

Experiences and Concerns of Parents of Gifted/ Multi-Exceptional Children in BC

Research Study conducted in 2022

Through a community partnership between

Dr. Debbie Clelland

and the Gifted Children's Association of BC,

Adler University & Debbie Clelland Counselling and Consulting



Why was this study conducted?

Debbie Clelland, PhD
Counselling & Consulting

- Information & Advocacy
 - Credible, reliable data about experiences of parents & families with gifted and multi-exceptional children in BC
- Collect current information
 - Recent pandemic and schooling from home
 - Trend towards Inclusive Education in BC
 - Some districts modifying/cancelling gifted programs
 - Some stating rationale: Gifted programs are “elitist”



Inclusive Education, BC Ministry of Education

- Definition: “Inclusion describes the principle that **all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence** in all aspects of their educational programs.”
(BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-a)
- Vision: “Our vision is to provide inclusive and responsive learning environments that recognize the value of diversity and provide equity of access, opportunity and outcome for all students including students with disabilities and diverse abilities.” (BC Ministry of Education, n.d.-b)

Definitions: giftedness & multi-exceptionality

- BC Ministry of Education definition of giftedness:
- A student is considered gifted when she/he possesses demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of exceptionally **high capability with respect to intellect, creativity, or the skills associated with specific disciplines**. Students who are gifted often demonstrate outstanding abilities in more than one area. They may demonstrate extraordinary intensity of focus in their particular areas of talent or interest. However, they **may also have accompanying disabilities** and should not be expected to have strengths in all areas of intellectual functioning.

(BC Ministry of Education, 2016)

- Multi-Exceptionality means giftedness + one or more other types of exceptionalities, such as learning disability (LD), ADHD, ASD, or any combination of advanced and lagging skills

Study Design & Team (Sept 2021 – Feb 2023)

- Gifted Children's Association of BC inspired the idea
 - Board members led by Lena Normen-Younger, past President of the GCABC
- Research Team
 - Dr. Debbie Clelland, Adler University & Debbie Clelland Counselling & Consulting – survey items, research proposal, research ethics application, oversight of research, qualitative data analysis and results interpretation
 - Adler University Students assisted: Parisa Mansouri, Kamalpreet Kaur
 - Duncan Clelland – data processing
 - Lena Normen-Younger, GCABC: survey items & research proposal
 - Dr. Garima Kamboj, GCABC Board – survey items
 - Other members of the GCABC Board
 - Dr. Lannie Kanevsky, SFU (Retired) – assisted with qualitative data analysis
 - SFU Statistics Consultation office: Dr. Ian Bercovitz & Junpu Xie-quantitative analysis

Credibility of the Survey

- Designed by a team of experienced researchers
- Received research ethics approval from the Adler University Research Ethics Board
- Data analyzed and interpreted by an experienced team of researchers & consultants
- Alpha coefficients showing internal validity for groups of survey items were good to very good
 - Ideal is 0.7 and above (Pallant, 2020)
 - Majority of the survey scales were above 0.8

Content of the Survey

101 Survey Items about:

- The participants
- Their gifted & multi-exceptional children (could respond about up to 3 children)

Main topics:

- Schooling experiences, including:
 - IEP's, Inclusive Education
- Challenges, including:
 - Concerns, Barriers & Experiences of Discrimination re: access to gifted programs

Open-ended question: Anything else you would like to add about your child's experience in the BC education system?

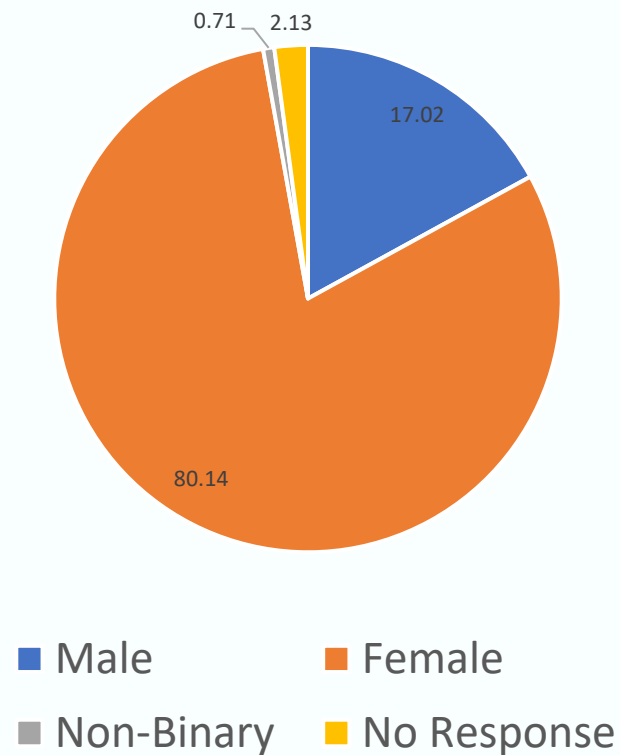
Thank you to Participants!

n = 145 Participants

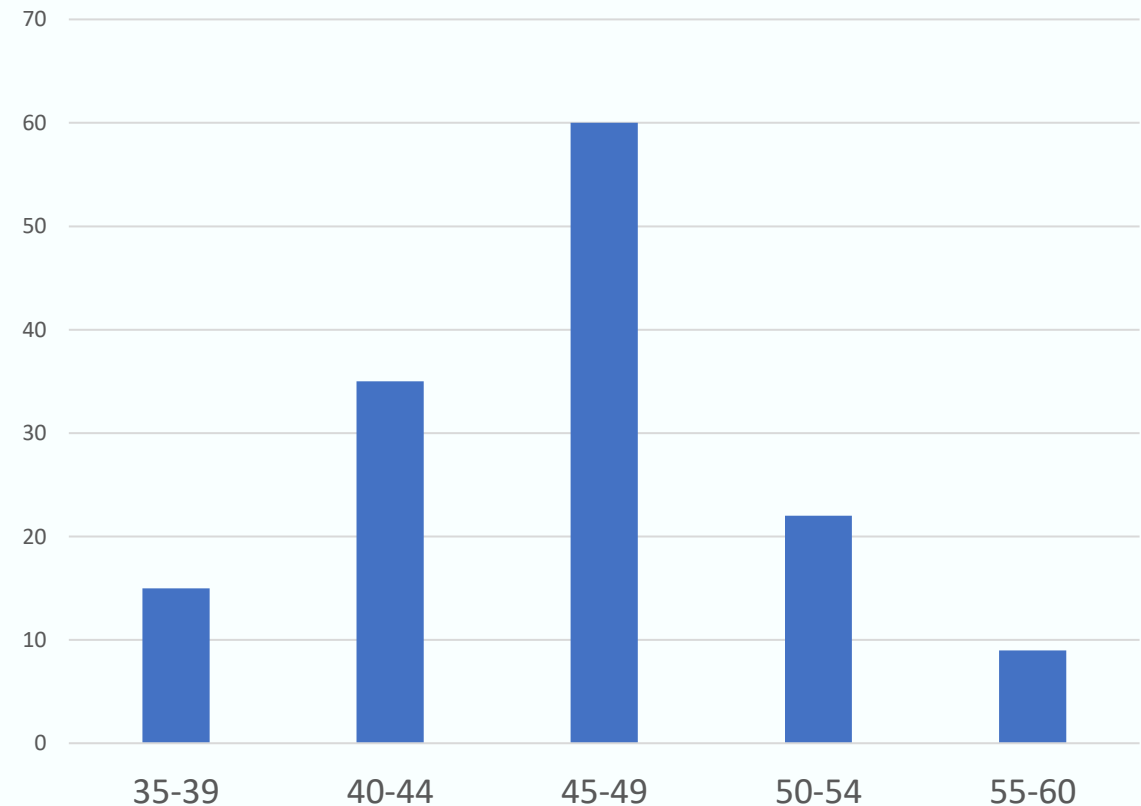
Information about 167 Gifted and Multi-Exceptional Children in BC

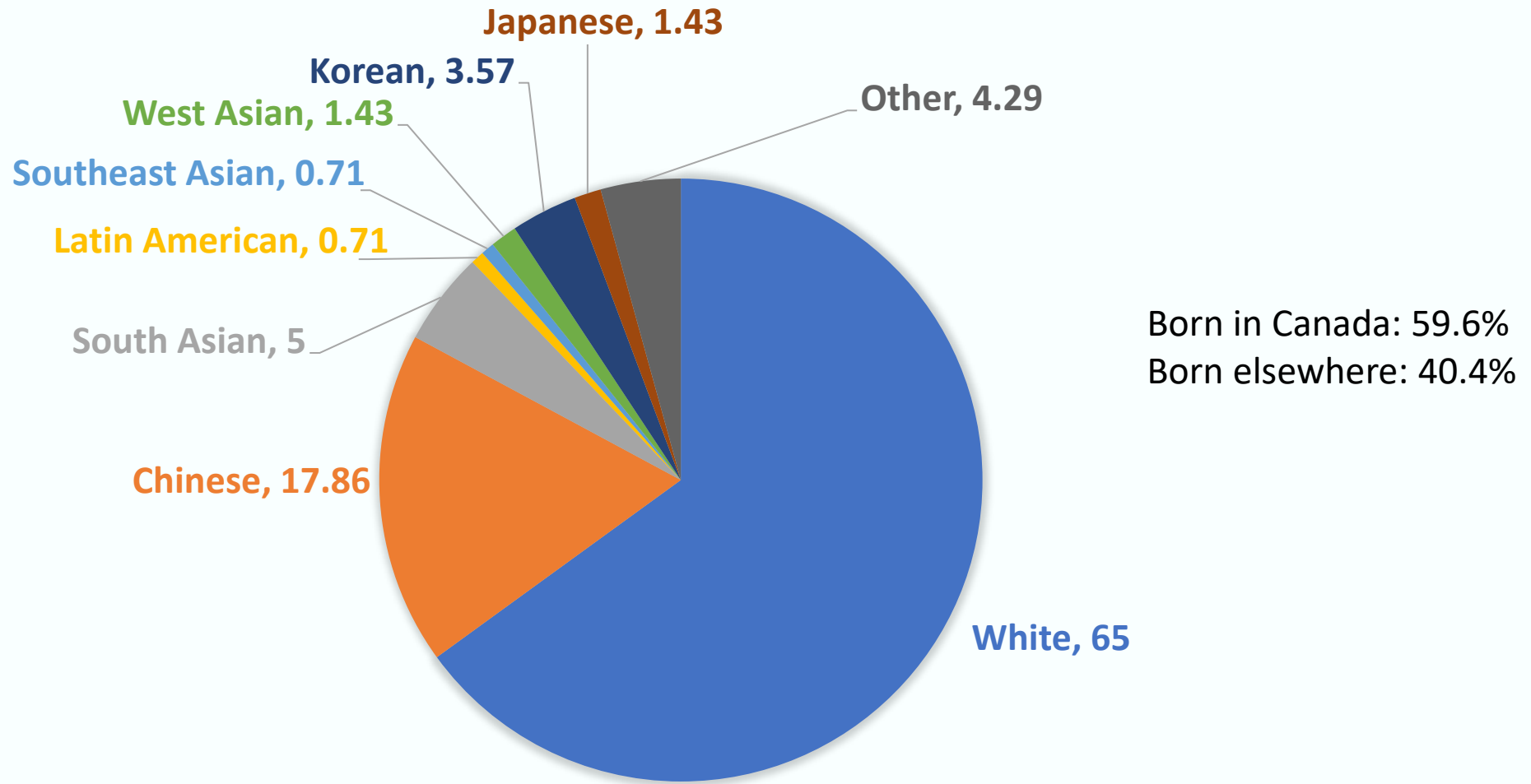
Participants: Parents (99.3%, i.e., not step-/grandparent)

Gender of Participants



Ages of Participants

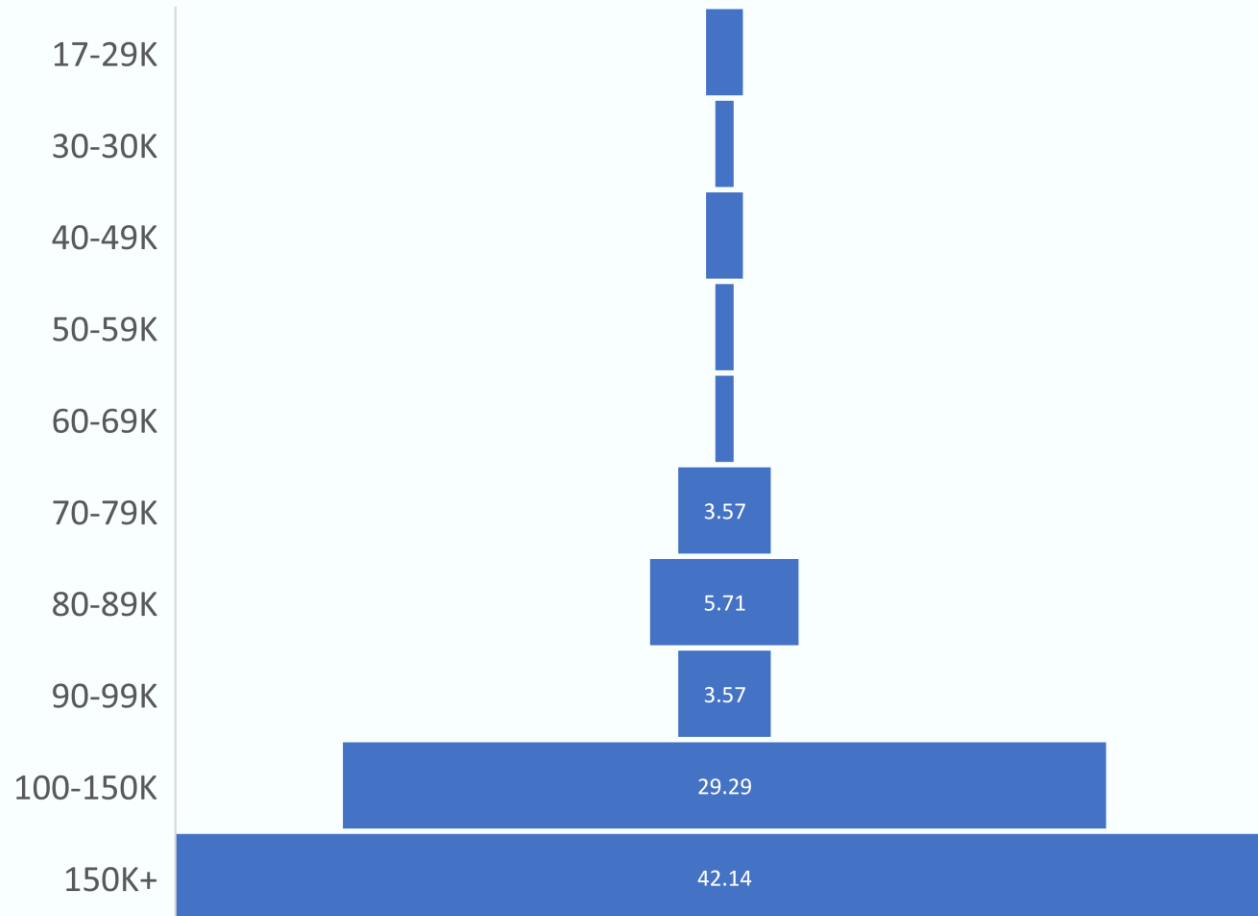




ETHNICITY (% OF PARTICIPANTS)

Household Income

(% of Participant Responses; n= 125)



