

A photograph of two students in a school hallway. A young man with curly hair and headphones around his neck is looking down at a laptop. A young woman with long blonde hair is leaning over him, smiling and holding a notepad and a pen, appearing to be taking notes or discussing something. The background is a blurred school hallway with other students and warm lighting.

# K-12 SCHOOL SAFETY

2023 SURVEY REPORT



**MOTOROLA** SOLUTIONS



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When it comes to K-12 school safety, parents and educators alike have both confidence and concerns.

According to an Education Week analysis, there were [23 school shootings](#) resulting in injuries or deaths in the first six months of 2023. Reports also indicate that nearly [one-third of middle schoolers](#) have been bullied. And not surprisingly, [student mental health issues](#) are among the top concerns that both teachers and parents have when it comes to school safety.

To help schools prepare for the 2023-24 school year, [Motorola Solutions](#) surveyed 1,000 K-12 parents and 1,000 K-12 educators about safety concerns, as well as their schools' emergency planning methods, communication, technologies and training protocols.

The research revealed that 67% of both parents and teachers are much more concerned about school safety now than they were five years ago. That said, 80% of teachers and 73% of parents are confident that their schools' emergency response plans are effective.

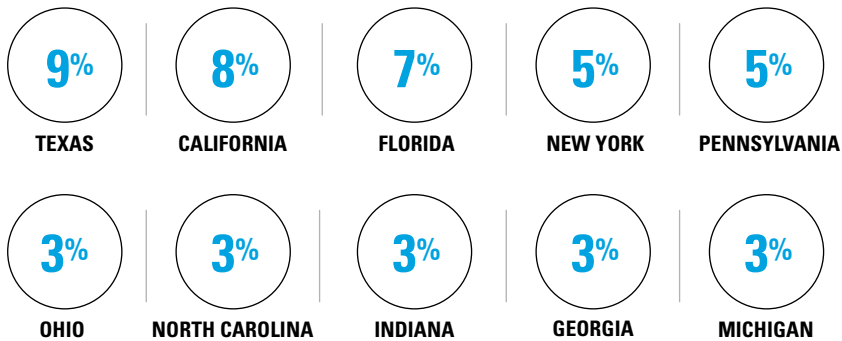
Parents list bullying/cyberbullying (67%), active shooters (56%) and student mental health (55%) as their top safety concerns, whereas teachers are most apprehensive about student mental health issues (72%), adequate staff to keep their schools safe (56%), bullying/cyberbullying and faculty/staff mental health issues (both 55%).

These survey insights reflect the perceptions of those closest to student safety and can help to inform forward-thinking conversations about emergency preparedness, response and notification protocols so that students, educators and staff are best protected from harm and parents can feel more at ease sending their children off to school.



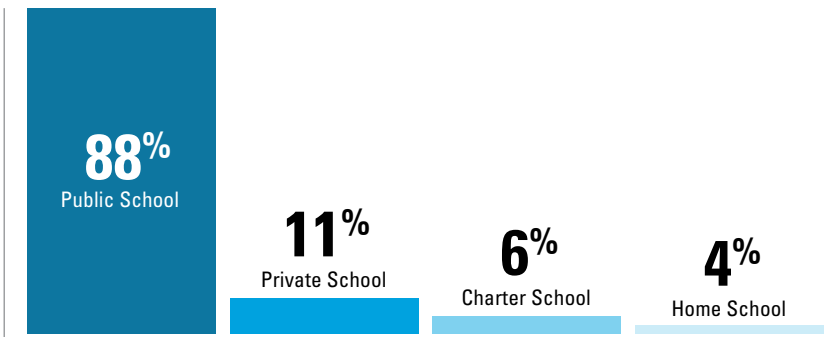
# SURVEY RESPONDENTS: PARENTS

Which state, district or territory do you live in?\*

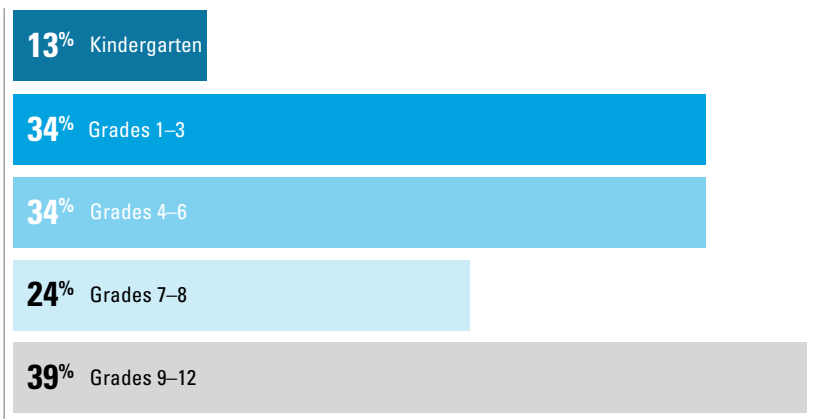


\*States with the most respondents.

