
Ninth Grade Transition Survey Report 2021

Anoka-Hennepin
School District

Prepared by the Department of
Research, Evaluation and Testing



ANOKA-HENNEPIN
SCHOOLS
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Introduction

This summary highlights student responses to the Ninth Grade Transition Survey. The objective of the Ninth Grade Transition Survey is to provide an opportunity for all ninth grade students to evaluate school programming and provide feedback on their experiences entering high school. Student’s perceptions of their educational experiences are useful for systems improvement. Summaries are shared with the Superintendent, Associate Superintendents, K-12 Curriculum and Instruction personnel, building-level administration and staff, and other district constituents.

The Ninth Grade Transition Survey has been administered since 2012 to all students finishing their ninth grade year. The survey was administered for the second time online this year for freshmen to complete between May 3rd and May 17th, 2021. Students generally take 15-30 minutes to complete the anonymous survey. The questionnaire consists of 15 items relating to students’:

- knowledge and use of school counselors
- concerns as ninth graders
- evaluation of their high school experiences
- educational aspirations
- demographic information

There were 890 ninth grade students who completed the survey in 2021. Typically, in years prior to 2020, teachers administered the survey during their advisory class, although starting in 2020 students were sent a link and asked to take the survey on their own time in an unstructured setting. Changes in results or number of respondents in 2020 and 2021 may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents were representative of the five traditional high schools as well as other sites and programs. Representation was generally equivalent regardless of school size with the exception of Andover High School, which is the smallest high school but had the greatest representation.

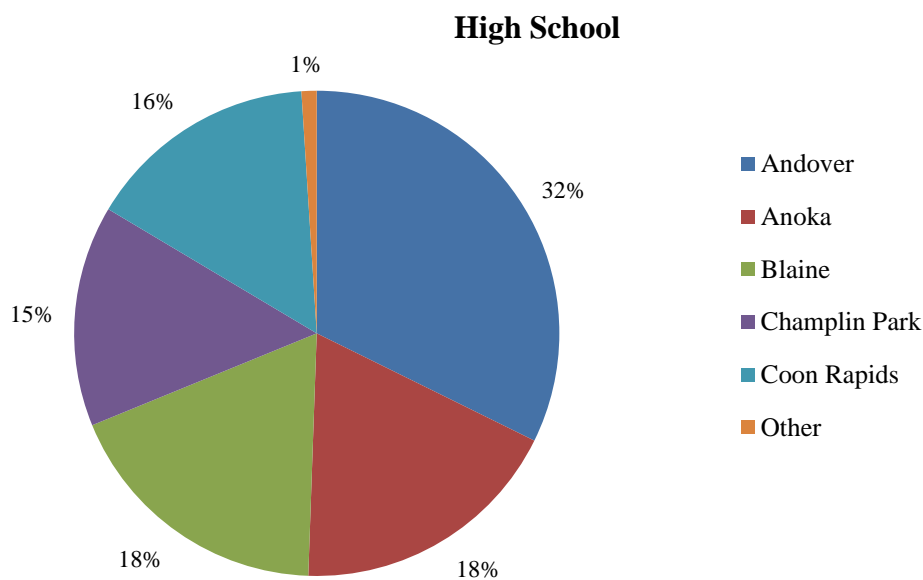


Figure 1. Percent of respondents by high school.

Key Findings

Note: Findings could be significantly impacted by 2020-21 instructional model changes during the pandemic.

- The percentage of ninth grade students who reported that their highest level of educational aspiration included obtaining a 4-year degree or higher was 76%, a decrease of 8% since 2020. Students with higher educational aspirations, obtaining a 4-year degree or higher, were more confident in reaching their goals.
- Most students learned about their school counselor through *orientation*, an *individual meeting* or an *advisory, advisement, or homeroom*.
 - Thirty-two percent of students reported not knowing who their counselor is, an increase of 18% from 2020. Additionally, 71% of ninth grade students reported that they have never met with their counselor; this was a 24% increase from last year.
 - Across all concerns, the percentages of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each concern has either stayed the same or decreased since 2020. The greatest percentages of students reported going to their school counselor for concerns about *schedule change, credits on track to graduate* and *registration* which is consistent with previous years.
- Thinking about the current school year, students rated their perceptions of their ninth grade experience. Eighty-eight percent of students reported feeling their teachers and other adults respect them, an increase of 3% since 2020. Other notable findings of students' ninth grade perceptions are indicated below.
 - Fifty percent of students reported knowing how to make an appointment with their school counselor, a 17% decrease since last year.
 - Sixty-one percent of students reported that they were in one or more school activities this year, a decrease of 16% from 2020.
 - The percentage of students who reported feeling prepared to move from eighth grade to high school (81%) decreased from the previous year by 11%.
- Ninth grade students were more concerned about *keeping up with class/homework* and *expectations to do well* at the end of the year than when entering the ninth grade.
 - The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering ninth grade were *bullying* and *peer pressure*. These items were even less of a concern at the end of the year.
 - The largest changes in concerns from the beginning to the end of the school year were those items centered on the physical unknowns of a new school. These concerns include *school size* which dropped by 12%, *going to a new school* which dropped by 16%, and *finding my classrooms* which dropped by 21% at the end of ninth grade.
 - Fifty-two percent of students reported feeling overwhelmed as they entered ninth grade and 50% still feeling overwhelmed at the end of their ninth grade year. Feeling overwhelmed has been at its highest level of concern since the inception of the survey back in 2012.
- On average, students rated the overall quality of services provided at their high schools as 2.8 (equivalent to a B-). Grades assigned in 2021 to each of the seven items related to the quality of services provided decreased or stayed the same as the previous year.

Demographics

There were 890 ninth grade students who participated in the survey. Students reported being 37% male and 54% female (5% of students preferred not to answer and 3% did not identify with any of the options listed). In years prior to 2020, students who completed the survey were distributed fairly evenly across genders. For the past two years, where we asked students to complete this survey on their own time, we have seen more of a discrepancy between genders. Students self-reported their ethnic background as the following:

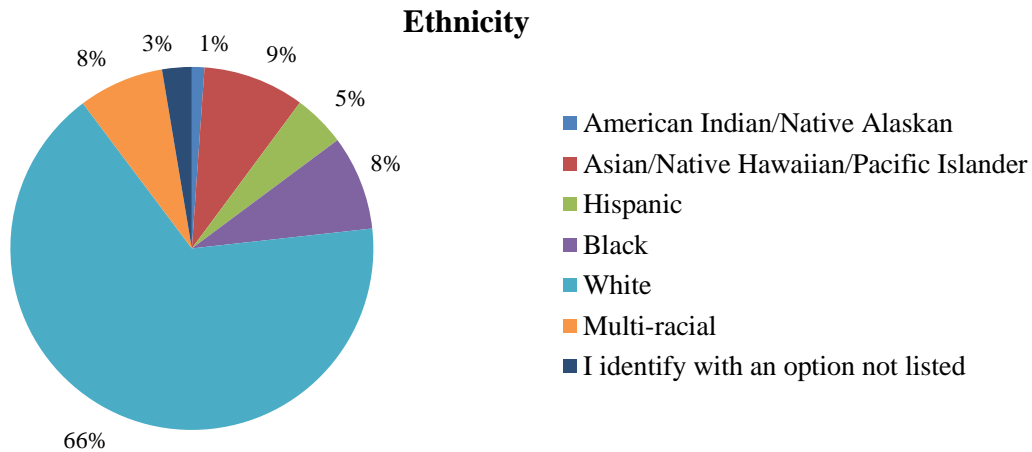


Figure 2. Percent of respondents by federal ethnicity.

