

Community Priorities Survey

Results and Analysis

Nyack Public Schools

Nov. 30, 2015 – Jan. 15, 2016



Purpose of the Study

In the Community Priorities Survey, Nyack Public Schools asked parents, staff, and the community for feedback on where we, the district, should focus our efforts to best prepare students for life after high school. The purpose of the survey was to determine the community's priorities and how well the district's current initiatives are aligned with those priorities.

K12 *Insight* partnered with Superintendent Montesano and his leadership team to develop the Community Priorities Survey, which addressed the following topics:

- Alignment with Nyack Public School District's mission
- Profile of a graduate
- Managing the district and its schools
- Strengths, needed improvements, and wishes
- Communication

Details of the Study

The survey was open from Nov. 30, 2015 to Jan. 15, 2016.

K12 *Insight* emailed individual invitations with survey links to parents, and district staff sent email notifications with a link to the survey to all staff members. Community members could access the survey through a link posted on the district's website. Paper surveys were also available, and participants could take the survey in English, Spanish, or Creole.

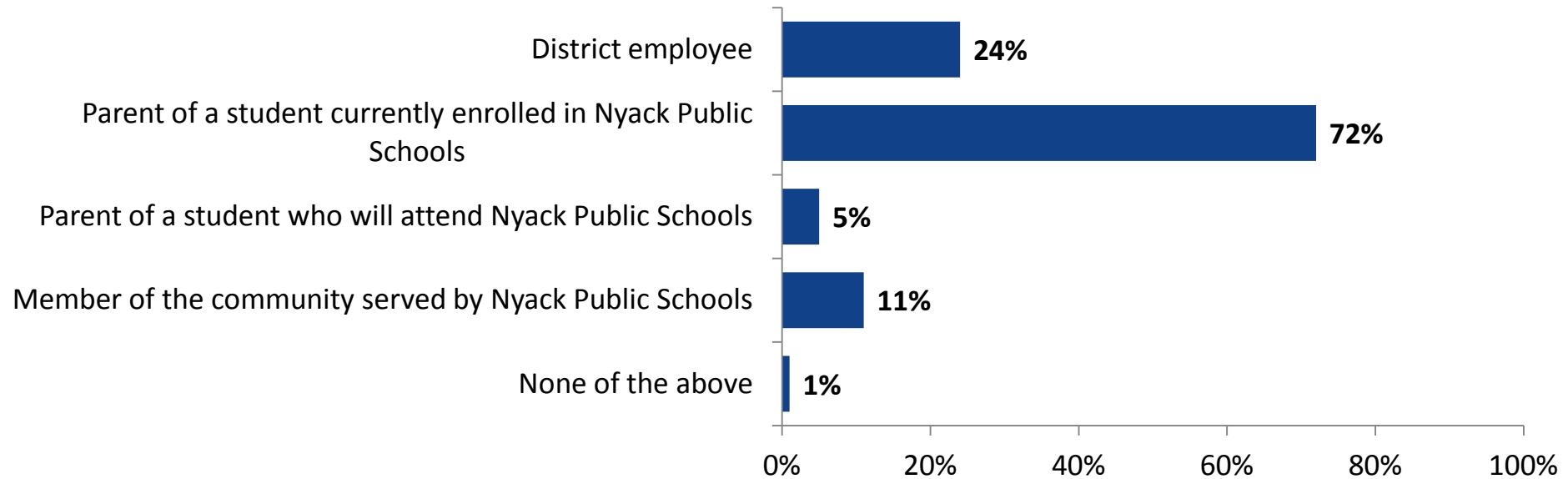
Participants learned about the survey via the district's website and Let's Talk! homepage. Flyers were also posted in each school and district office. Reminders were sent to parents who had not yet taken the survey on Dec. 7, 16, and 21, 2015, as well as on Jan. 13 and 15, 2016.

This report summarizes survey results. Results do not reflect random sampling; therefore, they should not be generalized to all members of the Nyack Public Schools community. Rather, results reflect only the perceptions and opinions of survey participants. Findings for each item in the report exclude participants who did not answer. In charts and graphs, data labels less than 5 percent are not shown.

Participation

Responding Group	Number of Invitations Delivered	Number of Responses via Email Invitations	Public Access Link Responses and Paper Surveys	Total Responses
Parents, Staff, and Community Members	2,644	549	405	954

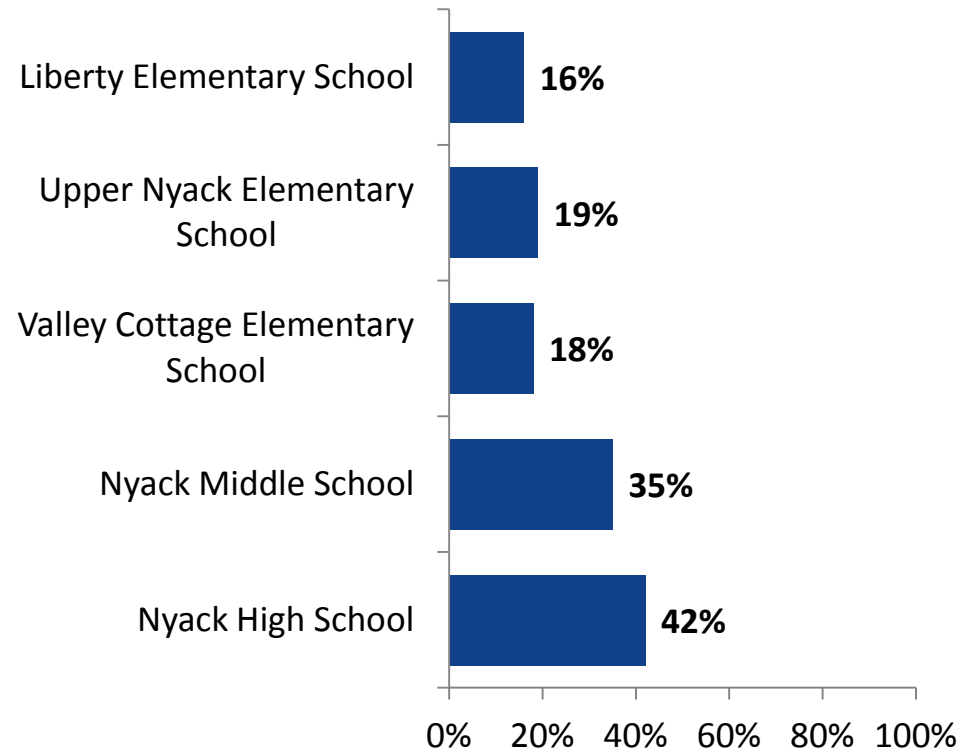
What is your relationship to Nyack Public Schools? (N=954)



