What's happening in our English-medium primary schools

Findings from the NZCER national survey 2019

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Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa

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1 NZEI: New Zealand Educational Institute; NZPF: New Zealand Principals' Federation; NZSTA: New Zealand School Trustees' Association; ERO: Education Review Office

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Summary

Every 3 years NZCER surveys principals, teachers, trustees, and parents at a random sample of English-medium primary schools to provide a national picture of what is happening in teaching and learning. This allows comparisons and tracking of how things change over time.

Here are many of the main findings from the 2019 survey. They show many positive things occurring in primary schools, along with gains in key areas. They also show continuing and deepening challenges, often related to support and resourcing. The 2019 survey also provides some pertinent information against which to evaluate changes to improve schooling and equity that have been heralded by the Government's response to the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce.

Most parents and whānau are positive about their child's experience of school and teachers, and their own involvement in the school. More parents in 2019 than in 2016 felt welcome in their child's school, saw their child's teachers as committed and enthusiastic, and felt their child's cultural identity was recognised and respected. Parents with a child with a disability or needing learning support were less positive than other parents.

Schools are giving more attention to the success and wellbeing of ākonga Māori. More principals said that Māori student achievement data played a significant role in board decision making, and that their school made use of approaches such as tuakana–teina. Almost all the principals were able to describe something their school had done to improve Māori student outcomes. However, 41% of principals still need but cannot access external expertise to implement reliable strategies to support Māori student learning, and 46% still need but cannot access external expertise to engage with whānau, hapū, and iwi.

Māori parents and whānau showed higher levels of satisfaction with their child's progress in 2019 than non-Māori parents and whānau.

Te reo Māori was a part of daily life in most English-medium primary schools, but in a limited way. Sixty-one percent of teachers used te reo Māori to give instructions or directions, 52% used a few Māori words or phrases, and 41% said their students helped them practise and strengthen their reo Māori so they learnt together. Fourteen percent of teachers now reported their students being able to learn te reo Māori most of the time, up from 8% in 2013. More principals, however, have difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori.

More attention to Pacific student learning is evident. More teachers included practices that support Pacific students' learning in 2019 compared with 2016. Pacific student achievement data played a significant role in more boards' decision making in 2019, and many of the principals whose schools had Pacific students described something their school had done to improve their outcomes.

Schools are taking a more systematic approach for students who need learning support. Most teachers reported confidence in teaching students with learning support needs, and had useful professional development to engage them in learning. They were positive about these learners' use of digital technology for those who needed assistive technology. However, only 54% said they had the support they needed to teach these students, and 35% now wanted more support to adapt *The New Zealand Curriculum* for these students, up from 19% in 2016.

Most teachers are confident they have the skills and knowledge to cater for English language learners. However, a third said they did not have sufficient support to help these learners.

'Learning to learn' activities and student involvement in their own assessment have changed little since 2013. One exception was that 39% of teachers now reported that their students could take part in hands-on/practical activities, almost double the 20% who said this in 2016. Close to 90% of the parents and whānau thought their child's school did a good job at helping their child learn to keep at it when learning is difficult, ask good questions, and develop problem-solving skills and attitudes.

Schools are attentive to student wellbeing. More principals report taking part in the Ministry of Education-funded PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) programme, or are using its approaches. Also noticeable is an increase in students learning about healthy eating and engagement in physical activity. Most primary teachers were consciously including strategies and topics to support students' relationships with their peers, their cultural and social identities, and emotional and physical wellbeing.

More recent areas of concern for student wellbeing, such as the impact of social media and healthy use of digital devices, and gender identity and consent, which are included in the 2015 sexuality guidelines for schools, were less commonly reported by teachers.

More schools have systems in place to support students' mental health but it is still a major issue for schools. Training for teachers to recognise mental health warning signs and provide classroom support was reported by 59% of principals in 2019, compared with 15% in 2016. There were also increases in schools having systems to identify individual students with social or mental health needs, and to identify groups of students with social or mental health needs (63% well embedded compared with 52% in 2016). However, 63% of principals identified support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs as a major issue for their school: one of the top four issues.

Many teachers experienced incidents of extreme behaviour. Twenty-five percent of teachers said that student behaviour often causes serious disruption in class, and 42%, sometimes. In 2019, 25% of teachers occasionally felt unsafe in their class, double the 12% who felt this in 2016.

Most schools work with agencies to support their wellbeing and positive behaviour work. Principals were most positive about those who can work with them closely, particularly those located in or near their school, those who are responsive, or providing PB4L professional learning and support. More schools are working with CAMHS and Oranga Tamariki than in 2016.

Assessment information is commonly used to improve learning. Primary teachers generally see the assessment they do as valuable and providing dependable information, though they are somewhat less positive about the time and energy needed to collect assessment information. Use of the online PaCT (Progress and Consistency Tool) remains low, with highest use in decile 1–2 schools.

At the school level, assessment information is used most to identify students who need to make accelerated progress, and to decide priorities for professional learning and resourcing.

Most parents and whānau are positive about the information they receive about their child's progress in reading, writing, and mathematics. About a fifth were not. Parents are slightly less positive about the information they received about their child's progress in relation to the rest of the curriculum, such as in science or social studies, with a quarter or more indicating they did not get good information.

Classroom use of digital technology has markedly increased since 2016, but over 40% of teachers are not yet confident about their knowledge and skills for the revised digital technologies learning area. Use of digital technology has increased most for coding and/or programming, now reported by 60% of teachers. Generating multimedia work, playing games or simulations, collaborating with others within the school on shared learning projects, and collaborating with others beyond the school have also increased. More students were taking part in coding on digital devices, gaming or game design, and makerspace activities.

Teachers are positive about the use of digital technology for learning. Many also said it created some difficulties because not all students had home digital technology access. While principals were also positive about the use of digital technology for learning, 64% identified the cost of it as a major issue for their school.

Many teachers have ongoing opportunities to share, reflect, and discuss teaching and learning with colleagues. More teachers now shared ideas with colleagues to help students improve their performance. However, around a fifth of teachers rate sharing between colleagues in their school as poor or very poor, and between 23% and 46% of teachers did not rate their school's support as good or very good, particularly in relation to support with particular students, and to understand and address bias. There was little progress in most of the aspects of professional school culture that we asked about. Time remains a fundamental challenge here. More teachers would also like more customised support and advice beyond their school, and more time to work with parents and whānau.

Most teachers make some use of digital technology for their own professional learning and support. Most downloaded or shared resources. Under half had contributed to online discussions about teaching, and like other digital use, this was more sometimes than often.

Team teaching and teaching in innovative learning environments work well if teachers are well supported. Team teaching is becoming a feature of primary schools: 26% of the teachers responding said they taught in a team all the time, and 28%, sometimes did so. Many of these also taught in innovative learning environments. Teachers who team-taught all the time were most positive about their work, including their school's professional culture. They were also positive about the benefits for learners. Those working in innovative learning environments did, however, think that some students find them overwhelming.

Teachers noted the importance of preparatory development to work well as a team, consistency in practice, the use of different strengths in a team, even workloads, and sufficient space and good acoustics.

Kāhui Ako are starting to have some effect. Most schools are members of a Kāhui Ako, and principals are seeing gains for their own school. Principals from schools that are in a Kāhui Ako are more likely than other principals to say they share information about student learning with other schools. Teachers have had more varied experiences with Kāhui Ako, but around half had useful PLD through their Kāhui Ako. Slightly less than half had good support from their within-school teacher, and useful interaction with other schools' teachers. Trustees' views also varied, but tended to the positive, particularly seeing benefits for their school.

Principals and teachers enjoy their work, but this is undercut by workload issues and increasing expectations. Top of the list of major issues principals saw as affecting their school in 2019 was that too much is being asked of schools: 72% now say this, markedly increased from 53% in 2016, and 42% in 2013. The effect of this for principals is to intensify their workload, with increases in stress levels, tiredness, and more feeling that they cannot give sufficient time to educational leadership. Only a minority felt supported by government agencies, and only half by parents and whānau. Many principals saw themselves continuing in the role over the next 5 years, but there is more interest in educational roles beyond the principalship than seen in previous surveys.

Government support used by principals was mostly to do with the management aspects of their role. What they were using more for their role as a whole were ex-principals, paid for by their school or themselves. Their professional organisations were also sources of support. Collegial support was widespread, but not necessarily deep. Only half the principals felt prepared for their first principalship.

Trustees are positive about their role and see that the most important part is to provide strategic direction for the school. Trustees report that most of their board's time is spent on student progress and achievement, followed by attention to property/maintenance, financial management, and strategic planning. Nearly all trustees responding had some advice or support to help them in their role. Trustees

external organisations, particularly NZSTA, and to a lesser extent the Ministry of Education and ERO. Over half the principals considered their board needed a lot of support from school staff.

Most boards had consulted with their parents, whānau, and community in the past year, through a range of means. There was an increasing use of digital technology in the consultation processes. Only 41% of trustees said parents had raised issues with their board, with the most common issues being student behaviour or bullying (19%) and dissatisfaction with a staff member (12%).

Almost all trustees would like to change something about their role. More funding for the school topped this list, selected by more trustees in 2019 than in 2013 and 2016. Close to half of the trustees would like to improve their own knowledge or training. Compared with 2016 data, more would like Ministry expectations to be reduced, and more support from parents and whānau.

Most schools interact with other schools. Nearly all principals say they share sporting events, and many share professional learning and development, visit other schools to learn from them, or talk with fellow principals. Around a third of the schools had ongoing interaction with other schools encompassing sharing and discussing their work, and working together to achieve satisfactory outcomes for individual students.

Principals were more positive in 2019 than in 2016 that they received helpful advice from the (now) Teaching Council and the national office of the Ministry of Education. Most thought their regional Ministry of Education office worked constructively with them, and half thought they had given their school good support and were trustworthy. They showed somewhat less satisfaction compared with 2016 in relation to ERO's advice. However, many principals continued to find value in ERO school and national reports. Around half thought that ERO school reviews were a valid indicator of overall school quality, and that the review process developed school capacity for self-evaluation.

Schools continue to have unmet needs for external expertise that they cannot readily access. This is most evident for particular groups of students, and for engaging with whānau, hapū and iwi, and with Pacific families. Schools' growing awareness of the need to partner with iwi and hapū was also evident in almost half the principals identifying this as a major issue for their school.

The top issues that principals identify facing their schools are: that too much is being asked of schools (72%), funding (67%), costs of digital devices and infrastructure (64%), and support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs (64%).

About the survey

Our survey went to a representative sample of 350 English-medium primary and intermediate schools. The survey went to the principal at each school, the board chair, and, through them, to another trustee, and through the school administration, to a random sample of teachers and parents. The survey was in hard copy, with trustees and parents having an online option.

Response rates this year were the lowest they have been since the survey began in 1989: 145 principals (41% response rate), 620 teachers (27% of a potential 2286 surveys sent to schools, from 181 schools), 126 trustees (18%, from 95 schools), and 395 parents (17% of a potential 2,286 surveys sent to schools, from 170 schools). Although higher numbers would give greater confidence that a full spectrum of views and experiences were covered, the 2019 national survey respondents' perspectives were also largely consistent with previous survey rounds which had higher response rates. The changes we saw were ones that made sense in the current educational landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as new policy or additional provision, or concerns evident in the material presented in the course of the schooling reviews carried out for the Government in 2018–19, or raised by teacher unions, the NZ Principals' Federation, and parents.

1. Introduction

NZCER embarked on its series of national surveys of schools in 1989 because of the radical changes that came with Tomorrow's Schools, and because of NZCER's role—indeed responsibility—as the country's independent educational research organisation with its own Act of Parliament and some government funding.

The national surveys have proved to be an invaluable means of tracking how things change—or don't—in what happens in schools, in teaching and learning, and in the relationships between schools and the government agencies. We thought it important from the start to include the perspectives of principals, teachers, school trustees, and parents—and would have included students if we had sufficient resources.

Our national surveys occur every 3 years. The 2019 national survey of primary schools which we report here shows how things are now and how they have changed, sometimes looking back to 2010. It provides some pertinent information to evaluate changes to improve schooling and equity that have been heralded by the Government's response to the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce final report.[2]

This year's survey report starts with student wellbeing. Provision for Te Reo Māori and ākonga Māori is next, followed by provision for Pacific students; provision for students with learning support needs; and provision for English language learners.

Then we turn to curriculum, assessment and reporting, and digital technology experiences in teaching and learning. Parent perspectives on their child's learning follow.

We look at ways in which teachers and schools work together: first, at school cultures and professional learning, next, at innovative learning environments and team teaching experiences, and Kāhui Ako.

Workload and support for teachers and principals come next, followed by trustee experiences.

Finally, we look at school resourcing, rolls, interactions with other schools and system support, and principal and trustee views of the major issues facing schools.

Climate change was a new topic in the 2019 national survey, and because of its significance, and contribution to an ongoing NZCER project, it is reported separately.[3]

Our survey went to a representative sample of 350 primary and intermediate schools.[4] Response rates this year were the lowest they have been: 145 principals (41% response rate), 620 teachers (27% of a potential 2286 surveys sent to schools, from 181 schools), 126 trustees (18%, from 95 schools), and 395 parents (17%

2 https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TSR/November-2019/TSR-Government-Response-WEB.pdf
Cathy Wylie was a member of the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce.
3 https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/climate-change-and-sustainability-primary-and-intermediate-schools,
4 Because of the low number of intermediate schools in the sample, they are not reported separately.

of a potential 2286 surveys sent to schools, from 170 schools).[5] Nonetheless, the responses still provided a largely representative spread in terms of school characteristics. Although higher numbers would give greater confidence that a full spectrum of views and experiences were covered, the 2019 national survey respondents' perspectives were also largely consistent with previous survey rounds which had higher response rates. The changes we saw were ones that made sense in the current educational landscape in Aotearoa New Zealand, such as new policy or additional provision, or concerns evident in the material presented in the course of the schooling reviews carried out for the Government 2018–2019 or raised by teacher unions, the NZ Principals' Federation, and parents.

We compare 2019 responses with responses from previous national surveys where the questions were the same or very similar. We have cross-tabulated responses with school decile, reporting differences that we found using chi-square testing to be statistically significant, ($p < .05$). The maximum margin of error for the principal survey is 8.1%, for the teacher survey around 3.9%, for the trustee survey around 8.7%, and for the parent survey 4.9%.

This 2019 national survey report shows some progress in some areas, mostly those where there has been support for teaching and schools. It also points to the importance of addressing principal and teacher workloads, how time is used in schools, and how people, schools, and support are connected.

5 The survey went to the principal at each school, the board chair, and through them, another trustee, and through the school administration, a random sample of teachers and parents. Paper surveys continued to be the main method used because of the range of topics in the national survey and its length. Trustees and parents, who had shorter surveys than principals and teachers, had an online option within the paper survey. Social characteristics of the survey respondents are given in the sections on teachers, principals, trustees, and parents.

2. Student wellbeing and positive behaviour

Fostering student wellbeing has been an implicit part of primary school provision for a long time. It was explicitly mentioned in the 1999 Health and Physical Education curriculum guidelines. Student wellbeing has recently come to the fore in the Government's overarching Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy launched in August 2019.[6]

In our 2016 national survey report we provided an overview of the work done in education since 2009 in relation to student wellbeing and positive behaviour, and offered frameworks for understanding the approaches used by schools in Aotearoa New Zealand.[7]

We start this section with a focus on school-wide approaches to support student wellbeing and related practices and programmes, including approaches to assist students who need extra wellbeing support, and the support for mental health. We touch briefly on the provision of a focus on healthy relationships within sexuality education as part of the Health and Physical Education curriculum.

The terrorist attacks on mosques in Christchurch on 15 March 2019 underlined the significance of respect for diversity. We next report what principals said about school knowledge and resources to support student understanding of, and respect for, diversity, and teachers' views of their own knowledge and resources to support this.

We then describe teacher reports of school and classroom practices to support student wellbeing, followed by parent and whānau views of their child's feelings of belonging and safety, and school support to develop attitudes and skills that contribute to their own and others' wellbeing.

Finally, we focus on what schools and teachers are doing to promote positive behaviour. Trustee views related to student behaviour follow. We provide some evidence about the increasing challenges of disruptive and extreme behaviour for teachers. We finish with principals' reports of the support and advice they have in relation to supporting wellbeing and positive behaviour.

Most schools have an active focus on student wellbeing

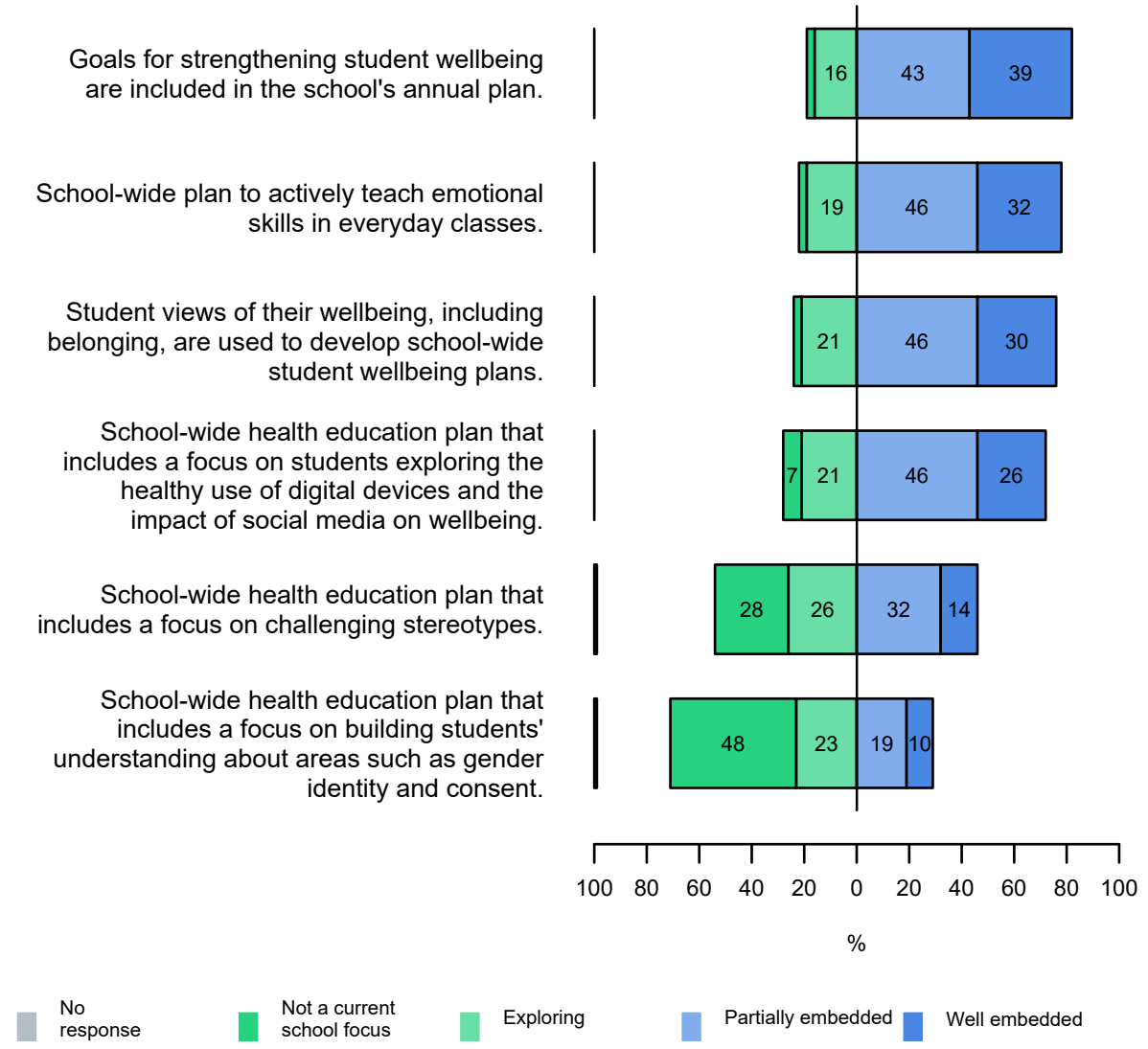
Most principals reported that their school uses four of the six approaches to student wellbeing we asked about, more often at the 'partially embedded' than 'well embedded' level.

Including goals for student wellbeing in the school annual plan was the most often well embedded approach, followed by a school-wide plan to actively teach emotional skills in everyday classes, the use of student views to develop school-wide student belonging plans, and a focus on the healthy use of digital devices. Less common was a focus on challenging stereotypes. Student understanding about gender identity and consent was the least common approach used in primary schools. Figure 1 has the details.

6 https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy

7 Boyd, S., Bonne, L., & Berg, M. (2017). *Finding a balance—fostering student wellbeing, positive behaviour, and learning.*NZCER. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/National%20Survey_Wellbeing_for%20publication_0.pdf

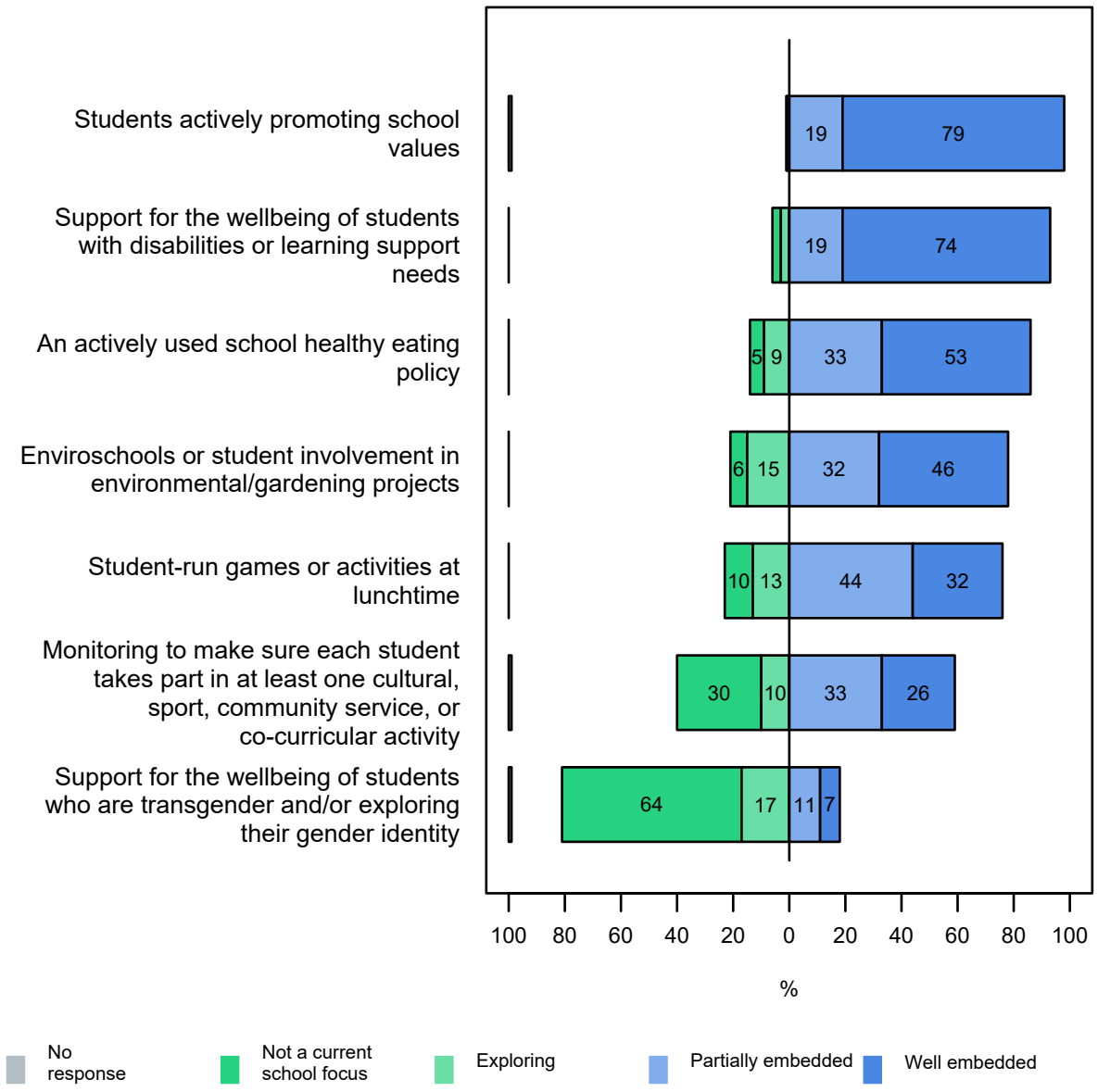
FIGURE 1 **School-wide approaches to support student wellbeing (Principals, *n* = 145)**



We also asked one of these items in 2016, school-wide plans to actively teach emotional skills in everyday classes. There was little change in 2019, indicating an aspect that may need more system support. Health education plans are less embedded than other school-wide approaches. This may suggest a need for more system support if primary schools are going to do more to challenge stereotypes and build understanding about gender identity and consent.

Primary schools commonly have a range of practices and programmes that support student wellbeing (Figure 2). Almost all principals reported that students actively promoting school values, and school support for students with disabilities or learning support, were well embedded. Just over half had a well embedded actively used school healthy eating policy, and just under half reported that Enviroschools or student involvement in environmental/gardening projects was well embedded. Around a third had well embedded lunchtime student-run games or activities, and around a quarter monitored student activity to ensure they take part in cultural, sport, community service, or co-curricular activity. Few had a focus on the wellbeing of transgender students or those exploring their gender identity, again indicating an area that may need more system support.

FIGURE 2 **Practices and programmes supporting student wellbeing (Principals, *n* = 145)**



We also included five of these items in the 2016 national survey. There were increases for three of these items, indicating more school attention to student wellbeing. More principals in 2019 reported

- an actively used school healthy eating policy (53% well embedded, compared with 37% in 2016)
- Enviroschools or student involvement in environmental/gardening projects (46% well embedded, compared with 31% in 2016)
- monitoring individual participation in co-curricular activity (26% well embedded compared with 10% in 2016).

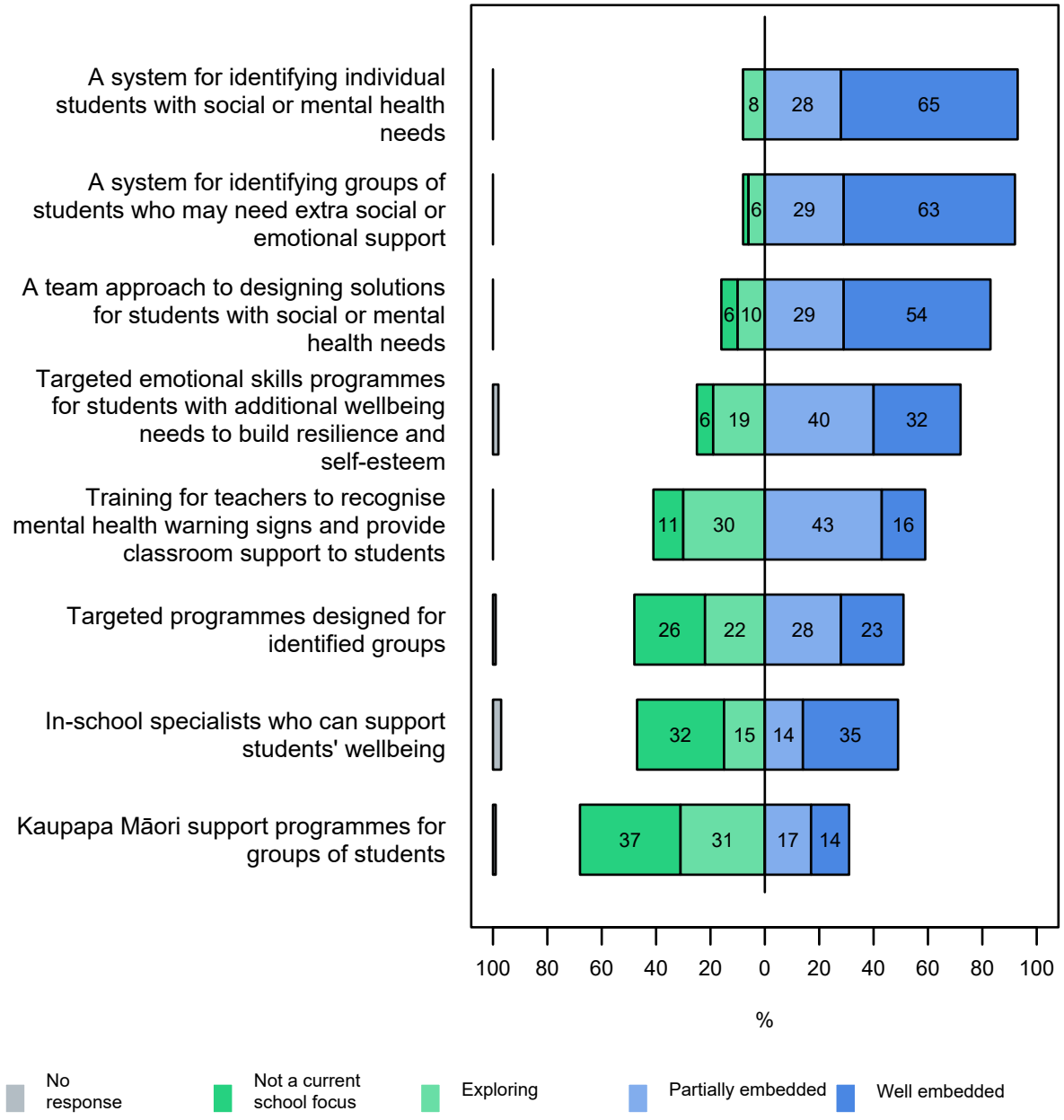
There was no change in the overall picture of having students actively promote school values, or student-run lunch-time games or activities.

School decile was associated with how well-embedded an actively used school healthy eating policy was (75% of decile 1 and 2 school principals reported this, as did 67% of decile 3 and 4 school principals, 39% of decile 5 and 6 school principals, 55% of decile 7 and 8 school principals, and 31% of decile 9 and 10 school principals).

Many schools have approaches to assist students who need extra wellbeing support

Figure 3 shows that many schools had well embedded systems of identifying individuals and groups with social or mental health needs. Over half had a well embedded team approach to designing solutions for them, and a third had in-school specialists to support student wellbeing. Training for teachers to recognise mental health warning signs and provide classroom support was less common, and least common were targeted programmes and kaupapa Māori programmes for students who need extra wellbeing support.

FIGURE 3 **Approaches to assist students who need extra wellbeing support (Principals, *n* = 145)**



In-school specialists to support student wellbeing were reported most by decile 1 and 2 school principals (79%).

More schools are focusing on student mental health needs

We also asked this set of items in 2016. More principals in 2019 now reported:

- training for teachers to recognise mental health warning signs and provide classroom support (59% well or partially embedded in 2019, compared with 15% in 2016)
- a system for identifying individual students with social or mental health needs (65% well embedded compared with 44% in 2016)
- a system for identifying groups of students with social or mental health needs (63% well embedded, compared with 52% in 2016).

Fewer principals now reported targeted programmes designed for identified groups (51% well or partially embedded in 2019, compared with 63% in 2016).

There was little change for the other four items in this set.

However, although more schools were now responding to students' mental health needs, 63% of principals identified support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs as a major issue for their school: one of the top four issues (see Table 34 on p. 163). Student behaviour was also identified by 28% of principals as a major issue—little changed from the 21% in 2016—and 15% identified student bullying, including cyber bullying.

Support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs was identified by 26% of the trustees as a major issue facing their school; 15% also identified student behaviour, and 10%, student bullying as major issues.

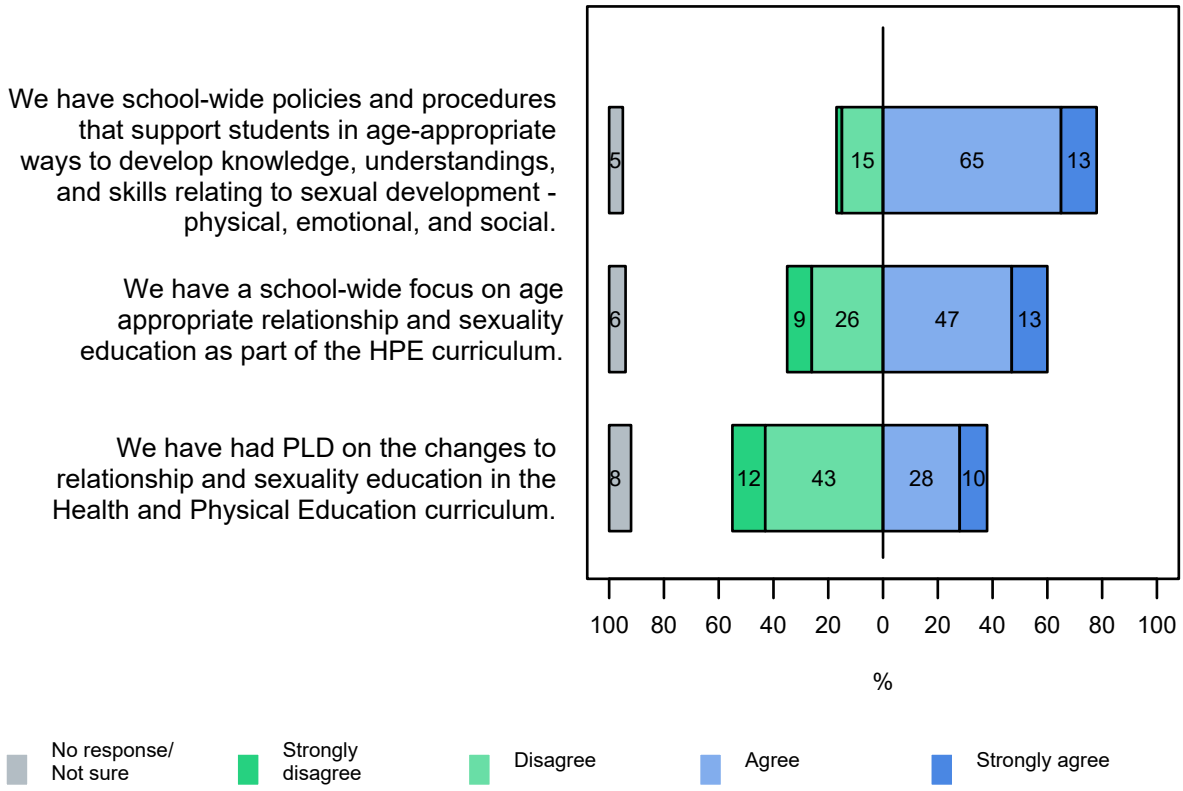
Most schools include sexuality education in policies and procedures

Sexuality education is part of the Health and Physical Education learning area. The guidance for schools shows that it is framed within the development of wellbeing.[8]

Most schools have included sexuality education in their policies and procedures (78%), and many (60%) have included age appropriate relationships and sexuality education in their Health and Physical Education curriculum. However, just over a third had had PLD on the recent changes to the national Health and Physical Education curriculum, as shown in Figure 4.

8 https://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-guidelines/Sexuality-education-a-guide-for-principals-boards-of-trustees-and-teachers/Sexuality-education-in-The-New-Zealand-Curriculum.
"All young people need access to information and opportunities to think about, question, and discuss issues related to relationships, gender, sexual identities, sexual orientation, sexual behaviour, sexual and reproductive health, and societal messages. Sexuality education provides a framework in which this can happen."
The 2015 Relationship education programmes guide is at:
https://health.tki.org.nz/Teaching-in-HPE/Policy-guidelines/Relationship-Education-Programmes-Guide-for-Schools

FIGURE 4 **Sexuality education (Principals, *n* = 145)**



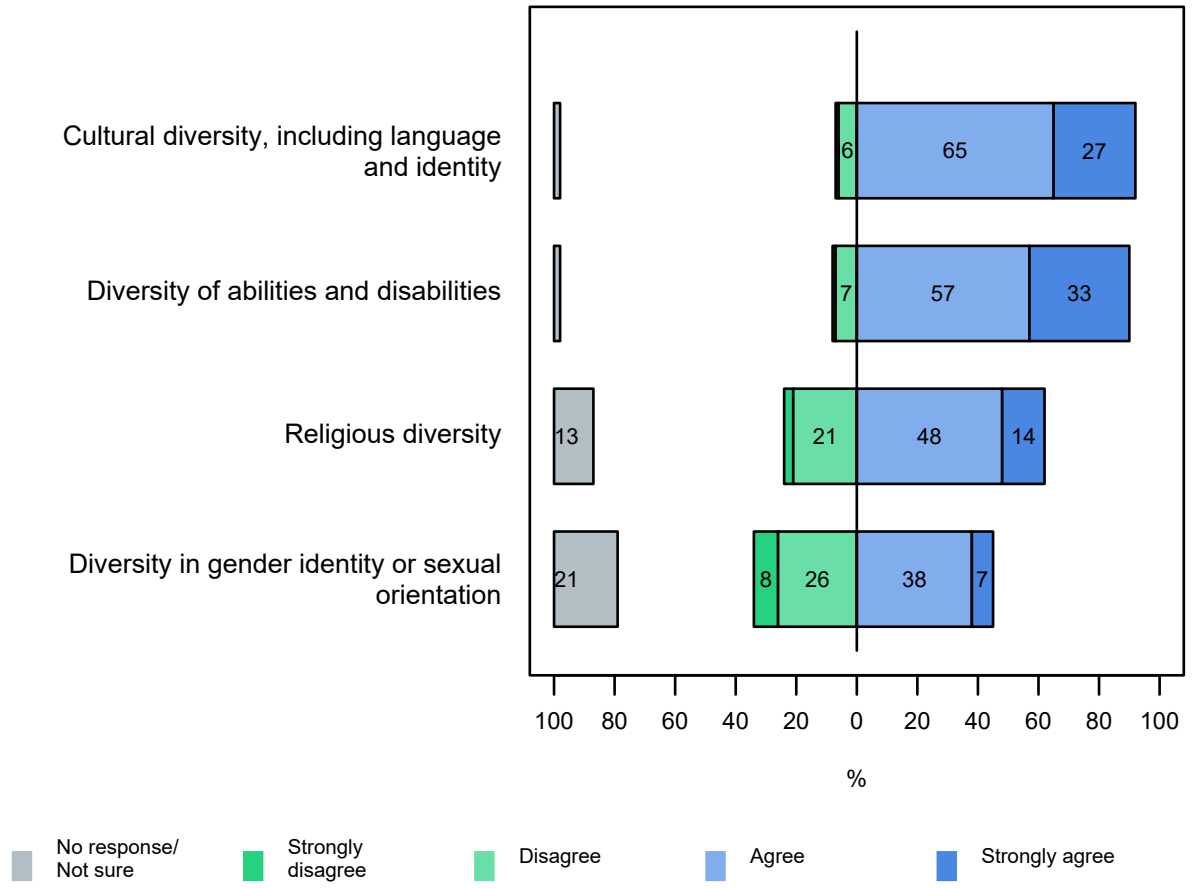
More confidence around supporting student understanding and respect for some forms of diversity than others

In a set of questions about school culture, we asked teachers to indicate how well their school was seeing all forms of student diversity as a resource and a strength, not as a difficulty. Just under a third of teachers (32%) reported this to be happening very well at their school, and 39% to be happening well—71% overall.

We also asked principals and teachers to indicate their confidence in relation to supporting student understanding and respect for four kinds of diversity.

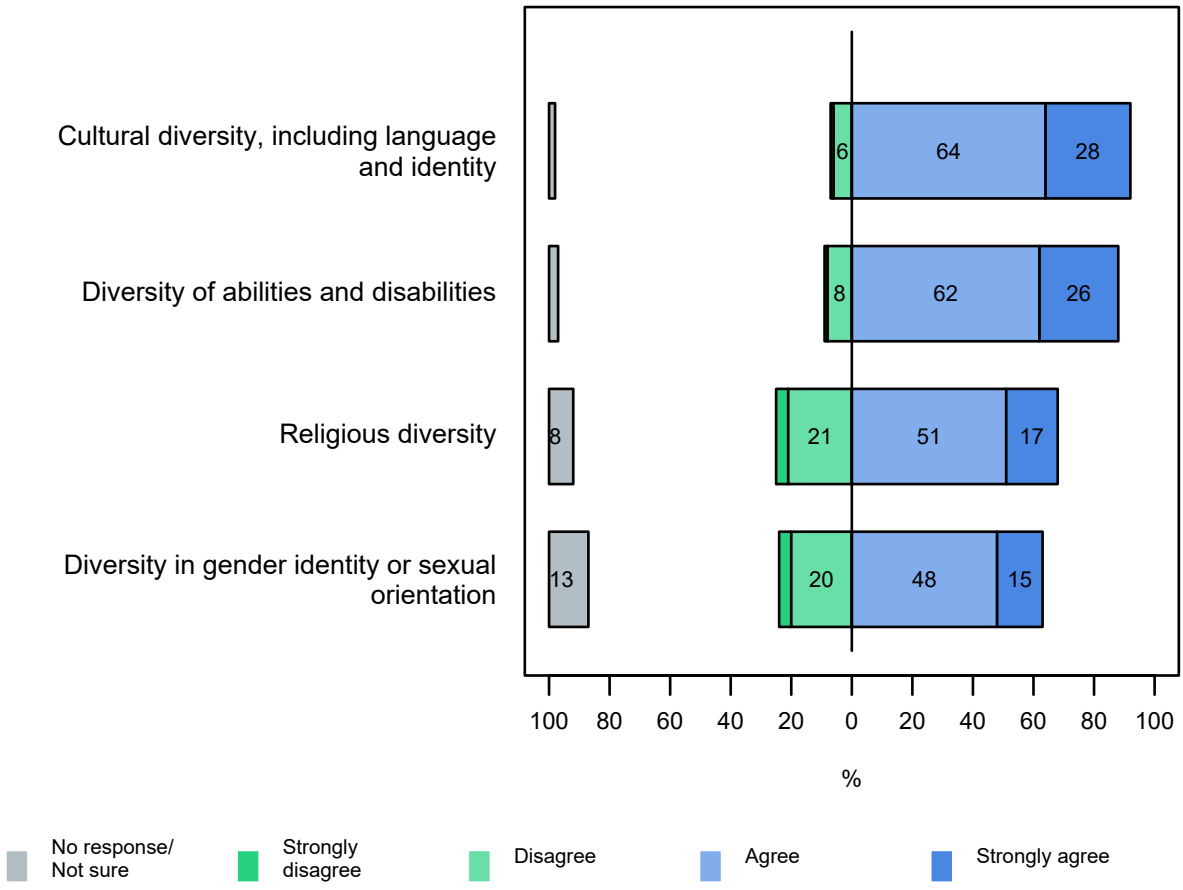
Figure 5 shows that principals were most confident that the school's teachers had the knowledge and resources they need to support students' understanding of, and respect for, diversity of abilities and disabilities, and cultural diversity. They were less confident, or unsure, about whether knowledge and resources were there to support students' understanding and respect for religious diversity, and even less so for gender identity or sexual orientation.

FIGURE 5 **School knowledge and resources to support student understanding of and respect for diversity (Principals, *n* = 145)**



A very similar picture is given by teachers, who we asked to focus on their own knowledge and resources (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6 **Teacher knowledge and resources to support student understanding of and respect for diversity (Teachers, *n* = 620)**

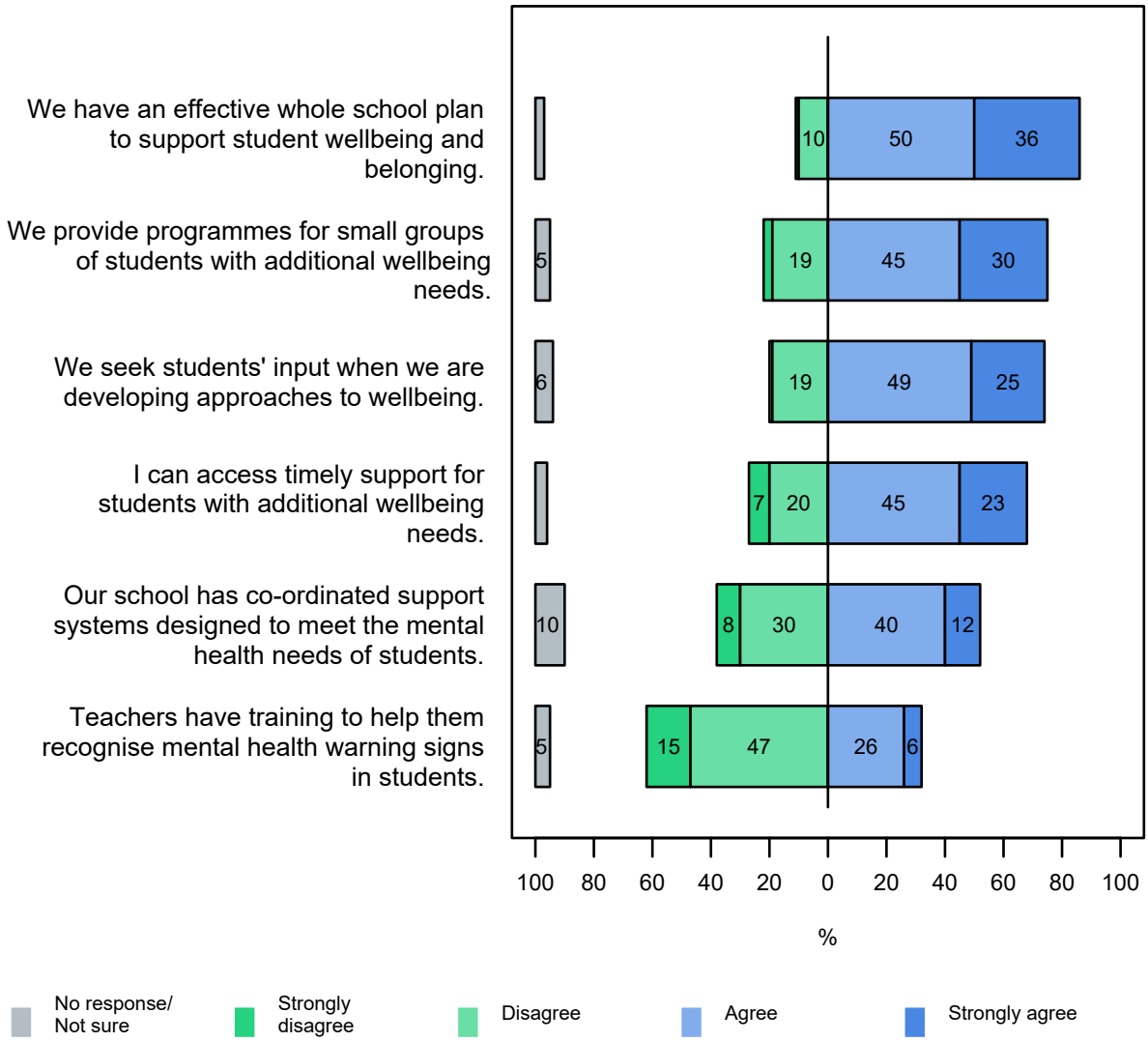


Teachers are largely positive about school support for student wellbeing, but most lack training on mental health warning signs

Most teachers reported that their school had an effective whole-school plan to support student wellbeing and belonging, and around three-quarters reported that their school had small group programmes for students with additional wellbeing needs, and that student input was sought when developing wellbeing approaches (74% in 2019, an increase from 57% in 2016).

Around two-thirds could access timely support for students with additional wellbeing needs. Student mental health needs were less supported, with 52% of the teachers reporting co-ordinated support systems in their schools. Only 32% reported they had had training for teachers to help them recognise mental health warning signs in students. However, that is almost double the 17% who reported such training in 2016.

FIGURE 7 **School supports for student wellbeing (Teachers, *n* = 620)**

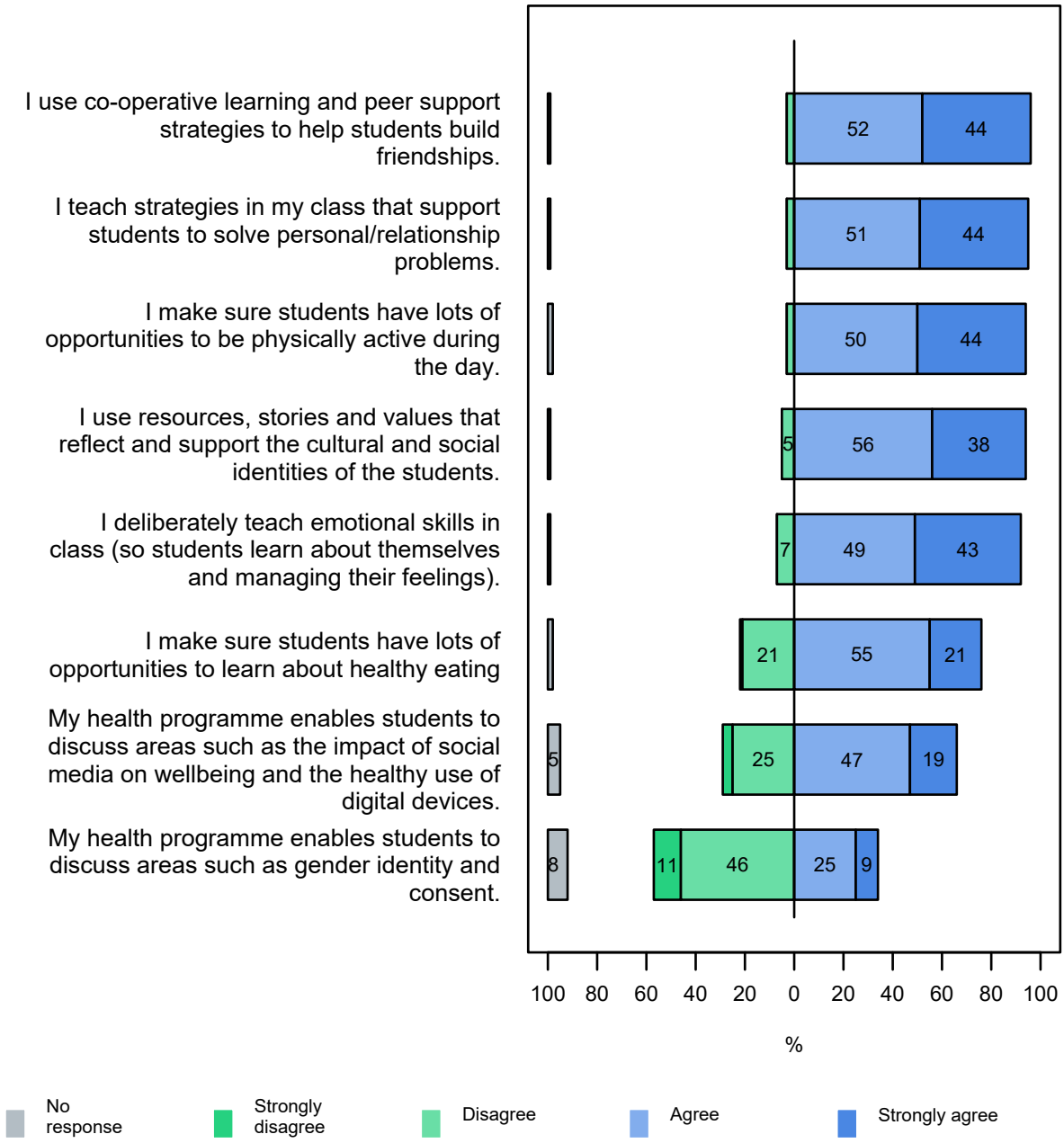


Most teachers provide strategies and topics to support student wellbeing

Most primary teachers were consciously including strategies and topics to support students' relationships with their peers, their cultural and social identities, and emotional and physical wellbeing, with Figure 8 showing between 38% and 44% strongly agreeing that they included these in their classroom work.

There was less strong agreement about more recent areas of concern for student wellbeing such as opportunities to learn about healthy eating (21% strongly agreed), the impact of social media and healthy use of digital devices (19% strongly agreed), and gender identity and consent, which are included in the 2015 sexuality guidelines for schools (9% strongly agreed).

FIGURE 8 **Classroom practices that support student wellbeing (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Somewhat more teachers reported making sure their students had lots of opportunities to learn about healthy eating in 2019 (76% agreed or strongly agreed) compared with 2016 (65%); and somewhat more strongly agreed that they were making sure students had lots of opportunities to be physically active during the day (44% in 2019, compared with 32% in 2016).

More decile 1 and 2 school teachers strongly agreed that they made sure students had lots of opportunities to learn about healthy eating (35% compared with 19% of decile 3 to 10 school teachers).

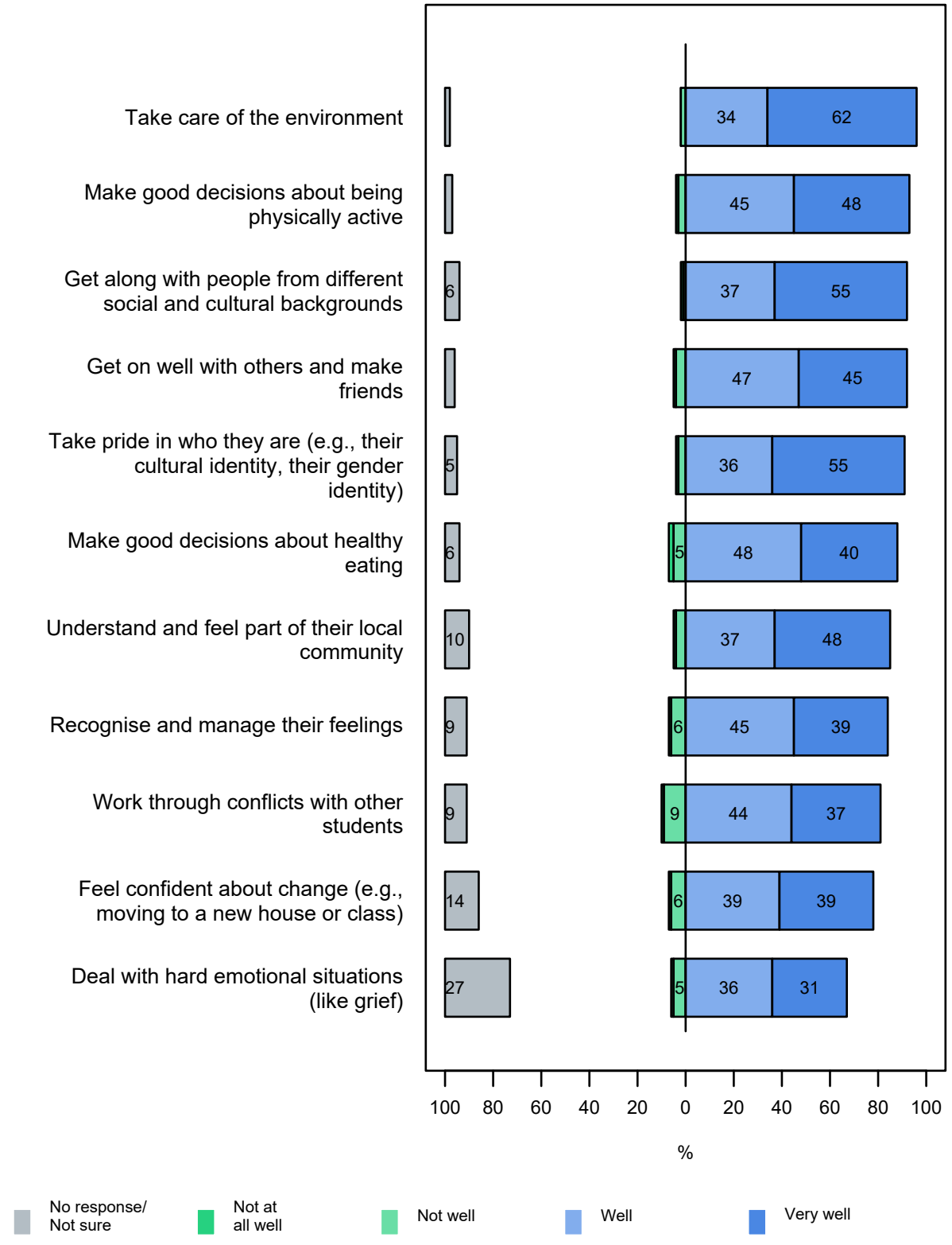
Parents and whānau are largely positive about their child's wellbeing experiences at school

Almost all the parents and whānau responding to the national survey thought their child felt they belonged in the school (53% strongly agreed, 41% agreed), and felt safe there (57% strongly agreed, and 41% agreed).[9]

They were also positive about how their child's school was helping them develop wellbeing attitudes and skills, as shown in Figure 9.

9 395 parents and whānau from 170 schools took part. Their schools were broadly representative of all school deciles, but the parents and whānau had higher qualification levels than the general population.

