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# Ninth Grade Transition Survey Report 2023

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Anoka-Hennepin  
School District

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Prepared by the Department of  
Research, Evaluation and Testing

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ANOKA-HENNEPIN  
SCHOOLS  
*A future without limit*

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## Introduction

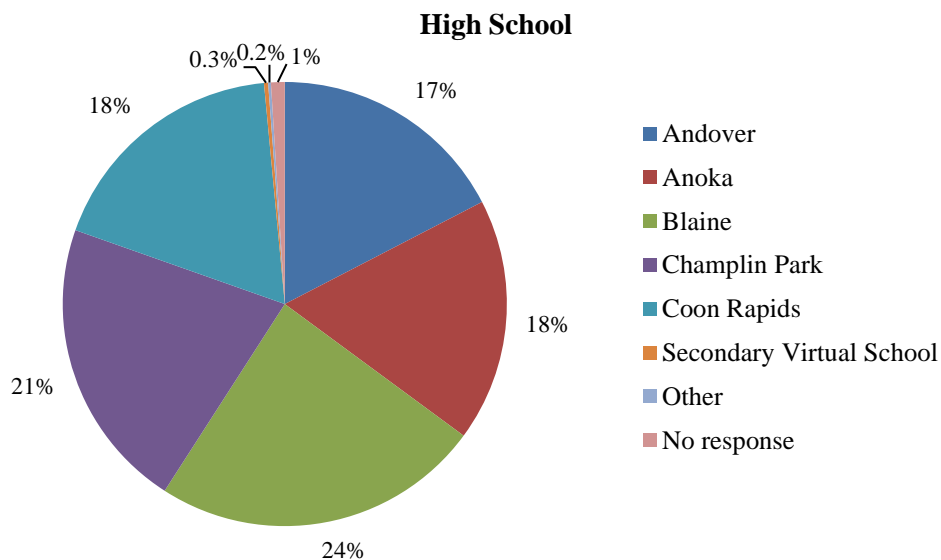
This summary highlights student responses to the Ninth Grade Transition Survey. The objective of the Ninth Grade Transition Survey is to provide an opportunity for all ninth-grade students to evaluate school programming and provide feedback on their experiences entering high school. Students' perceptions 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 to freshman during structured advisory classes to complete online between March 27<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. 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; and
- demographic information.

There were 2,332 ninth grade students who completed the survey in 2023, over 500 more students responding than in 2022. Historically, in years prior to 2020, teachers administered the survey during their advisory class, although in years 2020 and 2021, students were sent a link and asked to take the survey on their own time in an unstructured setting. In 2023, ninth grade students were given the opportunity to participate in the survey online during a structured time in advisory classes, except for students who attend Blaine High School who had the opportunity to complete the survey either on their own or during advisory classes, as well as students at Secondary Virtual School, who completed the survey during unstructured time. Changes in results or number of respondents in 2020 and 2021 may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and how the survey was administered.

Respondents were representative of the five traditional high schools, the district's virtual school, as well as other sites and programs. Respondent representation was generally reflective of enrollment with the exception of Champlin Park which was slightly underrepresented and Andover which was slightly over represented relative to their building size.

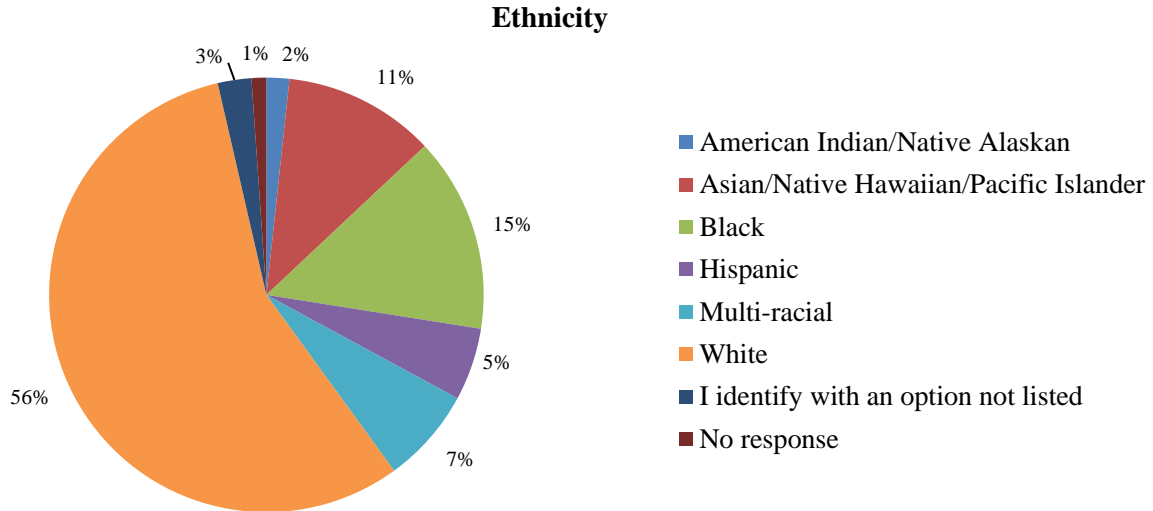


## Key Findings

- The percentage of ninth grade students who reported that their highest level of educational aspiration included obtaining a 4-year degree or higher was 71%, a decrease of 13% 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 who their school counselor is through *orientation* or an *individual meeting*.
  - Nineteen percent of students reported not knowing who their counselor is, an increase of 4% since 2022. Fifty percent of ninth grade students reported that they have never met with their counselor individually, an increase of 2% since last year.
  - Across all concerns, the greatest percentages of students reported going to their school counselor for concerns about schedule changes, registration, and credits on track to graduate, which is consistent with previous years.
- Thinking about the current school year, students rated their ninth-grade experience. Ninety-four percent of students reported feeling they are adjusting well to high school. Other notable findings regarding this item are noted below.
  - Eighty-nine percent of students agreed that they felt prepared to move from eighth grade to high school, which increased by 6% from students reports in 2022.
  - Seventy-seven percent of students reported that they were in one or more school activities this year, an increase of 3% since 2022.
  - The percentage of students who reported feeling like they are a part of the school community (81%) is now at the highest rate since 2017.
- When thinking about their ninth-grade experiences, compared to students overall, male students reported statistically significantly greater agreement with 7 of the 10 statements posed, while students who identify with a gender option not listed or preferred not to disclose their gender reported significantly less agreement on 10 and 9 out of 10 statements, respectively. Asian students reported lower agreement on 6 of the 10 items, while White students reported higher agreement with 8 of 10 items. Students attending Andover High School reported significantly higher agreement with 9 of 10 items, while students attending Anoka and Coon Rapids High Schools both rated 6 of the 10 items significantly lower compared to all students.
- Of the eleven potential areas of concern, students were more concerned about *keeping up with class/homework* 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*. Across the year, concern about peer pressure and bullying decreased even further.
  - The largest changes in concerns from the beginning to the end of the school year were items centered on the physical unknowns of a new school, including *school size* which dropped by 10%, *finding my classrooms* which dropped by 12%, and *going to a new school* which dropped by 13% by the end of ninth grade.
  - Forty-one percent of students reported feeling overwhelmed as they entered ninth grade and 39% feeling overwhelmed at the end of their ninth-grade year. Feeling overwhelmed has been the greatest concern since the inception of the survey.
- Students who identified as female reported significantly greater concern when entering high school in 10 of the 11 areas compared to students overall, yet students who identified as male were significantly less concerned in all 11 areas. White students reported significantly less concern in 6 of 11 areas, while students identifying as Asian reported significantly greater concern in 7 areas. Students attending Andover High school reported lower concern in all 11 areas, whereas students attending Blaine High School reported higher concern than students overall in 9 of 11 areas.
- On average, students rated the overall quality of services provided at their high schools as 2.9 (equivalent to a B-). Grades assigned in 2023 to each of the seven items related to the quality of services provided increased or stayed about the same as the previous year.
  - Male students and students attending Andover High School rated their school significantly higher than students overall on 5 of 7 items and 7 of 7 items, respectively, whereas students who identify with a gender option not listed on the survey rated their high school lower than students overall on 7 of 7 items.

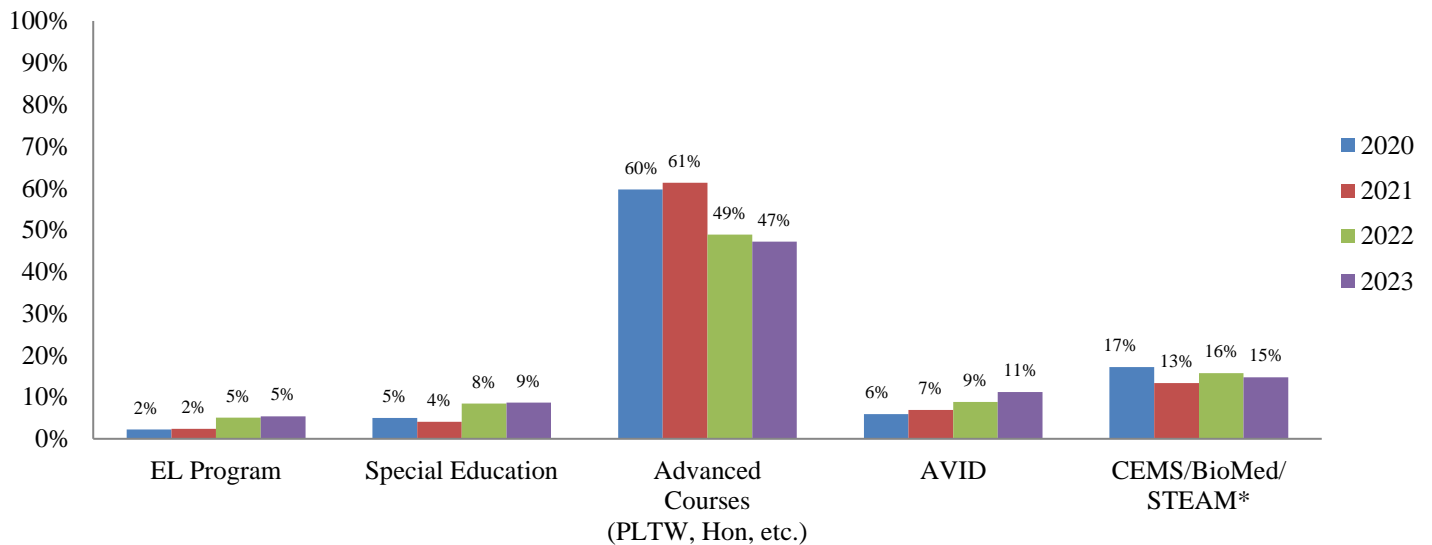
## Demographics

There were 2,332 ninth grade students who participated in the survey. Forty-six percent of responding students reported being female and 46% reported that they were male (3% of students preferred not to answer, 3% did not identify with the options listed, and 2% did not respond). Students' self-reported ethnic backgrounds were similar to the district population, as follows:



**Participation in special programming.** Just under half of respondents indicated they took advanced coursework. Just over 10% of respondents reported participation in the AVID program, while 15% of those responding reported participation in either CEMS, BioMed, or STEAM. The percentage of respondents who reported participating in the English Language Learner (EL) program and students reporting receiving special education services were both underrepresented compared to those enrolled.

### Percentage of students participating in special programming

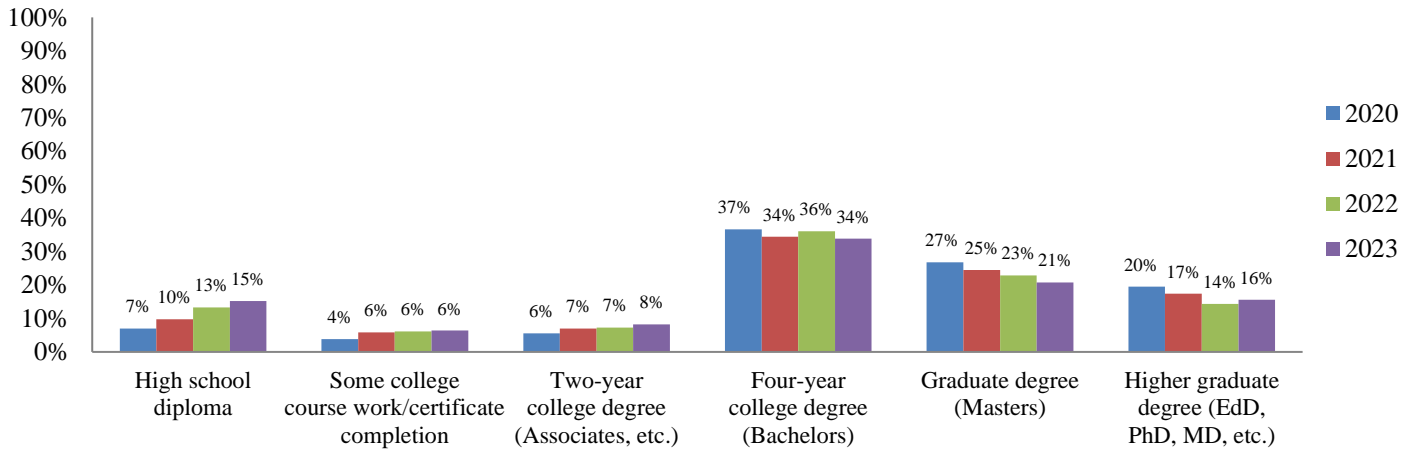


\* CEMS is only offered at Blaine HS and Coon Rapids HS, BioMed is only offered at Coon Rapids HS, and STEAM is only offered at Anoka HS.