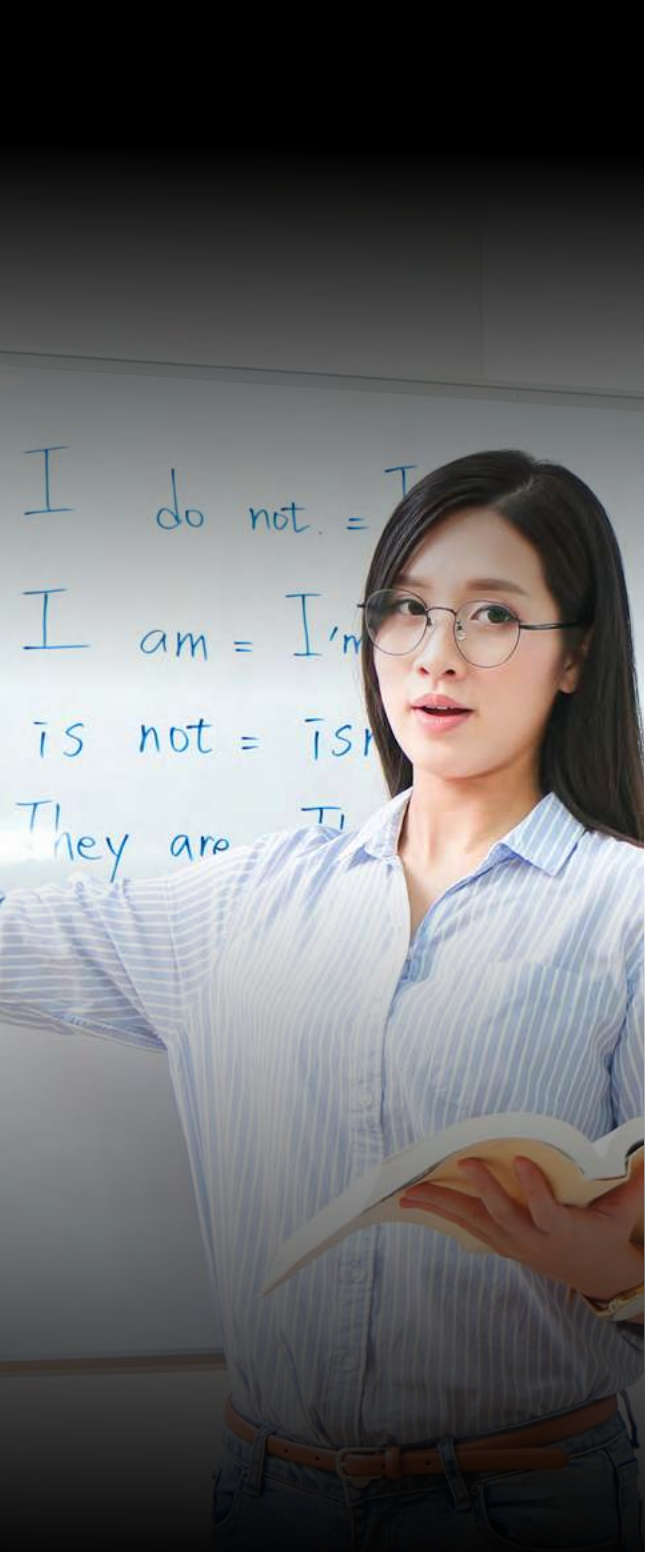
What types of schools do your children 18 and under attend, if any?



What are the grades of your children?

