

The Results of the  
Educator Preparation  
Program COVID-19  
Response Survey

Prepared by the Center for Assessment, Research, and Educational Safety

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## **Quantitative Findings for Educators Learning from COVID-19 Response**

The pandemic affected many professions around the nation, particularly those in healthcare and education. From schools closing to an entire year of virtual or hybrid teaching, current and future educators have faced many challenges. Despite the obstacles, Cooperating Teachers and Field Supervisors maintained their position and continued to work with the Sam Houston State University (SHSU) Educator Preparation Program (EPP) to instruct Pre-service Teachers. The purpose of this survey was to collect ideas about what worked in COVID-19 response and how the Pre-service Teacher' training experience was affected.

In May 2021, over 250 total SHSU Pre-service Teachers, Field Supervisors, and Cooperating Teachers participated in a survey sent by the Center for Assessment, Research, and Educational Safety (CARES) to determine the response of the EPP to COVID-19 and how the Pre-service Teachers' training experience was affected by the pandemic. In the survey, twelve quantitative questions ranging from questions related to the EPP to the individual's personal wellbeing were included. Quantitative data were collected using Likert-type scales where 1= "Strongly Disagree", 2= "Somewhat Disagree", 3= "Only Slightly Disagree", 4= "Only Slightly Agree", 5= "Somewhat Agree", and 6= "Strongly Agree". (*Refer to page 11 for qualitative results*). Following those questions, thirteen open-ended response questions offered participants an opportunity to explain in depth their thoughts and feedback.

To further enhance the understanding of the data, 13 graphs are included in the Appendix. Each graph includes the statement, exact response numbers, and a short interpretation summary. The total response numbers include Pre-service Teachers, Cooperating Teachers, and Field Supervisors combined unless indicated otherwise.

Overall, there was a response rate that was sufficient for the report. Cooperating Teachers had a 20% response rate, 39% rate for Field Supervisors, and 7% rate for Pre-service Teachers. Due to the lack of response, due to a variety of reasons, from the Pre-service Teachers, this report should not be considered exhaustive. However, it does offer some insight into the overall satisfaction of how those involved with the SHSU EPP felt about the changes due to COVID-19.

### **Qualitative Findings for Educators Learning from COVID-19 Response**

To gain a better understanding of how SHSU Pre-service Teachers adapted to the response of COVID-19, the CARES researchers partnered with the EPP. The research team used a mixed methods approach by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research components from an open-ended response. These components are meant to enhance one another and aid in the research team's quest for an answer to the research questions. The questions chosen for this research include:

- (a) How did the SHSU Educator Preparation Program maintain clear lines of communication? How could this have been improved?
- (b) In general, what challenges do you feel the SHSU Educator Preparation Program handled well?
- (c) In general, what challenges could the SHSU Educator Preparation Program have improved on?
- (d) What portions of the SHSU Educator Preparation Program do you believe prepared the Pre-service teachers best for the challenges of COVID-19? and
- (e) What additional Pre-service teacher training would have benefitted the Pre-service teachers?

These five questions were selected based on how they specifically related back to the SHSU EPP. Each major theme was chosen by the research team after reading and categorizing responses. Within the major themes, subcodes were created to provide a more magnified look into each theme. The findings from qualitative data provide unique insights to the research questions addressed in the survey. The following sections address these findings to inform the EPP on how Pre-service Teachers, Field Supervisors, and Cooperating Teachers felt the response to COVID-19 was handled.

## **Overview**

The past 18 months have brought tremendous hardship to the education system. However, the EPP did not step down and were able to face the challenges brought before them. There was an overall sense of handling many challenges, with the “best interest of all concerned” (Field Supervisor Respondent 6). Regarding mentoring and supervising, Cooperating Teacher Respondent 197 included that the EPP was able to navigate through “the inability for supervisor to come to campus and observe.”

Even without traditional teaching and observation, Cooperating Teachers and Field Supervisors included how well prepared their student teachers were in the face of change and uncertainty. Many praised that “students were well prepared” and “worked hard at everything” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 106; Cooperating Teacher Respondent 174). Information was constantly changing so it was important to keep clear lines of communication between EPP administration, Field Supervisors, Cooperating Teachers, and Pre-service Teachers. Respondents indicated that the EPP did well to “keep us informed” and “all concerns were addressed in a timely and appropriate manner” (Field Supervisor Respondent 9; Cooperating Teacher Respondent 15). Through the unknowns, “continuing with the program, instead of shutting it

down” showed all those involved in the EPP that “unexpected things happen, and the world doesn’t stop” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 57). The major themes emerged were communication, remote teaching, program, and trainings and will be detailed further in the paper.

### ***Communication***

The EPP maintained clear lines of communication in many ways with Cooperating Teachers, Field Supervisors, and Pre-service Teachers. One way was the “in-person communication” and “personal visits” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 55; Cooperating Teachers Respondent 128). Through COVID-19 and social distancing, using technology seemed like the right source of communication. Within this theme, a CARES researcher created three subcodes. These were the most common forms of technological communication: (a) emails, (b) phone calls, and (c) Zoom meetings. Pre-service Teachers were told to “check emails daily” and check-in regularly to Zoom meetings (Pre-service Teacher Respondent 26). Field Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers were also instructed to keep an eye out for emails and Zoom meetings. Cooperating Teachers were the overwhelming respondents to mention phone calls as a form of communication from the EPP.

While some of the responses mentioned instances of poor or unclear communication for all services, such as “at times I was not clear on when things were [due] and which forms to fill out” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 58). There were also comments about great communication and “no improvements needed” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 203). However, suggestions on how to improve are always welcome. Respondents addressed needs from better notification on visitations, timeliness, and clarity of information sent out. Some

suggested that additional emails such as a weekly update with more information would have been helpful.

Communication can also be categorized in segments: (a) mentor teacher, (b) Pre-service teacher, and (c) overall. There was a suggestion of “better communications with the student teacher regarding assignments due” or concerns from a Cooperating Teacher that they “received almost zero communication with the professor” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 12; Cooperating Teacher Respondent 46).

### ***Remote Teaching***

Due to the unprecedented year for teaching, many respondents addressed the need for improvement of different aspects within the EPP. The remote teaching theme consisted of codes related to (a) access to technology, (b) virtual training, and (c) program technology. One suggested improvement in accessing technology was providing student teachers “with the technology to complete the assignment” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 35). Various trainings on “how to use virtual learning platforms [Pre-service Teachers] may encounter in the field” could have also been improved (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 175). Now that many tasks were completed online, the program technology used to enter observations had moments of lagging and errors that frustrated some Cooperating Teachers.

