



# Milk & Flavored Dairy in Schools: Public School Parents

Polling by **Morning Consult** on behalf of the **International Dairy Foods Association**

 **MARCH 2026**

# Methodology

This poll was conducted between March 5-8, 2026, among a sample of 1,003 *Parents with children in public schools*. The interviews were conducted online, and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of *Parents with children in public schools* based on gender, age, race, educational attainment, region, and gender by age. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

# Key Takeaways

- 1 Parents with children in public schools believe milk's nutritional value is important to children's health, and most serve whole or 2% milk at home.** 88% of parents with children in public schools say drinking milk is important for children's daily nutritional intake. Whole and 2% milk are also the most frequently served at home.
- 2 Flavored dairy products are broadly embraced by parents– and parents recognize their health benefits.** Most parents serve flavored milk (85%) or flavored yogurt (91%) at home. Regardless of flavoring, most parents agree whole and 2% milk (flavored or unflavored) is nutritious (80%), wholesome (unflavored: 79%; flavored: 75%), healthy (unflavored: 78%; flavored: 80%), and tasty (unflavored: 80%; flavored: 76%).
- 3 Parents recognize their children are more likely to consume full servings of flavored dairy products.** 80% of parents say their child would likely consume a full serving of flavored milk versus just 60% for unflavored, and the gap is even wider for yogurt (80% flavored vs. 37% unflavored).
- 4 Flavored dairy messaging resonates – particularly when emphasizing flavored milk's role in reducing food insecurity and its adherence to federal standards.** Four-in-five parents find messages around food security and national standards convincing. Other messages tested were also strong, suggesting that parents are receptive to the case for flavored milk broadly.
- 5 There is strong support for dairy products – flavored and unflavored – in school meals and parents express concern over potential removal of flavored dairy products after learning more.** 85% of parents think it is important for school meals to include dairy products, even if they include small amounts of sugar and four-in-five support having flavored yogurt (81%) and flavored milk (77%) offered in school meal programs. Parents would be concerned (74%) if flavored milk and yogurt were removed from school meal programs.

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**AGENDA**

**Importance of Milk**

Perceptions of Milk Types

Flavored Dairy – Child's Consumption

Support for Dairy Options in Schools

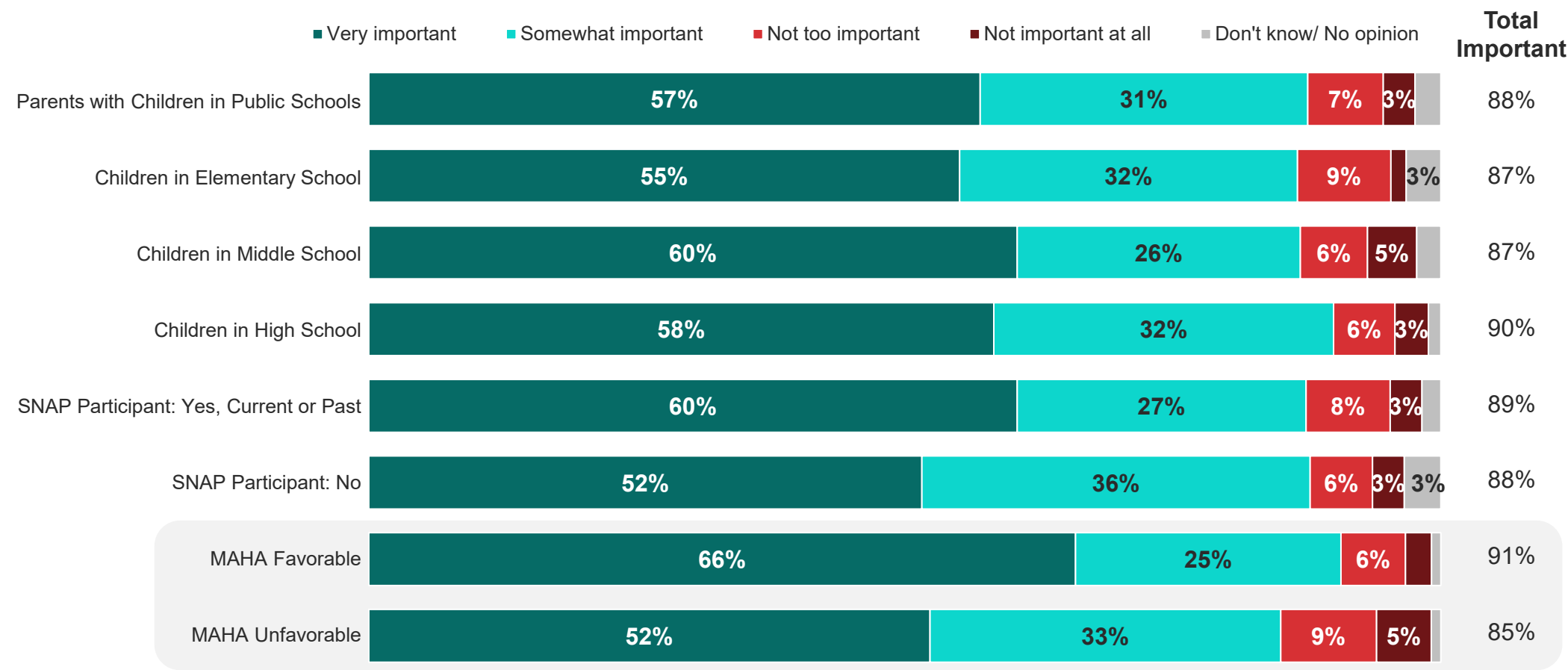
Messaging



IMPORTANCE OF MILK

Milk's nutritional importance for kids is near-universal among parents. Parents with favorable opinions of MAHA feel particularly strongly about this, with two-thirds saying milk is *very important* for children’s nutritional intake.

How important, if at all, do you believe **drinking milk** is for children’s daily nutritional intake?



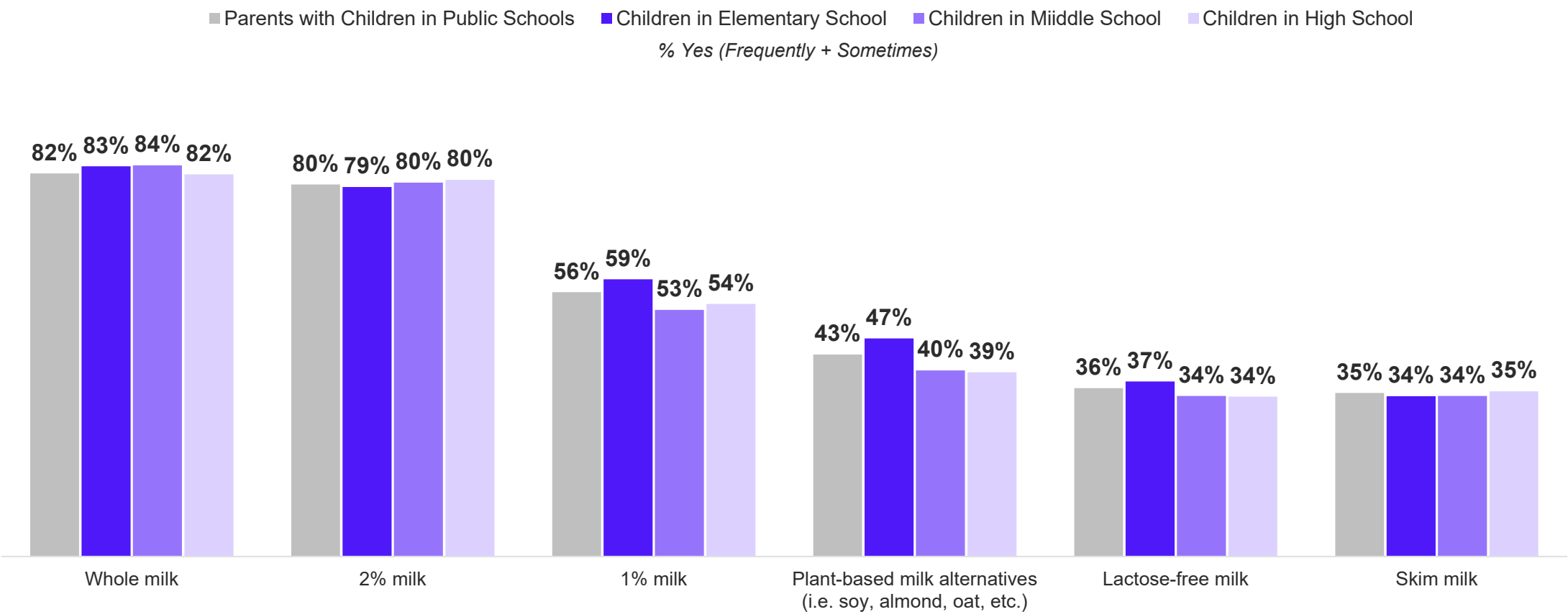
Total important = % Very important + % Somewhat important

Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

IMPORTANCE OF MILK

Parents primarily serve whole or 2% milk to their children, though a majority also offer 1% at home regardless of their child’s age.

