The American Teacher 2002

MetLife®
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
Home Office: New York, NY

210000000000001774(0902) Printed in the U.S.A.

The MetLife Survey of

THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2002

Student Life: School, Home and Community

MetLife®

Since 1984, MetLife has conducted this series of surveys that bring the views and voices of those closest to the classroom to the attention of policymakers and the public. Conducted by Harris Interactive, survey topics have changed to address key issues over the years—from reform to violence—but the premise remains the same: to give voice to teachers and others most familiar with classroom realities and most affected by education reform. **The following is a list of the surveys in the series to date.**

- **The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2001: Key Elements of Quality Schools** explores how teachers, principals and students evaluate their own school on key measures of an effective school environment, such as: teacher quality, school building conditions, standards and expectations and relationships between key groups.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 2000: Are We Preparing Students for the 21st Century?** examines teachers', students', and parents' views on where students are headed and how prepared they will be to reach their future goals.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1999: Violence In America's Public Schools—Five Years Later** revisits issues addressed in the 1993 study, and compares current findings with the state of affairs five years ago. This survey investigates the issue of school violence from the perspectives of students, teachers and law enforcement officers.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1998: Building Family-School Partnerships—Views of Teachers and Students** revisits issues addressed in the 1987 survey and compares and contrasts current teacher opinions on parental involvement in education with those from a decade ago. This report focuses primarily on the various ways parents can be actively involved with their children's education.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1997: Examining Gender Issues in Public Schools** examines the opinions of teachers and students on topics related to students' future goals and aspirations in the classroom. Gender differences and similarities are the primary focus of the report.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1996: Students Voice Their Opinions on—**
  - ***Violence, Social Tension and Equality Among Teens—Part I,*** is the first in a series of four 1996 releases of students' opinions that provide insight and understanding to the issues of violence and social tension in the nation's public schools. (Out of print)
  - ***Their Education, Teachers and Schools—Part II,*** provides students' views on their education and where improvements are most needed. (Out of print)
  - ***Learning About Values and Principles in School—Part III,*** gives the education community a general understanding of students' receptivity to learning about values and principles of right and wrong in the classroom. (Out of print)
  - ***Learning About Multiculturalism—Part IV,*** assesses students' opinions and interests about multicultural topics and provides an important and encouraging message to educators about the likely benefits if multiculturalism is given greater attention in the schools. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1984-1995: Old Problems, New Challenges** revisits concerns addressed in our first survey, in an attempt to find out whether the educational system has changed after years of intensive reform efforts. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1994: Violence in America's Public Schools—The Family Perspective** examines the contrasting views of parents and students about what goes on in and around the school building. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1993: Violence in America's Public Schools** illustrates the concerns across the country of teachers, students and law enforcement officers about the increasing violence and fears of violence in their schools. (Executive summary available)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1993: Teachers Respond to President Clinton's Education Proposals** provides valuable insight into what teachers believe needs to be done to make our schools safe and productive places for learning. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1992: The Second Year—New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals** revisits the new teachers after completing two years of teaching in America's classrooms. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1991: The First Year—New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals** returns to the cohort of new teachers who entered the classroom in the fall of 1990 and gauges their attitudes as they conclude their first year in the classroom. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1990: New Teachers—Expectations and Ideals, Entering the Classroom** examines the views of first-time teachers entering the classroom in the fall of 1990. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1989: Preparing Schools for the 1990s** looks back at the changes in education through the 1980's and looks ahead to the changes teachers say would improve education. (Out of print)

(Continued on inside back cover)

- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1988: Strengthening the Relationship Between Teachers and Students** includes the views of students in grades 4-12, and focuses on minority teachers' satisfaction with teaching and ways to increase their participation in the profession. (Executive summary available)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987: Strengthening Links Between Home and School** includes the views of parents of America's schoolchildren and reveals how parents and teachers are united in their commitment to educating America's youth. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America, 1986** reflects the views of those who left the teaching profession for other occupations. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of American the Teacher, 1986: Restructuring the Teaching Profession** explores the current structure of the teaching profession and ways to restructure it. (Executive summary available)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1985: Strengthening the Profession** examines teachers' own agenda for education reform. (Out of print)
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1984** analyzes attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers toward both public education in the United States and education reform. (Out of print)

MINI-SURVEYS – TEACHERS' VIEWS ON CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION

- ***The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1992: Ready or Not—Grade Level Preparedness*** examines teachers' perspectives on an issue that is key to the new national education goals. (Out of print)

  The series also includes several reports on individual states—two surveys of California teachers and one of New York teachers—whose questions parallel the 1984 and 1985 nationwide studies. (Out of print)
- ***The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1991: Coming to Terms*** probes emerging problems related to tightened school budgets. (Out of print)

ALSO AVAILABLE:

- ***Preparing Schools for the 1990s: An Essay Collection*** contains the views of distinguished education leaders including Theodore R. Sizer, Albert Shanker, Michael W. Kirst, and Floretta Dukes McKenzie who discuss recent and future directions in the efforts to improve our public schools.

Copies of *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* are available while in print by writing to:

MetLife
Survey of the American Teacher
One Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10010

or

Visit our website at http://www.metlife.com to download a copy of this 2002 survey. The 2001 and 2000 surveys and executive summaries of the 1999 and 1998 surveys are also available on the website.

The MetLife Survey of

Student Life: School, Home & Community

A SURVEY OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Conducted For:

MetLife, Inc.

Field Dates:
Teachers: March 14, 2002 to April 9, 2002
Students: March 7, 2002 to April 19, 2002

Project Directors:
Dana Markow, Ph.D., Director
Marc Scheer, Ph.D., Research Associate

Message from MetLife®

In 1984, for the first time, we asked Louis Harris & Associates, Inc. (now Harris Interactive Inc.) to survey teachers about their opinions on teaching and learning. This year's survey: *Student Life—School, Home & Community* is the nineteenth survey in what has become an annual series.

We conduct this survey every year because we believe that the best way to improve education is to listen to teachers. Teachers, students and others close to young people and the classroom give us a window into school life. They know what works and where improvements can be made for better teaching and learning.

This year our survey focuses on student life — at home, at school and in the community. Today's students are tomorrow's business, community and school leaders. To help students become productive citizens, we must support their learning and development, in school and beyond. To find out more about students' lives today, we asked teachers and students their opinions on issues such as whether students get enough sleep and exercise, what students worry about, whether students participate in activities outside the school day and what parents know about their children's lives.

These findings will help parents, teachers and community organizations equip young people with the skills and habits they need as they leave school and take their place in the world.

Robert H. Benmosche
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer
MetLife, Inc.

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CHAPTER 5

LIFE OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

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STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

What would you do if you had an extra 3 hours in the day?

"I'd be online talking to all my best friends that I won't be seeing next year due to different high school choices."
(8th grade girl)

~

"I would most likely do some community work or tutoring in school…"
(8th grade girl)

~

"I think that I would spend more time with my friends; friends are one of the most important things."
(9th grade boy)

~

"I would play sports!"
(11th grade boy)

~

"Sleep"
(11th grade girl)

Overview

How do students evaluate life in their community? How do they spend their day when they are not in school or at home? And how are these aspects of students' lives related to school success?

One measure of success in school is receiving top grades. The current survey reveals that students who are succeeding in school by this measure lead active lives and feel supported by their communities. Students who receive A's are more likely than those who are failing or barely passing to describe their neighborhood life as extremely or very happy. In addition, "A" students are involved in activities outside the classroom and beyond schoolwork. They are more likely than those who get lower grades to participate in such activities as sports, music and dance programs, and drama programs. Successful students work at jobs for fewer hours and spend less time hanging out with friends than do poor students. Teachers recognize this pattern – they are most likely to cite working for pay and hanging out with friends as interfering with students' success in school, and involvement in activities as promoting school success.

The Neighborhood

Students are only slightly more happy in their life in their community than they are at school. Almost four in ten students (37%) describe life in their neighborhood as extremely or very happy, compared to one-third (33%) of students who describe their school life this way. Boys and girls, as well as older and younger students, are equally likely to describe their neighborhood life as extremely or very happy. However, students' experiences do differ by socioeconomic factors such as minority status and parental education (a proxy for household income). Black (32%) and Hispanic (25%) students are less likely than White (41%) students to describe their neighborhood life as extremely or very happy. Students whose parents never went to college are less likely than those whose parents have at least a college degree to have a happy neighborhood life (33% vs. 43%). (Exhibits 5.1 – 5.2)

Also of note, the relationship between community life and school success is highlighted by the finding that "A" students are more likely than those with D's and F's to have a happy neighborhood life (39% vs. 23%). In a related matter, one in six students (16%) worry a great deal about being safe traveling to and from school. This concern is highest among girls (20%), Black students (24%), and among those doing poorly in school (24%). (Exhibits 5.2 – 5.4)

Exhibit 5.1
Students' Neighborhood Ratings

Q546-3 How would you describe life in your neighborhood?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

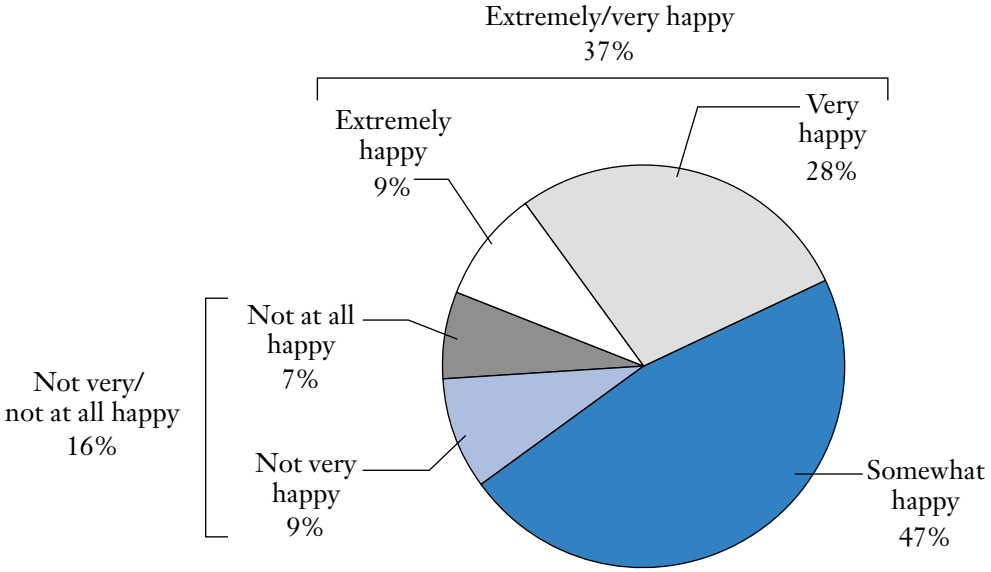

Exhibit 5.2
Students' Neighborhood Happiness

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Q546-3 How would you describe life in your neighborhood?
Base: All qualified students

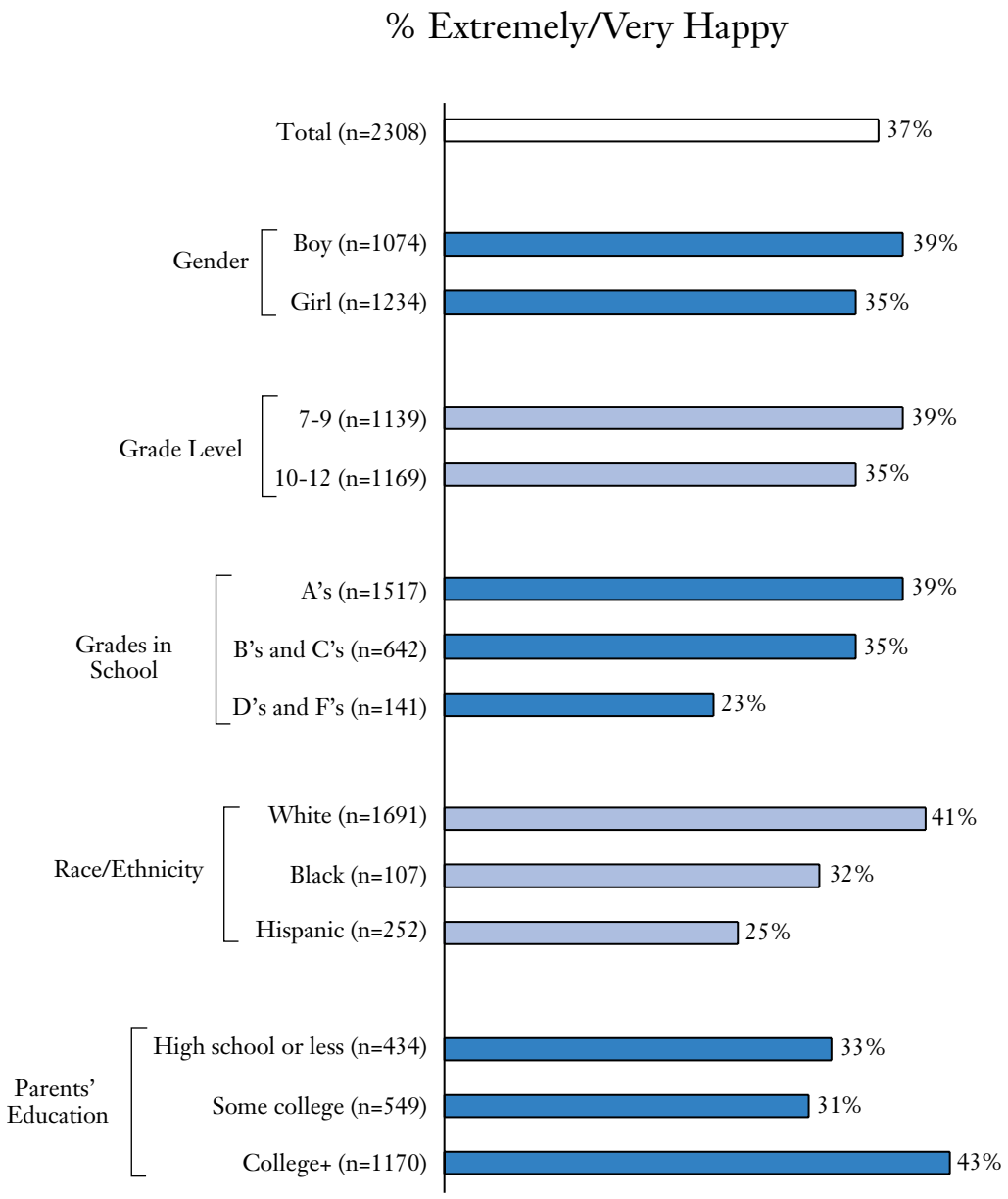

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Exhibit 5.3
Students' Worries About Traveling to School

Q535-5 How much do you worry about the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

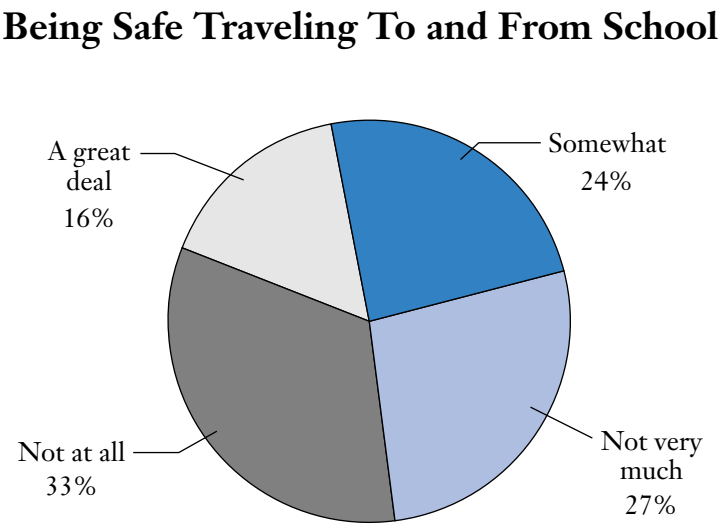

Exhibit 5.4
Students' Worries About Traveling to School by Demographics

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Q535-5 How much do you worry about the following?
Base: All qualified students

Being Safe Traveling to and From School

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal/somewhat	40	34	46	41	39	37	45	42
A great deal	16	12	20	18	14	14	18	24
Somewhat	24	22	26	23	25	23	26	18
Not very much/not at all	60	66	54	59	61	63	55	58
Not very much	27	28	26	26	29	29	28	10
Not at all	33	37	28	33	32	33	28	48

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal/somewhat	40	38	52	44	47	42	33
A great deal	16	15	24	16	25	14	12
Somewhat	24	23	27	28	22	29	21
Not very much/not at all	60	62	48	56	53	58	67
Not very much	27	27	21	29	21	28	31
Not at all	33	35	27	26	32	29	36

Friends

As might be expected, teens report that friends play an important role in their lives. On a typical school day, almost nine in ten students (87%) spend at least some time hanging out with friends. Younger students are slightly more likely than older students to hang out with friends (89% vs. 85%). For those who do hang out with friends on school days, they typically spend 2 hours a day with their friends. This amount of time is similar among girls and boys, and older and younger students. However, students who get D's and F's spend twice the amount of time hanging out with friends as do "A" students. (Exhibits 5.5 – 5.6)

Nearly all students (93%), regardless of age or gender, wish they had more time for being with their friends. However, Hispanic and Black students are slightly less likely than White students to want more time with friends (88% vs. 92% vs. 95%). (Exhibit 5.7)

Students' worries also focus on their relationships with peers. More than one-quarter of students (28%) worry a great deal about being liked by other people their age. This is a greater concern among girls than boys (31% vs. 24%), and among younger than older students (34% vs. 21%). Hispanic students are less likely than White students to worry a great deal about being liked by peers (19% vs. 28%). This result is especially interesting taken in conjunction with the previously noted finding that Hispanic students are also less likely than White students to want more time to spend with friends. (Exhibits 5.8 – 5.9)

Exhibit 5.5
Student Activities

Q335 On a typical school day, how much time do you spend doing the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

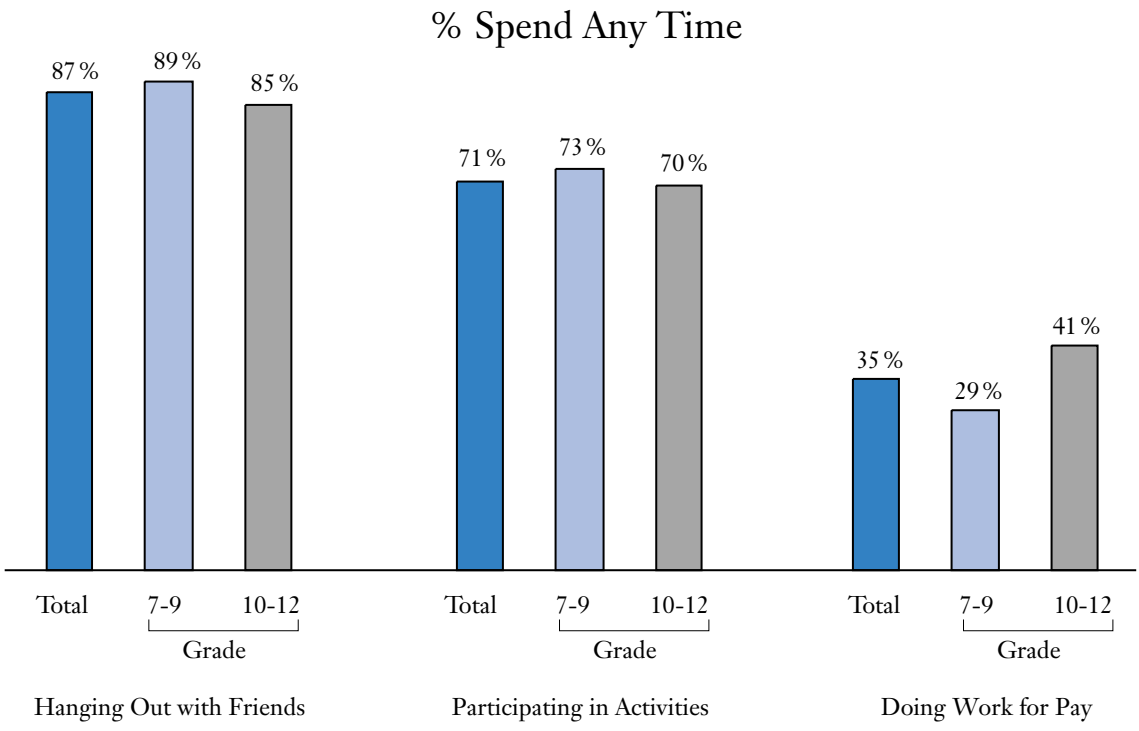

Exhibit 5.6
Amount of Time Spent on Activities

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Q335 On a typical school day, how much time do you spend doing the following?
Base: Students do activity

Median Hours

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Doing work for pay (n=819)	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	4
Hanging out with friends (n=2006)	2	2	2	2.25	2	2	2.5	4
Participating in activities (n=1762)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Doing work for pay (n=819)	3	3	4	3.5	3	3	3
Hanging out with friends (n=2006)	2	2	3	2	3	2.17	2
Participating in activities (n=1762)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

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Exhibit 5.7
More Time With Friends

Q346 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students

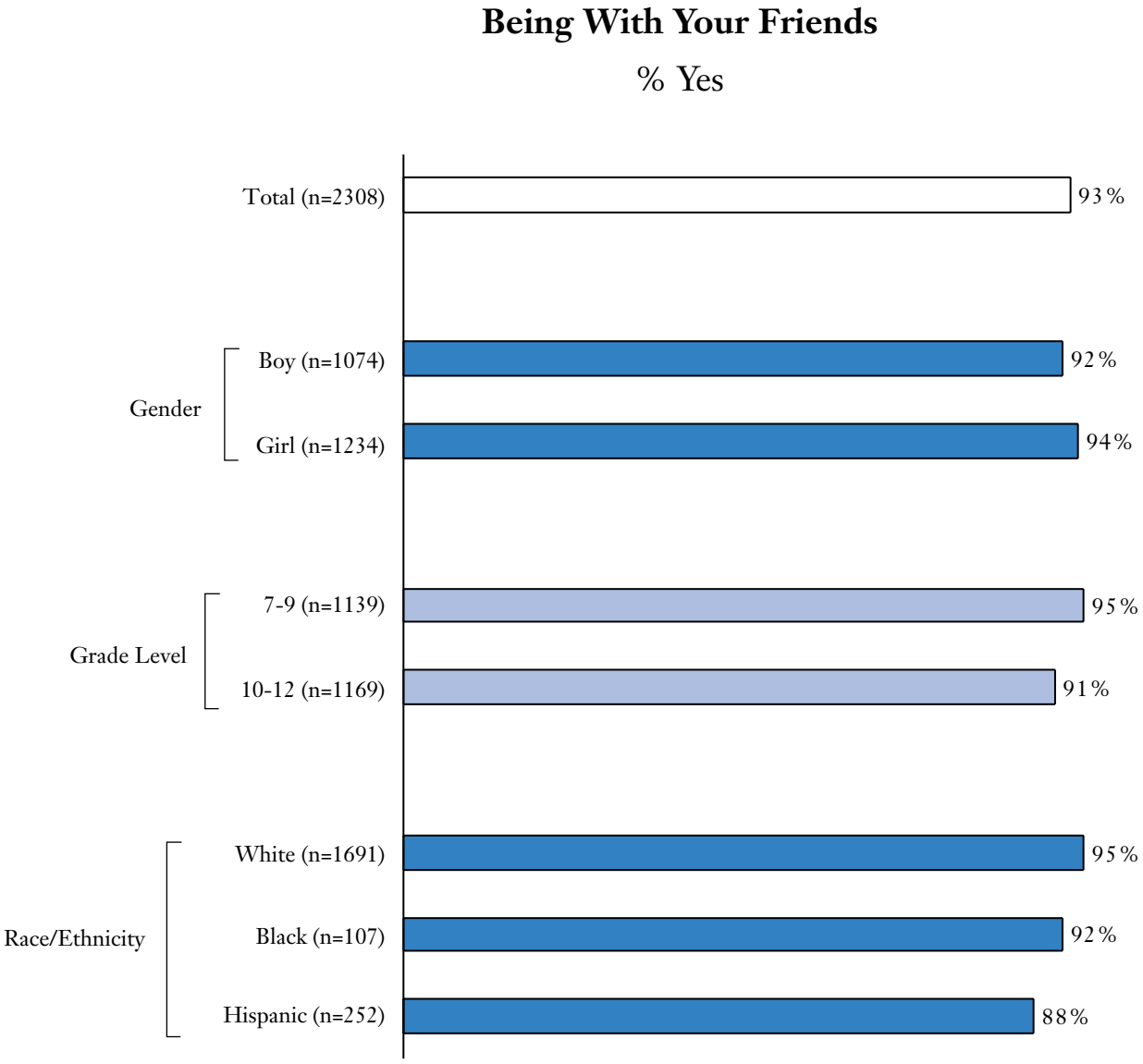

Exhibit 5.8
Students' Worries About Being Liked

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Q535-2 How much do you worry about the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

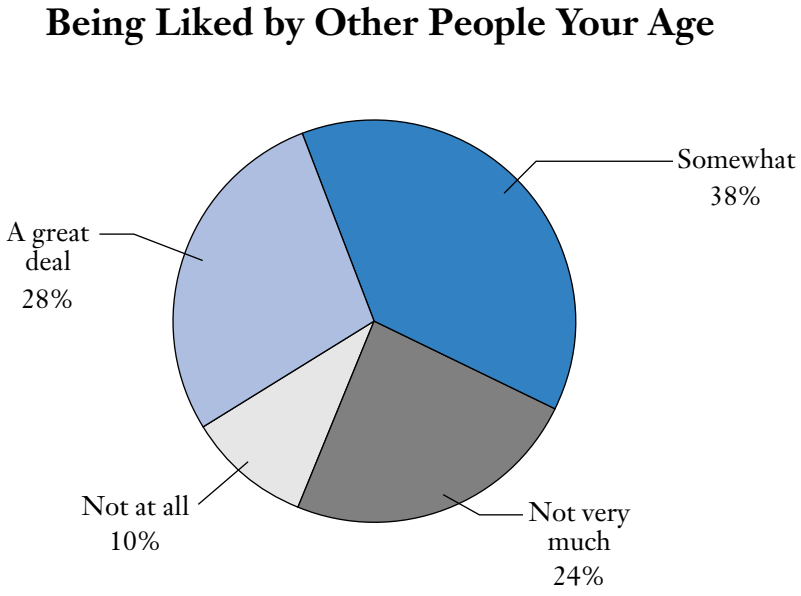

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Exhibit 5.9

Students' Large Amount of Worrying About Being Liked

Q535-2 How much do you worry about the following?
Base: All qualified students

Being Liked by Other People Your Age

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal/somewhat	66	65	67	69	63	67	65	64
A great deal	28	24	31	34	21	29	24	32
Somewhat	38	41	36	35	42	38	41	31
Not very much/not at all	34	35	33	31	37	33	34	36
Not very much	24	25	23	21	28	25	23	20
Not at all	10	10	10	10	9	8	11	16

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal/somewhat	66	68	52	58	61	63	71
A great deal	28	28	30	19	26	26	29
Somewhat	38	40	32	39	39	36	36
Not very much/not at all	34	32	37	42	38	37	29
Not very much	24	24	21	30	27	24	22
Not at all	10	8	16	13	11	13	8

Time Spent on Activities

Groups, programs and other activities account for a sizable proportion of students' time. On a typical school day, seven in ten students (71%) spend time participating in activities other than being in school or doing homework or studying. Those students who participate in such activities typically spend two hours on a school day doing these activities. Furthermore, one-third of students work for pay on a typical school day. Older students are more likely than younger students to work on a school day (41% vs. 29%). Older students who work spend four hours working on a school day, twice the amount of younger students. Students who receive poor grades work longer hours than those who receive A's (4 hours vs. 3 hours, median). (Exhibits 5.5 – 5.6)

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . . *In May 2002, 46% of teens were in the workforce. This percentage is down from 47.6% in May 2001 and it is the lowest rate since 1970. – U.S. Department of Labor, 2002*

Opportunities for Activities

Students report that their greatest opportunity for participation in activities is in the area of sports. Nine in ten students (89%) report that there are opportunities for teens to participate in sports in their community or school. More than half report that teens have opportunities to participate in programs related to dance or music (67%), drama (57%), or schoolwork or homework (55%). (Exhibit 5.10)

Girls and boys report the same opportunities for teens to participate in sports, drama, schoolwork or homework programs. However, girls are more likely than boys to report that people their age have opportunities to participate in dance and music programs (70% vs. 64%). (Exhibit 5.11)

Older students are more likely than younger students to report that people their age have opportunities to participate in dance or music programs (71% vs. 63%), drama programs (67% vs. 48%) and art programs (54% vs. 41%). (Exhibit 5.11)

Race and ethnicity are also factors in the opportunities for activities that students report. White students are more likely than Black students to report opportunities in their school or community for teens to participate in drama (61% vs. 44%) or art (50% vs. 31%) programs. White students are more likely than Hispanic students to report opportunities in their school or community for teens to participate in sports (91% vs. 84%). However, Hispanic students are more likely than White students to have opportunities for schoolwork or homework programs (61% vs. 51%). (Exhibit 5.11)

Socioeconomic status also distinguishes students' opportunities for activities. Students whose parents have earned at least a college degree are more likely than those whose parents have a high school degree or less to report opportunities in the following areas: dance and music programs (72% vs. 61%), drama programs (63% vs. 52%), art programs (52% vs. 43%). However, they do not differ in the opportunities for sports activities and schoolwork or homework programs. (Exhibit 5.11)

Finally, "A" students are more likely than failing or nearly failing students to be aware of opportunities to participate in activities. Students who receive A's are more likely than students who receive D's and F's to report that opportunities exist in their school or community for teens to participate in sports (93% vs. 76%), dance and music programs (73% vs. 44%), drama programs (63% vs. 39%), schoolwork or homework programs (59% vs. 39%), and art programs (53% vs. 31%). (Exhibit 5.11)

Exhibit 5.10
Students' Activity Opportunities and Participation

Q320 In your community or school, which of the following activities do people your age have opportunities to participate in, before or after school or on weekends?

Q325 Which of the following activities do you participate in, before or after school or on weekends?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

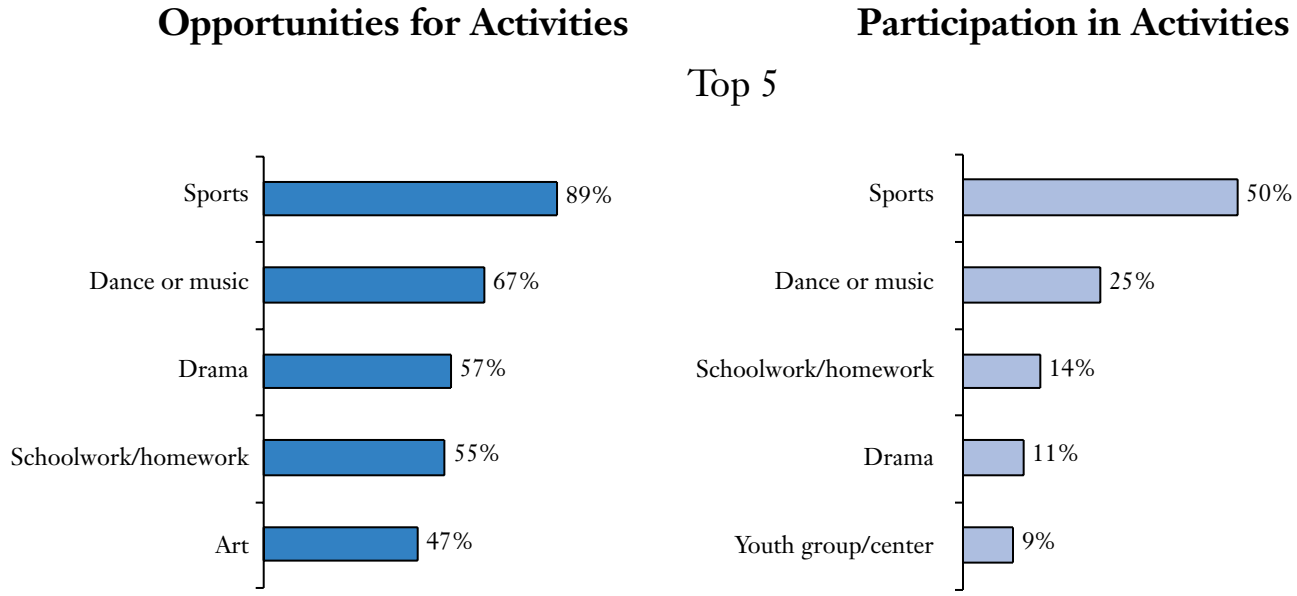

Exhibit 5.11
Students' Opportunities for Activities

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Q320 In your community or school, which of the following activities do people your age have opportunities to participate in, before or after school or on weekends?
Base: All qualified students

Top 5 Opportunities

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sports activities	89	90	88	89	90	93	86	76
Dance and music programs	67	64	70	63	71	73	61	44
Drama programs	57	57	57	48	67	63	50	39
Schoolwork or homework programs	55	56	53	55	54	59	51	39
Art programs	47	50	45	41	54	53	41	31

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sports activities	89	91	86	84	89	84	92
Dance and music programs	67	67	58	68	61	64	72
Drama programs	57	61	44	52	52	53	63
Schoolwork or homework programs	55	51	58	61	51	55	57
Art programs	47	50	31	46	43	44	52

Participation in Activities

The activities in which students actually participate to an extent reflect the opportunities that are available. Students are most likely to participate in sports (50%), followed by dance or music (25%), schoolwork or homework programs (14%) and drama programs (11%). In addition, one in eleven students (9%) participates in youth groups or youth center programs before or after school or on weekends. (Exhibit 5.10)

Girls are more likely than boys to participate in dance or music (30% vs. 19%) or drama (14% vs. 9%) programs. Sports participation is more common among younger students than older students (55% vs. 44%), as is participation in dance and music programs (28% vs. 21%) and schoolwork or homework programs (16% vs. 11%). In contrast, older students are more likely than younger students to participate in youth groups or youth center programs (12% vs. 7%). (Exhibit 5.12)

As with opportunity, race and ethnicity and socioeconomic status are also factors in students' actual participation. Black students are more likely than White students to participate in schoolwork or homework programs (22% vs. 12%) and in sports (57% vs. 53%). White students are more likely than Hispanic students to participate in sports (53% vs. 32%) and drama programs (12% vs. 5%). (Exhibit 5.12)

Students whose parents have earned at least a college degree are more likely than those whose parents have a high school degree or less to report participating in sports (56% vs. 43%), dance and music programs (30% vs. 17%), and drama programs (15% vs. 8%). (Exhibit 5.12)

Students who receive A's are more likely than those receiving D's and F's to participate in these activities as well, with the exception of youth group or youth center programs. (Exhibit 5.12)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *High school students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are: 57% more likely to have dropped out of school by the time they would have been seniors; 49% more likely to have used drugs; 37% more likely to have become teen parents; 35% more likely to have smoked cigarettes; and 27% more likely to have been arrested than those who spend one to four hours per week participating in activities. – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1995*

Exhibit 5.12
Students' Participation in Activities

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Q325 Which of the following activities do you participate in, before or after school or on weekends?
Base: All qualified students

Top 5 Activities

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sports activities	50	51	48	55	44	56	45	26
Dance and music programs	25	19	30	28	21	30	19	8
Schoolwork or homework programs	14	12	15	16	11	16	10	5
Drama programs	11	9	14	12	11	15	8	3
Youth group/ center programs	9	10	8	7	12	10	7	13

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Sports activities	50	53	57	32	43	46	56
Dance and music programs	25	25	19	23	17	22	30
Schoolwork or homework programs	14	12	22	14	14	18	11
Drama programs	11	12	14	5	8	8	15
Youth group/ center programs	9	9	10	12	12	8	8

