

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

2020 LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY RESULTS

OREGON GEAR UP

BACKGROUND

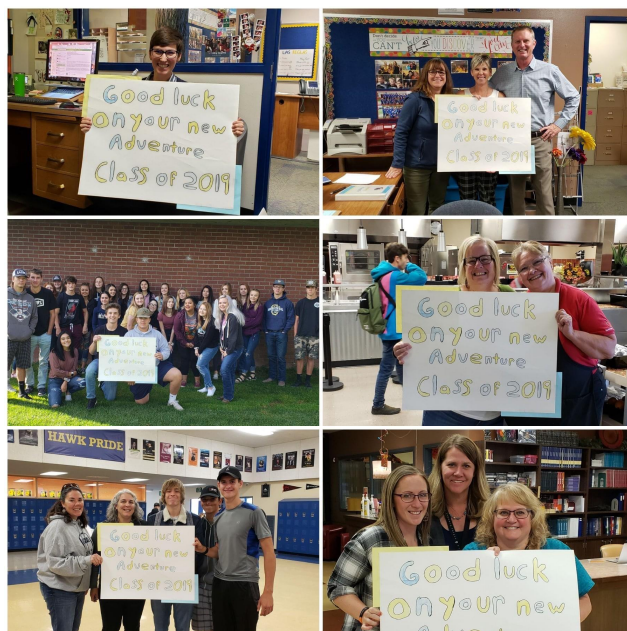
INTRODUCTION

Seeking to better understand the experiences of rural students after they graduate from high school and what influences their post-high school plans and decisions, Oregon GEAR UP retained the services of Metis Associates to conduct a Life After High School study in 21 rural communities across the state.

METHODOLOGY

From January through May of 2020, Metis administered the Life After High School Survey with high school graduates from 21 high schools that receive GEAR UP services through a grant from the US Department of Education to Oregon State University.

The survey was administered via email and texts using the Mozeo platform. GEAR UP coordinators in many schools also distributed the survey via email and social media. A total of 481 young people who graduated in 2019 completed the survey, representing a 51% response rate. Survey respondents were offered a \$10 Amazon gift card after submitting their confidential surveys.



LaPine High School wishing its 2019 graduating class "Good Luck" on their post-graduate adventures (Photo Courtesy: LPHS Facebook)

This Brief was prepared by Metis Associates on behalf of Oregon GEAR UP.

ABOUT OREGON GEAR UP

Oregon GEAR UP's goal is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary programs. Oregon GEAR UP works with select middle and high schools over seven years to create a college-going culture by providing funding and technical assistance, professional development for educators, and summer opportunities for students.

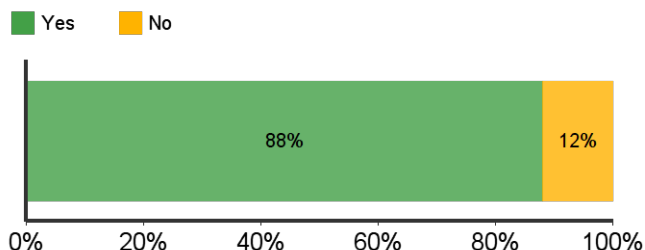
ABOUT METIS ASSOCIATES

Metis Associates, a national research and consulting firm, brings 40 years of expertise in evaluation, information management, and grant development to its work for organizations committed to making a meaningful difference in the lives of children, families, and communities. Our mission is to support public and private organizations in achieving results for the children, adults, families, and communities they serve. We work closely with clients to strengthen capacity to achieve their missions, make data-informed decisions, and improve services.

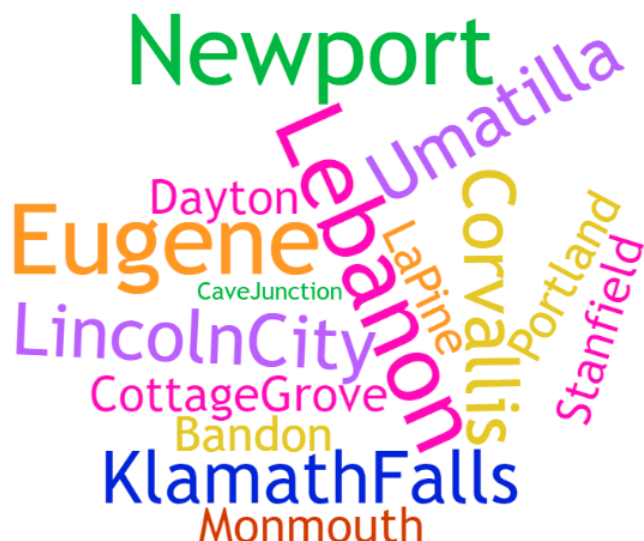
WHERE ARE YOUTH NOW AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

KEY FINDING: Six months after graduating from high school, most youth were still living in Oregon (88%). Over two-thirds of respondents were enrolled in some form of postsecondary education, including 2-year community colleges (35%), 4-year colleges or universities (32%), or certificate/trade programs (4%). Over two-thirds of the youth were also either working (51%) or looking for work (19%).

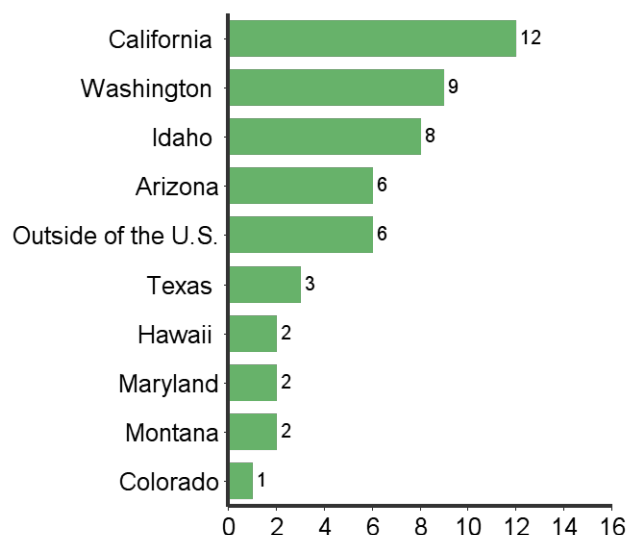
Do you currently live in Oregon?



