



National Public Opinion Survey Canadians' Thoughts on Public Education and Organized Labour

FINAL RESULTS

NATIONAL SURVEY OF 2,375 CANADIANS

CONDUCTED FOR CTF/FCE

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted with 2,375 Canadians aged 18 and over, from November 25 to December 11, 2022. A random sample of panelists were invited to complete the survey from a set of partner panels based on the Lucid exchange platform. These partners are typically double opt-in survey panels, blended to manage out potential skews in the data from a single source.

The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.0%, 19 times out of 20.

The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONVERSATIONS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Canadians are most receptive to big picture conversations about public education, such as the social good brought on by a strong public education system.

Canadians are far more likely to agree on the importance of working towards broad social impacts than fixing specific issues, or finding specific solutions.

94% agree equitable access to quality education for all children and youth in Canada is important.

91% agree the opportunity for children to access mental health services through the public education system is important.

90% agree the opportunity for children to access social supports through the public education system is important.

If you do have conversations about specific players in public education, Canadians like hearing about students/children/youth, then teachers, and lastly teachers' unions or the provincial government.

61% have a positive view of teachers.

38% have a positive view of teachers' unions.

29% have a positive view of their provincial education minister.

TEACHERS' UNIONS: IMAGE AND FUNCTION

Opinions of teachers' unions are driven by two pieces: image and function.

Image and function perform similarly, Canadians are divided on their views of the union's image, and role.

38% have a positive view of teachers' unions.

28% have a neutral view of teachers' unions.

22% have a negative view of teachers' unions.

36% say public education would be worse off without teachers' unions.

27% say there would be no difference to public education without teachers' unions.

23% say public education would be better off without teachers' unions.

On image:

Canadians see unions as reliable, and an organization willing to have a dialogue.

64% Steady. **62%** Engaging. **61%** Listens.

But steady also means bureaucratic (not nimble), and in dialogue many say unions are inauthentic and only interested in themselves.

73% Bureaucratic. **46%** Greedy. **48%** Combative.

On function:

In recent negotiations and overall, Canadians believe teachers' unions do a better job representing teachers, rather than students and the wider community.

For Canadians the value of public education comes from the social good it brings and the impact on children/youth so, few connect the value of teachers' unions = the value of public education.

Instead, teachers' unions are viewed as a tool for teachers.

THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Canadians want to see the federal government involved in big picture, societal benefits associate with public education.

Canadians support federal involvement in:

- Ensuring public education plays a role in poverty eradication (74%)
 - 67% CPC. 83% LPC. 81% NDP.
- Ensuring all children and youth across Canada have an equitable opportunity to learn in Canada's official languages (71%)
 - 63% CPC. 83% LPC. 74% NDP.
- Ensuring topics of national interest are included in the public education curriculum (69%)
 - 62% CPC. 83% LPC. 77% NDP.
- Establishing guidelines for incorporating truth and reconciliation topics into curriculum across Canada (64%)
 - 51% CPC. 78% LPC. 72% NDP.

And they are also in favour of federal involvement with structural improvements.

Canadians also support federal involvement in:

- Setting baseline guidelines and expectations for the delivery of public education across Canada (71%)
 - 66% CPC. 82% LPC. 80% NDP.
- Establishing guidelines for working conditions for teachers across Canada (70%)
 - 65% CPC. 82% LPC. 78% NDP.

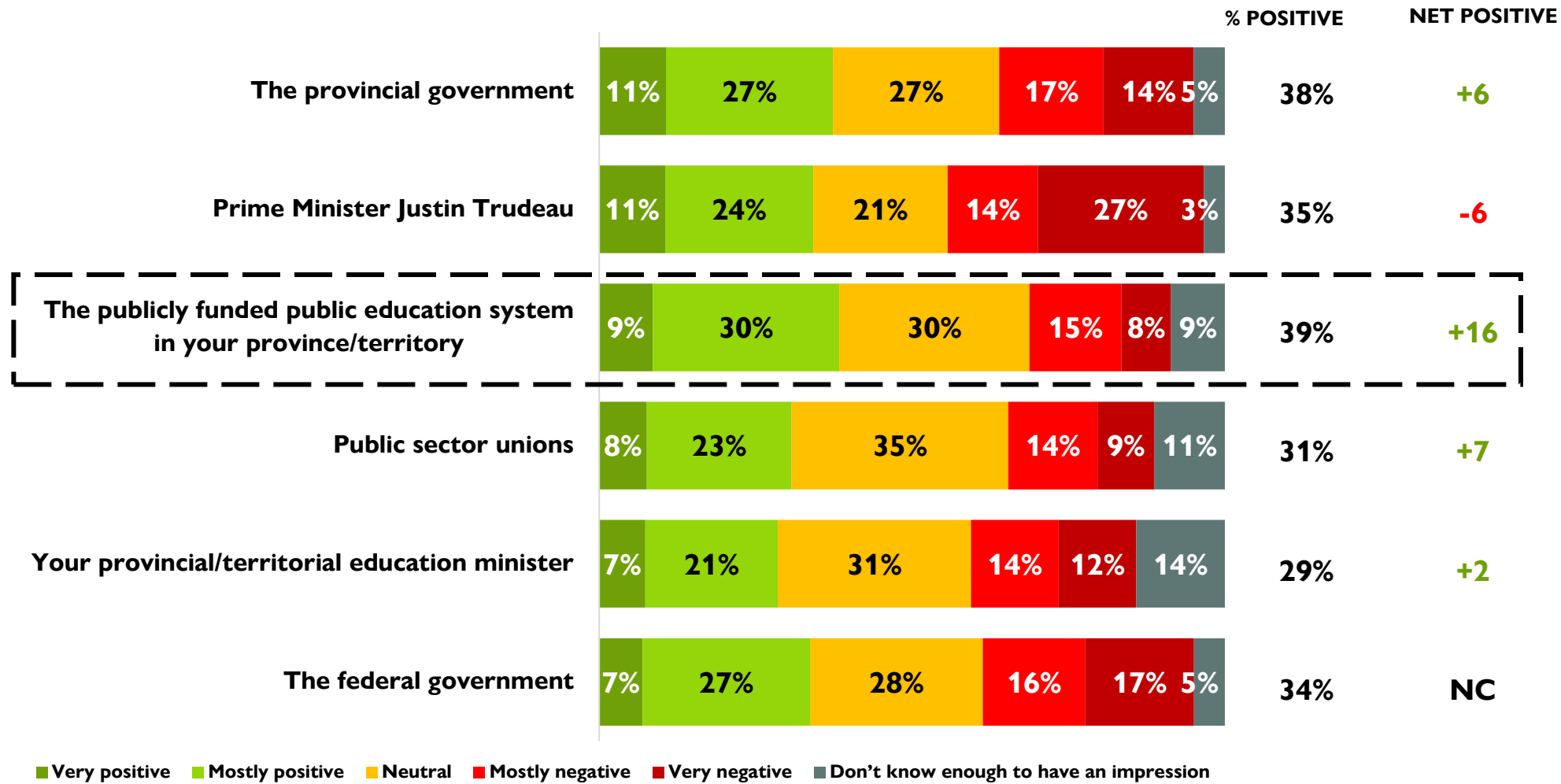


SURROUNDING IMPRESSIONS AND VIEWS

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- **Canadians have the most positive impressions about and see the most value in stakeholder groups that have the most ‘in the classroom’ interactions.**
- **For example, impressions of education ministers are least positive (29% positive, +2 net positive) and impressions of the system itself are the most positive (39% positive, +16 net positive).**
- **When it comes to stakeholders within the education system specifically, we see a similar pattern. Canadians have very positive impressions of teachers (61% positive, +50 net positive), and moderate impressions about the others: teachers’ unions (38%, +16 net rating), school boards (37%, +16 net positive), and CTF/FCE (36%, +21 net positive).**
- **It is perhaps no surprise that when asked about their role in creating a strong, public education system Canadians believe teachers play the biggest role (78%) , followed by school boards (70%), CTF/FCE (61%), and teachers’ unions (60%).**

IMPRESSIONS MOST POSITIVE FOR EDUCATION SYSTEM, LEAST POSITIVE FOR EDUCATION MINISTER

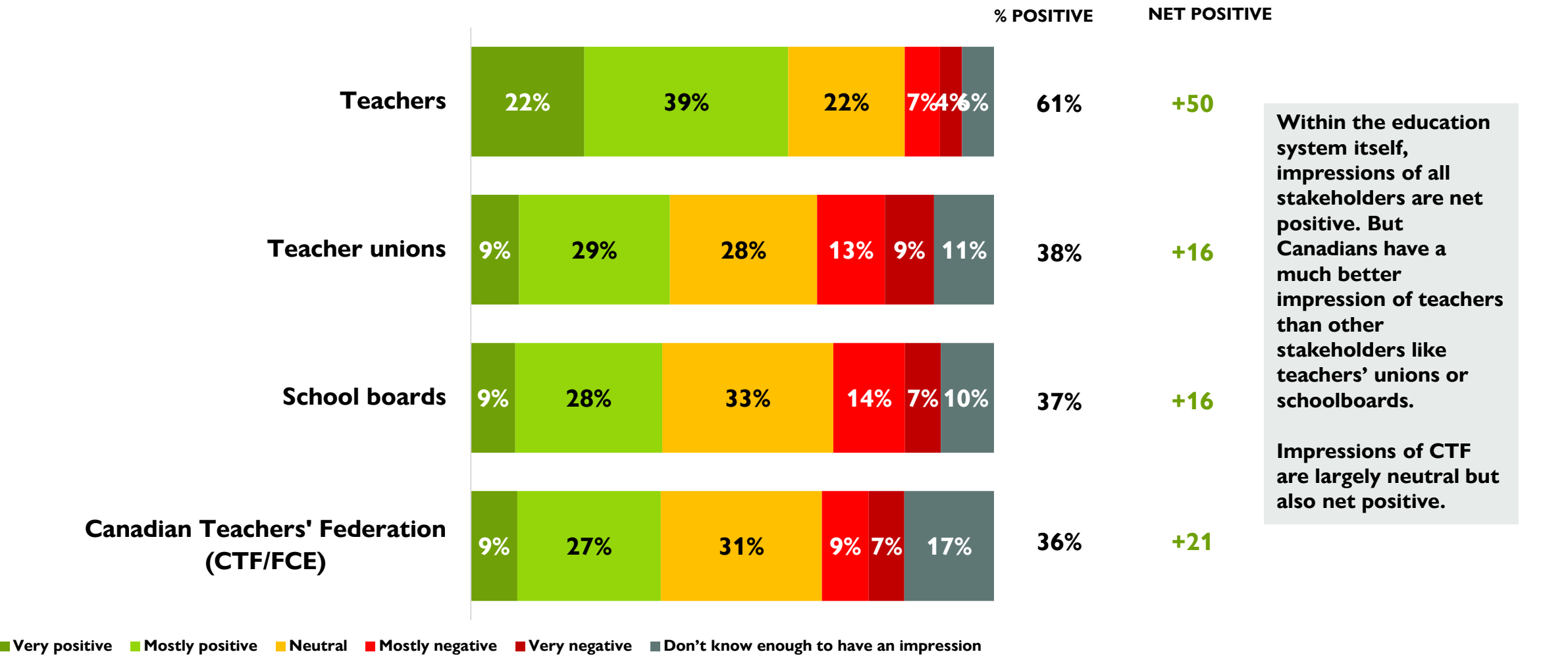


Among the different stakeholders relevant to CTF and the education file, Canadians' impressions rank as follows.

1. The education system itself (+16 net rating)
2. Public sector unions (+7 net rating)
3. Your provincial/territorial education minister (+2 net rating)

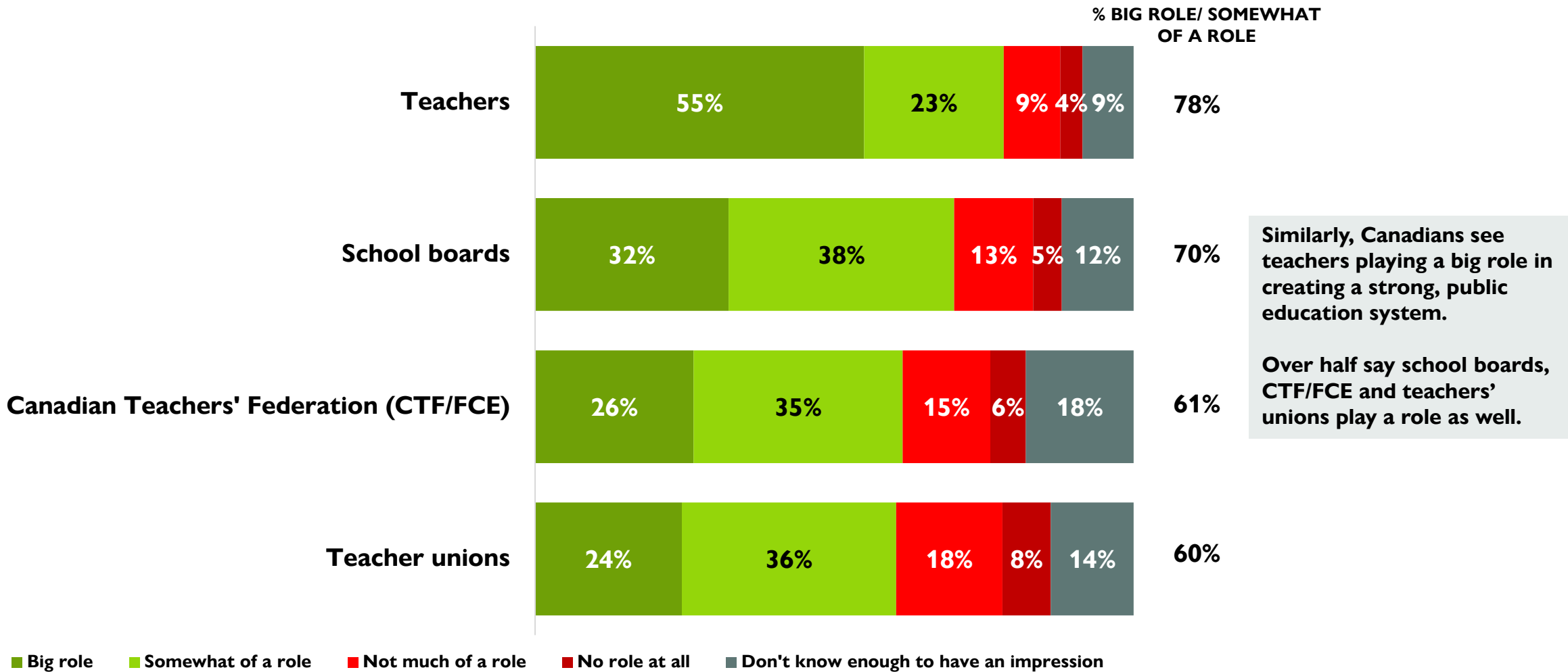
Please tell us if you have a very positive, mostly positive, mostly negative, or very negative impression of each:

CANADIANS HAVE MORE POSITIVE VIEW OF TEACHERS THAN OTHER EDUCATION STAKEHOLDERS



And what about the following in the public education system in your region? When we refer to the public education system we mean K-12 public education.