FIGURE 9 **Parent and whānau views of how well the school helped their child develop attitudes and skills that support wellbeing (*n* = 395)**



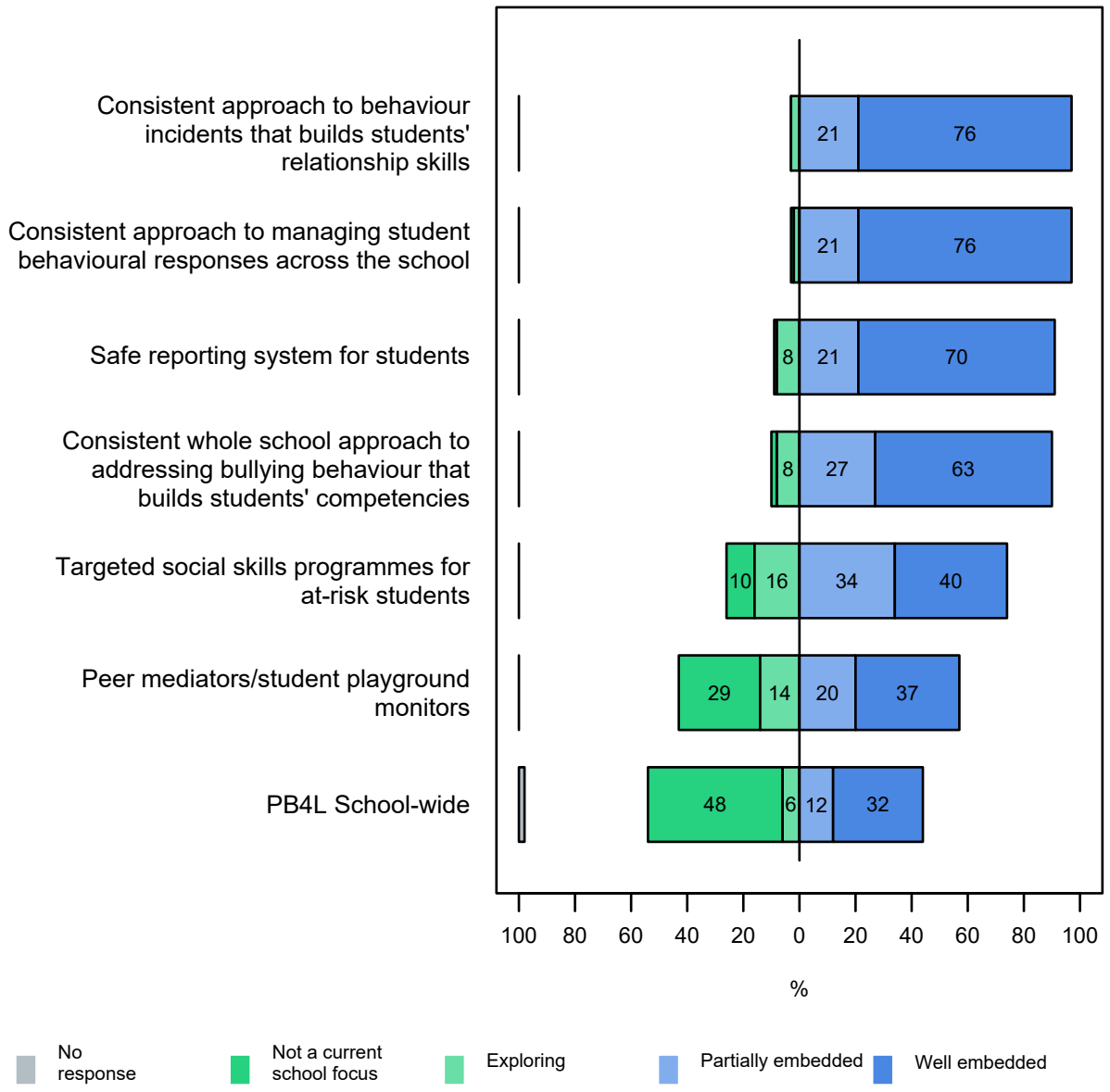
Parents and whānau whose child had a disability or needed additional learning support were less positive about the school's support for their child to develop wellbeing attitudes and skills; the detail is given in Section 5.

Compared with parent responses in 2016, more parents and whānau thought that their school helped their child well or very well in relation to getting along with people from different social and cultural backgrounds, taking pride in who they are, and recognising and managing their feelings.

Positive student behaviour is commonly promoted

The growing emphasis on fostering wellbeing as a key school purpose that also enhances students' learning capabilities is aligned with a shift in policy to move approaches to student behaviour away from framing it in terms of discipline for unwanted behaviour, towards considering what schools can deliberately do to foster and teach positive student behaviour. This was given impetus by the PB4L (Positive Behaviour for Learning) suite of supports that began in 2010. Many schools took up the PB4L School-wide framing and support. What Figure 10 shows is that, while a minority of schools have PB4L School-wide well embedded, many more report they have the consistent whole-school approaches that PB4L has emphasised, suggesting that the policy emphasis has had a wider impact beyond the actual PB4L School-wide programme.

FIGURE 10 **Promoting positive student behaviour (Principals, *n* = 145)**



This set of items was also asked in 2016. The picture is much the same in 2019 as for 2016, with two exceptions:

- More of the schools had taken part in PB4L School-wide (44% well or partially embedded in 2019 compared with 25% in 2016)
- More had safe reporting systems for students well embedded (70% in 2019, compared with 57% in 2016).

PB4L School-wide was reported as well embedded by 58% of decile 1 and 2 school principals.

Most teachers are in schools that are active around supporting positive behaviour

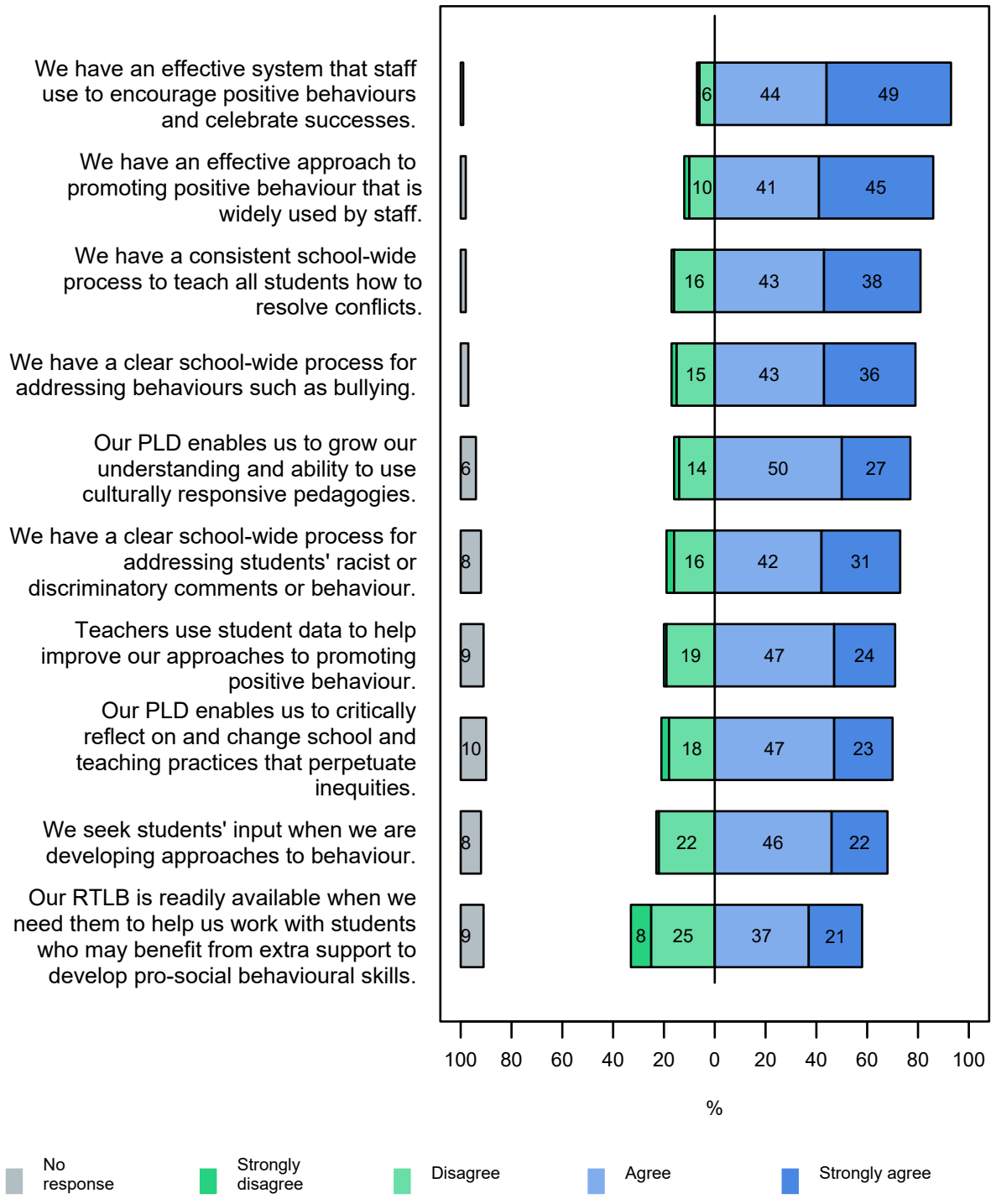
The most common approaches to support positive behaviour that teachers report are clear expectations for behaviour, encouragement and celebration of positive behaviour or success, emphasis on relationship building after behaviour incidents, and clear school-wide processes to address behaviours like bullying and racist or discriminatory comments or behaviour.

Figure 11 also shows that only around half the teachers find their Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB[10]) is available when needed, or use student data to help improve their approaches to promote positive behaviour. Slightly more than a fifth say their school does not use student input when developing approaches to behaviour, though this has been an important aspect of PB4L School-wide and developing student belonging in the school, and their commitment to behaviour approaches.

Decile 1 and 2 school teachers were somewhat more likely than others to strongly agree or agree with items in this set.

10 RTLB clusters work with groups of schools.

FIGURE 11 **Supporting positive student behaviour (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Student behaviour or bullying is the perennial main issue parents and whānau raise with school boards

Nineteen percent of the trustees said that student behaviour or bullying was the main issue raised by parents and whānau with their board. The same has been true since 2010, at much the same proportion.

Extreme behaviour is more of an issue

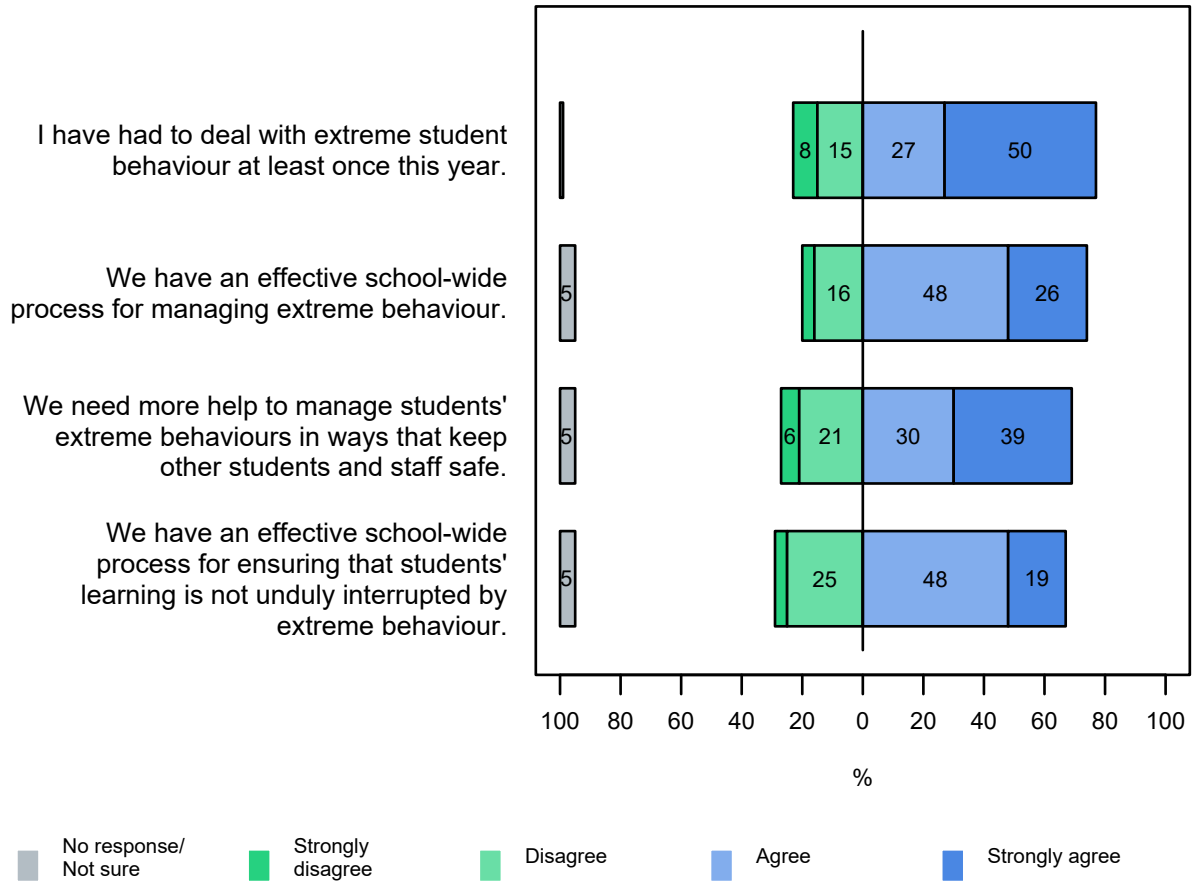
There has been increasing concern expressed by NZEI Te Riu Roa and NZPF about increases in disruptive student behaviour. The 2019 survey data shows that teacher reports of disruptive student behaviour and of feeling unsafe in their class had increased noticeably from 2016.

- In 2019 25% of teachers said they often experienced student behaviour that caused serious disruption in their class. In 2016 17% of teachers said they often experienced behaviour that disrupts teaching (a wider question than we asked in 2019).
- 24% of teachers felt unsafe in their class occasionally in 2019, double the 12% who reported this in 2016. One percent in both 2019 and 2016 felt frequently unsafe in their class.
- 23% of teachers felt unsafe in the school grounds occasionally in 2019, double the 11% who felt unsafe occasionally outside their classroom in 2016. Two percent frequently felt unsafe in the school grounds in 2019, and 1% frequently felt unsafe outside their classroom in 2016.

Feeling unsafe was not related to school decile, but often experiencing student behaviour causing serious disruption was (reported by 37% of decile 1 and 2 school teachers, 32% of decile 3 and 4 school teachers, 28% of decile 5 and 6 school teachers, 16% of decile 7 and 8 school teachers, and 21% of decile 9 and 10 school teachers).

We added a new question in 2019 to find out more about teachers' experiences with extreme student behaviour. Figure 12 shows that 77% of teachers had to deal with at least one incident of extreme behaviour in 2019. Most thought they had effective school-wide processes to manage such behaviour, and to ensure that students' learning was not unduly interrupted. However, most teachers also wanted more help to manage students' extreme behaviours in ways that keep other students and staff safe.

FIGURE 12 **Managing extreme behaviour (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Decile 1–2 school teachers were most likely to strongly agree that they had had to deal with extreme student behaviour at least once in 2019 (66%).

Support for schools around student wellbeing and behaviour is variable

There is a wide range of support and advice schools can draw on in relation to student wellbeing and behaviour. We asked about 18 sources, mostly government funded or provided. Table 1 shows school use of these support services. Use of services reflects their availability, for example, school-based social workers and health professionals are only funded for schools in low socio-economic communities.

TABLE 1 **School use of support and advice related to student wellbeing and behaviour (Principals, *n* = 145)**

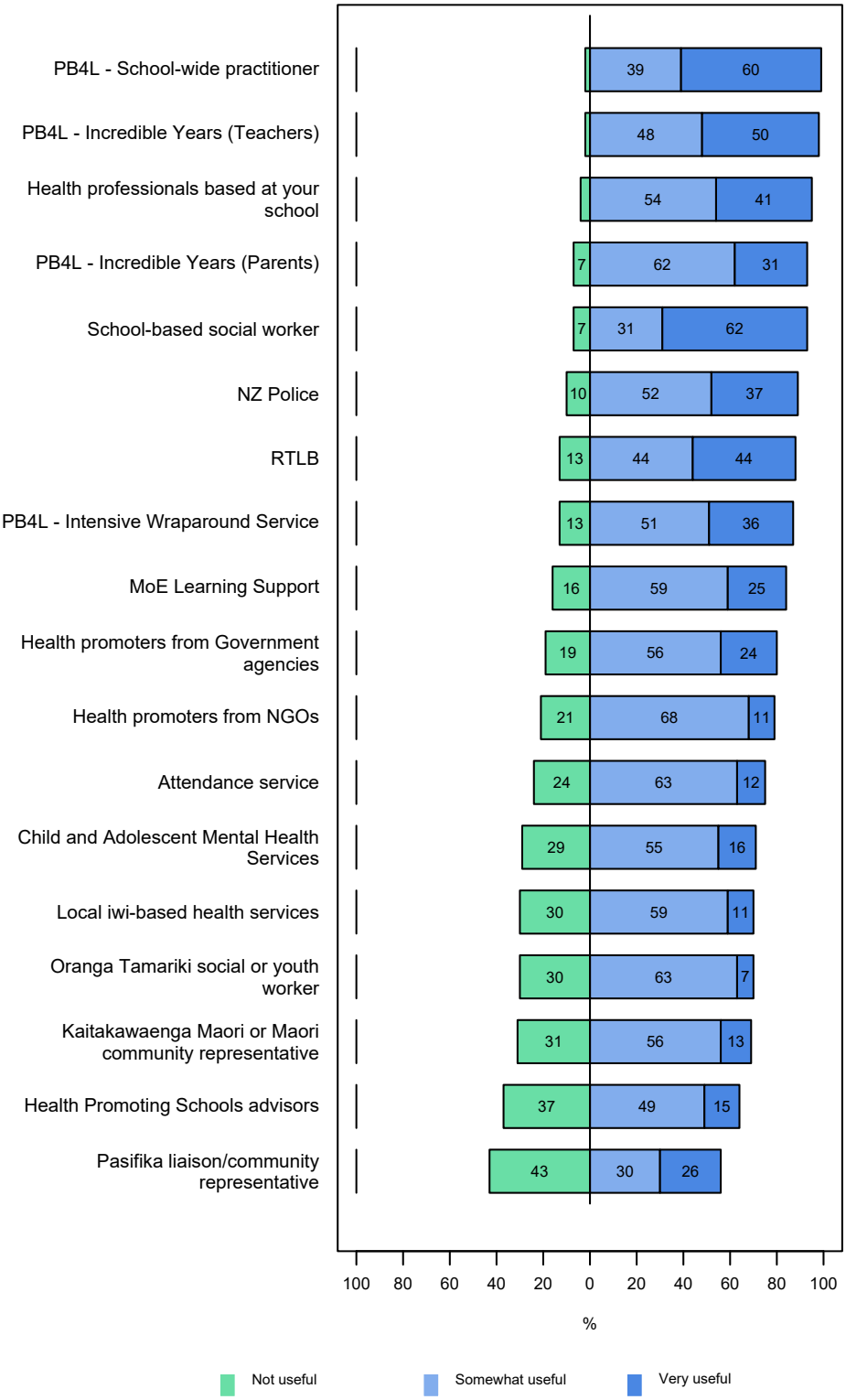
Source	
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	99
RTLB	97
Ministry of Education Learning Support	95
NZ Police	86
Attendance service	79
Oranga Tamariki social or youth worker	76
Health promoters from government agencies (e.g., local DHB, regional sports trust)	65
PB4L—Incredible Years (Teachers)	59
Health Promoting Schools advisors	57
Health promoters from NGOs (e.g., NZ Heart Foundation)	52
School-based social worker	38
PB4L—School-wide practitioner	32
Health professionals based at your school	32
PB4L—Intensive Wraparound Service	31
PB4L—Incredible Years (Parents)	31
Local iwi-based health services	30
Kaitakawaenga Māori or Māori community representative	27
Pacific liaison / community representative	16

Figure 13 shows principals' views of the usefulness of these services, as proportions of the total who gave views, indicating that they used a particular service.[11] Views of usefulness are likely to reflect actual availability when needed, and school expectations of what a service should provide. Views are also likely to reflect the level of knowledge and capability of a service to work with the school's culture, ways of operating, strengths, and needs.

Services that were rated as very useful by a third or more of users are mainly support that is offered onsite, such as school social workers, or aspects of PB4L professional development and support. Services for students with mental health needs or deep family needs are used by many schools, but are the lowest rated, a pattern that has persisted over time.

11 Principals could select a 'not applicable' response, indicating that they did not use a source of support and advice.

FIGURE 13 **Principals' views of the usefulness of student wellbeing and behaviour supports**[12]



12 There are different numbers giving their views for each item, depending on the number of principals whose school used the individual service.

Some of these services had more principals giving them ratings in 2019 than 2016, indicating greater contact and use. The set below includes some services that underline the growing concern around mental health and student attendance, in a wellbeing and student achievement context, as well as more schools having experience with PB4L support.

- CAMHS 58% of schools rated their use in 2016, 99% in 2019
- Oranga Tamariki 60% of schools rated their use in 2016, when it was CYF, and 76% in 2019
- Attendance service 68% of schools rated their use in 2016, and 79% in 2019
- PB4L Incredible Years (Teachers) 45% of schools rated their use in 2016, and 59% in 2019
- PB4L Intensive Wraparound Service 15% of schools rated their use in 2016, and 31% in 2019
- Health Promoting Schools advisors 46% of schools rated their use in 2016, and 57% in 2019

There were also indications of increased use of PB4L Incredible Years (Parents), and PB4L School-wide practitioners, and experience with Māori and Pacific services.

Some services also had higher proportions of principals rating their experiences of them as very useful in 2019 than in 2016 (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 **Behaviour and wellbeing services with higher proportions of principals rating them as very useful in 2019 compared with 2016**

Service	% of principals with experience of service rating them 'very useful' 2016	% of principals with experience of service rating them 'very useful' 2019
PB4L – Incredible Years (Parents)	4	31
PB4L – Incredible Years (Teachers)	37	50
PB4L Intensive Wraparound Service	13	36
CAMHS	6	15
Pacific liaison/community representative	2	26

Summary

It is a decade since the Taumata Whanonga cross-sector behaviour summit created the necessary momentum for schools and the education agencies to focus together on wellbeing and positive behaviour. The 2019 national survey findings show that most primary schools and teachers are actively working to thread this focus through school processes and the learning experiences of their students. Parents and whānau responding were largely positive about their child's sense of belonging and safety at school, and their gaining skills and attitudes that contribute to wellbeing, both individually and as a society. There are some marked gains around student learning about healthy eating and their part in the environment, both of which have also received input and support from beyond education.

Most schools work with agencies—education, social, and health—with variable experiences. They are mostly positive about those who work more closely with schools, often onsite, and with whom they can develop good ongoing relationships, such as school-based social workers, PB4L professional development providers, and to a lesser extent, RTLBs and school nurses. More schools were working with CAMHS and Oranga Tamariki, but principals continued to rate these services less positively than others.

But although schools have more systems in place to identify and support students with social or mental health needs, mental health issues are proving difficult for schools and teachers to respond to well either proactively or reactively. Schools are not alone in this, but it is proving to be an increasing issue for them.

Some schools are proactive and responding to changes in society by providing health education that enables students to challenge stereotypes, explore gender identities, and learn about areas such as consent and the impact of social media. However, these topics do not appear to be common in many school health education programmes, suggesting a need for more support in this area.

Despite school and teacher work and attention to supporting positive behaviour, many teachers did experience incidents of extreme behaviour, and there has been an increase in student behaviour that often causes serious disruption, and teachers occasionally feeling unsafe in their class.

3. Te reo Māori and school provision for ākonga Māori

Schools play a key role in supporting the identity and wellbeing of ākonga Māori as Māori as well as in their academic success. We know Māori students do much better when education reflects and values their identity, language, and culture. Te Tiriti o Waitangi obliges all schools to provide education that is relevant to Māori. System-level support for English-medium schools to understand what this means and how to improve the experiences of their ākonga Māori has been patchy and not sustained.[13] However, the last few years have seen stronger emphasis on growing school and teacher commitment and practice from government agencies and sector organisations. In May 2019 Te Ahu o te Reo Māori programme was also launched with pilots in four regions, to normalise the use of te reo Māori in English-medium classes.

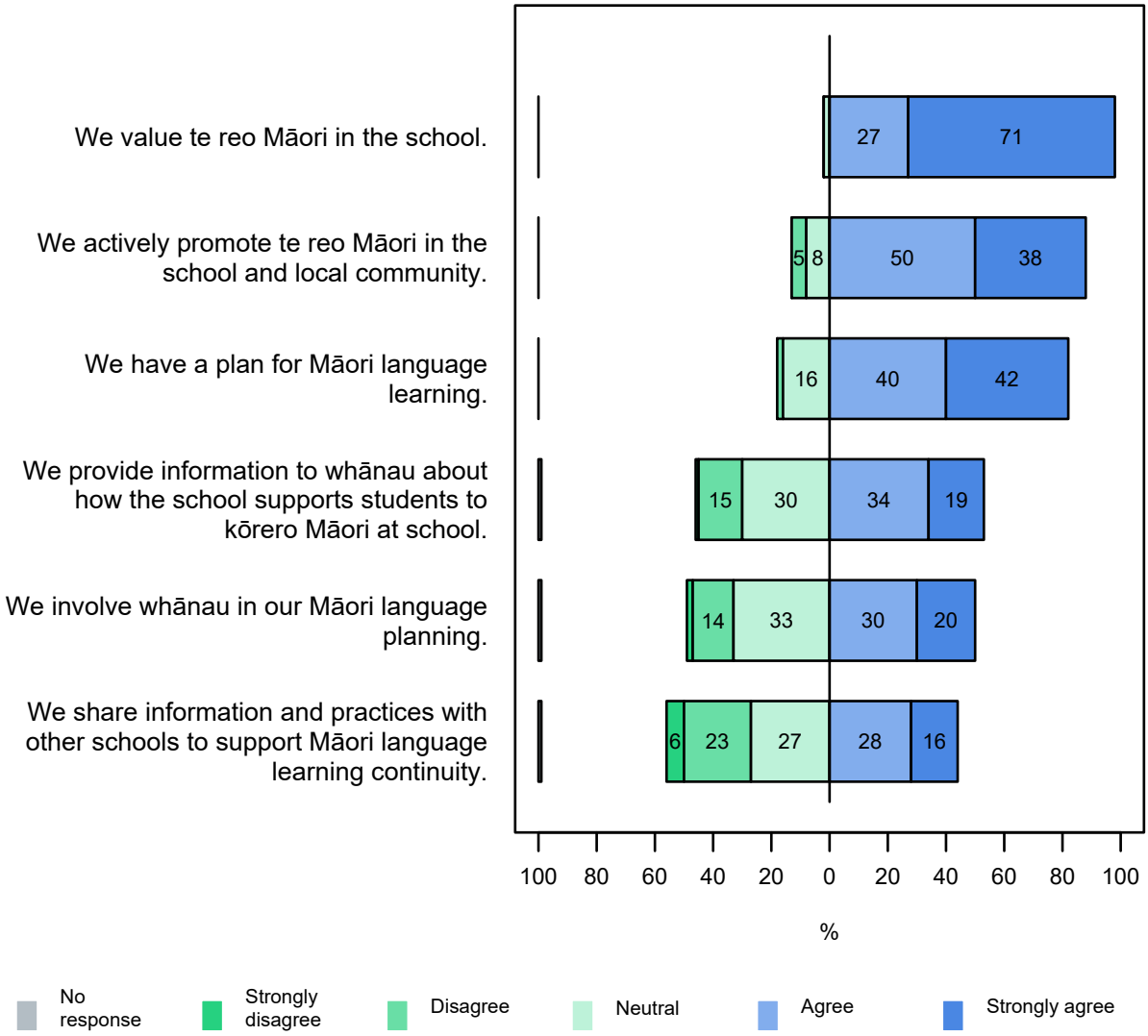
In this chapter, we start with the provision of te reo Māori, in schools and within classes, and support for ākonga Māori to maintain their reo Māori during school transitions. Then we turn to support for ākonga Māori wellbeing. School relations with local iwi and hapū, increasingly emphasised in relation to both ākonga Māori wellbeing and success, are then reported on. We conclude this chapter by looking at primary school focus on ākonga Māori achievement, what principals described as the most effective thing their school had done in the last 3 years to improve outcomes for ākonga Māori, and Māori parent views of their child's learning.

Most English-medium schools plan and promote te reo Māori

Almost all the principals responding said te reo Māori was valued in their school. Forty-two percent strongly agreed that they have a plan for Māori language learning in the school, and 36% actively promoted te reo Māori in the school and local community. However, although guidance commonly underlines the value of actively involving whānau, it was less common to involve whānau in schools' Māori language planning, or to inform them about how the school supports students to kōrero Māori at school. Figure 14 has the details.

13 See, for example, Office of the Auditor-General. (2016). *Summary of our education for Māori reports* [Parliamentary paper]. www.oag.govt.nz/2016/education-for-maori-summary/docs/summary-education-for-maori.pdf

FIGURE 14 **School planning for Māori language learning (Principals, *n* = 145)**



Increased attention to te reo Māori in teaching and professional learning

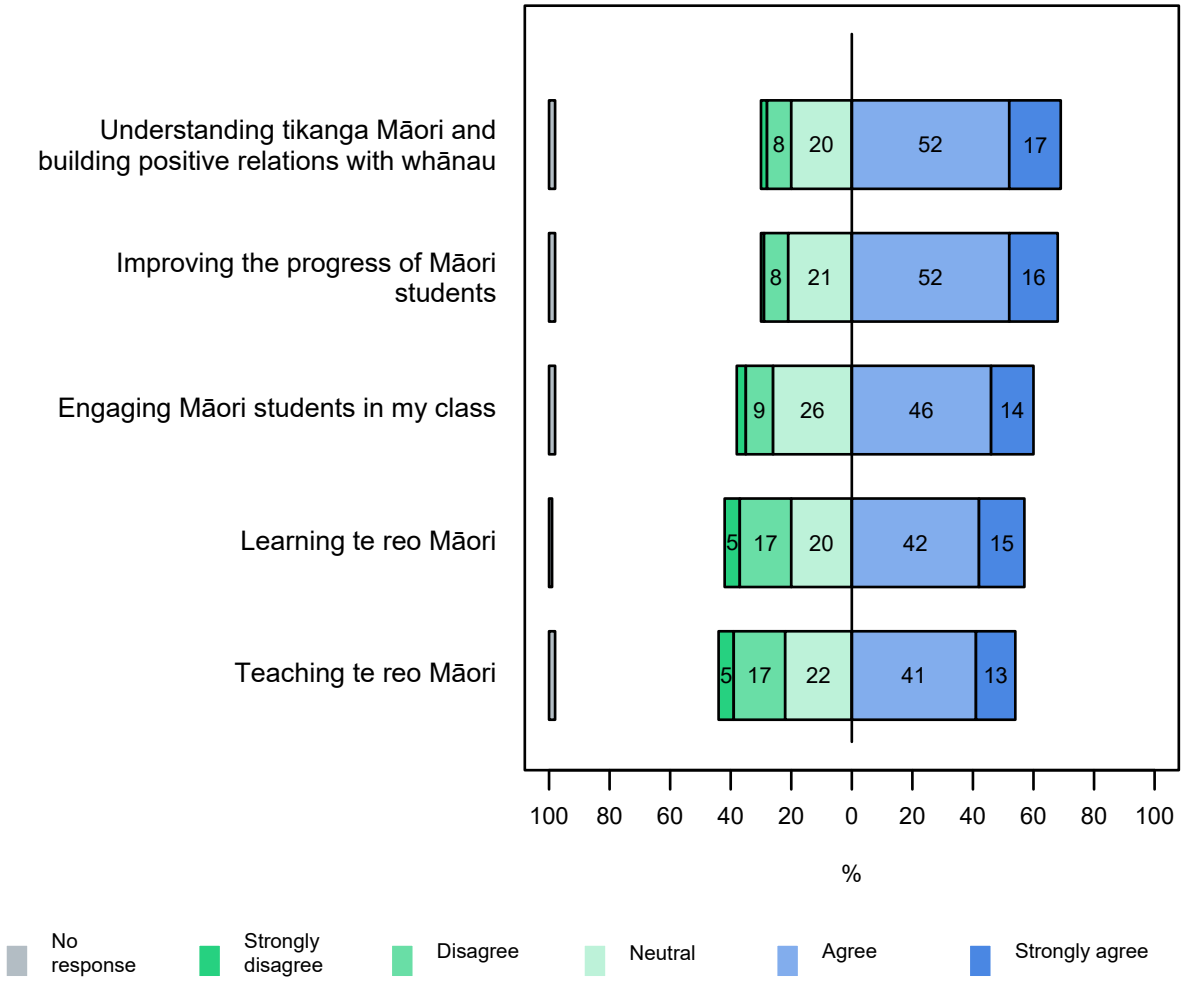
More principals in 2019 indicated difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori than in 2016, which may be due to both increased attention to te reo Māori in schools, as well as the continuing shortage of teachers:

- 24% had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori at a basic level (10% in 2016)
- 17% had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori at a moderate level (3% in 2016)
- 17% had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori at a high level (4% in 2016).

Half the principals said te reo Māori and tikanga Māori had been a focus for professional learning and/or change in teaching practice over the last 2 years in their school, a marked increase from the 38% who said this in 2016, and the 29% who said this in 2013.

Many primary teachers thought their professional learning over the last 3 years had given them practical help in relation to supporting Māori students, ranging from 69% in relation to understanding tikanga Māori and building positive relations with whānau, and 68% in improving the progress of Māori students, to 54% in relation to teaching te reo Māori. These proportions are much the same as 2016. Figure 15 shows the details.

FIGURE 15 **Practical help from professional learning to support Māori students (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



School decile was associated with teachers strongly agreeing that their professional learning had given them practical help to improve the progress of Māori students (29% of decile 1 and 2 school teachers strongly agreed, decreasing across deciles to 9% of decile 9 and 10 school teachers).

Teachers' use of te reo with their students is evident but limited

Students of 14% of the teachers could learn te reo Māori most of the time, up from 10% in 2016, and 8% in 2013. Another 47% of the teachers reported that students in their classes can learn te reo Māori quite often, 32% sometimes, and 5%, almost never.[14]

Table 3 shows more of the ways in which te reo Māori is used in classes. For most teachers, te reo Māori use is limited to giving some instructions or directions, and/or using a few Māori words or phrases. It is encouraging to see 41% of teachers consciously learning te reo Māori in their daily practice, using ako.[15]

14 We included 'learn te reo Māori' in a bank of items asking how often students did them in teachers' classes. As the next paragraph shows, this learning is limited in English-medium schools.
15 Teachers could select more than one use of te reo Māori.

TABLE 3 **Teachers' use of te reo Māori with their students**

	Teachers (*n* = 620) %
I use te reo Māori to give instructions or directions (e.g., E noho, E tū)	61
I use a few Māori words or phrases (e.g., greetings and farewells)	52
My students help me practise and strengthen my reo Māori so we learn together (ako)	41
I confidently use reo Māori phrases and short sentences, other than instructions, in my class on a daily basis (e.g., Ka wani kē! Kei te aha koe āpōpō? Nō wai ēnei tōkena?)	16
I occasionally lead short lessons or discussions in class using te reo Māori only	7
I'm not confident using Māori words or phrases so I don't if I can avoid it	3
I can confidently teach across the curriculum and conduct all class activities in te reo Māori only	2

Māori teachers[16] used te reo Māori more: 31% were confident to use te reo Māori phrases and short sentences and used it daily, compared with 14% of other teachers, and all but one of the nine teachers who conducted class activities in te reo Māori only were Māori. Five of these nine teachers taught in decile 1 and 2 schools; these schools also had a higher proportion of teachers who identified as Māori (29% compared with 7% in decile 3 to decile 10 schools).

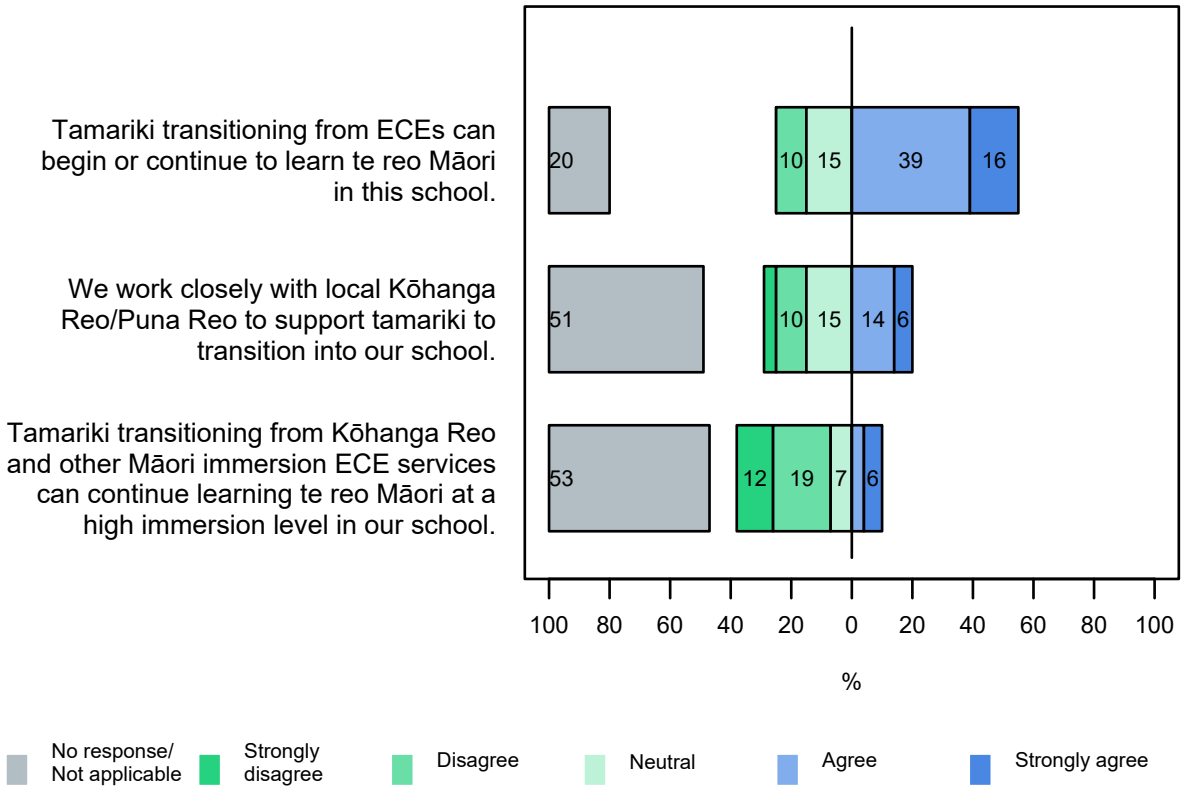
Most of the parents and whānau responding to the survey said that their child's school helped their child learn to speak te reo Māori: 30% very well, and 44% well. Māori and non-Māori parents and whānau had similar responses.

Few English-medium schools can provide a high level of te reo Māori for tamariki from Māori immersion early learning services

Figure 16 gives principals' answers to our questions about support for students transitioning from Kōhanga Reo or other Māori immersion early learning services. A fifth of the principals worked closely with local Kōhanga Reo / Puna Reo to support the transition of students, but only half of these (9%) said that these tamariki could continue learning te reo Māori at a high immersion level at the school. More generally, 55% of principals said that tamariki could begin or continue to learn te reo Māori in their school.

16 Ten percent (*n* = 60) of the teachers responding identified as Māori.

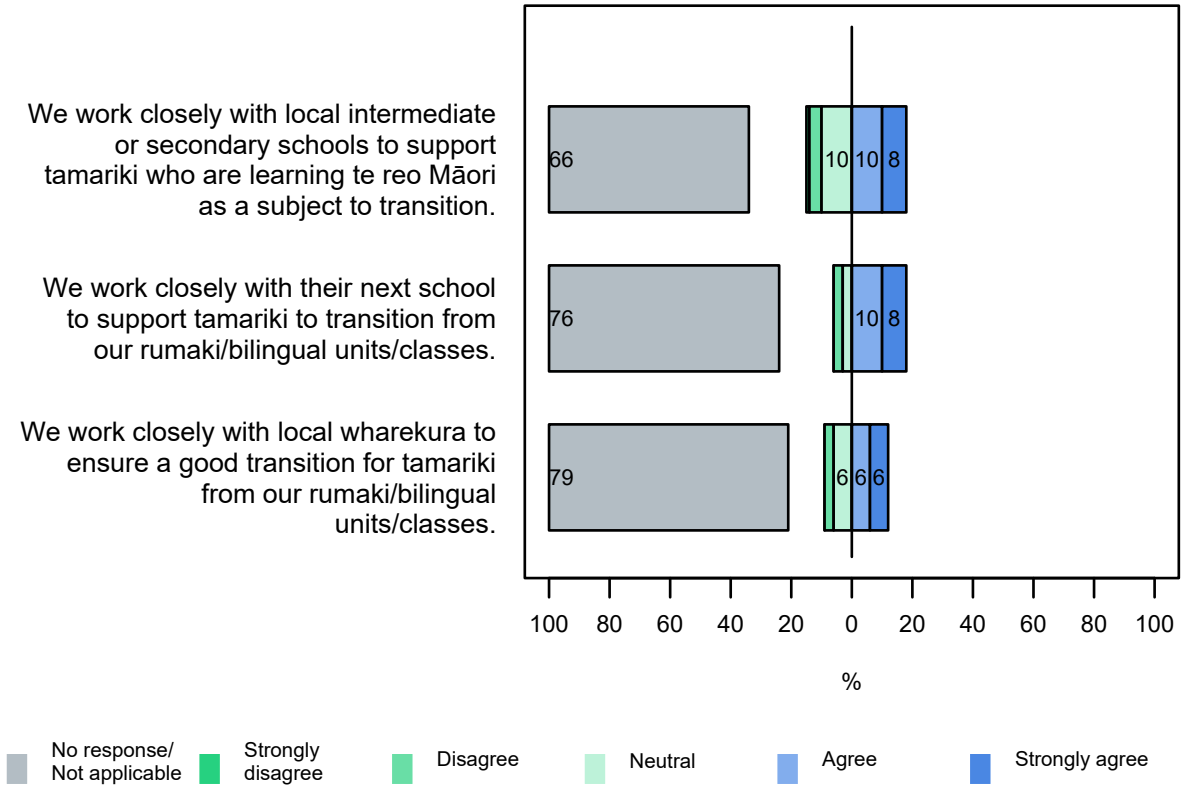
FIGURE 16 **Support for tamariki transitioning from Māori immersion into primary school (Principals, *n* = 145)**



Some schools work to provide transition support for te reo Māori from English-medium primary schools

When it comes to transitioning to secondary or intermediate school, 17% of the principals said they worked closely with the next school for tamariki from their rumaki/bilingual units/classes, and 18%, worked closely with the next school for tamariki who were learning te reo Māori as a subject .There has been little change here since 2016. Figure 17 shows the full picture.

FIGURE 17 **Support for te reo for tamariki as they transition to secondary or intermediate (Principals, *n* = 145)**

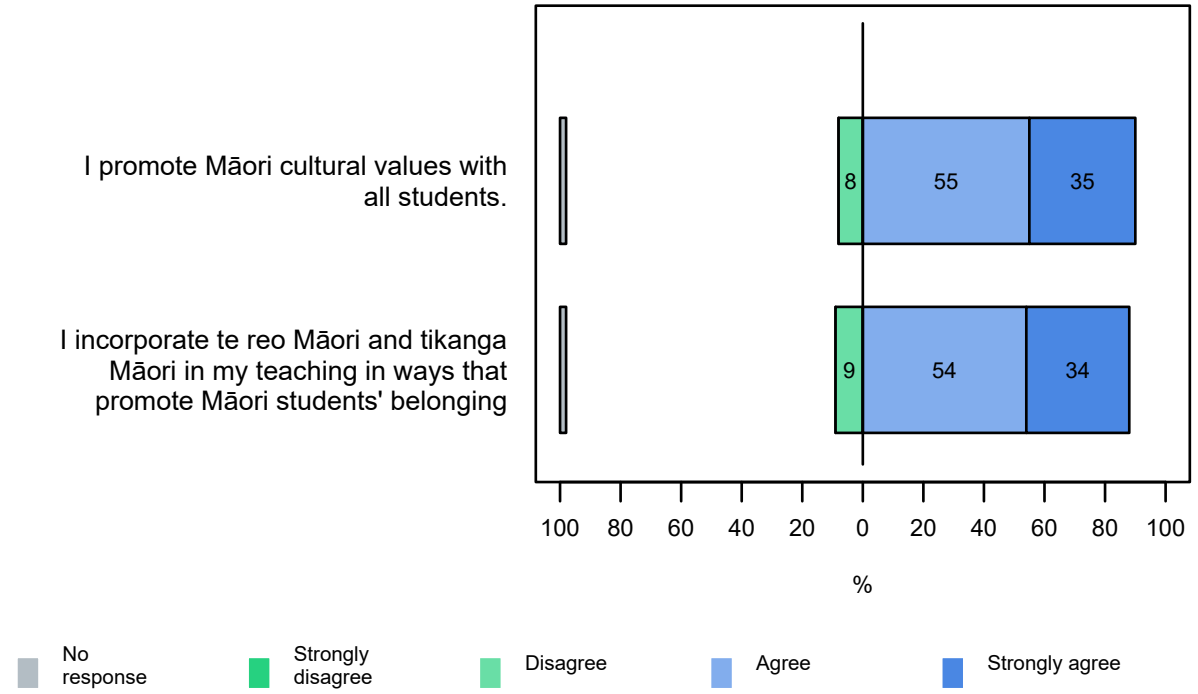


Most teachers and schools report some support for ākonga Māori wellbeing

Understanding and honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi in their school values and day-to-day activities was rated as very good by 31% of the teachers, and good by 42%. Twenty percent thought this was satisfactory in their school. Five percent found it poor, and 1%, very poor.

Around a third of the teachers strongly agreed that they promoted Māori cultural values with all students, and incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in ways that promote Māori students' belonging. A further 54%–55% agreed that they did these things. Only 8%–9% said they did not. This is much the same picture as in 2016, with the exception of a small increase in the proportion who strongly agreed that they incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori to promote Māori students' wellbeing, from 27% in 2016 to 34% in 2019.

FIGURE 18 **Teachers' support for ākonga Māori wellbeing (*n* = 145)**

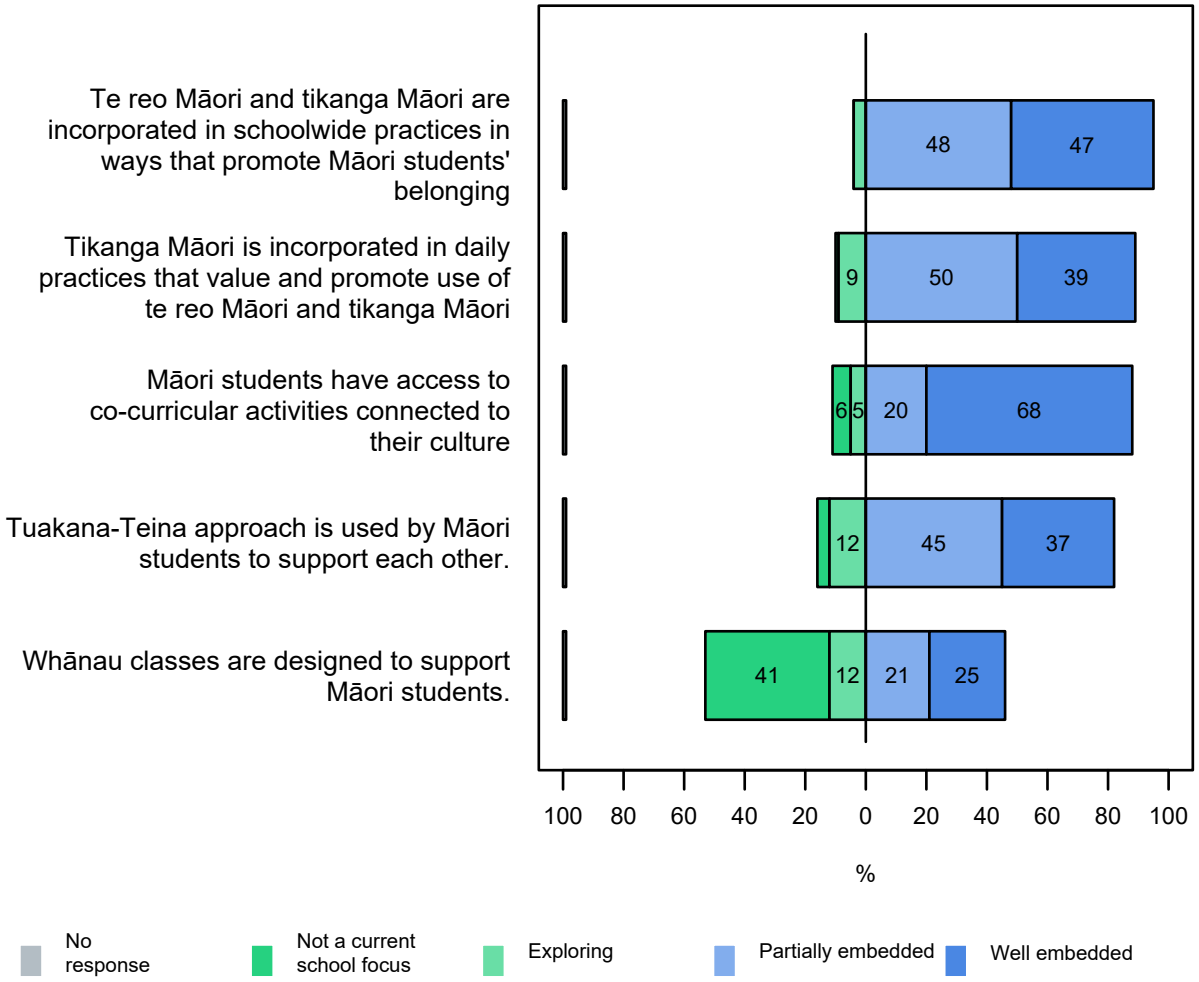


Around twice as many decile 1 and 2 school teachers strongly agreed that they promoted Māori cultural values with all students (60% compared with 31% of decile 3 to 10 school teachers), and incorporated te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in their teaching in ways that promote Māori students' belonging (56% compared with 31% of decile 3 to 10 school teachers).

Almost all the parents and whānau responding to the survey said that their child's teacher/s pronounced their name properly: 77% strongly agreed, and 21% agreed. Māori parents and whānau had similar responses as non-Māori.

Principals' reports of school-wide practices to support ākonga Māori wellbeing give a similar picture, showing a spread in terms of how well embedded these practices are, with small proportions still exploring ways to do this, and just a few saying it was not a focus—with the exception of providing whānau classes, organised vertically through year levels. Figure 19 has the details.

FIGURE 19 **School support for ākonga Māori wellbeing (Principals, *n* = 145)**



In 2019, more principals said their school was using the tuakana–teina approach (37% said this was well embedded, up from 20% in 2016, and only 4% said it was not a focus, compared with 25% in 2016). Whānau classes that were well embedded had also almost doubled: 25% in 2019, up from 13% in 2016. These were not a focus for 41% of schools, down from 59% in 2016.

Tuakana–teina approaches were well embedded more in decile 1 and 2 schools (54%), followed by decile 7 and 8 schools (42%), and decile 3 and 4 schools (39%). Whānau classes were also well embedded more in decile 1 and 2 schools (50%).

We also asked about kaupapa Māori support programmes for groups of students who need extra wellbeing support (see Figure 3 in Section 2). Such programmes were well embedded in 14% and partially embedded in 17% of the schools, much the same as in 2016. More schools were exploring such programmes in 2019: 31% compared with 19% in 2016. Decile 1 and 2 school principals reported the highest rate of embedding such programmes: 25%.

School interactions with local iwi and hapū are occurring, but need more support

Schools have been increasingly encouraged to work with their local iwi and hapū in partnership, so that Māori students can experience belonging and success as Māori, and that all the students in a school understand and respect the culture, knowledge, and language of their local iwi and hapū.

Sixty percent of the principals had some interaction with their local iwi:

- 37% had discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students
- 35% had interactions with local hapū usually
- 16% had iwi feedback on their annual report
- 13% co-constructed some programmes with their local iwi
- 5% co-constructed some student support with their local iwi.

Forty-six percent identified partnerships with iwi and hapū as a major issue facing their school, and the same proportion also said they needed external expertise to engage with whānau, hapū, and iwi, and could not readily access this.

Hui with whānau Māori were reported by 20% of the trustees taking part in the survey as part of their consultation with their school community. This is much the same as in 2016, 2013, and 2010. Consulting on provision for Māori students was highest in 2010—30%, compared with 20% in 2016 and 9% in 2019. Incorporating te reo and tikanga Māori and provision for Māori students was a topic of school community consultation for 10% of the trustees, much the same as in 2016 and 2013.

Māori student achievement plays an increasing role in decisionmaking but a sizeable group of schools want reliable strategies to support Māori student learning

Three-quarters of the principals said that Māori student achievement data played a significant role in their board's decisionmaking. There has been a marked increase from the 10% who strongly agreed with this statement in 2016 and the 9% in 2013, to 23% in 2019.

There was still a substantial proportion of principals who said they needed and could not access external expertise on implementing reliable strategies to support Māori student learning, 41%, as did 37% in 2016.

Māori student achievement was identified by 25% of the principals as a major issue facing their school, somewhat lower than the 34% who identified this in 2016. Decile 1 and 2 school principals were most likely to identify this as a major issue for them—46%.[17]

Most principals can identify effective practices in their school that have improved ākonga Māori outcomes

We asked principals an open-ended question about the most effective thing their school had done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for ākonga Māori and 130 comments were made. There were five main themes:

- use or increased use of te reo Māori and tikanga in everyday practice and visibility, with some mentioning school waiata, kapa haka, karakia, and performances for the school community

17 Māori student achievement was also identified as a major issue for their school by 30% of decile 3 and 4 school principals, 25% of decile 5 and 6 school principals, 13% of decile 7 and 8 school principals, and 14% of decile 9 and 10 school principals.

- whānau engagement, community involvement
- improving staff capability to teach ākonga Māori, through PLD, employment decisions, collaborative work
- using assessments and inquiry to identify ākonga Māori needs and tailor teaching
- greater emphasis on respectful relationships, localised curriculum, and pedagogy that supports student agency.

Māori parents and whānau responding to the survey were positive about their child's schooling experience

With the caveat that parents and whānau responding to the survey had higher education levels than parents and whānau as a whole, so they are not representative of all parents and whānau, the 55 Māori parents and whānau who took part in the survey were generally positive about school provision for their child, as were other parents and whānau. The full picture is given in Section 9.

Two-thirds of the Māori parents and whānau who took part in the survey strongly agreed that the cultural identity of their child was recognised and respected at the school, and that they were pleased with the progress their child had made in 2019.

Twenty percent of Māori parents and whānau coached or helped with kapa haka, 36% attended kapa haka at their child's school, and 13% taught te reo Māori and/or tikanga Māori there.

Summary

Overall, the national survey responses point to te reo Māori being used in English-medium schools, as part of daily life, but in a limited way. It is encouraging that there is a steady rise since 2013 in English-medium primary school students being able to learn te reo Māori most of the time, but the proportion is still low: 14%. The marked increase in the proportion of principals who have difficulty finding teachers of te reo attests to both the growing attention to te reo Māori in primary schools, and the continuing shortage of knowledgeable te reo Māori speakers who also want to teach.

Other signs of increased attention to the success and wellbeing of ākonga Māori are evident, with more use of tuakana–teina approaches, whānau classes, and exploration of kaupapa Māori support programmes, and Māori student achievement data playing a significant role in more school boards' decisionmaking. Most of the principals could identify something their school had done in the last 3 years to improve Māori student outcomes.

But it is concerning that there is still 41% of principals who need but cannot access external expertise to implement reliable strategies to support Māori student learning, and 46% needing but not able to access external expertise to engage with whānau, hapū, and iwi. Understanding of the importance of improving Māori student belonging, wellbeing, and success, and of these partnerships is evident, but more support will be needed for English-medium schools and teachers to put these into everyday practice.

