

**SEPAC**

5/30/2023

## MA General Laws, Section 3 Chapter 71B

*“The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: **advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee’s special education programs.**”*

\*Entirety of Section 3 Chapter 71B has been sent to committee for reference.

## SEPAC Needs Assessments

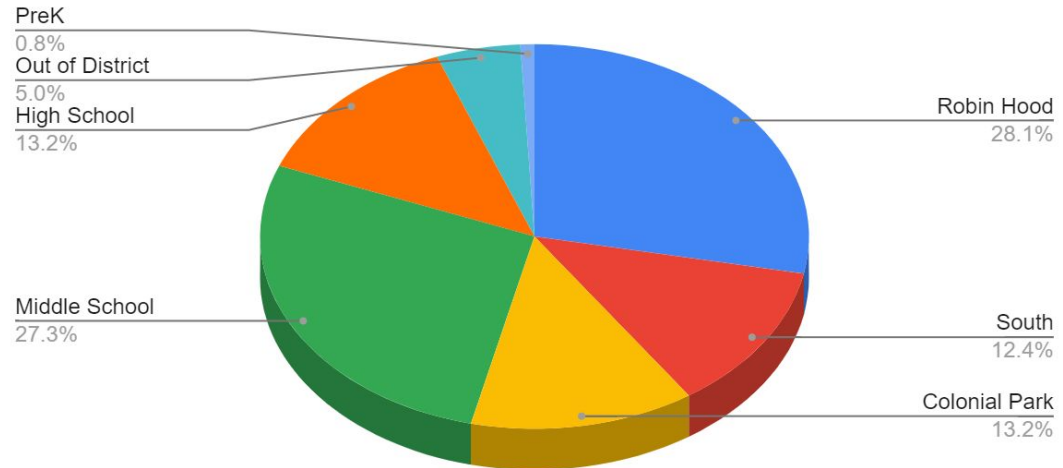
*“Conducting formal and informal needs assessments, such as **online or paper surveys**... serves several purposes....the PAC can then better determine which priorities its members believe are the best to focus on....Information gathered from the needs assessment **can be used to fulfill the PAC’s regulatory responsibility to “participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district’s special education programs”.**”*

- Guidance for Special Education Parent Advisory Councils, DESE (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/pac/guidelines.doc>)

# SEPAC Spring Caregiver Survey

- Data collected 4/30-5/19
- 107 respondents
- Not intended as criticism, but to gather information on pain points and areas of improvement

