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# Ninth Grade Transition Survey Report 2019

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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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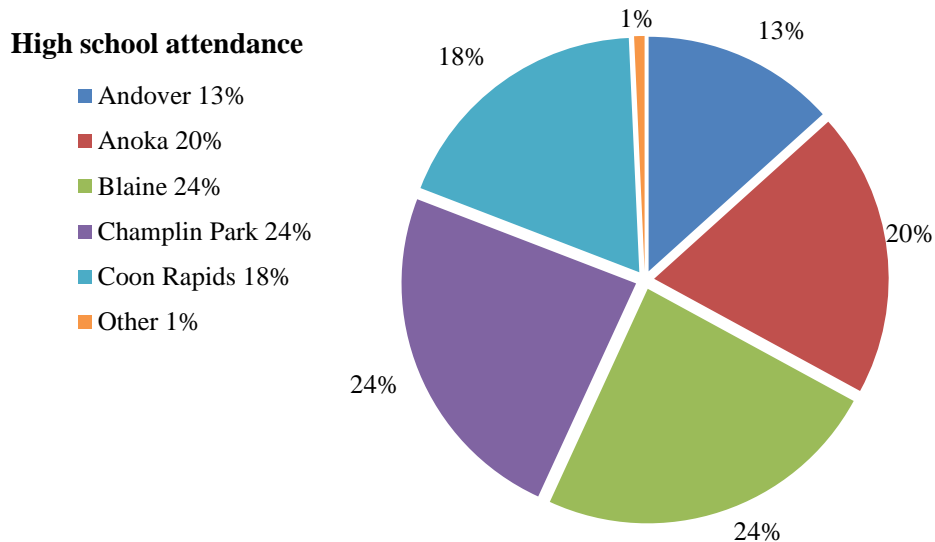
## Introduction

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. Teachers administered the survey during their advisory class between April 1 and May 17, 2019. 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 2,794 ninth grade students who completed the survey in 2019. Participants were representative of the five traditional high schools, as well as other programs, and representation was proportional to school size.



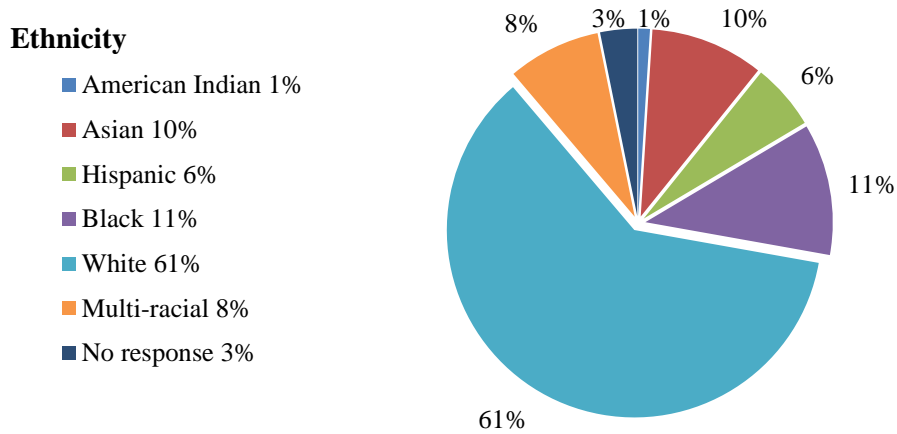
## Key Findings

- Thinking about their ninth grade year, 94% of students reported feeling well adjusted to high school, and 88% of students reported feeling prepared to move from eighth grade to high school. Both of these items were at levels similar to last year.
- Eighty-three percent of students reported feeling safe at their school, an increase of 2% from last year.
- Eighty-two percent of students agree that they have the support they need from building staff to be successful in high school, a decrease of 3% from 2018.
- Eighty percent of ninth grade students reported that their highest level of educational aspiration included obtaining a 4-year degree or higher, a 2% decrease from 2018. In general, students with higher educational aspirations were more confident in reaching their goals.
  - Asian students reported feeling significantly less confident in reaching their educational goals than ninth grade students overall, whereas, Black students reported feeling significantly more confident in reaching their educational goals than ninth grade students overall.
- Most students learned about their school counselor through *orientation, open house, an individual meeting* or their *advisory*.
  - Eighteen percent of students reported not knowing whom their counselor is, an increase of 3% from 2018. Forty-eight percent of ninth grade students reported that they have never met with their counselor.
  - Sixty-three percent agree that they know how to make an appointment with their school counselor, an increase of 3% since 2018.
  - Overall, the percentage of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each concern has decreased since 2018, however, students reported being most likely to go to their school counselor for concerns about *schedule change, credits on track to graduate, registration, and college or career planning*.
- The percentage of students reporting to all roles decreased for all concerns from 2018 to 2019.
- Ninth grade students were more concerned about *keeping up with class/homework, feeling overwhelmed, expectations to do well, and getting help from teachers* 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, peer pressure* and *school size*. These items were even less of a concern at the end of the year.
  - Asian students were significantly more concerned about *peer pressure, making friends, going to a new school* and *fitting in* at the beginning of the school year when compared to students overall.
  - Black students were more concerned at the beginning of the school year about *keeping up with class/homework* as compared to students overall. However, Black students were significantly less concerned than students overall about *finding their classrooms, fitting in, bullying* and *feeling overwhelmed*.
  - As they entered the ninth grade, female students reported feeling significantly more concerned than other students overall on all items. At the end of the year, female students were still more concerned than other students overall about all items except *going to a new school*.

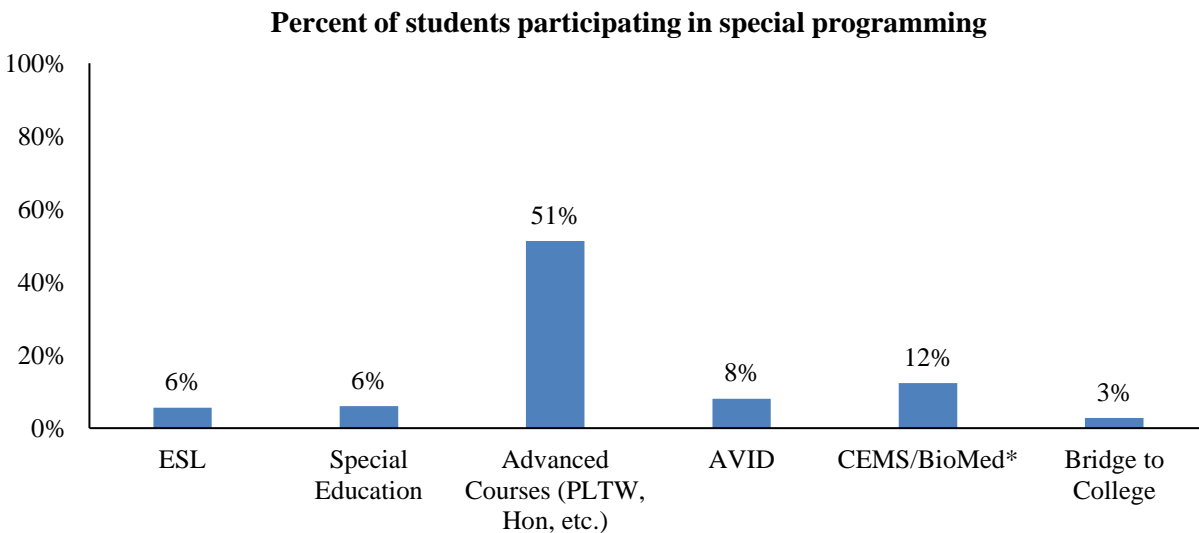
- On average, students rated the overall quality of services provided at their high schools as 2.7 (equivalent to a B-), which was the same as in 2018. Grades assigned in 2019 to each of the seven items related to the quality of services provided remained very similar to 2018.
  - In general, multi-racial students rated many of the items lower than students overall. Those items that were rated significantly lower as compared to other students were *course content that I can relate to*, *helpful feedback* and *incorporation of skills I will need in life*.
  - Asian students rated several items significantly higher as compared to students overall, including: *course content that I can relate to*, *meaningful assignments and activities*, and *incorporation of skills I will need in life*.

## Demographics

There were 2,794 ninth grade students who participated in the survey. Students were evenly distributed across both genders with 49% being male and 48% being female (3% of students provided no response to this question). Students self-reported their ethnic background as the following:



Over half of the participants reported taking an advanced course (51%), a slight decrease from 2018 (53%). Student participation in other special programs is shown in the chart below.

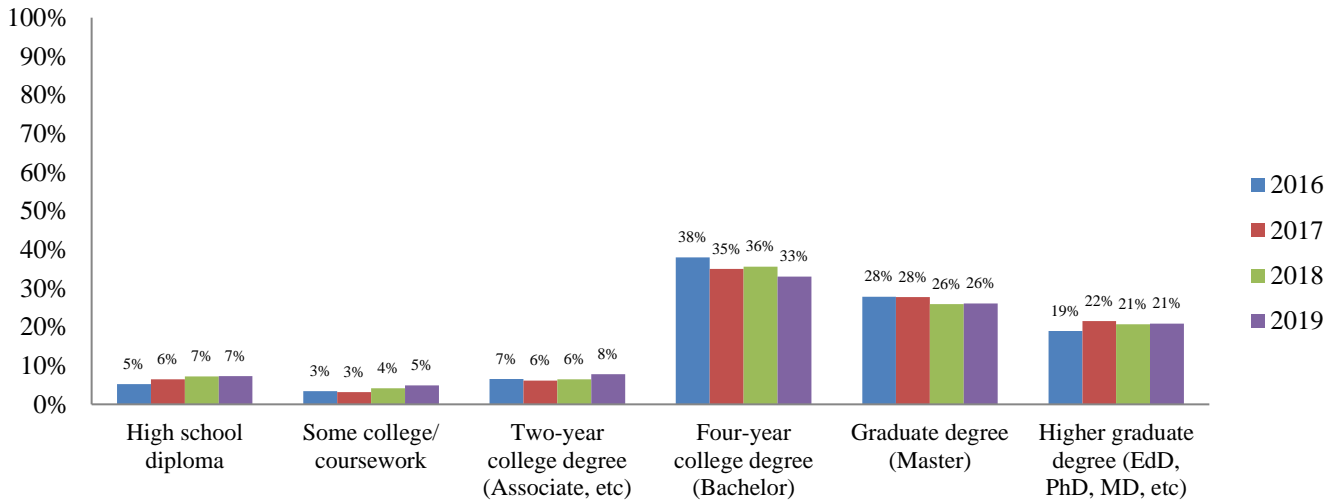


*\*CEMS/BioMed is offered only at Blaine and Coon Rapids High Schools.*

## Educational Goals

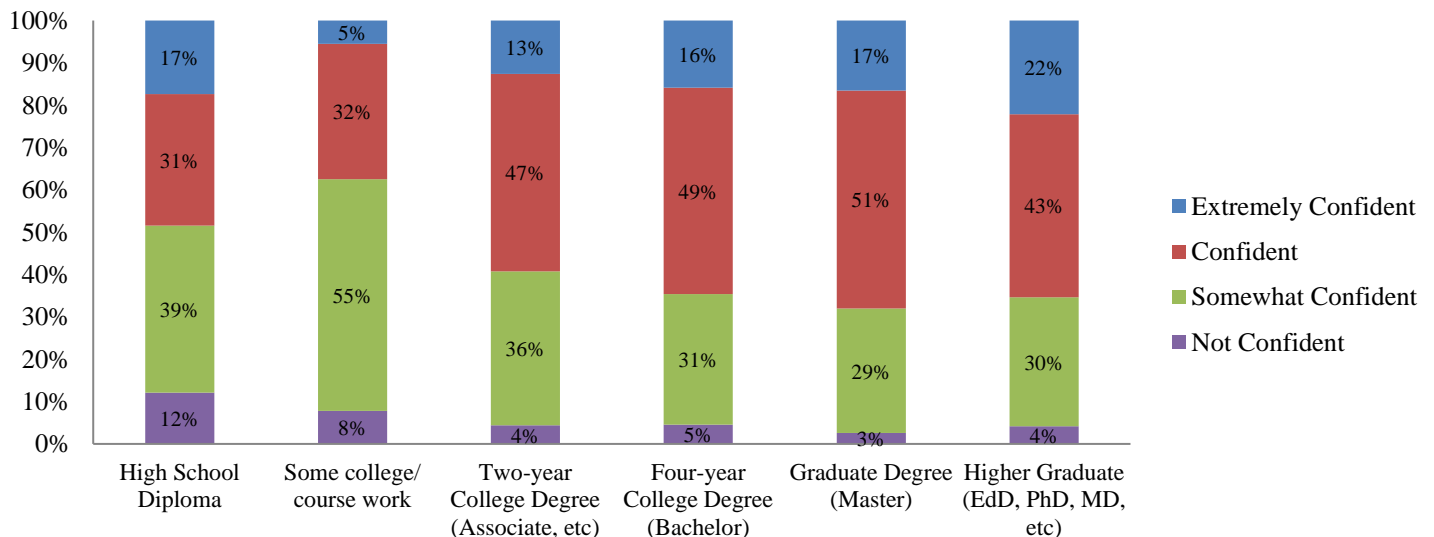
**Educational aspirations.** The percent of students that aspire to some level of college remained relatively the same from last year. However, 80% of ninth grade students reported aspirations that included obtaining a four-year college degree or higher, a decrease of 2% from 2018. Aspirations of obtaining a four-year college degree decreased 3% this year, whereas, aspirations for obtaining a graduate or higher graduate degree stayed the same.

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



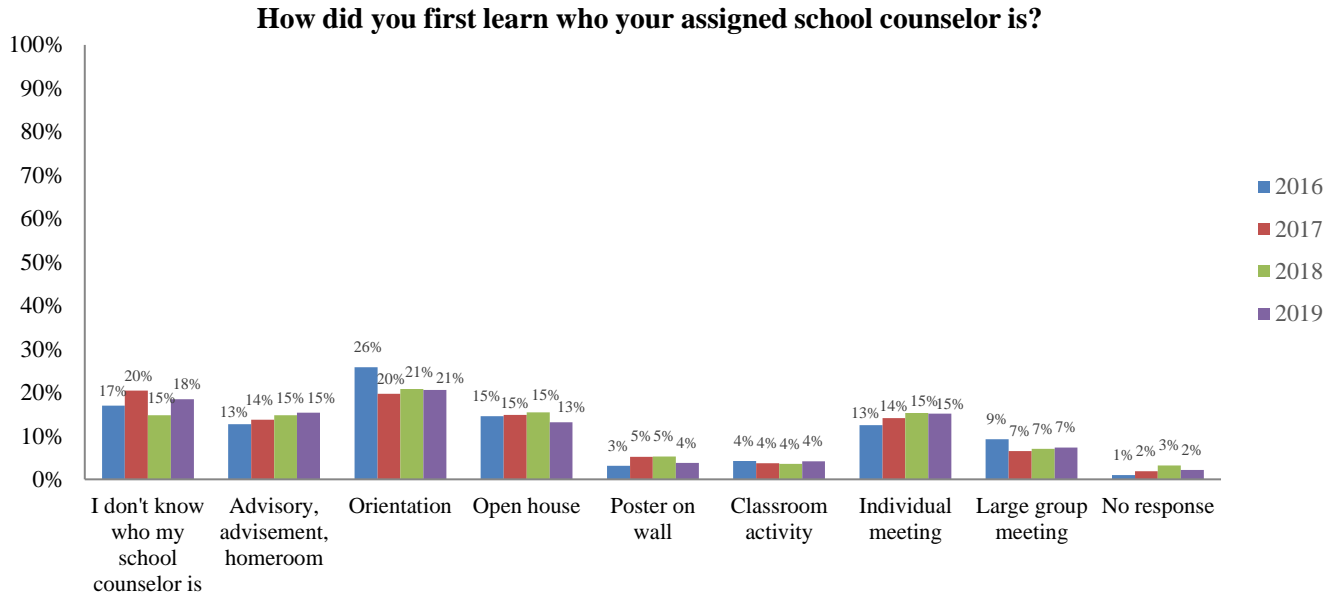
**Confidence in reaching educational goals.** Students pursuing a four-year college degree or higher reported being either extremely confident or confident in reaching their goals at a greater percentage than those students selecting other aspirations. Twelve percent of ninth grade students reported that they were not confident they could 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?**

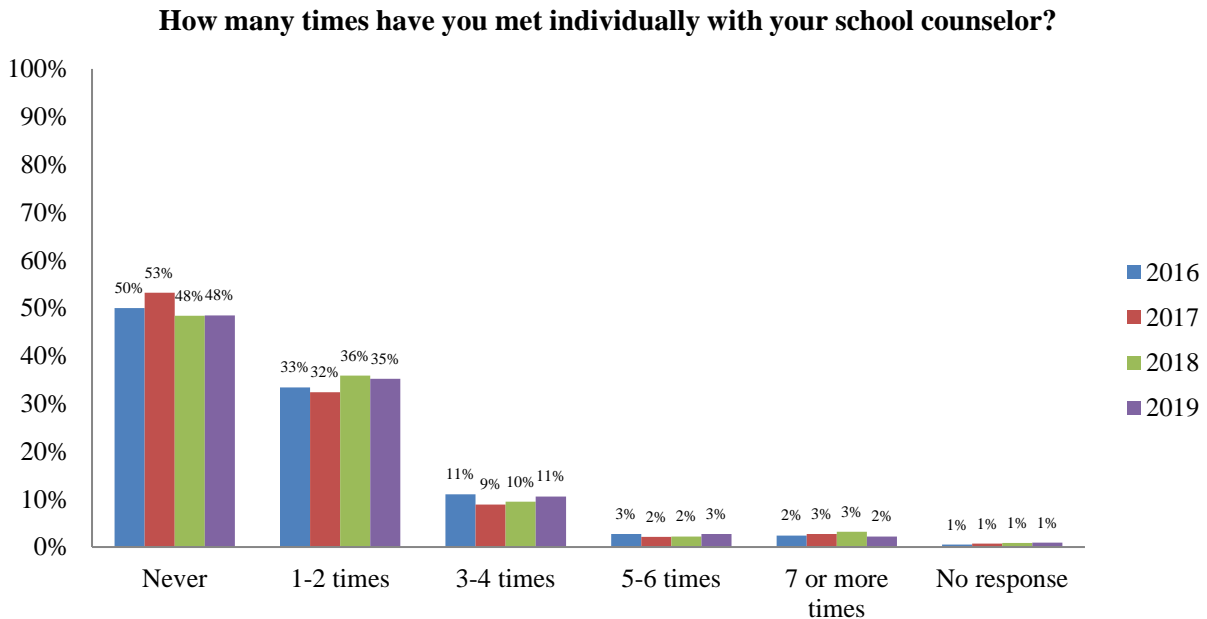


## School Counselors

**Knowledge of counselors.** Ninth grade students first learned who their school counselor is through an *orientation* (21%), an *individual meeting* (15%), an *advisory, advisement, or homeroom* (15%), and through an *open house* (13%). Eighteen percent of students stated they do not know who their counselor is. The percentage of students not knowing their counselor has increased 3%, since 2018.



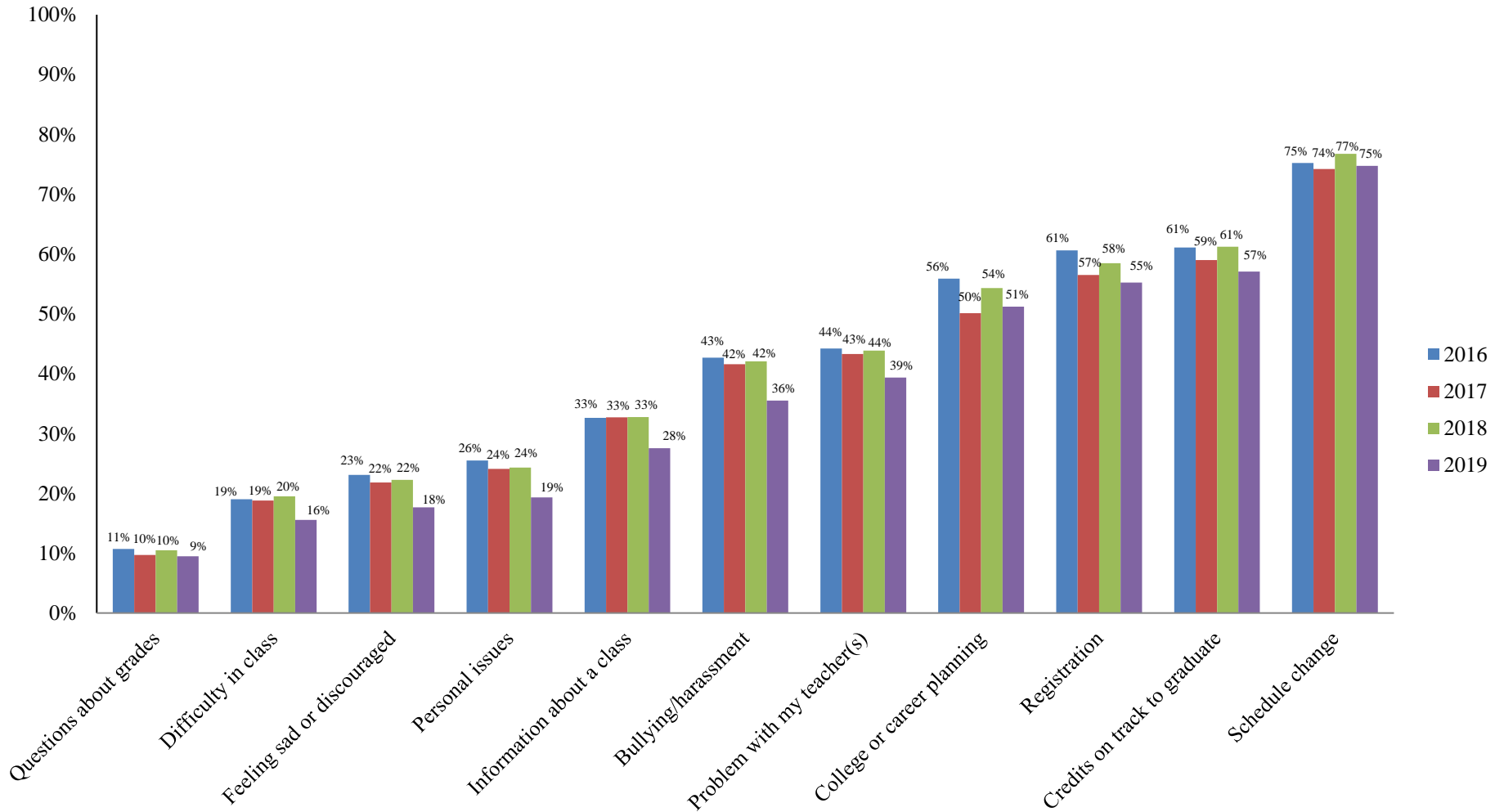
**Meeting with counselors.** Nearly half (48%) of ninth grade students have never met individually with their school counselor. This is down from 53% in 2017. Slightly over one-third (35%) of students have met with their counselor, one to two times, during the school year.





**Concerns.** The biggest concerns for which ninth grade students reported that they would go to their school counselor included: *schedule change* (75%), *credits on track to graduate* (57%), and *registration* (55%). Students were less likely to report that they would go to the school counselor for the following: *Questions about grades* (9%), *difficulty in class* (16%), *feeling sad or discouraged* (18%), and *personal issues* (19%). Overall, the percentages of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each concern have decreased since 2018.

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



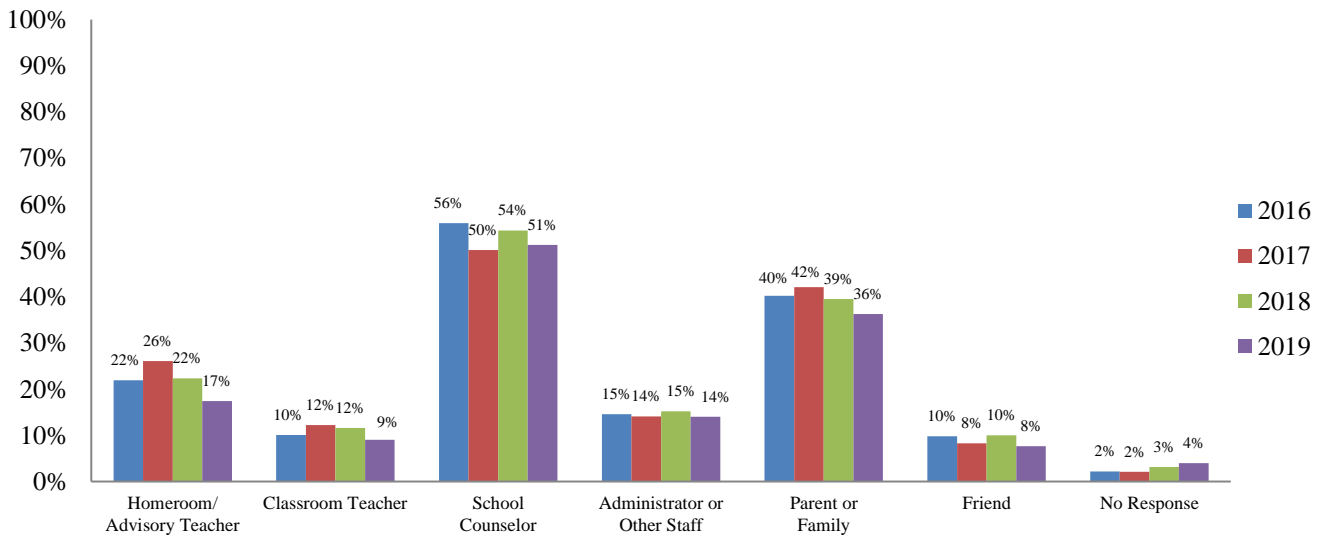
Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern. Other response options included an advisory teacher, a classroom teacher, an administrator, a friend, or a parent or family member.

## Additional Responses to Six of the Concerns

The percentage of students reporting to all roles decreased across all concerns from 2018 to 2019. In this section, students were allowed to choose more than one person that they would go to for each of the following concerns.

**College and career planning.** Slightly over half of the students surveyed (51%) said that they would go to a school counselor for college or career planning, a 3% decrease from 2018. Seventeen percent of students said they would go to their homeroom or advisory teacher, a 5% decrease from the previous year and almost a 10% decrease since 2017.

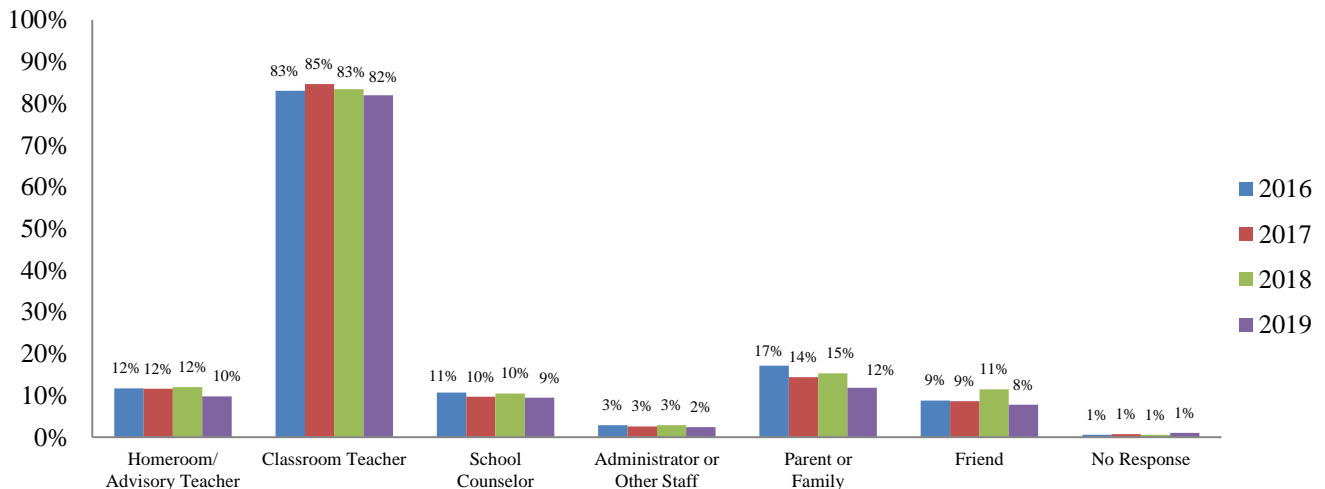
**Who students would go to to discuss: College or career planning**



*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 (82%) said that they would go to a classroom teacher with questions about their grades. More students reported that they would rather go to a parent or family member (12%) than to their homeroom/advisory teacher (10%), or their school counselor (9%).

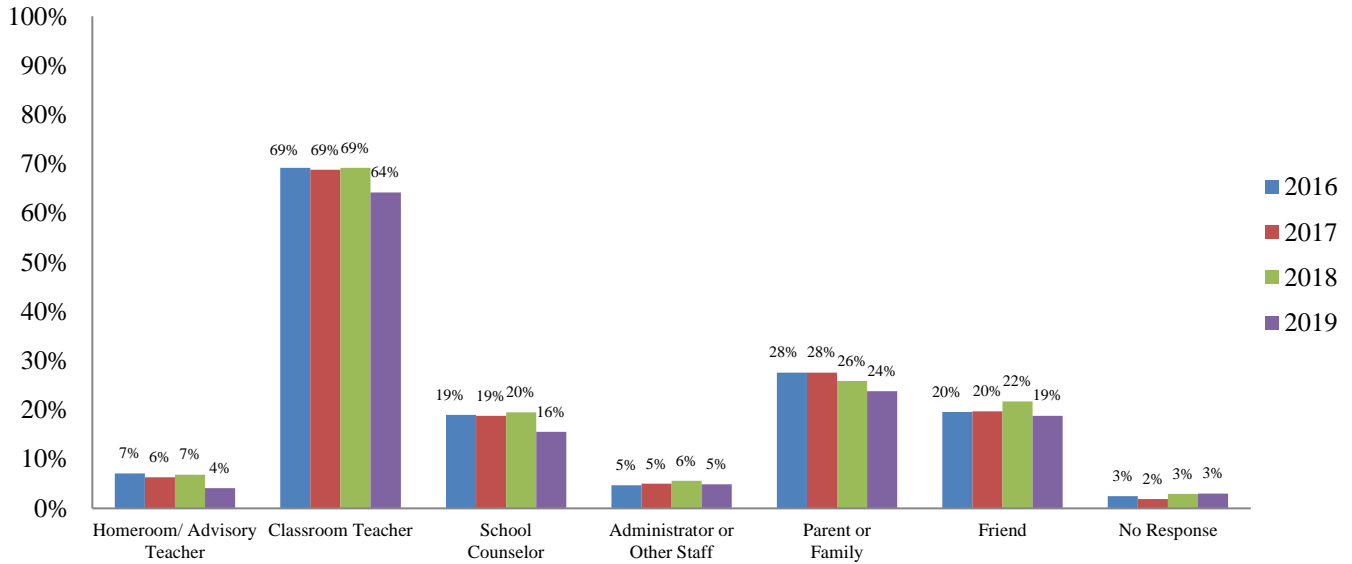
**Who students would go to to discuss: Questions about grades**



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

**Difficulty in class.** While 64% of ninth grade students said they would go to a classroom teacher for difficulty in class, a moderate percentage also reported going to people such as a parent or family member (24%), a friend (19%), or their school counselor (16%).

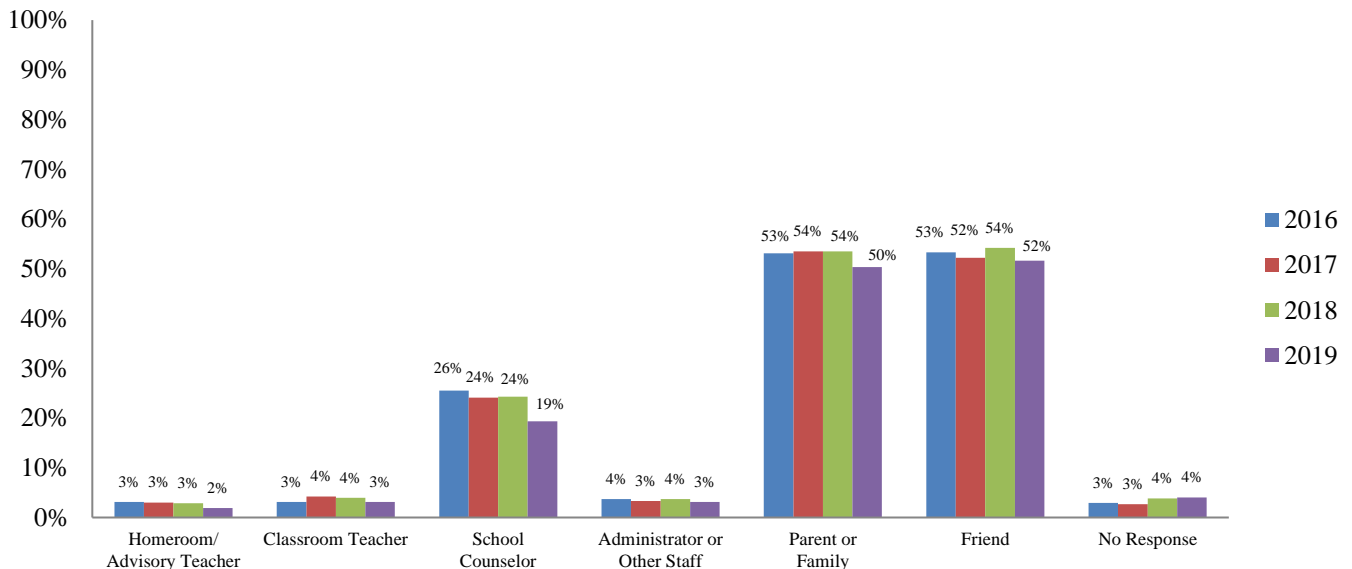
**Who students would go to to discuss: Difficulty in class**



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

**Personal issues.** Fifty-two percent of respondents said they would go to a friend to discuss personal issues, with 50% saying they would go to a parent or family member. Nineteen percent of students would go to their school counselor with personal issues.

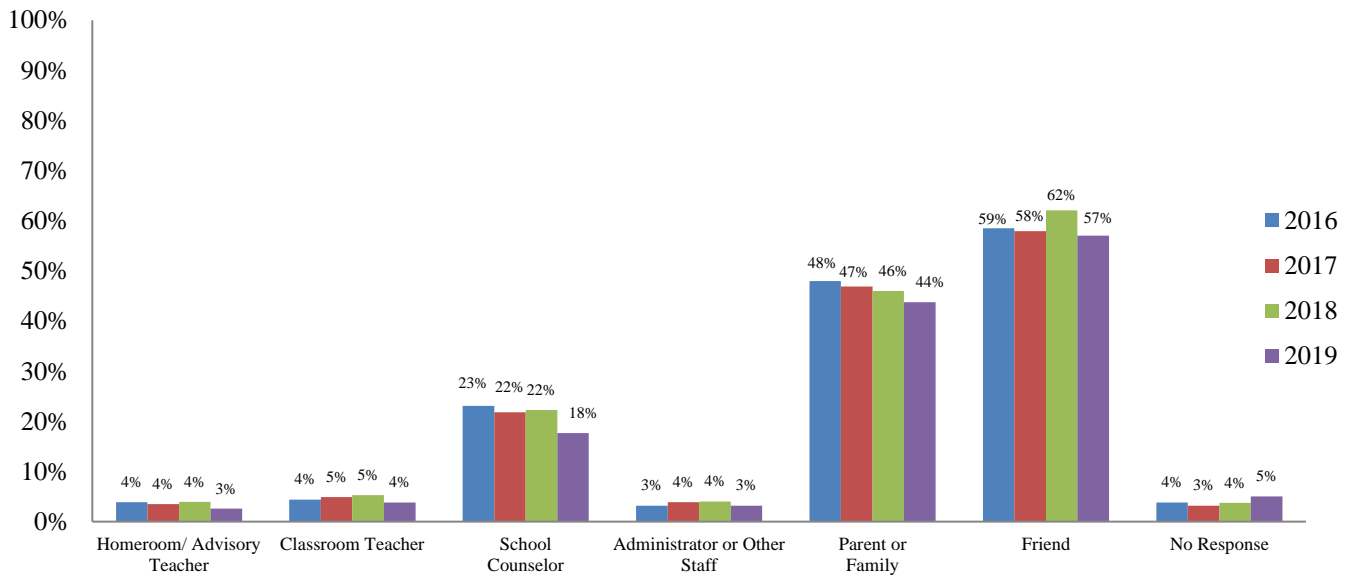
**Who students would go to to discuss: Personal issues**



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

**Feeling sad or discouraged.** Fifty-seven percent of students reported going to a friend to discuss feeling sad or discouraged, a decrease of 5% since 2018. Forty-four percent of students reported going to a parent or family member and another 18% reported going to a school counselor; both these percentages have steadily decreased since 2016. The percentage of students who did not indicate an individual with whom they would discuss feeling sad or discouraged increased slightly from 4% to 5%, our highest non-response rate across concerns.

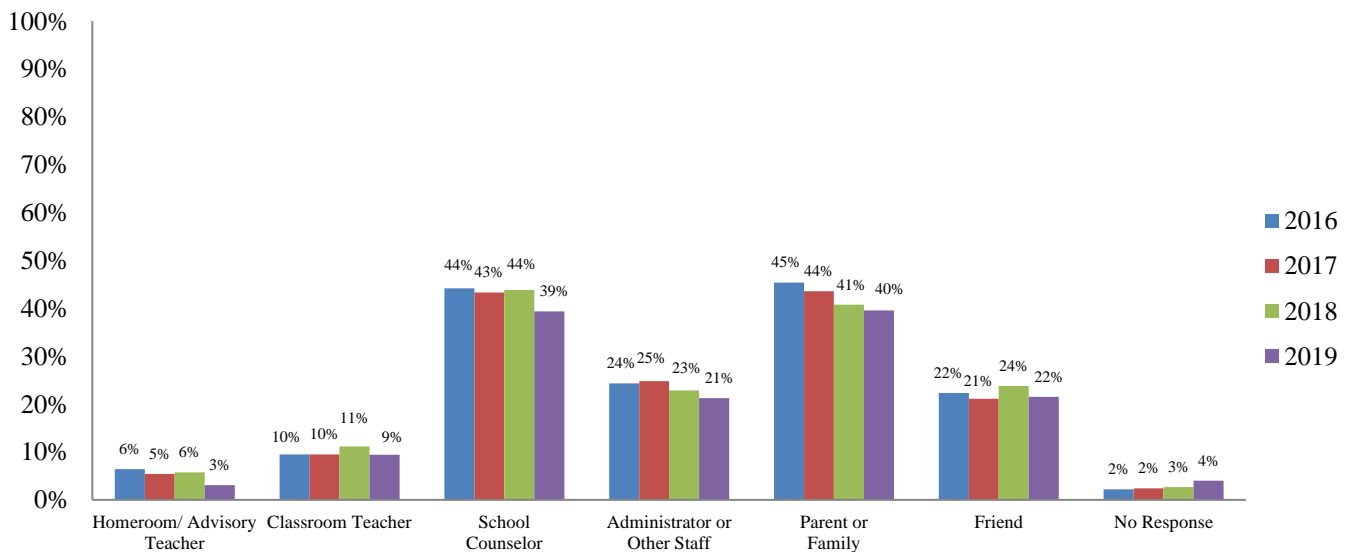
**Who students would go to to discuss: Feeling sad or discouraged**



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

**Problems with teachers.** The top responses students selected indicating whom they would go to if they had a problem with a teacher were talking to a parent or family member (40%), followed by talking to a school counselor (39%).

**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.

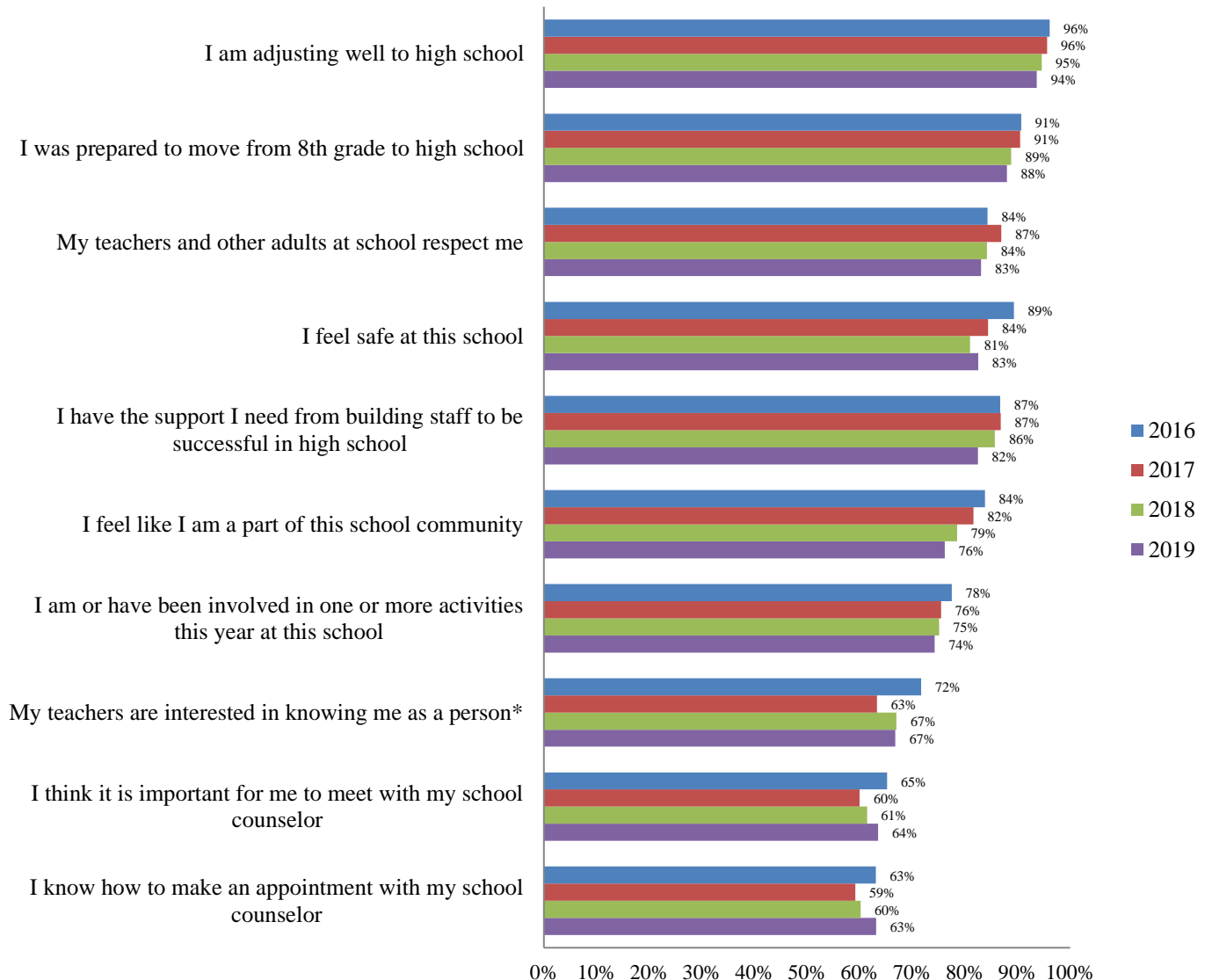
## Perceptions of the Ninth Grade Experience

Ninety-four percent of ninth grade students reported they are adjusting well to high school. Eighty-eight percent of students reported they felt prepared to move from eighth grade to high school. There was a 2% increase in the percentage of students who reported feeling safe at school since 2018.

The item with the lowest level of agreement was, *I know how to make an appointment with my school counselor*, however, this item increased 3% since 2018. The percentage of students who reported thinking it is important to meet with their counselor also increased 3% from 2018 to 2019.

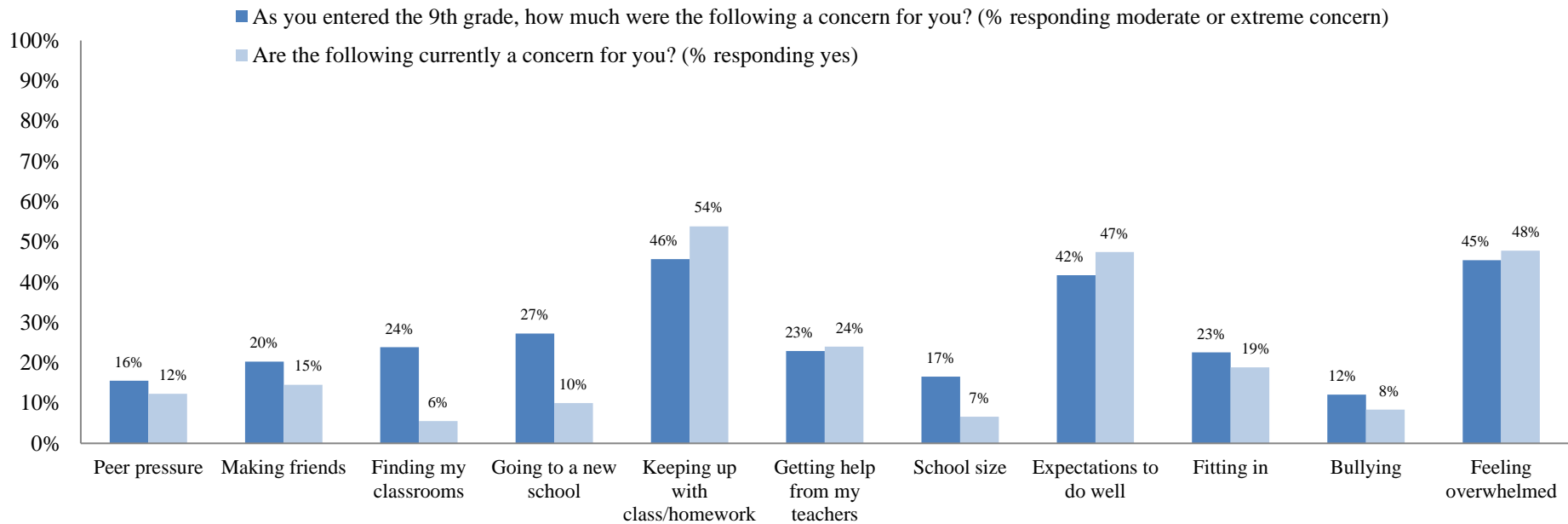
The percentage of students agreeing with the following statements have steadily declined since 2016: *I am adjusting well to high school* (94%), *I was prepared to move from 8th grade to high school* (88%), *I have the support I need from building staff to be successful in high school* (82%), *I feel like I am a part of this school community* (76%), and *I am or have been involved in one or more activities this year at this school* (74%).

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



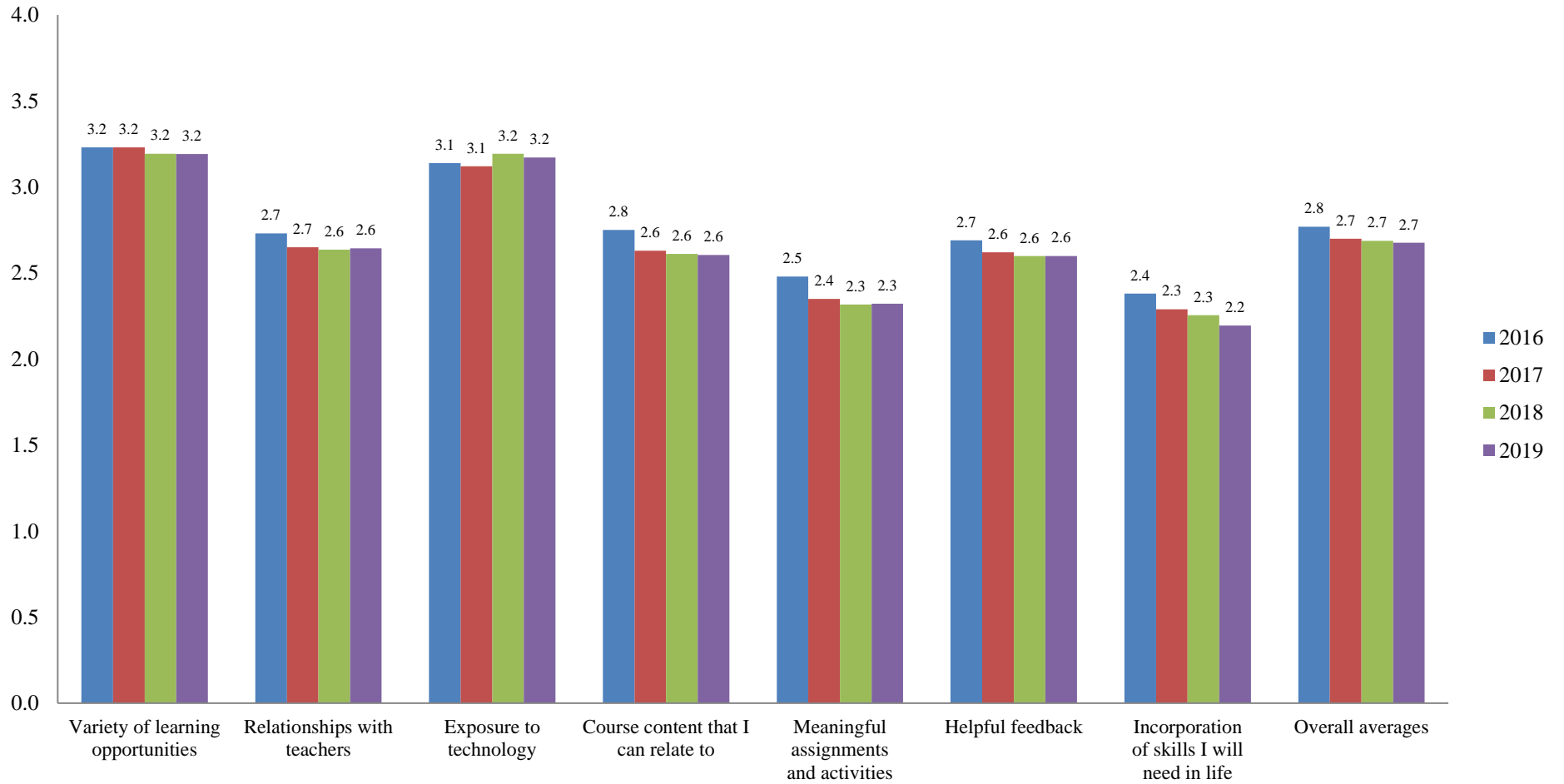
\* New wording in 2017 (previously "My teachers are interested in me as a person").

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



Ninth graders expressed less of a concern for seven of the 11 items at the end of the year than at the beginning. They were least concerned at the end of the year about the following: *finding my classrooms* (6%), *school size* (7%), *bullying* (8%) and *going to a new school* (10%). Students were more concerned at the end of the school year than when starting the school year about: *keeping up with class/homework* (54%), *feeling overwhelmed* (48%) and *expectations to do well* (47%). The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering the ninth grade were *bullying* (12%), *peer pressure* (16%) and *school size* (17%) which remained among the lowest concerns at the end of the year. Students felt approximately the same levels of concern about *getting help from teachers* both at the beginning and end of the school year. The largest changes in concerns from the beginning to the end of the school year were those items centered around the physical unknowns of a new school such as *finding my classroom*, *going to a new school* and *school size*, all of which decreased by year's end.

**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 2018.

In general, students rated having a *variety of learning opportunities* and *exposure to technology* higher than other items. Ratings, since 2016, on all 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, both of which have declined by the greatest amounts since 2016.

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.