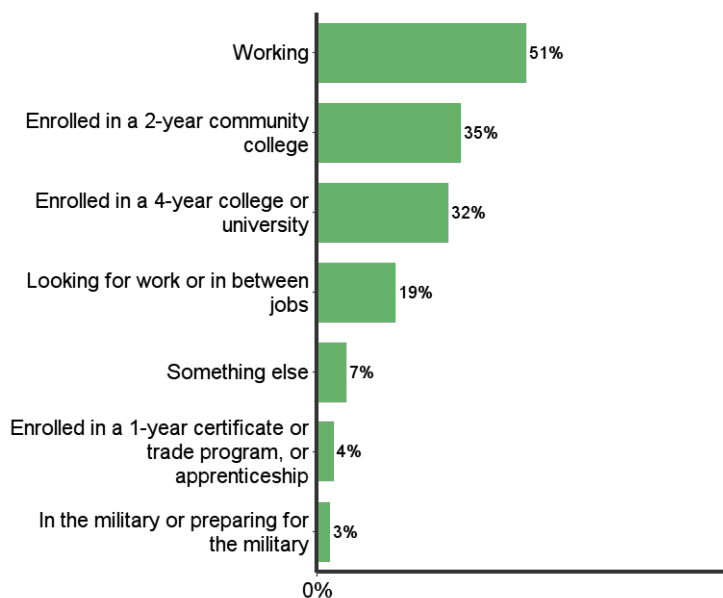
Top 15 cities



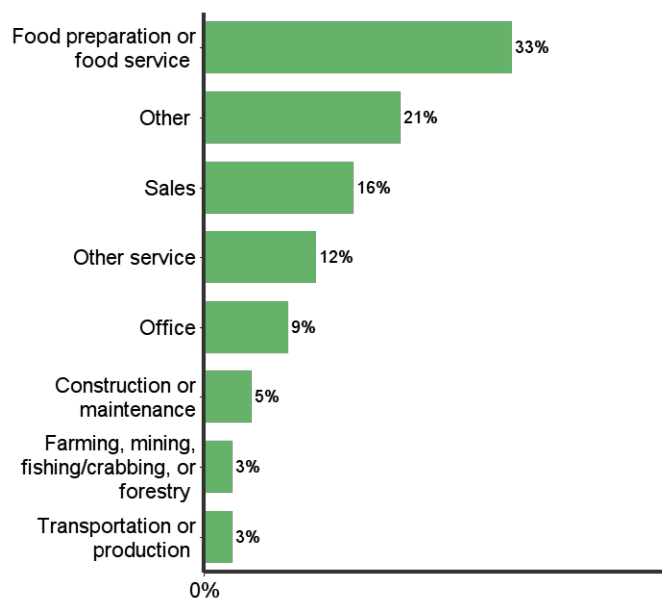
Residence outside of Oregon



What are you currently doing? (Check all that apply)



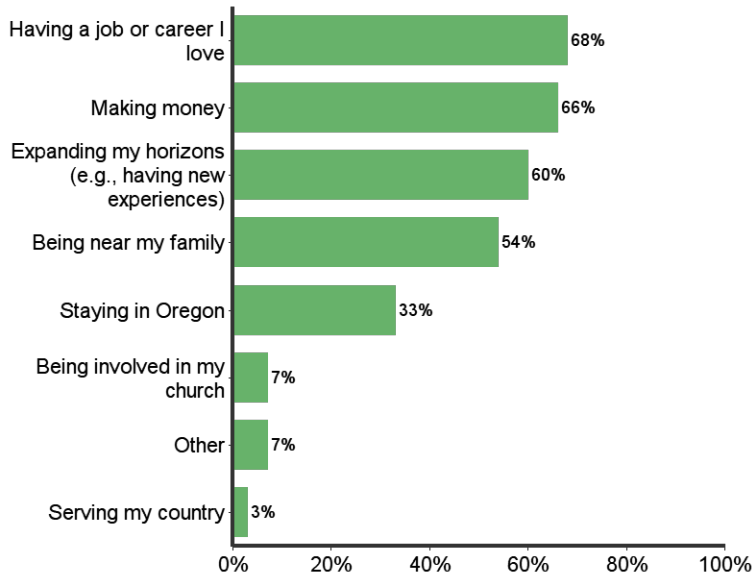
What type of job do you currently have?



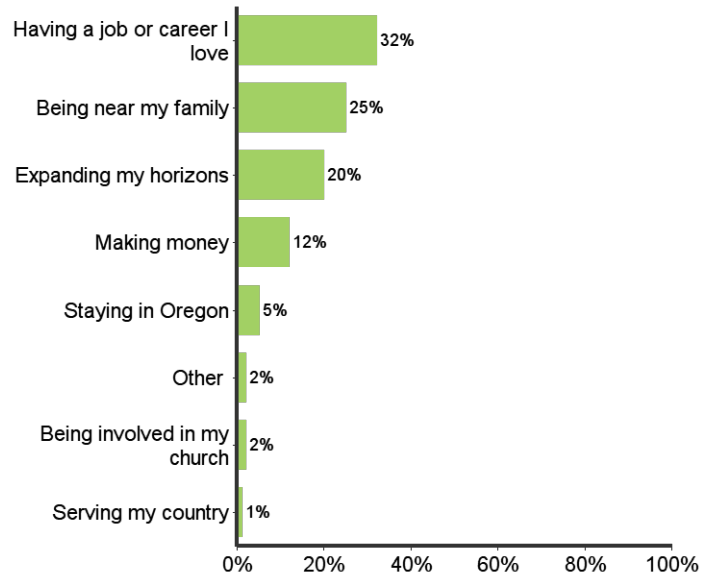
IMPORTANT FACTORS IN DECIDING WHAT TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

KEY FINDING: The most important considerations when youth were deciding what to do after high school were: having a career or job they love, making money, and expanding their horizons. Parents/guardians, teachers, and friends were the three most influential groups of people, when youth were deciding what to do after high school.

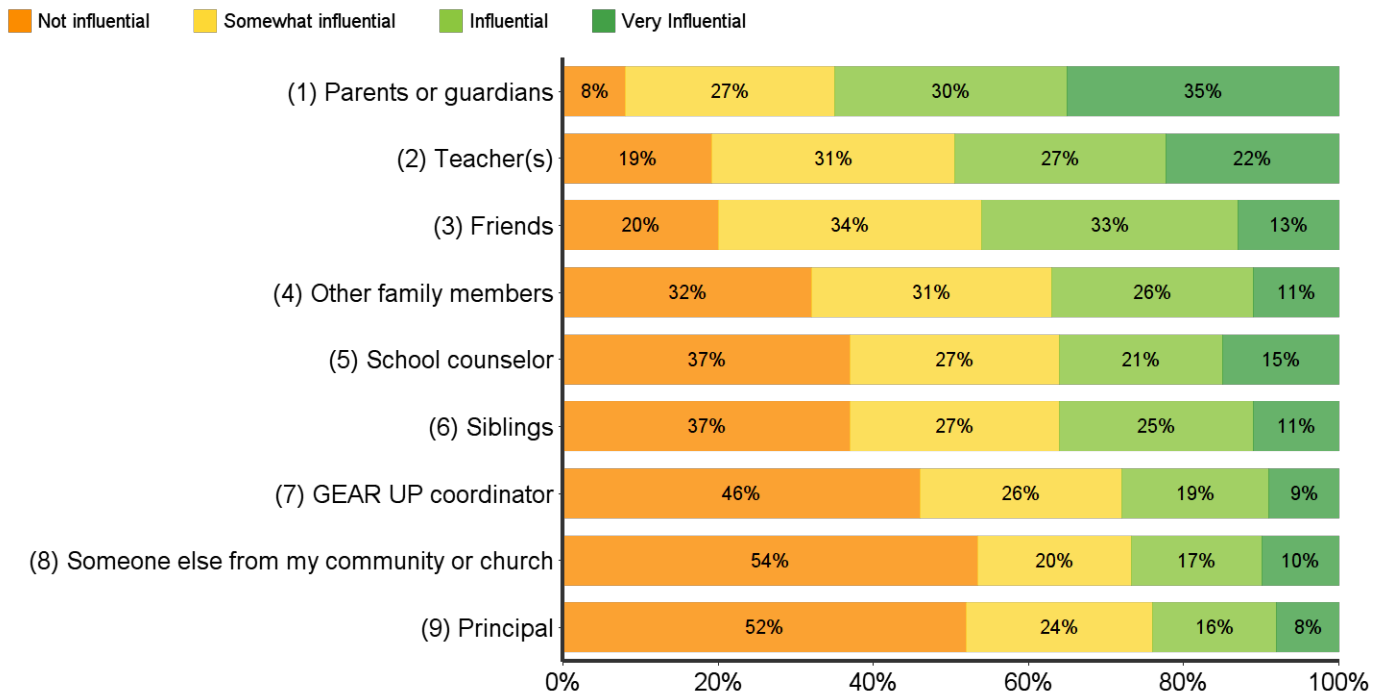
Which one of these were important to you when deciding about what to do after high school? (Check all that apply)



Which of these was the MOST IMPORTANT when deciding about what to do after high school? (Check one only)



How influential were the following people when you were making a decision about what to do after high school?