## Educational Goals

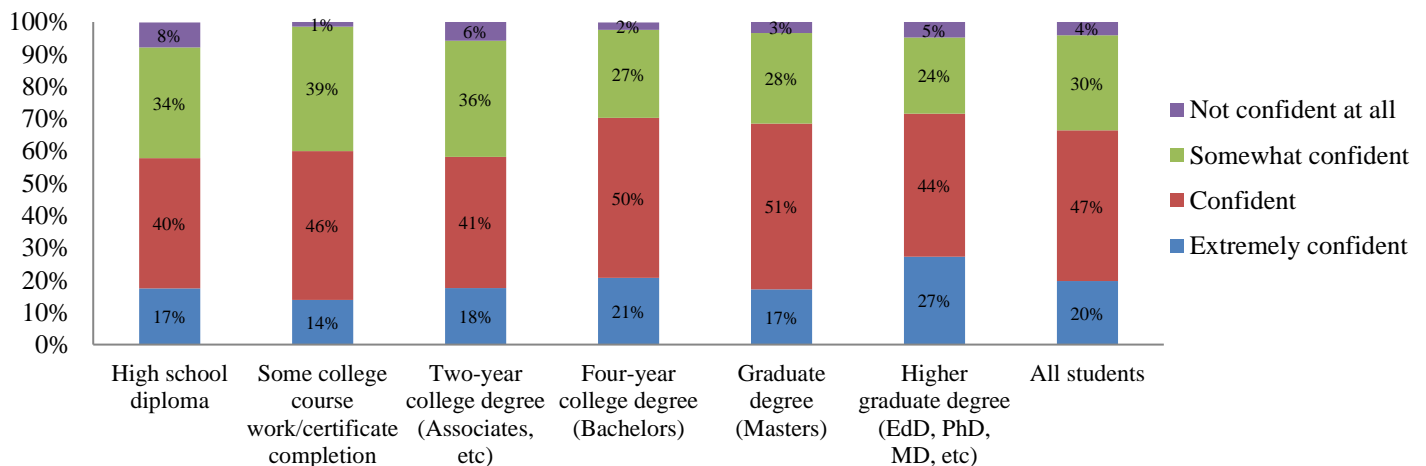
**Educational aspirations.** Seventy-one percent of ninth grade students reported aspirations that included obtaining a four-year college degree or higher, a decrease of 13% since the high in 2020. The percentage of students reporting a high school diploma as their highest educational goal has been steadily increasing over the last seven years. After a steady five-year decline in the percentage of students' aspirations to obtaining a higher graduate degree, there was an increase of 2% from 2022 to 2023.

**Highest educational goal (% of students)**



**Confidence in reaching educational goals.** Students aspiring to obtain 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. Of the 348 ninth grade students who indicated a high school diploma was their highest educational goal, 8% reported not being confident and 34% reported being only somewhat confident in obtaining this goal.

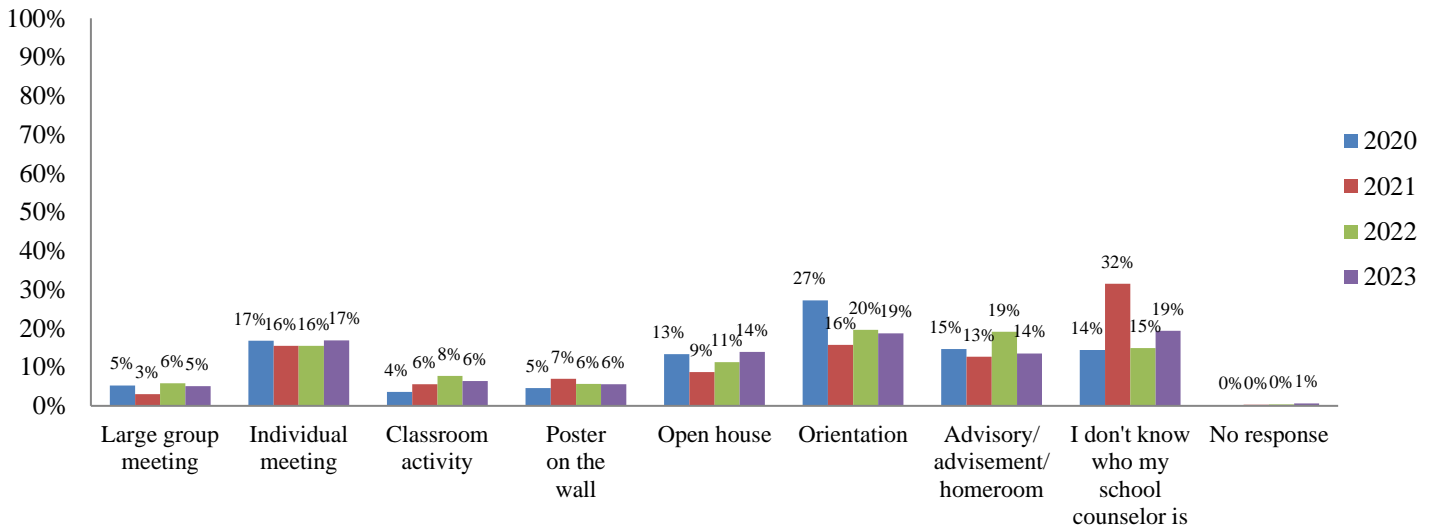
**Relationship between two questions:  
What is your highest educational goal? and How confident do you feel that you will reach your educational goal?**



## School Counselors

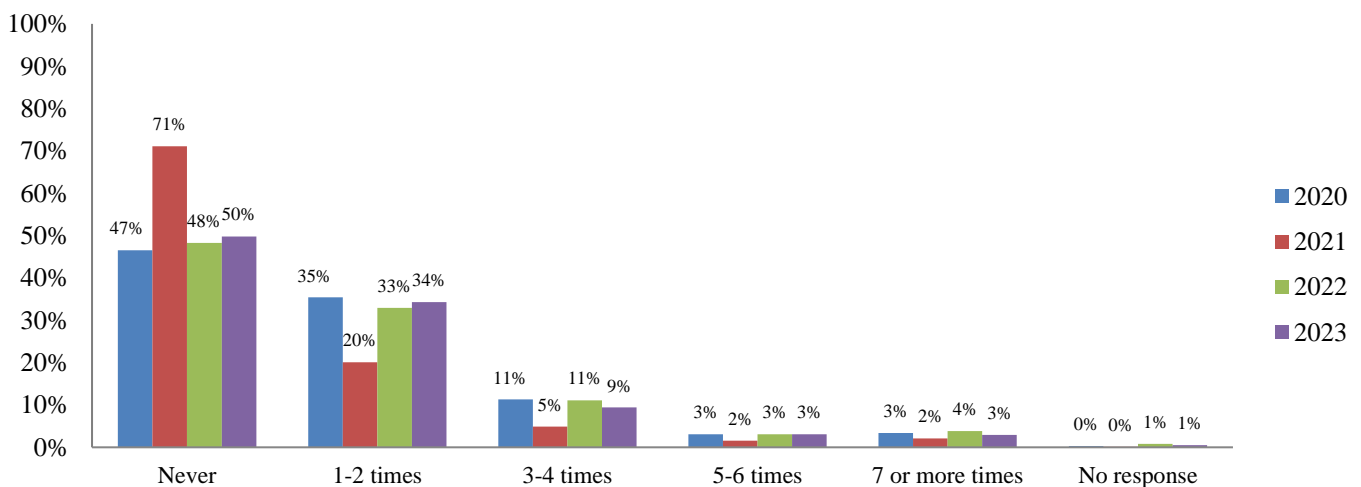
**Assigned counselor.** Nineteen percent of ninth grade students reported not knowing who their counselor was, a rate slightly higher than years in recent history, excluding 2021, for which there was a spike in students reporting not knowing their counselor. The top ways that ninth graders learned about their counselors was through *orientation* (19%), an *individual meeting* (17%), *advisory/advisement/homeroom* (14%), or *open house* (14%). The greatest increase in the way students learned about their counselor, for those who know who their counselor is, from 2022 was through *open house* (3% increase). However, there was a greater increase in the percentage of students who reported they do not know who their counselor is (4%).

**How did you learn about your school counselor?**



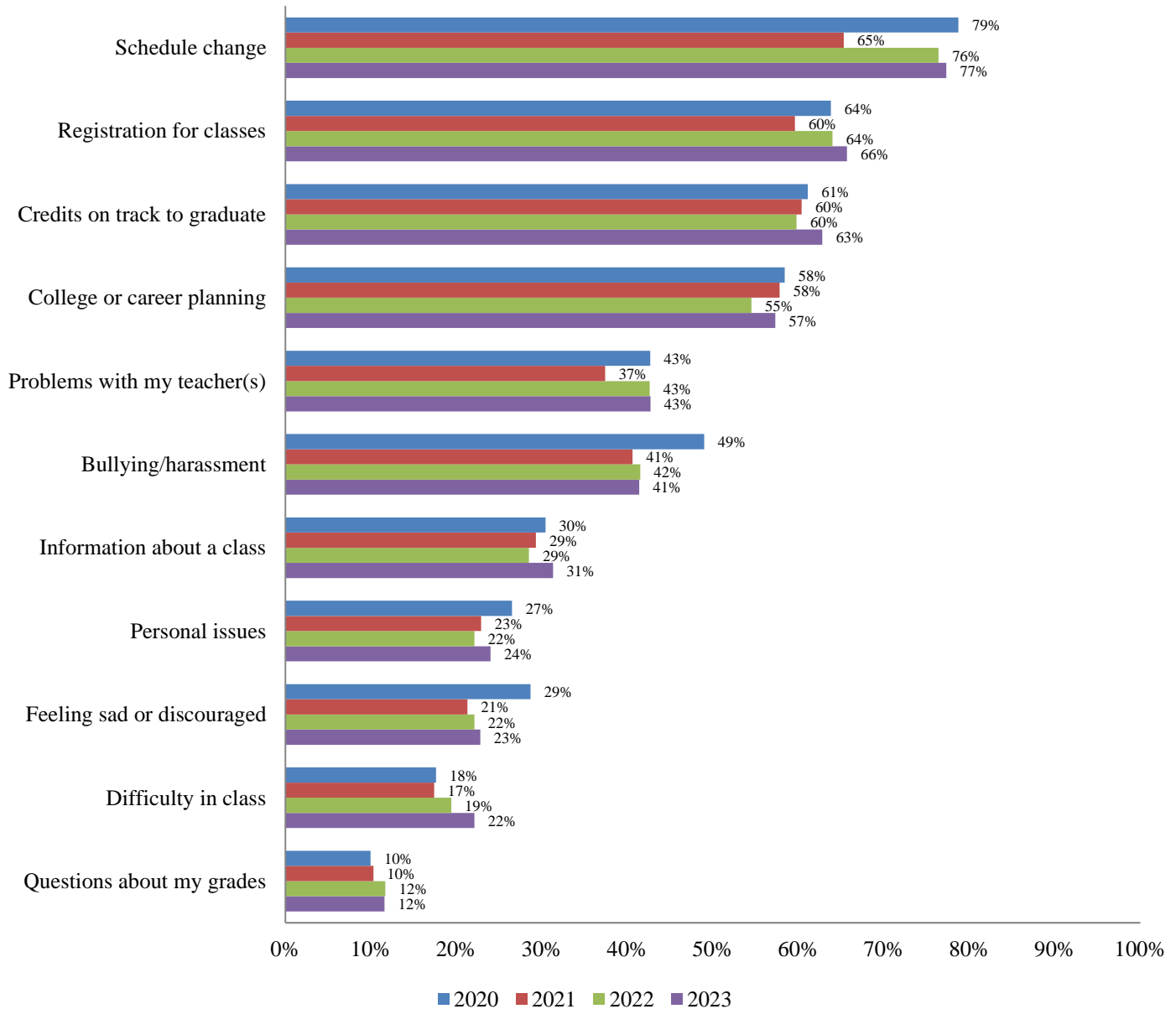
**Meeting with counselor.** The percentage of ninth grade students who reported having never met individually with their school counselor increased by 2% since 2022. Three percent of respondents indicated they met individually with their counselor 7 or more times. The percentage of students meeting with their counselor at each range of frequencies in 2023 was consistent with much of the survey history, with the exception of 2021.

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



**Concerns.** The concerns for which ninth grade students indicated they would go to their school counselor most frequently included: *schedule change* (77%), *registration for classes* (66%), and *credits on track to graduate* (63%), all of which increased slightly since 2022. Students were less likely to report that they would go to the school counselor for the following reasons: *questions about my grades* (12%), *difficulty in class* (22%), and *feeling sad or discouraged* (23%). Students reported that they would go to their counselor for each concern at the same or greater rate as 2022. The largest changes from 2022 to 2023 in the percentage of students reporting concerns for which they would see their counselor were *difficulty in class*, *information about a class*, and *credits on track to graduate*, each of which increased by 3%.

