



WHITEPAPER: NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

An Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
commissioned whitepaper from Hanover Research

July 2022



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Methodology.....	3
KEY FINDINGS.....	4
SECTION I: OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.....	7
Overall Mental State	7
Sources of Stress and Anxiety	8
SECTION II: STUDENT EXPERIENCES	11
Influence of The Pandemic.....	11
Seeking Support.....	14
Perceived Mental Health Support	16
Mental Education.....	18
School-Provided Services.....	19
SECTION III: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS	24
Beneficial Resources	24
Teacher Confidence.....	30

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) continues to identify a need to address students’ social, emotional, mental health, and overall wellness needs particularly with relation to the pandemic’s impact. ALAS has recognized the necessity to granularly break down students’ self-reported needs for ALAS to support its members and affiliates in determining how best to allocate and leverage available resources, funding, and services to assist students, especially Hispanic/Latino students across the country. Notably, ALAS has observed a nationwide challenge among districts, administrators, and other K12 education decision-makers to address and treat the symptoms of students’ social-emotional and wellness needs, over a methodical examination of underlying root causes.

To support a greater understanding of students’ needs across a variety of mental health and wellness competencies or constructs, ALAS has partnered with Hanover Research (Hanover) to design, administer, and analyze the results of a nationwide National Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment Survey. The survey solicited wellness self-perceptions and identified needs among secondary students throughout the country as well as the perceptions of parents and staff nationwide to examine how their perceptions of student wellness compare. This whitepaper summarizes the results of the survey and intends to support ALAS in identifying potential root causes of student mental health and wellness needs across the country.

METHODOLOGY

In Spring 2022, with the goal of soliciting perceptions of student mental health and wellness, Hanover administered the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Needs Assessment Survey using a panel to target parents, students, teachers, and administrators across the country. In this whitepaper, Hanover analyzes a total of 2,634 responses from the aforementioned respondent groups.¹ E.1 table below provides a summary of the characteristics of respondents for this survey by role and ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino and Non-Hispanic/Latino).

Throughout this analysis, charts exclude “Not Applicable” or “I don’t know/No opinion” responses, thereby focusing on respondent agreement, satisfaction, and other substantive results. Additionally, to facilitate interpretation of results, the charts display survey items in order of highest overall agreement or satisfaction to lowest. Please note that sample sizes vary across questions, as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents. Conclusions drawn from a small sample size should be interpreted with caution.




E.1: Respondent Characteristics by Role and Ethnicity Summary Table

RESPONDENT ROLE	HISPANIC/LATINO	NON-HISPANIC/LATINO	TOTAL
Parent	89	488	577
Student	130	607	737
Teacher	81	780	861
Administrator	47	412	459
Total	347	2,287	2,634



¹ Hanover performed standard data cleaning to exclude incomplete or poor-quality responses from the data set.

KEY FINDINGS


OVERALL MENTAL STATE

-  **Over 60 percent of survey respondents indicated experiencing moderate to extreme levels of stress or anxiety.** At the personal level, mental health, the financial security of family, and relationships with family, are the top three areas causing stress among respondents. Similarly, college preparation and the amount and difficulty of schoolwork are the main school-related drivers of anxiety among respondents. Notably, teacher respondents also reported changes in school policies related to COVID-19 as the main stressor.
-  **Students reported higher levels of stress or anxiety among the surveyed groups.** Students further reported mental health, college preparation, and the amount and difficulty of schoolwork or academics as the main sources of stress or anxiety.
-  **The percentage of Hispanic/Latino students feeling moderately to extremely stressed or anxious (77%) is higher than the percentage of Non-Hispanic/Latino students reporting similar levels of stress (70%).** Hispanic/Latino students identified mental health and difficulty of schoolwork or academics as the main stressors.


INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC

-  Derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, surveyed respondents reported that **changing school policies and college preparation as the top sources of increased stress or anxiety.** However, about one-third of them indicated that the pandemic has strengthened relationships with family and teachers.
-  **Similarly, Hispanic/Latino respondents identified college preparation as the top school-related source of increased stress or anxiety derived from the pandemic.** Remarkably, fewer Hispanic/Latino students believe that the pandemic has strengthened relationships with family and teachers compared to Non-Hispanic/Latino students.

SEEKING SUPPORT

-  **Surveyed students are more likely to seek mental or social-emotional support from a friend or parent than from school staff.** While most student respondents indicated having an adult at school they can go to if they have a problem, only 25 percent of them indicated they would likely seek mental or social-emotional support from school staff. **This trend is even stronger among Hispanic/Latino students.** Notably Hispanic/Latino students are more likely to seek support from a sibling (37%) than from a parent (33%).

PERCEIVED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

-  **Although most respondents indicated that their school is a safe space for all students, only a third of them trust their school's ability to support the mental health and emotional needs of their students.** Furthermore, administrator, teacher, and parent respondents tend to have a more favorable perception of the mental health supports available at schools than students. For instance, only 16 percent of students are confident about their school's ability to support their mental health and emotional needs. Likewise, **Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents show slightly more positive perceptions (33%) than Hispanic/Latino (28%) respondents** regarding their confidence in their school's support.

MENTAL EDUCATION

- While most respondents recognized that their schools do a good job at educating students on reporting violence, bullying, and harassment, respondents also agreed that their schools could provide more instruction regarding dealing with trauma. However, administrator, teacher, and parent respondents tend to have a more favorable perception of the mental health education provided at their schools than students. **There are no significant differences between Hispanic/Latino and Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents in this area.**

SCHOOL-PROVIDED SERVICES

- Survey respondents indicated that regular one-on-one check-ins with teachers and formal psychological evaluation/assessments are the most effective mental health and wellness services provided by their school. Notably, administrator and parent respondents tend to have a better perception of the effectiveness of these services when compared to teacher and student respondents' perceptions.
- Survey respondents also indicated that communication or check-ins with school staff and teachers are the most common school-provided mental health support-related services. However, student and parent respondents indicated a lower level of awareness of the services provided by their schools compared to administrator and teacher respondents.
- Hispanic/Latino respondents rank communications with teachers and school staff as the most effective ways of addressing students' mental health needs. However, Hispanic/Latino respondents show lower levels of awareness of the services or programs provided at their school compared to Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents.

BENEFICIAL RESOURCES

- Student respondents prioritize having a support staff who understands them as the resources that would most benefit them in the upcoming year. Likewise, parent respondents indicated that communications with teachers on regular one-on-one bases or as needed are most beneficial.
- Surveyed parents identified their child's ability or inability to identify when they need help as the main factor that triggers or deters their child's access to mental health or social-emotional support services. Notably, surveyed Hispanic/Latino parents identified their own ability to identify warning signs in their child as one of the main factors that most help their child access or use mental health or social-emotional support services.
- The proportion of Hispanic/Latino parents perceiving barriers for students to access mental health support services at their school is higher than the proportion of Non-Hispanic/Latino parents. This difference is stronger regarding language barriers (15% of Hispanic/Latino parents and 8% of Non-Hispanic/Latino parents).

TEACHER CONFIDENCE

- While most teacher respondents are confident in their ability to create a supportive learning environment and build meaningful relationships with students, they are less confident about their ability to integrate trauma-sensitive practices and identify trauma and mental health concerns among students.
- In contrast, most surveyed Hispanic/Latino teachers indicated being confident in their ability to build meaningful relationships with students and to create an equitable learning

environment. They are also less confident about their ability to integrate trauma-sensitive practices and identify trauma and mental health concerns among students.

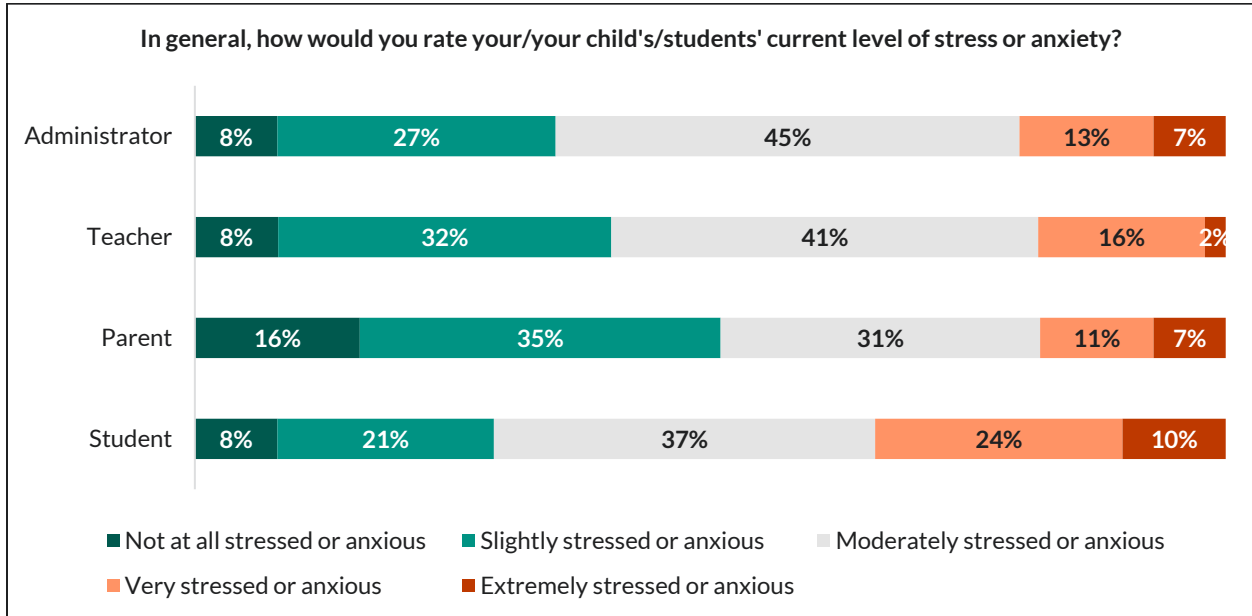


Most survey respondents identified training on identifying students who need additional emotional or mental support and identifying trauma and mental health concerns among students as the most pressing professional development needs. **However, surveyed Hispanic/Latino teachers prioritized building meaningful relationships with students and their families as professional learning areas that would benefit them the most.**

SECTION I: OVERALL MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

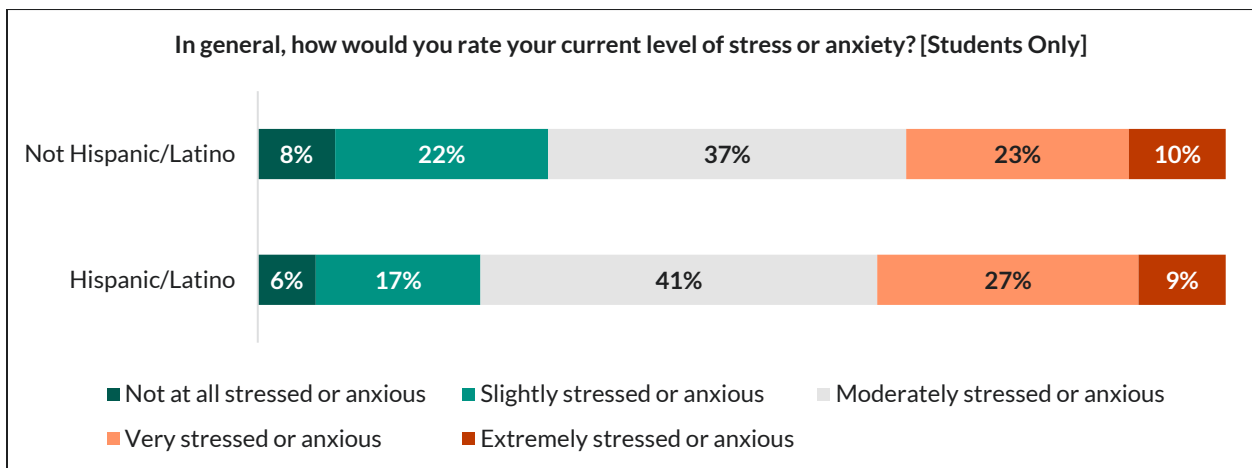
OVERALL MENTAL STATE

Over 60 percent of total respondents indicated having moderate to extreme levels of stress or anxiety. When looking at responses by respondent role, students are the largest group reporting higher levels of stress or anxiety (71%), followed by administrators (65%), and teachers (59%).



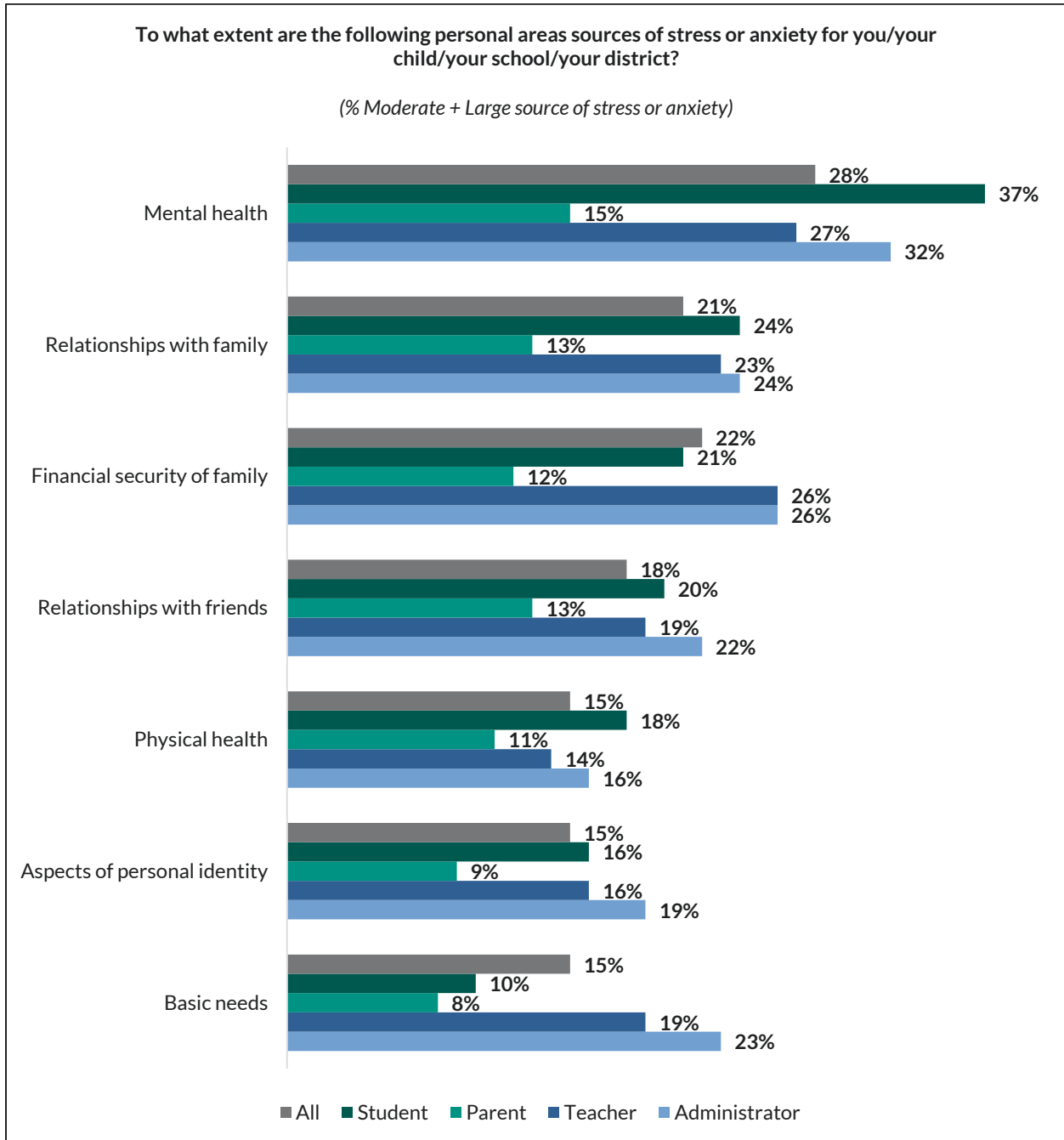
HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

Aggregate responses do not show differences between Hispanic/Latino and Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents. However, the proportion of Hispanic/Latino students feeling moderate to extremely stressed or anxious (77%) is higher than the proportion of their Non-Hispanic/Latino counterparts (70%).

