

Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council (AB SEPAC)

Business Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, October 19, 2022, at 7 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

To attend: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88216396903>

To call in: +1 646 876 9923

Meeting ID: 882 1639 6903

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of September 21, 2022, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education

1. Significant Disproportionality Resolution
2. Review of Special Ed Admin Structure & Use of Assistants
3. Parent/Guardian Recourse for Transportation Issues
4. Survey Findings RE: PowerSchool Access & Extended School Year

B. School Resource Officer 2022 DESE Memorandum of Understanding Update

C. 2021-2022 AB SEPAC Parent/Guardian Survey Select Findings

D. AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023

1. Follow Up On Issues Identified in 2021-2022 Survey: Outreach, Community Building
2. Listening Session for Parents/Guardians of Students With Autism
3. Participate in State Tiered Focus Monitoring Process
4. Spring 2023 Parent/Guardian Survey
5. Community Education on Basic Rights, New IEP Form, & Other Topics

IV. New Business – Other topics on people's minds

V. Open Issues

- A. MCAS performance vulnerable for students with disabilities
- B. Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff
- C. Increasing opportunities for meaningful inclusion across domains
- D. Enhanced Extended School Year, before-, and after-school programming
- E. Increased use of technology in IEP development, revision, & communication
- F. Following up on issues and subgroup trends identified via 2021-2022 parent/guardian survey
- G. Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum

VI. Adjournment

VII. Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 7 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

**Business Meeting Draft Minutes
September 21, 2022**

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Kara Lafferty; Secretaries A. Cohen and Lynette Cassel; Director of Special Education Jennifer Truslow; Coordinators Rebecca Comiskey (Merriam & Conant), Rachael Fusco (ABRHS), Maureen Lin (RJ Grey), and Tammy Kucharski (Motor Chair); School Committee Liaison to the SEPAC Adam Klein; and eleven community members were in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes

Reading and approval of the June 15, 2022, meeting minutes was tabled.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Welcome & Introduce Special Education Coordinators

The coordinators in attendance introduced themselves and their roles in the district.

B. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education

1. SEPAC Outreach

The SEPAC has a presence at all the back to school nights. Coordinators and principals were invited to join the mailing list. The SEPAC is reestablished as part of the joint PTO meetings. There is a meeting scheduled with the new Director of DEI to talk about 504 plans and other disability-related topics.

2. Staffing & Transportation

The district is meeting services despite being short staffed in some areas. There are still open positions. CASE continues to have a driver shortage.

3. Access to IEP Progress Reports in PowerSchool

Findings from the most recent parent/guardian feedback form indicated 50% of respondents did not know how to access IEP progress reports and other documents in PowerSchool. The number has decreased. Parents report difficulty using the system. The SEPAC Co-Chairs walked the Director through the process from the parent end. She will put in a "ticket" to see what can be done to make the process more intuitive. The SEPAC encourages parents who are experiencing barriers to request a PDF of their child's progress report instead.

PowerSchool's compatibility with the pending new Massachusetts IEP form is to be determined. There are some good elements in the new form and other changes school districts and advocates did not like. The state is taking feedback seriously. There will be professional development when the new document is released. The district is working with a consultant to help prepare.

The Director also shared information about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) Tiered Focus Monitoring (TFM) process. The district

provided a great deal of data last year to DESE. There will be on-site interviews this December to tour buildings and review more documents. There will be a parent survey with an invitation for families to be interviewed. The SEPAC officers are interviewed as part of the process. DESE is tracking special education compliance. All previous TFM (and older Coordinated Program Review–CPR) findings are published online.

C. Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3) Status & Officer Recruitment

The Friends of organization is the financial arm of the SEPAC. The group raises funds to pay for social events, speakers, and workshops. The district would otherwise hold the SEPAC's funds and expenses would need to be approved by the School Committee. The 501(c)(3) cannot exist without an Executive Director, a President, and a Secretary. These roles must be filled ASAP. The Treasurer position is held by Erica Abbruzzese. Anyone interested should reach out to the SEPAC. The group meets quarterly or as need arises.

D. School Resource Office 2022 DESE Memorandum of Understanding - Discussion

The School Committee must vote each year on the School Resource Officer (SRO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Acton Police Department. School Committee members wanted more data about the program before voting. The previous MOU is in place until they do so. No language can be taken out of the proposed MOU, but the document can be strengthened. The SEPAC shared the new MOU template from the state. There is information in the document that pertains to students with disabilities, particularly parents being asked if they would like SROs to have access to IEPs/504s. Behavior plans are notably not included in IEPs but may be attached to them. Members expressed concerns about sharing IEP information because SROs may not have training and know how to respond appropriately. They may not know how to honor student privacy or may treat students differently if they are known to have a disability. The SEPAC would like to know who administers training to the SROs and what is included. The ABRSD DEI Family Advisory had done substantial work around SROs and made a number of recommendations. These include a web site to explain the SRO role to families. A question was asked about the SRO program budget. District staff would be better to deal with deescalation. The Director clarified that the SROs are not involved in classroom crisis team calls. Students have safety and emergency plans as needed. People should email additional feedback to the SEPAC to bring to the School Committee policy subcommittee. The SEPAC's advisory role to the School Committee makes this our purview.

