

 MORNING CONSULT®

 CollegeBoard

NON-COLLEGE PATHWAYS

Polling Presentation

SEPTEMBER 2023



ABOUT US

Morning Consult is a global data intelligence company delivering insights on what people think in real time. By surveying tens of thousands across the globe every day, Morning Consult is unmatched in scale and speed: It determines the true measure of what people think and how their decisions impact business, politics and the economy.

Industry leaders rely on Morning Consult's proprietary technology and analysis for real-time intelligence to transform information into a competitive advantage.

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of The College Board seeks to understand what students are currently thinking about their future careers and their plans to get there, particularly for students interested in pursuing paths besides four-year college. Results of the study will direct internal product planning and messaging strategies.

METHODOLOGY STATEMENT

This poll was conducted between August 11-24, 2023 among a sample of 1,206 high school students ages 14-18. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

STUDENT SURVEY DEMOGRAPHIC DEFINITIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC	WEIGHTED (N)	%	DEFINITION
Students	1,206	100%	High school students ages 14-18 in grades 9-12
College-bound	617	51%	Students who are <i>very likely</i> they will attend four-year college immediately after high school
Non-college-bound	589	49%	Students who are <i>somewhat likely</i> or <i>very/somewhat unlikely</i> to attend four-year-college immediately after high school
9 th /10 th Graders	620	51%	Students in 9 th or 10 th grade (Freshman and Sophomore)
11 th /12 th Graders	586	49%	Students in 11 th or 12 th grade (Junior or Senior)
College 9 th /10 th Graders	299	25%	College-bound students in 9 th /10 th grade (Freshman and Sophomore)
Non-college 9 th /10 th Graders	321	27%	Non-college-bound students in 9 th /10 th grade (Freshman and Sophomore)
College 11 th /12 th Graders	318	26%	College-bound students in 11 th /12 th grade (Junior or Senior)
Non-college 11 th /12 th Graders	268	22%	Non-college-bound students in 11 th /12 th grade (Junior or Senior)
Gender: Male	614	51%	Male students
Gender: Female	592	49%	Female students
Ethnicity: White	818	68%	White students (includes Hispanic and non-Hispanic)
Ethnicity: Black	166	14%	Black students (includes Hispanic and non-Hispanic)
Ethnicity: Other	222	18%	Students of another race or ethnicity (includes Hispanic and non-Hispanic)
Ethnicity: Hispanic	294	24%	Hispanic students (of any race)

KEY FINDINGS

- **Half of non-college-bound students (50%) have heard *a lot* or *some* about alternatives to four-year college as compared to 2 in 3 college-bound students (67%).**
- **Less than two-thirds (63%) of high school students know the steps needed to take to transition into a career. This figure is unchanged since 2022.**
 - College-bound students (68%) are more likely to be *very* or *somewhat* confident of the steps needed to transition to a career than non-college-bound students (57%). They are also more likely to have explored their future career paths (91%) than non-college bound students (78%).
- **The most important career aspects to students are *doing something they're passionate about* (94%), *work-life balance* (92%), *doing something that aligns to their strengths* (92%), and *salary* (91%).**
 - Being able to support themselves financially (95%) and achieve their future goals (94%) are the biggest motivating factors for exploring potential career paths after high school.
- **When asked about their future career in an unaided, open-ended question, students selected becoming a nurse (12%), an engineer (9%), a doctor (8%), or a lawyer (8%) as their top career choices.**
- ***Diffused* students are least likely to feel “hopeful” or “excited” when it comes to exploring their future careers, while *Achieved* students feel the most positive about the future and their career.**
 - *Foreclosed*¹ or *Achieved* students exhibit higher confidence in knowing how to transition into a career than other segments.
 - *Diffused* students are less likely to say, compared to other segments that reaching their career goal is the most important factor in deciding their future plans.

NON-COLLEGE PATHWAYS

Non-college-bound students are less likely than college-bound students to say they are *hopeful*, *motivated*, and *excited* about exploring their future careers.

Which of the following words or phrases most closely describe how you feel about exploring your future career? Please select all that apply. **Total % Selected**

	Students	College	Non-College	
Positive feelings	Hopeful	46%	49%	43%
	Motivated	42%	48%	36%
	Excited	42%	46%	37%
	Confident	28%	27%	28%
Negative feelings	Anxious	48%	47%	48%
	Overwhelmed	40%	40%	39%
	Depressed	8%	6%	9%
	Pessimistic	7%	6%	8%

College- and non-college-bound students are about equally likely to say they are *anxious* and *overwhelmed* about exploring their future careers.

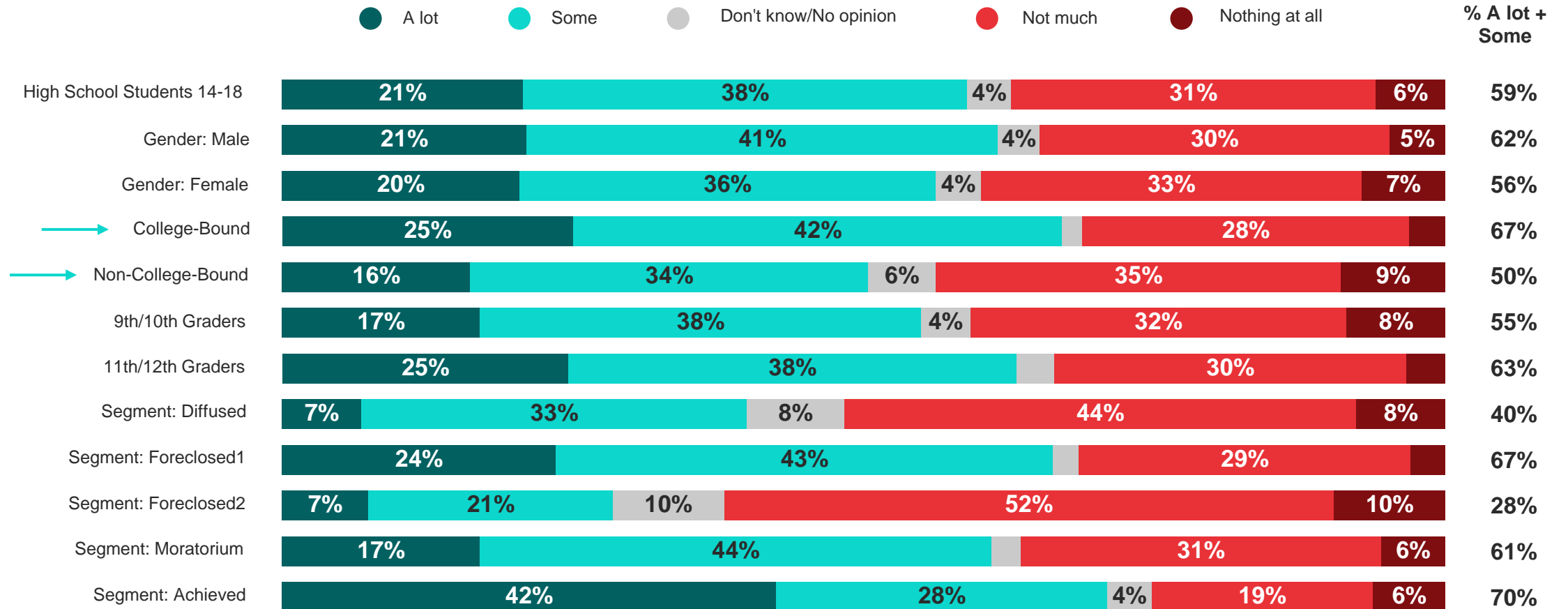


Note: Chart excludes "None of the above" option from survey.

NON-COLLEGE PATHWAYS

Half of non-college-bound students (50%) have heard a lot or some about alternatives to four-year college as compared to 2 in 3 college-bound students (67%).

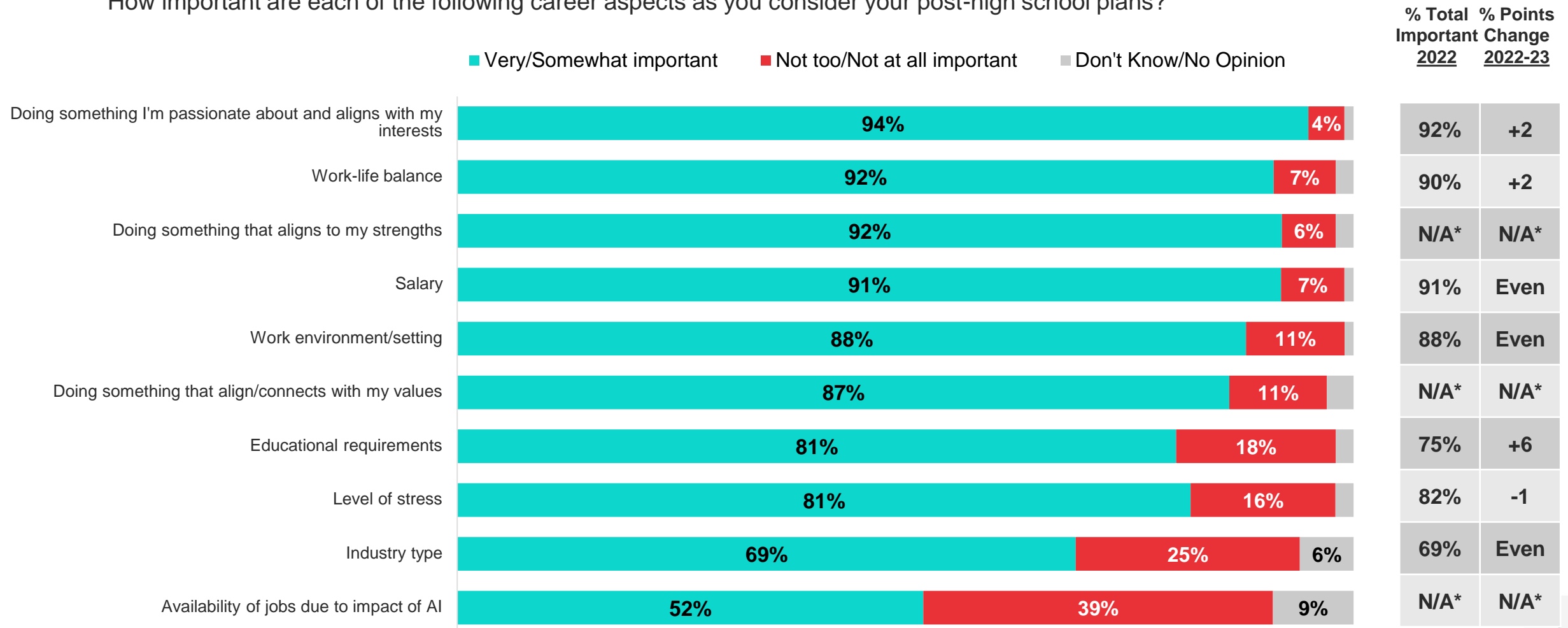
How much have you heard about post-high school options besides attending a four-year college?



CAREER EXPLORATION

Among those students tested, their most important career aspects are *doing something they're passionate about* (94%), *work-life balance* (92%), *doing something that aligns to their strengths* (92%), and *salary* (91%).

How important are each of the following career aspects as you consider your post-high school plans?



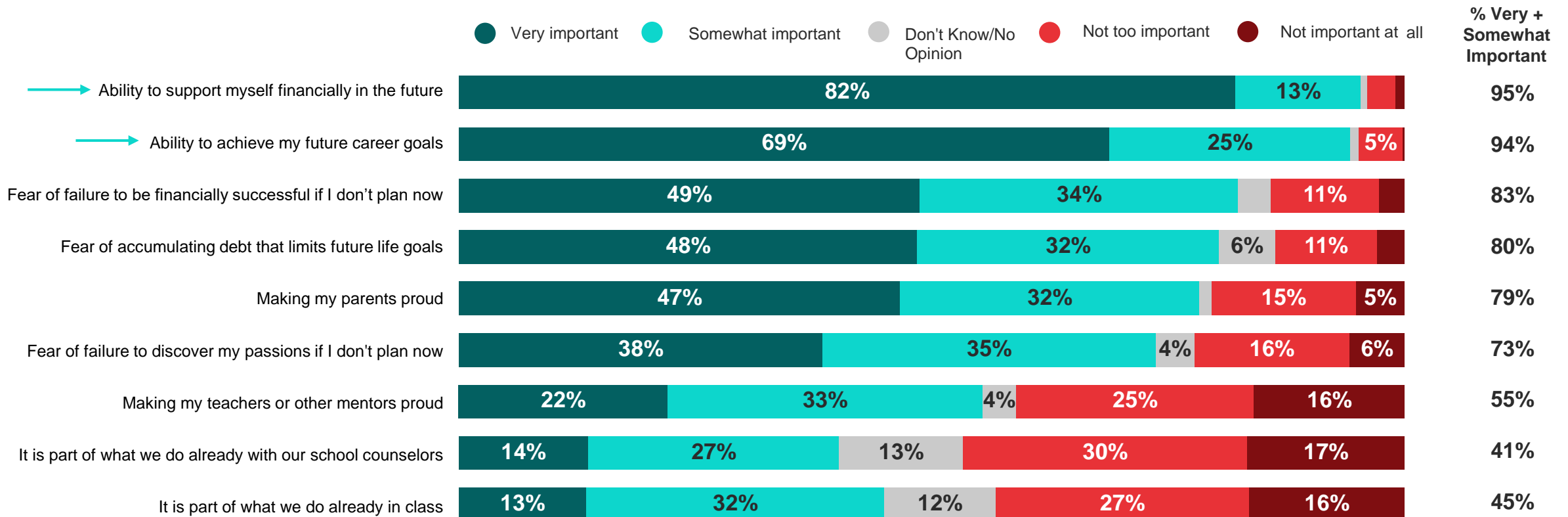
*answer option not included in 2022

CAREER EXPLORATION

Being able to support themselves financially and achieve their future goals are the biggest motivating factors for those exploring potential career paths after high school.

How important are each of the following in motivating you the most to explore possible career paths while in high school?