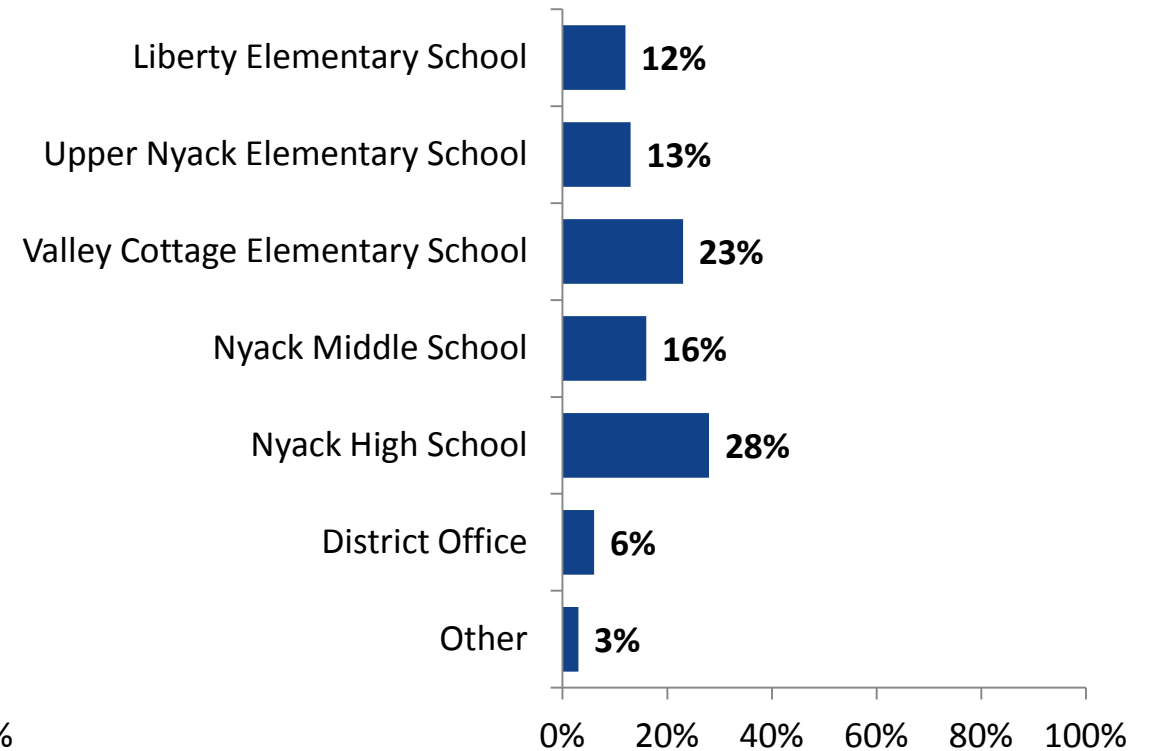
Note: The sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one response option.

Participation (Continued)

Please select your child(ren)'s school. (N=667)



What is your primary work location? (N=226)



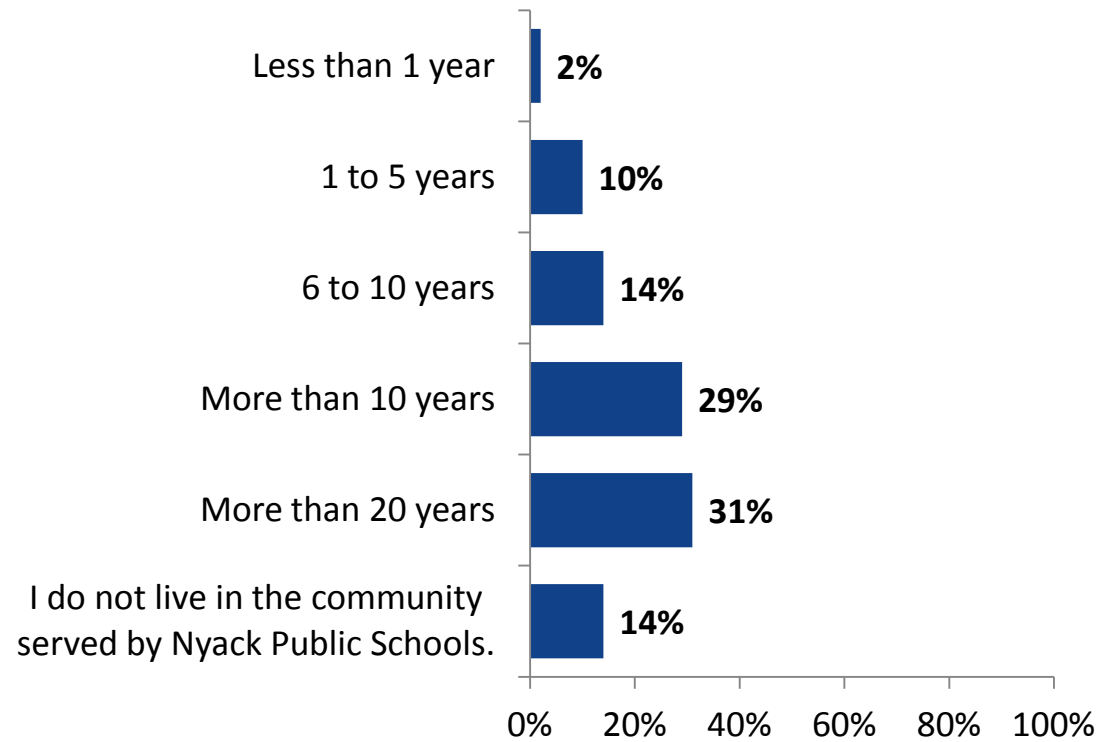
Notes:

- The sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one response option.
- Only parents answered this question.