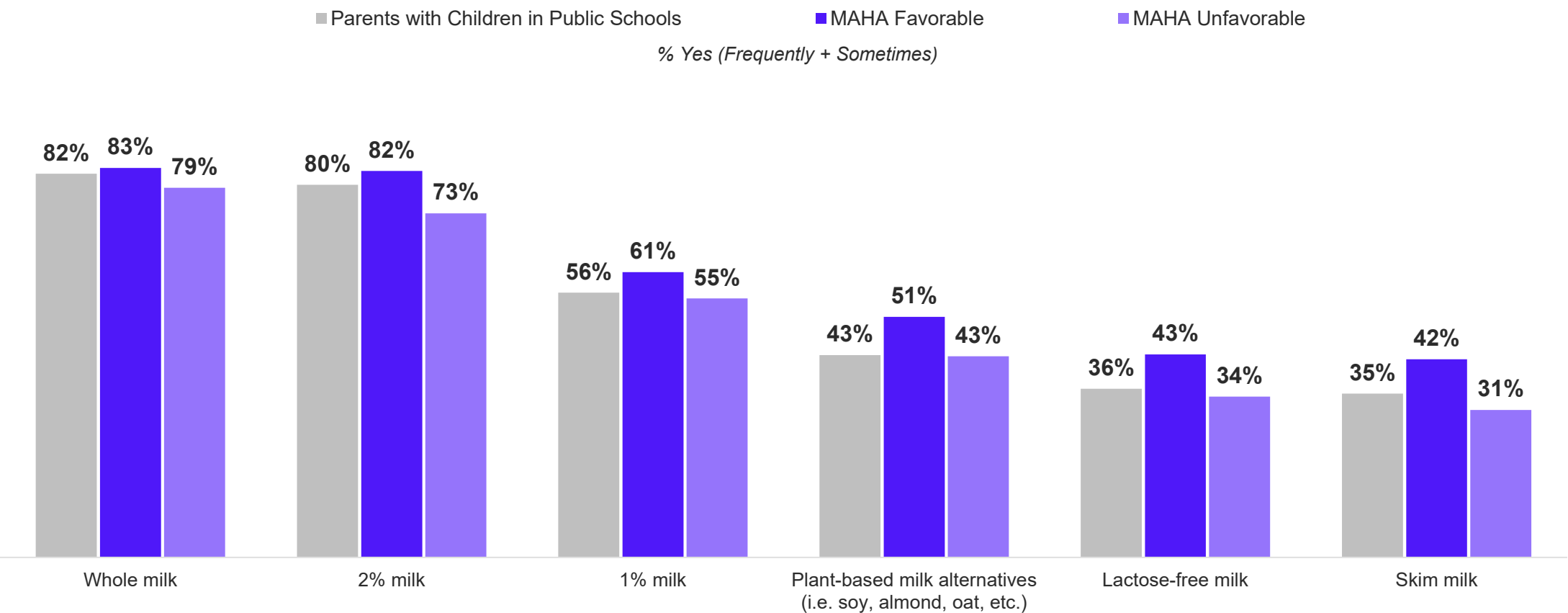
Which of the following types of milk do you serve to your children at home?



IMPORTANCE OF MILK

Regardless of MAHA views, parents frequently or sometimes serve whole or 2% milk at home. Parents with favorable opinions of MAHA are more likely than those with unfavorable views to serve most milk types, however.

Which of the following types of milk do you serve to your children at home?



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**AGENDA**

Importance of Milk

**Perceptions of Milk Types**

Flavored Dairy – Child's Consumption

Support for Dairy Options in Schools

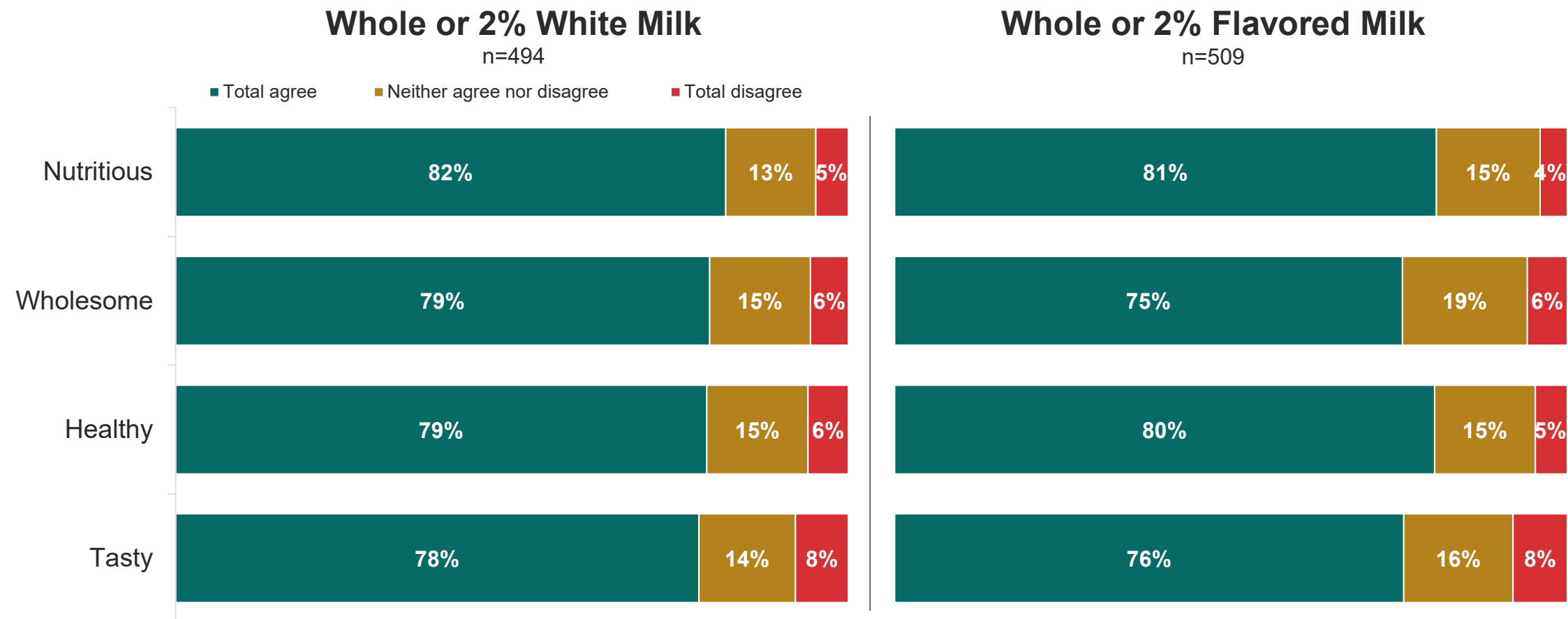
Messaging



PERCEPTIONS OF MILK TYPES

The vast majority of parents consider whole or 2% milk – flavored or unflavored – nutritious, wholesome, healthy, and tasty.

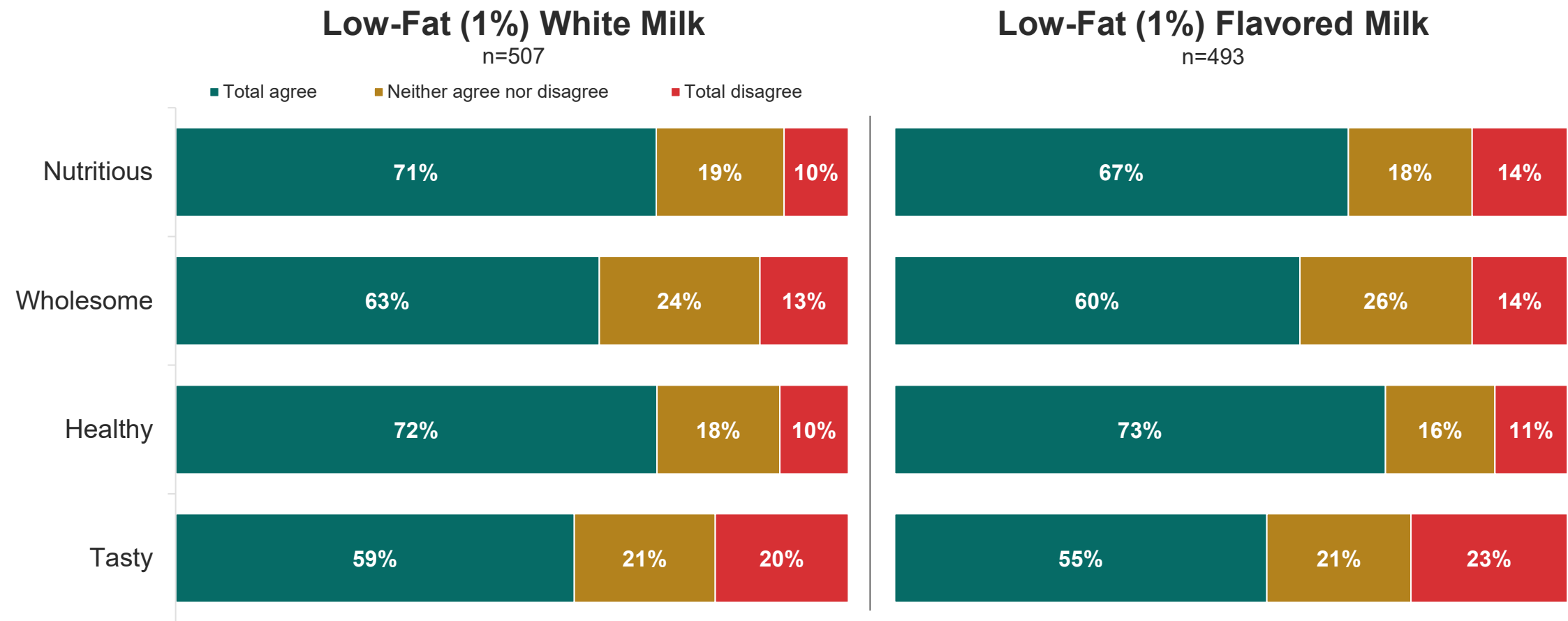
Do you agree or disagree that each of the following words you believe describe **whole** and **2% white/ flavored** milk?