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



Note: For each of the concerns above, students were given several options of who they would go to, counselors being one of them. Students were allowed to select as many of the options they wanted for each concern, for example, homeroom teacher, classroom teacher, parent or family, and friend. Items in the graph are sorted from highest to lowest agreement for the current year.

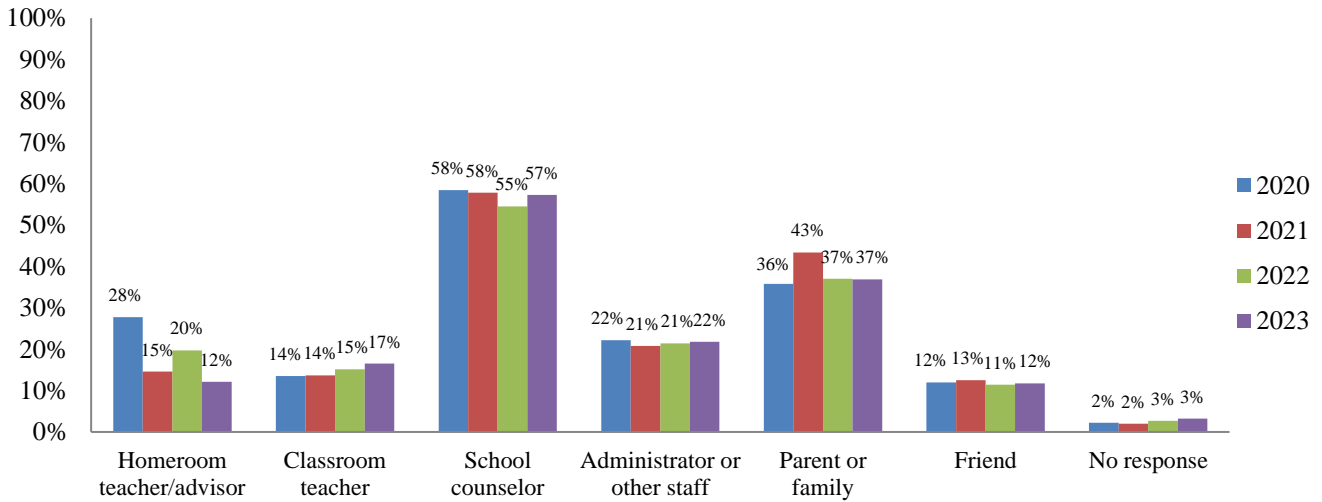


## Support for Concerns

The following graphs highlight who students report they would go to for support with concerns around successful course completion, future planning, and their social and/or emotional needs. In this section, students could choose more than one person that they would go to for each of the concerns.

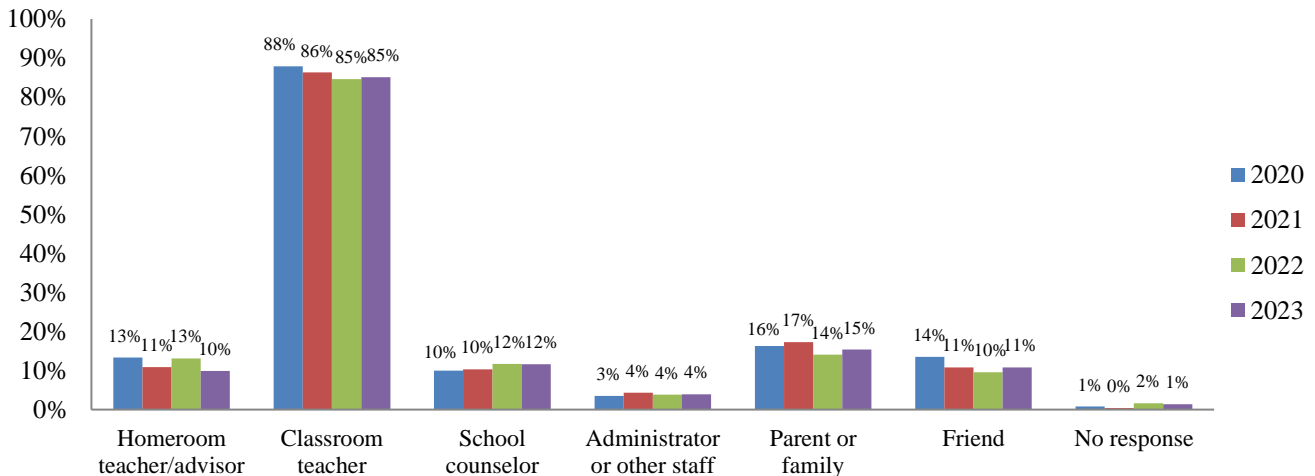
**College and career planning.** *School counselor* was the most commonly selected person to whom respondents would go to talk about college or career planning (57%); this was consistent with previous years. The next most common choice was a *parent or family member* (37%). Twelve percent of students reported they would go to a *homeroom teacher/advisor* for college or career planning, an 8% decrease from 2022, which was the largest reported change in this area.

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



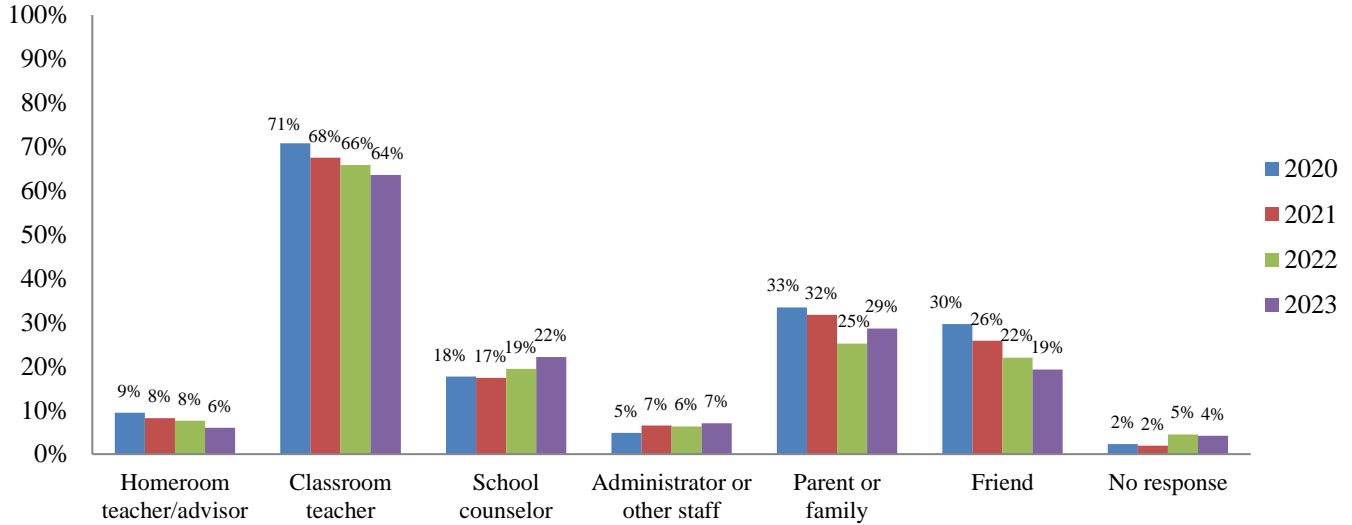
**Questions about grades.** Since the survey’s inception, students have most commonly reported they would go to their *classroom teacher* with questions about their grades (85% in 2023). More students reported they would go to a *parent or family member* for questions about their grades (15%), than to a *friend* (11%), a *school counselor* (12%), their *homeroom teacher/advisor* (10%), or a *school administrator or other staff* (4%).

**Who students would go to to discuss: Questions about grades**



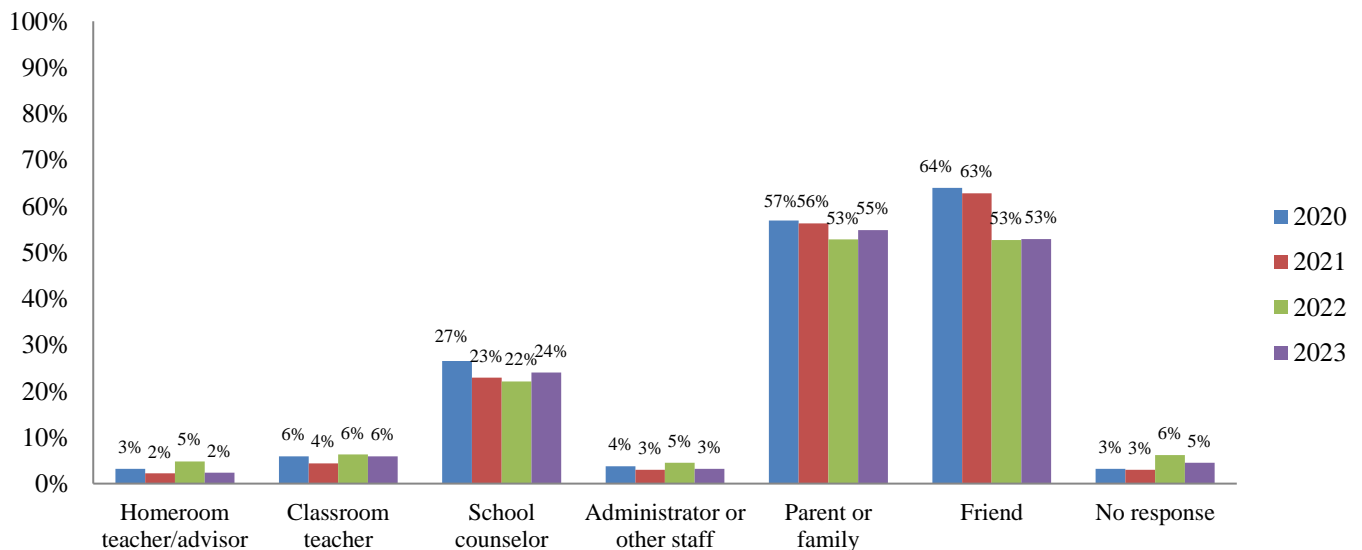
**Difficulty in class.** The majority of students (64%) reported they would go to a *classroom teacher* to discuss difficulty in class; this selection decreased by 7% since 2020. The percentage of students reporting that they would go to a *parent or family member* (29%) and/or a *school counselor* (22%) to discuss difficulty in class increased by 4% and 3% since 2022, respectively, whereas the percentage of students reporting that they would go to a *friend* (19%) or *homeroom teacher/advisor* (6%) decreased by 3% and 2%, respectively, since last year.

**Who students would go to to discuss: Difficulty in class**



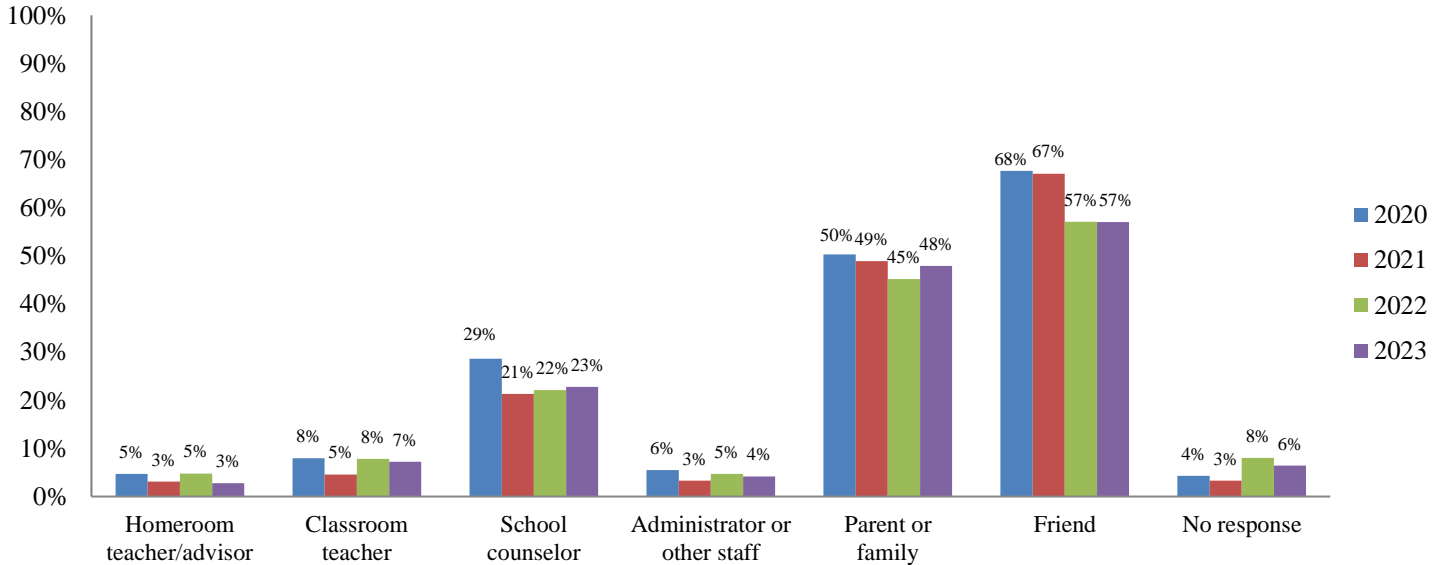
**Personal issues.** The highest percentage of students reported that they would go to a *parent or family member* (55%) to discuss personal issues, followed closely by a *friend* (53%). Students' reports of seeking out a friend to discuss personal issues saw a large increase in 2020 but is now at a level similar to 2019 and earlier years. Twenty-four percent of students reported they would seek out a *school counselor* to discuss personal issues. This is more than a *classroom teacher* (6%), an *administrator or other staff* (3%), or a *homeroom teacher/advisor* (2%), all of which decreased since 2022.