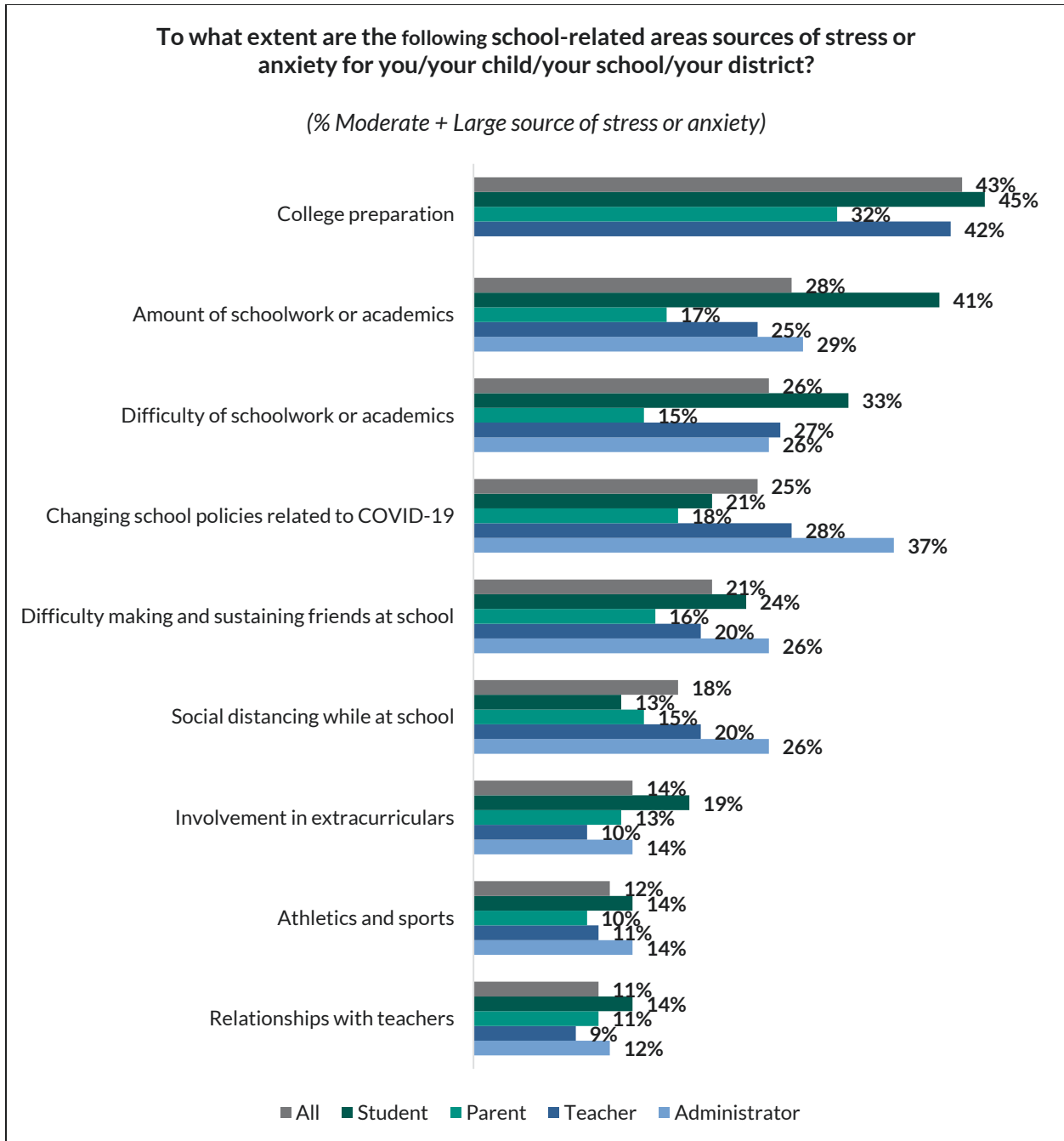


SOURCES OF STRESS AND ANXIETY

Mental health, the financial security of family, and relationships with family are the top three personal areas sources of stress or anxiety among all respondents (28%, 22%, and 21%, respectively). Notably, the proportion of students (37%) reporting mental health as the top source of stress or anxiety is larger compared to other respondent groups – administrator (32%), teacher (27%), and parent (15%).

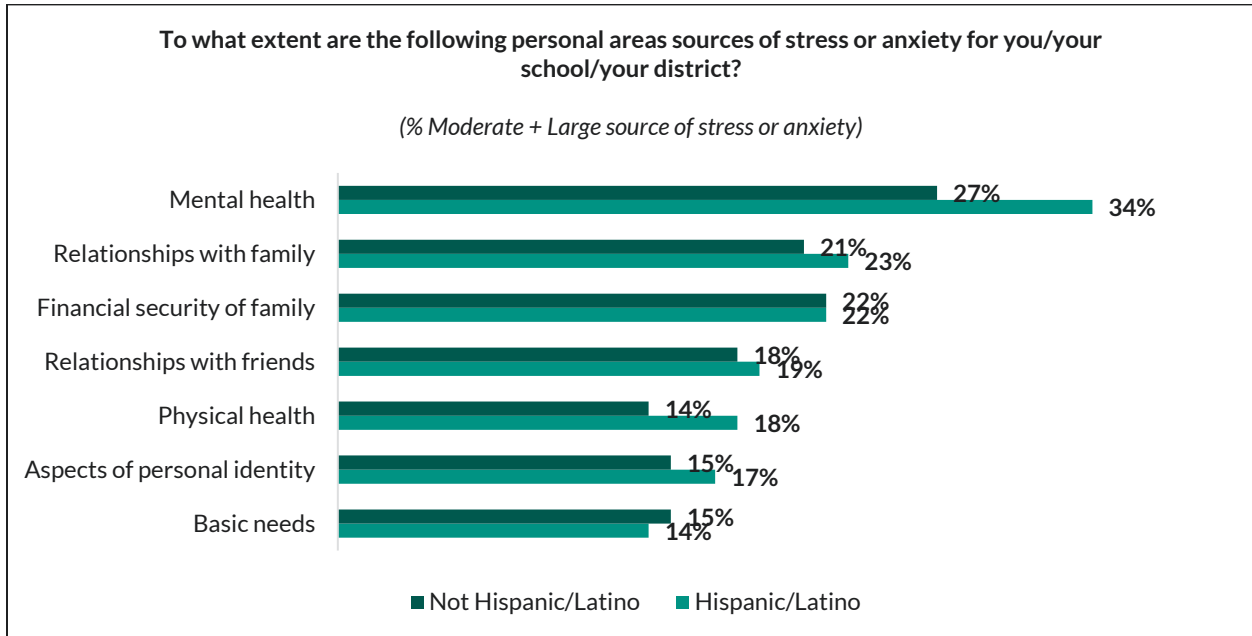


Regarding school-related items, college preparation and both the amount and difficulty of schoolwork or academics are the top three sources of stress or anxiety among all respondents. The proportion of students reporting these categories as the main source of stress or anxiety is higher than other groups (45% for college preparation, 41% for amount of schoolwork or academics, and 33% for difficulty of schoolwork or academics). Notably, 28 percent of teachers reported changes in school policies related to COVID-19 as the second source of stress or anxiety related to school.

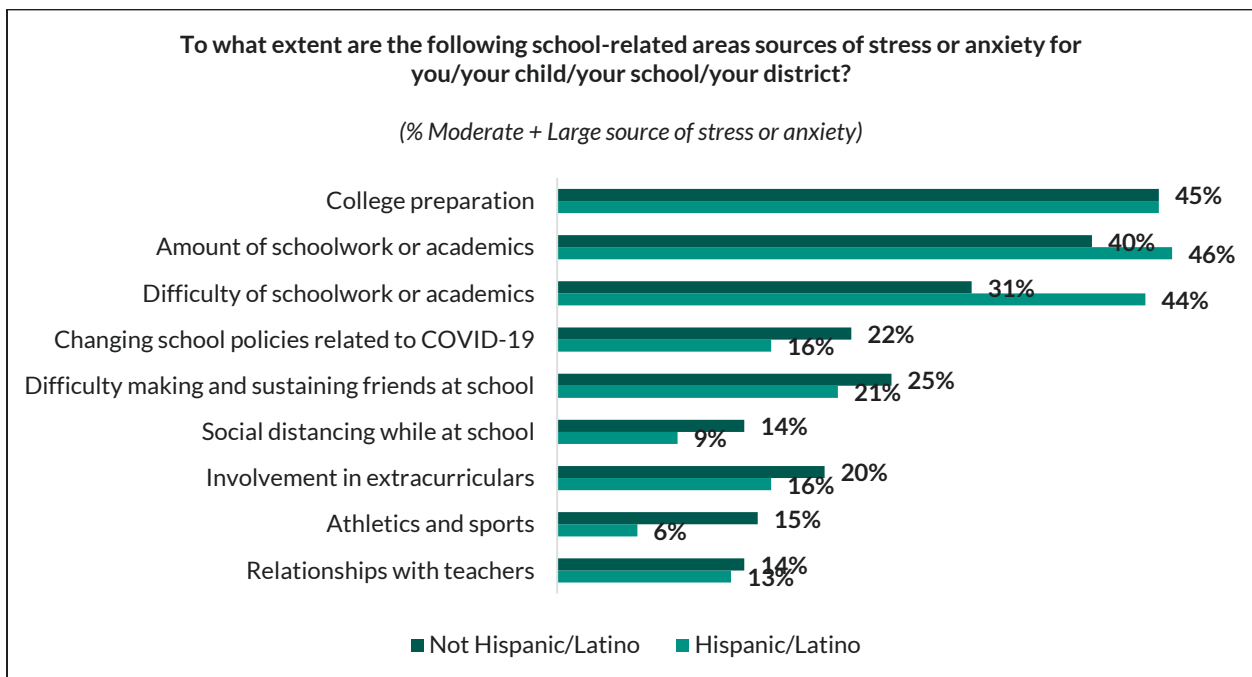


HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

The proportion of Hispanic/Latino respondents (34%) reporting mental health as the main personal area source of stress or anxiety is slightly larger than the proportion Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents (27%) feeling the same.



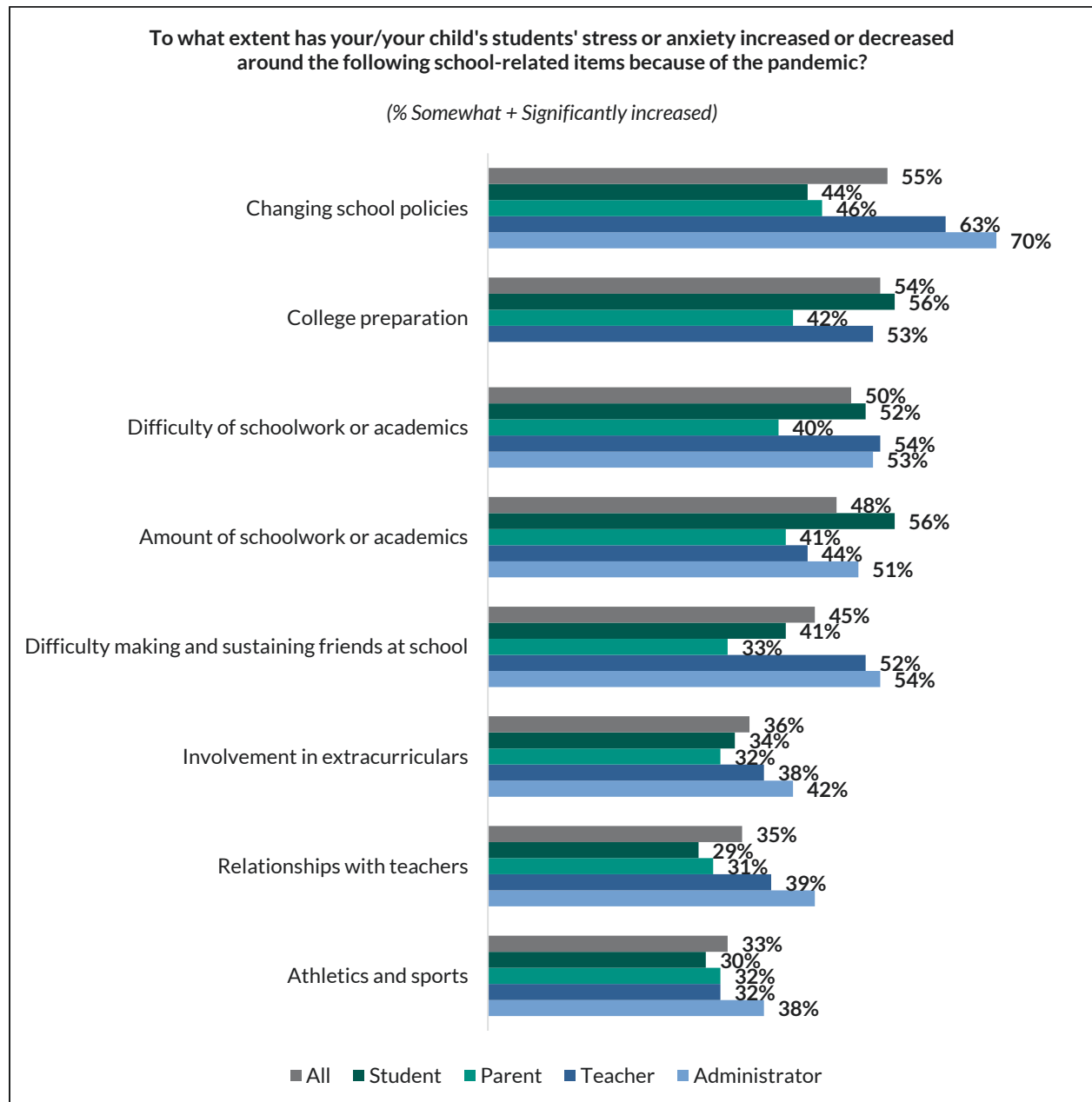
Similarly, the proportion of Hispanic/Latino students reporting the amount and difficulty of schoolwork or academics as the main school-related source of stress or anxiety is larger than the proportion of Non-Hispanic/Latino student respondents reporting the same. For instance, while 44 percent of Hispanic/Latino students listed “difficulty of schoolwork or academics” as a top source of stress, only 31 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino students reported the same.