### ***Program***

When asked what the EPP handled well during the transition, complements on how the program “showed students opportunities of teaching in a tricky period of time” were noted by respondents (Field Supervisor Respondent 7). Within the theme, three subcodes were formed: (a) flexibility, (b) hybrid setting, and (c) safety factors. These three pieces were praised by respondents for how well the transition occurred. Masks, social distancing, and adhering to CDC

COVID-19 guidelines kept Cooperating Teachers, Field Supervisors, Pre-service Teachers, and their students safe.

Without the participation of all three groups, the EPP would not be as successful as it is today. There were responses that asked: if “mentor teachers actually want to mentor” and “are good candidates” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 42; Cooperating Teacher Respondent 192). Even through the challenges and limitations, the (a) insufficient time in the classroom and (b) lack of observations were noticed by Field Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers. There were frustrations about the lack of preparedness of student teachers entering the classroom. One response suggested that “they should have handled Pre-service for their student teachers more thoroughly to ensure they were prepared” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 32).

### ***Training***

Due to the wide variety of answers, this theme was broken into three subcodes. Within these subcodes, there are additional subcodes.

#### *Technology*

Pre-service Teachers are given trainings throughout their time in the EPP that can benefit their in-class and real-world teaching experiences. There seemed to be a strong emphasis on being trained in different forms of technology, possibly because of the shift due to COVID-19. Technology training can come in a range of different topics, such as “zoom strategies, [and] hybrid teaching models” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 54). In the midst of unknowns, training on “using digital resources” could save time and be beneficial for Pre-service Teachers as they gain more familiarity with the resources and how to use them. The transition from all in-person to online and hybrid brought the attention to training for virtual learning. This can include

“practicing on zoom” and how to use “Google Classroom/LMS platforms” (Field Supervisor Respondent 9; Cooperating Teacher Respondent 51).

### *Classroom Management*

Besides technology centered training, there are aspects of classroom management training that could benefit Pre-service Teachers from “how to manage behavior” to “lesson planning” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 122; Field Supervisor 12). This includes professional development, such as “how you should interact with [a] teacher, students, etc.” (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 61). Codes within this theme of training include: (a) special education, (b) problem solving, and (c) mental health, that are also important to have in the Pre-service teacher’s tool belt. Training can better equip Pre-service Teachers before they graduate and begin their new job. However, there are some problems with training, such as “teachers don’t seem to have a clear understanding” or the “teacher expectations” when it comes to how trainings are conducted (Field Supervisor Respondent 13; Field Supervisor Respondent 7).

### *Pre-service Teacher Support*

Training Pre-service Teachers is an important factor in the EPP. While some responses expressed that “faculty was supportive” and “Pre-service Teachers received an enormous amount of support,” others expressed what additional support could be provided to Pre-service Teachers (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 6; Field Supervisor Respondent 19). The transition from student to full time teacher can be difficult, which is why respondents indicated that having support can help as they are managing new tasks. These topics can be categorized in three subcodes: (a) time management, (b) mental health, and (c) classroom management. As indicated by respondents, strong communication such as “peer groups to discuss concerns or difficulties together and work on strategies to improve” or feedback sessions that are “more critical and

specific” can provide additional support to Pre-service Teachers (Cooperating Teacher Respondent 42; Cooperating Teacher Respondent 21). Additional aspects of support for Pre-service Teachers were mentioned throughout the responses such as (a) school expectations, (b) observations, and (c) curriculum.

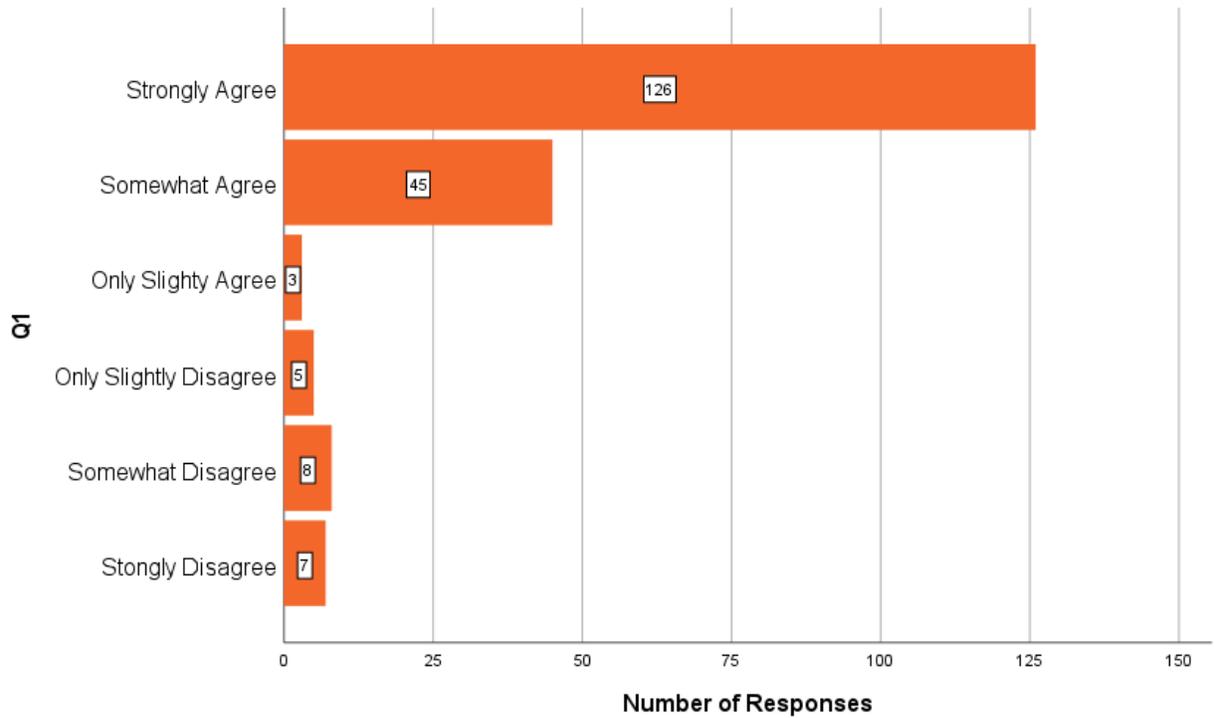
Overall, qualitative data indicated that participants were appreciative to be back in the classrooms and able to do their work. While a few participants shared their concerns over a lack of timely communication, most believed that the communication came just in enough time under the circumstances. Adapting to different kinds of training should be considered as the needs of Pre-service Teachers are constantly changing and being updated. The EPP should continue to seek the experiences and listen to the needs of Field Supervisors, Pre-service Teachers, and Cooperating Teachers as they continue to redesign and evaluate the program.



## Appendix

**Figure 1**

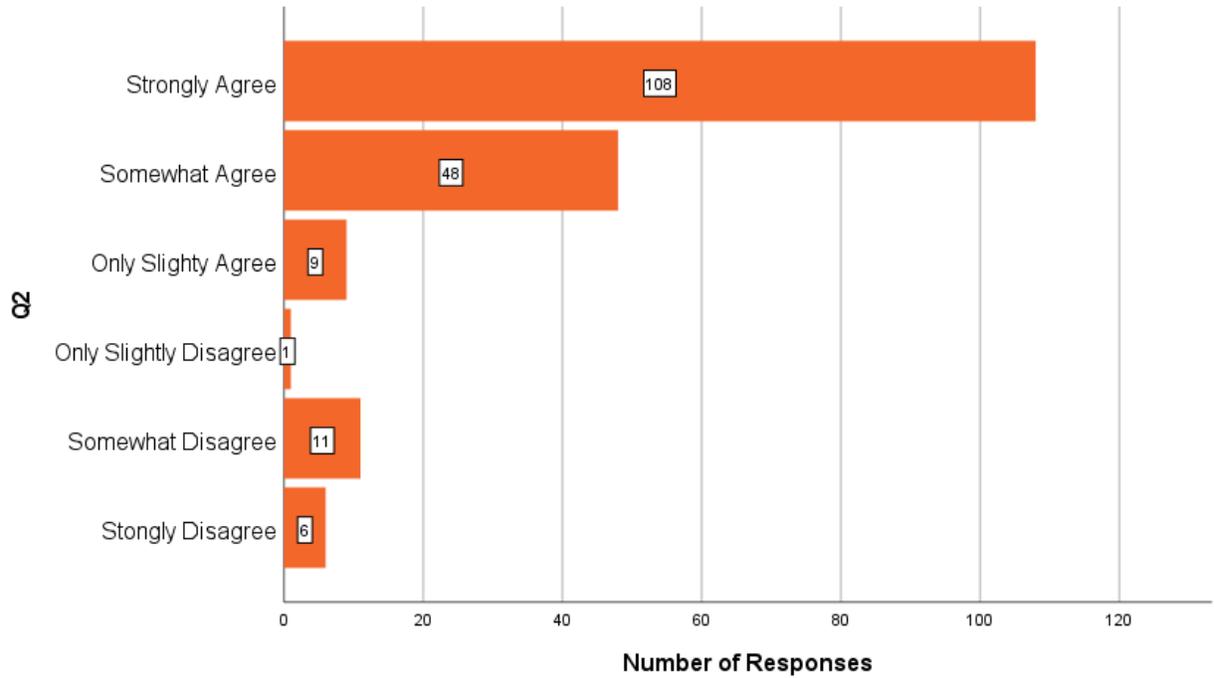
*The SHSU Educator Preparation Program addressed COVID-19 issues effectively:*



An overwhelming percentage of 64% of respondents expressed that they “Strongly Agreed” that the SHSU EPP addressed COVID-19 issues effectively while only 3% “Strongly Disagreed” with the statement.

**Figure 2**

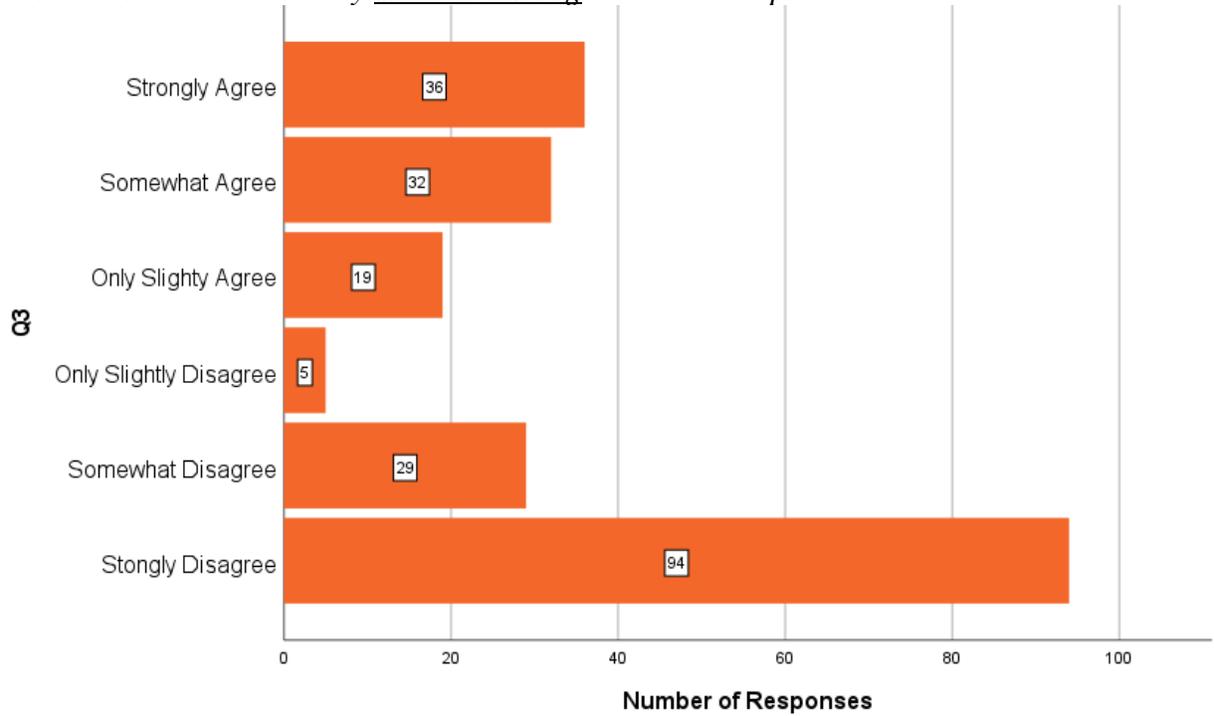
*The SHSU Educator Preparation Program will come out of COVID-19 stronger:*



While 59% “Strongly Agreed” that the SHSU EPP will come out of COVID-19 stronger, 3% “Strongly Disagreed”.

**Figure 3**

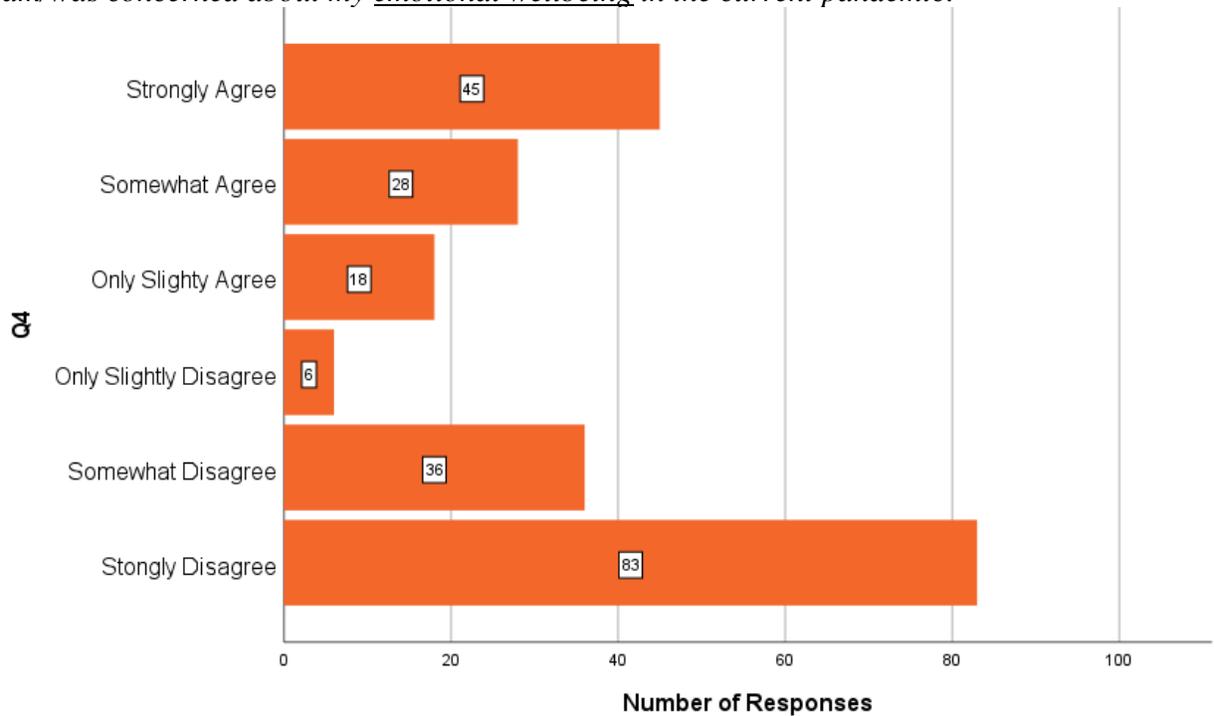
*I am/was concerned about my social wellbeing in the current pandemic:*



Answers were more spread out for this question regarding concerns for personal social wellbeing during the current pandemic. 60% chose in the range between “Only Slightly Disagree” to “Strongly Disagree” while 40% indicated that they agreed with the statement in the “Only Slightly Agree” to “Strongly Agree” range.

**Figure 4**

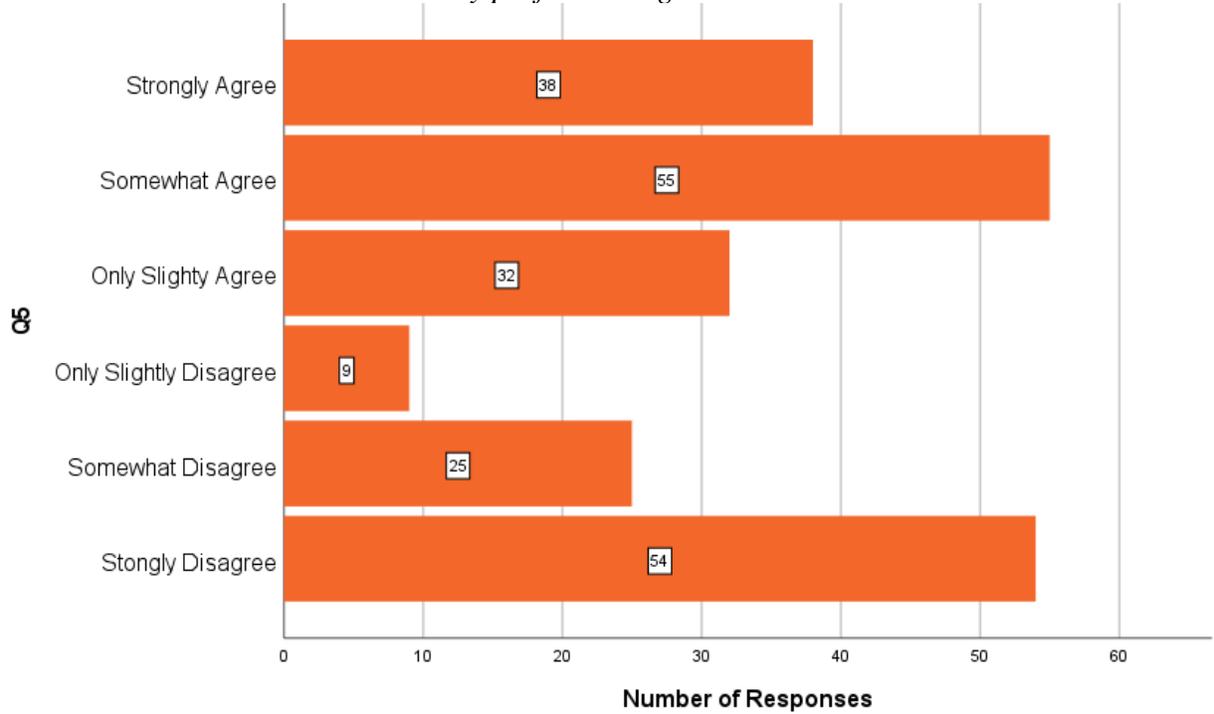
*I am/was concerned about my emotional wellbeing in the current pandemic:*



Answers were more spread out for this question regarding concerns for emotional wellbeing during the current pandemic. 57% chose in the range between “Only Slightly Disagree” to “Strongly Disagree” while 43% indicated that they agreed with the statement in the “Only Slightly Agree” to “Strongly Agree” range.

**Figure 5**

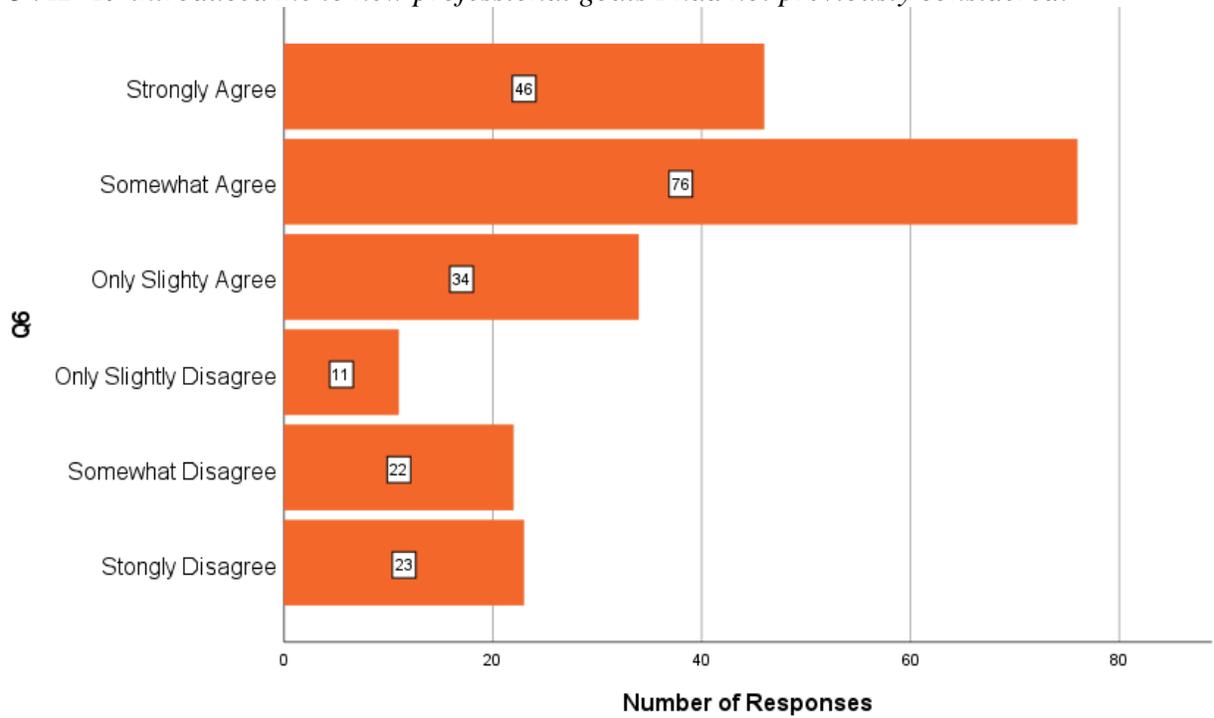
*COVID-19 caused me to reevaluate my professional goals:*



Pre-service Teachers, Field Supervisors, and Cooperating Teacher all felt the stresses of the transition due to COVID-19. Answers were more spread out for this question regarding concerns for emotional wellbeing during the current pandemic. 41% chose in the range between “Only Slightly Disagree” to “Strongly Disagree” while 59% indicated that they agreed with the statement in the “Only Slightly Agree” to “Strongly Agree” range.

**Figure 6**

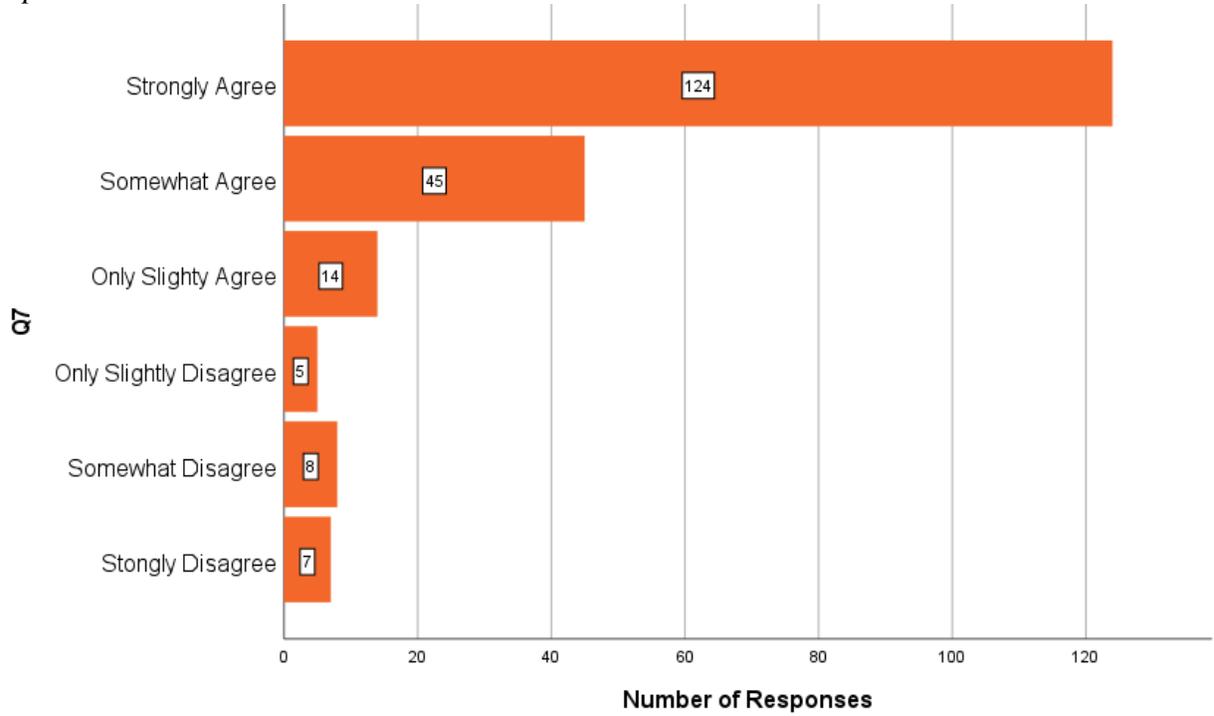
*COVID-19 introduced me to new professional goals I had not previously considered:*



A total of 35% of Field Supervisors, Pre-Service Teachers, and Cooperating Teachers indicated that COVID-19 introduced them to professional goals that had previously not been considered.

**Figure 7**

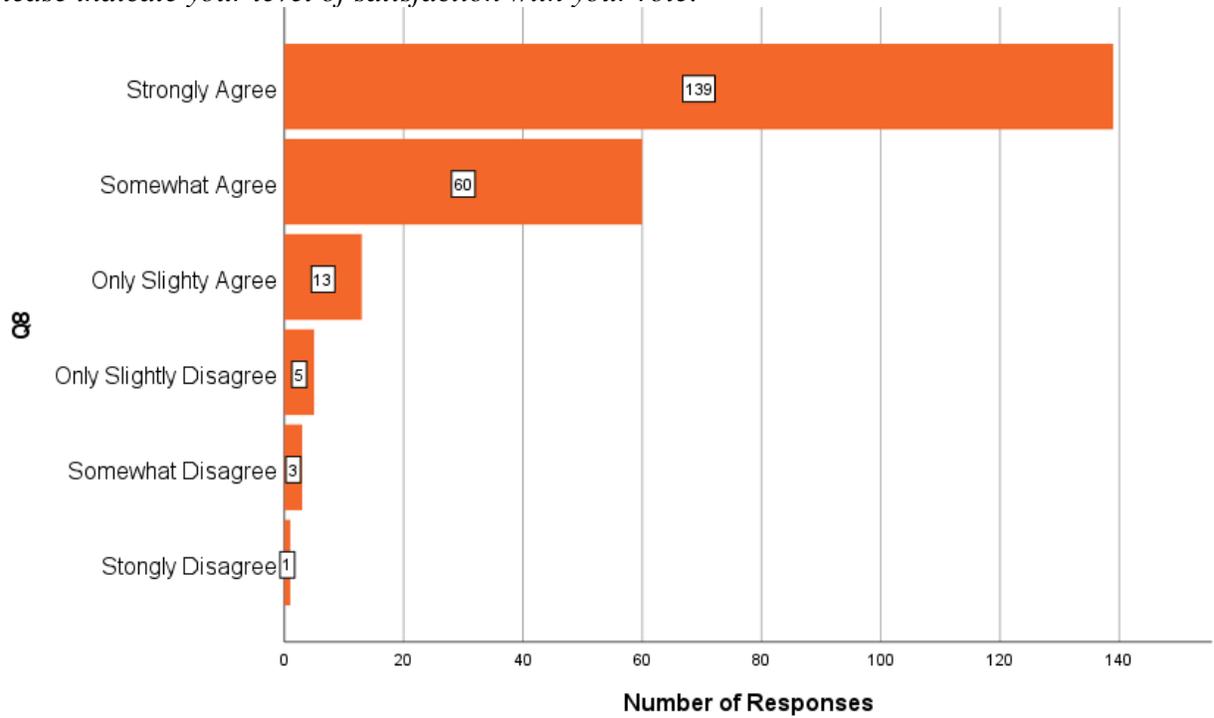
*Overall, I am satisfied with the SHSU Educator Preparation Programs' response to the COVID-19 pandemic:*



An overwhelming percentage of 61% of respondents expressed that they “Strongly Agreed” that they were satisfied with the SHSU EPP’s response to COVID-19 while only 3% “Strongly Disagreed” with the statement.

**Figure 8**

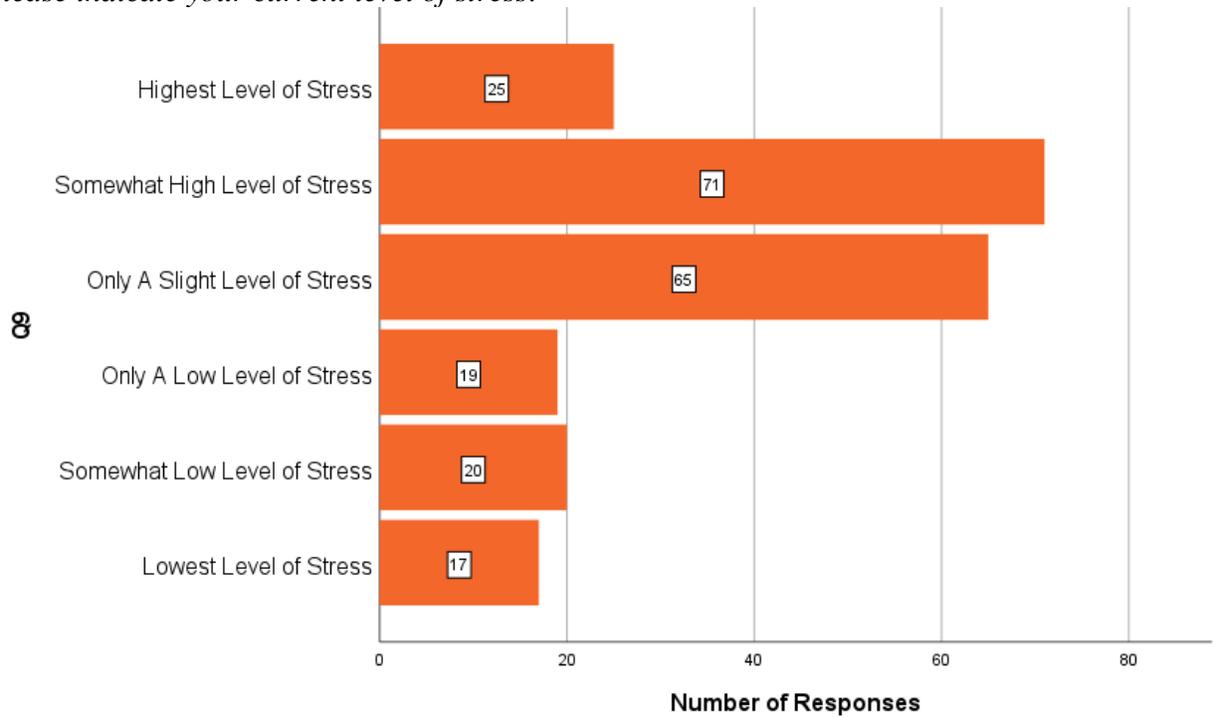
*Please indicate your level of satisfaction with your role:*



An overwhelming percentage of 62% of respondents expressed that they “Strongly Agreed” that they were satisfied with their role.

**Figure 9**

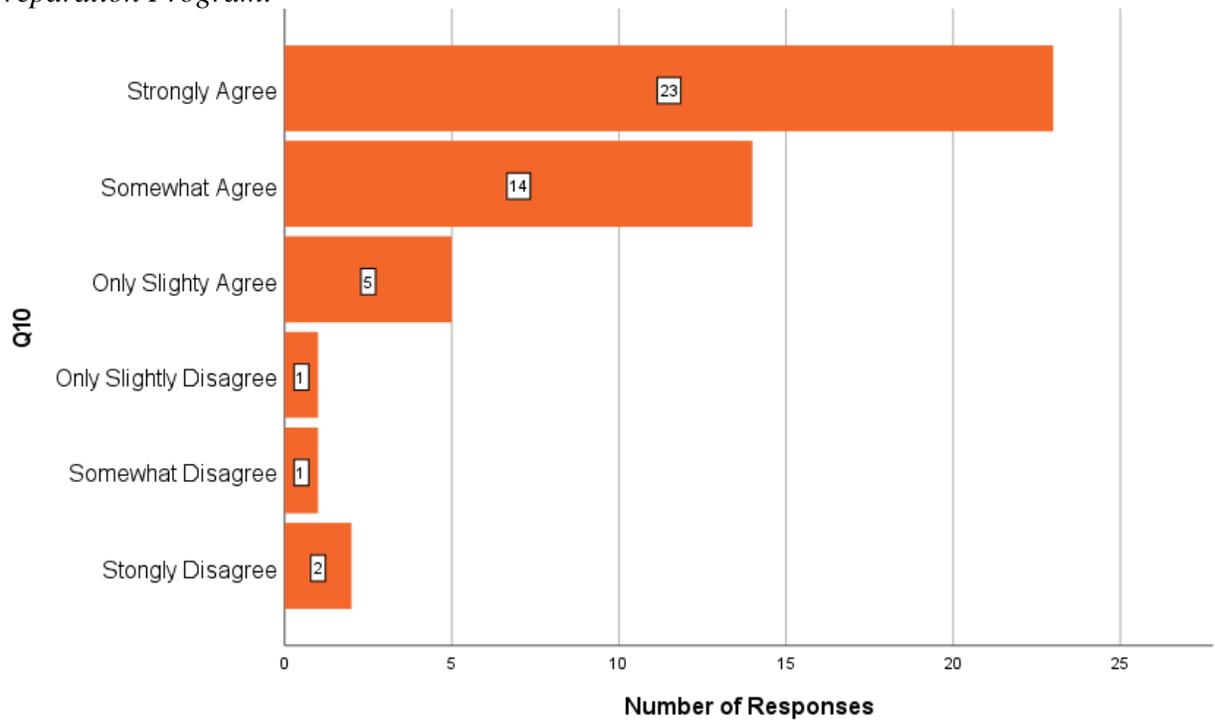
*Please indicate your current level of stress:*



An overwhelming percentage of 74% of respondents expressed that they currently fell in the “Highest Level of Stress” to “Only a Slight Level of Stress” range.

**Figure 10**

*There are many solutions to the problems COVID-19 has presented the SHSU Educator Preparation Program:*

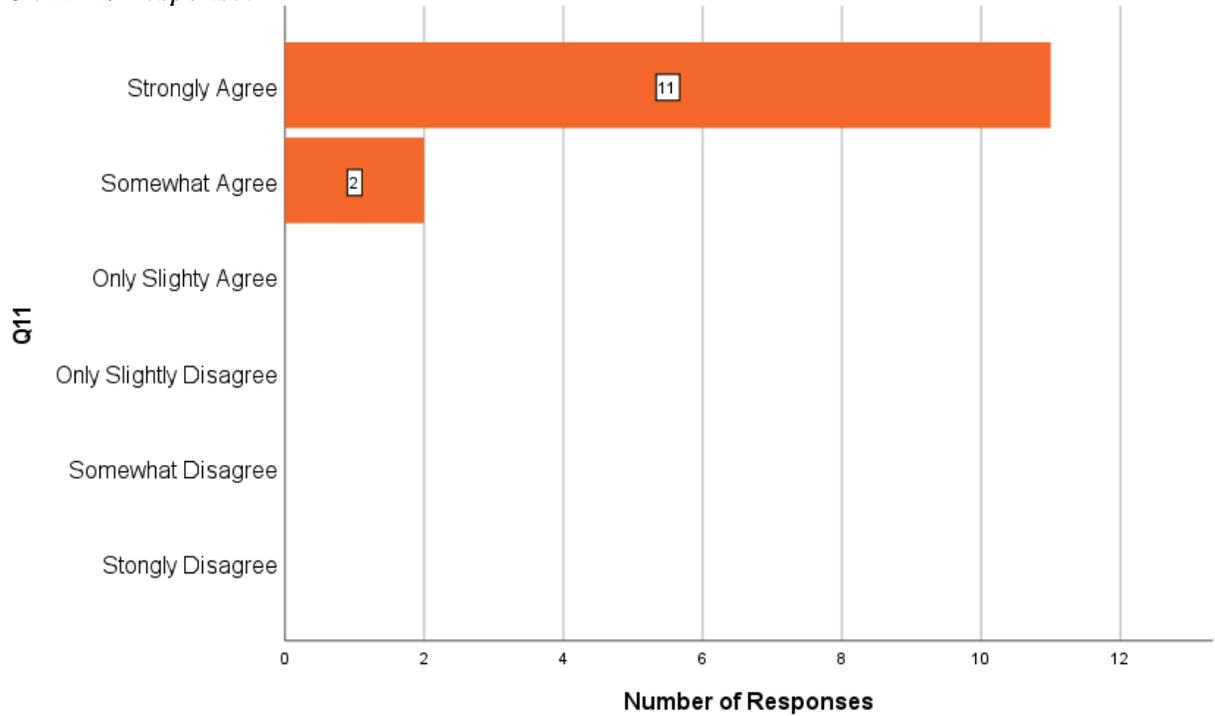


Note: This question was specifically asked for SHSU Faculty and Students. Therefore, the results are overall response answers from Pre-service Teachers and Field Supervisors.

Half of respondents “Strongly Agreed” that the SHSU EPP offered many solutions to the problems presented by COVID-19.

**Figure 11**

*SHSU Educator Preparation Program administrators listen to my ideas about improvements for COVID-19 response:*

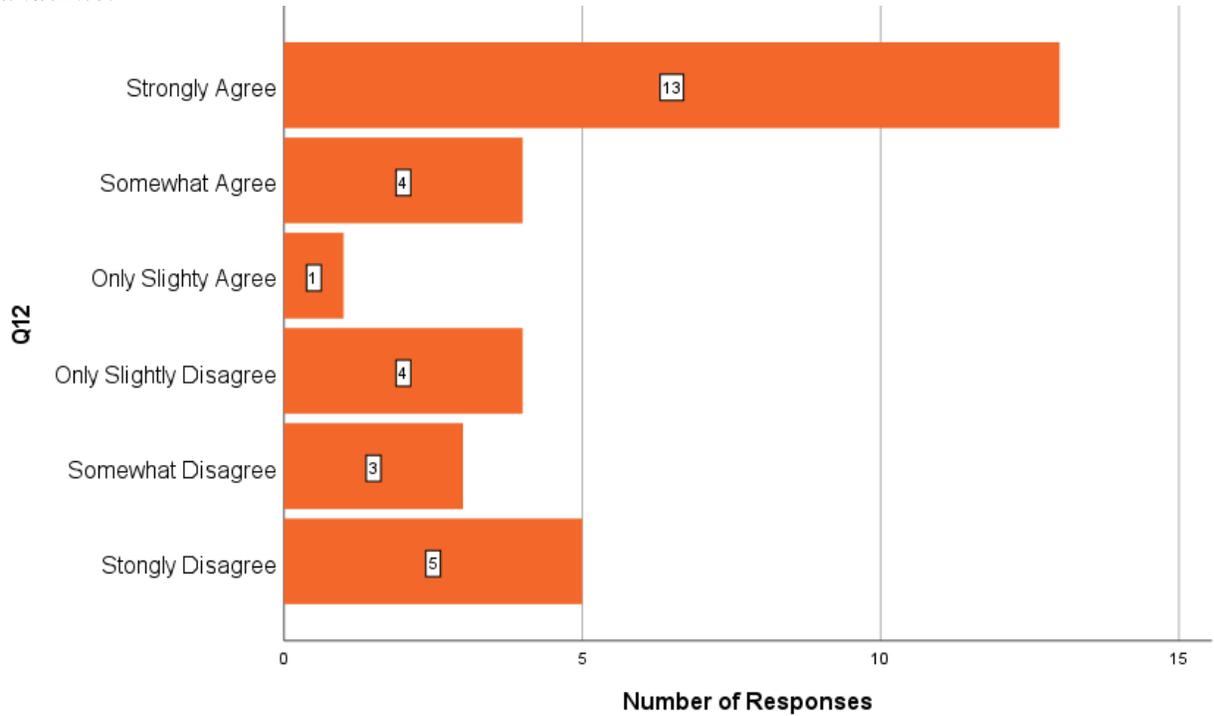


Note: Results are only from the Field Supervisors responses.

An overwhelming majority of Field Supervisors indicated that they “Strongly Agreed” that SHSU EPP administrators listened to ideas about improvement for COVID-19 response.

**Figure 12**

*I am/was concerned about my academic success as a Pre-service teacher in the current pandemic:*

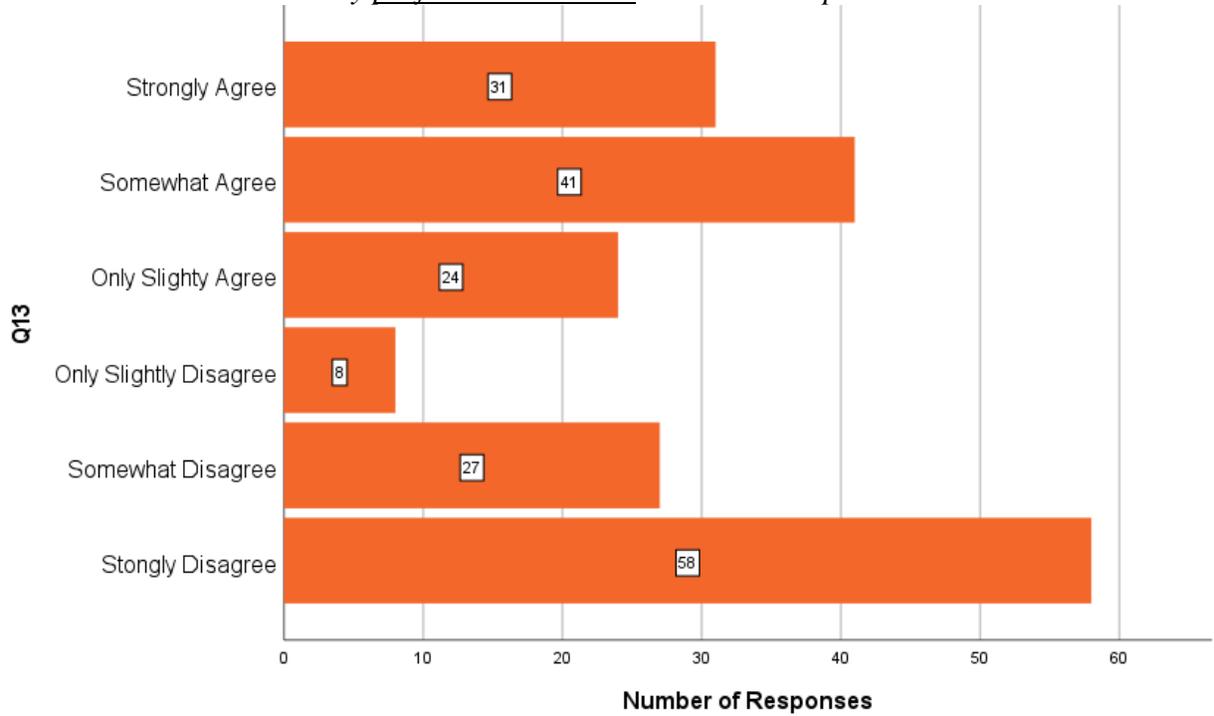


Note: Results are only from the Pre-service Teacher responses.

Results from the questions about Pre-service Teachers concerns about their academic success warranted 43% answering “Strongly Agree”.

**Figure 13**

*I am/was concerned about my professional success in the current pandemic:*



Note: Results are only from the Field Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers responses.

Results from the questions about Pre-service Teachers concerns about their academic success warranted 30% answering “Strongly Disagree” and 16% answering “Strongly Agree”.