

Alberta Teachers' Association **Research Summary**

May 2014



ENVIRONICS
R E S E A R C H G R O U P

Overview

- This summary report presents results drawn from past ATA surveys, as well as results from a publically available source (noted on the slide). The year of each ATA survey is noted on the slides.
- The ATA surveys are conducted by telephone survey among samples of approximately 800 adult Albertans. The margin of error for a sample of 800 is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points (at the 95% confidence level).
- The sampling method is designed to complete 800 interviews within households randomly selected across the province. The sample was disproportionate, with smaller cities and rural areas oversampled to permit meaningful statistical analysis. Respondents within each household were screened for random selection using the “most recent birthday” method. The data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample’s regional, age and gender composition reflects that of the actual Alberta population according to the most recently available Census information (2011).
- Results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses.

Teaching

Quality of Teaching

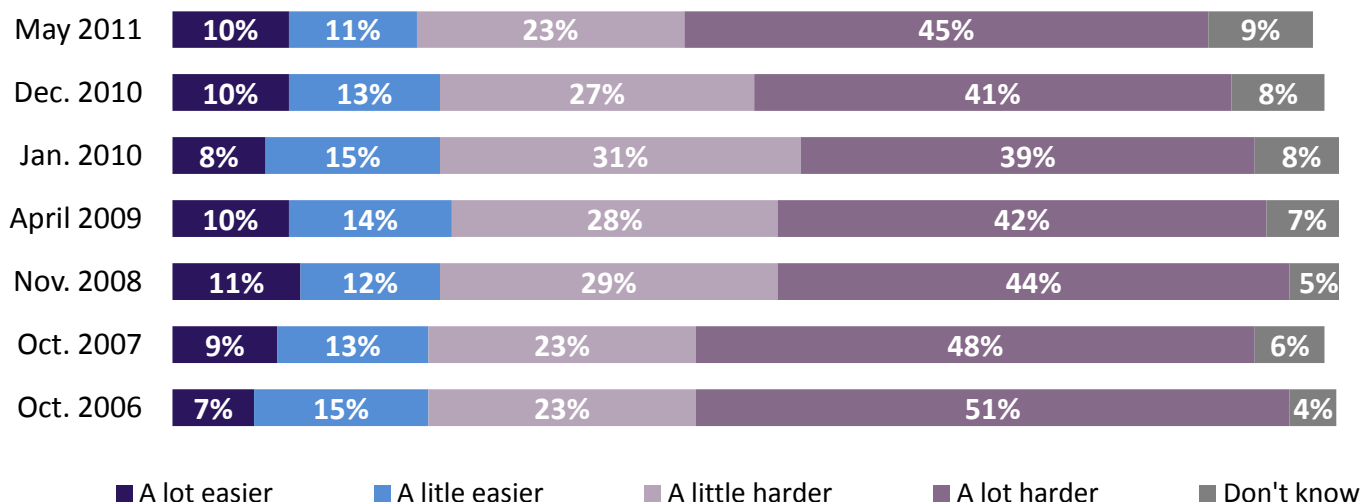
- High proportions are satisfied with the quality of teaching at schools -- principals (99%), teachers (97%), school board trustees (97%), students (95%), and parents (K–12: 87%, severe special needs: 89%).

Source: Alberta Education. Corporate Planning Branch. 2013 Satisfaction with education in Alberta survey: summary report

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/7726582/surveysummaryreport2013.pdf>

A majority of Albertans believe it is harder now than in the past for teachers to provide high quality education (2011)

Views on Alberta teachers' ability to provide high quality education now compared to in the past



Seven in ten (69%) Albertans believe teachers have a harder time providing high quality education now than in the past. Results have been quite consistent since tracking of this question began in October 2006.

Q. Thinking about the current state of Alberta's education system, do you think it is now easier or harder for Alberta teachers to provide high quality education than it was in the past? (Would that be a lot or a little?)

