



# Newcomer Wellness Initiative

## 2019–20 Evaluation Report

June 2020

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**Suggested citation:**

Chen, W., Chong, M., McCracken, M. (2020). *Newcomer Wellness Initiative 2019-20 Evaluation Report*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

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## Executive Summary

This report shares findings from the 2019-20 evaluation of the Salesforce-funded Newcomer Wellness Initiative in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). This work results from a second year of partnership between SRI International and OUSD's English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement (ELLMA) office. In this second year, we applied lessons learned from analyzing the previous year's data and improved both the design of the survey and the survey administration process to make the resulting data more reliable, valid, and useful to Initiative staff. ELLMA staff administered the survey in fall 2019, and SRI analyzed the data under their direction. In this Executive Summary, we first briefly describe the Initiative, the survey sample, the analysis methods, and then summarize the results of the analyses. We conclude with some potential implications of the results for the Newcomer Wellness Initiative and the district's efforts to support Newcomers moving forward.

### **Newcomer Wellness Initiative**

The Newcomer Wellness Initiative increased the robustness of existing Newcomer program supports at middle and high schools by providing onsite bilingual social workers and mental health professionals (Newcomer Navigators). Using a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework, the Navigators provided students with universal, group, and targeted individual supports. Universal supports included: conducting Newcomer intakes and needs assessments; providing Newcomers with an orientation to their new school; and offering activities designed to improve the overall school culture and make the school feel more safe, welcoming, and inclusive. Group supports included clinical groups on topics such as grief and loss, acculturation, and healthy relationships, as well as nonclinical groups such as lunch bunches and culture clubs. Individual supports were provided to students with the most intense needs, who may have required individualized counseling, intensive case management, and targeted attendance interventions (English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement Office, 2018).

These supports were applied with three goals in mind:

- (1) Increase Newcomer attendance rates by reducing obstacles to attending school,
- (2) Increase retention of non-graduating Newcomers by facilitating attendance and increasing connectedness to school, and
- (3) Increase Newcomers' feelings of connectedness to adults at school and their ability to access available supports, including health services.

Newcomer Navigators also tried to support students by meeting basic needs (to the extent possible) so that students would be ready to learn.

## Sample

A total of 1,417 Newcomer students in grades 6 through 12 at eight middle schools and five high schools completed the survey (Exhibit 1). Almost two-thirds (62%) of the students were in high school while about one-third (38%) were in middle school.<sup>1</sup> Exhibit 1 shows the sample size and approximate response rate<sup>2</sup> at each school. The overall response rate was 80 percent, with a very high middle school (96%) and lower high school (72%) response.

*Exhibit 1. Schools Participating in Fall 2019 Newcomer Survey, n = 1,417*

School Name	Sample Size (n)	Newcomer Enrollment December 2019	Approximate Response Rate
Bret Harte Middle School (Grades 6-9)	207	200	~100%
Elmhurst United Middle School	49	71	69%
Frick Impact Academy	58	58	100%
Melrose Leadership Academy	38	40	95%
Oakland School of Language (SOL)	48	49	98%
Roosevelt Middle School	53	58	91%
Urban Promise Academy	44	38	~100%
Westlake Middle School	46	49	94%
<b>Middle School Overall</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>96%</b>
Castlemont High School	152	294	52%
Fremont High School	200	278	72%
Oakland High School	183	203	90%
Oakland International High School	284	317	90%
Rudsdale Newcomer High School	55	124	44%
<b>High School Overall</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Total Sample</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>1779</b>	<b>80%</b>

<sup>1</sup> The middle school count includes Bret Harte, which serves grades 6-9.

<sup>2</sup> Response rates are approximate because they are based on Newcomer enrollment on a single day at the end of December 2019. The survey was administered at each school on different dates between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, and sample sizes at two of the schools actually exceed the enrollment due to fluctuations in enrollment over time.

## Analytic Approach

The data were cleaned so that records created during the testing process were removed and very small response groups for birth country and home language were combined into “other”. SRI staff then conducted descriptive analyses for the sample overall, by school, and by subgroups of interest; the subgroups included: time living in the U.S.; parent vs. non-parent primary caregiver; middle schooler vs. high schooler; birth country; and home language.

At the direction of Newcomer Wellness Initiative leaders, we focused the analysis and this report on two overlapping groups of students: 1) those who were born in the Northern Triangle region of Central America (consisting of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras), and 2) those who spoke Mam as their home language. OUSD expends a considerable amount of resources trying to serve these students yet has little formal data on them as a group. Thus, Initiative leaders saw this analysis as an opportunity to learn about these students in particular.

## Summary of Newcomer Survey Findings

### Demographics

- **Birth country.** More than three-quarters (77%) of the surveyed students were born in the Northern Triangle (53% Guatemala, 16% El Salvador, 8% Honduras). The remaining 23 percent were from Mexico (5%), Yemen (4%), China (4%), Vietnam (2%), and other countries (8%).
- **Home language.** Nearly one-quarter (23%) of students reported they spoke Mam as their home language. Among the 77 percent who spoke another language, Spanish was the most common (59%).
- **Time living in U.S.** About two-fifths (43%) of the surveyed students had been living in the U.S. for less than one year, while 23 percent had been in the country for 1 to 2 years, 17 percent had been in the country for 2 to 3 years, and 17 percent had been in the country for three or more years.
  - This breakdown varied little by birth country or home language, although a slightly smaller proportion of Mam-speakers (36%) and students from other (non-Northern Triangle) countries (37%) were brand-new to the country.

### Home Life and Economic Needs

- **Primary caregiver/guardian.** For the sample overall, the vast majority of students (77%) reported a parent was their primary caregiver/guardian, 9 percent said it was an uncle or aunt, and 8 percent said it was a brother or sister.
  - Compared to students from other birth countries, a smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported their primary caregiver was a parent (89% for other countries, 74% for Northern Triangle).
  - Compared to students who spoke other home languages, a smaller proportion of students who spoke Mam reported their primary caregiver was a parent (80% for other languages, 69% for Mam).

- **Food security.** For the sample overall, 12 percent of students reported they either did not have enough to eat or only sometimes had enough to eat each day and therefore were food insecure.
  - Among students who spoke Mam, food insecurity was more common; nearly one-quarter (22%) reported not having enough to eat or only sometimes having enough to eat each day while this rate was 10 percent among students who spoke another home language.
- **Student employment.** For the sample overall, 21 percent of students reported they had a job.
  - A larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported being employed compared with students from other countries (22% for Northern Triangle vs. 17% for other countries).
  - A larger proportion of students who spoke Mam reported being employed compared with students who spoke another home language (24% for Mam vs. 20% for other languages).

### **Barriers to School Attendance**

- **Missing school due to work.** Among students overall who worked, two-fifths (40%) said they sometimes missed school because of work.
  - A much larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported missing school due to work compared to students from other birth countries (44% for Northern Triangle vs. 21% for other countries).
  - A slightly larger proportion of Mam-speaking students said they missed school due to work compared to students who spoke another home language (44% for Mam vs. 39% for other language).
- **Missing school often.** For the overall sample, about one-quarter (26%) of students reported they missed school often (one day a week or more).
  - There is a large disparity in missing school often between students from the Northern Triangle (30%) and students from other countries (14%).
  - A similarly large disparity exists between students who spoke Mam at home (36%) as compared to students who spoke another home language (23%).
- **Transportation challenges.** Overall, among students who said they missed school often, about one-third (34%) further reported they missed school due to transportation challenges. The proportion of students reporting transportation was a barrier to school attendance did not differ by birth country or home language.
- **Transit pass.** Overall, among students who reported they missed school due to transportation challenges, the vast majority (87%) said having a district-provided Clipper card or bus pass would help them get to school.

- A greater proportion of students from the Northern Triangle said a Clipper card or bus pass would help them get to school compared to Newcomer students from other countries (89% for Northern Triangle vs. 75% for other countries).
- A greater proportion of Mam-speaking students said a transit pass would help them compared to students who spoke another home language (93% for Mam vs. 85% for other home language).

### **Perceptions of School Climate and Supports**

- **Feeling welcome and comfortable at school.** Overall, three-fifths (60%) of students said they felt welcome and comfortable at school most of the time, 37 percent said some of the time, while 3 percent said they never felt welcome and comfortable.
  - When students were disaggregated by birth country and home language, a slightly smaller proportion of Mam-speaking students reported feeling welcome most of the time (56%) compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages (62%).
- **Supports for feeling welcome and comfortable at school.** Among students overall, 81 percent responded that cultural celebrations would increase their feelings of being welcome and comfortable at school; 71 percent said this about staff who spoke their language and could translate, 74 percent said this about the building and yard at school being nicer or better, and 65 percent said this about having an orientation or tour when first starting school.
  - A slightly smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle responded these supports would increase their feelings of being welcome and comfortable at school compared to Newcomer students from other countries.
  - An even smaller proportion of Mam-speakers responded these supports would increase their feelings of welcome and comfort compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages.
- **Encouragement for attending school.** Among students overall, 78 percent responded that having classes related to the job they wanted to do would encourage them to come to school. Their responses about other factors that would encourage them to come to school were as follows: having better relationships with peers (78%), a more welcoming or comfortable environment (77%), staff who spoke their language and could translate (74%), and starting school later or ending earlier (67%).
  - A slightly smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle responded these supports or conditions would encourage them to attend school as compared to Newcomer students from other countries.
  - An even smaller proportion of Mam-speakers responded these supports would encourage them to attend school as compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages.
- **Experience of supports.** Among students overall, the supports they received from adults at school (and found to be helpful) with greatest frequency were supports for feeling sad or

worried (58%), school-related needs (defined as joining school programs, clearing absences, talking to counselors, etc.) (52%), and health or dental issues (49%); others included finding a lawyer (36%), housing issues (25%), and finding a job (24%). The type of support with the highest percentage of students reporting they wanted it but did not receive it was help with finding a job (23%).

- Students from the Northern Triangle received and found to be helpful support for feeling sad or worried and for finding a lawyer at higher rates than students from other countries (sad or worried: 60% for Northern Triangle vs. 50% for other countries; lawyer: 40% for Northern Triangle vs. 23% for other countries).
- There were more apparent differences by home language; Mam-speaking students received emotional and health or dental supports in somewhat equal frequency with students who spoke other home languages, but they reported somewhat higher rates of receiving support with finding a job (41% for Mam vs. 30% for other languages), a lawyer (51% vs. 44%), and housing (39% vs. 33%), and a slightly lower rate of receiving support with school-related needs (58% vs. 63%). More notable, however, is that for all supports, Mam-speaking students were more likely to report the support they received was unhelpful or that they did not receive the support despite wanting it.

## Sexual Health

- **Sex education.** Overall, 47 percent of students reported they had received sex ed at school. This percentage includes both middle and high school students.
  - Differences by birth country and home language were very small; students from the Northern Triangle reported a slightly higher rate of sex ed compared to students from other countries (48% for Northern Triangle vs. 44% for other countries).
- Fewer students who spoke Mam reported access to sex ed compared to students who spoke other home languages (45% for Mam vs. 48% for other languages).
- **Knowledge of access to birth control.** Overall, 49 percent of students said they knew where to obtain birth control or condoms.
  - A larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported knowing how to access birth control than students from other countries (51% for Northern Triangle vs. 43% for other countries).
  - A smaller proportion of students who spoke Mam reported access to birth control compared to students who spoke other home languages (44% for Mam vs. 51% for other languages).
- **Sexually active.** Overall, 17 percent of students reported they were sexually active. This percentage includes both middle and high school students.
  - There were small differences by birth country and home language; students from the Northern Triangle were slightly less likely to be sexually active than Newcomers from other countries (16% for Northern Triangle vs. 21% for other countries).

- Mam-speakers were slightly less likely to be sexually active than Newcomers who spoke other languages (14% for Mam vs. 18% for other languages).
- **Knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention.** Among students overall who were sexually active, 80 percent reported they knew how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
  - A larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention compared to students from other countries (85% for Northern Triangle vs. 67% for other countries).
  - A smaller proportion of students who spoke Mam reported knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention compared to students who spoke other home languages (68% for Mam vs. 83% for other languages).
- **Pregnant or parenting.** Overall, among students who were sexually active, 6 percent reported they were pregnant or had a child.
  - There was no difference in rate of pregnancy or parenting by birth country. Mam-speaking students reported lower rates of pregnancy or parenting compared to Newcomers who spoke other home languages (2% for Mam vs. 7% for other languages).

## Implications of Findings

- According to this survey, students from the Northern Triangle make up a large majority (about three-quarters) of OUSD's Newcomer population. A subset (about one-third) of these students speak Mam and represent a distinct group that looks similar to their Spanish-speaking Northern Triangle counterparts on many aspects of the survey but in some respects are different.
- Confirming what Newcomer Wellness Initiative staff have known anecdotally through their work with the students, Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students reported more needs and risk factors than other Newcomers. They were less likely to report they lived with a parent, indicating they were supported differently or potentially inadequately at home. Mam-speaking students reported a much higher rate of food insecurity than other Newcomers. Both Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students reported higher rates of employment, higher levels of school absenteeism due in part to employment, and a greater desire for a district-provided transit pass to help with transportation challenges compared to other Newcomers. *These indicators all suggest higher economic need among Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students, and the need for additional supports to encourage and enable them to attend school.*
- Overall, the Newcomer student population responded fairly positively to the survey questions about feeling welcome and comfortable at school and the supports that might increase those feelings. However, a substantial proportion of students (37%) indicated they only felt welcome "some of the time" while a very small percentage (3%) said they "never" felt welcome, so this represents a potential growth area for Initiative staff. *We know Initiative*

*staff have already implemented many of the practices that students responded favorably to on the survey (e.g., cultural celebrations, staff who can speak their language) but they can continue to do this as well as attempt to understand what other supports might further increase students' feelings of welcome and comfort.*

- Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students were less likely than others to respond affirmatively to the questions about increasing welcome and comfort at school and conditions that would encourage school attendance. It is possible these students were skeptical of these supports because they believed they were unlikely to receive them, or that supports would have a positive impact on them. It may be they do not desire supports or believe they deserve them. *These are possibilities Initiative staff can further explore and try to understand.*
- Overall, students indicated on a survey question about specific practical supports they received from an adult at school and whether those supports were helpful that emotional support and help with school-related and health needs were the most-desired supports, but it appears these were generally well met. Relatively small proportions of students reported the support they received was unhelpful or that they did not receive support but wanted it. However, a larger-than-typical proportion of students (23%) said they did not receive support finding a job but wanted it, indicating a likely gap in services. More notable, however, is that for all supports, Mam-speaking students were less likely to find the support they received helpful compared to students who spoke other languages and less likely to report receiving help despite wanting it. *This indicates Mam-speaking students experienced these supports quite differently from Newcomers who spoke other home languages, and generally had more unmet needs.*
- From the sexual health questions, we learned that under half of all students (including middle and high school students) had received any sex ed at school and knew where to obtain birth control. Sexual health is where we see Mam-speaking students diverge from the larger group of students from the Northern Triangle. Although Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students were both less sexually active than other Newcomers, those from the Northern Triangle were better informed about sex and risk prevention than Newcomers from other countries and Mam-speakers specifically. *This indicates that Spanish-speaking students from the Northern Triangle may be distinct from Mam-speaking students on key dimensions of sexual health and that Mam-speakers in particular may need additional sex education supports.*



## Introduction

This report shares findings from analyses that SRI Education conducted of a survey of middle and high school Newcomer students in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). Newcomers are defined as individuals attending schools in the United States for three years or less and who speak a language other than English at home (ELLMA Office, 2016). This work results from a second year of partnership between SRI and OUSD's English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement (ELLMA) office. In the 2019-20 school year, SRI and ELLMA staff members together revised the survey of Newcomer students, SRI advised ELLMA on the administration of the survey, ELLMA administered the survey in fall 2019, and SRI analyzed the data with direction from ELLMA regarding the goals of the analyses. In the previous 2018-19 school year, SRI analyzed Newcomer Survey data collected in fall 2018 by ELLMA and reported it in conjunction with spring 2019 data from the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS).<sup>3</sup> The CHKS sampled Newcomer and non-Newcomer populations and gave some context to the Newcomer Survey findings.

In this report, we first give background information on the Salesforce-funded Newcomer Wellness Initiative, which was designed to support Newcomers' success in school using a tiered intervention framework. We then describe the design and fielding of the fall 2019 Newcomer Survey that Initiative staff administered to help inform their work. We then share the results from the survey and conclude with some potential implications of the findings for the Newcomer Wellness Initiative and other OUSD efforts to support Newcomers moving forward.

### **Salesforce Grant in Oakland Unified School District**

In 2016, Salesforce.org began granting funds to the Oakland Public Education Fund (the Ed Fund), a nonprofit entity that supports OUSD's work. Broadly, the aims of the Salesforce grant are to increase OUSD students' college and career readiness, their high school graduation rates, and the number of graduates who go on to pursue post-secondary STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) degrees. The grant funding has been used to build out middle school computer science pre-pathways; increase teachers' math capacity through programs such as Blueprint Math Fellows and Common Core Teacher Leaders (CCTLs); create Future Centers<sup>4</sup> to support students' college and career planning; empower principals to use innovative solutions to address the unique challenges of their schools; and scale-up the Newcomer Wellness Initiative to serve the district's large population of new immigrant students (OUSD and Oakland Ed Fund, 2018; Oakland Ed Fund, n.d.). The Ed Fund contracted with SRI Education, a non-profit research organization, to evaluate the implementation of a subset of

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<sup>3</sup> For findings from the first year, see Chen, W., Chong, M., Williamson, C. (2019). *Newcomer Wellness Initiative 2018-19 Evaluation Report*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

<sup>4</sup> In partnership with the Oakland Promise Initiative

Salesforce initiatives and the outcomes associated with them. This report describes only the work SRI has done in evaluating the Newcomer Wellness Initiative.

## **Newcomer Wellness Initiative**

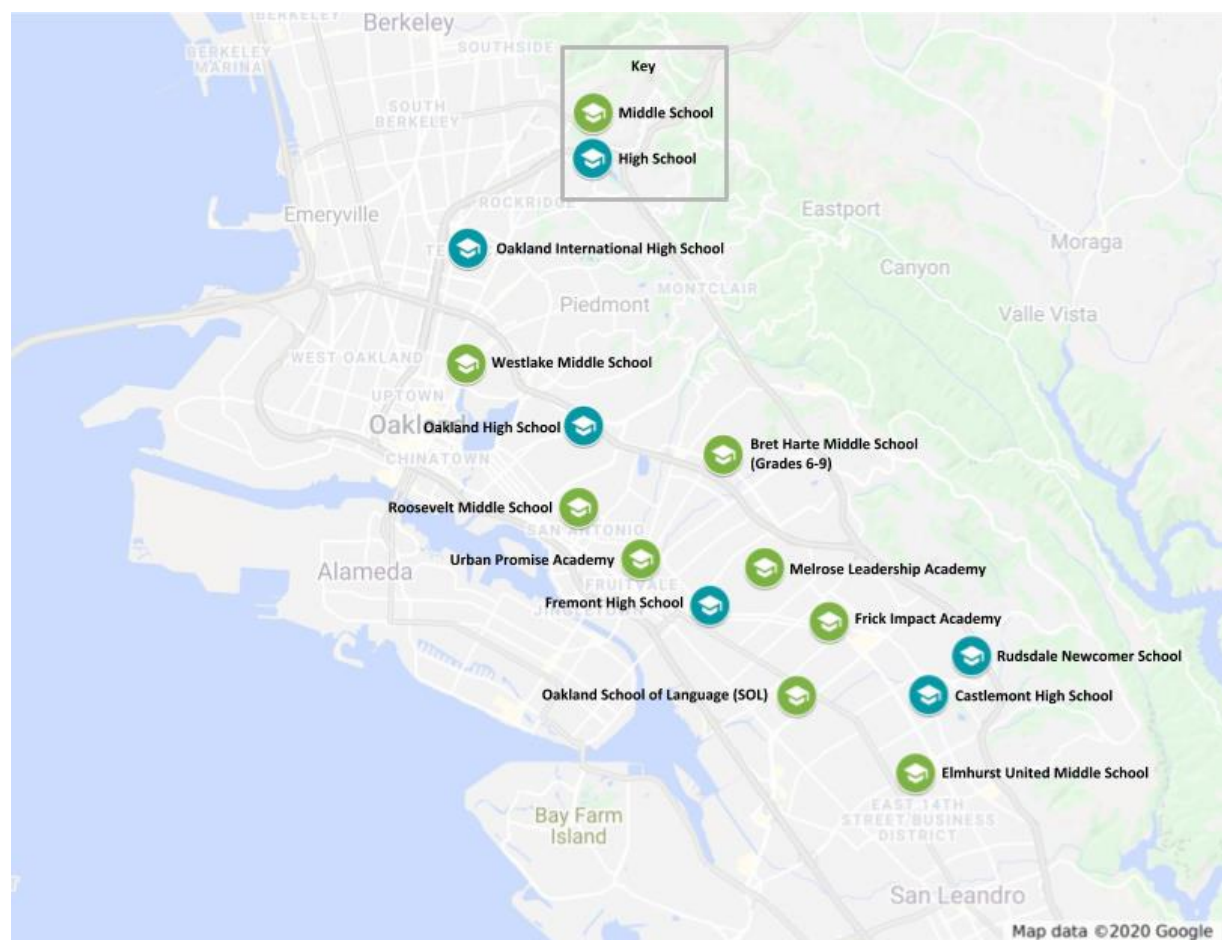
Launched in the 2017–18 school year, the Newcomer Wellness Initiative is one of the district’s Salesforce-funded programs. Prior to the Salesforce grant, the OUSD English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement (ELLMA) office had been supporting new immigrant students and families in accessing services through a team of two full-time staff based at the central enrollment office. Schools with large concentrations of new immigrant students also had Newcomer programs that provided students with a more intensive level of supports, including additional designated English Language Development (ELD) programming, after-school and summer programming, and services intended to address students’ non-academic needs that can affect learning, such as health and wellness services (OUSD, n.d.). The Salesforce-funded Newcomer Wellness Initiative increased the robustness of the supports available at middle and high schools with existing Newcomer programs by providing onsite bilingual social workers and mental health professionals, called Newcomer Navigators. Schools participating in the Newcomer Wellness Initiative in 2019-20 are identified below in Exhibit 2.

Using a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework, the Navigators provide students with universal, group, and targeted individual supports. Universal supports include conducting Newcomer intakes and needs assessments; providing Newcomers with an orientation to their new school; and leading activities designed to improve the overall school culture and make the school feel more safe, welcoming, and inclusive. Group supports included clinical groups on topics such as grief and loss, acculturation, and healthy relationships, as well as nonclinical groups such as lunch bunches and culture clubs. Individual supports are provided to students with the most intense needs who may require individualized counseling, intensive case management, and targeted attendance interventions (ELLMA Office, 2018).

These supports are applied with three goals in mind:

- (1) increase Newcomer attendance rates by reducing obstacles to attending school,
- (2) increase retention of non-graduating Newcomers by facilitating attendance and increasing connectedness to school, and
- (3) increase Newcomers’ feelings of connectedness to adults at school and their ability to access available supports, including health services.

Exhibit 2. Secondary Schools Participating in the Newcomer Wellness Initiative 2019-20



Note. Oakland International High School and Rudsdale Newcomer School serve only Newcomer students. The other schools are traditional schools that serve non-Newcomers as well.

To help students be ready to learn, Newcomer Navigators also try to support them in meeting basic needs to the extent possible. Navigators work in partnership with other staff at the school and district levels to further advocate for and support the success of Newcomers (ELLMA Office, 2018).

## Methods

The Ed Fund contracted with SRI Education to provide evaluation technical assistance to Newcomer Wellness Initiative staff (housed within the ELLMA office) beginning in late fall 2018, during the second year of the Initiative's implementation. SRI and Initiative staff mutually agreed upon an approach in which SRI would analyze survey data that Initiative staff had previously collected from Newcomer students in the fall of 2018, as well as data the district had collected from Newcomers and non-Newcomers using the CHKS in the spring of 2019. In 2019-20, the second year of our work together, SRI and Initiative staff applied lessons learned from the

previous year's data analyses to improve both the design of the survey and the way it was administered so the resulting data would be more reliable, valid, and useful to Initiative staff.

## **2019 Newcomer Survey**

### **Survey Design**

In editing the Newcomer Survey for the 2019 administration (see Appendix A for the complete survey), SRI staff and Initiative leaders worked to even more clearly align survey items with the goals of the survey (i.e., improve staff ability to effectively address student needs), as well as apply best practices in survey design. Initiative leaders had designed the first (2018) Newcomer Survey to inform their work toward the Initiative's goals of increased attendance, retention, and connectedness leading to service access. Survey questions assessed students' home life and economic needs; transportation to school and barriers to attendance; perceptions of school and community safety; risk behaviors and health knowledge; and receipt of school supports. In retrospect, Initiative staff determined that not all the items assessed student needs in a way that was actionable for them, however. For example, school staff could do little to impact community safety or change the methods by which students were commuting to school. Thus, we removed, added, or altered items using the guiding rule that all items needed to either directly or indirectly inform the staff of specific actions they could take to support students.

Also, a number of 2018 Newcomer Survey items were constructed in a manner that allowed students to respond with more than one answer (i.e., "mark all that apply") and this created analytic challenges. We had to first take the step of recoding responses for which students could mark all that apply into mutually exclusive categories. For the 2019 survey, we constructed items to take only one response.<sup>5</sup>

Additionally, demographic information (e.g., students' birth country, home language, time living in the U.S.) was not collected in 2018, so in the first-year report we made subgroup comparisons based on a few characteristics that were included in the survey that Initiative staff believed were the most important for understanding this population: middle school students compared to high school students; students whose primary caregiver/guardian was a parent compared to those with a non-parent primary caregiver, and students who felt safe at school compared to those who did not feel safe. For the 2019 survey, we added demographic items we believed could be the basis of the most meaningful subgroup comparisons.

### **Administration**

Initiative leaders also made changes to the survey administration that we expected would increase the sample size and the reliability and validity of the data collected. They administered the survey in four languages (English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese), and where possible, they

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<sup>5</sup> Due to a survey programming error, students could mark more than one response on three survey items (questions 11, 12, 13). Only a very small number did and we removed these instances of multiple responses from the analyses of these items.

attempted a pull-out or set-aside administration for students whose home language was Mam<sup>6</sup> that was guided by a Mam-speaking staff member or student mentor. As with the 2018 survey, Initiative leaders programmed the 2019 survey into Google Forms. Initiative staff worked with teachers and staff within each school to identify a date when the survey could be administered to Newcomer students and the best settings in which to do so. Initiative staff then assisted with the administration in person using a standardized set of instructions.