E. 2021-2022 SEPAC Parent/Guardian Survey Update

1. Respondent Summary

The survey was translated into French, Portuguese, and Chinese. There were 209 overall responses representing students with IEPs and 504s combined.

2. Social Emotional Findings - Discussion

Select findings were shared with the SEPAC regarding bullying fears, students having the appropriate social groupings, etc. The SEPAC is writing a detailed report to help establish recommendations to the School Committee pertaining to policy, procedure, and budget. There is a presentation on October 6th.

The Director shared some items on the 9/22 School Committee agenda. Jessica Minahan is consulting with the district around the pre-referral process. A member

asked how training is implemented and tracked. How are methods consistently applied after professional development? Sometimes practices are watered down or misused. Staff turnover has also made this difficult. Methods and approaches can be written into IEPs, but new staff may not have training.

IV. New Business/Questions

A parent new to the district wondered how to connect with other SEPAC families. They also wanted to know more about how students' needs are met at different schools. Several people offered their experiences and brainstormed ways to connect. Another member suggested more attention on how to find peer parents. The SEPAC may be able to designate a time for socializing during a meeting or have separate time. Someone suggested concrete plans, like a parents' night out. The Friends of 501(c)(3) can do more social events.

V. Adjournment


The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting

Wednesday October 19, 2022, 7 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

All AB SEPAC meetings are open to the public. We encourage parents of children with disabilities and others interested in special education to attend. Please check our website (www.absepac.org) for information regarding upcoming events.

Respectfully submitted by Lynette Cassel, Secretary



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council (AB SEPAC)

Business Meeting

October 19, 2022

I. Call to Order

Virtual Meeting Participation

- SEPAC meetings are public
- Votes will be conducted by roll call
- To be recognized by the Chairs, please use the raise hand function in the Participants window



Our Mission

**To ensure understanding, respect, support,
and the appropriate education of all children in our community.**

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council's
duties under state law include:

“advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district’s special education programs.”

II. Approval of Minutes

- Review and approval of September 21, 2021, meeting minutes (draft available at absepac.org)
- We will **vote to approve the minutes as written or amended** if necessary
- Voting will be by roll call
- If you are not a voting member (parent/guardian of a child with a disability residing or attending school in Acton or Boxborough), please ABSTAIN

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education
- B. School Resource Officer 2022 DESE Memorandum of Understanding Update
- C. 2021-2022 AB SEPAC Parent/Guardian Survey Select Findings
- D. AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023
 - 1. Follow Up On Issues Identified in 2021-2022 Survey:
Outreach, Community Building
 - 2. Listening Session for Parents/Guardians of Students With Autism
 - 3. Spring 2023 Parent/Guardian Survey
 - 4. Community Education on Basic Rights, New IEP Form, & Other Topics

A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education

1. Significant Disproportionality Resolution
2. Review of Special Ed Admin Structure & Use of Assistants
3. Parent/Guardian Recourse for Transportation Issues
4. Survey Findings RE: PowerSchool Access & Extended School Year

B. School Resource Officer 2022 DESE MOU Update

- The SEPAC is compiling feedback for the School Committee policy subcommittee
- There was extensive conversation at the September SEPAC meeting on the MOU; the proposed MOU can be found in the 9/21/22 meeting packet at absepac.org
- Additional feedback can be sent to abrsdsepac@gmail.com
- The School Committee is taking feedback regarding the SRO program in a public hearing at its December 1st meeting
- People can also email thoughts on the SRO program to abrsc@abschools.org

C. 2021-2022 AB SEPAC Parent/Guardian Survey Select Findings

Goal 1: Solicit information from our entire parent/guardian community to facilitate participation and ensure all children with disabilities are represented through our efforts

Goal 2: Monitor families' experiences with special education programming to provide feedback and guidance to the district

Goal 3: Follow up on issues previously identified through surveys, feedback forms, and anecdotal reporting

Demographics



- 209 responses total
- 183 students with IEPs / Students With Disabilities (SWDs)
- 24% of 762 October 1, 2021, DESE headcount
- 26 students with 504 Plans
- First time translating survey into languages other than English
 - Chinese, French, Portuguese (missing Korean & Spanish)
 - 3 of 13 surveys returned

