

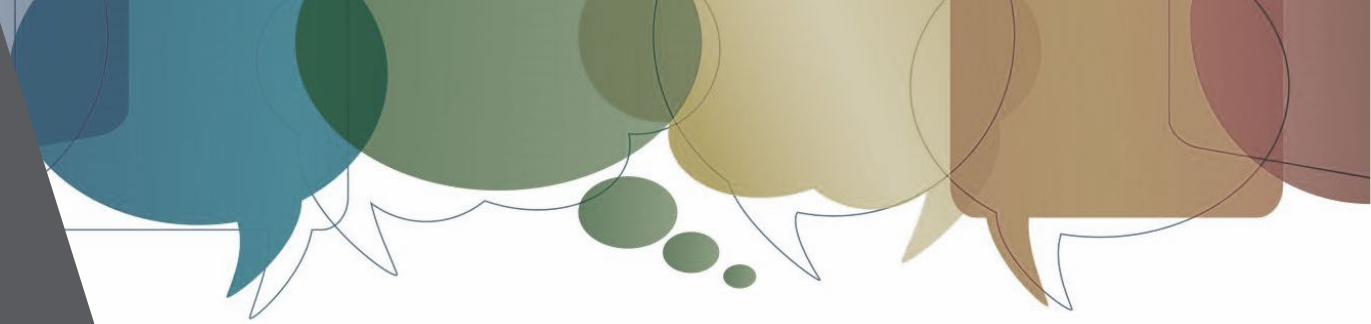


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OCTOBER 2020 RESEARCH

PULSE REPORT ON COVID-19 – REPORT #51

CABINET OFFICE

October 9th 2020



KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings

1 Over the past week, the government's 'right track' scores remain highly positive, stable at 80%.

2 After dipping last week, positive perceptions toward the government's performance on most economic, health and education metrics have either rebounded or remain unchanged.

3 Perception that the government is 'not doing as much as they should' has increased in three areas: 'preventing the spread of the virus', 'managing the process of gradually re-opening the province', and 'advising on the measures to prevent the spread'.

4 Ontarians now believe that the province's COVID-19 situation is essentially on par with other parts of the world.

Similarly, there has been a sharp drop over the past two months (from 71% to 21%) in the proportion of Ontarians who believe the threat of contracting COVID-19 is much less now.

5 Compared to last April/May, Ontarians are now much more likely to think they will catch the COVID-19 virus. The intensity of this view has also increased since the spring.

Ontarians are highly concerned about the second wave of this virus. The intensity of the concern is also high, with 57% saying they are 'very' concerned.

Ontarians perceive that the government is ready for the second wave.

6 Ontarians are divided over whether the restrictions are being re-introduced at the right pace or too slowly. Very few believe the re-introduction has been moving too quickly.

Key Findings

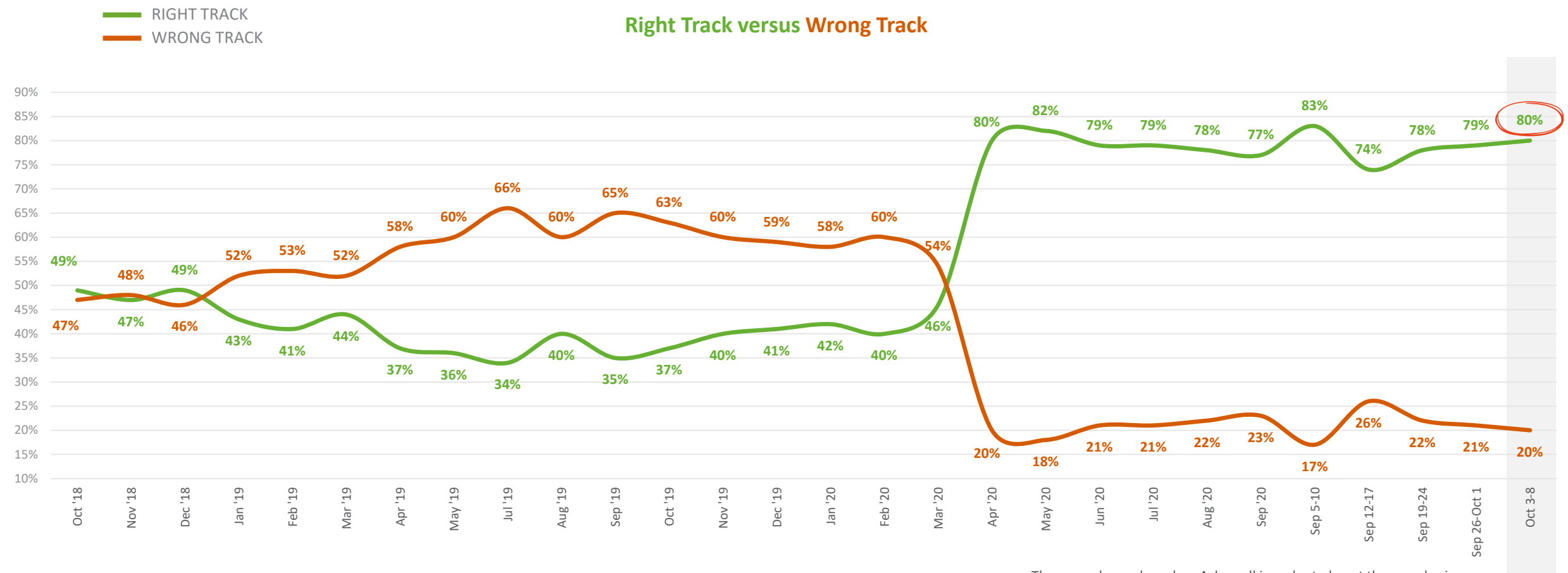
7 Importantly, Ontarians think that the recent increase in infections is expected as a result of the loosening of restrictions and that this is acceptable and not a sign of losing control.

8 Ontarians lean against another severe lockdown and prefer a more focussed approach in dealing with outbreaks in affected regions even if mean a higher level of infections.