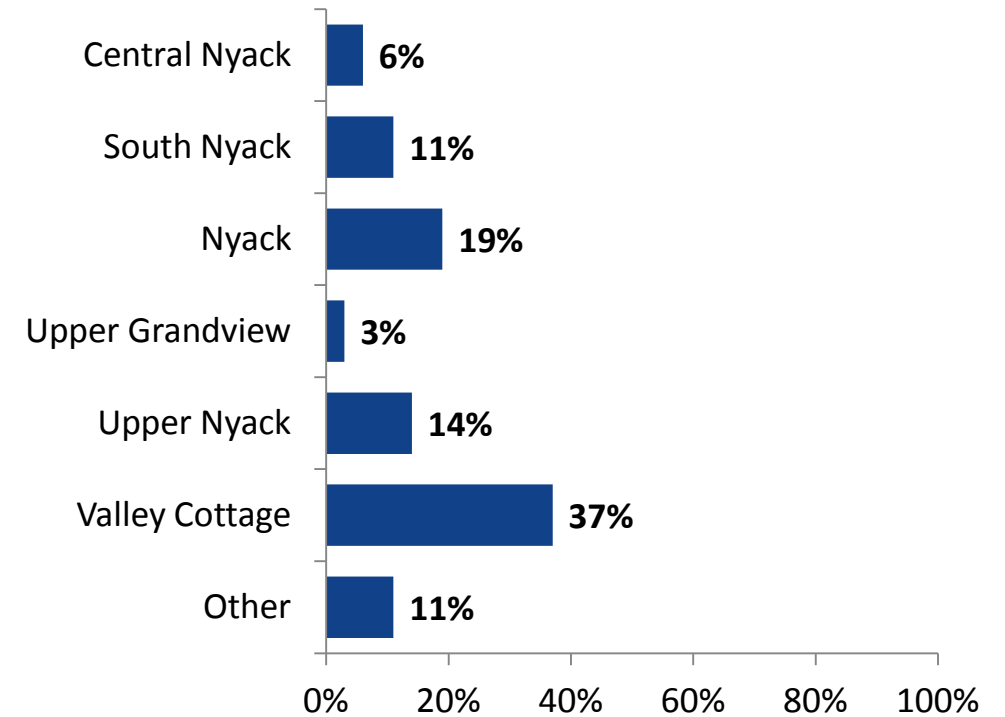
Note: Only district employees answered this question.

Participation (Continued)

How long have you lived in the Nyack community?
(N=926)

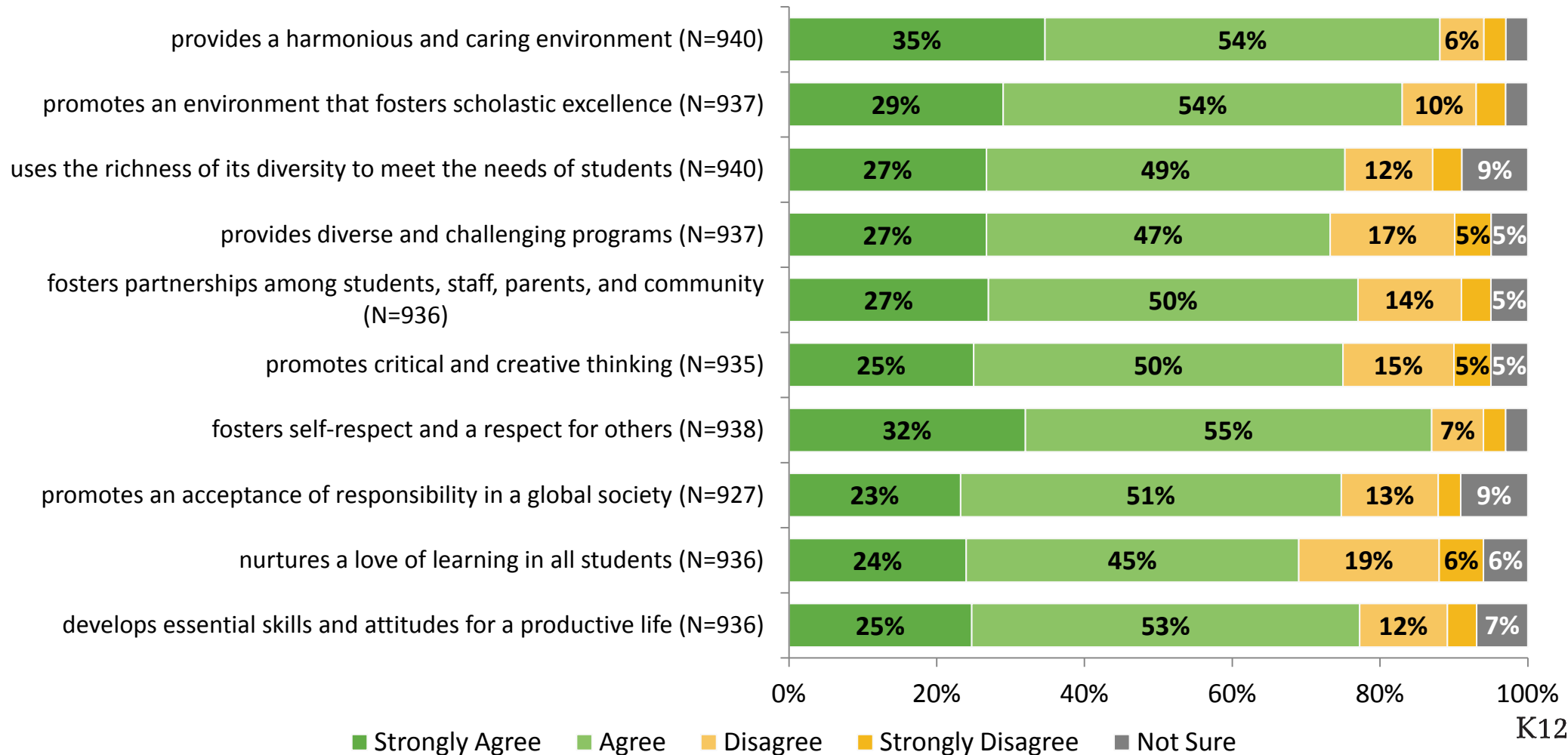


Which of the following best describes the neighborhood where you live? (N=873)



