



**Early Educational Intervention for at-risk Students:
A Preliminary Report of the Long Term Influences of the
Opportunity School Preschool Program**

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Sponsored by:

WTAMU Center for Learning Disabilities



Where did it all start?

- WTAMU's Center for Learning Disabilities and WTAMU Professors
- Guiding question
 - What is the impact of the Opportunity School?

General Population of the Opportunity School:

- Families come from a variety of backgrounds
 - Mostly low-income or those at risk of delays



Opportunity School

- Founded in 1969 in conjunction with the First Presbyterian Church of Amarillo, TX
- NAEYC- accredited
- No Excuses University Preschool- first in the US
- Two campuses in Amarillo, TX
- Provides affordable, high-quality early childhood education and caring family support
- All children deserve early childhood experiences that help them achieve their fullest potential



Literature Review

- **Perry Preschool Project** (1962- 1967) & **Abcedarian Project** (1972-1985)
 - Longitudinal study conducted
 - Positive Influence of preschool intervention program on low-income children's readiness for school and subsequent educational success.
- Tucker-Drob (2012) preschool attendance can significantly reduce the achievement gap between rich and poor students



Governor Abbott's Current Vision

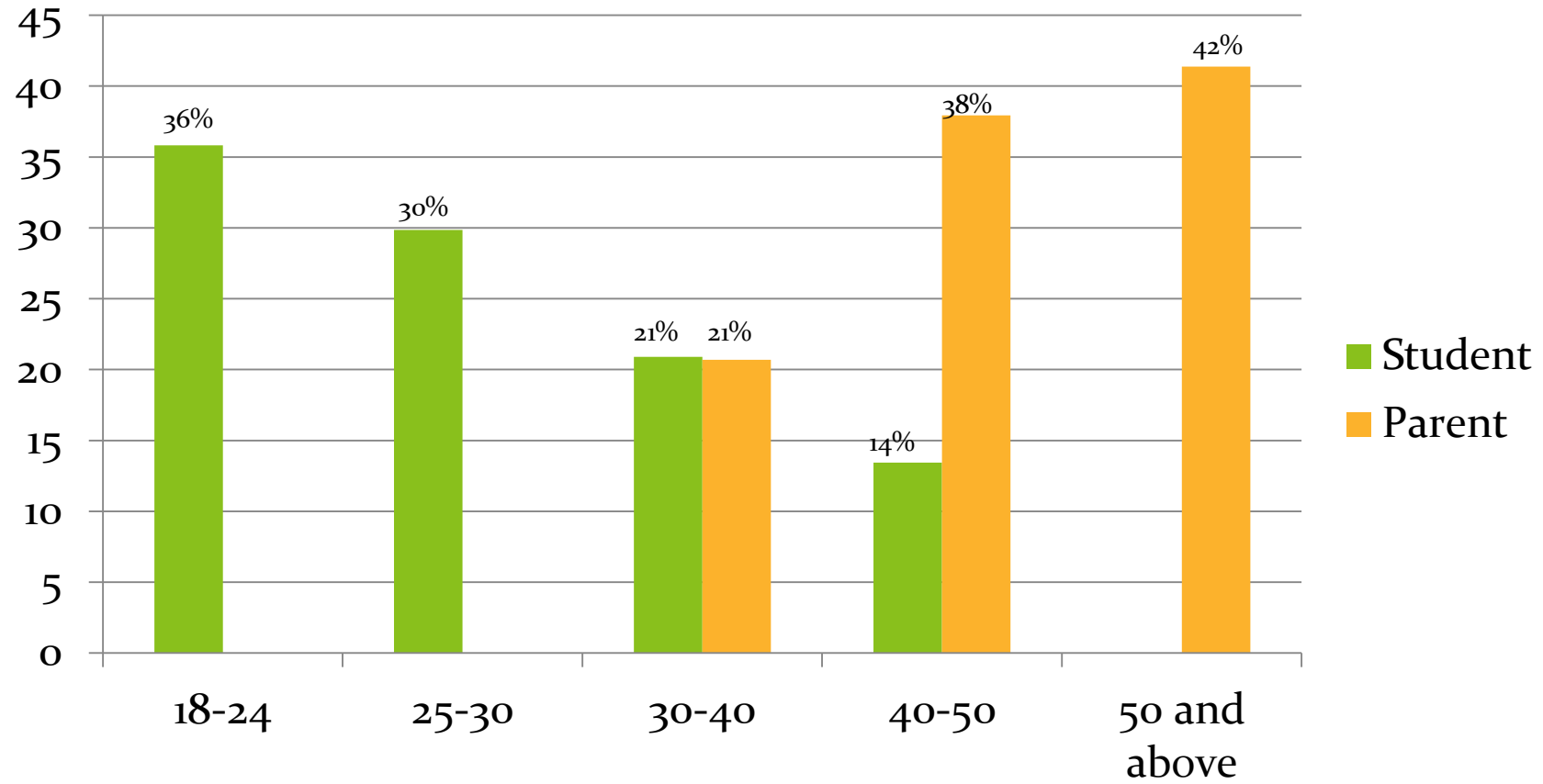
- Improve early childhood education opportunities in Texas
- Prioritize funding initiatives for early childhood
- HB 4: Strengthen pre-K programs geared toward low-income, non-English speaking, foster, and military families



Research Methodology

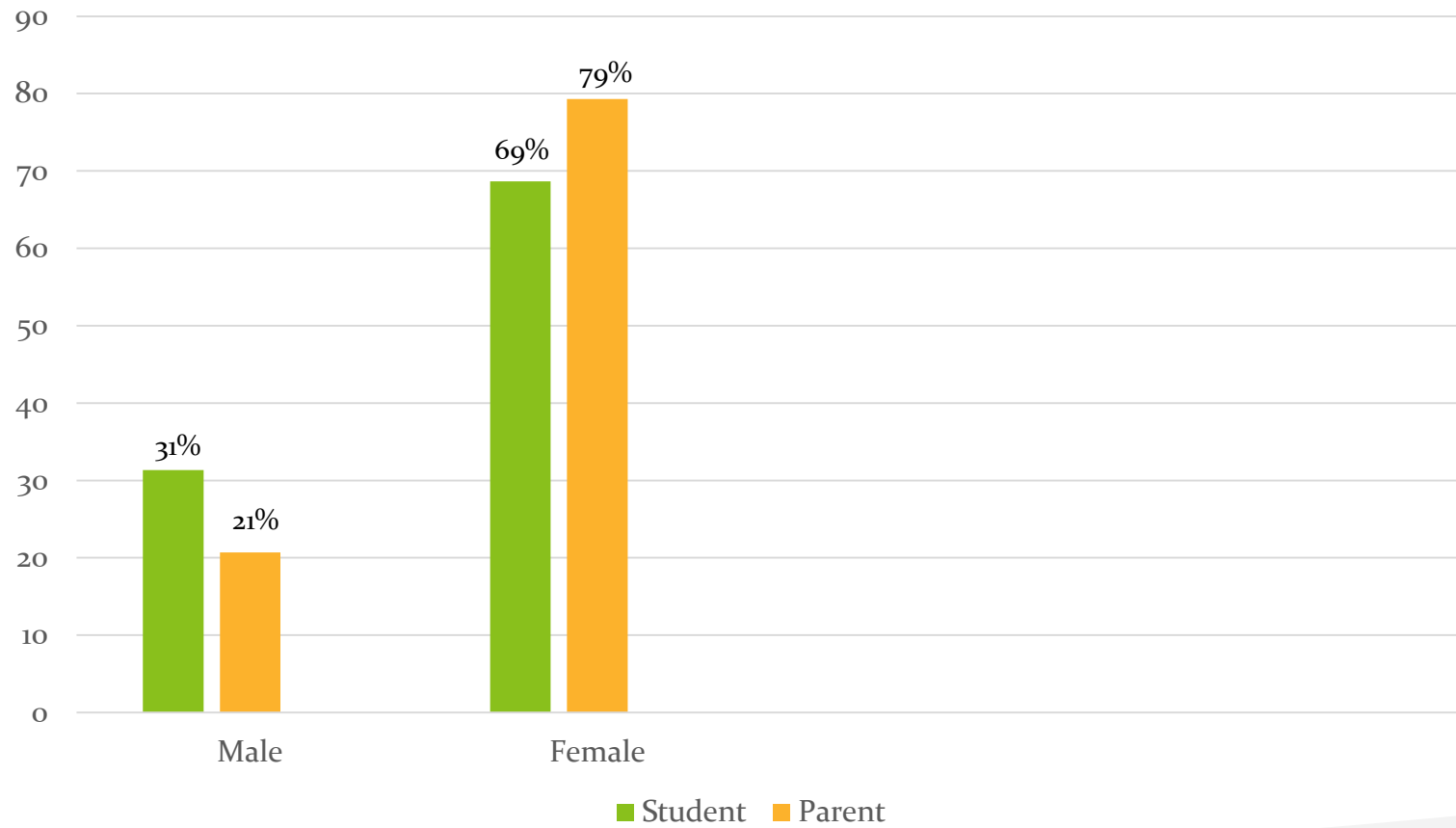
- Mixed Methods design
- Reviewed all enrollment data from the Opportunity School 1969-present
- Contacted a random selection of former students (2001-present)
 - Utilized creative means to locate and contact potential participants such as Facebook, Paid People Search, Yellow Pages, referrals, etc.
- **Completed 98 surveys (68 former students & 30 parents).**