TEACHERS PLAY BIGGEST ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, FOLLOWED BY SCHOOL BOARDS, CTF/FCE, TEACHERS' UNIONS



Thinking about the same groups, what kind of role do they play in creating a strong, public education system?

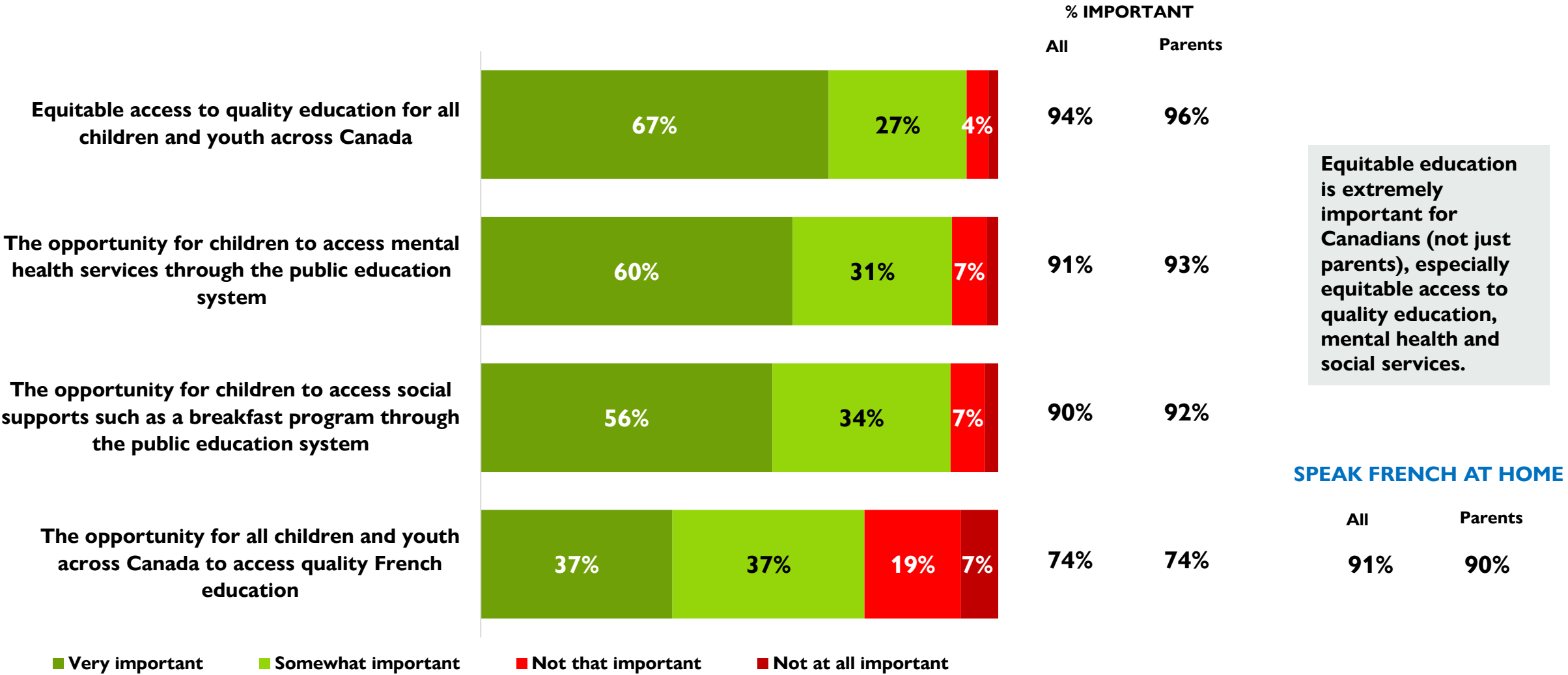


CHALLENGES IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

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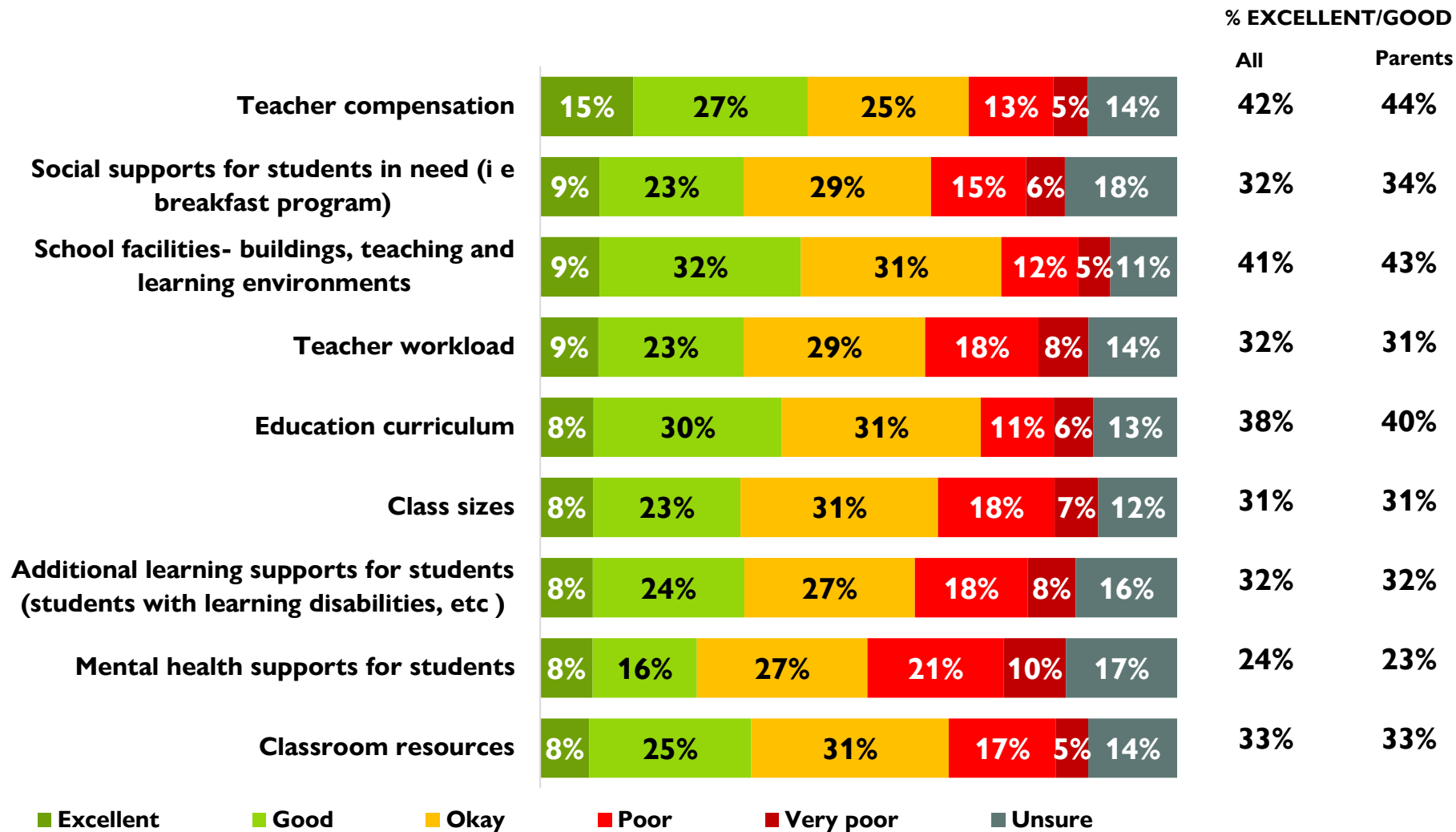
- **Canadians want to see a public education system with equitable access. This includes access to public education overall (94%), and access to mental health supports (91%) and social supports (90%) through the education system.**
- **There is a room for improvement on a long list of measures in Canadian's local school systems. No feature is in a good state according to the majority— though teacher compensation comes close, 42% rank it as excellent/good.**
 - **Areas that need the biggest improvement are: mental health supports for students, additional learning supports, and class sizes.**
- **65% of Canadians say there is a shortage of teachers in their community- much more common in Quebec, New Brunswick and the Northern territories.**
- **Now is a good time for messages about supporting the education system. Canadians still feel strongly that the pandemic highlighted the importance of investing in our education system.**
- **While there is a connection between these additional supports for students and teachers and funding, Canadians don't necessarily identify it. So, messages should focus more on alleviating the problem (reducing burnout, more support) rather than how the problem will be solved (more funding).**

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS VERY IMPORTANT FOR CANADIANS



How important, if at all, are the following issues for you?

TEACHER COMPENSATION, BUILDINGS IN BEST STATE, STUDENT SUPPORT, CLASS SIZES IN WORST STATE



Canadians will be most responsive to messages focused on improving:

1. Mental health support for students
2. Additional learning supports
3. Class sizes

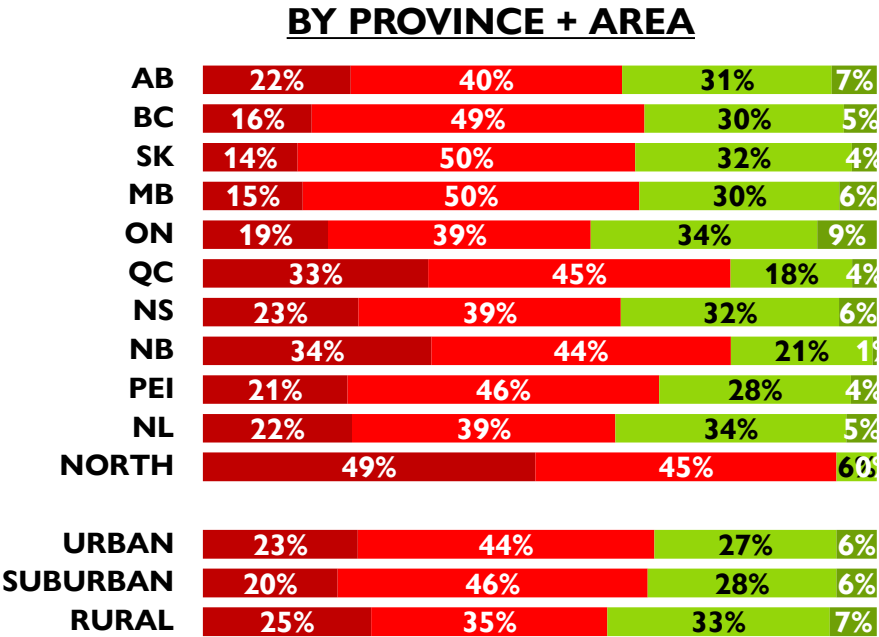
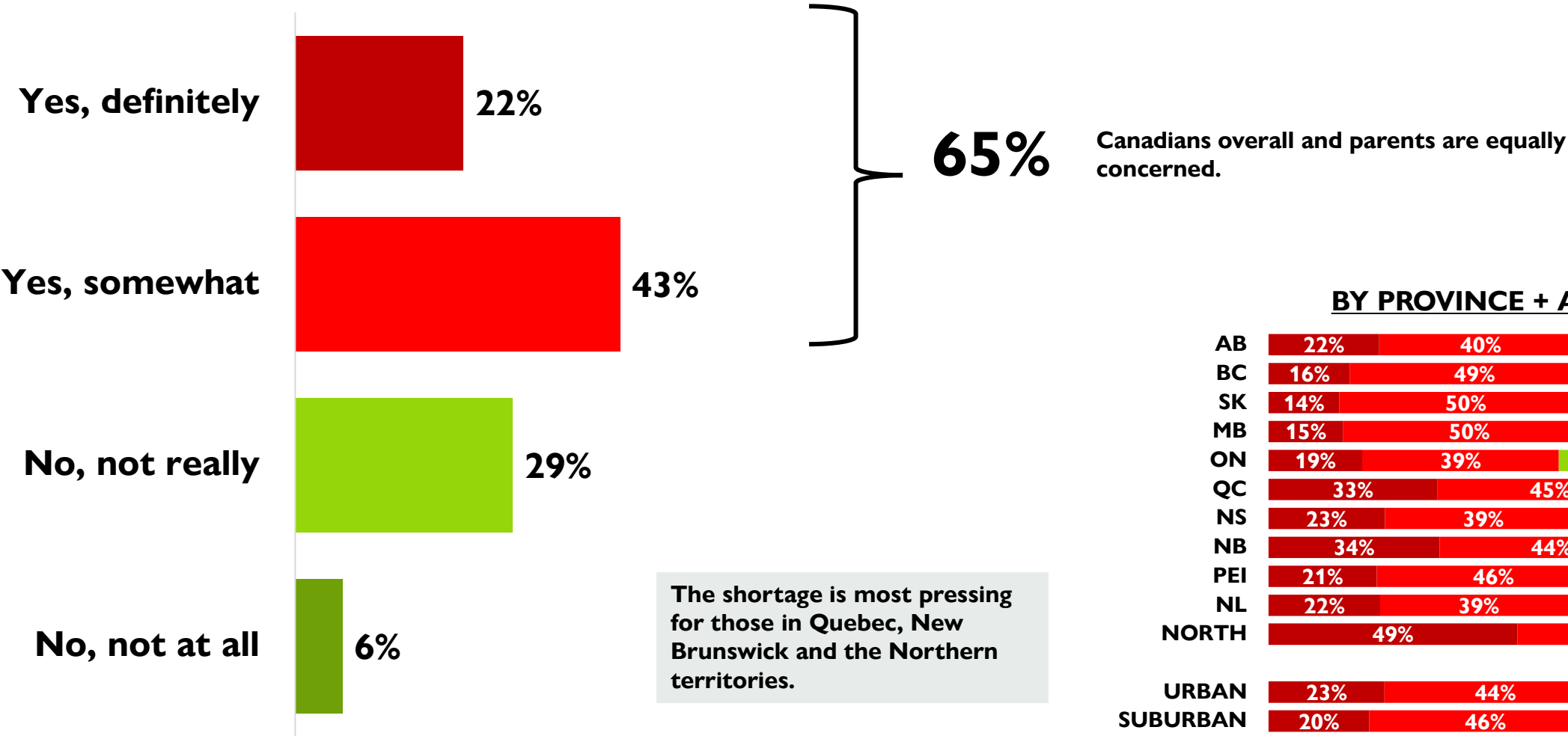
Because these are the aspects with the most to gain.

