

January 18, 2023



# Survey of Parents of K-12 Students Tennessee Statewide

January 3 – 4, 2023 | n=500 |  $\pm 4.30\%$

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# PROJECT SPECIFICATION



## Research Problem

- Public education needs have changed since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the political reaction to it hasn't been adjusted properly to fit the needs of both parents and their children. The Stones River Group needs to collect data on parents of students in the Tennessee public school system to understand their overall sentiment surrounding public education reform and to uncover which messages have the most impact on these parents.



## Target Group

- Parent or legal guardian of school-aged child under the age of 18 in Tennessee
- Weighted to be representative by:
  - Gender: Male / Female - 50/50
  - Education: High school / Higher - 35/65
    - Per statistics from Tennessee Department of Education for educational attainment of adults ages 25-64



## Methodology

- Quantitative CAWI (Computer Administered Web Interviewing) survey
- Used online panel
- Number of respondents
  - **January 2023: 405 respondents**
  - January 2022: 402 respondents
  - November 2020: 500 respondents
- Interviewed
  - **January 2023: January 10-16, 2023**
  - January 2022: January 7-11, 2022
  - November 2020: October 28 - November 2, 2020

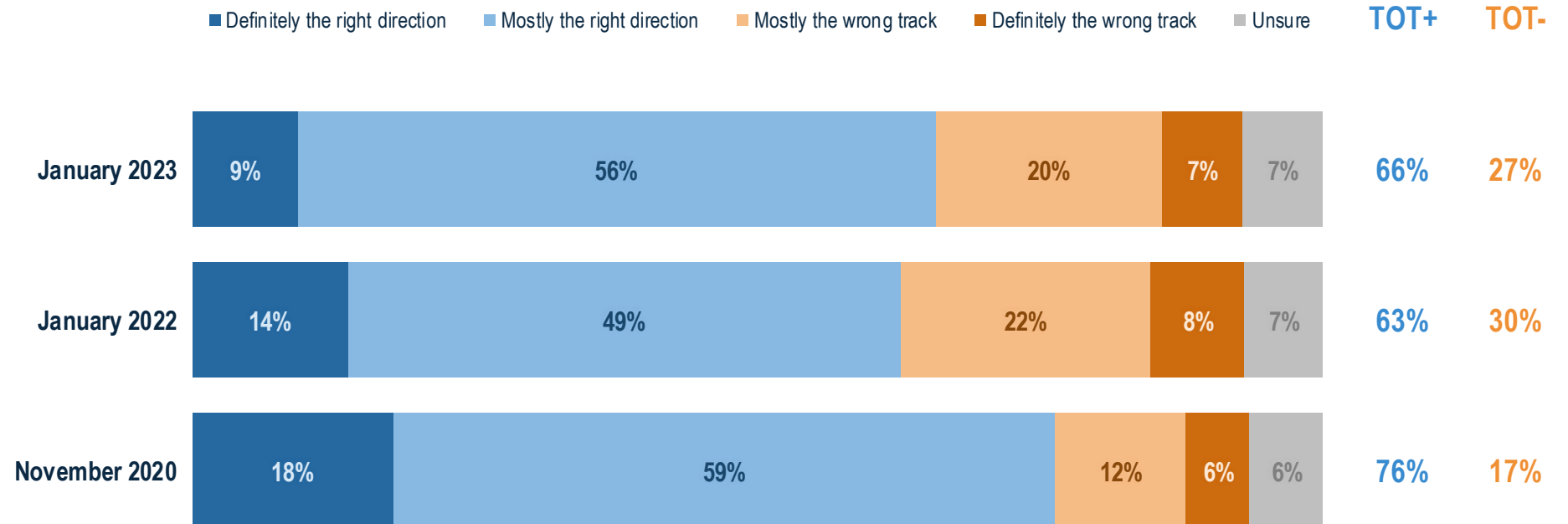


## Insights and Analysis

- Since 2020, opinion about public education has remained pretty static. However, they are **more satisfied than last year**.
- Parents prioritize **safety, behavior, and school programs/subjects** as top issues, which is very different from last year's priorities of **education quality** and **Covid**.
- Most parents still strongly think **they should be able to choose a public school that best meets their child's needs**.
- Parents believe **State Board** is the main authority in control of education (with a 7% decrease from last year). **Local Boards are** steady at 18%, and the **Governor** climbed to third place at 13% (8% last year and 2020).
- Parents still feel the need for a strong **change in public schools** with “a lot” of change growing 4% since last year. However, a third of respondents are unsure about **charter schools producing better results**.
- Parents **strongly support having charter schools as an option**, with *Charter Schools/Different Learning Styles*” as the most effective message when talking to voters about the issue.
- They believe improving the **curriculum** would be the greatest improvement to public schools.

# Public schools' image is up but still short of 2020 peak

- The image of public schools in Tennessee continues to shift since the 2020 Covid pandemic.
- The total “wrong track” continues to remain steady at around 27% (30% Jan 2022).
- “Definitely the right direction” continues to decrease by 4 or more points after each survey.

