

The Responsibility to Promote Resiliency

Public Perspectives on Mental
Health Education and the
Canadian School System

May 2014





Physical and Health Education Canada, as part of the AstraZeneca Young Health Program, has undertaken to make the case that Canadian children and youth ought to receive an education that promotes positive mental health.

To better understand how Canadians perceive the mental health challenges facing children and youth, as well as teachers, principals and the education system, we worked with Ipsos Reid to field a national survey. This report is a synopsis of those findings. For more information on our “Reading, Writing, Resiliency” campaign, including recommendations for action, visit www.teachresiliency.ca.

Methodology

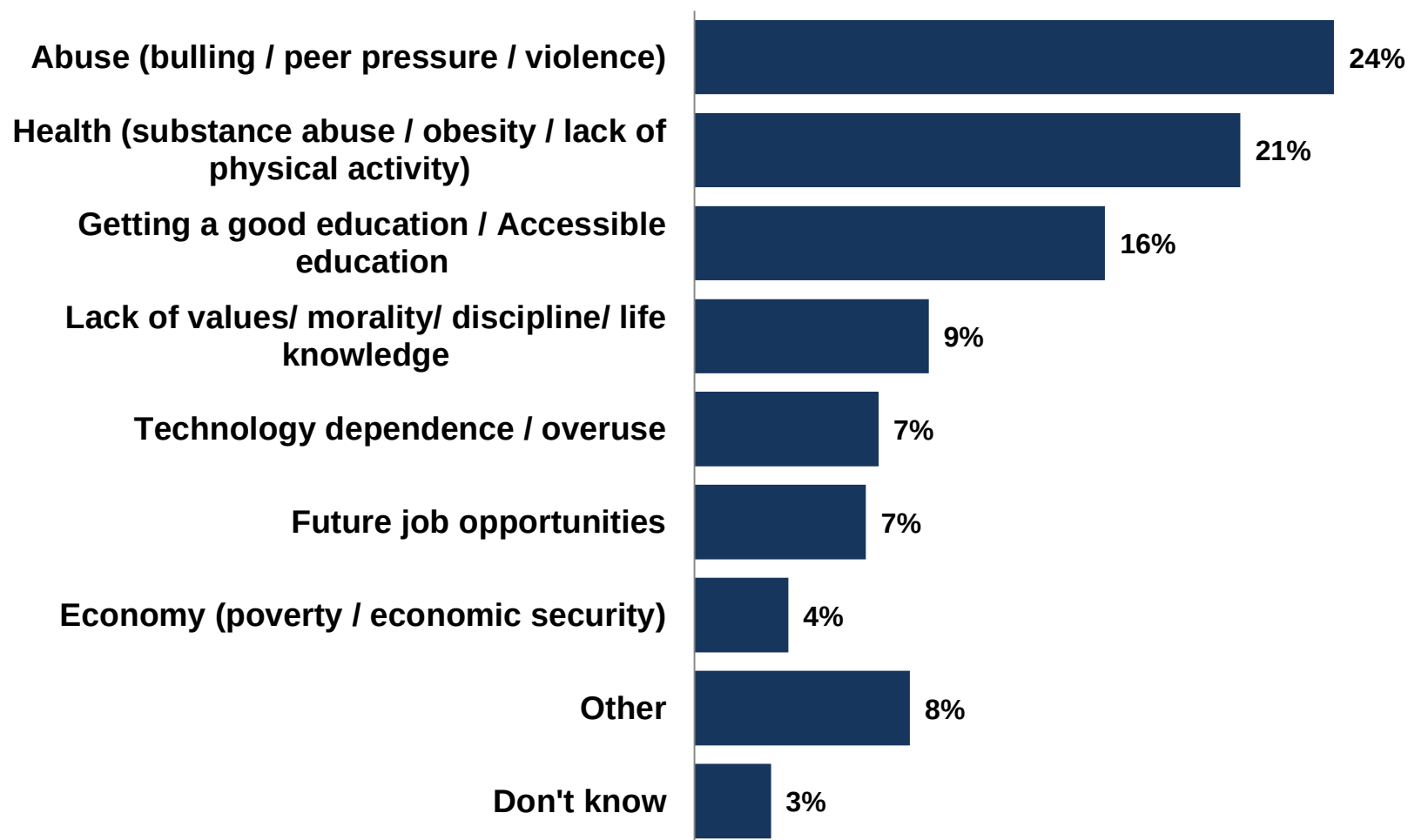
The methodology for the research involved a custom online survey drawing on members of the Ipsos Reid Online Panel.

A total of 2,092 surveys were conducted from September 27th to October 4th, 2013 among a sample of Canadians 18 years and older, with an oversample for smaller provinces to allow for detailed regional analysis. We also included an oversample among parents with children 8 to 17 years old to achieve a total of n=540 surveys among this audience.

The overall sample was weighted to be representative of the adult Canadian population according to the latest Statistics Canada Census data by region, age, gender and children at home. For media inquiries about the methodology, please contact Will Daley (will.daley@ipsos.com)

