

# High School Student Survey

Douglas County School District



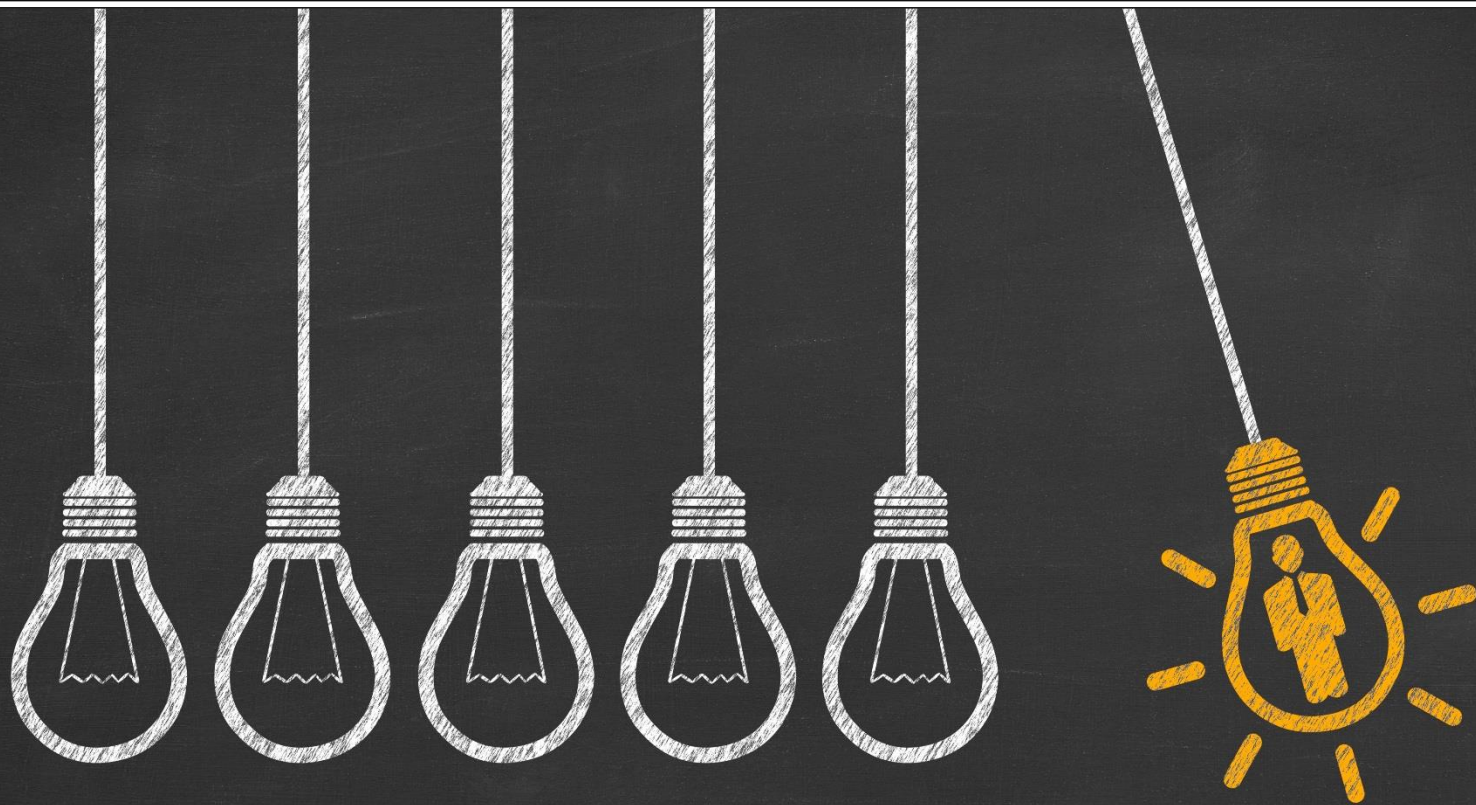
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# Overview and Context

This report summarizes a survey of 2,915 DCSD high school students that was conducted in December of 2016. It is part of a larger community research project that includes the following reports:

- ➔ High School Student Survey Report
- ➔ High School Student Interview Report
- ➔ High School Student Data Breakouts and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Employee Survey Report
- ➔ Employee Interview Report
- ➔ Employee Data Breakouts and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Parent and Community Survey Report
- ➔ Parent Interview Report
- ➔ Parent Data Breakouts and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Community Data Summary and Open-End Summary
- ➔ Higher education and Employer Interview Report
- ➔ Summary of Top-Level Findings



## Executive Summary

Top-level summary of the research and findings (Verbatim student quotes highlighted in color.)

# Many elements of education are working well for students

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- ➔ On the whole students feel that they are having a good educational experience. 65 percent rate their experience very good or good versus 8 percent poor or very poor. (The remainder rated it 'fair'.)
- ➔ A strong majority of students agree that they...
  - > Have friends (93 percent)
  - > Feel safe going to school (91 percent)
  - > Feel physically safe at school (87 percent)
  - > Have a trusted adult at their school (78 percent)
  - > Feel emotionally safe at school (75 percent)
  - > Are excited about learning (72 percent)

# Schools are generally meeting students' self-perceived needs

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- ➔ A strong majority of students agree that their school...
  - > Offers challenging classes (93 percent)
  - > Has plenty of extracurricular opportunities (89 percent)
  - > Has a wide variety of classes to choose from (89 percent)
  - > Is meeting their needs as a student (77 percent)
- ➔ Even so, it's not always enjoyable.
  - > 34 percent don't enjoy coming to school.
  - > Most satisfaction measures decline from the freshman to junior year before rebounding among seniors. Juniors tend to have the lowest satisfaction scores in most measures.

# Safety concerns are primarily internal

- ➔ 12 percent of students do not feel physically safe, and 22 percent do not feel emotionally safe. For those students...
  - > General meanness, bullying, and a concern that they have no defense or recourse against those things are concern for both those who feel physically unsafe and those who feel emotionally unsafe.  
“There is a lot of real sketchy looking kids that look like they could snap.”
  - > Fights and general aggressiveness are another concern among those who feel physically unsafe.
  - > Other concerns among those who feel emotionally unsafe are a concern that they can't share themselves openly, general anxiety or stress, and a feeling that others are judgmental or make comparisons among students.  
“I feel as if all the students at my school are very judgy, as they can tear me apart with me sharing how I feel. Also, many people don't care about my emotional wellbeing.”
- ➔ 28 percent say that students in their school are often bullied.

# No single educational solution works for everyone

- ➔ Students find similar situations to be rewarding or frustrating and there is no “one size fits all” ideal.
  - > When asked about the best parts of their educational experiences, students most commonly cited having caring teachers, good teachers, good learning opportunities, and a feeling of community.
  - > However, when asked about the things they like least, the most commonly cited problems are poor relationships with teachers, concerns about teacher quality and teaching methods, and a dislike of the curriculum.

“My school could provide alternative learning methods to help disabled and mentally ill teens who struggle with deadlines and other problems that are out of their control. I want to be able to leave school and not feel like a failure for not being able to go to college because I am neither rich enough or smart enough to get a scholarship. I don't want college to be drilled into every child's head every day of their educational career only to fail.”

“DCSD is a good school district and I've had a great education in my time here!”



# Students are generally happy with most, but not all, of their teachers.

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- ➔ 31 to 44 percent of students believe that “all or nearly all” of their teachers are (variously) knowledgeable, respectful, fair, engaged, challenging, helpful, and caring.
- ➔ 58 to 76 percent of students believe that most or all of their teachers share those traits.
- ➔ Areas where the most students are dissatisfied with teachers are assigning homework that helps them learn (40 percent say most or all do this) and making them excited about learning (46 percent say most or all do this).

# Support at home correlates to good experiences at school

- ➔ Students who get support at home for their education are more likely to...
  - > Feel physically and emotionally safe at school
  - > Feel like they belong at their school
  - > Feel that there's a collaborative environment at school
  - > Have friends at school
  - > Believe that their school has good and challenging class offerings
  - > Believe that there are opportunities for extracurricular activities
  - > Have a plan to achieve their goals after graduation
  - > Feel ready for the next phase of life

“I think it's the people in your house paying attention to your education and being supportive. Giving you time to do homework, helping with things, and being an advocate as a parent if someone won't listen to a student. Being available and understanding.”

# Counseling and support at school are areas for improvement

- ➔ While a strong majority have assigned counselors, they are used mostly for academic counseling, and used less for career, college, and personal counseling.
  - “While my school provides information about college and life after high school, a majority of this education has been knowledge that is surface level. I know about the deadlines for transcript requests and financial aid but don't feel that I have been helped in terms of scholarships, choosing a college, or deciding a career plan.”
  - > Students want regularly scheduled meetings with counselors to develop a relationship.
    - “I think make it more of an individual vs counselor thing because some kids like me were too shy to speak up.”
  - > 33 percent don't think it's easy to get help with personal problems at school
- ➔ Charter school students often don't have counselors, but appear better situated to get advice due to smaller school sizes and more in-depth relationships with teachers.

# Students worry about “the real world”

- ➔ Interviews and open-end questions show that students worry about very tangible issues: personal finance, picking colleges, finding careers, and so on.

“Teach stuff that we need to know but aren't taught now: taxes, buying an apartment, budgeting, etc.”

“Talk to us about our actual future. The things that actually matter should be taught. Things like how to pay a mortgage and balance a check book and get a job. We honestly need a class called life skills. We should talk about all future options and how it will impact us in the current world. Although it's great learning about other things like different ways to say angry or what a fortnight is, it would be more helpful to learn things about real life.”

“Tell us how to do taxes -Mock interviews -how to create a retirement plan -how to apply for jobs -how to make a resume -Teaching us the laws -Teaching us life skills -how to maintain a relationship in the workplace -Where/how to intern -how to take out/deal with a loan”

“Spend more times to tell us about jobs that aren't in the mainstream and what our major could lead to in terms of jobs.”

# Students worry about how their education positions them for careers

- ➔ Only 41 percent of seniors “strongly agree” that they feel ready for the next phase of life.
- ➔ Only 60 percent of seniors “strongly agree” that have a plan to achieve their goals after graduation.
- ➔ 35 percent of students disagree that they’re learning things in class that will help them in the future.
- ➔ Students feel pressured to pick a career, and many are not making the connection that foundational learning can help in careers and career changes.

“[A successful education is] One where I can go to sleep every night, confident that I know how to take a hold of life and learn through skills from school and apply it to everyday life, not learning how to graph quadratics. I want to learn skills that will help me specifically to the career path I want to go to.”

“Successful education allows students to choose the subjects they learn in high school, so they don't have to learn a bunch of stuff they will never use in their career, and instead learn stuff that will be applicable to colleges and careers.”

“Have more information about possible jobs that work with a students interests.”

“I would like to learn more valuable skills than pythagrium theorem. I do not know how to buget, balance a check book, interview successfully for a job, or speak professionally. I think the focus on annotating poems/novels and unuseful math is irrelevant to a future that doesn't involve those skills. I wish, instead of taking "filler courses" junior and senior year, that students should be able to start taking classes that more closely resemble their career paths.”

