

**Safer Teachers,  
Safer Students:**

**Back-to-School Testing  
Program Summary**

**January 9, 2021**



**Wellesley Education Foundation**



# Safer Teachers, Safer Students: Back-to-School Testing Program Background

- In July of 2020, the **Wellesley Education Foundation** (WEF) began a partnership with local scientists, physicians, and school administrators to support an ambitious goal of establishing one of the first K-12 public-school viral testing programs in the nation
- Working in collaboration with diverse communities across the state (*The Safer Teachers, Safer Students: Back-to-School Testing Collaborative*), our collective objective is to develop a framework for SARS-CoV-2 testing in all public schools, and to create a call for action for universal access to testing
- In our commitment to equity, we believe that Wellesley bears a civic responsibility to lead the charge in pioneering a pilot testing program, and to further advocate for funding to deliver equivalent programs in some of the hardest hit communities in the state, so that their children may safely return to school

# Safer Teachers, Safer Students: Back-to-School Testing Program Timeline

## July

WEF partners with local scientists and school administrators to support implementation of a viral testing pilot program

### Goals:

- Establish a SARS-CoV-2 pilot testing program in Wellesley Public Schools
- Work in collaboration with diverse communities across Massachusetts
- Create framework for SARS-CoV-2 testing across all public schools

## Early to Mid September

Operations planning / vendor evaluation process begins

WEF and members of multi-town collaborative seek donors to provide aid for testing programs in Chelsea and Revere

- Solicit philanthropic interest within Wellesley community
- Engage Life Science Cares (LSC) – a nonprofit science industry collective
- Secure \$250K commitment from LSC for Chelsea and Revere

WEF COVID-19 Innovation Fund launched to support school safety; Initial solicitation slated for viral testing program

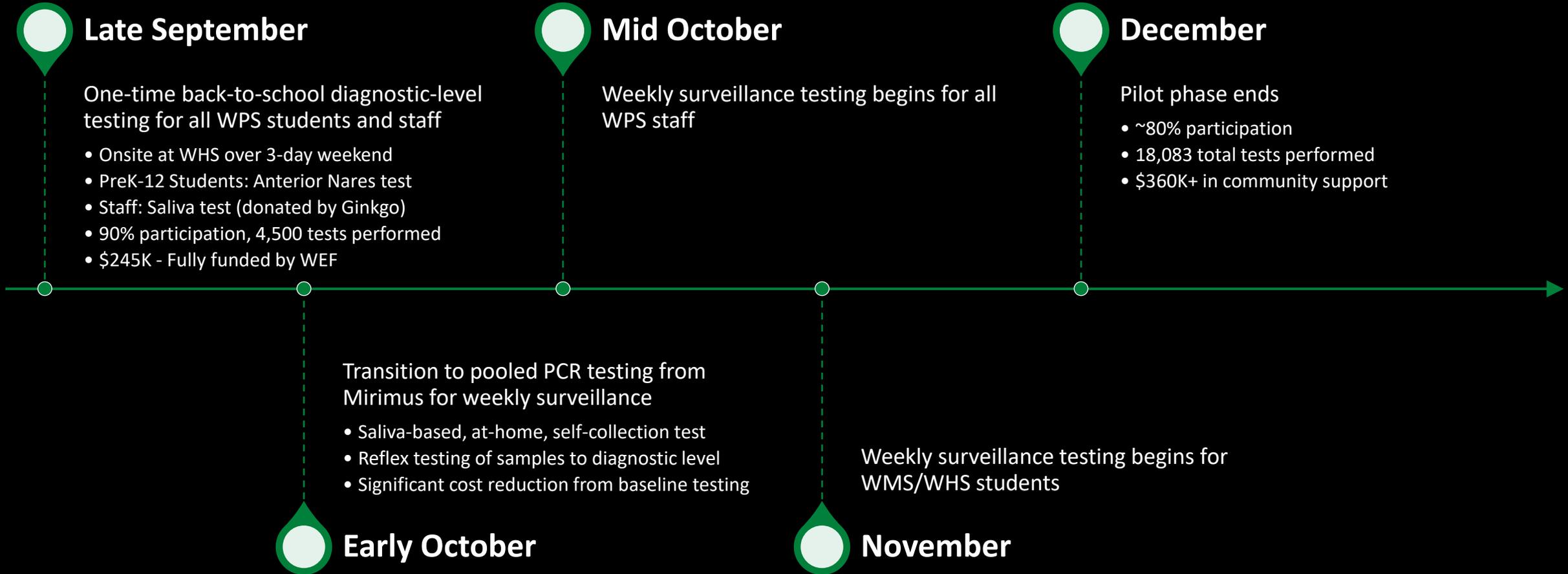
WEF surveys WPS Parents to gauge testing program interest