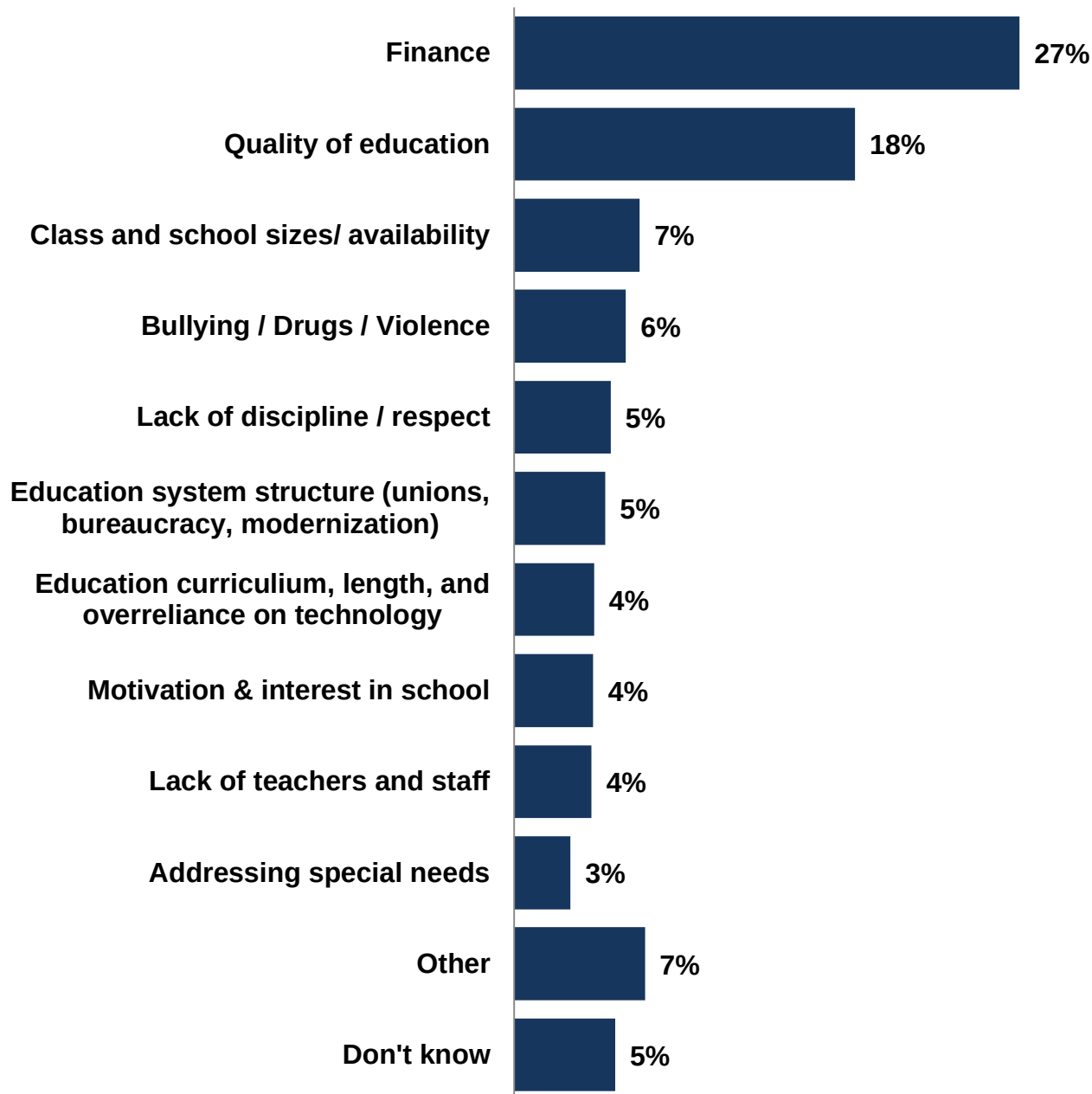


Almost one in four (24%) Canadians identify forms of abuse as the top issue facing children and youth today, followed by one in five concerned about their health.



In your opinion, what is the **most important** issue facing children and youth today?
Base: All respondents (n=2092)

Most mentions less than 2% are not shown

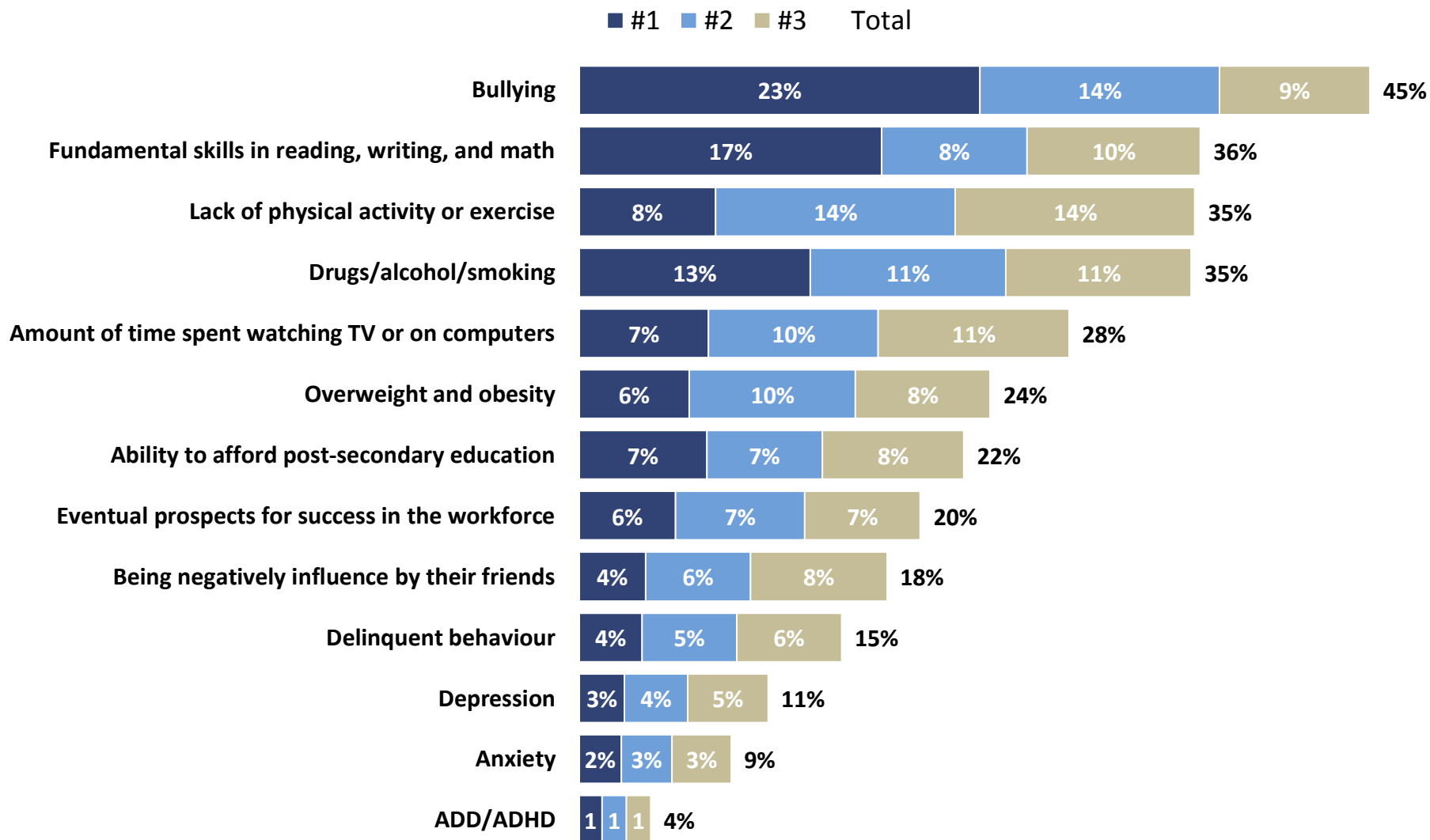


More than one in four Canadians believe the most important issues facing the educational system are funding (27%), followed by the quality of education (18%)

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing the educational system in your province?
 Base: All respondents (n=2092)