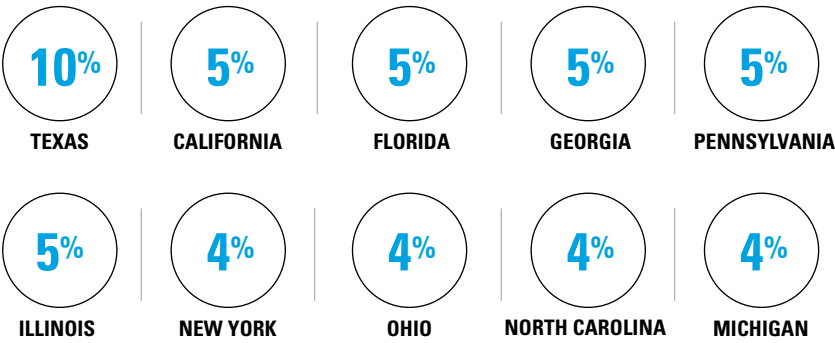






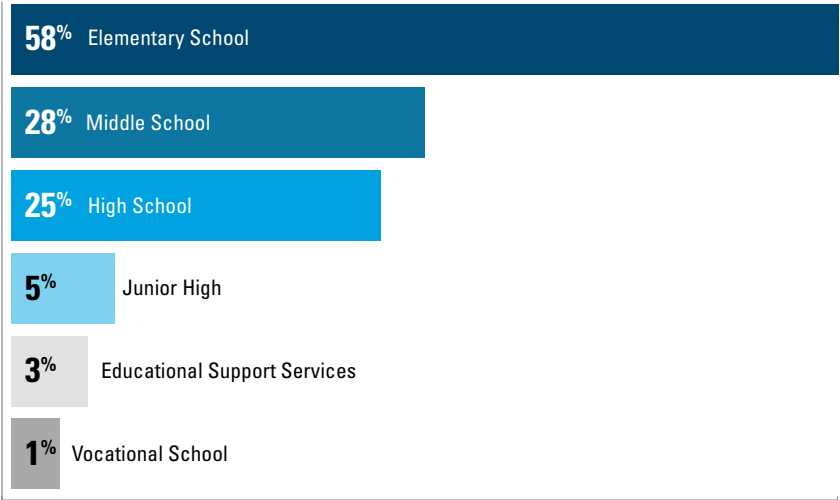
# SURVEY RESPONDENTS: TEACHERS

Which state, district or territory do you live in?\*

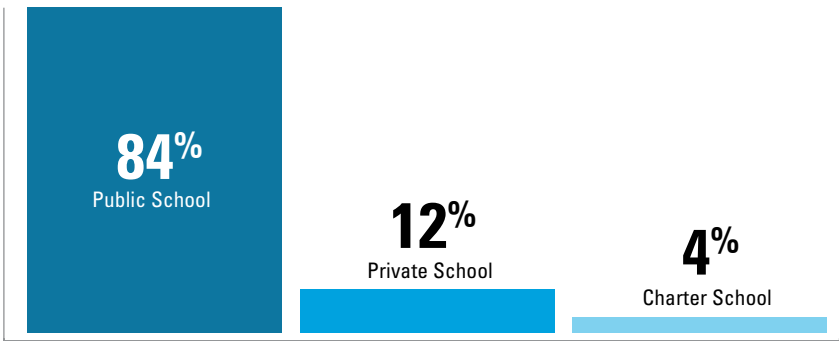


\*States with the most respondents.

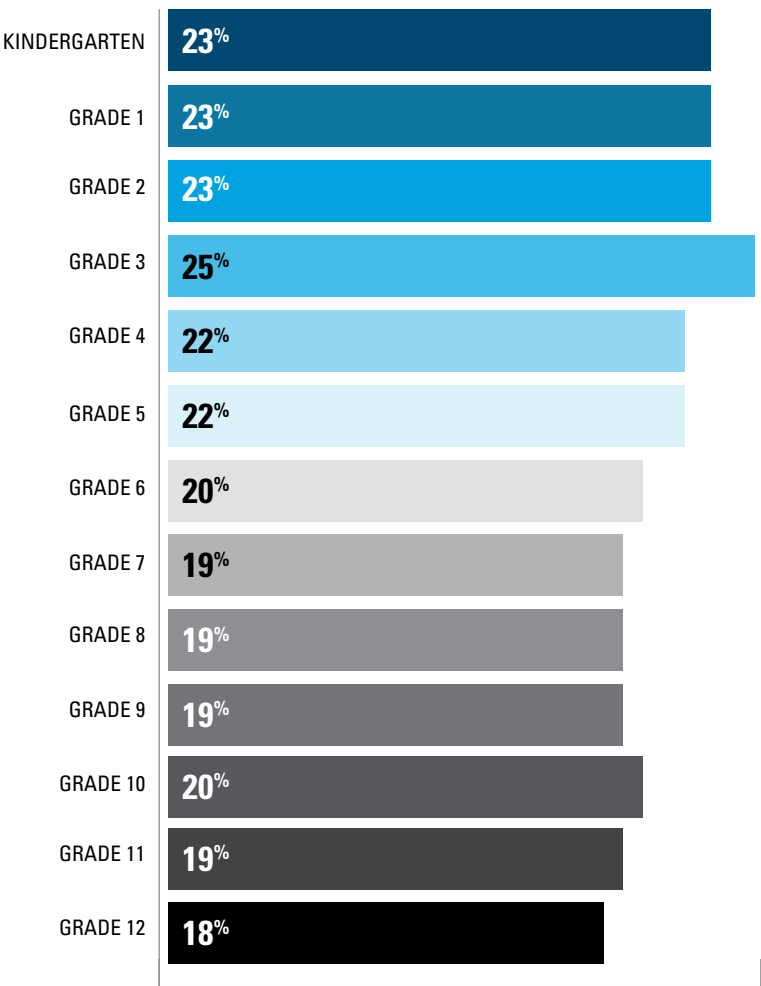
What type of educational establishment do you work for?



What type of school do you teach at?



What grades do you personally teach?





# SCHOOL SAFETY AND EMERGENCY INCIDENTS

When looking for schools to send their children to or teach at, parents and teachers both rank school safety as a critical factor: 66% of parents report that safety is extremely important and 72% of teachers say it is extremely important.