- WEF Board approves initial contribution of \$250K from Endowment
- 94% of WPS parents indicate overwhelming support for a testing program
- WEF launches town-wide fundraising campaign for Wellesley program

## August

Availability of testing program allows for agreement with WEA for return to in-person learning

# Safer Teachers, Safer Students: Back-to-School Testing Program Timeline



# WPS Viral Testing Pilot: Components



Ensuring a Pathway for  
Symptomatic Testing



One-Time Back-to-School Baseline  
Test for All Students and Staff



Weekly Surveillance Testing for All  
Staff



Weekly Surveillance Testing for a  
Subset of Students

# WPS Viral Testing Pilot: Goals



Outbreak prevention



Maximization of in-person learning



Reduction of fear and anxiety



Reassurance in efficacy of safety protocols and mitigation efforts

# WPS Viral Testing Pilot: Outcomes



## 60 total cases identified

19 cases via surveillance testing  
41 cases via outside testing  
22 staff, 38 students, 73% WHS/WMS



## Cluster of in-school transmission identified in WHS office space

Potential outbreak prevented  
Studied airflow, density and traffic pattern to identify cause and mitigation



## Schools remained open

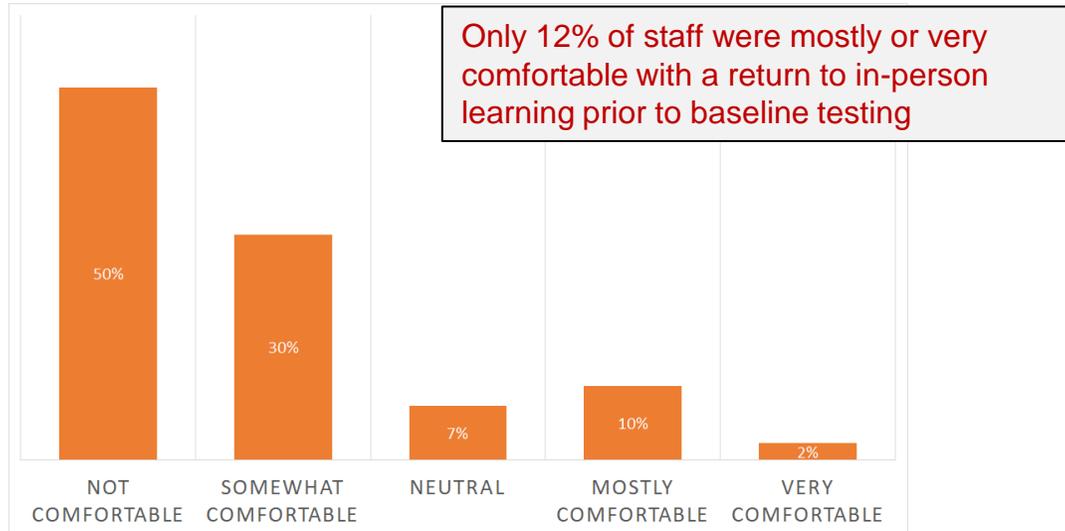
WMS remained open while WHS problem was researched  
WHS reopened based on data after temporary move to remote