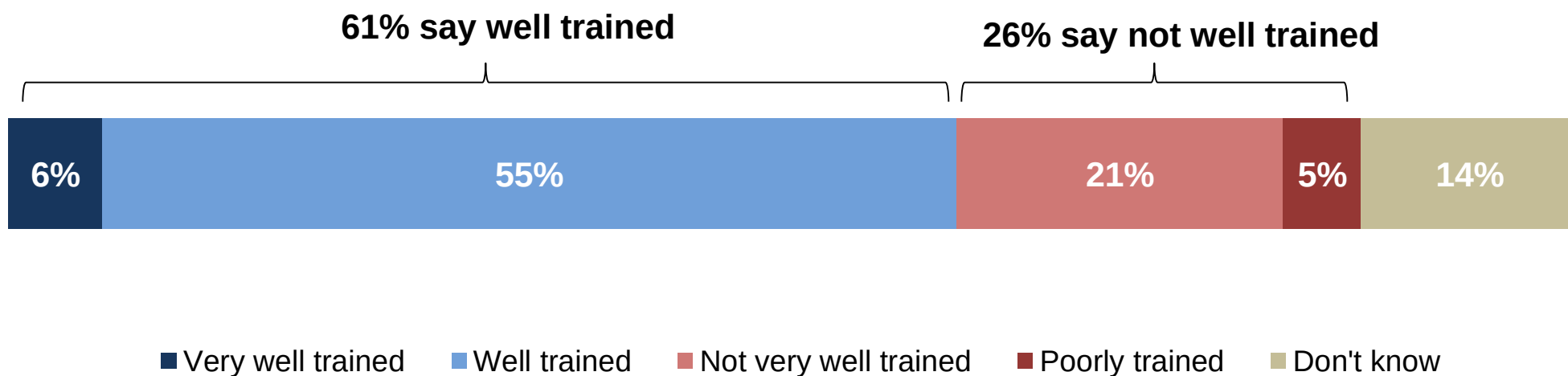
Most mentions less than 2% are not shown

Bullying (23%) is the top issue of concern among a range of issues facing children, and ranks in the top 3 for 45% of Canadians.



Q3: Which three of the following issues facing children and youth today are you most concerned about? Please rank your **top three** by selecting a 1 for the issue you are most concerned about, a 2 for the issue you are next most concerned about and a 3 for the third. Base: All Respondents (n=2092)

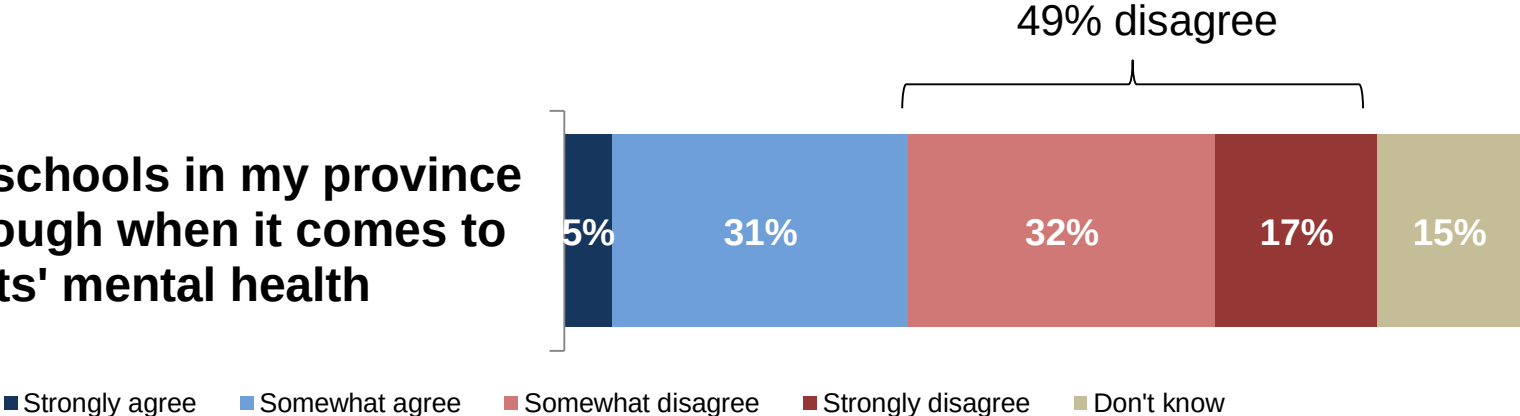
Most Canadians say that teachers in their province are well trained (61%), but only 6% say they are “very well trained”



Generally speaking, would you say that teachers in your province are...
Base: All Respondents (n=2092)

While 36% of Canadians agree that their schools are doing enough when it comes to mental health, 49% disagree.

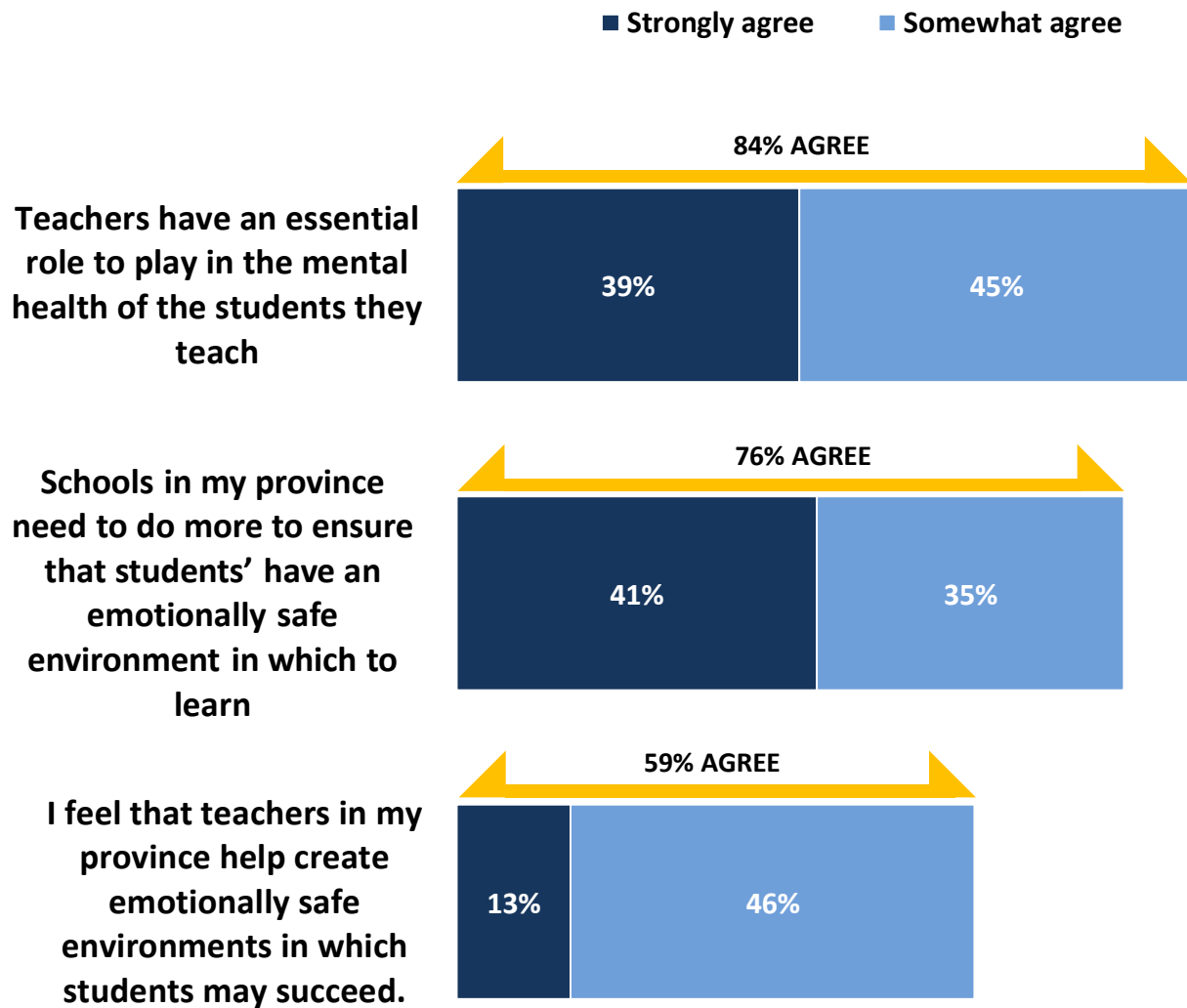
I believe that schools in my province are doing enough when it comes to students' mental health



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents (n=2092)

A strong majority of Canadians (84%) believe teachers have an essential role to play in the mental health of students they teach.

