

Needham Coalition for  
Youth Substance Abuse Prevention  
and  
Needham Public Health Department

Spring 2015 Parent Survey of Norms, Behaviors, and Attitudes  
Summary of Findings  
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# Background

- NCYSAP and the Needham Public Health Department conducted a survey of parents of 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- 62-item anonymous survey administered online during April-May, 2015.
- Survey questions addressed four broad domains:
  1. Communication about underage drinking and substance use
  2. Attitudes and beliefs about underage drinking and substance use
  3. Perceptions of underage drinking and substance use
  4. Parenting behaviors related to substance use prevention

# Background

- The term parent includes guardians and caregivers.
- Respondents were asked to answer questions with their *oldest* 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade child in mind even if they had multiple children.
- This survey was also administered in 2011 and 2013 – comparisons are made where possible.
- Limited comparisons are made to the October-November implementation of the 2014 MetroWest Adolescent Health Student Survey.

# Validity and Reliability

- Several steps were taken to increase our confidence in the results:
  1. Use of clear and unambiguous language
  2. Use of logic-based skip fields in the survey
  3. Questions based on those used in existing instruments
  4. Instructing respondents to skip items if they were either not applicable or the respondent wasn't comfortable answering
  5. Data screening
  6. Identical case analysis
  7. Missing data analysis
- Little evidence of large-scale errors in final dataset.

# Respondents

- 836 individuals visited the survey website – 150 were removed (18%) from the final analytic sample for the following reasons:
  - 92 did not have children in 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade (automatically disqualified)
  - 54 only answered the screening questions.
  - 4 did not identify the age of their oldest child in grades 6-12.
- Very close to the ideal of having each grade level represented by approximately 14% of parent/guardian respondents.

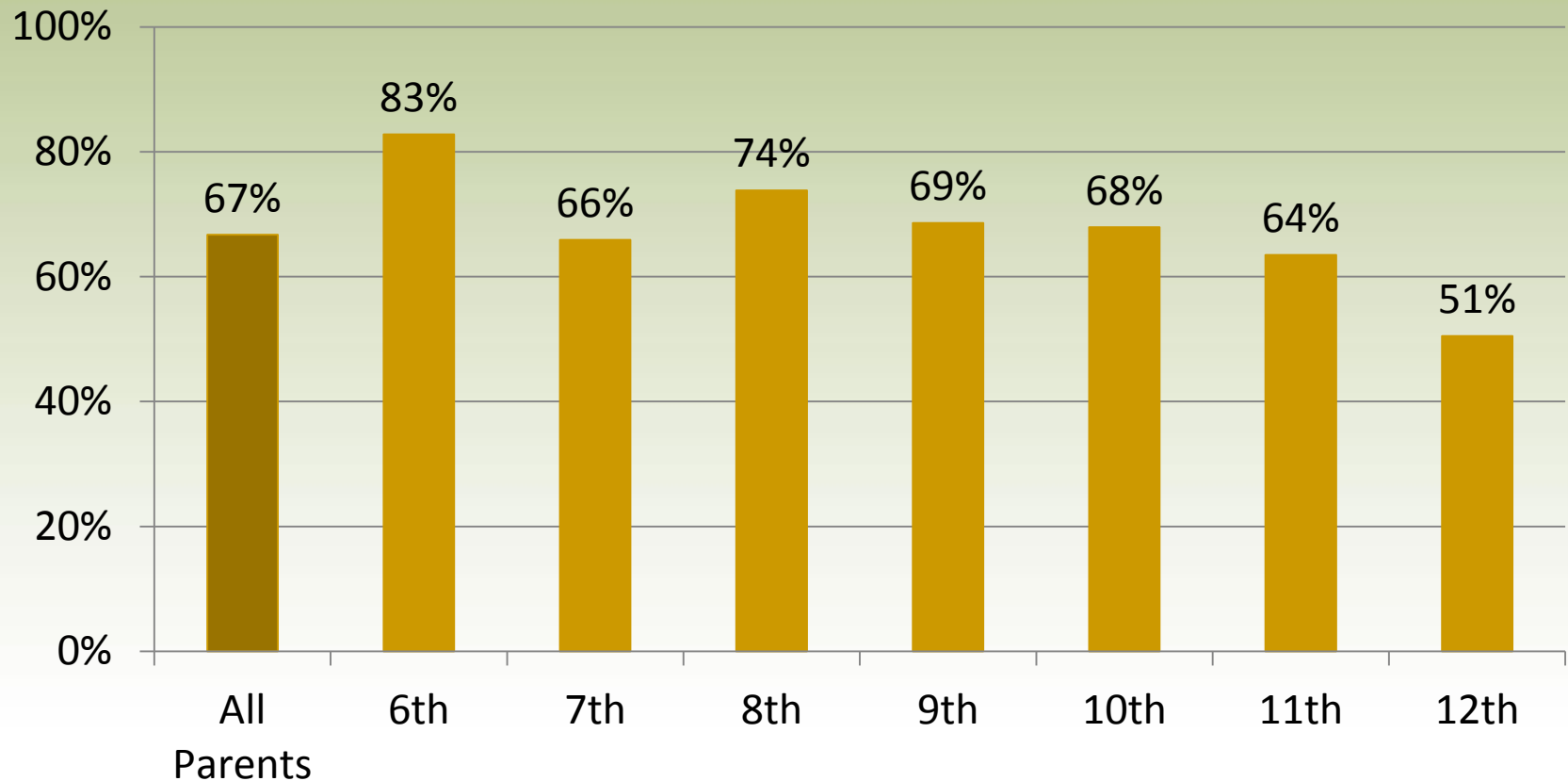
# Limitations/Caveats

- Self-selected convenience sample – between 25% and 33% of all parents of Needham public school students in grades 6-12.
- Estimates likely over-estimate protective factors and under-estimate risk factors.
- Parents of high school students were over-represented in the 2013 survey so caution should be used when looking at trends.

# COMMUNICATION

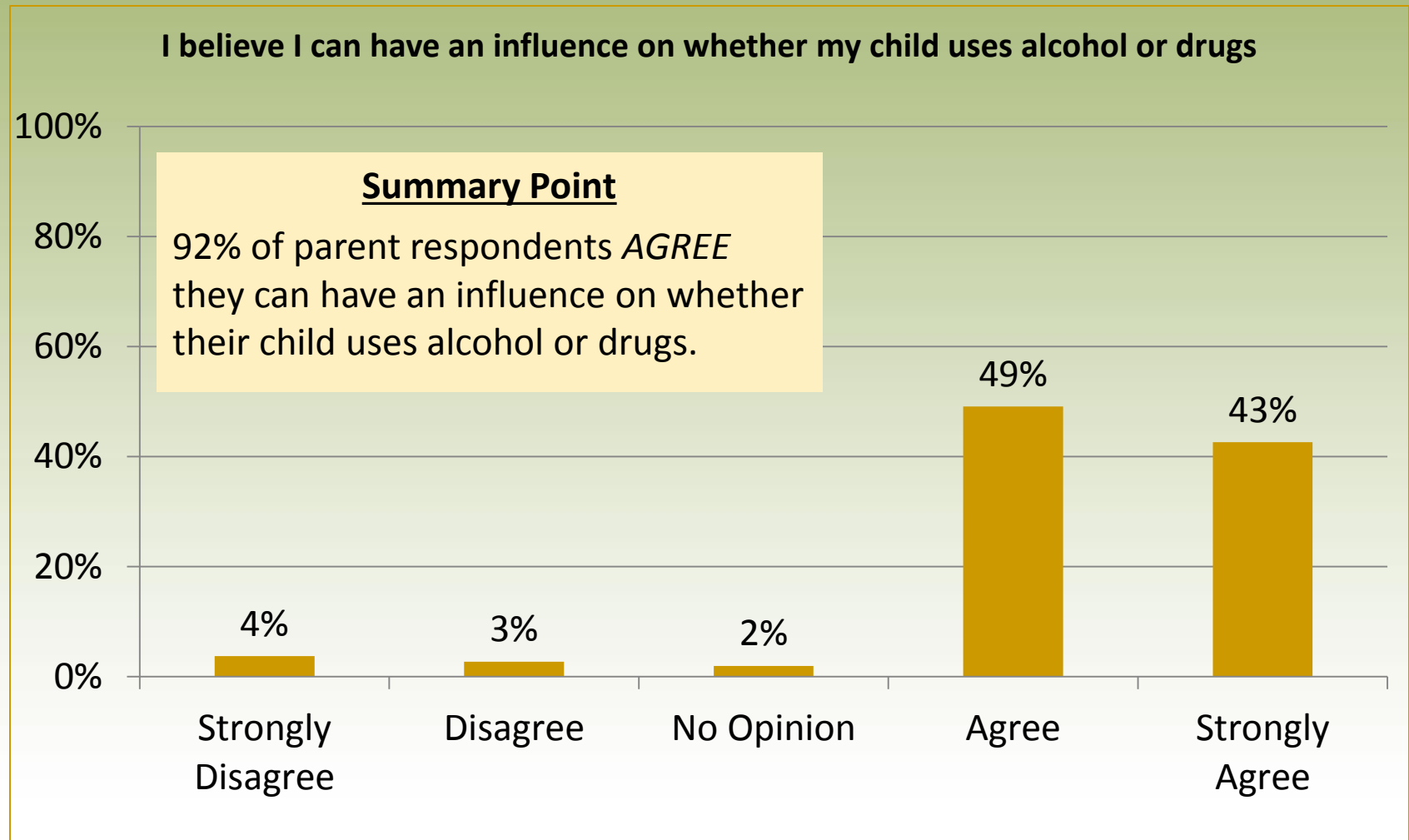
# Communication – Family Dinners [Parent Data]