Visiting the Library

An activity that students **infrequently** participate in, compared to other activities, is visiting the library. Nearly half of students (49%) visit a library a few times a year or less, including 11% who never visit. Boys (54%), older students (54%) and students who are receiving D's and F's in school (65%) are more likely than girls (45%), younger students (45%) and "A" students (47%) to be infrequent visitors. White students are more likely than Black students (53% vs. 38%) to report that they rarely visit the library. Forty-seven percent of Hispanic Students report that they visit the library only a few times a year or never. (Exhibit 5.13 – 5.14)

Exhibit 5.13
Visiting a Library

Q331-2 How often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

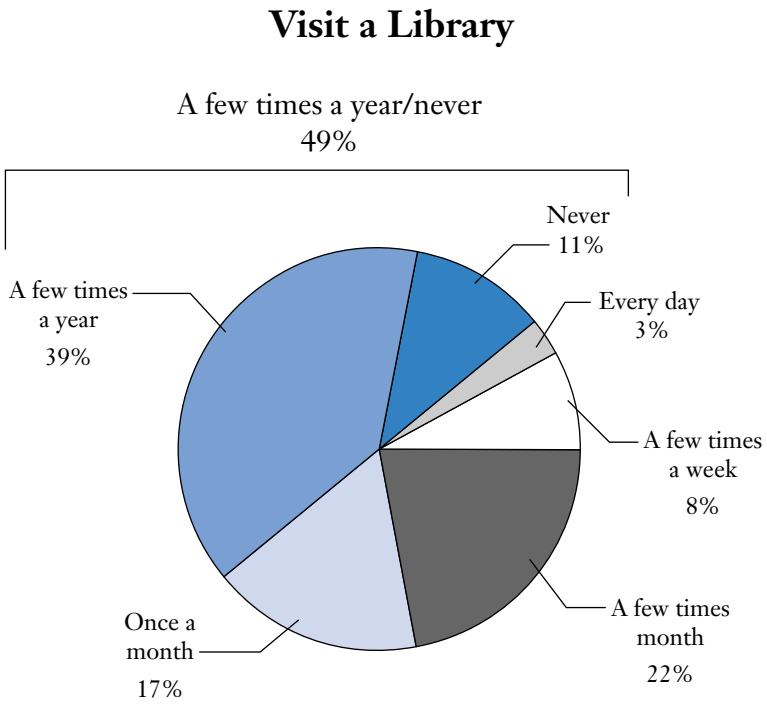

Exhibit 5.14
Infrequent Library Visits

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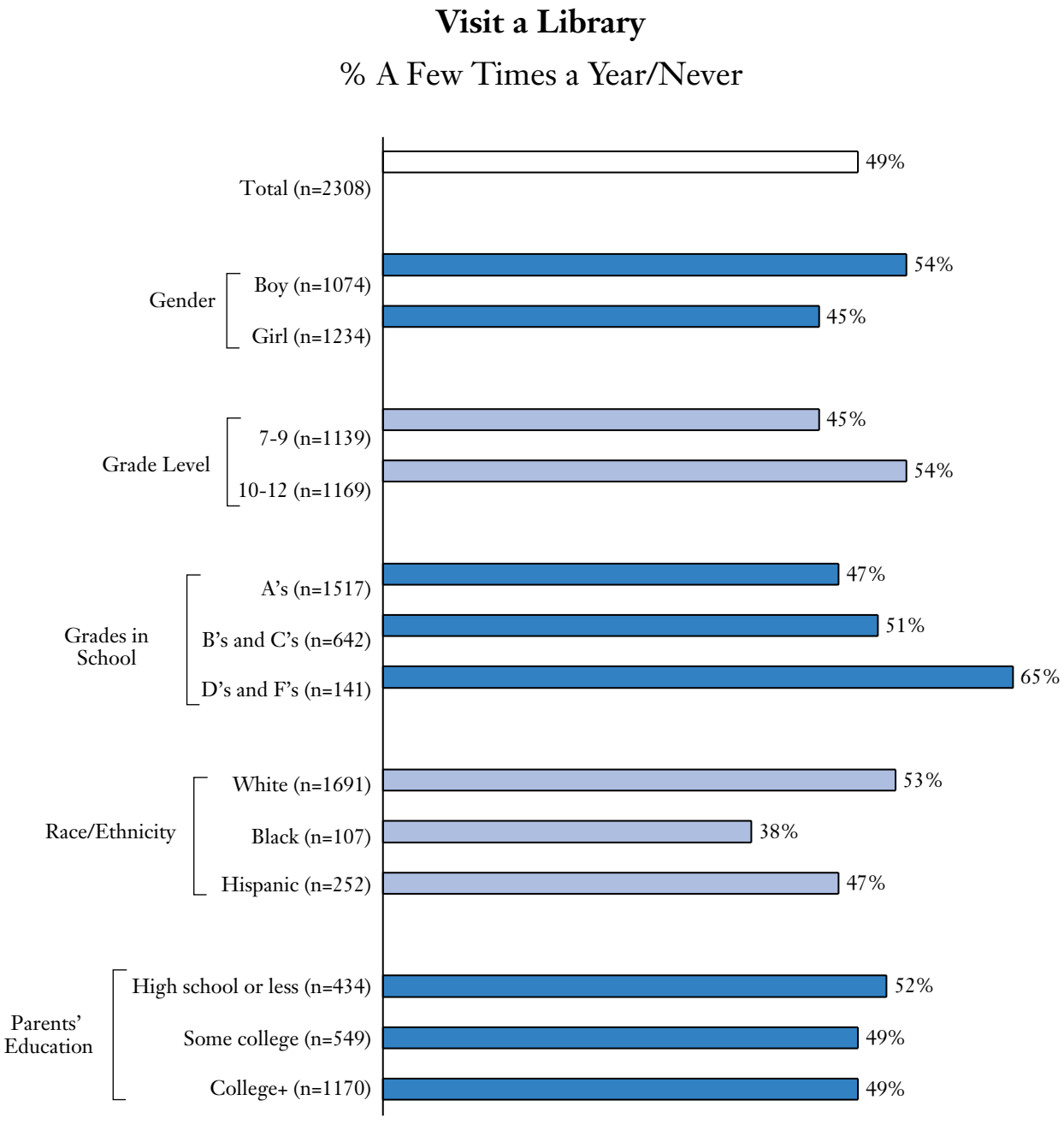
Q331-2 How often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students



Activities and School Success

Teachers and students have different opinions about the ways that various extracurricular activities influence student success in school. Teachers particularly target working and hanging out with friends as interfering with students' doing well in school. Seven in ten teachers (71%) believe that doing work for pay interferes with students' doing well in school, compared with only two in ten (19%) who believe that working helps students to succeed in school. More than half of teachers (55%) believe that spending time hanging out with friends interferes with students doing well in school, compared to 15% who believe that spending time with friends helps with school success. (Exhibit 5.15)

Senior high school teachers are more likely than those of middle or junior high school grades to believe that working interferes with students' doing well in school (80% vs. 64%). Teachers in schools with at least two-thirds of low-income students (75%), in schools with at least two-thirds minority students (64%), and in urban schools (64%) are more likely than other teachers to view hanging out with friends as a conflict with school success. (Exhibits 5.16 – 5.19)

Note that most teachers believe that participating in activities such as clubs, sports and other groups (72%) and helping in the community (71%) **does help** students do well in school. (Exhibit 5.15)

Exhibit 5.15

Teachers' Views on Activities That Help or Hinder School Success

Q611 Does time spent doing the following activities help or interfere with students' doing well in school?

Base: All qualified teachers (n=1111)

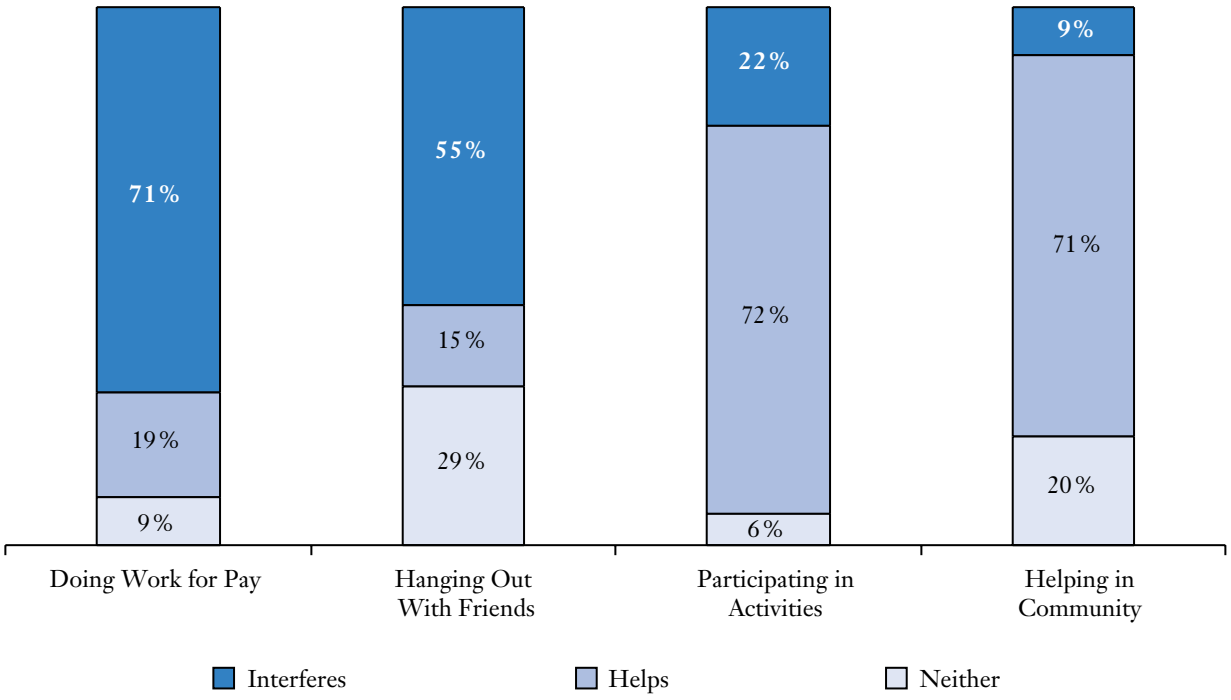


Exhibit 5.16
Teachers' Ratings of Doing Work for Pay

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Q611-2 Does time spent doing the following activities help or interfere with students' doing well in school?
Base: All qualified teachers

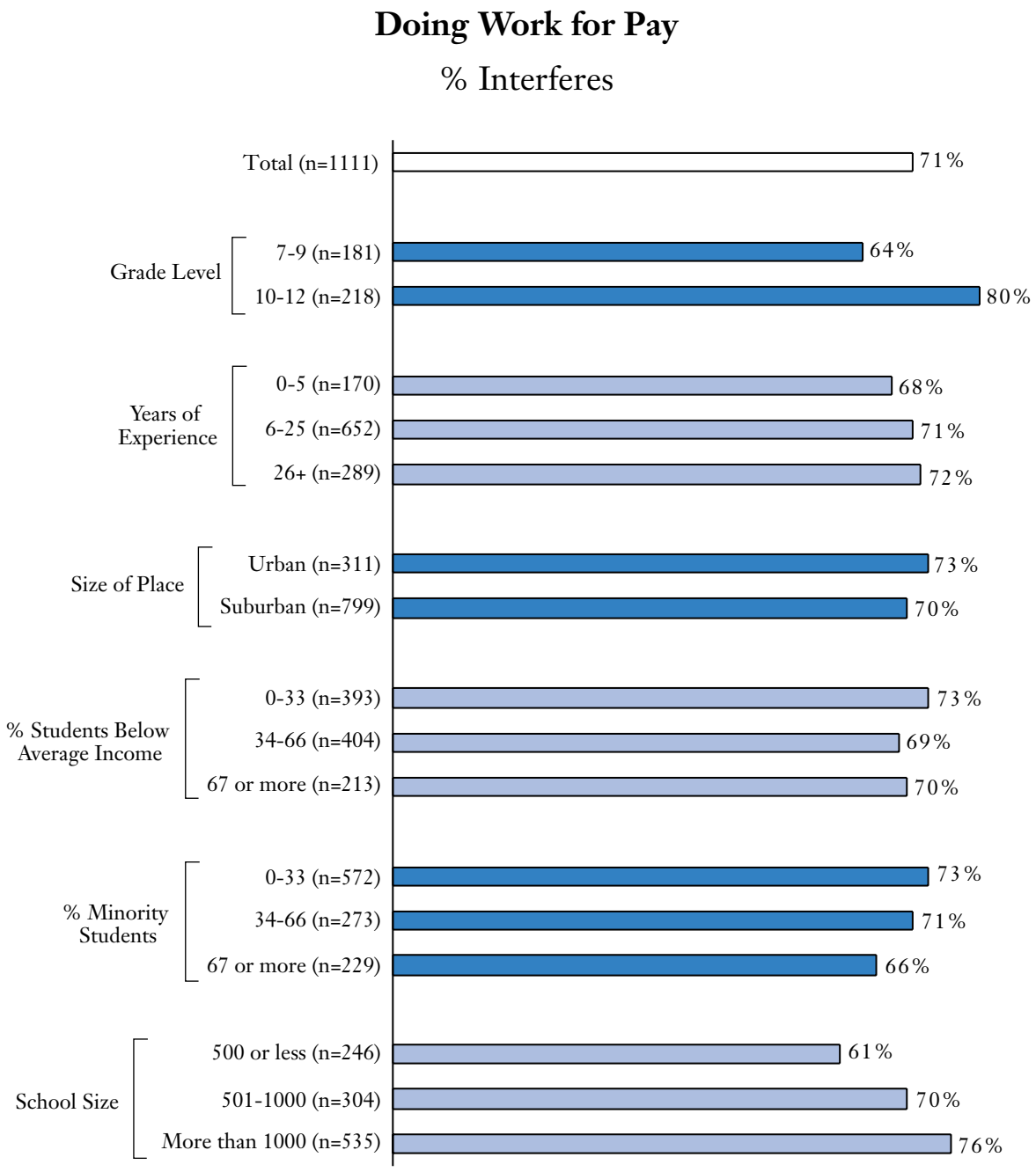

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Exhibit 5.17

Teachers' Ratings of Hanging Out With Friends

Q611-1 Does time spent doing the following activities help or interfere with students' doing well in school?

Base: All qualified teachers

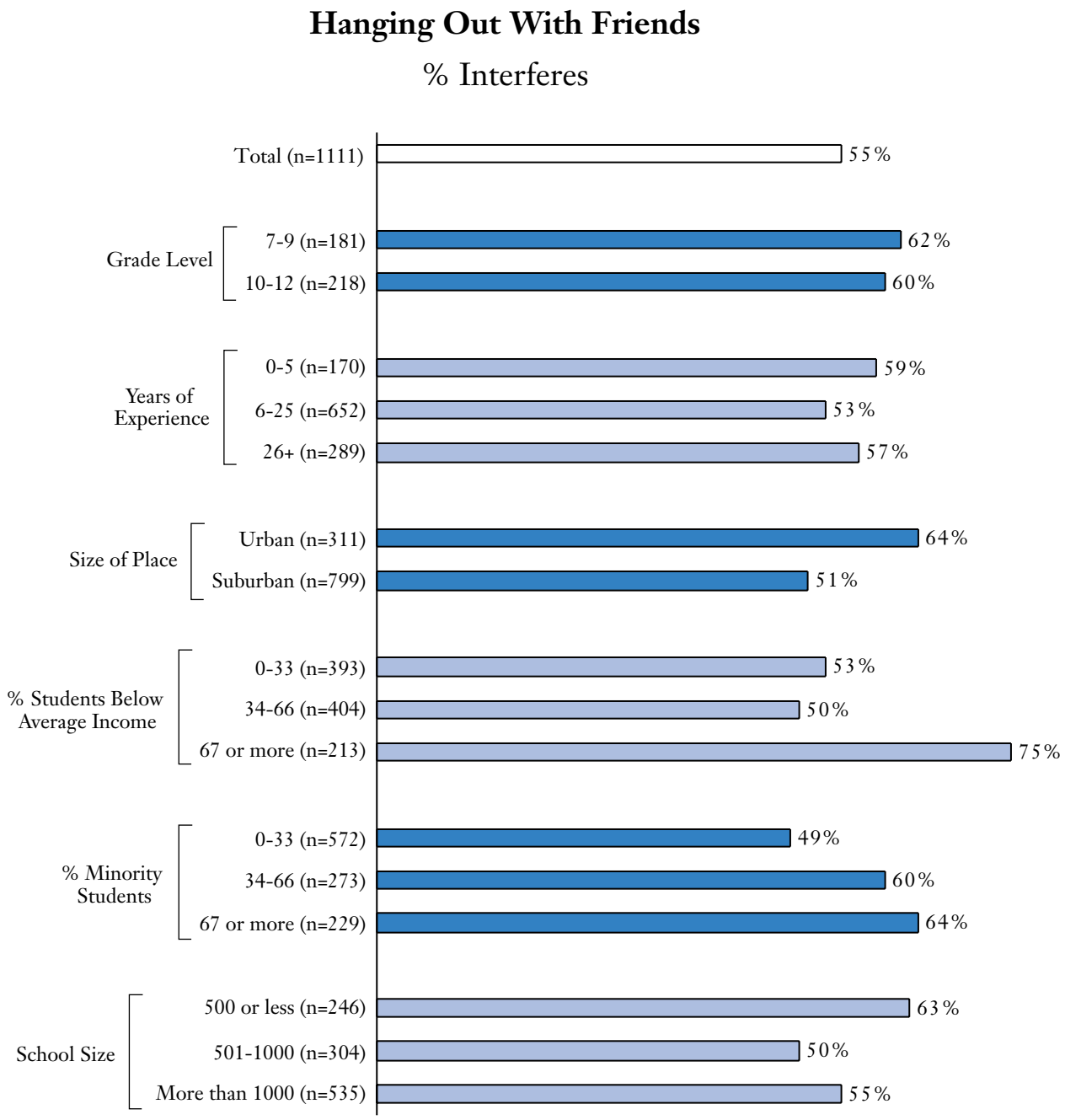

Exhibit 5.18
Teachers' Ratings of Participating in Activities

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Q611-3 Does time spent doing the following activities help or interfere with students' doing well in school?
Base: All qualified teachers

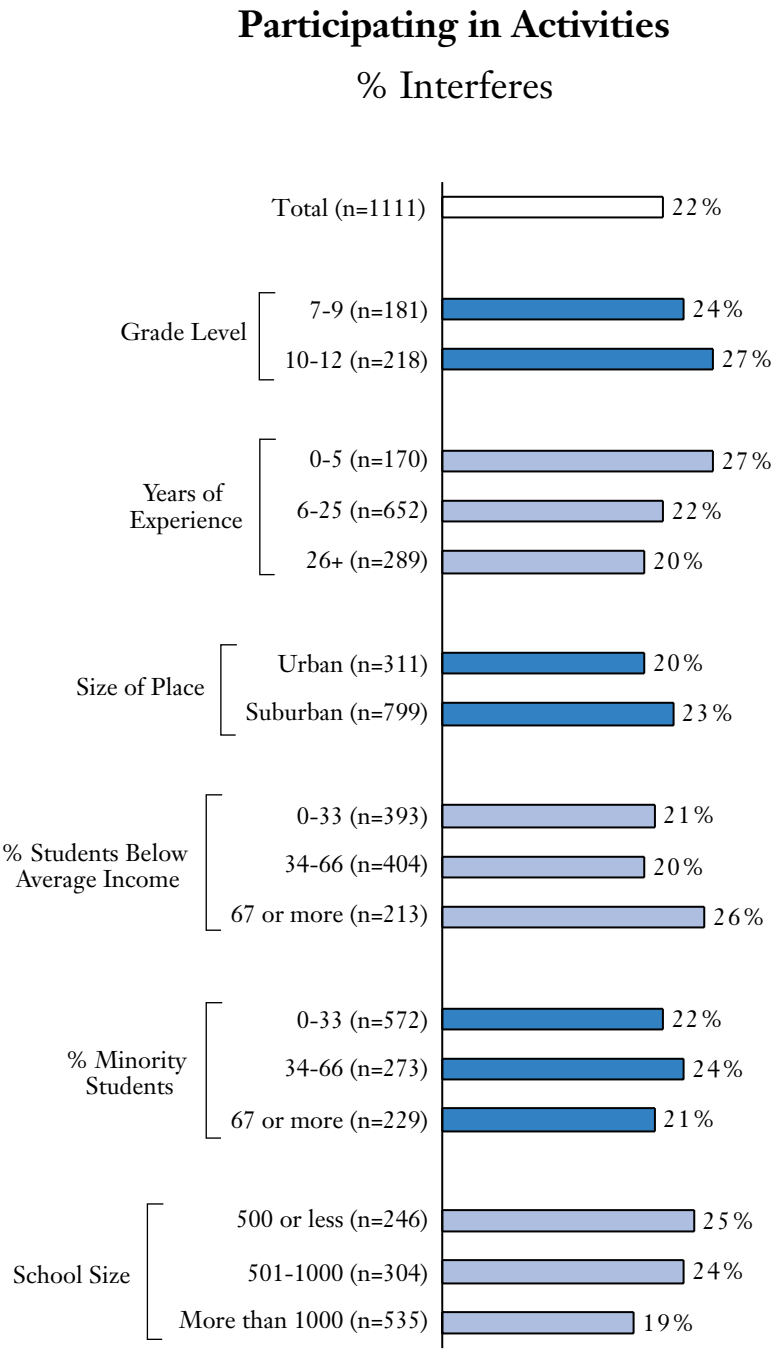

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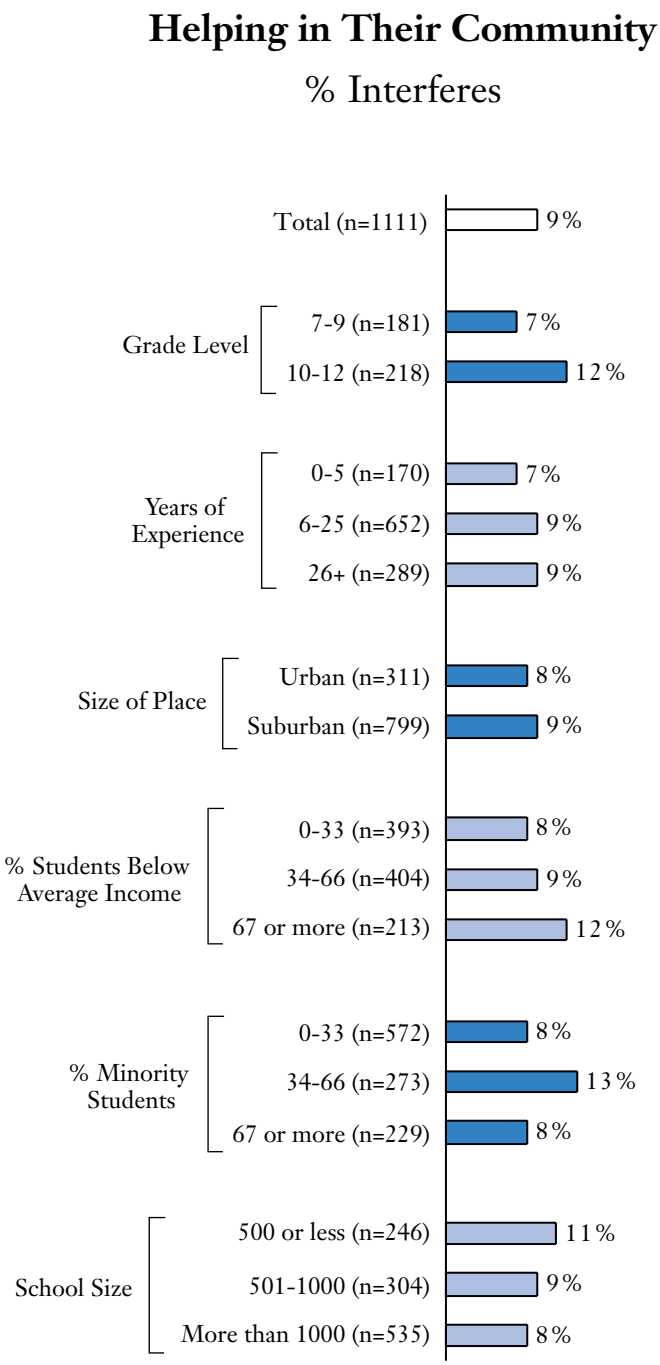
Exhibit 5.19

Teachers' Ratings of Helping in the Community

Q611-4 Does time spent doing the following activities help or interfere with students' doing well in school?

Base: All qualified teachers



Few students believe that any of these activities get in the way of their doing well in school. For a plurality of students who do these activities, they view their participation as neither helping nor getting in the way. However, half of students (48%) do believe that participating in activities does help them do well in school. (Exhibit 5.20)

Older students who work are more likely than younger students who work to believe that working for pay gets in the way of doing well in school (26% vs. 9%). (Exhibit 5.21)

Among students who participate in activities, poor students differ from those who receive A's on what gets in the way of their doing well in school. Students who receive D's and F's are more likely than "A" students to report that hanging out with friends (24% vs. 11%) and helping in their community (24% vs. 9%) get in the way of school success. (Exhibits 5.22 and 5.24)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *In* The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2000, *48% of students indicated that they did things to help out in their community.*

Exhibit 5.20

Students' Views on Activities That Help or Hinder School Success

Q351 Overall, does the time you spend doing the following activities help you or get in the way of doing well in school?

Base: Students that participate in activity

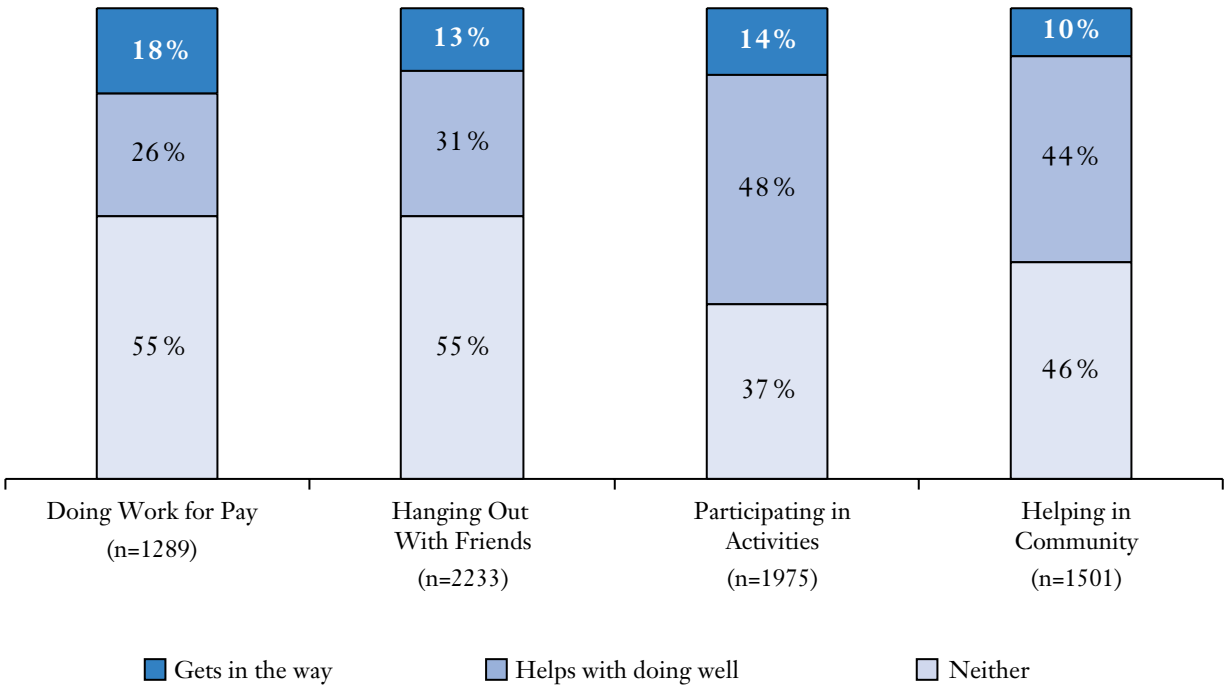


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Exhibit 5.21
Students' Ratings of Working for Pay

Q351-2 Overall, does the time you spend doing the following activities help you or get in the way of doing well in school?
Base: Students that participate in activity

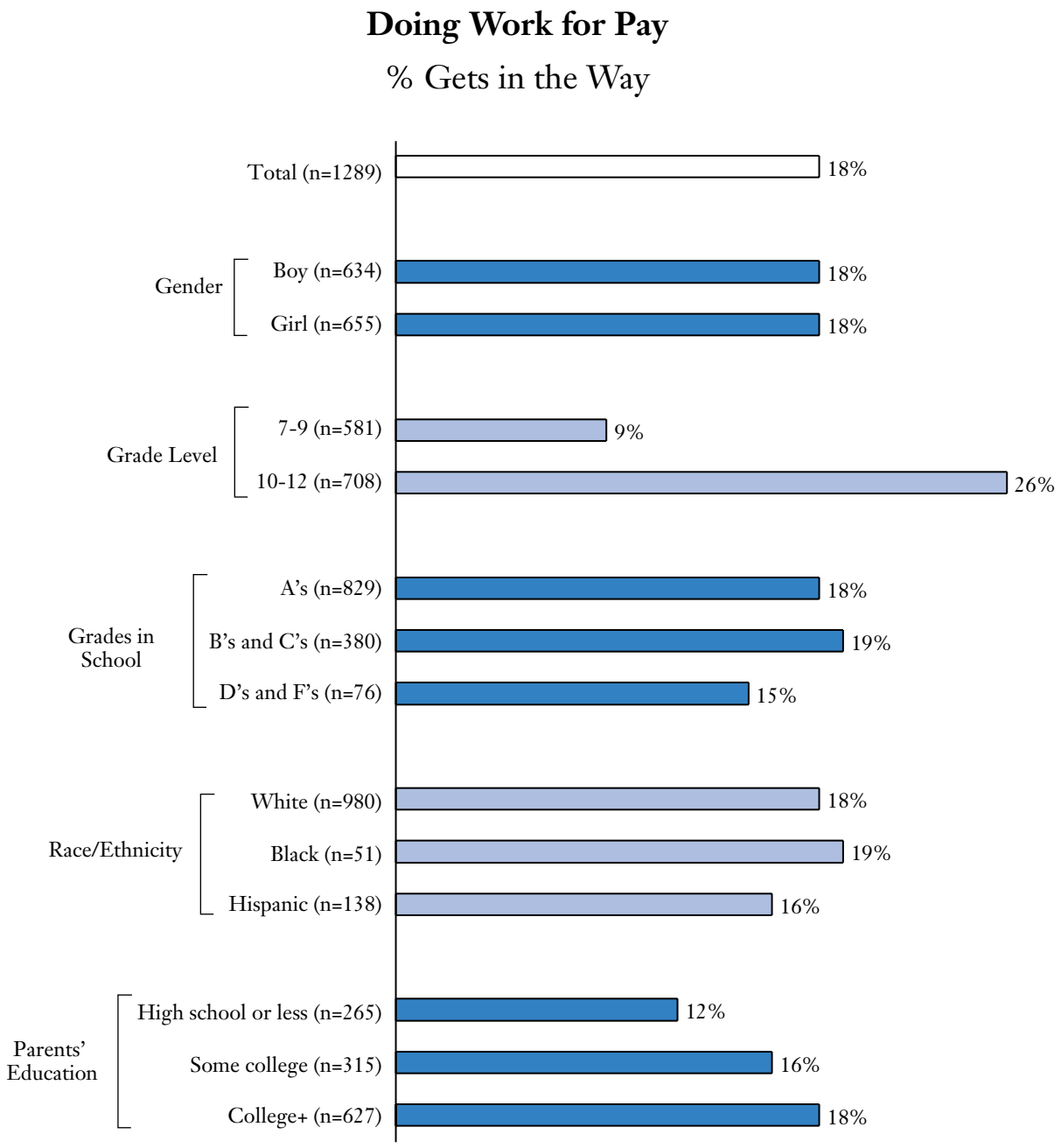

Exhibit 5.22
Students' Ratings of Hanging Out With Friends

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Q351-1 Overall, does the time you spend doing the following activities help you or get in the way of doing well in school?
Base: Students that participate in activity

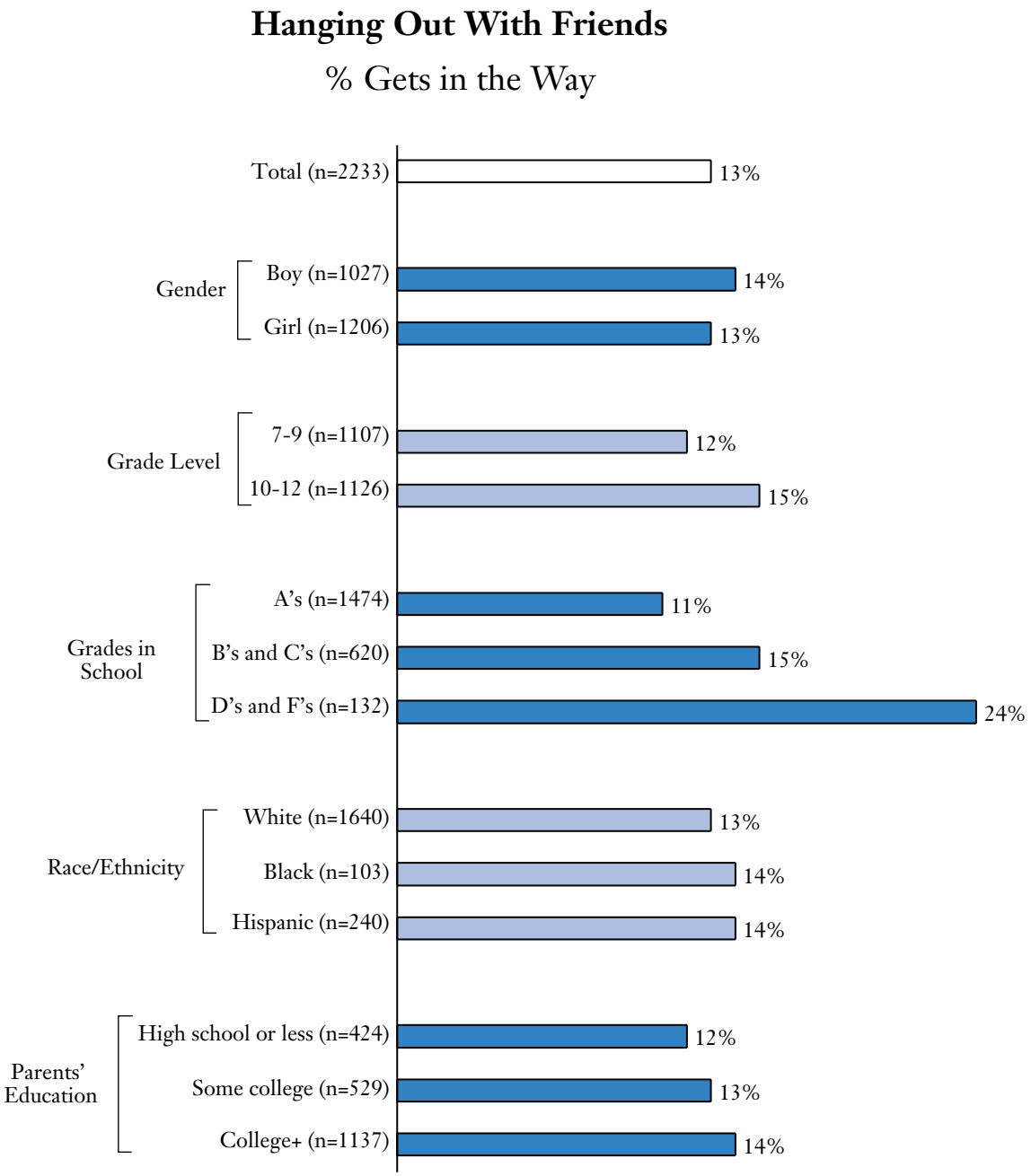

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Exhibit 5.23
Students' Ratings of Participating in Activities