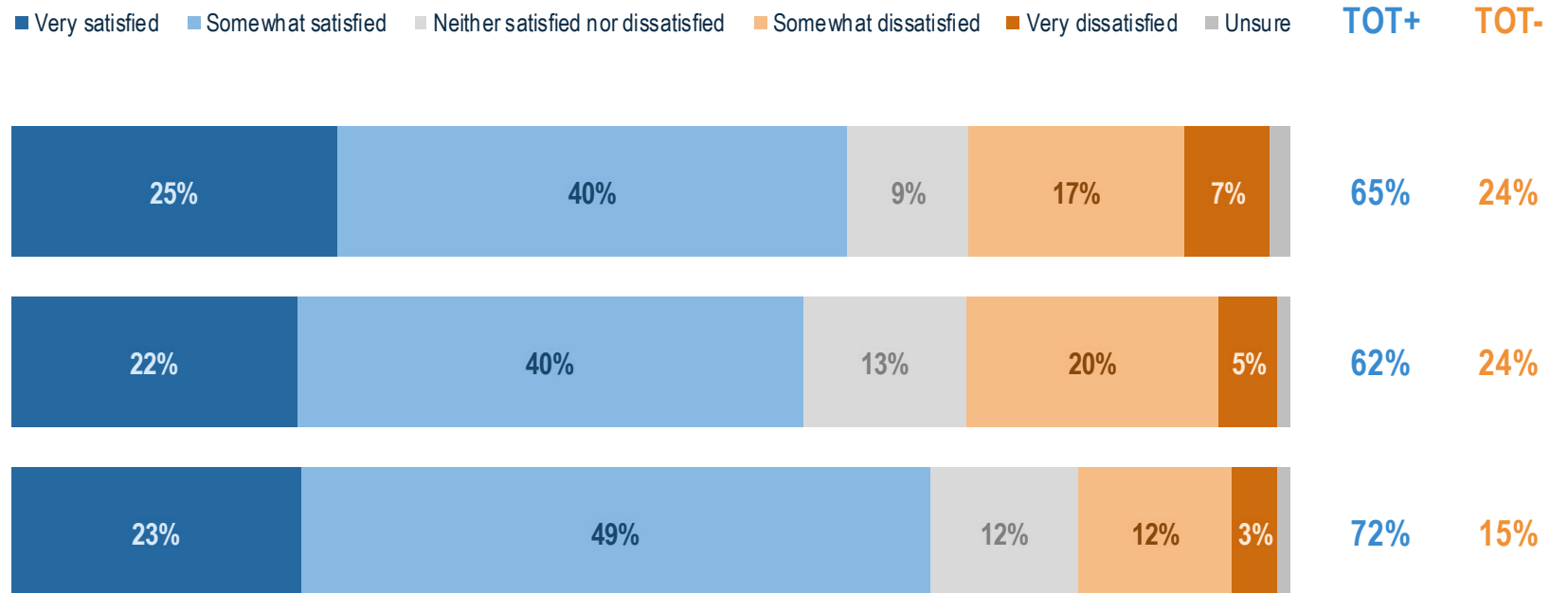


TOT+ = the sum of the two most positive options  
 TOT- = the sum of the two most negative options

JANUARY 2023	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			REGION					RACE		
		TOTAL	M	F	<35	35-49	50+	Memphis	Nashville	Chatt'ga	Knoxville	Bristol	White	Black
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	335	167	168	123	171	41	75	128	52	59	21	258	56	21
TOT+	66%	64%	68%	64%	68%	63%	64%	67%	64%	66%	70%	66%	63%	71%
TOT-	27%	29%	25%	29%	27%	24%	29%	27%	28%	28%	16%	27%	31%	20%

# Public school experience image unchanged from 2022

- Parents’ sentiments about their children’s experiences with public schools in Tennessee remain mostly the same as last year, with a slight increase in “very” dissatisfaction.
- Dissatisfaction remains in the mid-twenties across demographics, except in **Chattanooga** – where 34% of parents show negative attitudes.
- Both genders and all age groups show similar satisfaction and dissatisfaction rates.



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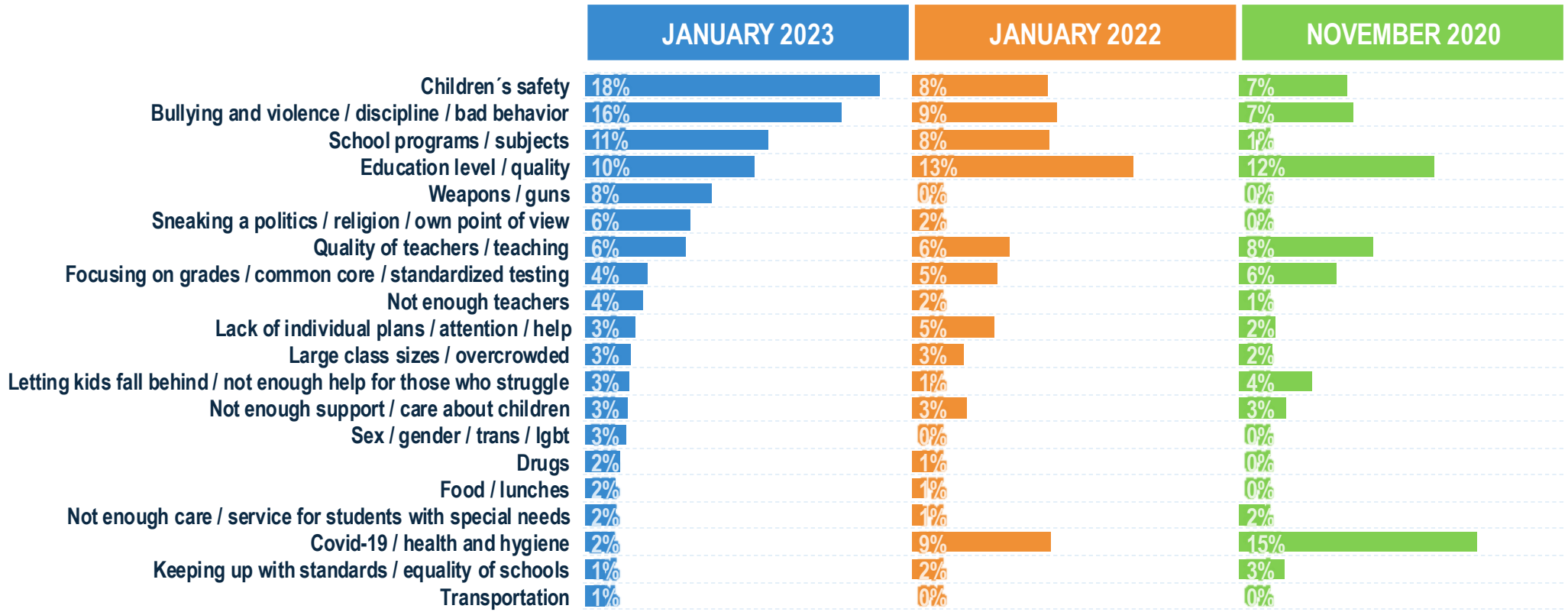
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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	335	167	168	123	171	41	75	128	52	59	21	258	56	21
TOT+	65%	65%	66%	64%	65%	71%	62%	72%	61%	64%	55%	64%	71%	71%
TOT-	24%	25%	22%	23%	23%	25%	22%	20%	34%	24%	24%	25%	20%	20%