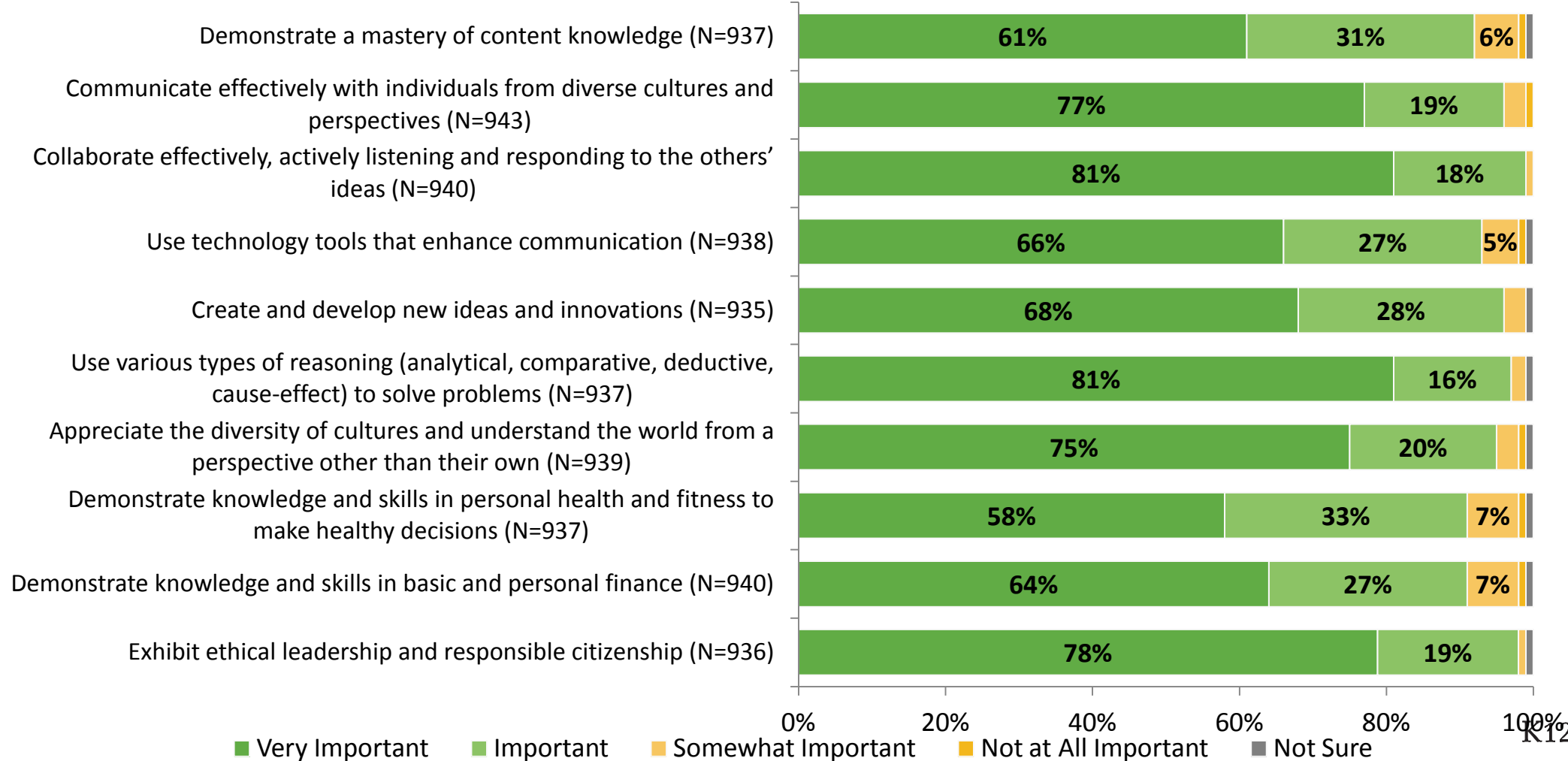
Alignment with Nyack Public School District's Mission

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Nyack Public Schools:



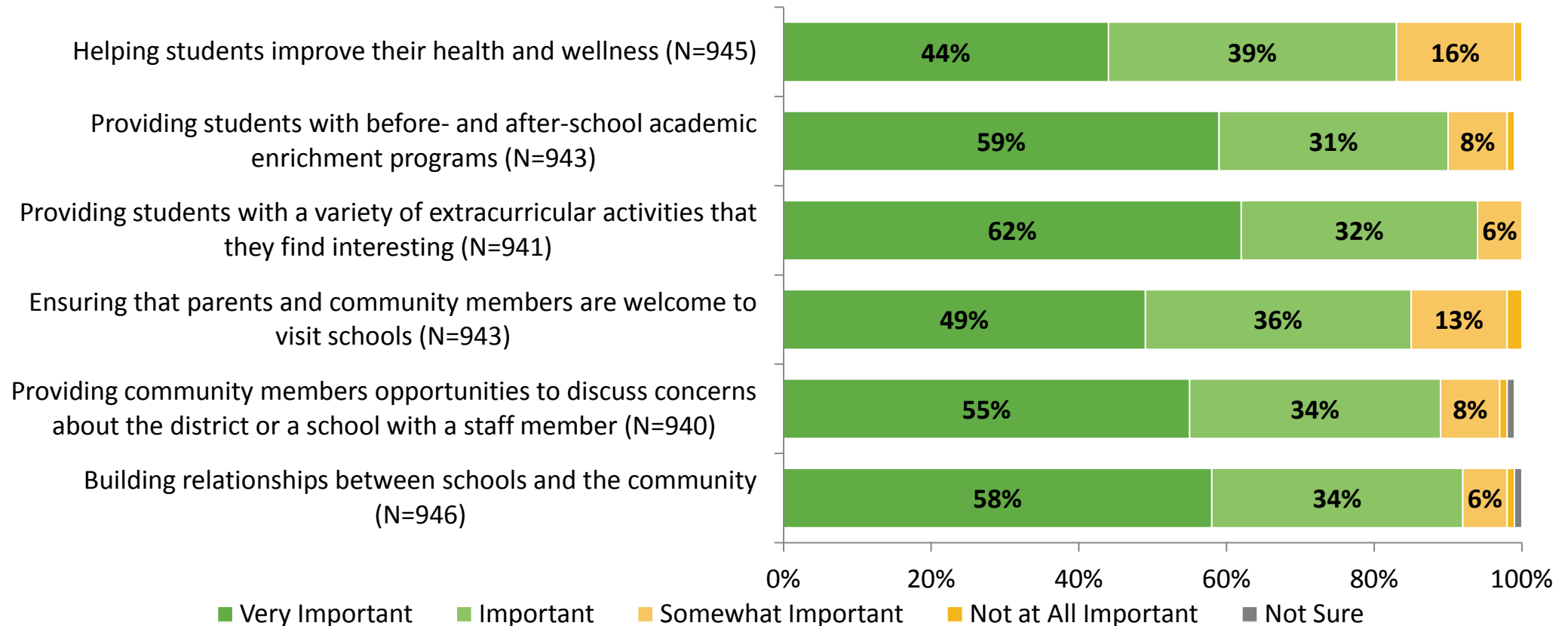
Profile of a Graduate

How important is it to you that students demonstrate the following skills upon graduation from high school?



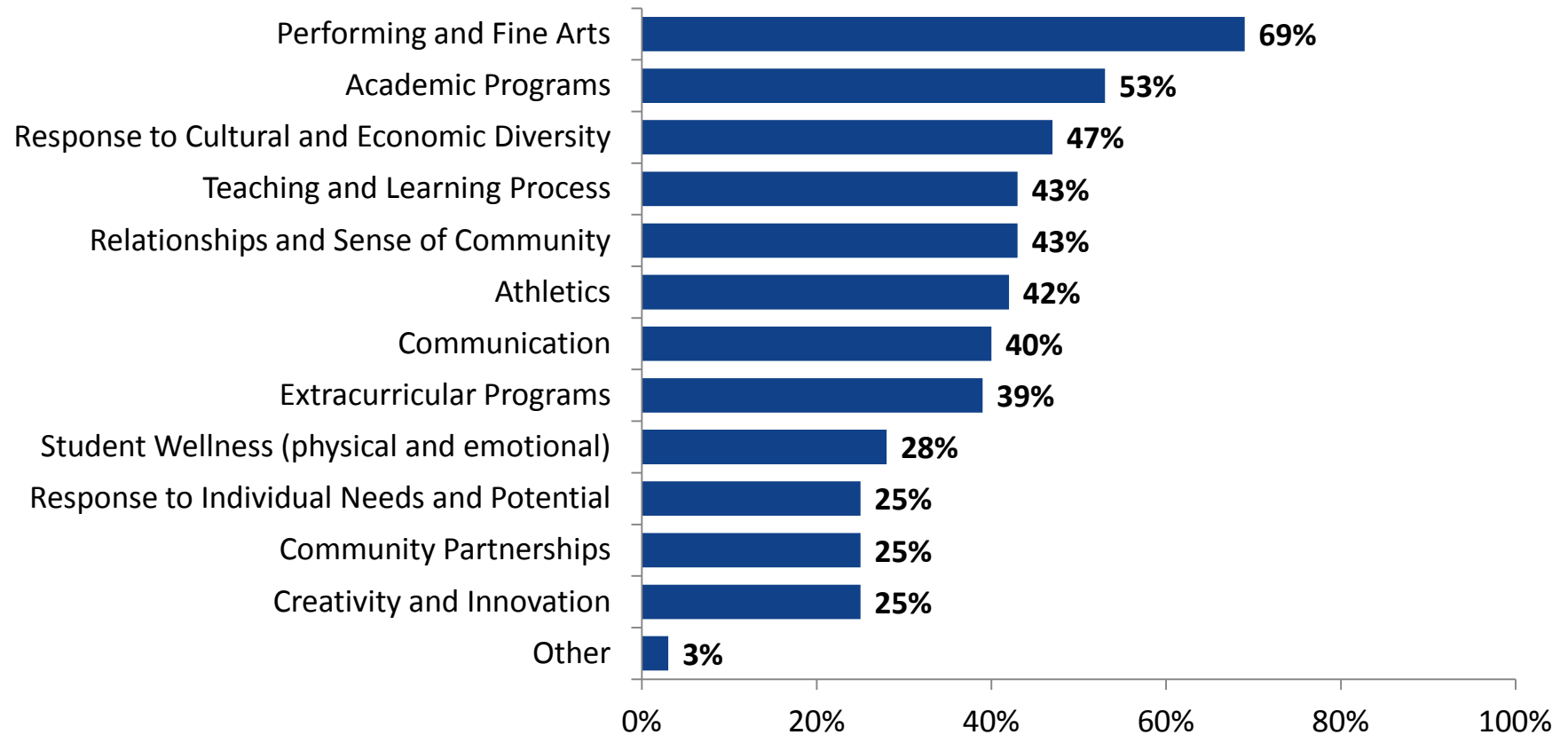
Managing the District and Its Schools

How important is it to you that Nyack Public Schools excel in the following aspects of district and school management?