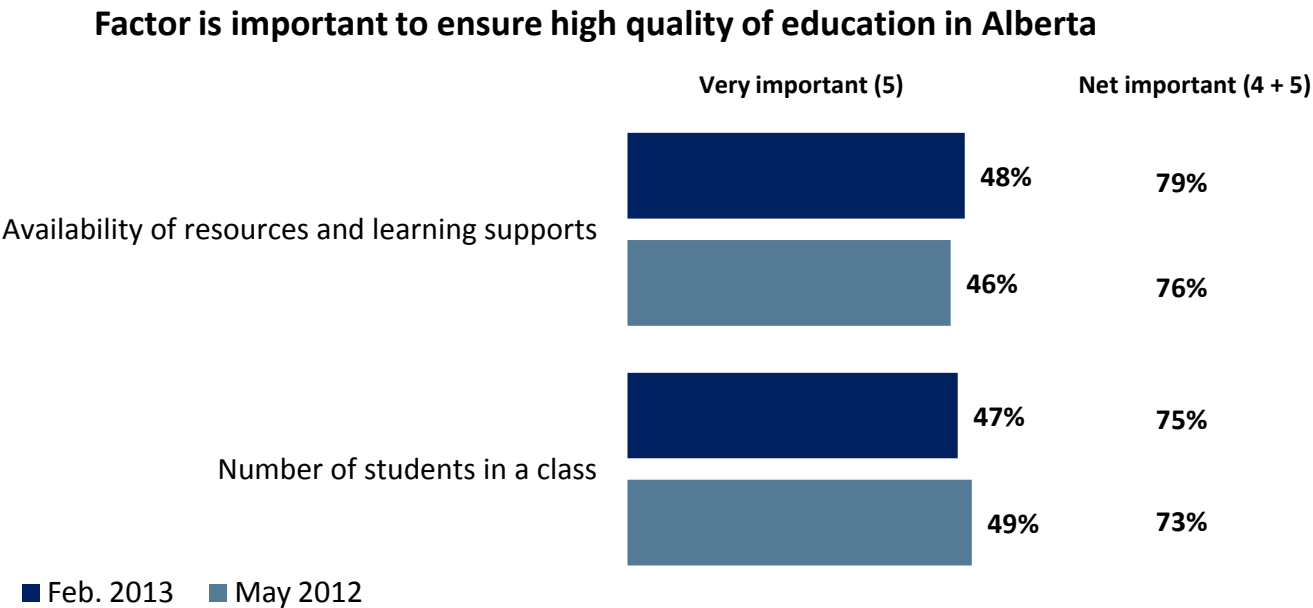
Large class sizes and resource limits are top factors making the teacher's job tough

Top factors making a teacher's job challenging (unprompted)	Jan. 2014 %	Feb. 2013 %	May 2012 %
NET: Class size/ratio	52	33	41
Class sizes too large	33	19	18
Too many students	18	9	11
Lack of one-on-one time w/ students (incl. sp. needs)	16	11	18
NET: Resources/infrastructure	43	42	49
Insufficient funding from government	15	7	7
Not enough resources	11	11	10
Teachers overworked/stressed	11	4	7
Lack of support (admin/gov't/school boards/unions)	6	11	3
Teacher have too many (non-teaching) duties	5	4	5
NET: Discipline/authority	34	42	34
Discipline lacking/teachers have no authority	22	16	21
Parental attitudes/communications	14	11	8
Net: Diversity in the classroom	13	27	21
Learning disabilities/special needs	8	15	9
Diversity of cultures/ethnicities (incl. ESL)	3	6	7
Poor curriculum	6	5	3
Poor quality teachers	5	3	5
Responsibilities/policies/curriculum constantly changing	5	5	7

Albertans cite a range of issues that make a teacher's job challenging, chief among them being large class sizes and limited resources. Class sizes being too large is now the largest single response, spontaneously mentioned by one-third.

Q. What do you think are some of the factors that make a teacher's job challenging?

Availability of resources and number of students/classroom remain the factors most thought to ensure high quality education (2013)