## Ate Dinner with Family on 5 or More of the Past 7 Days

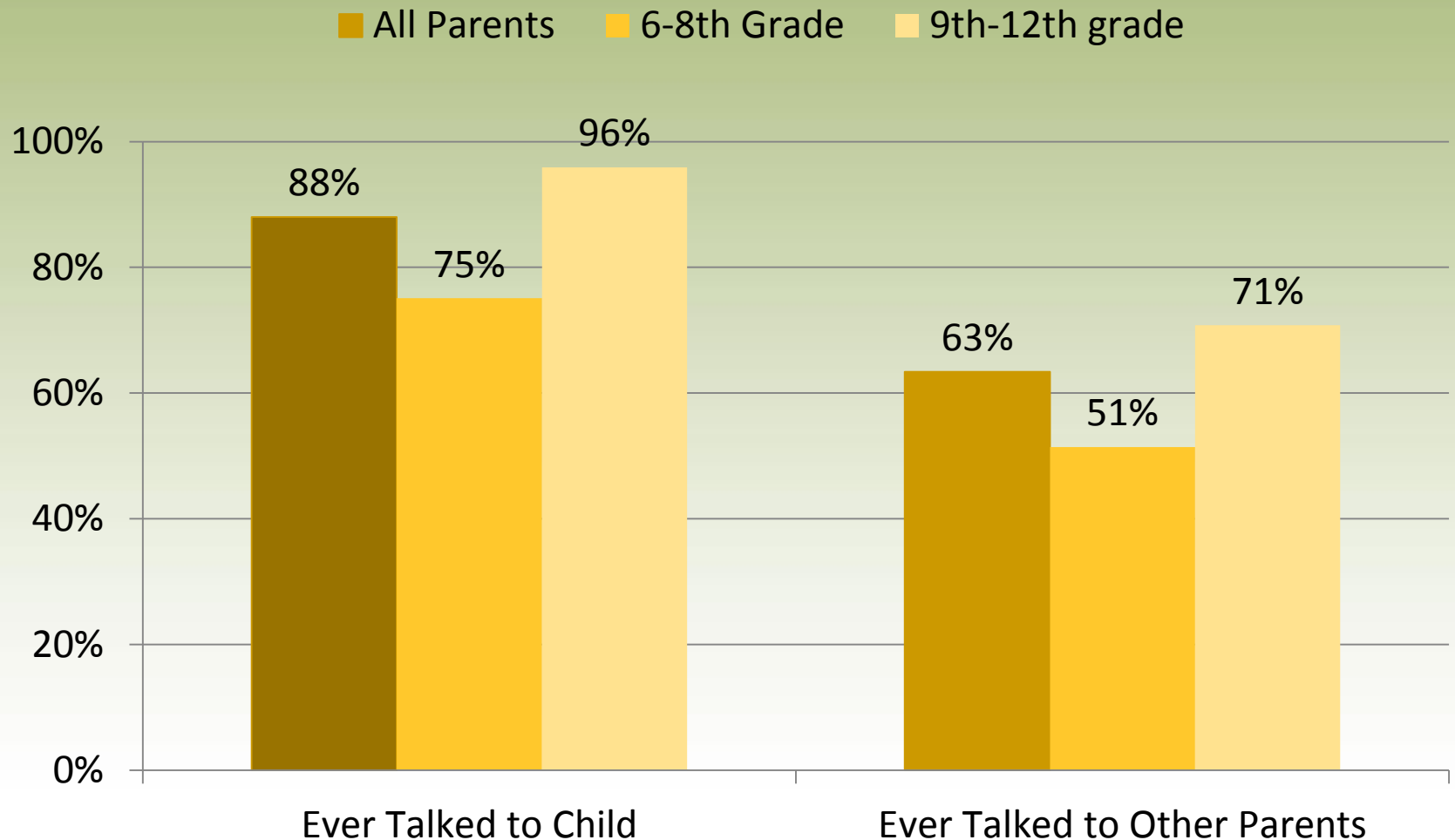




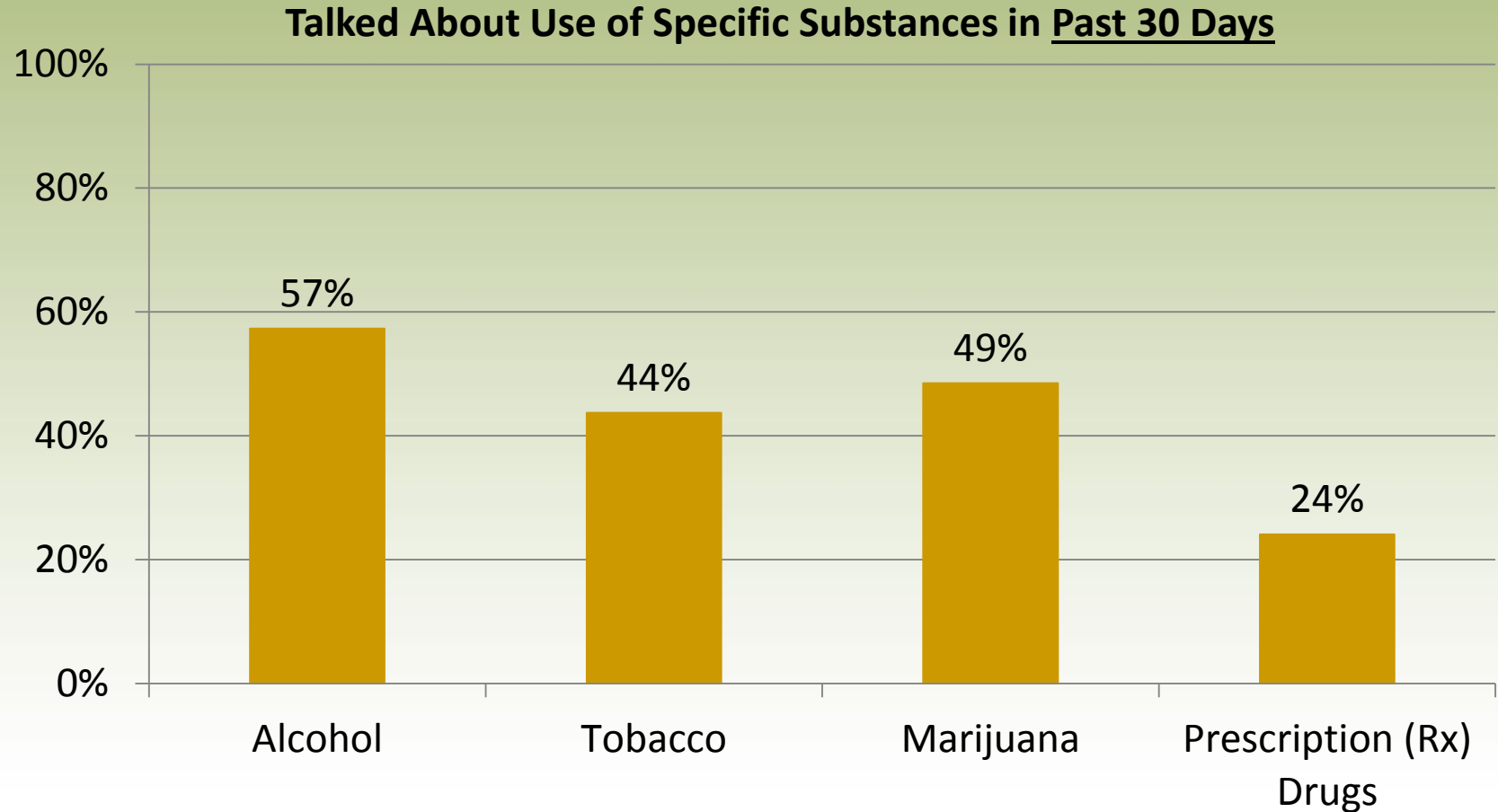
# Communication – Perceived Effectiveness of Parent-Child Communication [Parent Data]



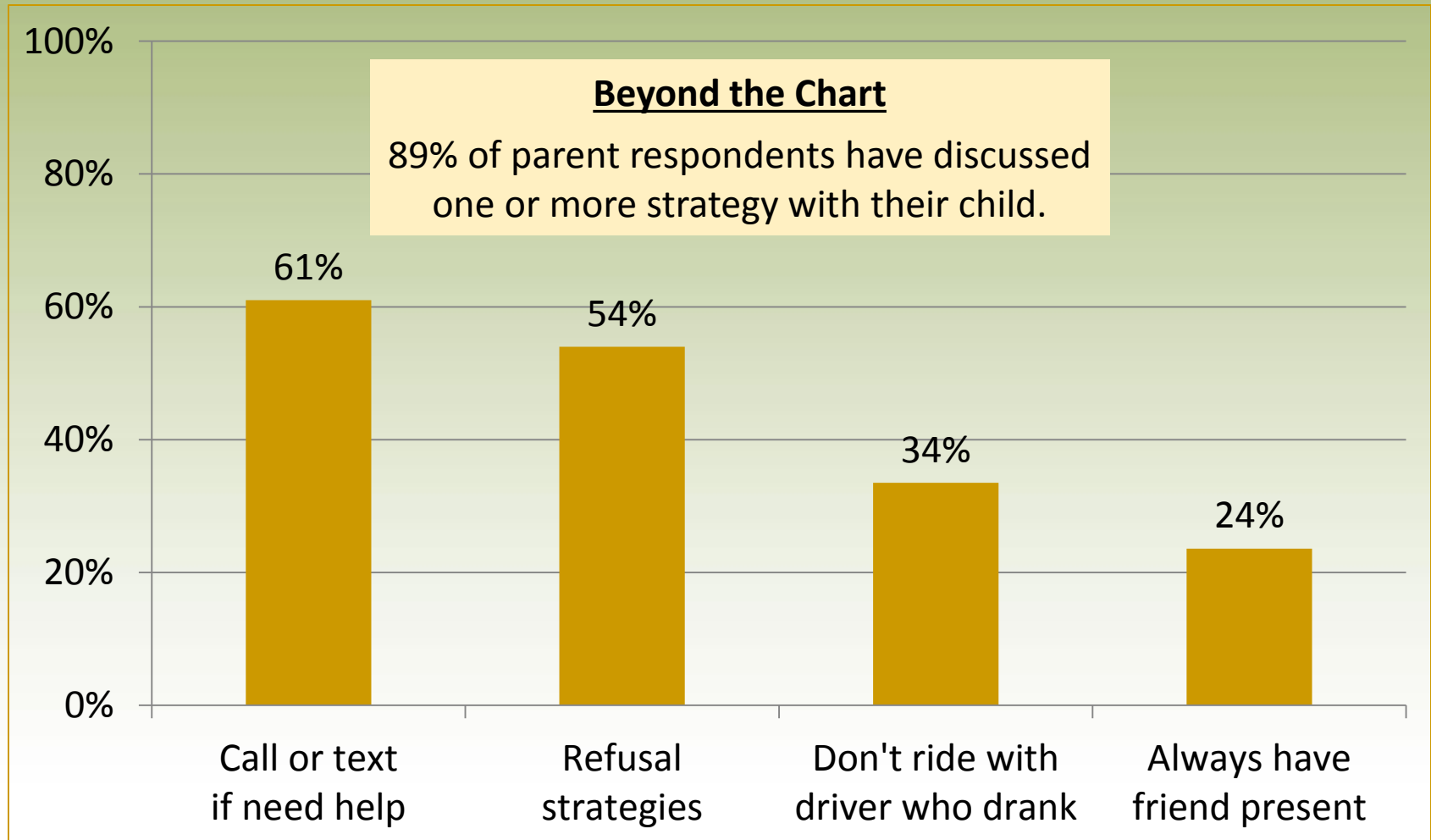
# Communication – Ever Talked About Substance Use with Child and Other Parents [Parent Data]