4. Meeting the needs of Pacific students

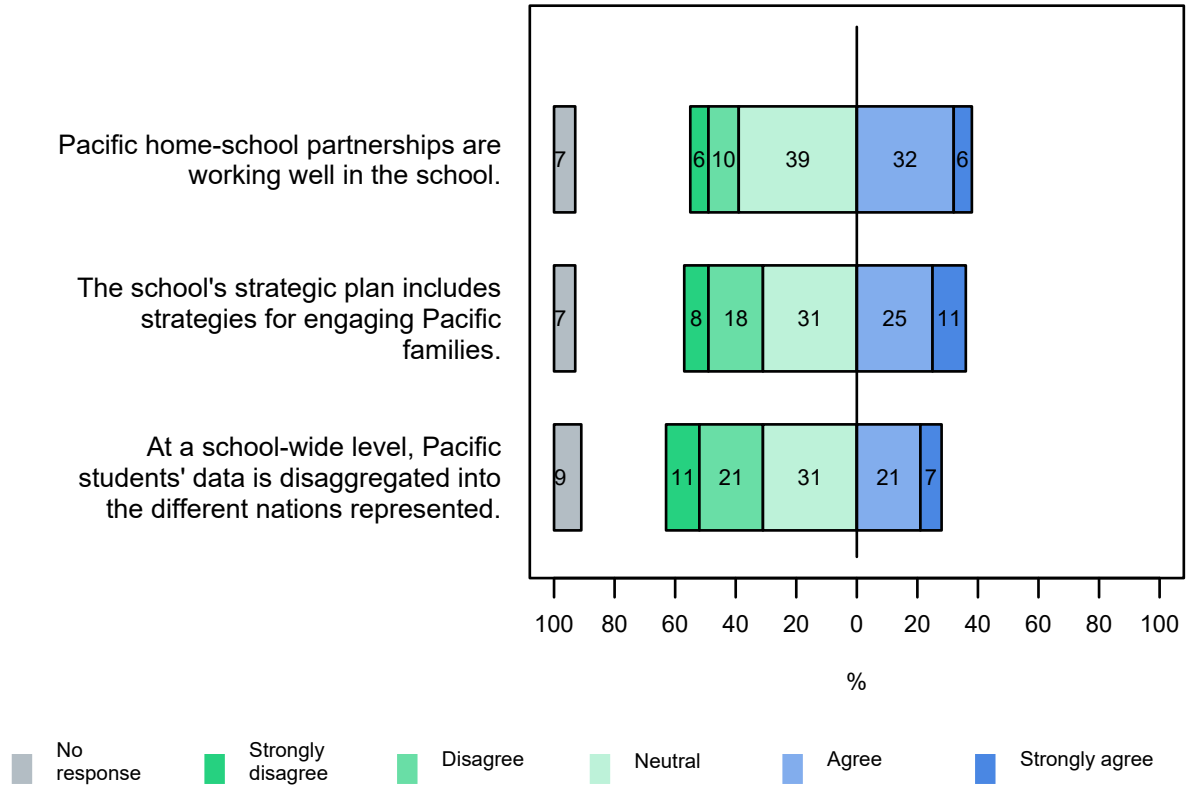
Pacific students make up 13% of Year 1–8 students. This broad grouping encompasses students from Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Niue, Fiji, and other Pacific Island cultures, most born in Aotearoa New Zealand. Students from these distinct cultures and languages tend to be clustered in areas and therefore in schools. Quite a few schools have no students from Pacific cultures.

In this section we first report primary schools' support for Pacific students and their families, their approaches to supporting Pacific students' wellbeing, and principals' responses to other items about the school and Pacific students. Then we turn to teachers' reports of how they support Pacific students' wellbeing, and their professional learning that helps this. We had 25 responses from Pacific parents and whānau, too few to report their views separately.

Support for Pacific students and their families varies

Just over a third of the principals said that their school's strategic plan included strategies to engage Pacific families, or that Pacific home-school partnerships were working well. Three-quarters of those who said Pacific home-school partnerships were working well also said their strategic plan had strategies to engage Pacific families. Somewhat fewer disaggregated Pacific student data by nation, as shown in Figure 20. The picture is much the same as it was in 2016.

FIGURE 20 **School support for Pacific students and their families (Principals, *n* = 145)**



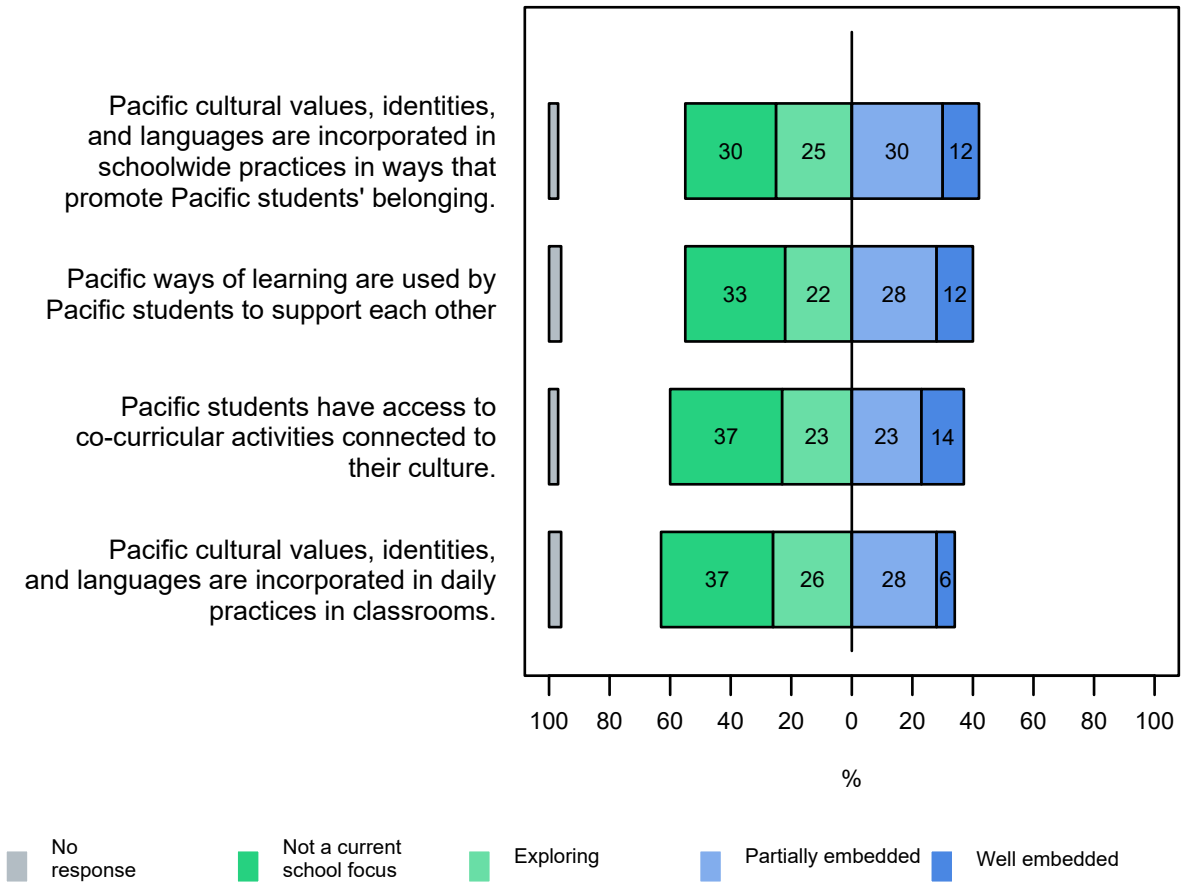
Disaggregating Pacific student data into their different nations was most evident in decile 1 and 2 schools (25% of these principals strongly agreed that they did this).

Twenty-six percent of the principals said they needed external expertise on engaging with Pacific families, but could not readily access this.

Pacific student wellbeing at school is variably supported

Over half the principals indicated that their school had embedded or was exploring the four approaches to supporting Pacific student wellbeing we asked about. Most of these were exploring or had partially embedded these approaches. Figure 21 shows the full picture here.

FIGURE 21 **Schools' approaches to supporting Pacific student wellbeing (Principals, *n* = 145)**



Decile 1 and 2 school principals had the highest proportion of principals reporting that they had well-embedded these approaches, other than the incorporation of Pacific cultural values, identities and languages in schoolwide practices, where there was no association with decile.

Pacific student achievement is more of a focus for schools

Pacific student achievement data played a significant role in 44% of the principals' school board decisionmaking (12% strongly agreed that it did). This has increased from 2016, when 28% of the principals said it played such a role, and 5% strongly agreed that it did.

When we asked whether their school needed external expertise to implement reliable strategies to support Pacific student learning, 29% of the principals responding said they needed this expertise, but could not access it, as did 21% in 2016. Eighteen percent needed it, but could access it; 48% said they did not need it: both proportions were much the same as in 2016.

Pacific student achievement was identified by 16% of the principals as a major issue facing their school, much the same as in 2016.

Most principals with Pacific students can identify effective practices in their school

We asked principals an open-ended question about the most effective thing their school had done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for Pacific students; 130 comments were made, with 44 saying that they had no Pacific students.

Themes among those principals who described the most effective thing they had done and included:

- using students' languages, visual references to their countries and culture, focus on each nation periodically; for example, through national language week, language days, groups performing at school events
- parent engagement and home–school partnerships; for example, a termly So'otaga programme where students, parents and teachers set student learning goals together, and school parent fono
- improving teacher capability, through PLD, using Tapasā (a framework and set of resources for teachers developed by the Teaching Council)[18], and staff appointments
- emphasis on students being aware of their own self-identity
- closer focus on Pacific learners' progress and supporting them to be active in seeking ongoing improvement, and teacher inquiry into the effectiveness of their work with Pacific learners.

Supporting transitions from Pacific language nests to provide language continuity is rare

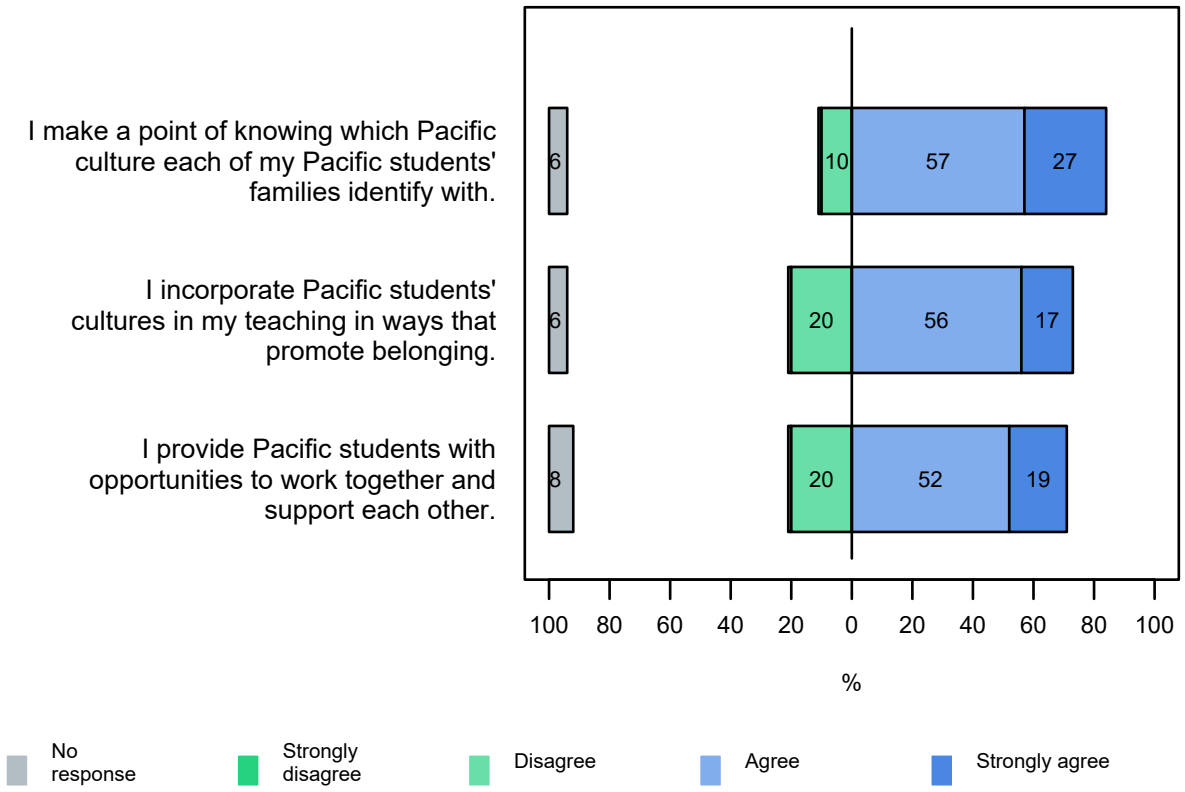
There are around 50 teacher-led Pacific language nests among the country's early learning services, mainly Tongan and Samoan; 29 primary schools offering Pacific language medium of instruction for some or more of the time, and another 10 offering a specific Pacific language as a curriculum subject. Not surprisingly then, in our sample only 7% of principals said their school worked closely with local Pacific language nests to support the transition of their children to the school, and only 4% of the principals said that children transitioning from Pacific language nests could continue learning their language in the school.

Teachers' support for Pacific students has improved since 2016

Making a point of knowing which Pacific culture each student identified with, incorporating these cultures in teaching to promote belonging, and providing opportunities for Pacific students to work together and support each other are practices reported by most primary teachers. Figure 22 shows more agreement than strong agreement with the items we asked about. Between 10 and 20% of teachers disagreed with these items.

18 https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/tapas%C4%81-cultural-competencies-framework-teachers-of-pacific-learners

FIGURE 22 **Teacher support for Pacific students (*n* = 620)**



There has been a marked increase since 2016 in teachers agreeing that they include these practices in their teaching, though little change at the 'strongly agree' level. Table 4 shows the increases at the 'agree' level.

TABLE 4 **Increases in teachers agreeing that they include practices to support Pacific students' learning and wellbeing, 2016 and 2019**

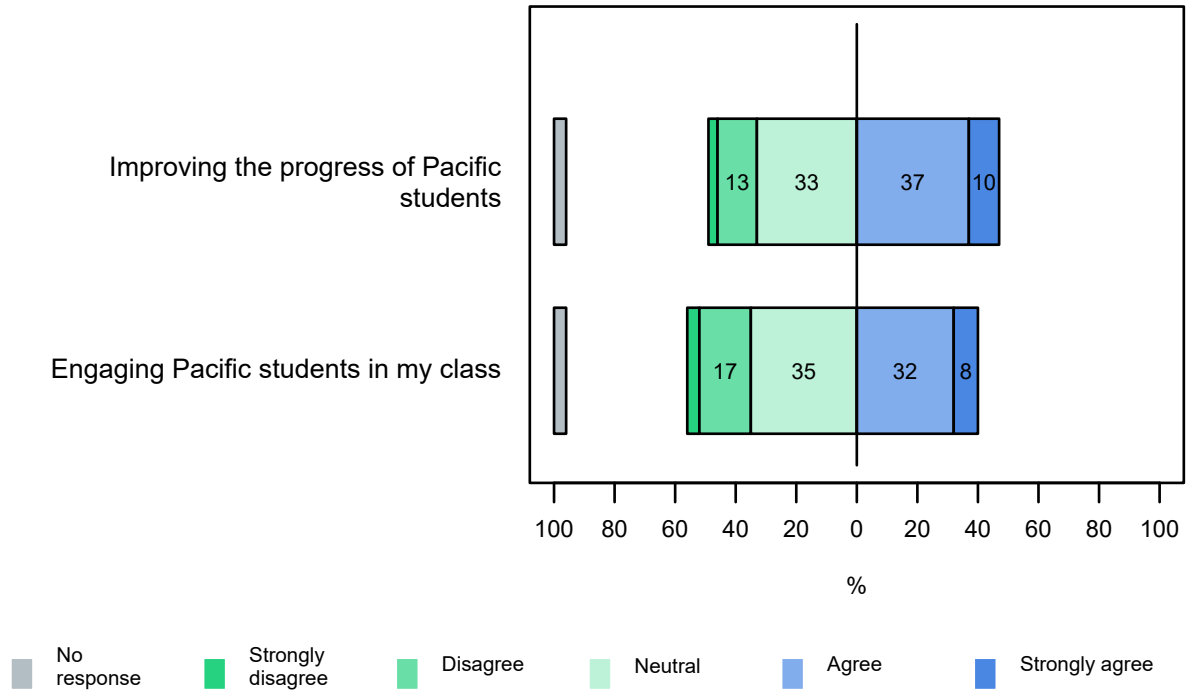
	2016 (*n* = 771) % agree	2019 (*n* = 620) % agree
I make a point of knowing which Pacific culture each of my Pacific students' families identify with.	42	57
I incorporate Pacific students' cultures in my teaching in ways that promote belonging.	37	56
I provide Pacific students with opportunities to work together and support each other.	36	52

Decile 1 and 2 schools have the highest enrolment of Pacific students, and teachers in these schools were the ones most likely to strongly agree with these items.

Practical help from professional learning to engage Pacific students shows little change

We asked teachers what practical help they had had from their professional learning in the last 3 years to engage Pacific students in their class (much the same picture as in 2016) and to improve their progress, a new item added in 2019. Figure 23 shows that 47% had such help around improving the progress of Pacific students, and 40% around engaging them in teachers' classes.

FIGURE 23 **Practical help from professional learning to support Pacific students (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Decile 1 and 2 school teachers had the highest proportion reporting strong agreement that they had had practical help from their professional learning here: 26% in relation to professional learning that gave practical help to improve Pacific student achievement, and 20%, Pacific student engagement in their class.

Summary

The clustered nature of Pacific student enrolment was reflected in school support and teacher professional learning. Decile 1 and 2 schools were the most attentive to Pacific learners and their families. However, there was a marked increase in principals' reports that Pacific student achievement data played a significant role in their school board decision making, and slightly more awareness that it was difficult to find external expertise to help them implement reliable strategies to improve Pacific student learning. Many of the principals with Pacific students can identify effective practices they are using as well. More teachers were including practices that support Pacific students' learning than in 2016.

5. Providing for students with disabilities or who need learning support

Around 15–16% of students have learning support needs, including disabilities. Providing well for them has been a mounting concern.[19] In 2019 the Ministry of Education responded with a new Learning Support delivery model and the Learning Support Action Plan—an additional 600 learning support coordinator roles in schools have been funded from 2020. Work has also been occurring to provide more nuanced markers of progress within *The New Zealand Curriculum* (*NZC)* Curriculum level 1 for teachers (and students and their families).[20]

In this section, we first draw together individual items from broader sets of questions about provision that we asked principals. Next, we report from the teachers' survey, focusing on a set of items specifically about working with students with learning support needs as well as individual items in other sets of questions. We then describe the views of parents and whānau with students who need learning support. This is the first time that we have asked parents and whānau to say whether they had a child who needed learning support, and the question has allowed us to provide a comparison with the views of other parents and whānau.

Principals' perspectives show some resourcing issues with provision for students who need learning support, but attention to their inclusion and progress

The achievement of students with learning support needs was identified by 34% of principals as a major issue facing their school.

Individual items from across the principal survey highlighted the resourcing of provision for students who need learning support.

- 23% of the principals said their school used operational funding or school-raised funds to employ one or more teachers to support students with learning support needs.
- 44% of principals thought that their school's buildings had sufficient flexibility to cater for students with disabilities or learning support needs.
- 21% of principals had difficulty finding suitable teachers for students with learning support needs.
- 30% of principals needed but could not readily access external expertise to support differentiated teaching for students with disabilities or learning support needs; the picture was better in relation to reporting on progress for students with learning support needs, with only 8% saying they needed but could not access external expertise about this.

19 Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (2018). *Our schooling futures: Stronger together Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātinitini* (initial report), pp. 78–85. https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TSR/Tomorrows-Schools-Review-Report-13Dec2018.PDF

20 https://assessment.tki.org.nz/Assessment-tools-resources/Learners-with-diverse-learning-needs/Level-One-Curriculum-Frameworks

More positively,

- 74% of the principals said that they had support for the wellbeing of students with disabilities or learning support needs well embedded in their school, and 19%, that this support was partially embedded.
- Students who need assistive technologies to support their learning were reported to have good access to these by 75% of the principals.
- Inclusion was a focus for professional learning and/or change in 23% of the schools in the last 2 years, as it was for 17% in 2016.
- 90% of principals thought their teachers had knowledge and resources to support students' understanding of and respect for diversity of abilities and disabilities.
- 82% of principals said they worked closely with local early childhood education (ECE) services to ensure a good transition of children with learning support needs into their school, and 87% worked closely with their students with disabilities or learning support needs' next school to ensure a good transition for them.
- 73% of principals said that engagement and achievement data for students with disabilities or learning support needs played a significant role in their school board's decision making.

Most principals can identify effective school practices to improve outcomes for students with disabilities or learning support needs

The majority of the principals (86%) answered a question about the most effective thing their school had done in the past 3 years to improve outcomes for students with disabilities or learning support needs, showing a commitment to include these students and progress their learning.

The main themes in their comments were:

- employing a SENCO (special education needs coordinator): someone with school-wide responsibility for oversight as well as working directly with teachers, students, teacher aides, families, and outside agencies. The importance of the SENCO's knowledge and passion for inclusion was mentioned in a number of comments
- putting more resources into work with these students, often through using the school's operational grant or locally raised funds
- using IEPs (individual education plans) to plan and track progress, and having school-wide registers of needs, and team approaches
- working more productively with RTLBs (Resource teachers: Leaning and behaviour), the Ministry of Education, agencies that can provide support, specialist schools, and Kāhui Ako to address specific student needs, and also share practice
- specific professional learning and development, for example on ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, anxiety, and on inclusion
- emphasising inclusion, in student activities, school productions, and learning beyond the classroom.
- getting more support from the Ministry of Education, including buildings and equipment as well as funding for teaching and teacher aides.

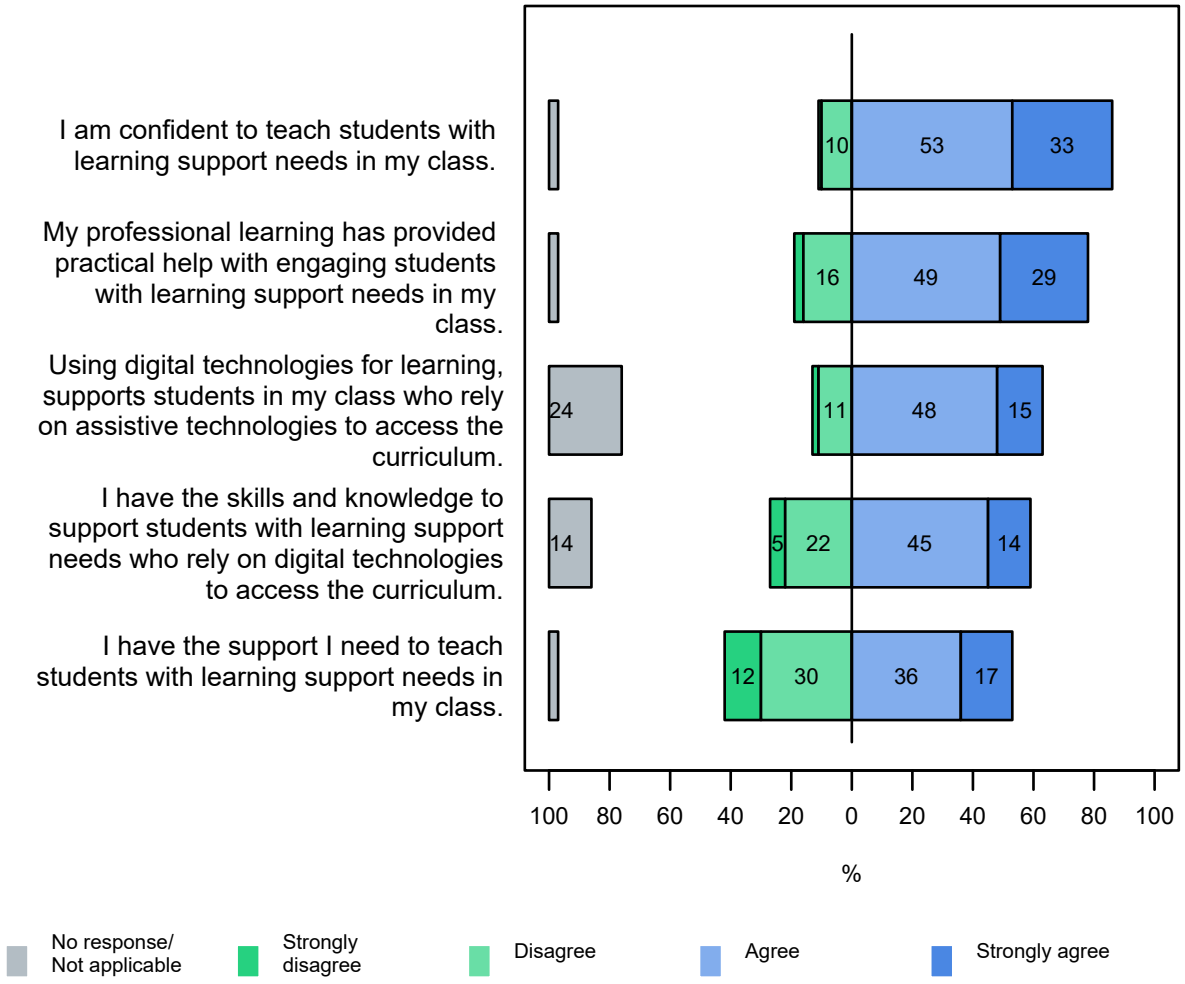
Teachers show confidence working with students who need learning support, but also need more support themselves

The majority of teachers responding (88%) thought they had the knowledge and resources to support their students' understanding and respect for diversity of abilities and disabilities. Many (72%) also thought that their school saw all forms of student diversity as a resource and strength, not a difficulty.

Figure 24 shows that most of the teachers expressed confidence in teaching students with learning support needs in their class, and they judged recent professional learning to have provided them with practical help with engaging such students. However, only 54% thought they had the support they needed to teach these students.

Most of the teachers who had students who relied on digital technology to access the curriculum were positive about its use, and about their own skills and knowledge to support these students.

FIGURE 24 **Providing for students who need learning support (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Information from other sets of questions asked of teachers showed that

- 67% saw their professional learning over the past 3 years as giving them practical help with improving the progress of students with learning support needs, and 66% with improving their engagement in class
- 64% thought that the support they got within their school for teaching students who need learning support was good or very good
- 61% thought that there was a good or very good level in their school in terms of all staff thinking it possible to address the barriers to learning experienced by students who need learning support.
- having more support staff (64%) was to the fore of the changes teachers wanted to see in their work.
- 35% would like more support so they can adapt *NZC* for students with learning support needs, increased from 19% in 2016, and 12% in 2013.

Parents and whānau of a child with a disability or who needs learning support are less positive than other parents and whānau about their child's school experiences

Twelve percent of parents and whānau responding said their child had a disability or needed learning support (*n* = 49), and a further 4% were not sure.

We asked parents and whānau a range of questions about their child's and their own experiences of their child's school. Section 9 gives the full picture. Here we show where parents and whānau who have a child with a disability or needing learning support showed a different pattern of responses than did parents and whānau of other students. They were less likely to rate something 'very well' or 'strongly agree' with it, and more likely to give negative ratings. However, the proportion giving negative ratings was mostly below 20%, with some exceptions.

School experiences of students with a disability or needing learning support

We included eight items about their child's experience of school. These parents and whānau were less likely to strongly agree and more likely to disagree (combining disagree and strongly disagree) with all eight statements, compared with parents and whānau whose child does not have a disability or need learning support.

My child:

- has good friends at school (45% strongly agreed, compared with 56% of other parents and whānau; 12% disagreed, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- feels safe at school (37% strongly agreed, compared with 61% of other parents and whānau; 12% disagreed, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)
- enjoys going to school (29% strongly agreed, compared with 57% of other parents and whānau)
- feels they belong in the school (29% strongly agreed, compared with 58% of other parents and whānau; 10% disagreed, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)
- is included in lots of school activities (37% strongly agreed, compared with 51% of other parents and whānau; 14% disagreed, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- is helped to set realistic learning goals (22% strongly agreed, compared with 43% of other parents and whānau; 14% disagreed, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- has schoolwork with the right amount of challenge (20% strongly agreed, compared with 34% of other parents and whānau; 18% disagreed, compared with 9% of other parents and whānau)
- finds schoolwork interesting (10% strongly agreed, compared with 38% of other parents and whānau; 25% disagreed, compared with 5% of other parents and whānau).

School support for the development of skills and attitudes associated with the *NZC key competencies and learning capabilities* for students with a disability or needing learning support

Parents and whānau who have a child with a disability or needing learning support were just as likely as parents and whānau of other children to say the school helped their child have a 'can do' attitude, develop problem-solving skills and attitudes, discover a range of interests and passions, and learn to speak te reo Māori.

Their views did differ for the skills and attitudes below.

My child's school helps my child:

- try new things (33% said very well compared with 53% of other parents and whānau; 12% said not well or not well at all, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)

- speak up when they need to (29% said very well compared with 43% of other parents and whānau; 24% said not well or not well at all, compared with 6% of other parents and whānau)
- ask good questions and be reflective (25% said very well compared with 49% of other parents and whānau; 20% said not well or not well at all, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)
- keep at it when learning is difficult (25% said very well compared with 48% of other parents and whānau; 18% said not well or not well at all, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau).

Parents and whānau of students with a disability or needing learning support—views of their child's teachers

When it came to statements about their child's teacher/s, parents and whānau who have a child with a disability or needing learning support were just as likely as the parents and whānau of other children to find their child's teacher/s committed and enthusiastic, treating their child fairly, and pronouncing their child's name properly.

They had different views on the items below.

My child's teacher/s:

- are aware of my child's strengths and weaknesses (45% strongly agreed, compared with 54% of other parents and whānau; 8% disagreed, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- think about my child's wellbeing as well as their learning (45% strongly agreed, compared with 55% of other parents and whānau; 10% disagreed, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- respond to any concerns I have (41% strongly agreed, compared with 58% of other parents and whānau; 12% disagreed, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- provide clear feedback about their work (33% strongly agreed, compared with 46% of other parents and whānau; 16% disagreed, compared with 6% of other parents and whānau)
- motivate my child to want to learn (29% strongly agreed, compared with 57% of other parents and whānau; 14% disagreed, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- have high expectations for my child (27% strongly agreed, compared with 40% of other parents and whānau; 18% disagreed, compared with 5% of other parents and whānau).

Parents and whānau of students with a disability or needing learning support—views of schools' support for their child's social and emotional development

Parents and whānau of a child with a disability or needing learning support were just as likely as others to rate their child's school well when it came to getting on well with others and making friends, and getting along with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. They did see things somewhat differently for most of the other items in this set.

My child's school helps them:

- take pride in who they are (49% rated this very well compared with 57% of other parents and whānau; 10% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- understand and feel part of their local community (39% rated this very well compared with 50% of other parents and whānau; 10% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- make decisions about healthy eating (39% rated this very well compared with 46% of other parents and whānau; 20% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 5% of other parents and whānau)
- make good decisions about being physically active (33% rated this very well compared with 51% of other parents and whānau; 6% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)

- feel confident about change (33% rated this very well compared with 41% of other parents and whānau; 18% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 6% of other parents and whānau)
- work through conflicts with other students (31% rated this very well compared with 38% of other parents and whānau; 18% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 8% of other parents and whānau)
- recognise and manage their feelings (31% rated this very well compared with 41% of other parents and whānau; 20% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 5% of other parents and whānau)
- take care of the environment (27% rated this very well compared with 42% of other parents and whānau; 14% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- deal with hard emotional situations (25% rated this very well compared with 33% of other parents and whānau; 10% rated this not well or not at all well, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau).

Parents and whānau of students with a disability or needing learning support—experiences with their child's school

Parents and whānau were also asked about their own experiences of their child's school. Parents and whānau of a child with a disability or needing learning support were just as likely as others to agree that they found it easy to understand what their child's teachers say, get good ideas about how to support their child's learning, and that the school genuinely includes parents in its activities. They did have different views on most of the items:

- I am generally happy with the quality of my child's schooling (43% strongly agreed compared with 52% of other parents and whānau; 18% disagreed, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- I am pleased with the progress my child has made this year (35% strongly agreed, compared with 51% of other parents and whānau; 20% disagreed, compared with 6% of other parents and whānau)
- It's easy to talk with my child's teachers (59% strongly agreed, compared with 66% of other parents and whānau; 10% disagreed, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- I feel welcome in the school (8% disagreed, compared with 1% of other parents and whānau)
- I trust this school (45% strongly agreed compared with 65% of other parents and whānau; 16% disagreed, compared with 3% of other parents and whānau)
- If my child had difficulty in learning, the school would help them (35% strongly agreed, compared with 47% of other parents and whānau; 20% disagreed, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)
- If my child had any emotional difficulties, the school would help them (31% strongly agreed compared with 39% of other parents and whānau; 16% disagreed, compared with 4% of other parents and whānau)
- If my child had difficulties with other students, the school would help sort this out (29% strongly agreed, compared with 42% of other parents and whānau; 14% disagreed, compared with 7% of other parents and whānau)
- The cultural identity of my child is recognised and respected (37% strongly agreed, compared with 51% of other parents and whānau; 10% disagreed, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau)
- The school supports and includes ALL students (35% strongly agreed, compared with 54% of other parents and whānau; 12% disagreed, compared with 1% of other parents and whānau)
- I would recommend this school to other students (49% strongly agreed, compared with 64% of other parents and whānau; 16% disagreed, compared with 2% of other parents and whānau).

Cost more of an issue for parents and whānau of students with a disability or needing learning

Twelve percent of parents and whānau with a child who has a disability or needs learning support said their child had been unable to attend regular full-time classes when they needed a teacher aide, because it cost too much, compared with less than 1% of other parents and whānau. As well, cost had meant their child had been unable to use a digital device at school for 16%, compared with 5% of other parents and whānau.

Parents and whānau with a child with a disability or needing learning support were less positive about information on their child's progress

Parents and whānau with a child with a disability or needing learning support also had different views from other parents and whānau on the quality and clarity of information they get from the school. They were less positive about the information about their child's progress in maths, writing, and health and PE. They were also less positive about the information about their child's social development and behaviour:

- 33% rated the information about progress in maths as very good compared with 42% of other parents and whānau
- 35% rated the information about progress in writing as very good compared with 45% of other parents and whānau; 12% rated it as poor or very poor compared with 4% of other parents and whānau
- 25% rated the information about progress in health and PE as very good compared with 32% of other parents and whānau
- 27% rated the information about their child's social development as very good compared with 35% of other parents and whānau; 10% rated it as poor or very poor compared with 3% of other parents and whānau
- 8% rated the information about their child's behaviour as poor or very poor compared with 3% of other parents and whānau.

Summary

Principal and teacher reports of their work with students who need learning support point to general commitment to serving them well. There appears to be a more systematic approach to identifying student learning needs, designing appropriate programmes, and sharing and building the knowledge and capability of their teachers. Nonetheless, serving these students well continues to challenge resources, both within the school and beyond.

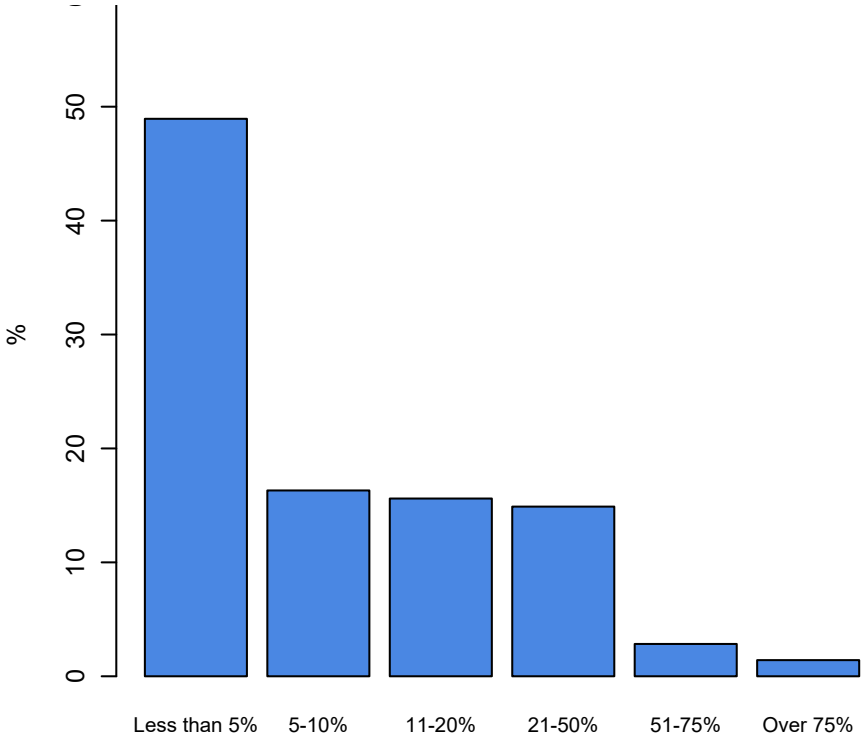
Parents and whānau of students who need learning support were less positive about their child's school experiences than parents and whānau of other students. While the differences were clear, however, they were not stark. Most of these parents and whānau were positive about their child's learning and their child's school.

6. Providing for English language learners

Students who have English as a second or additional language have been a growing population in Aotearoa New Zealand schools. In 2019 there were around 49,000 primary and secondary students whose schools received some additional funding to provide them with ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), if their English proficiency was below the benchmark for their level.[21] Online resources and guidance for teachers are also provided.[22] We included questions about provision for English language learners in 2019 for the first time in the NZCER national surveys.

English language learners are unevenly distributed among schools. There is variation in the proportion of English language learners in a school. We asked principals approximately what proportion of students in their school had English as a second or additional language. These learners comprised less than 5% of the school roll for nearly half (48%) of the schools, and over half the school roll for 4% (see Figure 25).

FIGURE 25 **English language learners as a proportion of primary school rolls (Principals *n* = 145)**



21 https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/budget-2019/increased-resources-for-esol-in-schools/
22 http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/

ESOL funding can be used to provide specialist ESOL support. Table 5 shows that half the principals reported having no specialist support for English language learners, in line with the almost half of schools with less than 5% of their roll who were English language learners. The support primary schools were most likely to have was ESOL-trained teaching assistants (30% had these).

TABLE 5 **Specialist ESOL support in primary schools**

	Principals (*n* = 145) %
No specialist ESOL support	50
ESOL-trained teaching assistants	30
Dedicated ESOL teacher	17
Bilingual teacher aides	14
Other support (including untrained teacher aides)	13

Thirty-nine percent of the principals thought they had access to sufficient support to help their English language learners, 21% were unsure, and 39% thought they did not.

Many teachers are confident about catering for English language learners but a third say they do not have access to sufficient support for them

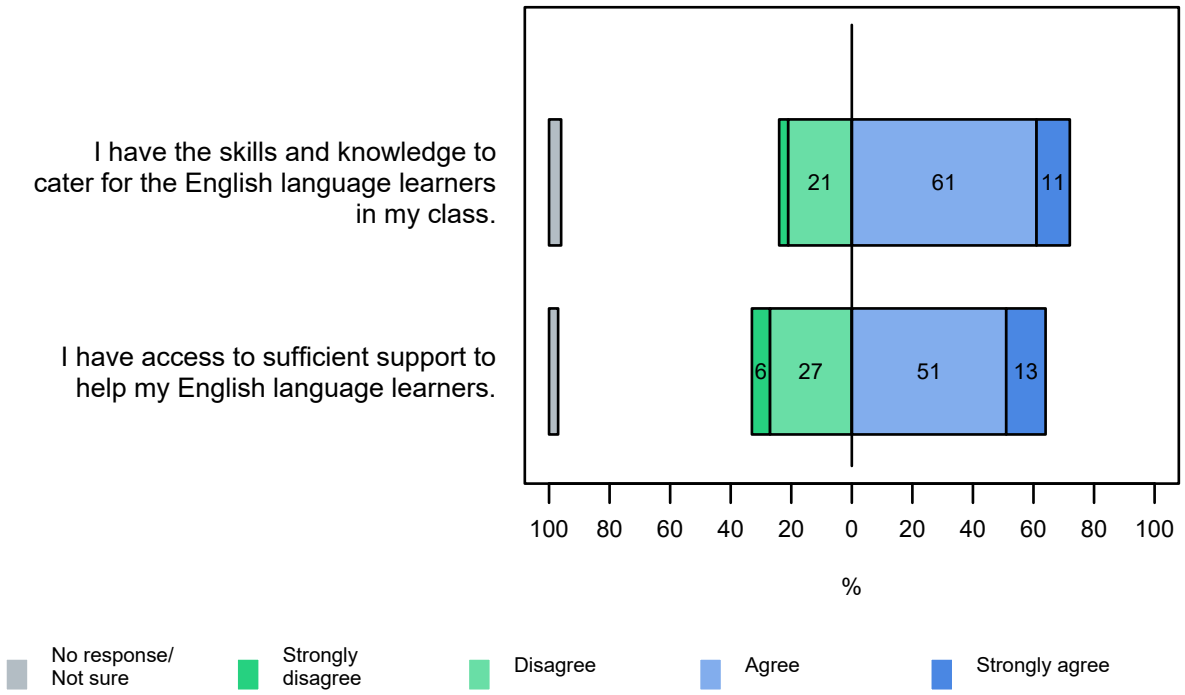
Most teachers who responded to the survey had students whose English was a second or additional language, and who needed additional support with English: 23% had many such students, and 47% had some. Twenty-nine percent had none of these students.

Decile 1 and 2 school teachers were more likely than teachers in decile 3–10 schools to report having ‘many’ students whose English was a second or additional language—38%.

The number of different first languages among English language learners reported by their teachers ranged from one to 30, with a median number of three different languages other than English in a teacher’s class.

Nearly three-quarters of the teachers with these students thought they had the skills and knowledge to cater for the English language learners in their class, but somewhat fewer thought they had access to sufficient support to help their English language learners, as shown in Figure 26. Few strongly agreed they had skills and knowledge or access to sufficient support.

FIGURE 26 **Supporting English language learners in the classroom (Teachers, *n* = 436)**



Parents and whānau responding were positive about the support their child had to learn English

Our survey was in English only, which means that it cannot provide a full picture of the views of parents and whānau whose child is an English language learner. Twenty-four percent of the parents and whānau taking part said their families spoke a language other than English at home, but only 12% of these (11 of 96) said their child needed support at school to learn English. All but one of these thought their child was getting the support they needed to do so.

Summary

Many teachers and schools have some English language learners, and a few schools have many. More than half have three or more students who are English language learners (in a class of 25, that means at least 10%).

Thirty-nine percent of principals did not think they had the access to sufficient support for these students. Most specialist support was in the form of teacher aides.

Many teachers show confidence that they have knowledge and skills to cater for English language learners in their class, though few strongly agreed that they did. A third did not think they had sufficient support for their English language students.

7. Curriculum, assessment, and reporting to parents and whānau

An important national development for the future of the learning opportunities that primary schools can provide occurred in 2019. The Curriculum, Progress, and Achievement Ministerial Working Group grappled with the issues that have become evident since *The New Zealand Curriculum* (*NZC*) became mandatory in 2010, and the issues around valid and reliable assessment of student progress that came to the fore with National Standards. Its recommendations would provide schools and kura with much more clarity, guidance, and support, while ensuring that there is ongoing evaluation and review to support progress.[23]

Material we report here gives pertinent information for future evaluation of how things change for students, teachers, parents and whānau, and for schools.

In this section, we first look at teacher reports of their provision of some key learning opportunities, and their students' involvement in their own assessment. Next we look at how teachers use assessment information, and what parents and whānau make of the student progress information they get from schools. Then we look at principals' perspectives on the use of student assessment information across their school. We conclude this chapter with principals' reports of some of their school's *NZC*-linked professional development, and their experience of Ministry-funded guidance for schools in relation to local curriculum framing.

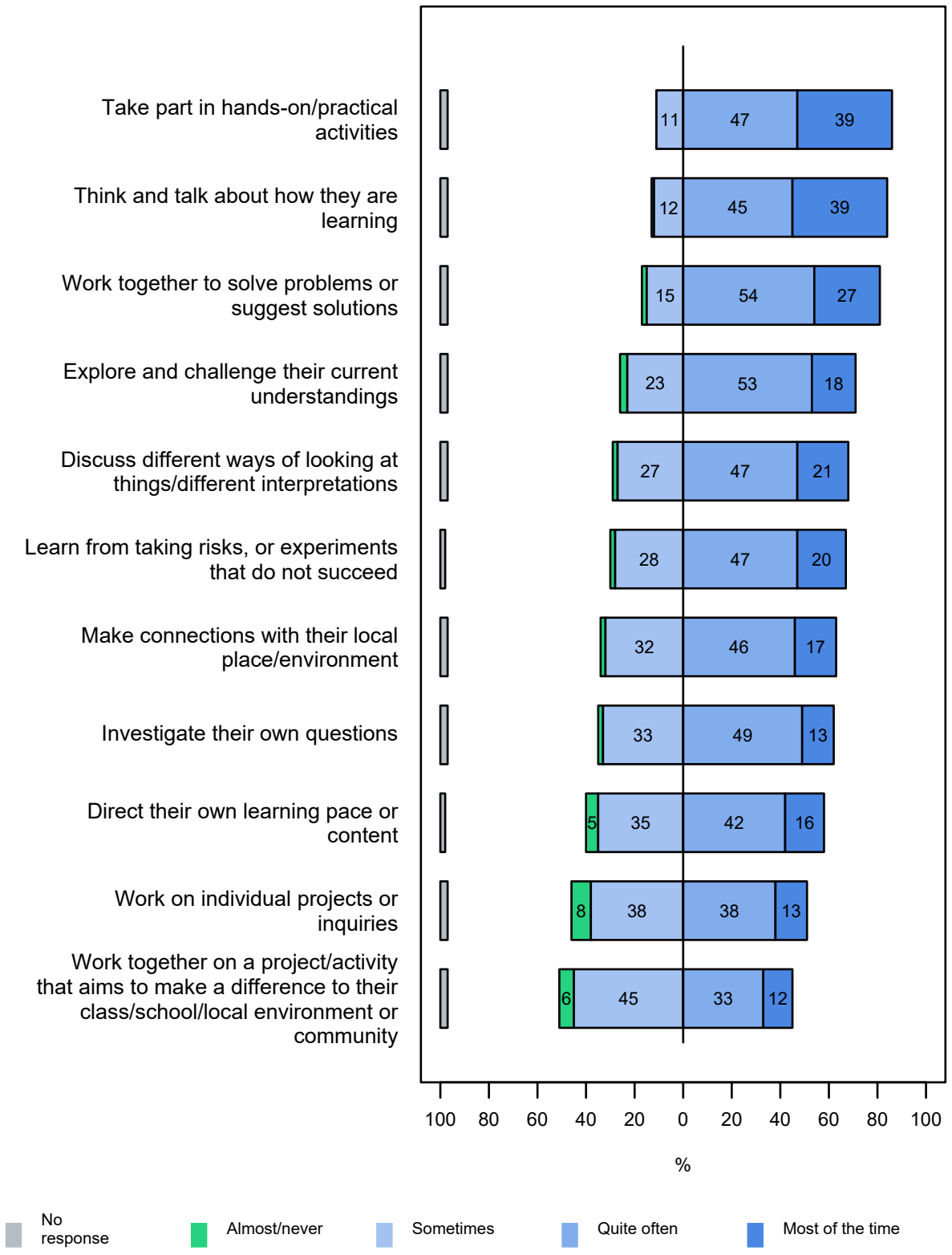
Learning to learn opportunities are common but not frequent

The 11 learning experiences reported here are ones that are beneficial for student motivation and metacognition, growing knowledge as well as skills. Motivation, metacognition, and knowledge are all vital for ongoing agility in learning—even more essential now as our learners navigate and construct a post COVID-19 world.

Figure 27 shows that these opportunities happened at least sometimes in almost all the teachers' classes. It was most common for teachers to provide students with opportunities to take part in hands-on/practical activities, and to talk and think about how they were learning. It was least common for students to work on individual projects or inquiries, or to work together on a project or activity aimed to make a difference.

23 Curriculum, Progress and Achevement Ministerial Advisory Group. (2019). *Strengthening curriculum, progress, and achievement in a system that learns. E whakakaha ana i te marautanga, te koke, me te ekenga taumata i te rangapū e ako ana.* https://conversation-space.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ELS+0324+CPA+Final+MAG+report_06+includes+Ed+Strategy+vision.pdf

FIGURE 27 **Key learning to learn opportunities (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



We have included this bank of questions in the national survey since 2013. The picture shown in Figure 27 has remained largely consistent over time, underlining the need for teachers to have more guidance and support in relation to our national curriculum. This need is evident in the 2019 recommendations by the Curriculum, Progress, and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group, and in the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Review Taskforce's recommendation for a strong Curriculum Centre within the Ministry of Education.

Just a few learning to learn opportunities had increased in frequency in 2019:

- take part in hands-on/practical activities (most of the time for 39% of teachers in 2019, compared with 20% in 2016, and 24% in 2013)
- direct their own learning pace or content (most of the time for 16% of teachers in 2019, compared with 12% in 2016, and 10% in 2013)
- work together on a project/activity that aims to make a difference to their class/school/local environment or community (most of the time for 12% of teachers in 2019, compared with 6% in 2016, and 6% in 2013; the increase may reflect the inclusion of 'environment' in this item in 2019).

Most parents and whānau think their child's school helps them develop skills that support learning

We asked parents and whānau how well they thought their child's school helped them with skills and attitudes that support making the most of life, and learning. The full set of items is reported in Section 9 of this report. Particularly relevant here is that close to 90% of the parents and whanau thought their child's school helped their child develop these things 'well' or 'very well':

- Keep at it when learning is difficult
- Ask good questions/be reflective
- Develop problem-solving skills and attitudes.

Involving students in their own assessment is common. We continued the focus on metacognition in a set of items for teachers about how students are supported in classes to improve the quality of their work through understanding what is expected of them, and learning how to monitor and judge their own and others' work. We also asked teachers how they use assessments to inform their work and support student progress.

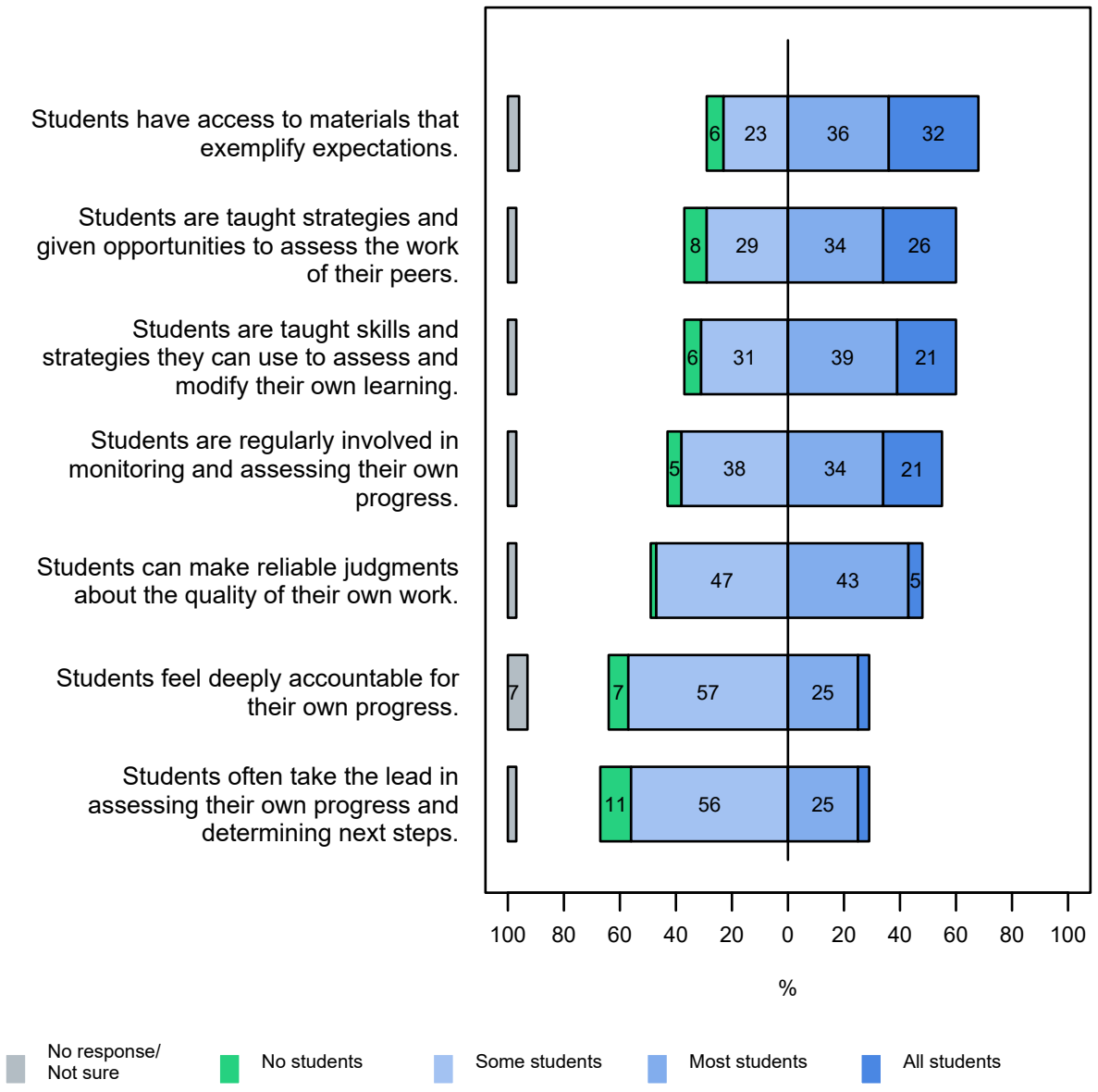
Involving students in their own assessment seems to be common in Aotearoa New Zealand primary school classrooms. Figure 28 shows that 60% or more of teachers reported that most or all of their students had access to material that exemplifies expectations, and that they were taught strategies to assess and modify their own learning, and to assess their peer's work.[24] Figure 28 also shows that around half the teachers reported that most or all of their students were regularly involved in monitoring and assessing their own progress, and that most or all could make reliable judgements about the quality of their own work. It was less common for most or all students to feel deeply accountable for their own progress, and often take the lead in assessing their own progress and determining next steps.

Student involvement in assessment increased with their year level, with the exception of teachers reporting that students could make reliable judgements about the quality of their work.

Regular involvement of all students in monitoring and assessing their own progress was reported more by decile 7–10 school teachers (27%, compared with 15% among decile 1–6 school teachers).

24 The scale we used for this question may be more appropriate for some of the items than others, and teachers may have interpreted the question as being about student responses to their teaching and opportunities to self-assess.

FIGURE 28 **Students using assessment to improve their learning (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Assessment information is valued, but takes time to collect

Primary teachers generally see the assessment they do as valuable and providing dependable information, though they were somewhat less positive about the time and energy needed to collect assessment information. Figure 29 also shows that formative assessment is part and parcel of day-to-day teaching. Use of standardised assessments to inform teaching programmes was reported by 75% of the teachers.

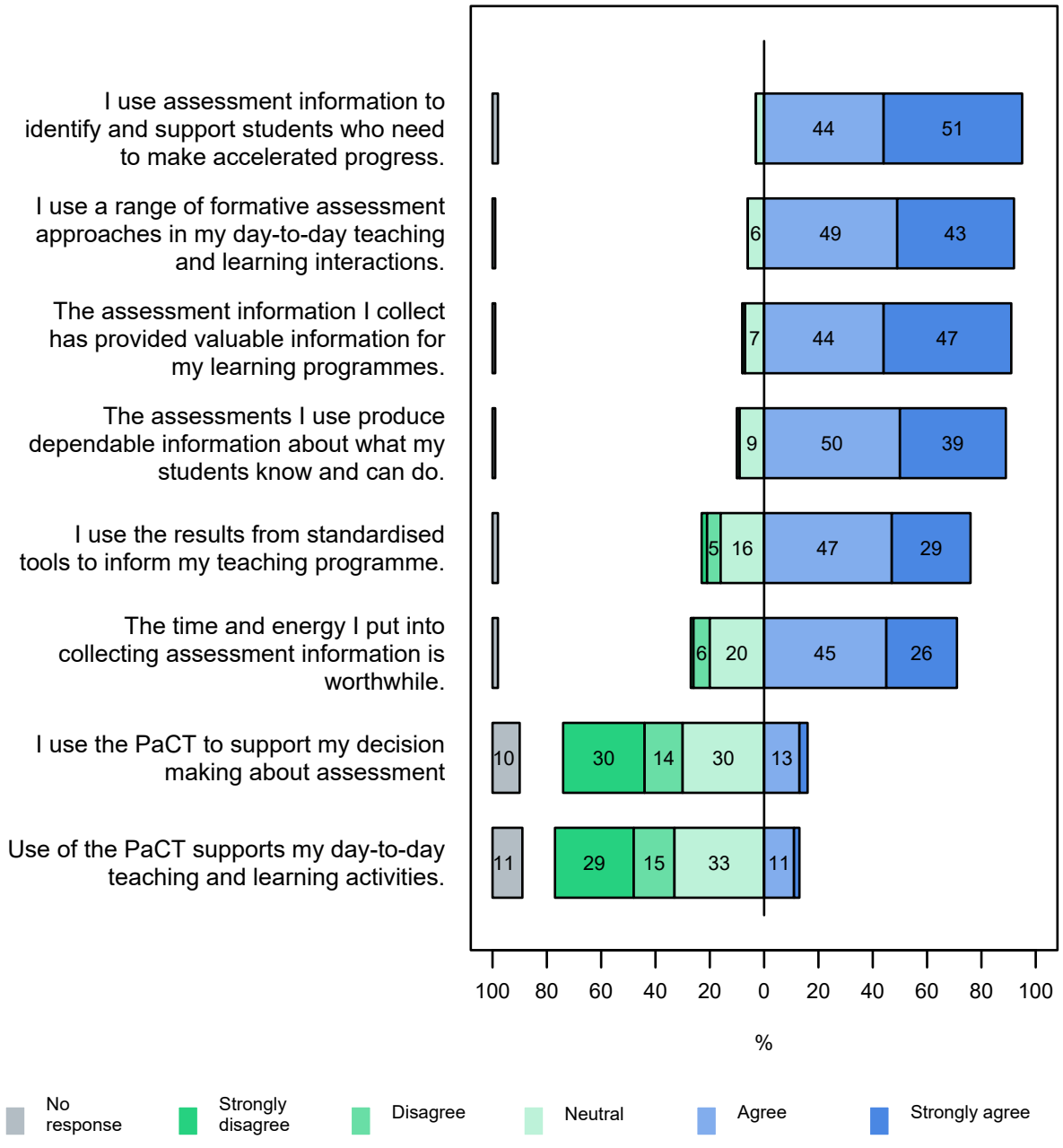
Use of the online PaCT (Progress and Consistency Tool) remains low. PaCT was designed to support overall teacher judgements for the National Standards, which were no longer required from 2018.[25] However, this

25 The controversy around their introduction, and evidence around their impact can be found in Bonne, L. (2017). *National standards in their seventh year.* NZCER. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/NZCER%20National%20Standards%20Report.pdf and Thrupp, M. (2017). *The search for better educational standards: a cautionary tale.* Springer International Publishing.

tool to chart student progress was not widely taken up or tried because of distrust that the data from it would become the sole measure of student learning and school quality, and used to compare and rank schools, exacerbating competition between schools.