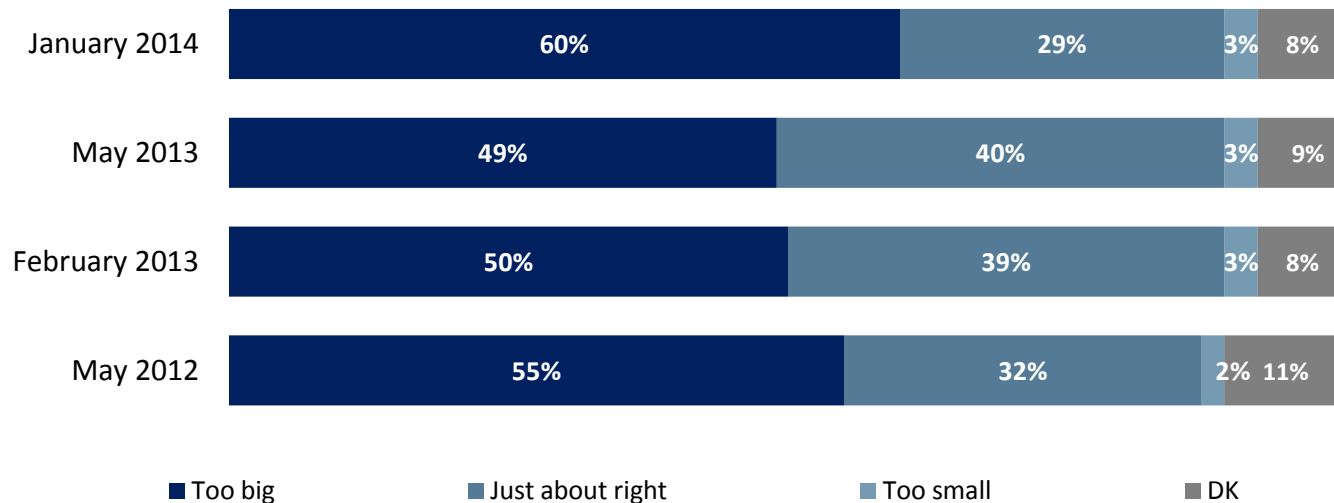


Albertans were asked to indicate how important each factor is to ensuring high quality education in the province. Albertans are most likely to think that the availability of resources and learning supports (48% very important) and the number of students in a class (47% very important) are the top education quality factors.

Q. How important do you consider each of the following when it comes to ensuring a high quality of education in Alberta? Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not at all important and 5 means very important?

Six in ten Albertans now think that class sizes are too large

Opinion about class sizes in Alberta's schools



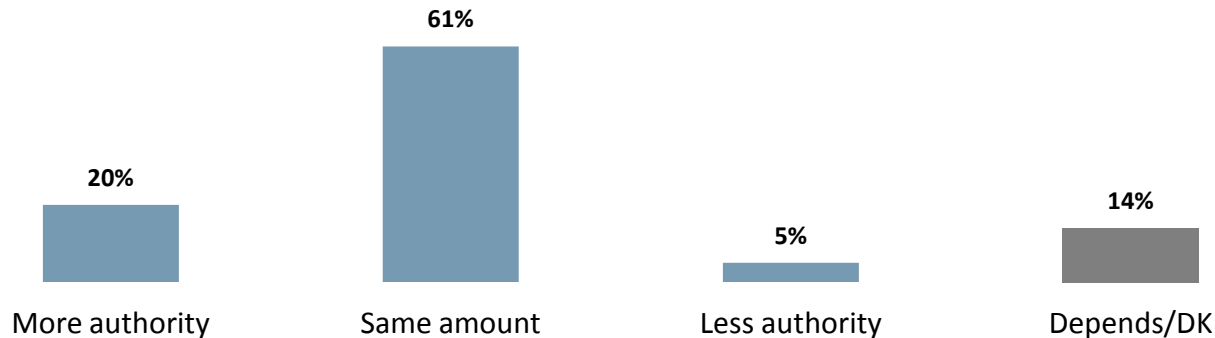
In January 2014, six in ten Albertans think that, in general, class sizes in the province's schools are too large – the highest proportion since May 2012. Three in ten think they are about the right size, and the remainder either say they are too small (3%) or do not provide an opinion (8%).

Q. Thinking about the number of students in a class with one teacher... in general, would you say that class sizes in Alberta's schools are too big, too small, or are they just about right?