# Counseling can be of particular help to students not going to college

- ➔ 71 percent of seniors plan on attending college, compared to 15 percent planning to pursue a career or vocational training. (14 percent did not answer the question or proposed some other option.)
- ➔ More seniors received information about college than they did about other options for post graduation.
  - > 74 percent got information about going to college.
  - > 53 percent got information about different careers (post-college or post-high school)
  - > 38 percent got information about technical or two-year schools.
  - > 31 percent got information about getting a job after high school.
- ➔ A college-bound culture alienates non-college bound students.
  - “...they push us to go to college and put a negative connotation on working after because they want us to go to college.”
  - “The school puts a large focus on STEM careers, to the point of actively discouraging students from considering other careers. While STEM careers are great and all, students shouldn't be discouraged from doing what they want to. That said, the school also puts a major focus on college in general.”
  - “To prepare me better for my future plans they could talk more about the alternate opportunities for schooling. They usually push the ideology of "4-year college or bust." However, I think that they should be much more open to 2-year schools and even no education careers. There is no mention of careers like salesmen that require little to no education.”





## Detailed Findings

# Reporting notes

- ➔ The following pages present a detailed analysis of the survey questions.
- ➔ Graphs may not add up to 100% due to a small number of no replies on each question. The no replies are a larger percent of later survey questions, and thus are presented on later graphs.
- ➔ Statistically significant differences are noted for each question.
- ➔ Graphs typically show overall findings. Additional segment findings are referenced but not always shown (please see accompanying Excel file for all segmentation results).
- ➔ The overall margin of error is  $\pm 1.9\%$ .
  - > The margins of error for the following subgroups are:
    - Traditional Public School:  $\pm 1.7\%$ .
    - Charter/Other type of school:  $\pm 9.6\%$ .
    - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade:  $\pm 3.5\%$ .
    - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade:  $\pm 3.3\%$ .
    - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:  $\pm 3.5\%$ .
    - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:  $\pm 4.3\%$ .
  - > All margins of error are with a 95% confidence interval and adjusted for weighting.

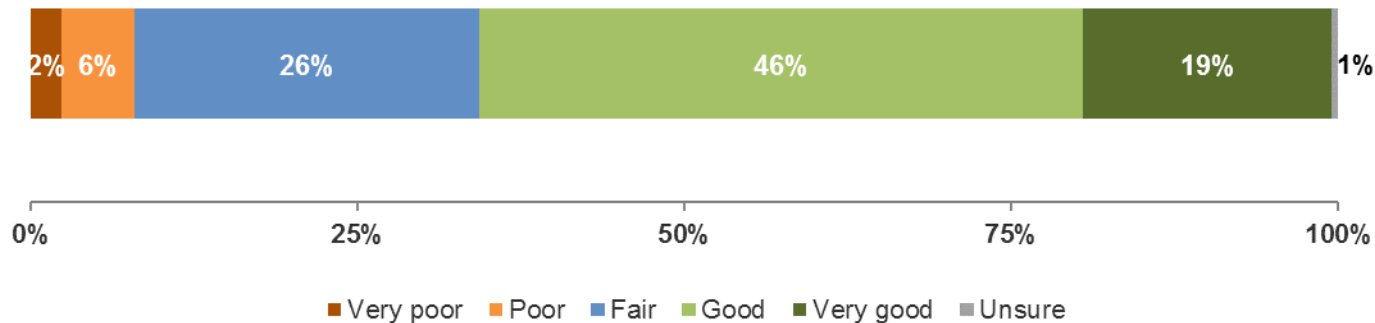


# Evaluation of the District

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# Almost two thirds of students rate the quality of their education as good or very good

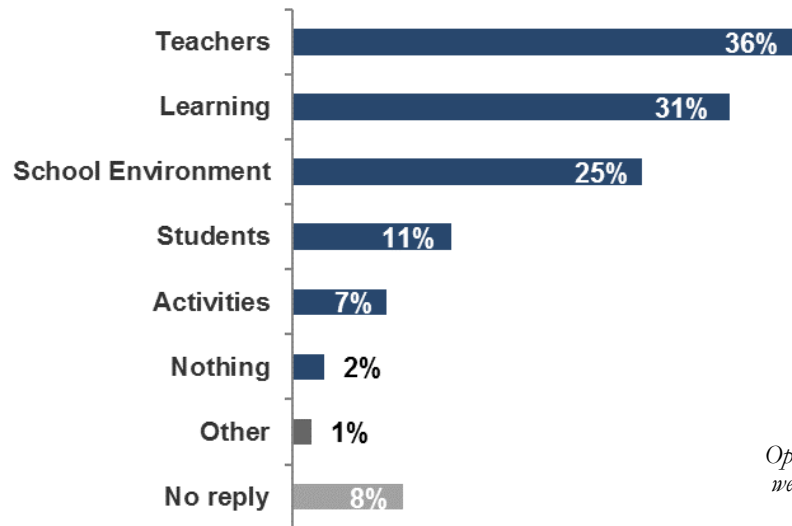
## Quality of education



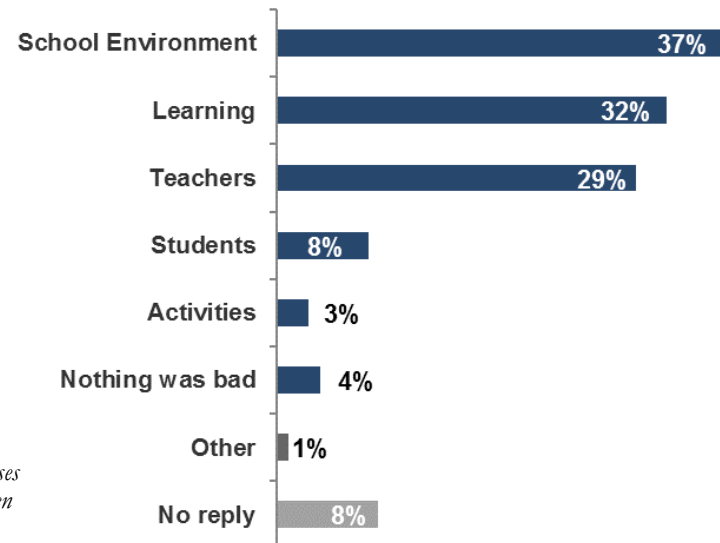
- Charter and alternative school students are more likely to rate the quality of their education as very good, while traditional school students are more likely to rate their education as fair.
- Sophomores and juniors gave slightly lower ratings for their education quality.
- Male students are more negative about the quality of their education.
- Students who receive more support for education at home gave higher ratings for their education quality.

# The same factors can be the best and the worst part of school for students.

## What Students Like Most About Their Education Experience



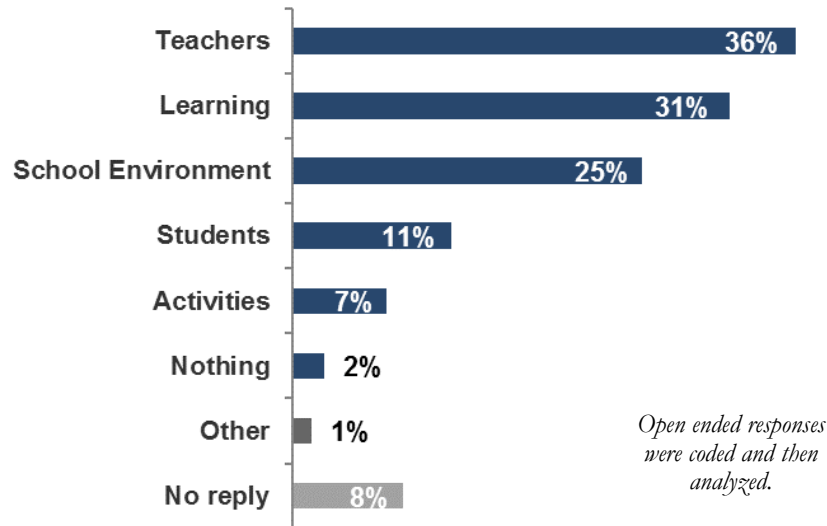
## What Students Liked Least About Their Education Experience



*Open ended responses  
were coded and then  
analyzed.*

# Students say that teachers, learning, and their school environment are the best parts of school

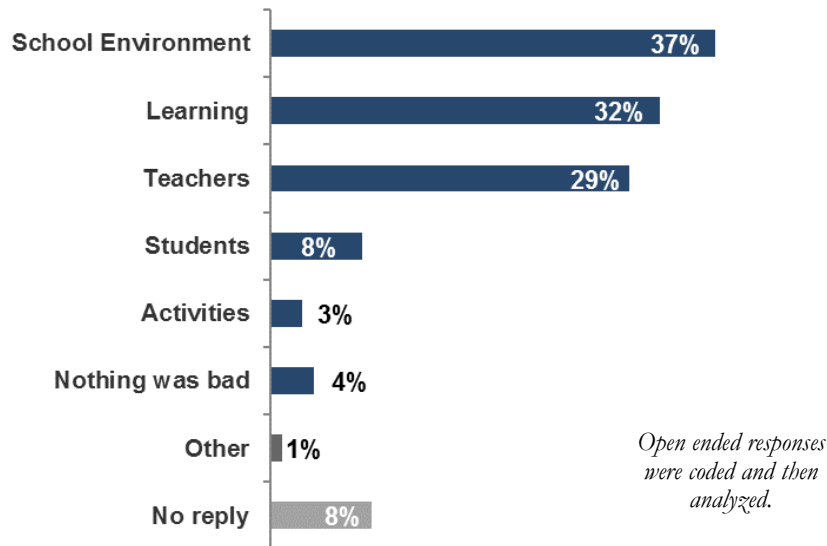
## What Students Like Most About Their Education Experience



- When students mentioned teachers, they generally referred to specific teachers themselves, the fact that teachers are nice, friendly and welcoming, and the fact that teachers support and care about them.
- When students mentioned learning, they generally referred to the class options and learning opportunities they have had, the fact that they are receiving a good education, and specific aspects of classes such as the topic or the rigor.
- When students mentioned the school environment, they were generally referring to the people at their school (i.e., the community), the education resources, the education support, or school holidays and days off.
- *See the accompanying data file for verbatim responses.*