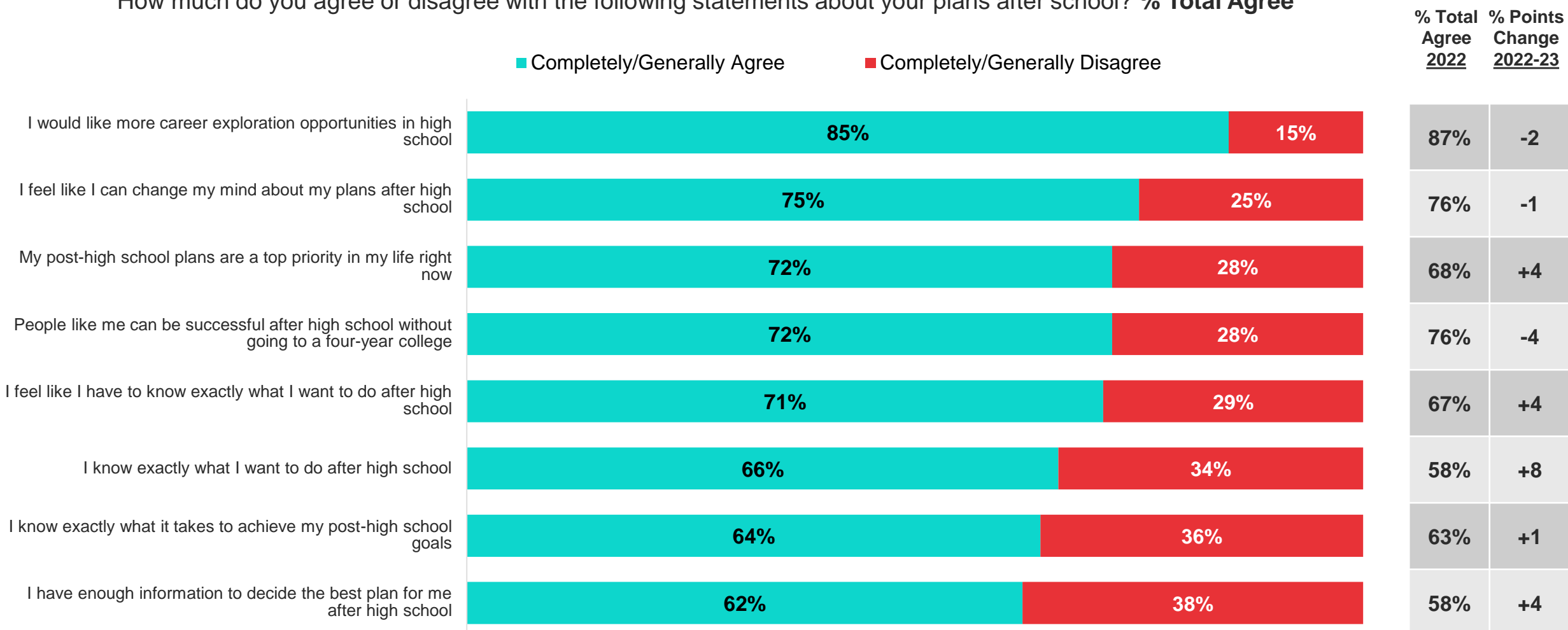
Among those who have begun exploring future career paths they could take post-high school *a lot* or *some* ... (N=1,023)



CAREER EXPLORATION

Almost 9 in 10 students would like more career exploration opportunities in school, and less than two-thirds of students feel that they have enough information to decide the best plan for them after high school.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? % Total Agree

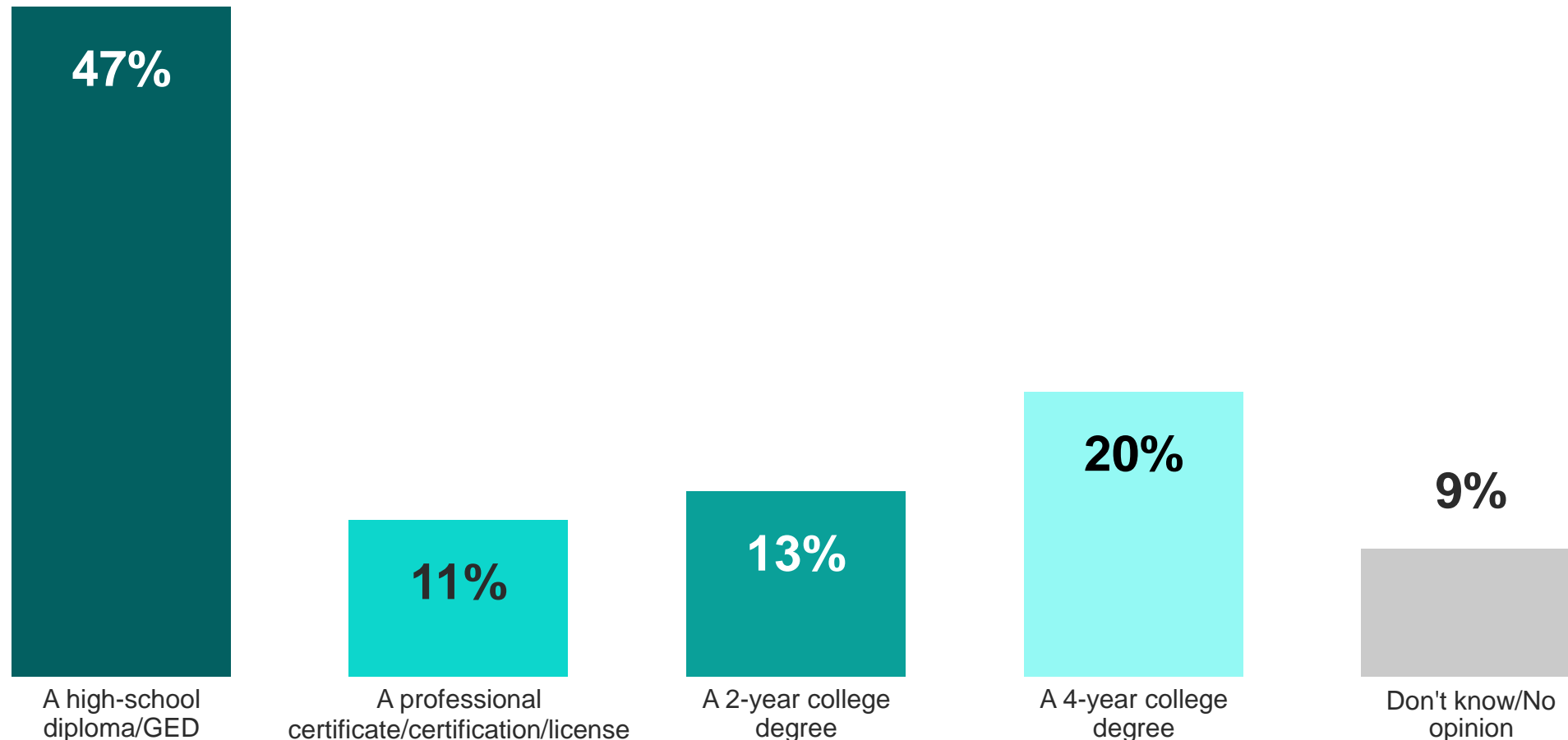


*answer option not included in 2022

CAREER EXPLORATION

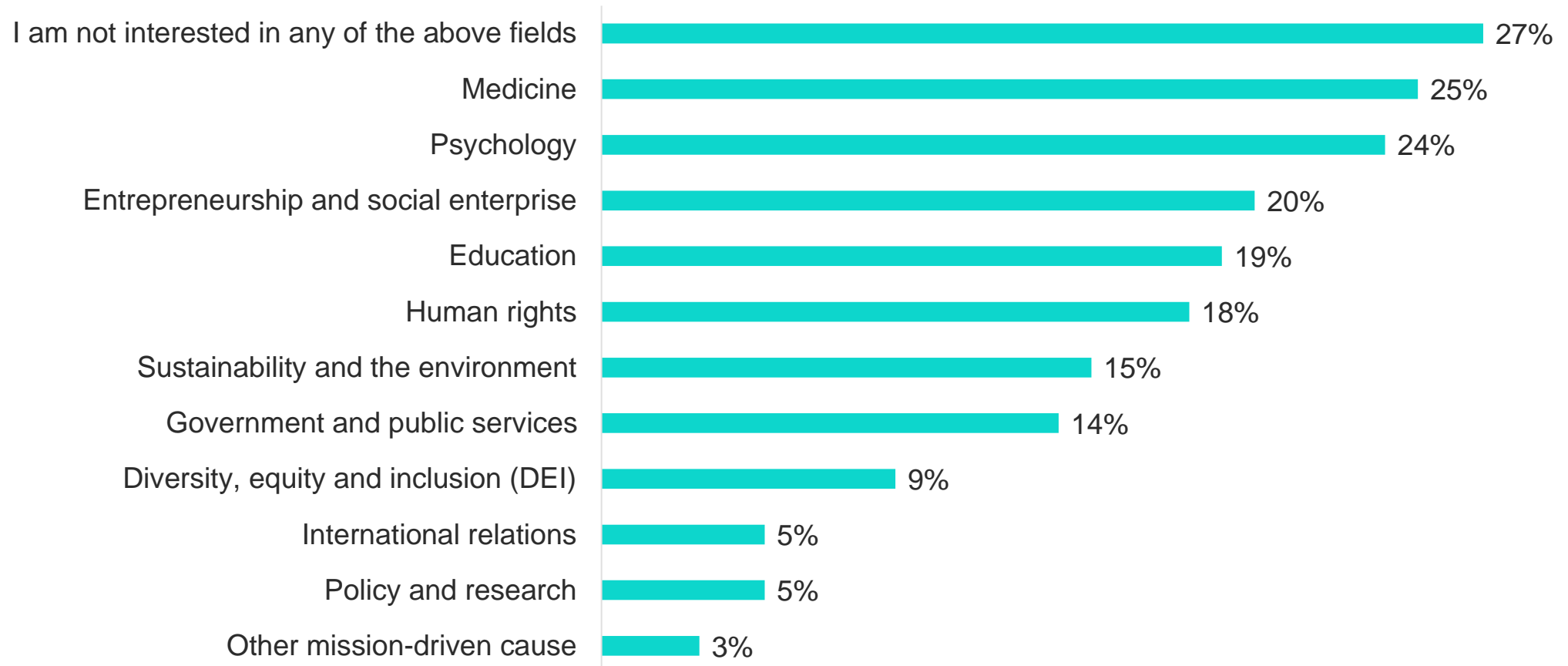
Almost half of high-school students (47%) think that a high-school diploma or GED is the minimum that employers expect when hiring. 1 in 5 (20%) think that a 4-year college degree is the minimum requirement.

In general, what do you think is the minimum education level most employers expect when hiring individuals?



3 in 4 students (73%) said that they are passionate in working in mission-based fields with Medicine (25%), Psychology (24%), and Entrepreneurship (20%) featuring among the top three choices.

Are you passionate about working in any of the following mission-based fields?



SEGMENTATION

Student Segmentation: Nearly 3 in 5 students are in the *Moratorium* segment, followed by *Achieved* (18%) and *Foreclosed2* (10%).

Adapted from the [Marcia model](#).

Student Segment	Share of students	How much, if at all, have you begun exploring future career paths you could take post-high school?	Which best describes where you are in terms of your future career goals?
Diffused	5% (N=64)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not much •Not at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I have no idea what career I would like
Foreclosed1	8% (N=95)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I know exactly what career I want to pursue
Foreclosed2	10% (N=119)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not much •Not at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I know exactly what career I want to pursue •I have some idea of which career I would like •I know the career area I want to work in but not the specific career or job
Moratorium	59% (N=706)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A lot •Some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I have no idea what career I would like •I have some idea of which career I would like •I know the career area I want to work in but not the specific career or job
Achieved	18% (N=222)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •I know exactly what career I want to pursue

EMOTIONS BY SEGMENTS

Diffused students are least likely to feel “hopeful” or “excited” when it comes to exploring their future careers, while *Achieved* students feel the most positive about their future career.

Which of the following words or phrases most closely describe how you feel about exploring your future career? Please select all that apply. **Total % Selected**

	Diffused	Foreclosed1	Foreclosed2	Moratorium	Achieved	
Positive feelings	Hopeful	17%	46%	28%	50%	52%
	Motivated	15%	46%	25%	43%	56%
	Excited	15%	37%	22%	40%	66%
	Confident	9%	32%	22%	22%	51%
Negative feelings	Anxious	48%	36%	47%	54%	32%
	Overwhelmed	58%	39%	34%	45%	21%
	Depressed	11%	7%	4%	9%	4%
	Pessimistic	11%	4%	6%	8%	3%

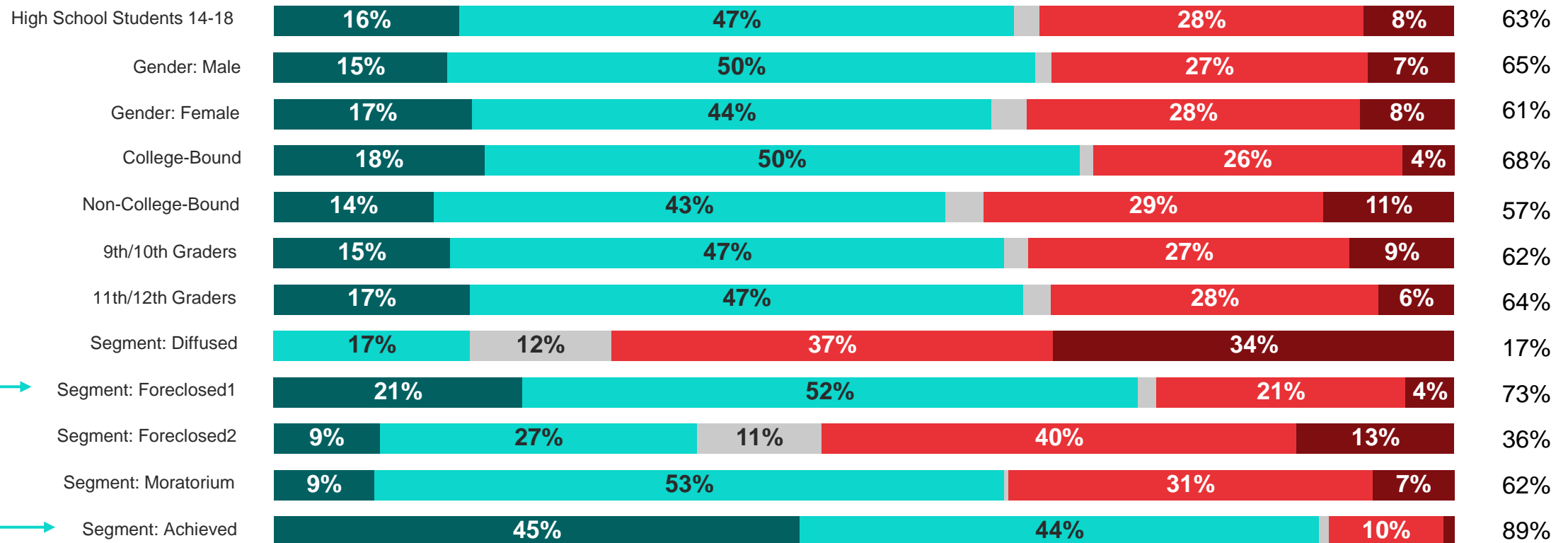
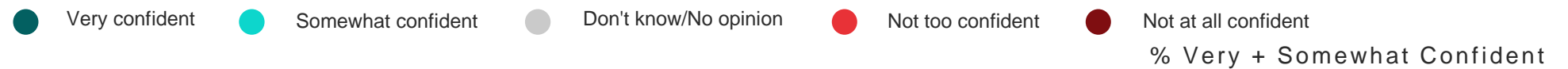
Achieved students are least likely to feel “depressed” or “pessimistic” about exploring their future career. *Foreclosed* students also show very low levels of these negative feelings.