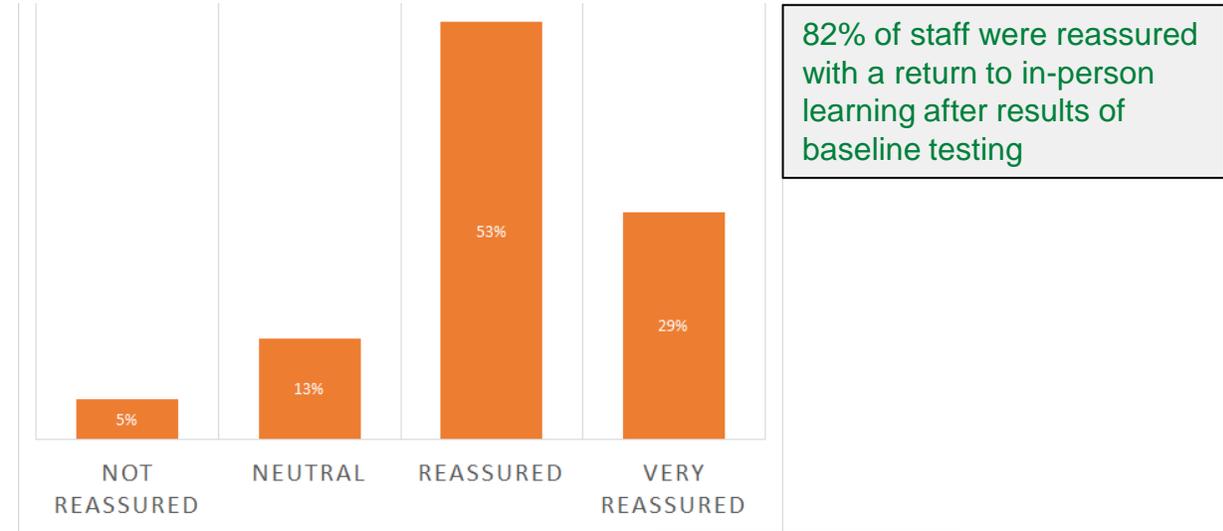
## Survey results from 1,149 participants indicate positive correlation between availability of testing and degree of reassurance in school safety

# Baseline Testing: Level of Reassurance Provided to Staff & Parents

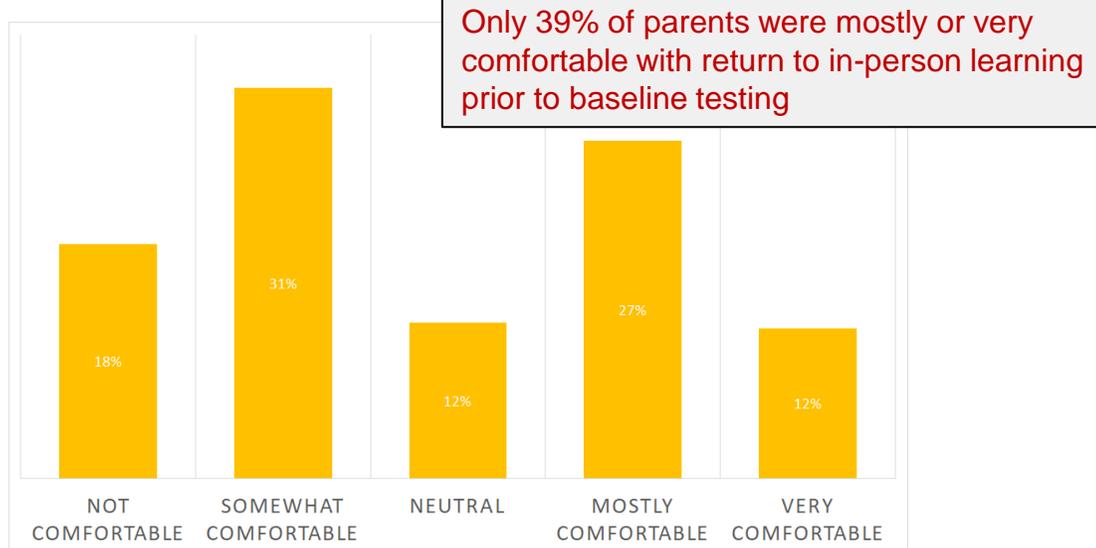
## Staff Level of Comfort with In-Person Learning: Before Baseline Testing