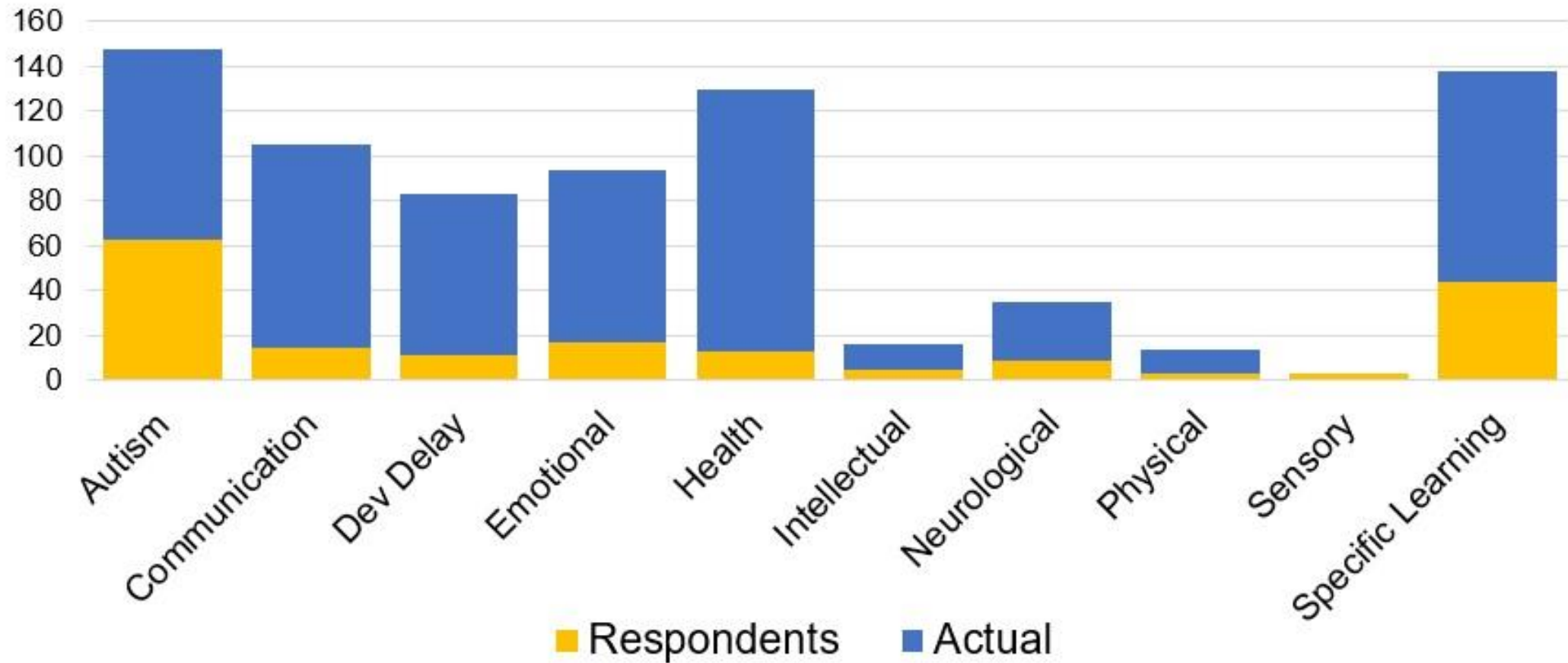
Demographics Continued

- First time collecting race/ethnicity data per DESE definitions
- Survey results (IEPs + 504s) of total SWD based on 810 headcount
 - African American 9.3% (5 of 54)
 - Asian 25.4% (31 of 122)
 - Hispanic 11.7% (7 of 60)
 - Native American 0% (0 of 3)
 - Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander 0% (0 of 3)
 - Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic 21.6% (11 of 51)
 - White 28.8% (149 of 517)