Q351-3 Overall, does the time you spend doing the following activities help you or get in the way of doing well in school?
Base: Students that participate in activity

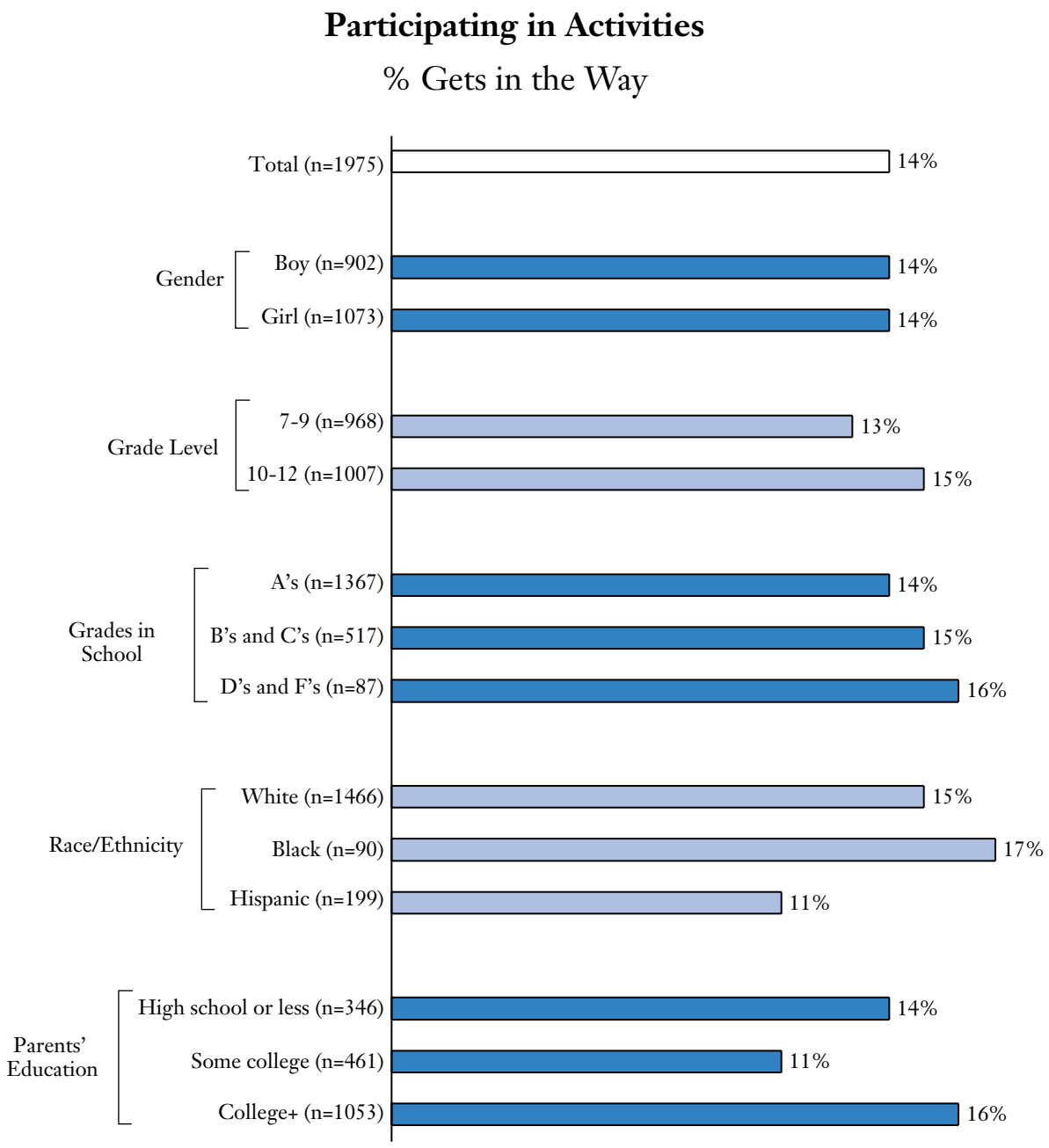
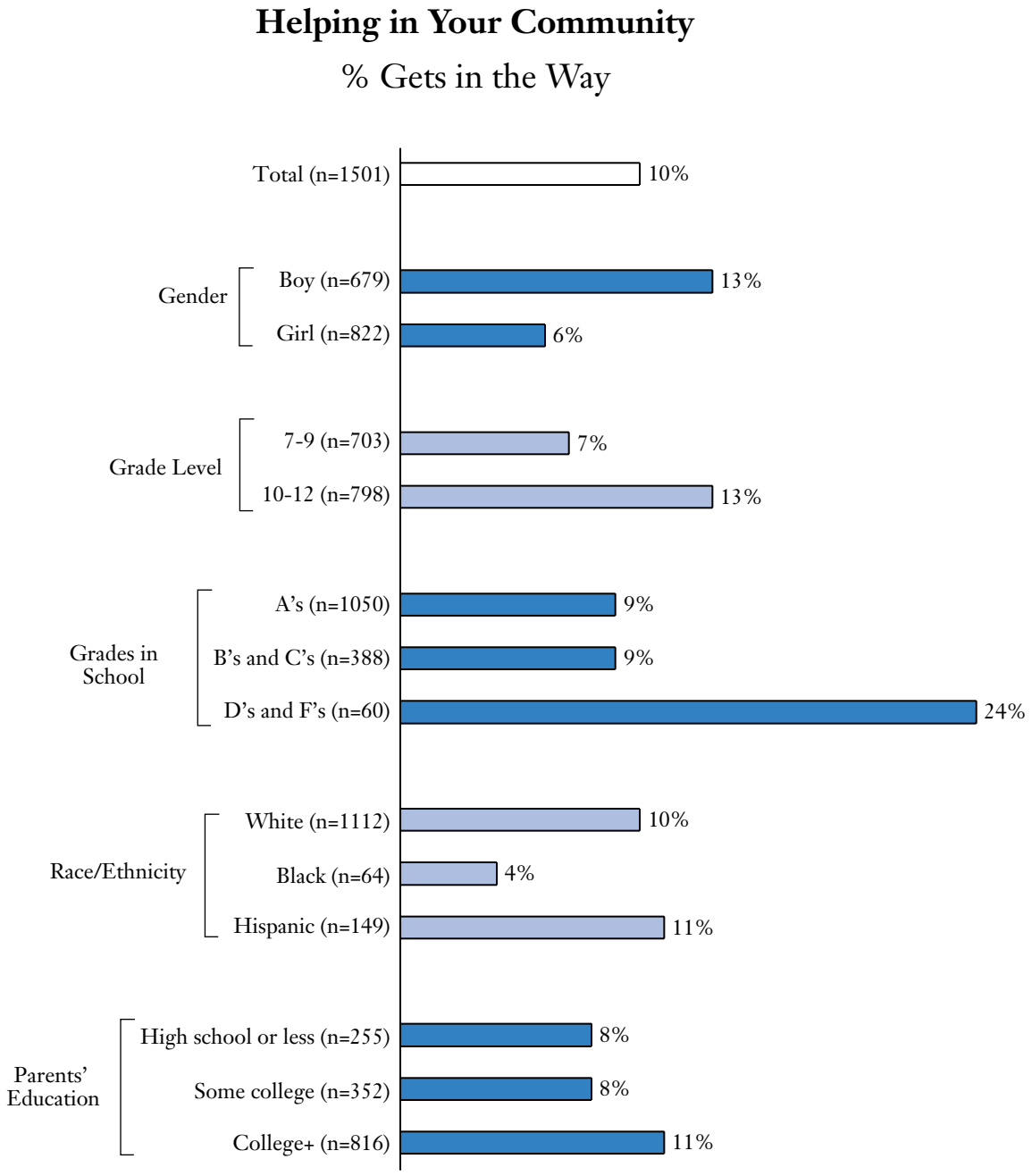


Exhibit 5.24
Students' Ratings of Helping in Your Community

Q351-4 Overall, does the time you spend doing the following activities help you or get in the way of doing well in school?
Base: Students that participate in activity



SECTION III:
THE HOME

CHAPTER 6

HOMEWORK

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

Advice to parents . . .

"Don't bother me about homework, and let me handle it on my own."

(12th grade boy)

~

"Make sure they check my homework and speak to the teachers periodically to make sure the student is following all of the rules and completing assignments, etc."

(10th grade girl)

Advice to teachers . . .

"…they could…give less homework. Because as much as they like to think so, they're not the only class I get homework in."

(10th grade girl)

~

"Stress homework completion."

(8th grade boy)

Overview

Although fewer than two in ten teachers assign homework 5 days a week, most do assign homework 3 or more days a week. Teachers report that seven in ten of their students typically complete their homework assignments during the school week, while more than eight in ten students themselves report that they spend time on a typical school day doing homework or studying.

Assigning Homework

Six in ten teachers (61%) assign homework 3 or more days a week. Nearly two in ten (18%) assign homework 5 days a week, while one in seven (14%) never assign homework. Teachers with more than 25 years of experience are more likely than those with 5 years or less experience to assign homework 3 or more days a week (63% vs. 52%). Teachers in schools with mostly low-income students are less likely than those in schools with few low-income students to assign homework 3 or more days a week (61% vs. 51%). (Exhibits 6.1 – 6.2)

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Exhibit 6.1

Frequency of Homework Assignment

Q410 During a typical school week, how often do you assign homework?
Base: All qualified teachers (n=1111)

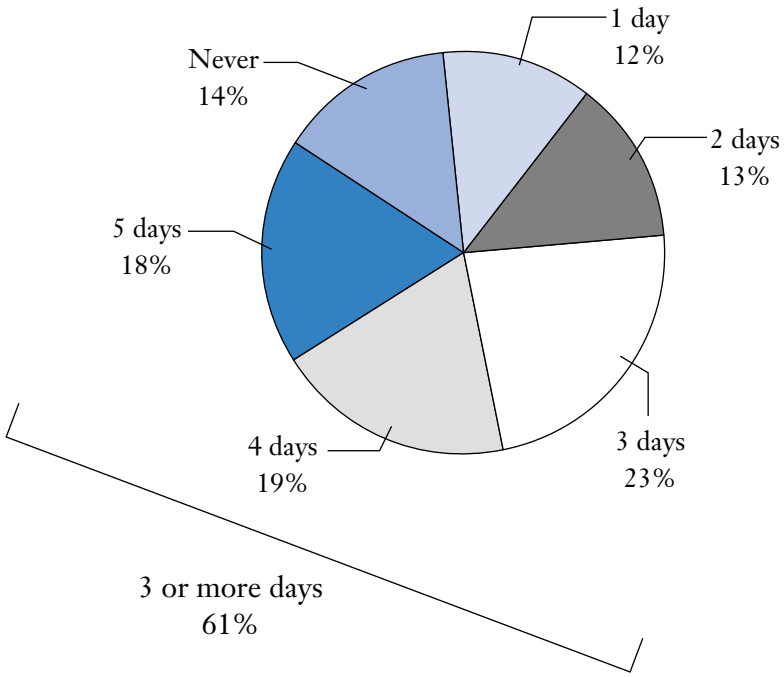

Exhibit 6.2
Frequency of Homework Assignment by Demographics

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Q410 During a typical school week, how often do you assign homework?
Base: All qualified teachers

		Grade Level		Years of Experience			Size of Place	
	Total	7-9	10-12	0-5	6-25	26+	Urban	Suburban/ Rural
Base	1111	181	218	170	652	289	311	799
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	14	8	15	17	14	12	13	14
1 day a week	12	18	7	14	10	13	14	11
2 days a week	13	11	16	17	14	11	8	16
3 or more days	61	63	61	52	61	63	65	59
3 days a week	23	28	25	23	25	19	20	24
4 days a week	19	26	13	23	19	18	19	19
5 days a week	18	9	22	7	17	26	25	16

		% Students Below Average Income			% Minority Students			School Size		
	Total	0-33	34-66	67 or More	0-33	34-66	67 or More	500 or Less	501-1000	More than 1000
Base	1111	393	404	213	572	273	229	246	304	535
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	14	13	14	13	13	14	19	13	14	14
1 day a week	12	10	12	18	10	13	13	12	10	12
2 days a week	13	15	11	17	16	10	10	20	12	11
3 or more days	61	61	63	51	60	63	57	52	64	62
3 days a week	23	22	24	15	24	21	22	19	27	22
4 days a week	19	21	20	16	19	21	20	20	23	18
5 days a week	18	18	19	20	18	21	16	13	13	23

The majority of students complete their homework assignments. Teachers who assign homework report that, on average, 73% of their students complete their homework assignments during a typical school week. Teachers' assignments are not often informed by the other homework that students are receiving. More than half (52%) speak with other teachers once a month or less about how much homework they are assigning, including two in ten teachers (22%) who never speak with their students' other teachers about how much homework they are assigning. (Exhibits 6.3 – 6.4)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 1996 *found that 49% of students said that they were assigned homework every day, and 66% of students said that they completed their homework nearly always.*

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Exhibit 6.3

Percentage of Students Completing Homework

Q420 What percentage of your students complete their homework assignments during a typical school week?

Base: Teachers who assign homework

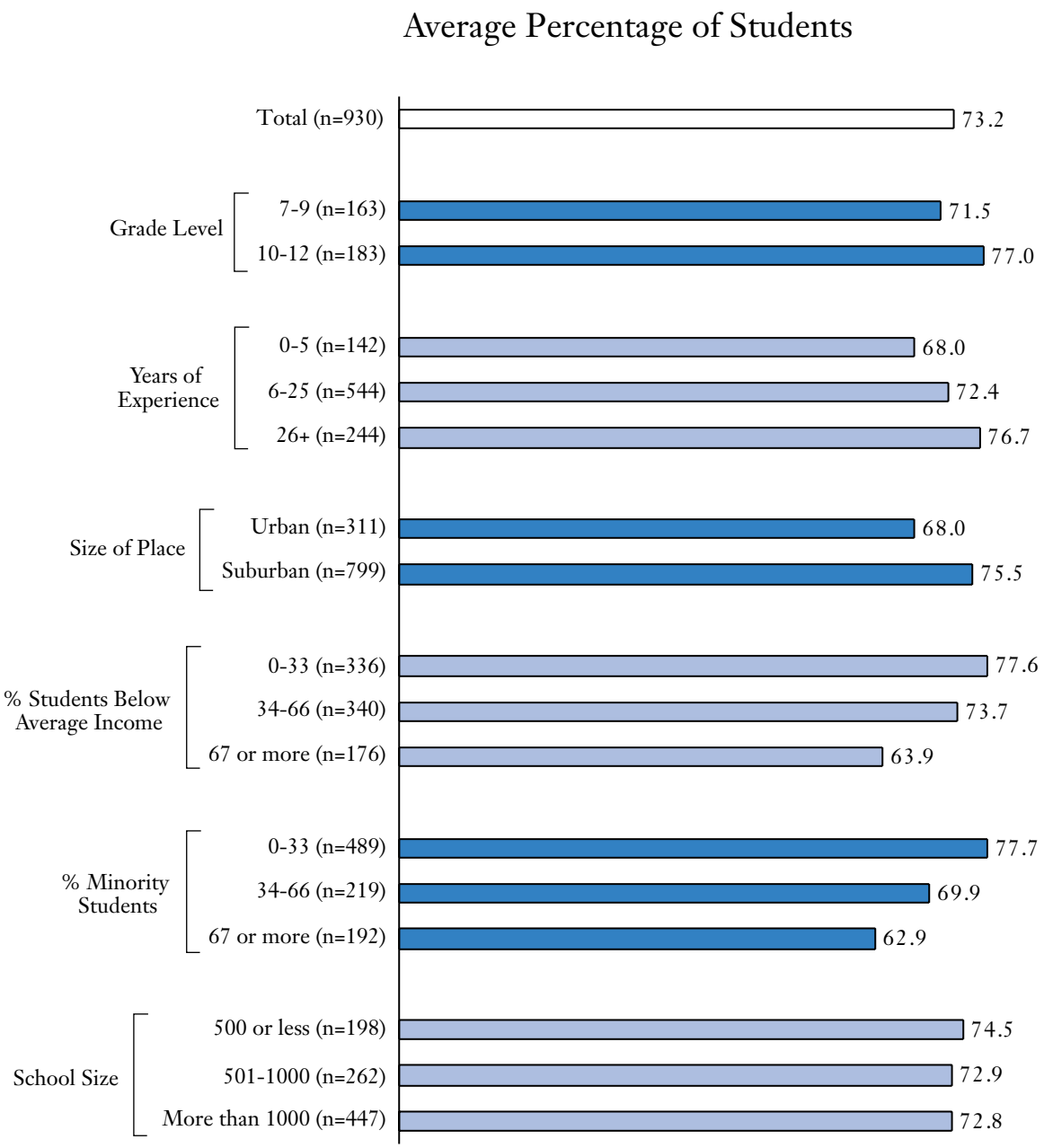

Exhibit 6.4

Frequency of Conversations Among Teachers About Students' Homework Assignments

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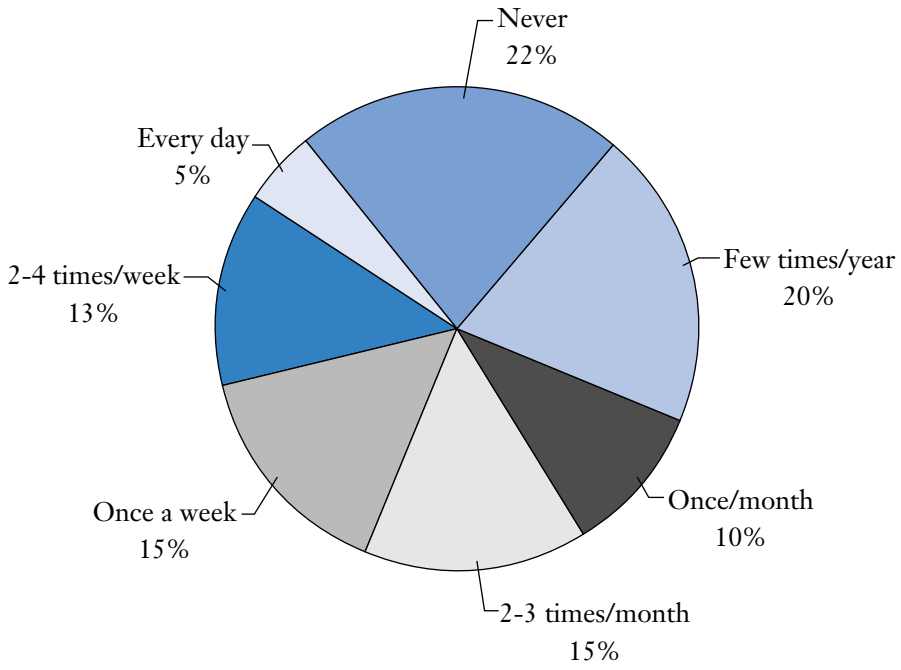
Q430 How often do you speak to your students' other teachers about how much homework they are assigning?

Base: All qualified teachers (n=1111)



Most teachers (60%) believe that their students' parents think they assign the right amount of homework, although one-quarter (24%) are not sure what their students' parents think about this. Recall that in Chapter 3, only seven percent of teachers reported speaking very often to parents about students not completing homework assignments. Teachers in schools with mostly low-income students are more likely than teachers in schools with few low-income students to report that parents think they assign too little homework (13% vs. 5%), as are teachers in schools with mostly minority students (16% vs. 6%). (Exhibits 6.5 – 6.6)

Exhibit 6.5
Parents' Views of Homework

Q440 Do your students' parents think you assign too much homework, too little homework or the right amount of homework?
Base: All qualified teachers (n=1111)

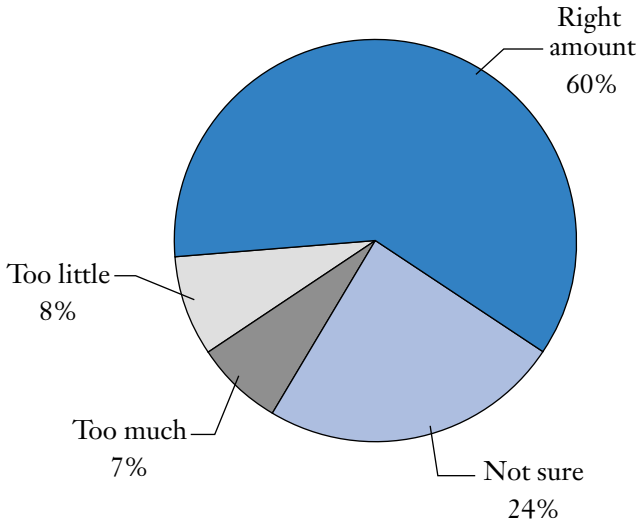


Exhibit 6.6
Parents' Views of Homework by Demographics

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Q440 Do your students' parents think you assign too much homework, too little homework or the right amount of homework?
Base: All qualified teachers

		Grade Level		Years of Experience			Size of Place	
	Total	7-9	10-12	0-5	6-25	26+	Urban	Suburban/ Rural
Base	1111	181	218	170	652	289	311	799
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too much	7	11	9	4	8	6	6	7
Too little	8	14	5	8	8	9	9	8
Right amount	60	54	64	59	59	62	59	61
Not sure	24	21	22	27	24	23	26	24

		% Students Below Average Income			% Minority Students			School Size		
	Total	0-33	34-66	67 or More	0-33	34-66	67 or More	500 or Less	501-1000	More than 1000
Base	1111	393	404	213	572	273	229	246	304	535
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too much	7	7	8	5	9	5	5	10	5	7
Too little	8	5	9	13	6	8	16	8	8	9
Right amount	60	69	58	55	62	67	51	57	63	61
Not sure	24	18	24	27	23	20	27	24	24	24

Doing Homework

Students say that they spend time on their homework assignments, although they devote more time to other activities. Nearly nine in ten students (86%) report that they spend time doing homework or studying on a typical school day. These students typically spend 1.5 hours on this activity. This compares with the 2 hours each day that students typically spend hanging out with friends and 2 hours they spend participating in activities (Chapter 5). Two in ten students (21%) do not have a quiet place to do their homework. (Exhibits 6.7 – 6.9)

Exhibit 6.7
Time Spent on Homework

Q336-3 On a typical school day, how much time do you spend doing the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

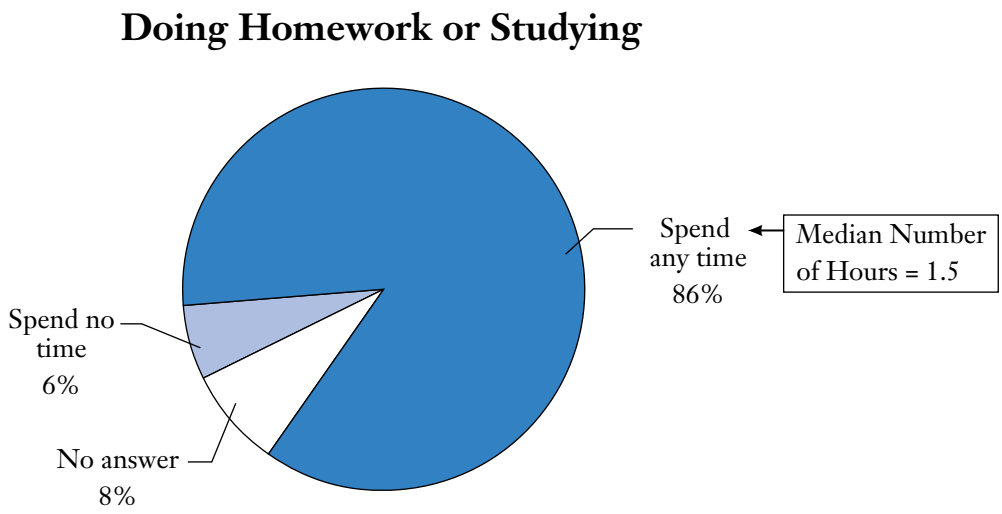

Exhibit 6.8
Quiet Place to Do Homework

Q355 Do you have a quiet place to do your homework?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

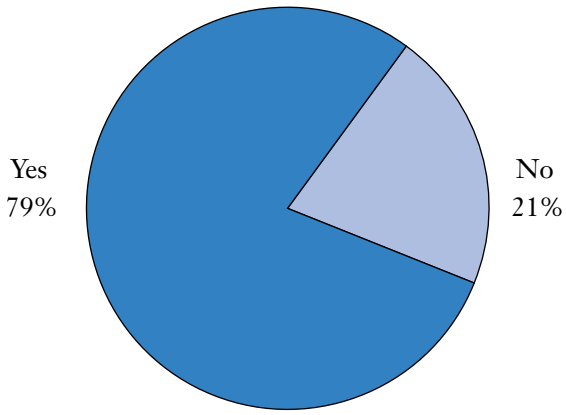

Exhibit 6.9
Quiet Place to Do Homework by Demographics

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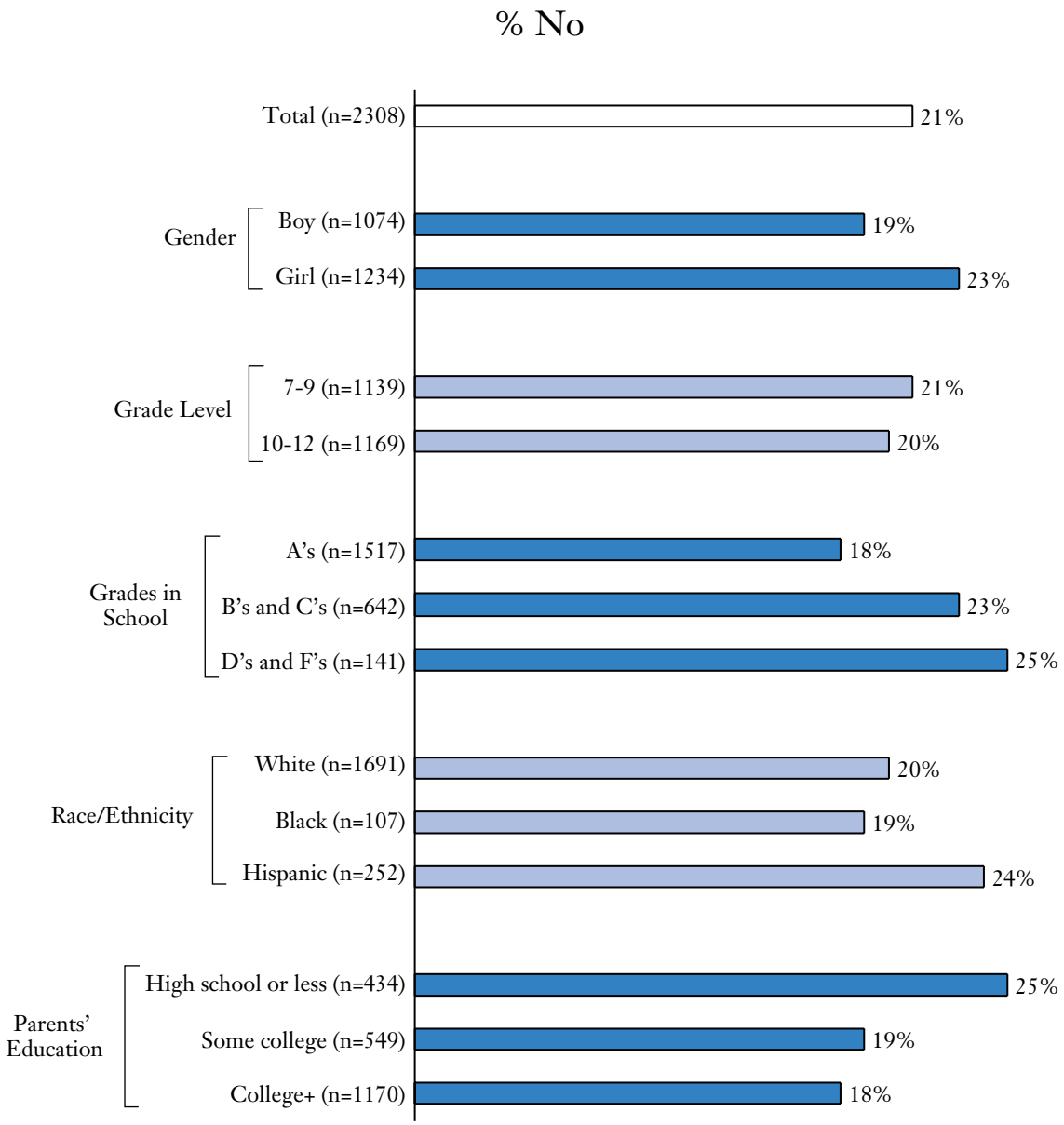
Q355 Do you have a quiet place to do your homework?
Base: All qualified students



Four in ten students (41%) wish they had more time for schoolwork, including studying or homework. Students who are most likely to wish for more time for schoolwork include Hispanic students (49%), "A" students (44%) and older students (46%). Four in ten students (41%) think the time they spend doing activities such as watching TV or videos, or playing video or computer games gets in the way of doing well in school. Students are much more likely to view these activities as getting in the way of doing well in school compared to doing work for pay (18%), hanging out with friends (13%), participating in activities (14%) or helping in the community (10%; Chapter 5). Teachers are even more adamant in this view. More than eight in ten (84%) think

that these activities interfere with students' doing well in school. Like students, teachers also rate watching TV and playing computer games as more likely to interfere with school success, compared to doing work for pay (71%), hanging out with friends (55%), participating in activities (22%) or helping in the community (9%). (Exhibits 6.1.0 – 6.12, Chapter 5)

Exhibit 6.10
Wishes for More Time for School Work

Q346-1 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students

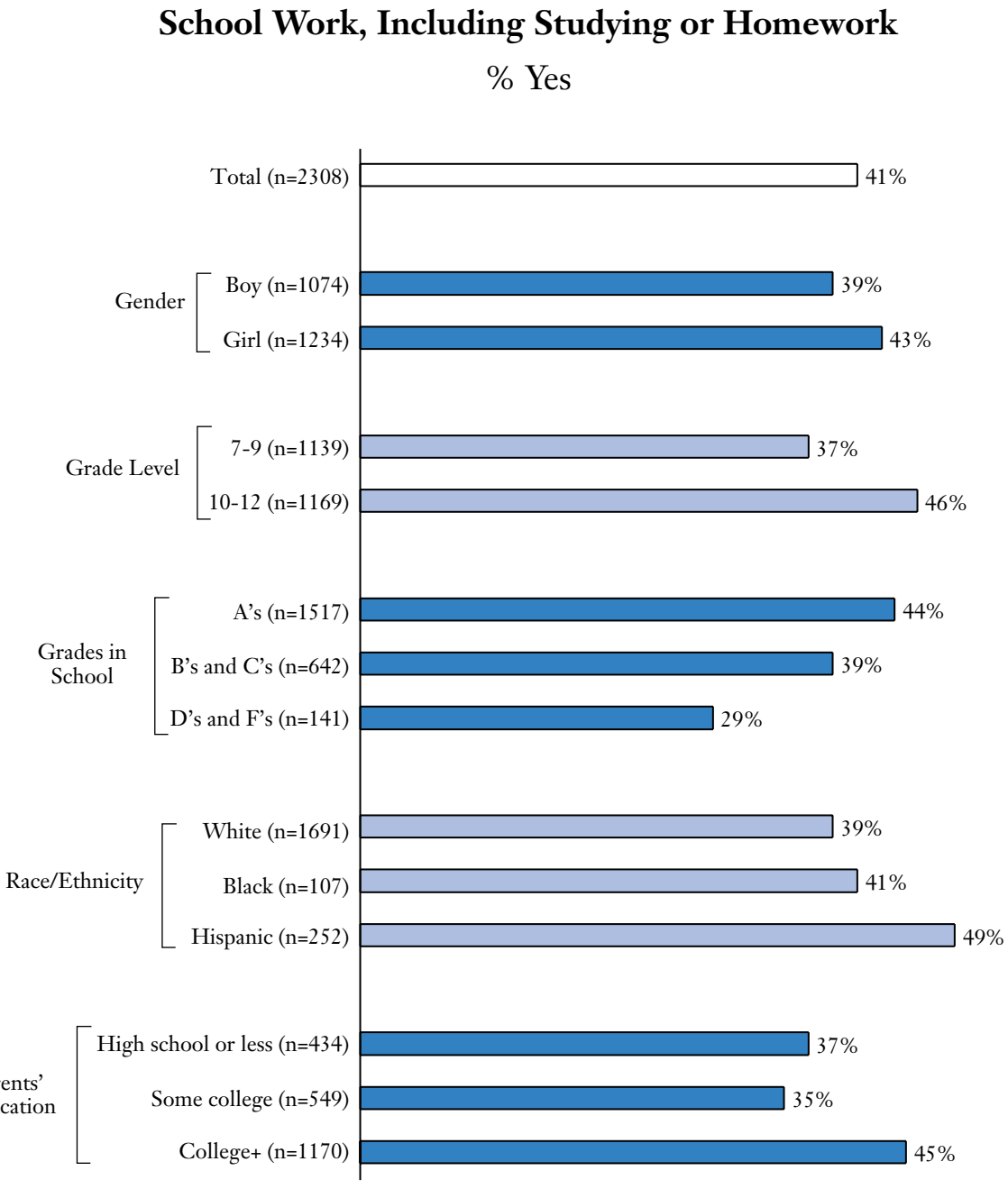


Exhibit 6.11
Students' Opinions of the Effects of Video and Computer Activities

Q351-5 Overall, does the time you spend doing the following activities help you or get in the way of doing well in school?
Base: Does activity