Note: Chart excludes “None of the above” option from survey.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Foreclosed1 and *Achieved* students exhibit higher confidence in knowing how to transition into a career than other segments.

How confident are you, if at all, that you know the steps you need to take to transition into a career?



SEGMENTATION

Diffused and *Foreclosed* students are the most likely to have no interest in any of the mission based-fields. *Achieved* students show the most passion for medicine while *moratorium* students are most passionate about psychology.

Are you passionate about working in any of the following mission-based fields?

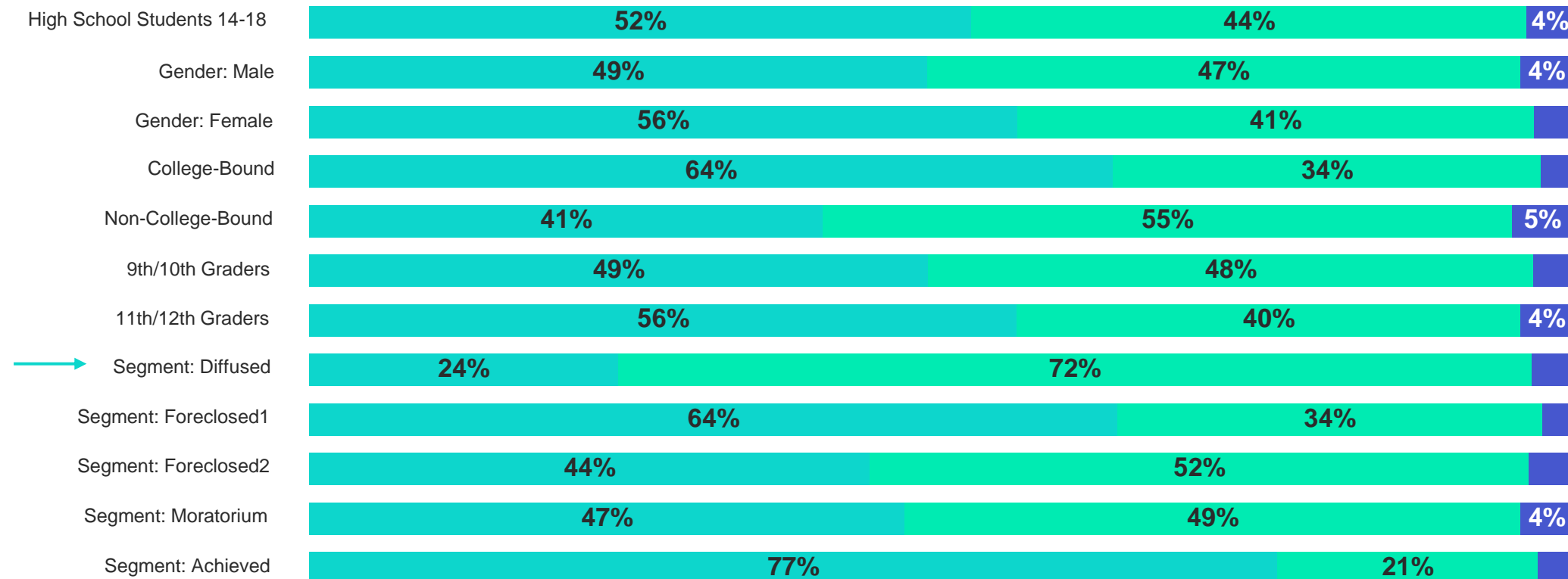
Diffused	Foreclosed1	Foreclosed2	Moratorium	Achieved
I am not interested in any of the above fields	I am not interested in any of the above fields	I am not interested in any of the above fields	Psychology	Medicine
Education	Human rights	Medicine	Medicine	I am not interested in any of the above fields
Psychology	Medicine	Education	Entrepreneurship and social enterprise	Human rights
Human rights	Sustainability and the environment	Government and public services	I am not interested in any of the above fields	Education
Medicine	Education	Human rights	Education	Psychology

CAREER EXPLORATION

Diffused students are less likely to say, compared to other segments that reaching their career goal is the most important factor in deciding their future plans.

How important is reaching your career goal in determining your education, training, or first step after high school?

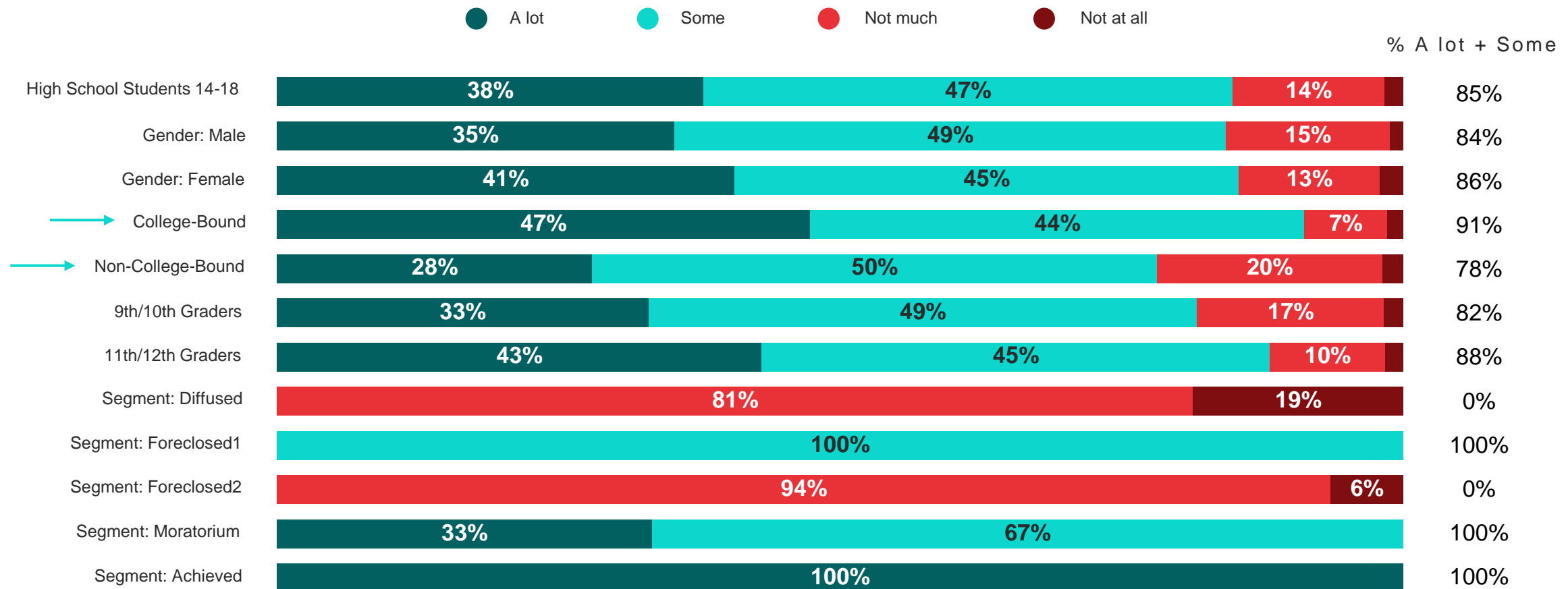
● It is the most important factor in deciding my future plans ● It is somewhat important in deciding my future plans ● It is not important in deciding my future plans



CAREER EXPLORATION

College-bound high-schoolers are much more likely (47%) to have explored their future career paths “a lot” compared non-college-bound students (28%).

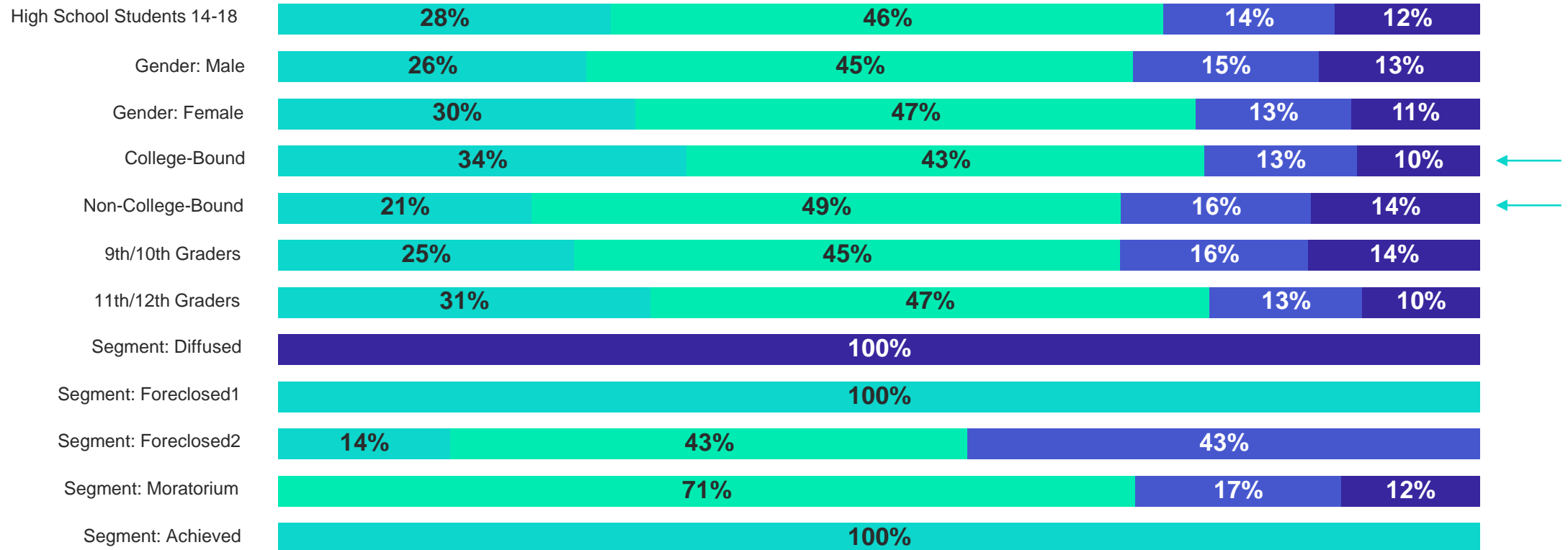
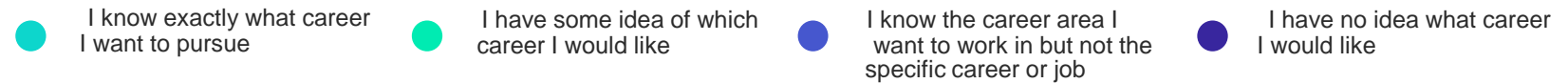
How much, if at all, have you begun exploring future career paths you could take post-high school?



CAREER EXPLORATION

College-bound students (34%) are more likely than non-college bound students (21%) to know exactly what career they want to pursue.

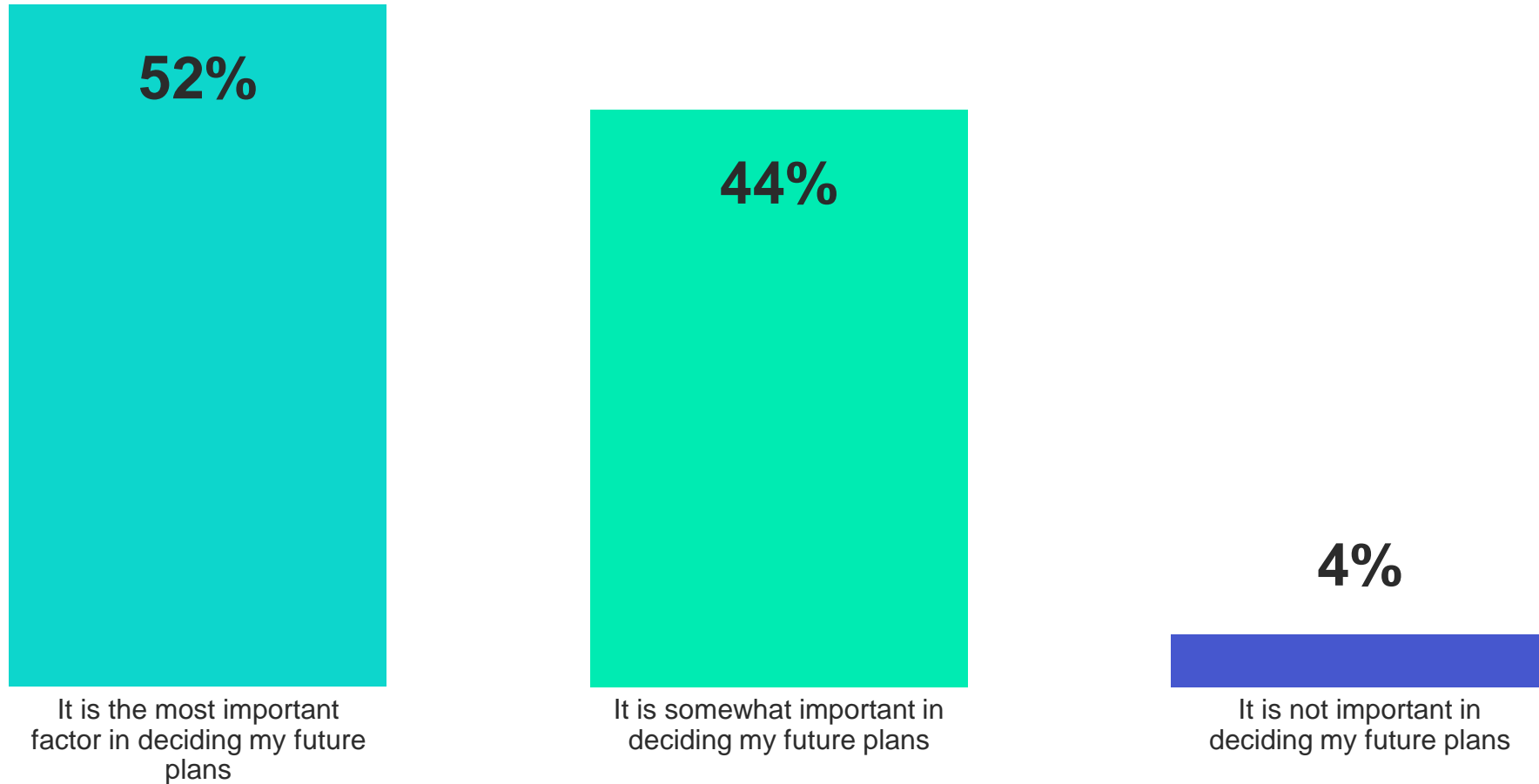
Which best describes where you are in terms of your future career goals?