In 2019, school decile was related to use of PaCT—29% of decile 1 and 2 teachers indicated its use to support their decision making about assessment, decreasing to 10% of decile 9 and 10 teachers.

FIGURE 29 **Assessment sources and uses (Teachers, *n* = 620)**

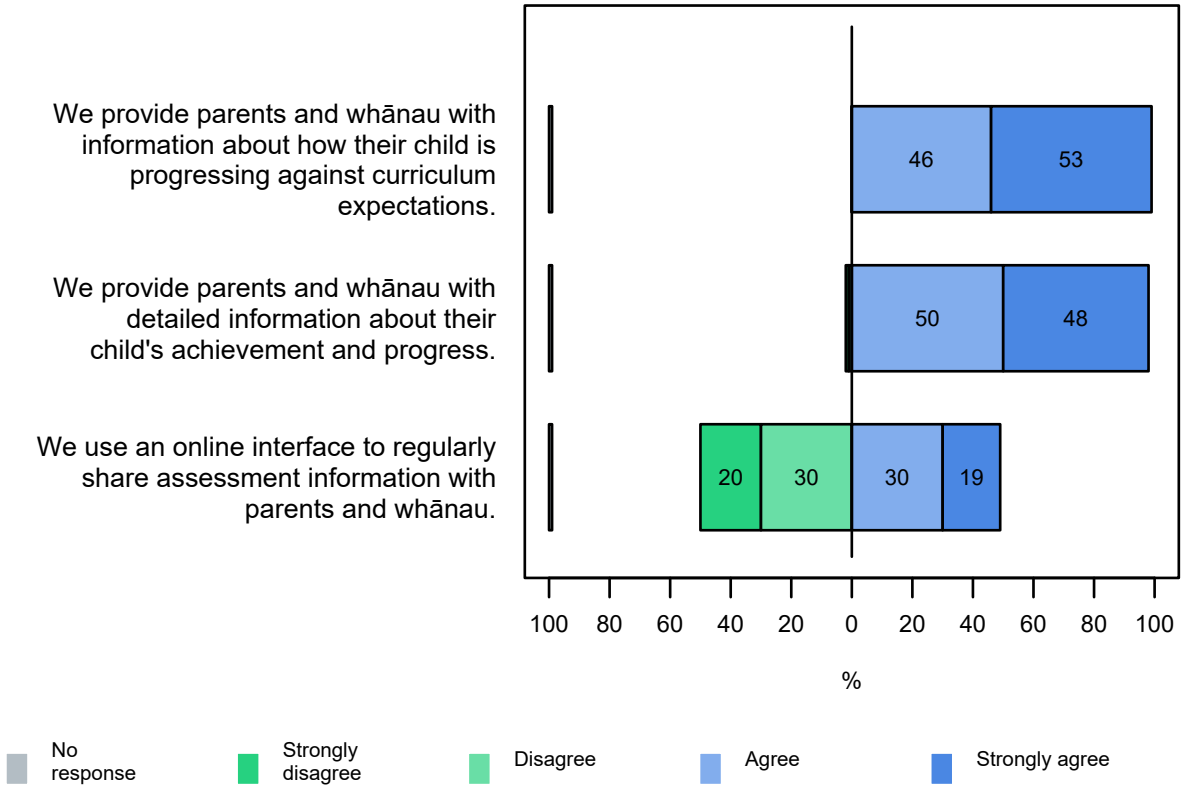


Mixed use of online reporting of child progress to parents and whānau

Around half the principals strongly agreed, and almost all the rest agreed, that they provided parents and whānau with detailed information about their child's achievement and progress, and how they were progressing against curriculum expectations. Just a few principals thought they were not providing parents and whānau with such information.

Regular use of an online interface for sharing assessment information is still not common. Figure 30 has the details.

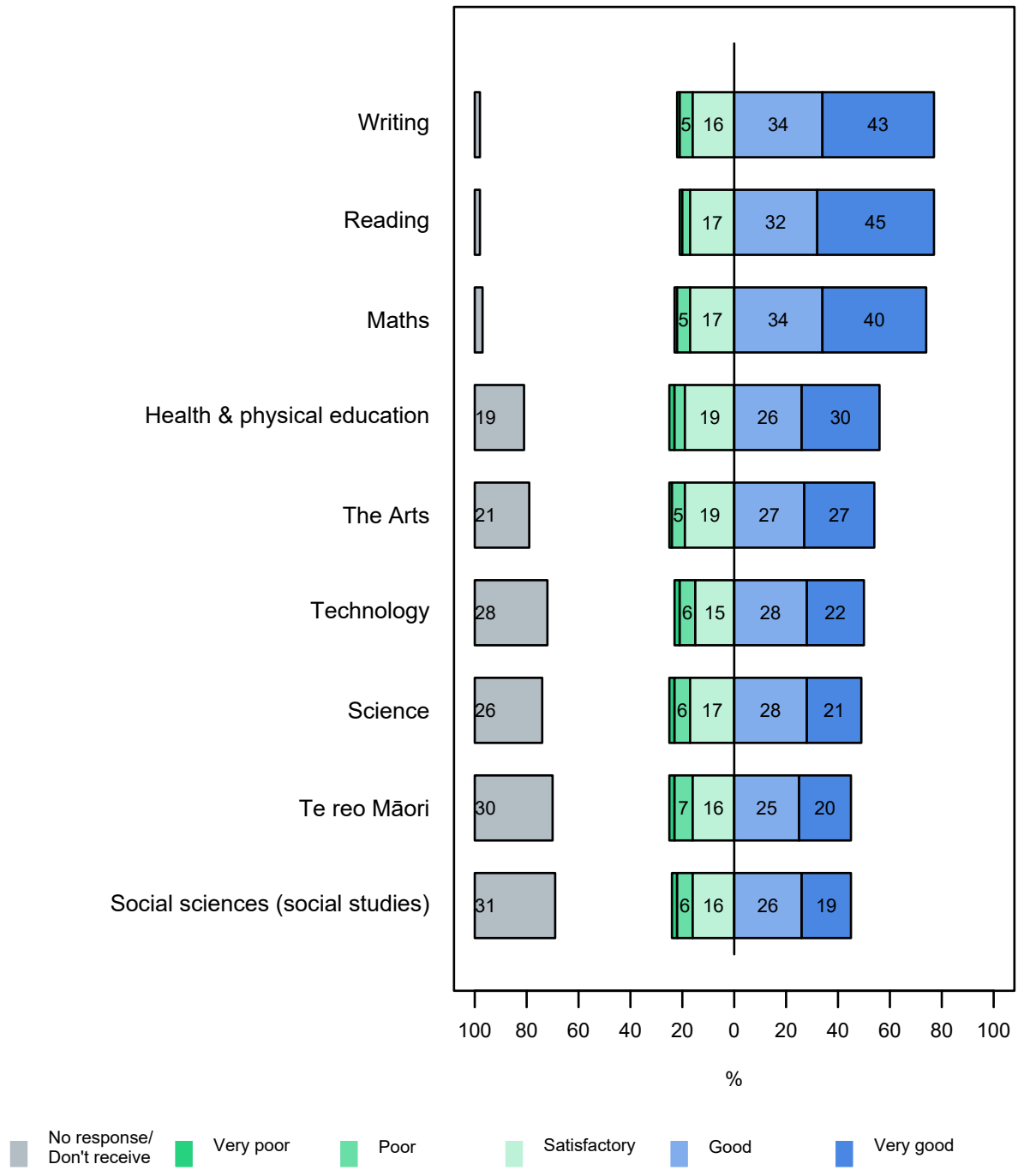
FIGURE 30 **School reporting to parents and whānau about their child's progress (Principals, *n* = 145)**



Parents and whānau are largely positive about the information they get about their child's progress but a significant minority do not get information about all curriculum areas

The parents and whānau taking part in the national survey 2019 were largely positive about the information they received about their child's progress in reading, writing, and mathematics. About a fifth were not. Figure 31 shows their views of the quality and clarity of this information. It also shows that other aspects of *NZC* including science, the arts, social sciences, and health and physical education were not as well covered in the reports that parents and whānau get about their child's progress. This is likely to reflect the need for national level curriculum work on what progression looks like across *NZC*, as identified by the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group.

FIGURE 31 **Parent views of the quality and clarity of information about their child's progress (*n* = 395)**

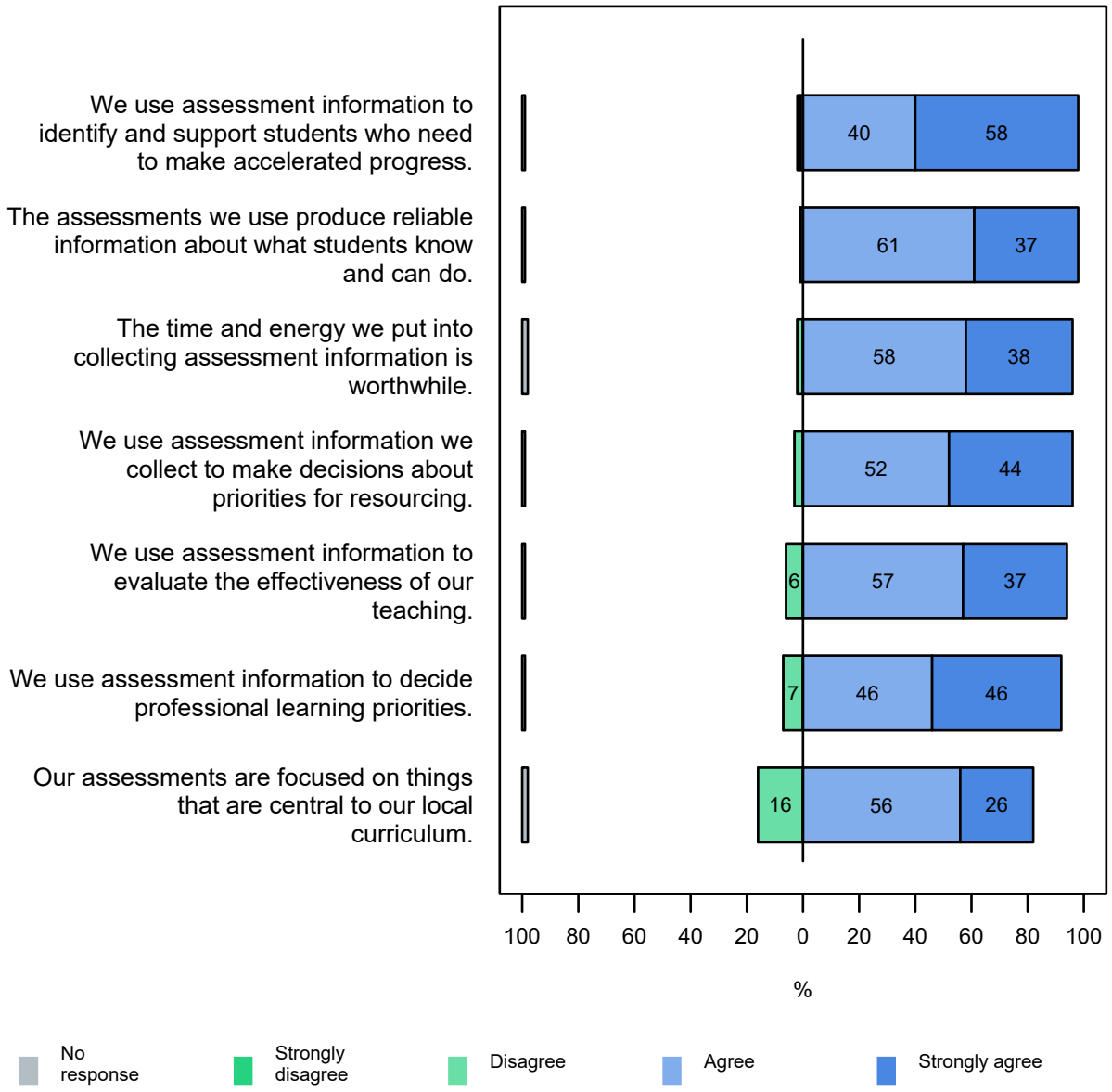


Student assessment information is important for schools

We asked principals for their thoughts about the usefulness of student assessment information, and how they use that information. Figure 32 shows that principals agreed with most of the items here, though 16% disagreed that their assessments were focused on things central to the school's local curriculum.

The main uses of assessment information at the 'strongly agree' level were to identify and support students who need to make accelerated progress, followed by deciding priorities for professional learning and resourcing, then to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's teaching. The proportions of principals who 'strongly agree' that the time and energy put into collecting assessment information, or that the assessments used produce reliable information about what students know and can do, were somewhat lower.

FIGURE 32 **Use and usefulness of student assessment information (Principals, *n* = 145)**



Inquiry, values, student agency, and digital fluency are common in schools' *NZC*-related professional learning or change in teaching practice

Schools' decisions on their professional learning reflect both what is available to them through Ministry-funded contracts, and what they can spend from their operational funding and any additional money they have. The Ministry of Education funding for school professional learning changed from 2017. Limited priority areas were identified, local panels of the Ministry and professionals decided regional allocations, and schools chose their provider from a list of accredited providers.

In 2013 we began asking principals about what their school focused on in their *NZC*-related professional learning and/or change in teaching practice, other than the perennial maths, reading, and writing. We included some new items in 2019 to reflect what we were hearing about Kāhui Ako and schools' interests and new national emphases, such as student wellbeing, and digital fluency.

Table 6 shows that these new items were more to the fore than items we asked about in 2013 and 2016, with the exception of teaching as inquiry.

Schools were also focusing more on te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, and key competencies, than they were in 2016 or 2013. There were hints of more attention being paid to inclusion, though not significantly different from 2016 or 2013.

TABLE 6 **School focus for professional learning and/or change in teaching practice for last 2 years related to *NZC* other than reading, writing, or maths**

***NZC* aspect**	**2013 principals (*n* = 180)**	**2016 principals (*n* = 200)**	**2019 principals (*n* = 145)**
Teaching as inquiry	63	78	70
Values	*	*	62
Student agency	*	*	61
Digital fluency^	*	*	54
Student wellbeing	*	*	52
Key competencies	34	34	50
Te reo Māori and tikanga Māori	29	38	50
Learning progression	*	*	47
Formative assessment /assessment for learning	34	42	39
Integrating learning areas	31	29	37
Learning to learn	23	26	23
Inclusion	17	17	23
Science capabilities	*	25	18

^ We asked about e-learning in previous surveys: this had been a focus for 39% of schools in 2013, and 45% in 2016.

*Not asked

There was quite a range in the number of these 13 focuses that principals said their school had focused on in their professional learning and/or changes: 3% of principals identified a single focus over the last 2 years; 5% identified 12 or 13. Most schools had paid attention to between three and seven of these professional learning or teaching practice change focuses.

Principals who used Ministry of Education support for local curriculum design were largely positive about it

> The National Curriculum provides an overall framework within which Kaiako (teachers) and Tumuaki (leaders) can make decisions about content and context. Through these decisions (using the National Curriculum), they design local curricula that reflect the needs, interests and priorities of their students, whānau and the community. (Curriculum, Progress, and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group report, June 2019, p. 7).

Designing local curriculum at the school level has not been without issue, and concerns have been raised about inequities in student experiences that may be related to what different schools decide is important, and how those decisions are made. In 2019, the Ministry of Education provided professional development and online guidelines.[26]

Our 2019 survey questions related to the national curriculum focused around the use of this Ministry support, and what professional learning schools were doing that was related to *NZC*, reported above.

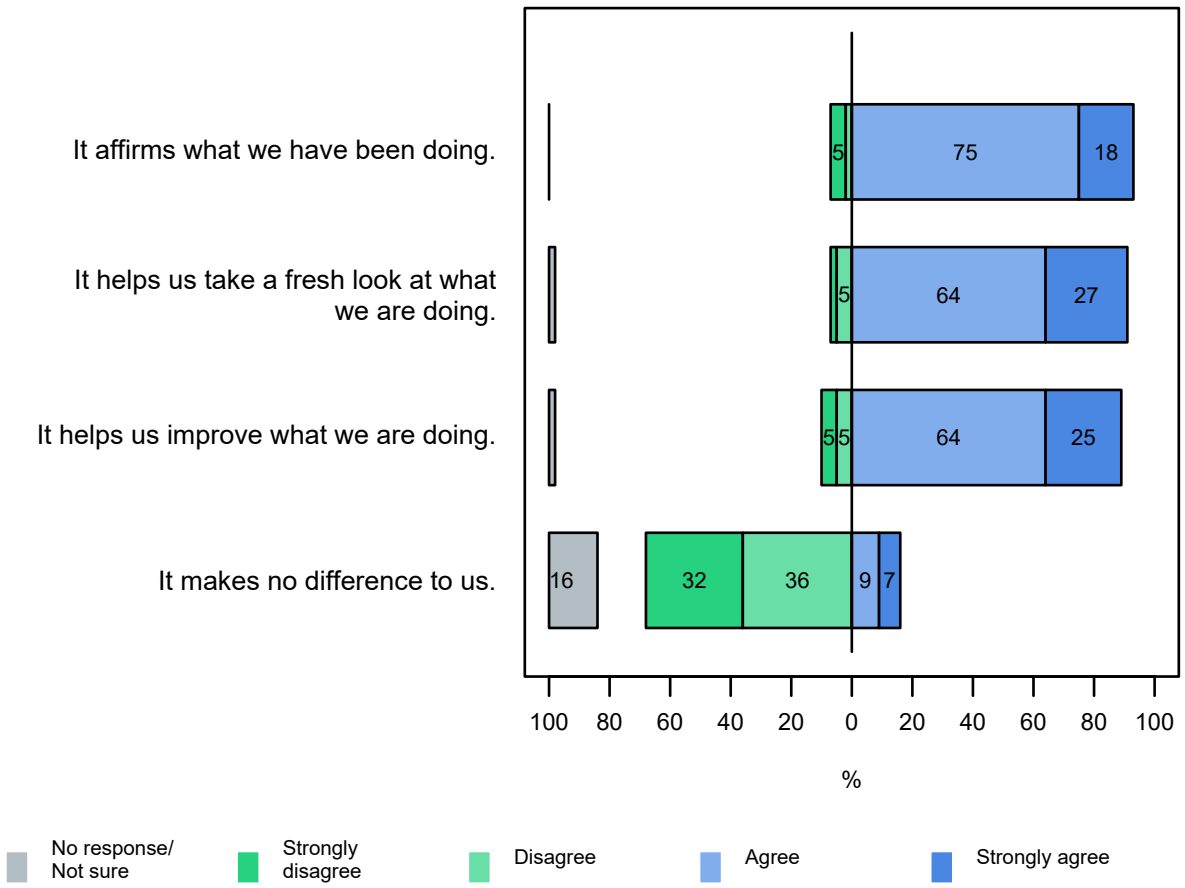
Thirty percent of the principals had used Ministry of Education support in relation to local curriculum design.

- 19% of all the principals responding had used the Local Curriculum Design material from the Ministry of Education (online)
- 19% participated in a Local Curriculum Design workshop
- 15% used the Local Curriculum Design toolkit on their own
- 5% used the Local Curriculum Design digital toolkit with schools in their Kāhui Ako.

We asked those who had used Ministry support to rate their agreement about the support (Figure 33). Some other principals also responded to this bank of questions. On the whole, principals who had used this support were positive about it, with a quarter strongly agreeing with the statements. It both affirmed what they had been doing, as well as giving them a fresh look at that work, and helping them to improve it. Few said it made no difference to them.

26 https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Strengthening-local-curriculum/Leading-local-curriculum-guide-series

FIGURE 33 **Principal views of Ministry-funded local curriculum design support (*n* = 65)**



Thirty principals made comments in response to an open-ended question about their work around local curriculum design. These ranged widely. Some had been focusing on this for some time, and some of these were doubtful that the current Ministry tools would add value to what they saw as essentially local. Others planned to start local curriculum design work in 2020.

Some found the local curriculum workshop they had been to or the online material useful; others did not. There was disappointment for some when their applications for PLD funding to work on local curriculum design were declined. Examples of views:

> *Concise. Focused booklets. Asks the right questions.*
>
> *Wish it was better supported to unpack the toolkit. PLD application for this was turned down.*
>
> *The PD providers were very poor—read from the MOE produced material and added no new insight.*

Several spoke of positive experiences working as a Kāhui Ako/Community of Learning:

> *Working with facilitators through our CoL has assisted us greatly giving all a sense of local identity and using the Ngāti Kahungunu curriculum has strengthened identity.*

Our question about the results of schools' Kāhui Ako involvement included a question on whether they were doing some useful work on a shared local curriculum: 31% of principals whose school belonged to a Kāhui Ako said they were, 31% were neutral, and 22% disagreed. (Figure 57 in Section 12 has the details in the context of other Kāhui Ako work.)

In another bank of questions about student assessment, 26% of principals strongly agreed and 56% agreed that their student assessments were focused on things that were central to their school's local curriculum; 16% disagreed.

Summary

This national picture of some key learning opportunities for students, how their learning is assessed and reported, and what primary schools have focused on in their professional learning or change in teaching practice, underline the importance of improving clarity and support for schools. Teachers' and principals' answers here indicate that they value the greater emphasis that came with the *New Zealand Curriculum* on thinking about teaching in terms of how students learn, and find that assessment can be used to improve not only individual student progress but also as a learning resource for teachers and principals to keep improving their practice.

But taking science as a key example, it is concerning that it is not a focus in school professional learning or change, and a substantial minority of parents and whānau do not get clear or quality information about their child's science progress. The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) shows that "most students at Year 8 are not making enough progress in science".[27] Providing some resources online for teachers and schools is not enough to ensure that the *NZC* is strong in every school so that students can progress in all learning areas. Deeper connecting schools with expertise, and sharing across schools, is needed.

27 https://scienceonline.tki.org.nz/What-do-my-students-need-to-learn/Progress-and-Achievement-in-Science

8. Learning with digital technologies

Digital technologies have become integral to New Zealand schools, though the extent and nature of their use in learning varies. In 2017, the Technology learning area of *NZC* was revised to strengthen opportunities for students to learn *about* digital technologies. This involved two new areas of learning: computational thinking (CT) and developing and designing digital outcomes (DDDO).[28] Schools were expected to start teaching the revised technology learning area in 2020. An ERO report in late 2018 found that many schools were unprepared to do so.[29] From 2018, the Ministry of Education has funded Kia Takatū ā-Matihiko, the National Digital Readiness Programme, which aims to support teachers, kaiako, school leaders, and tumuaki to feel supported, confident, and well equipped to implement the new digital technologies (DT) and hangarau matihiko (HM) curriculum content. Schools have also been able to apply for centrally-funded PLD to support digital fluency.

This chapter starts with principals' perspectives on digital technologies and their use. It then looks at some ways students are using digital technologies for learning, including growth in activities such as gaming and coding. Teacher views on the value of digital technologies for learning are then described, followed by their views of the new Digital Technologies outcomes.

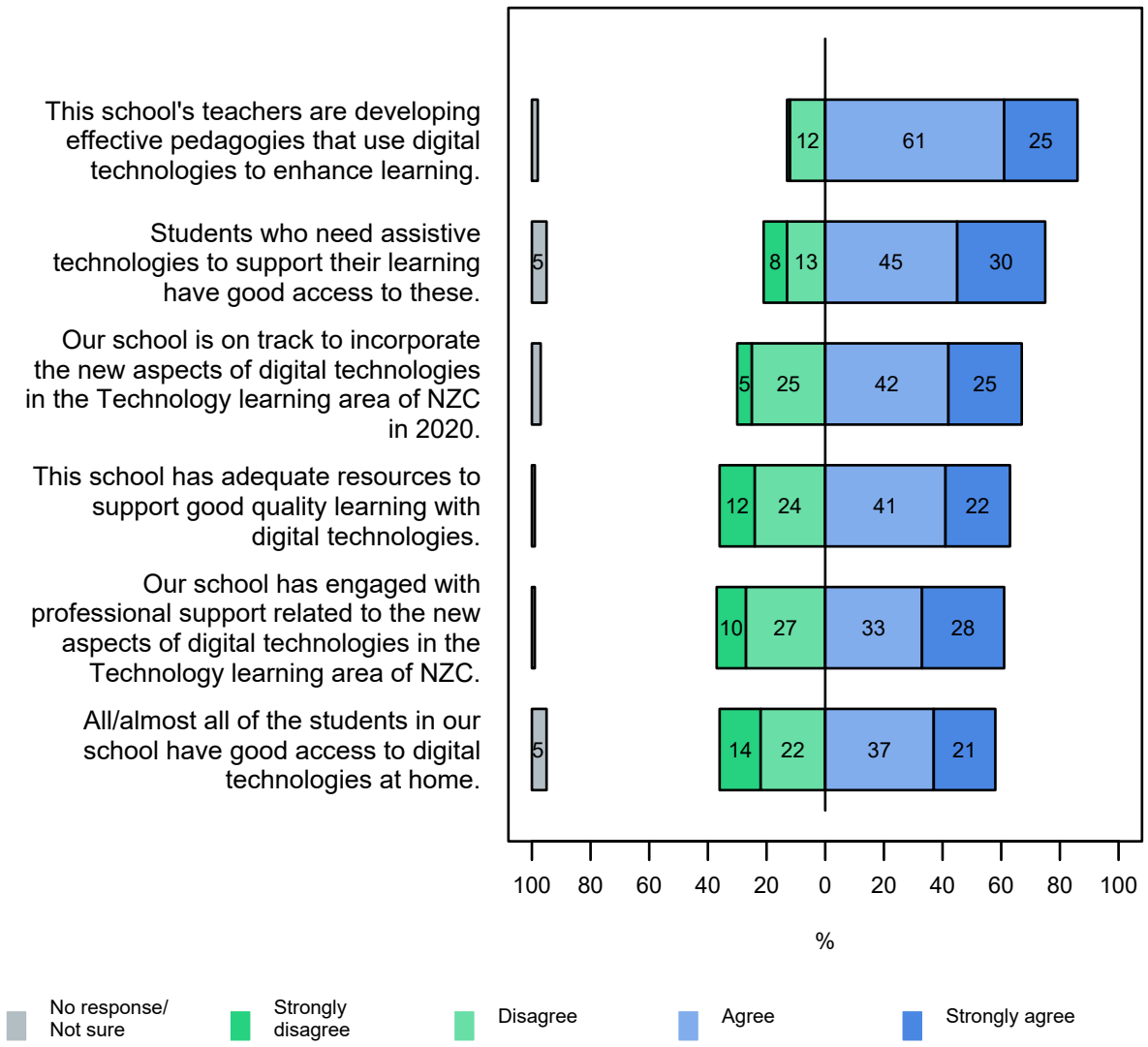
Principals are more confident about teachers developing digital pedagogy than about meeting digital costs

Figure 34 shows that most principals were confident that their teachers were developing effective pedagogies using digital technologies to enhance learning, though around a third did not think they had adequate resources to support good quality learning with these, or that all or almost all their students had good access to digital technologies at home. Two-thirds (67%) said their school was on track to incorporate the new DT curriculum content in 2020, and 61% said their school had engaged with professional support around the new DT content.

In a separate question on the major issues facing their school, 64% of principals identified the cost of purchasing, maintaining, and replacing digital devices and infrastructure—one of the top four issues.[30]

28 Equivalent revisions were made to strengthen hangarau matihiko in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, with the addition of Te tupuranga whakaaro rorohiko and Te tupuranga tangata me te rorohiko, within ngā wāhanga ako hangarau.
29 Education Review Office. (2019). *It's early days for the new digital technologies curriculum content.* https://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Its-early-days-for-the-new-digital-technologies-curriculum-content.pdf
30 Table 34 has the full picture of the major issues identified by principals.

FIGURE 34 **Principals' perspectives on digital technologies and their use (*n* = 145)**



More use of digital technologies in classrooms

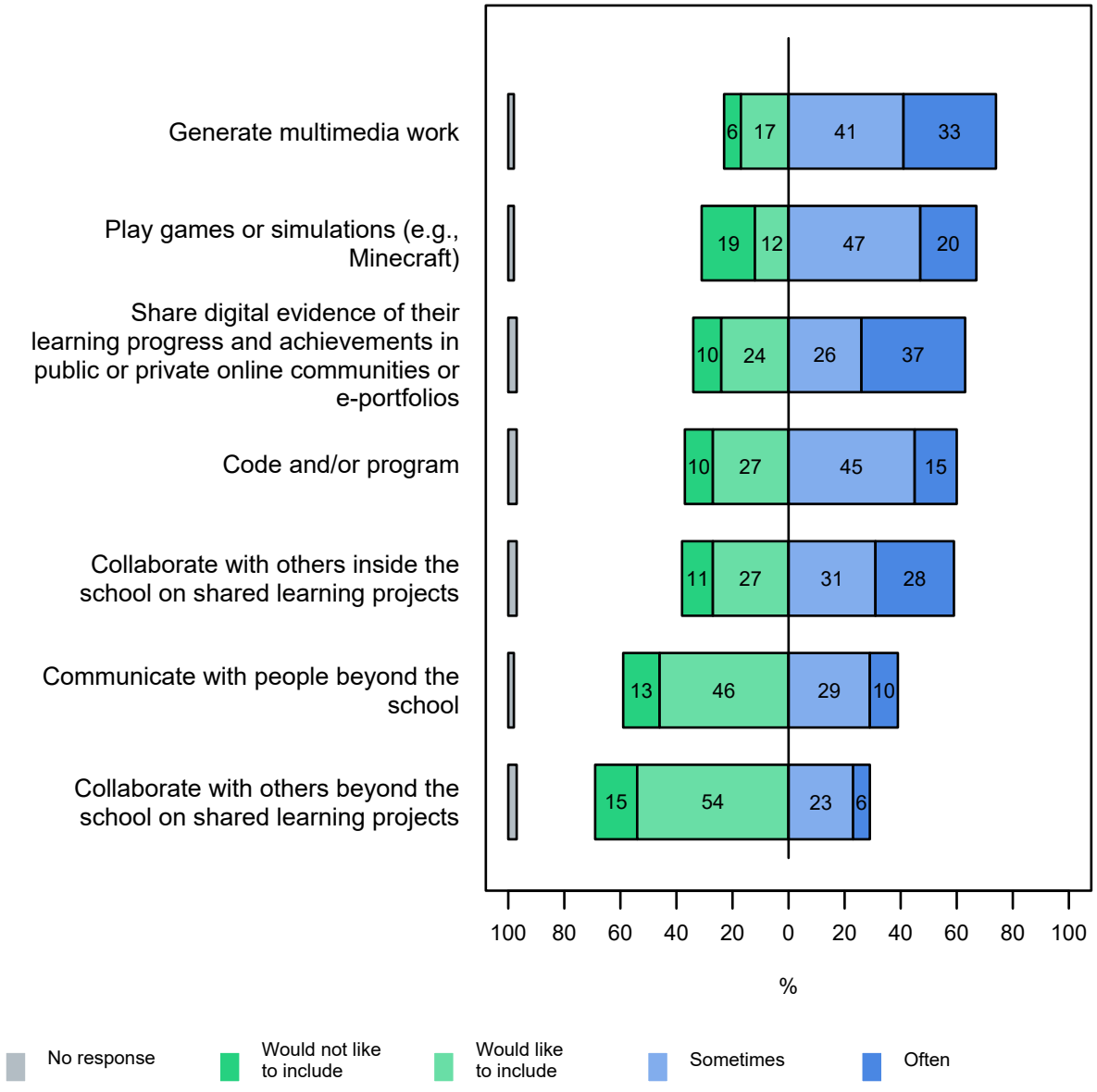
Previous national surveys identified that using the internet for research and digital word processing were already very common ways of using digital technologies in most classrooms. Figure 35 shows how often teachers said their students used digital technologies for a selection of other purposes that we have been tracking over several years.

Some clear changes since 2016 were evident from teachers' responses relating to the use of digital technologies for learning 'often' or 'sometimes':

- code and /or program—60%, up from 19% in 2016
- generate multimedia work (e.g., images, movies, music, animations)—74%, up from 56% in 2016
- play games or simulations—67%, up from 55% in 2016
- collaborate with others inside the school on shared learning projects (e.g., co-creating documents or discussion forums)—59%, up from 47% in 2016
- collaborate with others beyond the school (e.g., experts, community groups, people at other schools) on shared learning projects—29%, up from 14% in 2016.

Of the digital technology uses we asked about, 'share digital evidence of learning progress', 'generating multi-media work', and 'collaborating on shared learning projects within the school' were the most frequent. Some teachers said they wanted their students to be using digital technologies in ways they weren't currently doing, though around 10% did not want to include any of these in their programme, and 19% did not want to play games or simulations in their classroom. These are lower proportions than in 2016.

FIGURE 35 **Purposes for students' use of digital technologies (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



The new digital technologies areas of computational thinking for digital technologies (CT) and designing and developing digital outcomes (DDDO) include an emphasis on developing knowledge and capabilities associated with coding. Many core computer science concepts associated with coding can be taught without digital devices, using "unplugged" activities such as physical games and puzzles suitable for young learners.

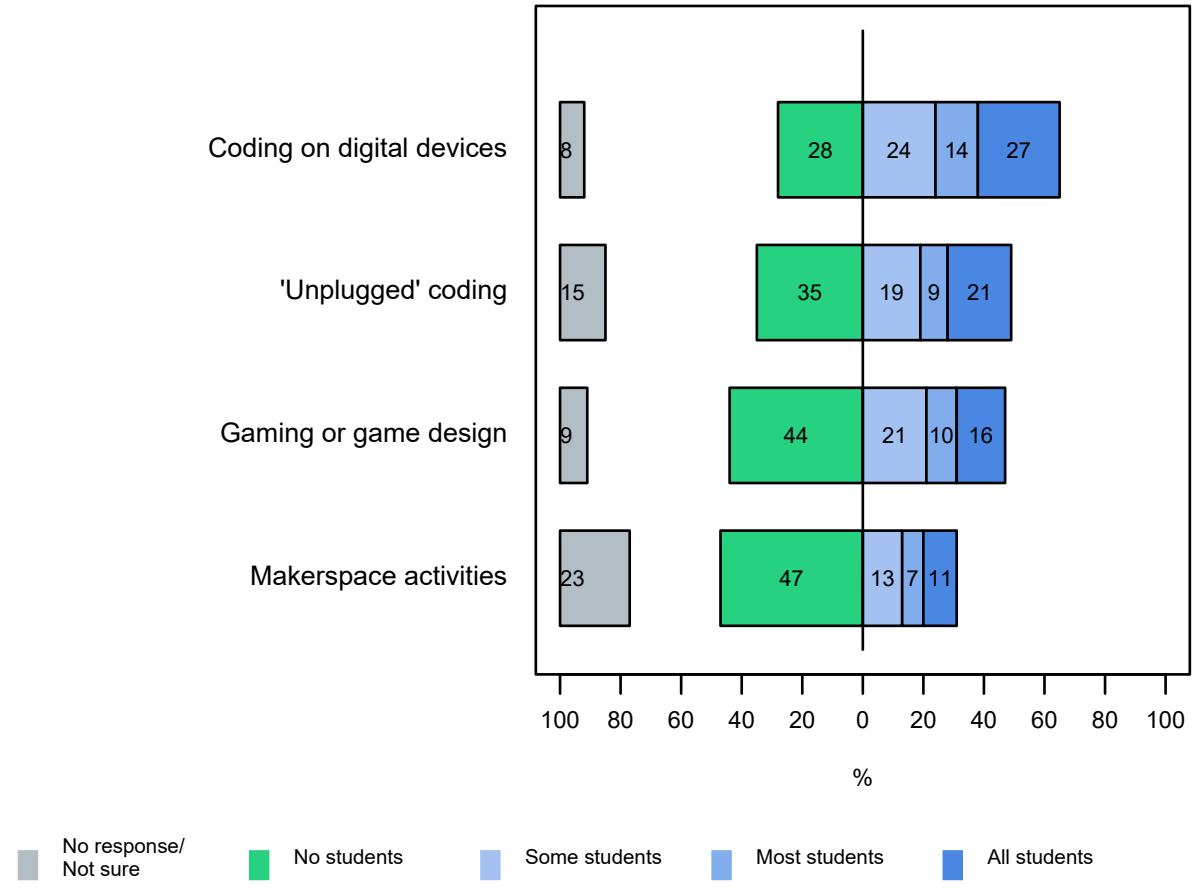
There have been increases in teacher reports of the participation of 'all' or 'most' students in gaming and coding since 2016:

- coding on digital devices—41%, up from 12% in 2016
- gaming or game design—26%, up from 12% in 2016.
- makerspace activities—18%, up from 2% in 2016.

Reasons for marked increases in these activities are likely to include: that these are good contexts to develop CT and DDDO; teachers are getting more exposure to how to utilise gaming, coding, and making effectively in their classroom pedagogy through the Ministry of Education funded programmes; Minecraft attracted children and teachers noticed this and tried to work with those interests; and devices and connectivity have generally improved for most schools.

Figure 36 shows that not all students were involved in these activities, even when the activities were included in a class programme. All students in a class were most likely to be included in coding on digital devices, and "unplugged" coding (not using digital devices). These findings raise the question about whether, in some classrooms, coding and gaming activities are taken up by those who already have an interest or affinity for these activities, including home availability and support as well as school co-curricular opportunities, such as lunchtime and after-school clubs.

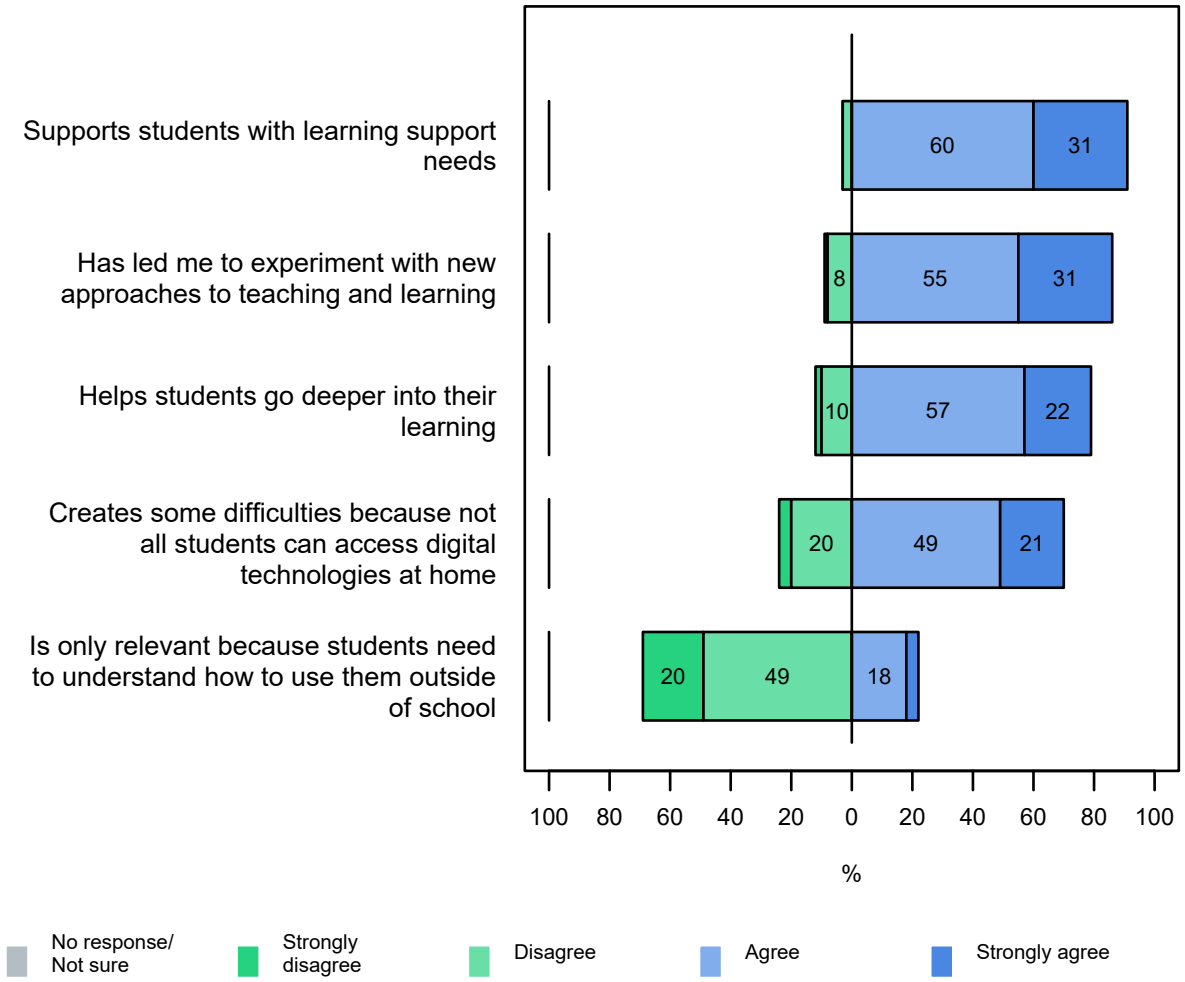
FIGURE 36 **Participation in gaming and coding (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Teachers are positive about digital technologies for learning

Most teachers were positive about their experiences with digital technologies in student learning, as shown in Figure 37. There was high agreement that digital technologies can support students with learning support needs, can help students go deeper into their learning, and lead teachers to experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning. Few saw them only being relevant because students need to use them outside the classroom. However, many thought that the use of digital technology in their class created some difficulties because not all their students could access digital technologies at home.

FIGURE 37 **Teachers' experiences of using digital technologies for student learning (*n* = 620)**



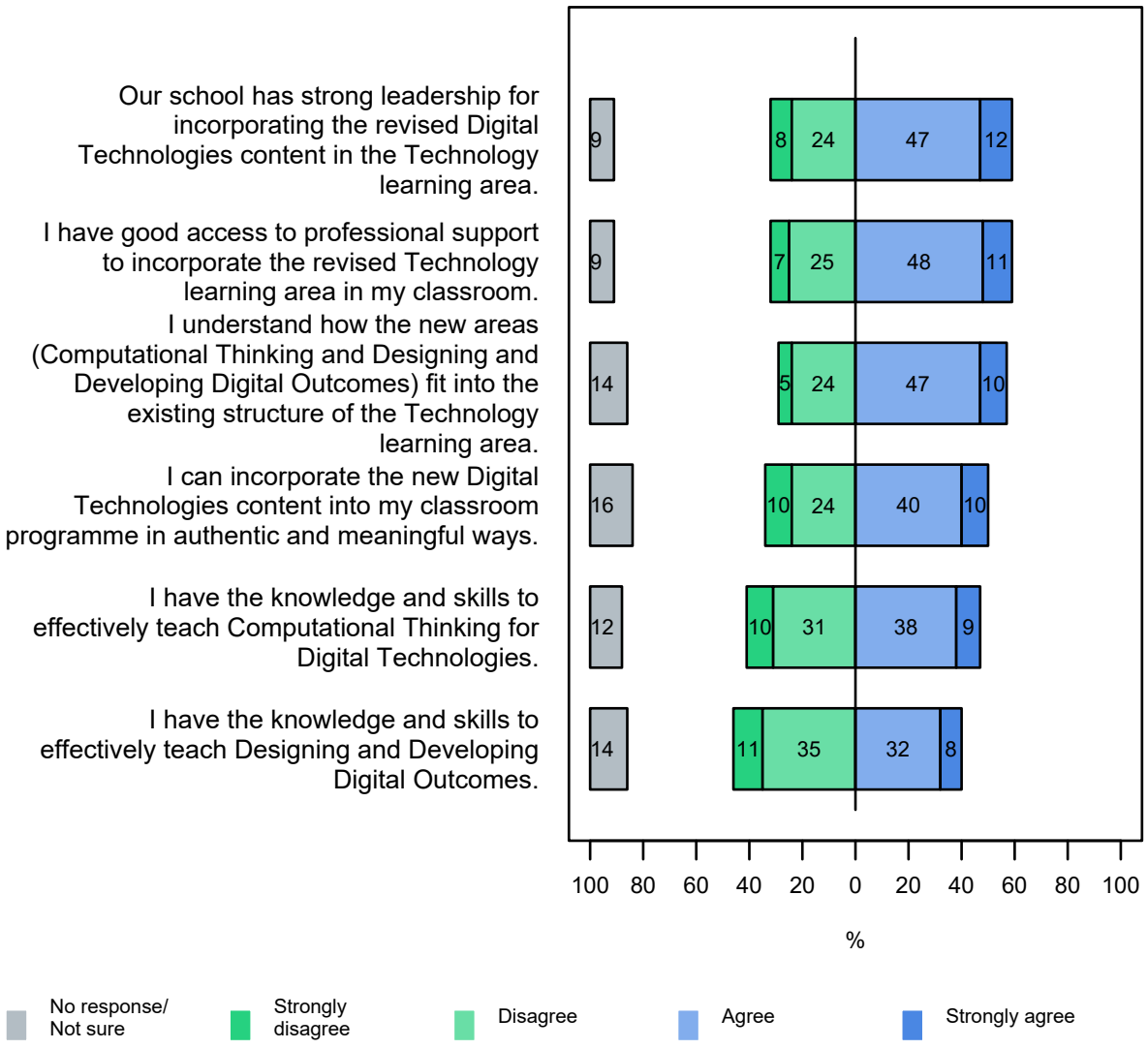
Overall, teachers' reported experiences in 2019 were similar to those reported in 2016. There was a slight increase in teachers agreeing that using digital technologies helps students go deeper into their learning (79%, compared with 72% in 2016).

There was also a slight increase in teachers reporting that their school equipment was adequate and reliable (66%, compared with 60% in 2016), and in reporting that digital technologies were available whenever their students need them for their learning (60%, compared with 52% in 2016).

Nearly half of teachers are not yet confident in their knowledge and skills for the revised *NZC* Digital Technologies content

Overall, around half the teachers who responded to the survey expressed confidence around the new Digital Technologies content, their school leadership for incorporating it, and their access to professional support, as shown in Figure 38. This is mainly at the 'agree' rather than 'strongly agree' level. However, 46% didn't think they have the knowledge and skills to effectively teach Designing and Developing Digital Outcomes, and 41% doubted their knowledge and skills in relation to Computational Thinking for Digital Technologies.

FIGURE 38 **Views of the revised *NZC* Digital Technologies (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Summary

This 2019 national survey snapshot shows that digital technologies were commonly used in primary school learning, with some types of use showing increases since 2016, including creating multimedia, coding, gaming, and collaboration with others inside and beyond the school. Teachers were generally positive about their use. Both teachers and principals pointed to inequities, however, related to not all students having home access to digital technologies.

In some classrooms, activities such as coding on devices, "unplugged" coding, and gaming may not be happening for all students, possibly indicating that students' pre-existing interests and affinities may drive some of this activity in some classrooms.

There was a mixed picture of school and teacher confidence about the working with the new Digital Technologies curriculum. While the Ministry of Education increased its professional development support, and indicated it did not expect the new curriculum to be fully in place by 2020,[31] the picture here points to the value of continuing support and ways for schools and teachers to share their learning in giving effect to the new curriculum.

The picture here also gives some useful information to evaluate changes since COVID-19 and the government's rapid provision of digital technology hardware and software for students to learn from home, and whether experiences of learning and teaching in the "learning from home" period influence what happens in the longer term with digital technologies learning and use.

31 https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395986/new-nz-digital-curriculum-set-for-2020-are-schools-ready

9. Parent and whānau perspectives on their child's learning and school

In this section we present parent and whānau perspectives on their child's experiences of school, views on their child's teachers, and their own experience of the school as parents and whānau. This includes information they receive and their own participation in school activities. We also look at whether the school was their closest school, and whether it was their first choice.

The survey comprised mostly closed-response questions. At the end of the survey, parents and whānau were invited to add a comment about their child's schooling. Just under 40% wrote comments, whose themes we report.

We note any differences in responses about their child's experiences and their own in relation to parental ethnicity (Māori and non-Māori), and school decile.

We also include parent and whānau perspectives in other sections in this report about provision for te reo Māori and ākonga Māori; provision for Pacific students; provision for students with disabilities or needing learning support; curriculum, assessment and reporting to parents and whānau; and school trustees' perspectives.

Parent and whānau respondents

These perspectives come from 395 parents and whānau from 170 schools—48% of the schools in our national survey sample. It is not easy to get a national picture of parent and whānau perspectives which is representative of schools and the social characteristics of parents and whānau. We sent each school in our sample sufficient surveys for one in 50 of their students' parents and whānau, and asked them to send these to a random selection of the school's families. We gave advice about how to make a random selection. The surveys included information about how to access and complete the survey online; 52 parents and whānau chose to do this instead of filling out the paper version. We asked parents and whānau to focus on their youngest child at the school. We had a good spread of responses across most year levels, but with lower proportions in new entrants / year 0, and years 7 and 8.

The response rate for the parent and whānau survey was 17% (*n* = 395 of a total of 2286 parent surveys sent to schools). The median parent response rate for the schools that took part was 33%, with a range from 4% to 100%.

We had an over-representation of parents and whānau from decile 8 and decile 10 schools, and an under-representation of parents and whānau from decile 2 and decile 5 schools. The median school roll was 286, much larger than the national median roll for primary schools of 177.

The approximate margin of error for the parent and whānau responses is around 4.9%.[32]

As in previous rounds of the national survey, the majority of parent and whānau respondents were women (88%), with higher qualification levels than the general population. Over half (52%) had degree qualifications, higher than the 35% who did so in the 2016 survey, and higher than the 28.8% aged 30–64 who had degree qualifications in the 2018 Census. Ten percent of parents and whānau had no formal qualifications—much the same as in the 2016 national survey, and somewhat fewer than the 13.9% aged 30–64 who had no qualifications in the 2018 Census.

The national picture we can provide here is skewed somewhat toward the experiences of parents and whānau in large primary schools, and decile 8 and 10 schools, and towards the experiences of parents and whānau who have degree qualifications.

The ethnic composition of the parents and whānau responding[33] was:

- 74% NZ European / Pākehā
- 14% Māori
- 10% Asian
- 7% Pacific.

Twelve percent of parents and whānau said their child had a disability or needed learning support, and a further 4% were not sure. There were some differences in responses for parents and whanau whose child had a disability or needed learning support, and these have already been reported in Section 5.

Pākehā parents and whānau were more likely to have a child at a higher decile school—51% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school were Pākehā, compared with 67% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 3–4 school, and 80% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 5–10 school.

Whānau Māori were more likely to have a child at a decile 1—2 school: 46% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school were Māori, compared with 15% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 3–4 school, 8% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 5–8 school, and 6% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 9–10 school.

Most parents and whānau said their child attends their first choice of school, and for many this was their closest school

Many parents and whānau responding to the survey (89%) said their (youngest) child attended their first choice of school. For 73% of these parents and whānau, this school was also their closest primary or intermediate school. Overall, 71% of parents and whānau said their child attended their local school, the primary or intermediate school closest to them. This is up from 63% in 2016. In the 2019 data, there was no association between school decile and whether a child attended their first choice of school, or attended their local school.

32 This is an approximation since we asked schools to distribute the surveys randomly, with guidance, but cannot guarantee that the distribution was random.

33 Parents and whānau were able to identify with multiple ethnic groups, so the total percentage reported here exceeds 100%. The 2018 Census figures for ethnicity give 70.2% identifying with a European ethnic group, 16.5% with the Māori ethnic group, 15.1% with an Asian ethnic group, and 8.1% with a Pacific ethnic group. https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-zealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity

School zoning also influences the school a child attends. Over half of all parents and whānau (58%) reported that living in their school's zone enabled their child to enrol at their current school, similar to the 54% in 2016. There was an association by decile: parents and whānau with a child at a higher decile school were more likely to say that living in zone enabled their child to get into the school (64% of those with a child at a decile 7–8 school, and 69% of those with a child at a decile 9–10 school, compared with 46% of those with a child at a decile 1–2 or decile 5–6 school, and 52% of those with a child at a decile 3–4 school). Conversely, parents and whānau with a child at decile 1–6 schools were more likely to say their child was at a school with no enrolment zone (26% of those with a child at a decile 1–2 school, 15% of those with a child at a decile 3–4 school, and 39% of those at a decile 5–6 school, compared with 8% of decile 7–8, and 4% of decile 9–10). Overall, 15% of parents and whānau said their child was at a school with no enrolment zone (23% in 2016).

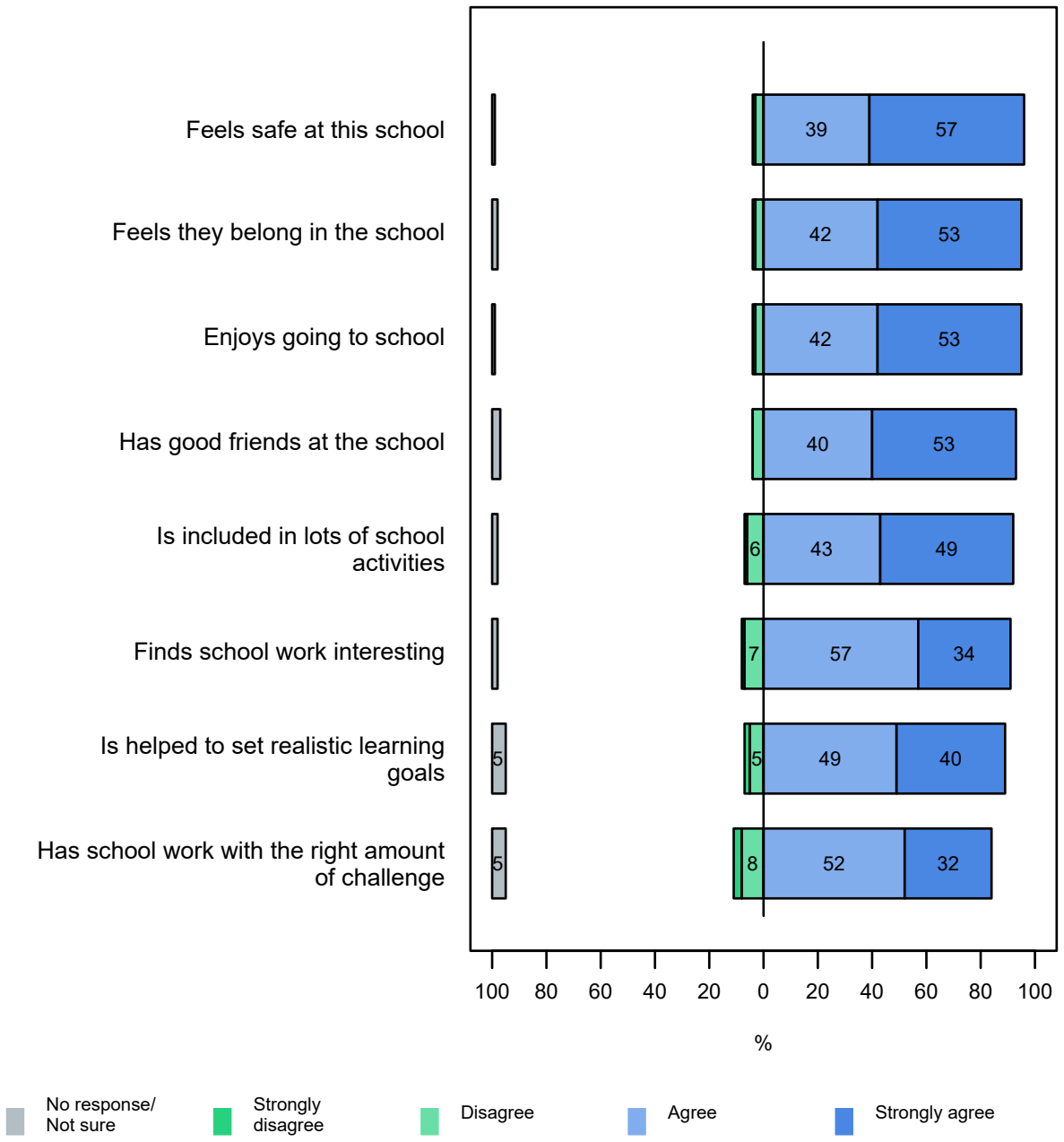
Families who live outside their preferred school's enrolment zone can include their child in that school's ballot for any spare places. Six percent said their child had been drawn from the ballot for their current school, the same as in 2016. Another 11% of parents and whānau said their child met the special character criteria for the school (e.g., it was a Catholic school and their family is Catholic). For those with a child at a decile 3–4 school, the figure was 21%.