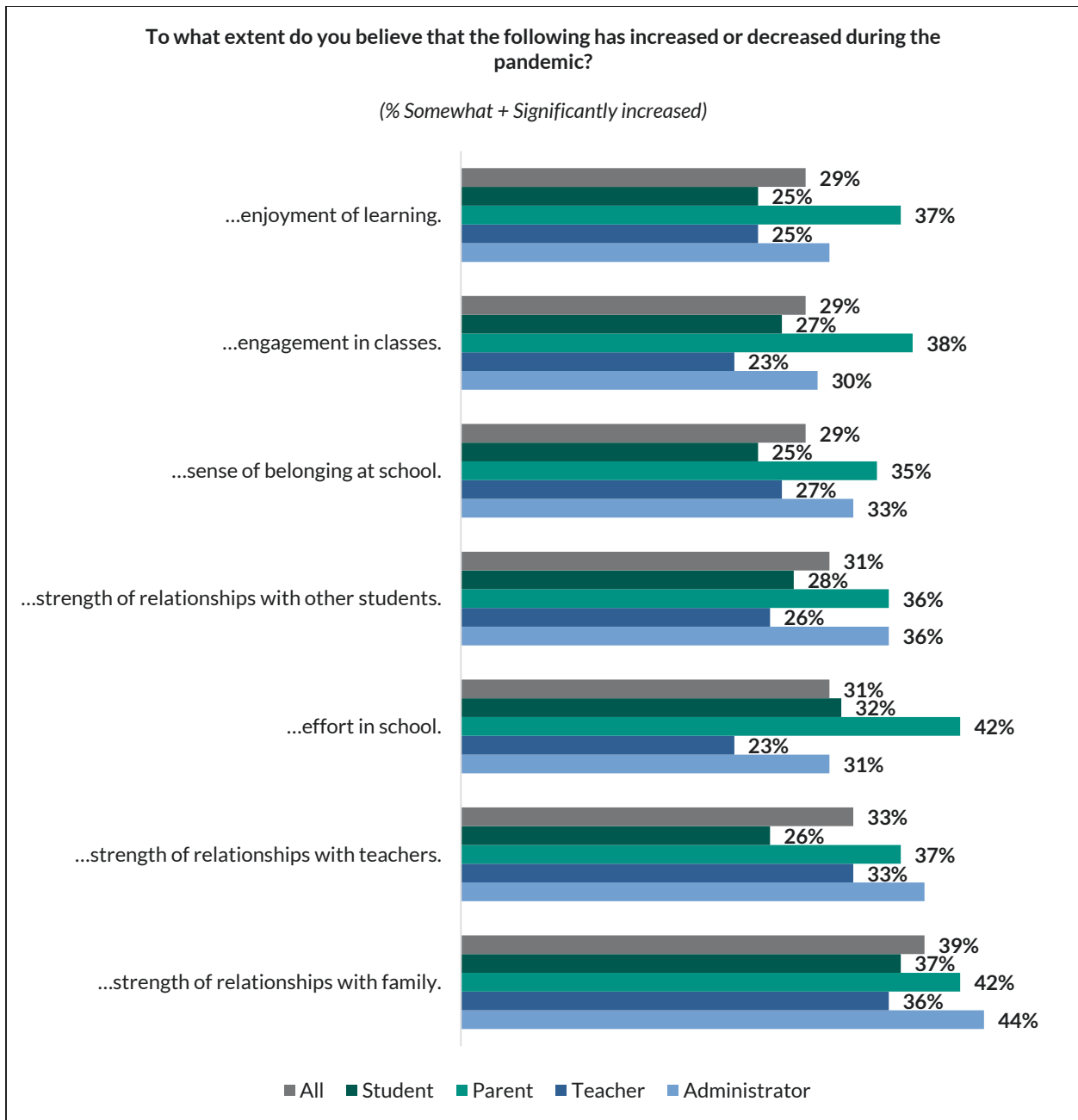
SECTION II: STUDENT EXPERIENCES

INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC

Changing school policies, college preparation, and difficulty of schoolwork or academics are the top three school-related sources of increased stress or anxiety derived from the COVID-19 pandemic. 55 percent of total respondents identified changing school policies as the main source of increased stress or anxiety during the pandemic. Similarly, 54 percent of respondents listed college preparation and 50 percent listed difficulty of schoolwork or academics. Notably, 70 percent of administrators identified changes in school policies as the main source of increased stress or anxiety because of the pandemic, while 56 percent of students listed college preparation and amount of schoolwork as the main school-related stressors during the pandemic.

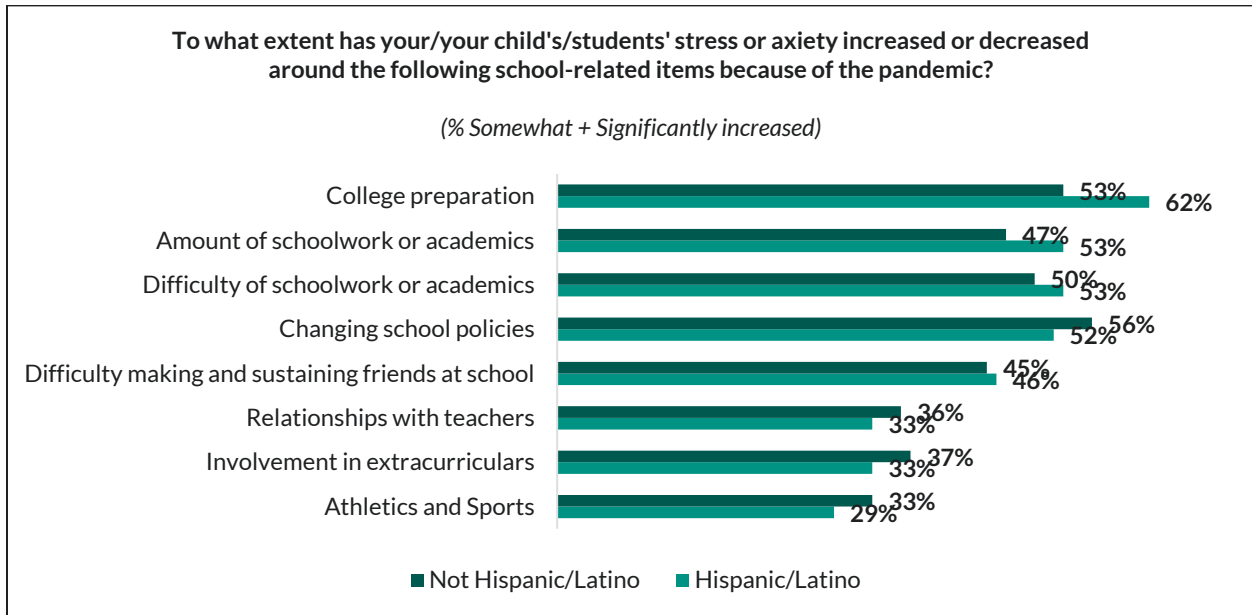


About one-third of total survey respondents indicated that the pandemic has strengthened relationships with family (39%) and teachers (33%). In particular, 44% of administrator respondents and 42% of parent respondents identified strengthened relationships with family during the pandemic.

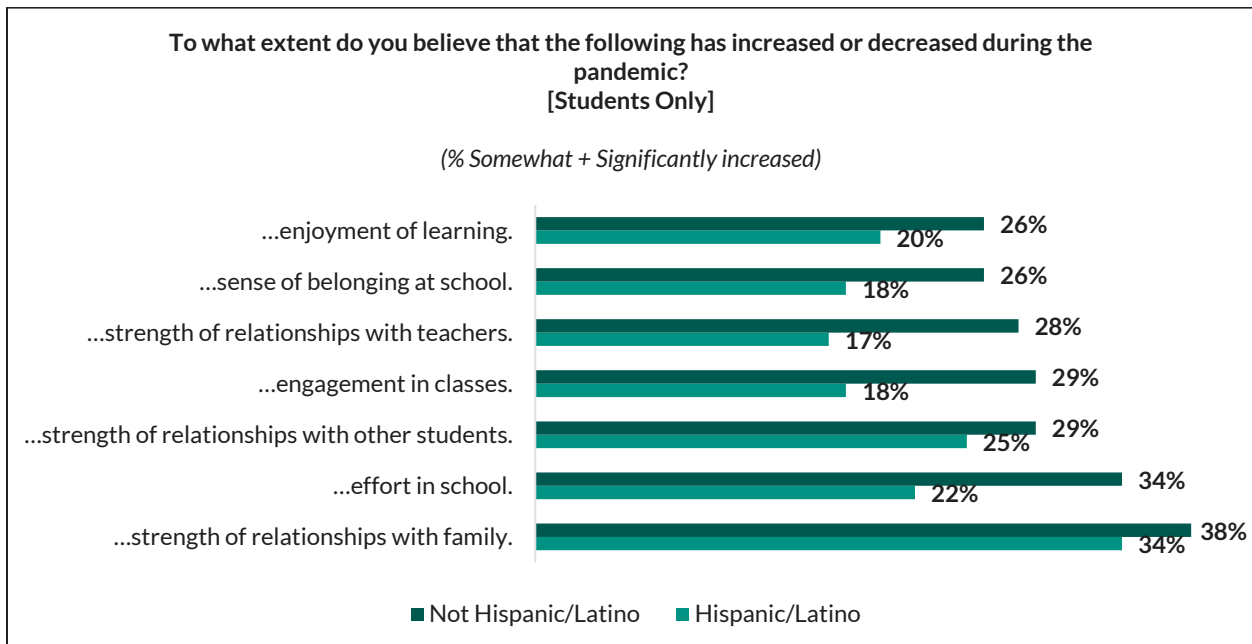


HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

Hispanic/Latino respondents identified college preparation as the top school-related source of increased stress or anxiety derived from the COVID-19 pandemic. College preparation is the main stressor for 62 percent of Hispanic/Latino respondents, while 53 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents feel the same.

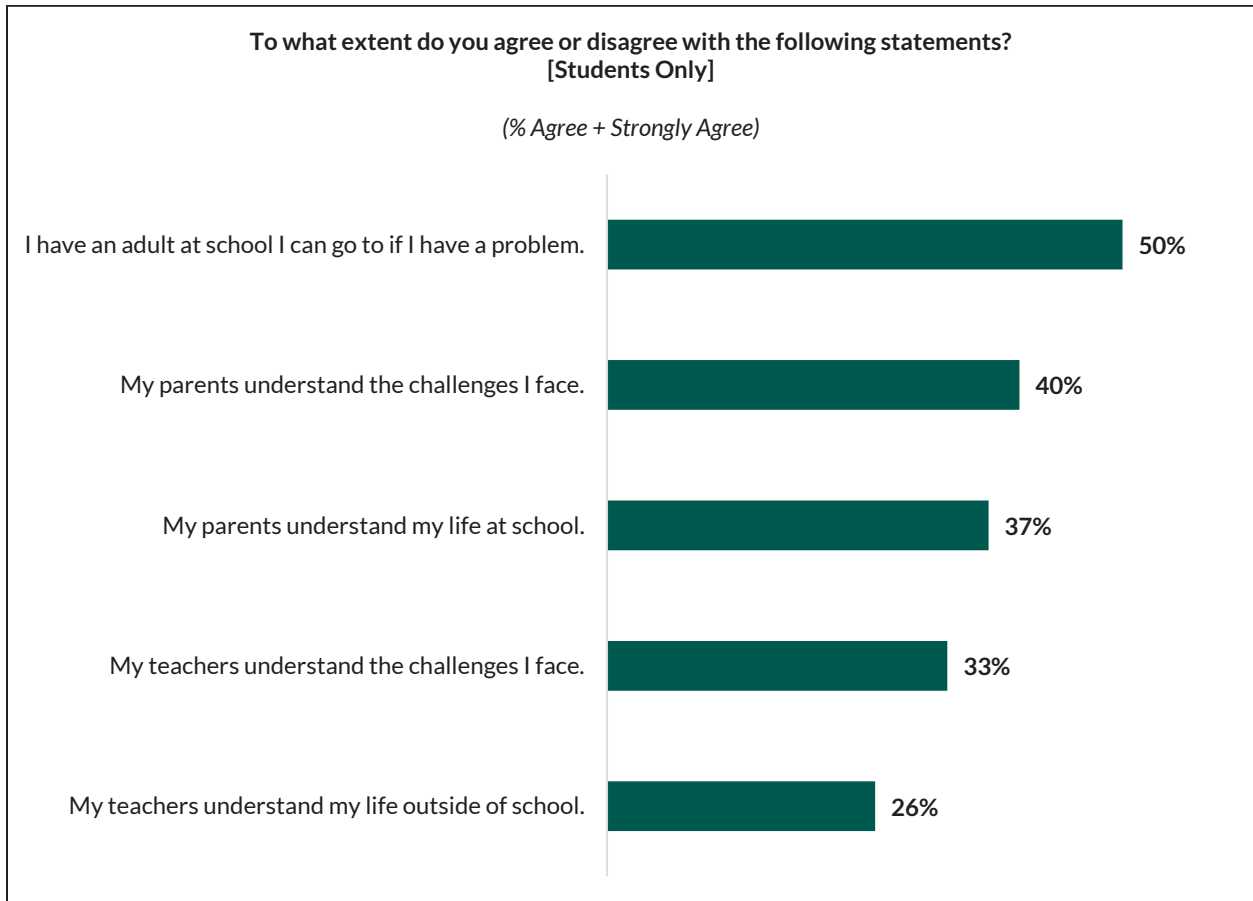


Notably, fewer Hispanic/Latino students believe that the pandemic has strengthened relationships with family and teachers compared to Non-Hispanic/Latino students. While 38 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino students believe that the pandemic helped strengthen relationships with family, only 34 percent of Hispanic/Latino students had the same perception. Similarly, 17 percent of Hispanic/Latino students and 28 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino students indicated that their relationships with teachers enhanced during the pandemic.



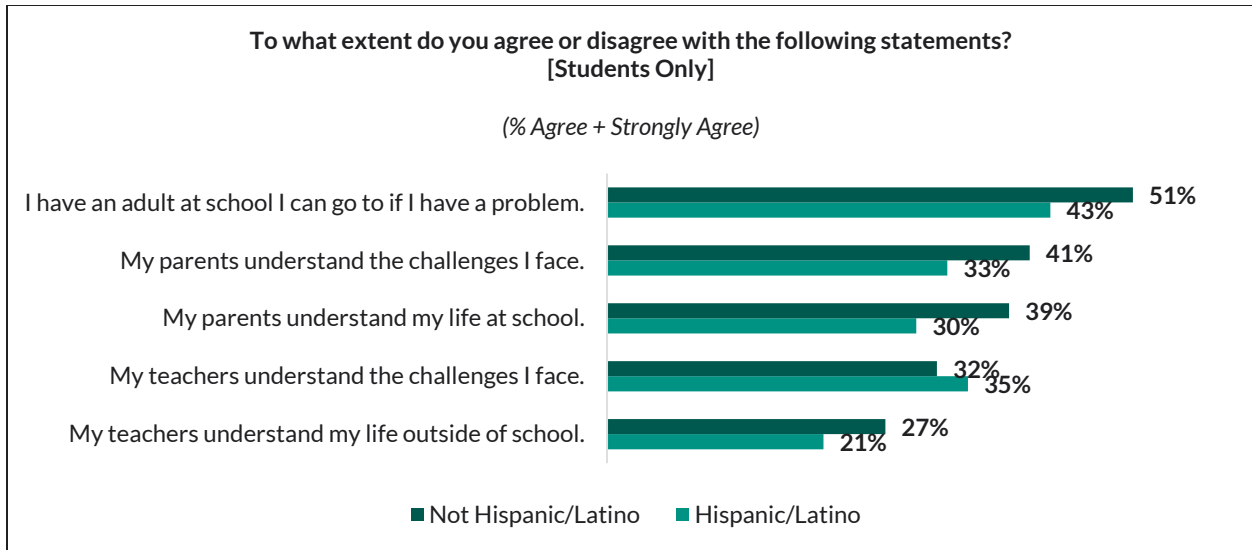
SEEKING SUPPORT

When asked about mental and social-emotional support at school, half of the student respondents agreed that they have an adult at school they can go to if they have a problem. However, only 26 percent agreed that their teachers understand their life outside of school. Furthermore, only 25 percent of surveyed students indicated they would be likely or extremely likely to seek mental or social-emotional support from school staff (e.g., a school psychologist or counselor). The survey also revealed that students are more likely to seek mental or social-emotional support from a friend (62%), or a parent (46%), than from teachers (42%) or a school psychologist (37%).