# Communication – Parent-Child Communication About Specific Substances [Parent Data]



# Communication – Types of Strategies Parents Have Discussed with their Children [Parent Data]



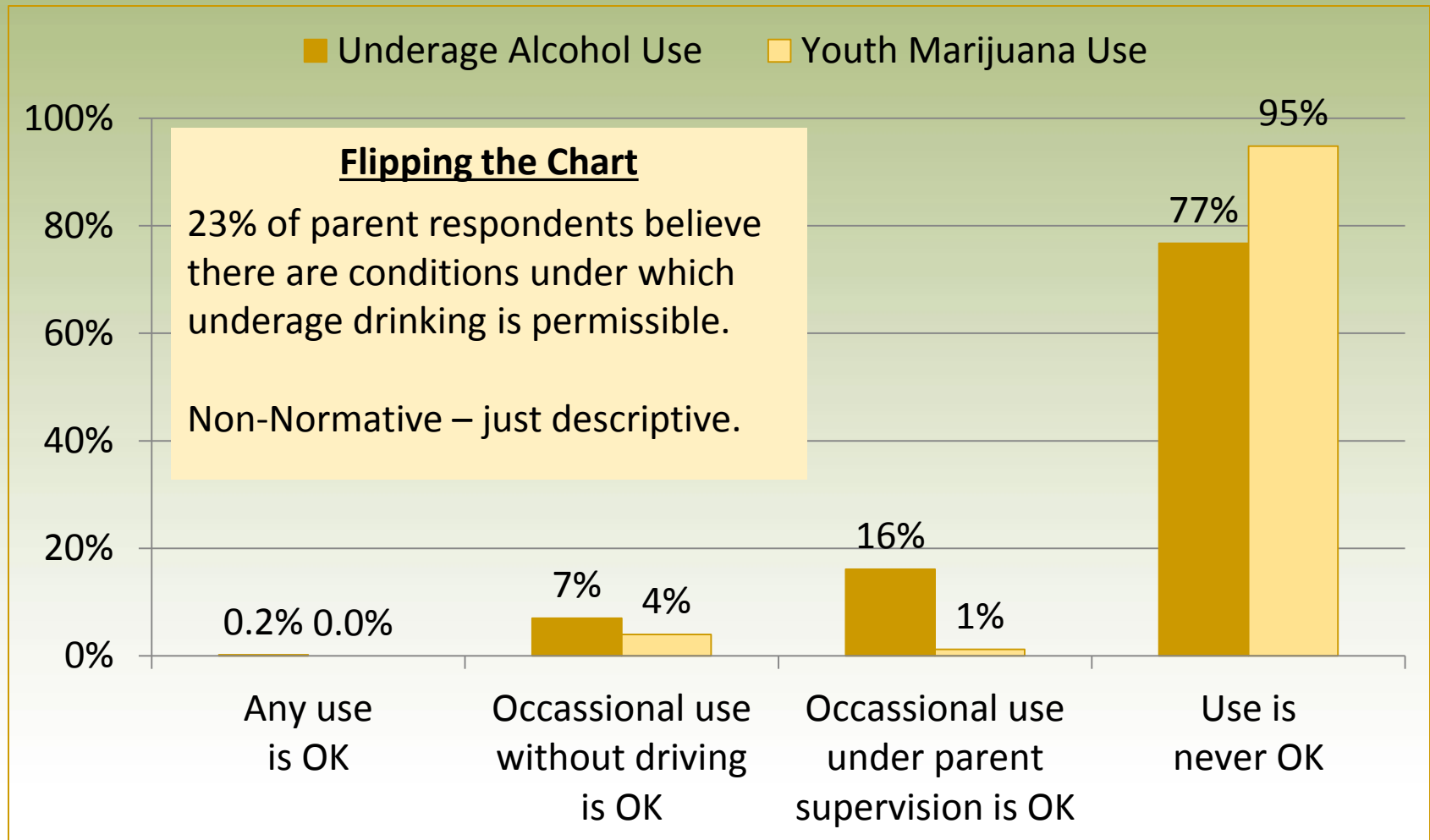
# Communication – Summary Points

- 67% of parent respondents report eating dinner at home with their family on 5 or more of the last 7 days – a setting where prevention conversations can occur.
- Approximately 9 of every 10 parent respondents *agree* that they can have an influence on whether their child uses alcohol or drugs.
- Most parents have talked with their child (88%) and parents of their child's close friends (63%) about substance use. [***Opportunity***]
- Most parents have discussed one or more safety strategy with their child such as calling or text messaging if they need help.

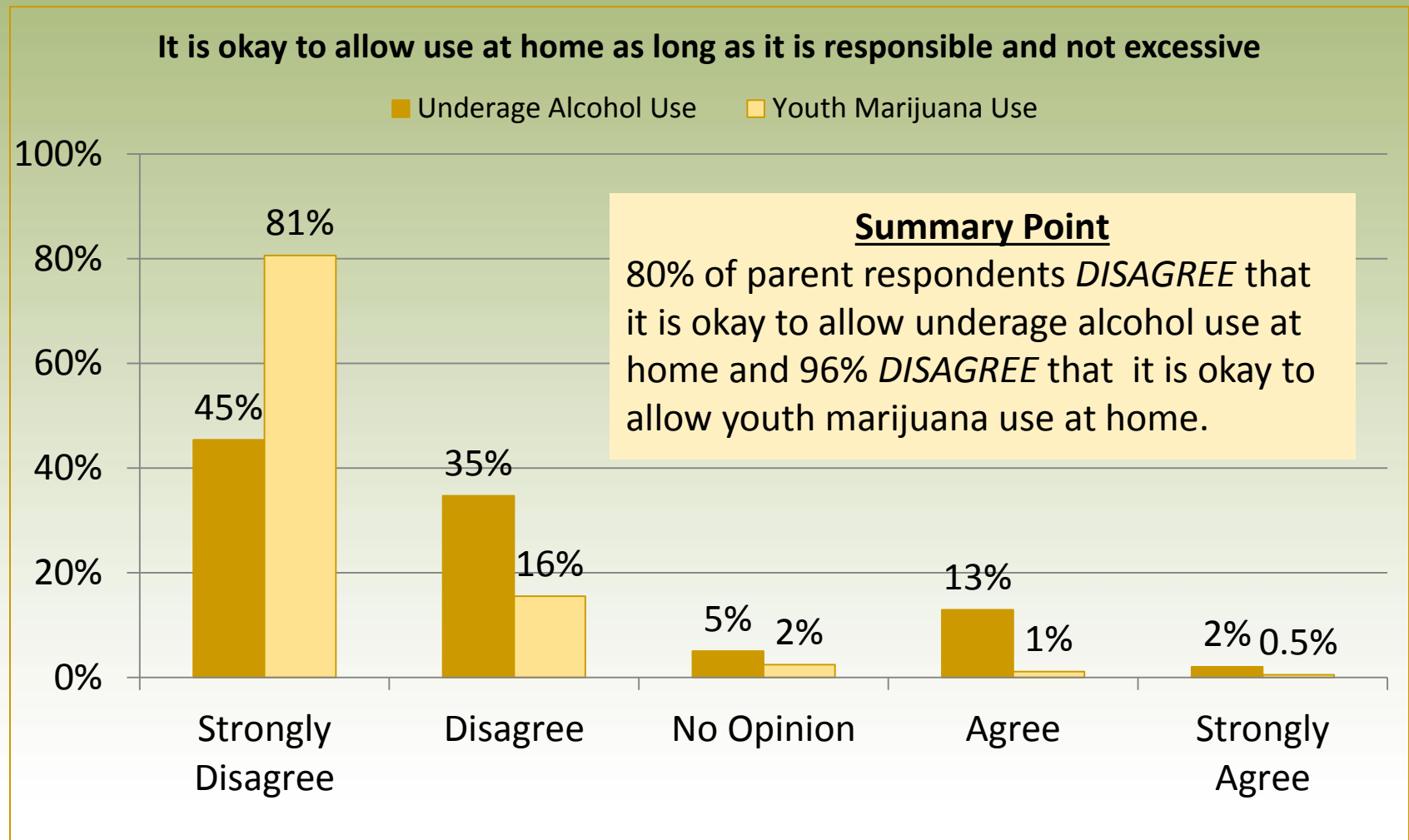
# **ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS**

# Attitudes – Parent Attitudes About Youth Substance Use

[Parent Data]