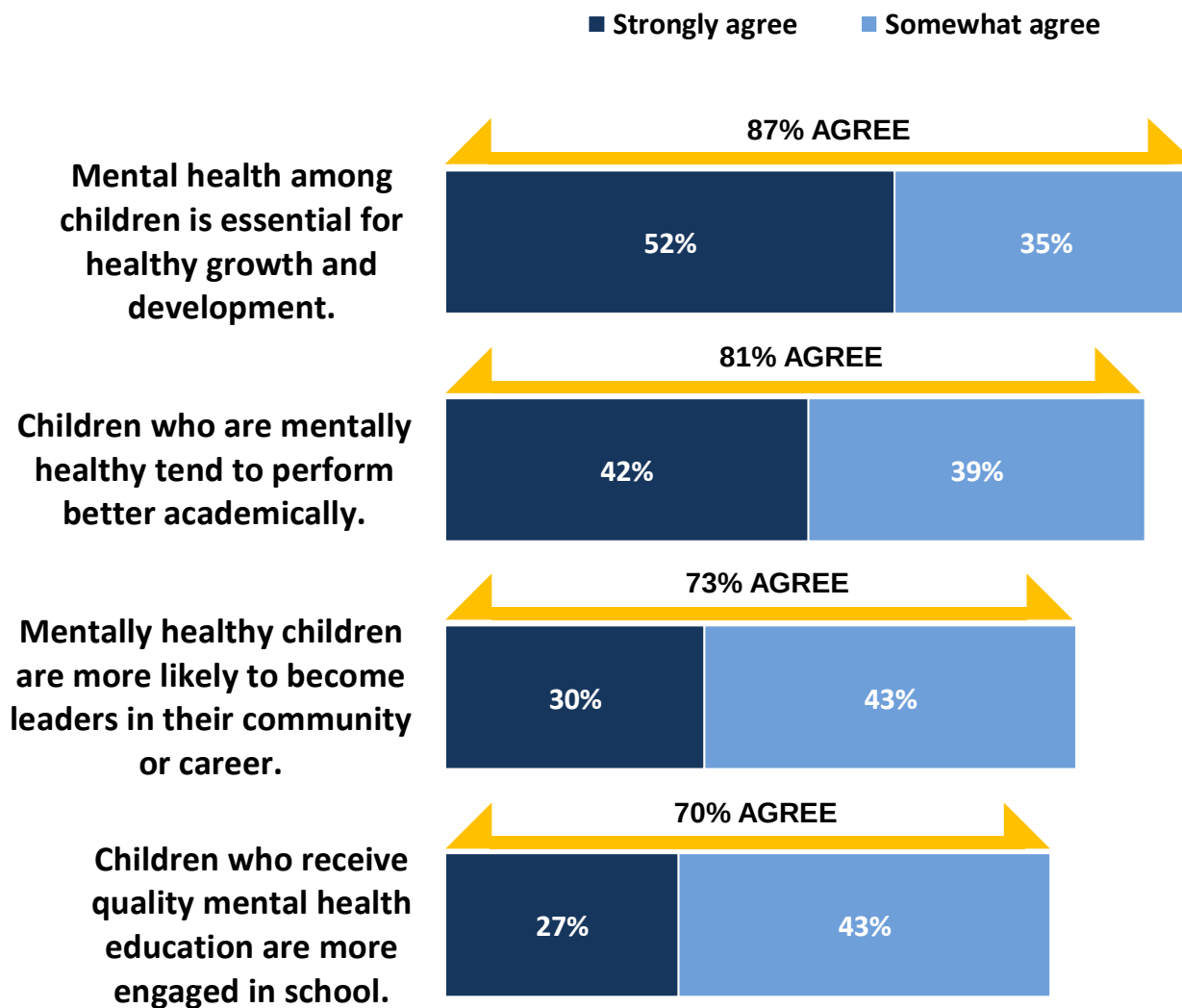
However, 3 in 4 Canadians believe that schools need to do more to ensure an emotionally safe learning environment, and just over half of Canadians think that teachers are creating an emotionally safe place for student success.



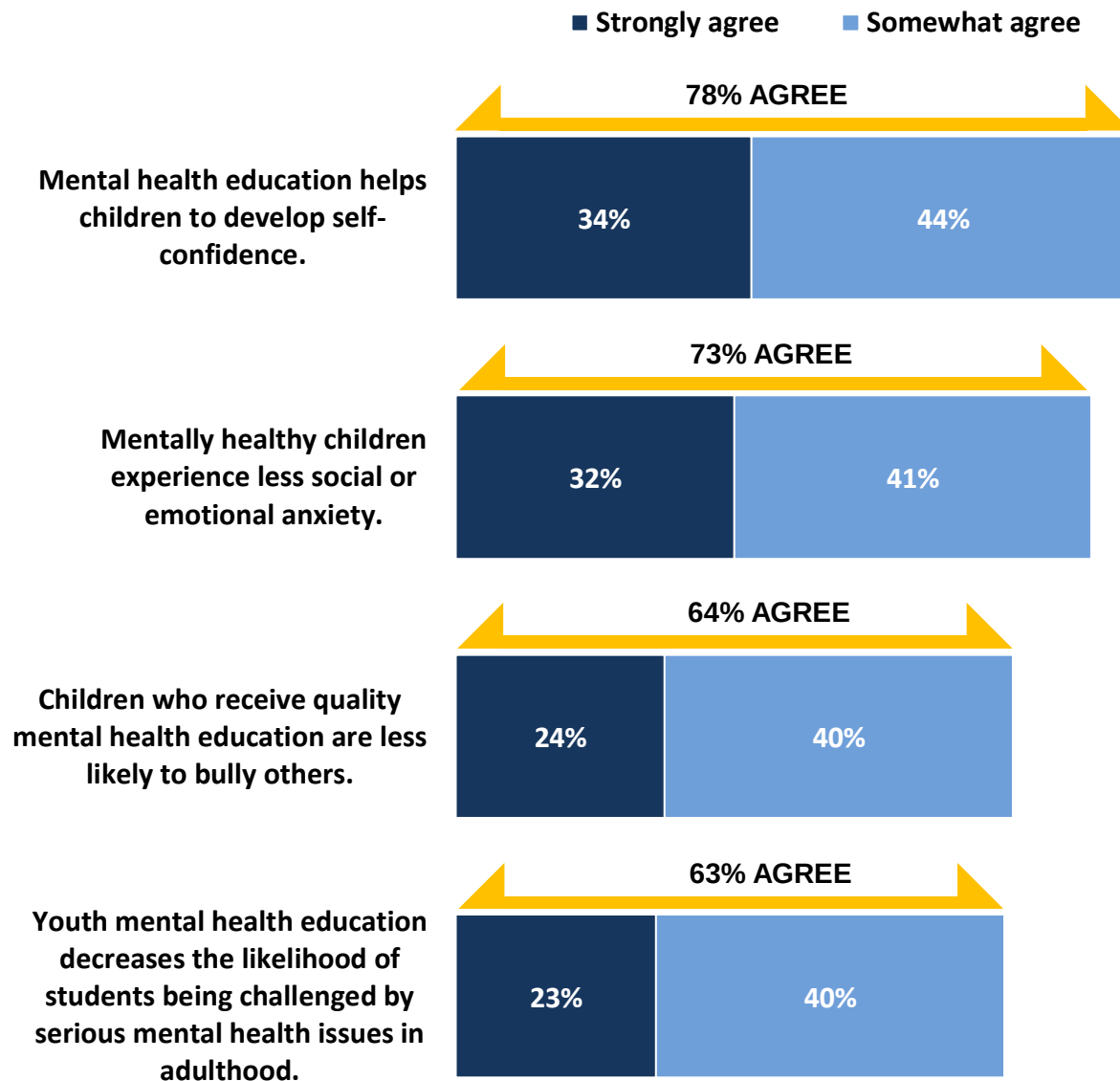
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents (n=2092)

