

Student, Teacher, and Parent Perspectives on Stress, Homework, Activities, and Coursetaking

July 2019

Introduction

As part of an effort to better support students' emotional health, D205 began by gathering information from students, staff, and parents. In May 2019, teachers, parents, and students in grades 6-12 participated in a survey asking about perceptions of stress, amounts of time spent on homework and homework practices, and related issues. D205 will use this information as initial input to inform potential actions to strengthen student wellness. This document summarizes feedback from each survey, including the following sections:

- Key Findings
- Survey Administration
- Perceptions of Stress
- Causes of Stress
- Time Spent on Activities Outside of School
- Time Spent on Schoolwork/Homework
- Homework Practices and Purpose
- Sleep and Start Time

Key Findings

As part of an effort to better support students' emotional health, D205 began by gathering information from students, staff, and parents. In May 2019, middle and high school teachers, parents, and students participated in a survey asking about perceptions of stress, amounts of time spent on homework and homework practices, and related issues. D205 will use this information as initial input to inform potential actions to strengthen student wellness

Perceptions of Stress

- More older students indicate higher stress levels than younger students, with over 50 percent of high school students reporting an average stress level of 8 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 10). Almost one-fifth of the 11th grade class (19%) reported the maximum stress level of 10. Parents report somewhat lower stress levels for their students than students themselves report, while teacher reports of the extent to which they believe that students experience high levels of stress generally match student reports.

Causes of Stress

- Getting good grades was identified as a top stressor by more than half of students at both middle school and high school (62 percent at middle school and 73 percent at high school mentioned this as either their first or second causes for stress). For high school students, getting into a good college was the next most-commonly cited stressor, with 39 percent of students mentioning this as a major cause of stress. One-third of middle school students and one-quarter of high school students felt a main source of stress was having enough time for homework and other activities. Parents identified similar stressors for students.
- Suggestions from staff, students, and parents to reduce stress included reducing homework, coordinating assignments, offering study hall and stress management resources/courses, limiting numbers of advanced courses students take and managing expectations around course-taking and the college applications process.

Time Spent on Activities Outside of School

- On average, students report spending about 21 to 23 hours per week on before- or after-school activities such as sports, clubs, chores and family obligations, paid jobs, and other activities.

Time Spent on Homework

- The amount of time students report spending homework increases by grade. High school students most commonly report spending 2-3 hours per day on homework, 7th and 8th graders most commonly report spending 1 to 1 ½ hours per day on homework, and 6th graders most commonly report spending less than one hour on homework. Over 50 percent of high school students report spending over 2 hours on homework per day. Most parents report that their students spend somewhat less time on homework than students do. Overall, both teachers and parents suggest that students should spend less time on homework than they are.
- Students taking more advanced courses more commonly report spending more time on homework than students taking fewer advanced courses (for example, about one-third of

students taking 4 or more advanced courses report spending more than 3 hours on homework per night).

- Students who report doing more homework show higher average stress levels. Mean stress levels, however, do not appear to relate directly with increased numbers of advanced courses.
- Middle and high school students both report that main reasons for taking advanced courses was school recommendations and a sense that those courses will help them get into college or more advanced courses in high school. Middle school students also reported parents wanting them to take an advanced course as a common reason. Middle and high school students report taking electives mainly because of their interest. In general, parents cite student interest and ability to develop skills like critical thinking and communication as the most important reasons for students to choose courses, which align to reasons students report for taking electives, but not advanced courses.

Homework Practices and Purpose

- Overall, fifty-three percent of students report that homework helps them learn what they need to know in class. Survey responses show some differences between student, parent, and teacher responses related to homework practice. For example, 52% of teachers say they almost always explain the purpose of the homework they assign, with an additional 18% reporting that they do “more than half the time.” However, 70 to 80 percent of students say teachers “never” or “sometimes” explain the purpose of homework being assigned. Responses to questions about feedback and grades on homework show a similar pattern.
- More teachers and parents say that the purpose of homework is to help students practice skills or strengthen what they know than students report that it actually serves this purposes (over 90 percent of parents and teachers report this purpose, while about 71 percent of students report that homework serves this purpose). Over 60 percent of parents and teachers report that homework should spark student interest and curiosity about a subject, but only 12 percent of students say that their homework assignments are interesting and make them want to learn more about a topic. More parents report that homework serves to help students learn to manage their time than teachers or students.

Student Sleep

- On average, middle school students report 8.4 hours of sleep and high school students report 7 hours of sleep per night, less than National Sleep Foundation recommendations. Middle school students say that in about half of the last 7 days (3.7 days), they got enough sleep so that they felt rested. On average, high school students report getting enough sleep 2.7 out of the last 7 days. About 40 percent of students report that they had a “little problem” getting up to go to school in the last 7 days, with about 11 percent of middle schools students and 32 percent of high school students saying they had a “big” or “very big” problem getting up for school. Students who reported having bigger problems getting up also reported higher stress levels on average.

Survey Administration

Table 1 shows responses rates for each survey. Copies of each survey are included in Appendix A.

Table 1. Survey Response Rates

Students			Parents			Staff		
<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Response Rate</i>
6	403	66%	6	122	20%	Middle	65	35%
7	517	76%	7	93	14%			
8	430	67%	8	69	11%			
9	185	25%	9	153	20%	High school	100	46%
10	208	29%	10	123	17%			
11	227	32%	11	105	15%			
12	N/A	N/A	12	27	5%			
<i>Total</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>692</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>41%</i>

Perceptions of Stress

Students were asked to rate their average level of stress in the prior week on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating “not stressed at all” and 10 indicating that the student felt “extremely stressed.” Figure 1 shows that more older students indicate higher stress levels than younger students, with over 50 percent of the population reporting an 8 or higher in high school. The average stress levels also generally increase as grade level increases, though the mean stress of the tenth grade is lower than the ninth grade. Again, however the proportion of students in the higher stress levels is greater at 10th grade than 9th. Almost one-fifth of the 11th grade class (19%) reported the maximum stress level of 10. As shown in Figure 2, parents report somewhat lower stress levels for their students than students themselves report.

Figure 1. Student Reports of Stress Levels by Grade

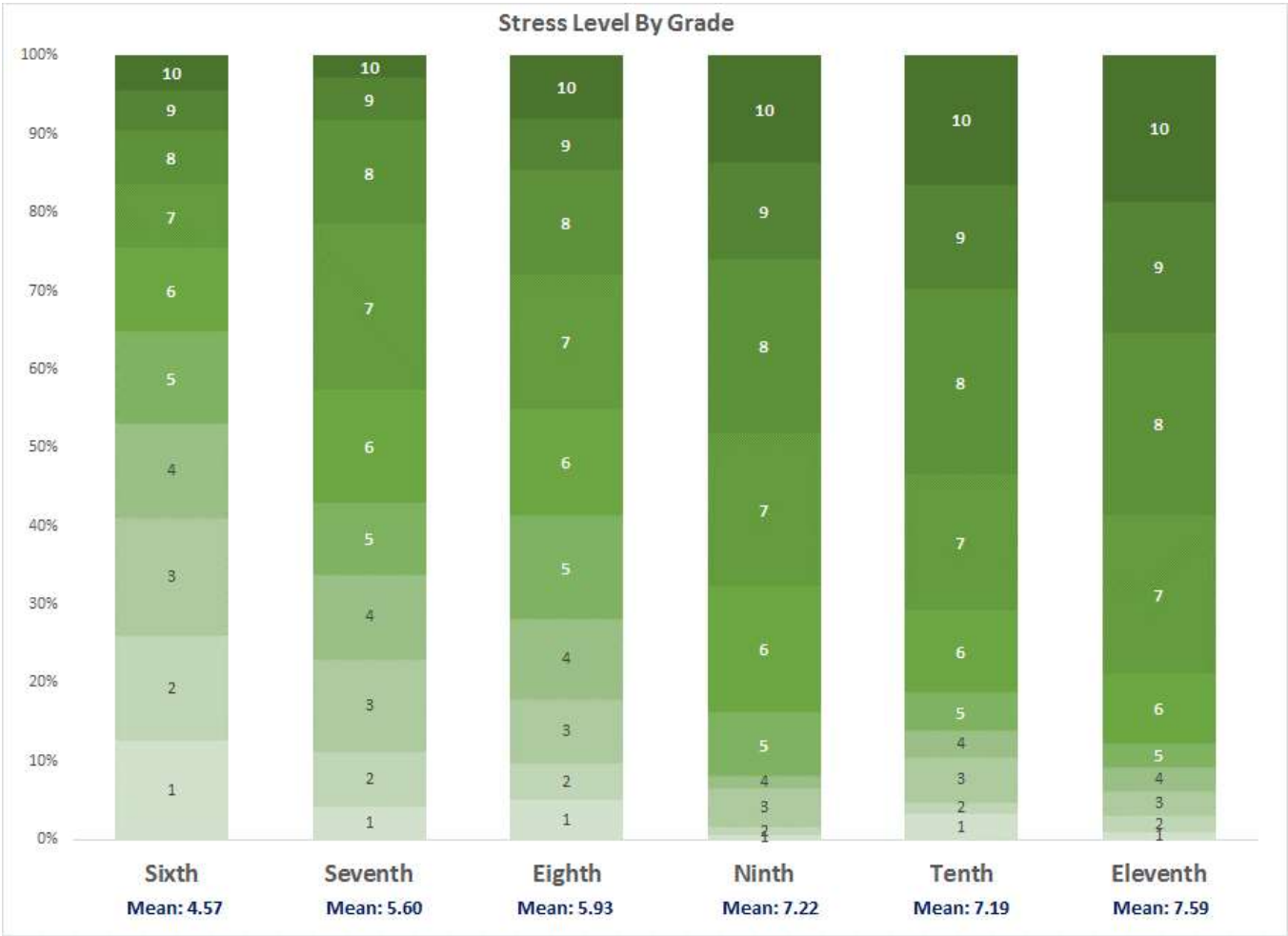
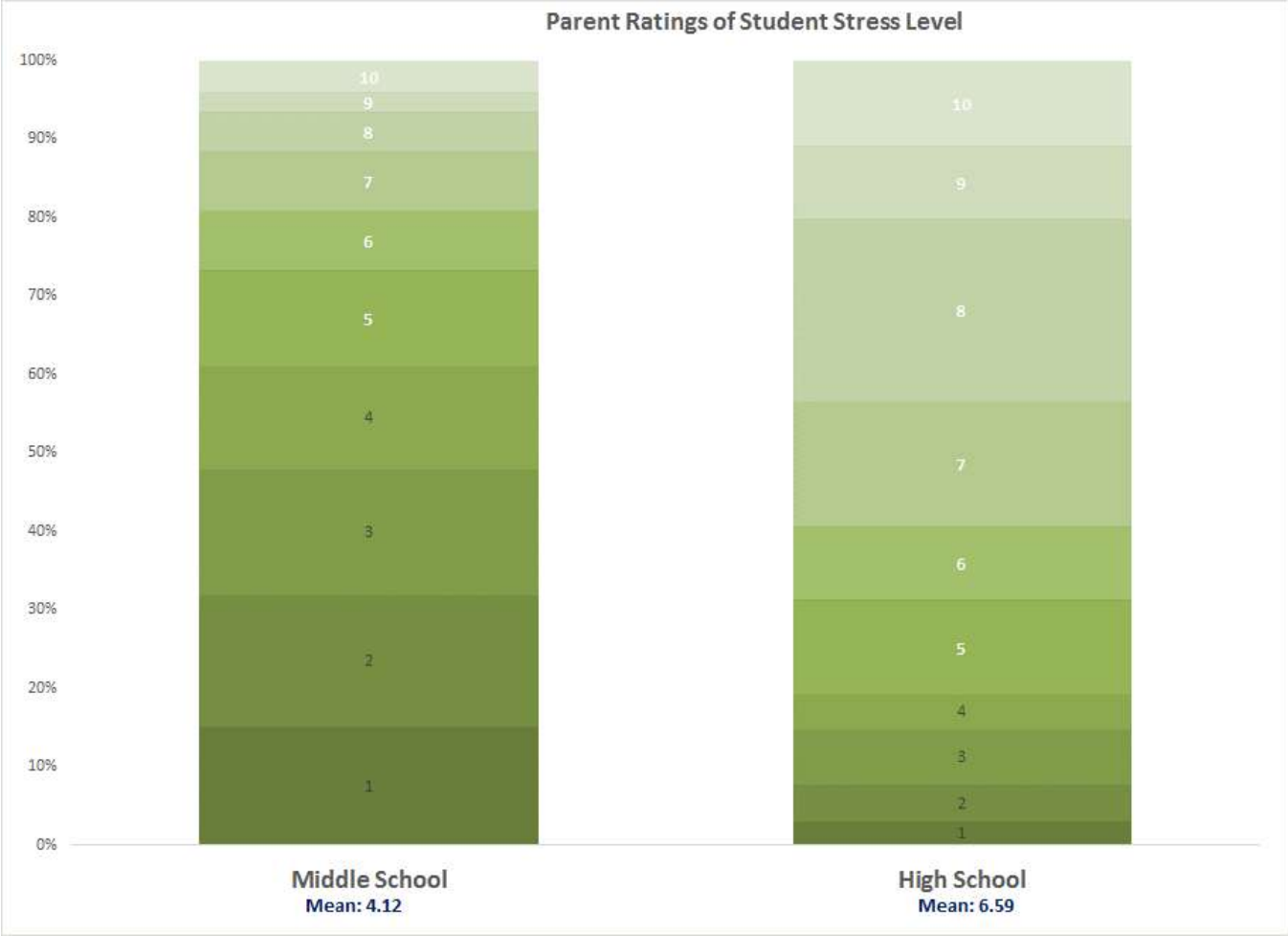


