

Middle School Poll

Prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and Phi Delta Kappa (PDK)

Field dates: February 14 – March 5, 2007

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Background

Middle school is a time of transition into adolescence, as students undergo significant physical, emotional and psychological changes. In addition, it is a critical juncture for academic decisions which can have a direct impact on opportunities for post-secondary education. Currently, there is no opportunity for middle-level students on a broad scale to express their opinions on issues that affect them daily and to contribute to the national dialogue on school reform. In response, this study shines a spotlight on how the middle grades can affect the issues that are presently being debated by practitioners, policymakers and pundits and on the relationship of middle level success to high school and beyond.

The survey was conducted on behalf of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and Phi Delta Kappa International (PDK) with support from the Lumina Foundation

Study Goals

This study reflects these organizations' interest in the middle school experience and school reform and focused on the following goals:

- Bring the middle-level student voice to the forefront in the national dialogue on school reform;
- Draw the attention of policymakers and the public to the importance of effective schooling for students in the middle grades;
- Inform educators about strengths and weaknesses in middle-level schooling as seen through the eyes of students;
- Provide a roadmap for changes needed to improve middle-level education.

Method

- This study was conducted online from February 14 – March 5, 2007.
- Sample was drawn from the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) database and supplemented by sample obtained from Survey Sampling Inc.
- Password-protected email invitations were sent to parents of prospective respondents.
- Qualified respondents were U.S. residents in grades 7 or 8.
- In total 1,814 middle level students successfully completed the survey.
- Gender, grade level, race/ethnicity, parents' highest level of education, geographic region, and urbanicity were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.
- The sampling error for the total sample for this study is +/- 3.3 percentage points.
- Individual interviews averaged 20 minutes in length.

Executive Summary

Middle school, specifically grades 7 and 8, is a critical juncture in students' education. Their current performance and their expectations for the future can have a significant impact on their education in high school and beyond. In this study, we bring the voices of students themselves into the discussion and examine their experiences and views in a number of critical middle school issues, including expectations for high school and views on standardized testing.

Most 7th and 8th grade students would grade their school an A or B for the quality of the education they receive. Most of these students also report having several teachers who help them. Generally, they are optimistic about their futures: few report there is any chance they will drop out of high school and most are confident they will attend college.

This enthusiasm, however, is sometimes inconsistent with the resources they report they have or will need to help them achieve their goals. Predominantly, these discrepancies are associated with factors such as the type of school a student attends and their social-economic status (represented by parents' highest level of education). In response, middle level school reform has the opportunity to address the disconnect between the high level of optimism and hope of this age group, and the reality many of them will face in achieving their goals.

Executive Summary

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

Are they satisfied? Students who think their school is providing them with a good education are predominantly living in suburban or urban communities, expect to go to college, want to test well, and have parents who have at least a college degree. In addition, these students also think that they are the ones most responsible for their grades in school.

Are they challenged? Nine out of ten say that their school expects them to do their best all the time (18% report making mostly A's) and in general they report being challenged and prepared for tests.

On average, students spend about an hour and a half on homework each day (51% say they are assigned just the right amount of homework, and 44% say it is too much.) While a majority of students are assigned homework every day (60%), students whose parents have higher education degrees report having homework assigned more often than students whose parents have a high school education or lower.

Are they prepared? Students who are earning lower grades, and those of lower socio-economic backgrounds know less about what is required of them to graduate from high school, and in general feel less prepared to succeed once they get there.

Executive Summary

TESTING AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Seven in ten middle school students have taken a standardized test this school year, most of whom are more likely to be public school students and from urban areas. Although testing is important to many students, most students think that their teachers are more concerned with standardized tests than they, or their parents are. Also, students think that the grades their teachers give them, rather than standardized tests, are a more accurate reflection of their abilities.

While most students have at least heard of the No Child Left Behind act, only 10% report knowing a lot about it.

HIGH SCHOOL

Most students expect high school to be difficult, yet remain confident that they will succeed. Despite this confidence, however, students do not want high school to be any harder than it has to be. In fact, they report that making classes harder would only lead to more students dropping out. The students who feel confident about succeeding in high school generally also think they will attend college.

Again, those with lower grades and parents with lower levels of education are less confident about their preparedness for high school and express more anxiety over what to expect once they get there.

Seven percent of middle level students say there is a chance they will drop out of high school. Of those who say there is some/good chance they might drop out of high school, 40% cite low grades and the inability to keep up as the reason; 9% cite disliking school.

Executive Summary

VIEWS ON COLLEGE

Although most students (92%) think they will attend college, most do not know much about it: only 11% have “a great deal” of information about how to choose the high school classes that will prepare them.

The majority of those students who feel confident they will attend college are students whose parents have higher education degrees, attend schools in urban or suburban communities and who think their school is doing a good job of giving them a chance to learn. Funding is by far the main reason why students say they might not attend college.

VIEWS ON TEACHERS AND TEACHING

Middle level students are generally satisfied with their teachers (on average, they’ve had about 5 who have really helped them), but a bit reluctant to qualify them as “excellent.” Students earning lower grades and those of lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to have teachers who have really helped them. Being caring, attentive and friendly, and taking time out for explanations are the types of attitudes and behaviors that students value in their teachers.

Despite this overall satisfaction, only 4% of students are interested in becoming a teacher themselves one day, saying low pay is the by far the main reason why not.

Executive Summary

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND OTHER DIVERSITY ISSUES

More than half of 7th and 8th graders attend schools that can be characterized as middle schools (serving grades 6th-8th). About 13% attend schools that include elementary grades and about 6% are in a high school setting.

About half of the students describe their school as having students who come from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Of those who report being in schools that are not diverse, only two in ten are in the minority. Within certain minority racial groups (Black/African American and Hispanic), more students are receiving lower grades than their white counterparts who show almost three quarters earning A's.

In terms of regulated tolerance, most schools do not restrict their students from wearing clothing or jewelry that expresses cultural or religious beliefs.

Three quarters report that students in their schools have a negative attitude toward people who are or are thought to be gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Executive Summary

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS AND OTHER DIVERSITY ISSUES (con't)

Metro Status

Information on whether a school is located in an urban, suburban or rural environment was gathered in this survey by asking students to classify their schools as one of the three. Based on the student's classifications, some findings emerged that show rural students are at a disadvantage in several areas when compared to students in urban and suburban schools. For example, rural students:

- tend to grade their schools lower
- use the Internet less
- Are less confident will attend college
- Are more likely to have parents with a high school education or less

Executive Summary

CONCLUSION

For the most part, middle level students are excited and optimistic about their plans for high school and college. Their current school experiences are challenging and thought-provoking, and they feel they are working hard. When it comes to the cold reality of resources (getting information about high school and college, being prepared for what they will face both academically and socially), disconnections emerge. As is most often the case, social-economic status (represented here by parents level of education), middle school grades, and sometimes urbanicity or geographic region can affect their chances for success. Seventh and eighth graders possess a great deal of energy and hope that can be harnessed to help propel them toward successful lives. The following report details the areas where they need the most help in achieving their goals.

Executive Summary

CONCLUSION

For the most part, middle level students are excited and optimistic about their plans for high school and college. Their current school experiences are challenging and thought-provoking, and they feel they are working hard. When it comes to the cold reality of resources (getting information about high school and college, being prepared for what they will face both academically and socially), disconnections emerge. As is most often the case, social-economic status (represented here by parents level of education), middle school grades, and sometimes urbanicity or geographic region can affect their chances for success. Seventh and eighth graders possess a great deal of energy and hope that can be harnessed to help propel them toward successful lives. The following report details the areas where they need the most help in achieving their goals.



Current School Experiences

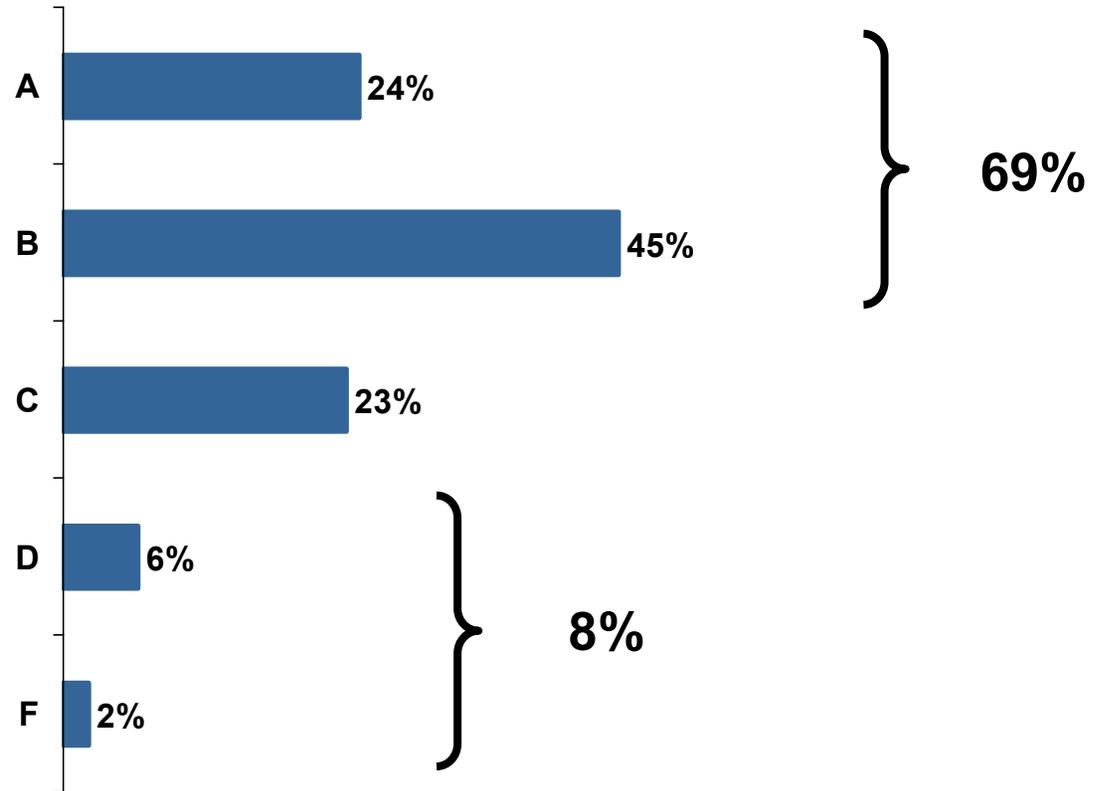
School and Student Experiences

Findings: School and Student Experiences

- **Two-thirds of 7th and 8th grade students report their school's and their own grade performance mostly as an A or B (69% and 66%).**
- **Satisfaction with public schools is high overall with three-quarters (75%) of students saying that given a choice, they would chose to attend public school.**
- **Eight-in ten students acknowledge *they* are most responsible for their grades.**
- **Students reporting getting higher grades are:**
 - Girls (24% girls get mostly A's vs. 13% boys).
 - Children of parents who are college graduates (27% of students whose parents have a college degree or more are getting mostly A's, 16% some college, 13% HS or less).
 - Expecting to go to college (28% of students who report they will definitely attend college are getting mostly A's vs. 7% who probably will attend college and 1% who will not)
- **Schools are graded higher for their performance by students who:**
 - Are girls (29% of girls give their school an A vs. 20% of boys).
 - Live in suburban and urban communities (19% rural; 25% suburban; 27% urban).
 - Expect to go to college (32% who definitely will attend college give their school an A vs. 16% who probably will attend college and 7% who will not).
 - Want to test well (26% of those to whom it is important to test well, and 11% to whom it is not give their school an A).
 - Have parents who are college graduates (grade school an A: 30% parent college graduate; 20% some college; 22% HS or less).

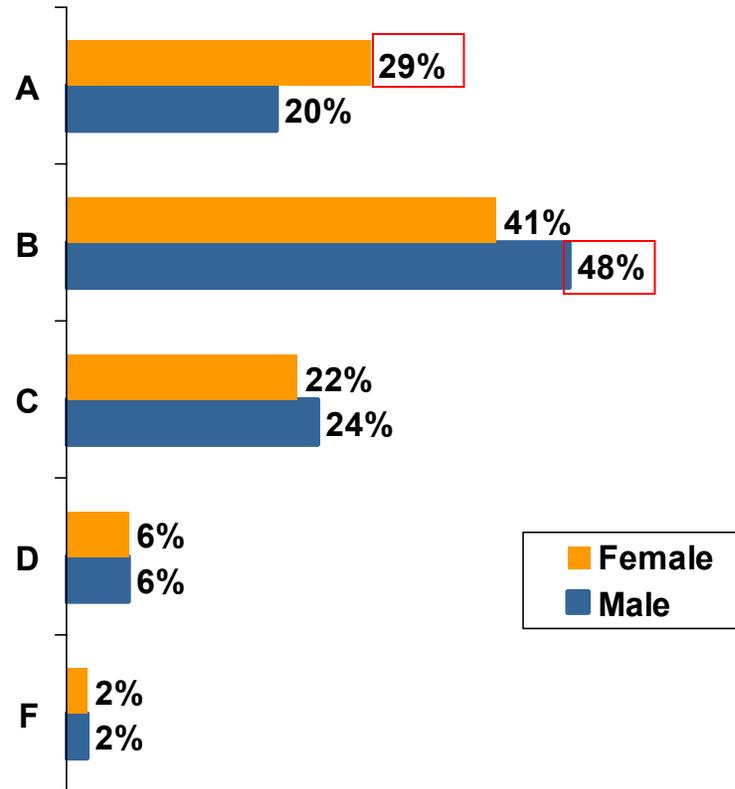
Two-thirds of students grade their school an A or B

What grade would you give your school?



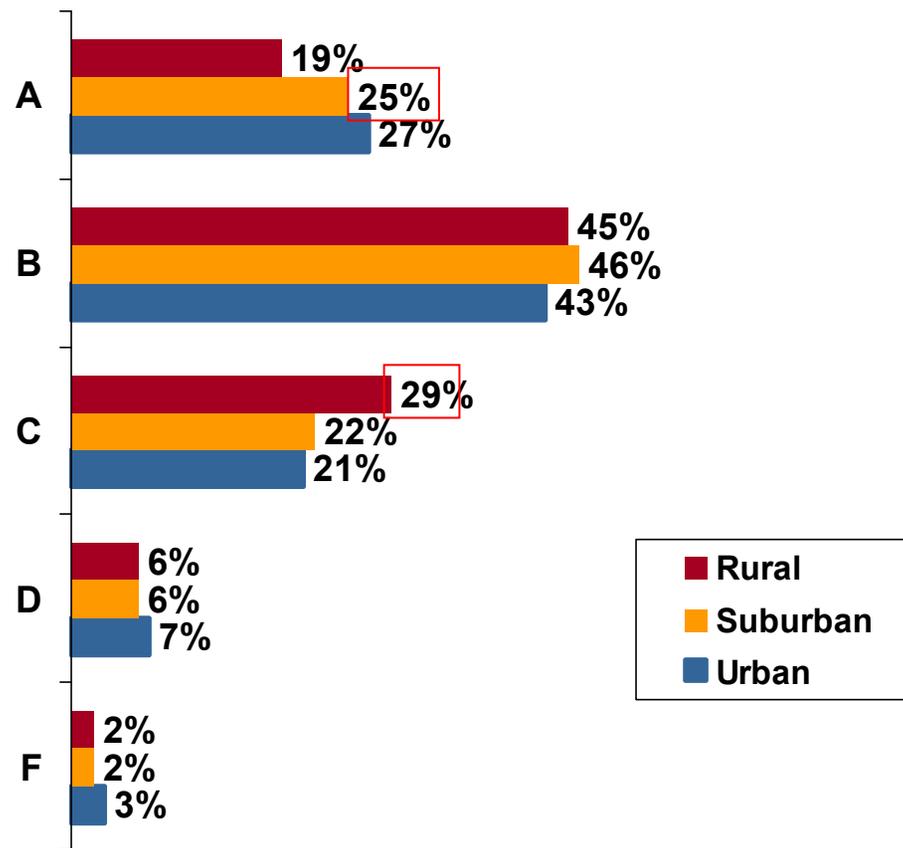
Girls grade their school more favorably than boys do

What grade would you give your school?



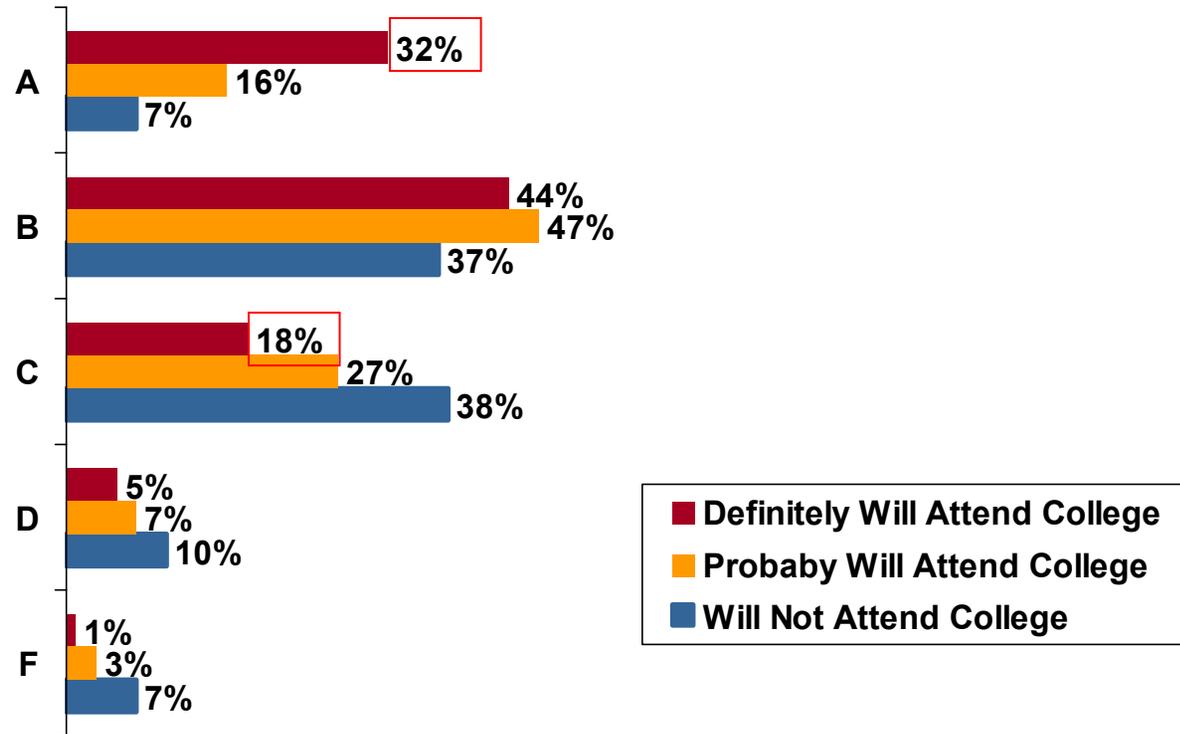
Schools are graded higher by students in suburban & urban communities than rural

What grade would you give your school?



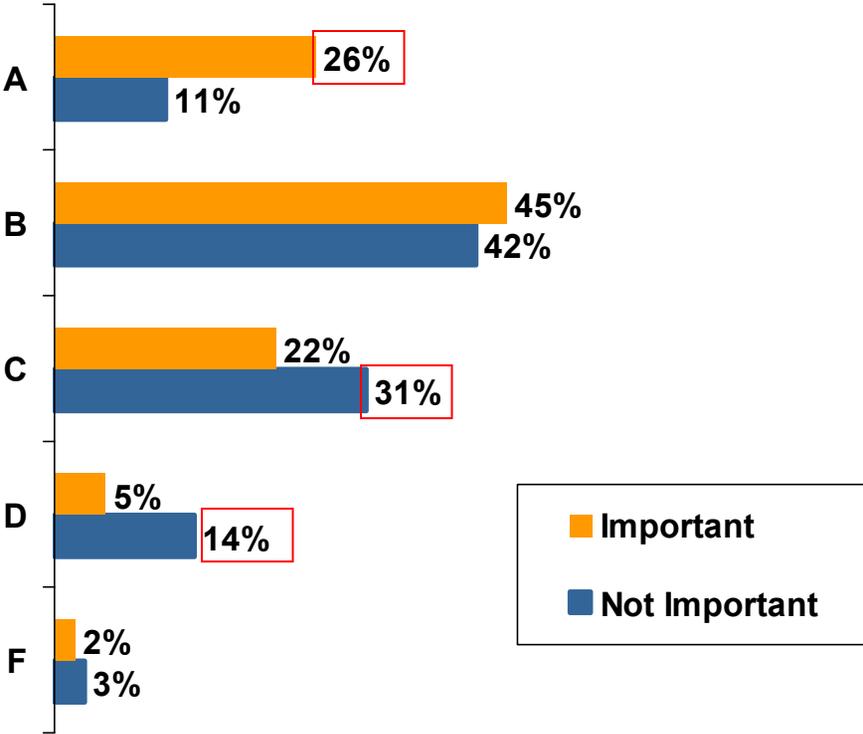
Schools are graded higher by students who expect to go to college

What grade would you give your school?



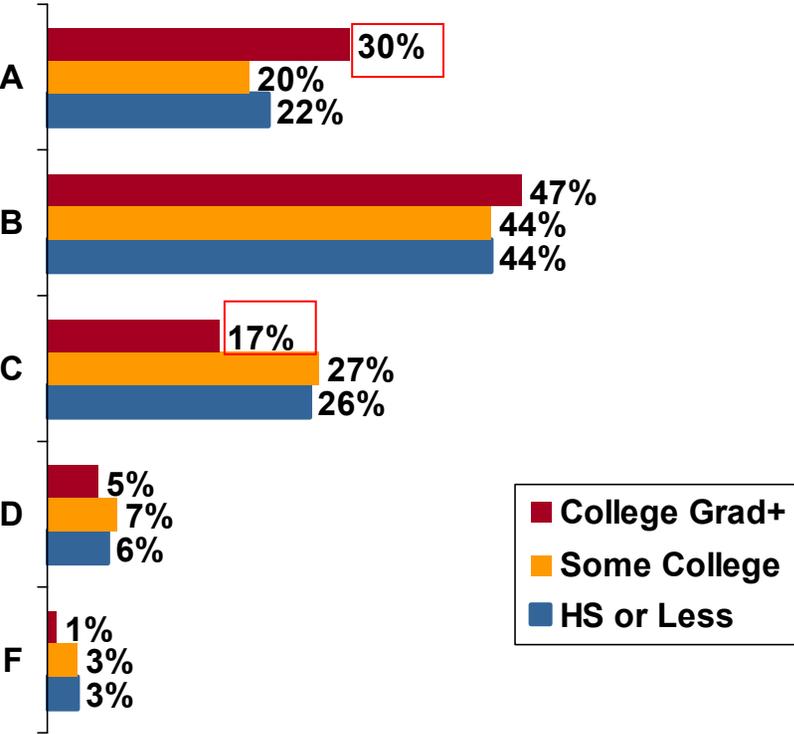
Schools are graded higher by students for whom it is important to test well

What grade would you give your school?



Schools are graded higher by students whose parents are college graduates

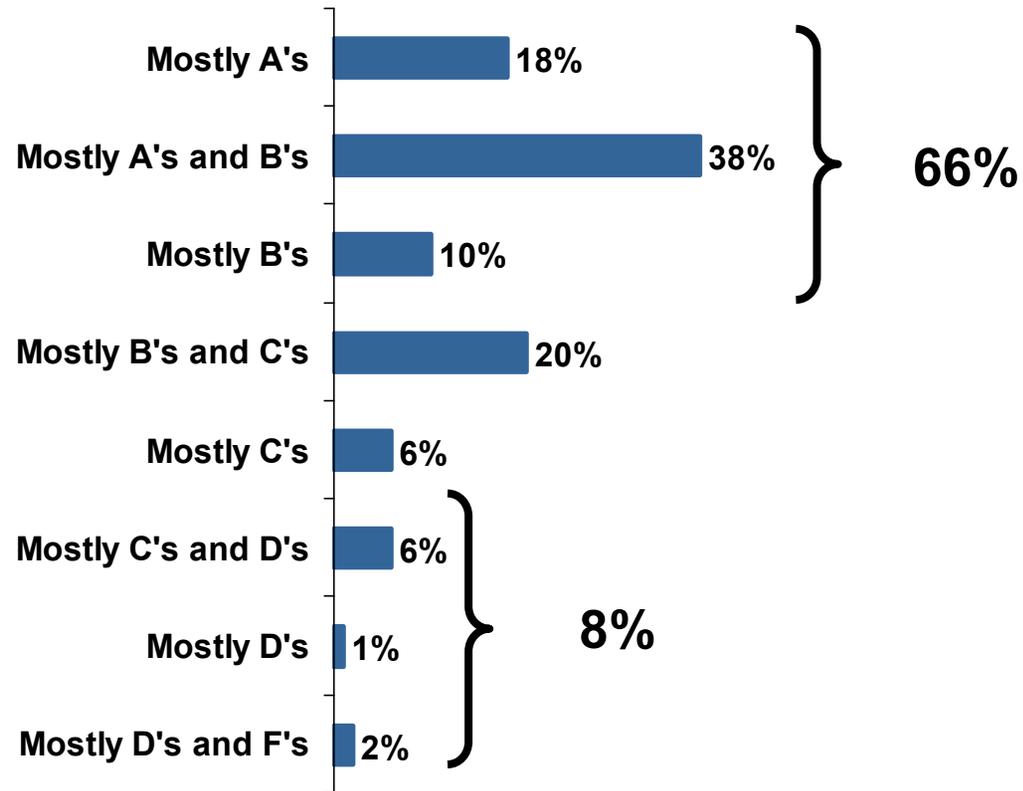
What grade would you give your school?



Q505 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
College graduate or more (n=670)

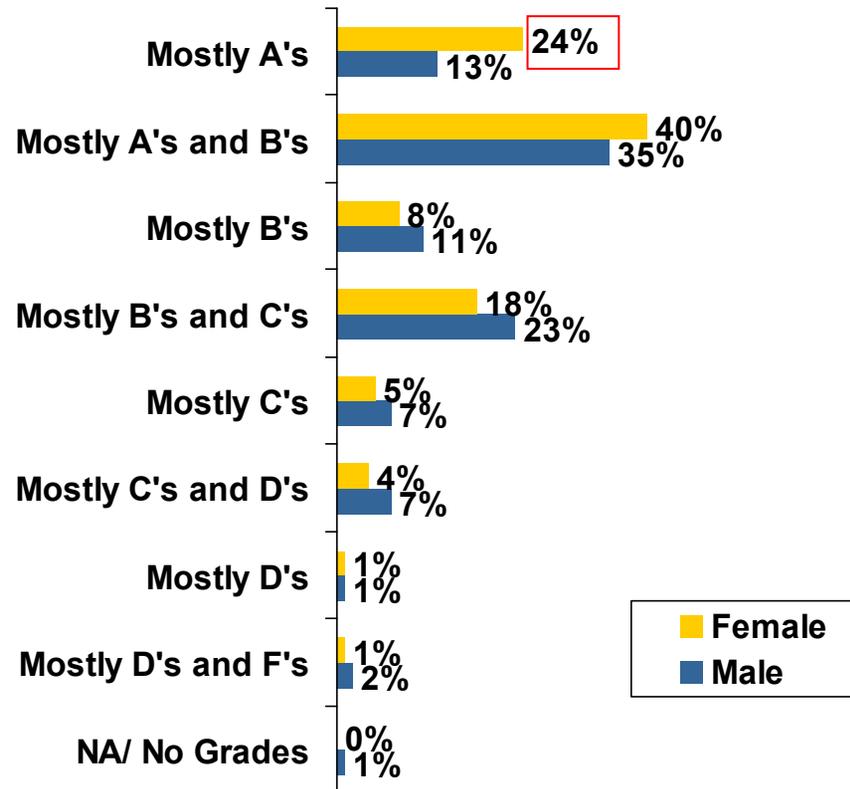
Two-thirds of students report getting mostly **As** or **Bs**

What grades do you usually get in school?



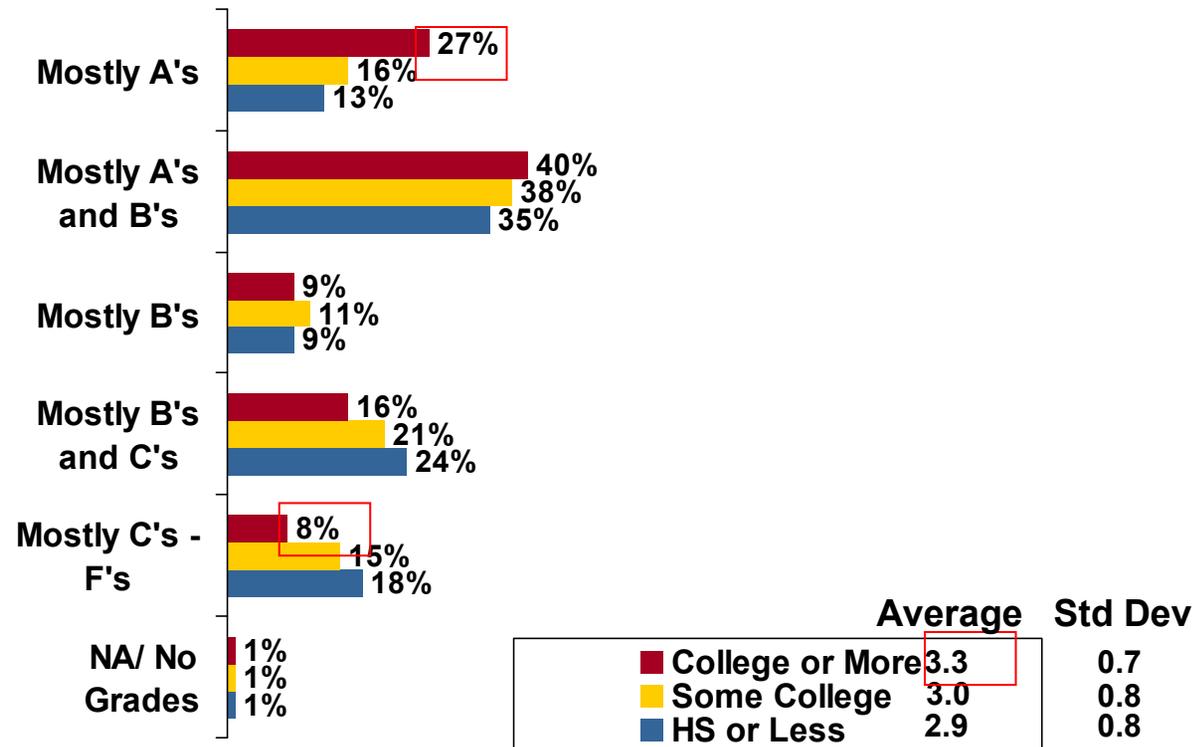
Girls report getting higher grades in school than boys

What grades do you usually get in school?