# Parts of their school environment, their learning, and their teachers are also what students like least

**What Students Liked Least About Their Education Experience**

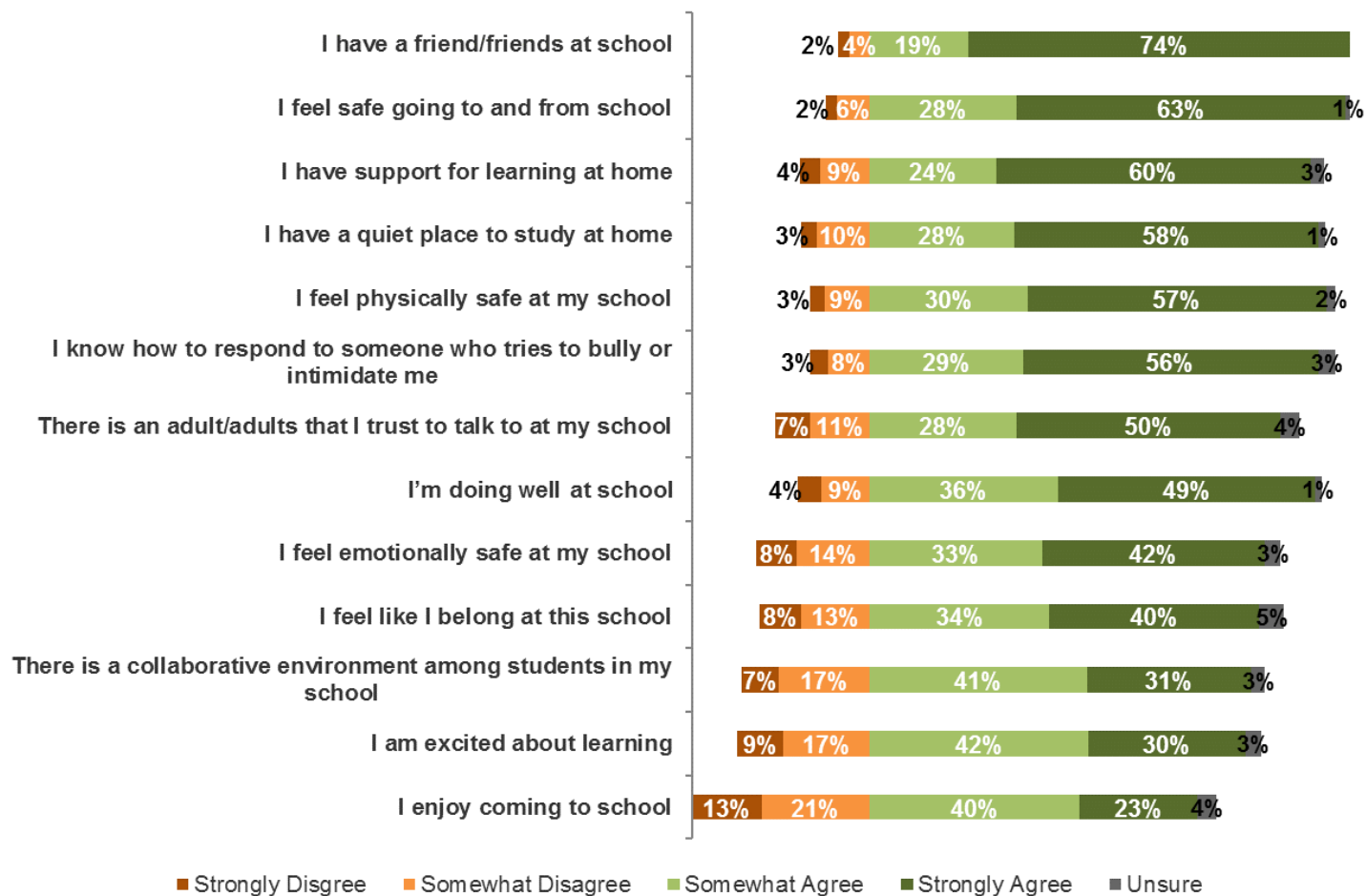


- When students referred to their school environment, they were often citing a specific complaint about the education support (staff, administration, Board, or counseling), aspects of their schedule (time off, etc.), or education resources and facilities.
- When students mentioned learning, they generally were describing specific classes or the curriculum, the level of academic rigor and work, or testing.
- When students mentioned teachers, they generally mentioned that they dislike their teachers, that they do not like the teaching methods, or they do not like the quality of teaching.
- *See the accompanying data file for verbatim responses.*

# School Climate and Satisfaction

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# Most students receive support for education both at school and at home



# Students generally have support for learning at home

- ➔ While most students believe they are doing well at school, not as many students are excited about coming to school.
  - > More than 80 percent of students believe that they are doing well at school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, female students, those who have been in the District longest, and those with more support at home for education are more likely to say that they are doing well.
  - > More than 60 percent of students said they enjoy coming to school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support at home for education more strongly feel this.
  - > More than 70 percent of students are excited about learning. Students at charter and alternative schools, seniors, and those with more support at home for education are more excited.
- ➔ More than 80 percent of students said that they know how to respond to someone who tries to bully or intimidate them. Male students and those with more support for education at home more strongly believe that they know how to respond.
- ➔ The vast majority of students have support for learning at home.
  - > More than 80 percent of students said that they have support for learning at home. Freshmen, female students, and those who have been in the District longer were more likely to report that they have support for learning at home.
  - > More than 80 percent of students reported that they have a quiet place to study at home. Students with more support for education at home were more likely to report that they have support for learning at home.

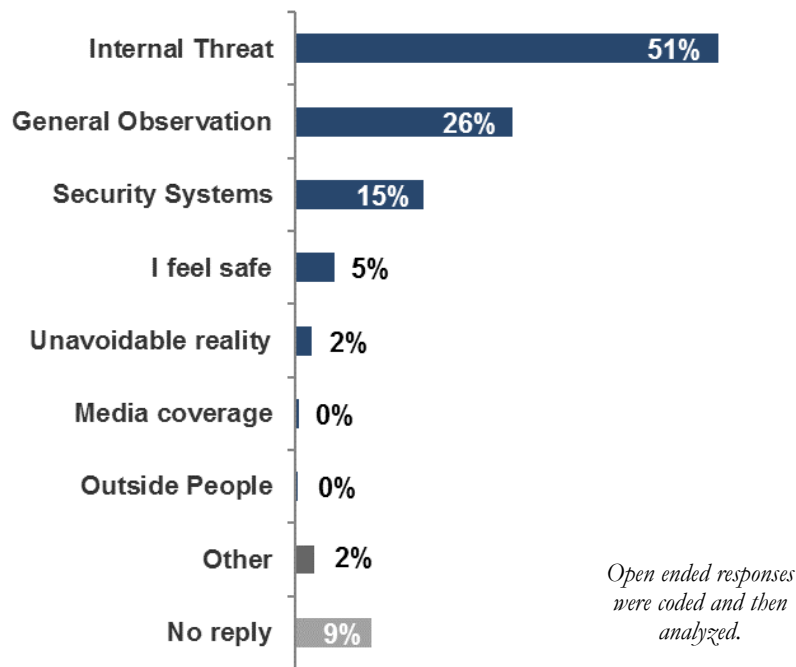


# Most students have social support at school and feel safe

- ➔ Most students reported having social support at their school.
  - > Almost three quarters of students feel like they belong at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support at home for education more strongly feel this.
  - > More than 90 percent of students said that they have a friend(s) at school. Students at traditional public schools, male students, students who have been in the District longer, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to report that they have friends.
  - > More than 70 percent of students feel that there is a collaborative environment among students in their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to say that there is a collaborative environment.
  - > Almost 80 percent of students said that there is an adult(s) that they trust to talk to at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, seniors, males students, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to say that there is an adult they trust at school.
- ➔ Students were more likely to report feeling physically safe at their school than emotionally safe.
  - > More than 80 percent of students feel physically safe at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support at home for education are more likely to feel safe.
  - > Three quarters of students feel emotionally safe at school. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support at home for education are more likely to feel emotionally safe.
  - > More than 90 percent of students feel safe going to and from school. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support at home for education are more likely to feel safe. Students who have a family member drive them to school feel the safest when going to and from school.

# Students who feel physically unsafe attribute it to perceived threats at their school

## Reasons for Feeling Physically Unsafe

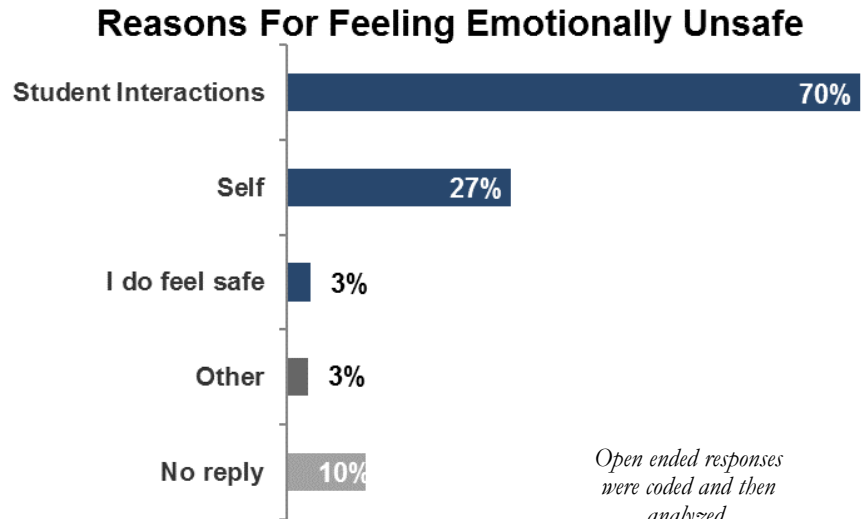


*Open ended responses  
were coded and then  
analyzed.*

- Typical threats at their school included mean or weird people at their school, feeling like they have no recourse for dealing with a problem, and fights, aggression, or threats at school.
- *See the accompanying data file for verbatim responses.*

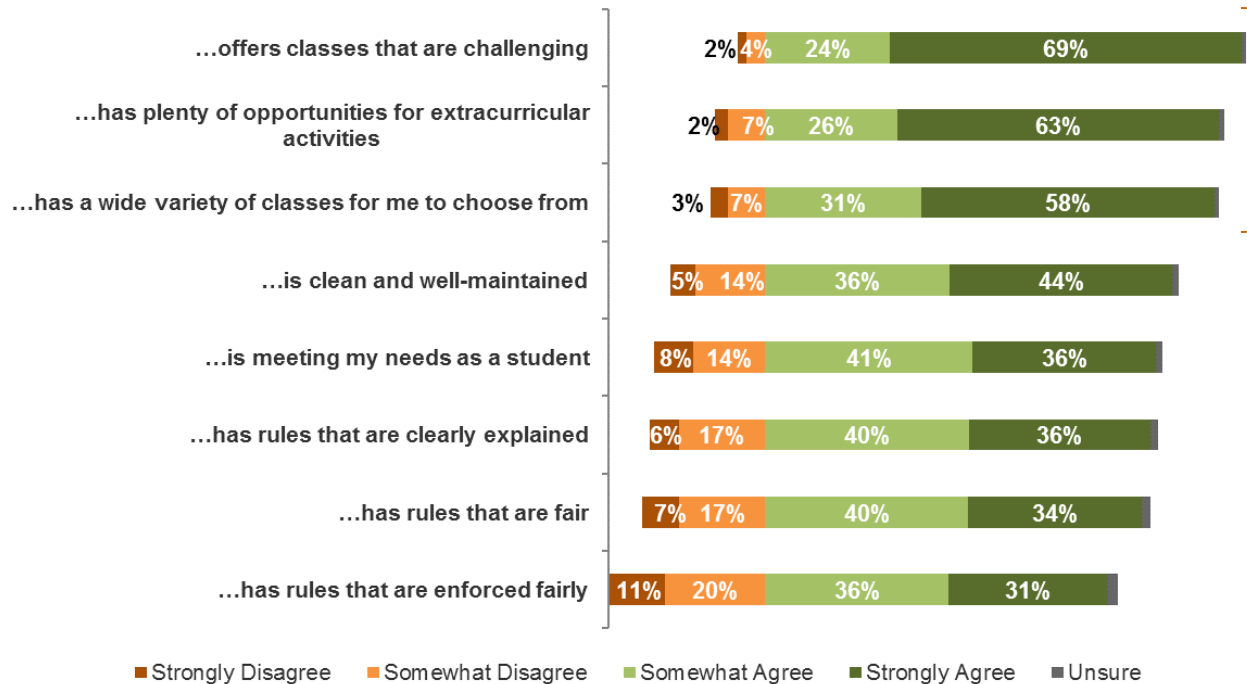
# Students who feel emotionally unsafe generally feel that way because of interactions with other students