Canadians see the following aspects in the best state:

1. Teacher compensation
2. School facilities
3. Education curriculum

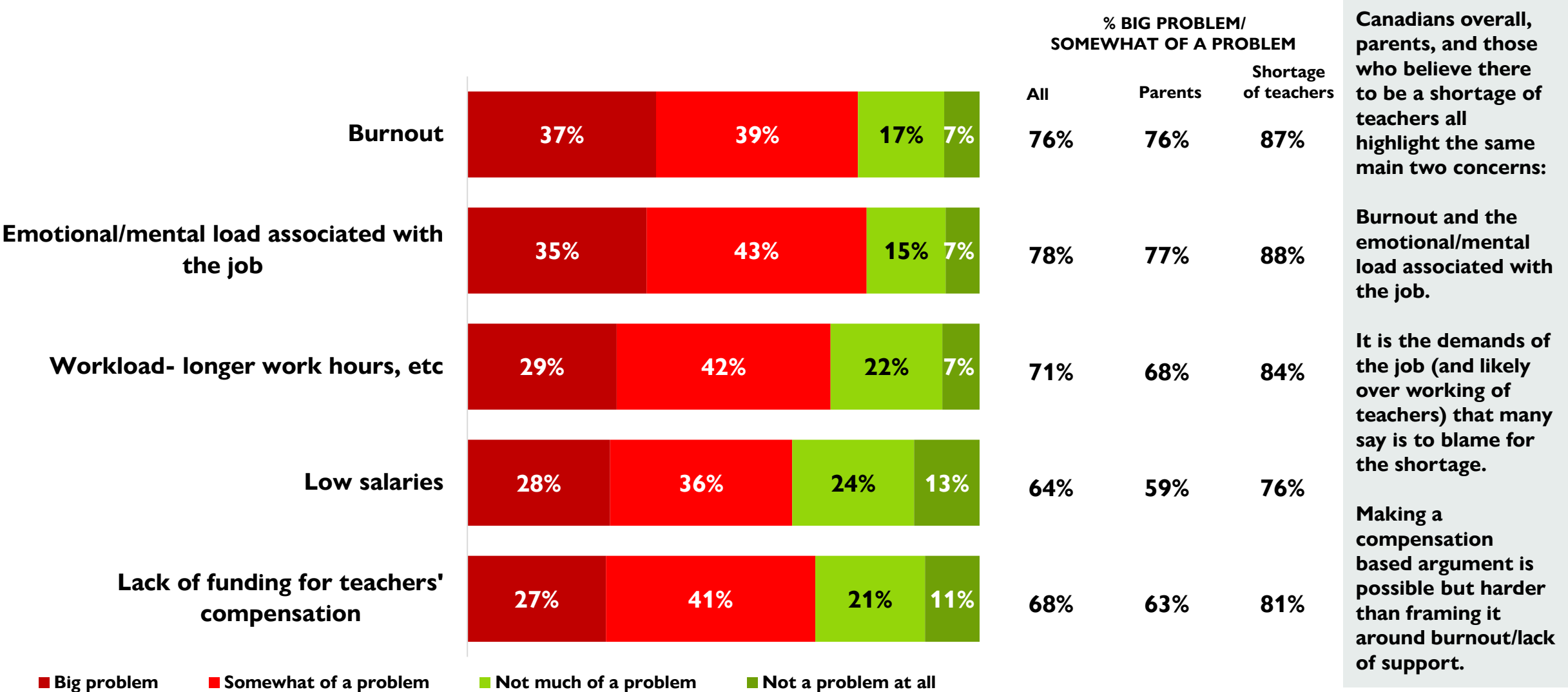
A message focused on these aspects will resonate, but not as much as a message focused on improving other aspects.

TWO THIRD OF CANADIANS SAY THEIR COMMUNITY HAS A SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS



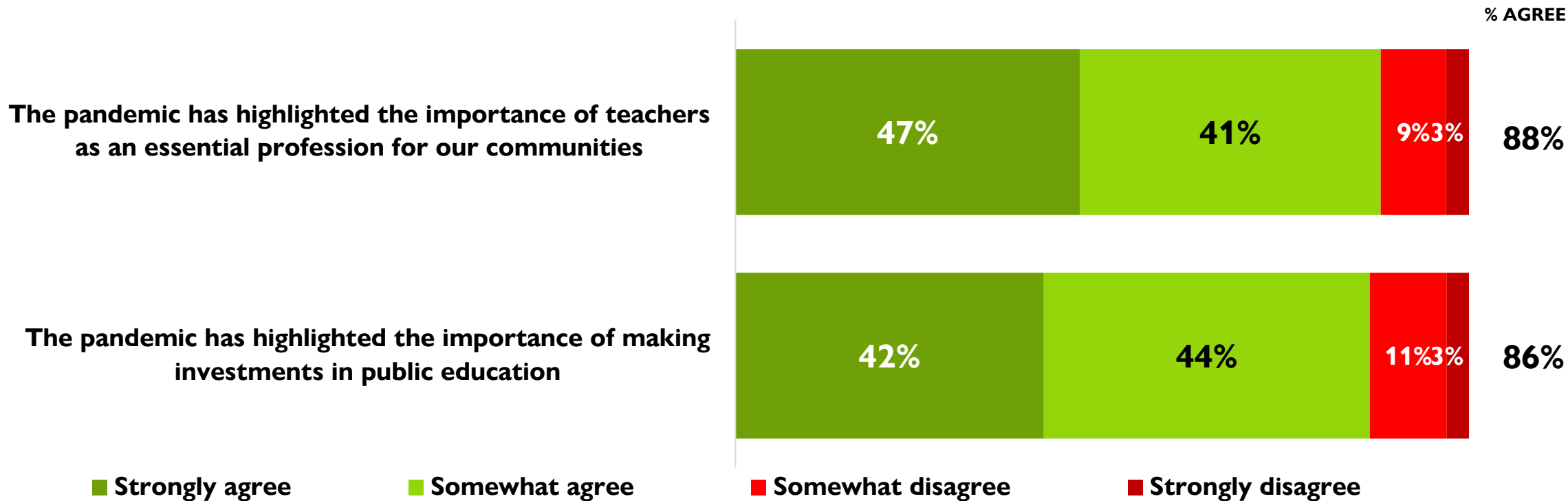
Based on what you know, is there a shortage of teachers in your community?

MENTAL HEALTH, WORKLOAD BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS



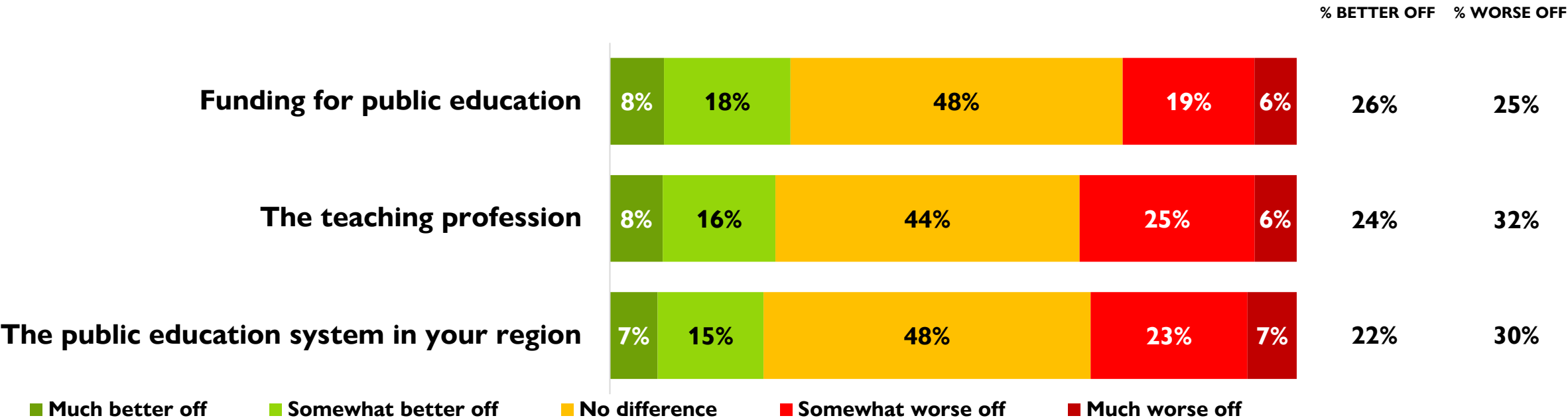
For each, do you think this is a big problem or not much of a problem in the sector?

HIGHER LEVELS OF APPRECIATION FOR TEACHERS, EDUCATION POST PANDEMIC REMAIN



Now is also a good time to be spreading a message about the importance of education. Canadians still feel strongly the pandemic highlighted the importance of teachers, and investments in education.

TEACHING PROFESSION, SYSTEM WORSE OFF SINCE PANDEMIC, SPLIT ON WHETHER FUNDING IS BETTER OR WORSE



That said, there is still more evidence a funding-driven conversation will be challenging. Just as many say funding is better off as it is worse off. The bigger problem is with the profession itself and education. While these challenges are related to lack of funding, Canadians are more likely to see the challenges relating to burnout and workload.



THE ROLE OF UNIONS

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- Unprompted, Canadians have mixed views of teachers' unions- half write positive sentiments and the other half write negative sentiments.
- On the image of teachers' unions: Canadians see unions as engaging (even those who have negative views of unions), and steady group that has the qualities needed to be build good relationships and reputation.
 - However this steadiness also means many see unions are bureaucratic (rather than nimble), and old fashioned, and while unions may be good at creating dialogue, they are often self-interested (greedy and combative).
- On the structural value of teachers' unions: 36% of Canadians say the public education system would be worse off without teachers' unions, the rest don't see the value to the system- 27% say there would be no difference, 23% say the system would be better off.
 - This is due to two pieces: Canadians believe teachers' unions are much better at representing teachers than other groups in the school system (students, community, parents); and they are divided on whether it is the union's job to step in and negotiate on many of the big issues plaguing the public school system (additional learning supports, classroom resources, mental health supports).
- Finally, strike action worsens opinions of teachers' unions not only for those with negative views, but for Canadians in general.

TOP OF MIND OPINIONS ARE MIXED ON TEACHERS' UNIONS



Top of mind words to describe unions are split- half have positive sentiments and the other, negative.