School zoning (14 parents and whānau), transport (four parents and whānau), or the child not wanting to go to that school (five parents and whānau) were the main reasons a child did not attend the school that was the first choice for the parents and whānau (n = 39). A few parents and whānau mentioned their child's special needs, and others commented that having moved to or from a particular area, or having only one school in an area, meant their child was not at the school they would have chosen.

Most parents and whānau are positive about their child's school experience

Figure 38 shows that 90% or more of parents and whānau agreed that their child enjoys going to school, finds school work interesting, feels they belong at school, feels safe, is included in lots of activities, and has good friends at school. Over 80% also agreed that their child is helped to set realistic learning goals, and has school work with the right level of challenge.

FIGURE 39 **Parent and whānau views of their child's school experience (*n* = 395)**



Māori parents' and whānau responses to the items in Figure 39 did not vary significantly from those of non-Māori parents and whānau.

There were just a few associations with school decile:

- Fewer parents and whānau with a child at a decile 5–6 school agreed that their child finds school work interesting (20% disagreed, compared with 4% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 1–2 school, 6% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 3–4 school, 5% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 7–8 school, and 8% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 9–10 school).
- Parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school were less likely to strongly agree that their child has good friends at the school (38%, compared with 48%–59% of parents and whānau with children at other schools).

School activities cost too much for some parents and whānau

Eighteen percent of parents and whānau said their child had been unable to take part in at least one school activity because of the cost. Cost meant a child was unable to take part in using a digital device (6% of parents and whānau), do schoolwork at home that they need the internet for (3%), or take part in sport (3%), camp (3%), a cultural activity (3%), or a class trip (2%). This is a very similar picture to 2016.

Two of these items varied with school decile:

- 9% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school said their child had been unable to do school work at home that they need the internet for, compared with 3% of those with a child at a decile 3–4 or 7–8 school, and 1% at a decile 9–10 school. None with a child at a decile 5–6 school indicated their child had been unable to do this due to cost.
- 7% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school said their child had been unable to attend regular classes when they needed a teacher aid due to cost, compared with 2% of those with a child at decile 3–4 or 9–10 schools, and none with a child at a decile 5–8 school.

A higher proportion of Māori whānau indicated their child was unable to do the following school activities because they cost too much:

- school work at home that they needed the internet for (11%, compared with 2% of non-Māori parents and whānau)
- attending regular full-time classes when they needed a teacher aide (7%, compared with 1% of non-Māori parents and whānau).

Twelve percent of parents and whānau with a child who has a disability or needs learning support said their child had been unable to attend regular full-time classes when they needed a teacher aide, compared with less than 1% of other parents and whānau.

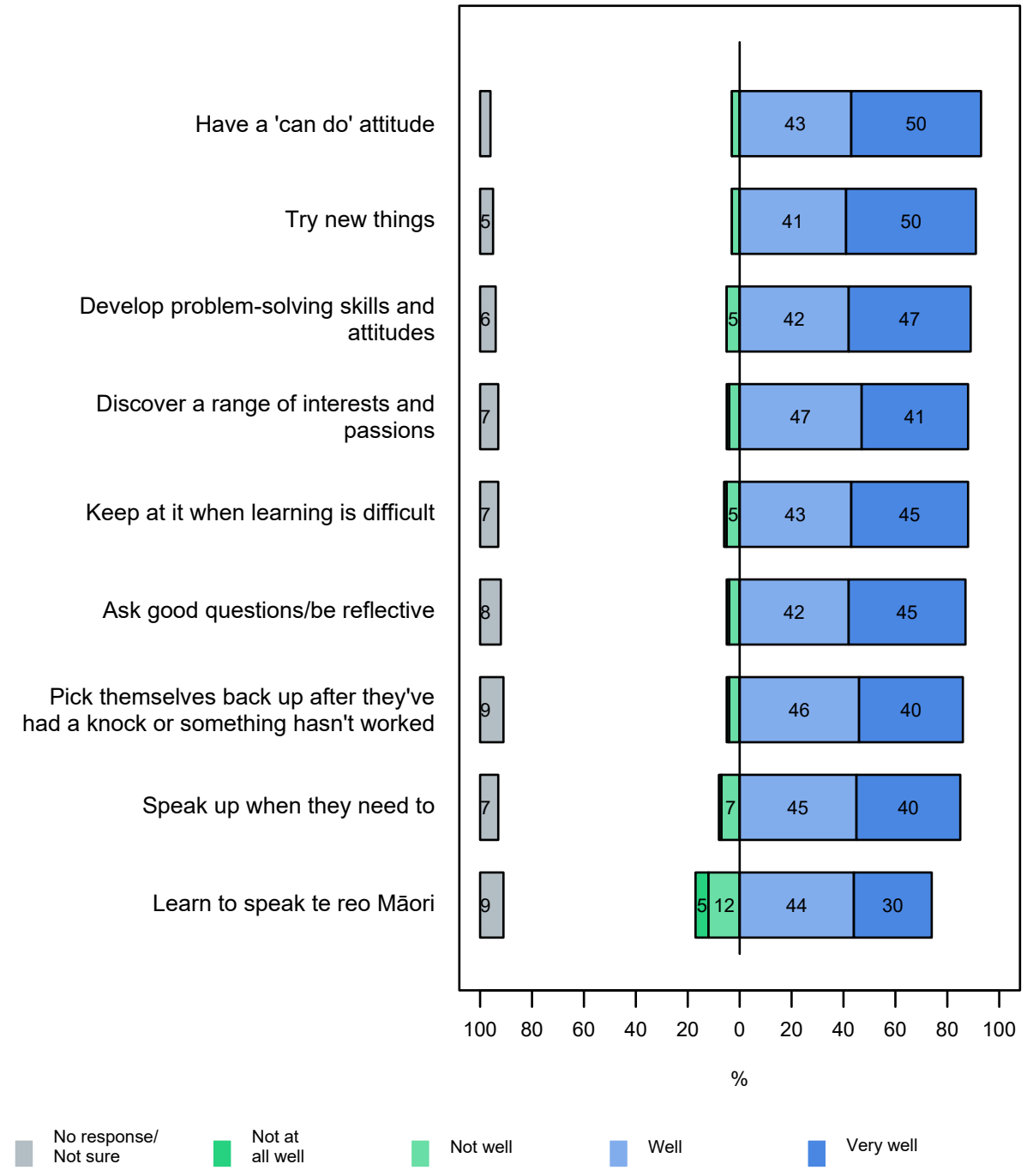
Most parents and whānau think their child's school helps them develop positive attitudes and skills

Two sets of items asked parents and whānau how well the school helped their child develop skills and attitudes. These are shown in Figures 40 and 41 below.

Many parents and whānau thought their child's school helped their child develop positive attitudes and skills that are needed to make the most of life, and to support learning. Over 80% of parents and whānau thought their child's school did these things 'well' or 'very well', with the only exception being learning to speak te reo Māori, which 74% of parents and whānau thought was done 'well' or 'very well' (see Figure 40). Compared with 2016, a higher proportion of parents and whānau selected 'very well' for all items.[34]

34 Because there were a higher proportion of parents and whānau with degree qualifications responding in 2019, we checked the patterns in the 2 years to see if this might account for increases, but there was no clear pattern indicating that this was the reason for the increase in parent satisfaction levels.

FIGURE 40 **Parent and whānau views of how well the school helped their child develop attitudes and skills that support learning (*n* = 395)**

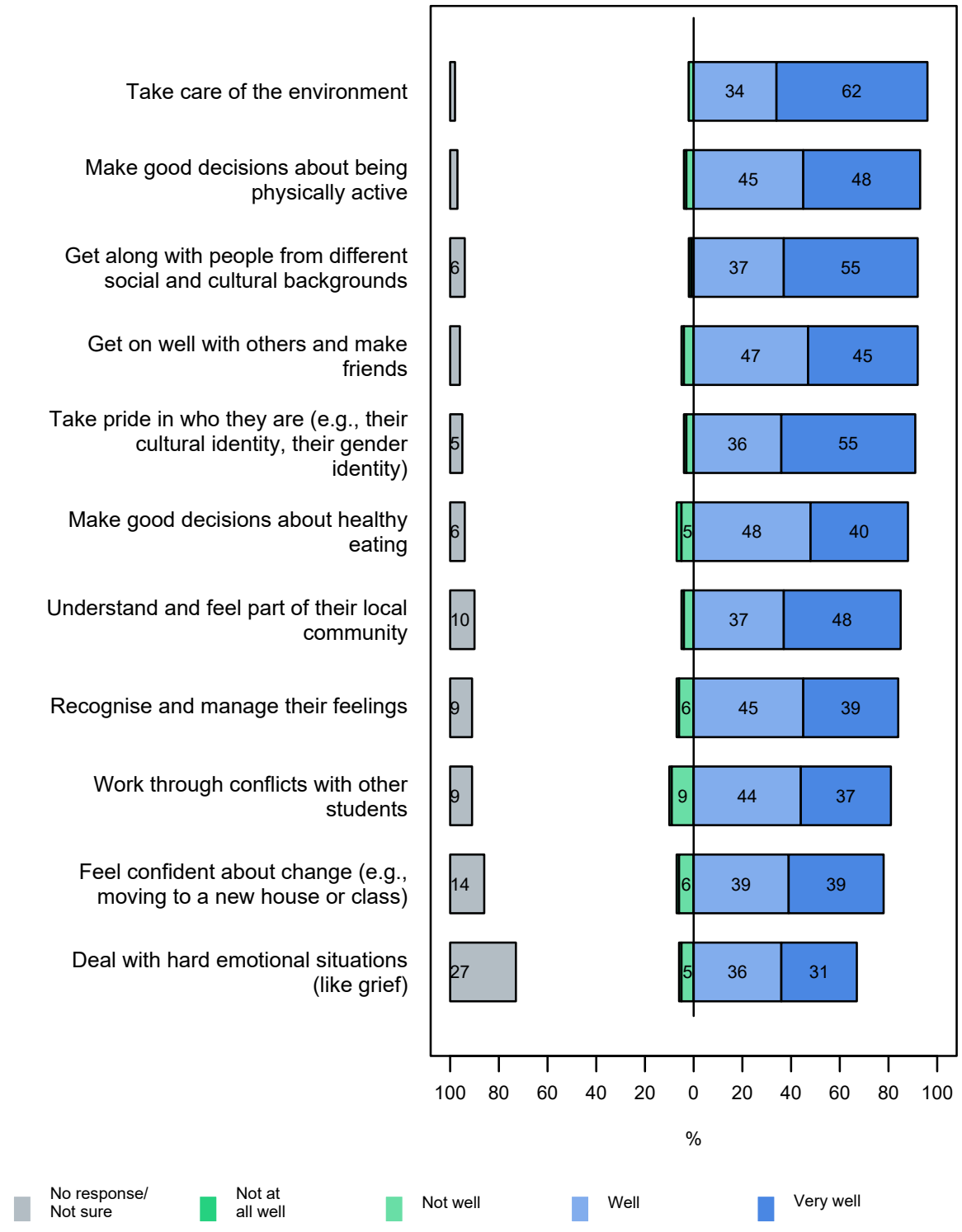


Māori parents' and whānau responses to the items in Figure 40 did not vary significantly from those of non-Māori parents and whānau, and there were no differences associated with school decile.

Figure 41 shows the responses to the second set of items about skills and attitudes, related more to wellbeing and social connections. Many parents and whānau considered the school helped their child develop these 'well' or 'very well', and again compared with 2016, a higher proportion of parents and whānau selected 'very well' for some items. The following items had an increase of 10 percentage points

or more: 'get along with people from different social and cultural backgrounds', 'take pride in who they are', and 'recognise and manage their feelings'. A new item, 'take care of the environment', topped the list, with 96% of parents and whānau saying the school did this 'well' or 'very well'.

FIGURE 41 **Parent and whānau views of how well the school helped their child develop attitudes and skills that support wellbeing (*n* = 395)**



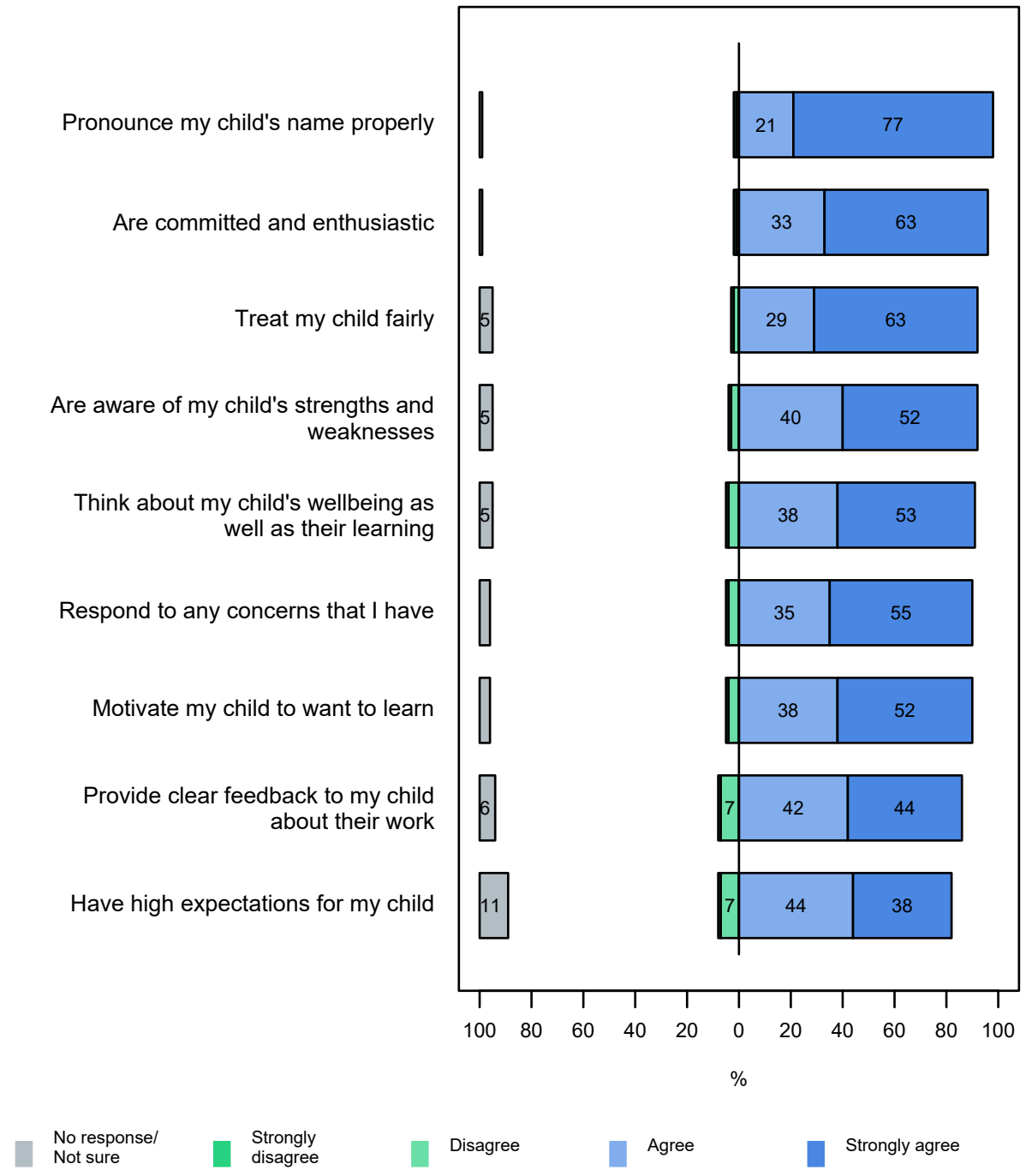
Māori parents' and whānau responses to the items in Figure 41 did not vary significantly from those of non-Māori parents, and there were no differences associated with school decile.

Most parents and whānau are positive about their child's teachers

Figure 42 shows the positive views that parents and whānau hold about their child's teachers. As they have been in previous national surveys, teachers are seen as committed and enthusiastic, aware of a child's strengths and weaknesses, and responsive to parent concerns. More parents and whānau in 2019 strongly agreed that their child teacher(s) are committed and enthusiastic: 63%, compared with 54% in 2016.

Two new items in 2019 asked parents how much they agreed that their child's teacher(s) pronounced their child's name correctly, and that their child was treated fairly. Nearly all (98%) of parents and whānau agreed that teachers pronounced their child's name correctly, and 92% agreed their child was treated fairly.

FIGURE 42 **Parent and whānau views of their child's teachers (*n* = 395)**

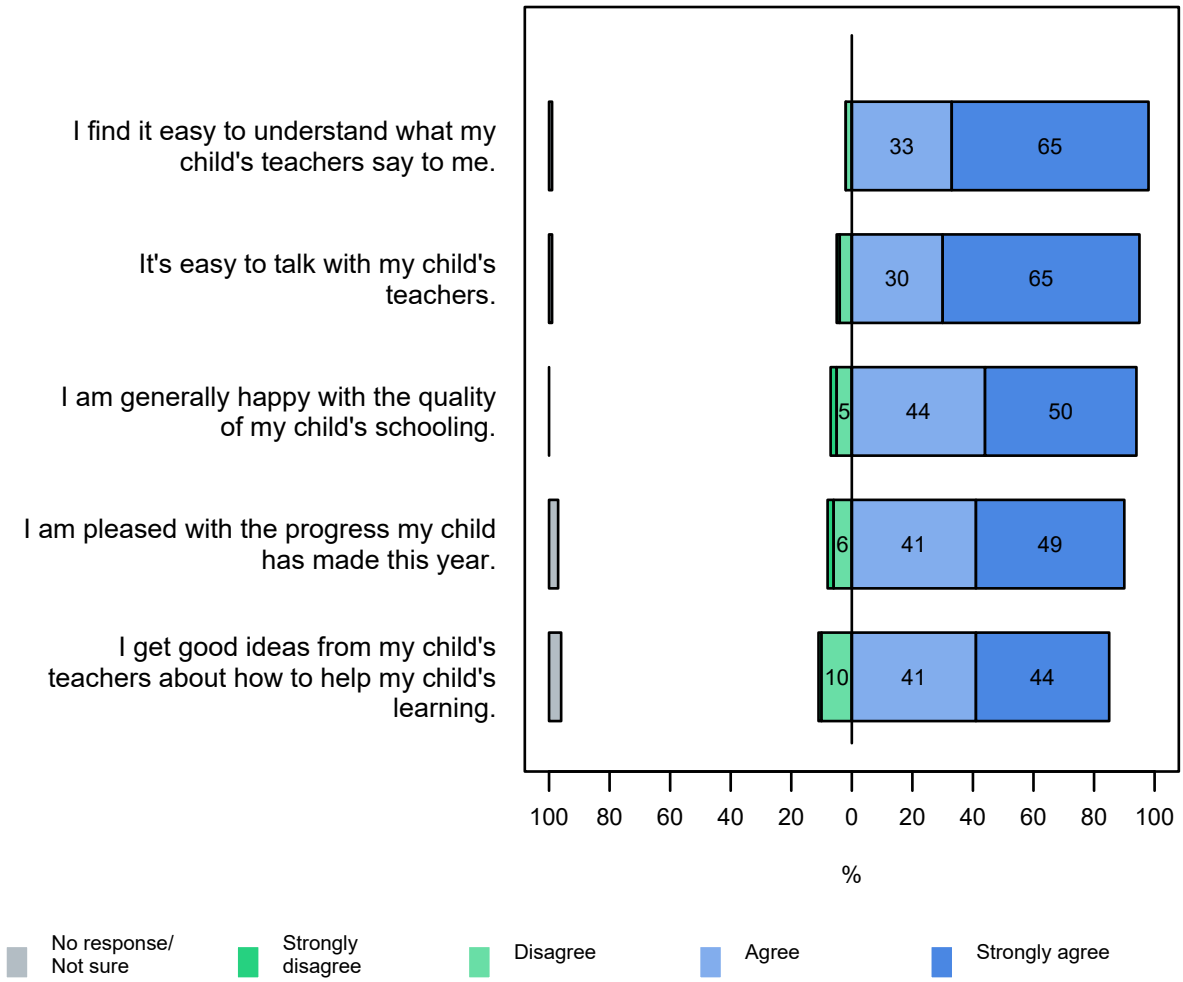


Māori parents' and whānau responses to the items in Figure 42 did not vary significantly from those of non-Māori parents and whānau. Parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–4 school were more likely to agree that their child's teacher had high expectations for their child (89% of parents with a child in a decile 1–2 school, and 93% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 3–4 school, compared with 75% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 7–8 school, and 77% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 9–10 school). Eleven percent of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 7–10 school disagreed that their child's teacher had high expectations, compared with 2% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–4 school.

Most parents and whānau are positive about their communication with teachers and their child's progress

Figure 43 shows parent and whānau responses to items about their relationships with their child's teacher and their views on their child's progress and learning. Nearly two-thirds of the parents and whānau strongly agreed they find it easy to understand what their child's teachers say to them, and to talk with their child's teachers. Half strongly agreed that they were generally happy with the quality of their child's schooling.

FIGURE 43 **Parents and whānau views on communication with their child's teachers and their child's progress (*n* = 395)**



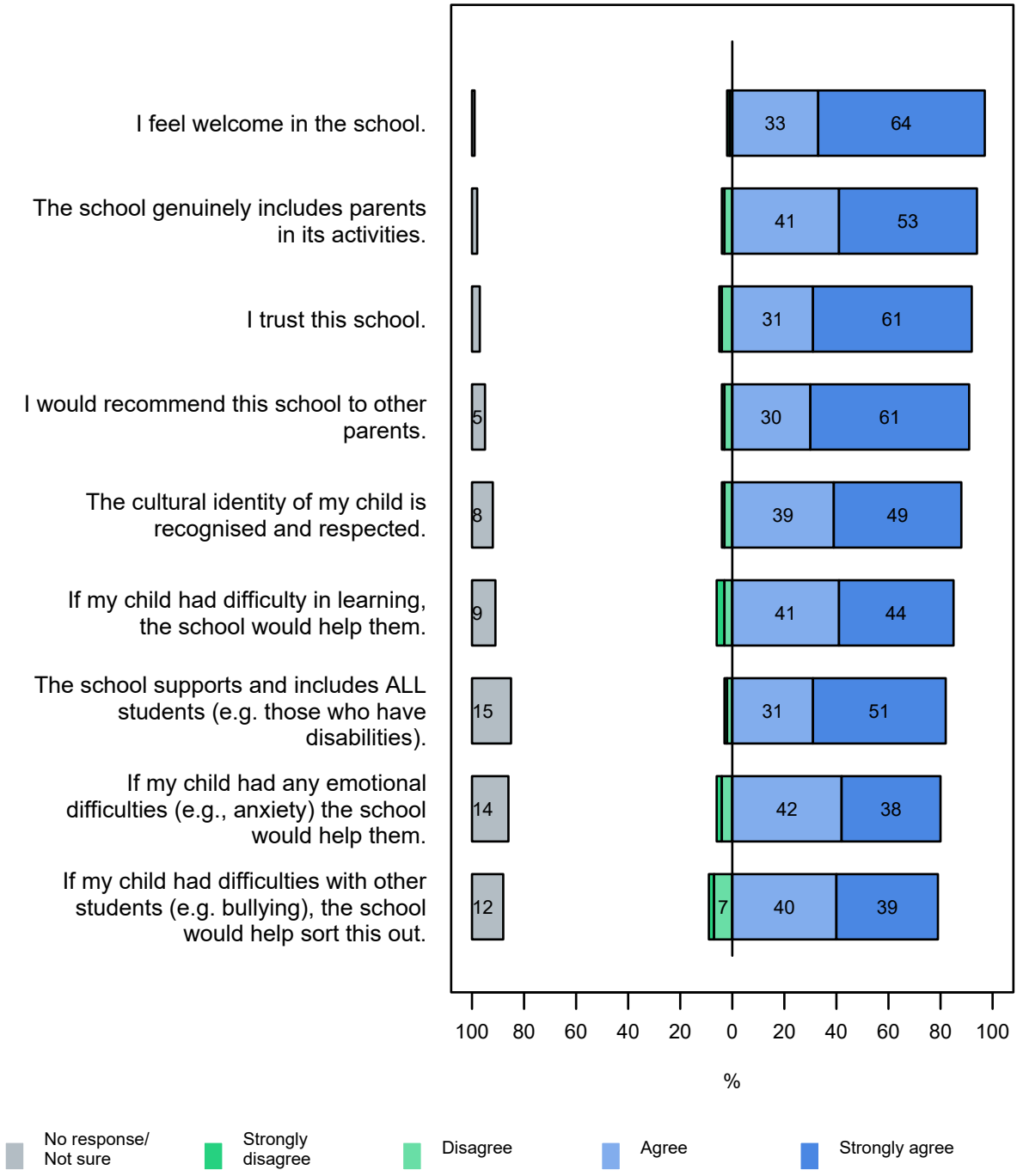
There were no differences by school decile. Māori parent and whānau responses differed from non-Māori parent and whānau responses for one item. Māori parents and whānau were more likely to strongly agree that they were pleased with the progress their child has made (67% of Māori parents and whānau, compared with 46% of non-Māori parents and whānau).

Figure 44 shows parent and whānau responses to items about their own relationship with the school and how they consider the school would respond if their child had learning or socioemotional difficulties. Nearly all (98%) of the parents and whānau agreed they feel welcome in the school, an increase from 2016. In 2016, 53% strongly agreed they feel welcome in the school, and this has increased to 64% in 2019. Over

60% also strongly agreed that they trust the school (a new item in 2019), and that they would recommend the school to other parents.

Eighty-nine percent of parents and whānau agreed or strongly agreed that their child's cultural identity is recognised and respected, up from 79% in 2016 and 67% in 2013. This increase is mostly at the 'strongly agree' level (increasing from 27% in 2013 to 36% in 2016 to 49% in 2019). Māori parents and whānau were more positive than non-Māori parents and whānau for this item: 95% of Māori whānau agreed (67% strongly agreed) that their child's cultural identity is recognised and respected.

FIGURE 44 **Parent and whānau experiences of their child's school (*n* = 395)**



There were no differences by school decile. Māori parents and whānau were more likely than non-Māori parents and whānau to strongly agree that if their child had emotional difficulties or experienced difficulties with other students, the school would help them (58% of Māori parents and whānau, compared with 34% of non-Māori parents and whānau in relation to emotional difficulties and 56% of Māori parents and whānau, compared with 37% of non-Māori parents and whānau in relation to difficulties with other students).

Parent and whānau comments on their child's school, teachers, and learning experiences are mostly positive

At the end of the survey, parents and whānau were invited to add a comment about their youngest child's schooling. Some of these comments are presented below.

Twenty-two percent of the parents and whānau (*n* = 88) wrote positive comments about their own or their child's experience of the school.

> *The teachers and staff are outstanding in the efforts they make toward caring for and educating the children. I believe they go above and beyond every day. They really make the school a central and trusted hub of the local community.*
>
> *We have great confidence in this school for the education and support they provide our child. The staff, environment, curriculum and administration have been amazing in our time there.*
>
> *We find this school absolutely wonderful and love the fact it feels like a community where everyone knows everyone and looks out for each other. It's so easy to communicate with any of the staff and our child's teacher is 100% committed and passionate.*

Four percent of the parents and whānau (*n* = 17) made negative comments about their own or their child's experience of the school. A theme in these responses was staff turnover.

> *Instability and unreliability of teaching staff. High staff turnover for such a small school.*
>
> *Both of my children have been affected by staff changes. Child 1 has had four teachers in 2 years, Child 2 has had two teachers this year … This is very disruptive and demotivating.*
>
> *We feel our child's classes are rather chaotic and would benefit from some structure and quiet during workshops. We find it difficult to get clear info on where our child sits compared to expectation and the school reporting system does not really help.*
>
> *Our son was left to drift in his year 4. He went from a very motivated student to one that doesn't want to go to school. We discussed this with his teacher. She had no ways of thinking differently to re-engage our son.*

Some parents and whānau (6%, *n* = 23) offered suggestions for improving their school, including communication with and reporting to parents, the use of composite classes, homework policy, and extra-curricular opportunities.

> *Having a Kapa Haka group. I think the whole school would benefit and enjoy doing Kapa Haka.*
>
> *There needs to be channels for parents to have a voice at the school. Parents should have an opportunity to give honest feedback about teachers … this has never been asked for.*
>
> *It would be good to receive a regular newsletter from a teacher about what is happening in the class. What activities they are doing and what they are learning.*
>
> *They could definitely utilise their Facebook page more often. I know more about other schools in our area than I know about this school.*
>
> *More consultation/parent surveys—in the seven years of being involved with the school there has only been one parent survey evening and no actual surveys.*

Some (5%, *n* = 18) offered suggestions for improving school or education more generally. These included comments about modern/innovative learning environments, use of digital technology, and Ministry of Education funding and resourcing, including for learning support.

I believe there is too much emphasis on new entrants having to read, sit for ages, please everyone etc. They need time to develop other skills [and can] cover this stuff when they are ready. Not just this school but all schools.

I shouldn't have to reapply for my child's high health needs when she has a lifelong condition that will only get worse. The school has been very supportive but this is a very time consuming exercise for myself and the school

Going forward more support needs to be in place for teachers to cope with children with complex behavioural issues.

The school and their leadership team are doing extremely well in the face of chronic underfunding from central government. Further, the school is let down by a lack of transparency in the mechanisms used to target special needs teachers to schools by central government.

The open plan classes are too noisy and distracting.

I think long screen hours at school will affect the motor skills of a child … Traditional learning is good over the full-on device learning and it is good for mental and physical development of students.

Finally, 4% (n = 16) of the parents and whānau made a comment expressing concern that their child was not getting what they need. This included comments about learning support, and support for gifted and talented children.

It could be helpful to have more information around dyslexia. My eldest child has displayed some signs of this.

My child has dyspraxia. Not every teacher he has had recognises it or understands what it is.

My child has a hearing loss and could benefit from extra assistance in class that apparently we don't qualify for. More support for children with additional needs is acutely needed at our school.

I'm not sure our school is well enough equipped to meet the needs of academically gifted children

Parents and whānau receive better information about their child's progress in reading, writing, and maths, than in other curriculum areas

Parent and whānau ability to support their child's learning is related to the information they have about their child's time at school and their performance.

We asked parents and whānau two questions about the quality and clarity of information they got from the school. Figure 45 shows their views on the information about their child's progress across curriculum areas.[35]

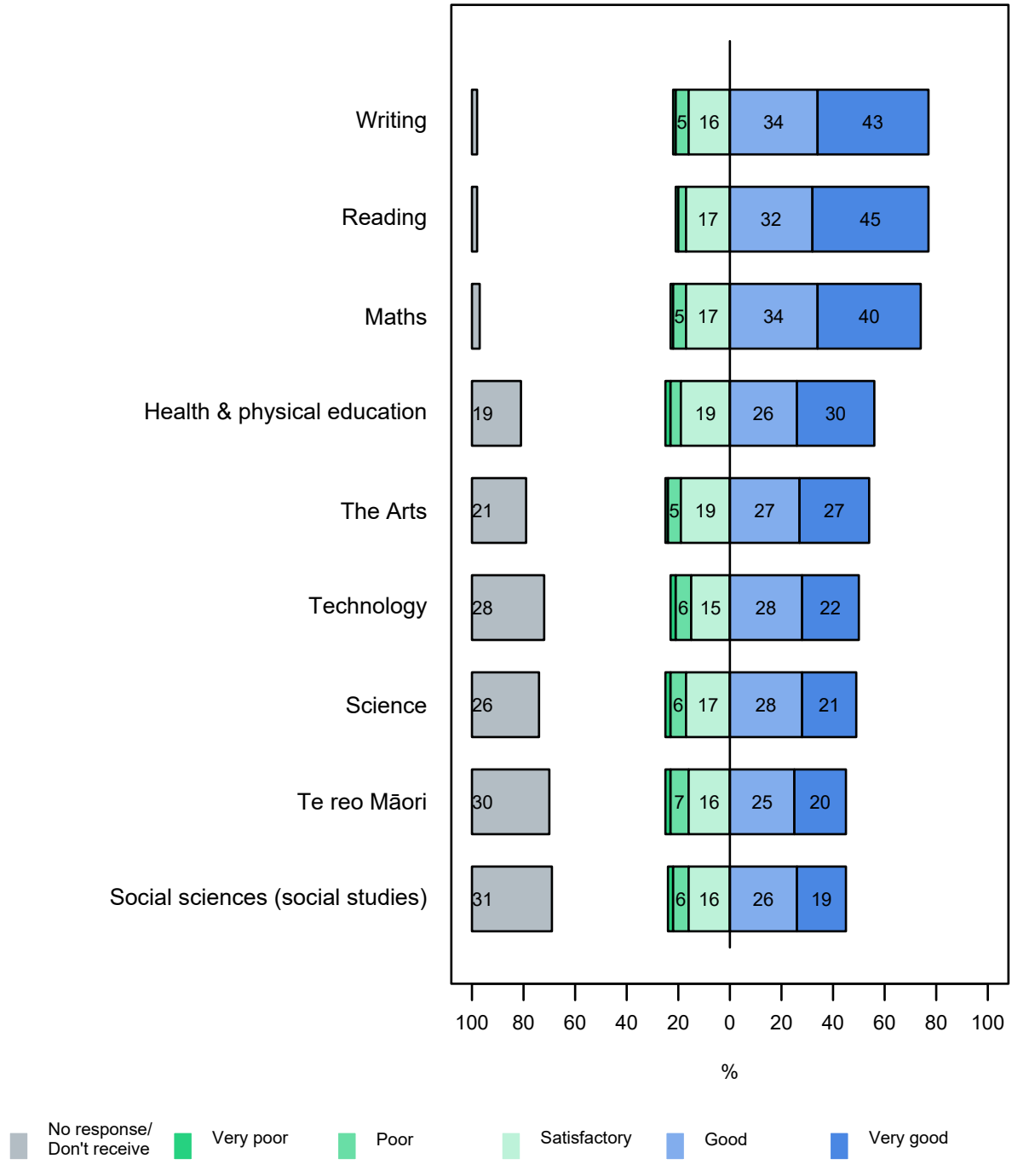
Figure 45 shows that parents and whānau rated the quality and clarity of information they got about their child's progress in writing, reading, and maths more highly than the information they got about progress in other curriculum areas.[36] A sizeable minority of parents and whānau said they did not receive information about their child's progress in science (24%), technology (26%), social studies (28%), health and PE (19%), te reo Māori (28%), and the arts (20%).

Parents and whānau with a child at a lower decile school were more likely to say that the information they got about their child's progress in te reo Māori was very good (36% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 1–2 school, decreasing to 11% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 9–10 school). Māori parents' and whānau responses did not vary significantly from those of non-Māori parents and whānau.

35 We also included this figure in Section 7 Curriculum, Assessment, and Reporting.

36 These data are not comparable with 2013 and 2016 data, as the focus in the previous two rounds of the survey was on reporting in relation to National Standards.

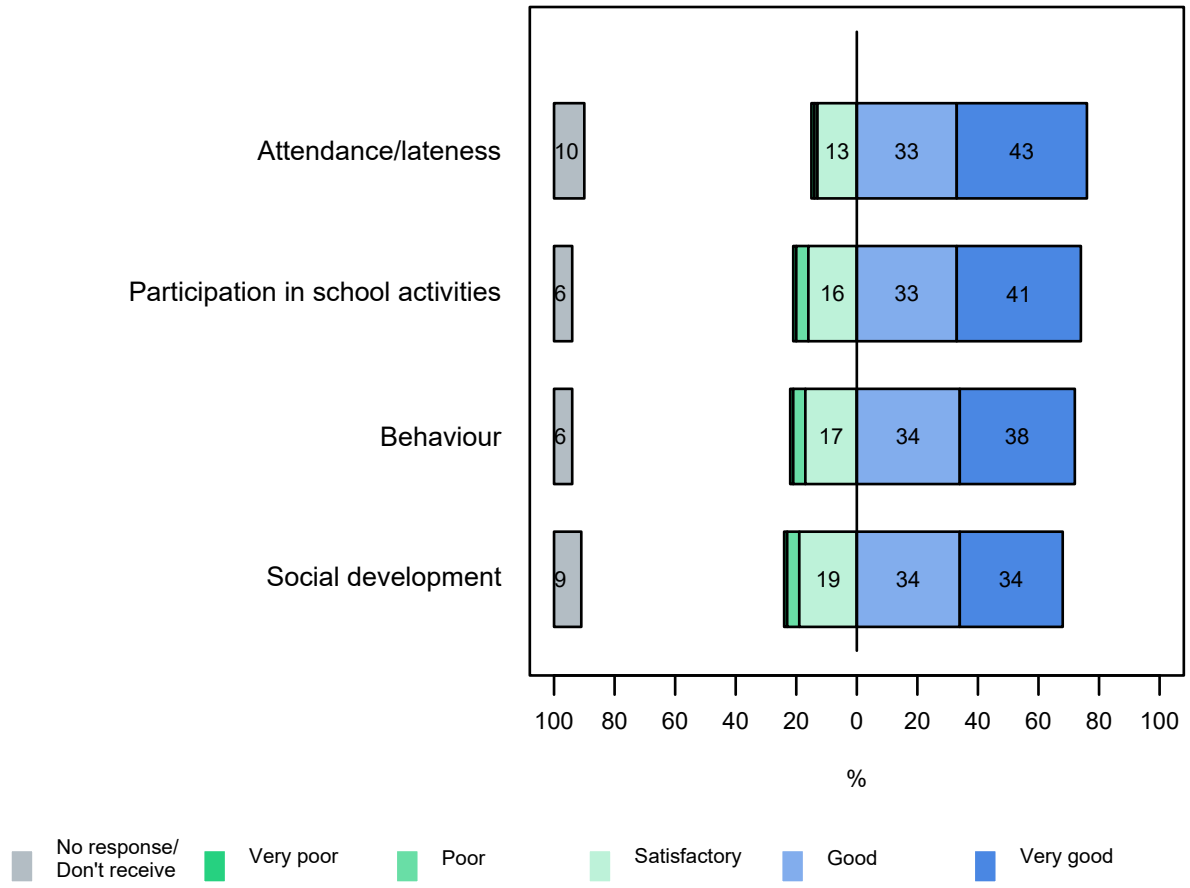
FIGURE 45 **Parent and whānau views of the quality of information they get from their child's school about progress in curriculum areas (*n* = 395)**



Many parents and whānau receive good information about their child's attendance, progress, and behaviour

Many parents and whānau thought the quality of information they received from school about their child's behaviour, social development, participation in school activities, and attendance/lateness was good or very good. Fewer than 5% of parents and whānau indicated any of the information shown in Figure 46 was of a poor or very poor quality. Between 4–8% said they did not receive this information.

FIGURE 46 **Parent and whānau views of the quality of information they get from their child's school about their child's social development, behaviour, and participation (*n* = 395)**



The only decile-related difference was that parents and whānau with a child at a lower decile school were more likely to say that the information they got about their child's behaviour was very good (66% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 1–2 school, decreasing to 29% of parents and whānau with a child in a decile 9–10 school).

Māori parent and whānau responses differed from non-Māori parent and whānau responses for one item. Māori parents and whānau were more likely to say that the information they received about their child's attendance/lateness was poor (6% compared with 1% of non-Māori parents and whānau). However, they were also more likely to say it was very good (51%, compared with 42% of non-Māori parents and whānau).

Over half of parents take part in school surveys, fundraising and school trips, and attend sports

In 2019, the proportion of parents and whānau who said they had been involved with their child's school by responding to a school survey had increased to 61%. The proportion of parents responding who were on the PTA, school council, or board of trustees (BOT) had also increased. Otherwise, there were only minor differences compared with 2016. Parental involvement does seem to have increased over the decade in relation to sports.

TABLE 7 **School activities in which parents and whānau had participated during the year**

School activity	2010 (*n* = 550) %	2013 (*n* = 684) %	2016 (*n* = 504) %	2019 (*n* = 395) %
Responded to school survey(s)	48	46	52	61
Attending sport	41	39	62	59
Fundraising	53	51	61	54
School trips	50	43	52	52
Attending school plays/choir/orchestra, etc.	*	*	45	47
Coaching/helping with sports	16	18	23	25
Classroom help	16	15	17	22
PTA/school council/BOT	13	12	13	22
Consultation	*	12	8	16
Attending kapa haka	*	*	10	15
Building repairs and maintenance	4	3	5	9
Canteen/school lunches	8	*	8	7
Coaching/helping with school plays/choir/orchestra, etc.	*	*	6	6
Coaching/helping with kapa haka	*	*	3	6
Helping in library	4	4	2	5

*Not asked

Very few parents and whānau (<3%) indicated they had attended, coached, or helped with a Poly club or Pacific cultural group, or taught te reo Māori or tikanga Māori (not shown in Table 7). Māori parents and whānau were more likely than non-Māori parents and whānau to have:

- taught te reo Māori and/or tikanga Māori (13% compared with 0.3%)
- coached or helped with kapa haka (20% compared with 3%)
- attended kapa haka (36% compared with 12%)
- supervised around the grounds (15% compared with 4%).

Looking at parents' and whānau involvement in school activities, there were several differences related to school decile, all showing a higher proportion of involvement from parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school:

- 7% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school had taught te reo Māori and/or tikanga Māori (compared with 3% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 3–4 school, and 0–1% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 5–10 school)
- 16% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school had helped with kapa haka (compared with 5% or less for parents and whānau of a child at other decile schools)
- 7% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school had helped with Poly club or Pacific cultural groups (compared with 2% or less for parents and whānau of a child at other decile schools)
- 13% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school had helped in the school library (compared with 6% or less for parents and whānau of a child at other decile schools)
- 11% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school had attended Poly club or Pacific cultural groups (compared with 5% or less for parents and whānau of a child at other decile schools)
- 29% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school and 20% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 9–10 had attended kapa haka (compared with 8–12% for parents and whānau of a child at decile 3–8 schools)
- 16% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school had supervised around the grounds (compared with 6% or less for parents and whānau of a child at other decile schools).

Summary

Most parents and whānau are positive about their child's experience of school and teachers, and their own involvement in the school. More parents and whānau in 2019 than in 2016 felt welcome in their child's school, saw their child's teachers as committed and enthusiastic, and felt their child's cultural identity was recognised and respected. Parents and whānau with a child with a disability or needing learning support were less positive than other parents and whānau.

Many parents and whānau also thought that their child's school helped their child develop positive attitudes and skills that are needed to make the most of life, and to support learning

Cost had meant their child being unable to do at least one school activity for 18% of parents and whānau. Those with a child at a decile 1–2 school, and Māori parents and whānau were more likely to indicate their child had been unable to do school work at home that they need the internet for, or attend regular classes when they needed a teacher aide, because these activities cost too much. Parents and whānau with a child with a disability or needing learning support were also more likely to say their child had not been able to attend regular classes when they needed a teacher aide.

Nearly all of the parents and whānau agreed that teachers pronounced their child's name correctly, and that their child was treated fairly.

Māori parents and whanau responding were as positive about their child's learning and school experiences as non-Māori. They were more likely than non-Māori parents and whānau to strongly agree that they were pleased with the progress their child has made this year (67% of Māori parents and whānau, compared with 46% of non-Māori parents and whānau).

Around 60% of parents and whānau responding to the survey have been involved in their child's primary school in the past year by responding to a survey or attending sports events. Parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school responding were the most likely group of parents and whānau to participate in many of the activities.

Most parents and whānau said their child attended their first choice of school, and for many this was also the primary or intermediate school closest to them. In 2019, there was no association between school decile and whether a child attended their first choice of school.

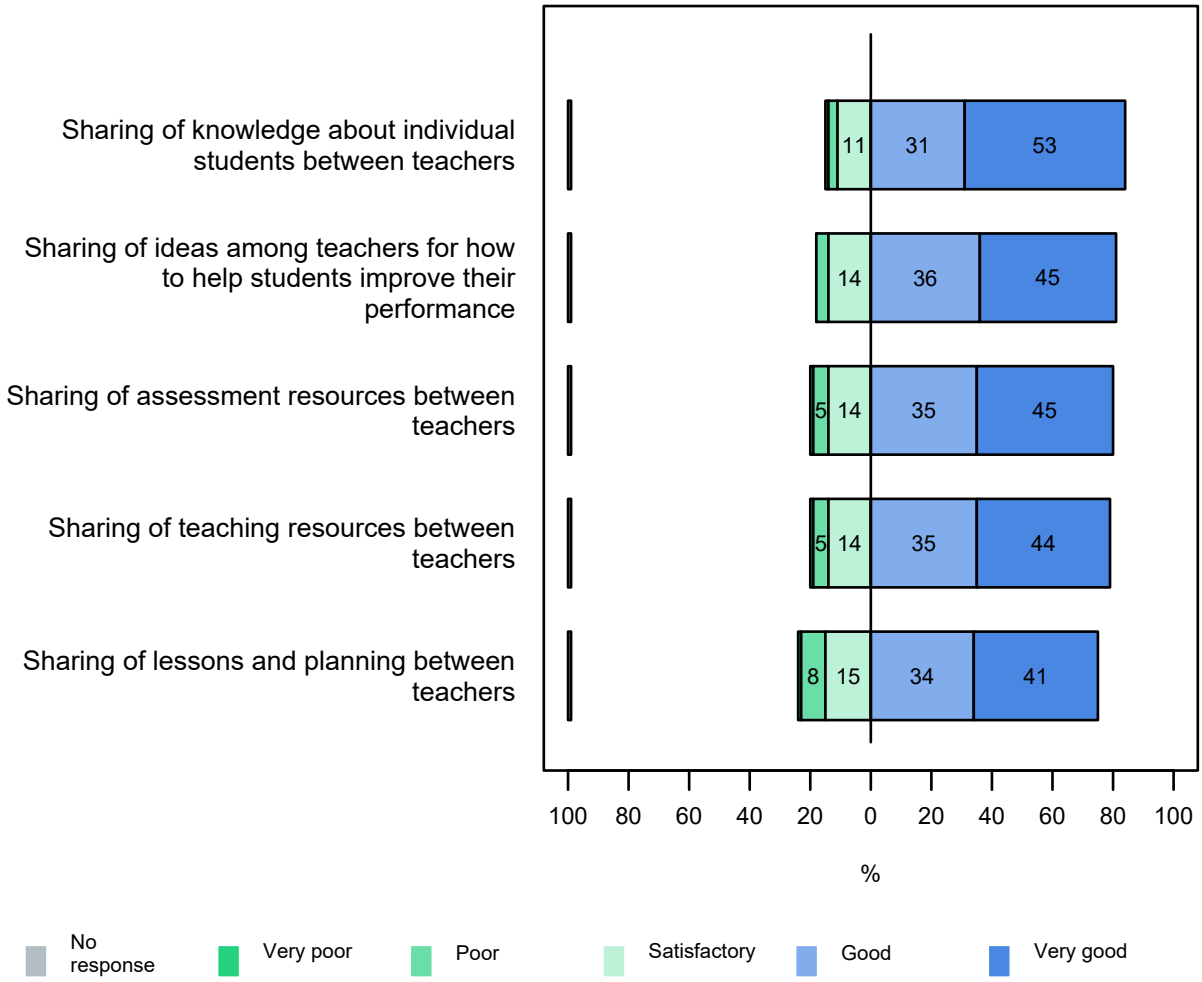
10. School culture and teacher learning

Students and teachers benefit from school cultures where teachers are well supported; share knowledge, ideas, and resources; and keep developing their practice. This section focuses on teacher reports of their school's professional culture, and their professional learning and development, including the use of online resources, professional learning, and sharing. It also covers the time they have to work together, the role of feedback on performance, mentoring of provisionally registered teachers, and the kinds of professional learning they have experienced.

More teachers are sharing ideas to help students improve their performance

Sharing of resources, lessons and planning, knowledge about individual students and ideas for how to help students improve their performance was judged as good or very good within their school by many teachers (see Figure 47). It was not good in the schools of around a fifth of teachers.

FIGURE 47 **Teacher sharing within their school (*n* = 620)**

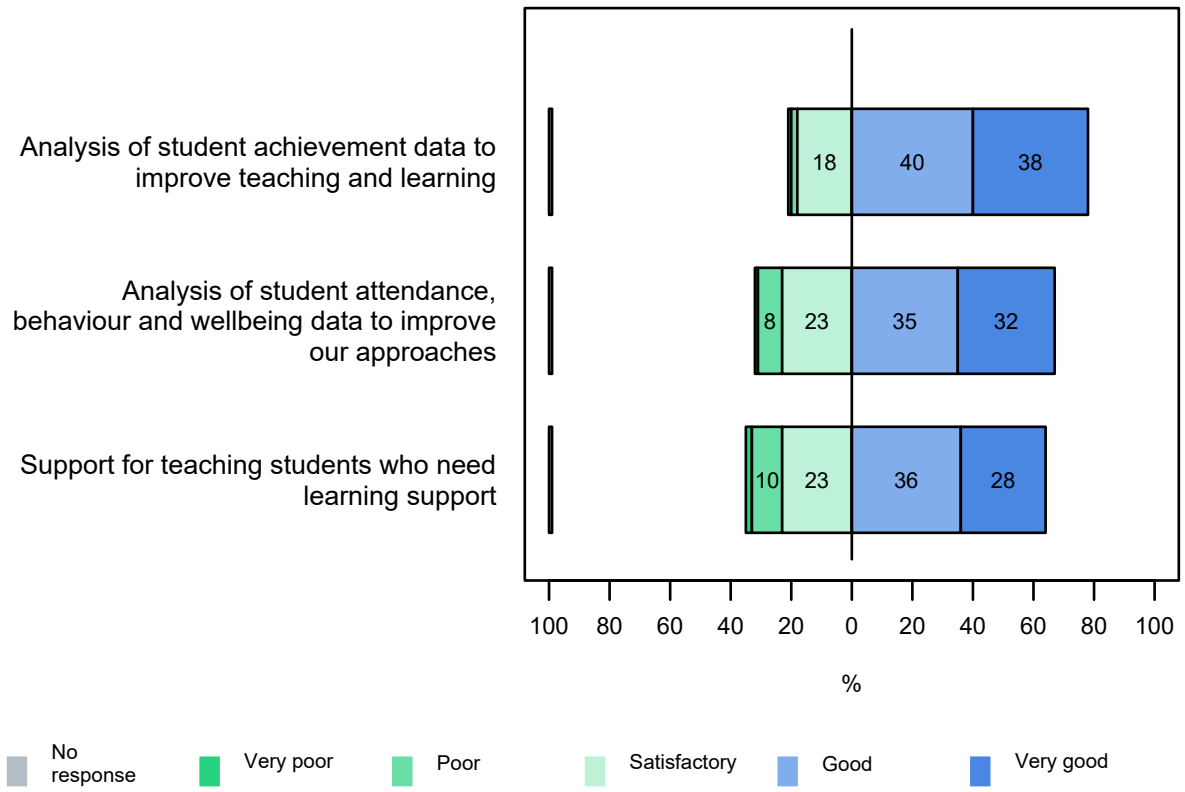


The patterns here have stayed much the same since the 2010 primary national survey. The exception is an increase in the proportion of teachers rating their school's sharing of ideas for how to help students improve their performance as very good from 32% in 2016 to 45% in 2019.

Most teachers think that there is good analysis of student data in order to make improvements

Most teachers thought their school made good use of analysis of student data in order to make improvements, more so in relation to student achievement data than in relation to attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing. Most also thought that their school's setting of useful targets for student achievement was good. Figure 48 has the details.

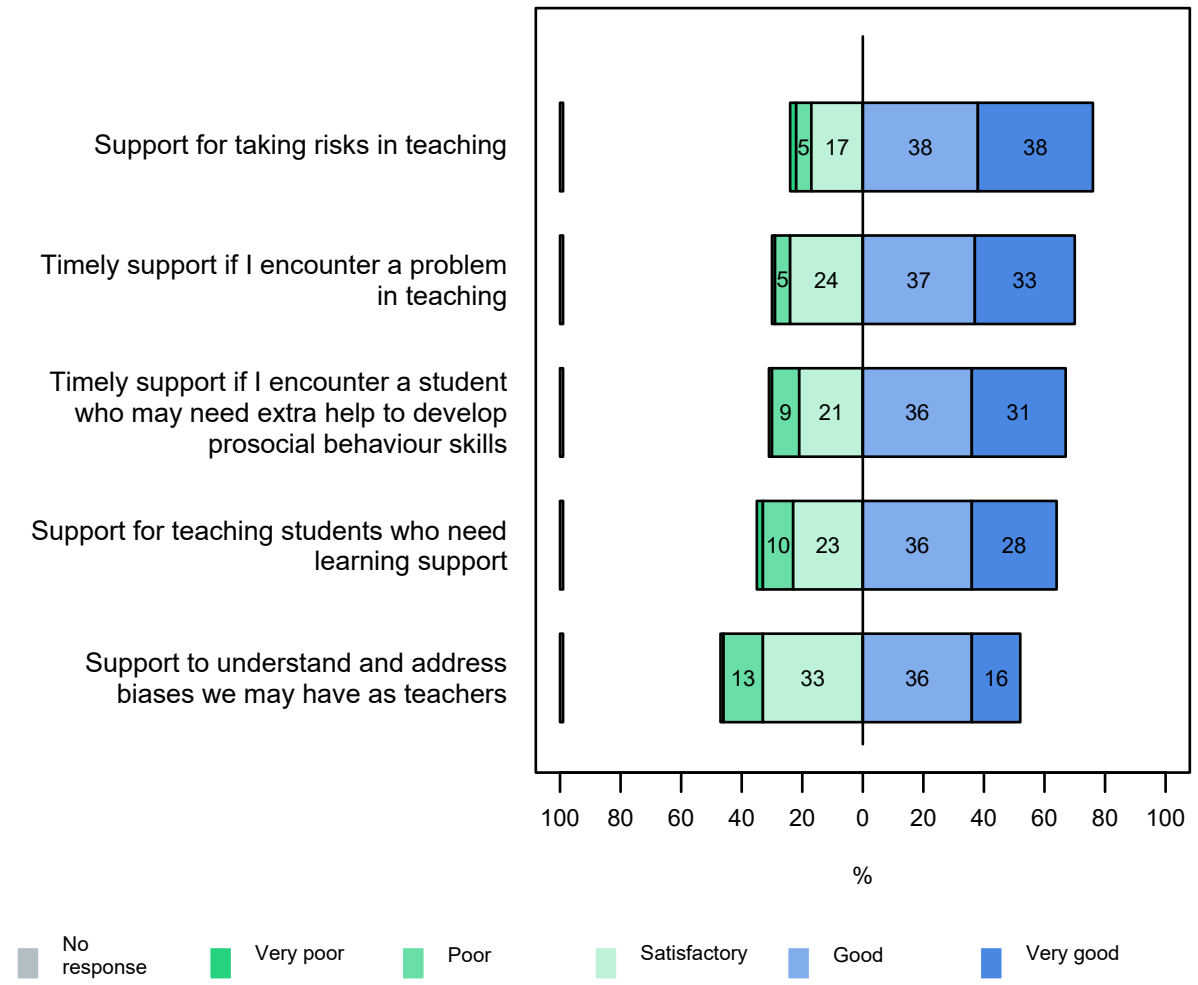
FIGURE 48 **School analysis of student data for improvement (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



The support that teachers get from their school varies

We asked teachers about support they get from their school. Figure 49 shows a range of experiences, with many reporting that they get very good or good support, but between 23% and 46% not rating their school's support as good or very good, particularly in relation to support with particular students, and to understand and address bias. Compared with 2016, somewhat fewer teachers said they had very good or good timely support if they encountered a problem in teaching (70%, compared with 78% in 2016, 79% in 2013, and 78% in 2010).