When it comes to children's physical health, four in five agree mental health contributes to healthy growth and development (87%).

Additionally, a strong majority of Canadians feel that children who are mentally healthy are more likely to be engaged (70%) and perform better in school (81%)



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: All respondents (n=2092)

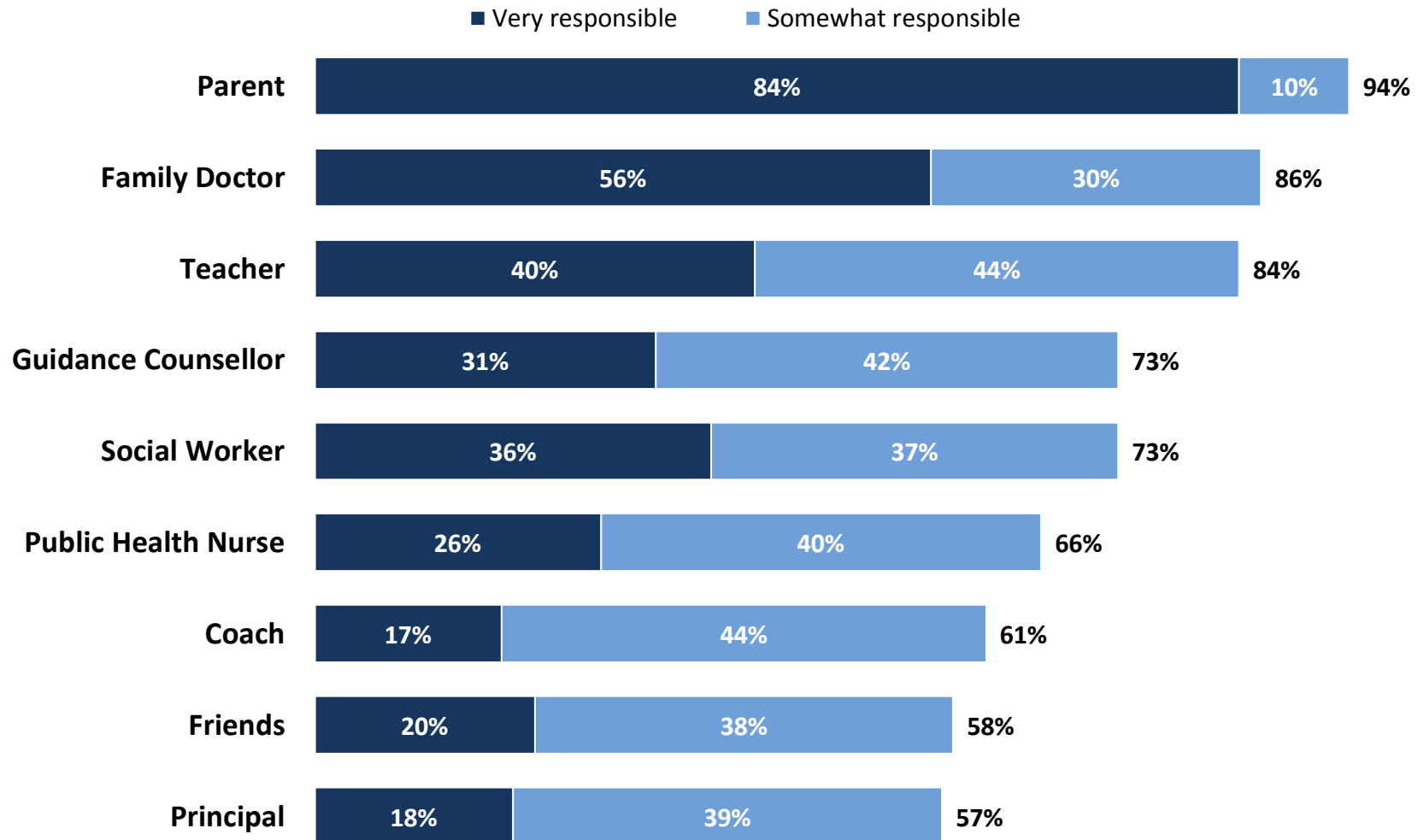


More than 3 in 4 Canadians believe mental health education develops self confidence, and 73% believe that mentally healthy children experience less anxiety.

Additionally, Two-thirds of Canadians believe mental health education can reduce bullying, as well as decrease the chance of a mental health issue in adulthood.