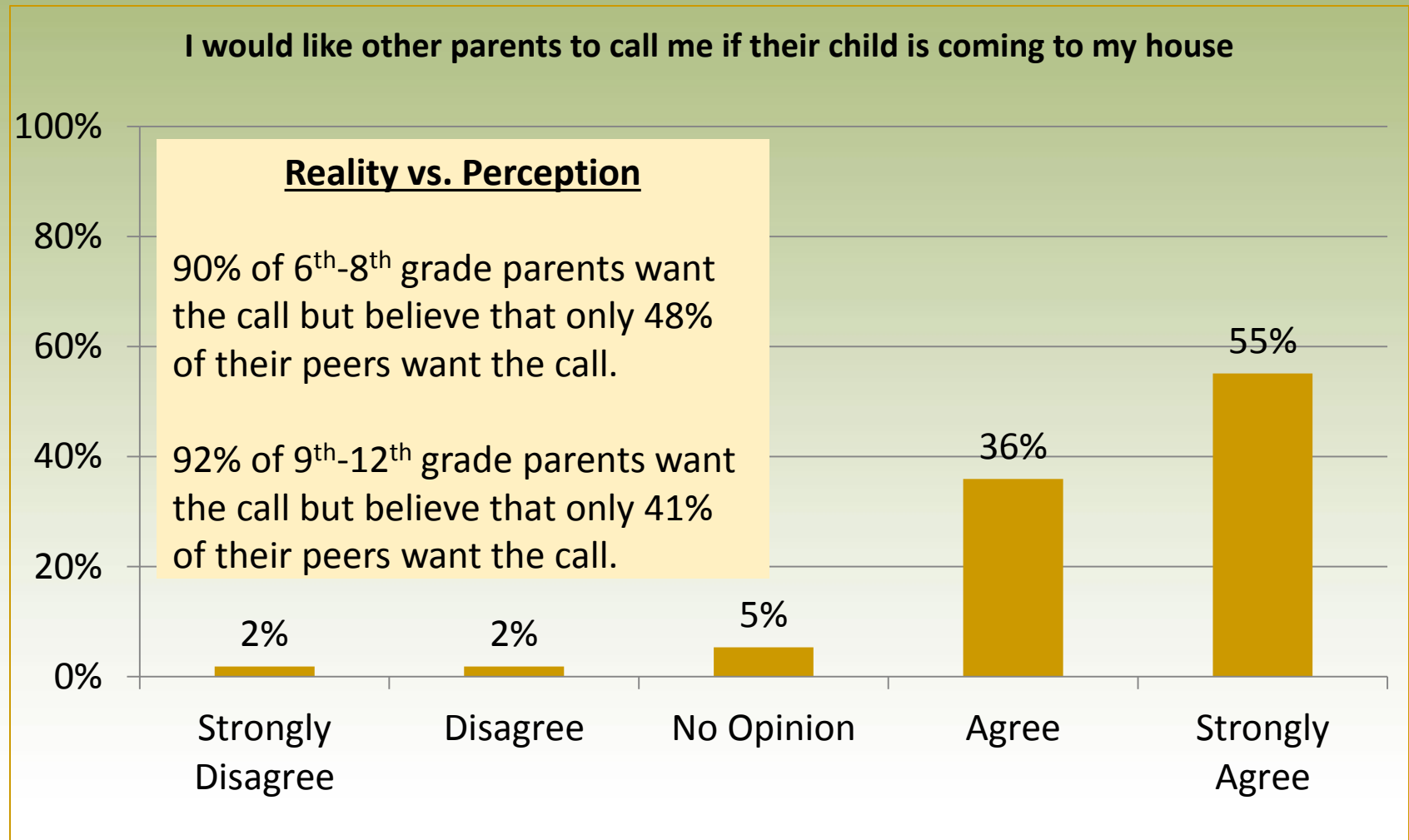
# Attitudes – Parent Attitudes About Youth Substance Use at Home [Parent Data]





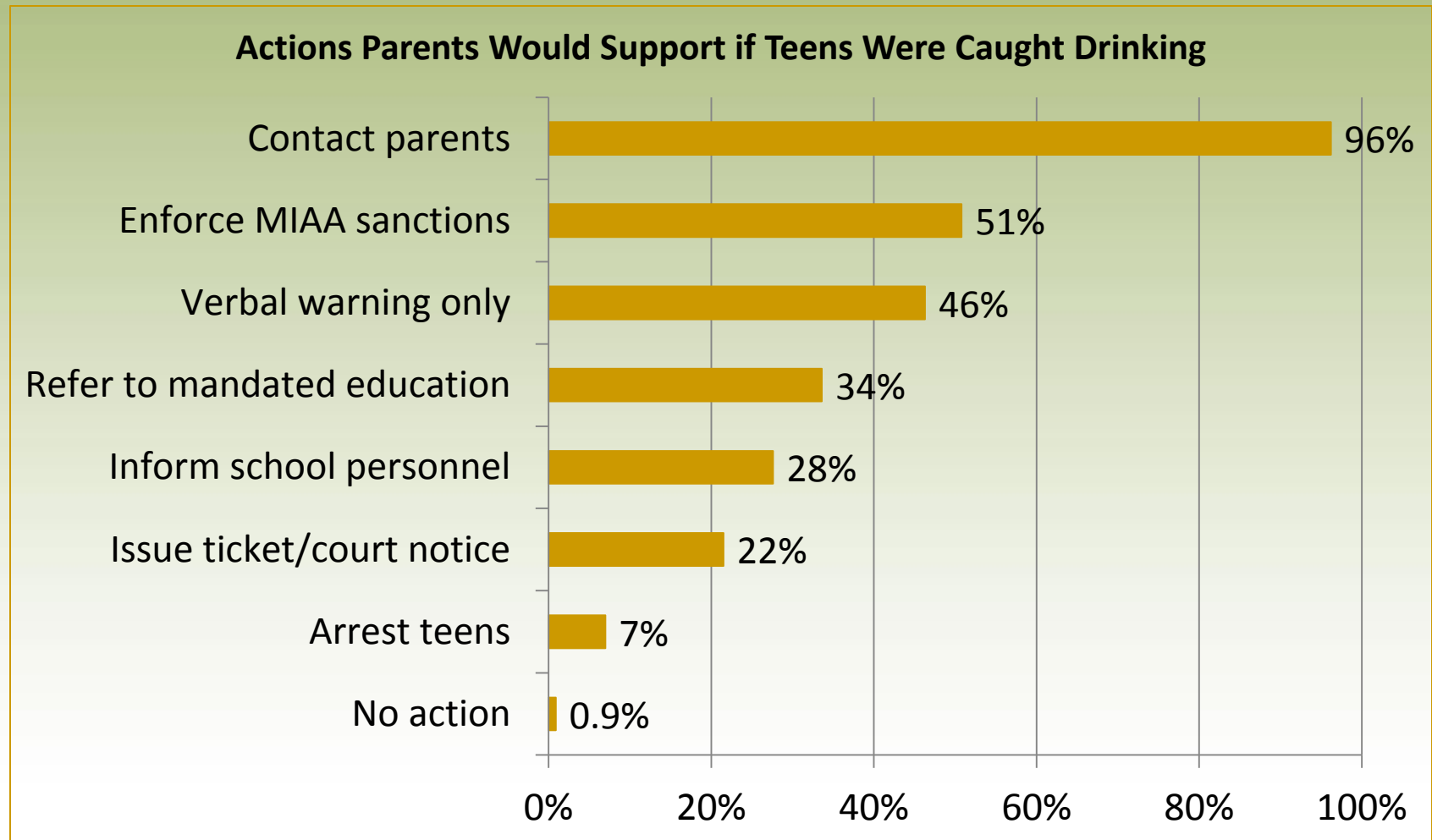
# Attitudes – Desire to Receive Calls from Other Parents

[Parent Data]

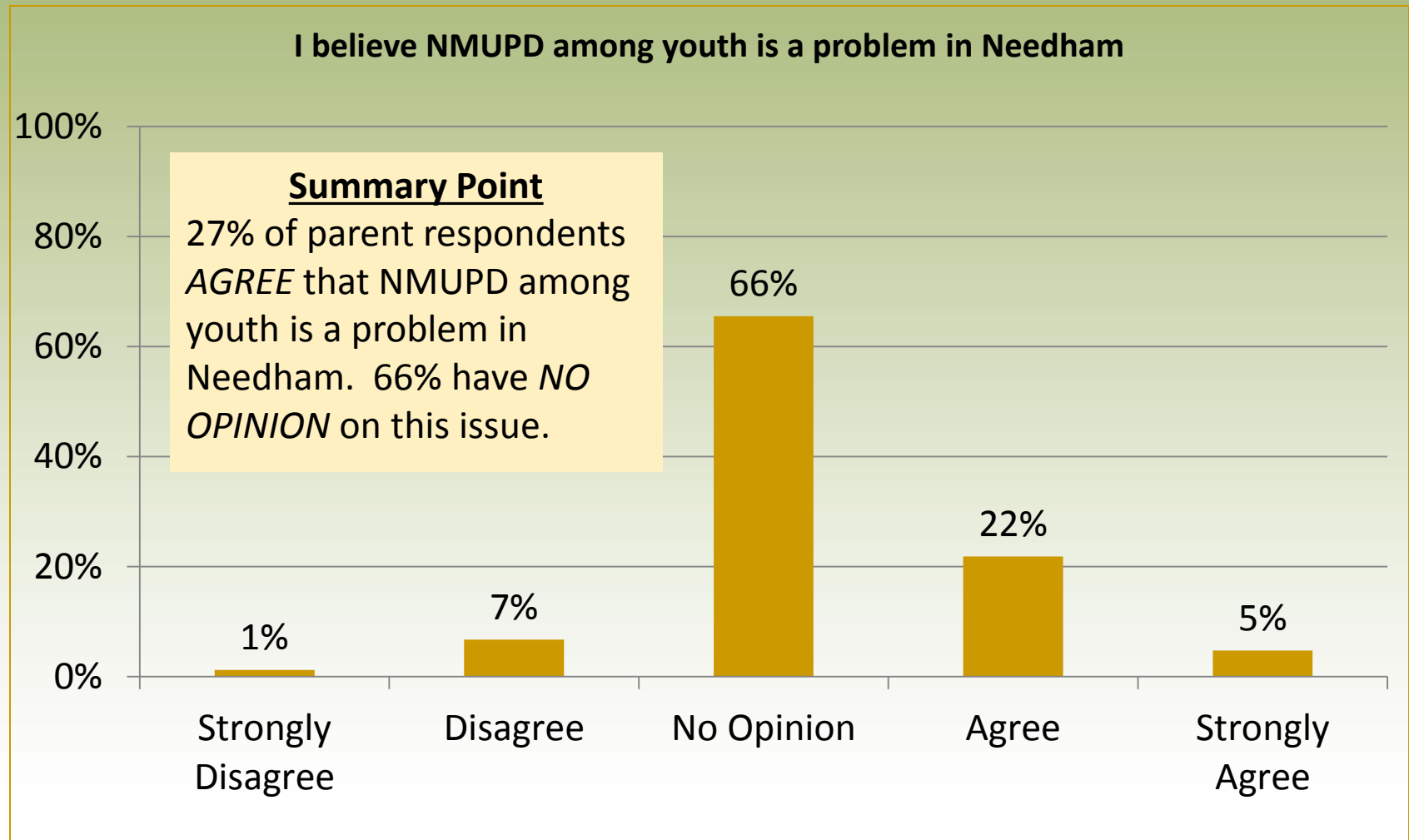


# Attitudes – Parent Attitudes About Police

## Involvement in Drinking Situations [Parent Data]



# Attitudes – Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs (NMUPD) [Parent Data]

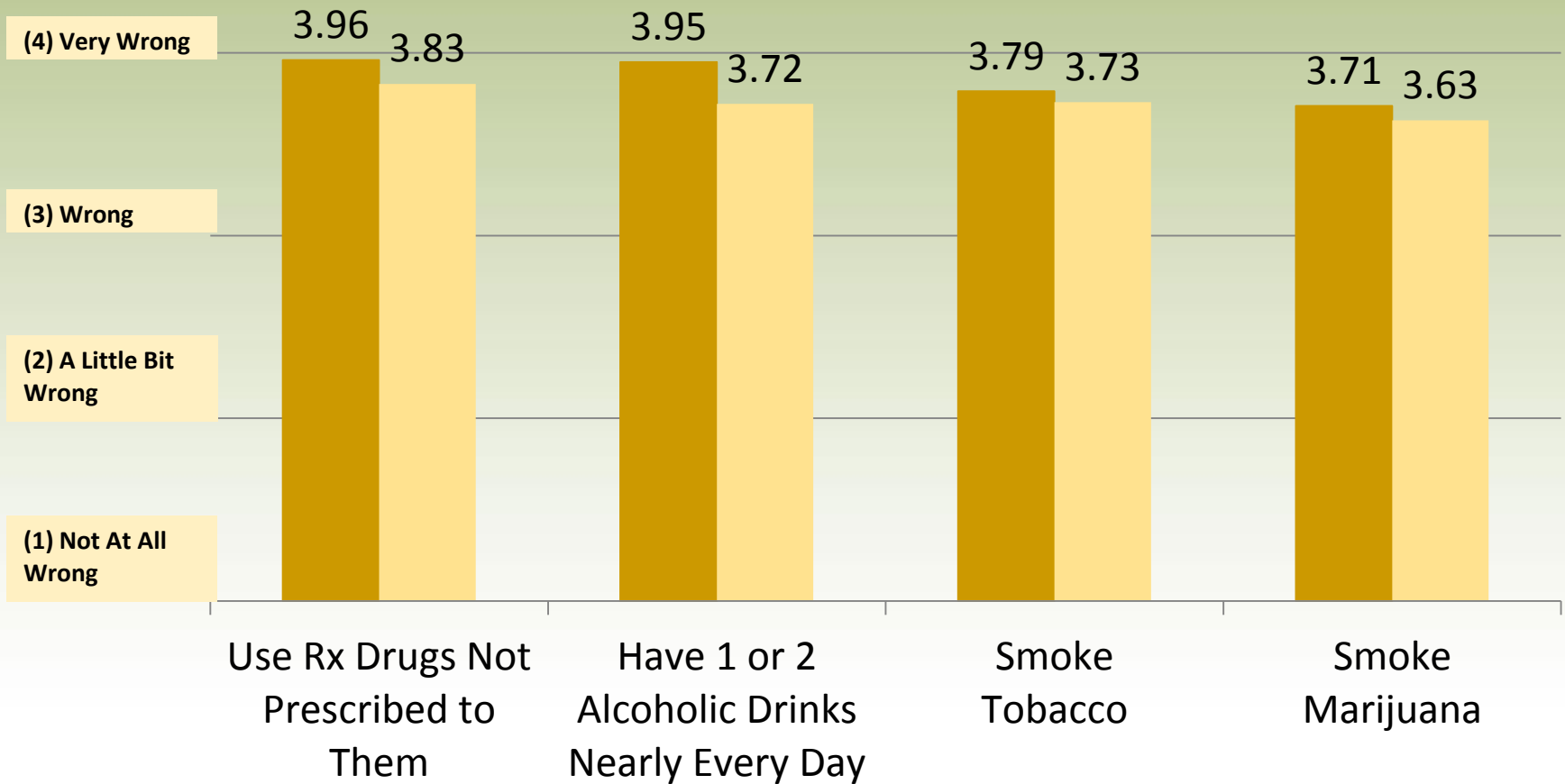


# Attitudes – Parental Disapproval of Youth Substance Use

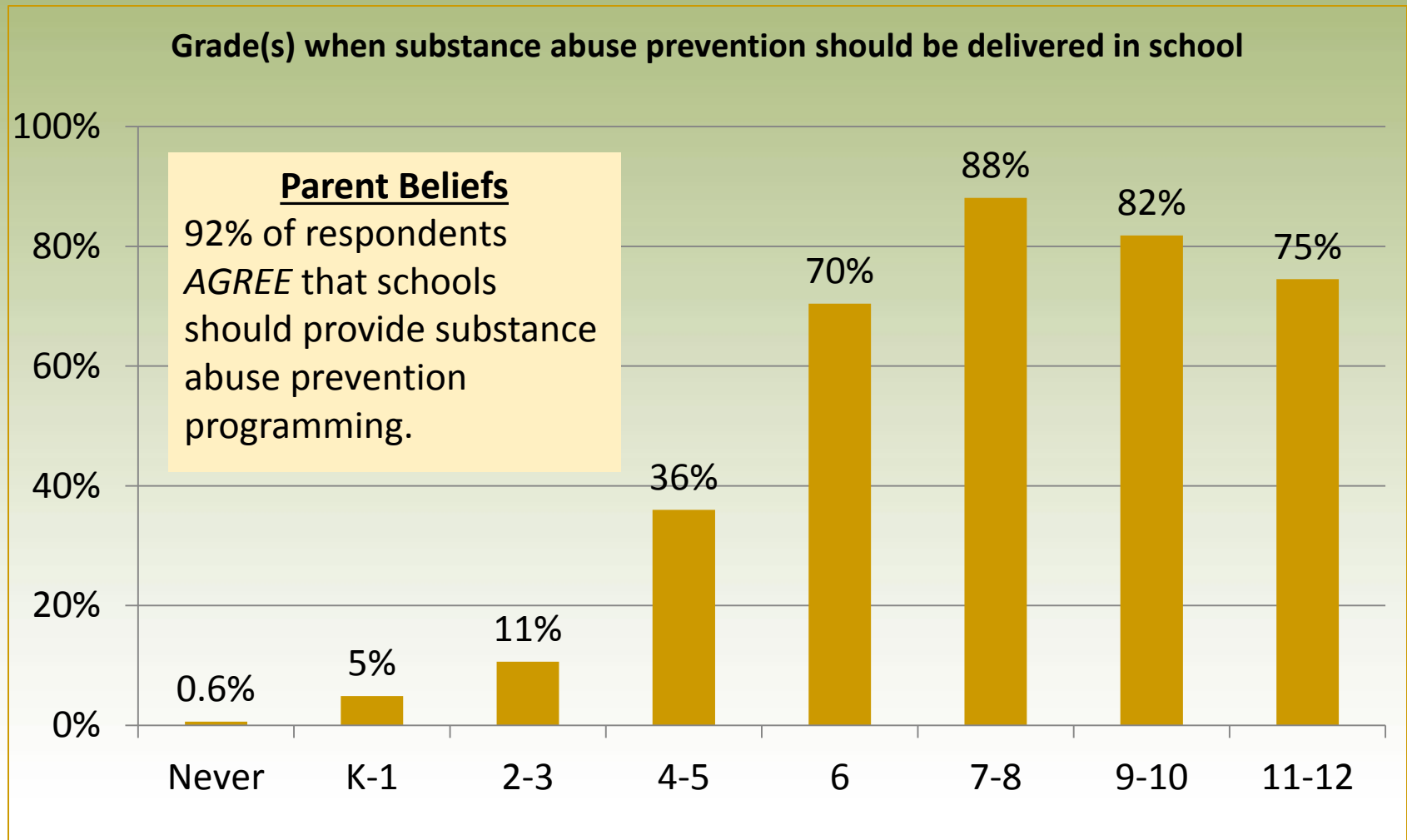
[Parent/Youth Data]

How wrong do parents think it would be for their child to...

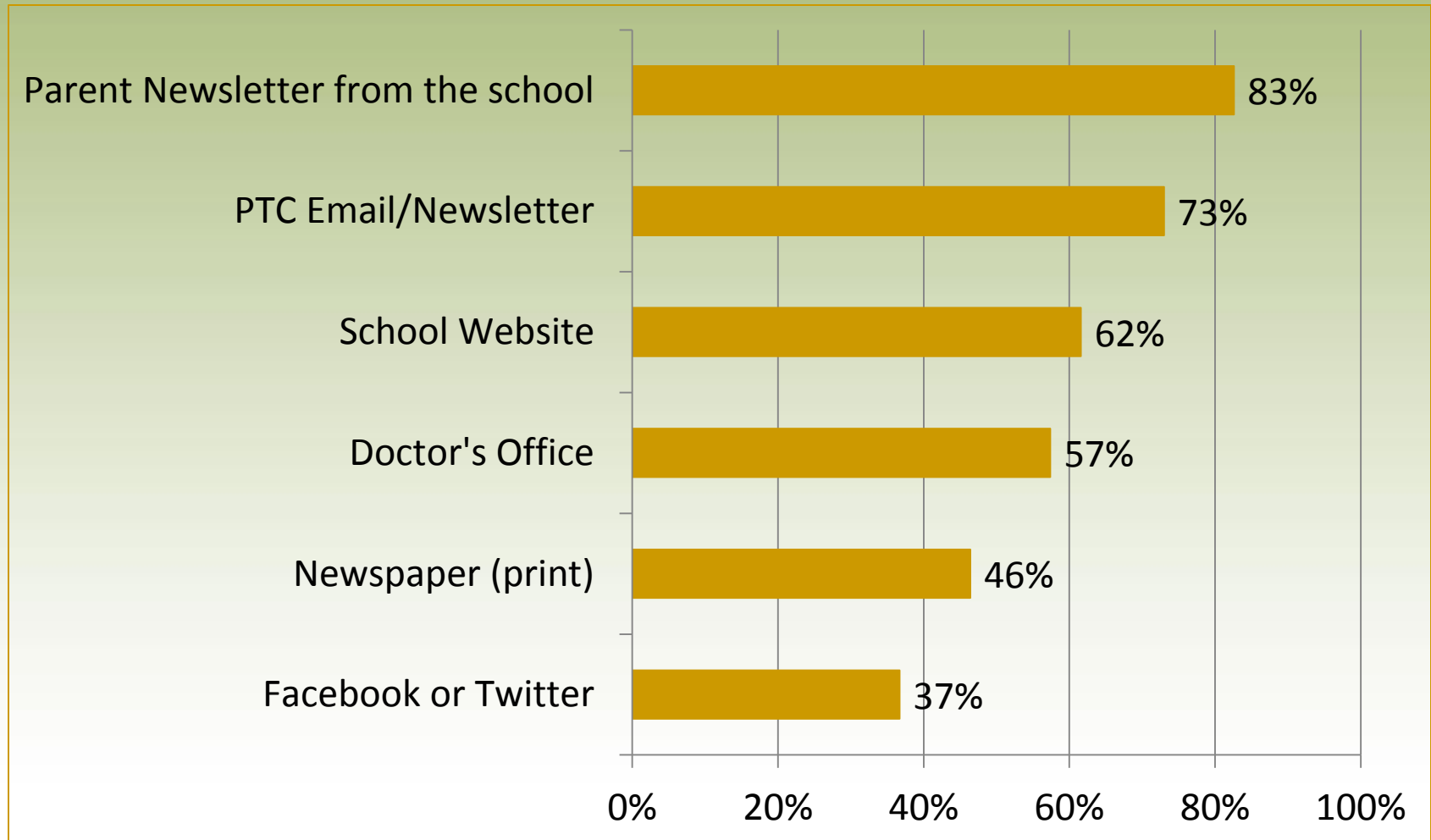
■ All Parents   ■ All Students



# Attitudes – Substance Abuse Prevention in Schools [Parent Data]



# Attitudes – Most Effective Ways/Places to Reach Parents with Prevention Messages [Parent Data]



# Attitudes and Beliefs – Summary Points

- The majority of parent respondents believe that youth use of substances (particularly marijuana) is never a good thing and do not support use at home.
- 91% of parent respondents want to be called if a child is coming to their house but fewer than half believe that other parents want to be called.
- Almost all parent respondents support the police taking action against teens caught using alcohol – especially calling the parent of the teens.