## **Sample**

A total of 1,417 Newcomer students in grades 6 through 12 at eight middle schools and five high schools completed the survey (Exhibit 1 above). The overall response rate (80%) was good. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the students were in high school and about one-third (38%) were in middle school.<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of students chose to take the survey in Spanish (77%), while 15 percent took it in English, 4 percent in Arabic, and 4 percent in Chinese.

## **Analytic Approach**

After cleaning the data (e.g., removing records created during the testing process, combining very small response groups for birth country and home language into “other”), SRI staff conducted descriptive analyses consisting largely of frequencies or percentages. We ran these for the sample overall, by school, and by subgroups of interest. Subgroups examined included those defined by time living in the U.S.; parent vs. non-parent primary caregiver; middle school vs. high school; birth country; and home language.

## **Focus on Students Born in the Northern Triangle and Students with Mam Home Language**

Following careful discussion with Newcomer Wellness Initiative leaders, we decided to focus the analysis and this report on two overlapping groups of students: 1) those who were born in the Northern Triangle region of Central America (consisting of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras), and 2) those who spoke Mam as their home language. OUSD has a relatively large population of these students and as a group, they tend to have higher needs than even other Newcomer students because of the specific geopolitical context of the area from which they come. Some are from rural, indigenous communities where they had little access to formal education, most are fleeing high levels of violence and/or poverty, and some arrive in the U.S. as unaccompanied minors and have little social support. OUSD expends a considerable amount of resources trying to serve these students yet has little formal data on them as a group because the demographic variables in the district data system are not currently set up to uniquely identify them. Thus, Initiative leaders saw this analysis of the Newcomer Survey as an opportunity to learn about Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students in particular.

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<sup>6</sup> A Mayan language spoken by indigenous peoples living in Guatemala and parts of southwestern Mexico.

<sup>7</sup> The middle school count includes Bret Harte, which serves grades 6-9.

## Findings

### Survey Results for Overall Sample, Students Born in the Northern Triangle and Students with Mam Home Language

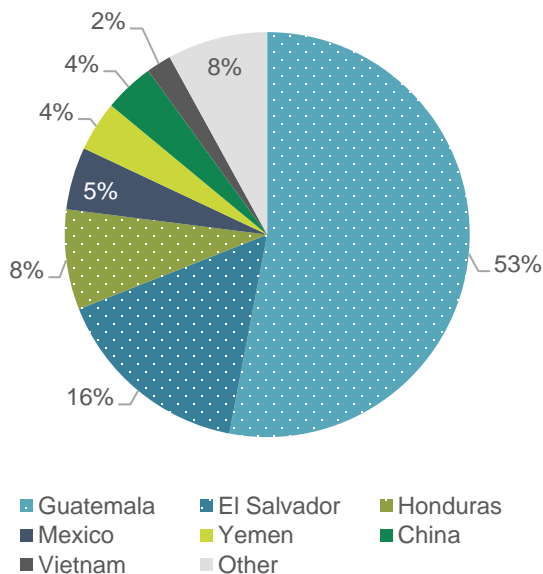
Below we present descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages) for Newcomer Survey items for the overall sample ( $n = 1,417$ ), students born in the Northern Triangle ( $n = 1,085$ ) compared to students born in other countries ( $n = 332$ ), and students who speak Mam as their home language ( $n = 331$ ) compared to students who speak other home languages ( $n = 1,086$ ). Results for middle schools overall, high schools overall, and individual schools can be found in Appendix B. Rounding errors may result in totals of 99 or 101 percent.

#### Demographics

##### **Birth country**

More than three-quarters (77%) of the surveyed students were born in the Northern Triangle (Exhibit 3). Over half (53%) were from Guatemala, 16 percent were from El Salvador, and 8 percent were from Honduras. The remaining 23 percent of students were from other from countries including Mexico (5%), Yemen (4%), China (4%), Vietnam (2%), and others (8%).

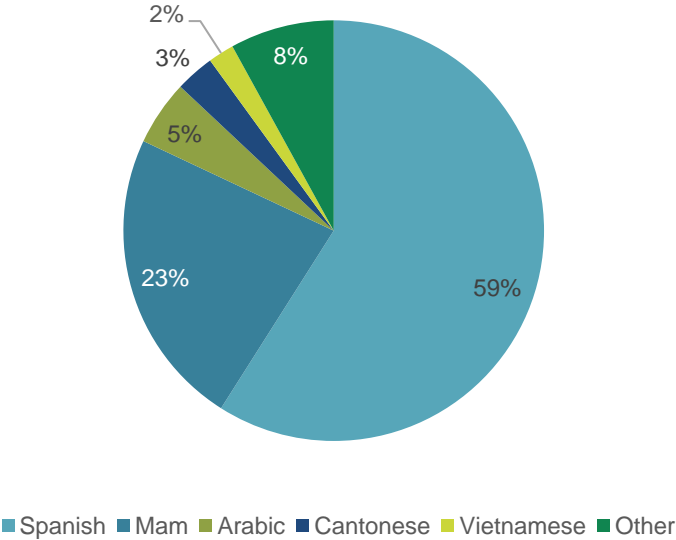
Exhibit 3. Students' Birth Country,  $n = 1,417$



##### **Home language**

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of students reported they spoke Mam as their home language (Exhibit 4). Among the three-quarters (77%) who spoke another home language, Spanish was the most common at 59 percent.

Exhibit 4. Students' Home Language, n = 1,417

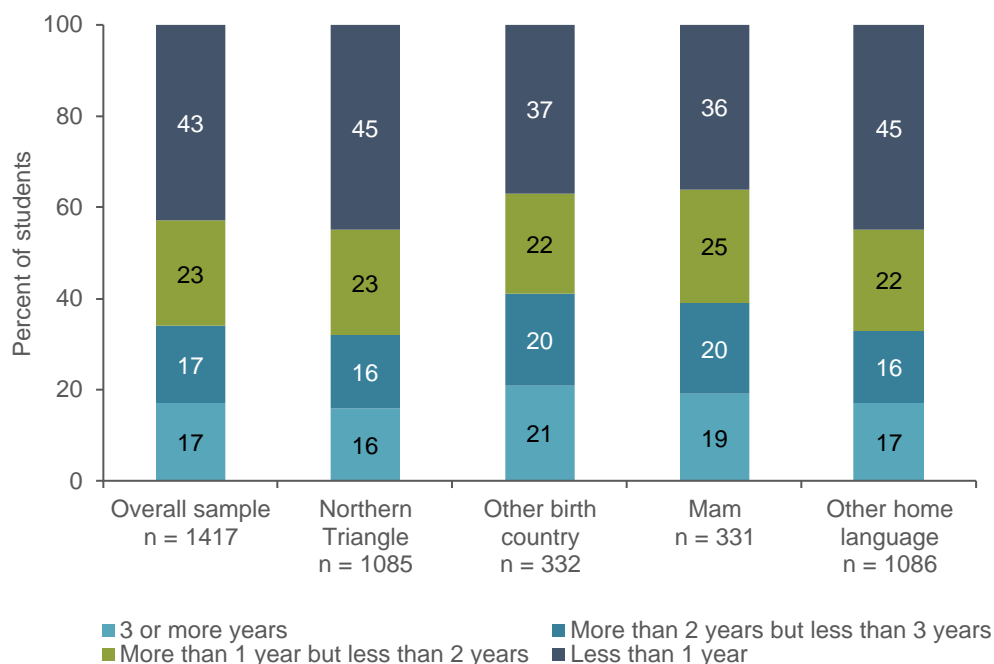


Additional analyses revealed that of the 1,085 surveyed students who were born in the Northern Triangle, 30 percent spoke Mam as their home language. Of the 331 students who spoke Mam as their home language, 100 percent were born in the Northern Triangle.

**Time living in the U.S.**

Overall, about two-fifths (43%) of Newcomer students had been living in the U.S. for less than one year at the time of the survey, while 23 percent had been in the country for more than one year but less than two years, 17 percent had been in the country for more than two but less than three years, and the remaining 17 percent had been in the country for three or more years. This breakdown changed little by birth country or home language, although a slightly smaller proportion of Mam-speakers (36%) and students from “other” (non-Northern Triangle) birth countries (37%) were brand-new to the country.

Exhibit 5. Length of Time Living in the U.S., for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language



### Home Life and Economic Needs

To learn about who students were living with and the types of supports and needs they had at home, we asked about their primary caregiver or guardian (defined as the person who provided them with housing and food), whether they had enough food to eat each day, whether they had a job, and whether they contributed to paying rent where they lived. In a check of the data for face validity (i.e., do we think the question captured the information we were trying to capture?) we found the rent question may have been misinterpreted by a significant number of students. Given this, we are not presenting the data here, but it is included in the report as Appendix C and must be interpreted very cautiously.

#### Primary caregiver/guardian

Overall, the vast majority of students (77%) reported a parent was their primary caregiver/guardian, while 9 percent said it was an uncle or aunt and 8 percent said it was a brother or sister (Exhibit 6). A very small number of students (2%) reported they did not have a relative or family friend acting as caregiver/guardian and cared for themselves.

Compared to students from other birth countries, a smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported their primary caregiver was a parent (89% for other countries, 74% for Northern Triangle). Relatedly, compared to students who spoke other home languages, a smaller proportion of students who spoke Mam reported their primary caregiver was a parent (80% for other languages, 69% for Mam) (Exhibit 7). This may mean that because students



from the Northern Triangle and students who spoke Mam were less likely to live with a parent, they were more likely to be supported differently or potentially inadequately at home.

Exhibit 6. Students' Primary Caregiver/Guardian, n = 1,417

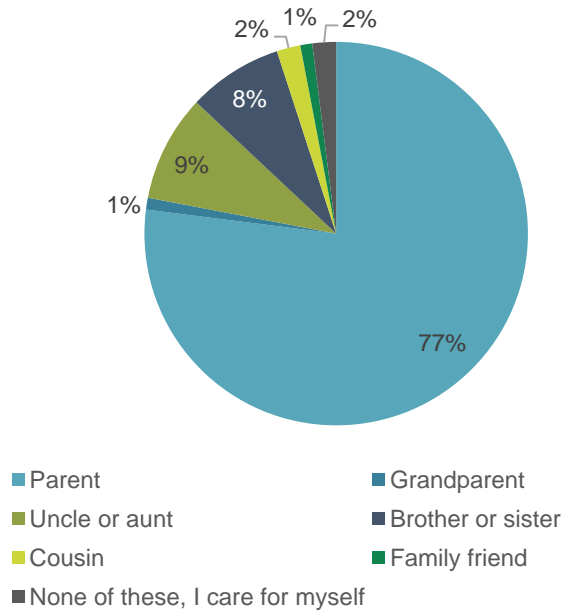
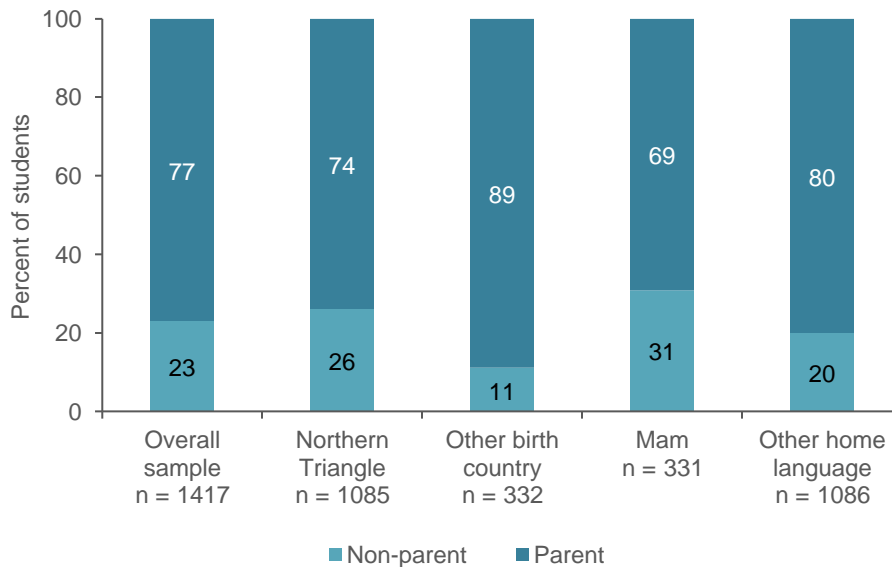


Exhibit 7. Students' Primary Caregiver/Guardian, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language

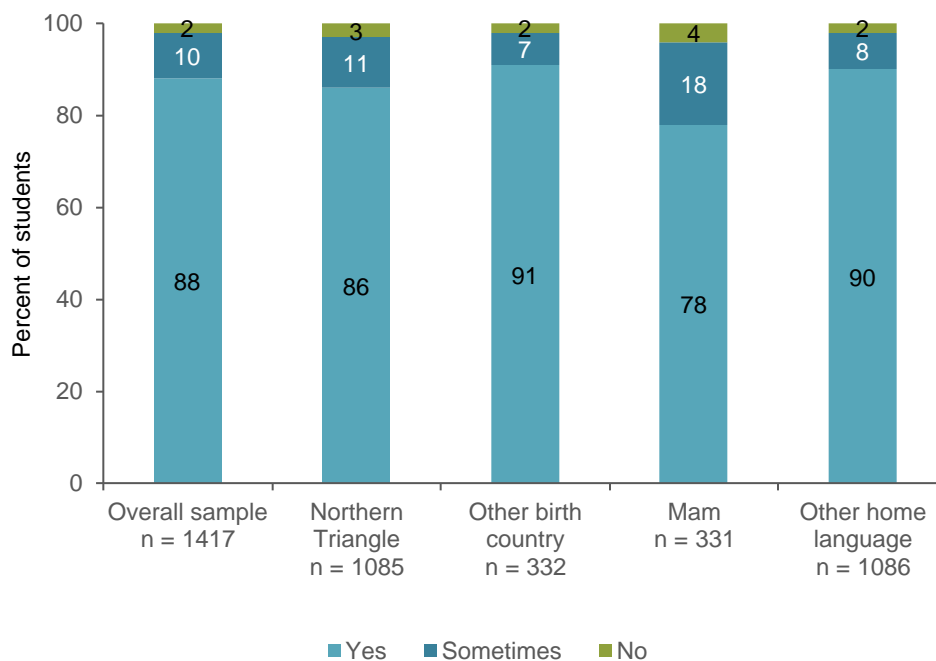


### **Food security**

Overall, 12 percent of students reported they either did not have enough to eat or only sometimes had enough to eat each day (and therefore were food insecure) (Exhibit 8). Although still a minority of students, this number is large enough to warrant attention because hunger is an impediment to basic human functioning and, for these students, likely a barrier to learning.

Among students who spoke Mam as their home language, food insecurity was even more common with nearly one-quarter (22%) reporting not having enough to eat or only sometimes having enough to eat each day. This is compared to a food insecurity rate of 10 percent among students who spoke another home language. This indicates Mam-speaking students experience a much higher rate of food insecurity than other Newcomer students and this risk is obscured when looking at Newcomers together as a whole.

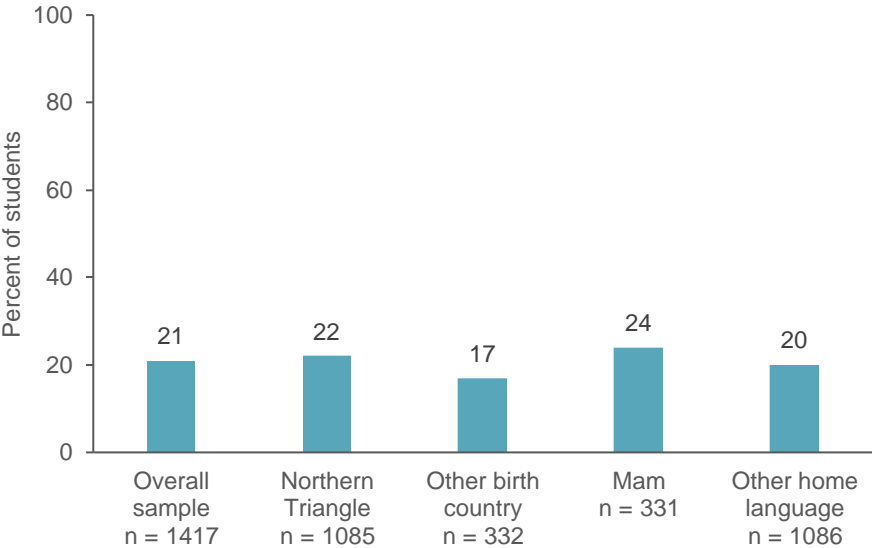
*Exhibit 8. Student Perceptions of Food Security, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language*



### **Student employment**

Overall, 21 percent of students reported they had a job (Exhibit 9). Students from the Northern Triangle reported slightly higher rates of employment compared to students from other countries (22% for Northern Triangle vs. 17% for other countries). Similarly, students who spoke Mam reported slightly higher rates of employment compared with students who spoke another home language (24% for Mam vs. 20% for other languages). This again suggests higher economic need among students from the Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students, where the latter is a subset of the former.

Exhibit 9. Students with Jobs, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language



**Barriers to School Attendance**

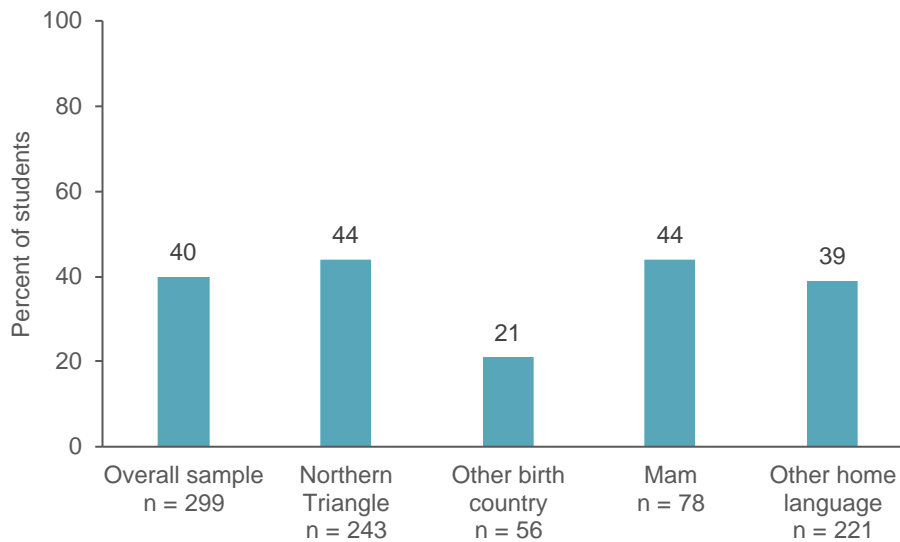
We asked students who worked if they sometimes missed school because they worked. We also asked all students whether they missed school often (defined as one day a week or more). For those who responded they missed school often, we asked if it was because it was hard to get there, and if it was hard to get there, whether having a district-provided Clipper card<sup>8</sup> or bus pass would help.

***Missing school due to work***

Among students overall who worked, two-fifths (40%) said they sometimes missed school because of work (Exhibit 10). When disaggregated by birth country, a much higher proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported missing school due to work compared to students from other birth countries (44% for Northern Triangle vs. 21% for other countries). A slightly higher proportion of Mam-speaking students said they missed school due to work compared to students who spoke another home language (44% for Mam vs. 39% for other language).

<sup>8</sup> A regional transit pass.

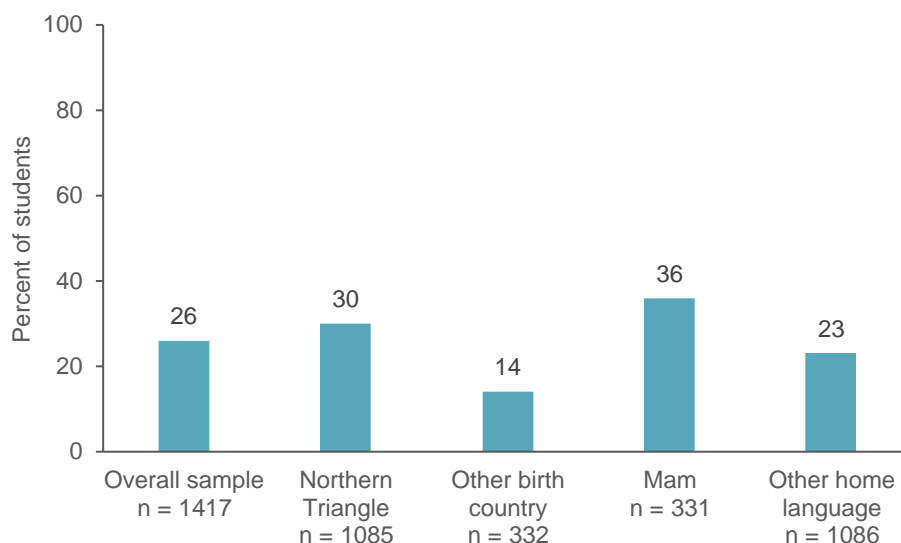
Exhibit 10. Students Who Missed School due to Work, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language



### **Missing school often**

Overall, about one-quarter (26%) of students reported they missed school often (one day a week or more) (Exhibit 11). When disaggregated by birth country, there is again a large disparity in missing school often between students from the Northern Triangle (30%) and students from other countries (14%). A similarly large disparity exists between students who spoke Mam at home (36%) compared to students who spoke another home language (23%). This further indicates that, compared to other Newcomers, students from the Northern Triangle and those who speak Mam are at higher risk for absenteeism and need additional supports to encourage and enable them to attend school.

Exhibit 11. Students Who Missed School Often, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language



### **Transportation challenges**

Among all students who said they missed school often, about one-third (34%) further reported they missed school because “it was hard to get there,” indicating transportation challenges (Exhibit 12). The proportion of students reporting transportation was a barrier to school attendance did not differ by birth country or home language.

Overall, among students who reported they missed school due to transportation challenges, the vast majority (87%) said having a district-provided Clipper card or bus pass would help them get to school (Exhibit 13). Although there was no difference by birth country in the percentage of students who reported missing school due to transportation challenges, among those with transportation challenges, a greater proportion of students from the Northern Triangle indicated having a Clipper card or bus pass would help them get to school compared to Newcomer students from other countries (89% for Northern Triangle vs. 75% for other countries). A similar relationship exists regarding home language; a greater proportion of Mam-speaking students said a transit pass would help them compared to students who spoke another home language (93% for Mam vs. 85% for other home language). This may be another indicator of economic need among students from the Northern Triangle and students who speak Mam.

Exhibit 12. Students Who Missed School Often Due to Transportation Challenges, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language

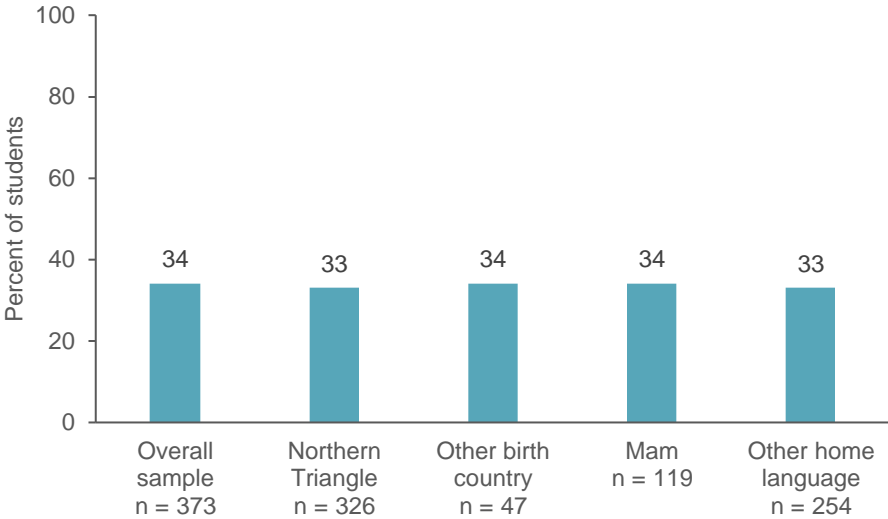
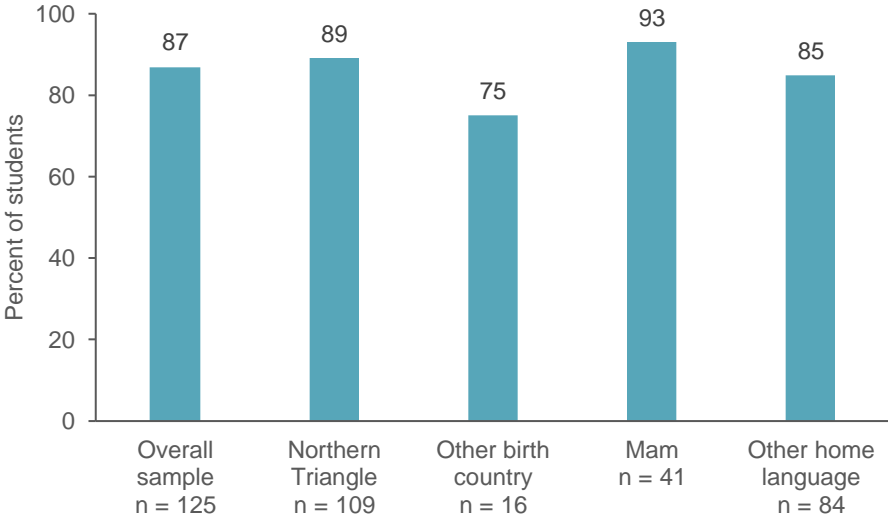


Exhibit 13. Students with Transportation Challenges Who Would Benefit from Clipper Card/Bus Pass, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language



**Perceptions of School Climate and Supports**

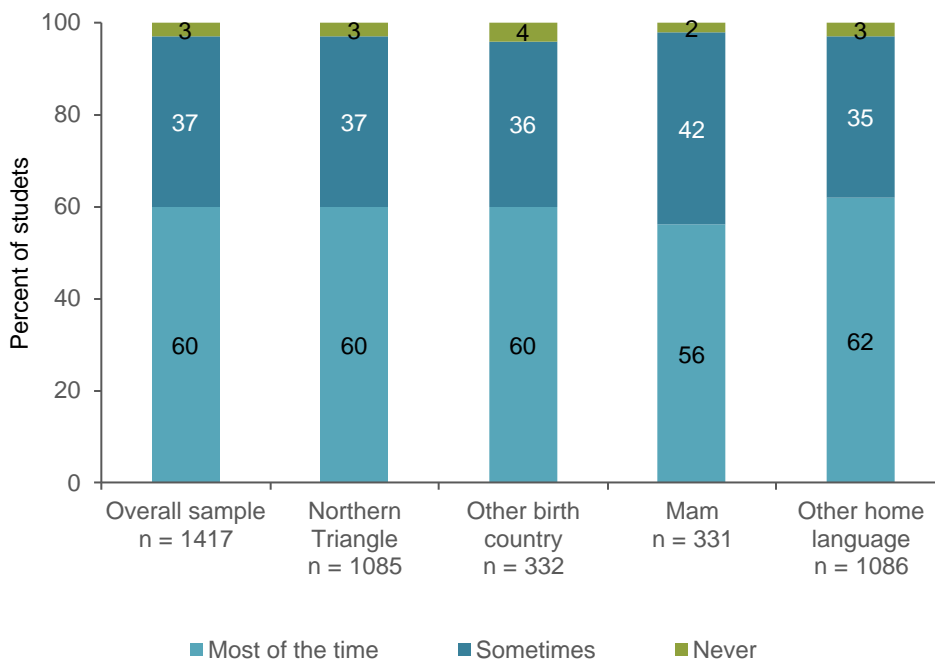
To learn about how students viewed the emotional and practical supports that were being offered at school, we asked them how welcome and comfortable they felt at school, what supports would help them feel more welcome and comfortable at school, what supports would

encourage them to attend school, and about their experiences of certain supports they received at school.