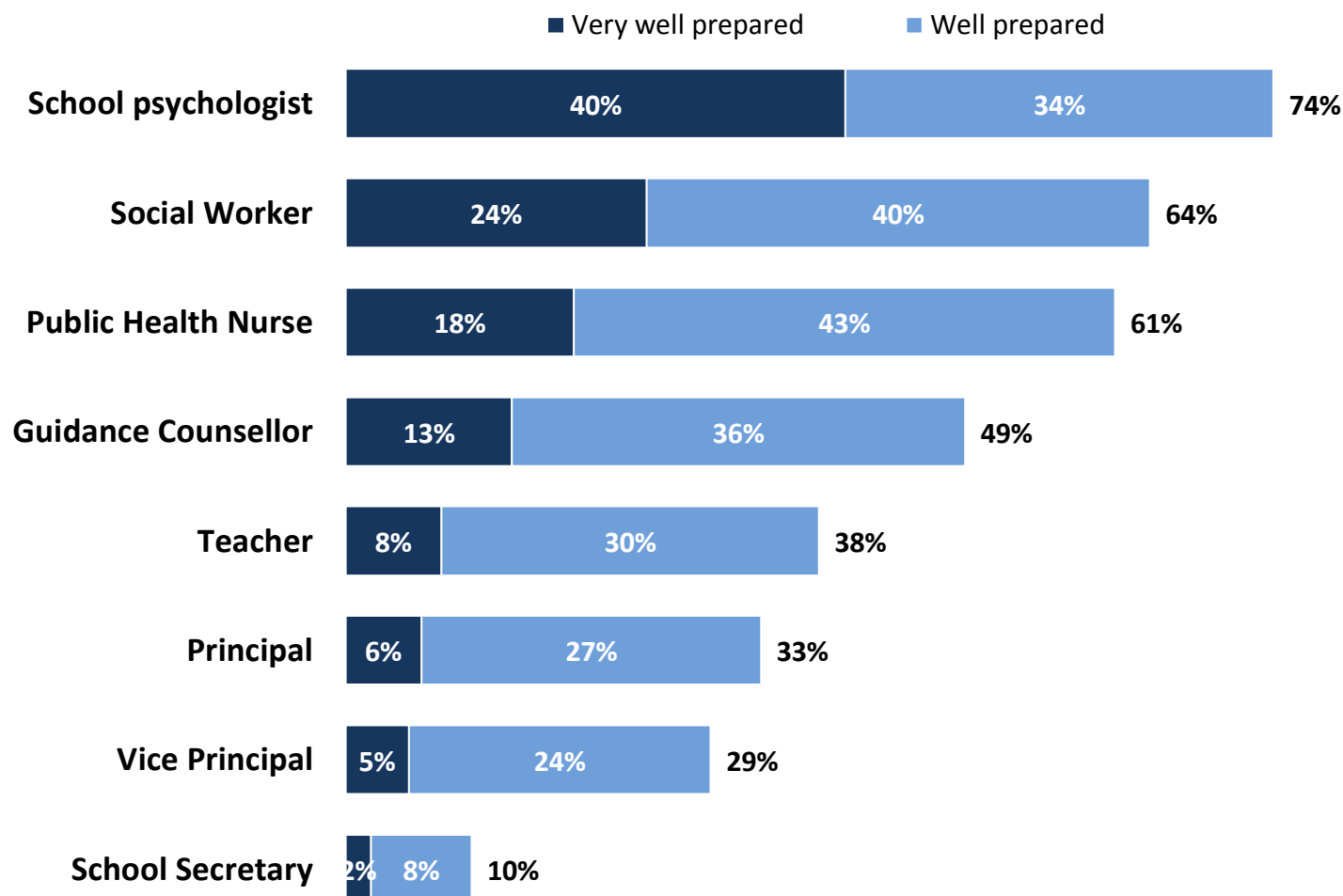
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: All respondents (n=2092)

Canadians feel mental health issues among students falls primarily to parents (94%), followed by their family doctor (86%), and then teachers (84%).



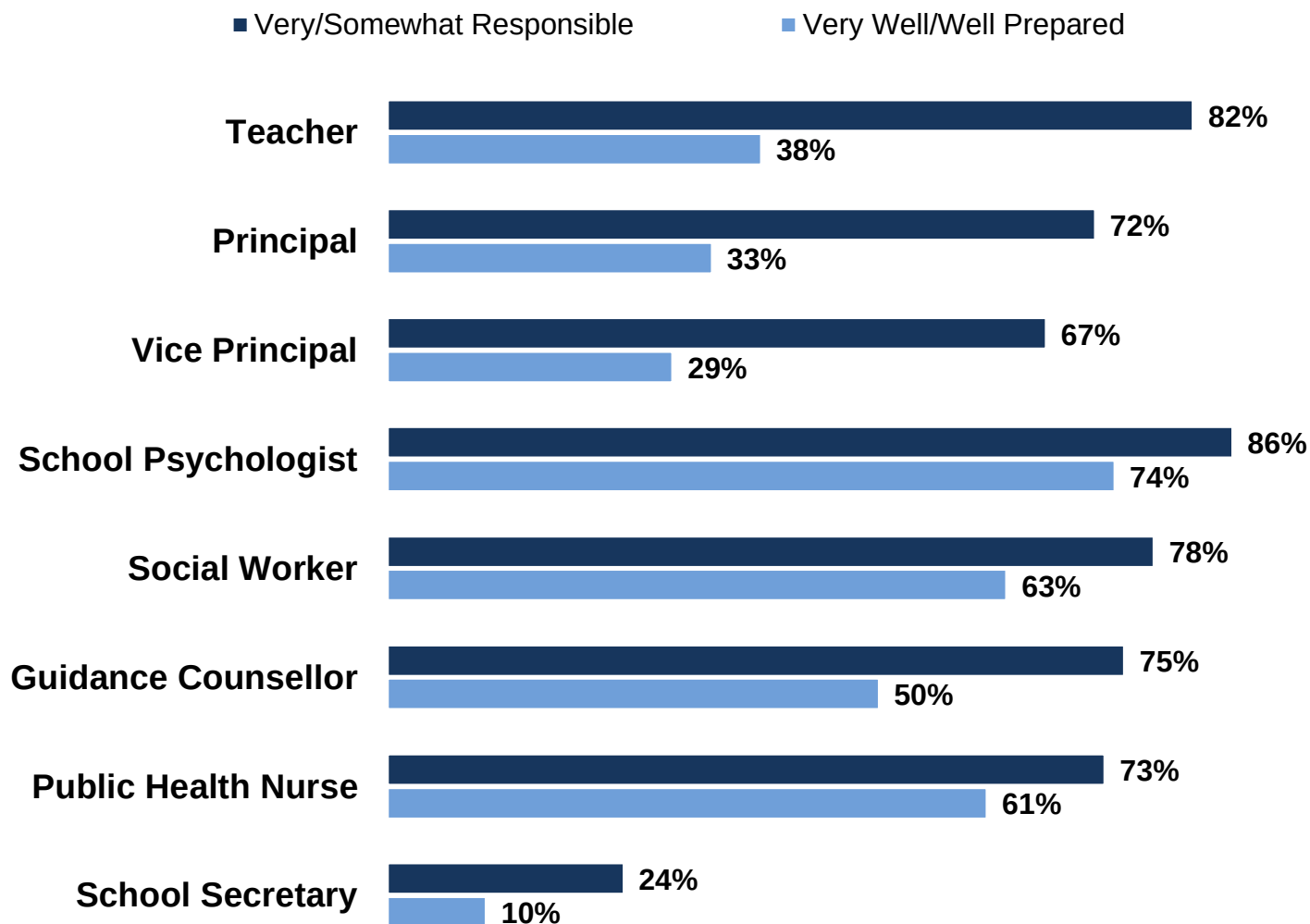
How responsible are each of the following for recognizing that a student may be faced with a mental health issue? Base: All Respondents (n=2092)

While the majority of Canadians believe school psychologists and social workers are well prepared to recognize if a student is struggling with a mental illness, less than half believe the same of teachers and principals.