Students getting higher grades have parents who are college graduates

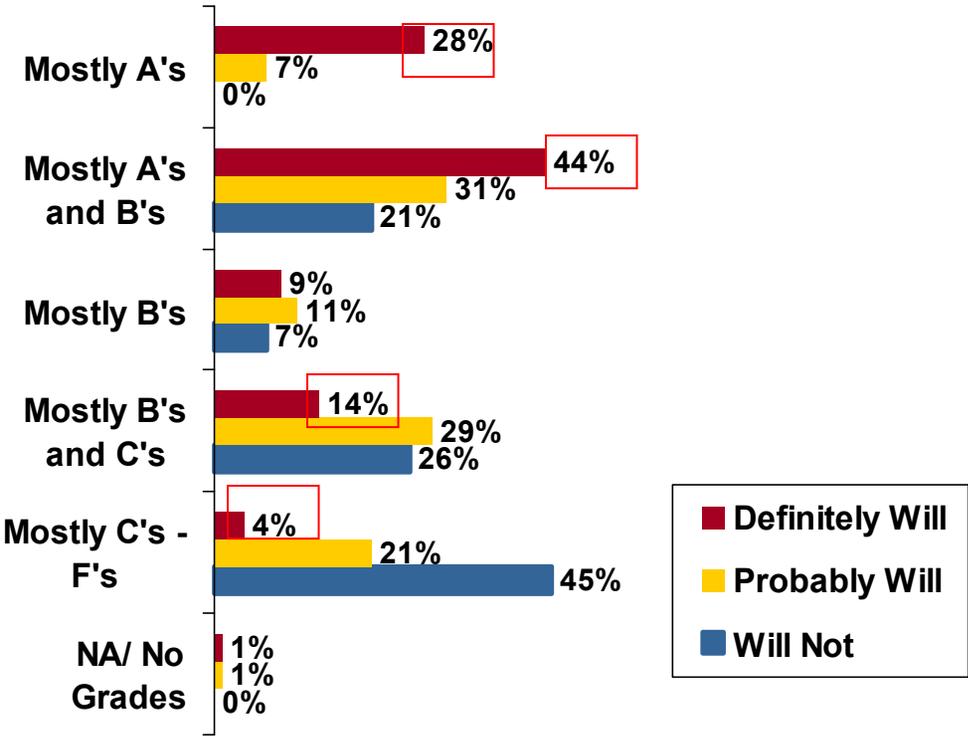
What grades do you usually get in school?



Q530 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
 High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
 College graduate or more (n=670)

Students reporting getting higher grades expect to go to college

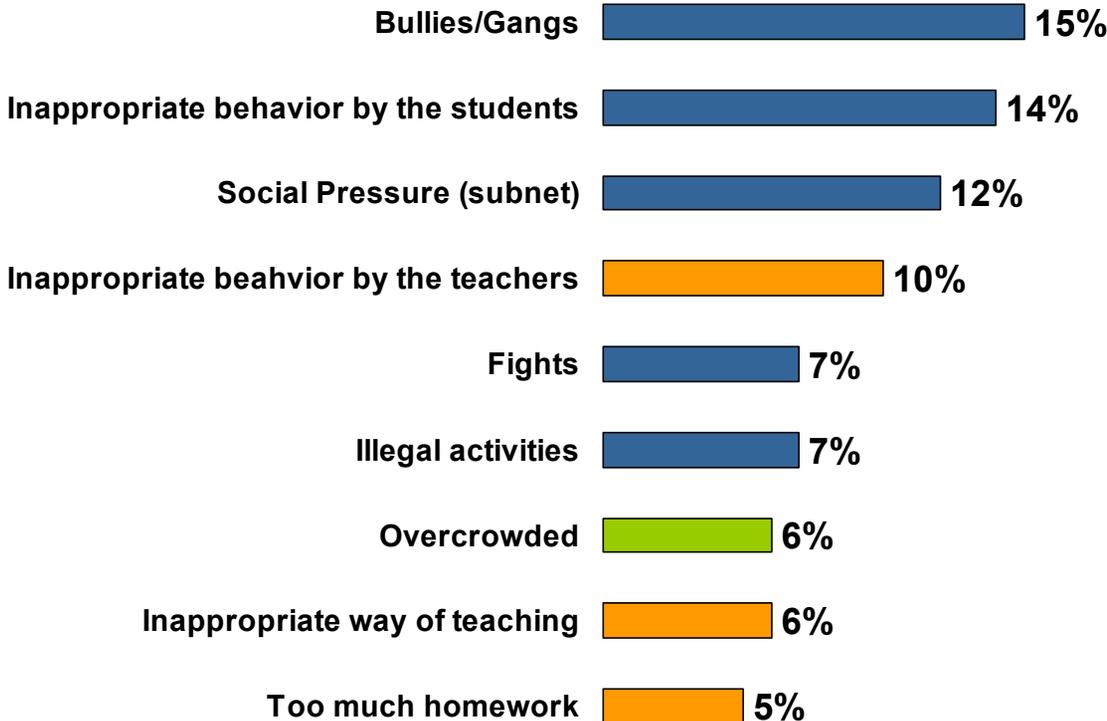
What grades do you usually get in school?



Student behavior (including bullies and gangs, fights and illegal activities) is the most commonly cited problem in schools

What do you think are the biggest problems in your school?

Nets:
Student Behavior (46%)
Teaching/Teachers (29%)
**Administrative/
 School Structure (25%)**



What do you think are the biggest problems in your school?

Bullying, lazy students, rudeness and disrespect to teachers

bullying, drugs, kids with problems at home, cliques

gangs, drugs and kids trying to grow up too fast.

gangs and lack of funding for teachers

A little overcrowded. Not enough kids really want to be there. Gangs and cliques. GANGS!!!

Parents that think Drugs and Alcohol are not a problem. Kids are starting to explore these things now. They always say not my child.

the teachers don't help enough with problems, they don't seem to care enough about students needs.

lack of teacher interest in the individual kids and how their home life affects their attention span and the outcome of projects due to so many after school things going on

teachers expect too much and don't give enough help, kids talking about other kids, the rich kids get all the attention, mean kids

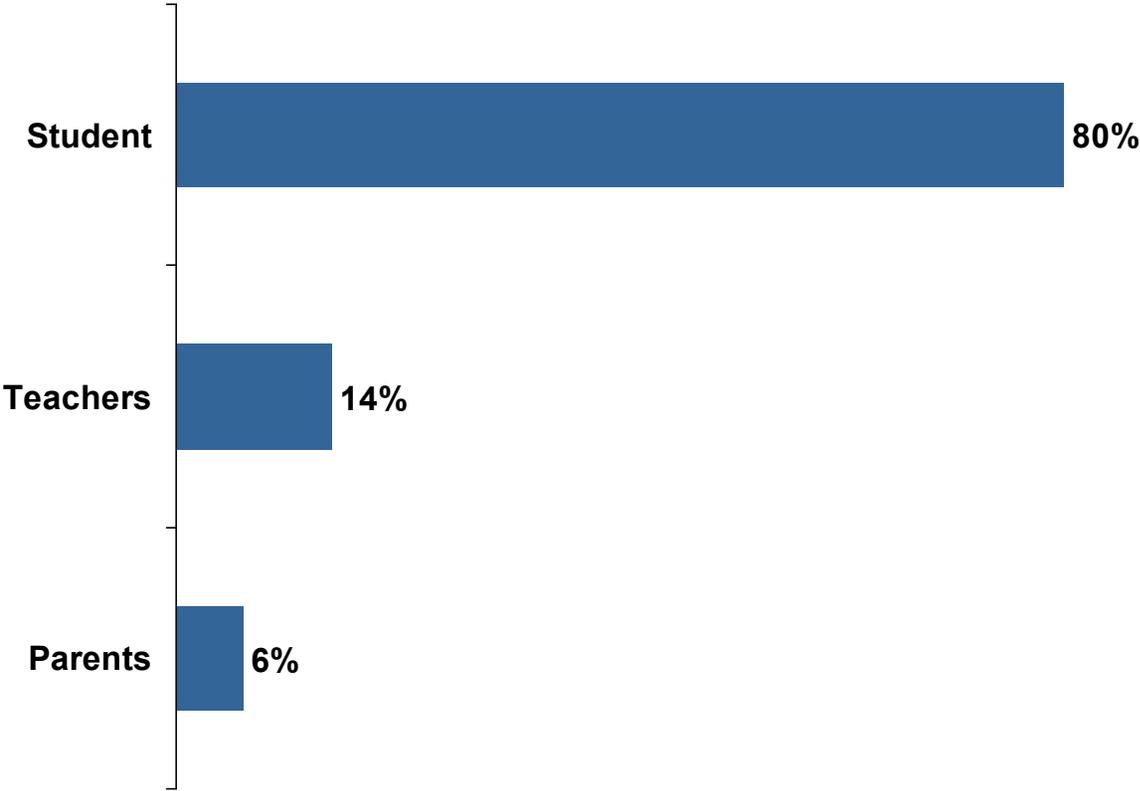
Not enough one on one time with the teacher. Not enough extra help and passing students that haven't learned enough.

Unhappy teachers, which in turn makes unhappy students. Too much emphasis on standardizing tests.

The fact that the teachers seem to be more interested in how quiet I can be than what they are teaching me. And they don't pay attention to bullies

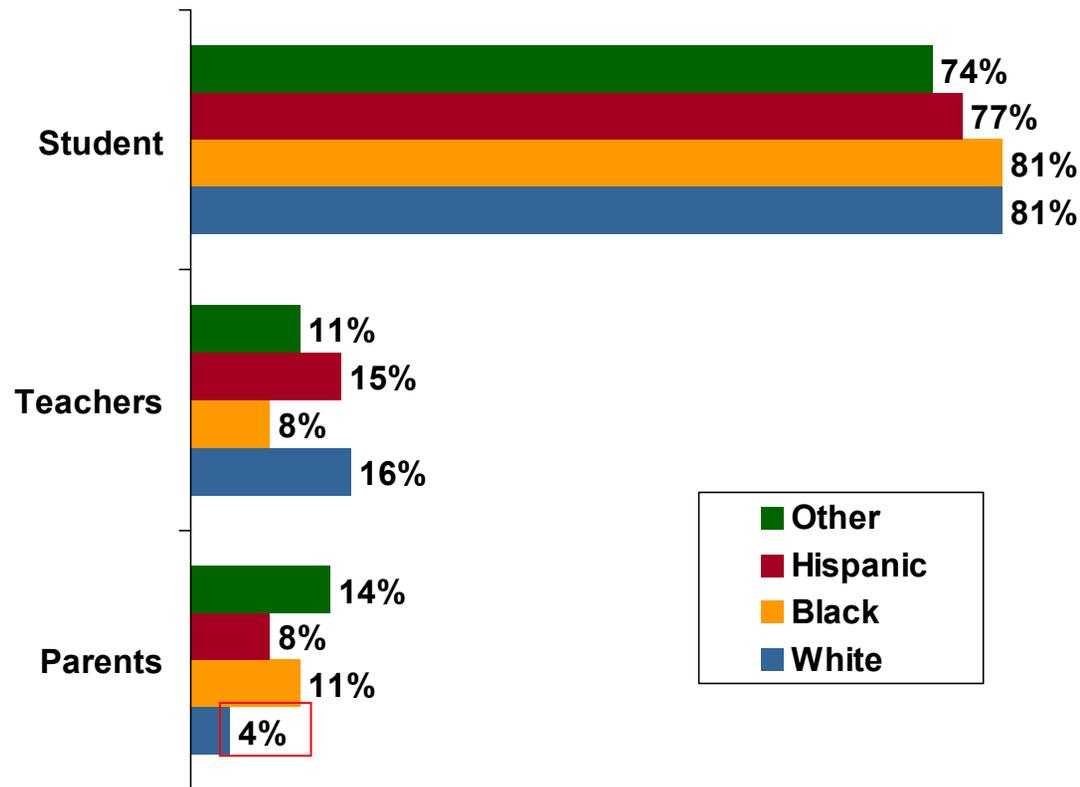
Eight in ten students say they are most responsible for their grades

Who do you think is most responsible for whether a student gets good grades in school?



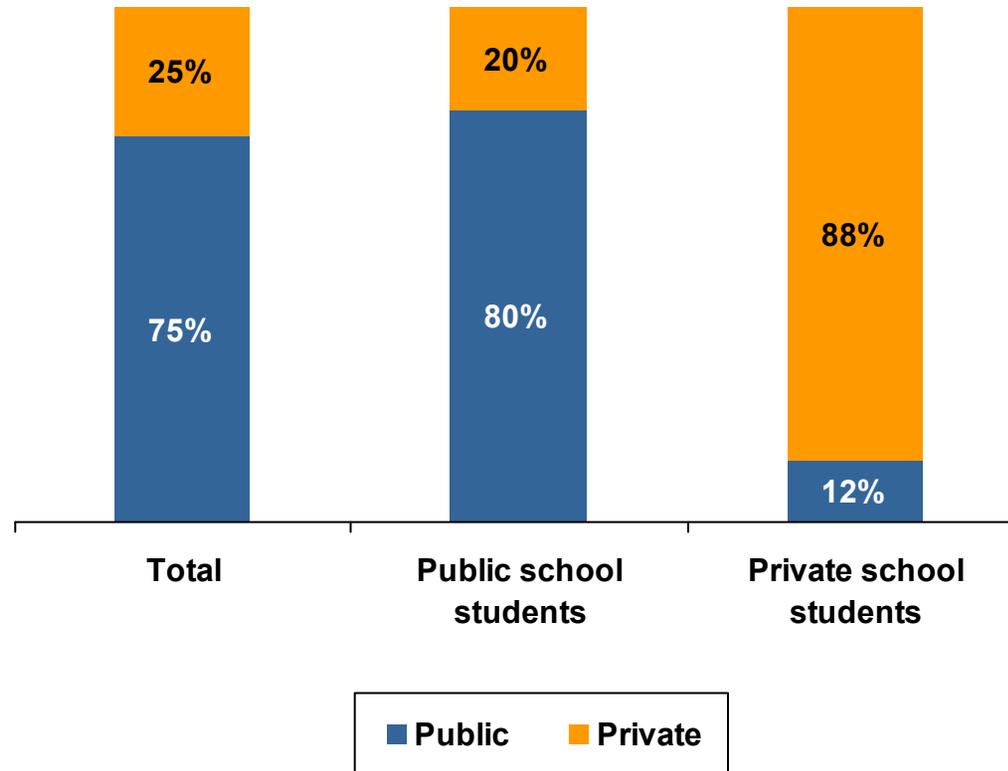
White students are least likely to say that parents are most responsible for their good grades.

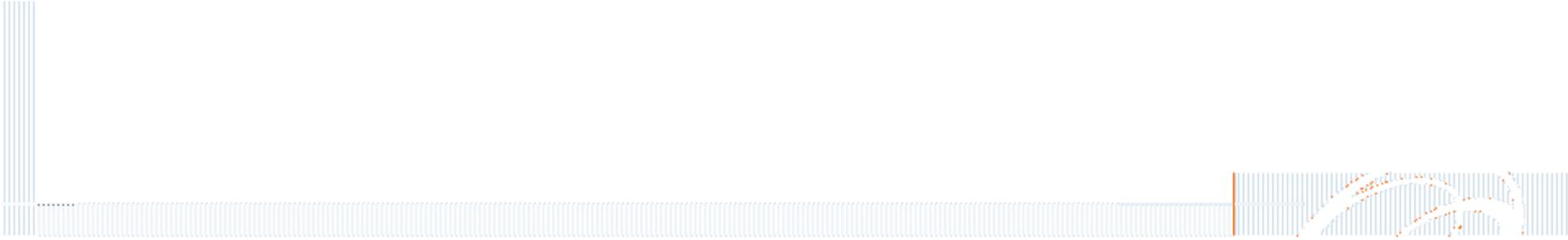
Who do you think is most responsible for whether a student gets good grades in school?



Three out of four students would attend public school if they could choose.

If you had a choice between attending public school or private school, which would you choose?





Current School Experiences

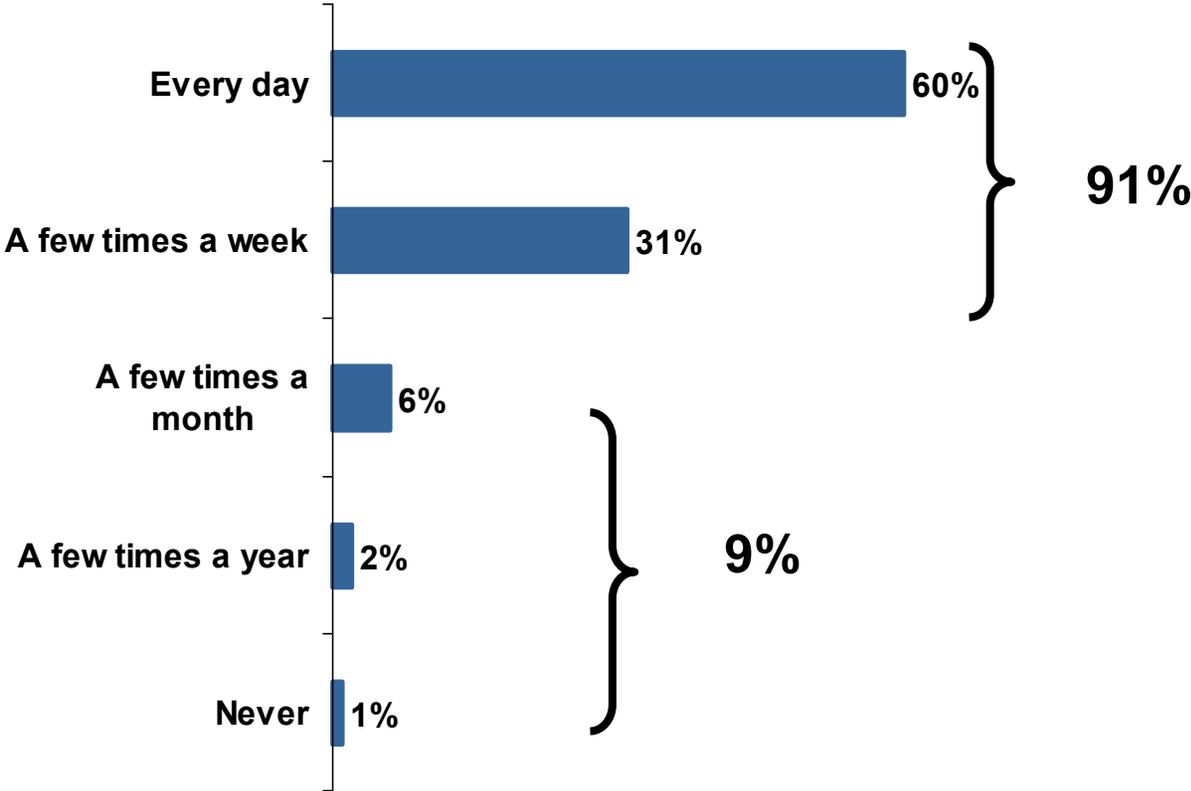
Homework and Assignments

Findings: Homework and Assignments

- **Seven-in-ten students (67%) use the Internet to some degree to complete school assignments, and one-in-four students use it a great deal.**
 - There is a disparity in the usage of the Internet in rural communities and in less educated households.
 - Rural households use the Internet quite a bit or a great deal less than suburban and urban households (14% vs 27% and 25% respectively).
 - Students whose parents have a college degree are more likely to use the Internet quite a bit or a great deal (29%) than those with HS or less (20%) or some college (20%).
- **Over half (60%) of the students are assigned homework everyday.**
 - There is a disparity in how often homework is assigned in less educated households.
 - Students whose parents have a college degree are assigned homework more often (67% everyday) vs those with some college (56%) or HS or less (56%).
- **Half (51%) of the students feel they are assigned just the right amount of homework while most others (44%) say it is too much.**
- **Time doing homework for a majority of students (60%) is one hour or less on an average day.**

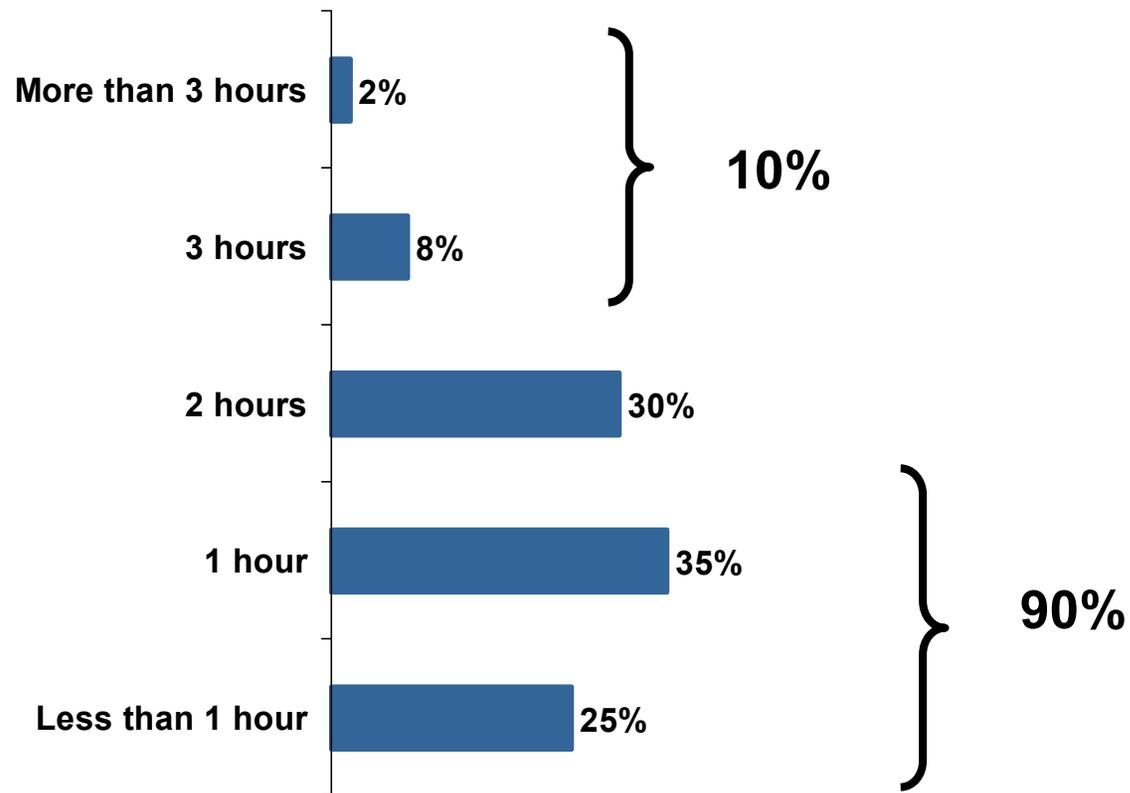
Over half of students are assigned homework every day

How often are you assigned homework?



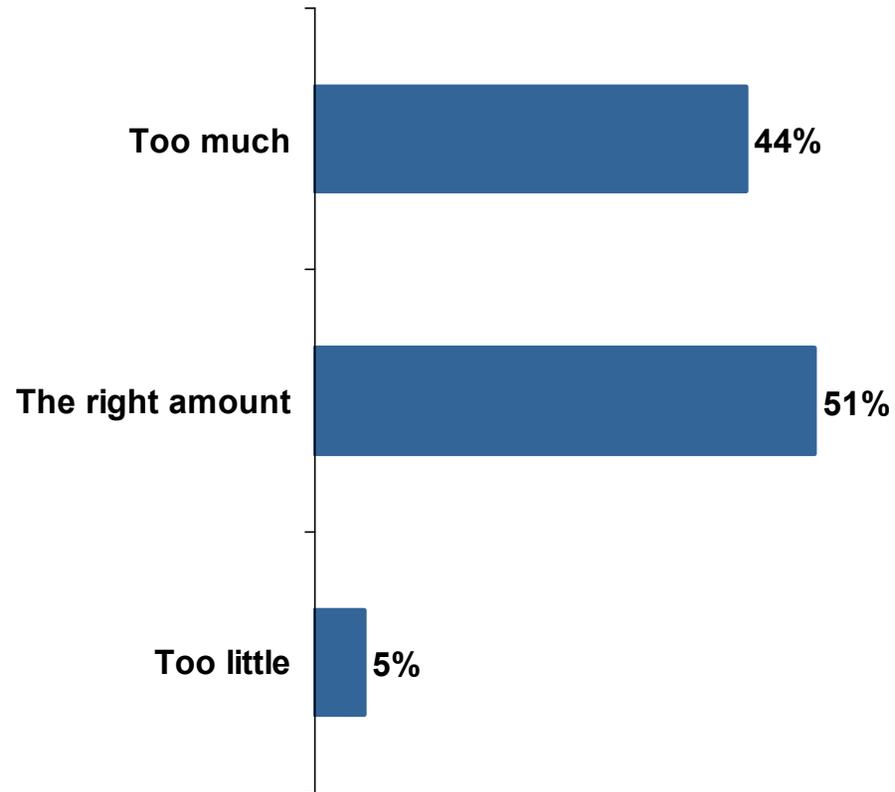
Time doing homework for majority of students is one hour or less on an average day

On an average day, how much time do you spend doing homework?



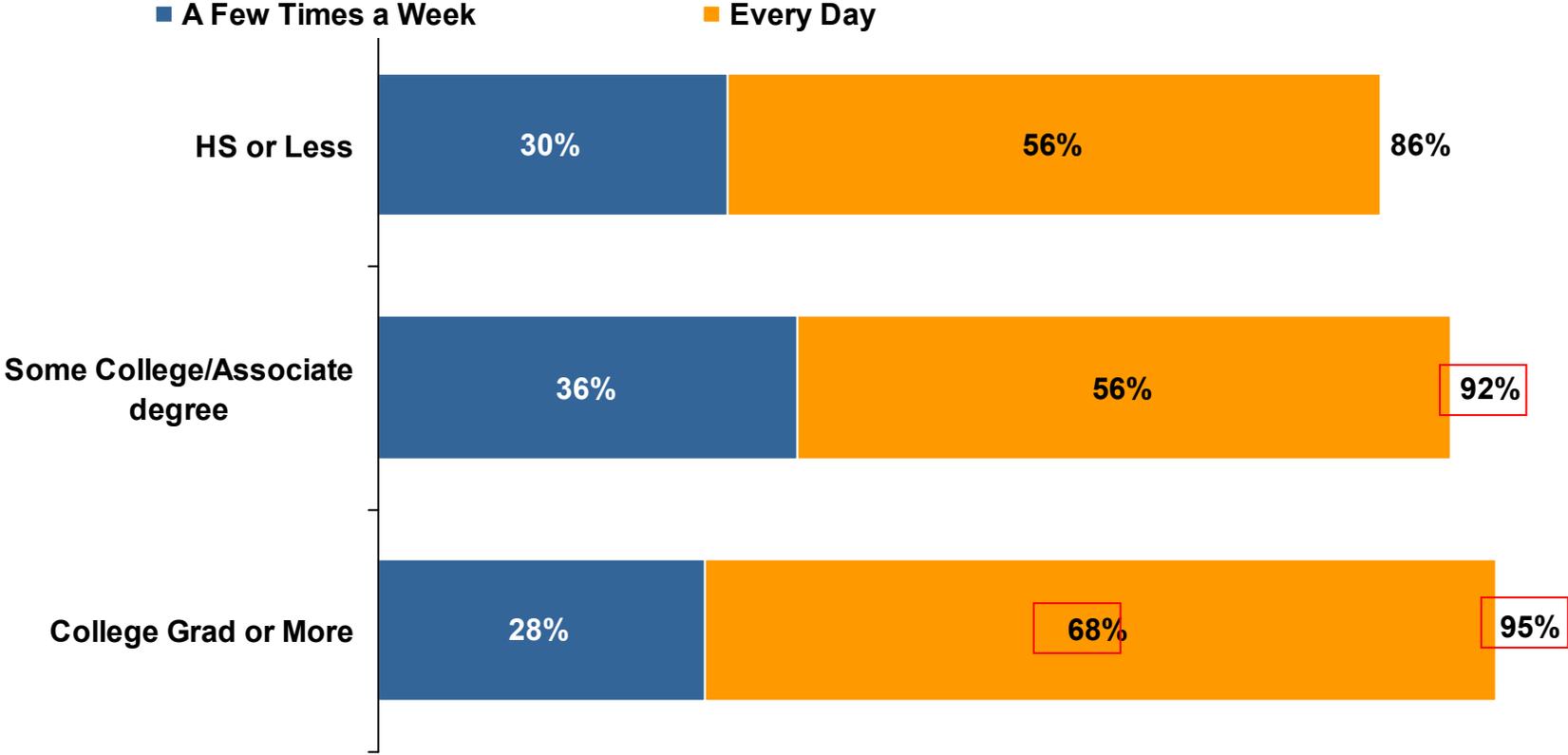
The amount of homework is just right for half of the students and too much for most others

Do you think the amount of homework you are assigned is too much, the right amount or too little?



Frequency of homework is reported to be higher among students whose parents are college educated

How often are you assigned homework?