Principals

Six in ten Albertans think that principals should have the same amount of authority as they currently have (2014)

Opinion about authority level of principals

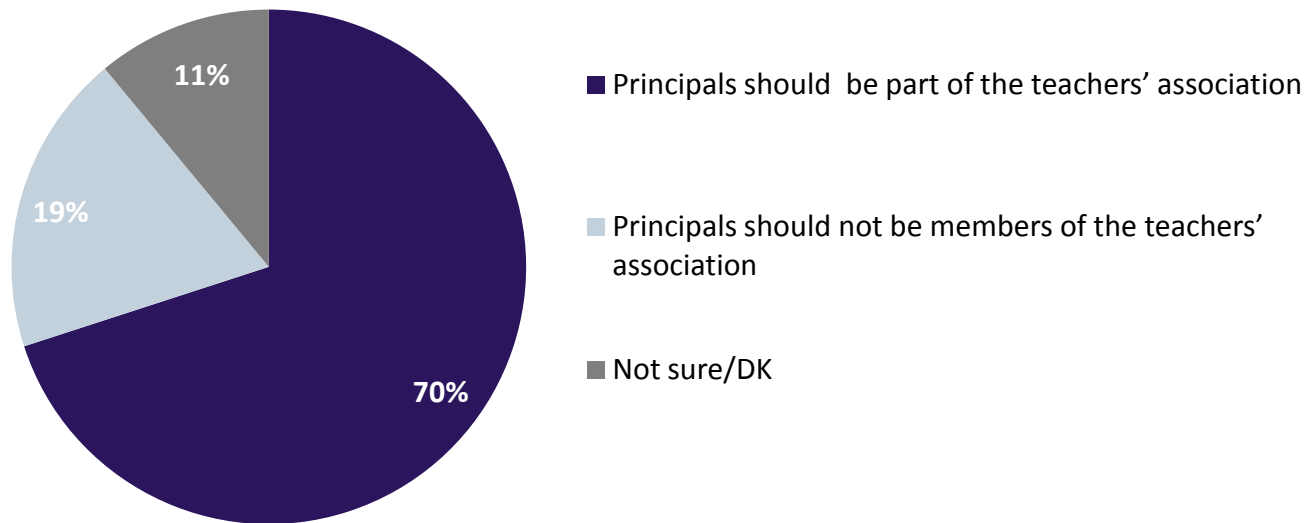


A majority of six in ten Albertans think that principals have the right amount of authority currently. Two in ten think they should have more authority; only five percent think they should have less. One in seven say it depends (4%) or do not know (10%).

Thinking that principals should have the same amount of authority is the dominant view across the province and across population subgroups, including those who have a household member employed in the K-12 system (69%, statistically similar to 60% who do not have this connection). That principals should retain the current level of authority is marginally higher among those with a university degree (68%), and those who think that the current teacher authorization system is about right (65%).

Seven in ten Albertans say that principals should be members of the teachers' association (2014)

Opinion about membership of principals in the teacher's association



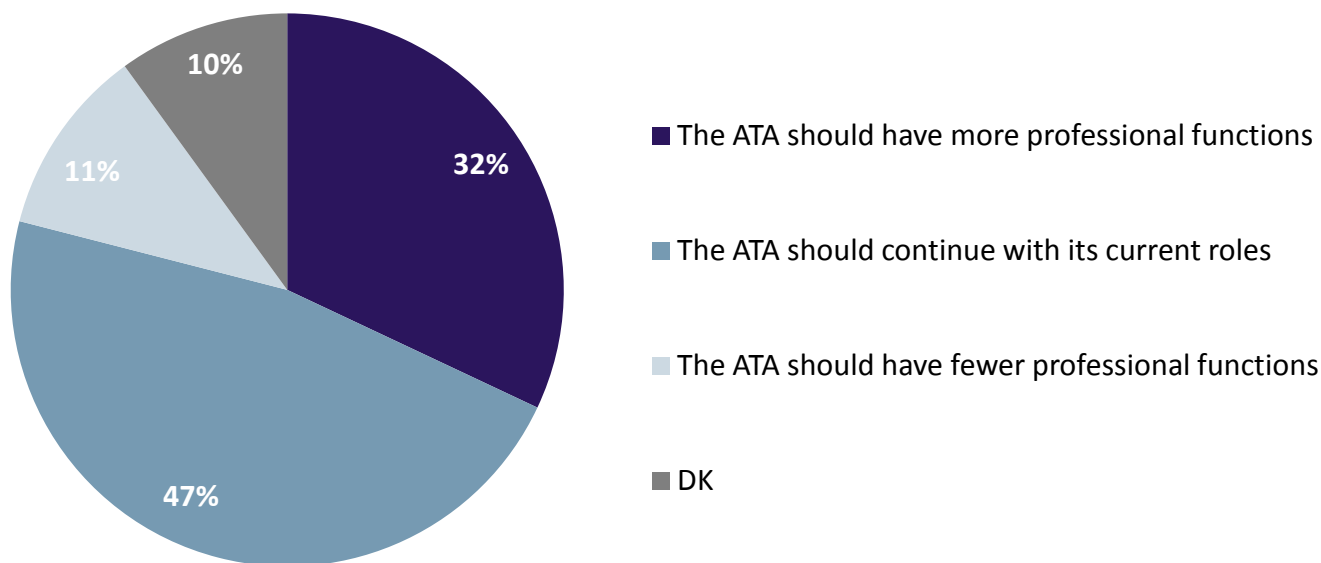
Albertans were read two differing opinions about the membership of principals in the teachers' association and asked which was closest to their own view. That principals should be members of the teachers' association is, by far, the dominant view, with residents over three times as likely to think this as to think they should not be members.