APPENDIX

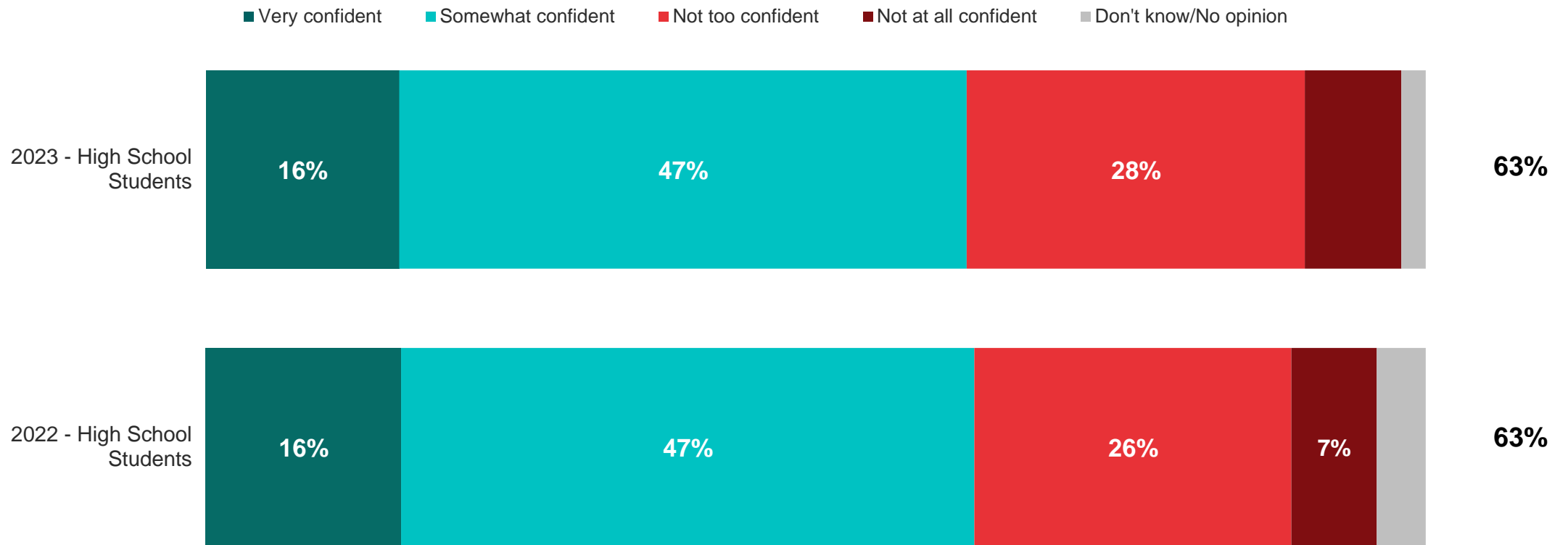


How important is reaching your career goal in determining your education, training, or first step after high school?

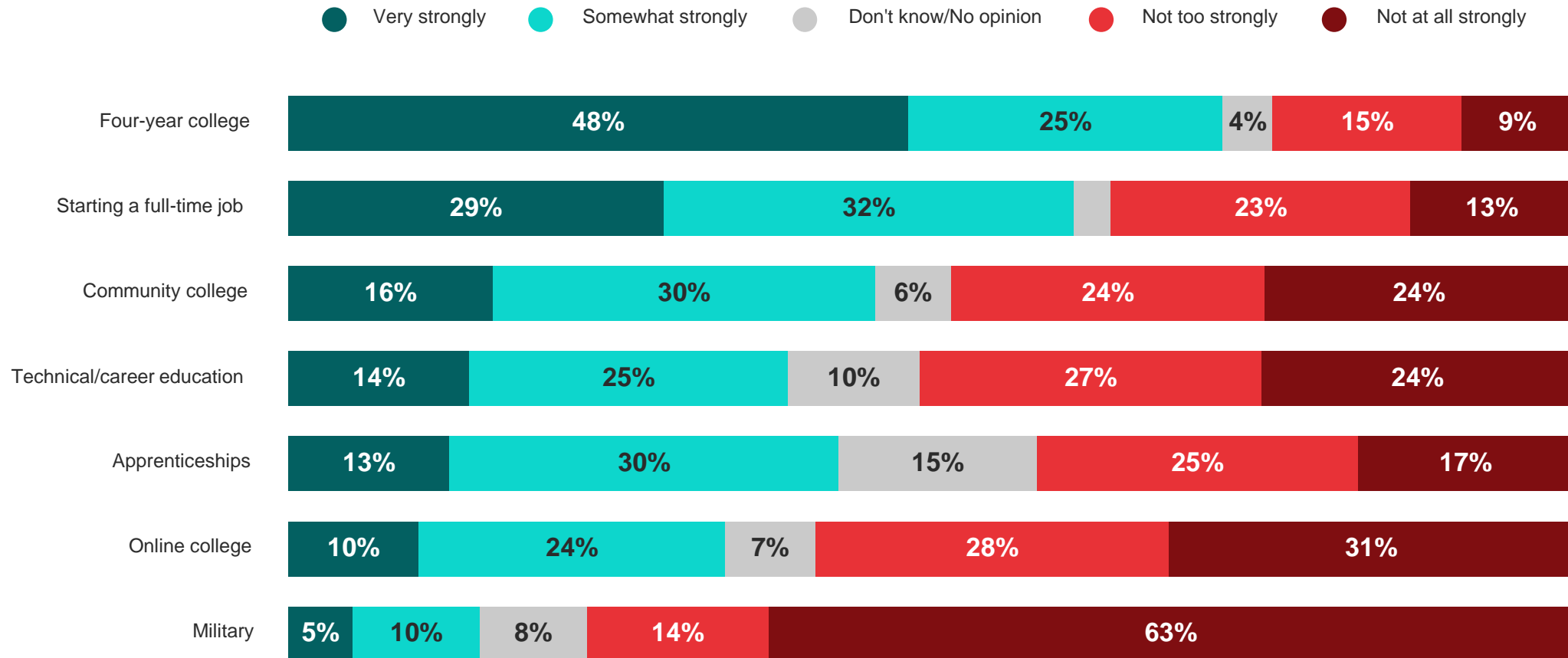


How confident are you, if at all, that you know the steps you need to take to transition into a career?

Total Confident

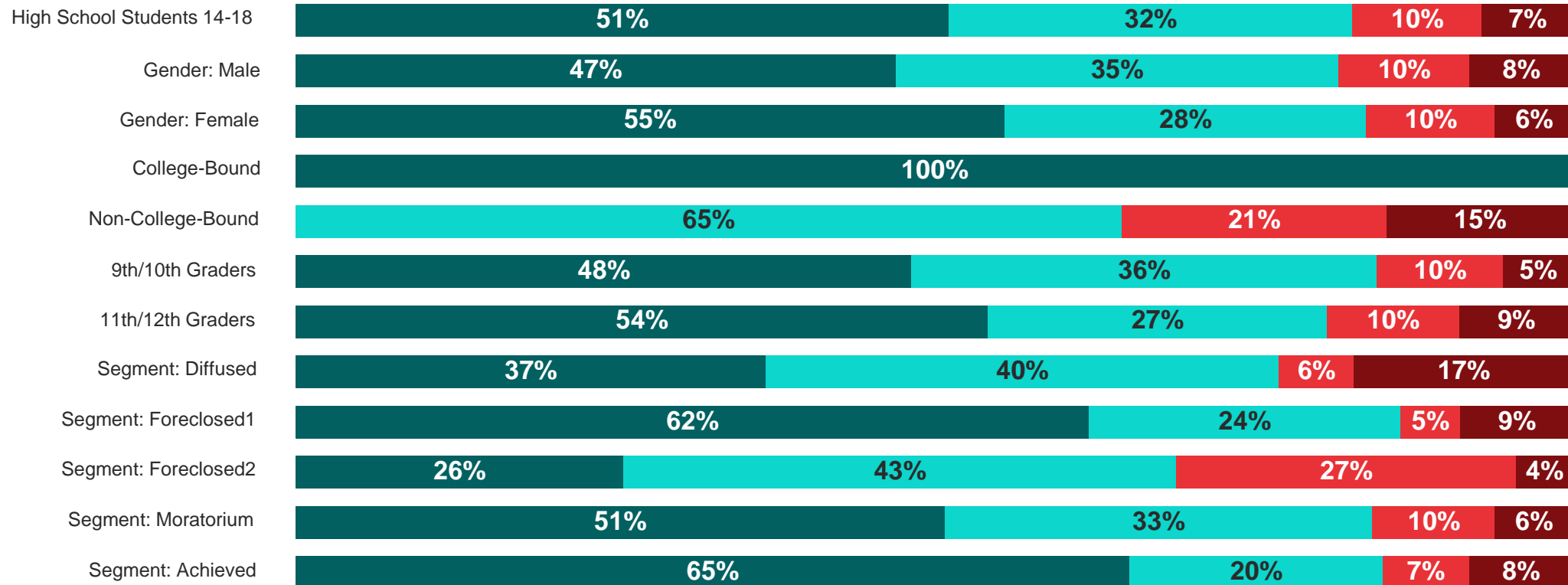


How strongly, if at all, are you considering the following post-high school options?

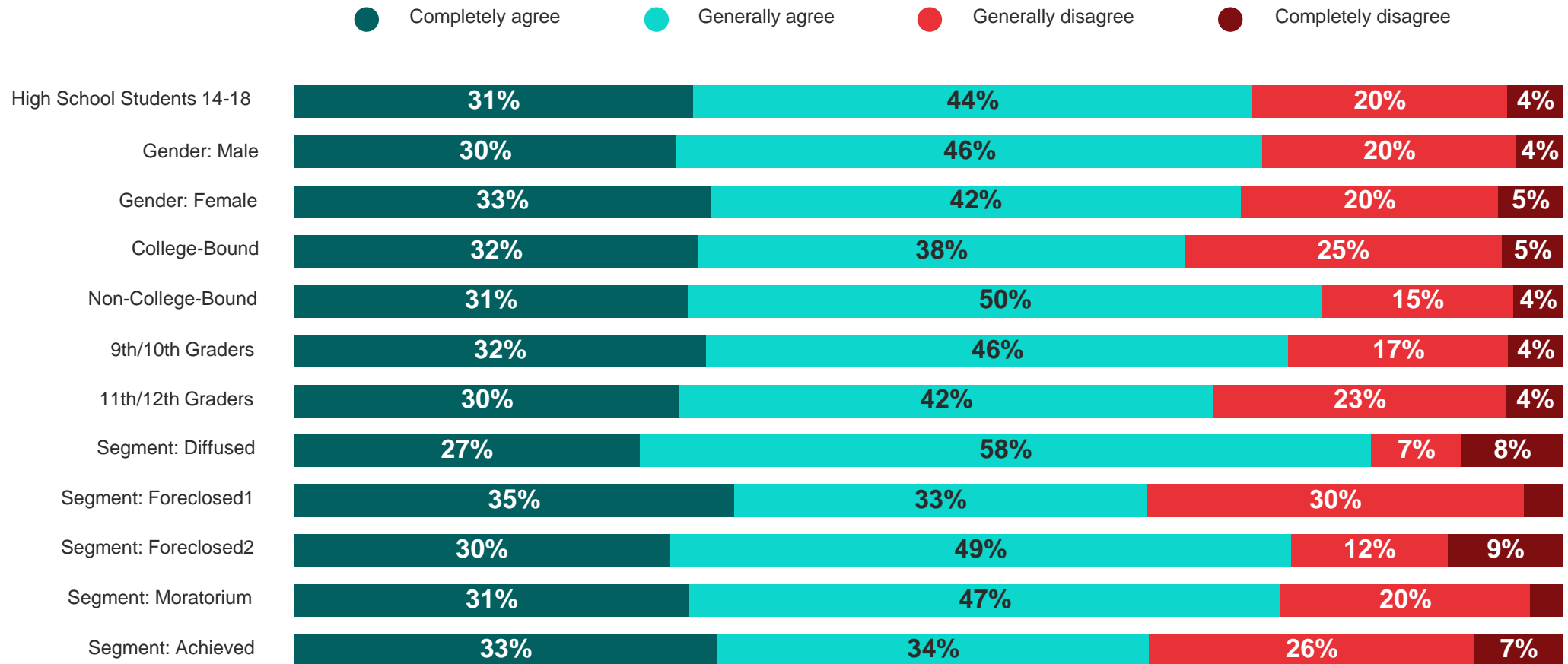


How likely or unlikely it is for you to attend a four-year college immediately after high school?

