

2024 Report

School-Family Communications

Understanding Key Trends



2024 Report on School-Family Communications

With a primary goal to bolster K-12 family engagement and provide actionable recommendations, SchoolStatus conducted a comprehensive survey delving into the communication dynamics between families and schools.

The survey embarked on a mission to answer the critical questions that school districts grapple with daily:

- **How can we proactively boost attendance?**
- **What tailored communication do families truly desire?**
- **How can schools become collaborative hubs for engagement?**

In this report, we unravel the survey's findings, providing actionable insights that shed light on the current state of relationships between K-12 families and schools, shaping a path toward more effective school-home partnerships to support student success.

This report includes perspectives from a range of K-12 families, exploring their communication preferences, perspectives on the importance of attendance, and viewpoints on the content, channels, and frequency of the communications they receive from schools.

Survey Methodology

The 2024 K-12 Family Communication Survey, conducted by SchoolStatus in January 2024, aimed to gather insights from U.S. families and caregivers of K-12 children aged 6-18. The survey employed SurveyMonkey Audience as the data collection platform.

The final survey results comprised 1,047 complete responses, along with 35 partial responses.

Survey Demographic Distribution

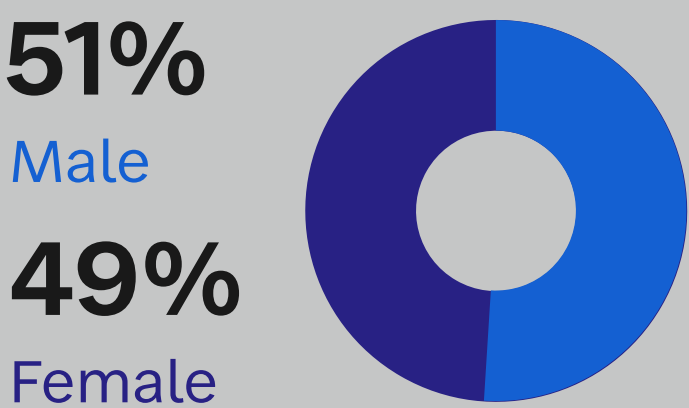
Total Respondents

1,047
Completed
35
Partially Completed

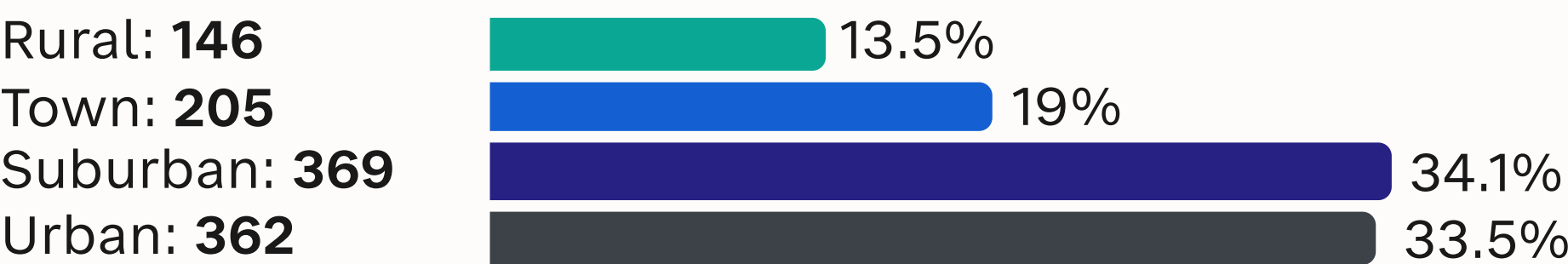
Grade Level



Gender



School Location

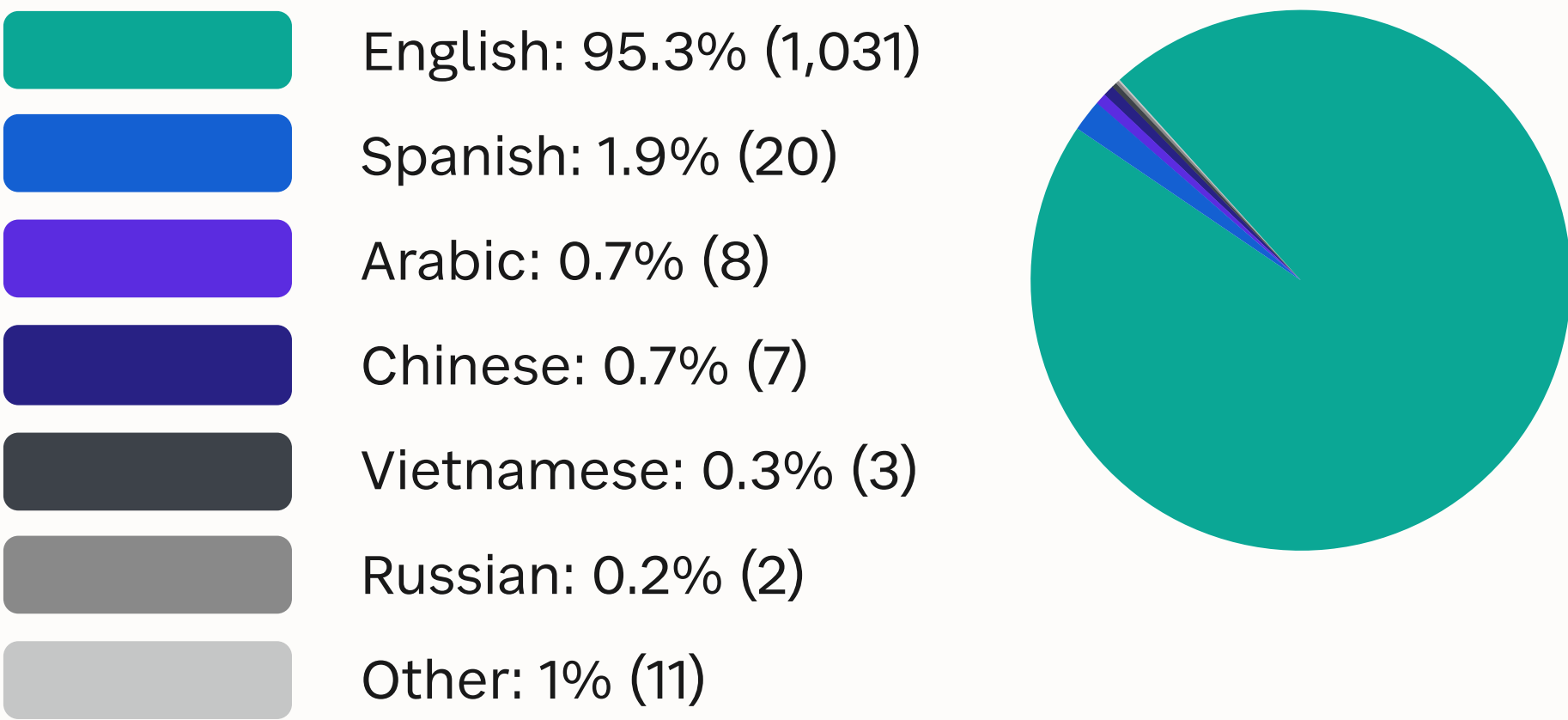


5%

of families in the sample speak a language **other than English at home**

● ● ● ● ●

Primary Language



Organizational Structure of the Report

The report is organized into four sections, each emphasizing a key theme derived from the survey data. These themes serve as guiding elements, revealing pathways to strengthen connections between families and schools.

1. Connection and engagement: Proactive measures for positive outcomes

Recognizing the pivotal role attendance plays in student success is fundamental to achieving positive outcomes. Families seek more than reactive measures; they desire consistent, positive, and supportive communication.

2. Communication effectiveness: Tailored and timely Interaction

Communication acts as a vital link between home and school. Families express the need for improved, tailored communication that is specific to their child, relevant, and actionable.

3. Support and partnership: Collaborative engagement

Engagement functions as a partnership, with families actively seeking guidance and support on how they can be a part of enhancing their child's academic success and improving attendance.

4. Accessibility: Universal engagement across backgrounds

Incorporating insights on demographic details, device preferences, and contextualizing engagement, this theme focuses on the universal desire for effective engagement.

These sections reflect the fundamental desires shared by families and educators alike: proactive measures for positive outcomes, tailored and timely communication, collaborative engagement, and universal accessibility. By recognizing and addressing these themes, educators can foster stronger connections with families, ultimately contributing to the holistic family engagement necessary to support positive educational outcomes for students.