## PARENTS

**To the extent that more than one school may be an option in your area, how important is safety in your decision making versus other factors?**

66% Extremely important

28% Very important

4% Somewhat important

2% Hardly important

0% Not important at all

## TEACHERS

**How important is school safety for you when choosing where to teach?**

72% Extremely important

23% Very important

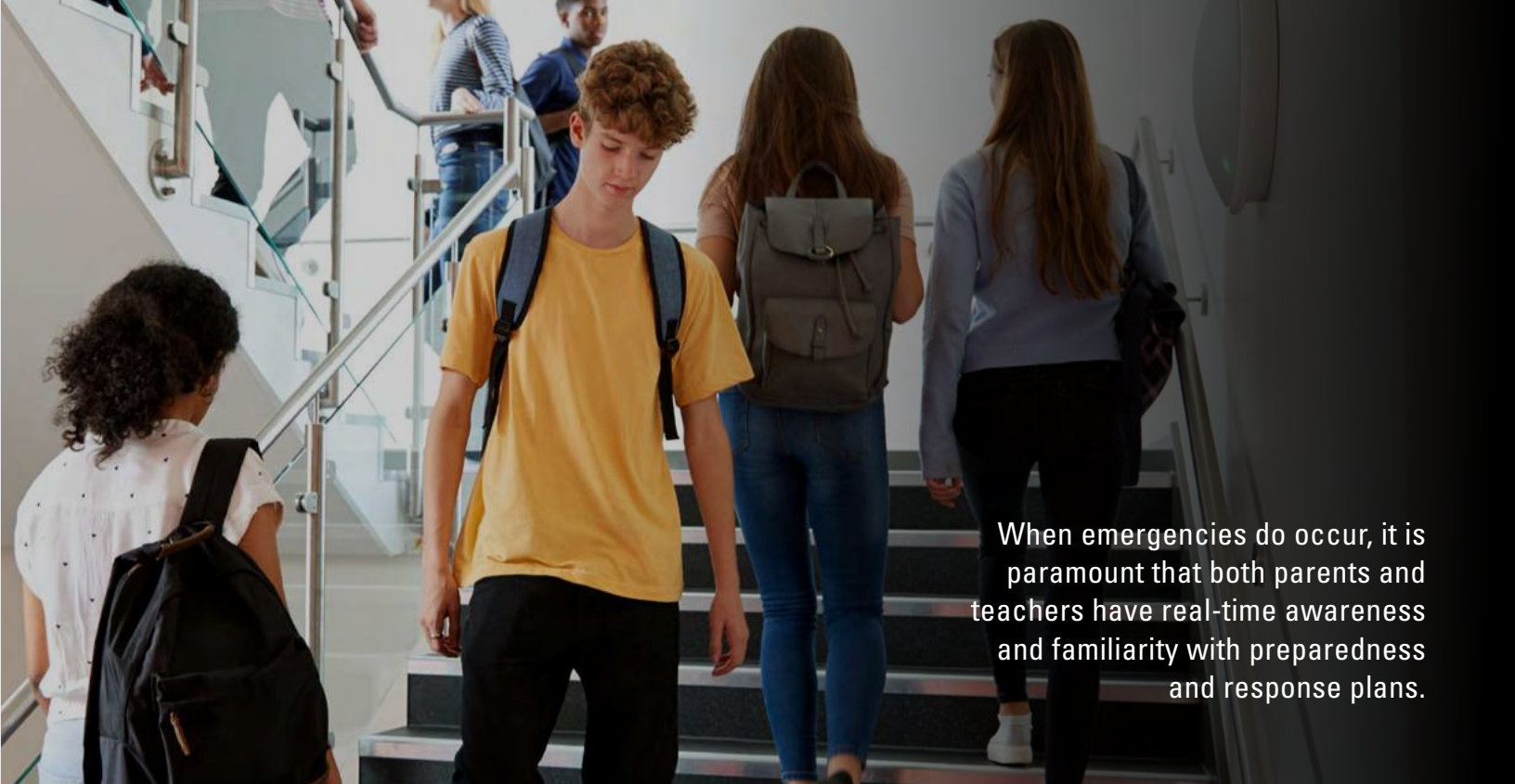
5% Somewhat important

0% Hardly important

0% Not important at all





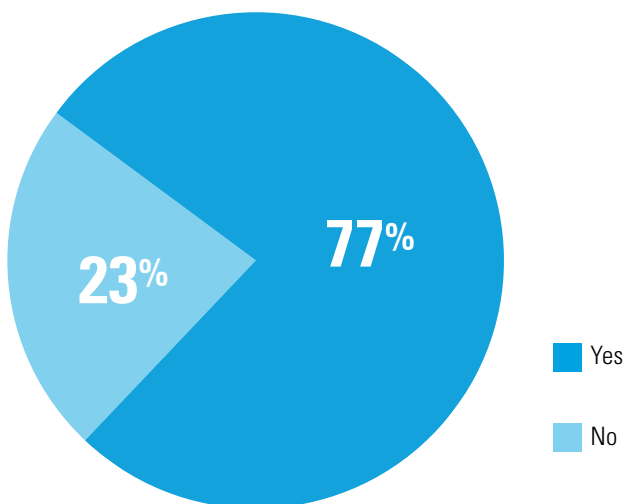


When emergencies do occur, it is paramount that both parents and teachers have real-time awareness and familiarity with preparedness and response plans.

The good news is that confidence in school emergency preparedness and response plans is high, with parents saying they are confident (73%) and teachers reporting they are slightly more confident (80%). When emergencies do occur, it is paramount that both parents and teachers have real-time awareness and familiarity with preparedness and response plans. Seventy-seven percent of parents indicate that they are familiar with their child's school emergency preparedness and response plans, and 75% know which safety measures are in place for certain situations. For teachers, 73% say that they have real-time awareness of emergency response activities during an incident.