2021 Census data

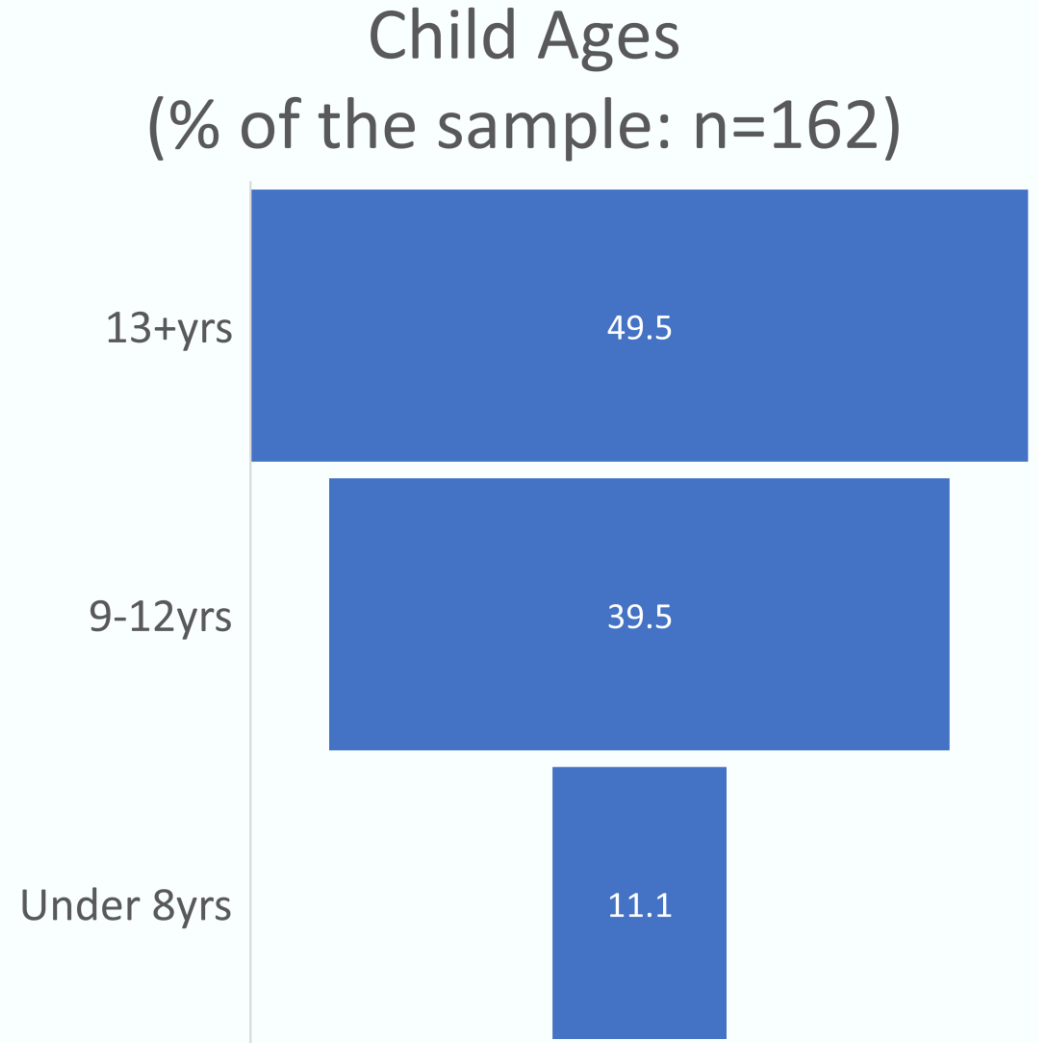
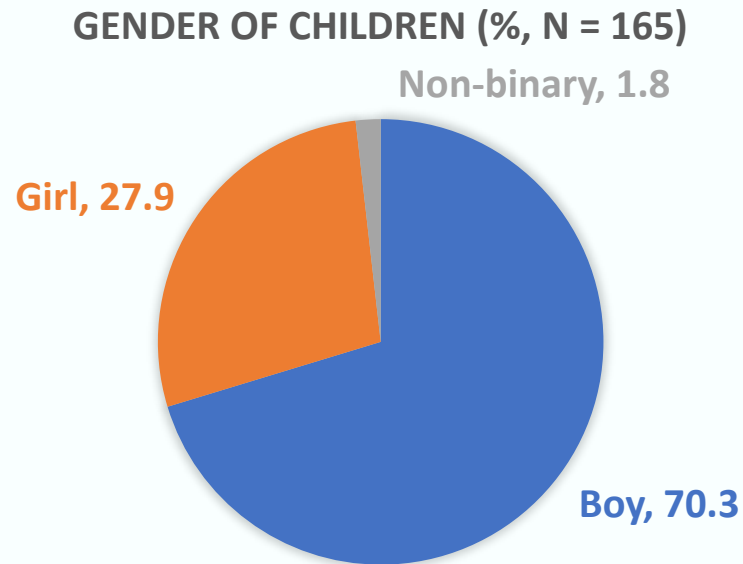
- Median total income for 2 or more person households in BC: \$108,000
- Median total income for couple with children households in BC: \$138,000

(Statistics Canada, 2022)

Children Described by Participants

Participants' Children

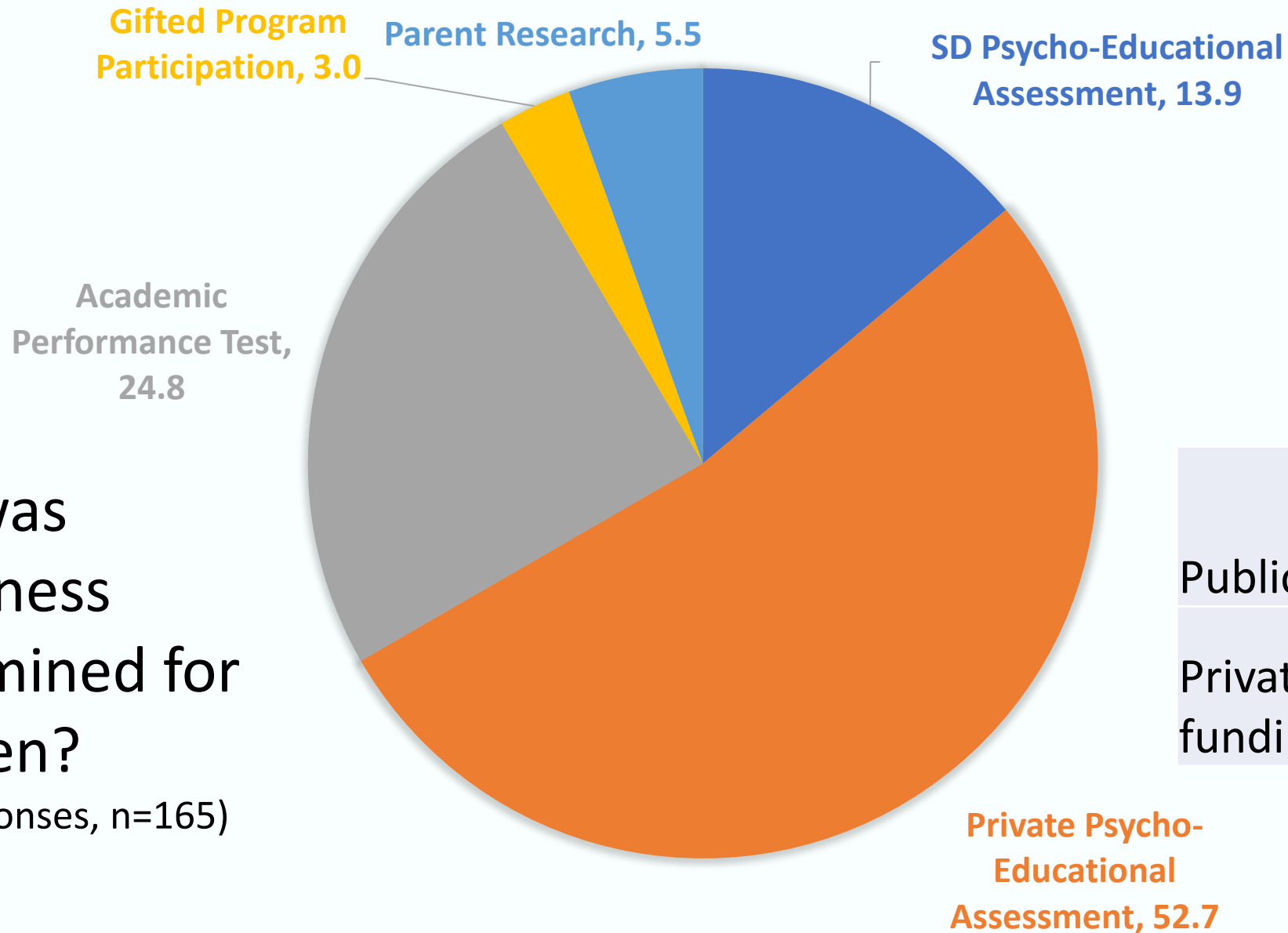
- 56.7% had 2 children
- 70.2% had 1 gifted / multi-exceptional child in the family



Giftedness or Multi-Exceptionality in Children

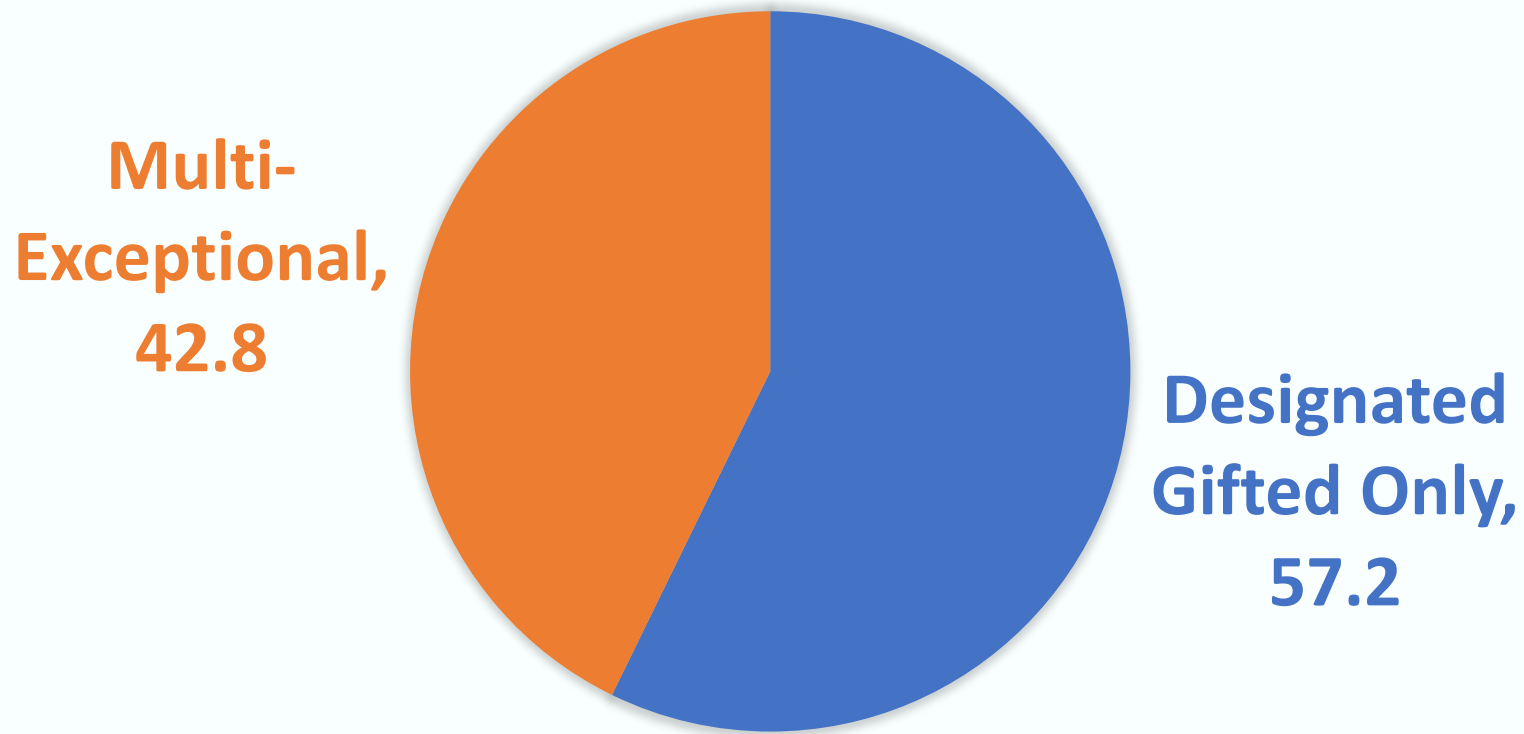
How was Giftedness Determined for Children?

(% of responses, n=165)



Public funding	41.7%
Private funding	52.7%

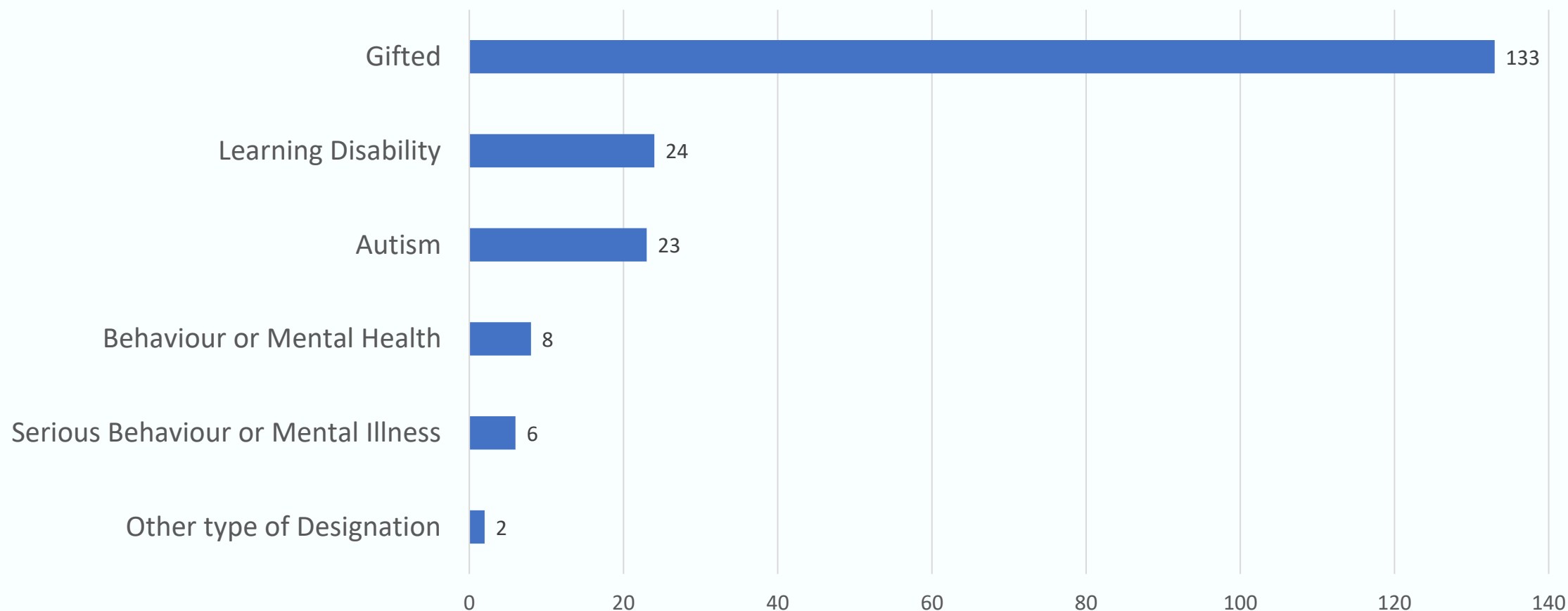
GIFTED OR MULTI-EXCEPTIONAL (% OF CHILD 1 RESPONSES, N=145)



Note: “Designated Gifted Only” determined from participant response that the first child was designated as gifted in the School District (n=83); Multi-Exceptional was determined from a) designated gifted in the School District AND b) a second SD designation (n=58) or a non-designated multi-exceptionality (n=4)