# Safety is the dominant top issue followed by bullying

- Children’s safety, behavior, and school subjects had significant jumps from previous surveys – with **safety going up 11% and behavior up 9% since 2020.**
- Safety and bullying are significant issues for **women, parents <35, and in Memphis**, as 300 shooting incidents occurred on U.S. school grounds in 2022, compared to 250 in 2021 and 114 in 2020.
- Covid as a top issue has essentially disappeared with parents since the end of the pandemic.

TOP 20 - JANUARY 2023



JANUARY 2023	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			REGION					RACE		
TOP 3	TOTAL	M	F	<35	35-49	50+	Memphis	Nashville	Chatt'ga	Knoxville	Bristol	White	Black	Other
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
Children’s safety	18%	15%	20%	21%	15%	21%	24%	18%	15%	10%	26%	17%	28%	7%
Bullying and violence / discipline / bad behavior	16%	12%	19%	19%	15%	12%	18%	15%	18%	14%	9%	15%	16%	20%
School programs / subjects	11%	13%	9%	10%	11%	14%	8%	10%	15%	13%	16%	12%	9%	12%

ALL RESPONDENTS

# Two-thirds say choice based on needs is important to them

- Unchanged from last year, about 9-out-of 10 of respondents say this is “very important.”
- This belief remains consistent across the board, with Memphis showing the most hesitancy (10% unimportant).

■ Very important   
 ■ Somewhat important   
 ■ Neither, nor   
 ■ Somewhat unimportant   
 ■ Very unimportant   
 ■ Unsure   
TOT+    TOT-

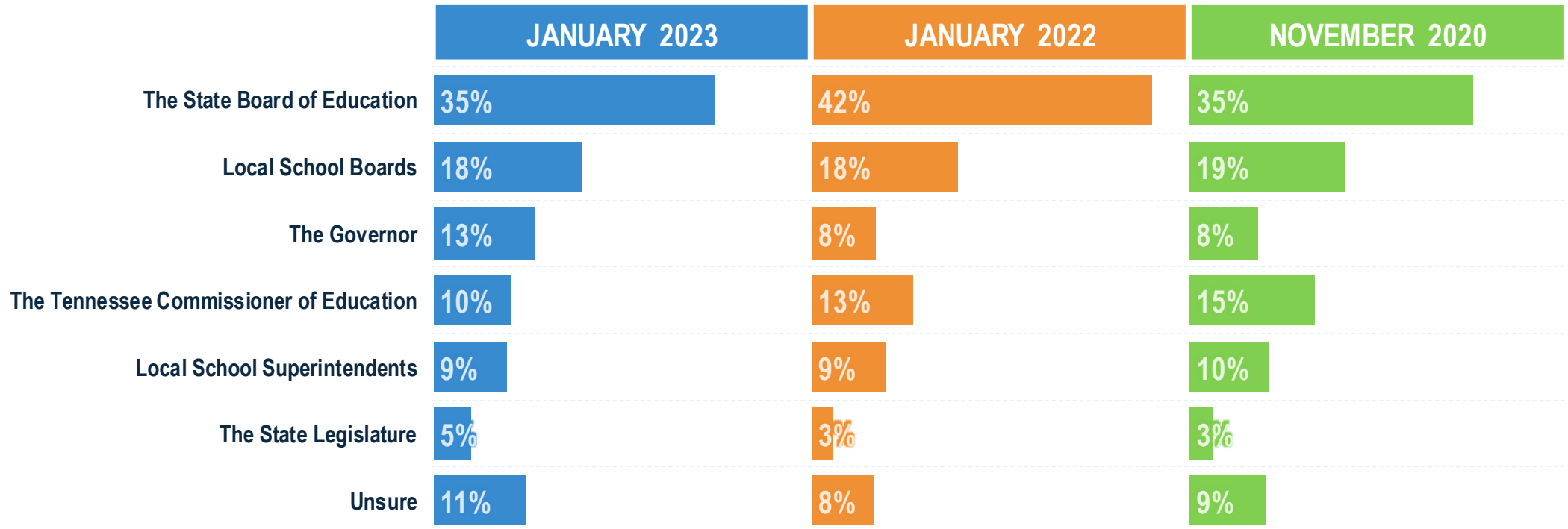


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		M	F	<35	35-49	50+	Memphis	Nashville	Chatt'ga	Knoxville	Bristol	White	Black	Other
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
TOT+	90%	89%	91%	89%	91%	90%	85%	92%	94%	89%	85%	90%	91%	82%
TOT-	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	3%	10%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	14%

# Most still say State Board responsible, but Governor responsibility rising

- The State Board of Education is viewed as responsible for the quality of education at the same rate it was in 2020, which is down from the 2022 peak of 42%.
- Significantly, the Governor having responsibility has almost doubled since 2020 – especially in **Knoxville** and with **parents 50+**.
- The previous third place choice, the Commissioner of Education is now 5% down from November 2020.