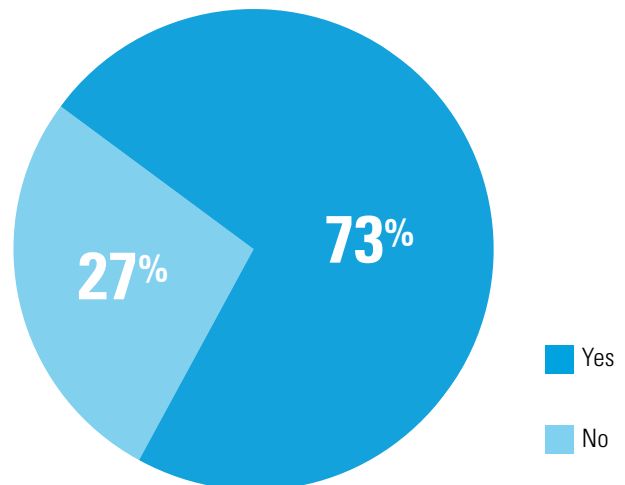
## PARENTS

**Are you familiar with your child's school emergency preparedness and response plans?**



## TEACHERS

**Do you have real-time awareness of response activities during an emergency incident?**

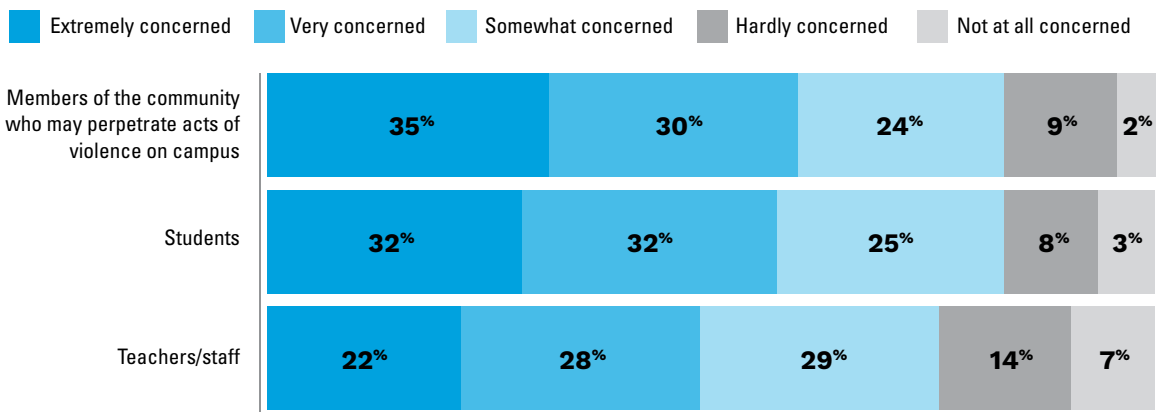


# SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Parents and teachers alike are worried about the mental health of students and those in their communities. Sixty-four percent of parents are concerned about students' mental health, and 65% are concerned about community members' mental health. Meanwhile, 68% of teachers are very or extremely concerned about students' mental health and 63% are concerned about the mental health of community members who may perpetrate acts of violence on a school campus. Half of parents are concerned about teachers' and staff members' mental health, and a similar number of teachers are concerned for themselves and their peers' mental health.