RIGHT TRACK
WRONG TRACK



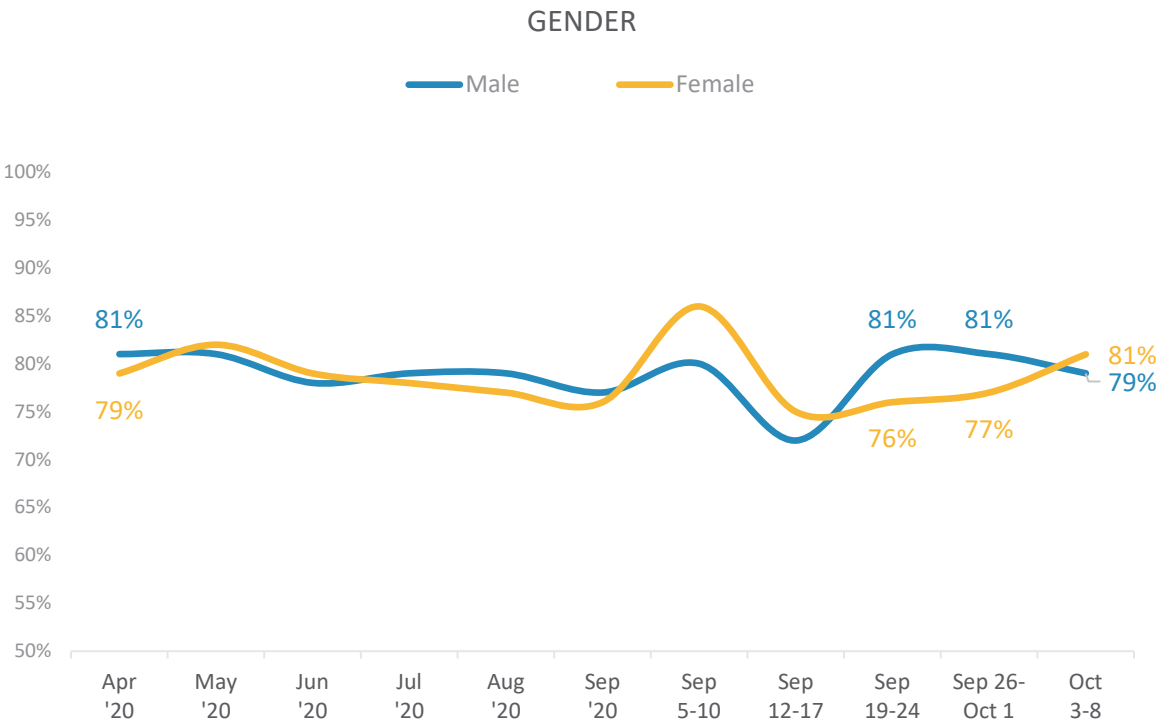
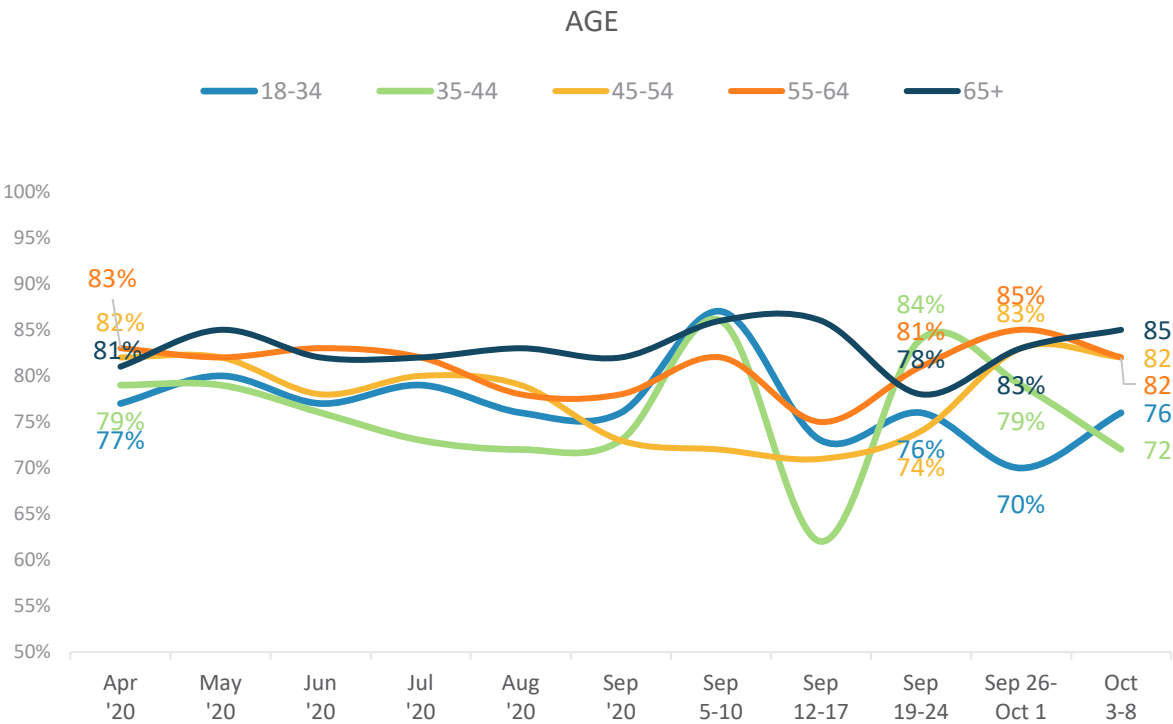
Over the past week, the government’s ‘right track’ scores remain highly positive, stable at 80%.



Q2. Overall, do you feel that the Ontario provincial government is on the right track or the wrong track, in terms of how it is governing the province? Base: Total sample

The ‘right track’ scores have increased slightly among women.

Right Track Scores – 6-Day Roll

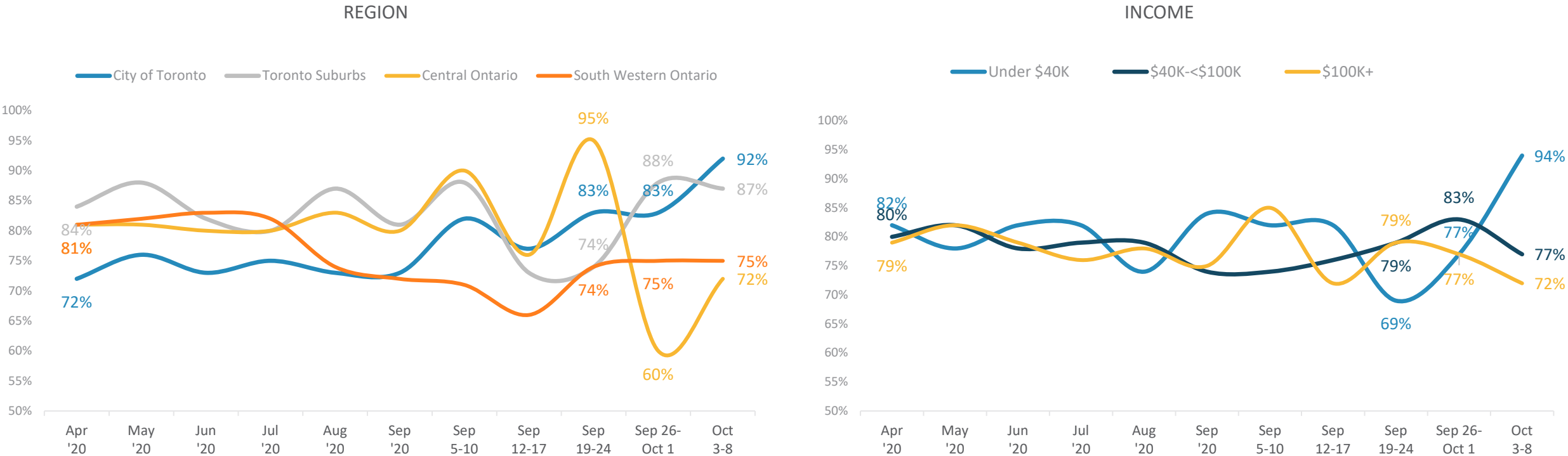


These graphs are based on 5 day roll in order to boost the sample sizes.

Q2. Overall, do you feel that the Ontario provincial government is on the right track or the wrong track, in terms of how it is governing the province? Base: Total sample

The ‘right track’ scores remain strong in the Toronto suburbs, but these scores have been increasing in the City of Toronto in recent weeks.

Right Track Scores – 6-Day Roll



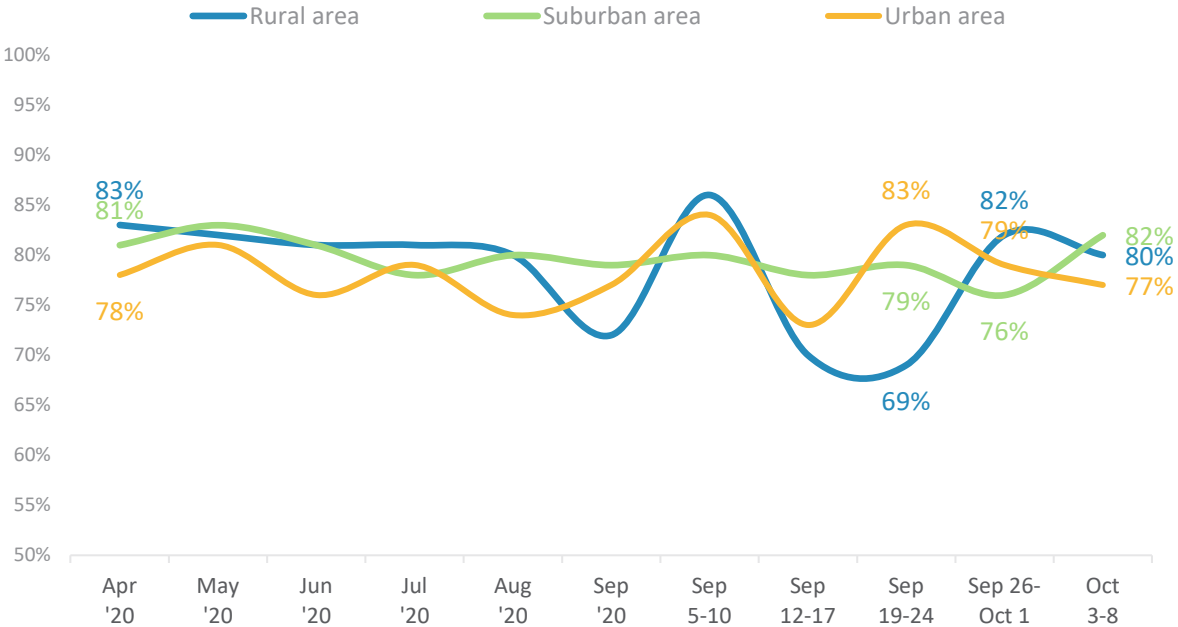
These graphs are based on 5 day roll in order to boost the sample sizes.