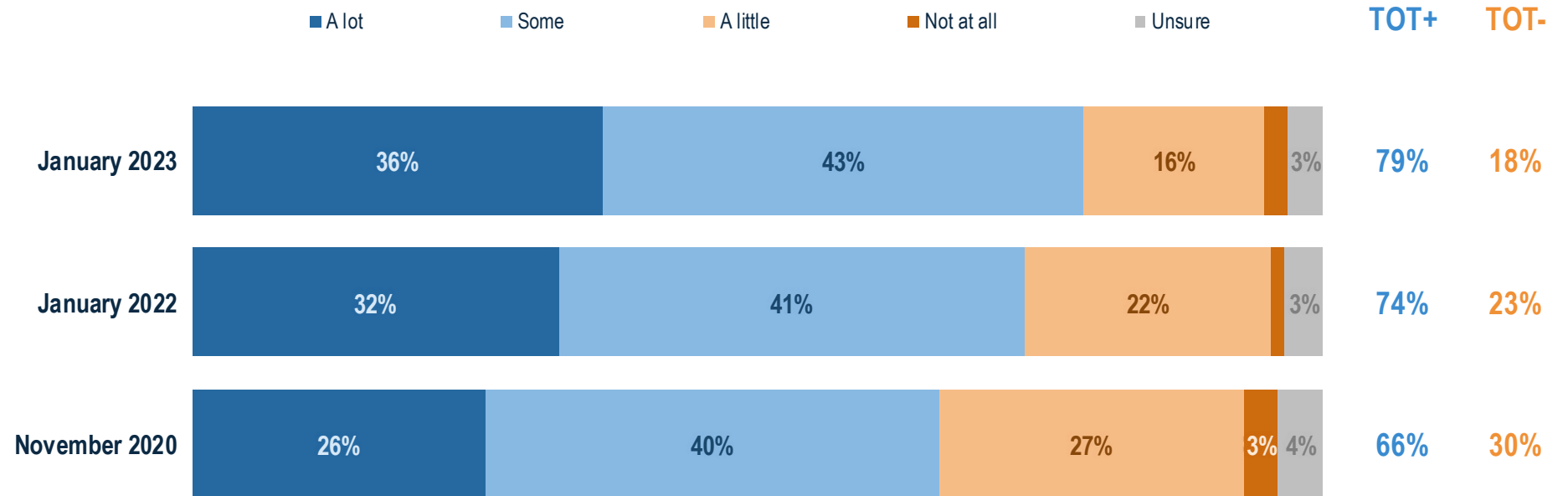


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TOP 3	TOTAL	M	F	<35	35-49	50+	Memphis	Nashville	Chatt'ga	Knoxville	Bristol	White	Black	Other
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
The State Board of Education	35%	37%	32%	35%	37%	24%	32%	37%	37%	35%	19%	36%	24%	42%
Local School Boards	18%	17%	19%	16%	17%	26%	20%	13%	11%	27%	38%	18%	19%	15%
The Governor	13%	11%	14%	12%	11%	18%	13%	13%	9%	16%	9%	12%	14%	11%



# The need for change in schools continues to grow

- The belief that change is needed has increased slightly, but most of that increase is in the “a lot [of change is needed]” category.
- Women, Memphis, Chattanooga, and African-Americans** are especially likely to think a lot of change is needed.



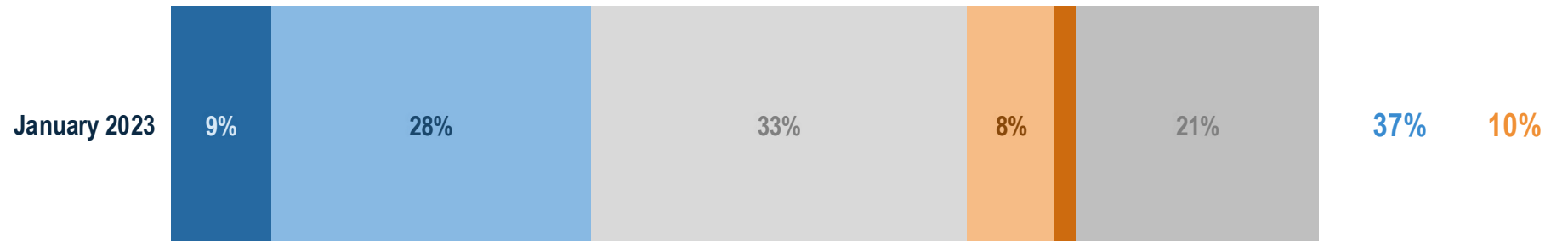
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JANUARY 2023	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			REGION					RACE		
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	TOTAL	M	F	<35	35-49	50+	Memphis	Nashville	Chatt'ga	Knoxville	Bristol	White	Black	Other
A lot	36%	34%	39%	14%	20%	56%	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
Some	43%	47%	38%	37%	47%	42%	36%	48%	37%	42%	50%	45%	33%	42%
A little	16%	16%	16%	20%	12%	21%	13%	14%	19%	21%	14%	16%	13%	20%
Not at all	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	4%	2%	5%	2%	1%	0%
Unsure	3%	1%	5%	4%	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%	5%	6%	2%	3%	14%

# Public charter schools have mixed opinions with parents

- About a third of respondents are unsure about charter schools producing better results than public schools.
- More than 40% of **men, parents 35-49, Memphis, and Chattanooga** residents say charter schools produce better results.

■ Definitely better   
 ■ Probably better   
 ■ About the same   
 ■ Probably worse   
 ■ Definitely worse   
 ■ Unsure   
 TOT+    TOT-



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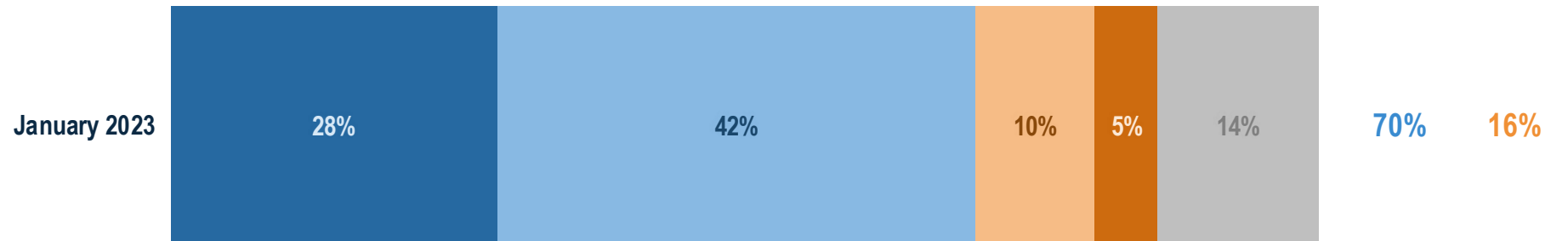
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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
TOT+	37%	43%	30%	31%	40%	37%	41%	36%	41%	26%	38%	34%	52%	35%
TOT-	10%	11%	8%	13%	9%	4%	5%	9%	6%	18%	11%	9%	11%	15%

# 70% of parents show some support for public charter school, even before they hear messaging

- A plurality of voters before messaging say they “somewhat” support the option to send their child to charter schools, with **parents 50+** having the highest total support.
- Majorities of all demographics support the freedom to have an option.

