
Ninth Grade Transition Survey Report 2018

Anoka-Hennepin
School District

Prepared by the Department of
Research, Evaluation and Testing



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Key Findings.....	4
Demographics	5
Educational Goals	6
School Counselors	7
Additional Responses to Six of the Concerns.....	9
Perceptions of the 9 th Grade Experience.....	12

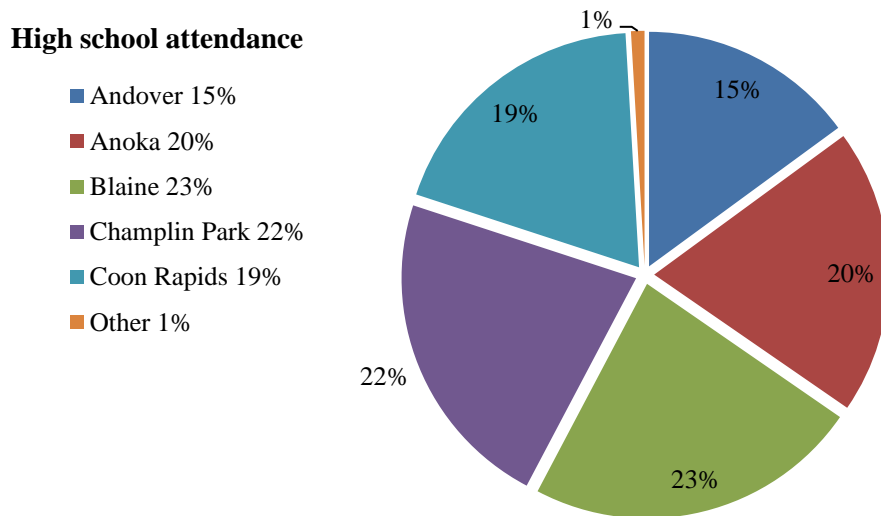
Introduction

This summary highlights students' responses to the Ninth Grade Transition Survey. The objective of the Ninth Grade Transition Survey is to provide an opportunity for all ninth graders to evaluate school programming and provide feedback on their experiences entering high school. Students' perceptions of their educational experiences are useful for systems improvement, and 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. Teachers administered the survey during their advisory class between April 2 and May 18, 2018. 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
- educational aspirations
- demographic information

There were 2,705 ninth grade students who completed the survey in 2018. Participants were representative of the five traditional high schools, as well as other programs, and representation was proportional to school size.



This summary aggregates student responses for a selected number of items from the survey.

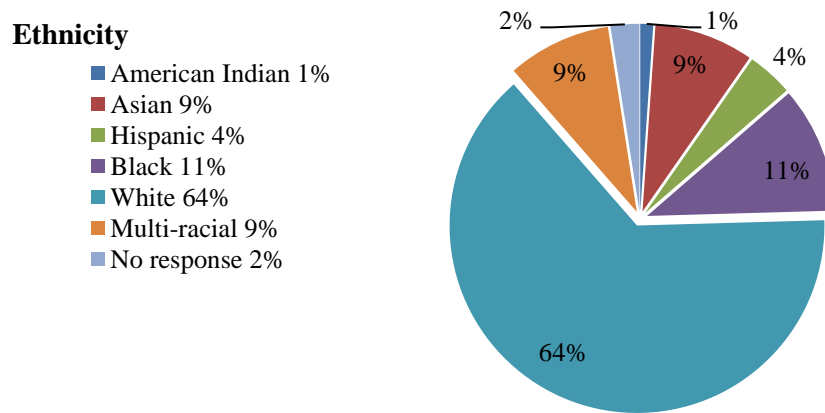
Key Findings

- Thinking about their ninth grade year, 95% of students reported feeling well adjusted to high school, and 89% of students reported feeling prepared to move from 8th grade to high school. Both of these items were at similar levels to last year.
- Eighty-one percent of students reported feeling safe at their school, down 3% from last year.
- Eighty-six percent of students agree that they have the support they need from building staff to be successful in high school and 84% feel their teachers and other adults at school respect them.
- Eighty-two percent of ninth grade students reported that their highest level of educational aspiration included obtaining a 4-year degree or higher, 2% lower than the 2017 rate of 84%. In general, students with higher educational aspirations were more confident in reaching their goals.
 - Asian students report feeling significantly less confident in reaching their educational goals than 9th grade students overall, whereas Black students report feeling significantly more confident in reaching their educational goals than 9th grade students overall.
- Most students learned about their school counselor through orientation, open house, an individual meeting or advisory. Fifteen percent of students reported not knowing who their counselor is, down from 20% in 2017. Nearly half (48%) of the 9th grade students reported that they have never met with their counselor.
- Students reported being most likely to go to their school counselor for *schedule changes* (77%), *making sure credits are on track for graduation* (61%), *registration* (58%), and *college or career planning* (54%).
- Ninth grade students were more concerned at the end of the year than upon entering the ninth grade in regards to *keeping up with class/homework* and *expectations to do well*.
 - The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering 9th grade were *bullying*, *school size* and *peer pressure*. These items were even less of a concern at the end of the year.
 - Asian students were more concerned about *peer pressure*, *making friends*, *getting help from teachers*, *expectations to do well*, and *fitting in* both at the beginning and end of 9th grade when compared to all students.
 - At the beginning of the year, American Indian students reported being significantly less concerned about *peer pressure*, *finding classrooms*, *keeping up with class/homework*, *school size*, and *expectations to do well* than students overall. However, by the end of the year, American Indian students reported feeling *more* concerned than students overall about these same concerns (except *keeping up with class/homework*, which American Indian students reported to be of comparable concern to students overall by the end of the year).
 - As they entered 9th grade, female students reported feeling more concerned than male students on all items except *keeping up with class/homework*. By the end of the year, female students were more concerned about *all* items than male students.
- On average, students rated the overall quality of services provided at their high schools as 2.7 (equivalent to a B-), which was the same as in 2017. Grades assigned to each of 7 items related to the quality of services provided remained very similar to their 2017 levels, though students' ratings of *exposure to technology* have increased substantially since 2015.