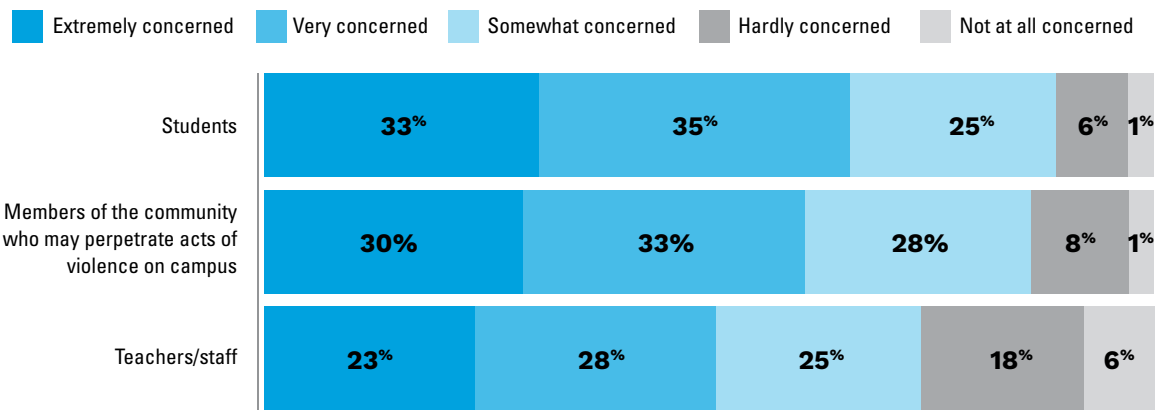
## PARENTS

**How concerned are you about the mental health of the following groups?**



## TEACHERS

**How concerned are you about the mental health of the following groups?**





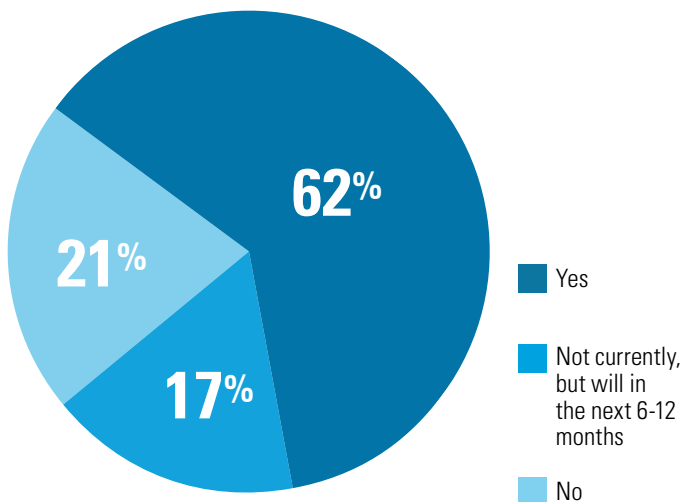


Sixty-eight percent of teachers are very or extremely concerned about students' mental health challenges

When it comes to mental health resources to support students, there are differing levels of agreement between parents and teachers over whether schools have the right resources in place to help. Sixty-two percent of parents believe so, but 42% of teachers do not.

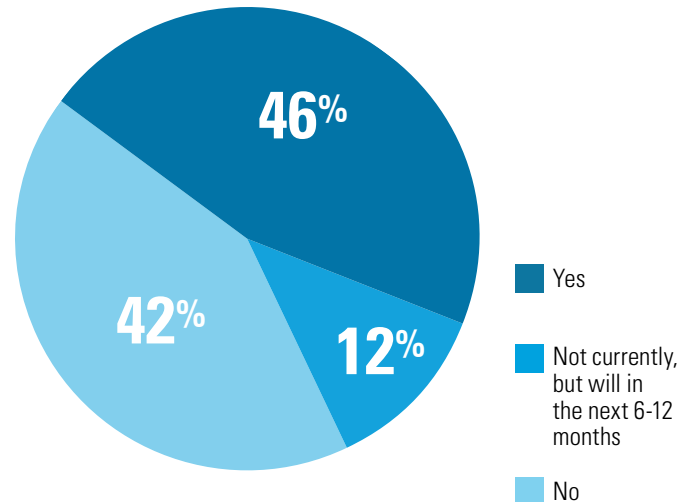
### PARENTS

**Do you believe your child's school has the appropriate mental health resources to support students?**



### TEACHERS

**Do you believe your child's school has the appropriate mental health resources to support students?**



Providing and promoting the right mental health resources can help create a safer environment for students, teachers and faculty while increasing parents' peace of mind.





The ability for teachers to submit anonymous/confidential tips, along with access to the latest technology tools to help inform school leaders, 9-1-1 callers and first responders of emergencies more quickly, can contribute to increased safety and better outcomes.

## TOP COMMUNICATION CHANNELS BEFORE AND DURING EMERGENCIES

To help prevent emergencies from unfolding, 43% of parents report that they are able to submit anonymous or confidential tips via an online portal/website (43%), a hotline (38%) or through SMS text messages (36%). Slightly less than half of teachers (48%) report that they are able to submit anonymous or confidential tips. Like parents, teachers rely on submitting tips via an online portal/website submission (15%), a hotline and SMS text messages (10% each).

When it comes to real-time response, 84% of teachers report that they have been notified of emergency incidents unfolding at or near their school and instructed on the actions they need to take. In the event of an emergency, though, 57% of teachers said that they would typically use the classroom phone to call the main office—a time-consuming approach that does not simultaneously loop in school district officials, 9-1-1 call handlers or first responders who may need to act fast.

School communication with parents during an emergency is swift: 89% of parents say their child's school has an alerting system to immediately contact them via phone, text and/or email during an emergency.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, 32% of teachers would be notified in-person when it is safe to bring students back to school or if students should be taken to a reunification point. Twenty-one percent would be notified via SMS message from school safety personnel or administrators, and 20% would be notified via two-way radios.

On a positive note, the research also revealed that more than half of teachers (57%) feel as though they and their colleagues have the safety technology and resources they need to support students with access and functional needs during an emergency. This includes students with physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities or those that have limited English proficiency.





# THE STATE OF SCHOOL SAFETY TECHNOLOGY

Specifically, parents say [visitor management protocols](#) (59%) and [video security equipment](#) (57%) are used to help improve safety at their child's school. They also noted that [alert notifications](#) (58%), [two-way radios](#) (45%) and public address systems (41%) are utilized when emergencies occur.

