parents and staff to see where we can improve our school, setting goals to improve our school and then collecting data to prove that we accomplished our goals.*

*Teacher in service days be done during the summer months...an act of common sense and good courtesy to the taxpaying parents; these are a major inconvenience to parents who both work and have to set up other arrangements for their children.*

*Teacher training – The Drake issue highlights the flaws in the current process whereby teachers can take courses that really have little or no relevance to what they do, but they not only get the course paid for but also get a salary increase for taking the course. Yet, the students receive little or no benefit from this. We need to stop this! We can't afford it! We need to plan and approve the courses teacher are able to take and be reimbursed for and get salary increases for. It must be job relevant. The question of whether Drake is even a worthwhile course is another whole story and that also has to be managed much better. The courses must be valuable courses that teach the teachers a lot of useful information and not some "Mickey Mouse" course that just gives the teacher a diploma to use for increasing their salaries.*



### 3. Climate

**The policies and practices in the education system provide little consequences for poor attendance, late assignments and disruptive conduct. Some feel that this is not preparing students for the life in the “real world”.**

- Some feel that students face few consequences in the current education system and that teachers are helpless to enforce discipline as a result. Some cite the absence of consequences to be a contributing factor to the lack of respect in the classroom and for teachers. Some of the primary issues mentioned include:
  - Student attendance. Some perceive large numbers of students to be skipping classes, sometimes for days or even weeks. While the school spends resources on tracking down students or reaching out to parents for attendance issues, this is perceived as a waste of resources since there are no actual penalties or consequences for missing class.
  - Students are handing in assignments late or not doing them at all with no consequences. Some feel it is unfair that a student who hands their assignment in two weeks late could get the same or higher mark as a student who handed it in on time. Homework is also perceived to be something which some students don't take seriously.
  - Some feel strongly that without the fear of failing a grade there is little incentive for students to apply themselves and for parents to become more involved. The system is fostering an environment that rewards procrastination and poor effort.
- The primary concern amongst those who commented is that current policies around consequences give students the wrong message and don't set them up for success in “real life”. Once they leave the education system and enter the workforce their employers will not be as tolerant of the same behavior.
- As a result of the policy of inclusion some teachers feel there are few consequences for disruptive or violent behavior. Integration exposes some students to unnecessary risk in cases where kids have impulse control issues and can have violent outbursts. When teachers have to spend most of their time dealing with the 5% it does the 95% a disservice. Lack of resources and training is an issue.
- Some feel strongly that consequences need to be reintroduced into the system and recommend that they be developed jointly by the administration, teachers and parents (and input from students).

*Attendance is out of control! There is absolutely no recourse for students who do not come to school. At least 1/3 of my students are absent on a regular basis. What are we going to do about that??*

*Certain policies and practices in the Nova Scotia system lead students to think that sustained effort is not necessary, and there are few consequences for work not done, attention not paid, and study not taken seriously. One is the practice of allowing students to hand in work late, re-do substandard work, or take tests repeatedly until a satisfactory result is achieved. Not only does this place an extra burden on already-burdened teachers, but it creates the impression in students' minds that one need only work hard some of the time, preferably sometime in the future. The practice of using the mean instead of an average mark for term evaluations confirms this impression.*

*Students must have consequences! They are taking advantage of every aspect of the education system. We are so concerned about hurting feelings that we are giving false hopes and realities to many students. Students are missing ridiculous amounts of school hours, homework is frowned upon, there are little consequences for not respecting due dates, this no zero policy is ridiculous.*

*We have moved too far away from putting the onus on the kids to take responsibility for their actions. We are not preparing them for the real world where there is failure and mistakes, and that is how we learn.*

## 4. Structure

### School boards should be reduced to increase funding going to schools.

- Nearly all those who emailed about school board issues recommend downsizing or amalgamating the school boards. Many suggest having only one, province-wide, school board.
- Most respondents feel that the issues of funding and school boards are intricately linked. There is a perception that school boards are top heavy and that administrators are paid too much.
- Reducing the number of boards or the number of administrators at board level would free up more money to be allocated to the schools and classrooms.
- There is also the perception that administration (school boards, department of education, etc.) is out of touch with what is actually happening in classrooms. Many individuals feel strongly that administration needs to spend time in the classrooms, and for longer than an hour or a day, to fully understand what is happening “in the trenches”.
- Similarly, respondents express opinions that the focus should be on the individuals actually interacting with students and making an impact on their education: the teachers. They feel that this is where priorities must lie and that funding should reflect this priority.
- Another concern is the manner in which board members are appointed. Respondents feel that electing board members is causing more issues than it solves.

*With a limited supply of money, we must maximize every dollar that is spent on Education in this province. I really feel that that the people who make a difference in young people's lives, have direct contact with them. In Education, this means teachers. I think the Department of Education should have a serious look at how much money is spent at the School Board level. The DOE should do an audit of the School Boards to look at how the money is being spent and if it could be used better by having more teachers in schools instead of in the “Bureaucracy”. There are many great people working at the School Boards. However, many of those people would have a greater impact on students if they were working with them in a school. Last year, the Newfoundland government decided to go with one School Board for the whole province and many of the teachers working at school boards returned to the classroom. It should be investigated how this has impacted education in the province and if it is idea we want to use in this province.*

*As a Nova Scotia teacher, former school administrator, External Review Team leader, with nearly 30 years working in this province's Education system the answer seems pretty obvious. We are TOP heavy. Check the NS School Board websites. Examine the number of "consultants, advisors, etc... We're overloaded at the TOP. Huge sums of money aren't what's needed most in Nova Scotia's Education system. Cuts to the number of "Upper Level School Board Staff" is what's needed. The salaries of these "consultants" and "advisors" and "others", some that aren't even listed on the Board websites are for the most part, a waste of time and money.*

*Never has the education bureaucracy been larger and more out-of-touch re: the student. Boards and the department never; never, genuinely observe kids and classrooms. When they show up it is not to ask questions, it is to draw superficial conclusions that lead far too often to a ‘continue the present course of action’ decision. Board members, board staff and department officials need to spend a lot more time (not at more schools) getting a deeper understanding of today's kids and classes. They are out of touch but all-powerful.*

## **Much more funding is needed in the schools and classrooms, especially in terms of supporting diverse learners.**

- In general, more funding is needed in schools to support teachers and their classrooms. These funds are needed for supplies and teacher supports (such as education assistants).
- Specifically, not enough funding is reaching students with special needs. This includes students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, as well as those students from low socio-economic backgrounds who may not be able to afford basic supplies (including food) needed for learning success. While it is noted that students who have very serious needs, who cannot feed or take care of themselves, receive support, this leaves very little support for those students who may have less severe needs.
- Respondents also commonly express the need for much more support staff for teachers.
- Many respondents note the inefficiency of the current funding formula by which schools are awarded funding based on enrollment. This formula fails to take into account other factors such as the number of students with special needs and the socio-economic level of the community.

*The current model of education in NS does not adequately support diverse learners, especially those facing additional barriers of poverty, racial discrimination and mental health challenges. A better infrastructure of support and more funding to support diverse learners is urgently needed. Teaching staffs in some communities are faced with the dire consequences of poverty every day, but funding formulas are the same for each school. Schools Plus is making some progress in assisting at risk communities, but there is scope for much more to be done. In HRSB, there is a 50% support teacher in each junior high school, but the need for such a position is far greater in North Dartmouth and Preston than south end Halifax. Similarly, approximately one third of the school population at Dartmouth High is on the Resource caseload, but the funding formula for support is linked to overall school population. There are many gaps in the education system of NS and vulnerable populations suffer the most.*

*At the Elementary level, there is very little money for support workers for children with special needs. Yes, if they're unable to feed themselves or some such they have access to full time support. But if they are mentally challenged, or slightly on the autism spectre, then there is little or no support. The need is there, the money is not.*

*There can be nothing more cut from the school or the classrooms. In fact, the Minister should personally visit each school, discuss with the teachers and principals what that particular school needs, or is lacking, and distribute the funds to the school ! Bypass the boards so that you, the parents, the educators, the children see that the funds actually go to what is needed, what is required.*

## Hiring processes hurt current and aspiring teachers.

- Hiring problems are three-fold: schools need much more support staff and specialists, certified teachers need to be able to find gainful employment, and current NS teachers need to be fairly treated.
- As in other areas of this review, more staff are needed within schools. Both EAs and specialists, such as speech-language pathologists, are integral to the success of all students, especially those with special needs.
- Many teachers complain about restrictive staffing regulations that end up preventing good teachers from finding suitable positions. Some raise concerns about moving between boards and losing their status, while others are affected by the degree requirements (ex. A teacher with a PhD in physics who was told that his BSc and MSc math courses did not count in NS as part of an education degree).

