



Back-to-School Report

Syndicated Research Report

September 2022

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Summary



K-12 Parents Took to In-Store Shopping This Year, While College Students Followed a Different Path to Purchase

Most K-12 parents took to in-store shopping for this school year; however, college shoppers were more inclined to shop online. For back-to-college shoppers specifically, *friends/family* were the primary source of information for their shopping, but *colleges/universities* and *retailers* were a close second. This presents an opportunity for retailers (who aren't already doing so) to partner with colleges/universities to promote products and deals that are relevant to college students.

Many Felt the Impact of Price Increases This Back-to-School Season

With prices having increased across many categories, shoppers felt the impact this back-to-school season. Many more shoppers report having spent *more* than those who spent *less* on back-to-school items this year compared to in past years. Even still, more than half of back-to-school shoppers were not able to get everything they needed for this school year, and a family's financial situation appears to be a major factor. In fact, those back-to-school shoppers who are financially worse off than before the pandemic are the least likely to have been able to get everything they needed for this school year.

Parents With Older Children Express Concerns About Their Children Being Set Back Academically Due to the Pandemic

Academic progress is a [major concern](#) for parents and educators as kids go back to school this year. Most parents with children in school believe the pandemic has set their child behind academically. That said, the older and further along a child is in school, the more likely a parent is to feel that their child has been set back academically because of the pandemic.

A Third of Parents Feel Uncomfortable Sending Their Children Back to School This Year Due to Safety Concerns

With [school shootings on the rise](#), nearly a third of parents don't feel safe sending their children back to school this year, which is likely why concern about gun violence is higher among parents right now compared to this time last year and the year prior. Even though this issue is certainly a politically polarizing topic, parents who identify as *independents* feel the *least safe* sending their children back-to-school this year. The same goes for parents in the Northeast, whereas parents in the Midwest feel the *safest* doing so.



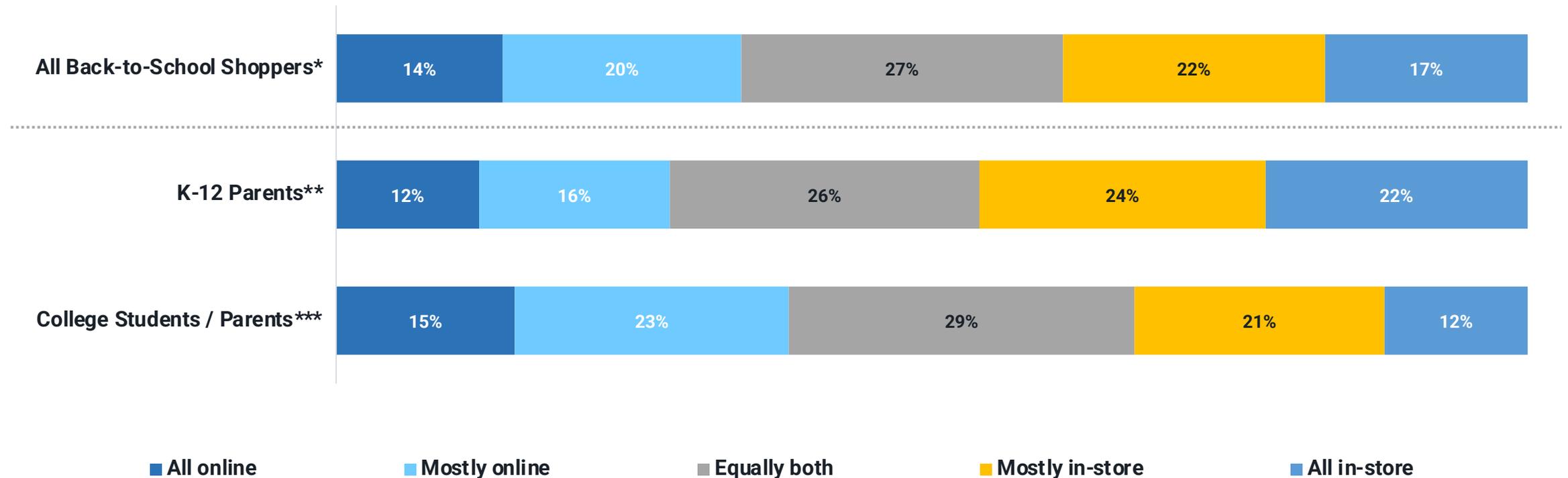
Detailed Findings

With COVID concerns having dampened compared to the past two years, more back-to-school shoppers took to shopping in stores vs. online for this school year.