## School my student attends



# I feel like a valued member of my student's IEP team

**Stongly Disagree**

6.4%

**Disagree**

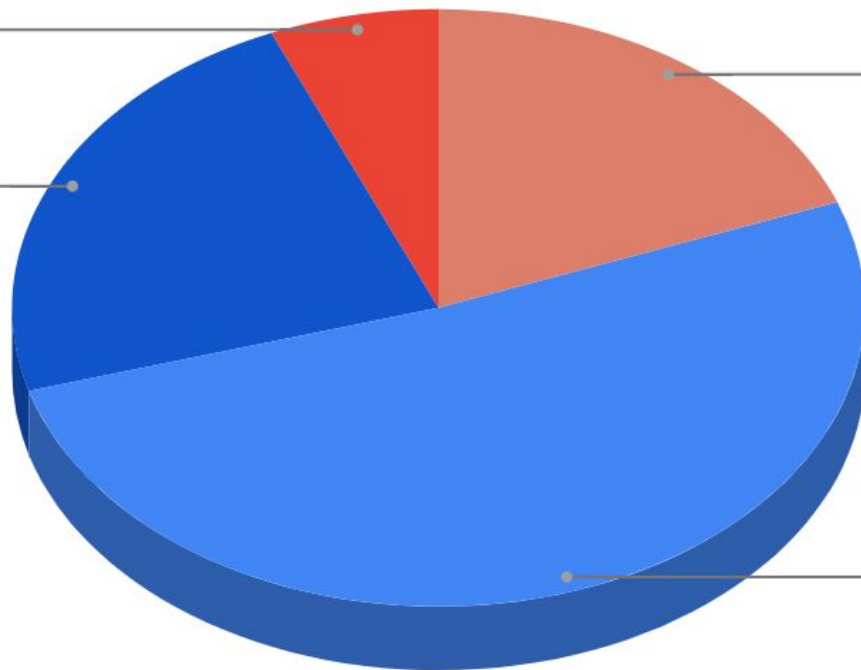
19.2%

**Strongly Agree**

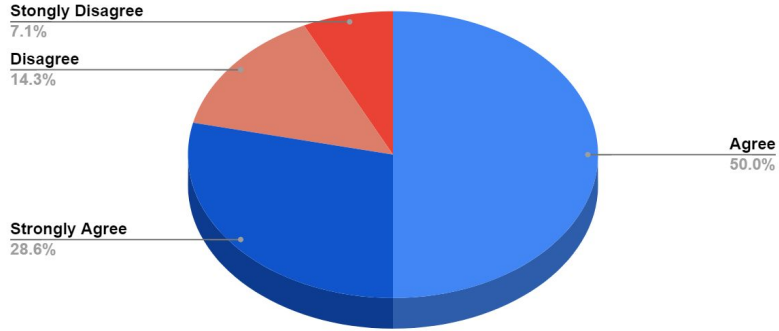
23.1%

**Agree**

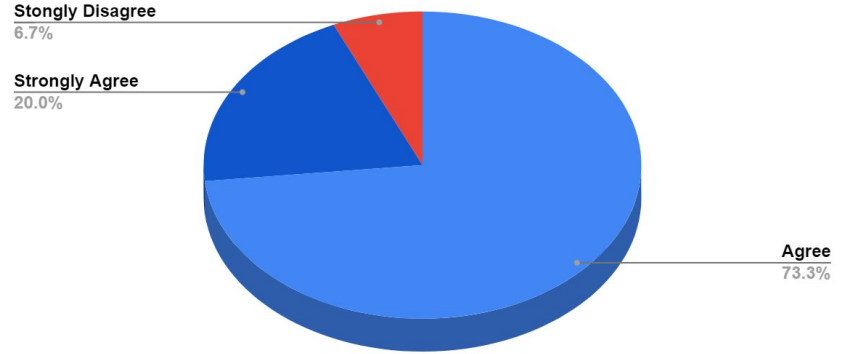
51.3%



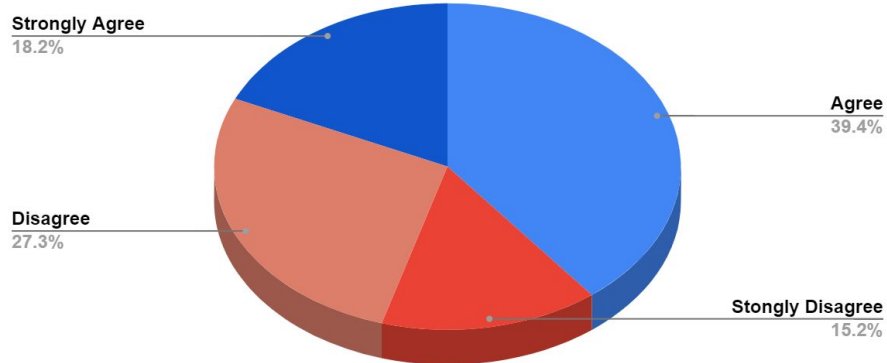
### Colonial Park



### South



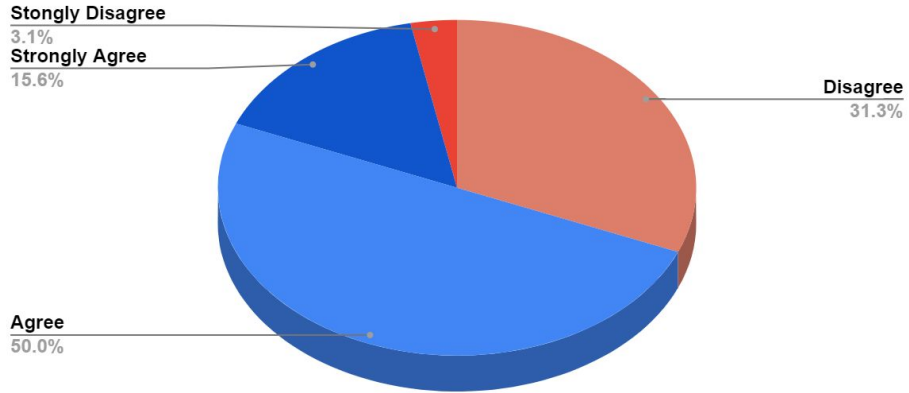
### Robin Hood



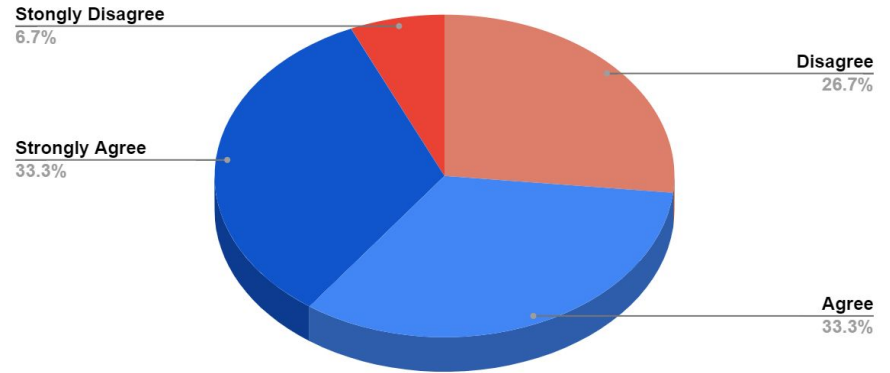
I feel like a valued member of IEP team

# I feel like a valued member of my student's IEP/504 team

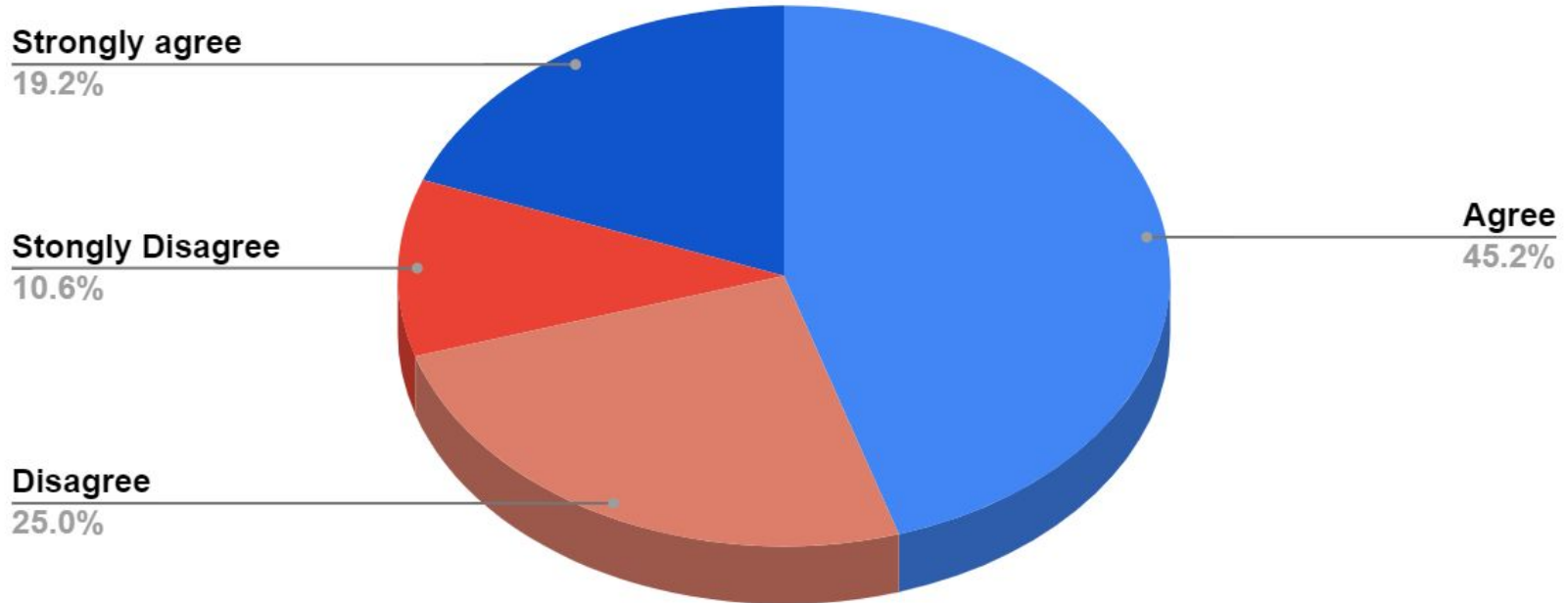