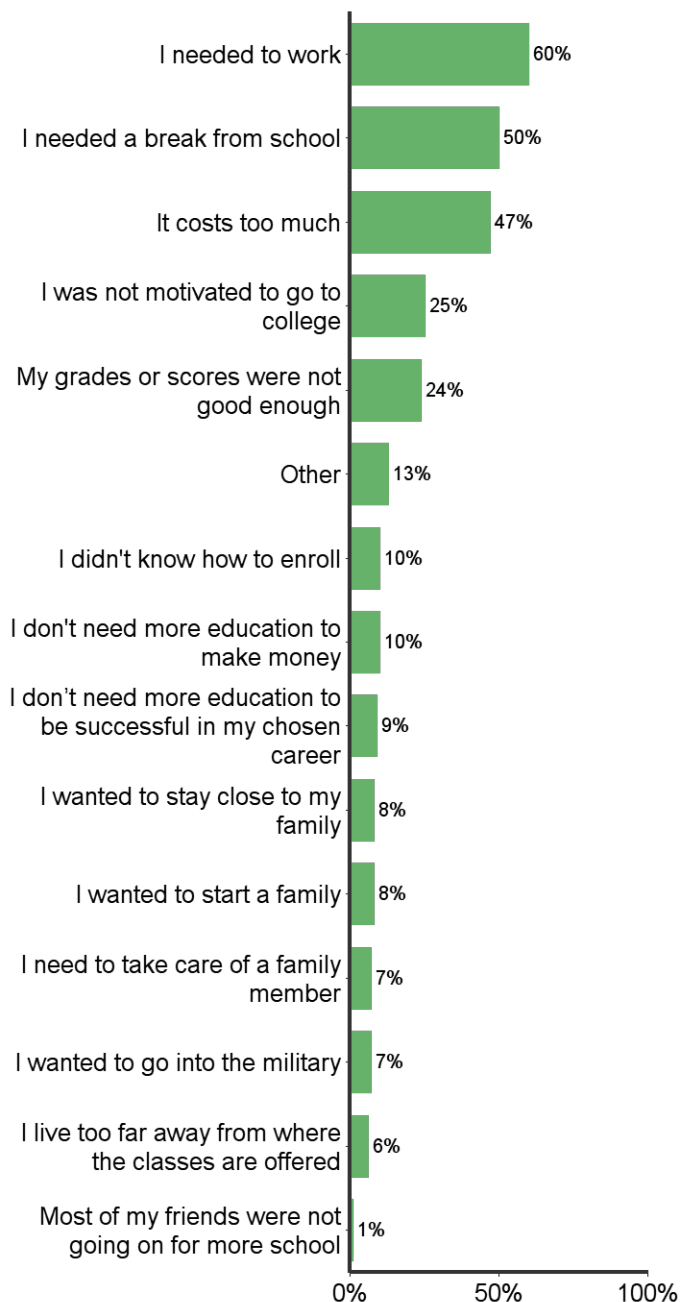


STUDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY NOT ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION (PSE)

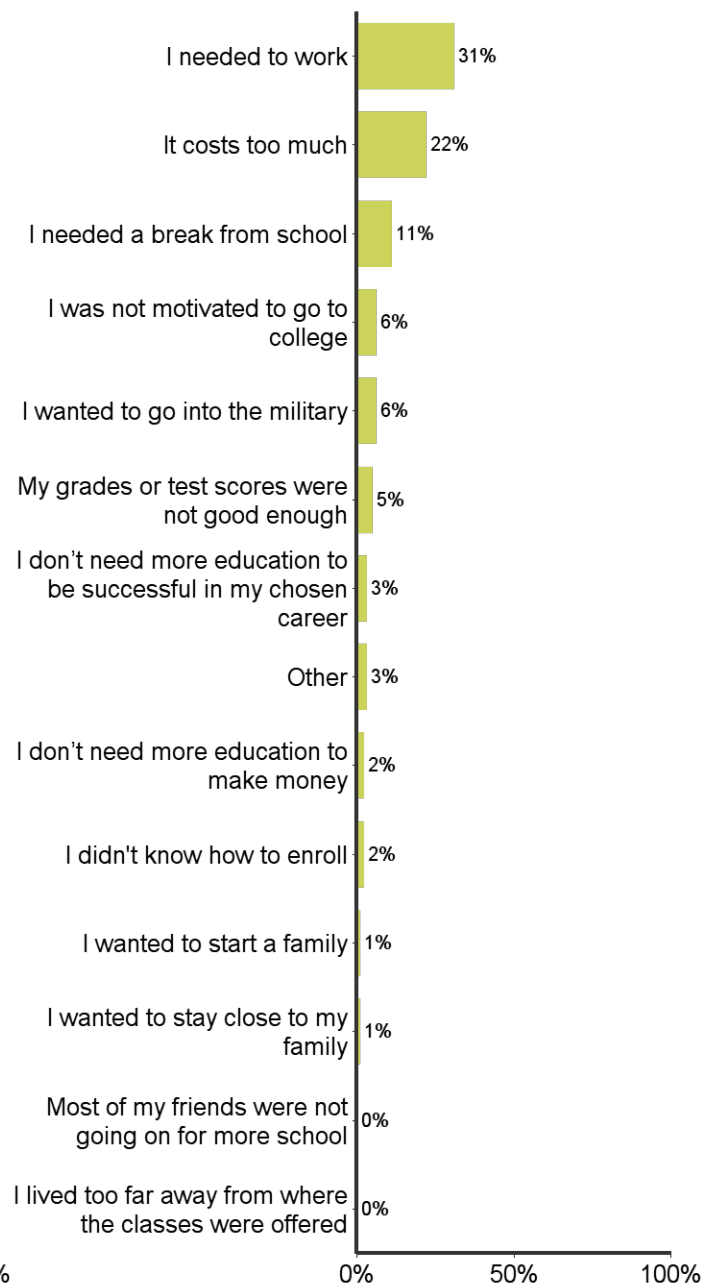
KEY FINDING: The most prevalent reasons preventing youth from enrolling in postsecondary education after graduating from high school were: needing to work, cost considerations, and needing a break from school.

Here are some reasons why people decide to postpone or not to continue their education beyond high school.