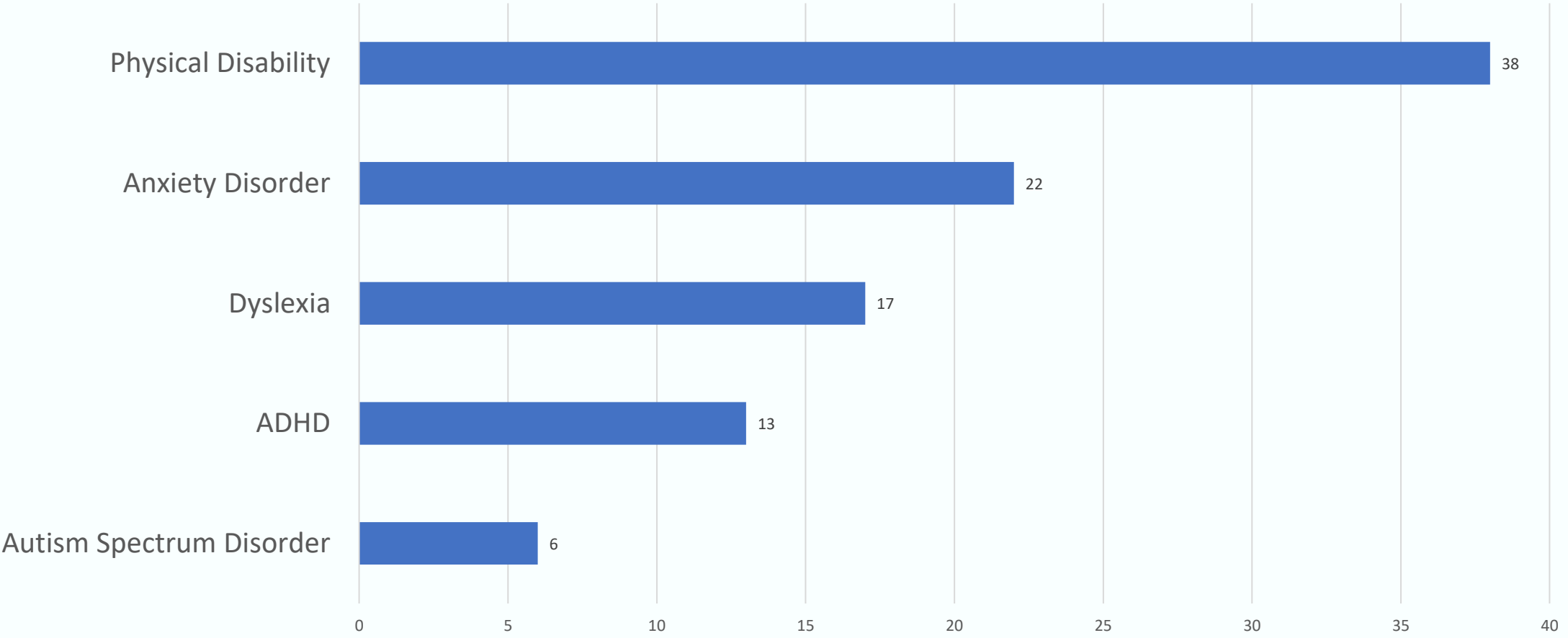
Type of Special Education Designation at School

Participants selected all relevant types; Frequency, n=196



Type of Child's Multi-Exceptionality Reported by Participants

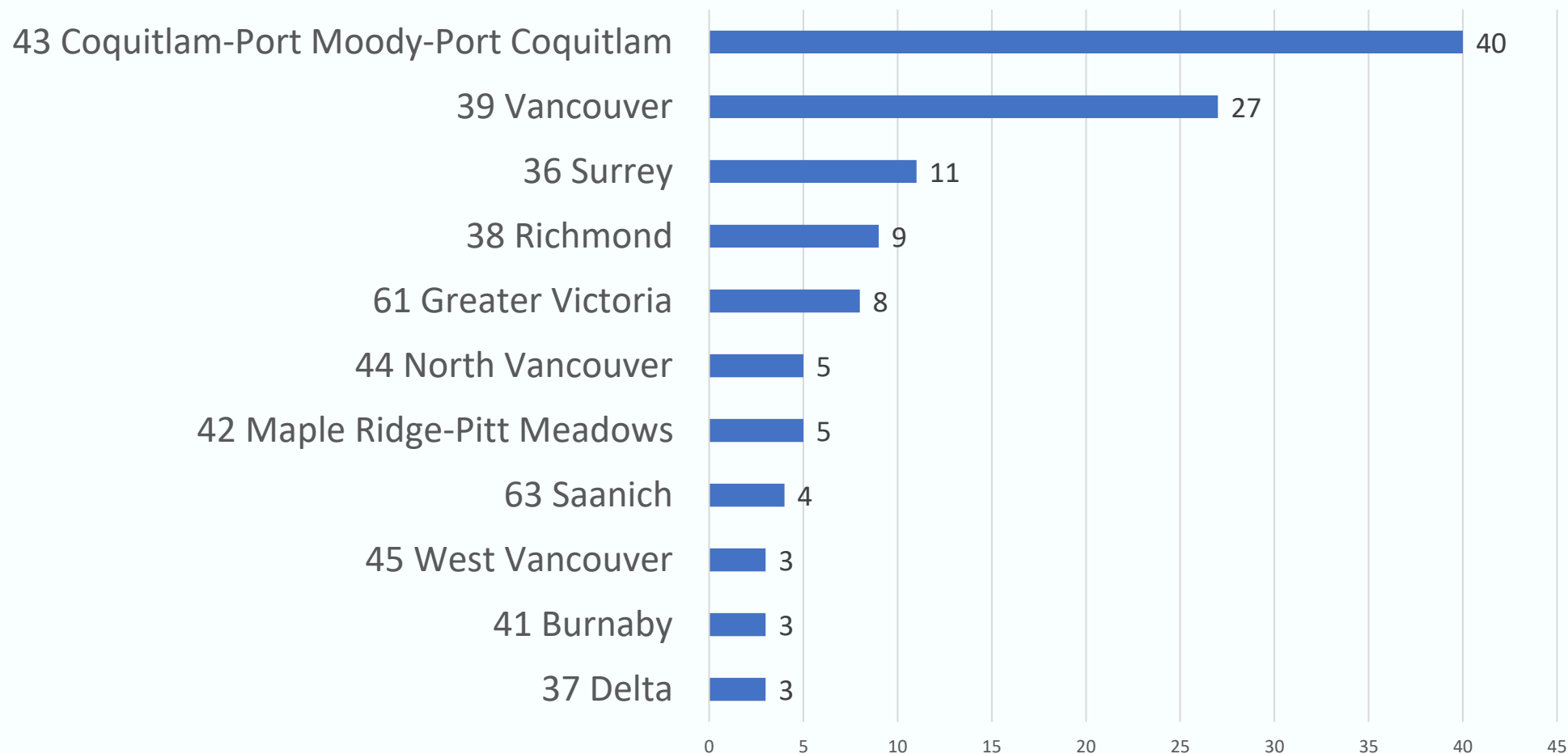
Selected all types; Frequency, n=96: May not be designated the school system



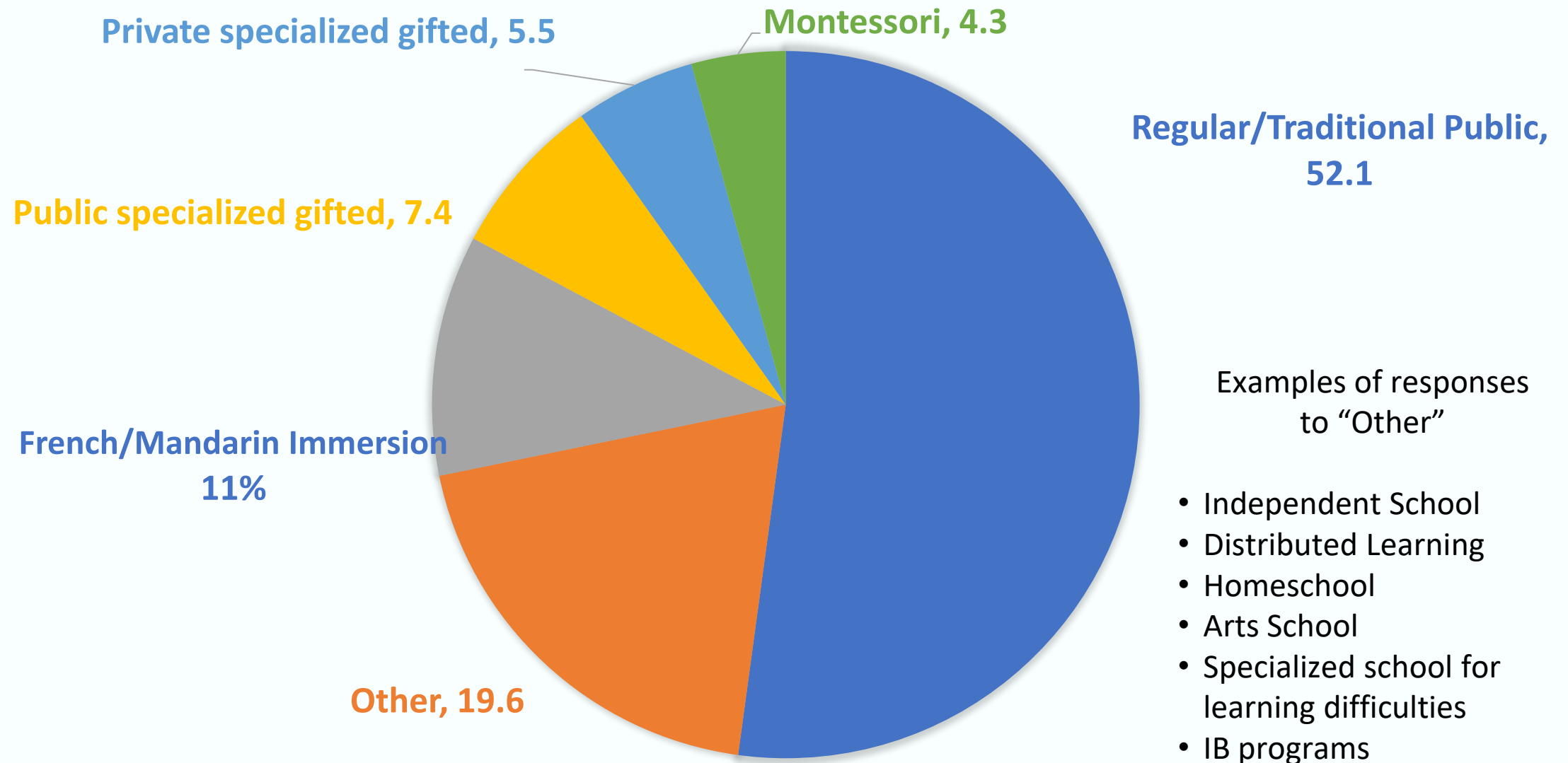
Schooling & Learning Opportunities

School District Locations of Gifted Children (Frequency, n=138)

Note: An Additional 15 SD had 1-2 Responses

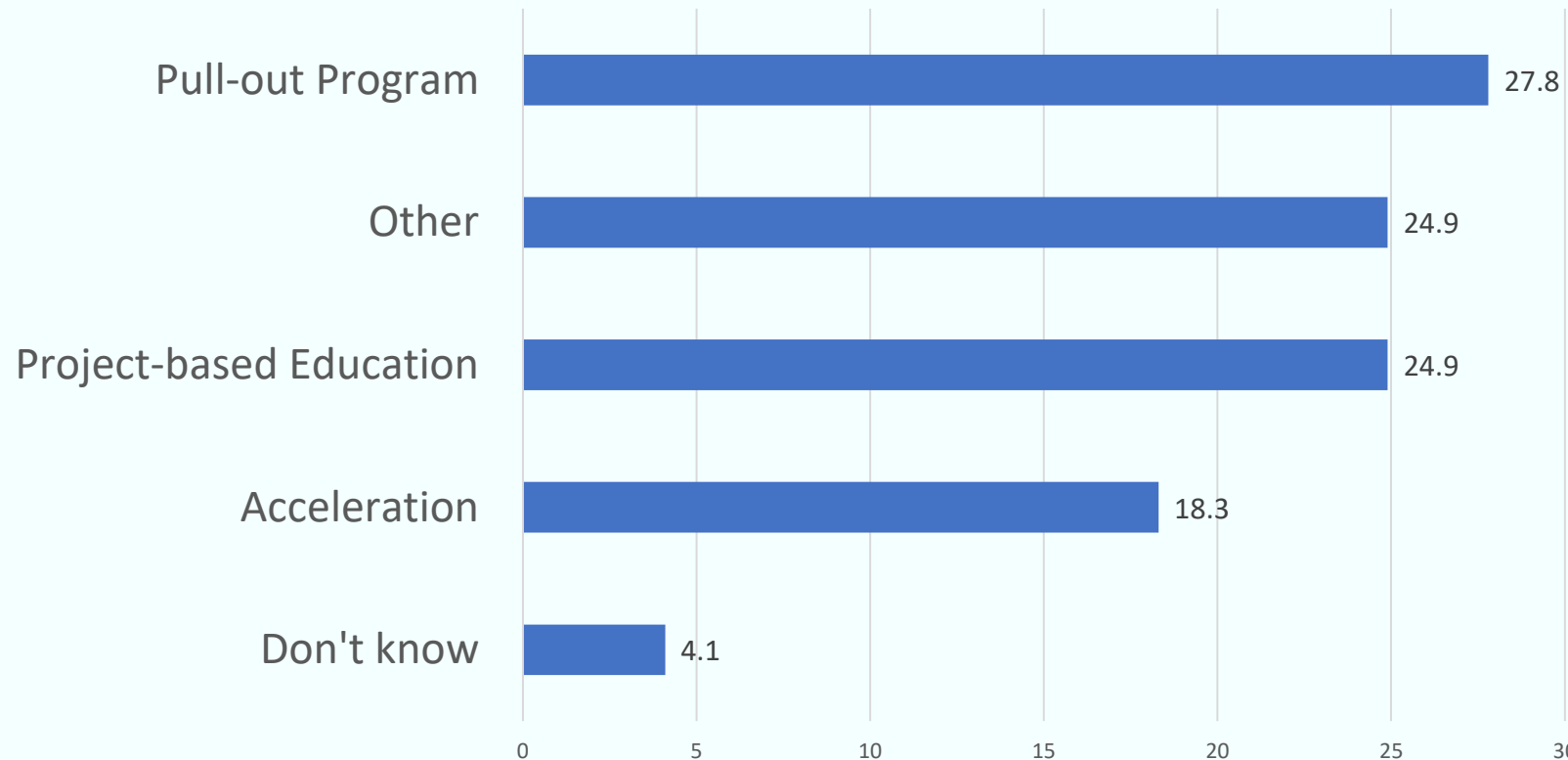


Type of School Program (% , n=163)