Survey Responses to Total SWD by IEP Disability Type

N=183

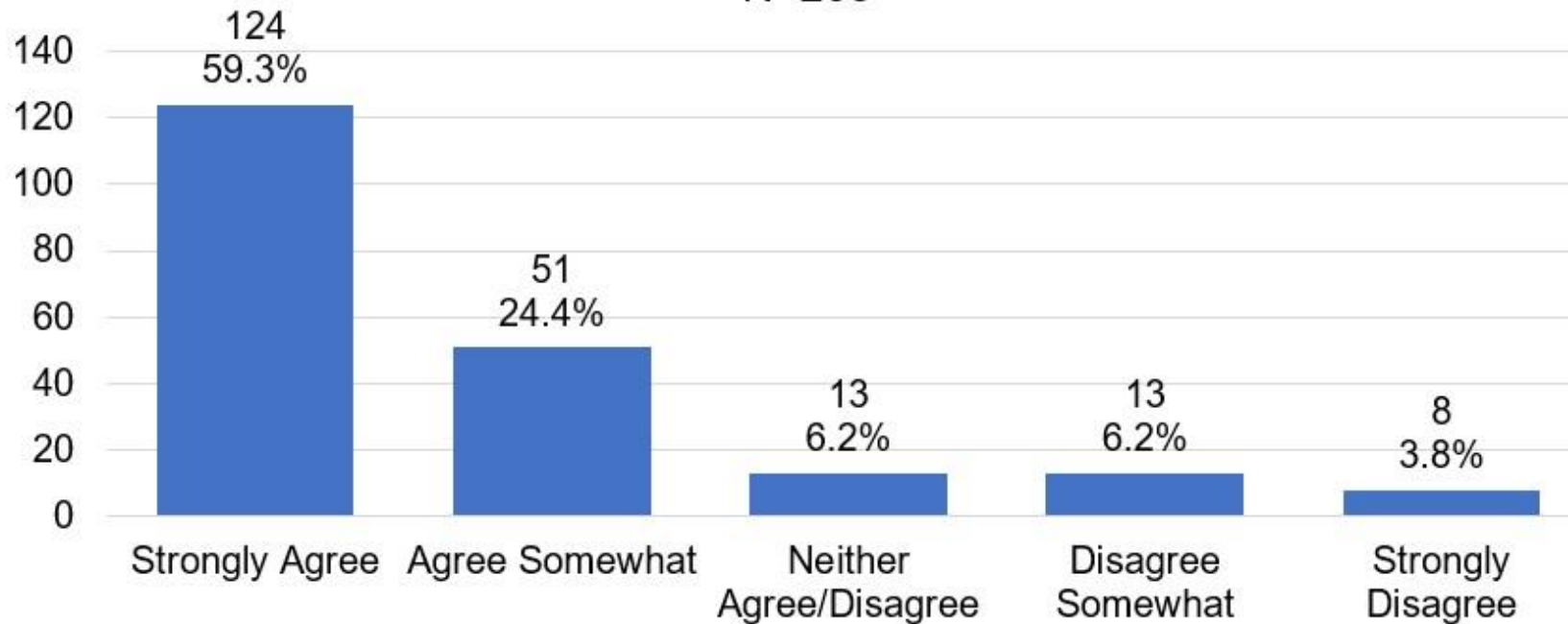
*504s removed



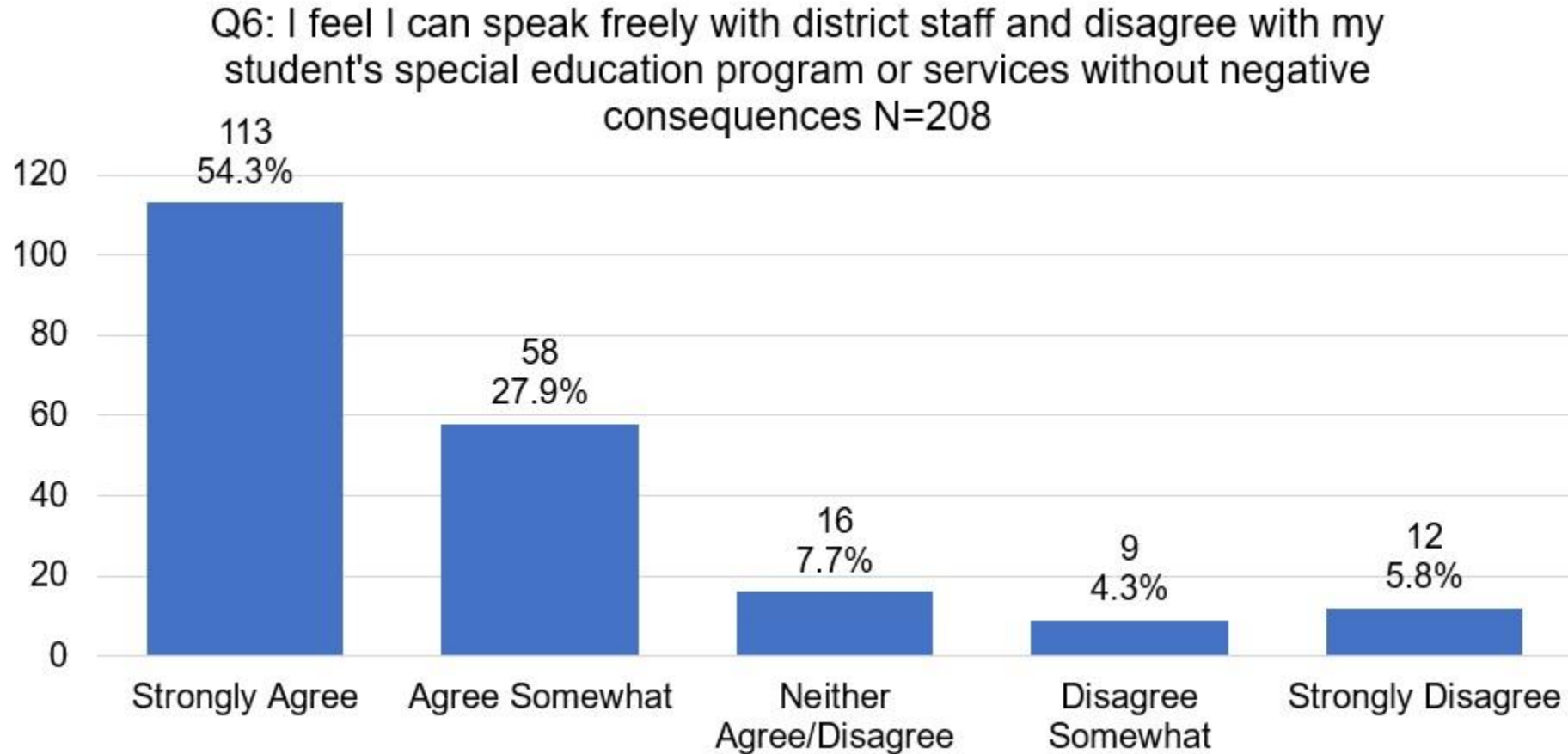
Collaboration

Q5: My observations and suggestions about my student's special education program, accommodations, or services are given consideration as a full member by the rest of the IEP team / For a student with a 504, my input is given consideration by school staff