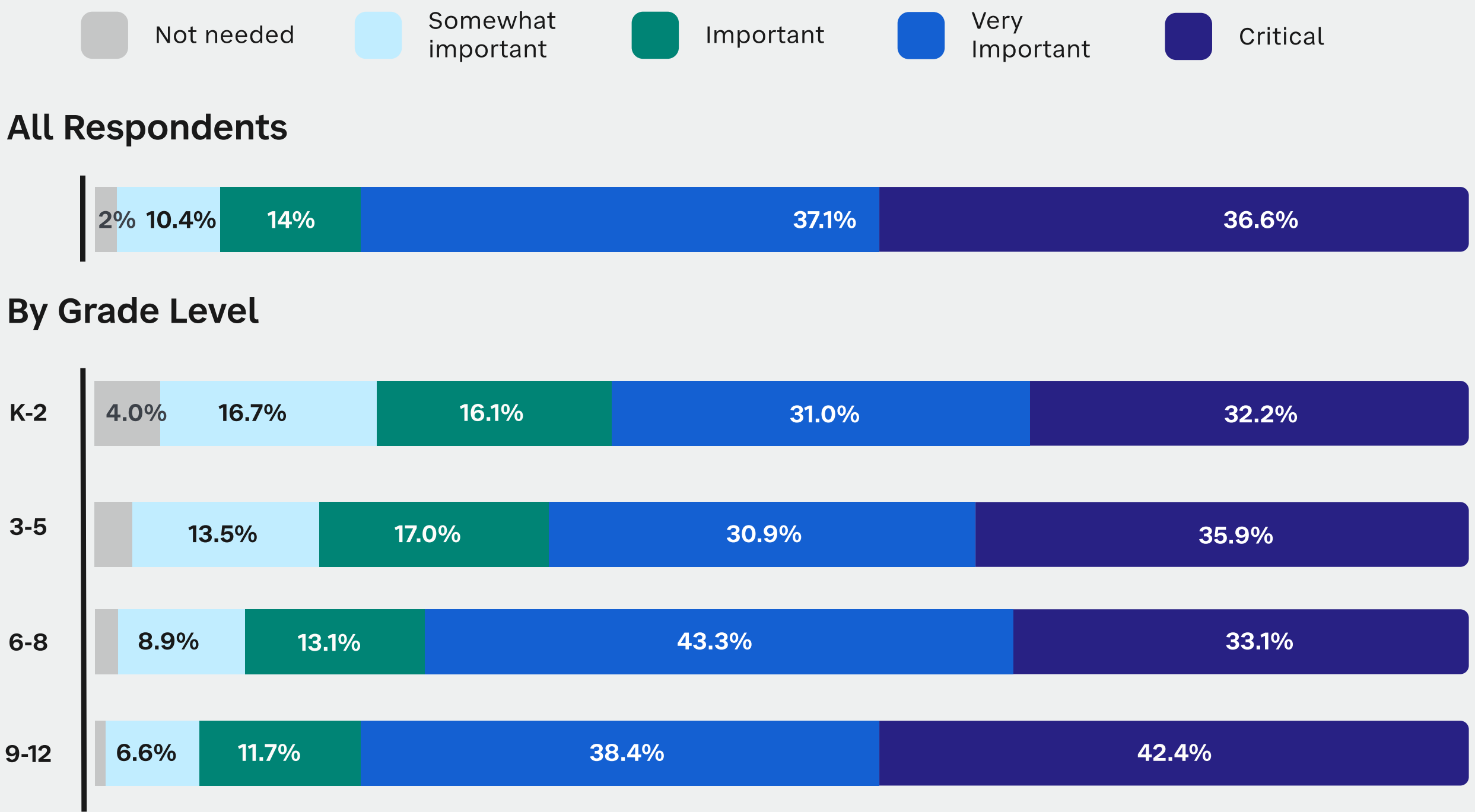
1: Connection and Engagement

Proactive Measures for Positive Outcomes and Increased Attendance

Families place significant emphasis on attendance as a fundamental aspect of student success. Nearly **88%** of families across all K-12 grades consider attendance important, very important, or critical to student success. The survey underscores a consensus among families that proactive, positive messaging plays a crucial role in addressing absenteeism and enhancing attendance.

Importance of Attendance

How important do you think attendance is for student academic success?



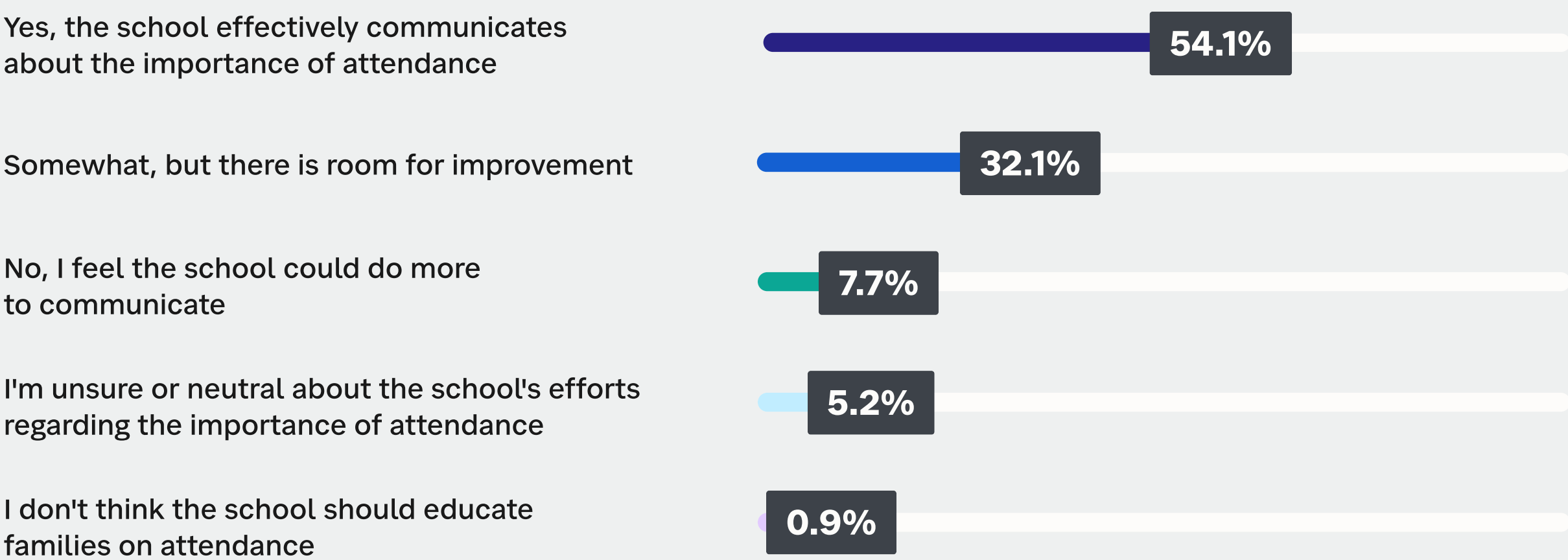
Furthermore, the **data reveals that in early grades (K-2), families are less likely to view attendance as critical or very important for student academic success.** This highlights a gap that proactive communication and education can address in years where attendance sets the foundation for future success.

Type and Frequency of Communication

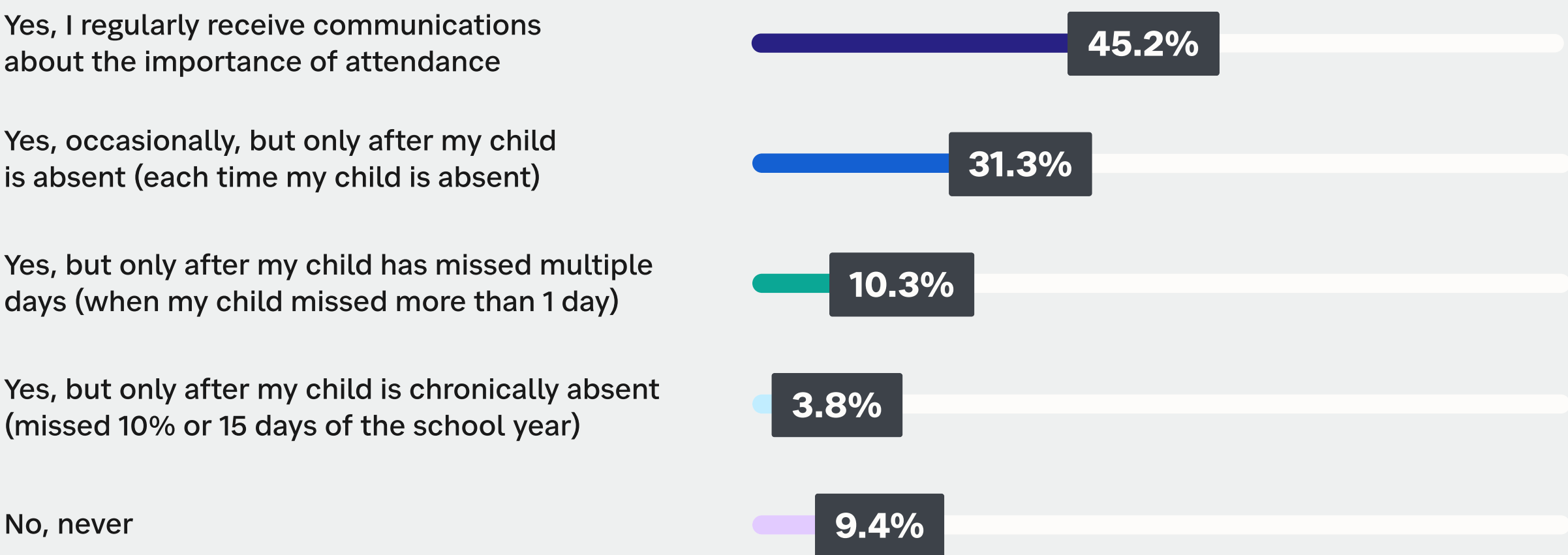
While many districts are actively communicating about attendance when students miss school, there is a demand for enhanced, proactive communication, with nearly **40%** of families expressing a desire for improvements. More than **45%** of families only received communications about the importance of attendance after their child was absent; **9%** never received these types of communications.