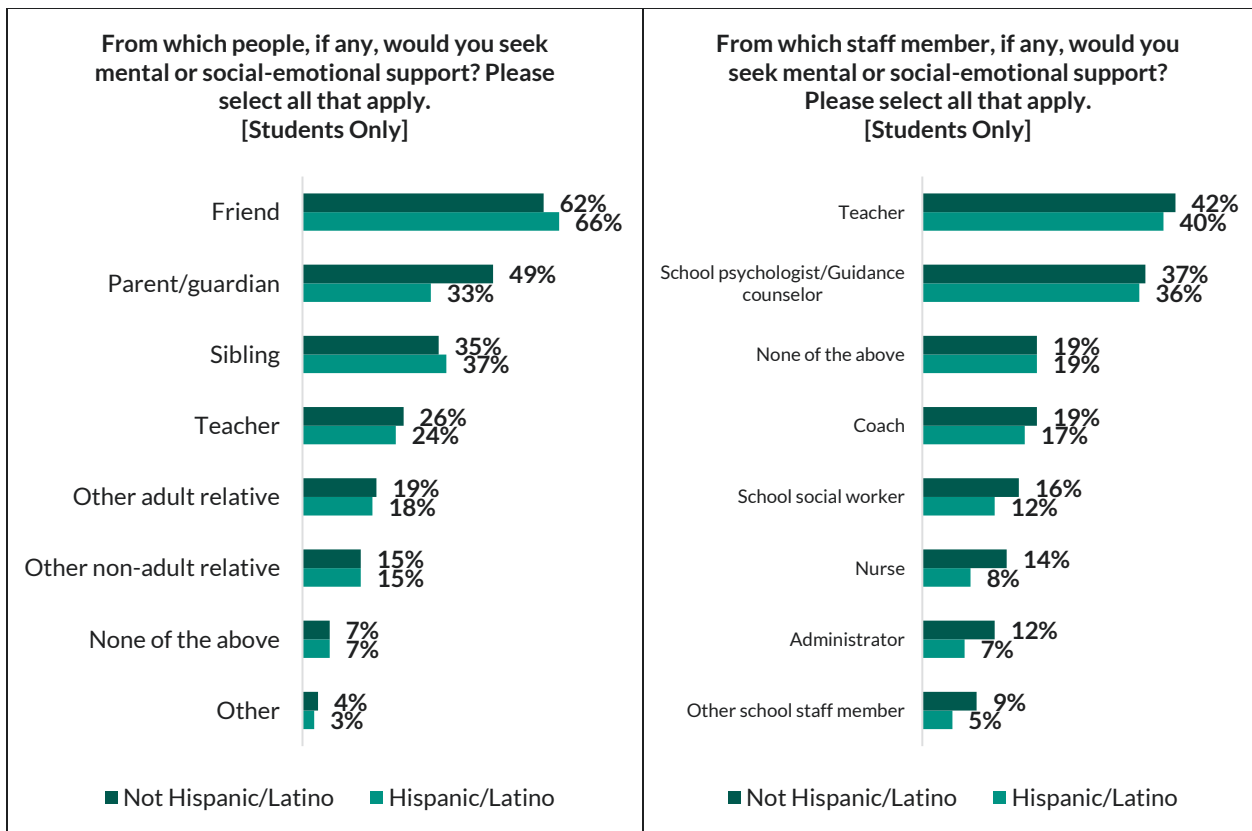


HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

Overall, student perceptions of mental or social-emotional support at school are less favorable among surveyed Hispanic/Latino students compared to their Non-Hispanic/Latino peers. For instance, 51 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino students agreed that they have an adult at school they can go to if they have any problem, while only 43 percent of Hispanic/Latino students shared this perception. Notably, 35 percent of Hispanic/Latino students and 32 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino students agreed that their teachers understand the challenges they face.

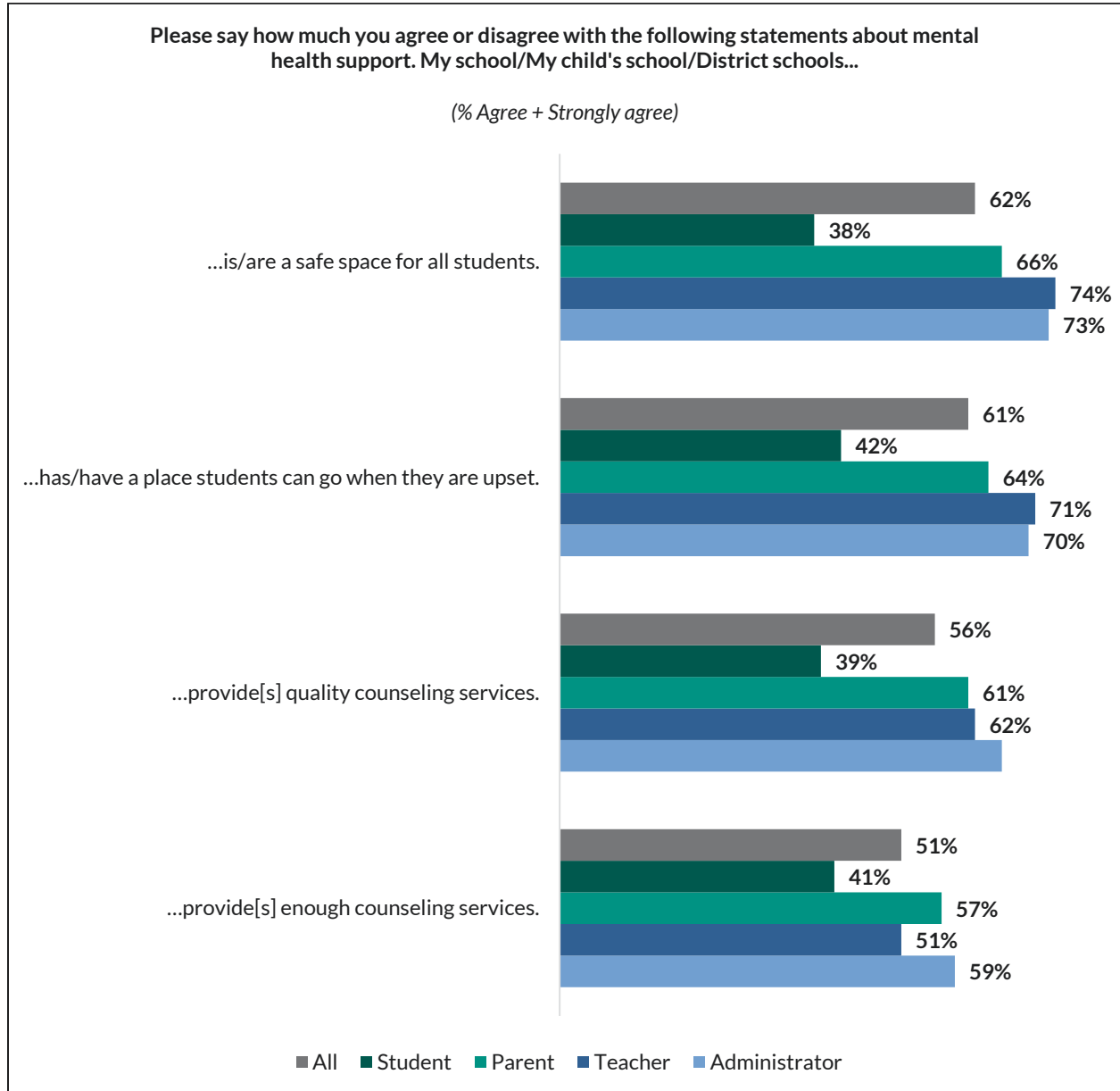


Similarly, 21 percent of the surveyed Hispanic/Latino students and 25 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino students are likely or extremely likely to seek mental or social-emotional support from school staff. Moreover, Hispanic/Latino students are more likely to seek mental or social-emotional support from a friend (66%) or sibling (37%) and less likely to rely on a parent (33%) than their Non-Hispanic/Latino peers. Hispanic/Latino student respondents are also less likely to count on teachers (40%) or school psychologists (36%) when seeking mental or social-emotional support at school than Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents.

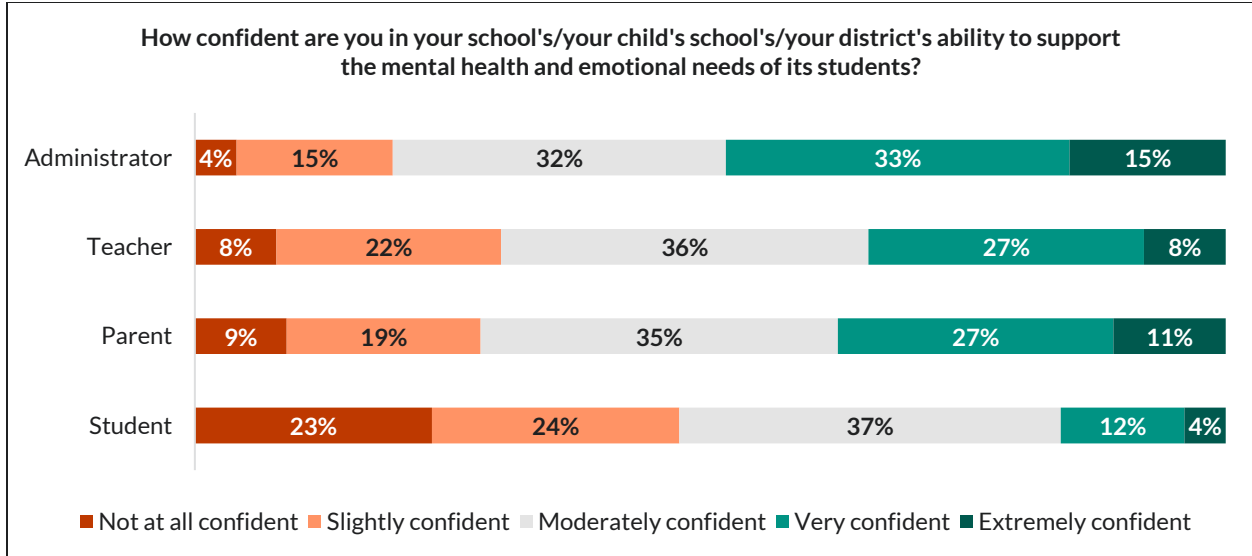


PERCEIVED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Although 62 percent of total respondents indicated that their school is a safe space for all students, only half of them indicated that their school provides enough counseling services. However, administrator, teacher, and parent respondents tend to have a more favorable perception of the mental health supports available at schools than students. For instance, 74 percent of teacher respondents, 73 percent of administrator respondents, 66 percent of parent respondents, and 38 percent of student respondents indicated that their school is a safe space for all students.

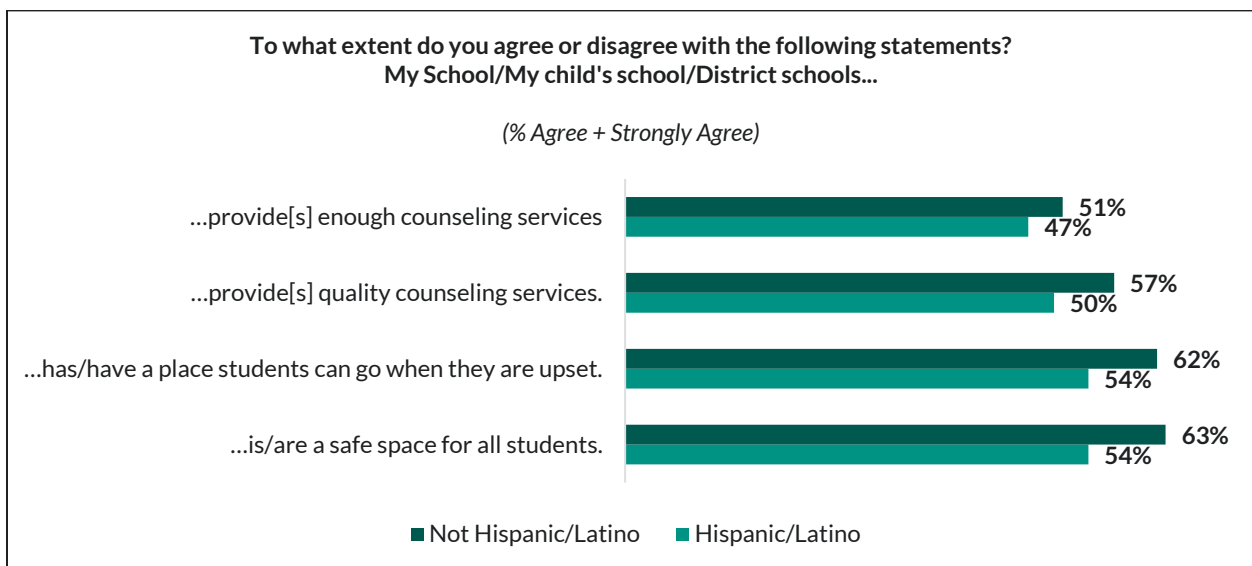


About one-third of the survey respondents are very or extremely confident in their school's ability to support the mental health and emotional needs of their students. When analyzing responses by role, administrator respondents tend to be more confident (48%), followed by parents (38%) and teachers (35%). However, only 16 percent of students are confident about their school's ability to support their mental health and emotional needs.



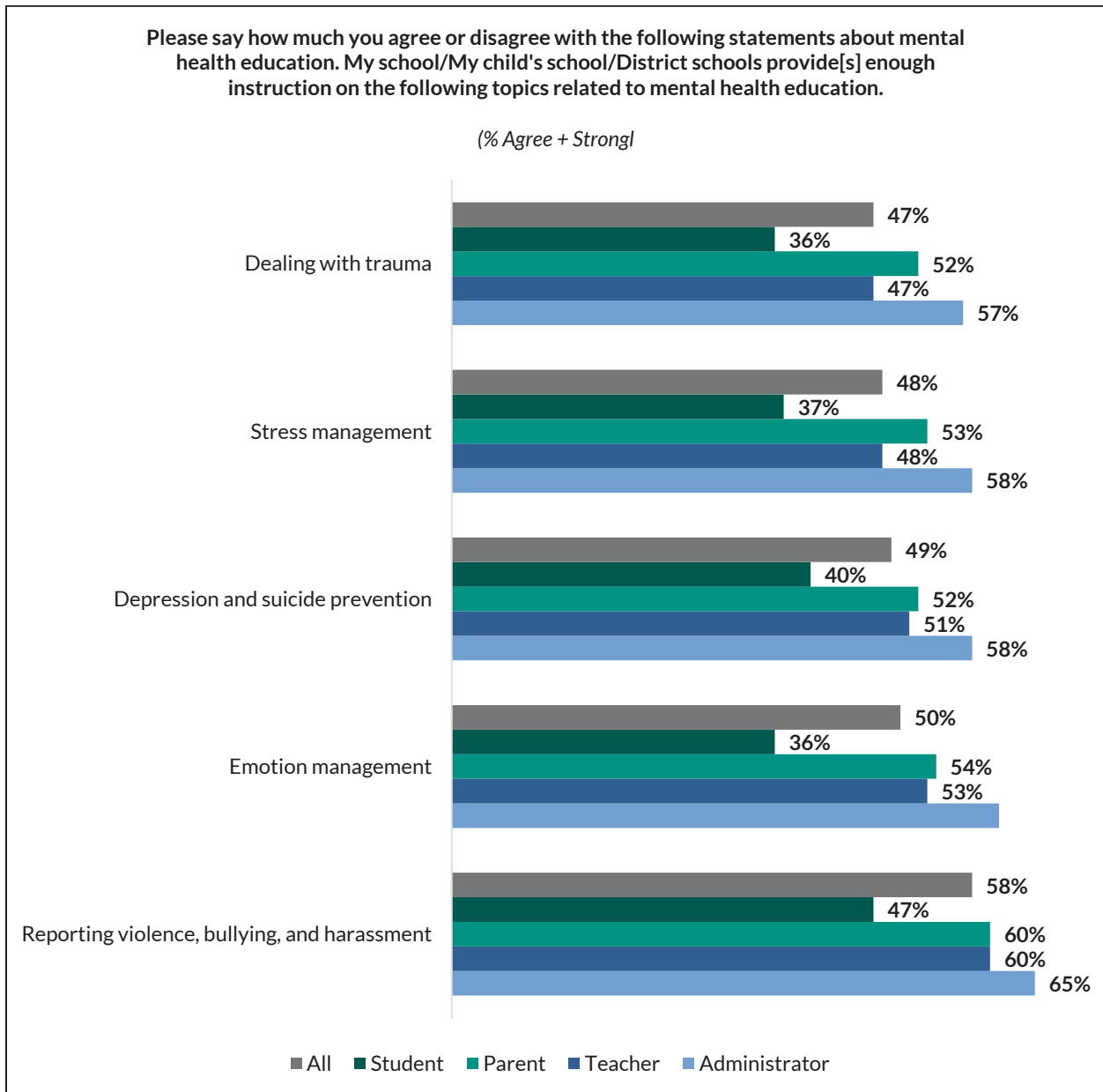
HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

When asked about perceived mental health support available at their school, 54 percent of Hispanic/Latino respondents agreed that their school is a safe space for all students and 47 percent indicated that their school provides enough counseling services. In contrast, Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents show slightly more positive perceptions, as 63 percent agreed that their school is a safe space for all students and 51 percent indicated that their school provides enough counseling services. This trend replicates when asked about the respondents' confidence in their school's ability to support the mental health and emotional needs of its students. While 33 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents indicate being very or extremely confident, 28 percent of Hispanic/Latino respondents indicate the same.