- Strongly support options like charter schools
- Somewhat support options like charter schools
- Somewhat oppose charter schools, only traditional K-12 schools
- Strongly oppose charter schools, only traditional K-12 schools
- Unsure

TOT+ TOT-

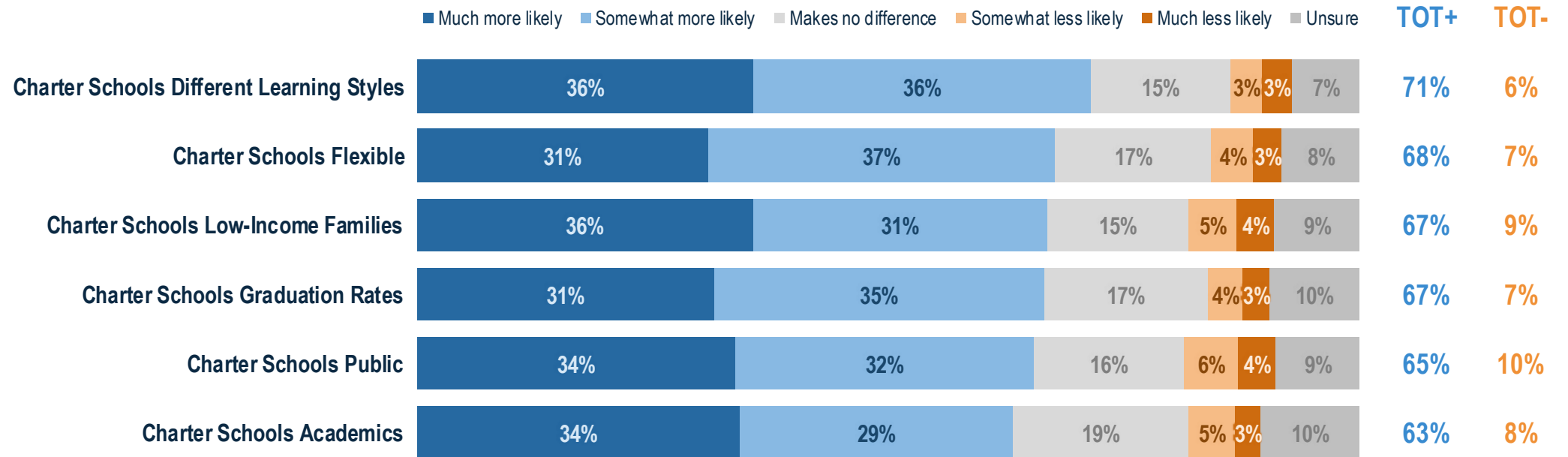


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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
TOT+	70%	72%	69%	64%	71%	83%	75%	70%	72%	65%	59%	69%	75%	72%
TOT-	16%	16%	16%	23%	14%	3%	14%	17%	18%	12%	21%	15%	17%	22%

# Pro-charter school messaging reaches favorable majorities

- “**Charter Schools Different Learning Styles**” is the most impactful overall, reaching 70% across most groups.
- “**Charter Schools Flexible**” and “**Charter Schools Low-Income Families**” are most impactful with **parents 50+, Memphis, and Chattanooga** residents.
- “**Charter Schools Graduation Rates**” resonates the most with **parents 50+**.



TOT+ = the sum of the two most positive options  
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TOT+	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			REGION					RACE		
		TOTAL	M	F	<35	35-49	50+	Memphis	Nashville	Chatt'ga	Knoxville	Bristol	White	Black
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
Different Learning Styles	71%	72%	71%	70%	70%	79%	76%	68%	78%	67%	74%	74%	66%	54%
Flexible	68%	67%	68%	61%	69%	78%	72%	63%	78%	67%	60%	69%	68%	57%
Low-Income Families	67%	67%	67%	61%	68%	77%	70%	68%	71%	62%	51%	69%	66%	52%
Graduation Rates	67%	65%	68%	63%	65%	82%	73%	62%	73%	61%	67%	68%	67%	45%
Public	65%	66%	65%	63%	66%	70%	70%	63%	67%	62%	65%	66%	66%	61%
Academics	63%	63%	64%	62%	63%	68%	69%	63%	68%	50%	66%	63%	71%	51%



# Messages

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Messages tested in this survey, in order of the most effective.

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***Charter Schools Different Learning Styles***

Not every student learns the same, and charter schools have more flexibility to create a school culture that improves student performance and parent satisfaction while still having rigorous academic standards.

***Charter Schools Flexible***

The flexibility that local charter schools have for hiring teachers, personalizing learning, crafting creative lesson plans, and using technology in new ways allows them to make any helpful changes to address the learning needs of students.

***Charter Schools Low-Income Families***

Charter schools provide families with a tuition-free choice option for their children’s education, something that has been traditionally only available to families with high incomes who can afford private school.

***Charter Schools Graduation Rates***

Data from communities with a mix of traditional public schools and nonprofit public charter schools show they have stronger student achievement and higher graduation rates for the entire community.

***Charter Schools Public***

Charter schools are public schools, and they are free and open to all children, no matter their background or skill level.