Thirteen percent of the participants reported participation in either CEMS, BioMed or STEAM, this was a decrease of 4% from 2020, which was the largest change in respondent participation compared to last year. Student participation in other special programs is shown in the chart below.

Percentage of students participating in special programming

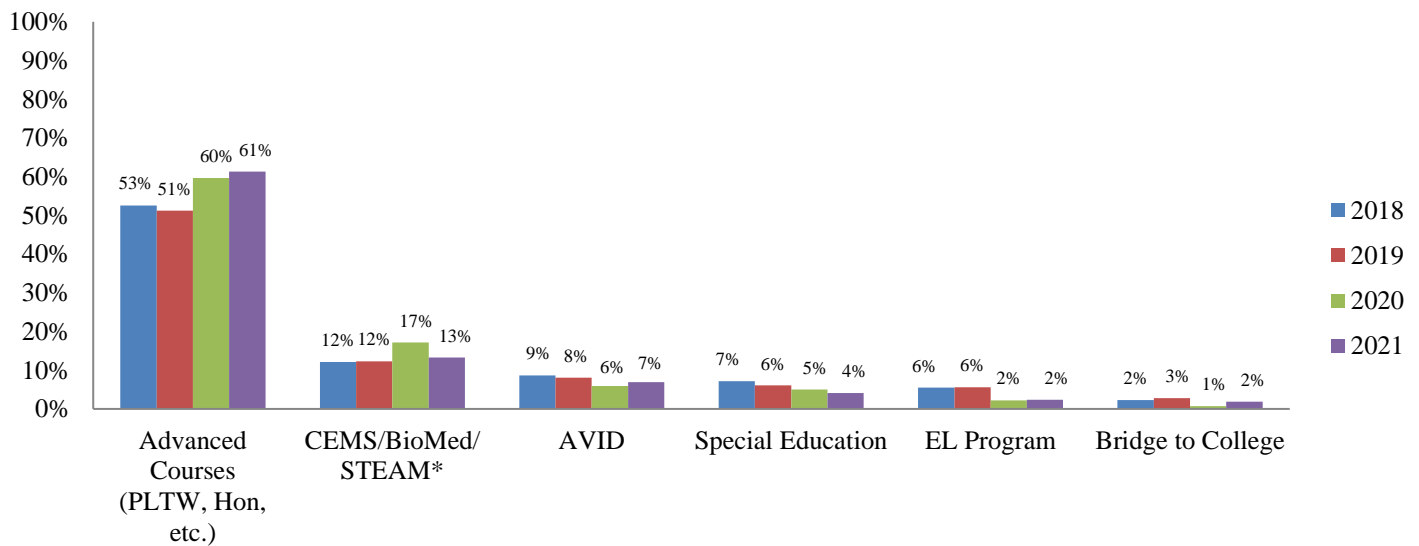


Figure 3. Percent of respondents by participation in special programming.
 * CEMS/BioMed/STEAM is only offered at Blaine and Coon Rapids High Schools.

Educational Goals

Educational aspirations. Seventy-six percent of ninth grade students reported aspirations that included obtaining a four-year college degree or higher, a decrease of 8% since 2020. From 2018 to 2020, aspirations of obtaining a high school diploma, doing some college course work, or achieving a two-year degree remained fairly consistent, however, this year each of those aspirations went up. The opposite was found for aspirations to obtaining a four-year degree or higher where each of those goals went down in 2021.

Highest educational goal (% of students)

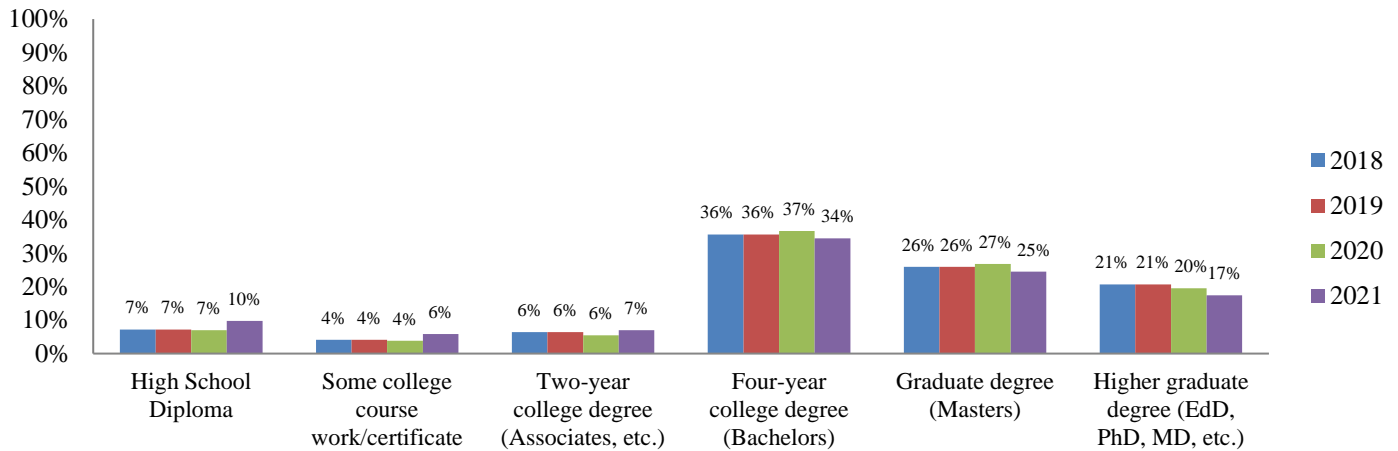


Figure 4. Percent of respondents by highest educational goal.

Confidence in reaching educational goals. Students pursuing a four-year college degree or higher reported being either extremely confident or confident in reaching their goals at a greater percentage than those students selecting other educational aspirations. In general, students with lower educational aspirations were less confident in reaching their goals.

**Relationship between two questions:
'What is your highest educational goal?' and 'How confident do you feel that you will reach your educational goal?'**

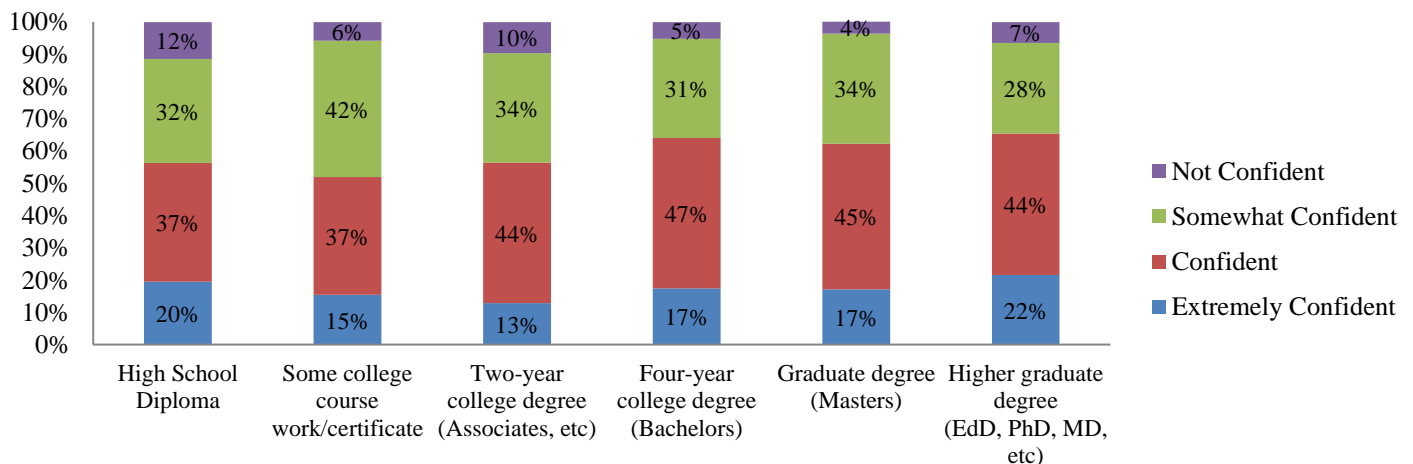


Figure 5. Percent of respondents by highest educational goal and confidence level.

School Counselors

Assigned counselor. Thirty-two percent of ninth grade students reported not knowing who their counselor was, an increase of 18% from last year. Ninth graders who knew their counselor learned about him or her through *orientation* (16%), an *individual meeting* (16%), or an *advisory, advisement, or homeroom* (13%).

How did you learn about your school counselor?

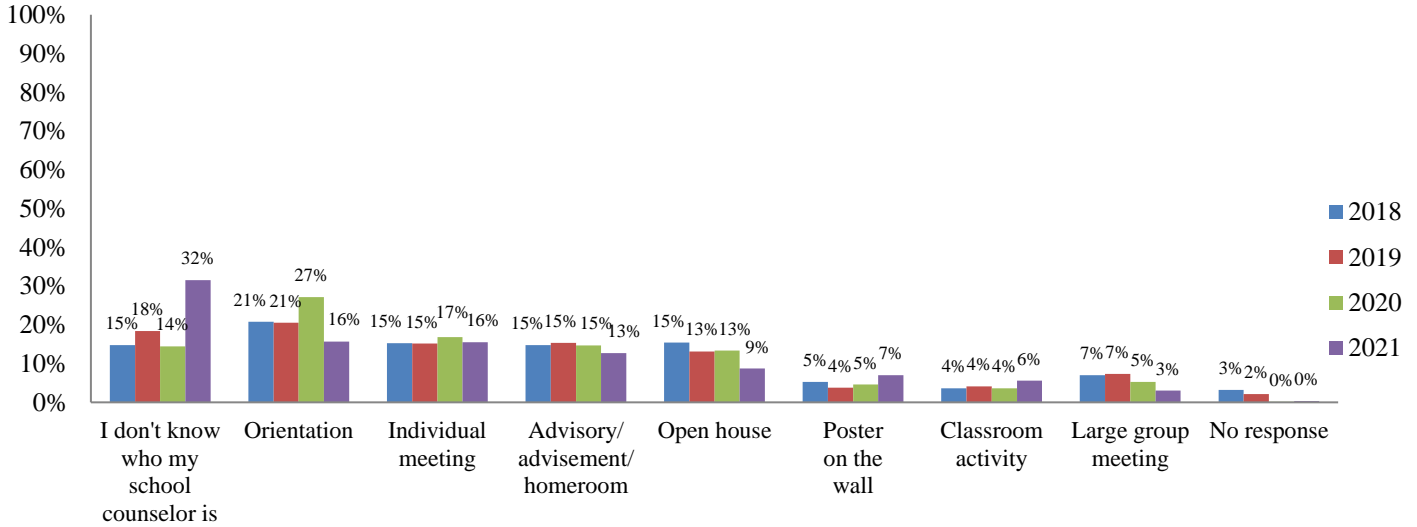


Figure 6. Percent of respondents by how he or she learned of who their counselor was.

Meeting with counselor. The percentage of ninth grade students who reported having never met individually with their school counselor, showed an increase of 24% since 2020, and is now at its highest level (71%) since the inception of the survey back in 2012.

How many times have you met individually with your school counselor?

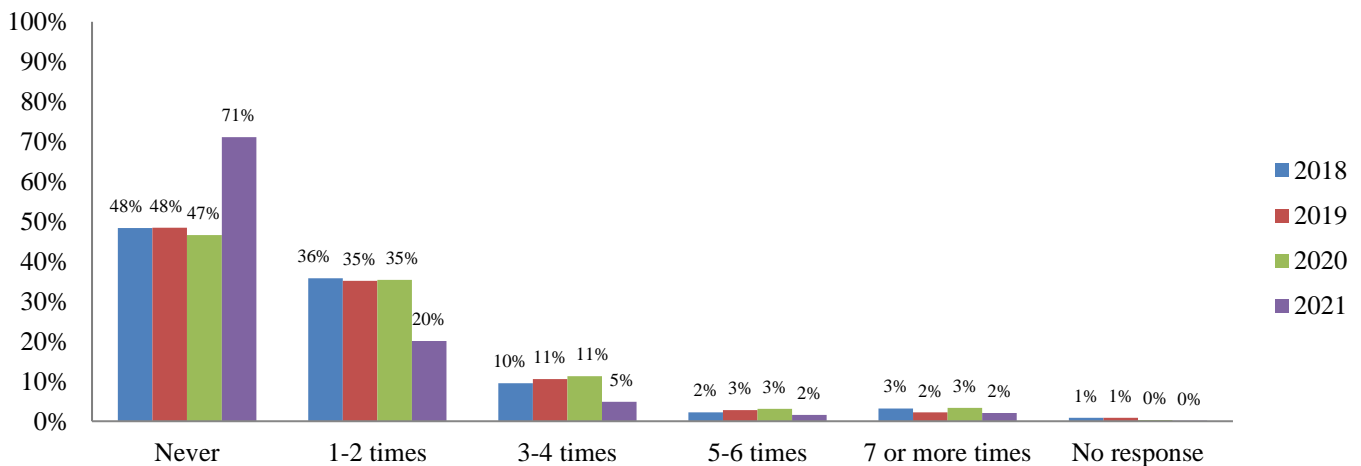


Figure 7. Percent of respondents by how often he or she met with their counselor.

Concerns. The concerns for which ninth grade students indicated they would go to their school counselor most frequently included: *schedule change* (65%), *credits on track to graduate* (60%), and *registration* (60%). Students were less likely to report that they would go to the school counselor for the following: *questions about grades* (10%), *difficulty in class* (17%), and *feeling sad or discouraged* (21%). The percentage of students who reported they would see their counselor because of schedule change decreased 14% since last year and is at its lowest level (65%) since the survey began in 2012. The percentages of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each of the identified concerns has decreased since 2020 except questions about grades which has remained about the same.

Percentage of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each concern

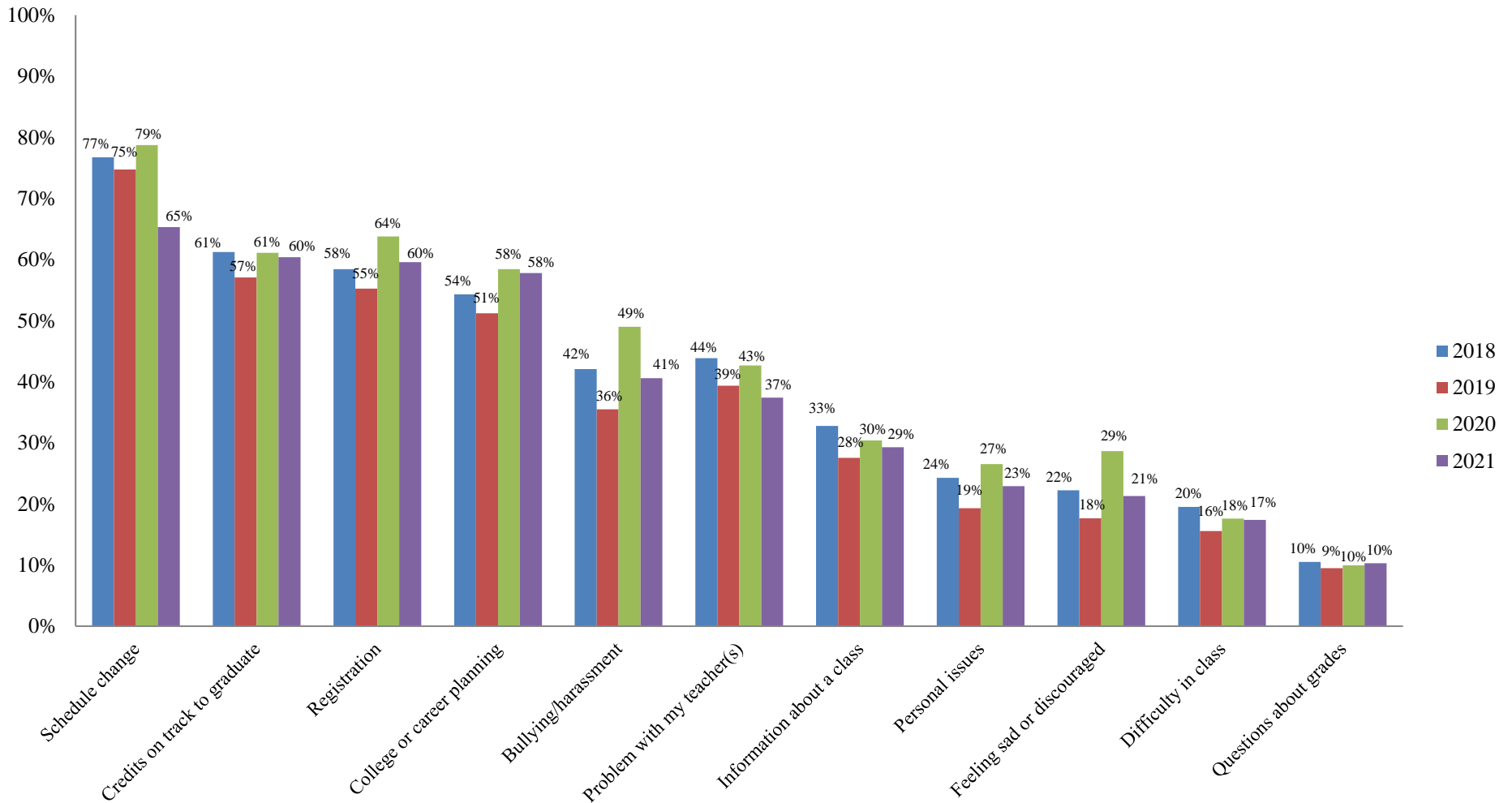


Figure 8. Percent of respondent self-reporting that they would go to their school counselor for each concern.

Additional Responses to Six of the Concerns

In this section, students could choose more than one person that they would go to for each of the following concerns.

College and career planning. School counselor was the highest rated person to who respondents would go to talk about college or career planning (58%); this was consistent with previous years. Forty-three percent of students reported they would go to a parent or family member for college or career planning, a 7% increase from 2020. Fifteen percent of students reported they would go to their homeroom teacher or advisor to discuss college or career planning, a 13% decrease from the previous year.

Who students would go to to discuss: College or career planning

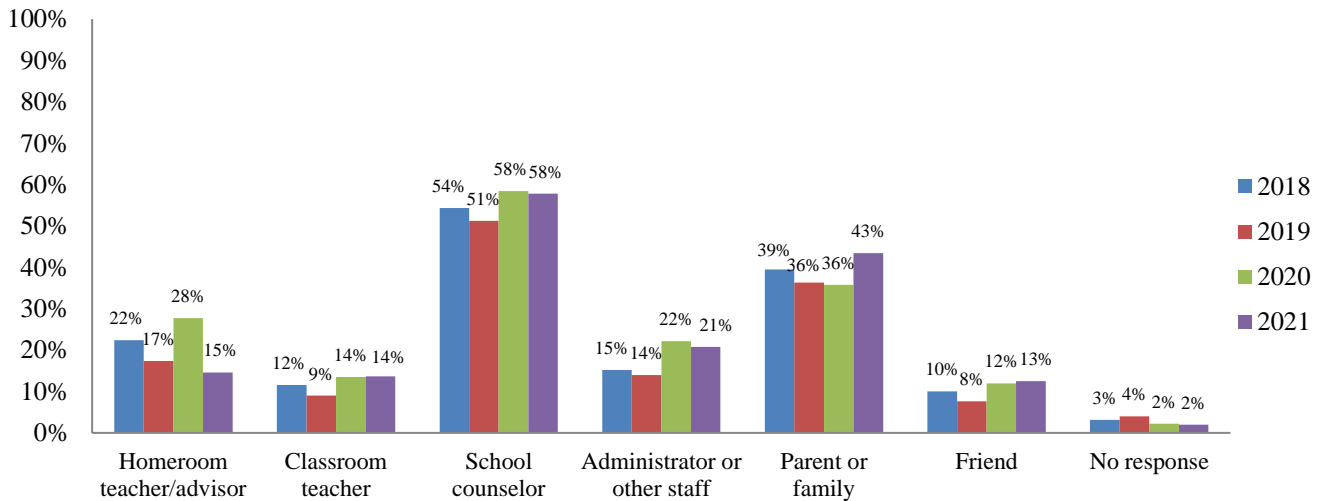


Figure 9. Percent of respondents by who they would go to to discuss college or career planning.

Questions about grades. For the past four years, students reporting they would go to their classroom teacher with questions about their grades has remained consistently high (86% in 2021). More students reported they would go to a parent or family member for questions about their grades (17%), than to their homeroom teacher/advisor (11%), a friend (11%), a school counselor (10%), or a school administrator or other staff (4%).

Who students would go to to discuss: Questions about grades

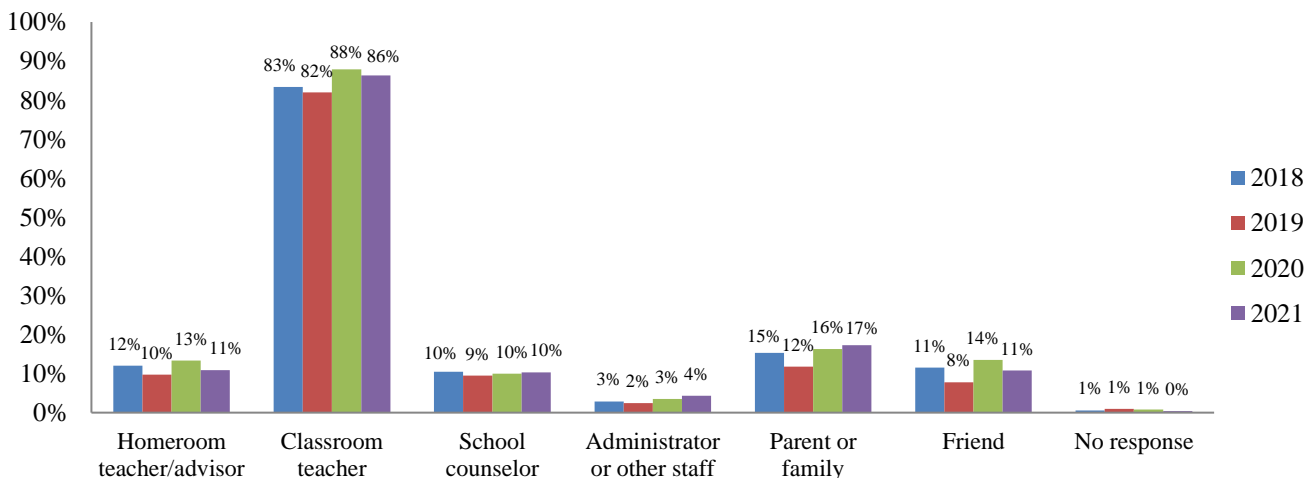


Figure 10. Percent of respondents by who they would go to for questions about grades.

Difficulty in class. The majority of students (68%) reported they would go to a classroom teacher to discuss difficulty in class; this was a 3% decrease from 2020. A moderate percentage of students reported they would go to a parent or family member (32%), a friend (26%), and/or a school counselor (17%) to discuss difficulty in class.

Who students would go to to discuss: Difficulty in class

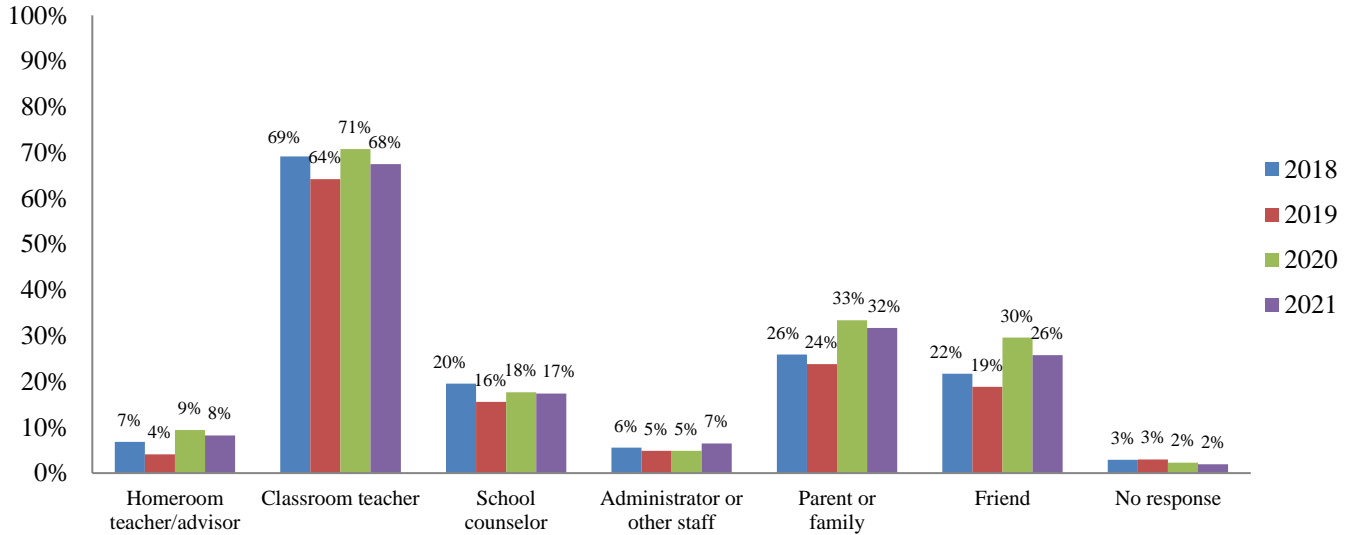


Figure 11. Percent of respondents by who they would go to for difficulty in class.

Personal issues. Sixty-three percent of students reported they would go to a friend to discuss personal issues while 56% percent of students reported they would go to a parent or family member. Twenty-three percent of students reported they would discuss personal issues with a school counselor. This is more than a classroom teacher (4%), an administrator or other staff (3%) or a homeroom teacher/advisor (2%).

Who students would go to to discuss: Personal issues

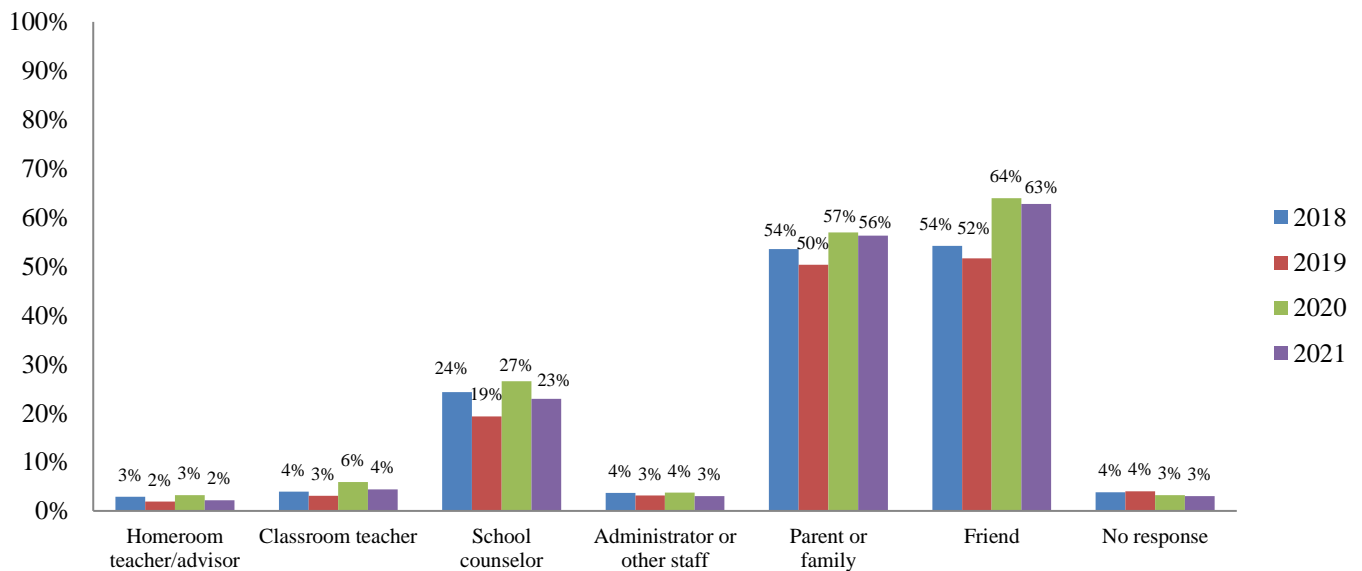


Figure 12. Percent of respondents by who they would go to to discuss personal issues.

Feeling sad or discouraged. Sixty-seven percent of students reported they would go to a friend to discuss feeling sad or discouraged. Forty-nine percent of students reported they would go to a parent or family member. These two response options have remained consistently high since 2012. Twenty-one percent of students reported they would go to a school counselor, a decrease of 8% from last year.

Who students would go to to discuss: Feeling sad or discouraged

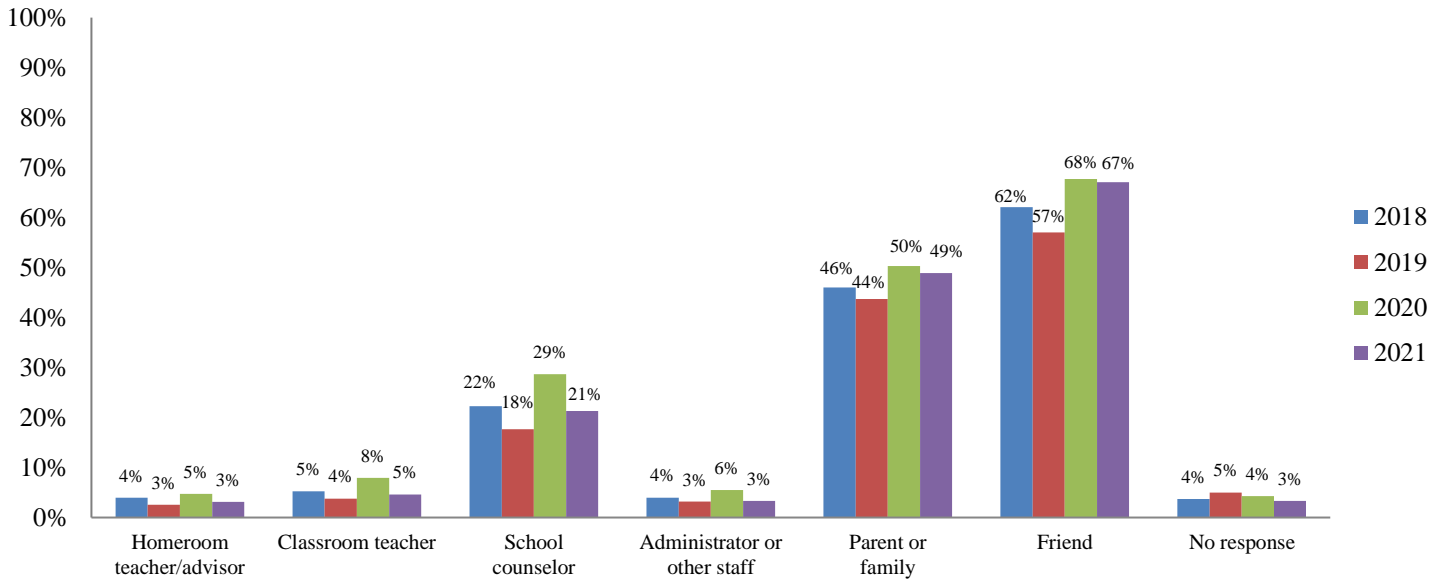


Figure 13. Percent of respondents by who they would go to to when feeling sad or discouraged.

Bullying and/or harassment. The highest percentage of students reported they would go to a parent or family member (49%) or friend (44%) regarding bullying or harassment concerns. The percentage of students that reported they would go to a classroom teacher to discuss bullying and/or harassment (23%) has steadily increased over the past two years. Forty-one percent of students reported they would go to a counselor to discuss being bullied and/or harassed, a decrease of 8% since last year.

Who students would go to to discuss: Bullying/harassment

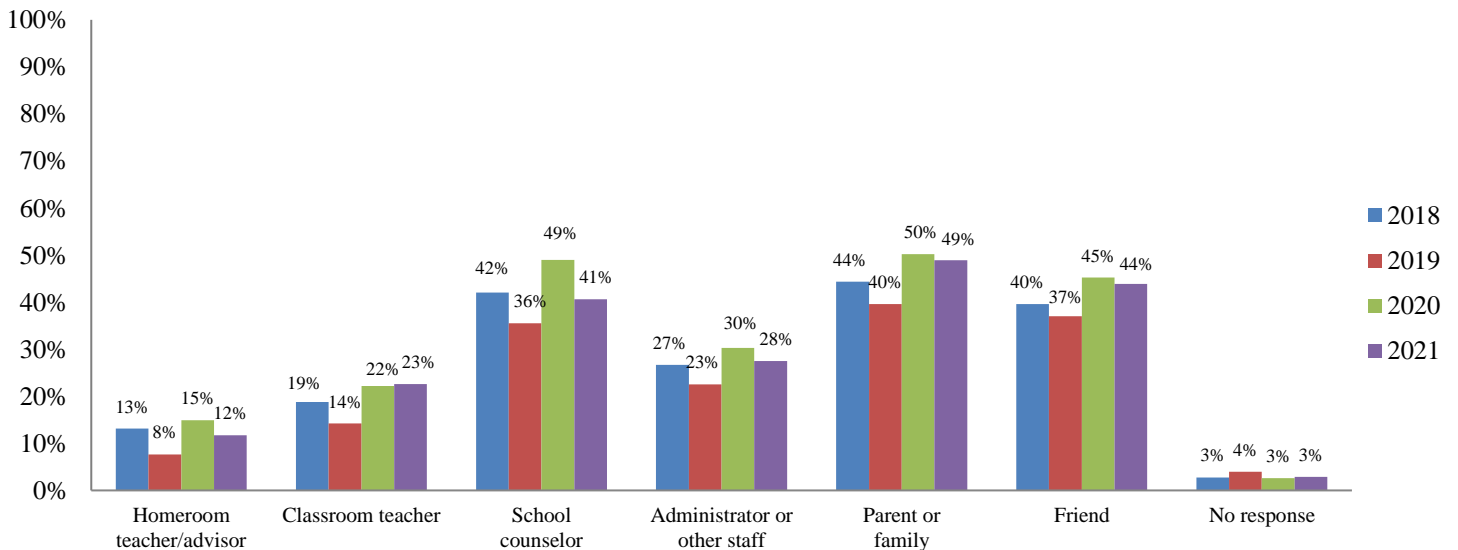


Figure 14. Percent of respondents by who they would go to to discuss bullying and/or harassment.

Perceptions of the Ninth Grade Experience

Note: These items in particular may have been impacted by the 2020-21 learning model changes.

Eighty-eight percent of students agreed with the statement *My teachers and other adults at school respect me*, an increase of 3% since last year. This item was the only item that did not decrease for the 2020-21 school year.

Fifty percent of ninth grade students reported knowing how to make an appointment with their school counselor, a decrease of 17% since 2020. Sixty-one percent of students reported being involved in one or more activities in his or her school, a decrease of 16% since the year before.

The percentage of students who reported feeling prepared to move from eighth grade to high school (81%) decreased by 11% since last year.

Sixty-nine percent of students reported feeling like they were a part of their school community, a decrease of 8% from 2020 to 2021.

When thinking about your ninth grade year... (% who strongly agree or agree)

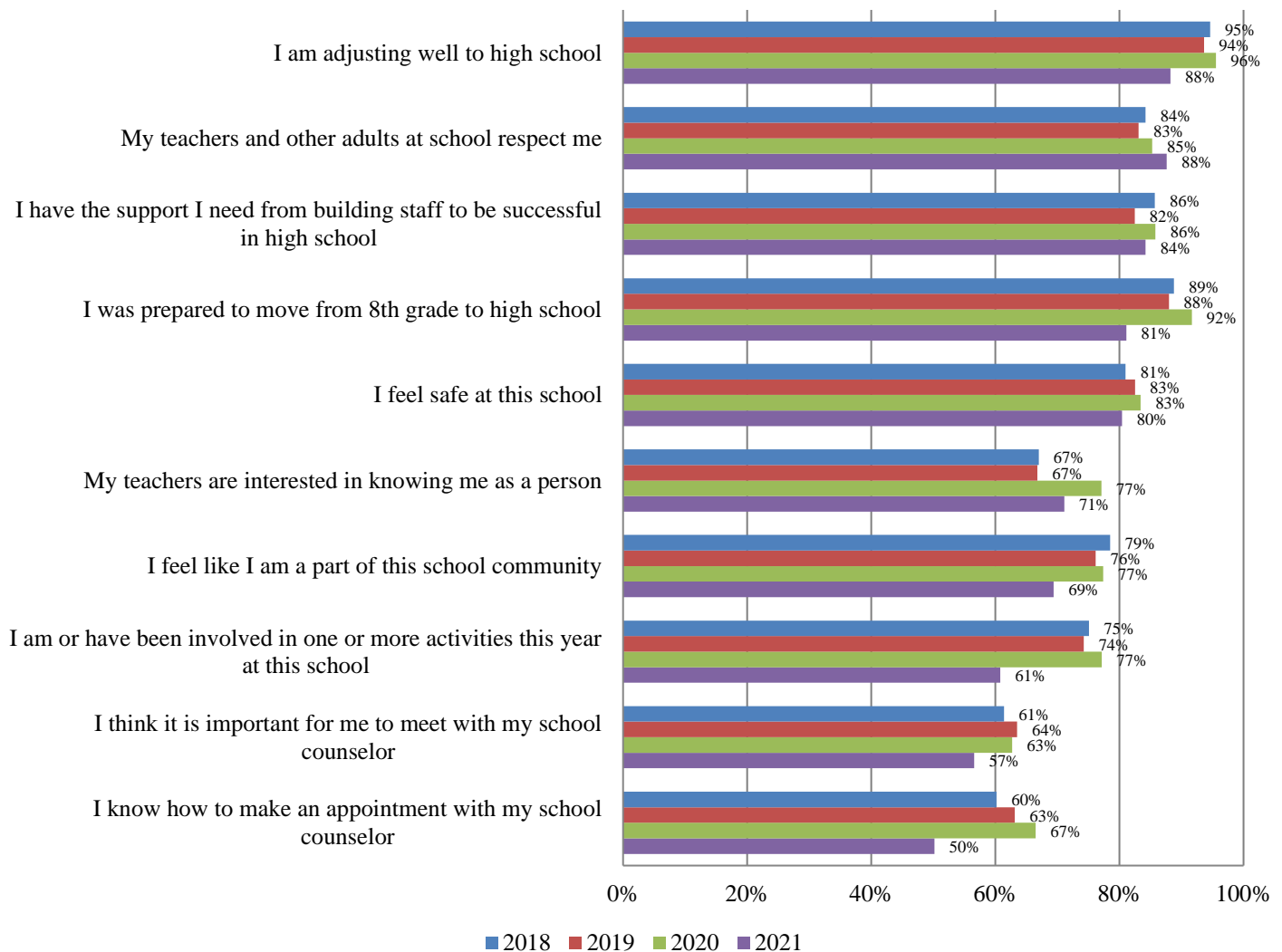


Figure 15. Percent of respondent agreement with the statements about their ninth grade experience.

Comparing level of concern from beginning to end of year

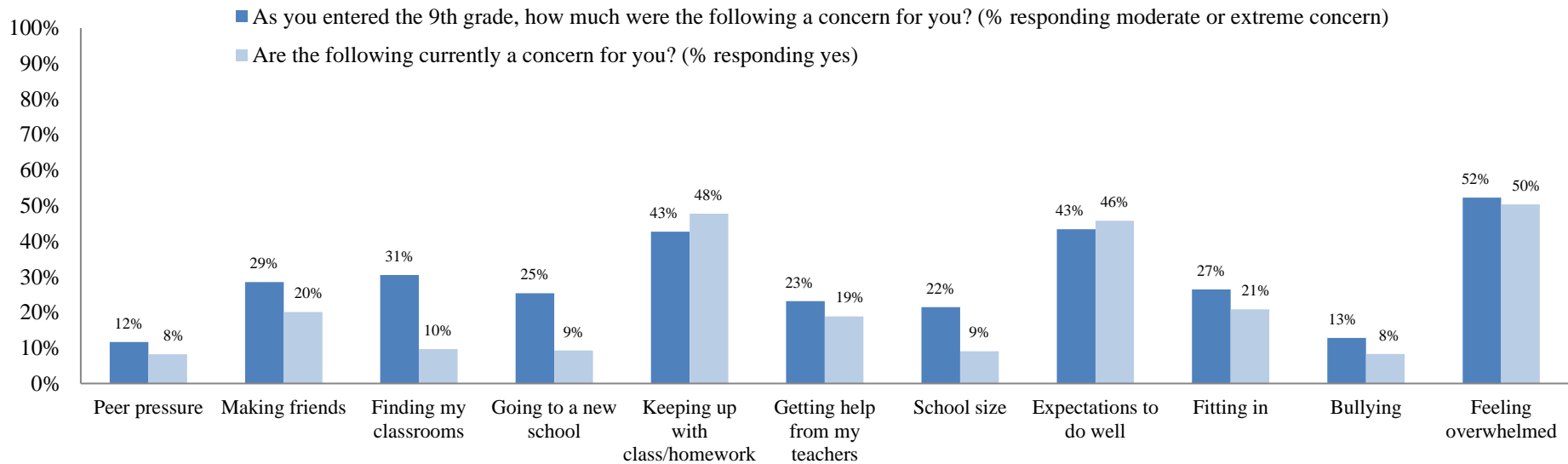


Figure 16. Percent of respondents concerned about various topics related to school from the beginning of their ninth grade year to the end.

Ninth graders expressed less of a concern for nine of the eleven items at the end of the year than at the beginning. They were least concerned at the end of the year about the following: *bullying* (8%), *peer pressure* (8%), *going to a new school* (9%), *school size* (9%), and *finding my classrooms* (10%). Students were more concerned at the end of the school year than when starting the school year about: *keeping up with class/homework* (48%) and *expectations to do well* (46%). The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering the ninth grade were *peer pressure* (12%) and *bullying* (13%). The largest changes in concerns from the beginning to the end of the school year were those items centered on the physical unknowns of a new school. These concerns include school size which dropped by 12%, going to a new school which dropped by 16%, and finding my classrooms which dropped by 21% by the end of ninth grade.

Average letter grade assigned to high school (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and F = 0)

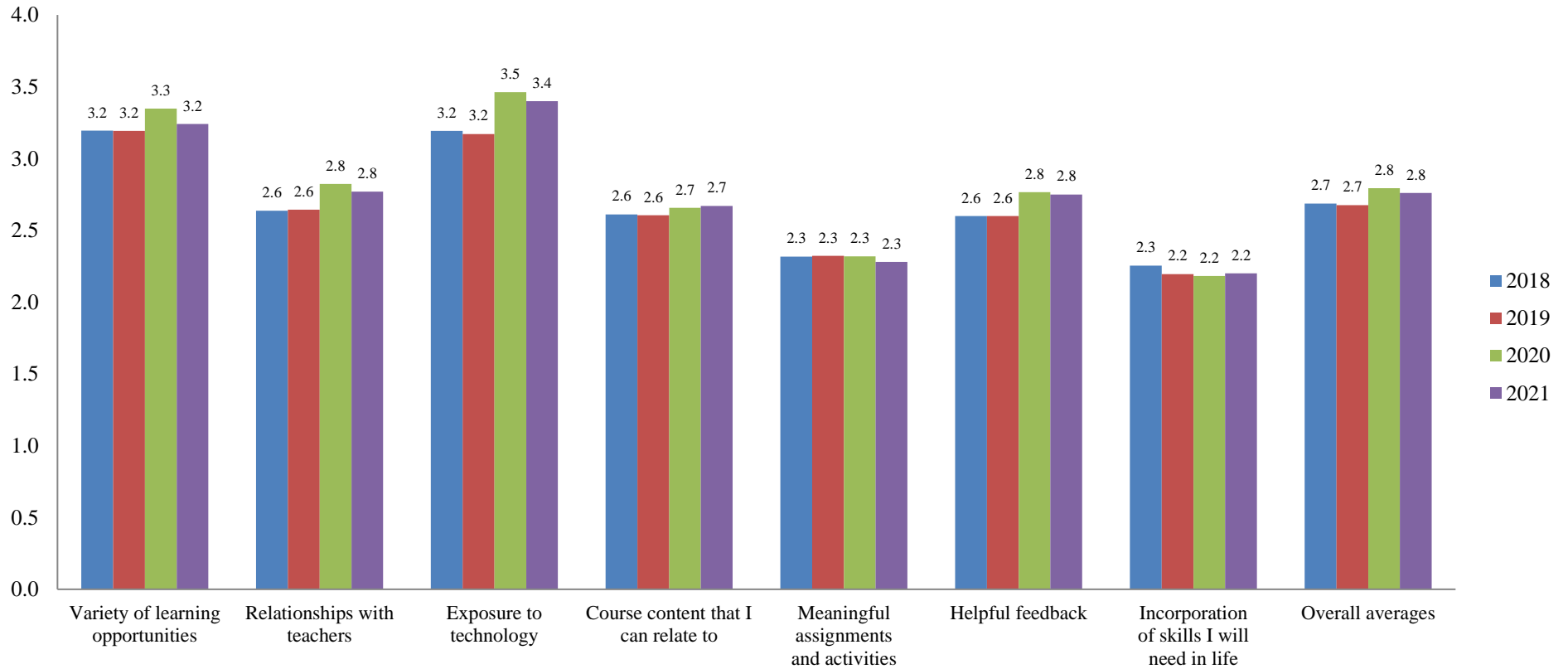


Figure 17. Average letter grade assigned to high school by item.

On average, students rated the quality of services provided at their high schools as a 2.8 (equivalent to a B-). All grades assigned to each item either decreased slightly or stayed the same from last year to this year.

In general, students rated *exposure to technology* and *variety of learning opportunities* higher than other items. The rating of *incorporation of skills I will need in life* was the lowest among items, with *meaningful assignments and activities* only slightly higher. Ratings were relatively stable or on the decline until 2020, where ratings increased for many items. In 2021, however, we saw the opposite, ratings were either stable from the year prior or decreased.

This report was generated by the Research, Evaluation and Testing department of the Anoka-Hennepin School District. For further information, please visit the RET website, www.ahschools.us/ret, or call (763) 506-1000 and request the RET department.