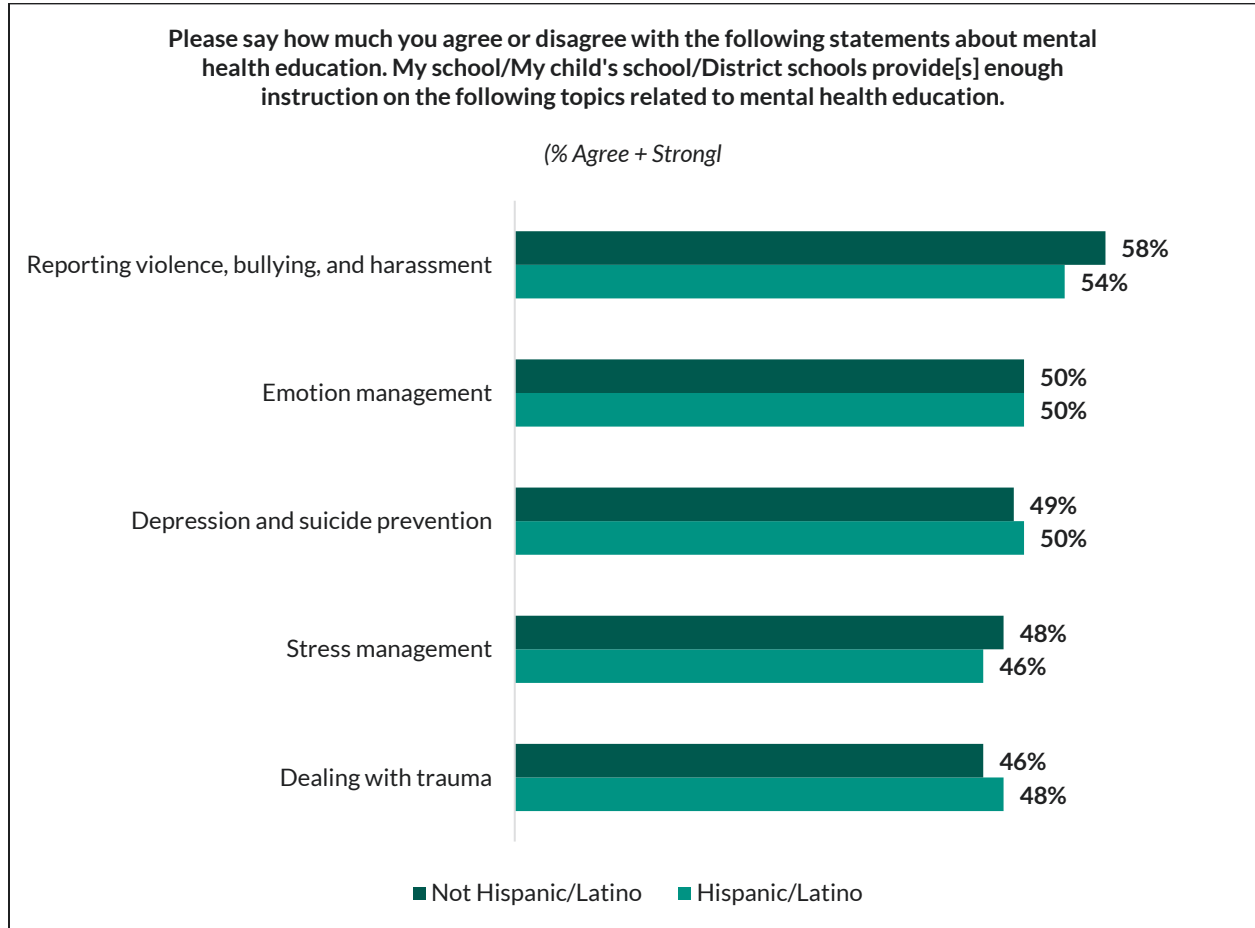
MENTAL EDUCATION

Regarding respondents' perceptions of the instruction received at their school on topics related to mental health education, most surveyed respondents (58%) indicated that their schools do a better job at educating students on reporting violence, bullying, and harassment. In contrast, 47 percent of respondents agreed that their schools provide enough instruction regarding dealing with trauma. However, administrator, teacher, and parent respondents tend to have a more favorable perception of the mental health education provided at their schools than students. For instance, 61 percent of administrators agree that their school provides enough instruction on emotion management, while only 36 percent of students have the same perception.



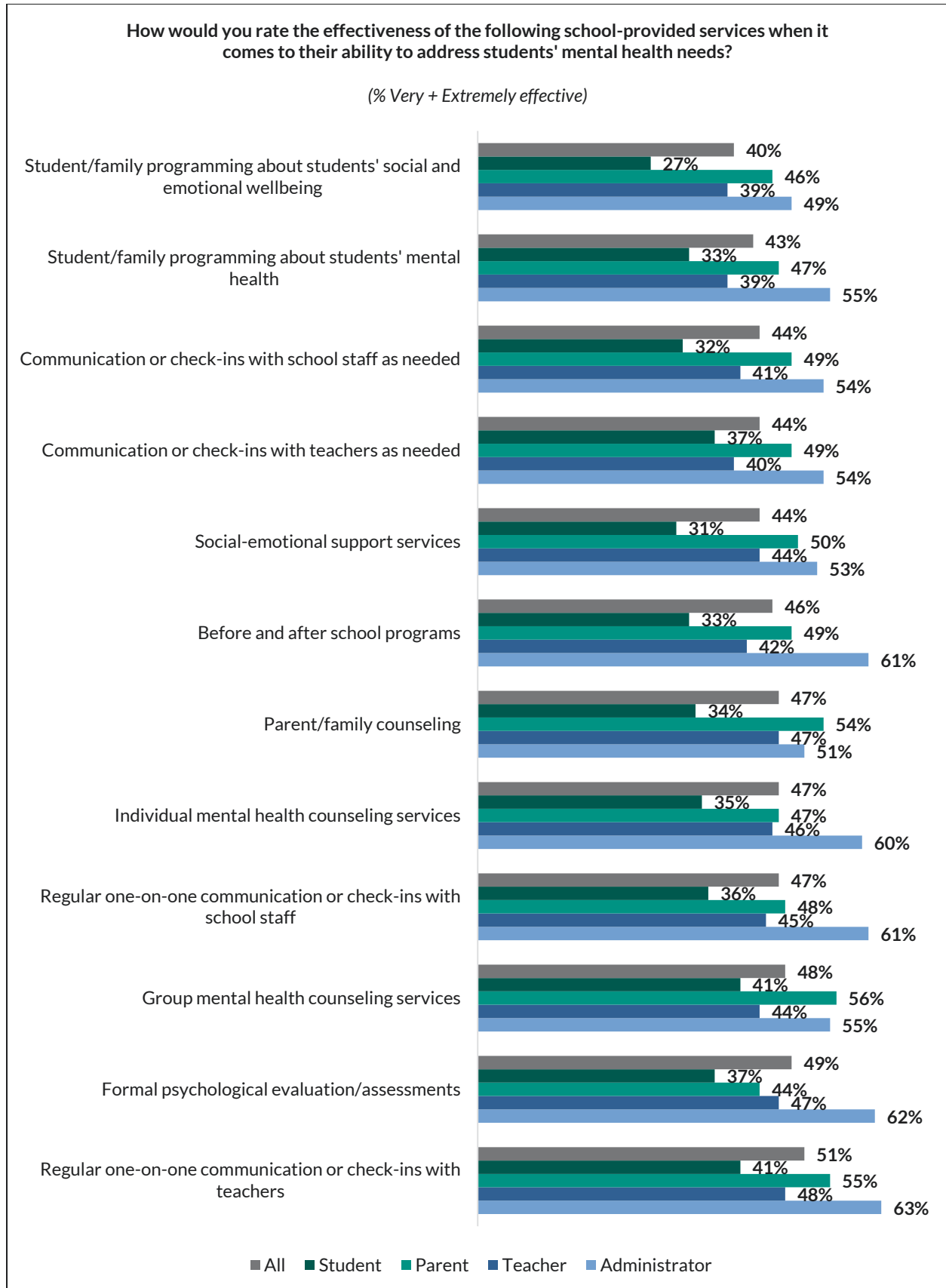
HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

Hispanic/Latino respondents have similar perceptions to those of Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents regarding perceived mental health support available at their school. However, more Hispanic/Latino respondents (48%) agreed that their school provides enough instruction on dealing with trauma than Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents (46%).

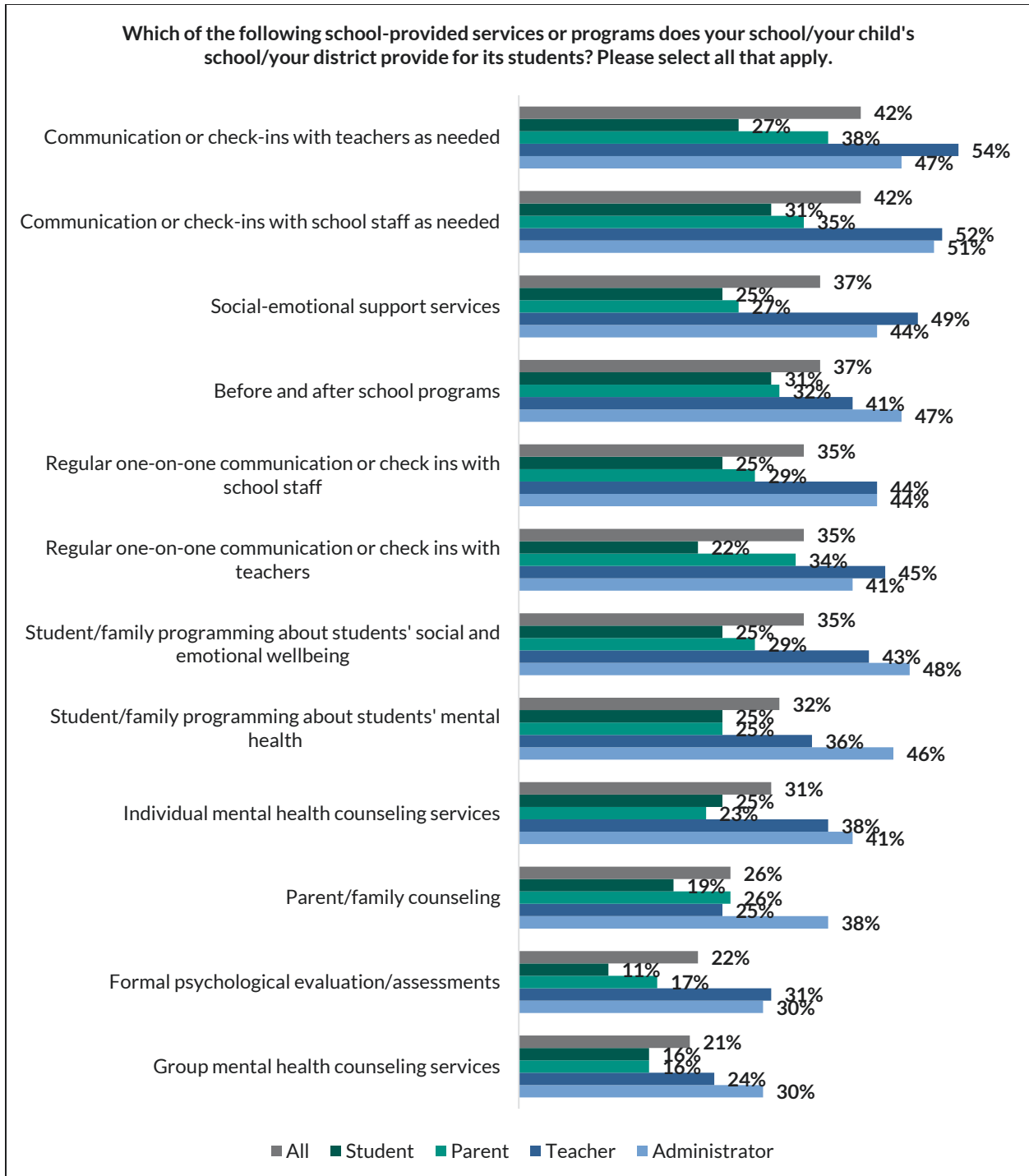


SCHOOL-PROVIDED SERVICES

Survey respondents indicated that regular one-on-one check-ins with teachers, formal psychological evaluation/assessments, and group mental health counseling services are the most effective mental health and wellness services provided by their school. Conversely, respondents perceived student/family programming about students' social and emotional wellbeing as the least effective service provided by their school. Notably, administrator and parent respondents tend to have a better perception of the effectiveness of these services when compared to teacher and student perceptions. For instance, 63 percent of surveyed administrators and 55 percent of parents consider that regular one-on-one check-ins with teachers are very or extremely effective, while 48 percent of teacher respondents and 41 percent of student respondents indicated the same.

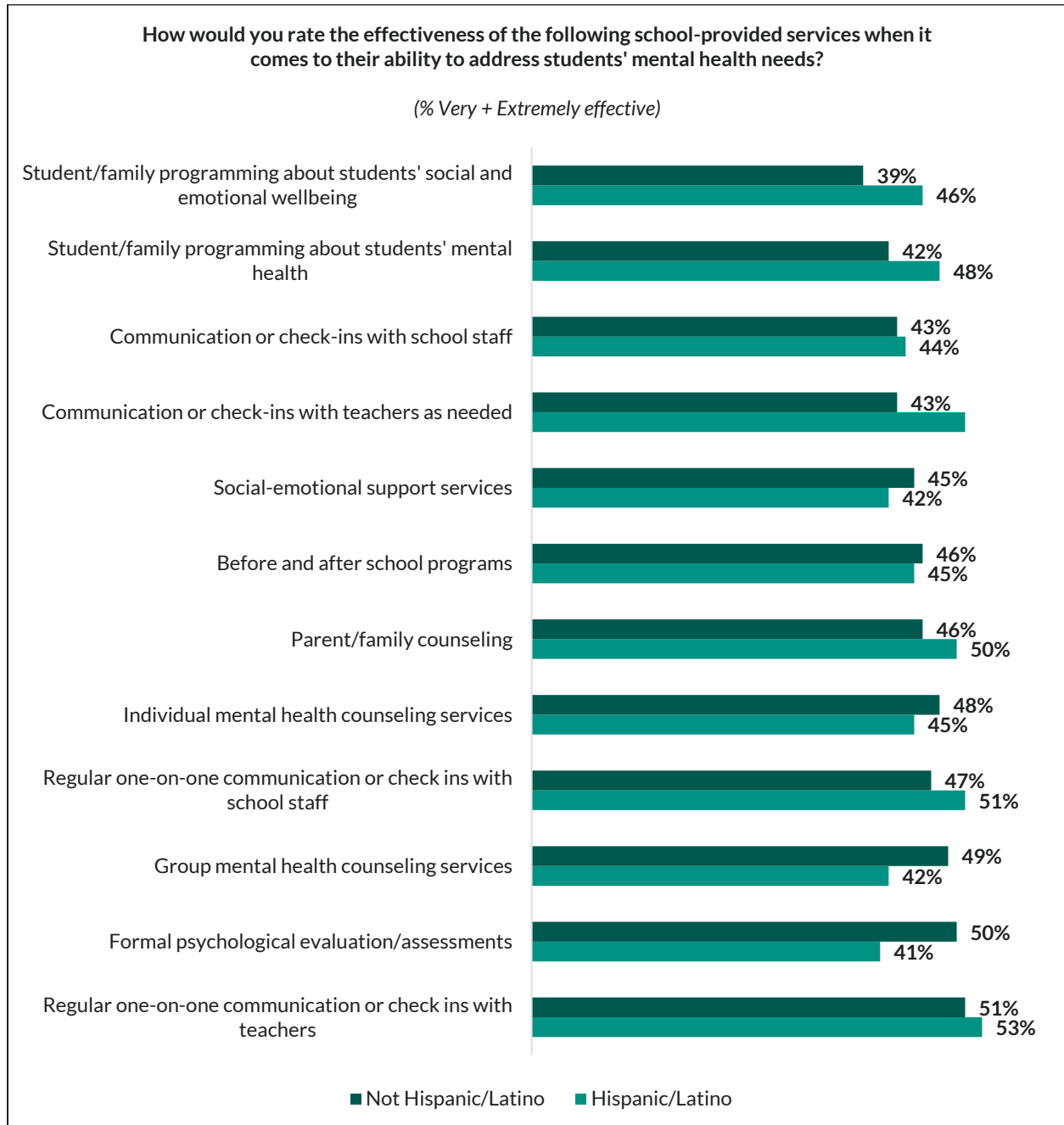


Communication or check-ins with school staff and teachers are the most common school-provided mental health support-related services, as indicated by survey respondents. In contrast, group mental health counseling services and formal psychological evaluation/assessments are the least common school-provided services noted by total respondents. However, student and parent respondents indicated a lower level of awareness of the services provided by their schools compared to administrator and teacher respondents. For instance, 52 percent of teacher respondents and 51 percent of administrator respondents indicated that their school provides communication or check-ins with school staff, while only 35 percent of parents and 31 percent of students reported that their school provides this service.