- Typical student interactions that made students feel emotionally unsafe involved dealing with mean people, bullying, and judgmental comparisons.
- Reasons for not feeling emotionally safe that were due to the student (i.e., “Self”) included mental health issues, feeling like they cannot be themselves around others, and other self-image issues.
- *See the accompanying data file for verbatim responses.*



# Students believe that academic offerings at their school are varied and challenging

## My school...



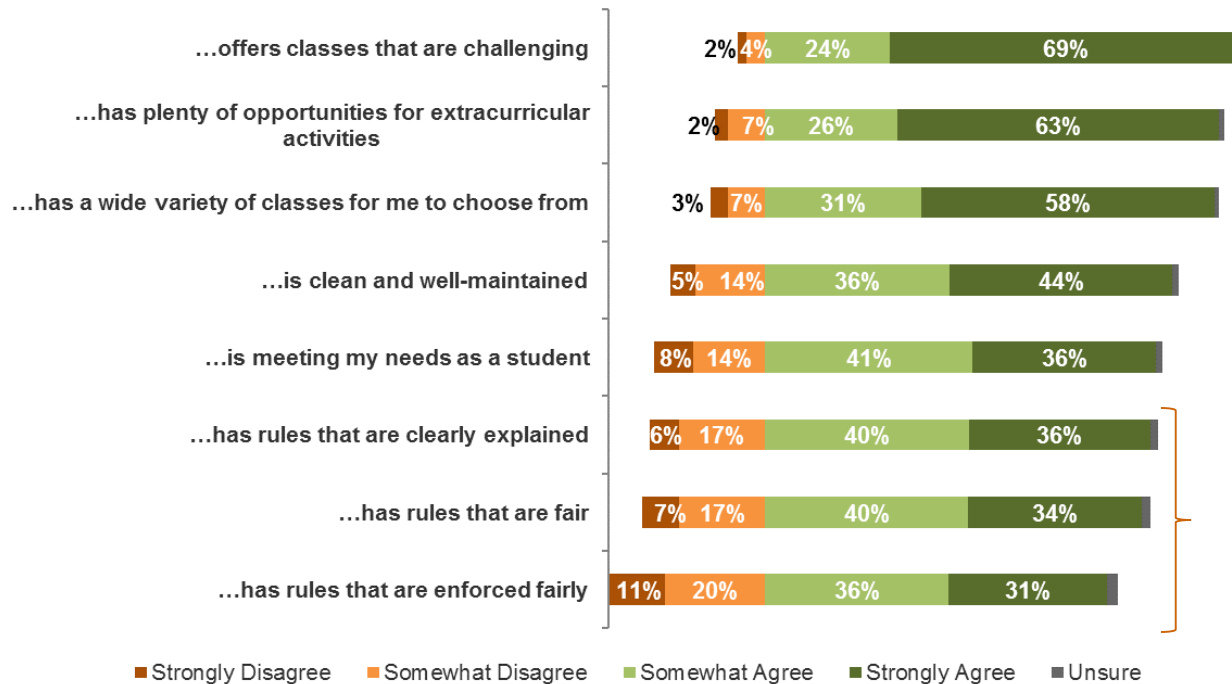
➞ Almost 90 percent of students believe that their school has plenty of opportunities for extracurricular activities. Students at traditional public schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

➞ Almost 90 percent of students believe that their school has a wide variety of classes for them to choose from. Students at traditional public schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

➞ More than 90 percent of students believe that their school offers classes that are challenging. Female students, those who have been in the District longer, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

# Students have more doubts about whether their school's rules are fair and fairly enforced

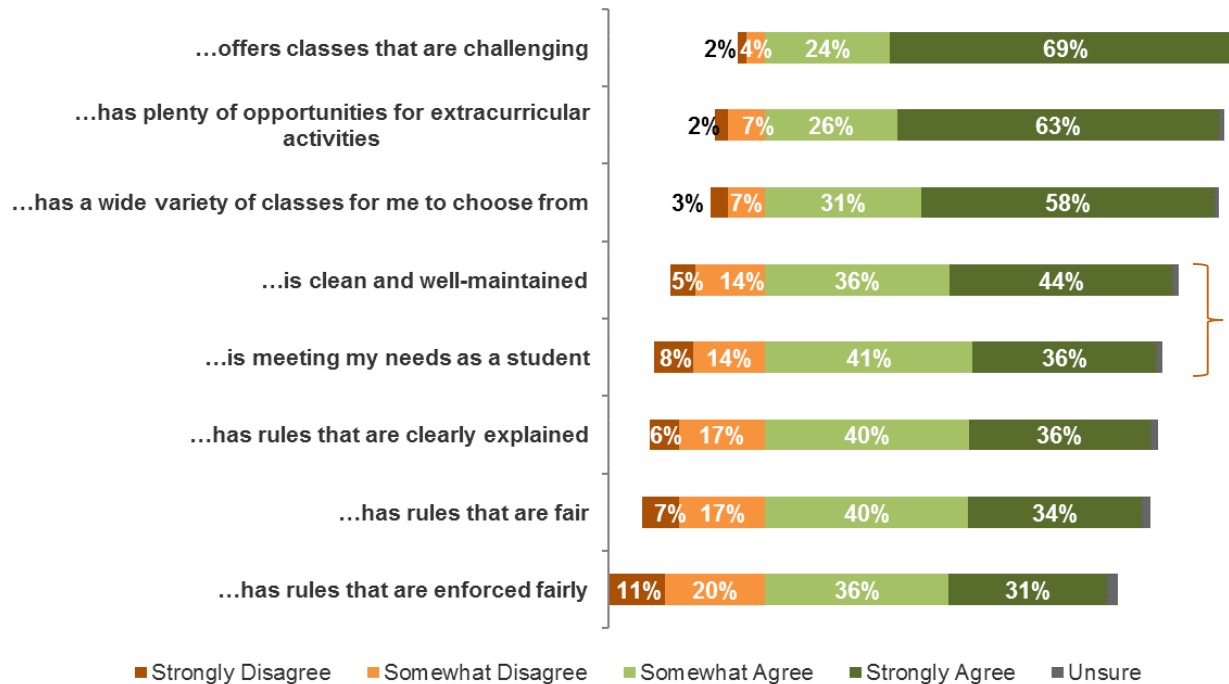
## My school...



- Three quarters of students think their school has rules that are clearly explained. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
- Almost three quarters of students think their school has rules that are fair. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
- Two thirds of students think their school has rules that are enforced fairly. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

# Most students believe that their school is clean, well-maintained, and meeting their needs

## My school...

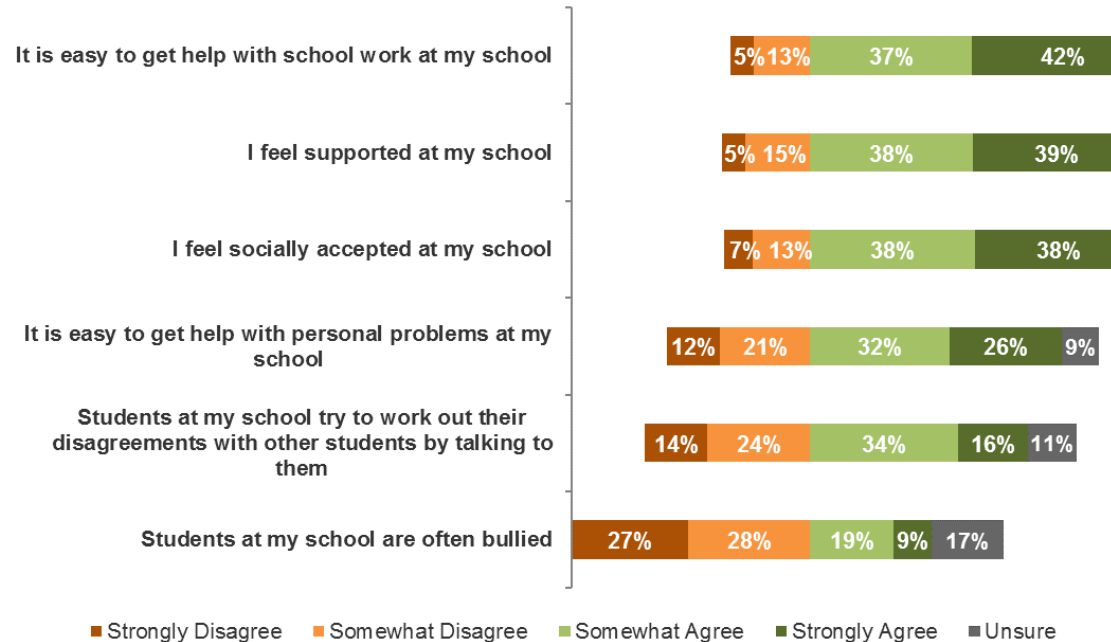


➞ Roughly 80 percent of students reported that their school is clean and well maintained. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

➞ More than three quarters of students believe that their school is meeting their needs as a student. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

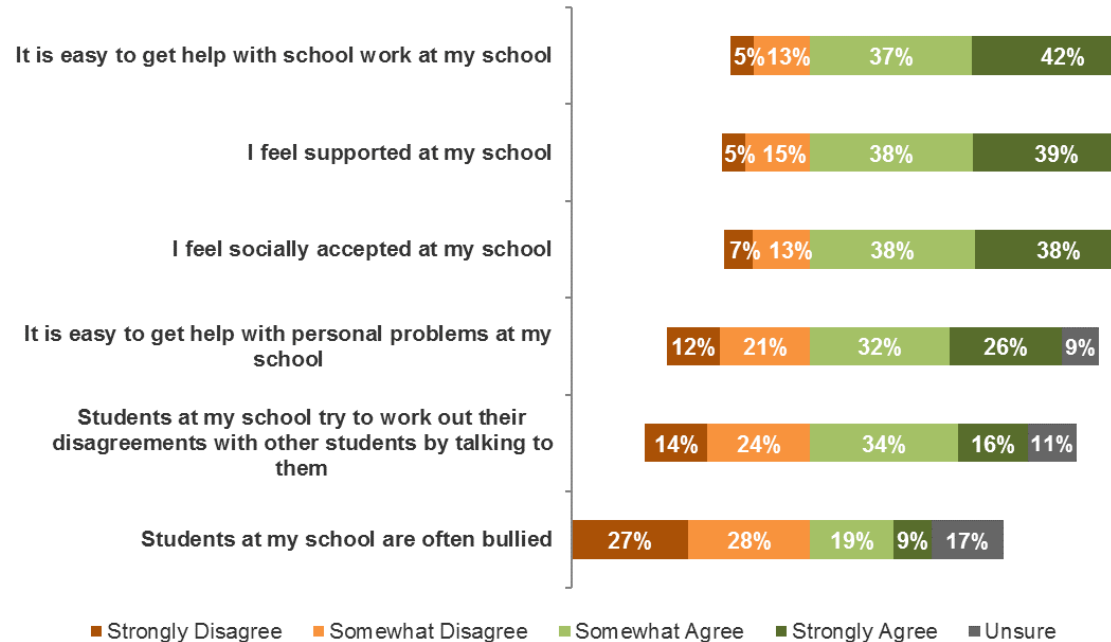
# The majority of students feel socially supported at their school

- More than three quarters of students feel socially accepted at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home more strongly feel this way.
- More than three quarters of students reported that they feel supported at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to report this.
- Students reported some bullying at their schools, and a need among their students to work harder at resolving their disagreements through discussion.
  - > Over a quarter of students reported that students at their school are often bullied. Students at traditional public school and female students were more likely to report bullying.
  - > About half of students reported that students at their school try to work out their disagreements with other students by talking to them. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to report this.