Q. [ROTATE] Some/other people say that principals, as managers of teachers, should not be members of the professional association of teachers. [ROTATE] Some/other people think that as educators, principals should be members of the professional association of teachers. Which of these views is closest to your own?

The ATA

A plurality of Albertans feel that the ATA should maintain its current roles (2014)

Opinion about ATA and professional functions



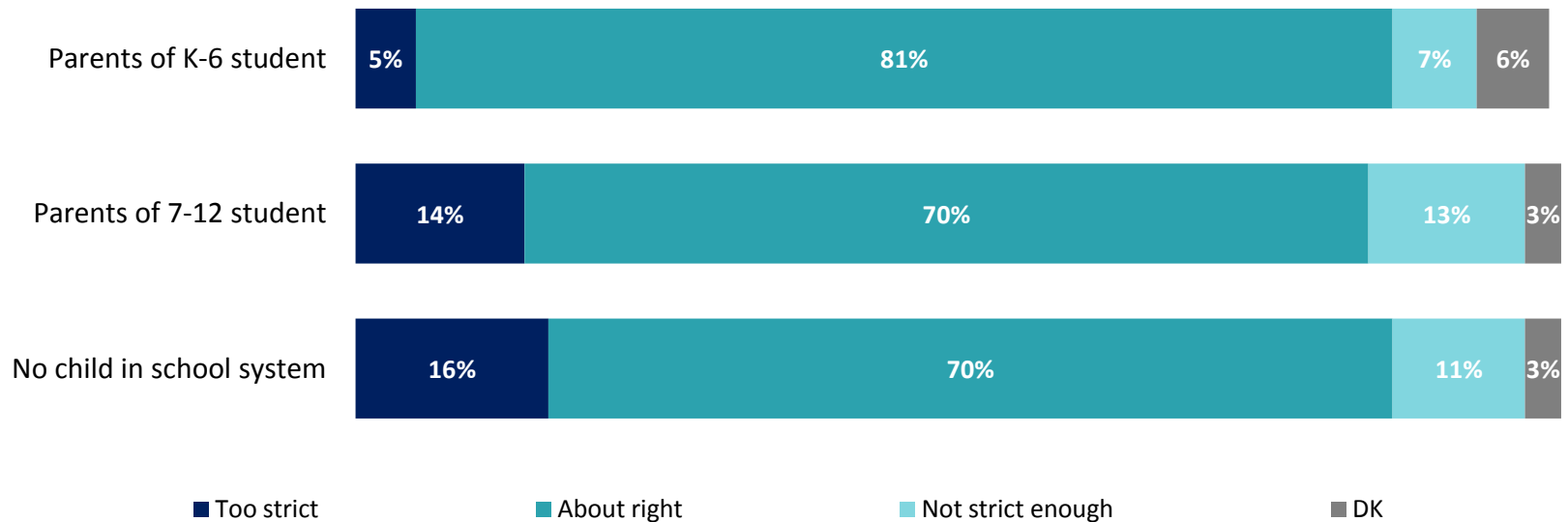
Albertans were read three opinions about the ATA's professional functions and asked which is closest to their view. Close to half say that the association should continue with its current roles, and three in ten say its professional functions could be expanded, such as the ability to issue or remove teachers' licences. One in ten feel the ATA should have fewer functions than it currently has, and a similar proportion do not know.

