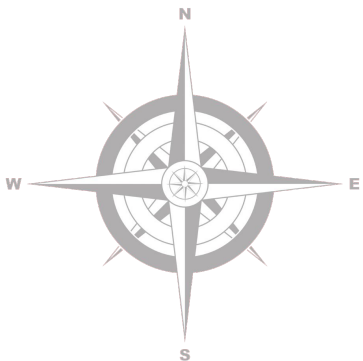


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# WPS Viral Testing Update

**School Committee  
December 22, 2020**



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**WELLESLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Learning • Caring • Innovating*

# Goals of Surveillance Testing

- Outbreak prevention
- Maximization of in-person learning
- Reduction of fear and anxiety
- Reassurance that safety precautions and mitigation efforts are effective
- Priorities:
  - Symptomatic testing
  - Asymptomatic surveillance testing of staff
  - Asymptomatic surveillance testing of students

# WPS COVID Testing Approach

- **Baseline Individual Diagnostic PCR Testing (Sept 24-28)**
  - PreK - 12th Students - EMT collected Anterior Nares Swab (Eurofins/Boston Heart, \$68 per person)
  - Staff - Saliva (Ginkgo/Immune Observatory, donation)
  - 90 % + participation, 4500 tests performed
- **Weekly Optional Pooled PCR Surveillance Testing (Oct 19-Dec 22)**
  - All staff at all schools and 6th - 12th students take home saliva collection (Mirus, discounted rate from Mobilizing Foundation of \$8 per individual), ability to reflex test to individual diagnostic level with existing sample
  - Approximately 80% participation, 18,704 tests performed

# COVID Testing Outcomes

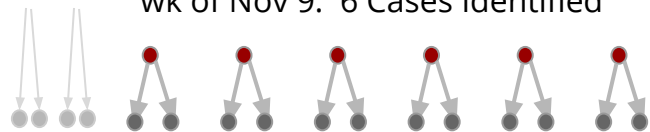
- **WPS has had 60 total cases since September** (22 staff / 38 students / 73 % of which were Middle/High School)
  - 19 of these cases have been identified through surveillance testing
  - 41 of these cases have been identified through outside testing
- **Cluster of in-school transmission identified in main office of high school**
  - Studied airflow, density and traffic pattern to identify mitigation
  - Other schools were able to remain open while problem was understood and addressed

# Community spread was potentially avoided

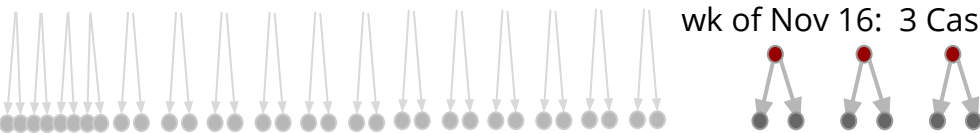
wk of Nov 2: 1 Case Identified



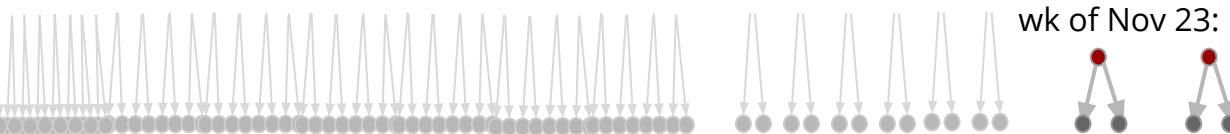
wk of Nov 9: 6 Cases Identified



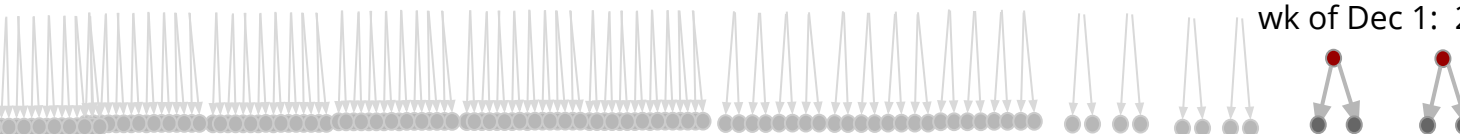
wk of Nov 16: 3 Cases Identified



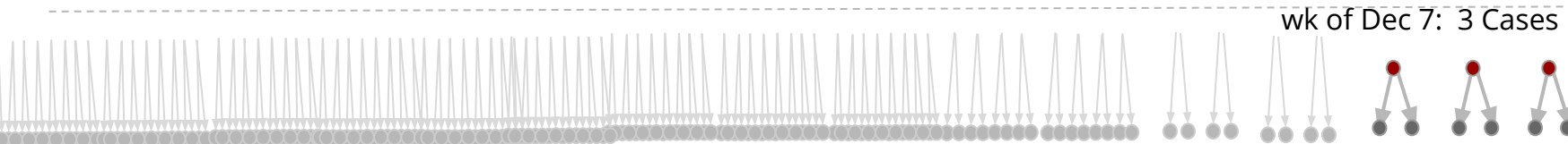
wk of Nov 23: 2 Cases Identified



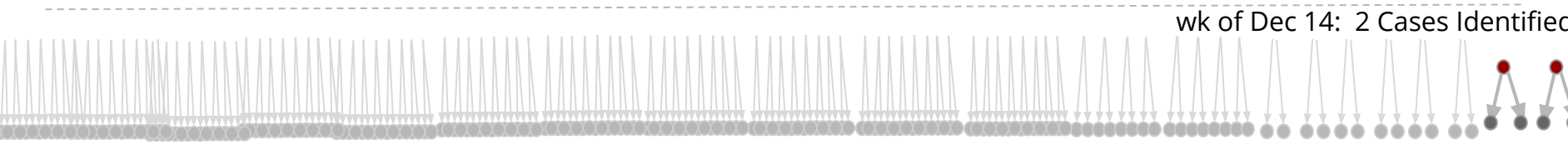
wk of Dec 1: 2 Cases Identified



wk of Dec 7: 3 Cases Identified



wk of Dec 14: 2 Cases Identified



# Reflections on Pilot - What Worked Well

- **Focus on prioritizing in-person learning in as safe a manner as possible**
- **Testing helped to make discussions more data-driven**
- **Support from Superintendent, Nursing Staff, School Committee, Teachers Union, Scientific Advisory Committee, and Wellesley Education Foundation critical**
- **Communications, e.g., webinars - helped ease concerns**
- **Key factors: Scientifically defensible, operationally feasible and financially affordable lead to selection of Mirimus model.**
  - Ability to drill down to individual diagnostic testing on same sample;
  - Ease of program critical - take-home, testing off-site, no need for “intelligent pooling”; able to avoid quarantining entire school or entire classroom
  - Buy-in of staff and parents and community - staff helps group kits for homeroom; volunteering by parents
  - Scheduling before / after weekend for distribution and collection - good cadence
- **Being able to put technology in place as needed - Google Form with data verification; barcode searching**