How prepared do you think the following school staff are to recognize if a student might be struggling with a mental health issue? Base: All Respondents (n=2092)

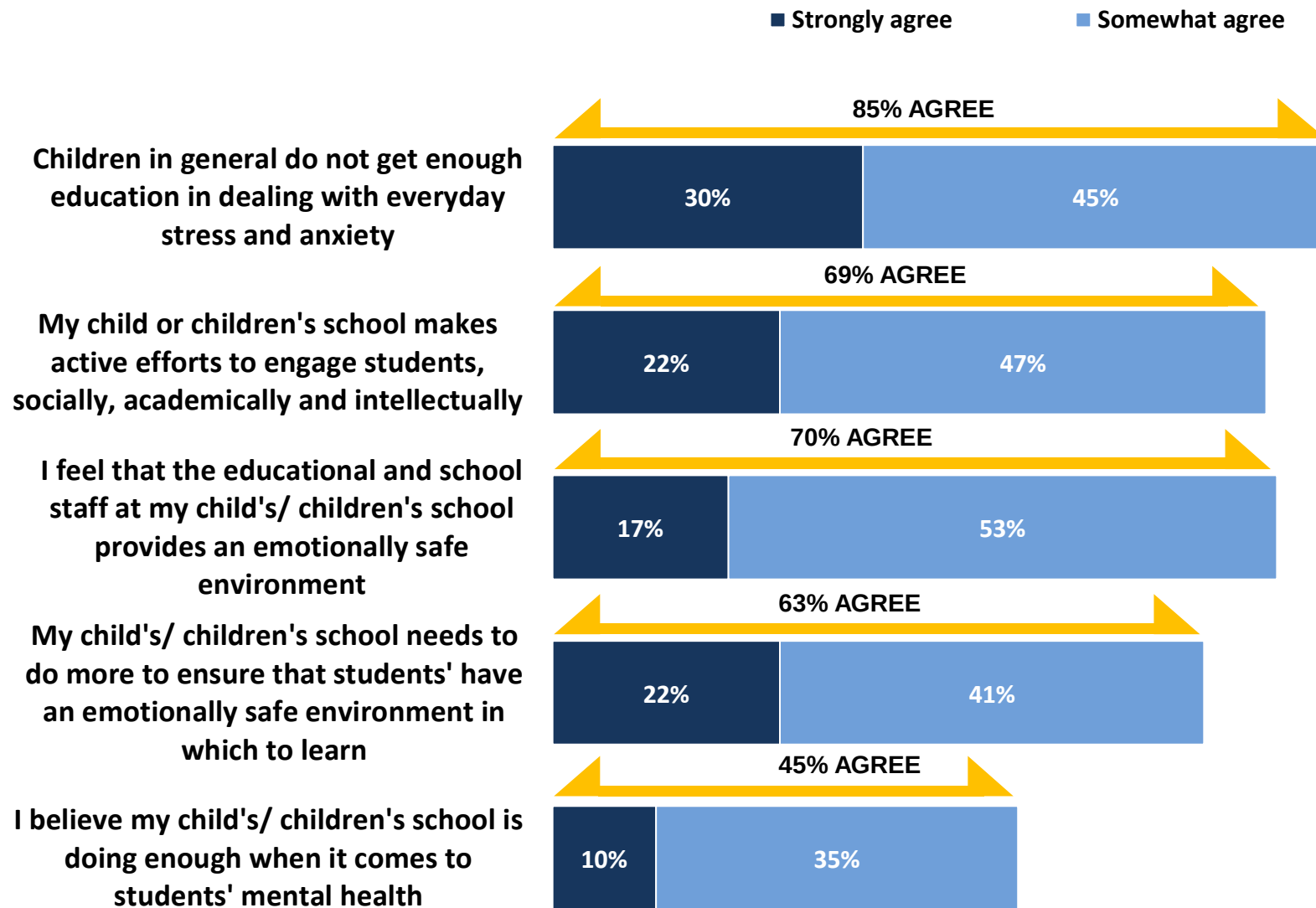
There is a wide gap between the perception of teachers' responsibility to recognize a student struggling with a mental health issue, and their preparedness to do so.



In school, how responsible are the following parties for ensuring that students receive mental health support they need?
Base: All Respondents (n=2092)

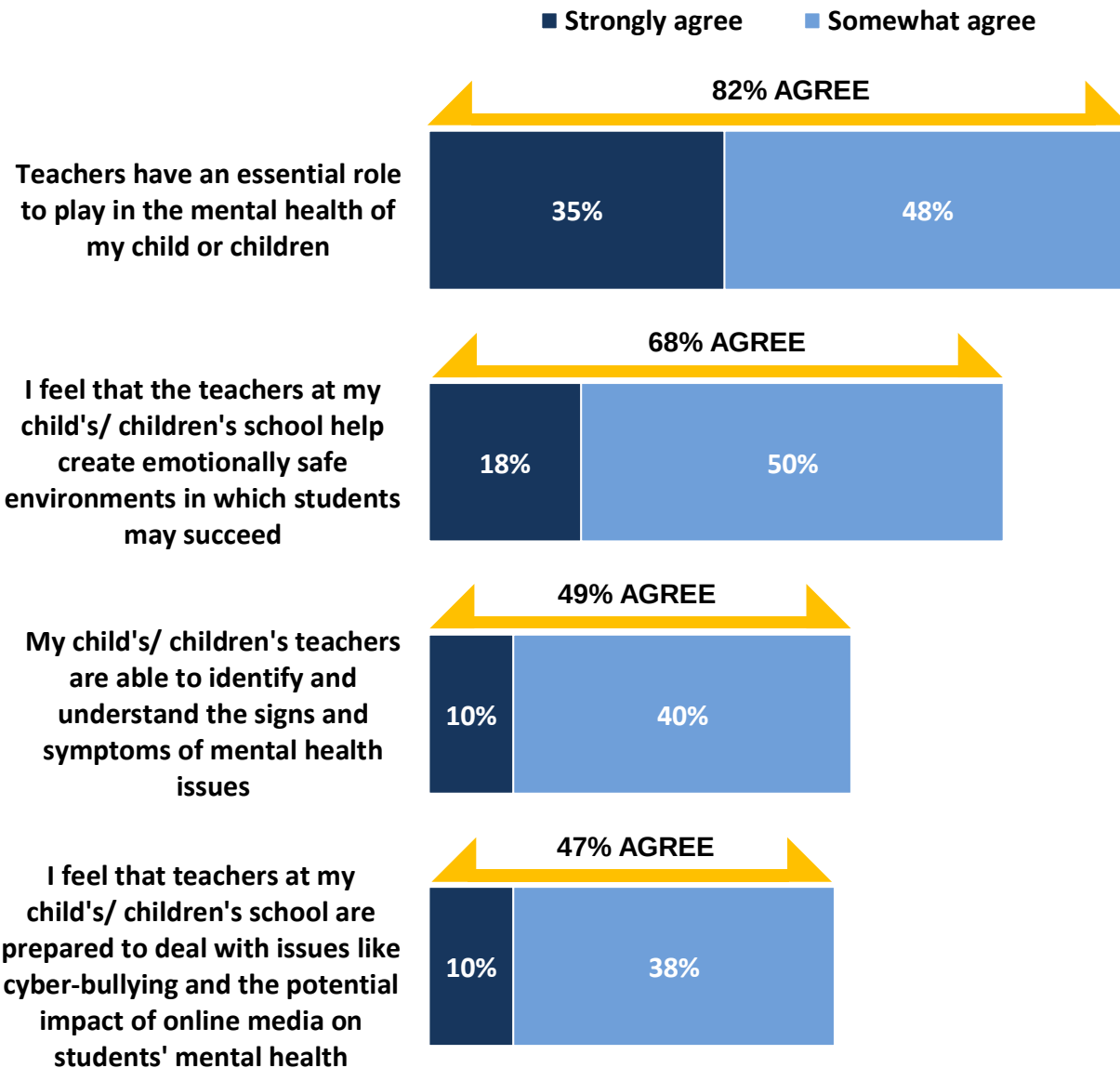
How prepared do you think the following school staff are to recognize if a student might be struggling with a mental health issue?
Base: All Respondents (n=2092)