N=209

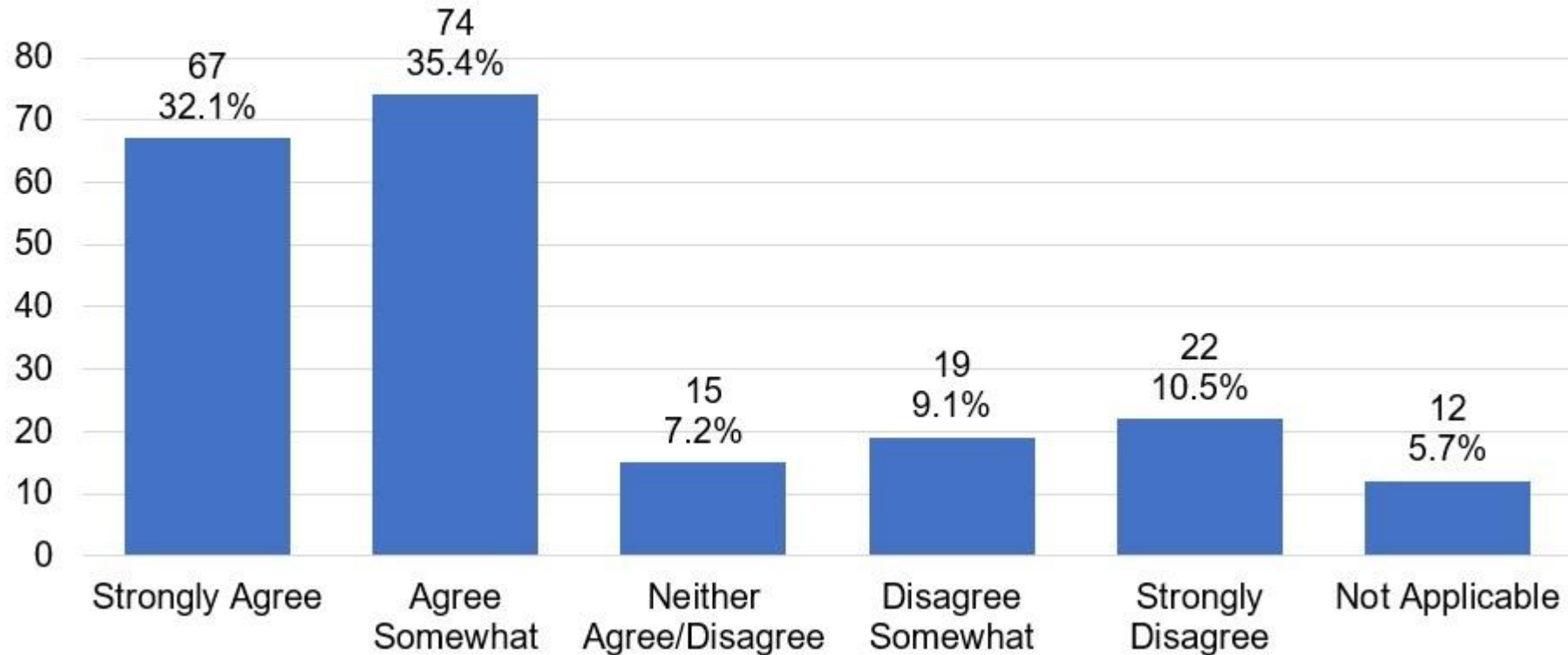


Culture



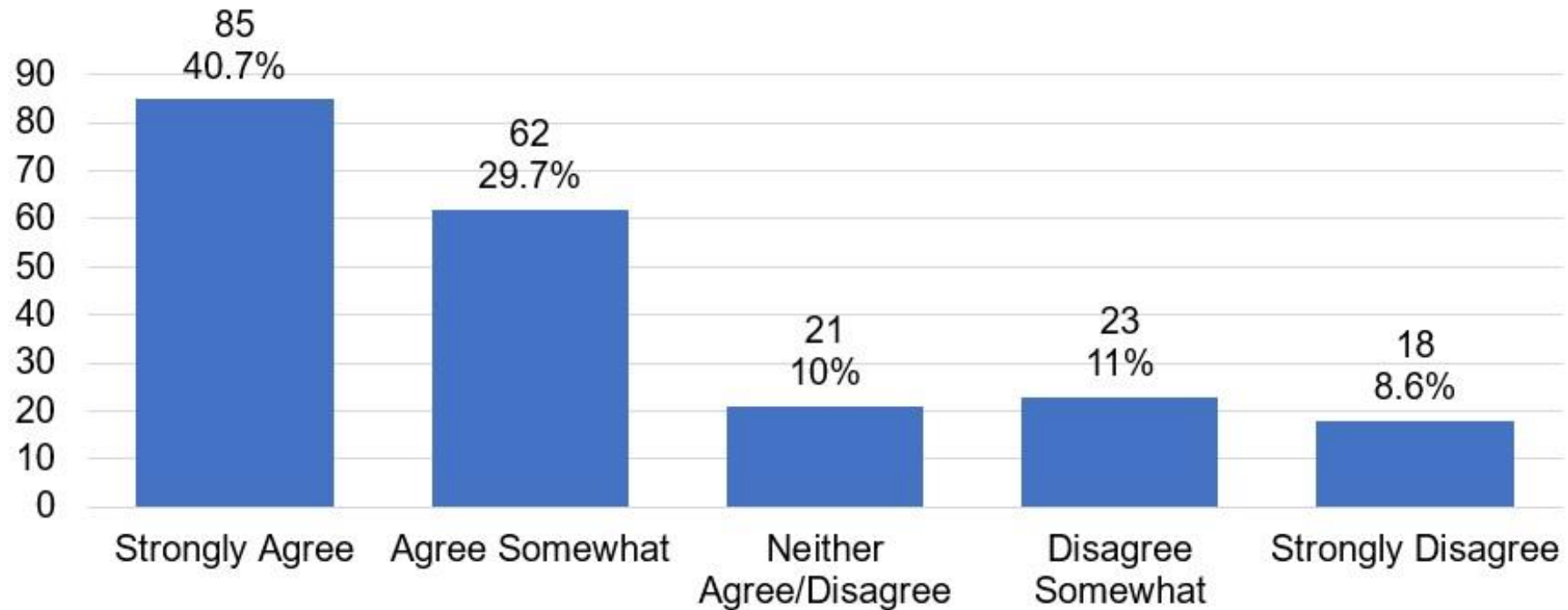
Staff Understanding

Q11: I feel as though general education staff understand my student's disability-related needs N=209