# Reflections on Pilot - What Could Be Improved

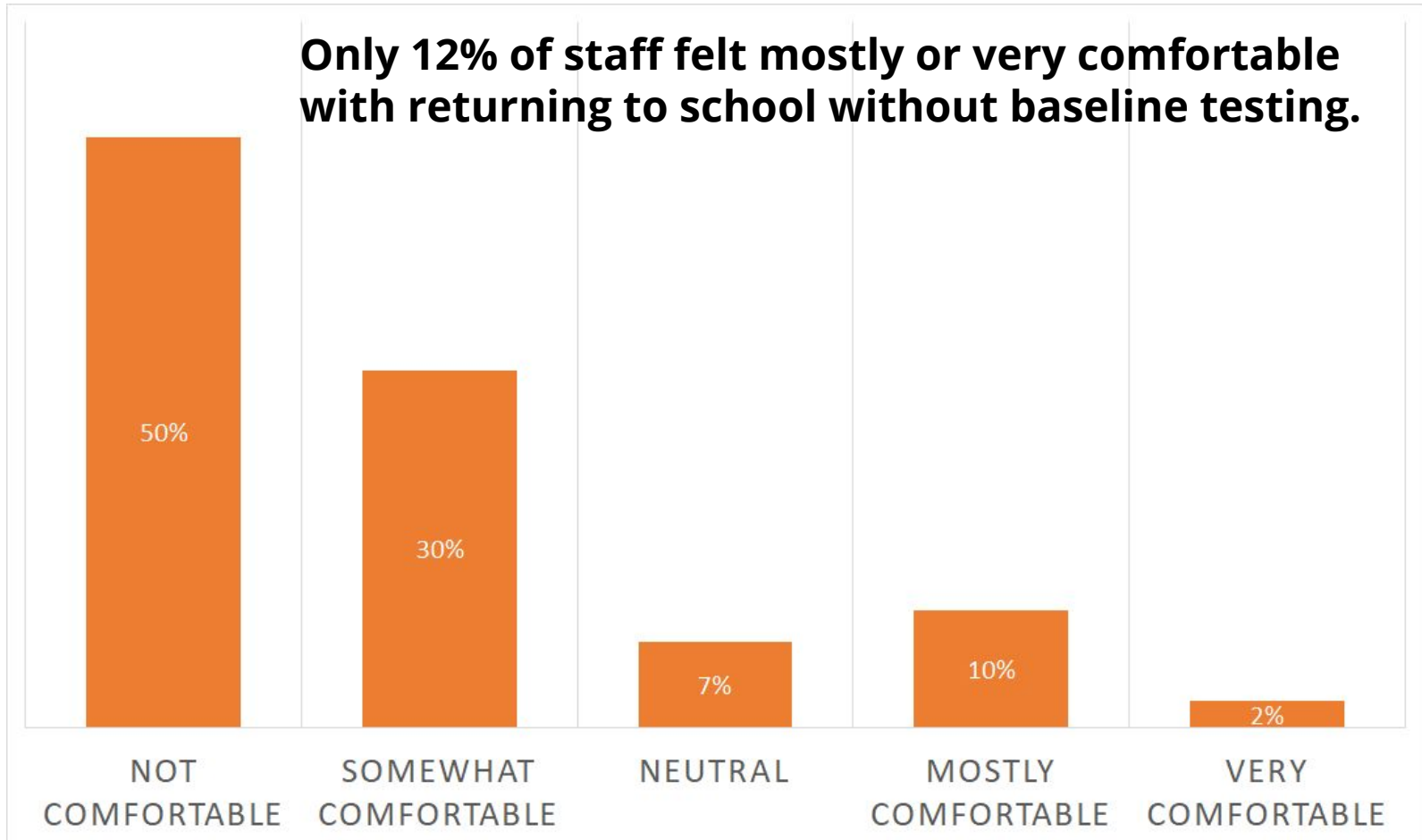
- **First public school district to implement testing involved overcoming challenges**
- **Inconsistencies in data reporting, multiple spreadsheets, initial delays to MAVEN**
  - New portal to be released in January to improve administrative & user experience
- **Kit Assembly is time consuming**
  - Mirimus will be providing “kitted” test supplies in January/February
- **Education of the community on process and testing expectations**
  - e.g., registration, ½ full saliva, don't eat or drink, don't participate if you have been positive, etc.
- **Elementary staff and parents would feel more comfortable with PreK-5 students getting tested; however, challenge would be getting them to collect saliva (even some secondary students have trouble)**
- **Transparency - how to strike balance between confidentiality and how much detail to share with community**
- **Difficulty of obtaining symptomatic tests**

# Survey Results from Staff and Parents

- **Reduction of fear and anxiety among staff and parents was a key goal of the pilot program**
- **WEF recently distributed a survey to staff and parents to understand:**
  - **How the program has impacted perceptions of school safety**
  - **Perceived benefits and detriments of the program**
- **1,149 participants responded to the survey**
  - **491 Staff Members (51% WHS/WMS, 49% PreK-5)**
  - **658 Parents**
    - **78% with students enrolled at either WHS or WMS**
    - **22% with students only enrolled in PreK-5**