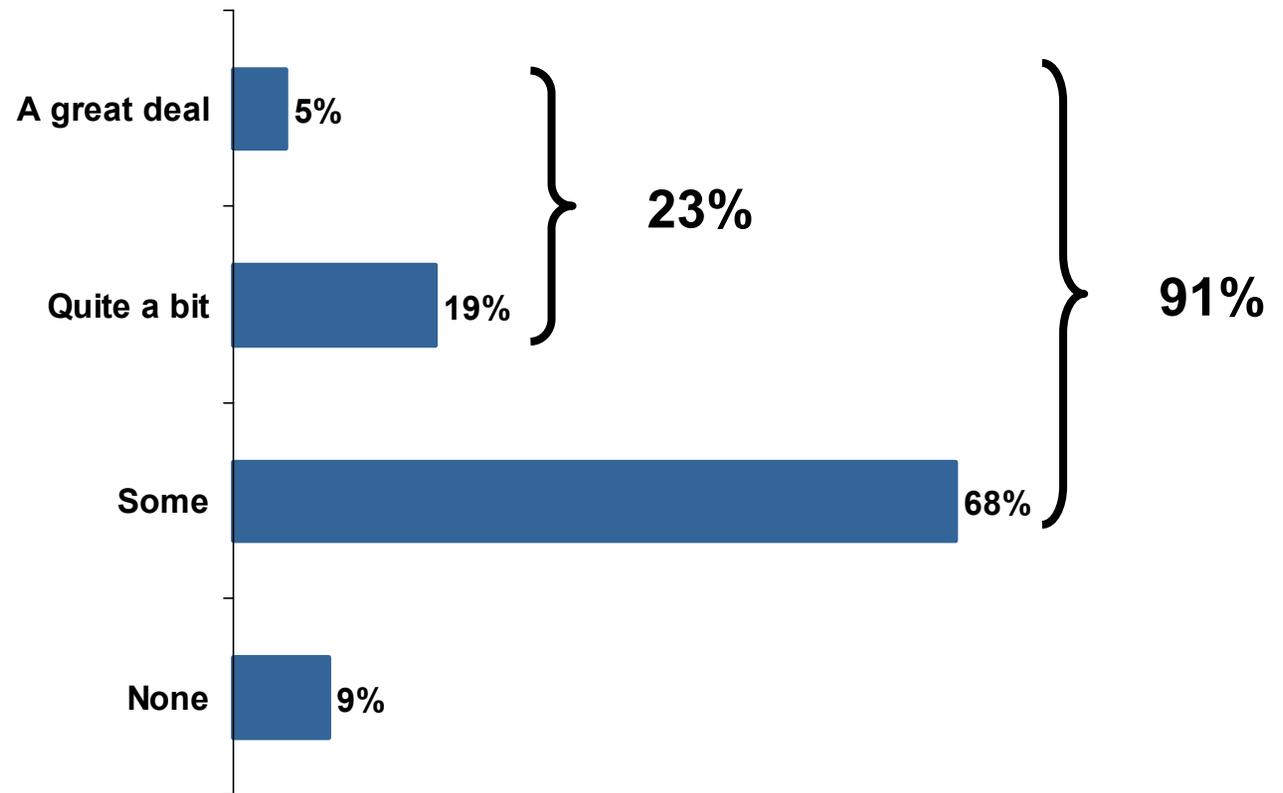


Harris Interactive

Q515 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
College graduate or more (n=670)

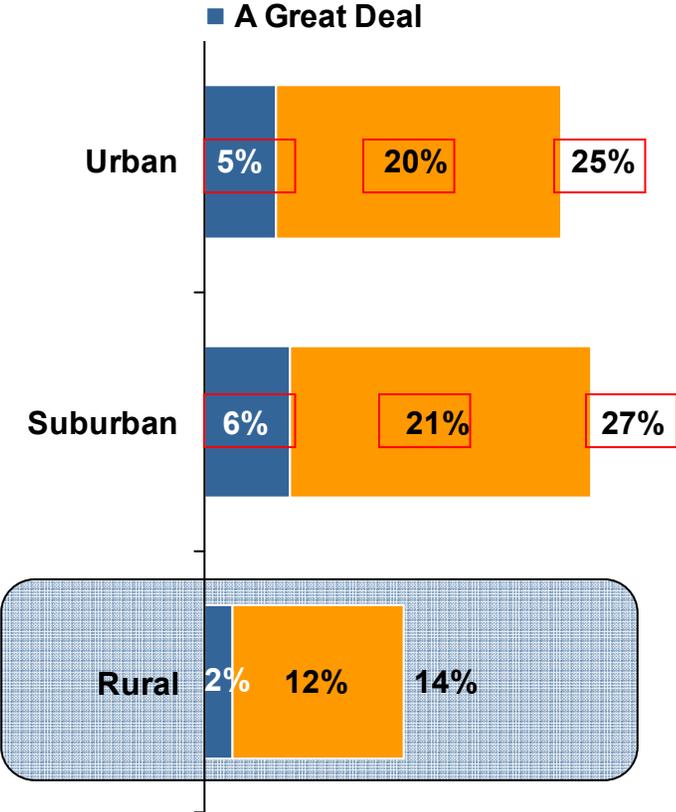
Most students use the Internet to complete their school assignments

How much do you use the Internet to complete your school assignments?



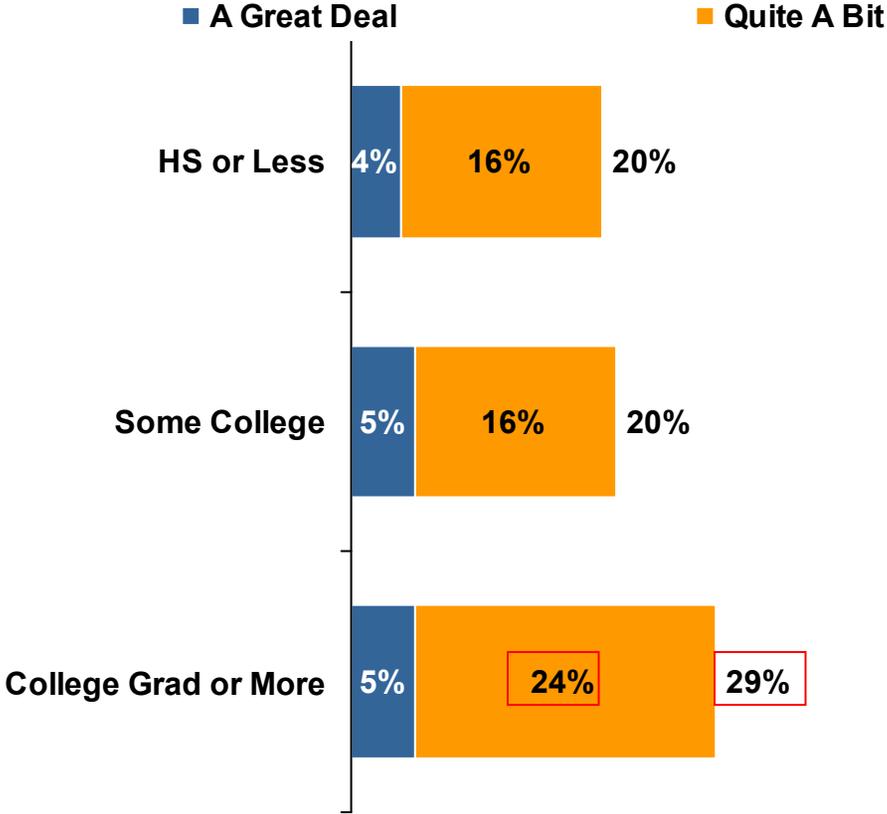
Students in rural communities use the Internet less than students in urban and suburban communities

How much do you use the Internet to complete your school assignments?



Use of Internet is more frequent among students whose parents are college graduates

How much do you use the Internet to complete your school assignments?

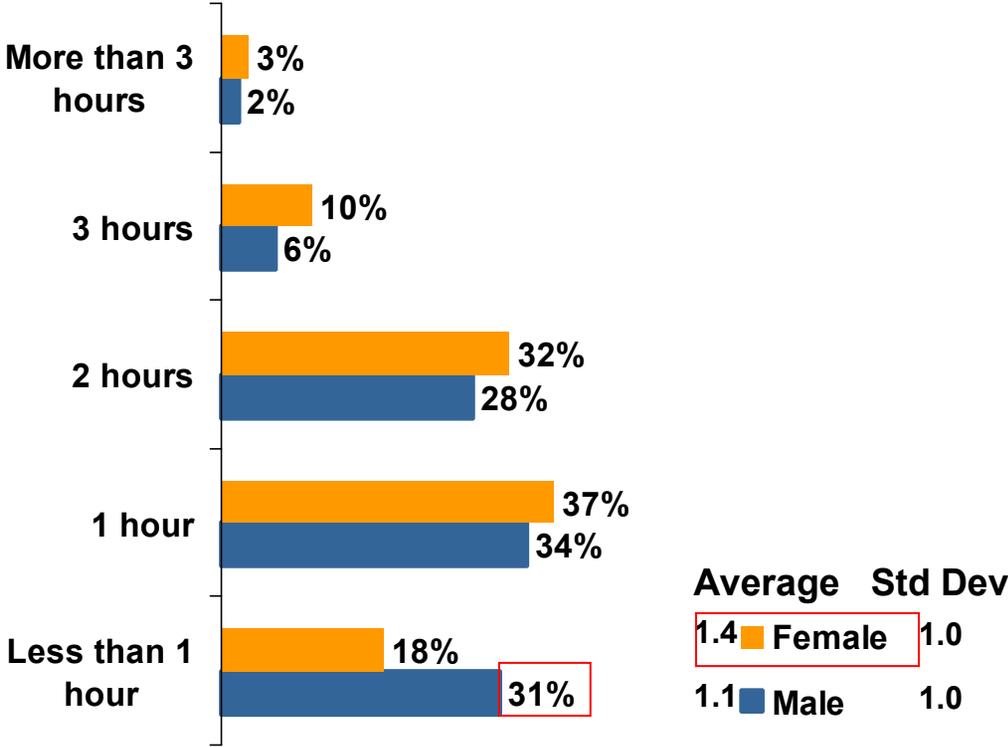


Harris Interactive

Q510 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
College graduate or more (n=670)

Girls report spending more time doing homework than boys

On an average day, how much time do you spend doing homework?





Current School Experiences

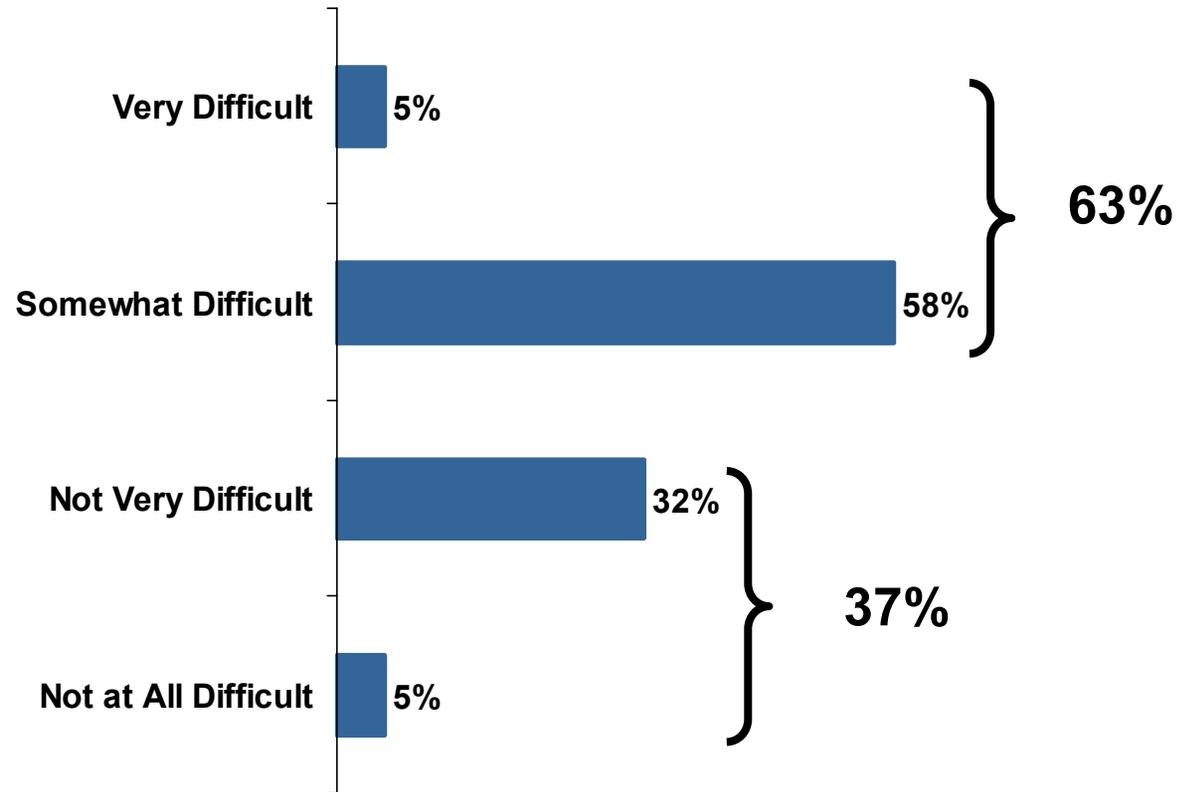
School Success and Preparation

Findings: School Success and Preparation

- **Students are somewhat challenged by the work they are asked to do with one-in-six (63%) finding the work somewhat/very difficult.**
 - Students' perceived level of difficulty directly related to students' grades.
- **Making good grades is very important for seven-in-ten (71%) students followed by the opportunity to participate in chosen classes (61%) and activities (52%).**
- **Majority of students (57%) strongly agree that school expects the best all the time but half as many (29%) strongly agree that they have the preparation to do well on all kinds of tests.**
- **Majority of students (52%) feel somewhat prepared to succeed this year; about four out of ten (38%) feel very prepared.**
- **Half (56%) feel school is somewhat or not at all interested in their success in school; more than four in ten (43%) feel school is very interested.**
- **Students in schools they've graded C or lower generally feel less fulfilled and likely to succeed, compared to students in schools graded B or higher.**
 - These students:**
 - Are less likely to feel fulfilled with their performance or opportunities.
 - Feel their school expects less of them and prepares and challenges them less.
 - Feel their ideas and opinions are infrequently included in decisions that affect them in the classroom.
 - Feel less likely to succeed this school year.
 - Are less likely to feel their school is interested in their success.
 - Find that the work they are asked to do more difficult.

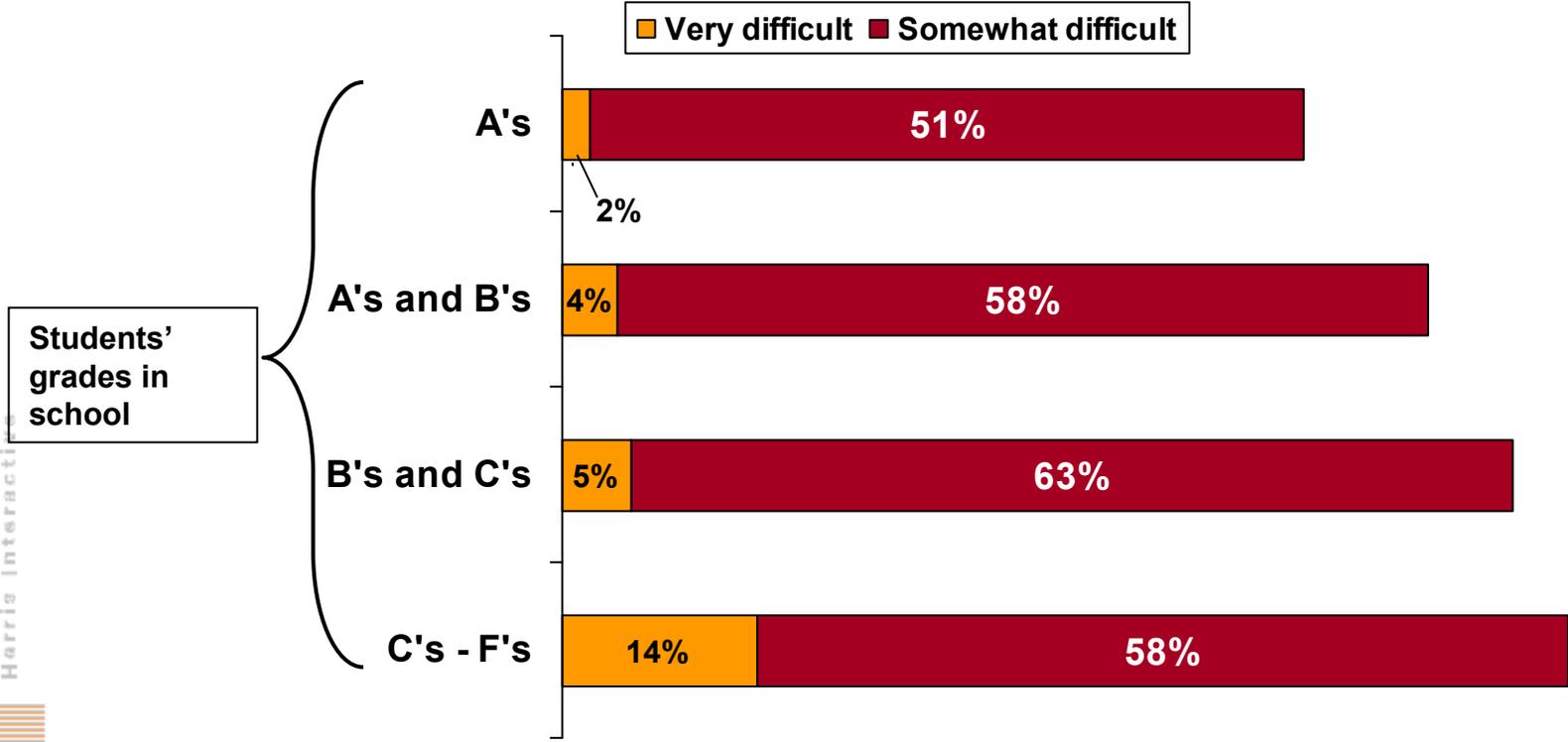
Students are somewhat challenged by their school work

How difficult is the work you are asked to do this school year?



Students earning lower grades find the work they are asked to do more difficult

How difficult is the work you are asked to do this school year?

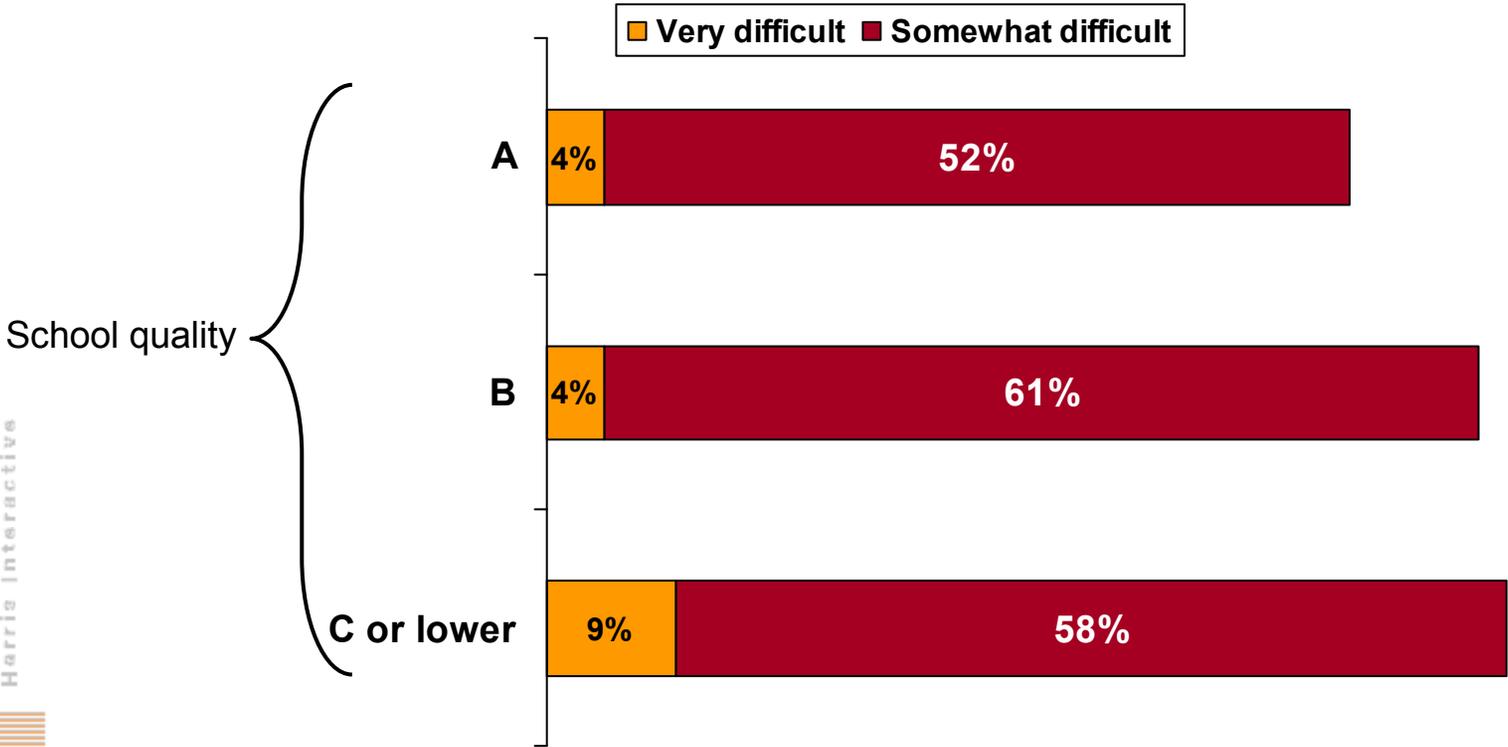


Students' grades in school

Harris Interactive

Students who grade their school a B or less find the work they are asked to do more difficult

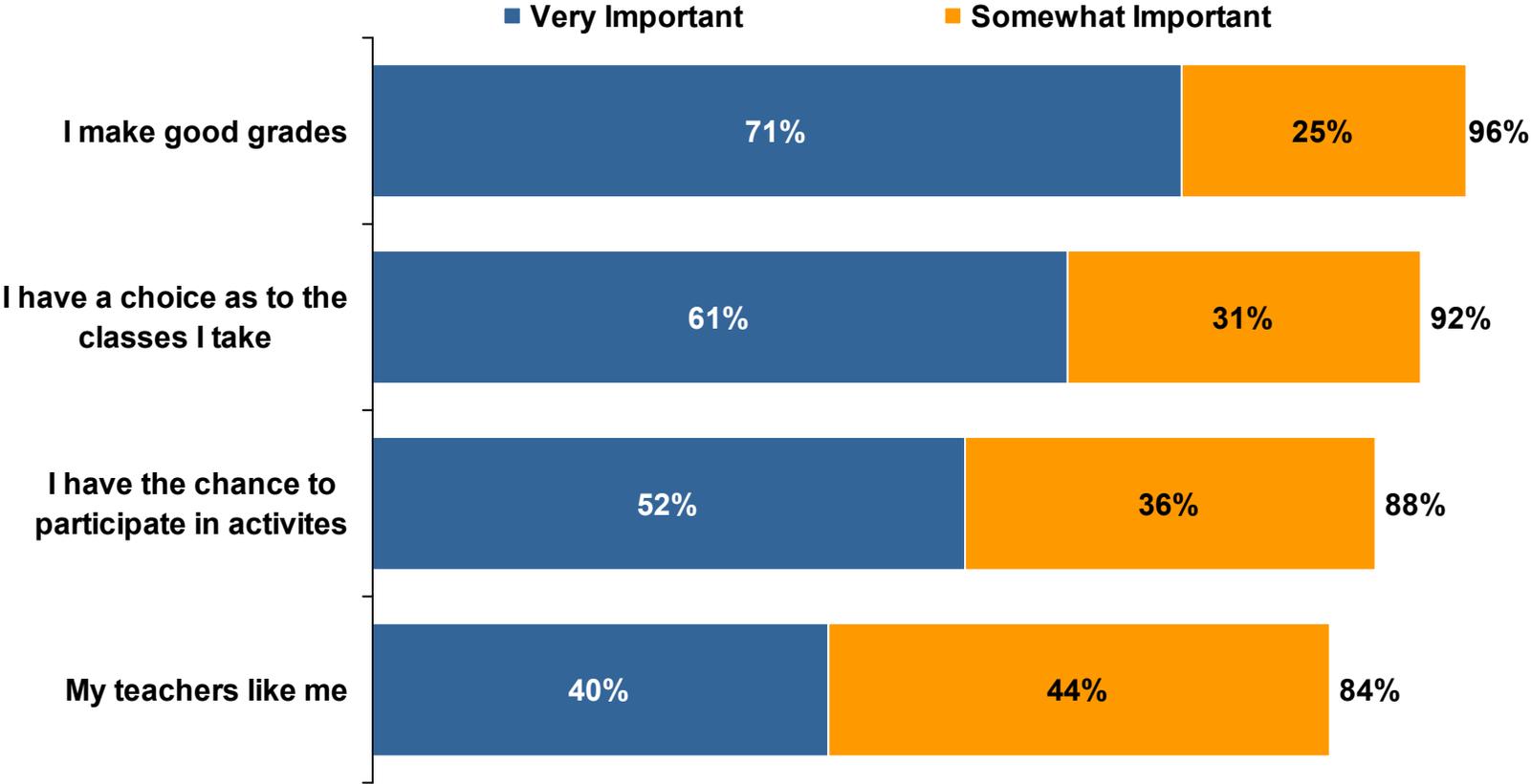
How difficult is the work you are asked to do this school year?



Harris Interactive

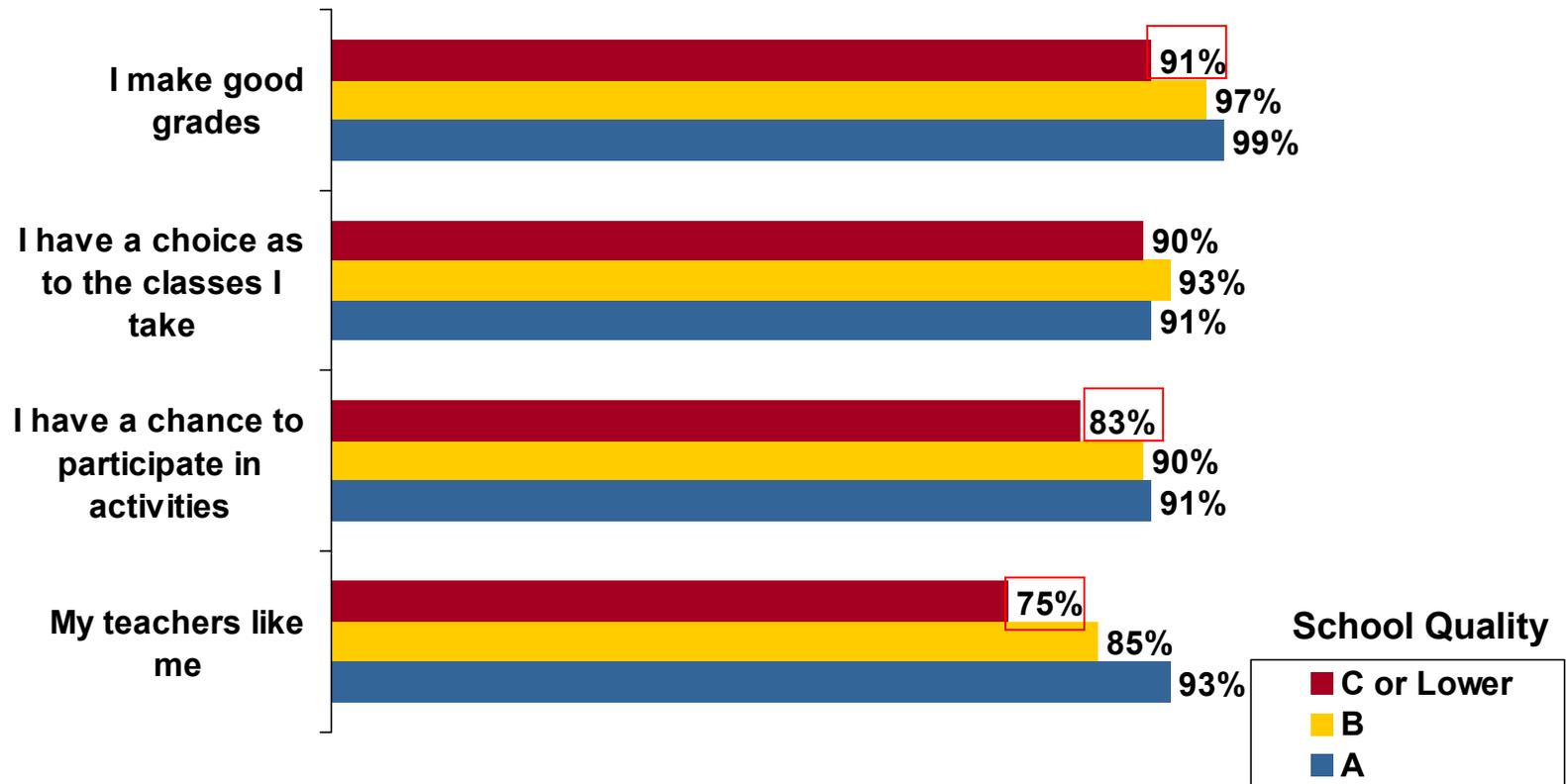
Grades are important for nearly all students, followed by the opportunity to participate in chosen classes and activities

How important is each of the following to you?