## Middle School



## High School

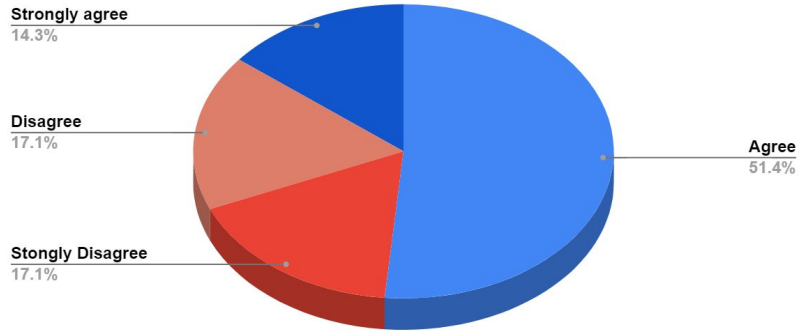


# I believe my student's team always has my student's best interest in mind.

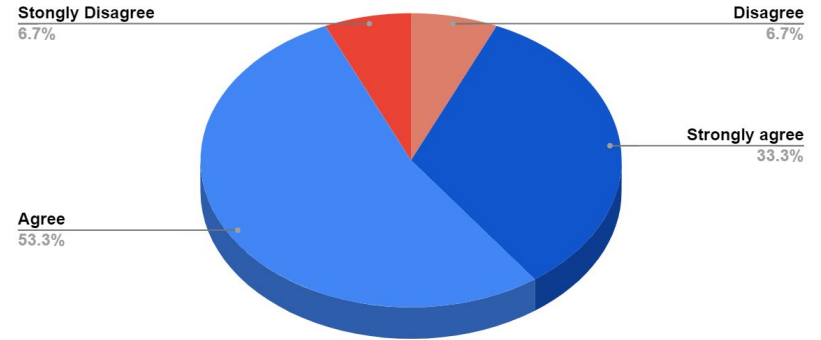




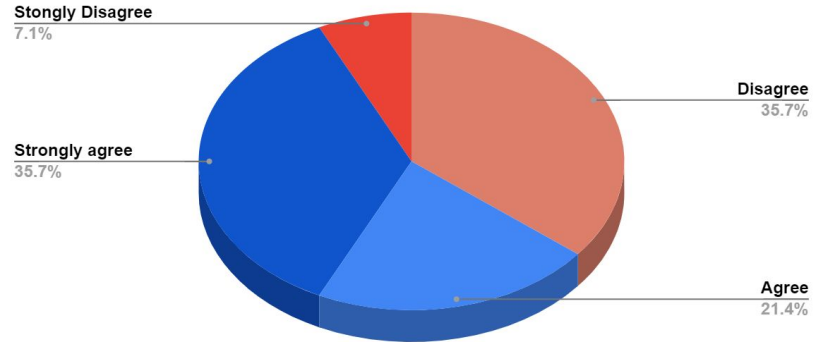
## Robin Hood



## South

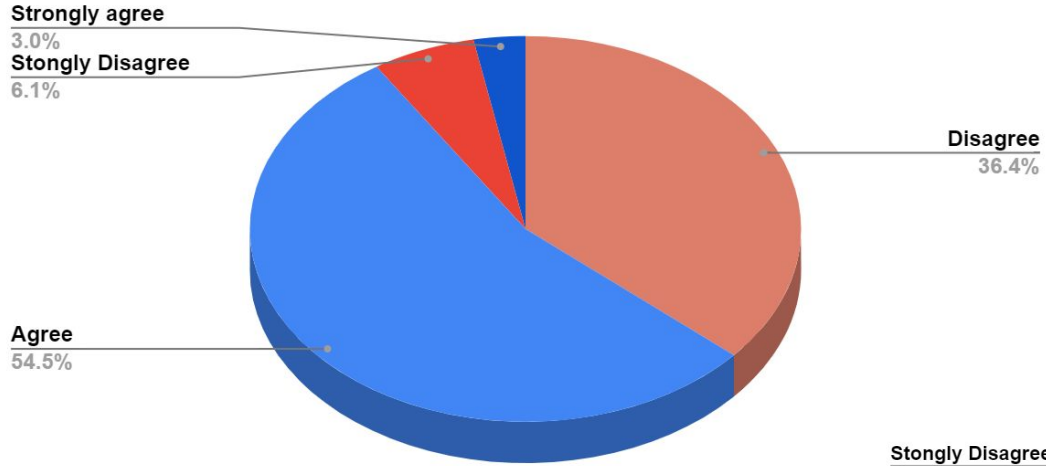


## Colonial Park

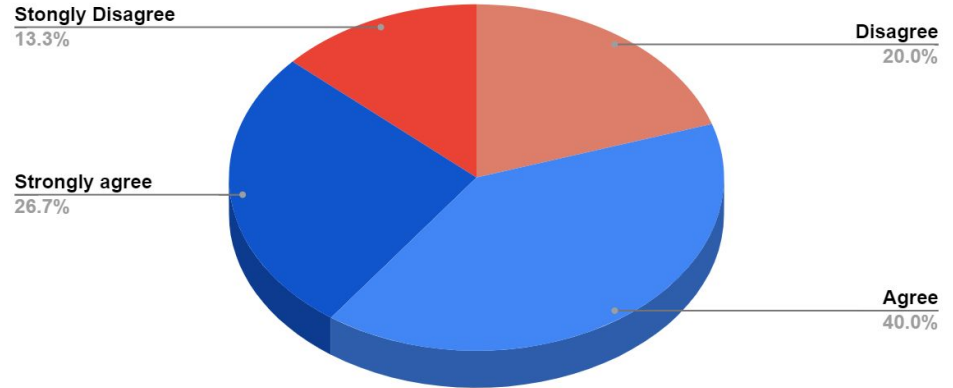


## Best Interests

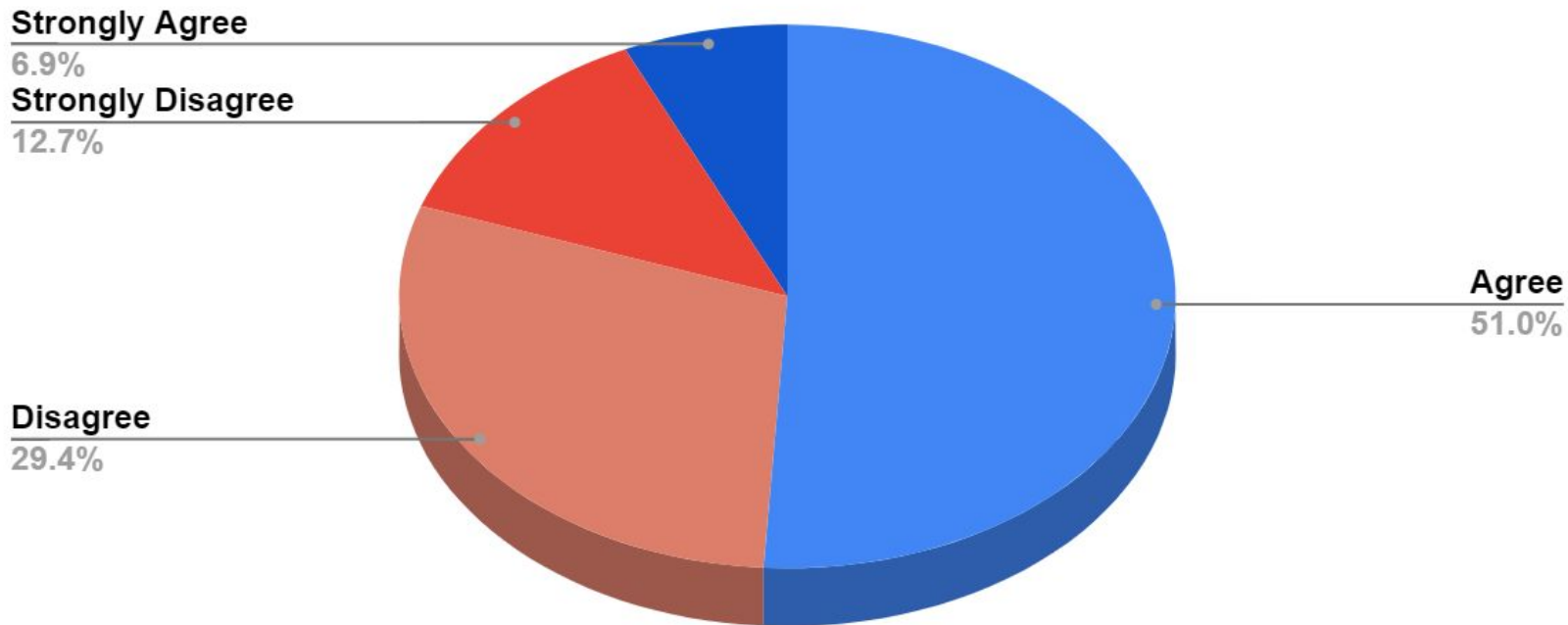
## Middle School



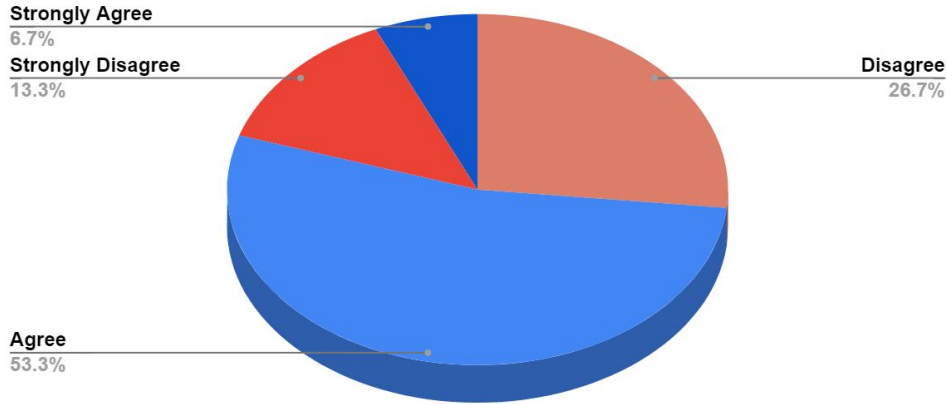
## Best Interests



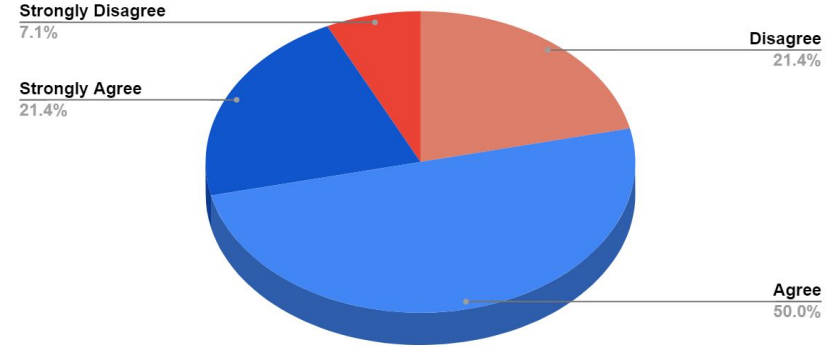
# I found the IEP/504 process to be smooth and easy to understand.