MOST USED POSITIVE WORDS FOR TEACHERS' UNION

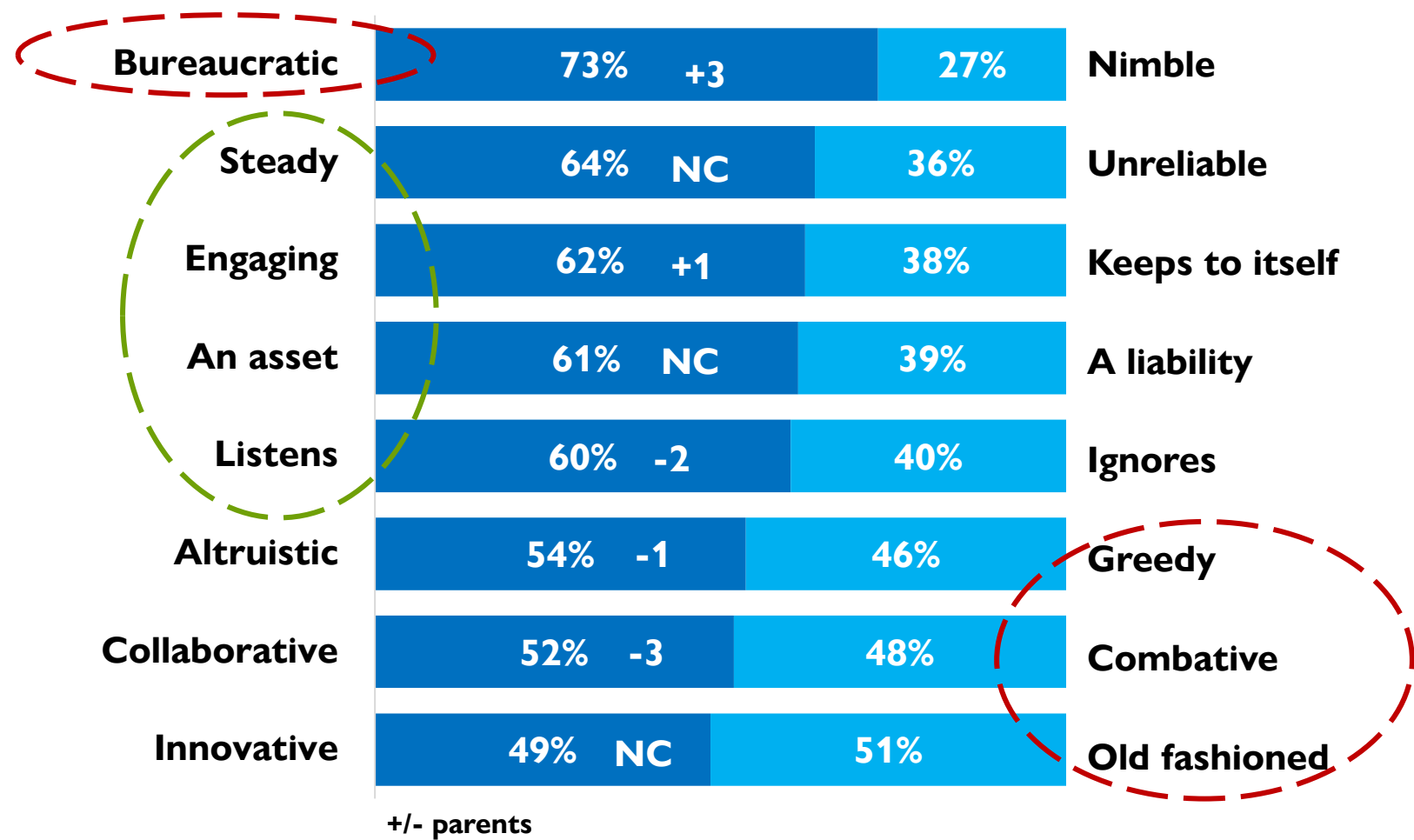
- 1. GOOD/FAIR**
- 2. SUPPORTIVE**
- 3. TEACHERS
RIGHTS/PROTECTION**

MOST USED NEGATIVE WORDS FOR TEACHERS' UNION

- 1. GREEDY**
- 2. STRIKES**
- 3. CORRUPTED**

When you think of teachers' unions, what words come to mind?

OPINIONS OF UNIONS ARE MIXED, COLLABORATIVE BUT SELF-CENTRED, STEADY BUT OLD-FASHIONED



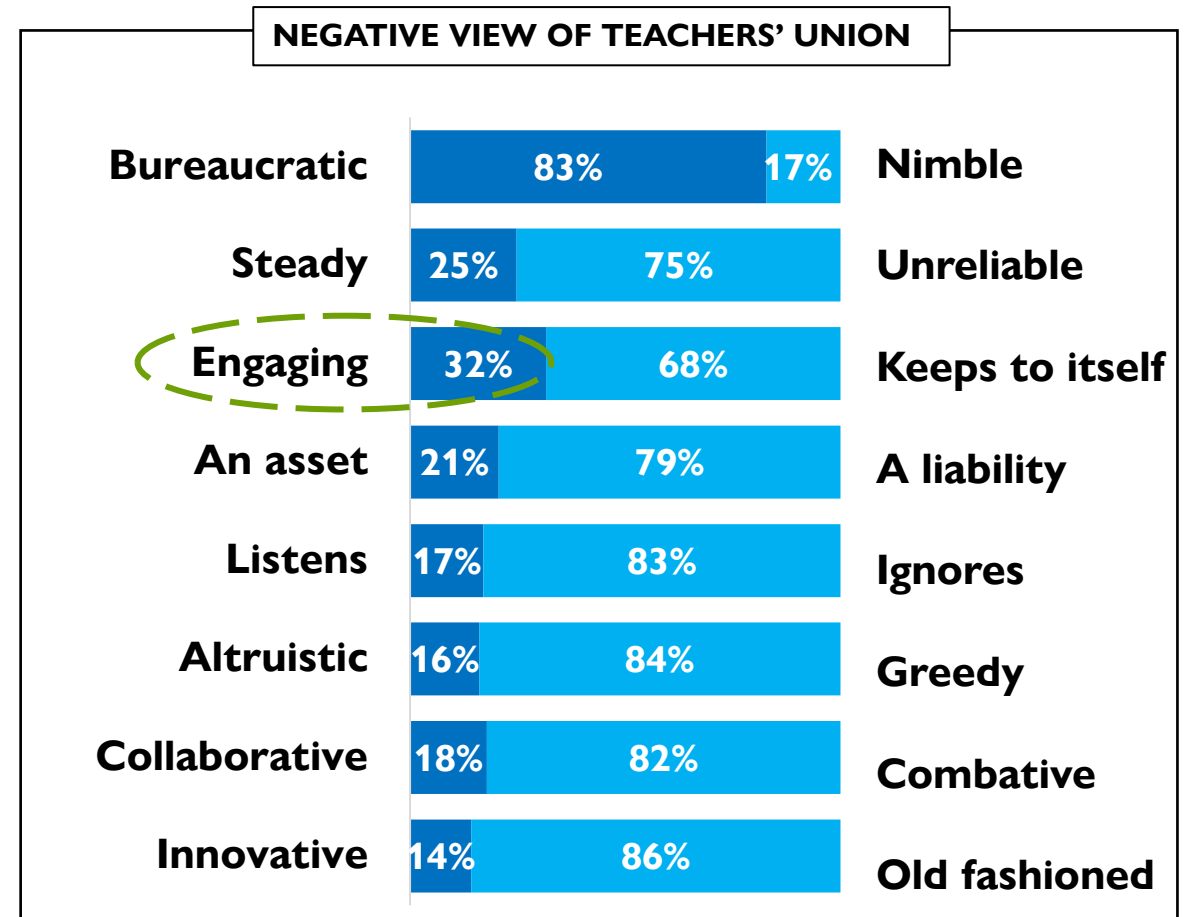
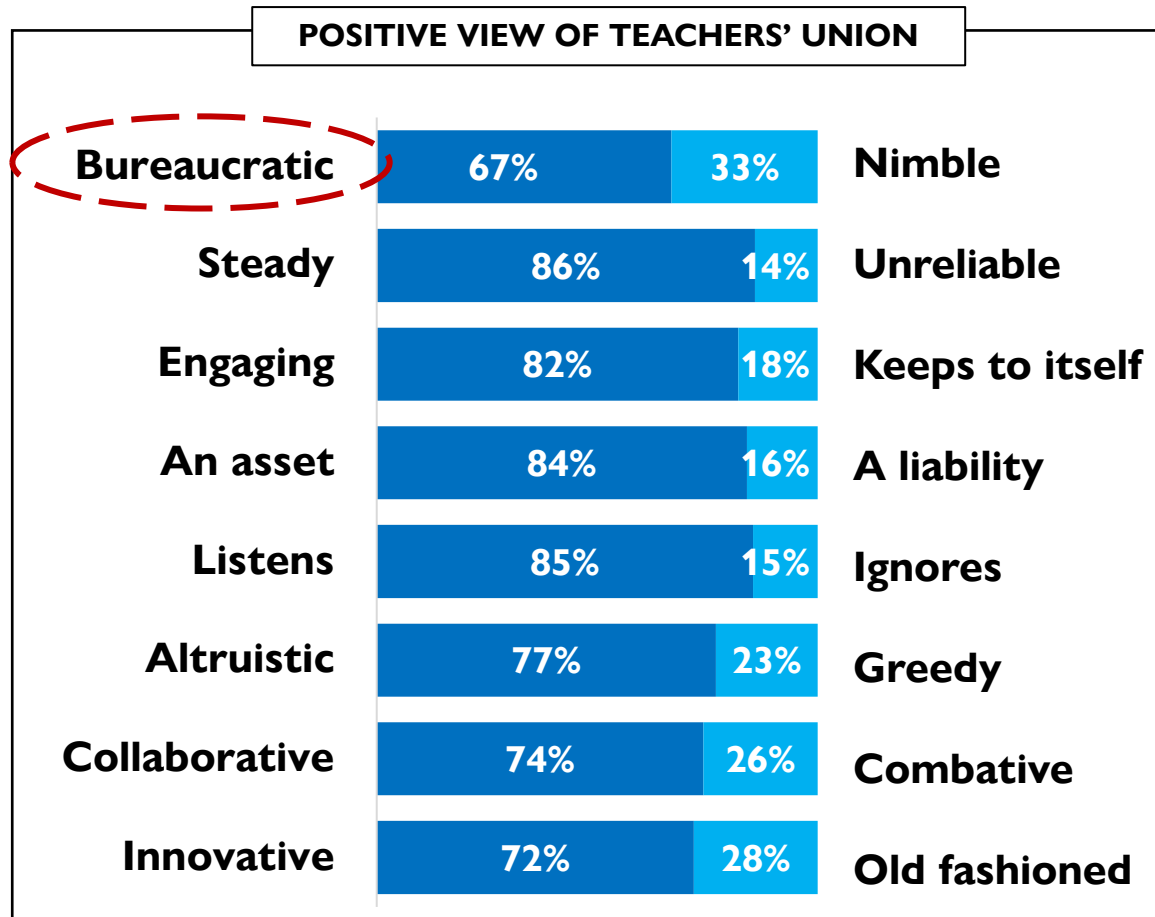
Canadians views of teachers' unions are more nuanced than simply positive and negative.

There is fairly widespread acceptance that unions are stable, and asset and have they ability to build good relationships (they engage but also listen).

But unions are also seen to be very inflexible (bureaucratic, old-fashioned) and self-centred (greedy and combative).

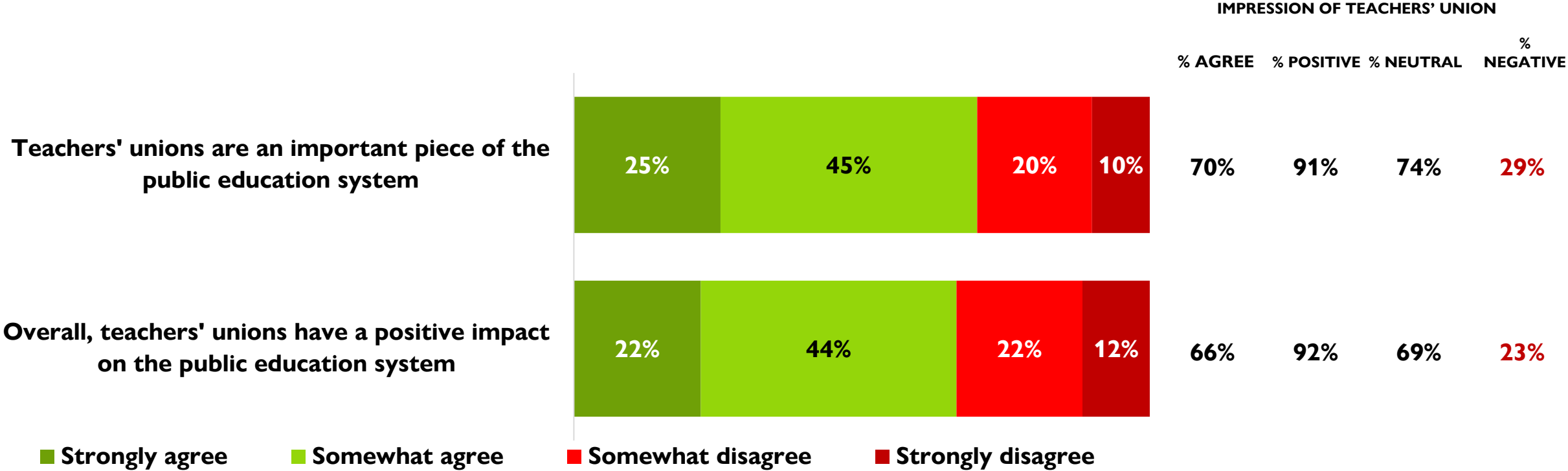
Out of the following pairs, which would do you think best describes teachers' unions?

POSITIVE OPINIONS DRIVEN BY ENGAGEMENT, NEGATIVE DRIVEN BY GREED, COMBATIVE PERCEPTIONS



Teachers' unions biggest image problem is that they are bureaucratic (even those who have a positive view of teacher's unions feel this way).
 Teachers' unions biggest image asset is that they are seen as engaging (a third of those with negative opinions of unions feel this way).