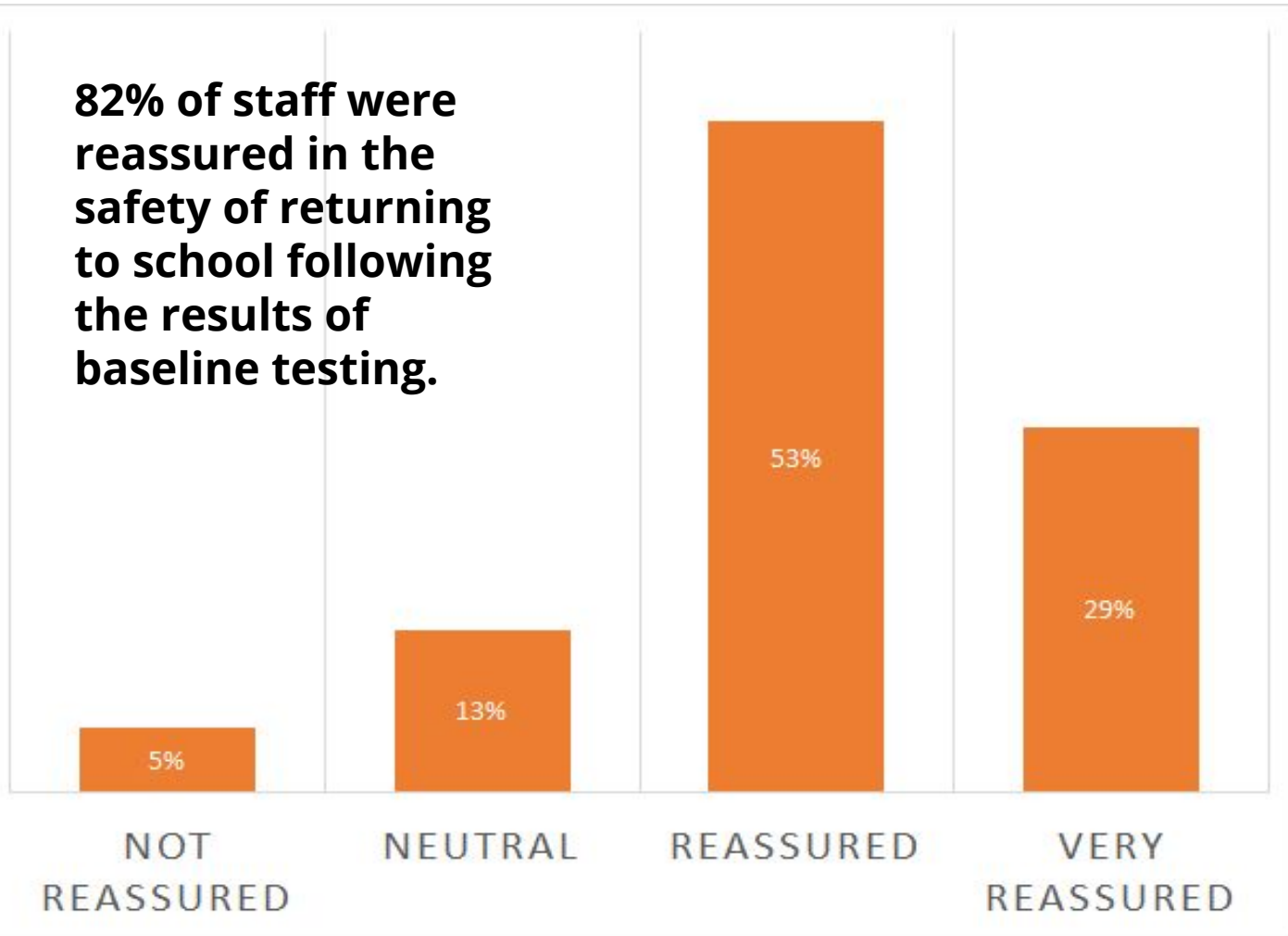


# Staff Level of Comfort in Return to School Without Baseline Testing



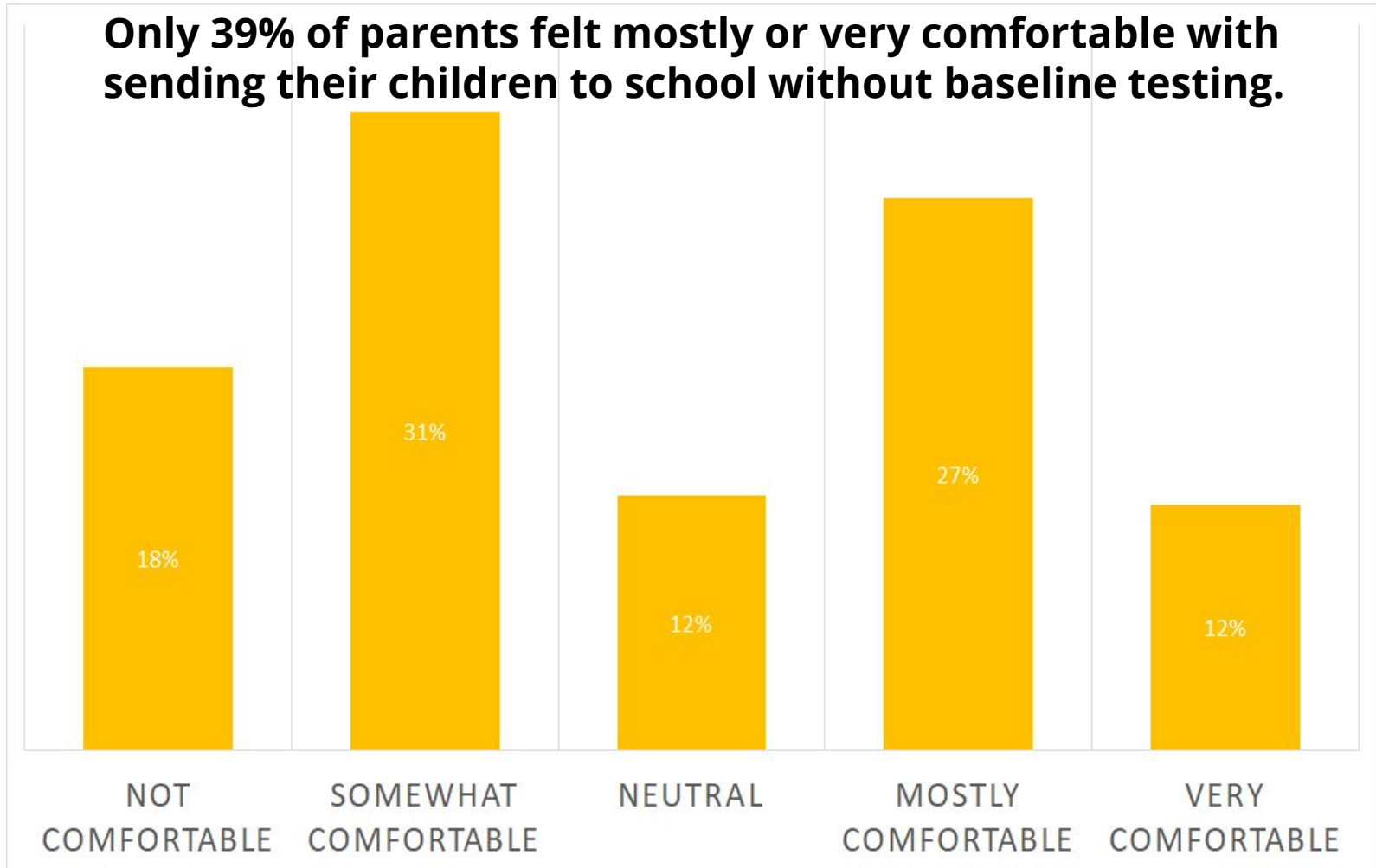
# Staff Level of Reassurance After Results of Baseline Testing