# Students believe it is easier to get help with school work than personal problems at their school

- ➞ About 90 percent of students said that it is easy to get help with school work at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to report this.
- ➞ Almost 60 percent of students said that it is easy to get help with personal problems at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support for education at home were more likely to report this.

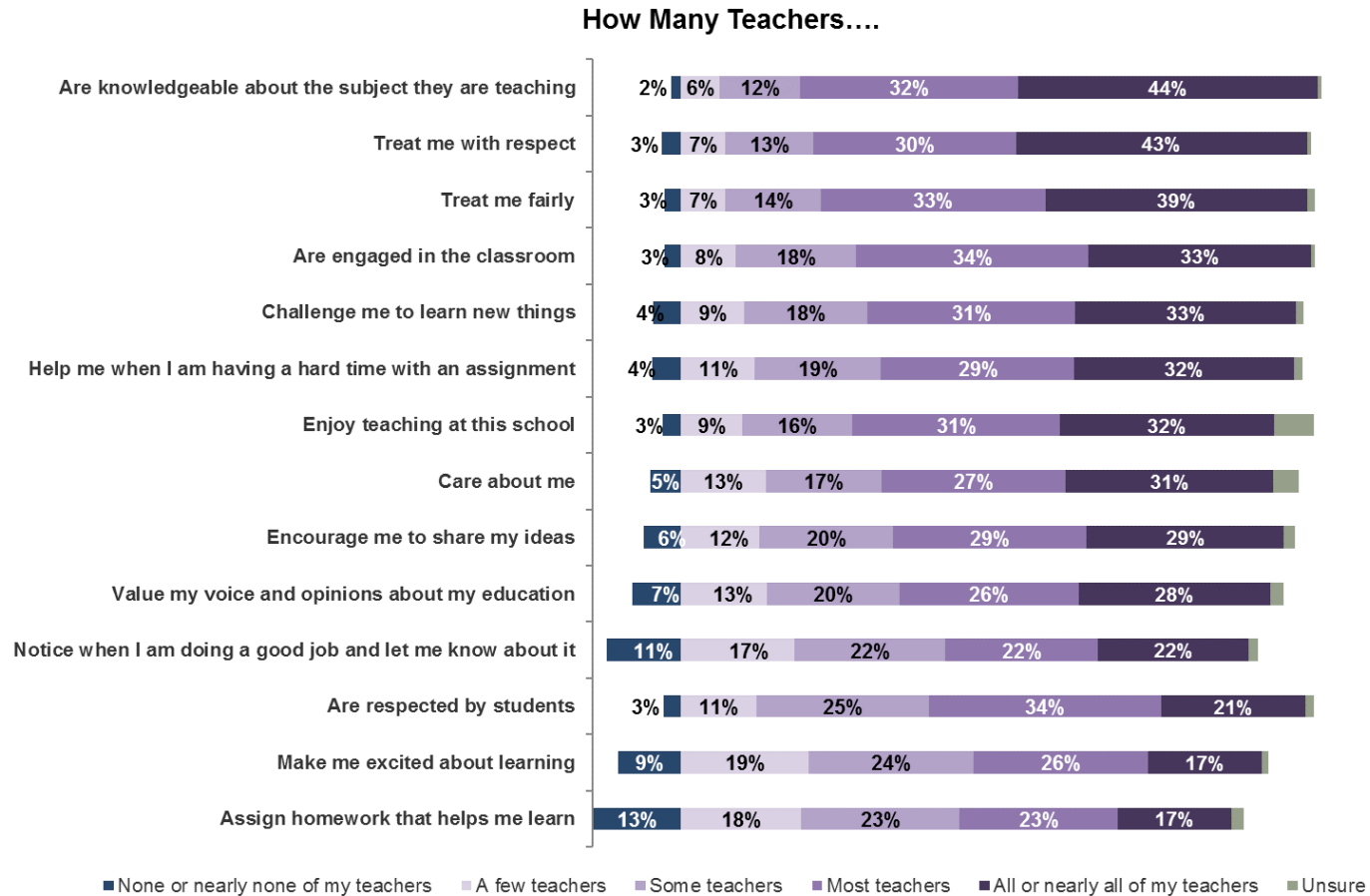




# Teachers and Learning

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# Most students have teachers who are supporting them at school



# Students believe that most of their teachers care about them or at least treat them fairly

- The most common characteristics of teachers, according to students, are that they are knowledgeable, they treat students with respect, and they treat students fairly.
  - > More than three quarters of students believe that most or all of their teachers are knowledgeable about the subject that they are teaching. Less than two percent reported that none of their teachers are knowledgeable. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home reported that more of their teachers are knowledgeable.
  - > More than 70 percent of students reported that most or all of their teachers treat them fairly. Three percent reported that none of their teachers treat them fairly. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home believe that more of their teachers treat them fairly.
  - > Almost three quarters of students reported that most or all of their teachers treat them with respect. Three percent reported that none treat them with respect. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, and those with more support for education at home believe that more of their teachers treat them with respect.
- Students generally feel that most of their teachers care about them.
  - > Almost 60 percent of students reported that most or all of their teachers care about them. Five percent reported that none of their teachers care about them. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home believe that more of their teachers care about them.
  - > More than 60 percent of students said most or all of their teachers help them when they are having a hard time with an assignment. Four percent said that none of their teachers help them. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home reported that more of their teachers help them.
  - > More than 40 percent of students feel that most or all of their teachers notice when they are doing a good job and let them know it. Eleven percent reported that none of their teachers did this. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home believe that more of their teachers notice when they are doing a good job.

# Many teachers challenge students in class and encourage them to share their thoughts

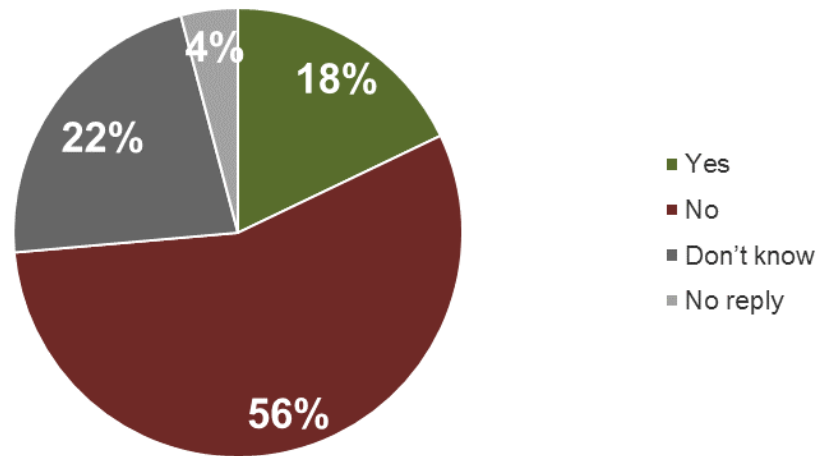
- Students reported that most of their teachers challenge them in class. While they feel challenged, students reported that fewer of their teachers are assigning useful homework or making them excited to learn.
  - > More than 60 percent of students reported that most or all of their teachers challenge them to learn new things. Four percent believe that none of their teachers challenge them. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home feel that more of their teachers challenge them.
  - > Forty percent of students reported that most or all of their teachers assign homework that helps them learn. Thirteen percent think that none of their teachers assign homework that helps them. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home feel that more of their teachers assign homework that helps them.
  - > More than 40 percent of students feel that most or all of their teachers made them excited about learning. Nine percent feel that none of their teachers made them excited. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, and those with more support for education at home feel that more of their teachers made them excited.
- Students reported having teachers who encourage them to share their ideas in class.
  - > Almost 60 percent of students feel that most or all of their teachers encourage them to share their ideas. Six percent believe that none of their teachers encourage them. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home reported that more of their teachers encourage them.
  - > More than half of students feel that most or all of their teachers value their voice and opinions about their education. Seven percent feel that none of their teachers value their voice and opinions. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home feel that more of their teachers value their voice and opinion.

# Many teachers are engaged in the classroom

- Students believe that most of their teachers are engaged in the classroom. They think slightly fewer of their teachers enjoy teaching at their school and are respected by students.
  - > More than 70 percent of students reported that most or all of their teachers are engaged in the classroom. Three percent reported that none are engaged. Students at charter and alternative schools and those with more support for education at home believe that more of their teachers are engaged.
  - > More than 60 percent of students believe that most or all of their teachers enjoy teaching at their school. Three percent believe that none of their teachers enjoy teaching at their school. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support for education at home believe that more of their teachers enjoy teaching.
  - > More than half of students indicated that most or all of their teachers are respected by students. Three percent think none of their teachers are respected by students. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, and those with more support for education at home believe more of their teachers are respected by students.