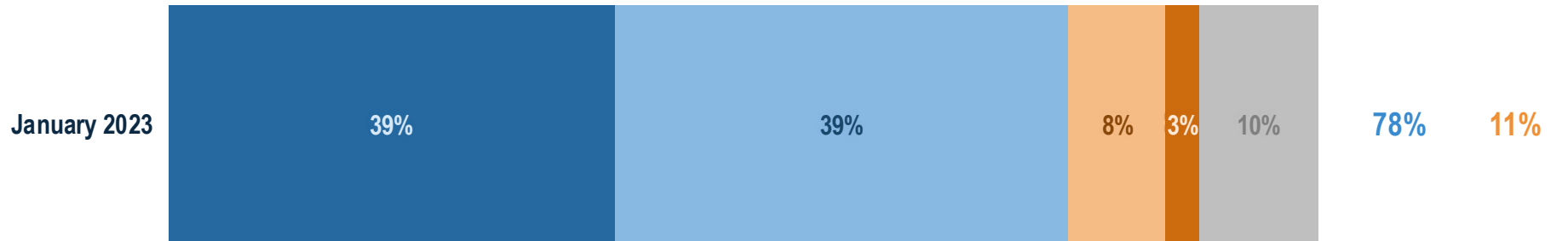
***Charter Schools Academics***

According to a recent study, students advance at a faster pace academically in charter schools than they do in traditional public schools – especially African American students and students from low-income backgrounds.

# Majorities say charter schools should have access to vacant public-school buildings

- More than three-fourths of those surveyed believe that public charter schools should be able to use vacant public-school buildings.

■ Definitely yes    
 ■ Probably yes    
 ■ Probably no    
 ■ Definitely no    
 ■ Unsure    
 TOT+    
 TOT-



TOT+ = the sum of the two most positive options  
 TOT- = the sum of the two most negative options

Currently, public charter schools must find and then pay for their facilities and buildings. On average, this costs charters about 11% - 15% of their total budget and means that money that should be spent in classrooms, on teacher salaries, and on instructional supplies must be spent on buildings instead.

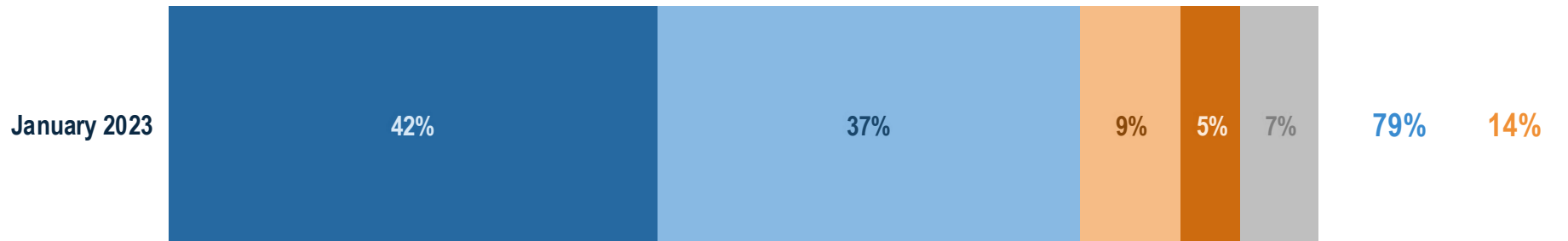
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TOT+	78%	80%	77%	75%	79%	83%	82%	75%	82%	78%	77%	79%	79%	65%
TOT-	11%	12%	11%	15%	10%	7%	6%	13%	12%	14%	12%	11%	14%	7%

# After messaging, “strongly” support surpasses “somewhat” support for charter schools option

- After messaging, the respondents say they “strongly support” having charter schools as an option almost doubles.
- All the demographics tested showed an increase in support, with **parents 50+ and Chattanooga** residents approaching 90% total support.

- Strongly support options like charter schools
- Somewhat support options like charter schools
- Somewhat oppose charter schools, only traditional K-12 schools
- Strongly oppose charter schools, only traditional K-12 schools
- Unsure

TOT+ TOT-



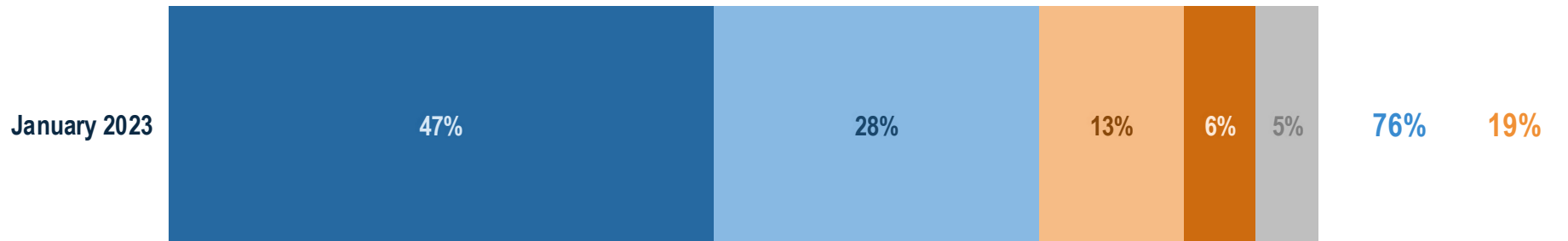
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TOT+	79%	80%	79%	79%	77%	86%	83%	77%	85%	76%	73%	80%	77%	73%
TOT-	14%	15%	13%	15%	15%	6%	12%	16%	12%	14%	16%	13%	17%	22%

# Reading proficiency law supported with close to half “strongly supporting” law

- All the demographics tested show a healthy majority for the so-called “third-grade law” that requires students to be proficient in reading before going to fourth grade.
- Chattanooga, Bristol, and men** show the strongest support for the law – while **women, Memphis, and Nashville** show some resistance to it.