82% of staff were reassured in the safety of returning to school following the results of baseline testing.

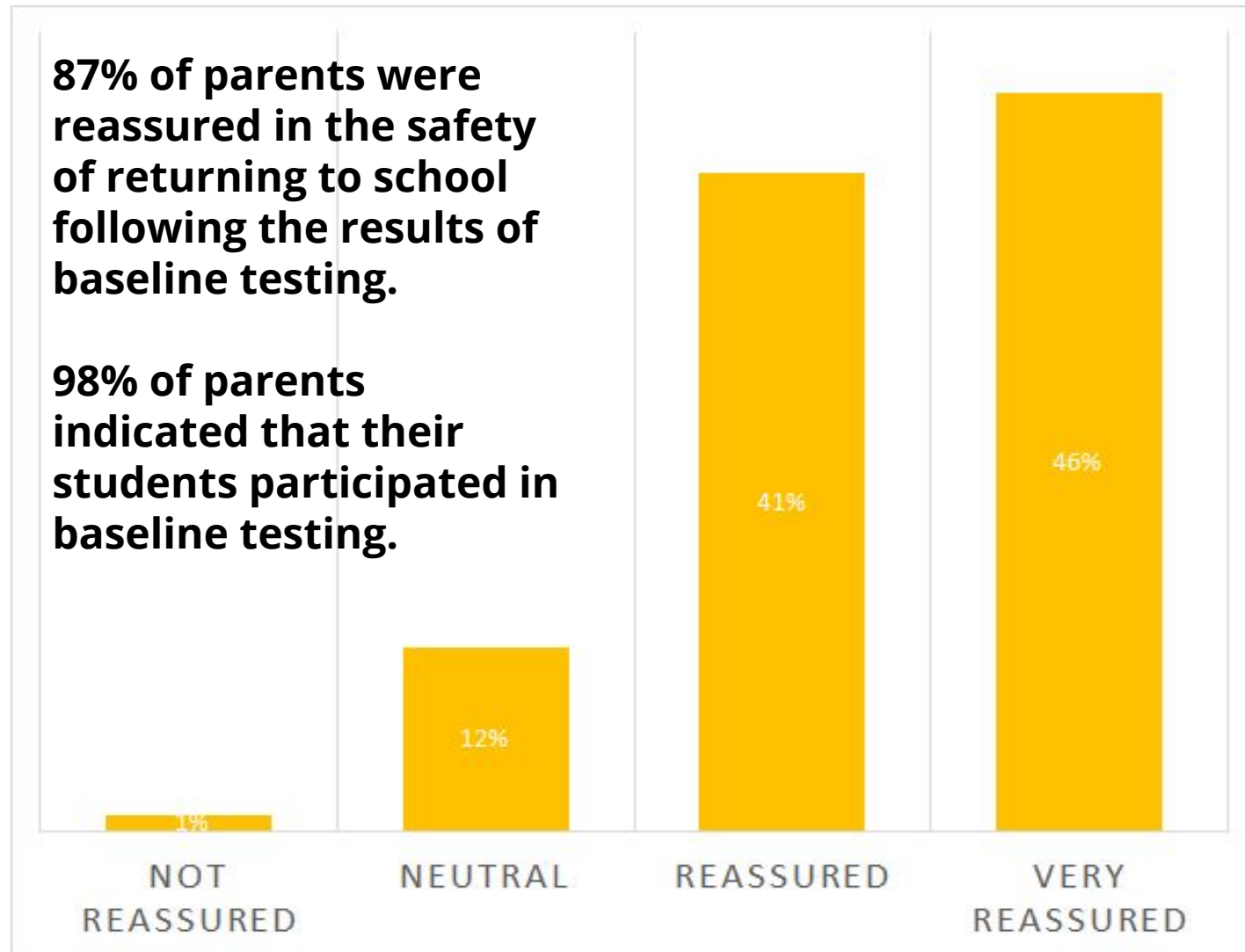


# Parent Level of Comfort in Return to School Without Baseline Testing

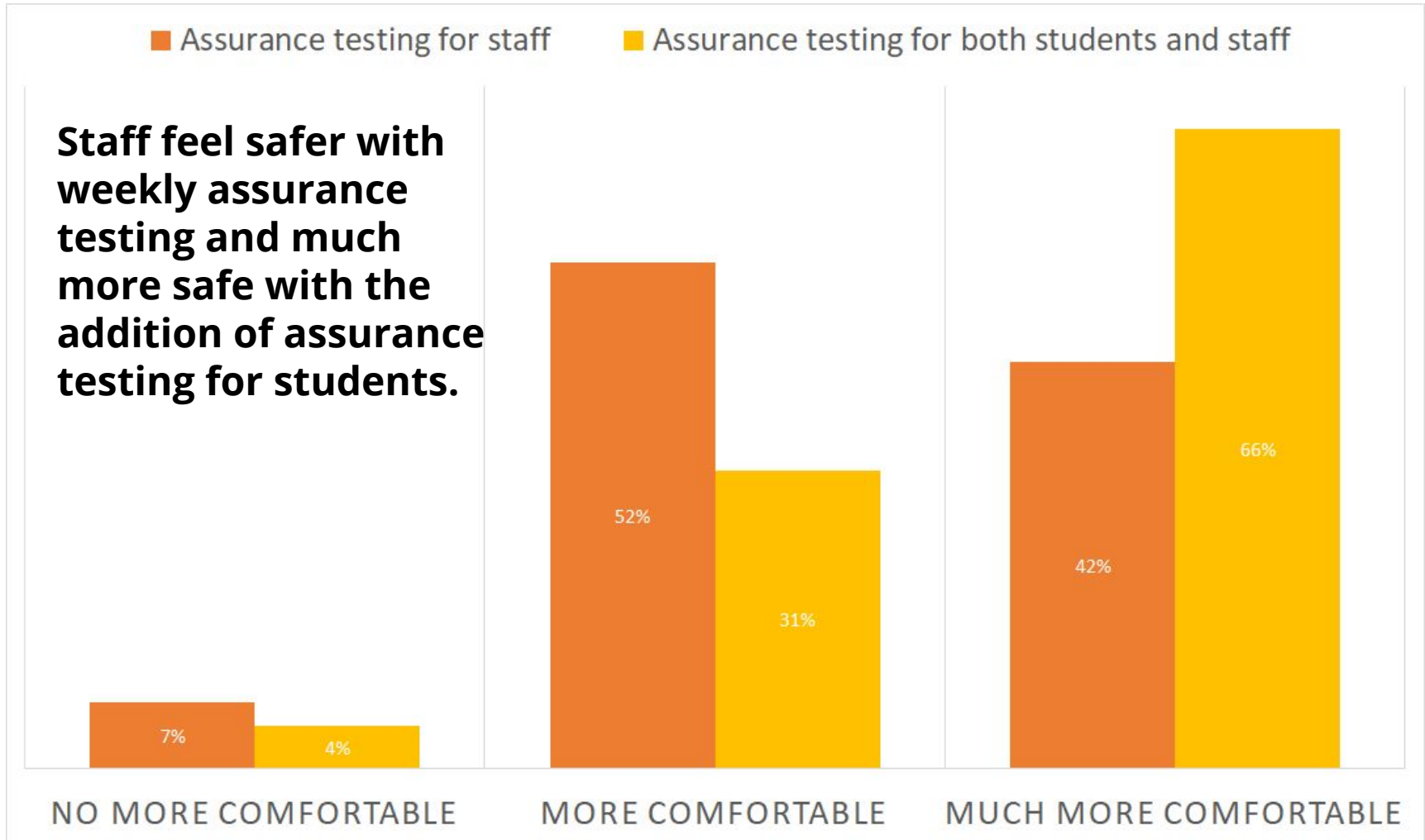
Only 39% of parents felt mostly or very comfortable with sending their children to school without baseline testing.