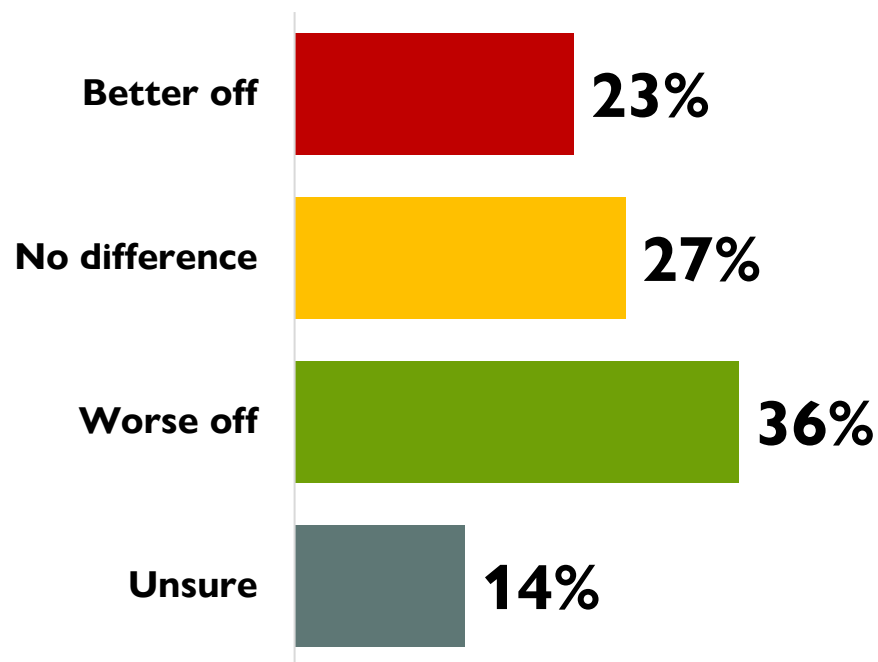
THOSE WHO HAVE NEGATIVE VIEWS DON'T BELIEVE IN VALUE OF UNION IN EDUCATION SYSTEM



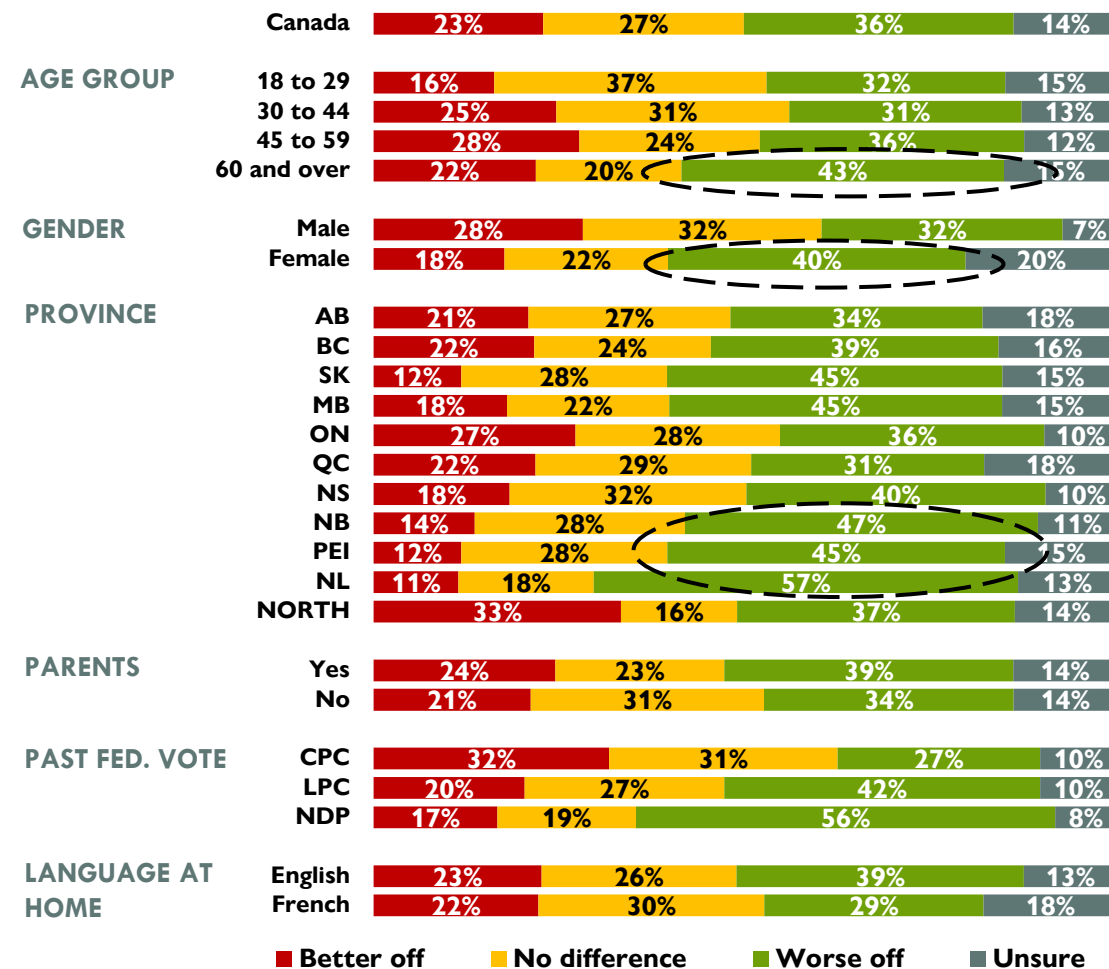
Negative opinions are driven by the role of union's just as much as they are driven by image perceptions.

Those who have a negative view of unions are a lot less likely to believe teachers' unions are an important piece of the public education system and even less likely to agree they have a positive impact on the public education system.

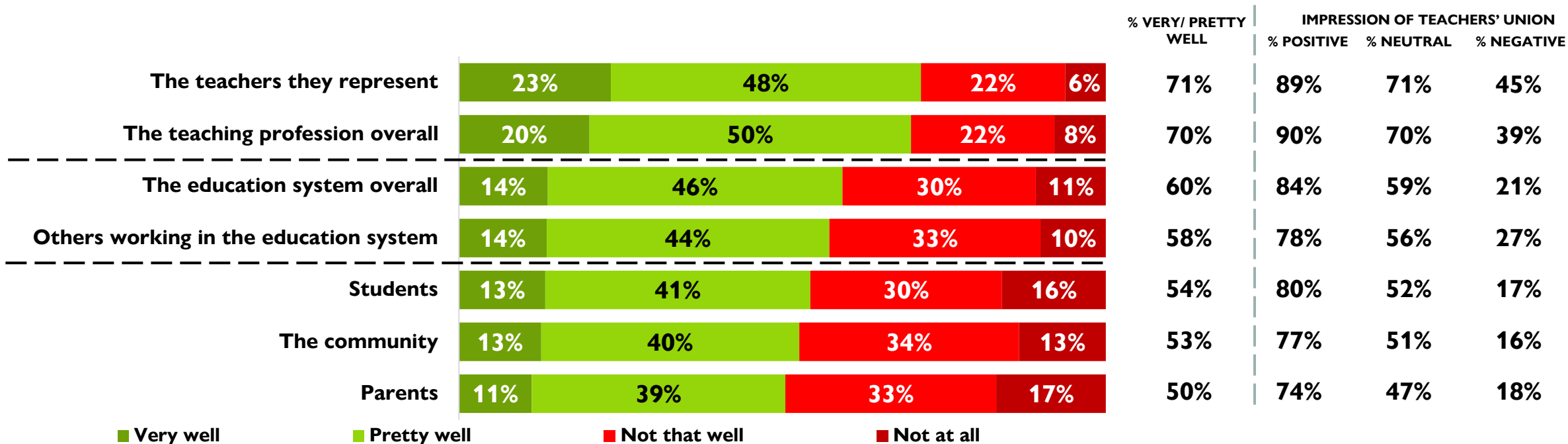
VALUE OF UNION IS AT RISK, ONLY A THIRD SAY EDUCATION SYSTEM WORSE OFF WITH NO TEACHERS' UNIONS



A third say the education system would be worse off without unions.
The majority however don't see the value in teachers' unions saying the public education system would be better off (23%) or see no difference (27%).



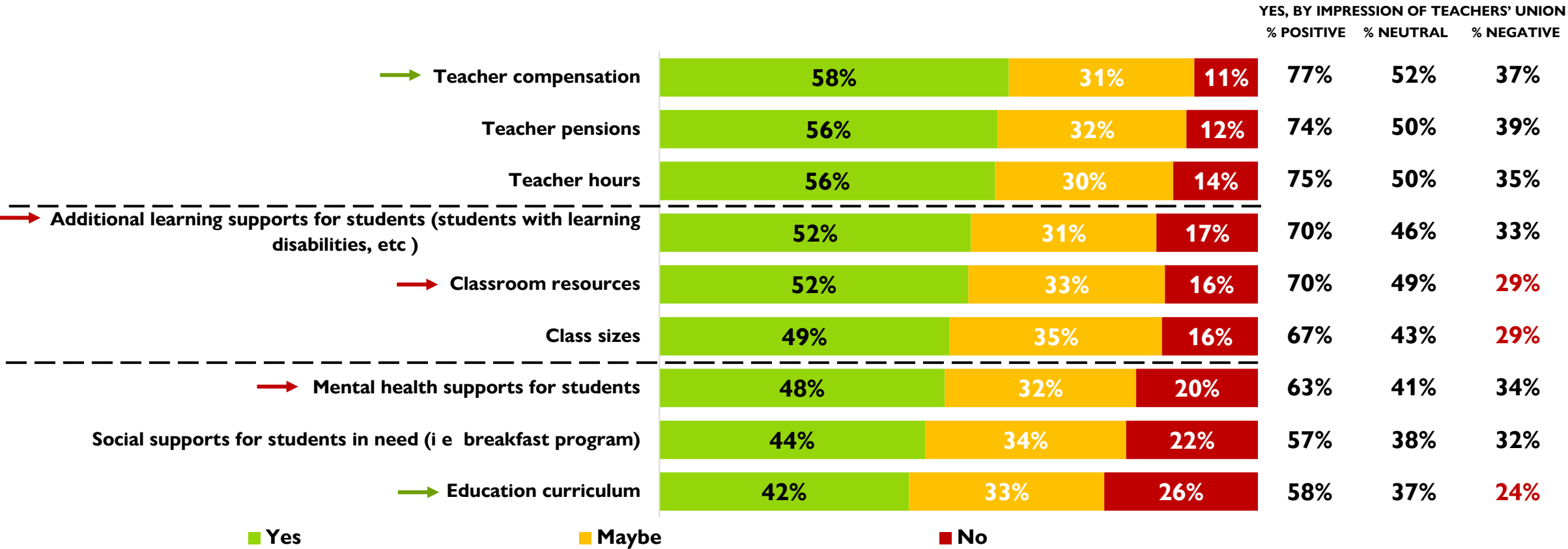
TEACHERS' UNIONS REPRESENT TEACHERS BEST, OTHERS LESS SO



Most say teachers' unions do at least a pretty good job representing teachers and the teaching profession overall, and a moderately good job supporting the wider education system.

Canadians are more divided on whether teachers' unions support students, the community and parents. Beliefs are closely aligned with views of unions overall.

CANADIANS WANT TO SEE TEACHER UNION INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHER'S WORKING CONDITIONS, LESS SO ON OTHER ITEMS



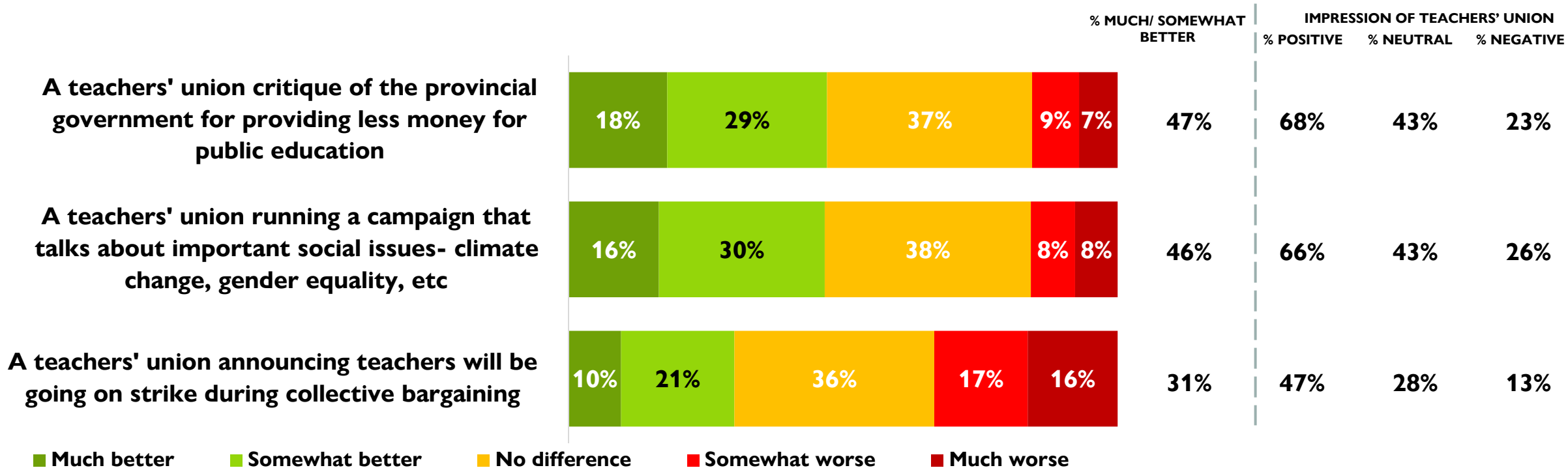
Again Canadians think unions should be involved in issues that impact teachers specifically and directly, but even then there is not whole-hearted agreement that unions play a role.

Looking at the top three areas for improvement in the public education system, Canadians are divided on whether teachers' unions should play a role.

And on the areas that are doing best Canadians want to see involvement (teacher compensation) or none at all (education curriculum).

Next, are some issues that impact teachers. Should teachers' unions play a role in negotiating the following?

STRIKE ACTION WORSENS IMPRESSION OF TEACHERS' UNION



All three messages work best for those who already have a positive impression of the union. Critiques of the government work best, followed by a campaign focused on social issues.

An announcement of a strike has a net negative impact- improving opinions of those who already like unions and worsening impressions for those who feel neutral or do not like teachers' unions.