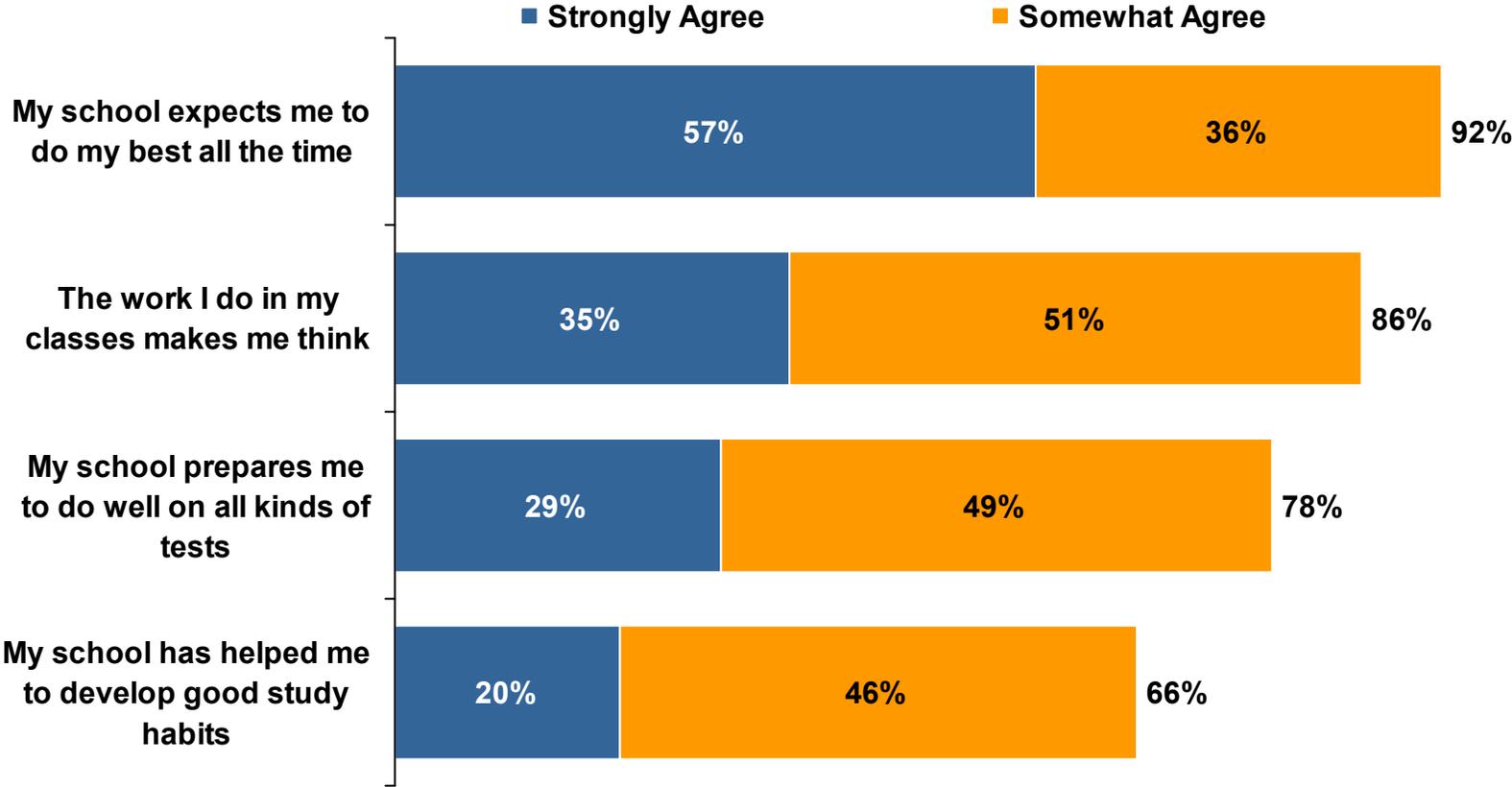
Students grading their school a C or lower are less likely to feel fulfilled with their performance or opportunities

How important is each of the following to you?
 --Summary of Very/Somewhat Important--



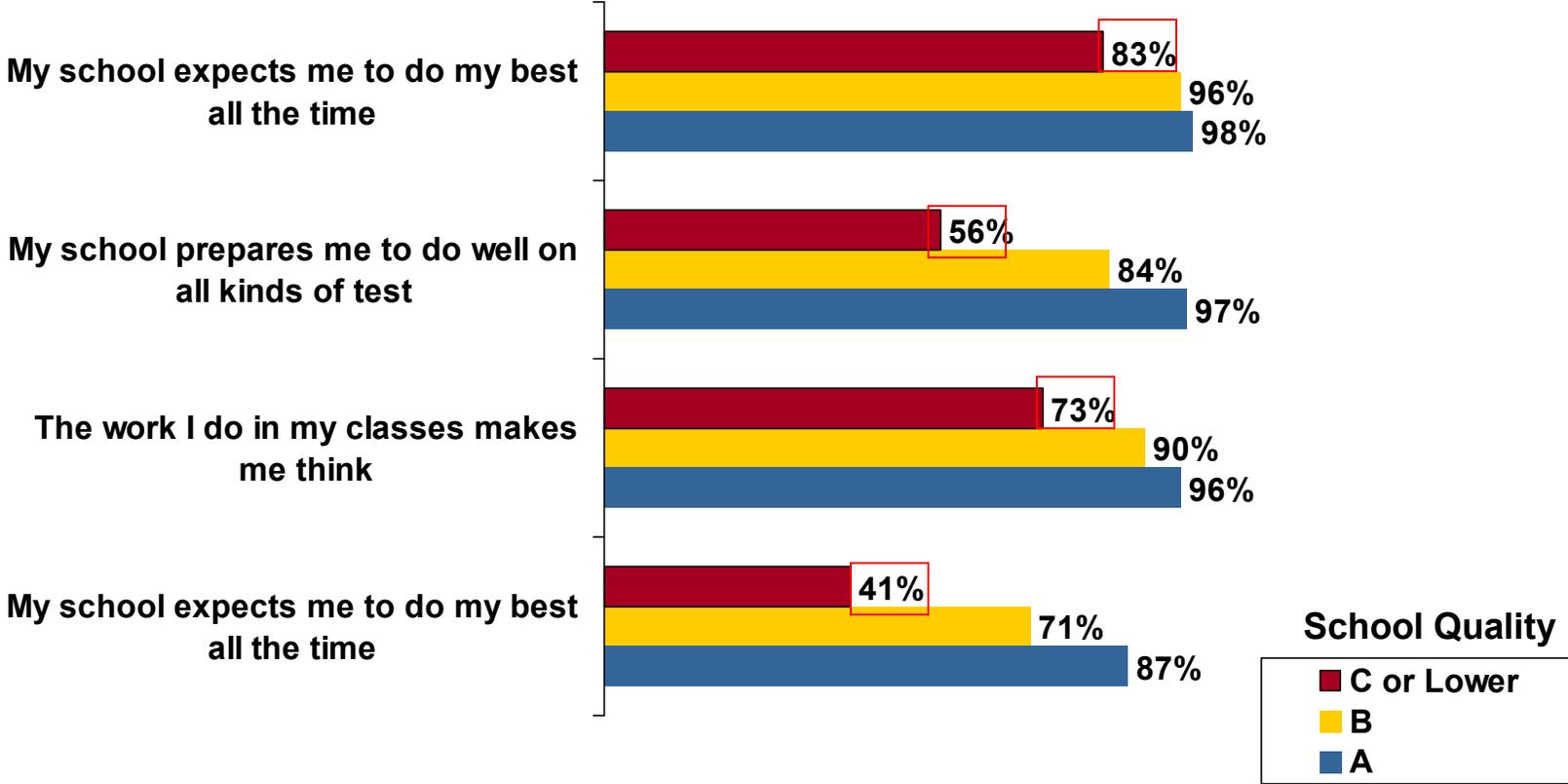
Majority strongly agree that school expects the best all the time but half as many strongly agree that they have the preparation

How much do you agree or disagree with the following about your school?



Students grading their school a C or lower feel their school expects less of them and prepares and challenges them less

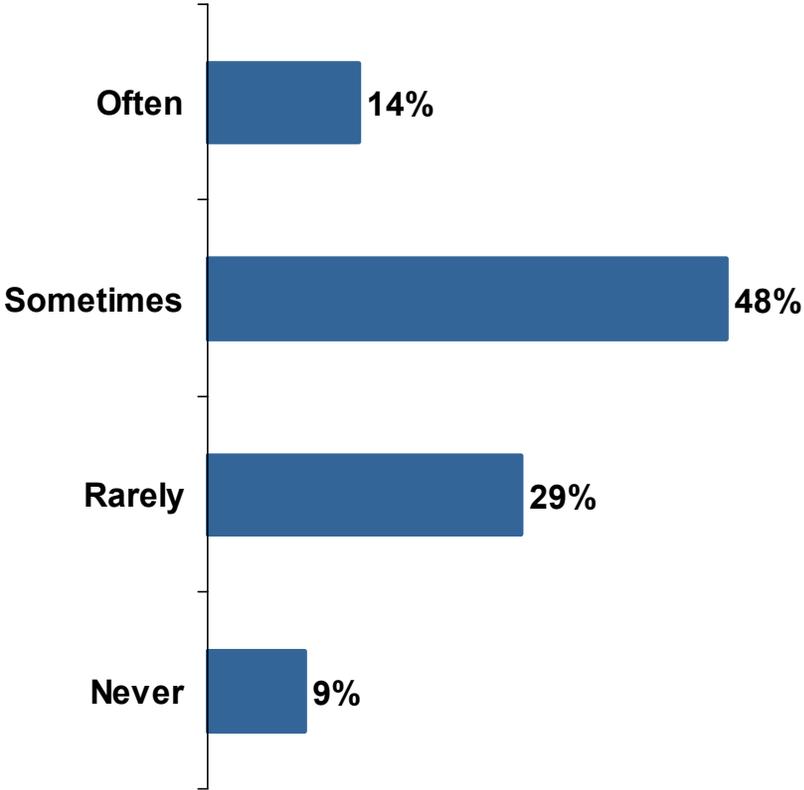
How much do you agree or disagree with the following about your school?
 --Summary of Agree--



Q555 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
 A (n=439), B (n=800), C or lower (n=575)

Four in ten students report that their school rarely or never includes their ideas and opinions in decisions that affect students in the classroom

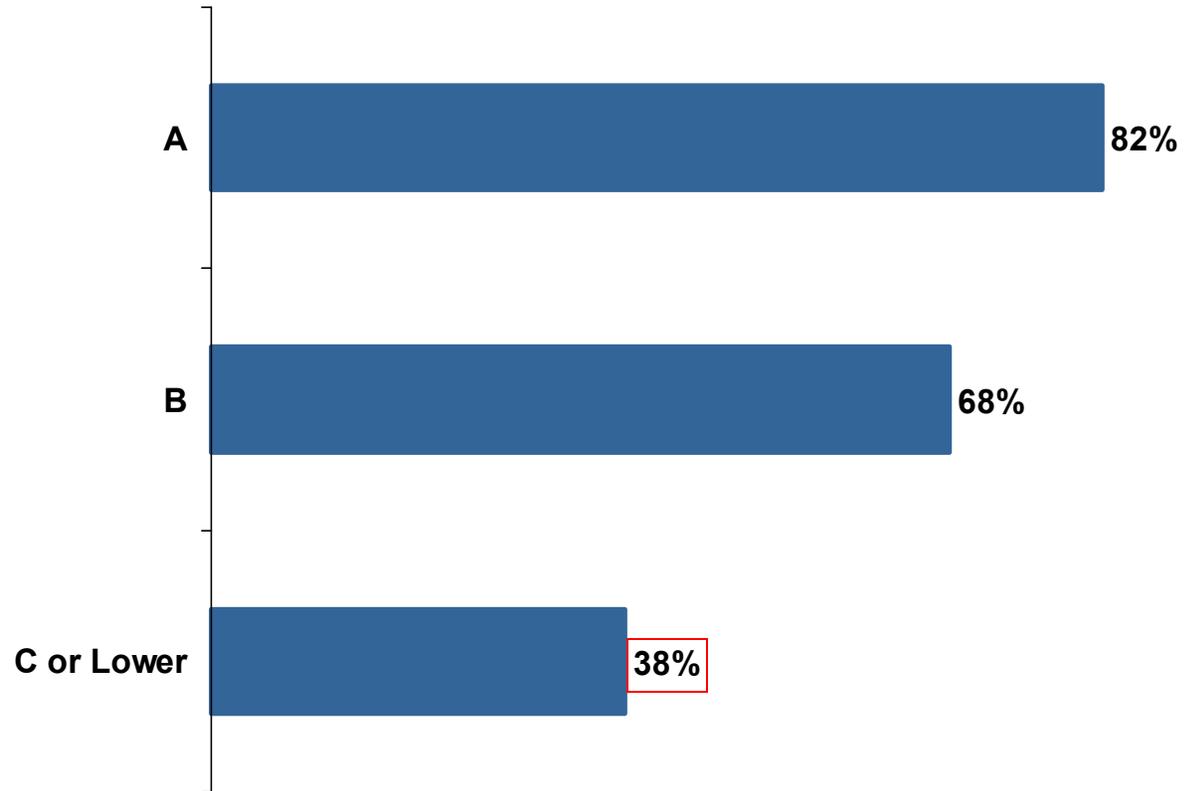
How often does your school include student's ideas and opinions in decisions that affect you in the classroom?



Students grading their school a C or lower feel their ideas and opinions are infrequently included in decisions that affect them in the classroom

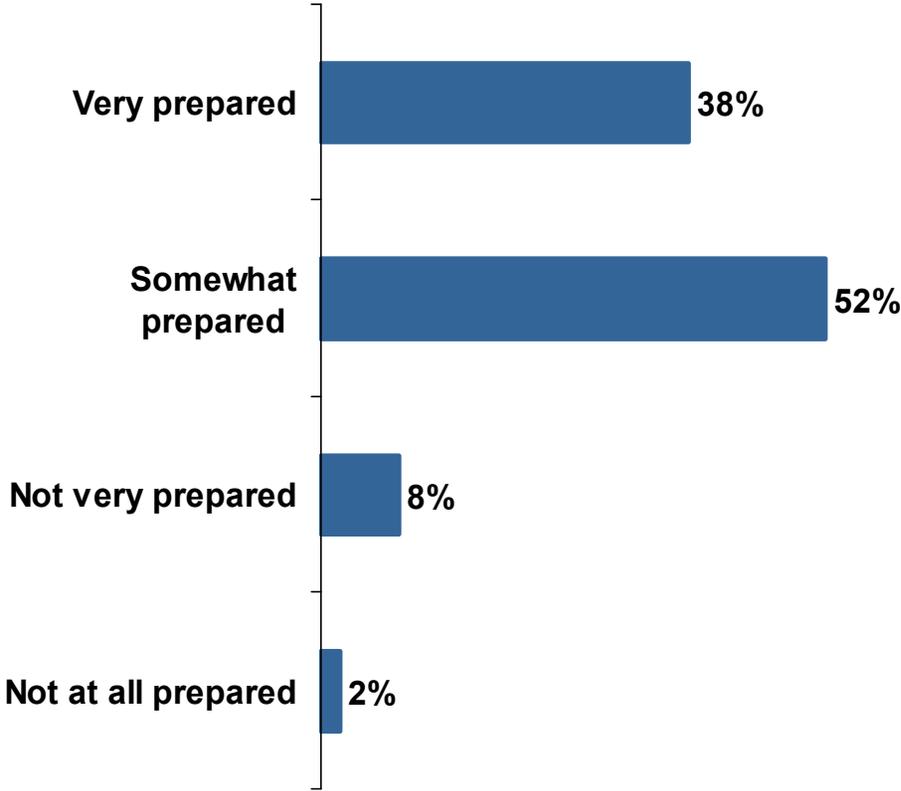
How often does your school include student's ideas and opinions in decisions that affect you in the classroom?
--Summary of Often/Sometimes--

School Quality



Four in ten feel very prepared to succeed this year

How prepared do you feel to succeed this school year?



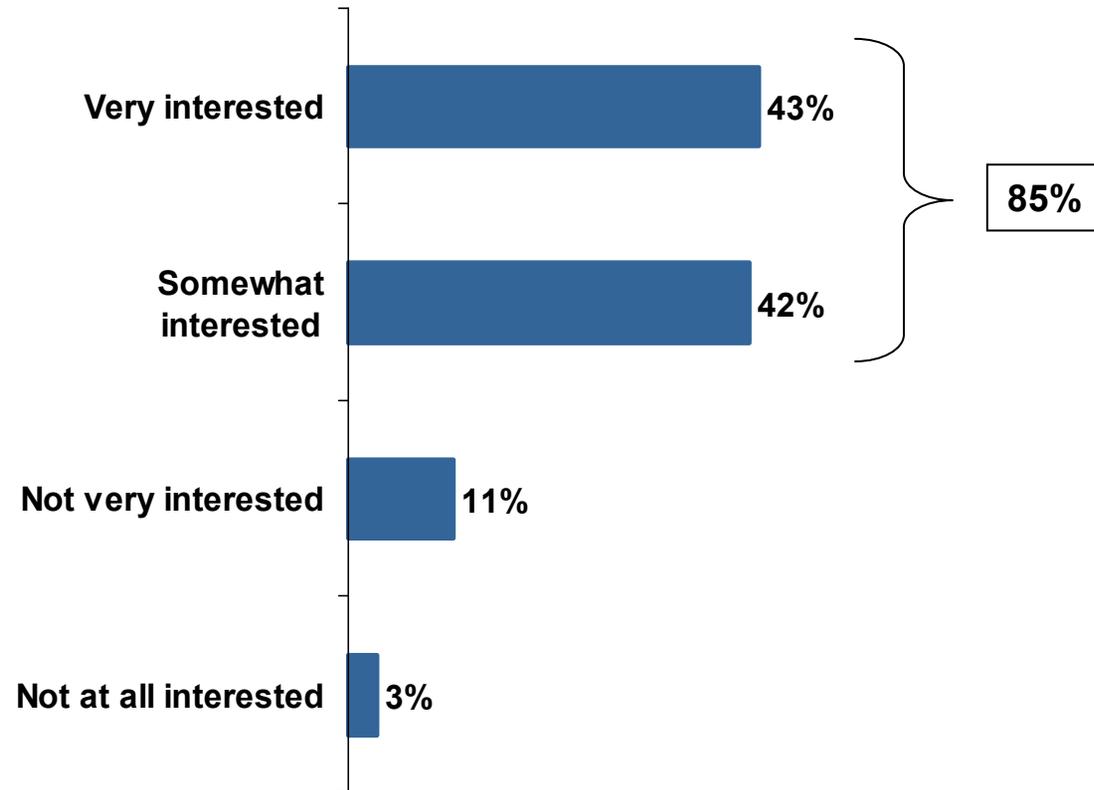
Students grading their school a C or lower feel less likely to succeed this school year

How prepared do you feel to succeed this school year?
--Summary of Very/Somewhat--



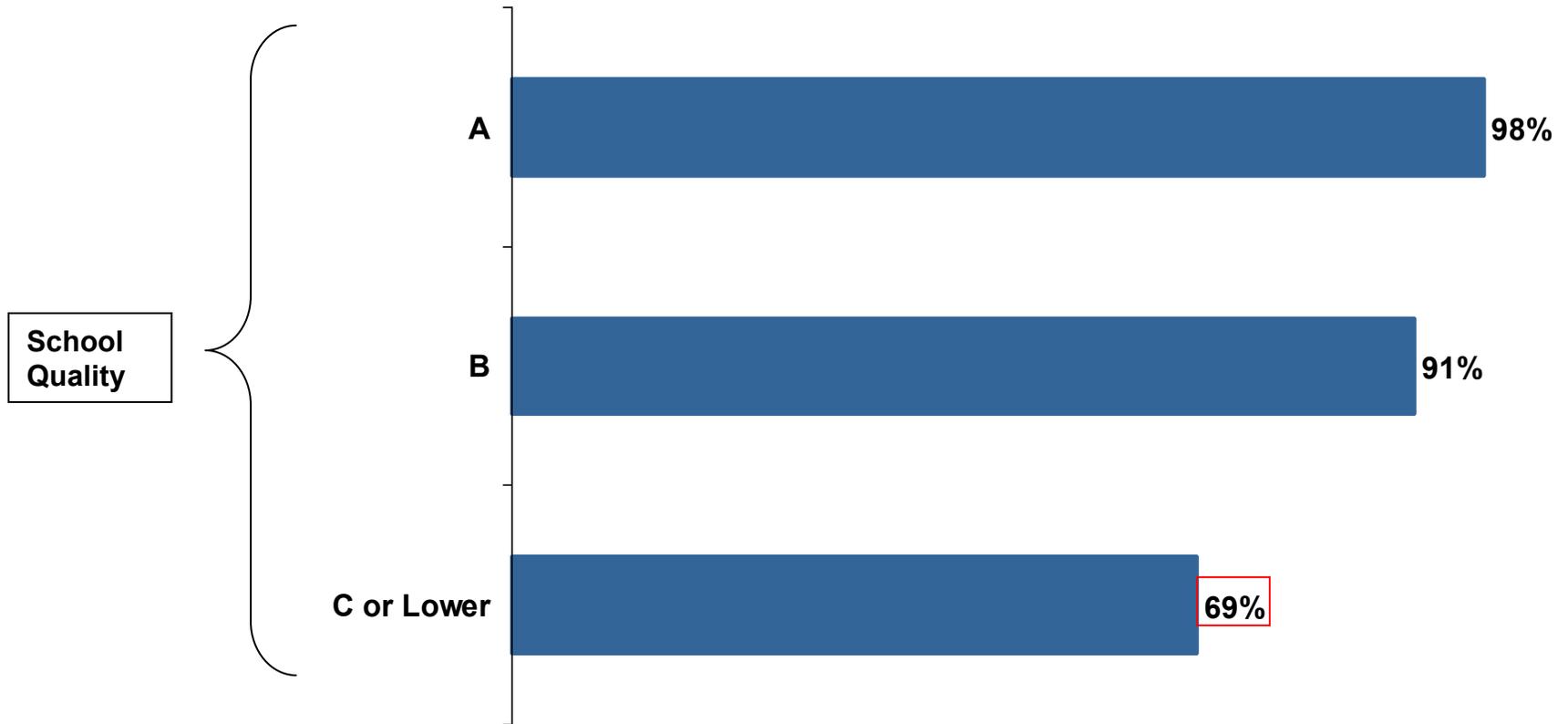
More than eight in ten students feel their school is very/somewhat interested in their success in school

How interested do you think your school is in your success in school?



Students grading their school a C or lower are less likely to feel their school is interested in their success

How interested do you think your school is in your success in school?
--Summary of Very/Somewhat--





Views About High School

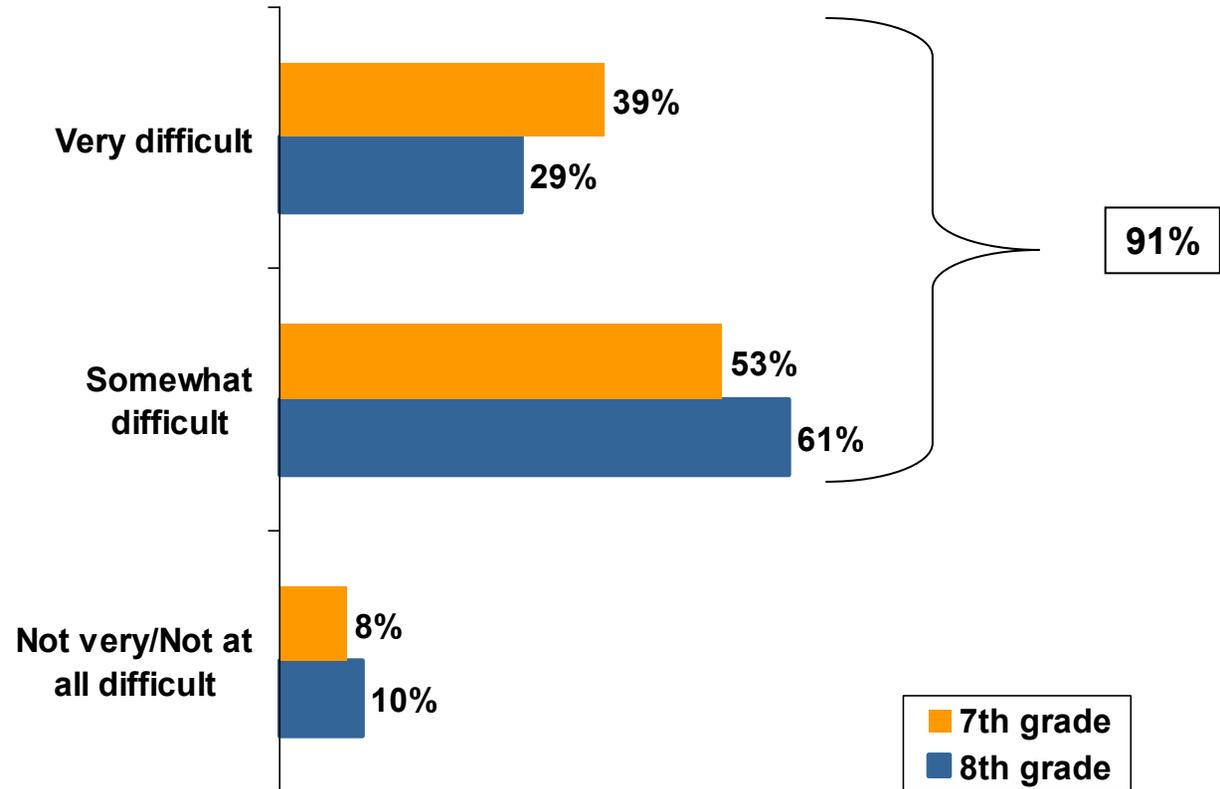
Summary: Views About High School

- Most middle level students expect high school to be difficult, yet they still express confidence that they will succeed.
 - 93% say there is no chance they will drop out of high school
 - 61% think that their major academic skills are good enough for high school
- Despite this confidence, students do not favor a more rigorous high school curriculum, nor do they think increasing requirements or making classes harder will be beneficial for students or help them stay in school.
- Generally, students whose parents have higher levels of education are more likely to think they are prepared to succeed in high school, and are more knowledgeable about what will be expected of them.
- If students feel confident about succeeding in high school, they tend to be confident they will attend college.

91% of middle level students think their school work in high school will be difficult.

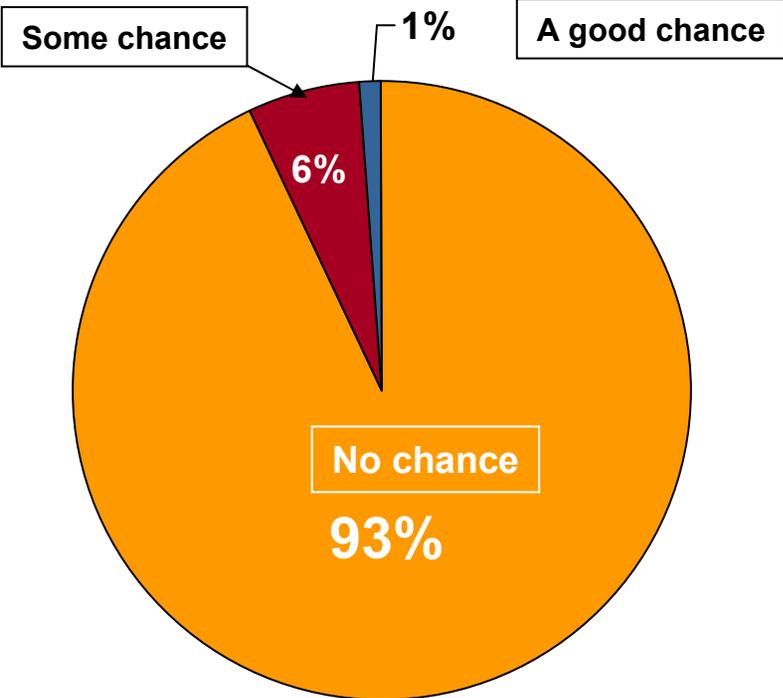
How difficult do you think your school work will be in high school?

Students from Eastern states (42%) are more likely than those from the Midwest (30%) to think high school work will be very difficult.



Seven percent of students report there is a chance they will drop out of high school.

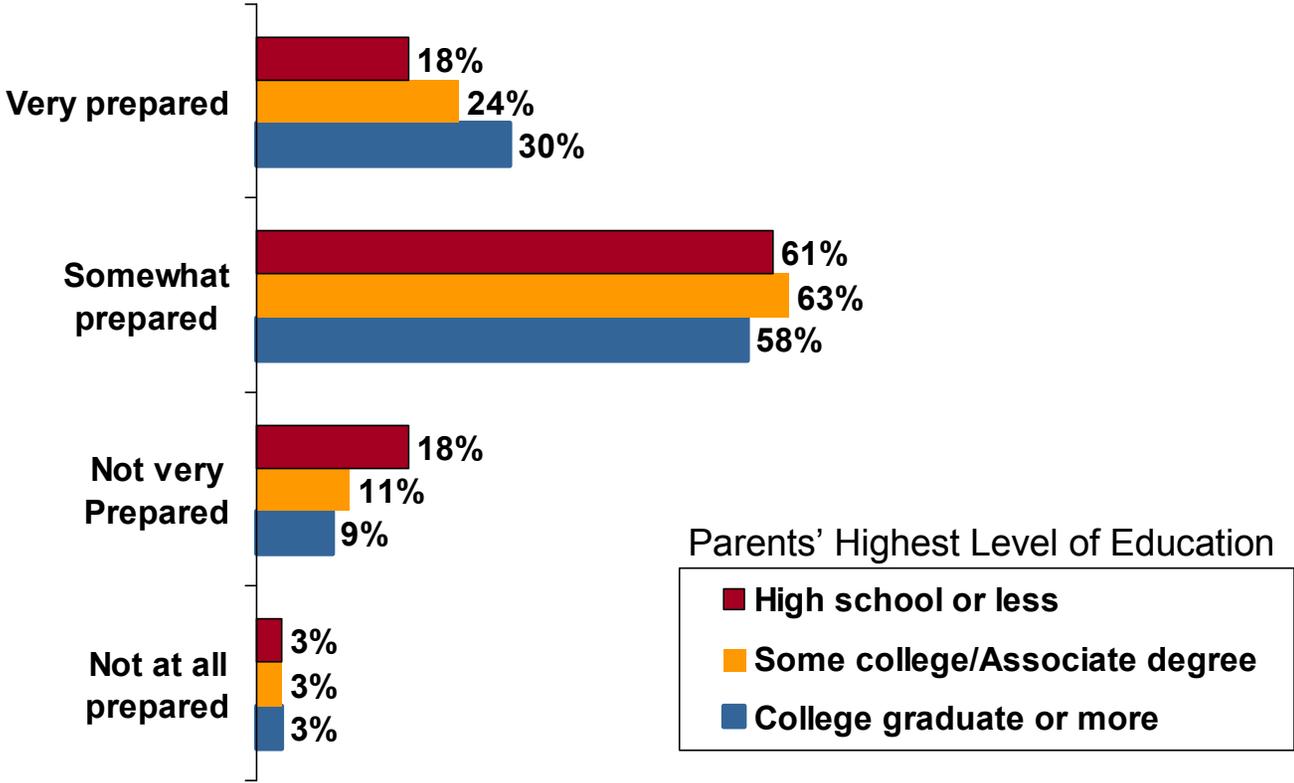
What are the chances that you might drop out of high school and not graduate?



Children of parents with lower levels of education are more likely to say they will drop out of high school

Students whose parents did not attend college report feeling less prepared to succeed in high school than students whose parents have more advanced degrees.