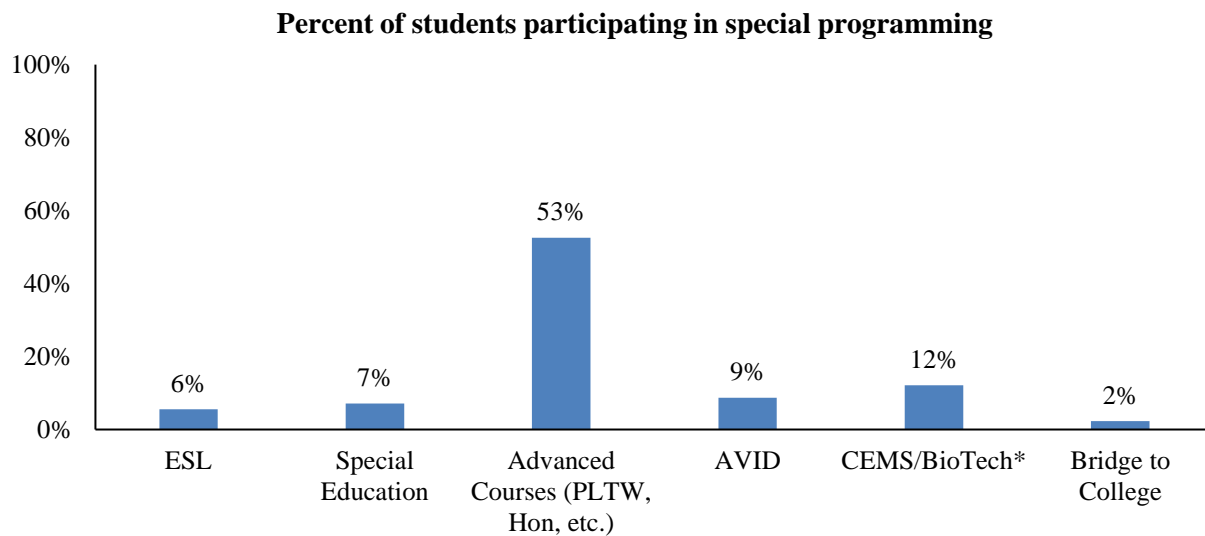
- Multi-racial students rated many of the items significantly lower than students overall, including: *variety of learning opportunities, relationships with teachers, exposure to technology, course content I can relate to, and helpful feedback.*
- Black students rated *relationships with teachers* and *exposure to technology* significantly lower than students overall.
- Male students rated *relationships with teachers, course content I can relate to, meaningful assignments and activities, helpful feedback, and incorporation of life skills* higher than female students.

Demographics

Overall, 2,705 ninth grade students participated in the survey. Students were close to evenly distributed across both genders, with 47% of the respondents being male and 50% being female (3% of students provided no response to this question). Also, students self-reported their ethnic background as the following:



Just over half of the participants said they have taken an advanced course, remaining steady from 2017. Student participation in other special programs is shown in the chart, below.

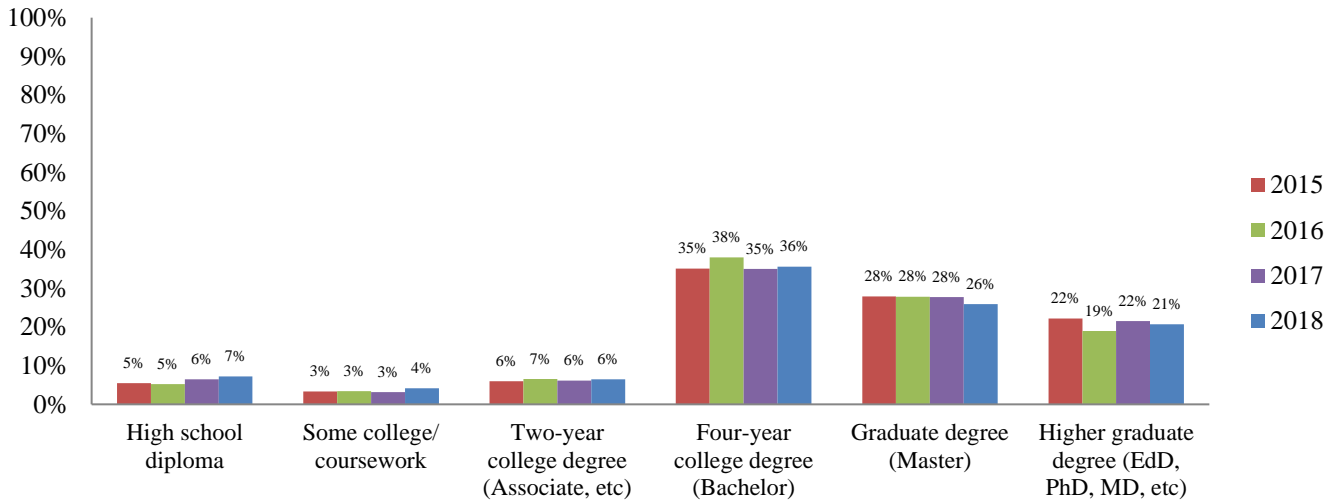


*CEMS/BioTech was offered only at Blaine and Coon Rapids High Schools.

Educational Goals

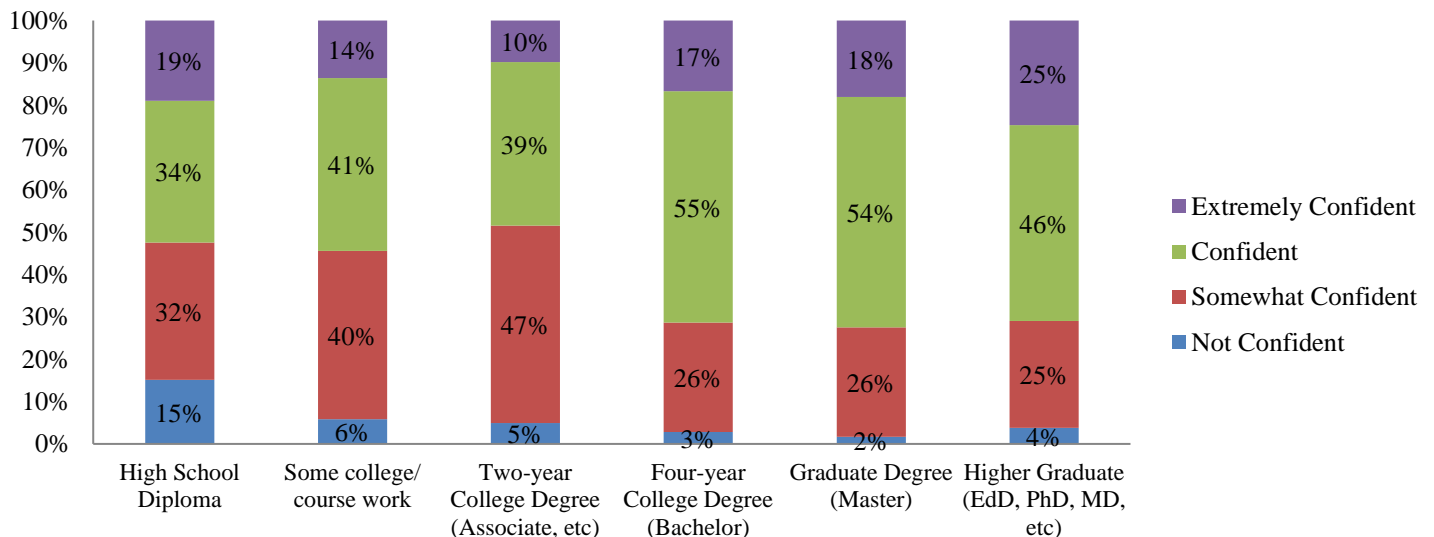
Educational aspirations. Eighty-two percent of ninth grade students reported that their highest level of educational aspiration included obtaining a 4-year degree or higher, similar to the 2017 rate of 84%. Aspirations of obtaining a four-year college degree have increased 1%, whereas aspirations for obtaining a graduate degree such as a Master’s degree have decreased 2%.