**Feeling welcome and comfortable at school**

Overall, three-fifths (60%) of students said they felt welcome and comfortable at school most of the time (Exhibit 14). Among the remaining students, 37 percent said they felt welcome and comfortable some of the time, and 3 percent never felt welcome and comfortable. These proportions changed very little when students were disaggregated by birth country and home language, although a slightly smaller proportion of Mam-speaking students reported feeling welcome most of the time (56%) compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages (62%). This difference is small, however, and we do not know if it is statistically significant.

*Exhibit 14. Students Who Felt Welcome and Comfortable at School, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language*

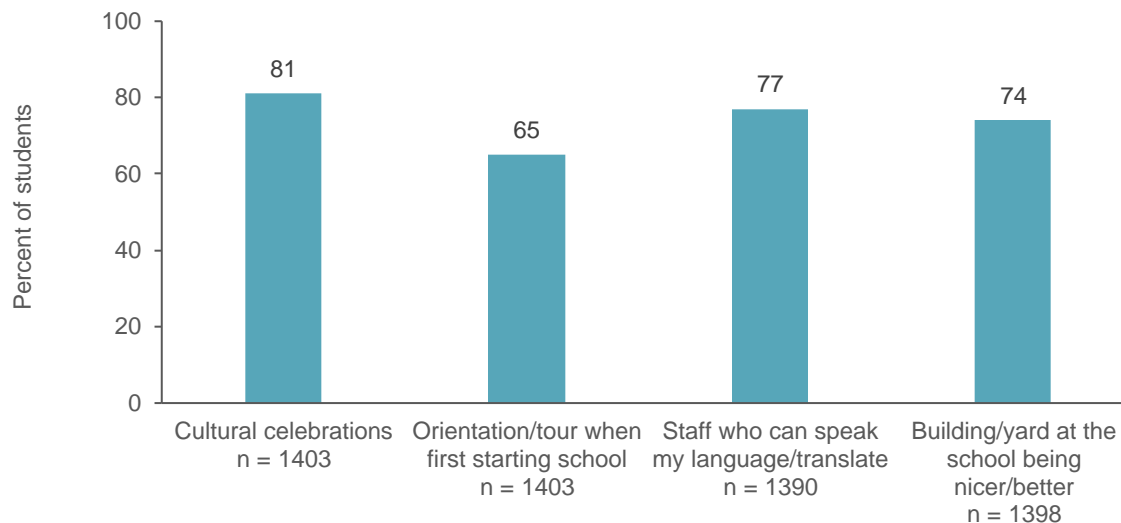


**Supports for feeling welcome and comfortable at school**

We asked students whether certain supports or conditions would help them feel more welcome and comfortable at school. Overall, 81 percent said cultural celebrations, 77 percent said staff who spoke their language and could translate, 74 percent said the building and yard at school being nicer or better, and 65 percent said having an orientation or tour when first starting school would increase their feelings of being welcome and comfortable at school (Exhibit 15). We know some of these practices are already in place in some schools, but the relatively high rate of

affirmative responses suggests Newcomer Wellness Initiative staff and other school personnel should consider implementing these supports if they have not done so already.

*Exhibit 15. Supports That Would Increase Student Feelings of Welcome and Comfort at School, for Overall Sample*



When disaggregating by birth country, we generally see a slightly smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle responded these particular supports would increase their feelings of being welcome and comfortable at school compared to Newcomer students from other countries (Exhibit 16). We see a similar but more pronounced pattern when disaggregating by home language, with a smaller proportion of Mam-speakers responding these supports would increase their feelings of welcome and comfort compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages (Exhibit 17). The difference between the two groups was greatest for “staff who can speak my language or can translate” (69% for Mam vs. 79% for other home languages).

It is unclear why we see lower rates of affirmative responses among students from the Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students. It is possible these students doubt the supports would ever be provided or could impact their attendance. It may be they do not desire supports or believe they deserve them. It is also possible the grid-like format of the survey question was particularly challenging for Mam-speaking students who were taking the survey in Spanish or English to understand, affecting their responses.



Exhibit 16. Supports That Would Increase Student Feelings of Welcome and Comfort at School, by Birth Country

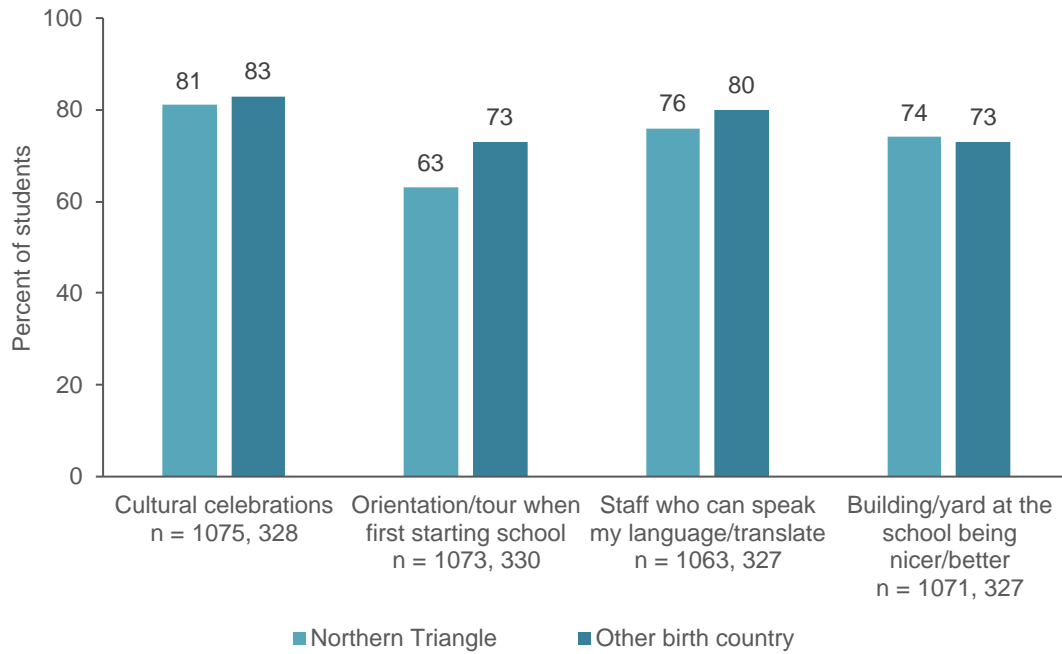
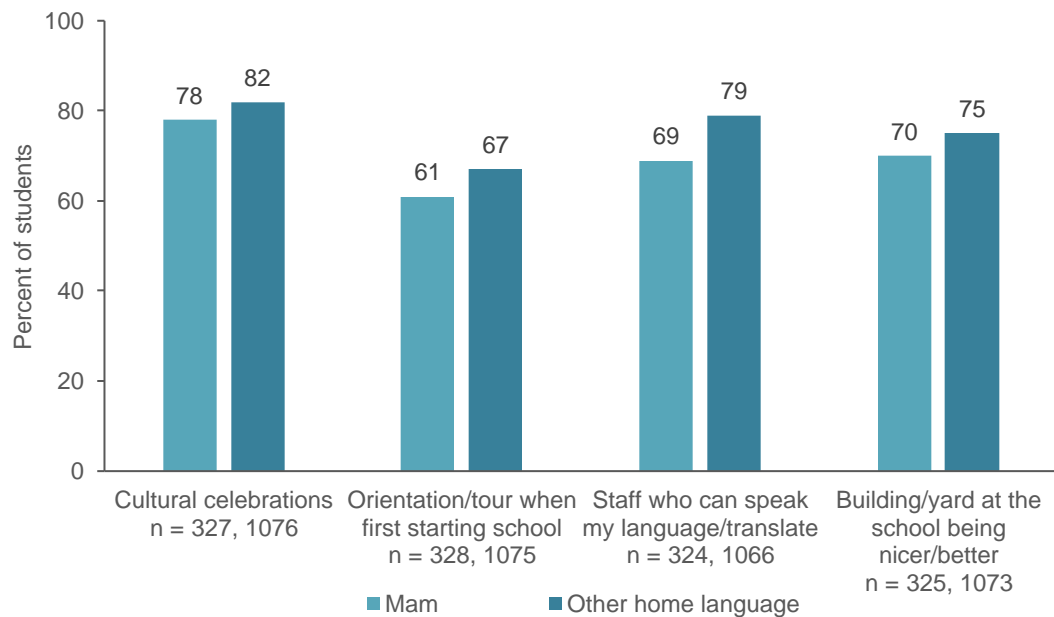


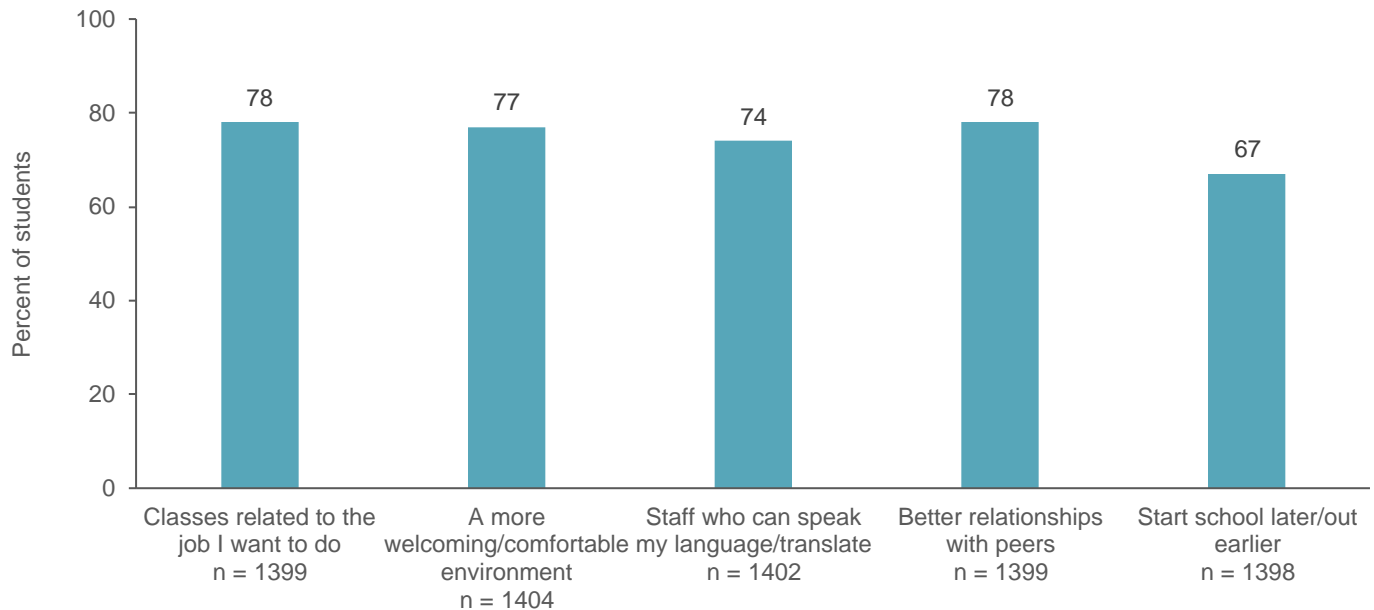
Exhibit 17. Supports That Would Increase Student Feelings of Welcome and Comfort at School, by Home Language



### **Encouragement for attending school**

We asked students which supports or conditions would encourage them to attend school. Overall, 78 percent said classes related to the job they wanted to do, 78 percent said better relationships with peers, 77 percent said a more welcoming or comfortable environment, 74 percent said staff who would speak their language or could translate, and 67 percent said starting school later or ending earlier would encourage them to come to school (Exhibit 18).

*Exhibit 18. Supports That Would Encourage Students to Attend School, for Overall Sample*



When disaggregating by birth country and home language, we see a pattern of results very similar to those regarding increasing feelings of welcome and comfort at school. A slightly smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle responded these particular supports or conditions would encourage them to attend school compared to Newcomer students from other countries (Exhibit 19). The pattern is more pronounced when disaggregating by home language, with a smaller proportion of Mam-speakers responding these supports would encourage them to attend school compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages (Exhibit 20). Again, we may be seeing lower rates of affirmative responses among students from the Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students because they doubt the supports would ever be provided or could impact their attendance.

The difference between the two home language groups was greatest for “a more welcoming and comfortable environment” (64% for Mam vs. 81% for other languages) and “staff who can speak my language or can translate” (63% for Mam vs. 77% for other languages). The gap seen for the latter support may reflect a recognition that there are few staff available who speak Mam.

Starting school later or getting out earlier as a support or condition was not as attractive to students as expected.

Exhibit 19. Supports That Would Encourage Students to Attend School, by Birth Country

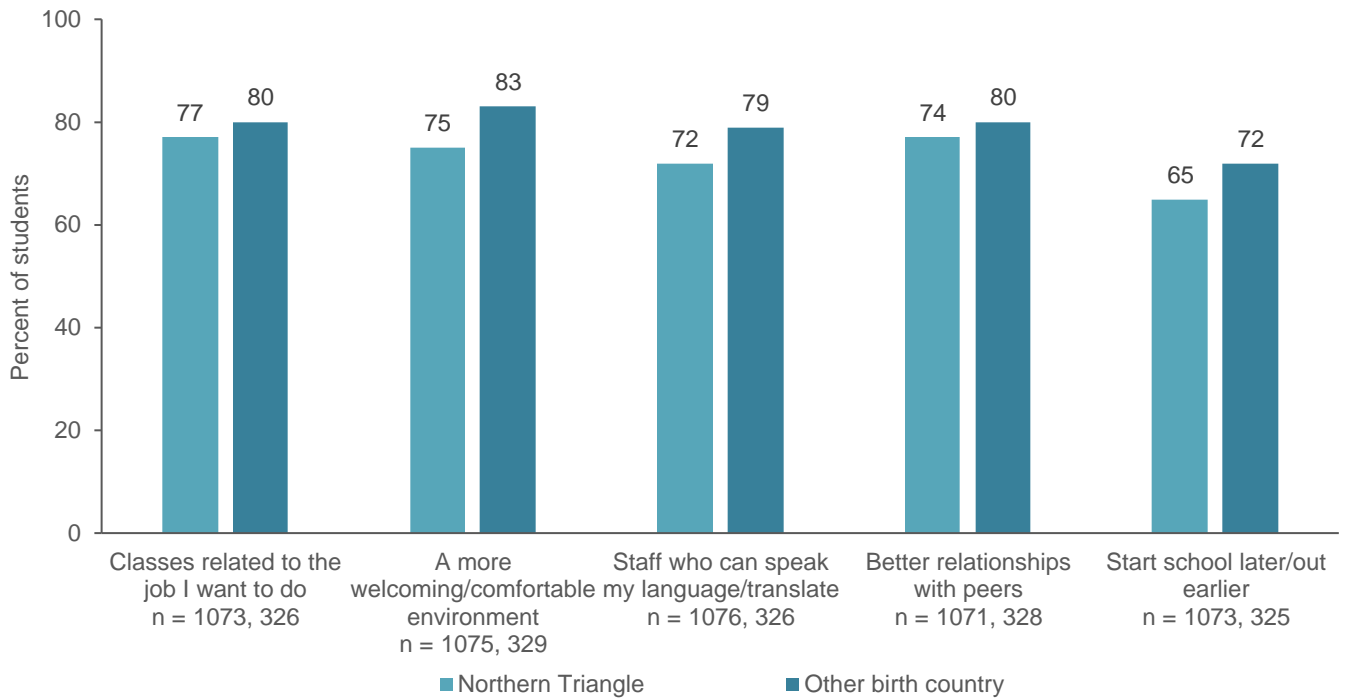
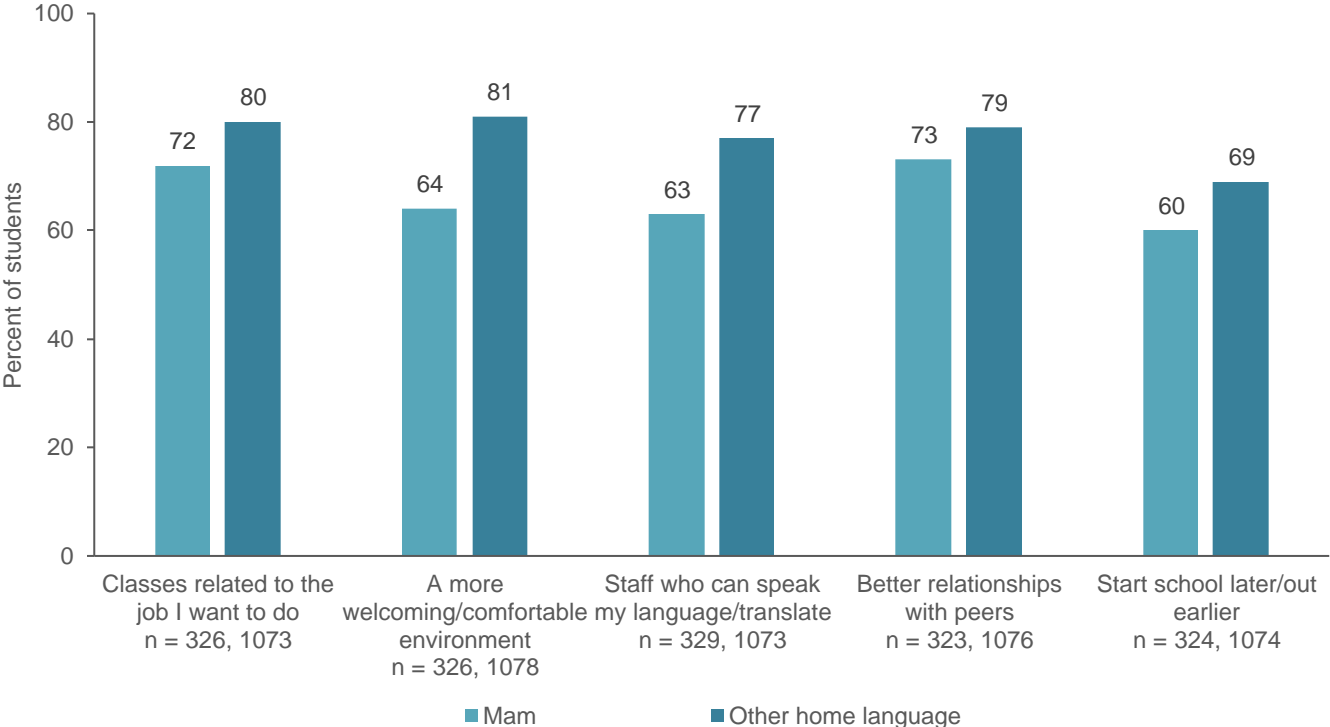


Exhibit 20. Supports That Would Encourage Students to Attend School, by Home Language

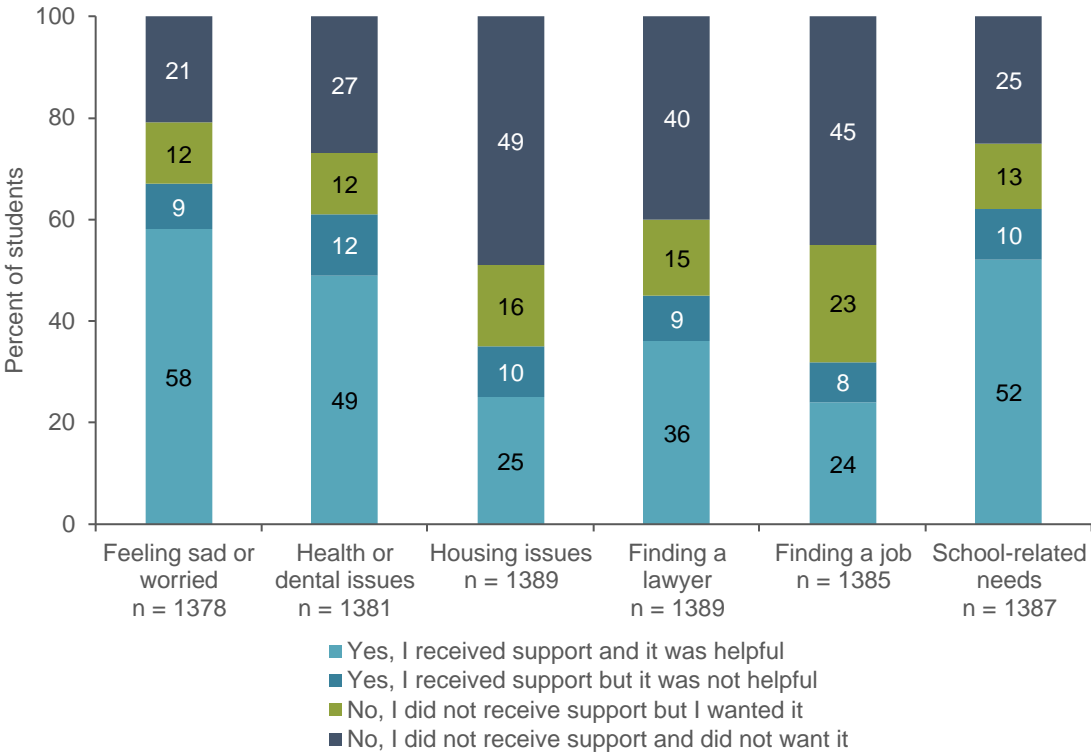


**Experience of supports**

We asked students if they had received specific supports from an adult at school, whether they found it helpful if they had received it, and if they had not received it whether they wanted it. Overall, the supports students received and found to be helpful with greatest frequency were those for feeling sad or worried (58%), school-related needs (defined as joining school programs, clearing absences, talking to counselors, etc.) (52%), and health or dental issues (49%) (Exhibit 21). Other supports that they received and found to be helpful at lower frequencies were those for finding a lawyer (36%), housing issues (25%), and finding a job (24%). For each type of support, another 8 to 12 percent of students reported they received support but found it unhelpful, whereas 12 to 23 percent said they did not receive the support but wanted it. The type of support students most reported they wanted but did not receive was help with finding a job (23%). The types of supports students reported they had not received and *did not* want were for housing issues (49%) and finding a job (45%).

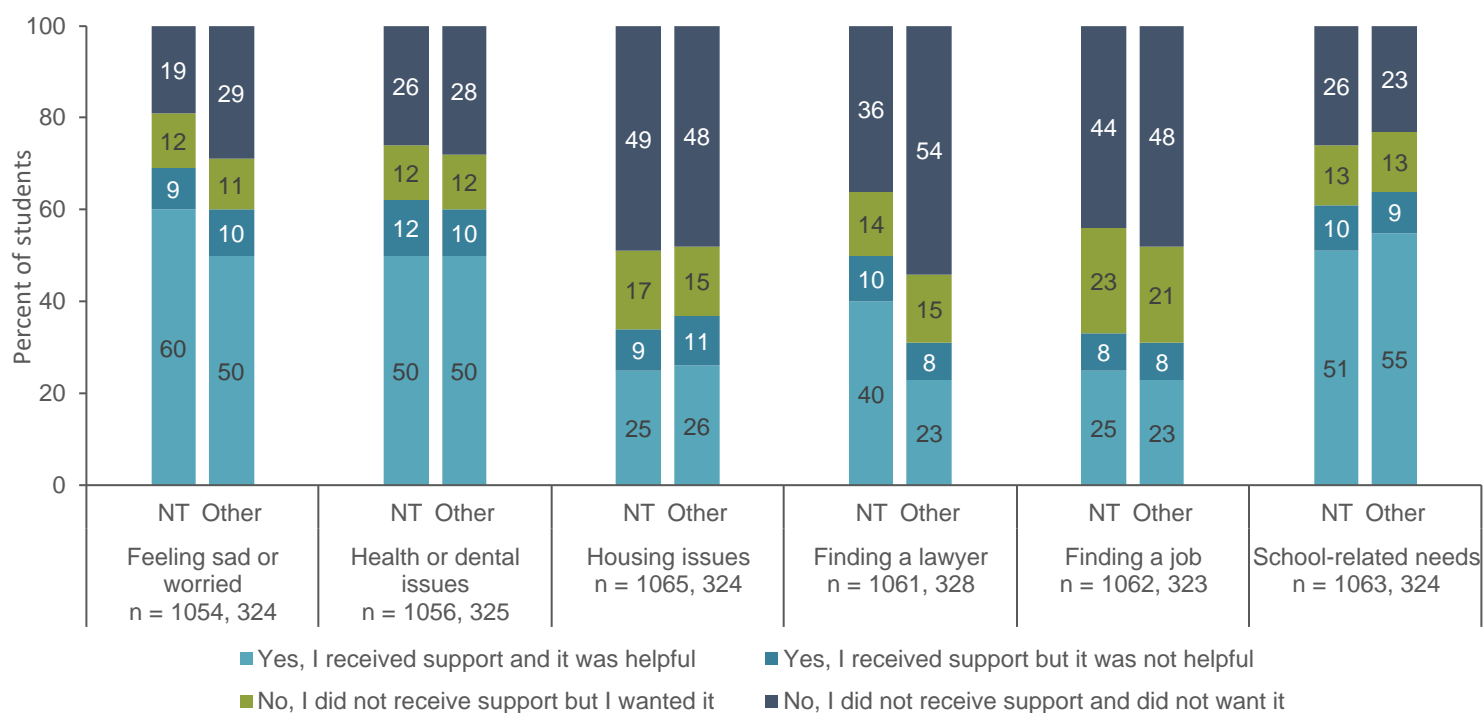
With these results, we can differentiate to some extent student support needs from what staff were able to provide and identify where some gaps might be. Students identified emotional support and school-related and health needs as most important, but also indicated these needs were generally well met. About 25 percent of students reported they received support that was unhelpful or their need was unmet, and 23% said they did not receive support for finding a job but wanted it, indicating a likely gap in services.