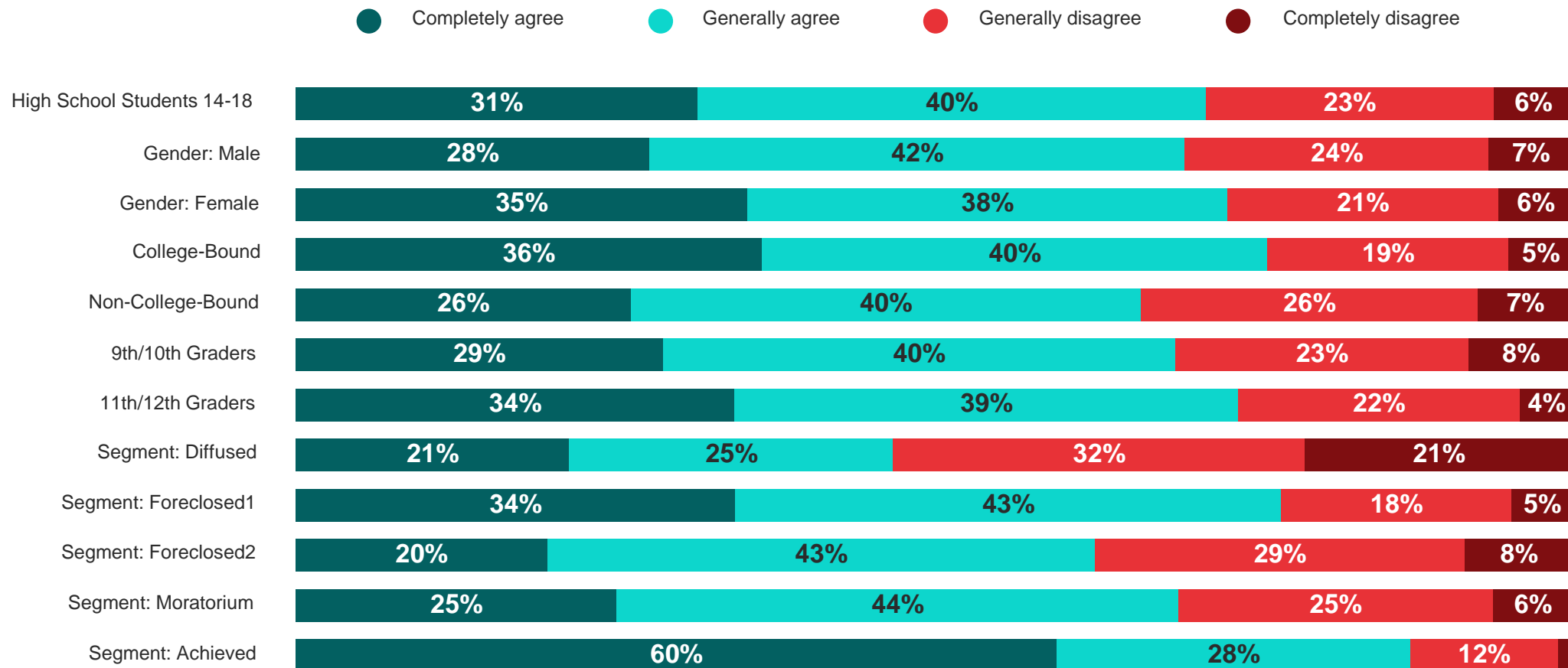
● Very likely
 ● Somewhat likely
 ● Somewhat unlikely
 ● Very unlikely



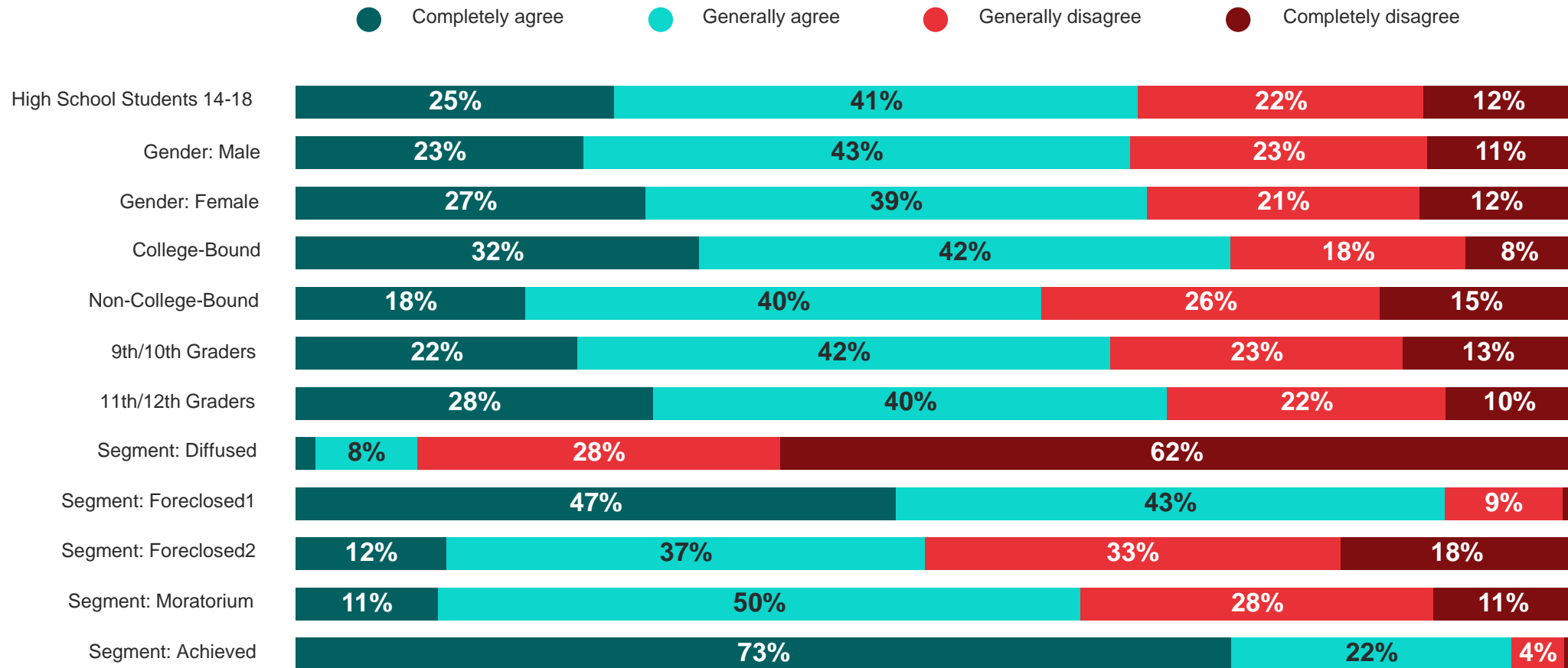
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? I feel like I can change my mind about my plans after high school



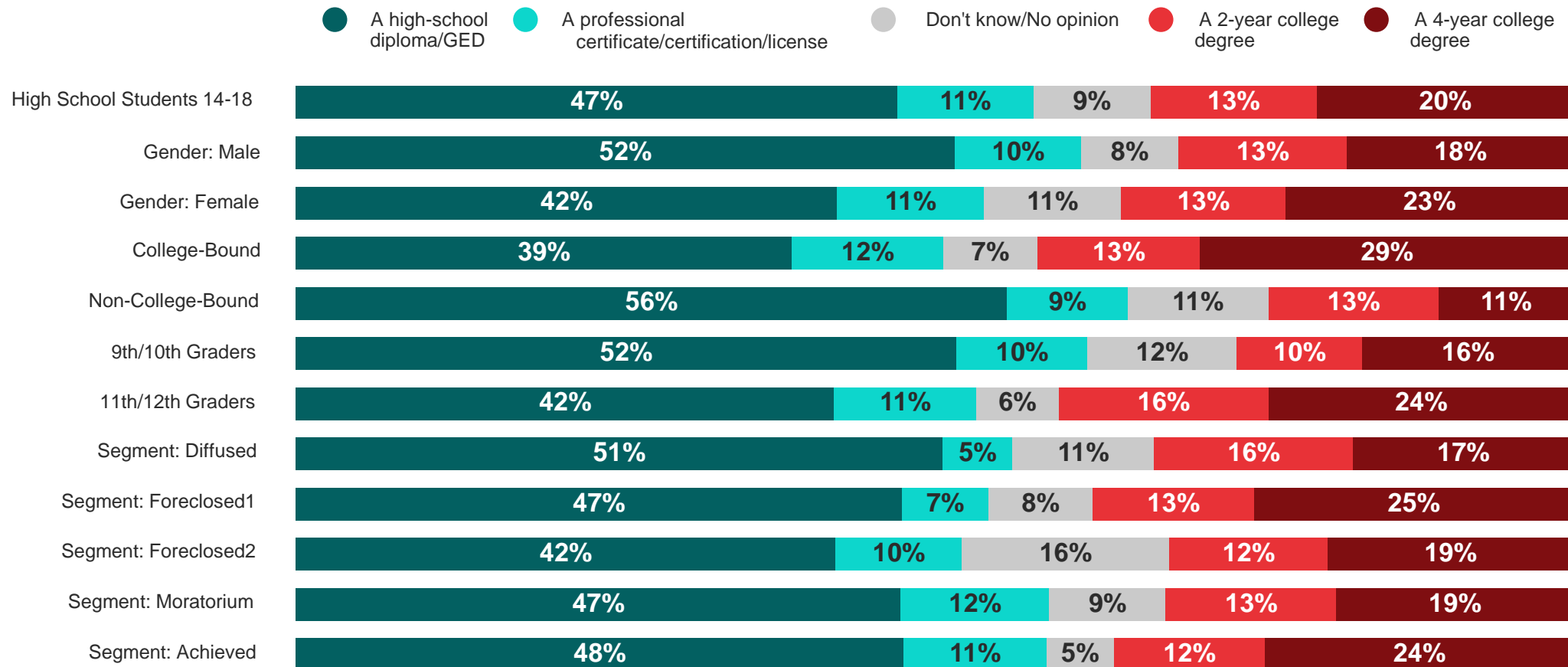
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? I feel like I have to know exactly what I want to do after high school



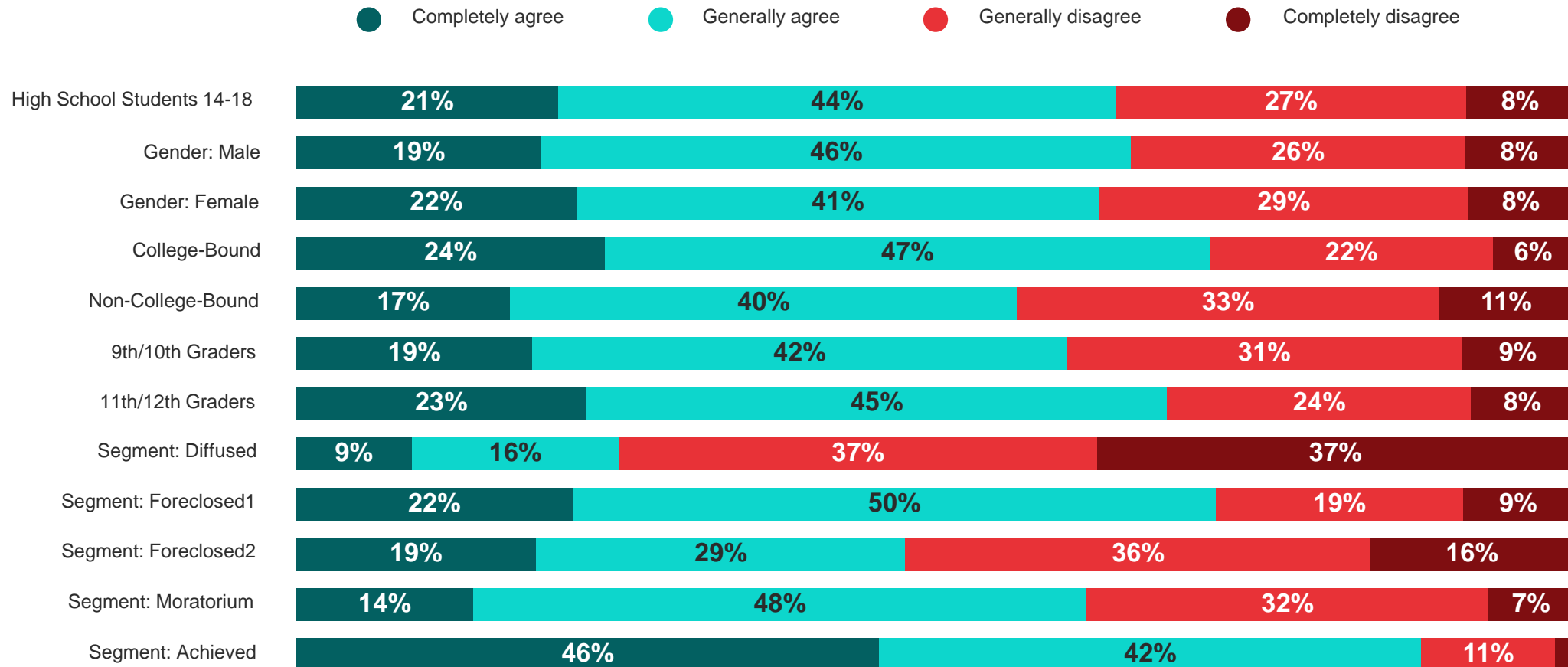
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? I know exactly what I want to do after high school



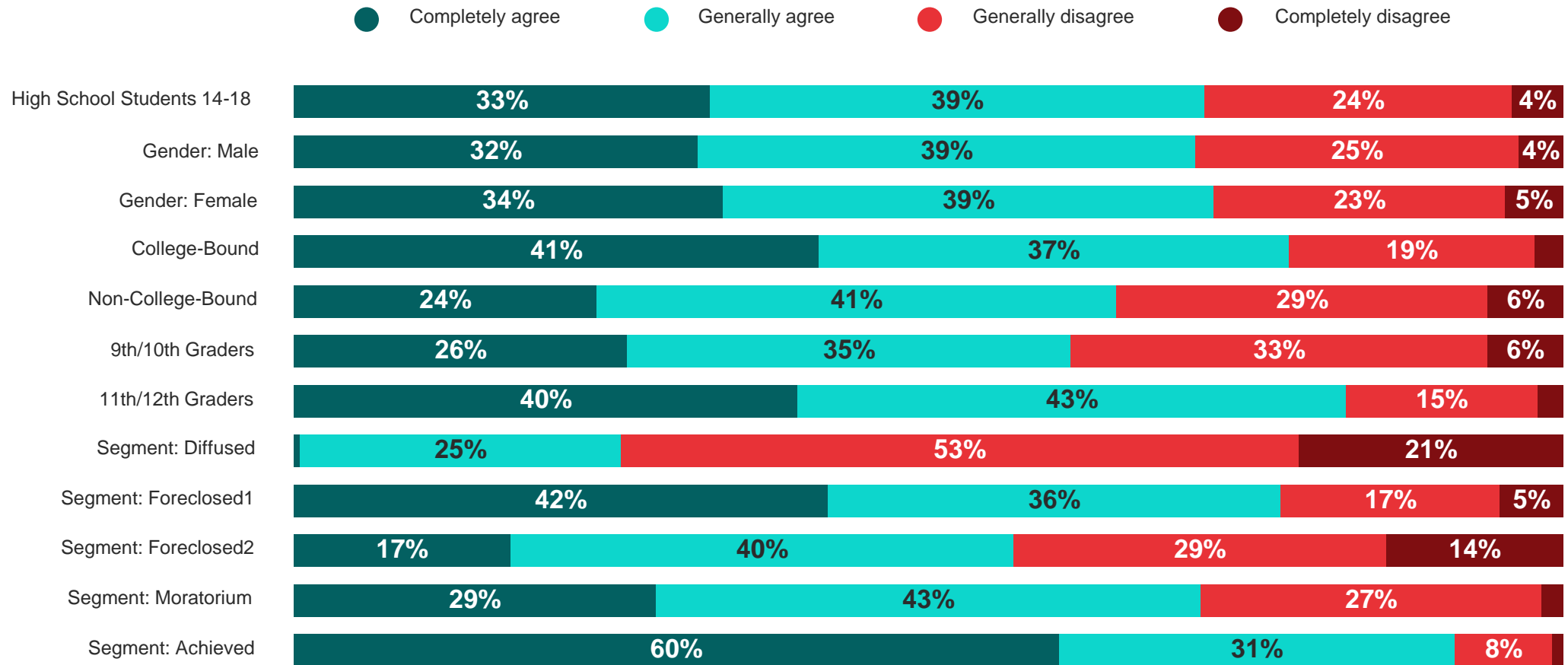
In general, what do you think is the minimum education level most employers expect when hiring individuals?