Highest educational goal (% of students)



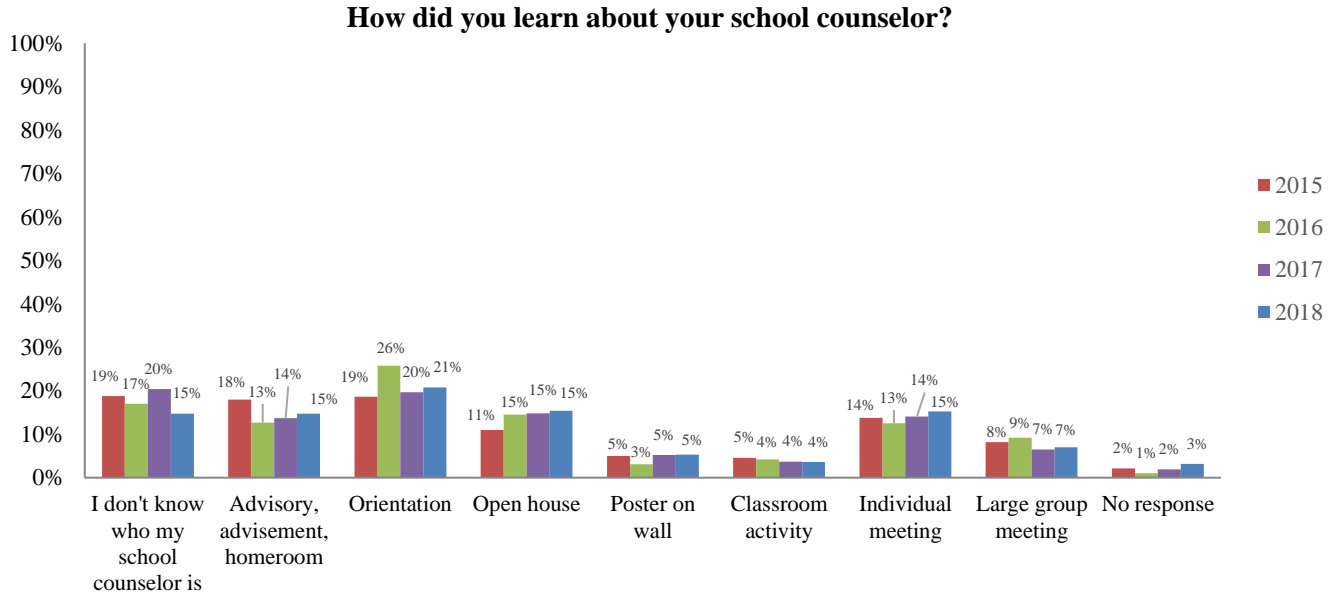
Confidence in reaching educational goals. Students pursuing a four-year college degree, a graduate degree, or a higher graduate degree reported being either extremely confident or confident in reaching their goal at a greater rate than those students selecting other aspirations. Fifteen percent of ninth grade students were not confident they would obtain their educational goal of a high school diploma. 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?**

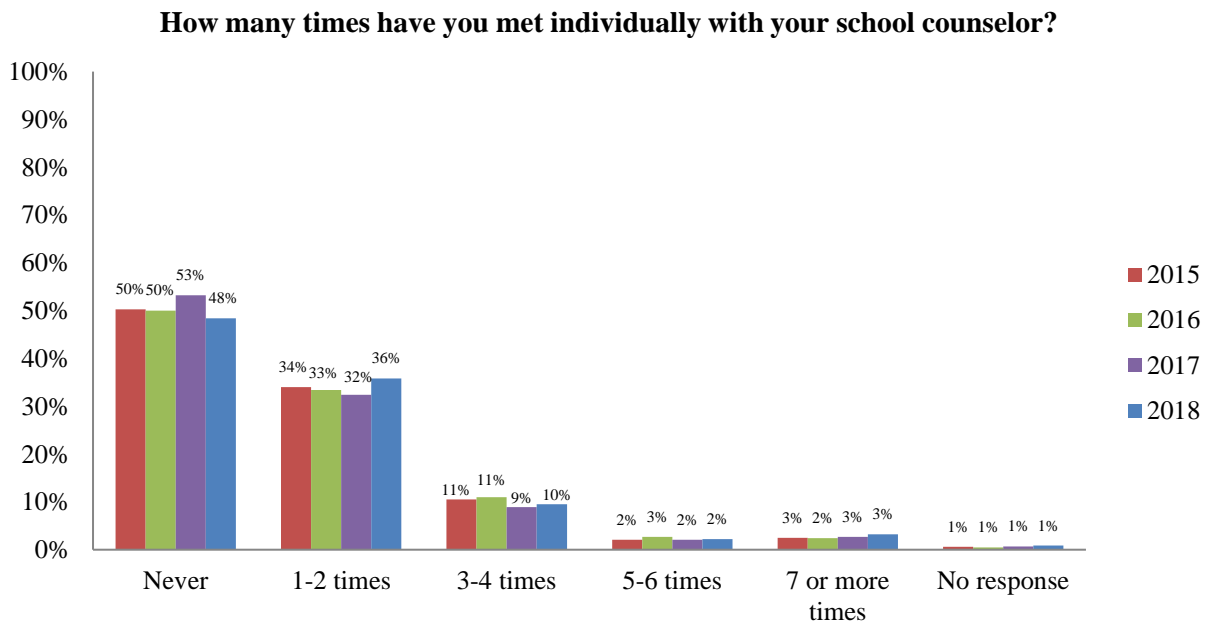


School Counselors

Knowledge of counselors. Most ninth grade students learned about their school counselor through orientation (21%), and 15% of students stated that they do not know who their counselor is. Students also learned about their counselors from their open house (15%), their advisory/advisement/homeroom (15%), or an individual meeting (15%). The percent of students not knowing their counselor has decreased 5% since last year.