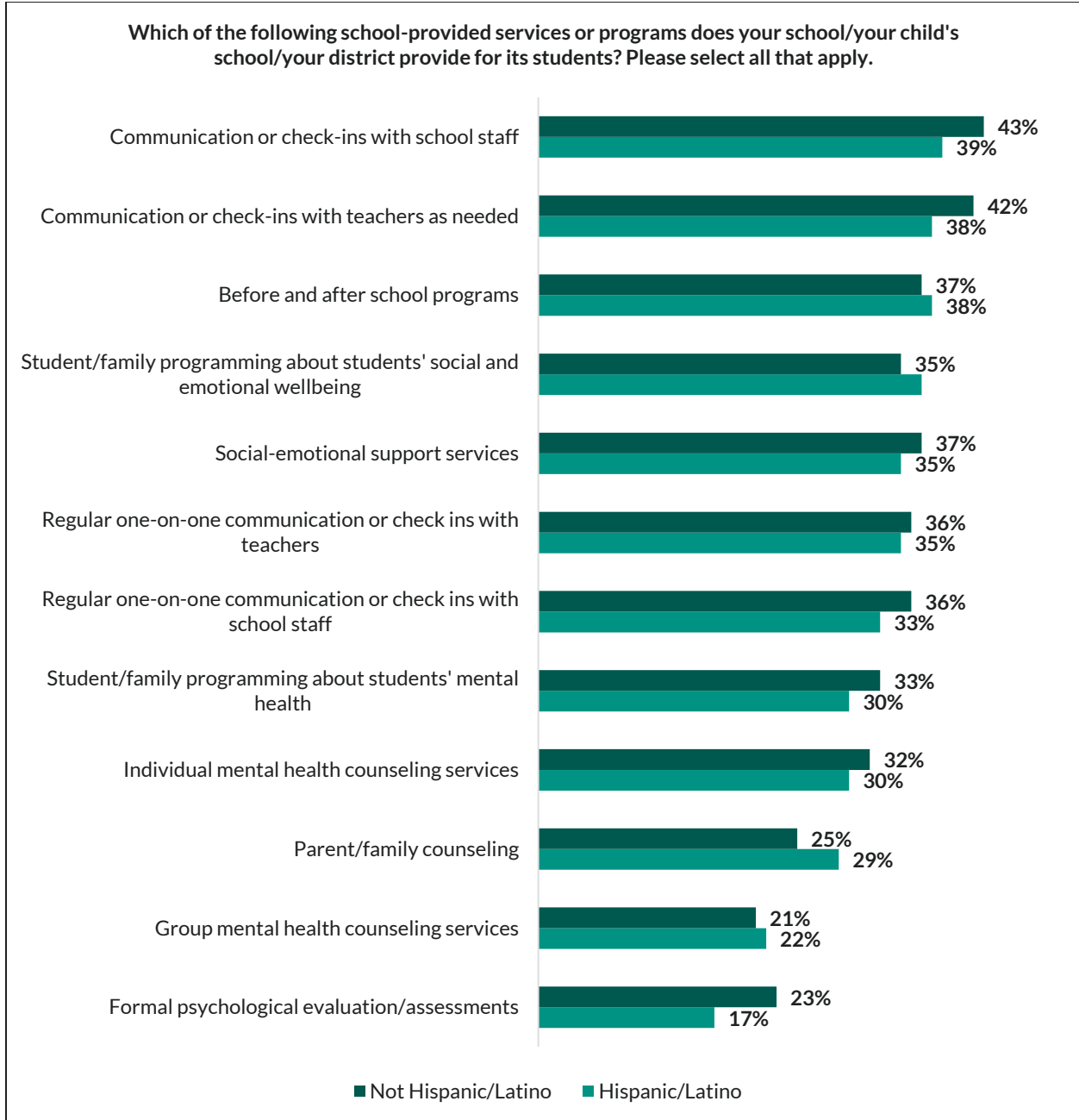


HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

Hispanic/Latino respondents think highly about the effectiveness of their communications with teachers and school staff for addressing students' mental health needs. Regular one-on-one check-ins with both teaching and school staff, and communication or check-ins with teachers as needed, are ranked among the most effective school-provided services among Hispanic/Latino respondents. In contrast, Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents rank regular one-on-one communications with teachers, formal psychological evaluation/assessment, and group mental health counseling services as the most effective school-provided services.



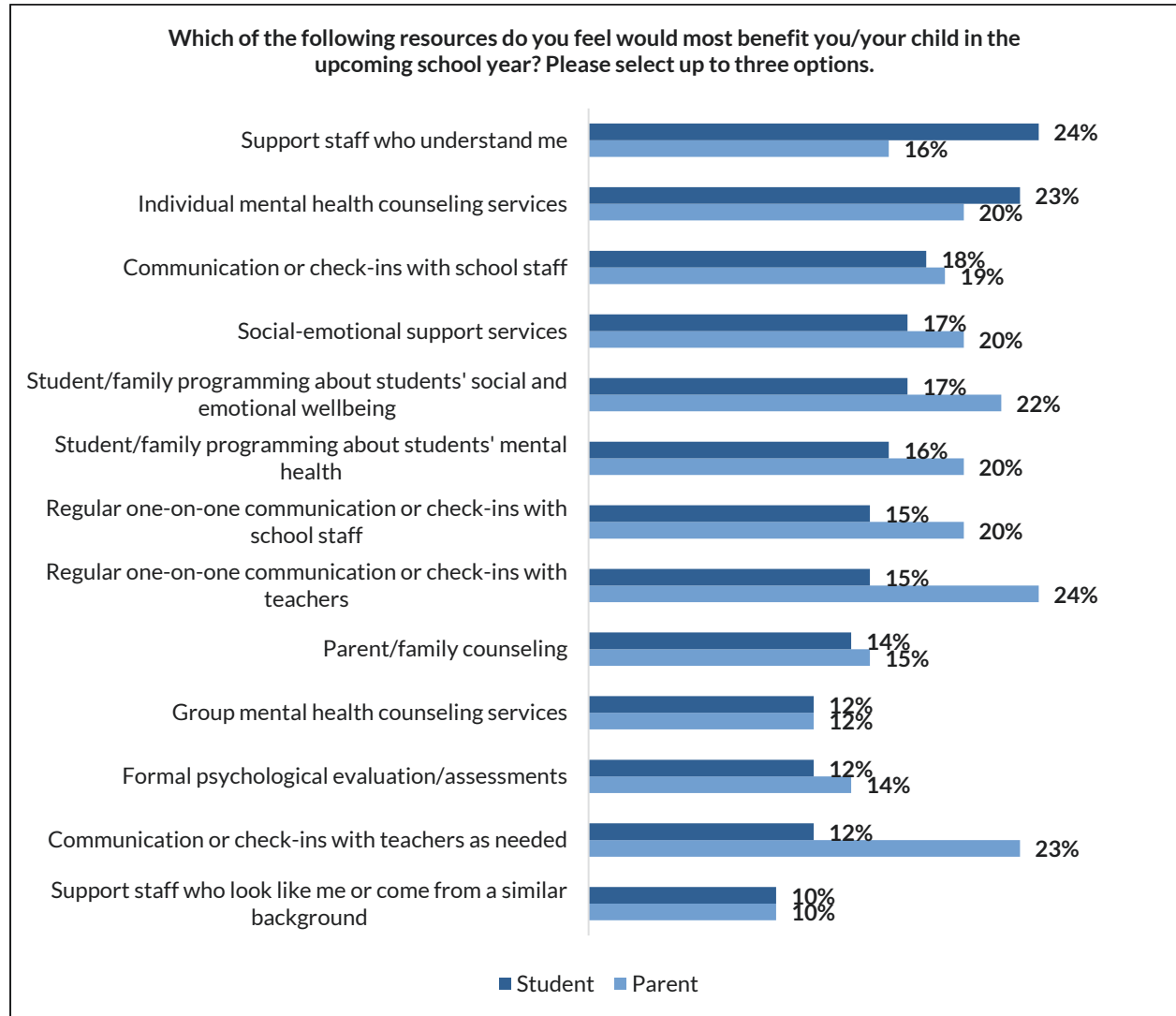
Overall, Hispanic/Latino respondents show lower levels of awareness of the services or programs provided at their school compared to Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents. For instance, 23 percent of Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents indicated that their school provides formal psychological evaluation/assessments, while 17 percent of Hispanic/Latino respondents identified these programs as part of the services offered at their school.



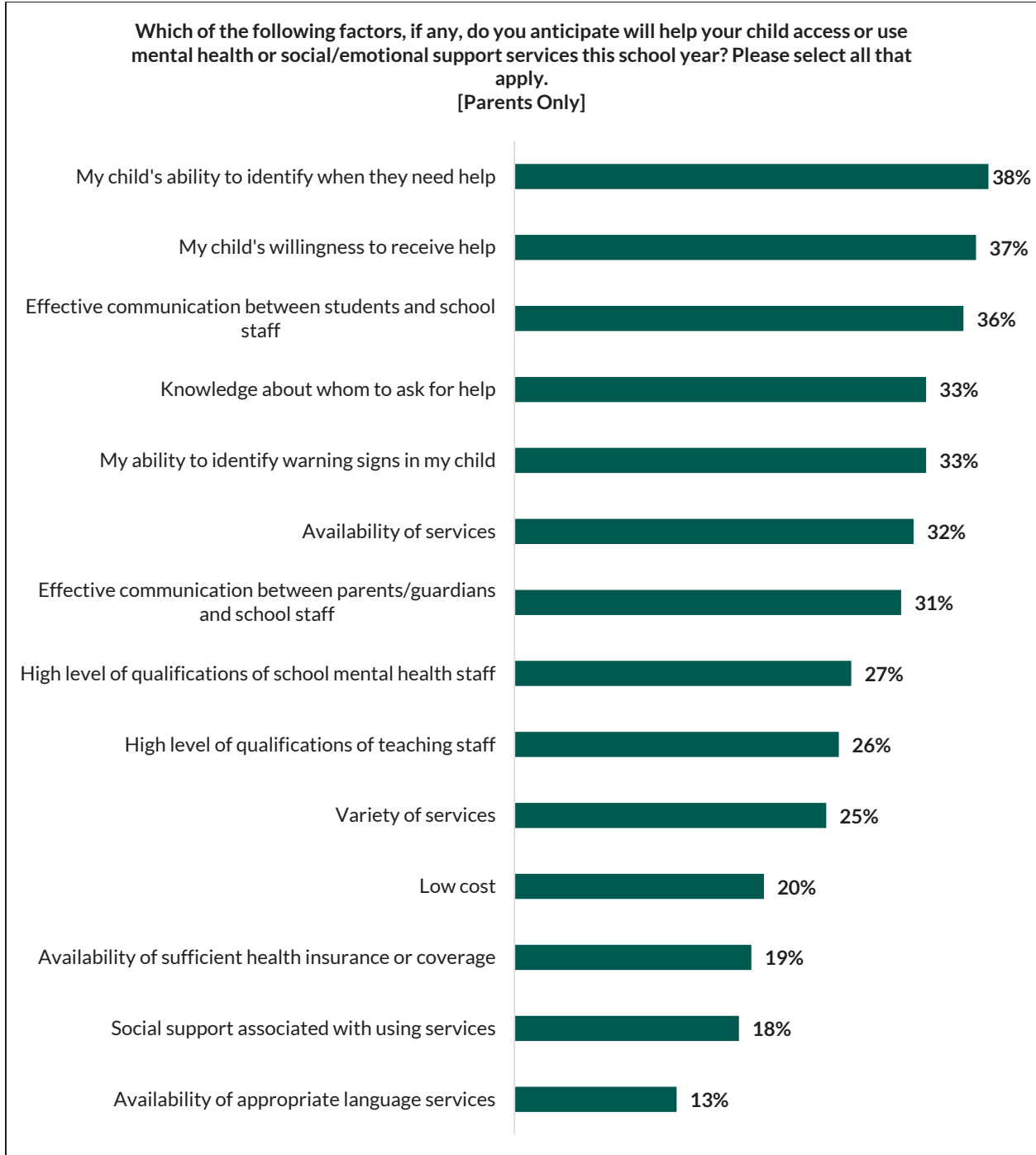
SECTION III: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS

BENEFICIAL RESOURCES

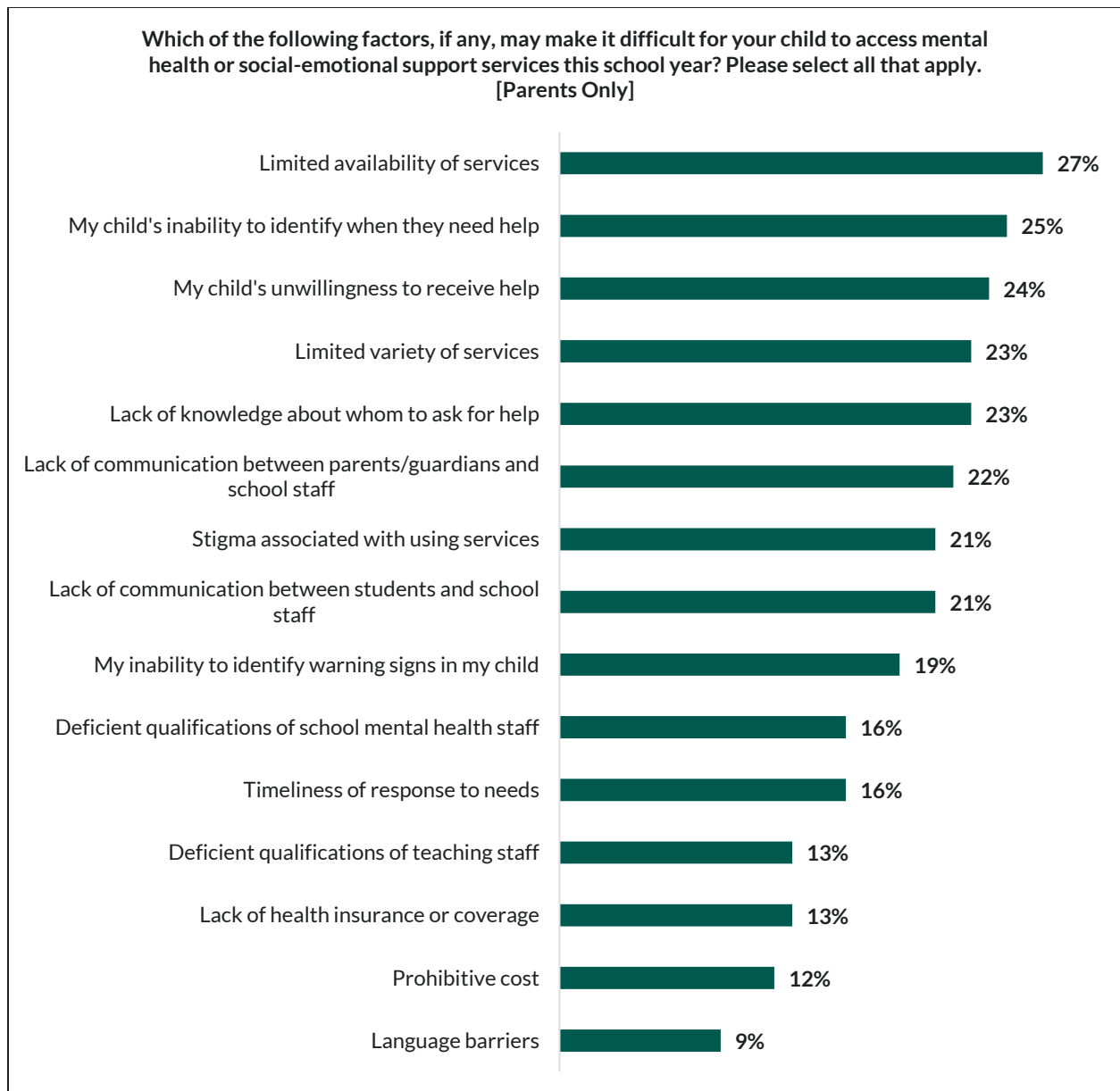
Parent and student respondents identified individual mental health counseling services, support staff that understand students, and student/family programming about students' social and emotional wellbeing as the top three resources that would most benefit students in the upcoming year. Notably, student respondents prioritized having a support staff who understands them (24%) and individual mental health counseling services (23%), while parent respondents prioritized communications with teachers on regular one-on-one bases (24%) or as needed (23%).