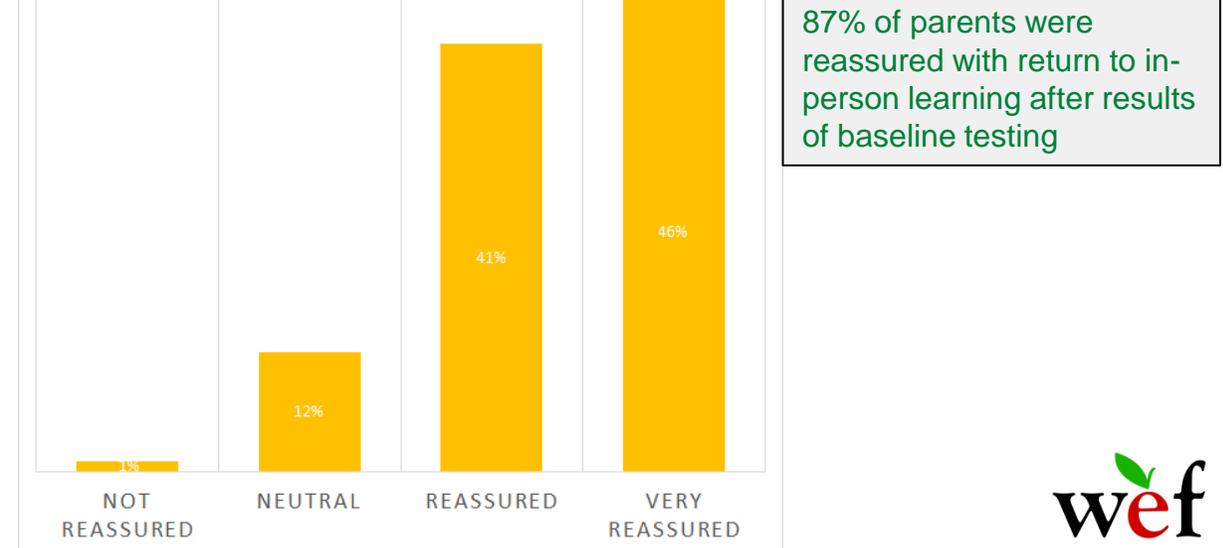
## Staff Level of Comfort with In-Person Learning: After Baseline Testing