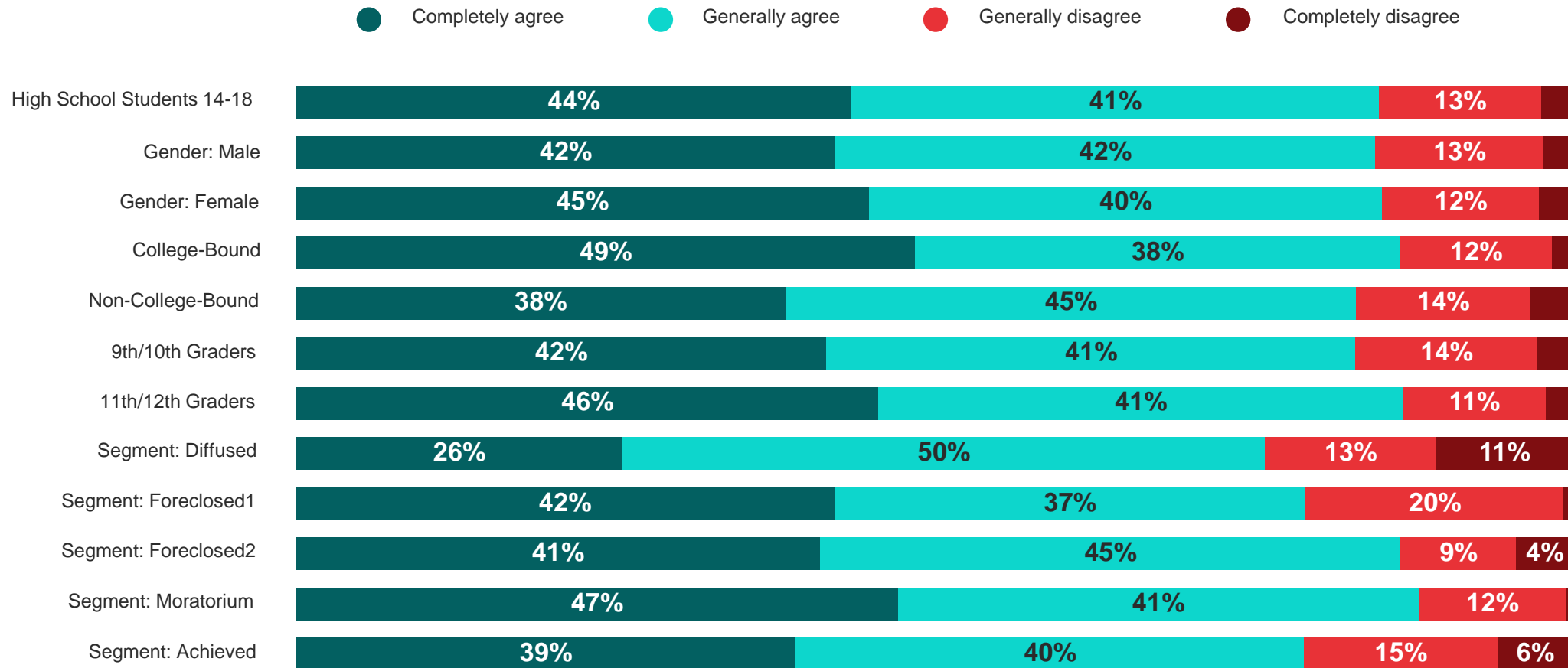
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? I know exactly what it takes to achieve my post-high school goals



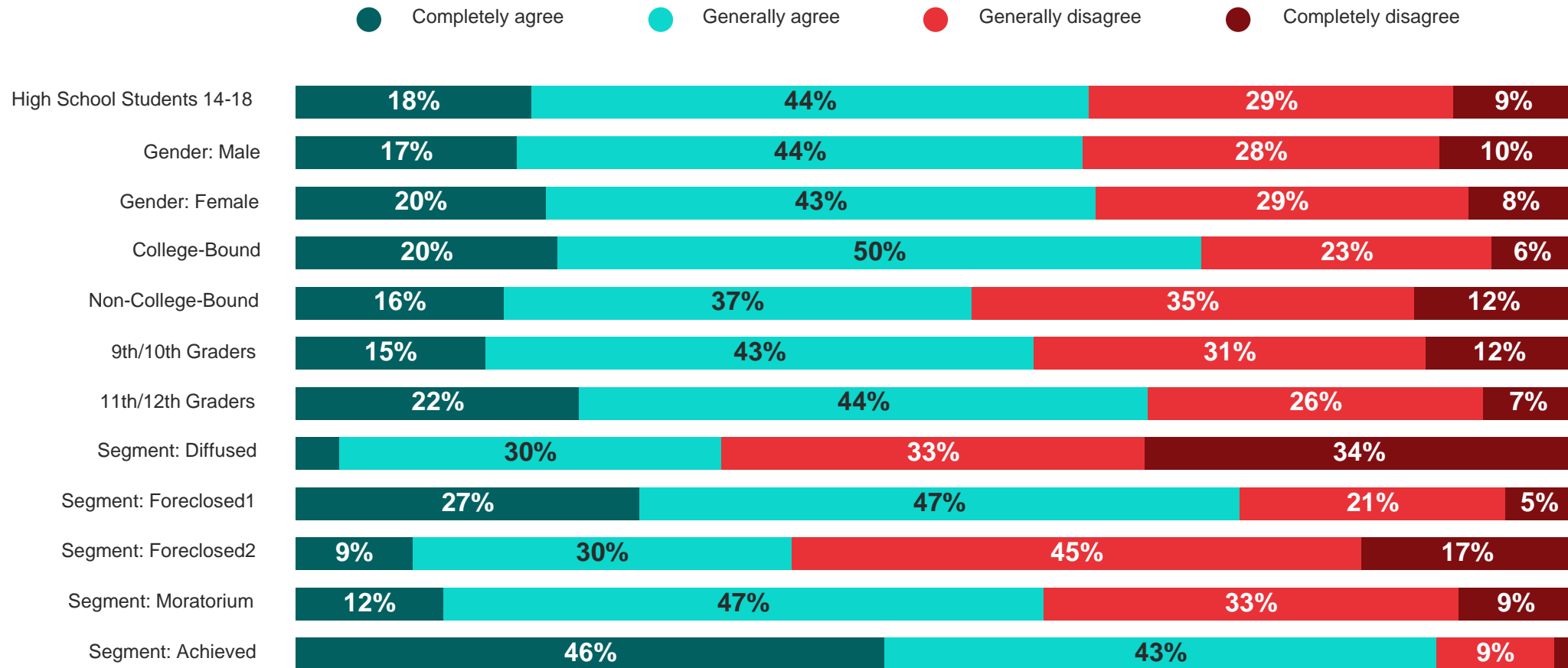
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? My post-high school plans are a top priority in my life right now



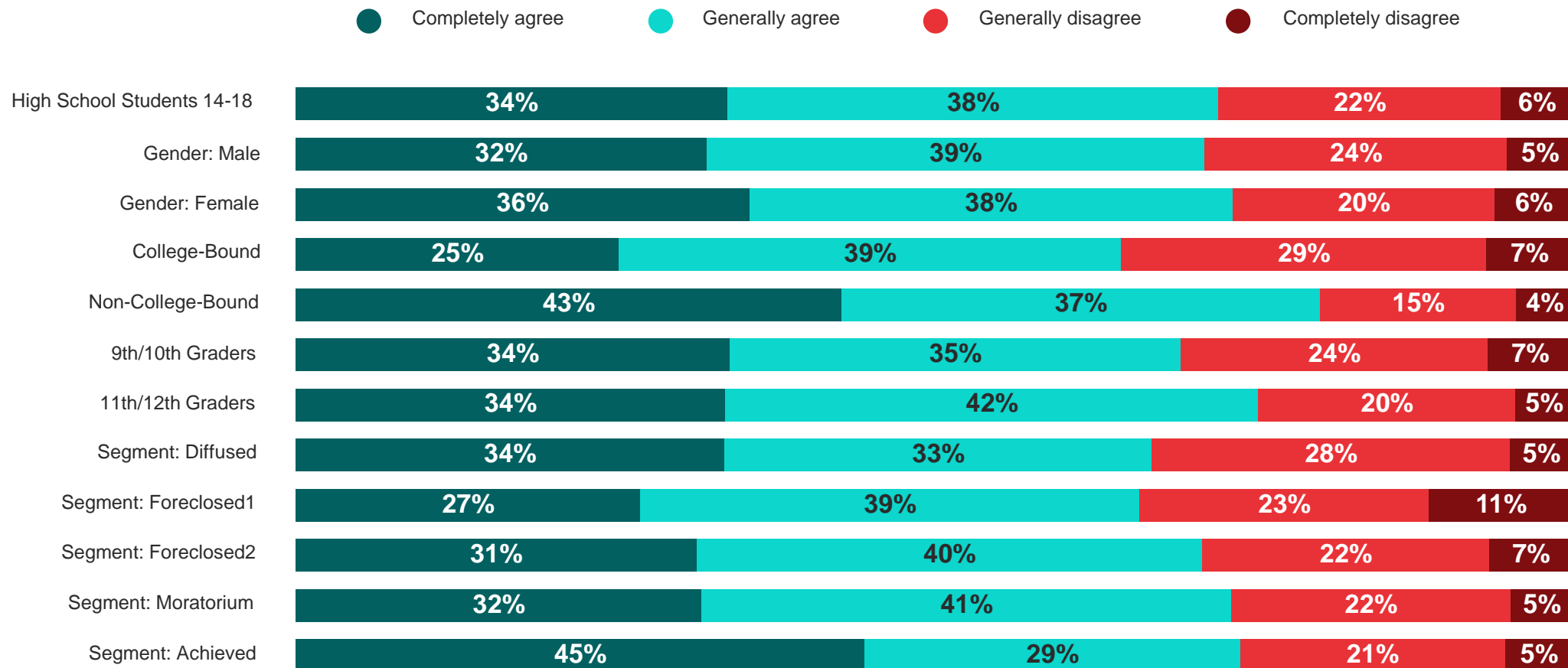
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? I would like more career exploration opportunities in high school



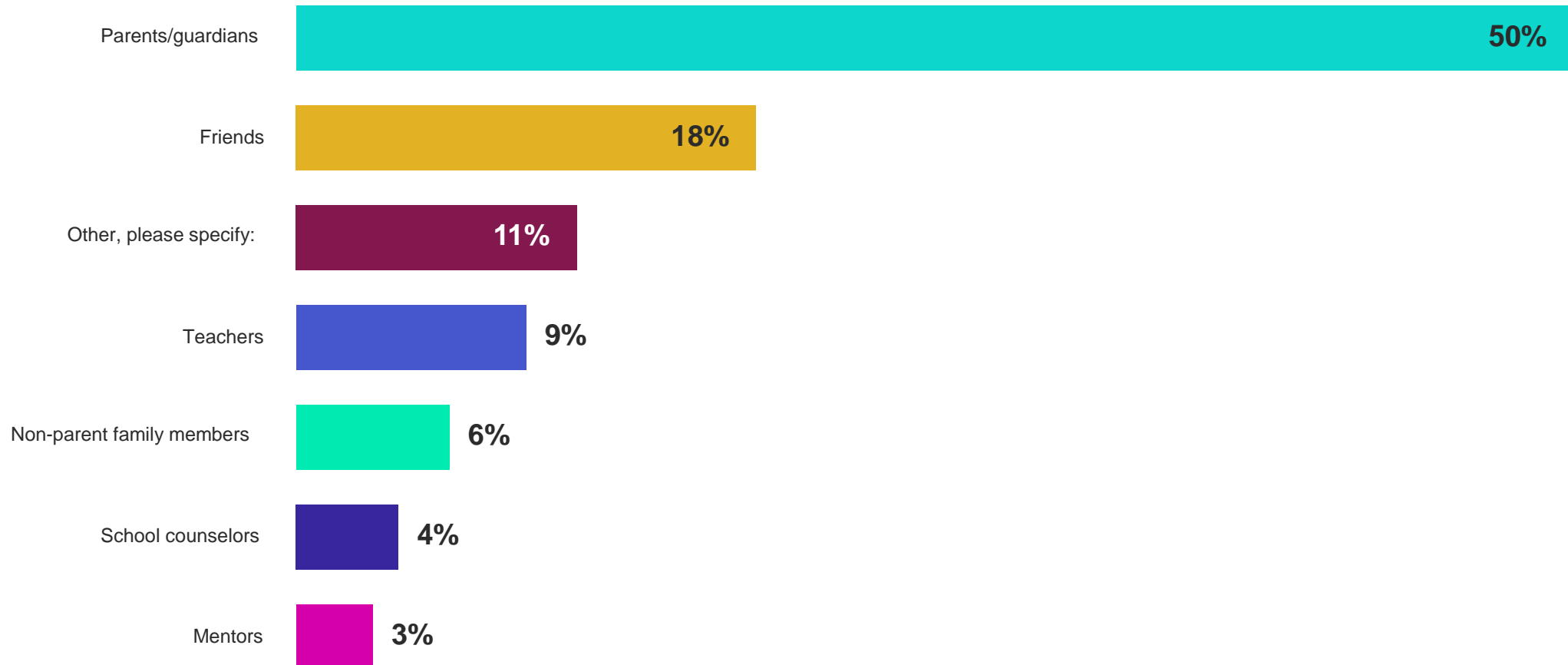
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? I have enough information to decide the best plan for me after high school