Figure 2. Parent Reports of Student Stress Levels



Teachers were also asked about the extent to which they believe that students experience high levels of stress (though they were not asked to provide an average level of stress). As shown in Table 2, most middle school teachers report that a few students are highly stressed, which seems to correspond to student reports in which about 20 percent of students report stress levels of 8 or higher. At the high school level, most teachers say that “some” students are highly stressed, compared to at least 50 percent of students reporting a stress level of 8 or higher.

Table 2. Teacher Perceptions of Student Stress

Middle School Teachers	N	%
Most students are highly stressed	6	9%
Some students are highly stressed	22	34%
A few students are highly stressed	34	52%
Don't know/not sure	3	5%
High School Teachers	N	%
Most students are highly stressed	21	21%
Some students are highly stressed	55	55%
A few students are highly stressed	23	23%
Don't know/not sure	1	1%

Causes of Stress

Students were provided a list of potential stressors identified by district staff and asked to select their top two.¹ Figures 3 and 4 show that getting good grades was identified as a top stressor by more than half of students at both middle school and high school (62 percent at middle school and 73 percent at high school mentioned this as either their first or second causes for stress). For high school students, getting into a good college was the next most-commonly cited stressor, with 39 percent of students mentioning this as a major cause of stress. One-third of middle school students and one-quarter of high school students felt a main source of stress was having enough time for homework and other activities. An additional 16% of high school students and 23% of middle school students identified having enough time to get homework done as a primary stressor. As shown in Figure 5, parents also identified getting good grades and having enough time for homework and other activities as primary causes of stress for their students.

¹ Because students could choose two stressors, percentages in Figures 2 and 3 do not sum to 100 percent.

Figure 3. Stressors for Middle School Students

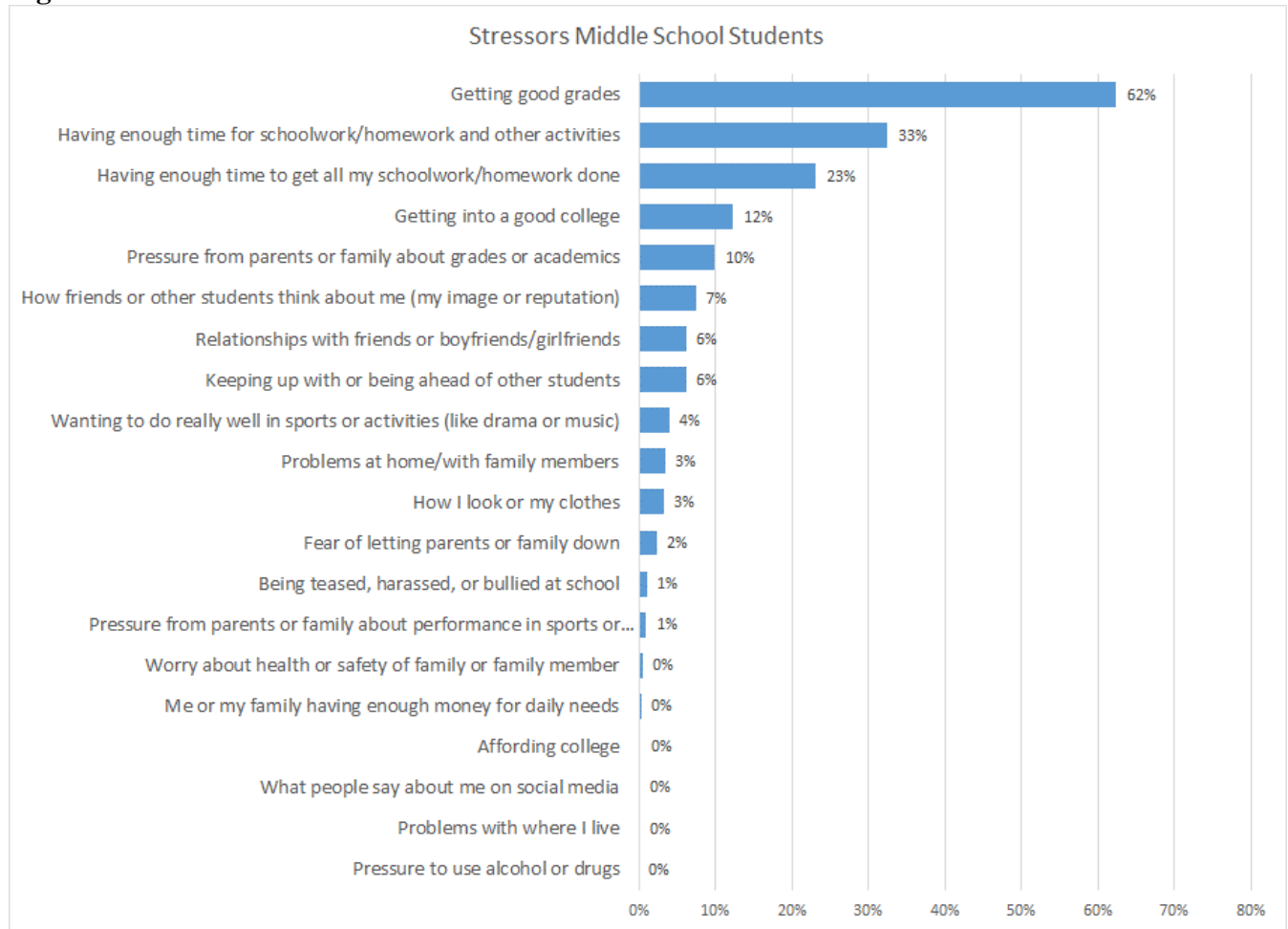


Figure 4. Stressors for High School Students

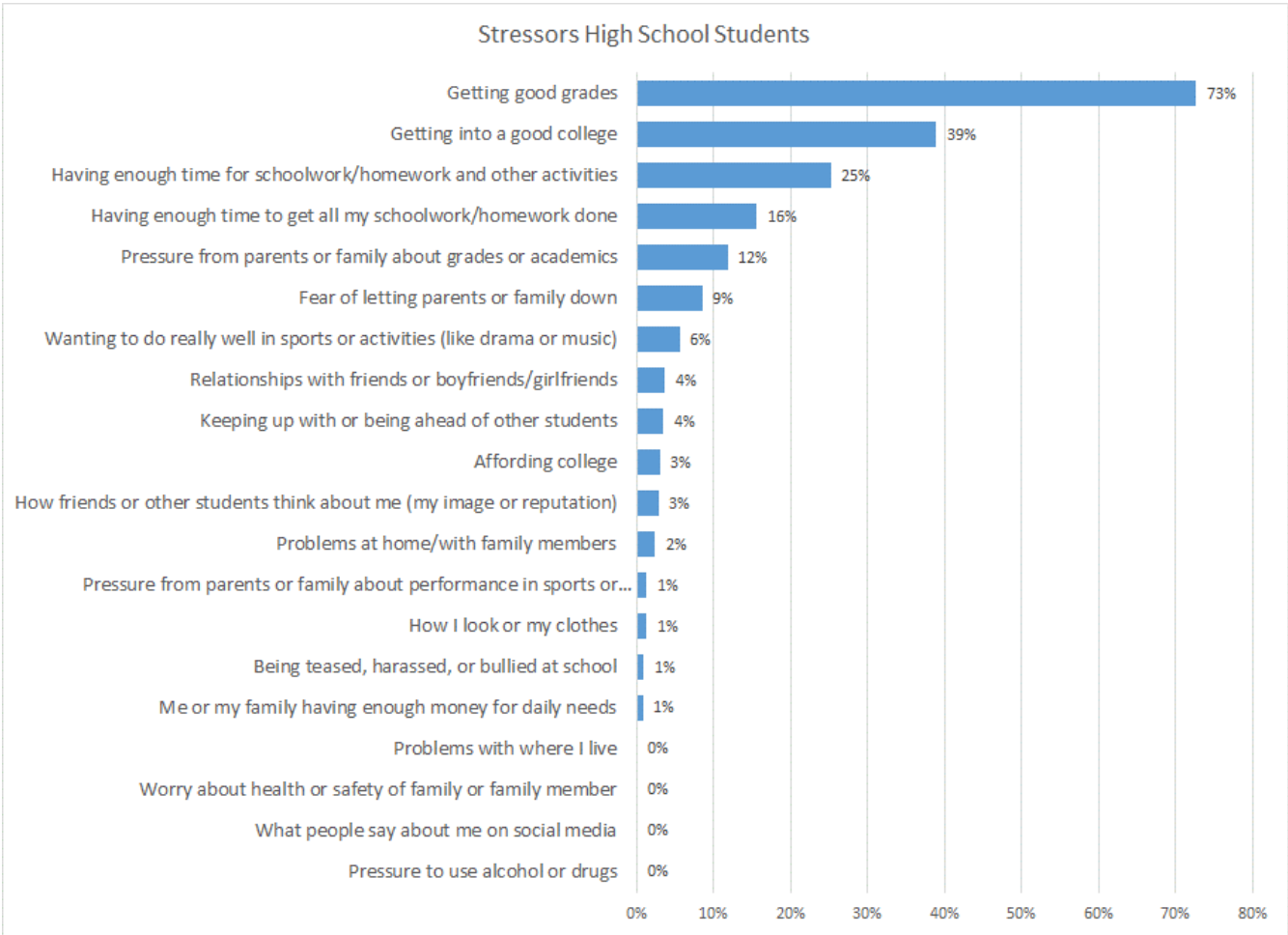
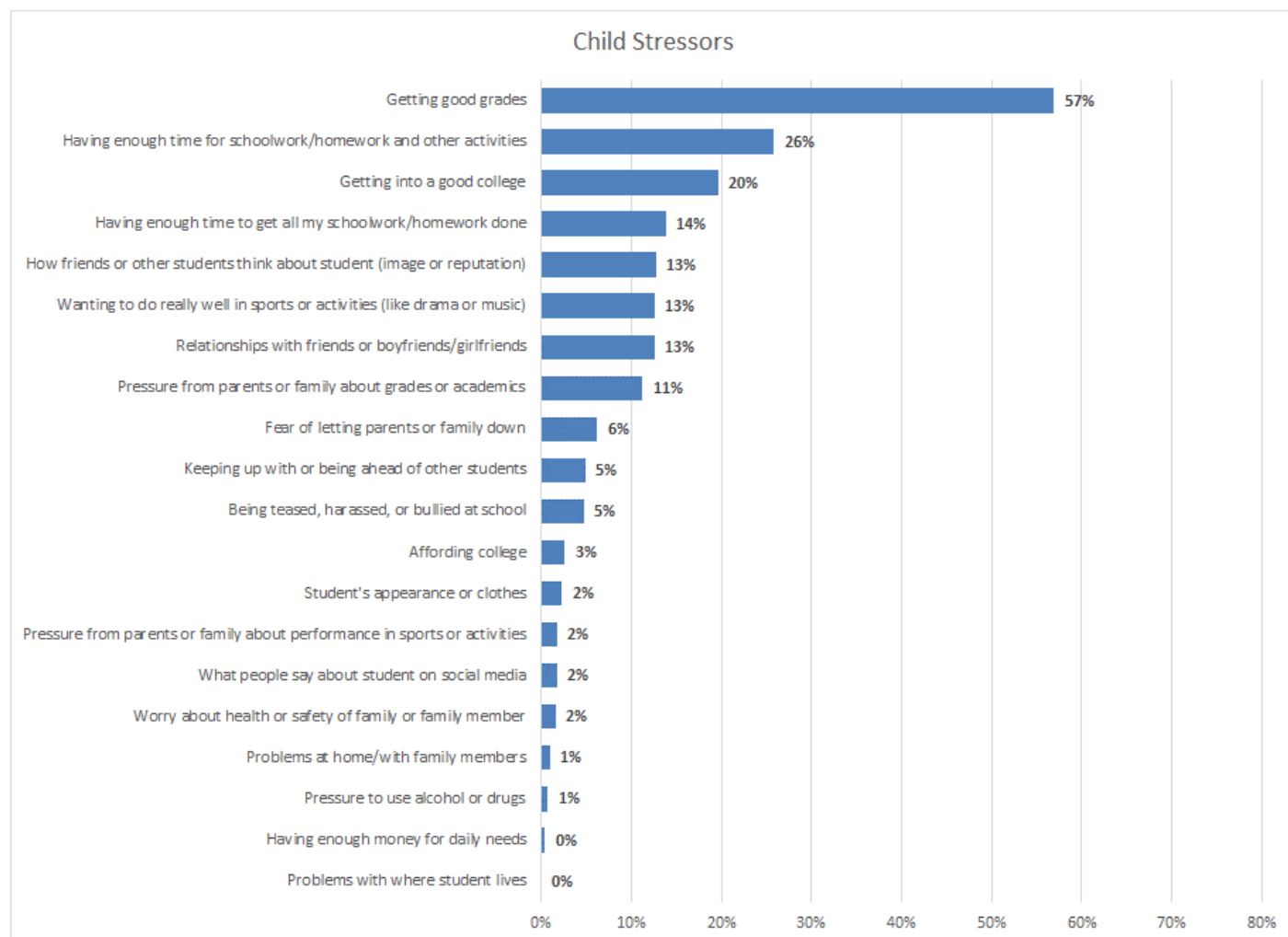


Figure 5. Parent Perceptions of Student Stressors



Parents, students, and staff were also asked for their suggestions on how the district or their schools might work to reduce student stress. Appendix C provides a detailed summary of responses by group. In general, suggestions related to reducing homework, coordinating assignments, offering study hall and stress management resources/courses, limiting numbers of advanced courses students take and managing expectations around course-taking and the college applications process.

Time Spent on Activities Outside of School

Because the district theorized that one potential source of stress for students was difficulty in balancing activities and schoolwork, students were asked about time spent on activities before and after school and on homework. Specifically, students were asked how much time in the prior week they spent on a variety of activities such as jobs, clubs, games and social activities, and sports. Figure 6 shows that on average, students report spending about 21 to 23 hours per week on activities. Figures 7 and 8 provide more detail on the proportions of students reporting different amounts of time spent on activities. More than half of students in both middle and high school report spending 2 to 6 hours per week on social activities and personal entertainment. Students in middle school report spending more time in non-school sports compared to high school students, and more high school students report spending more

time on chores and family obligations. More high school students also spend more time at paid jobs, volunteering, and with school clubs than middle school students. For example, 11 percent of high school students worked at least 10 hours per week.

Figure 6. Hours Spent on Before and After School Activities – Middle and High School

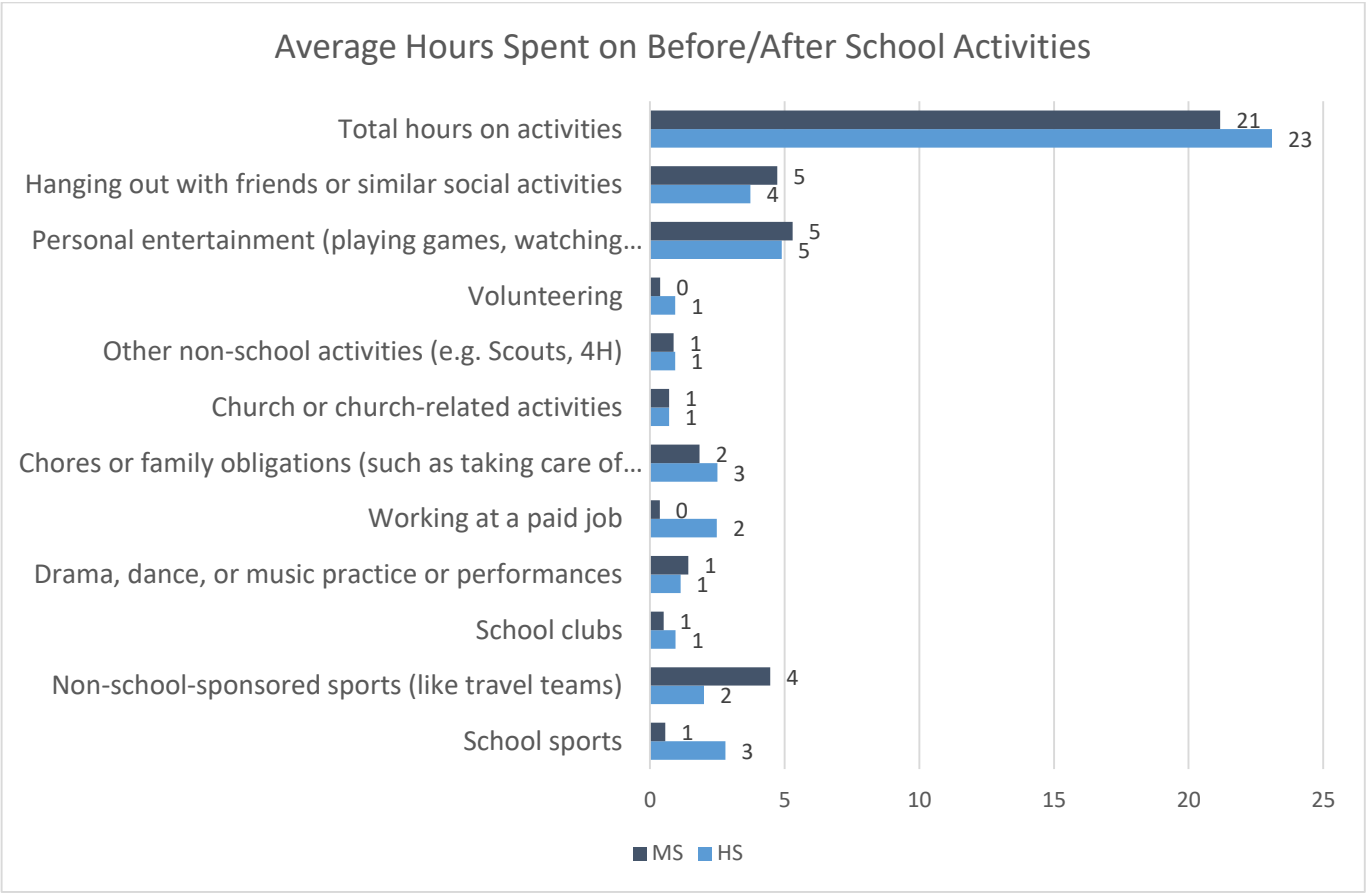


Figure 7. Before and After School Activities – Middle School

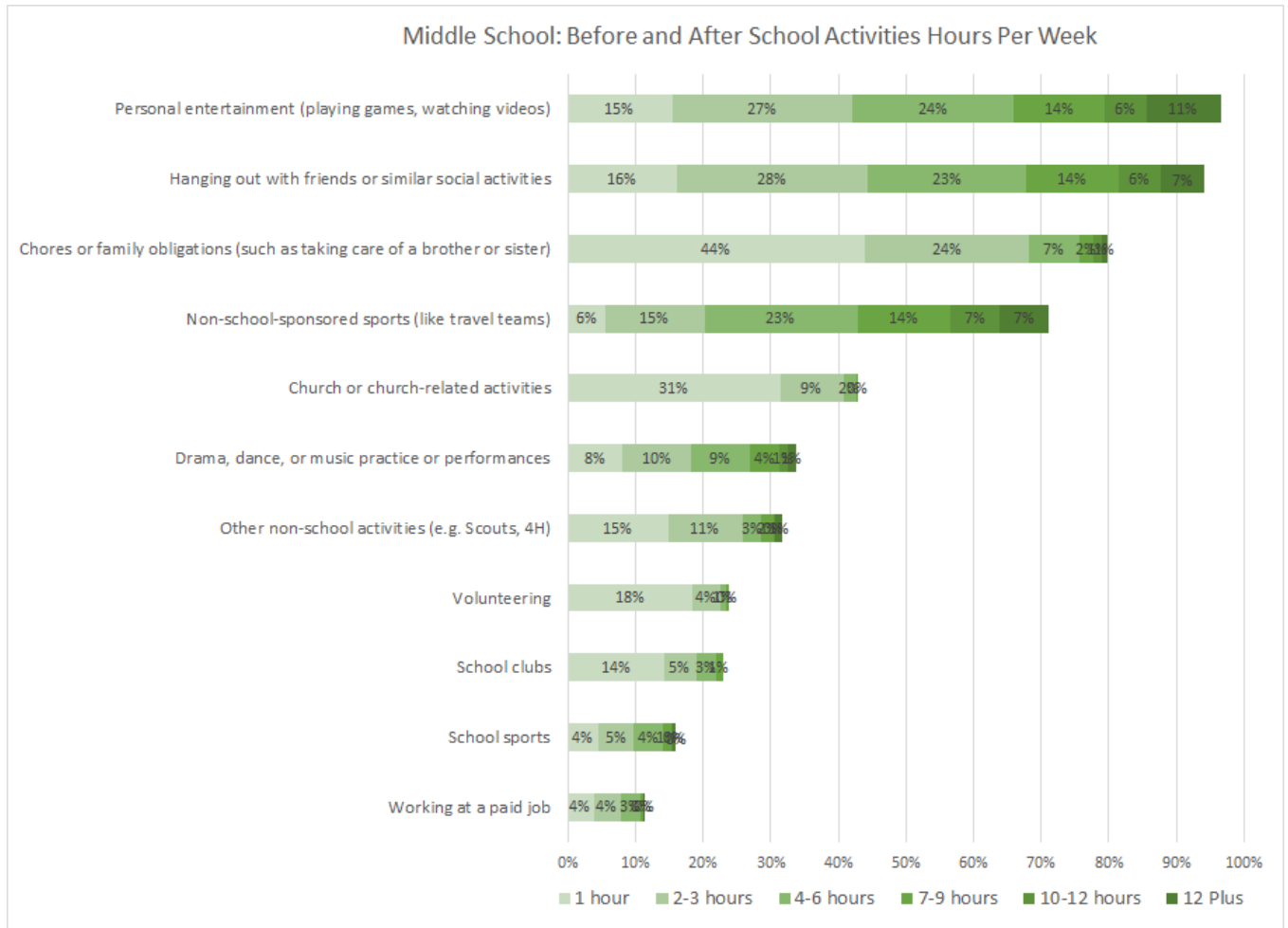
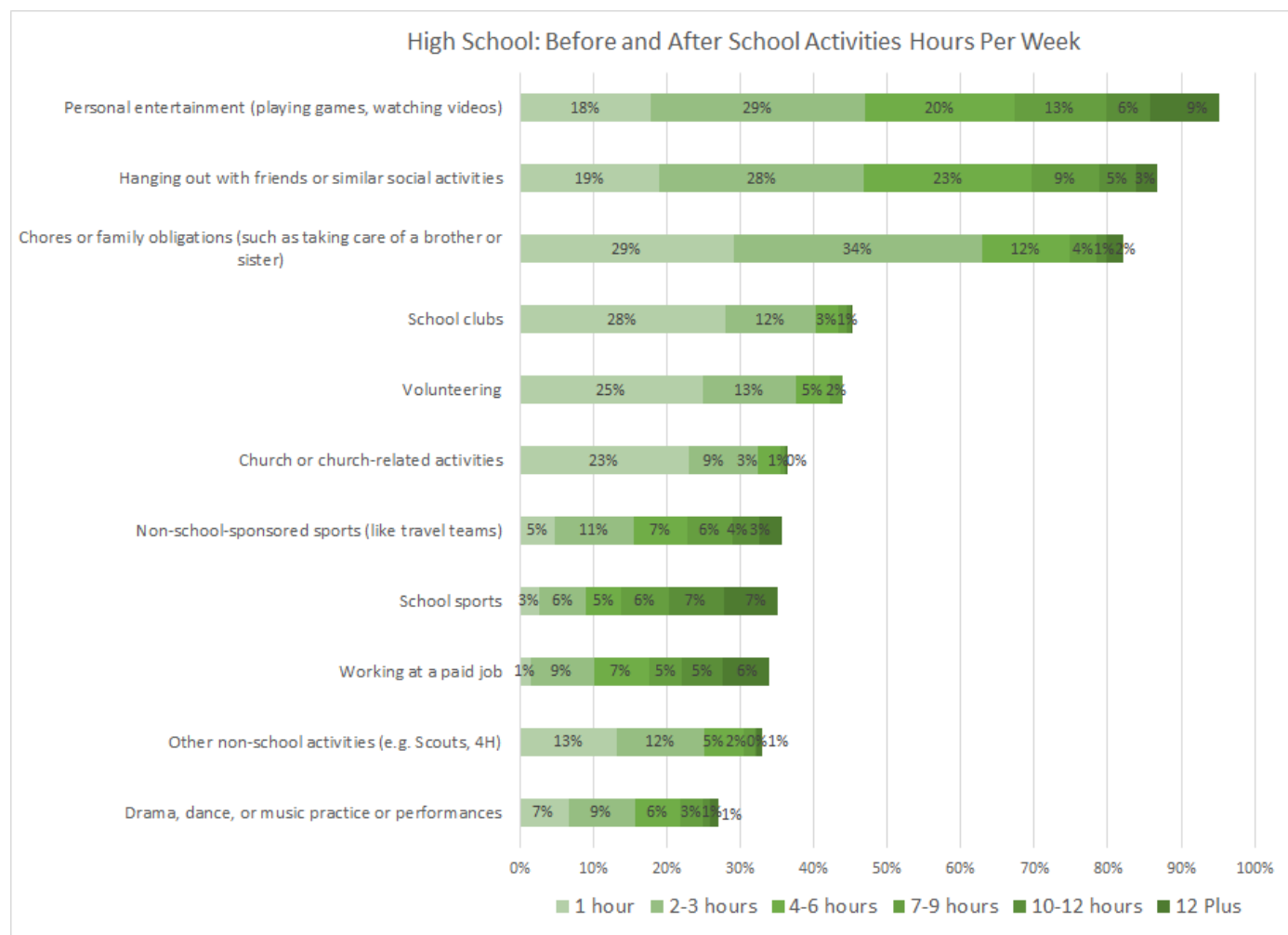


Figure 8. Before and After School Activities – High School



Time Spent on Schoolwork/Homework

Students and parents were also asked about the time students spend on homework and how much they think they should spend on homework. Teachers also responded to a question about the amount of time students spend on homework. Figure 9 shows daily homework time by grade, with the modal response outlined. The amount of time students report spending homework increases by grade. High school students most commonly report spending 2-3 hours per day on homework, 7th and 8th graders most commonly report spending 1 to 1 ½ hours per day on homework, and 6th graders most commonly report spending less than one hour on homework. Over 50 percent of high school students report spending over 2 hours on homework per day. Table 3 shows how often students report receiving homework by subject. More high school students report getting homework every day in math, social studies, and science courses, while more middle school students report getting homework every day in English and world language courses. Eighty-seven percent of high school students report getting math homework every day.

Table 3. Frequency of Homework Assignments by Subject – Student Responses

Middle School	Every day	3 or 4 days a week	1 or 2 days a week	Never
English	33%	25%	35%	7%
Math	40%	33%	21%	6%
Science	11%	20%	52%	17%
Social Studies	6%	26%	55%	13%
Foreign Language	14%	27%	40%	19%
High School	Every day	3 or 4 days a week	1 or 2 days a week	Never
English	18%	35%	43%	5%
Math	87%	8%	3%	2%
Science	36%	27%	27%	9%
Social Studies	27%	24%	36%	12%
Foreign Language	12%	26%	47%	16%

Figure 9. School Day Time on Homework - Student Responses

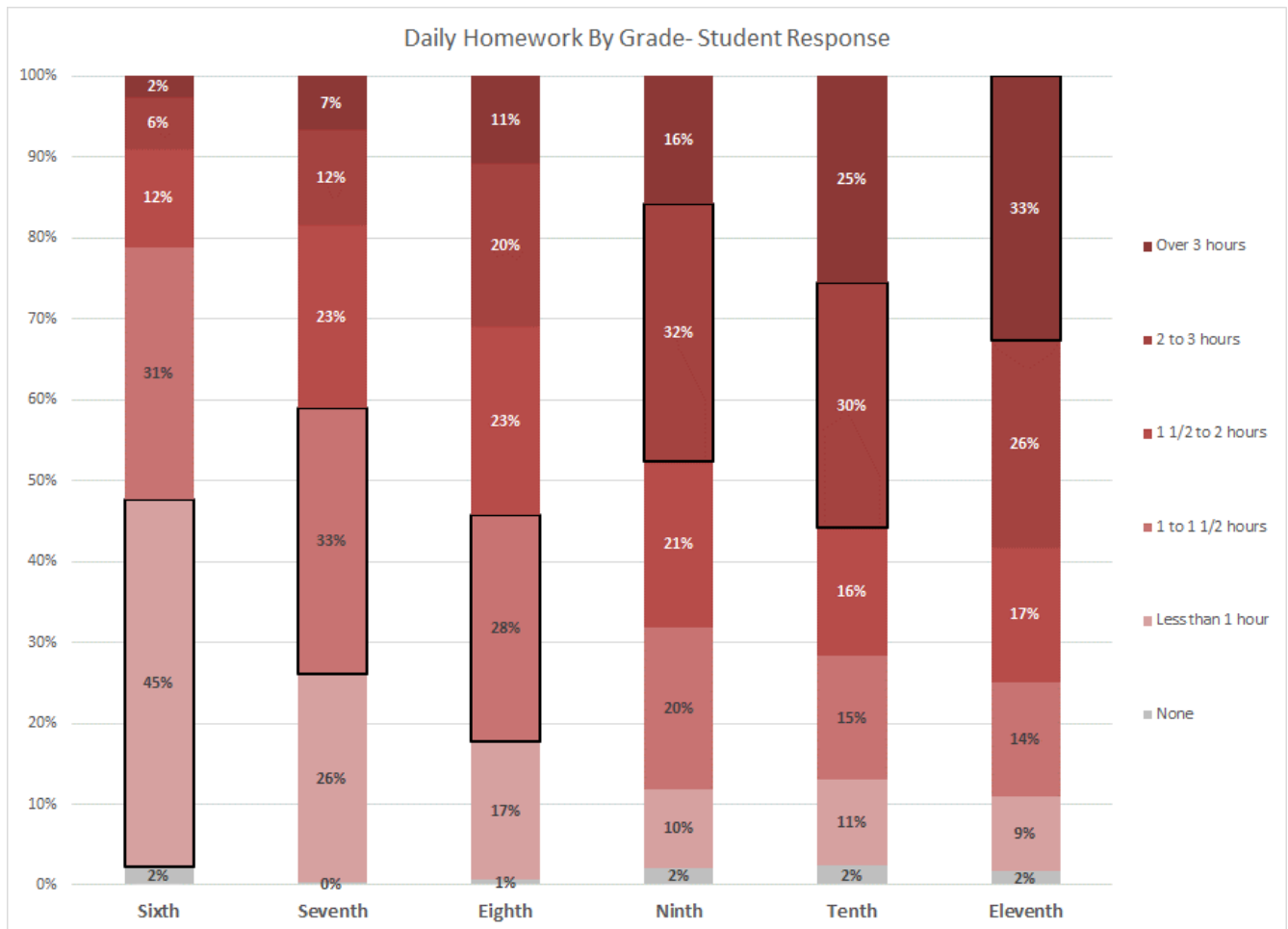


Table 4 displays parent responses to questions about how much time students do spend and should spend on homework. Most parents report that their students spend somewhat less time on homework than students do. Parents of middle and high school students think that 1 to 1 ½ hours of homework is the most appropriate amount of daily homework for their students.

Table 4. School Day Time on Homework - Parent Responses

	Middle School		High School	
	DOES Spend	SHOULD Spend	DOES Spend	SHOULD Spend
None	12%	3%	1%	1%
<1 Hour	49%	37%	13%	11%
1 to 1 1/2 hours	23%	42%	22%	34%
1 1/2 to 2 hours	8%	11%	22%	31%
2 to 3 hours	4%	6%	20%	19%
Over 3 hours	4%	1%	22%	4%

Teachers were also asked on a typical school day how much time they thought students should spend on homework for all their classes. Their responses are captured in Table 5. For high school students, teachers most commonly agree with parents that students should spend 1 to 1 ½ hours on homework, but suggest middle school students should spend less than an hour. Overall, both teachers and parents suggest that students should spend less time on homework than they are. Most parents report that their students spend somewhat less time on homework than students do.

Table 5. Weekday Time on Homework - Teacher Responses

	Middle School	High School
	SHOULD Spend	SHOULD Spend
None	0%	0%
<1 Hour	57%	29%
1 to 1 1/2 hours	35%	36%
1 1/2 to 2 hours	8%	28%
2 to 3 hours	0%	7%
Over 3 hours	0%	0%

Figure 10 shows weekend homework amounts. As with weekday homework, middle school students report spending less time on homework than high school students. High school students, especially at tenth and eleventh grades, report spending similar amounts of time on weekends on homework to weekday time. Figure 11 points toward a relationship between the amount of time students spend on homework and the stress they experience, with students who report doing more homework showing higher average stress levels. Appendix B provides information on student reports of homework over the most recent holiday break, with older students again reporting spending more time on homework over break than younger students.

Figure 10. Weekend Time on Homework - Student Response

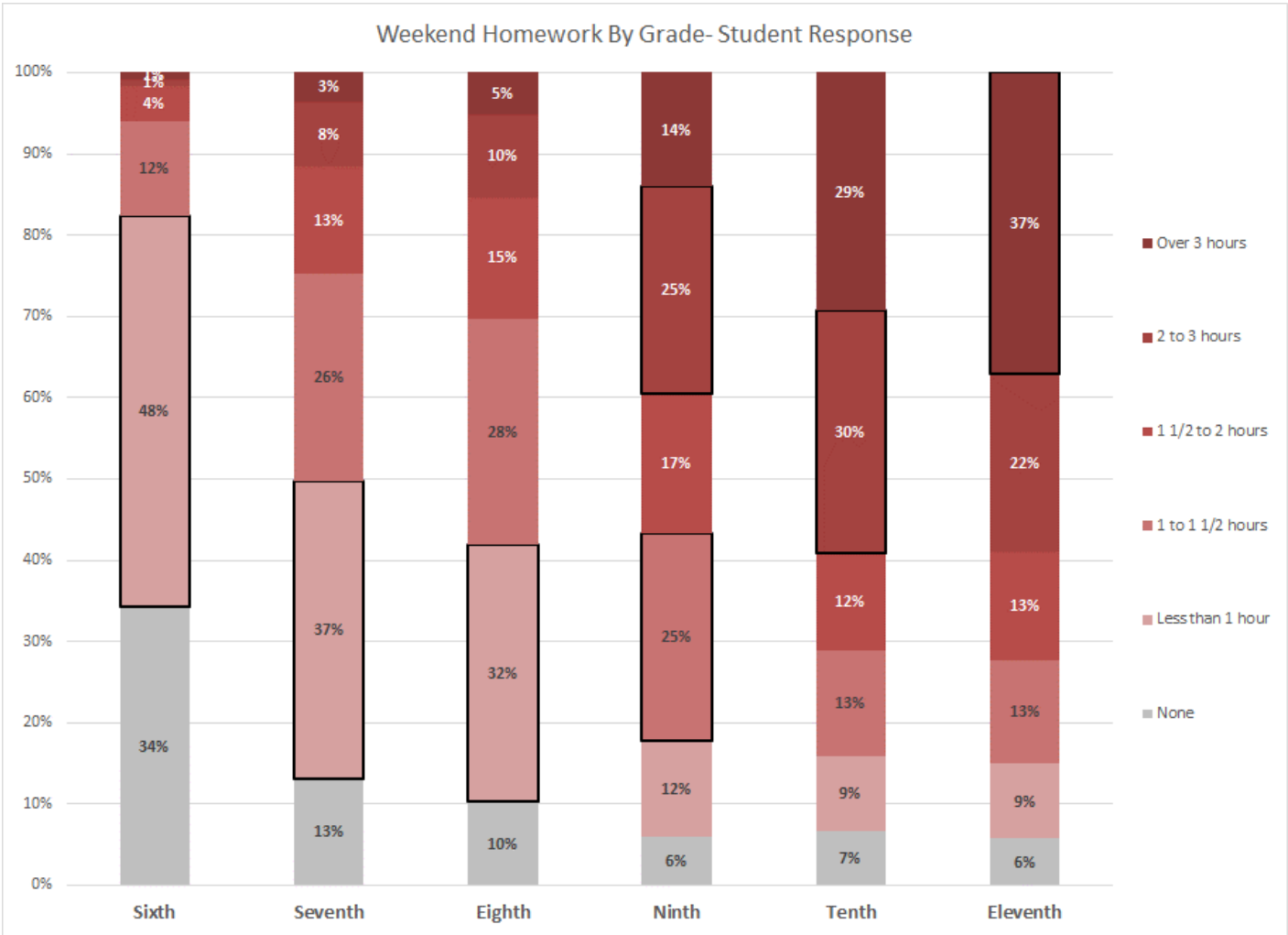
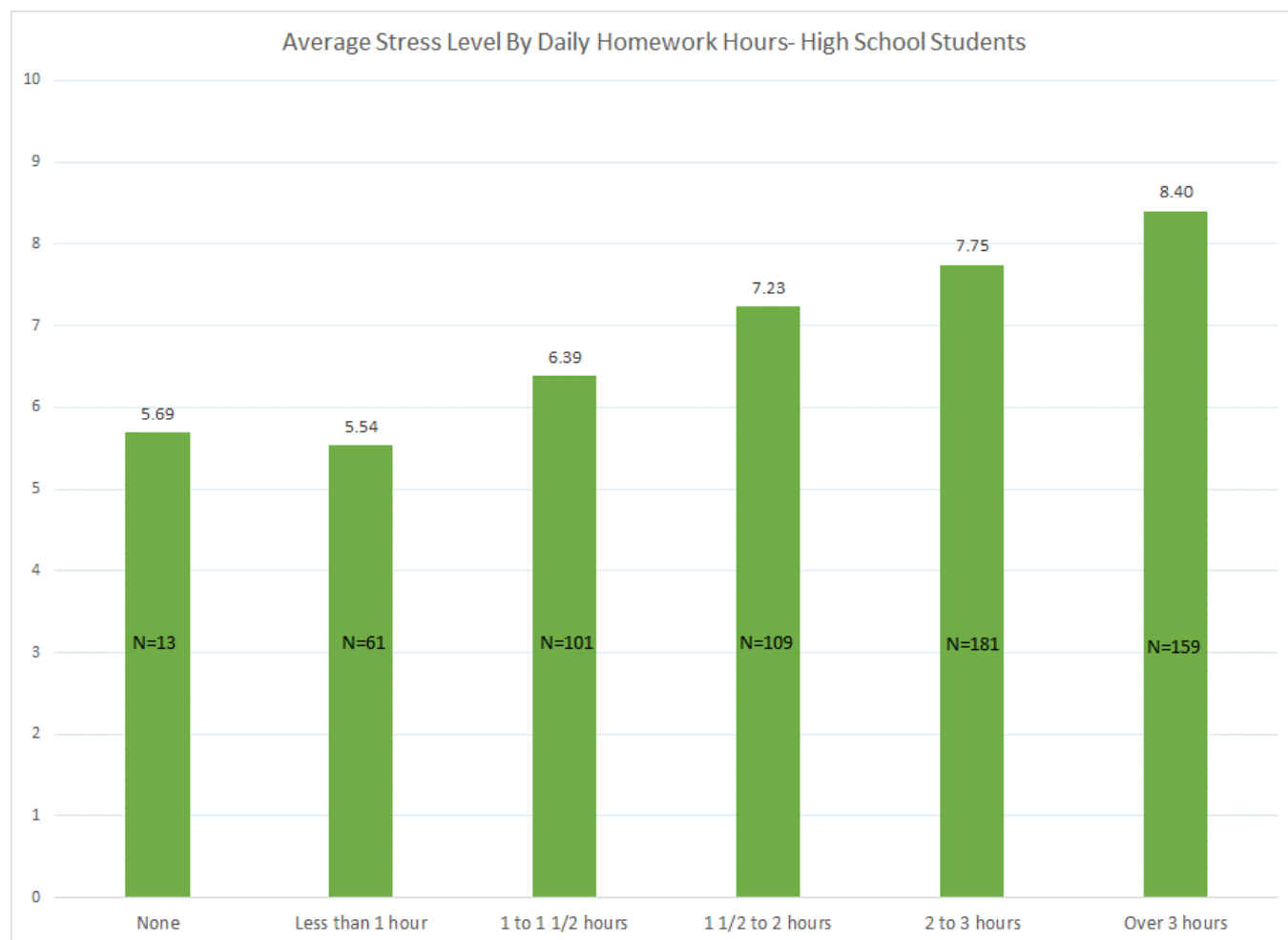


Figure 11. Stress Levels by Daily Homework Time for High School Students



In the survey, students were asked to identify how many advanced courses they were taking (students reported the number of honors, AP or ACP courses they were taking). Appendix B provides information about the reasons students selected advanced or elective courses and parent perceptions of why students should take courses. Middle and high school students both report that main reasons for taking advanced courses was school recommendations and a sense that those courses will help them get into college or more advanced courses in high school. Middle school students also reported parents wanting them to take an advanced course as a common reason. Middle and high school students report taking electives mainly because of their interest, with the second most commonly cited reason for high school students being related to getting into college or advanced courses and the second most commonly cited reason for middle school students being parent input. In general, parents cite student interest and ability to develop skills like critical thinking and communication as the most important reasons for students to choose courses, which align to reasons students report for taking electives, but not advanced courses.

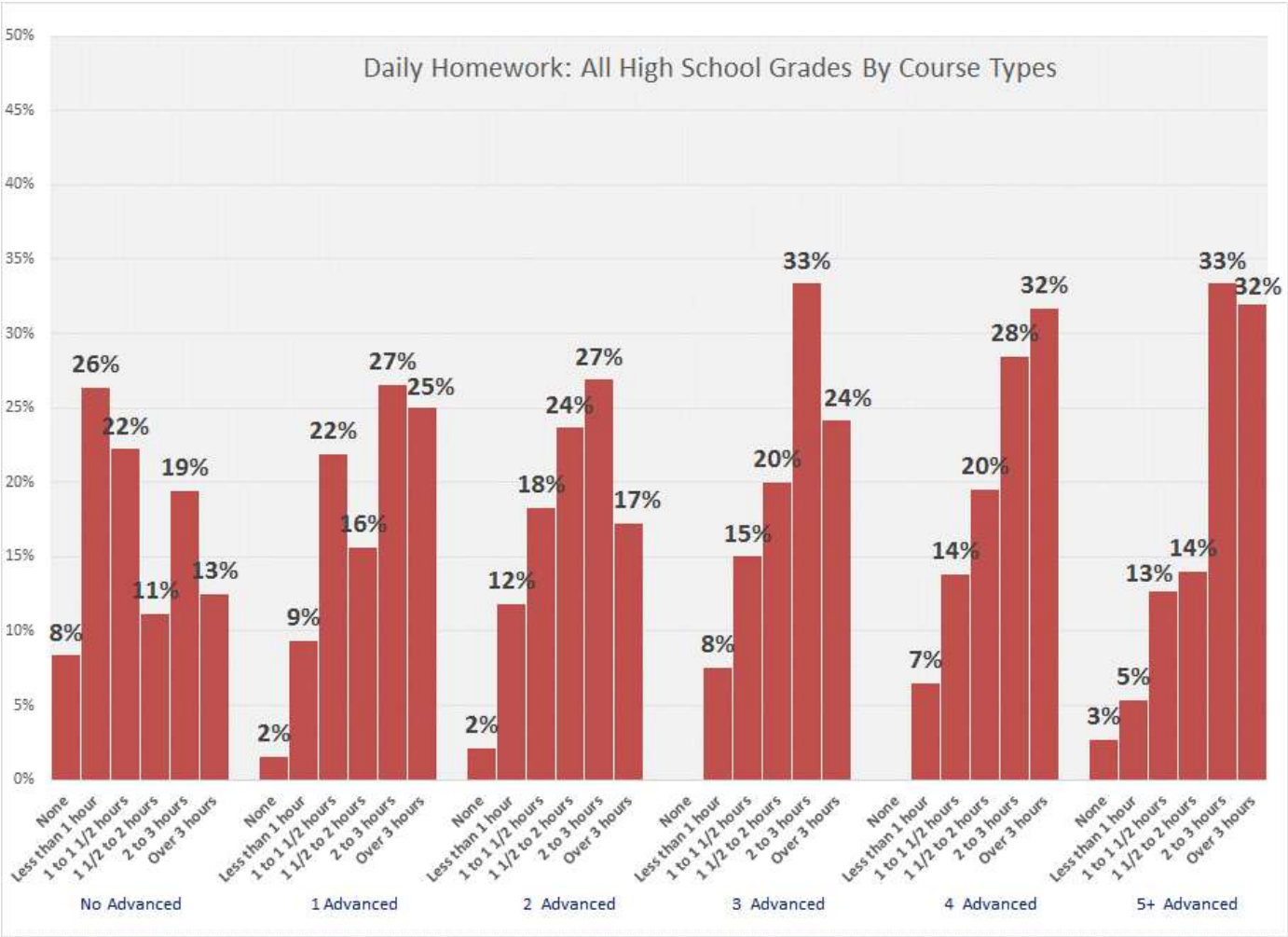
Table 6 shows the stress level of high school students by the number of advanced courses they report taking and Figure 12 shows the distribution of homework hours by number of advanced courses. Students taking more advanced courses more commonly report spending more time on homework than students taking fewer advanced courses (for example, about one-third of students taking 4 or more

advanced courses report spending more than 3 hours on homework per night). Mean stress levels, however, do not appear to relate directly with increased numbers of advanced courses.

Table 6. Average Stress Levels by Numbers of Advanced Courses – High School Responses

	Ninth		Tenth		Eleventh	
	Percent of Students	Mean Stress	Percent of Students	Mean Stress	Percent of Students	Mean Stress
No Honors, AP, or ACP courses	15%	7.54	10%	6.90	10%	6.39
1 Honors, AP, or ACP course	16%	7.43	8%	6.29	7%	7.47
2 Honors, AP, or ACP courses	14%	7.48	17%	7.26	15%	8.18
3 Honors, AP, or ACP courses	25%	6.89	17%	7.64	16%	7.81
4 Honors, AP, or ACP courses	29%	7.04	14%	7.41	18%	7.76
5+ Honors, AP, or ACP courses	1%	9.00	34%	7.13	33%	7.54

Figure 12. Daily Homework by Number of Advanced Courses - High School Students



Homework Practices and Purpose

Student and staff surveys also gathered information about the perceived purposes and value of homework and practices related to homework assignment and use. Tables 7 and 8 show some differences between student and teacher responses related to homework practice. For example, Table 7 shows that 52% of teachers say they almost always explain the purpose of the homework they assign, with an additional 18% reporting that they do “more than half the time.” Table 6 shows that 70 to 80 percent of students say teachers “never” or “sometimes” explain the purpose of homework being assigned. Responses to questions about feedback and grades on homework show a similar pattern. Most teachers report infrequent differentiation in homework assignment (i.e. giving different homework to students or homework to some but not all students), while students report these practices occurring more often. For example, 71 percent of teachers report “almost never” giving homework to some students but not all, while about 40 to 50 percent of students report “never” or “sometimes” receiving different homework or different amounts from teachers.

Table 7. Teacher Reports on Homework Practices

Teachers-All Levels	Almost never	Less than half of the time	About half of the time	More than half of the time	Almost always
Explain the purpose of homework being assigned	9%	11%	10%	18%	52%
Give comments or feedback to individual students on homework	12%	18%	23%	20%	27%
Give comments or feedback to the whole class on homework	8%	5%	17%	33%	36%
Give a letter grade or points on homework as part of a course grade	29%	12%	18%	19%	21%
Use information on student performance from homework to plan lessons	13%	12%	17%	28%	30%
Give different homework to different students	40%	32%	13%	12%	4%
Give homework to some students but not all	71%	18%	6%	4%	1%

Table 8. Student Perceptions of Homework Practices

Middle School	Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
The teacher explains the purpose of the homework being assigned	31%	41%	20%	8%
The teacher gives me comments or feedback on my homework	22%	50%	23%	5%
The teacher gives me a letter grade or points on my homework as part of my course grade	9%	34%	34%	23%
The teacher gives different homework to different students or gives homework to some students but not all	9%	34%	34%	23%
High School	Never	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
The teacher explains the purpose of the homework being assigned	32%	49%	15%	3%
The teacher gives me comments or feedback on my homework	36%	52%	10%	2%
The teacher gives me a letter grade or points on my homework as part of my course grade	10%	42%	33%	15%
The teacher gives different homework to different students or gives homework to some students but not all	10%	42%	33%	15%

Figures 13, 14, and 15 show teacher, student, and parent perspectives on the purpose and value of homework. Overall, fifty-three percent of students report that homework helps them learn what they need to know in class. More teachers and parents say that the purpose of homework is to help students practice skills or strengthen what they know than students report that it actually serves this purposes (over 90 percent of parents and teachers report this purpose, while about 71 percent of students report that homework serves this purpose). Over 60 percent of parents and teachers report that homework should spark student interest and curiosity about a subject, but only 12 percent of students say that their homework assignments are interesting and make them want to learn more about a topic. More parents report that homework serves to help students learn to manage their time than teachers or students. Seventy-two percent of parents report agreeing or strongly agreeing with this purpose for homework, while 52 percent of teachers and 35 percent of students report agreeing with this purpose. Over 40 percent of parents and teachers report that homework should introduce student to new content, though some open-ended parent and student comments also point to students having to learn new content on their own as a source of stress.

Figure 13. Teacher Perspectives on Homework

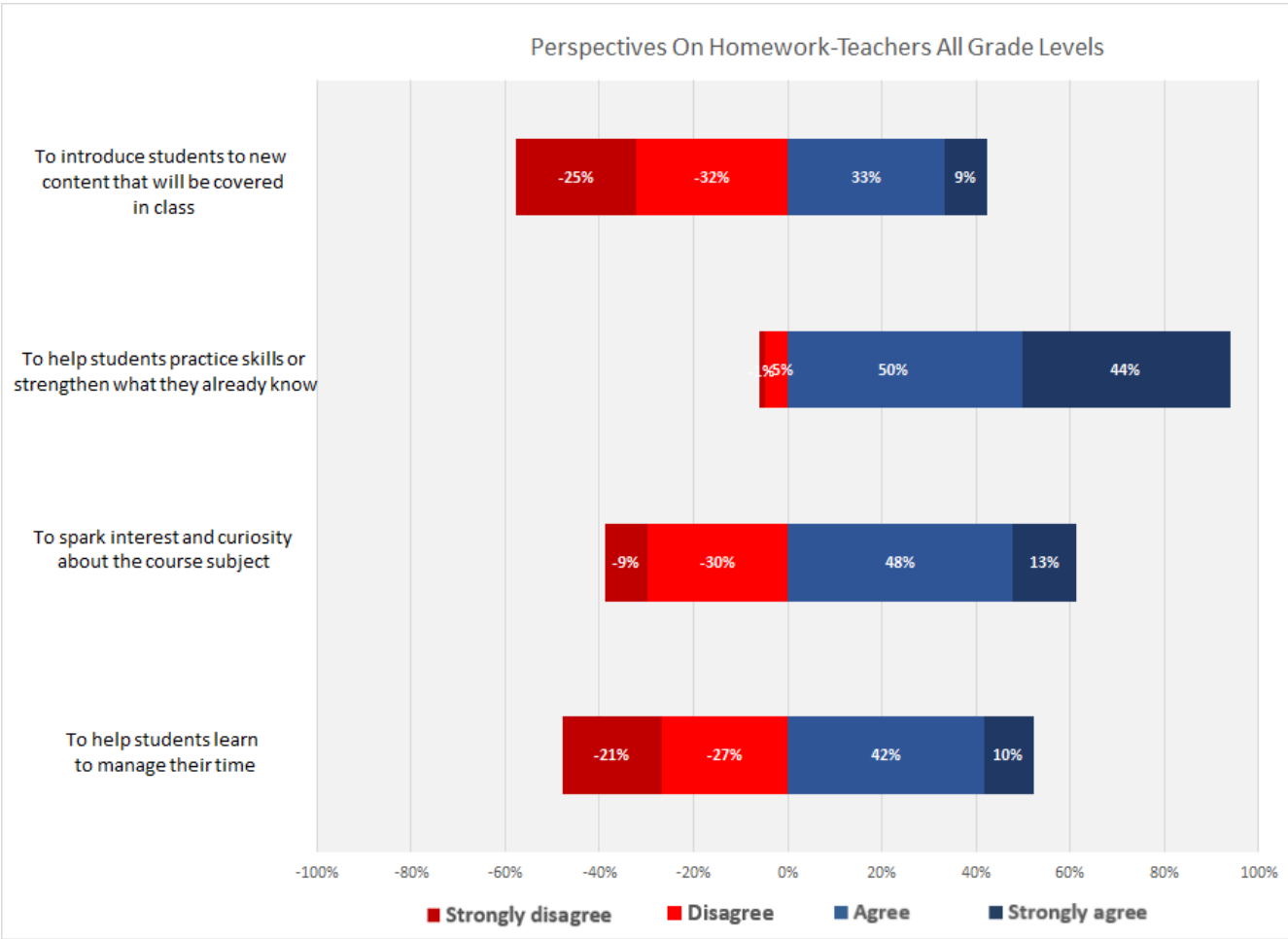


Figure 14. Student Perspectives on Homework

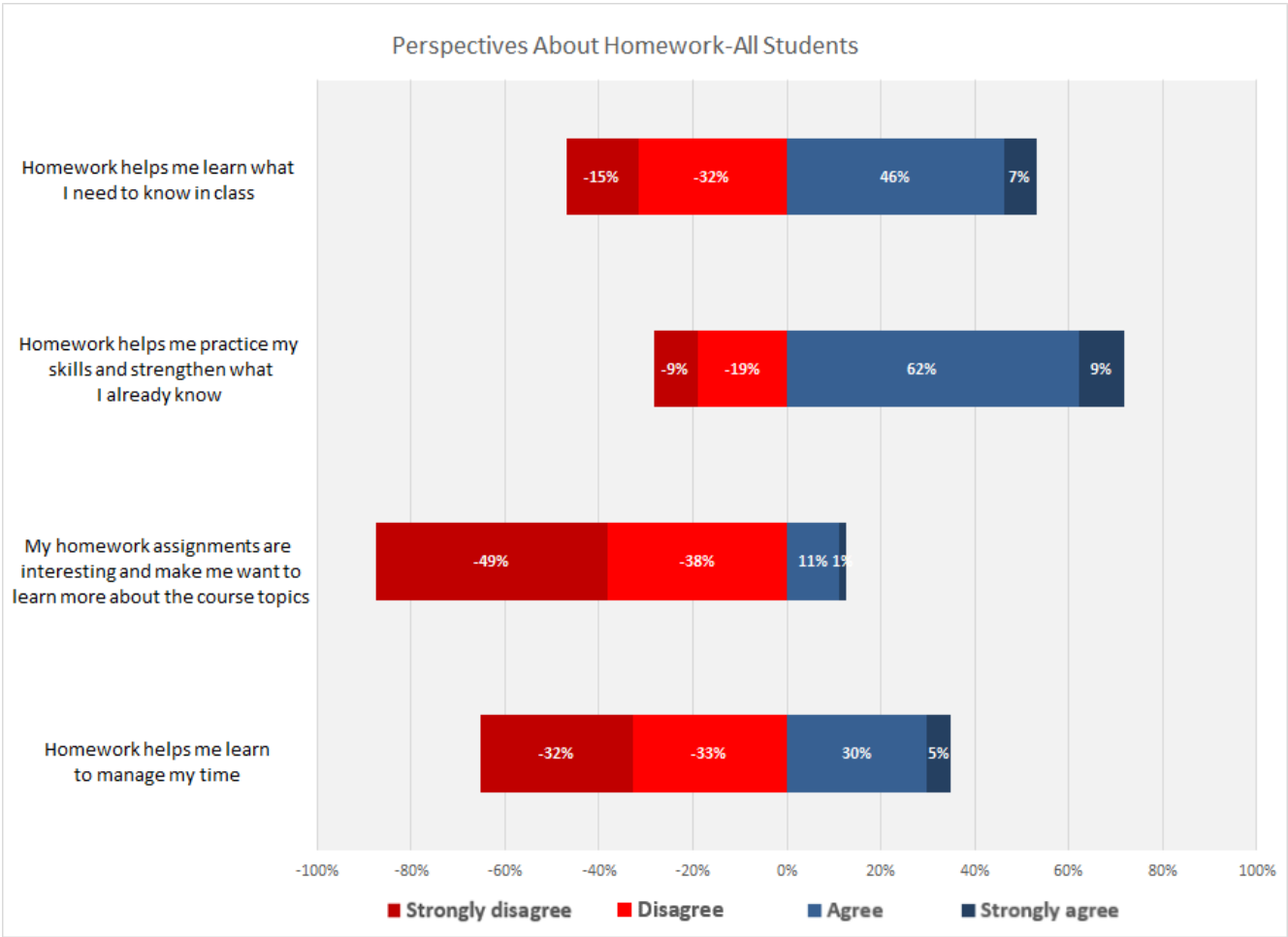
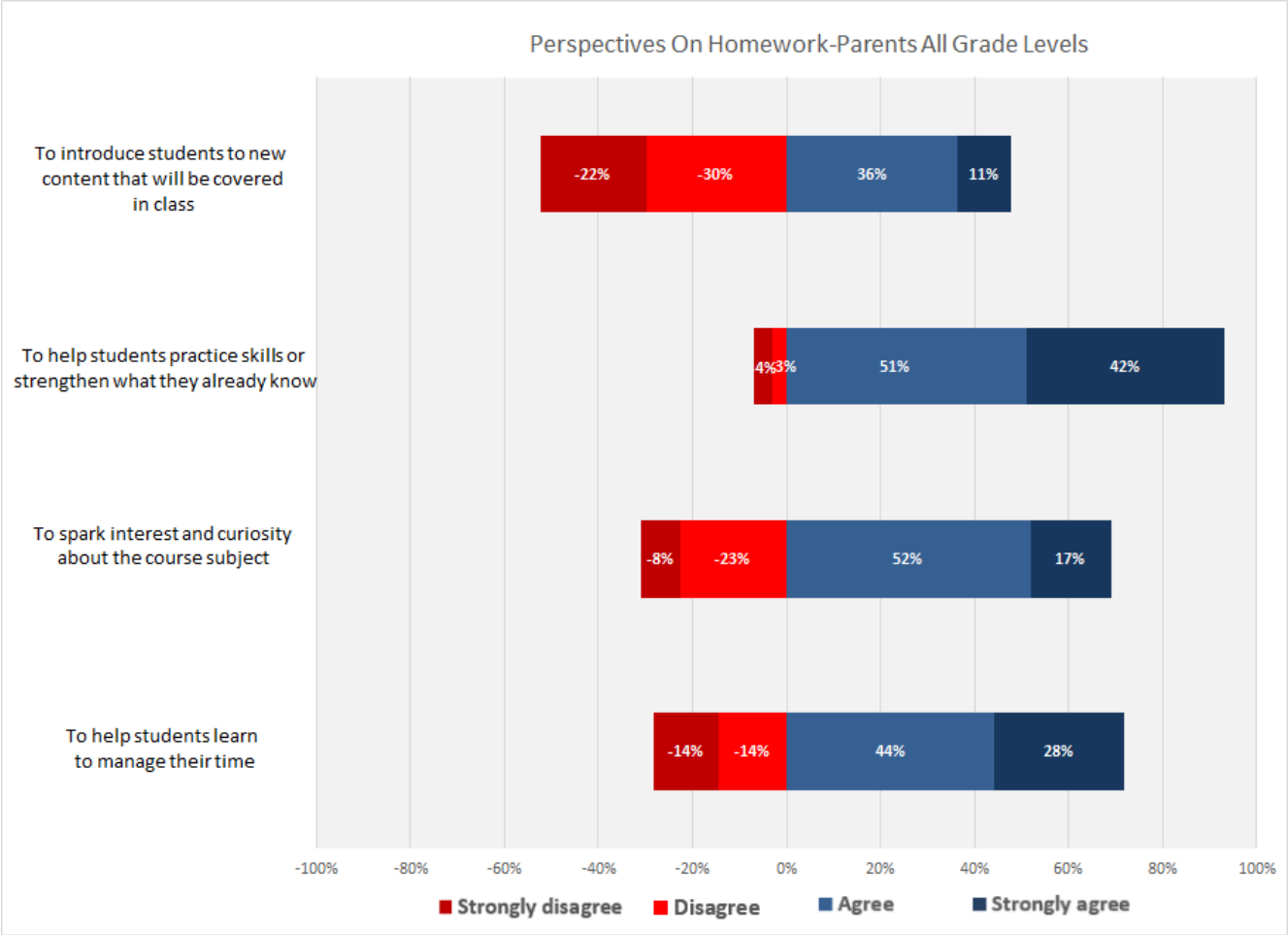


Figure 15. Parent Perspectives on Homework



Sleep and Start Time

According to the National Sleep Foundation, children aged 6-13 should get 9-11 hours of sleep per night and teenagers aged 14-17 are recommended 8-10 hours of sleep. The survey asked the students their usual bedtimes and wake-up times on school days and average hours of sleep were calculated from these times. Table 9 shows that on average, middle school students report 8.4 hours of sleep and high school students report 7 hours of sleep per night. The survey also asked students to report on how often they got enough sleep to feel rested and how much of a problem (if any), they had getting up for school. Middle school students say that in about half of the last 7 days (3.7 days), they got enough sleep so that they felt rested. On average, high school students report getting enough sleep 2.7 out of the last 7 days.

About 40 percent of students report that they had a “little problem” getting up to go to school in the last 7 days, with about 11 percent of middle schools students and 32 percent of high school students saying they had a “big” or “very big” problem getting up for school (57 report at least “more than a little problem”). Students who reported having bigger problems getting up also reported higher stress levels on average.

Table 9. Amount of Sleep and Stress Levels of Students

In the past 7 days, how much of a problem did you have getting up to go to school on school days?	N	%	Average of "What time do you usually wake up on school days?"	Average Hours Sleep	Average of "How many of the last 7 days did you get enough sleep so that you felt rested in the morning?"	Average level of stress
Middle School						
No problem at all	346	26%	6:45 AM	8.8	5.2	4.0
A little problem	617	46%	6:45 AM	8.4	3.9	5.4
More than a little problem	233	17%	6:49 AM	8.2	2.6	6.4
A very big problem	42	3%	6:57 AM	8.2	1.5	7.2
A big problem	111	8%	6:52 AM	7.9	1.9	6.9
Total Middle School	1349		6:47 AM	8.4	3.7	5.4
High School						
No problem at all	57	9%	6:05 AM	7.4	4.3	5.6
A little problem	210	34%	6:12 AM	7.4	2.9	6.8
More than a little problem	157	25%	6:10 AM	6.9	1.9	7.7
A very big problem	73	12%	6:22 AM	6.6	1.2	8.5
A big problem	123	20%	6:11 AM	6.7	1.2	8.0
Total High School	620		6:12 AM	7.0	2.3	7.3

Appendix A. Surveys

Appendix B. Additional Tables

Table B1. Hours of Homework Over Last Holiday - Student Responses

Hours Homework	Sixth	Seventh	Eight	Ninth	Tenth	Eleventh
None	35%	26%	22%	5%	6%	6%
Less than 1 hour	22%	30%	26%	10%	5%	7%
1 to 1 1/2 hours	11%	30%	23%	12%	13%	11%
1 1/2 to 2 hours	9%	21%	22%	14%	19%	16%
2 to 3 hours	5%	24%	14%	15%	24%	19%
Over 3 hours	3%	17%	14%	11%	20%	34%

Table B2. Frequency of Homework Assignments by Subject - Teacher Responses

	N	Every day	3 or 4 days a week	1 or 2 days a week	Less than 1 or 2 days a week
Middle All	65	8%	17%	29%	46%
English	20	10%	10%	50%	30%
Math	19	16%	47%	26%	11%
Science	7			29%	71%
Social studies	4			25%	75%
Creative Tech/CTE/FACS/PLTW	9				100%
Fine Arts (Visual, Music)	2			50%	50%
PE	3				100%
World Language	1				100%
	N	Every day	3 or 4 days a week	1 or 2 days a week	Less than 1 or 2 days a week
High School All	100	19%	20%	19%	42%
English	18	6%	44%	22%	28%
Math	19	74%	11%	5%	11%
Science	11	18%	18%	18%	45%
Social studies	14		43%	43%	14%
Creative Tech/CTE/FACS/PLTW	11			18%	82%
Fine Arts (Visual, Music)	2		50%		50%
PE	8				100%
World Language	13	15%	8%	31%	46%
Special education	4				100%

Table B3. Main Reasons for Taking Advanced Courses – Middle School*

Main Reason	N
Recommended by the school	513
Will help me get into college or advanced courses in high school	266
Parents wanted me to take the course(s)	247
Interested in the subject or course	174
Most rigorous/advanced courses available	87
My friends were taking this course(s)	35

*note that students could choose more than one reason

Table B4. Main Reasons for Taking Advanced Courses – High School*

Main Reason	N
Will help me get into college or more advanced courses in high school	379
Recommended by the school	254
Interested in the subject or course	220
Most rigorous/advanced courses available	178
Parents wanted me to take the course(s)	102
My friends were taking this course(s)	45

*note that students could choose more than one reason

Table B5. Main Reasons for Taking Elective Courses – Middle School*

Main Reason	N
Interested in the subject or course	931
Parents wanted me to take the course(s)	314
My friends were taking this course(s)	284
Will help me get into college or advanced courses in high school	194
Recommended by the school	150
Not applicable/not taking electives	43

*note that students could choose more than one reason

Table B6. Main Reasons for Taking Elective Courses – High School*

Main Reason	N
Interested in the subject or course	455
Will help me get into college or advanced courses in high school	160
Recommended by the school	87
My friends were taking this course(s)	69
Parents wanted me to take the course(s)	57
Not applicable/not taking electives	55
Most rigorous/advanced courses available	12

*note that students could choose more than one reason

Table B7. Importance of Reasons for Taking Courses – Parent Responses

Middle School Parents	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Recommendation by the school	33%	47%	17%	4%
Most rigorous/advanced courses available	22%	39%	28%	11%
Will help student get into college or advanced courses in high school	37%	38%	21%	4%
Student interest in the subject or course(s)	69%	28%	2%	0%
Student's friends taking the course(s)	5%	14%	33%	49%
Will help student find a job	22%	36%	27%	15%
Will help student build skills such as critical thinking, citizenship, collaboration	68%	26%	5%	1%
Will help student explore possible career areas of interest	56%	33%	7%	4%
High School Parents	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Recommendation by the school	29%	52%	16%	3%
Most rigorous/advanced courses available	24%	41%	26%	9%
Will help student get into college or advanced courses in high school	57%	33%	8%	2%
Student interest in the subject or course(s)	64%	31%	4%	0%
Student's friends taking the course(s)	4%	8%	25%	63%
Will help student find a job	28%	35%	27%	10%
Will help student build skills such as critical thinking, citizenship, collaboration	57%	34%	7%	2%
Will help student explore possible career areas of interest	56%	35%	9%	0%

Appendix C. Summary of Open Ended Responses - Summary

Teacher Responses: *What suggestions do you have for how your school or D205 could help reduce student stress?*

Middle School

- Reintroduce guidance to students (they mention a program before taught by counselors)
- Make sure homework is purposeful and can be done independently
- Several of the teachers mentioned chaos of two minutes passing time and felt three minutes would make day feel less stressful.

High School

- The most common theme was that the students were taking too many or were improperly placed into AP or advanced courses.
 - There were comments about limits to AP or advanced courses especially in freshmen and sophomore year
 - Many teachers expressing frustration at being left out of the process of consulting students.
 - Teachers fear that advisors and parents may push a false narrative of how important AP courses were instead encouraging students to pursue courses they were more likely to have success in and only pursue more rigorous courses in areas in which they were truly interested (and to save room for electives). Relatedly, they recommended parent education programs about academic rigor and stress.
 - One teacher mentioned a former program where former students returned from college to discuss their experiences and how they needed to focus on “learning” and not grades.
 - Help students manage expectations when choosing their classes - one teacher offered an example of a [calculator](#) that another district uses to help students understand the workload that their course schedule will entail.
 - Another theme was the offering more tools for students for stress management, including tools for executive functioning
 - Many teachers discussed limiting homework and being more efficient with how teachers assign and use homework.

Parents: *How could your student's school or D205 help reduce student stress?*

Middle School

- Parent comments often mentioned homework, though with differing perspective. Some parents appreciate the low amount of homework their children had now, some parents expressed concern that their children had too much right now, and others feared their children did not have enough and would not be prepared for high school.
 - A few parents expanded upon their requests for more homework and gave examples like a parent with a current 9th grader who was in “shock” by workload change from middle to high school. Similarly, parents with high school students who thought their children taking REACH courses were overworked but the work expected from the regular classes was not preparing their children for high school.
- Several parents wanted study halls where students could work on homework and receive assistance from teachers so they could ask questions.
 - This is also related to some concerns parents had about lack of instruction and clarity on how to complete homework assignments

- Other parents requested more communication to know when assignments would be due

High School

- The most common response was a call for a reduction in homework. In relation to that topic, some parents were concerned that students felt they had to teach themselves and they referenced their students consulting YouTube to learn a lesson parents prefer them to learn in the classroom.
- Some parents felt that the high school is pushing too many AP and advanced courses
- Some parents noted that college guidance has too much focus on elite universities which causes students to stress and not enough guidance for affordable and viable options for students. A more “balanced approach” was desired.
- Some parents mentioned the school could offer time management and study skills, such as note taking.
- Other parents mentioned that they and their children did not know where to get support when their student was struggling. Math was most commonly mentioned subject with this topic.

Students: *How could this school help reduce student stress?*

Middle School Students

- Over 50 percent of student requested less homework
- Students also mentioned having study hall instead of acceleration where they can ask teachers questions
- Some students requested outdoor recess time

High School

- Over 50 percent of high school students mentioned homework load in their responses and many specifically mentioned less homework around finals and AP exams.
 - Related to this them, students expressed frustration at teaching themselves too much content
 - Students also requested time in class to work on problems so they could ask questions
- Over 10 percent mentioned having all their projects and tests due at the same time causes them a great deal of stress
 - Many also mention not knowing in advance when their projects and exams would be due caused them stress, and they request calendars and syllabi with dates to help them plan.
- Some students specifically mention a later start time would help them with stress and that late Wednesdays currently help them catch up on sleep.
- A few students mentioned that they were really helped by the York Students Services Team and one student thought not enough students were aware of their services.
- A few students mentioned the new lunch process with IDs was stressful and time consuming.