Exhibit 21. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, for Overall Sample



When disaggregating results by birth country, students from the Northern Triangle received and found helpful support with feeling sad or worried at greater rates than did students from other countries (60% for Northern Triangle vs. 50% for other countries) (Exhibit 22). The difference was even more pronounced for support with finding a lawyer (40% for Northern Triangle vs. 23% for other countries). The need for these two supports was lower among students from other birth countries, and they were more likely to indicate they did not receive or want it. For the remaining types of supports, differences by birth country were very small.

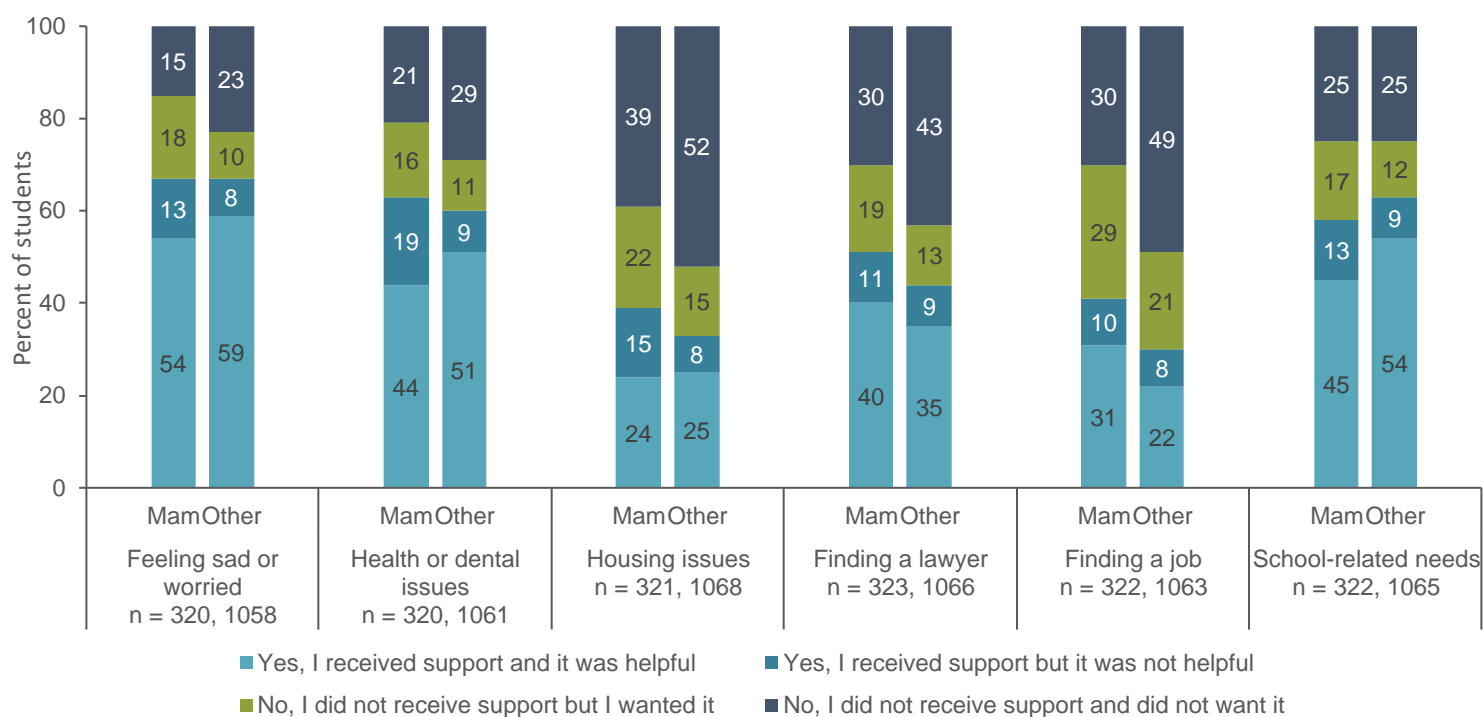
Exhibit 22. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, by Birth Country



There were more apparent differences by home language. Mam-speaking students received emotional and health or dental support in somewhat equal frequency with students who spoke other home languages (feeling sad or worried: 67% for Mam vs. 67% for other languages; health or dental: 63% for Mam vs. 60% for other languages), but they reported higher rates of receiving support with finding a job (41% for Mam vs. 30% for other languages), finding a lawyer (51% for Mam vs. 44% for other languages), and finding housing (39% for Mam vs. 33% for other languages), and a slightly lower rate of receiving support with school-related needs (58% for Mam vs. 63% for other languages) (Exhibit 23).

More notable, however, is that for all supports, Mam-speaking students were more likely to find the support they received unhelpful compared to students who spoke other languages. For all supports, Mam-speaking students were also more likely not to have received the support despite wanting it. For all supports except those that were school-related, students who spoke other home languages were less likely to want the support. This indicates Mam-speaking students experienced these supports quite differently from Newcomers who spoke other home languages, and generally had more unmet needs.

Exhibit 23. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, by Home Language



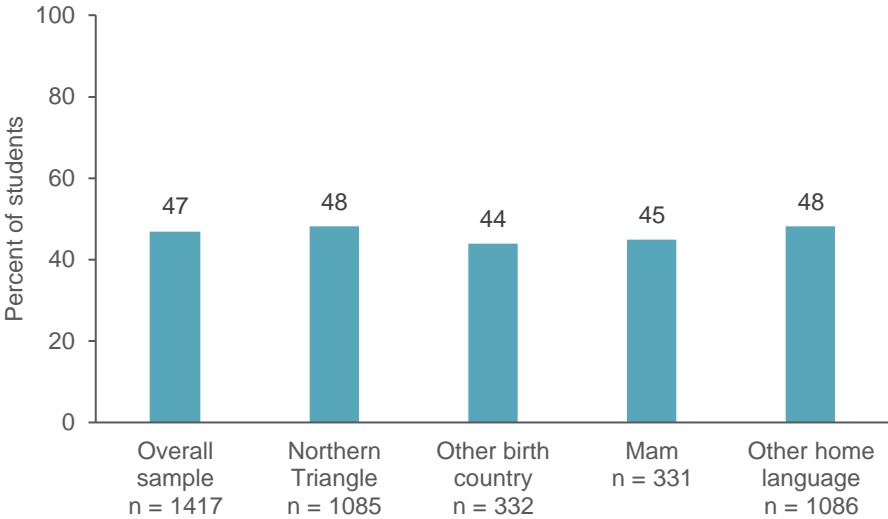
## Sexual Health

To understand how well-prepared students were to maintain their sexual health, we asked if they had experienced a class or a lesson regarding sex at school, if they knew where to get birth control or condoms, and if they were sexually active. For those who were sexually active, we asked whether they knew how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and if they were pregnant or parenting.

### Sex education

Overall, 47 percent of students reported they had received sex ed at school (Exhibit 24). This percentage includes both middle and high school students. Differences by birth country and home language were very small and similar to responses about knowledge of access to birth control (next item). Students from the Northern Triangle reported a slightly higher rate of sex ed compared to students from other countries (48% for Northern Triangle vs. 44% for other countries). Typically Mam-speaking students respond similarly to and as a subset of those from the Northern Triangle; however, in this instance students who spoke Mam reported a slightly lower rate of sex ed compared to students who spoke other home languages (45% for Mam vs. 48% for other languages).

Exhibit 24. Students Who Received Sex Education at School, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language

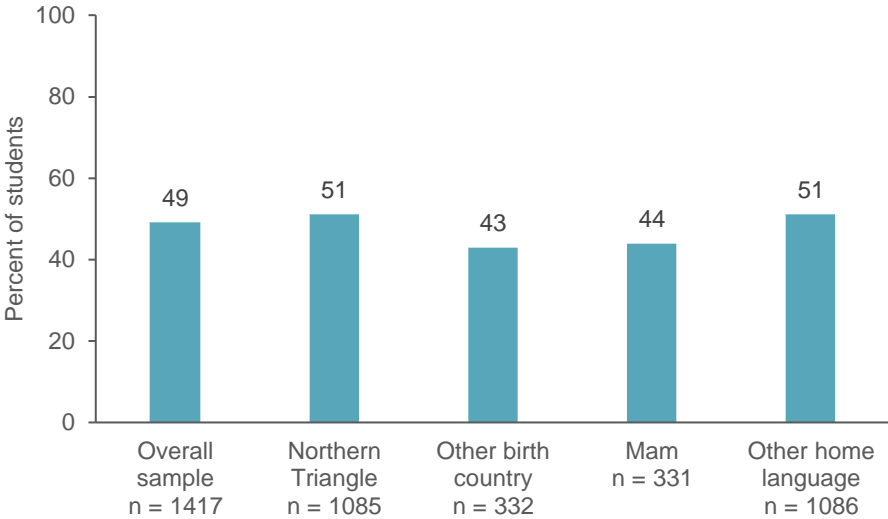


**Knowledge of access to birth control**

Overall, 49 percent said they knew where to obtain birth control or condoms (Exhibit 25). As with the sex ed item above, students from the Northern Triangle reported a higher rate of knowledge of access to birth control compared to students from other countries (51% for Northern Triangle vs. 43% for other countries); again, students who spoke Mam reported a lower rate of knowledge about access to birth control compared to students who spoke other home languages (44% for Mam vs. 51% for other languages). These two items indicate Mam-speaking students in particular may need more sex education so they are better prepared to maintain their sexual health.



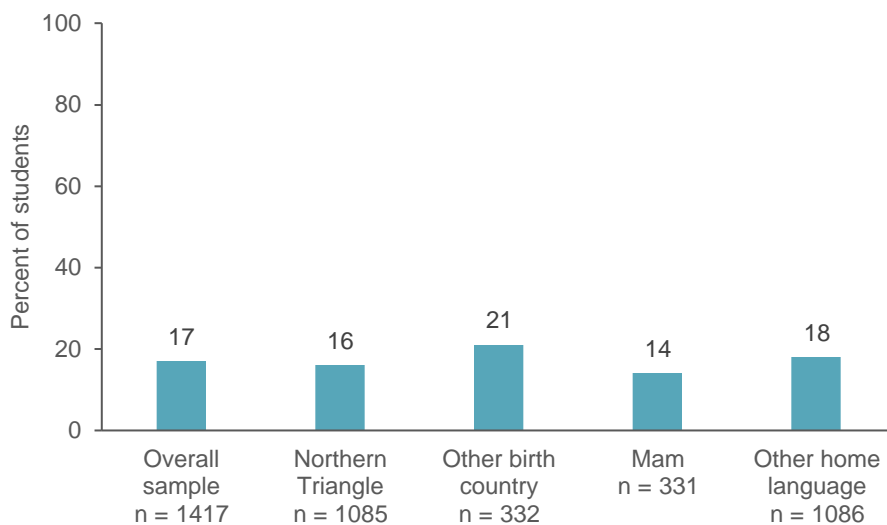
Exhibit 25. Students Who Knew Where to Obtain Birth Control, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language



**Sexual risk and prevention**

Overall, 17 percent of students reported they were sexually active (Exhibit 26) (this percentage includes both middle and high school students). There were small differences by birth country and home language; students from the Northern Triangle were slightly less likely to be sexually active than Newcomers from other countries (16% for Northern Triangle vs. 21% for other countries), and Mam-speakers were slightly less likely to be sexually active than Newcomers who spoke other languages (14% for Mam vs. 18% for other languages). For this item, responses from students from the Northern Triangle and those who spoke Mam were concordant in that they were both lower than their respective comparison groups.

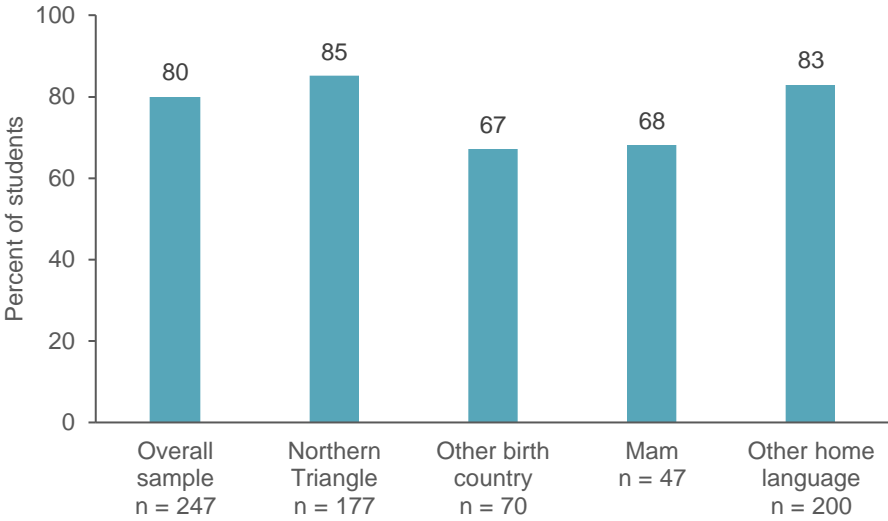
Exhibit 26. Students Who Reported Being Sexually Active, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language



Among students overall who were sexually active, 80 percent reported they knew how to prevent pregnancy and STDs (Exhibit 27). As with the two knowledge-related questions above (sex ed and knowledge of access to birth control), students from the Northern Triangle reported a higher rate of knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention compared to students from other countries (85% for Northern Triangle vs. 67% for other countries) and, again, students who spoke Mam reported a lower rate of knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention compared to students who spoke other home languages (68% for Mam vs. 83% for other languages).

Although students from the Northern Triangle and students who spoke Mam were both less sexually active than other Newcomers, those from the Northern Triangle were better informed about sex and risk prevention than Newcomers from other countries and Mam-speakers specifically. This indicates Spanish-speaking students from the Northern Triangle may be distinct from Mam-speaking students on key dimensions of sexual health and that Mam-speakers in particular may need additional sex education supports.

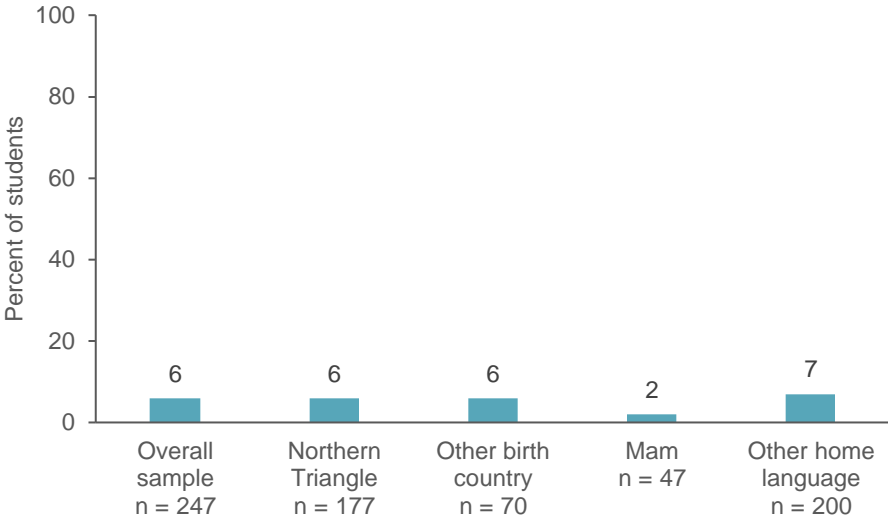
Exhibit 27. Sexually Active Students Who Reported Knowledge of Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language



Among students overall who were sexually active, 6 percent reported they were pregnant or had a child (Exhibit 28). There was no difference in rate of pregnancy or parenting by birth country. Mam-speaking students reported lower rates of pregnancy or parenting compared to Newcomers who spoke other home languages (2% for Mam vs. 7% for other languages).

It appears Mam-speakers were at lower risk for pregnancy or parenting as an outcome compared to other Newcomers despite indications of lower levels of sex ed and knowledge of risk prevention. This may be attributable to lower levels of sexual activity. Students from the Northern Triangle had the same risk of pregnancy or parenting as those from other countries, despite reporting slightly lower levels of sexual activity and higher levels of sex ed and knowledge of risk prevention. These data must be interpreted with caution, however, because they were all self-reported, and pregnancy or parenting was a very low-incidence outcome.

Exhibit 28. Sexually Active Students Who Reported Being Pregnant or Parenting, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country and Home Language



## Summary and Implications

### Strengths and Limitations of the Survey

These results from the 2019 Newcomer Survey paint an unprecedented descriptive picture of the Newcomer student population in OUSD. Findings represent a large proportion (80%) of Newcomers overall and provided basic but valuable information on their home lives, ongoing needs, and experience of supports the Newcomer Wellness Initiative staff and other school personnel provided. By capturing key demographic information, we were also able to focus in on students from the Northern Triangle and students who spoke Mam as their home language. These are two distinct but overlapping groups OUSD serves, and we highlighted ways in which they may be similar to or different from other Newcomers. Because the district data system is not currently set up to uniquely identify these students, the district had little formal data on them as a group. This survey fills a critical gap in knowledge and may allow staff to further refine and target the services that they provide.

That said, there are limitations to these data. They do not represent all Newcomers, and the use of a sampling method consisting of a single-day administration at each school means the students who were most often absent were the least likely to be represented. Also, the data were entirely self-reported, which means they represent what students told us and not necessarily what was. However, for certain types of questions, such as those regarding needs and experiences of services, student perceptions may be what is most important.

## Summary of Findings

### Demographics

- **Birth country.** More than three-quarters (77%) of the surveyed students were born in the Northern Triangle (53% Guatemala, 16% El Salvador, 8% Honduras). The remaining 23 percent were from Mexico (5%), Yemen (4%), China (4%), Vietnam (2%), and other countries (8%).
- **Home language.** Nearly one-quarter (23%) of students reported they spoke Mam as their home language. Among the 77 percent who spoke another language, Spanish was the most common (59%).
- **Time living in U.S.** About two-fifths (43%) of the surveyed students had been living in the U.S. for less than one year, while 23 percent had been in the country for 1 to 2 years, 17 percent had been in the country for 2 to 3 years, and 17 percent had been in the country for three or more years.
  - This breakdown varied little by birth country or home language, although a slightly smaller proportion of Mam-speakers (36%) and students from other (non-Northern Triangle) countries (37%) were brand-new to the country.

### Home Life and Economic Needs

- **Primary caregiver/guardian.** For the sample overall, the vast majority of students (77%) reported a parent was their primary caregiver/guardian, 9 percent said it was an uncle or aunt, and 8 percent said it was a brother or sister.
  - Compared to students from other birth countries, a smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported their primary caregiver was a parent (89% for other countries, 74% for Northern Triangle).
  - Compared to students who spoke other home languages, a smaller proportion of students who spoke Mam reported their primary caregiver was a parent (80% for other languages, 69% for Mam).
- **Food security.** For the sample overall, 12 percent of students reported they either did not have enough to eat or only sometimes had enough to eat each day and therefore were food insecure.
  - Among students who spoke Mam, food insecurity was more common; nearly one-quarter (22%) reported not having enough to eat or only sometimes having enough to eat each day while this rate was 10 percent among students who spoke another home language.
- **Student employment.** For the sample overall, 21 percent of students reported they had a job.
  - A larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported being employed compared with students from other countries (22% for Northern Triangle vs. 17% for other countries).

- A larger proportion of students who spoke Mam reported being employed compared with students who spoke another home language (24% for Mam vs. 20% for other languages).

### **Barriers to School Attendance**

- **Missing school due to work.** Among students overall who worked, two-fifths (40%) said they sometimes missed school because of work.
  - A much larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported missing school due to work compared to students from other birth countries (44% for Northern Triangle vs. 21% for other countries).
  - A slightly larger proportion of Mam-speaking students said they missed school due to work compared to students who spoke another home language (44% for Mam vs. 39% for other language).
- **Missing school often.** For the overall sample, about one-quarter (26%) of students reported they missed school often (one day a week or more).
  - There is a large disparity in missing school often between students from the Northern Triangle (30%) and students from other countries (14%).
  - A similarly large disparity exists between students who spoke Mam at home (36%) as compared to students who spoke another home language (23%).
- **Transportation challenges.** Overall, among students who said they missed school often, about one-third (34%) further reported they missed school due to transportation challenges. The proportion of students reporting transportation was a barrier to school attendance did not differ by birth country or home language.
- **Transit pass.** Overall, among students who reported they missed school due to transportation challenges, the vast majority (87%) said having a district-provided Clipper card or bus pass would help them get to school.
  - A greater proportion of students from the Northern Triangle said a Clipper card or bus pass would help them get to school compared to Newcomer students from other countries (89% for Northern Triangle vs. 75% for other countries).
  - A greater proportion of Mam-speaking students said a transit pass would help them compared to students who spoke another home language (93% for Mam vs. 85% for other home language).

### **Perceptions of School Climate and Supports**

- **Feeling welcome and comfortable at school.** Overall, three-fifths (60%) of students said they felt welcome and comfortable at school most of the time, 37 percent said some of the time, while 3 percent said they never felt welcome and comfortable.
  - When students were disaggregated by birth country and home language, a slightly smaller proportion of Mam-speaking students reported feeling welcome most of the time (56%) compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages (62%).

- Supports for feeling welcome and comfortable at school.** Among students overall, 81 percent responded that cultural celebrations would increase their feelings of being welcome and comfortable at school; 71 percent said this about staff who spoke their language and could translate, 74 percent said this about the building and yard at school being nicer or better, and 65 percent said this about having an orientation or tour when first starting school.

  - A slightly smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle responded these supports would increase their feelings of being welcome and comfortable at school compared to Newcomer students from other countries.
  - An even smaller proportion of Mam-speakers responded these supports would increase their feelings of welcome and comfort compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages.
- Encouragement for attending school.** Among students overall, 78 percent responded that having classes related to the job they wanted to do would encourage them to come to school. Their responses about other factors that would encourage them to come to school were as follows: having better relationships with peers (78%), a more welcoming or comfortable environment (77%), staff who spoke their language and could translate (74%), and starting school later or ending earlier (67%).

  - A slightly smaller proportion of students from the Northern Triangle responded these supports or conditions would encourage them to attend school as compared to Newcomer students from other countries.
  - An even smaller proportion of Mam-speakers responded these supports would encourage them to attend school as compared to Newcomers who spoke other languages.
- Experience of supports.** Among students overall, the supports they received from adults at school (and found to be helpful) with greatest frequency were supports for feeling sad or worried (58%), school-related needs (defined as joining school programs, clearing absences, talking to counselors, etc.) (52%), and health or dental issues (49%); others included finding a lawyer (36%), housing issues (25%), and finding a job (24%). The type of support with the highest percentage of students reporting they wanted it but did not receive it was help with finding a job (23%).

  - Students from the Northern Triangle received and found to be helpful support for feeling sad or worried and for finding a lawyer at higher rates than students from other countries (sad or worried: 60% for Northern Triangle vs. 50% for other countries; lawyer: 40% for Northern Triangle vs. 23% for other countries).
  - There were more apparent differences by home language; Mam-speaking students received emotional and health or dental supports in somewhat equal frequency with students who spoke other home languages, but they reported somewhat higher rates of receiving support with finding a job (41% for Mam vs. 30% for other languages), a lawyer (51% vs. 44%), and housing (39% vs. 33%), and a slightly lower rate of receiving support with school-related needs (58% vs. 63%). More notable, however, is that for all

supports, Mam-speaking students were more likely to report the support they received was unhelpful or that they did not receive the support despite wanting it.

## Sexual Health

- **Sex education.** Overall, 47 percent of students reported they had received sex ed at school. This percentage includes both middle and high school students.
  - Differences by birth country and home language were very small; students from the Northern Triangle reported a slightly higher rate of sex ed compared to students from other countries (48% for Northern Triangle vs. 44% for other countries).
  - Fewer students who spoke Mam reported access to sex ed compared to students who spoke other home languages (45% for Mam vs. 48% for other languages).
- **Knowledge of access to birth control.** Overall, 49 percent of students said they knew where to obtain birth control or condoms.
  - A larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported knowing how to access birth control than students from other countries (51% for Northern Triangle vs. 43% for other countries).
  - A smaller proportion of students who spoke Mam reported access to birth control compared to students who spoke other home languages (44% for Mam vs. 51% for other languages).
- **Sexually active.** Overall, 17 percent of students reported they were sexually active. This percentage includes both middle and high school students.
  - There were small differences by birth country and home language; students from the Northern Triangle were slightly less likely to be sexually active than Newcomers from other countries (16% for Northern Triangle vs. 21% for other countries).
  - Mam-speakers were slightly less likely to be sexually active than Newcomers who spoke other languages (14% for Mam vs. 18% for other languages).
- **Knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention.** Among students overall who were sexually active, 80 percent reported they knew how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
  - A larger proportion of students from the Northern Triangle reported knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention compared to students from other countries (85% for Northern Triangle vs. 67% for other countries).
  - A larger proportion of students who spoke Mam reported knowledge of pregnancy and STD prevention compared to students who spoke other home languages (68% for Mam vs. 83% for other languages).
- **Pregnant or parenting.** Overall, among students who were sexually active, 6 percent reported they were pregnant or had a child.
  - There was no difference in rate of pregnancy or parenting by birth country. Mam-speaking students reported lower rates of pregnancy or parenting compared to



Newcomers who spoke other home languages (2% for Mam vs. 7% for other languages).