There is an opportunity for schools to improve attendance by proactively educating families about the importance of coming to school *before* students are absent.

Do you feel your child’s school is communicating with families and students about the importance of attendance?



Have you ever received communication about the importance of attendance from your child’s school?

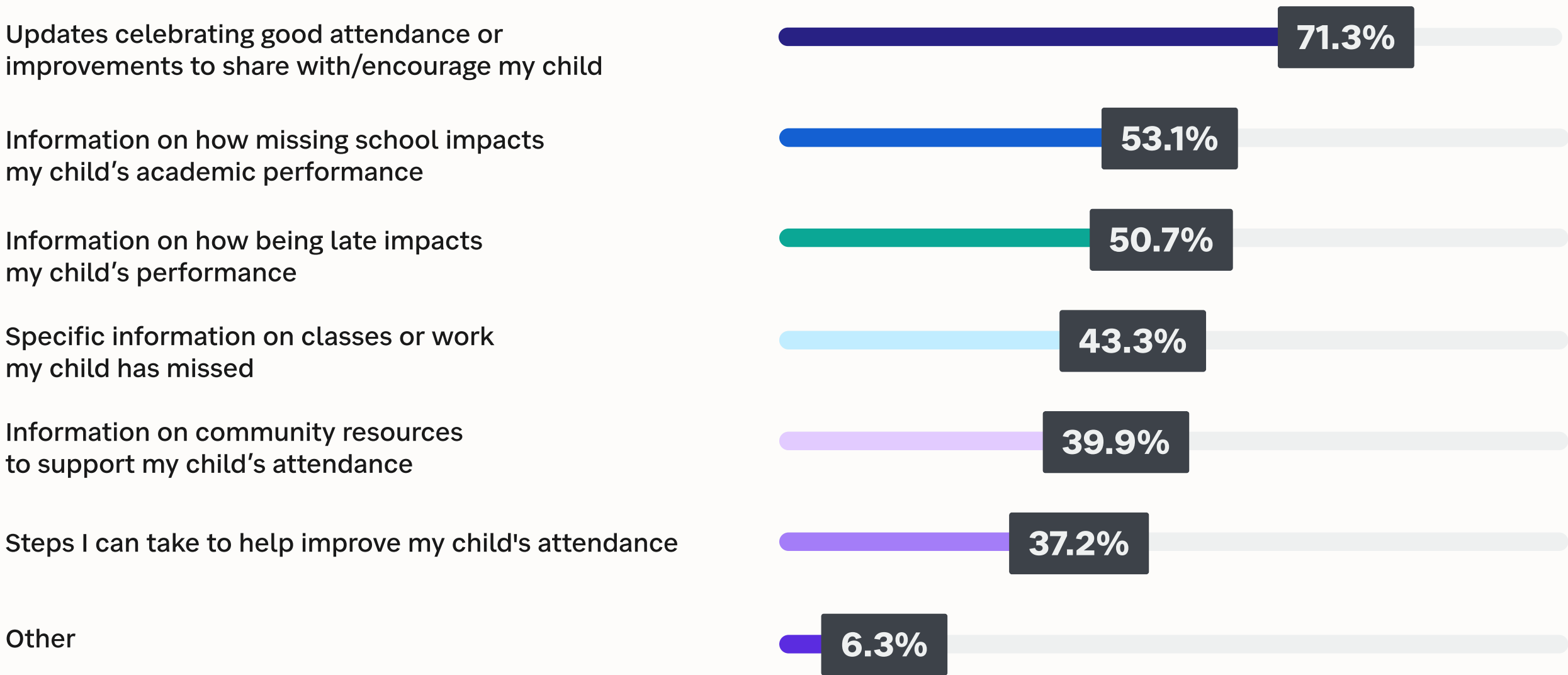


Desired Information on Attendance

Families also emphasized the pivotal role of consistent, proactive communication in improving attendance and academic success. Specifically, **71.3%** of respondents desire updates celebrating good attendance or improvements and **53.1%** seek information on how missing school impacts their child's academic performance. Half of respondents also want information on how being late impacts academic performance.

These results highlight the importance of refining communication strategies to better meet the needs of families.

What additional information about your child's attendance would you find helpful?



71% of respondents desire updates celebrating good attendance or improvements

53% of respondents seek information on how missing school impacts their child's academic performance

Overall, the data underscores the need for improved communication strategies to effectively address absenteeism. By leveraging these insights, education stakeholders can better understand the significance of proactive engagement, particularly concerning attendance, and tailor communication strategies to meet the needs of all families, thereby fostering a supportive environment for student success.

2: Communication Effectiveness

Tailored and Timely Interaction

The theme of communication effectiveness emerged with over **70%** of families expressing a strong need for better communication practices. This trend indicates a notable gap between current practices and the desired level of engagement.

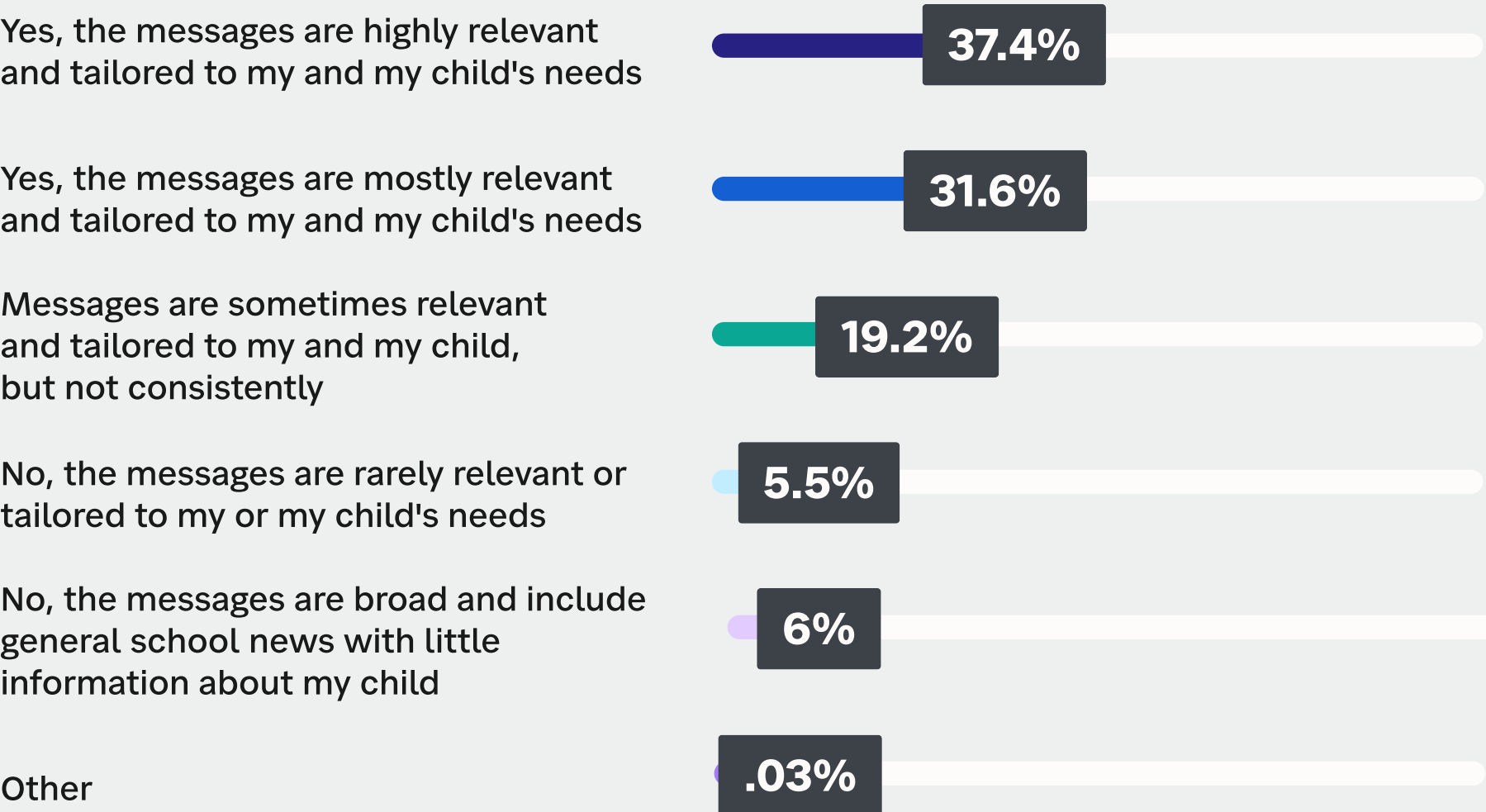
"A single, easy-to-use platform for communication would simplify things. We don't want to be overwhelmed with too many different channels."

Tailoring communication to all needs is crucial, with **31%** of families feeling that messages are not consistently tailored to their specific requirements.

Families emphasized the importance of personalized communication, as highlighted by a quote from a multilingual family who expressed the desire for “personalized messages through a mobile app.”

Relevance of School Messages

Are the messages you receive from your child’s school relevant and tailored to your and your child's needs?



31%
of respondents reported messages were not consistently relevant and tailored to them and their children’s needs.