PERCEPTIONS OF MILK TYPES

Unflavored and flavored low-fat milk options are also considered nutritious, wholesome, and healthy. Parents rate flavored and unflavored low-fat milk similarly across attributes.

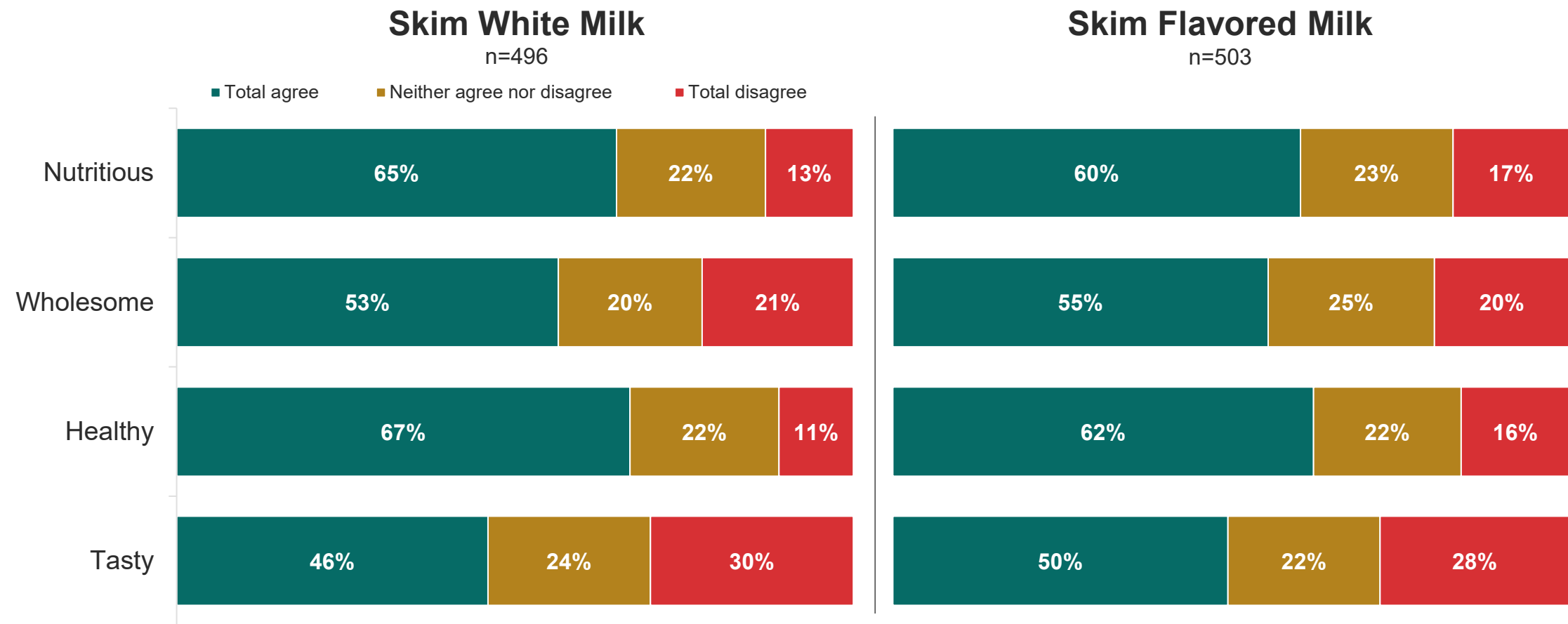
Do you agree or disagree that each of the following words you believe describe low fat (1%) white milk/ low fat (1%) flavored milk?



PERCEPTIONS OF MILK TYPES

Half of parents consider skim milk wholesome – whether flavored or unflavored. More parents rate white skim milk as healthy or nutritious, while more consider flavored skim milk tasty.

Do you agree or disagree that each of the following words you believe describe **skim white/ skim flavored** milk?



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**AGENDA**

Importance of Milk

Perceptions of Milk Types

**Flavored Dairy – Child's Consumption**

Support for Dairy Options in Schools

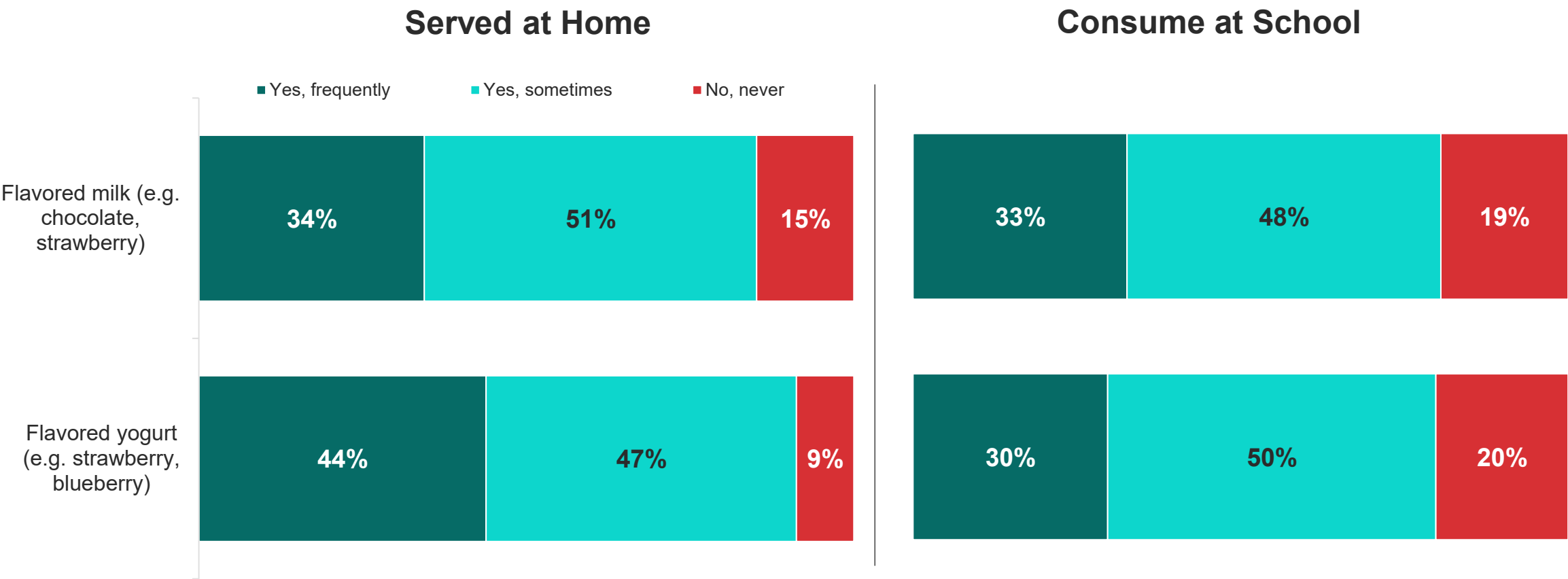
Messaging



FLAVORED DAIRY – CHILD’S CONSUMPTION

Parents frequently serve flavored milk (85%) and flavored yogurt (91%) at home, and most believe their child consumes these products at school.

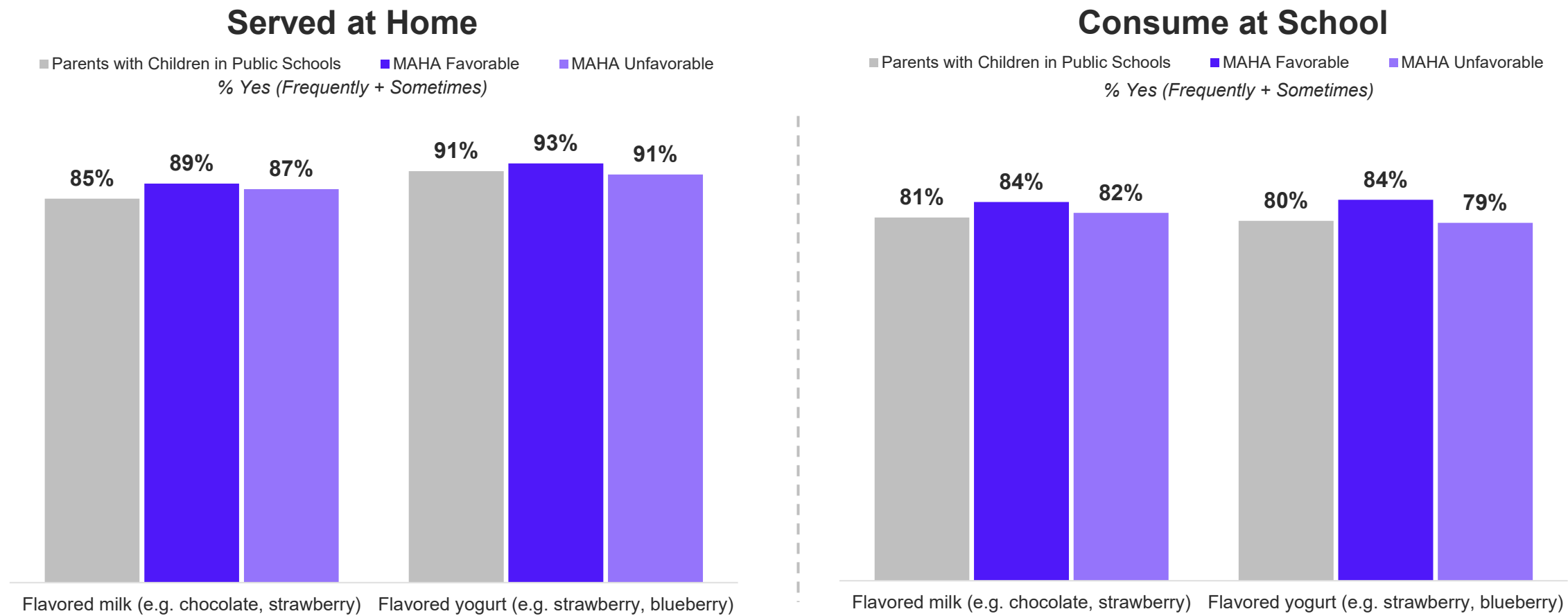
Do you currently serve the following to your children at home? | As far as you know, does your child consume the following at school?