## Implications of Findings

- According to this survey, students from the Northern Triangle make up a large majority (about three-quarters) of OUSD's Newcomer population. A subset (about one-third) of these students speak Mam and represent a distinct group that looks similar to their Spanish-speaking Northern Triangle counterparts on many aspects of the survey but in some respects are different.
- Confirming what Newcomer Wellness Initiative staff have known anecdotally through their work with the students, Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students reported more needs and risk factors than other Newcomers. They were less likely to report they lived with a parent, indicating they were supported differently or potentially inadequately at home. Mam-speaking students reported a much higher rate of food insecurity than other Newcomers. Both Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students reported higher rates of employment, higher levels of school absenteeism due in part to employment, and a greater desire for a district-provided transit pass to help with transportation challenges compared to other Newcomers. *These indicators all suggest higher economic need among Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students, and the need for additional supports to encourage and enable them to attend school.*
- Overall, the Newcomer student population responded fairly positively to the survey questions about feeling welcome and comfortable at school and the supports that might increase those feelings. However, a substantial proportion of students (37%) indicated they only felt welcome "some of the time" while a very small percentage (3%) said they "never" felt welcome, so this represents a potential growth area for Initiative staff. *We know Initiative staff have already implemented many of the practices that students responded favorably to on the survey (e.g., cultural celebrations, staff who can speak their language) but they can continue to do this as well as attempt to understand what other supports might further increase students' feelings of welcome and comfort.*
- Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students were less likely than others to respond affirmatively to the questions about increasing welcome and comfort at school and conditions that would encourage school attendance. It is possible these students were skeptical of these supports because they believed they were unlikely to receive them, or that supports would have a positive impact on them. It may be they do not desire supports or believe they deserve them. *These are possibilities Initiative staff can further explore and try to understand.*
- Overall, students indicated on a survey question about specific practical supports they received from an adult at school and whether those supports were helpful that emotional support and help with school-related and health needs were the most-desired supports, but it appears these were generally well met. Relatively small proportions of students reported

the support they received was unhelpful or that they did not receive support but wanted it. However, a larger-than-typical proportion of students (23%) said they did not receive support finding a job but wanted it, indicating a likely gap in services. More notable, however, is that for all supports, Mam-speaking students were less likely to find the support they received helpful compared to students who spoke other languages and less likely to report receiving help despite wanting it. *This indicates Mam-speaking students experienced these supports quite differently from Newcomers who spoke other home languages, and generally had more unmet needs.*

- From the sexual health questions, we learned that under half of all students (including middle and high school students) had received any sex ed at school and knew where to obtain birth control. Sexual health is where we see Mam-speaking students diverge from the larger group of students from the Northern Triangle. Although Northern Triangle and Mam-speaking students were both less sexually active than other Newcomers, those from the Northern Triangle were better informed about sex and risk prevention than Newcomers from other countries and Mam-speakers specifically. *This indicates that Spanish-speaking students from the Northern Triangle may be distinct from Mam-speaking students on key dimensions of sexual health and that Mam-speakers in particular may need additional sex education supports.*

## References

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- English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement Office, Oakland Unified School District. (2016). *Newcomer Program Executive Summary*. Oakland, CA: Author.
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- Oakland Unified School District. (n.d.). Newcomer Programs. Retrieved from <https://www.ousd.org/newcomer>
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## Appendix A: Fall 2019 Newcomer Survey

\* Required

### 1) What school do you attend? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Bret Harte
- Castlemont
- Elmhurst United
- Fremont
- Frick
- Melrose Leadership Academy
- Oakland High
- Oakland International
- Roosevelt
- Oakland SOL (School of Language)
- Rudsdale Newcomer
- Urban Promise Academy (UPA)
- Westlake

### 2) How long have you been in the United States? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Less than 1 year
- More than 1 year but less than 2 years
- More than 2 years but less than 3 years
- 3 or more years

### 3) What country were you born in? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Guatemala
- El Salvador
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Yemen
- China
- Vietnam
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**4) What is your home language? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Spanish
- Mam
- Arabic
- Cantonese
- Vietnamese
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5) Who is your primary caregiver/guardian (person who provides you with housing and food)? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Parent
- Grandparent
- Uncle or aunt
- Brother or sister
- Cousin
- Family friend
- None of these, I care for myself

**6) Do you contribute to paying rent where you live? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes, I pay for all of it
- Yes, I pay for some of it
- No, I don't pay any of the rent

**7) I have enough food to eat each day. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

**8) Do you have a job? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes      *Skip to question 8a.*
- No      *Skip to question 9.*

**8a) Do you sometimes miss school because you work? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**9) Do you usually miss school one day a week or more? \***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes Skip to question 9a.
- No Skip to question 10.

**9a) Do you miss school because it is hard to get there? \***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes Skip to question 9b.
- No Skip to question 10.

**9b) Would having a Clipper card or bus pass help you get to school? \***

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

**10) I feel welcome and comfortable at school. \***

Mark only one oval.

- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Never

**11) These things would help me feel more welcome and comfortable in school. \***

Check all that apply.

	Yes	No
Cultural celebrations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An orientation or tour when first starting school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff who can speak my language or someone who can translate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The building and yard at the school being nicer or better	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**12) I have received support from an adult at school with... \***

Check all that apply.

	Yes, I received support and it was helpful	Yes, I received support but it was not helpful	No, I didn't receive support but I wanted it.	No, I didn't receive support and I didn't want it.
Feeling sad or worried	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or dental issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Housing issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding a lawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School-related needs (joining school programs, clearing absences, talking to counselors)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**13) These things would encourage me to come to school.\***

*Check all that apply.*

	Yes	No
Classes that are related to the job I want to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A more welcoming and comfortable environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff who can speak my language or someone who can translate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better relationships with peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Starting school later or getting out earlier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**14) Have you had a class or a lesson at school on sex? (Choose only one.)\***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**15) Do you know where to get birth control/condoms? (Choose only one.)\***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**16) Are you sexually active? (Choose only one.)\***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes      *Skip to question 16a.*
- No      *Skip to "End of Survey."*

**16a) Do you know how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases? (Choose only one.)\*** *Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**16b) Are you pregnant or do you have a child? (Choose only one.)\***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

## Appendix B: School-level Data

Exhibit B-1. Length of Time Living in the U.S., for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

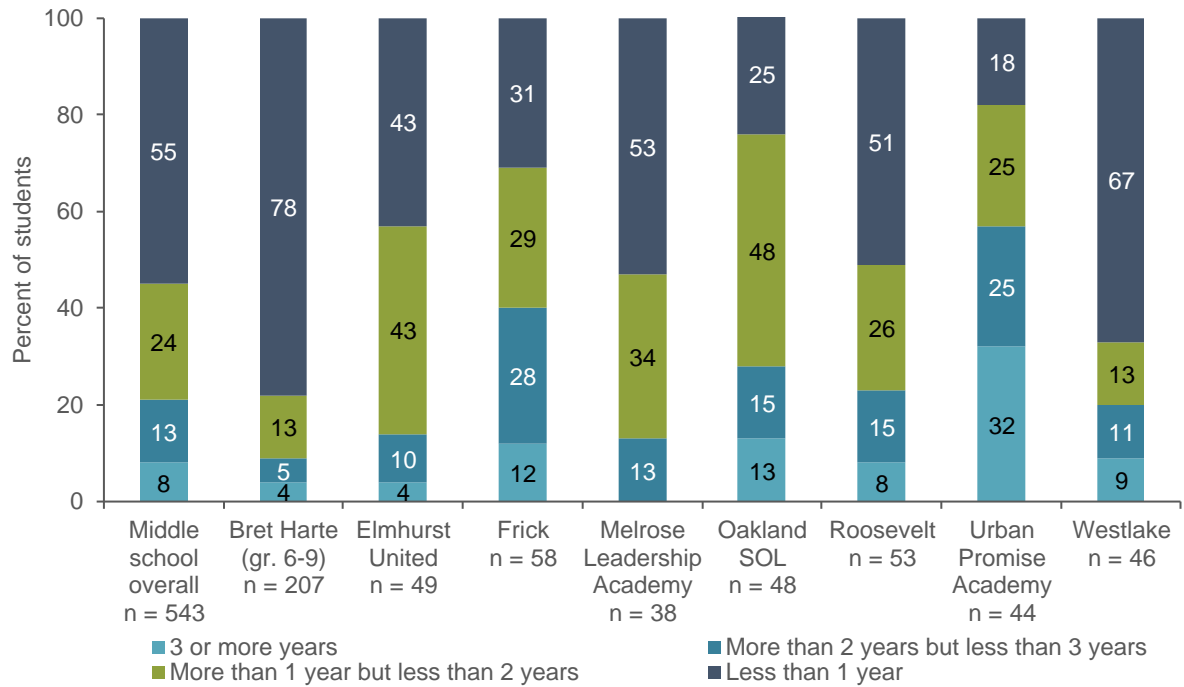


Exhibit B-2. Length of Time Living in the U.S., for High Schools Overall and by High School

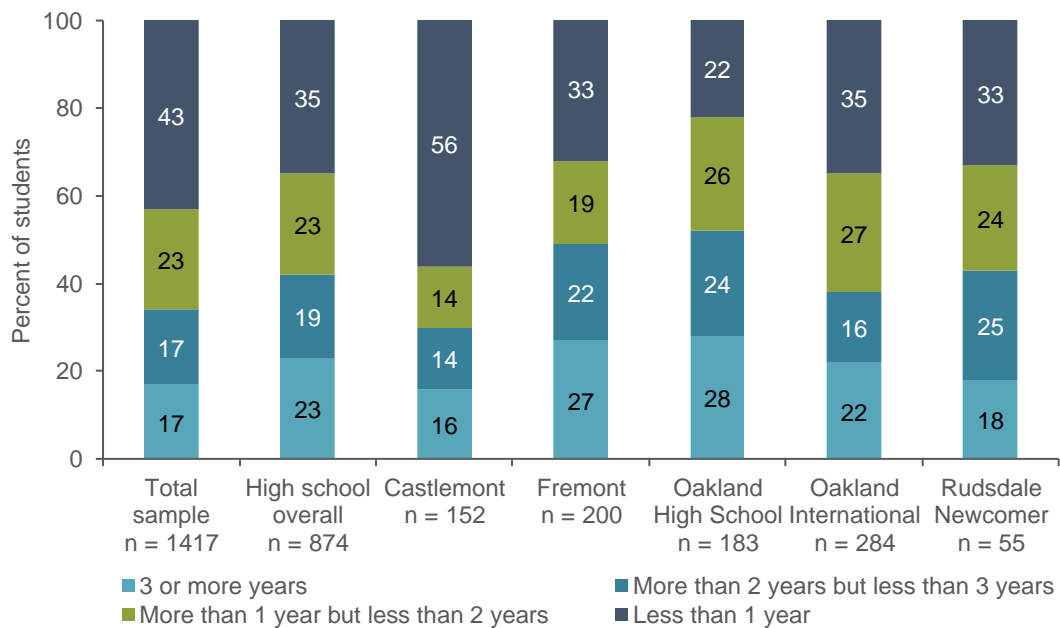




Exhibit B-3. Students' Birth Country, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

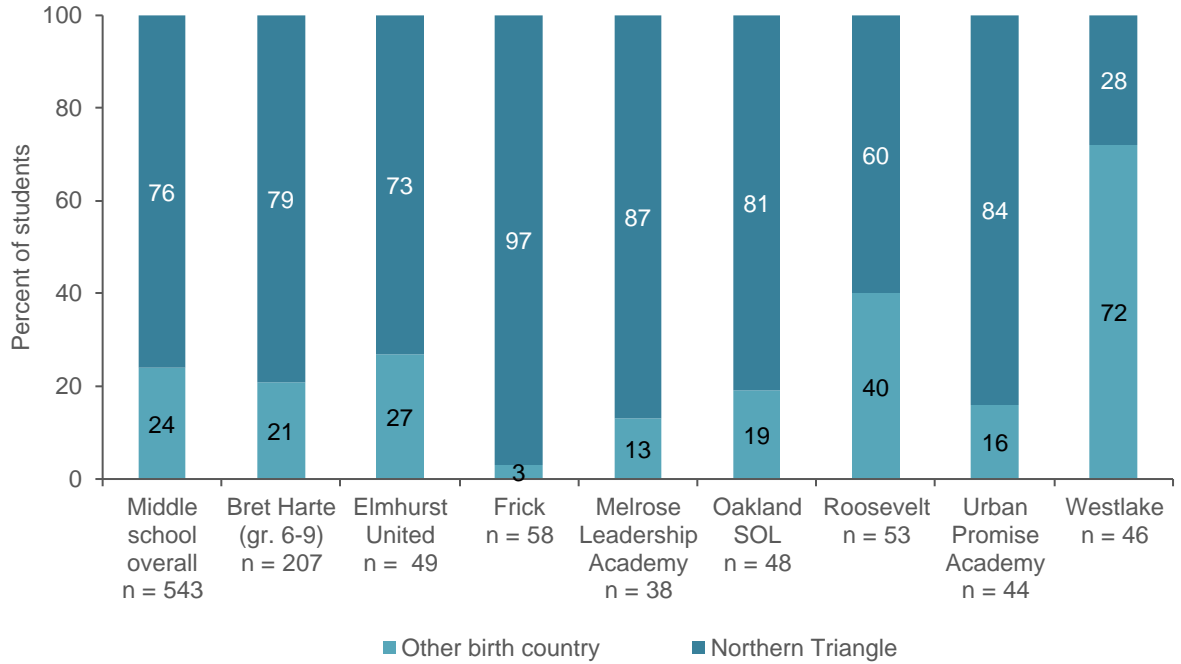


Exhibit B-4. Students' Birth Country, for High Schools Overall and by High School

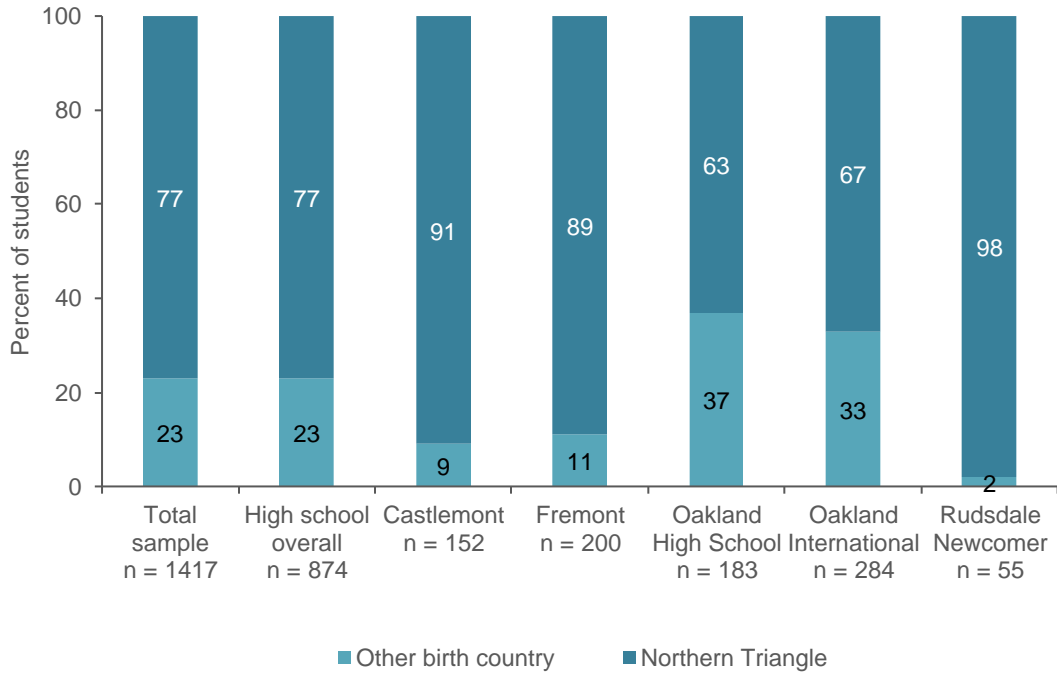


Exhibit B-5. Students' Home Language, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

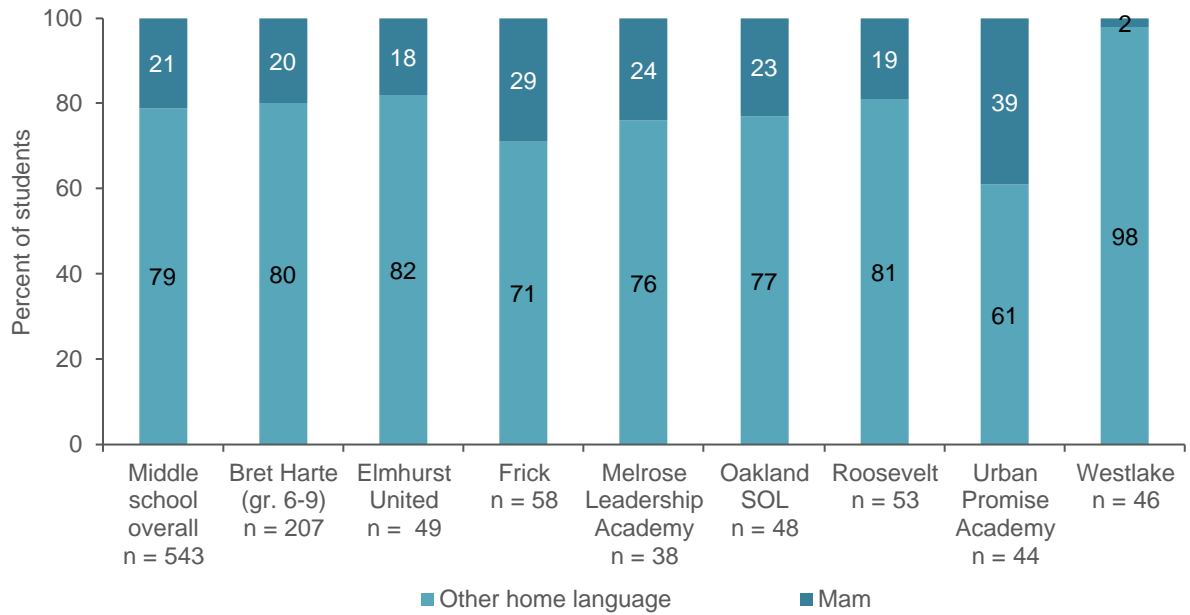


Exhibit B-6. Students' Home Language, for High Schools Overall and by High School

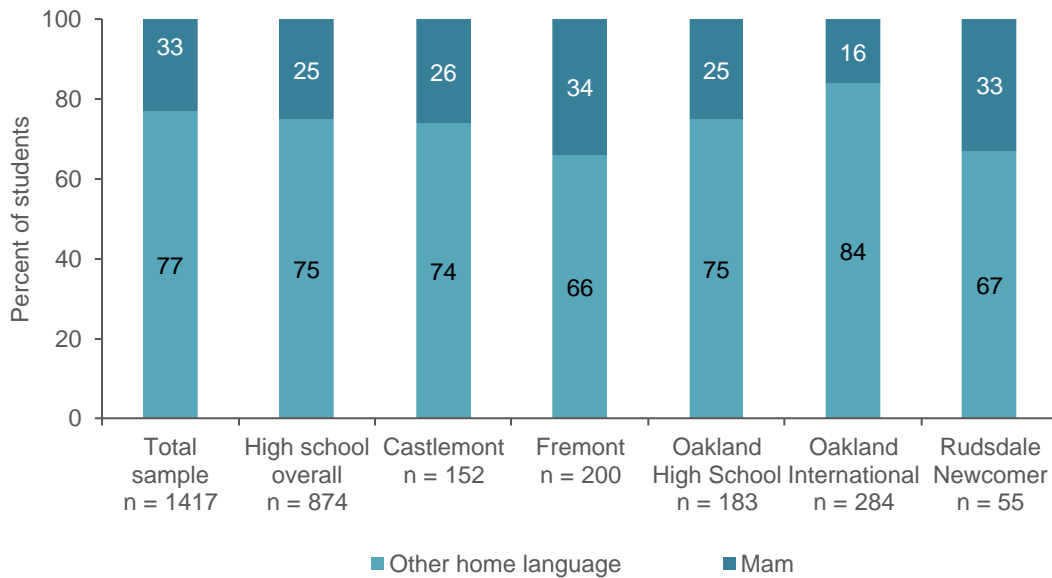


Exhibit B-7. Students' Primary Caregiver, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

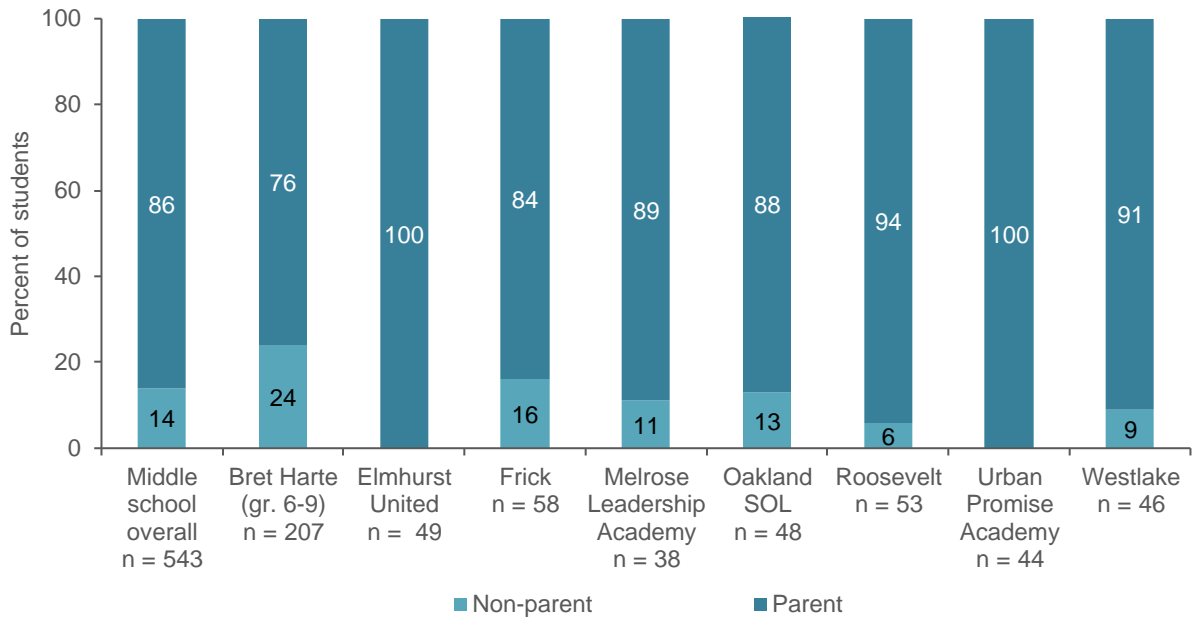


Exhibit B-8. Students' Primary Caregiver, for High Schools Overall and by High School

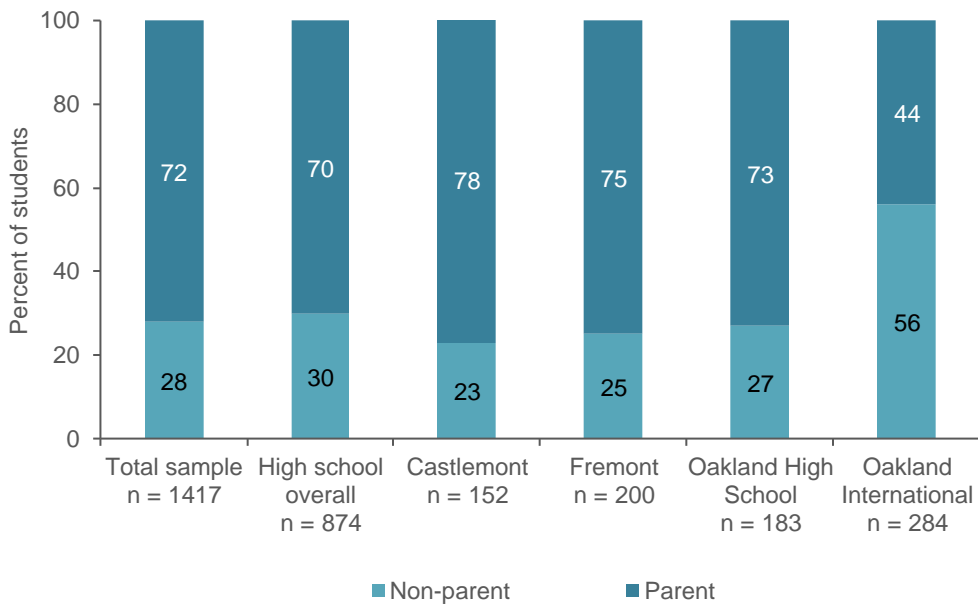


Exhibit B-9. Student Perceptions of Food Security, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

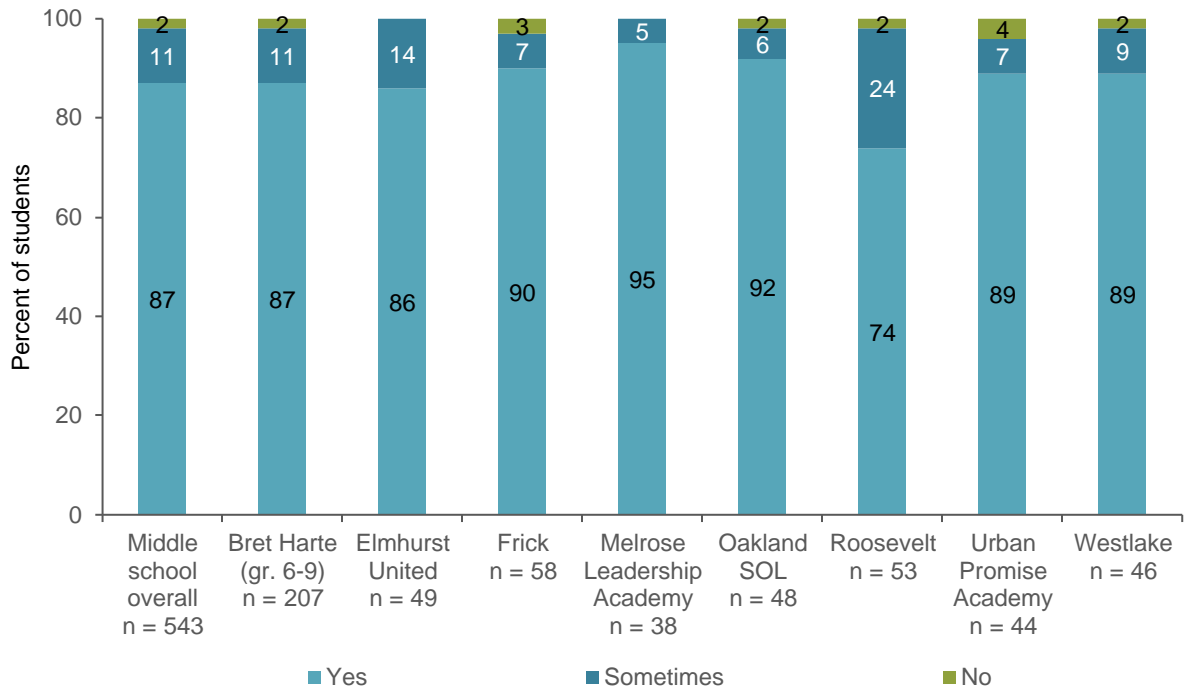


Exhibit B-10. Student Perceptions of Food Security, for High Schools Overall and by High School