Nyack Public Schools' Strengths

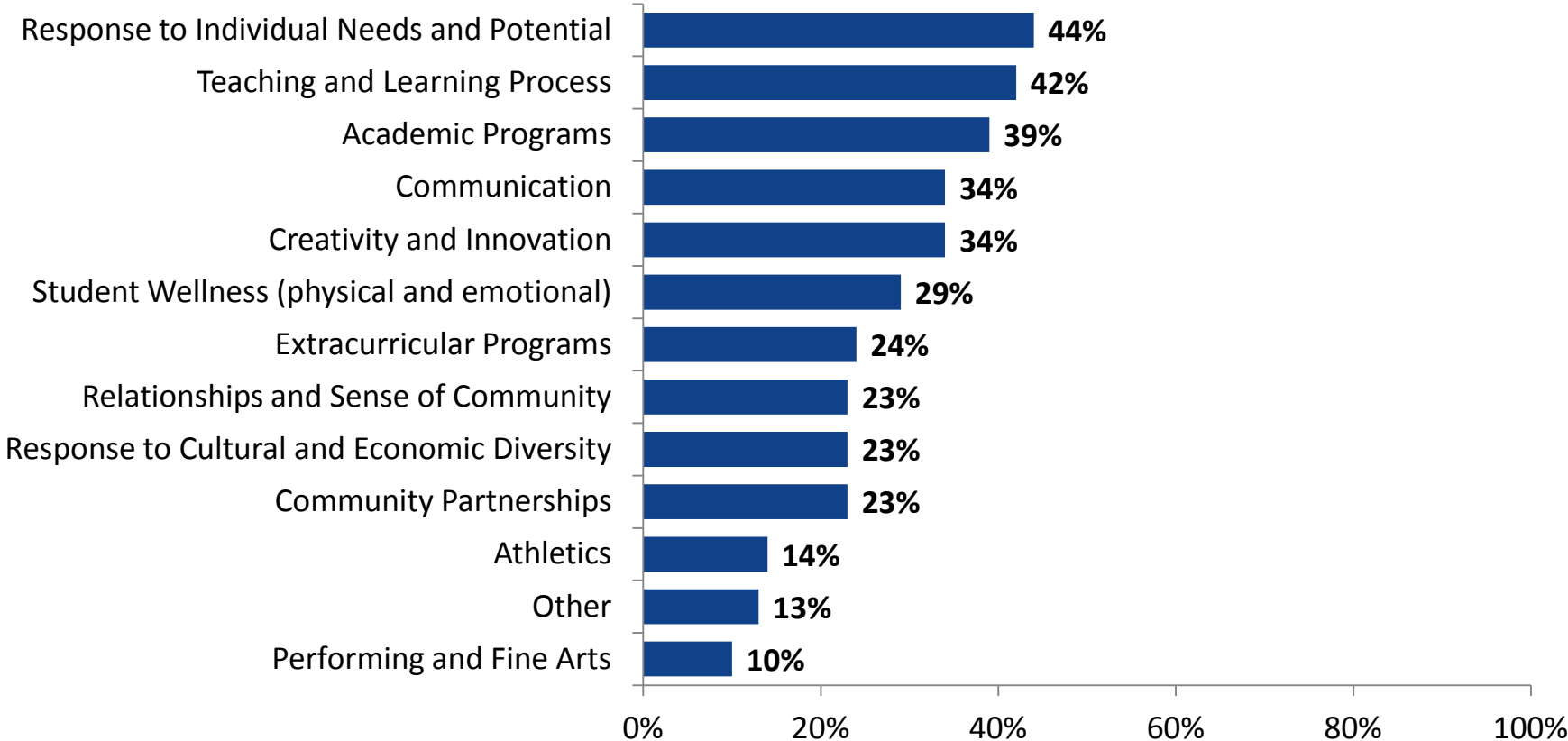
Which of the following are Nyack Public Schools' strengths? (N=909)



Note: The sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one response option.

Areas for Improvement

Which of the following are areas where Nyack Public Schools needs improvement? (N=777)



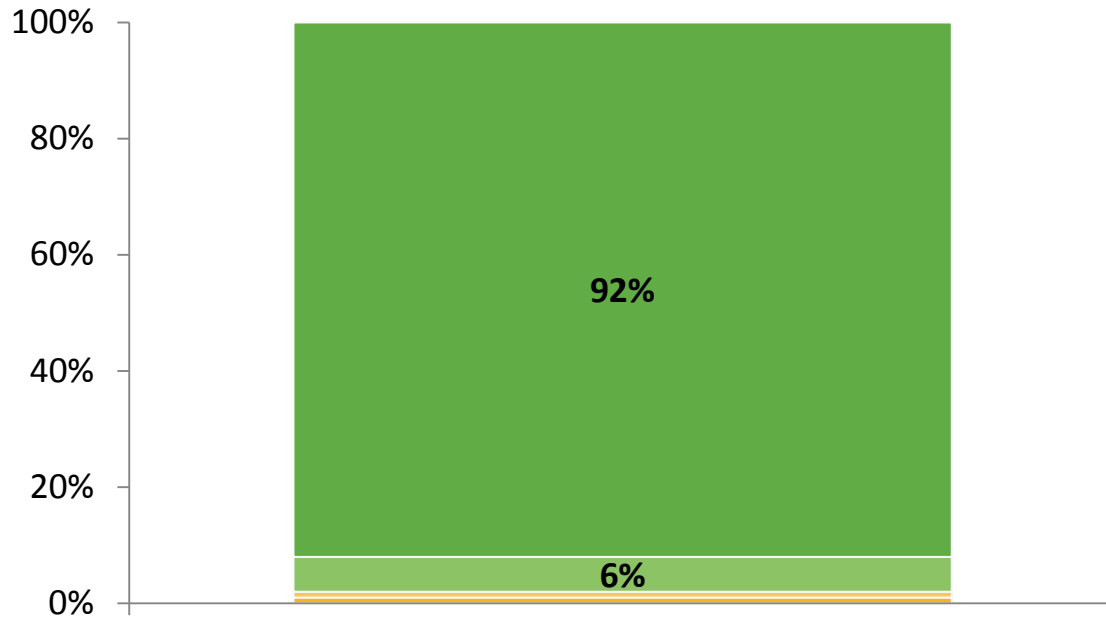
Note: The sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one response option.