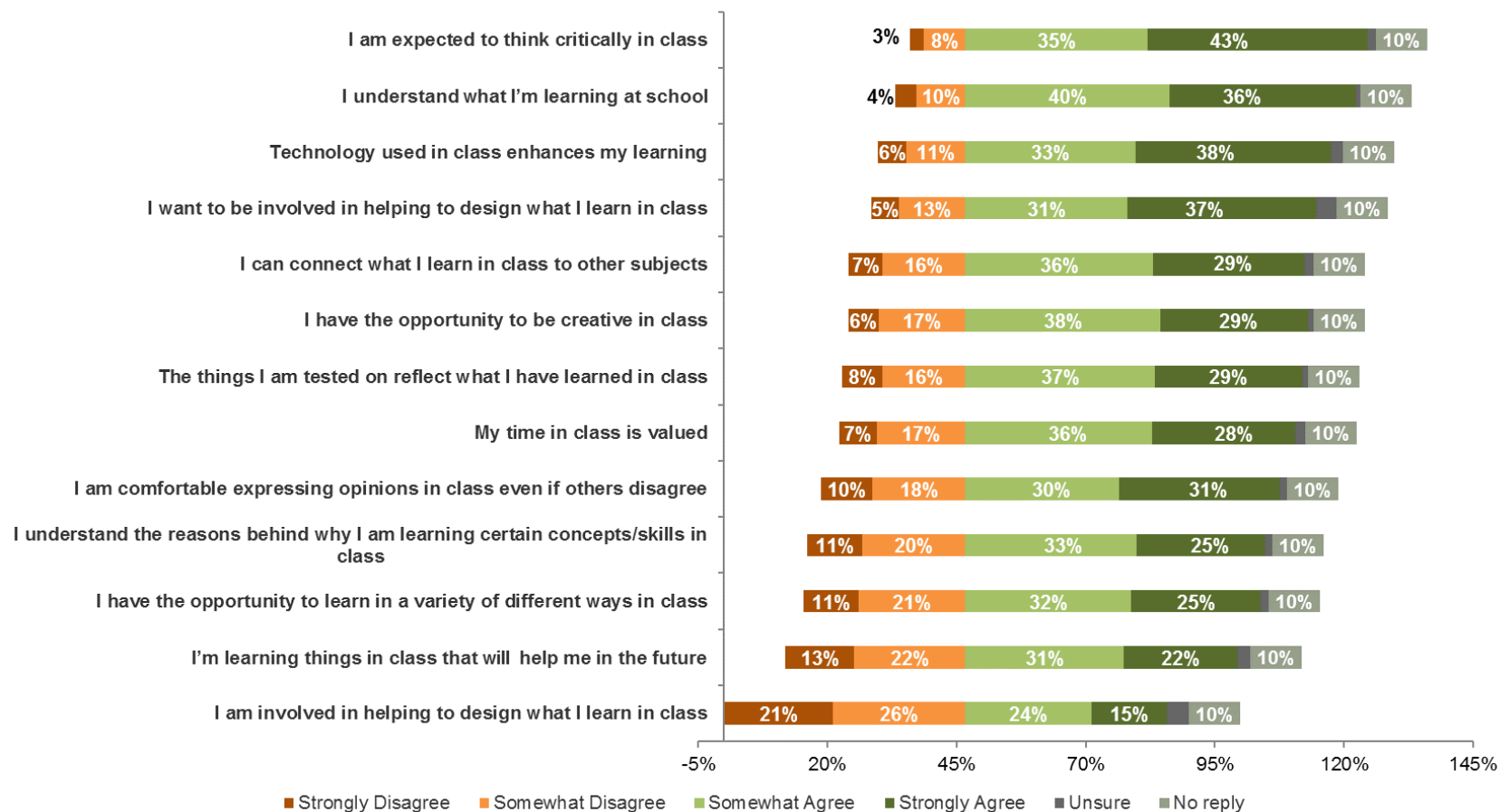
# Less than a fifth of students are worried about their teachers leaving

Worried About Teachers Leaving



➞ Older students are more worried about their teachers leaving.

# Students generally reported positive evaluations of their classes



# Students understand what they are learning and like the use of technology

- Students feel they are expected to think critically at school and that they understand most of what they are learning in school. Fewer understand why they are learning certain things in class.
  - > Almost 80 percent of students reported that they are expected to think critically in class. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > More than 70 percent of students feel like they understand what they are learning at school. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > Almost 60 percent of students feel like they understand the reasons behind why they are learning certain concepts/skills in class. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
- Most students believe technology use is appropriate for their classes and that they are tested on what they are taught.
  - > More than 70 percent of students agreed that technology used in class enhances their learning. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > Almost 70 percent of students agreed that the things they are tested on reflected what they have learned in class. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen and seniors, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.



# Students want more input in designing what they learn

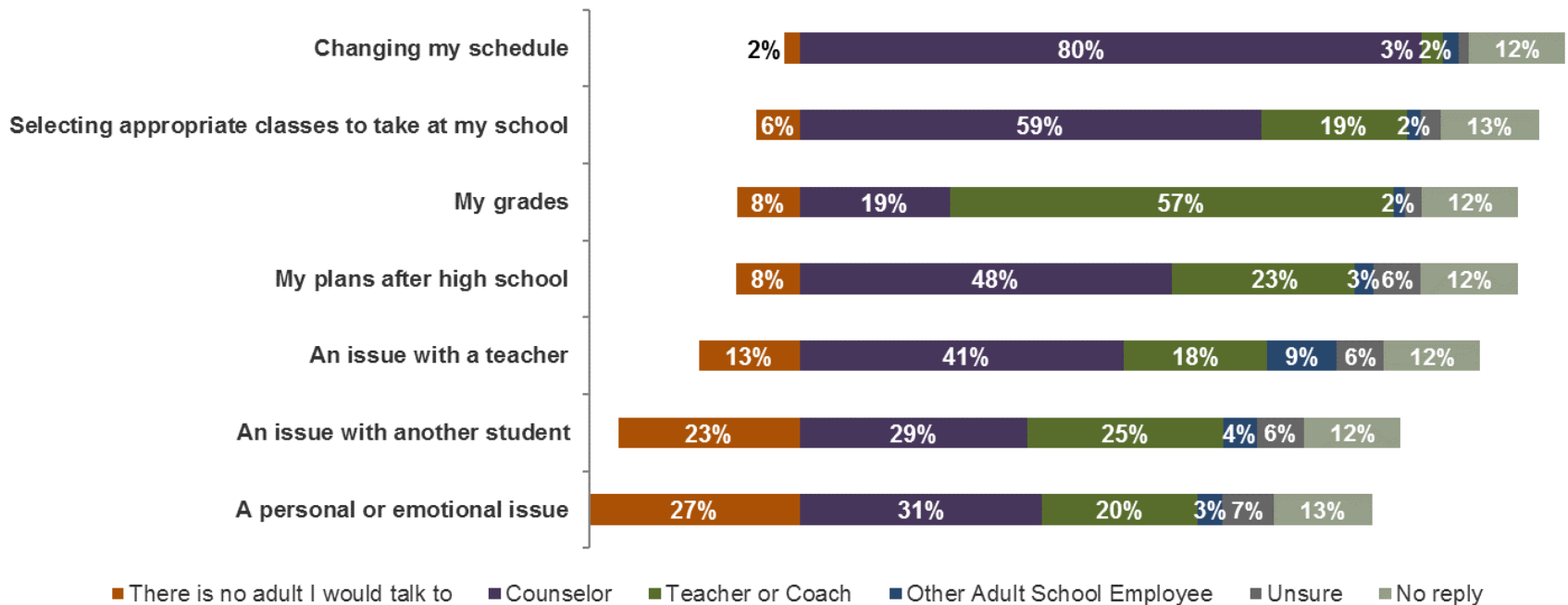
- ➔ Students generally feel like they get to be creative in class and that their time is valued. Some students, however, do not feel comfortable expressing their opinions in class.
  - > Two thirds of students feel like they have the opportunity to be creative in class. Students at charter and alternative schools and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > More than 60 percent of students feel like their time in class is valued. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > More than 60 percent of students feel comfortable expressing opinions in class even if others disagree. More than a quarter of students do not feel comfortable doing so. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
- ➔ Students generally want to be more involved in designing their classes.
  - > Almost 70 percent of students want to be involved in helping design what they learn in class. Students at charter and alternative schools are more likely to believe this.
  - > Almost 40 percent of students said that they are involved in helping to design what they learn in class. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > Almost 60 percent of students feel like they have the opportunity to learn in a variety of different ways in class. Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
- ➔ While students are able to connect what they are learning to other classes at school, they have a harder time connecting it to future goals.
  - > Two thirds of students feel like they can connect what they learned in class to other subjects. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.
  - > More than half of students believe that they are learning things in class that will help them in the future. Students at charter and alternative schools, male students, and those with more support for education at home are more likely to believe this.

# Student Support

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# Most students have an adult at school with whom they could discuss issues

Students Would Talk to \_\_\_\_ About....

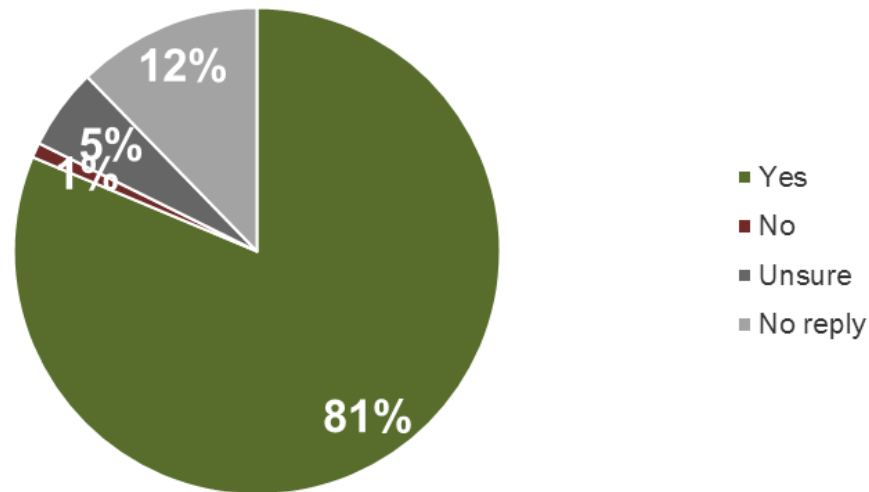


# Students are less likely to have an adult at school with whom they could discuss personal issues

- ➔ Most students have adults at school with whom they could discuss academic issues.
  - > Less than 6 percent of students said that there is no adult that they would talk to about selecting appropriate classes to take at their school. Most would talk to a counselor, teacher or coach. Seniors said that they would be more likely to talk to a counselor. Students with less support for education at home are more likely to say that there is no adult they would talk to at school about classes.
  - > Less than two percent of students said that there is no adult they would talk to about changing their schedule. Students with less support for education at home are more likely to say that there is no adult they would talk to at school about changing their schedule.
  - > Eight percent of students said that there is no adult that they would talk to about their grades. Students with less support for education at home are more likely to say that there is no adult they would talk to at school about their grades.
  - > Eight percent of students said there is no adult they would talk to about their plans after high school. Seniors are more likely to have an adult to talk to about plans for after high school.
- ➔ Students have fewer adults at school to talk to about personal issues.
  - > More than a quarter of students said that there is no adult that they would talk to about a personal or emotional issue. Students with less support for education at home are more likely to say that there is no adult they would talk to at school about a personal or emotional issue.
  - > Thirteen percent of students said that there is no adult that they would talk to about an issue with a teacher. Students with less support for education at home are more likely to say that there is no adult they would talk to at school about an issue with a teacher.
  - > Almost a quarter of students said that there is no adult they would talk to about an issue with another student. Students with less support for education at home are more likely to say that there is no adult they would talk to at school about an issue with another student.