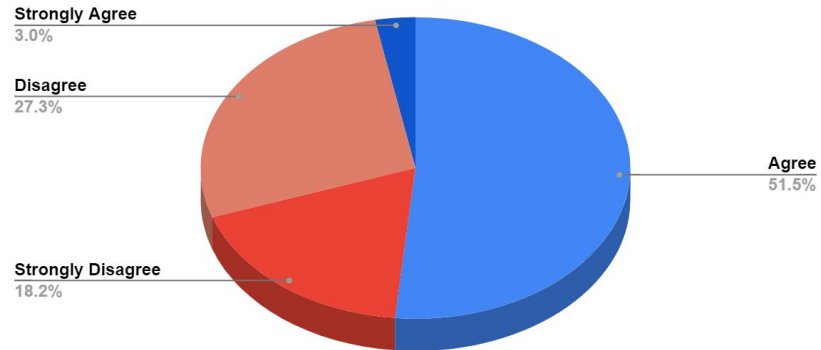
## Colonial Park



## South

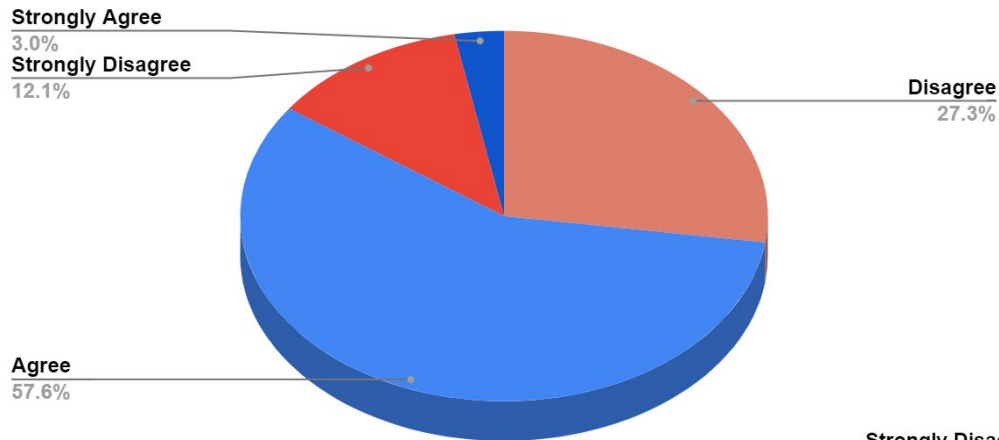


## Robin Hood



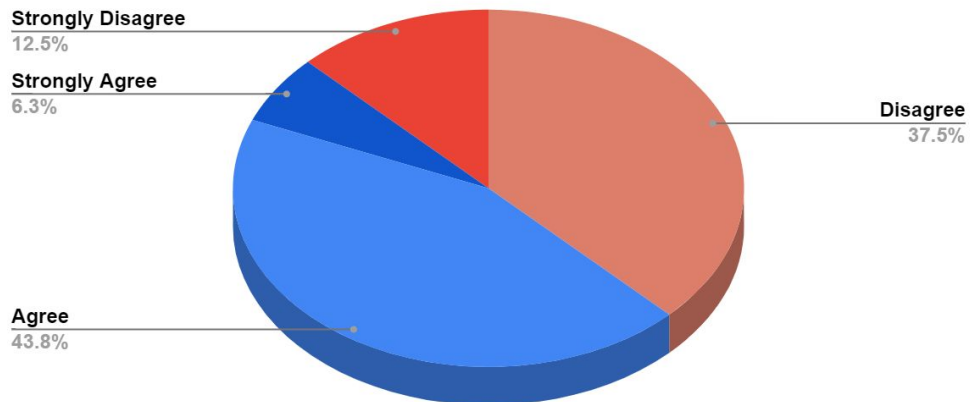
## IEP Process

## Middle School

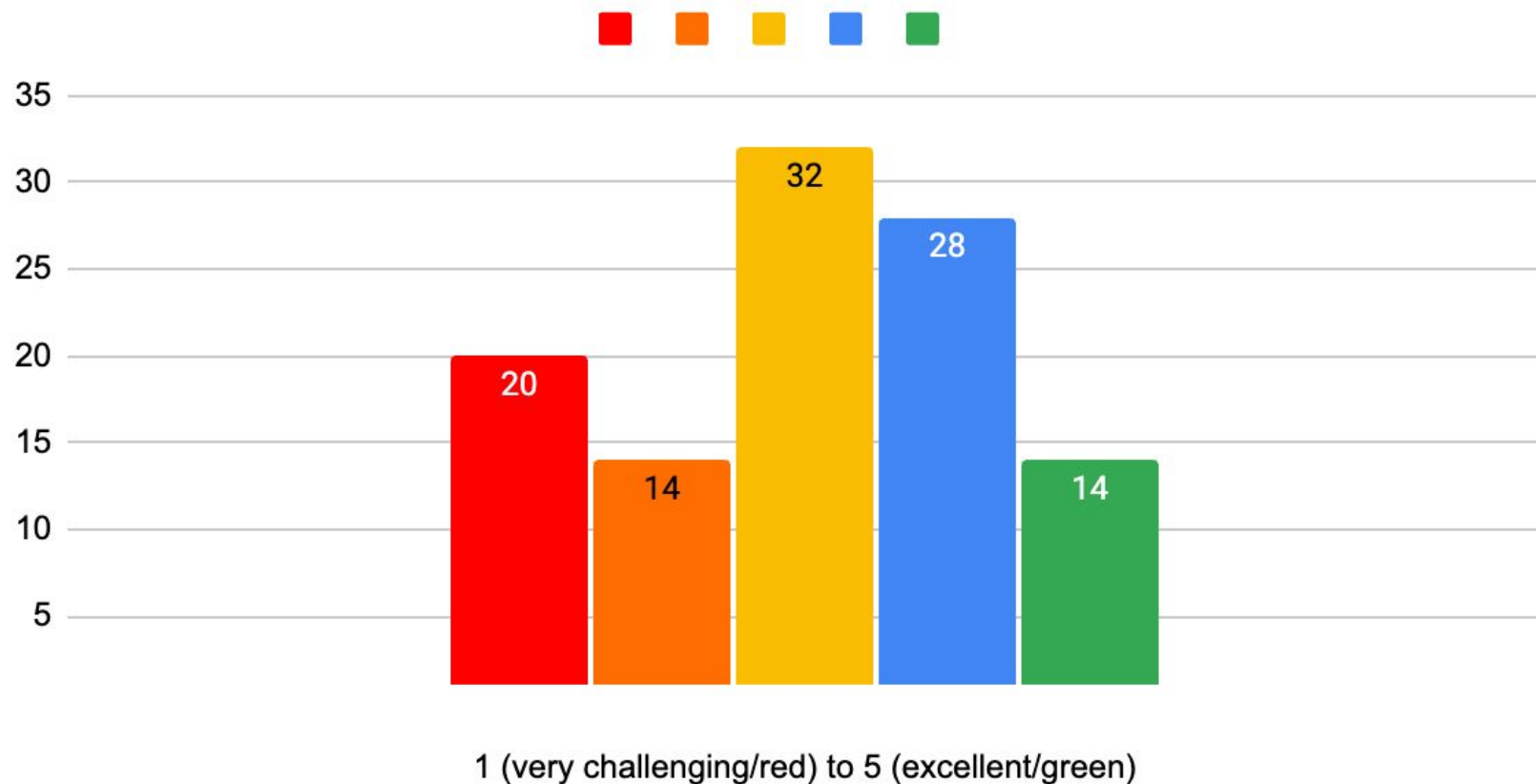


## IEP Process

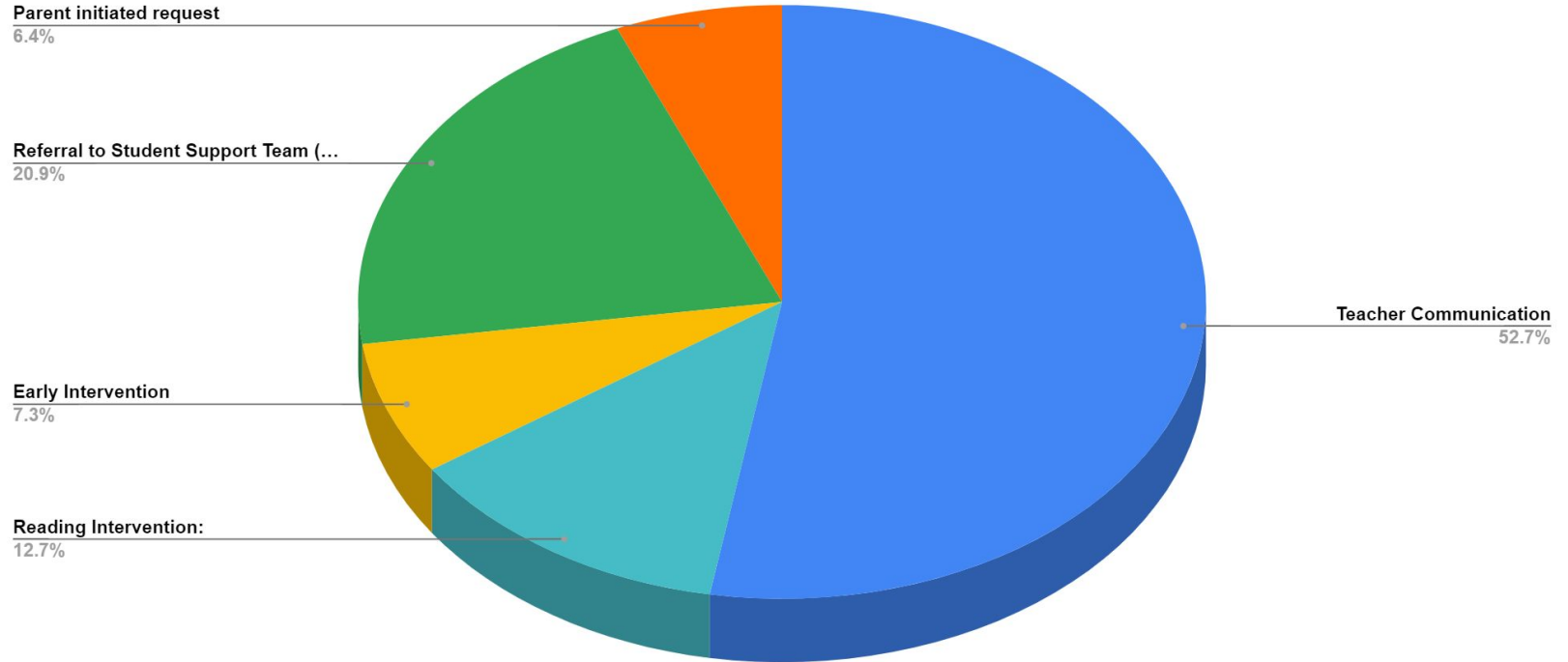
## High School



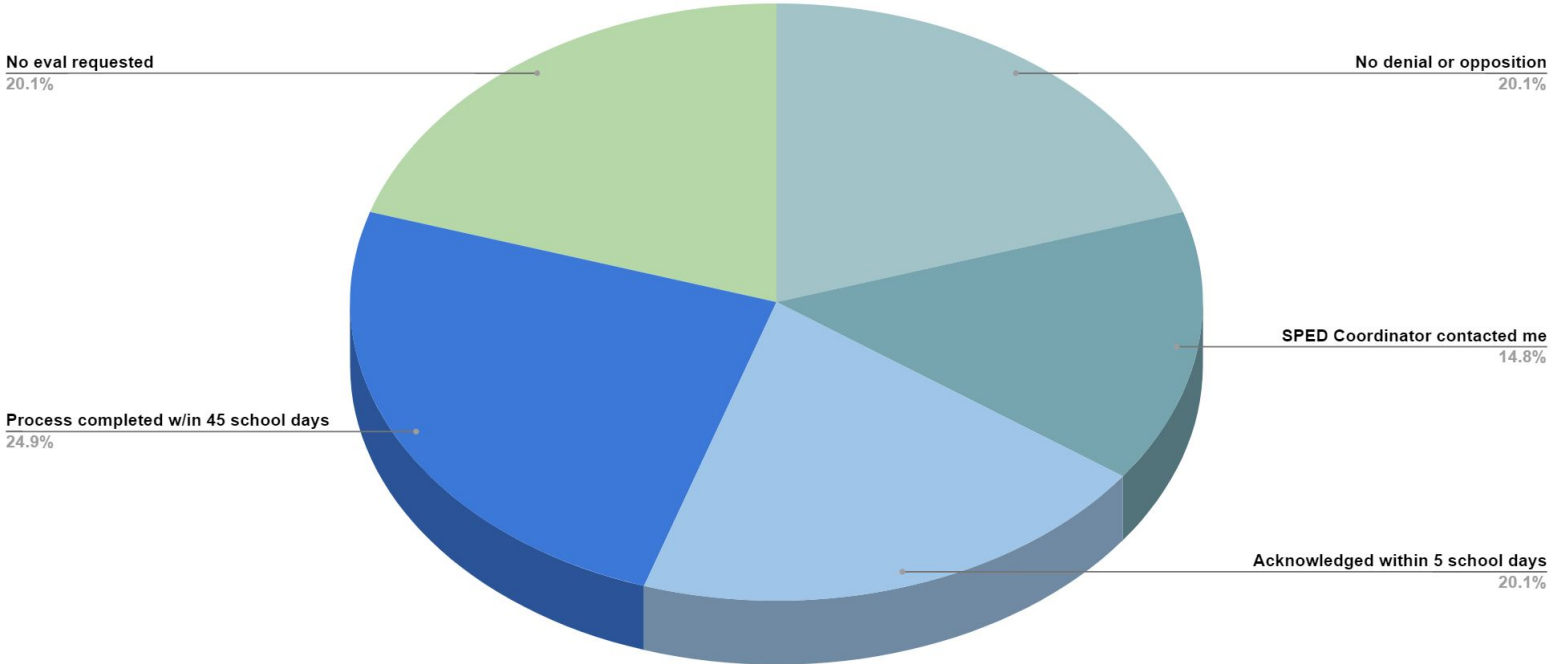
On a scale of 1 (very challenging) to 5 (excellent) rate your IEP experience