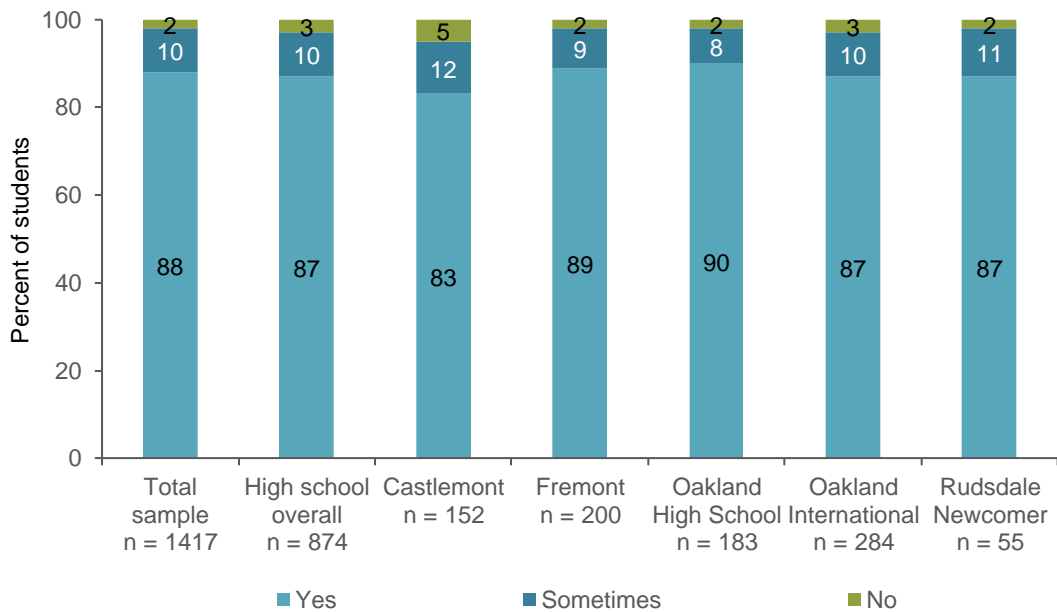


Exhibit B-11. Students with Jobs, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

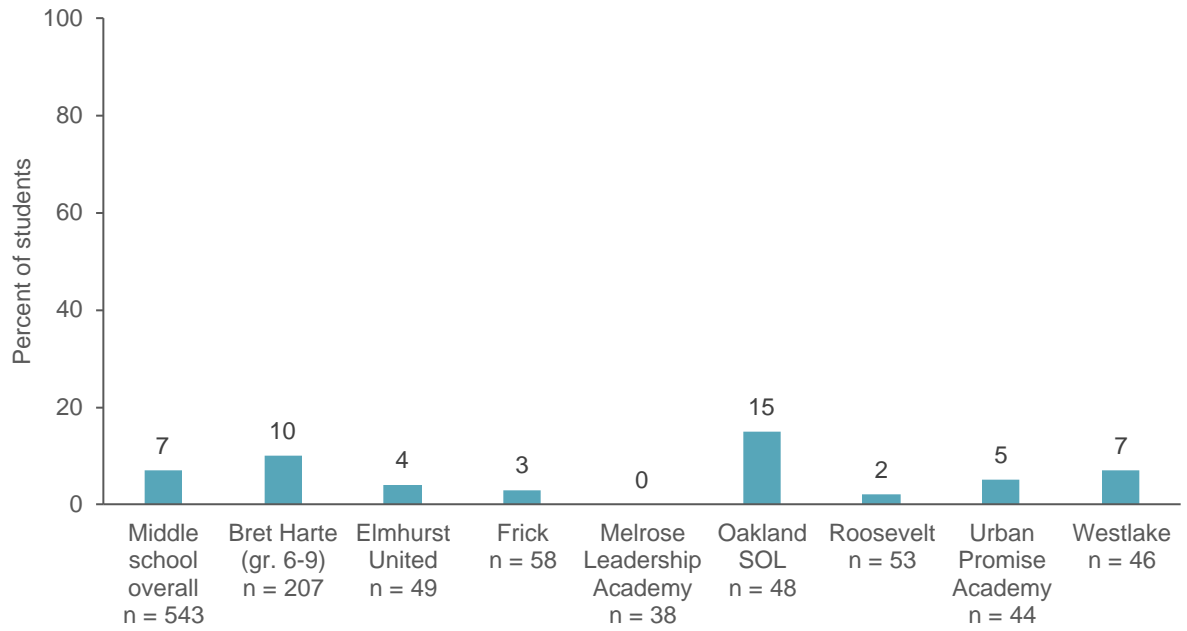


Exhibit B-12. Students with Jobs, for High Schools Overall and by High School

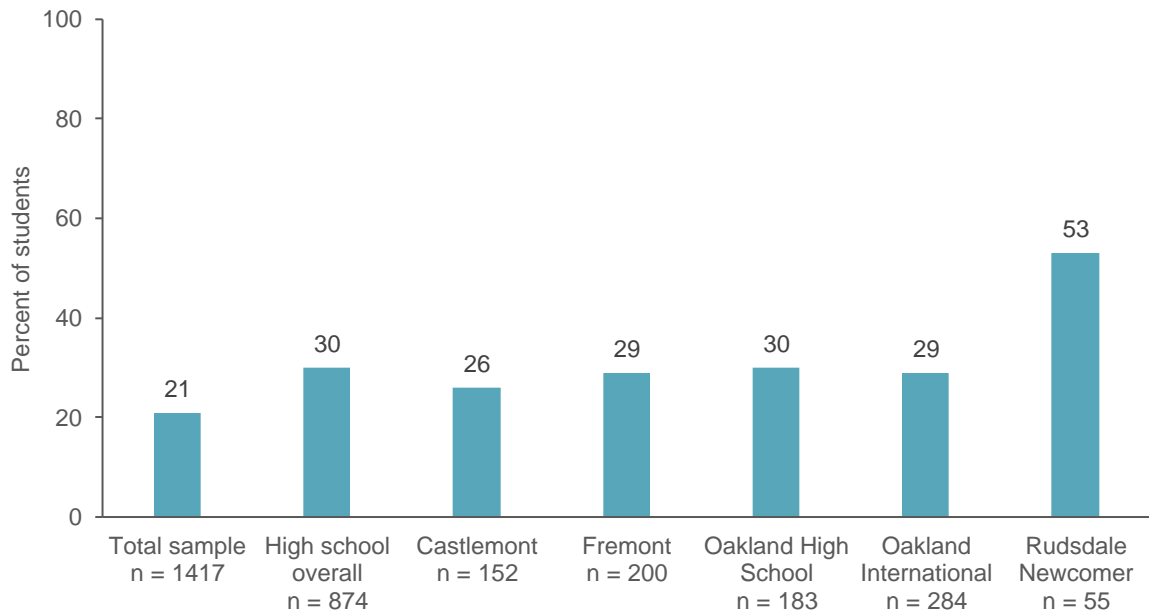


Exhibit B-13. Students Who Missed School due to Work, for Middle Schools Overall<sup>9</sup>, High Schools Overall, and by High School

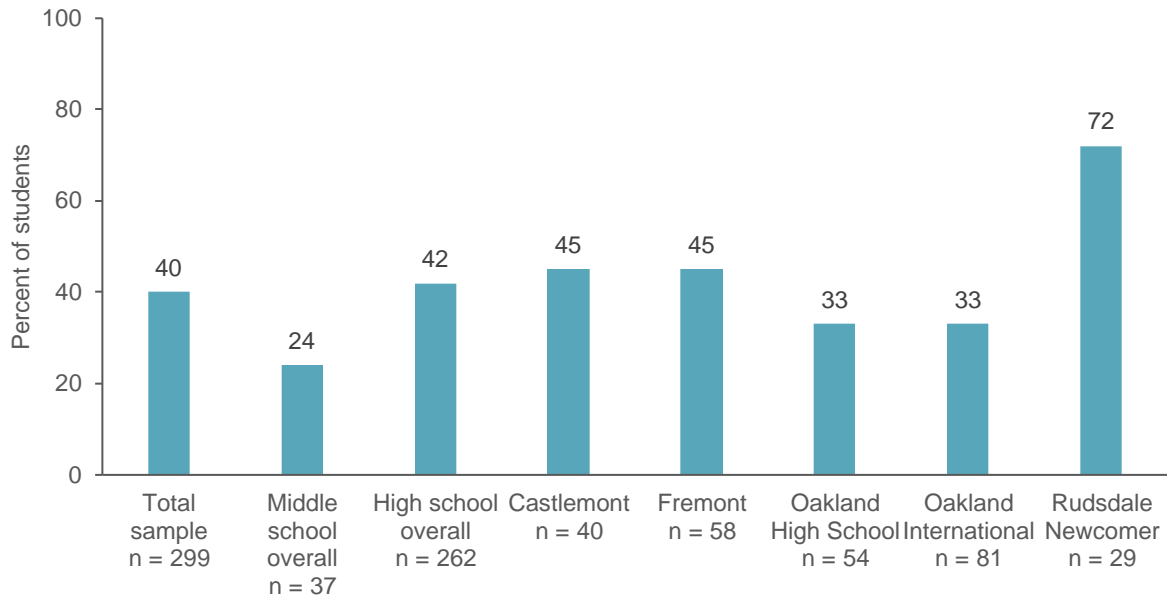
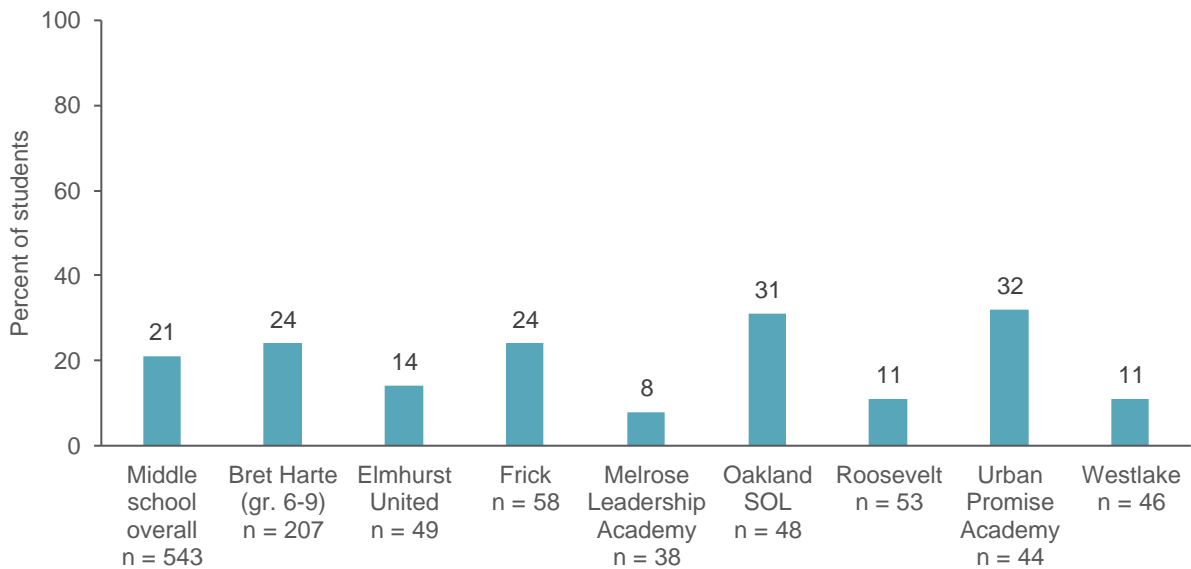


Exhibit B-14. Students Who Missed School Often, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School



<sup>9</sup> Data for individual middle schools are not reported due to very small sample sizes.

Exhibit B-15. Students Who Missed School Often, for High Schools Overall and by High School

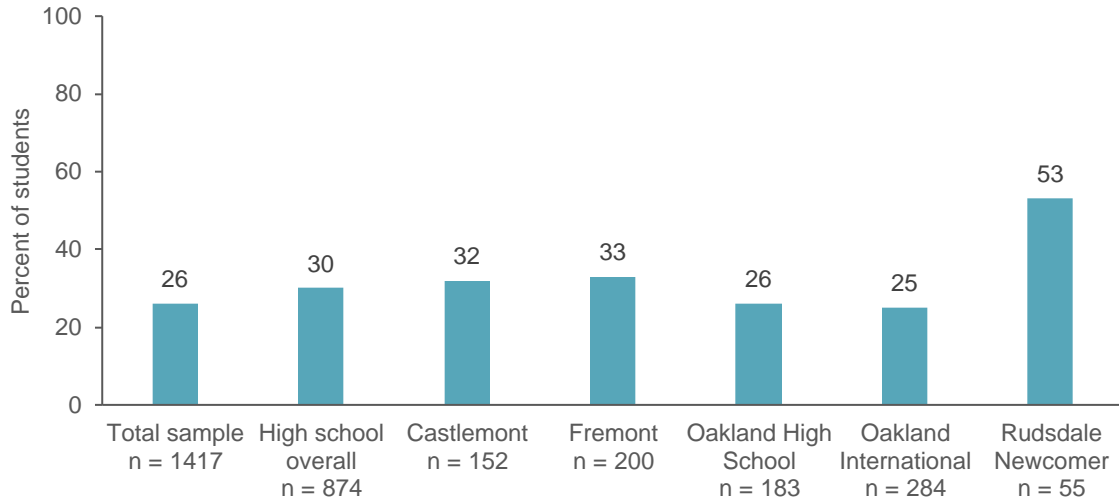
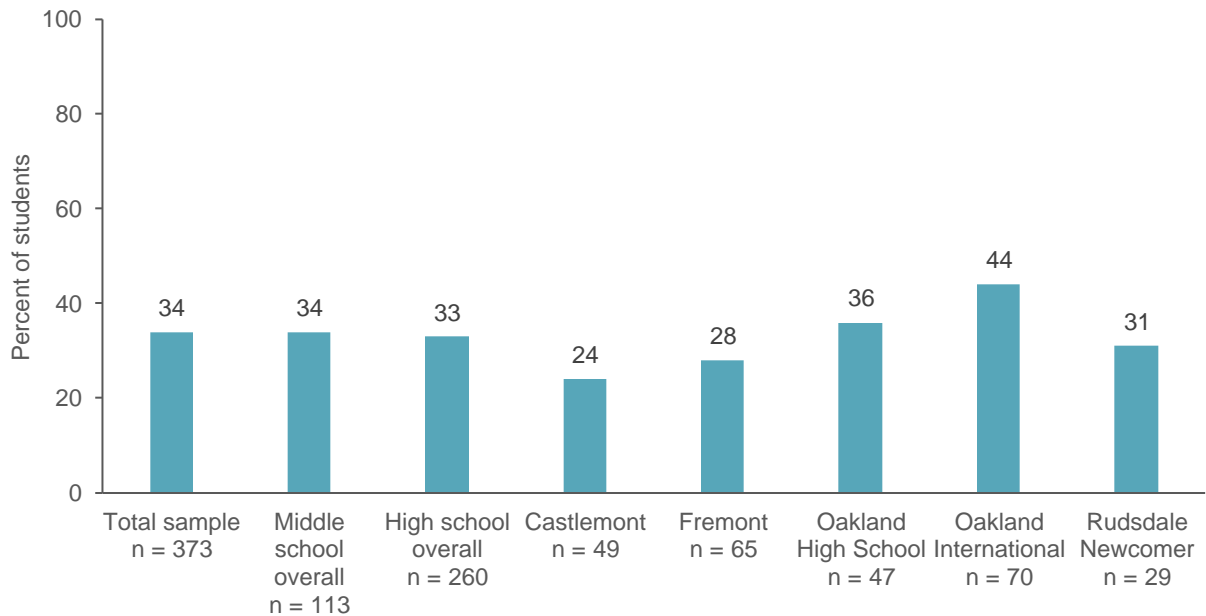


Exhibit B-16. Students Who Missed School Often Due to Transportation Challenges, for Middle Schools Overall,<sup>10</sup> High Schools Overall, and by High School



<sup>10</sup> Data for individual middle schools are not reported due to very small sample sizes.

Exhibit B-17. Students with Transportation Challenges Who Would Benefit from Clipper Card/Bus Pass, for Middle Schools Overall,<sup>11</sup> High Schools Overall, and by High School

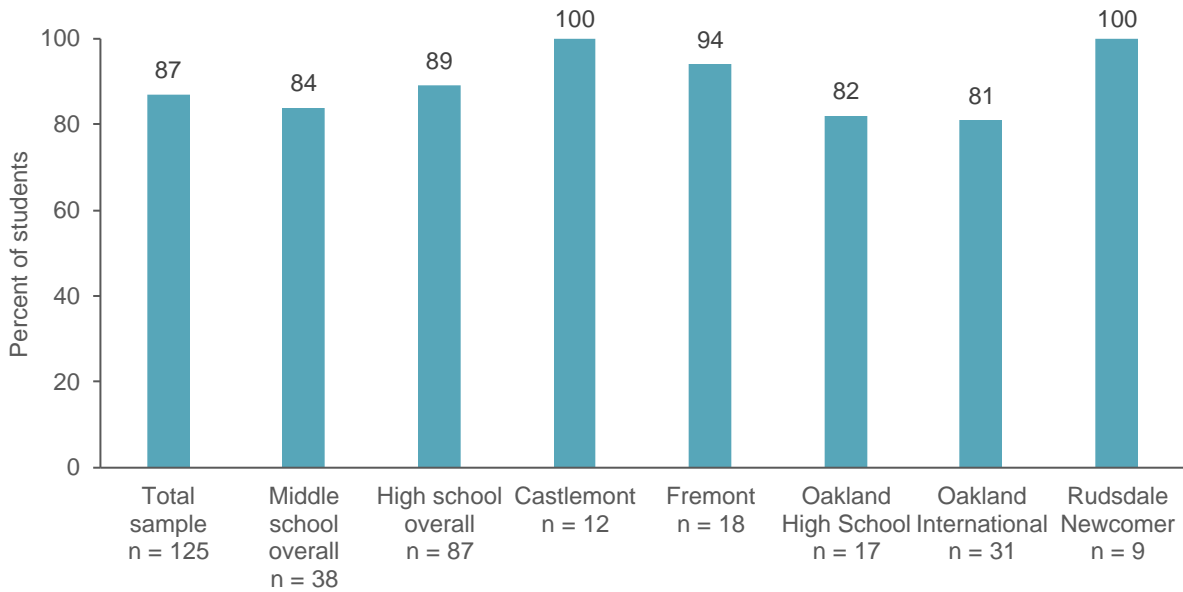
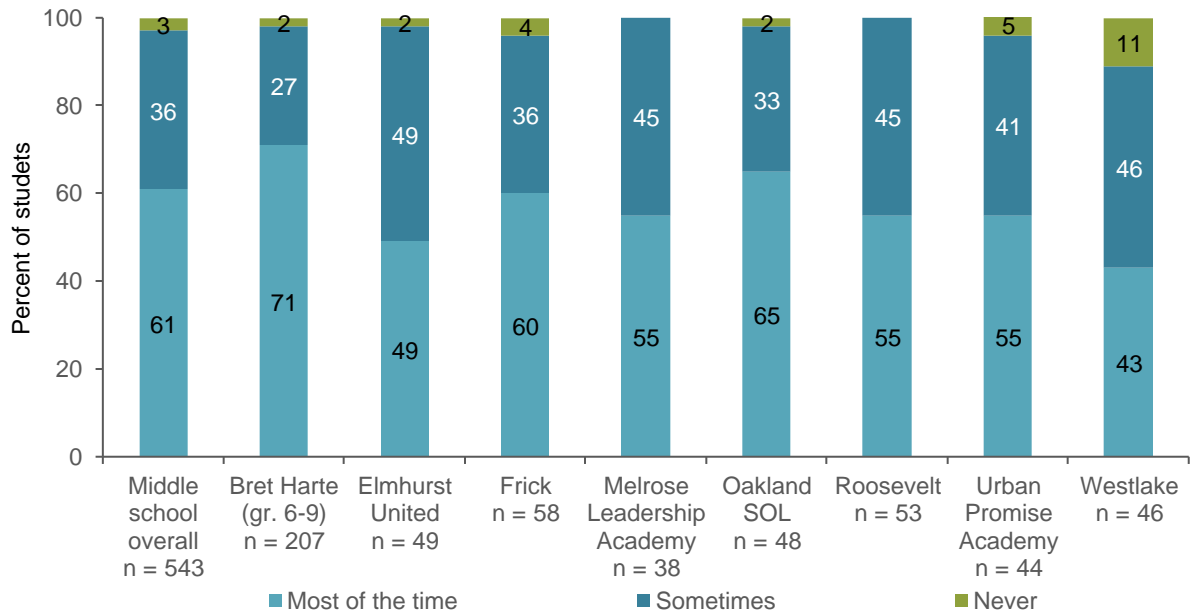


Exhibit B-18. Students Who Felt Welcome and Comfortable at School, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School



<sup>11</sup> Data for individual middle schools are not reported due to very small sample sizes.



Exhibit B-19. Students Who Felt Welcome and Comfortable at School, for High Schools Overall and by High School

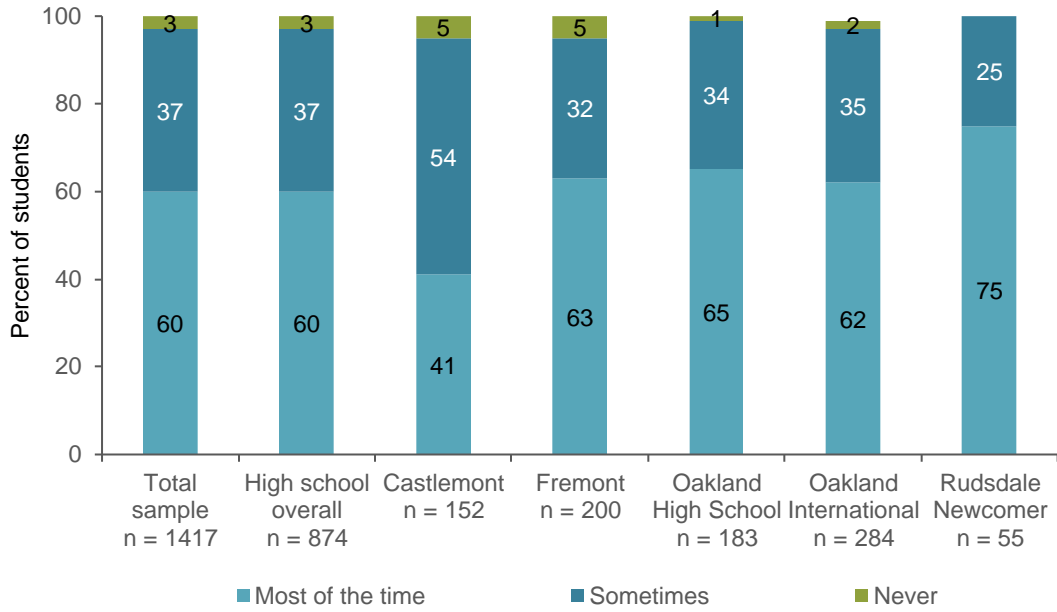


Exhibit B-20. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Bret Harte Middle School

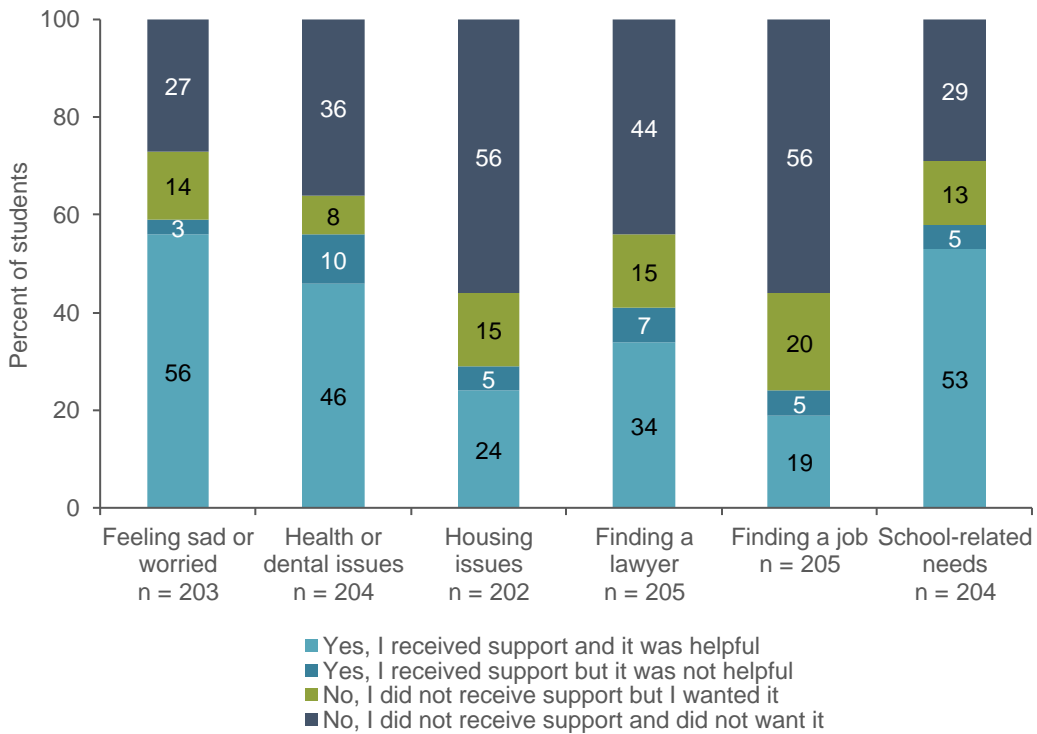


Exhibit B-21. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Elmhurst United Middle School