■ Strongly support   
 ■ Somewhat support   
 ■ Somewhat oppose   
 ■ Strongly oppose   
 ■ Unsure   
 TOT+    TOT-



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JANUARY 2023	TOTAL	GENDER		AGE			REGION					RACE		
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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
TOT+	76%	79%	72%	79%	74%	74%	72%	75%	83%	74%	83%	77%	72%	71%
TOT-	19%	15%	22%	16%	21%	18%	21%	21%	16%	17%	9%	19%	21%	15%

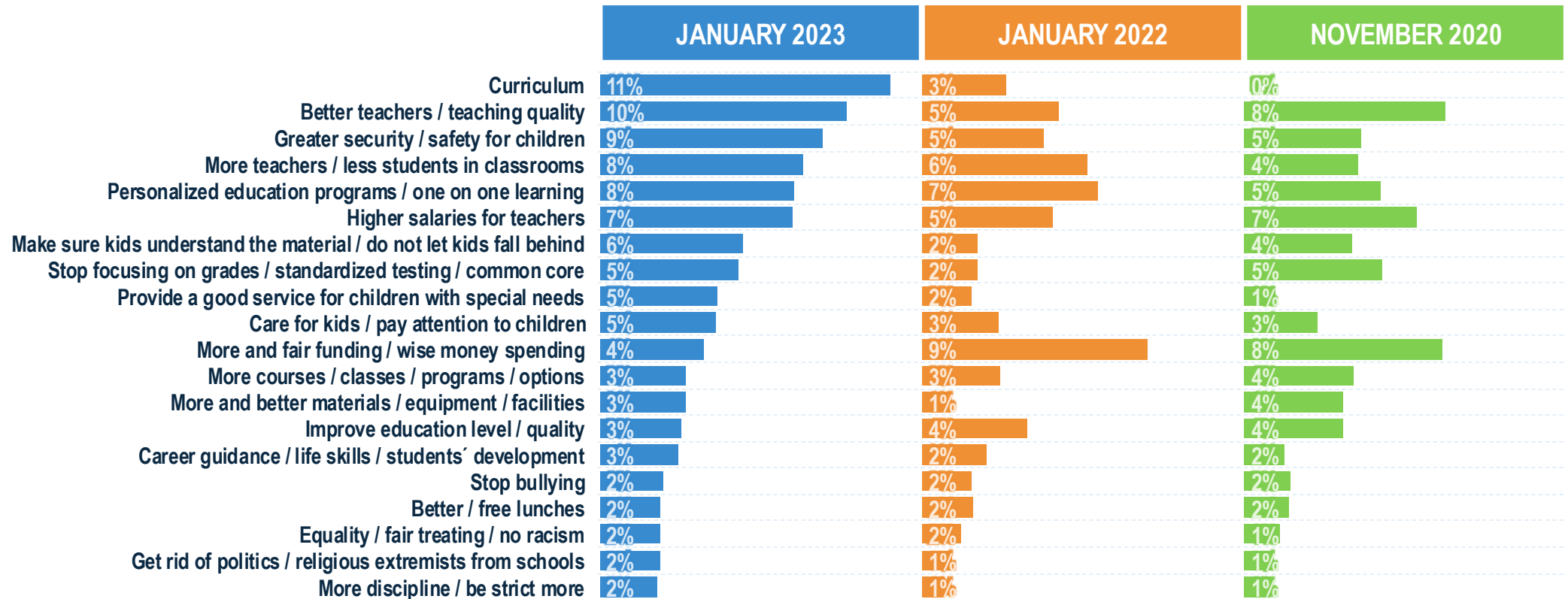




# Curriculum improvement sees the biggest jump

- Improving the **curriculum** increased dramatically since last year, and is the top issue followed by **better teachers**. These are the only two issues to reach double digits overall.
- Safety** rounds up the top three and reaches double-digit support **with parents <35, Memphis, Knoxville, and African-Americans**.