Most Effective Ways to Communicate

Responses	Communication <i>from</i> School Overall Rank	Communication <i>with</i> School Overall Rank
Email from teachers or staff members	1	1
Phone call from teachers or staff members	2	2
Meeting in person with teachers or staff members	3	3
Nyack school district website	4	4
Mail to my home address	5	5
Other	6	7
Through translation services (e.g., Spanish or Haitian Creole liaison)	7	6

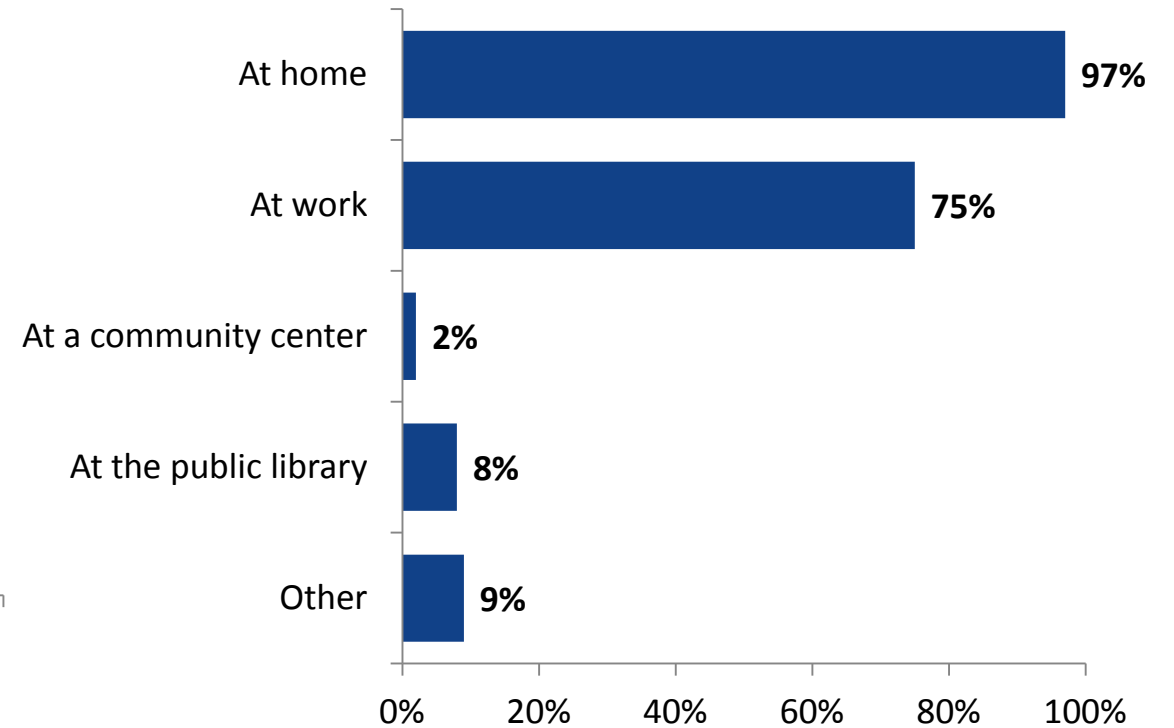
Access to a Computer

To what extent do you have access to a computer? (N=654)



- Not at all
- Very little: I rarely have access to a computer
- To some extent: I sometimes have access to a computer
- To a great extent: I can access a computer whenever I want

Where do you access a computer? (N=641)

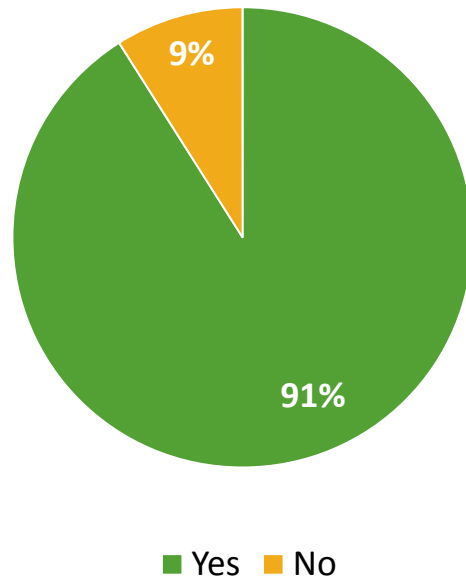


Notes:

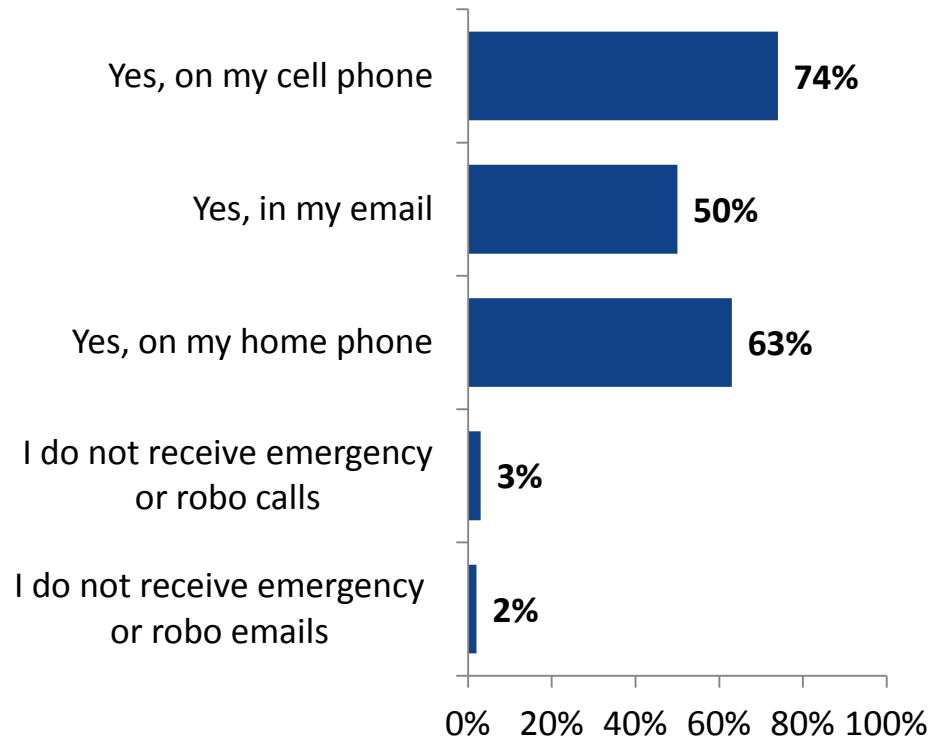
- The sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one response option.
- Participants who do not have access to a computer at all did not answer this question.

Receiving Information from Nyack Public Schools

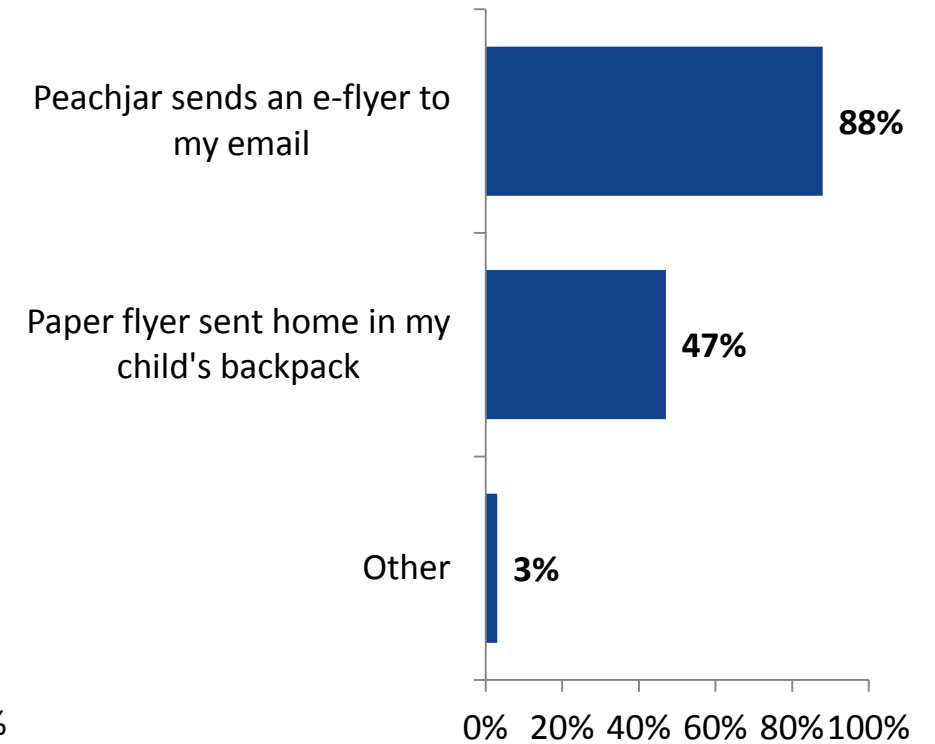
Do you use a cell phone to access your email? (N=644)



Do you receive robo or emergency calls and emails from the school? (N=646)



How do you receive flyers or letters home? (N=637)



Note: The sum of percentages may exceed 100 percent because participants could select more than one response option.

Suggestions for Improvement

If you could immediately change one or two things in the Nyack Public Schools, what would they be? N=529

There was a perceived need for better communication between parents/the community and schools and district staff. Participants requested that information regarding student progress, announcements, and district decisions be accessible, timely, and clear.

Participants described their displeasure with the emphasis on testing and Common Core.

Participants described changes related to the type and amount of opportunities available to students, especially in the form of accelerated courses and enrichment for students excelling academically. For students in general, participants expressed the need for increased academic rigor, especially in math and science, additional courses focusing on life skills, developing cultural awareness, and a decrease in homework.

Teacher accountability and teacher quality were areas listed as in need of improvement. Support for parents and students from guidance counselors in particular, especially in regard to college preparation, was also mentioned by some participants.

Respondents reported wanting a more student-centered approach to learning (e.g., project-based learning and hands-on learning).

Respondents recommended more support for students at various academic levels, particularly those struggling academically. Participants mentioned the identification of students in need, gaining an understanding of their needs, and differentiated instruction to accommodate those needs as the specific areas in need of improvement.

Key Findings and Next Steps

- Strong majorities of participants agreed that Nyack Public Schools is performing according to the district's mission. The statements that received the highest levels of agreement are:
 - Nyack Public Schools provides a harmonious and caring environment.*
 - Nyack Pubic Schools fosters self-respect and a respect for others.*
- At least 90% of all survey participants agreed that all of the skills listed in the survey were important for students to demonstrate upon graduation. As a result, it's clear the Nyack community supports aligning learning standards with 21st century outcomes for today's students.
- Survey participants identified performing and fine arts and academic programs as strengths of Nyack Public Schools. However, 44% of participants felt that the district could improve in the area of responding to individual students' needs and potential.
- The call for more individualized instruction and/or attention to individual student needs was also reflected in the open-ended comments, with many participants calling for a more student-centered approach to learning and both rigorous learning opportunities for high achieving students as well as more academic support for low-achieving students.
- Next, district leaders will use these survey findings to articulate a vision statement and work to ensure all of the district's programs are aligned with that new vision.



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