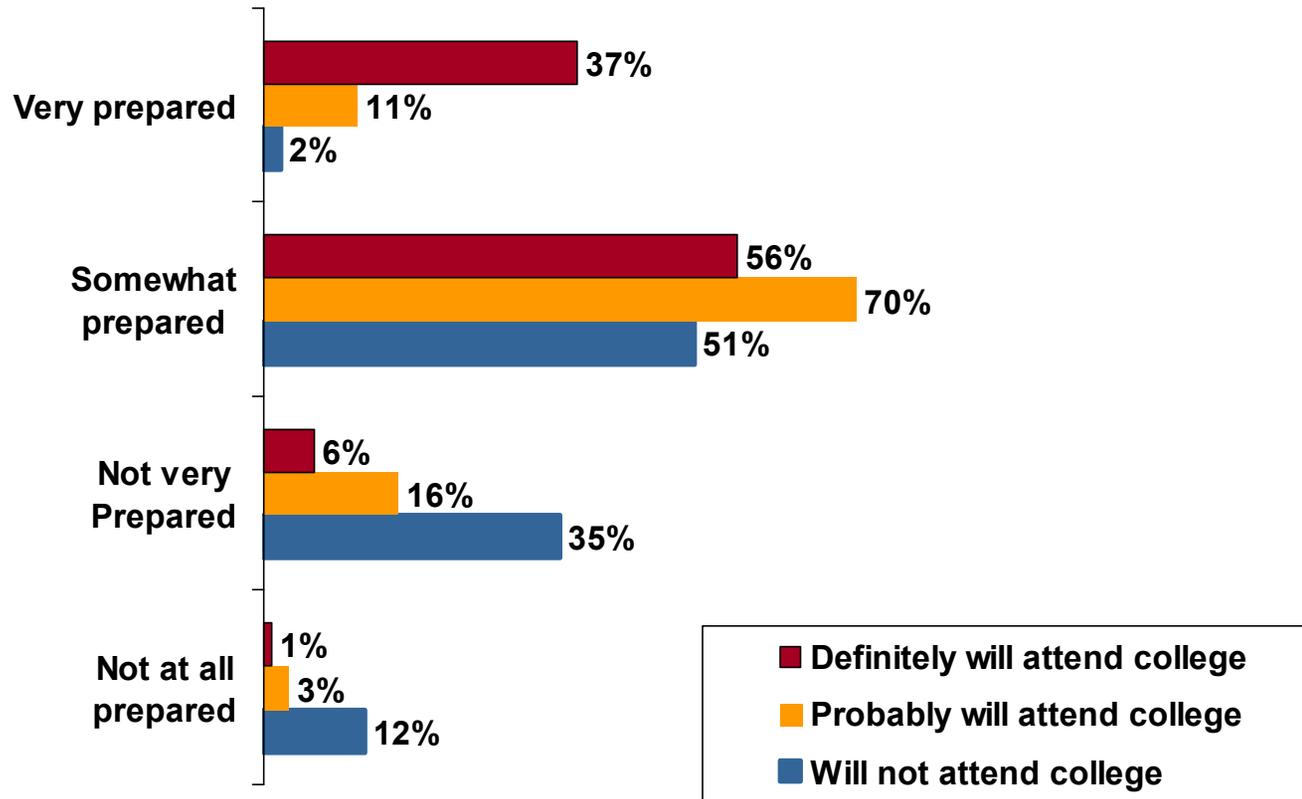
How well prepared do you think you will be to succeed in high school?



Q610 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
 High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
 College graduate or more (n=670)

More than half of students who will not attend college feel somewhat prepared to succeed in high school; only 2% feel very prepared.

How well prepared do you think you will be to succeed in high school?

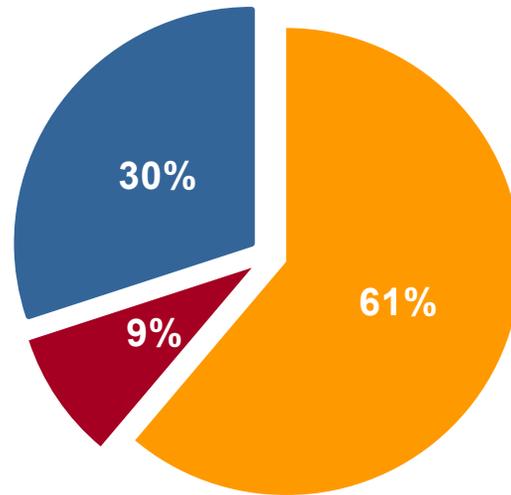


Q610 Base: All Qualified Respondents (n=1814)
 Definitely will attend college (n=993), Probably will attend college (n=671),
 Will not attend college (n=150)

More than half of middle school students feel their writing, math and reading skills are strong enough for high school.

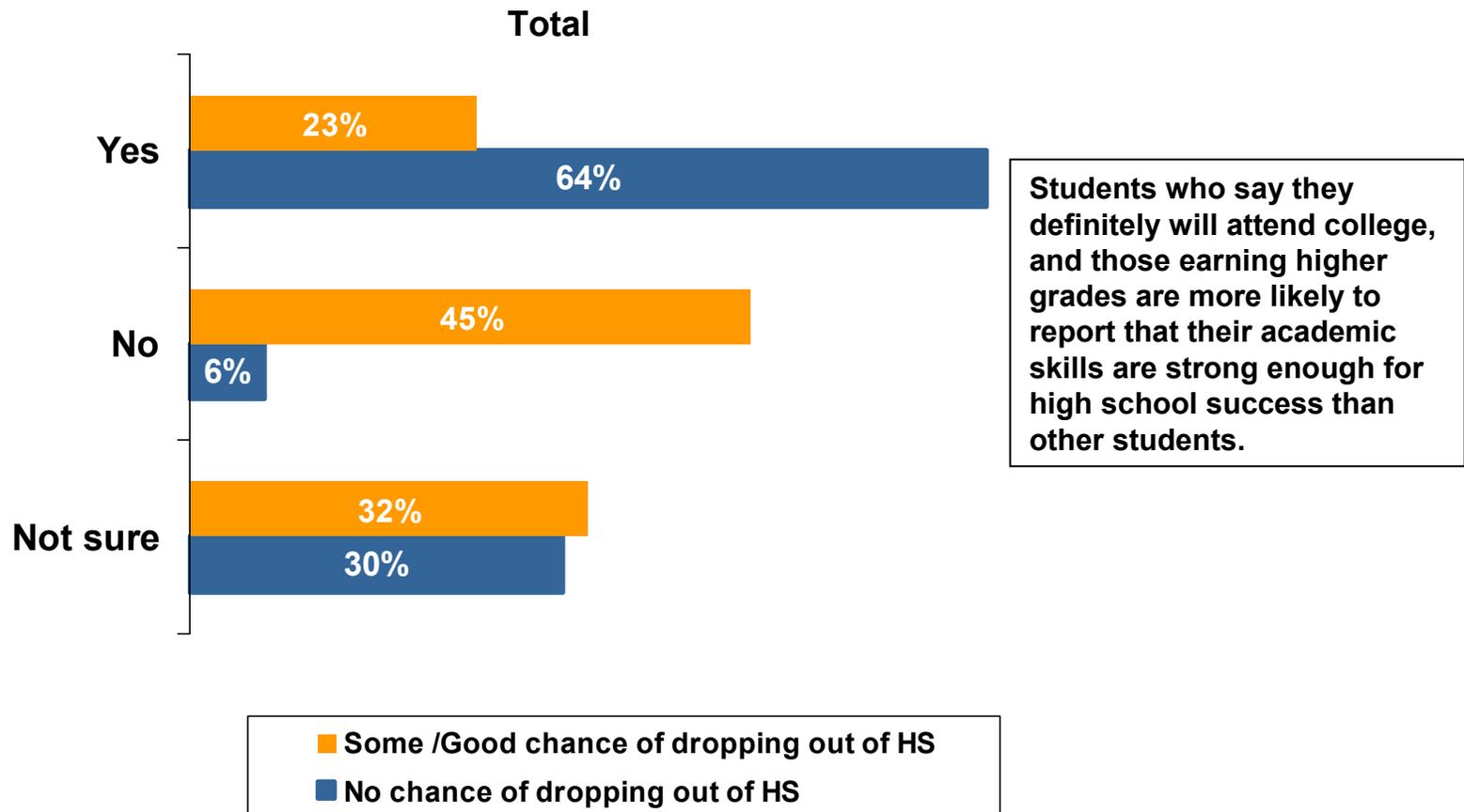
Overall, do you feel that your writing, math, and reading skills are strong enough for you to be successful in your classes in high school?

Total



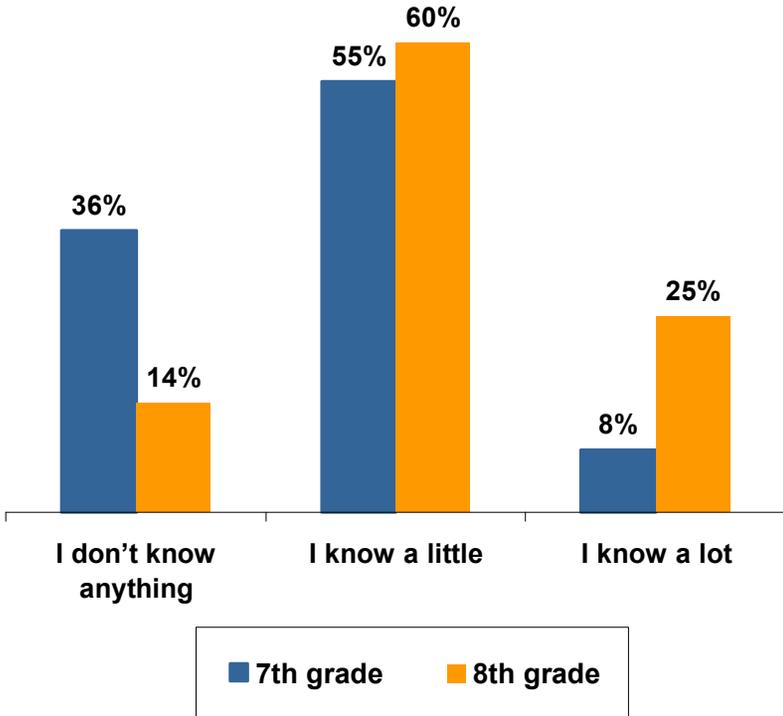
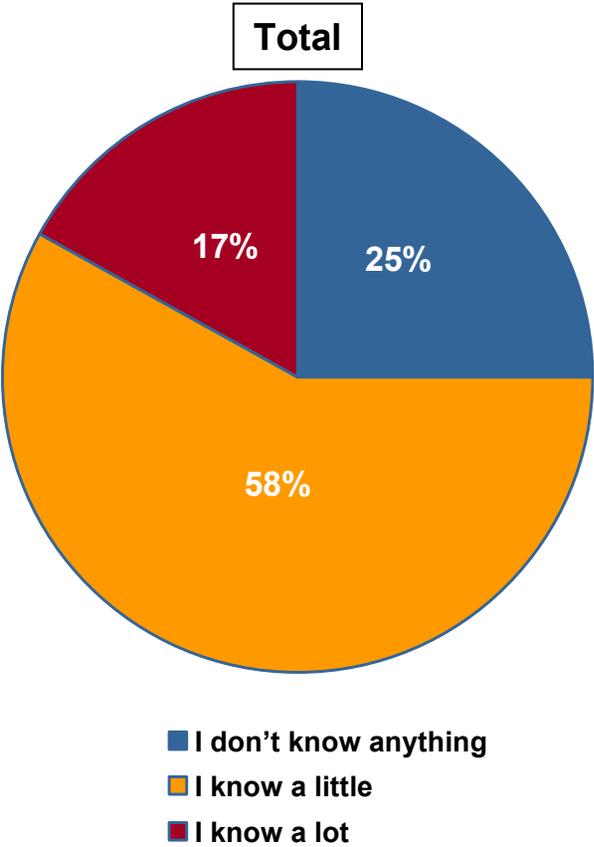
Nearly half of students who predict they may drop out of high school feel that their academic skills are not strong enough to be a successful high school student.

Overall, do you feel that your writing, math, and reading skills are strong enough for you to be successful in your classes in high school?



More 8th graders than 7th graders know at least a little about high school graduation requirements

How much do you know about the courses or classes that are required to graduate from high school?

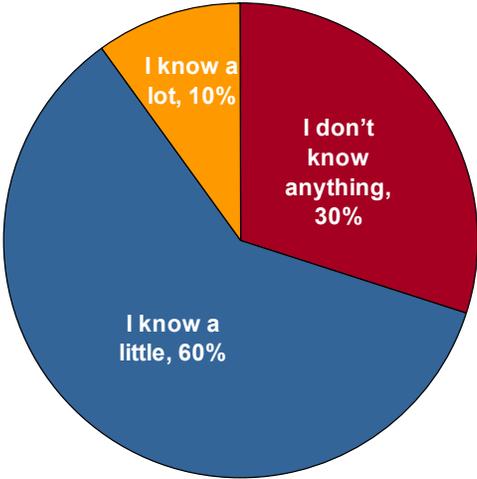


Q620 Base: All Respondents (n= 1814)
 7th grade (n=912), 8th grade (n=902)

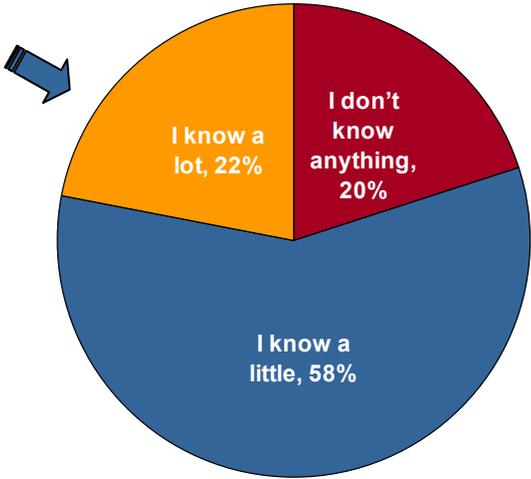
The more education parents have, the more knowledgeable their children are about high school requirements.

How much do you know about the courses or classes that are required to graduate from high school?

Parents' Education:
High school or less



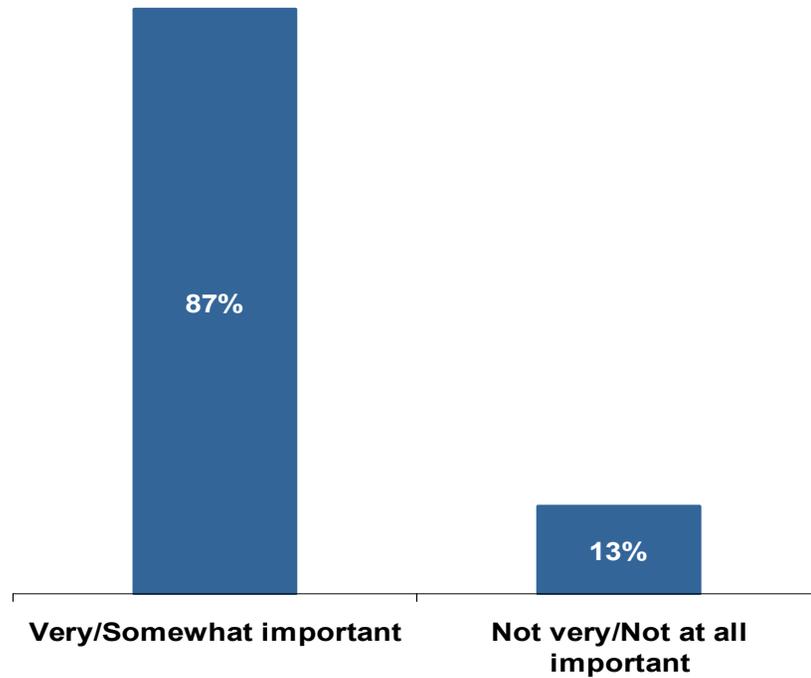
Parents' Education:
College graduate or more



Q620 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
College graduate or more (n=670)

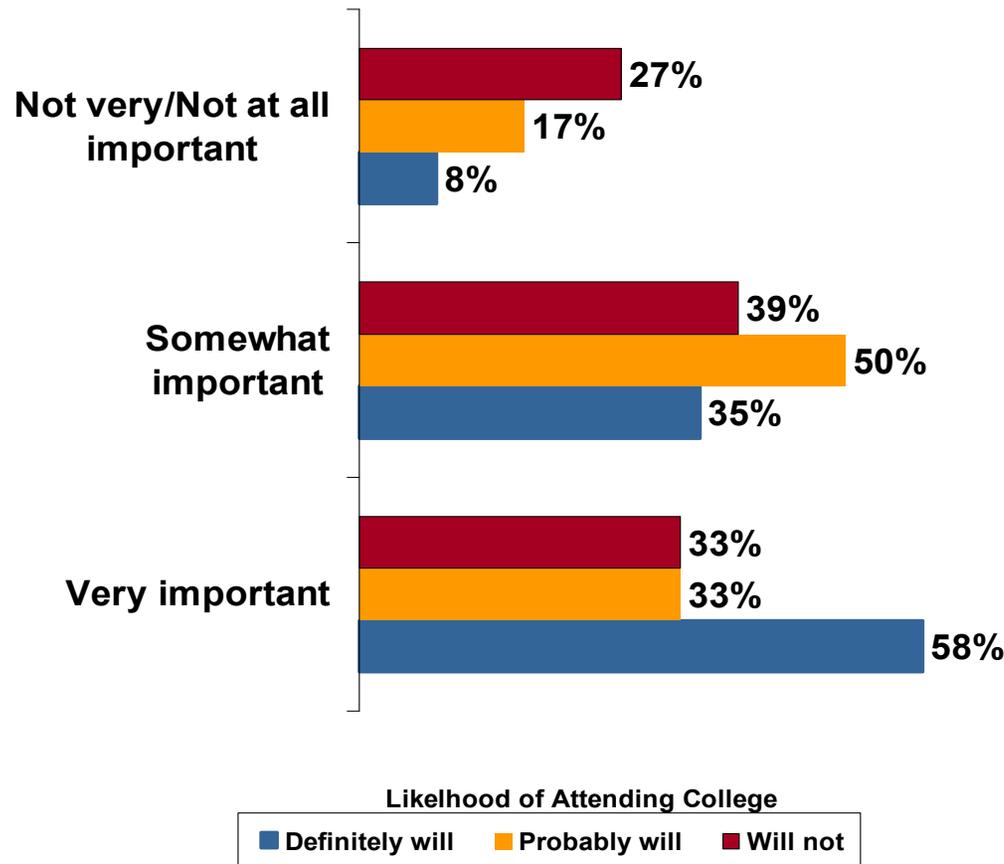
The majority of students agree it is important to take a math class every year of high school.

How important do you think it is for high school students to take a math class every year of high school?



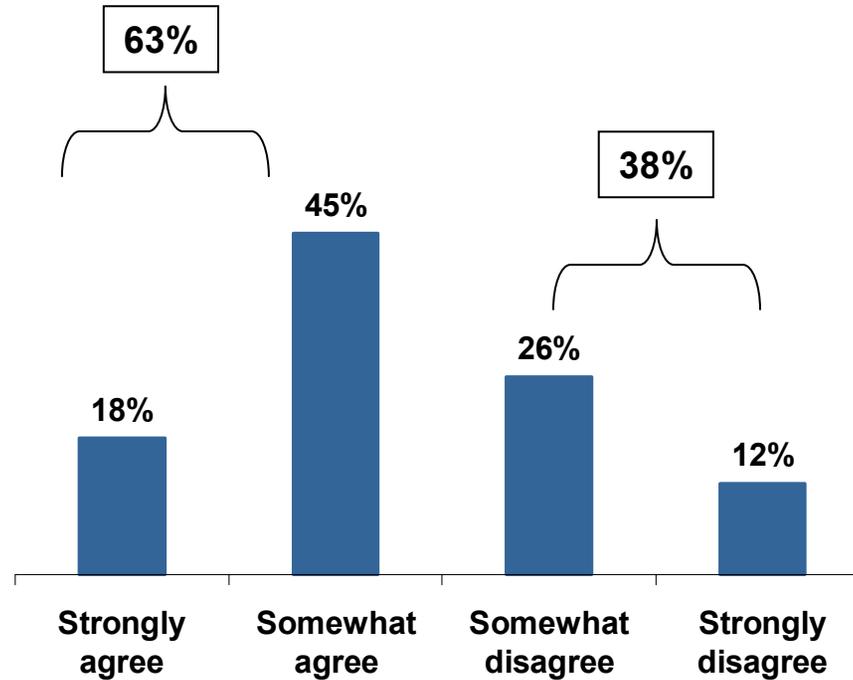
Students who report they definitely will attend college think it is very important for high school students to take a math class every year of high school.

How important do you think it is for high school students to take a math class every year of high school?



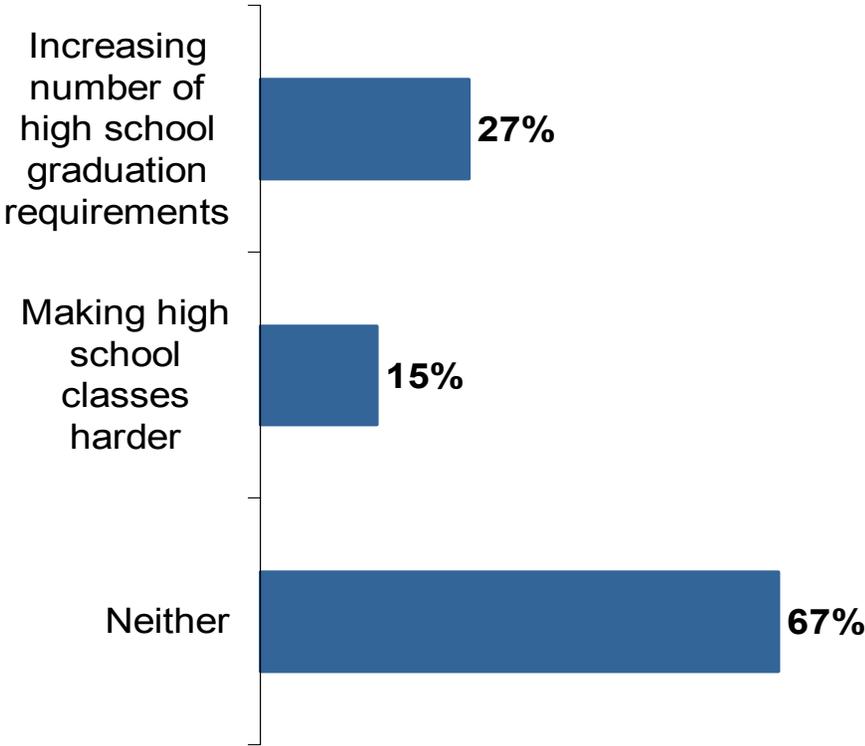
63% of middle level students believe that taking advanced math classes in high school is dependent upon completing Algebra by the eighth grade; 12% strongly disagree.

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Only students who take Algebra by the eighth grade will be able to take advanced math classes such as Calculus in high school.**



Most students do not feel that a more rigorous high school curriculum would leave them better prepared for life after high school.

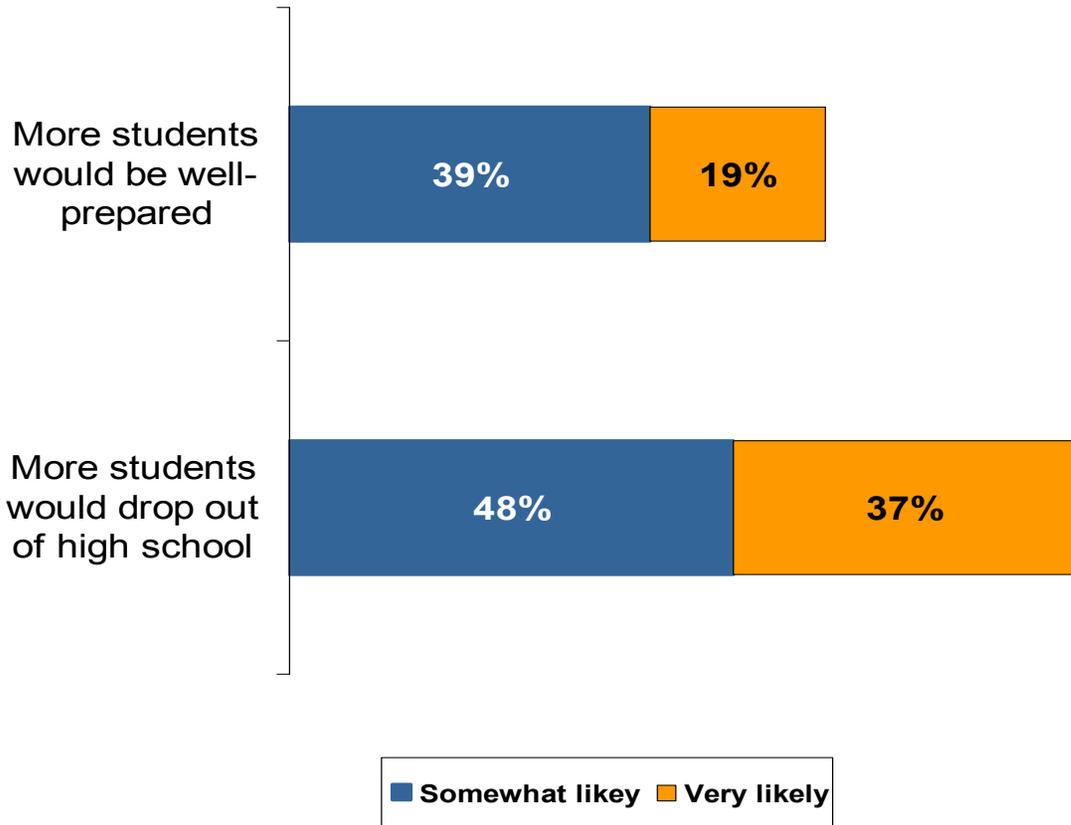
Which of the following would help make sure that students are better prepared when they leave high school?



Of those who favor changes to the high school curriculum, most prefer increasing the number of graduation requirements over making classes harder.

85 % of middle level students think it likely that increasing the number of graduation requirements and making classes harder would cause more students to drop out of high school.

If high schools increased the number of graduation requirements and made classes harder, how likely do you think it is that each of the following would happen?

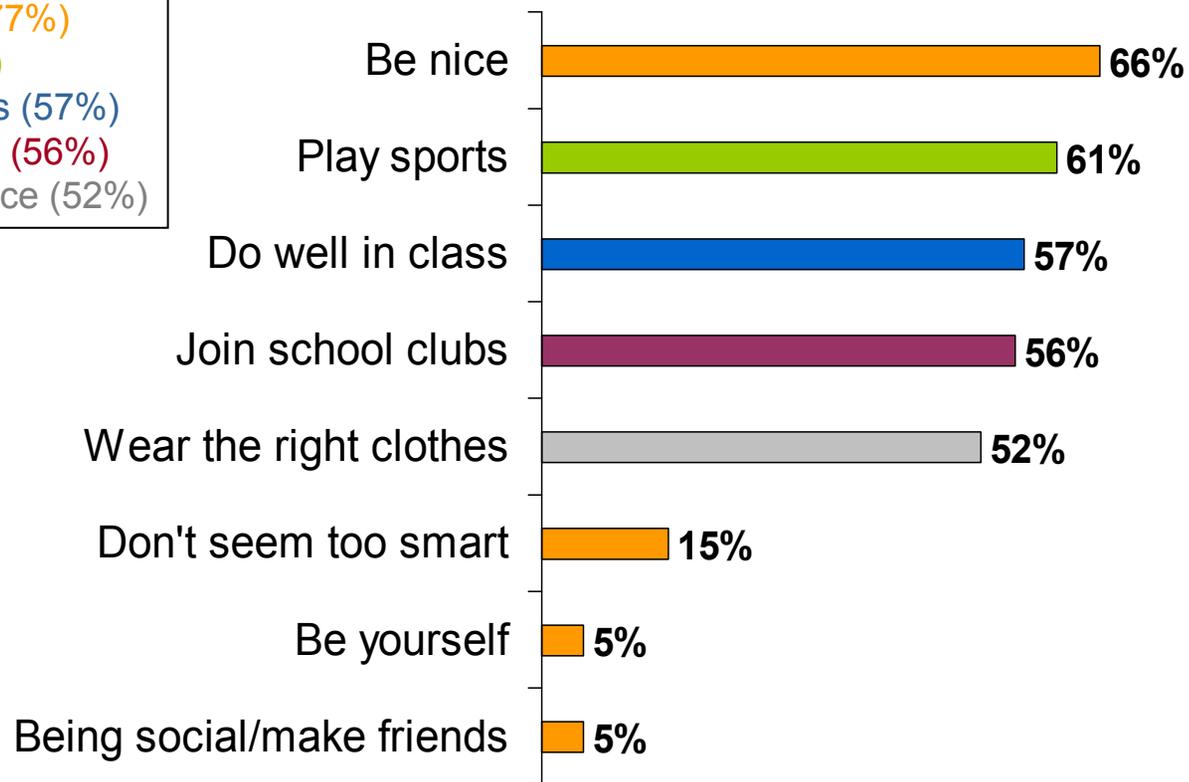


In general, middle level students think a combination of academic success, athleticism, appropriate behavior and the right clothes are the best ways to “fit in” in high school.

In high school, what do you think is the best way for students to fit in?

NET categories:
Behavior/Social (77%)
Play Sports (61%)
Academic success (57%)
Join School Clubs (56%)
Clothes/Appearance (52%)

TOP RESPONSES:



In high school, what do you think is the best way for students to fit in?

Be nice to everyone, wear the current fad of clothing achieve to do their best in all classes.

Dress right, fal in with the right crowd, do wahtever the 'right crowd' asks you to do

dress right, go to all parties, be friendly to everyone, do sports, and don't be judgemental

not be too extreme--be 'middle of the road'

wear the right clothes. Do the work. Make friends. Get good grades. Join clubs and socialize. Be an atheletic supporter or an athelete. Don't be a bully!!!

there are different 'clicks' in high school theater, jocks ,nerds,geeks,rich,smart , whores, art, etc.

Don't stick out and wear the right clothes and pick out the right friends.

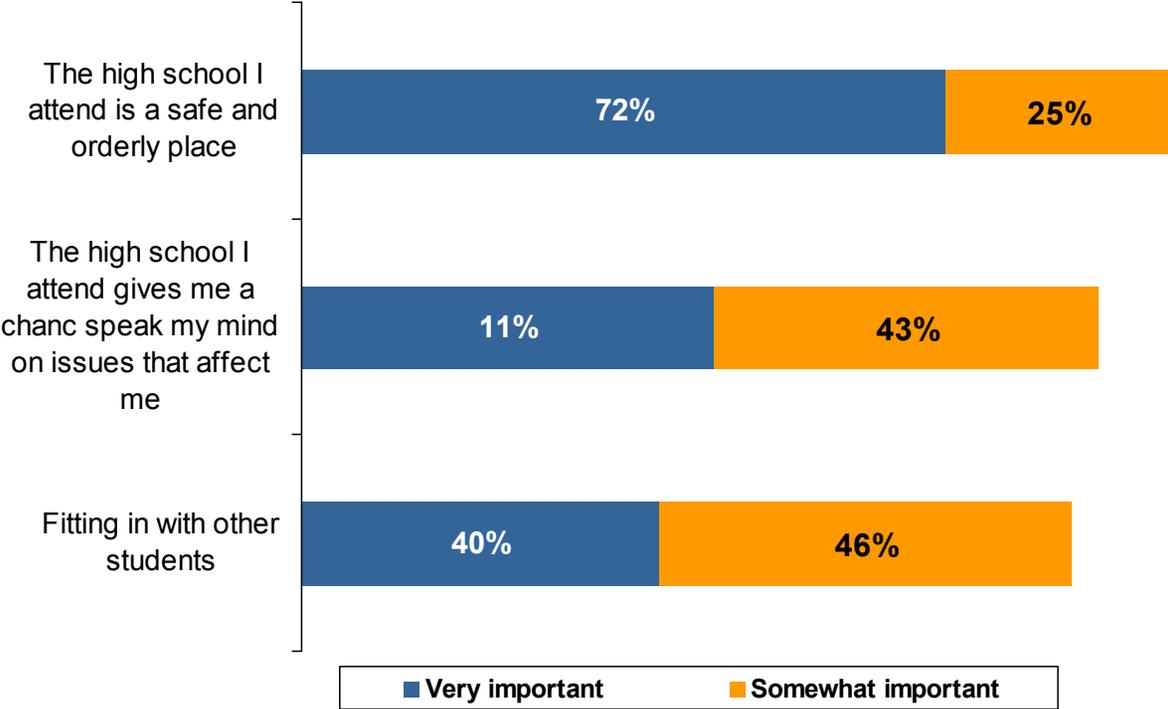
Wear the right cloths and be in the right group of people that have money. This is the message we are being taught.