Q. Which of the following views is closest to your own ...?

Teacher Certification

A strong majority of Albertans feel that current teacher authorization requirements are about right (2014)

Opinion about teacher authorization requirements



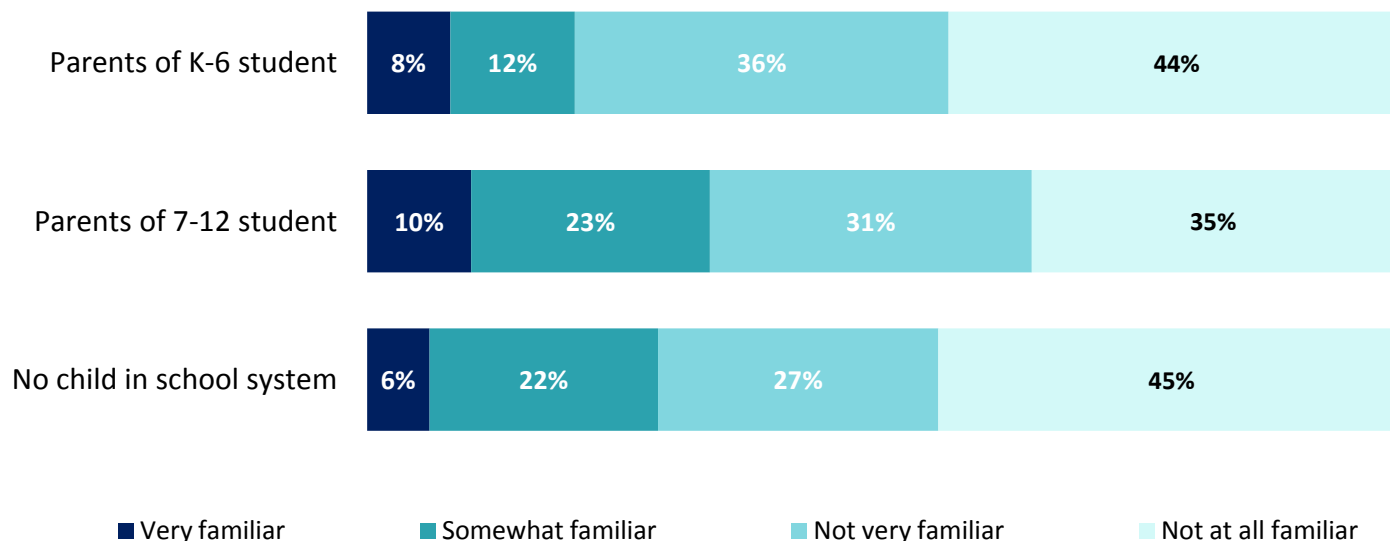
Albertans were told that only individuals with teacher training from a university and a Government of Alberta issued teaching certificate are authorized to teach in the province's schools, and asked to indicate whether this policy is too strict, not strict enough, or about right. A majority of seven in ten feel this is about right, including eight in ten parents of current K-6 students. The remainder are fairly evenly divided between finding the current requirements too strict (14%) or not strict enough (10%).

Q. Currently, only individuals with teacher training from a university and a Government of Alberta issued teaching certificate are authorized to teach in Alberta schools. Generally speaking, do you find these requirements to be too strict, not strict enough or are they about right?

Teacher Conduct

A large majority of Albertans are unfamiliar with how teacher conduct is regulated (2014)

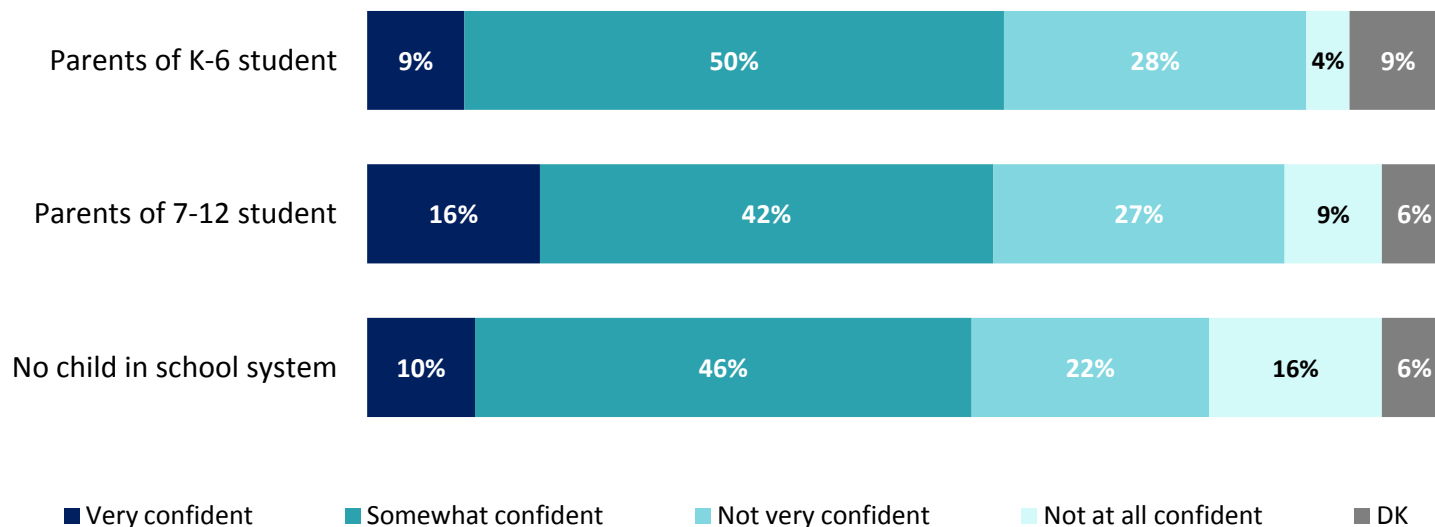
Familiarity with current teacher conduct regulation processes



Albertans were asked to indicate their level of familiarity with the processes currently in place to regulate teacher conduct. Relatively few – 27 percent overall – express any familiarity; fewer than one in ten are very familiar. Three-quarters (73%) are not very or at all familiar, including 80 percent of parents of children currently in K-6, and 66 percent of parents of students in grades 7-12. Those without a child in Alberta schools at the present time have a similar level of familiarity to parents of older children.

More than half of Albertans are confident that complaints about teacher conduct are addressed effectively (2014)

Level of confidence that complaints about teacher conduct are addressed effectively



When asked how confident they are that complaints about teacher conduct, close to six in ten (57%) are at least somewhat confident; fewer than four in ten (37%) are not very or at all confident.

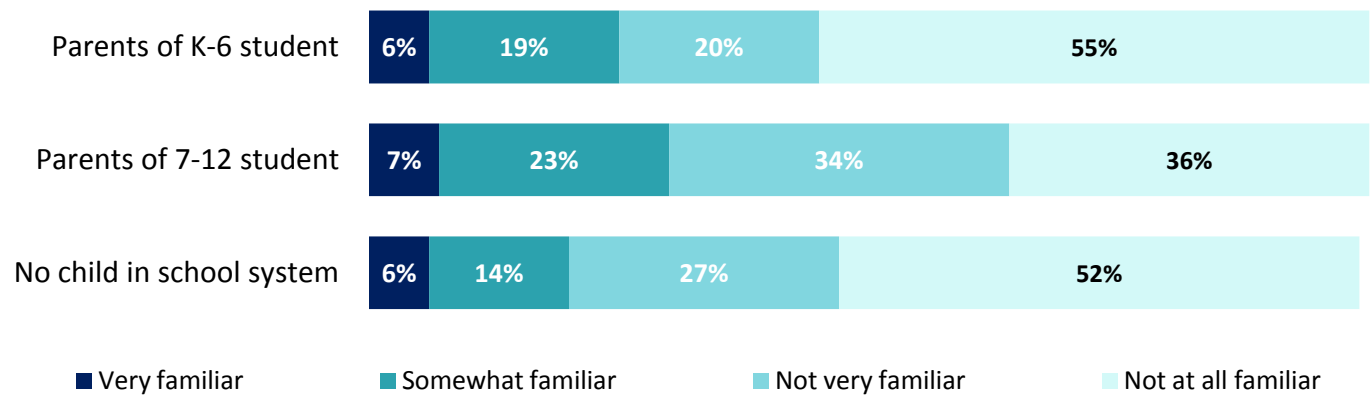
Three-quarters (75%) who are at least somewhat familiar with the processes currently in place to regulate teacher conduct go on to express some level of confidence that complaints about conduct are addressed effectively; the seven percent who are very familiar with conduct regulation are the most likely to also be very confident that complaints about this are effectively addressed (57% vs. 7% who are less than very familiar).

Q. How confident are you that complaints about teacher **conduct** are addressed effectively? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?

Teacher Competency

The majority of Albertans are not familiar with current processes for regulating teacher competency (2014)

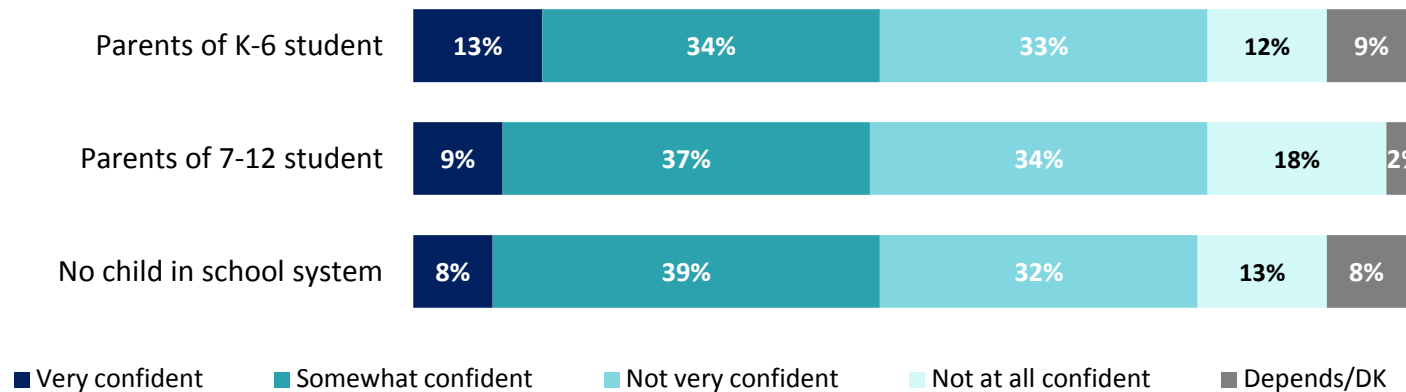
Familiarity with current teacher competency regulation processes



Albertans were asked to indicate their level of familiarity with the processes currently in place to regulate teacher competence. Just 22 percent overall express any familiarity, and fewer than one in ten are very familiar. A strong majority of just over three-quarters admit to being not very or at all familiar, including 74 percent of parents of children currently in K-6, and 69 percent of parents of students in grades 7-12. Those without a child in Alberta schools at the present time are the least likely to have any familiarity (20% familiar, 79% unfamiliar).

Albertans are divided in confidence about whether complaints about teacher competency are effectively addressed (2014)

Level of confidence that complaints about teacher competency are addressed effectively



Albertans were asked how confident they are that complaints about teacher competency are addressed effectively and close to half (47%) are at least somewhat confident, and a similar proportion (45%) are not very or at all confident.

Familiarity with the current processes for regulating teacher competency is a notable factor in increased confidence that complaints are handled well. **Close to six in ten (58%) who say they are very or somewhat familiar with competency regulation express at least some confidence that complaints about this are addressed effectively;** the six percent who are *very* familiar with the current processes are the most likely to also express at least some confidence that complaints are effectively addressed (77% vs. 51% who are somewhat familiar, and 43% who are not very or at all familiar). As familiarity is linked to having a household member employed in the school system, those reporting such a connection are much more likely (63%) than those who do not (44%) to express some level of confidence; confidence is highest when the household member is a teacher (73%).

Q. How confident are you that complaints about teacher **competency** are addressed effectively? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not at all confident?



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