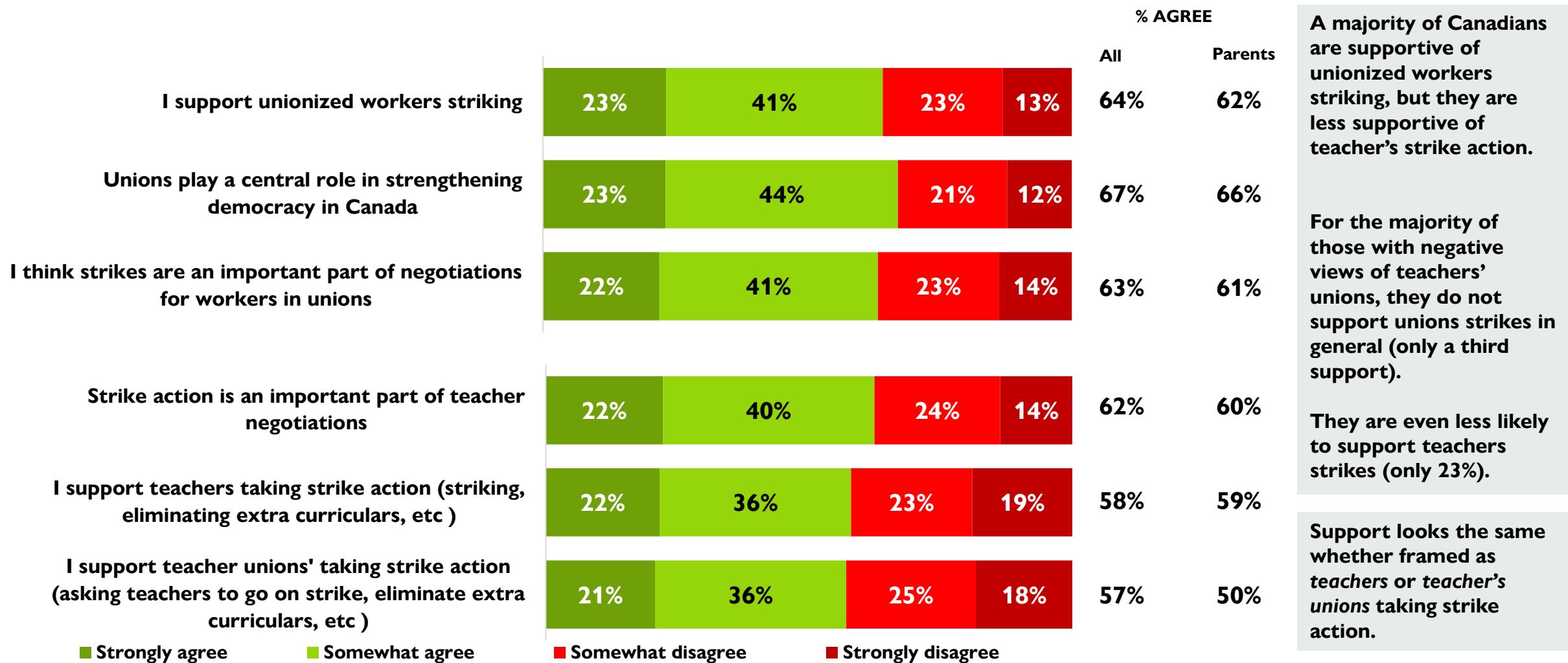


UNIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS

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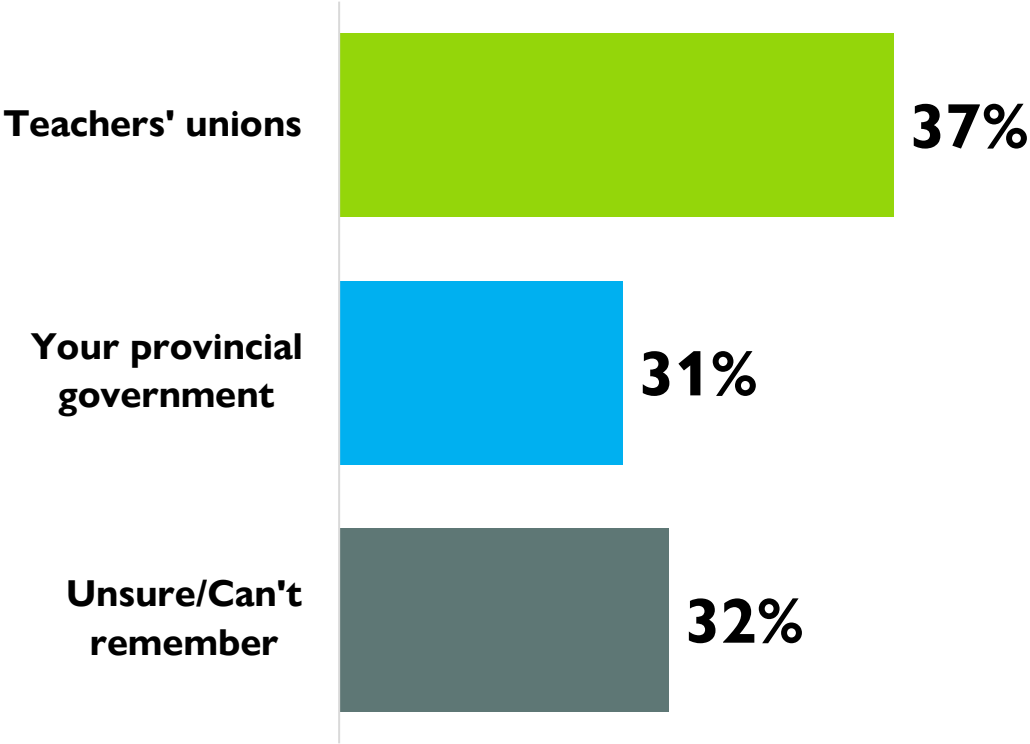
- Canadians are less supportive of teachers' strikes (57-58%) compared to unionized worker strikes in general (64%).
 - This includes framing them as *teacher's taking strike action* and *teachers' unions taking strike action*.
- Those with negative views are less likely to support strike action.
- Past strikes have left Canadians divided on who they support- 37% side with teachers' unions, 31% side with their provincial government, 32% haven't taken a side.
- 49% say the teachers' unions did a very/pretty good job improving the working environment for teachers in the last round of negotiations. Gains for students are less obvious. Again, especially so for those with negative views of teachers' unions.

MAJORITY SUPPORT UNIONIZED WORKERS STRIKING, LESS SUPPORT FOR TEACHER'S STRIKES



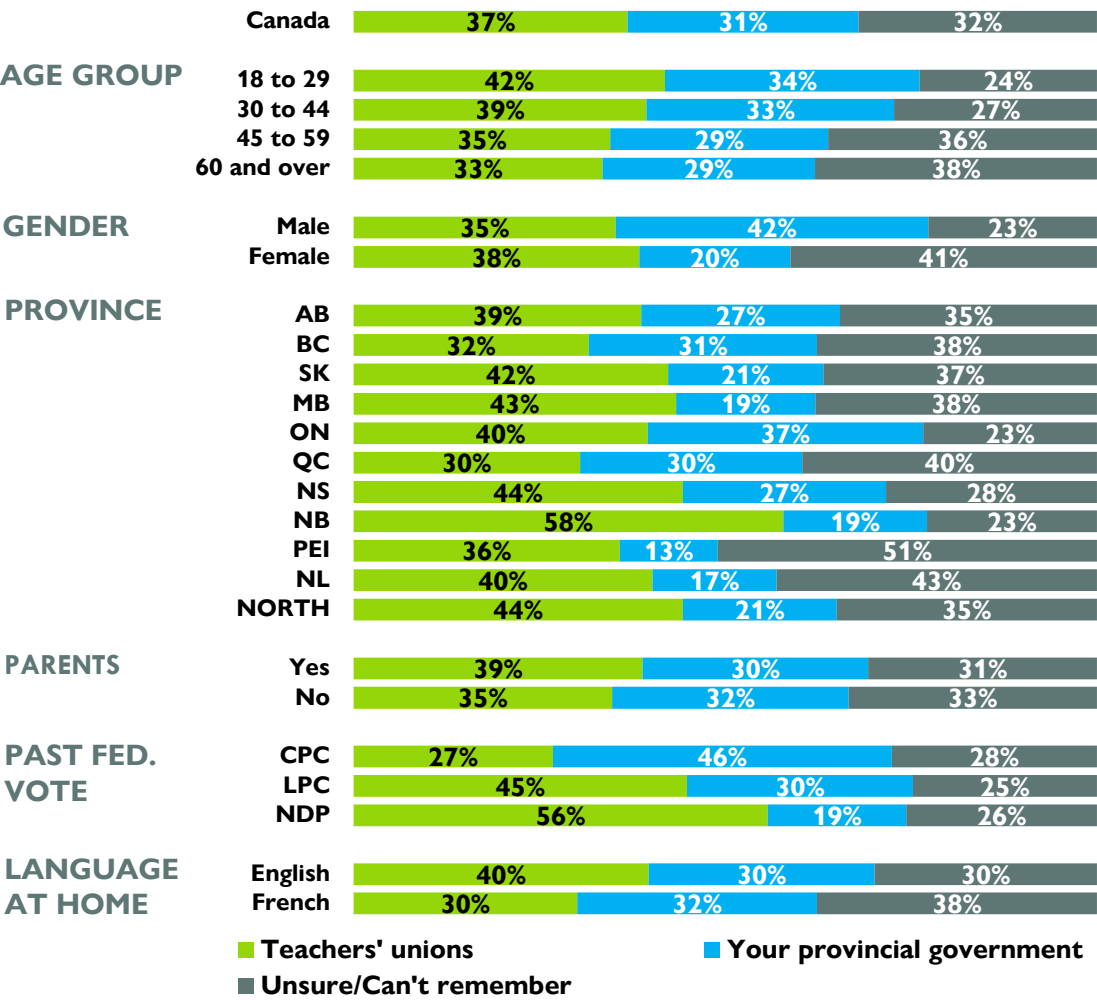
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about unions in general?

CANADIANS DIVIDED ON WHO THEY SUPPORTED DURING LAST TEACHERS' UNION NEGOTIATIONS

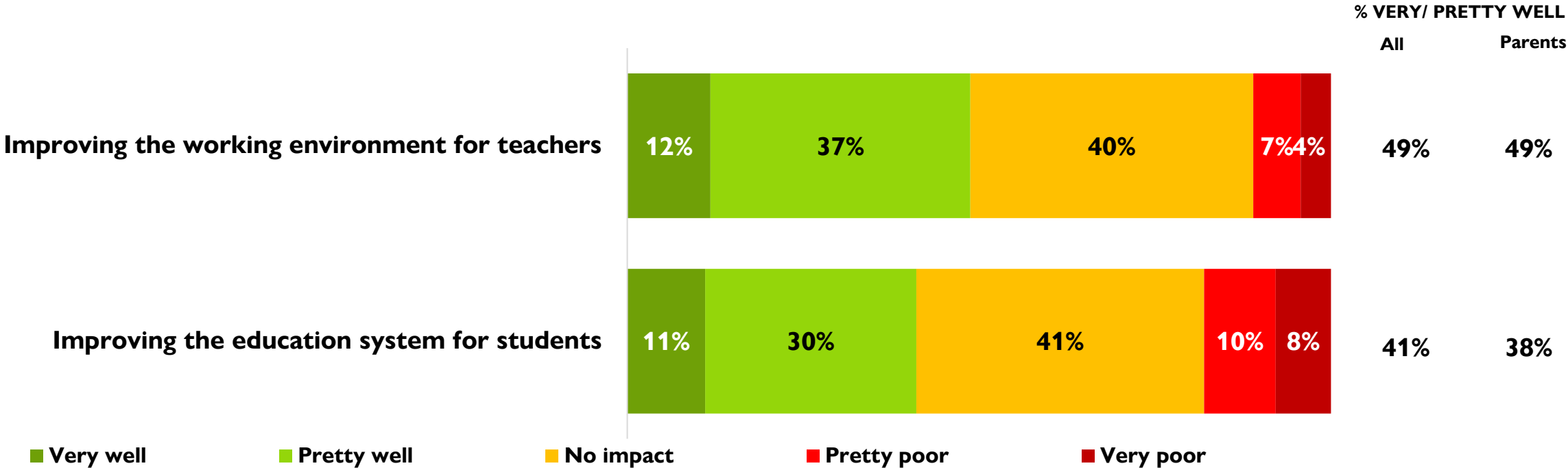


Those with negative views of teachers' unions are not neutral. They side with the government (59%).

And interestingly younger Canadians are more likely to take a side.



MORE GAINS MADE FOR TEACHERS THAN STUDENTS IN PAST NEGOTIATIONS



Half say the teachers’ unions did a good job improving working conditions for teachers, but they are more skeptical about the gains made for students.

This is felt especially among those with negative views of unions where 29% say they did at least a pretty good job improving working environments for teachers, and only 14% say they did at least a pretty good job improving the education system for students.