Age :



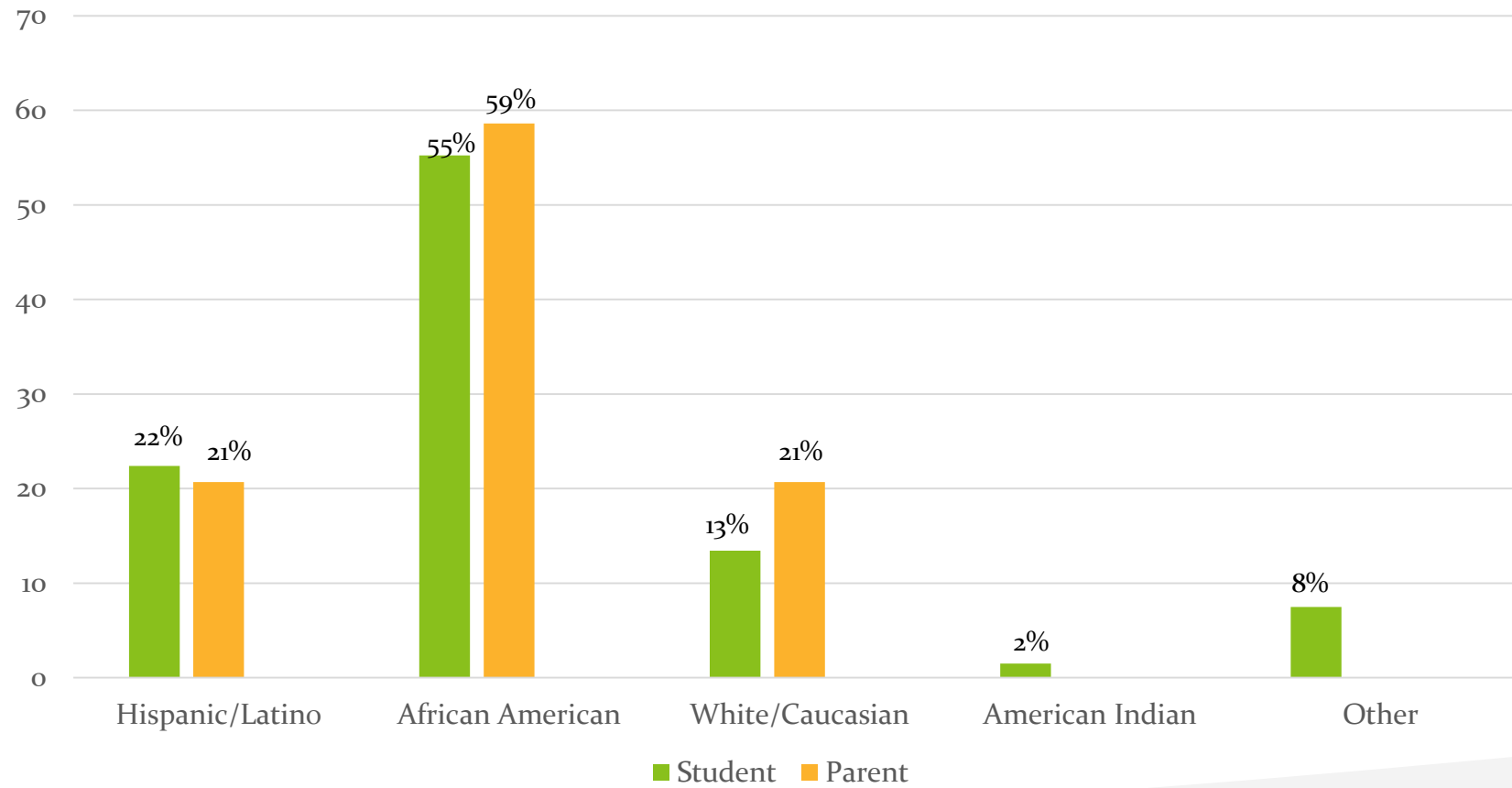


Gender:

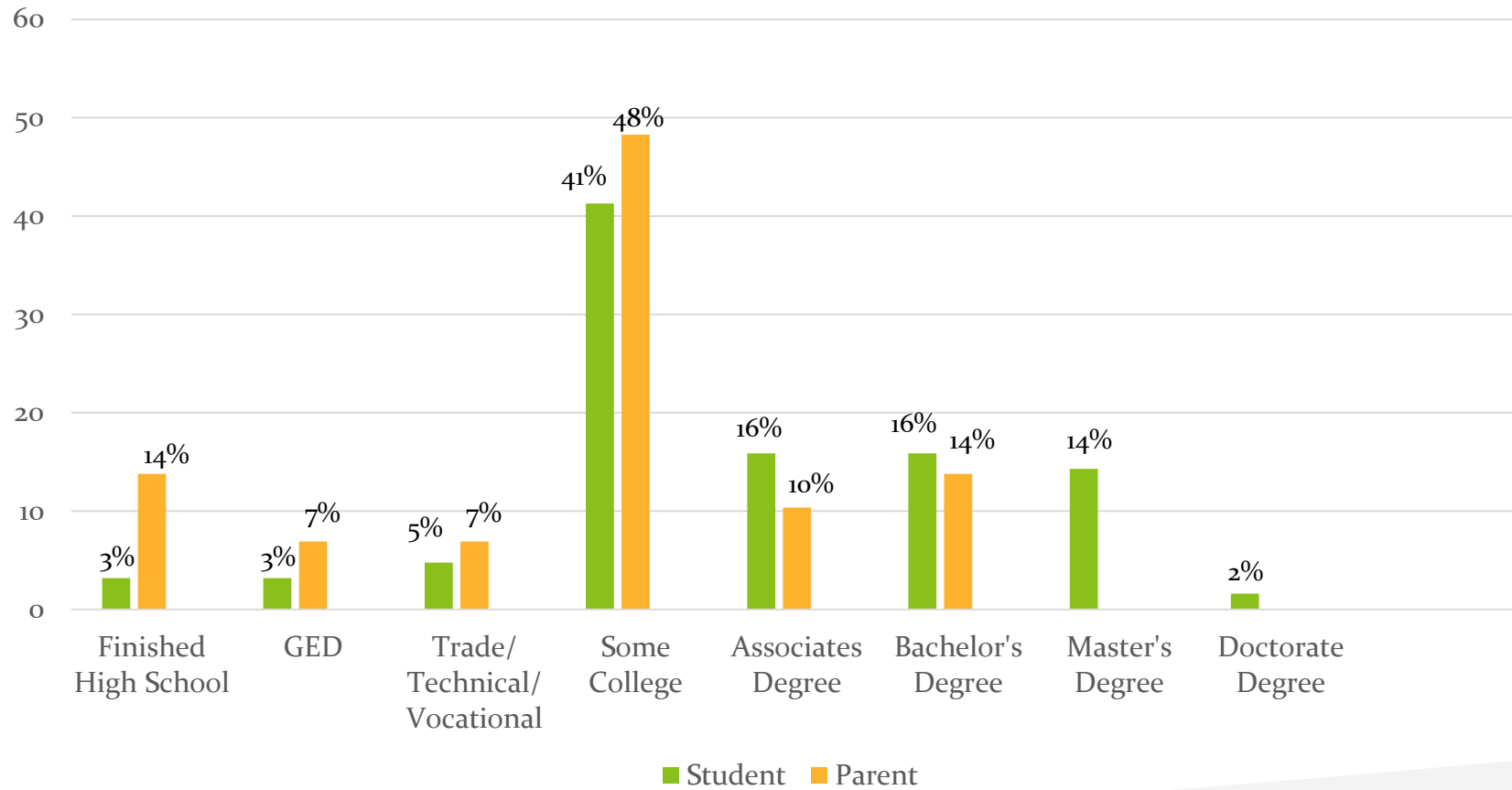




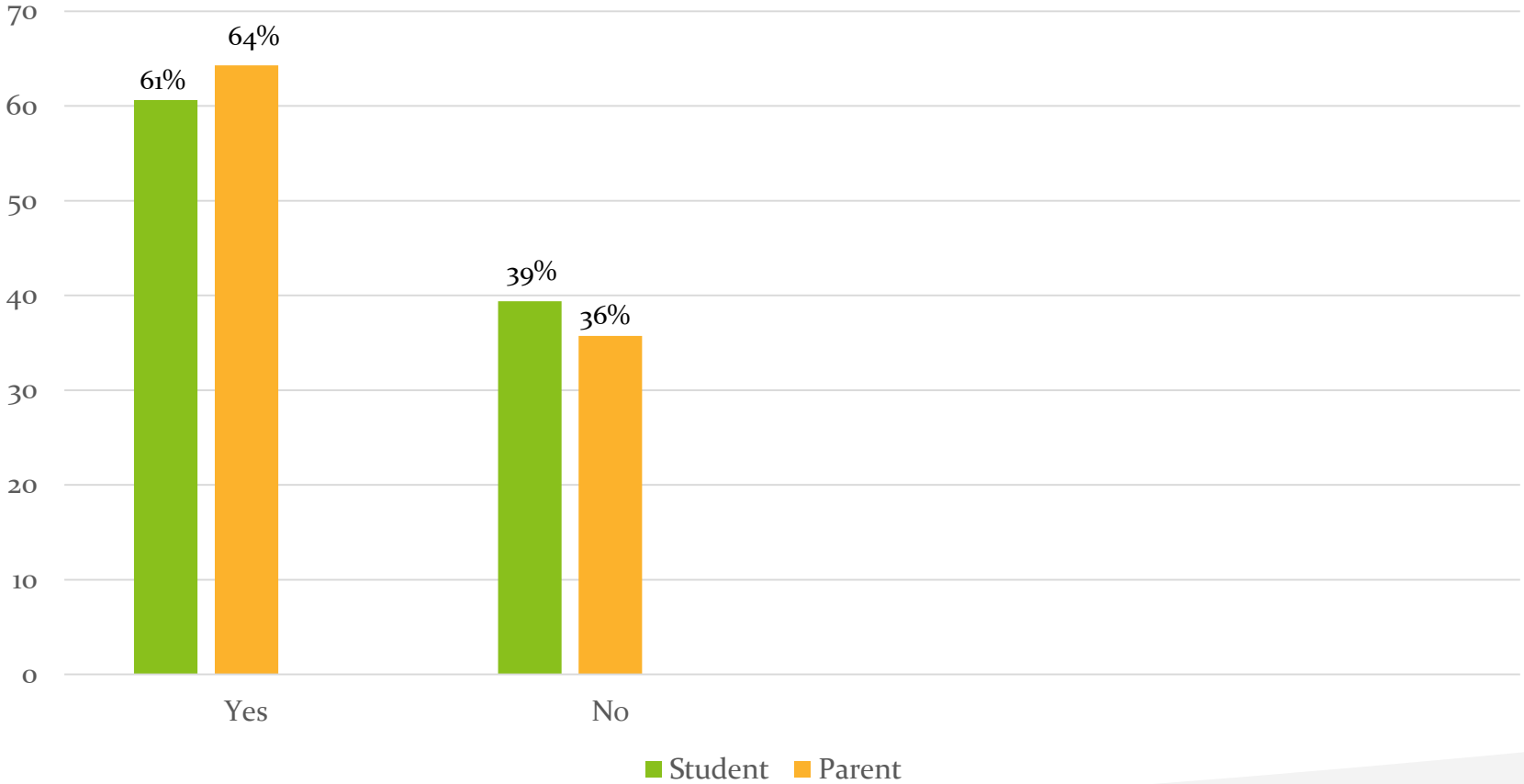
Race:



Highest level of education:

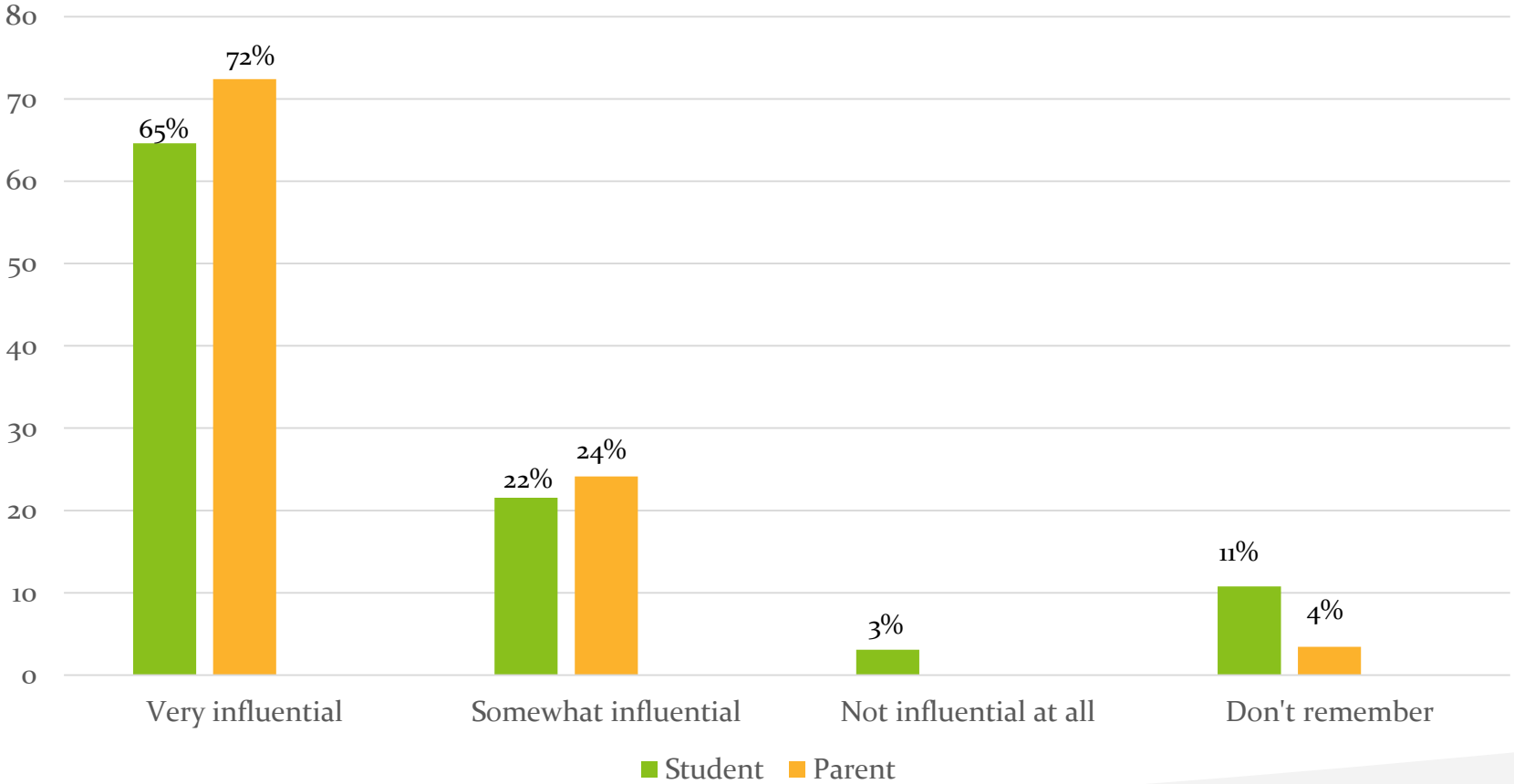


First generation student?



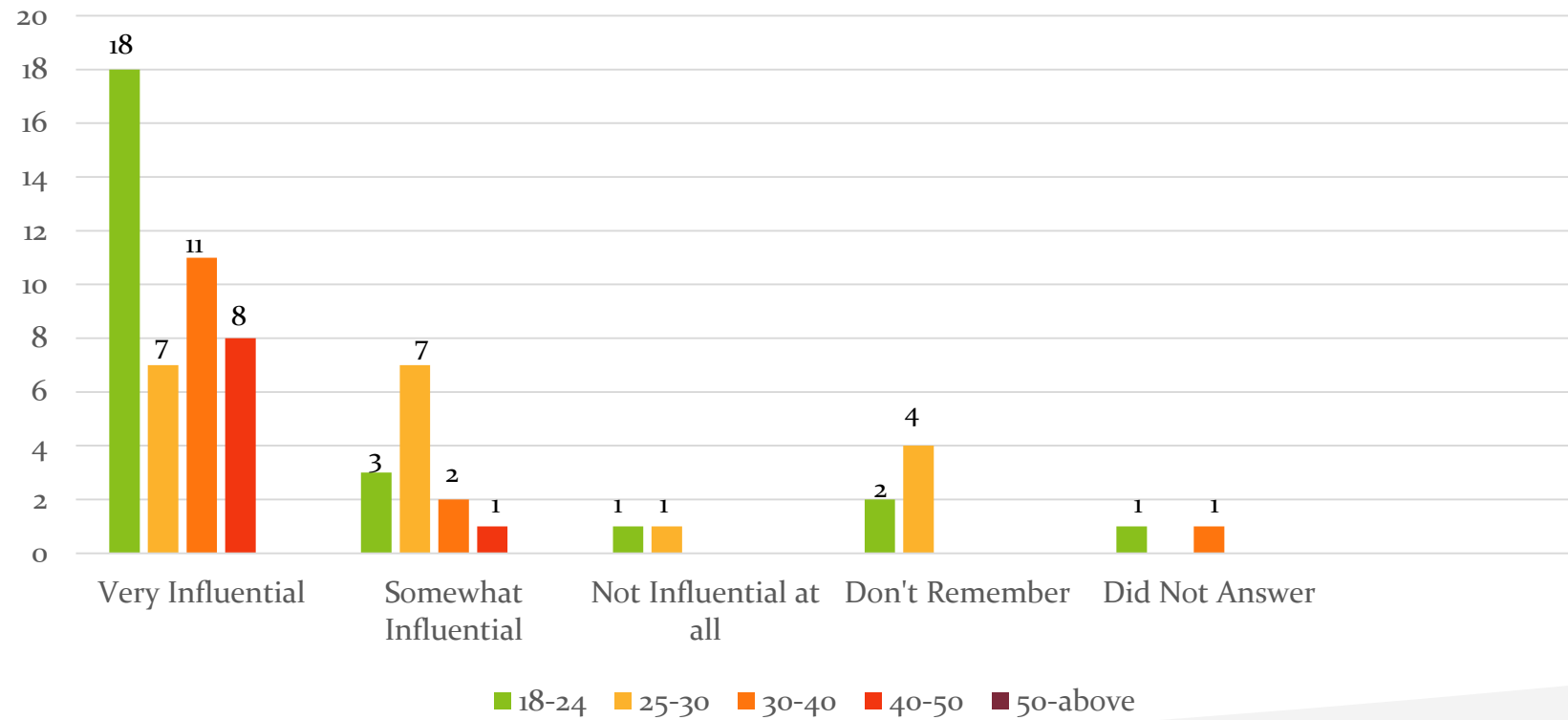


How influential was Opportunity School in helping you obtain the next level of education?