FLAVORED DAIRY – CHILD’S CONSUMPTION

Nine-in-ten parents with favorable or unfavorable opinions of MAHA serve flavored milk or yogurt at home, and most of them believe their child consumes these products at school.

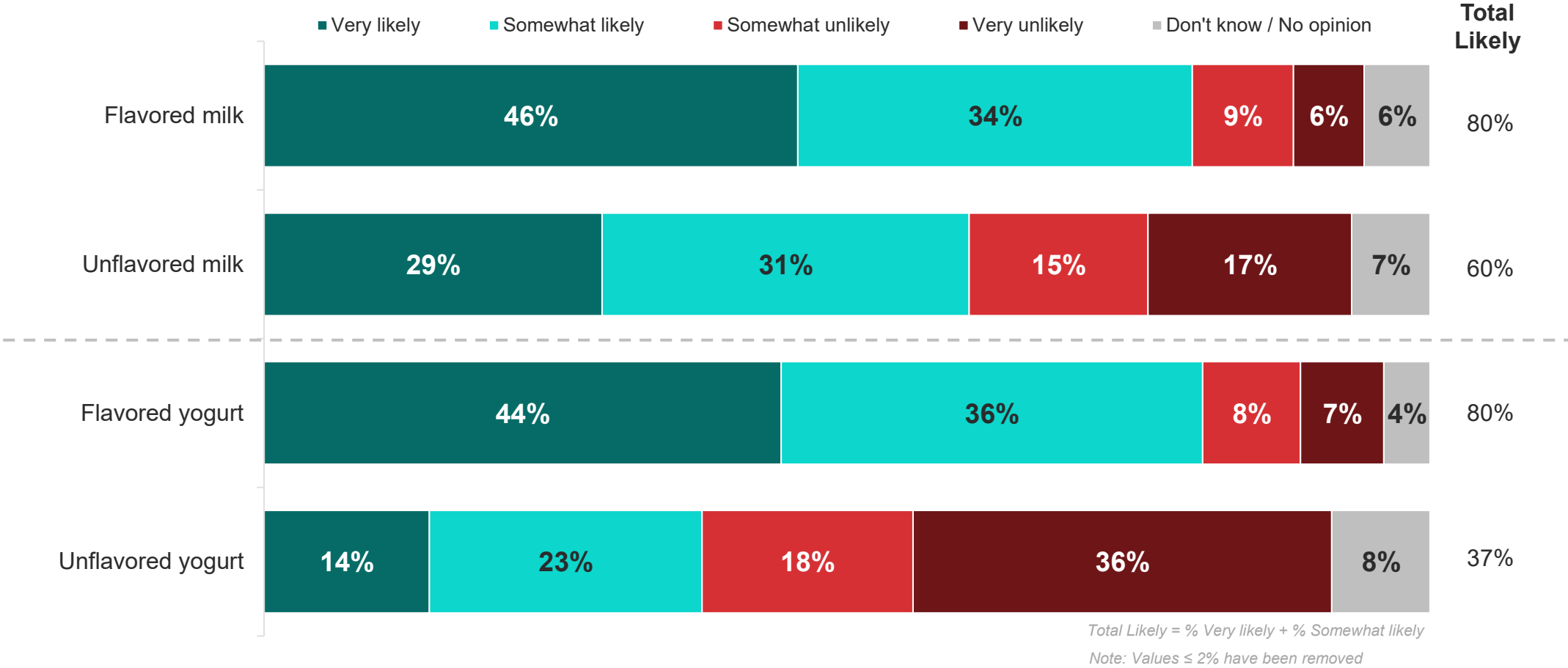
Do you currently serve the following to your children at home? | As far as you know, does your child consume the following at school?



FLAVORED DAIRY – CHILD’S CONSUMPTION

Parents say their children are more likely to eat or drink a full serving of flavored milk or yogurt than they are their unflavored counterparts. One-third of parents say their child is *very unlikely* to consume unflavored yogurt.

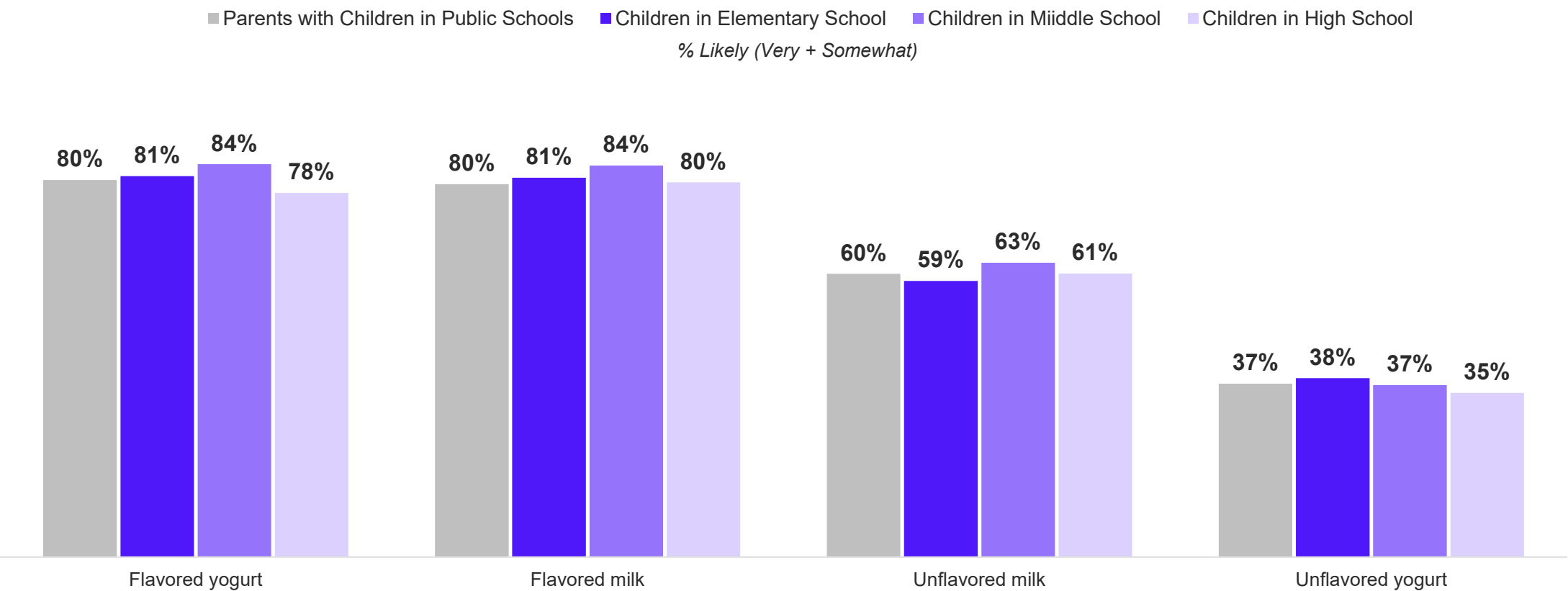
Regardless of where they are, how likely is your child to eat a full serving of the following?



FLAVORED DAIRY – CHILD’S CONSUMPTION

Likelihood of consumption does not vary much by children’s age, with the vast majority of parents saying their children are likely to consume full servings of flavored dairy products regardless of what grade they are in.

Regardless of where they are, how likely is your child to eat a full serving of the following?