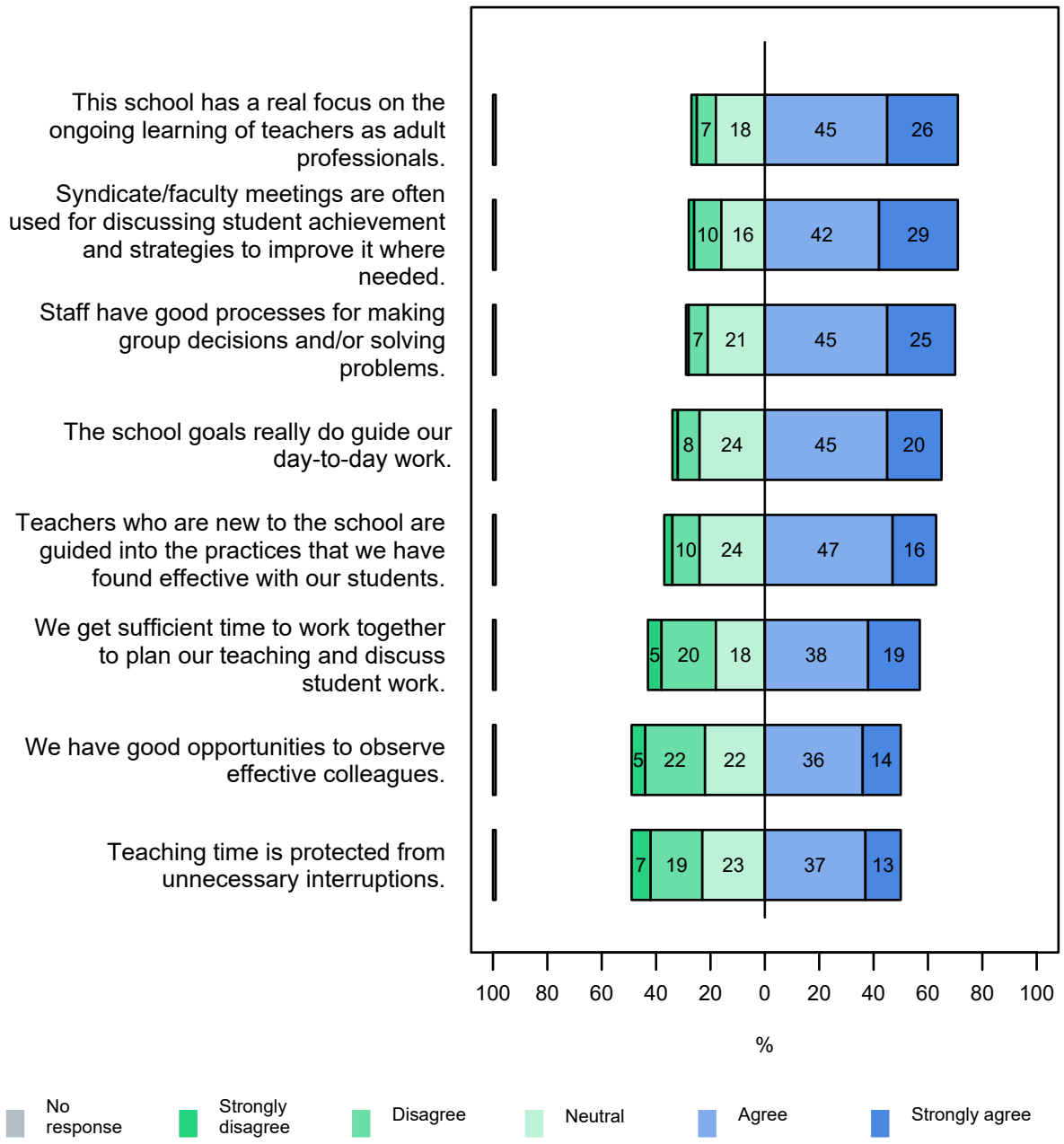
FIGURE 49 **School support for teachers (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



Many teachers' schools have a focus on improving practice, but time to work together is still a challenge

Most of the teachers said they worked in schools whose culture was one of ongoing learning for teachers, including the use of meeting time to discuss student achievement and strategies for improvement, and guidance for teachers new to the school on practices that are effective for the school's students. But just over half had sufficient time to work together to plan their teaching and discuss student work, half said their teaching time was protected from unnecessary interruptions, and half had good opportunities to observe effective colleagues. There has been a small decline in the proportion of teachers who said the school's staff had good processes for making group decisions and/or solving problems (70% in 2019, compared with 76% in 2016), and in those who said their school had a real focus on the ongoing learning of teachers as adult professionals (71% in 2019, compared with 78% in 2016).

FIGURE 50 **School processes to support ongoing improvement of practice (Teachers, *n* = 620)**

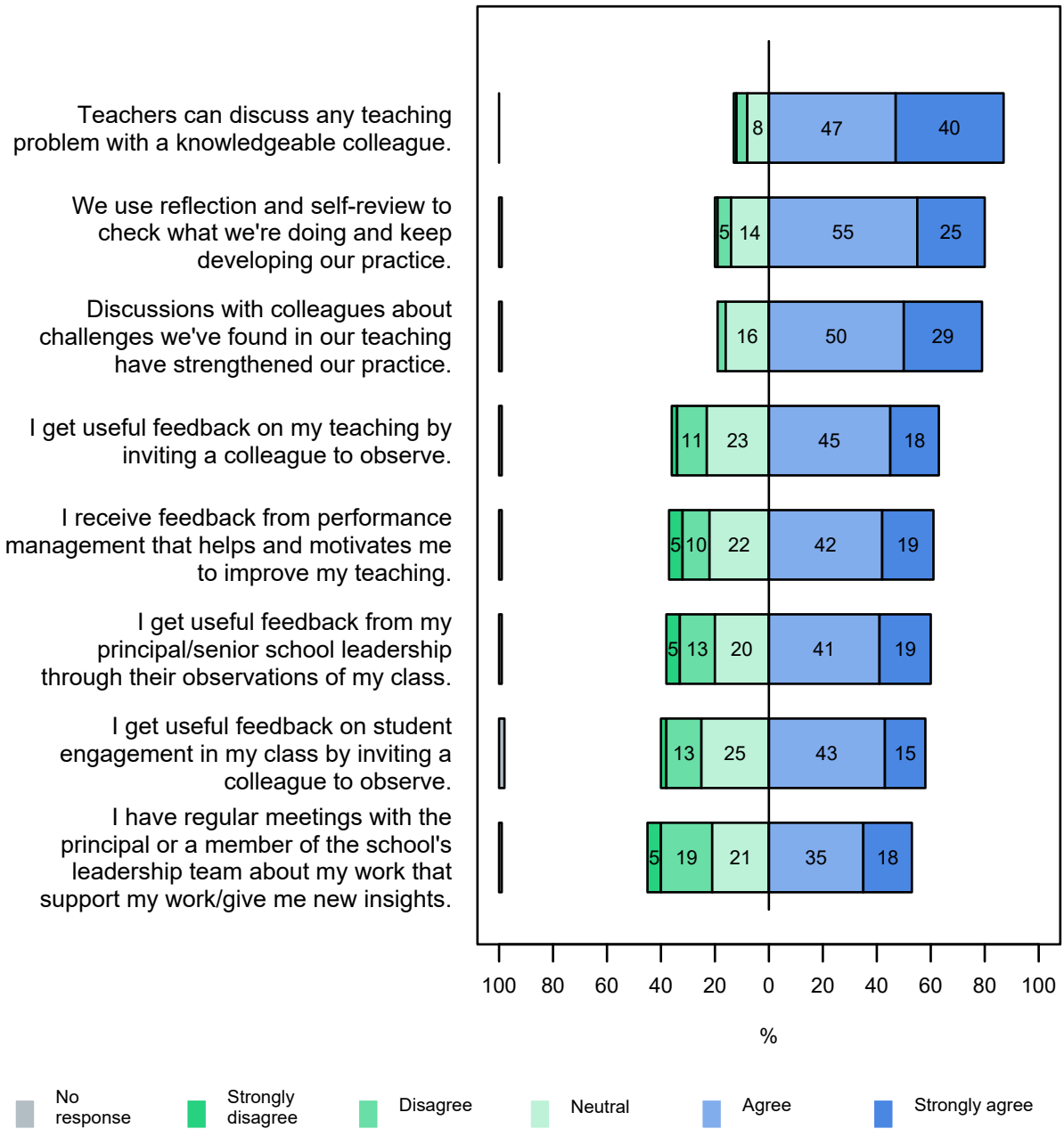


Discussions and reflection are more common for strengthening teaching than feedback

While most teachers report useful discussions and reflection to improve their teaching, fewer teachers agreed that feedback plays a role. Fewer than two-thirds of teachers thought they got useful feedback from collegial or principal/school leadership observations of their teaching or from performance management, and just over half had regular meetings with their principal or someone from the school's leadership team who supported their work or gave them new insights.

There has been a decline in reports of feedback from 2016, when 78% said they got useful feedback on their teaching by inviting a colleague to observe, and 71% that they had useful feedback from their principal/senior leadership's observations of their class. Figure 51 has the details.

FIGURE 51 **Feedback, discussions and reflection to strengthen teaching practice (Teachers, *n* = 620)**



In the set of items about school culture and ways of working, we asked teachers to rate their school's development of leadership skills among teachers. Twenty-six percent rated their school as 'very good' at doing this, and 38% as 'good'—64% overall. A further 24% rated their school as 'satisfactory', 11% as 'poor', and 2% as 'very poor' at developing teachers' leadership skills.

Fewer than half of mentor teachers have useful professional learning or time allocated for their role

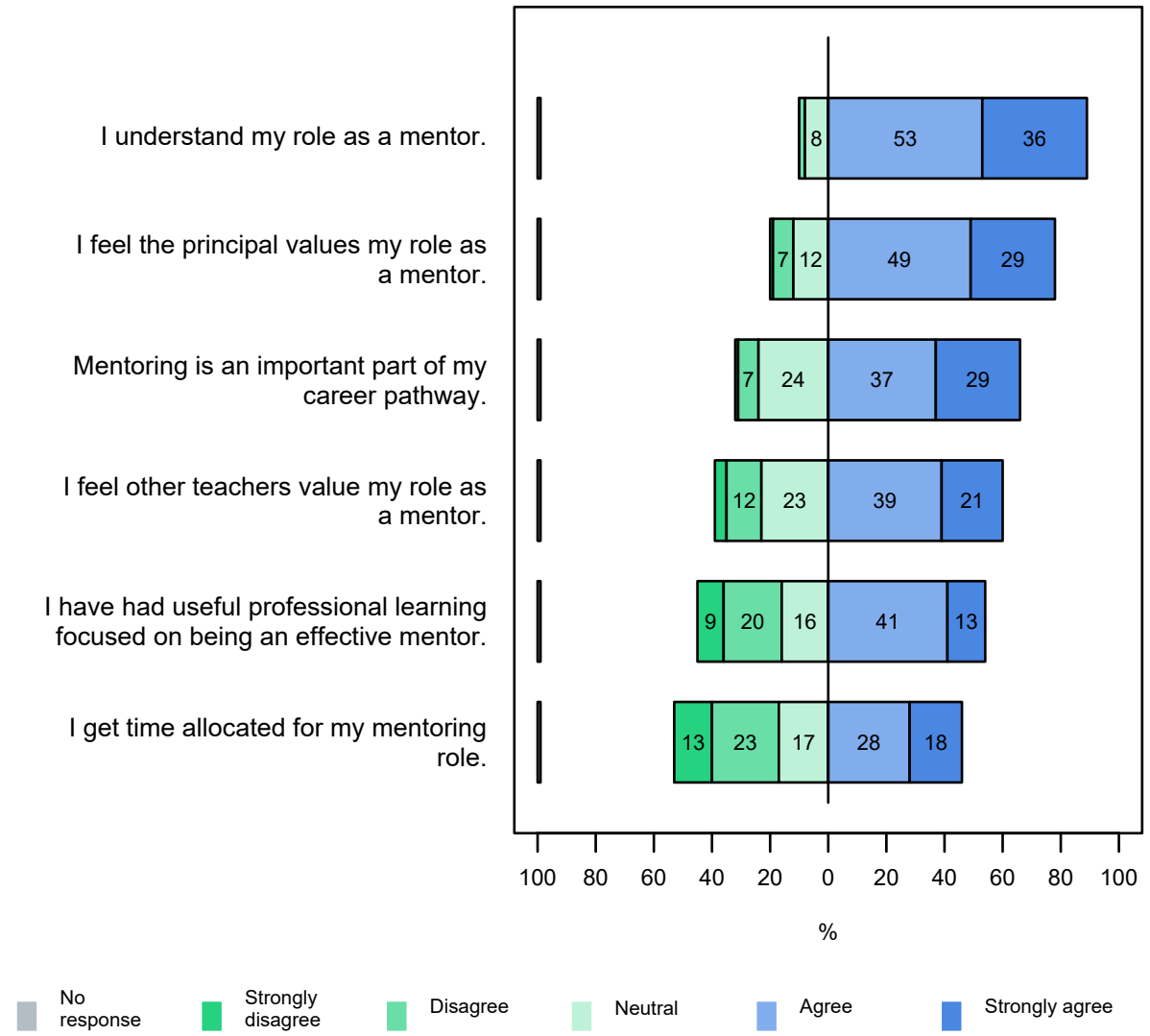
Schools play an important part in the professional development of new graduates and early career teachers.

Almost three-quarters of all teachers who completed the survey rated the quality of mentoring of provisionally certificated teachers in their school as ‘very good’ or ‘good’.

Fifteen percent of the teachers who took part in the survey were mentor teachers for provisionally certificated teachers. Most said they understood their role as a mentor, and thought this role was valued by their principal, and, to a lesser extent, by other teachers (23% gave a neutral answer here, indicating they might not know what other teachers thought). Fewer mentor teachers thought their colleagues valued their role in 2019 than in 2016 (60% compared with 74% in 2016).

However, just under half said they got the time allocated for their role, and 54% had had useful professional learning focused on being an effective mentor, though this is somewhat more than the 46% in 2016 who had had such professional learning. Figure 52 gives the full picture.

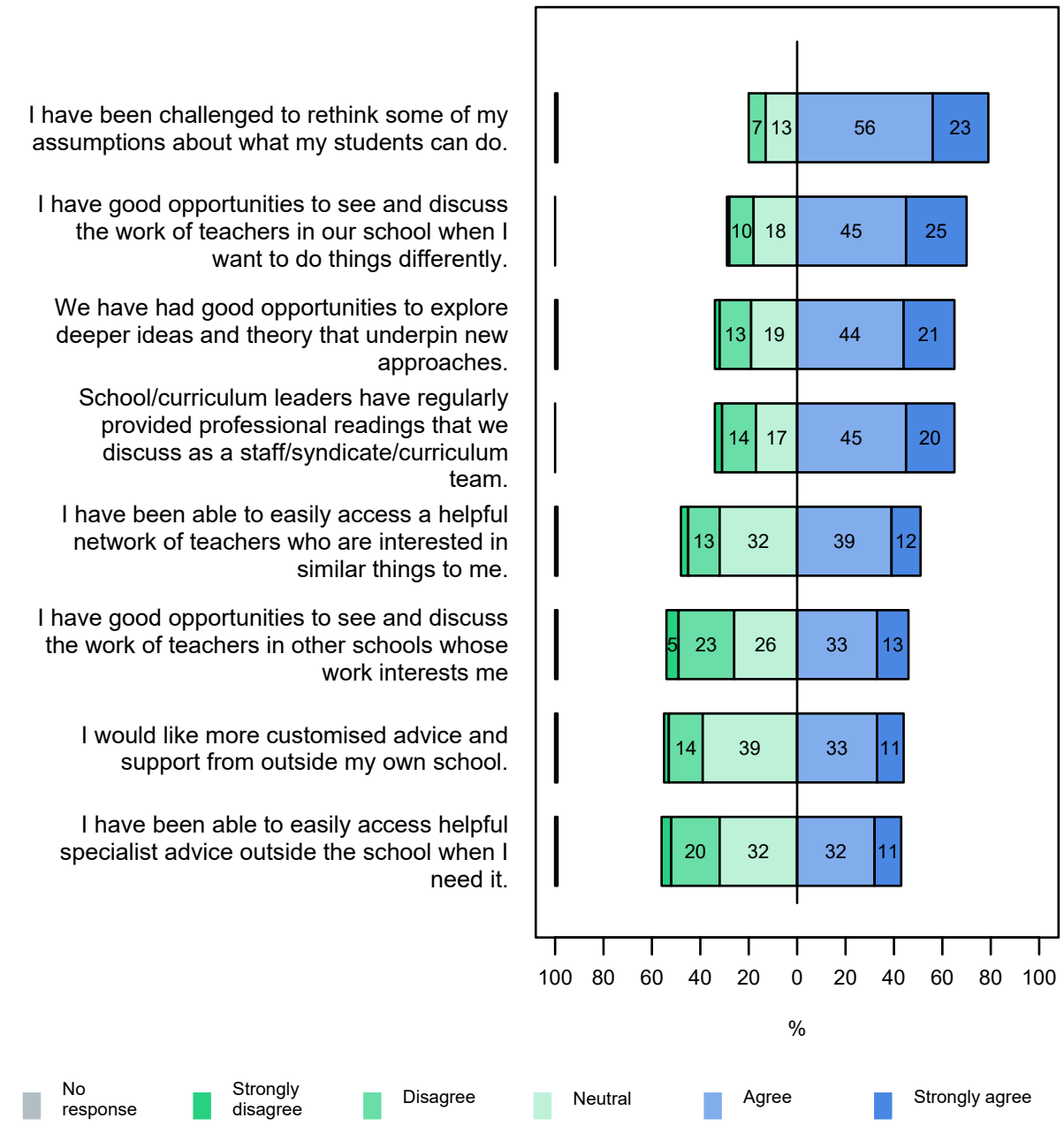
FIGURE 52 **Mentor teachers' experiences of the role (*n* = 95)**



Many teachers have a range of professional learning opportunities with colleagues, more within the school than beyond

Figure 53 shows that most teachers thought that their professional learning and development in the last 3 years had challenged them to rethink some of their assumptions about what their students can do. It also shows that within-school PLD opportunities were more of a feature in primary teachers' professional learning than opportunities and advice beyond their school.

FIGURE 53 **Teachers' experiences of professional learning over the past 3 years (*n* = 620)**



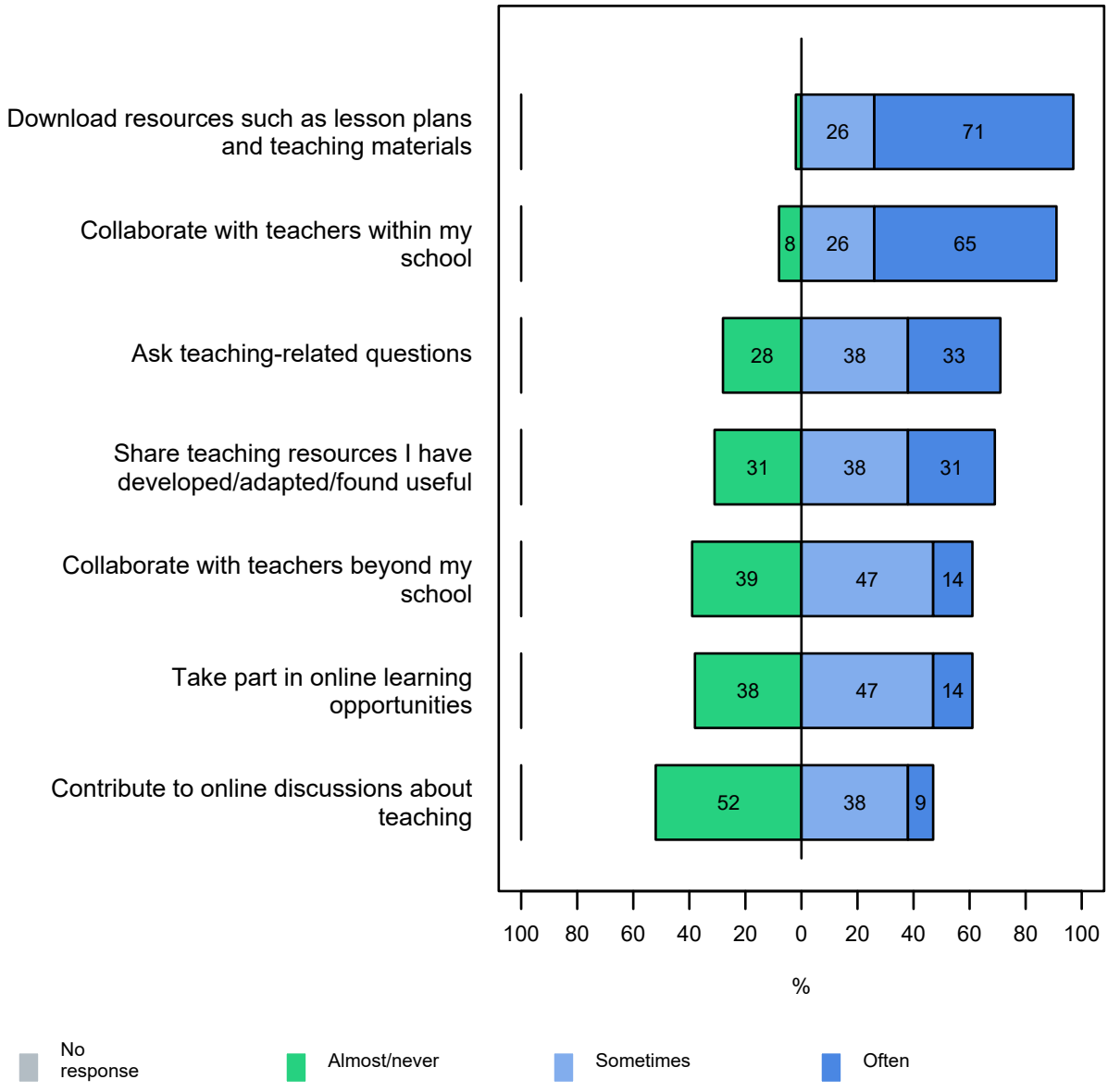
The overall pattern here is much the same as in 2016, with two slight differences:

- In 2019, 44% said they would like more customised advice and support from outside their own school (compared with 38% in 2016).
- In 2019, 51% said they could easily access a helpful network of teachers who are interested in similar things (as did 57% in 2016).

Downloading resources is still the most common online activity for teachers

In late 2019, digital technology was a resource for most, but not all, teachers. The two most frequent uses teachers make of the internet to support teaching and learning were to download resources—such as lesson plans and teaching materials—and collaborate with colleagues inside their school. Figure 54 also shows that around a third seem to rarely or never use the Internet for their own learning or contribution.

FIGURE 54 **Teachers' use of the internet (*n* = 620)**



More teachers in 2019 were taking part in online learning opportunities sometimes or often (61%, compared with 50% in 2016), perhaps reflecting the centrally funded PLD to support Kia Takatū ā-Matihiko, the National Digital Readiness Programme. Slightly more were sharing teaching resources online (68%, compared with 62% in 2016).

Summary

Teachers' responses indicated that many worked in schools where there are ongoing opportunities to share, reflect, and discuss their teaching and student learning, with an improvement lens. But ensuring that time is available to make the most of these opportunities was still a challenge. Comparing 2019 teachers' responses to the questions reported in this section with teachers' responses in 2016 raises some questions.

One gain was that more teachers were now sharing ideas for how to help students improve their performance. However, there were somewhat fewer saying they had very good or good timely support if they encountered a teaching problem, that their school had a real focus on the ongoing learning of teachers as adult professionals, that they had useful feedback from observations, and that they could easily access a helpful network of teachers interested in similar things. More were wanting customised support and advice beyond their school.

Overall, the patterns have not changed much: there has been no further progress. While many teachers indicate active attention in their schools to keep improving teaching and learning, there is still a significant minority of teachers—and their students—who were missing out.

11. Team teaching and innovative learning environments

There has been growing interest in the shift in some schools away from the single-cell, one-teacher-and-their-class provision to having a team of teachers work with students. Some of this is related to the introduction of innovative learning environments, with much larger spaces than traditional classrooms, and more flexibility in how the space is organised.

Our 2019 national survey gave us the opportunity to find out how common these quite fundamental shifts are, and what teachers make of them. We also thought it important to ask open-ended questions about what helped or hindered teaching in teams, and teaching in innovative learning environments, so that others thinking of making these changes could learn from these experiences.

Team teaching has benefits if teachers are supported to work as a team

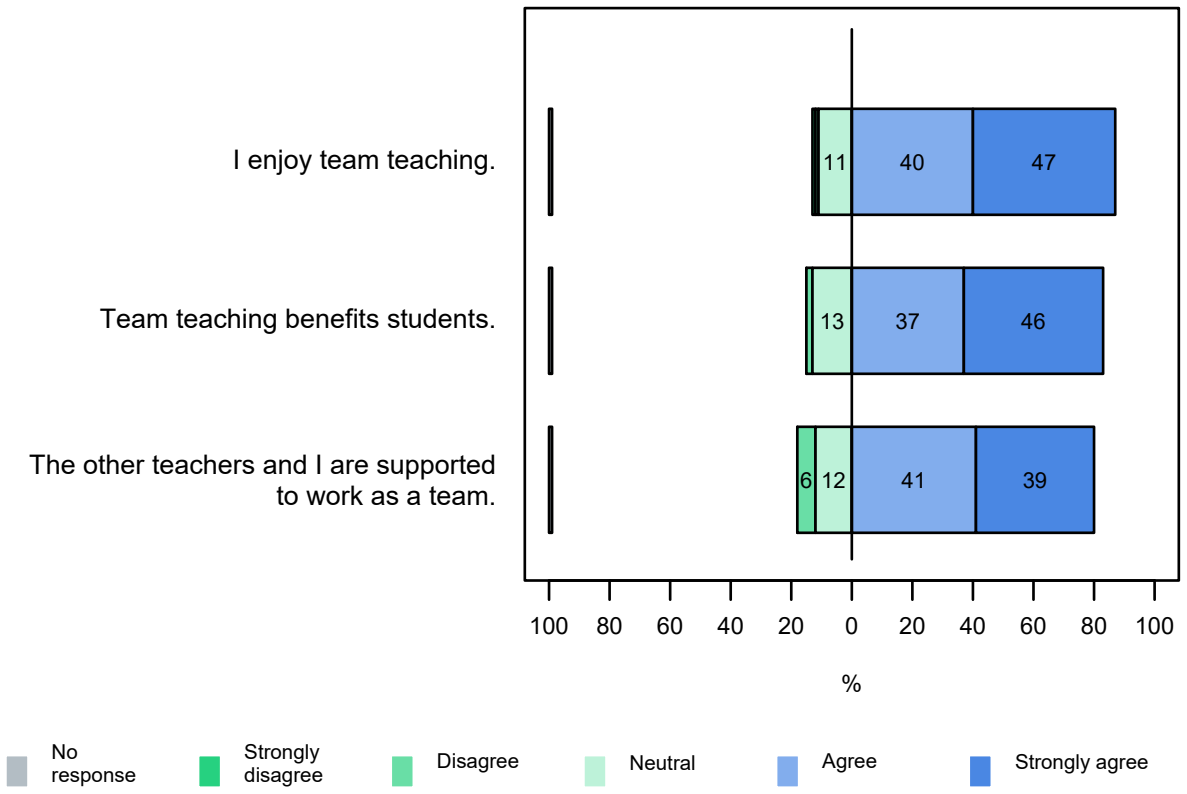
Team teaching is becoming a feature of primary schools: 26% of the teachers responding said they taught in a team all the time, and 28% did so sometimes. Teachers in decile 7–10 schools were most likely to be team teaching all the time: 33% compared with 19% of teachers in decile 1–6 schools. This may be related to property funding which has been on the basis of roll, and priority for modernising or building schools in population growth areas, which have included more high decile schools.

In 2017, we saw in the national picture from the first year of the Teaching, School, and Leadership Practices survey that teachers who team taught were more positive about their school culture, and had more time than others to work together; they were also more confident about the teaching practices asked about.[37]

The 2019 national survey findings also indicate that team teaching has benefits for teachers and, teachers believe, for their students. Teachers who taught in teams were positive about their experiences teaching together, and saw benefits for students, as Figure 55 shows.

37 Wylie, C, McDowall, S., Ferral, H., Felgate, R., & Visser, H. (2017). *Teaching practices, school practices, and principal leadership: The first national picture 2017.* NZCER. https://www.tspsurveys.org.nz/images/TSP_National_Report_2017.pdf

FIGURE 55 **Views of team teaching (*n* = 337)**



More of those who team taught all the time strongly agreed that they enjoyed their job: 59% compared with 41% of those who team taught sometimes, or who did not team teach at all. They were less likely to say they would like more non-contact time for preparation (56% compared with 63% of those who team taught sometimes, and 70% of those who did not team teach).

Those who team taught all the time were twice as likely as those who team taught some of the time to 'strongly agree' that they enjoyed team teaching, that it benefited students, and that they were supported to work as a team. Just over two-thirds of these teachers also worked in modern learning environments.

They also rated their school culture more highly in terms of

- support for taking risks in teaching (52% rated this aspect as 'very good', as did 35% of those team teaching sometimes, and 31% of those who did not team teach)
- sharing of lessons and planning between teachers (53% rated this aspect as 'very good', as did 45% of those team teaching sometimes, and 31% of those who did not team teach)
- sharing of knowledge about individual students (52% rated this aspect as 'very good', as did 44% of those team-teaching sometimes, and 40% of those who did not team teach)
- support for teaching students who need learning support (75% rated this aspect as 'very good' or 'good', as did 62% of those team teaching sometimes, and 59% of those who did not team teach)
- seeing all forms of student diversity as a resource and a strength, not as a difficulty (83% rated this aspect as 'very good' or 'good', as did 70% of those team teaching sometimes, and 66% of those who did not team teach)
- syndicate/faculty meetings are often used for discussing student achievement and strategies to improve it where needed (37% rated this aspect as 'very good', as did 31% of those team teaching sometimes, and 22% of those who did not team teach)

- discussions between colleagues about teaching challenges that have strengthened practice (37% strongly agreed, as did 28% of those team teaching sometimes, and 24% of those who did not team teach)
- Use of reflection and self-review to check what we're doing and keep developing our practice (34% strongly agreed, as did 22% of those team teaching sometimes, and 21% of those who did not team teach).

Useful guidance to make team teaching work well

We asked for comments on what helps or hinders effective team teaching, and 186 teachers gave their experience, providing useful guidance for others considering or moving into team teaching.

What helps team teaching?

Respectful relationships, shared approaches, expectations, and goals, good communication, time to plan and talk together about what is working well or not, fair sharing of the work and resources

The team relationships. More ideas generated so easier to plan work. Teaching to each other's strengths and learning from other teachers.

Teachers within a team need to be "on the same page"—especially in regards to behaviour/work expectations. Students need to be getting the same messages.

Good collaboration and negotiation skills. Able to listen to other teachers' ideas.

Time to collaborate is essential, it builds strong relationships and gives us a chance to share student insights. Comprehensive PD prior to beginning team teaching in a collaborative planning space is essential to success.

Helps having similar teaching philosophies, positive professional relationships, shared beliefs and understandings about learning.

I co-teach with another teacher and both find it helpful when we split our classes into equal groups depending on levels. We have 5–6 groups between us and we plan every week, collectively coming up with different activities and reflecting on what we have taught.

What hinders team teaching?

Hierarchical relationships, a lack of openness, uneven workloads, difference in approaches, poor classroom set-up.

Not having everyone "pull their weight" and leaving others to do the "dirty work" like dealing with difficult students.

Top down model. It should be on even playing field. Control. Lack of trust.

Senior Management Team not supporting transition with effective PLD. Assuming current, single-cell syndicates will transition without thought to teaching partnerships/teams that would work.

Size of classrooms—with many students. No breakout areas. Lack of time to set up classroom activities. New way of teaching. Lack of time to visit successful team teaching classrooms in local areas. Lack of P.D. to upskill teachers to teach in a team.

Time to plan together—we don't get that luxury within the day and have to find time outside the 9–5pm. This is extremely difficult.

Not sharing, being forced into the wrong team, people who are not compatible.

Negative personalities in the team who don't contribute and are passive aggressive.

Positive relationships between teachers are essential. A team of 3 is challenging— especially when one has a different viewpoint and is struggling to handle the workload and the year level. Too many teachers (4+) is too many.

We are in single cell rooms, so students can get lost moving between rooms. We have many students with ASD or behavioural problems, they struggle with loud or differing room environments.

Many are positive about teaching in an innovative learning environment

Twenty-four percent of the primary teachers responding taught in an innovative learning environment[38] all the time, and 14%, sometimes. Decile 9–10 school teachers were most likely to teach all the time in such environments (32%), and decile 5–6 school teachers, least likely (13%).

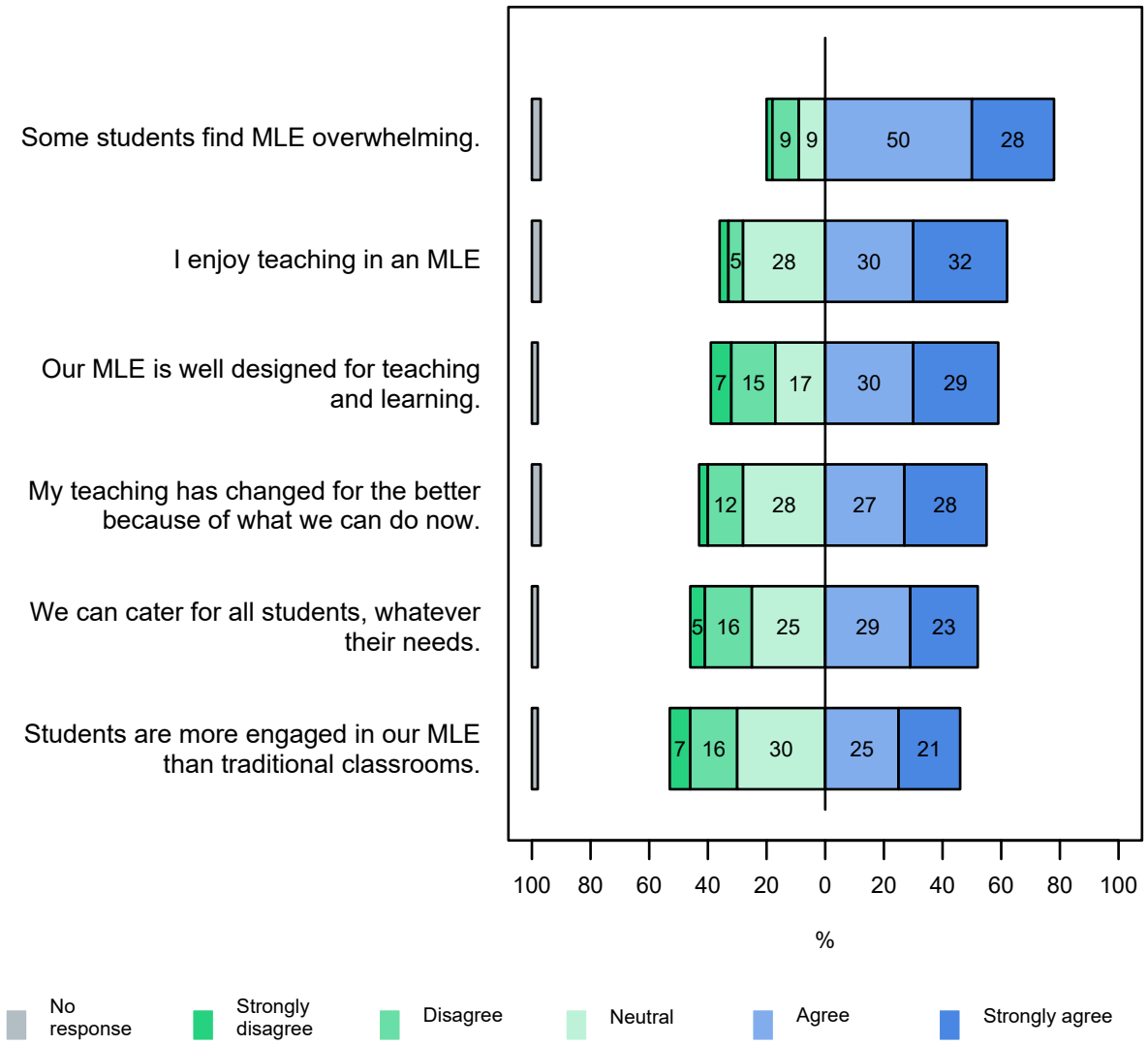
Most views of their and their students' experiences were positive or neutral, perhaps because most were positive (59%) or neutral (17%) about how well designed their innovative learning environment was for teaching and learning.

Sixty-two percent of those who taught in an innovative learning environment enjoyed teaching in such an environment, and 55% thought their teaching had changed for the better.

Just over half thought they could cater for all students, and 45% thought that students were more engaged in the flexible learning environment than traditional classrooms, and 30% were neutral about this. But 78% of the teachers thought that some students find innovative learning environments overwhelming. Figure 56 has the details.

38 Our question asked about teaching in a "modern (innovative/flexible) learning environment". Modern was the term first used in Aotearoa New Zealand education. The current term is "innovative", in line with international reference.

FIGURE 56 **Experiences of Innovative Learning Environments (MLE) (Teachers *n* = 337)**



Not surprisingly, given the overlap between those team teaching and teaching in an innovative learning environment, answers from those teaching in an innovative learning environment were also more positive about some aspects of their school culture, particularly in relation to

- taking risks in teaching
- support for students who need learning support
- seeing all forms of student diversity as a resource and strength, not a difficulty
- having sufficient time to work together to plan teaching and discuss student work
- syndicate/faculty meetings often used for discussing student achievement and strategies to improve it where needed
- good processes for making group discussions and/or solving problems
- collegial discussions about teaching challenges that strengthen practice
- guidance for teachers new to the school into practices found to be effective with the school's students.

Useful guidance on effective teaching in innovative learning environments

We asked for comments on what helps or hinders effective teaching in innovative learning environments. Often comments included both what helps and hinders, indicating the multi-faceted shift involved from single-cell to team teaching in larger spaces, and in students becoming more self-directed. Noise and insufficient space posed challenges to innovative learning working well.

It's not the space/room that determines purposeful and focused learning. It's the quality of the teaching and learning. Relationships between teacher and students. It's a new way to teach so teachers need to upskill, have PD.

Helps: flexible groupings, teaching to strengths, time to talk, learning space culture, changes of pedagogy, open mindset. Hinders: Fixed mindset, doing the same thing, grouping children due to behaviour.

Too many opportunities for distraction, too noisy, poor listening environments. Easier for students to be off task. Quality of work goes down when students lie on the floor.

Some students find doing their own thing hard to comprehend if told what to do 24/7. Many students become self-regulated learners very quickly. Some students don't become self-regulated learners quickly. Changes from one class organization to next means students need to learn to change—can be good or not!

Noise level. Easily distracted students. Establish clear values. Ensure students are involved in establishing rules and values/ways of working together.

MLEs in old schools (ours) can be loud, lacking in breakout space and feel overcrowded, (but) the mix of teachers allows more choice for our children when it comes to asking for support.

Our special needs especially autistic behaviour problems struggle to cope in our MLE. Too noisy, not structured enough, not monitored closely enough.

Noise can be an issue for students with anxiety issues but you can set up different spaces and ways for students to work.

Equally some students find traditional spaces overwhelming. It depends on teacher dynamics/confrontational styles/ adaptions etc. Flexible learning environments where we can open/shut/change are preferred.

Not all our classrooms are MLE so students are having to adjust year to year. Students seem more settled moving from one MLE to the next.

Working in a MLE that has been made by knocking out the wall between two prefab classrooms hasn't made any improvement to the acoustics. When you have 56 students in one space it can be very noisy if it hadn't had any sound proofing done. When getting students to pack up and move to next activity it takes a lot longer. Children who find big groups hard or lots of noise (these are just some things) can get easily overwhelmed or distracted.

Our MLE works as single cell classes with a variety of MLE furniture and open doors between classes. It doesn't work as an effective MLE because there is barely any cross grouping etc.

Teachers attitudes to being in a team—still think as individuals. The space is not purpose built. Sharing of knowledge and expertise is great.

The students have more teachers that know them and to relate to if a staff member is not present. Shared planning and problem solving in teaching grows your practice.

Personal development on team work helps. Trust between team members and leaders and their teams. Good communication and setting expectations. Being open and visible, being able to use your strengths and talk about your weaknesses. Feeling valued is key.

Summary

Teachers who team teach all the time were mostly positive about their experiences, and were in schools that had stronger professional collaborative communities than teachers who team taught sometimes, or not at all. They identified the value of sufficient time to plan, reflect, and share, of being able to use different strengths in the team, of being consistent in their practice, and the importance of preparatory development in how to work well as a collaborative team. The model did not work so well if the teams were not well constructed, workloads were uneven, teachers had different approaches, and the space was too small.

Just over two-thirds of those who team taught all the time were in innovative learning environments. There is a similar picture here about the benefits of working in these environments, and the support that is needed to make them work well. Well-designed space came to the fore, as did the importance of mitigating noise.

While most teachers thought that some students found innovative learning environments overwhelming, most also thought or were neutral about whether students were more engaged in this environment.

12. Kāhui Ako

Kāhui Ako, or Communities of Learning, were announced in early 2014 as part of the Investing in Educational Success "system change". Kāhui Ako were to focus on the educational pathway of students, by bringing together primary and secondary schools in an area to ensure the coherence of learning and support through individuals' schooling pathway. Our 2016 report describes the genesis and development of Kāhui Ako, including the tensions around the model, with most of the funding going into individual salaries for those taking Kāhui Ako roles.[39]

More support was provided for Kāhui Ako from 2017, with the Ministry of Education funding Expert Partners to work with Kāhui Ako as they developed their (mandatory) achievement challenges and plans, and provided online tools and resources.[40] Early childhood education services were included in Kāhui Ako where feasible, though no additional funding was available. The scope of achievement challenges was widened to include focuses that schools wanted to work on, such as student wellbeing and student agency. By 2019, the majority of schools were in a Kāhui Ako.

The Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce recommended in its final report that Kāhui Ako continue with more flexibility, and that other cluster models also be supported.[41]

The initial phase of Kāhui Ako was accompanied by evaluation through case studies and surveys. However, there has been little ongoing evaluation of their progress. This makes the survey responses here particularly useful.

Principals see some positive impact from Kāhui Ako participation

Most principals reported that their school belonged to a Kāhui Ako—74%. Of this group, half of the principals met regularly as part of their Kāhui Ako principals/stewardship group, and the other half met as a principals' group, as needed. Thirteen percent led their Kāhui Ako. Ten percent said they had no formal role.

Gains from Kāhui Ako involvement were clearest in relation to principals' mutual support, greater shared understanding of student needs in the community, shared professional development improving teaching in schools, and changing some practices. Principals' positive reports were more at the 'agree' level than 'strongly agree', suggesting gradual rather than dramatic changes. Figure 57 has the details.

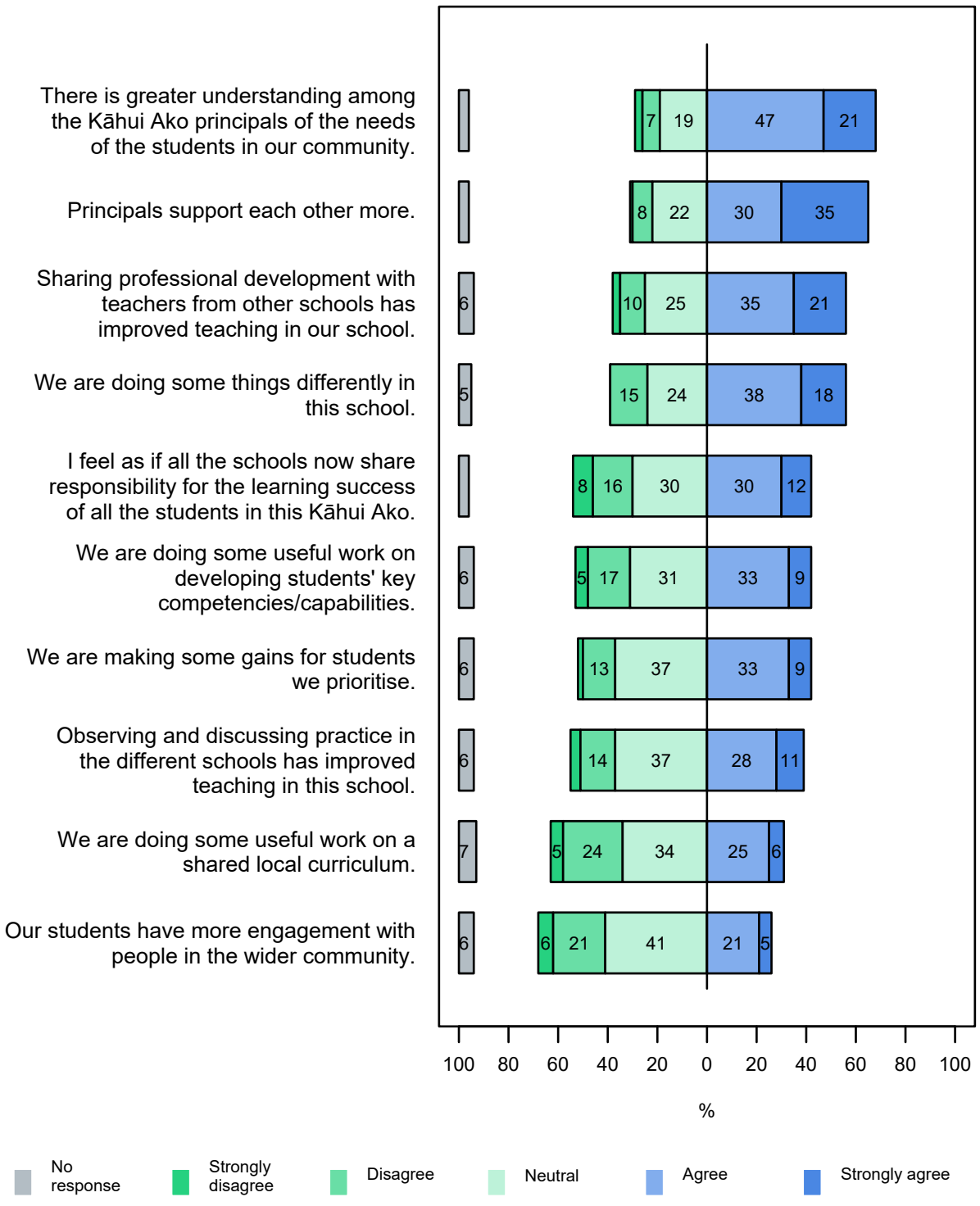
Not all principals see gains, with around 30% not seeing any useful work around a shared local curriculum (which would also suggest work on what a pathway through schooling looks like), and slightly less not seeing any more engagement of their students in the wider community. Other items had between 10% and 20% of the principals not seeing positive impacts.

39 Wylie, C. (2016). Communities of Learning/Kāhui Ako: the emergent stage. NZCER. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/NZCER%20COL%20Report%20final.pdf

40 See https://www.education.govt.nz/communities-of-learning/

41 Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (2019). *Our Schooling Futures: stronger together. Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātinitini. Final report.* Ministry of Education. See pp. 41, 49.

FIGURE 57 **Results of Kāhui Ako involvement (Principals *n* = 107)**



More sharing and discussing of student data across schools belonging to Kāhui Ako

We compared the responses of principals of schools belonging to a Kāhui Ako with those who did not in relation to their interactions with other schools (reported in full in Section 16).

Principals of the schools in Kāhui Ako reported more sharing of

- PLD with other schools (86% compared with 53% of other schools)
- student information if they shift to another school (87% compared with 69% of other schools)

They also reported more sharing and discussing of each school's

- student achievement data (52% compared with 14% of other schools)
- student wellbeing data (39% compared with 6% of other schools)
- learning support data (33% compared with 14% of other schools).

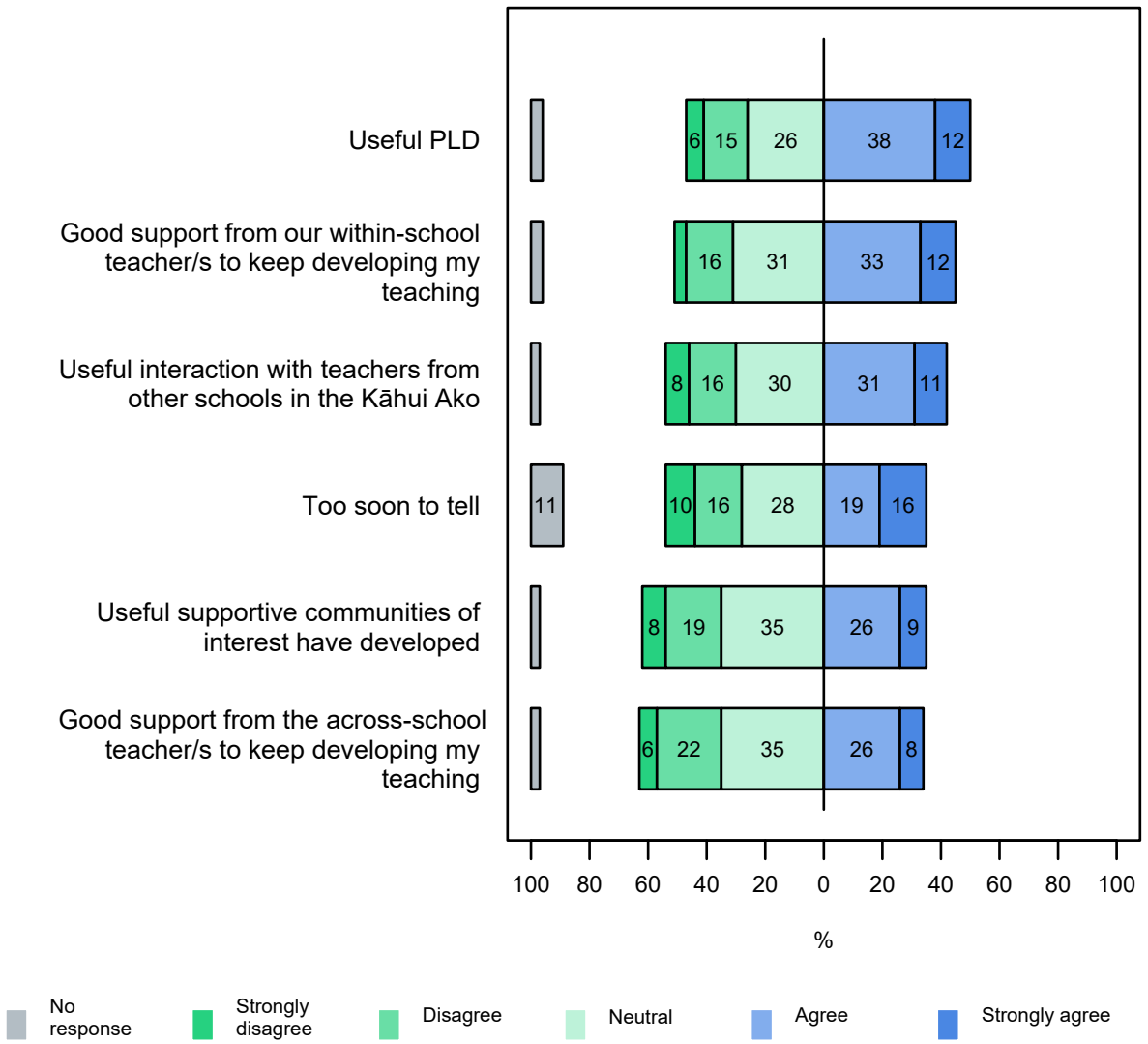
There were also more discussions with iwi about how best to provide for Māori students (41% compared with 22% of other schools).

Teachers' experiences of Kāhui Ako range widely

Just over half (52%) of the teachers who responded to the survey were at schools that are part of Kāhui Ako. Interestingly, another 20% were not sure if their school was part of one, indicating that either their school is not actively participating (it may not have a within-school Kāhui Ako role), or that any Kāhui Ako initiated or linked activity is not clearly flagged as such.

We asked the teachers who said their school belonged to a Kāhui Ako about some of the intended benefits. Figure 58 shows a range of experiences, with positive views more frequent than negative views, and around a third neutral. Positive experiences were most evident in relation to useful PLD, good support from the Kāhui Ako within-school teachers, and useful interaction with teachers from other schools.

FIGURE 58 **Experiences of Kāhui Ako (Teachers, *n* = 320)**

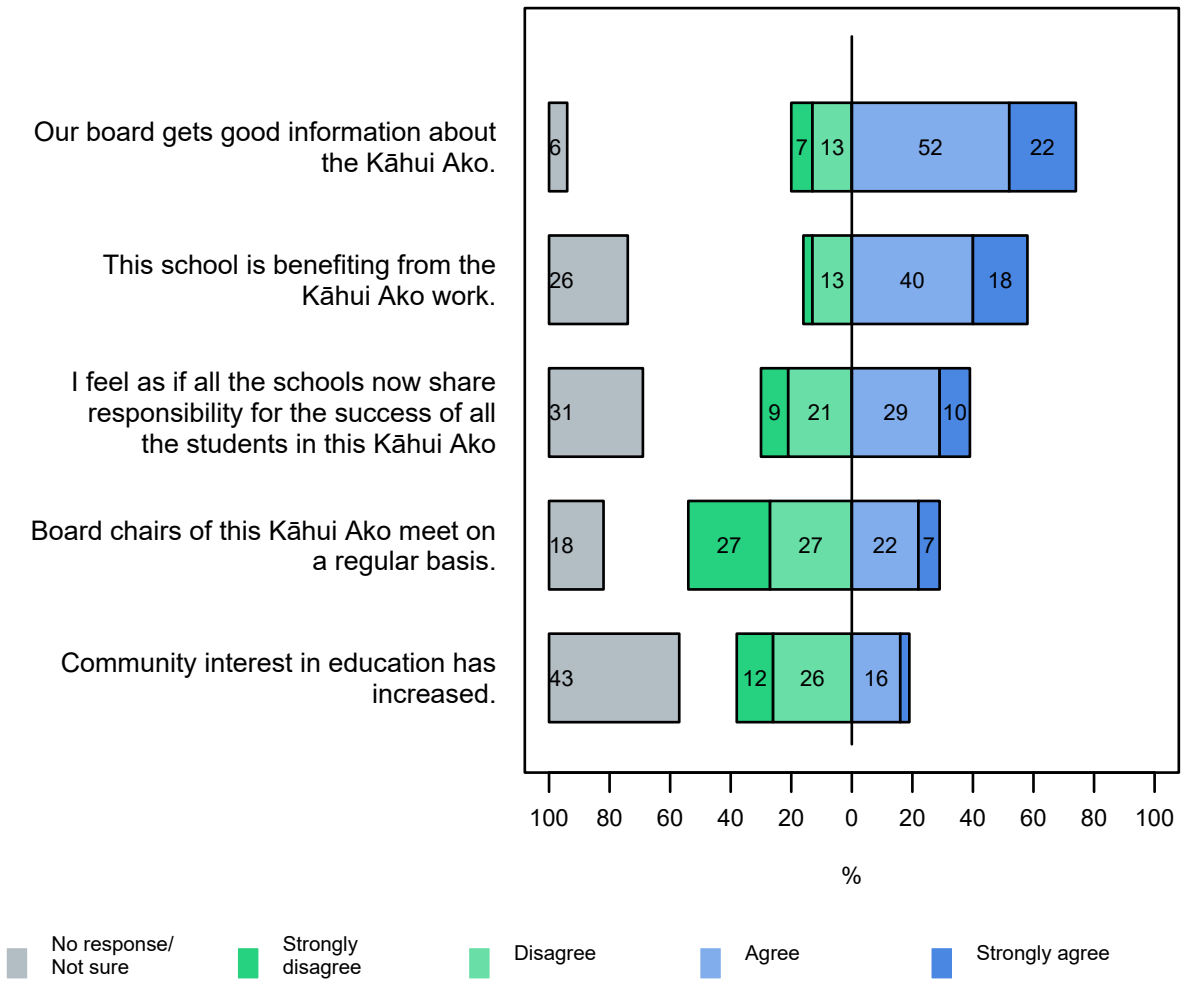


Trustees feel they have good information about their Kāhui Ako and see some benefits

Many trustees responding were in a school that belongs to a Kāhui Ako (71%). Eighteen percent of trustees were not, and 10% were not sure if their school was part of a Kāhui Ako.

Figure 59 shows that most trustees from a school in a Kāhui Ako thought their board got good information about it (22% strongly agreed and 52% agreed), and over half that their school was benefiting from the Kāhui Ako work (18% strongly agreed and 40% agreed). Views were more mixed about whether schools were now sharing responsibility for student success, and community interest in education had increased. Less than a third of the trustees thought that board chairs of schools in their Kāhui Ako met on a regular basis.

FIGURE 59 **Trustees' views of their Kāhui Ako (*n* = 90)**



Summary

The Kāhui Ako model has been a significant shift for schools, and not one that could happen quickly. Most Kāhui Ako took several years to gel and identify what they could best do together, with the roles and funding they had.

These late 2019 responses show that principals were largely positive about their own and their school's participation in their Kāhui Ako, seeing gains for their own school rather more than for some of the ambitions of the policy to develop shared local curriculum and new connections with their community. However, Kāhui Ako schools did share much more than do other schools in relation to student learning.

Teachers had more varied responses, but half had had useful PLD through their Kāhui Ako, and slightly less report good support from their across-school teacher, and useful interaction with other schools' teachers. Trustees' views also varied, but tended to the positive, particularly seeing benefits for their school.

Overall, Kāhui Ako participation is showing some positive movement. The 2019 aggregate Teaching, School and Principal Leadership Practices survey also showed somewhat higher ratings for Kāhui Ako participants.[42] This national survey picture also raises questions about evident differences in Kāhui Ako experiences that call for further work on how we can make the most of the Kāhui Ako model, and build on that to ensure the success of collaborative work between schools.