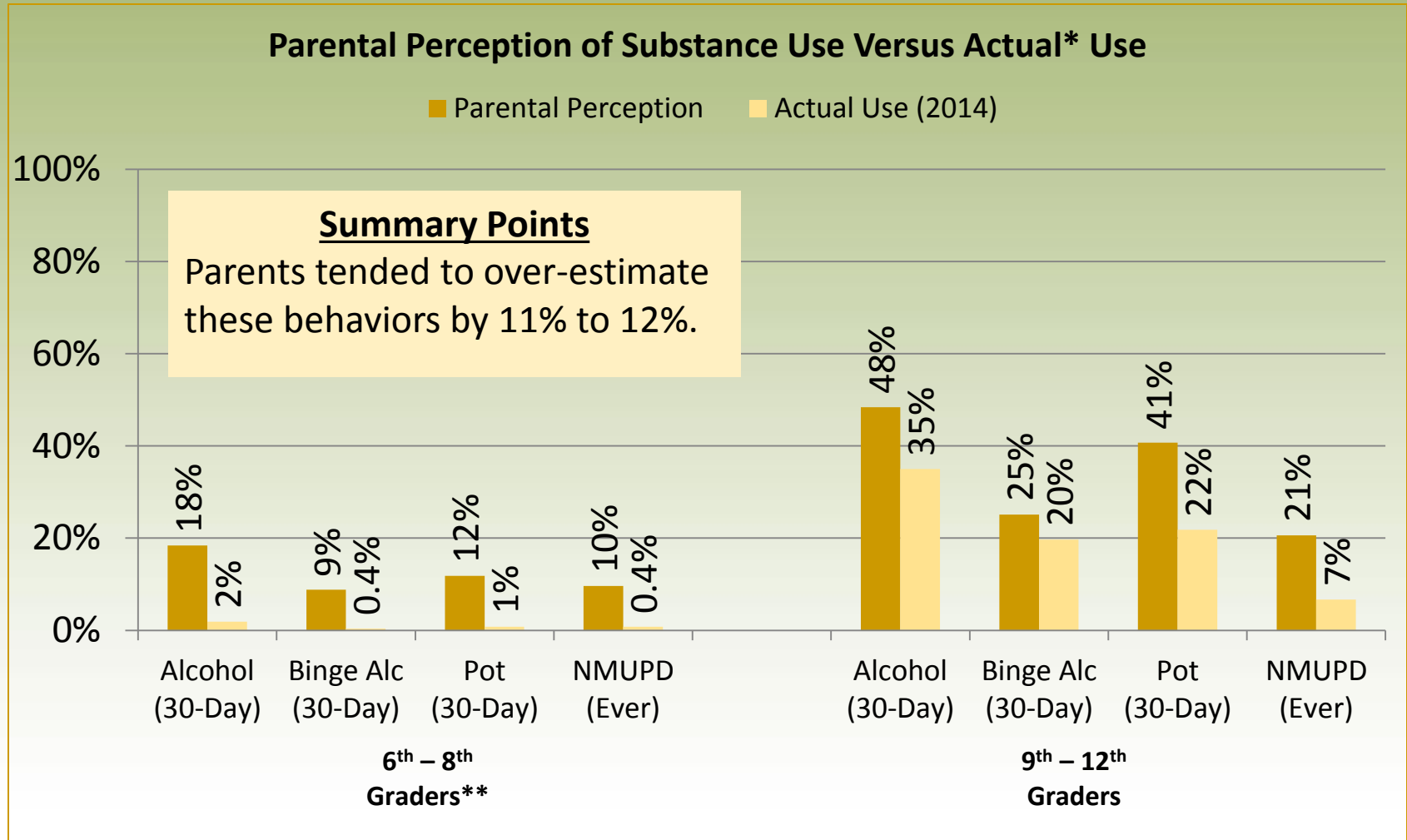
# Attitudes and Beliefs – Summary Points

- Most parent respondents have no opinion about NMUPD among youth.
- Almost all parent respondents believe use of AOD is *very wrong* and youth respondents to the student survey are fairly accurate in their perception of their parent's beliefs.
- Almost all parent respondents support school-based prevention education and think the best way to reach parents with prevention messages is through the school and parent-teacher council.



# PERCEPTIONS

# Perceptions– Perceived Substance Use vs. Actual Substance Use [Parent/Youth Data]



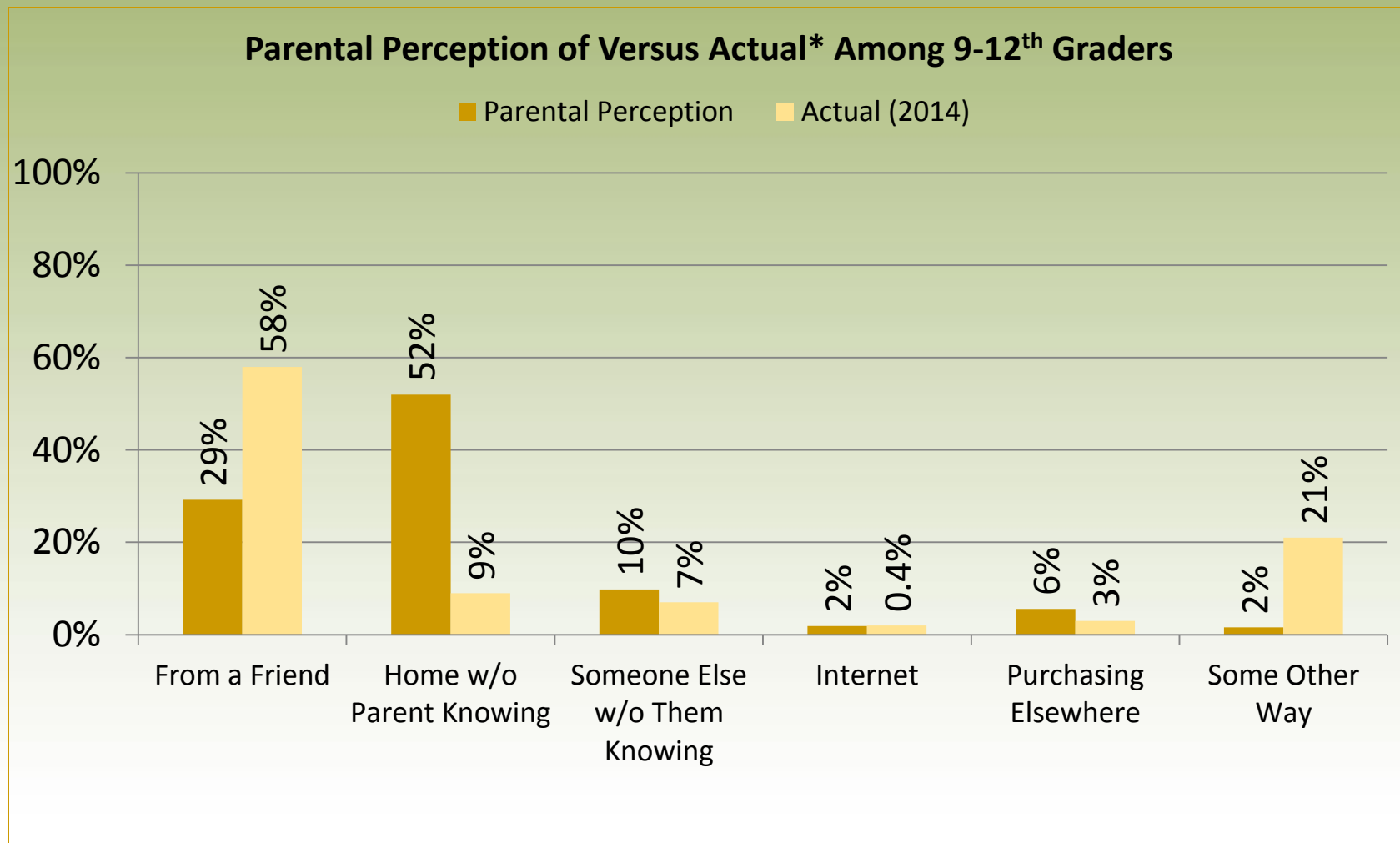
\* Actual data are from the 2014 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey implemented in Needham.