Type of gifted accommodation received

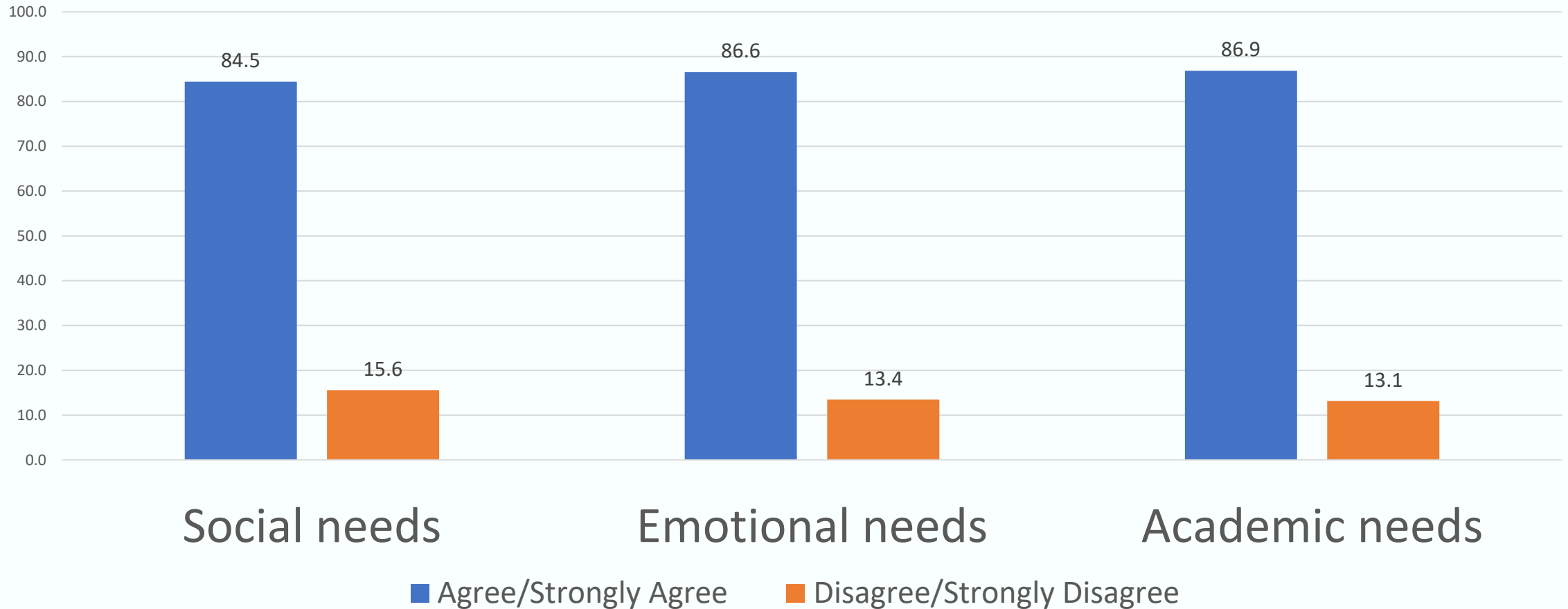
Select all Types, %, n=169 chosen



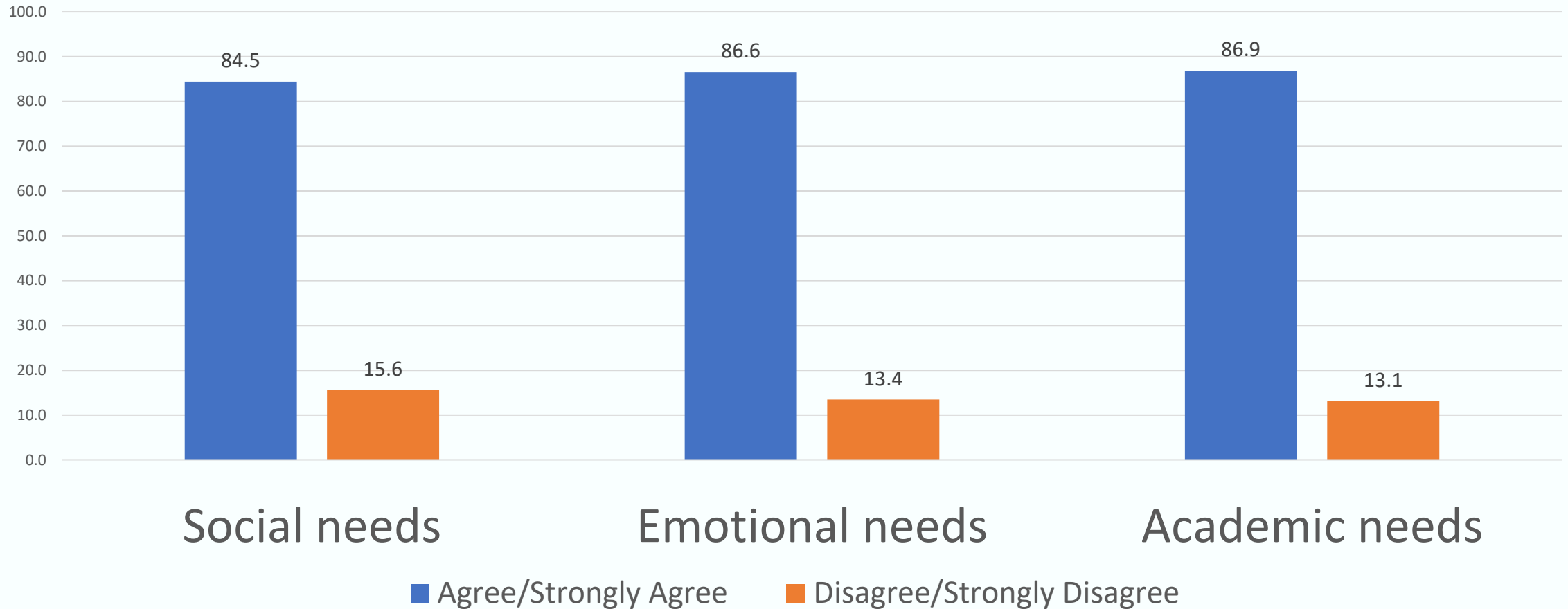
Examples of “Other” responses in order of frequency:

- None
- No gifted programs in school/school district
- Self-directed extensions
- Enrichment
- For other exceptionality only, not giftedness

Schools do NOT Meet Gifted Child's Needs (% Agreement, n=145)

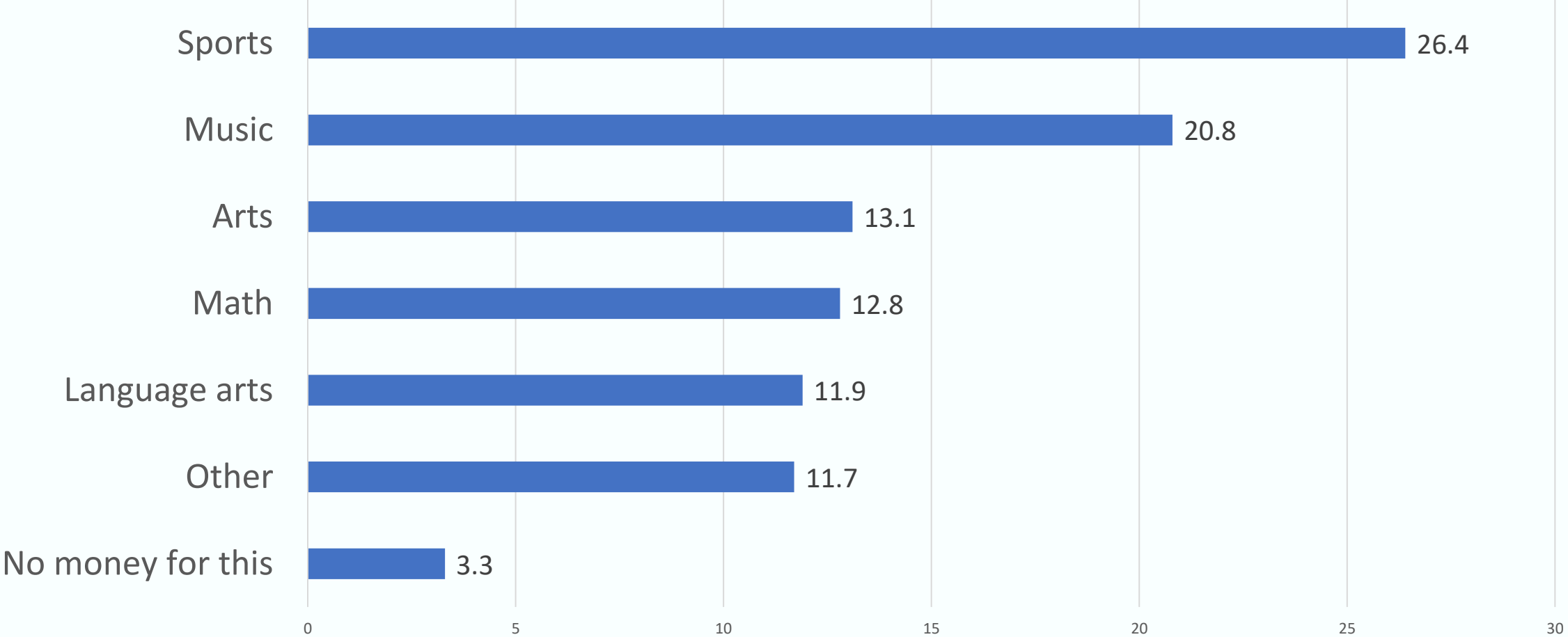


Perceptions of Need for Extracurriculars (% Agreement, n=145)



Types of Enrichment Provided by Families

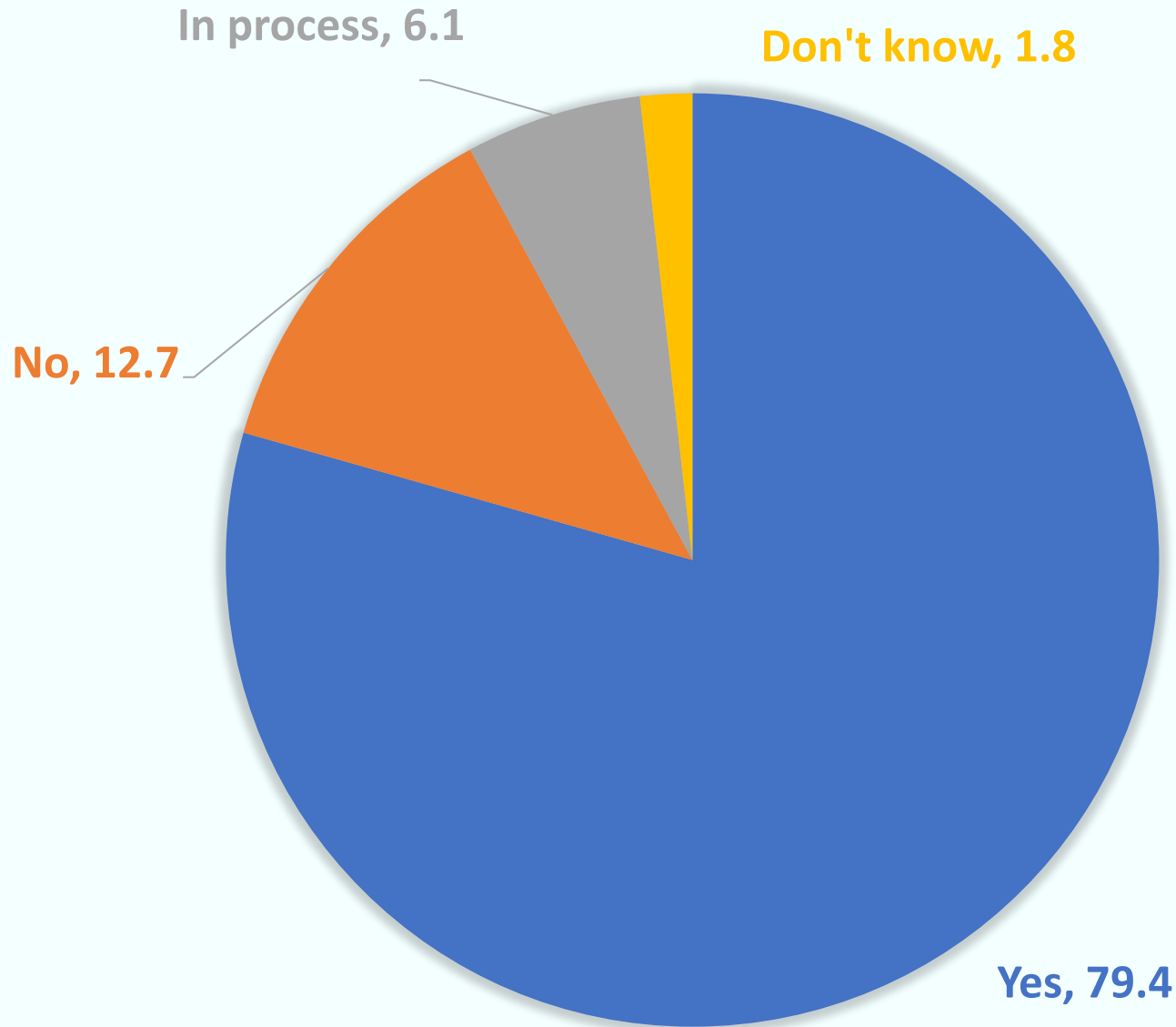
(Select all types, %, n=360)



Individual Education Plans

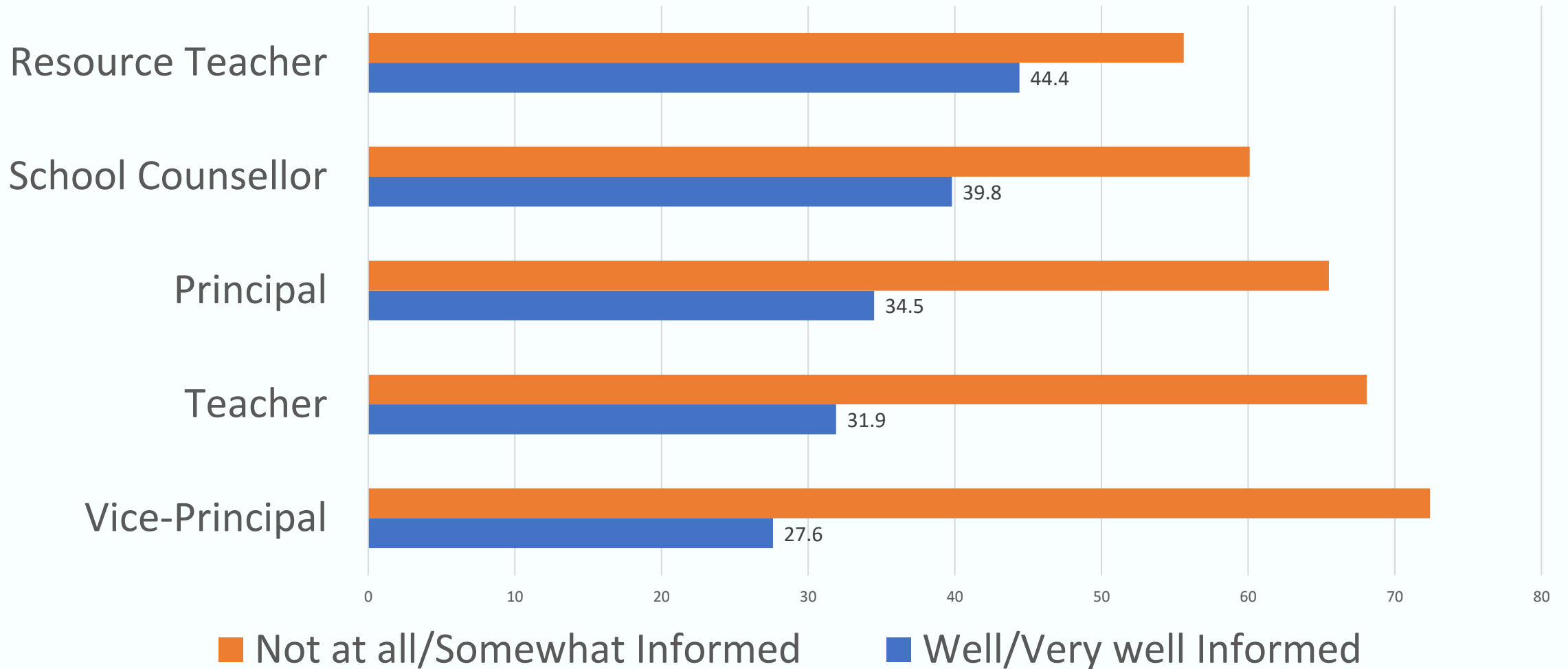
(IEP's)

(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES, N=165)