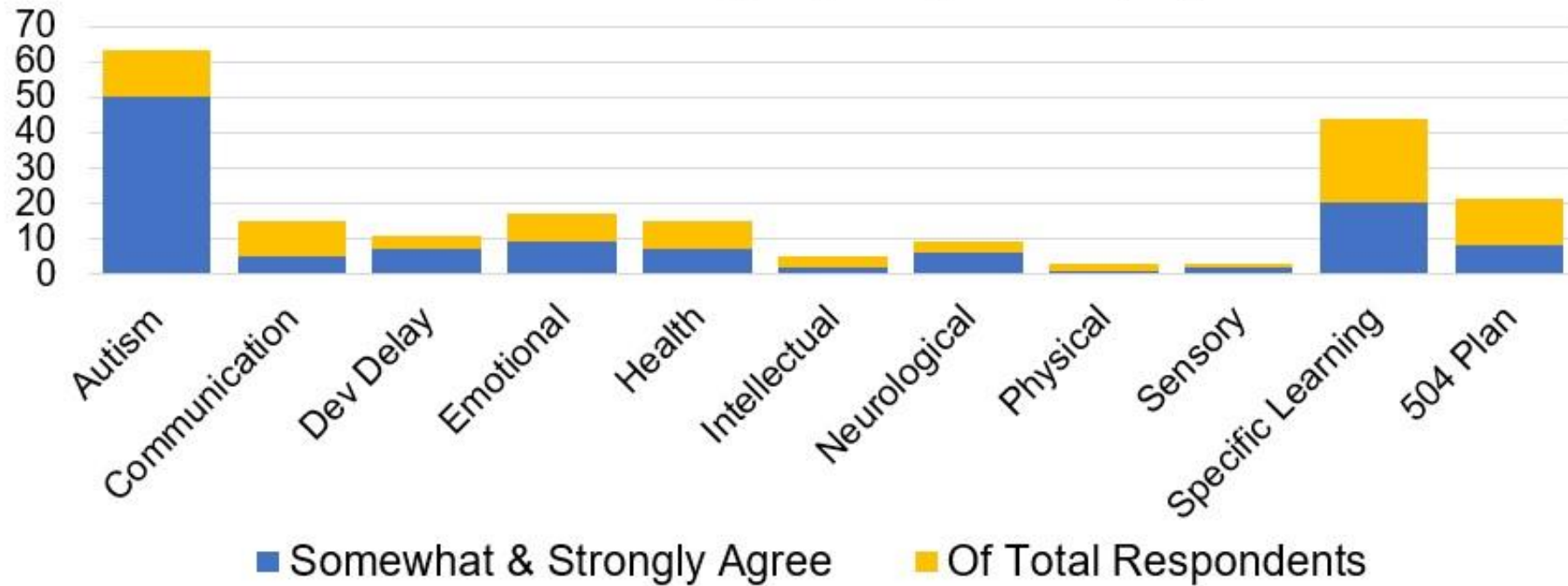
Social Emotional Needs

Q9: My student has the appropriate support, peer groupings, and/or services necessary to meet their social and emotional needs N=209



Bullying, Teasing & Harassment

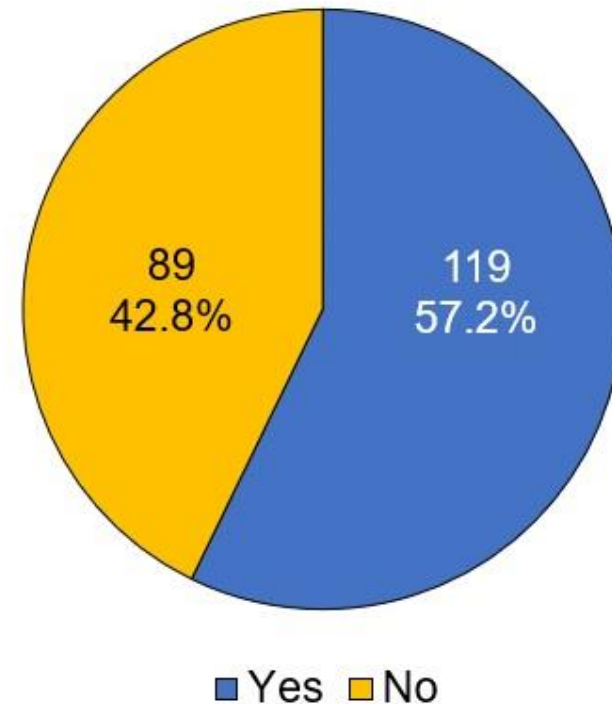
Q10: I worry about my student being bullied, teased, or harassed
due to their disability N=208
Somewhat & Strongly Agree by Disability Type



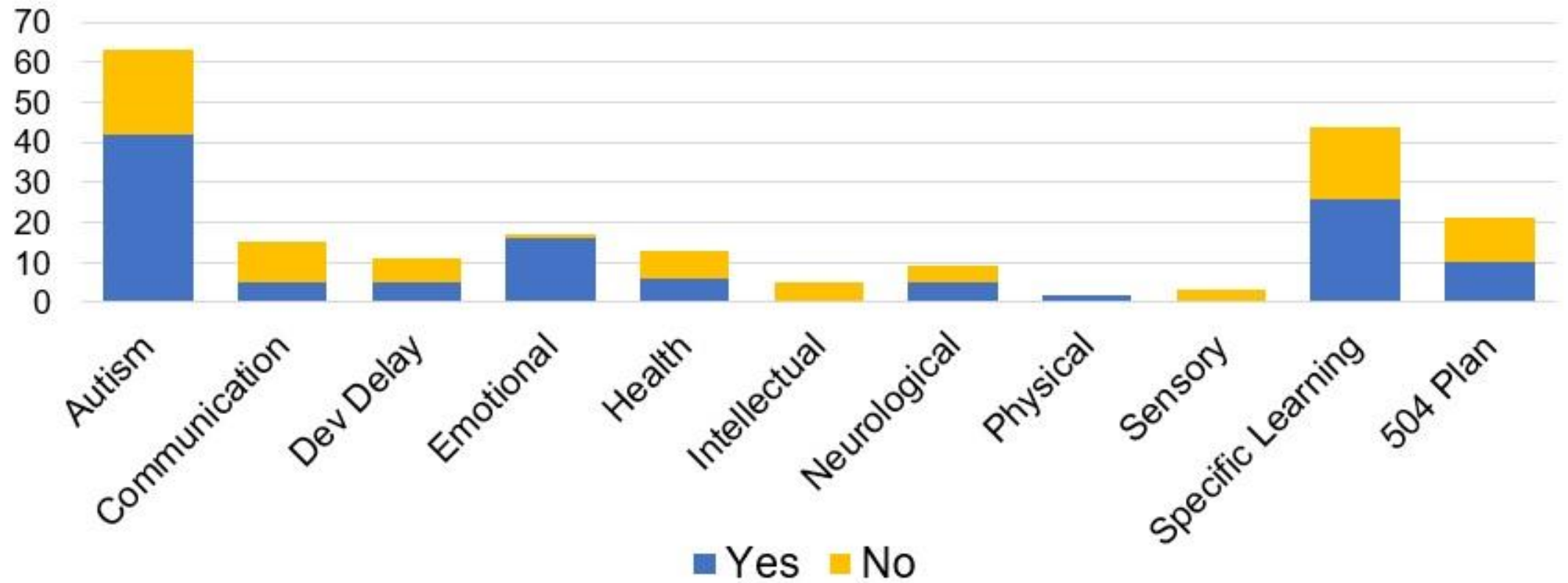
Private Therapies

- Many families report pursuing outside services in addition to what their students receive in school
- Over half report supplementing
- Discrepancies by disability type
- Questions regarding equity, adequate in-school service provision, and progress monitoring

Q14: I supplement my student's special education services or 504 support with private therapy for their disability-related needs N=208

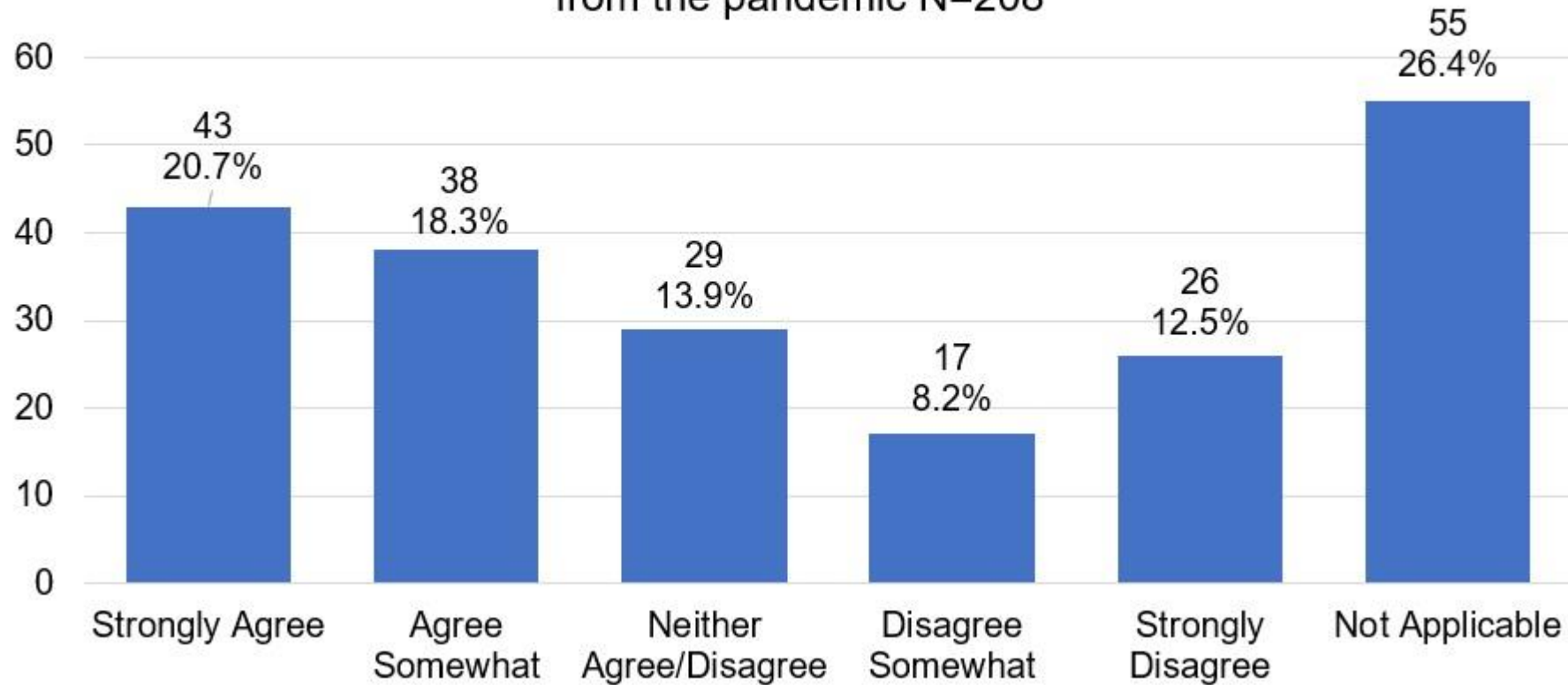


Q14 Private Therapy by Disability Type
N=208



COVID's Impact

Q13: My student was provided the appropriate level of COVID Compensatory Services to address any regression or new needs from the pandemic N=208



D. AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023

1. Follow Up On Issues Identified in 2021-2022 Survey: Outreach, Community Building . . .
2. Listening Session for Parents/Guardians of Students With Autism
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Outreach Efforts to Date

- Met with new Director of DEI
 - Participating in development of District welcome center
- Contacted all Principals and Special Education Coordinators to reintroduce organization and invite them to join the mailing list
- Attending joint PTO/PTF/PTSO meetings
 - Shared emphasis on reaching linguistically-diverse families, ELPAC
 - Already approached for presentations, feedback on event access, info on playground renovations
- SEPAC business meetings on District calendar
- Attended all back to school nights and Early Childhood Program social
- Planning social event for caregivers, re-establishing coffee/tea hours

IV. New Business

Other topics on
people's minds



V. Open Issues

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- B. Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff
- C. Increasing opportunities for meaningful inclusion across domains
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- G. Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum

VI. Adjournment

- We will **vote to adjourn the meeting**
- Voting will be by roll call
- If you are not a voting member (parent/guardian of a child with a disability residing or attending school in Acton or Boxborough), please ABSTAIN

Next Meeting November 16, 2021, 7 p.m. Via Zoom
Meeting Information Available @absepac.org

Thanks & Contact Information

Our thanks to Director of Special Education Jen Truslow,
Director of DEI Jen Faber,
and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee for their
ongoing collaboration

absepac.org
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