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**AGENDA**

Importance of Milk

Perceptions of Milk Types

Flavored Dairy – Current Consumption

**Support for Dairy Options in Schools**

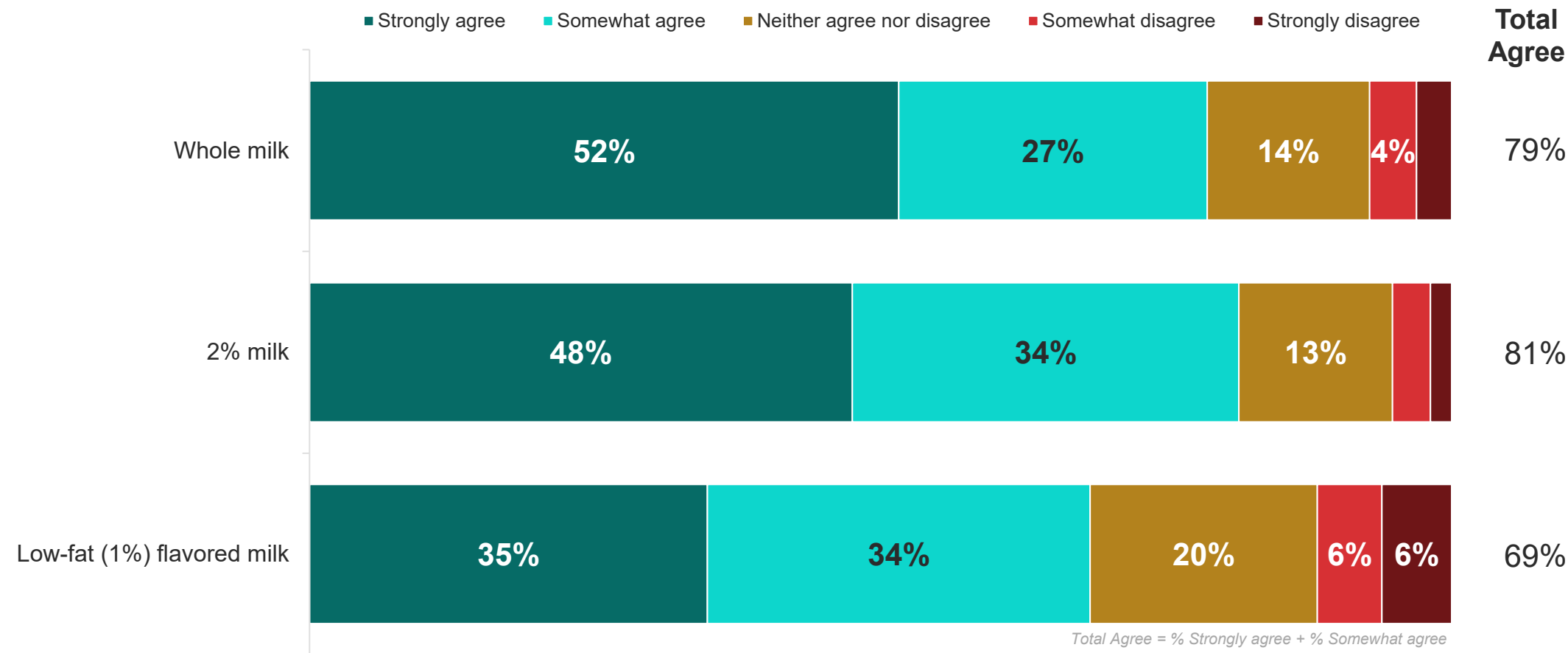
Messaging



SUPPORT FOR DAIRY OPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Parents support the availability of whole milk, 2% milk, and low-fat flavored milk in public schools in their community. Support is slightly stronger for higher fat options, with half of adults *strongly supporting* the availability of whole or 2% milks in school meals.

Do you agree or disagree that the following should be an option for children in public school meals in your community?



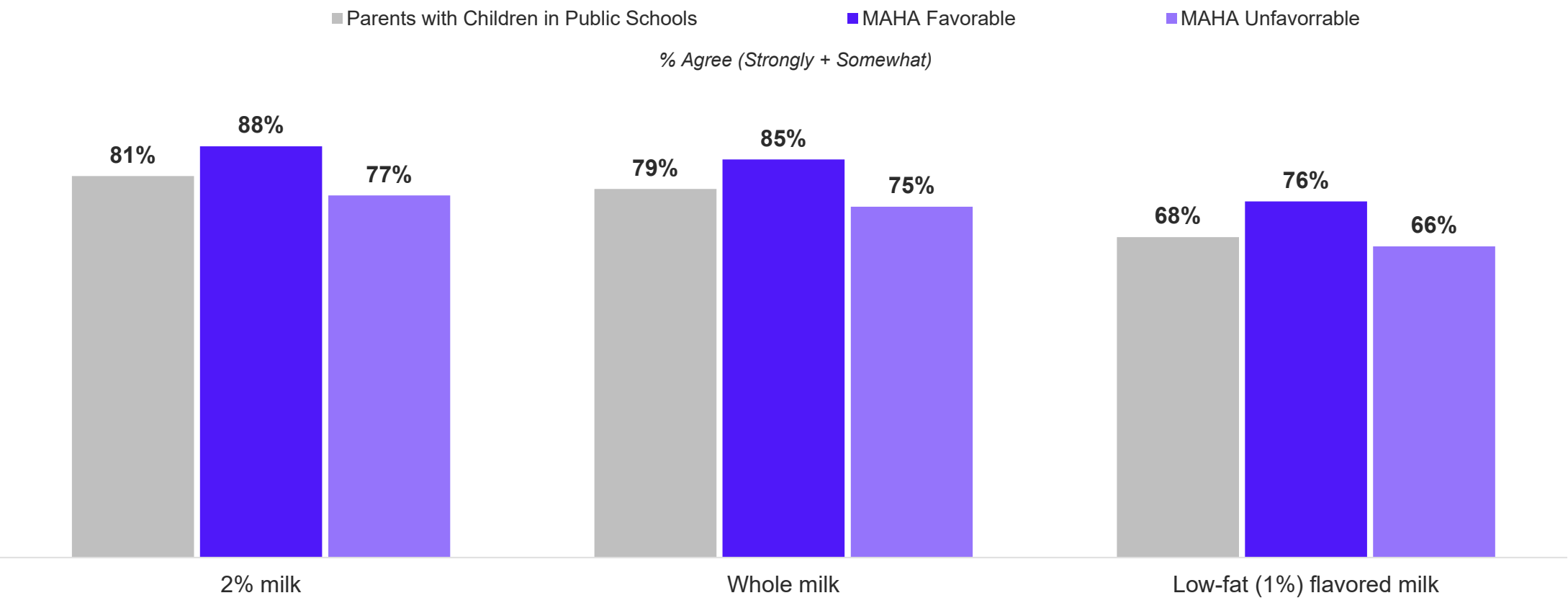
Total Agree = % Strongly agree + % Somewhat agree

Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

FLAVORED DAIRY – CHILD’S CONSUMPTION

The majority of parents support the availability of milk options in public schools, but parents with favorable opinions of MAHA are even more likely to agree these milk options should be available to children at public schools in their community.

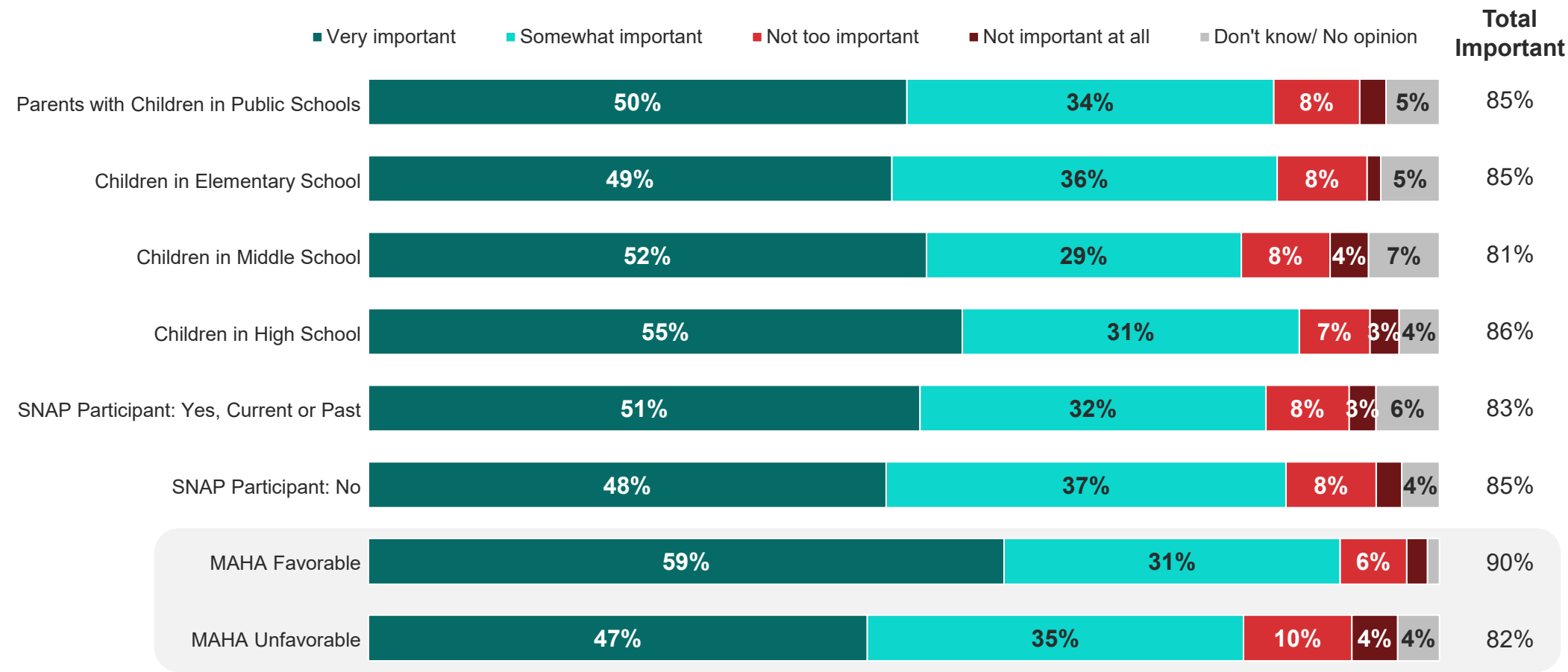
Do you agree or disagree that the following should be an option for children in public school meals in your community?



SUPPORT FOR DAIRY OPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Parents believe school meals should include dairy products, even if those products contain small amounts of added sugar. This belief is particularly strong among parents with favorable opinions of MAHA.

How important, if at all, is it that school meals include dairy products, even if those products contain small amounts of added sugar?