Surveyed parents identified their child’s ability to identify when they need help (38%) and their child’s willingness to receive help (37%) as the factors that would most help their child access mental health or social-emotional support services. Additionally, a third of parent respondents also indicated that the knowledge about whom to ask for help and their ability to identify warning signs in their child would help their child access these services.

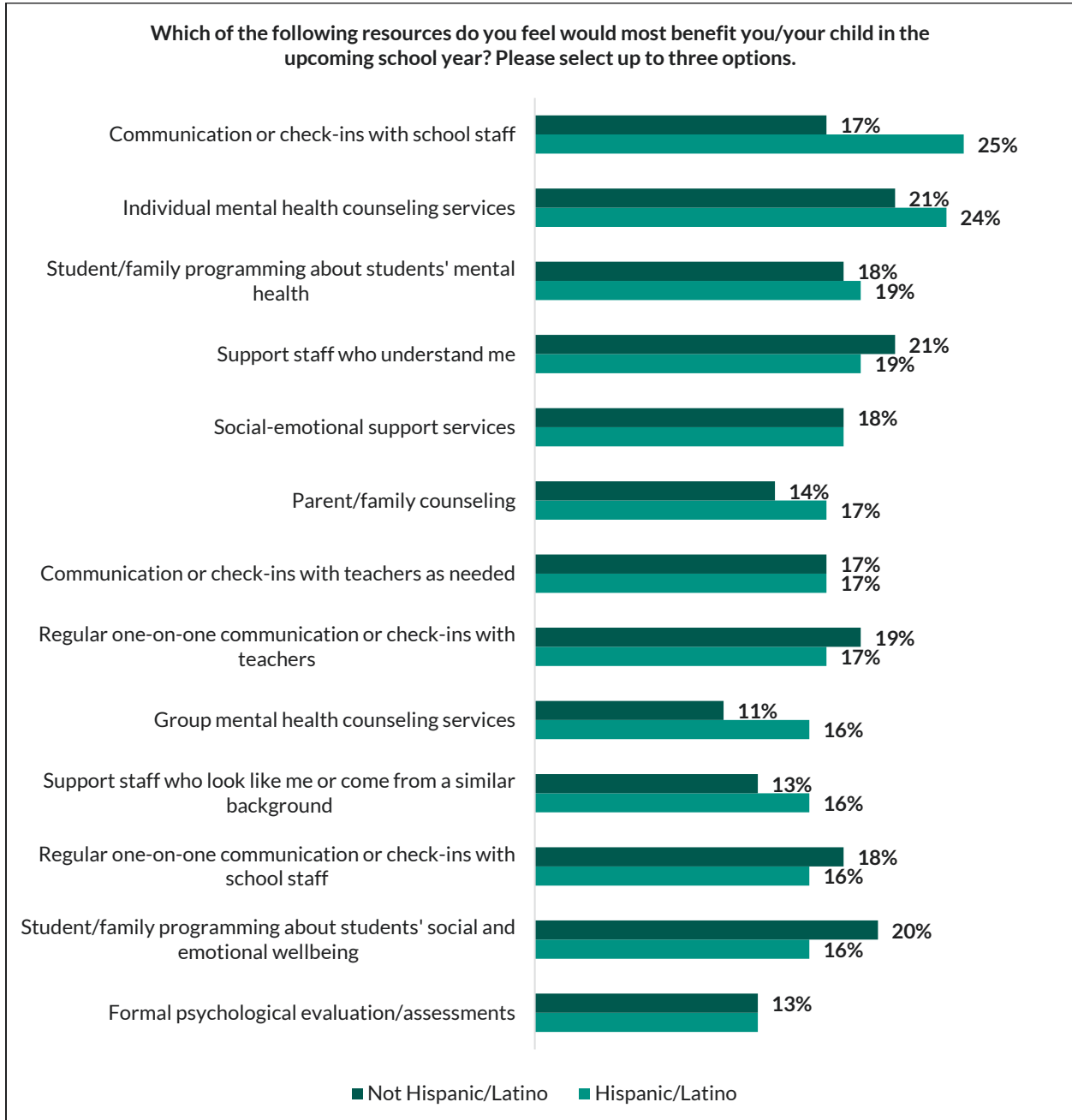


Parents further identified the limited availability of services (27%) and their child’s inability to identify when they need help (25%) as the main factors that would make it difficult for students to access mental health services. Nearly a quarter of parents also reported their child’s unwillingness to receive help as an element making it difficult for their child to access these services.

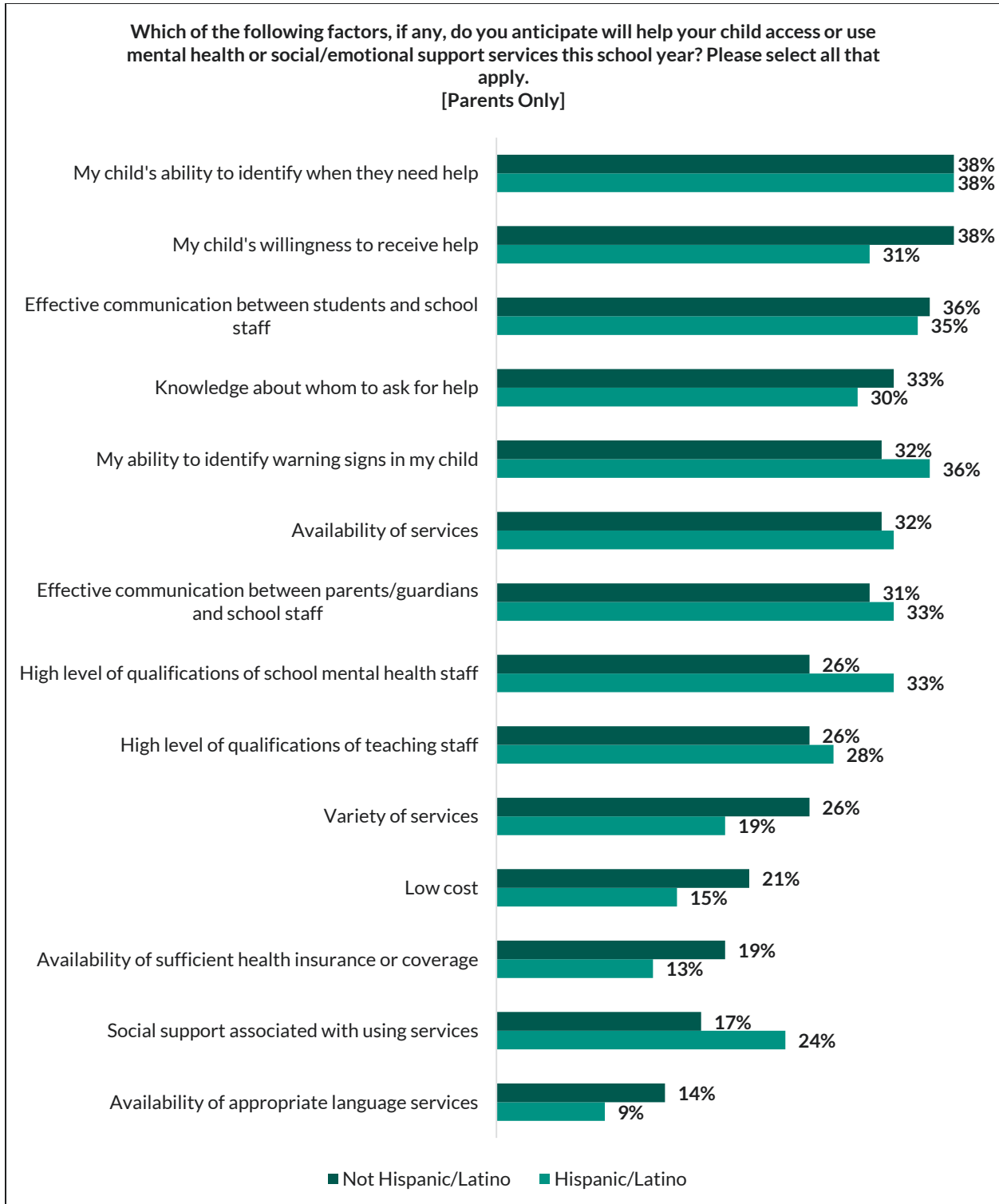


HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

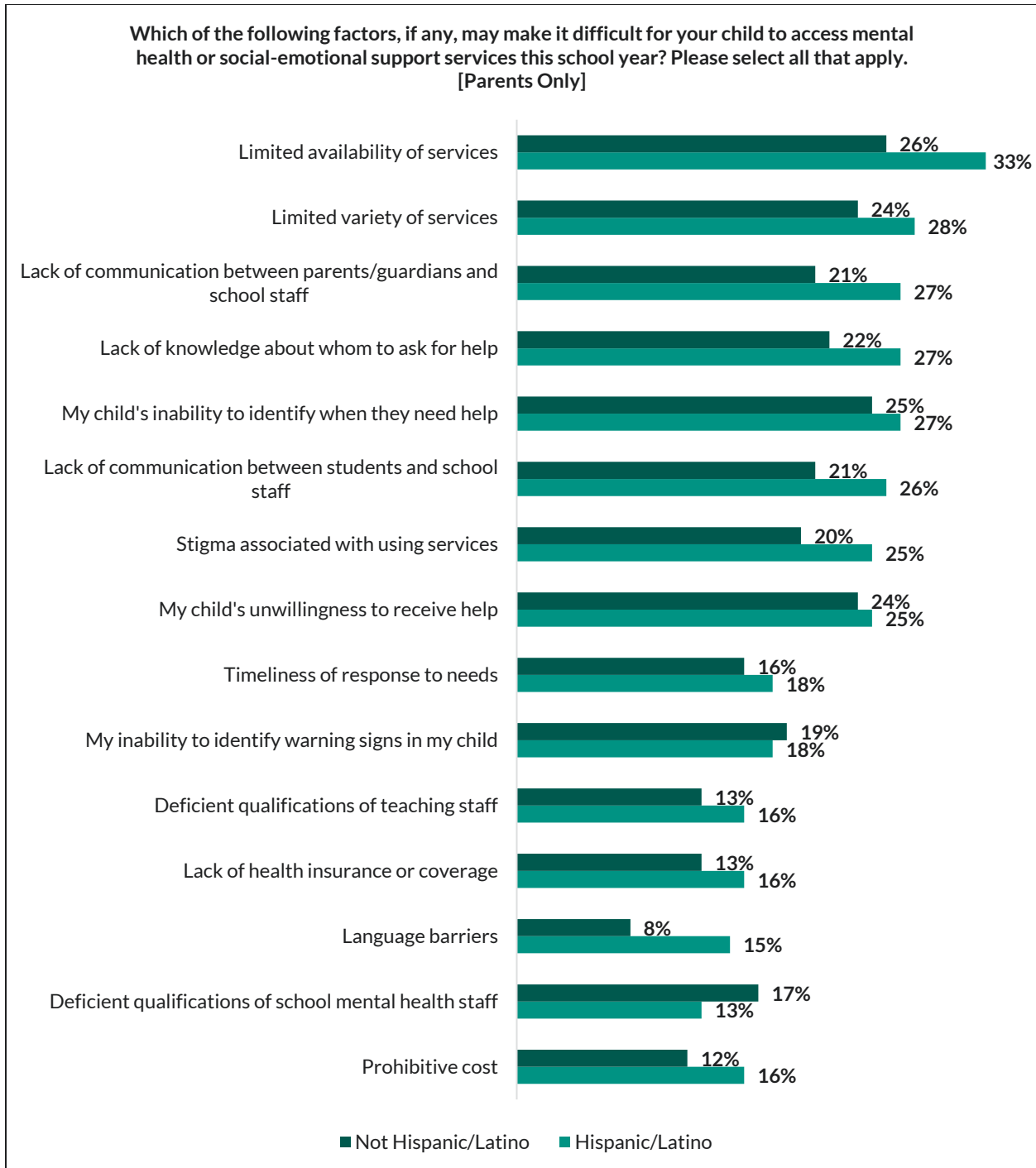
Hispanic/Latino respondents identified communication or check-ins with school staff (25%) and individual mental health counseling services (24%) as the most beneficial resources for students' mental health and wellbeing support. Although Non-Hispanic/Latino respondents also ranked individual mental health counseling services as the top resource, support staff who understand students is ranked second within this group.



Surveyed Hispanic/Latino parents identified their own ability to identify warning signs in their child as one of the main factors that most help their child access or use mental health or social-emotional support services. While 38 percent of surveyed Hispanic/Latino parents indicated that their child’s ability to identify when they need help is the top factor, 36 percent of them indicated their own ability to identify warning signs in their child as one of the main factors. In contrast, effective communication between students and school staff is ranked second among Non-Hispanic/Latino parents.