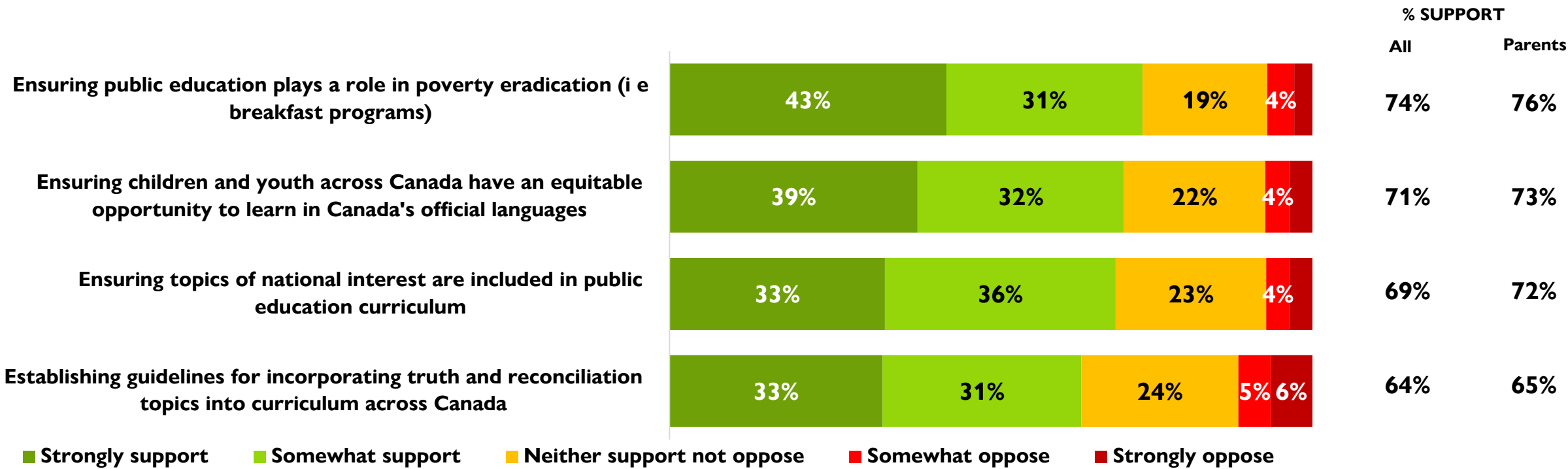


THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

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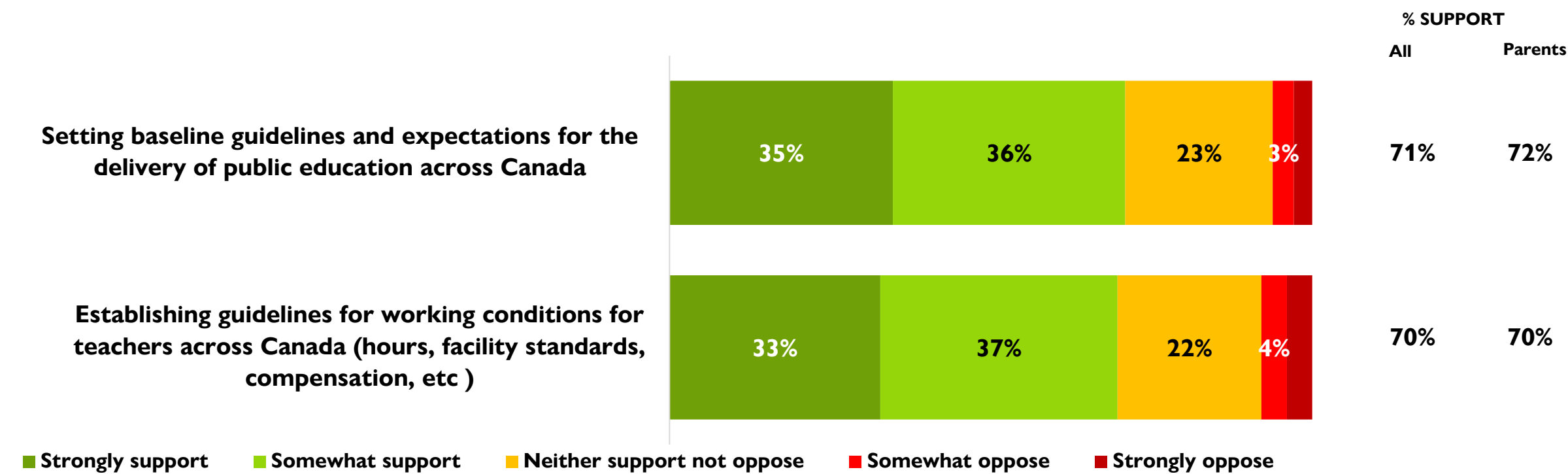
- At least two thirds of Canadians support federal involvement in:
 - Ensuring public education plays a role in poverty eradication (74%)
 - Ensuring all children and youth across Canada have an equitable opportunity to learn in Canada's official languages (71%)
 - Ensuring topics of national interest are included in the public education curriculum (69%)
 - Establishing guidelines for incorporating truth and reconciliation topics into curriculum across Canada (64%)
- Support from all major party voters is strongest for ensuring public education plays a role in poverty eradication.
- 70% of Canadians also support federal involvement in:
 - Setting baseline guidelines and expectations for the delivery of public education across Canada (71%)
 - Establishing guidelines for working conditions for teachers across Canada (70%)

CANADIANS SUPPORT FEDERAL ROLE IN A NUMBER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL ISSUE FILES



Parents and Canadians alike are supportive of federal involvement in poverty eradication through public education, ensuring equal opportunity to learn official languages, ensuring topics of national interest are included in public education curriculum, including truth and reconciliation topics.

SUPPORT FOR ROLE IN BASELINE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS OF EDUCATION DELIVERY, WORKING CONDITIONS



Similarly, a majority of Canadians support federal government involvement in setting baseline guidelines and expectations for public education delivery and establishing working conditions for teachers across Canada.

ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

BY PAST FED VOTE

% Strongly / Somewhat Support	Total	CPC	LPC	NDP
Ensuring public education plays a role in poverty eradication (i.e. breakfast programs)	74%	67%	83%	81%
Ensuring children and youth across Canada have an equitable opportunity to learn in Canada's official languages	71%	63%	83%	74%
Ensuring topics of national interest are included in public education curriculum	69%	62%	83%	77%
Establishing guidelines for incorporating truth and reconciliation topics into curriculum across Canada	64%	51%	78%	72%
Setting baseline guidelines and expectations for the delivery of public education across Canada	71%	66%	82%	80%
Establishing guidelines for working conditions for teachers across Canada (hours, facility standards, compensation, etc.)	70%	65%	82%	78%

Across party lines, the role of public education in poverty eradication and setting base guidelines and expectations for delivery of public education have the most support.

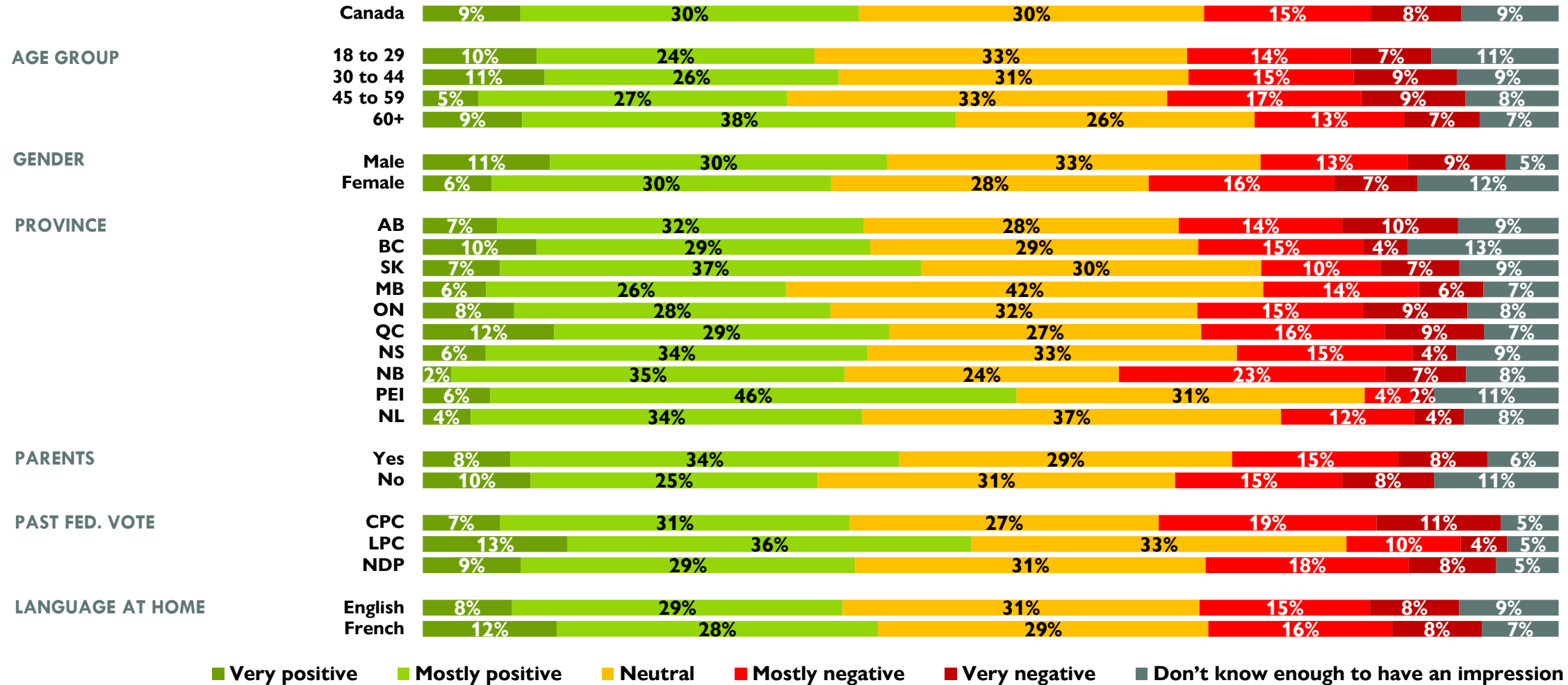
The following are some ways the federal government can play a role in public education in Canada. For each, is this something you would... | Here are some more ways the federal government can play a role in public education in Canada. For each, is this something you would...



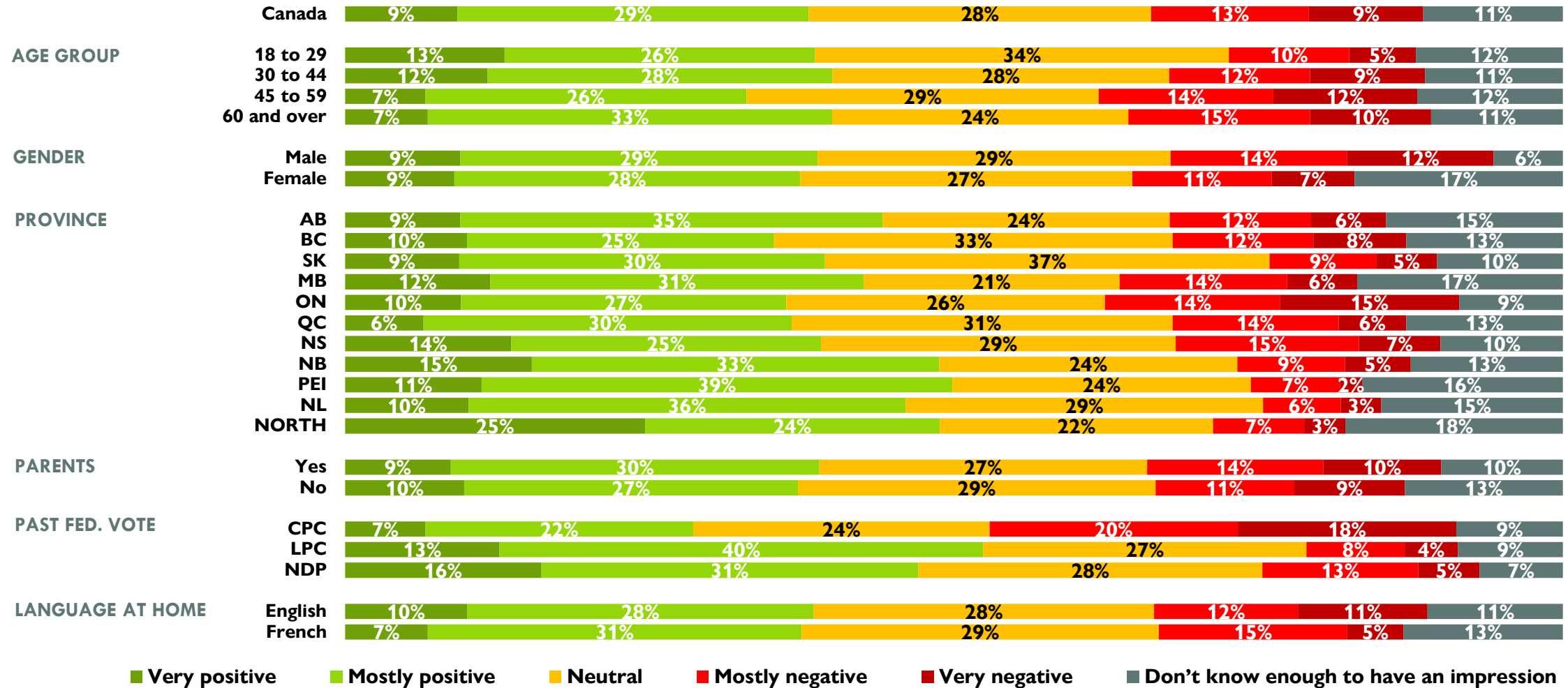
APPENDIX

IF CANADIANS HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE IMPRESSION OF...