**Choose any reasons that apply to you.
(Check all that apply)**

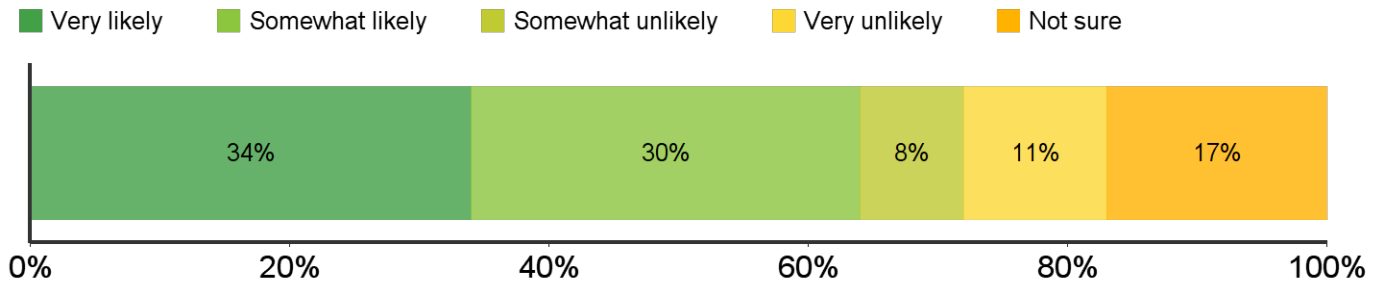


**Which one was most important to you?
(Check one)**

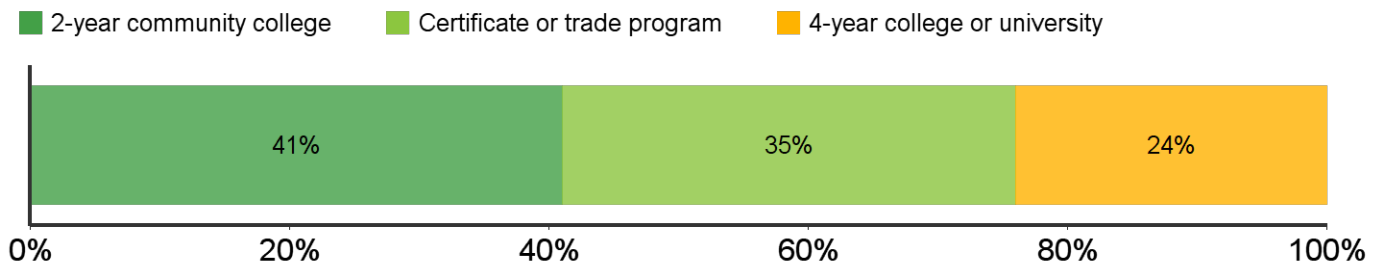


KEY FINDING: Yet, two-thirds of the youth who were not enrolled in postsecondary education at the time of the survey indicated they were "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to enroll in the future. Youth said they were most likely to enroll in 2-year community colleges, followed by certificate or trade programs, and 4-year colleges and universities.

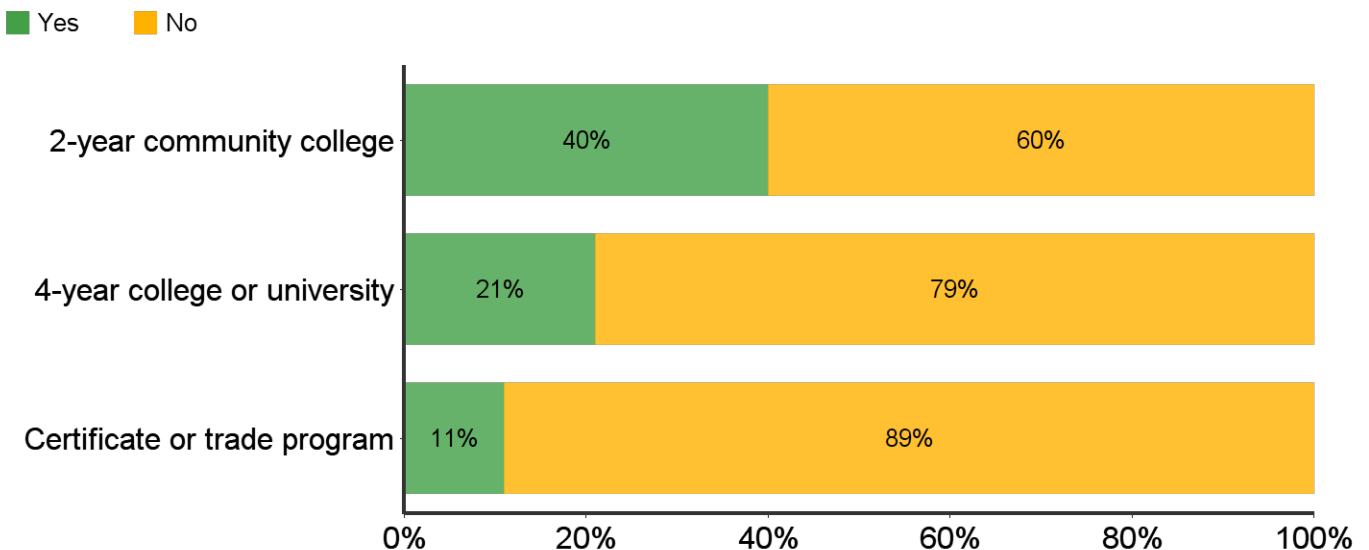
How likely are you to enroll in postsecondary education in the future?



Which one are you most likely to enroll in?



While in high school did you apply to any of the following?