Just be true to yourself. I feel you always don't need to go with the group. You need to be your own person and do what is right even if it is hard.

Be friends with the right people, it is all about the connections that you make.

Overall, students are most concerned with the safety and order of their high school than fitting in with other students.

Thinking about high school, how important are each of the following to you?

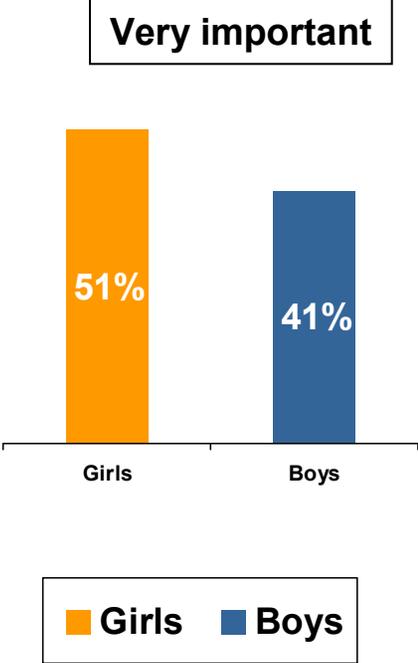
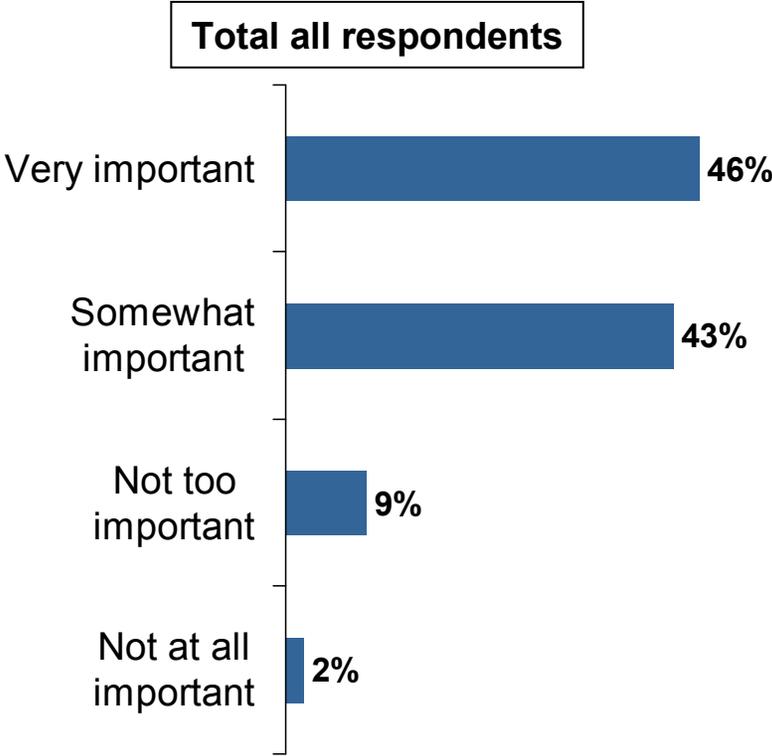


Harris Interactive

Girls, more than boys, think it is important to be given the chance by their high school to speak their minds on issues that affect them.

Thinking about high school, how important are each of the following to you?

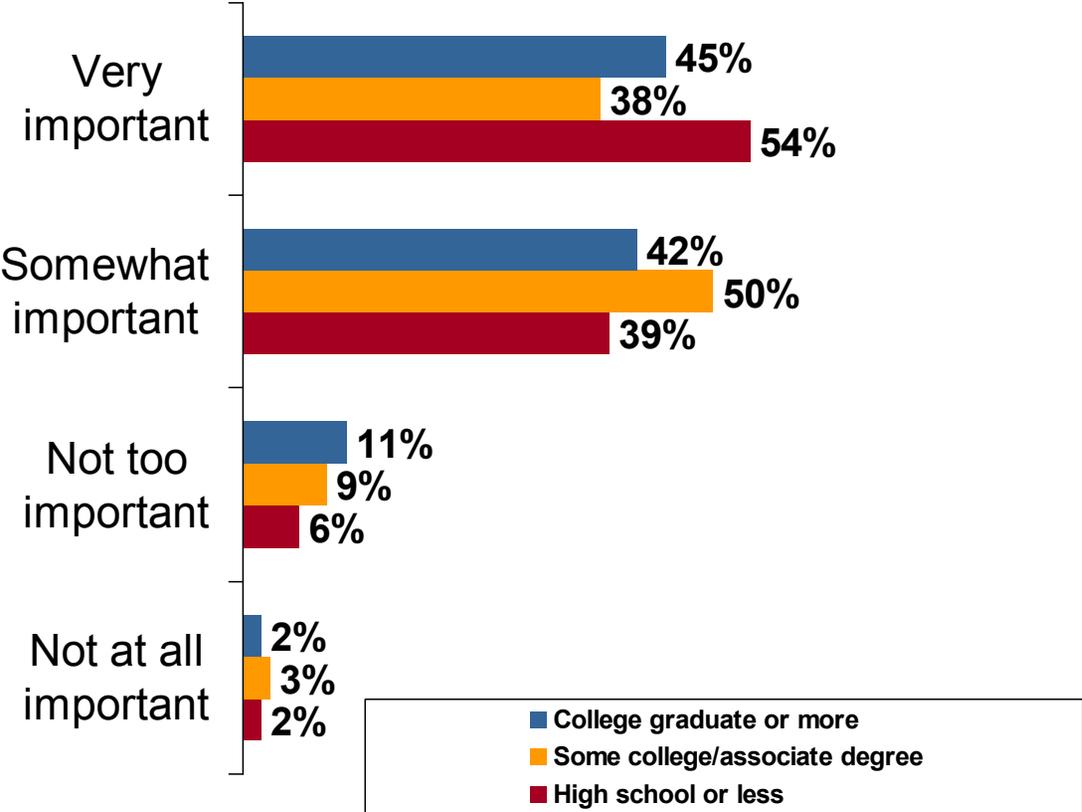
The high school I attend gives me a chance to speak my mind on issues that affect me



Students whose parents have less than a college degree are more likely to think the chance to speak their minds is an important part of high school.

Thinking about high school, how important are each of the following to you?

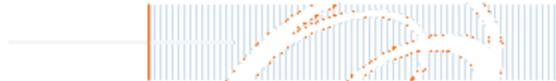
The high school I attend gives me a chance to speak my mind on issues that affect me



Q646 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
 High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
 College graduate or more (n=670)



Harris Interactive



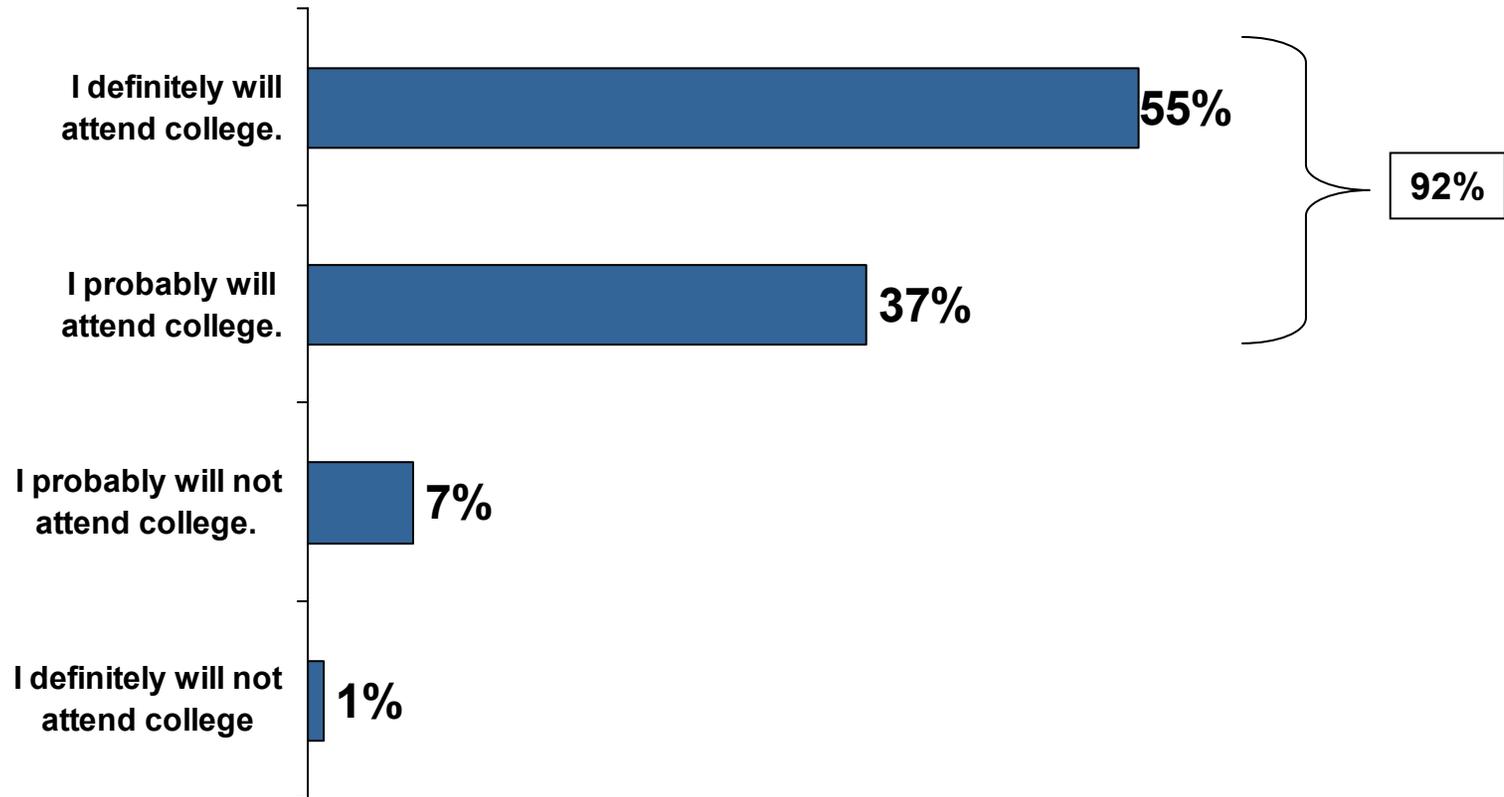
Post-High School Plans

Summary: Post High School Plans

- The majority of 7th and 8th graders think they will attend college. Most of these students are:
 - Children of parents with a college degree or more
 - From urban and suburban schools
 - Students who think their school is doing a good job giving them a chance to learn
- Funding is cited as the reason most likely to prevent kids from attending college.
- By and large, students depend on school personnel, as well as family and friends, to get information about high school classes they need to take to get in to college.

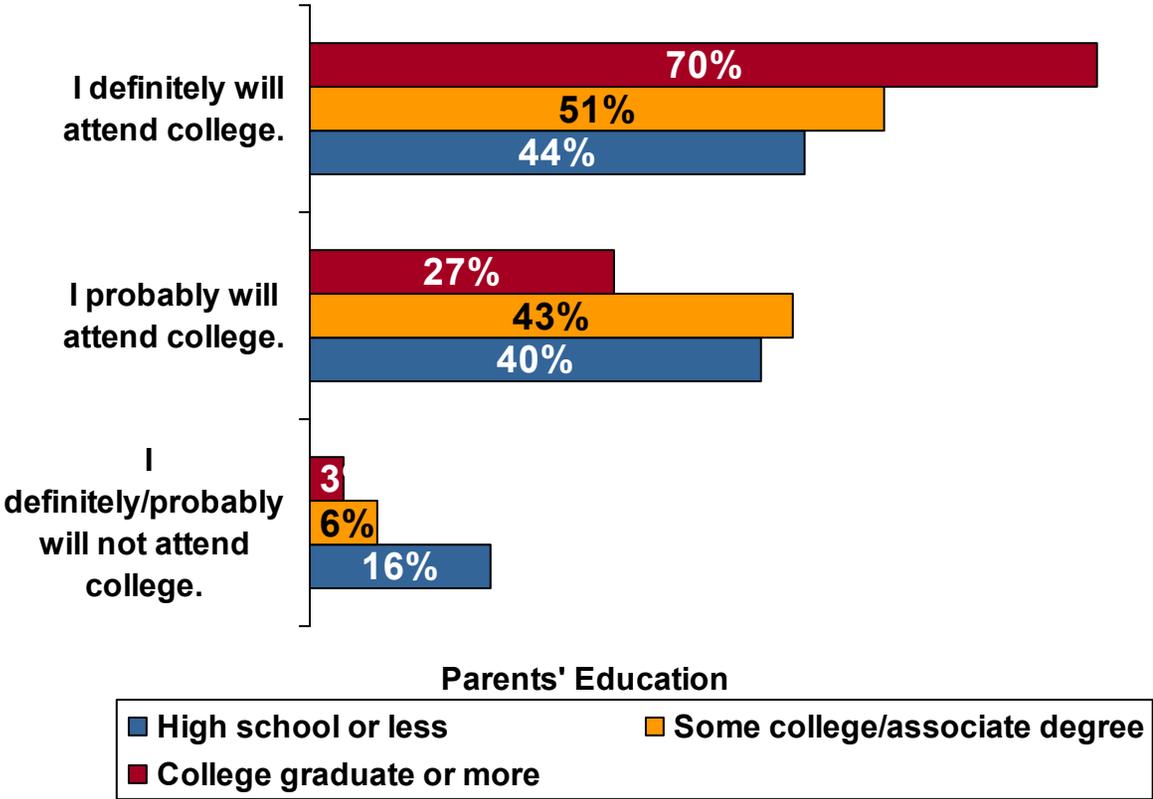
92% of all respondents report they probably/definitely will attend college.

How likely is that you will attend college?



The children of parents with higher education degrees are more confident that they will attend college.

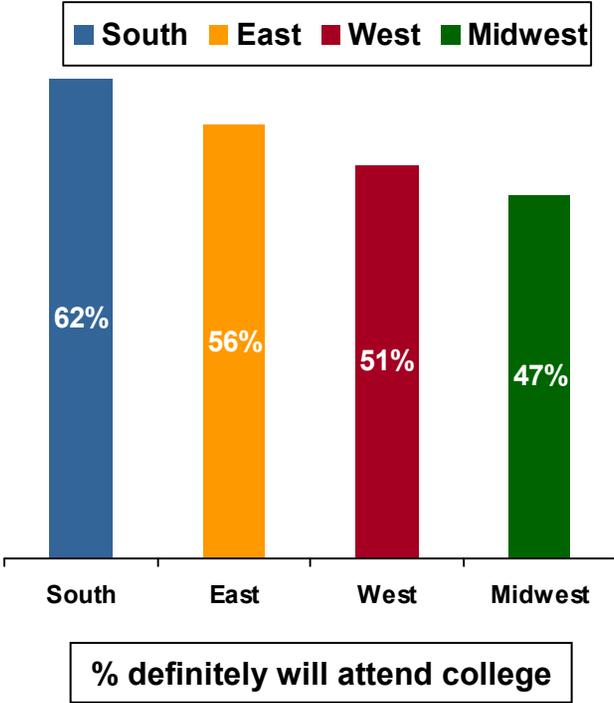
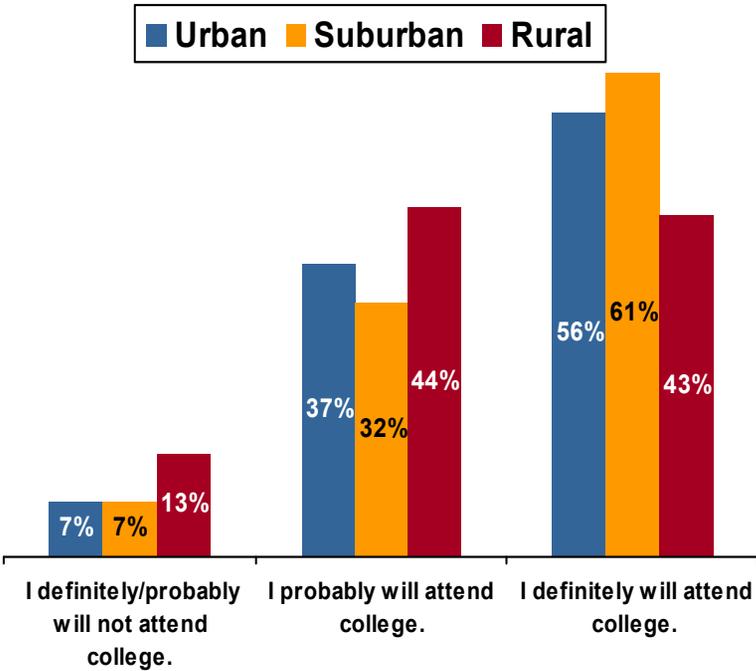
How likely is that you will attend college?



Q705 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
 High school or less (n=355), Some college/Associate degree (n=752),
 College graduate or more (n=670)

Students living in rural areas are less confident they will attend college than students in both urban and suburban areas.

How likely is that you will attend college?

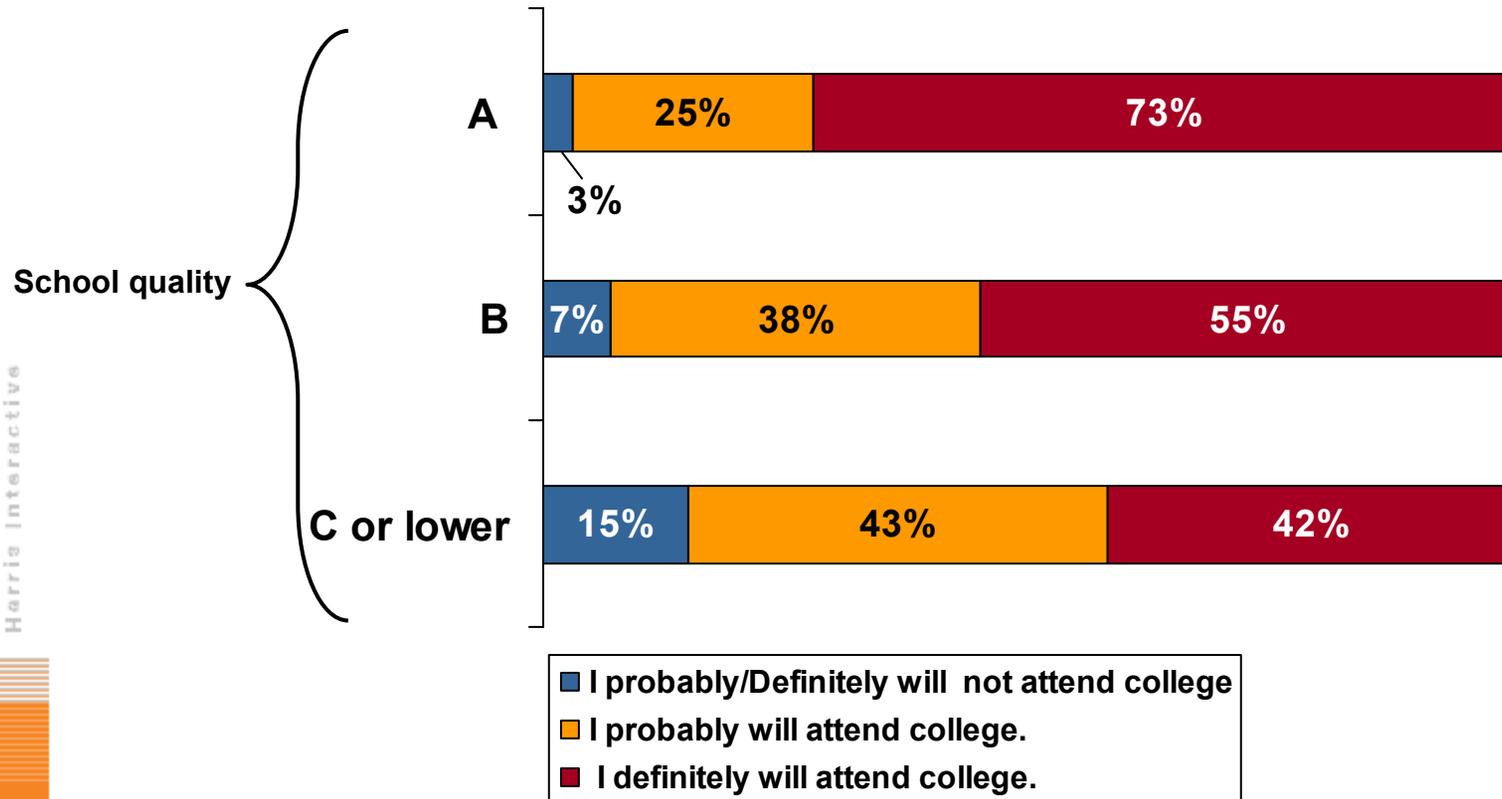


Harris Interactive

Q705 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)
 Rural (n=639), Suburban (n=648), Urban (n=527)
 East (n=374), Midwest (n=748), South (n=335), West (n=357)

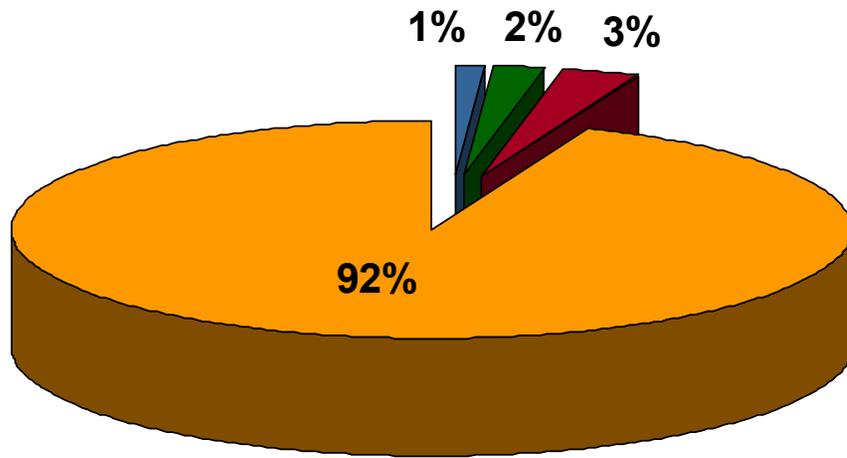
The students who are more satisfied with their school quality are also more likely to feel confident about attending college.

How likely is that you will attend college?



Of those who possibly/definitely will not attend college, 92% cite funding as the main deterrent.

What is the main reason why you might not attend college?



- I have special education needs
- Enroll in Navy/Military
- Learning disability
- It costs too much

Other reasons given for not attending college:

“my learning disability”

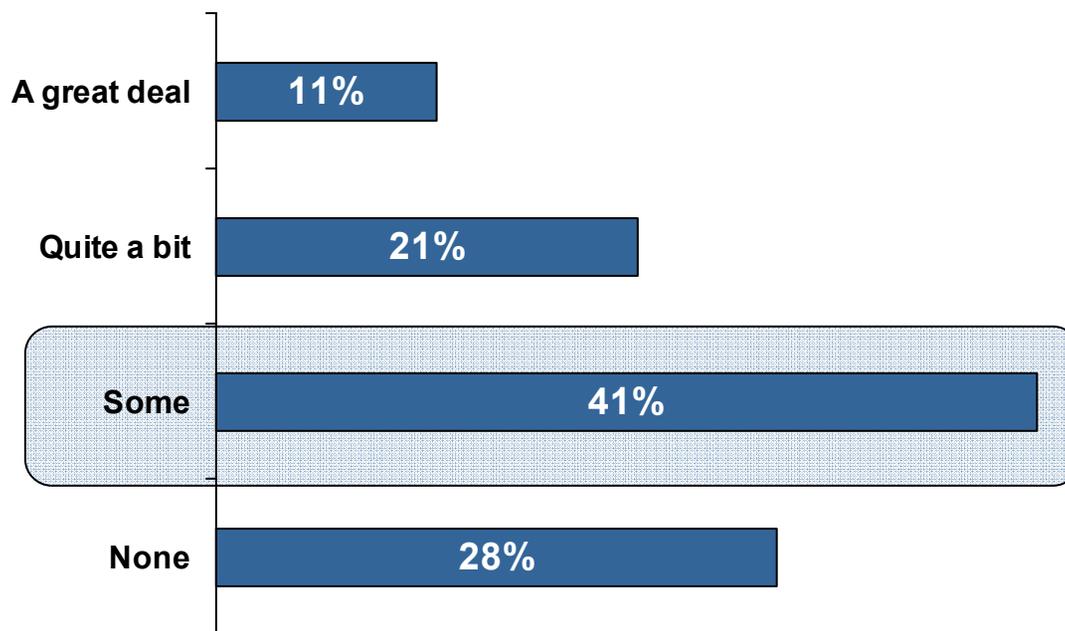
I have dslexia and my teachers dont help me enough

My goals for the future will not benefit from college...I am interested in creative arts and learning them is all about desire and motivation, not school.

I will not be able to get myself back and forth.

The majority of 7th and 8th graders who say they will attend college do not have a lot of information about how to choose the high school classes that will help get them there.

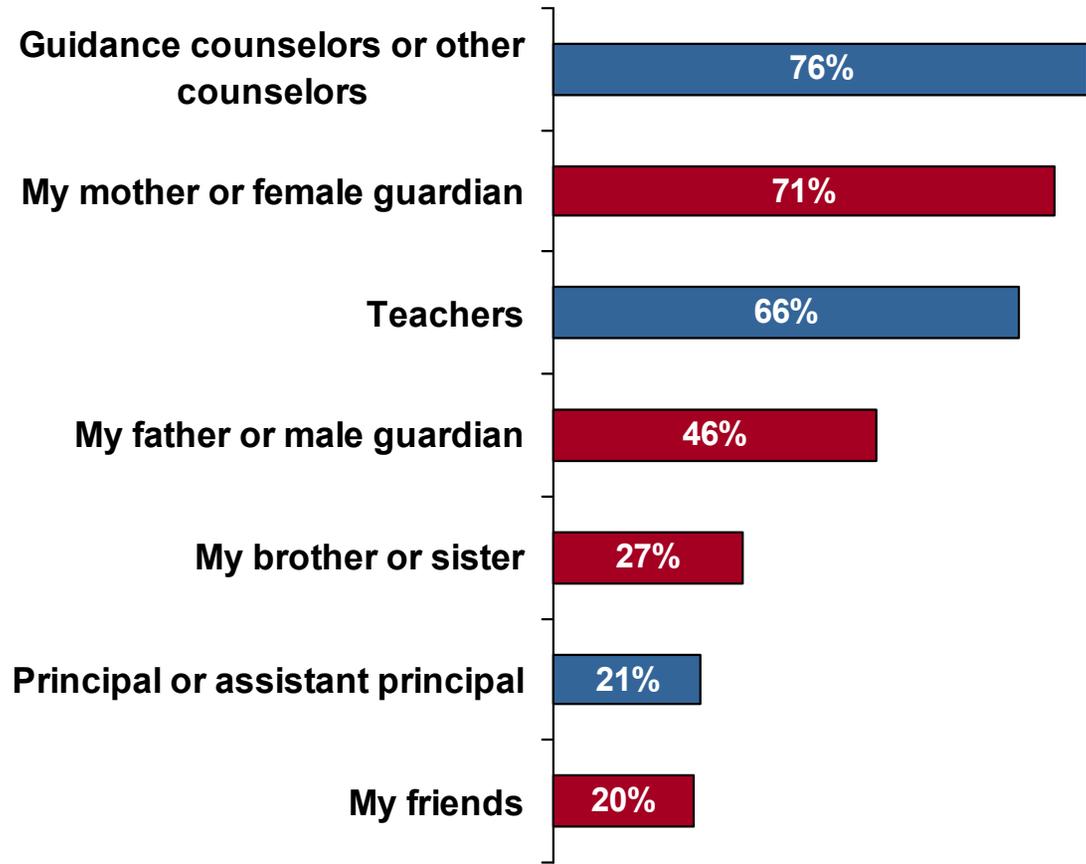
How much information do you have about how to choose the high school classes that will prepare you to attend college?

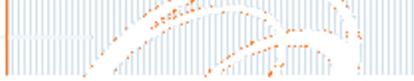


To get information about high school classes required to attend college, most students would turn to school personnel and/or family/friends.

Who would you go to for information about the high school classes you will need to take in order to attend college?

NET Categories:
School personnel (88%)
Family/Friend (83%)





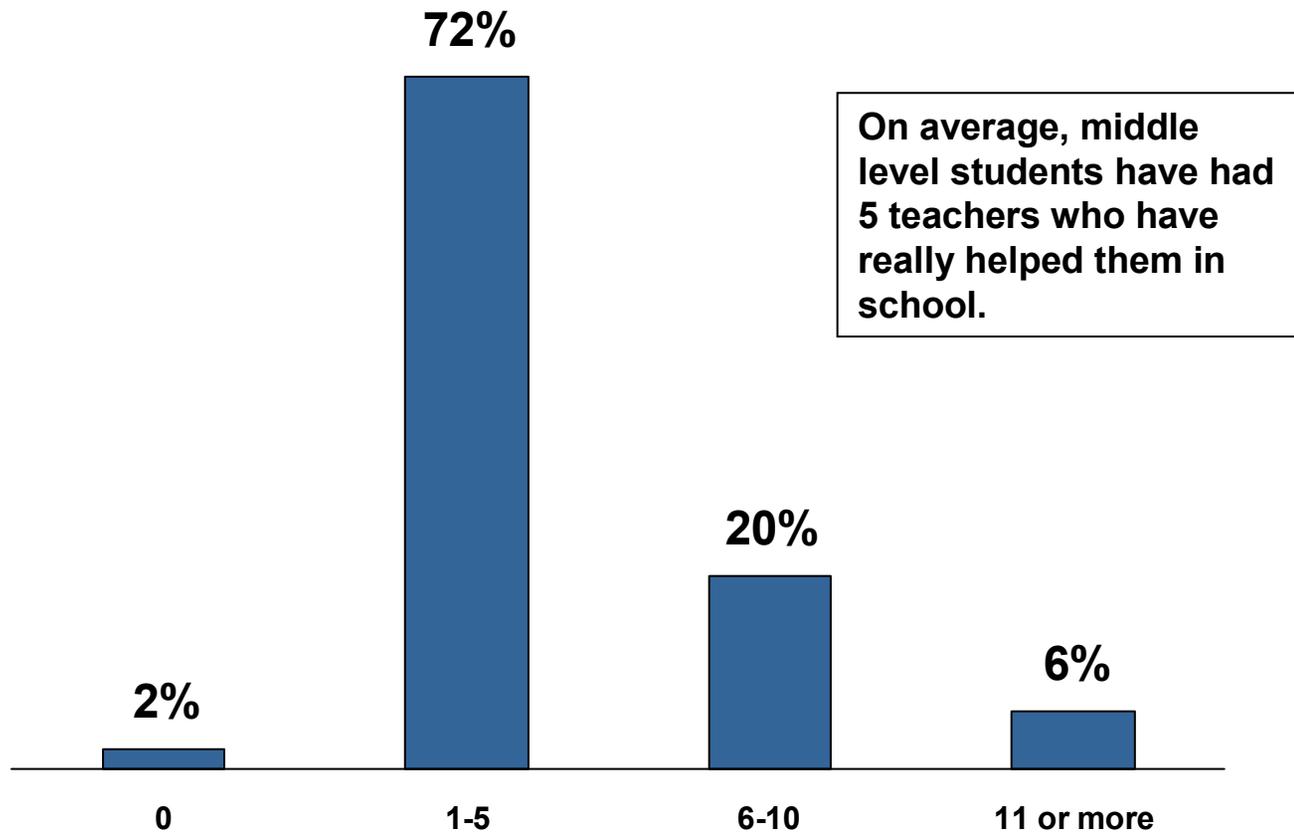
Views on Teachers and Teaching

Summary: Views on Teachers and Teaching

- Overall, students are satisfied with their teachers, but somewhat reluctant to call them “excellent.”
 - Most students agree that their teachers give them a good/very good chance to learn
- The majority of students value qualities in a teacher like being friendly, caring and attentive and taking time out to explain material.
- Despite this satisfaction, only 4% of students report being very interested in becoming a teacher themselves one day.
 - Low pay is the main reason students say they would not want to be a teacher.

Almost three quarters of middle level students have had between 1 and 5 teachers who have really helped them in school.

How many teachers have you had who have really helped you in school?

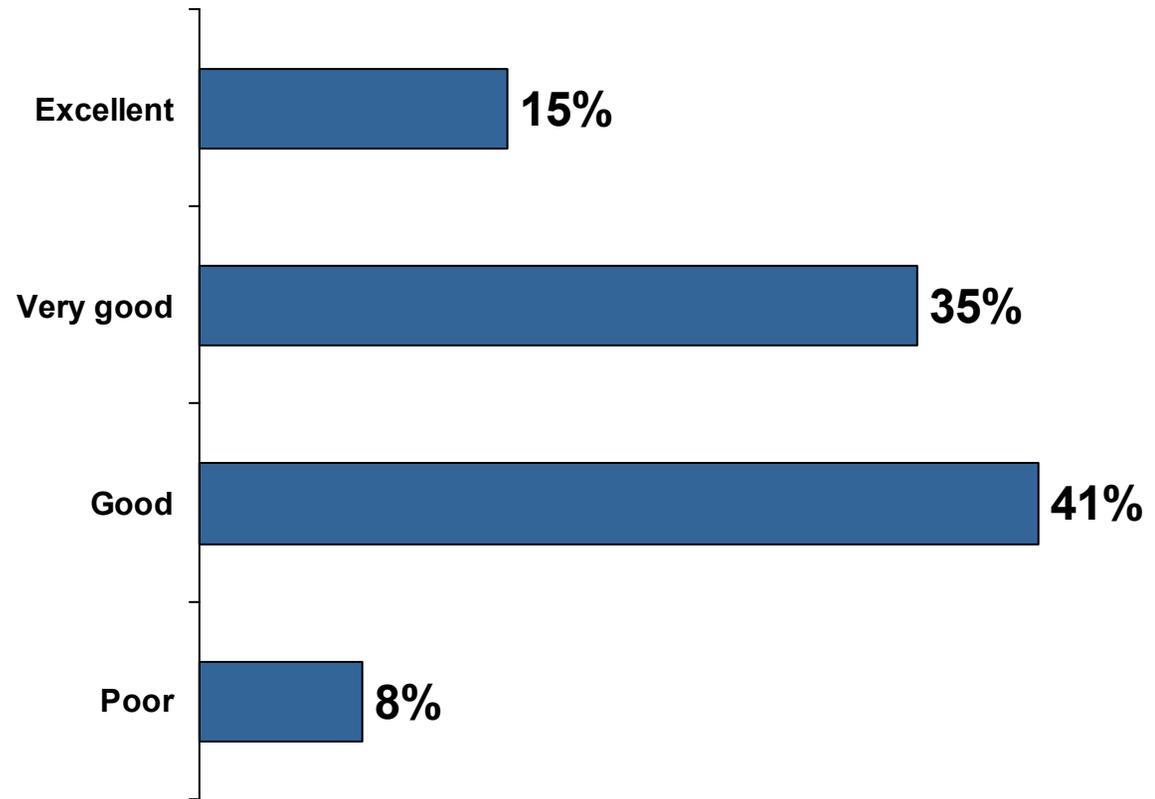


Half of students think their teachers give them an excellent or very good chance to learn the subject matter.

Thinking about the teachers you have had, how would you rate them on giving you a chance to learn the subject matter?

Students who think they will definitely attend college (55%) are more likely than those who say they will not (8%) to rate their teachers as excellent.*

28% of students who earn A's think their teachers are excellent in this regard versus only 4% of students earning C's – F's.**



Q805 Base: All Respondents (n=1814)

*Definitely will attend college (n=993), Will not attend college (n=150)

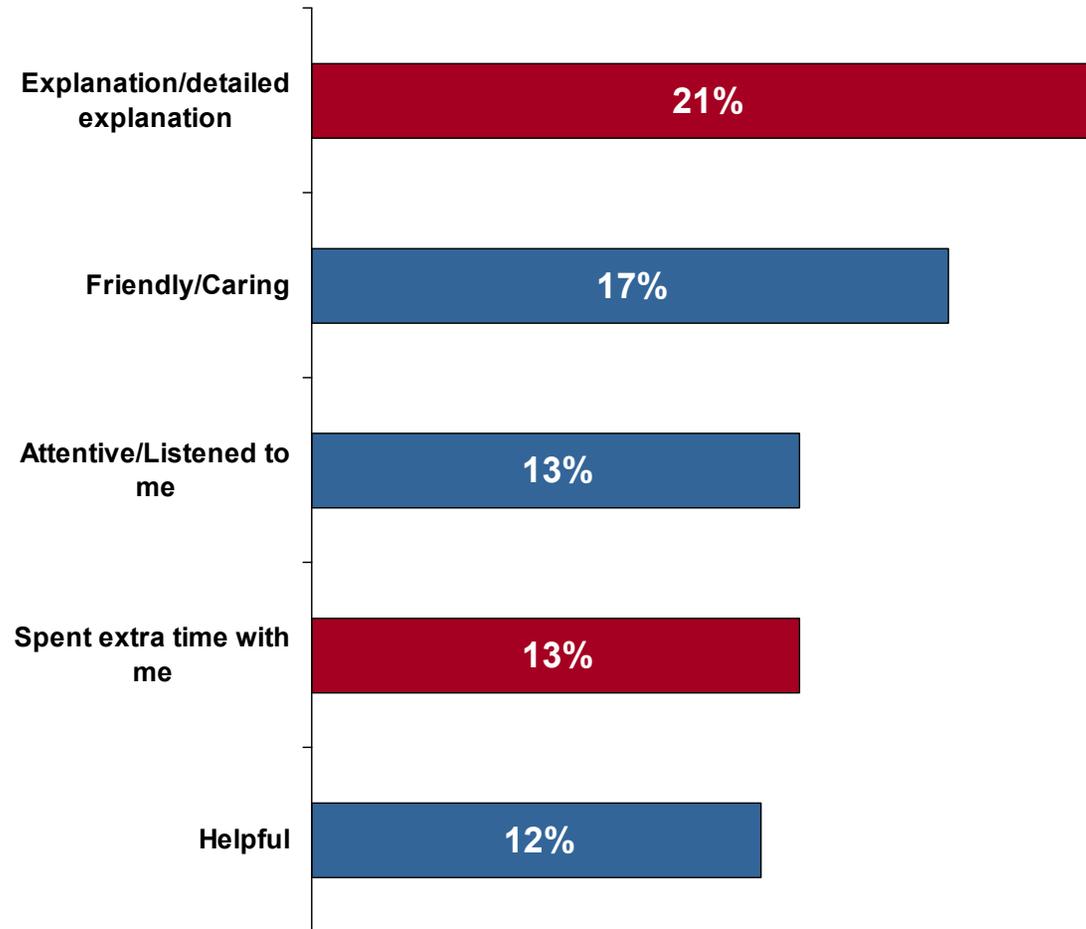
**Students earning A's (n=378), C's-F's (n=259)

Qualities like being friendly, taking time to listen, and providing detailed explanations are top reasons students find teachers special.

How did these teachers help you learn? What made them special?

NET Categories:

- Attitude (45%)
- Assistance (44%)
- Teaching skills (21%)
 - made classes fun(8%)
 - made classes interesting (4%)
- Personality development (16%)
 - Encouraged me to study (8%)
 - Promoted individualism (3%)



How did these teachers help you learn? What made them special?

they listen they laugh with us they make us work hard

Let me know that I didn't have to be perfect at every thing.

They didn't get mad or yell when I asked questions.

They sat with me individually when I struggle with work. They keep my mom involved by calling her. They asked me questions and cared.

These teachers helped me learn by taking time to go over our questions that we have had and do many reviews to prepare us for the standardized test at the end of every school year. They were special because they were all fun and we did fun activities.

knew lots about the subject

when I told them that I was having trouble, they found a way to teach me so I could learn

one told personal experience stories one showed videos

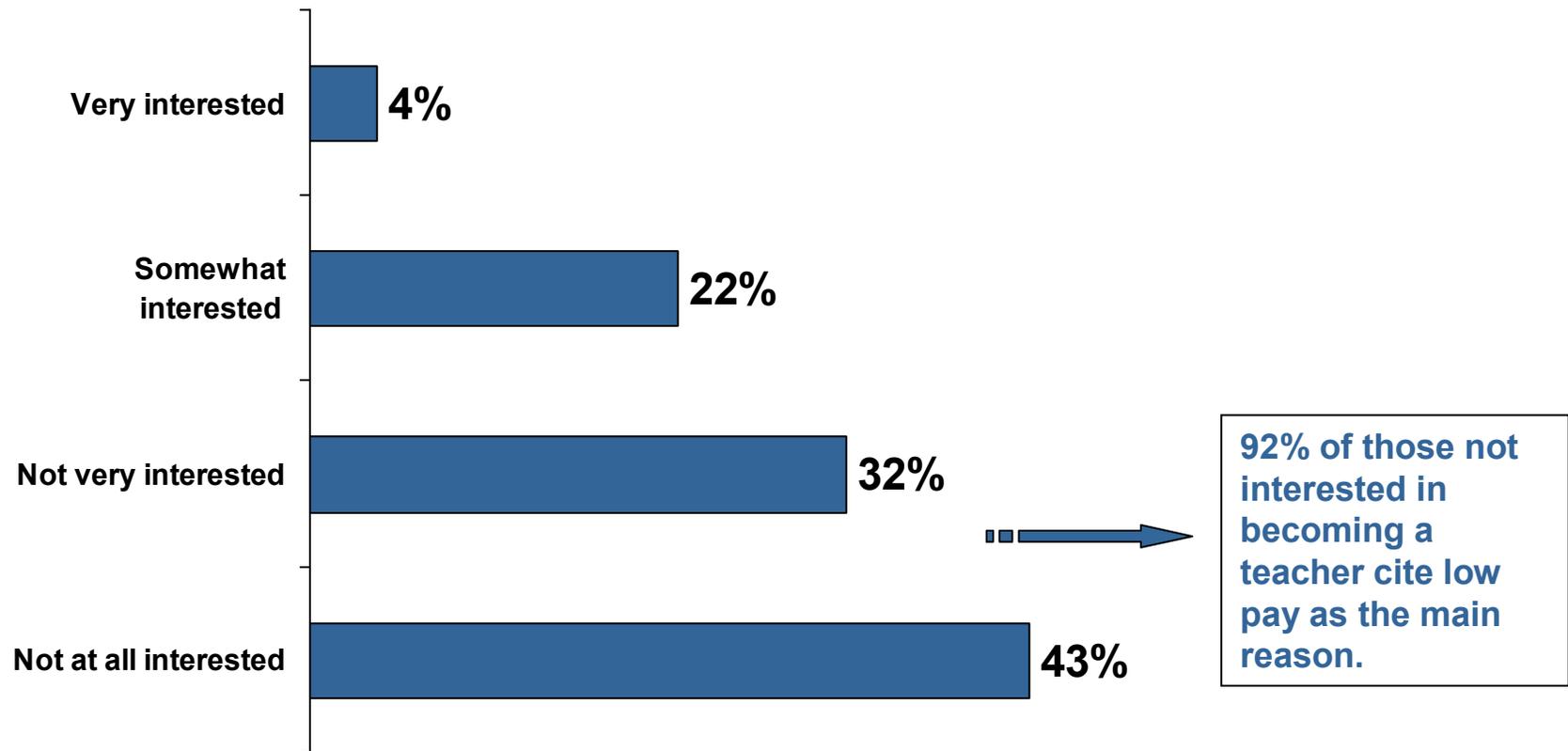
Made me feel comfortable enough to ask questions.

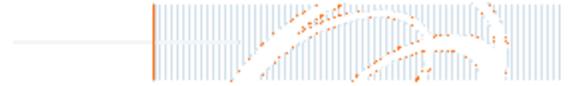
They related to kids well, not superior or demanding. They tried to see things from my perspective, and help me understand, not just copy what is expected to learned. They had an interest in ME, not the grade.

I had like a special bond with all of the teachers I picked.

Three quarters of middle level students are not very/not at all interested in becoming a teacher.

How interested are you in becoming a teacher?





Views on Testing and Other Initiatives

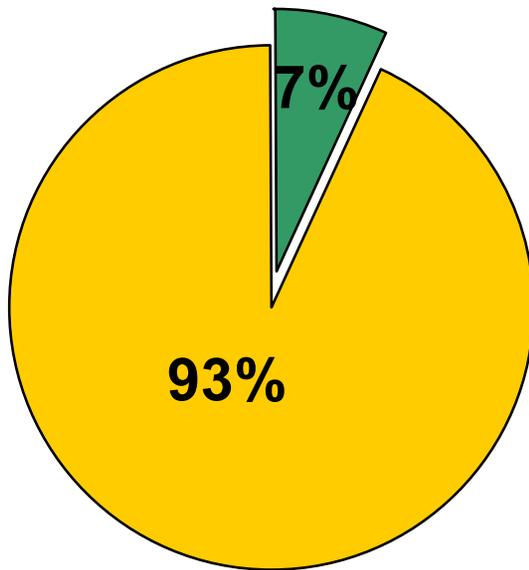


Summary: Views on Testing and Other Initiatives

- Almost all middle school students have taken a standardized test this year.
 - Predominantly, these students are public school students in urban schools.
- Students tend to think that standardized tests are more important to their teachers than to their parents or themselves, but think that the grades and scores their teachers give them for regular academic work is a better reflection of their abilities.
- Of the academic disciplines, most students think Math is the most important one to test to assess school quality.
- Only 10% report knowing a lot about No Child Left Behind.

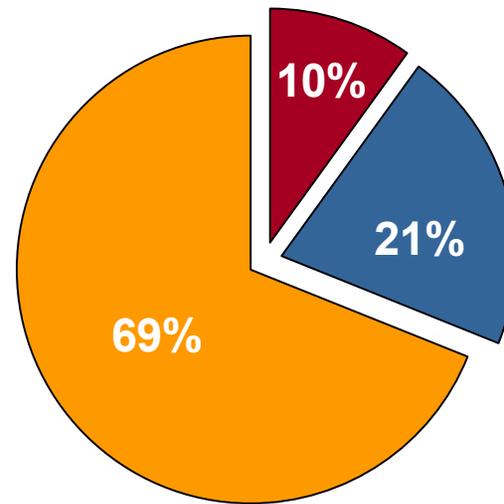
93% of middle level students have taken standardized tests; 69% are sure they took one this year.

Ever took standardized test



No Yes

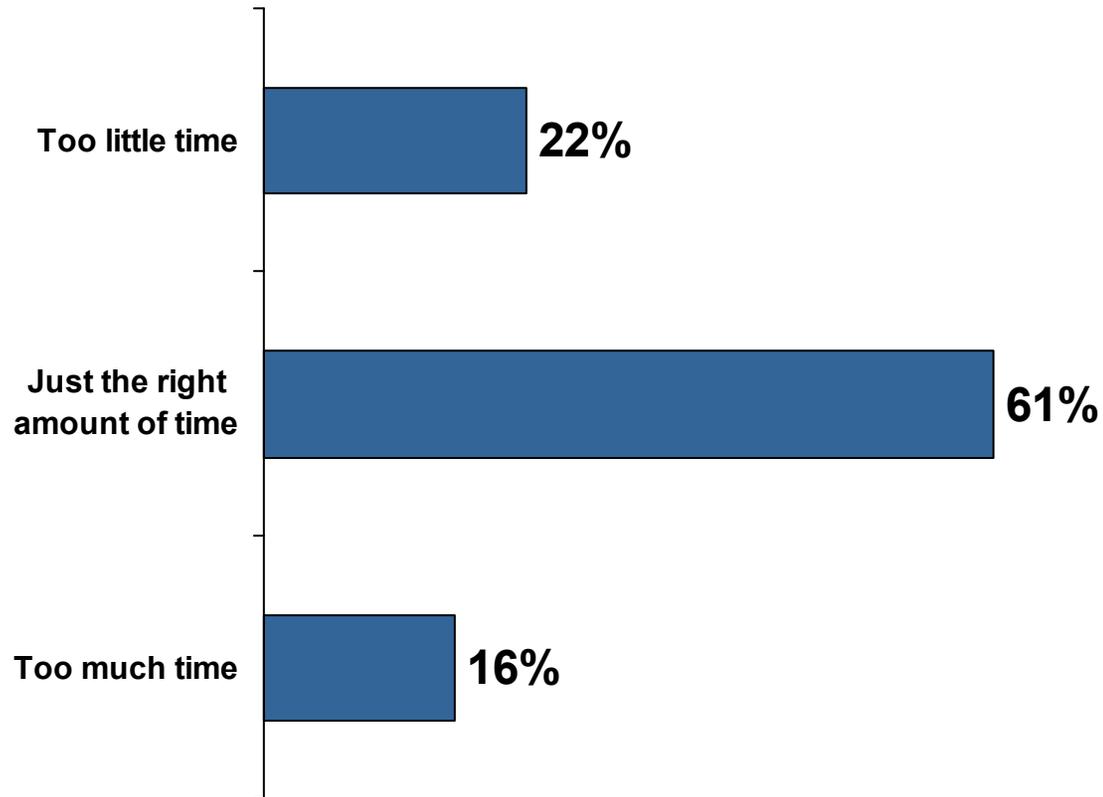
Took standardized test this school year



Not sure No Yes

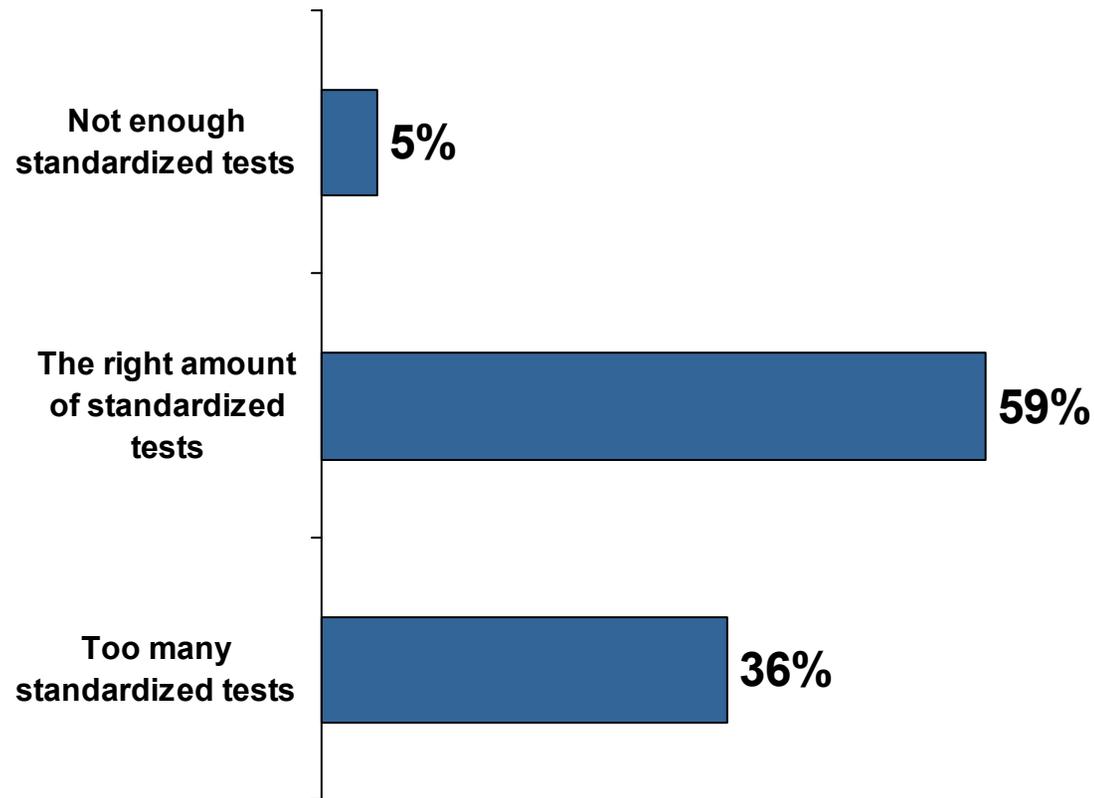
Most students feel the right amount of class time was spent preparing for standardized tests.

Thinking about the last standardized test you took, do you think you spent too much, too little, or the right amount of class time preparing and reviewing for the test?



While a majority of students think their school gives them the right amount of standardized tests, many also feel there are too many.

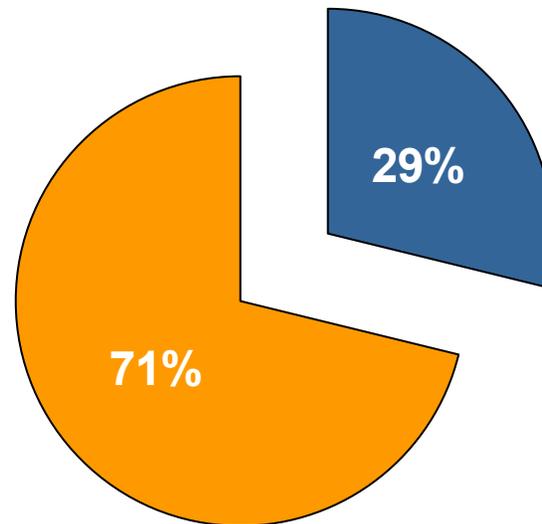
Thinking about standardized tests, do you think your school gives you... ?



Most students think the grades and scores from their teachers, rather than standardized tests, are the most accurate description of their academic abilities .

Which statement do you agree with the most?

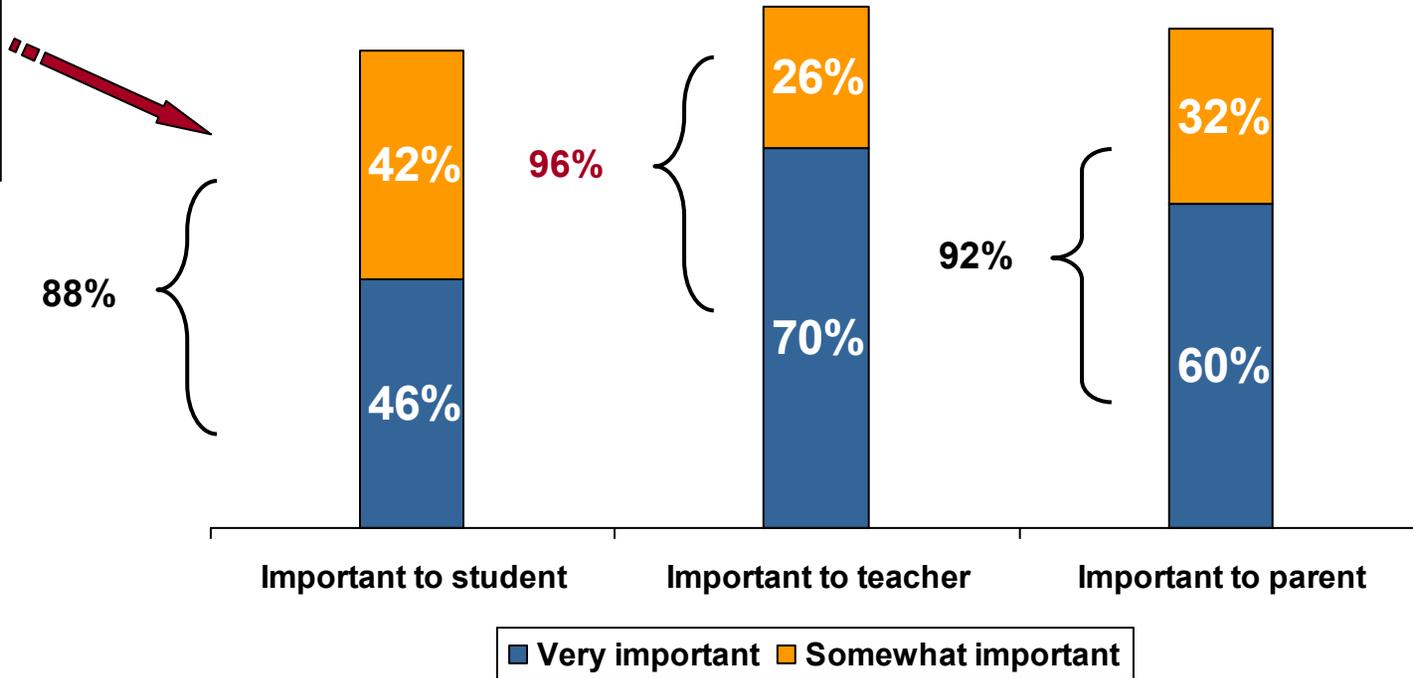
- The grades or scores from standardized tests are the most accurate description of my abilities at school
- The grades or scores that my teachers give my work are the most accurate description of my abilities at school



Generally, standardized testing is important to all, but when asked to whom standardized testing is very important, more students vote for teachers over themselves or their parents.

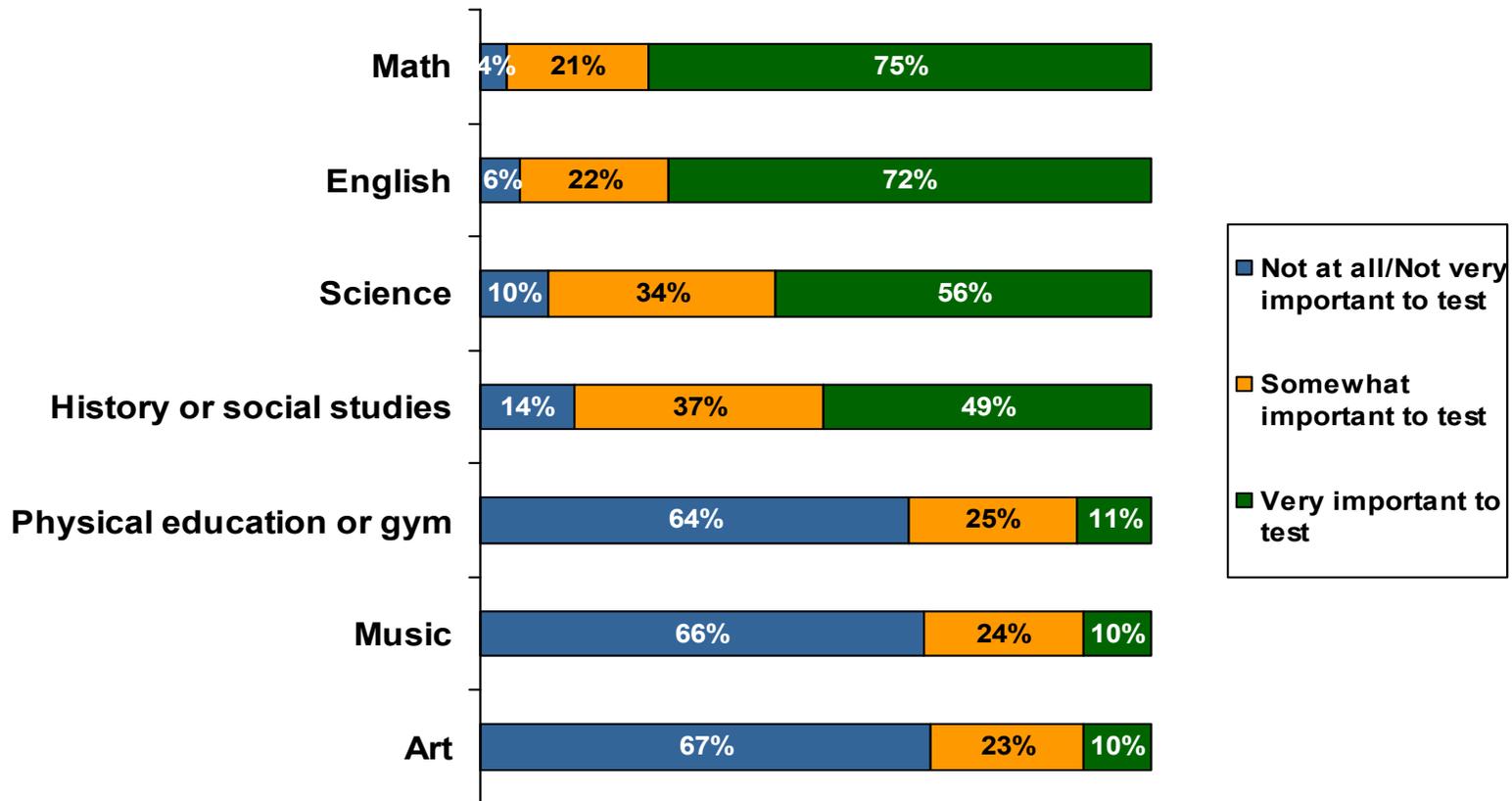
How important is it to... you / your teachers / your parents...to do well on standardized tests?

