
Ninth Grade Transition Survey Report 2020

Anoka-Hennepin
School District

Prepared by the Department of
Research, Evaluation and Testing



ANOKA-HENNEPIN
SCHOOLS
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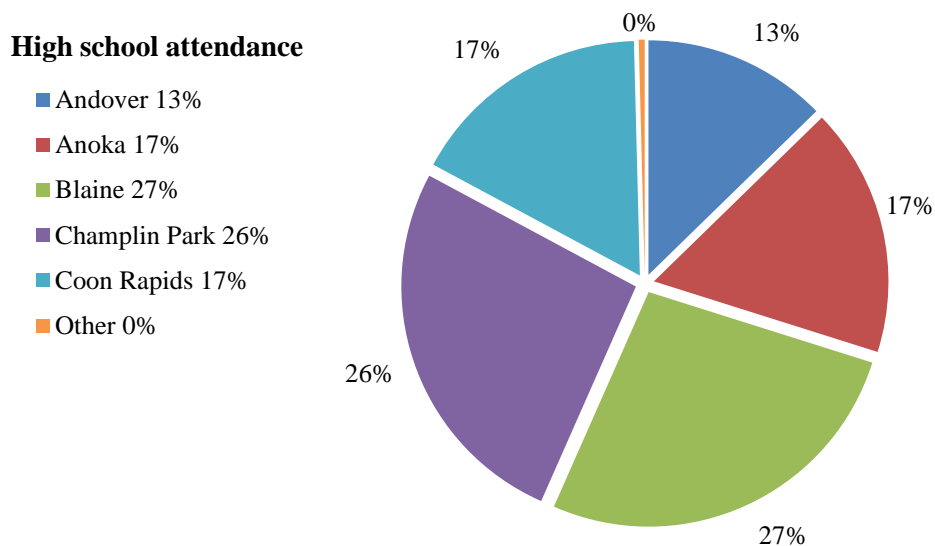
Introduction

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 first time online this year for freshmen to complete during distance learning between May 27 and June 3, 2020. 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 743 ninth grade students who completed the survey in 2020. This is down over two thousand from the year prior. Changes to the number of respondents may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were representative of the five traditional high schools, as well as other programs, and representation was proportional to school size.



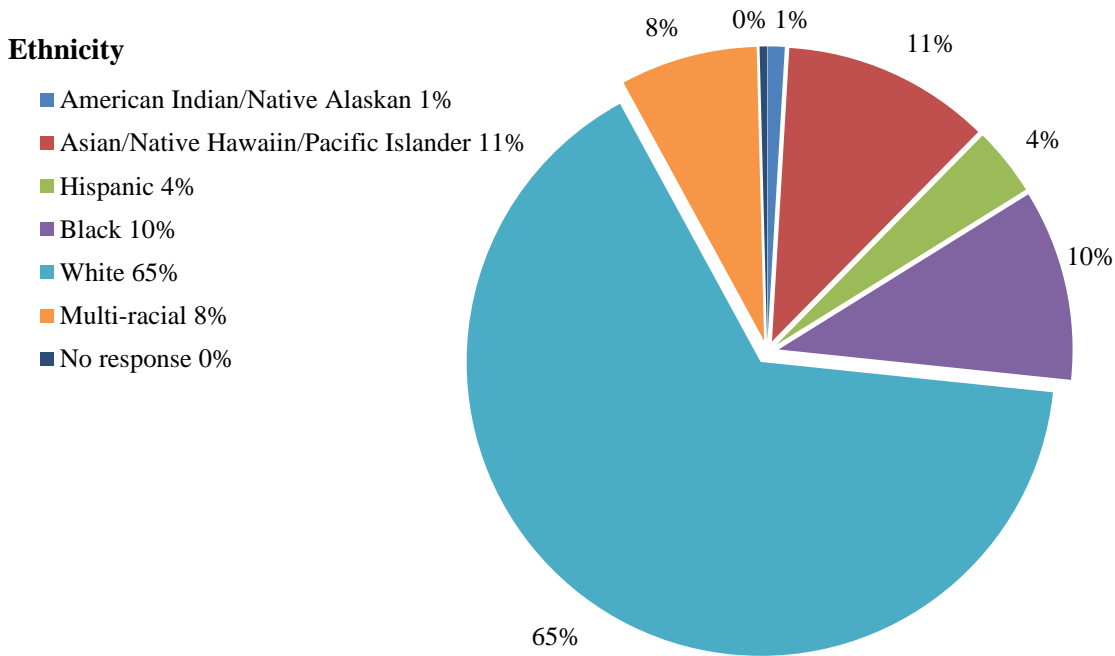
Key Findings

- Typically, teachers administered the survey during their advisory class, although this year students were sent a link and asked to take the survey on their own time in an unstructured setting. Changes in results may be impacted by the COVID-19 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 84%, an increase of 4% since 2019. 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.
- Most students learned about their school counselor through *orientation*, an *individual meeting* or an *advisory, advisement, or homeroom*, and *open house*.
 - Fourteen percent of students reported not knowing whom their counselor is, a decrease of 4% from 2019. Additionally, 47% of ninth grade students reported that they have never met with their counselor.
 - Sixty-three percent of ninth graders agree that it is important for them to meet with their school counselor, a decrease of 1% since 2019.
 - Overall, the percentages of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each concern has increased since 2019. The percentages of students who reported going to their school counselor were mostly for concerns about *schedule change*, *registration*, and *credits on track to graduate*.
- For each area of concern, the percentage of students who reported going to each role increased or stayed the same from 2019 to 2020.
- Thinking about their ninth grade year, 96% of students reported feeling they are adjusting well to high school, an increase of 2% since 2019.
 - Ninety-two percent of students reported feeling prepared to move from eighth grade to high school, a 4% increase since last year.
 - Eighty-six percent of students agree they have the support they need from building staff to be successful in high school, an increase of 4% from 2019.
 - The percentage of students who reported feeling safe at school remained relatively the same as the previous year (83%).
- Ninth grade students were more concerned about *keeping up with class/homework* 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 less concerned about *making friends*, *getting help from teachers*, *fitting in*, and *feeling overwhelmed* at the beginning of the school year when compared to students overall.
 - As they entered the ninth grade, female students reported feeling significantly more concerned than other students overall about *peer pressure* and *finding their classrooms*. Male students, as they entered the ninth grade, reported feeling significantly less concerned than other students overall about nine of the 11 items.