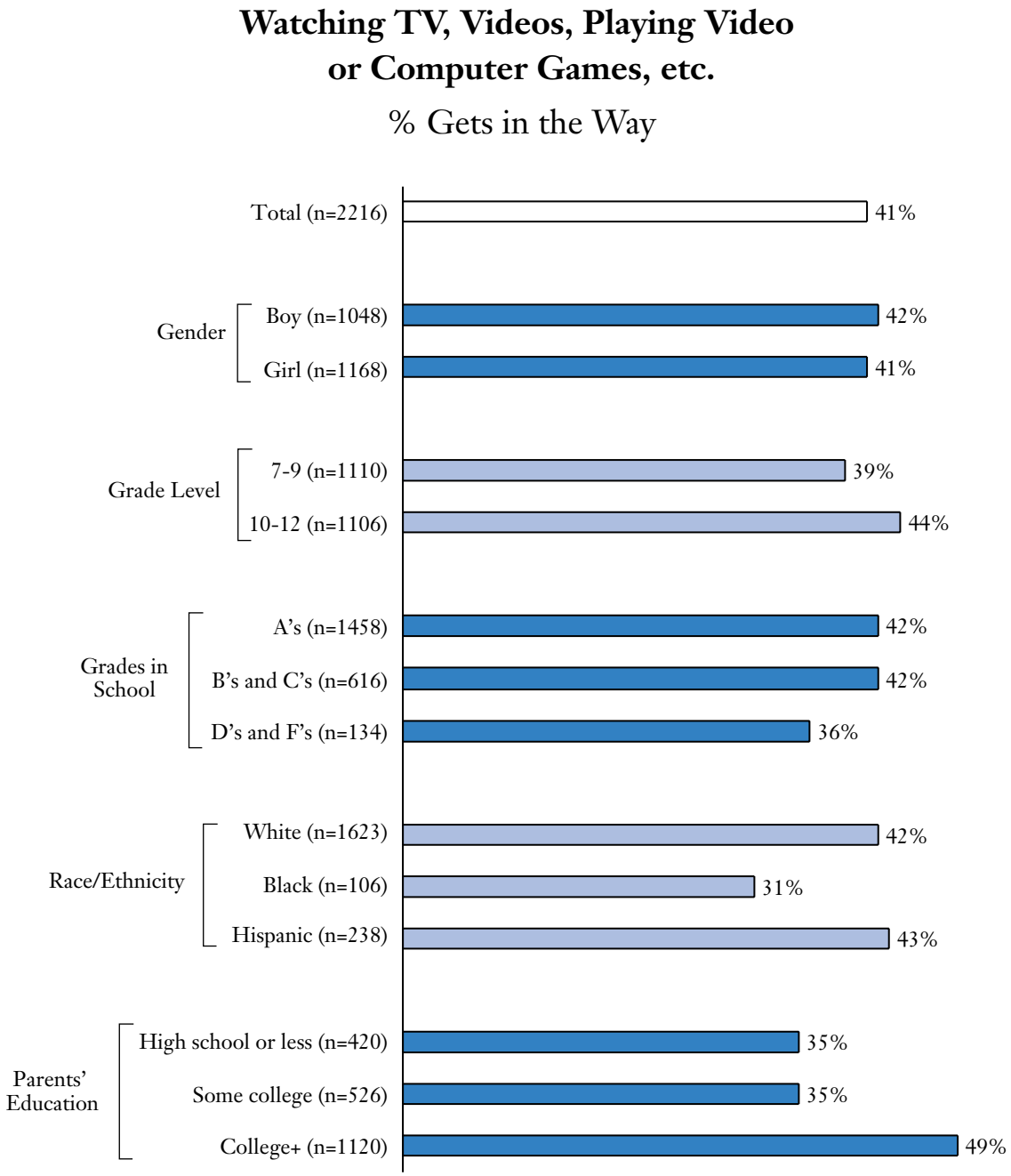


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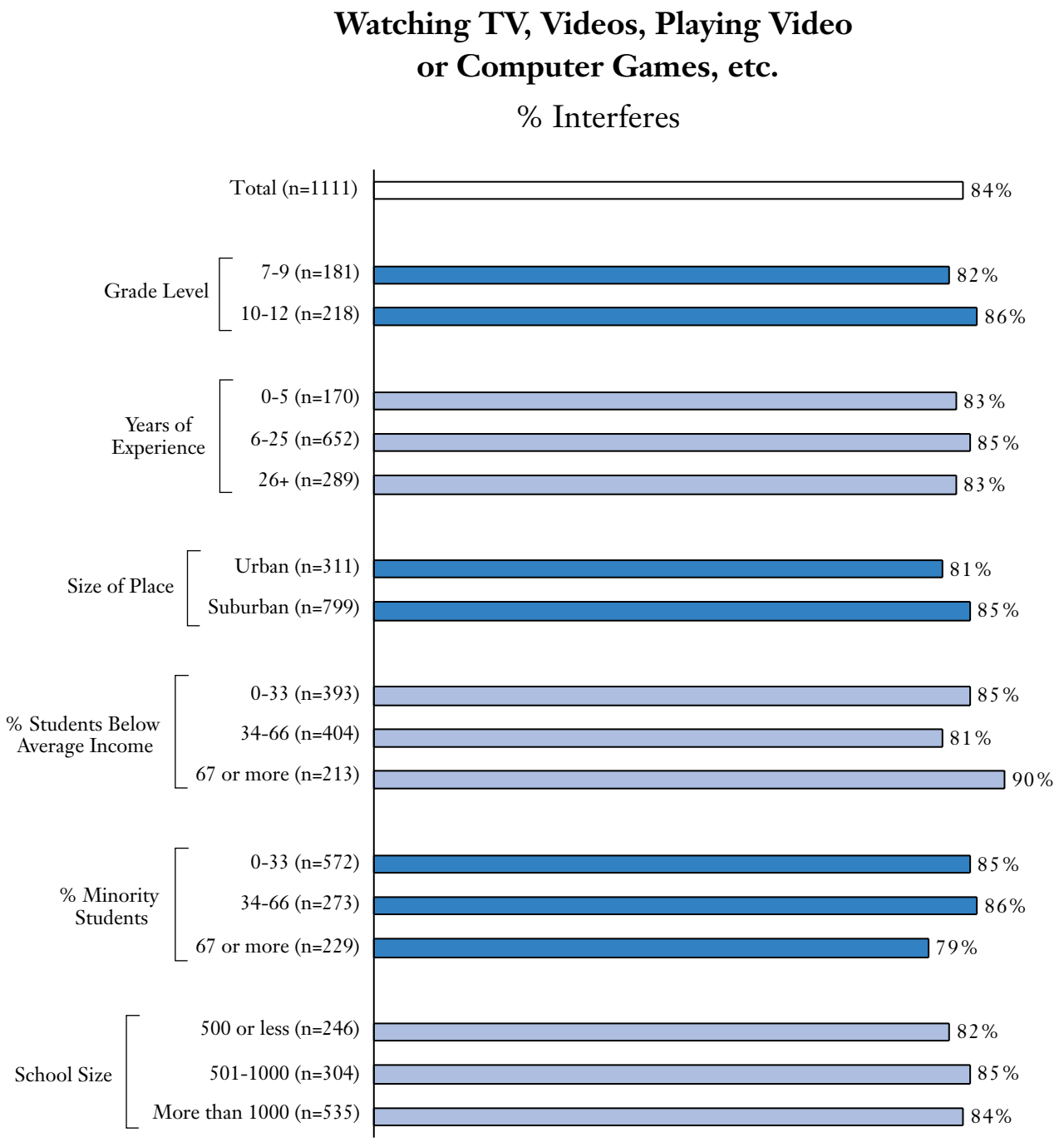
Exhibit 6.12

Teachers' Opinions of the Effects of Video and Computer Activities

Q611-5 Does time spent doing the following activities help or interfere with students' doing well in school?

Base: All qualified teachers



CHAPTER 7

PARENTS

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STUDENTS AND TEACHERS SPEAK OUT

What can parents do?

According to students…

"Nothing. Just have faith in me and let me do my own thing."
(8th grade girl)

~

"Listen to us without giving stupid lectures. It's nice to have someone who can just LISTEN once in a while."
(8th grade girl)

~

"Well as much as I hate to say it, they need to ask my teachers about my grades all the time."
(10th grade boy)

~

"Support me and not put pressure on me to do really well – just let me do what I can without stressing me out."
(11th grade girl)

According to teachers…

"Don't criticize teachers, administrators, or coaches in front of the children."
(Teacher in small town school)

~

"Require their child to comply with rules and assignments…without excuses…"
(Teacher in suburban school)

~

"Be involved! Take the time to talk to teachers, visit school. Get excited about what their child is doing."
(Teacher in rural school)

~

"Talk to your child, ask questions – be nosy, praise them, restrict them – set boundaries, teach them to set goals and work for them."
(Teacher in small town school)

~

"Turn off the TV."
(Teacher in inner city school)

Overview

Although most students report that they usually eat a meal with their parents at least 5-6 days per week; 75% of secondary school students are spending time at home without adult supervision. Students believe that their parents know how they are doing in school, but they are less likely to believe that their parents know what they worry about or what is important to them.

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Time With Parents

The majority of students (55%) eat a meal with their parents 5 or more days a week. However, one in eleven students (9%) report that they never eat a meal with their parents. Junior high school students are more likely than senior high school students to eat a meal with their parents every day (42% vs. 26%) and Hispanic students are more likely than Black or White students to eat a meal with their parents every day (41% vs. 33% vs. 29%). (Exhibits 7.1 – 7.2)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *In the current study, a number of students report having frequent meals with parents, as well as a desire to spend more time with parents. These themes were also evident in The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2000, in which 54% of students said that they ate a meal with their parents 5 or more days a week and 24% of students said that they felt they spent too little time with their parents.*

Exhibit 7.1
Frequency of Meals With Parents

Q511-2 During a typical week, how often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

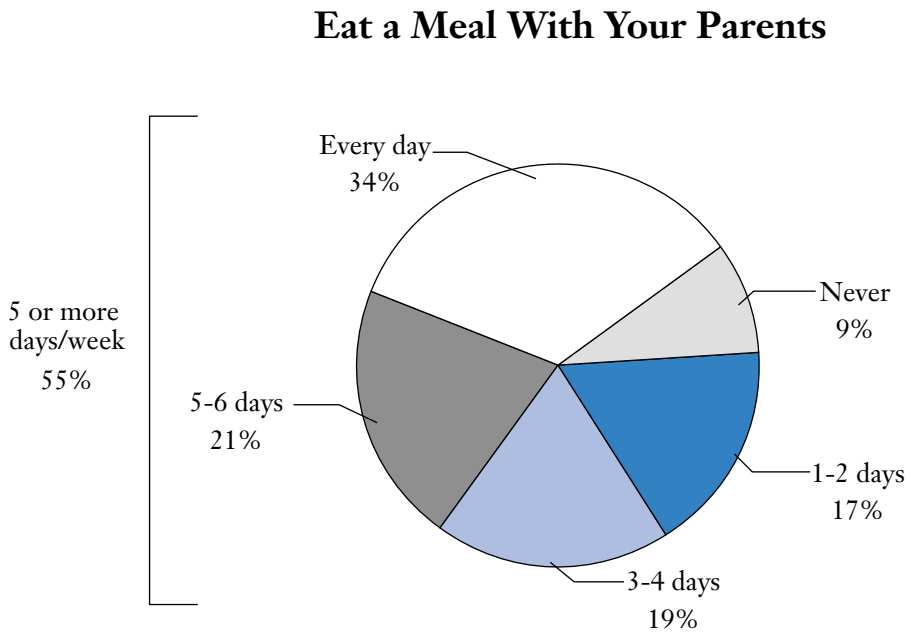

Exhibit 7.2
Frequency of Meals With Parents by Demographics

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Q511-2 During a typical week, how often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students

Eat A Meal With Your Parents

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	9	6	12	8	10	9	8	10
1-2 days	17	16	18	12	22	16	17	22
3-4 days	19	20	17	17	21	19	18	16
5-6 days	21	22	20	21	21	22	20	19
Every day	34	36	33	42	26	34	36	33

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	9	7	21	9	14	8	7
1-2 days	17	16	19	19	21	18	15
3-4 days	19	21	13	14	16	19	20
5-6 days	21	23	18	16	16	19	26
Every day	34	33	29	41	33	35	32

Students wish for more time with their parents. One-third of students (35%) never bring friends to their home when their parents are there. Three-quarters of students (75%) spend time on a typical school day in their home when their parents or other adults are not there. Students typically spend 1.5 hours alone at home each day. More than half of students (54%) wish they had more time to be with their parents. (Exhibits 7.3 – 7.7)

Exhibit 7.3
Bringing Friends Home

Q511-1 During a typical week, how often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

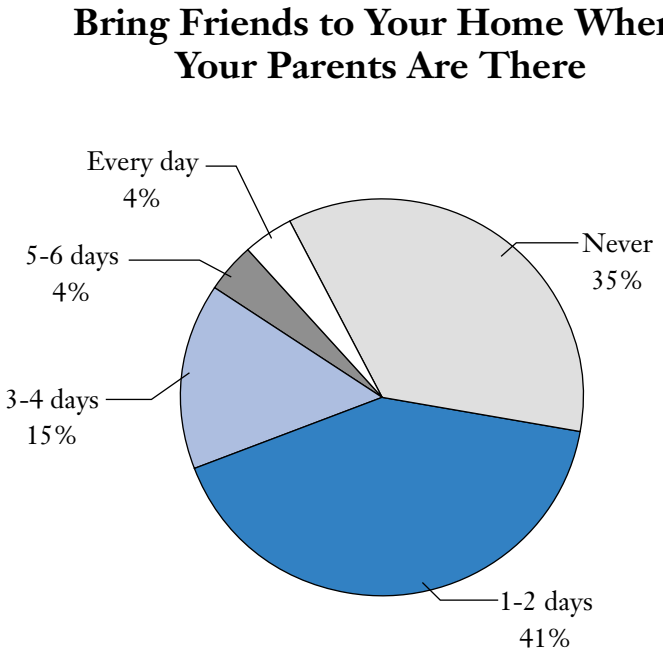

Exhibit 7.4
Bringing Friends Home by Demographics

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Q511-1 During a typical week, how often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students

Bring Friends to Your Home When Your Parents Are There

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	35	36	34	34	36	36	33	42
1-2 days	41	38	43	39	42	45	37	23
3-4 days	15	18	13	17	14	14	18	19
5-6 days	4	4	4	4	4	3	6	7
Every day	4	4	5	6	3	3	6	9

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	35	31	37	55	37	34	34
1-2 days	41	43	36	32	37	42	43
3-4 days	15	17	19	9	15	15	15
5-6 days	4	5	5	1	4	4	4
Every day	4	5	3	3	6	5	4

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Exhibit 7.5
At Home, Unsupervised by Adults

Q336-6 On a typical school day, how much time do you spend doing the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

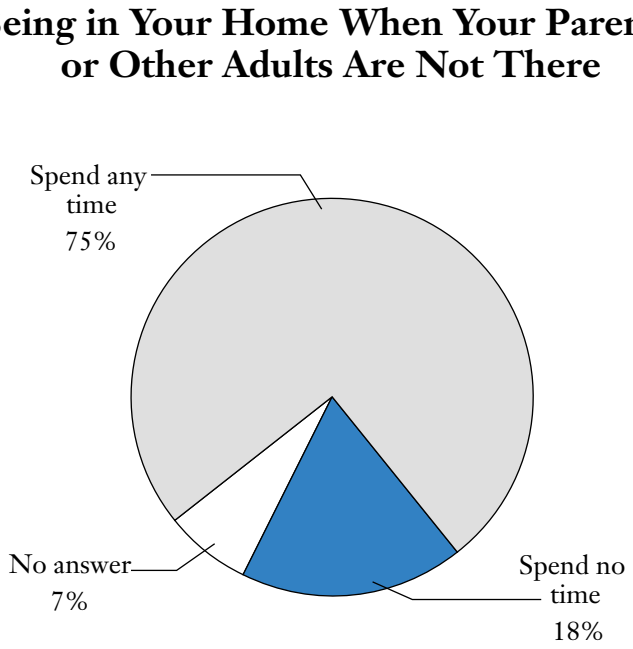

Exhibit 7.6
Number of Hours at Home, Unsupervised by Adults

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Q336-6 On a typical school day, how much time do you spend doing the following?
Base: All qualified students

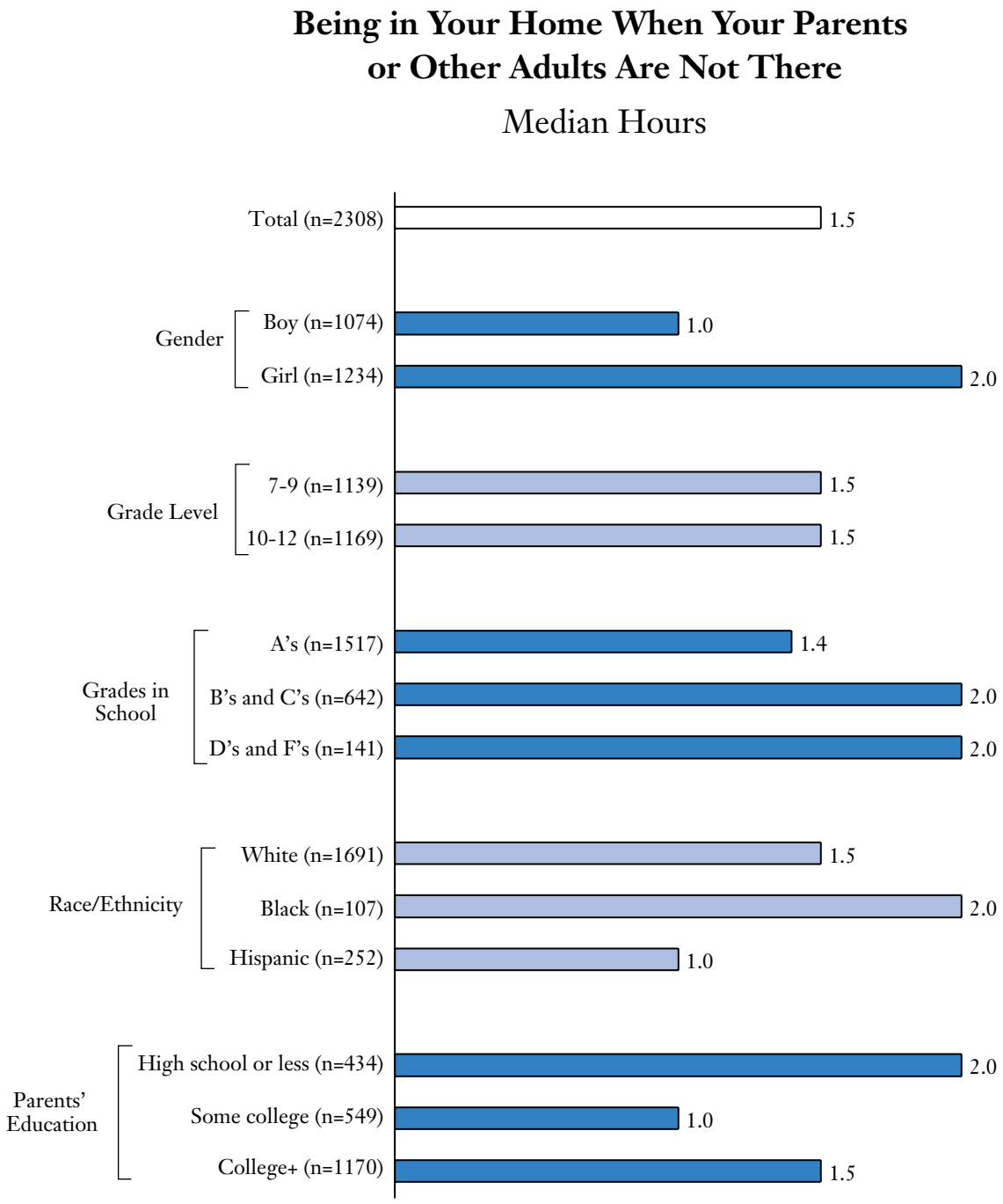

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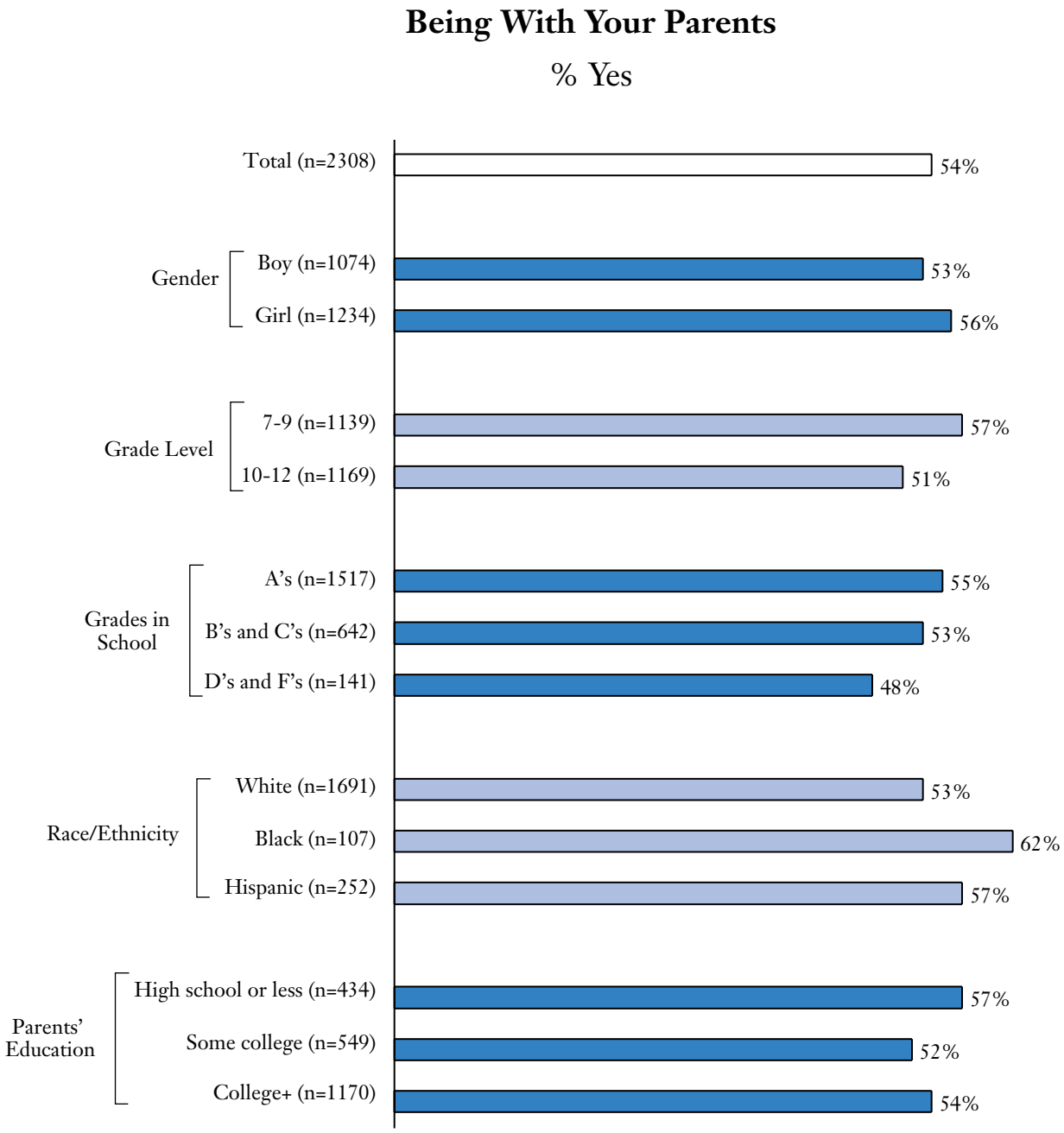
Exhibit 7.7
Wishes for More Time With Parents

Q346-4 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students

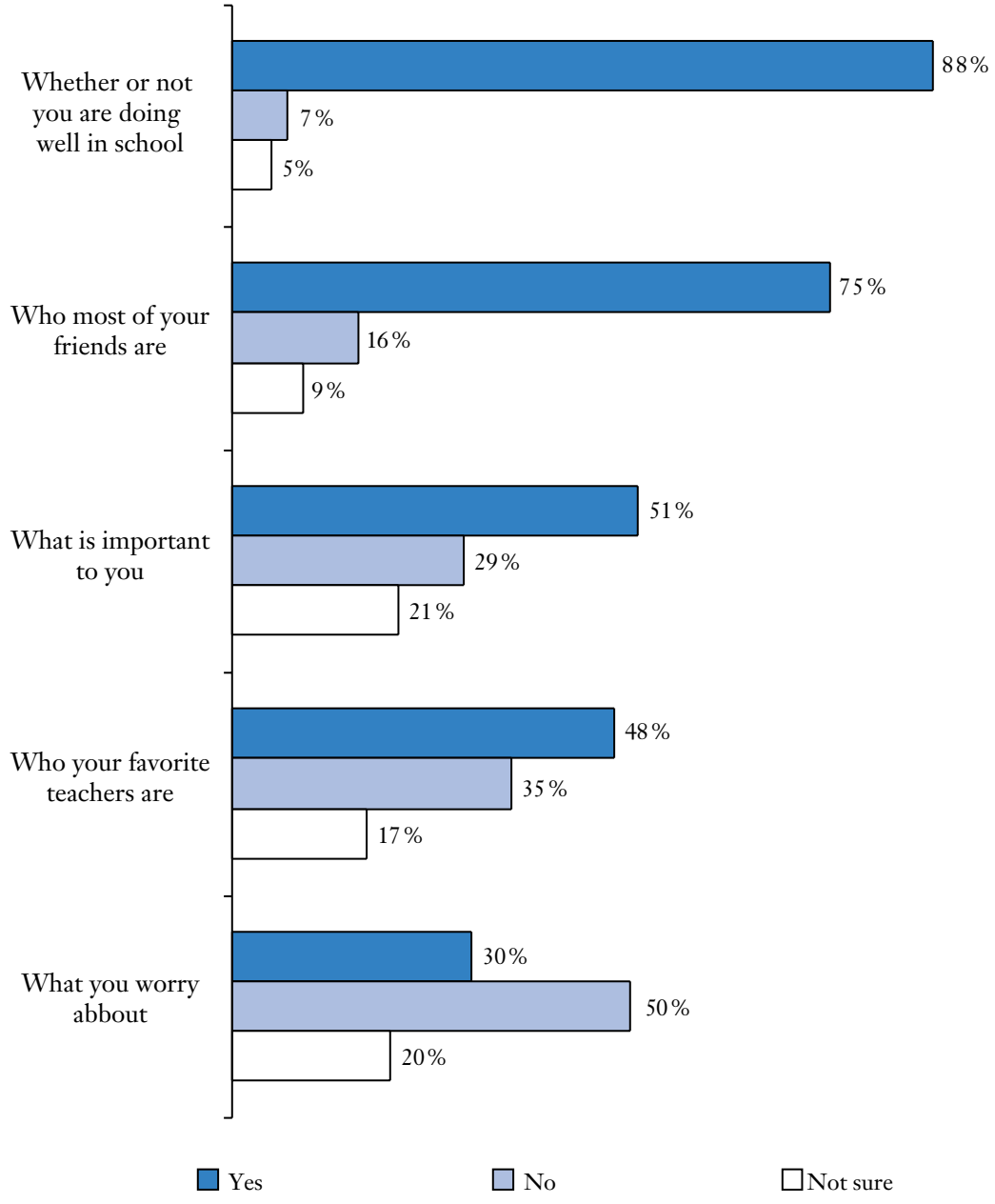


Parents' Knowledge of Students' Lives

Students report that their parents know them well in some respects and less well in others. Students are most likely to report that their parents know whether or not they are doing well in school (88%) and who most of their friends are (75%). However only three in ten students (30%) report that their parents know what they worry about. (See more on student worries in Chapter 8.) (Exhibit 7.8)

Exhibit 7.8
Parents' Knowledge

Q516 Do your parents know the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)



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A number of students report that their parents do not have some important information about them. Half of students (50%) report that their parents do **not** know what they worry about and three in ten students (29%) report that their parents do **not** know what is important to them. One-third of students (35%) report that their parents do not know who their favorite teachers are. Students who are getting D's and F's (52%), Hispanic students (49%), and those whose parents have no more than a high school education (44%) are the most likely students to report that their parents do not know who their favorite teachers are. Students who are getting D's and F's are more than twice as likely as those who are getting A's to report that their parents do not know who most of their friends are (35% vs. 14%). (Exhibits 7.9 – 7.13)

OBSERVATION: *Do students want their parents to be more involved in their education? In* The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 1998, *68% of students wanted their parents to maintain the same level of involvement. Students who got D's and F's were more likely than "A" students to want change in this area – but most of these wanted less involvement from their parents. Interestingly, in the current survey, 48% of "D" and "F" students wish they had more time with their parents.*

Exhibit 7.9
Parents' Knowledge of Students' Friends

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Q516-1 Do your parents know the following?
Base: All qualified students

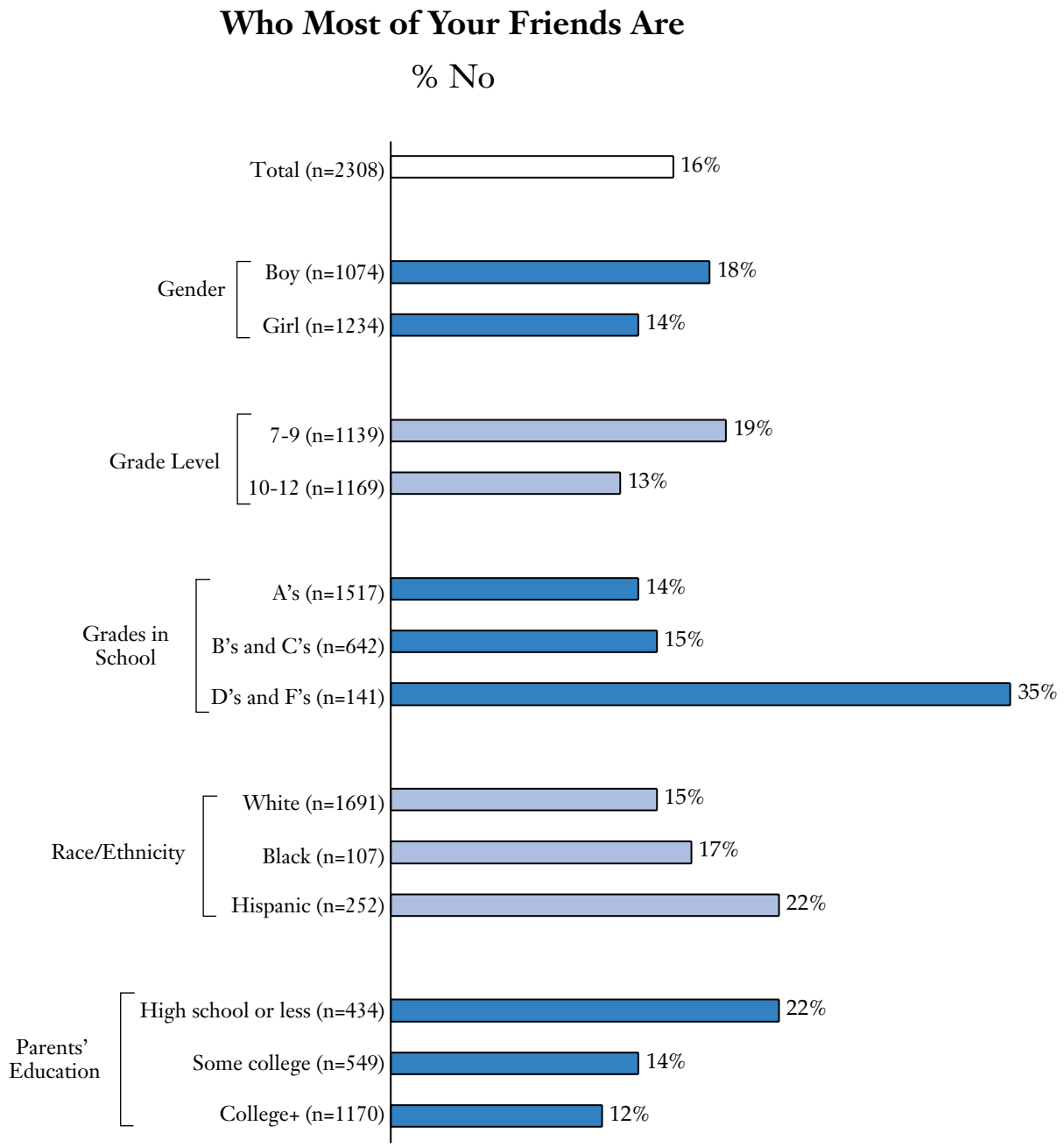

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Exhibit 7.10
Parents' Knowledge of Students' Teachers

Q516-2 Do your parents know the following?
Base: All qualified students

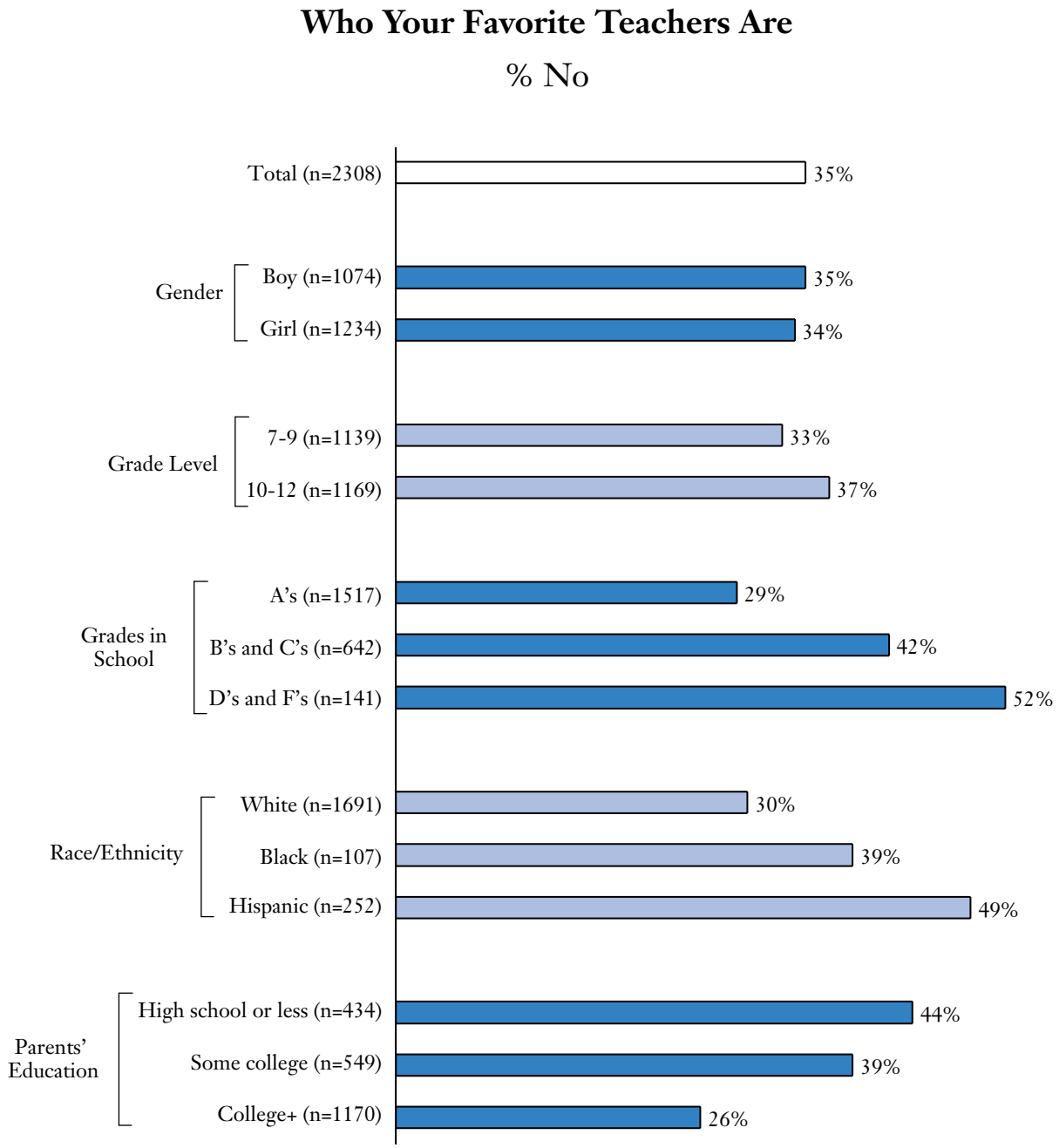

Exhibit 7.11
Parents' Knowledge of Students' School Performance

Q516-3 Do your parents know the following?
Base: All qualified students

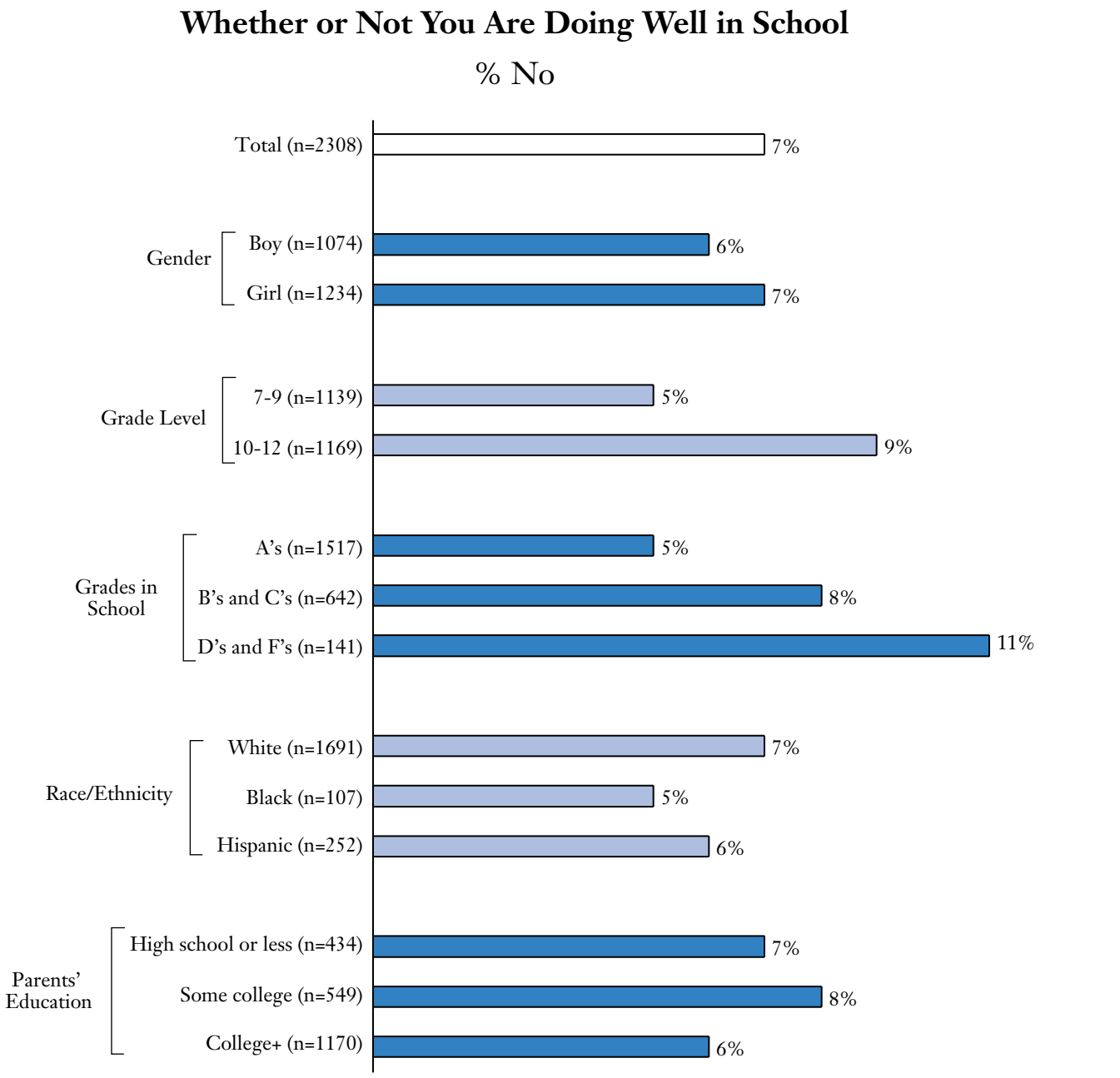

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Exhibit 7.12
Parents' Knowledge of Students' Worries