# The vast majority of students said that they have an assigned counselor at their school

Have An Assigned Counselor



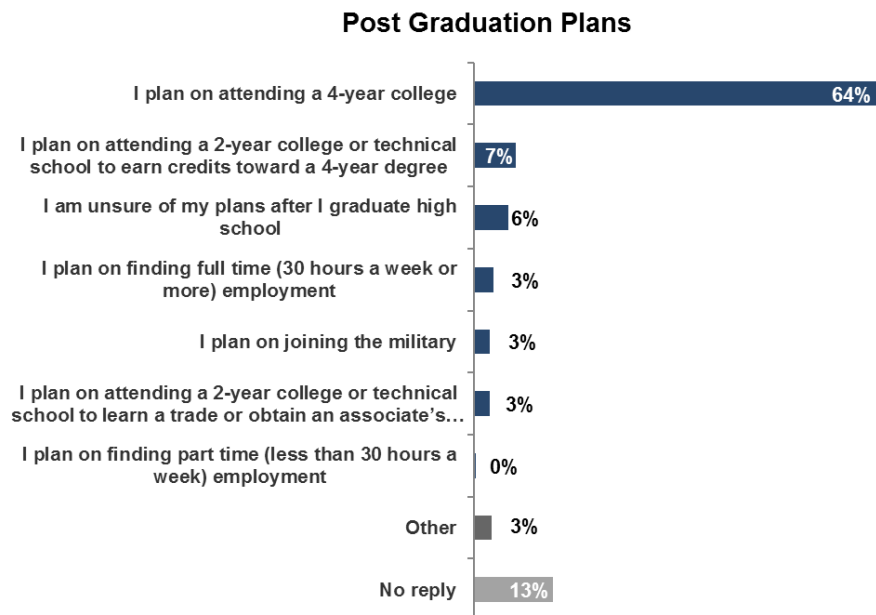
- Students at charter and alternative schools, freshmen, male students, and those with less support for education at home are more unsure.

# Preparing for the Future

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Just Seniors

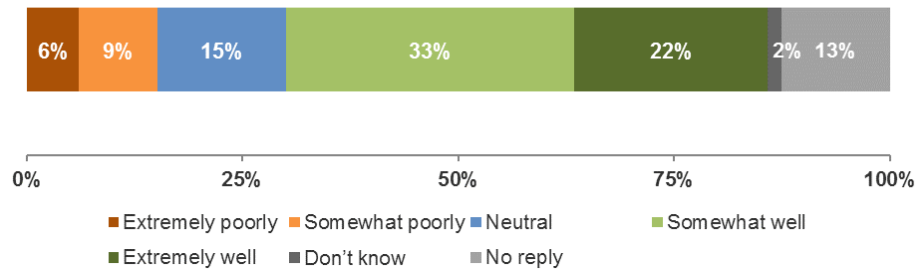
# Most seniors plan on attending a 4-year college



- Female seniors and those with more support for education at home are more likely to plan on attending a 4-year college.

# More than half of seniors believe that their school has prepared them well for post graduation plans

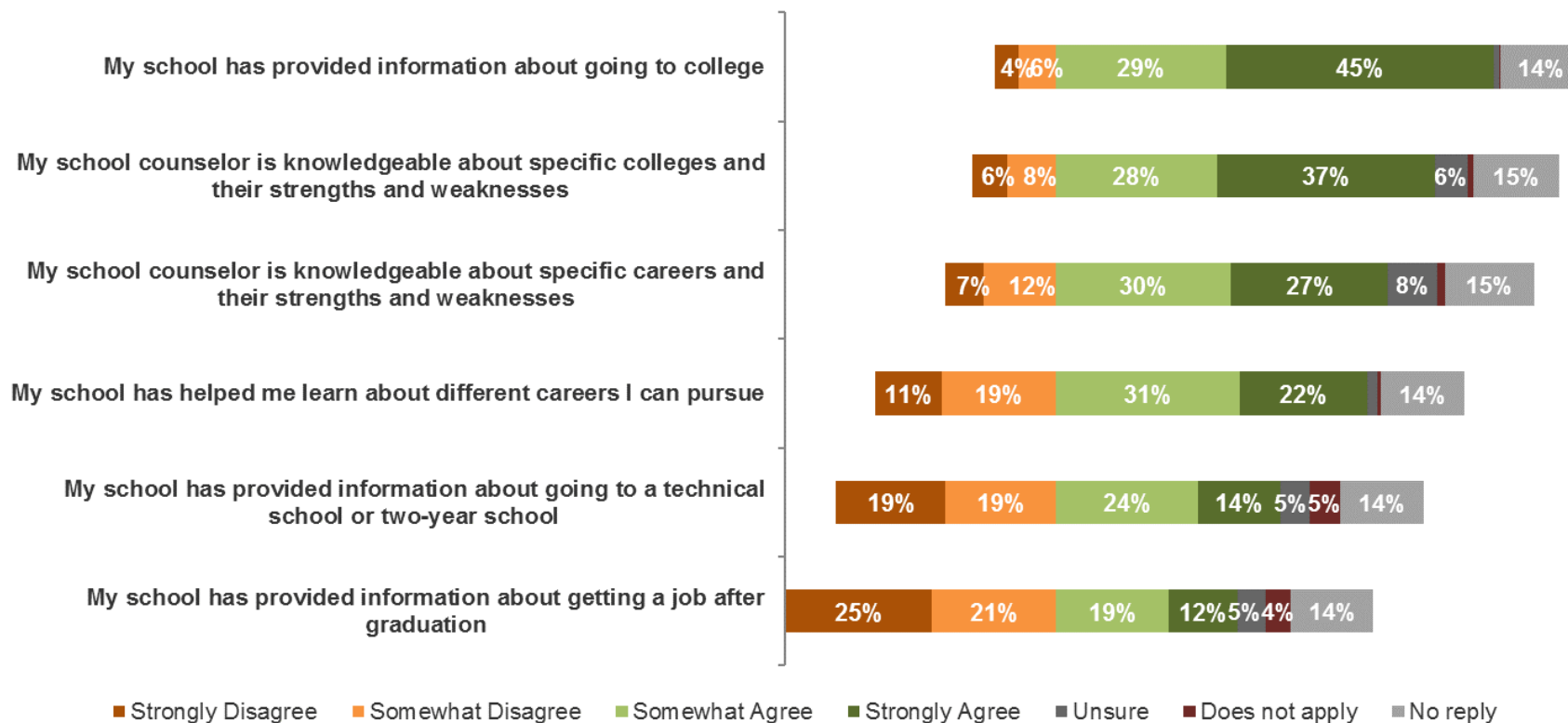
**Rating of School Preparation for Post Graduation Plans**



- Fifteen percent think their school has done a poor job of preparing them.
- Seniors with more support for education at home believe that their school has done a better job.



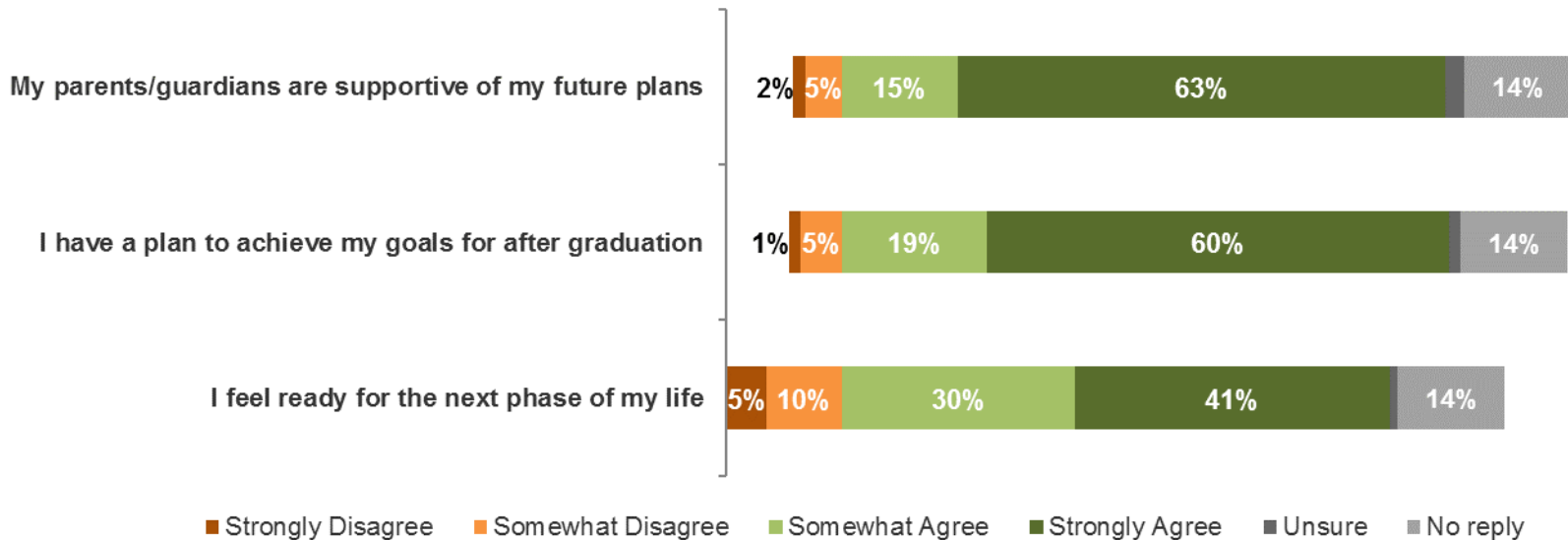
# Seniors received more information from their school about college than about other post graduation plans



# School counselors are generally seen as knowledgeable by seniors

- Counselors have information about both colleges and different careers.
  - > More than 60 percent of seniors said that their school counselor was knowledgeable about specific colleges and their strengths and weaknesses.
  - > Almost 60 percent of seniors said that their school counselor was knowledgeable about specific careers and their strengths and weaknesses.
- Most seniors have received information about colleges and careers that they might pursue.
  - > Three quarters of seniors said that their school has provided information about going to college.
  - > More than half of seniors feel like their school has helped them learn about different careers that they could pursue.
- Seniors reported receiving less information from their schools about going to technical and two year schools or about immediately joining the work force after graduation.
  - > Almost 40 percent of students said that their school has provided information about going to a technical school or two year school.
  - > About a third of seniors said that their school has provided information about getting a job after graduation.

# Seniors feel supported yet a little nervous about their post graduation plans

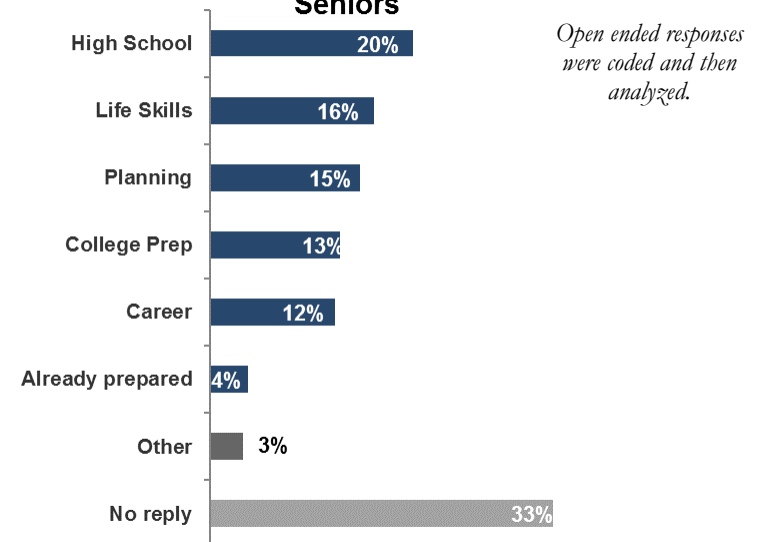


- Almost 80 percent of seniors said that they have a plan to achieve their goals for after graduation. Seniors with less support for education at home are less likely to have a plan for achieving their goals after graduation.
- Almost 80 percent of seniors said their parents/guardians are supportive of their future plans. Seniors with more support for education at home said their parents/guardians are more supportive of their future plans.
- More than 70 percent of seniors said they feel ready for the next phase of their life. Seniors with more support for education at home are more likely to feel ready for the next phase of their life.