More students find testing somewhat important



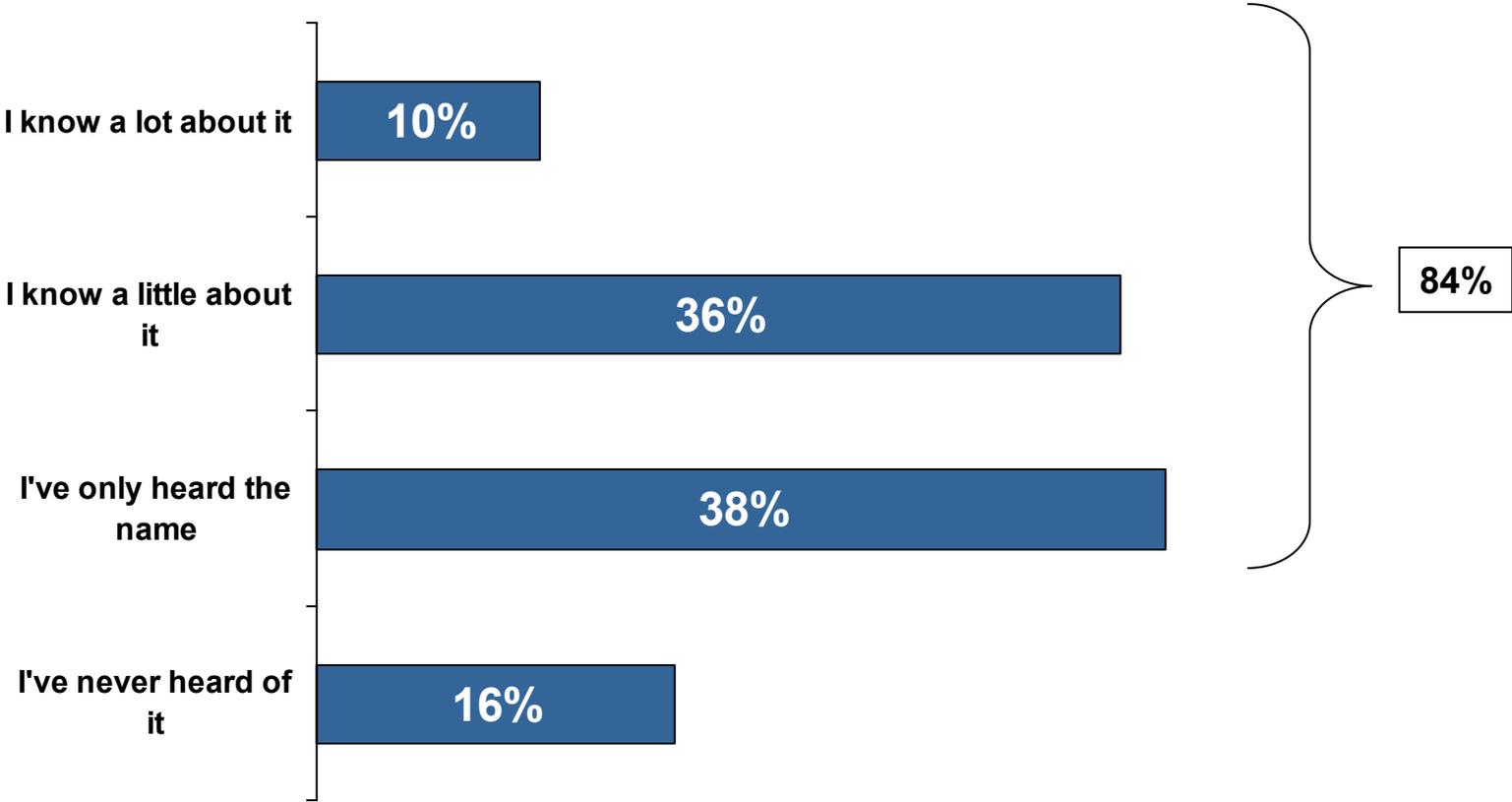
Students rate Math and English as two most important subjects to be tested to assess quality of school.

How important is it that each of the following subjects is tested so that people can know if a school is doing a good or bad job?



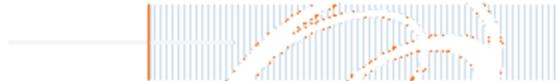
Most students have at least heard of NCLB

How familiar are you with the No Child Left Behind Act, also known as NCLB, a federal education bill?



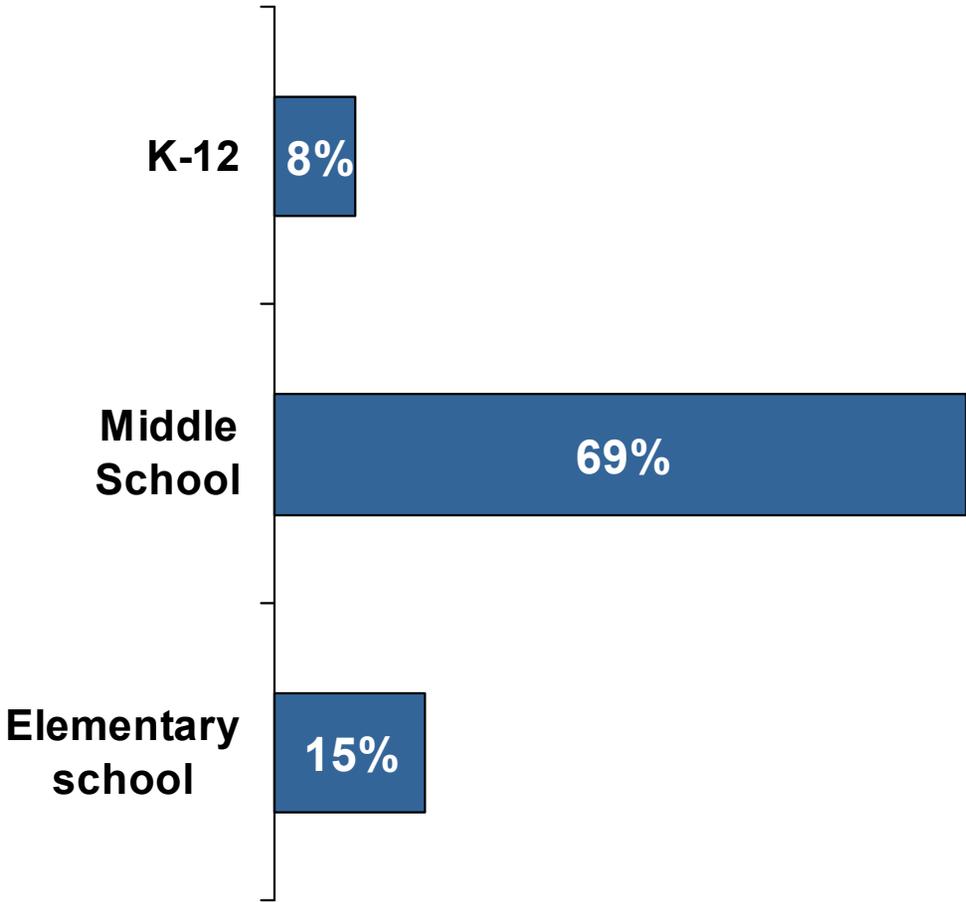


Harris Interactive



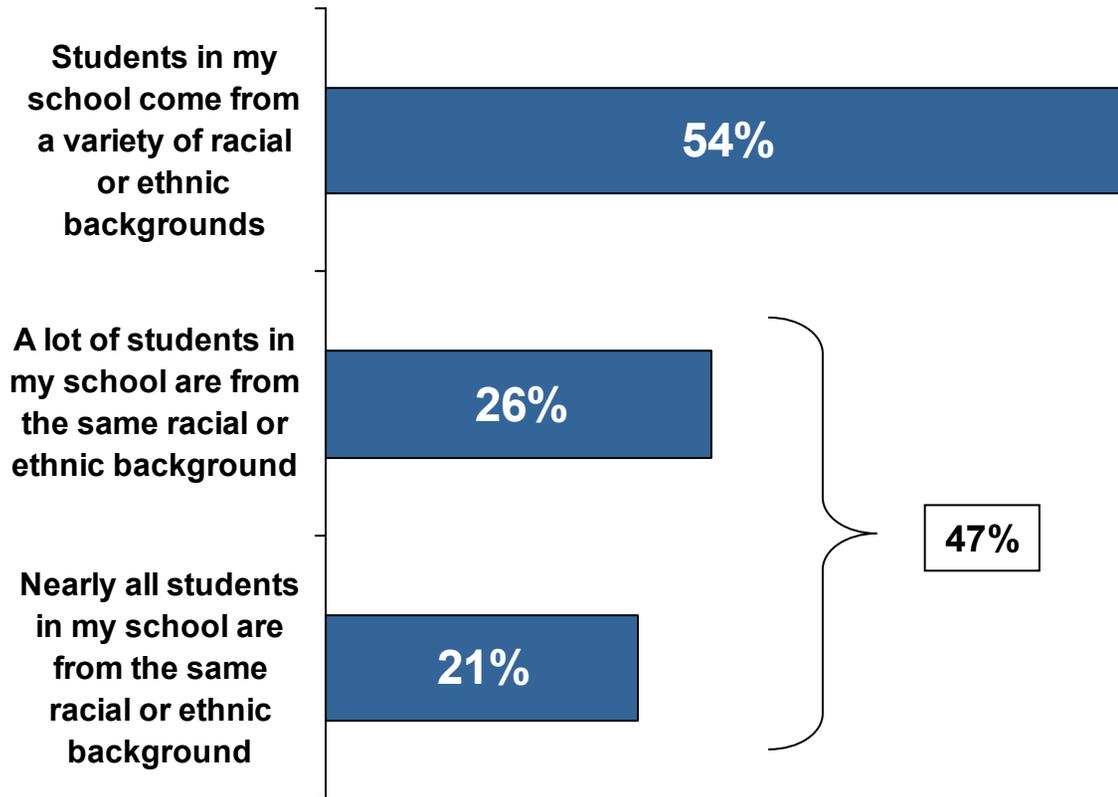
School Demographics

The majority of middle level students attend schools that serve grade six through grade eight.



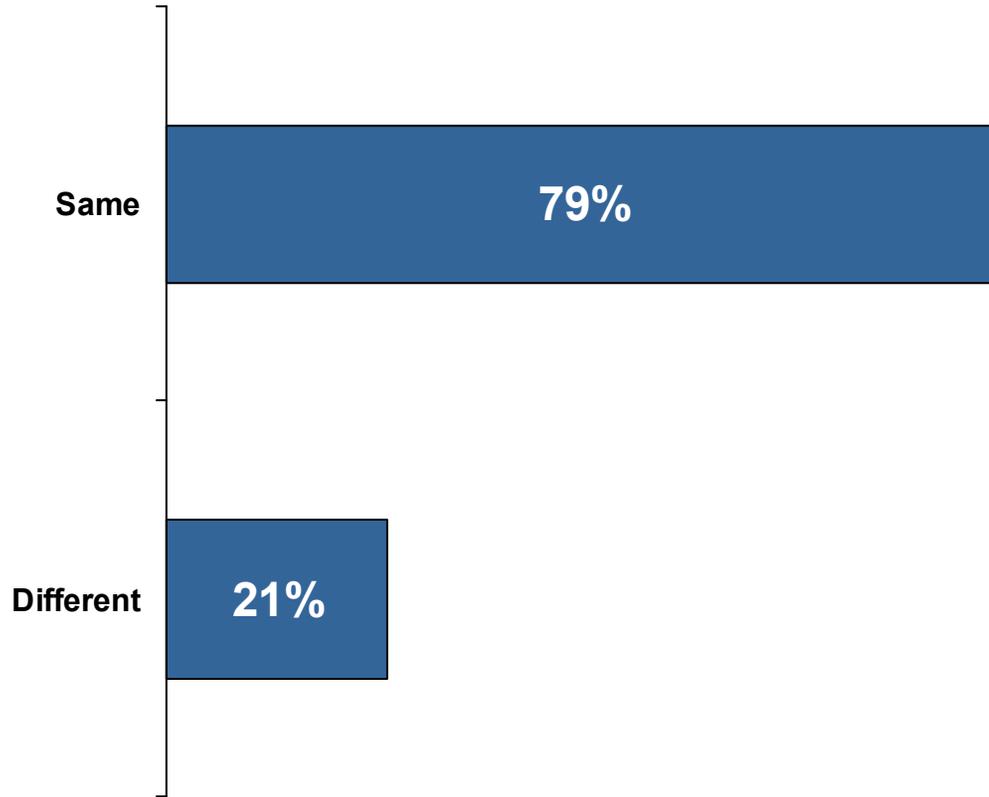
Half of middle level students report attending schools where a lot or all students are from the same racial background.

Which of the following best describes the racial and ethnic background of the students at your school?



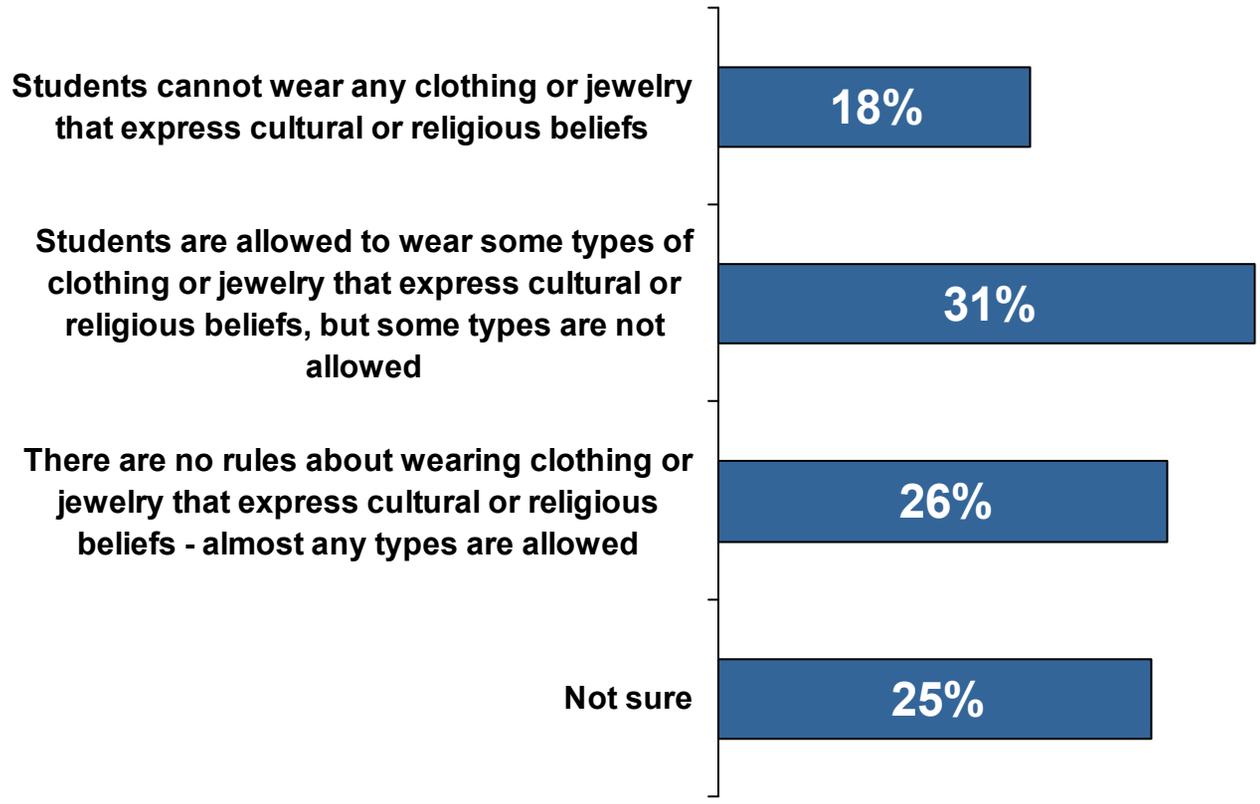
Two in ten students attending less diverse schools are in the minority group.

Is your racial or ethnic background the same or different than most of the students at your school?



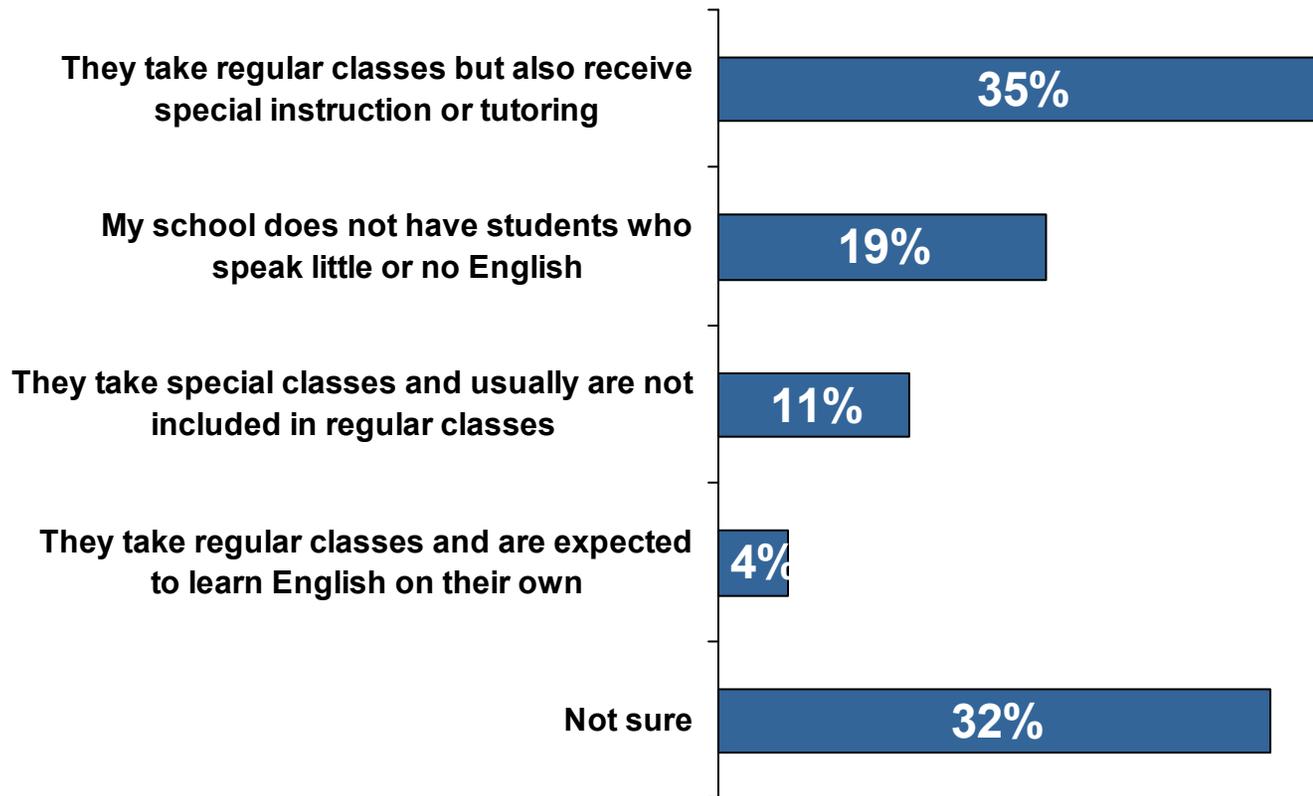
Schools differ on policies restricting clothing or jewelry that expresses cultural or religious beliefs.

Which of the following best describes the rules your school has about students wearing clothing or jewelry that expresses cultural or religious beliefs, such as a headscarf, a cross, a Star of David, or a scripture quotation printed on a T-shirt?



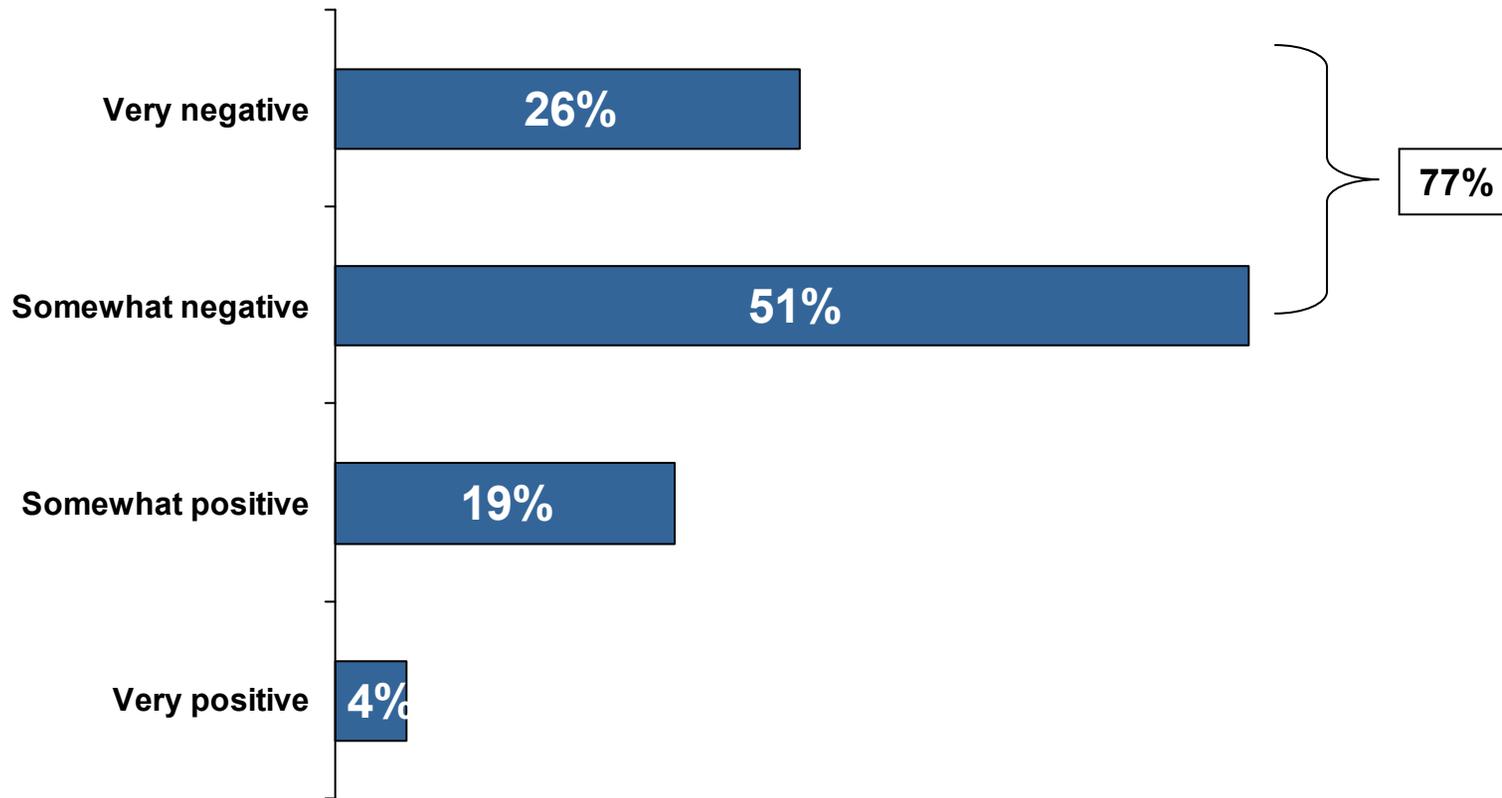
About a third of non-native English speakers take regular classes but also receive special instruction or tutoring

In your school, when a student speaks only a little or no English, what types of classes do they take?



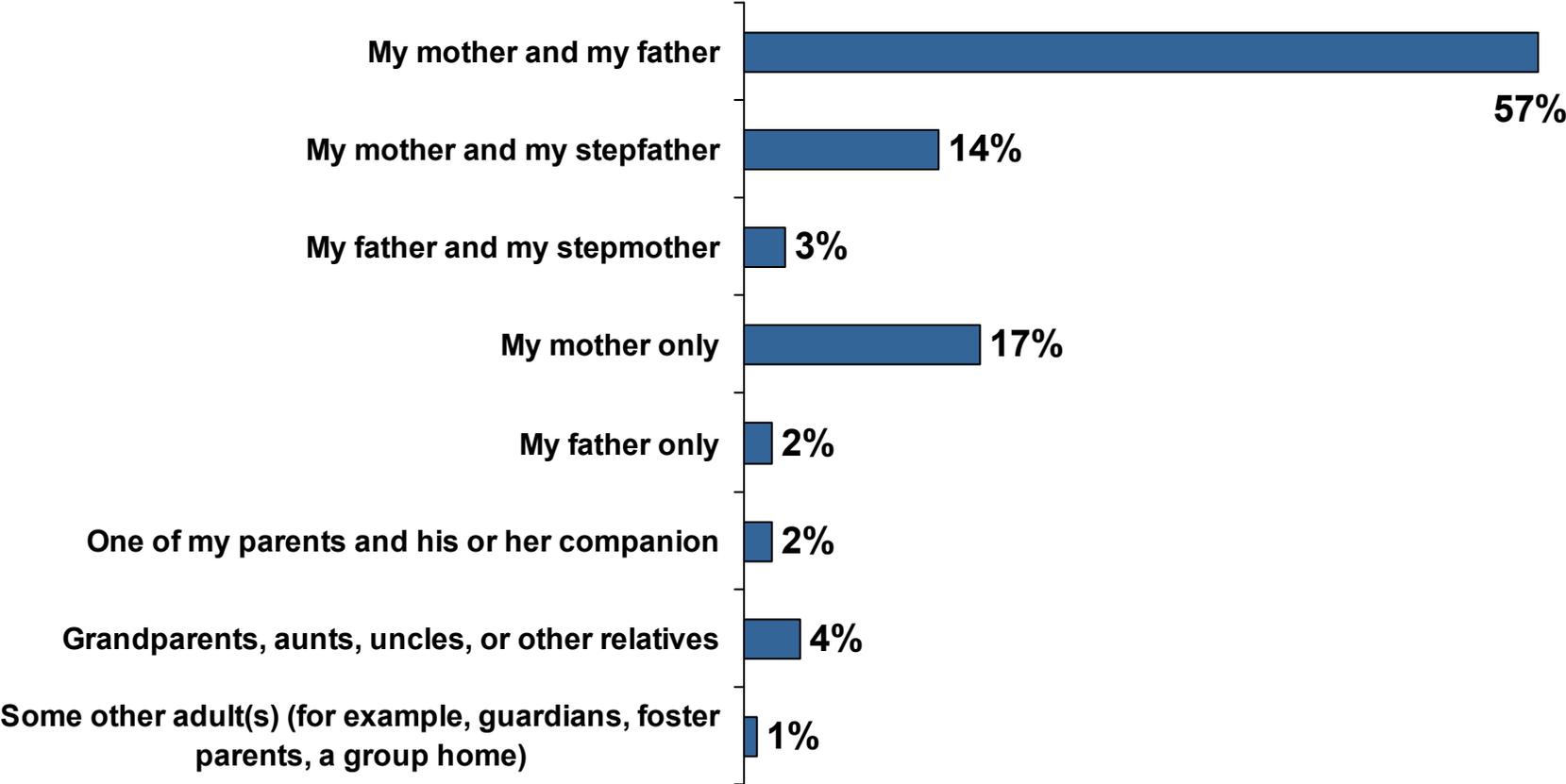
More than three quarters report that students in their schools have a negative attitude toward people who are or are thought to be gay, lesbian or bisexual.

In general, what is the attitude of students in your school toward students who are, or who people think are, gay, lesbian, or bisexual?



Most students live with both their parents; single parent households are second most common living arrangement.

Who are the adults that you live with most of the time?



Demographic Profile of Total Respondents

		Total
		%
Gender	Male	51
	Female	49
Grade	7 th	50
	8 th	50
Child's Age	12	29
	13	53
	14	16
Parents's Education	High school	32
	Some College	32
	College Degree	35
Region	East	22
	Midwest	20
	South	35
	West	22
Urbanicity	Urban	31
	Suburban	46
	Rural	23

		Total
		%
Race/Ethnicity	White	61
	Black/African American	16
	Hispanic	17
	Other	7
School Type	Public	92
	Private	7
School Level	Elementary	13
	Middle School	73
	K-12	6
Adults in home	Mother & Father	57
	Parent & Stepparent	17
	Mother only	17
	Father only	2
	Parent & Companion	2
	Other relative or adult	5

Demographic Profiles of Rural Students

		Rural	Urban	Suburb	National TOTAL
		N=421	N=556	N=837	N=1814
		%	%	%	
Race/ Ethnicity	White	73	46	64	61
	Black/African American	7	24	15	16
	Hispanic	15	23	15	17
	Other	5	8	6	6
Parents' Education	HS or less	46	32	25	32
	Some College	32	36	29	32
	College Degree	21	29	45	35
Adults in home	Mother & Father	55	49	63	57
	Parent & Stepparent	17	19	16	17
	Mother only	18	20	16	17
	Father only	1	3	2	2
	Parent & Companion	3	3	1	2
	Other relative or adult	6	7	3	5

Rural students are more likely to be White and have parents with a high school education or less than students in both urban and suburban schools

Demographic Profile of Rural Students

		Rural N=421	Urban N=556	Suburb N=837	National TOTAL N=1814
		%	%	%	
School Diversity	Nearly all students same	41	12	16	21
	A lot students same	26	23	28	26
	Students from variety of backgrounds	33	65	56	54
Use of internet	Great deal/ Quite a bit	14	25	27	23
	Some/None	86	75	73	77
School Level	Elementary	15	15	11	
	Middle School	60	75	79	
	K-12	14	3	4	
	Definitely will attend college	43	56	61	55

Rural schools are not as diverse

Rural students use the internet less

Rural students least likely to attend college

Demographic Profiles of School Quality

Grade student gives school:		A	B	C or lower
		N=437	N=812	N=565
		%	%	%
Gender	Male	42	55	53
	Female	58	45	47
Grade	7 th	54	51	46
	8 th	46	49	54
Parents' Education	HS or less	29	32	35
	Some College	26	31	37
	College Degree	44	36	26
Race/Ethnicity	White	63	59	61
	Black/AA	14	16	17
	Hispanic	16	18	17
	Other	7	6	6
Urbanicity	Urban	34	29	30
	Suburban	48	47	43
	Rural	18	23	27

Girls are more likely to grade their school an A

Children of parents with a college degree or more are more likely to be satisfied with school