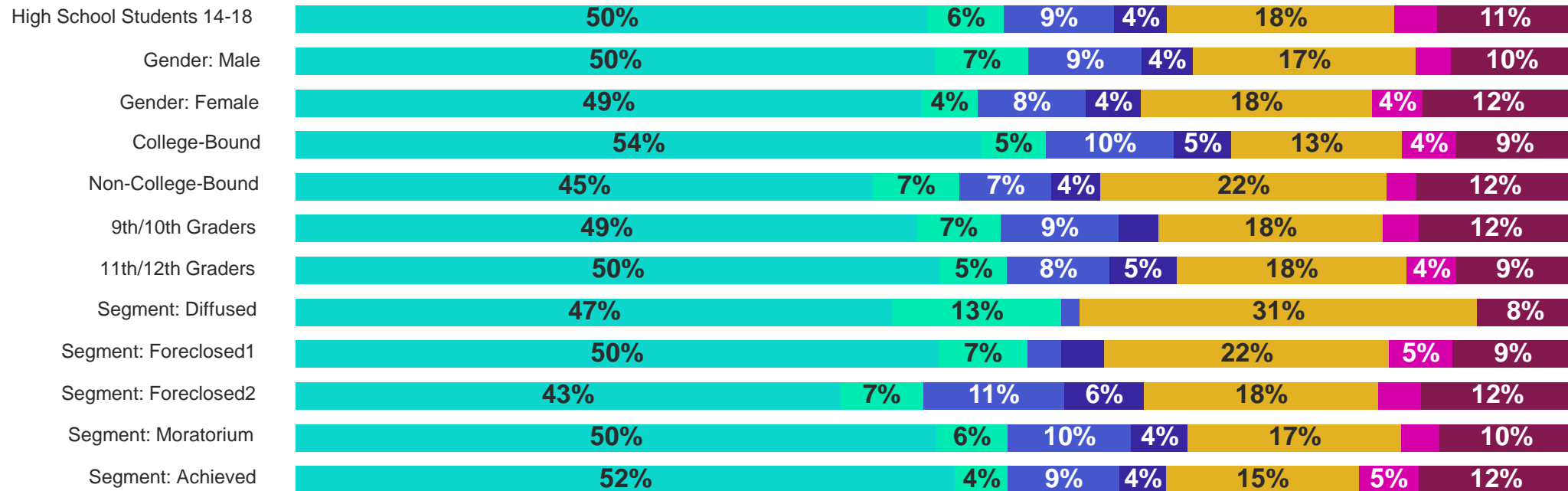
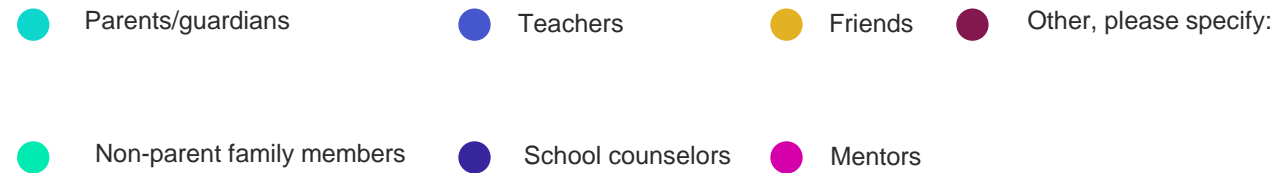
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your plans after school? People like me can be successful after high school without going to a four-year college



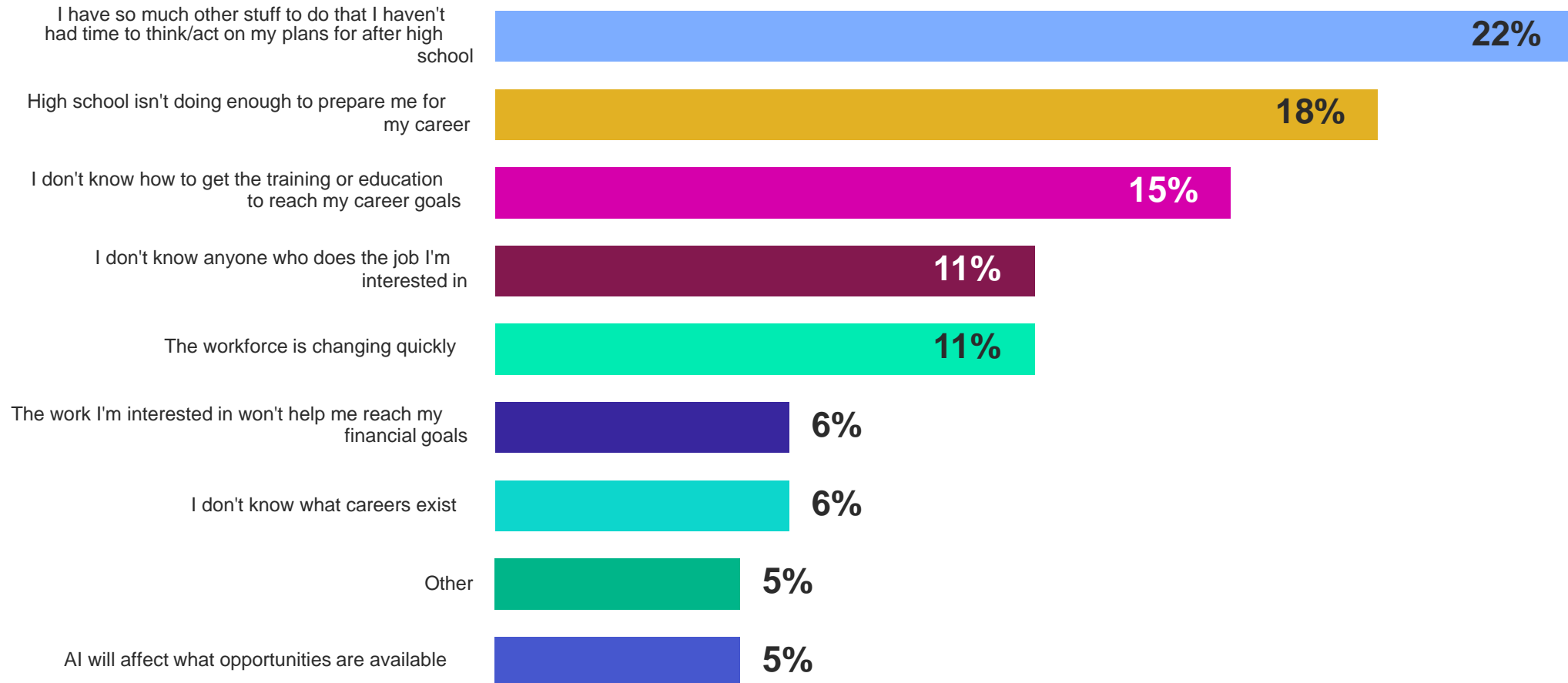
Who personally motivates you the most to explore possible career paths while in high school?



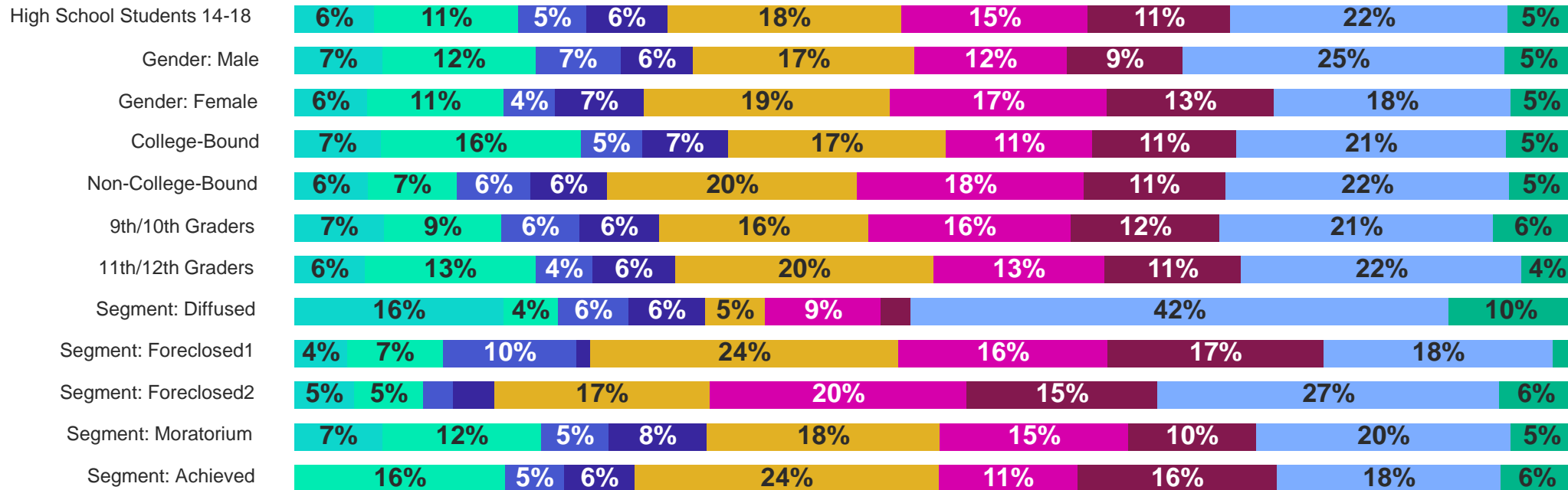
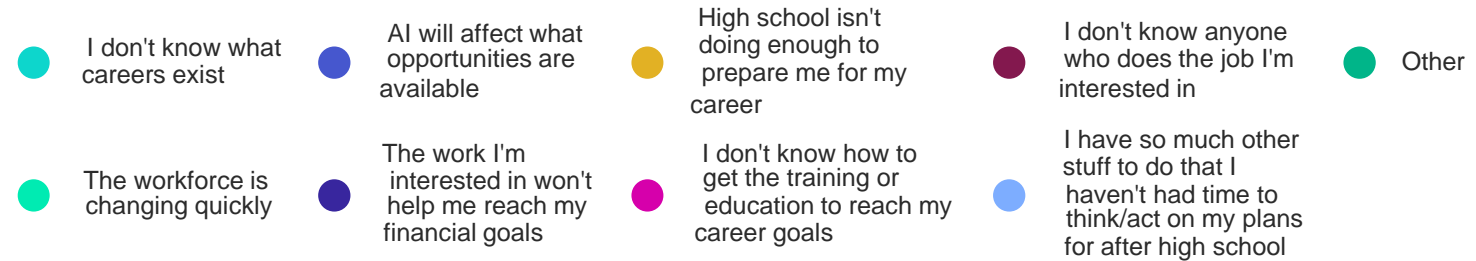
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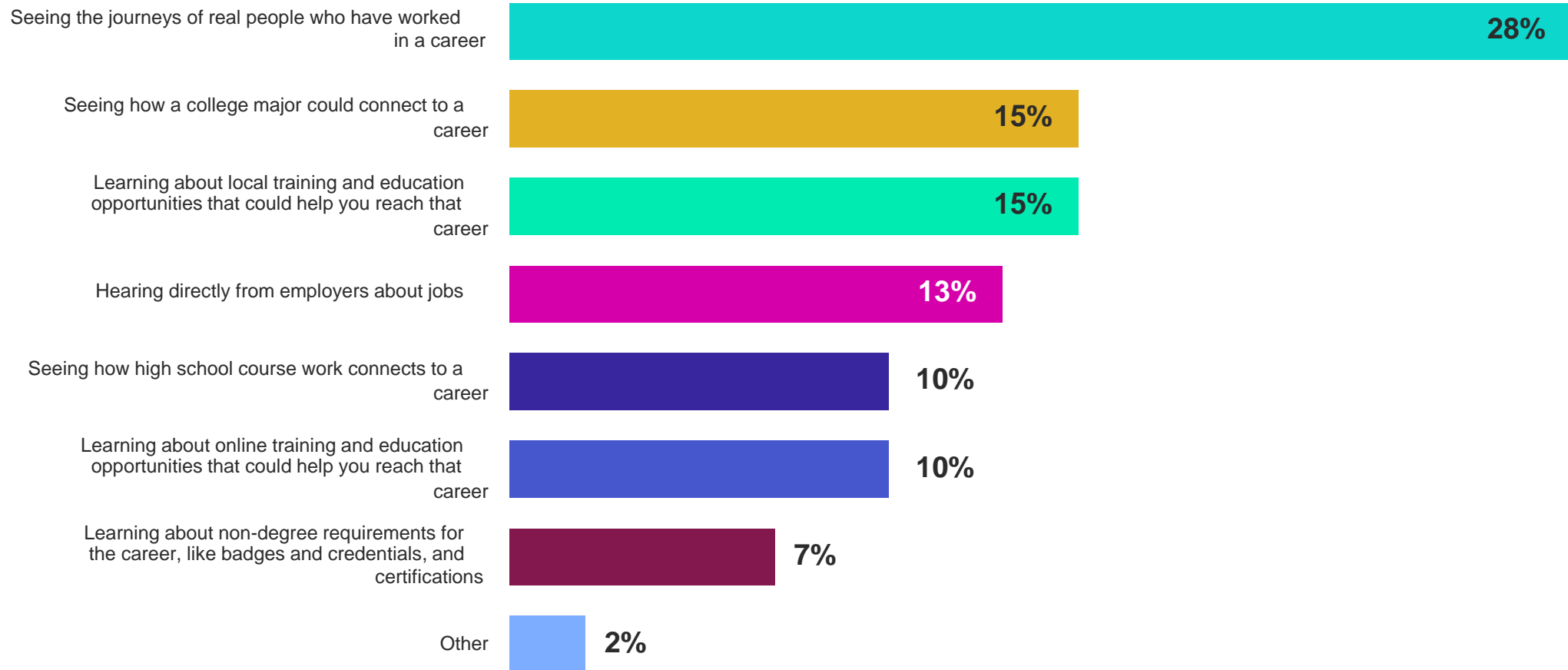
Which of the following options best describes the reason for the way you feel about exploring your future career?