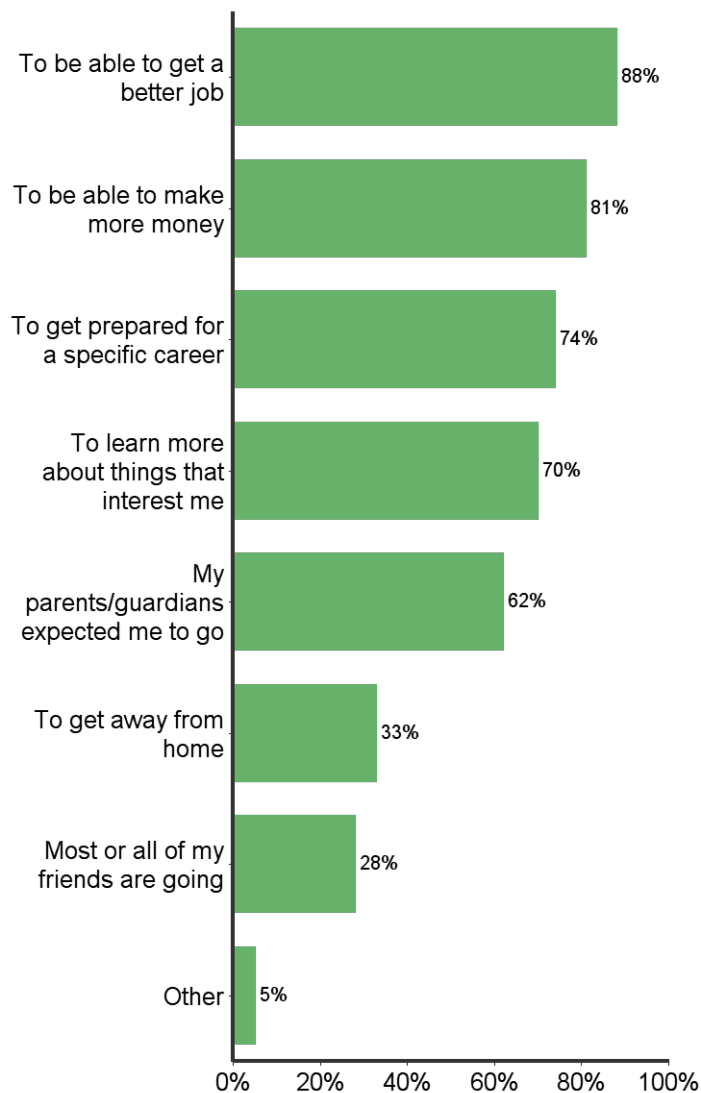


STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

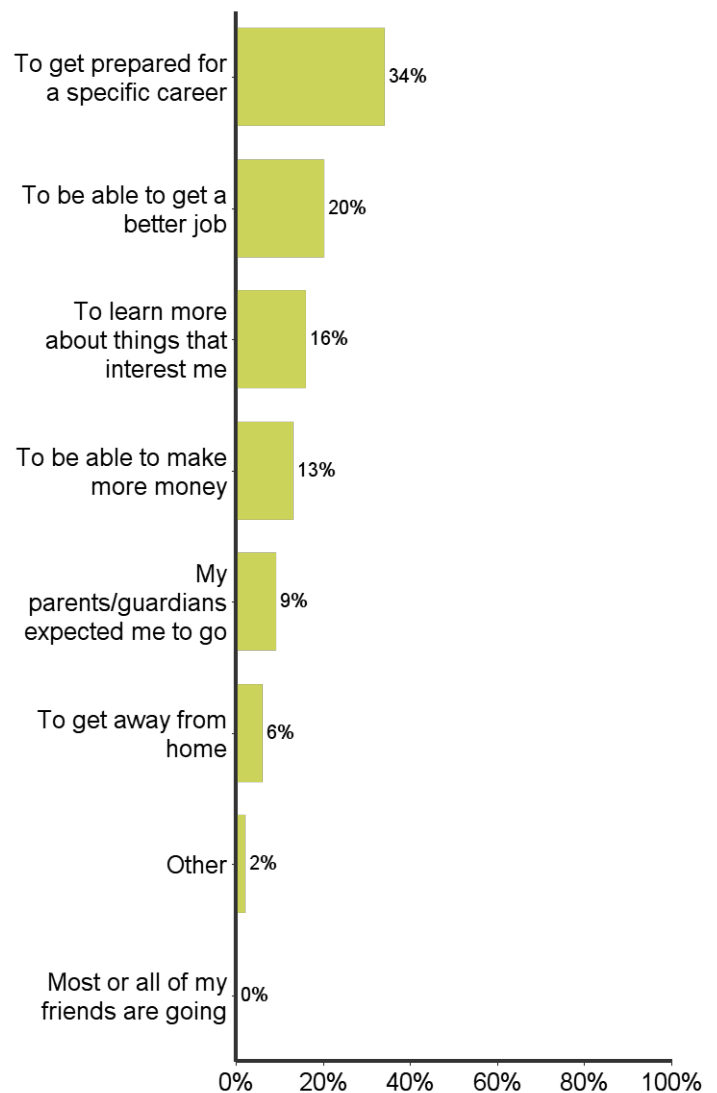
KEY FINDING: Youth who enrolled in postsecondary education were asked to identify the reasons they had for enrolling. The **most frequent reasons** were: being able to get a better job, being able to make more money, getting prepared for a specific career, and learning more about things that interest them. Interestingly, although 82% said one of the reasons they enrolled was to make more money, only 13% thought making money was the **most important** reason.

Here are some reasons why people enroll in postsecondary education.

*Which ones are important to you?
(Check all that apply)*

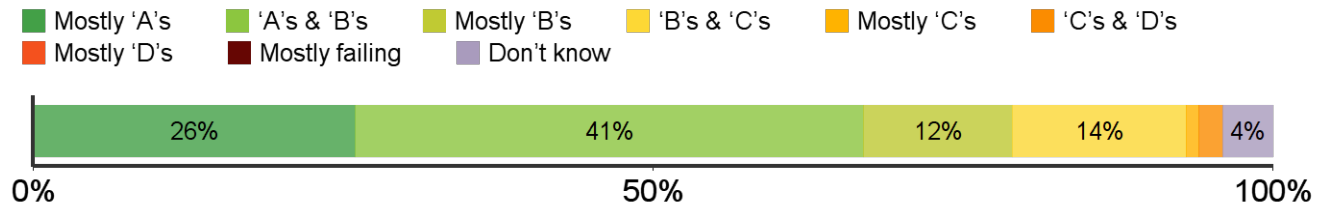


*And of these reasons, which one
is most important to you?
(Check one)*

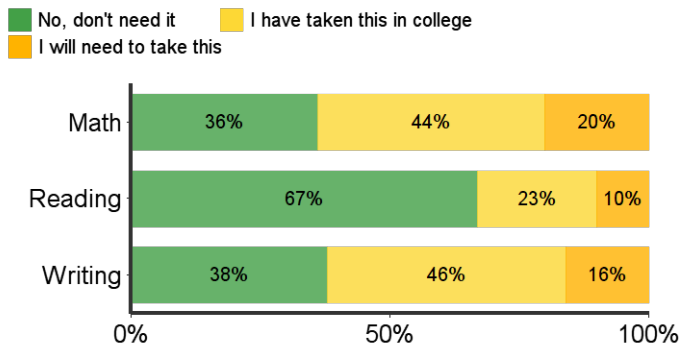


KEY FINDING: Most youth (79%) enrolled in college reported getting good grades (B's and above). Yet, many entered college with a need for remedial coursework in math (65%) and writing (62%).

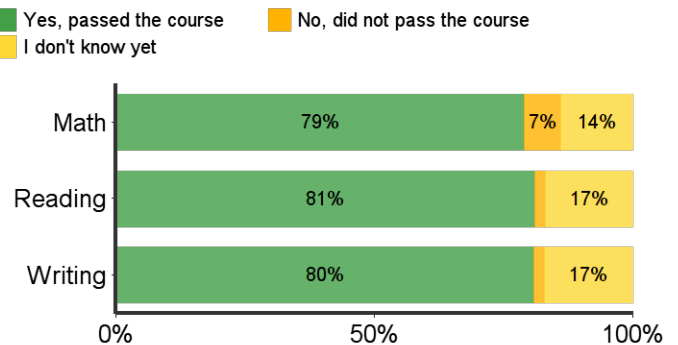
What are your grades like in college?



Do you have to take the following remedial courses?

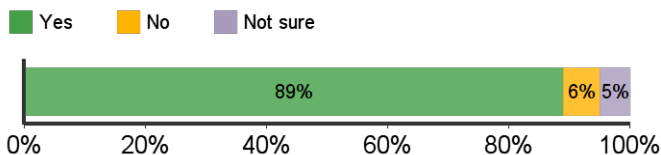


If you have taken these courses, have you passed these courses?