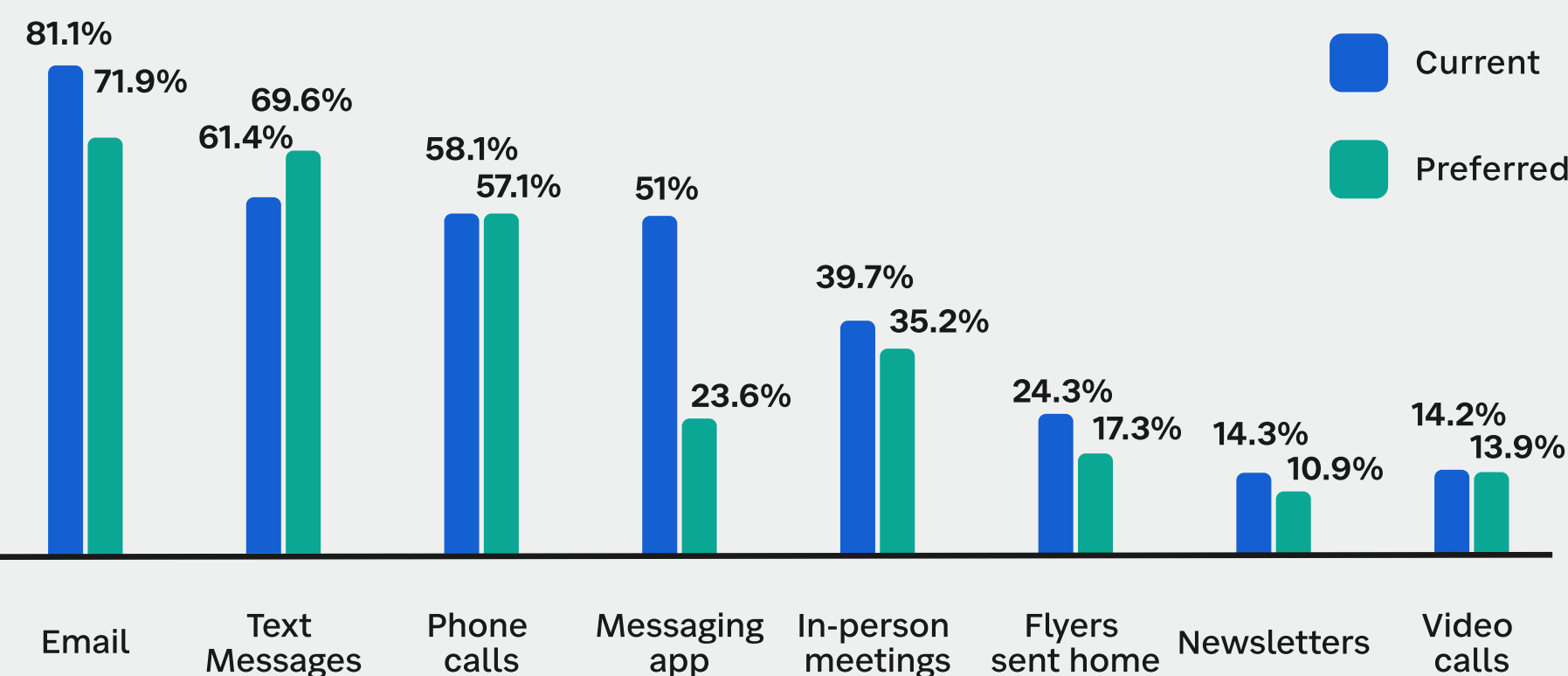
Multilingual families were less likely to feel communications were highly relevant and tailored to them.

Communications Channels & Perception

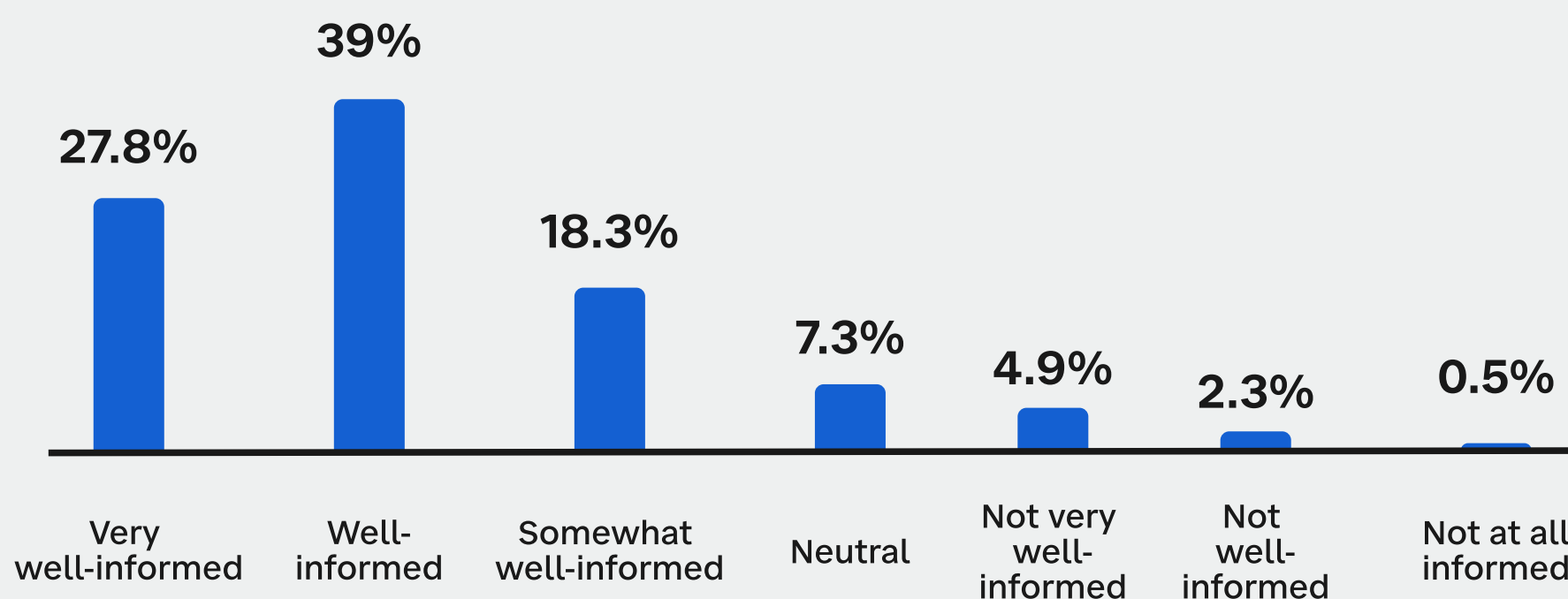
The survey underscores the significance of digital communication channels, with **72%** preferring emails and **70%** favoring texts. The majority expressed a desire for a single, easy-to-use platform, emphasizing the need for streamlined communication.

Responses also show that many schools and educators are communicating about each child’s academic progress, with **67%** of families feeling well-informed. There is still room for improvement in both content and method of communication for a third of respondents.

*Through which channels do you receive information about your child from their school or teacher?
Which channels would you prefer?*



Do you feel well-informed about your child’s academic progress and success in school?



72%

of respondents prefer to receive information about their child via email

51% of families currently use a messaging app for school communications, but only