Q516-4 Do your parents know the following?
Base: All qualified students

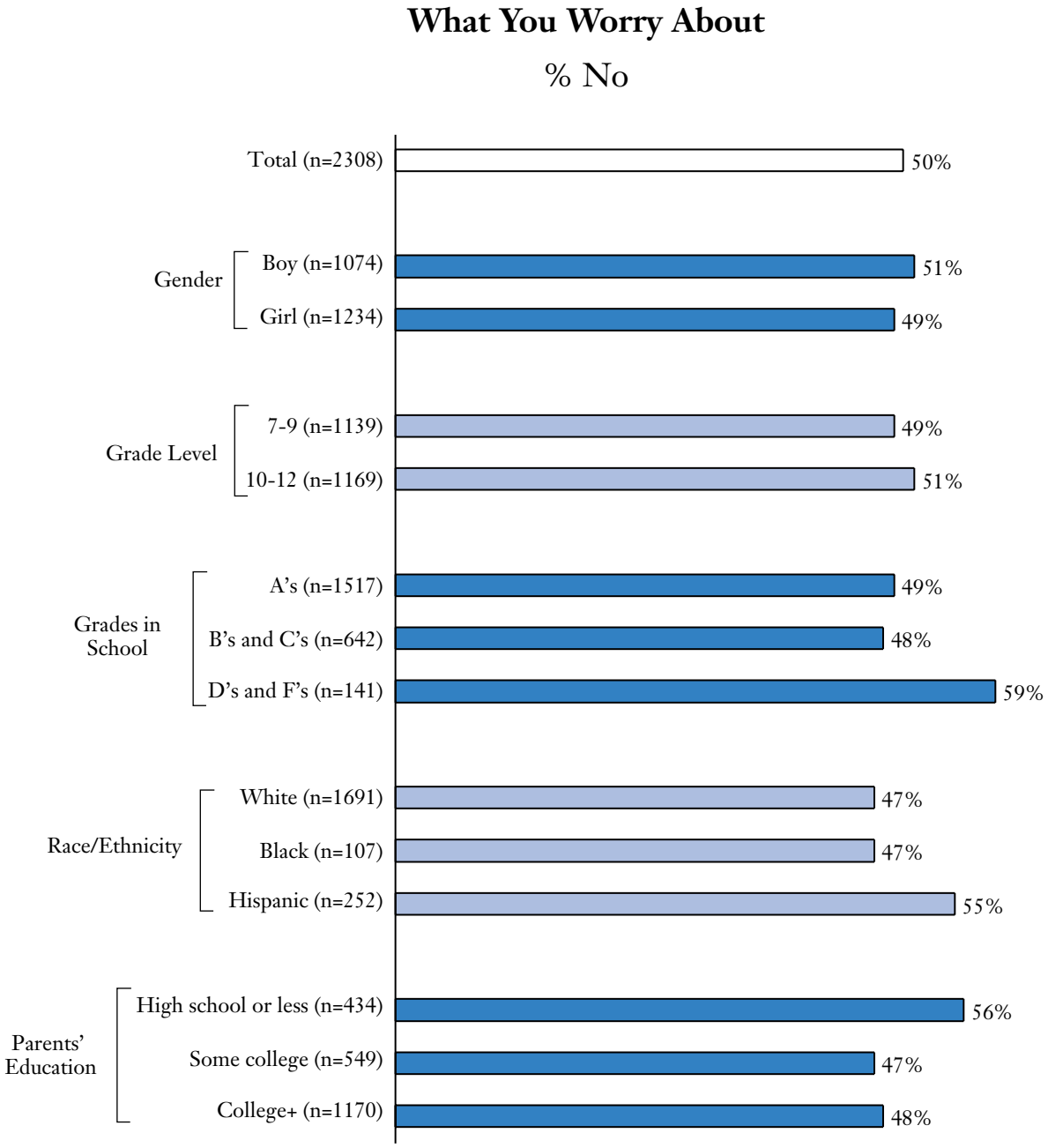

Exhibit 7.13
Parents' Knowledge of Students' Priorities

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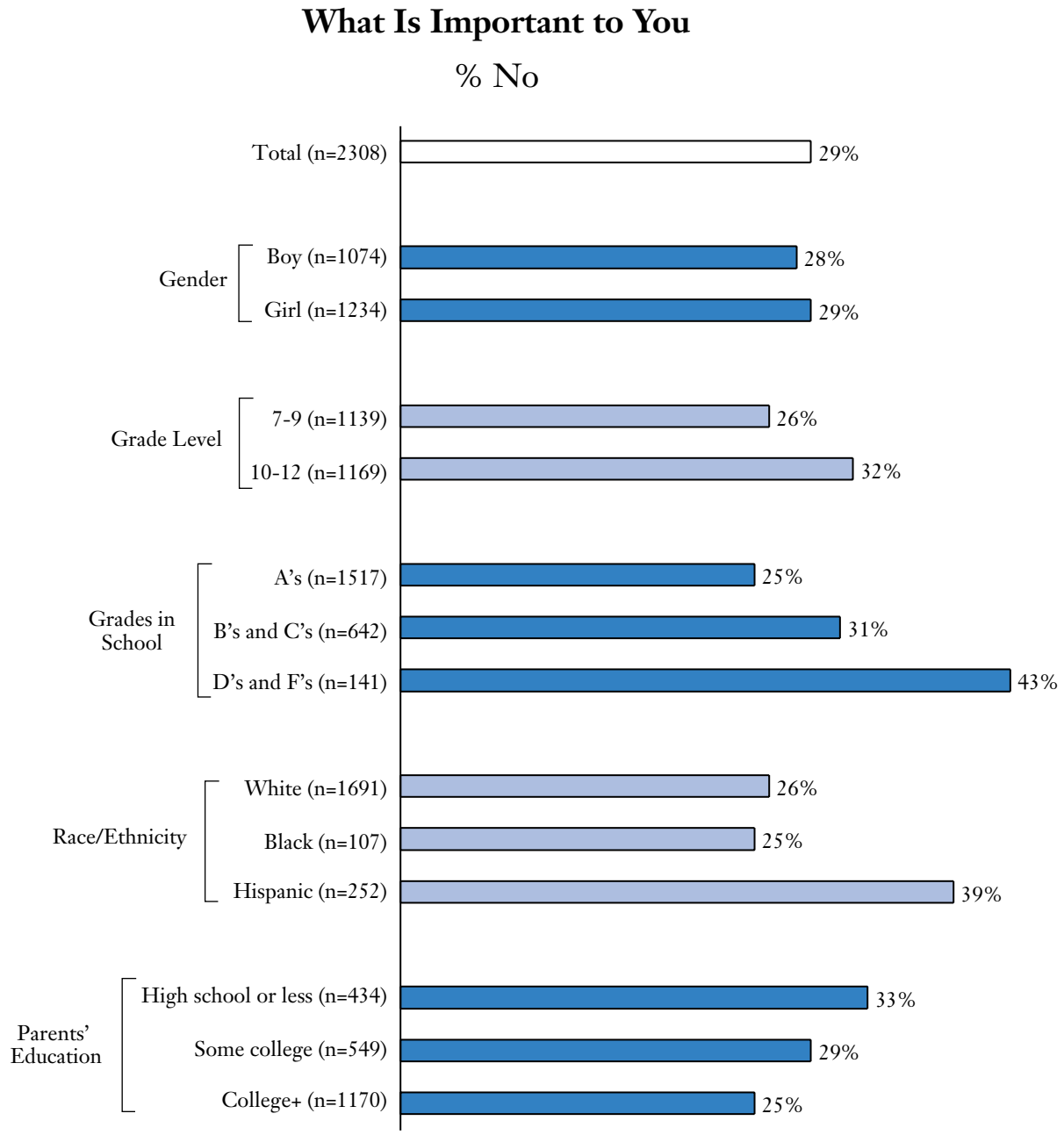
Q516-5 Do your parents know the following?
Base: All qualified students



CHAPTER 8

STUDENTS' HEALTH AND CONCERNS

THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2002

TEACHERS SPEAK OUT

What do you think is the most important action a parent can take to help their children be successful in school?

"Be there, love them, feed them, see that they get enough sleep…"
(Teacher in suburban school)

Overview

Students who are getting higher grades in school are more likely than those getting lower grades to regularly eat breakfast, exercise and get more sleep. Students' sleep is of concern to both teachers and students. Two-thirds of students feel that they do not get enough sleep. One-third of secondary school students get less than 7 hours of sleep on a school night. This lack of sleep has an impact on several aspects of their lives at school and at home. Students also report frequent difficulties related to their mental well-being. As noted in Chapter Two, doing well in school is a major concern for many students. Secondary school students experience anxiety and other difficulties, with time pressures, boredom and stress at the top of the list.

Appearance and Exercise

A number of students are concerned about the way they look. One-third of secondary school students (34%) worry a great deal about looking good. Students who are most likely to worry a great deal about their appearance are girls (41%), 7th – 9th graders (41%) and Black students (47%). (Exhibits 8.1 – 8.2)

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Exhibit 8.1
Worries About Appearance

Q536-3 How much do you worry about the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

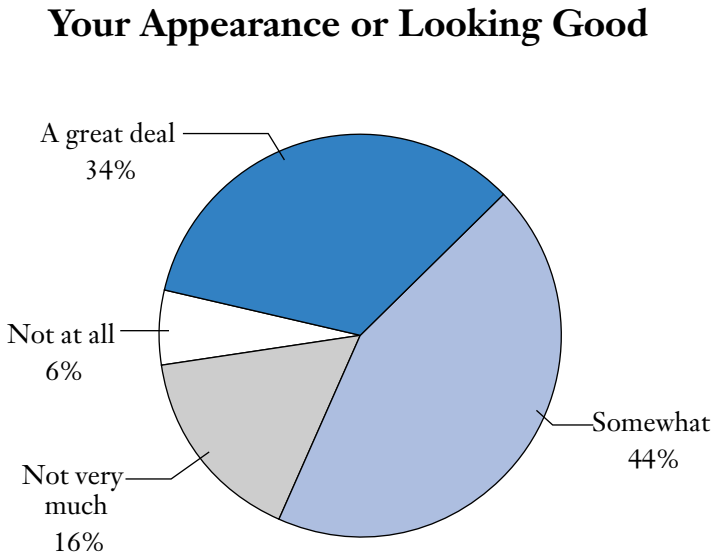
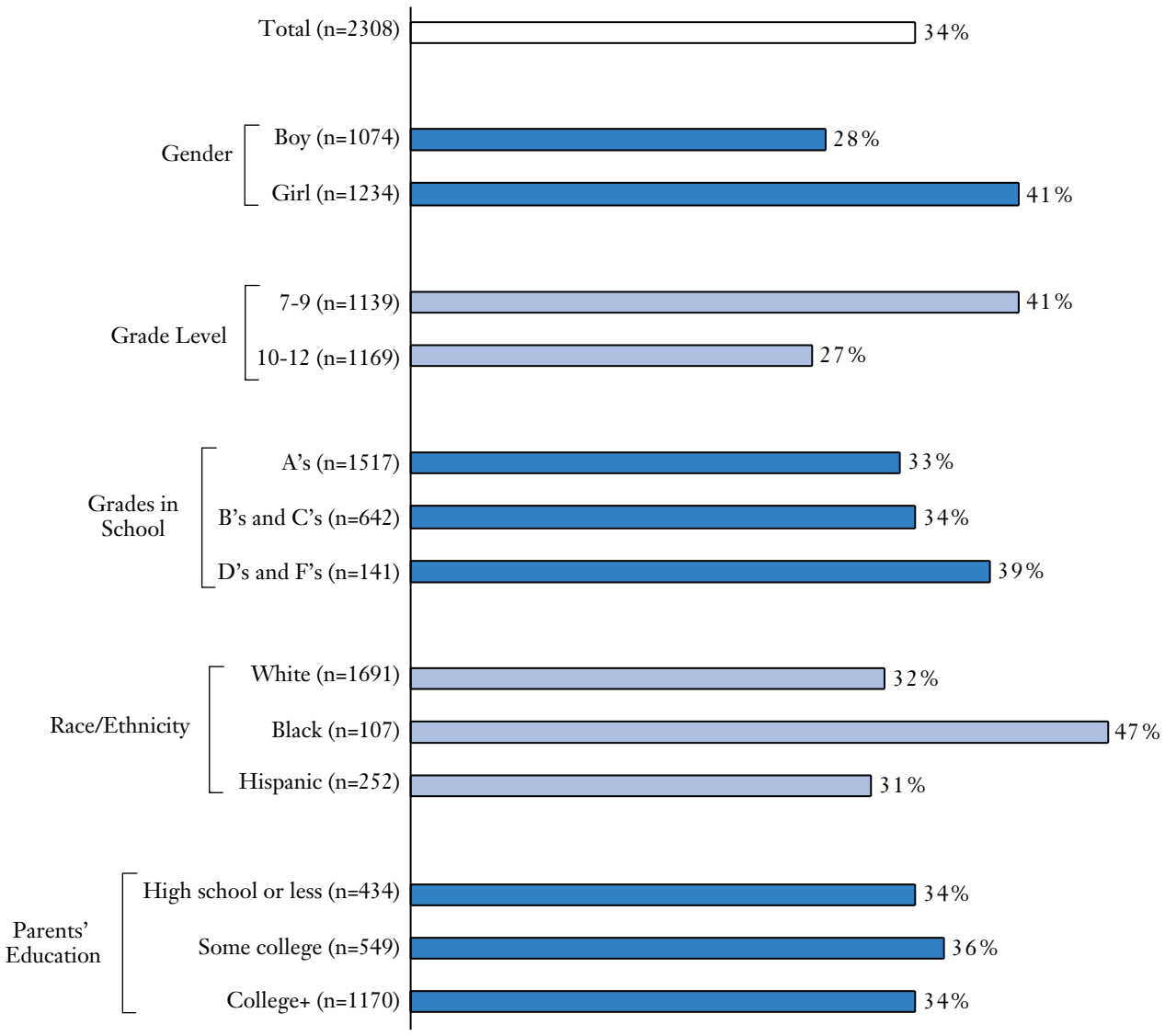


Exhibit 8.2
Worries About Appearance by Demographics

Q536-3 How much do you worry about the following?
Base: All qualified students



Students also report frequent physical activity. More than half of students (54%) report that they do things that require a lot of physical activity and exercise for four or more days a week. Boys are more likely than girls (58% vs. 50%), and younger students are more likely than older students (59% vs. 48%) to participate in this level of physical activity. Hispanic students are less likely than Black or White students to exercise 4 or more days a week (43% vs. 57% vs. 56%). (Exhibits 8.3 – 8.4)

OBSERVATION: *"A" students are more likely than those getting D's and F's to exercise four or more days a week (56% vs. 45%) (Exhibit 8.4). This trend reflects findings elsewhere in this report which show that students who are getting higher grades in school are more likely than those who are failing or nearly failing to be active in many areas of their lives, including extracurricular activities such as sports, the arts and schoolwork programs (Chapter 5).*

Exhibit 8.3
Frequency of Physical Activities

Q410 During a typical week, how often do you do things that require a lot of physical activity and exercise, like playing sports, jogging, swimming, dancing or other things?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

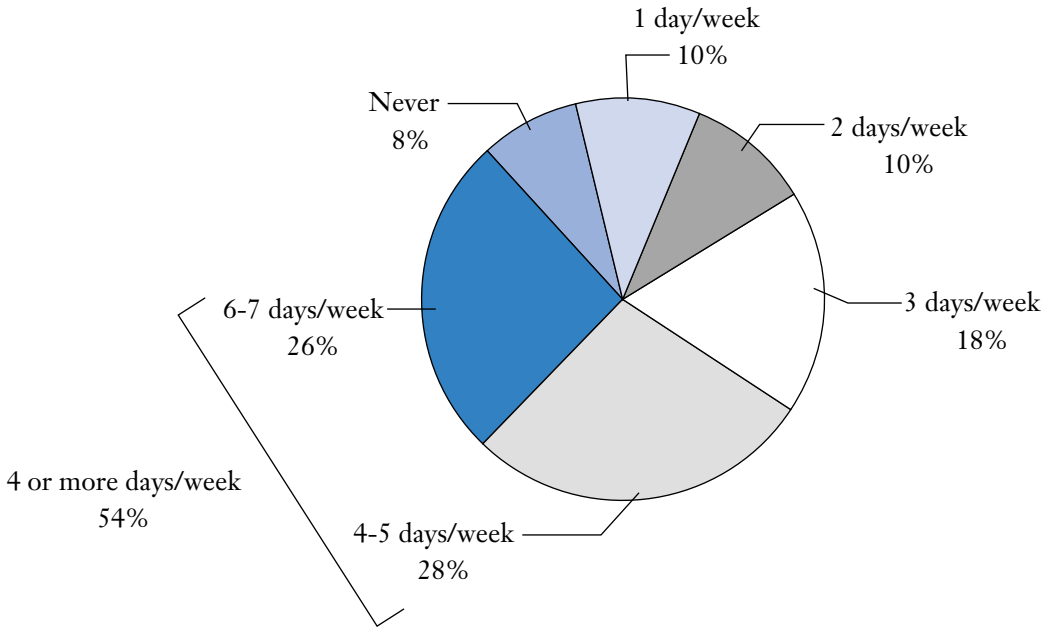


Exhibit 8.4

Frequency of Physical Activities by Demographics

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Q410 During a typical week, how often do you do things that require a lot of physical activity and exercise, like playing sports, jogging, swimming, dancing or other things?
Base: All qualified students

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	8	9	7	4	12	7	8	13
1 day a week	10	9	11	7	13	10	11	6
2 days a week	10	9	12	11	10	9	11	16
3 days a week	18	16	20	19	17	18	17	20
4 or more days a week	54	58	50	59	48	56	53	45
4 to 5 days a week	28	26	29	28	28	29	27	21
6 to 7 days a week	26	31	20	31	20	27	25	24

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	8	8	6	13	8	10	7
1 day a week	10	10	5	12	9	9	11
2 days a week	10	9	10	15	13	10	9
3 days a week	18	18	22	18	16	17	18
4 or more days a week	54	56	57	43	55	54	55
4 to 5 days a week	28	28	28	25	31	31	25
6 to 7 days a week	26	28	29	18	23	23	29

Breakfast

Half of students (50%) eat breakfast four or more days a week. As with exercise, boys are more likely than girls (57% vs. 43%), and younger students are more likely than older students (55% vs. 44%) to eat breakfast 4 or more days a week. Unlike exercise however, family income is related to how frequently students eat breakfast. Low-income students (those whose parents have no more than a high school education) are less likely than high-income students (those whose parents have at least a college degree) to eat breakfast 4 or more days a week (41% vs. 56%). White students are also more likely than Black or Hispanic students to eat breakfast this often (53% vs. 36% vs. 43%). Finally, eating breakfast is associated with school success. Students who get A's are more likely than those who get B's and C's or D's and F's to eat breakfast 4 or more days a week (56% vs. 43% vs. 39%). (Exhibits 8.5 – 8.6)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *Approximately 14% of all American children are overweight or obese. —National Center for Health Statistics, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000*

Children who eat breakfast perform better on standardized achievement tests and have fewer behavior problems in school. Researchers at Harvard Medical/ Massachusetts General Hospital found that hungry children are more likely to have behavioral and academic problems than children who get enough to eat. At school, hungry children had more problems with irritability, anxiety and aggression, as well as more absences and tardiness.

Exhibit 8.5
Frequency of Breakfast Eating

Q430 During a typical week, how many days do you eat breakfast?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

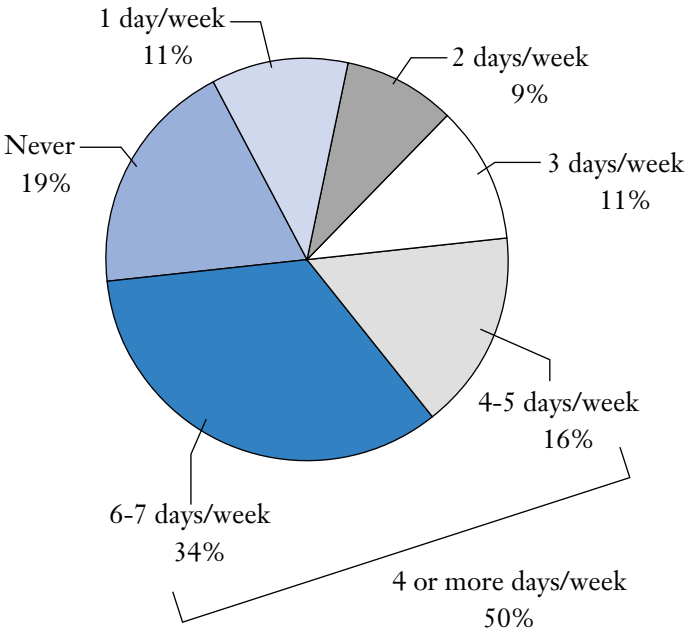

Exhibit 8.6
Frequency of Breakfast Eating by Demographics

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Q430 During a typical week, how many days do you eat breakfast?
Base: All qualified students

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	19	17	21	17	21	16	20	31
1 day a week	11	9	14	10	13	11	13	8
2 days a week	9	8	11	9	10	9	11	7
3 days a week	11	10	11	9	13	8	14	15
4 or more days a week	50	57	43	55	44	56	43	39
4 to 5 days a week	16	19	13	18	15	18	15	14
6 to 7 days a week	34	38	29	37	30	38	28	25

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never	19	18	15	26	20	25	15
1 day a week	11	10	16	12	14	12	10
2 days a week	9	9	12	10	13	13	7
3 days a week	11	9	21	10	12	12	10
4 or more days a week	50	53	36	43	41	38	56
4 to 5 days a week	16	17	14	14	12	14	20
6 to 7 days a week	34	36	22	29	29	24	38

Sleep

STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

What would you do if you had an extra 3 hours in the day?

"Sleep, I need sleep."
(10th grade boy)

Sleep is particularly important in regard to the well-being of secondary school students. Students typically get 7 hours of sleep on a school night. One-third of secondary school students (33%) get less than seven hours of sleep on a typical school night, including twelve percent who get less than **six** hours of sleep. Older students are more likely than younger students (43% vs. 25%), and girls are more likely than boys (37% vs. 30%) to get less than 7 hours of sleep on a school night. Sleep is another area associated with school success. Students who get D's and F's are more likely than those who get A's to sleep less than seven hours on a school night (43% vs. 33%). (Exhibit 8.7)

Teachers believe lack of sleep is a problem for many of their students. On average, teachers report that 40% of their students do not get enough sleep. Lack of sleep is an even bigger issue from the students' perspective. Two-thirds of students (64%) think they do not get enough sleep. Girls (71%) and older students (73%) are more likely than other students to feel sleep-deprived. (Exhibits 8.8 – 8.10)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *The recommended amount of sleep for teenagers is a minimum of 8.5 hours per night. – National Sleep Foundation, 2002*

Exhibit 8.7
Hours of Sleep

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Q420 On a typical school night (Sunday – Thursday), how many hours do you sleep?
Base: All qualified students

		Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
	Total	Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 7 hours	33	30	37	25	43	33	31	43
Less than 6 hours	12	12	11	9	15	11	12	21
6 hours	21	18	25	16	28	22	20	21
7 hours	25	27	23	21	30	28	22	21
8 hours	26	27	25	31	20	26	27	21
More than 8 hours	14	15	14	22	6	13	18	12
Median	7	7	7	8	7	7	7	7

		Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 7 hours	33	35	28	30	34	36	32
Less than 6 hours	12	12	11	9	12	14	10
6 hours	21	22	17	21	22	22	21
7 hours	25	24	22	31	26	22	26
8 hours	26	27	30	20	25	26	27
More than 8 hours	14	13	19	18	13	16	14
Median	7	7	7	7	7	7	7

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Exhibit 8.8
Teachers' Views of Students' Sleep

Q720 What percentage of your students do not get enough sleep?
Base: All qualified teachers

Average Percentage of Students

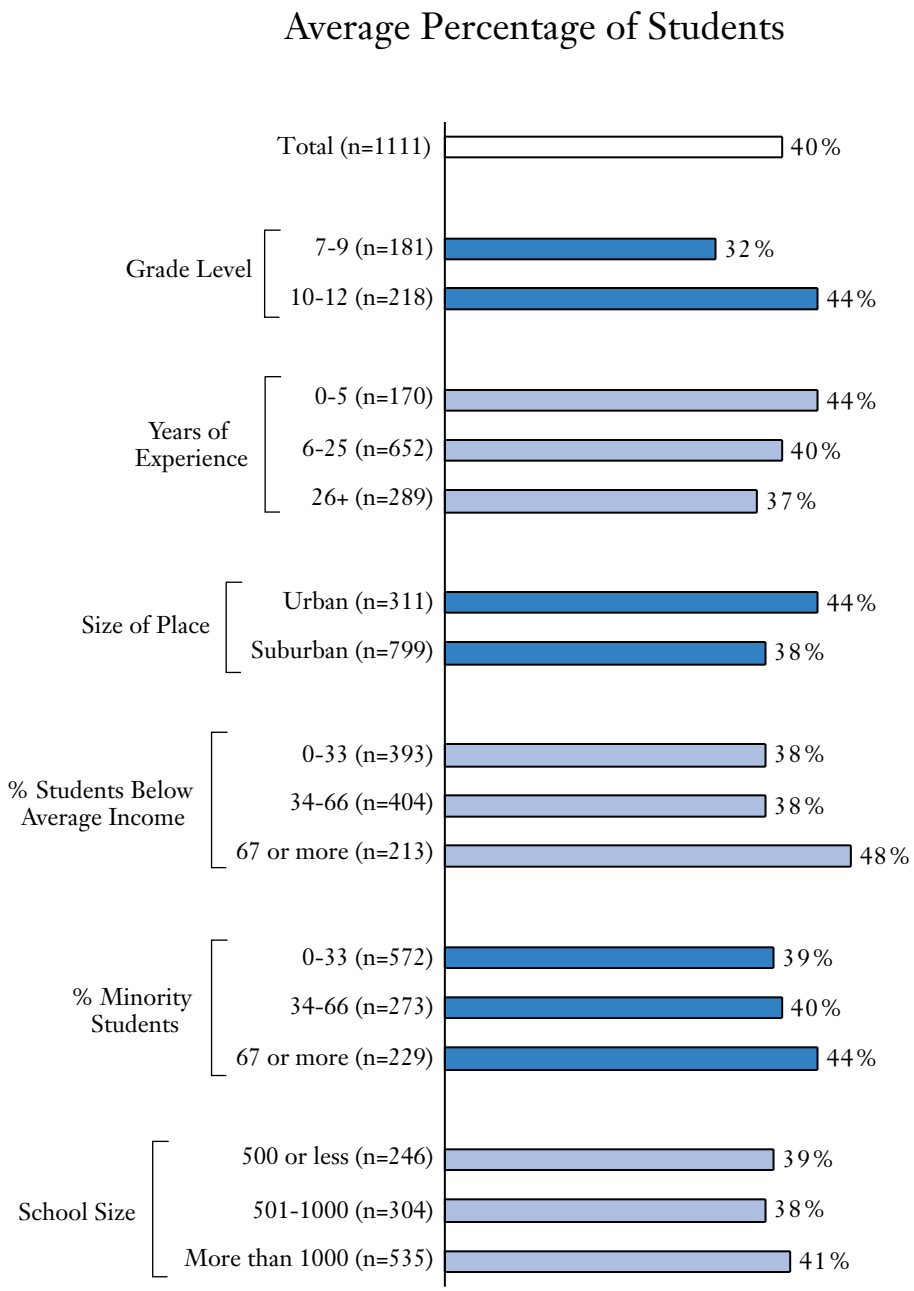

Exhibit 8.9
Students' Views of Sleep

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Q425 In general, do you think you get enough sleep?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

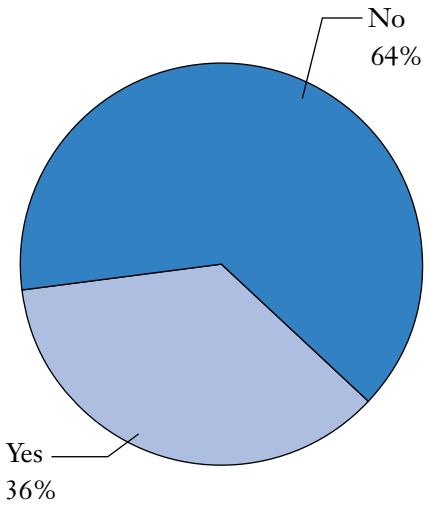

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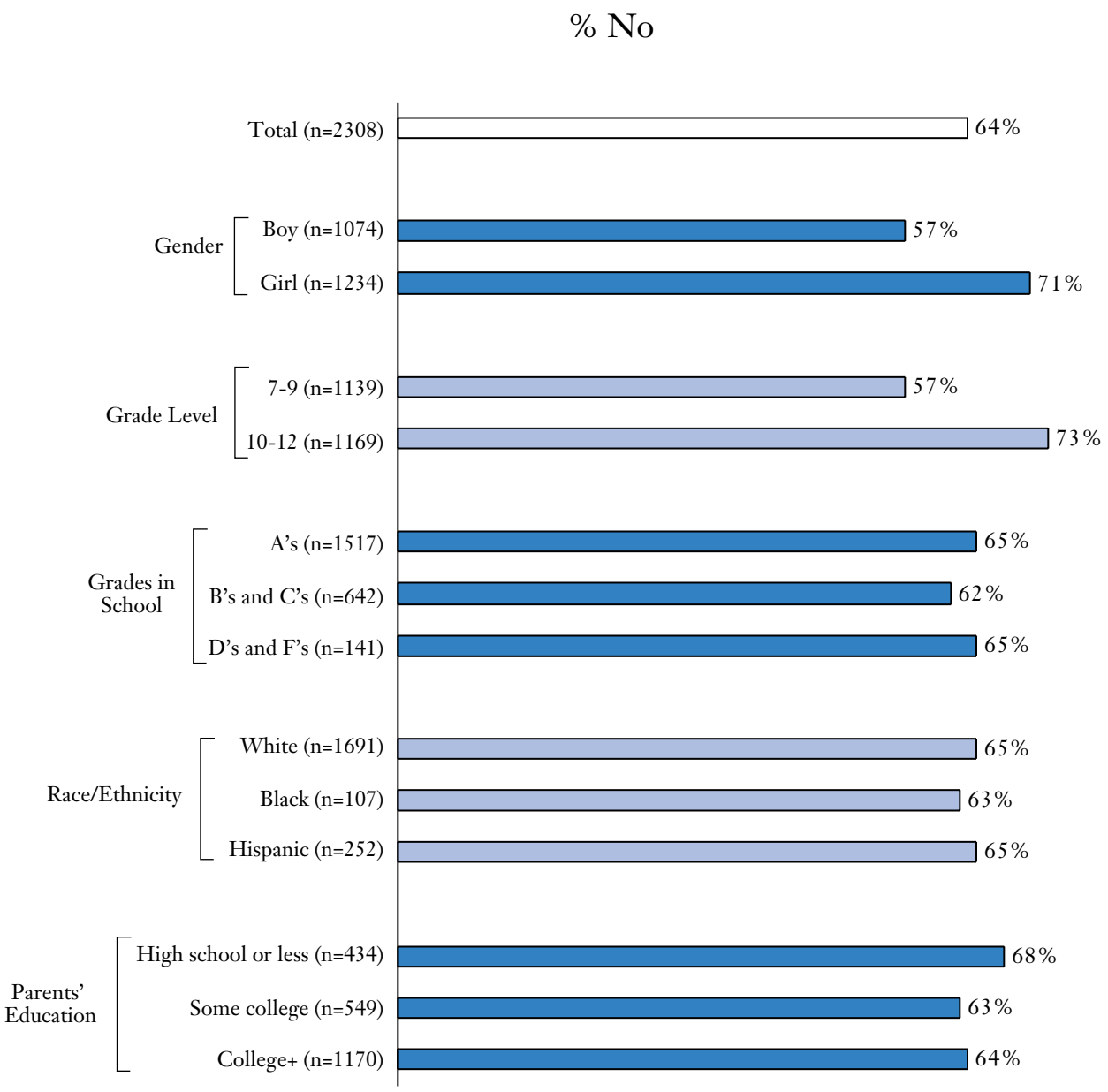
Exhibit 8.10
Students' Views of Sleep by Demographics