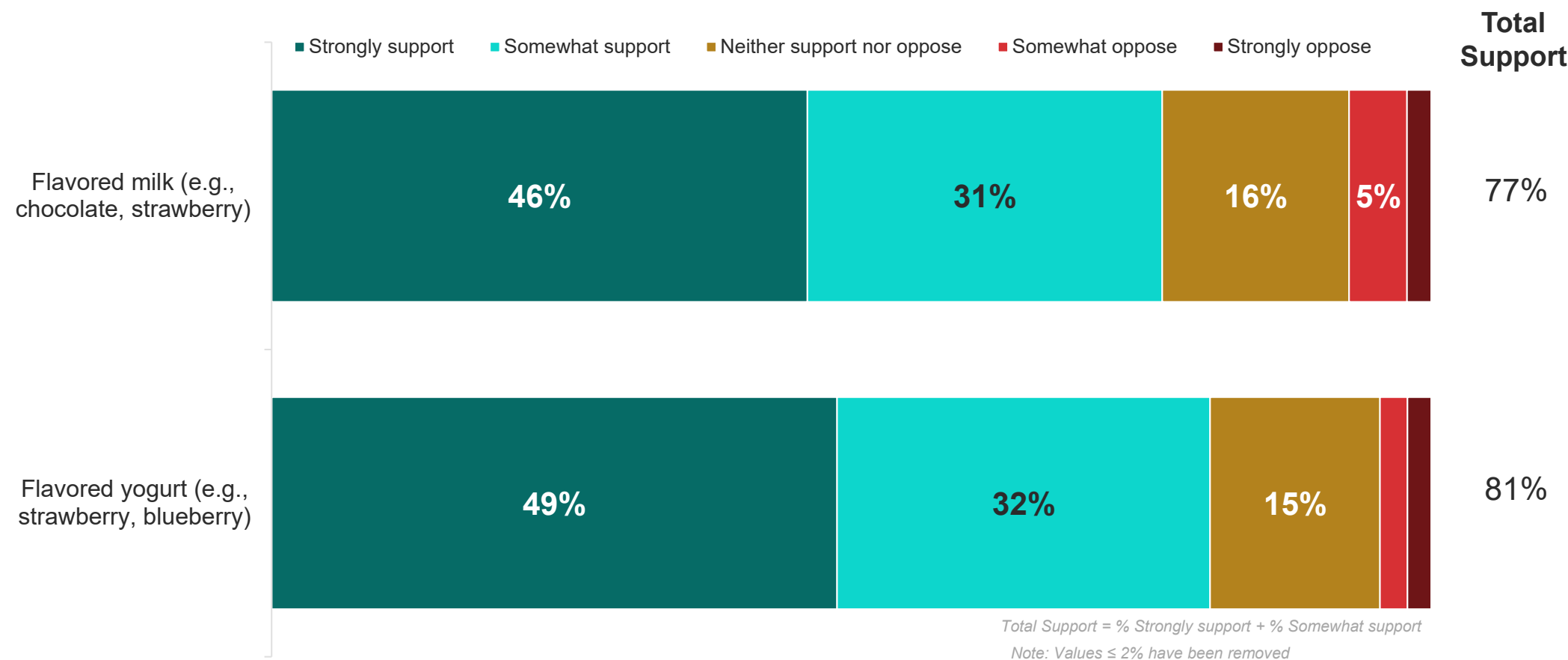
Total important = % Very important + % Somewhat important

Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

SUPPORT FOR DAIRY OPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Parents support flavored dairy options in schools. About half strongly support flavored milk and flavored yogurt being offered as part of school meal programs.

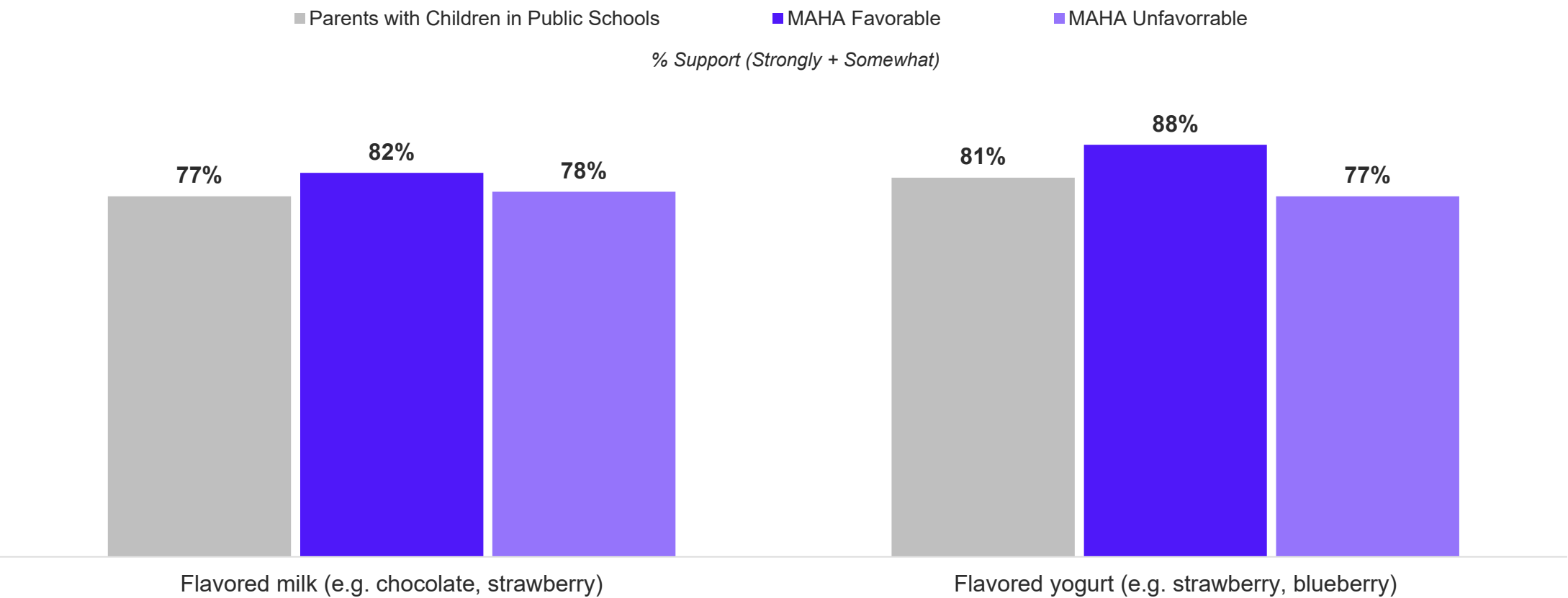
Based on what you know, do you support or oppose the following being available as part of school meal programs?



SUPPORT FOR DAIRY OPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Parents with favorable opinions of MAHA support the availability of flavored milk and yogurt in school meal programs more than those with unfavorable views – though, support is strong among both groups.

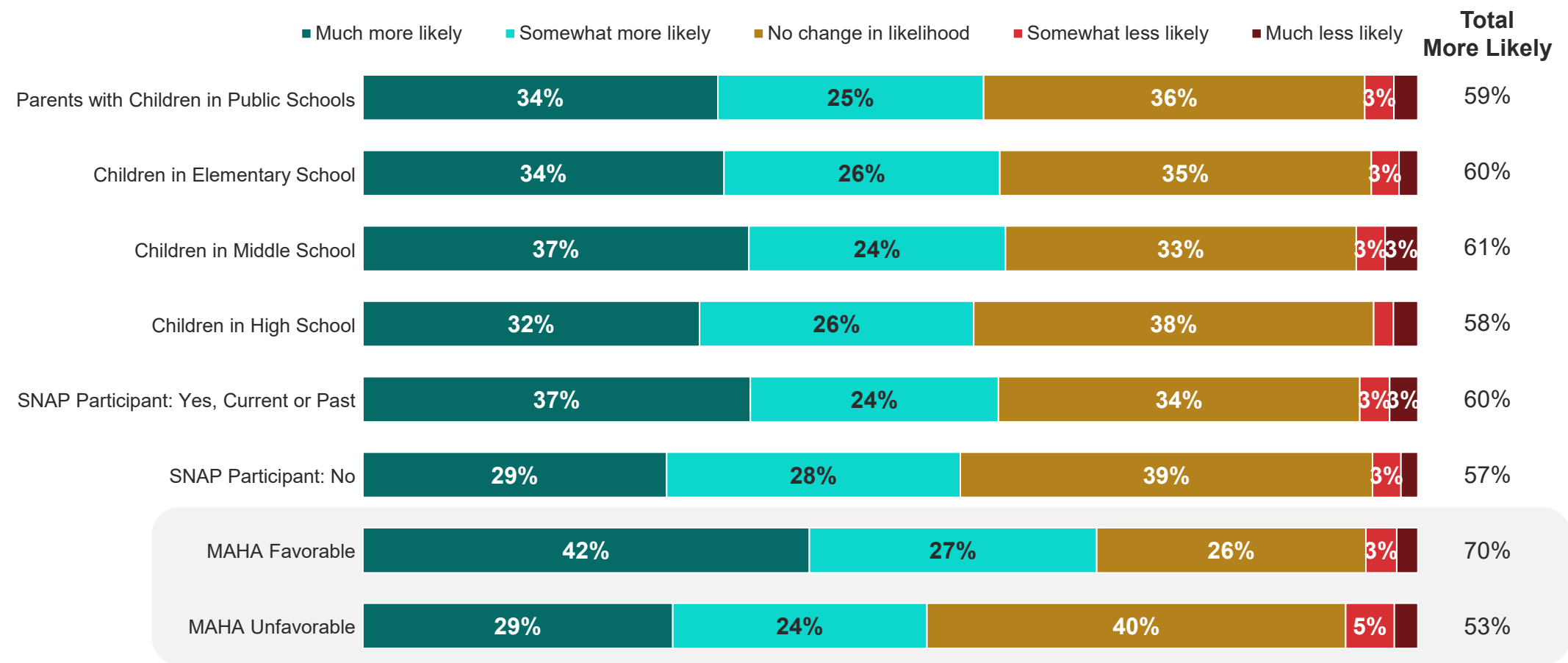
Based on what you know, do you support or oppose the following being available as part of school meal programs?