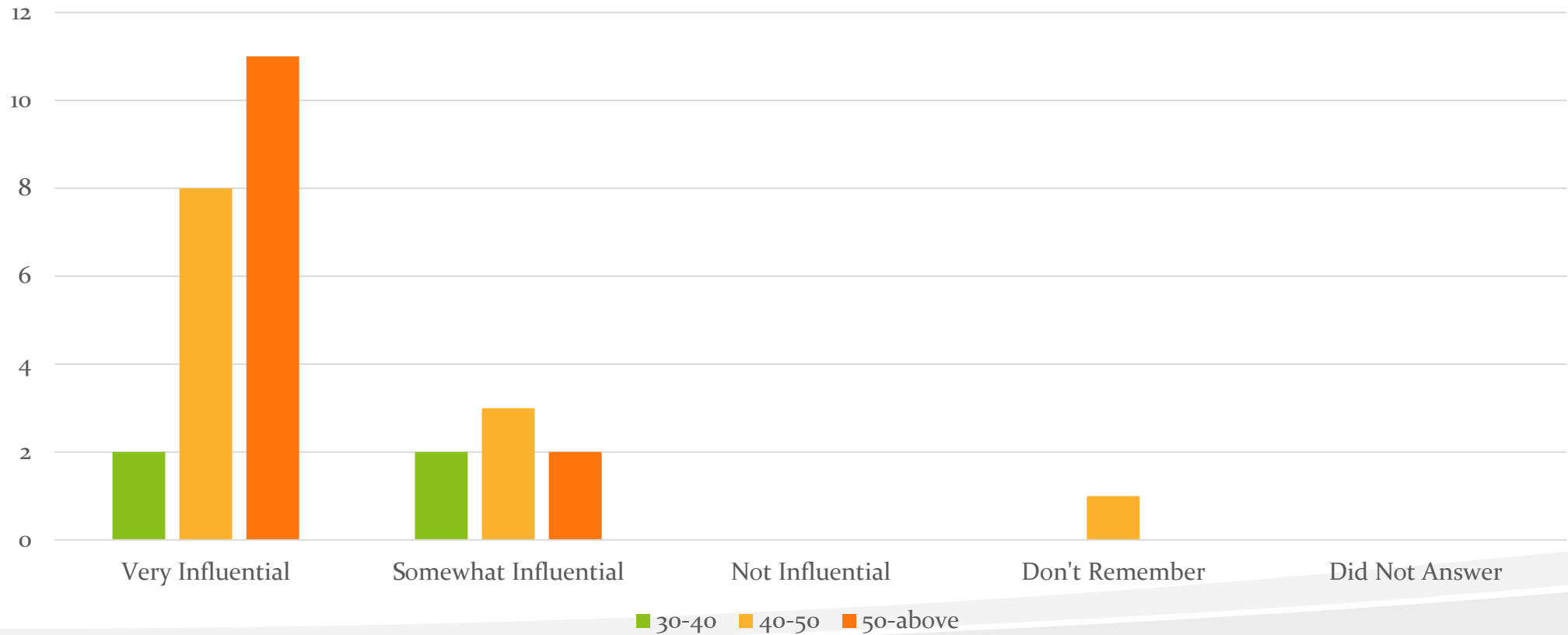
Influence of Opportunity School by AGE?