Q2. Overall, do you feel that the Ontario provincial government is on the right track or the wrong track, in terms of how it is governing the province? Base: Total sample

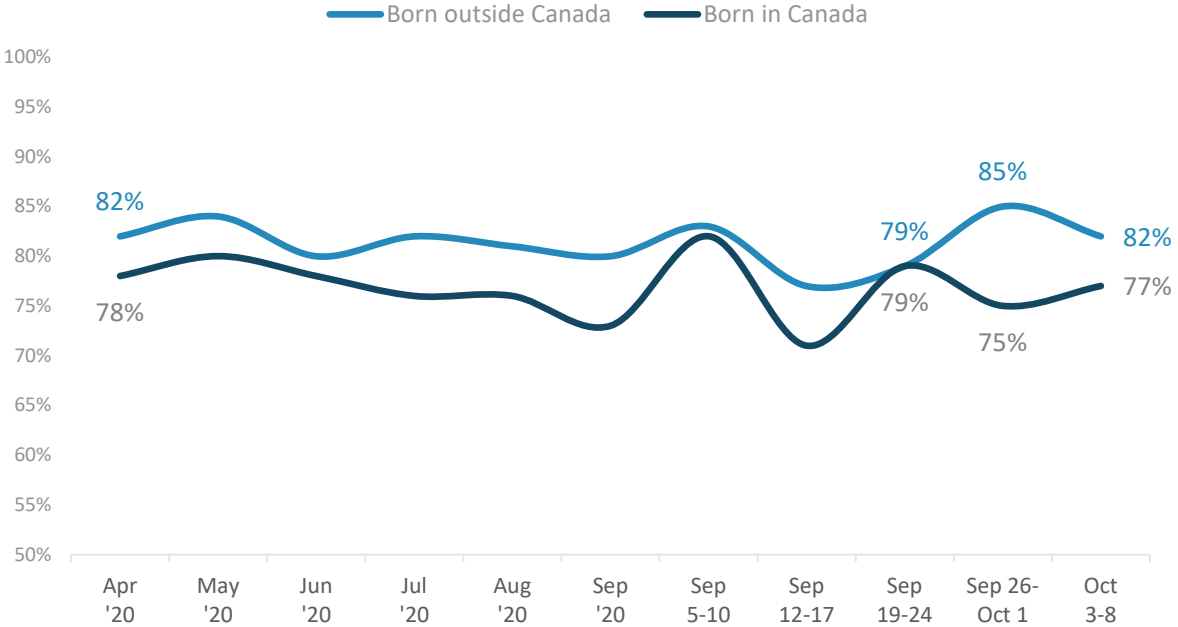
The ‘right track’ scores continue to be stronger among those born outside Canada compared to those born in Canada.

Right Track Scores – 6-Day Roll

RURAL/URBAN/SUBURBAN



BORN OUTSIDE/WITHIN CANADA



These graphs are based on 5 day roll in order to boost the sample sizes.

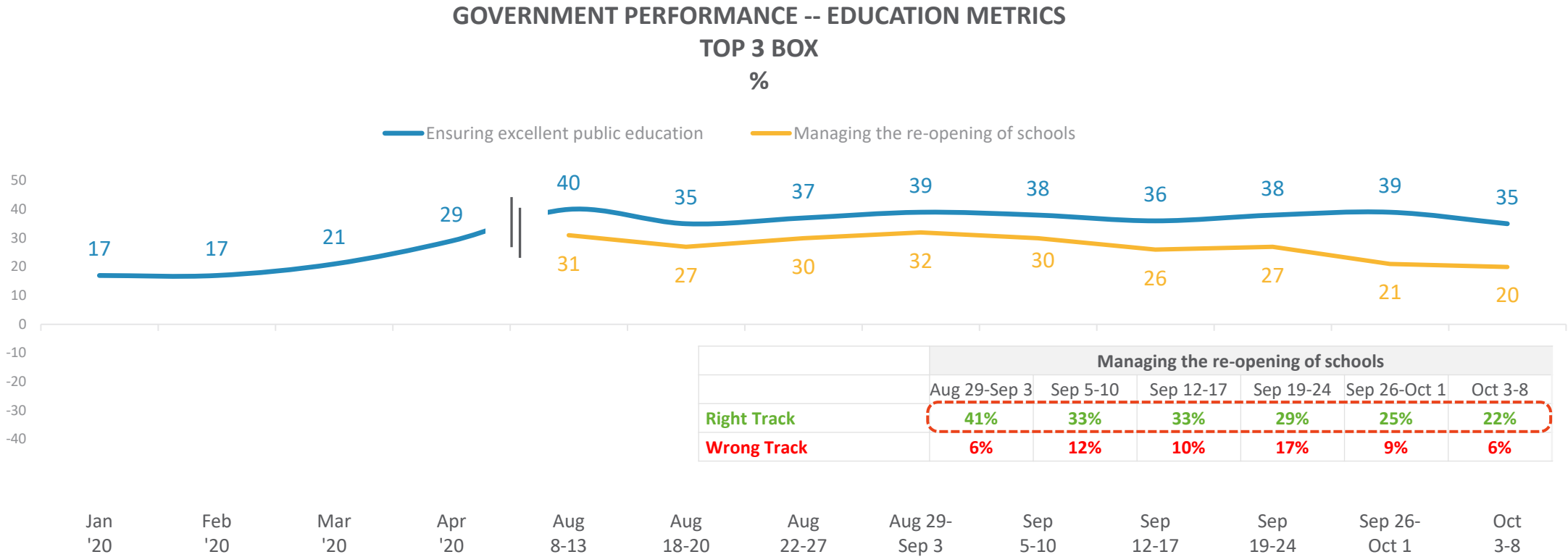
Q2. Overall, do you feel that the Ontario provincial government is on the right track or the wrong track, in terms of how it is governing the province? Base: Total sample

PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC



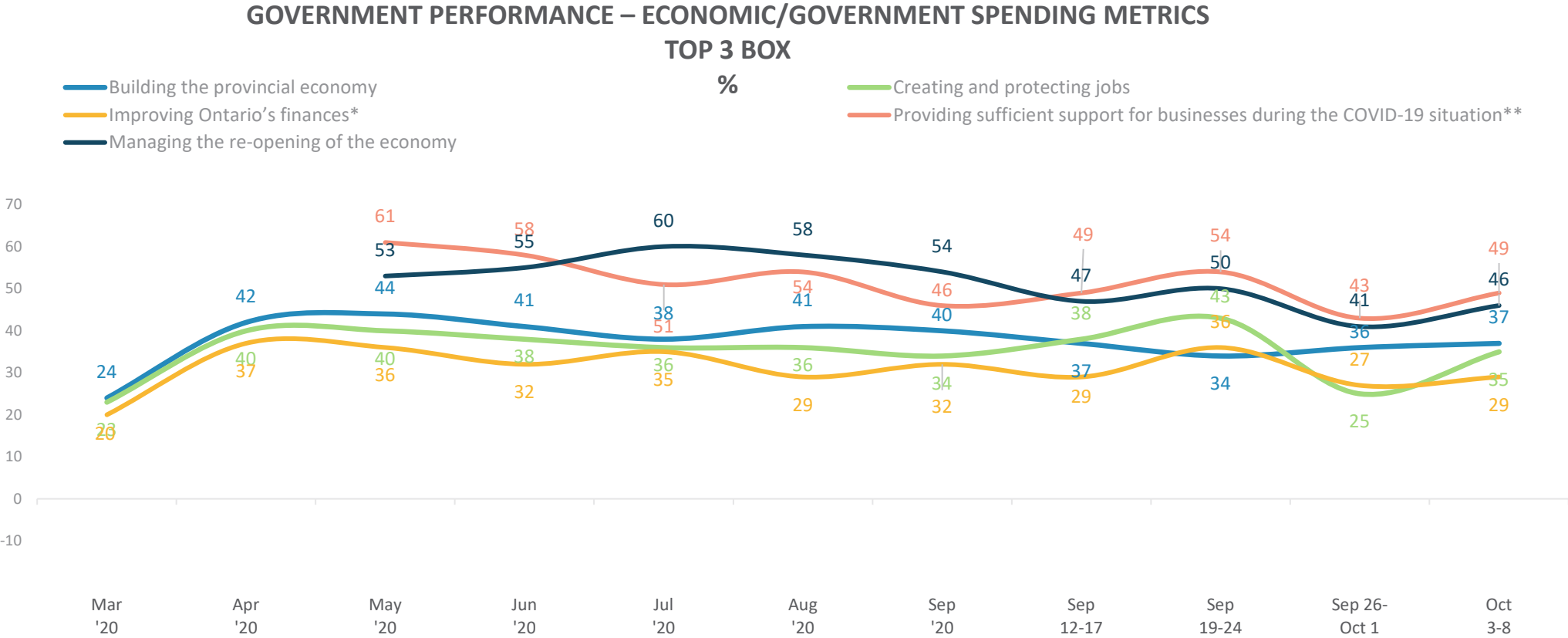
The government scores on ‘ensuring excellent public education’ remain positive. However, positive scores on ‘managing the re-opening of schools’ have slipped to its lowest level.

- There has been decline (from 41% to 22%) on school re-opening among those who believe the government is on the ‘right track’.



Q5. Using a scale where, where 1 means “poor” and nine is “excellent”, how would you rate the performance of Ontario government at managing each of the following? Bases vary

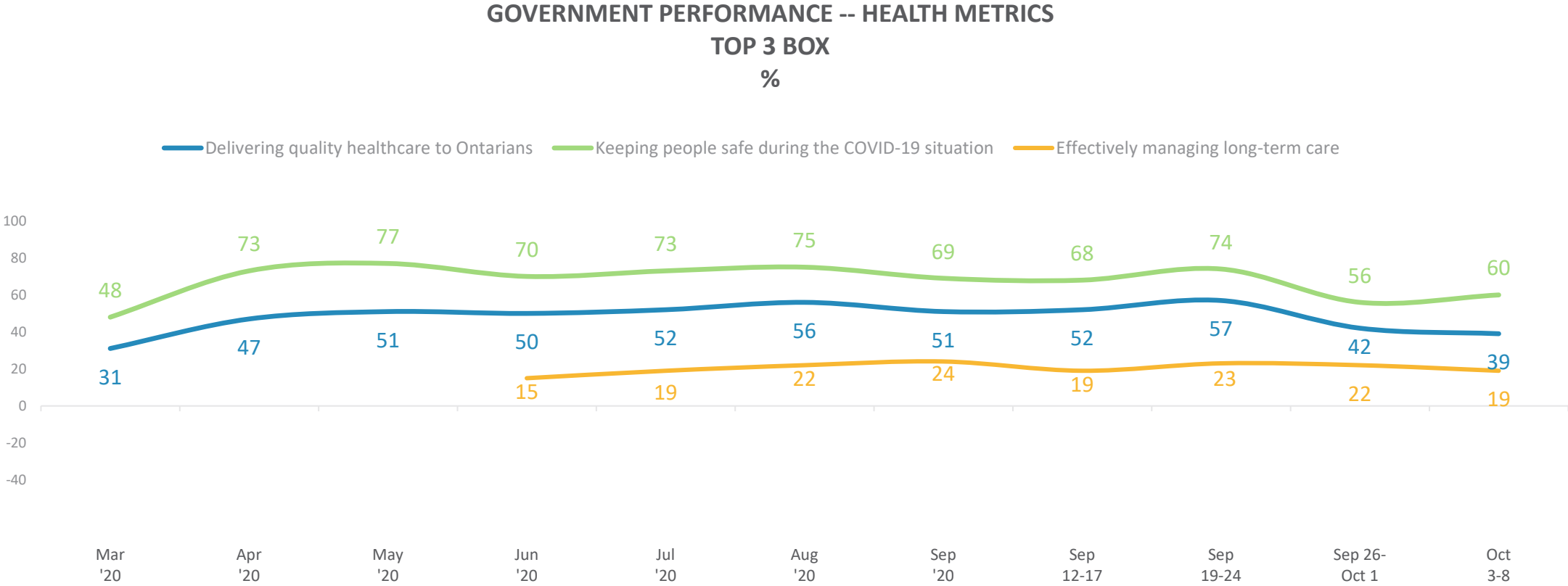
After experiencing a drop last week, positive perceptions of 3 of the 5 economic metrics have rebounded slightly. The two remaining stable are ‘building the provincial economy’ and ‘improving Ontario’s finances’.



Q5. Using a scale where, where 1 means “poor” and nine is “excellent”, how would you rate the performance of Ontario government at managing each of the following?
*Former phrasing: “Improve Ontario’s finances”
**Former phrasing: “Sufficient business support during the COVID-19 situation”

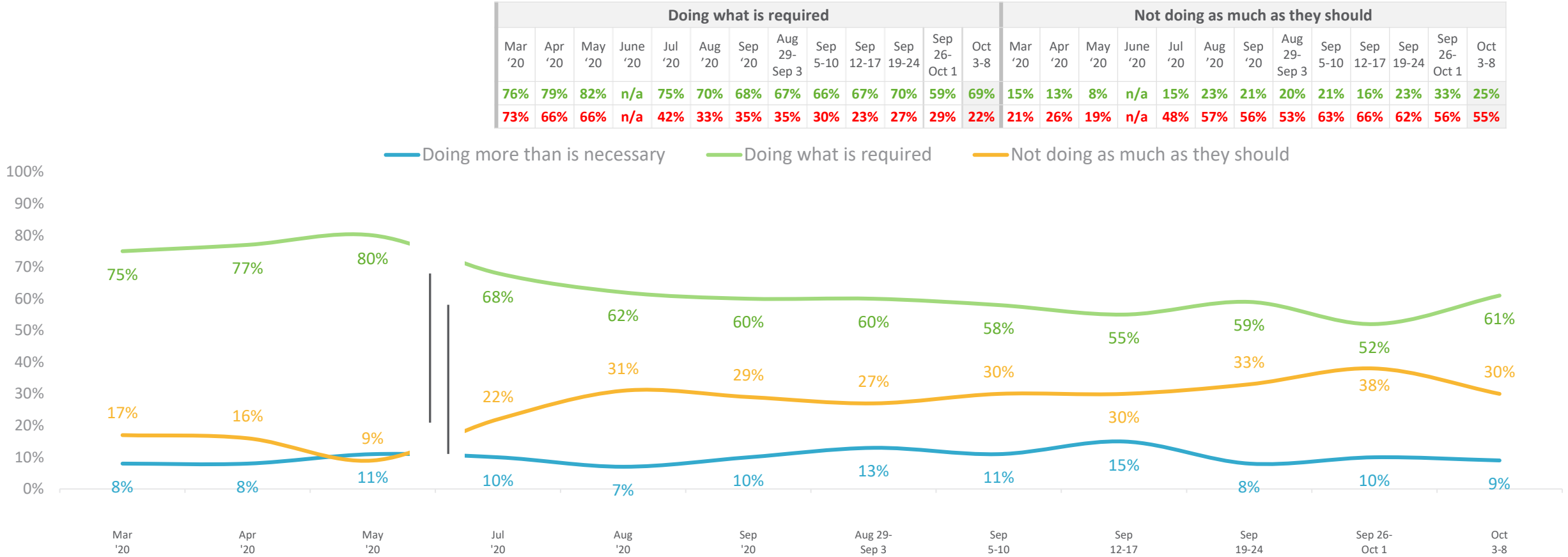
Bases vary

Over the past week, positive perceptions of the government’s performance on key health metrics remain stable.