\*\* Note actual use estimates for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders are based on students in grades 7 and 8 only since the MetroWest survey isn't done with 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

## Perceptions – Source of Alcohol [Parent/Youth Data]

- Parent respondents correctly identified the top sources of alcohol among youth who drank in the past 30 days. As reported by High School students in 2014, the most common sources were:
  - From a party: 67%
  - From an underage friend (not at a party): 62%
  - From someone they know over 21 years of age: 35%
  - From home without parent's/guardian's knowledge: 33%

# Perceptions— Source of Rx Drugs [Parent/Youth Data]

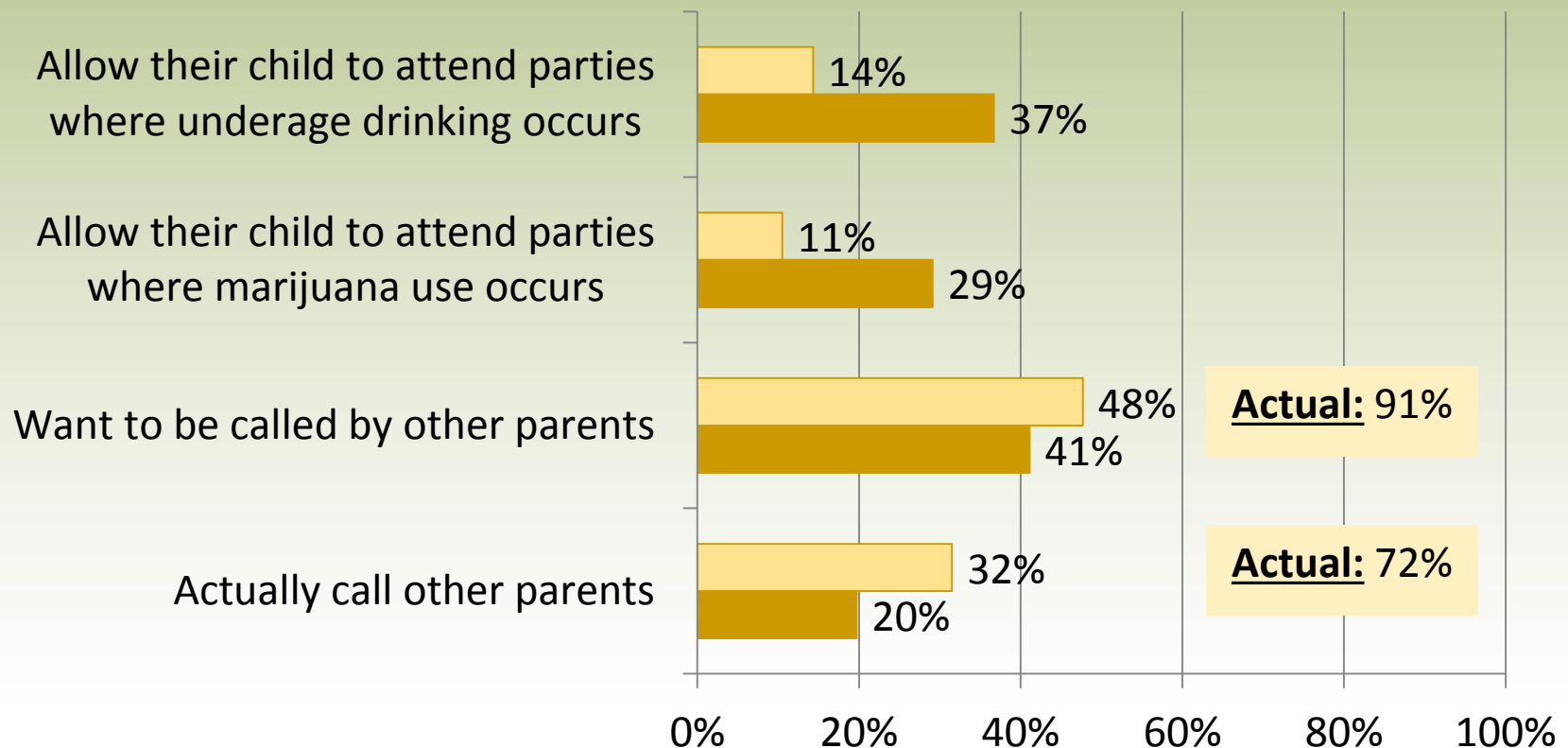


\* Actual data are from the 2014 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey implemented in Needham.

# Perceptions – Parent Perception of Other Parents' Attitudes and Behaviors [Parent Data]

## Parent Respondent Estimate of How Many *Other* Parents...

Other Parents of 6-8th Graders (perceived)    Other Parents of 9-12th Graders (perceived)



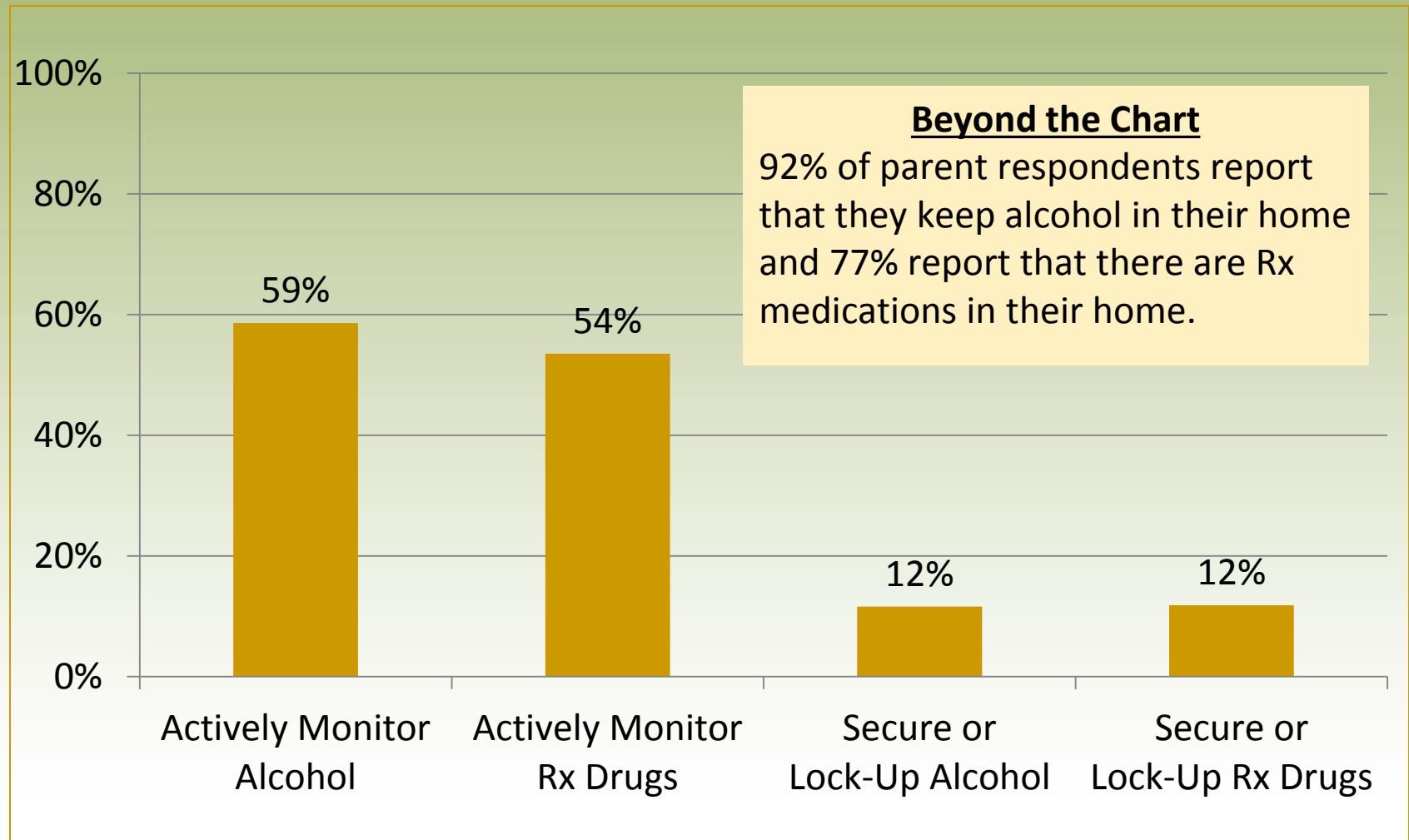
# Perceptions – Summary Points

- Parents tended to over-estimate youth substance use behaviors by about 11% at the middle school level and 12% at the high school level. The largest over-estimate was for HS marijuana use. Perception of HS binge drinking was very accurate.
- Parent respondents were accurate in their identification of the most common sources of alcohol among youth users but were less accurate in their estimates of the sources of prescription drugs.
- Parent respondents believe about 45% of other parents want to be called (versus 90% who want to be called themselves). Parent respondents think about 25% of other parents make the call (versus 72% who report making the call themselves).

**BEHAVIORS**

# Behaviors – Alcohol and Rx Drug Means

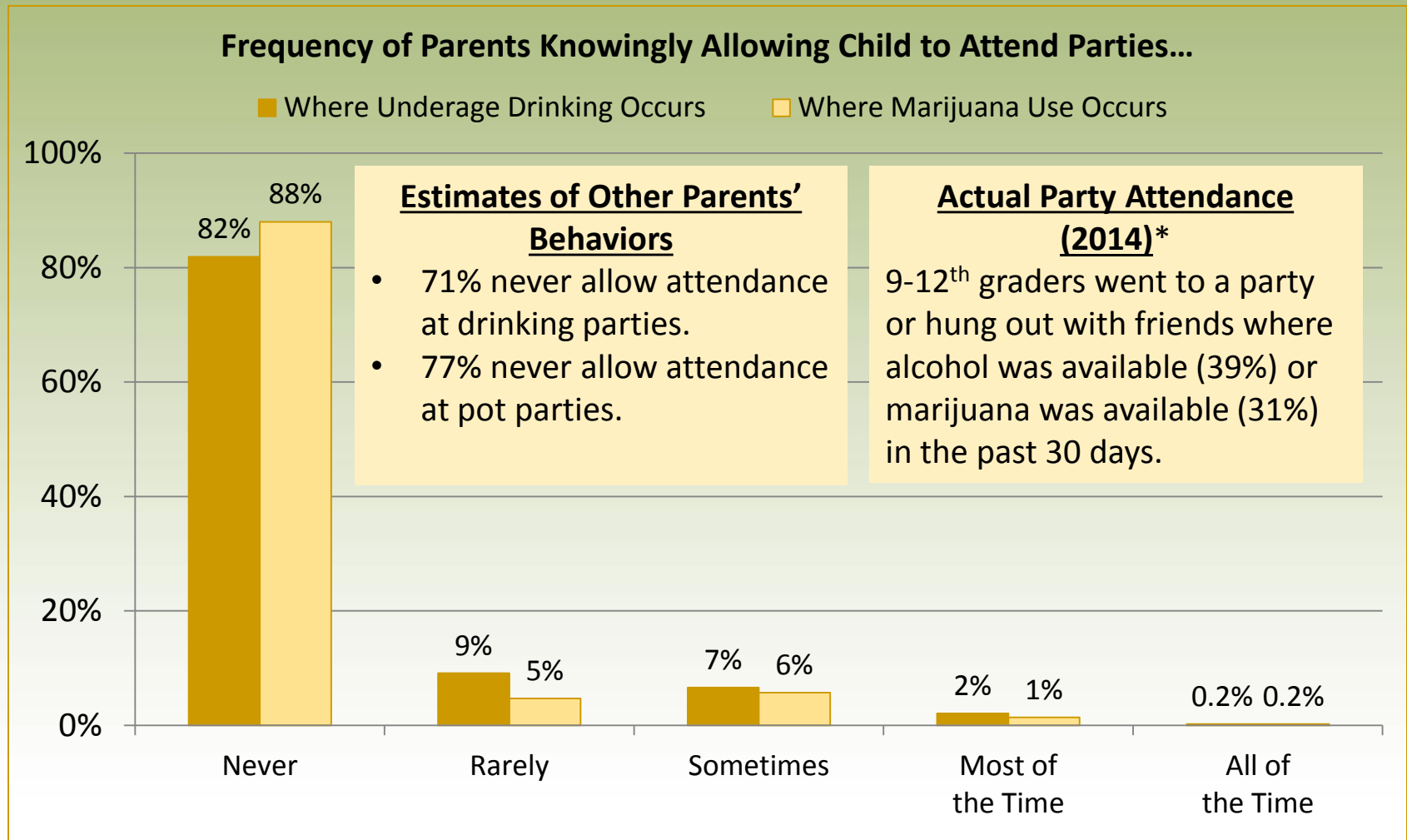
## Restriction Efforts [Parent Data]





