

Calendar Survey Analysis

Prepared for Glenbrook High School District 225

November 2018



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Introduction

- In this report, Hanover Research (Hanover) presents findings from our analysis of Glenbrook High School District 225's (GHSD) Calendar Survey. The survey instrument, designed collaboratively by Hanover and GHSD, assesses key GHSD stakeholders' perceptions of changing the school calendar from a traditional to a collegiate calendar, and how changes may impact families and school staff.
- Surveys were distributed to current GHSD students and parents/guardians, parents/guardians of GHSD feeder school students, and GHSD staff members via an email campaign. After removing low quality responses, severely limited responses, and disqualified responses, Hanover analyzed qualifying responses for a total sample of 7,707. A breakdown of respondents' stakeholder groups and high schools are shown in the figures below. For a breakdown of respondents by high school grade level, feeder school, feeder school grade level, feeder school district, and dual staff/parent role, please refer to the accompanying data supplement.

STAKEHOLDER	COUNT (%)
Glenbrook High School student	2,479 (32%)
Staff member	606 (8%)
Parent of a Glenbrook High School student	2,120 (28%)
Parent of a Glenbrook High School feeder school student	2,502 (32%)

n=7,707

HIGH SCHOOL	COUNT (%)
Glenbrook South High School	2,845 (55%)
Glenbrook North High School	2,296 (44%)
Glenbrook Off-Campus	40 (1%)

n=5,181

Methodology

- In the following report, aggregate results and results segmented by stakeholder group are discussed in the Key Findings section and displayed in the Report Figures section. For full aggregate and segmented results by stakeholder group, high school, high school grade level, feeder school, feeder school grade level, feeder school district, and dual staff/parent role, please consult the accompanying data supplement. These data highlight instances where there are statistically significant differences between stakeholder groups (indicated with an asterisk [*]).
- Note that sample sizes vary across questions as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents (e.g., students). Conclusions drawn from a small sample size ($n < 20$) should be interpreted with caution. Throughout the analysis, “Does Not Apply to Me” or “No Opinion” responses, and equivalent, are excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion.
- In the survey, 1,262 respondents indicated that they were a parent of both a child attending a Glenbrook High School and a child attending a Glenbrook feeder school. For these respondents, they were asked to select one child to complete the survey for. A percentage breakdown of these respondents is shown in the figure below.

PARENT OF AT LEAST ONE CHILD ATTENDING A GLENBROOK HIGH SCHOOL AND A GLENBROOK FEEDER SCHOOL	COUNT (%)
Prefer to answer for a child attending a Glenbrook High School	874 (69%)
Prefer to answer for a child attending a Glenbrook feeder school	388 (31%)

n=1,262

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

- **GHSD should consider adopting the Option 1 calendar (i.e., earlier school start and end dates and final exams scheduled prior to winter break) for its high schools.** The survey results indicate that more than half of all stakeholders (students, staff, and parents) prefer to have final exams taken prior to winter break. Students prefer the Option 1 calendar, and while school staff slightly prefer the Option 2 calendar, they also indicate that the Option 1 schedule would not adversely impact their classroom and curriculum planning. Most parents also indicate that the Option 1 schedule would not adversely affect family vacation planning and other activities.
- **GHSD should secure buy-in from parents of GHSD feeder school students if the school district decides to adopt the Option 1 calendar.** More than half of this group of parents prefer the Option 2 calendar over Option 1. GHSD should communicate to this group of parents the reasons that the district is considering shifting the calendar (e.g., aligns better with the flow of the curriculum). Parents of students in three schools in particular—Greenbriar (K-5), Lyon (PreK-5), and Pleasant Ridge (3-5)—do not prefer Option 1 because they believe that it will have a negative impact on their family vacation plans and other activities. GHSD may want to focus communication efforts on these parents in particular, and address the concerns they have about impact on their family schedules.
- Given that the majority of students report experiencing moderate-to-high levels of stress during most school weeks, **GHSD should consider offering resources and supports that help students manage the stressors that they face in school.** Some suggested resources and supports include offering specific trainings to students on effective time management and general strategies to cope with stress (e.g., taking breaks, engaging in physical exercise), and encouraging students to make use of the counseling services available at their school.

KEY FINDINGS

School Calendar Preference

- **Students prefer the school calendar that has earlier school start and end dates (Option 1) while parents of Glenbrook feeder school students prefer later school start and end dates (Option 2)** (see figure to the right). Staff members slightly prefer Option 2 (48%) over Option 1 (41%), while parents of Glenbrook High School students are almost evenly divided on the school calendar schedules (49% for Option 1 and 45% for Option 2).
- **Three-quarters (76%) of respondents like the Option 1 schedule because it features a first-semester final exam that occurs prior to the winter break, while two-thirds (67%) like Option 2 because of the school start date that occurs in late August.** Only 5 percent of respondents like the school start date of early-to mid-August that is featured in the Option 1 schedule, and just 18 percent like Option 2's date of first-semester exams that occur after winter break.

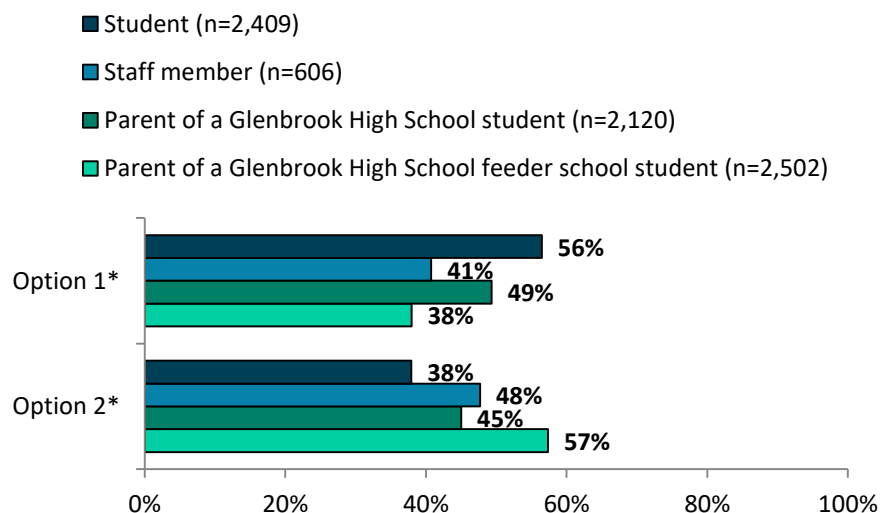
OPTION 1:

- **Start of School:** Early- to Mid-August
- **First-semester Final Exams/Assessments:** Before winter break
- **Last Day of School:** Late May

OPTION 2:

- **Start of School:** Late August
- **First-semester Final Exams/Assessments:** After winter break
- **Last Day of School:** Early June

Which calendar-style do you prefer?



School Calendar Preference by Respondent Characteristics

- Calendar preferences do not differ for students across the high school grade levels, but a few differences in preferences do emerge for feeder school parents by school and school district.

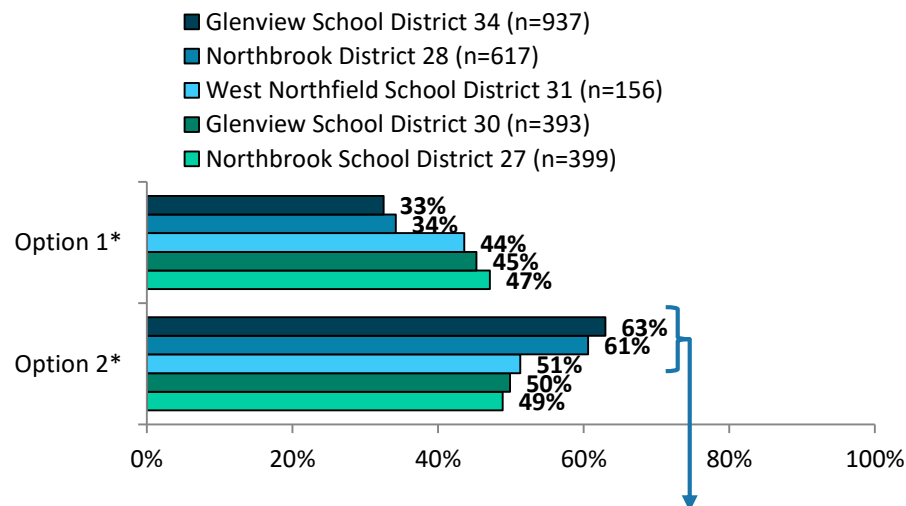
Students:

- Preferences are similar for students across the high school grade levels (between 52% and 61% of grades 9-12 students prefer Option 1).

Feeder School Parents:

- Preferences are similar for parents across feeder school grade levels (with Option 2 being preferred by parents at most grade levels).
- While parents with children at most feeder schools prefer Option 2 over Option 1, parents of children at three schools did prefer Option 1: Hickory Point (K-2)—54% of parents, Westbrook (Pre K-2)—51%, and Field Middle (6-8)—52%.

Which calendar-style do you prefer?



Parents of children in schools at Northbrook District 28 and Glenview School District 34 have a clear preference for Option 2 while parents at the other three feeder school districts are closer to being evenly split between the two calendar schedules.

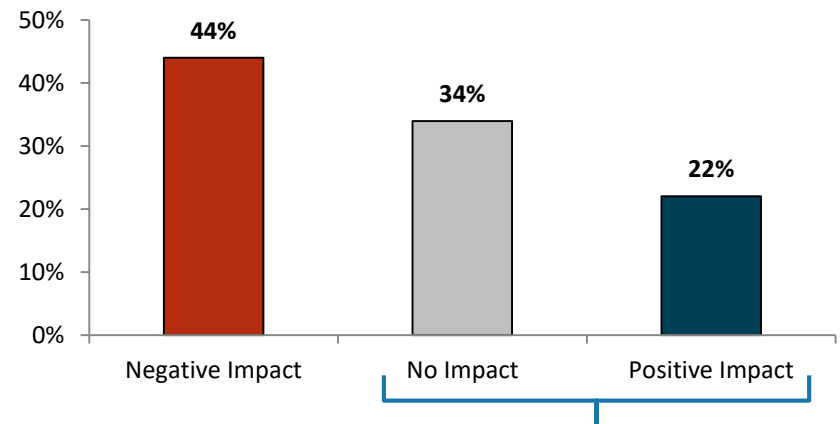
It appears that one of the main reasons why parents prefer Option 2 is because the schedule interferes less with their vacation plans and activities than Option 1. Of the parents with children at schools who prefer Option 2 the most, which includes Greenbriar (K-5), Lyon (PreK-2), and Pleasant Ridge (3-5), between 65% and 75% indicate that a move to Option 1 would have a “negative impact” on their family vacation plans and other activities.

Impacts of Calendar Change on Parents and School Staff

- Overall, staff agree that a change from the Option 2 calendar to the Option 1 calendar would have a minimal and even a positive impact on their experiences.
 - The vast majority of staff indicate that the proposed calendar change would have no affect or a positive effect on professional development opportunities (90%), the flow of the curriculum (78%), the quality of winter break (76%), and on the return to school after winter break (77%).
 - Staff who report a negative effect indicate that the calendar change would have the most impact on grading time (48%) and class preparation time (43%).

The majority (**73%**) of school staff indicate that **they would not need to change the format of their final exams if the school schedule were to change.**

What impact would a move to the Option 1 calendar have on your household's vacation and other activities? (n=7,552)

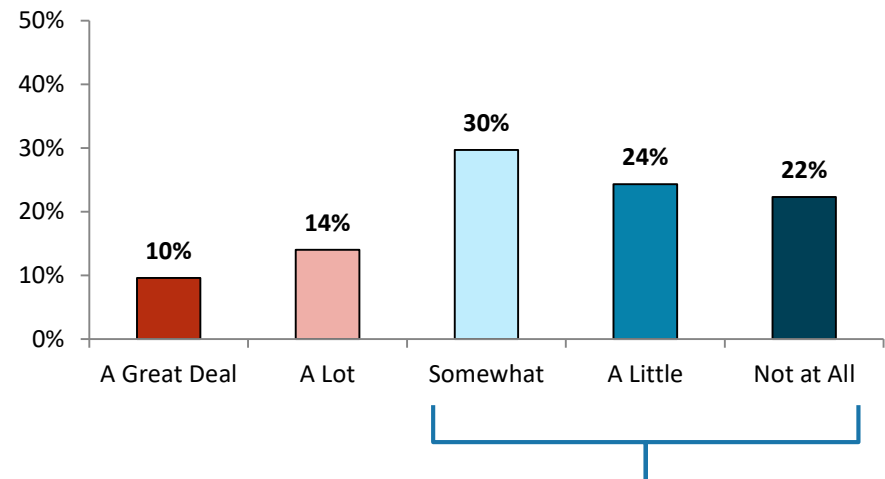


Over half (56%) of parents indicate that a change in the school calendar **would not adversely affect family vacation plans and activities.**

Impact of Changing Final Exam Schedule to Prior to Winter Break

- Approximately half of students indicate that ongoing academic and non-academic activities would have no or very little impact on final exam preparation if first-semester final exams were to be scheduled before winter break (see figure to the right). A plurality (46%) indicate that ongoing coursework would have “no” or just “a little” impact on their exam preparation, while 26 percent indicate coursework would have “somewhat” of an impact, and 28 percent indicate it would have “a lot” or “a great deal” of impact.
- The majority (53%) of respondents report that having exams after winter break compared to taking them before the break would be worse or much worse. Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicate taking exams after winter break would be better or much better.