SUPPORT FOR DAIRY OPTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Most parents indicate an increased likelihood to have their children participate in school meals if the school provided whole or 2% milk as options– particularly parents with a favorable view of MAHA. Few parents say they are less likely to take advantage of meal plans as a result.

Congress recently passed a bill allowing schools to provide whole and 2% milk to students nationwide. Would you be more or less likely to have your child participate in school lunch or breakfast if his or her school provides whole or 2% milk as options?



Total More Likely = % Much more likely + % Somewhat more likely

Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

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**AGENDA**

Importance of Milk

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Support for Dairy Options in Schools

**Messaging**



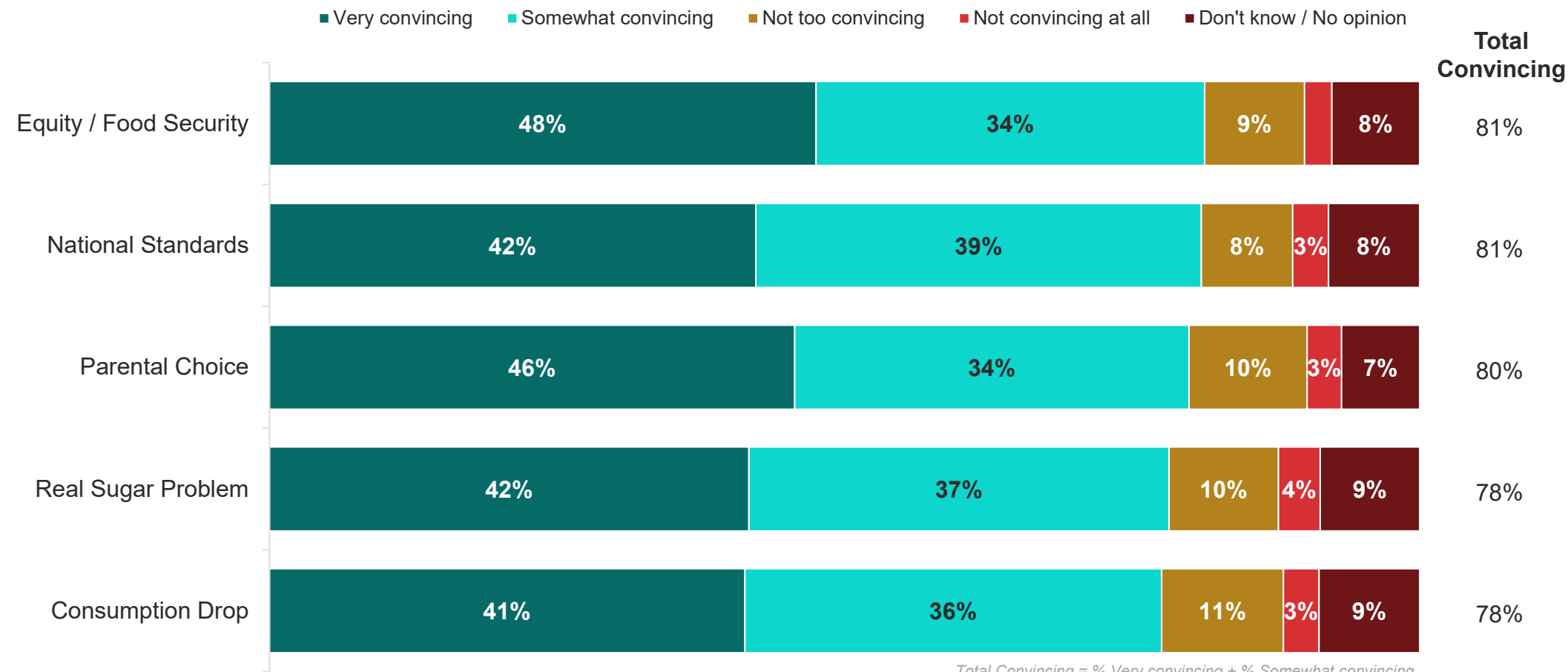
## MESSAGING

| Message Name           | Full Message Shown to Respondents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nutrition Standards    | <i>Flavored milk served in schools is carefully formulated to meet strict federal nutrition standards, containing no more than 10 grams of added sugar per serving — far less than most flavored milks found in stores. It still delivers the same essential nutrients as white milk, including calcium, vitamin D, and protein that growing children need</i>         |
| Consumption Drop       | <i>When schools have removed flavored milk in the past, overall milk consumption dropped significantly, meaning children ended up consuming less calcium and other key nutrients. Keeping flavored options available ensures more kids are actually getting the nutrition they need, not less</i>                                                                      |
| Parental Choice        | <i>Parents, not federal policymakers, should have the primary say in what their children eat. Flavored milk and yogurt in school meals give families more options to ensure their kids consume nutritious dairy as part of a balanced diet</i>                                                                                                                         |
| Real Sugar Problem     | <i>When it comes to added sugar in schools, flavored milk and yogurt are not the problem. Sugary foods without much nutrition are what policymakers should remove. Removing flavored dairy from school meals would do little to reduce sugar consumption while taking away one of the most nutrient-dense foods children consume during the school day</i>             |
| Equity / Food Security | <i>For many children, especially those in lower-income households, school meals are their primary source of daily nutrition. Flavored milk and yogurt help ensure these children consume enough calcium and protein to support healthy development. Removing them could have real consequences for children who have few other reliable sources of these nutrients</i> |

MESSAGING

Messages on flavored dairy are convincing, but those highlighting how flavored milk options address food insecurity, provide more options and adhere to federal standards limiting sugar content are strongest.

Next you will read statements about flavored dairy products in school meals. For each one, please indicate how convincing you find each of the following statements.



Total Convincing = % Very convincing + % Somewhat convincing  
Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

## MESSAGING

**Flavored dairy messaging resonates across key groups. Messaging emphasizing flavored milk's role in addressing food insecurity and parental choice are *very convincing* to about half of SNAP participants and those favorable of MAHA.**

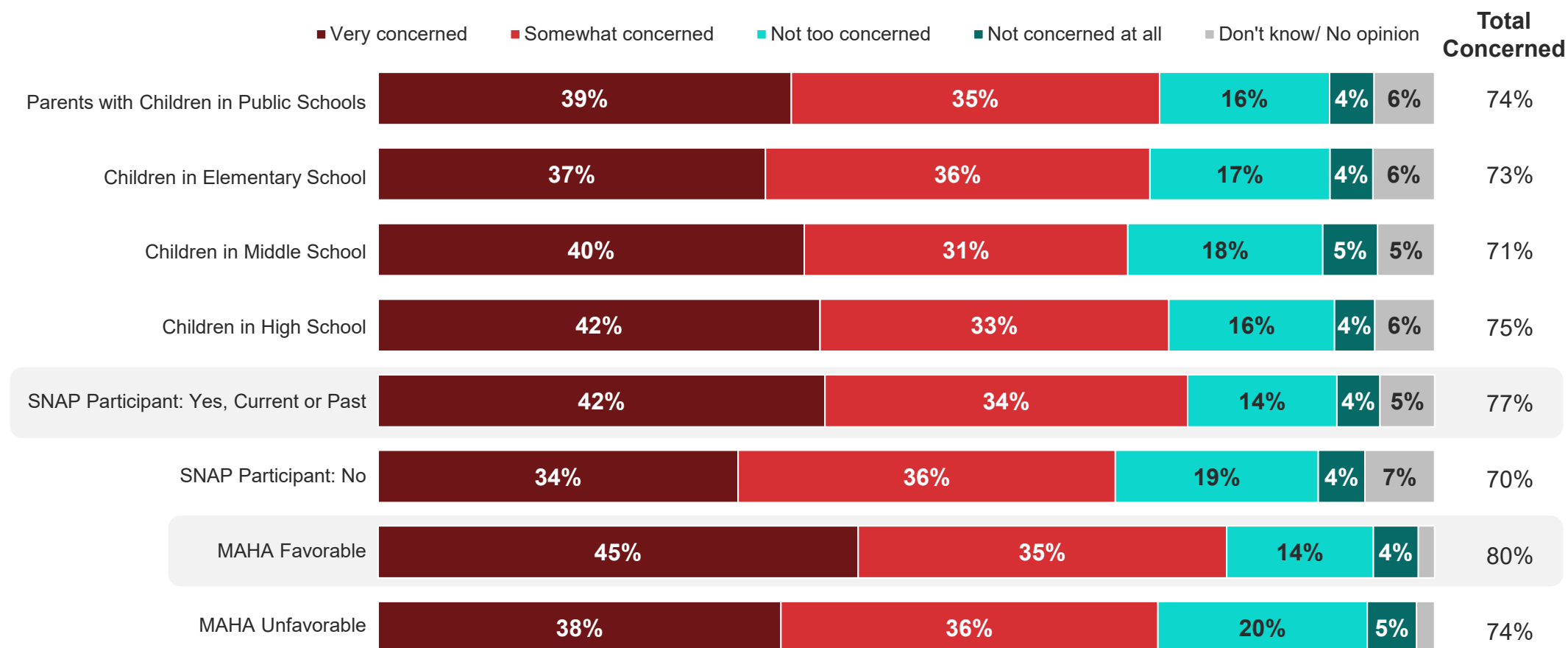
Next you will read statements about flavored dairy products in school meals. For each one, please indicate how convincing you find each of the following statements.