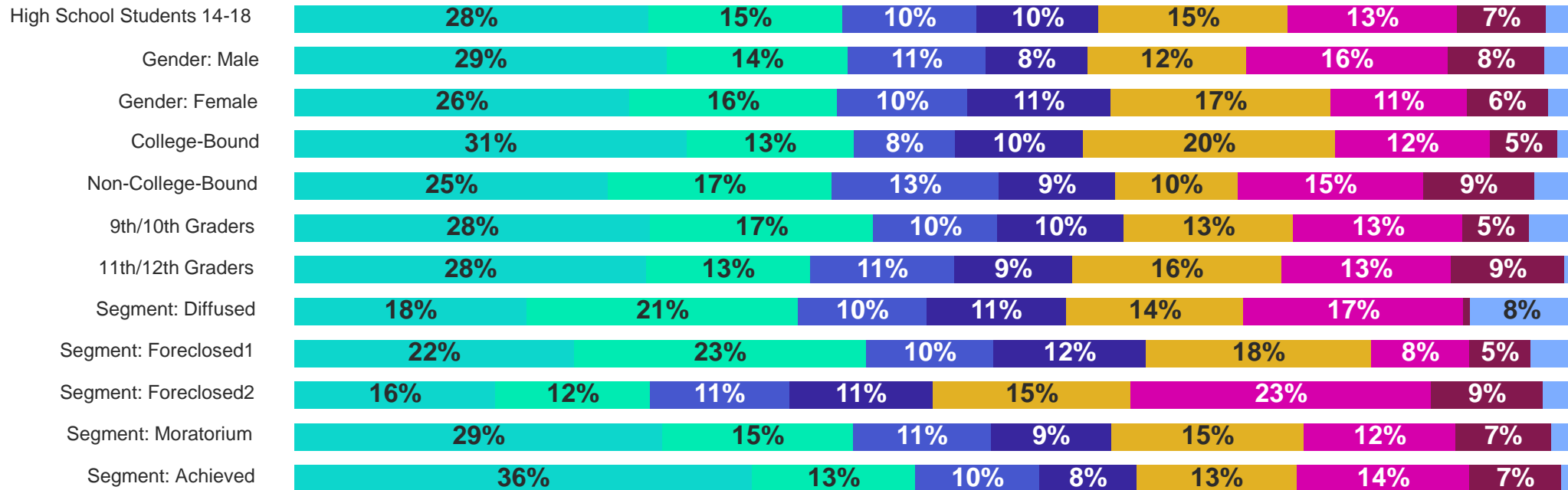
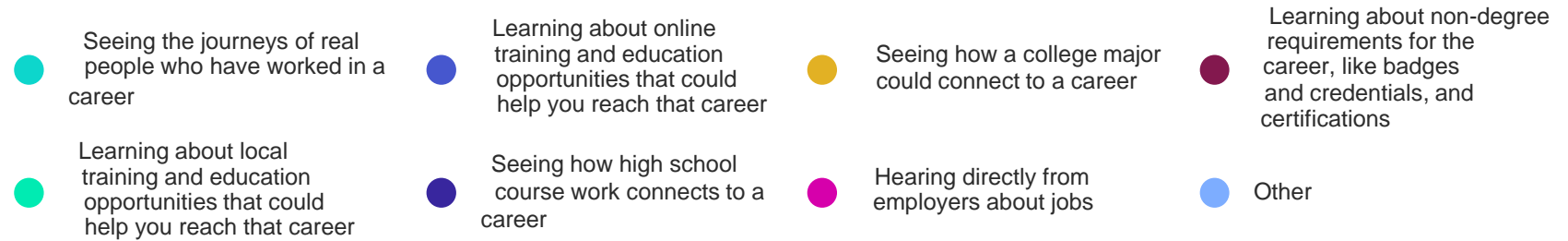
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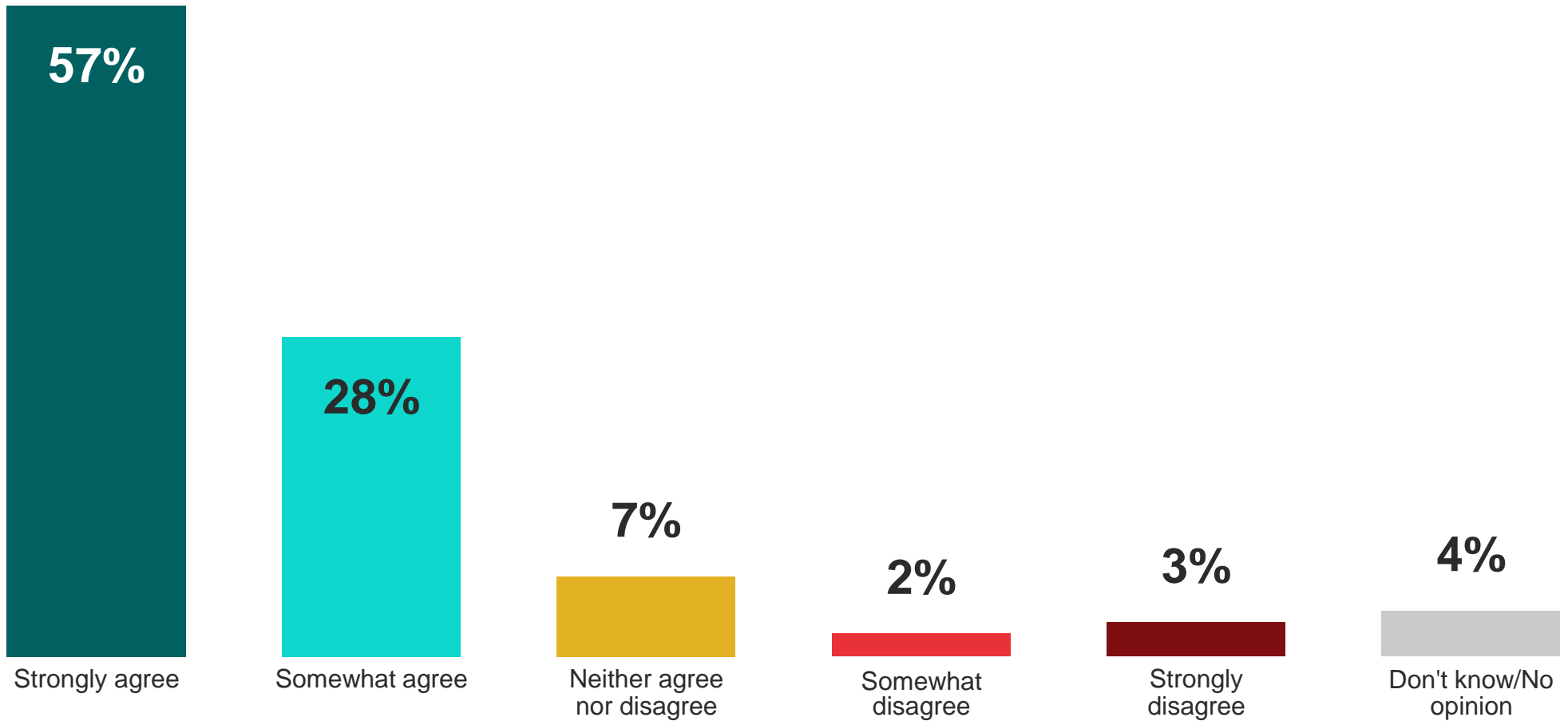
What would most help you evaluate different career opportunities?



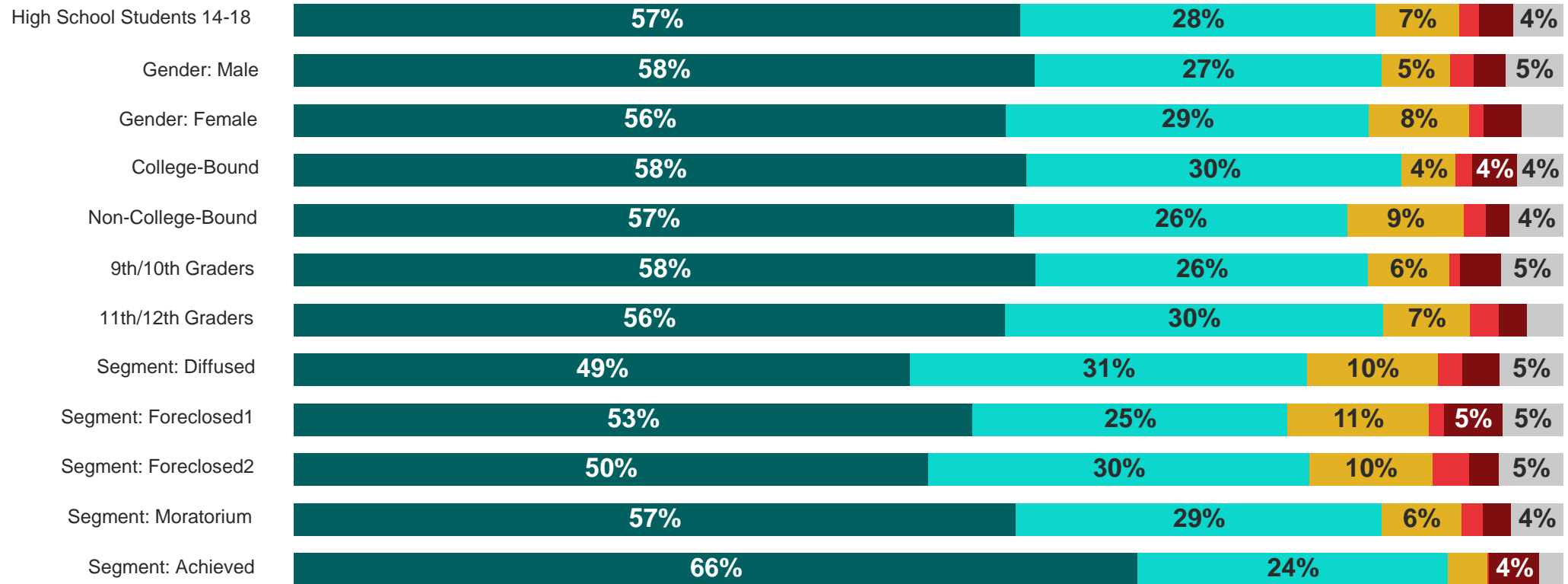
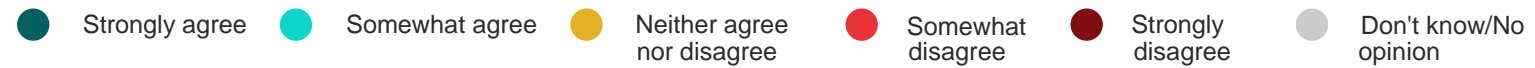
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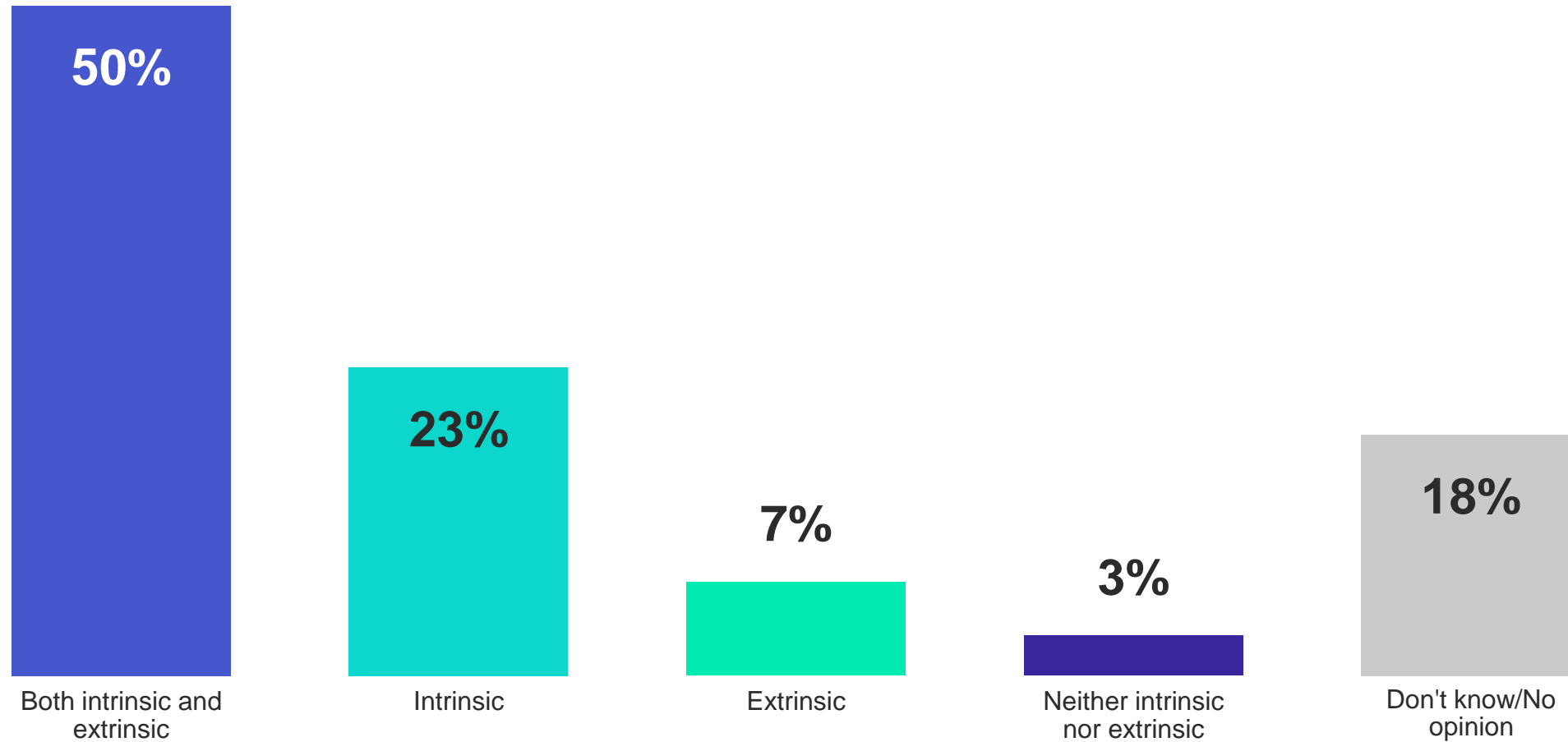
Do you agree or disagree that your future career should align with your passions?



Do you agree or disagree that your future career should align with your passions?



In general, would you say your motivations for pursuing your future career goals are more intrinsic (coming from within yourself), extrinsic (motivated by outside factors or people), both, or neither?



In general, would you say your motivations for pursuing your future career goals are more intrinsic (coming from within yourself), extrinsic (motivated by outside factors or people), both, or neither?