How much will involvement in non-academic activities (school extracurriculars, family, etc.) interfere with first-semester final exam preparation? (n=4,900)



Almost half (47%) of respondents indicate that involvement in non-academic activities would have “no” or just “a little” impact on exam preparation while 30 percent indicate it would have “somewhat” of an impact.

Final Exams and Portfolio Work

■ About two-thirds (63%) of students took final exams or submitted portfolio work in January during the 2017-2018 academic year and that coincides with the official exam schedule for that year.

- Students report that they took or submitted, on average, five final exams or portfolio assignments in January 2018.
- About a third (31%) of students took final exams or submitted portfolio work in December of the same academic year, indicating that some school staff/teachers have already shifted the exam schedule to prior to the winter break.

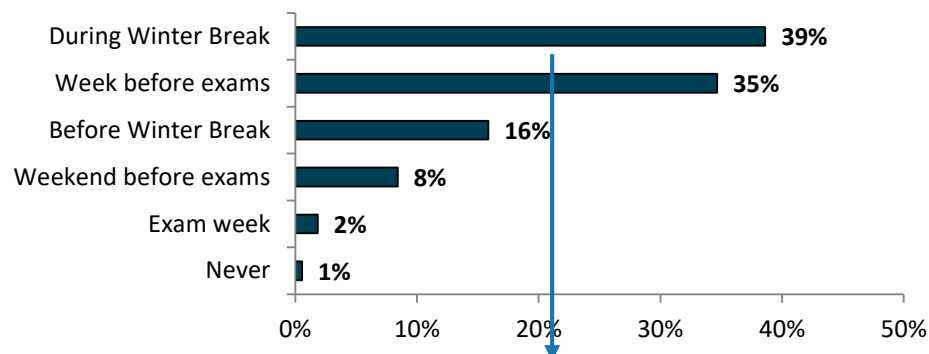
Students report that out of the first semester courses they took that ended in December 2017/January 2018, they, on average,....

- ✓ ...completed about **2 alternative assessments** rather than a final exam/portfolio assignment;
- ✓ ...had **3 classes** that **assigned homework to be completed over winter break**;
- ✓ ...had **3 classes** that **required a unit exam prior to winter break**; and
- ✓ ...had **2 classes** that **required a project to be handed in prior to winter break**.

Final Exam Preparation and Stress Experienced

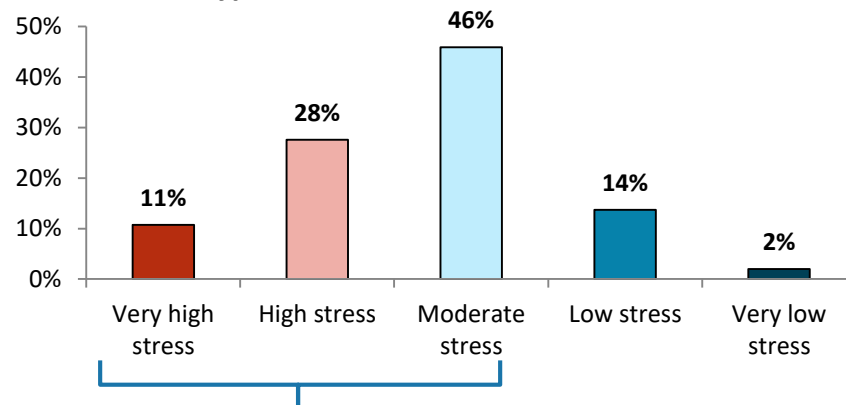
- **Students spend the most time studying and preparing for their first-semester final exams after winter break.** Sixty-eight percent of students estimate spending 6 or more hours studying the weekend before the final exams while 53 percent report spending 6+ hours during exam week. Thirty-six percent report spending 6+ hours studying during winter break.
- **Not surprisingly, the majority (59%) of students report experiencing significantly more stress during exam week.** Most students report average or below average stress during winter break. Stress increases leading up to the week of exams, decreases during break, and increases again (to a lesser extent) for the first two weeks of the 2nd semester.

When do you usually start focusing on first-semester final exam preparation? (n=1,235)



Thirty-nine percent of students begin preparing for first-semester final exams over winter break.

How do you rate your level of stress during a typical school week? (n=1,152)



38% experience high or very high stress and 46% experience a moderate level of stress.

SURVEY FIGURES

Calendar Preference

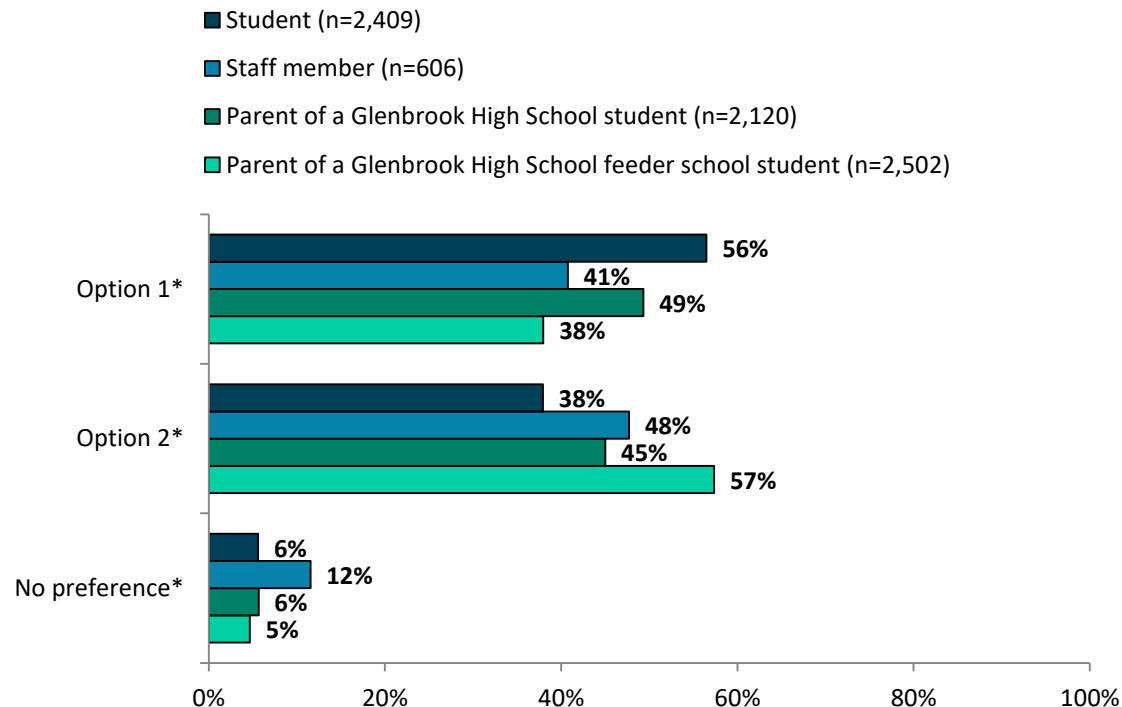
OPTION 1:

- **Start of School:** Early- to Mid-August
- **First-semester Final Exams/Assessments:** Before winter break
- **Last Day of School:** Late May

OPTION 2:

- **Start of School:** Late August
- **First-semester Final Exams/Assessments:** After winter break
- **Last Day of School:** Early June

Which calendar-style do you prefer?



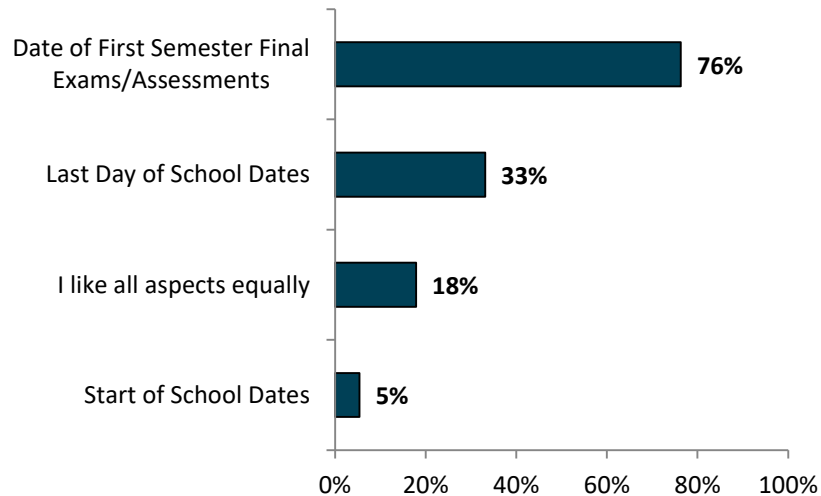
Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

Option 1 School Calendar: Aspects Respondents Like Most

OPTION 1:

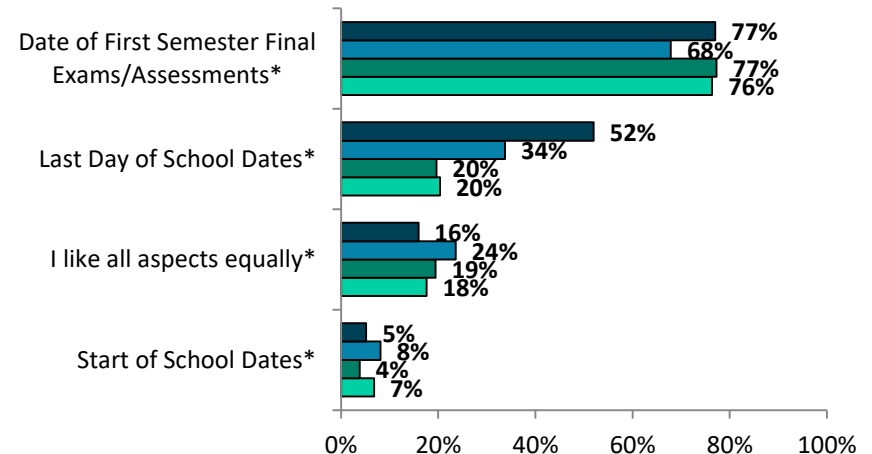
- Start of School: Early- to Mid-August
- First-semester Final Exams/Assessments: Before winter break
- Last Day of School: Late May

What aspect(s) of the Option 1 school calendar do you like most? Select up to two options. (n=3,605)



What aspect(s) of the Option 1 school calendar do you like most? Select up to two options.

- Student (n=1,375)
- Staff member (n=246)
- Parent of a Glenbrook High School student (n=1,040)
- Parent of a Glenbrook High School feeder school student (n=944)



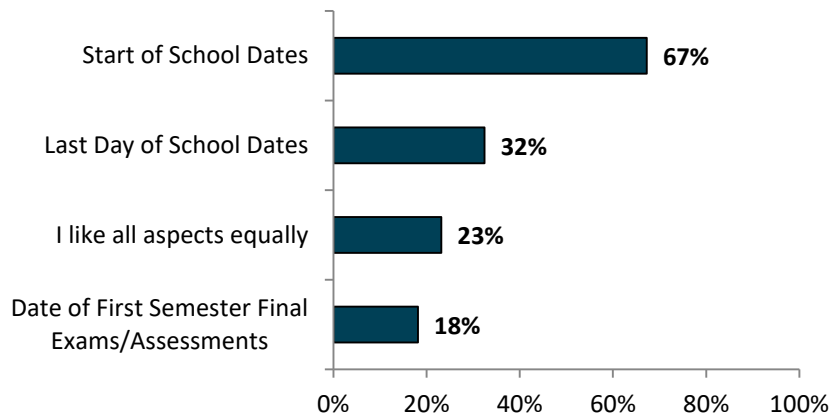
Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

Option 2 School Calendar: Aspects Respondents Like Most

OPTION 2:

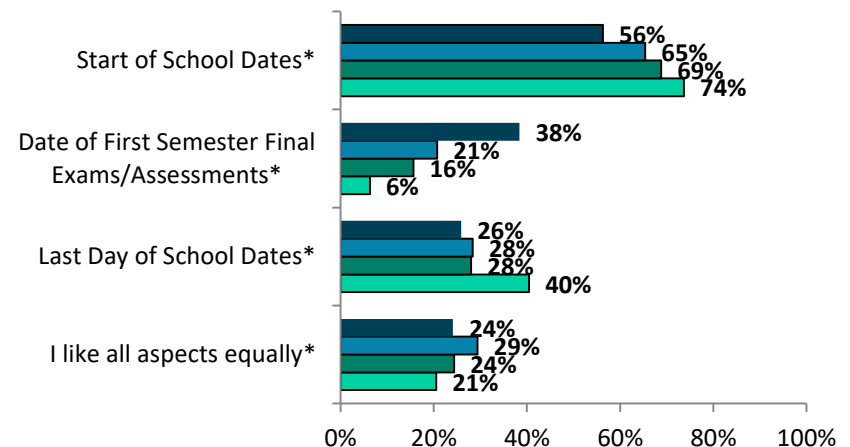
- Start of School: Late August
- First-semester Final Exams/Assessments: After winter break
- Last Day of School: Early June

What aspect(s) of the Option 2 school calendar do you like most? Select up to two options.
(n=3,590)



What aspect(s) of the Option 2 school calendar do you like most? Select up to two options.