Parents overwhelmingly agree that children do not get enough education on dealing with stress and anxiety, and that while schools are making efforts, more can be done.



Q17b. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: Parents of children between 8-17 (n=540)

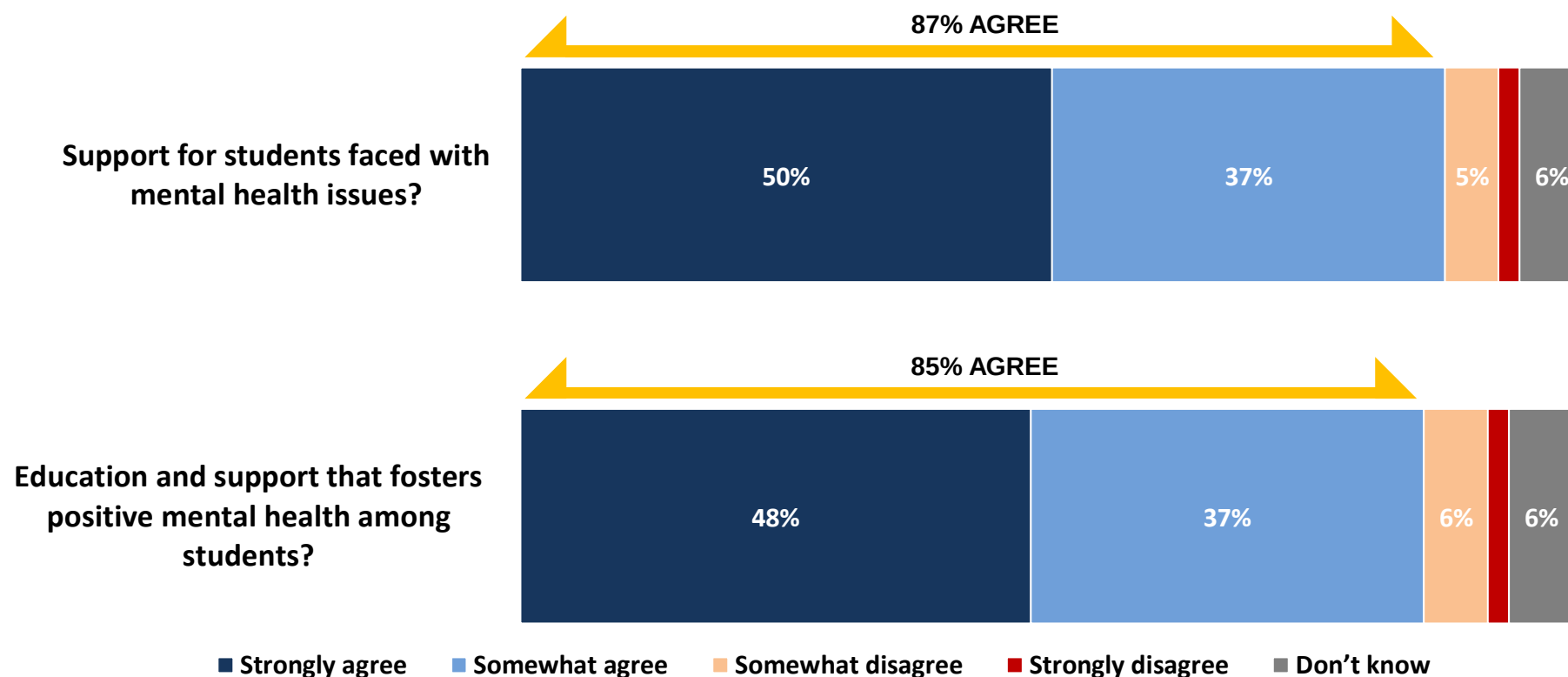
While parents agree (82%) teachers have an essential role, they are divided when it comes to their ability to identify signs of mental health issues.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: Parents of children between 8-17 (n=540)

More than 4 in 5 Canadians agree that federal and provincial governments should invest in support for students facing mental health issues as well as education that fosters positive mental health.

How much do you agree or disagree that the federal and provincial governments should make a greater investment in:



How much do you agree or disagree that the federal and provincial governments should make a greater investment in:?
Base: All Respondents (n=2092)



About Physical & Health Education Canada

Physical & Health Education Canada (PHE Canada) is the national voice for physical and health education. We work with educators and on-the-ground professionals to develop the resources, understanding, and networks to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead healthy, physically active lives, now and in their future. The foundation of our work is advocating for strong health and physical education curriculum, and providing the support to ensure its delivery by qualified educators supported by engaged administrators. We strive to achieve our vision by fostering healthy school communities where all students can develop the resiliency to be the citizens of our future.

Learn more about us at www.phecanada.ca.



About the AstraZeneca Young Health Program

The AstraZeneca Young Health Program is about helping young people in need around the world deal with the health issues they face, so that they can improve their chances of living a better life. In Canada, the AstraZeneca Young Health Program (YHP) is working in partnership with three leading Canadian charitable organizations to improve the mental and emotional wellbeing of youth ages 10-19. YHP supports the advocacy efforts of PHE Canada to ensure that teachers are equipped with the skills to project a positive mindset and to teach the skills that lead to positive mental health for Canadian youth.

For more information please visit www.younghealth.ca.

Physical & Health Education Canada
301-2197 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1 H 7X3

www.phecanada.ca | info@phecanada.ca