However, that was more so the case for K-12 shoppers. College students and parents, on the other hand, were more likely to have shopped online than in stores this year.

Did you do most of your back to school (or college) shopping in store or online this year? (Rebased among B2S shoppers)

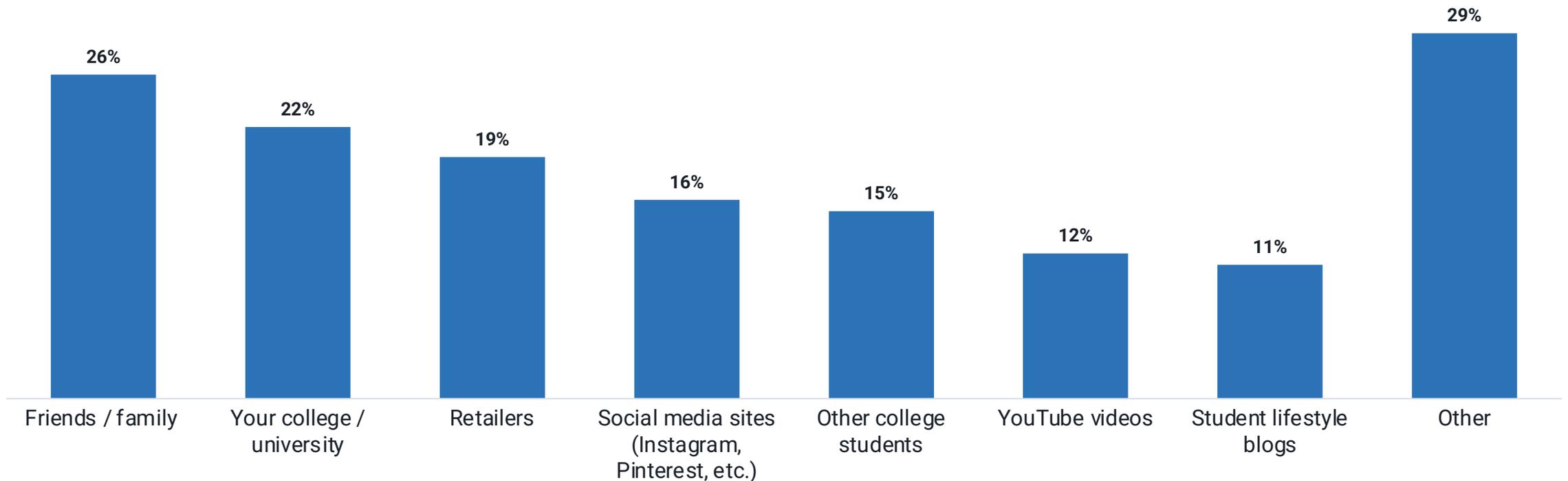


For college shoppers specifically, friends/family may have been the primary source of information for their shopping, but colleges/universities and retailers were a close second.



For retailers who aren't already doing so, this presents an opportunity to partner with colleges/universities to promote products and deals that are relevant to college students.

What sources did you use to get information about back to college shopping for this Fall? (Please select all that apply.)*
(Rebased among college B2S shoppers)



With prices having increased across many categories, shoppers felt the impact this back-to-school season. Many more shoppers report having spent more (46%) than those who spent less (25%) on back-to-school items this year compared to past years.