- Student (n=920)
- Staff member (n=289)
- Parent of a Glenbrook High School student (n=952)
- Parent of a Glenbrook High School feeder school student (n=1,429)



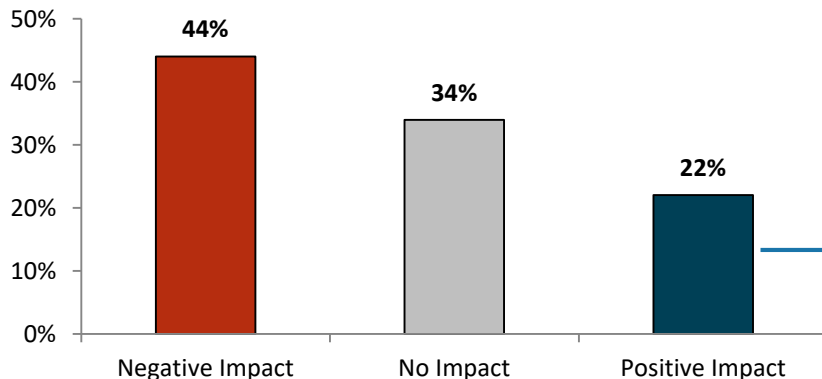
Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

Option 1 School Calendar: Impact on Parents

OPTION 1:

- Start of School: Early- to Mid-August
- First-semester Final Exams/Assessments: Before winter break
- Last Day of School: Late May

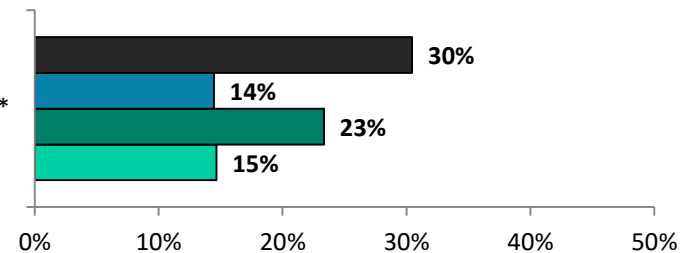
What impact would a move to the Option 1 calendar have on your household's vacation and other activities? (n=7,552)



What impact would a move to the Option 1 calendar have on your household's vacation and other activities?

- Student (n=2,387)
- Staff member (n=602)
- Parent of a Glenbrook High School student (n=2,087)
- Parent of a Glenbrook High School feeder school student (n=2,476)

Positive Impact*



Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

Option 1 School Calendar: Impact on Staff

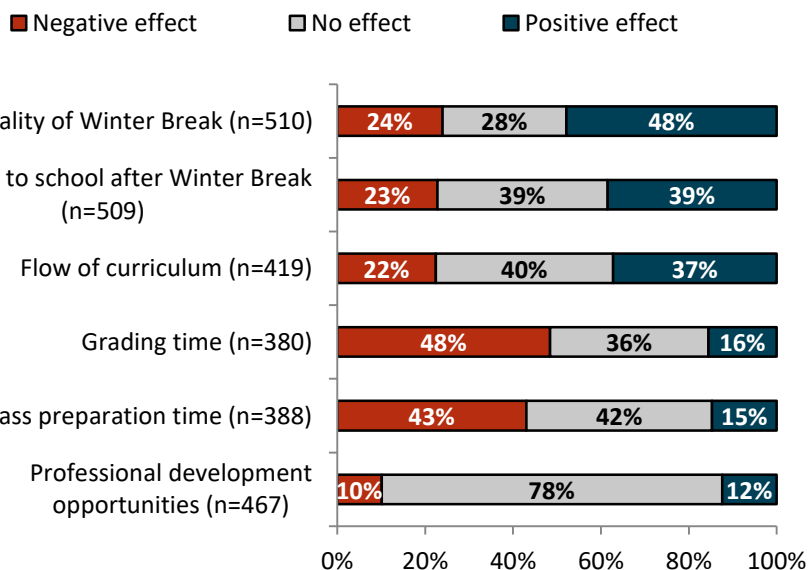
OPTION 1:

- **Start of School:** Early- to Mid-August
- **First-semester Final Exams/Assessments:** Before winter break
- **Last Day of School:** Late May

OPTION 2:

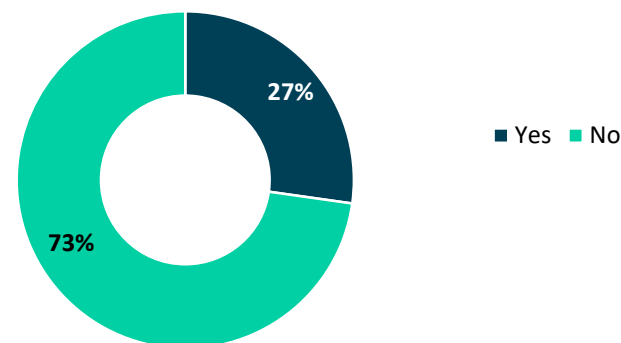
- **Start of School:** Late August
- **First-semester Final Exams/Assessments:** After winter break
- **Last Day of School:** Early June

Would a change to the option 1 school calendar from the option 2 school calendar have any positive or negative effects on the following:



Note: This question was only asked of staff members.

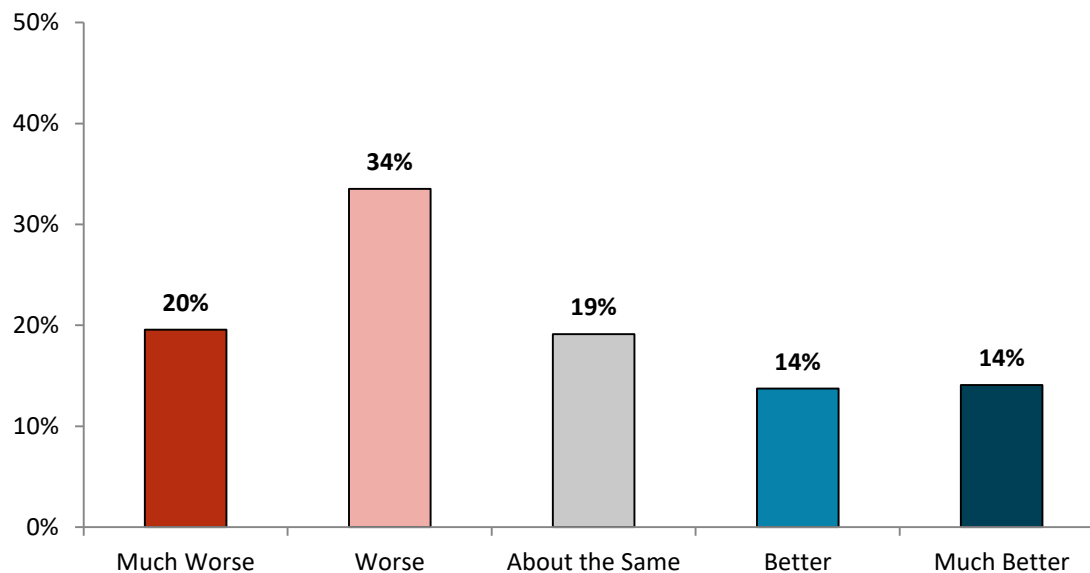
Would you change the format of your semester final exam(s) because of a calendar change to the option 1 school calendar from the option 2 school calendar? (n=437)



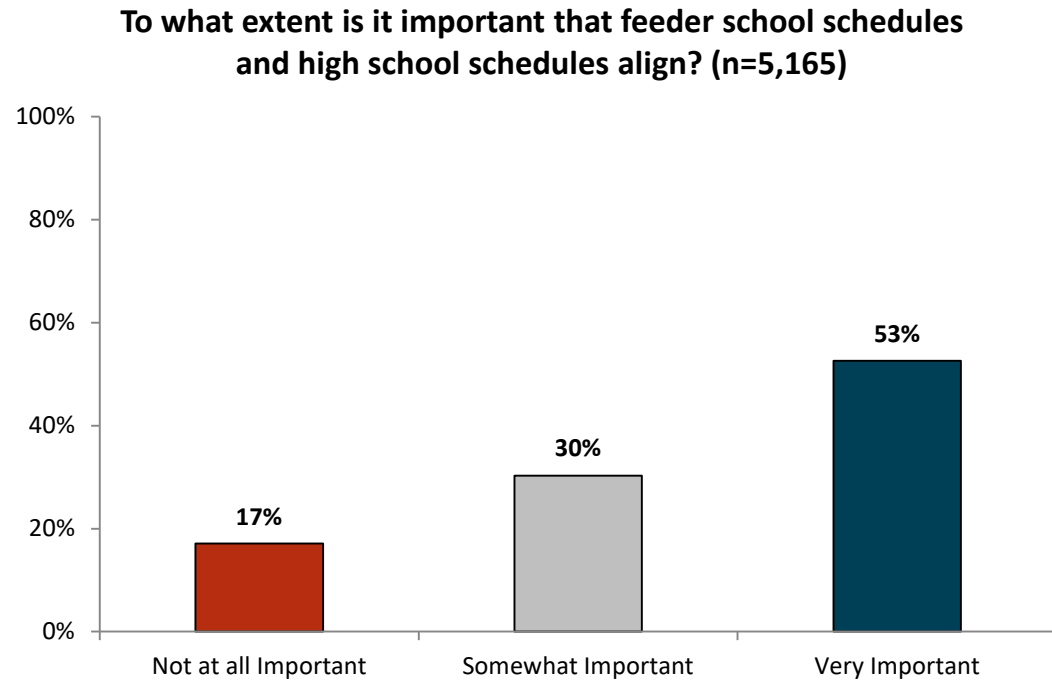
Note: This question was only asked of certified staff members.

Taking First-Semester Final Exams After Winter Break

Do you think taking first-semester final exams after Winter Break instead of taking them before is better, the same, or worse overall? (n=5,181)



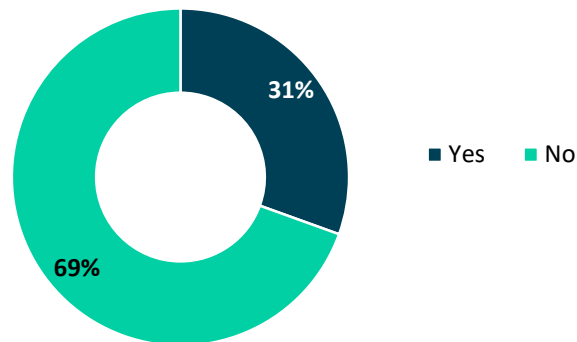
Importance of Schedule Alignment



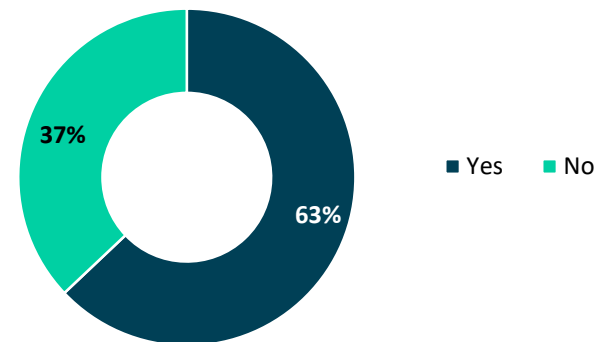
Note: This question was only asked of parents and staff members.

First-Semester Final Exams and Portfolio Work

Did you administer/take any first-semester final exams or ask students to submit any portfolio work outside of the first semester final exam window and in December 2017? (n=2,016)



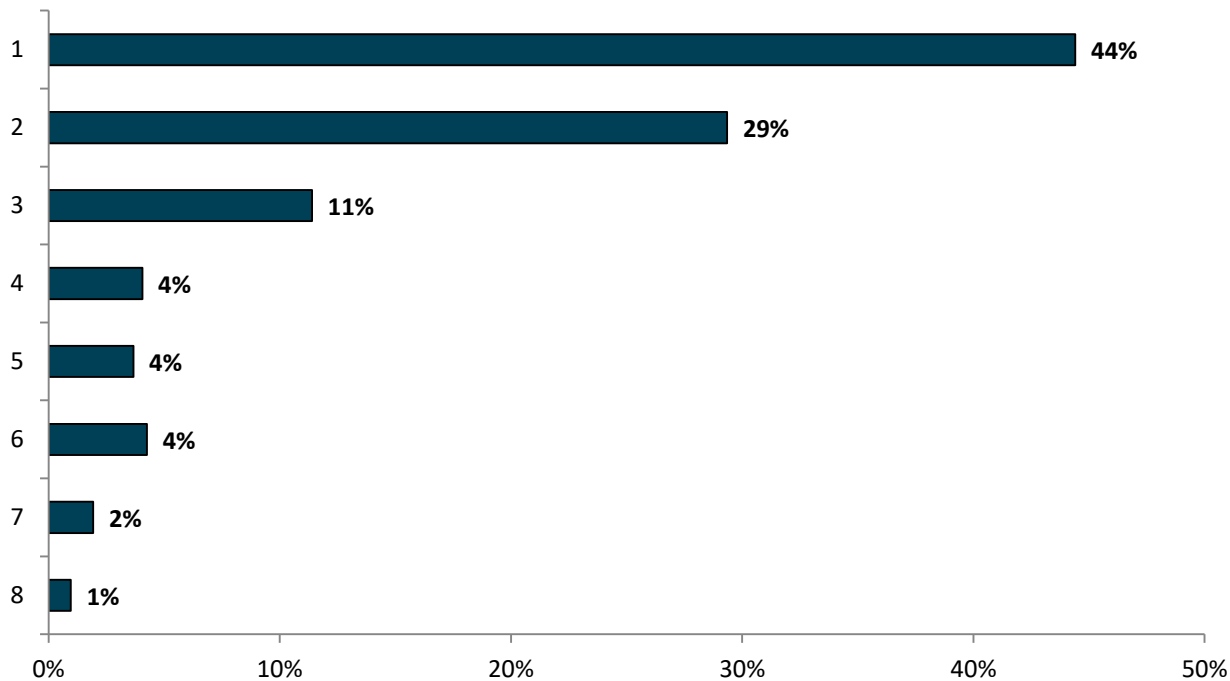
Did you administer/take any first-semester final exams or (ask students to) submit any portfolio work during January 2018? (n=2,016)



Note: These questions were only asked of students and certified staff members.