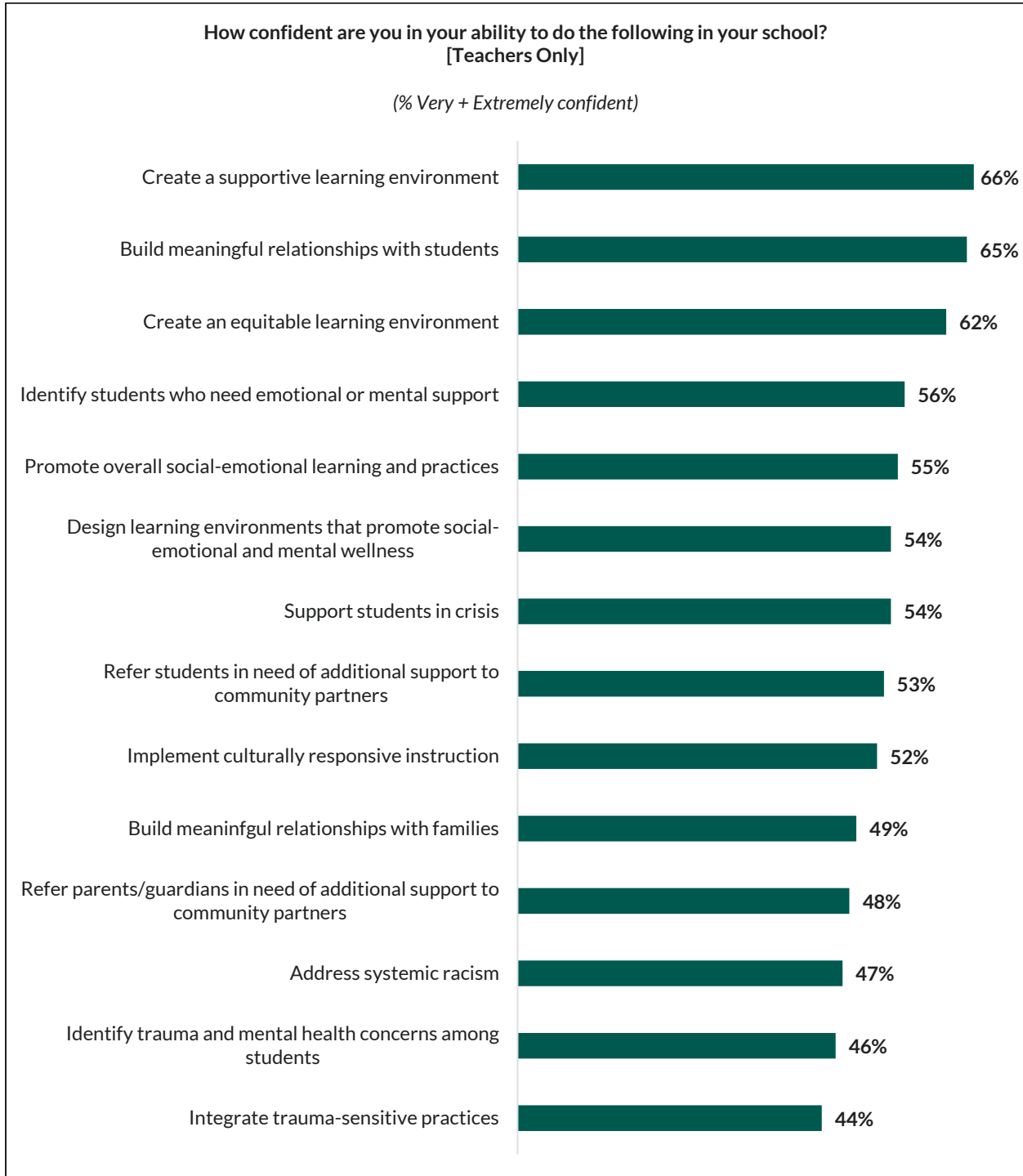


When asked about factors that make it difficult for students to access mental health support services at their school, the proportion of Hispanic/Latino parents perceiving barriers is higher than the proportion of Non-Hispanic/Latino parents in all categories, particularly regarding language barriers (15% of Hispanic/Latino parents and 8% of Non-Hispanic/Latino parents).

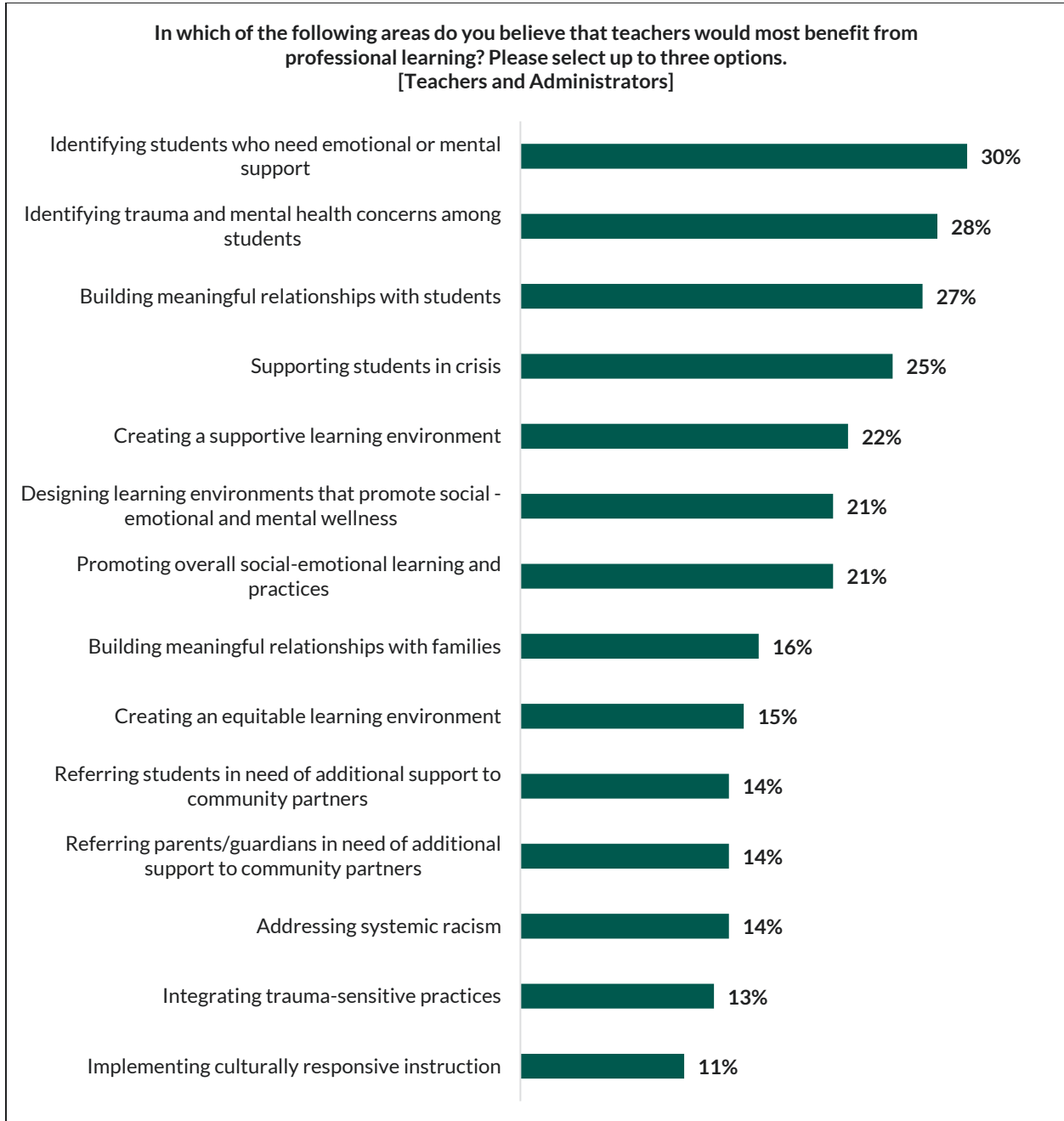


TEACHER CONFIDENCE

Most teacher respondents indicated being very or extremely confident in their ability to create a supportive learning environment (66%) and to build meaningful relationships with students (65%). Teacher respondents are less confident about their ability to integrate trauma-sensitive practices (44%) and to identify trauma and mental health concerns among students (46%).

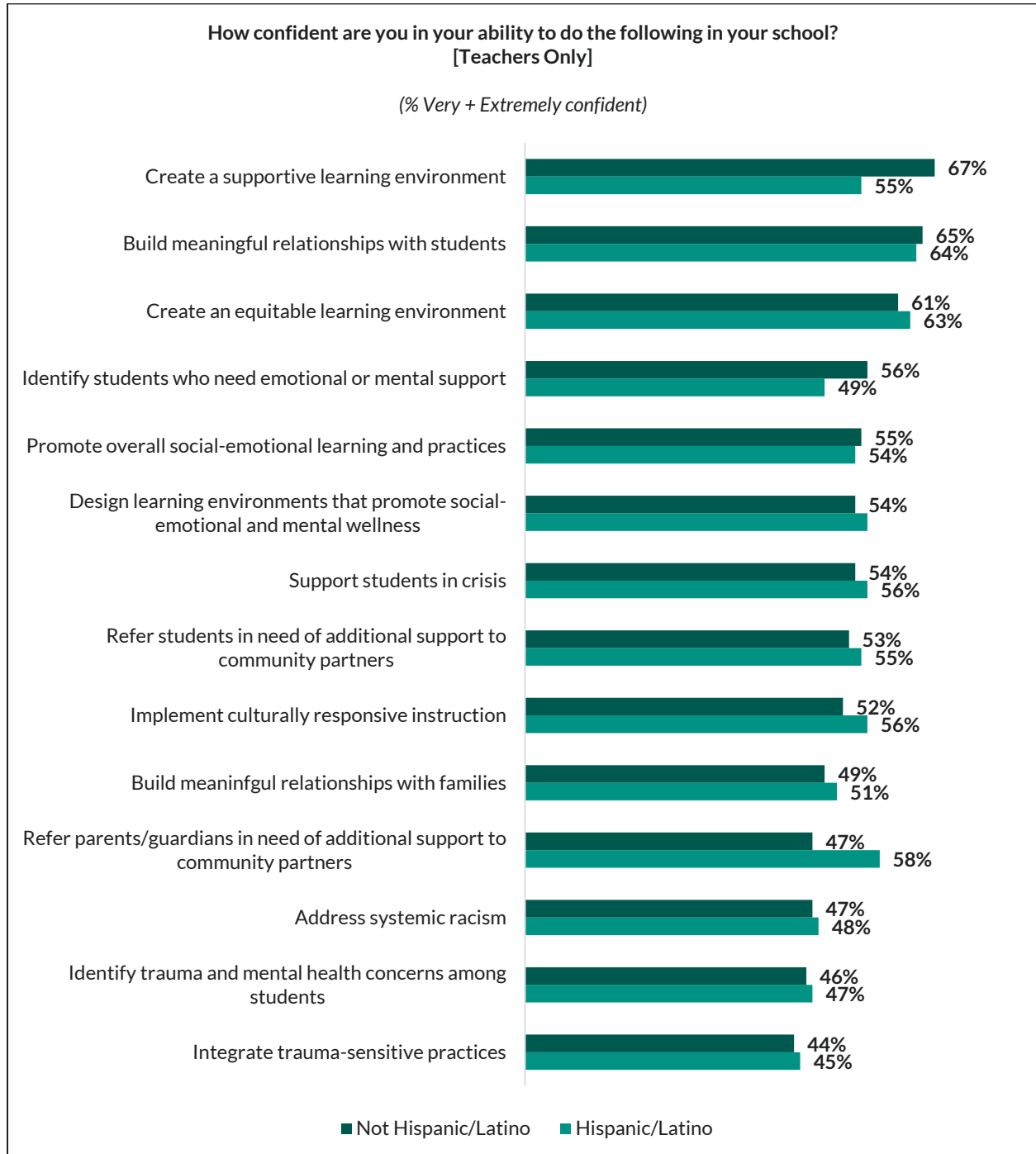


Therefore, the top professional learning areas that administrator and teacher respondents identified as most beneficial include identifying students who need additional emotional or mental support (30%) and identifying trauma and mental health concerns among students (28%). Although teachers indicated low confidence levels in their ability to integrate trauma-sensitive practices, only 13 percent of respondents identified integrating trauma-sensitive practices as a professional learning area that would most benefit teachers.

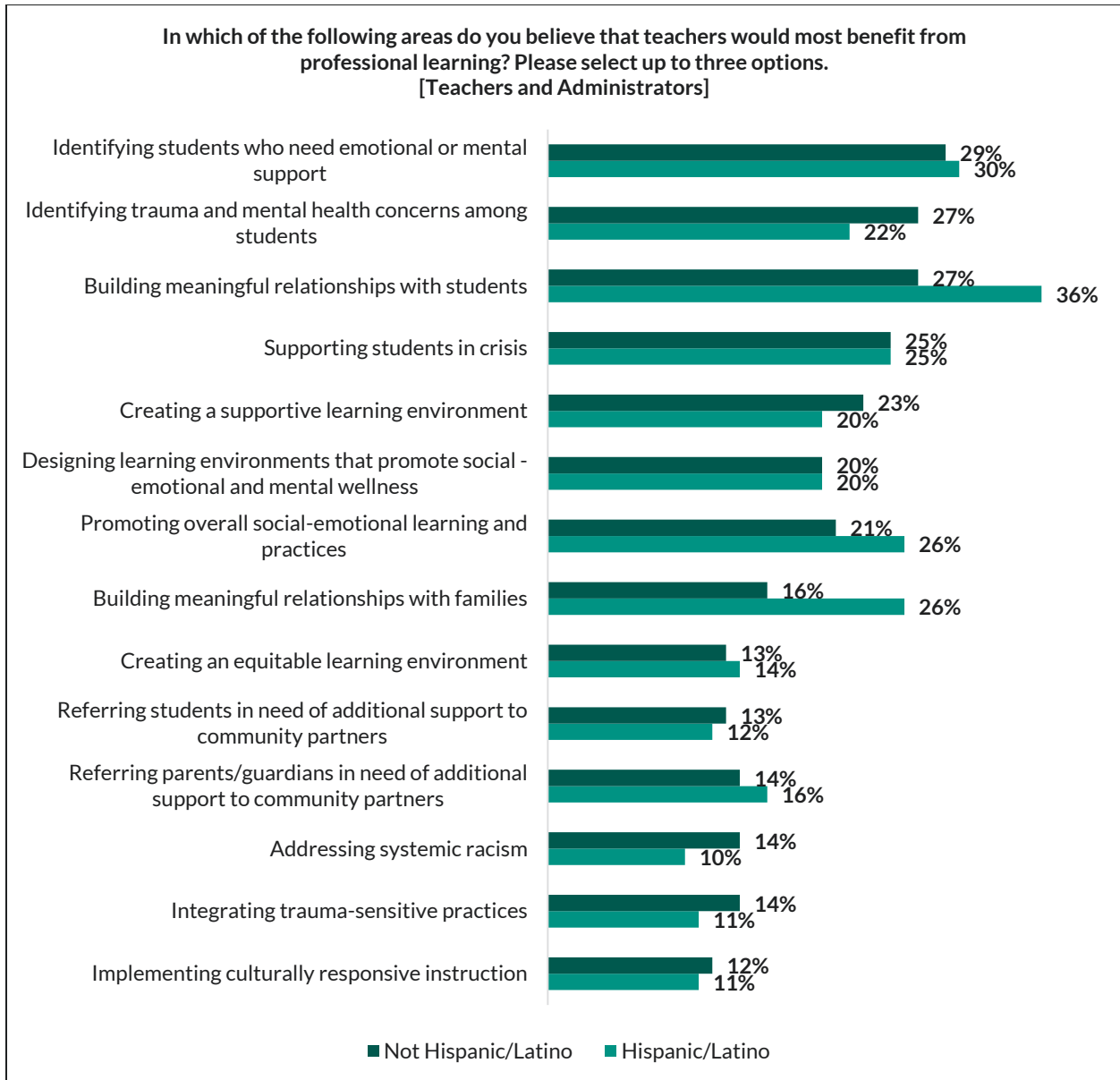


HISPANIC/LATINO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONS

Most surveyed Hispanic/Latino teachers indicated being very or extremely confident about their ability to build meaningful relationships with students (64%), create an equitable learning environment (63%), and refer parents/guardians in need of additional support to community partners (58%). Hispanic/Latino teacher respondents are less confident about their ability to integrate trauma-sensitive practices (45%) and identify trauma and mental health concerns among students (47%).



Surveyed Hispanic/Latino teachers prioritized building meaningful relationships with students (36%) and their families (26%) as professional learning areas that would benefit them the most. Other priority areas indicated by Hispanic/Latino teachers include identifying students who need additional emotional or mental support (30%) and promoting overall social-emotional learning and practices (26%).



ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover Research provides high-quality, custom research and analytics through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

OUR SOLUTIONS

ACADEMIC SOLUTIONS

- **College & Career Readiness:**
Support on-time student graduation and prepare all students for post-secondary education and careers.
- **Program Evaluation:**
Measure program impact to support informed, evidence-based investments in resources that maximize student outcomes and manage costs.
- **Safe & Supportive Environments:**
Create an environment that supports the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of students, parents, and staff through a comprehensive annual assessment of climate and culture.

ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

- **Family and Community Engagement:**
Expand and strengthen family and community relationships and identify community partnerships that support student success.
- **Talent Recruitment, Retention & Development:**
Attract and retain the best staff through an enhanced understanding of the teacher experience and staff professional development needs.
- **Operations Improvement:**
Proactively address changes in demographics, enrollment levels, and community expectations in your budgeting decisions.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION

Build a high-performing administration that is the first choice for students, parents, and staff.

OUR BENEFITS



EXPERT

200+ analysts with multiple methodology research expertise



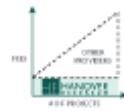
FLEXIBLE

Ongoing custom research agenda adapts with organizations' needs



DEDICATED

Exclusive account and research teams ensure strategic partnership



EFFICIENT

Annual, fixed-fee model shares costs and benefits



www.hanoverresearch.com