**Who students would go to to discuss: Personal issues**



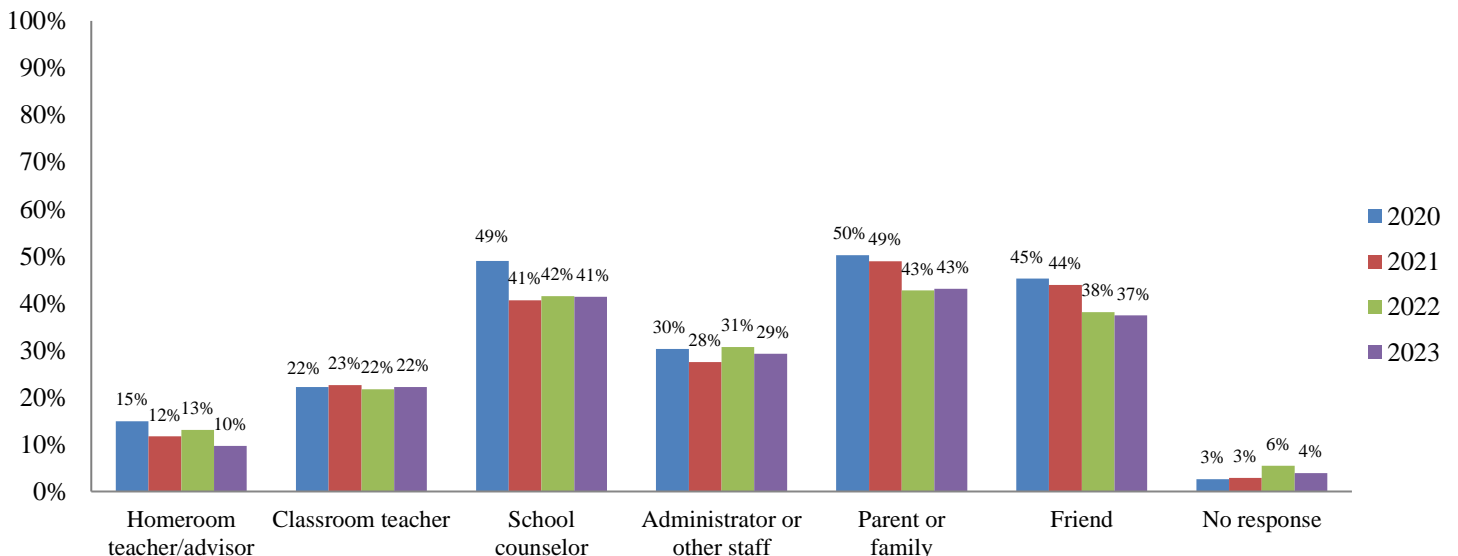
**Feeling sad or discouraged.** Fifty-seven percent of students reported they would go to a *friend* to discuss feeling sad or discouraged. Forty-eight percent of students reported they would go to a *parent or family member*. Students reporting they would go to a friend to discuss feeling sad or discouraged spiked in 2020, but has now returned to levels similar to 2019 and earlier. Twenty-three percent of students reported they would go to a *school counselor*, an increase of 2% over the past three years.

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



**Bullying and/or harassment.** Across all people to whom a student could go to discuss bullying/harassment, there was maintenance or decrease since 2022. The highest percentages of students reported they would go to a *parent or family member* (43%) or *school counselor* (41%). Thirty-seven percent of students reported they would go to a *friend* to discuss being bullied and/or harassed. The percentage of students who reported they would go to a *classroom teacher* to discuss bullying and/or harassment has remained fairly stable around 22% for the past four years.

**Who students would go to to discuss: Bullying/harassment**

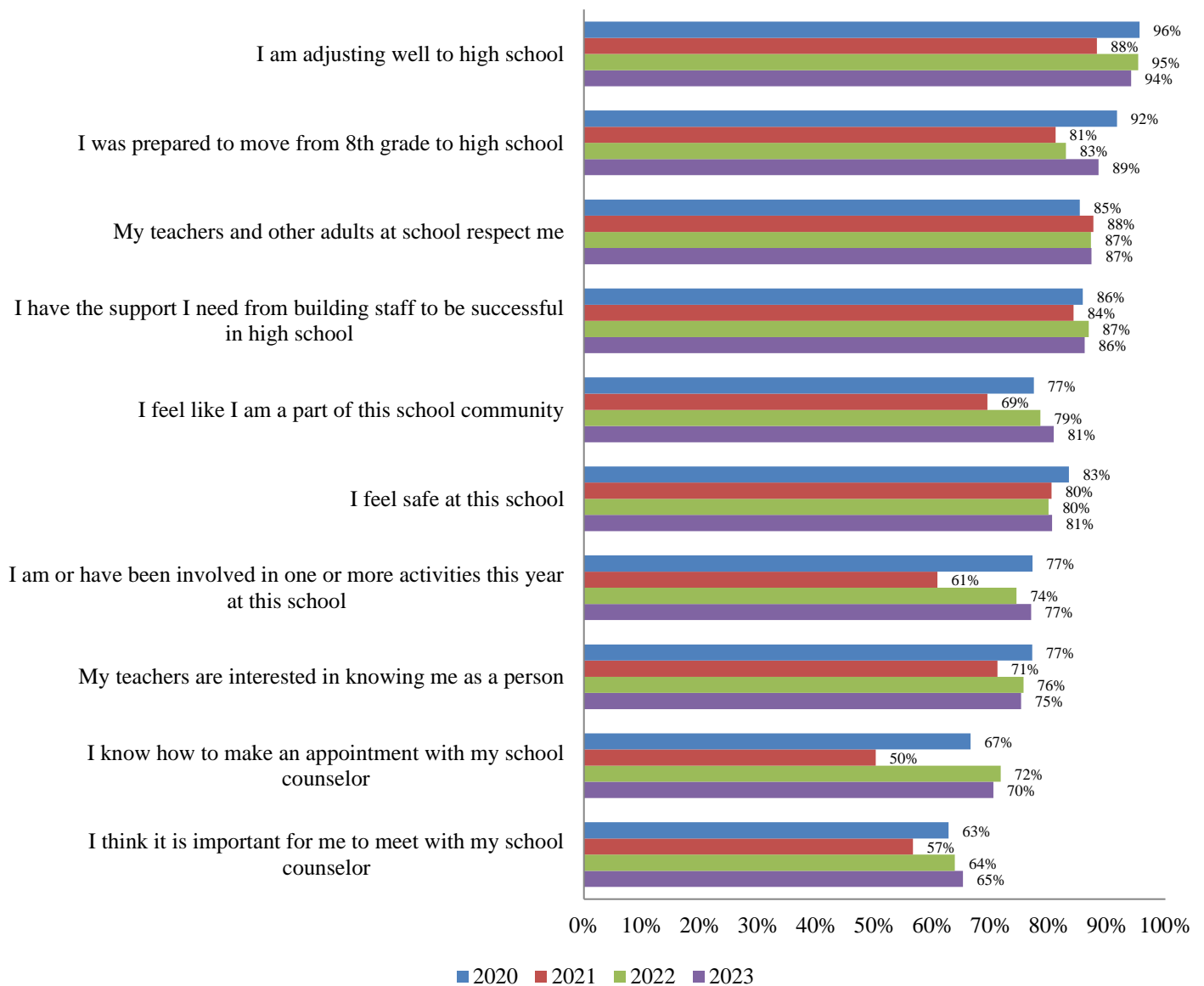


## Perceptions of the Ninth Grade Experience

Ninety-four percent of students agreed with the statement *I am adjusting well to high school*, a rate similar to prior years with the exception of 2021. Eighty-nine percent of students agreed that they felt prepared to move from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to high school, an increase of 6% since 2022, and also a return to a rate more similar to years prior to 2021. Eighty-one percent of students reported that feel part of this school community, which is the highest rate for this item since 2017. The item *I think it is important for me to meet with my school counselor* increased by 1% since last year to 65%, an all-time high, tied with the rate in 2016.

Seventy percent of ninth grade students reported knowing how to make an appointment with their school counselor, which reflects a 2% decrease from 2022, which was a year when agreement with this item was at an all-time high.

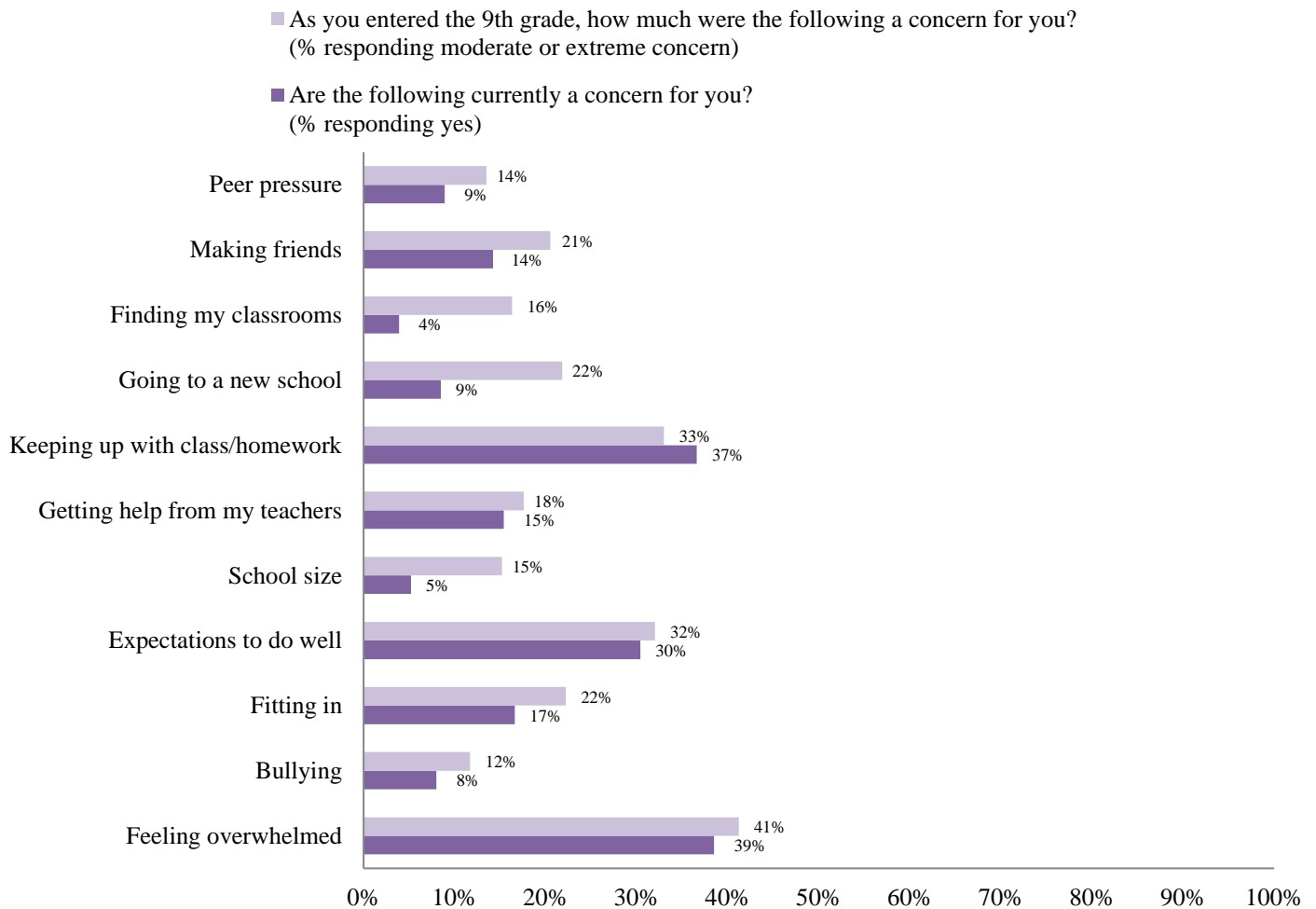
### When thinking about your ninth grade year... (% who strongly agree or agree)



Note: Items in the graph are sorted from highest to lowest agreement for the current year. Agreement with these items in 2021 may have been particularly impacted by the 2020-21 learning model changes associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Changes to concerns entering high school.** Ninth grade students were asked at the end of the year to think back to the beginning of the school year regarding whether they had certain concerns upon entering ninth grade, as well as report whether these were still concerns at the end of the year. Ninth graders expressed having less of a concern for ten 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: *peer pressure* (9%), *going to a new school* (9%), *bullying* (8%), *school size* (5%), and *finding my classrooms* (4%). Students reported being more concerned at the end of the school year than when starting the school year about *keeping up with class/homework* (37%). The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering the ninth grade were *peer pressure* (14%) and *bullying* (5%). 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 included *school size* which dropped by 10%, *finding my classrooms* which dropped by 12%, and *going to a new school* which dropped by 13% by the end of ninth grade. The items that were most concerning to students at the beginning and end of the year were *expectations to do well*, *keeping up with class/homework*, and *feeling overwhelmed*.