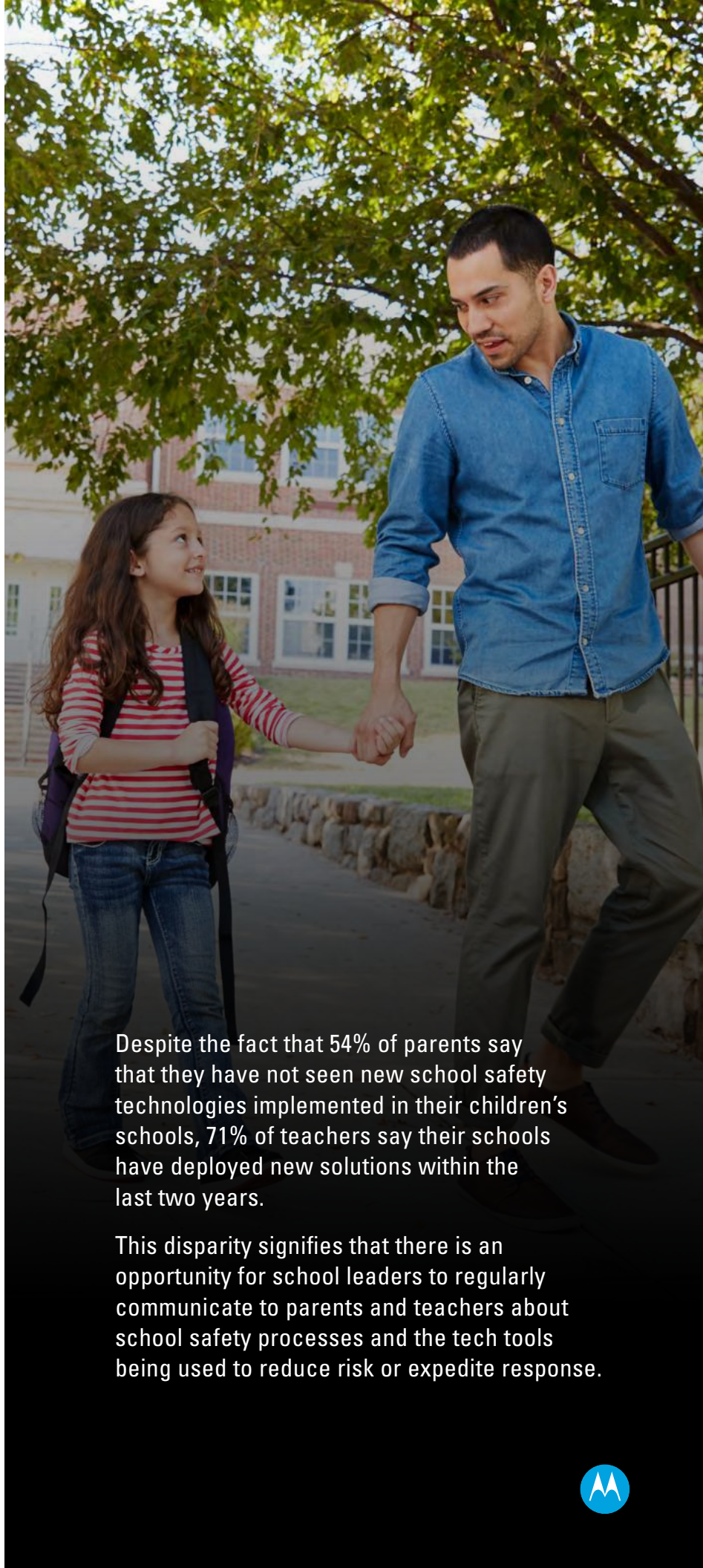
Teachers report that video security equipment is used to monitor events in and around their schools, and visitor management protocols are in place to screen visitors (both 83%). Another day-to-day preventative measure used is [access control equipment](#) that may require a key card or badge (74%). During emergencies, educators say that notifications are sent via phone, text and/or email to parents (74%).

What technologies would most move the needle for parents when it comes to school safety? Parents rank [panic button apps](#) that allow teachers/staff to directly and swiftly notify school authorities and 9-1-1 (46%), concealed weapons detection technology (45%) and metal detectors (39%) at the top of their lists.

Interestingly, more than half of parents (54%) say that they have not seen new safety technologies implemented in their children's schools, whereas 71% of teachers say that their school has implemented new safety technology in the last two years. This disparity presents an opportunity for schools to periodically communicate with parents about the safety solutions they're implementing to reduce risk or expedite response.

Despite the fact that 54% of parents say that they have not seen new school safety technologies implemented in their children's schools, 71% of teachers say their schools have deployed new solutions within the last two years.

This disparity signifies that there is an opportunity for school leaders to regularly communicate to parents and teachers about school safety processes and the tech tools being used to reduce risk or expedite response.







## EFFECTIVENESS OF DRILLS AND TRAINING

School safety lockdown exercises and evacuation drills are a common practice for teachers and their students. Eighty-nine percent of parents report that their child has participated in a school lockdown drill, while 96% of teachers have participated in this type of activity. Further, 82% of parents say that their child has participated in a drill specifically for active shooter preparedness, while 73% of teachers say that they have participated in these specific drills with students, and another 10% without students. Seventeen percent of teachers report they have not participated in these specific types of drills. This last statistic underscores the need for ongoing school and public safety collaboration so that all educators and school personnel have the most up-to-date emergency preparedness and response training.