42 Wylie, C. & Hodgen, E. (2020). *Teaching, School, and Principal Leadership Practices Survey 2019.* NZCER. https://www.tspsurveys.org.nz/images/TSP_National_Report_2019.pdf

13. Teachers' work, morale, and changes they would make

A national spotlight shone on teachers' work in 2019, with unprecedented strikes in support of salary increases as well as teachers wanting high workloads addressed. Our national survey went out several months after negotiations had yielded pay increases and an Accord between the Ministry of Education and teacher unions was registered to make progress on workload, wellbeing, and change management issues.[43]

As in previous rounds, the national survey contained questions about teachers' experience and roles, their job satisfaction, workload and morale, changes they would like to their work, and plans for the future. Teachers also made general comments about their work.

We had responses from 27% of the teachers (*n* = 620), from 181 of the 350 schools in the national sample. We sent each school in our sample sufficient surveys for a sample of teachers based on student numbers. The margin of error is around 3.9%.[44] The median response rate in the schools that took part was 50%. Teachers' responses are somewhat under-representative of decile 1–2 schools, full primary schools, and smaller schools. They are somewhat over-representative of decile 7–10 schools.

Eighty-six percent of the teachers responding were women, and 12% men; the remainder did not give their gender. Most teachers identified their ethnicity as NZ European / Pākehā (81%), 10% as Māori, 2% gave a Pacific culture, and 1% an Asian culture; 11% gave other identifications such as their country of origin.

Many teachers are long-serving in the profession, and have roles beyond the classroom

Table 8 shows the range of teachers' length of experience in teaching, and Table 9 shows how long teachers have taught at their current school. Half the teachers who completed the 2019 national survey had been teaching for more than 15 years, but only 12% had stayed in their current school for more than 15 years.

43 https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/News/Bargaining/Accord.pdf
44 This is an approximation since we asked schools to distribute the surveys randomly, with guidance, but cannot guarantee that the distribution was random.

TABLE 8 **Teachers' length of experience teaching**

Years teaching	2019 (*n* = 620) %
First year	6
Second year	5
3–5 years	13
6–10 years	12
11–15 years	15
More than 15 years	50

TABLE 9 **Teachers' length of experience at current school**

Years at their current school	2019 (*n* = 620) %
First year	16
Second year	15
3–5 years	28
6–10 years	16
11–15 years	13
More than 15 years	12

Eighty-three percent of the teachers were in permanent positions, and 17% were in fixed-term positions. Just over half the teachers in their first year of teaching were in fixed-term positions (59%). Most of the teachers (88%) were in full-time positions.

The majority (86%) were classroom teachers. Two-thirds of the classroom teachers also had roles beyond the classroom. Thirty percent held formal leadership roles (deputy principal, assistant principal, curriculum/syndicate leader for English/Literacy or Maths). Thirty-two percent received a management unit.

Roles that teachers undertook included:

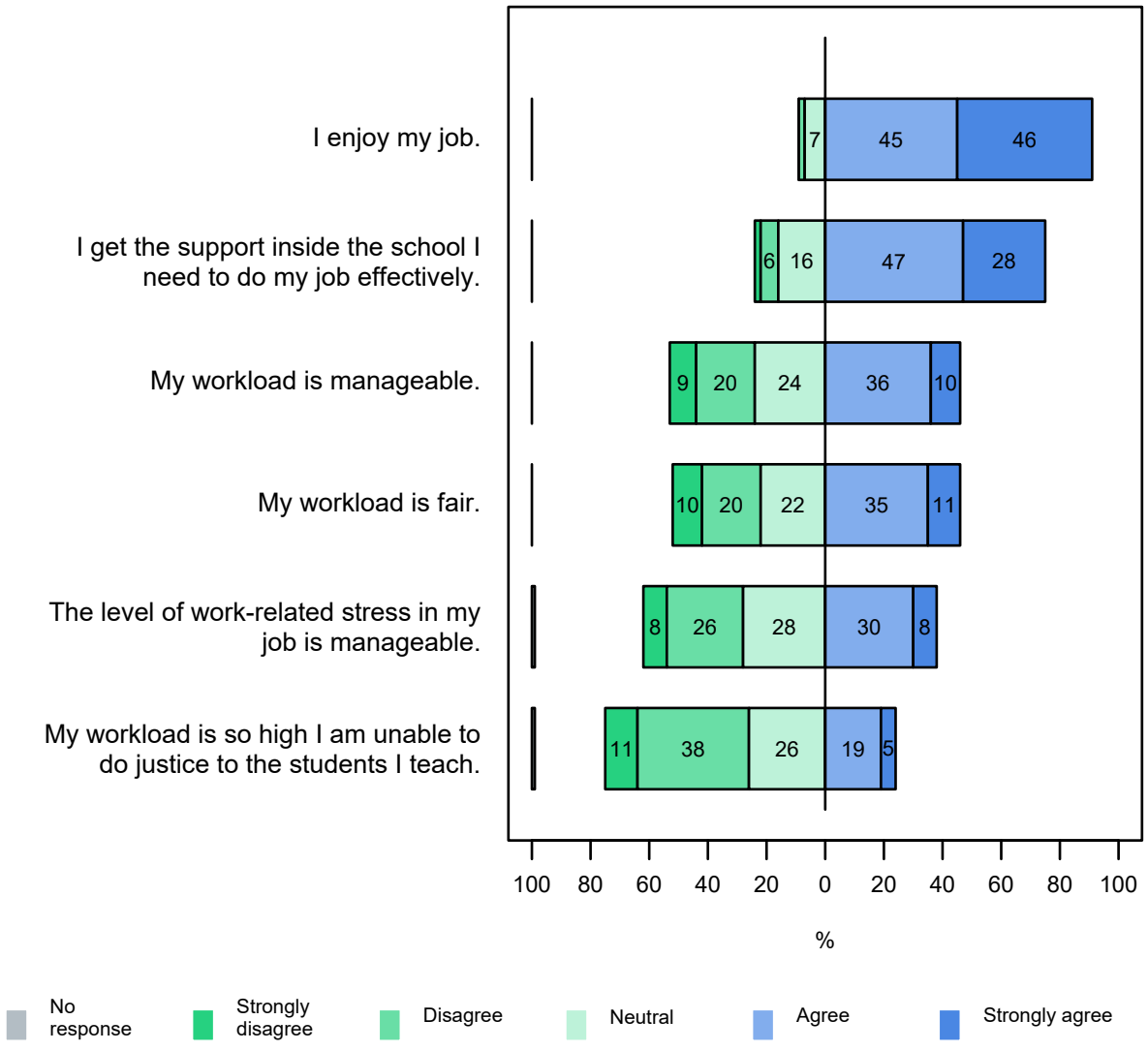
- classroom teacher (86%)
- senior teacher / syndicate leader (19%)
- associate teacher for student teachers on practicum (14%)
- mentor/tutor teacher (12%)
- subject specialist (11%)
- staff rep on the school board (8%)
- curriculum/syndicate leader—English/Literacy (7%)
- curriculum/syndicate leader—Maths (6%)
- Kāhui Ako within-school teacher (6%)
- special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) (6%)
- assistant principal (5%)
- Kāhui Ako across-schools teacher (2%).

Surveys were completed by somewhat greater proportions of teachers with a home class in the Year 1 to Year 6 range (18% to 25% each) than those with a home class of New Entrants / Year 0 (14%) and Year 7 and 8 students (2% each). A small proportion (8%) of teachers had no home class.

Teachers have high job enjoyment but issues with workload

Job enjoyment continued to be high among primary teachers (see Figure 60). There was less agreement that they get the support inside the school that they need to do their job effectively, and less than half thought their workload was fair or manageable, or that they could manage the level of work-related stress in their job. A quarter thought their workload was so high that they could not do justice to the students they taught. This is a very similar picture to 2016 and 2013.

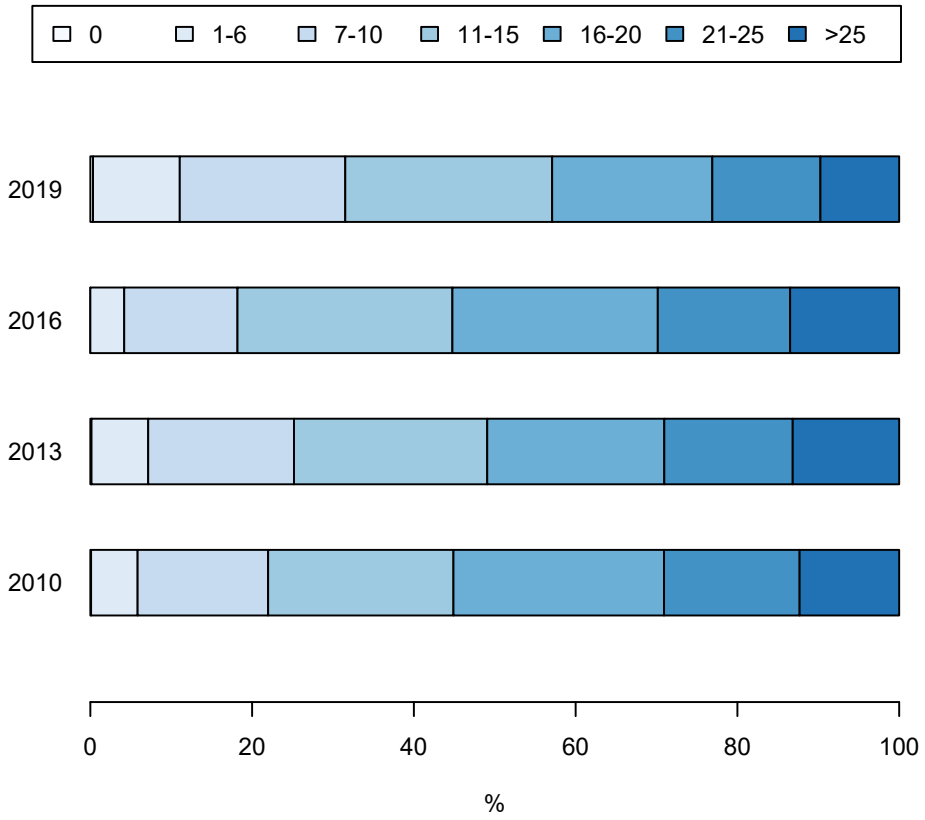
FIGURE 60 **Teachers' job satisfaction, workload and in-school support (*n* = 620)**



Just over two-thirds said their morale as a teacher was 'good' (46%) or 'very good' (22%). Morale was satisfactory for 23%. Nine percent reported 'poor' or 'very poor' morale. This is much the same as in 2016 and 2013.

Almost all teachers work beyond their timetabled hours, with almost half working another 15 hours a week or more. In 2019, more teachers reported that they worked an additional 10 or fewer hours a week than in 2016 (31%, compared with 18% in 2016, and comparable to 27% in 2013). Somewhat fewer reported working more than 20 hours more than their timetabled hours (23%, compared with 30% in 2016, and 29% in 2013)—see Figure 61.

FIGURE 61 **Hours per week teachers reported spending on their work, outside timetabled hours; 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019**



Most teachers want a better balance in their work and more support

Table 10 shows the desired changes in their work that teachers chose from the items we have included for some time in the national survey, and patterns over time.

In 2019, around two-thirds wanted to reduce administration/paperwork, have more support staff, reduce class size, have more non-contact time, and more time to work with individual students. Interest in having more support staff, more non-contact time, and reducing class size has increased since 2013.

The proportion of teachers who want more support with adapting *NZC* for students with additional learning needs has increased over time from 12% in 2013, to 19% in 2016, to 35% in 2019. There was also more interest in having better access generally to useful curriculum resources and external curriculum advice, and a slight increase in interest in reducing curriculum coverage or size.

Increasing attention to the value of working with parents and whānau as partners in children's learning is evident—31% of teachers now identify more time to work with parents and whānau as a desired change in their work, increasing from 16% in 2013.

Teachers also showed more interest in having more support to learn effective ways of managing behaviour—19% identified this as a change they would like, increasing from 11% in 2016 and 2013.

The 2019 collective contract negotiations and associated industrial action saw increases in teacher pay. Better pay was still identified by 49% in the national survey, which went out after the negotiations had concluded, but this was lower than in 2016.

TABLE 10 **What primary and intermediate teachers would change about their work—2013, 2016, and 2019**

Change desired	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %	2019 (*n* = 620) %
Reduce administration/paperwork	74	71	66
More support staff	50	59	64
Reduce class size	52	59	64
More noncontact time for preparation, etc.	58	62	64
More time to work with individual students	60	56	63
More time to reflect/plan/share ideas	55	54	54
More time to design relevant local learning activities	48	46	50
Better pay	54	59	49
More noncontact time to work with other teachers	44	50	49
Reduce assessment workload	43	46	44
More classroom resources	40	36	43
Reduce the number of initiatives at any one time	46	44	43
More support for me to adapt *NZC* for students with additional learning needs	12	19	35
More time to work with parents and whānau	16	21	31
Reduce curriculum coverage/size	23	25	30
More sharing of knowledge/ideas with teachers from other schools	39	31	29
Better access to useful curriculum resources	22	19	27
Reduce pace of change	27	23	26
More advice available when assessment results show gaps in student learning	25	20	23
More appreciation of my work by school leaders	23	21	22
More support for me to learn effective ways of managing behaviour	11	11	19
Better access to external curriculum advice	16	11	18

Ten percent of teachers indicated there were other things they would change about their work. Changes they would like include more support generally for students' learning, wellbeing, and behaviour needs.

Interest in reducing their assessment workload was greatest among decile 1–2 school teachers (61%). Wanting more classroom resources was also linked to school decile, increasing from 35% of decile 9–10 school teachers to 54% of decile 1–2 school teachers.

Rewarding but over-demanding: Insight from teachers' comments about their work

Almost a third of the teachers (*n* = 172) gave us comments about their work as a teacher. Enjoyment of teaching and commitment to children's learning was most voiced—alongside an equal number of comments about having too great and broad a workload, the stress of this, and the difficulty of achieving a work–life balance. Quite often these two feelings were voiced together.

Other themes in the comments included: challenges around meeting all students' needs; feeling that teaching was not valued as a profession; and insufficient input into, and support for, curriculum and policy changes.

The focus of the comments was similar to 2016.

Some illustrations:

> *I really do enjoy teaching. I love the magic of the children. BUT the paperwork and crammed curriculum have taken away the opportunities to explore and experiment. School trips are very few because of the paperwork and restrictions.*
>
> *It's a fun job but it doesn't have the respect in the community that it once did. So many social issues impact our tamariki and a teacher needs general life skills to be a social worker, counsellor, dietician, health worker, first aider. It's rewarding and draining every day.*
>
> *I love my job but work 4 days a week so that I have 1 day at home for all the admin and planning. It doesn't seem too fair to only get paid for 4 days but work 5. I do it for my own mental well-being*
>
> *I love being in the classroom teaching my students, but the downsides of too much paperwork/assessment and dealing with parents who think I have only 1 child in my class of 29 gets overwhelming.*
>
> *I love working with children but I don't enjoy the expectations and workload. Too much is put on teachers to be everything for students. I have a young family and I feel stressed and grumpy when I get home. This is not fair to my family!*
>
> *Teaching, learning and working with children is fun yet challenging. The biggest issue at present is the level of anxiety many kids face at school. We need to address learning expectations so that the children are challenged but not overwhelmed.*
>
> *I wish I had the time/resources/support to help the children who really need it*
>
> *It is undervalued by society and the government. It's poorly resourced, especially for children with high learning needs, special or behavioural needs. I feel that I regularly fail children not because of my teaching ability but because I have too many children with too many complex needs in my class and no people to help. Children are missing out year after year.*
>
> *I would like to see a huge increase in support for students with needs. Real in-class support, not more advisory roles. Waiting lists for health diagnosis reduced (currently we are waiting 18 months for a diagnosis). Ways to identify and support needs for students coming from pre-school to school. Most of my workload is adapting programs for kids with needs and then trying to cater for several high needs students at the same time as teaching the rest of the class.*
>
> *I am a passionate progressive teacher who works collaboratively with colleagues to ensure our tamariki get the best education possible. The learning difficulties/behavioral difficulties that are becoming more and more common today, require us to adjust, reflect and dig deeper for strategies that are relevant, sustaining and appropriate for this century.*

The culture of each school can be so different from each other and a teacher has no way of knowing until they are part of the staff, what it will be like for them as a teacher there. Not all things can be addressed, so it's vital that the school you are in fits with your philosophy of teaching.

Teachers' career plans remain stable, with more teachers seeing they can progress their career within their school

Teachers were asked to indicate their career plans for the next 5 years (see Table 11). Overall, the picture is much the same as in 2016, with some reduction in the proportion intending to take on a leadership role with management units, or apply for a study award, sabbatical, or fellowship. Forty percent of teachers planned to continue as they were in 2019.

TABLE 11 **Teachers' career plans for the next 5 years—2013, 2016, and 2019**[45]

What teachers plan to do	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %	2019 (*n* = 620)
Continue as I am now	35	38	40
Build my leadership skills	*	*	23
Change schools	19	15	17
Take on a leadership role with management units	28	24	16
Increase level of responsibility within teaching (e.g., Kāhui Ako role, curriculum leader role)+	*	*	14
Begin or complete a postgrad qualification	17	14	12
Apply for a study award/sabbatical/fellowship	18	17	12
Take on a middle management role+	*	*	12
Change careers within education	11	10	11
Retire	10	9	11
Take on a senior management role+	*	*	10
Retrain/change to a career outside education	8	9	10
Leave teaching for personal reasons (e.g., travel, family)	9	10	9
Not sure	6	7	9
Get a permanent position	8	10	9
Other	3	4	9
Get a part-time position	5	6	6
Get a full-time position	3	4	3

* Not asked.
\+ In 2016, 24% of teachers indicated they planned to 'increase their level of responsibility'. In 2019, this was split into three separate items to give more specific information about what teachers intended to do.

45 Teachers could give multiple responses here.

In another question, 58% of the teachers thought that they could progress their career within their current school, an increase from the 43% who thought this in 2016. We asked this year about career progression beyond the school, and 66% thought that was available.

Eleven percent of teachers responding expressed interest in becoming a principal in the future, with a further 19% unsure about this. Sixty-eight percent had no interest in becoming a principal. This was much the same as in 2016.

Summary

Comparison of 2019 teacher responses with those from 2013 and 2016 show that workload issues for teachers are far from new. Enjoyment of the work remains high, but it is undercut by increasing expectations that are often not matched by resourcing, support, or time.

A real test of the changes arising from Ministry–union Accord and the Government's work programme following the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce recommendations that addressed key aspects of teacher support and how schools work will be whether we see changes in this national survey picture of teachers' experiences.

14. Principal careers, wellbeing, and support

Principals are key to the strength of their school and its students' learning. They are key to developing the leadership a school needs at all levels. The importance of leadership in our schools is underlined by the Leadership Strategy for the teaching profession of Aotearoa New Zealand, launched by the then Education Council in 2018, and the recommendations made to bolster school leadership and its support by the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce, which have been taken into the Government work programme.[46]

The national survey has provided an ongoing picture of principal careers, workload, morale and wellbeing, and the support they have for their role for many years.

In 2019, 145 principals of the 350 schools in our sample took part in the primary national survey, a 41% response rate. They provide a largely representative response in terms of their school characteristics. We analysed responses in relation to school decile, but, with two exceptions, found no relationships—what we report here is common for principals across different deciles. The margin of error for the figures reported here is 8.1%.

Sixty-six percent of the principals taking part in the 2019 national survey were female, and 34% male. Eighty-six percent identified as NZ European / Pākehā; 12% identified as Māori, 1% each as Samoan, Cook Island Māori, Niuean, Chinese or Indian, and 4% as Other.

We start this section looking at principal careers: their pathway, years of experience overall and in their current school, and career plans. Then we turn to principals' workload and wellbeing. We end this chapter by looking at support principals have for their role.

46 The Leadership Strategy, including the Educational Leadership Capability Framework, can be found at https://teachingcouncil.nz/content/leadership-strategy. The Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce's final report section *Supporting school leadership can be found at* https://conversation-space.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/Tomorrows+Schools+FINAL+Report_WEB.pdf, pp. 32–37.

Most, but not all, have school leadership experience before they become principals

Fifty-eight percent of the principals responding had been deputy principals before they first became a principal, much the same as the 60% in 2016, and not significantly different from the 51% in 2013 and 54% in the 2010 national surveys. Some came from an assistant principal role (11%), some from being a Scale A teacher with management units, which are given for some school-wide responsibility (6%), or being a syndicate leader (6%). The most recent role for 13% had been a Scale A teacher without receiving a management unit. This is much the same as the 11% in 2016, and not significantly different from 2013 or 2010, when 19% first started in the role without a management unit.

Most principals' experience in education had only been in schools (83%). Others have (also) worked as college of education or university lecturers (6%), consultants (5%), and PLD providers (3%). Just two principals had come from a Ministry of Education regional or local office, and one from being an ERO reviewer.

Only half the principals felt well prepared for their first principalship

Only half of the principals thought they were well prepared for their first principalship: 13% thought they were very well prepared, and 37%, well prepared. Thirty-two percent thought they were not well prepared, and 17%, not at all well prepared.

Fewer principals have spent more than 15 years in the role

There was a wide range of length of experience in the principal role (see Table 12).

TABLE 12 **Years as principal 2010–2019**

Years as principal	2010 (*n* = 210) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Under 3 years	19	12	18	20
3–5 years	22	18	12	20
6–10 years	16	18	21	19
11–15 years	11	19	19	14
16+ years	33	31	31	26

Forty-four percent had been principal at their current school for under 3 years; at the other end of the spectrum, 12% had been at their school for more than 15 years.

TABLE 13 **Principals' years leading their current school**

Number of years	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Less than 1 year	15
1–3 years	29
4–5 years	15
6–10 years	19
11–15 years	10
15+ years	12

Most principals have led only one or two schools

There has been an increase since 2010 and 2013 in the proportion of principals who have led only one or two schools, from 67% in 2010 to 77% in 2019. Just under a fifth have experience of leading four to five schools.

TABLE 14 **Number of schools that principals have led 2010–2019**

Number of schools	2010 (*n* = 210) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
1	41	44	50	49
2	26	22	25	28
3	13	13	14	6
4	7	10	6	9
5+	11	7	5	8

High principal turnover is evident in 14% of schools

Most schools have had just one or two principals in the last 10 years, indicating a desirable stability. High levels of principal turnover (four or more principals in 10 years) occurred in 14% of the schools, a figure that has not improved since 2010, as Table 15 shows.

TABLE 15 **Principal turnover 2010–2019**

Number of principals at school over 10 years	2010 (*n* = 210) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
1	22	33	32	27
2	45	43	39	44
3	21	12	17	15
4	5	6	5	6
5+	6	5	7	8

Most principals want to remain as principals, but there is increased interest in other roles in education

Where do principals see themselves in the next 5 years? Many principals gave more than one answer here, indicating openness to opportunities as they arose.

On the whole the picture is much the same as it has been since 2010, with the exception of a much greater interest in changing to a different role in education. There was less thought in 2019 of taking on a Kāhui Ako leadership role than in 2016.

Where principals see themselves in the next 5 years:

- continuing as principal of their current school: 55%
- applying for sabbatical or study award: 33%
- leading another school: 33%
- retiring: 23% (8 percent of the principals responding were aged 65 or more, and 20% were aged 60–64)[47]
- taking a Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako leadership role: 7%, down from 12% in 2016
- taking on a different role in education: 17%, up from 8% in 2016.
- retraining or changing to a different career: 8%
- returning to classroom teaching: 5%
- 15% were unsure, much the same as in 2016, and up from 5% in 2013.

Figure 62 shows that 58% of the principals responding would like more career options beyond the principal role, not significantly different from 50% in 2016, and 36% sometimes feel stuck in the role because there are no further local educational career options for them, up from 26% in 2016.

As noted in the previous section, we asked teachers if they were interested in becoming a principal: 11% were, with a further 19% unsure. This is much the same as in 2016.

47 A third of the principals responding were aged 40–49, and another third, aged 50–59. Four percent were younger than 40.

Principals continue to work long hours

Few principals can carry out their role in 50 hours a week or fewer, with the proportion who could do so halving since 2013. Around two-thirds of principals worked 56 or more hours a week in 2019, much the same since 2013. There has been a slight but not statistically significant increase in the proportion putting in 66 hours a week or more—from 17% in 2010, to 22% in 2019.

TABLE 16 **Principals' work hours per week[48] 2010–2019**

Hours per week	2010 (*n* = 207) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
41–50	12	14	9	7
51–55	22	24	23	22
56–60	33	29	30	33
61–65	14	12	15	14
66–70	12	13	13	15
71–80	4	4	5	6
81+	1	1	3	1

Principals are optimistic and enjoy their jobs, but few think their workload is sustainable

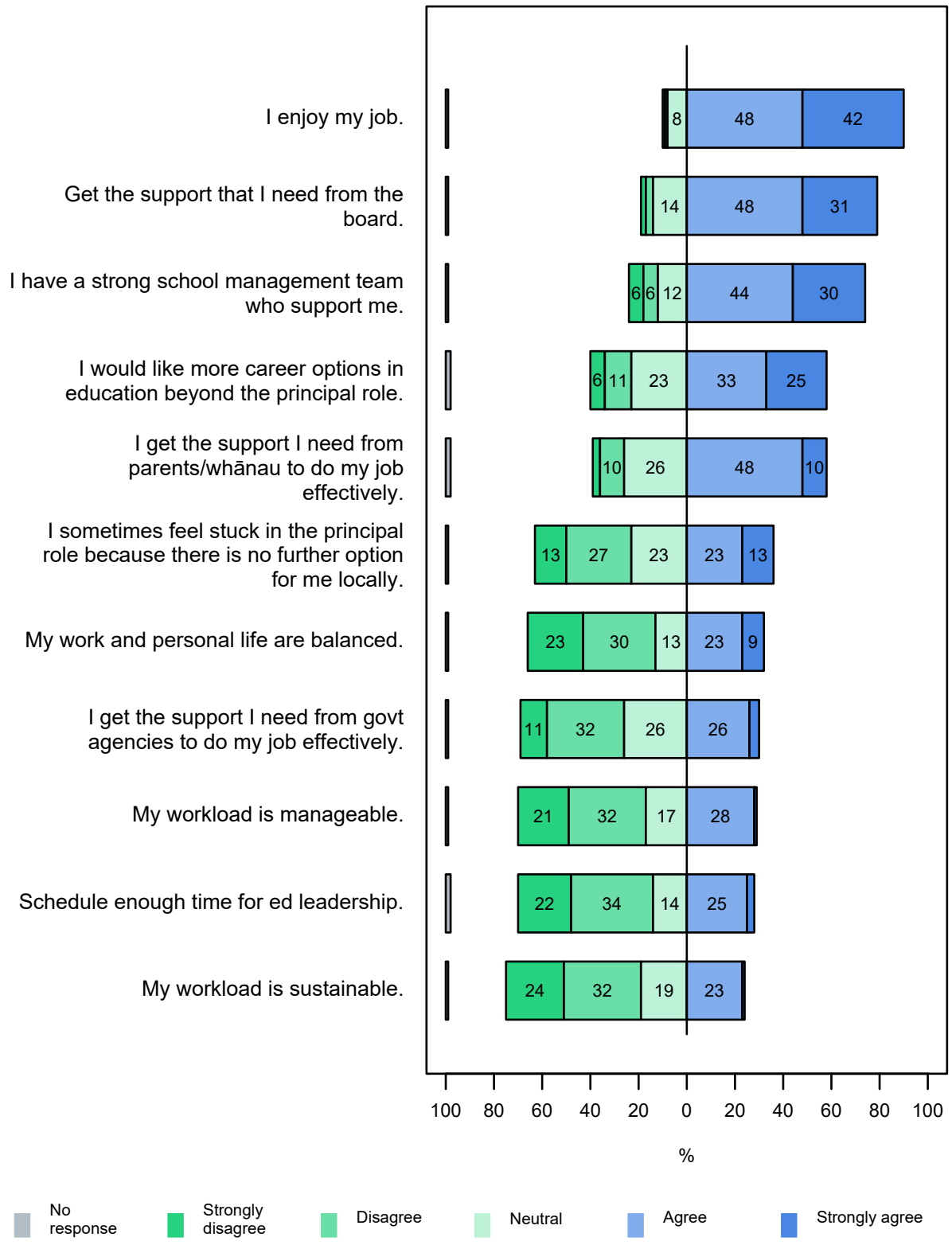
Principals' optimism tends to be high: 12% said that they were always optimistic, and 59% said they were mostly optimistic about their life and role as a school principal over the past week. Twenty-seven percent were occasionally optimistic, and 1%, never. The 71% who were always or mostly optimistic in 2019 is much the same as the 65% who reported this in 2016, and the 73% in 2013, but lower than the 79% in 2010.

Ninety percent of principals enjoyed their jobs. However, only 29% thought their workload was manageable, 23% that the workload was sustainable, and 28% that they could schedule enough time for the educational leadership part of their job. These proportions are somewhat lower than in 2016, and much lower than in 2013 or 2010. In 2019, 42% strongly agreed that they enjoyed their job, not significantly different from the 48% in 2016. Only a third felt that their work and personal life were balanced, a decrease from 44% in 2016.

Figure 62 also shows that most principals felt supported by their school board of trustees and a strong management team. Just over half felt supported by parents/whānau, and only 30% felt they got the support they needed from government agencies.

48 Our question asked principals: "In total, approximately how many hours a week do you work? (This includes meetings, contact with trustees, and contact with parents and whānau: all the work you do which is for the school.)"

FIGURE 62 **Principals' views of their work (*n* = 145)**



Principal morale is lower, stress levels are higher, and tiredness has increased

Principal morale in 2019 was lower than shown in the three previous national surveys since 2010, with a lower proportion reporting their morale was 'very good', and a higher proportion reporting it was 'poor'. Sixteen percent said their overall morale was 'very good' (compared with 27% in 2016), 46% said their morale was 'good', 23% said their morale was 'satisfactory', 12% said their morale was 'poor' (up from 7% in 2016), and 1 percent said their morale was 'very poor'.

Principals have higher stress levels on average than the general population.[49] Principal stress levels have increased since 2019: Table 17 shows 59% with high or extremely high stress levels, compared with 37% in 2010.

TABLE 17 **Principals' typical stress levels 2010–2019**

Stress level	2010 (*n* = 210) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Extremely high	6	7	5	10
High	31	42	42	49
About average	56	40	45	34
Low	6	9	8	3
Very low	1	1	2	1

The NZEI Occupational Health and Wellbeing survey found that principals' main sources of stress were:

- lack of time to focus on teaching and learning
- sheer quantity of work
- government initiatives, and
- resourcing needs.[50]

More principals were reporting in 2019 that tiredness was affecting their performance, or that they were worn out, and fewer reporting that they were 'wide awake and raring to go'. In total, a quarter of principals were experiencing issues with tiredness that impacted on their work, as shown in Table 18.

49 Riley, P. (2017). *New Zealand primary school principals' occupational health and wellbeing survey.* Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University. Report prepared for NZEI. p. 13. https://www.nzei.org.nz/documents/Principals%20Health%20and%20Well-Being%20Report_20170120SM.pdf

50 Ibid., p. 26

TABLE 18 **Principals' levels of tiredness 2010–2019**

Tiredness level	2010 (*n* = 210) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Wide awake and raring to go	24	14	18	4
Some level of tiredness through the days	51	56	53	41
Constant tiredness that does not affect my performance	14	21	20	28
Constant tiredness that affects my performance	7	5	6	17
Absolutely worn out	3	2	2	8

Primary principals continued to have difficulty undertaking regular exercise, which is likely to be related to their workload and activities that often involve evening or weekend engagements as well as work taken home. The pattern has stayed much the same since 2010. At least 62% of primary principals would not meet the recommended Ministry of Health guidelines of 2.5 hours moderate exercise each week. Most would not meet the Heart Foundation's guideline of 30 minutes moderate exercise each day:

- 29% did not do some form of fitness activity of 30 minutes or more within the past week
- 34% had done some form of fitness activity on 1–2 days of the past week
- 27% had done some form of fitness activity on 3–5 days of the past week
- 10% had done some form of fitness activity on 6–7 days of the past week.

Principals seek more time for educational leadership and a balanced life

Consistent with the information on principals' workload, and the doubts about its manageability and sustainability, Table 19 shows that principals continued to seek more time for the essence of their work—educational leadership—and the reflection, reading, and innovation that should go with it. They continued to seek a more balanced life. They also wanted more professional dialogue about their work, a reduction in the human resource management demands of their role, and a more productive relationship with their board chair. Most notable is the almost double increase in the proportion who would like to reduce parents and whānau demands on them. This may indicate the increased emphasis on parents and whānau as partners with the school in their children's learning.

TABLE 19 **Principals' desired changes to their work**

Desired change	2010 (*n* = 207) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
More time to focus on educational leadership	62	59	75	79
More time to reflect/read/be innovative	68	68	78	74
Reduce administration/paperwork	60	54	64	66
Have a more balanced life	51	42	54	59
Reduce demands of property management	44	36	45	46
Get advice from Ministry of Education, ERO and Teaching Council that is aligned	*	*	#	43
Reduce external agencies' demands/expectations	40	29	31	38
More professional dialogue about my work	33	28	29	37
Reduce human resource management demands	27	28	23	35
Higher salary	33	26	34	34
Reduce parents' and whānau demands on me	18	18	16	31
More productive relationship with board chair	*	*	9	12

* Not asked.
# In 2016, this item about alignment covered Ministry of Education and ERO, and 29% of principals selected it.

Principal use of the NZSTA helpdesk has increased

Almost all principals used some of the Ministry of Education-funded support that they can access without cost. NZSTA advice and professional development around their role as board employees, responsible for managing schools, is the most used, by half to two-thirds of principals. Use of the Educational Leaders website has declined: it was no longer a prime source of information and advice. Around a third of the principals had been through the voluntary First-time Principals' programme in the past 3 years. A fifth had had sabbaticals or study awards, open to experienced principals.

TABLE 20 **Ministry of Education-funded support for the principal's role, used by principals over the last 3 years**[51]

Support	2010 (*n* = 207) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
NZSTA Helpdesk (Advice and Support Centre)	49	50	52	67
NZSTA professional development	46	43	48	53
NZSTA HR and industrial relations advisers (HR advisers in 2016)	52	37	42	48
Educational Leaders website	65	43	48	37
First-time Principals' Programme	38	26	28	34
Teach NZ Sabbatical/Study award	*	14	20	21
Nothing	7	8	9	7
Other	6	6	6	7

* Not asked

Participation in the voluntary and free First-time Principals programme was highest among those with less than 3 years' experience as a principal at 76%, somewhat lower than 2016 figures of the 86% of principals with less than 3 years' experience, and 66% of those with 3–5 years' experience.

Use of the Educational Leaders website is lowest among both the new principals (21% of those with 3 years' experience or less, and the most experienced (27% of those with more than 15 years' experience). The most experienced also made less use of the NZSTA HR and industrial advisers (47% compared with 66% of the new principals, and 76% of those with 3 to 15 years' experience as a principal).

Use of NZSTA professional development was lowest among decile 1 and 2 school principals (33%).

Principals draw on support from ex-principals and their representative bodies

All but 9% of principals also drew on other support for their role over the last 3 years. Most notable is their use of former principals who they or their school paid:

- 61% used a private consultant or adviser who had been a principal, as did 55% in 2016
- 48% used NZEI Te Riu Roa
- 42% used NZPF
- 17% used a private consultant or adviser who had not been a principal.
- 14% undertook postgraduate study
- 8% took part in MACS, the Māori Achievement Collaboratives, as did 4% in 2016.

Other support mentioned included working with the non-profit Springboard trust, which provides a leadership development programme and ongoing support for alumni from the programme with strategic innovation at their schools.

51 In 2010 we asked principals about their use of support in the last 2 years.

Mutual support is important for principals but still limited

Almost all (92%) of the principals took part in non-Ministry of Education-funded principal networks or groups, much the same as in 2016, 2013, and 2010. Most attended regular meetings (such as local principals' associations), and conferences. Attending regular meetings was highest among decile 9 and 10 school principals: 96%. But deeper mutual support for undertaking this complex role, and working with other principals to improve leadership practice, was not common. In 2019, there were fewer professional learning groups (PLGs) that principals facilitated themselves, and less involvement in inquiry projects to improve practice. There was a slight increase in mentoring, or being mentored, and more use of online discussion forums.

TABLE 21 **Participation in principal networks or peer learning**

Form or purpose	2010 (*n* = 207) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Attend regular meetings	74	86	83	77
Attend conference(s)	58	71	80	72
Discuss common issues	58	79	62	58
Provide mutual support	53	75	62	56
Part of a PLG that is externally facilitated	*	*	28	28
Mentor another principal	*	20	21	26
Part of a PLG that we facilitate	*	*	43	25
I am mentored by another principal	*	11	15	20
Critical friendship based on visits to other schools	*	23	17	18
Online discussion forum	*	6	12	17
Part of inquiry project to improve practice	22	20	16	10
Use Twitter to get advice or ideas	*	4	7	7

* = Not asked

Benefits principals gain from their annual principal appraisal remain variable

Performance management should provide principals with useful feedback and discussion that supports ongoing effectiveness and growth. Each school's board of trustees has the responsibility of carrying out the annual appraisal of the principal they employ. Principals must provide evidence in relation to criteria included in collective employment contracts, including evidence related to the three stages within the principal career pathway. The appraisal also looks at evidence in relation to agreed goals relating to school goals, and it identifies goals for the principal's ongoing development. Such annual appraisal is intended to provide both accountability and support. The appraisal may be carried out by the board chair, or, often, by a professional, usually with educational experience. There has been considerable variability in the quality and usefulness of principal appraisal.

There were some marked differences from previous surveys here. On the one hand, there was an increase in these appraisals providing the opportunity for frank discussions of challenges and for joint strategic thinking. On the other, there was some decrease in agreement on goals to move the school or the principal forward. And fewer principals in 2019 felt their contribution to the school received a good acknowledgement in their performance appraisal.

TABLE 22 **Gains from principals' most recent performance appraisal**

Gain	2010 (*n* = 207) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Good acknowledgement of contribution to school	74	78	80	64
Agreement on goals that will move the school forward	57	66	64	57
Opportunity for frank discussion of challenges facing the school and joint strategic thinking	44	39	38	57
Agreement on goals that will move me forward	54	62	65	51
New insight into how I could do things	35	34	40	34
Nothing much*	7	9	6	8

* In 2016 this item read "Nothing, it was not professionally done"

Summary

Top of the list of major issues principals saw as affecting their school in 2019 was that too much was being asked of schools—72% now said this, markedly increased from 53% in 2016, and 42% in 2013.

The effect of this for principals is to intensify their workload, with increases in stress levels, tiredness, and more feeling that they cannot give sufficient time to educational leadership. Only a minority felt supported by government agencies, and only half by parents and whānau.

Government support used by principals was mostly to do with the management aspects of their role. What they were using more for their role as a whole were ex-principals, paid for and chosen by their school or themselves. Their professional organisations were also sources of support. Collegial support was widespread, but not necessarily deep. Only half the principals felt prepared for their first principalship.

It is not that principals did not enjoy their role—most did. Many saw themselves continuing to lead schools over the next 5 years. But there was now more interest in educational roles beyond the principalship.

A real test of the changes arising from the Government's work programme following the Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce recommendations will be whether we see changes in this national survey picture of principals' work and support.

15. Trustees' perspectives and the work of school boards

Here we present school trustee perspectives on their role and the work of school boards. We also include principals' views of the key elements in the role of boards, parents' and whānau views of their involvement in consultation and contact with their school board, and principals' views of how their school board is working. Because past analysis has shown that school decile has an association with trustee perspectives and the work of their boards, we report the results of cross-tabulation where there are statistically significant patterns.

Trustee respondents

These perspectives come from 126 trustees, from 95 schools, 68% of whom were board chairs. To reach school trustees for the national survey, we write to the board chair via the school. We send two letters and ask the chair to complete the survey themselves and give the other letter with the survey to another board member other than the principal or teacher representative, preferably one who might have a different view on some issues. In 2019, we provided the option of filling in the survey on paper and mailing it back, or completing it online using a link in the paper survey. Thirty-three trustees filled in the survey online. The margin of error for trustee responses is around 8.7%.

As with the other groups we surveyed, our 2019 response rate was the lowest we have had for the national surveys—18% of the potential respondents, from 27% of the schools in the national survey sample. We had an over-representation of trustees from decile 9–10 schools, and an under-representation of trustees from decile 1–2 schools. The median school roll was 165, somewhat lower than the national median roll of 177.

The majority (80%) identified themselves as New Zealand European / Pākehā (more than the national proportion of primary school trustees, which is 66%);[52] 12% identified themselves as Māori (less than the national proportion of primary school trustees, which is 18%); 5% identified as Samoan (national proportion is 4%); and 1% each identified as Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, and Indian. Eight percent identified as 'Other' ethnicity. Over one-third (37%) of the trustees who identified as Māori were on the boards of decile 1–2 schools. Trustees who identified as New Zealand European / Pākehā were least likely to be on the boards of decile 1–2 schools (37%).

More female than male trustees responded: 58% female and 41% male, which is close to the national picture for primary school trustees.[53]

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the trustees who responded to the survey in 2019 had a university-level degree, up from 56% in 2016 and 50% in 2013.[54] This is much higher than the national proportion of those aged 30–64

52 https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/schooling/board_of_trustees
53 No trustees selected the gender diverse option, and just two did not respond to this question.
54 Education qualifications of trustees are not reported nationally, so we cannot tell how representative this is of all primary school trustees.

who have a tertiary degree (28.8% in the 2018 Census). Only one trustee who responded to the survey had no qualification. (In the 2018 Census, 13.9% of adults aged 30–64 reported no qualification for their highest qualification.) There was no association between trustees' qualification level and school decile.

Sixty-one percent of the trustees were in paid employment, 29% were self-employed, and 4% were not in paid employment. There was no association between trustees being in paid employment and school decile.

Sixty-eight percent of the trustees who responded in 2019 were board chairs. This is a higher proportion of respondents than in the last two rounds of the survey (61% in 2016 were board chairs, and 48% in 2013). Any marked differences in the views of chairs and other trustees are reported.

Most of the trustees are new to school boards but half have governance experience

Most (86%) of the trustees who responded to the survey had not been on a school board before. This is similar to the proportions in 2016 (81%) and 2013 (86%). Trustees from lower decile schools were more likely to have been on the board of another school (26% of trustees in decile 1–2 schools, compared with 4% of trustees in decile 7–8 schools and 8% of trustees in decile 9–10 schools).

School boards were the first governance experience for around half of the trustees. In 2019, 49% of trustees had no experience on the board of another organisation, similar to 56% in 2016 and 52% in 2013. The remaining 51% indicated that they had served on the board of another type of organisation, with some having served on more than one other board. In 2019, 17% of trustees responding had served on the board of a business, 14% on the board of a non-government/voluntary organisation with staff, 11% on the board of a non-government/voluntary organisation that did not employ staff, 11% on the board of some other organisation, and 8% on the board of an ECE or tertiary organisation.

Almost all the trustees are in paid employment

Almost all the trustees who responded to the survey were also in paid employment: 61% as employees and 30% self-employed. Some board members who were employees got support from their employment for their school trustee role: 43% could use work hours flexibly, 22% could use some work equipment, and 20% could use some paid time for their role. This has not improved since 2013, when 27% of employees could use some work equipment, and 25% some paid time for their role.

Board chairs have more board experience than other trustees

Trustees' median length of time on their board at the time of responding to the survey was 3 years, 5 months. For board chairs the median was 4 years, and for other board members the median was 3 years. As in previous years, there was a significant difference in time on the board between chairs and other trustees: board chairs had been on their board between half a year and just under 3 years longer than other trustees.

Most trustees thought the amount of responsibility the board has is about right

Most of the trustees (84%) thought that the amount of responsibility asked of school boards was about right. The proportion of trustees who thought that the responsibility was about right shows an upwards trend since 2010 (68% in 2010, 77% in 2013, 75% in 2016). A small proportion of trustees (15%) thought too

much was asked of trustees (little change from 2013 and 2016); and just one trustee thought it was too little (in both 2013 and 2016, 2% thought too little was asked of trustees). More chairs than other trustees thought the amount of responsibility asked of school boards was too much—20% of chairs, compared with 5% of other trustees.

Most (84%) of the trustees spent under 6 hours a week on their board work, with 44% spending less than 2 hours a week (as did 47% in 2016, 54% in 2013, and 48% in 2010). In 2013 and 2016 there was an association between being a board chair and time spent on board work, with board chairs spending more time than other trustees. This association was not evident in the 2019 survey data.

Board members are motivated to contribute to their community

Table 23 shows that the main driver for taking on school board responsibility was to contribute to the community (83% of trustees). Around half of the trustees responding went onto a board because they wanted to help their own child, because they were asked to, or because they had particular skills that they felt would be useful. Not many went onto a school board to change things at the school, or because they felt the school lacked leadership. Of the 15 who identified themselves as Māori, four said they were motivated to stand for the board to represent a Māori perspective. Of the eight who identified themselves as Pacific, four said they were motivated to stand for the board to represent a Pacific perspective. A few went on their school board to represent a disability perspective.

Table 23 also shows that most of the drivers or attractions of school board membership have been pretty stable over time, with some decrease in those going onto the board to help their (own) child.

TABLE 23 **Trustees' reasons for joining their primary school board**

Reason	2010 (*n* = 252) %	2013 (*n* = 277) %	2016 (*n* = 176) %	2019 (*n* = 126) %
To contribute to the community	86	82	80	83
To help my child/children	66	66	59	54
I was asked	50	44	43	51
I have particular skills that are useful	*	54	48	49
I wanted to learn how the school operated	*	47	38	42
I wanted to improve achievement levels	18	25	18	16
Not many people were standing	*	9	12	13
I wanted to change things at the school	14	11	14	10
Leadership at the school was lacking	9	4	9	5
To represent a Pacific perspective	*	*	5	4
To represent a Māori perspective	*	*	3	3
To represent a disability perspective	*	*	*	2

* Not asked

There was an association between school decile and the trustees who selected "I was asked" as a reason for standing for their school board. The proportion of trustees who reported this was lowest in decile 1–2 and 9–10 schools (37% and 34%), compared with 64% in decile 3–4 schools, 57% in decile 5–6 schools, and 71% in decile 7–8 schools.

Trustees enjoy their role

Two new open questions in the 2019 survey asked trustees what they enjoyed most and least about their role. Almost all the trustees (98%) wrote at least one thing they enjoyed the most about the role. Four themes were the strongest:

- community service, and the opportunity to "give back" and contribute to the local community (commented on by 21% of trustees)
- the opportunity to contribute to improving student outcomes and achieve the best for students (commented on by 21% of trustees)
- enjoying and valuing positive relationships with the school and the community (commented on by 19% of trustees)
- making a difference (commented on by 18% of trustees).

Here are some of their responses:

> *Being able to contribute something back to the school that my children attend.*
>
> *Being able to serve the community. I enjoy the relationship with the principal and knowing what makes the school tick.*
>
> *Discussing elements of a school that really matter. I feel like I can contribute.*
>
> *Being able to give back to the school community and help with the governance of the school by supporting principal and staff in their management decisions.*
>
> *The feeling of contributing to the community and school, and learning new skills.*
>
> *Helping to set the direction of the school and positively impact the wellbeing and achievement of the students at school.*

Other aspects trustees enjoyed were getting the opportunity to contribute to setting the school's strategic direction; their own learning; and supporting the principal (all commented on by 13% of trustees).

Most trustees (89%) also wrote at least one thing they enjoyed the least about the role. Two themes emerged most strongly—dealing with information and decisions from the Ministry of Education or ERO (commented on by 20% of trustees), and the time and workload involved in the trustee role (commented on by 18% of trustees):

> *Dealing with the Ministry! Too much staff turnover. Having to allocate a smaller pot of money. Bureaucracy. Having to fundraise for technology equipment. Having no options for severe behaviour students. Not having our wonderful counsellor recognised by government as being essential for the wellbeing of our students, and therefore having no assistance with funding.*
>
> *A lot of responsibility and time commitment required for the role.*
>
> *Too much to do. If we did everything MoE and NZSTA expected of us we would all burn out. The expectations on volunteers are too great.*

Other themes of what they enjoyed least about their role came through in 3%–11% of the trustees' comments:

- dealing with complaints and conflict
- the extent of responsibilities
- disciplinary meetings and supporting students who have been excluded
- the lack of parental or community support
- employment and personnel issues
- property issues
- inadequate school funding.

Providing strategic direction is the most important element of the school board role

Providing strategic direction continued to be seen by trustees and principals as the most important element of the role of school boards. Table 24 shows the pattern of responses from trustees and principals was similar, although more trustees than principals selected creating a safe and inclusive environment as the most important element of the board's role.

TABLE 24 **Views on the most important element of the board of trustees' role**

Most important element	Trustees (*n* = 126) %	Principals (*n* = 145) %
Providing strategic direction for school	62	63
Supporting principal	10	8
Creating safe and inclusive environment	9	3
Employing school principal	4	1
Representing parents and whānau in the school	2	4
Scrutinising school performance	2	3
Overseeing principal's performance	1	0
Agent of government/representing government interest	1	2
Overseeing school finances	0	0
Health and safety	0	0

Trustees report that boards spend the most time on student progress and achievement

We asked trustees to rank aspects of board activity by the amount of time spent on them. Their responses showed a wide range between boards in how much time they give to particular aspects of their role (or, in the case of day-to-day management, what they should not be doing as the school's governing body). Apart from financial management and the strategic plan, all the aspects we asked about had at least one trustee saying that was what their board spent *most* of its time on over the past year, and at least one trustee saying that was what their board spent *least* time on.

Fifty-four percent of trustees put student progress and achievement first or second, followed by 27% putting property/maintenance, 25% putting financial management, and 23% putting strategic planning first or second. This is much the same pattern as in 2016.

Table 25 shows the percentage of trustees who ranked each activity first, indicating their board spent the greatest amount of time on it.

TABLE 25 **Activities boards spent the most time on**

Board activity	Trustees ranking it 1st (*n* = 126) %
Student progress and achievement	32
Property/maintenance	16
Financial management	10
Review (e.g., policies)	9
Strategic plan	6
Human resources (e.g., performance review and appointment processes)	6
Personnel/industrial (individual cases)	4
Day-to-day management	3
Students behaving inappropriately/discipline/bullying cases	2
Community-related issues	2
Board professional development	2

More attention to student and school performance data in board decision making

We asked principals for their perspective on how their board worked. Figure 62 shows that most of the principals reported that their board actively pays attention to achievement data in making decisions (91%, up from 77% in 2016) and regularly scrutinises school performance (81%, up from 69% in 2016).

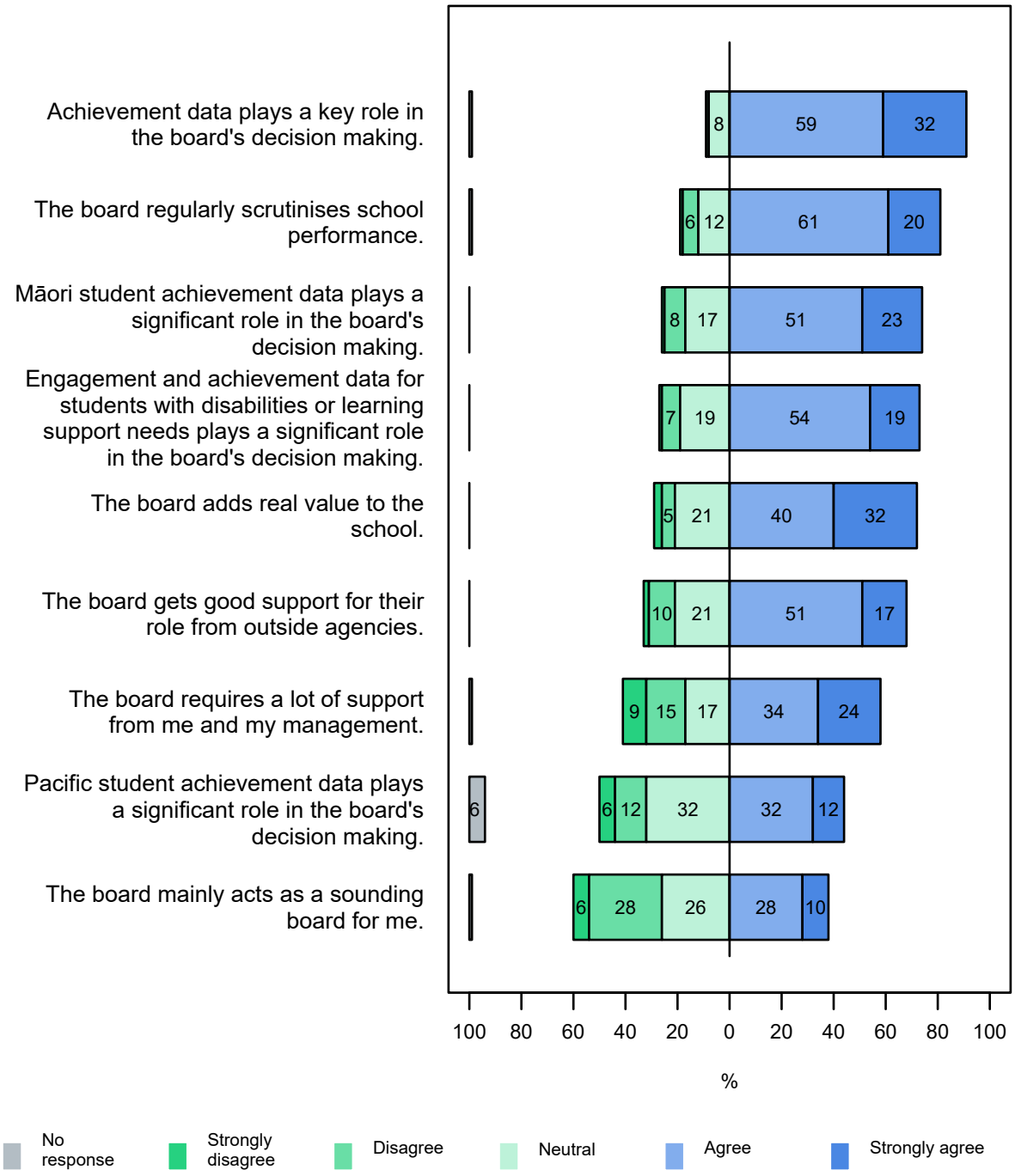
When compared with 2016 survey results, there have also been increases in the proportion of principals who perceive that student data about specific groups of students plays a significant role in board decision making:

- 74% of principals agreed that data about Māori students plays a significant role in board decision making (up from 53% in 2016)
- 44% of principals agreed that data about Pacific students plays a significant role in board decision making (up from 29% in 2016)
- 73% of principals agreed that engagement and achievement data for students with disabilities or learning support needs plays a significant role in board decision making (65% said this in 2016)

There was also an increase in the proportion of principals agreeing that their board requires a lot of support from them and their management (59% up from 36% in 2016). It is possible that this is because of a change in question wording. In 2019 the question asked generally about "your board"; in 2016, the question asked about the "past board". In both years, the survey was completed around a term after board elections, so when responding to the 2019 survey the principal may have been thinking about their new board, which could require more support.

The principals of decile 1–2 schools were the most likely to *strongly* agree that their board requires a lot of support (54%, compared with 27% for decile 3–4 schools, 18% for decile 5–6 schools, 10% for decile 7–8 schools, and 17% for decile 9–10 schools).

FIGURE 63 **Principals' views of their board (*n* = 145)**



Most trustees are positive about how well their school board is doing

Most of the trustees were positive about how well their school board was doing: 30% thought the board was "on top of its task", and 60% thought it was "making steady progress". This overall picture has remained much the same since 2010. There was no association by school decile.

Nearly one-third (32%) of trustees said their board regularly reviewed its own processes as recommended (the same as 2016), and 58% said the board did this sometimes (up from 40% in 2013, with 48% saying this in 2016).

Most advice for trustees comes from within their school or from NZSTA

Nearly all trustees responding (98%) had some advice to help them in their role. Trustees were asked about the professional development they had participated in, and the support, advice, and information sources they had used in the past year. The New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) is contracted by the Ministry of Education to provide a range of professional development, support, and advisory services to boards of trustees. All state and state-integrated school boards can access basic NZSTA services, resources, and information. School boards can also choose to become member schools through an annual subscription, which offers benefits including national and regional newsletters and meetings, an annual conference, additional web resources, study awards, advocacy, and discounts on insurances and copyright licensing. Around 92% of state and state-integrated school boards are members of NZSTA.[55]

Table 26 shows that most of the trustees got advice from their principal and other school staff (77%) and their own colleagues on the school board (62%). Sixty-two percent had taken part in NZSTA workshops, 43% had sought advice from the NZSTA Advisory and Support Centre, and a smaller proportion had used other NZSTA services. We do not include comparisons with 2016 or previous years here, because in previous years we asked about advice and support in more detail.

TABLE 26 **Advice sources trustees have used for the role in the past 12 months (*n* = 126)**

Advice source	Trustees (*n* = 126) %
Guidance and information from principal/school staff	77
Guidance and information from other trustees on the school board	62
Took part in NZSTA workshops	62
Advice from NZSTA Advisory and Support Centre	43
Contact with trustees in other schools	37
Professional development in their paid work	25
NZSTA online modules	25
Advice from ERO	21
Advice from NZSTA regional advisor on governance issues	19
Advice from regional MoE office	18
Advice from NZSTA regional advisor on employment issues	13
Attended NZSTA conference	10
Other	10

There was an association between school decile and the proportion of trustees who took part in NZSTA online modules. This was highest for trustees in decile 5–6 schools (48%), followed by trustees in decile 1–2 schools (32%) and in decile 3–4 schools (28%). It was lowest for trustees in higher decile schools (17% of trustees in decile 7–8 schools, and 11% of trustees in decile 9–10 schools).

55 https://www.nzsta.org.nz/our-organisation/ (5 May 2020)

There was also an association between school decile and the proportion of trustees who had received advice from ERO. This was highest for trustees in decile 1–2 schools (47%), and lowest for trustees in decile 9–10 schools (8%).

Trustees in decile 9–10 schools were most likely to say they had professional development in their paid work that helped with their governance role (47%) compared with 9–26% for trustees in other decile schools.

Over two-thirds of trustees would like more funding for their school

Almost all trustees felt there was something about their role that they would change. Only 6% (eight trustees) sought no change.

More funding for their school topped the list of changes trustees would like, by a considerable margin (70% of trustees, up from 53% in 2016 and 49% in 2013). Table 27 also shows that, compared with 2016, there was an increase in the proportion of trustees who would like Ministry expectations to be reduced, more support from parents and whānau, and more guidance on how to use achievement data. There was a decrease in the proportion of trustees who selected a clearer distinction between governance and management as an area they would change about their role (10% compared with 21% in 2016).

TABLE 27 **Main changes trustees would make in their role**

Change	2010 (*n* = 252) %	2013 (*n* = 277) %	2016 (*n* = 176) %	2019 (*n* = 126) %
More funding for the school	66	49	53	70
Improve my knowledge or training	38	43	46	42
Reduce Ministry expectations of what we can provide for the funding we get	23	26	22	36
More support from parents and whānau	31	21	18	34
More guidance on how to use achievement data to inform board decision making	30	26	15	32
More support for community consultation	*	*	*	27
Work more with other schools	31	28	22	21
Higher payment (meeting fees and expenses)	12	*	18	20
More time to focus on strategic issues	20	20	19	19
More support/advice from Ministry of Education	13	14	19	19
More advice about modern learning environments	*	*	24	18
More support/advice from independent education experts	22	17	13	16
More support in our employer role	*	*	*	14
More support to meet community expectations	*	*	*	14
Clearer distinction between governance and management	26	18	21	10
Reduce workload/paperwork	14	11	10	10
More support/advice from NZSTA	5	7	3	7
Better information from school staff to inform our decisions	7	11	7	5
Clearer guidelines to make disciplinary decisions	2	7	6	5
Better communication between board members	6	8	9	4
Reduce role in disciplinary decisions	2	3	3	2

* Not asked in that year. There were questions about community consultation in previous years, but the wording has changed too much to allow a meaningful comparison.

Trustees at decile 1–6 schools were the most interested in having more support for community consultation (48% at decile 5–6 schools, 36% at decile 3–4 schools, 32% at decile 1–2 schools, 16% at decile 9–10 schools, 13% at decile 7–8 schools).

Many boards have no issues raised by parents

More than half the trustees in 2019 had not had parents raise issues with their board. In 2019, 41% of the trustees said that parents had raised issues with their board that year, as did 48% in 2016 and 51% in 2013.

The issues raised were wide ranging. Table 28 shows that student behaviour or bullying and dissatisfaction with a staff member continue to be the most reported issues that parents and whānau raise with school boards. Other issues were all selected by 10 or fewer trustees as issues that parents and whānau had raised in the past year. Of note is that funding, fundraising, and spending was raised less than in previous

years (3% of trustees said parents had raised this with the board, compared with 10% in 2016). No trustees reported that parents and whānau had asked about provision for Māori students, Pacific students, or students with English as a second language.

In 2019 we asked about four new issues and all had been raised with at least one school board: students' mental health and wellbeing (4% of trustees), religion in schools (3% of trustees), environmental issues (2% of trustees), and sexuality/relationship education curriculum (1% of trustees).

TABLE 28 **Main issues raised by parents with their school board**

Issue (*n* = all trustees responding to the survey)	**2013** (*n* = 277) %	**2016** (*n* = 176) %	**2019** (*n*=126) %
Students behaving inappropriately or bullying	16	18	19
Dissatisfaction with a staff member	13	16	12
Transport	9	6	8
Class sizes	6	5	5
Cost for parents and whanau	5	5	5
Students' mental health and wellbeing	*	*	4
School uniform	*	7	4
Inclusion of students in sports/cultural events	?	2	4
Grounds/maintenance	16	6	4
School zone/enrolment scheme	13	4	4
Religion in schools	*	*	3
Funding, including fundraising/spending	12	10	3
Environmental issues	*	*	2
Provision of learning support	7	6	2
Student achievement	5	5	2
Modern/innovative learning environments	*	4	2
Curriculum	5	2	2
Homework	5	2	2
Digital technology/e-learning	5	3	1
Theft/vandalism	3	2	1
Sexuality/relationship education curriculum	2	*	1
Provision for Māori students	4	3	0
Provision for Pacific students	0	0	0
Provision for students with English as a second language	0	1	0
Co-curricular provision	*	1	0

* Not asked in that year

More boards use email surveys to consult with their community

Boards have a legal requirement to regularly consult with their school community. Most of the trustees (87%) said their board had consulted with their community in the past 12 months. This is a similar proportion to previous years.

A notable change from previous cycles of the survey was the increase in the proportion of trustees reporting that their board surveys parents and whānau by email (57% up from 32% in 2016). More boards now use an email survey than a paper questionnaire. The second most used method was a public meeting or workshop at the school (see Table 29). Most (85%) of the trustees whose boards had consulted with their parents and whānau thought that the methods used were successful—53% generally successful, and 32% for some issues. This is a similar picture to previous surveys.

In 2016 we reported that trustees from decile 1–2 schools were least likely to report emailing surveys to parents and whānau, but this association was not evident in the 2019 data. Trustees from decile 1–2 schools were, however, more likely than other trustees to report that they consulted with the community through questions in the school newsletter (73% compared with 55% of trustees in decile 3–4 schools, 32% of trustees in decile 5–6 schools, 43% of trustees in decile 7–8 schools, and 26% of trustees in decile 9–10 schools).

TABLE 29 **Board interaction and consultation with community**

Methods used to consult ***n*** **= number of trustees who answered yes to the question "Does your board consult with its community?"**	**2010 (*n* = 208) %**	**2013 (*n* = 226) %**	**2016 (*n* = 152) %**	**2019 (*n* = 110) %**
Email survey of parents and whānau	6	25	32	57
Public meetings/workshops at school	42	50	52	49
Paper questionnaire to parents and whānau	59	73	63	46
Questions in school newsletter	50	43	40	42
Parents and whānau invited to board meetings/workshops	32	31	38	28
Hui with whānau Māori	15	26	18	20
Public meetings/workshops in community	11	11	11	16
Fono with Pacific families	*	*	*	11
Hui with iwi/hapū	*	*	12	9
Specific groups met with board members	12	10	7	6
Phone survey(s) of parents and whānau	5	8	6	3
Home meetings	3	4	2	1

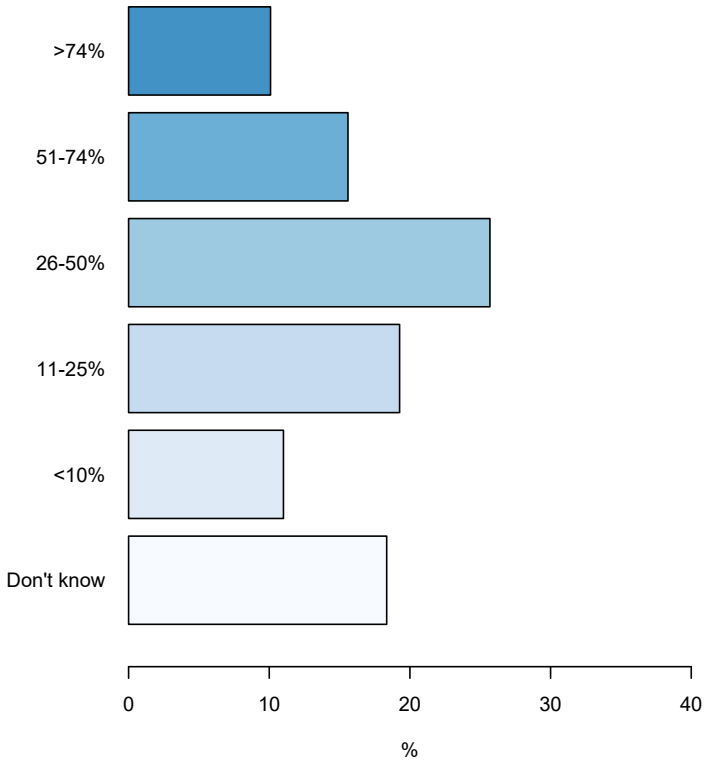
Trustees on boards that consulted their community indicated a wide range of topics covered (see Table 30). Compared with 2016, fewer trustees reported that their board consulted on the use of digital technology, and modern/innovative learning environments. This likely reflects that these have been embedded more in schools since 2016. It is also notable that fewer trustees reported that their board consulted on student achievement, or on provision for Māori students. Decile 1–2 school trustees were more likely than other trustees to report consulting about student achievement (47%), school trips (47%), sports (33%), student attendance (27%), and timetabling / start and finish times (20%). Decile 3–4 school trustees were more likely than other trustees to report consulting about incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori (25%), and on the school role in relation to climate change (15%).

TABLE 30 **School community consultation topics, reported by trustees (*n* = 110)**

2019 (*n* = 110) % range	Topic
30%–36%	School strategic plan Curriculum Reporting to parents and whānau
25%–29%	School culture Ways of working with parents, whānau, and community
15%–19%	School trips Student achievement (18%, down from 38% in 2016) Use of digital technology (16%, down from 24% in 2016) School uniform Student physical health
10%–14%	Property Religious instruction Sports Sexuality and relationship education (12%, up from 6% in 2016) Students' mental health or wellbeing (12%, new in 2019) Enrolment scheme / zoning Incorporating te reo and tikanga Funding
5%–9%	Provision for Pacific students Provision for Māori students (9%, down from 20% in 2016) Co-curricular activities Modern/innovative learning environments (7%, down from 20% in 2016) Students behaving inappropriately or bullying Provision of learning support Student attendance Timetabling/start and finish times Local hapū and iwi education priorities
Less than 5%	School role in relation to climate change Provision for students with English as a second language Bilingual Pacific education

Figure 64 shows a wide range in the proportion of parents and whanau who trustees estimated took part in their board's consultation in 2019.

FIGURE 64 **Proportion of parents and whanau taking part in school board consultations (Trustees, *n* = 126)**



Around half the parents and whānau responding were happy with consultation, contact with board, and information about the school

Over half (59%) of those responding to the parent and whānau survey thought their school genuinely consulted with them about new directions or issues. Around a quarter (23%) of the respondents said they were unsure, and 16% thought their school did not genuinely consult with them about these things. These proportions are similar to 2016.

Over half (52%) of parents and whānau felt they had enough contact with their school's trustees, with 23% unsure. This is more positive than reported in 2016, when 41% of parents and whānau felt they had enough contact with their school board.

Parents and whānau who answered 'no' or 'not sure' were asked what sort of contact with the board they would like more of.

- 35% wanted easier access to records of board meetings
- 28% wanted more surveys or consultation from the board
- 22% wanted more frequent meetings for parents to have discussions with the board
- 14% wanted greater responsiveness from the board to feedback or complaints
- 10% wanted more time for public discussion at board meetings
- 9% wanted easier access to board meetings
- 4% wanted more involvement in the board's student discipline hearings.

We also asked parents and whānau if there was any information they would like to have about the school that they don't already have. Half (52%) said no, a quarter (25%) said yes, and 22% were not sure.

Parents were asked what other information, if any, they would have liked about the school. The areas of information selected by 5% or more of parents are shown in Table 31. Much of this is information that would normally be provided by the school.

TABLE 31 **Information parents and whānau would like about the school that they don't already have**

Information	Parents and whānau (*n* = 395) %
What is taught (the curriculum)	11
Availability of extra support for learning	9
School policies	8
How the school supports safety and students' wellbeing	6
What to expect and how things are supposed to work	6
Student achievement across the school	6
School progress on its annual goals	6
School's use of funds	5
Te reo Māori learning options at the school	5
How I can support the school	5
How to communicate with the school and provide feedback	5

There were two differences associated with school decile:

- Parents and whānau with a child at a decile 5–6 school were most likely to say they wanted more information about the availability of extra support for learning (67%, compared with 8% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school, and 27–33% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 3–4, or 7–10 school).
- Parents and whānau with a child at a decile 9–10 school were most likely to say they wanted more information about what to expect and how things are supposed to work (42%, compared with 31% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 7–8 schools, 15% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school, and under 10% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 3–6 school).

Twenty-one percent of the parents and whānau said there was an area of school life where they would like to have a say and felt they could not, and a further 13% were unsure. This is much the same as in 2016. The proportion of parents and whānau who said there was an area of school life where they would like a say increased from 13% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 1–2 school, to 32% of parents and whānau with a child at a decile 9–10 school.

Nine percent of parents and whānau would like more say in how children learn, and 7% would like more say in what they learn. How student wellbeing is supported, which class their child is in, student behaviour, and homework were all identified by 6%. Other areas were identified by 3% or fewer: how students' cultural identity is supported, funding decisions, school uniform or dress, and the school timetable.

Summary

The 2019 survey responses show that most aspects of trustees' work and their perspective of their board's role have remained much the same over the past decade. Primary school boards of trustees draw on parents and others who are motivated to contribute to their community. As a group they are more highly educated than the national average and most are in paid employment. The drivers or attractions of school board membership have been pretty stable over time. Trustees most enjoy the opportunity to "give back" and to contribute to student outcomes in their broadest sense.

Most of the trustees who responded to the survey had not been on a school board before, although around half had experience on the board of another organisation. Most spent under 6 hours a week on their board work, with 44% spending less than 2 hours a week. A sizeable minority could use or give themselves some support from their employment for their trustee role, most commonly by working flexibly.

Many primary school trustees thought that the amount of responsibility asked of school boards was about right. However, more chairs than other trustees thought the amount of responsibility asked of school boards was too much: 20% of chairs, compared with 5% of other trustees.

Board capability and focus showed some variation. Most trustees were positive about how well their school board was doing, and many principals saw their school board as adding real value to the school. However, over half of the principals considered their board needed a lot of support from school staff.

Nearly all trustees responding had some advice or support to help them in their role. Trustees were supported in a variety of ways, both from within the school by staff and other trustees, and from external organisations, particularly NZSTA, and to a lesser extent the Ministry of Education and ERO.

Student progress and achievement, followed by property/maintenance, financial management, and strategic planning were the main focus for boards.

There was an increasing use of digital technology in how boards consulted with parents. Only 41% of trustees said parents had raised issues with their board, with 19% of trustees reporting student behaviour or bullying and 12% dissatisfaction with a staff member.

Trustees' main calls for change to their role continued to identify more school funding and improvements to their knowledge or training. More would now like Ministry expectations to be reduced, more support from parents and whānau, and more guidance on how to use achievement data. While the changes trustees would like include some things trustees can do individually or as a board, such as improving their own knowledge, many are outside their control and require involvement from agencies beyond the board or school.

16. School resourcing, rolls, interactions with other schools, and system support

In this section, we first look at key aspects of schools' provision for learning: their government operational funding, staffing and school funding of additional teaching roles, school buildings, and the extent of competition between schools for students—and stability of school rolls—on which government funding and staffing rest.

Next we look at the support schools experience, including their interactions with other primary schools, early childhood services their students came from, and the intermediate or secondary schools they go onto.

Then we look at principal views of the advice they receive from government agencies and their own representative organisations, what they use from ERO's evaluative role at school and national levels, and schools' unmet needs for external expertise.

We finish this section with principal and trustee views of the major issues facing their schools, most often resource issues, but also challenges students bring, and goals for improving what the school can do for its students.

Operational funding continues to be a challenge

The Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce initial report noted that both costs and expectations of education continue to rise.[56] Operational funding continues to be a major issue for schools, identified by 67% of the principals and 56% of trustees responding to the national survey. In 2019, 12% of principals thought that their 2019 government funding for the school was enough to meet its needs, and 1% were unsure. This is much the same picture since 2010.

Answers about how the year was looking financially in 2019 were much the same as principals reported in the national survey 3 years earlier.

Fifty-six percent of the principals indicated that 2019 was looking much the same in financial terms as 2018; 13% said it was looking a bit better, and 3%, much better. Seventeen percent said the year was looking a bit worse than 2018, and 11%, a lot worse.

56 Tomorrow's Schools Independent Taskforce (2018). *Our Schooling Futures: Stronger Together Whiria Ngā Kura Tūātinitini*, p. 107. https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TSR/Tomorrows-Schools-Review-Report-13Dec2018.PDF

Teaching staff numbers and finding teachers also challenge schools

Staffing numbers or class sizes were identified by 53% of principals and 40% of trustees as a major issue for their school. Sixty-eight percent of the principals did not consider the school's teaching staffing entitlement was enough to meet its needs. Sixty-three percent indicated that their school funded an additional teacher out of their operational grant and locally raised funds. The median number of full-time equivalent positions funded this way was one, with one school funding 13 such positions.

The main roles of school-funded additional teachers in 2019 were similar to those in 2016, with one exception:

- To teach a class: 39%
- Support students with learning support needs: 23%
- Provide literacy/numeracy support: 20% of these schools (lower than the 28% of schools in 2016)
- Support English language learners: 10%
- Principal relief: 8%
- Te reo Māori support: 8%
- Music / arts / kapa haka tuition: 7%
- Extension students / GATE: 3%
- IT/tech support: 2%
- Home-school partnership: 2%
- Supporting Pacific language/s: 2 %.

In 2018, teacher shortages hit the headlines, leading to Ministry action in 2019 to improve teacher supply. Sector leaders have also worked with the Ministry to develop an Education Workforce Strategy, work that is still under way.

When this survey was done in September 2019, 66% of the principals said they had difficulty finding suitable teachers for vacant positions at their school, a marked increase from 41% in 2016, and 18% in 2013.

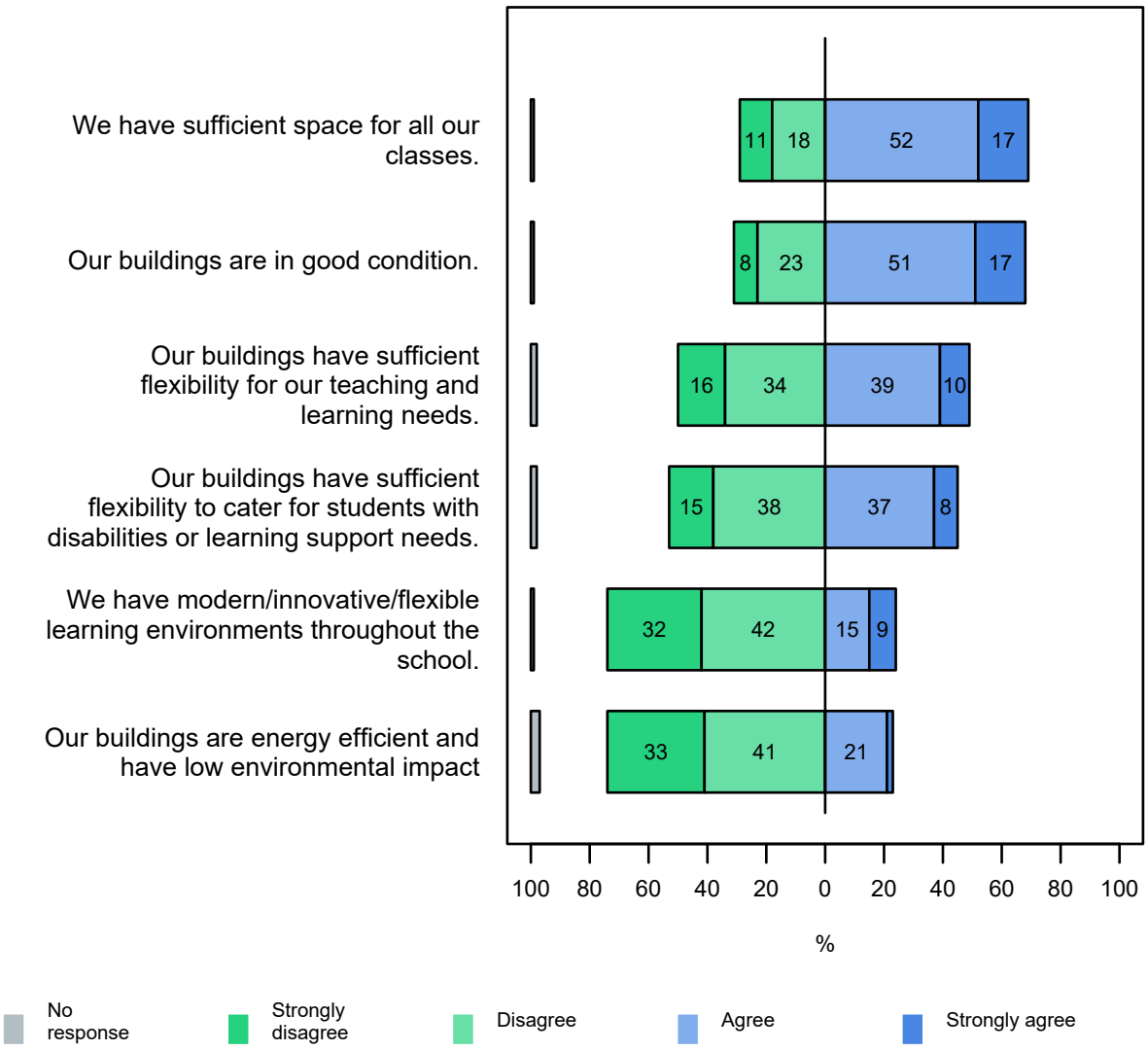
We asked about some positions in particular:

- 24% of all the principals responding had difficulty fnding suitable senior or middle management leaders
- 21% had difficulty finding suitable teachers for students with learning support needs (other than Reading Recovery)
- 17% had difficulty finding suitable teachers for particular curriculum areas
- 12% had difficulty finding suitable teachers to provide Reading Recovery
- Between 17% and 24% of schools also had difficulty finding teachers of te reo Māori for different levels (this is reported fully in Section 3). These are much higher proportions than in 2016.

Two-thirds of schools have sufficent space for all classes and buildings in good condition

Around two-thirds of the principals thought their school buildings were in good condition, and that they had sufficient space for all their classes. They were less positive about the flexibility of their buildings. Around a quarter reported energy efficient buildings and flexible learning environments throughout the school. Figure 65 has the details.

FIGURE 65 **Views of school buildings (Principals, *n* = 145)**



Principals' reports of what they were doing in response to climate change included reducing energy consumption, waste, and emissions, but their comments indicated the need for more system-level support to enable this.[57]

Student transience is a particular issue for decile 1 and 2 schools

The issues arising from student transience have been identified by principals as difficulty managing resources and staff, security of housing and family for children, poor attendance, behaviour or learning among transient children, and ensuring that they experienced continuity in their learning.[58]

57 See Bolstad, R. (2020). *Climate change and sustainability in primary and intermediate schools: Findings from the 2019 NZCERnational survey of English-medium school*. NZCER. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/climate-change-and-sustainability-primary-and-intermediate-schools

58 Wylie, C. (2017). *School resources, relations with other schools, and support. Findings from the NZCER National Survey of Primary and Intermediate Schools 2016.* NZCER. pp 7–9. https://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/National%20Survey_Resources_Nov17.pdf

In 2019, student transience was often an issue for 17% of the principals, and sometimes an issue for a further 46%. These proportions are much the same as in 2016 and 2013. It is an issue particularly for decile 1 and 2 schools: 42% of these principals said it was often an issue, followed by 27% of decile 3 and 4 school principals. It was not often an issue for any of the decile 9 and 10 school principals.

Direct competition for students affects over half of primary schools, but more schools have enrolment schemes, taking fewer out-of-zone students

Direct competition with other schools for students was reported by 56% of the principals, as it was by 63% in 2016. Three was the median number of schools with whom the principal felt their school was competing for students, with a range from one other school, to 11 other schools. This range is much the same as in 2016.

Competition for students was related to whether a school had spare places, but it was felt across the board. It was felt more by principals who had places for all students who applied, 72%, but it was also felt by 46% of those whose school rolls were full and 42% of the schools with an enrolment scheme.

In 2019, 61% of the schools had places for all the students who applied, not significantly different from the 67% in 2016. Forty-six percent had enrolment schemes, up from 38% in 2016, and 1% were thinking of having one. Enrolment schemes are related to school decile, with 21% of decile 1 and 2 school principals reporting they had an enrolment scheme, rising to 68% of decile 7 and 8 school principals, and 62% of decile 9 and 10 school principals.

Almost all of the schools with enrolment schemes took students from beyond their zone. In 2019, such students were not as high a proportion of the roll as they had been in 2016. Fifty-five percent of schools had up to 10% of their students from out of zone, compared with 37% in 2016. Conversely, fewer schools had more than 40% of their students from out of zone: 9% compared with 18% in 2016.

Interactions with other primary schools are common but often limited

We asked principals about their interaction with other schools. Table 32 shows high levels of sharing student sporting and to a lesser extent cultural events, and of professional learning. Sharing of student information when students change schools is still not universal. There is no evidence of an increase since 2016 for most of the activities we asked about in both years, even though many principals reported that their school belonged to a Kāhui Ako. However, as reported in the section on Kāhui Ako, there is more interaction related to students and learning among schools that belong to a Kāhui Ako.

Table 32 shows that around a third of the schools taking part in the 2019 national survey had ongoing interaction with other schools encompassing sharing and discussing their work, and working together to achieve satisfactory outcomes for individual students.

Schools' interaction with other schools ranged from 4% that had one or two kinds of interaction only, to 24% that had 10 or more different kinds of interaction with other schools. Just over 40% of the principals reported five to seven different kinds of interaction with other schools.

There was less reporting by decile 1–2 school principals of sharing or discussing student achievement data with other schools (21%), sharing information on an individual student moving schools (63%), or sharing/reflecting on leadership practice at the principal level (67%).

TABLE 32 **Schools' interactions with other primary and intermediate schools**

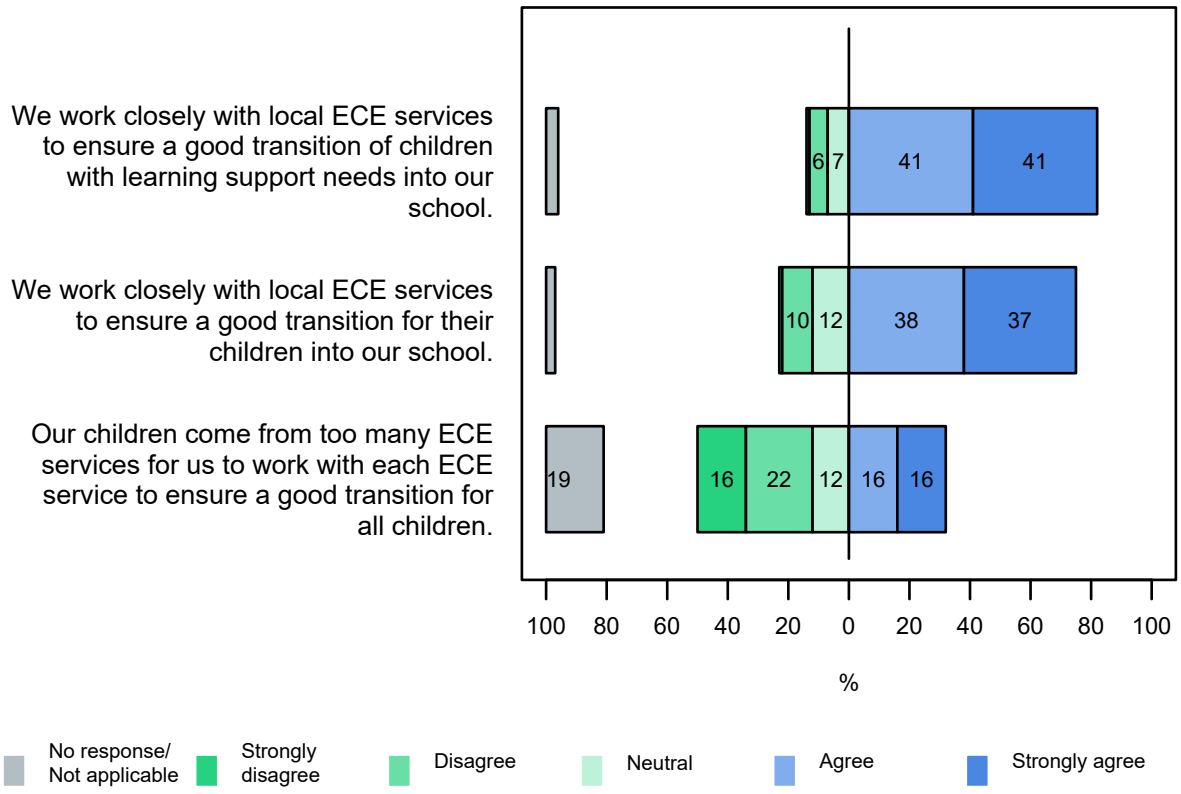
	2013 Principals (*n* = 172) %	2016 Principals (*n* = 200) %	2019 Principals (*n* = 145) %
Share sporting events	*	98	92
Share individual student information if they move to another school	*	*	82
Share and reflect on leadership practice at the principal level	*	80	81
Share PLD	72	73	77
Visit other schools to learn from each other	43	76	75
Share cultural events	*	79	68
Share challenges and approaches around getting change in pedagogy	*	49	51
Share and discuss each school's student achievement data^	*	41*	43
Share and discuss each school's student wellbeing data	*	*	31
Have regular meetings of schools as a group with social agencies	29	25	31
Work together to place students who are having difficulty in one school into another school	14	23	30
Share and discuss each school's learning support data	*	*	29
Share and discuss our student engagement data#	*	20	26
Work with other local schools to reduce truancy	9	17	15

*= Not asked.
^ In 2016, this question was phrased "discuss school achievement data"
# In 2016, this question was phrased "discuss our student engagement data"

Most schools work with early childhood education services to support their students' transition

Most primary school principals reported that they worked closely with local ECE services to ensure a good transition, and somewhat more did so for students with learning support needs. But around a third noted that their students came from too many ECE services for them to be able to work with each one of these services. Figure 66 has the details.

FIGURE 66 **Schools' work with ECE services to support transition to school (Principals, *n* = 145)**

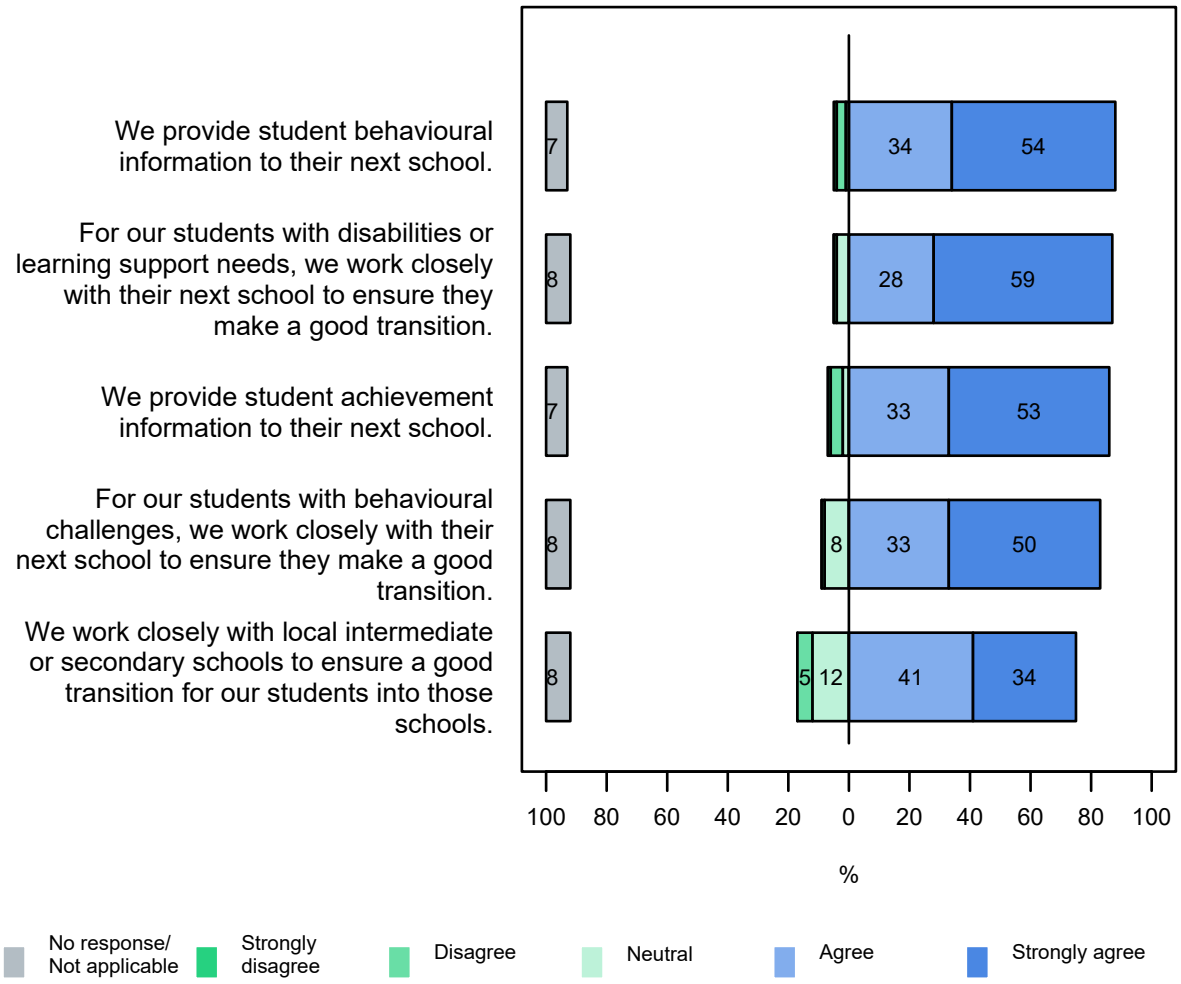


Supporting the transition of students from Kōhanga Reo and other Māori immersion services is described in Section 3. Transition from Pacific language nests is reported in Section 4.

Most schools share information about students to support transition from primary schools

Most principals also reported working closely with local intermediate or secondary schools to ensure a good transition for their students into those schools. Even more provided students' next schools with student achievement and behavioural information—though not all. Perhaps they did not know where students had gone. Almost all worked closely with the next school for students with disabilities or learning support needs, or behavioural challenges. Figure 67 shows that there was a higher level of strong agreement with the items about sharing individual information than for general work with the next schooling level.

FIGURE 67 **Primary schools' work with the next schooling level to support student transition (Principals, *n* = 145)**



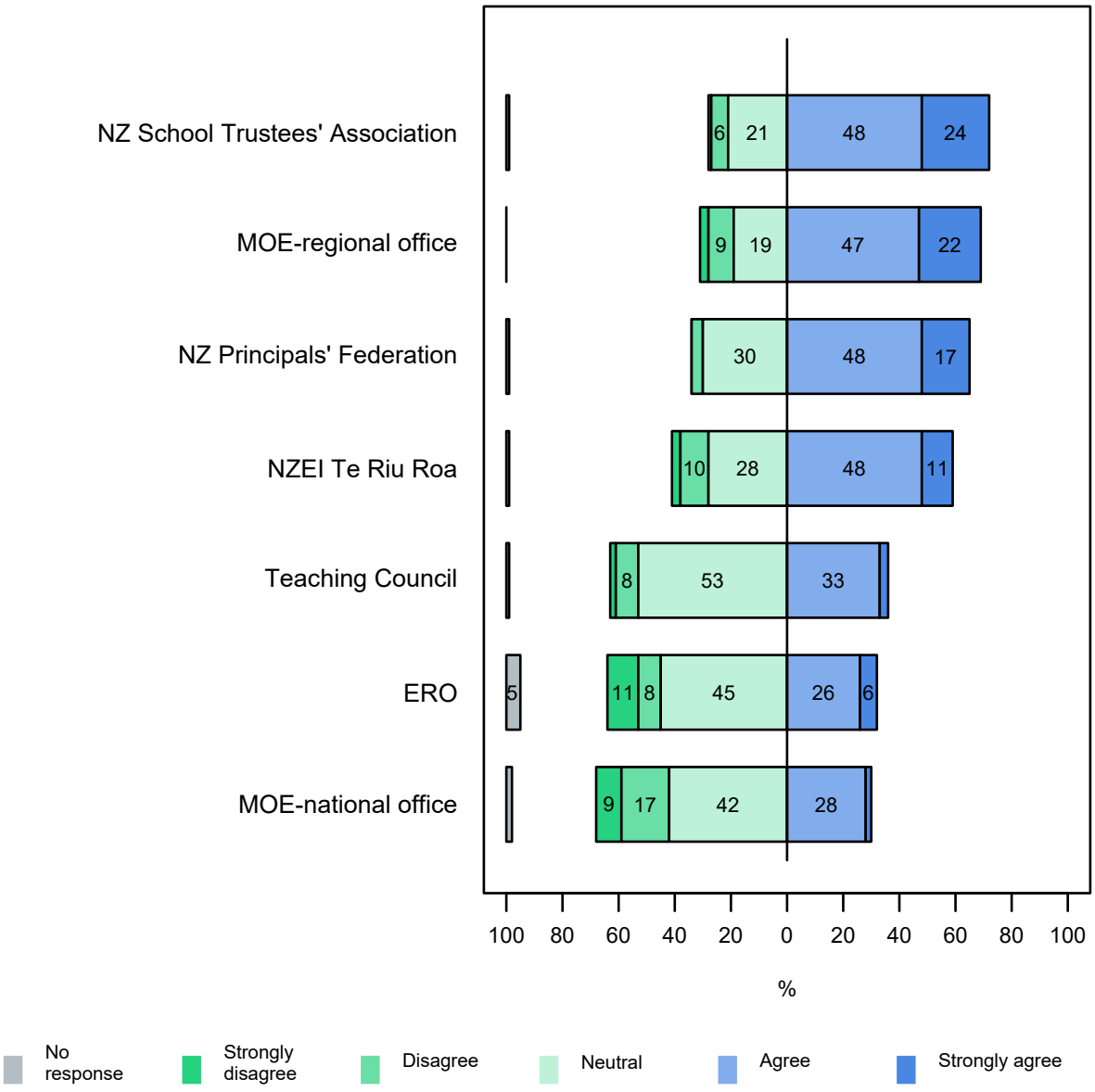
Support for the transition of the relatively few students moving on from rumaki or bilingual units, or who have studied te reo Māori as a subject is reported in Section 3.

Principals are largely positive about national organisations' advice

Figure 68 shows principals' views on whether they had helpful advice in 2019 from government education agencies, NZSTA—which is contracted to provide advice to boards and principals as the school manager—and their own professional organisations. Positive views outweighed negative views for all the organisations. Neutral views are likely to indicate mixed experiences or a lack of contact in 2019; quite a few principals had neutral views, particularly about the Teaching Council, ERO, and the national office of the Ministry of Education.

Principals were more likely to have positive views of the organisations they have approached for information, such as NZSTA or the Ministry of Education regional office, rather than organisations they may have approached for a decision about resources (the national office of the Ministry of Education), or that can make a decision that could affect their standing (ERO).

FIGURE 68 **Principals' views of the helpfulness of advice**[59] **(*n* = 145)**

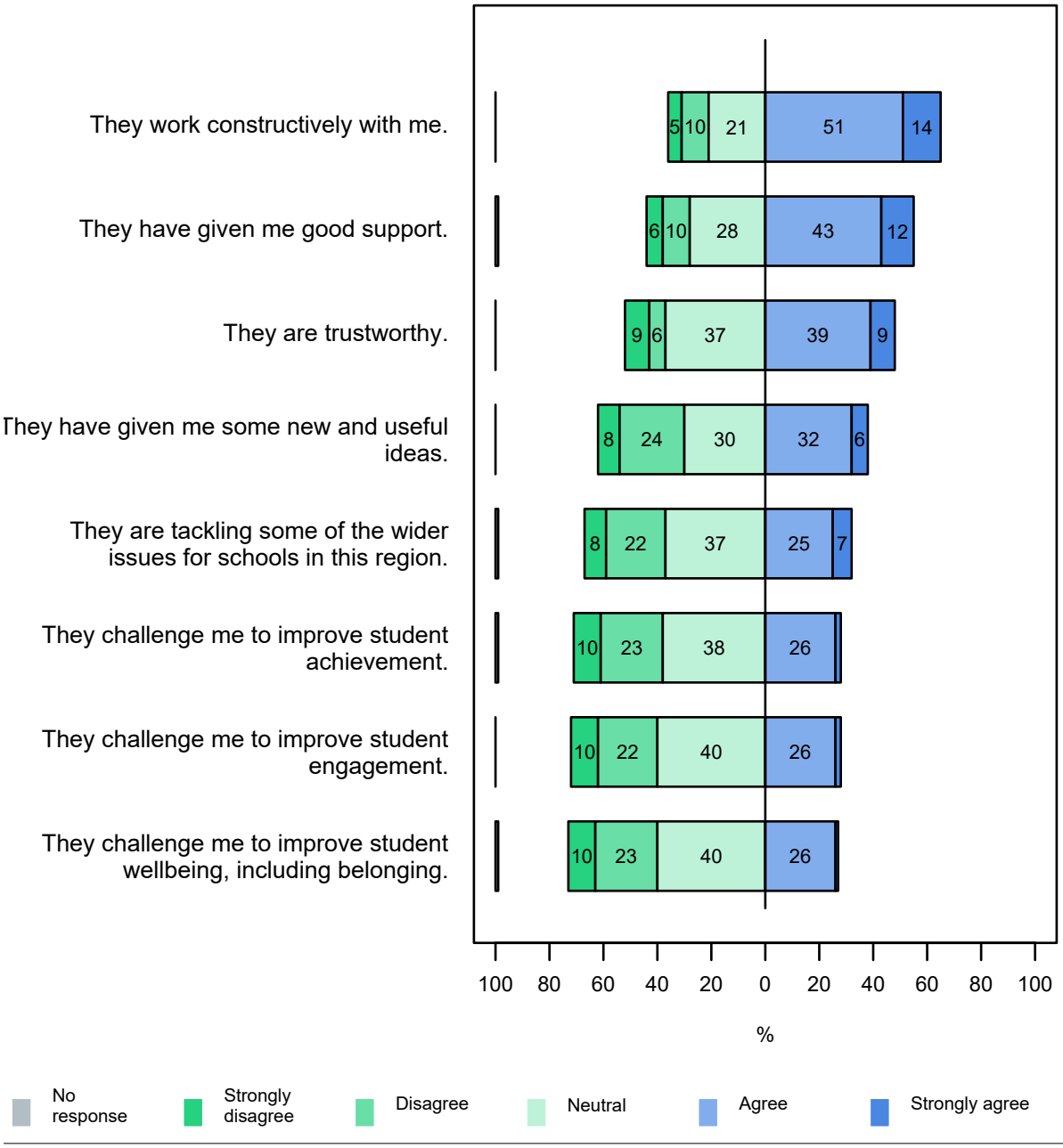


Principals' views of the government agencies and professional organisations were much the same as they expressed in 2016 in relation to their Ministry of Education regional office, and NZSTA, NZPF, and NZEI Te Riu Roa. Fewer principals in 2019 disagreed that the Teaching Council had provided them with helpful advice than in 2016, when the Teaching Council was the Education Council (10% in 2019, 22% in 2016). More principals in 2019 disagreed that the national office of the Ministry of Education had provided them with helpful advice (26% in 2019, 16% in 2016). Fewer principals agreed that ERO had provided them with helpful advice (32% in 2019, 43% in 2016).

We asked further questions about principal experiences with their regional Ministry of Education office (see Figure 69). Many thought that this office had worked constructively with them, and around half felt this office had given them good support and was trustworthy. Neutral views may indicate that principals had mixed views or little contact with their regional office.

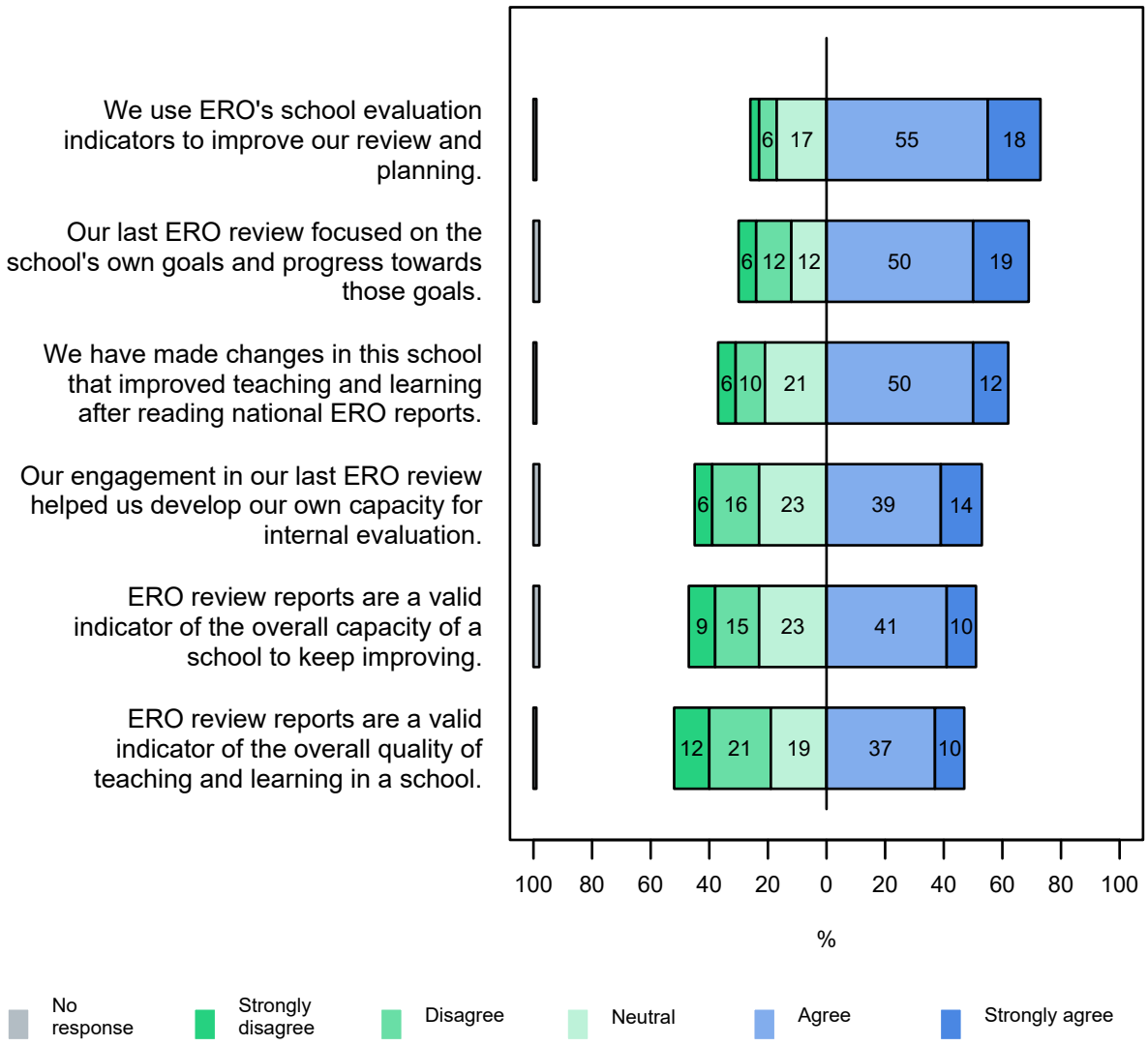
59 MOE = Ministry of Education, ERO = Education Review Office, NZSTA = NZ School Trustees' Association

FIGURE 69 **Principals' views of their regional Ministry of Education office (*n* = 145)**



How do principals see their experiences with ERO, and what use do they make of its school and national evaluations to improve what they do? Figure 70 shows that more principals found value in ERO review reports than thought ERO review reports were valid indicators of a school's quality, or agree that ERO reviews develop school capacity for self-evaluation. The picture here was much the same in 2016.

FIGURE 70 **Principals' views of ERO (*n* = 145)**



There continue to be unmet school needs for external expertise

We asked principals about their access to external expertise to support a range of current and longstanding aspects of schools' work. Table 33 gives the overall picture of the proportions who said they needed expertise but could not readily access it, with the figures for 2016 included for items also asked then.[60] Expertise to work with students with mental health needs tops the list, as it did in 2016. A significant minority of schools also continued to need expertise but could not readily find it to improve their Māori and Pacific students' learning, and differentiate teaching for their students with learning support needs. Digital technology curriculum changes also need more support. Other core areas of schools' work, such as using data and inquiry, or embedding key competencies, have only small proportions unable to access external expertise, or feeling that the school did not need it.

60 Principals could select one of three answers: 'not needed', 'needed and can readily access', and 'needed, but can't readily access'. All the items that had 22% or fewer principals identifying it as an area of needed expertise they could not readily access had around half of the principals saying it was an area they needed external expertise in, which they could readily access.

TABLE 33 **External expertise needed but not readily accessed by schools**

Aspect	2016 Principals (*n* = 200)	2019 Principals (*n* = 145)
Working with students with mental health needs	46	59
Engaging with whānau, hapu, and iwi	*	46
Implementing reliable strategies to support Māori student learning	37	41
Implementing the revisied digital techologies content in the Technology learning area	*	32
Differentiating teaching for students with disabilities or learning support needs	24	30
Implementing reliable strategies to support Pacific student learning	21	29
Engaging with Pacific families	*	26
Selecting effective external advice/support for the school's professional learning	29	22
Supporting or improving student wellbeing	14	19
Engaging with families about providing for students with disabilities or learning support needs	*	16
Promoting positive student behaviour	15	6
Reporting on progress for students with learning support needs	12	8
Embedding key competencies into all learning areas	12	7
Analysing student achievement data	9	6
Using student and school data in ways that improve teaching and learning	19	6
Using teacher inquiry to improve learning	11	3

Resources and support are the major issues school leaders and trustees identify

We asked principals and trustees to identify the major issues facing their school from a set of items, many of which we have asked about in the national surveys since 2010.

Table 34 shows the trends in what principals identified as the major issues facing their school. These issues are not so much the core work of schools—student achievement—but about the human, digital, and physical resources that are needed to enable that work.

The first thing to notice about the major issues identified by principals as ones facing their school are the marked increases in principals' sense of increased expectations of what schools can do, coupled with resourcing difficulties that have grown markedly: in relation to teacher supply, digital technology, class sizes, and property. Funding in general has been a perennial major issue.

The second thing to notice is the challenge principals face in getting support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs: testament in some respects to our growing awareness of needs in this area. There is also an increase since 2013 in the proportion of principals finding student behaviour a major issue in their school. Bullying was less identified as a major issue, by 15% of principals.

In 2019, principals were also more aware of the value of partnerships with iwi and hapū, and the challenges of forging these.

TABLE 34 **Major issues facing principals' schools**

Major issue	2010 (*n* = 207) %	2013 (*n* = 180) %	2016 (*n* = 200) %	2019 (*n* = 145) %
Too much is being asked of schools	*	42	53	72
Funding	66	66	48	67
Cost of purchasing, maintaining, and replacing digital devices & infrastructure[61]	*	*	*	64
Support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs	*	*	*	63
Recruiting quality teachers[62]	22	15	(31)	56
Property maintenance or development	30	38	48	55
Staffing levels / Class sizes	34	18	38	53
Partnership with iwi and hapū	*	*	30	46
Retaining quality teachers	27	25	(31)	39
Good quality professional learning and development	*	*	30	37
Achievement of students with learning support needs[63]	*	19	39	34
Parent and whānau engagement	*	*	*	28
Student behaviour[64]	12	12	21	28
Using modern/innovative learning environments effectively	*	*	*	27
Student achievement	33	35	31	26
Māori student achievement	18	29	34	25
Pacific student achievement	8	13	19	16
Student bullying, including cyber bullying	*	*	*	15
Student engagement	*	*	*	15
Responding to cultural diversity	6	14	9	12

* = Not asked.

61 In 2016, the equivalent item was "Maintenance/replacement of digital technology," identified by 52% of principals as a major issue for their school.
62 In the 2016 national survey, we amalgamated items about teacher supply, and asked about "attracting or recruiting good teachers": 31% of principals identified this as a major issue for their school.
63 In 2016, this item referred to students with additional education needs, the terminology then in use for this group of students.
64 In 2010 the item was "student behaviour/discipline"; in 2013 "improving student behaviour".

Decile 7–10 school principals were least likely to identify recruiting quality teachers, student behaviour, parent and whanau engagement, or student bullying as major issues for their school. Decile 1–2 school principals had more principals identifying recruiting quality teachers as a major issue (79%), Māori student achievement (47%), and student bullying (38%).

Table 35 shows the trends in what trustees identify as the major issues facing their school. Of note is the increase in the proportion of trustees who identified funding as a major issue facing their school, showing a similar pattern as principals.

The proportion of trustees identifying staffing levels / class sizes as a major issue shows little change from 2016 at 40%, but it remained considerably higher than the 20% who selected it in 2013. Recruiting quality teachers was identified as an issue by 33% of the trustees, considerably increased from 8% in 2013 and 15% in 2016 (when it was combined with retention in the item "attracting and/or keeping good teachers").

A smaller proportion of trustees identified student achievement as a major issue facing their school (12% down from 21% in 2016 and 27% in 2013).

TABLE 35 **Trustees' views of major issues facing their school**

Major issue	2010 (*n* = 257) %	2013 (*n* = 277) %	2016 (*n* = 126) %	2019 (*n* = 126) %
Funding	65	55	34	56
Staffing levels/class sizes	12	20	36	40
Parent/whānau engagement (in 2013: Increasing parent support for learning)	24	34	25	35
Property maintenance or development	29	43	43	34
Recruiting quality teachers	10	8	*	33
Cost of purchasing, maintaining, and replacing digital devices/ infrastructure	*	*	19	29
Support for students with mental health or additional wellbeing needs	*	*	*	26
Achievement of students with learning support needs	*	18	21	25
Māori student achievement	14	30	25	23
Retaining quality teachers	24	16	*	21
Partnerships with iwi and hāpu	*	*	13	18
Too much being asked of schools	*	15	17	18
Student behaviour (2010: student behaviour/discipline)	8	11	14	15
Student achievement	25	27	21	12
Responding to cultural diversity	4	10	7	11
Pacific student achievement	2	16	14	10
Student bullying (2013: Decreasing bullying)	*	7	*	10
Using modern/innovative learning environments effectively	*	*	*	10
Good quality PLD (2013: Insufficient support for professional learning	10	9	7	8
Student engagement (previously Motivating and engaging students)	2	11	5	6

* Not asked in that year

Few of these major issues identified by trustees were associated with school decile. Trustees from decile 3–4 schools were more likely than other trustees to report that Māori student achievement and Pacific student achievement were major issues facing their school. Only trustees from decile 1–4 schools reported that student engagement was a major issue.

Summary

There were few surprises in the views reported in this section. Squaring available resources with growing expectations has long been an issue for schools. Gains are unlikely to be made here unless there is more government funding and active support, and concerted work to make more of the time and money available.

In 2019 school rolls were somewhat fuller, more schools had zones, and were taking fewer out-of-zone students. Interaction between schools was common, particularly sharing sporting events, professional learning and development, visiting other schools to learn from them, or talking with fellow principals. Around a third of the schools taking part in the 2019 national survey have ongoing interaction with other schools encompassing sharing and discussing their work, and working together to achieve satisfactory outcomes for individual students.

Principal views of the helpfulness of the advice they receive from government organisations and their own representative organisations are related to the role they play, with more positive views of those that give them advice than those whose decisions affect their school. Quite a few principals had neutral views, suggesting that they may have had no contact or mixed experiences with these organisations.

Views had not changed much from 2016, with some improvement evident in relation to the (now) Teaching Council, the national office of the Ministry of Education, and somewhat less satisfaction in relation to ERO. However, many principals continued to find value in ERO school and national reports. Around half thought that ERO reviews were a valid indicator of overall school quality. Most thought their regional Ministry of Education office worked constructively with them, and half thought it had given their school good support, and was trustworthy.

Schools continued to have unmet needs for external expertise that they cannot readily access; this is most evident for particular groups of students, and for engaging with whānau, hapū and iwi, and Pacific families. Schools' growing awareness of the need to partner with iwi and hapū was also evident in almost half the principals identifying this as a major issue for their school.

Resources and support for schools dominate principal and trustee reports of the major issues facing their schools, with principals feeling increasingly that too much is being asked of schools.

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