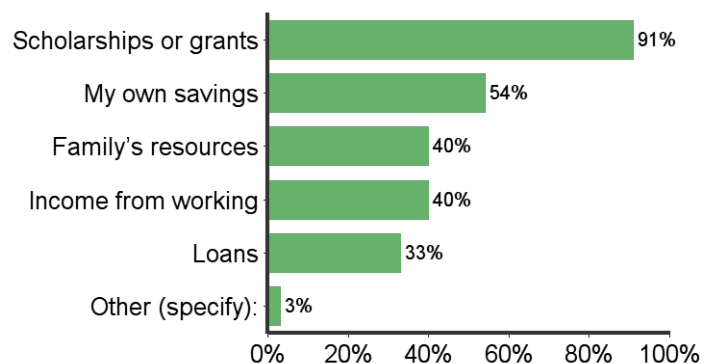


KEY FINDING: Most youth enrolled in college completed the FAFSA/ORSAA, were recipients of the Oregon Promise grant, and were using multiple sources of income and financial aid to pay for college. Yet, less than half (48%) were "confident" or "very confident" they could continue to afford college.

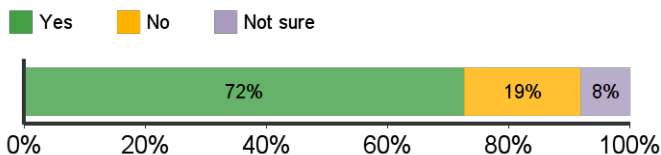
Did you or your parents complete the FAFSA/ORSAA?



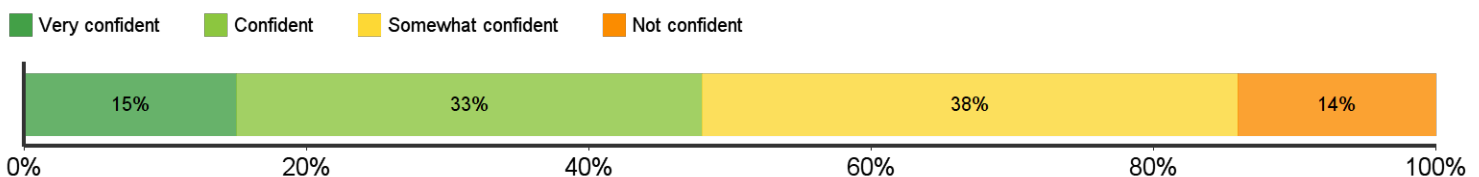
Which one of the following are you using to pay for your tuition and living expenses? (Check all that apply)



Are you a recipient of the Oregon Promise? [2-year community college students only]

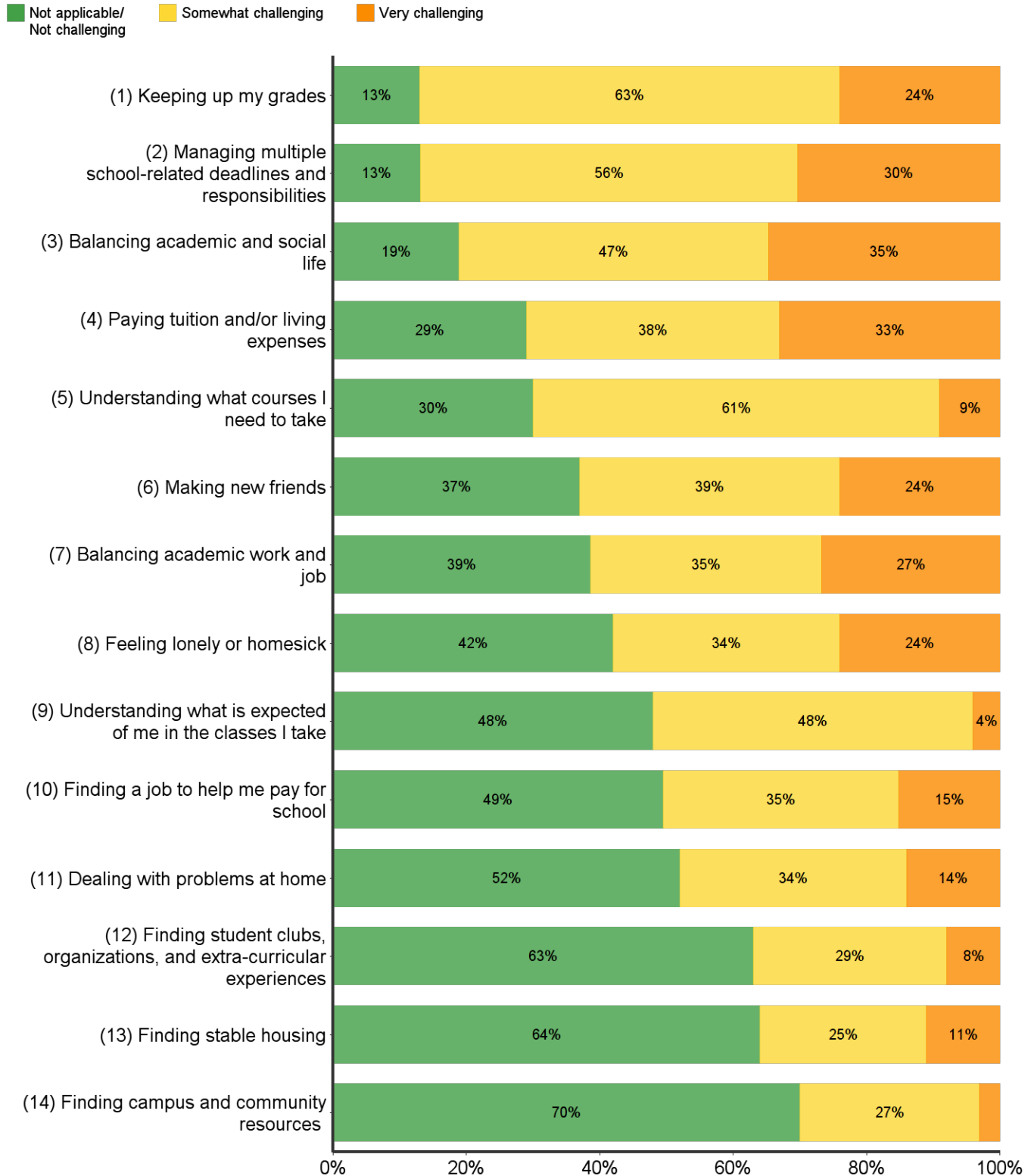


How confident are you that you can continue to afford college?



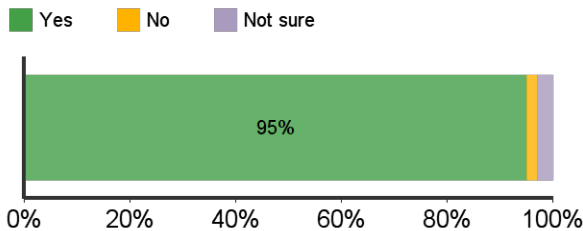
KEY FINDING: The most common challenges while in college (described by youth as being "very" or "somewhat challenging") were: keeping up their grades, managing school deadlines and responsibilities, balancing academic and social life, and paying tuition and/or living expenses.