# Behaviors – Parties and Gatherings

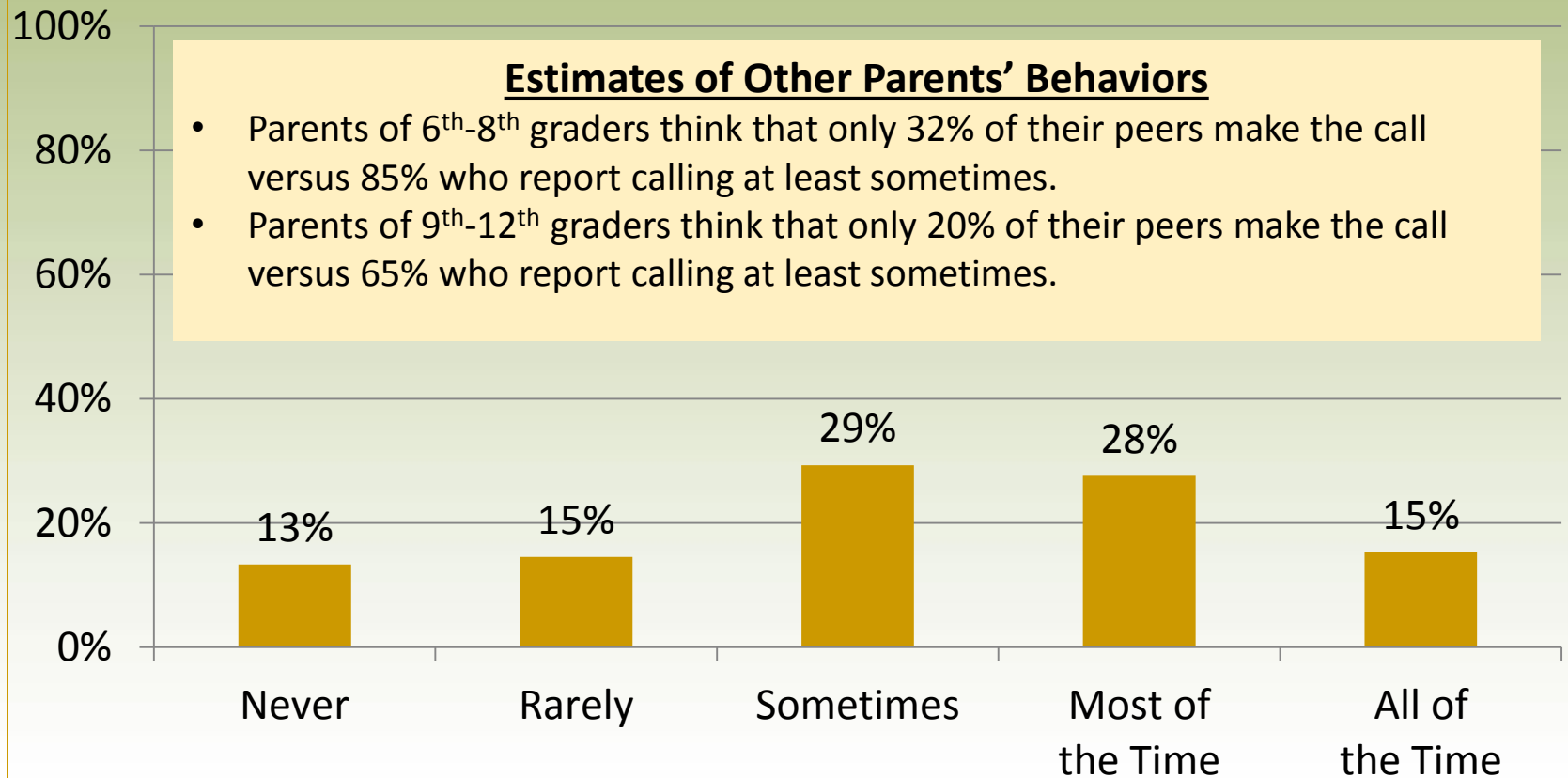
[Parent/Youth Data]



\* Actual data are from the 2014 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey implemented in Needham.

# Behaviors – Frequency of Calling Other Parents Prior to Youth Social Gathering

Frequency of Parents Making the Call to Other Parents



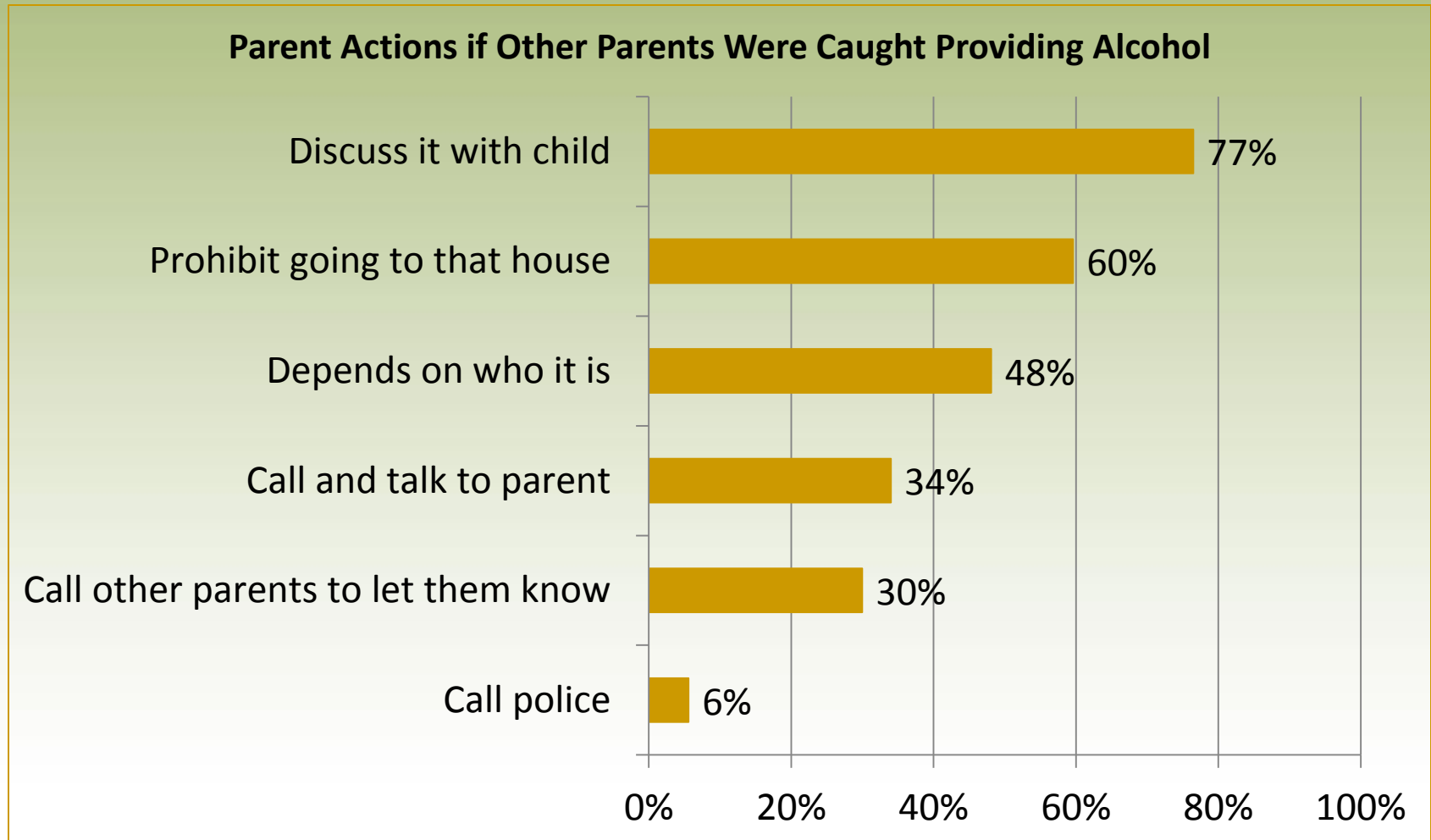
# Behaviors – Parental Monitoring

- 66% reported that they monitor the activity of their child and his/her friends by walking through the area in which they are congregating and visually assessing for signs of substance use most/all of the time when their child has friends over the house.
- 97% require their child to tell them with whom and where they will be most/all of the time when their child is out with friends.
- 81% check-in with their child by phone or text message most/all of the time when their child is out with friends.

# Behaviors – Parental Monitoring

- 61% visually assess their child for signs of substance use most/all of the time when their child returns home from being out with friends.
- 93% report that they engage their child in a conversation to learn about their activities most/all of the time when their child returns home from being out with friends.

# Behaviors – Parent Actions if Other Parents Were Providing Alcohol to Minors [Parent Data]



# Behaviors – Summary Points

- About half of parent respondents monitor alcohol and prescription drugs present in their home and roughly 12% lock them up.
- Most parents (82%) never knowingly allow their child to attend parties where underage drinking occurs and 88% where marijuana use occurs. This is slightly higher than their estimate of how many *other* parents do the same. Student survey data show that youth report attending more parties than their parents seemingly know about.
- 72% of parents report that they call other parents at least some of the time, but estimate that far fewer *other* parents do so. Reports of making the call decline steadily with age/grade of the parent's child.

# Behaviors – Summary Points

- Almost all parent respondents report that they know where and who their child is with when they are out with friends and 81% check-in by phone or text message.
- Over half of parent respondents (61%) visually assess their child when he or she returns home from being out with friends and 93% engage their child in a conversation at some point to inquire about their activities while they were out with friends.
- If a parent learns that another parent is providing alcohol to teenagers, they are most likely to address this individually by talking to their child or to talk to that parent. Very few indicated that they would involve the authorities.

**QUESTIONS?**

**DISCUSSION**