# Parent Level of Reassurance After Results of Baseline Testing

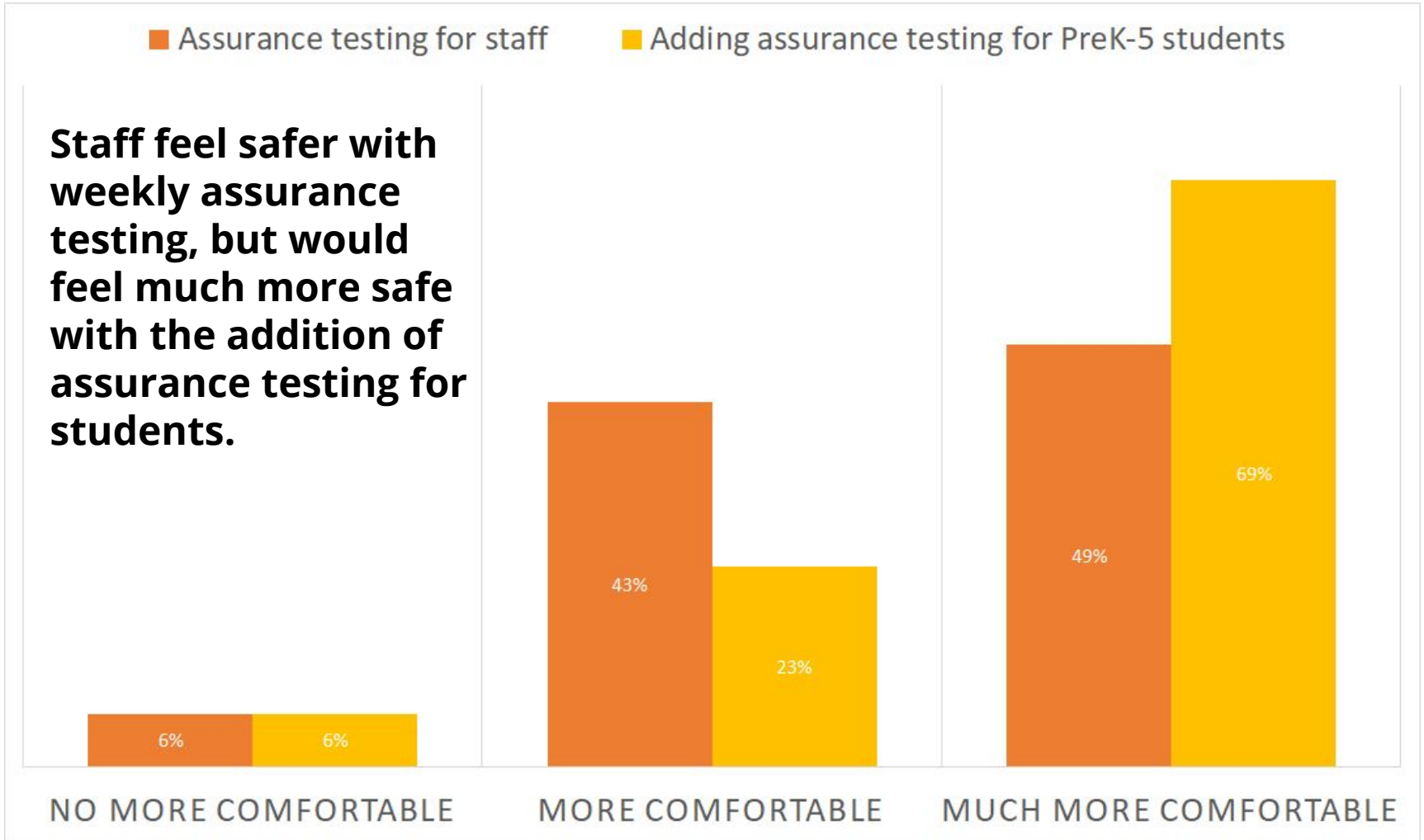


# WMS/WHS Staff Level of Comfort in School Safety w/ Weekly Testing



**100% of staff surveyed have been participating in weekly testing.**

# PreK-5 Staff Level of Comfort in School Safety w/ Weekly Testing

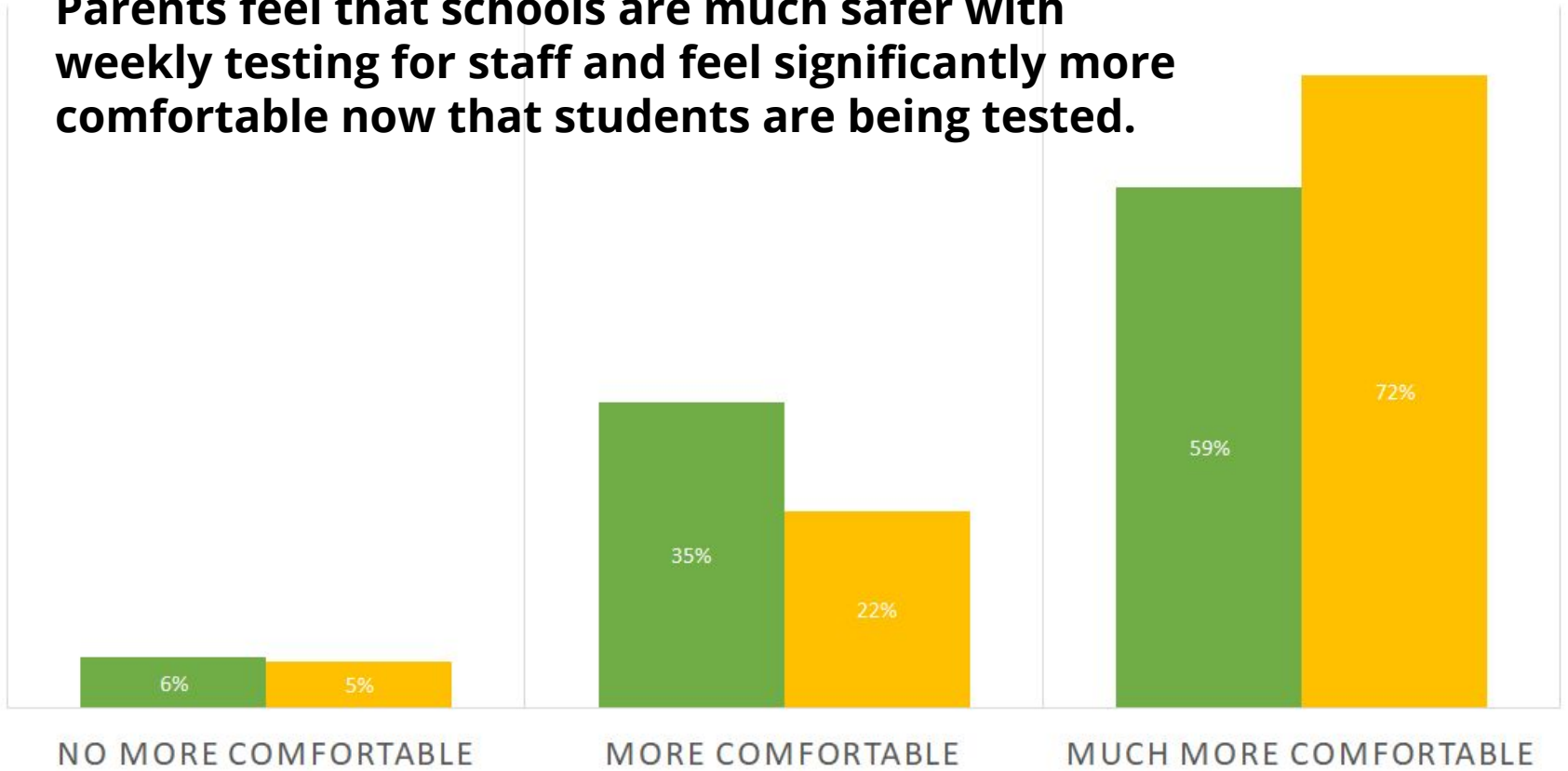


**100% of staff surveyed have been participating in weekly testing.**

# WMS/WHS Parent Level of Comfort in School Safety w/ Weekly Testing

■ Assurance testing for staff   ■ Assurance testing for both students and staff

**Parents feel that schools are much safer with weekly testing for staff and feel significantly more comfortable now that students are being tested.**