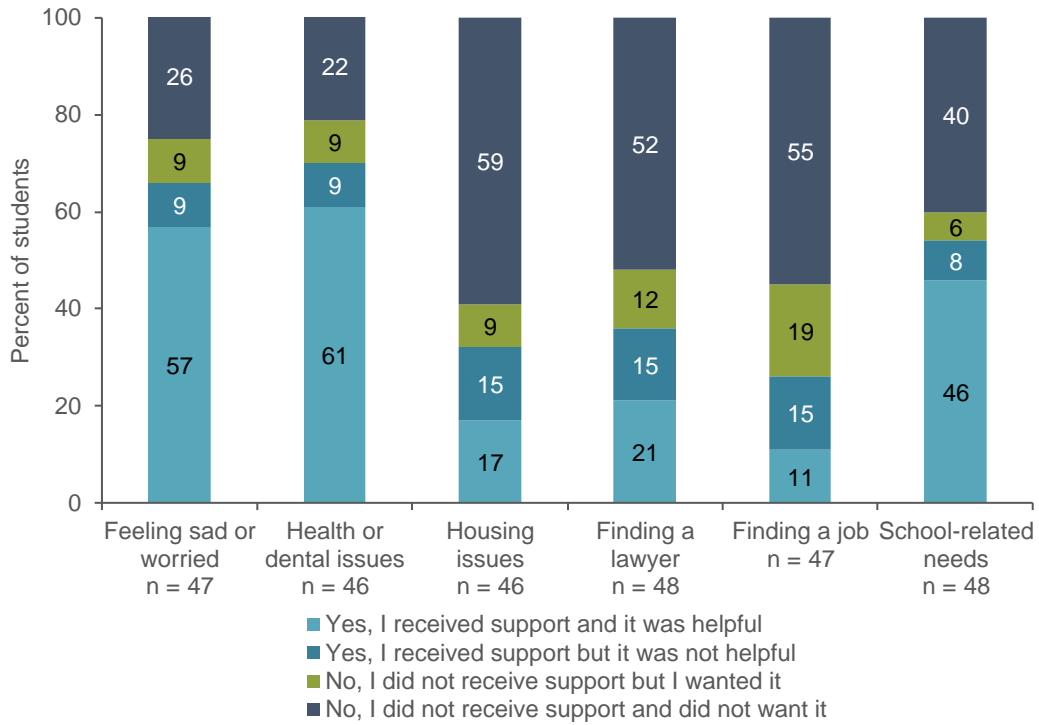


Exhibit B-22. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Frick Impact Academy

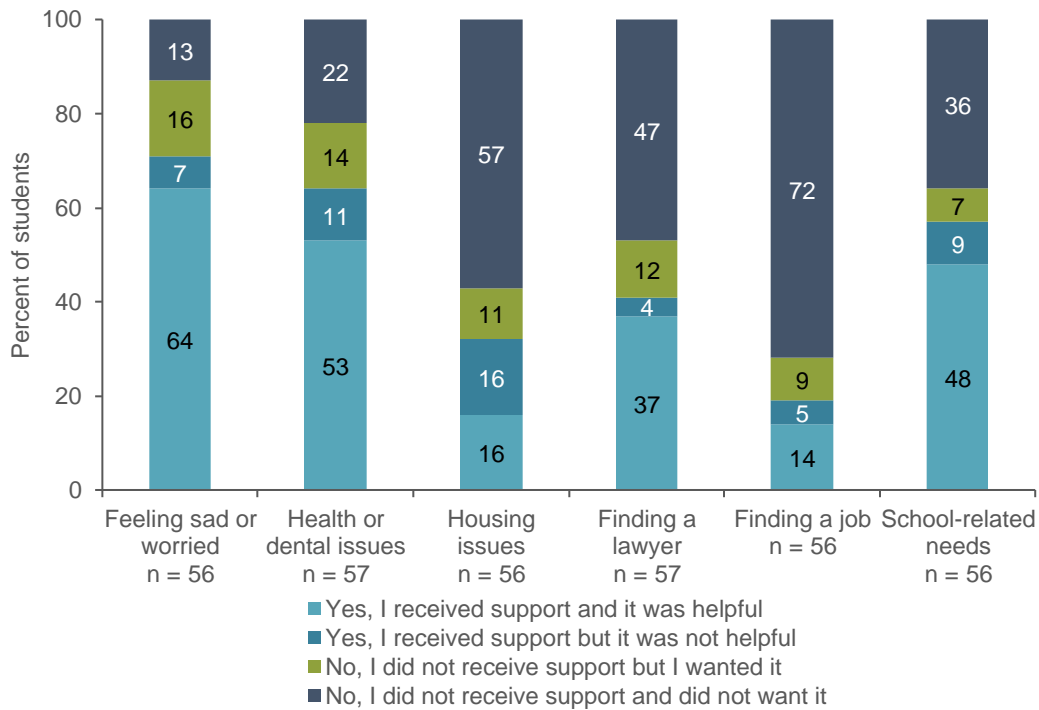


Exhibit B-23. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Melrose Leadership Academy

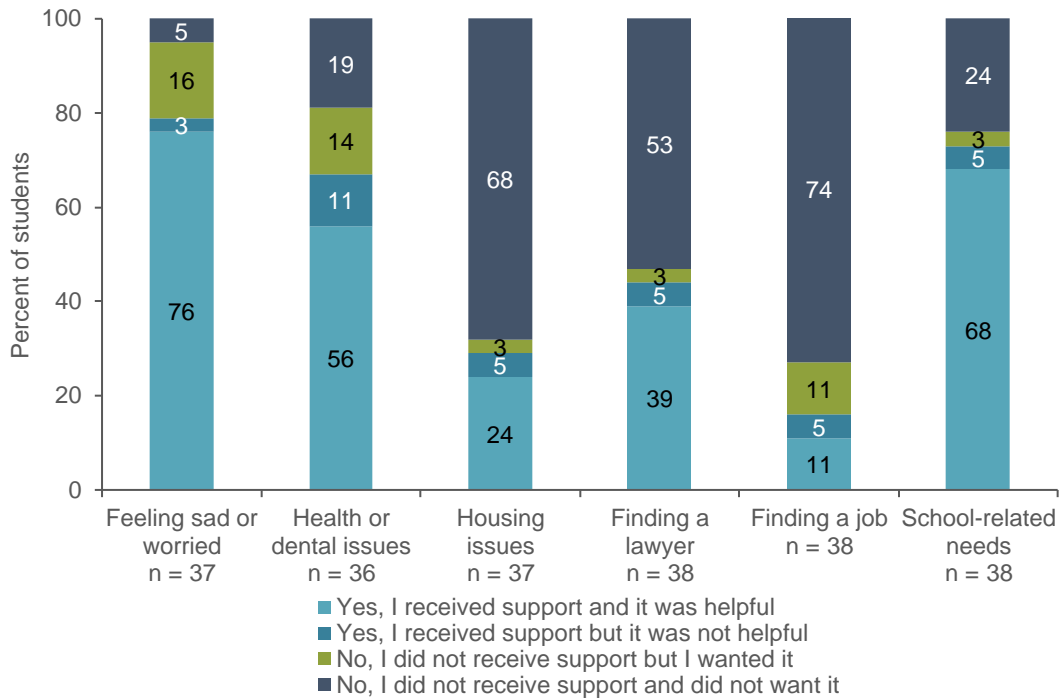


Exhibit B-24. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Oakland School of Language

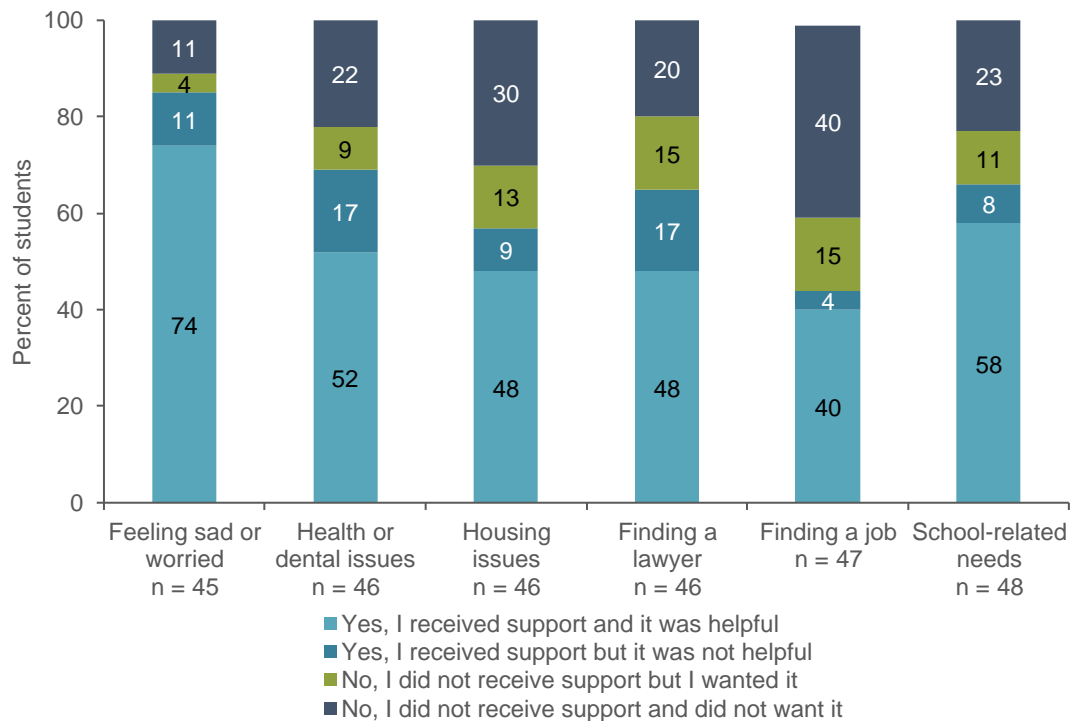


Exhibit B-25. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Roosevelt Middle School

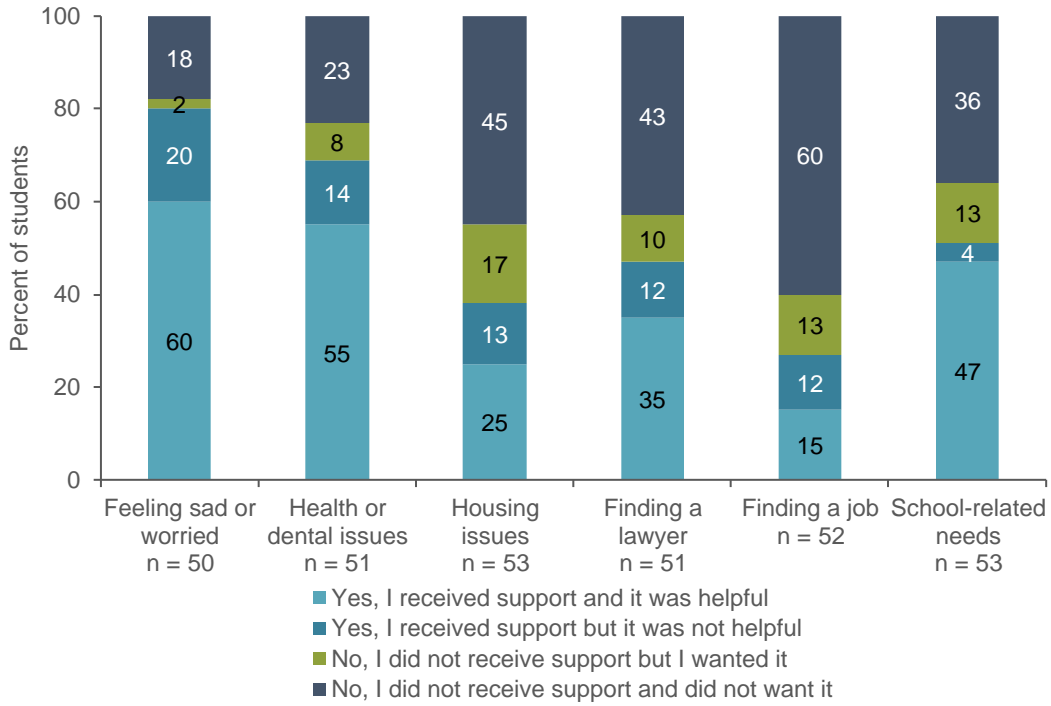


Exhibit B-26. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Urban Promise Academy

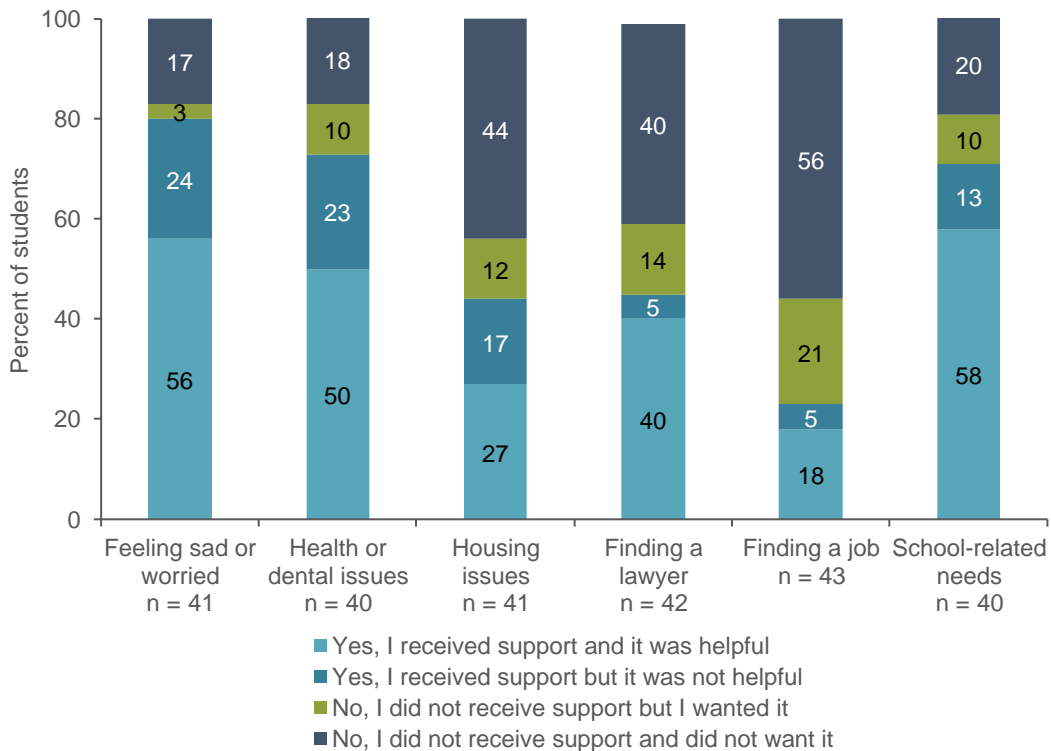


Exhibit B-27. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Westlake Middle School

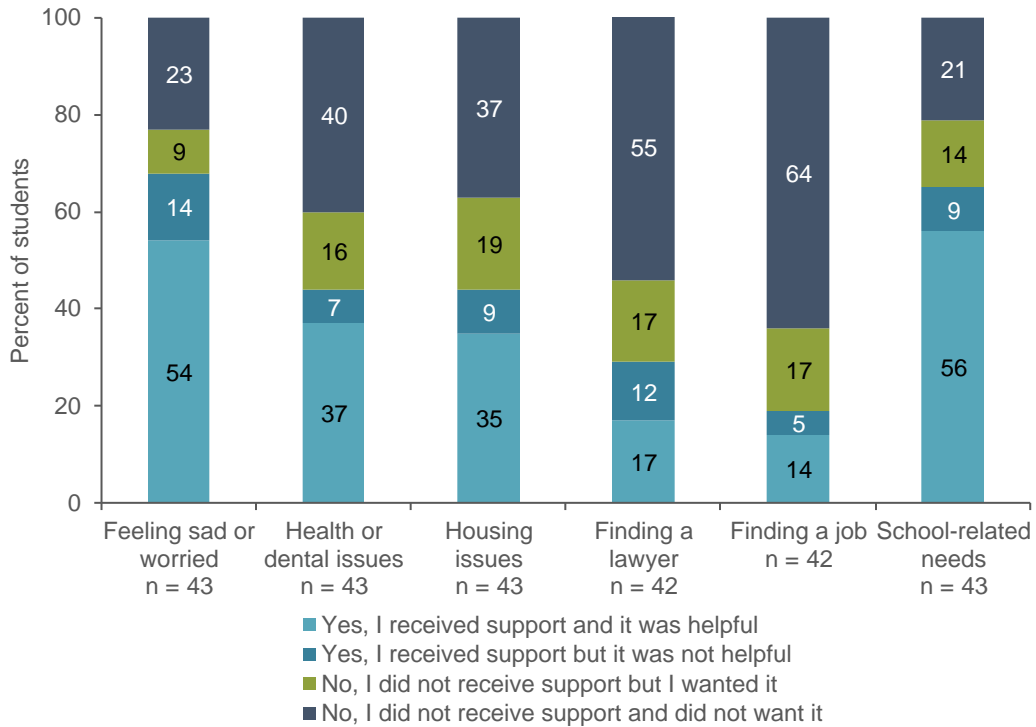


Exhibit B-28. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Castlemont High School

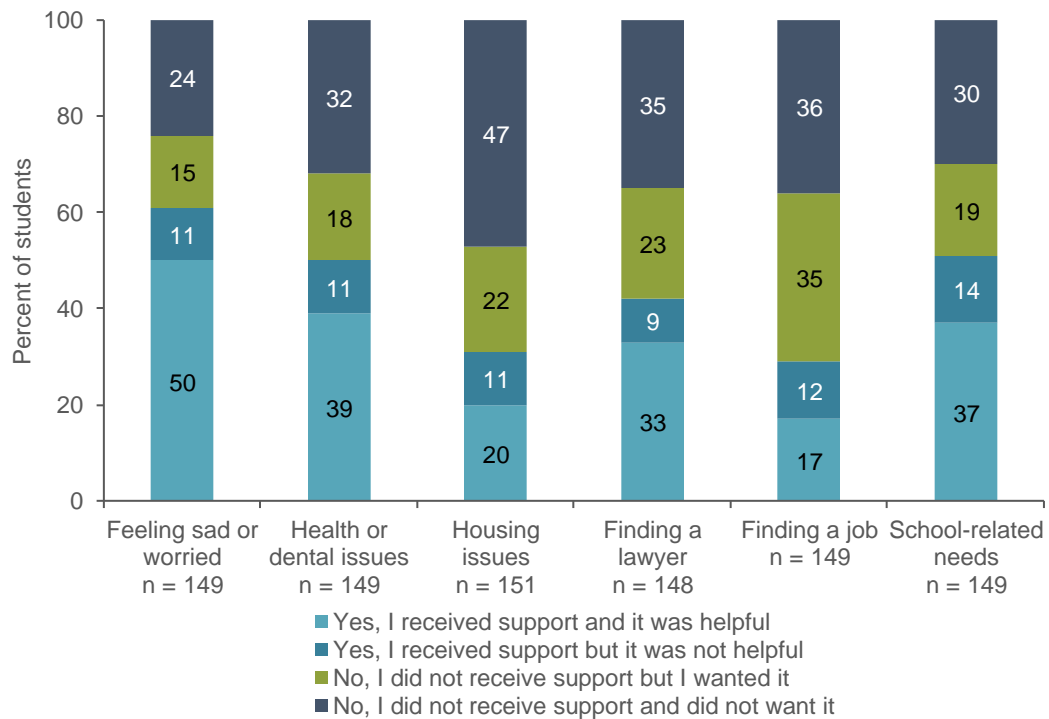


Exhibit B-29. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Fremont High School

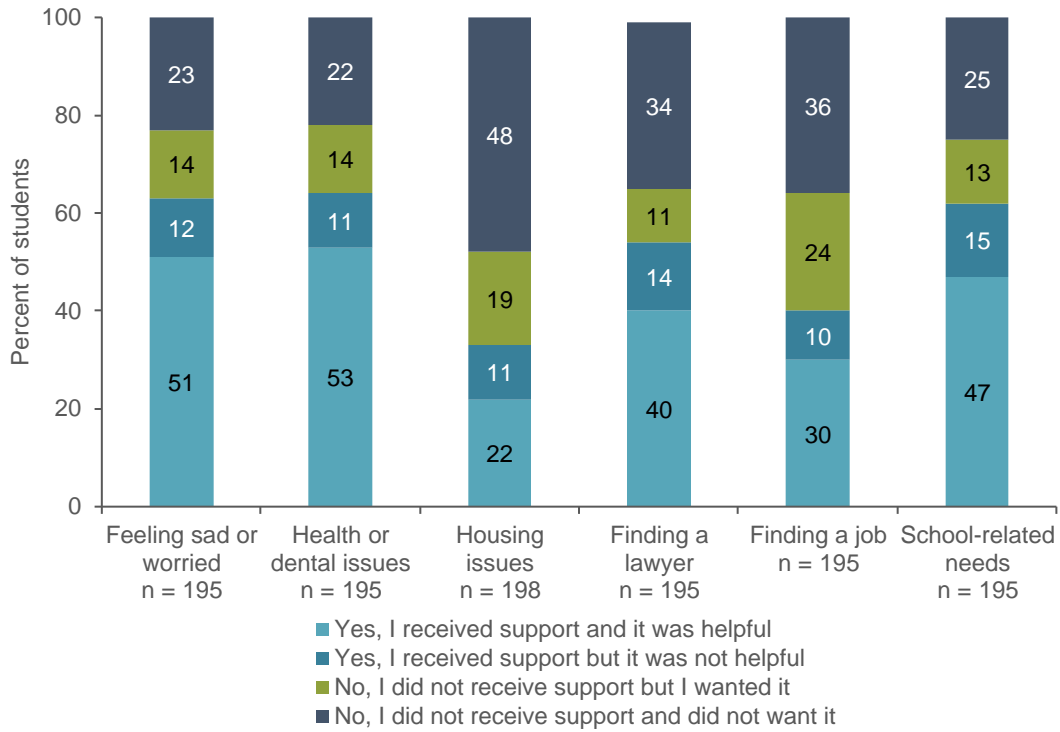


Exhibit B-30. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Oakland High School

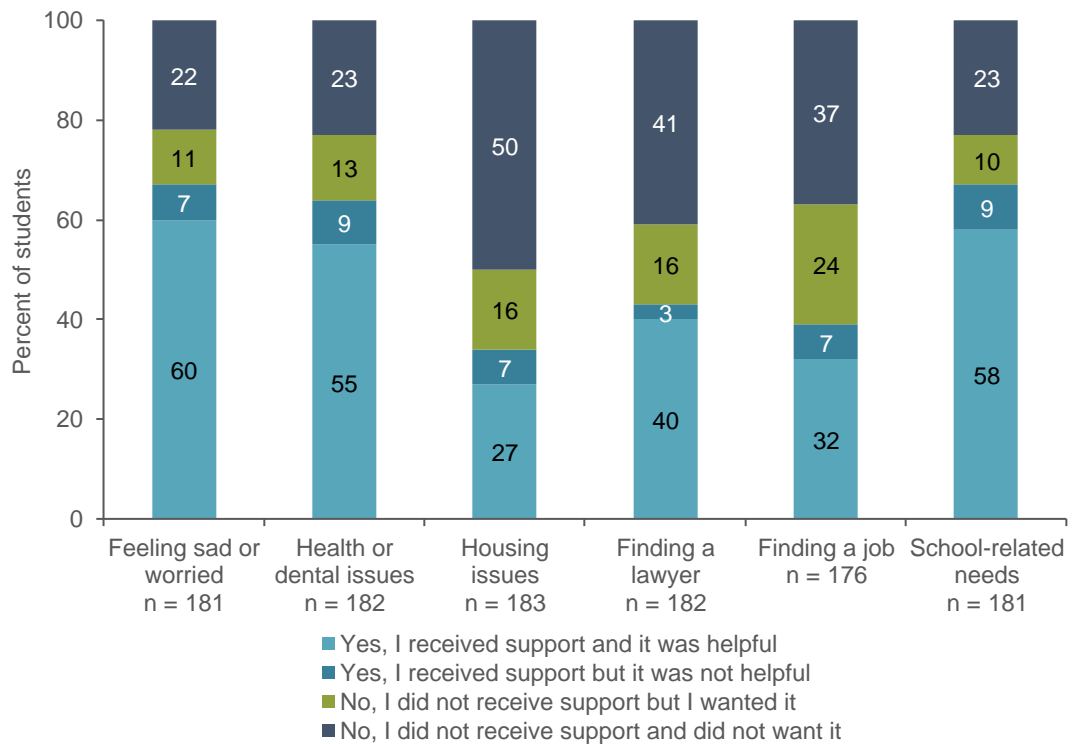


Exhibit B-31. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Oakland International High School

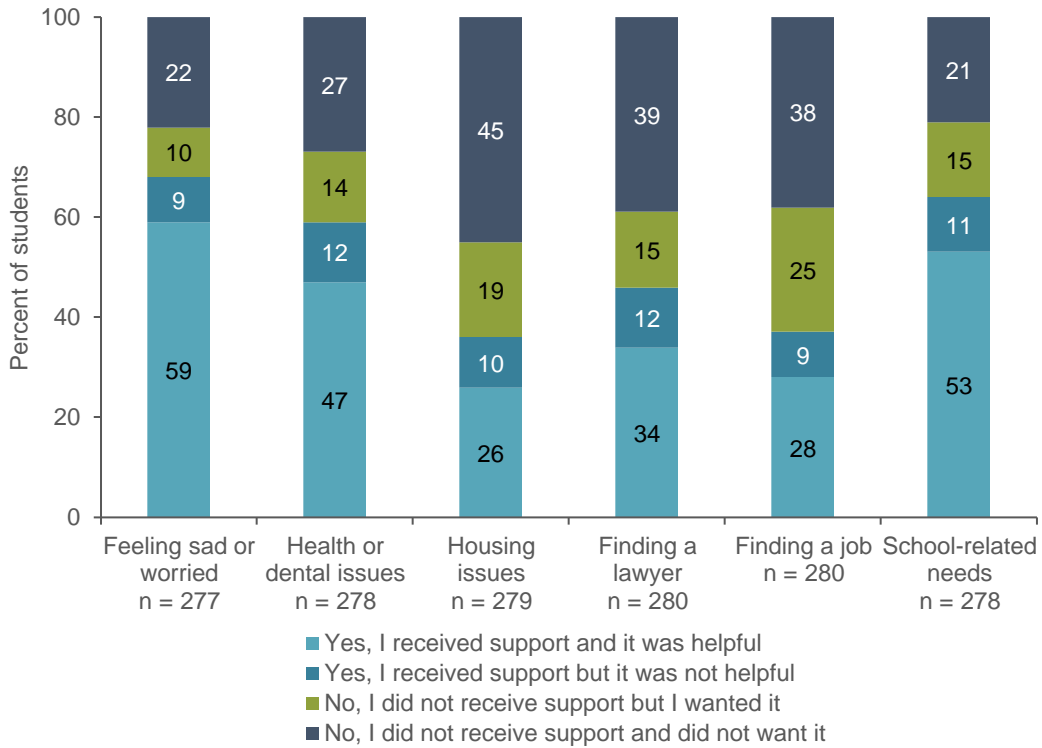


Exhibit B-32. Students' Experience of Supports from an Adult at School, Rudsdale Newcomer High School