Student



Influence of Opportunity School by AGE

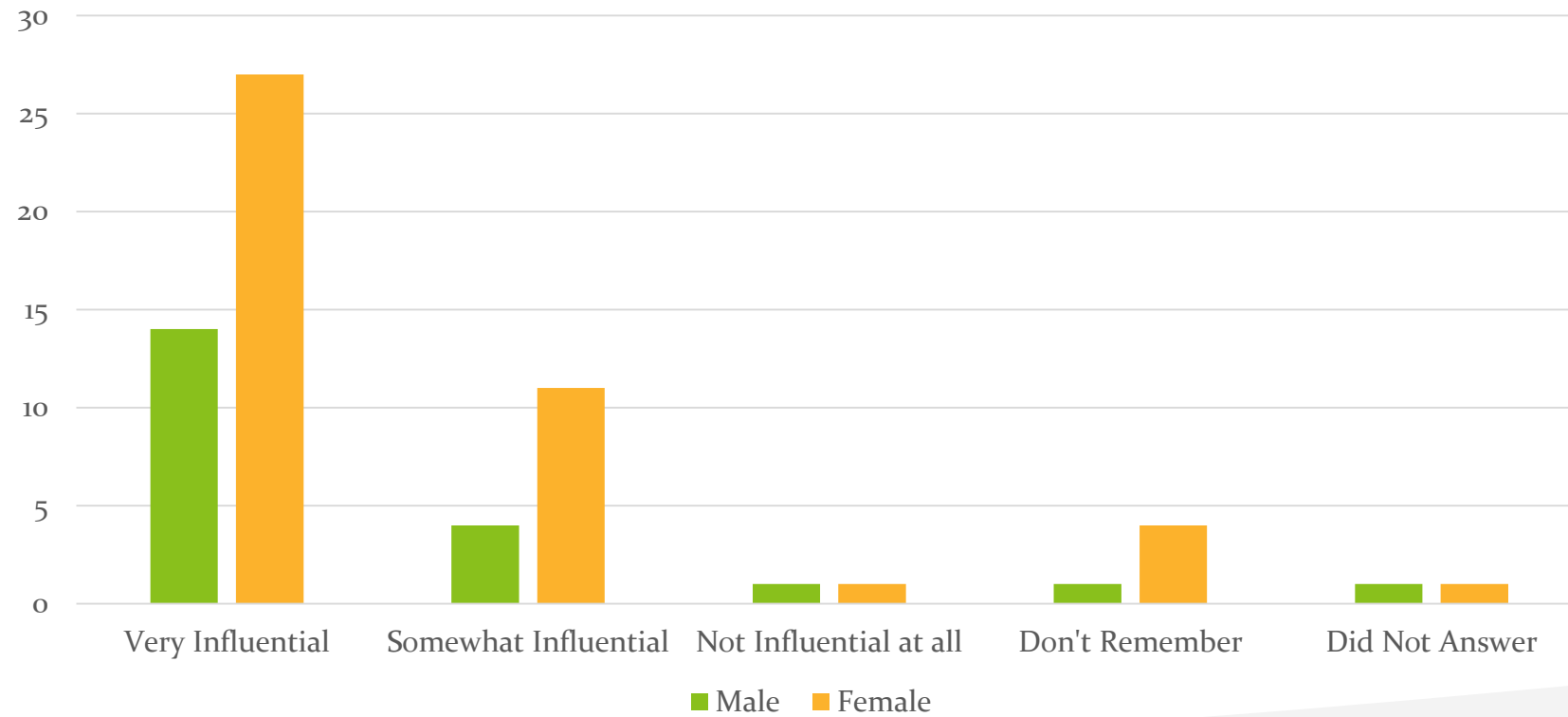
Parent





Influence of Opportunity School by Gender

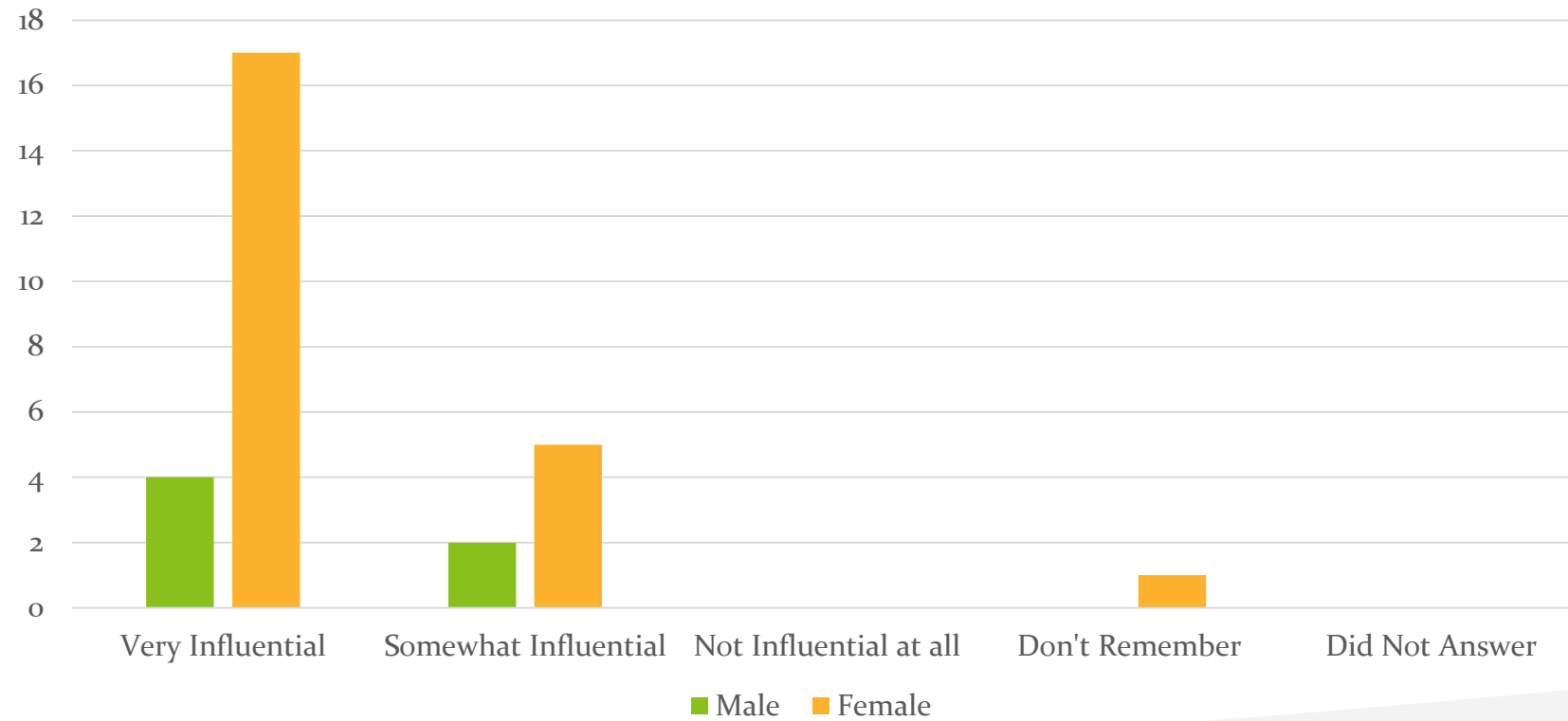
Student





Influence of Opportunity School by Gender

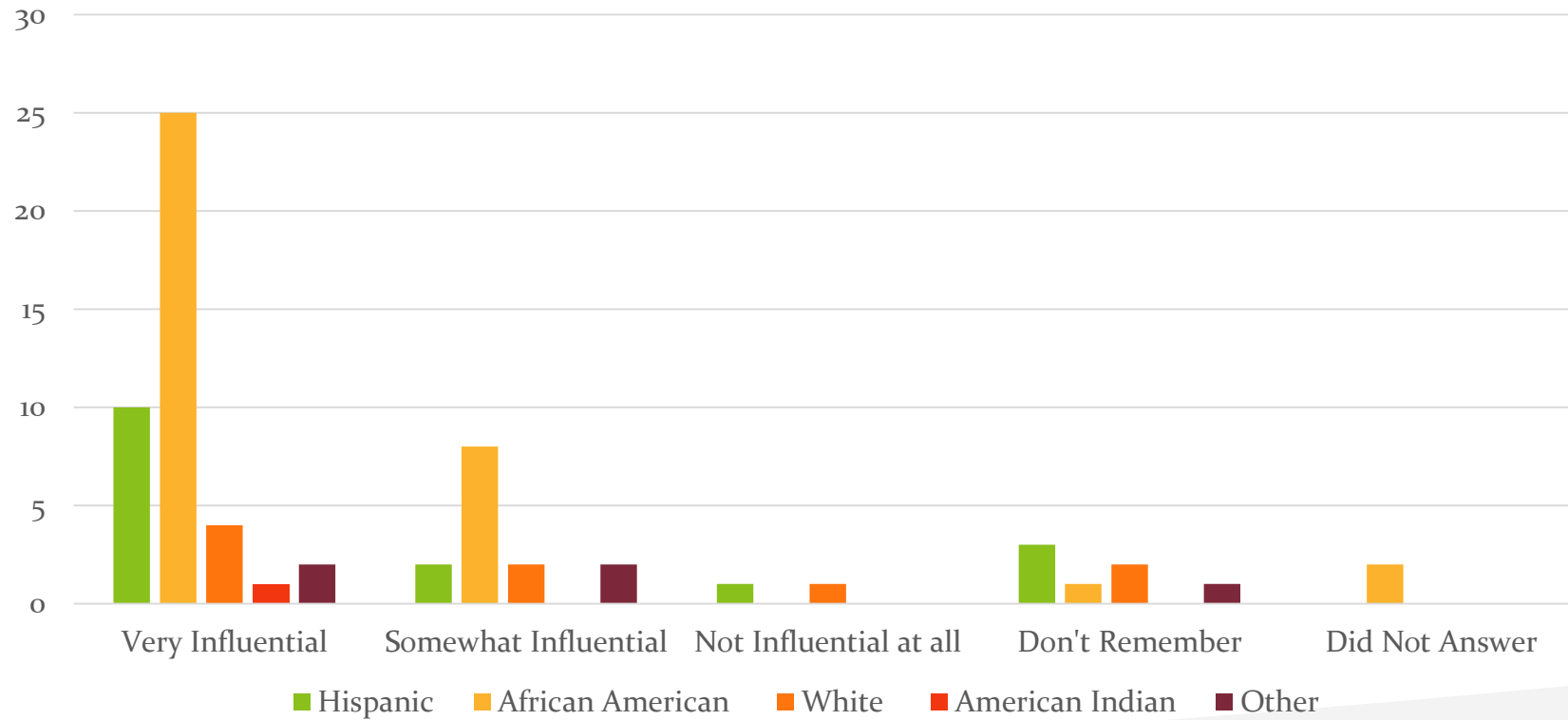
Parent





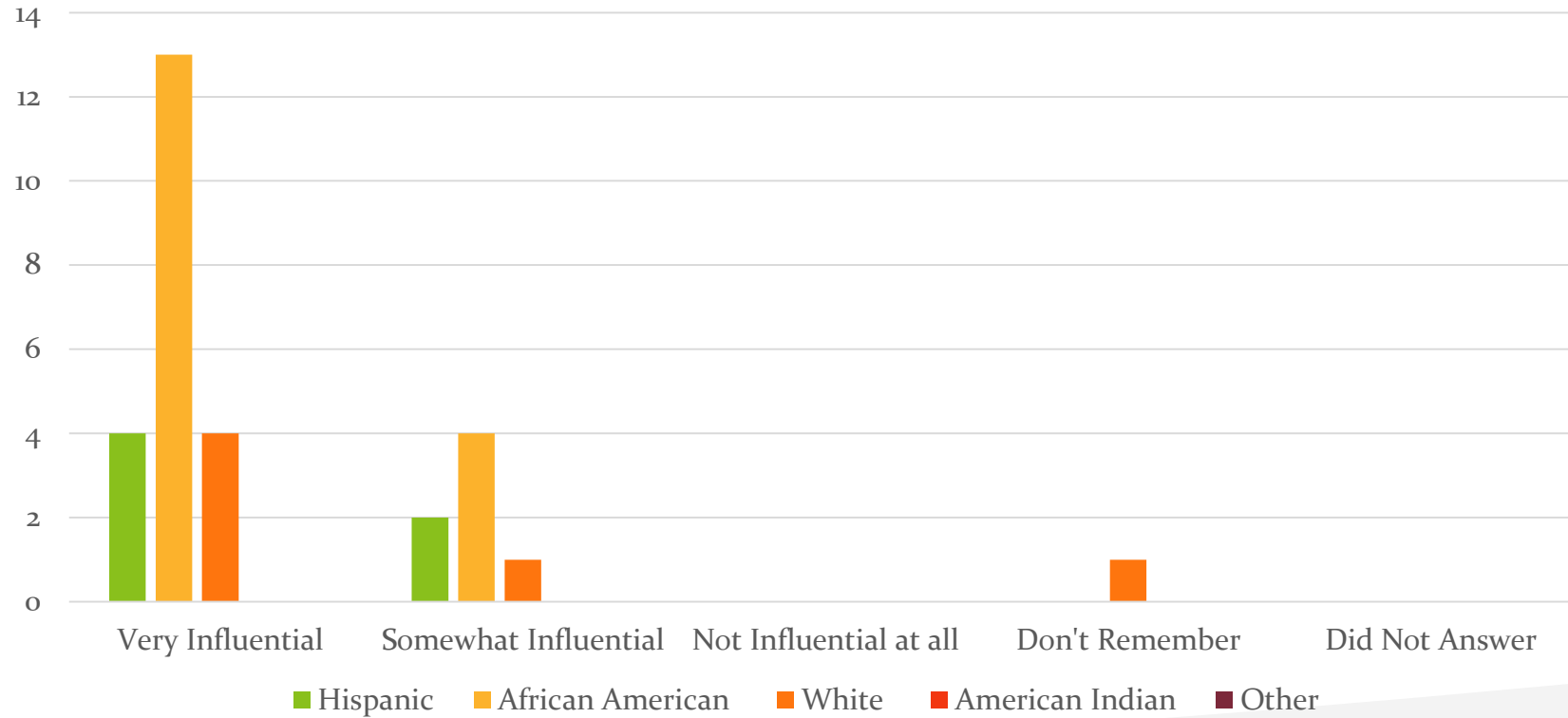
Influence of Opportunity School by Race

Student



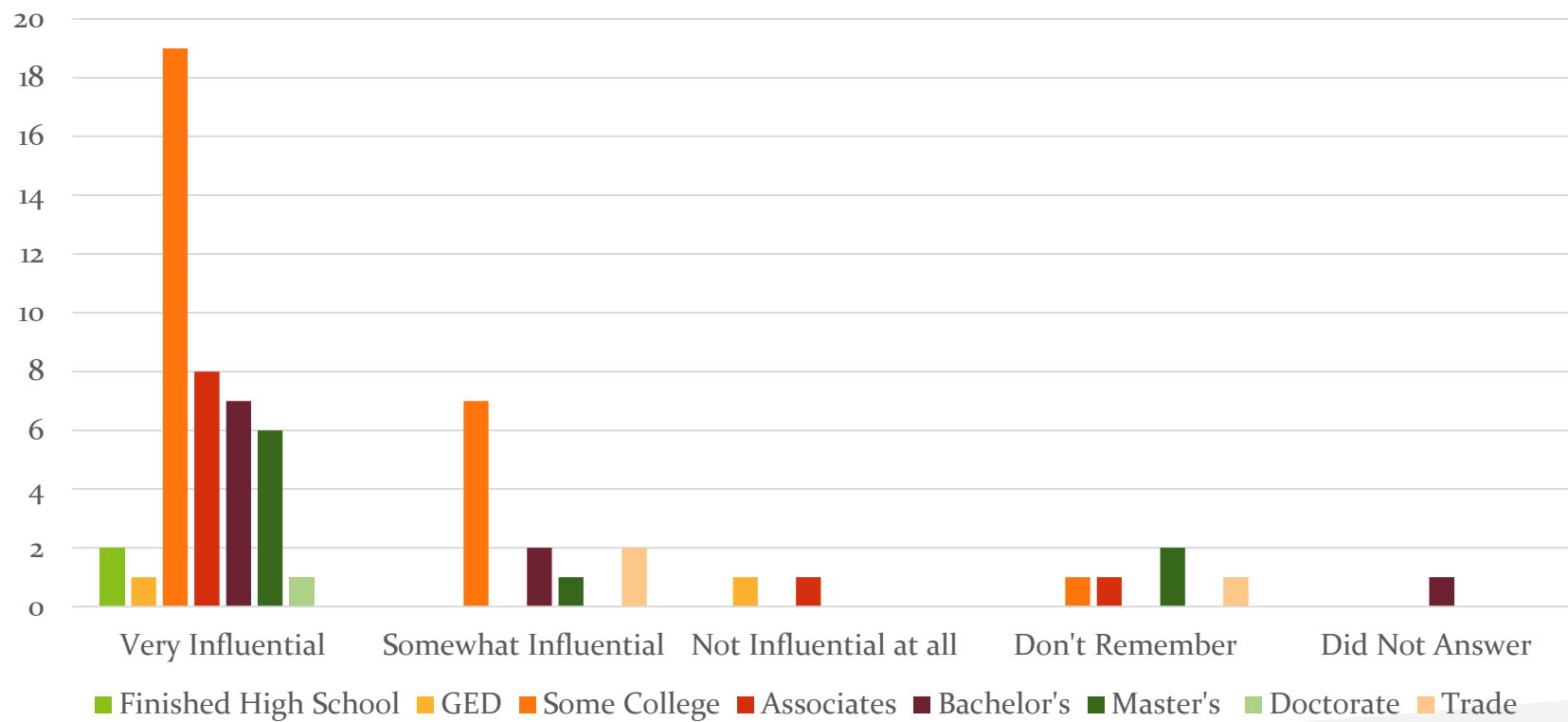
Influence of Opportunity School by Race

Parent

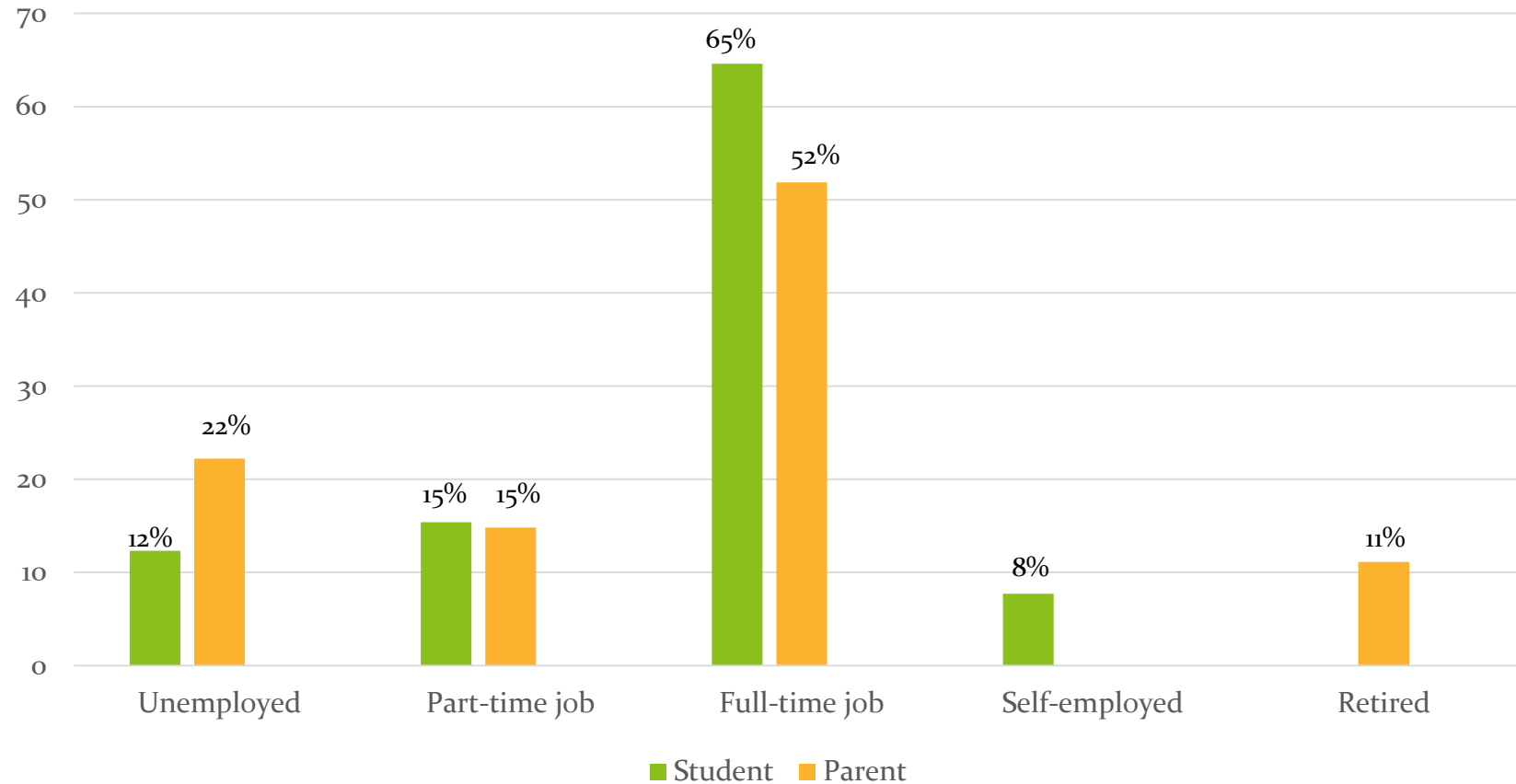


Influence of Opportunity School by Educational Level

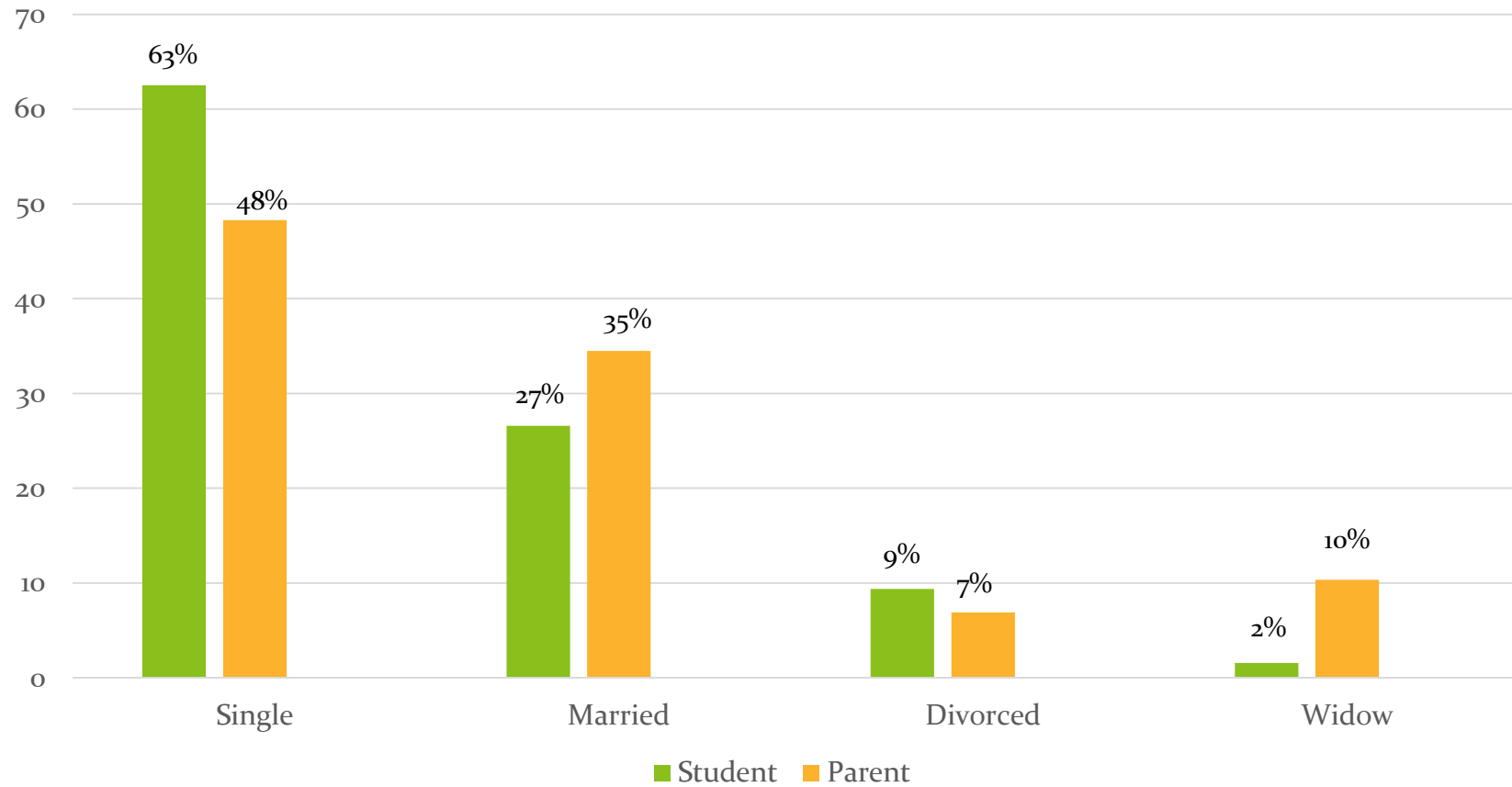
Student



Current employment status

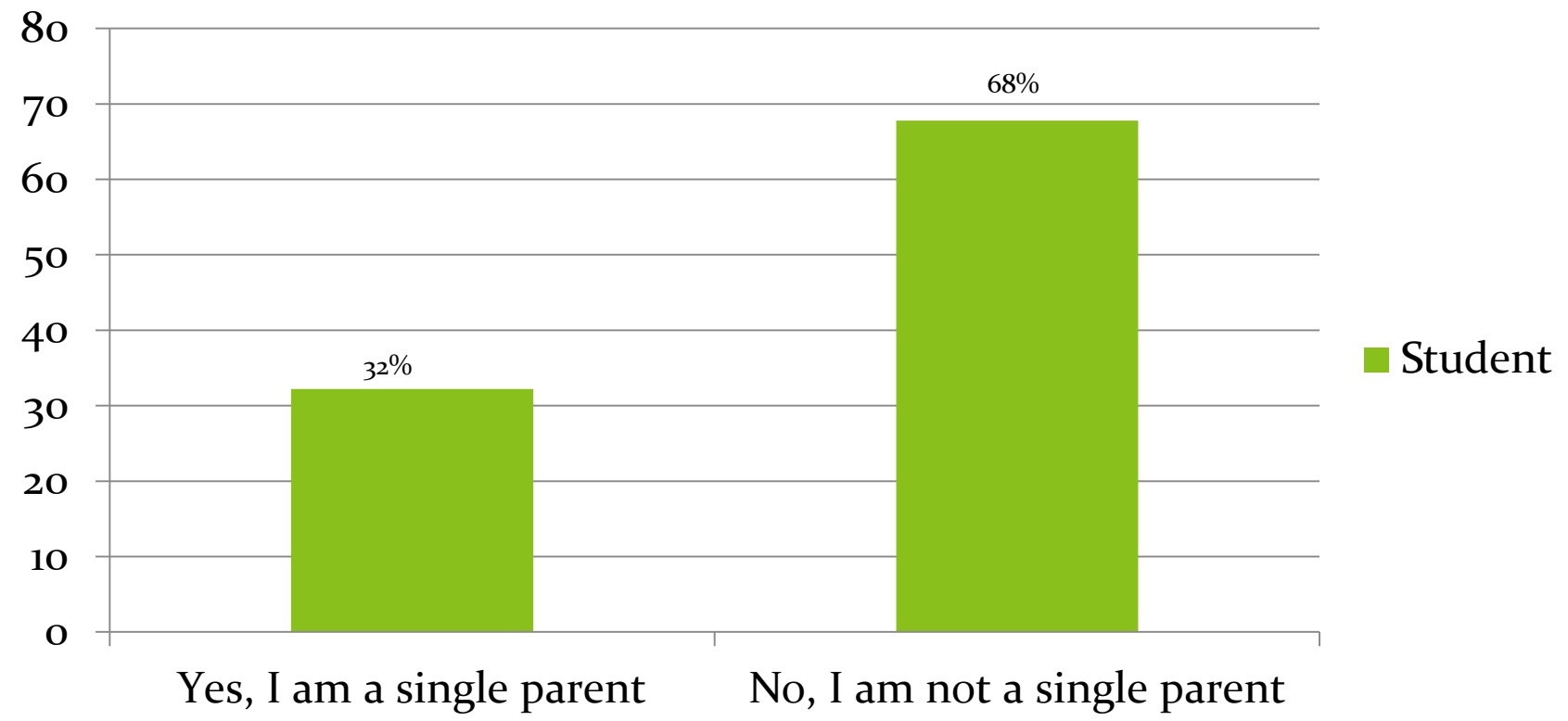


Current marital status:



Single parent:

Student



Approximate average annual household income:

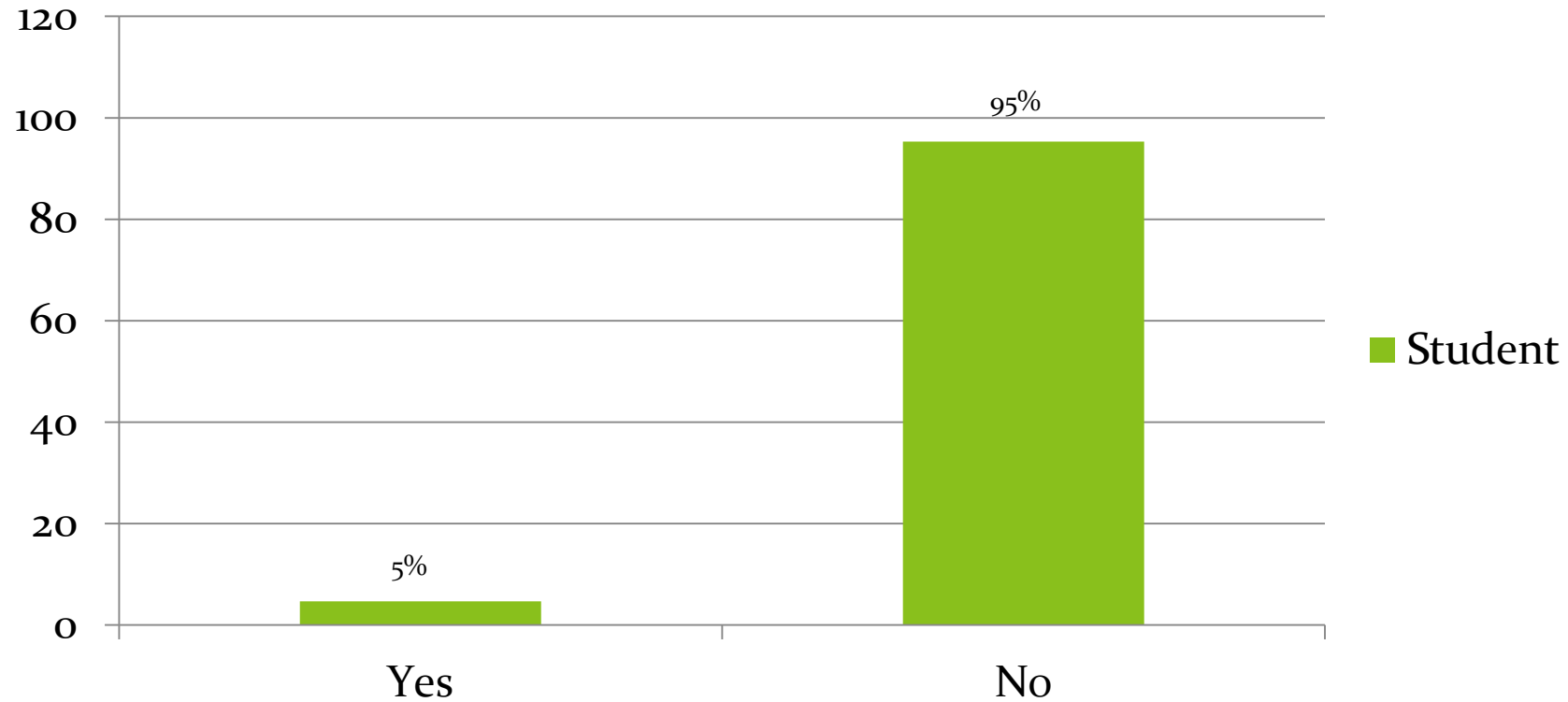
Student





Have you ever committed a felony?