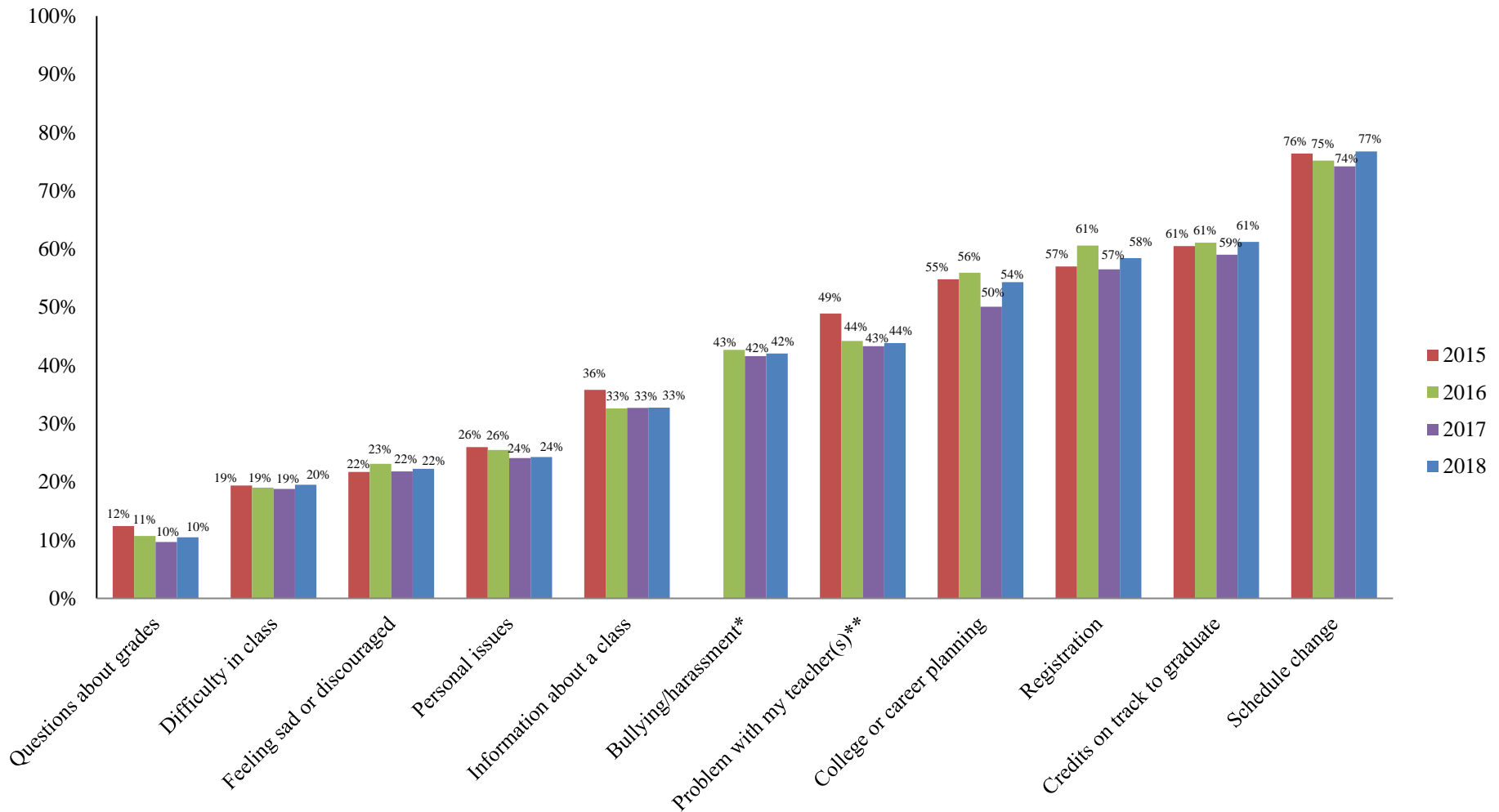


Meeting with counselors. Nearly half (48%) of ninth grade students have never met with their school counselor one-on-one. This is down from 53% in 2017. About one-third of ninth graders met with their counselor one or two times during the school year.



Concerns. The concerns for which ninth grade students reported that they would go to their school counselor the most include *schedule changes*, *credits on track to graduate*, and *registration*. Students were less likely to report that they would go to the school counselor for *questions about grades*, *difficulty in class*, *feeling sad or discouraged*, and *personal issues*. This pattern in responses has remained relatively consistent over time.

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



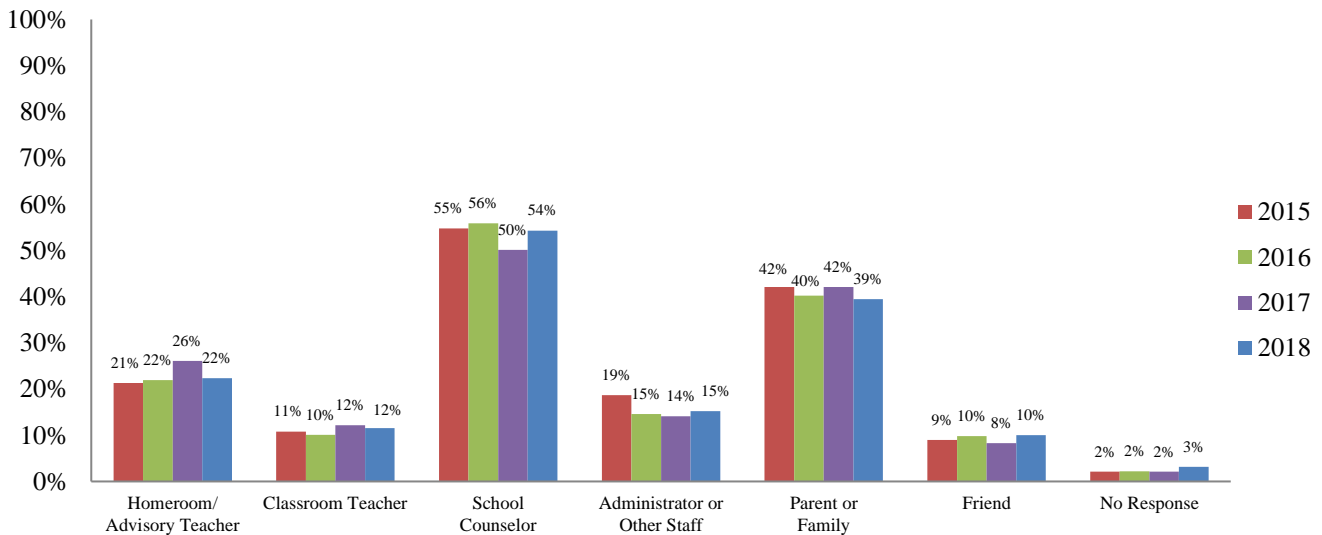
Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern. Other response options included an advisory teacher, a classroom teacher, an administrator, a friend, or a parent or family member.

* New option in 2016. **New wording in 2016 (previously “teacher problems”).

Additional Responses to Six of the Concerns

College and career planning. Over half of the students surveyed (54%) said that they would go to a school counselor for college or career planning, up 4% from 2017. Thirty-nine percent of students said they would go to a parent or family member, a 3% decrease from 2017, while 22% said they would go to their homeroom or advisory teacher, down 4% from 2017.

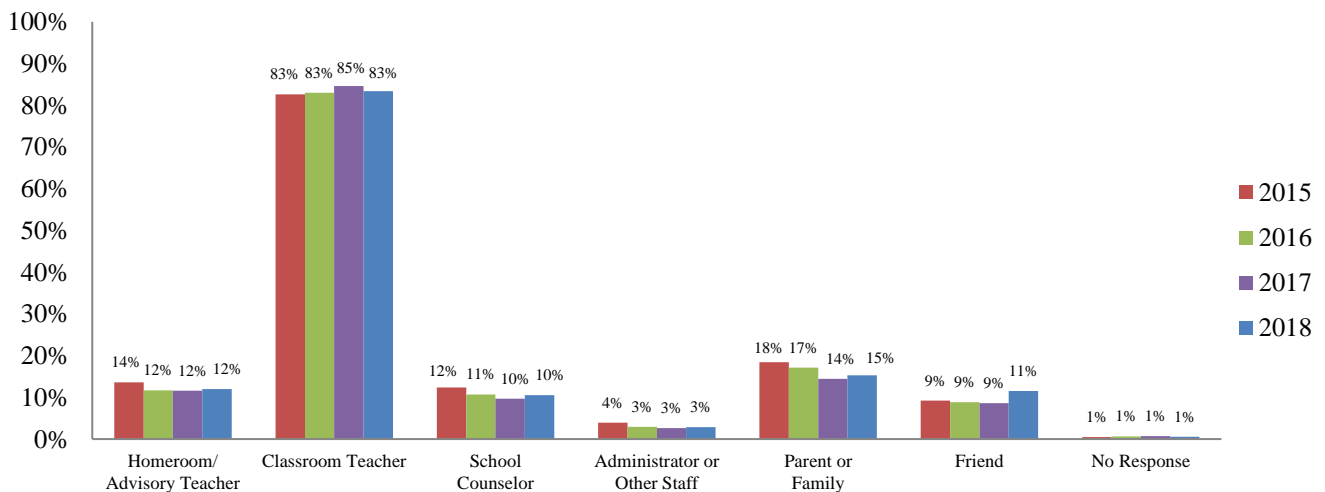
Who students would go to discuss: College or career planning



Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern.

Questions about grades. The vast majority of students (83%) said that they would go to a classroom teacher with questions about their grades. More students reported that they would go to a parent or family member (15%) than to their homeroom/advisory teacher (12%).

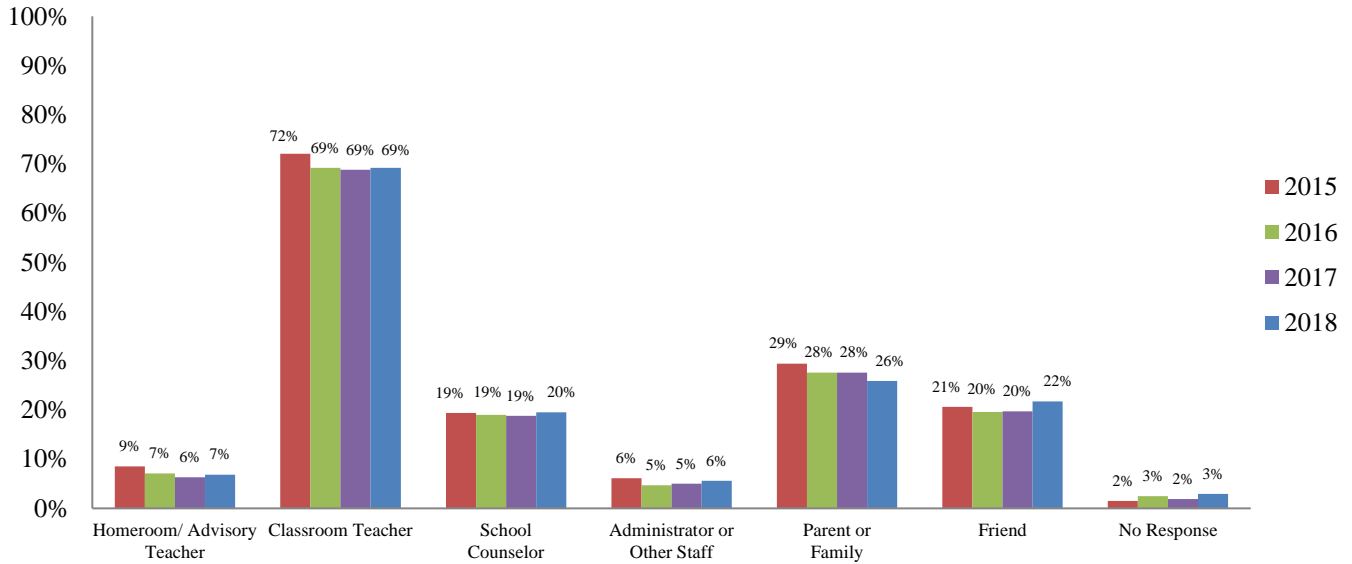
Who students would go to discuss: Questions about grades



Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern.

Difficulty in class. While 69% of ninth grade students said they would go to a classroom teacher for difficulty in class, a moderate number also reported going to people such as a parent or family member, a friend, or their school counselor.

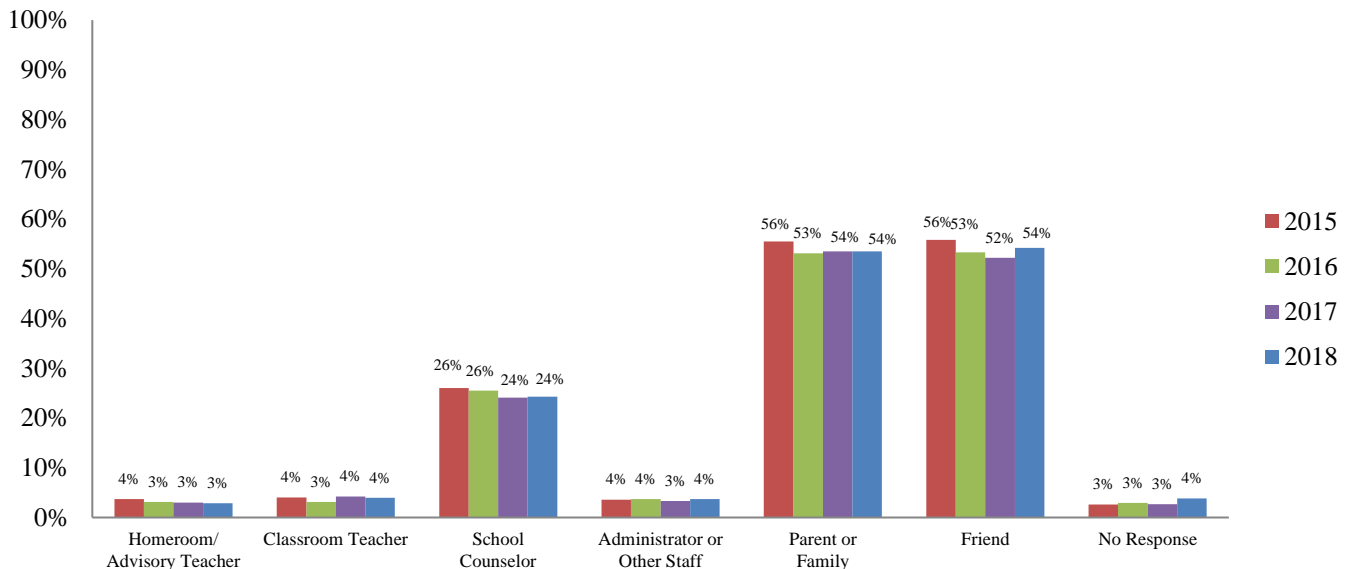
Who students would go to to discuss: Difficulty in class



Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern.

Personal issues. Fifty-four percent of respondents said they would go to a parent/family member about personal issues, with the same percent saying they would go to a friend. About one-quarter of students would go to their school counselor with personal issues.

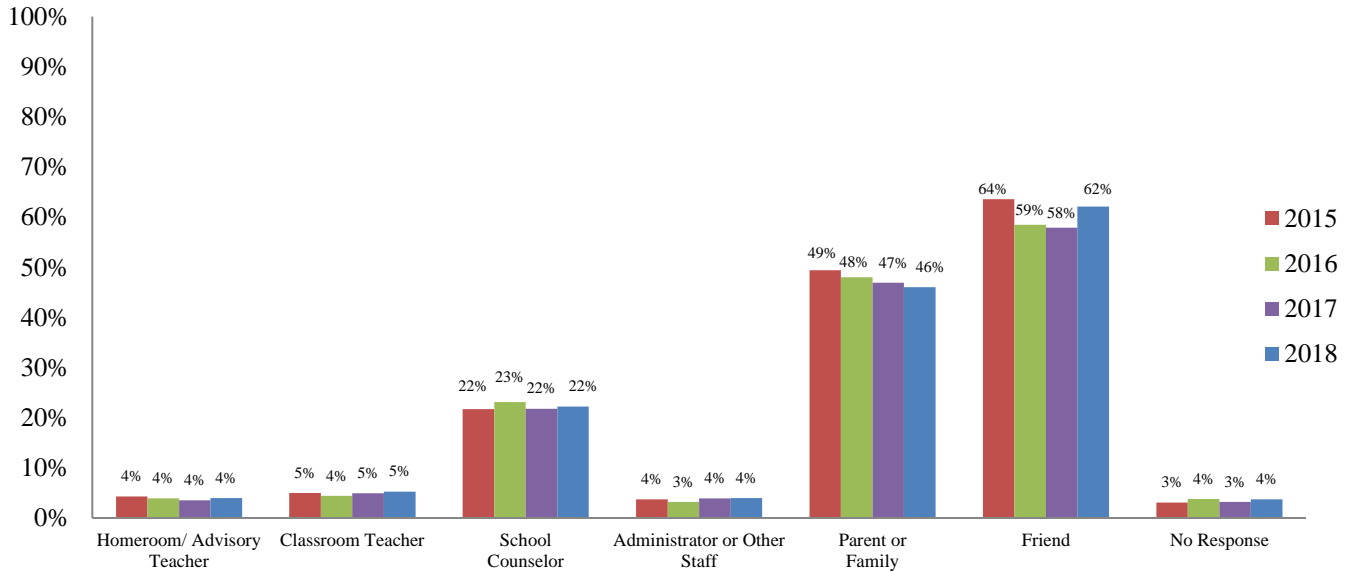
Who students would go to to discuss: Personal issues



Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern.

Feeling sad or discouraged. The majority of students (62%) said they would go to a friend if they were feeling sad or discouraged, a 4% increase over 2017. Other common responses included going to a parent or family member or to a school counselor.

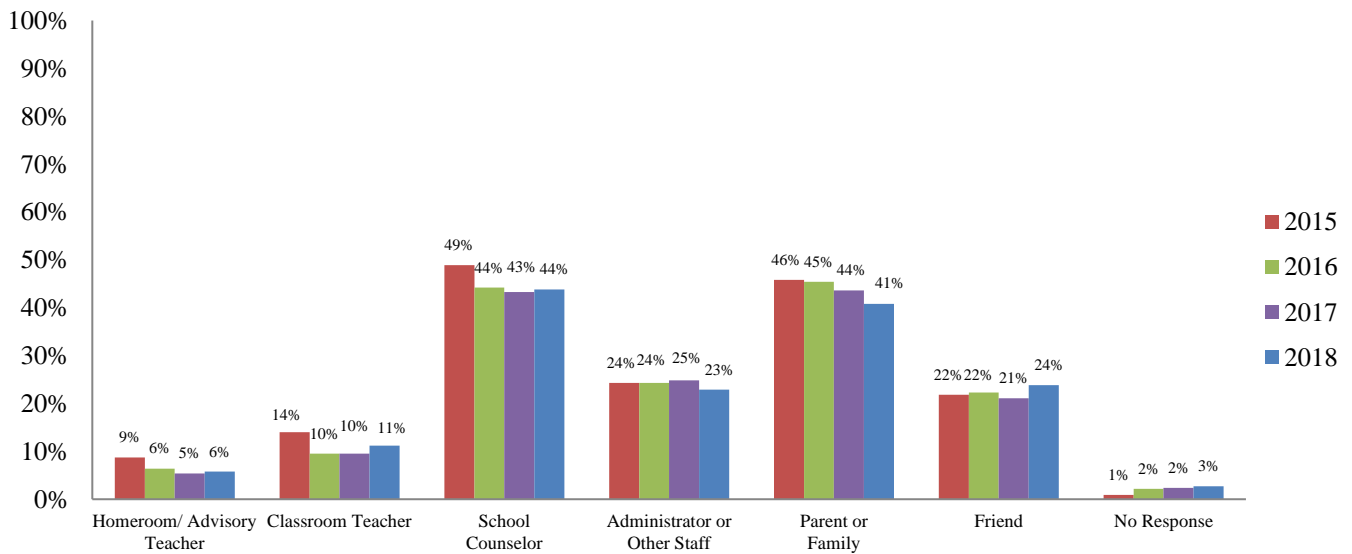
Who students would go to to discuss: Feeling sad or discouraged



Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern.

Problems with teachers. Many students selected more than one response in regards to who they would go to if they had a problem with a teacher. The top response was talking with a school counselor, followed by talking to a parent or family member.

Who students would go to to discuss: Problems with my teacher(s)*



Note. Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern.

* New wording in 2016 (previously "teacher problems").

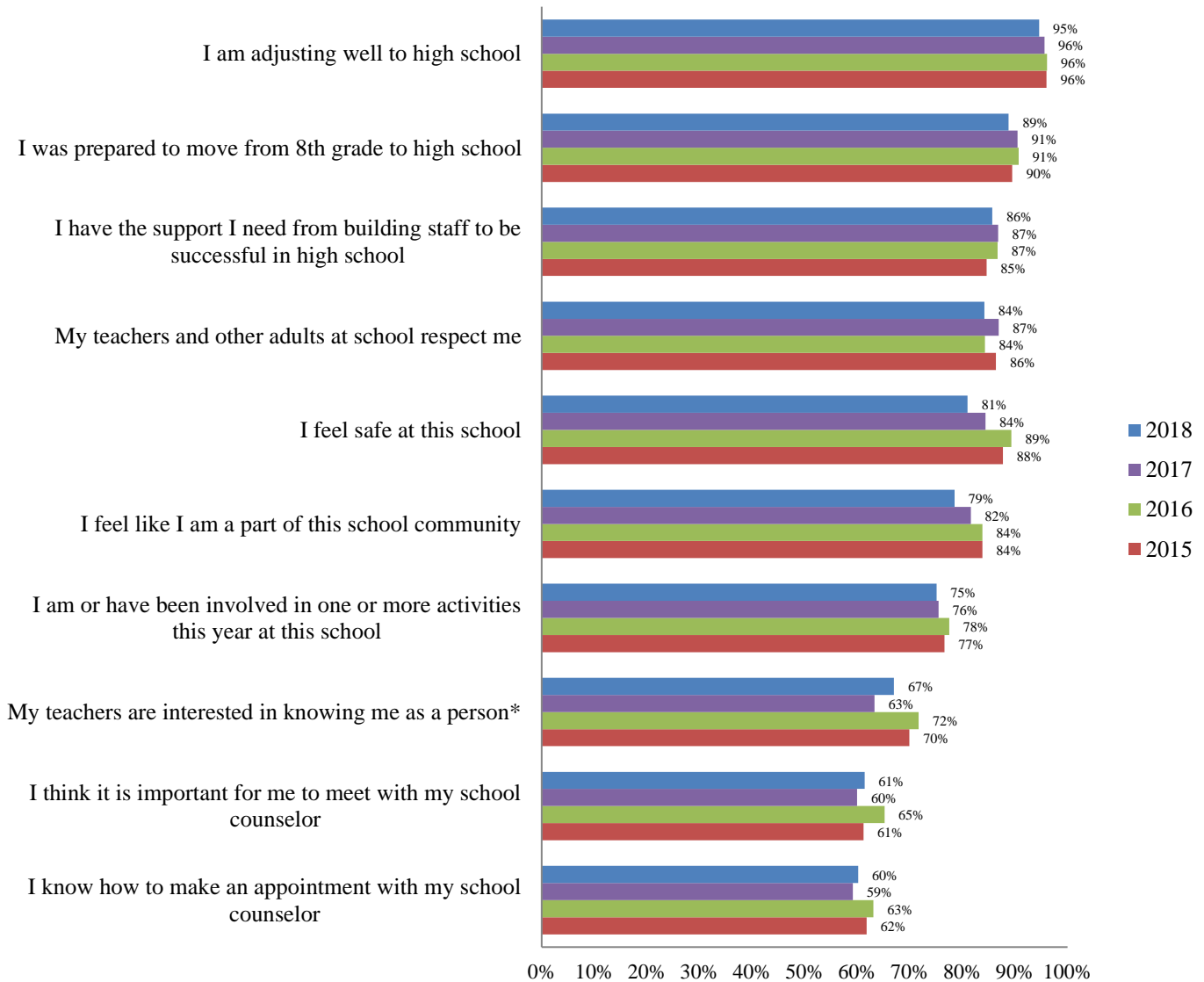
Perceptions of the 9th Grade Experience

Ninety-five percent of ninth grade students reported feeling well adjusted to high school. Eighty-nine percent of students agreed that they were prepared to move from 8th grade to high school. However, on another survey item, only 55% of students thought that their middle school experience prepared them for high school.

The item with the lowest level of agreement was, *I know how to make an appointment with my school counselor*, with 60% of students agreeing. Not considering the two items related to meeting with school counselors, the item of lowest agreement was, *My teachers are interested in knowing me as a person*, with only 67% of students reporting agreement with this statement. This represents a 4% increase since 2017, whereas the majority of other items decreased over the past year.

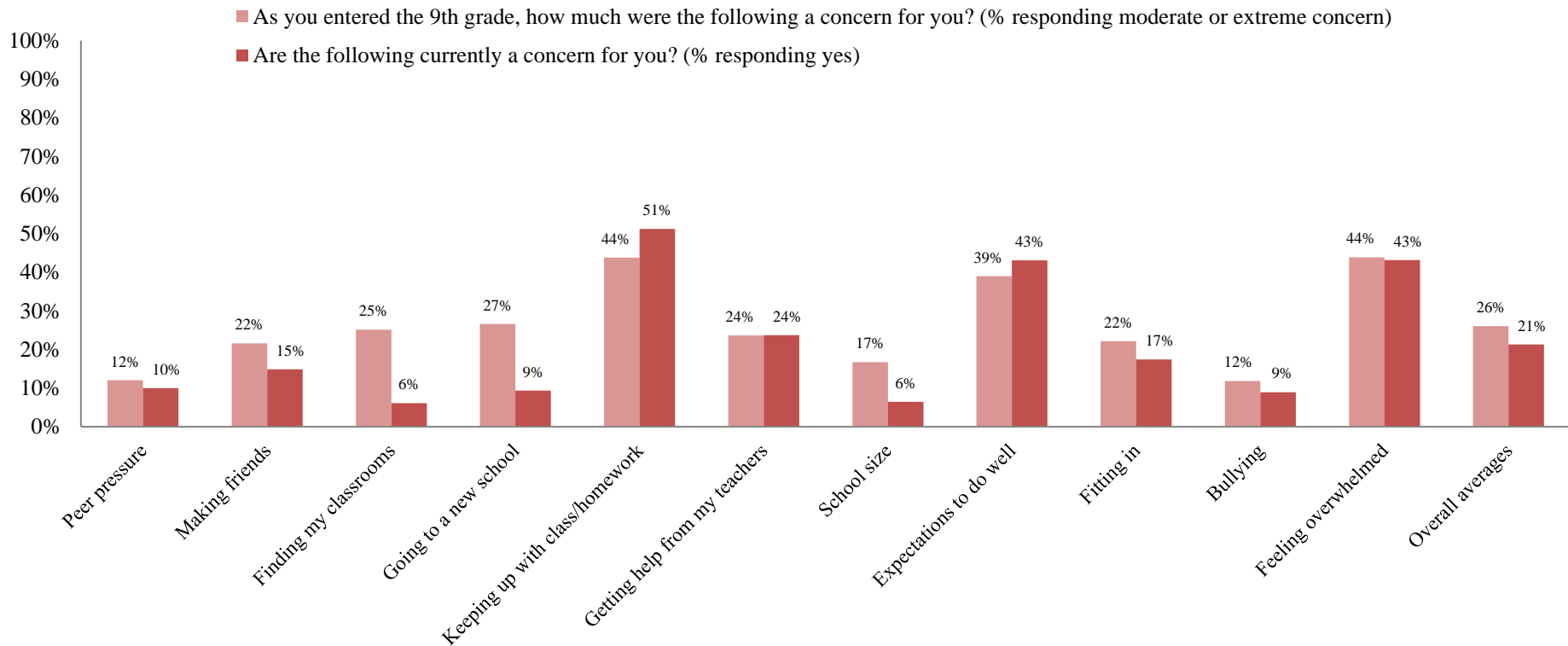
The percentage of students agreeing with the statements, *I feel safe at school*, *My teachers and other adults at school respect me*, and *I feel like I am a part of this school community* has declined 3% since 2017.

**When thinking about your 9th grade year...
(% who strongly agree or agree)**



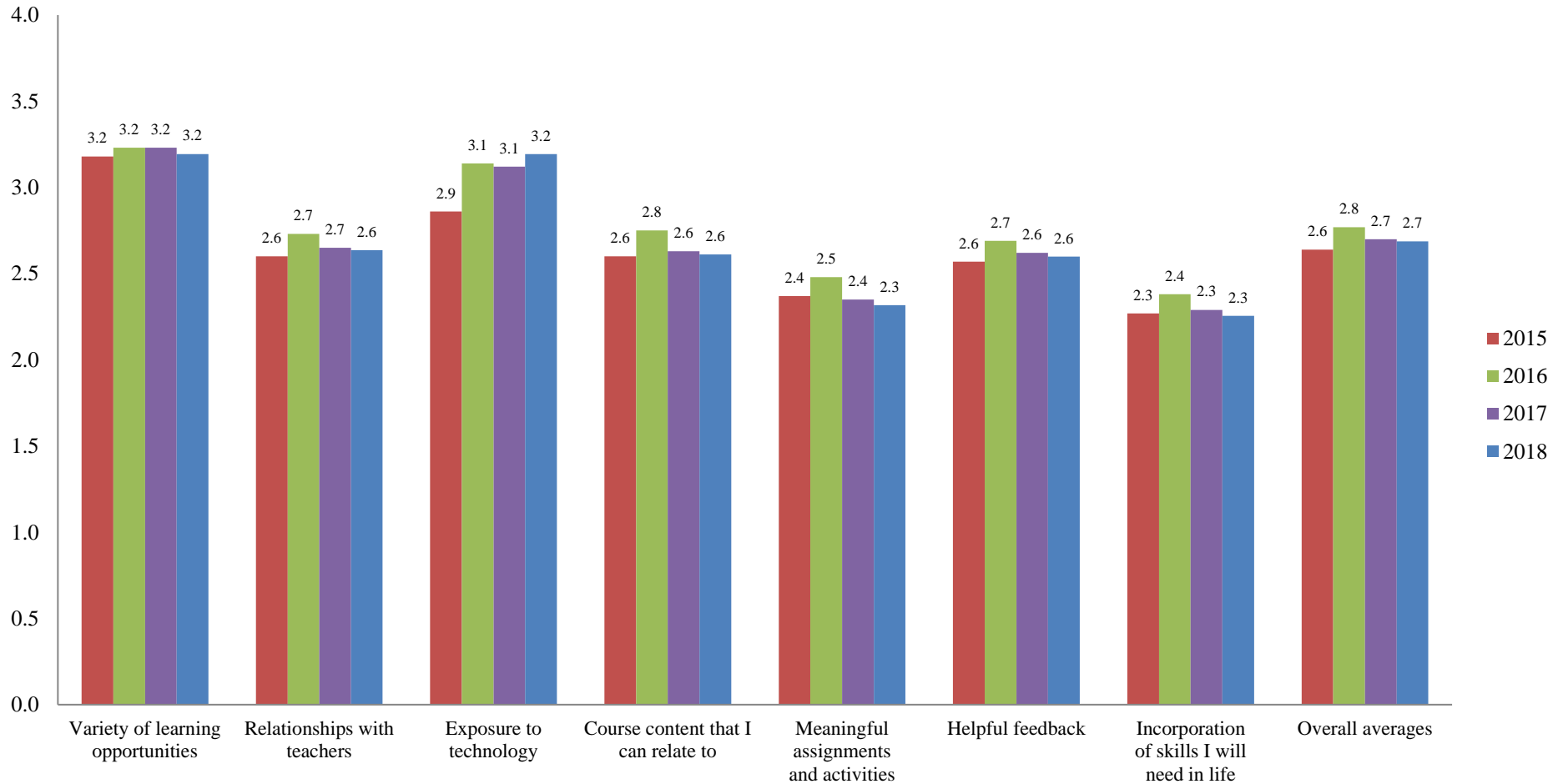
* New wording in 2017 (previously "My teachers are interested in me as a person").

Comparing level of concern from beginning to end of year



For 8 of 11 concerns, ninth graders reported less concern at the end of the year than at the beginning. The largest declines in concern from the beginning to the end of the year were *finding classrooms*, *going to a new school*, and *school size*. These findings are consistent with previous years. Ninth grade students were more concerned at the end of the year than upon entering the ninth grade in regards to *keeping up with class/homework* and *expectations to do well*. The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering 9th grade were *peer pressure* and *bullying*. These items remained among the lowest concerns at the end of the year, as well as concerns about *school size* and *finding classrooms*. On average, students felt about the same levels of concern at the beginning and end of the year around *getting help from teachers* and *feeling overwhelmed*.

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



On average, students rated the quality of services provided at their high schools as a 2.7 (equivalent to a B-). Grades assigned to each item were generally similar to responses in 2017.

In general, students rated having a *variety of learning opportunities* and *exposure to technology* higher than the other items. Ratings of *exposure to technology* have increased substantially since 2015, while other items have remained fairly consistent. The rating of *incorporation of skills I will need in life* is the lowest among items, and has been over time, with *meaningful assignments and activities* only slightly higher.

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.