Q425 In general, do you think you get enough sleep?
Base: All qualified students



Students who report that they do not get enough sleep are predominantly female and in 10th – 12th grades. On average, they sleep 7 hours a night, compared to 8 hours for those who report getting enough sleep, and sleep-deprived students are three times as likely as rested students to sleep less than 6 hours on a school night (16% vs. 5%). Sleep-deprived students are not more likely to work for pay on a typical school day. However, among students who do work, those who feel sleep-deprived typically work one hour longer on a school day (3.5 vs. 2.5 hours). Sleep-deprived students are also more likely than rested students to have considered dropping out of school (23% vs. 15%) and to not have a quiet place to do homework (24% vs. 14%). (Exhibit 8.11)

Not surprisingly, sleep-deprived students are also more likely than rested students to experience problems of concentration and staying awake during the day. Sleep-deprived students are more likely than other students to:

- Have difficulty waking up in the morning (70% vs. 37%);
- Feel tired during class (64% vs. 34%);
- Daydream in class (48% vs. 31%);
- Have trouble falling asleep at night (38% vs. 16%);
- Get too hungry to be able to pay attention in class (19% vs. 11%); and
- Fall asleep during class (15% vs. 7%). (Exhibit 8.12)

Sleep-deprived students are also more likely than rested students to experience other types of stress and difficulties. Sleep-deprived students are more likely than others to very often or often:

- Feel that they have too much to do (63% vs. 38%);
- Feel bored (61% vs. 43%);
- Feel nervous and stressed (54% vs. 30%);
- Worry about having enough money (45% vs. 27%);
- Have difficulty paying attention in class (34% vs. 16%);
- Feel lonely (34% vs. 18%);
- Have problems with their family (25% vs. 15%); and
- Have problems with other people their age (25% vs. 15%). (Exhibit 8.13)

Exhibit 8.11

Demographic Profile of Sleep-Deprived Students

	Total	Get Enough Sleep: Yes	Get Enough Sleep: No
Base:	2308	814	1490
	%	%	%
Gender			
Boy	51	61	46
Girl	49	39	54
Grade level			
7th – 9th	52	64	46
10th – 12th	48	36	54
Size of place			
Urban	31	30	31
Suburban/rural	69	70	69
Race/ethnicity			
White	66	66	67
Black	11	12	11
Hispanic	14	14	14
Parents' education			
High school or less	22	20	23
Some college	24	25	24
College or more	48	48	46
Language at home			
English	91	88	92
Other language	8	10	7
Quiet place to do homework			
No	21	14	24
Yes	79	86	76
Considered dropping out			
No	80	85	77
Yes	20	15	23
Hours of sleep on a school night			
Less than 6	12	5	16
Median	7 hours	8 hours	7 hours
Work for pay on a school day			
Yes	35	34	35
No	61	60	61
Hours worked for pay on a school day (median)	3	2.5	3.5
(Base: Student works)	(819)	(275)	(543)

Exhibit 8.12
Student Difficulties by Amount of Sleep

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Q416 How often do you experience the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

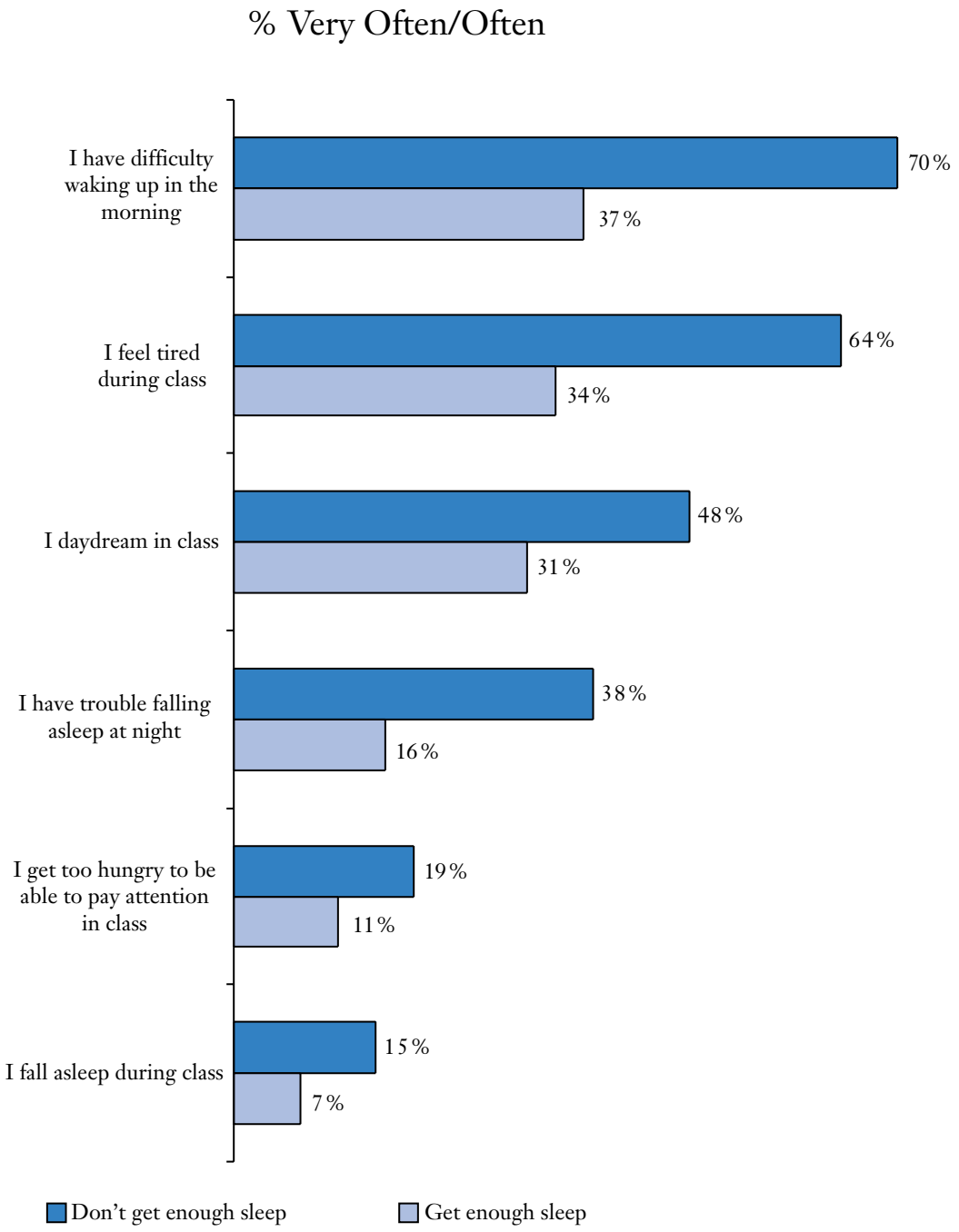
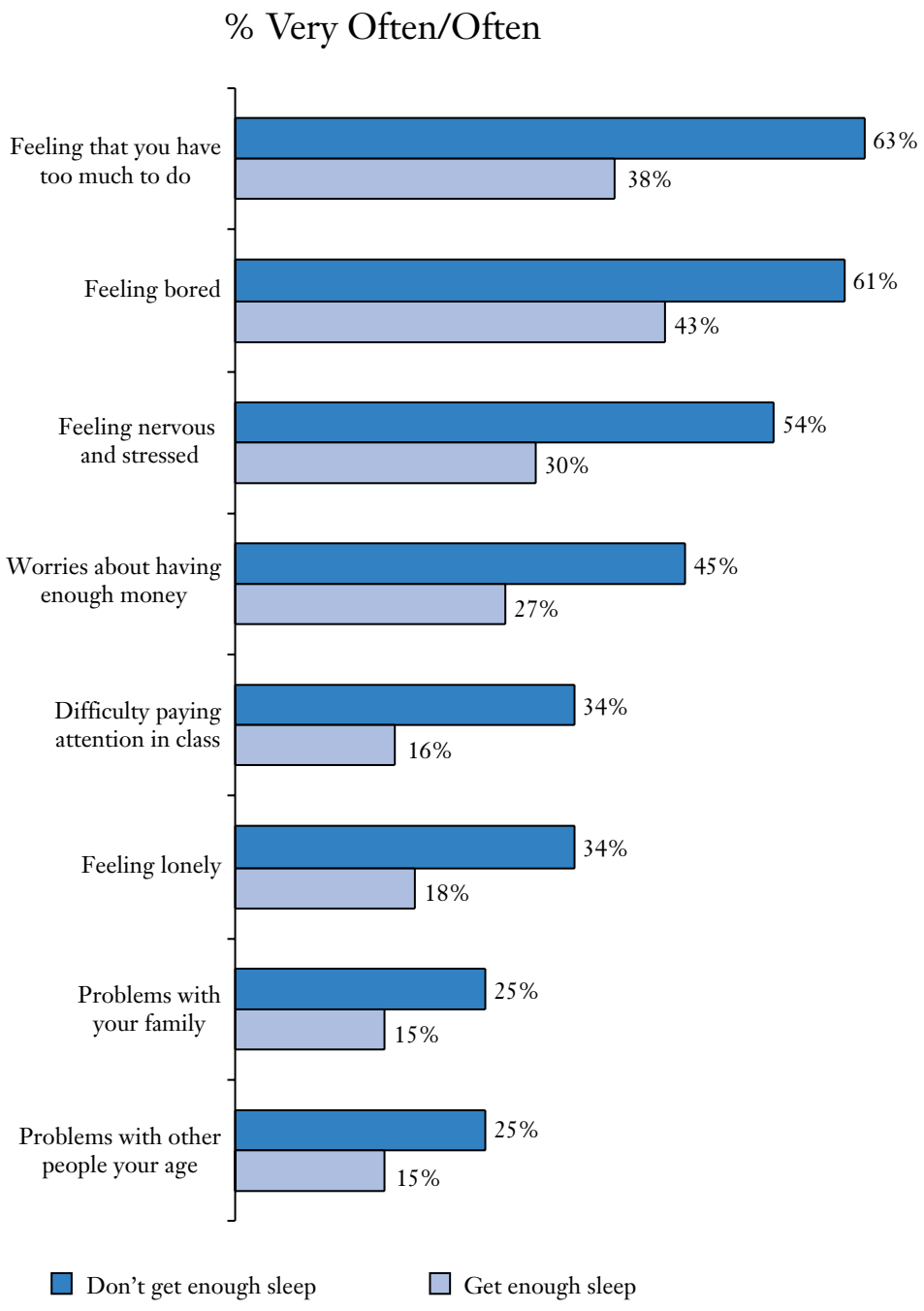


Exhibit 8.13
Student Stress by Amount of Sleep

Q541 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

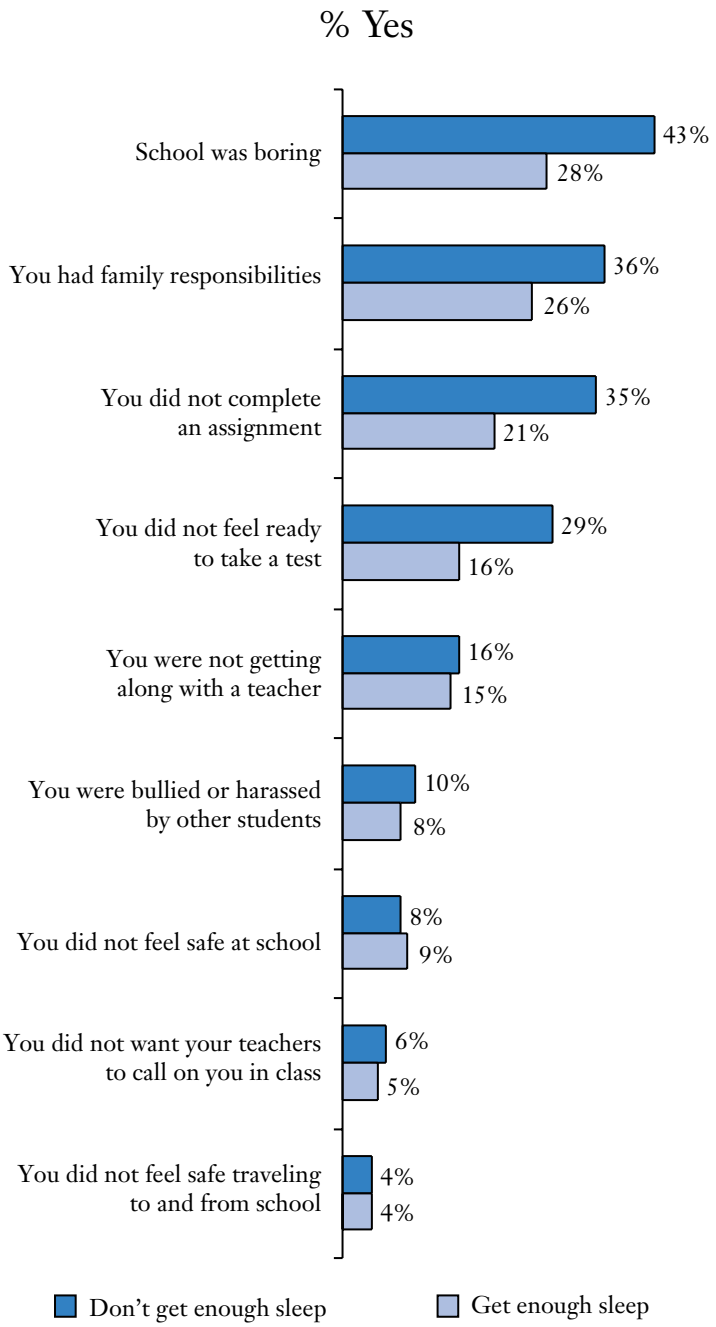


Finally, not getting enough sleep also appears to be related to skipping class or school. Students who do not get enough sleep are more likely than others to have skipped class or school because of the following:

- School was boring (43% vs. 28%);
- They had family responsibilities (36% vs. 26%);
- They did not complete an assignment (35% vs. 21%); and
- They did not feel ready to take a test (29% vs. 16%). (Exhibit 8.14)

Exhibit 8.14
Skipping Class by Amount of Sleep

Q317 During the past two years, have you ever skipped a class or school because . . .?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)



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Reading for Pleasure

Four in ten students (38%) read for fun at least a few times a week. Girls are more likely than boys (40% vs. 35%), and younger students are more likely than older students (40% vs. 35%) to read for fun this frequently. Students whose parents have a college degree are more likely than those whose parents have no more than a high school education to read for fun at least a few times a week (43% vs. 31%). In addition, "A" students are nearly three times as likely as students who get D's and F's to read for pleasure this frequently (46% vs. 17%). (Exhibits 8.15 – 8.16)

OBSERVATION: *Although students are reading for fun, they may not be reading books.* The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2000 *found that only two in ten (18%) said that, "I read books in my free time" was a lot like them. In the current survey, 48% of "D" and "F" students with they had more time with their parents.*

Nearly four in ten students (37%) wish they had more time for reading for fun. Girls (44%), older students (41%), "A" students (41%) and higher income students (parent has at least a college degree; 42%) are the most likely students to wish that they had more time for pleasure reading. (Exhibits 8.17 – 8.18)

A sizable proportion of students wish they had more time for reading for pleasure. However, compared to this, students are more than twice as likely to wish they had more time for being with their friends (93%) or doing what they want to do (97%). Compared to their wishes for more reading time, students are also more likely to wish for more time with friends or doing what they want to do than to be with their parents (54%) or do schoolwork (41%) (see Chapters 2 and 7). Younger students (95%) and White students (95%) are the most likely students to wish they had more time for being with their friends. However, the wish for more time to do their own thing is shared by all types of students. (Exhibits 8.17 and 8.19 – 8.20)

Exhibit 8.15
Frequency of Reading for Fun

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Q331-1 How often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

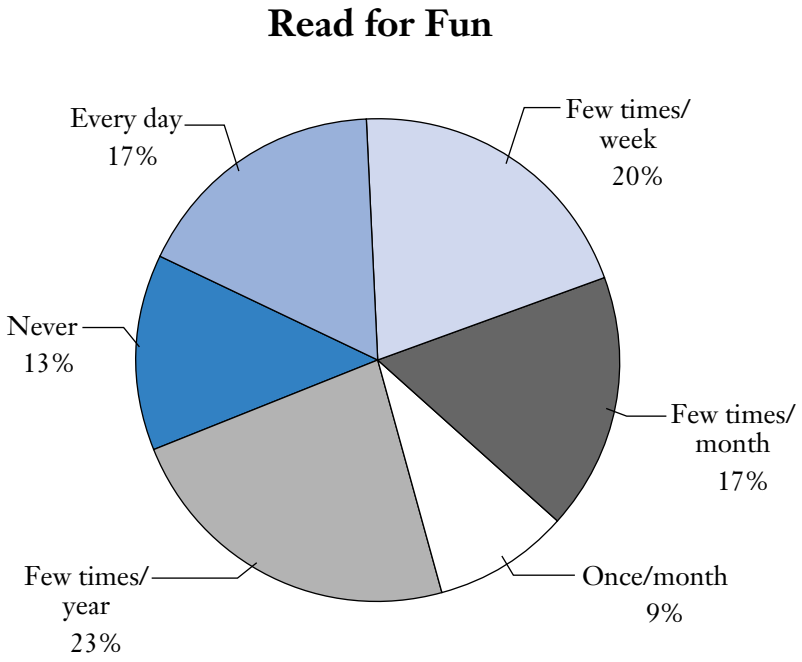

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Exhibit 8.16
Frequency of Reading for Fun by Demographics

Q331-1 How often do you do the following?
Base: All qualified students

Read for Fun

	Total	Gender		Grade Level		Grades in School		
		Boy	Girl	7-9	10-12	A's	B's & C's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1074	1234	1139	1169	1517	642	141
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Every day/a few times a week	38	35	40	40	35	46	27	17
Every day	17	16	18	16	19	21	11	9
A few times a week	20	19	21	24	17	24	16	8
A few times a month	17	16	19	20	15	17	18	16
Once a month	9	8	9	8	9	7	11	12
A few times a year/never	36	40	32	32	41	30	43	54
A few times a year	23	25	22	20	26	22	27	19
Never	13	15	10	12	14	8	16	35

	Total	Race/Ethnicity			Parents' Education		
		White	Black	Hispanic	High school or less	Some college	College or more
Base	2308	1691	107	252	434	549	1170
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Every day/a few times a week	38	37	36	35	31	33	43
Every day	17	17	20	13	12	16	20
A few times a week	20	20	16	21	18	17	23
A few times a month	17	15	26	21	16	21	16
Once a month	9	9	9	9	9	10	8
A few times a year/never	36	38	28	35	45	36	32
A few times a year	23	24	20	23	26	23	23
Never	13	14	8	12	18	14	9

Exhibit 8.17
Students' Wishes for More Time

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Q346 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

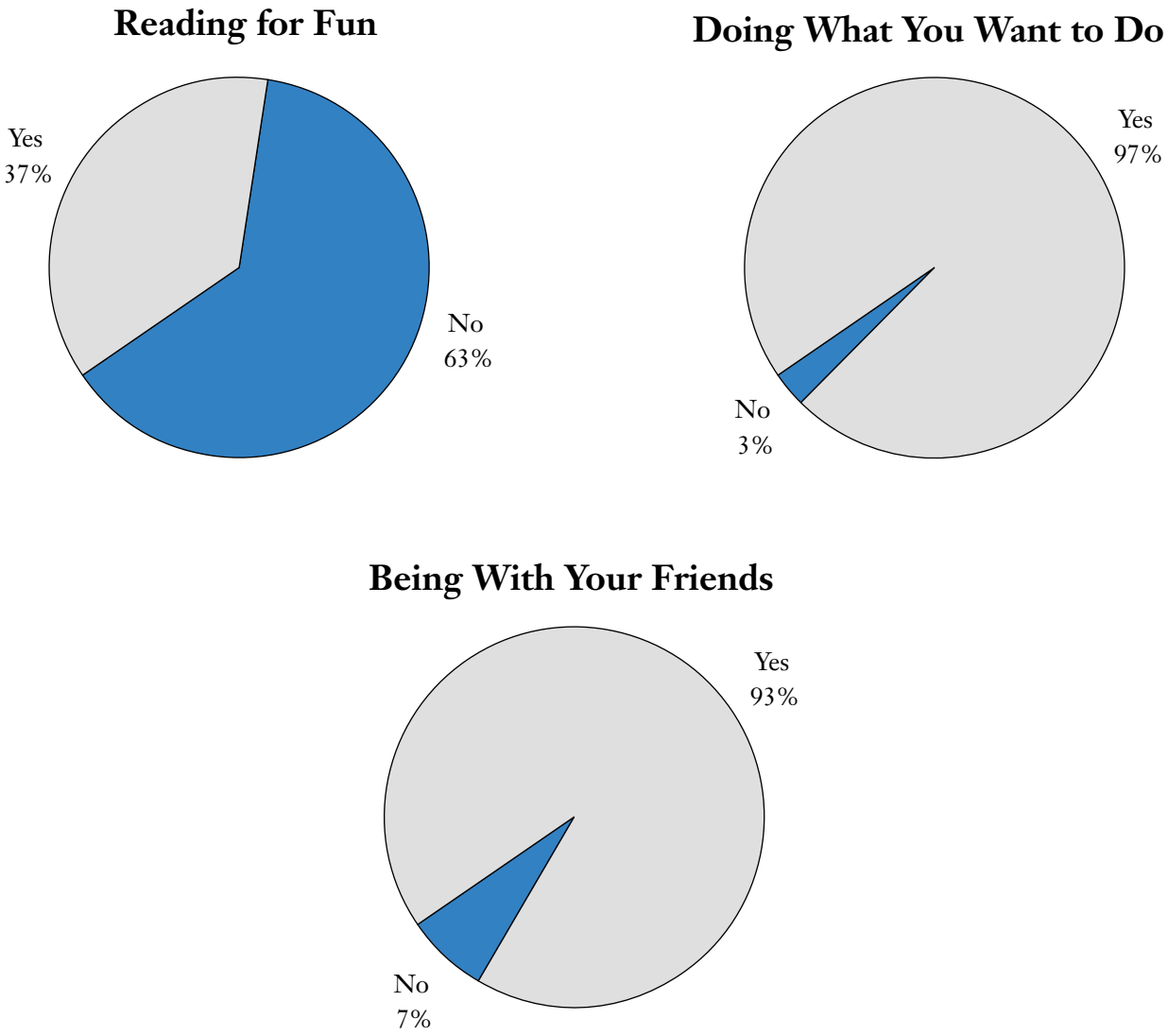

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Exhibit 8.18
Students' Wishes for More Time Reading

Q346-2 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students

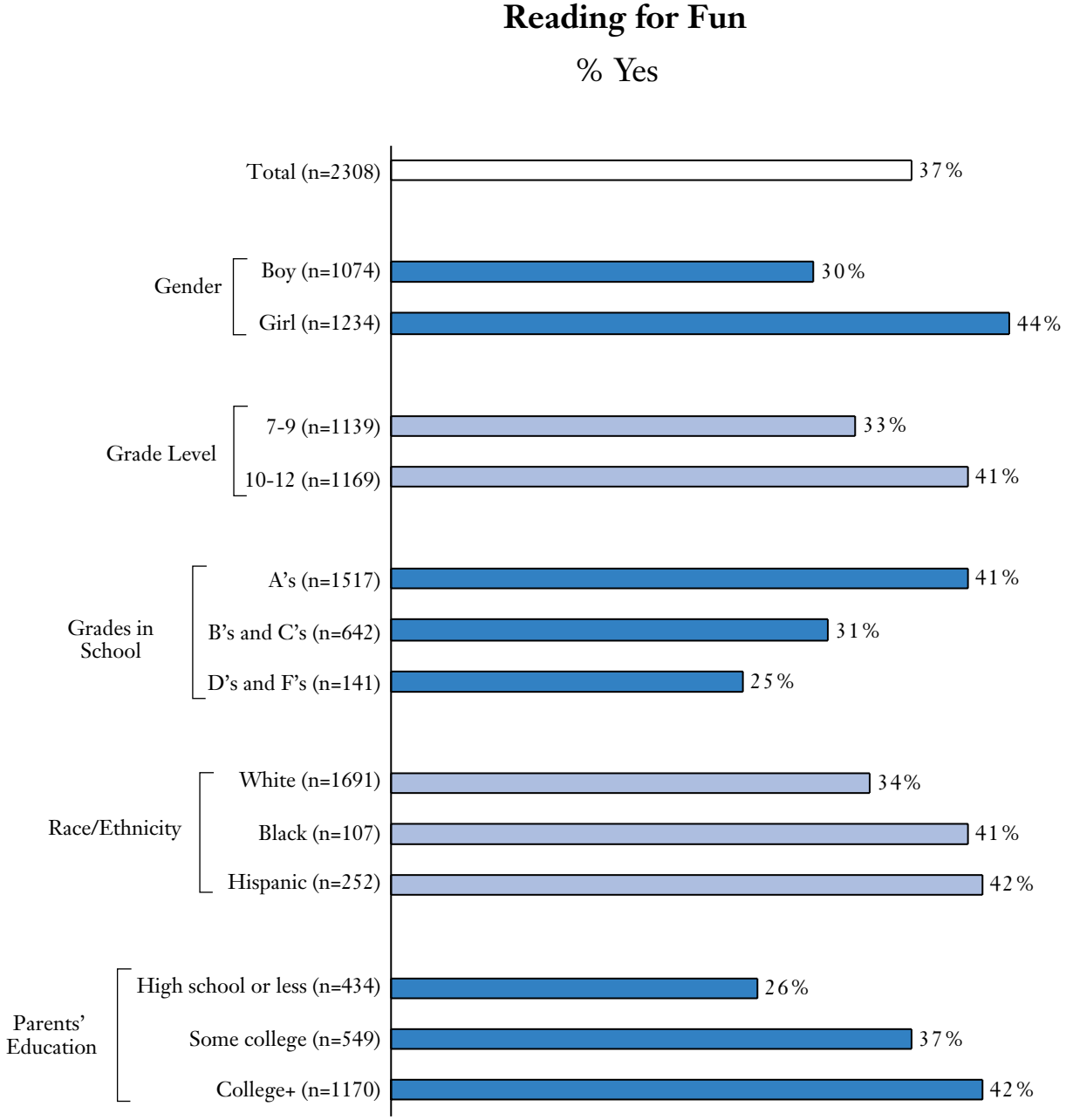

Exhibit 8.19
Students' Wishes for More Time With Friends

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Q346-3 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students

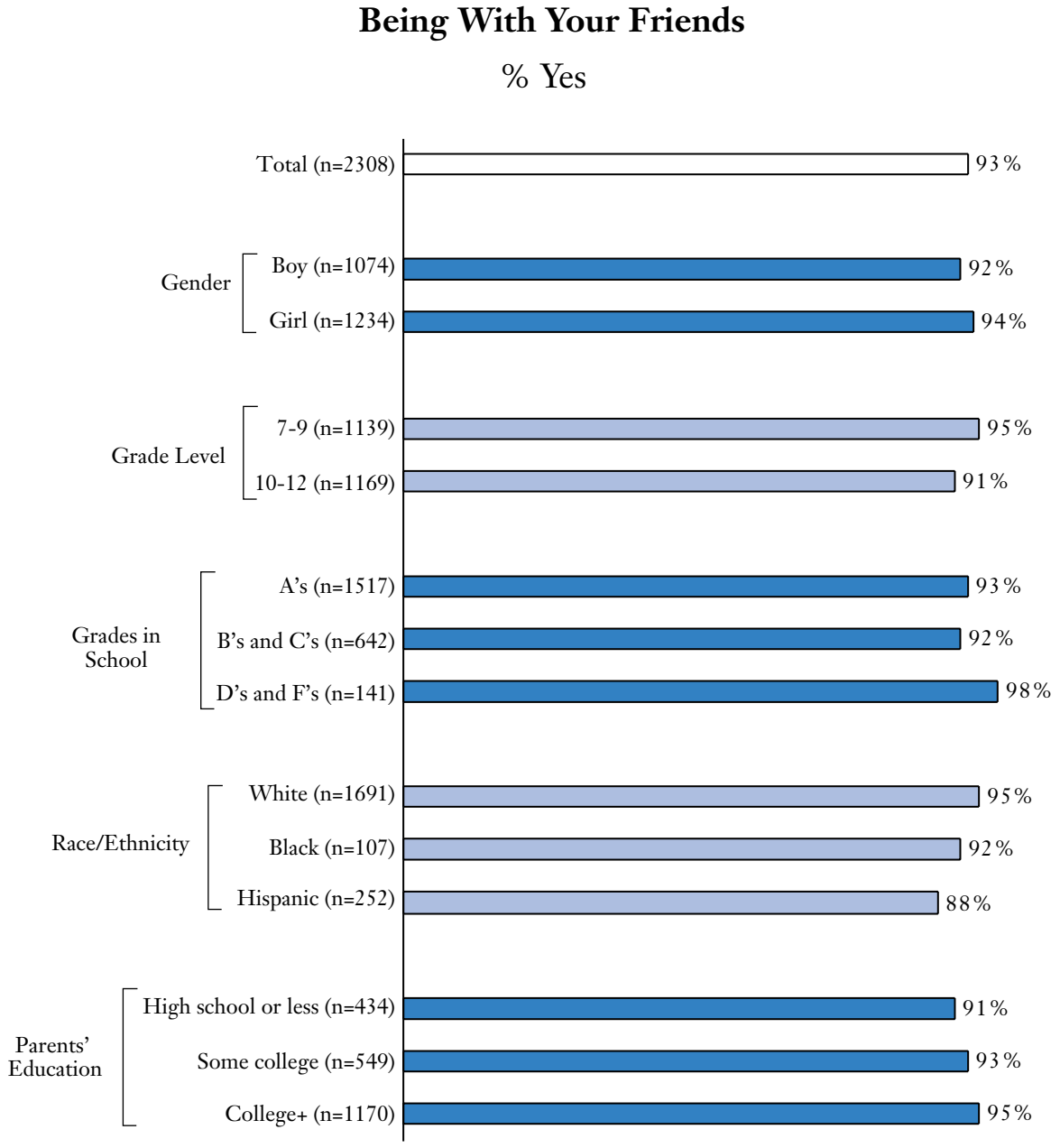

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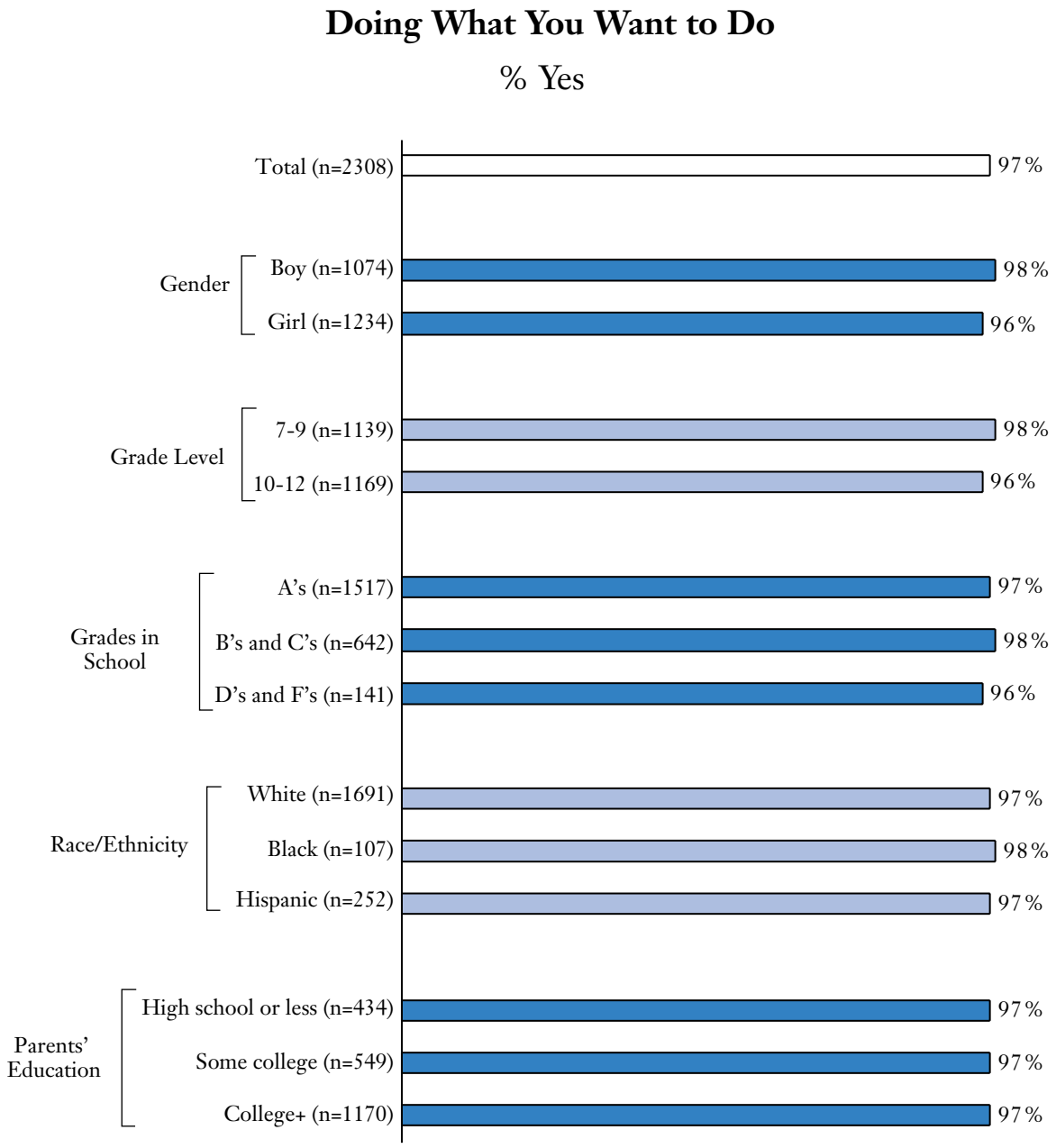
Exhibit 8.20

Students' Wishes for More Time for Doing What They Want to Do

Q346-5 Do you wish you had more time for the following?
Base: All qualified students



Happiness and Difficulties at Home

Many, but not all, students have positive feelings about their home life. Slightly more than half of students (55%) describe their home and family life as extremely or very happy. As noted previously (Chapters 1 and 5), students are much more likely to describe their home life this way, compared to life in their neighborhood (37%) or at school (33%). Boys (60%) and high-income students (parent has at least a college degree; 60%) are the most likely students to describe their home life as extremely or very happy (58%), while students who get D's and F's are the least likely students to describe their home life this way (31%). (Exhibits 8.21 – 8.22)

Exhibit 8.21
Students' Description of Home Life

Q546-1 How would you describe…?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