## Parent Level of Comfort In-Person Learning: Before Baseline Testing

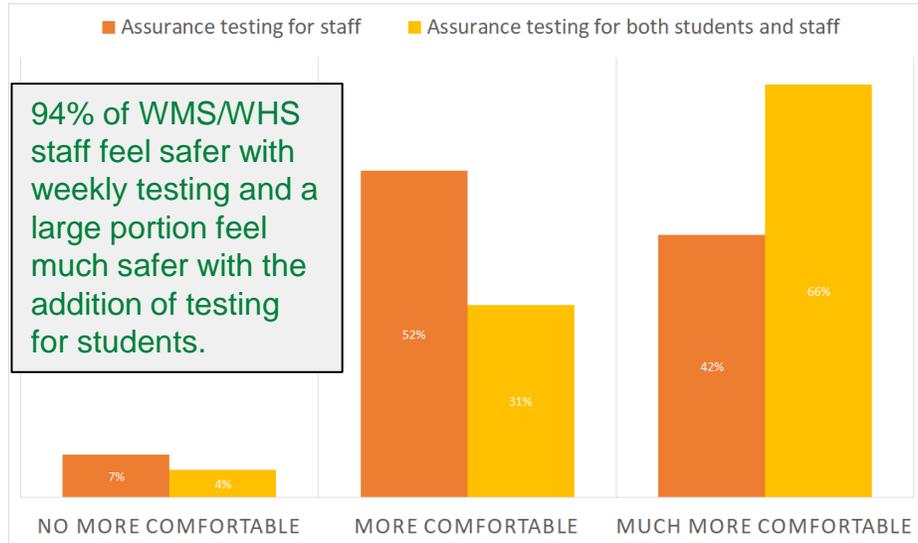


## Parent Level of Comfort with In-Person Learning: After Baseline Testing

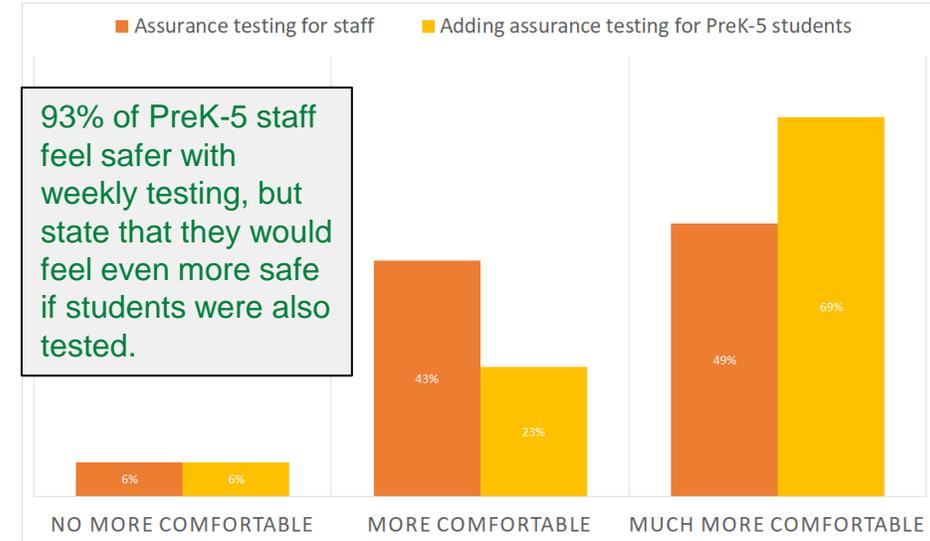


# Weekly Testing: Level of Reassurance Provided to Staff & Parents

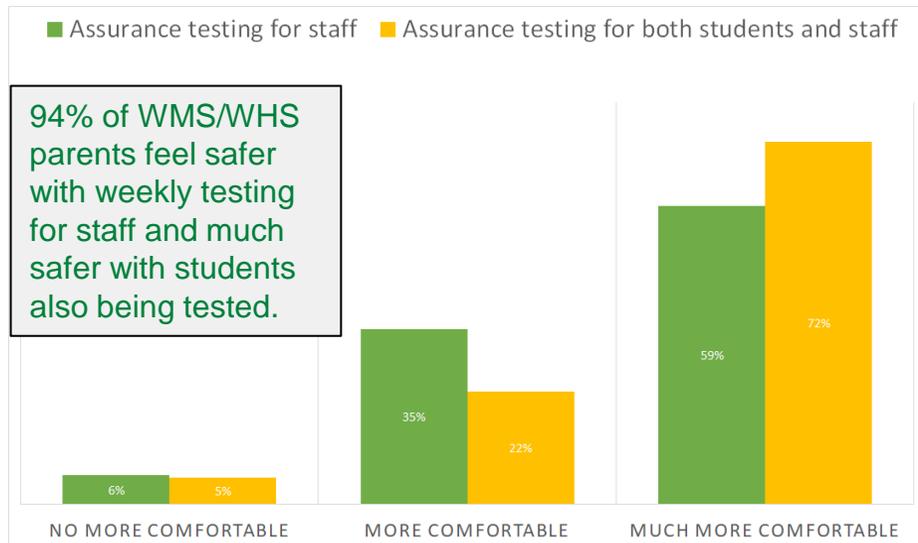
## WHS/WMS Staff Comfort in School Safety with Weekly Testing