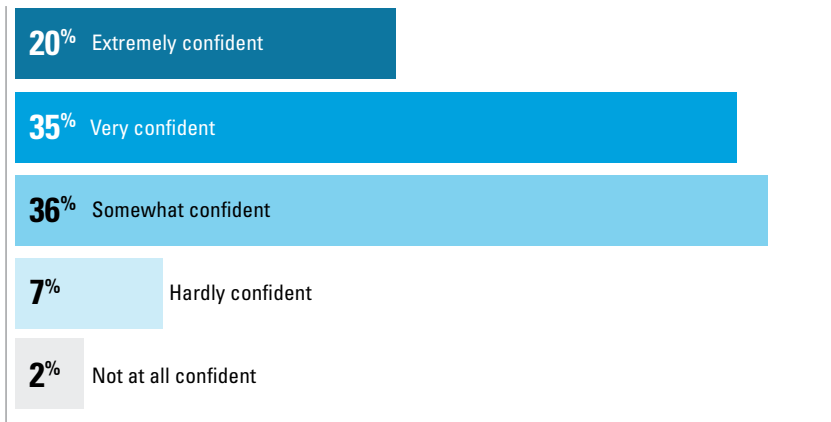
As part of their training, 57% of teachers report that they have engaged with law enforcement and first responders. Thirty-six percent haven't engaged with these officials but want to. Of those who have interacted with first responders, only half (49%) of teachers say that these interactions included students. This integrated training may help students better understand emergency preparedness protocols and the most appropriate response strategies when crisis events unfold.

How does this level of preparedness impact the confidence levels of caretakers? Parents are relatively confident in the training students at their child's school receive (53%) and the training teachers/staff receive (55%).



## PARENTS

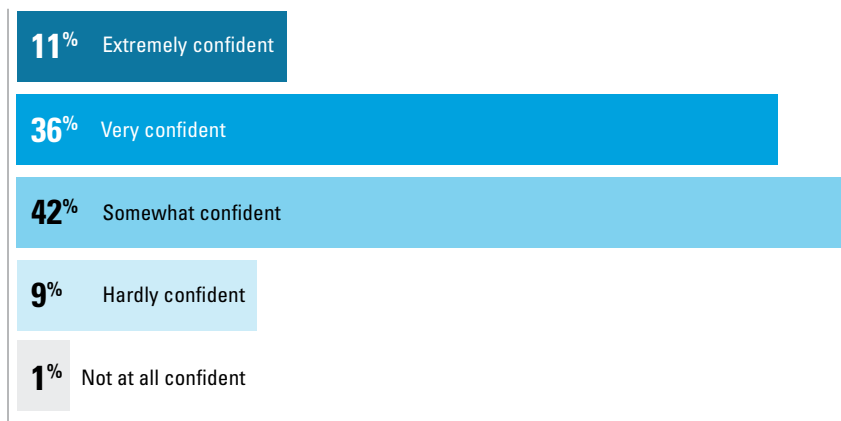
**How confident are you in the emergency preparedness and response training teachers/staff at your child's school receive?**



Teachers are slightly less confident than parents, with 47% of teachers surveyed saying that they are confident in the emergency preparedness and response training they have received.

## TEACHERS

**How confident are you in the emergency preparedness and response training you have received?**



To bolster teacher confidence and reinforce the importance of emergency preparedness, school leaders may consider conducting hands-on training throughout the year – complemented with key safety guidelines communicated via faculty messaging channels or school safety apps.



# CONCLUSION

During an emergency, every second counts. No matter the crisis, it is critical that teachers have the safety protocols, communication channels, technology and training to keep themselves and their students safe and public safety authorities informed. They need to feel confident and well-equipped to handle any emergency, which is why ongoing awareness efforts and training are crucial. And if an emergency does occur, teachers need mechanisms in place to swiftly report events and connect with 9-1-1 and other key stakeholders.

Keeping parents in the loop is also paramount. In the absence of information, misinformation abounds. With that in mind, parents should be well informed of emergency preparedness plans, response strategies and notification processes throughout the year – not just once. Parents also provide an extra set of eyes and ears and can inform authorities about what's happening in children's lives – therefore adding a powerful layer of defense. As such, schools should consider implementing and informing parents about anonymous tip lines so that if they see or hear something that could potentially undermine school safety, it can be reported and explored in a timely manner.

The entire school community—students, parents, teachers and staff—needs to understand which technologies are being used to reinforce safety efforts on an ongoing basis. Innovations such as panic button apps, video security, two-way radios and alert notifications are part of the school safety ecosystem and can help speed up response times, increase overall safety measures and ensure swift dissemination of information.

When both parents and teachers alike understand the plans, processes and innovations that are in place, it will not only allay concerns but ultimately lead to better safety outcomes when crisis events occur.

## Methodology

The independent market research firm Researchscape conducted this survey. Respondents were 1,000 parents with students in grades K-12 and 1,000 K-12 teachers in the United States. The survey was conducted in June 2023.

## About Motorola Solutions

Motorola Solutions is a global leader in public safety and enterprise security. Our solutions in land mobile radio communications, video security & access control and the command center, bolstered by managed & support services, create an integrated technology ecosystem to help make communities safer and businesses stay productive and secure. At Motorola Solutions, we're ushering in a new era in public safety and security. Learn more at [www.motorolasolutions.com](https://www.motorolasolutions.com).

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