THE PUBLICLY FUNDED PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN YOUR PROVINCE/TERRITORY

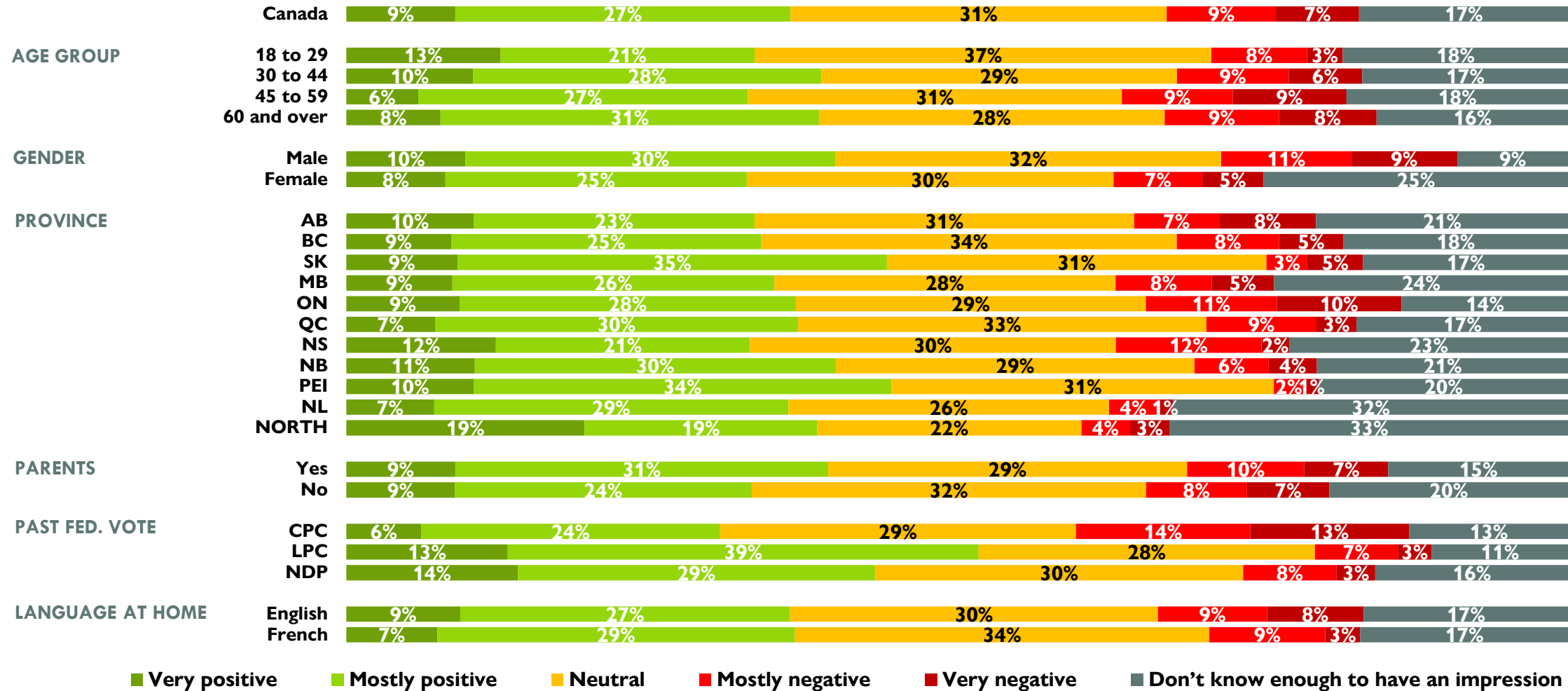


2/3RD OF CANADIANS HAVE NEUTRAL TO POSITIVE IMPRESSION OF TEACHERS' UNION



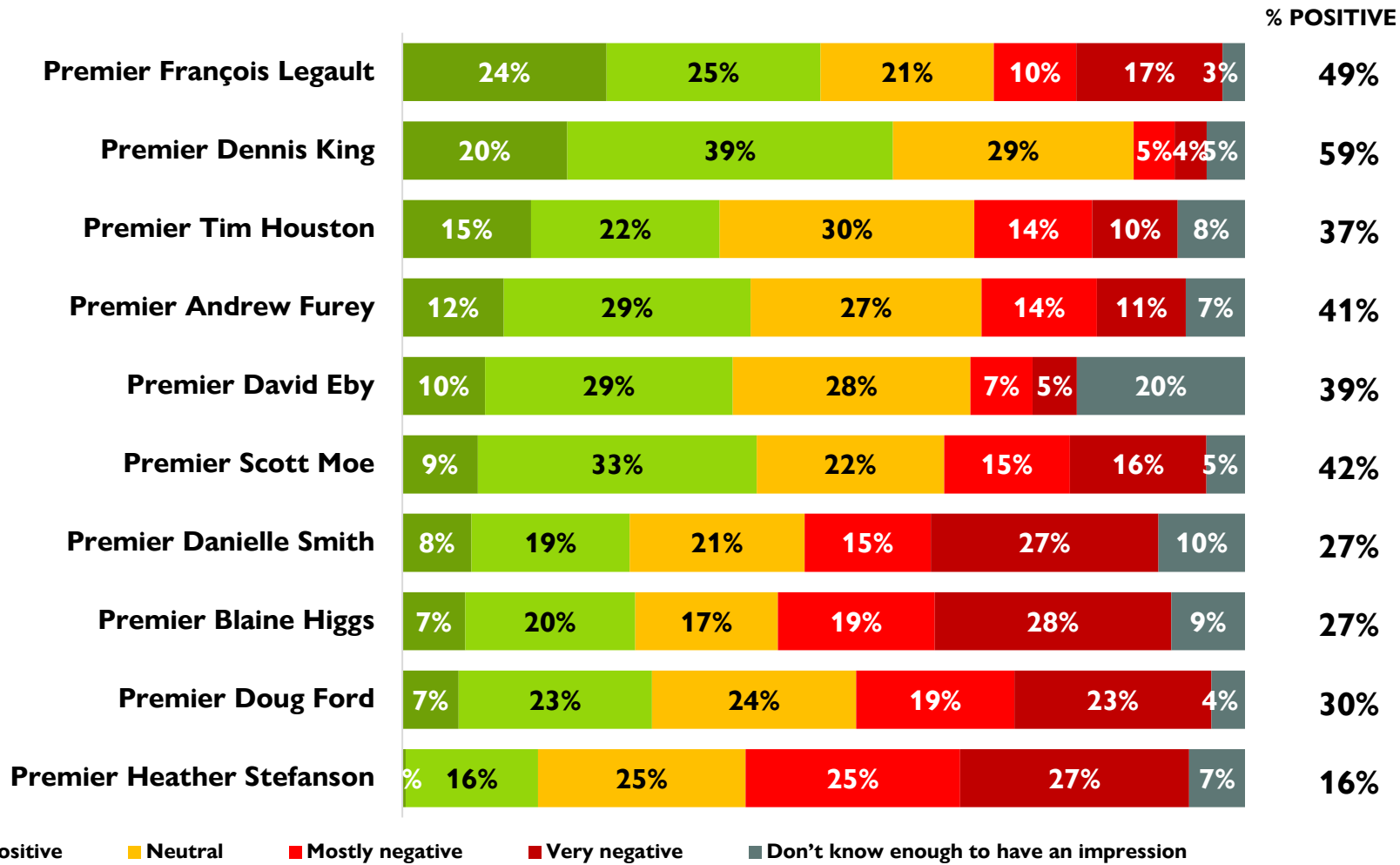
And what about the following in the public education system in your region? When we refer to the public education system we mean K-12 public education.

WHILE 1/3RD OF CANADIANS HAVE A POSITIVE IMPRESSION OF CTF, ANOTHER 1/3RD HAVE A NEUTRAL IMPRESSION



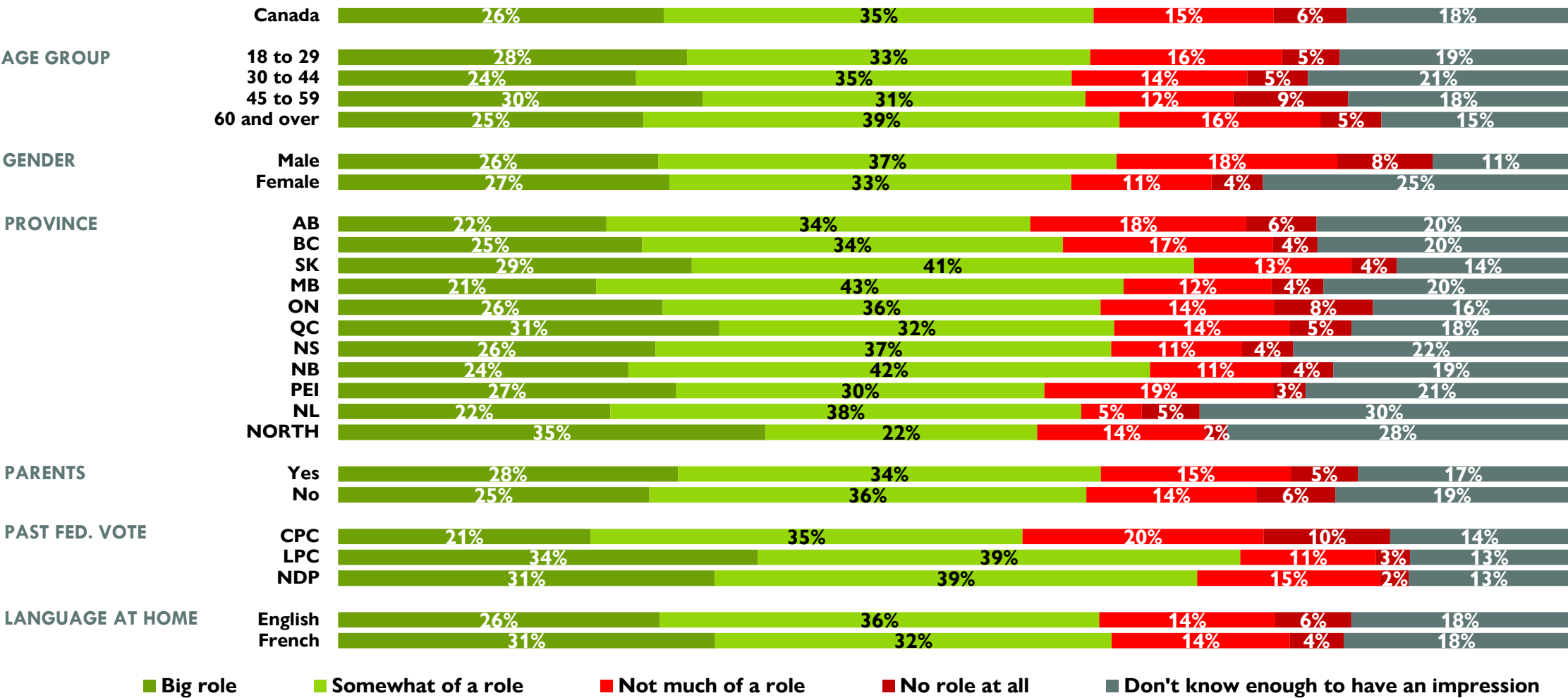
And what about the following in the public education system in your region? When we refer to the public education system we mean K-12 public education.

IMPRESSIONS OF PREMIERS VARY GREATLY



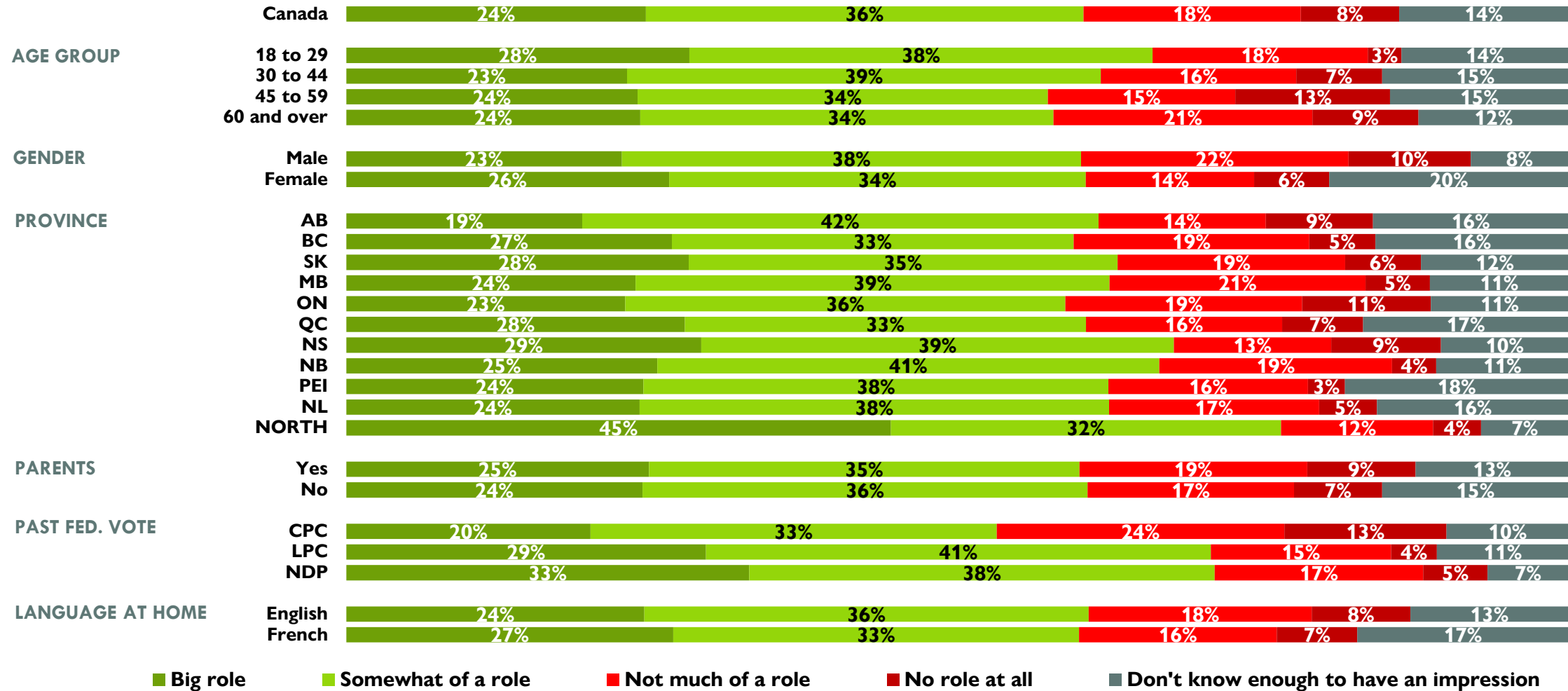
Please tell us if you have a very positive, mostly positive, mostly negative, or very negative impression of each:

CLEAR MAJORITY OF CANADIANS BELIEVE THAT CTF PLAYS AT LEAST SOMEWHAT OF A ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM



Thinking about the same groups, what kind of role do they play in creating a strong, public education system?

CLEAR MAJORITY OF CANADIANS BELIEVE THAT TEACHER UNIONS PLAYS AT LEAST SOMEWHAT OF A ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM



Thinking about the same groups, what kind of role do they play in creating a strong, public education system?