| % Very Convincing      | Adults | Children in Elementary School | Children in Middle School | Children in High School | SNAP Participant: Yes | SNAP Participant: No | Favorable of MAHA | Unfavorable of MAHA |
|------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Equity / Food Security | 48%    | 47%                           | 50%                       | 48%                     | 48%                   | 46%                  | 51%               | 54%                 |
| Parental Choice        | 46%    | 47%                           | 48%                       | 46%                     | 47%                   | 44%                  | 52%               | 42%                 |
| National Standards     | 42%    | 42%                           | 43%                       | 44%                     | 45%                   | 43%                  | 49%               | 41%                 |
| Real Sugar Problem     | 42%    | 42%                           | 44%                       | 42%                     | 43%                   | 40%                  | 48%               | 46%                 |
| Consumption Drop       | 41%    | 41%                           | 44%                       | 43%                     | 42%                   | 41%                  | 45%               | 47%                 |

## MESSAGING

**Parents would be concerned if flavored dairy options were removed from their children's meal program. This concern is particularly strong among parents with favorable opinions of MAHA and SNAP participants.**

After learning more, if flavored milk and yogurt were removed from your child's meal program, how concerned would you be?



Total concerned = % Very concerned + % Somewhat concerned

Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

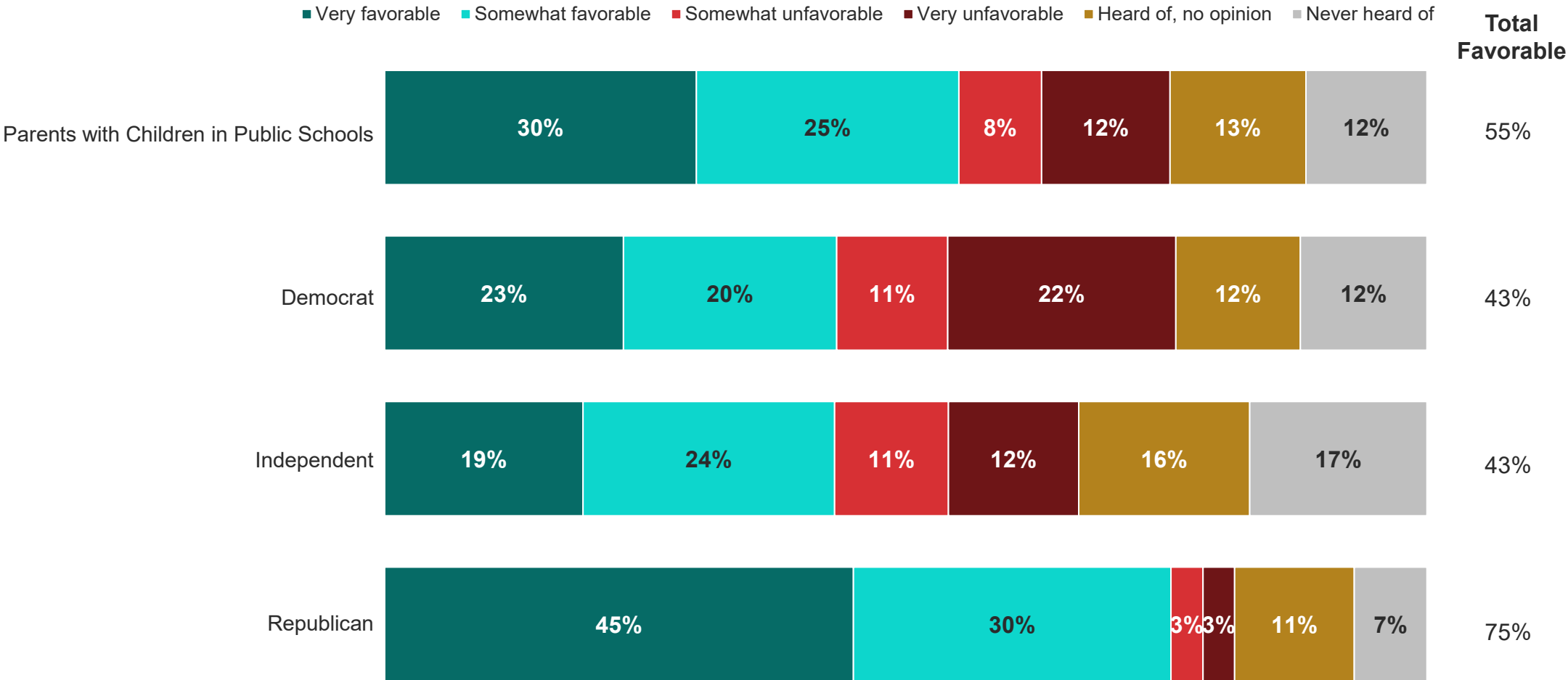
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**AGENDA**

# Appendix



APPENDIX

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement?

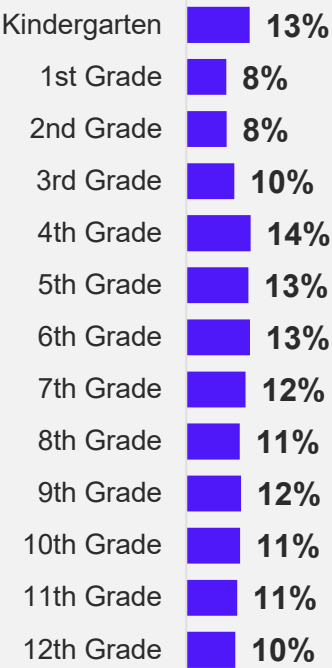


Total Favorable = % Very favorable + % Somewhat favorable  
Note: Values ≤ 2% have been removed

APPENDIX

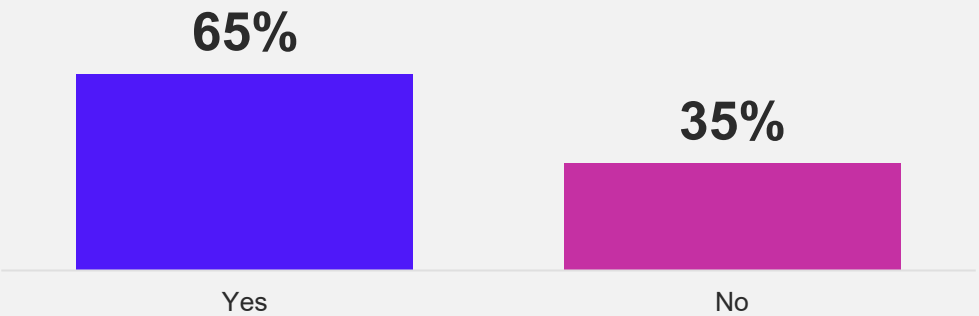
Child’s Current Public School Grade Year

% selected

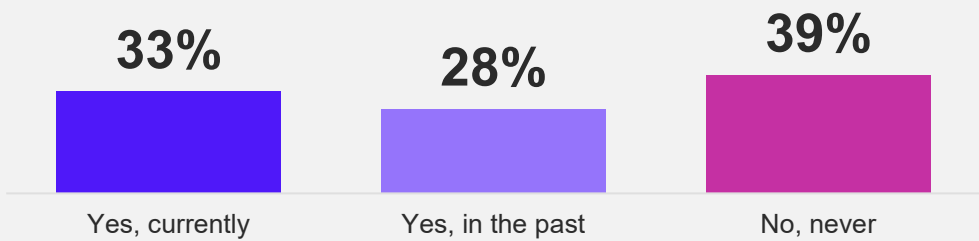


|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Elementary School | 55% |
| Middle School     | 34% |
| High School       | 38% |

Qualify for Reduced-Price Meals



Participated in SNAP



## APPENDIX

**Do you currently serve the following to your children at home? | As far as you know, does your child consume the following at school?**

| % Yes (Frequently + sometimes)                  | Serve at Home     |                               |                           |                         |                             |                                    |                   |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|                                                 | Adults            | Children in Elementary School | Children in Middle School | Children in High School | SNAP Participant: No, Never | SNAP Participant: Yes, in the Past | Favorable to MAHA | Unfavorable to MAHA |
| Flavored milk<br>(e.g. chocolate, strawberry)   | 85%               | 88%                           | 84%                       | 83%                     | 81%                         | 84%                                | 89%               | 87%                 |
| Flavored yogurt<br>(e.g. strawberry, blueberry) | 91%               | 93%                           | 93%                       | 90%                     | 90%                         | 91%                                | 93%               | 91%                 |
|                                                 | Consume at School |                               |                           |                         |                             |                                    |                   |                     |
| Flavored milk<br>(e.g. chocolate, strawberry)   | 81%               | 84%                           | 84%                       | 78%                     | 76%                         | 85%                                | 84%               | 82%                 |
| Flavored yogurt<br>(e.g. strawberry, blueberry) | 80%               | 84%                           | 80%                       | 77%                     | 76%                         | 87%                                | 84%               | 79%                 |