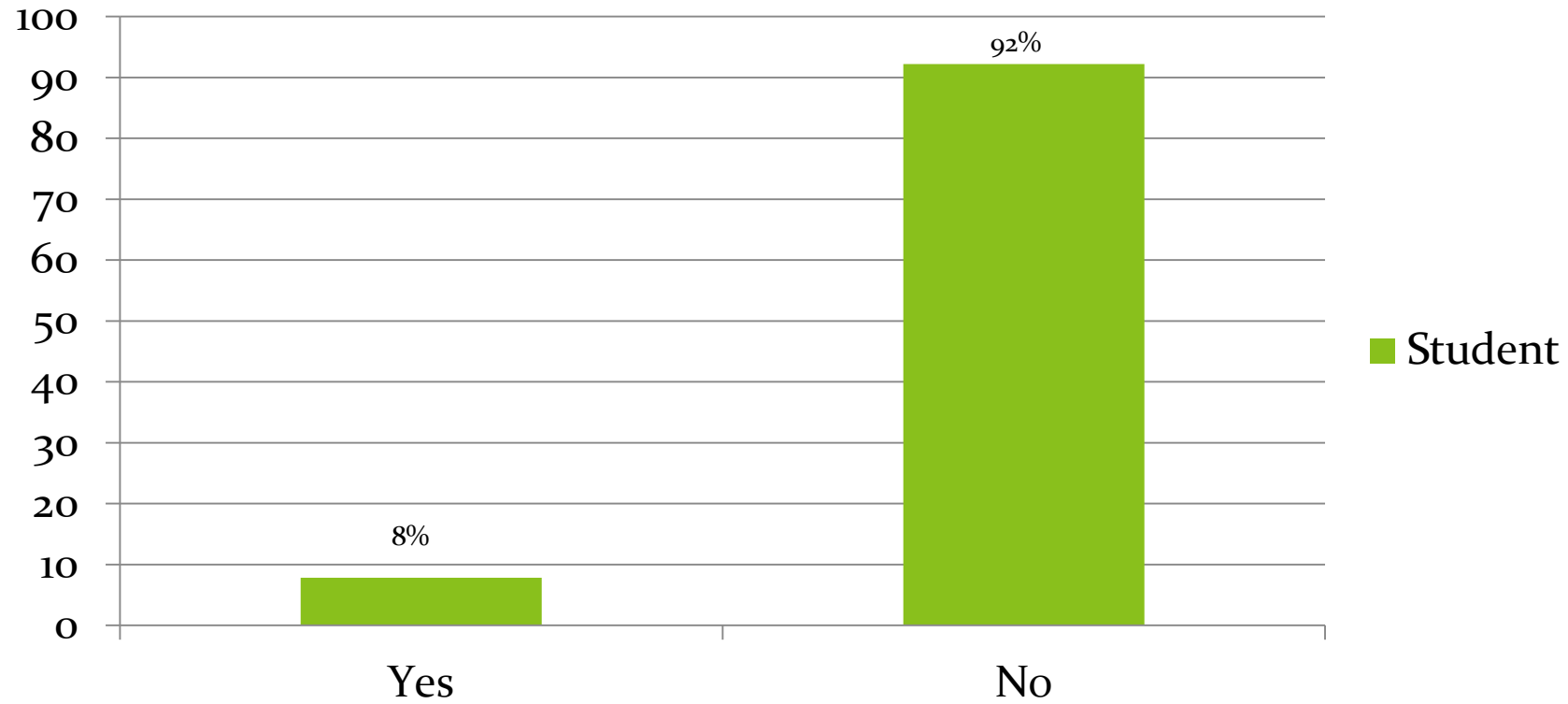
Student





Have you ever been convicted?

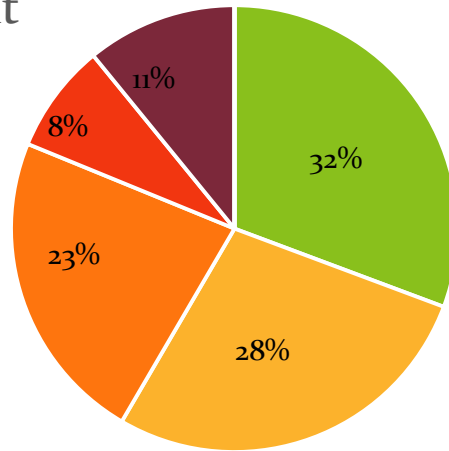
Student





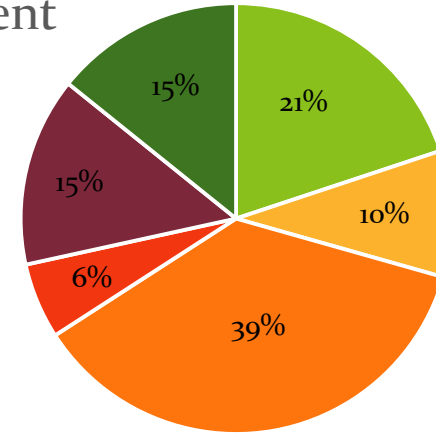
Memories of Opportunity School

Student



- School Events and Fun Activities
- Social Achievement: riding the bus, having snacks, building network
- Great teachers
- School Environment
- Academic Achievement
- School-Home Connection

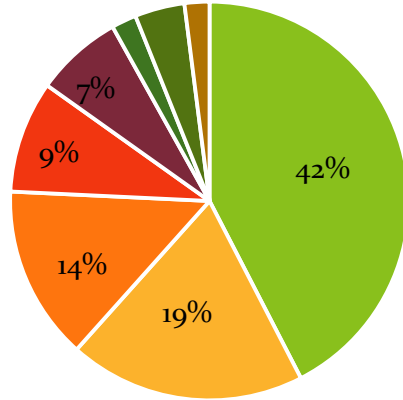
Parent



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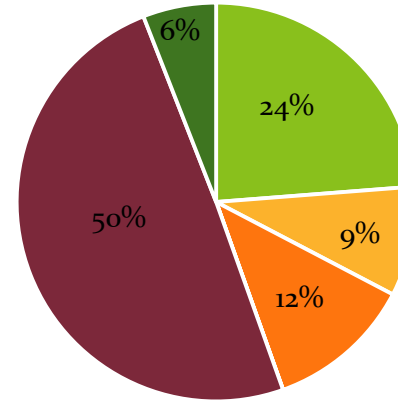
In what ways do you think the Opportunity School supported your family?

Student



- Learning/Safe Environments/Education
- Child Care/Meals
- Financial Support/School Supplies
- Transportation
- Relationships with parents/Family Support
- Mental/Emotional Support
- Career Support
- Behavior/Discipline

Parent



- Learning/Safe Environments/Education
- Child Care/Meals
- Financial Support/School Supplies
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- Relationships with parents/Family Support
- Mental/Emotional Support



Suggestions for Early Childhood Providers:

Offer Engaging, Hands-on, and Interactive Learning Centers & Activities:

- Examples: Library, Pretend (Dress Up), Letter Wall, Writing, Science, Construction, Cooking, Nature, Outdoor, etc.

Provide services for families:

- Examples: Transportation, Meals, Scholarships, Translation, Intergenerational educational support

Teacher Qualifications:

- Associates Degree or Bachelor's Degree (preferable)

Conduct Continuing Staff Development:

Examples: Curriculum alignment, Behavior Interventions, Parent Involvement Strategies



Topics to Consider in EC-6 degree programs:

1. Increase candidate understanding of young children's development by highlighting their unique characteristics and needs
2. Incorporate field experiences and observation hours in a variety of settings (including child care centers and prekindergarten classes)
3. Enhance candidates' understanding of language development and ESL teaching strategies
4. Develop candidate knowledge of developmentally appropriate, research and evidence-based assessment and instructional practices relating to foundational reading skills



Link to TExES Certification Areas :

- Importance of Oral Language
- Observe the developmental progression of skills in all content areas
- Understand the foundations of early literacy and numeracy
- Progression of human development and developmental characteristics
- Significance of involvement and communication with families

Foundational Knowledge for Early Childhood Educators

- Oral language is the base for literacy development
- Students' and families' basic needs must be met before significant learning can occur
- Positive home-school relationships should be developed and nurtured
- Clear and consistent 2-way communication is vital
- Engaging learning activities foster educational motivation