# Seniors wish their schools had more clearly tied the curriculum to their post graduation goals and life

- ➔ Many seniors noted specific things for high schools to change, such as offering more courses relevant to their interests, increasing academic rigor, and clearly connecting coursework to the real world.
- ➔ Many seniors wish that schools had taught them more basic life skills to prepare them for life after graduation.
- ➔ Seniors also want more counseling staff and general counseling to help them prepare for post graduation.
- ➔ Some seniors also think that schools should offer more guidance on applying for and choosing a college or applying for and choosing a career.

**How School Could Have Better Prepared Seniors**

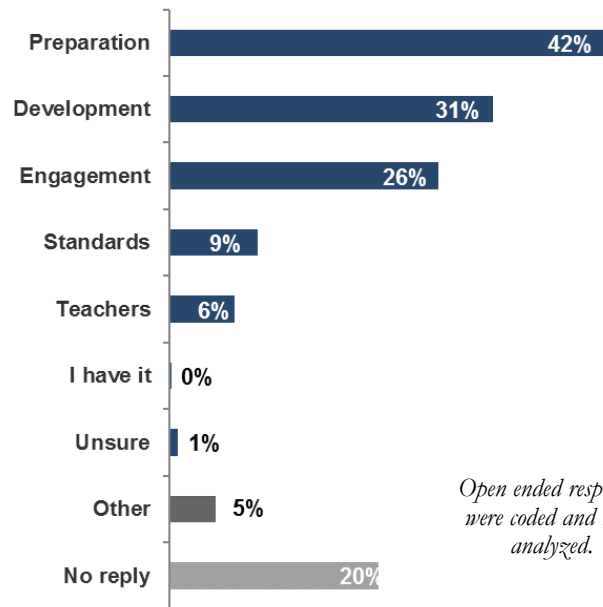


# Success

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# Students think that a successful education is preparation for life

**Elements of a Successful Education**



*Open ended responses  
were coded and then  
analyzed.*

- ➔ Most students defined a successful education as preparation for life or development of a student. They believe that a successful education prepares students for their future life, for college, for a career. They also think that a successful education develops knowledge, skills and critical thinking, and personal growth.
- ➔ Many students also think that a successful education involves engagement of a student. They described a successful education as one that challenges a student, makes a student want to learn, creates a supportive environment for learning, and is hands-on.
- ➔ When students mentioned standards as part of a successful education, they usually mentioned having good grades.
- ➔ When students mentioned teachers as part of a successful education, they described them as quality teachers who are supportive and caring.



# Demographics

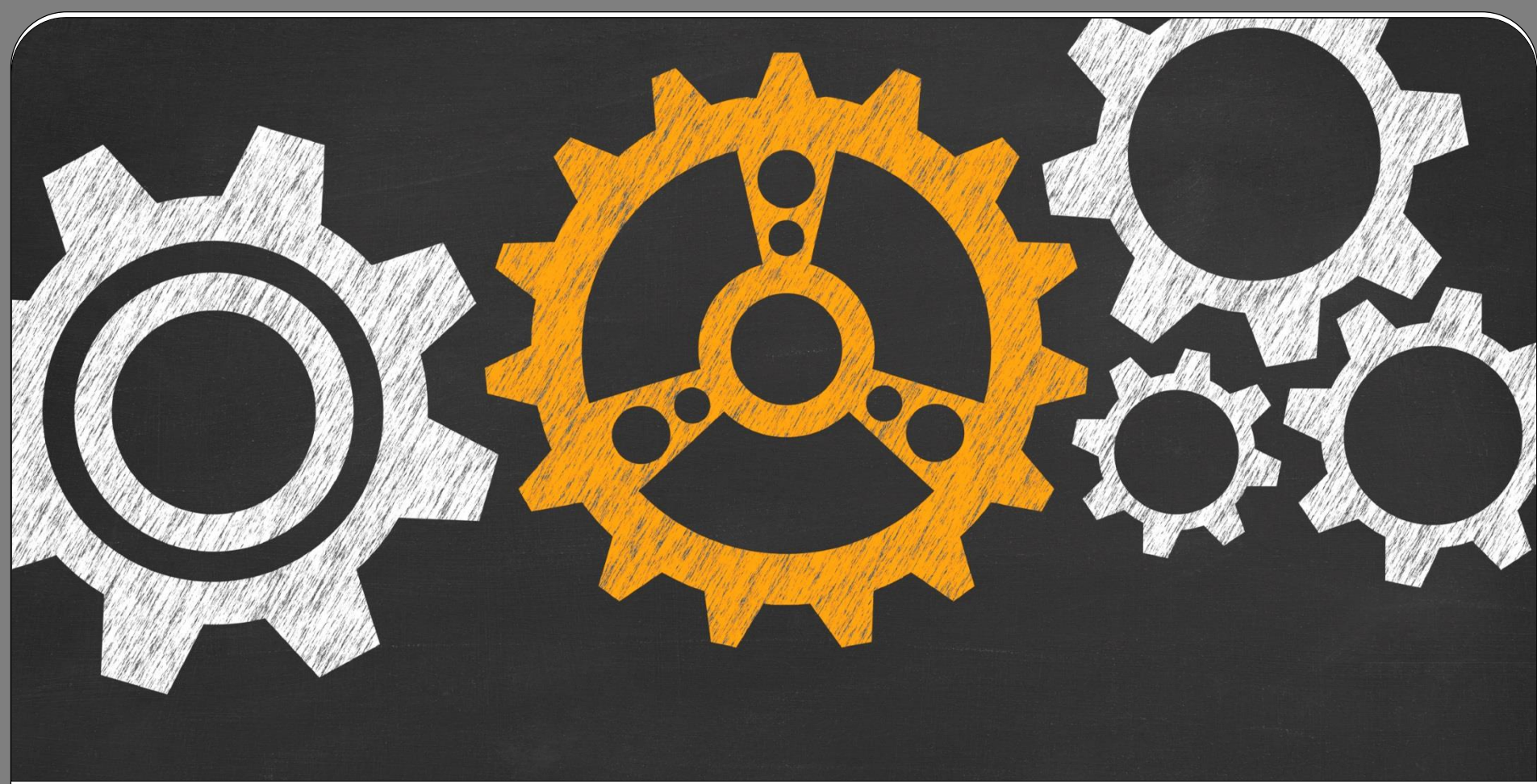
Unweighted Raw Data

# Demographics

These data represent raw responses. See the next section for a discussion of statistical weightings.

	<i>Total</i>	Grade			
		9	10	11	12
<i>Base</i>	<b>2915</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>656</b>
Gender					
No reply	13%	16%	14%	11%	13%
Male	34%	33%	32%	38%	33%
Female	53%	50%	55%	51%	55%
Transportation to School					
No reply	14%	15%	13%	10%	16%
I take the school bus	13%	21%	20%	7%	4%
I walk or bike	6%	8%	7%	4%	5%
I drive myself	29%	0%	6%	55%	59%
A family member drives me	30%	45%	45%	20%	11%
I car pool with adult drivers	3%	6%	3%	1%	1%
A friend drives me	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Other	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%
Grade					
9	25%	100%	-	-	-
10	27%	-	100%	-	-
11	25%	-	-	100%	-
12	23%	-	-	-	100%





# Appendix

Research Methodology • Additional Reference

# Methodology

- Research mode & sampling
  - > Online survey of DCSD high school students using a contact list provided by Douglas County School District.
- Survey instrument
  - > The survey was designed by Corona Insights.
  - > The survey was approximately 10 minutes in length.
- Execution
  - > Surveys were completed between December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup> 2016.
  - > Corona Insights initially sent out an email to parents of high school students allowing them to opt their student out of the survey if desired. Once opt-out students were cleaned from the list, Corona Insights sent an email invitation and two reminder emails (the reminder only went to students who had not yet completed the survey). Access to the survey was controlled via unique login information to prevent students from completing the survey more than once.
  - > 2,915 total responses are included in this analysis after data cleaning, including 422 partial responses that were reviewed and considered sufficient to include in the final dataset. After removing bounced emails, this represents a 14.7% response rate (APPOR RR3).
  - > Because certain populations may be more likely to respond to a survey, we needed to weight the data in order to make the survey sample representative of the overall population of high school students. The survey sample differed somewhat in gender, grade of the student, and type of school. Thus, data were weighted by gender, grade, and type of school (traditional public vs. charter or alternative school) to ensure that the samples matched the district's features in those areas. Weights ranged from 0.67 to 7.45.

# Cognitive Testing

- ➔ After the initial design of the survey, Corona conducted a series of cognitive testing interviews to pre-test the survey with 10 students. Students were asked to complete a draft of the survey and then discuss the survey with a Corona interviewer. The goals of the interviews were as follows:
  - > Ensure questions were asked in a clear, answerable manner
  - > Ensure questions were asked in a neutral, unbiased manner
  - > Ensure that the survey was not missing expected questions
- ➔ As a result of the cognitive testing interviews, the final survey included edits to wording, response options, question structure, and addition/deletion of questions.
- ➔ All interviews were conducted in-person in October and November 2016.
- ➔ Cognitive testing participants were recruited from a random list of all DCSD high school students. Parents were required to give consent for their child to participate in the interview.
- ➔ General characteristics of the participants from the interviews are summarized in the chart below.

Gender	Grade	High School
Male: 5 Female: 5	9: 0 10: 1 11: 4 12: 5	Castle View: 2 Chapparral: 2 Douglas County: 2 Highlands Ranch: 1 Legend: 1 Mountain Vista: 1 Rock Canyon: 1 Thunder Ridge: 1

# Segments

- ➔ The data were segmented with the following variables:
  - > **Type of school:** Traditional public school, Charter/Alternative type of school
  - > **Grade:** 9-12
  - > **Gender:** male, female
  - > **Years in District:** less than year, 1-3 years, 4-5 years, 6-7 years, 8+ years
  - > **Support at home for education:** strong support, some support, no support
  - > **Worried about teachers leaving:** yes, no, don't know
- ➔ Full results of the survey broken out by each variable are included in an accompanying data file.

# About Corona Insights

Our founder named the company Corona because the word means “light.” It’s the knowledge that surrounds and illuminates an issue; exactly what we provide. Our firm’s mission is to provide accurate and unbiased information and counsel to decision makers. We provide market research, evaluation, and strategic consulting for organizations both small and large.

*Learn more at [www.CoronaInsights.com](http://www.CoronaInsights.com)*

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