23.6%

of families **want** to use a messaging app for school communications



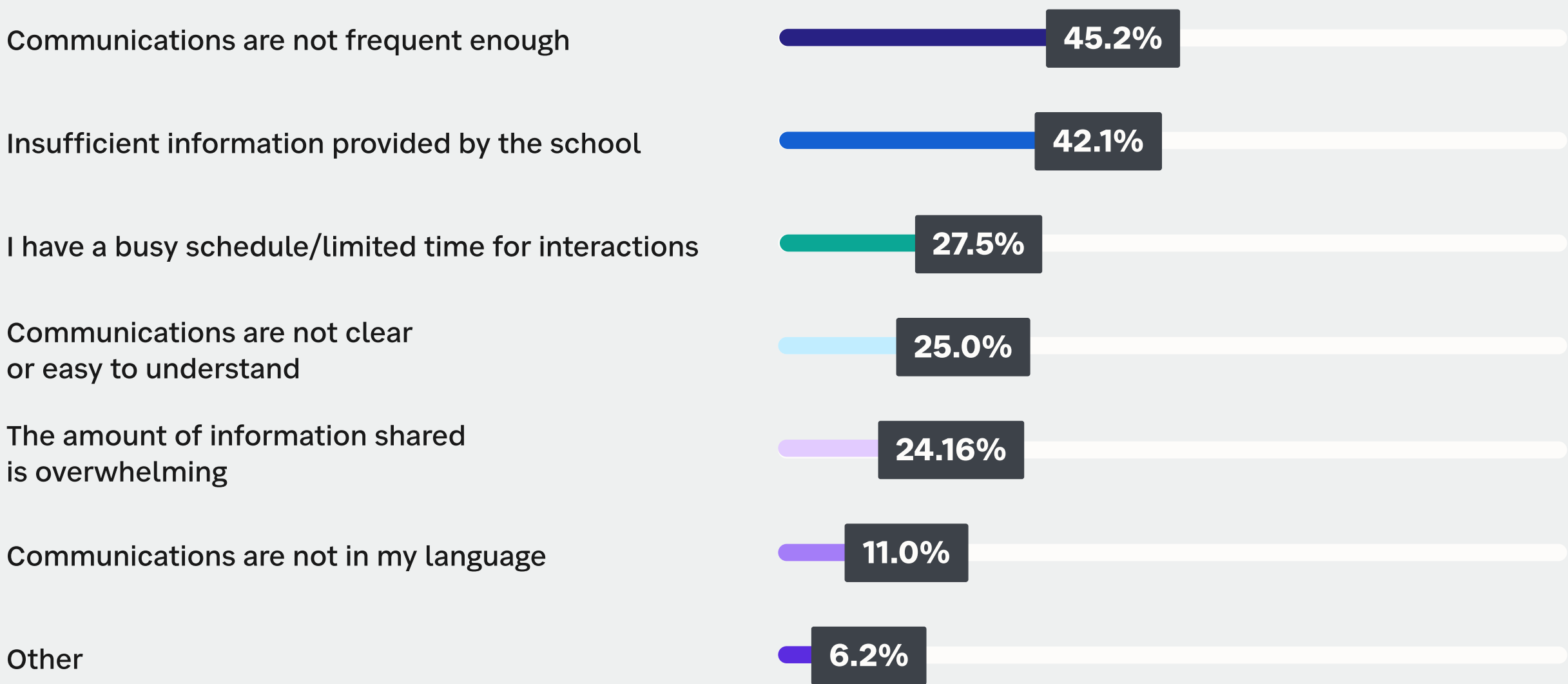
1/3

of families do not feel well-informed about their child’s progress

School-Home Communications Barriers

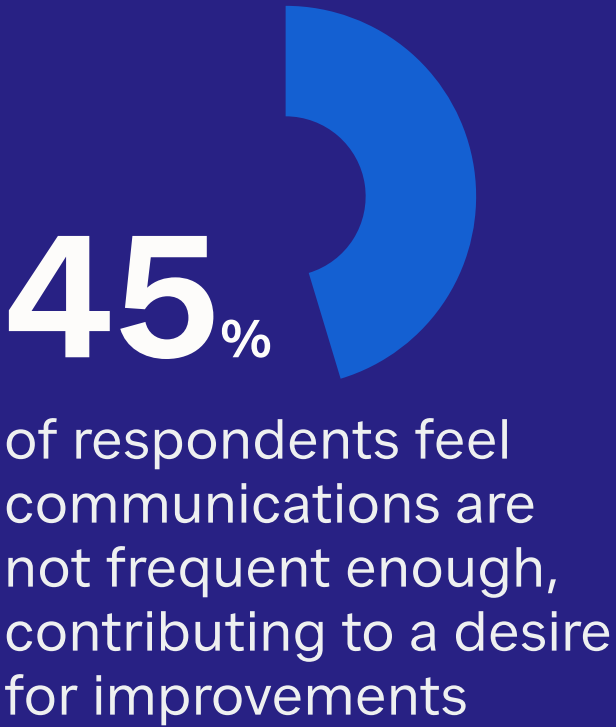
Communication serves as a vital link between home and school. Families want frequent, tailored communication that is relevant and actionable. Yet **45%** of respondents feel communications are not frequent enough, contributing to the overall desire for improvements. Unclear messaging and information overload are other common barriers to families feeling informed.

What keeps you from feeling well-informed about your child's academic progress and success in school?



These insights highlight the gap between current practices and the desired level of engagement among families, emphasizing the need for tailored and effective communication strategies.

By leveraging insights from the dataset, educational stakeholders can better understand these communication needs and preferences, fostering effective connections with families and ultimately supporting student success.



3: Support and Partnership

Collaborative Engagement

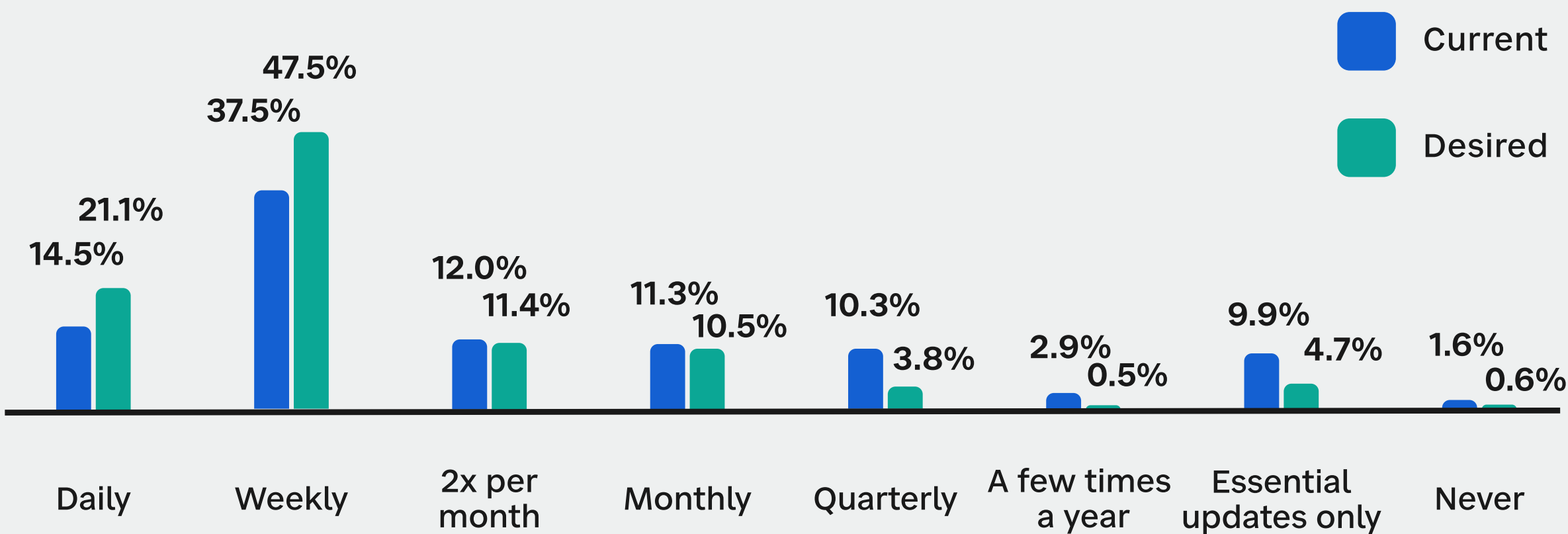
Support and partnership are pivotal in fostering student success. Families' active participation and desire for individualized support underscore the collaborative nature of education. **58%** of families seek a holistic approach to student success.

Families want to hear from teachers and schools when their students are doing well, not just when there's a problem. **71%** of families would value updates celebrating good attendance or improvements, noting that positive reinforcement is motivating. This can be challenging for schools based on educators' limited bandwidth, but it is crucial for building trust and a sense of partnership between home and school.

"Recognition motivates our child, and it's great to see the school appreciating their efforts."



Current vs. Desired Frequency of Updates

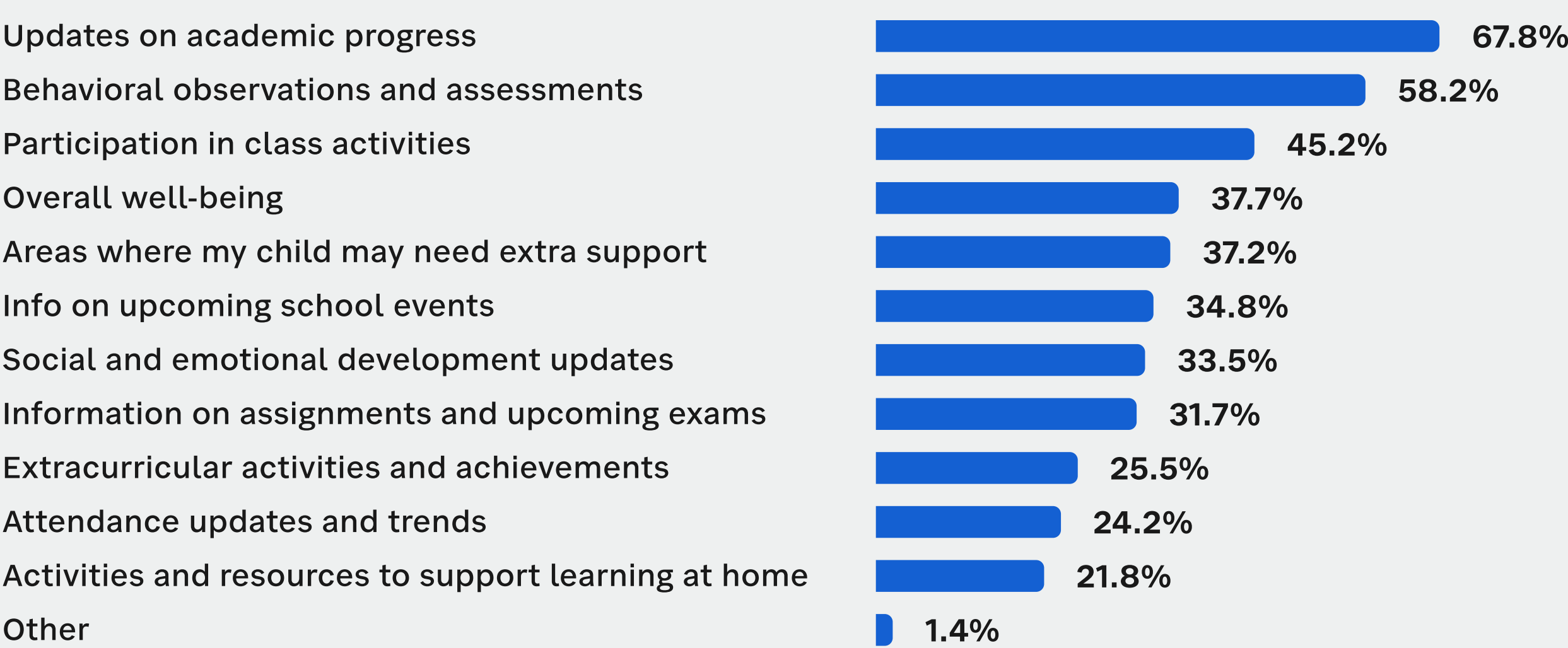


K-12 families want frequent updates about their children's academic progress. **68.6%** of families want daily or weekly communication—a **16.6% gap in desired communication frequency vs. reality.**

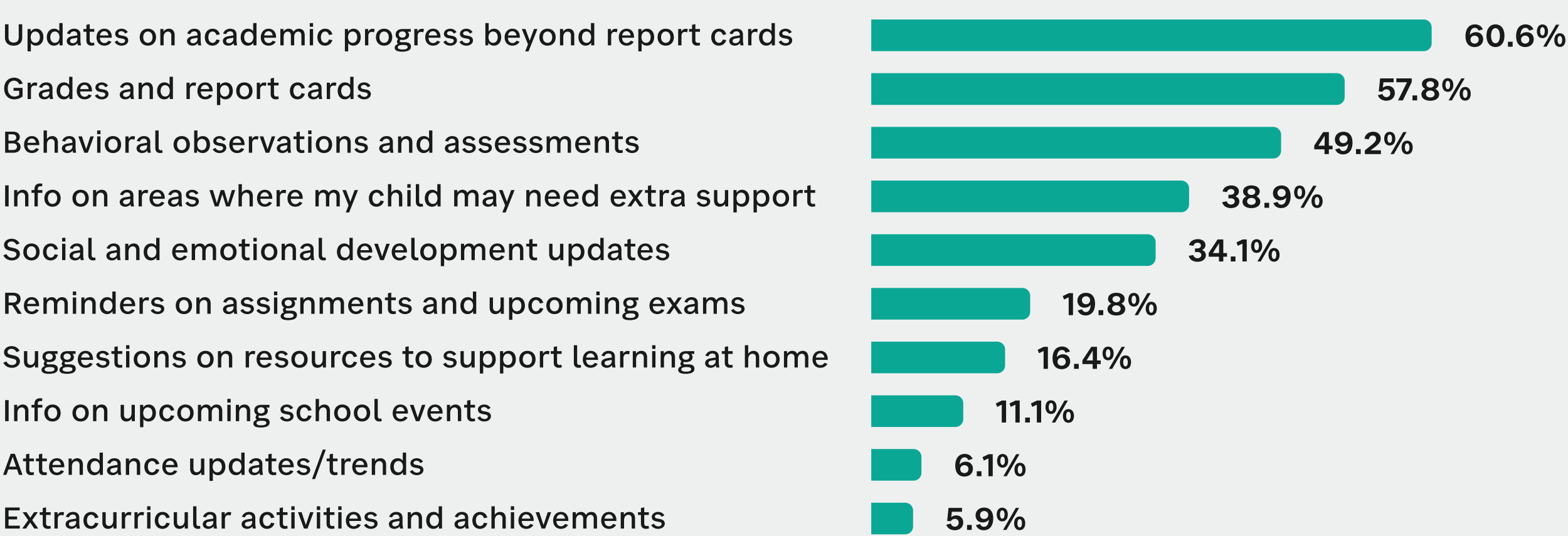
Types of Information Shared

Families also expressed a desire for communication that helps them support learning at home. **37%** of families want information on actionable steps they can take to improve their child's attendance, emphasizing the collaborative role of families in the education process.

What type of information does your child’s teacher/school currently share with you when communicating about your child’s progress and/or well-being?



What type of information would you most like to receive on your child’s progress and overall well-being at school?



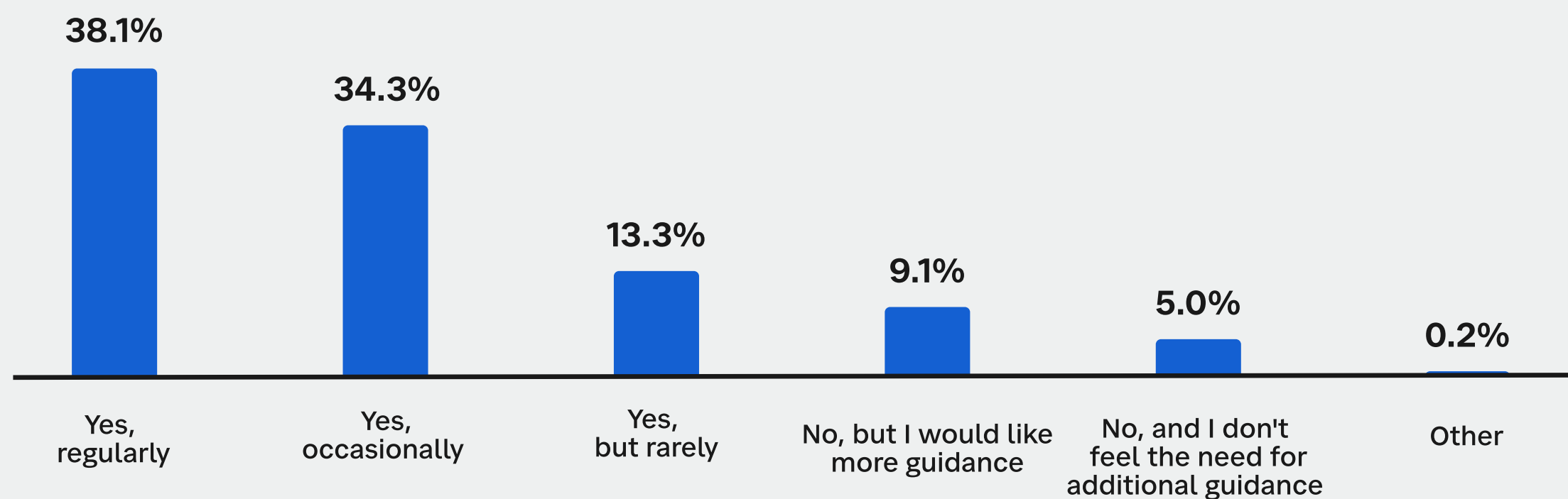
Communication on Supporting Student Success

Less than **40%** of families receive regular communication on how they can best support their child’s academic success.

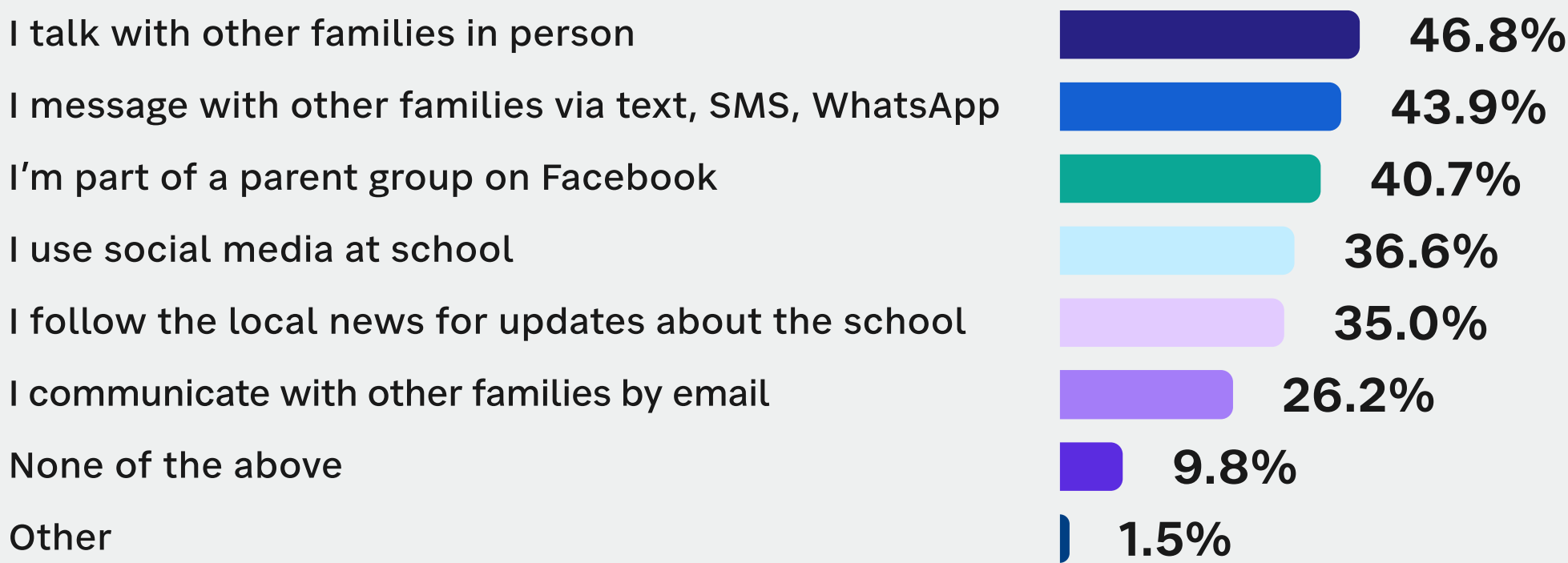
When families don’t receive the information they need from their child’s school or teachers, they often seek out support from other families or look to social media and local news for updates about the school or district.

By addressing the identified gaps in communication and providing holistic support, educators can strengthen their partnerships with families, laying the groundwork for positive student outcomes. Together, through meaningful collaboration, we can ensure every child has the support they need to thrive academically and personally.

Has your child’s school/teacher communicated with you about how you can best support your child’s academic success?



Outside of district/school communication channels, what other ways do you stay informed about your child’s school or district?



4: Accessibility Drives Engagement

Universal Accessibility Across Backgrounds

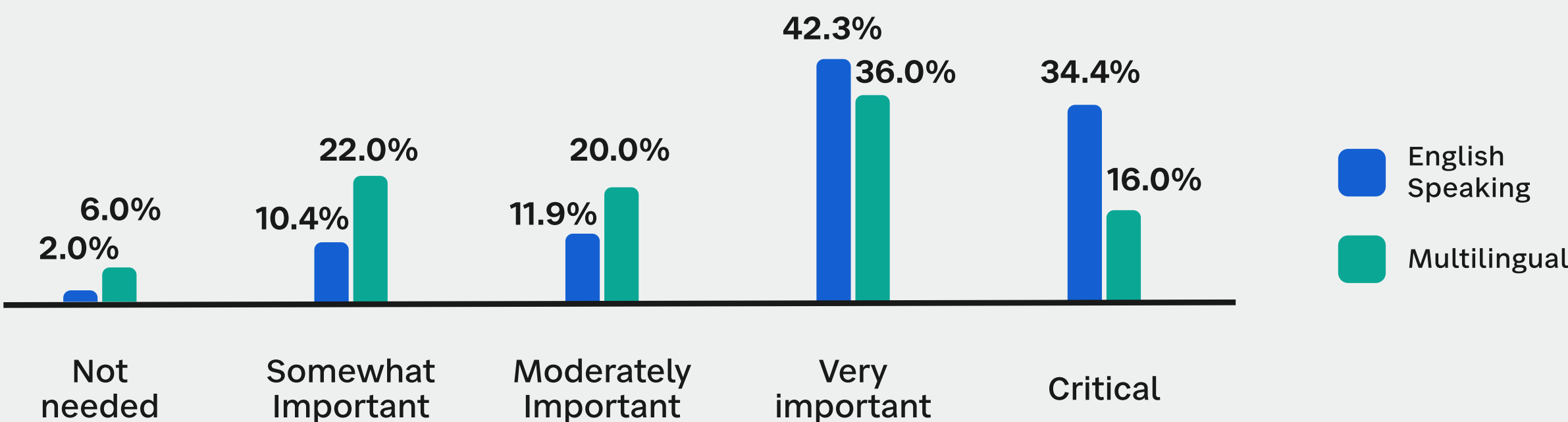
The survey responses offer a nuanced glimpse into the landscape of families engaging with the education system, spanning various grade levels, geographic regions, and primary languages. The majority of respondents hail from suburban and urban areas, with English being the predominant language spoken at home. Device preferences reflect a blend of iOS and Android platforms, highlighting the importance of catering to different technological ecosystems to ensure accessibility.

While the percentage of responses from multilingual families was relatively small (5%), their insights remain invaluable in shedding light on the challenges they face. **The voices of multilingual families provide critical insights into the barriers many families encounter regarding communication and engagement with their children’s schools.**

A universal desire for effective engagement emerged as a central theme, transcending income brackets and geographic boundaries. Families express a collective aspiration for streamlined communication channels that are easy to navigate.

Importance of School-Home Communication

How important do you think school-home communication is to student academic success?

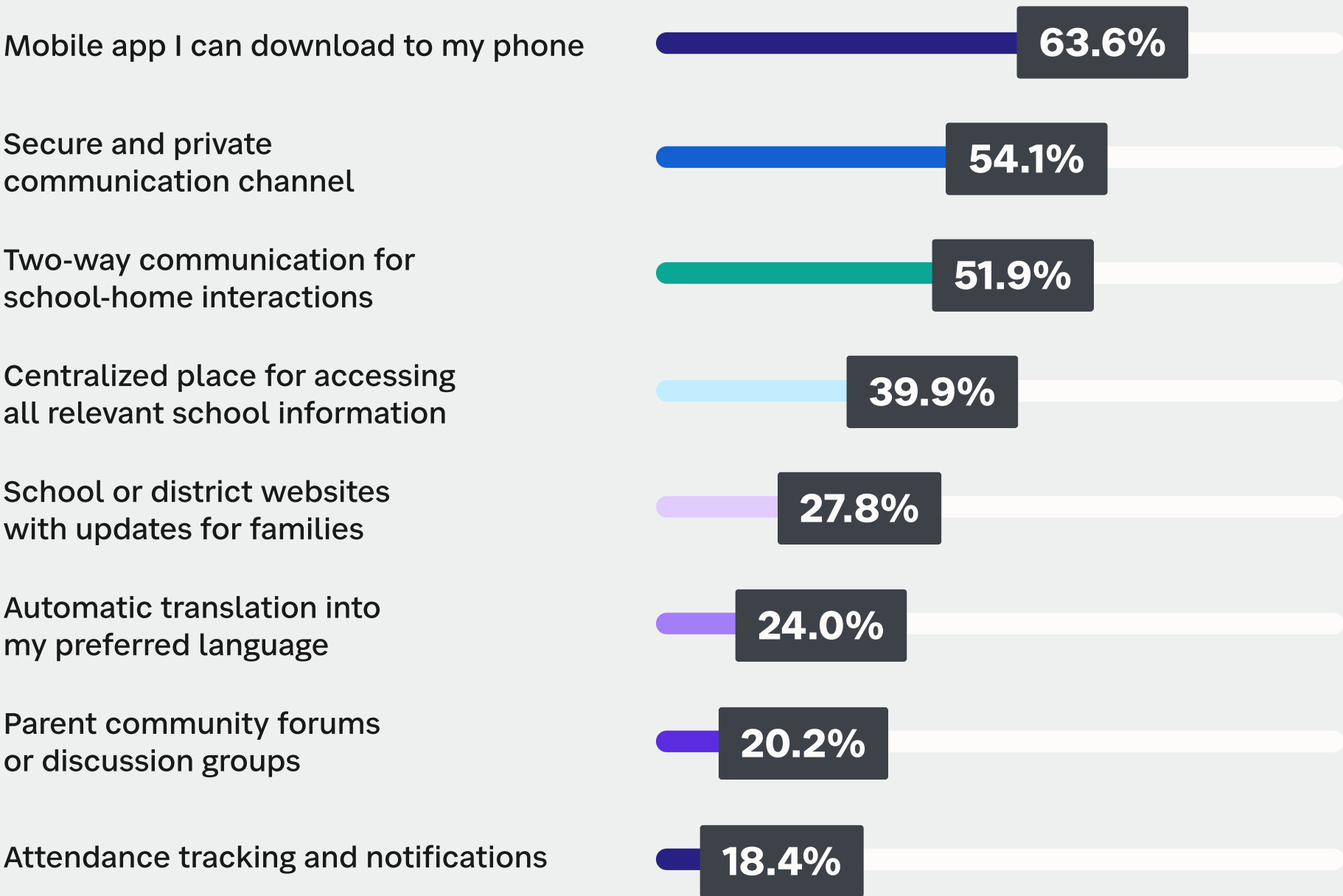


Importance of Communication Features

Tailoring communication to the needs and preferences of K-12 families, through solutions that factor in accessibility, ultimately foster stronger connections between schools and communities.

Across the board, families are often overwhelmed by too many communication channels, with over half of respondents using three or more school communication tools for one child. **62%** of K-12 families said a single, easy-to-use communications channel would make it easier to connect with their child’s school. This ease of interaction underscores the importance of streamlined communication channels in fostering family engagement.

As a parent, what features are most important to you in a school communications tool?



More than

50%

of families use **three or more** school communication tools for one child

62%

of families say using a single tool would make school-home communication easier

The dataset reveals a disparity in families’ frustration levels regarding feeling informed by the school about their children's progress. With **56%** of multilingual families expressing dissatisfaction compared to **33.2%** in the broader survey group, this stresses the urgency of addressing language barriers. While we cannot draw broad generalizations from this particular dataset alone, it catalyzes further exploration and highlights the need for additional research and targeted support for multilingual families.

Perception of Information Accessibility

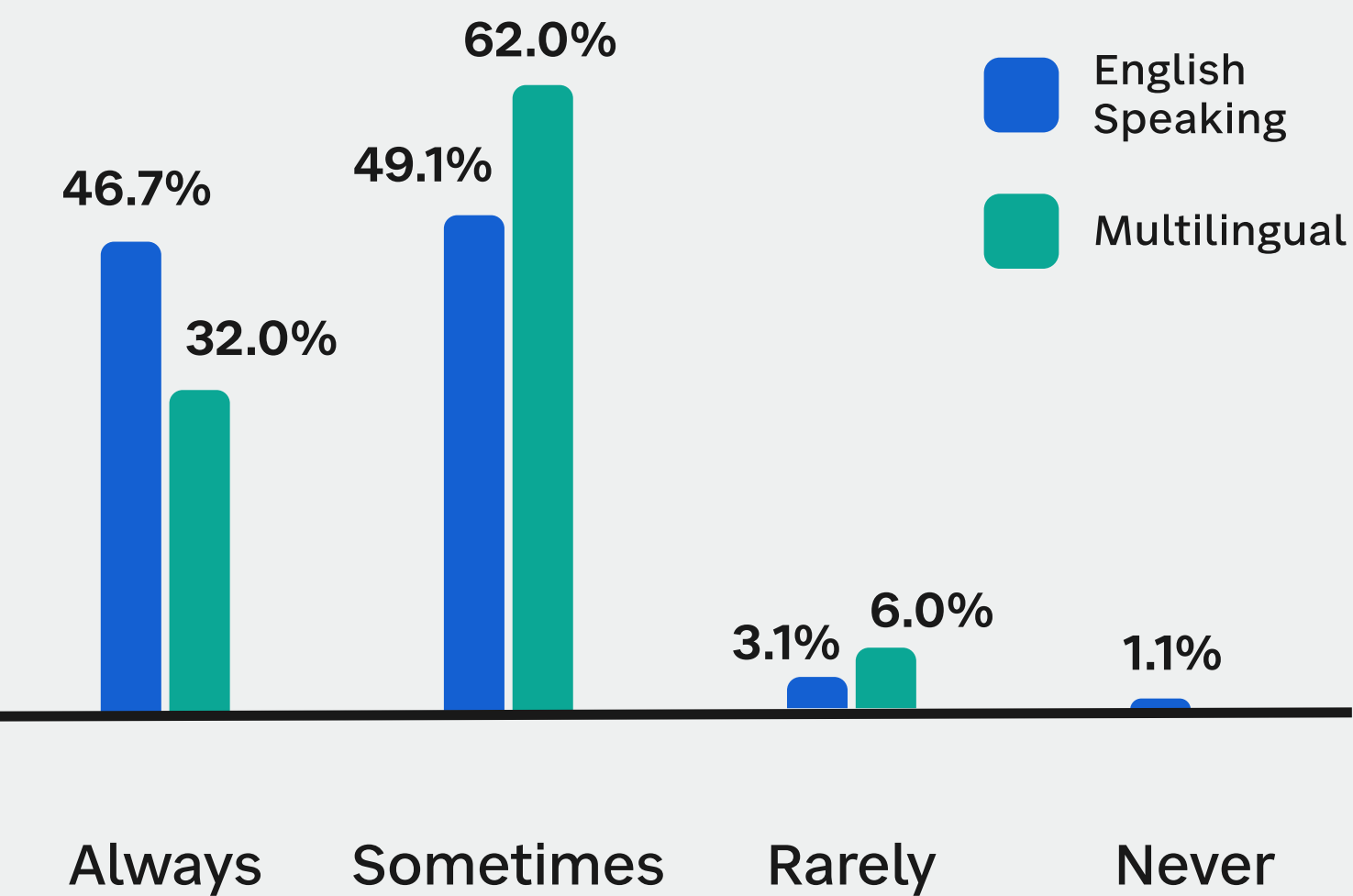
One respondent expressed, "Language barriers make it hard for me to understand my child's progress. I wish there was better communication in a language I can understand." This demonstrates the profound impact language can have on family involvement, particularly for multilingual families.

While translation is a key theme in accessible school-home communication, one respondent highlighted the importance of expanding the approach to accessible communications to include images stating, "Show us what [my child's] day looks like through pictures." Providing information in varied formats help ensure accessibility for all families, with different backgrounds, language preferences, and technology access.

In addition, ease of communication between families and educators significantly enhances family engagement with attendance. While **40%** of all respondents find it easy to connect with teachers, only **27%** of multilingual families feel the same.

32%
of families reported that communications were not as frequent as they would prefer

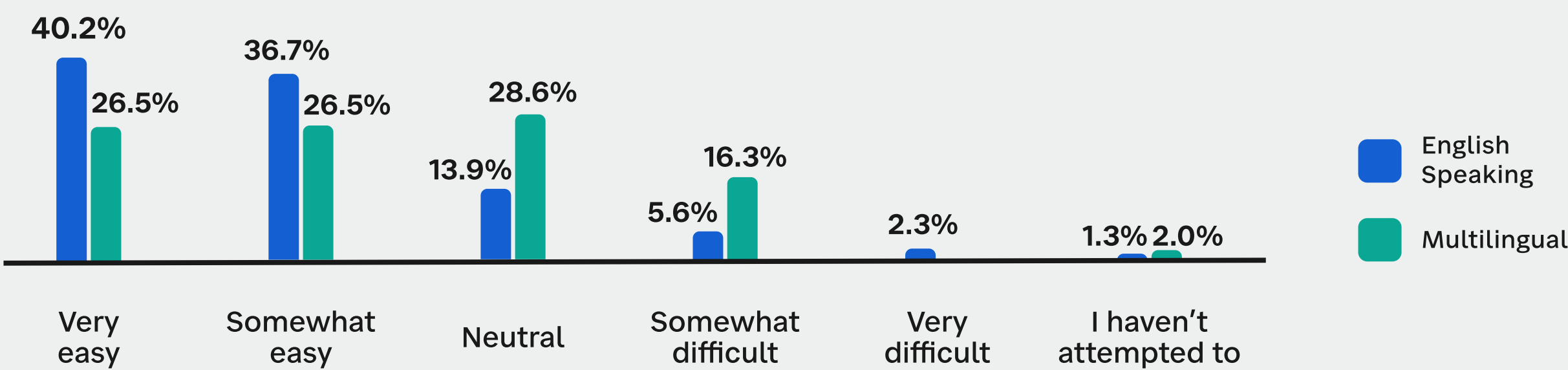
Do you find the information shared by your child's school or district easy to access and understand?



64%
of multilingual families find school communications to not be clear or in their preferred language

Ease of Connecting with Teachers

How easy do you find it to connect with teachers when you have a question or want to discuss something about your child?



27% of multilingual respondents find it very easy to connect with teachers.

52% of multilingual respondents view school-home communication as very important or critical to student success.

While our dataset provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by multilingual families, there is a need for additional research with a larger group of families in order for schools to fully understand the unique needs of multilingual families and provide adequate support.

By embracing accessibility in communication strategies, schools can foster stronger connections with families and ensure that every family can actively participate in their child's educational journey.



Conclusion

The survey responses captured for the 2024 report on K-12 school-family communications clearly show that fostering meaningful connections between schools and families is paramount for positive educational outcomes. K-12 families value consistent, personalized, and easily accessible communication from schools regarding their child's academic progress, behavior, and well-being. While educators and administrators are doing many things well, there are a few consistent focus areas that could greatly impact family engagement and student success.

When asked what they **most wish their child's school would add or include in school-home communications**, five main themes surfaced:

1. Streamlined digital communication platform

Families voiced a preference for a centralized platform for all parties, including families, teachers, and students, to facilitate communication, and provide a comprehensive view of a child's progress. Some expressed concerns about the use of multiple apps and the desire for easier access to information in one place.

2. Effective digital communication options

Families expressed a preference for digital communication methods, including email and text messages. Respondents also noted the importance of having a user-friendly digital platform for communication, including features like online meetings, messaging, and access to academic information.

3. Timely academic progress updates

Families want timely updates on their child's academic progress, including grades, assignments, and any areas that may need improvement. They also noted the importance of knowing about upcoming assignments and tests. Some suggested weekly reports or real-time access to academic info.

4. More information on child's progress beyond grades

Many families emphasize the importance of regular updates on their child's development, academically, behaviorally, and socially/emotionally. They want to receive more information on areas of improvement, achievements, and social interactions.

5. Increased feedback on positive behavior

Families, especially those with children facing behavioral challenges, emphasized the importance of receiving positive feedback and updates on improvements. They want a balanced view of their child's behavior, not just notifications about negative incidents.

Through a comprehensive survey, we've uncovered valuable insights that transcend linguistic and demographic boundaries, underscoring the universal desire for proactive engagement, effective communication, and increased support from families. One respondent captured the essence of this sentiment, expressing, "Understanding the ripple effect of tardiness is crucial for parental involvement." This encapsulates the collective aspiration for deeper understanding and collaboration between families and schools.

While the survey data provides a rich tapestry of insights, it's essential to recognize its limitations and the need for ongoing research and targeted support for each community and family. Moving forward, education stakeholders must embrace a holistic approach to family engagement. This approach entails tailoring communication to different needs, providing relevant and actionable information, and ensuring accessibility across different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

By taking into account the findings from this report and continuing to prioritize proactive outreach with centralized and easy-to-use communication tools, educators can forge stronger partnerships with families, ultimately nurturing environments where every student can thrive academically and personally.

Together, let's continue this journey of collaboration and empowerment, ensuring that every child receives the support they need to reach their full potential.

About SchoolStatus

The funding of this report reflects SchoolStatus' ongoing commitment to strengthening connections between families and educators.

SchoolStatus is a unified K-12 platform for centralized school-home communication, data-driven attendance management, and streamlined teacher professional development. We enable an integrated and impactful educational experience, from district leadership to families at home. With more than 200 million successful school-home interactions, and millions of users, SchoolStatus drives meaningful results for districts and schools across the U.S.

Meet with us to learn about how we support districts' communication and attendance goals. [Request a demo.](#)