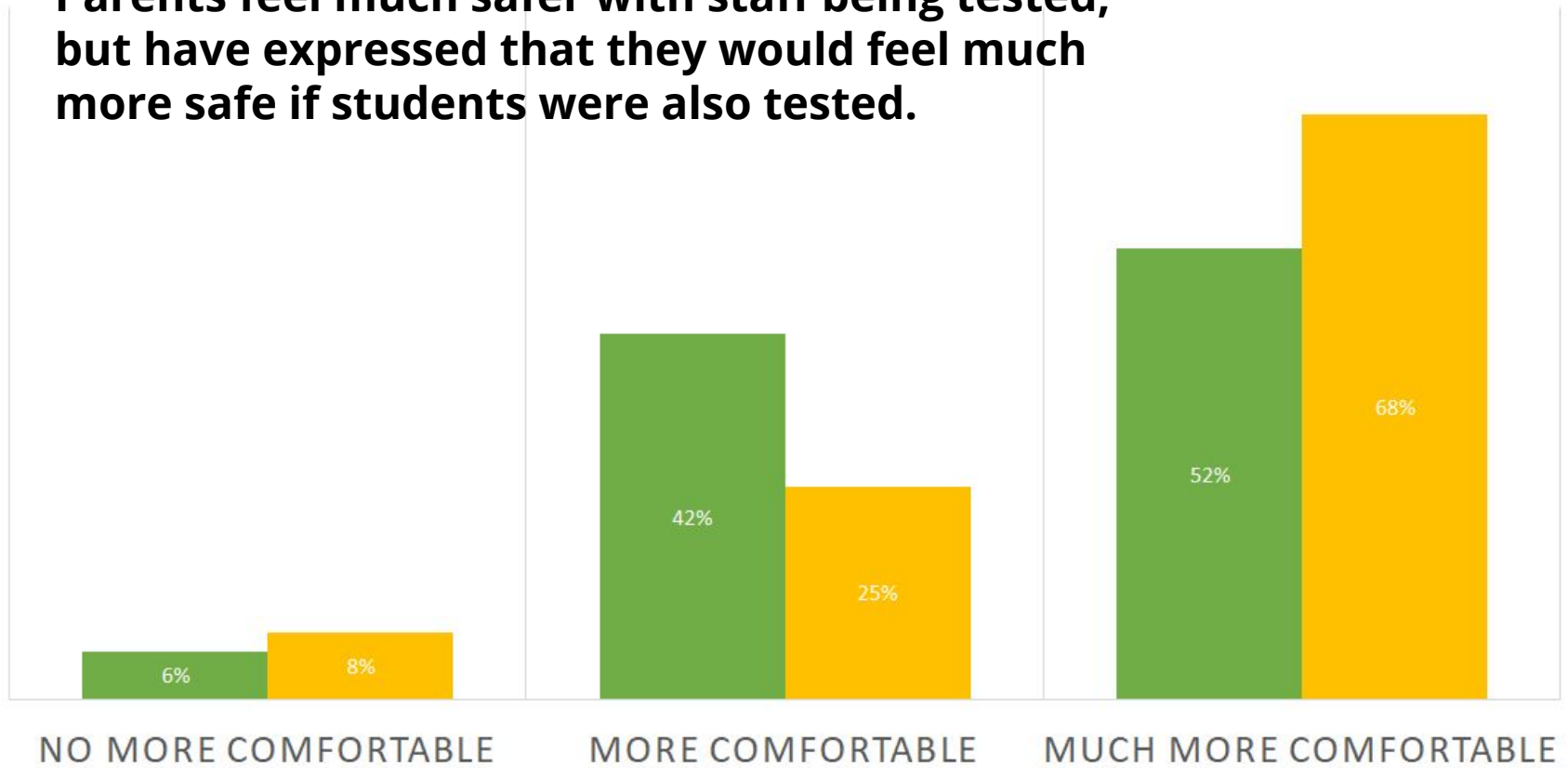


**99% of parents surveyed have students participating in weekly testing.**

# PreK-5 Parent Level of Comfort in School Safety w/ Weekly Testing

■ Assurance testing for staff   ■ Assurance testing for both students and staff

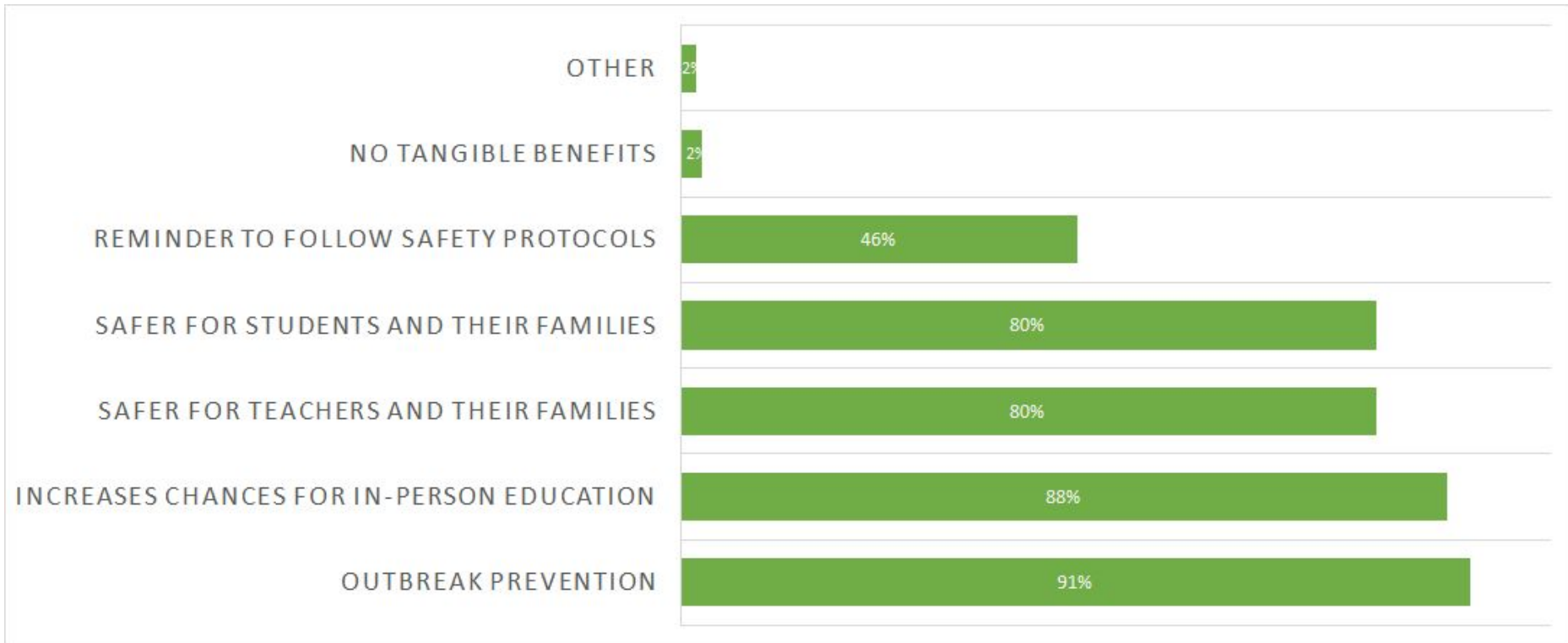
**Parents feel much safer with staff being tested, but have expressed that they would feel much more safe if students were also tested.**