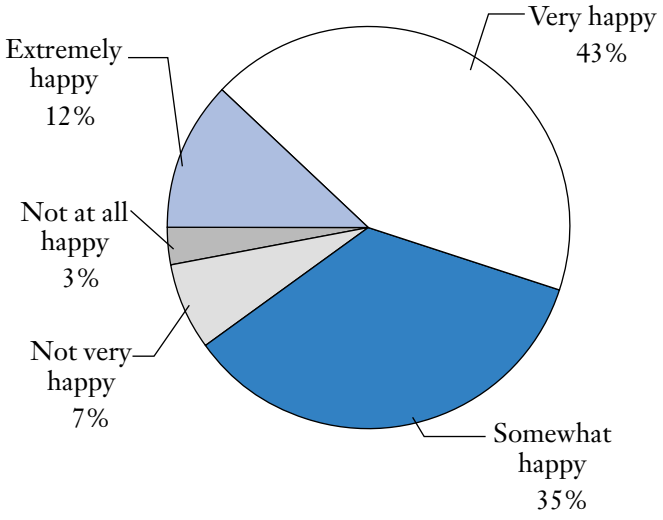


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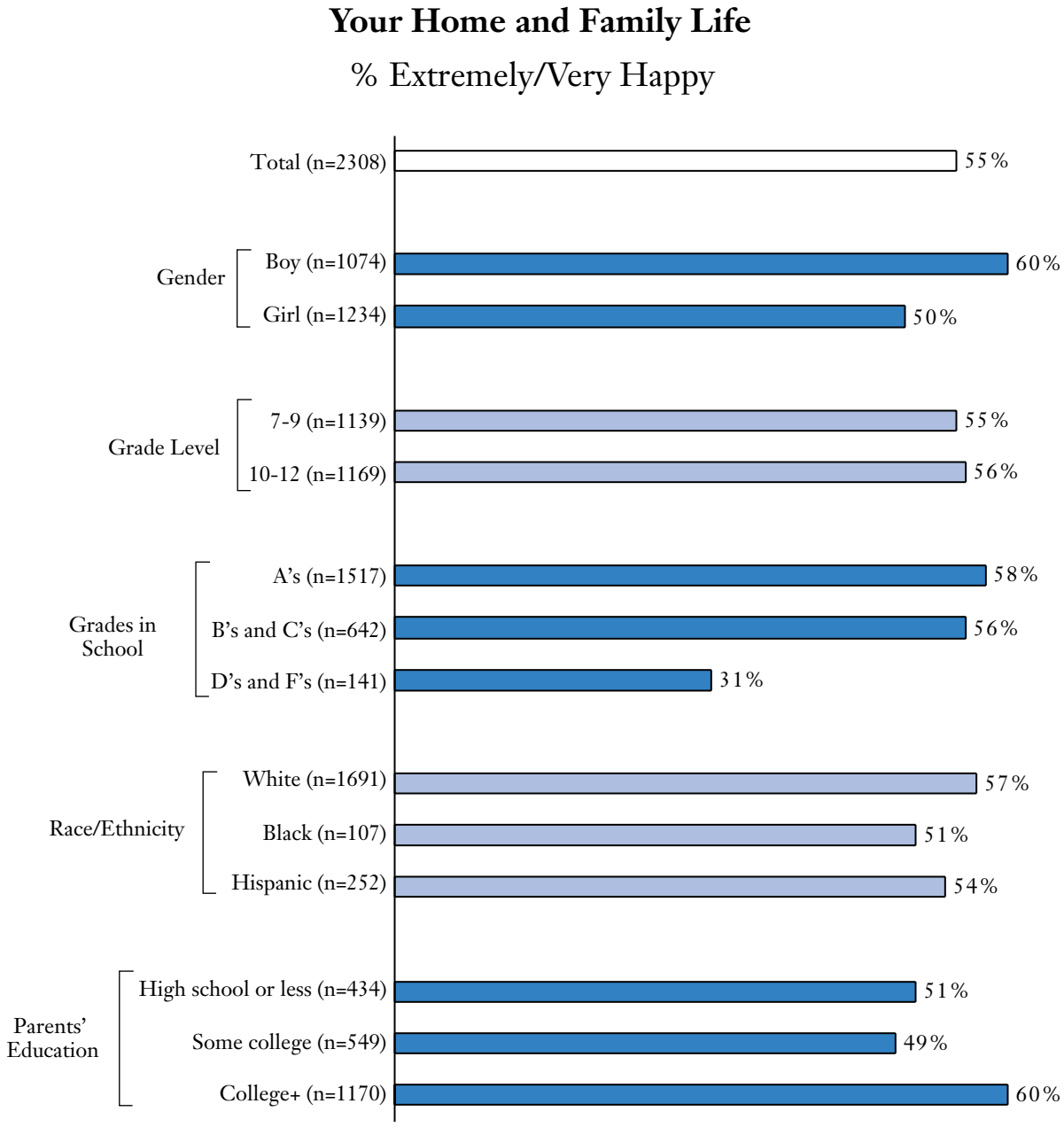
Exhibit 8.22
Students' Description of Home Life by Demographics

Q546-1 How would you describe…?
Base: All qualified students



Feelings of anxiety and other difficulties are frequently experienced by secondary school students, with time pressures, boredom and stress toward the top of the list. Students very often or often:

- Feel that they have too much to do (55%);
- Feel bored (55%);
- Feel nervous and stressed (46%);
- Worry about having enough money (39%);
- Feel lonely (28%);
- Have difficulty paying attention in class (27%);
- Have problems with their family (22%); and
- Have problems with other people their age (22%). (Exhibits 8.23 – 8.31)

Girls are more likely than boys to frequently have all of these experiences, with the exception of difficulties paying attention in class. Older students are more likely than younger students to very often or often feel that they have too much to do (61% vs. 49%); feel nervous and stressed (50% vs. 41%), worry about having enough money (47% vs. 31%); and have difficulty paying attention in class (30% vs. 25%). (Exhibits 8.24 – 8.31)

Finally, experiencing certain of these stresses and difficulties is also related to school success. Students who are getting D's and F's are more likely than those who are getting A's to very often or often feel bored (76% vs. 53%); have difficulty paying attention in class (58% vs. 23%); and have problems with their family (30% vs. 20%). (Exhibits 8.24 – 8.31)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *Academic stress has been evident in past* MetLife Surveys of the American Teacher *as well. In* The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2000, *37% of students indicated that the statement "I'm under a lot of pressure to do well in school" was a lot like them.*

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Exhibit 8.23
Student Stress

Q540 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students (n=2308)

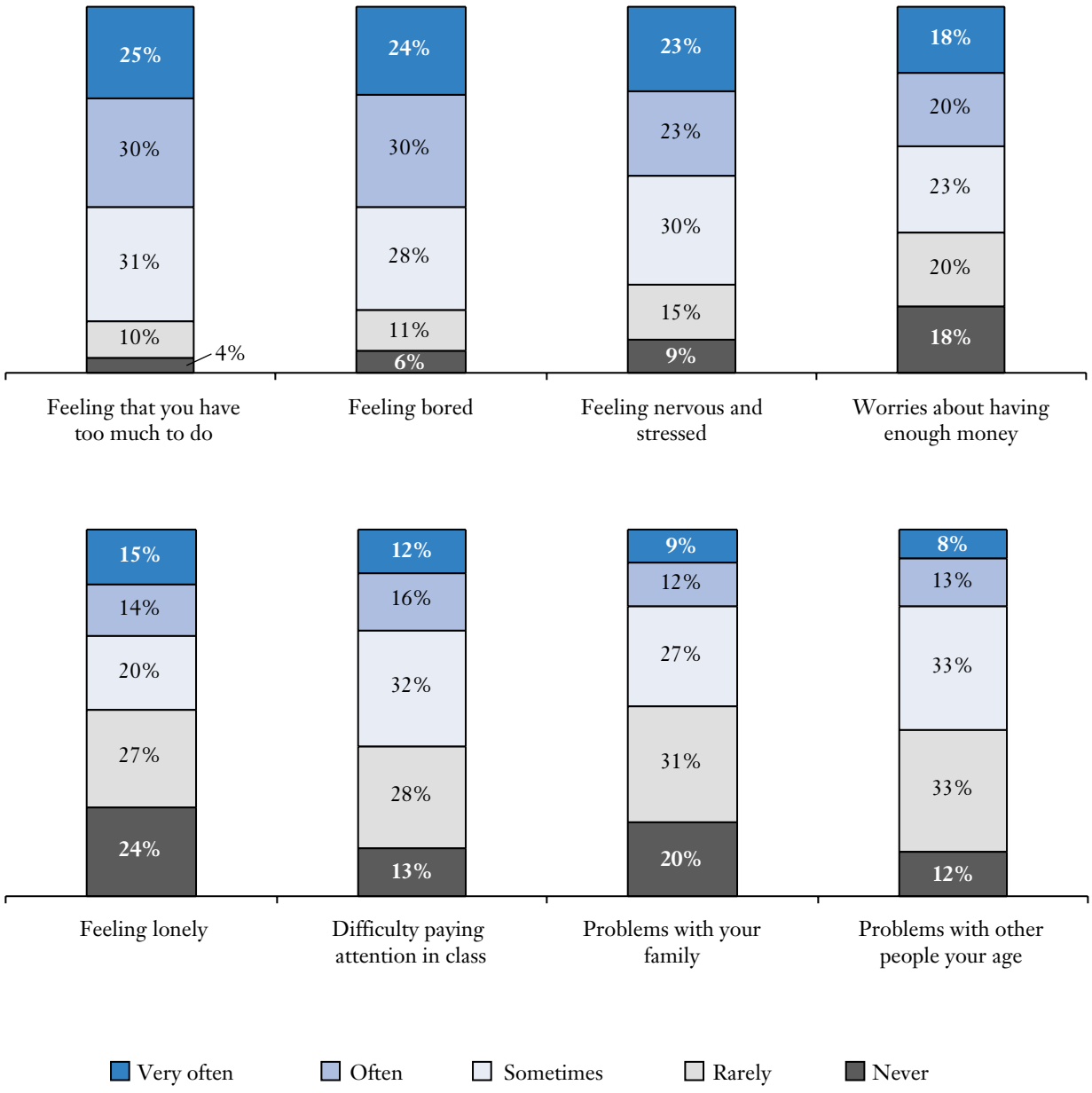

Exhibit 8.24
Feeling Overwhelmed

Q540-1 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

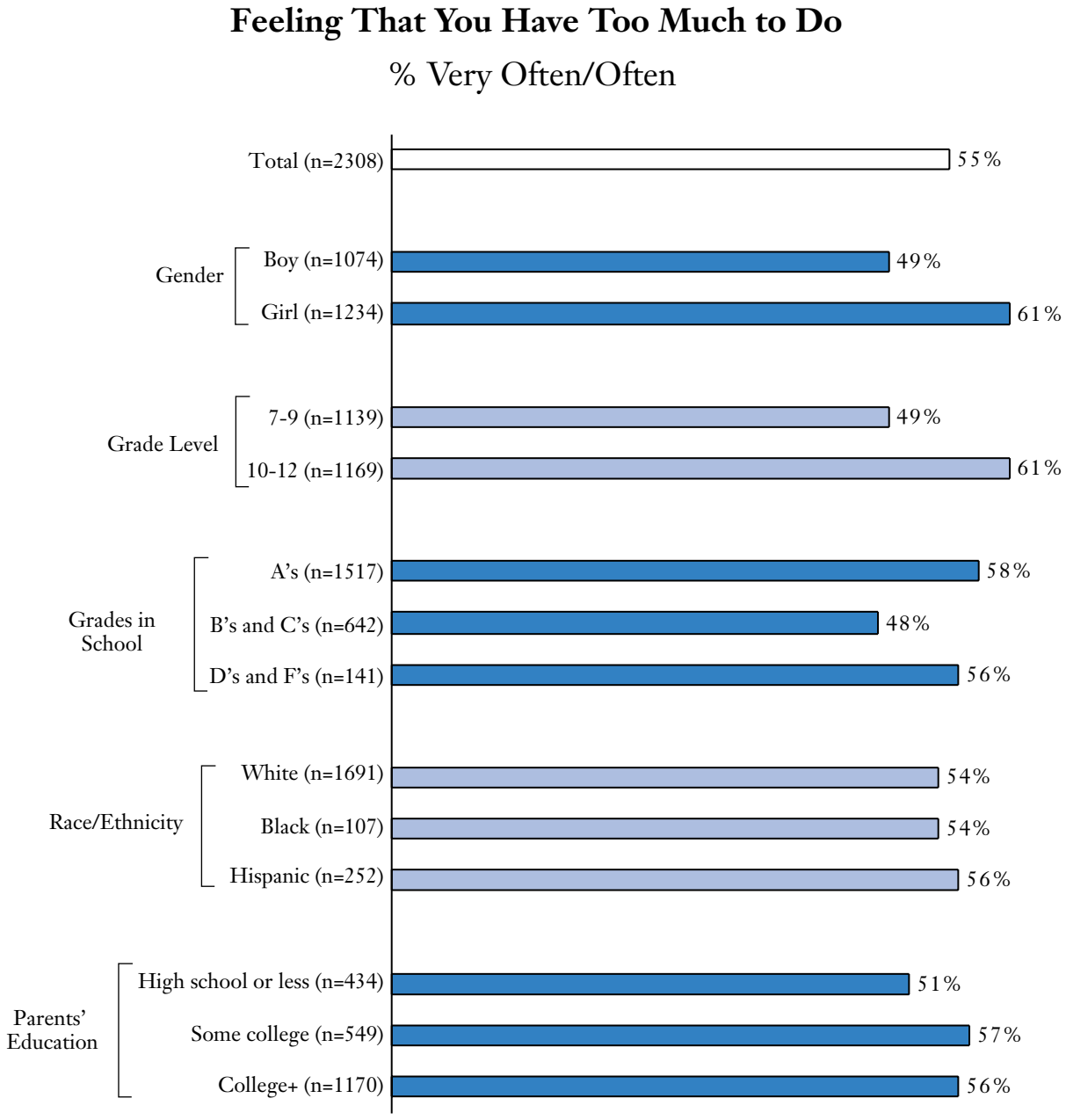

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Exhibit 8.25
Feeling Bored

Q540-7 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

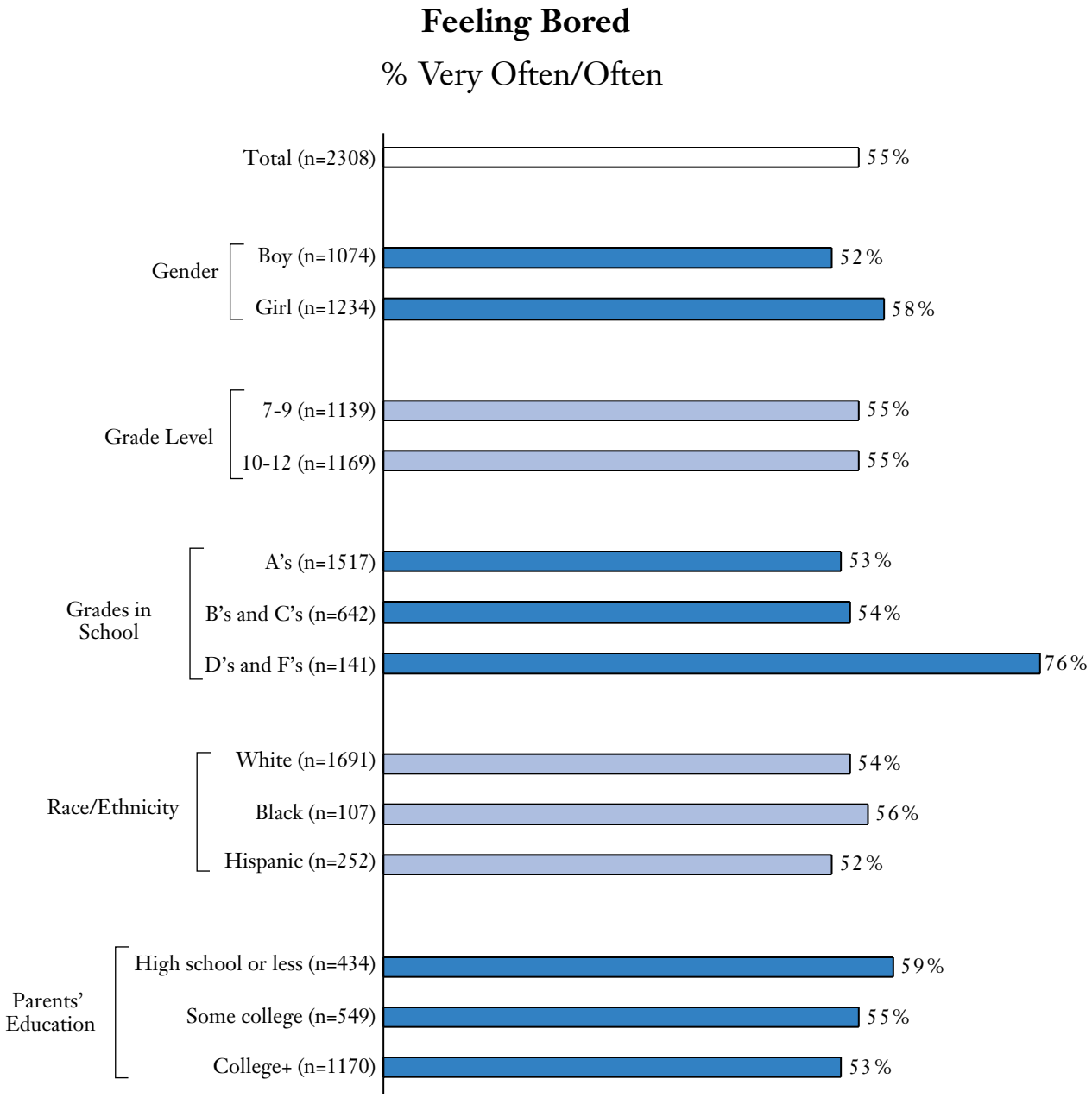

Exhibit 8.26
Feeling Nervous and Stressed

Q540-5 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

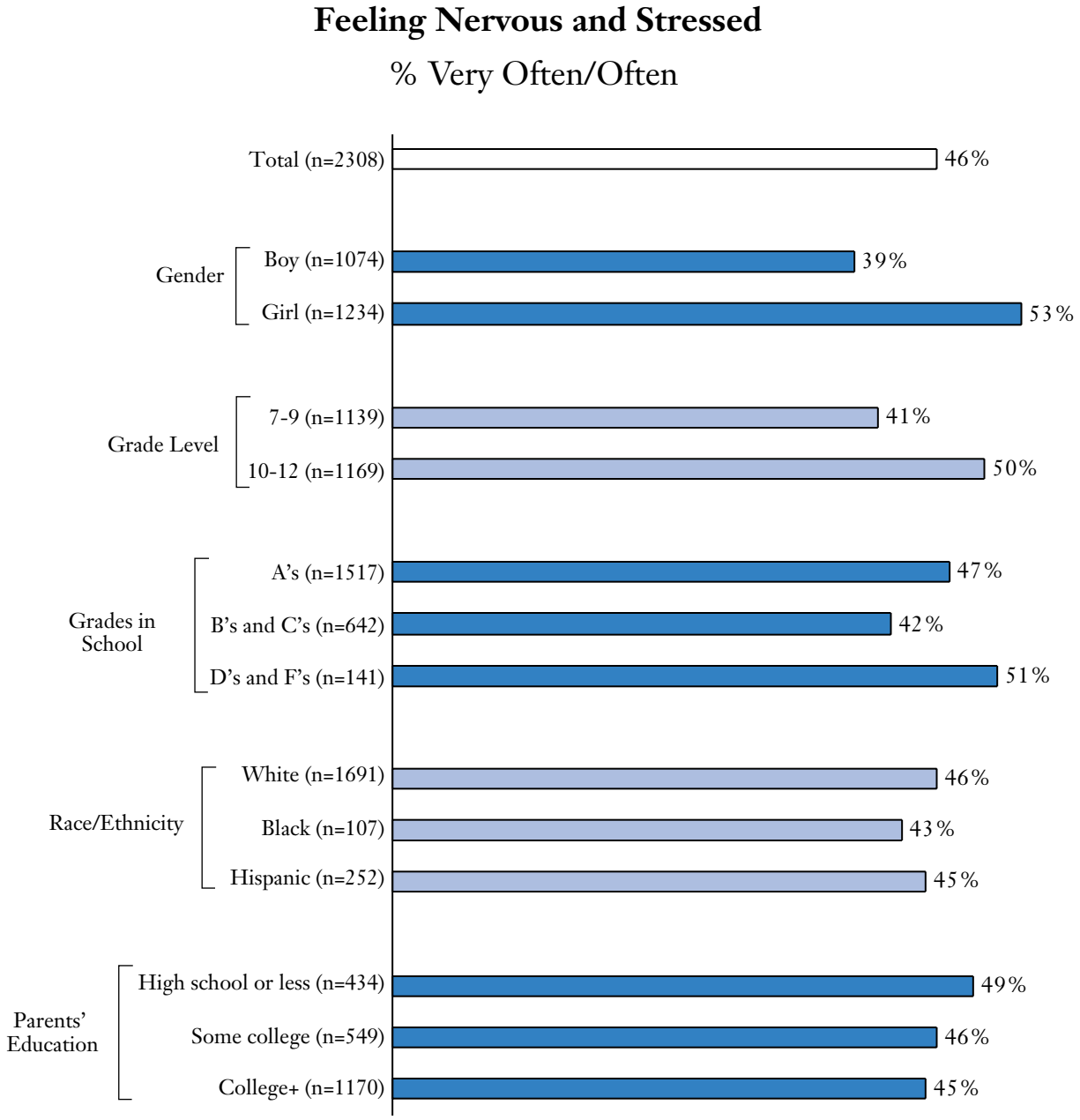

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Exhibit 8.27
Worried About Money

Q540-2 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

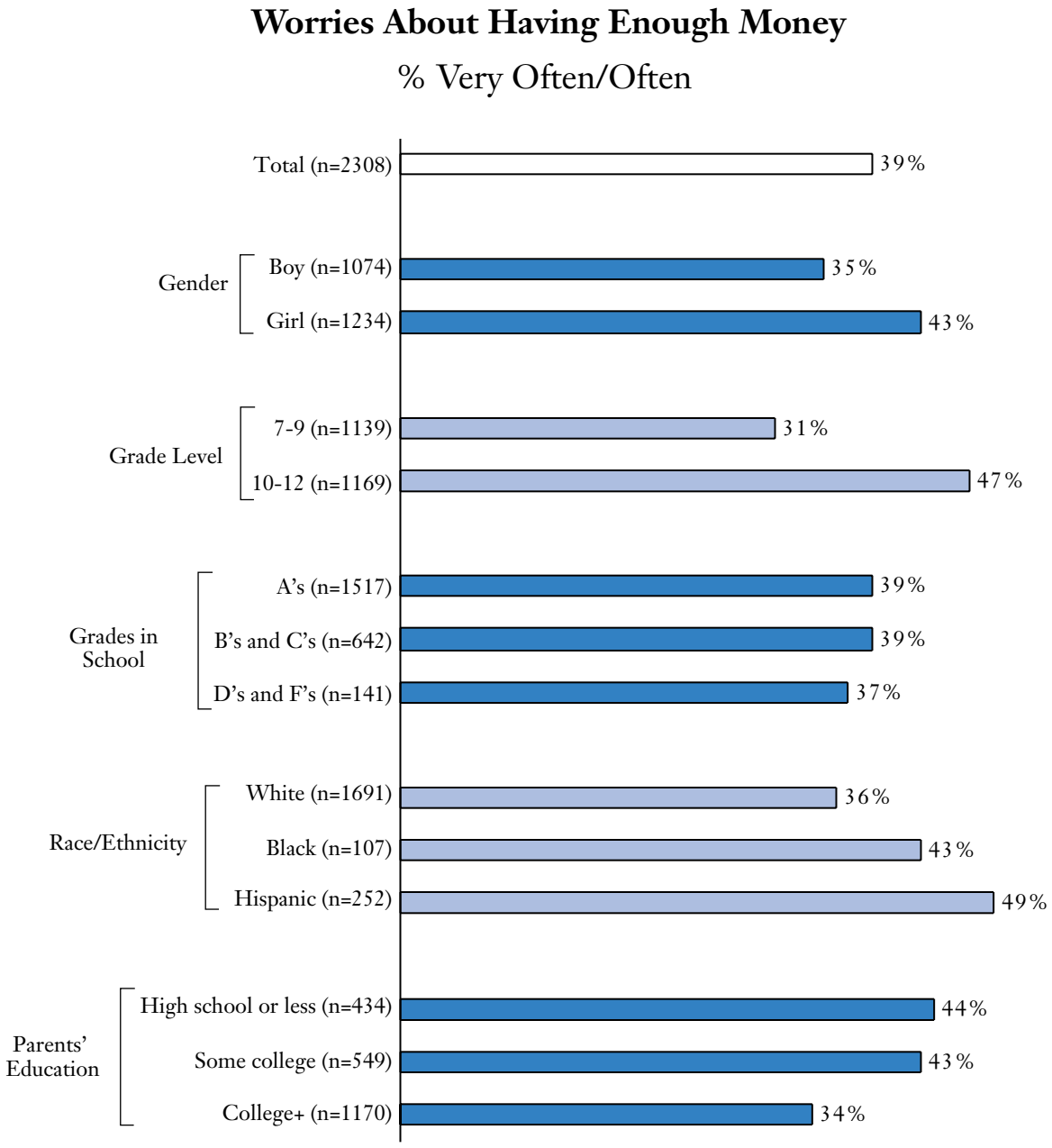

Exhibit 8.28
Feeling Lonely

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Q540-8 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

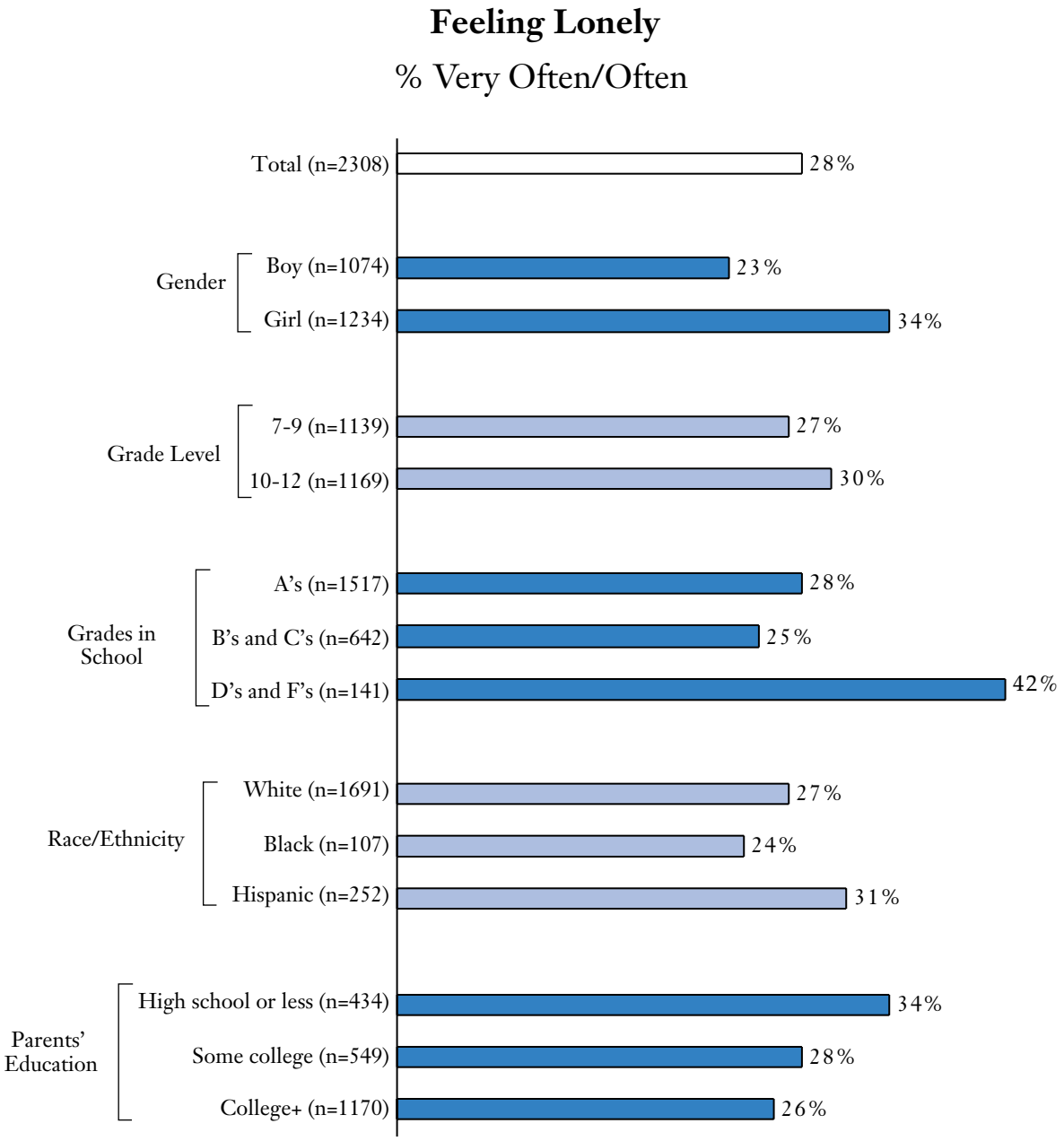

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Exhibit 8.29
Difficulty Paying Attention

Q540-6 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

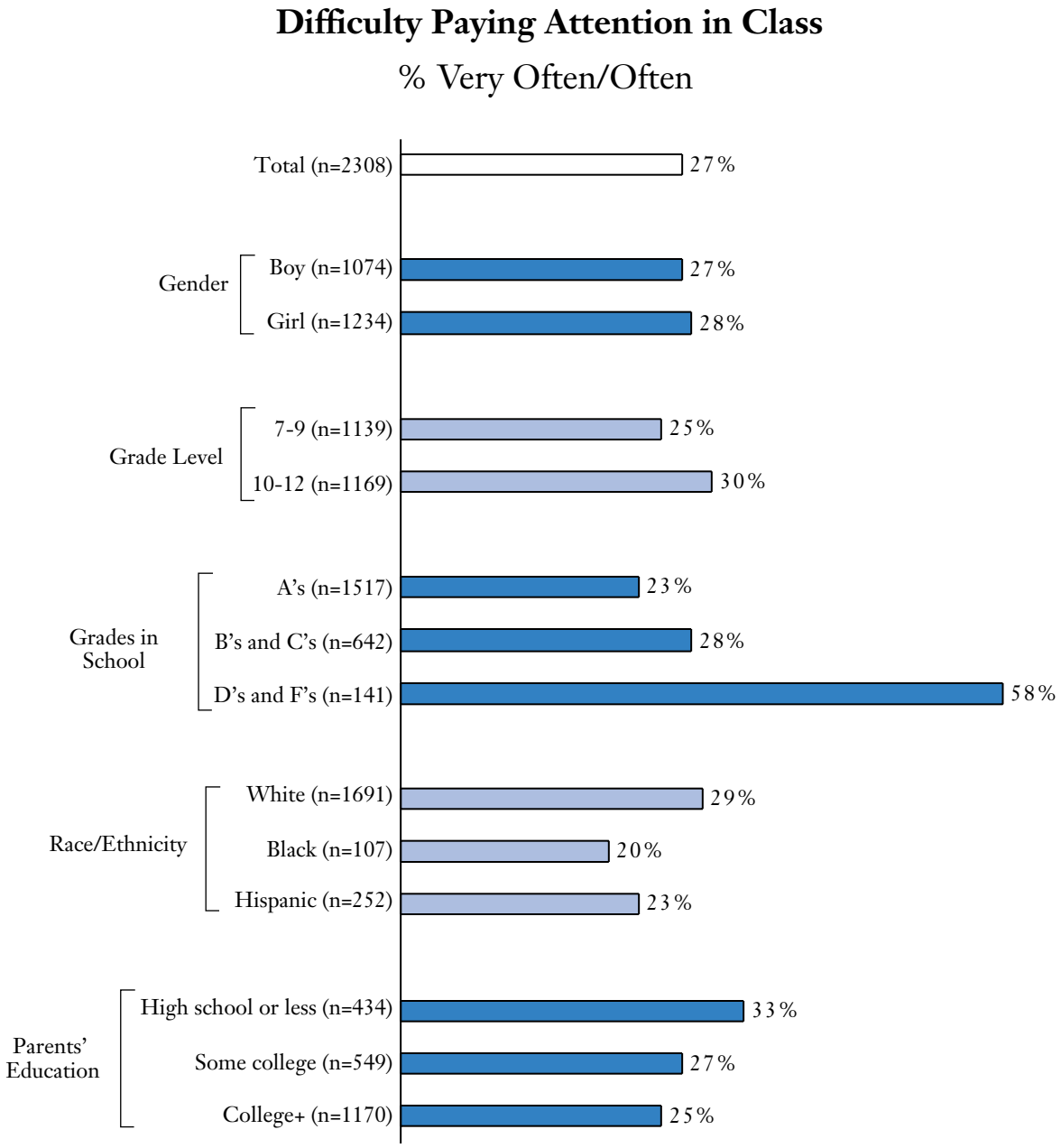

Exhibit 8.30
Family Problems

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Q540-3 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students

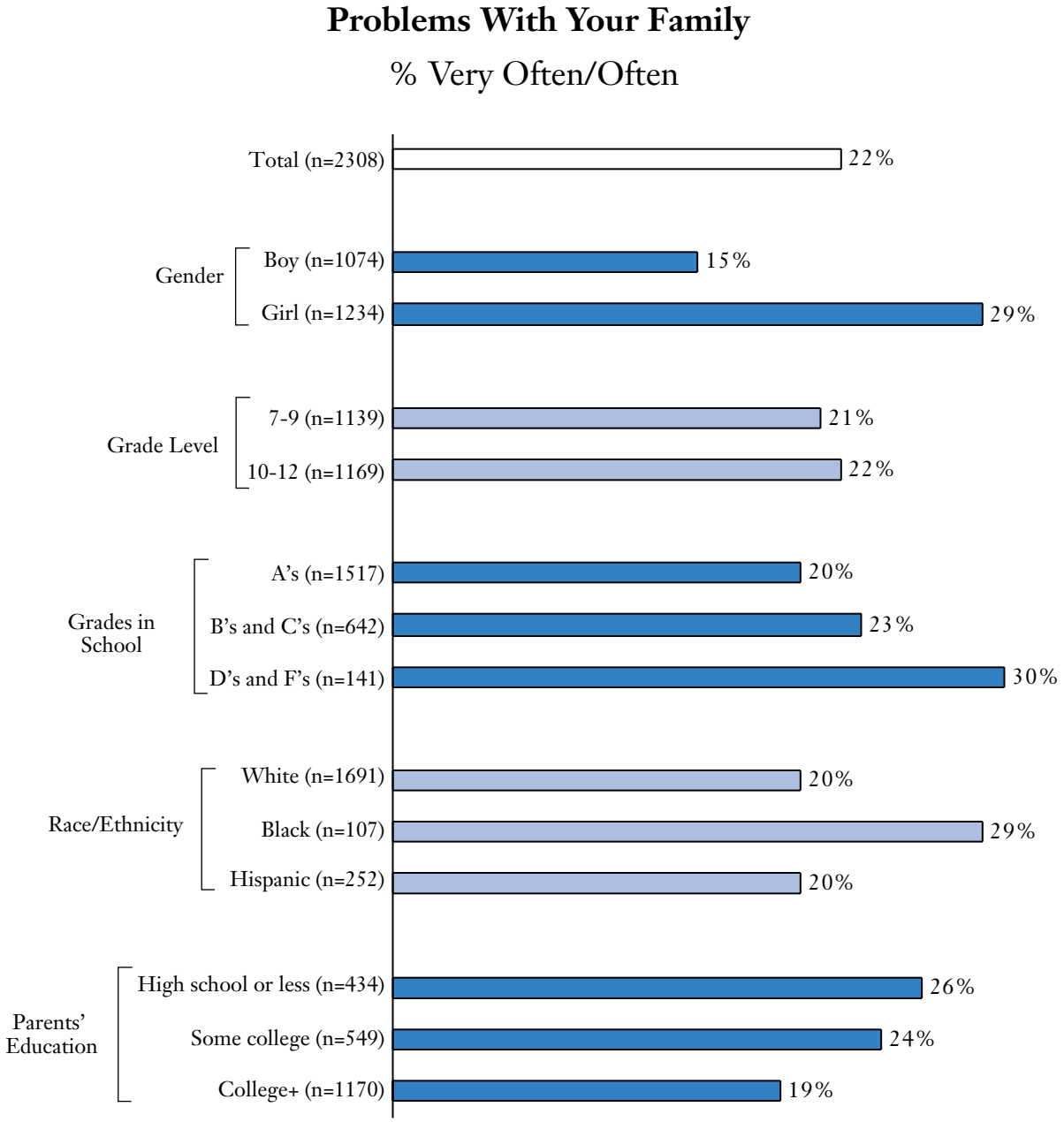

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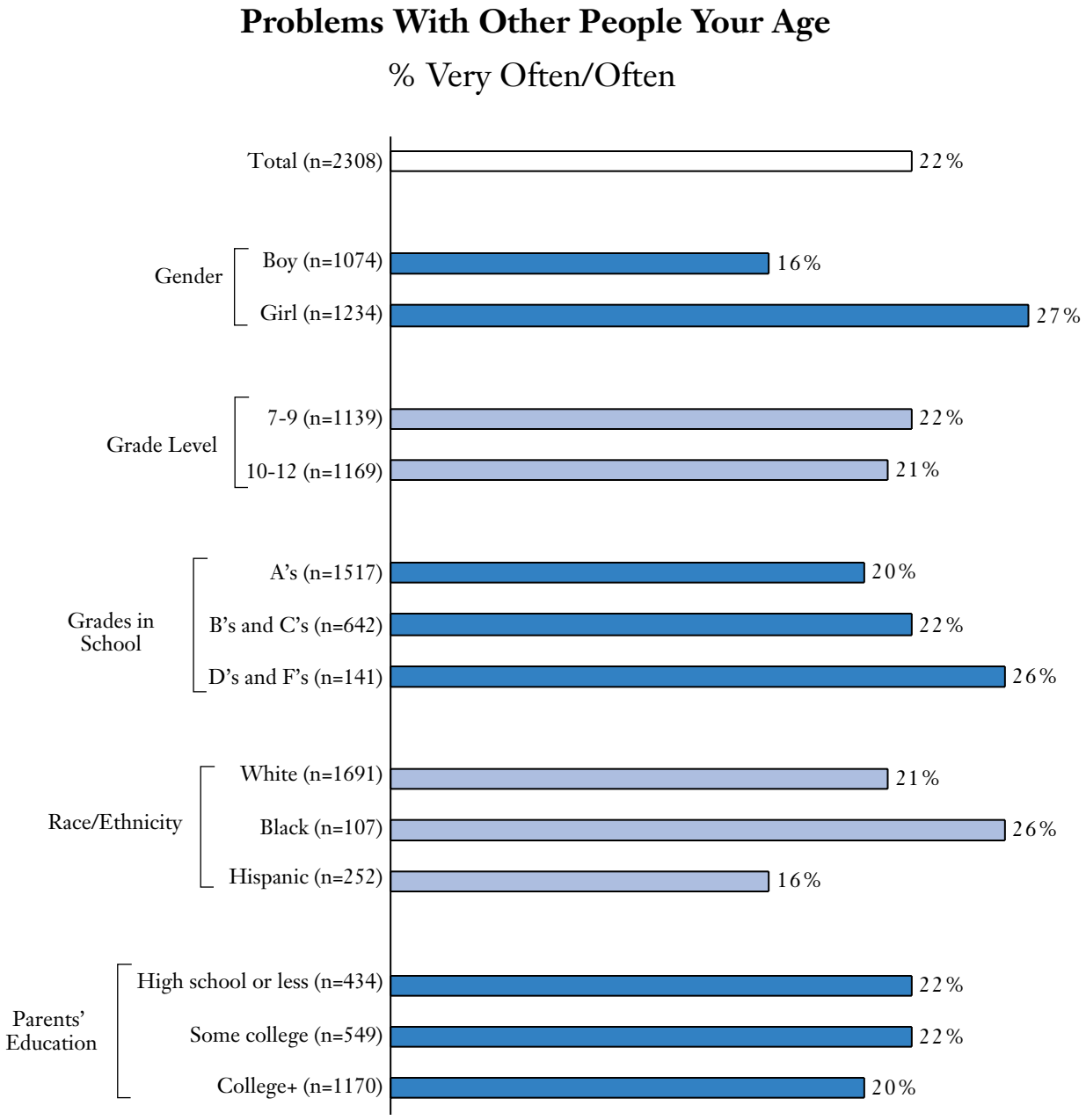
Exhibit 8.31
Peer Problems

Q540-4 During the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?
Base: All qualified students



CHAPTER 9

CONNECTIONS

TEACHERS SPEAK OUT

"Social services, businesses, and the school need to be on the same page."
(Teacher in urban school)

~

"I wish that we could find funding to feed these kids."
(Teacher in suburban school)

~

"Money is fine, but the students need the human contact with people outside of their family…"
(Teacher in suburban school)

Overview

Several themes and connections have surfaced throughout this year's *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*. Students' and teachers' attitudes and experiences vary according to socioeconomic factors. In addition, teachers' attitudes and experiences vary with the number of years they have been teaching. This chapter highlights and reviews common themes and connections among findings that surface regarding students' home, school and community lives.