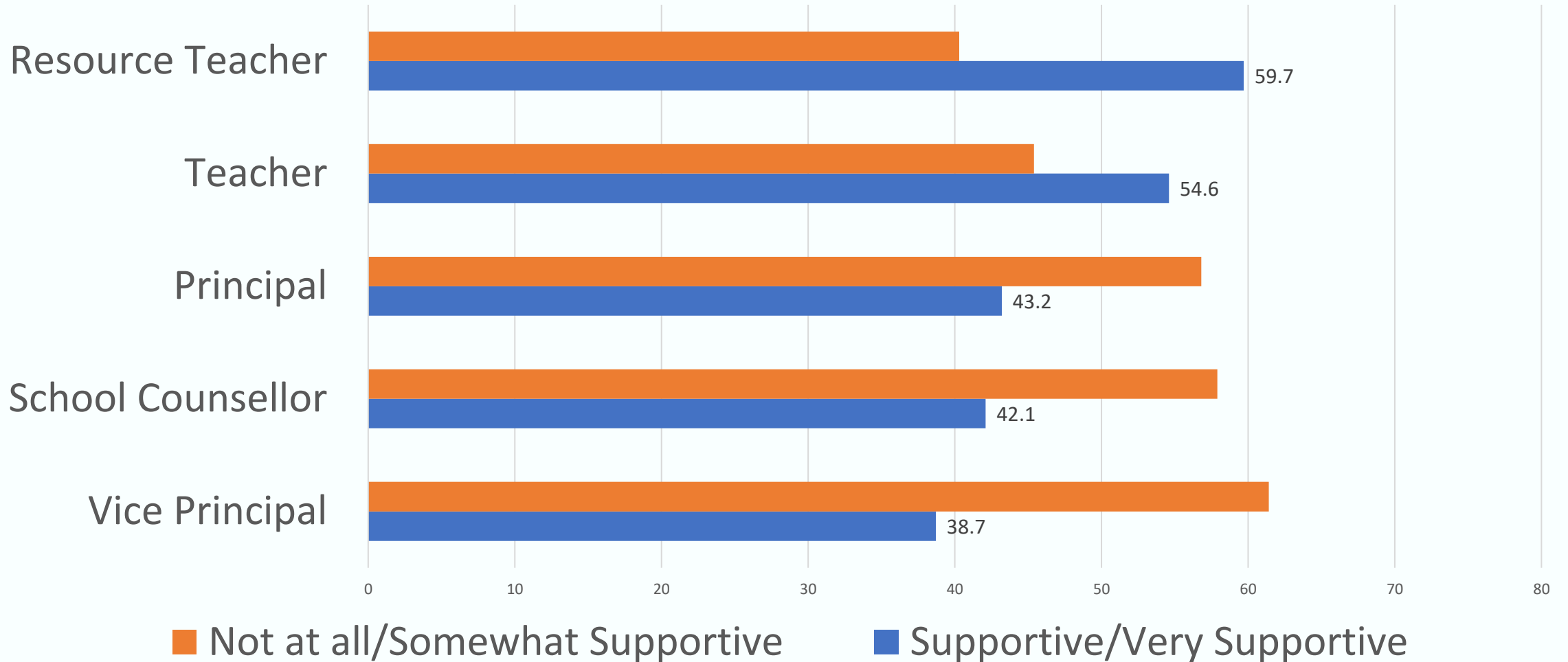


Do Gifted
Children
have an
Individual
Education
Plan (IEP)?

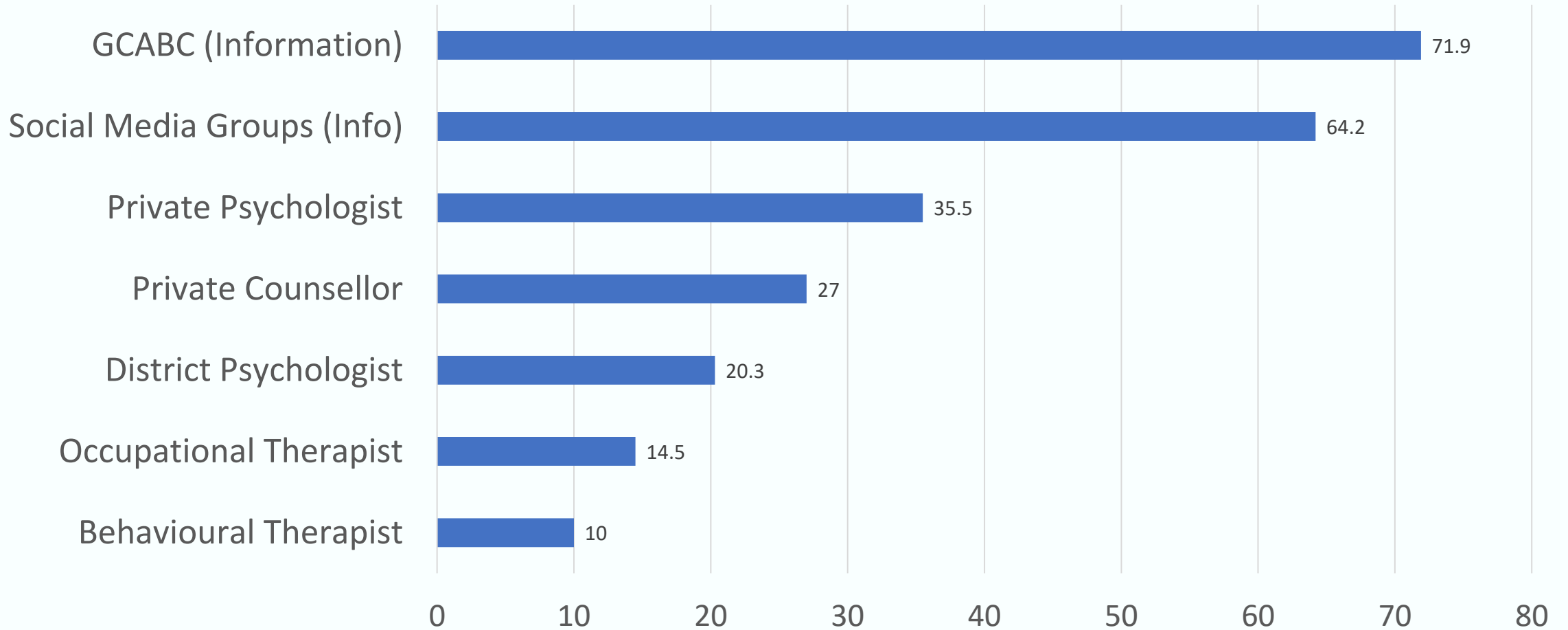
School Staff Knowledge of Gifted Education for Contributing to an IEP (% , n = 113-141)



Perceptions of Support from School Staff re: IEP (%, n=119-141)

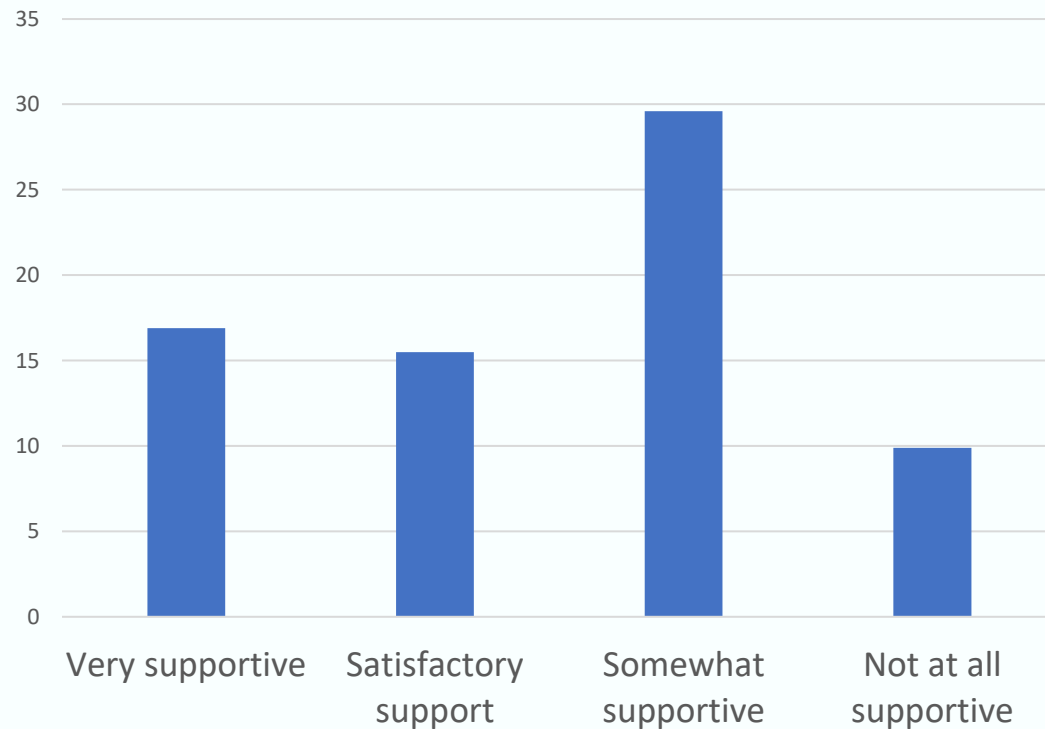


Groups & Professionals where participants were seeking Information or Support for IEP's (% of responses, n=141)

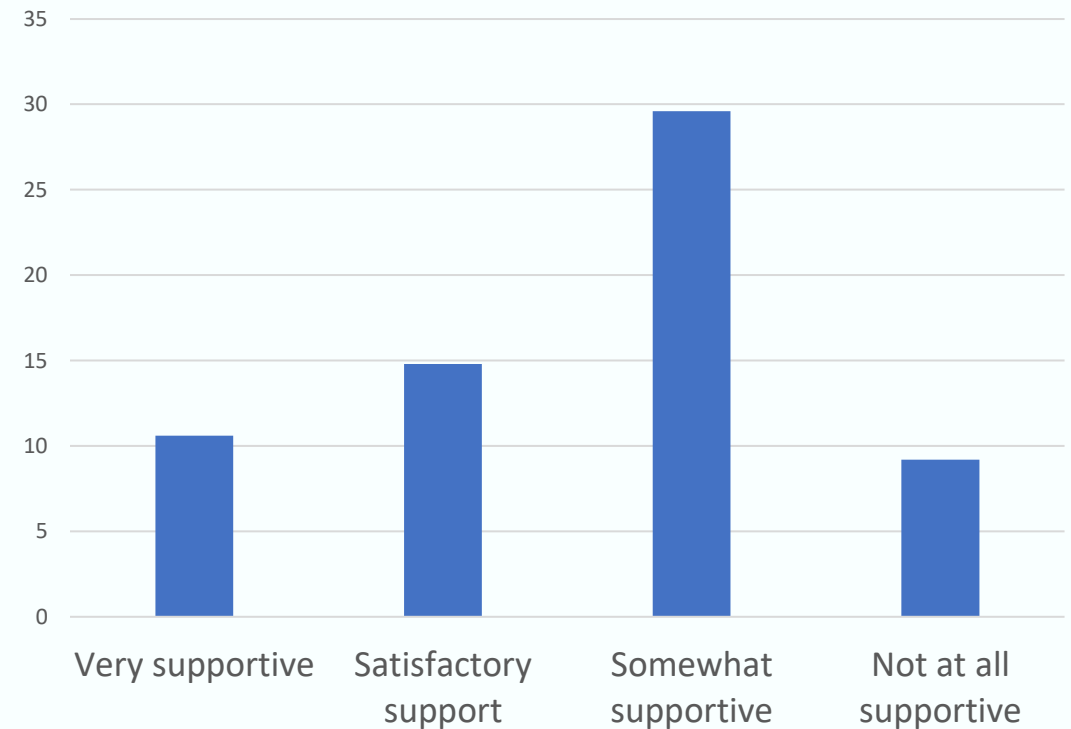


Level of Supportive Information for IEP's

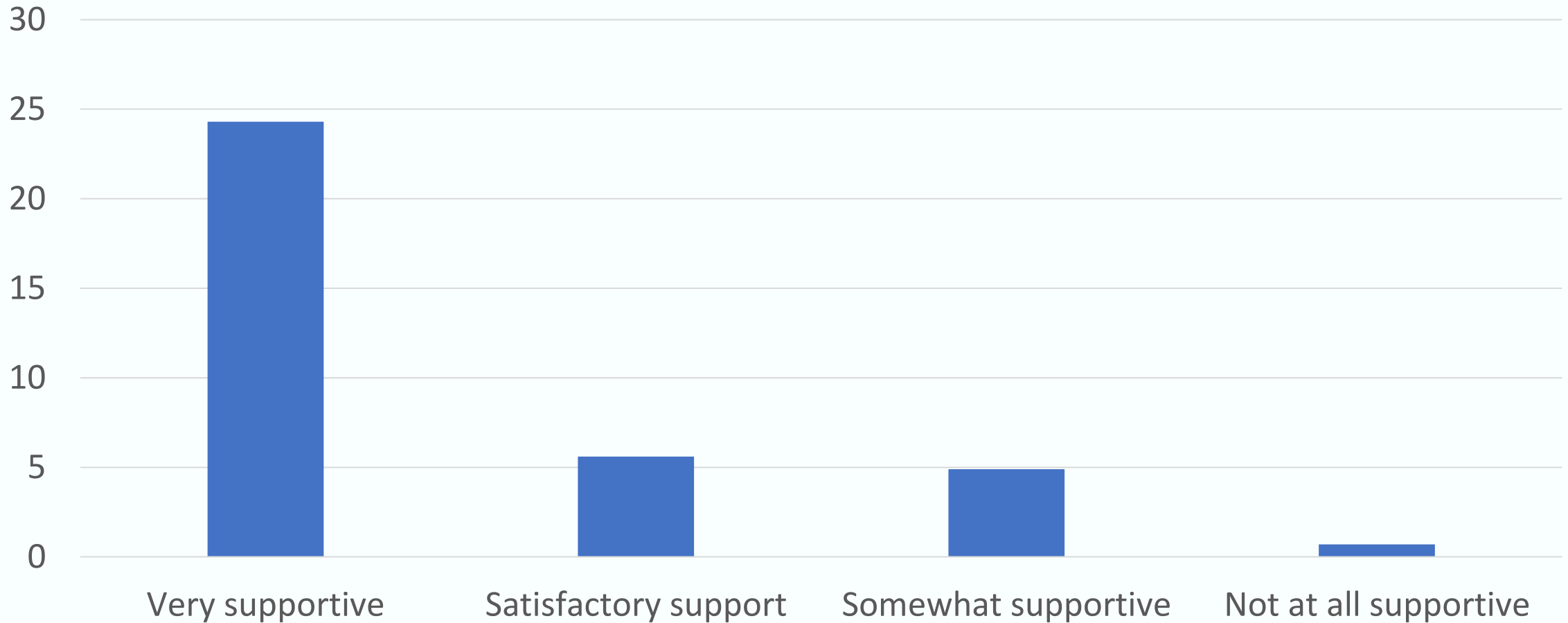
GCABC
(71.9% of Participants, Frequency %)



Social Media Groups
(64.2 % of Participants, Frequency %)

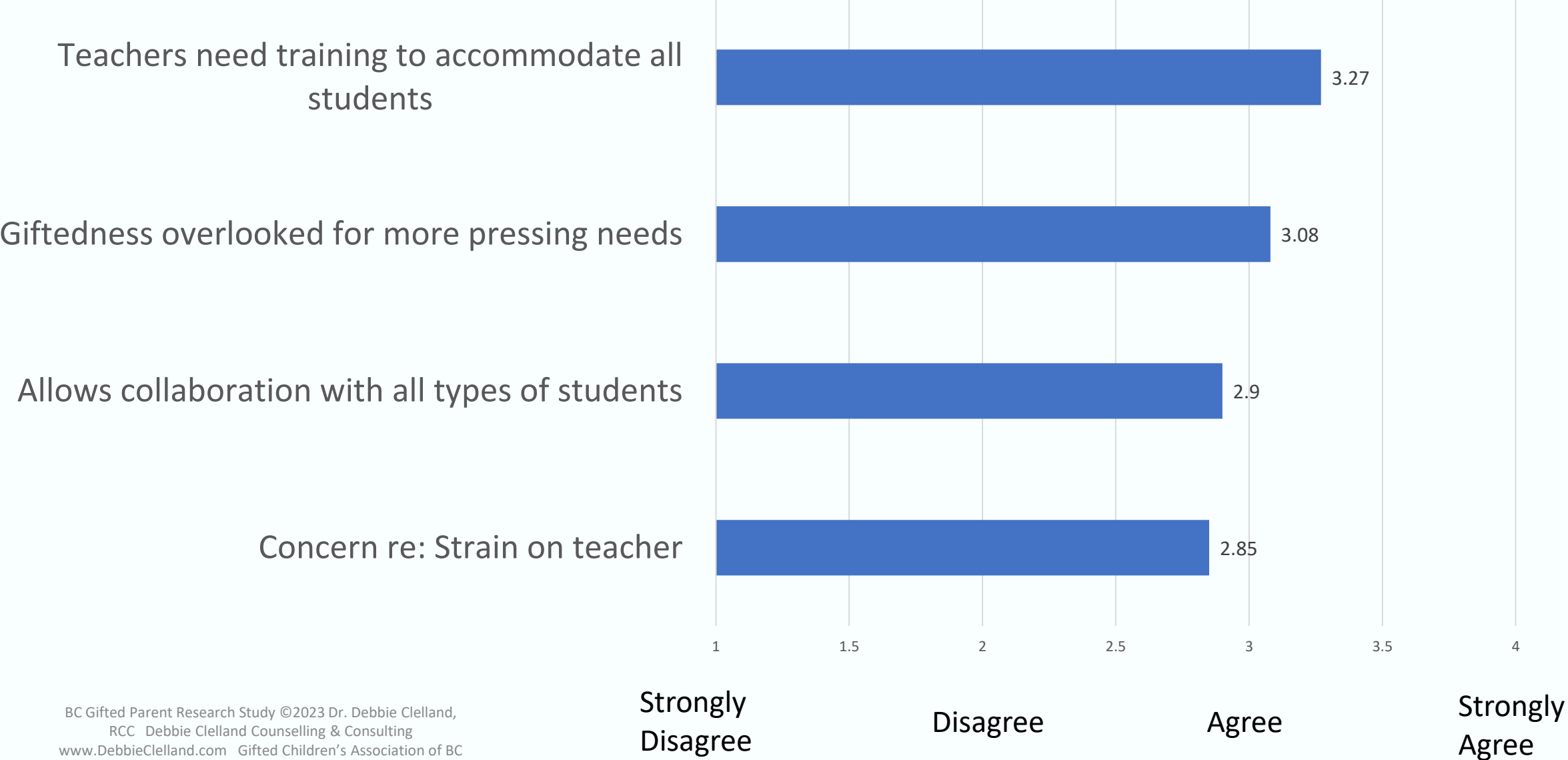


Private Psychologist: Level of Support for IEP's (35.5% of Participants, %)

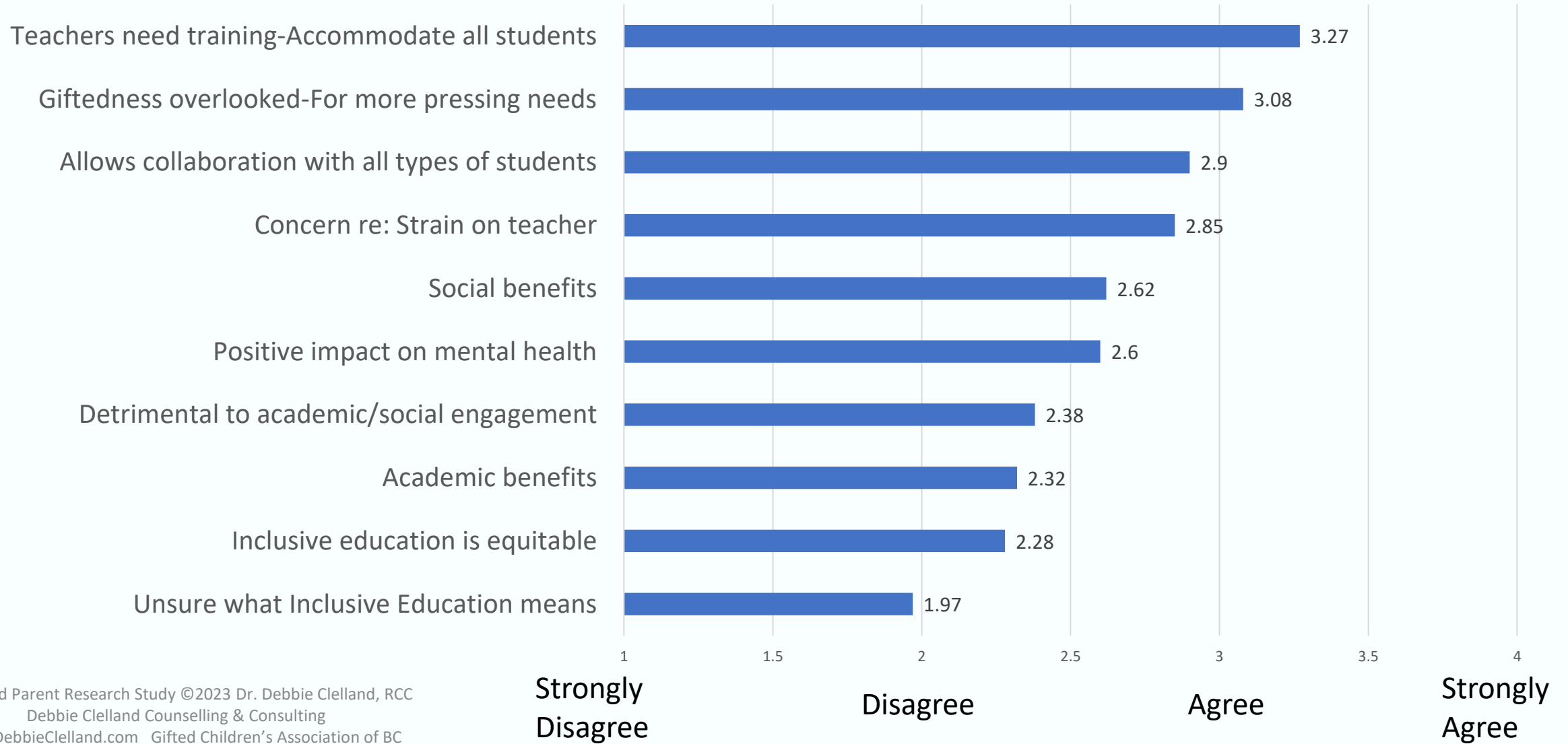


Perceptions about Inclusive Education

Perceptions about Inclusive Education – Top 4 responses: Agreement
(Average scores/Mean of 1=SD to 4=Strongly agree, n=121-138)



Perceptions about Inclusive Education: All survey items
(Average scores/Mean of 1=SD to 4=SA, n=121-138)



Experiences of Schooling Changes In Districts, Family Choices

School District: Gifted Programming Changes

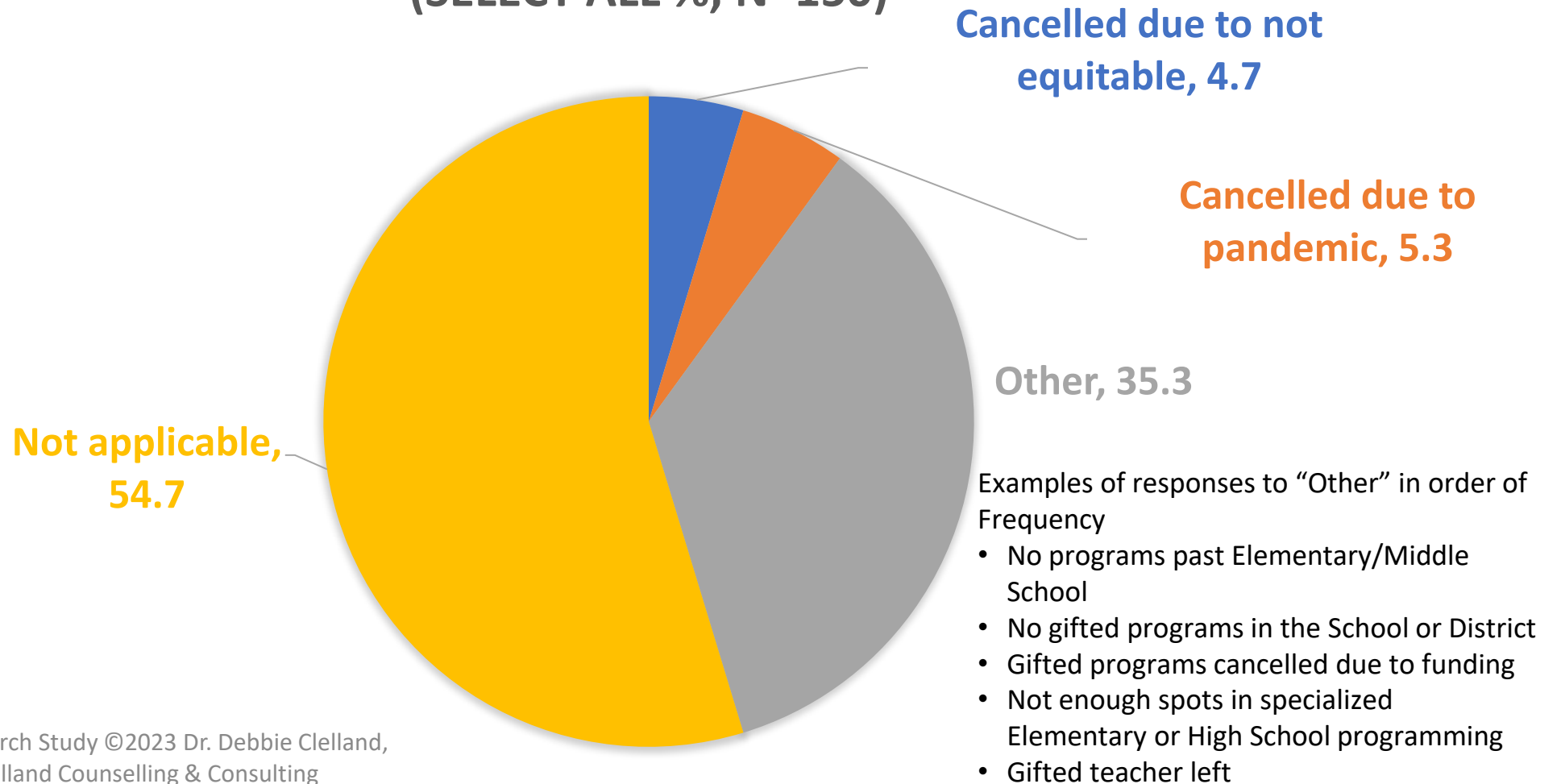
Has Gifted Programming changed in your District (% , n=164)

- Yes 33.5%
- No 40.9%

Are you worried about future changes to Gifted Programming? (% , n=164)

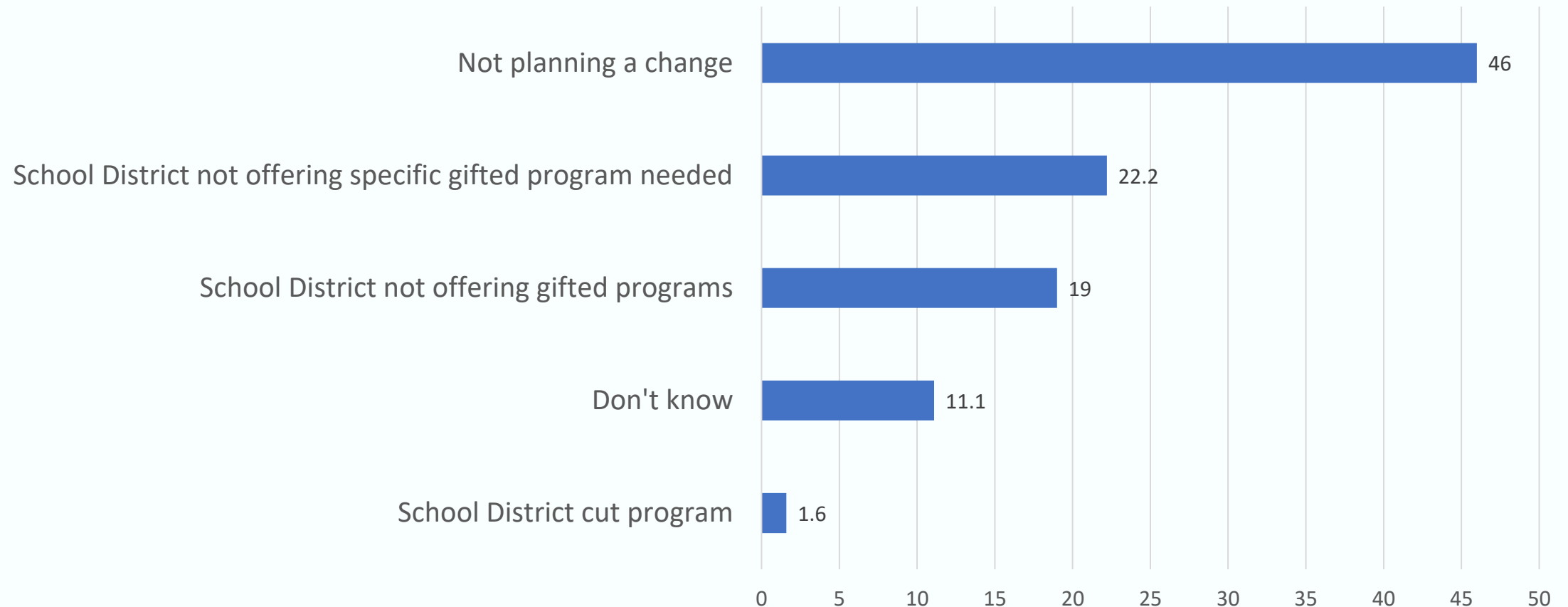
- Yes 20%
- No 30.3%

SCHOOL DISTRICT REASONS FOR GIFTED PROGRAM CHANGE (SELECT ALL %, N=150)



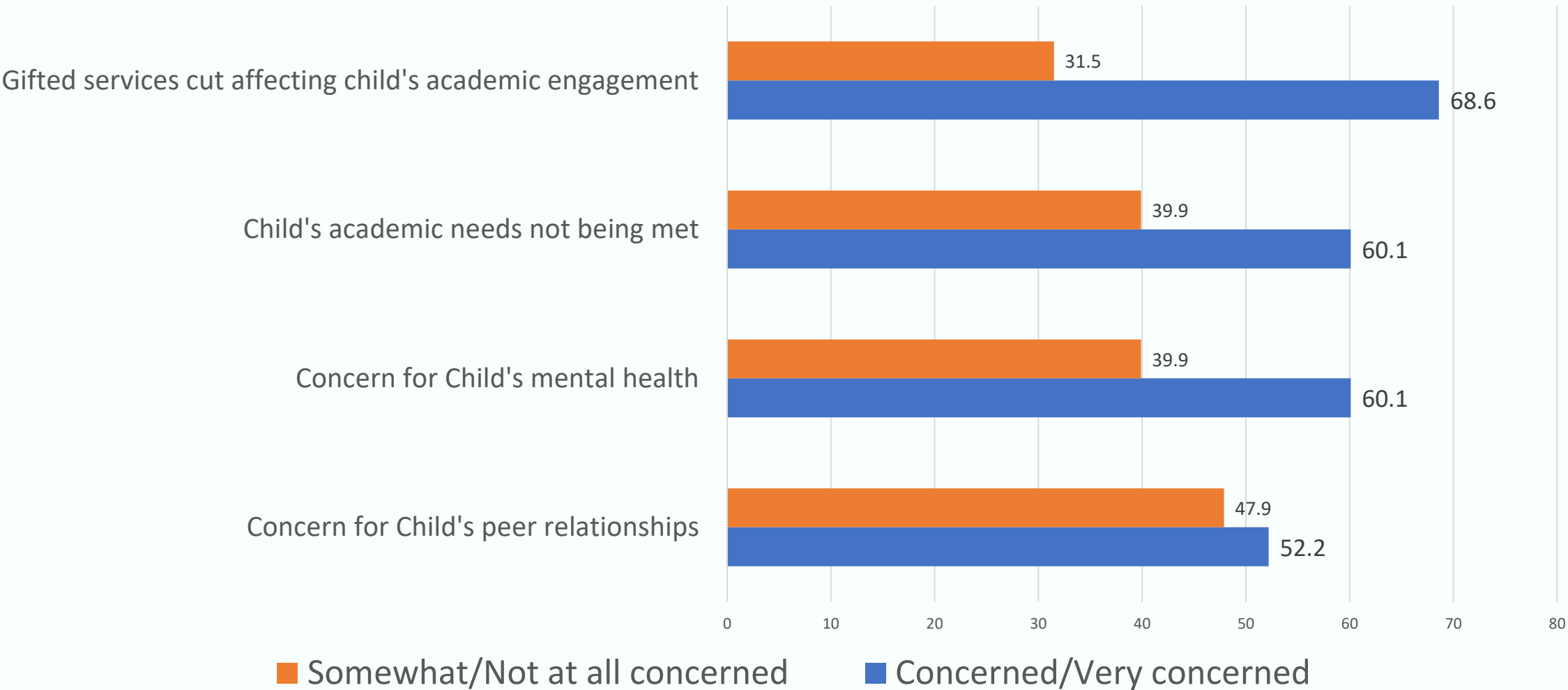
Reasons Families Made Educational Changes for Gifted Children

Select all Types of Changes, %, n=126 responses

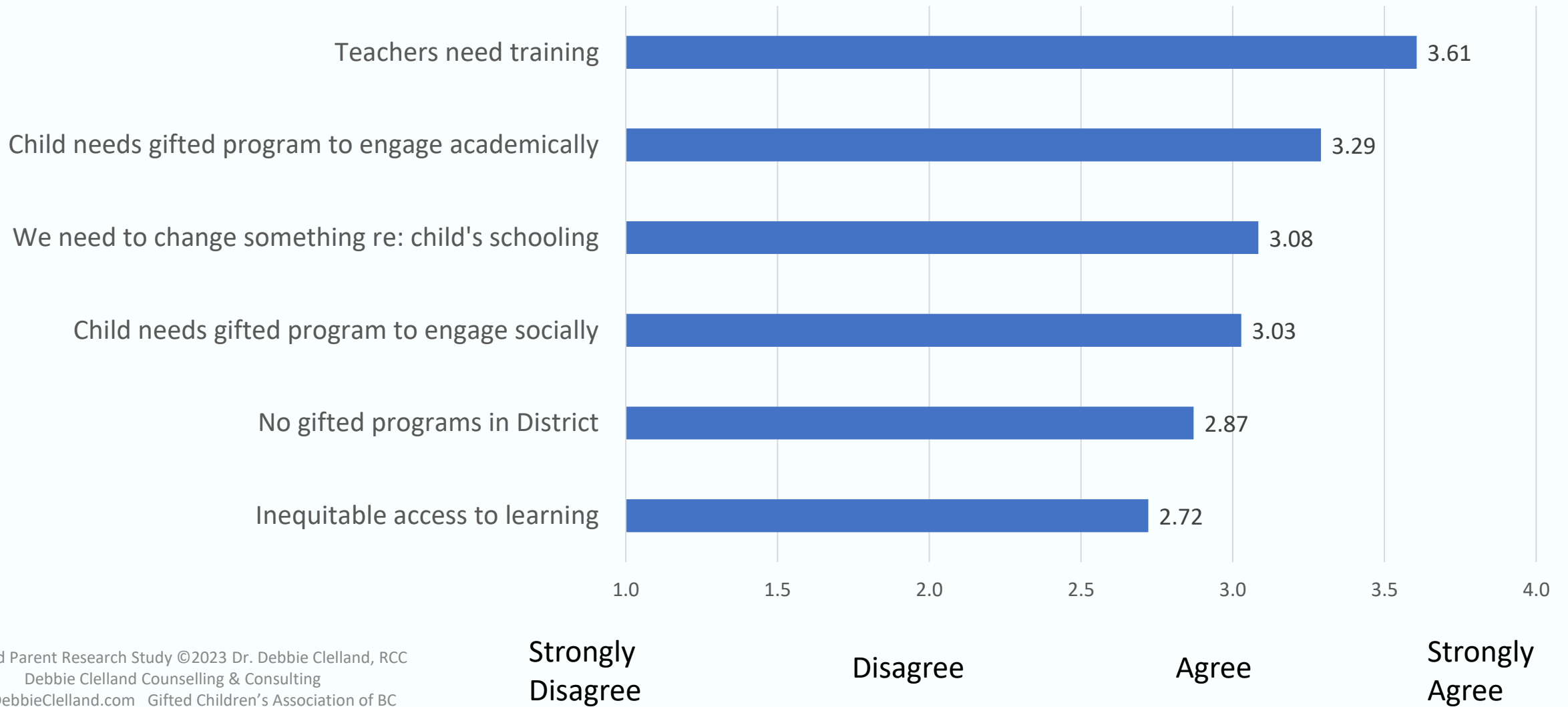


Participant Concerns about their
Gifted/Multi-Exceptional Children,
Themselves & their Families

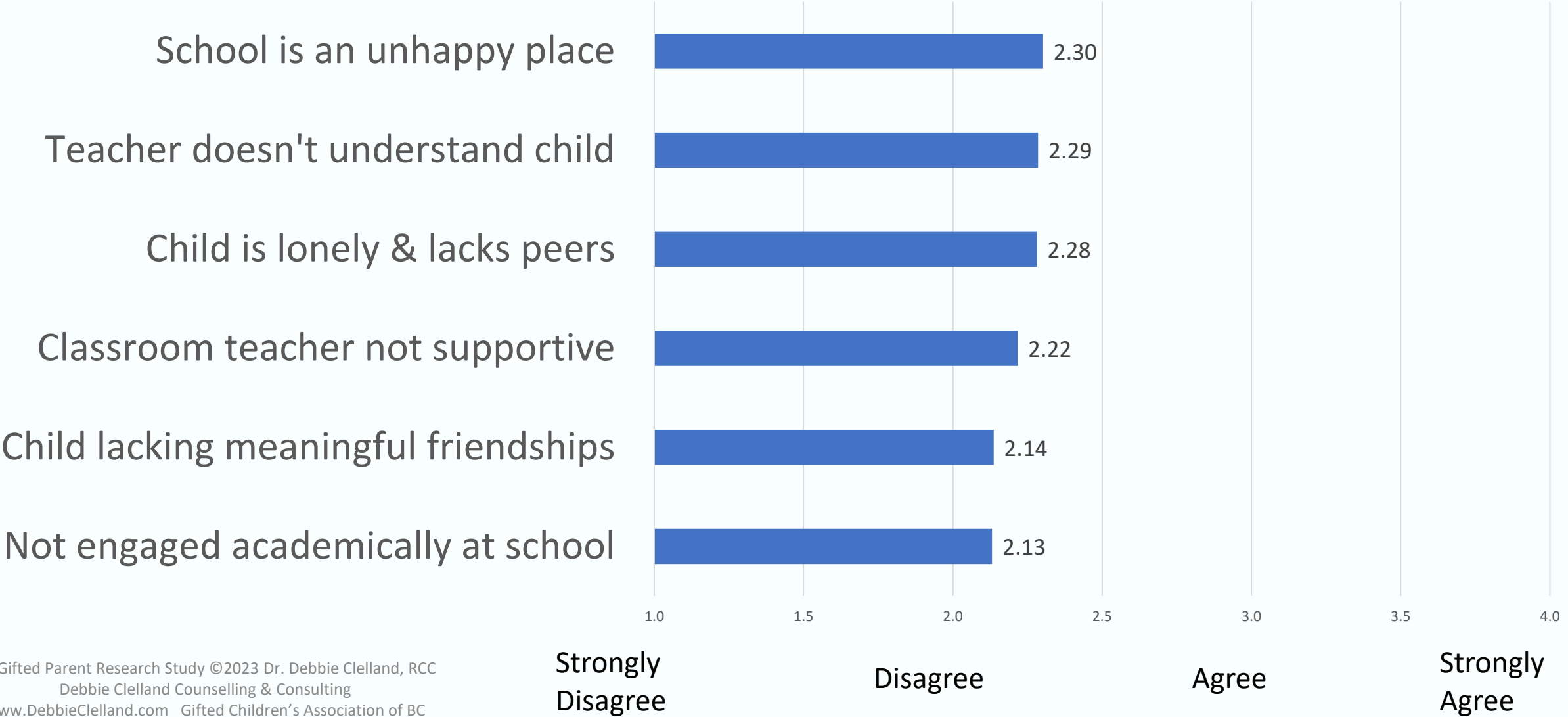
Level of Concern for Gifted Child (%, n=159-163)



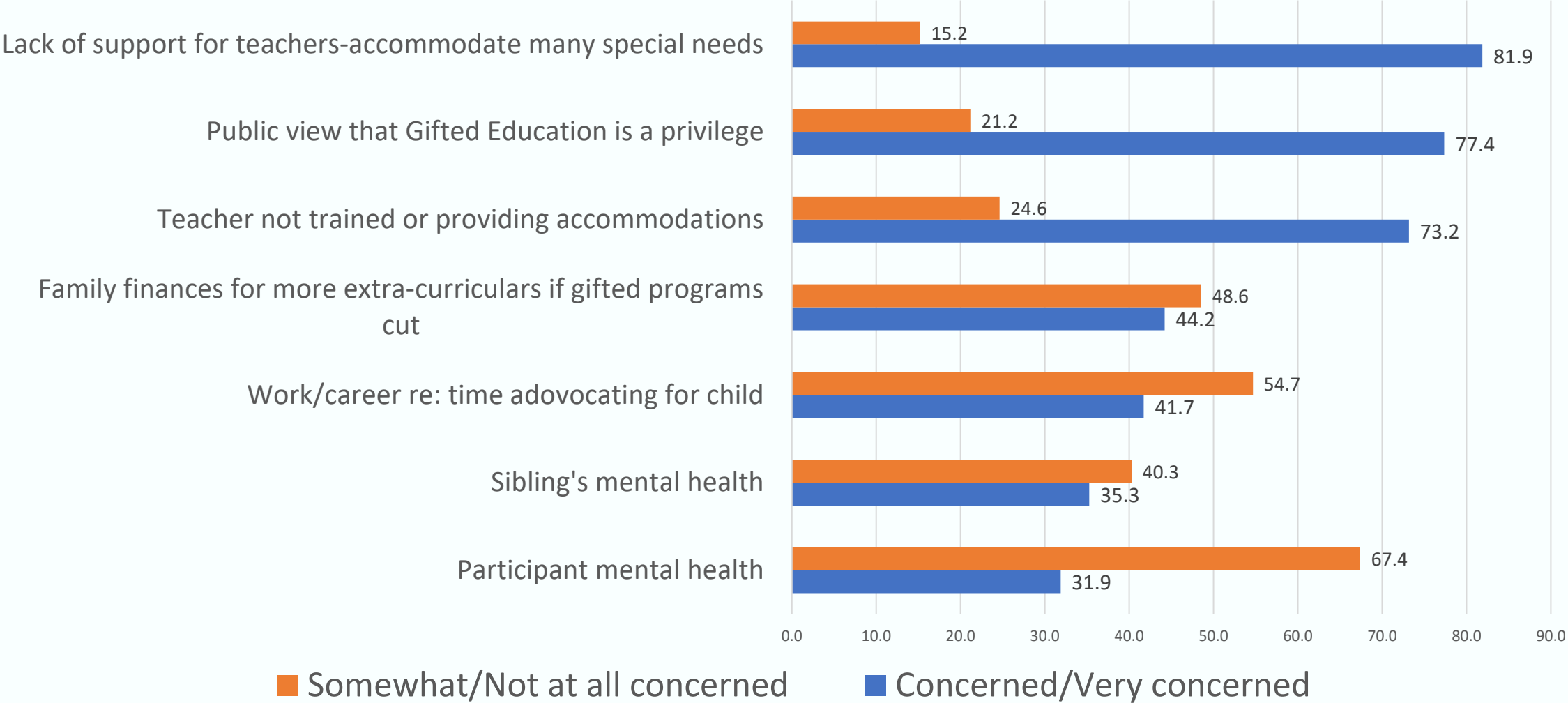
Concerns about Child's Current Academic Situation: Agreement (Average scores/Mean 1=SD to 4=SA, n=132-142)



Concerns about Child’s Current Academic Situation:
Slight Disagreement (Average scores/Mean, n=132-142)

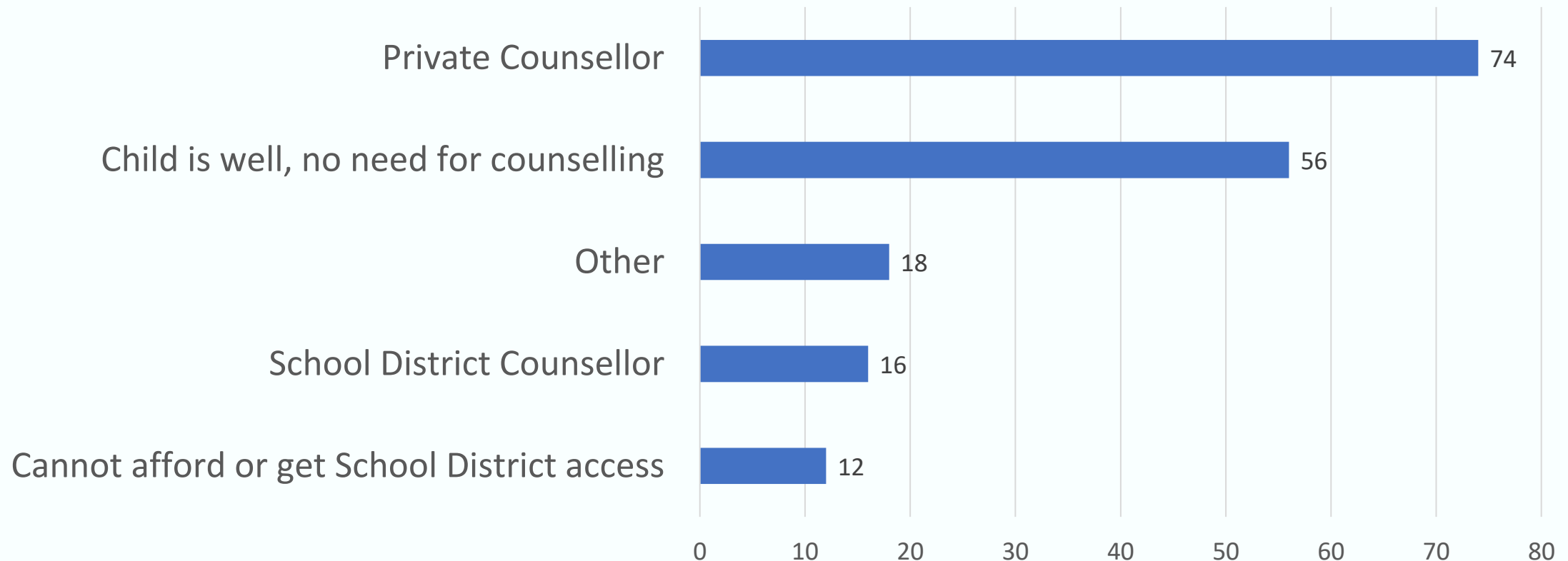


Concerns about School, Finances, Self & Siblings (% , n= 126-130)



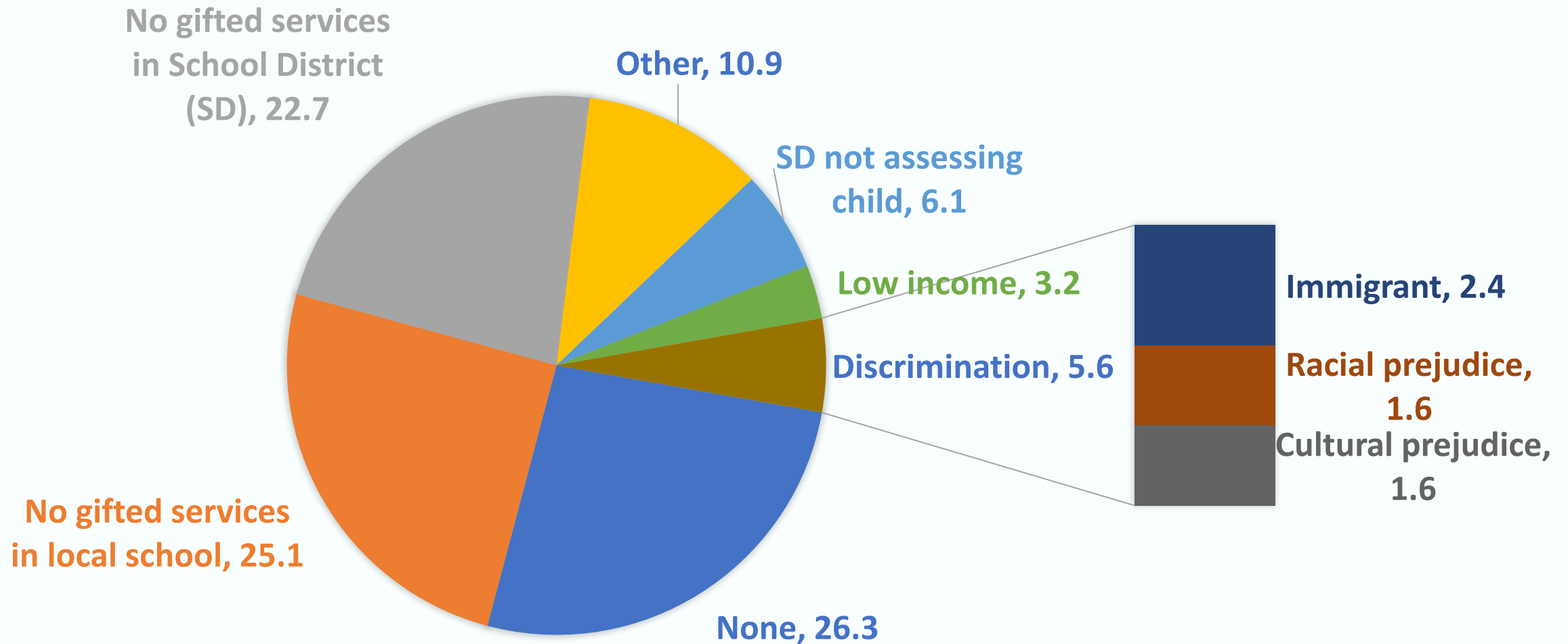
Mental Health Supports Accessed for Gifted Child

(Select all, n=176 responses)



Experiences of Barriers or
Discrimination While Seeking
Access to Gifted Education

BARRIERS OR DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCED WHILE ACCESSING GIFTED EDUCATION (SELECT ALL: % OF RESPONSES, N=247)



Thematic Analysis conducted by Dr.
Debbie Clelland and Dr. Lannie Kanevsky
of responses to the question:

(Braun & Clarke, 2012)

Is there anything else you would like to let us
know about your gifted/multi-exceptional
child's current experiences
with the education system in BC?

Themes I

1. Spectrum of experiences with the education system: Positive, Negative, and Journey along a bumpy path

“We have found that each year our son’s success in the school system depends on if he clicks with [the] teacher”

2. Teachers need to understand giftedness: How to support and challenge students
3. Teachers in inclusive classrooms overwhelmed by all learners’ needs
4. Program options are limited and/or disappearing

Themes II

5. Multi-exceptional children experience greater difficulties within the school system

‘It worked well for us with our daughter who is simply gifted, the effectiveness of public education faltered with our son who is twice exceptional. It was so bad we pulled him out and pursued private education. I cannot imagine what it would be like if we could not afford it.’

Themes III

6. Individual Education Plans (IEP) process is ineffective

7. Negative attitudes towards gifted children and giftedness

“Public school teachers often rolled their eyes and we were told several times that all children are gifted”

8. Difficulties obtaining accurate psychological or educational assessments

Themes IV

9. Families seeking a good fit for educational needs: Turned to homeschool, Think of independent school as a solution, and Changed schooling options within the public system

10. Poor communication from professionals within the system

11. Barriers to services and lack of equity for gifted students

“Discriminated against because of giftedness and not because of racism”

12. Potential solutions to problems in education system: Advocacy & funding

Study Limitations and Conclusions from this Research

Missing from our Study & Participant Group

- Education level of participants
- Household information (compare income levels)
- Children registered with Distributed Learning/Distance Ed
- More information on gifted girls (only 27.9% of the sample) and non-binary children (only 1.8% of the sample)
- Families with
 - Lower incomes
 - Gifted/Multi-Exceptional Children that have NOT been identified

How many gifted children should there be in BC?

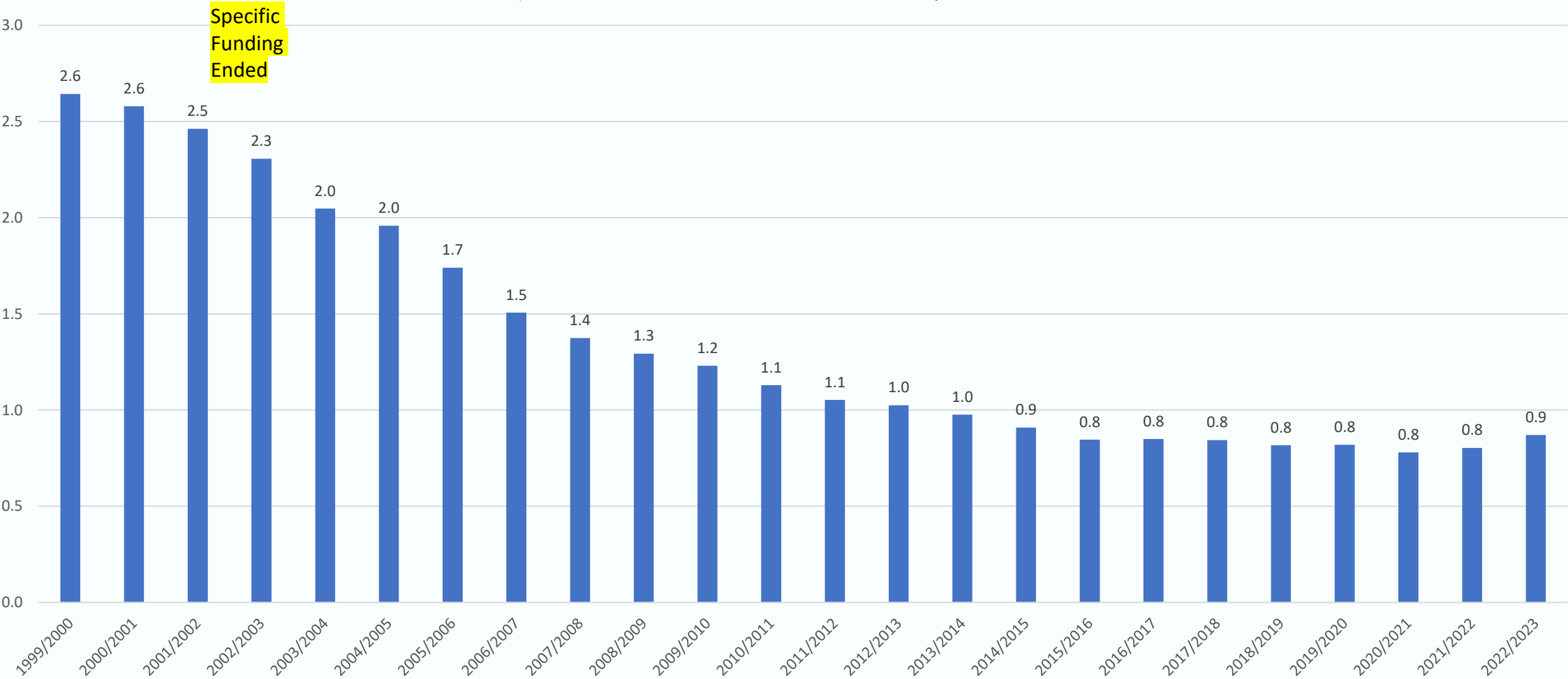
- Some estimates say giftedness is 2-5% of the population if we are looking only at IQ for identification
- BC and other locations require 2 types of information for identification, and rarely an IQ test
- Recommended practice for identification is between 5-10% (based on theories of giftedness & inclusivity practices)
 - More inclusive (language learners, low-income families)
 - Serve underachieving students, too

(BC Ministry of Education, 2016; Gagne, 2013; NAGC, n.d.; Ronksley-Pavia, 2021)

% of Students in BC Reported as Gifted to Ministry of Education

Note: Provincial funding linked to designation of giftedness ended in 2002. Now grouped funding with “High incidence special needs”

(Source: Author’s calculations from BC Ministry of Education)



What if children do not get identified as gifted?

- "...gifted children should be channelled into special education programmes...as soon as they can be effectively identified..." so they can "...develop together, without running the risk of experiencing social isolation, boredom and low self-esteem that often leads to underachievement."

(Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2010, p. 60)

20 year Longitudinal Study Profoundly Gifted in Australia

n=60 participants with IQ scores of 160 or above

Measure	Allowed to Skip 2 Grades	Skipped 1 or No Grades
Life Satisfaction	High	Lower
Educational Attainment	Research degrees at leading universities	Some not graduate from high school or college. Some less rigorous college courses
Social Relationships	Good social and love relationships	Many had significant struggles socially
Career Achievement	Professional careers	

(Gross, 2006)

How are gifted children identified in BC?

Commonly used Methods of determining giftedness:

1. Doing assessments/screening with all children (Coquitlam may be the only SD in BC that does this)
2. Assessing only a smaller % of students (assessments are expensive, so may only assess those who "look gifted")

Problem with #2: Research has found that up to 60% of gifted students remain un-identified if nomination by teacher is required, especially if the teachers have not been trained to recognize giftedness. (McBee et al., 2016)

Positives reported by Parent Participants in 2022 Research

- Most children had an IEP
- The majority of parents were not concerned about changes to District gifted programming in the past or future
- Only 1.6% reported a gifted program being cut
- Participants felt supported by teachers

Recommendations

- Training teachers in the identification & teaching of gifted students
- Creating school environments that:
 - Allow for gifted education options
 - Do not lead to teachers feeling overwhelmed and unsupported
- Ensuring there are gifted students being identified in every district, and this is being done to be inclusive of gender, ethnicity, income level, English Language proficiency, etc.
- Creating a variety of gifted education options that are available throughout the K-12 system, inside of classrooms, schools and districts
- Ensuring that gifted children get time with other gifted children to allow for same-ness, inclusion, and inspiration!

Resources

Resources for supporting parents on this journey – 3 page handout - sending via email

Highlights

- Know your child's needs & find other parents
 - Gifted Children's Association of BC
 - Meeting other parents;
 - List of Facebook groups: homelearners, BC parents, allies
 - Meetup Group "Vancouver young gifted children & parents meetup group"

Resources II

- Understanding & advocacy: giftedness & multi-exceptionality, IEP's
 - Many articles on the GCABC website: collaboration, educational options
 - Interview with Dr. Debbie Clelland, BCACC Insights Magazine Fall 2021 “The missed neurodiversity: Advocate for recognition & resources for gifted individuals”
 - Dr. Lannie Kanevsky’s website: Possibilities For Learning
 - Brilliant Behaviours questionnaire for understanding giftedness (also used by teachers)
 - Learning preferences survey for children
 - Resources for building IEP’s – using the above, auto-loads curriculum adaptations into a spreadsheet
 - Collaborating with the Lower Mainland Gifted Contacts & District Teachers

References

- Battisti, M., Friesen, J., & Hickey, R. (2012). How student disability classifications and learning outcomes respond to special education funding rules: Evidence from British Columbia. *Canadian Public Policy*, 38(2), 147-166.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association.
- BC Ministry of Education (n.d.-a). *Inclusive education resources*. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/teach/resources-for-teachers/inclusive-education#programs>
- BC Ministry of Education (n.d.-b). *Special education*. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/special-education>
- BC Ministry of Education (2016). *Special education services: A manual of policies, procedures and guidelines*. Author. http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf#page=47
- BC Ministry of Education. (n.d.-c). *Student headcount by diverse needs 1996/7 to 2022/23*. <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/bc-schools-student-headcount-by-grade>
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (n.d.-d). *Student headcount by grade 1991/92 to 2005/06; 2006/07 to 2016/2017; 2017/18 to 2022/23*. <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/student-headcount-by-special-needs-category>
- Clelland, D.A. (2009). *Needs for information and concerns of parents of gifted children in four Canadian provinces*.
- Gagné, F. (2013). The DMGT: Changes within, beneath, and beyond. *Talent Development & Excellence*, 5(1), 5–19.
- Gross, M.U.M. (2006). Exceptionally gifted children: Long-term outcomes of academic acceleration and non-acceleration. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 29(4), 404-429.
- Kanevsky, L. S., & Clelland, D. (2013). Accelerating gifted students in Canada: Policies and possibilities. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(3), 229-271.
- McBee, M. T., Peters, S. J., & Miller, E. M. (2016). The impact of the nomination stage on gifted program identification: A comprehensive psychometric analysis. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 60(4), 258-278.
- National Association for Gifted Children. (n.d.). *What is giftedness?* <https://dev.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/what-giftedness>
- Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS survival manual: A step-by-step guide to data analysis* (7th ed.). McGraw Hill.
- Ronksley-Pavia, M. (2020). Twice-exceptionality in Australia: Prevalence estimates. *Australasian Journal of Gifted Education*, 29(2), 17-29. DOI: 10.21505/ajge.2020.0013
- Statistics Canada. (2022; table). *Census profile: 2021 Census of population*. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released December 15, 2022. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Van der Westhuizen, C. N., & Maree, J. G. (2010). From human to humankind: Facilitating global awareness among the gifted. *Gifted Education International*, 27(1), 54-62.

Used exclusively for development of survey items:

- Connecticut State Department of Education. (2016). *Connecticut special education survey report: Parent summary 2014-2015* [PDF file]. Prepared by Glen Martin and Associates. Retrieved from https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/parent_survey.pdf
- Ducharme, D., & Magloire, J. (2018). A Systemic Study into the Rights of Students with Special Needs and Organization of Educational Services Within the Québec School System: Summary Document. Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.
- Hosseinkhanzadeh, A. A., Yeganeh, T., & Taher, M. (2013). Investigate Attitudes of Parents and Teachers About Educational Placement of Gifted Students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84, 631–636. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.616>

Thank you



Debbie Clelland, PhD
Counselling & Consulting

Thank you to the Research Team, and the Participants

Further Resources & Presentation slides:

Gifted Children's Association of BC

- www.giftedchildrenbc.org

Debbie Clelland Counselling & Consulting

- www.DebbieClelland.com

Debbie Clelland, PhD
Counselling & Consulting



GIFTED
CHILDREN'S
ASSOCIATION of BC