## Prior to requesting an eval, we received:

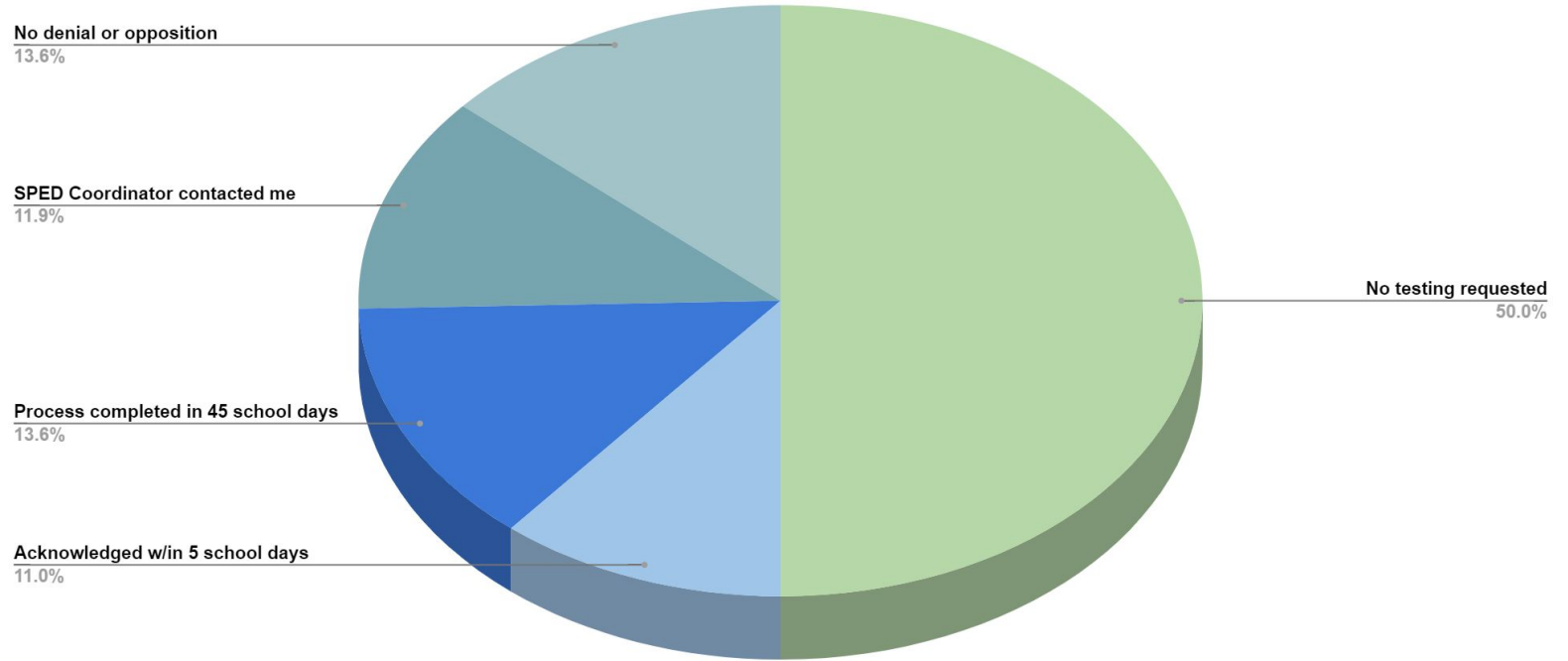


# When I requested an initial evaluation

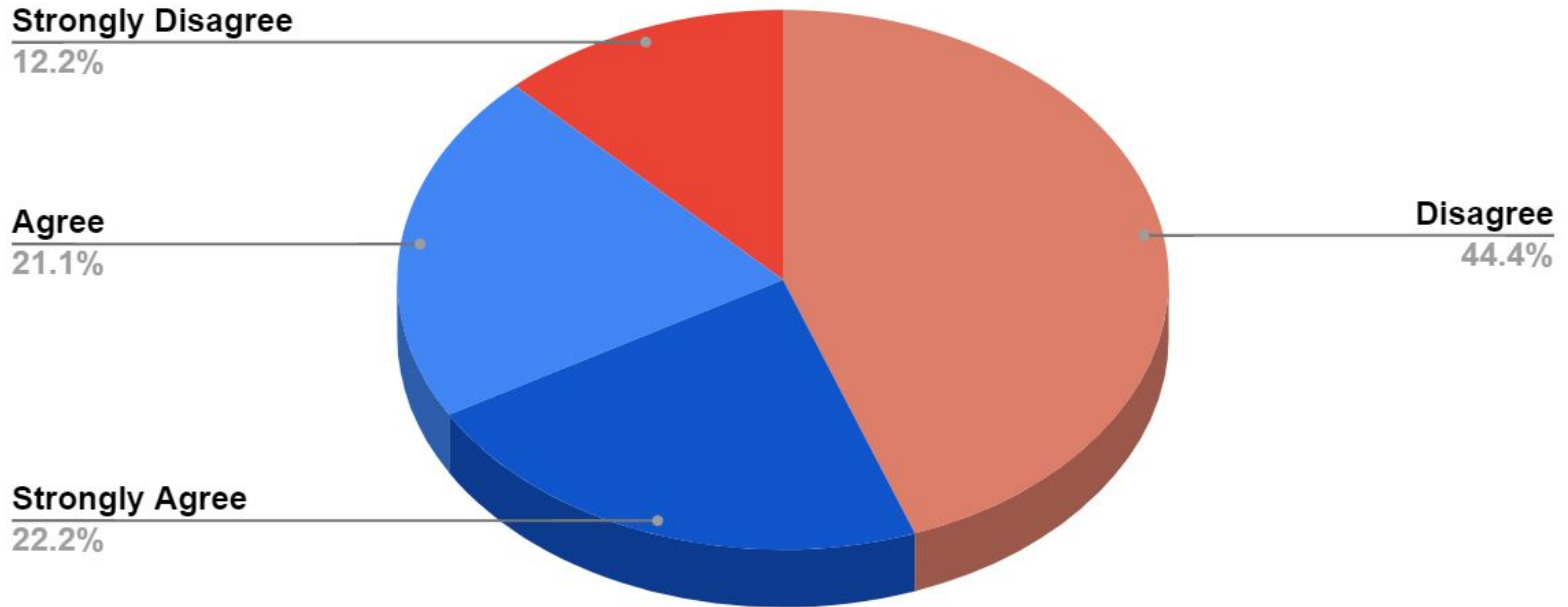




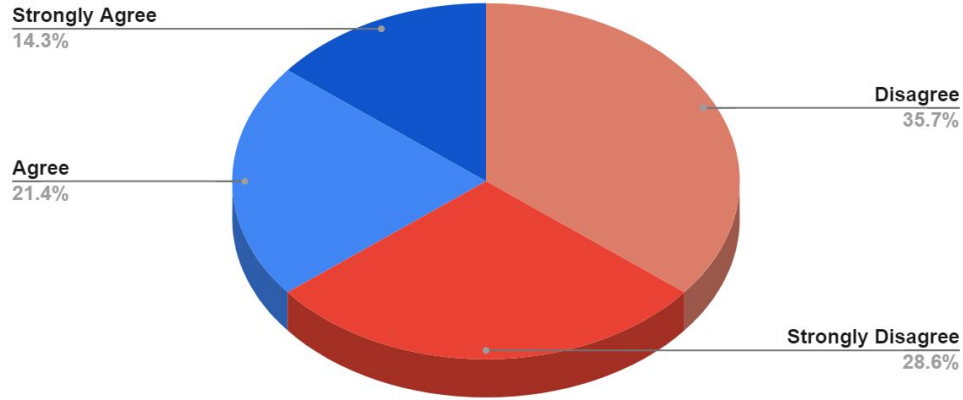
## When I requested additional testing



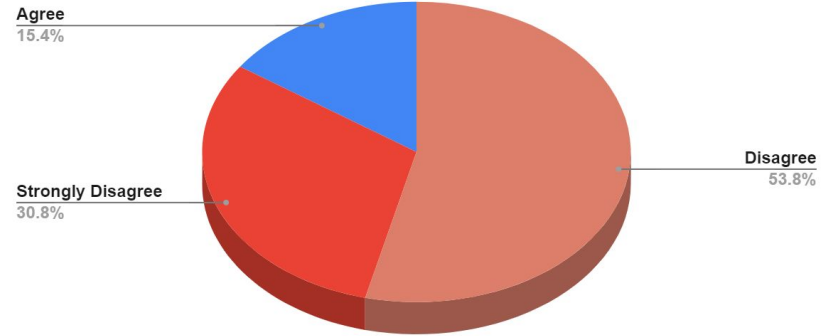
# I worry about retaliation if I push back against a decision made by the district.



## Colonial Park

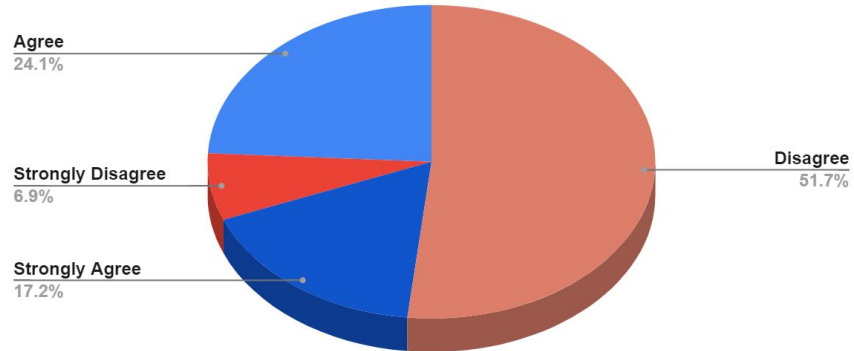


## South

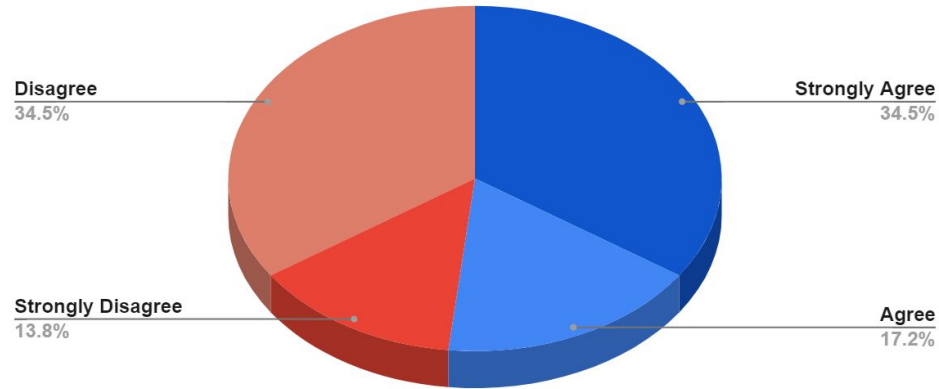


## Robin Hood

## Retaliation concern

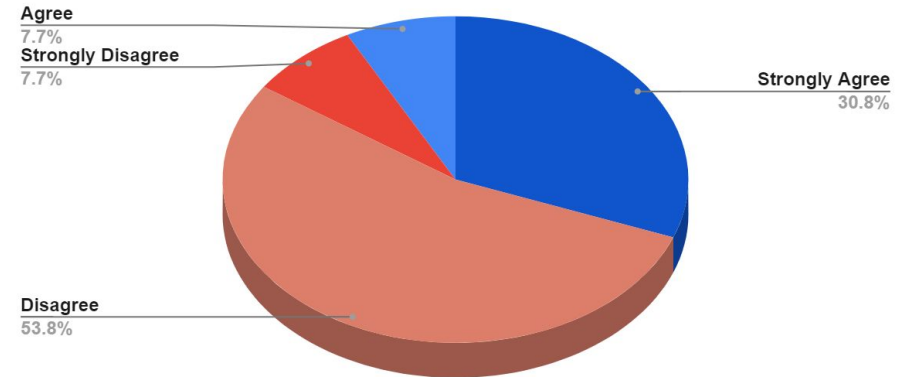


## Middle School



## Retaliation concern

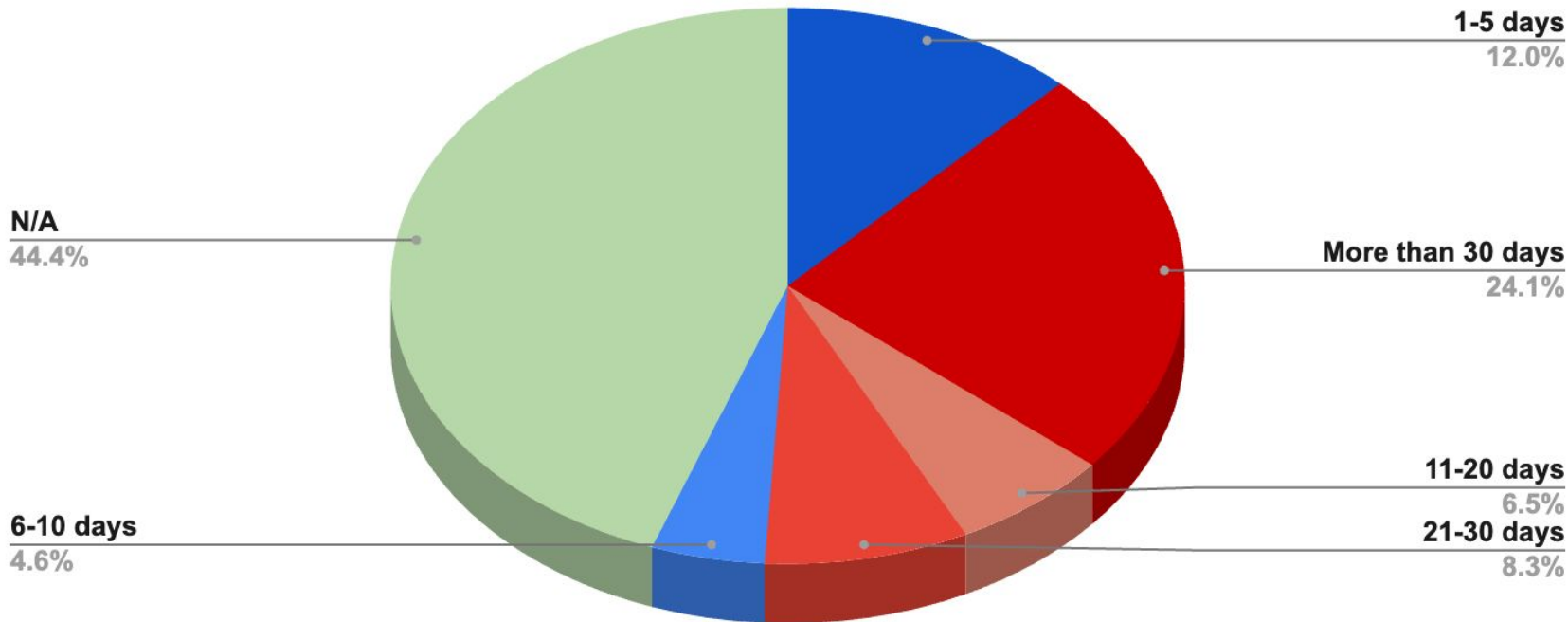
## High School



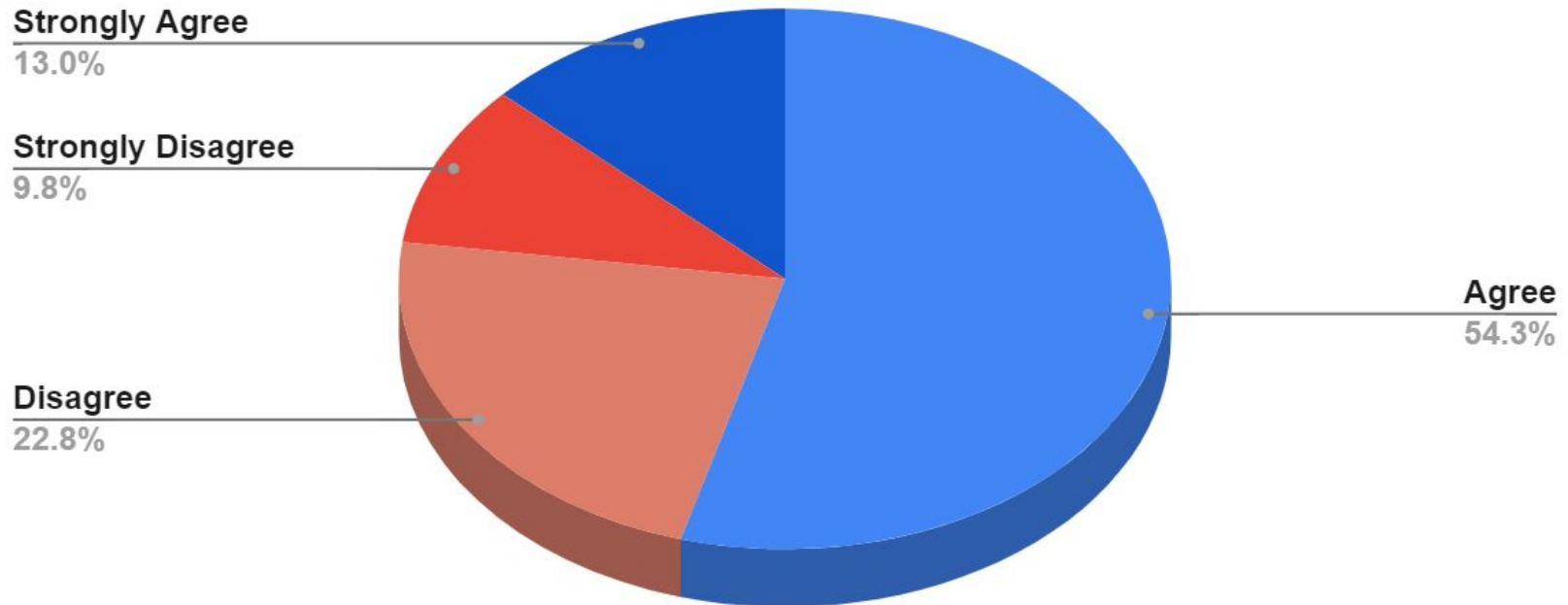
# Why do you worry about retaliation, and what would that look like to you?

- Because of the experiences of my children, the lack of honesty and transparency from members of the special education staff and administrators- principals, vice principals, director of spec. Ed, and the defensive nature and attitude from these individuals when issues are addressed.
- I constantly feel like I need to pick and choose my battles, in fear of retaliation. I feel like I need to let some small things slide so I have better luck fighting for bigger battles. I also frequently have to spend \$80/email out to my advocate, bc I feel the admin doesn't take me seriously unless I have her representing me.
- One is always concerned that pushing back against an overloaded school system will raise the hackles of those we trust to care for and educate our children. You hear stories of things getting dragged out, tripped up, or denied. And I've been told no before to requests for additional services. How hard do you push back without fearing repercussions on your child, whether they mean to or not?
- I feel that the team meets ahead of time and determines a recommended course of action and if I do not fall in line and agree with that, they will be resentful and not look for alternatives. If I complain too much about what is happening in the classroom, they will be less likely to share what is happening and communicate effectively. I've worried if I complain about a specific teacher and what is happening/not in classroom, that they will be less willing to work collaboratively with me and my student. And that if I speak up "too much," I'll not be taken seriously and be known as "that parent."
- I worry that if I push back about decisions made, the team will be less likely to involve me in any future decisions. I worry that I will be labeled as "that parent" and seen as argumentative, rather than trying to do what is best for my child. I worry that if I push too hard, my suggestions will be pushed aside and any issues my child is having will not be communicated to me.

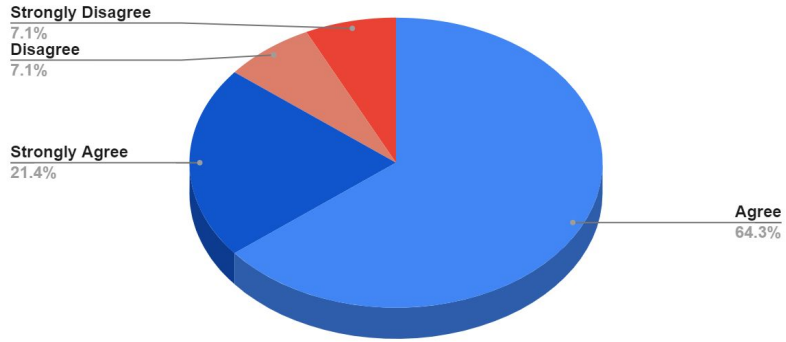
# Communication provided by the district regarding a delay in provision of services was sent in the following time range:



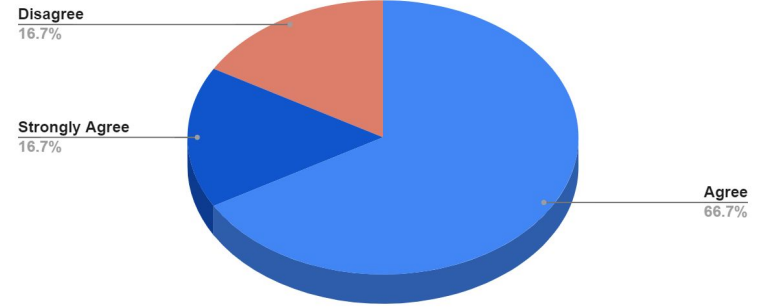
# Accommodations outlined in my student's IEP/504 are consistently provided.



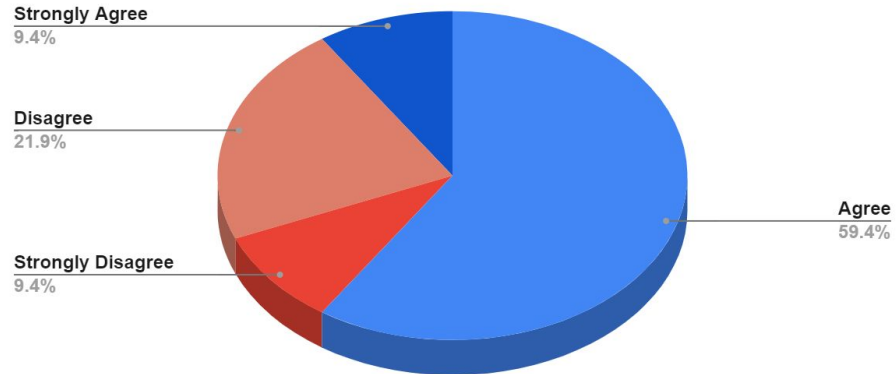
**Colonial Park**



**South**



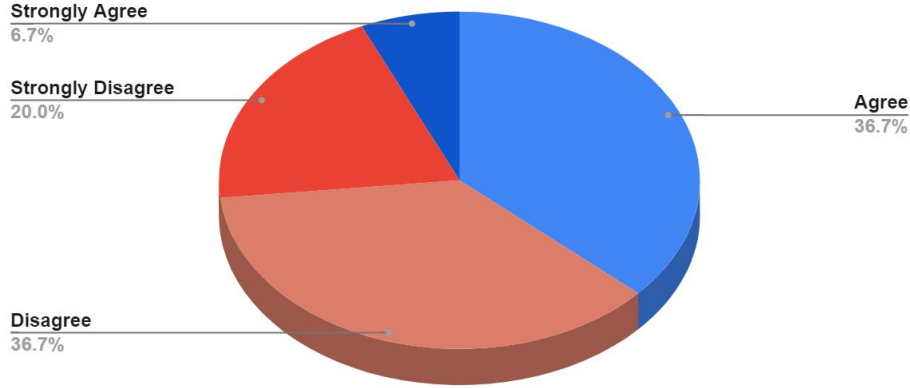
**Robin Hood**



**Accommodations are provided consistently**

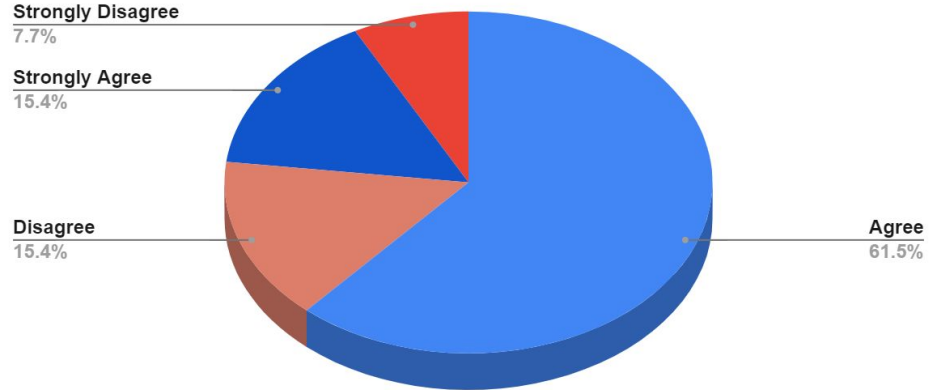


## Middle School

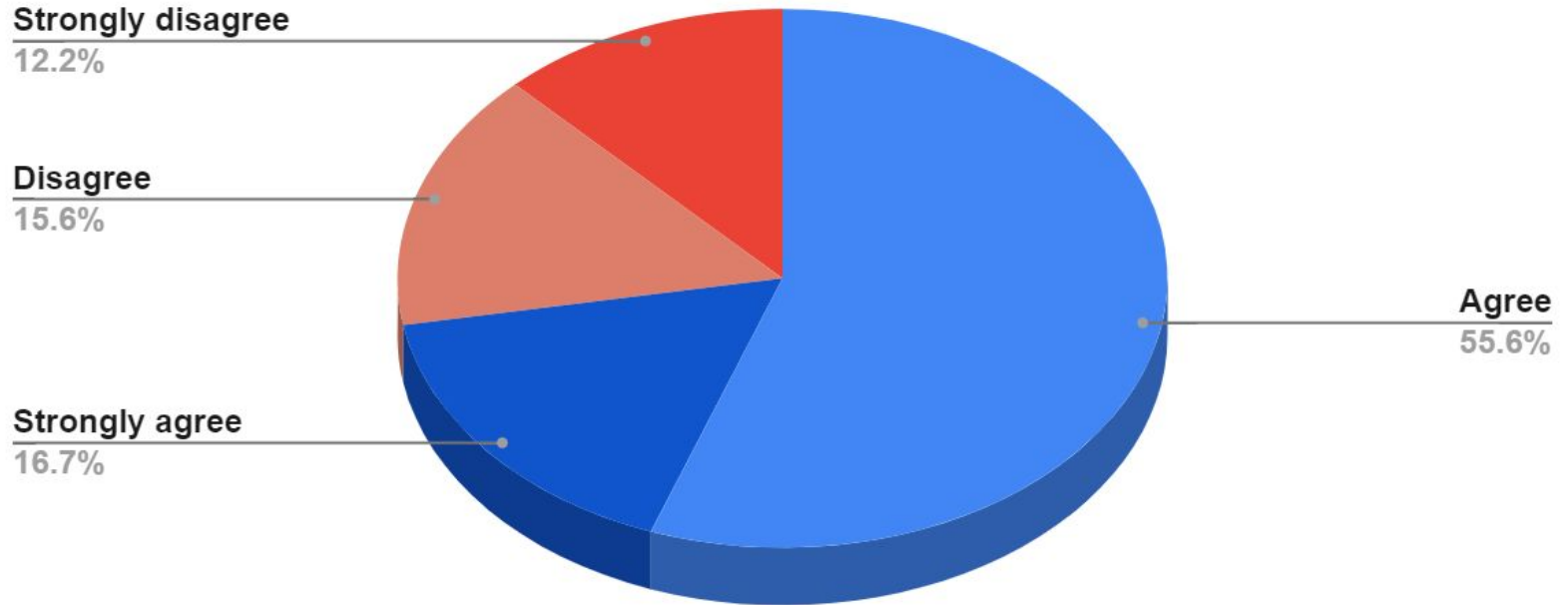


# Accommodations provided consistently

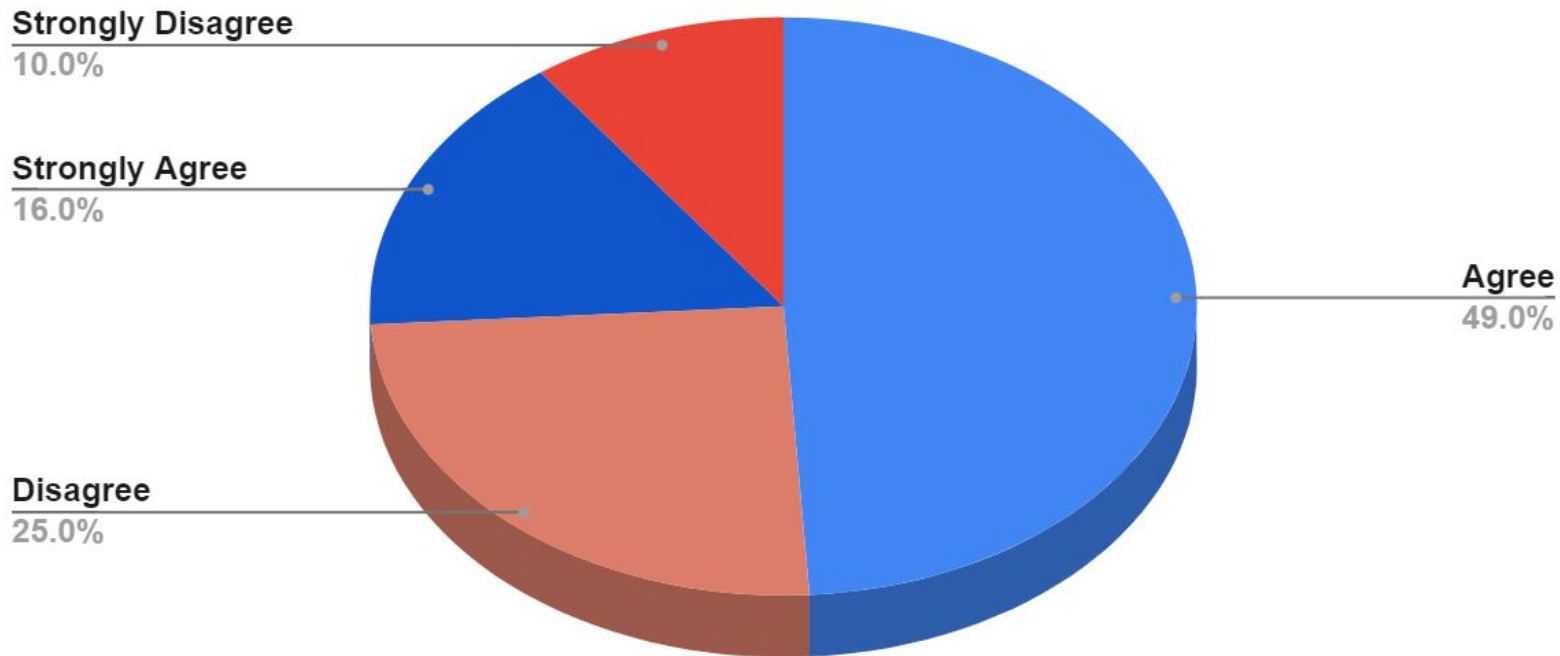
## High School



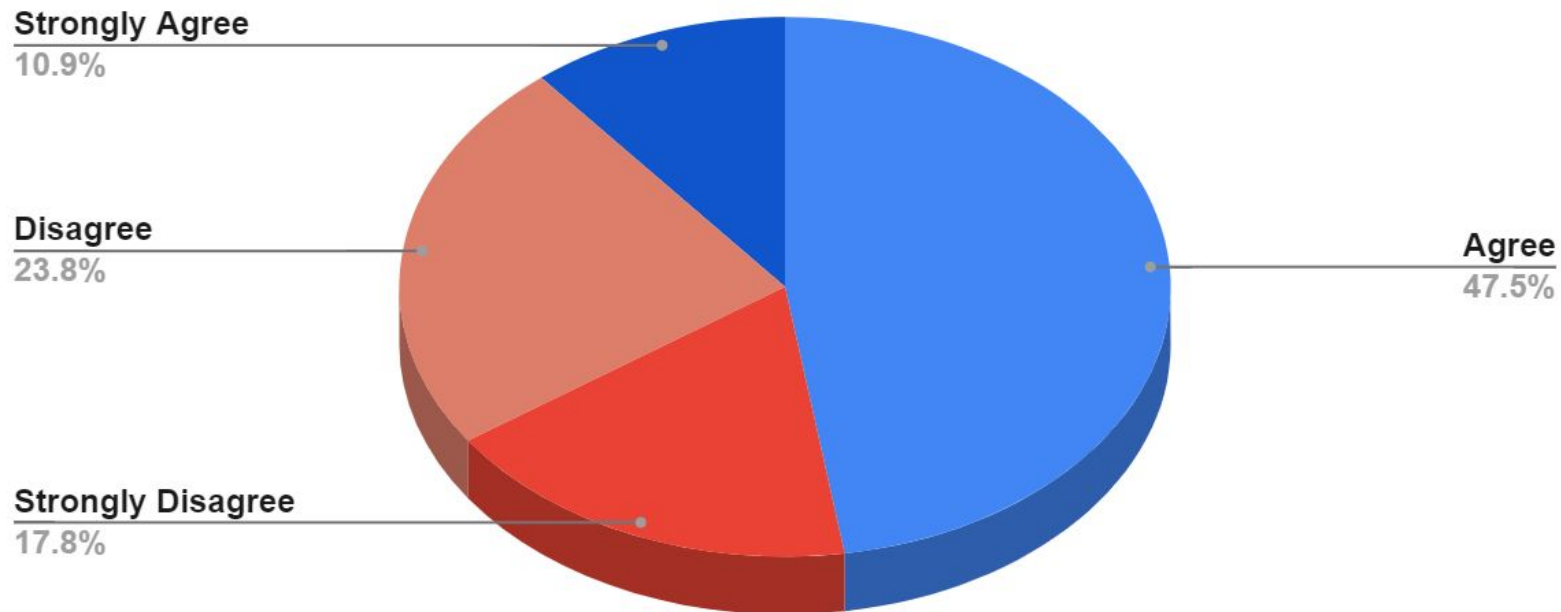
# The curriculum modifications and/or services in the IEP currently in place are helping my child succeed.



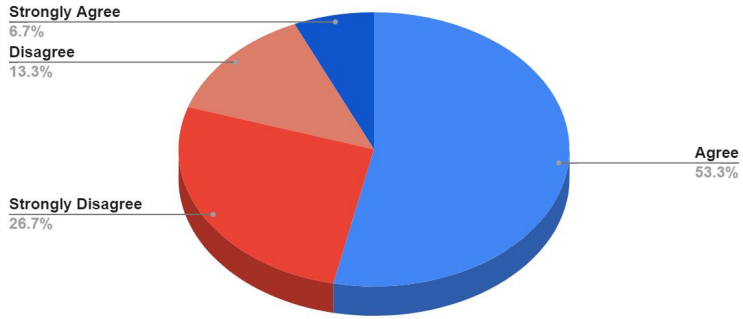
# My student is currently making effective progress



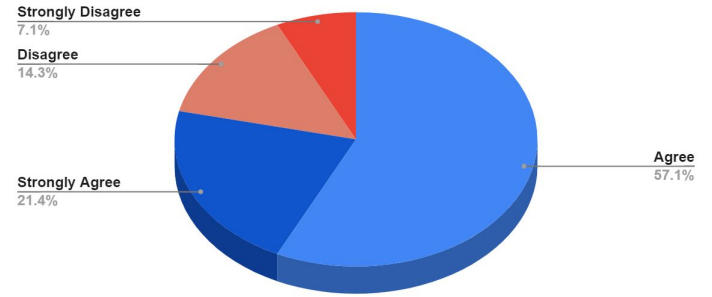
# I am pleased with the quality of services my student received during the 2022-2023 school year.



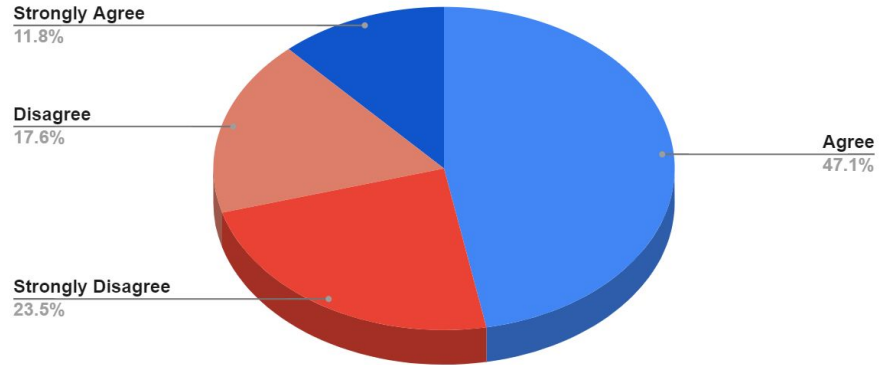
**Colonial Park**



**South**

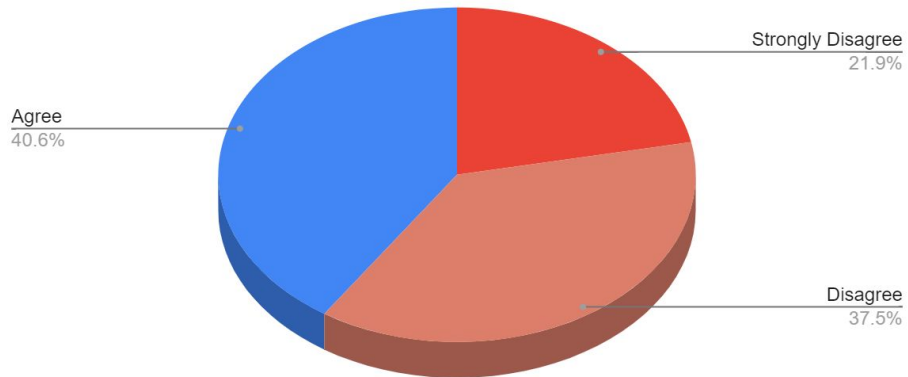


**Robin Hood**

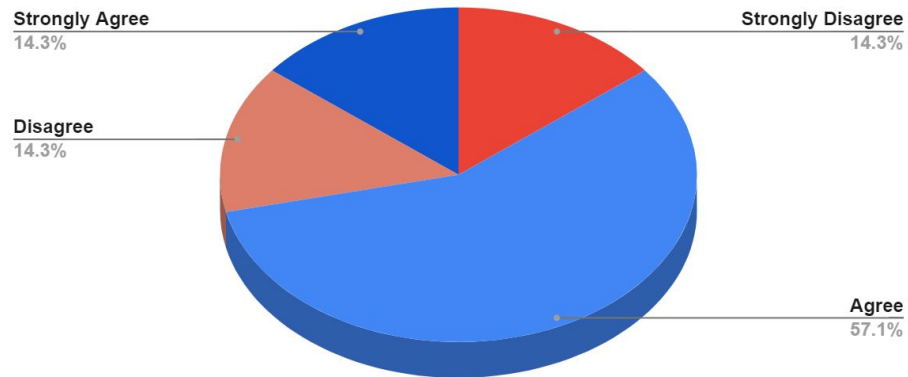


**Pleased with services**

## Middle School

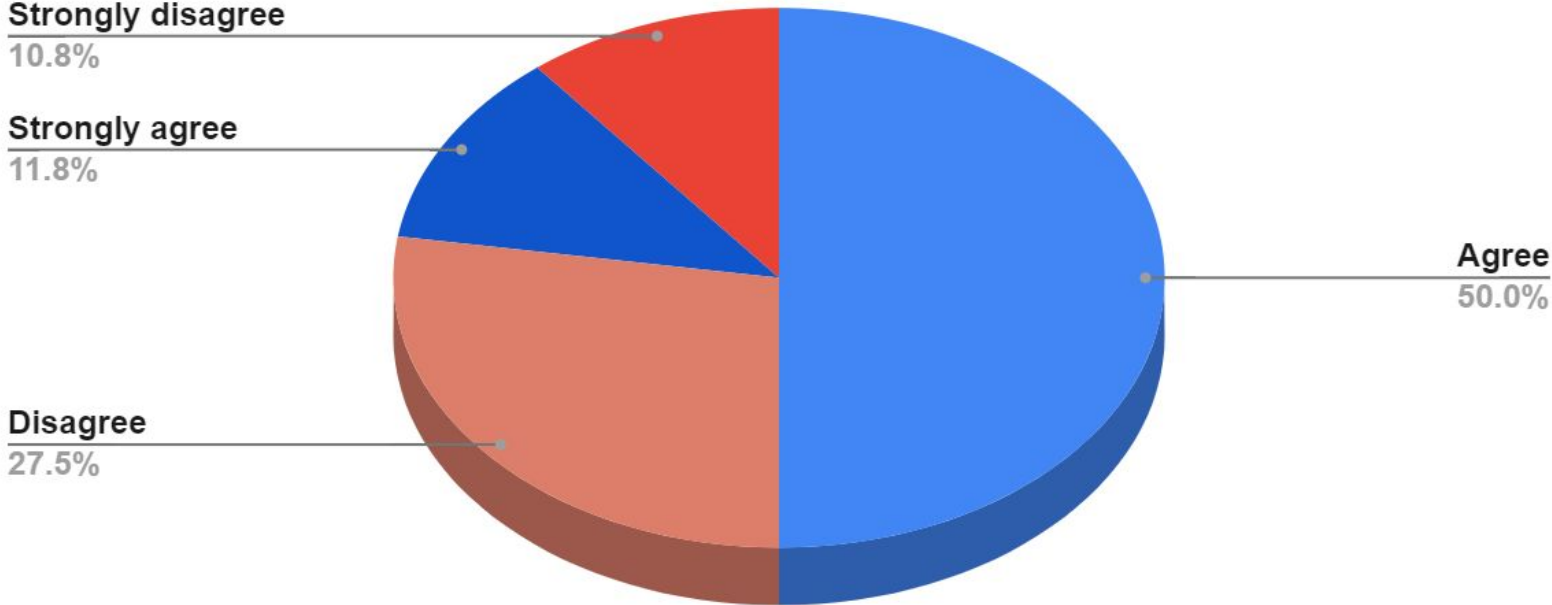


## High School

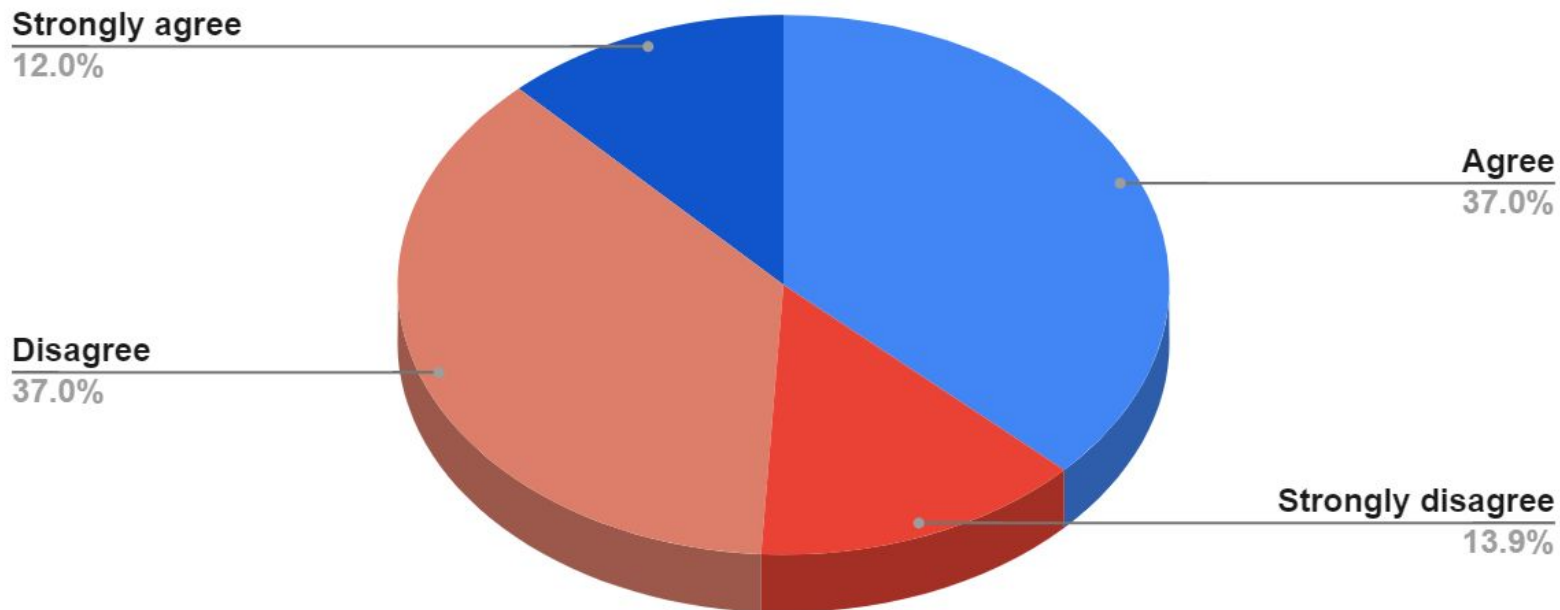


**Pleased with services**

# Stoneham Public Schools are able to meet my student's social emotional learning needs

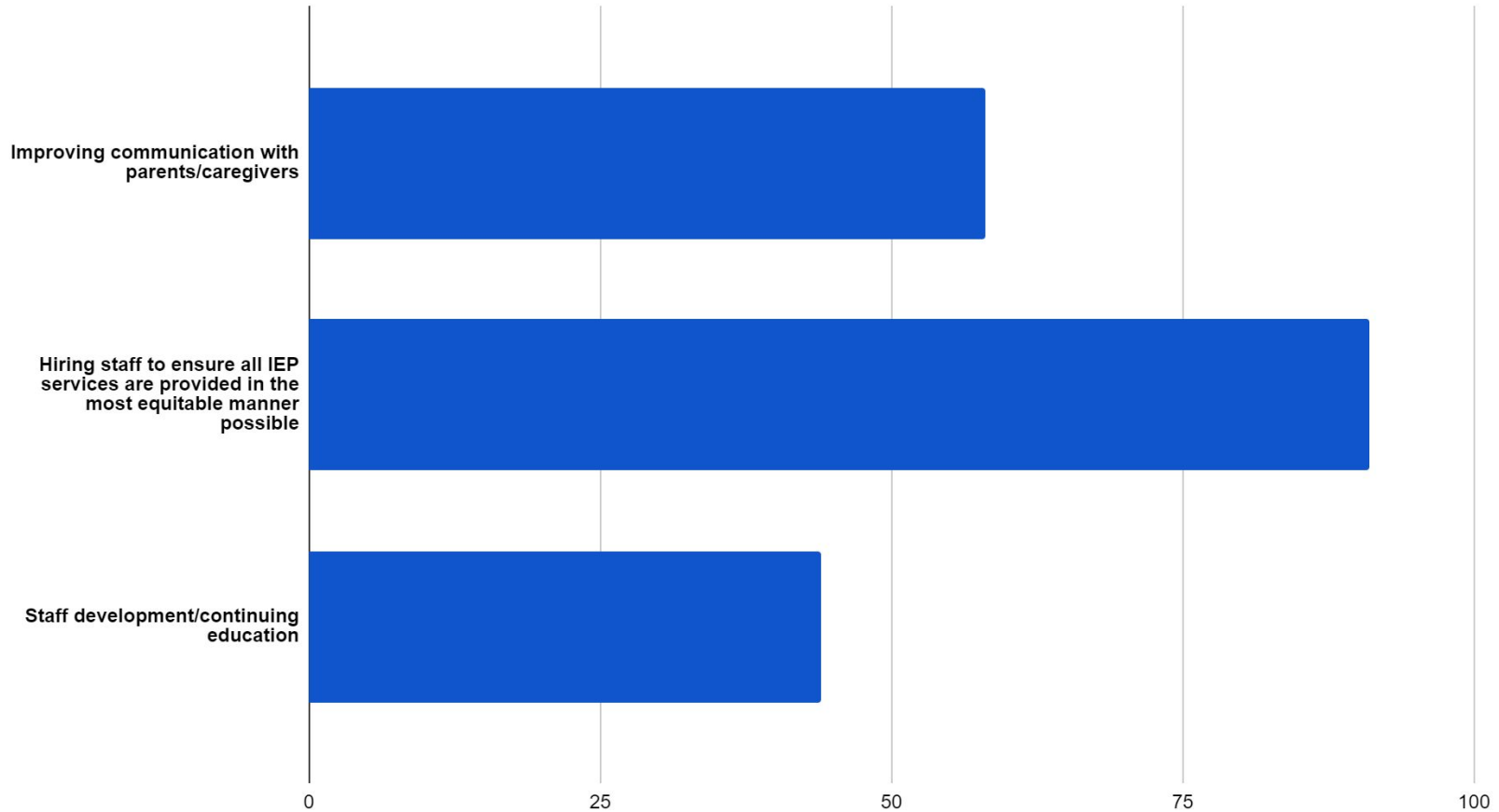


# I believe my student's educators are given the supports and professional development they need to be successful.





## What do you think should be the top priorities for the Special Ed Department?



# Takeaways

- 35% think the team does NOT have the student's best interests in mind
- 53% worry about retaliation
- 41% are not pleased with the quality of services received
- 56% of MS respondents say accommodations are not consistently provided
- **43% report communication regarding a delay in services fell outside the legal requirement of 30 days\***
  - **RH: 53%**; CP: 44%; South: 22%; **MS: 50%**; HS: 33%

# Evaluation/Testing takeaways

- 53% of parents received communication from classroom teachers while only 7% initiated an evaluation process themselves
- 21% of students were referred to SST
- No more than 25% of respondents were contacted by the coordinator regarding specific area of concern.
- No more than 30% of requests were completed within legal parameters of 45 school days.

## Path Forward

- **Clear, concise, and transparent communication with families**
- Increasing compliance with IEP/504 requests and services
- Documentation, communication, and education of **tiered interventional supports and DCAP** (gen ed supports) made available to parents and educators

## Path Forward, cont.

- Hiring of staff to fully and **equitably** service all students
- Identify cause of disparities between schools and enact plan to resolve disparities
- Staff development and continuing education
- Tiered focus monitoring review with DESE

## SEPAC Recommendations

- Continued collaboration between the district and SEPAC to hear feedback from families
- Fulfill our regulatory responsibility to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs
- Work with the district to better advertise the existence of SEPAC and our purpose