Did you end up spending more or less money on back to school (or college) items this year compared to previous years? (Rebased among B2S shoppers)*	%
Much more	22%
Somewhat more	24%
Same amount	29%
Somewhat less	11%
Much less	14%

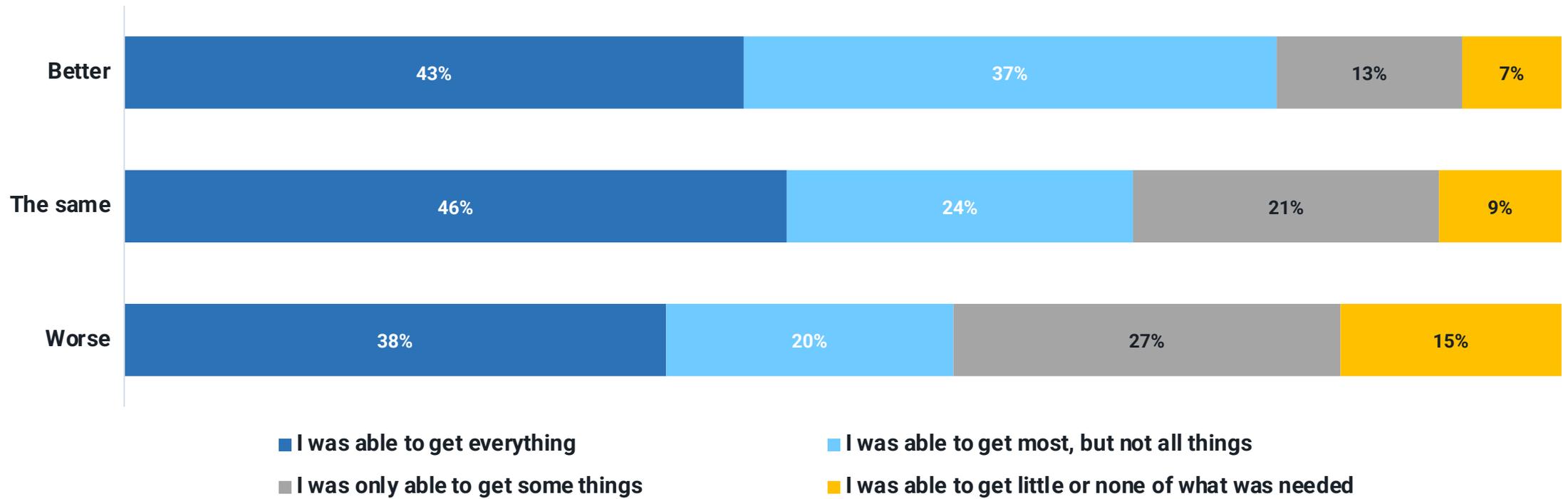
Even still, more than half (52%) of back-to-school shoppers were not able to get everything they needed for this school year.

Were you able to get everything you and / or your child needed to go back to school (or college) this year? (Rebased among B2S shoppers)*	%
I was able to get everything	48%
I was able to get most, but not all things	23%
I was only able to get some things	18%
I was able to get little or none of what was needed	11%



An individual's personal financial situation is almost certainly a factor in that. In fact, those back-to-school shoppers who are financially worse off than before the pandemic are the least likely to have been able to get everything they needed for this school year.

Would you say you're financially better or worse off than before the COVID-19 pandemic? *compared with* Were you able to get everything you and / or your child needed to go back to school (or college) this year? (Rebased among B2S shoppers)*



Academic progress is also a major concern for parents and educators as kids go back to school this year. Most parents with children in school (52%) believe the pandemic has set their child behind academically.



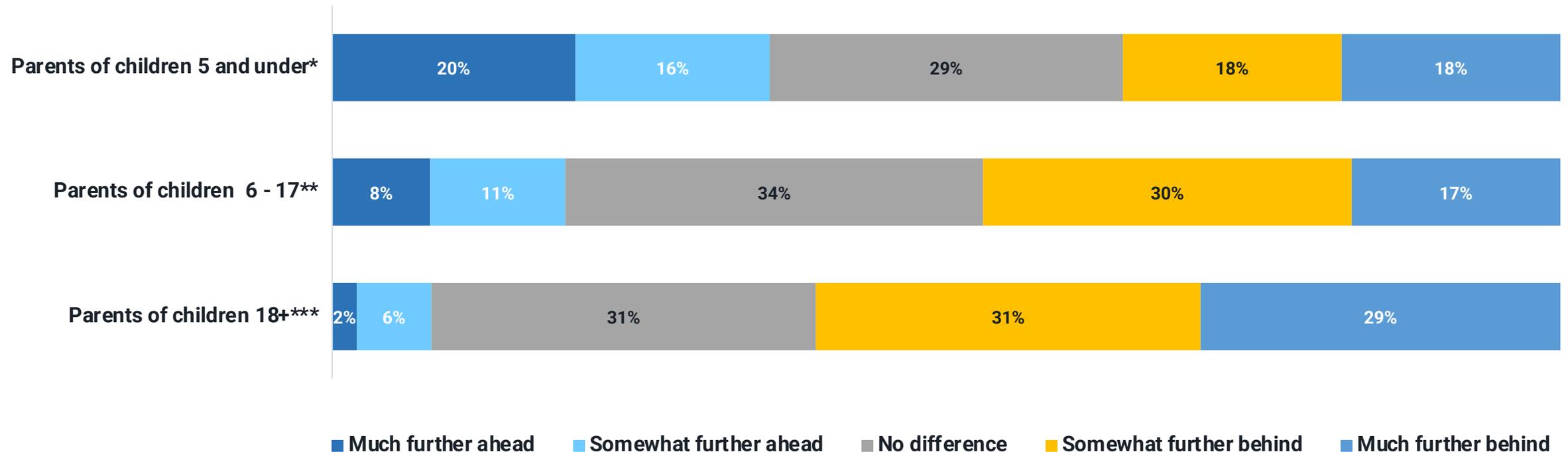
Going into this school year, do you feel as though the pandemic has set your child back or ahead academically? (Rebased among those with children in school / college)*	%
Much further ahead	9%
Somewhat further ahead	11%
No difference	28%
Somewhat further behind	29%
Much further behind	23%

The older their children are, the more likely a parent is to feel that their child has been set back academically because of the pandemic.



In fact, parents with young children (5 and under) are just as likely to say their child is further ahead versus behind academically.

If you have children, how old are they? (Select all that apply) compared with Going into this school year, do you feel as though the pandemic has set your child back or ahead academically? (Rebased among those with children in school / college)



Most parents feel safe sending their children back to school this year, but there's still a large portion (32%) who don't.

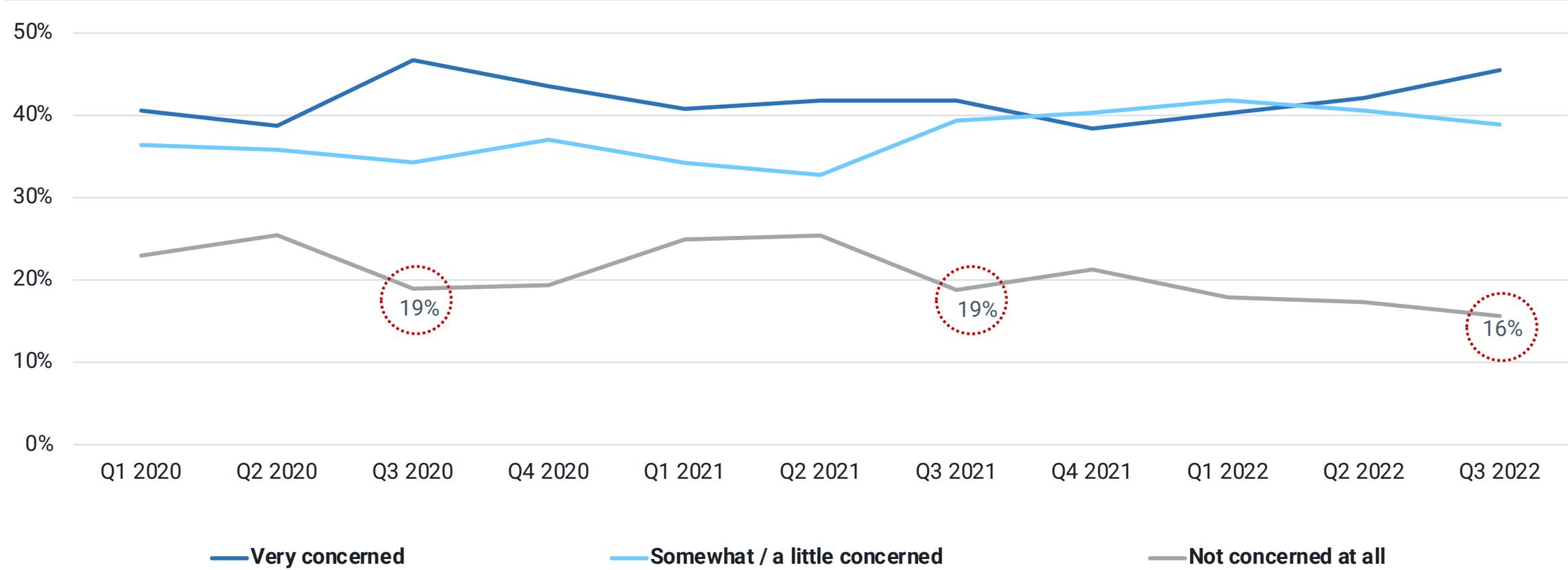


How safe do you feel sending your child back to school (or college) this year? (Rebased among those with children in school / college)*	%
Very safe	35%
Somewhat safe	33%
Somewhat unsafe	19%
Very unsafe	13%

Not to mention, concern about gun violence (in general) is higher among parents right now compared to this time last year and the year prior.



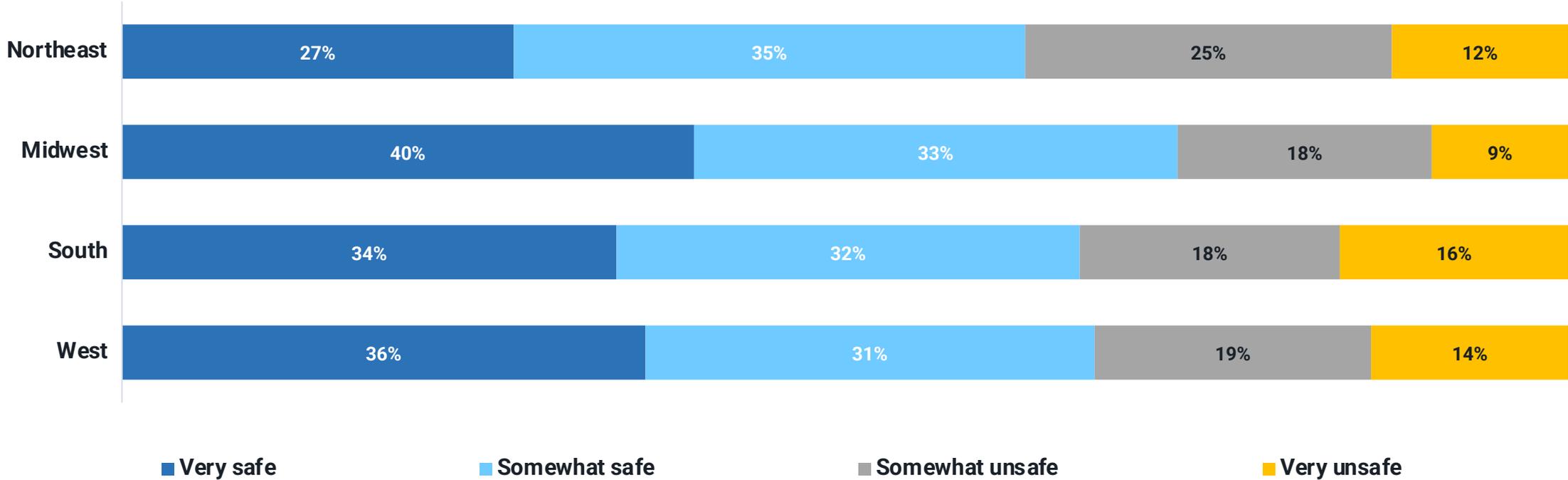
How concerned are you right now about gun violence?* (Among parents)





Parents in the Midwest feel most safe sending their children to school this year, while those in the Northeast feel the least safe doing so.