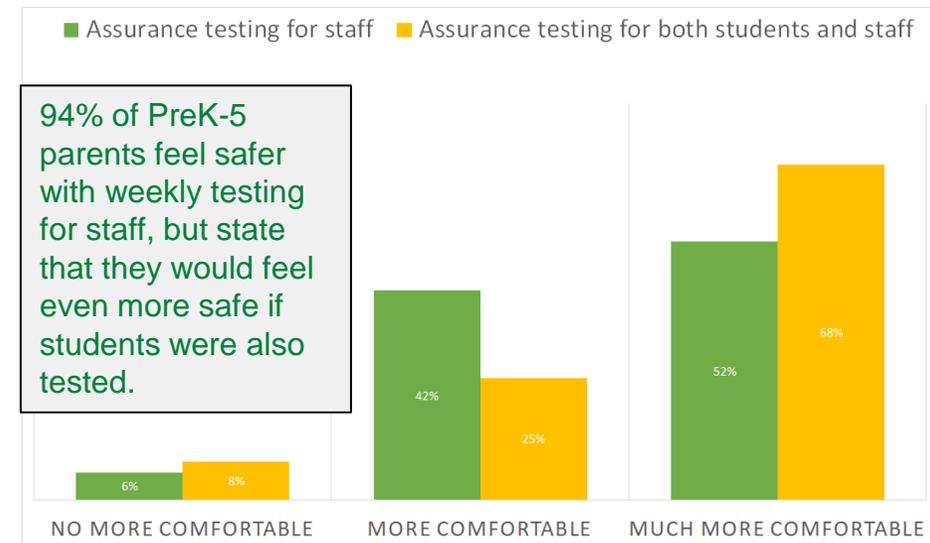
## PreK-5 Staff Comfort in School Safety with Weekly Testing