The following are some challenges that first-year college students may be experiencing. To what extent have the following been challenging for you?



KEY FINDING: Most (95%) youth were planning to re-enroll in college the following semester. Those who did not had varied reasons for not re-enrolling.

Do you plan to re-enroll in college the next semester?



[Not Re-Enrolling in Spring Semester] Why not?

I'm committed already.
Don't know.
Everything is super hard.
I have a specific time slot at college, which for me is fall and winter.
I might start online classes and have a change of career.
I want to travel.
I'm not sure if I want to take a break.
Difficulty with housing requirements.
I think I may take a year elsewhere or out of school.
I'm going through a difficult time now.
No time.

KEY FINDING: When asked about the additional supports they needed in order to be successful in college, the most common response was financial supports (e.g., loans, scholarships, financial aid, money, etc.). Other common requests for additional supports were: more friends; mentoring, advising, and general encouragement; counseling/therapy; and academic supports.

What kind of support would be helpful to you to improve your overall college experience? [REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS]

A group for those who move away from home alone, and need help making friends.

A group of good local friends. It's harder to make friends when you're an adult working and going to college.

Any kind of financial support.

Better guidance from advisors.

Clarity about the financial aid issues I am currently having right now.

Closer/clearer academic guidance from mentors/faculty/etc.

Counseling.

Emotional support or maybe more friends ;)

Financial and social. I'm broke and haven't spoken to someone my age in months.

Hard to say. I think more support from friends would be helpful, making friends has been challenging for me at such a small campus. More mental health resources would be a great help as well.

I think learning about more career options in my field. We did this in high school but so much changes in year or two, I'd like to know even further options I have now.

Knowing more about loans and overall life skills.

Learning how to balance life, work, social, and school.

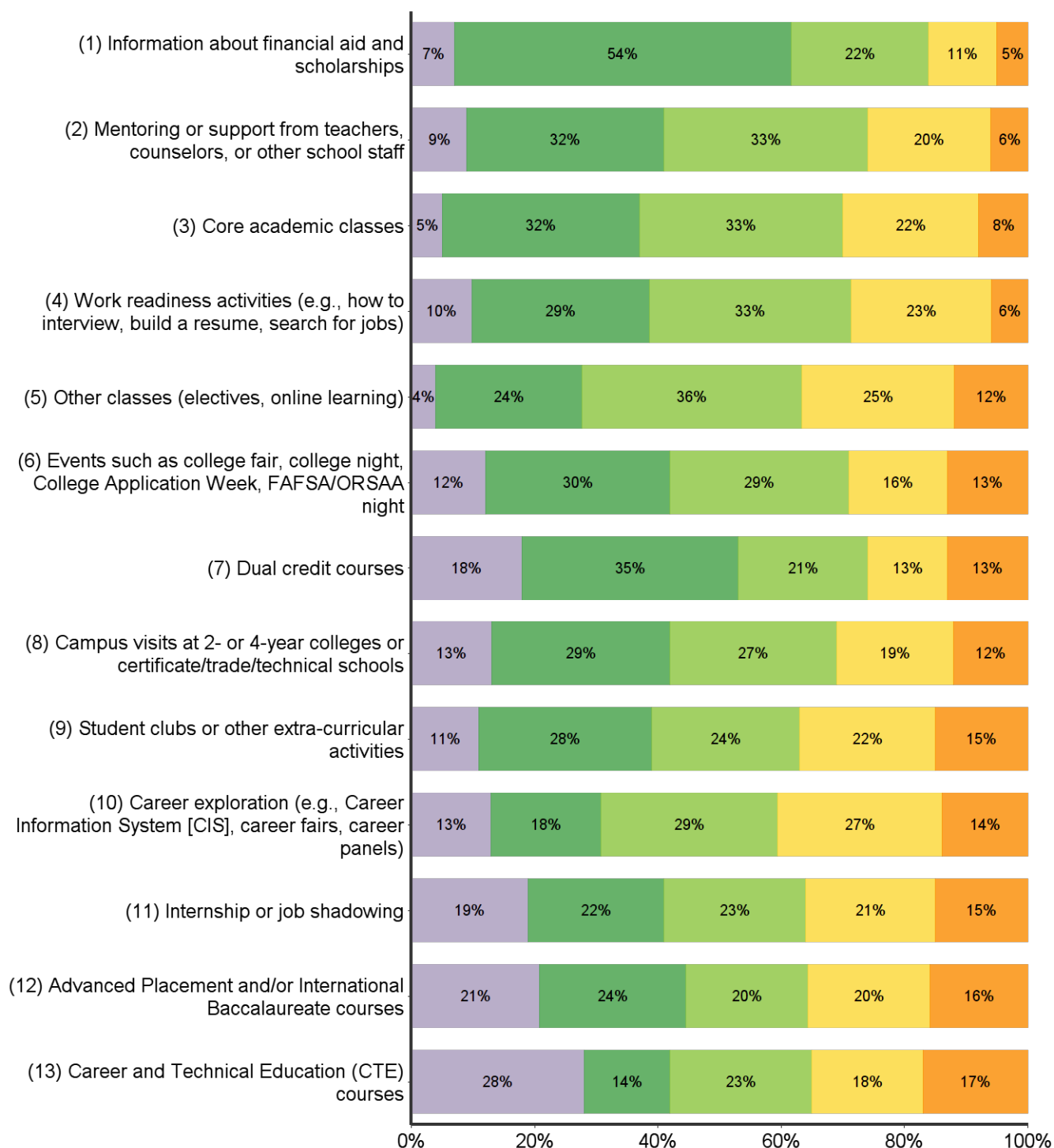
Someone to help me organize myself, my classes and guide me to find the help I need when I need it, whether it be financially or academically.

ALL STUDENTS: REFLECTING ON HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

KEY FINDING: The most important supports youth received while in high school (with most youth describing them as "important" or "very important") were: information about financial aid and scholarships (76%); mentoring or support from teachers, counselors and other school staff (65%); core academic courses (65%); and work readiness activities (61%).

Looking back at your high school experience, how important were the following in helping you prepare for life after high school?

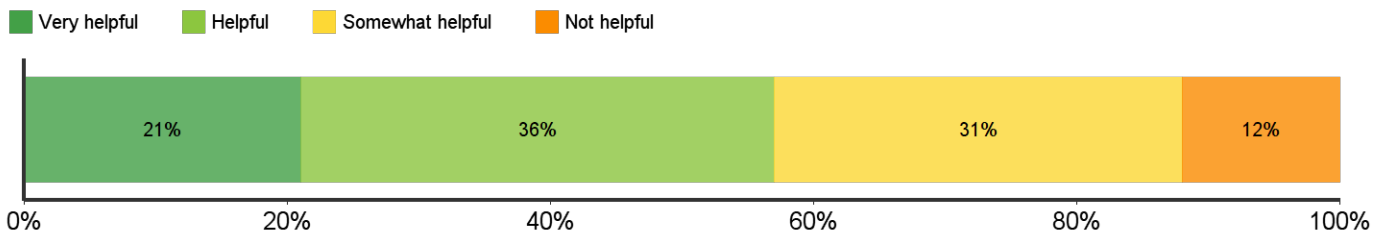
■ Not applicable (e.g., did not participate/ receive)
 ■ Very important
 ■ Important
 ■ Somewhat important
 ■ Not important



KEY FINDING: Overall, 88% of youth said their high school was "somewhat" to "very helpful" in preparing them for life after high school.

Youth were asked to reflect on additional supports they would have liked in high school to help them prepare for life after high school. The most common suggestions among youth who were NOT enrolled in postsecondary education were: more life skills classes (e.g., budgeting, taxes, apartment search, car loans and payments, home economics); more information about options besides college such as trade programs; and more career and job readiness activities.

Overall, how helpful was your school in preparing you for life after high school?



[REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS AMONG STUDENTS NOT ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION]

What more could your high school have done to help you and other students plan for and prepare for life after high school?

Actually be more involved with students and their needs.

More college visits that weren't optional.

Explore other options besides college.

Focus on different strengths. I feel like they think everyone has the same strengths and that isn't fair for people who are different.

Give a wider variety when it comes to careers.

High schools need to remind students that college and the military are not the only options. I have not once heard from my school about the trades.

I don't think they can do any more than what they did.

More life relevant electives.

More on finances and managing money.

My high school did a great job at preparing us for life after. If there was one thing I could have understood better is budgeting and getting to really understand what that means and how helpful it will be.

Nothing. High school made it easy to succeed if you applied yourself.

More classes educating students with work readiness activities. There was only one class and it was math related only.

Teach more about real life things (building credit, taxes, insurance, etc).

KEY FINDING: The most common suggestions among youth who were enrolled in postsecondary education were: more college readiness activities and assistance with college applications and financial aid; more AP, dual credit, rigorous, and advanced courses; more career exploration and job readiness activities; and more life skills activities or courses.

[REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS AMONG STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION]

What could your high school do to improve the overall assistance provided to students preparing to continue their education after high school?

1) Offer more scholarships. 2) Offer classes like Home Economics that will prepare kids on how to live outside of living with their parents (i.e. teaching them how to cook, file tax returns, write a check, etc.).

A time during school hours in which students can do scholarships.

Better and more varied electives.

Career searching should go further than just a senior project. Career fairs should be offered more often than college fairs and should be more open to the students.

Encourage them to participate in extracurriculars, and make sure they learn their time management skills so they are prepared .

Genuine, one-on-one support from adults who care about us as individuals for when we're trying to figure out what to do/where to go after high school.

Get more teachers for assisting the students in scholarships/continued education.

Have a more challenging curriculum, especially for upperclassmen.

Have classes that teach about jobs, resumes and balancing schedules. Maybe also teach harder things that make us think more or have more advanced classes.

Having more mentors.

I couldn't have graduated from a better place. The faculty did everything they could to tailor my courses to the things that I truly wanted to do. To leave one critique, I would say that college readiness courses and programs could've been more available to every kind of student, ideally for most times in the day.

It would be cool to have graduates from the high school come back and talk to the ongoing senior class. To tell them what it's like after high school, and try to get them to apply to more scholarships.

Make electives that relate to life after high school.

More dual credit classes that are more beneficial towards prerequisites of their choice of career.

They did a great job at helping us get scholarships which has been quite nice. Having more information about possible jobs would be rewarding.

Workshops/classes explaining basic life skills (how to do taxes, write emails professionally, basic cooking skills).

KEY FINDING: Youth completing the survey provided very thoughtful advice for succeeding in high school and beyond, including: working harder in school; getting better grades; procrastinating less; applying to more colleges and scholarships; taking advantage of opportunities in school, such as advanced courses, as well as extra-curricular activities and community service; asking more questions/advice and asking for help; being less stressed; and being more involved and more motivated.

If you could give one piece of advice to yourself as a 9th grader that would have helped you succeed in high school and beyond, what would you have said?

[REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS]

Aim high and fill up that community service section of that resume.

Always try your hardest and don't slack off because it all counts.

Apply for every scholarship possible and do the best in your classes that you can. It will pay off in the long run.

Ask for help whenever you feel stuck. Be it because of a class or mental illness, there are people willing and available to help you.

Ask more questions about everything related to college.

Be less procrastinating, more wise, save up some money, get a job early, stay on top of my grades, talk more to teachers and have everything in on time.

Be more involved and don't be scared to try new things.

Be yourself. Stay true to who you are and don't let anyone change it or you.

Challenging yourself when you have a built-in support system like you do in high school makes life in college 100 times easier.

Discover your bad habits now, and actively work to change them before high school is over. Going into college with a bad habit of for example ditching, or not checking your email, will be way more harmful in college than high school and they are harder to work on last minute.

Do well because it will help you in the future. Having good grades and being on task will lead you through many doors in the future.

Don't give up! Just use your resources as you go through high school and connect with your teachers and mentors.

Don't let the people around you affect your work. You can't change other people, you can only focus on changing yourself. After high school, you won't see any of these kids again. So, don't let their hurtful words and actions affect the way you see yourself. You're a smart, bright, kind person, don't let anyone tell you differently.

Focus on your spirit and your purpose. Manage your time not because you NEED to, but because it will be the most valuable skill you'll ever get.

Get involved in as much as you can, your grades don't have to be perfect, make them a priority but take advantage of extracurricular activities. And keep records of what you do.

Live in the present, but always keep your future in mind. Remember that in 4 years you will be going to where you allowed yourself to go. Yes grades matter! Get involved!

To take more AP courses to help decrease the amount of classes I need to take in college.

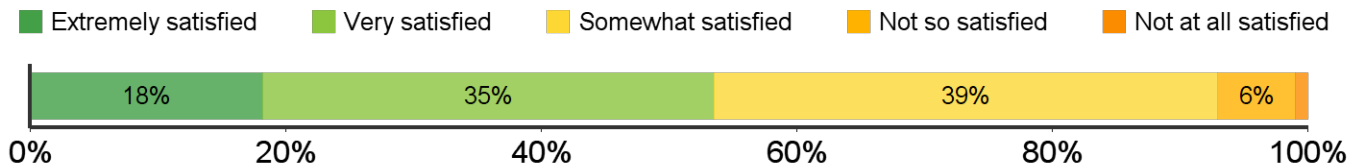
KEY FINDING: Most youth (92%) reported being "somewhat" to "extremely satisfied" with their life after high school. Youth who were enrolled in postsecondary education were more likely to be "very" or "extremely satisfied" than youth who were not enrolled (58% compared to 44%, respectively).

College was singled out as both the most rewarding and the most challenging aspect of life after high school. Other rewarding aspects included: freedom, working, independence, friends, and family. Other challenges included: money, time, work, school, social life, and moving, among others.

KEY FINDING: Most youth (92%) reported being "somewhat" to "extremely satisfied" with their life after high school. Youth who were enrolled in postsecondary education were more likely to be "very" or "extremely satisfied" than youth who were not enrolled (58% compared to 44%, respectively).

College was singled out as both the most rewarding and the most challenging aspect of life after high school. Other rewarding aspects included: freedom, working, independence, friends, and family. Other challenges included: money, time, work, school, social life, and moving, among others.

How satisfied are you currently with your life after high school?



What aspects of your life after high school have been MOST REWARDING to you?



What aspects of your life after high school have been MOST CHALLENGING to you?