**Parents who ONLY have students enrolled in PreK-5 (22% of respondents)**

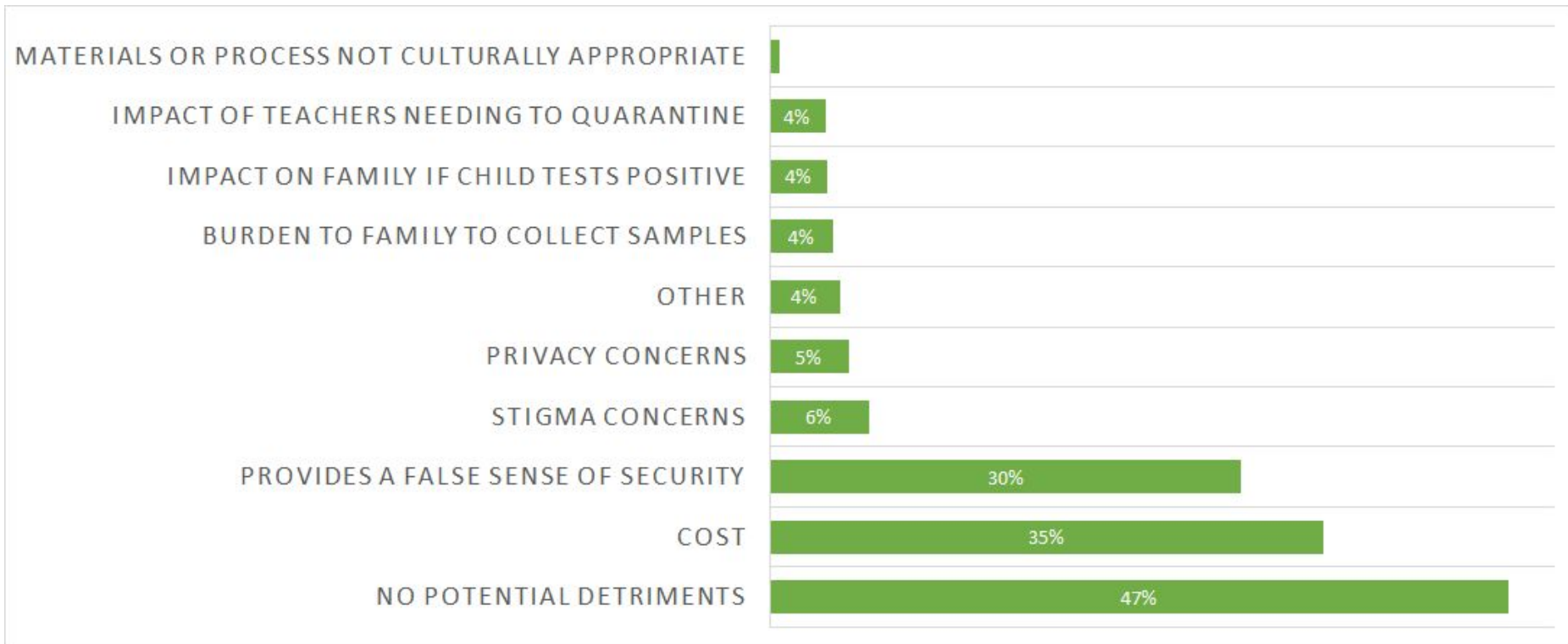


# Parent Perceived Benefits of Weekly Assurance Testing



**The majority of parents felt that weekly testing allowed for prevention of outbreaks, increased the chances for maintaining in-person education, and made school safer for teachers, students, and their families. Close to 50% of parents also felt that testing served as a reminder to follow safety protocols.**

# Parent Perceived Detriments of Weekly Assurance Testing



**Nearly 50% of parents felt that weekly assurance testing had no detriments, and approximately a third of parents identified cost and the provision of a false sense of security as potential detriments.**

# General Observations

- **Both staff and parents have found testing to be very helpful in providing reassurance in the safety of our schools**
- **98% of staff surveyed said they are very likely to continue participating in weekly assurance testing; 2% said they are somewhat likely to continue participating**
- **94% of parents surveyed said they are very likely to continue having their students participate in weekly testing; Another 3% said they are somewhat likely to have their students continue participating**
- **The amount of testing performed is positively correlated with the degree of assurance in school safety**

# General Observations (cont.)

- **Concerns have been expressed about participation and the need to ensure that we achieve maximum levels of participation from both staff and students**
- **Continued interest in testing for elementary students from both staff and parents**
- **Staff and parents have expressed concern about adherence to safety protocols during winter break**
- **Testing underscores the need to continue emphasizing the importance of following safety protocols**

# Funding Projections

Costs	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Baseline Testing	\$245,000		\$13,000					
Surveillance Testing		\$13,000	\$70,000	\$98,000	\$98,000†	\$110,000††	\$183,000††	\$73,000††
<b>Cumulative Cost</b>	<b>\$245,000</b>	<b>\$258,000</b>	<b>\$341,000</b>	<b>\$439,000</b>	<b>\$537,000</b>	<b>\$647,000</b>	<b>\$830,000</b>	<b>\$903,000</b>
<b>Funding Source</b>	Wellesley Education Foundation \$600,000					Town Funding \$300,000		April Break
Cash Inflow		\$340,000	\$150,000	\$110,000	--	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$50,000
<b>Cumulative Funding</b>		<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>\$490,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>	<b>\$850,000</b>	<b>\$900,000</b>
<b>Funding Balance</b>		<b>\$82,000</b>	<b>\$149,000</b>	<b>\$161,000</b>	<b>\$63,000</b>	<b>\$53,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>(\$3,000)</b>

## Assumptions:

† Assumes \$8.00 per test (with support from Mobilizing Foundation)

†† Assumes \$12.50 per test; If \$10.50 per test is an achievable price, cost will be reduced by 20%

All projections assume 80% participation of total testing population (2,664/3,330 staff and students)

All projections also incorporate costs for reflex testing and shipping & handling of samples

# Next Steps

- Work to make continued improvements in our testing process
- Continue with surveillance testing in January, prepare to pivot to town dollars
  - Weekly participation continues to be strongly encouraged
- Consider expanding WPS Dashboard by adding measures specific to school community that leverage case tracking & surveillance testing data