

The background of the slide is a faded, historical-style map of the Americas. It shows various geographical features, rivers, and place names in French and Spanish. Labels include 'MEXIQUE', 'G. du Mexique', 'CUBA', 'MER DES ANTILLES', 'AMER. CENTR.', 'COLOMBIE', 'MEXIQUE', 'QUITEQUATEUA', 'Callapago', 'Lima', 'Callapago', 'Froid', and 'Courant'. The map is overlaid with a dark horizontal band containing the main title.

Educational Values and Interests

Acton Public School Committee
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Presentation

January 28, 2010

Our Changing Demographic Study Group Participants

Liza Huber, Director Of Pupil Services

Marie Altieri, Director of Personnel

Craig Hardimon, RJG Principal

Andrew Shen, RJG Assistant Principal

James Marcotte, ABRHS Assistant Principal

Kellie Carter, RJG Classroom Teacher

Diane Telicki, ABRHS Classroom teacher

Stephen Hitzrot, School Counselor/Chairperson

Ed Kaufman, Merriam Principal

Christine Price, Conant Principal

Matthew Kidder, Out-of-District Coordinator

Carol Huebner, Early Childhood Coordinator

Mary Emmons, Pupil Services Coordinator

Bart Wendell, District Consultant

Educational Values and Interests

A beginning...A Grass Roots Effort...

- Anecdotal Information
- Structural and Institutional Shifts
- The ABRSD Leadership Institute

Educational Values and Interests

Central Questions:

- Does the data help us identify themes (interesting information about shifts in community priorities)?
- Does the data require action steps?

Educational Values and Interests

Understanding the Data

- Looking for recognizable and meaningful patterns
- Learning about possible new trends
- Only a beginning to understanding
- Identifying community values and priorities for our schools

Educational Values and Interests

Discussion Questions:


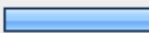
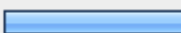




- What constitutes a quality education?
- What constitutes a balanced education?
- What are the areas of congruency and conflict for identified areas?
- Questions that give us food for thought?
- Forums for further discussion?

Educational Values and Interests

- The Data -



Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		10.1%	113
Agree		26.8%	300
Somewhat Agree		32.8%	368
No Opinion		1.5%	17
Somewhat Disagree		14.3%	160
Disagree		10.1%	113
Strongly Disagree		4.5%	50
answered question			1,121
skipped question			188

Question # 35:

I consider standardized test scores to be very important for measuring the academic success of the students and of the school's efforts to educate students.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	11.4%	128
Agree	20.9%	235
Somewhat Agree	24.6%	277
No Opinion	17.4%	196
Somewhat Disagree	11.7%	132
Disagree	9.1%	102
Strongly Disagree	4.8%	54
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 39:
The school district should use international comparisons when reviewing the district's performance and priorities.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	13.9%	156
Agree	21.3%	239
Somewhat Agree	26.2%	294
No Opinion	6.0%	68
Somewhat Disagree	14.5%	163
Disagree	13.4%	151
Strongly Disagree	4.7%	53
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 40:

I am most concerned with my child's ability to be competitive in being admitted into a top tier college or university.

Educational Values and Interests - **The Aggregate**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	4.6%	52
Agree	17.3%	194
Somewhat Agree	27.1%	305
No Opinion	9.1%	102
Somewhat Disagree	27.0%	303
Disagree	11.6%	130
Strongly Disagree	3.4%	38
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 42:

Our schools have had a long history of success and achievement, and we should not make any significant changes.



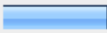

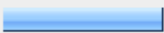


Educational Values and Interests - **The Aggregate**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	19.3%	217
Agree	21.4%	241
Somewhat Agree	27.5%	309
No Opinion	9.6%	108
Somewhat Disagree	12.8%	144
Disagree	6.5%	73
Strongly Disagree	2.8%	32
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 43:

Our community (parents, teachers, students) has become too concerned with grades and academic performance at the cost of creating a balanced development (social health, emotional wellness) of our students.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree 	8.5%	95
Agree 	15.8%	178
Somewhat Agree 	18.2%	205
No Opinion 	9.7%	109
Somewhat Disagree 	28.2%	317
Disagree 	14.4%	162
Strongly Disagree 	5.2%	58
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 44:

It is important for the school district to increase its emphasis on high academic performance.

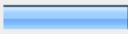
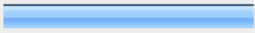
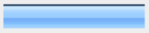




Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	14.3%	161
Agree	39.3%	442
Somewhat Agree	29.7%	334
No Opinion	3.8%	43
Somewhat Disagree	7.7%	87
Disagree	3.6%	41
Strongly Disagree	1.4%	16
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 45:

Athletics can play as important a role as academics in positively shaping a student's potential.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree 	22.2%	250
Agree 	45.2%	508
Somewhat Agree 	25.1%	282
No Opinion 	1.9%	21
Somewhat Disagree 	3.7%	42
Disagree 	1.1%	12
Strongly Disagree 	0.8%	9
<i>answered question</i>		1,124
<i>skipped question</i>		185

Question # 46:

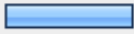
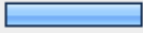
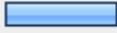




Performing and fine arts can play as important a role as academics in positively shaping a student's potential.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	22.3%	251
Agree	48.0%	539
Somewhat Agree	23.6%	265
No Opinion	1.7%	19
Somewhat Disagree	3.4%	38
Disagree	0.7%	8
Strongly Disagree	0.4%	4
answered question		1,124
skipped question		185

Question # 47:
Extracurricular programs can play as important a role as academics in positively shaping a student's potential.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

		Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree		22.8%	256
Agree		24.2%	272
Somewhat Agree		19.9%	224
No Opinion		16.3%	183
Somewhat Disagree		8.1%	91
Disagree		6.0%	67
Strongly Disagree		2.8%	31
answered question			1,124
skipped question			185

Question # 53:

I am concerned that the standards of “excellence” at AB have gone so high that students who would be considered very strong in other districts are viewed as mediocre.

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

		Response Percent	Response Count
Of greatest importance		40.9%	443
Important		52.5%	569
Useful but not essential		4.5%	49
Neither useful nor negative		1.0%	11
Not useful		0.1%	1
Not important		0.1%	1
Educationally harmful		0.1%	1
No opinion		0.8%	9
<i>answered question</i>			1,084
<i>skipped question</i>			225

Question # 61:
Development of social and relational skills (peer relationships, self-esteem, self-expression). I consider this feature to be:

Educational Values and Interests - The Aggregate

	Response Percent	Response Count
Of greatest importance	2.6%	27
Important	16.6%	175
Useful but not essential	19.2%	202
Neither useful nor negative	9.5%	100
Not useful	27.4%	289
Not important	3.6%	38
Educationally harmful	18.9%	199
No opinion	2.3%	24
<i>answered question</i>		1,054
<i>skipped question</i>		255

Question # 77:
Focusing curriculum on high academic success through increased homework, I consider this feature to be:

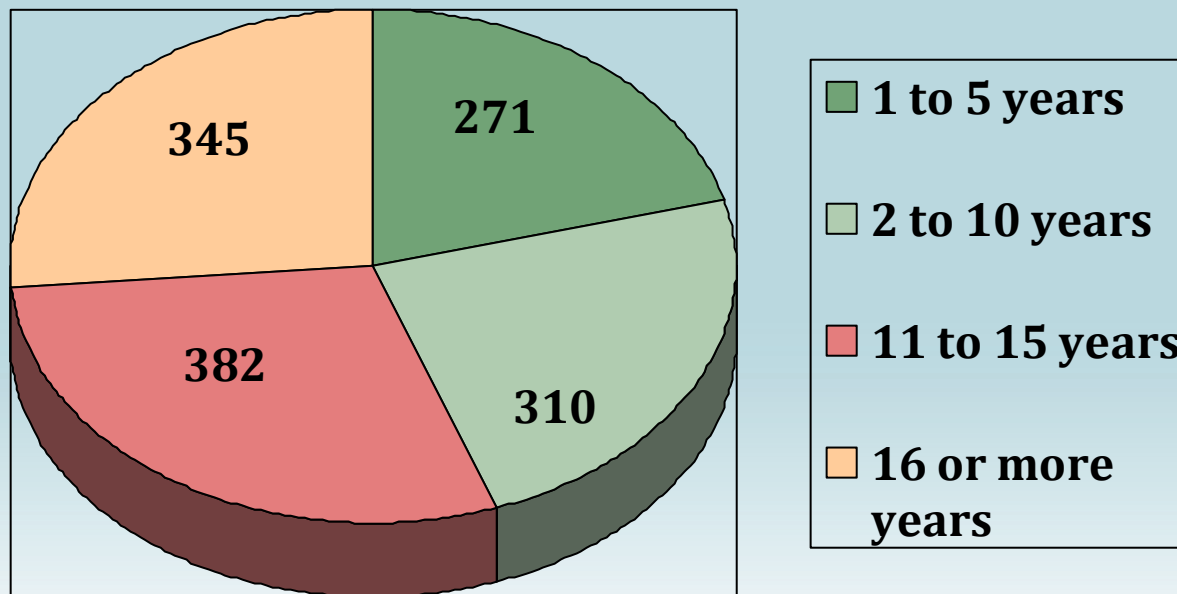
Educational Values and Interests

- The Disaggregate -



Educational Values and Interests

The Data: Time in Acton - Boxborough

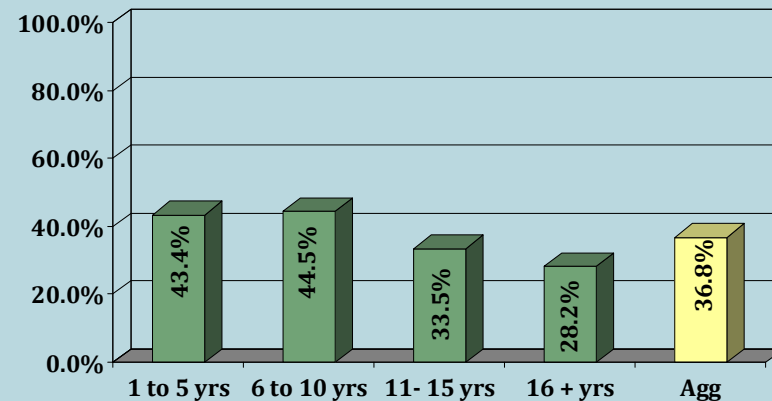


Educational Values and Interests - Time in AB

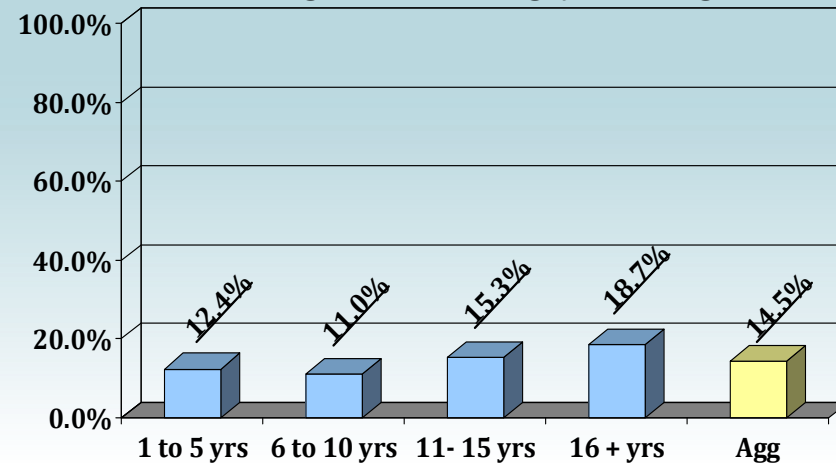
Question # 35:

I consider standardized test scores to be very important for measuring the academic success of the students and of the school's efforts to educate students.

Agree/Strongly Agree



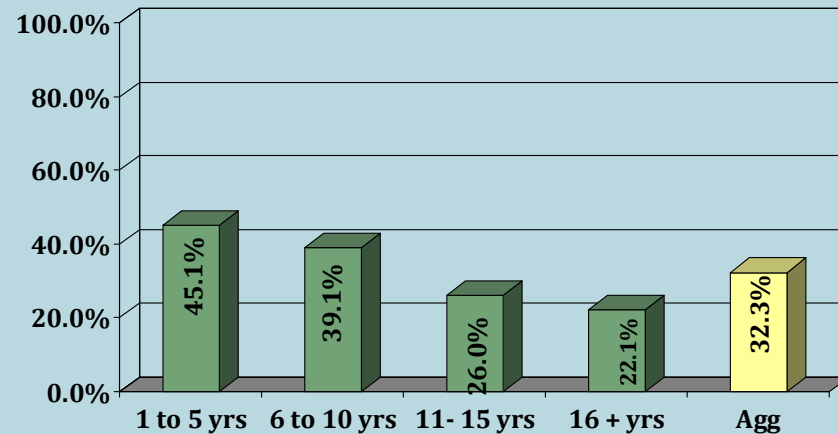
Disagree/Strongly Disagree



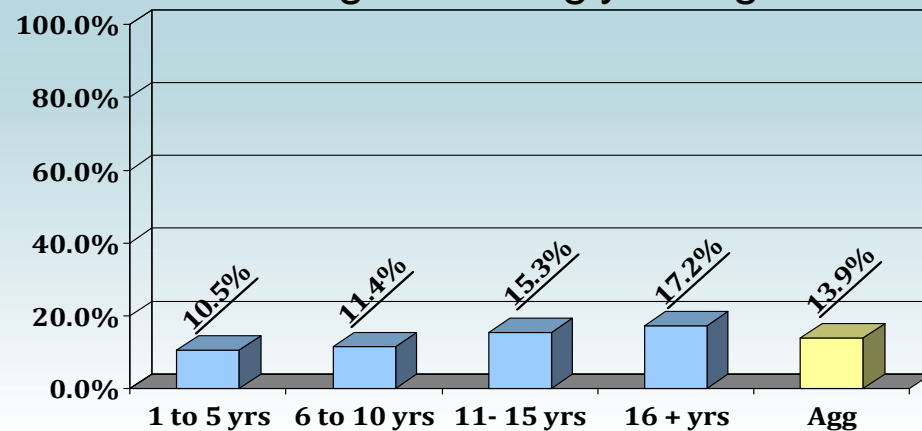
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Question # 39:
The school district should use international comparisons when reviewing the district's performance and priorities.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

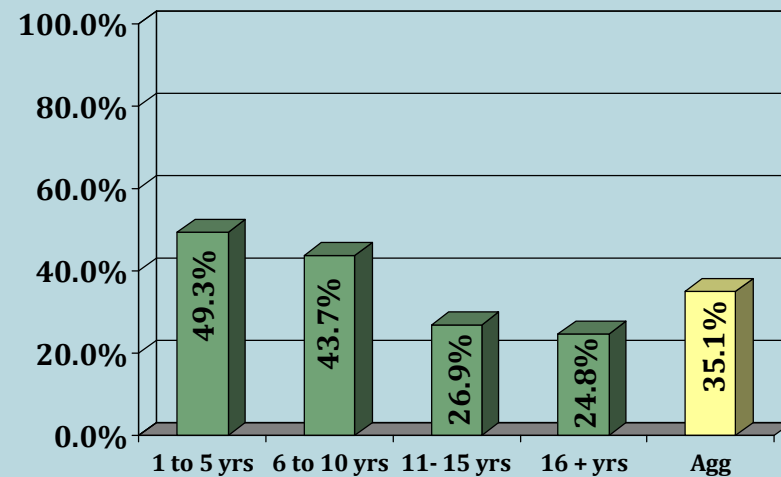


Educational Values and Interests - Time in AB

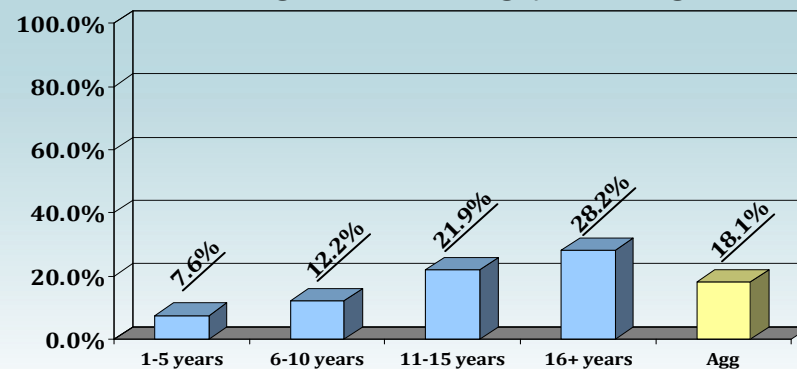
Question # 40:

I am most concerned with my child's ability to be competitive in being admitted into a top tier college or university.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

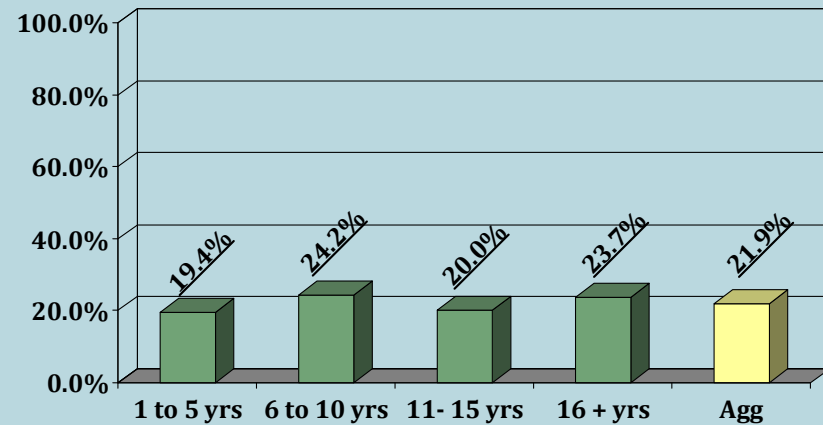


Educational Values and Interests - Time in AB

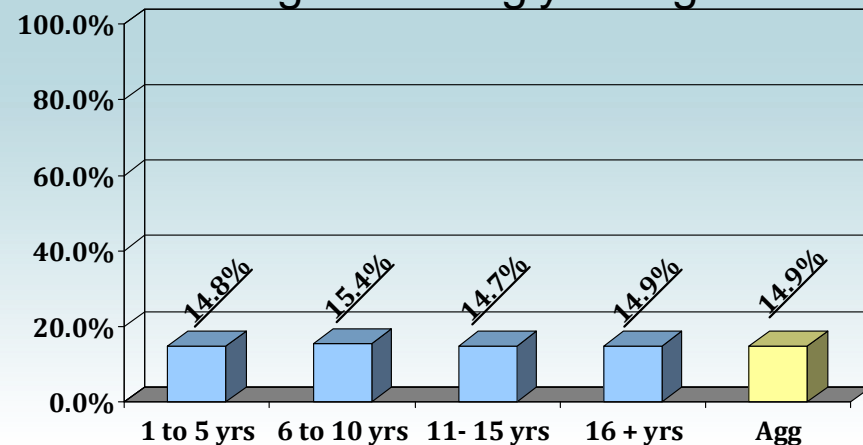
Question # 42:

Our schools have had a long history of success and achievement, and we should not make any significant changes.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

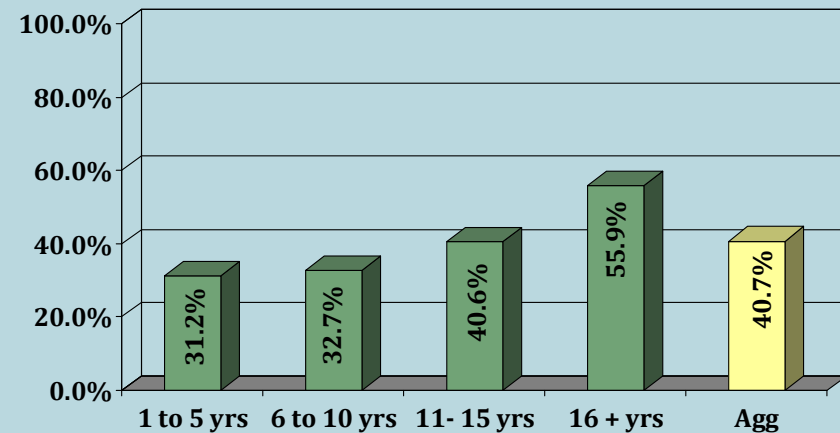


Educational Values and Interests - Time in AB

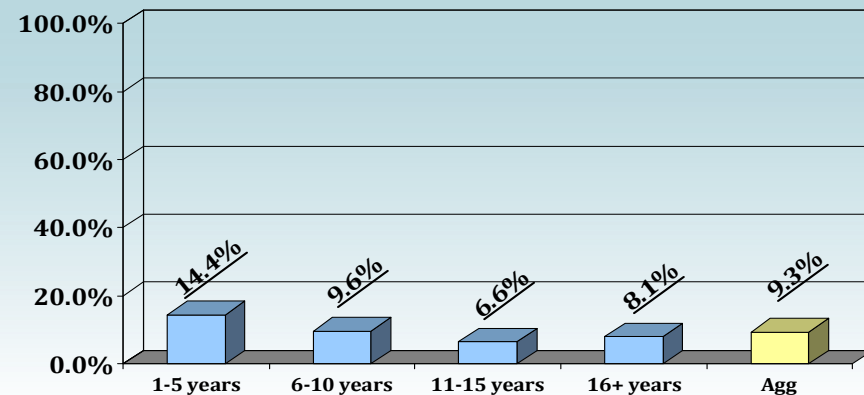
Question # 43:

Our community (parents, teachers, students) has become too concerned with grades and academic performance at the cost of creating a balanced development (social health, emotional wellness) of our students.

Agree/Strongly Agree



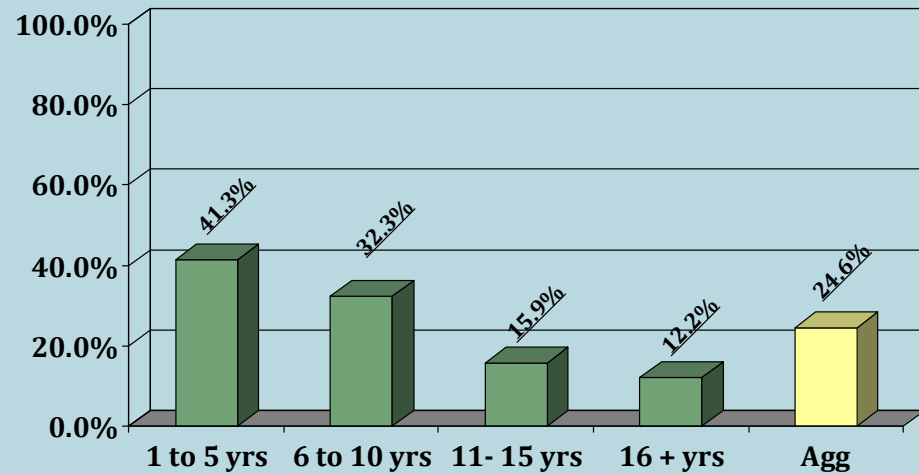
Disagree/Strongly Disagree



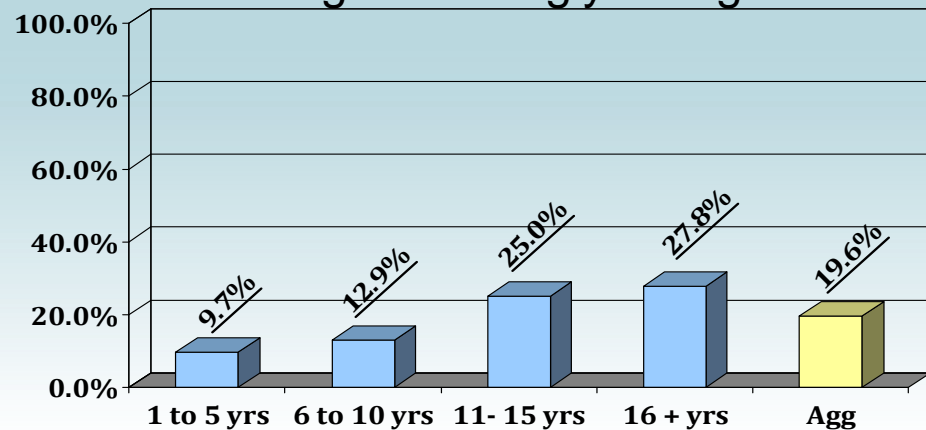
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Question # 44:
It is important for the school district to increase its emphasis on high academic performance.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

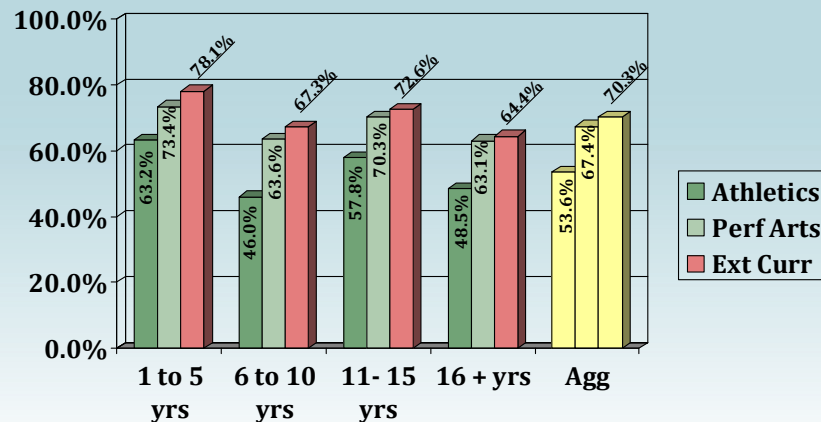


Educational Values and Interests - Time in AB

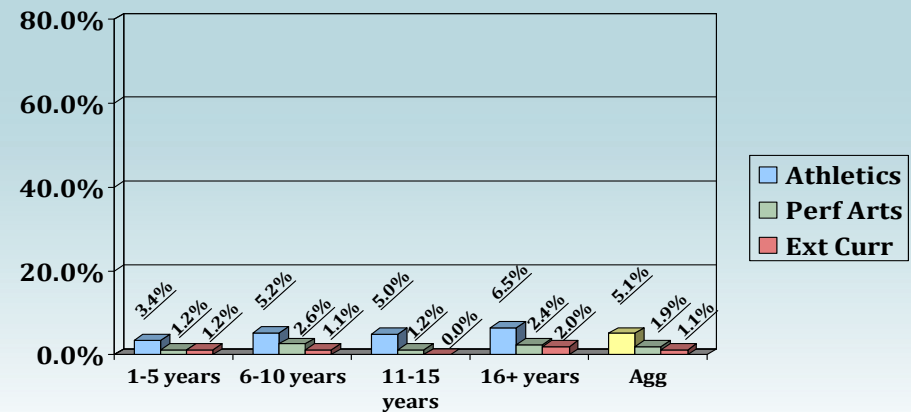
Question # 45, 46, 47:

Athletics, Performing Arts, and Extracurricular programs can play as important a role as academics in positively shaping a student's potential

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

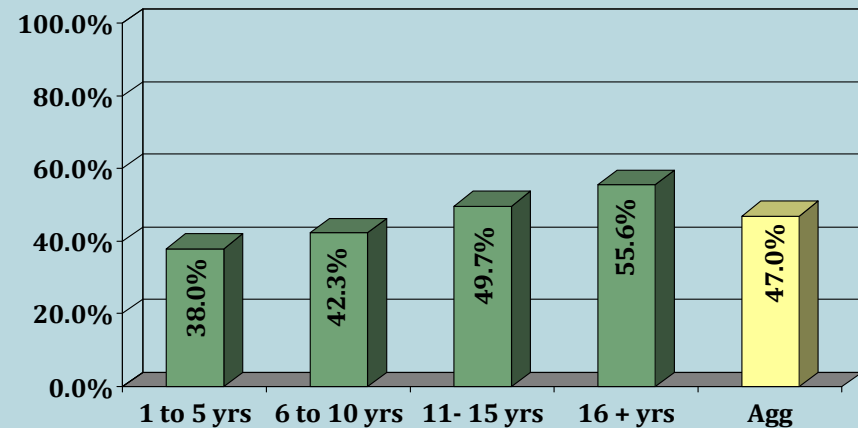


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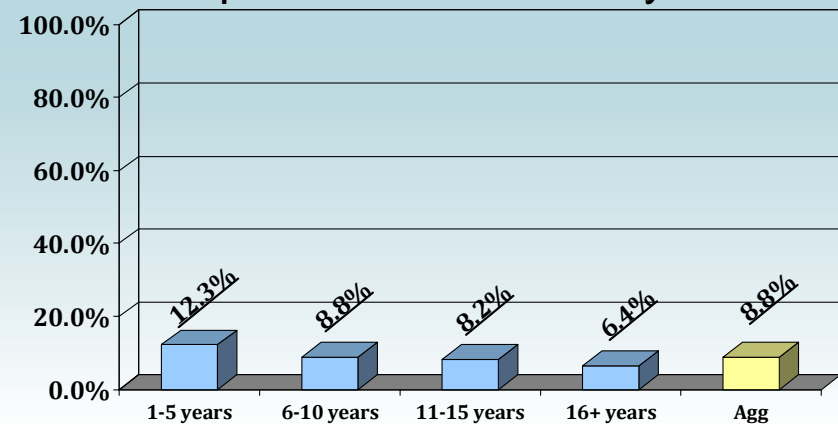
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Important/Of Greatest Importance



Not Important/Educationally Harmful

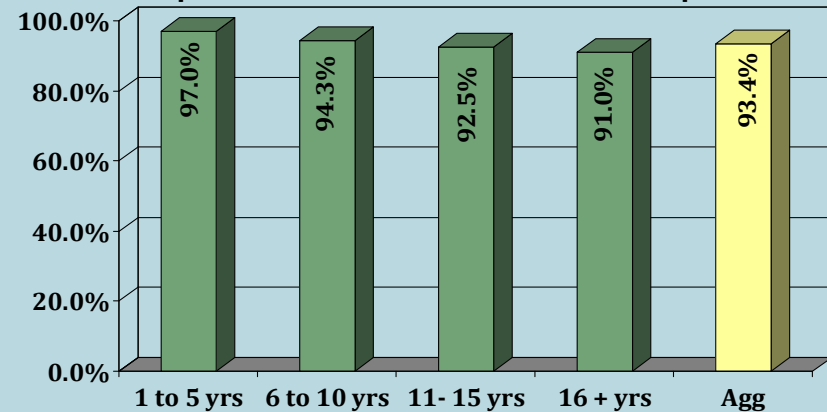


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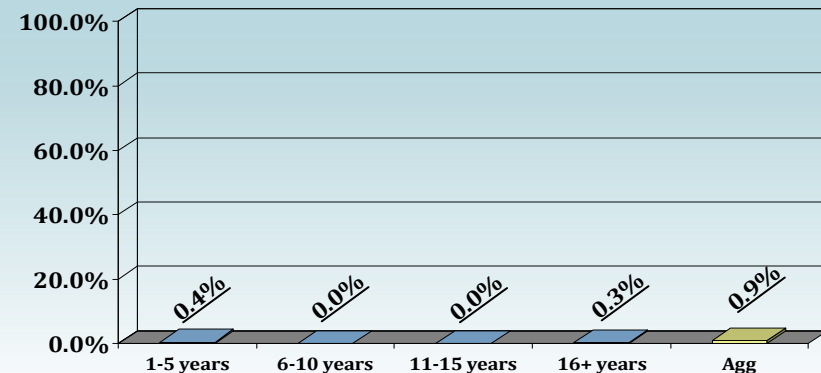
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Important / Of Greatest Importance



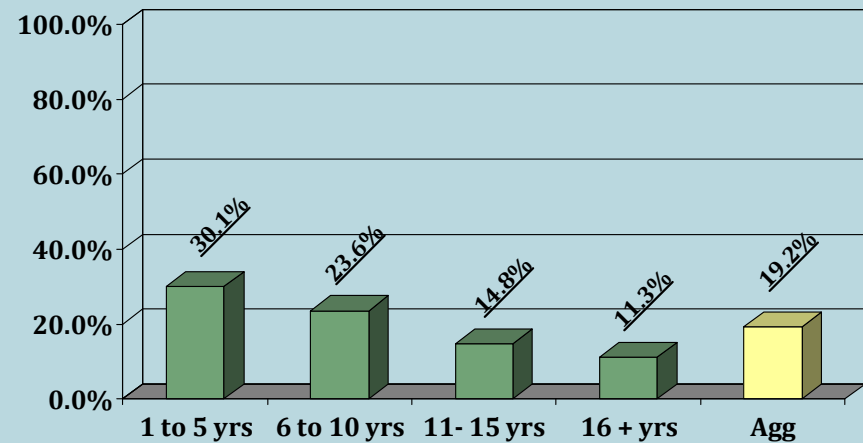
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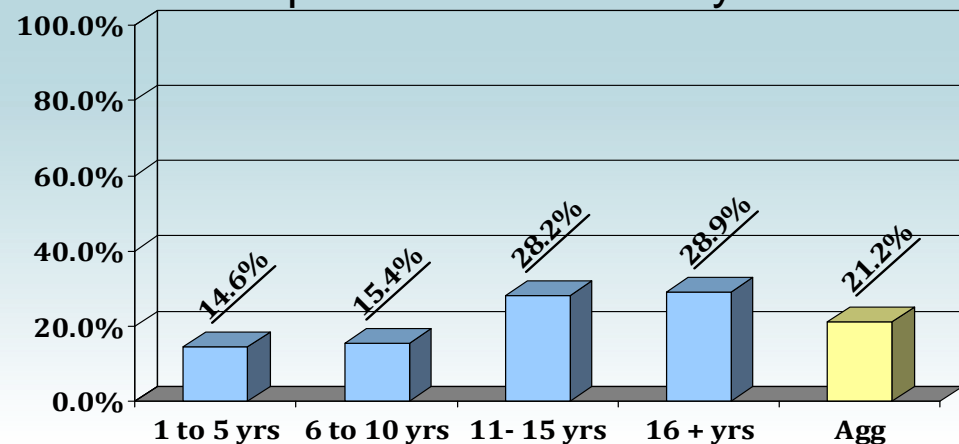
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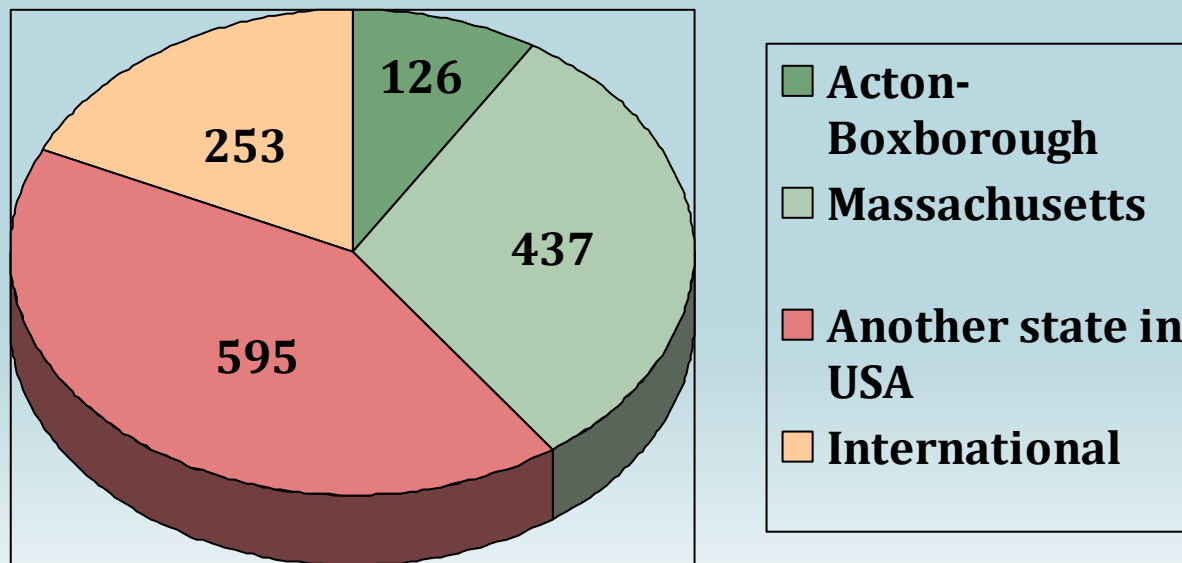


Not Important/Educationally Harmful



Educational Values and Interests

The Data: Educational Background

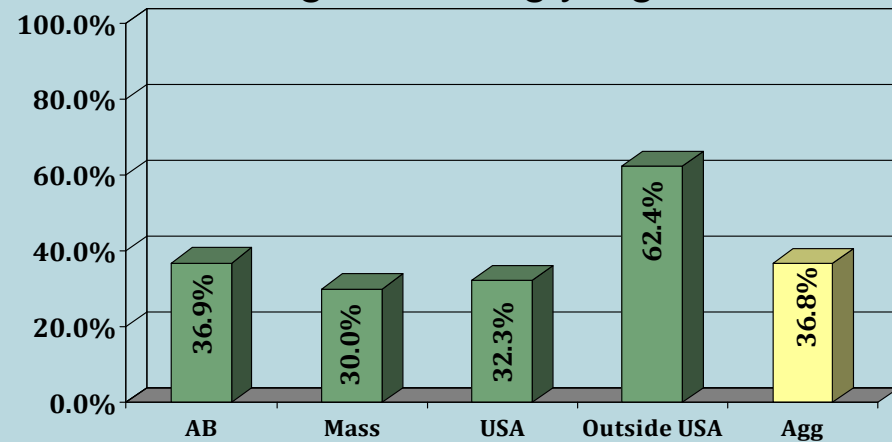


Educational Values and Interests

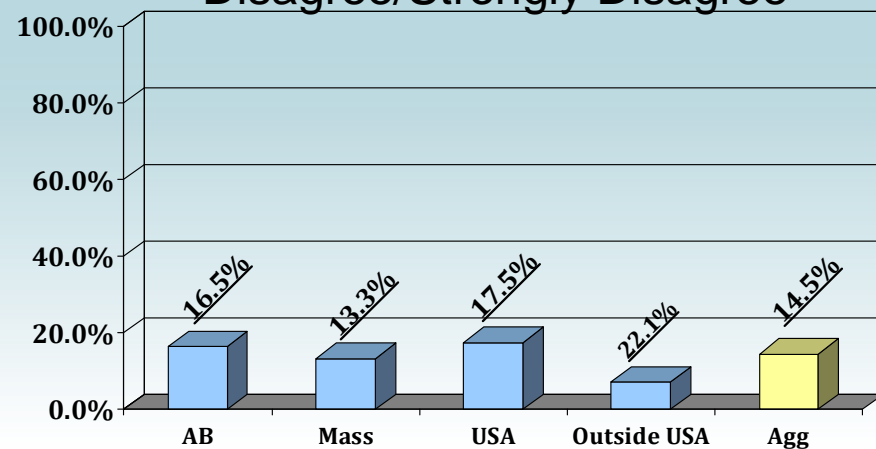
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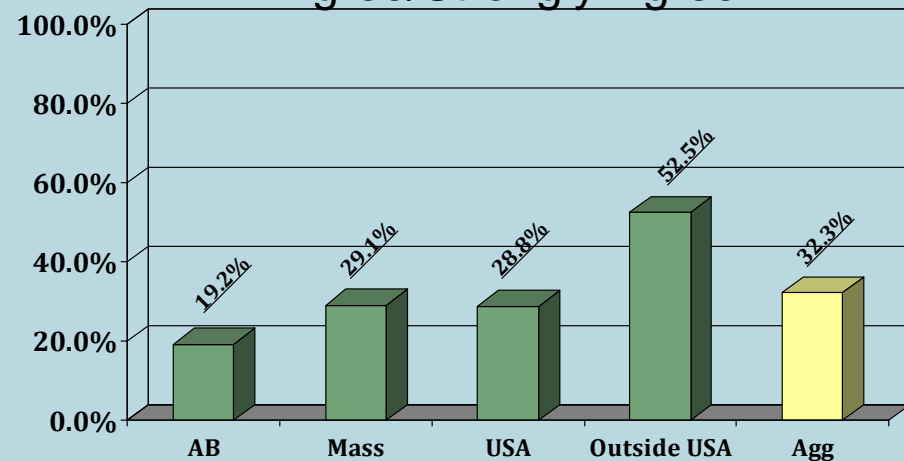


Educational Values and Interests

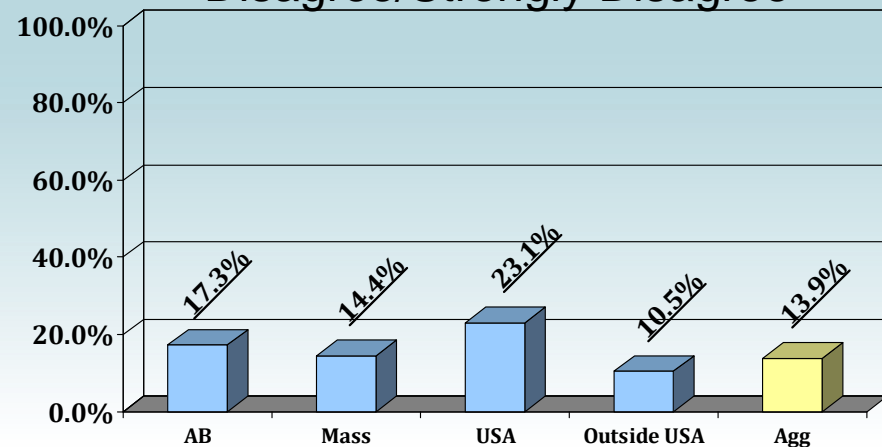
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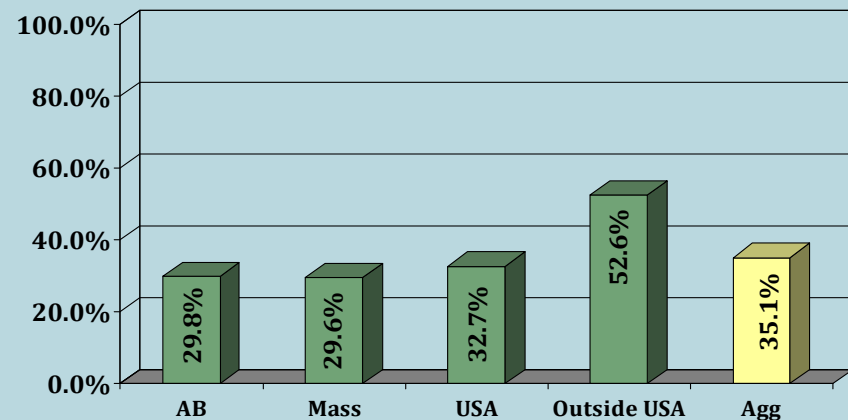
Educational Values and Interests

Educational Background

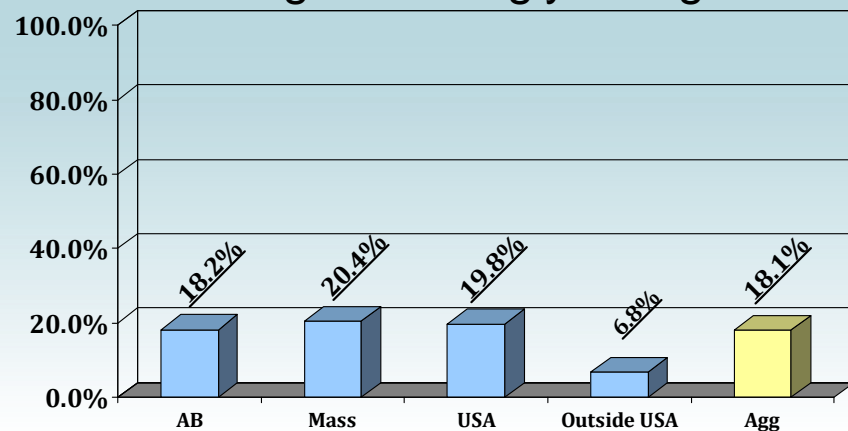
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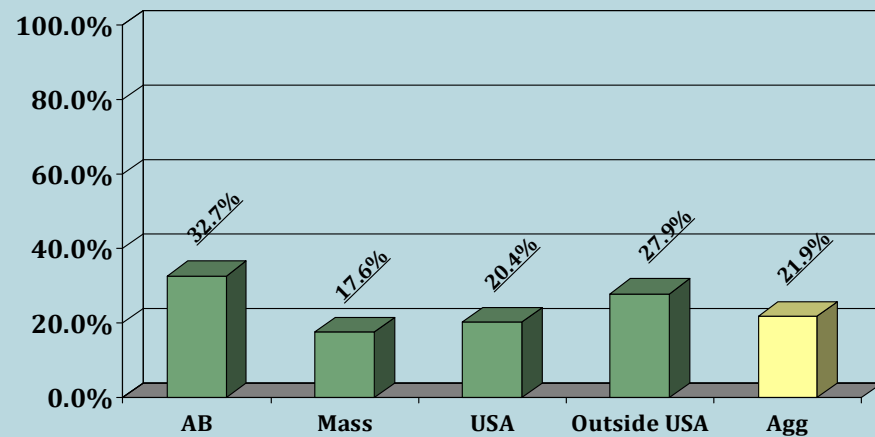


Educational Values and Interests

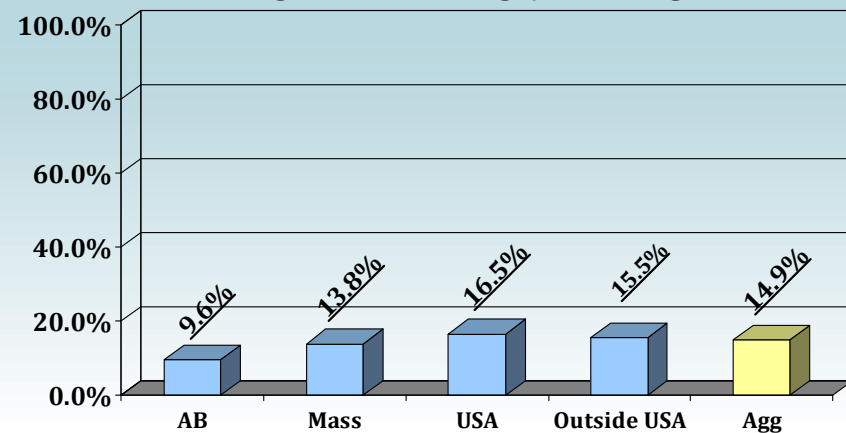
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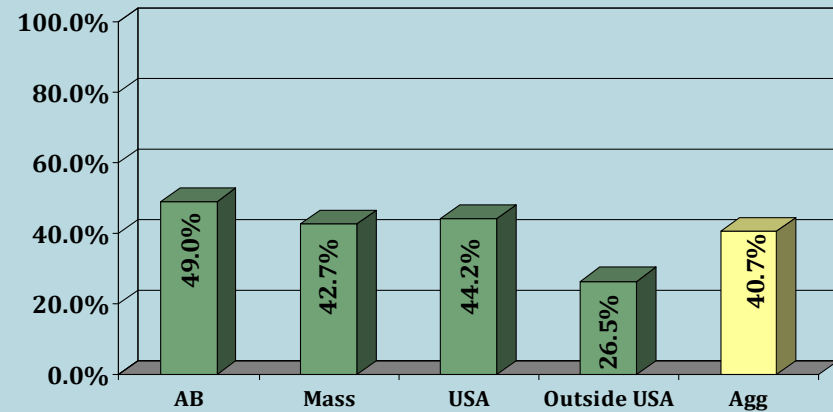


Educational Values and Interests

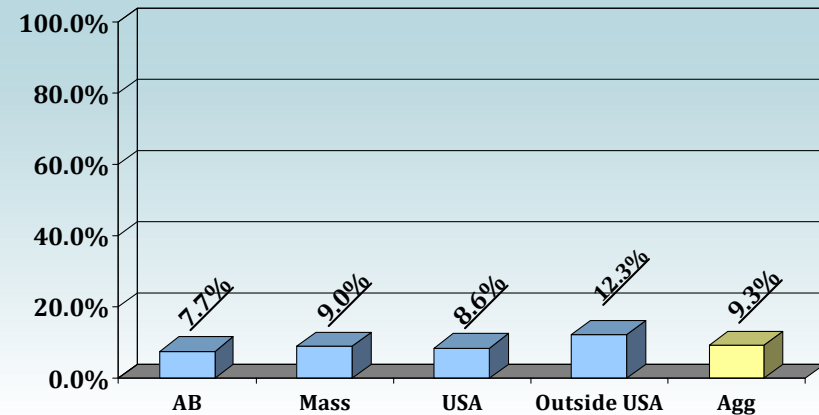
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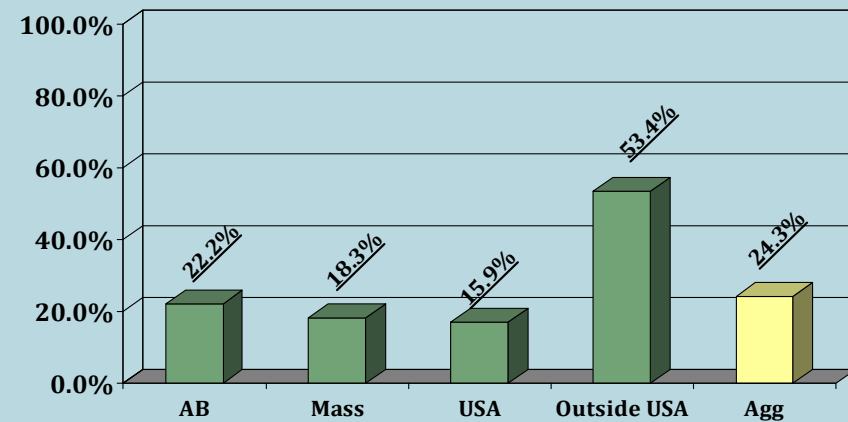


Educational Values and Interests

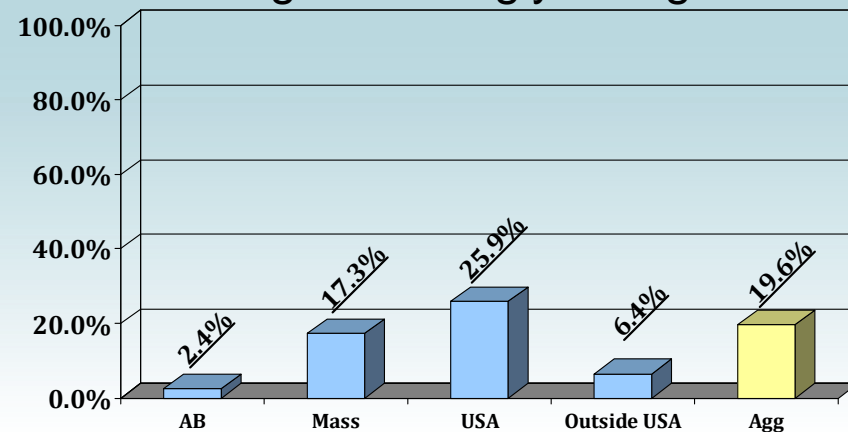
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Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



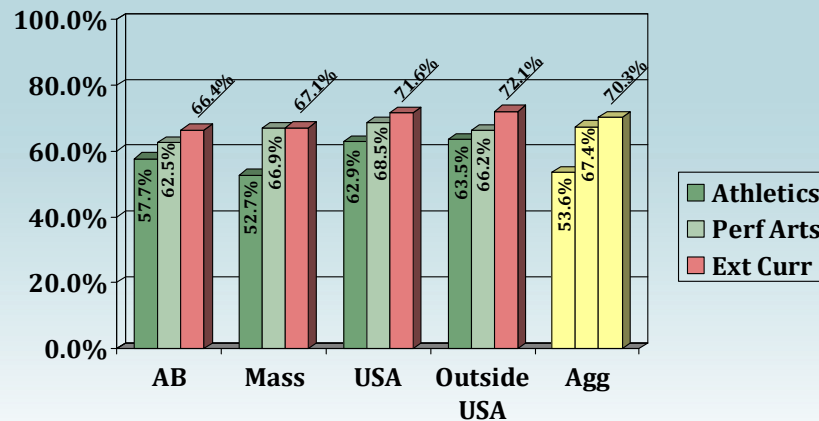
Educational Values and Interests

Educational Background

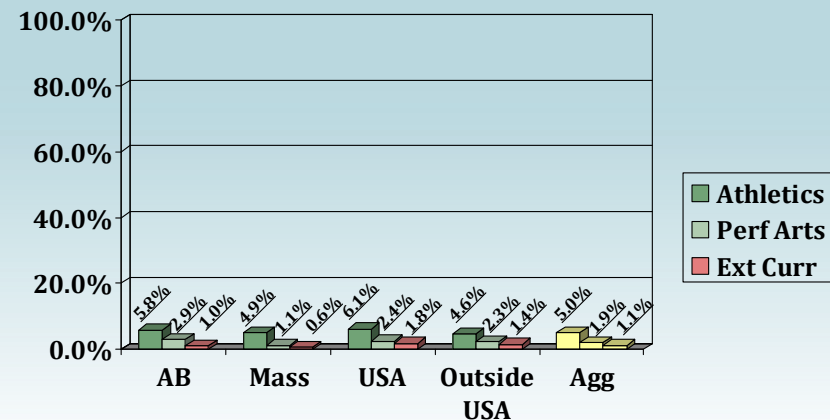
Question # 45, 46, 47:

Athletics, Performing Arts, and Extracurricular programs can play as important a role as academics in positively shaping a student's potential.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



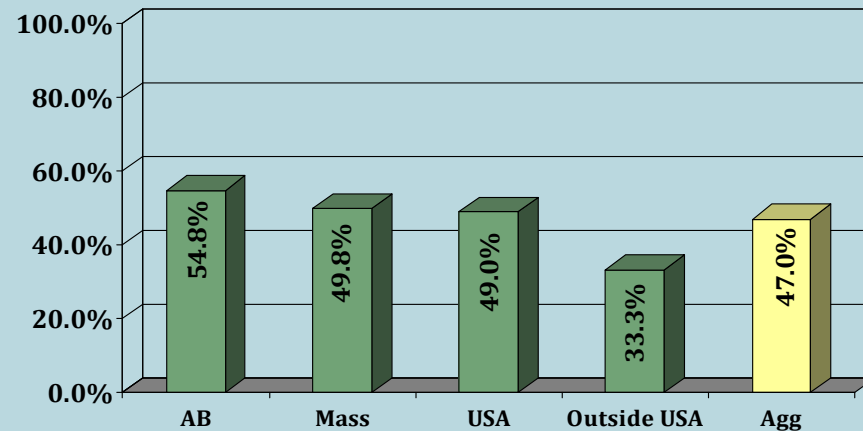
Educational Values and Interests

Educational Background

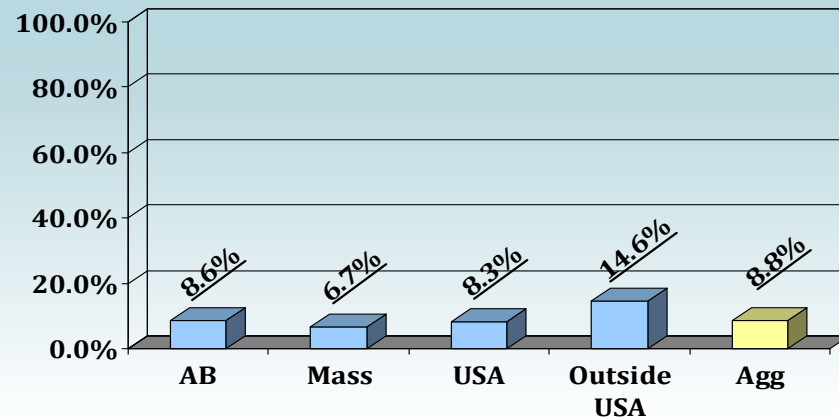
Question # 53:

I am concerned that the standards of “excellence” at AB have gone so high that students who would be considered very strong in other districts are viewed as mediocre.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

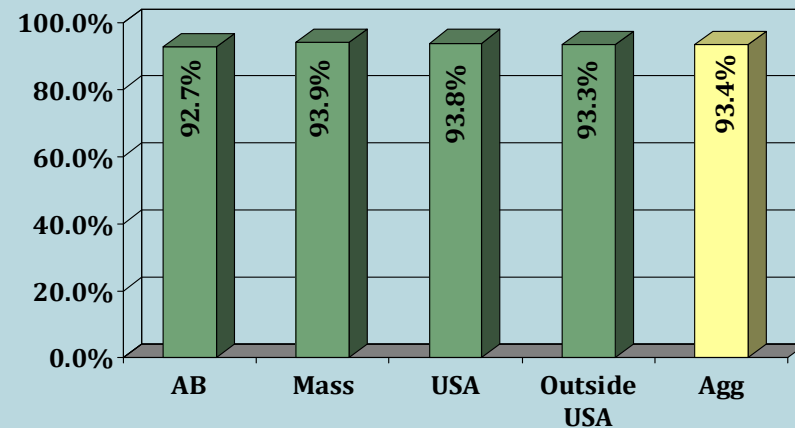


Educational Values and Interests

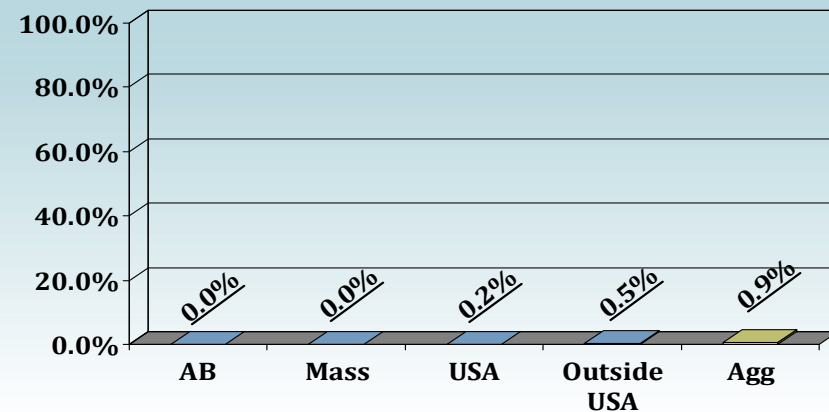
Educational Background

Question # 61:
Development of social and relational skills (peer relationships, self-esteem, self-expression). I consider this feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance



Important/Of Greatest Importance

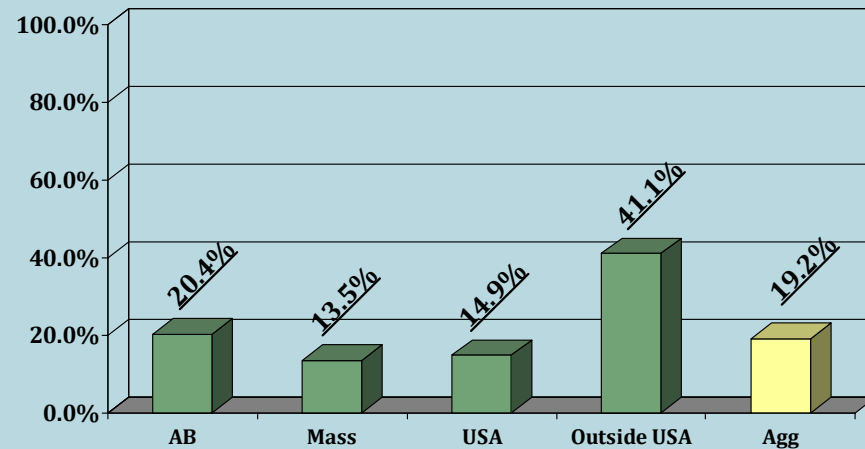


Educational Values and Interests

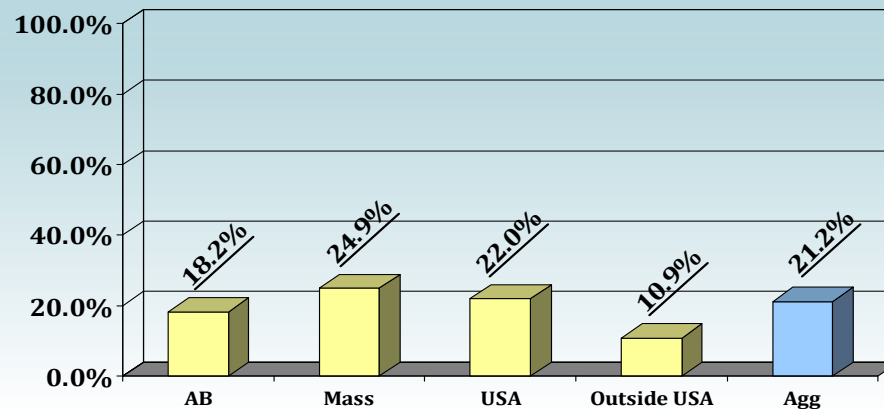
Educational Background

Question # 77:
Focusing curriculum on high academic success through increased homework, I consider this feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance

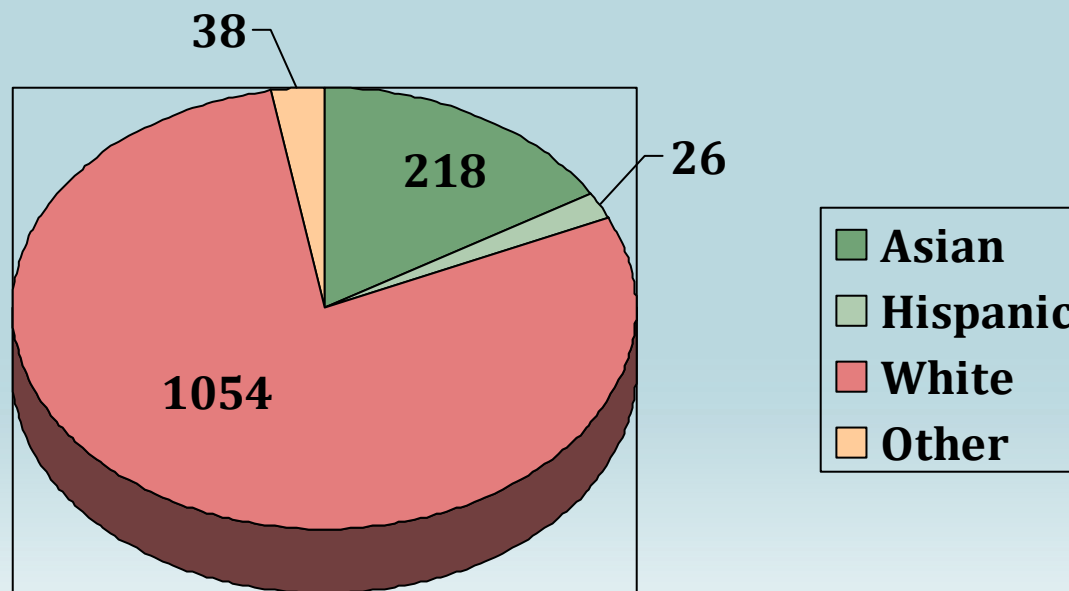


Important/Of Greatest Importance



Educational Values and Interests

The Data: Race and Ethnicity



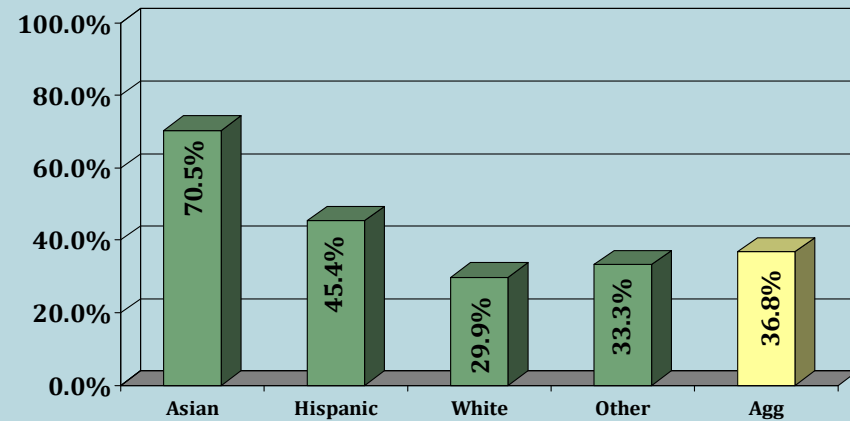
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

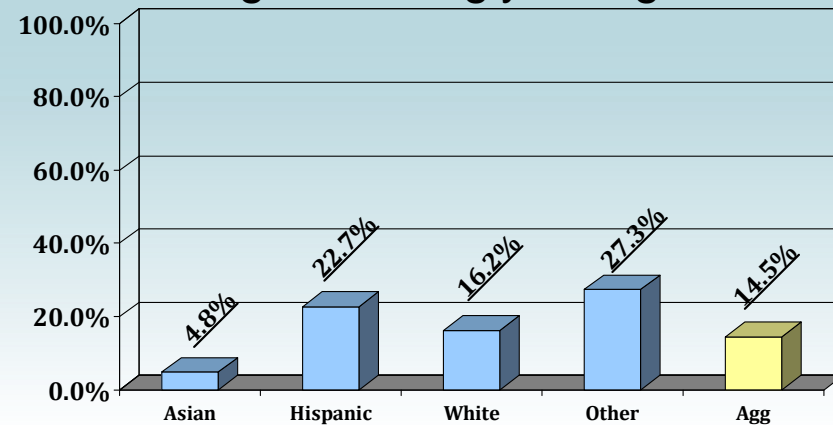
Question # 35:

I consider standardized test scores to be very important for measuring the academic success of the students and of the school's efforts to educate students.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

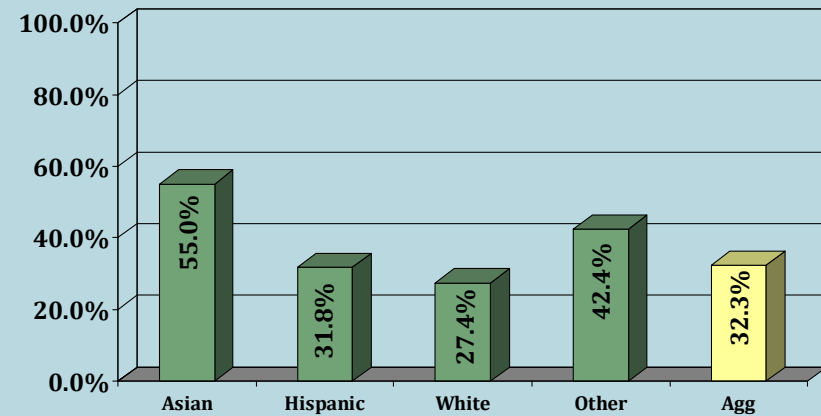


Educational Values and Interests

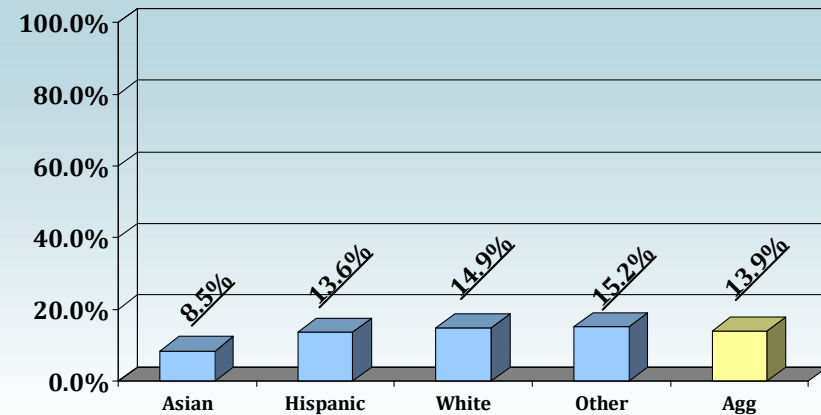
Race and Ethnicity

Question # 39:
The school district should use international comparisons when reviewing the district's performance and priorities.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



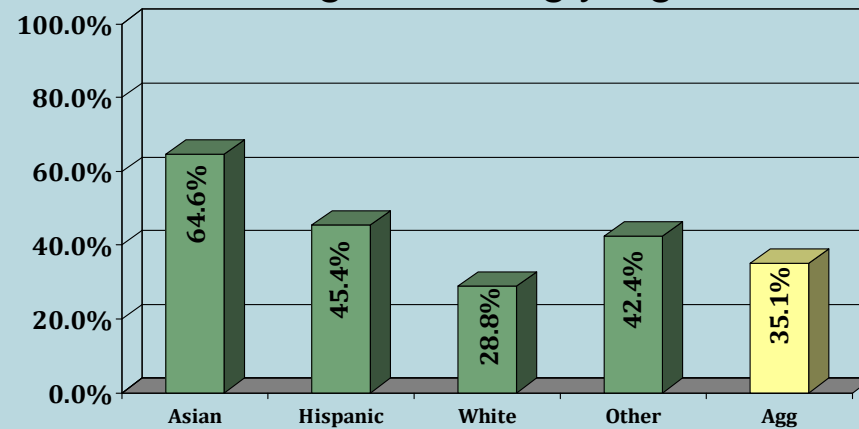
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

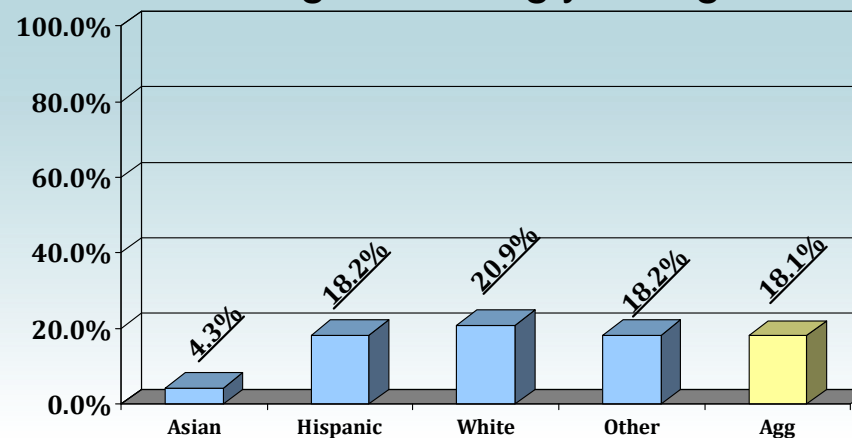
Question # 40:

I am most concerned with my child's ability to be competitive in being admitted into a top tier college or university.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



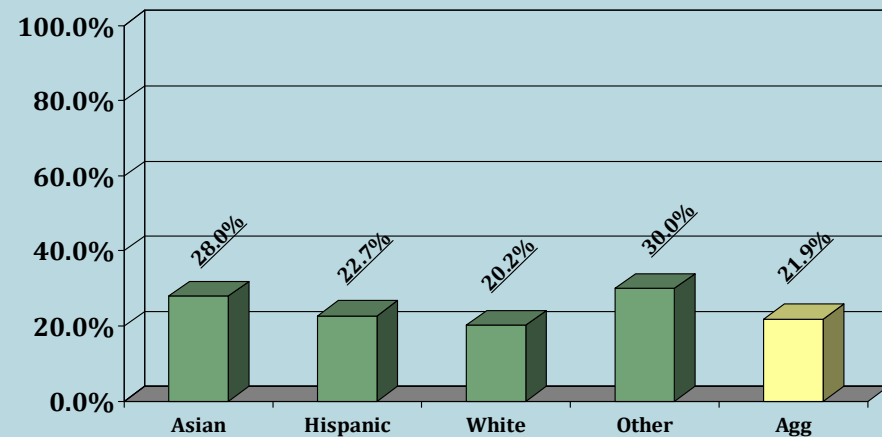
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

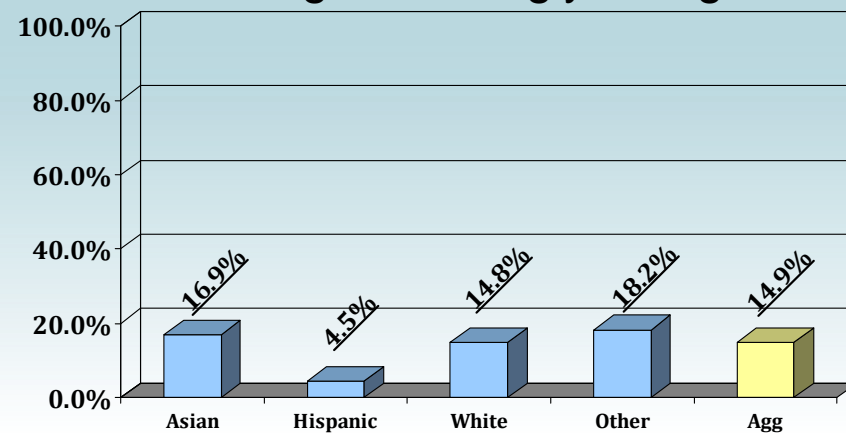
Question # 42:

Our schools have had a long history of success and achievement, and we should not make any significant changes.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



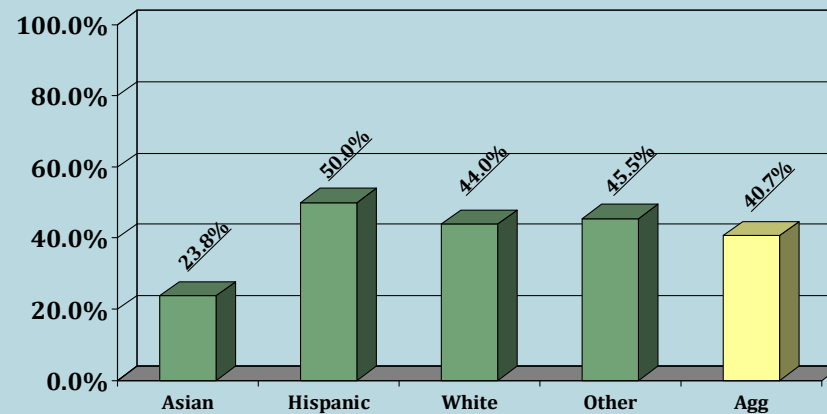
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

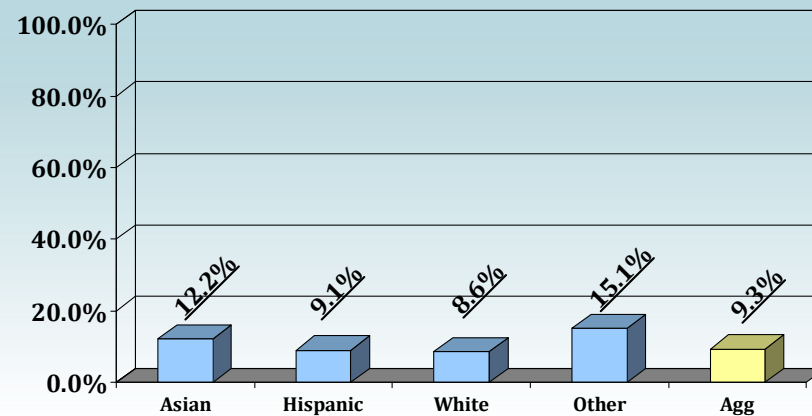
Question # 43:

Our community (parents, teachers, students) has become too concerned with grades and academic performance at the cost of creating a balanced development (social health, emotional wellness) of our students.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



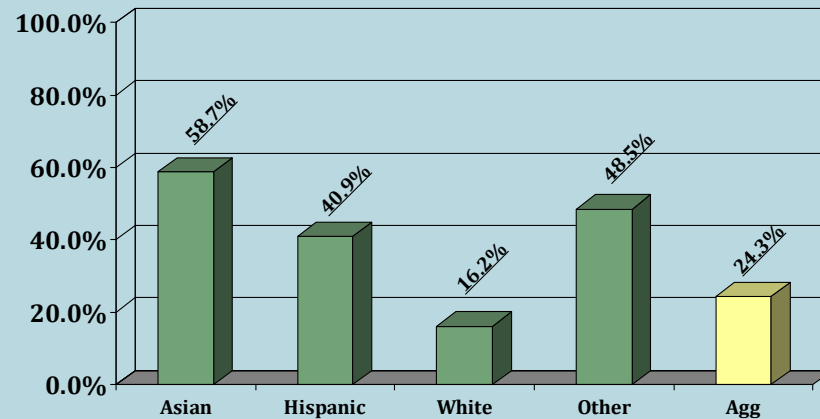
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

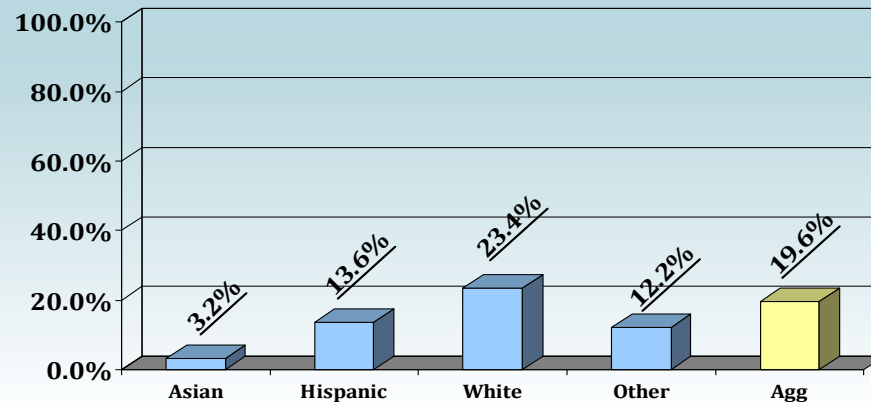
Question # 44:

It is important for the school district to increase its emphasis on high academic performance.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



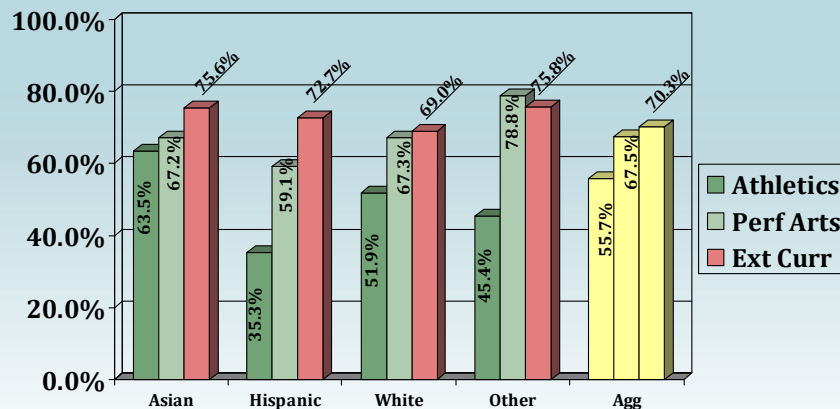
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

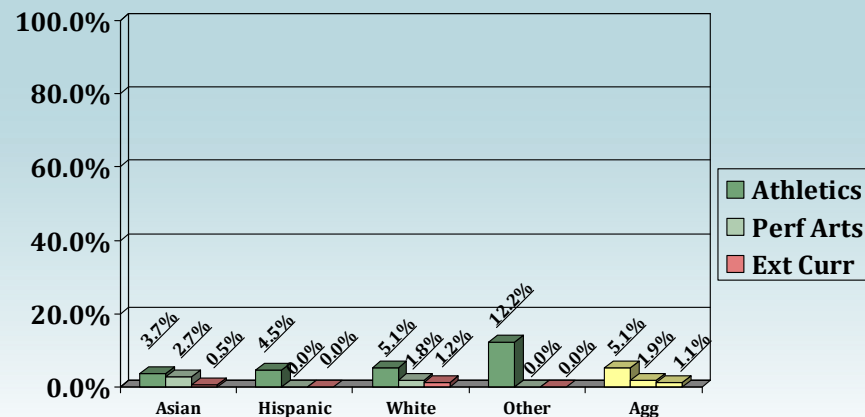
Question # 45, 46, 47:

Athletics, Performing Arts, and Extracurricular programs can play as important a role as academics in positively shaping a student's potential.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



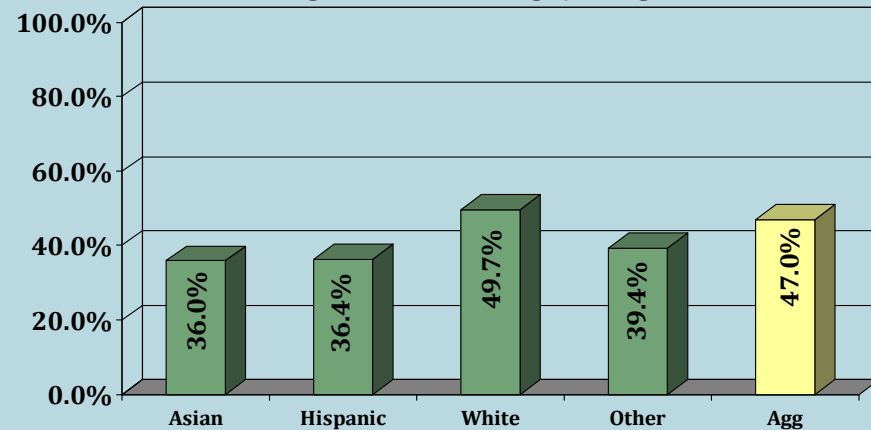
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

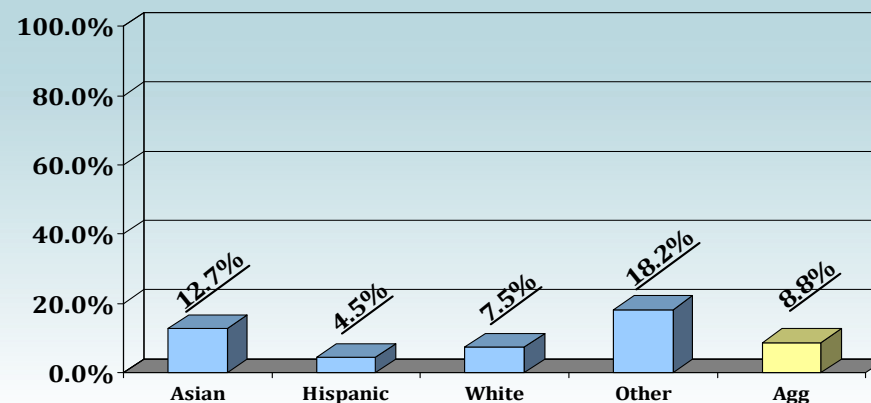
Question # 53:

I am concerned that the standards of “excellence” at AB have gone so high that students who would be considered very strong in other districts are viewed as mediocre.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



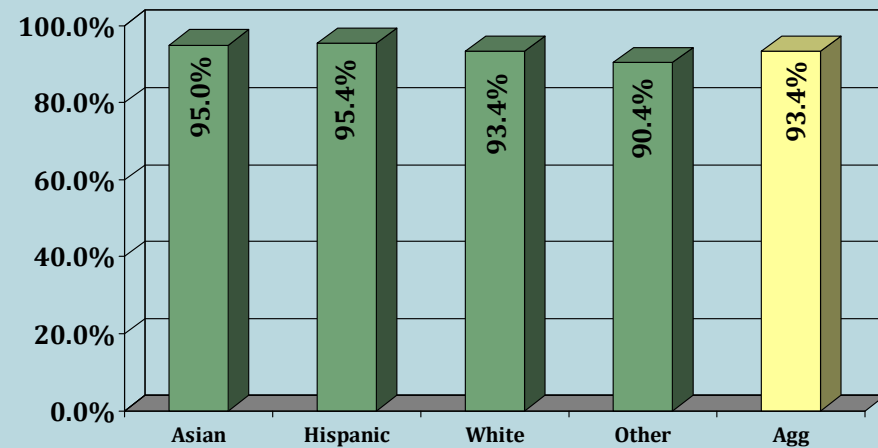
Educational Values and Interests

Race and Ethnicity

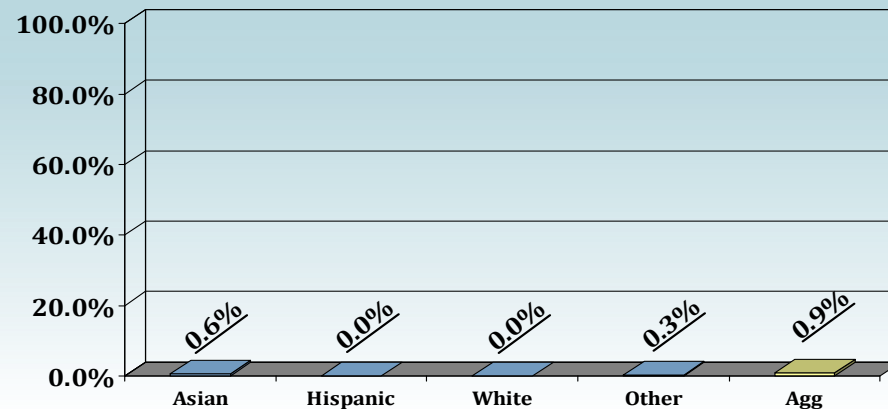
Question # 61:

Development of social and relational skills (peer relationships, self-esteem, self-expression). I consider this feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance



Not Important/Educationally Harmful

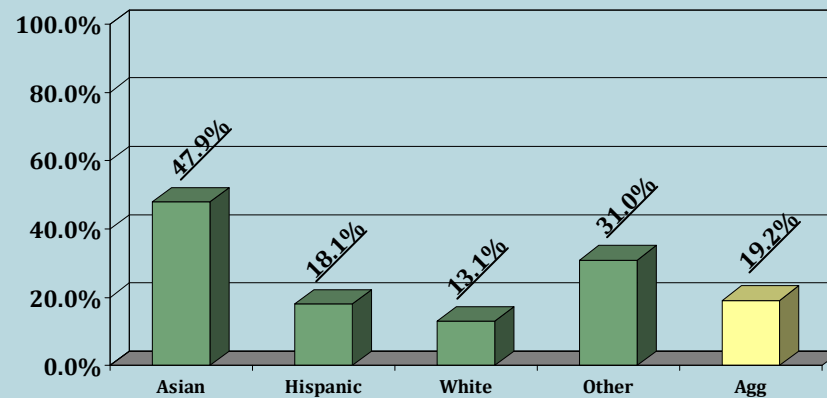


Educational Values and Interests

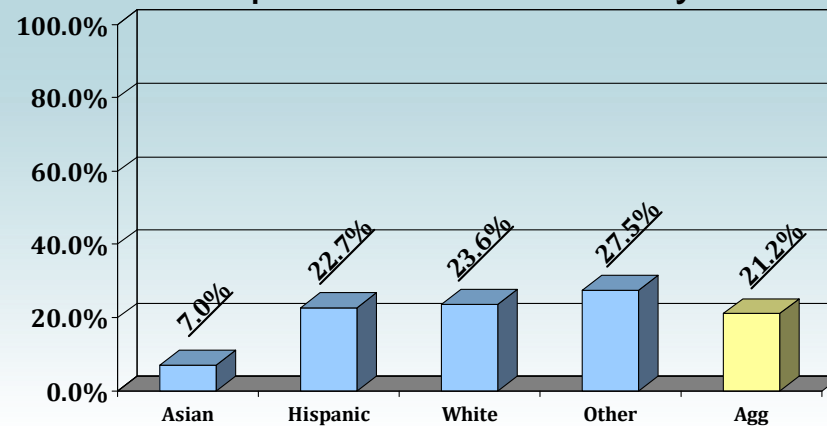
Race and Ethnicity

Question # 77:
Focusing curriculum on high academic success through increased homework, I consider this feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance



Not Important/Educationally Harmful



Educational Values and Interests

Educational Values and Interests

- The Comments -

Educational Values and Interests

Comments on comments

- Engrossing
- Thought provoking
- Deeply personal
- Anecdotal
- But.....

Educational Values and Interests

Comments codes

1. References to demographic shifts (racial, ethnic, etc.)
[18 comments]
2. “Average” student in AB would be top tier elsewhere
[15 comments]
3. Ideas about how academic achievement should be measured (what defines success)
[52 comments]
4. References to the impact of academics on stress and emotional well-being
[36 comments]
5. Desire for increase academic rigor, gifted and talented programs
[25 comments]

Educational Values and Interests

Comments codes

6. Current academic standards and expectations are too high
[25 comments]
7. Overall strong satisfaction with schools
[47 comments]
8. “Other” – comments not relating to issues at hand
[136 comments]
9. Comments about level of competitive atmosphere
[64 comments]
10. Desire for schools to meet needs of students who not considered “top tier”
[45 comments]

Educational Values and Interests

“We believe the Acton teachers and school system are doing a very good job and the school system is producing quality results. In addition to the school system, the success of the Acton school district and the children is due to: (1) High parental involvement (2) Efforts of PTO fundraising for additional classroom teachers, and (3) Large percentage of students who receive supplementary education (Kuman, Tutors, Home Schooling etc). Our biggest concern is the allocation of school resources. We worry that the "average" student falls through the cracks. We want to see all children in the classroom receive an equal amount of attention and focus.”

“Stay the course and don't increase my taxes!”

Educational Values and Interests

“APS and ABRSD have provided my children with an excellent education. There is no doubt. However, I believe it has come at a price. I believe that while high academic standards and striving for excellence is important, too much pressure is put on this, and the result is an education that, while academically excellent, is not geared toward the WHOLE child. I have observed many students in both of my children's classes, who are high achievers, but who haven't learned to lead a balanced life. Priority is not given to balancing academics with work, extra curricular activities AND LEISURE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. I believe that Acton would do well to focus more on the whole child, and developing individuals who value more than type A behavior and academics. While I support the value of "life long learning" which is definitely a part of the Acton School system, it should not be learning for the sake of learning, which I fear it has become.”

Educational Values and Interests

“It would be nice to have an honors program as early as 5th grade, and perhaps for more subjects than just math in junior high. Also, increased homework amounts are not the answer - fewer, but more clever problems where the students are required to think beyond the very basics would do more good.”

“The Acton-Boxborough schools should put more emphasis on programs for academically accelerated and gifted students at the elementary and Jr. High level. There are programs for, and support for special needs students at the other end of the spectrum, why not more support for this population? There is currently too much emphasis on bringing mediocre students up to par while children who hunger for more academic challenges are given no opportunities and getting lost in the shuffle. Given that the AB schools have a tradition of academic excellence, there should be at least some effort made to research gifted and talented programs at the elementary and Jr. high levels.”

Educational Values and Interests

“Acton / AB has demographics that puts children whose parents want balanced lives for them in an academic disadvantage to the point where it is obvious that they would shine and get into better colleges if they were in a different public school community. For example, ... advance math is about how many problems a child can solve in a time period (beat the clock); it is not about if the child can grasp concepts and solve problems. Why is this--because too many children have studied the concepts years ago in Kumon, so the schools/teachers differentiate on how fast the children can solve problems...What is wrong with this picture? This is insane and is strictly due to the demographics and misguided beliefs. ... Stress levels are out of control for families and children that want normal, balanced, healthy lives.”

Educational Values and Interests

“Acton-Boxborough regional high presents many opportunities for students to succeed. Still, many students feel tremendous pressure and stress. I feel that the balance is skewed to a great extent towards intensive curriculae that presume students' acceptance to 'top tier' colleges. I think A-B could do a much better job at educating all our children, and every one of our children has a talent or gift that society will benefit from, if there is greater balance. I think there are also examples of extreme thinking among some parents and staff. I don't think the school should formulate policy based on the opinions or philosophies of the majority, but rather we should base our educational programming on fact- and research-based evidence pertaining to adolescent development, best educational practices, and the creation of healthy individuals. It is sad to see seniors graduate in flying colors but completely burnt out on the threshold of life - and we have seen many of these in A-B!”

Educational Values and Interests

“I think the schools are doing an excellent job although I do see a bit too much in the way of memorizing facts and less in critical thinking.... But in general, I love the attention and money we put into schools. As for racial differences, I see a great need for improvement in attitudes and understanding about ethnic differences. My Caucasian kids often make mention of feeling like minorities when they are in higher level classes (lots of Asian kids) and I don't see as much mixing up amongst them all. I guess people like to hang with familiar people, and that's okay. But I don't like the prejudices I see by non-Asians about high pressured and highly achieving Asians. I would like to learn about different families' ideas, hear from the families, parents and kids, about these issues, and some public soul searching about what different cultures bring to Acton and what we want to learn from each other and where we want to go together. Groups and forums with all cultures represented (e.g. hearing from that Asian-born parent and other parents--not to single out one culture-- what they are thinking) would be fun and helpful for all ages. I find myself alternately wanting my kids to relax and not stress, and wanting them to get into as good a college as possible, and fearing that they look only mediocre in this high achieving town and mad at myself for even caring...and competitive with other cultures, fearing they are getting ahead.”

A faded, historical-style map of the Americas, showing North and South America with various city names and geographical features. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent green grid.

Educational Values and Interests

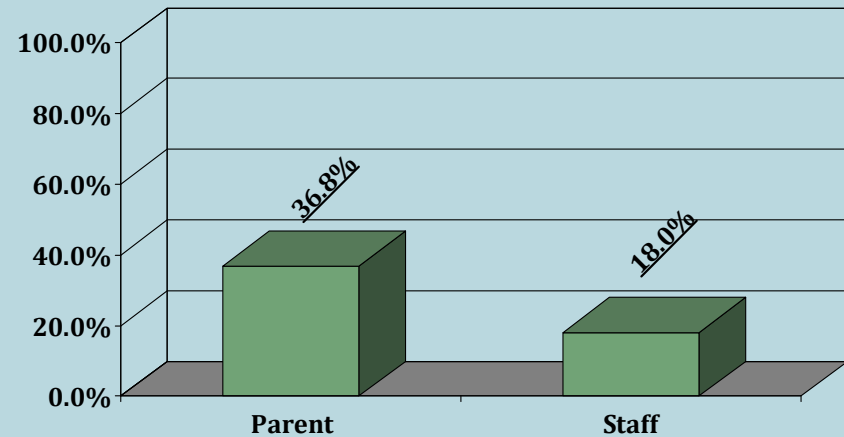
Staff & Faculty *Comparison to Parent Results*

Educational Values and Interests

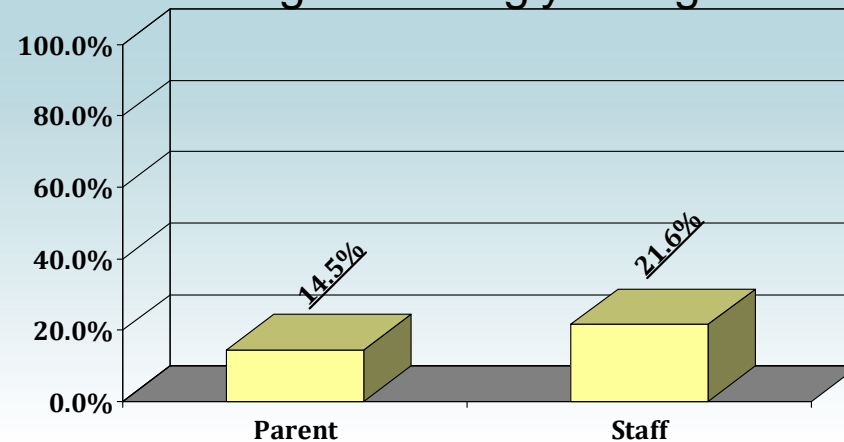
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 9 (35):
I consider standardized test scores to be very important for measuring the academic success of the students and of the school's efforts to educate students.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

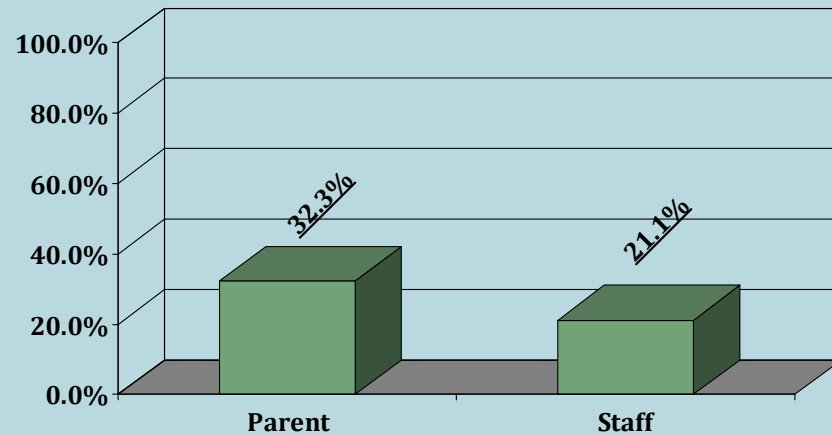


Educational Values and Interests

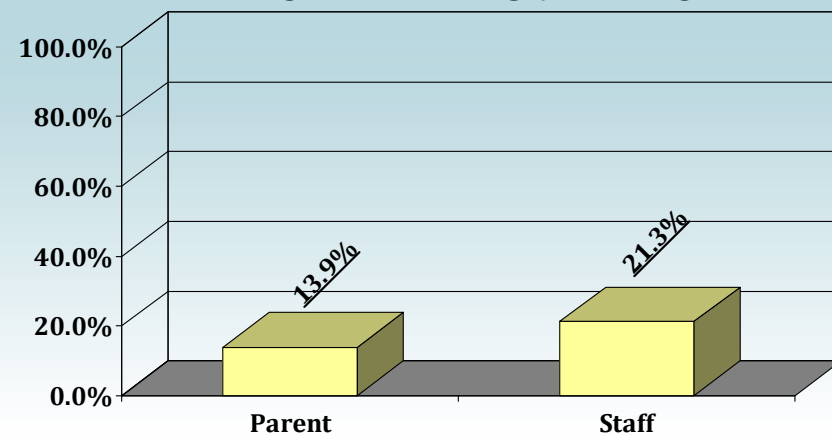
The Staff: Aggregate

Question #13 (39):
The school district should use international comparisons when reviewing the district's performance and priorities.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

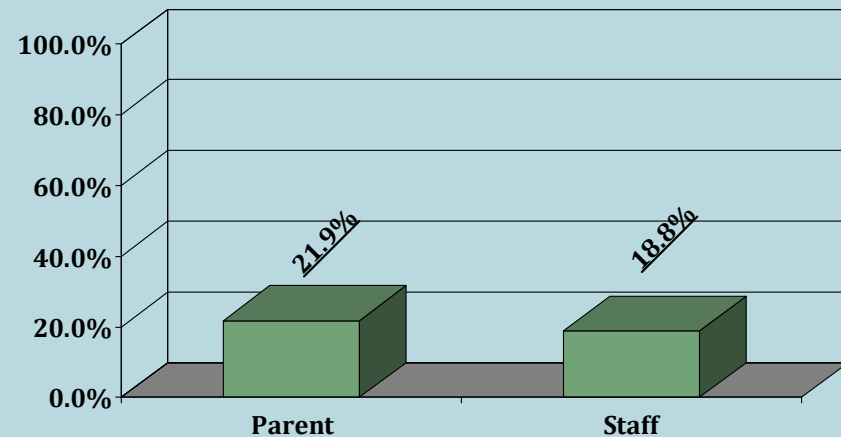


Educational Values and Interests

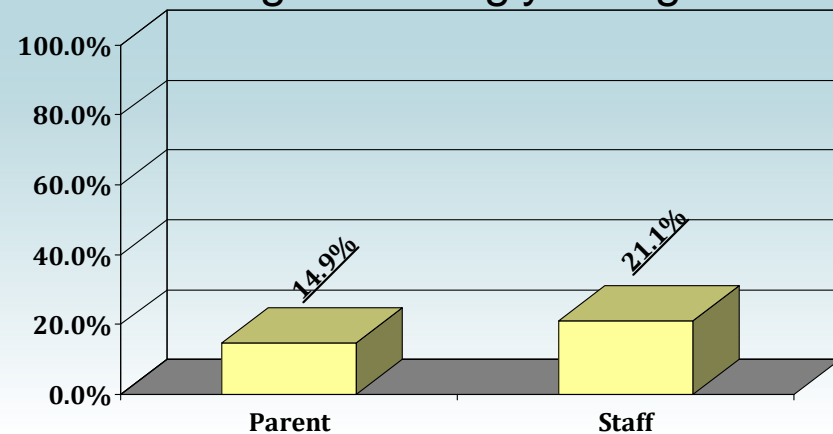
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 16 (42):
Our schools have had a long history of success and achievement, and we should not make any significant changes.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

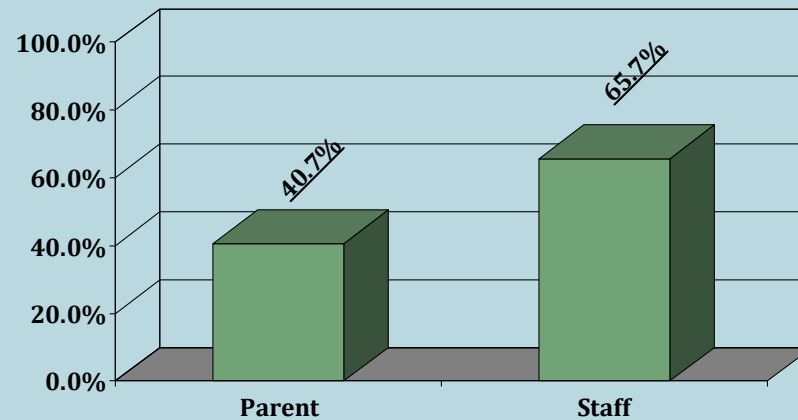


Educational Values and Interests

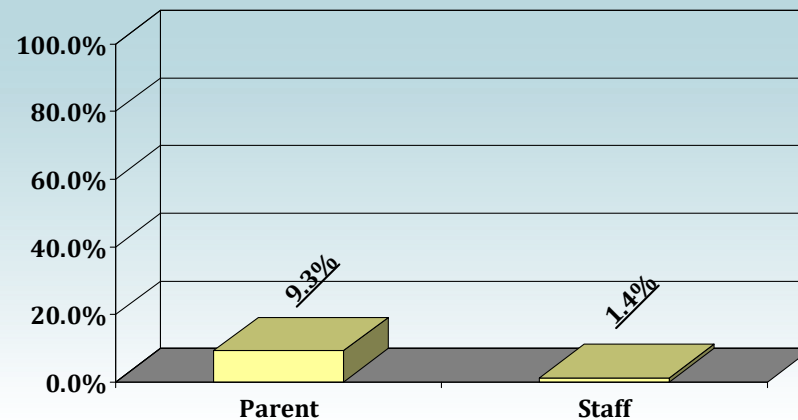
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 17(43):
Our community (parents, teachers, students) has become too concerned with grades and academic performance at the cost of creating a balanced development (social health, emotional wellness) of our students.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

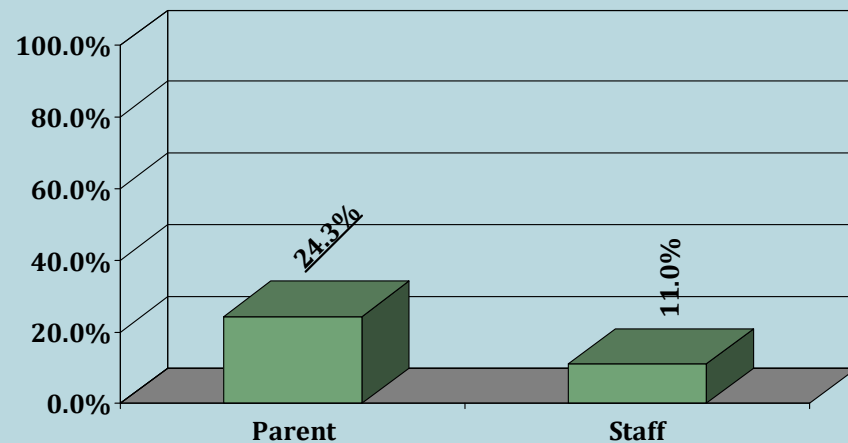


Educational Values and Interests

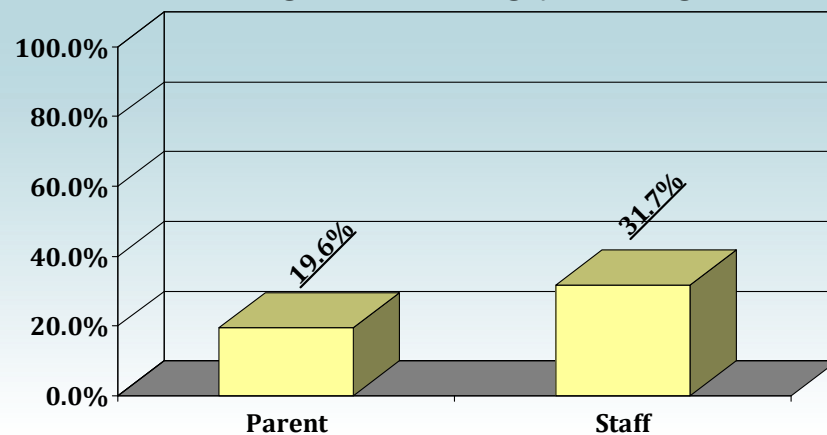
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 18 (44):
It is important for the school district to increase its emphasis on high academic performance.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree



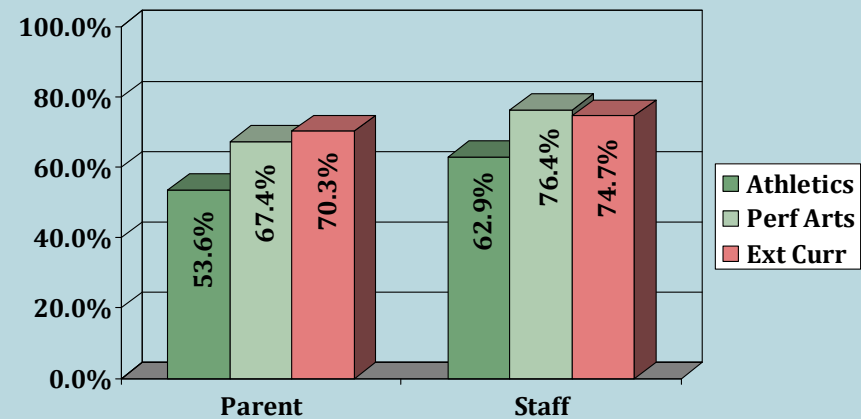
Educational Values and Interests

The Staff: Aggregate

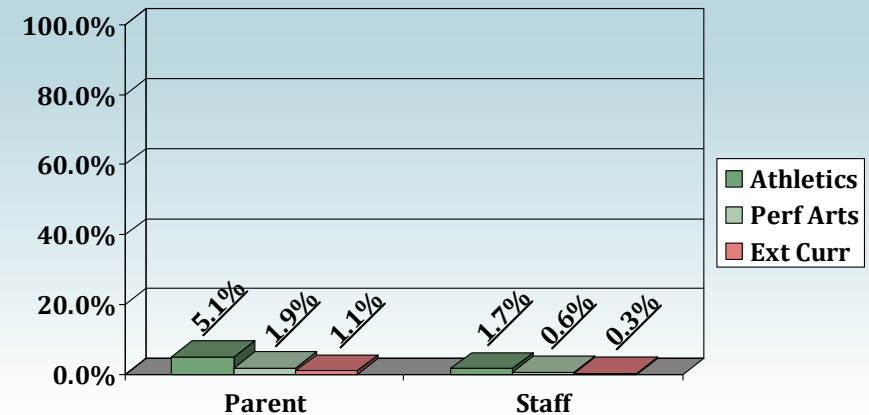
Question # 19(45), 20
(46), 21 (47):

*Athletics, Performing
Arts, and
Extracurricular
programs can play as
important a role as
academics in positively
shaping a student's
potential.*

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

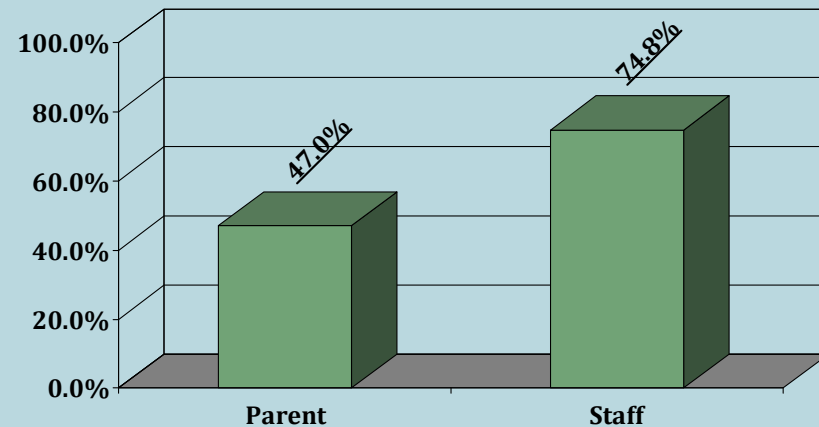


Educational Values and Interests

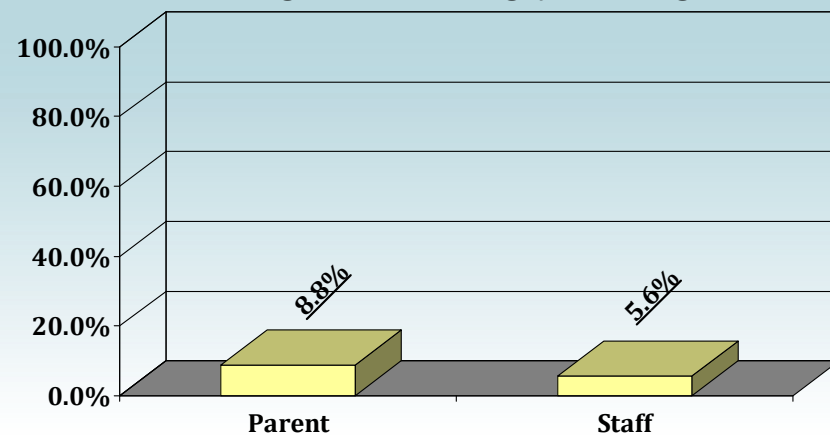
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 27 (53):
I am concerned that the standards of “excellence” at AB have gone so high that students who would be considered very strong in other districts are viewed as mediocre.

Agree/Strongly Agree



Disagree/Strongly Disagree

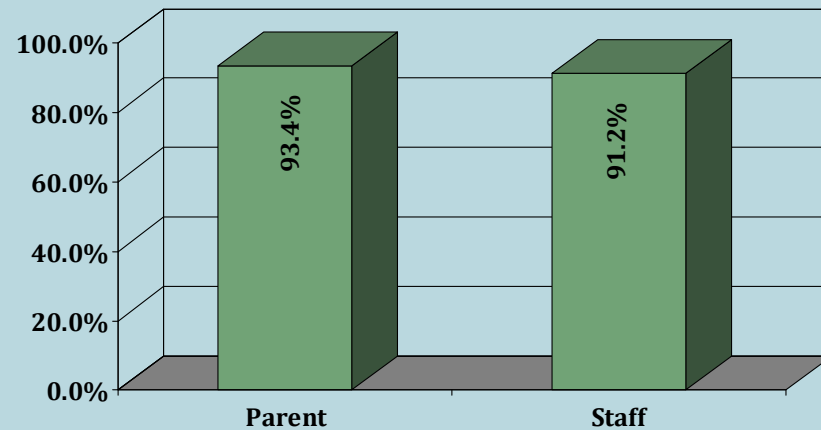


Educational Values and Interests

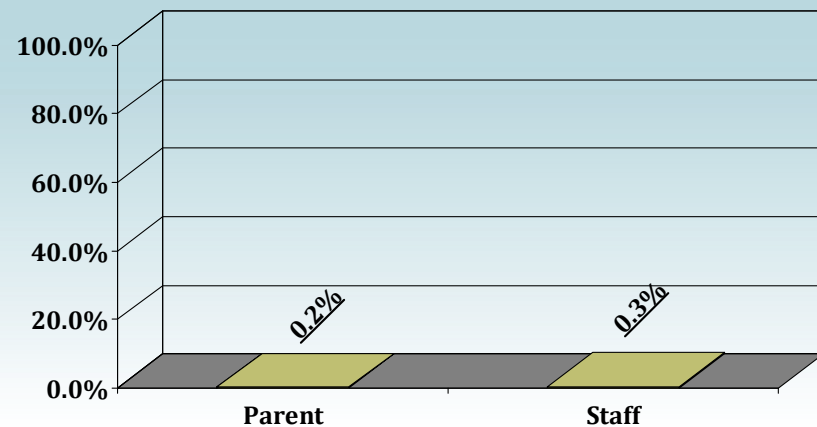
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 35(61):
Development of social and relational skills (peer relationships, self-esteem, self-expression). I consider this feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance



Not Important/Educationally Harmful

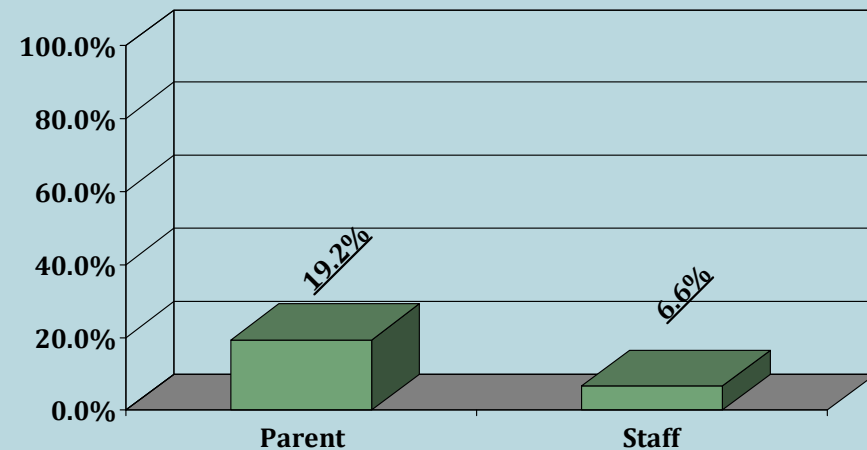


Educational Values and Interests

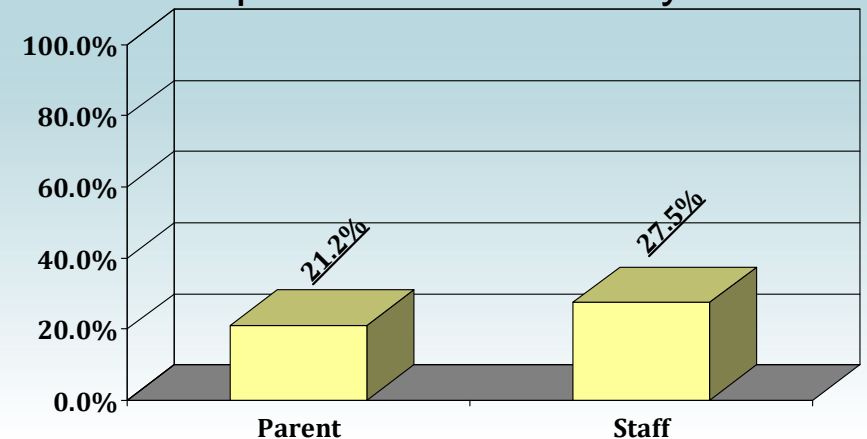
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 51 (77):
Focusing curriculum on high academic success through increased homework, I consider this feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance



Not Important/Educationally Harmful

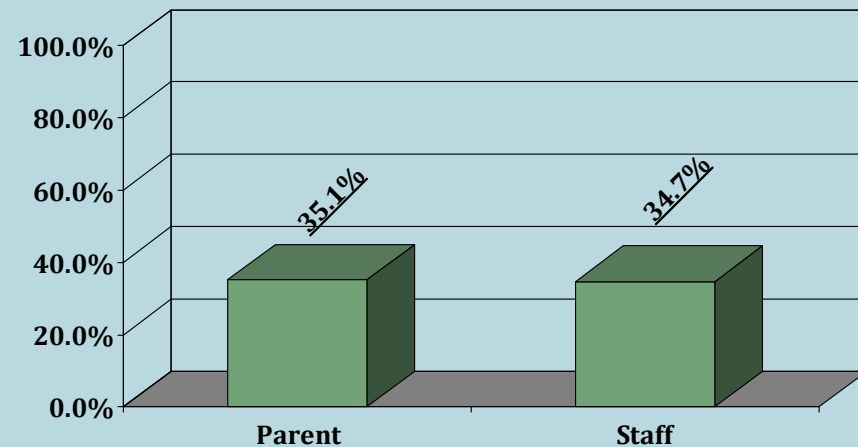


Educational Values and Interests

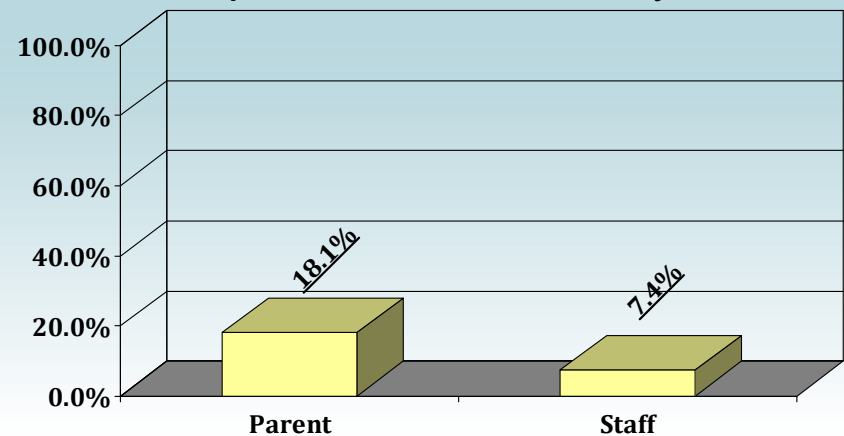
The Staff: Aggregate

Question # 59 (40):
Maximizing potential
to gain admission
into top tier colleges.
I consider this
feature to be:

Important/Of Greatest Importance



Not Important/Educationally Harmful



Educational Values and Interests

What do we know?

- There has been a demographic shift in our school population (*Enrollment by Race data*)
- We have a spectrum of educational experiences in our community
- We have a more varied perspectives of how parents/guardians define success for their children and how to achieve it

Educational Values and Interests

Naming the challenges

- Navigating change
- Varied perspectives
- Natural tendency to stereotype

Educational Values and Interests

Where do we go from here

- Developing a common vocabulary for future discussions
- Longitudinal study
- Using the data to fuel thoughtful conversations
 - Develop questions
 - Schedule forums
 - Consider student input through the survey process
 - School/community focus groups

Educational Values and Interests

***What are we trying to understand?
Where are we going?***

- Community demographic shifts
- Effect on schools and community
- What are our educational values?
- Need to enhance or change?