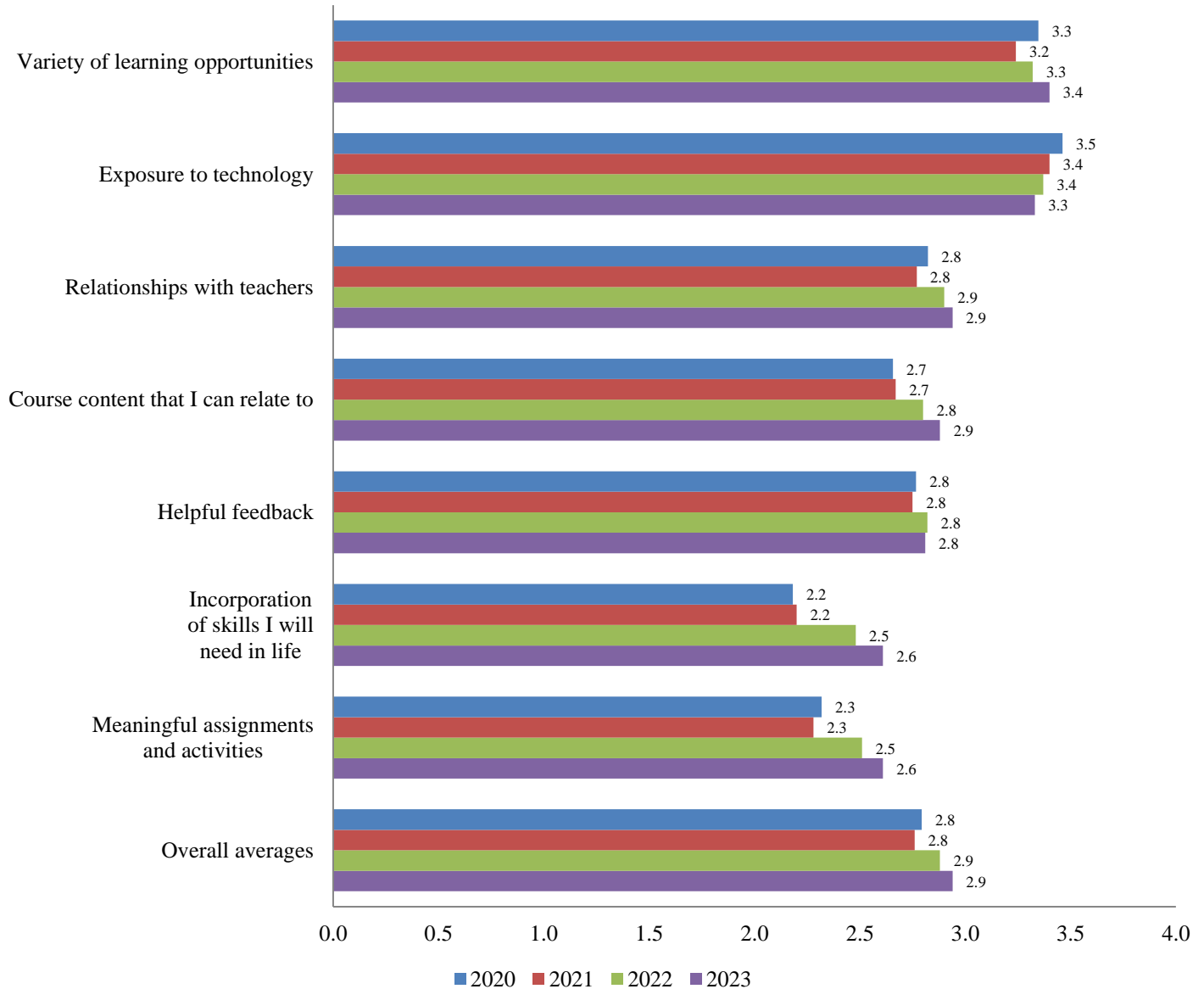
### Comparing level of concern from beginning to end of year



**Rating areas of high school.** On average, students rated the quality of services provided at their high schools as a 2.9 (equivalent to a B-). Grades assigned to each area increased or stayed about the same from last year to this year.

In 2023, students rated *variety of learning opportunities* higher than all other items. Historically, *exposure to technology* has been the highest rated item; in 2023, this item was the second highest rated. The ratings of *incorporation of skills I will need in life* and *meaningful assignments and activities* were the lowest among items, but have increased over the past three years.

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



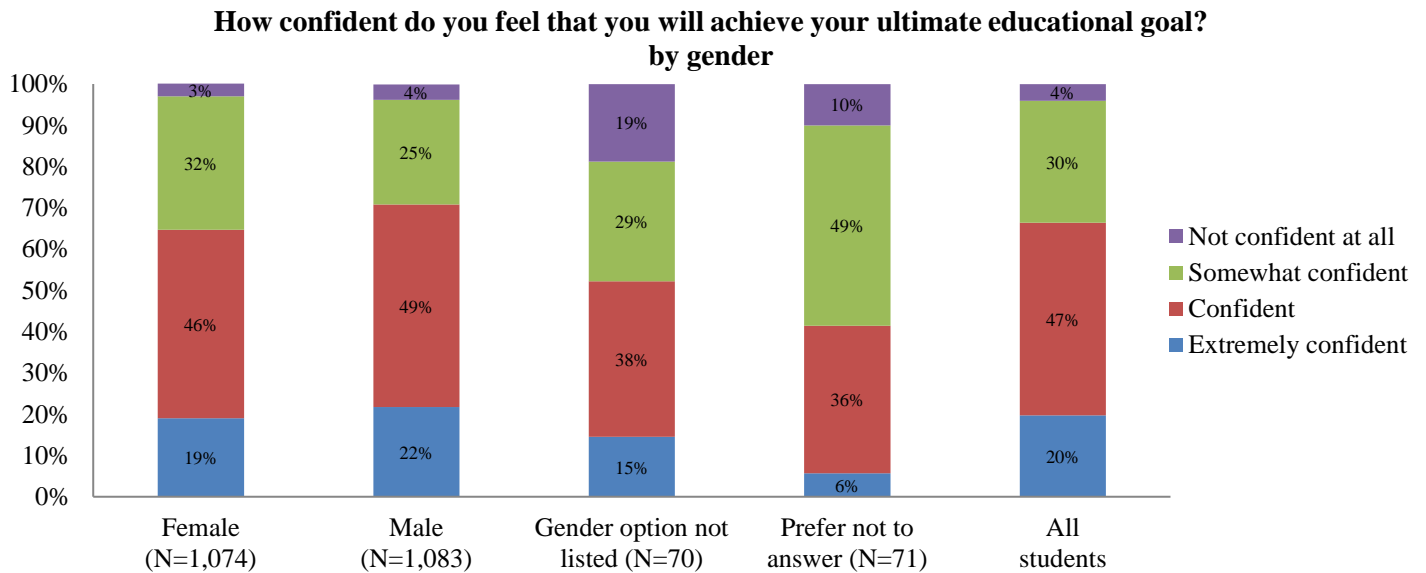
Note: Items in the graph are sorted from highest to lowest rating for the current year.

## Comparisons by Student Group

In this section, results in which student group differences were statistically significant are highlighted. When patterns in statistically significant differences were observed in the data, results are presented by self-reported factors in the order that follows: (1) gender, (2) race/ethnicity, and (3) school. When no statistically significant differences among student groups exist, or when significant differences are not consistent across several items in a section, no graphical representation of the results is presented. In all cases, the student group of focus is compared to the overall data of all respondents. Be mindful of student group size as it pertains to data volatility when drawing conclusions.

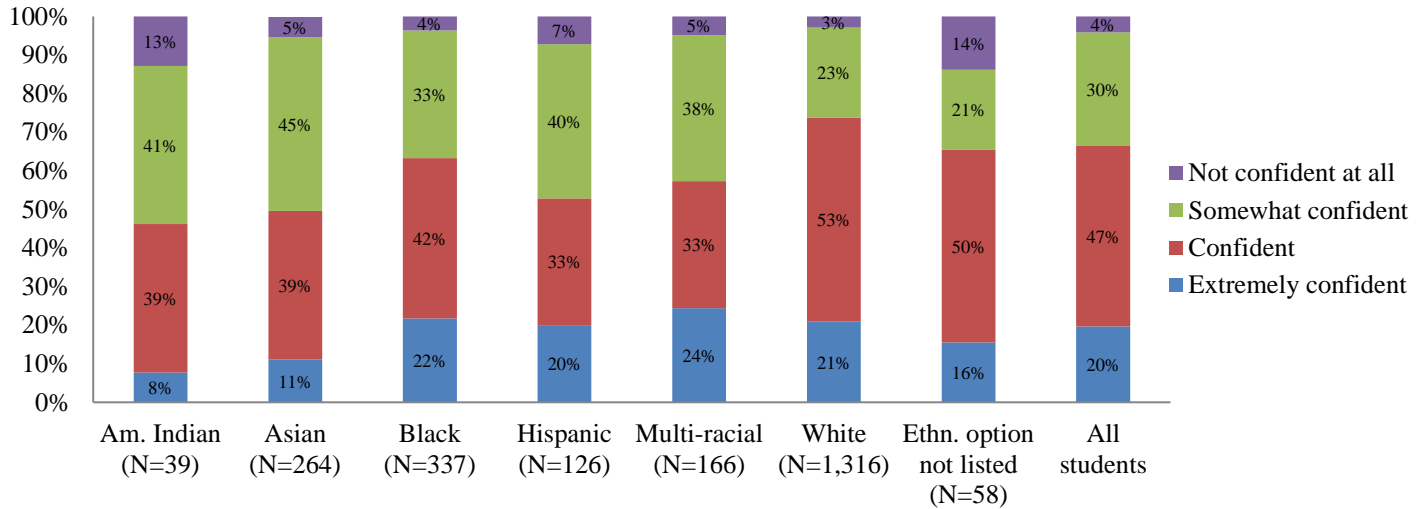
**Confidence in reaching educational goals.** When examining differences in ninth grade students’ confidence in reaching their educational goals, there were statistically significant differences related to gender, race/ethnicity, and school.

When focusing on gender, students who identify with a gender option not listed and those who preferred not to answer reported feeling less confident, while students who identify as male reported feeling more confident than students overall.



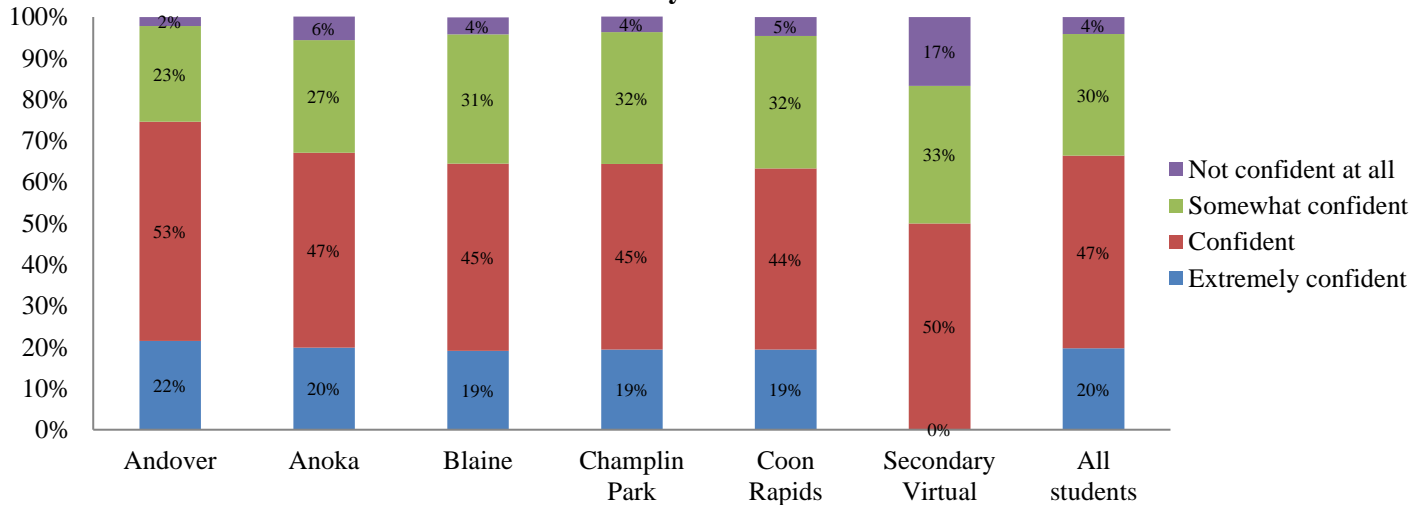
Considering race/ethnicity, students who identify as American Indian, Asian, or Hispanic reported feeling less confident while students who identify as White reported feeling more confident than students overall.

**How confident do you feel that you will achieve your ultimate educational goal?  
by ethnicity**



When focusing on school, students at Andover High School reported statistically significantly higher confidence in achieving their educational goals than students overall.

**How confident do you feel that you will achieve your ultimate educational goal?  
by school**

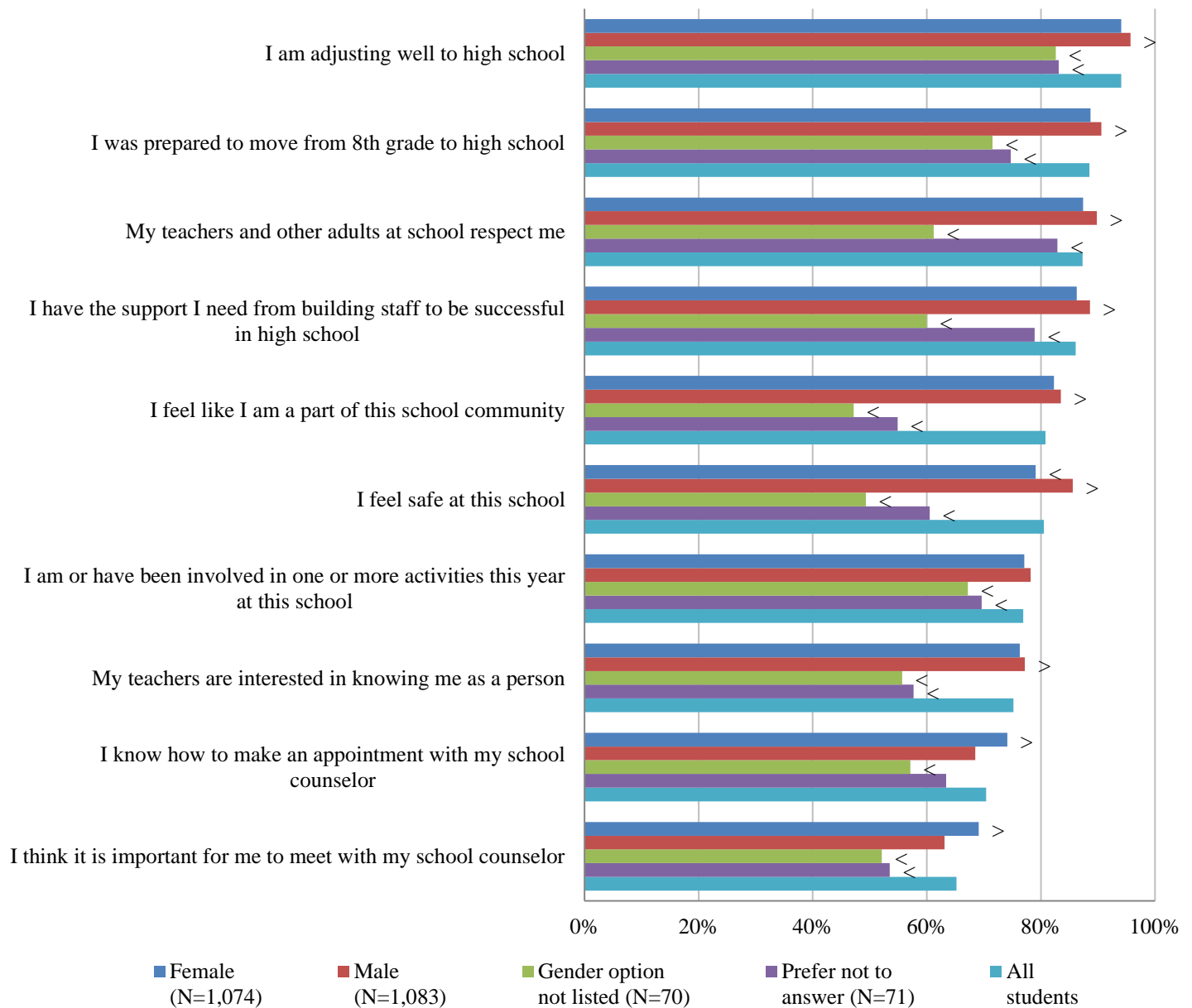




**Perceptions of ninth grade experience.** When examining differences in students’ perception of ninth grade, there were statistically significant differences in the areas of gender, race/ethnicity, and school. Symbols on graphs in this section indicate which items are statistically significantly different than the “all students” group. A “<” sign indicates the area for that student group was significantly lower than students overall, and a “>” sign indicates the area for that student group was significantly higher than students overall. Items in each graphic regarding perceptions of ninth grade experience are sorted from highest to lowest for all student agreement for the current year.

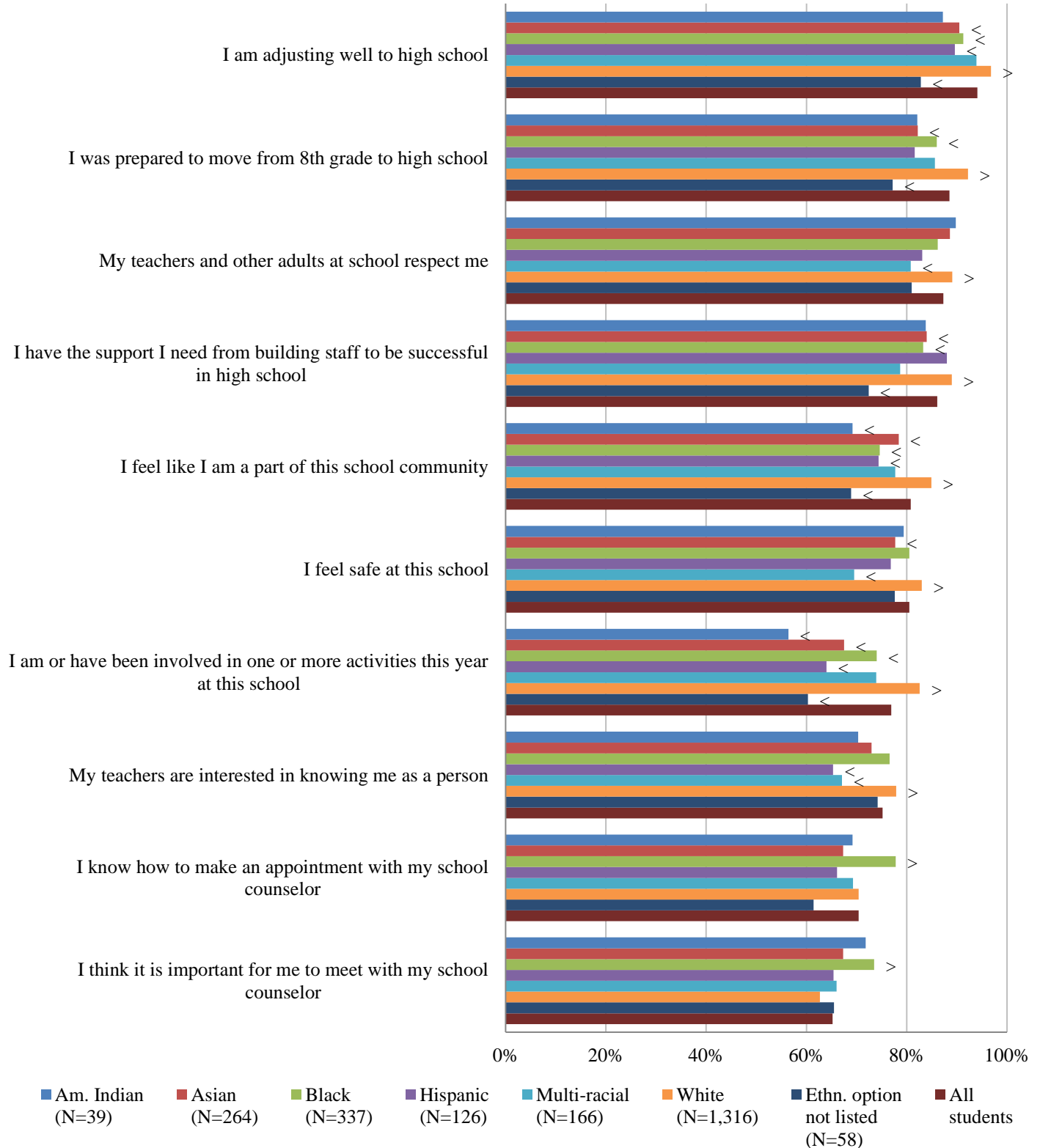
Regarding self-reported gender, students who identify with a gender option not listed or those who preferred not to answer reported significantly lower agreement than students overall on 10 of 10 and 9 of 10 items, respectively. Students who identify as male reported significantly higher agreement than students overall on 7 of the 10 items.

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



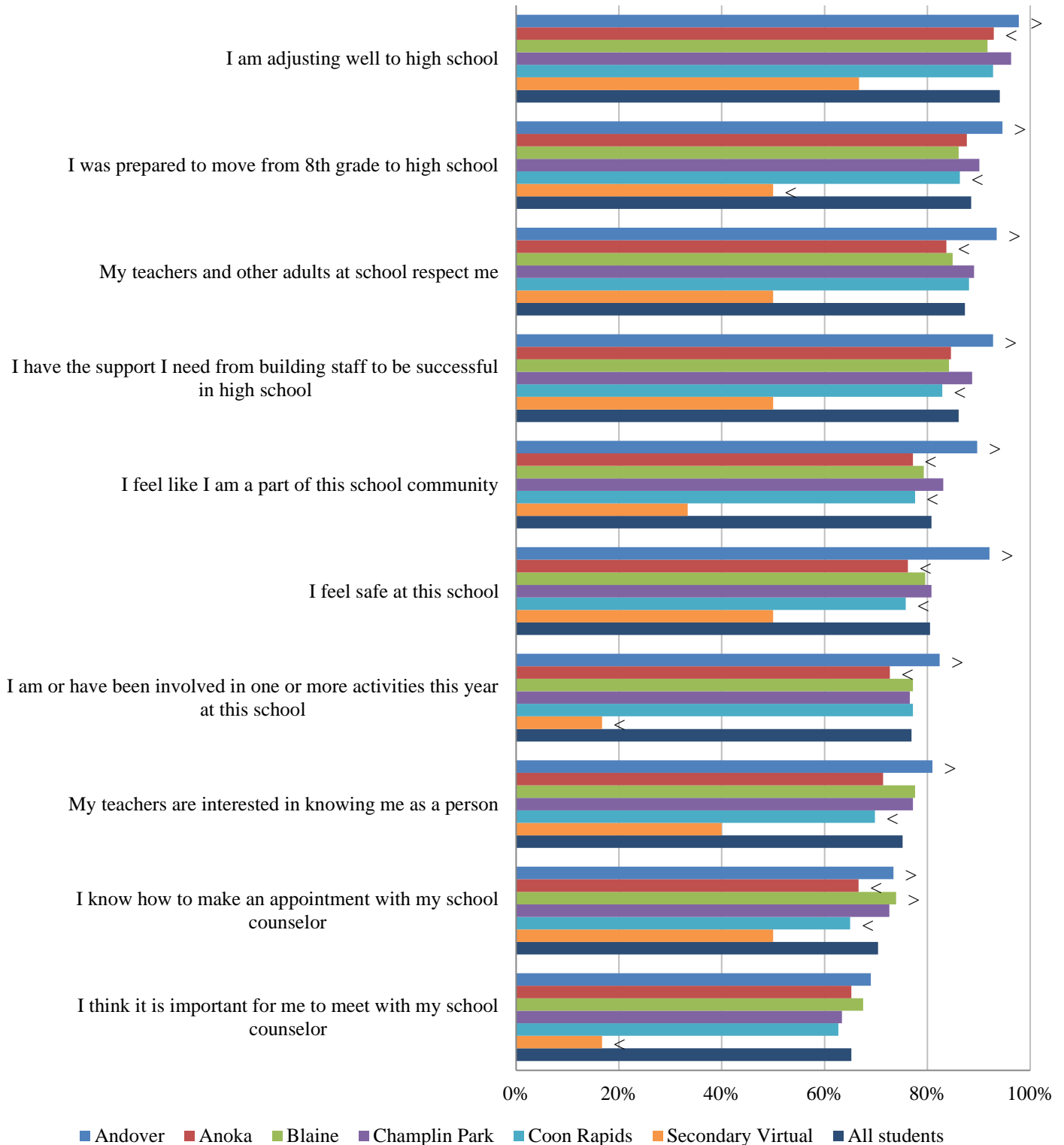
Regarding self-reported racial/ethnic background, students who identify as Asian, Black, Hispanic, Multi-racial, and those who identify with an option not listed reported significantly lower agreement (denoted with “<”) than students overall on 6 of 10, 5 of 10, 4 of 10, 3 of 10, and 5 of 10 items, respectively. Students who identify as White reported significantly higher agreement (denoted with “>”) than students overall on 8 of the 10 items.

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



When examining responses by school, both students attending Anoka High School and Coon Rapids High School reported significantly lower agreement with 6 out of 10 of the items (denoted with “<”) than students overall. Students attending Andover High School reported significantly higher agreement (denoted with “>”) than students overall on 9 of the 10 items.

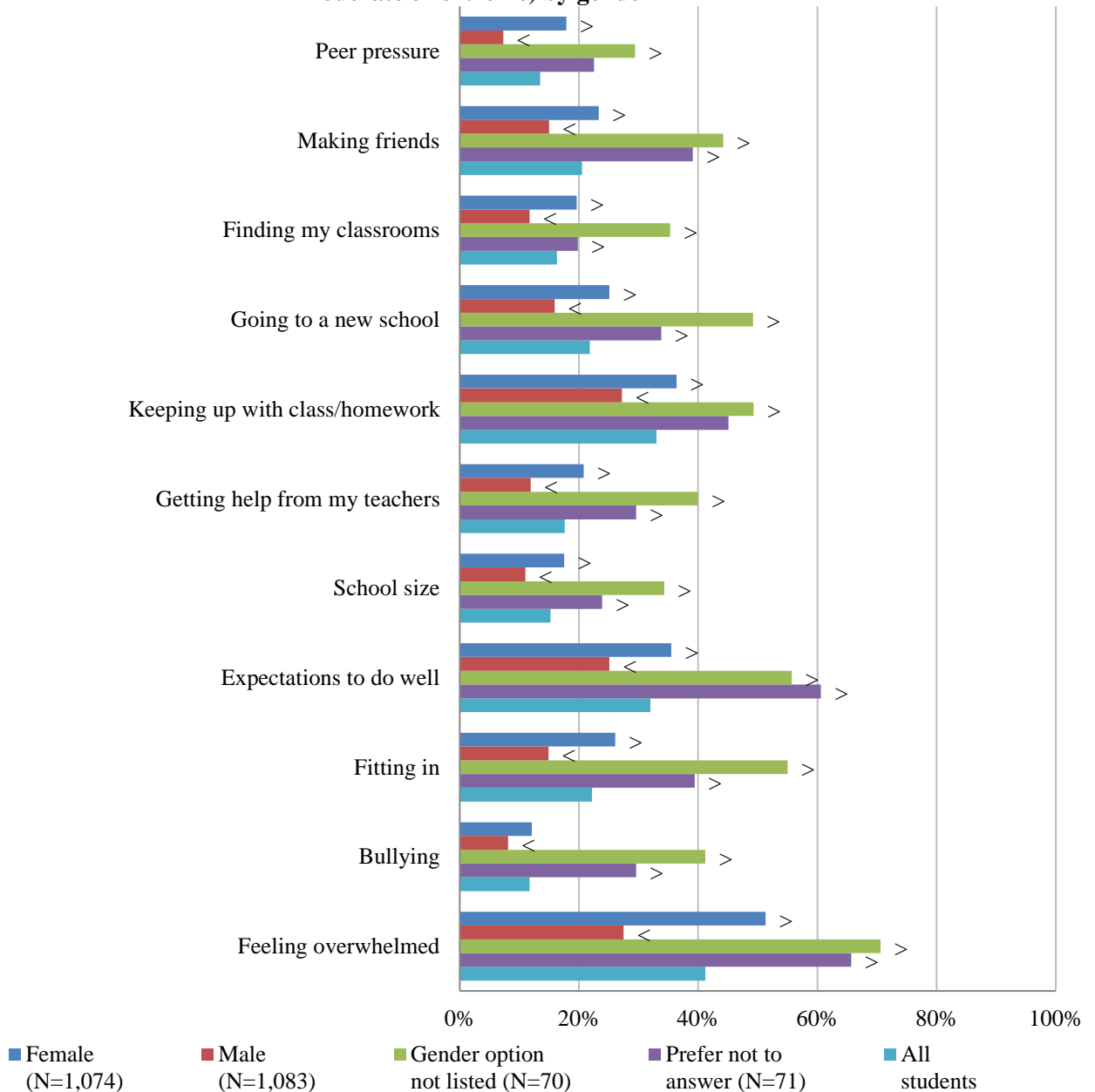
**When thinking about your ninth grade year...  
(% who strongly agree or agree) by school**



**Concerns entering high school.** When examining differences in students’ level of concern thinking back to when they entered high school, there were statistically significant differences related to gender, race/ethnicity, and school. Symbols on graphs in this section indicate which items are statistically significantly different than the “all students” group. A “<” sign indicates the area for that student group was significantly lower than students overall, and a “>” sign indicates the area for that student group was significantly higher than students overall.

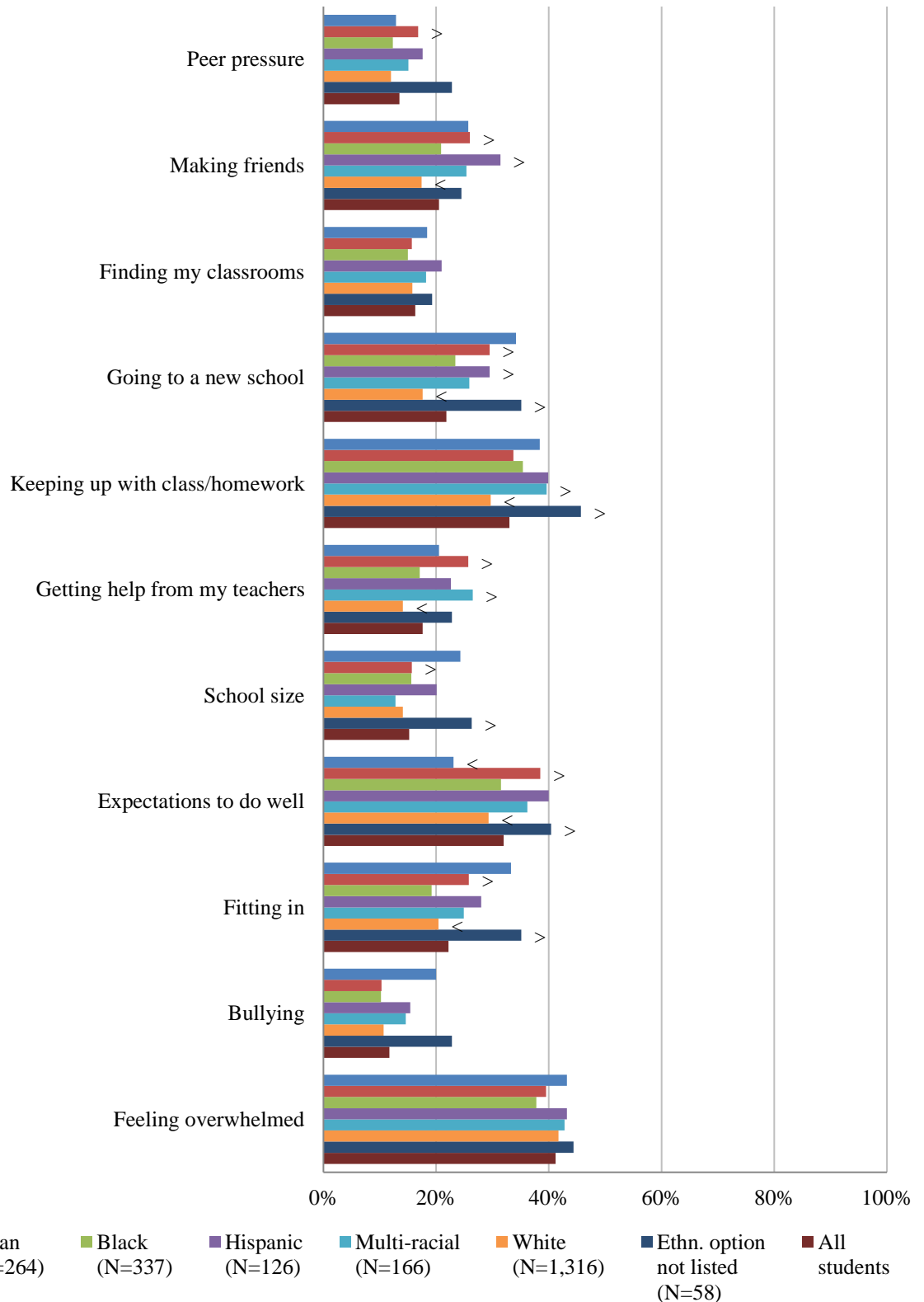
Considering gender, students who identify as female or with a gender option not listed, along with those who preferred not to answer, reported significantly greater concern than students overall on 10 of 11, 11 of 11, and 9 of 11 items, respectively. Students who identify as male reported significantly less concern than students overall on 11 of the 11 items.

**Percentage of students reporting concern when entering high school (% who report moderate or extreme) by gender**



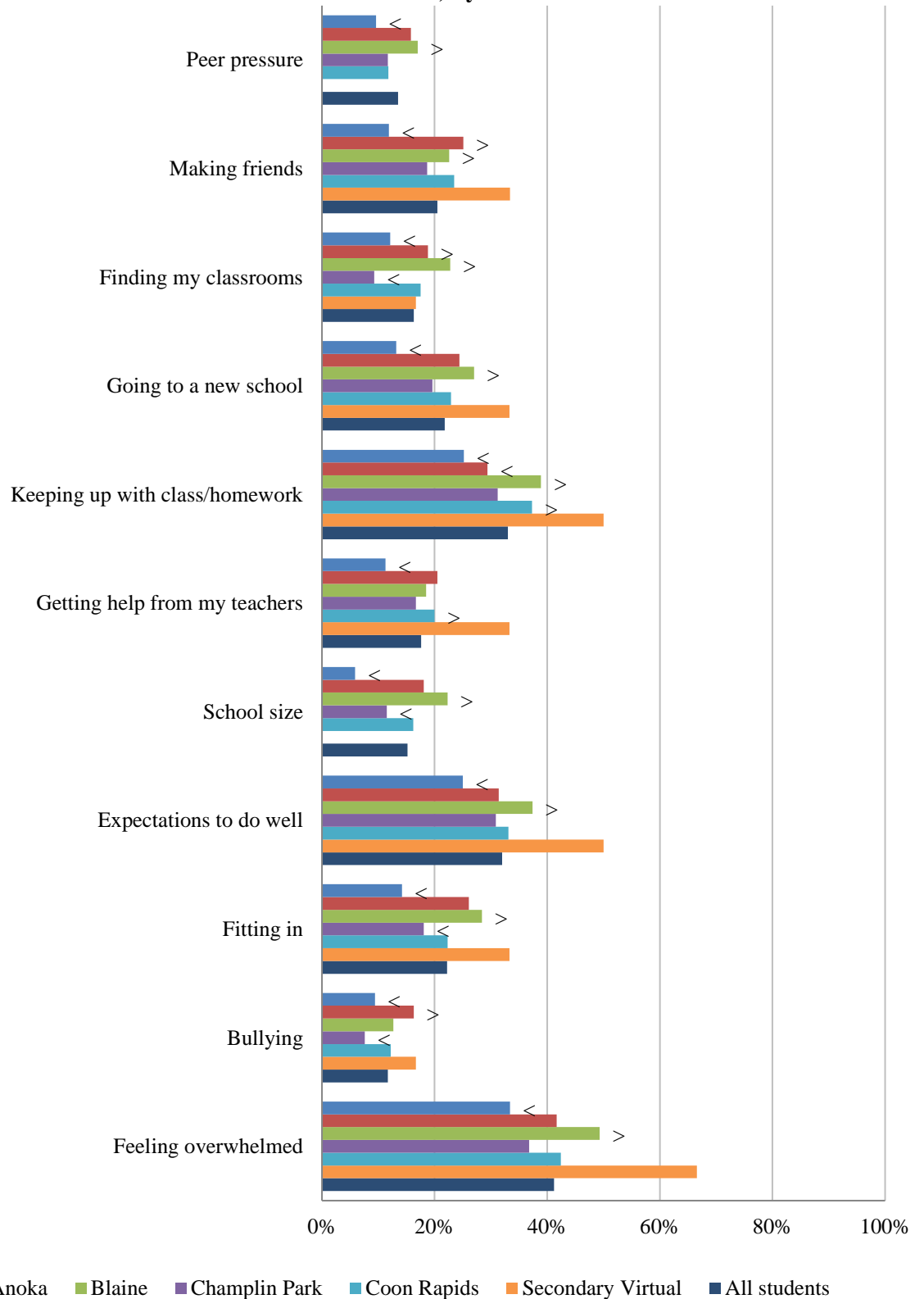
Regarding self-reported racial/ethnic background, students who identify as Asian and those who identify with an ethnicity not listed reported significantly greater concern when entering high school (denoted with “>”) than students overall on 7 of 11 and 5 of 11 items, respectively. Students who identify as White reported significantly less concern (denoted with “<”) than students overall on 6 of the 11 items.

**Percentage of students reporting concern when entering high school (% who report moderate or extreme) by ethnicity**



When examining responses by school, students attending Blaine High School reported significantly greater concern when entering high school (denoted with “>”) than students overall on 9 of 11 items, while students attending Andover High school and Champlin Park High School reported significantly less concern (denoted with “<”) than students overall on 11 of the 11 items and 4 of 11 items.

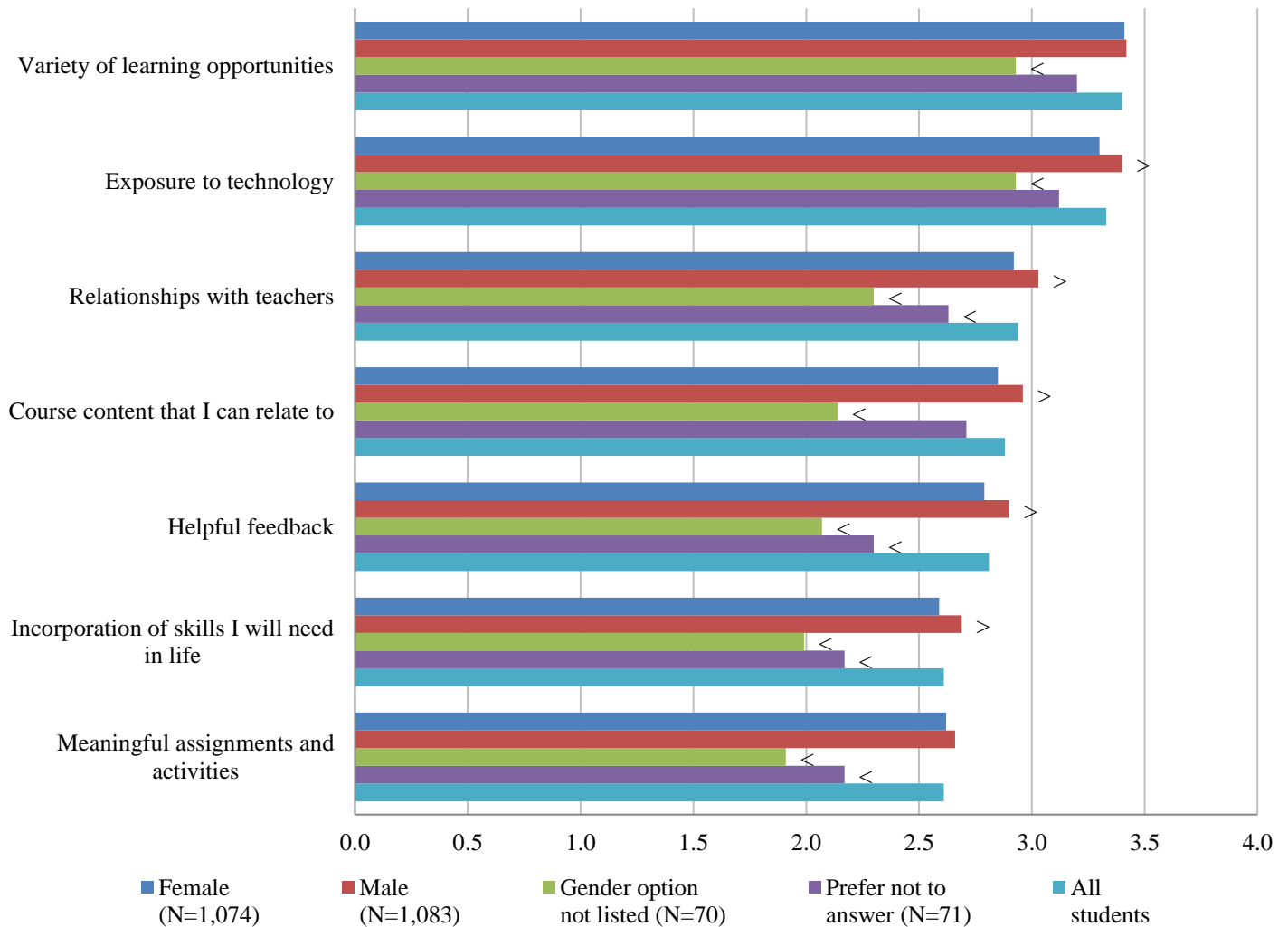
**Percentage of students reporting concern when entering high school (% who report moderate or extreme) by school**



**Rating areas of high school.** When examining differences in students’ ratings of their high schools across multiple areas, there were statistically significant differences related to gender, race/ethnicity, and school. Symbols on graphs in this section indicate which items are statistically significantly different than the “all students” group. A “<” sign indicates the area for that student group was significantly lower than students overall, and a “>” sign indicates the area for that student group was significantly higher than students overall. Items in each graphic regarding high school ratings are sorted from highest to lowest for all student agreement for the current year.

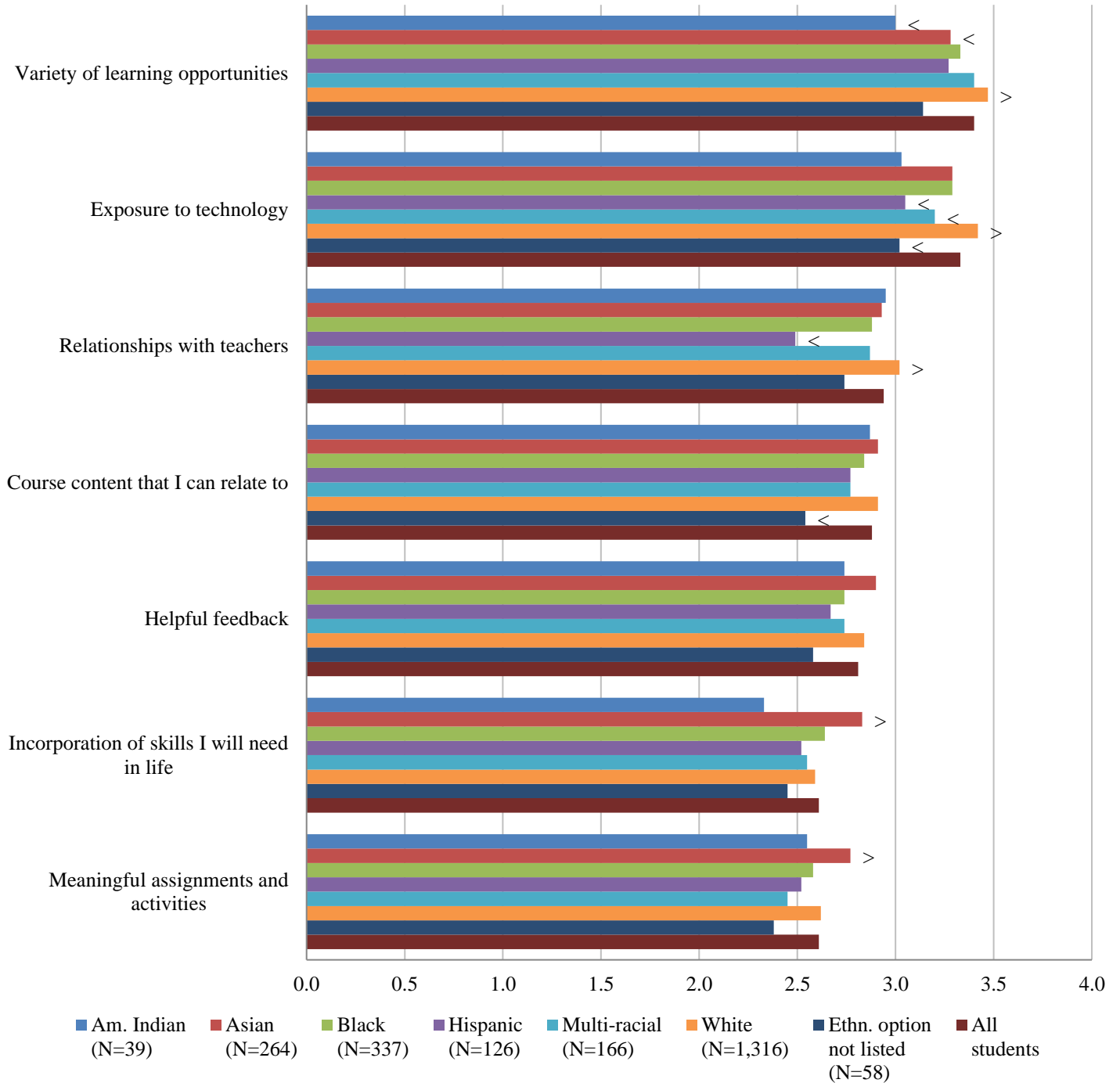
Regarding self-reported gender, students who identify with a gender option not listed or those who preferred not to answer reported significantly lower ratings of their school than students overall on 7 of 7 and 4 of 7 items, respectively. Male students reported significantly higher ratings of their school on 5 of 7 items compared to students overall.

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



Regarding self-reported race/ethnicity, students who identify as Asian or White reported significantly higher ratings of their school than students overall on 2 of 7 and 3 of the 7 items, respectively. Students who identify as Hispanic or whose ethnicity was not listed on the survey reported significantly lower ratings of their high school compared to all students on 2 of the 7 items for both groups.

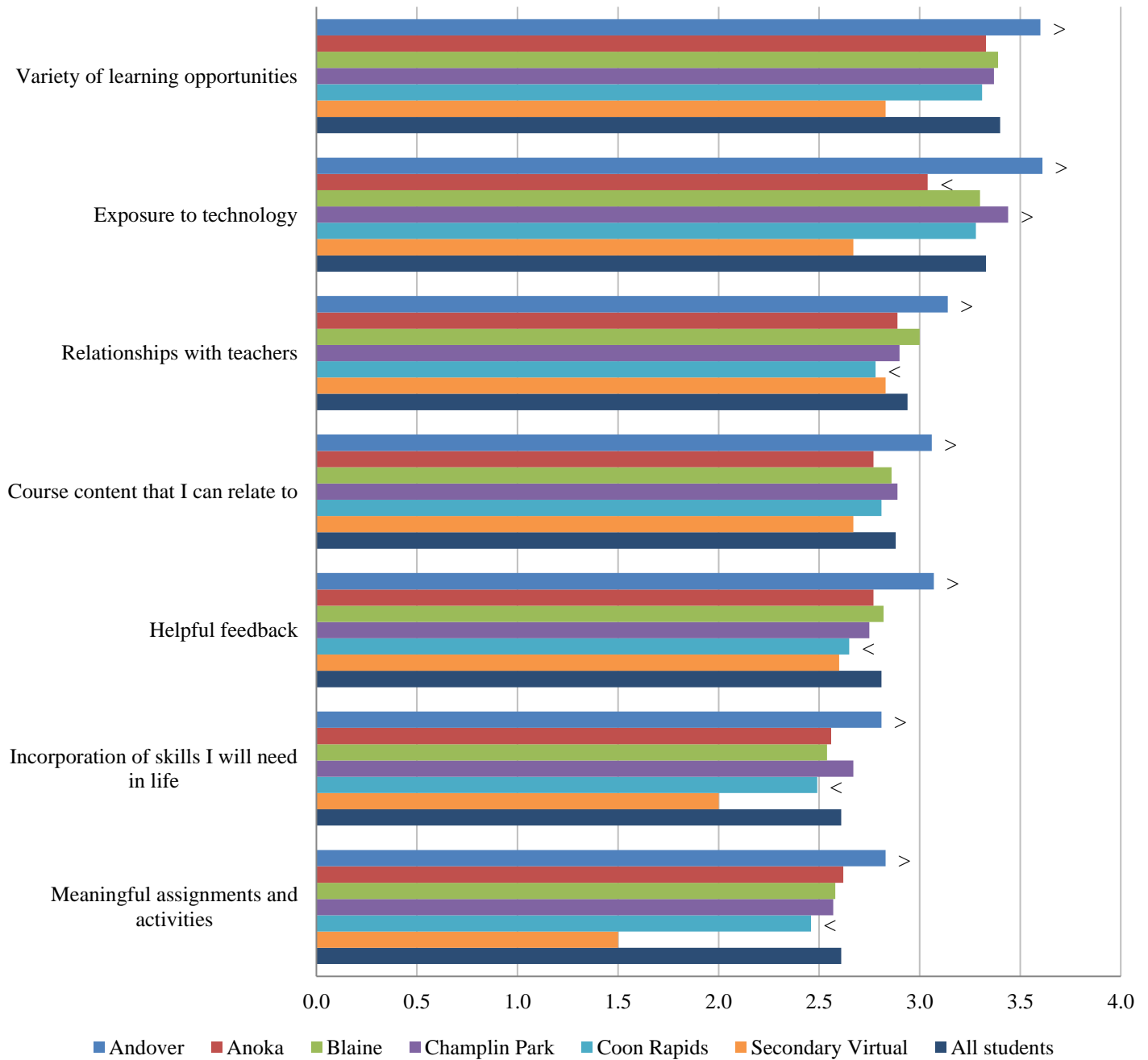
**Average letter grade assigned to high school (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and F = 0) by ethnicity**





When examining responses by school, students who attending Coon Rapids High School rated their school significantly lower in 4 of the 7 areas (denoted with “<”) compared to students overall. Students who reported attending Andover High School rated their school significantly higher (denoted with “>”) than students overall in all 7 areas.

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



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](http://www.ahschools.us/ret), or call (763) 506-1000 and request the RET department.