- On average, students rated the overall quality of services provided at their high schools as 2.8 (equivalent to a B-). Grades assigned in 2020 to each of the seven items related to the quality of services provided increased or stayed the same as the previous year.
 - Asian students rated several items significantly higher as compared to students overall, including: *meaningful assignments and activities, helpful feedback, and incorporation of skills I will need in life.*
 - As compared to other students overall, male students rated the following items significantly higher: *relationships with teachers, course content that I can relate to, and incorporation of skills I will need in life.*

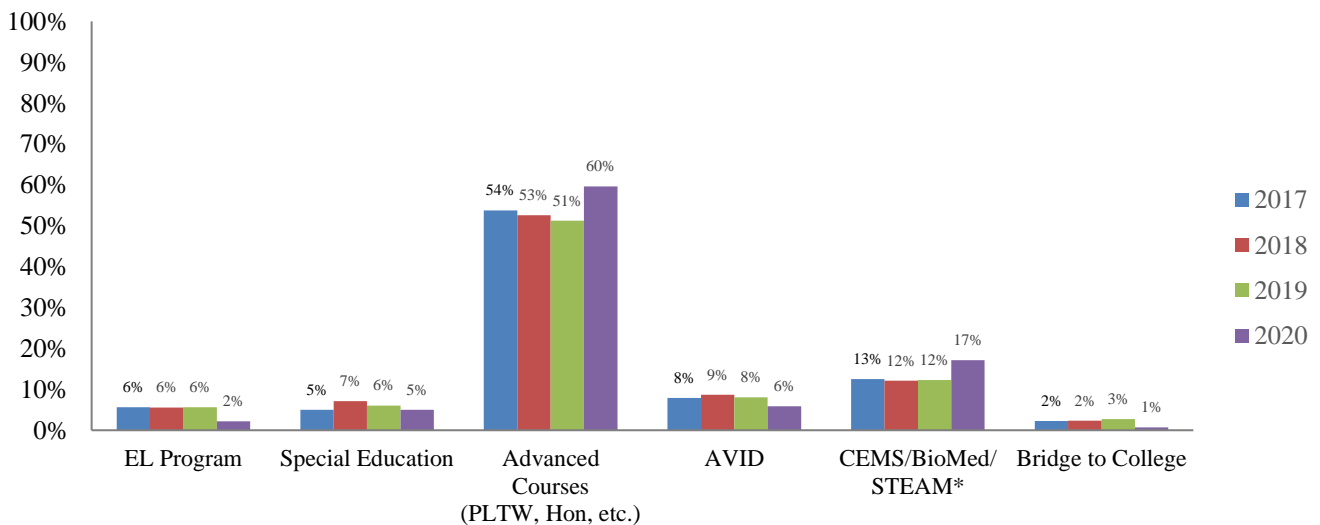
Demographics

There were 743 ninth grade students who participated in the survey. Students reported being 31% male and 65% female (3% of students preferred not to answer). In previous years, students who completed the survey were fairly evenly distributed across genders. Students self-reported their ethnic background as the following:



Sixty-percent of the participants reported taking an advanced course, an increase of 9% from 2019. Student participation in other special programs is shown in the chart below.

Percentage of students participating in special programming

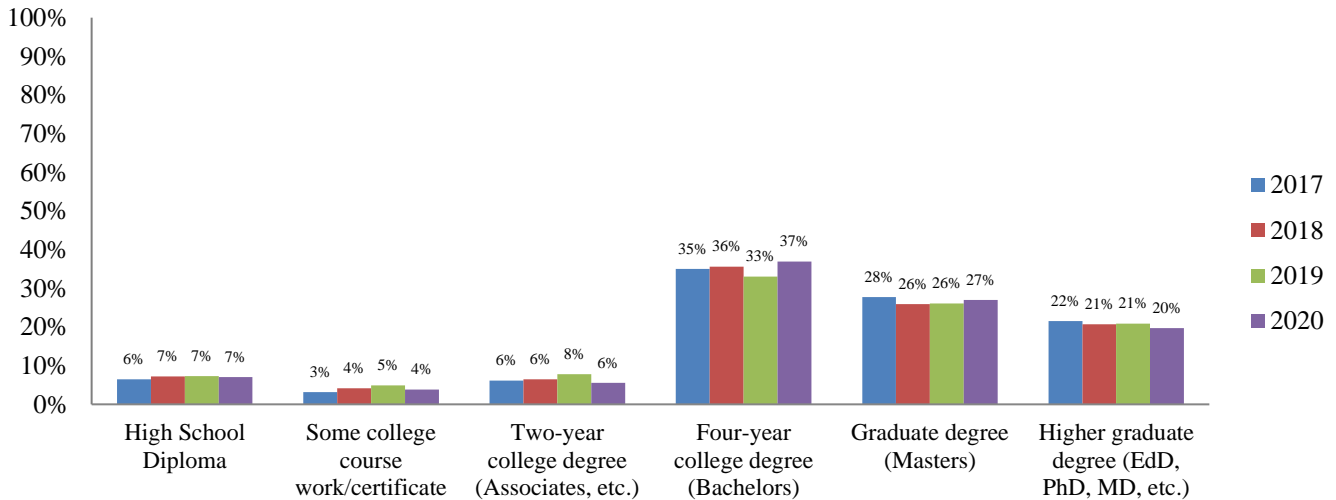


*CEMS/BioMed/STEAM are offered only at Anoka, Blaine, and Coon Rapids High Schools.

Educational Goals

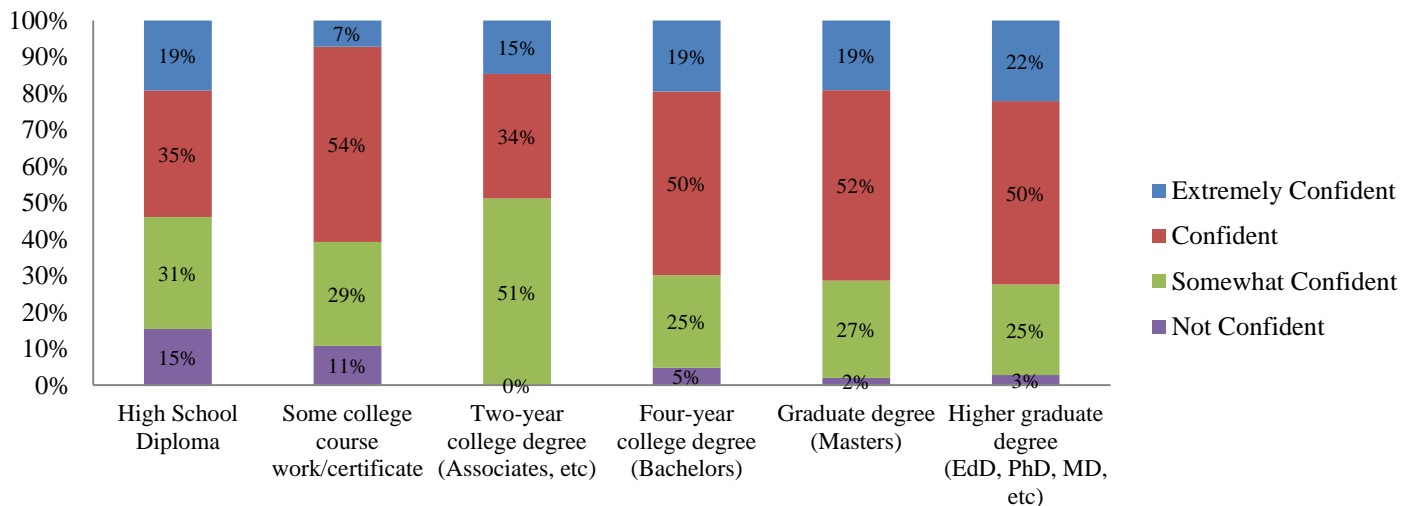
Educational aspirations. Eighty-four percent of ninth grade students reported aspirations that included obtaining a four-year college degree or higher, an increase of 4% since 2019. Aspirations of obtaining a four-year college degree increased 4% this year, whereas, aspirations for obtaining a graduate or higher graduate degree remained relatively the same.

Highest educational goal (% of students)



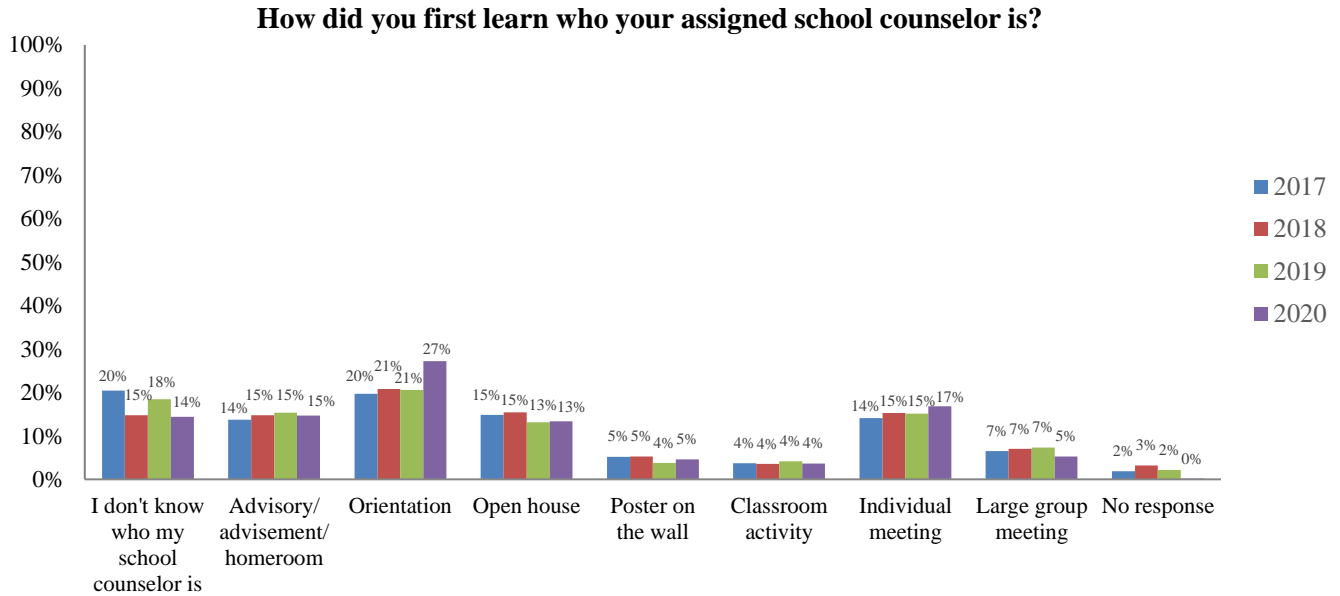
Confidence in reaching educational goals. Students pursuing a four-year college degree or higher reported being either extremely confident or confident in reaching their goals at a greater percentage than those students selecting other educational aspirations. Fifteen percent of ninth grade students reported that they were not confident they could obtain their educational goal of a high school diploma, an increase of 3% since last year. 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?'**

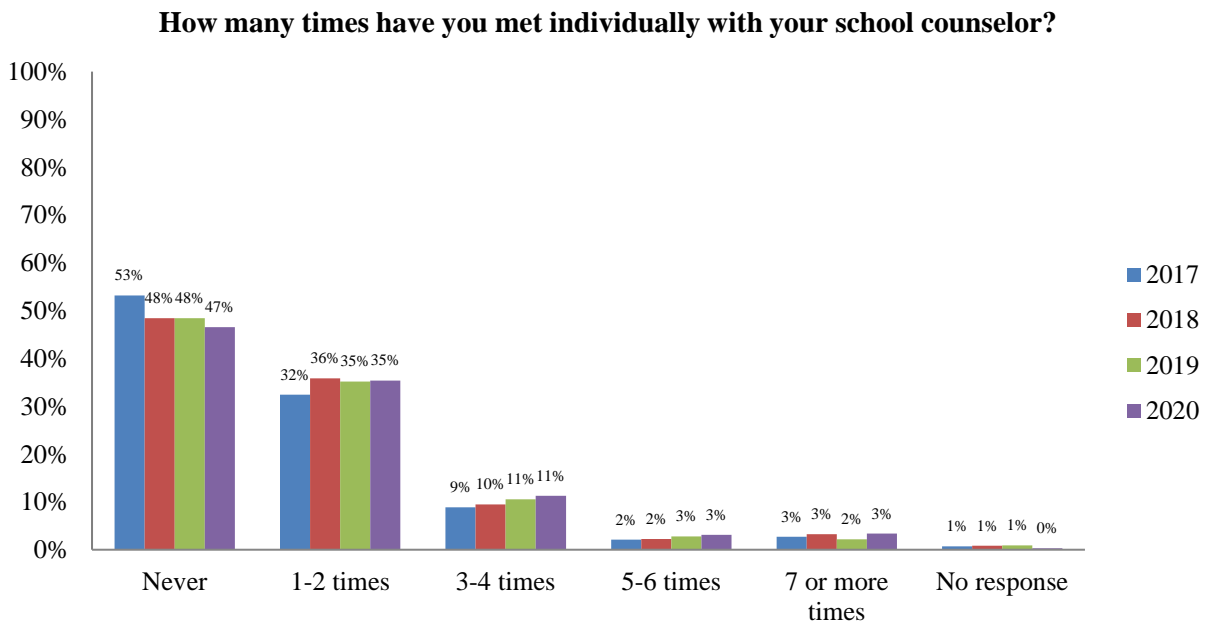


School Counselors

Assigned counselor. Most ninth grade students first learned who their assigned school counselor is through an *orientation* (27%), an *individual meeting* (17%), an *advisory, advisement, or homeroom* (15%), and through an *open house* (13%). Fourteen percent of students stated they do not know who their counselor is, a decrease of 4% since 2019.

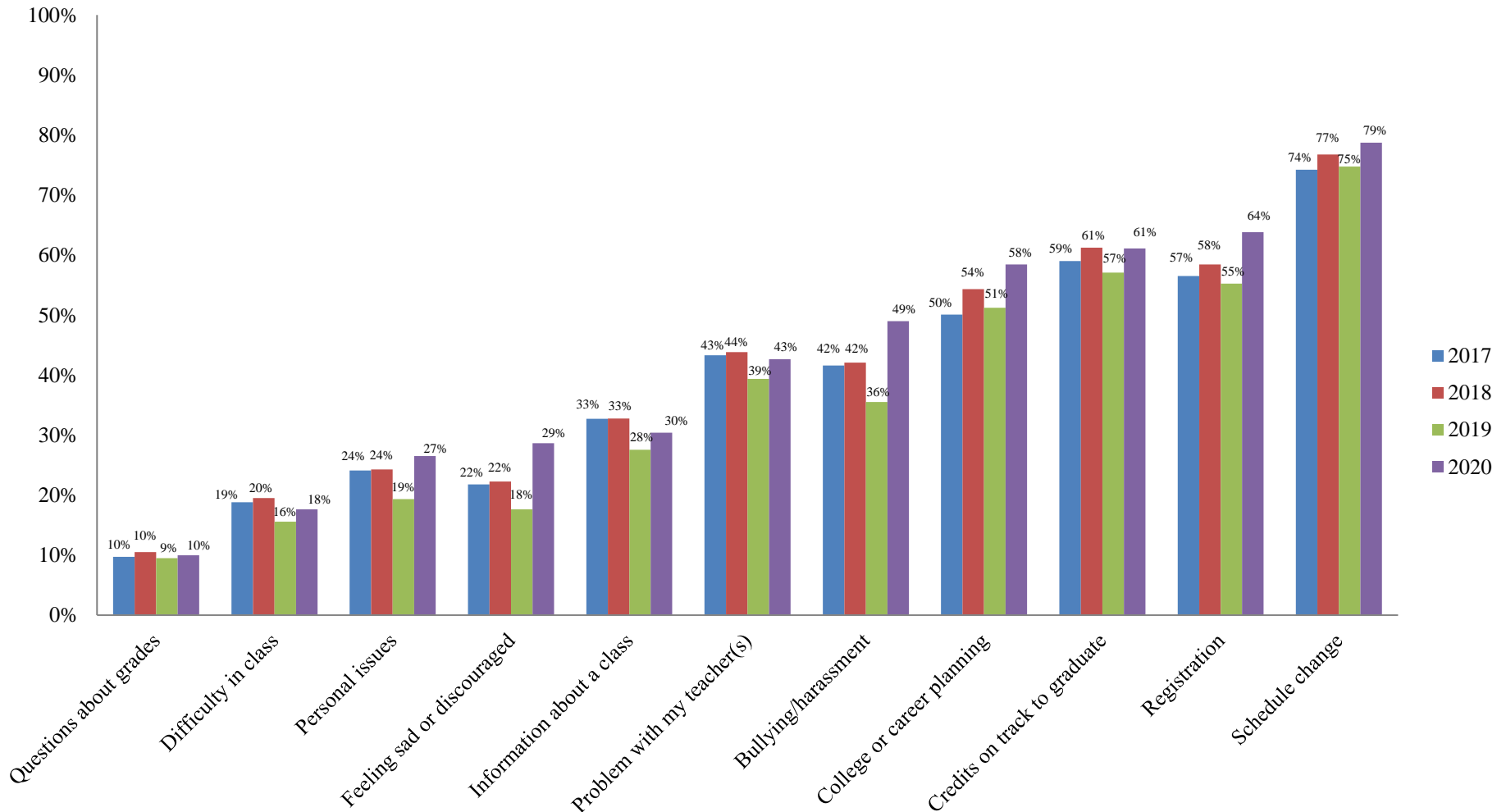


Meeting with counselor. The percentage of ninth grade students who reported never having met individually with their school counselor decreased 1% since 2019 (47%) and is now at its lowest level since 2013. Slightly over one-third (35%) of students have met with their counselor, one to two times, during the school year.



Concerns. The greatest concerns for which ninth grade students reported they would go to their school counselor included: *schedule change* (79%), *registration* (64%), and *credits on track to graduate* (61%). Students were less likely to report that they would go to the school counselor for the following: *questions about grades* (10%), *difficulty in class* (18%), and *personal issues* (27%). The percentage of students who reported seeing their counselor because of *bullying/harassment* increased 13% since last year and is at its highest level (49%) since the survey began including this item in 2016. Overall, the percentages of students reporting they would go to their school counselor for each concern have increased since 2019.

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



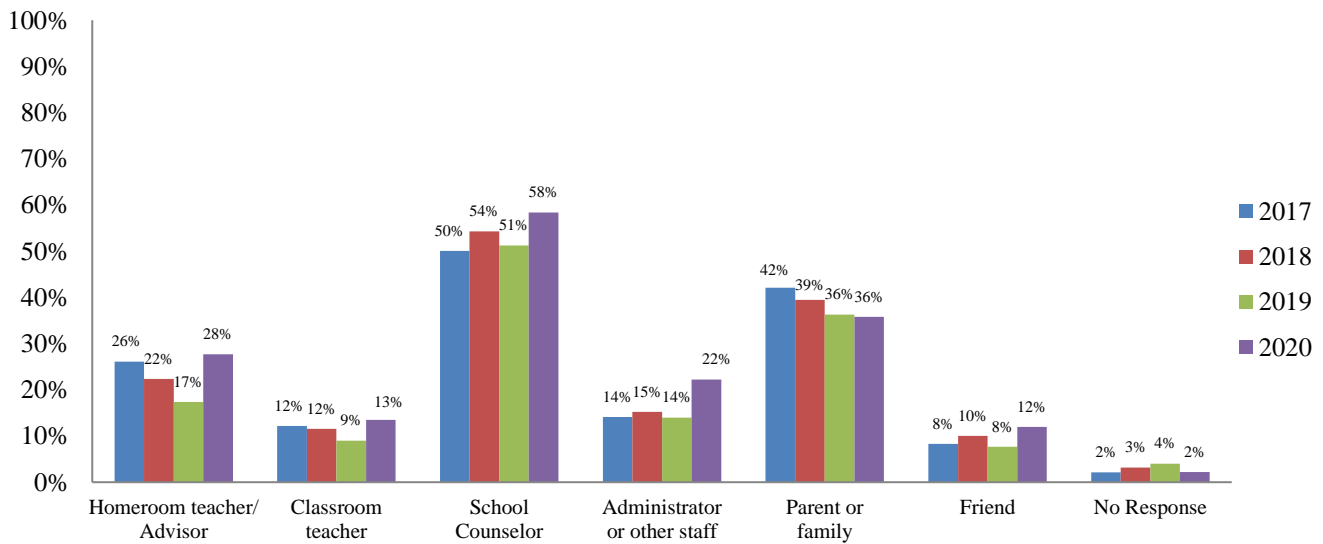
Note: Students were allowed to choose more than one person they would go to for each concern. Other response options included an advisory teacher, a classroom teacher, an administrator, a friend, or a parent or family member.

Additional Responses to Six of the Concerns

The percentage of students reporting to each role increased or stayed the same across all concerns from 2019 to 2020. 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. Fifty-eight percent of students reported they would go to a school counselor for college or career planning, a 7% increase from 2019. Twenty-eight percent of students reported they would go to their homeroom teacher or advisor to discuss college or career planning, an 11% increase from the previous year.

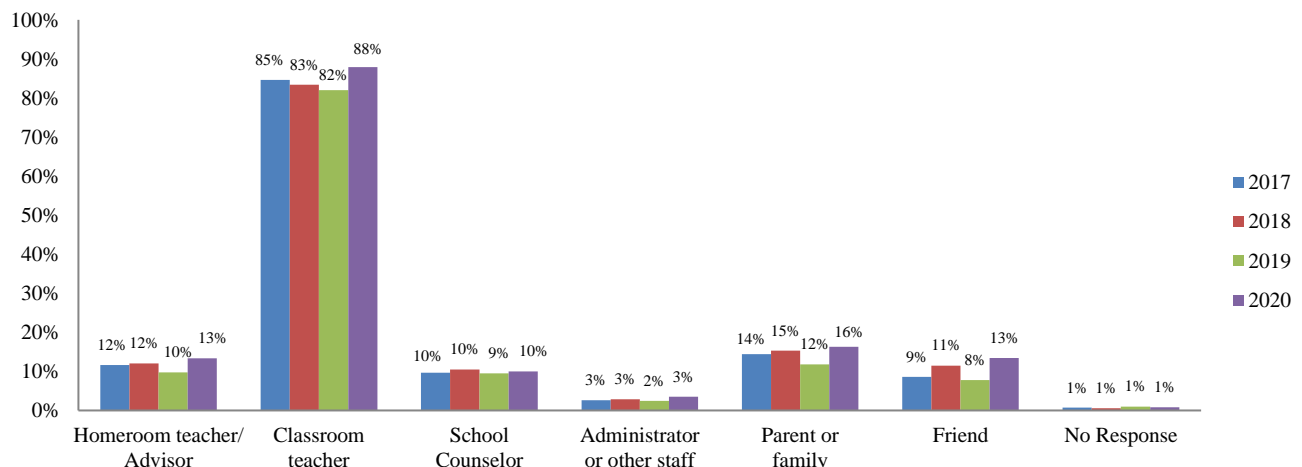
Who students would go to discuss: College or career planning



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

Questions about grades. Eighty-eight percent of students reported they would go to their classroom teacher with questions about grades, a 6% increase since 2019. More students (16%) reported they would go to a parent or family member for questions about grades, than to their homeroom teacher/advisor (13%), a friend (13%), or their school counselor (10%).

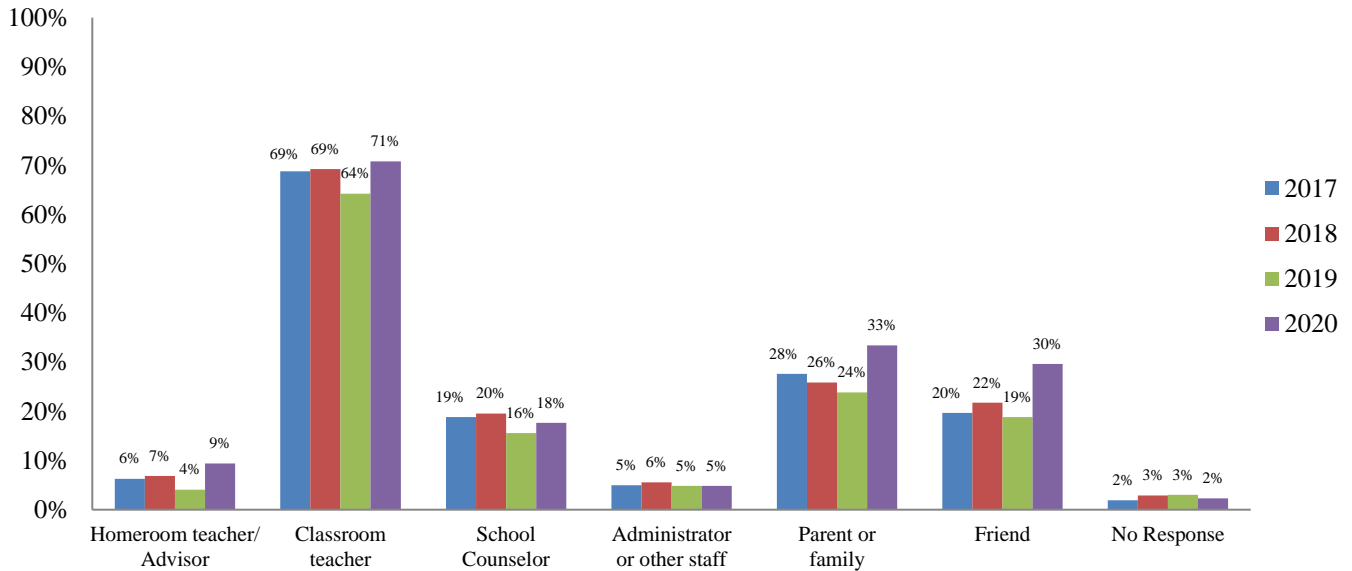
Who students would go to discuss: Questions about grades



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

Difficulty in class. The majority of students (71%) reported they would go to a classroom teacher to discuss difficulty in class, an increase of 7% since last year. A moderate percentage of students reported they would go to a parent or family member (33%, an increase of 9%), a friend (30%, an increase of 11%), and/or a school counselor (18%, an increase of 2%), to discuss difficulty in class.

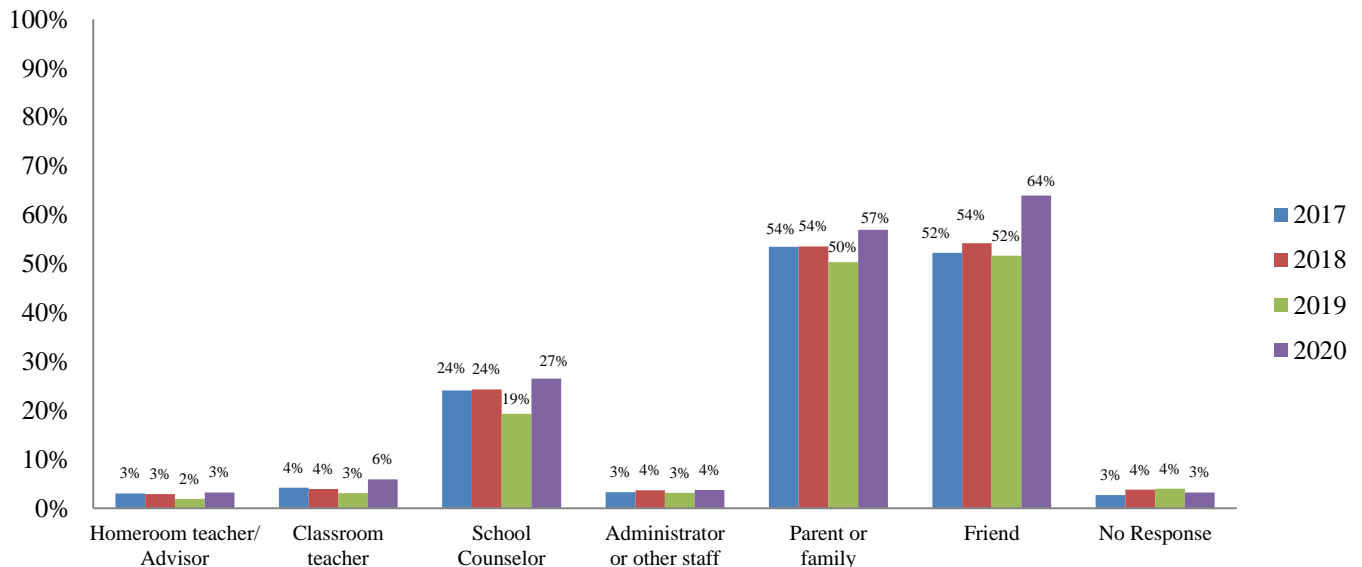
Who students would go to discuss: Difficulty in class



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

Personal issues. Sixty-four percent of students reported they would go to a friend to discuss personal issues, an increase of 12%. Fifty-seven percent of students reported they would go to a parent or family member, an increase of 7%. Another 27% of students reported they would discuss personal issues with a school counselor, an increase of 8% percent since 2019.

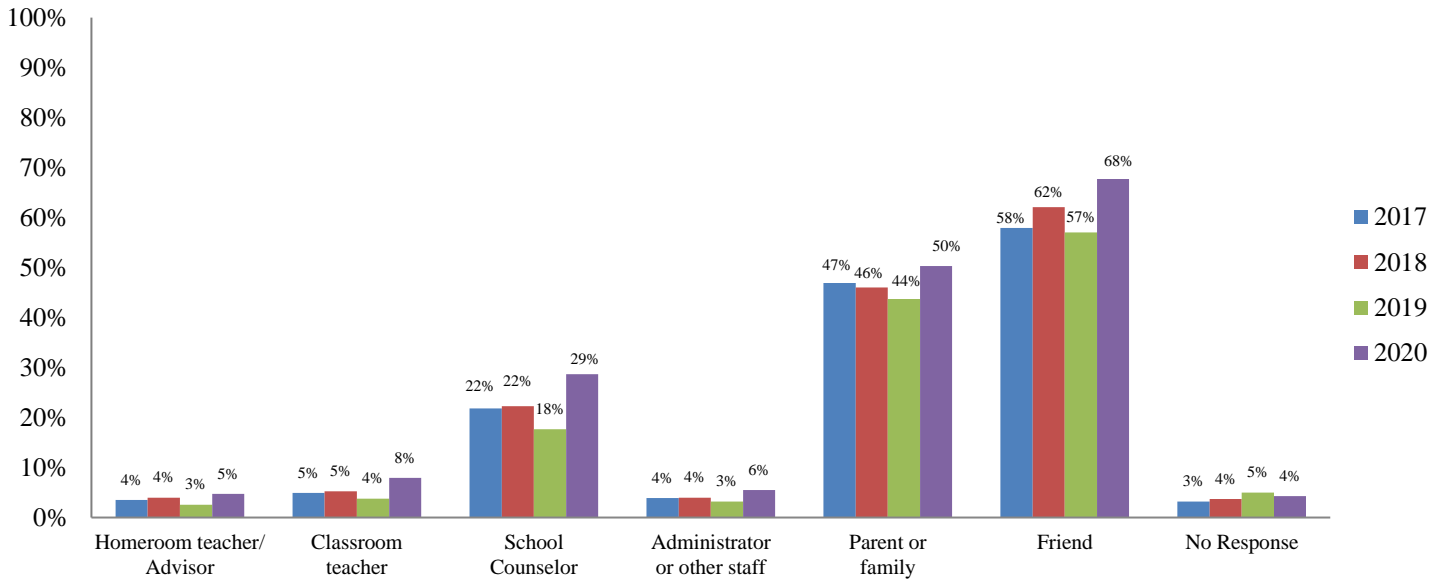
Who students would go to discuss: Personal issues



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

Feeling sad or discouraged. Sixty-eight percent of students reported they would go to a friend to discuss feeling sad or discouraged, an increase of 11% since 2019. Fifty percent of students reported they would go to a parent or family member, an increase of 6% since 2019. Twenty-nine percent of students reported they would go to a school counselor, an increase of 11%. These levels are all-time highs across years.

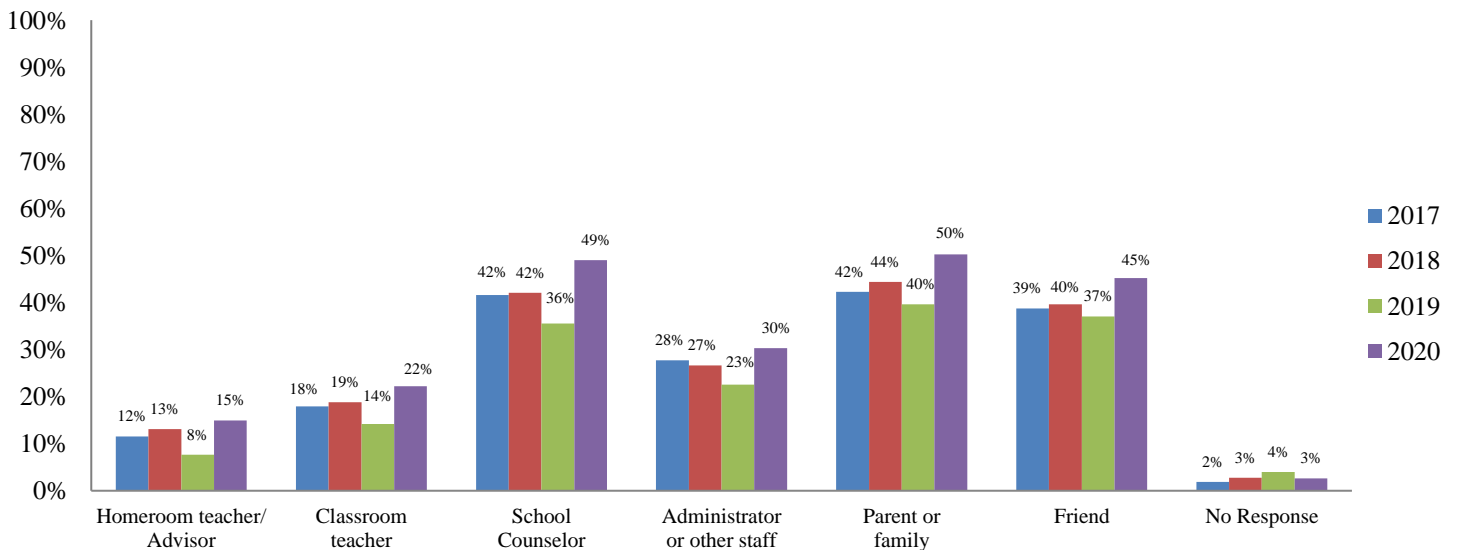
Who students would go to discuss: Feeling sad or discouraged



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

Bullying and/or harassment. The percentage of students (50%) that reported they would go to a parent or family member to discuss bullying and/or harassment increased 10% since 2019. Forty-nine percent of students reported they would go to a counselor to discuss being bullied and/or harassed, an increase of 13% since last year. Forty-five percent of students reported they would go to a friend to discuss bullying/harassment, an increase of 8% since 2019. Overall, the percentage of students who reported they discussed bullying/harassment to each role increased from 2019 to 2020.

Who students would go to discuss: Bullying/harassment



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

Perceptions of the Ninth Grade Experience

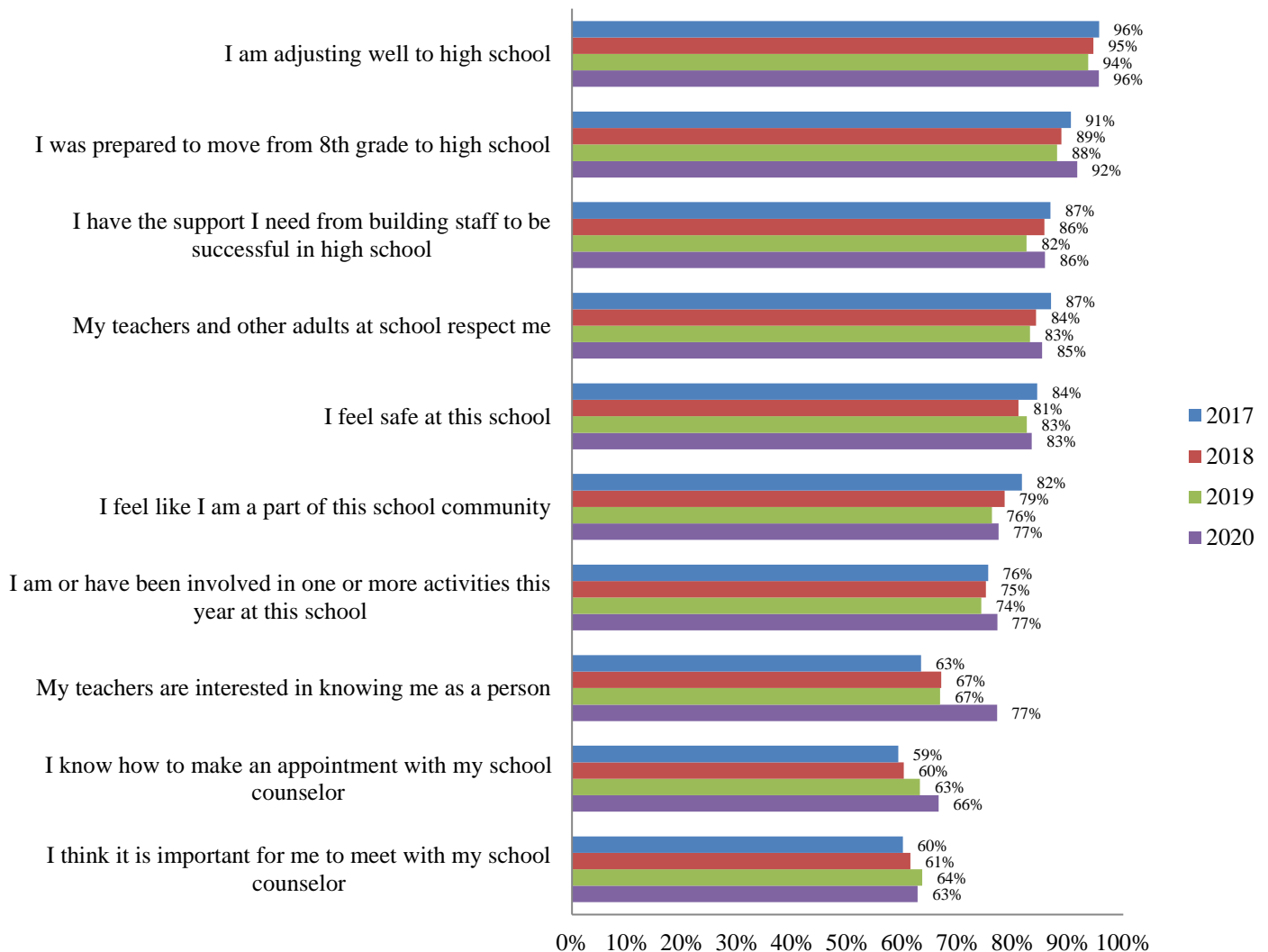
The percentage of students agreeing with all the following statements have increased or stayed the same since 2019, except for the item *I think it is important for me to meet with my school counselor*. This item had the lowest level of agreement (63%), a decrease of 1% since 2019.

Ninety-six percent of ninth grade students reported they are adjusting well to high school, an increase of 2% since 2019. Ninety-two percent of students reported they felt prepared to move from eighth grade to high school, an increase of 4% since 2019. The percentage of students (83%) who reported feeling safe at school remained the same as the previous year.

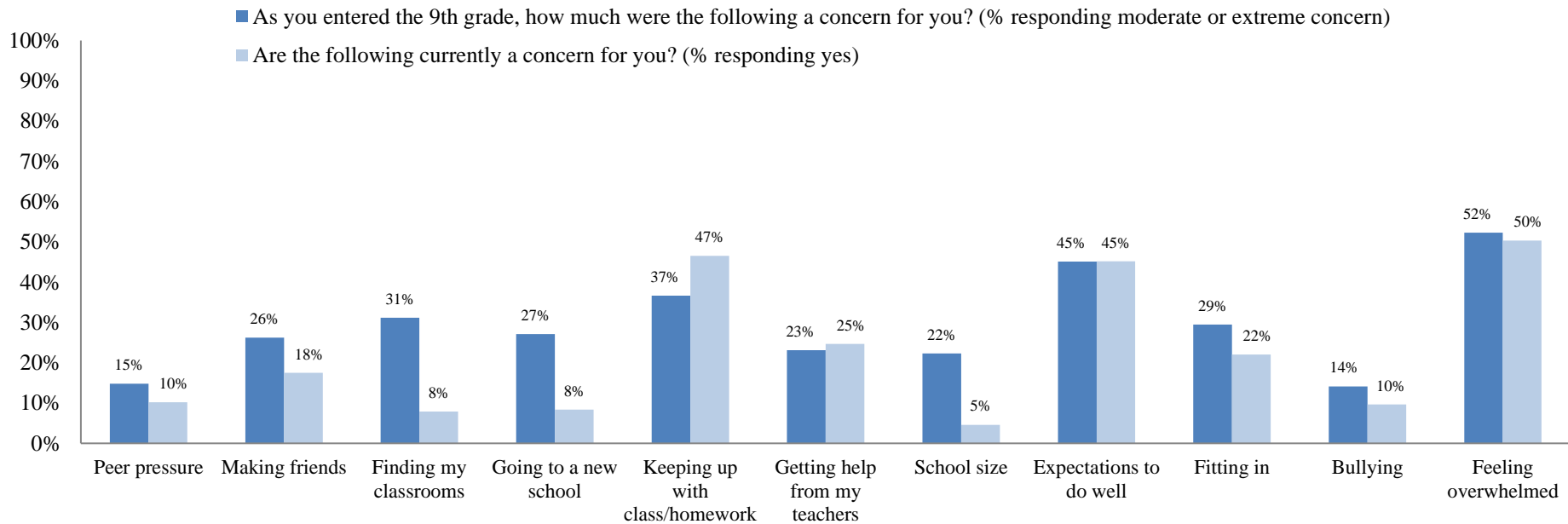
The percentage of students (77%) who agree with the statement, *My teachers are interested in knowing me as a person*, increased 10% since last year and is at its highest level since the item was rephrased in 2017.

The percentage of students (66%) who reported knowing how to make an appointment with their school counselor increased 3% from 2019 to 2020.

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

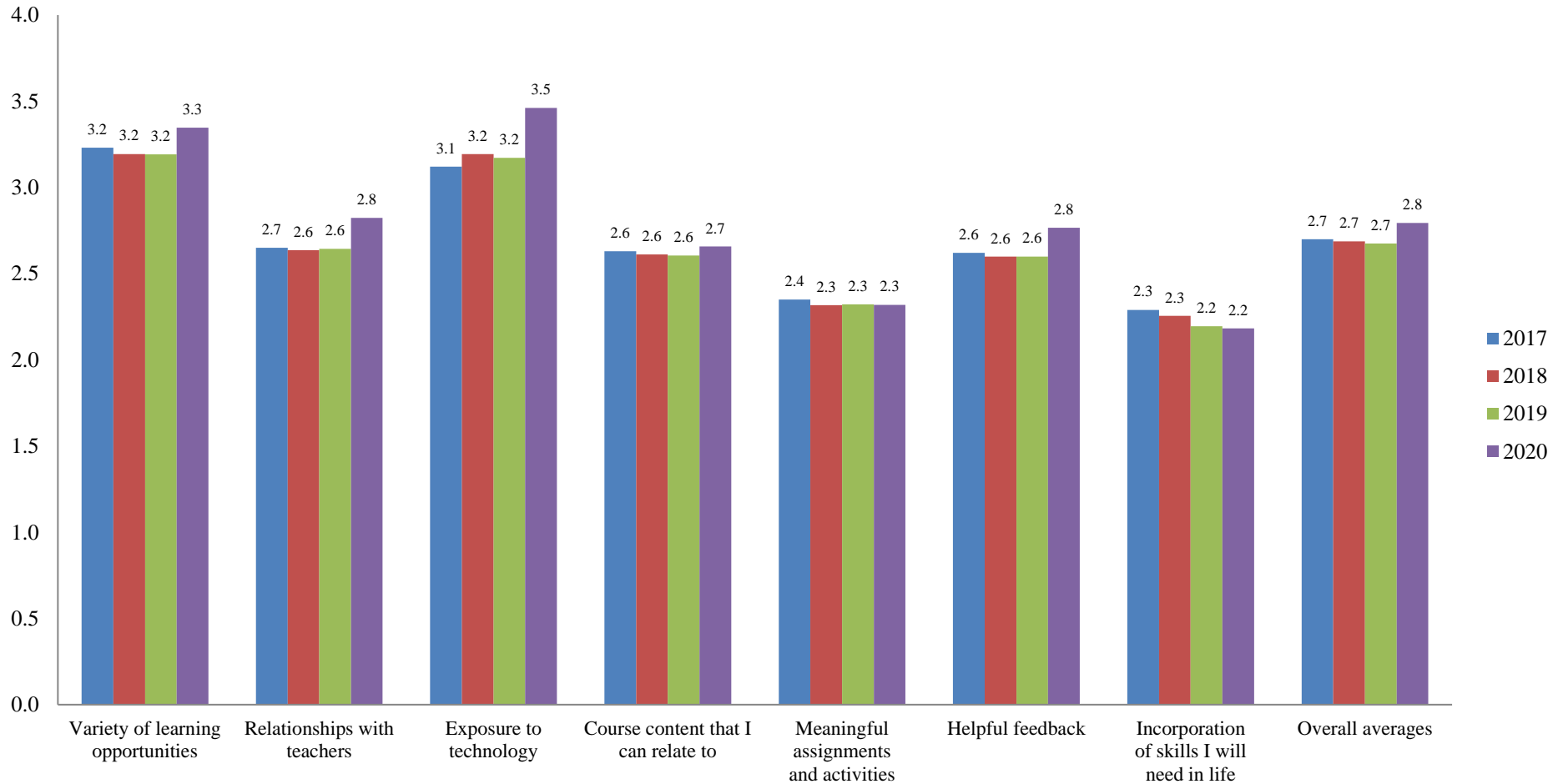


Comparing level of concern from beginning to end of year



Ninth graders expressed less of a concern for eight 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: *school size* (5%), *finding my classrooms* (8%), *going to a new school* (8%), *bullying* (10%), and *peer pressure* (10%). Students were more concerned at the end of the school year than when starting the school year about: *keeping up with class/homework* (47%) and *getting help from my teachers* (25%). The items with the lowest levels of concern when entering the ninth grade were *bullying* (14%), *peer pressure* (15%) and *school size* (22%). Students felt approximately the same levels of concern about *expectations to do well* 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 on the physical unknowns of a new school such as *school size* (5%), *finding my classrooms* (8%), and *going to a new school* (8%), all of which decreased by year's end. These patterns of change are consistent with previous years of data.

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 2.8 (equivalent to a B-). Grades assigned to each item increased or stayed the same in 2020.

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* is the lowest among items, with *meaningful assignments and activities* only slightly higher. Ratings were relatively stable or on the decline up until 2020, when ratings increased for many items.

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.