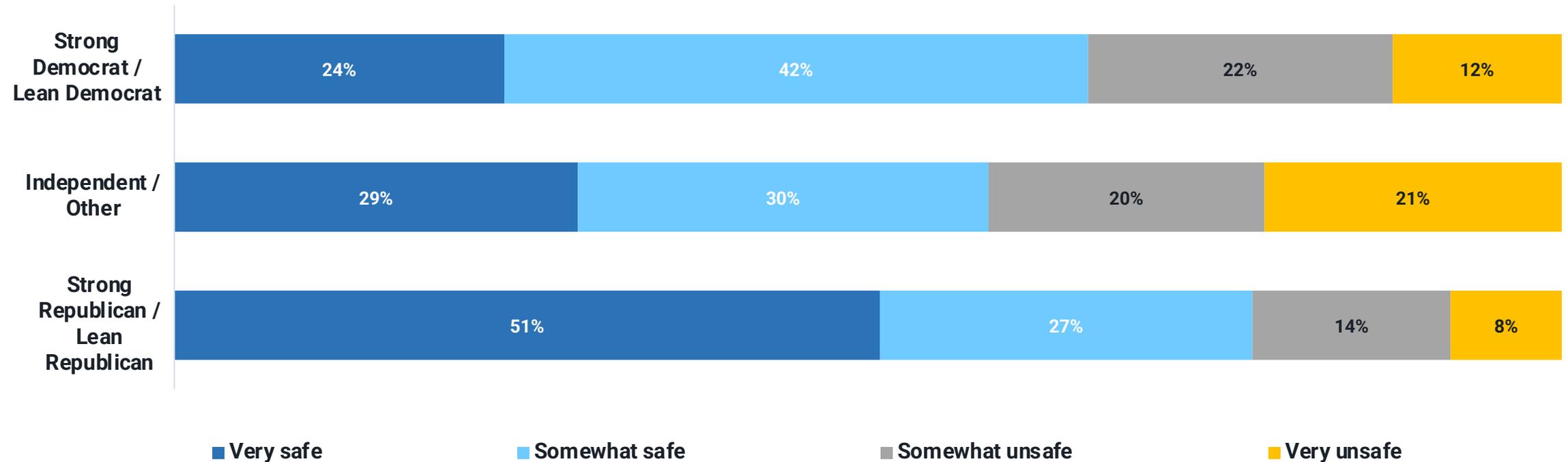
Which U.S. Census region are you in? *compared with* How safe do you feel sending your child back to school (or college) this year? (Rebased among those with children in school / college)*



While the issue of safety in schools is certainly a politically polarizing topic, parents who identify as *independents* feel the *least* safe sending their children back-to-school this year.



Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent / Other? **compared with** How safe do you feel sending your child back to school (or college) this year? (Rebased among those with children in school / college)*



Background & Methodology



Background

This is the third and final report in a back-to-school report series this year, which focuses on back-to-school shopping habits and social / political / cultural / economic forces impacting both K-12 parents and those attending college this year.



Methodology

CivicScience leveraged its standard collection methodology (explained in more detail on [the following slide](#)) to capture thousands of responses across dozens of questions—some of which have been collecting for months or years, and others which have only been asked one time for this report.

Because of our proprietary collection methodology, every question and cross-tab has a unique number of responses and date ranges, which are mentioned at the bottom of each slide where response data is shown. Appropriate weighting schemes are also applied to ensure a balanced and representative sample according to US Census figures (age / gender).

The CivicScience Intelligent Polling Platform and Methodology

We've pioneered a new method of "always-on" quantitative online research that can capture representative samples all day, every day.



OUR DATA SOURCING

We source our data through partnerships with hundreds of online and mobile content publishers. For them, the integration of our polls and quizzes improves on-site engagement time and provides audience detail unavailable elsewhere. We aggregate all the response data into our centralized platform.



OUR COLLECTION PROCESS

Our quizzes and polls are non-intrusively embedded in a website's content experience and serve a short set of diverse questions designed to keep respondents engaged. If they choose, respondents can continue to answer a seemingly endless series of fun quizzes and engagement questions as well as custom and syndicated research questions.



OUR RESPONDENTS

Our data is reliable and organic because our polls are 100% voluntary and respondents are kept anonymous, even to us. They enjoy voicing their opinions and seeing aggregate results presented back to them. Because we collect large response volumes on a national scale, we can deliver representative samples that can be segmented and analyzed in many ways.



OUR ANALYTICS

As respondents answer our questions, we store all their answers over time in an anonymous profile. We then use proprietary advanced technology to analyze the data in aggregate and in near real time, cross-tabulating questions to find statistically meaningful correlations for clients to navigate.