TOP 20 - JANUARY 2023

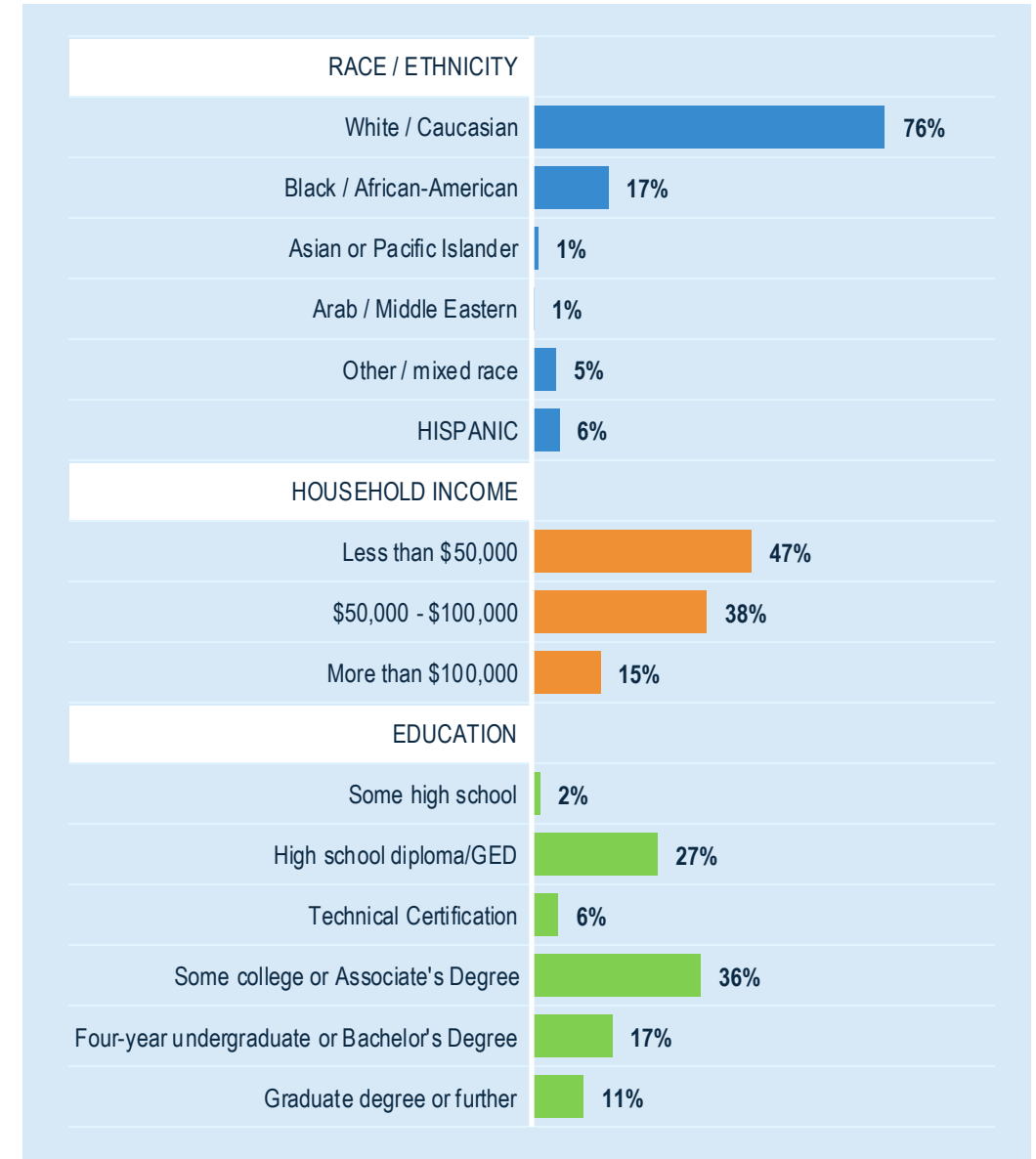
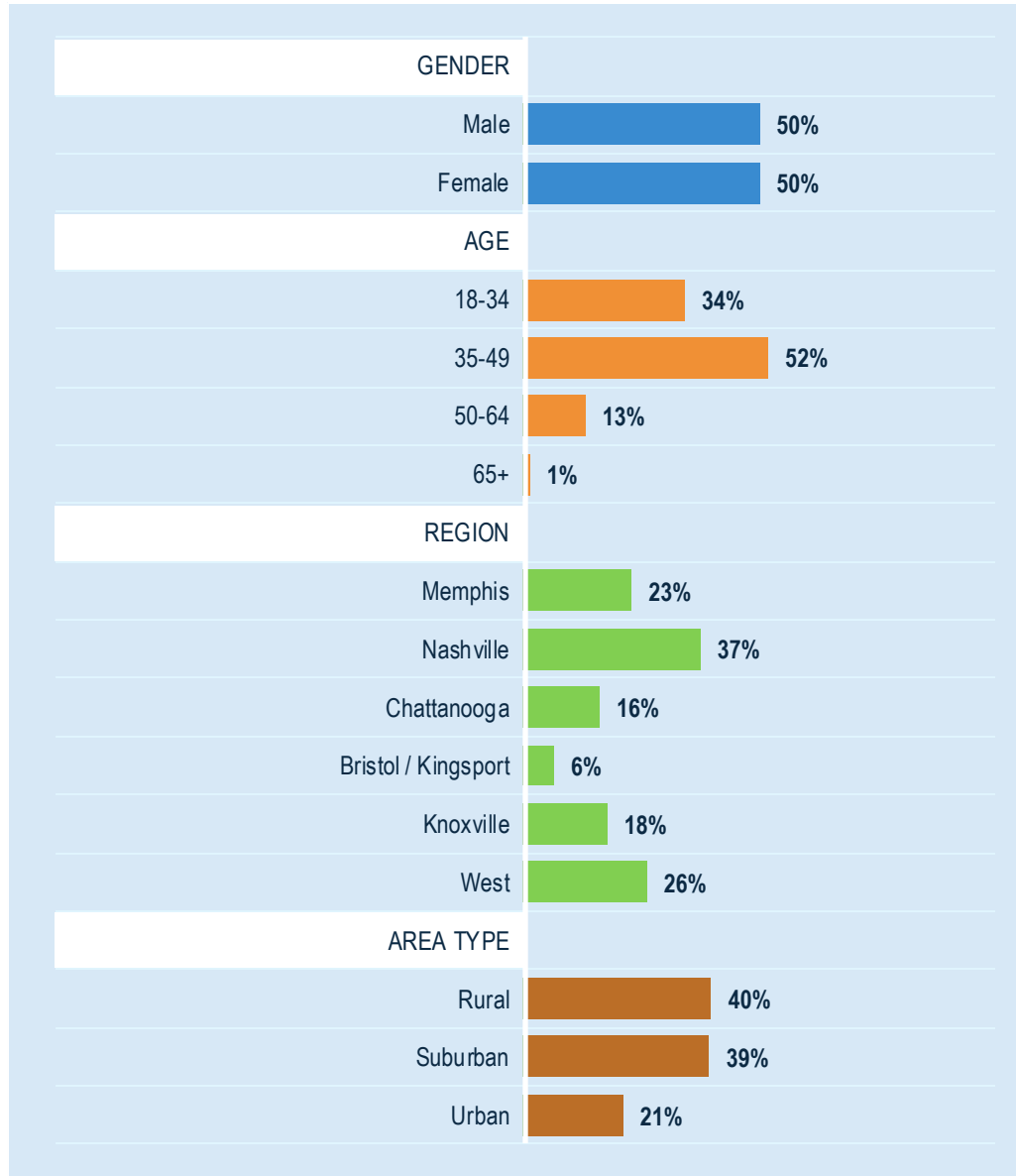


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NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	405	197	208	142	207	56	93	152	63	71	26	310	66	29
Curriculum	11%	12%	11%	12%	13%	3%	10%	12%	12%	13%	3%	11%	10%	16%
Better teachers / teaching quality	10%	10%	9%	10%	9%	11%	11%	9%	11%	8%	6%	8%	21%	3%
Greater security / safety for children	9%	9%	8%	13%	7%	5%	11%	7%	9%	10%	6%	9%	10%	0%

ALL RESPONDENTS

# SAMPLE STRUCTURE 1/2

## JANUARY 2023



# SAMPLE STRUCTURE 2/2

## JANUARY 2023