Q5. Using a scale where, where 1 means “poor” and nine is “excellent”, how would you rate the performance of Ontario government at managing each of the following? Bases vary

Over the past week, there has been drop in the proportion of Ontarians who think the government is ‘not doing as much as they should’.



QCV-6. Thinking about the measures that the Government of Ontario has already taken to limit the spread of the virus, including advising the public and businesses about prevention measures, gradually reopening the province, and planning for the return to school in the fall, at this time would you say they are ...
(previous phrasing) Thinking about the measures that the Government of Ontario has already taken to limit the spread of the virus, including issuing a Declaration of Emergency, ordering non-essential businesses to close, advising the public and businesses about prevention measures and closing publicly funded schools, at this time would you say they are ... (READ LIST. RANDOMIZE ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE ONLY.) (previous phrasing) Thinking about the measures that the Government of Ontario has already taken to limit the spread of the virus, including advising the public and businesses about prevention measures and closing publicly funded schools, at this time would you say they are ...

Base: Total sample, base varies

Perception that the government is ‘not enough as much as they should’ has increased in three areas: ‘preventing the spread of the virus’, ‘managing the process of gradually re-opening the province’, and ‘advising about the measures to prevent the spread’.

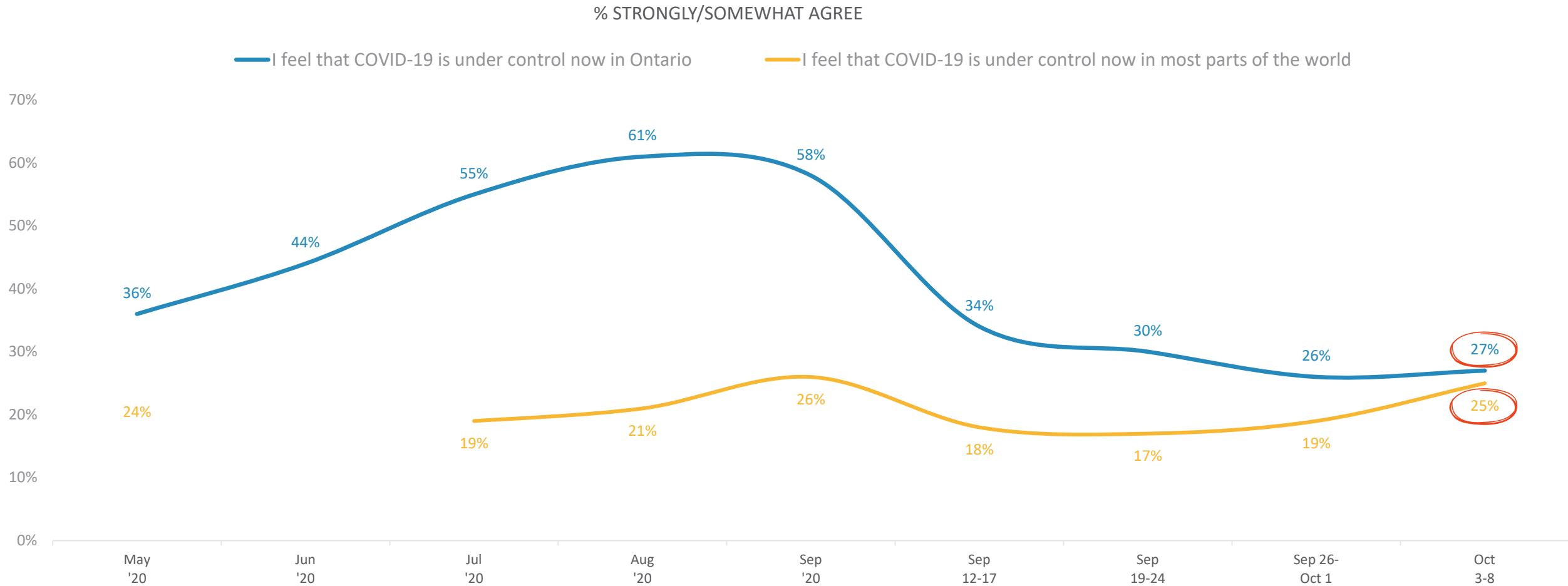
- As reported previously, ‘managing the reopening of schools’ continues to be the another key area where many Ontarians feel the government is ‘not doing as much as they should’.

	% DOING MORE THAN IS NECESSARY						% DOING WHAT IS REQUIRED						% NOT DOING AS MUCH AS THEY SHOULD*					
	Aug '20	Sep '20	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8	Aug '20	Sep '20	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8	Aug '20	Sep '20	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advising the public and businesses about the measures they should take to prevent the spread of the virus	15	16	13	16	10	14	70	70	70	72	65	65	13	12	14	10	23	19
Managing the process of gradually re-opening the province	10	11	9	12	9	8	72	70	76	66	63	64	16	17	13	20	27	26
Taking the necessary actions to prevent the spread of the virus	11	13	11	15	7	11	71	68	63	59	54	46	17	17	22	26	37	40
Managing the re-opening of schools (Previously: Planning for the return to school in the fall)	9	9	12	6	6	8	39	37	35	36	37	37	45	46	43	55	53	52

COVID-19 INFECTIONS



Ontarians now believe that their province’s COVID-19 situation is essentially on par with other parts of the world.



QCV-8B. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the effects of COVID-19. The first is ...
Base: Total sample, bases vary

There has been a sharp drop over the past two months (from 71% to 21%) in the proportion of Ontarians who believe the threat of contracting COVID-19 is much less now.

% STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT AGREE	June 10-14	June 11-15	June 13-16	June 14-17	June 15-18	June 16-20	June 17-21	June 18-22	June 20-23	June 21-24	June 22-25	June 23-27	June 24-28	June 25-29	June 27-30	June 28-July 2	Jul 4-9	Jul 11-16	Jul 18-23	Jul 28-30	Aug 1-6	Aug 8-13	Aug 18-20	Aug 22-27	Aug 29-Sep 3	Sep 5-10	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	varies																													
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I think the threat of contracting COVID-19 is much less now than it was a month ago	54	54	57	60	61	65	63	62	59	60	60	61	63	59	60	58	64	64	67	56	60	71	58	57	52	43	25	28	25	21
I am doing my best to get <u>back</u> to living a normal pre-COVID-19 life	70	71	72	70	69	67	69	72	74	71	70	70	69	71	73	72	76	70	78	72	78	79	75	76	82	72	75	65	61	71
I see people everyday not following the social distancing guidelines	72	75	75	76	78	79	81	81	83	82	79	78	77	78	77	77	84	76	77	71	67	73	68	72	70	66	68	70	72	75

QCV-14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample

Compared to last April/May, Ontarians are much more likely to think they will catch the COVID-19 virus. The intensity of this view has also increased since the spring.

- Interestedly, perceptions on this consideration do not vary by age.

I don't think someone like me will get COVID-19

	Apr '20	May '20	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	varies			
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL AGREE	25	22	16	11
Strongly agree	8	8	6	5
Somewhat agree	16	15	9	6
Neither agree nor disagree	13	10	8	9
Somewhat disagree	22	25	19	25
Strongly disagree	38	40	56	55
TOTAL DISAGREE	60	64	74	81

<i>I don't think someone like me will get COVID-19</i>					
	Age				
	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8
% AGREE	8%	11%	14%	9%	15%
% DISAGREE	83%	83%	76%	83%	79%

QCV-14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: Total sample

LEVEL OF CONCERN ABOUT DIFFERENT COVID-19 METRICS

Not surprisingly, among Ontarians about 1-in-2 (46%) focus on reported cases. Only 27% indicate they focus on the number of deaths as a result of COVID-19.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
The number of reported cases	51	46
The number of people in hospital	11	13
The number of people in Intensive care units	9	8
The number of deaths as a result of COVID-19	25	27
Don't know/Not sure	5	5

IS ONTARIO READY
FOR THE SECOND
WAVE?