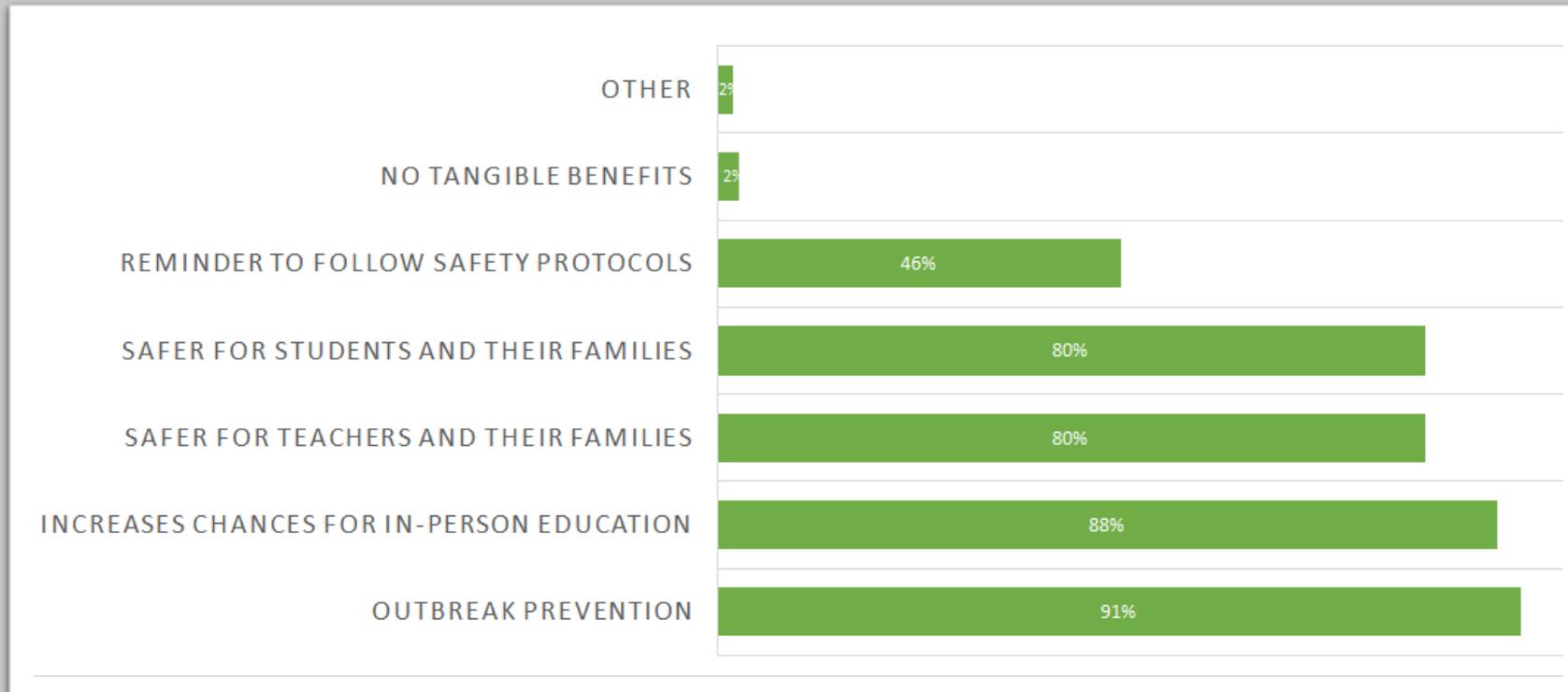


## WHS/WMS Parent Comfort in School Safety with Weekly Testing



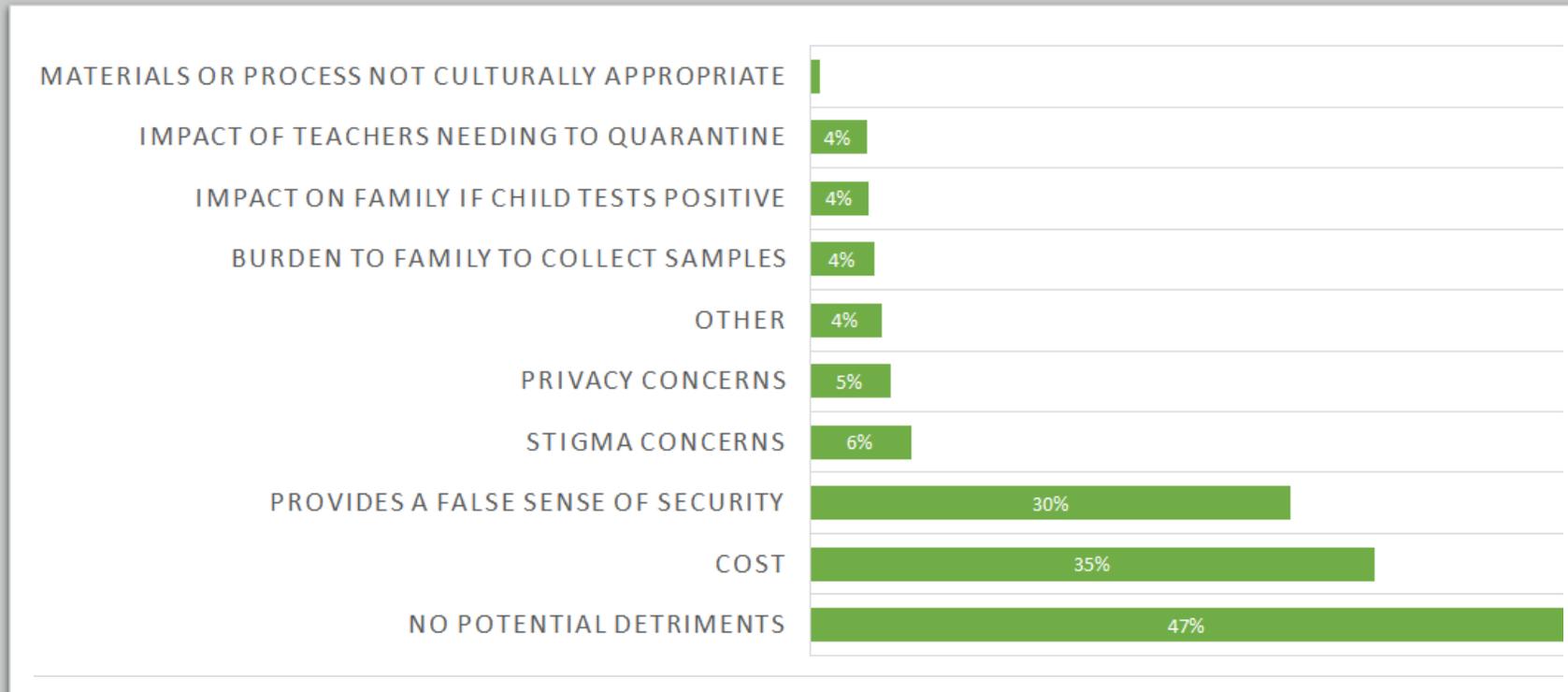
## PreK-5 Parent Comfort in School Safety with Weekly Testing