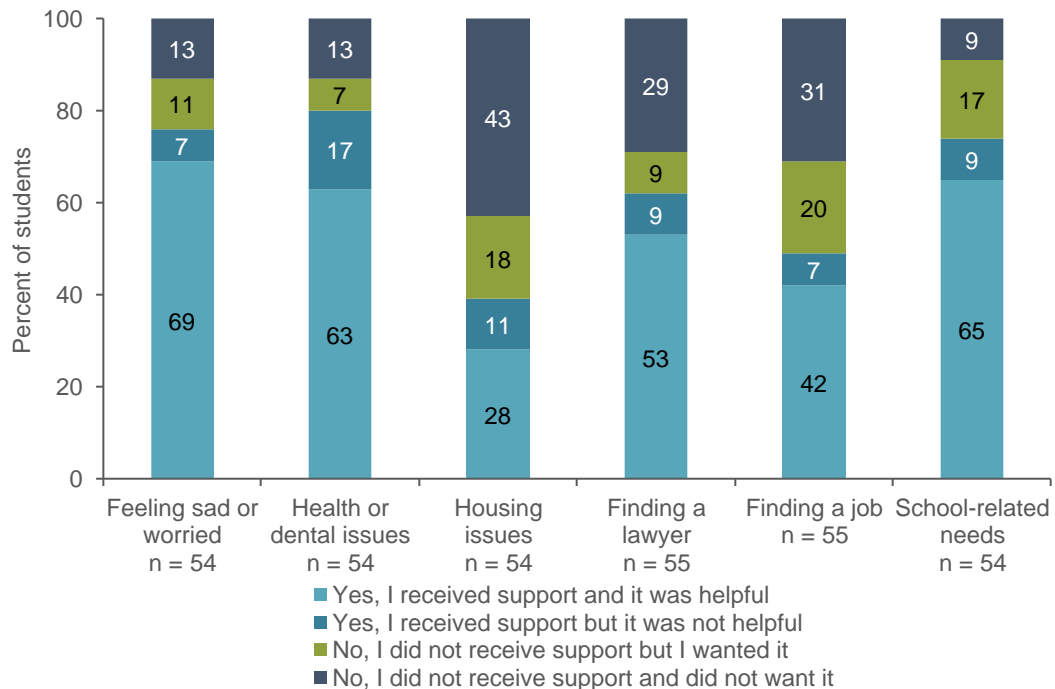


Exhibit B-33. Students Who Received Sex Education at School, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

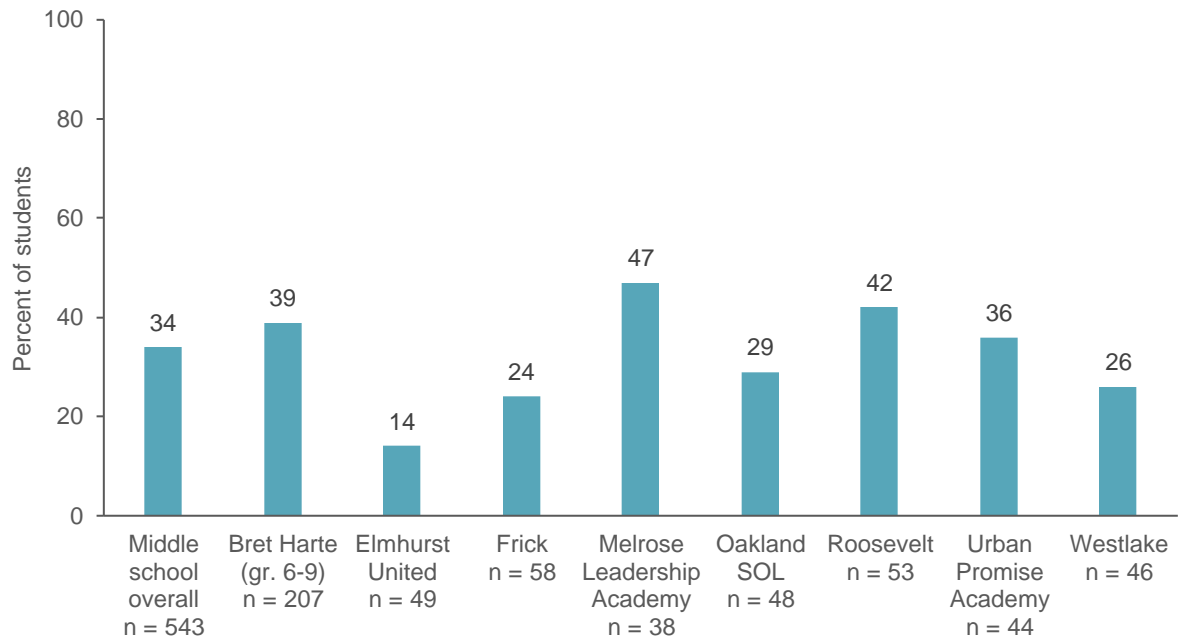
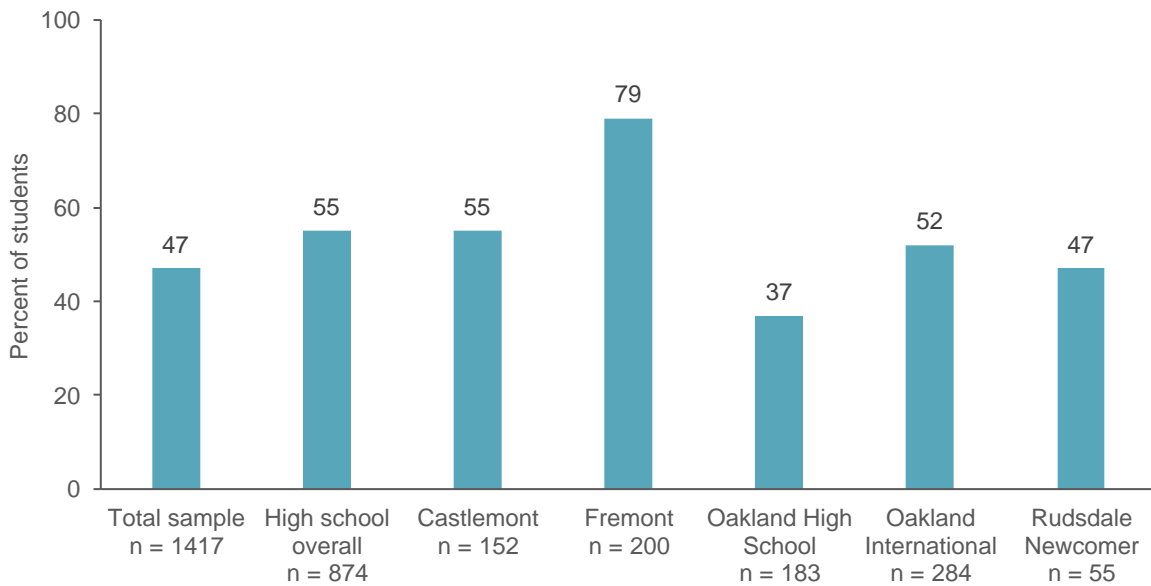
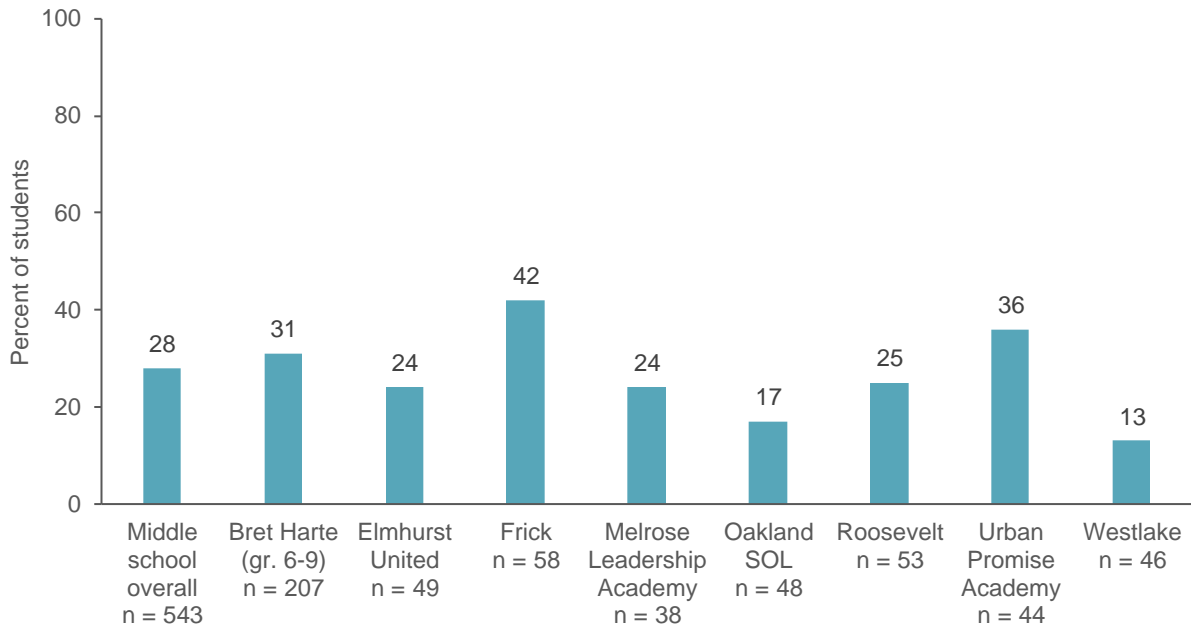


Exhibit B-34. Students Who Received Sex Education at School, for High Schools Overall and by High School

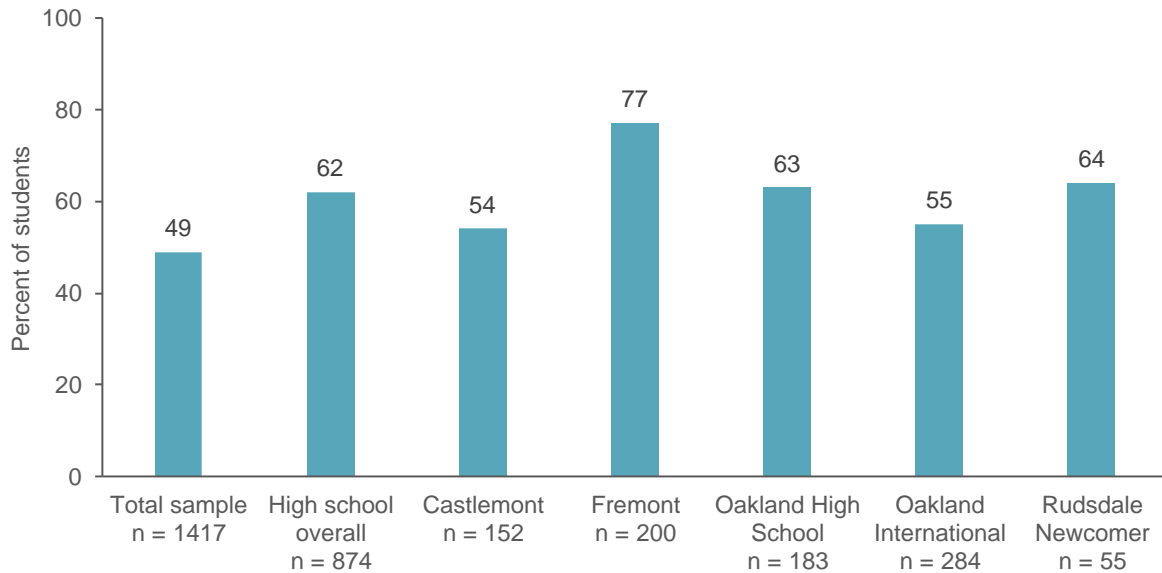




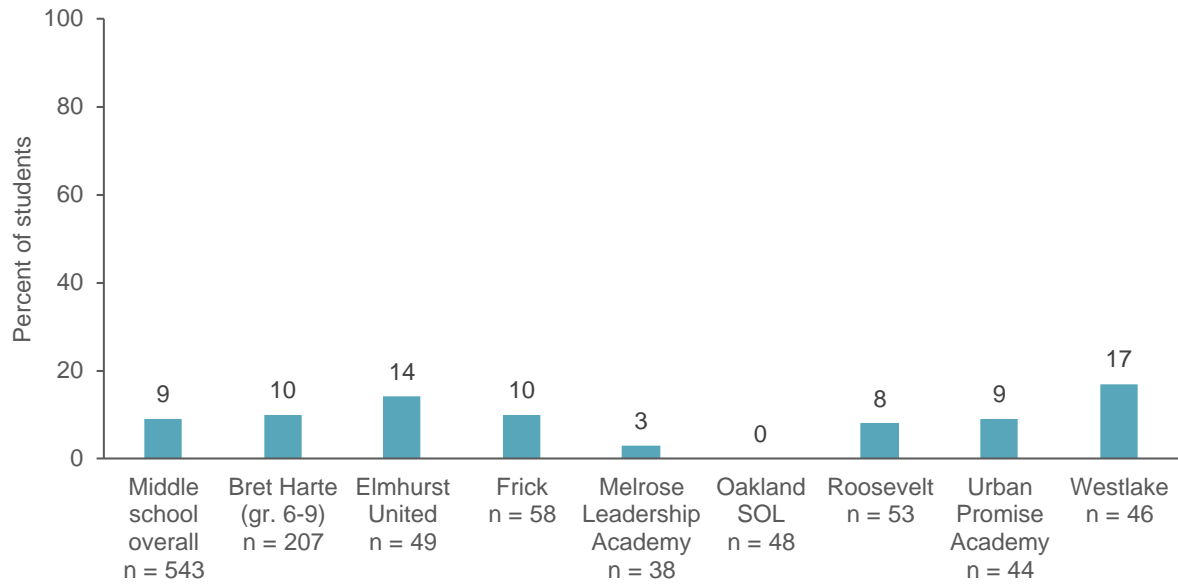
*Exhibit B-35. Students Who Knew Where to Obtain Birth Control, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School*



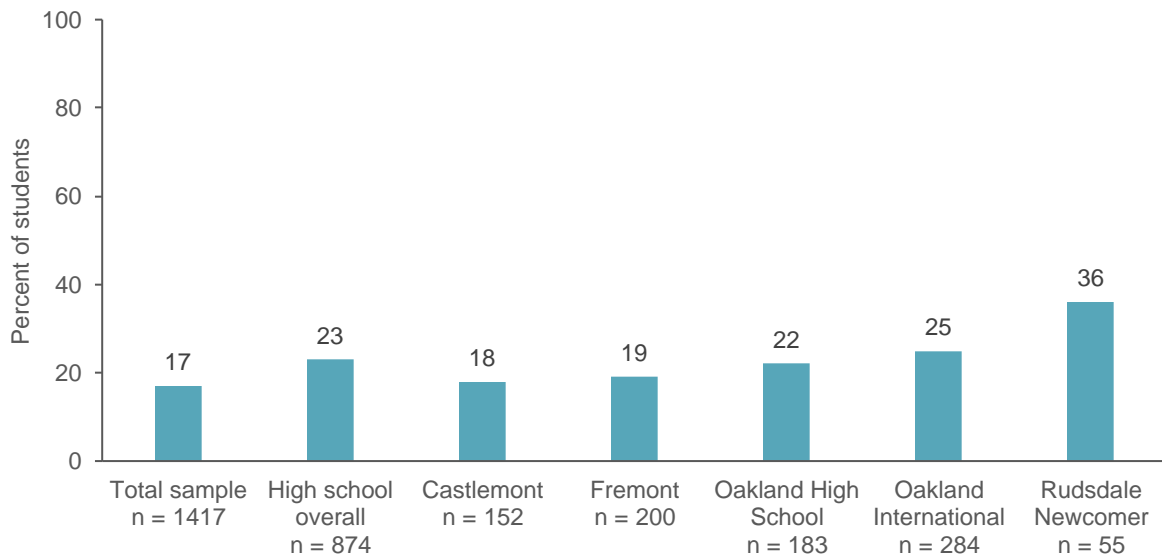
*Exhibit B-36. Students Who Knew Where to Obtain Birth Control, for High Schools Overall and by High School*



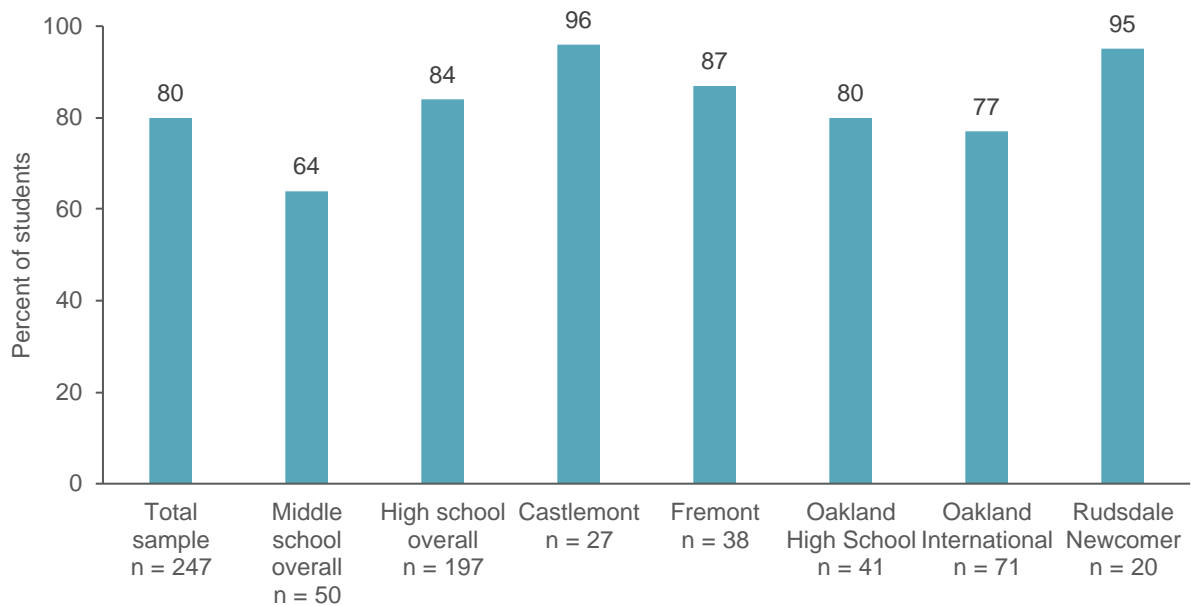
*Exhibit B-37. Students Who Reported Being Sexually Active, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School*



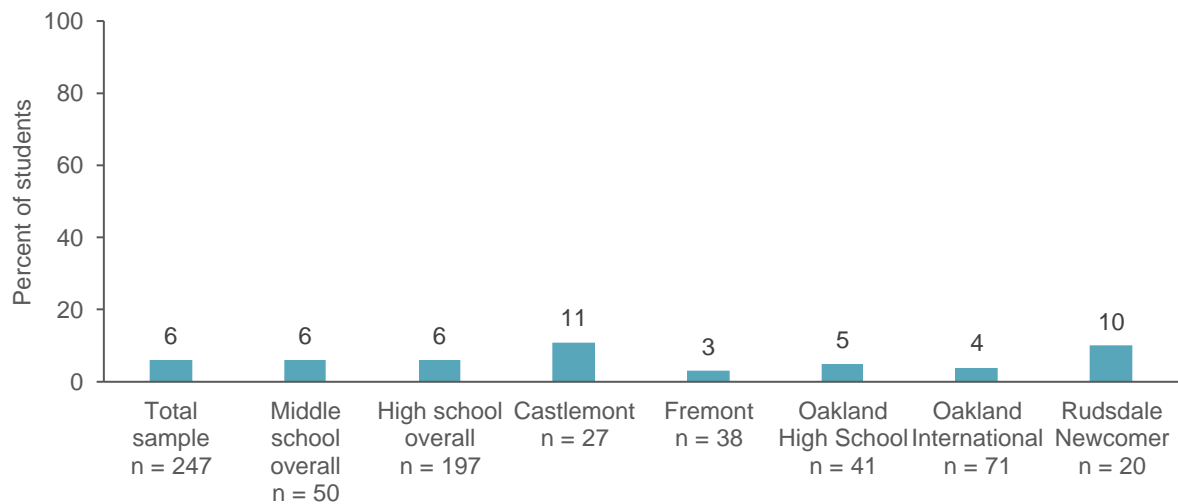
*Exhibit B-38. Students Who Reported Being Sexually Active, for High Schools Overall and by High School*



*Exhibit B-39. Sexually Active Students Who Reported Knowledge of Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention, for Middle Schools Overall,<sup>12</sup> High Schools Overall, and by High School*



*Exhibit B-40. Sexually Active Students Who Reported Being Pregnant or Parenting, for Middle Schools Overall,<sup>13</sup> High Schools Overall, and by High School*



<sup>12, 10</sup> Data for individual middle schools are not reported due to very small sample sizes.

## Appendix C: Students Contributing to Rent

These data are in response to the question “Do you contribute to paying rent where you live?” Please note that we believe the question may have been misinterpreted by a significant number of students due to the high proportion of students across all groups who answered that they pay for all of the rent (Exhibit C-1). This proportion often exceeds the number of students who reported they had jobs. This is especially true for middle school students; on average, 7% of middle school students reported they had jobs (Exhibit B-11), yet 19% reported they paid for all of the rent and another 9% reported they paid for some of it (Exhibit C-2).

However, the data may be somewhat more valid for high school students, who reported having jobs (Exhibit B-12) and paying rent (Exhibit C-3) in more comparable proportions. We also see corresponding high percentages of students with jobs and students paying rent at Rudsdale Newcomer High School.

*Exhibit C-1. Students Who Contribute to Rent, for Overall Sample, by Birth Country, and Home Language*

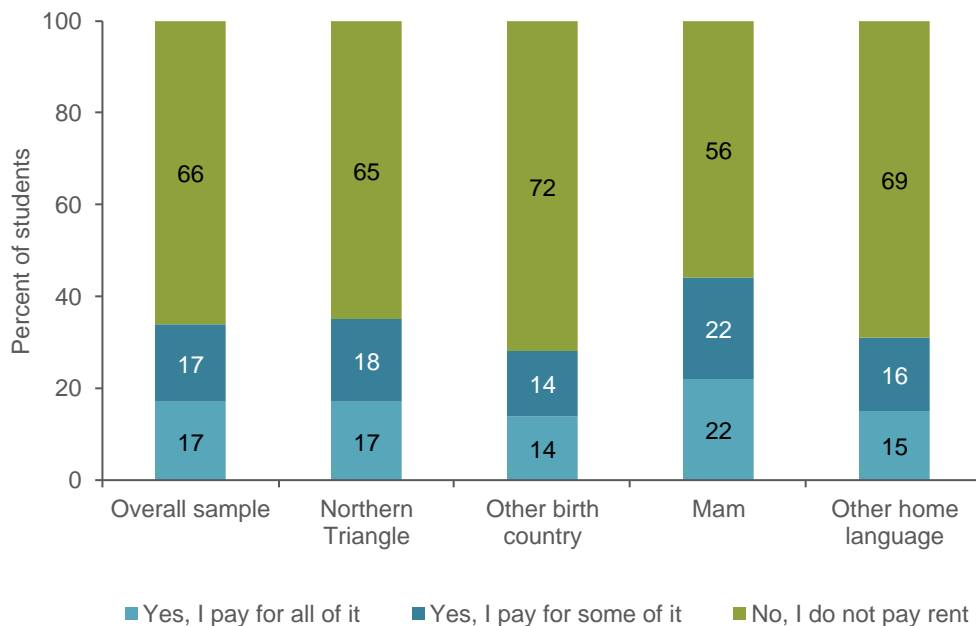


Exhibit C-2. Students Who Contribute to Rent, for Middle Schools Overall and by Middle School

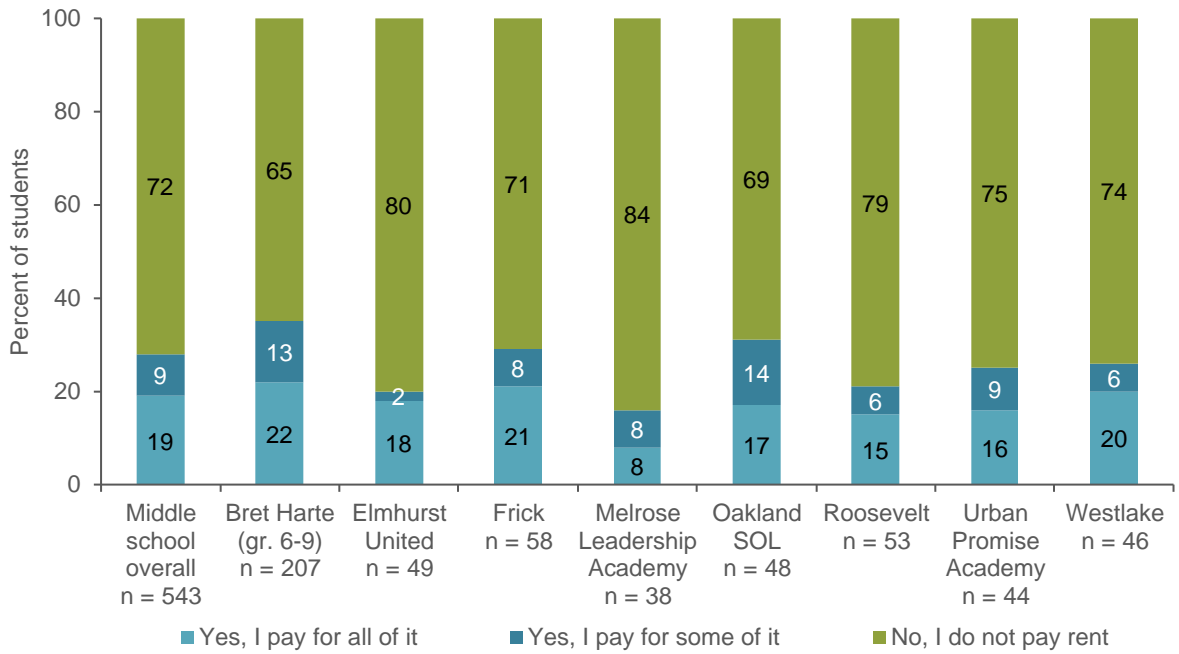


Exhibit C-3. Students Who Contribute to Rent, for High Schools Overall and by High School