First-Semester Final Exams and Portfolio Work

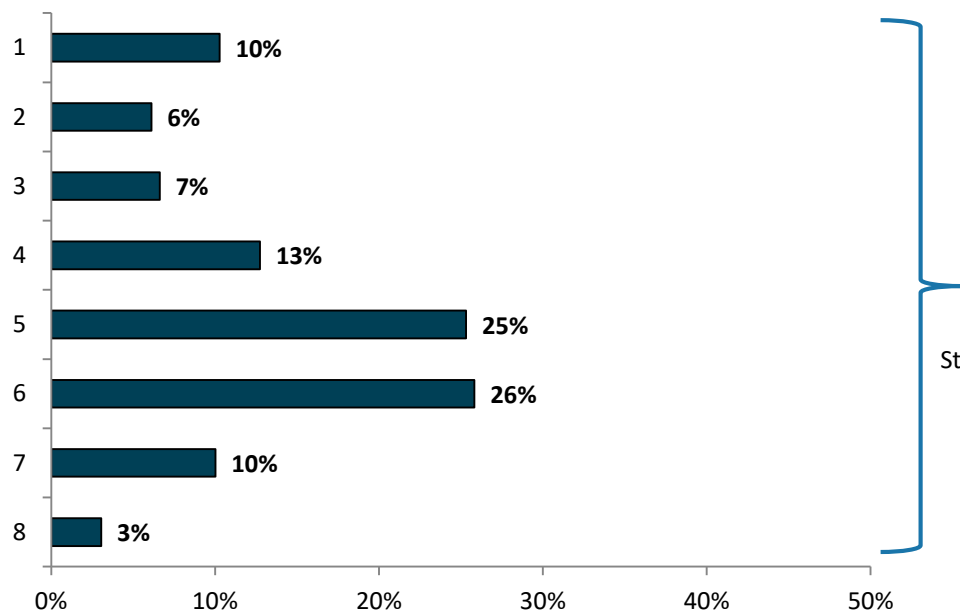
How many first semester final exams or portfolio assignments did you take/administer last December 2017 outside of the three-day first semester final exam period while enrolled/teaching at a Glenbrook High School District 225 school? (n=518)



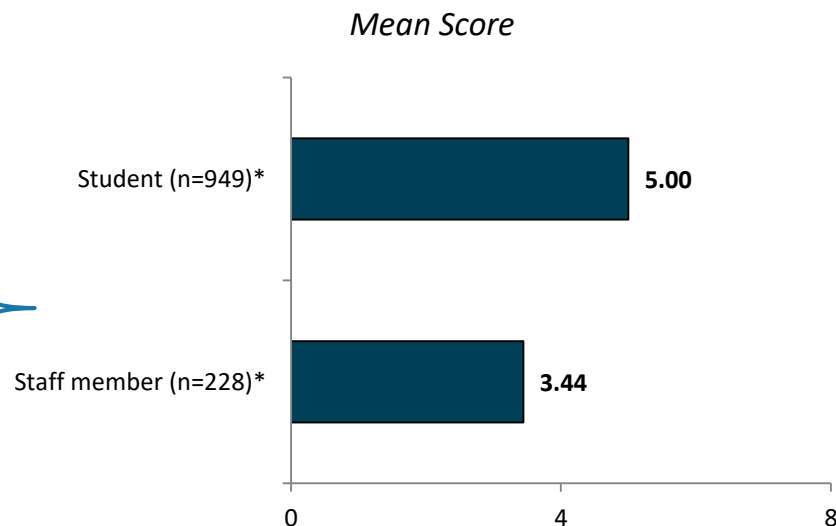
Note: This question was only asked of students and certified staff members who took/administered final exams or portfolio assignments in December 2017.

First-Semester Final Exams and Portfolio Work

How many first semester final exams or portfolio assignments did you take/administer last January 2018 at your Glenbrook High School District 225 school? (n=1,177)



How many first semester final exams or portfolio assignments did you take/administer last January 2018 at your Glenbrook High School District 225 school?

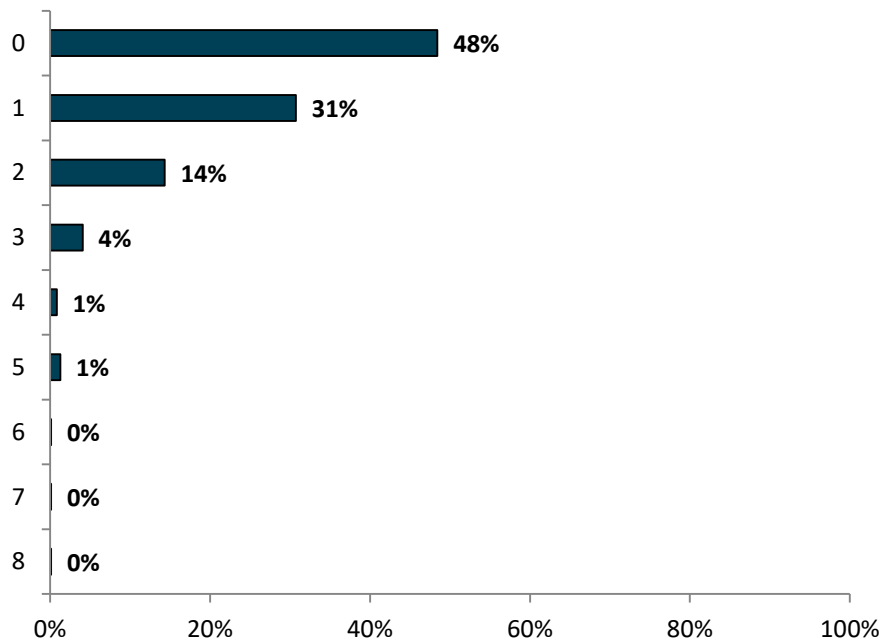


Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

Note: These questions were only asked of students and certified staff members who took/administered final exams or portfolio assignments in January 2018.

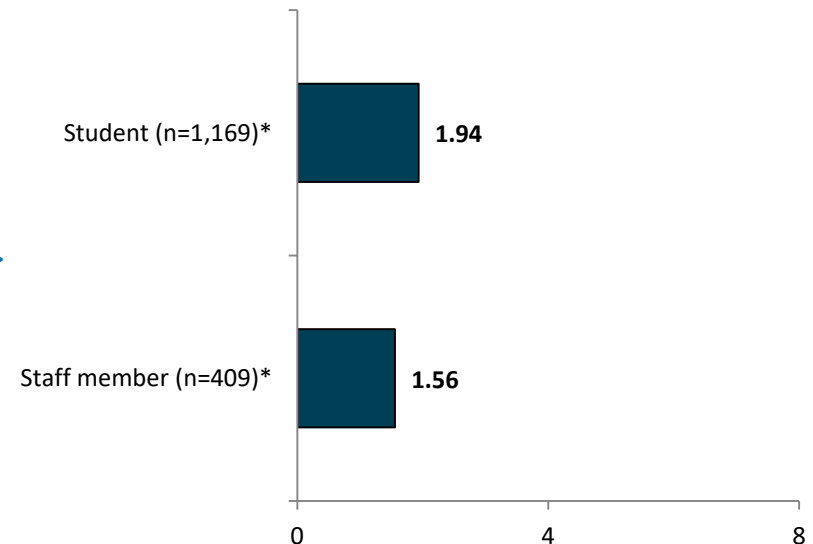
First-Semester Courses

How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 used an alternative assessment, like an end-of-term project or take-home test, instead of a semester final exam or portfolio? (n=1,578)



How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 used an alternative assessment, like an end-of-term project or take-home test, instead of a semester final exam or portfolio?

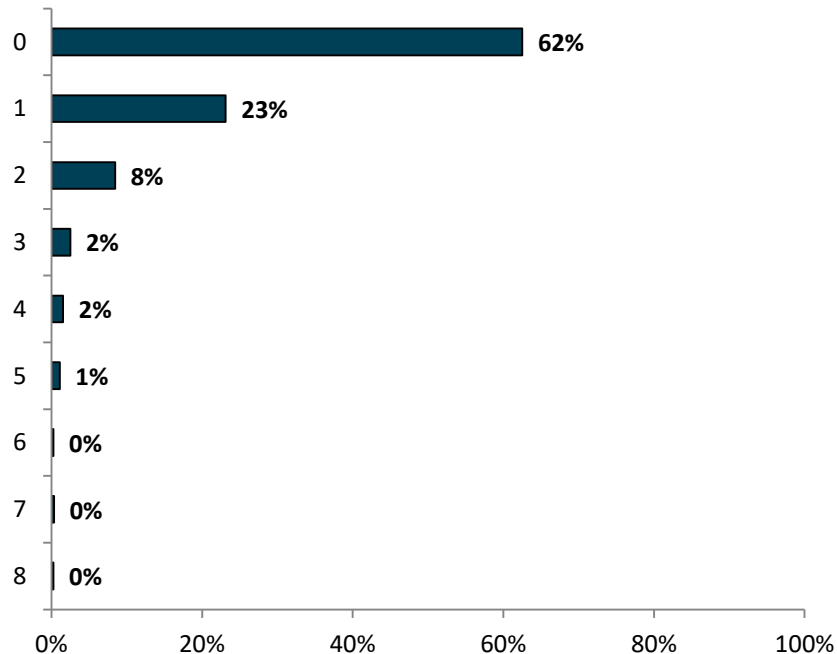
Mean Score



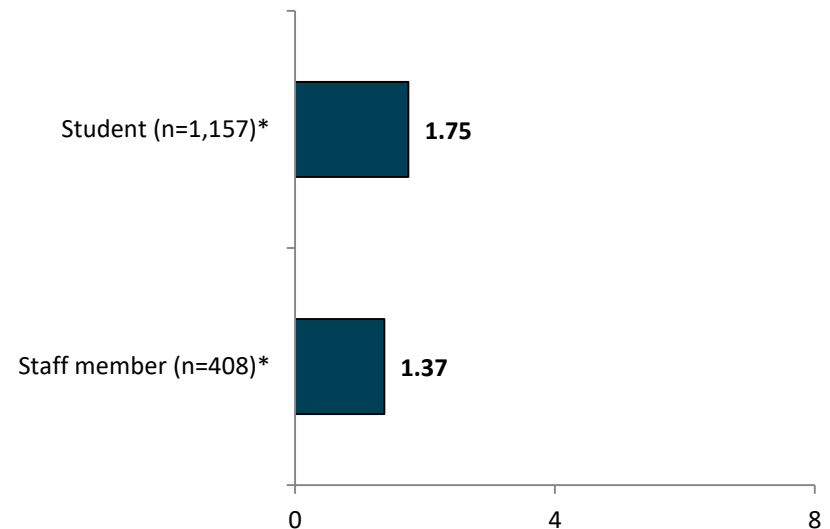
Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

First-Semester Courses

How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required both an alternative end-of-term project or take-home test and a semester final exam/portfolio at the end of the semester?
(n=1,565)



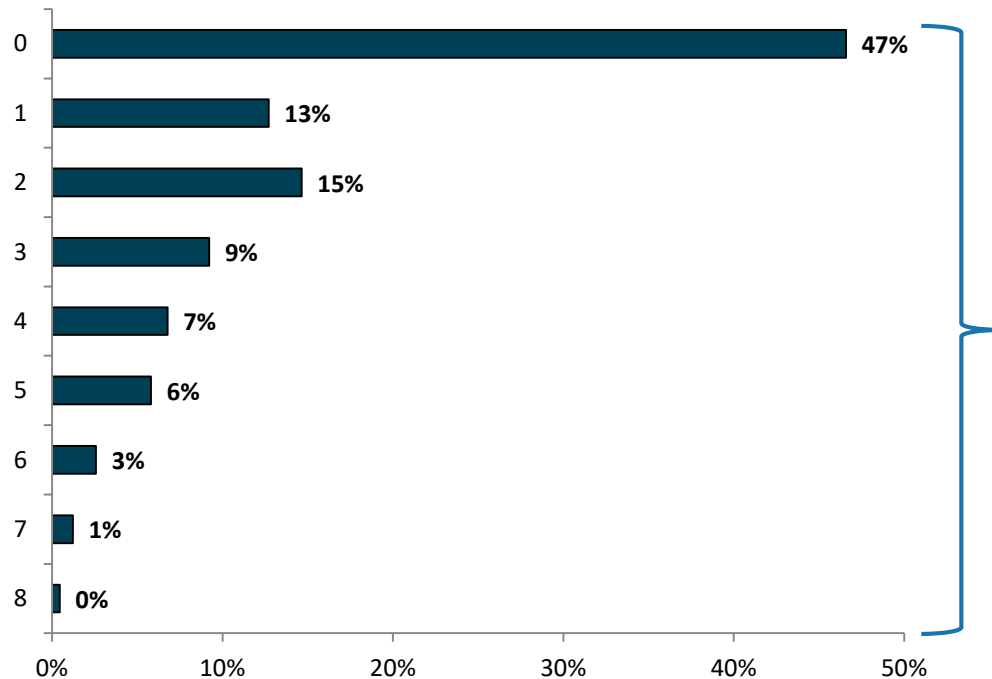
How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required both an alternative end-of-term project or take-home test and a semester final exam/portfolio at the end of the semester?
Mean Score



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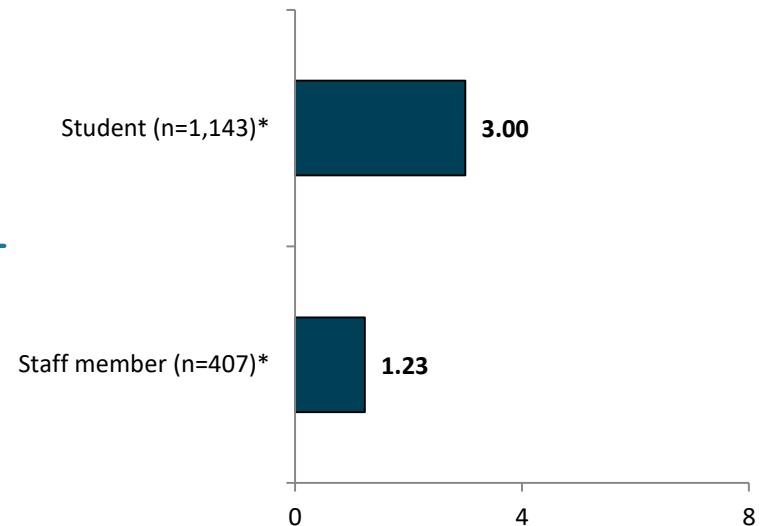
First-Semester Courses

How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required homework to be completed over winter break? (n=1,550)



How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required homework to be completed over winter break?

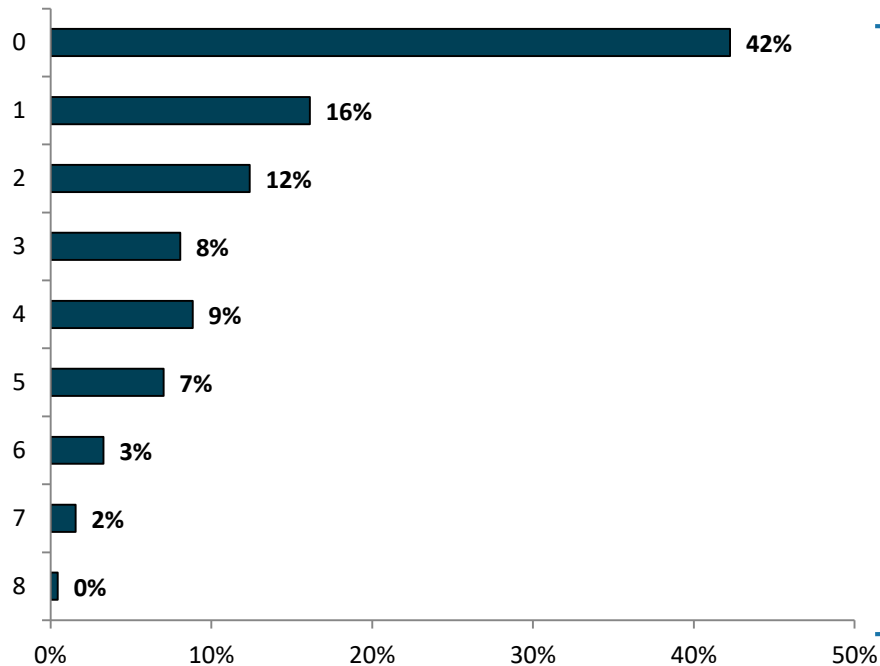
Mean Score



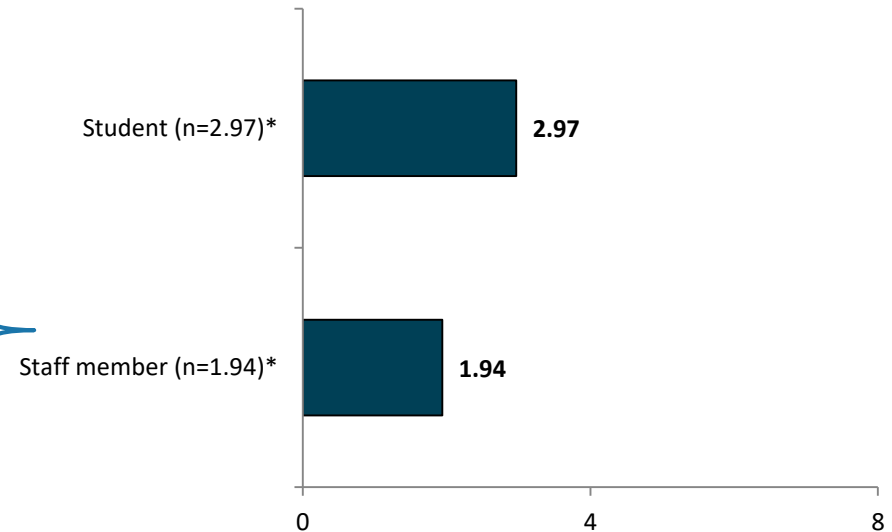
Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

First-Semester Courses

How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required a unit exam immediately prior to winter break?
(n=1,550)



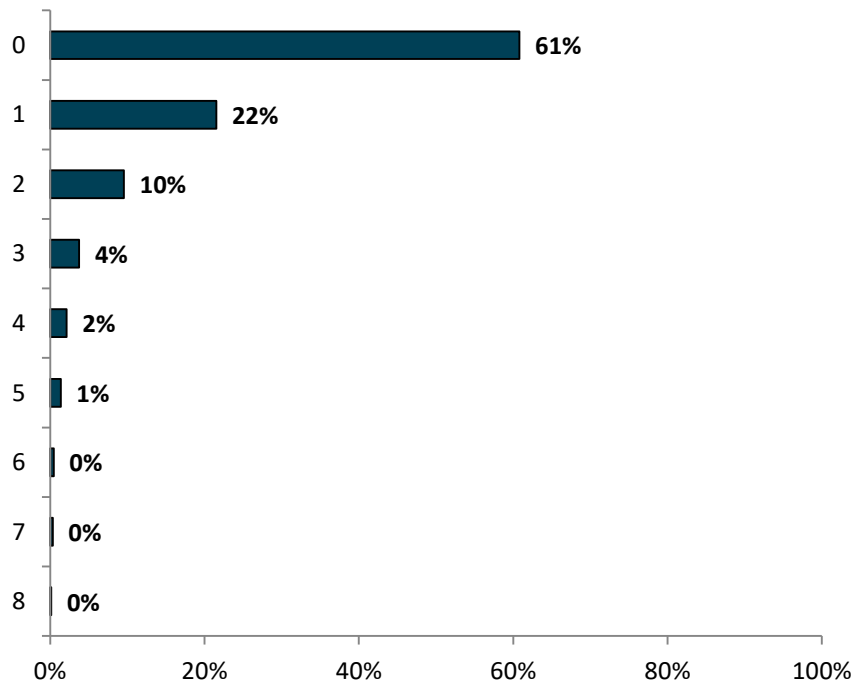
How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required a unit exam immediately prior to winter break?
Mean Score



Note: * Indicates statistically significant difference between stakeholder groups on this item at the 95% level.

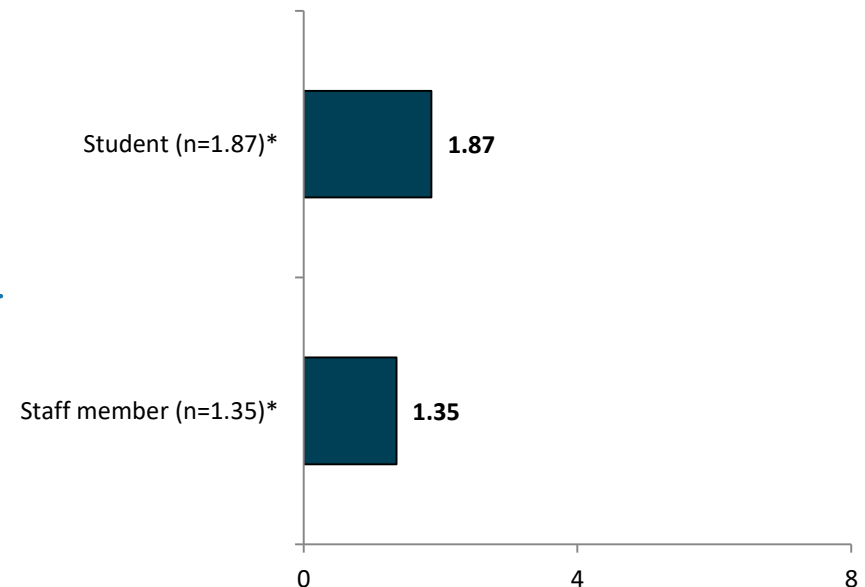
First-Semester Courses

How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required a project (not portfolio) to be handed in immediately prior to winter break? (n=1,548)



How many of your first semester courses ending in December 2017/January 2018 required a project (not portfolio) to be handed in immediately prior to winter break?

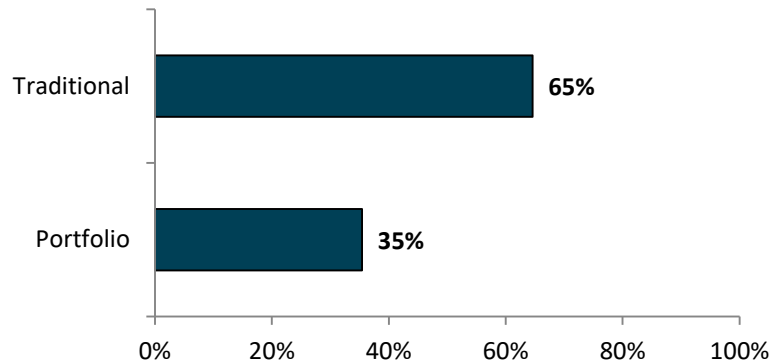
Mean Score



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Exam Preference and Final Exam Preparation

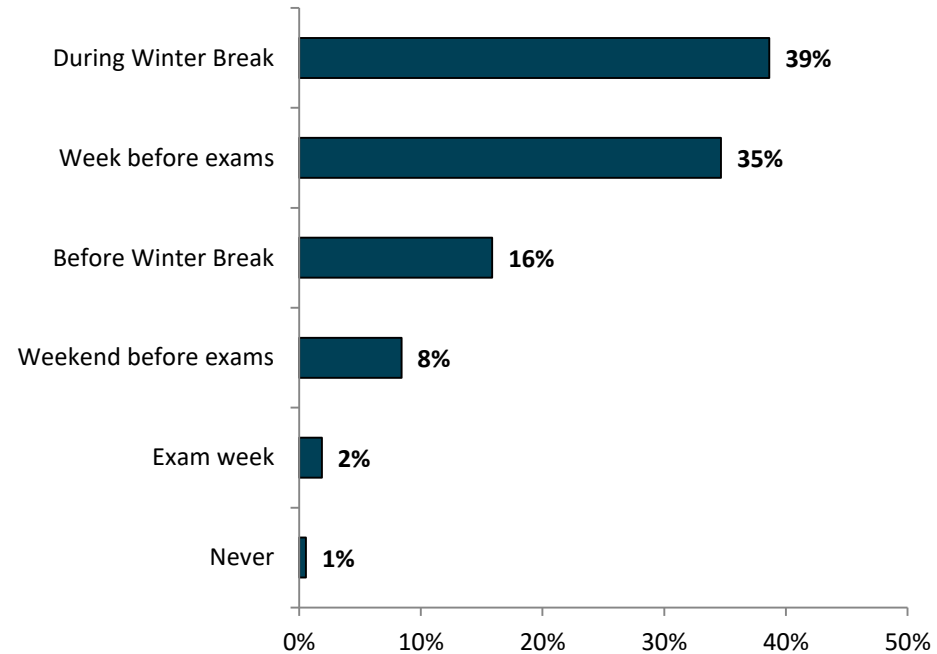
Do you prefer for exams to be traditional or portfolio? (n=1,680)



HIGH SCHOOL	COUNT (%)
Glenbrook South High School	2,845 (55%)
Glenbrook North High School	2,296 (44%)
Glenbrook Off-Campus	40 (1%)

n=5,181

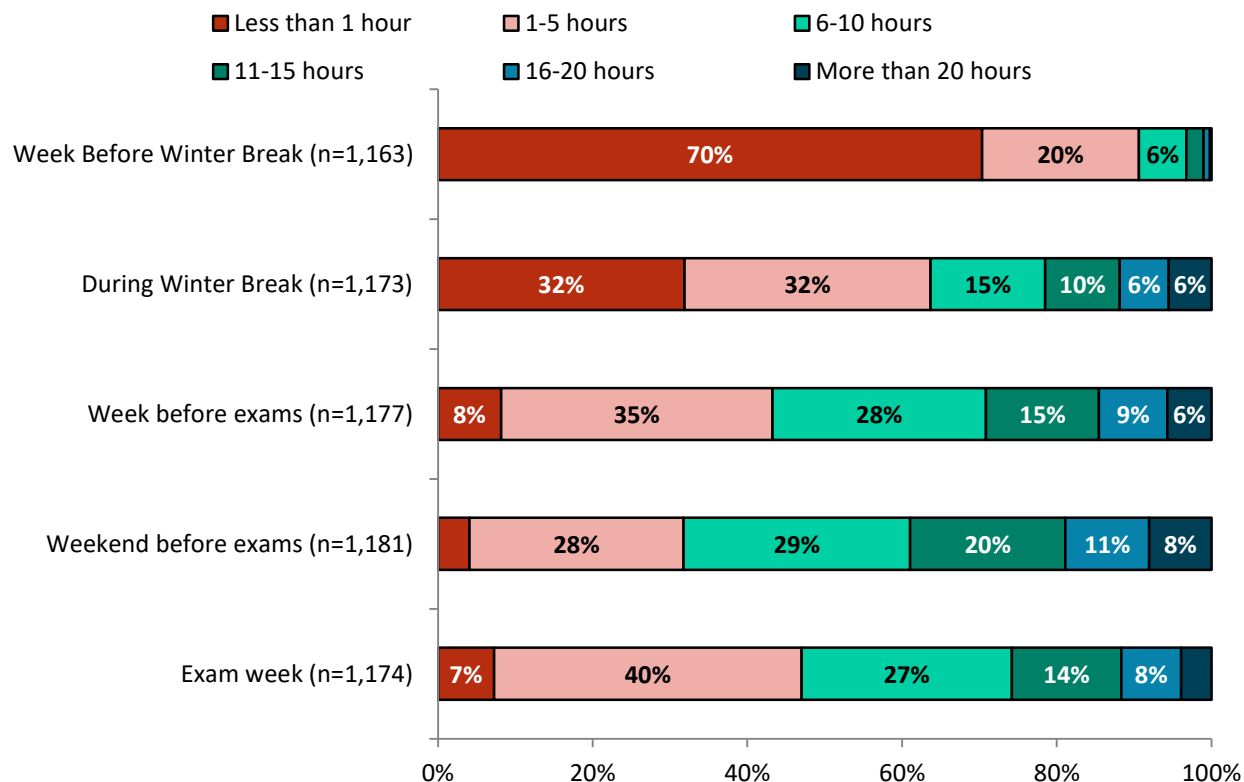
When do you usually start focusing on first-semester final exam preparation? (n=1,235)



Note: This question was only asked of students.

Time Spent Studying for First-Semester Exams

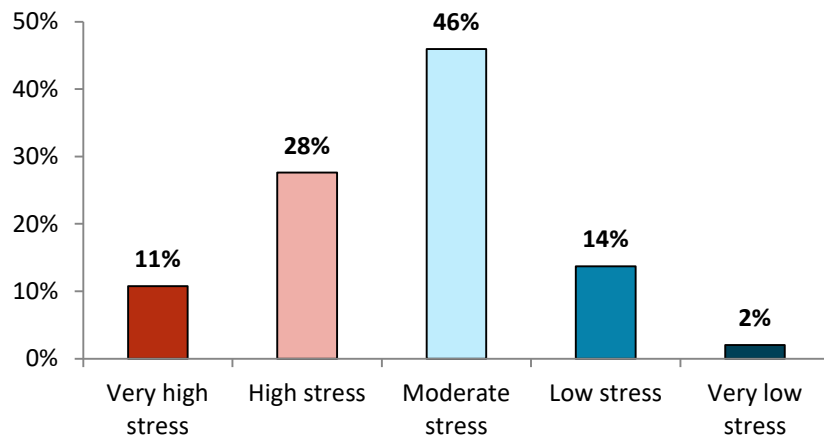
How much time would you estimate that you spend studying or preparing for first-semester final exams during the following times?



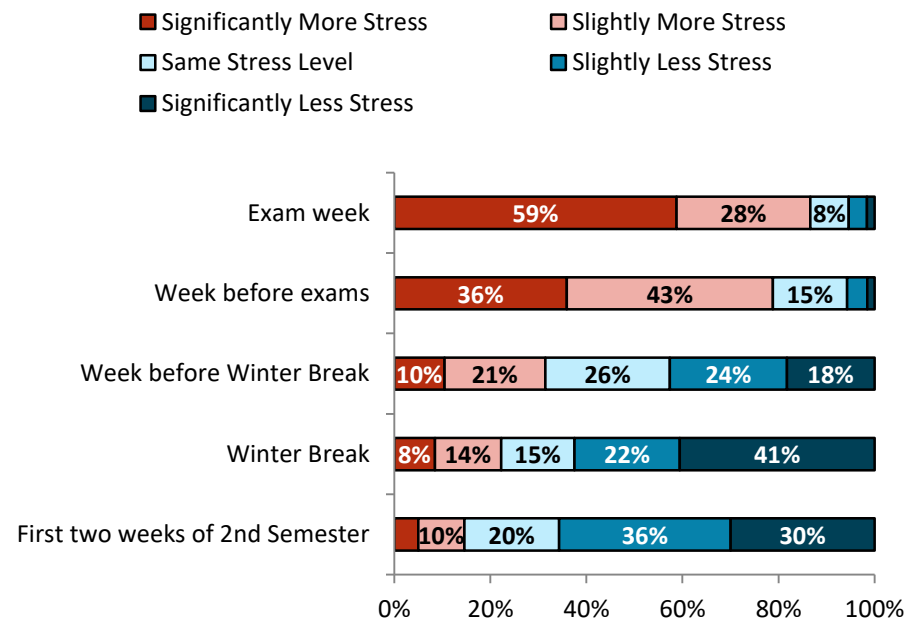
Note: This question was only asked of students.

Level of Stress

How do you rate your level of stress during a typical school week? (n=1,152)



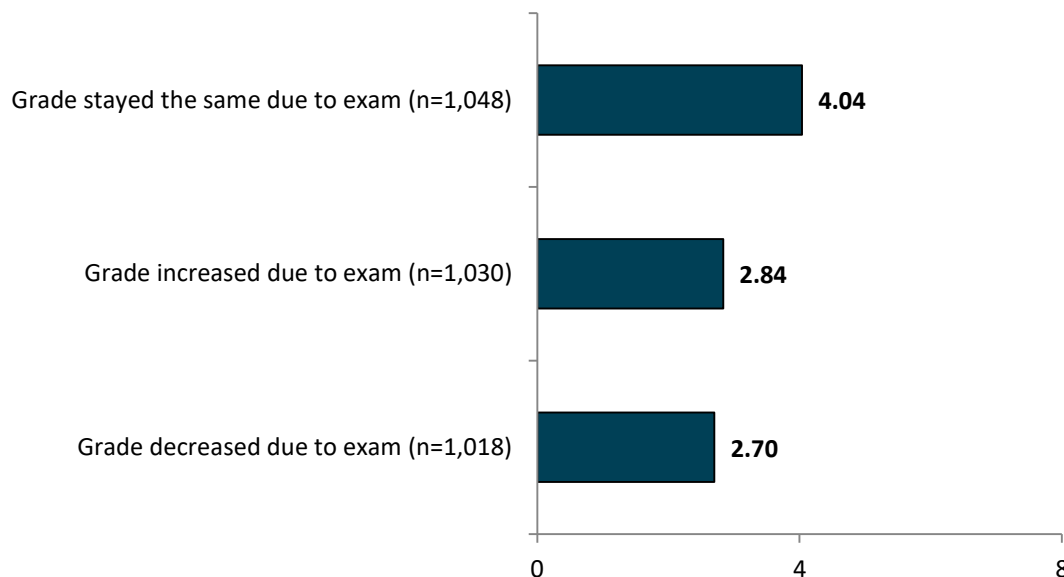
Compared with a typical school week, how do you rate your level of stress at the following times during December 2017 and January 2018? (n=1,152)



Note: These questions were only asked of students.

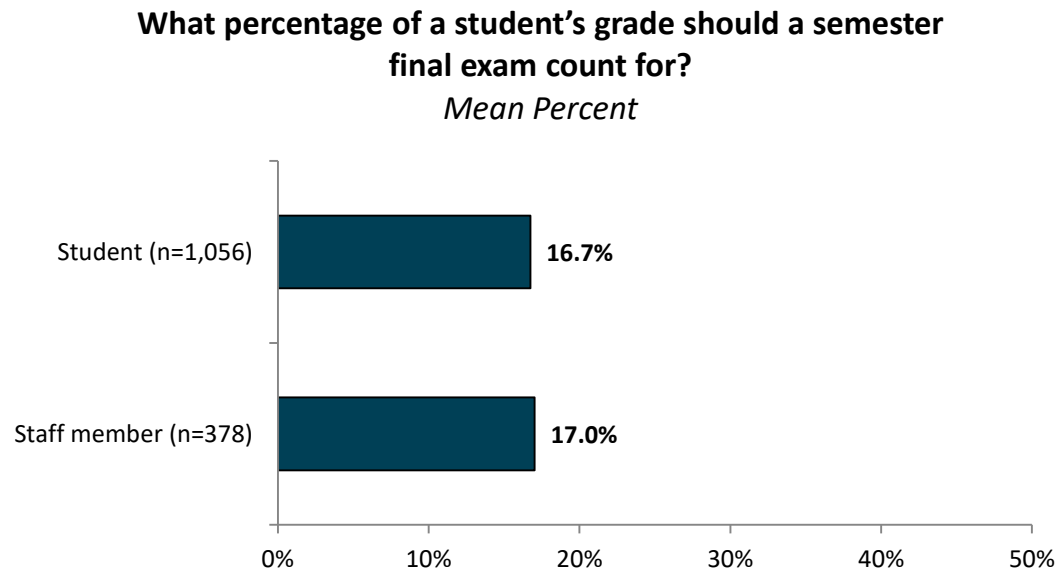
Change in Course Grades Following Recent Exam Period

During the most recent exam period, approximately how many of your course grades increased, stayed the same, and decreased following the final exam?



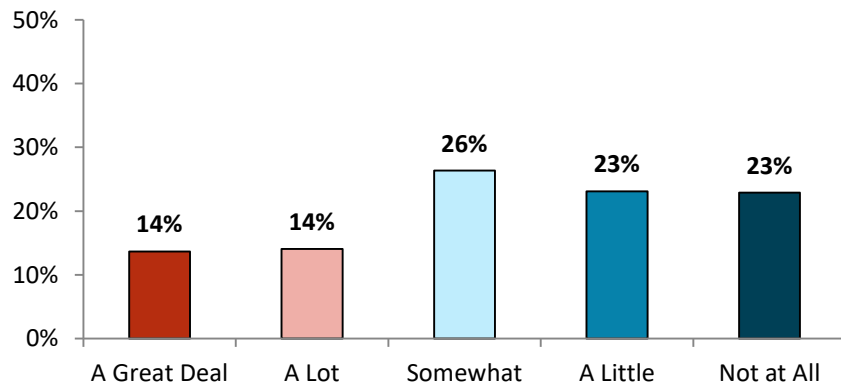
Note: This question was only asked of students.

Percent of Student's Grade that Final Exams Should Count As

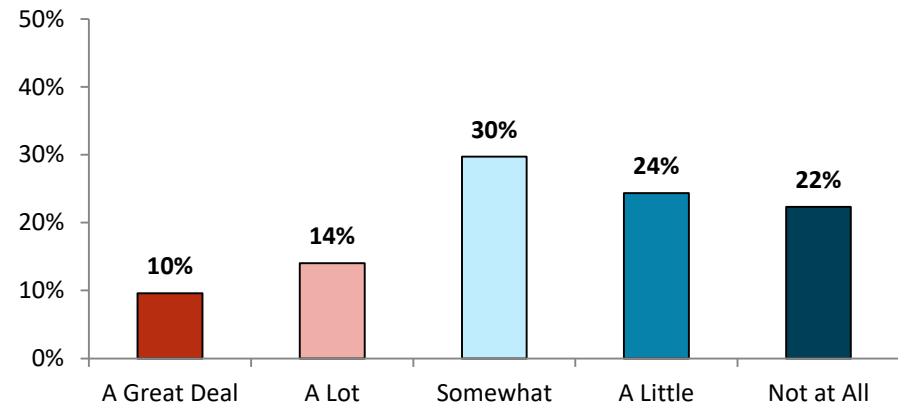


First-Semester Final Exam Preparation

How much do you think ongoing coursework will interfere with first-semester final exam preparation if first-semester final exams are scheduled to be taken before Winter Break? (n=4,888)

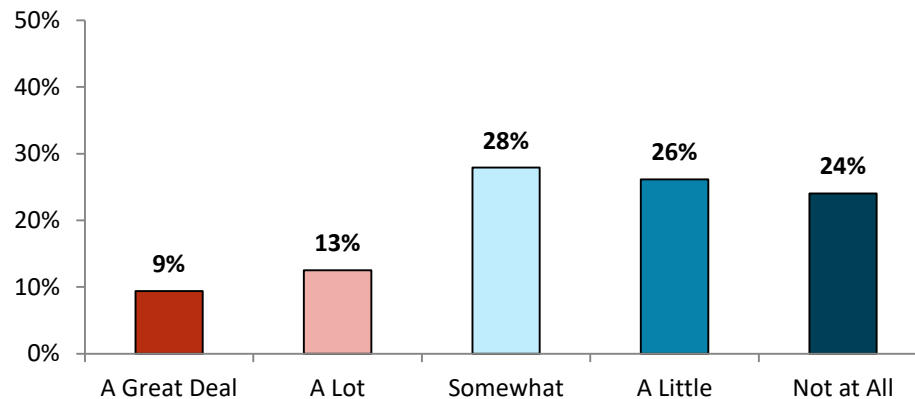


How much will involvement in non-academic activities (school extracurriculars, family, etc.) interfere with first-semester final exam preparation? (n=4,900)



Non-Academic Activities and Final Exam Preparation Before Winter Break

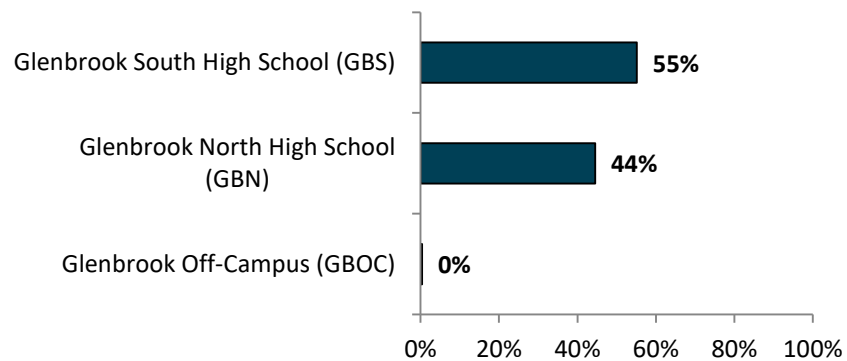
How much will involvement in non-academic activities (school extracurriculars, family, etc.) interfere with unit exam and project preparation just before Winter Break? (n=4,916)



RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

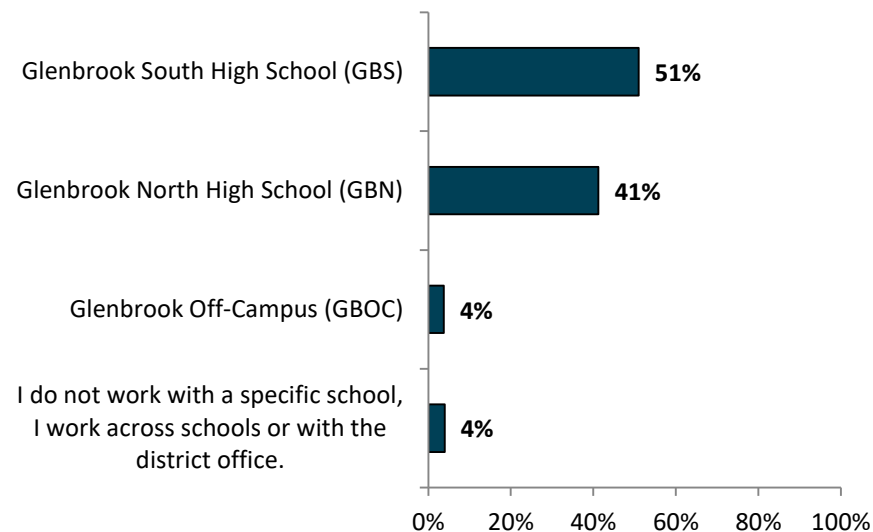
School

Which Glenbrook school do you/does your child currently attend? (n=4,599)



Note: This question was only asked of students and parents.

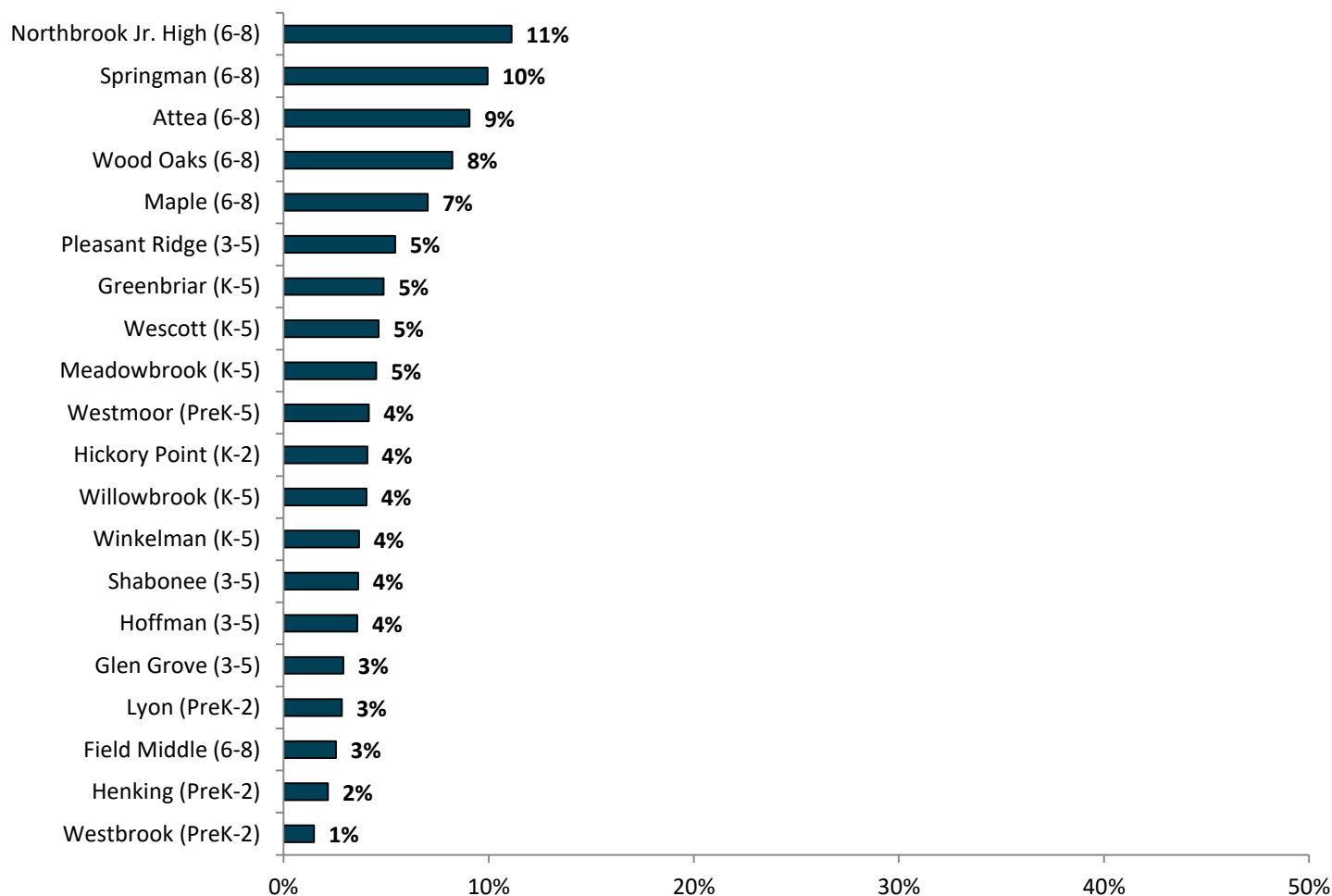
In which school do you primarily work? (n=606)



Note: This question was only asked of staff members.

Feeder School

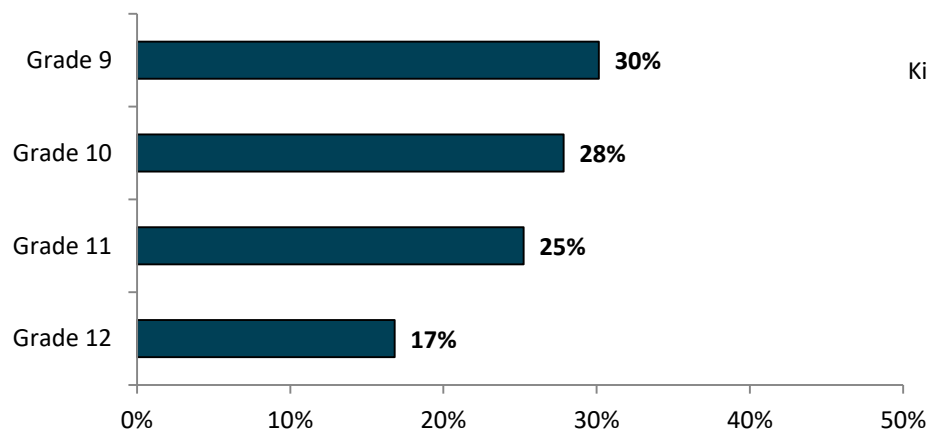
What feeder school do you/does your child currently attend? (n=2,502)



Note: This question was only asked of parents of a Glenbrook High School feeder school student.

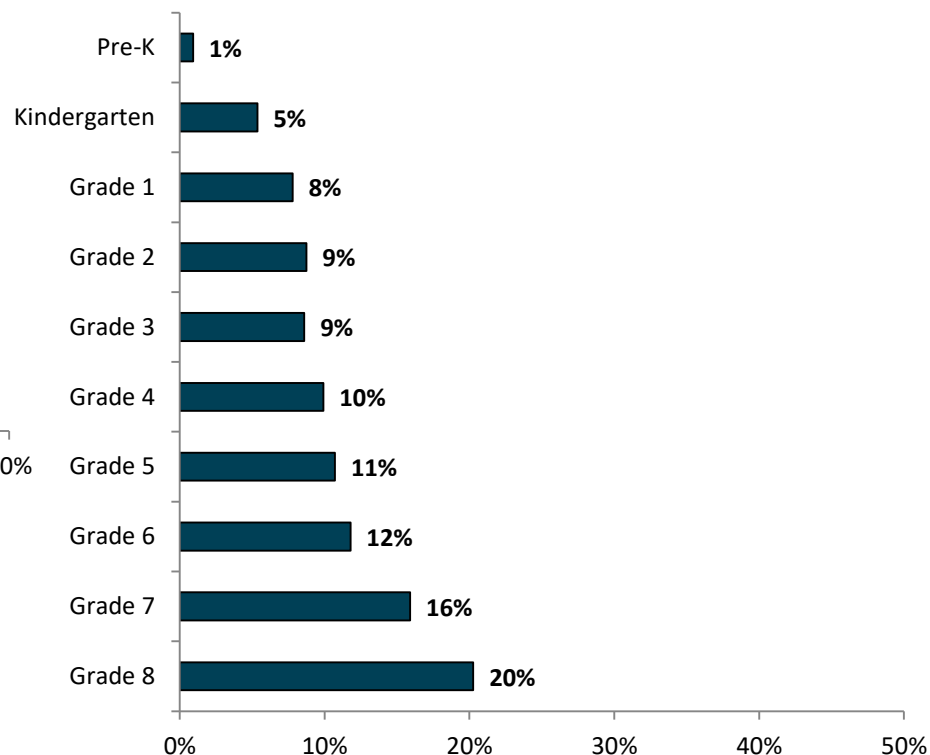
Grade Level

**Please select your grade level/child's grade level:
(n=4,599)**



Note: This question was only asked of students and parents.

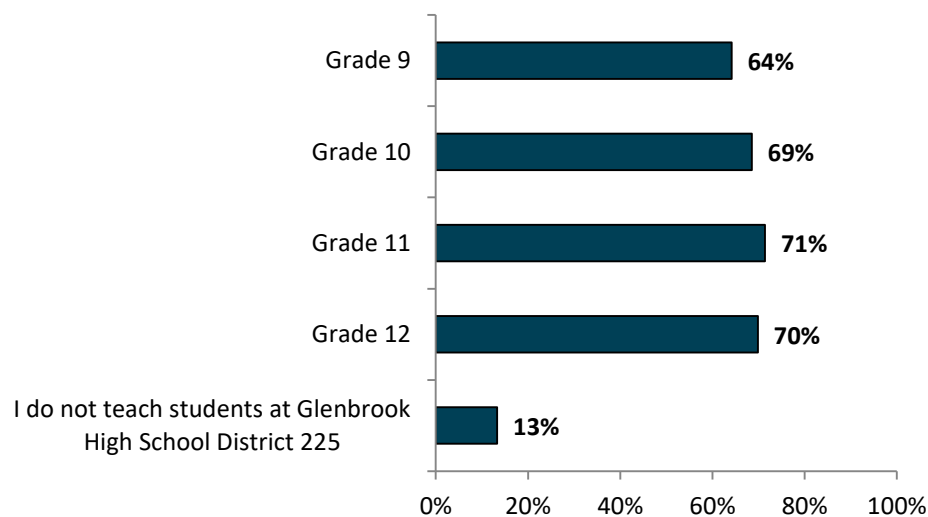
Please select your child's grade level: (n=2,502)



Note: This question was only asked of parents of a Glenbrook High School feeder school student.

Grade Level

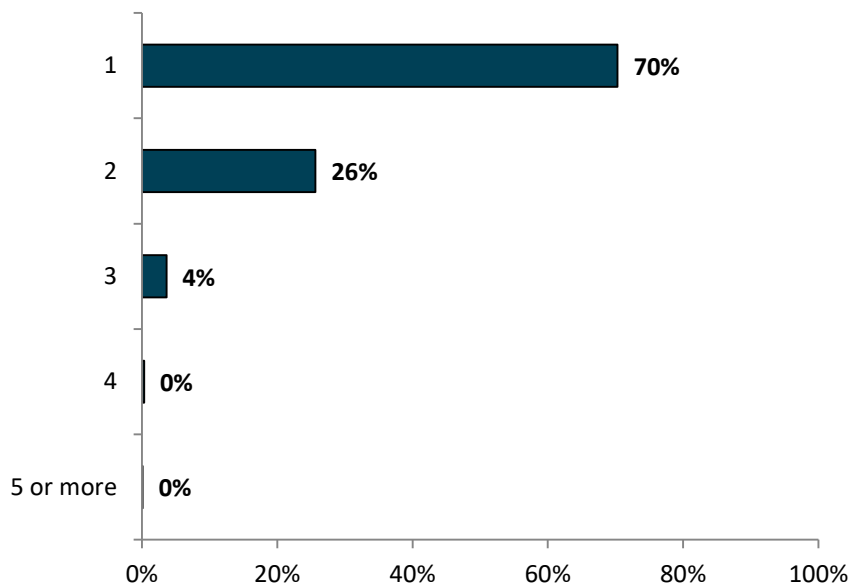
What grades level do you teach at Glenbrook High School District 225? Select all the apply. (n=458)



Note: This question was only asked of certified staff members.

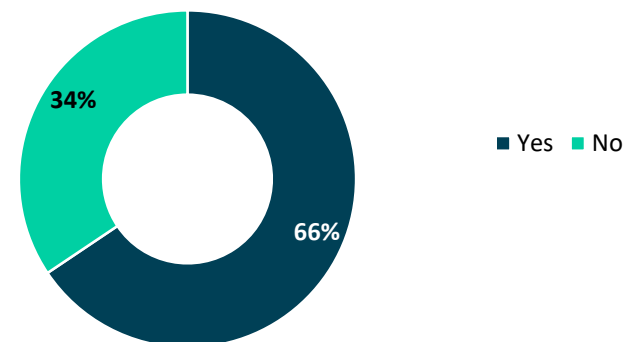
Children Enrolled in Glenbrook Schools

How many children do you currently have enrolled in Glenbrook? (n=2,508)



Note: This question was only asked of parents.

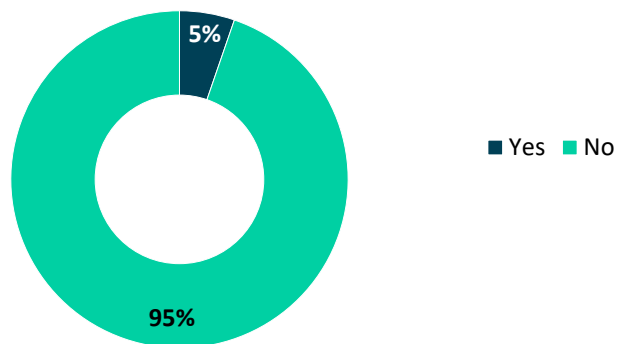
Do you have a child who attends a Glenbrook High School District feeder school? (n=5,228)



Note: This question was only asked of parents and staff members.

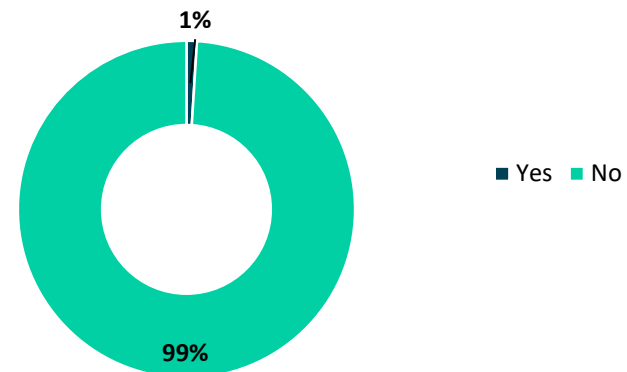
Multiple Roles

Are you also the parent of a Glenbrook High School student? (n=606)



Note: This question was only asked of staff members.

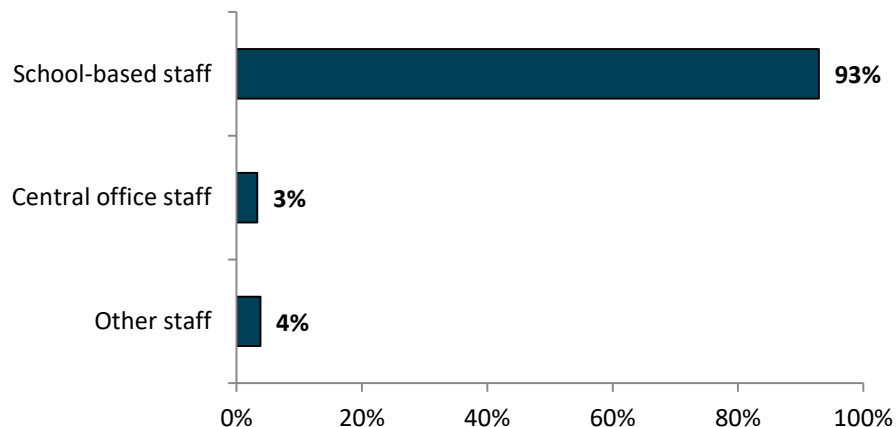
Are you also a Glenbrook High School staff member? (n=2,508)



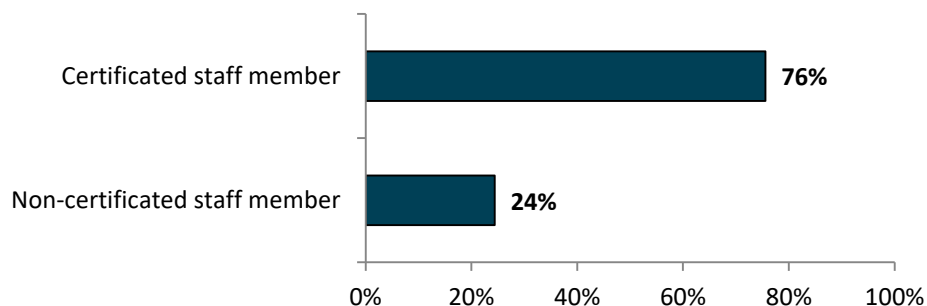
Note: This question was only asked of parents.

Staff Role

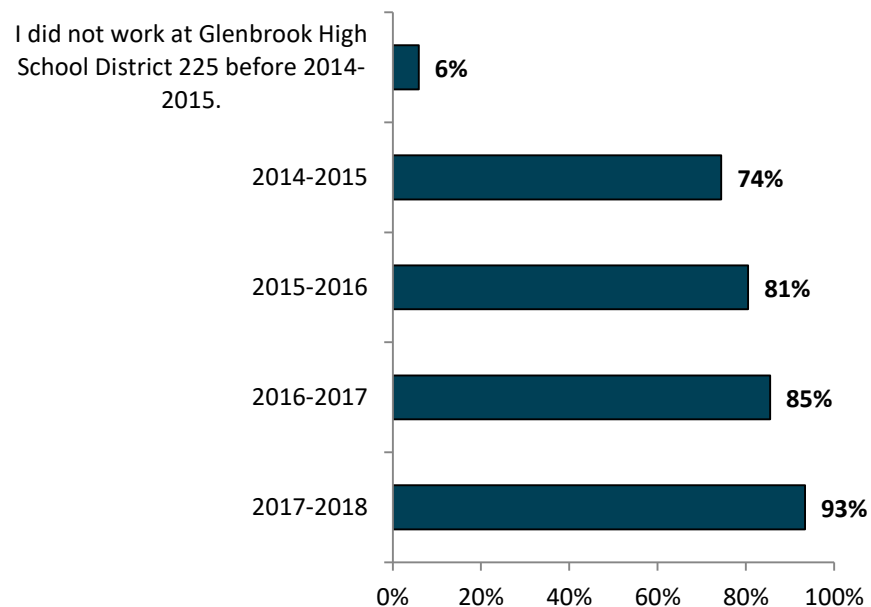
Which of the following best describes your role at Glenbrook High School? (n=606)



Are you a certificated or non-certificated staff member? (n=606)

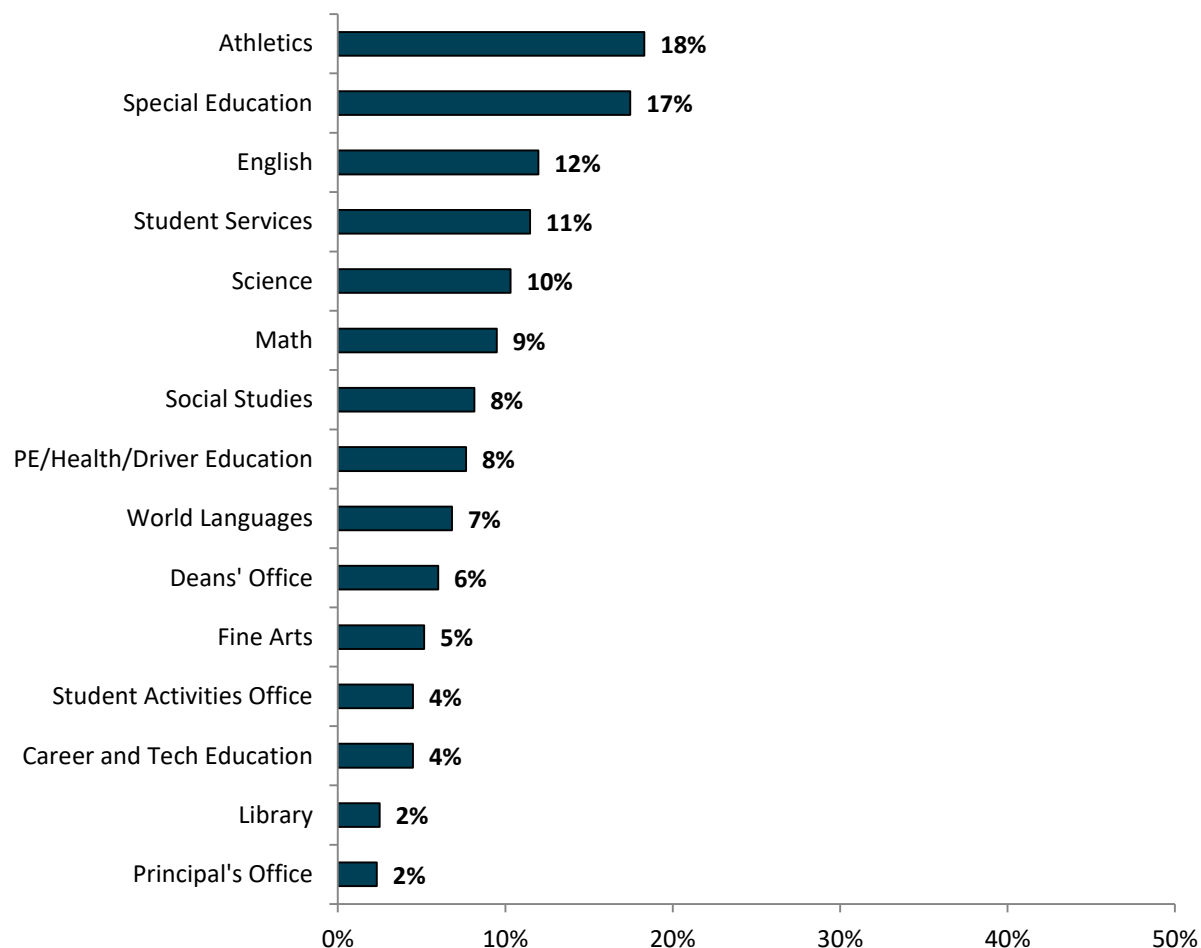


Please select the previous school years you worked at Glenbrook High School District 225. Please select all that apply. (n=606)



School and Department

In which of the following departments or areas did you work in the 2017-2018 academic year? Please select all that apply. (n=601)



Note: This question was only asked of staff members. Only the top 15 most selected departments are visualized. For full results, see data supplement.



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