LEVEL OF CONCERN ABOUT COVID-19 SECOND WAVE

Ontarians are highly concerned about the second wave of this virus. The intensity of the concern is also high, with 57% saying they are ‘very’ concerned.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
TOTAL CONCERNED	86	89
Very concerned	61	57
Somewhat concerned	25	32
Not too concerned	8	8
Not at all concerned	5	3
TOTAL NOT CONCERNED	13	11
Don't know/not sure	<1	-

Q126. With the recent increase in infections in certain regions of the province, how concerned or not are you about a Second Wave of the virus in Ontario this fall? Are you
Base: Total sample

Ontarians perceive that the government is ready for the second wave. However, it is important to note the level of intensity is not particularly high.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
TOTAL PREPARED	75	78
Very prepared	16	13
Somewhat prepared	59	64
Not too prepared	15	14
Not at all prepared	8	6
TOTAL NOT PREPARED	22	20
Don't know/not sure	3	2

DID ALL IT COULD OR COULD HAVE ACTED DIFFERENTLY

Given the recent increases in reported cases, Ontarians are a bit divided over whether the government did all it could reasonably be expected to do or if it could have acted differently.

- Importantly, those who see the government on the ‘right track’ are more likely to think that the government has done ‘all it could reasonably be expected to do.’ In contrast, those who see the government on the ‘wrong track’ are much more likely to think the government ‘could have acted differently’.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
All it could reasonably be expected to do	44	52
Could have acted differently	55	47
Don't know/Not sure	1	1

	All it could reasonably be expected to do		Could have acted differently	
	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
Right Track	52%	61%	46%	37%
Wrong Track	12%	14%	88%	86%

Q130 Overall, given the recent increases in reported cases, do you believe the Ontario Government has done all it can reasonably be expected to do or could it have acted differently?
Base: Total sample

Most Ontarians strongly reject the idea that recent ‘increases in COVID-19 infections are not serious illnesses and the Ontario government is overreacting to the problem’.

*Most of the reported increases in COVID-19 infections are not serious illnesses
and the Ontario government is overreacting to the problem*

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	varies	
	%	%
TOTAL AGREE	16	21
Strongly agree	5	8
Somewhat agree	11	14
Neither agree nor disagree	4	7
Somewhat disagree	21	24
Strongly disagree	58	47
TOTAL DISAGREE	79	71
Don't know	1	1

Ontarians today (compared to April/May) are more likely to think this virus will make people seriously ill. Not surprisingly, those aged 55+ are much more concerned about becoming seriously ill from the disease.

Even if I did get COVID-19, I don't think I would be seriously ill

	Apr '20	May '20	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	varies			
	%	%	%	%
TOTAL AGREE	39	36	28	30
Strongly agree	14	14	12	14
Somewhat agree	25	23	16	15
Neither agree nor disagree	10	9	6	12
Somewhat disagree	19	19	17	19
Strongly disagree	27	31	44	36
TOTAL DISAGREE	46	50	61	55

Even if I did get COVID-19, I don't think I would be seriously ill					
Age					
	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8	Oct 3-8
% AGREE	39%	41%	27%	21%	18%
% DISAGREE	42%	36%	55%	71%	75%

QCV-14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample

Ontarians lean against another severe lockdown and prefer a more focused approach in dealing with outbreaks in affected regions even if this means a higher level of infections.

- Interestingly, there is very little difference between those who think the government is on the ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ track on this question.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
Some people say that Ontario will have to go back to a severe lockdown, even if this significantly damages the economy.	33	29
Other people say, we should deal with it by outbreak and by region, and not province wide so the economic recovery can continue, even if there is a risk of more infections.	64	69
Don't know/Not sure	2	1

	Ontario will have to go back to a severe lockdown		Should deal with it by outbreak and by region	
	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
Right Track	32%	28%	66%	70%
Wrong Track	36%	36%	57%	64%

Q132 If the increase in COVID 19 infections continues, thinking of these two points of view, which one best reflects your own?
Base: Total sample

Given the recent rise of infections, Ontarians are much more likely to indicate that they paying attention to news or information related to COVID-19 now compared to mid-July. Moreover, fewer Ontarians are saying they don’t need to hear any more news about COVID-19.

% STRONGLY/ SOMEWHAT AGREE	June 10-14	June 11-15	June 13-16	June 14-17	June 15-18	June 16-20	June 17-21	June 18-22	June 20-23	June 21-24	June 22-25	June 23-27	June 24-28	June 25-29	June 27-30	June 28- July 2	Jul 4-9	Jul 11-16	Jul 18-23	Jul 28-30	Aug 1-6	Aug 8-13	Aug 18-20	Aug 22-27	Aug 29- Sep 3	Sep 5-10	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26- Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	varies																													
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I’m paying less attention to news or information about COVID-19	50	53	51	51	50	47	47	52	53	51	53	51	50	52	48	49	52	39	60	38	44	47	47	50	50	49	45	49	34	40
I feel that I don’t <u>need</u> to hear any more news about COVID-19	24	26	24	22	23	20	22	23	21	23	20	20	21	19	22	20	22	20	24	21	22	27	30	21	28	29	21	20	16	22

QCV-14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



Importantly, Ontarians think that the recent increase in infections is expected as a result of the loosening of restrictions and that this is acceptable and not a sign of losing control.

	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	varies			
	%	%	%	%
Some people say they are worried about this and it is a sign that Ontario is losing control of the situation and more increases can be expected.	34	31	34	36
Other people say that some increase is to be expected as a result of the loosening of restrictions and that this is acceptable and not a sign of losing control	61	64	62	60
Don't know	5	5	3	4

QCV125. (Q124b) As you may know there has been a steady increase in the number of reported COVID 19 cases in Ontario over the past two weeks. (Previous phrasing: As you may know, there has been a slight uptick in the number of reported COVID-19 cases in Ontario in the last few days.) Thinking of these two points of view, which one closest to your own?

Base: Total sample

Ontarians are divided over whether the restrictions are being re-introduced at the right pace or too slowly. Very few believe the re-introduction has been moving too quickly.

- Those who see the government is on the ‘right track’ continue to be much more likely to believe that the re-introduction of these restrictions is occurring at the right pace, although there is also a sizable number who think it has been moving too slowly.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
Moving too quickly	12	13
At the right pace	43	46
Moving too slowly	44	39
Prefer not to answer/Don't know	1	3

	At the right pace		Moving too slowly	
	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
Right Track	50%	53%	38%	35%
Wrong Track	17%	16%	63%	54%

QCV125B. As you may know, the number of reported cases of COVID infection has increased steadily over the past two weeks. Because of this, the government of Ontario introduced new regulations such as limiting the number of people at an indoor and outdoor gathering at a private residence. Do you believe the government is moving too quickly, at the right pace, or moving too slowly in reintroducing changes to control the spread of COVID in Ontario this fall?

Base: Total sample

Ontarians provide overwhelming support for the new restrictions of 10 people for in-person events and 25 for outdoor events. This past week, some 61% say they are ‘very’ supportive of this action.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
TOTAL SUPPORTIVE	91	87
Very supportive	70	61
Somewhat supportive	22	26
Not too supportive	3	7
Not at all supportive	5	6
TOTAL NOT SUPPORTIVE	8	13
Don't know/not sure	<1	-

Q128. Public-health data indicates that the increases in infections over the past two weeks are tied in many cases to private parties at homes and in backyards. As a result, the government of Ontario recently introduced new regulations limiting indoor, in-person events to 10 people, and outdoor events to 25 people anywhere in the province. Thinking about these changes how supportive are you of their introduction. Would you say that you are ...

Base: Total sample

Ontarians believe that these new restrictions on indoor/outdoor events will be effective, although the level of intensity is not high.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
TOTAL EFFECTIVE	74	77
Very effective	16	16
Somewhat effective	58	61
Not too effective	17	15
Not at all effective	7	6
TOTAL NOT EFFECTIVE	24	22
Don't know/not sure	2	1

Q129 And, still thinking about these new regulations, please indicate how effective or not you think they will be in slowing the rate of COVID infections. Do you believe they will be ...
Base: Total sample

SUPPORT FOR LIMITING
ACCESS TO
GOVERNMENT TESTING
SITES



Ontarians are highly supportive of the idea of restricting access to government testing centres to specific segments of people - such as those showing symptoms or that have been exposed to those who have contracted the virus - given that there are other channels to obtain tests.

	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	300	300
	%	%
TOTAL SUPPORTIVE	75	72
Very supportive	45	36
Somewhat supportive	29	35
Not too supportive	12	14
Not at all supportive	12	13
TOTAL NOT SUPPORTIVE	24	27
Don't know/not sure	1	1

Q133. (Q134) Ontarians can get tested for COVID 19 at government testing centres, pharmacies, hospitals, doctors' offices. Recently, the wait times at the Ontario government COVID testing centres have increased. To reduce the line-ups, only those people who: Show symptoms of COVID 19, Have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID 19, Are frontline healthcare workers, Are residents in long-term care homes, or who Are located in areas where there has been an outbreak will be able to be tested at these centres. All others who would like a COVID test will be asked to get a test at other locations. To what extent are you supportive or not supportive of limiting testing at Ontario government test centres?

Base: Total sample

MASK WEARING PERCEPTIONS



FREQUENCY OF FACE MASK WEARING

Again, reflecting the rising infection rate, the proportion of Ontarians wearing masks ‘all the time/most of the time’ has reached its highest point (88%) since we started to track this behaviour. Moreover, 66% (the highest point) say they wear a mask ‘all the time’.

	June 18-22	June 20-23	June 21-24	June 22-25	June 23-27	June 24-28	June 25-29	June 27-30	June 28-July 2	Jul 4-9	Jul 11-16	Jul 18-23	Jul 28-30	Aug 1-6	Aug 8-13	Aug 18-20	Aug 22-27	Aug 29-Sep 3	Sep 5-10	Sep 12-17	Sep 19-24	Sep 26-Oct 1	Oct 3-8
n=	313	400	400	410	410	410	410	410	410	300	300	300	300	260	310	300	310	310	300	300	300	300	300
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
TOTAL ALL/MOST OF THE TIME	52	52	52	52	54	55	58	58	60	60	72	76	77	73	81	80	84	81	87	87	86	88	88
All of the time	26	27	27	23	25	25	25	29	29	22	45	42	47	48	56	49	55	54	61	61	64	63	66
Most of the time	26	25	26	29	29	31	33	29	32	38	27	34	29	24	25	30	29	28	26	26	22	25	23
Some of the time	26	26	28	28	26	25	24	26	24	20	20	17	15	17	13	14	11	12	12	9	10	8	8
Rarely	19	18	15	17	17	16	15	12	13	18	5	7	7	9	5	4	4	5	1	3	4	3	3
Never	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	<1	1	1	1	<1
RARELY/NEVER	23	21	20	20	20	20	18	15	16	21	7	8	8	10	6	6	5	6	1	4	5	4	3

QD1B. As a result of COVID-19 and thinking about your daily activities when you are away from home, how often do you wear a face mask or covering?

Base: Total sample

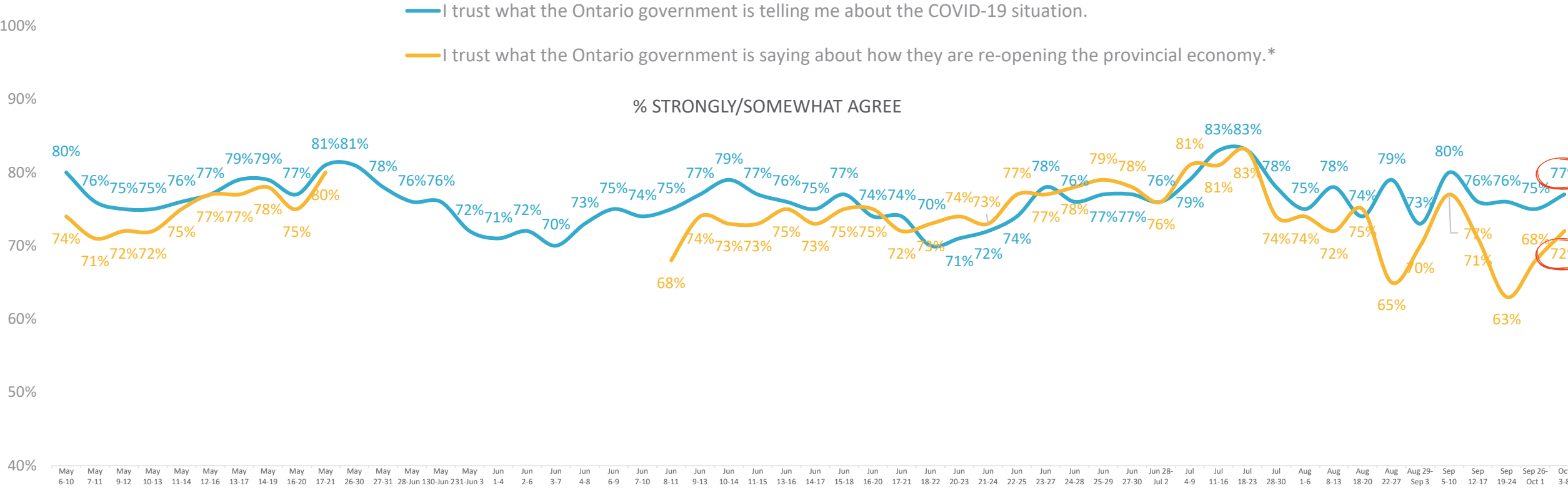
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT COVID-19 MESSAGING



TRUST IN THE GOVERNMENT’S COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT COVID-19

Ontarians maintain high levels of trust about the government’s messages re the COVID-19 situation. In contrast, trust in the government’s messaging about the re-opening of the provincial economy remains bouncy.

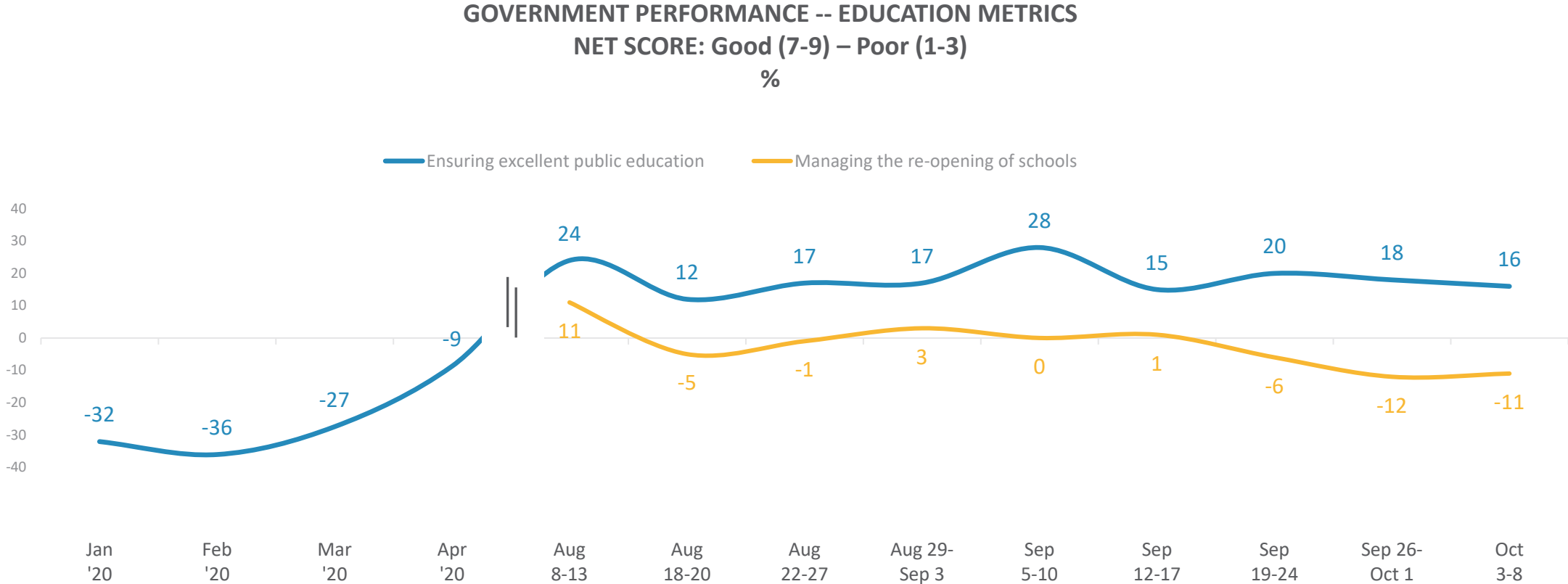


QCV-8B. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the effects of COVID-19. The first is ...
Base: Total sample, base varies * Previous phrasing: I trust what the Ontario government is saying about how they plan to re-open the provincial economy

APPENDIX

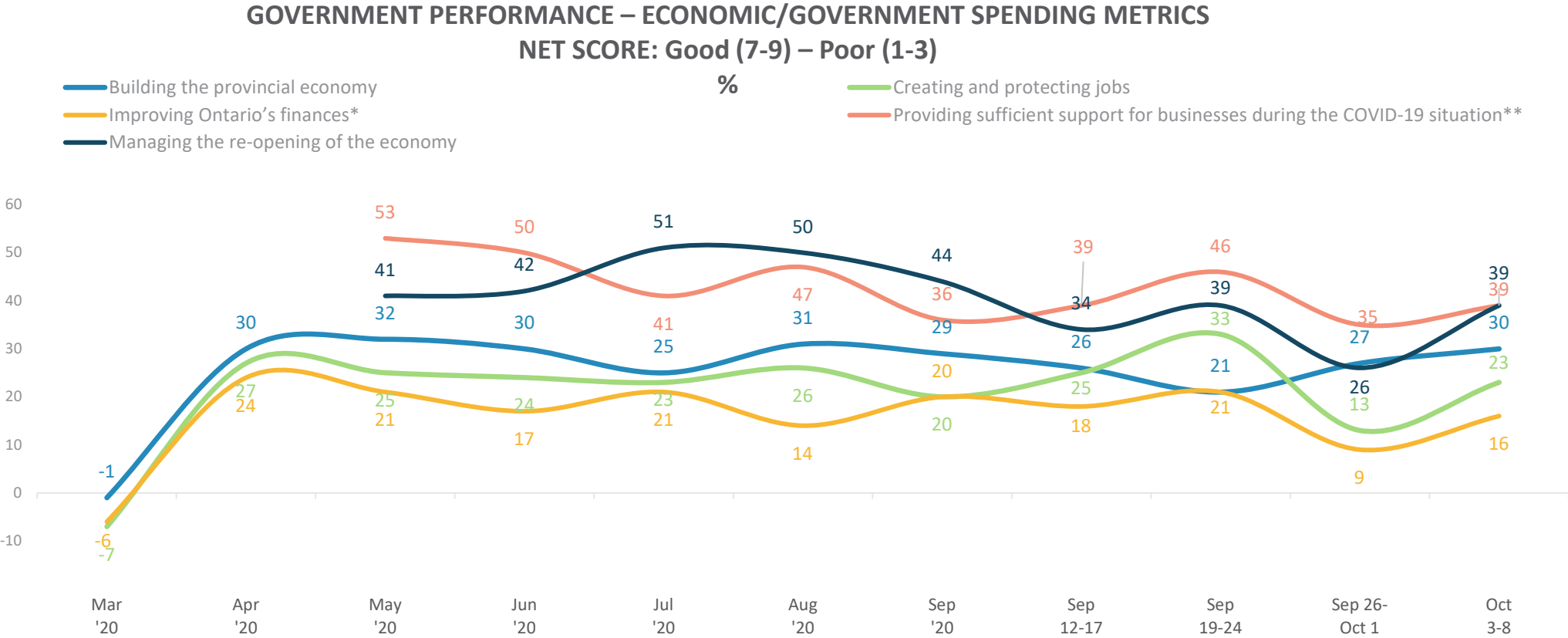


Perceptions toward the government’s performance on education remains stable.



Q5. Using a scale where, where 1 means “poor” and nine is “excellent”, how would you rate the performance of Ontario government at managing each of the following? Bases vary

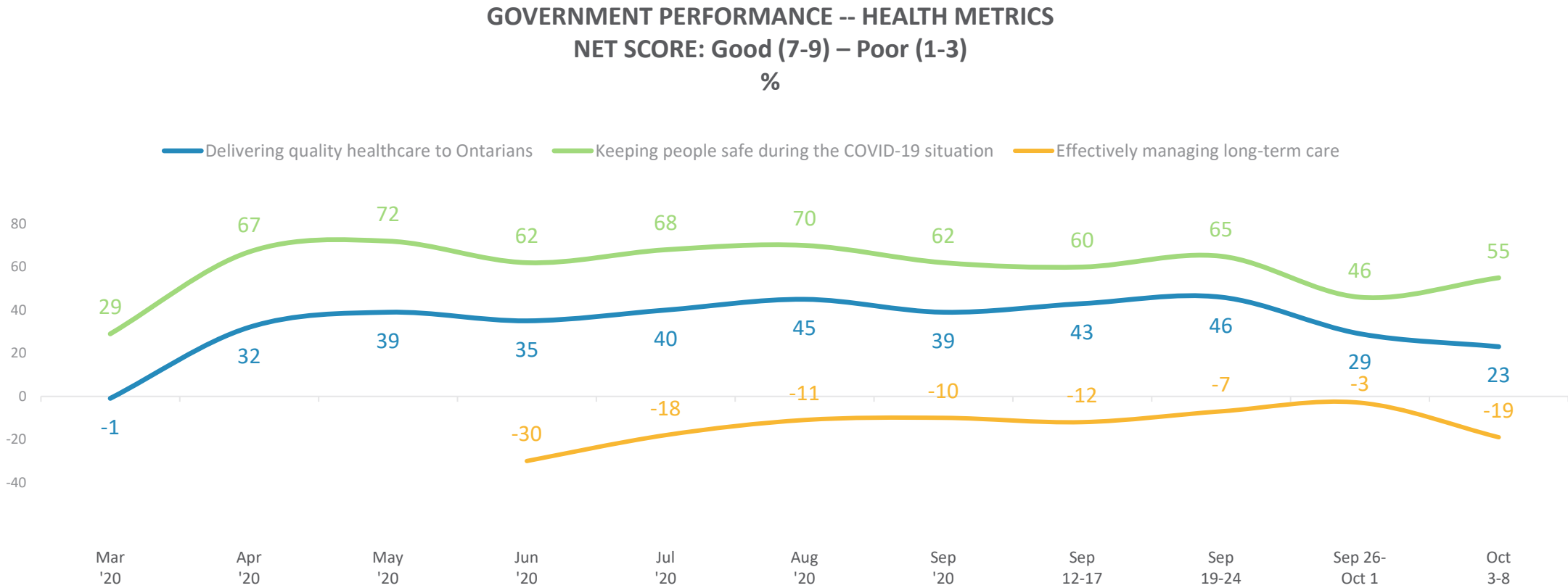
Perceptions of the government’s performance have on most economic metrics.



Q5. Using a scale where, where 1 means “poor” and nine is “excellent”, how would you rate the performance of Ontario government at managing each of the following?
*Former phrasing: “Improve Ontario’s finances”
**Former phrasing: “Sufficient business support during the COVID-19 situation”

Bases vary

Moreover, perceptions toward the government’s performance on ‘keeping people safe during the COVID-19 situation’ have improved, but ‘delivering quality healthcare’ and ‘managing long-term care’ have declined.



Q5. Using a scale where, where 1 means “poor” and nine is “excellent”, how would you rate the performance of Ontario government at managing each of the following? Bases vary