## Parent Perceived Benefits of Weekly 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 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. No other significant detriments were identified.

# WPS Viral Testing Pilot: Conclusions



Both parents and staff find testing very helpful in providing safety reassurances.



Testing underscores the importance of continued emphasis on adherence to safety protocols.



Participation levels should continue to be encouraged in order to gain maximum value.



Based on the success of the pilot program, WPS intends to continue weekly testing through a combination of WEF and WPS budget resources.

# Funding Projections for Ongoing Viral Testing



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 <sup>‡‡</sup>	\$183,000 <sup>‡‡</sup>	\$73,000 <sup>‡‡</sup>
<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 <sup>‡</sup> \$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>

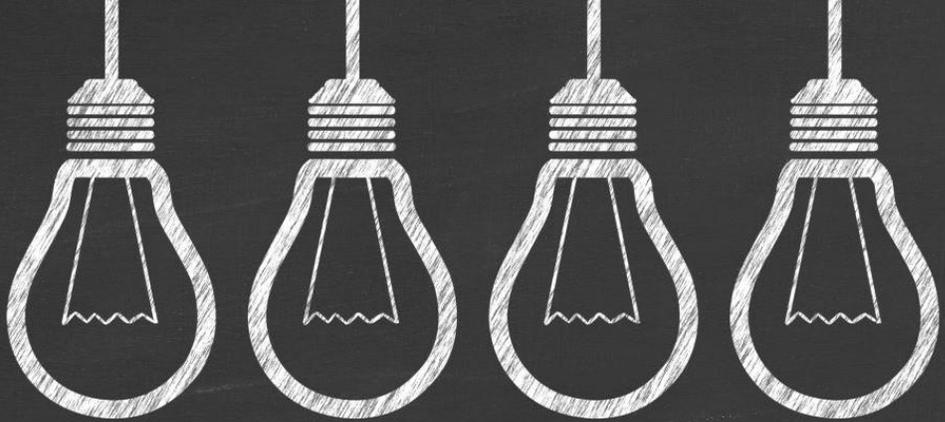
## Assumptions:

<sup>‡</sup> Pending further details on availability of state funding, projections assume use of planned WPS budget resources

<sup>‡‡</sup> Assumes \$12.50 per test using Mirimus pooled testing

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



# A Great Success!

- Wellesley's Testing Program has been featured in multiple news outlets, will be profiled by the Rockefeller Foundation for promising practices in COVID-19 testing for K-12 schools, and is now regarded as the model program for other public-school districts across the nation to follow
- Members of the multi-town collaborative continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis, and thanks in large part to this collective effort, DESE has announced the introduction of weekly pooled testing for K-12 public schools across the state



# Wellesley Education Foundation

Advancing Innovation and Excellence in  
Wellesley Public Schools

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[www.wellesleyeducationfoundation.org](http://www.wellesleyeducationfoundation.org)