*We used to have specialists and consultants that we could talk to and meet about curriculum but in the budget cuts many of those jobs were eliminated or divided up by the remaining people so much that we cannot ever get to see them. Where I used to be able to contact these people, I no longer have the ability to do so.*

*In this move from CCRSB to HRSB, I lost all seniority rights! Trust me working in system such as HRSB where qualifications and seniority are paramount to securing a position in a school, I truly have started my education career over because I crossed the county line to closer. If this is not the 19th century model, I certainly am missing something. I had to fight through the Provincial Contract to keep my accumulated sick time benefits earned through twenty years of employment with CCRSB. As well, the service award accumulation has been effected by this move. My employer is ultimately the Province of Nova Scotia and its taxpayers. Due to its arms length legal structure that is used to employ educators, teacher mobility within the borders of Nova Scotia are extremely restricted by this seven board system. In the 21st century model, the barriers to employee mobility and opportunities are being removed across Canada and to some extent North American, but in Nova Scotia a teacher must start their career over to cross the county line. Sad.*

## 5. Student Support

### Students need much more support than is currently being offered.

- The diverse needs of students are increasing every year, but the funding and resources available to support these students is not keeping up with need.
- Specialists of all types are crucial, especially in elementary years. However, respondents feel particularly passionate about the lack of mental health professionals in the school system. Many students are dealing with issues of anxiety and depression and there is very little support for these students. Teachers may not be aware of the issues and even if they are, they likely don't have the necessary training to deal with them.
- All respondents reiterate the need for many more support staff. Both specialists and educational assistants are sorely needed.
- While Nova Scotians are generally proud of our history of inclusive education, respondents express concern about whether the current inclusive education standards are hurting both our students with special needs and our students without. In order for inclusive education to work well, there need to be adequate supports for students with special needs. The demands on teachers are far too great. Most teachers have large class sizes with incredibly diverse students, as well as many different IPPs to deal with on a daily basis.

*No change in the history of public education has been as academically destructive as the way Nova Scotia implemented inclusion. It has produced staggering numbers of dysfunctional classrooms, with at least 2/3 of the students on some form of individualized program. As a result, many teachers daily prepare for 3-6 courses, 6-10 adaptations, modifications or IPP's, and 4-8 literacy enhancements, trying to keep the educational ship afloat. Those demands soon exceed teaching limits, resulting in an automatic promotion policy to clear the system, with plummeting literacy and math scores, graduating increasing numbers of lower-knowledge students, incapable of independent learning and destined to become third world Canadians. The best description of this present system is a politically correct illusion of success.*

*The needs of students who experience mental health issues like anxiety and depression is increasing. Teachers are often not made aware of these situations and are not well equipped to handle them. We are lacking in support systems and professionals with in our schools. We need bodies (staff) in our schools to deal with these issues. Many of our students are missing time due to illness, mental health issues or lack of family support, teachers are left trying to help students catch up and pass courses. In Ontario, we are aware of credit recovery teachers to support students in these situations. Resource teachers should be allocated on the needs of students and not just the overall student population of the school. Our current program planning model does not always support or serve the needs of all the students in need.*

*However, I very firmly believe that specialists of another sort are crucial to the early grades (and I include the kindergarten/primary year/s as well). These specialists are the psychologists, social workers, behaviour therapists, and speech therapists. The whole early intervention thing just makes so much sense. The department and the board already seem to believe in this philosophy as seen in programmes*

*like reading recovery and ELT. But the stitch in time saves nine mentality is absolutely crucial when it comes to helping troubled kids. And there are a lot of troubled kids. Yes, we have these specialists in the system, but as of now, we have to wait far too long for these kids to be seen and then there isn't anywhere near enough time for any individual child to be helped. As soon as teachers see a need, there should be immediate help and lots of it.*

## 6. Class Size

### Classes are too large for teachers to properly teach everyone

- Respondents (54) universally agree that class sizes are too large and should be capped; in addition, pre-existing caps are felt to be too flexible and should be “hard caps”.
- Most feel that large class sizes prevent students from getting the attention that they need for successful learning. Children on IPPs or who have special needs take up additional time and should be taken into account with class sizes, as this drastically changes the demands on the teacher.
- A number of respondents point out that some classes (i.e. IB classes) are very small and that this money could be better used to benefit *all* students.

*Please consider regulating class sizes, especially in the Grades Primary – 3, in combined classes and in French Immersion classrooms. Resource and Program Support Case Loads are overflowing with demand but classroom teachers cannot cope with the number of students and the variety of learning needs in their classrooms. Smaller classes could potentially reduce the need for Resource and Program Support in a school while also allowing teachers to feel successful in supporting their students’ needs.*

*High student to teacher ratios in the high school classroom, (the minimum is usually 30 going up to 40), make it extremely difficult to provide timely feedback for assignments and one on one time is drastically reduced.*

*Colleen MacKenzie, president of the Riverside Elementary School advisory council in Albert Bridge, said a recent provincial decision to implement caps on class sizes was a good idea, but there is still too much flexibility involved. For example, she said, the cap of 20 students in Grade 3 can be raised to 27, depending on circumstances.*

*The class sizes should be dependant on the amount of students with IPPs. In other provinces, IP programming counts as the equivalent of 2 students in configuring class sizes. There is more time required to support IPPs.*



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