Students That Receive High Grades and Low Grades

"A" students and students who receive D's and F's differ by gender. Failing and nearly failing students are more likely than "A" students to be boys (60% vs. 47%) and to be in lower high school grades (64% vs. 52%). "D" and "F" students are more likely than "A" students to be low-income (parents' education) (34% vs. 18%), and "A" students are more likely than "D" and "F" students to have high family income (parents' education; 54% vs. 24%). "A" students and those who are failing (or nearly failing) do not differ by race or ethnicity, whether English is the main language spoken at home, or whether the school is in an urban area or not. (Exhibit 9.1)

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Exhibit 9.1

Demographic Profile of Students That Receive High Grades and Low Grades

	Total	Grades in School	
		A's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1517	141
	%	%	%
Gender			
Boy	51	47	60
Girl	49	53	40
Grade level			
7-9	52	52	64
10-12	48	48	36
Race/ethnicity			
White	66	70	71
Black	11	9	7
Hispanic	14	11	17
Parents' education			
High school or less	22	18	34
Some college	24	22	28
College or more	47	54	24
Size of place			
Urban	31	29	27
Suburban/rural	69	71	72
Language at home			
English	91	92	87
Other language	8	7	10

"D" and "F" students are also **less active** than "A" students in several areas of their lives. "D" and "F" students are less likely than "A" students to participate in activities such as sports (26% vs. 56%), dance and music (8% vs. 30%), schoolwork programs (5% vs. 16%) and drama programs (3% vs. 15%). "D" and "F" students are also less likely than "A" students to participate in literacy-related activities. Those receiving failing or nearly failing grades are less likely than "A" students to read for fun every day or a few times a week (17% vs. 46%). Two-thirds of students who get D's and F's (65%) never visit a library or only do so a few times a year, compared to less than half of "A" students (47%). (Exhibit 9.2)

Exhibit 9.2
Activities and Student Success

	Total	Grades in School	
		A's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1517	141
	%	%	%
Participate in activities (Q325)			
Sports activities	50	56	26
Dance and music programs	25	30	8
Schoolwork or homework programs	14	16	5
Drama programs	11	15	3
Visit a library (Q331)			
Every day/a few times a week	11	10	11
A few times a month	22	24	12
Once a month	17	19	9
A few times a year/never	49	47	65
Read for fun (Q331)			
Every day/a few times a week	38	46	17
A few times a month	17	17	16
Once a month	9	7	12
A few times a year/never	36	30	54

"D" and "F" students are twice as likely as "A" students to never eat breakfast (31% vs. 16%) and are more likely to get less than 7 hours of sleep on a school night (43% vs. 33%). "D" and "F" students are also more likely than "A" students to very often or often experience problems concentrating in class. "D" and "F" students are more likely than "A" students to frequently daydream (60% vs. 39%), get too hungry to pay attention (22% vs. 13%), fall asleep during class (27% vs. 10%) and have difficulty paying attention in class (58% vs. 23%). In addition to reporting difficulties in concentration in class, "D" and "F" students are also more likely than "A" students to skip class or school because school was boring (53% vs. 32%), they did not feel ready to take a test (36% vs. 21%) or they were not getting along with a teacher (32% vs. 11%). "D" and "F" students are also more than four times as likely as "A" students to have considered dropping out of school (57% vs. 12%). (Exhibit 9.3)

Exhibit 9.3

Health, Concentration, Attendance and Student Success

	Total	Grades in School	
		A's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1517	141
	%	%	%
Eat breakfast (Q430)			
Never	19	16	31
4 or more days a week	50	56	39
Sleep (Q420)			
Less than 7 hours	33	33	43
Very often/often (Q415/Q541)			
Daydream in class	42	39	60
Get too hungry to pay attention in class	16	13	22
Fall asleep during class	12	10	27
Have difficulty paying attention in class	27	23	58
Skipped class or school (Q371)			
School was boring	37	32	53
Did not feel ready to take a test	24	21	36
Not getting along with a teacher	15	11	32
Considered dropping out (Q387)	20	12	57

"D" and "F" students are **less connected with adults** in their lives than are "A" students. Those students who are failing or nearly failing are more likely than "A" students to report that their parents do **not** know who most of their friends are (35% vs. 14%), who their favorite teachers are (52% vs. 29%) and what is important to them (43% vs. 25%). "D" and "F" students are also more likely than "A" students to very often or often experience problems with their family (30% vs. 20%). "D" and "F" students' relationships with their teachers do not fare any better. Students who get D's and F's are more likely than those who get A's to report that their teachers never speak with them one-on-one about their interests and things that are important to them (70% vs. 45%) or their plans for college or work after high school (69% vs. 45%). (Exhibit 9.4)

Exhibit 9.4
Adults and Student Success

	Total	Grades in School	
		A's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1517	141
	%	%	%
Parents do not know (Q516)			
Most friends	16	14	35
Favorite teachers	35	29	52
What is important to student	29	25	43
Very often/often experience problems with family (Q541)	22	20	30
Teachers never speak one-on-one about (Q376)			
Interests and things that are important	49	45	70
Plans for college or work after high school	48	45	69

Students' emotional well-being also appears to be related to success in school. "D" and "F" students are less likely than "A" students to be extremely or very happy at home (31% vs. 58%), in school (10% vs. 40%) and in their neighborhood life (23% vs. 39%). "D" and "F" students are more likely than "A" students to very often or often feel bored (76% vs. 53%) and lonely (42% vs. 28%). However, it is the "A" students who are more likely than "D" and "F" students to worry a great deal about doing well in school (53% vs. 24%). (Exhibit 9.5)

Exhibit 9.5
Emotions and Student Success

	Total	Grades in School	
		A's	D's & F's
Base	2308	1517	141
	%	%	%
Extremely/very happy (Q546)			
Home and family life	55	58	31
School life	33	40	10
Life in the neighborhood	37	39	23
Worry a great deal about doing well in school (Q536)	47	53	24
Very often/often (Q541)			
Feeling bored	55	53	76
Feeling lonely	28	28	42

Socioeconomic Factors in Students' Lives

The previous analysis revealed that "D" and "F" students are more likely than "A" students to have low family incomes (as measured by parents' education as a proxy for family income). Family income distinguishes other aspects of students' lives at school, at home and in their community as well. How do these factors influence their school lives? Low-income students (parents with no more than a high school education) are less likely than high-income students (parents with college degree or more) to feel extremely or very successful in school (49% vs. 58%) or to describe their life in school as extremely or very happy (24% vs. 39%). Low-income students are less likely than high-income students to believe that their school is preparing them extremely well to go to college (10% vs. 18%). Low-income students are more likely than high-income students to worry a great deal about being safe at school (30% vs. 17%). Low-income and high-income students differ in how they assess whether they are learning a lot in school. Low-income students are more likely than high-income students to know that they're learning a lot because their parents are proud (23% vs. 16%), while high-

income students are more likely than low-income students to judge this by feeling that they're learning (58% vs. 48%). (Exhibit 9.6)

Low-income students appear to be at risk in other aspects of school as well. They are more likely than high-income students to have considered dropping out of school (24% vs. 18%) and they are more likely than high-income students to have **never** spoken individually with a teacher about their plans for college or work after high school (54% vs. 44%). Low-income students also are less likely than high-income students to strongly agree that teachers in their school are interested in what's best for their students (18% vs. 27%). (Exhibit 9.6)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *The poverty rate for U.S. people under the age of 18 was 16.2% in 2000. This represents over 11 million children. In addition, America's children are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as Americans in any other age group. — U.S. Census Bureau, 2001*

Exhibit 9.6
School Attitudes and Socioeconomic Factors

		Parents' Education		Size of Place	
	Total	High school or less	College or more	Urban	Suburban/ rural
Base	2308	434	1170	723	1584
	%	%	%	%	%
% Extremely/very					
Successful in school (Q551)	53	49	58	51	53
Happy in school (Q546)	33	24	39	32	33
Extremely well prepared by school (Q311).					
To go to college	15	10	18	13	16
Worry a great deal about (Q536)					
Being safe at school	22	30	17	27	20
Know that you're learning a lot (Q315)					
By feeling that you're learning	53	48	58	52	53
By parent being proud	20	23	16	20	20
Considered dropping out of school (Q387)	20	24	18	20	20
Teachers never spoke one-on-one about (Q376)					
Plans for college or work after high school	48	54	44	45	49
Teachers are interested in what's best for students (Q381)					
Strongly agree	24	18	27	25	23

The previous discussion revealed an association between participation in activities and success in school. An examination of activity level and students' family income (parents' education) reveals that low-income students are **less active** than high-income students in their lives outside of the classroom. In addition, low-income students are less likely than high-income students to have **opportunities** to participate in dance or music programs (61% vs. 72%), drama programs (52% vs. 63%) and art programs (43% vs. 52%). Low-income students also report that they are less likely than high-income students to **participate** in sports (43% vs. 56%), dance or music programs (17% vs. 30%) or drama programs (8% vs. 15%). Low-income students are more likely than high-income students to never read for fun or only do so a few times a year (45% vs. 32%). (Exhibit 9.7)

"A" students are equally likely as "D" and "F" students to be in urban schools (Exhibit 9.1) and the school's location does not distinguish among students' school attitudes (Exhibit 9.6). However, urban students are less likely than suburban/rural students to have opportunities to participate in drama programs (60% vs. 51%) and to participate in sports (45% vs. 52%). While students' family income does not distinguish how often they visit a library, suburban or rural students are more likely than other students to never visit a library or visit only a few times a year (51% vs. 45%). (Exhibit 9.7)

Exhibit 9.7
Activities and Socioeconomic Factors

		Parents' Education		Size of Place	
	Total	High school or less	College or more	Urban	Suburban/ rural
Base	2308	434	1170	723	1584
	%	%	%	%	%
Opportunities for participation (Q320)					
Dance or music programs	67	61	72	67	67
Drama programs	57	52	63	51	60
Art programs	47	43	52	46	48
Participate in activities (Q325)					
Sports activities	50	43	56	45	52
Dance or music programs	25	17	30	26	24
Drama programs	11	8	15	12	11
Visit a library (Q331)					
Every day/ a few times a week	11	13	10	13	10
A few times a month	22	20	20	25	21
Once a month	17	13	20	16	17
A few times a year/never	49	52	49	45	51
Read for fun (Q331)					
Every day/a few times a week	38	31	43	40	36
A few times a month	17	16	16	18	17
Once a month	9	9	8	9	9
A few times a year/never	36	45	32	32	38

Students' family income (parents' education) also distinguishes aspects of their home and family life that are related to their school performance. Low-income students are more likely than high-income students to report that they do not have a quiet place to do homework (25% vs. 18%). High-income students are more likely than low-income students to eat breakfast at least four days a week (58% vs. 41%). As might be expected, low-income students are more likely than high-income students to very often or often worry about having enough money (44% vs. 34%), but low-income students are also more likely than high-income students to very often or often have problems with their family (26% vs. 19%). Low-income students are more likely than high-income students to report that their parents do not know who most of their friends are (22% vs. 12%), who their favorite teachers are (44% vs. 26%), or what is important to them (33% vs. 25%). (Exhibit 9.8)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *In* The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2001, *low-income secondary school students, compared to high-income students were: three times as likely to report that they had difficulty paying attention in class because they were worrying about problems at home; more likely to report often needing extra help with schoolwork; less likely to report having high expectations for their future; more likely to believe that their school was not helping at all to prepare them for a successful future.*

Exhibit 9.8
Home and Family Life and Socioeconomic Factors

	Total	Parents' Education		Size of Place	
		High school or less	College or more	Urban	Suburban/ rural
Base	2308	434	1170	723	1584
	%	%	%	%	%
Very often/often experience (Q541)					
Worries about having enough money	39	44	34	43	37
Problems with family	22	26	19	23	21
Parents do not know (Q516)					
Most friends	16	22	12	17	16
Favorite teachers	35	44	26	39	33
What is important to student	29	33	25	27	29
No quiet place to do homework (Q355)	21	25	18	24	19
Eat breakfast (Q430)					
Never	19	20	15	20	18
4 or more days a week	50	41	58	48	51
Extremely/very happy (Q546)					
Home and family life	55	51	60	52	57
Life in neighborhood	37	33	43	34	38

Schools' Socioeconomic Factors

Teachers' assessments of school quality differ. Teachers in schools with mostly low-income students are less likely than those with one-third or fewer low-income students to report that their school is preparing their students extremely well to go to college (19% vs. 37%). Teachers in low-income schools also have different views of their students. Teachers in low-income schools are more likely than those with few low-income students to strongly agree that their students only do enough work to get by (36% vs. 15%) and less likely than those with few low-income students to believe that their students care a great deal about doing well in school (21% vs. 41%). Teachers in low-income schools are more likely than those with few low-income students to report that their students are very often or often irritable or in bad moods (28% vs. 14%) and that they are disruptive (28% vs. 16%). Furthermore, teachers in low-income schools are more likely than those with few low-income students to believe that hanging out with friends interferes with doing well in school (75% vs. 53%). (Exhibit 9.9)

The location of the school in an urban versus a suburban or rural location does not distinguish teachers' views in most of these areas. However, teachers in urban schools are less likely than others to strongly agree that the teachers in their school know a lot about the surrounding community or neighborhood (34% vs. 53%). (Exhibit 9.9)

Exhibit 9.9

Teachers' Views of Students and School Factors

	Total	% Students Below Average Income		Size of Place	
		0-33	67 or more	Urban	Suburban/ rural
Base	1111	393	213	311	799
	%	%	%	%	%
School preparing students extremely well (A) to go to college (Q311)	29	37	19	29	29
Strongly agree					
Teachers know a lot about surrounding community or neighborhood (Q331)	47	49	41	34	53
Students only do enough work to get by (Q451)	22	15	36	26	20
Students care a great deal about doing well in school (Q350)	31	41	21	27	32
Very often/often (Q711)					
Students are irritable/in bad mood	19	14	28	23	17
Students are disruptive	19	16	28	21	18
Hanging out with friends interferes with doing well in school (Q611)	55	53	75	64	51

These differences in views among teachers in low-income and high-income schools indicate that teachers in low-income schools appear to have different types relationships with their students. Teachers in low-income schools are more likely than teachers in high-income schools to discuss with their students very often or often such negative behaviors as poor academic performance (80% vs. 68%), not completing homework (73% vs. 58%), and disrupting class (70% vs. 48%). However, teachers in low-income schools are also more likely than other teachers to talk with their students frequently about their worries (60% vs. 41%). (Exhibit 9.10)

Teachers in urban schools are more likely than others to have many of these discussions with their students. Teachers in urban schools are more likely than others to have individual conversations with their students very often or often about not completing homework (73% vs. 58%), disrupting class (62% vs. 53%) and worries (53% vs. 41%). They are also more likely than others to very often or often speak to students' parents about their child's disrupting class (40% vs. 27%). (Exhibit 9.10)

Teachers in low-income schools differ from those in high-income schools by their homework assignments as well. Teachers in low-income schools are less likely than those in high-income schools to assign homework at least three days a week (51% vs. 61%). Interestingly, teachers in low-income schools are also more likely than those in high-income schools to report that their students' parents think they assign too little homework (13% vs. 5%). (Exhibit 9.10)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? *In* The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2001, *teachers in schools with more than two-thirds low-income students were more likely than others to report that they faced big problems in teaching due to students with problems such as hunger, poverty, or troubled family lives, and students with discipline problems.*

Exhibit 9.10

Teacher Communication and Homework and School Factors

	Total	% Students Below Average Income		Size of Place	
		0-33	67 or more	Urban	Suburban/ rural
Base	1111	393	213	311	799
	%	%	%	%	%
Very often/often have individual discussions with students about (Q531)					
Poor academic performance	71	68	80	75	70
Not completing homework.	63	58	73	73	58
Disrupting class	56	48	70	62	53
Worries.	45	41	60	53	41
Very often/often speak to parents about (Q511)					
Disrupting class	31	29	36	40	27
Assign homework 3 or more days/week (Q410)	61	61	51	65	59
Parents' view of homework assignments (Q440)					
Too much	7	7	5	6	7
Too little	8	5	13	9	8
Right amount	60	69	55	59	61
Not sure	24	18	27	26	24

Teaching Experience

In addition to differences among teachers based on the location or socioeconomic characteristics of their school, teachers' perceptions and practices also differ according to their years of teaching experience. Teachers with five years or less of experience are more likely than those with more than 25 years of experience to report that students in their classroom very often or often have difficulty concentrating (38% vs. 23%), daydream (33% vs. 18%), are irritable or in bad moods (27% vs. 14%), fall asleep in class (22% vs. 12%) and are too hungry to concentrate in class (16% vs. 7%). (Exhibit 9.11)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher *in 1990 and 1991 surveyed teachers just prior to their first year of teaching and after that year was completed. Half of secondary school teachers in their first year of teaching strongly agreed that many children come to school with so many problems that it's very difficult for them to be good students. In contrast, only 22% of these teachers held this belief before their first teaching experience.*

Experienced teachers are more likely than new teachers to assign homework 3 or more days a week (63% vs. 52%). In particular, experienced teachers are nearly four times as likely as new teachers to assign homework 5 days a week (26% vs. 7%). Experienced teachers are also more likely than new teachers to speak with parents very often or often about their child's good academic performance (54% vs. 41%) and interests and talents (37% vs. 21%). (Exhibit 9.11)

DID YOU KNOW THAT. . . ? The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 1991 *found that elementary and secondary school teachers' belief in the importance of working with parents, although strong, actually declined from the level before they became teachers (85% vs. 91%).*

Finally, new teachers are more likely than experienced teachers to be women (69% vs. 42%). New teachers are also more likely than experienced teachers to teach in schools that have predominantly minority students (26% vs. 16%). (Exhibit 9.12)

Exhibit 9.11
Differences Among New and Experienced Teachers

	Total	Years of Experience 0-5	26+
Base	1111	170	289
	%	%	%
Very often or often done by students in classroom (Q711)			
Have difficulty concentrating	30	38	23
Daydream	24	33	18
Are irritable or in bad moods	19	27	14
Fall asleep or doze	12	22	12
Are too hungry to concentrate	10	16	7
Very often/often speak to parents about students (Q511)			
Good academic performance	52	41	54
Interests and talents	35	21	37
Assign homework (Q410)			
3 or more days a week	61	52	63
3 days	23	23	19
4 days	19	23	18
5 days	18	7	26

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Exhibit 9.12
Profile of New and Experienced Teachers

	Total	Years of Experience 0-5	26+
Base	1111	170	289
	%	%	%
Gender			
Male	45	31	58
Female	55	69	42
Grade level			
7-9	14	14	15
10-12	21	21	21
Size of place			
Urban	30	32	32
Suburban/rural	70	67	68
School size			
500 or less	21	21	21
501-1000	26	19	24
More than 1000	52	55	54
% Students below average income			
0-33%	35	31	38
34-66%	38	38	38
67% or more	17	21	15
% Students English as second language			
0-33%	82	81	82
34-66%	9	9	8
67% or more	5	9	3
% Minority students			
0-33%	55	50	62
34-66%	23	21	18
67% or more	18	26	16

Warning Signs: The Role of Parents, Teachers and Communities

A theme that runs throughout these findings is the importance of communication among students, teachers and parents and supportive communities in which this communication can happen. Similar themes have emerged in many previous *Surveys of the American Teacher*; including those in 1987, 1998 and 2001. *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*; *2001* revealed that the secondary school years are a particularly vulnerable time. Feelings of alienation are prevalent among students, parents and teachers. This year's survey elaborates on potential causes and consequences of this alienation, and indicates that students are more successful when they are supported at home and at school and have opportunities to participate in a variety of activities in their community. Lack of communication is related to lack of success in school, and low-income students appear to be particularly at risk for infrequent discussions with adults. Students who are failing or nearly failing are more likely than "A" students to report that their parents are not aware of key aspects of their lives and that their teachers never speak with them individually about their interests and plans for the future. Low-income students report similar patterns. Experienced teachers appear to be more attuned to the importance of frequent discussions with parents. They are more likely than new teachers to speak frequently with parents about their child's good academic performance and their interests and talents. These findings suggest a relationship among communication and school success.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

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Student Sample

School Survey

A total of 878 public school students in grades 7 through 12 were surveyed during an English class using a self-administered questionnaire. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted between March 7, 2002 and April 5, 2001.

The Harris national probability sample of schools and students is based on a highly stratified two-stage sampling design. This design employs features similar to the sample designs used in various national surveys of students and schools that are conducted by the U.S. National Center of Education Statistics. Sample is drawn from a list of approximately 80,000 public, private and parochial schools in the United States. It is selected to account for differences in grade enrollment, region and the size of the municipality where schools are located. For this study, only public schools were selected. A random selection of schools is drawn on the basis of the number of students in each cell proportionate to the number of students in the universe, creating a cross section of young people in a set of designated grades.

After sending a letter to principals soliciting their participation, Harris Interactive Inc. contacted the principals in selected schools by telephone to request their participation in the survey. An eligible grade was randomly assigned to each school. If the principal agreed to participate, a random selection process was then used to select a particular class to complete the survey. The principal was asked to alphabetize all classes for the grade assigned by the Harris firm. Using a random number selection grid, an interviewer identified an individual class. For junior and senior high school, where students attend different classes for each subject, only English classes were used to make the selection. Since all students in all grades must study English, this ensures a more representative sample of students by academic track and level of achievement.

A number of steps were included in the consent process in order to maximize response rates. The alert letter contained a brief description of the survey process and some background information on the Harris organization and schools were offered an incentive to participate. In addition, at a principal's request, calls were made to local boards or district offices to gain approval from the appropriate officials. If necessary, copies of the introductory letters and other materials were mailed or sent via fax to the principal and/or other school officials.

If a particular school could not participate, it was replaced by a school with similar demographic characteristics so as to preserve the integrity of the primary selection. Another randomly drawn school was chosen within the same region, with similar grade enrollment and size of municipality, and in the same or the nearest zip code to the original school.

Harris Interactive Inc. mailed instructions, a set of questionnaires and materials for return mail to the teacher of the selected class. In addition, teachers were provided with guidelines for administering the survey. By providing teachers with educational materials, including *The Basic Primer on Public Opinion Polling*, we hope to ensure that this exercise is woven into the classroom curriculum in a meaningful way. Furthermore, by surveying only one class in each school, we impose on the school as little as possible. Students were given envelopes in which to seal their completed surveys before returning them to the teacher. Please note that the survey instrument is anonymous; at no point was the student asked to provide his or her name.

All interviews were carefully edited and checked for completeness and accuracy. Surveys with significant errors or large proportions of missing data were removed; typically this represents less than 1% of the questionnaires that arrive in-house. However, as with all self-administered questionnaires, occasional questions were sometimes left blank. Findings for each question are reported based on the total number of potential respondents in the sample. As an overall check, each questionnaire was reviewed to ensure that a majority of all possible responses had been completed.

Online Survey

The survey questionnaire was self-administered online by means of the Internet to 1430 public school students in grades 7 through 12 who have access to the Internet. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted between April 10, 2002 and April 19, 2002.

Sample was drawn from the Harris Poll Online database of approximately 7 million households who are registered as participants. In order to reach students in grades 7 through 12, the sample was drawn from the Youth Panel, which is a subset of the Harris Interactive Panel of Cooperative Respondents. Currently, there are nearly 500,000 HPOL members under the age of 18.

Email addresses for households in the database are obtained from participation in the following sources: Youth Panel web communities (HarrisZone.com and HarrisKidZone.com), Harris Poll Online registration, the Harris/Excite Poll, Harris Poll Online banner advertisements, Excite and Netscape product registrations, Harris telephone research, media recruitment, and sweepstakes sponsored by Matchlogic and its subsidiaries (e.g., DeliverE, Preferences.com, etc.). Invitations for this study were emailed to a selected sample of the database identified as residing in the U.S.A. and being 13-20 years old, or residing in the U.S.A. and being parents of 13-17 year olds.

Interviews were conducted using a self-administered, online questionnaire, via Harris's proprietary, web-assisted interviewing software. The Harris Online interviewing system permits online data entry of interviews by the respondents. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks

5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Agree", "Disagree", "Not sure"), the system will only accept coded responses corresponding to these choices. All data is tabulated, checked for internal consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

To maintain the reliability and integrity in the sample, the following procedures are used:

1. Password protection: Each invitation contains a password that is uniquely assigned to that e-mail address. A respondent is required to enter the password at the beginning of the survey to gain access into the survey. Password protection ensures that a respondent completes the survey only one time.
2. Reminder invitations: To increase the number of respondents in the survey and to improve overall response rates, up to two additional reminder invitations are typically mailed at 2-4 day intervals to those respondents who have not yet participated in the survey.
3. Summary of the survey findings: To increase the number of respondents in the survey and to improve overall response rates, respondents are often provided with a summary of some of the survey responses. This too is done via the Internet. Respondents are sent an email that provides them access to a web site that will contain the survey findings. As with the survey itself, this is a password-protected site that is accessible for a limited period (1-2 weeks).

The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Our edit programs act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the online program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

Weighting of Student Data

Data were weighted to reflect the national population of public school students in grades 7 through 12 for key demographic variables (grade, gender, race, size of place and region). Demographic weights were based on data from the U.S. National Center of Education Statistics. In addition, data collected online were weighted to key behavioral and attitudinal variables to align them with the data collected using the school methodology and to represent one-half of the total interviews.

Teacher Sample

Telephone Survey

The survey included a total of 506 interviews with a nationally representative sample of current public school teachers of grades 7 through 12 throughout the continental United States. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted between March 14, 2002 and April 9, 2002. Telephone interviews were conducted from Harris's telephone research center in Rochester, New York.

Harris drew a random sample of 7500 current public school teachers throughout the United States from a list compiled by Market Data Retrieval of Westport, Conn. Sample sites for completed interviews were set for each state, based on statistics of public school teachers in each state published by the U.S. National Center of Education Statistics.

Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each teacher was screened to ensure that he or she is currently teaching at least part-time in a public school and currently teaches in grades 7 through 12. If the respondent passed the screen, an appointment was made to complete the interview at a time convenient for the teacher.

Online Survey

The survey questionnaire was self-administered online by means of the Internet to 605 public school teachers in grades 7 through 12 who have access to the Internet. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted March 21, 2002 and March 25, 2002.

Sample was drawn from the Harris Poll Online database of approximately 7 million households who are registered as participants in Harris's online database. Email addresses for households in the database are obtained from participation in the following sources: Harris Poll Online registration, the Harris/Excite Poll, Harris Poll Online banner advertisements, Excite and Netscape product registrations, Harris telephone research, media recruitment, and sweepstakes sponsored by Matchlogic and its subsidiaries (e.g., DeliverE, Preferences.com, etc.). Invitations for this study were emailed to a selected sample of the database identified as being a teacher or in the education profession and residing in the U.S.A.

Weighting of Teacher Data

Data collected online were weighted to key demographic and attitudinal variables to align it with the data collected using the telephone methodology.

Telephone Interviewing Procedures (Teachers)

Interviewing for this study was conducted by Harris's professional interviewing staff and was continuously quality monitored by the supervisory staff. Through direct supervision of the interviewing staff and continuous monitoring of the interviews, a uniformity of responses was achieved that could not have been obtained by other interviewing methods.

The Harris computer assisted telephone interviewing system (CATI) permits on-line data entry and editing of telephone interviews. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

The CATI system reduces clerical error by eliminating the need for keypunching, since interviewers enter the respondents' answers directly into a computer during the interview itself. For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Provides," "Does not provide," "Not sure"), the CATI system will only accept coded responses corresponding to these choices. All data is tabulated, checked for internal consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Harris's edit programs act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the CATI program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

Online Interviewing Procedures (Teachers)

Interviews were conducted using a self-administered, online questionnaire, via Harris' proprietary, web-assisted interviewing software. The Harris Online interviewing system permits online data entry of interviews by the respondents. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Agree", "Disagree", "Not sure"), the system will only accept coded responses corre-

sponding to these choices. All data is tabulated, checked for internal consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

To maintain the reliability and integrity in the sample, the following procedures are used:

1. Password protection: Each invitation contains a password that is uniquely assigned to that e-mail address. A respondent is required to enter the password at the beginning of the survey to gain access into the survey. Password protection ensures that a respondent completes the survey only one time.
2. Reminder invitations: To increase the number of respondents in the survey and to improve overall response rates, up to two additional reminder invitations are typically mailed at 2-4 day intervals to those respondents who have not yet participated in the survey.
3. Summary of the survey findings: To increase the number of respondents in the survey and to improve overall response rates, respondents are often provided with a summary of some of the survey responses. This too is done via the Internet. Respondents are sent an email that provides them access to a web site that will contain the survey findings. As with the survey itself, this is a password-protected site that is accessible for a limited period (1-2 weeks).

The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Our edit programs act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the online program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

Reliability of Survey Percentages

The results from any survey sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of this variation is measurable and is affected both by the number of interviews involved and by the level of the percentages expressed in the results.

Exhibit A.1 shows the range of sampling variation that applies to percentage results for this type of survey. The chances are 95 in 100 that the survey results do not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points from the results that would have been obtained had interviews been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

For example, if the response for a sample size of 300 is 30%, then in 95 out of 100 cases the response of the total population would be between 25% and 35%. Note that survey results based on subgroups of a small size can be subject to large sampling error.

Exhibit A.1

Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use in Evaluating Percentage Results

Number of People Asked Question on Which Survey Result Is Based	Survey Percentage Result at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Result at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Result at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Result at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Result at 50%
2,000	1	2	2	2	2
1,500	2	2	2	2	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

Sampling tolerances also are involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample (subgroup analysis) or from different surveys. Exhibit A.2 shows the percentage difference that must be obtained before a difference can be considered statistically significant. These figures too represent the 95% confidence interval.

For example, suppose one group of 1,000 has a response of 34% "yes" to a question, and an independent group of 500 has a response of 28% "yes" to the same question, for an observed difference of 6 percentage points. According to the Exhibit, this difference is subject to a potential sampling error of 5 percentage points. Since the observed difference is greater than the sampling error, the observed difference is considered statistically significant.

Exhibit A.2

Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use in Evaluating Differences Between Two Percentage Results

Approximate Sample Size of Two Groups Asked Question on Which Survey Result Is Based	Survey Percentage Result at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Result at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Result at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Result at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Result at 50%
5,000 vs. 2,000	2	2	2	3	3
1,000	2	3	3	3	3
500	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
2,000 vs. 2,000	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	3	3	4	4
500	3	4	4	5	5
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
200	5	6	7	7	8
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
500 vs. 500	4	5	6	6	6
200	5	7	8	8	8
100	6	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	13	14	15
200 vs. 200	6	8	9	10	10
100	7	10	11	12	12
50	9	12	14	15	15
100 vs. 100	8	11	13	14	14
50	10	14	16	17	17
50 vs. 50	12	16	18	19	20

Non-Sampling Error

Sampling error is only one way in which survey findings may vary from the findings that would result from interviewing every member of the relevant population. Survey research is susceptible to human and mechanical errors as well, such as interviewer recording and data handling errors. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm, including the CAI systems described earlier, keep these types of errors to a minimum.

APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRES