



# NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

2020–2021 Administration





## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the results for a national high school student survey conducted during the 2020–2021 school year. The survey was created by Resonant Education staff members in collaboration with the Aspen Institute to ask students about their participation in sports as well as other perceptions about sports in high school.

Overall, nearly 6,000 students responded to the survey from schools representing all regions of the country as well as school types (Public, Private, and Charter) and urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural). The results provide critical information about the experience of high school students in sports both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are several notable results that could inform key decisions that are listed below and explained in further detail within the report.

### Previously Played High School Sports Across Genders

-  Basketball **24%**
-  Soccer **21%**
-  Track & Field **19%**
-  Volleyball **17%**
-  Football **16%**

### Most Requested Sports Not Offered at Their School

-  Archery **13%**
  -  Gymnastics **7%**
  -  Lacrosse **7%**
  -  Bowling **7%**
- Students in charter schools were more likely to report that they wanted more options for sports offered at their school. Most frequent requests were for sports often common in traditional schools (swimming and football).

The most requested sport **for Black students** was gymnastics (13% compared to the overall average of 7%). This sport was especially requested by females.

### Why Students Engaged in Sports

- #1** Having fun **81%**
- #2** Exercise **79%**
- #3** Learning and improving skills **66%**
- #4** Playing with and making new friends **64%**
- #5** Competing (testing myself against others) **59%**
- #6** Winning games **53%**

### Motivation for Playing Sports for Males And Females

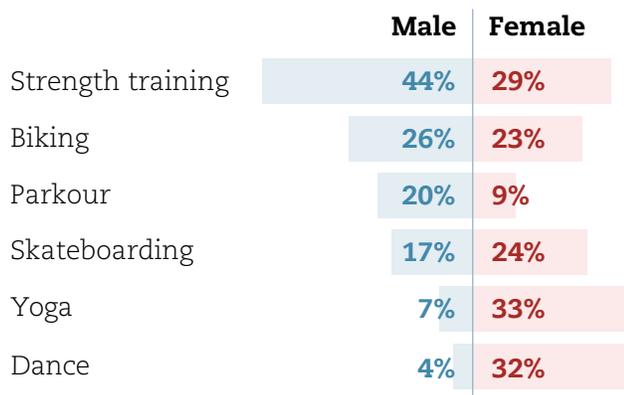
	Male	Female
Competing	64%	54%
Winning games	60%	48%
Mental health & well-being	41%	56%
Belonging to a group	29%	38%
College applications	37%	46%

**Black students** were much more likely than other races and ethnicities to report playing sports for college scholarships (50% versus overall average of 39%) while **White students** were more likely to report belonging to a group than other races and ethnicities.

### Top Reasons Why Students Are Not Participating in High School Sports

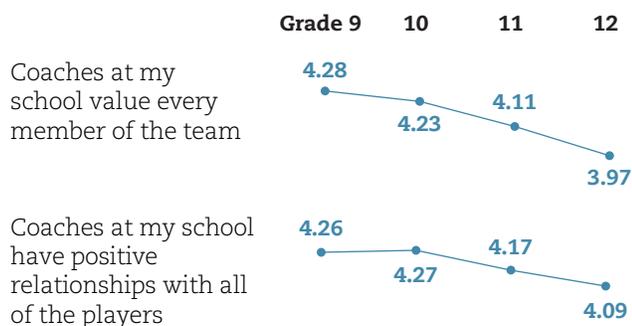
- #1 Schoolwork **42%**
- #2 Not enjoying sports **32%**
- #3 Not having sports that are of interest **26%**
- #4 I don't think I'm good enough **25%**

### Interest in Participating in Physical Activities for Males and Females



White students had higher interest levels in outdoor activities and climbing and Black students were most likely to be interested in dance as an activity (28% vs 19% overall).

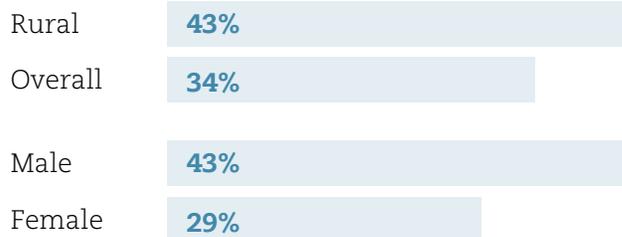
### Student Perceptions of Athletic Personnel by Grade



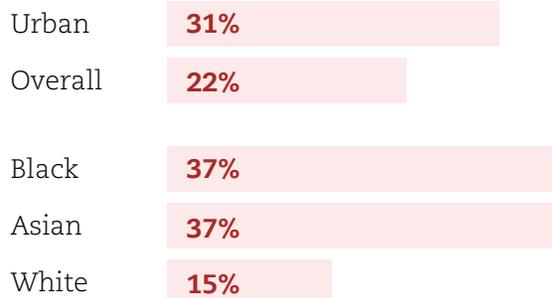
As students got older, they were less likely to agree with statements such as “Coaches at my school value every member of the team” and “Coaches at my school have positive relationships with all of their players.” Items were scored on a five-point frequency scale, from Never (1) to Almost Always (5).

### Concern for Catching or Transmitting COVID-19 by Playing Sports – by School Type and Gender

#### Not concerned



#### Very concerned



The report includes each question broken down by school type (Public, Private, and Charter), urbanicity (Urban, Rural, and Suburban), gender, and race/ethnicity.

## Introduction

The Aspen Institute has partnered with Resonant Education to design and implement a national student survey to collect information about a variety of topics primarily related to high school student perceptions of sports. This report provides an overview of the findings of a quantitative analysis of survey results.

## Project Background

The Aspen Institute's Project Play launched a major new phase of its work called Reimagining School Sports in America, in partnership with Adidas/BOKS, The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation and the Hospital for Special Surgery. This multiyear initiative aims to identify strategies and models that engage and create more healthy opportunities for students.

As part of this initiative, the Aspen Institute partnered with Resonant Education to administer an anonymous, online student survey to capture the thoughts of high school students on a range of topics related to sports, in order to better understand their needs, interests, and attitudes. Since 2014, Resonant Education's mission has been to improve educational experiences for students, educators, and parents around the country by enhancing the data used to drive decisions. Resonant partners with organizations to design and deliver the highest quality educational surveys, assessments, and evaluations available. Resonant Education has conducted surveys and assessments in several of the largest districts and educational organizations across the country.

## Survey Methodology

The survey was created by Resonant Education staff members in collaboration with the Aspen Institute and launched in September 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey includes items that asked students about the types of sports they have played previously, what sports they planned to play in the future assuming they would be allowed to play again, and what sports they wish their school offered. It also included similar questions for non-sport activities. The survey also looked at sport motivation, both why students choose to play a sport and why they choose not to play a sport, as well as the student's experience in school with both PE classes and athletic personnel. Finally, given that the survey was administered during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, questions were included that related to sports and COVID-19.

The survey was conducted online and schools that participated were given a unique web link to share with all of their students. Since each school received one link, student responses were completely anonymous. School personnel were encouraged to distribute their web link to students using whatever channels worked best for their school. Common distribution channels included posting the link on the school's online learning platform, sending the link to students over email, and having the link provided directly to students by a teacher at the end of PE class time. Schools were recruited for participation in the survey over email and their participation in the survey was completely voluntary.

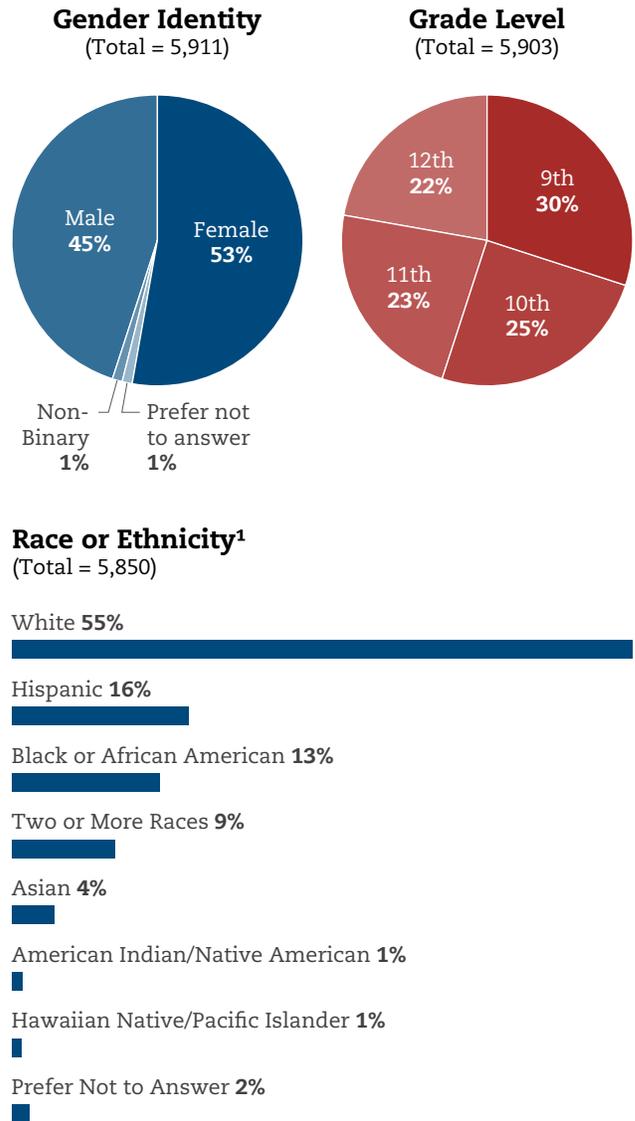
Upon completion of the survey, school personnel received access to the results of their school’s survey in Resonant Education’s online reporting platform. They were able to review all item responses, noting that results were suppressed when sample sizes were not large enough to protect the identity of student respondents. Schools were able to use this data for future planning needs or as part of Title IX reporting. The survey was open between September 14, 2020, and March 1, 2021.

## Sample

Overall, there were 5,932 total survey responses. Survey responses were checked for minimum time spent on the survey, that all questions were answered, and answer variation (e.g., no straight-line answers) to ensure valid responses. No responses were identified as needing deletion.

Figure 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the sample of students participating in the study. Overall, we see slightly more females than males and slightly more younger grades included than older grades. Blank responses are not reported.

**Figure 1: Student Demographic Information**



<sup>1</sup> Sum greater than 100% is due to rounding.



# RESULTS

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The survey results are broken down into five primary sections below. The first section provides information about the types of sports that students have played previously, what they plan to play, and what they wish their school offered. The second section looks at sport motivation, both why students choose to play a sport and why they choose not to play a sport. Section 3 looks at non-sport activities that students participate in at school and outside of school, plus what they would like to participate in. Section 4 looks at items that ask about the student's experience in school with both PE classes and athletic personnel. The final section (Section 5) looks at questions related to sports and COVID-19.

## Section 1: Sport Engagement and Preferences for Various Sports

This section looks at the type of sports that students reported playing in the past, what they are planning to play (both at school and outside of school), as well as the sports they wish were offered at their school. For all figures in this section, percentages will sum to greater than 100%, as students were able to select multiple response options for all questions. Figures 2–4 look at what students reported having previously played in prior years. Figure 2 looks at the breakdown by school type (Public, Private and Charter) as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural). Figure 3 presents the breakdown by gender and race/ethnicity, and Figure 4 shows the breakdown by grade level.

Overall, the most popular sports played previously in high school by students were basketball (24% of students), soccer (21%), track and field (19%), volleyball (17%) and football (16%). For school type, charter schools reported the highest percentages of students playing traditional sports like soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Private schools had significantly higher percentages of students reporting that they played lacrosse, tennis, and field hockey. In looking at urbanicity, rural schools tended to report the highest levels of playing basketball, softball, and track and field while urban schools reported the highest levels of playing soccer.

Differences in sport by gender reflected expected differences for sports traditionally made available to single genders such as football, cheerleading, wrestling, and volleyball. Most other sports that were offered equally to both genders saw similar percentages in participation. By race/ethnicity, the most popular sports for Black students were basketball, football, and track and field. For Hispanic students, the most popular sports were soccer and basketball, and Asian students had the highest percentages for cross country, tennis, and volleyball. By grade level, participation in sports tended to increase overall as students moved up into the higher grades. An example of this can be seen in track and field, which saw participation rise steadily by grade from 10% in 9th grade all the way to 25% by 12th grade.

**Figure 2: Sport(s) Already Played in High School by School Type and Urbanicity**

	Total Results	Public Schools	Private Schools	Charter Schools	Public, Non-Charter Schools		
					Urban	Suburban	Rural
Archery	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Badminton	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Baseball	9%	11%	6%	8%	9%	13%	10%
Basketball	24%	23%	20%	48%	19%	19%	28%
Bowling	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%
Cheerleading	4%	5%	1%	8%	4%	4%	6%
Cross Country	12%	10%	16%	7%	10%	12%	9%
Dance Team	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%
Field Hockey	3%	0%	12%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Flag Football	2%	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%	2%
Golf	5%	5%	6%	0%	5%	7%	4%
Gymnastics	1%	2%	0%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Ice Hockey	2%	0%	8%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Lacrosse	6%	2%	19%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Rowing	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Skiing	1%	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Soccer	21%	16%	28%	35%	20%	14%	17%
Softball	7%	8%	2%	6%	7%	6%	11%
Swimming	6%	6%	7%	3%	4%	7%	5%
Tackle Football	16%	20%	7%	13%	15%	21%	20%
Tennis	10%	7%	18%	1%	6%	7%	8%
Track and Field	19%	22%	13%	12%	18%	20%	25%
Ultimate Frisbee	1%	0%	3%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Volleyball	17%	17%	17%	23%	16%	16%	18%
Weightlifting	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%	4%
Wrestling	5%	6%	2%	3%	6%	7%	6%

**Figure 3: Sport(s) Already Played in High School by Gender and Race/Ethnicity**

	All	Male	Female	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian
 Archery	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
 Badminton	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
 Baseball	9%	20%	1%	10%	10%	9%	4%
 Basketball	24%	27%	22%	47%	20%	23%	20%
 Bowling	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
 Cheerleading	4%	0%	8%	8%	4%	3%	2%
 Cross Country	12%	12%	11%	4%	14%	5%	20%
 Dance Team	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%
 Field Hockey	3%	0%	6%	0%	5%	1%	2%
 Flag Football	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	3%	3%
 Golf	5%	6%	4%	1%	6%	2%	6%
 Gymnastics	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
 Ice Hockey	2%	3%	1%	0%	3%	0%	4%
 Lacrosse	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%	2%	3%
 Rowing	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
 Skiing	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
 Soccer	21%	21%	20%	10%	20%	39%	15%
 Softball	7%	0%	12%	6%	7%	6%	9%
 Swimming	6%	3%	8%	1%	7%	4%	5%
 Tackle Football	16%	33%	1%	28%	14%	14%	8%
 Tennis	10%	9%	10%	3%	11%	7%	19%
 Track and Field	19%	19%	19%	29%	18%	14%	16%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
 Volleyball	17%	3%	30%	15%	18%	13%	20%
 Weightlifting	3%	5%	1%	3%	3%	0%	5%
 Wrestling	5%	10%	1%	5%	4%	5%	5%

**Figure 4: Sport(s) Already Played in High School by Grade Level**

	Total Results	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
 Archery	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
 Badminton	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
 Baseball	9%	8%	7%	11%	10%
 Basketball	24%	25%	23%	24%	24%
 Bowling	1%	4%	1%	1%	1%
 Cheerleading	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%
 Cross Country	12%	15%	9%	10%	14%
 Dance Team	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%
 Field Hockey	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%
 Flag Football	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%
 Golf	5%	4%	4%	6%	5%
 Gymnastics	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
 Ice Hockey	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
 Lacrosse	6%	5%	5%	6%	7%
 Rowing	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
 Skiing	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
 Soccer	21%	17%	22%	19%	23%
 Softball	7%	7%	4%	8%	7%
 Swimming	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%
 Tackle Football	16%	15%	17%	15%	16%
 Tennis	10%	9%	8%	10%	11%
 Track and Field	19%	10%	15%	20%	25%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
 Volleyball	17%	14%	19%	18%	16%
 Weightlifting	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
 Wrestling	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%

Figures 5–7 look at what students were planning to play during the upcoming year (provided they were available). Similar to the previous figures, Figure 5 presents the breakdown by school type (Public, Private and Charter) as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural). Figure 6 presents the breakdown by gender and race/ethnicity, and Figure 7 shows the breakdown by grade level.

Similar trends emerged in sports played previously (Figures 2–4) and sports expected to play during this upcoming year.

**Figure 5: Sport(s) Planning to Play This Year in High School by School Type and Urbanicity**

	Total Results	Public Schools	Private Schools	Charter Schools	Public, Non-Charter Schools		
					Urban	Suburban	Rural
Archery	2%	3%	0%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Badminton	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Baseball	11%	12%	7%	8%	12%	13%	11%
Basketball	23%	22%	21%	34%	20%	20%	25%
Bowling	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	1%
Cheerleading	5%	6%	1%	10%	6%	5%	6%
Cross Country	8%	7%	11%	5%	6%	8%	7%
Dance Team	3%	3%	2%	3%	5%	4%	1%
Field Hockey	3%	1%	10%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Flag Football	2%	2%	0%	5%	2%	2%	1%
Golf	5%	5%	5%	2%	7%	6%	4%
Gymnastics	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Ice Hockey	2%	1%	7%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Lacrosse	5%	2%	19%	0%	2%	1%	2%
Rowing	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Skiing	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Soccer	20%	17%	23%	32%	21%	13%	19%
Softball	8%	10%	3%	6%	6%	6%	13%
Swimming	6%	5%	7%	4%	4%	6%	5%
Tackle Football	14%	16%	7%	11%	14%	17%	16%
Tennis	10%	9%	17%	4%	10%	7%	9%
Track and Field	20%	23%	14%	12%	17%	25%	24%
Ultimate Frisbee	1%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Volleyball	16%	16%	13%	28%	15%	16%	17%
Weightlifting	4%	5%	1%	3%	2%	4%	6%
Wrestling	6%	7%	1%	3%	6%	7%	8%

**Figure 6: Sport(s) Planning to Play This Year in High School by Gender and Race/Ethnicity**

	All	Male	Female	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian
 Archery	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
 Badminton	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
 Baseball	11%	21%	1%	9%	12%	10%	3%
 Basketball	23%	29%	18%	39%	19%	21%	16%
 Bowling	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%
 Cheerleading	5%	0%	10%	10%	4%	7%	1%
 Cross Country	8%	8%	8%	5%	9%	4%	13%
 Dance Team	3%	0%	5%	3%	2%	4%	3%
 Field Hockey	3%	0%	5%	0%	4%	1%	1%
 Flag Football	2%	3%	1%	4%	1%	3%	3%
 Golf	5%	6%	4%	1%	6%	3%	6%
 Gymnastics	1%	0%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%
 Ice Hockey	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%
 Lacrosse	5%	6%	5%	3%	8%	2%	2%
 Rowing	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
 Skiing	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
 Soccer	20%	20%	20%	10%	19%	40%	15%
 Softball	8%	0%	14%	6%	9%	8%	8%
 Swimming	6%	3%	8%	2%	7%	5%	6%
 Tackle Football	14%	29%	0%	24%	12%	11%	7%
 Tennis	10%	7%	13%	5%	11%	7%	22%
 Track and Field	20%	20%	20%	35%	19%	15%	14%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%
 Volleyball	16%	4%	28%	15%	16%	17%	24%
 Weightlifting	4%	6%	2%	3%	4%	3%	1%
 Wrestling	6%	11%	1%	5%	6%	6%	4%

**Figure 7: Sport(s) Planning to Play This Year in High School by Grade Level**

	Total Results	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
 Archery	2%	4%	2%	1%	1%
 Badminton	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
 Baseball	11%	11%	11%	10%	10%
 Basketball	23%	31%	21%	20%	17%
 Bowling	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%
 Cheerleading	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%
 Cross Country	8%	8%	7%	7%	9%
 Dance Team	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%
 Field Hockey	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
 Flag Football	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%
 Golf	5%	4%	5%	7%	5%
 Gymnastics	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
 Ice Hockey	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
 Lacrosse	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%
 Rowing	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
 Skiing	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%
 Soccer	20%	20%	22%	18%	19%
 Softball	8%	10%	7%	7%	6%
 Swimming	6%	7%	6%	5%	4%
 Tackle Football	14%	15%	14%	13%	12%
 Tennis	10%	8%	12%	11%	10%
 Track and Field	20%	22%	17%	20%	21%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
 Volleyball	16%	20%	17%	16%	12%
 Weightlifting	4%	6%	4%	2%	2%
 Wrestling	6%	7%	6%	5%	4%

Figures 8–10 look at what students were planning to play during the upcoming year outside of school. Figure 8 looks at the breakdown by school type (Public, Private and Charter) as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural). Figure 9 presents the breakdown by gender and race/ethnicity, and Figure 10 shows the breakdown by grade level.

Similar patterns were present for sports chosen inside and outside the school, with basketball, soccer, and volleyball being the top choices. Private school students tended to seek out lacrosse and tennis outside of school more than other school types.

**Figure 8: Sport(s) Planning to Play This Year Outside of High School by School Type and Urbanicity**

	Total Results	Public Schools	Private Schools	Charter Schools	Public, Non-Charter Schools		
					Urban	Suburban	Rural
 Archery	3%	4%	0%	5%	4%	2%	5%
 Badminton	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
 Baseball	10%	12%	6%	7%	13%	13%	10%
 Basketball	19%	20%	12%	24%	18%	18%	21%
 Bowling	3%	3%	0%	4%	4%	4%	2%
 Cheerleading	2%	3%	1%	3%	5%	2%	3%
 Cross Country	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%
 Dance Team	4%	4%	2%	5%	5%	5%	3%
 Field Hockey	2%	0%	6%	0%	0%	1%	0%
 Flag Football	3%	3%	0%	5%	3%	3%	3%
 Golf	4%	4%	6%	1%	4%	3%	4%
 Gymnastics	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%	2%
 Ice Hockey	2%	2%	5%	1%	2%	2%	1%
 Lacrosse	6%	2%	19%	2%	2%	1%	3%
 Rowing	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
 Skiing	3%	2%	7%	2%	1%	3%	1%
 Soccer	19%	18%	17%	30%	21%	15%	19%
 Softball	9%	12%	1%	4%	8%	10%	14%
 Swimming	5%	4%	5%	7%	6%	4%	4%
 Tackle Football	6%	8%	0%	9%	11%	7%	7%
 Tennis	5%	4%	12%	3%	5%	3%	4%
 Track and Field	6%	7%	2%	8%	11%	6%	6%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	0%
 Volleyball	13%	14%	7%	17%	13%	13%	15%
 Weightlifting	4%	5%	2%	1%	5%	4%	6%
 Wrestling	3%	4%	0%	2%	3%	5%	4%

**Figure 9: Sport(s) Planning to Play This Year Outside of High School by Gender and Race/Ethnicity**

	<b>Total Results</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>
 Archery	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	0%
 Badminton	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
 Baseball	10%	20%	1%	9%	11%	9%	1%
 Basketball	19%	26%	12%	42%	13%	17%	17%
 Bowling	3%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%	0%
 Cheerleading	2%	0%	4%	6%	2%	3%	0%
 Cross Country	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	1%	5%
 Dance Team	4%	1%	7%	4%	3%	4%	0%
 Field Hockey	2%	0%	3%	0%	2%	1%	1%
 Flag Football	3%	4%	1%	6%	1%	4%	5%
 Golf	4%	6%	2%	2%	5%	1%	4%
 Gymnastics	2%	1%	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%
 Ice Hockey	2%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%	4%
 Lacrosse	6%	6%	5%	4%	7%	3%	3%
 Rowing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
 Skiing	3%	4%	2%	1%	4%	0%	4%
 Soccer	19%	20%	18%	10%	16%	42%	16%
 Softball	9%	1%	16%	7%	10%	9%	6%
 Swimming	5%	3%	7%	2%	5%	6%	8%
 Tackle Football	6%	13%	1%	17%	4%	6%	5%
 Tennis	5%	4%	7%	3%	5%	5%	16%
 Track and Field	6%	6%	6%	17%	3%	4%	8%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%
 Volleyball	13%	2%	23%	12%	13%	13%	14%
 Weightlifting	4%	7%	1%	5%	4%	2%	3%
 Wrestling	3%	6%	1%	3%	3%	3%	0%

**Figure 10: Sport(s) Planning to Play This Year Outside of High School by Grade Level**

	Total Results	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
 Archery	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%
 Badminton	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
 Baseball	10%	10%	9%	11%	9%
 Basketball	19%	21%	16%	20%	15%
 Bowling	3%	3%	2%	1%	5%
 Cheerleading	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
 Cross Country	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
 Dance Team	4%	5%	4%	2%	3%
 Field Hockey	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
 Flag Football	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%
 Golf	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%
 Gymnastics	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%
 Ice Hockey	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%
 Lacrosse	6%	6%	6%	4%	6%
 Rowing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
 Skiing	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%
 Soccer	19%	19%	22%	14%	20%
 Softball	9%	10%	7%	9%	7%
 Swimming	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%
 Tackle Football	6%	8%	7%	5%	4%
 Tennis	5%	4%	6%	6%	5%
 Track and Field	6%	7%	5%	5%	5%
 Ultimate Frisbee	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
 Volleyball	13%	14%	12%	15%	11%
 Weightlifting	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%
 Wrestling	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%

Figures 11–13 look at the sports that students wished were offered at their school.

Figure 11 presents the breakdown by school type (Public, Private and Charter) as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural). Figure 12 presents the breakdown by gender and race/ethnicity, and Figure 13 shows the breakdown by grade level.

The most requested sport was archery (13%), followed by requests for gymnastics, lacrosse, and bowling (each at 7%). Further, students in charter schools were more likely to report that they wanted more options for sports offered at their school, with the most frequent requests coming for sports that are often common in traditional schools such as swimming and football. Students in urban schools reported wanting to do swimming more than rural or suburban.

By race/ethnicity, the most requested sport for Black students was gymnastics (13% compared to the overall average of 7%) with this sport being especially requested by females. Requested sports did not vary widely by grade level.

**Figure 11: Desire for Other Sports Offered at High School by School Type and Urbanicity**

	Total Results	Public Schools	Private Schools	Charter Schools	Public, Non-Charter Schools		
					Urban	Suburban	Rural
Archery	13%	13%	9%	16%	13%	13%	13%
Badminton	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	4%	5%
Baseball	2%	2%	0%	8%	2%	2%	2%
Basketball	2%	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Bowling	7%	7%	3%	11%	6%	4%	10%
Cheerleading	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	2%	4%
Cross Country	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Dance Team	5%	5%	4%	8%	3%	4%	6%
Field Hockey	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	4%
Flag Football	4%	4%	3%	5%	2%	3%	6%
Golf	2%	2%	0%	5%	2%	1%	2%
Gymnastics	7%	7%	4%	12%	7%	4%	9%
Ice Hockey	6%	7%	2%	4%	4%	7%	9%
Lacrosse	7%	7%	3%	6%	6%	6%	9%
Rowing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Skiing	5%	5%	9%	3%	4%	4%	6%
Soccer	3%	4%	0%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Softball	2%	1%	3%	5%	1%	1%	2%
Swimming	6%	5%	3%	17%	10%	2%	5%
Tackle Football	3%	2%	3%	11%	2%	2%	2%
Tennis	3%	3%	0%	9%	3%	2%	3%
Track and Field	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Ultimate Frisbee	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	6%
Volleyball	3%	3%	1%	5%	4%	3%	3%
Weightlifting	5%	5%	4%	7%	6%	4%	5%
Wrestling	3%	2%	3%	8%	2%	1%	3%

Figure 12: Desire for Other Sports Offered at High School by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

	Total Results	Male	Female	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian
 Archery	13%	12%	12%	10%	13%	10%	15%
 Badminton	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	14%
 Baseball	2%	4%	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%
 Basketball	2%	4%	2%	6%	2%	3%	2%
 Bowling	7%	8%	7%	7%	8%	7%	7%
 Cheerleading	3%	1%	5%	5%	3%	3%	2%
 Cross Country	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
 Dance Team	5%	1%	8%	9%	4%	6%	6%
 Field Hockey	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%
 Flag Football	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%
 Golf	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%	3%	3%
 Gymnastics	7%	2%	12%	13%	6%	7%	4%
 Ice Hockey	6%	7%	5%	2%	8%	4%	5%
 Lacrosse	7%	6%	7%	3%	8%	6%	5%
 Rowing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
 Skiing	5%	5%	5%	3%	6%	4%	9%
 Soccer	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	7%
 Softball	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%
 Swimming	6%	4%	7%	9%	5%	8%	10%
 Tackle Football	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%	5%	2%
 Tennis	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	5%	3%
 Track and Field	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
 Ultimate Frisbee	4%	6%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%
 Volleyball	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%
 Weightlifting	5%	7%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%
 Wrestling	3%	4%	2%	5%	2%	3%	2%

Figure 13: Desire for Other Sports at High School by Grade Level

	Total Results	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
 Archery	13%	12%	13%	12%	14%
 Badminton	5%	3%	5%	6%	5%
 Baseball	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
 Basketball	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
 Bowling	7%	6%	7%	7%	9%
 Cheerleading	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
 Cross Country	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
 Dance Team	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
 Field Hockey	3%	2%	3%	2%	4%
 Flag Football	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%
 Golf	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
 Gymnastics	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%
 Ice Hockey	6%	5%	8%	6%	6%
 Lacrosse	7%	4%	7%	8%	8%
 Rowing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
 Skiing	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%
 Soccer	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%
 Softball	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
 Swimming	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%
 Tackle Football	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%
 Tennis	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%
 Track and Field	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
 Ultimate Frisbee	4%	3%	4%	4%	6%
 Volleyball	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%
 Weightlifting	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%
 Wrestling	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%

## Section 2: Motivations for Engaging in Sport and Reasons for Not Engaging in Sport

This section looks at both why students reported wanting to play sports as well as the reasons they listed for not playing sports. For all figures in this section, percentages will sum to greater than 100%, as students were able to select multiple response options for all questions. Figure 14 looks at the reasons that students listed for playing sports by school type (Public, Private and Charter) as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race/ethnicity, and grade level.

Overall, the top responses for why students engaged in sports were having fun (81%), exercise (79%), learning and improving skills (66%), playing with and making new friends (64%), and competing (testing myself against others) (59%). There was a stronger connection in private schools (46%) for belonging to a group within a school than the overall average (34%), which also relates to private schools having the highest percentage about playing and making new friends (73%). Further, making family proud tended to be slightly more common in rural schools (40%) versus private schools (25%).

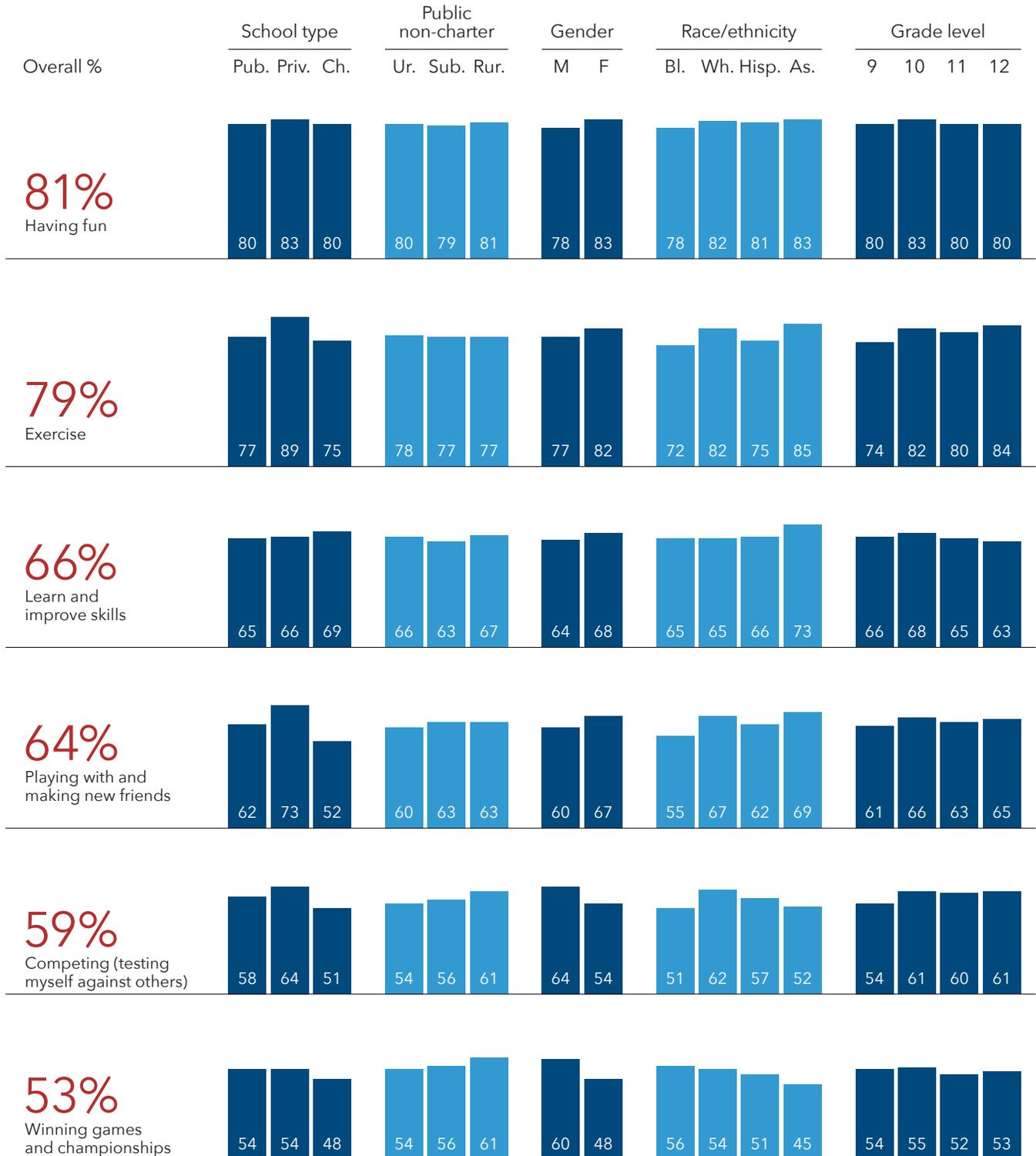
For gender, there were differences in a few key motivating factors. With males, winning games (60% for males, 48% for female) and competing (64% for males, 54% for females) showed higher rates while females were more likely to report mental health and well-being (56% for females, 41% for males), belonging to a group (38% for females, 29% for males) and college applications (46% for females, 37% for males). By race/ethnicity, Black students were much more likely to report playing sports for college scholarships as a

motivation (50% versus overall average of 39%) while White students were more likely to report belonging to a group. Hispanics also reported college scholarships more frequently than the average (44% compared to 39%), and Asian students reported the lowest levels for this reason at 23%. Asians were higher than the average for exercise and improving skills.

Figure 15 included students that indicated they wouldn't be participating in a sport in the upcoming year and looks at the various reasons that students listed for not participating by school type (Public, Private and Charter) as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race/ethnicity presented, and grade level. The most common reasons for not participating included schoolwork (42%), not enjoying sports (32%), not having sports that are of interest (26%), and not trying out because students didn't think they were good enough to make the team (25%). Charter school students tended to report greater barriers (fewer sports offered, transportation, and too much schoolwork).

There were some notable differences by gender, with females more likely to report schoolwork, social factors (not welcome, friends don't play, etc.), and not believing they will make the team (28% vs. 20% for males). For race/ethnicity, White students were more likely to report that they did not feel welcome and having barriers due to work schedules, while Asian students reported having too much schoolwork as more of a barrier than students of other races/ethnicities.

Figure 14: Motivation for Playing Sports



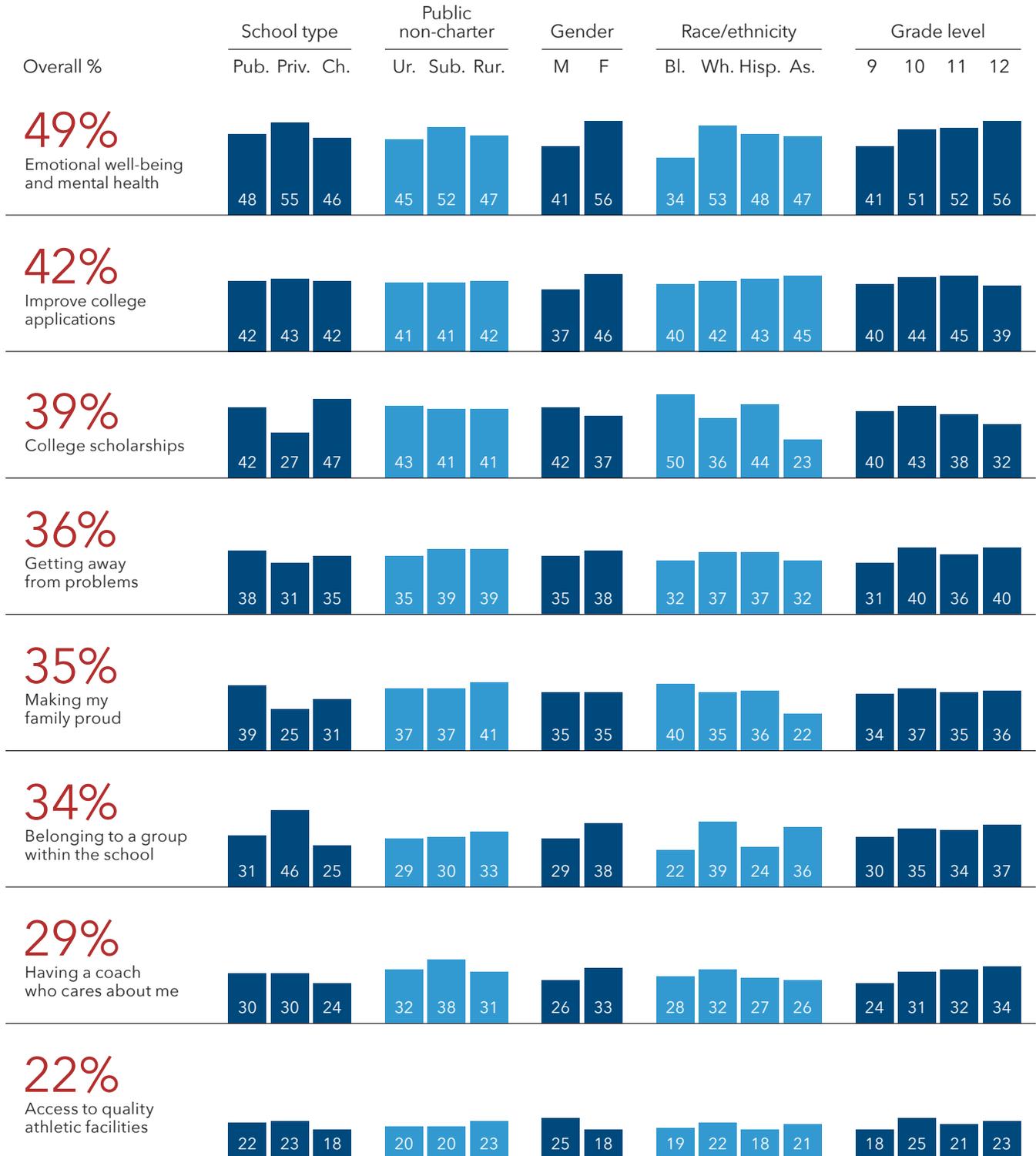
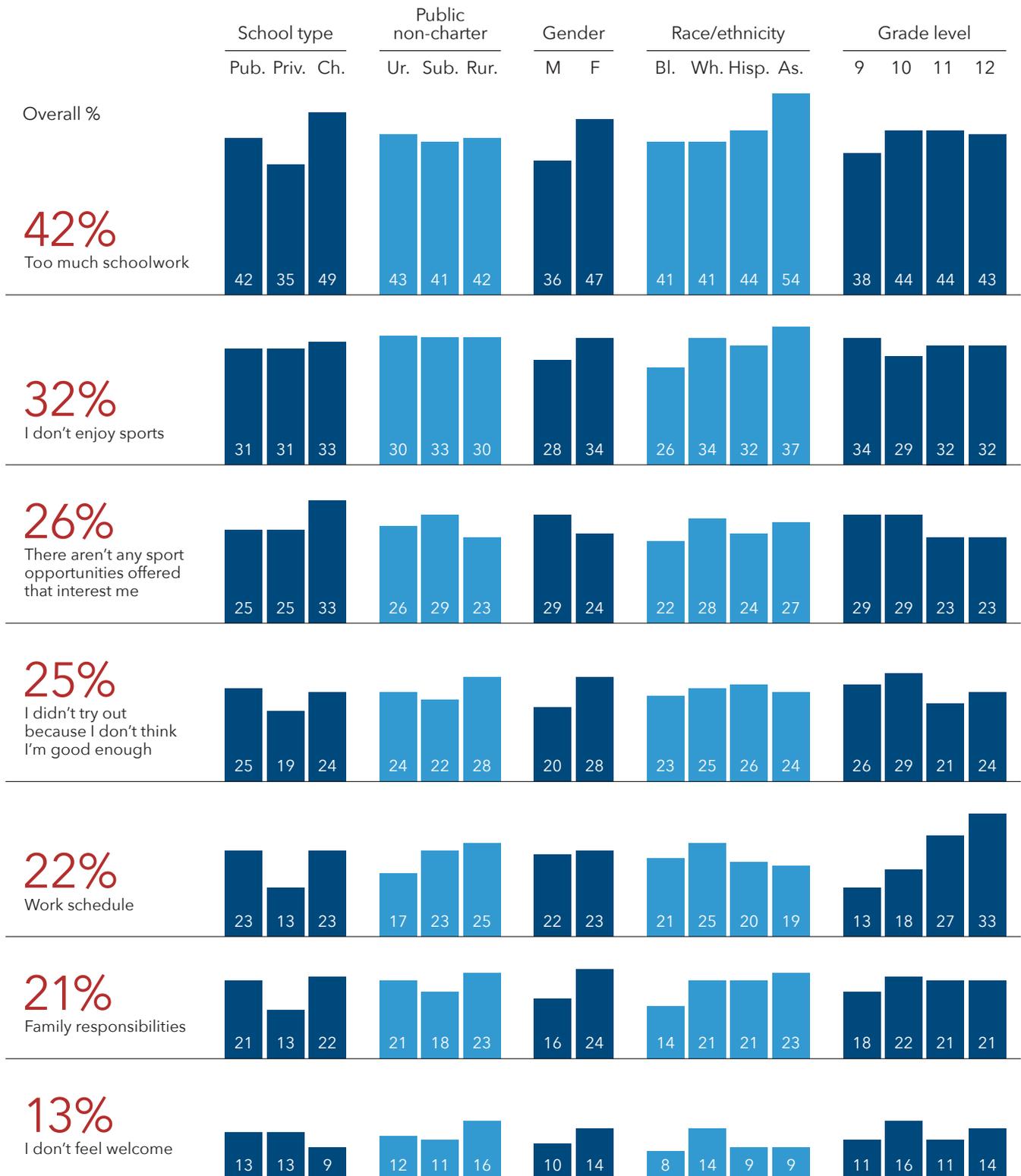
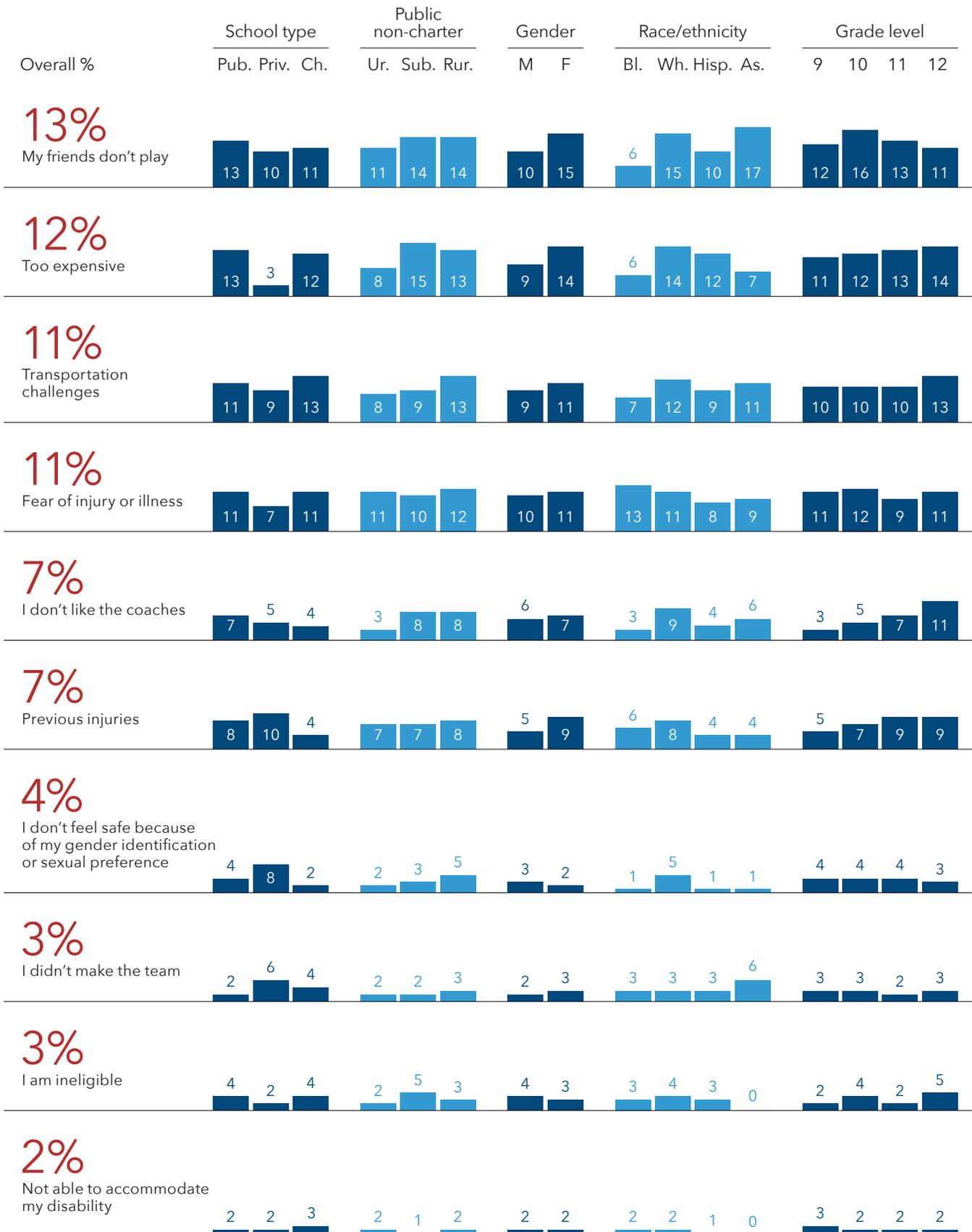


Figure 15: Why Students are Not Participating in High School Sports



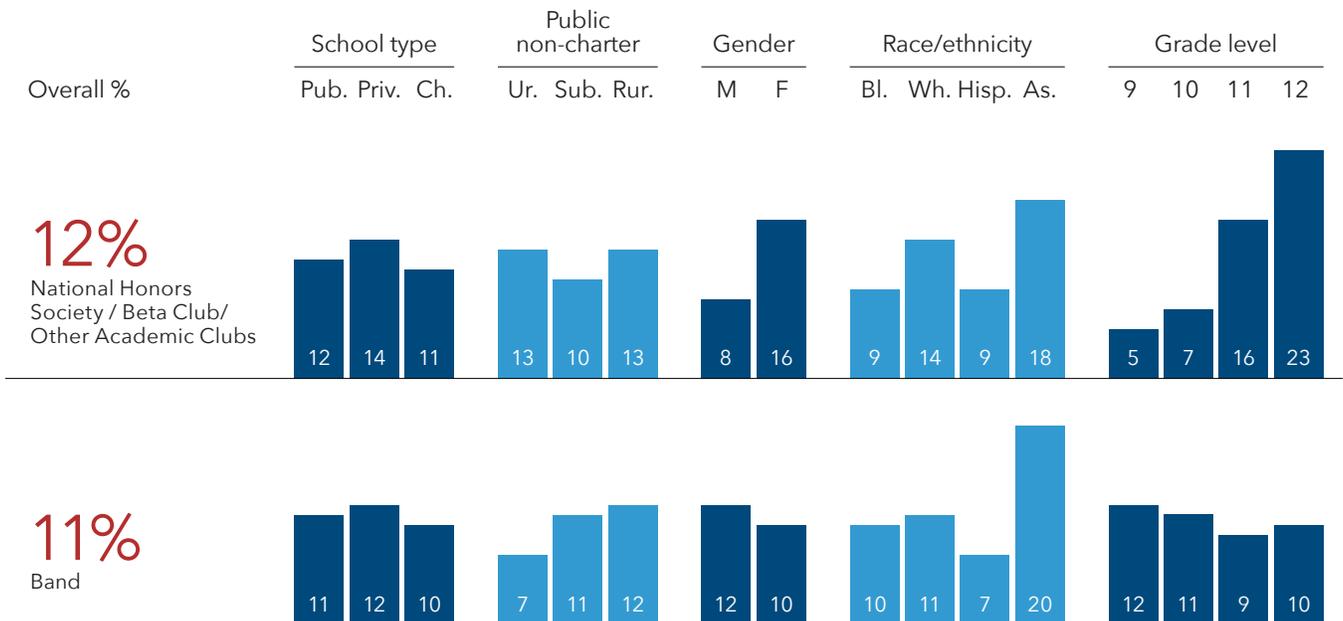


## Section 3: Participation in Activities

The next section looks at non-sport activities that students reported participating in, both at school and outside of school, as well as the types of physical activities in which they were interested in participating. For all figures in this section, some percentages will sum to less than 100% because students may not participate in any activity. Figure 16 looks at participation in activities within school by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race/ethnicity, and grade level.

Private schools tended to have the highest percentage of students reporting participation in the options listed for non-sport activities, while females reported greater participation in activities such as National Honor Society, Choir, and Student Council. Asian students tended to report a greater level of participation in all non-sport activities across the board.

**Figure 16: Participation in Non-Sport High School Activities**



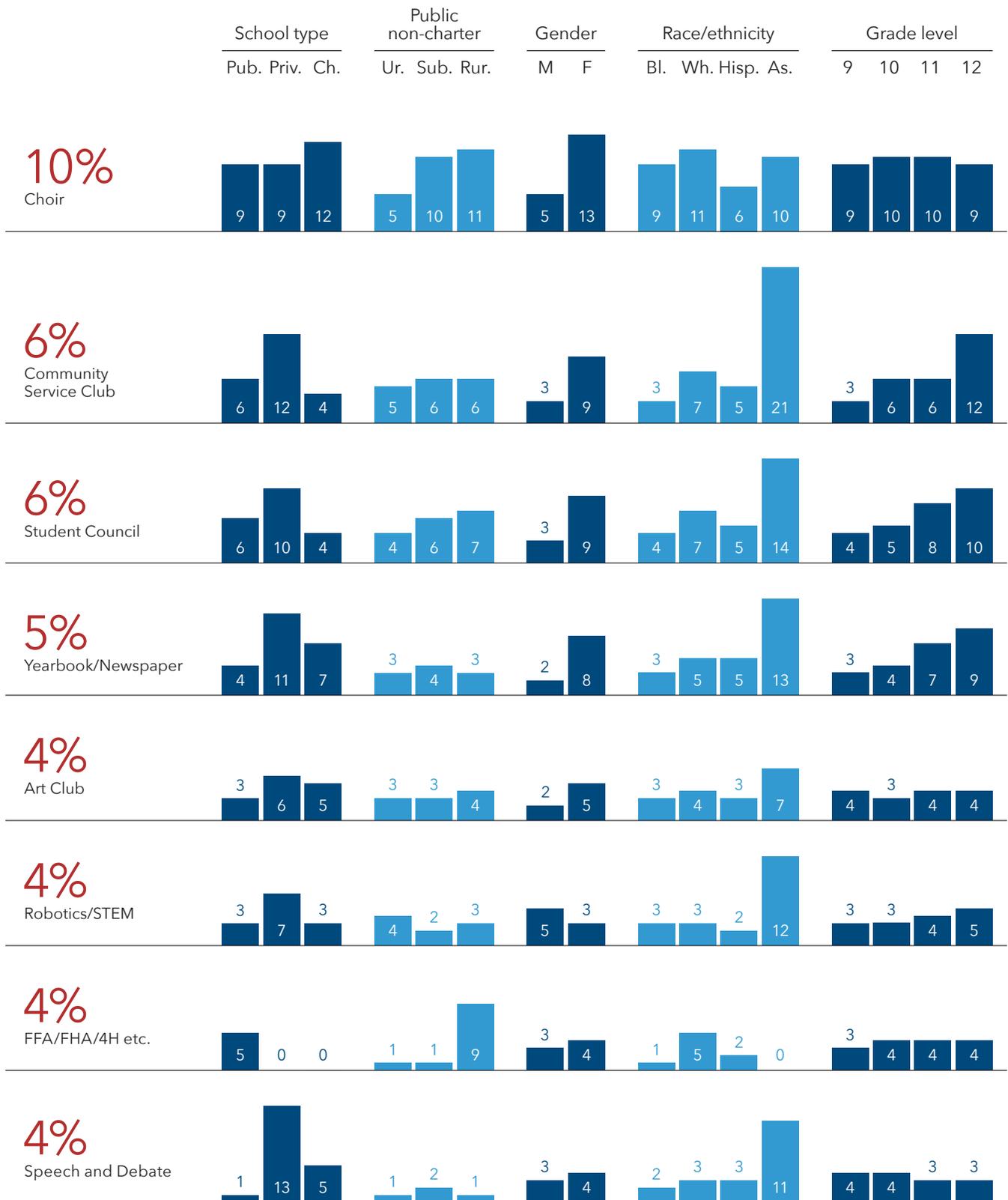
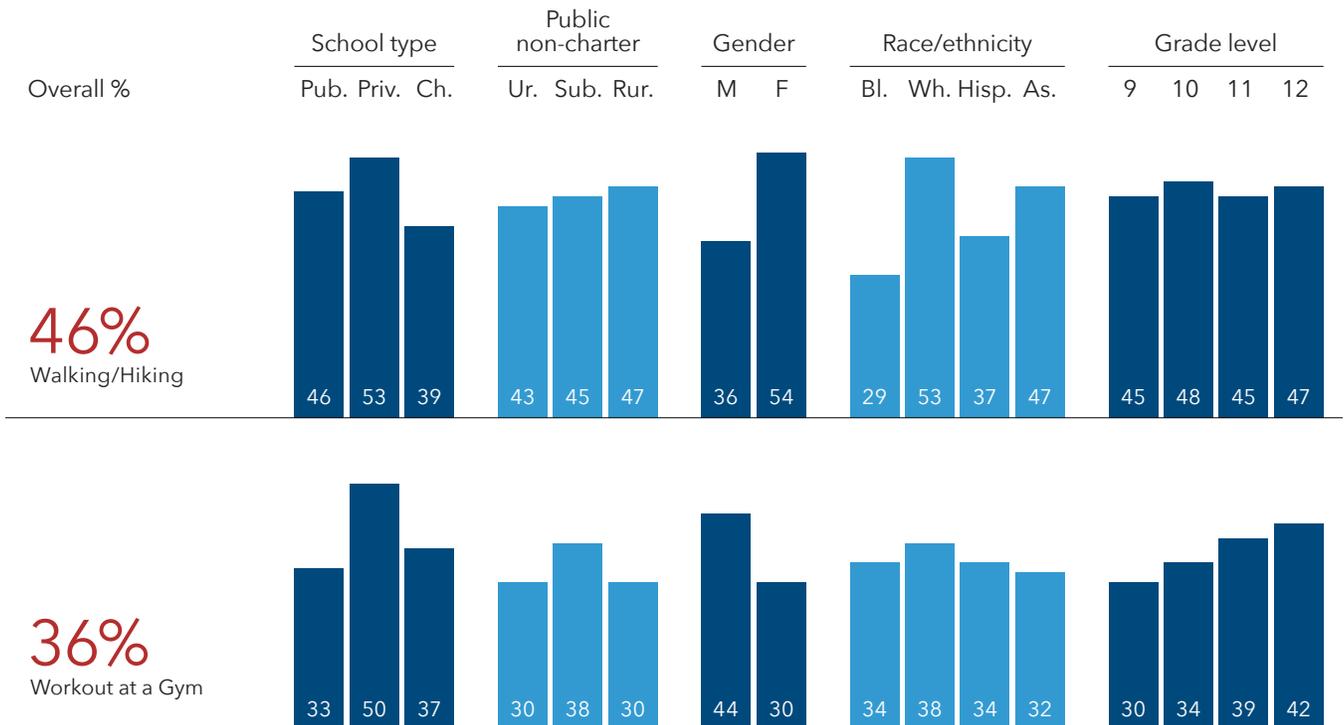


Figure 17 looks at participation in physical activities outside of school by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race/ethnicity, and grade level. The activities reported most frequently include walking/hiking (46%), working out at a gym (36%), pickup games (32%), riding bikes (32%), and jogging (30%). Across the board, students in private schools tended to report participating in these activities more frequently.

There were two notable differences by gender, with females more likely to report walking/hiking and males more likely to play in pickup games. For race/ethnicity, White students reported higher levels of activity for most choices, but were much higher for activities such as walking/hiking, riding bikes, swimming, jogging, and skiing.

**Figure 17: Participation in Non-Sport High School Activities**



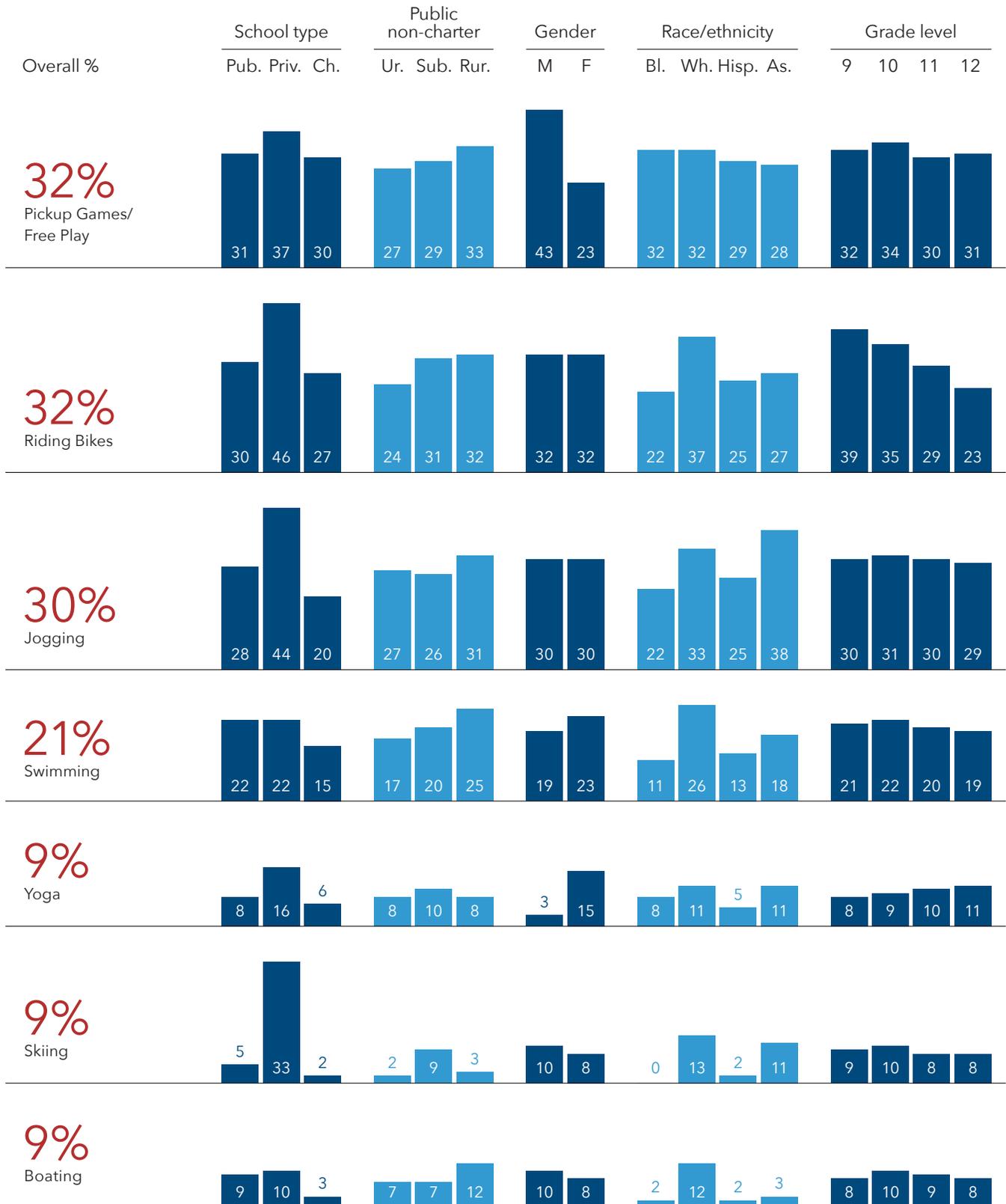
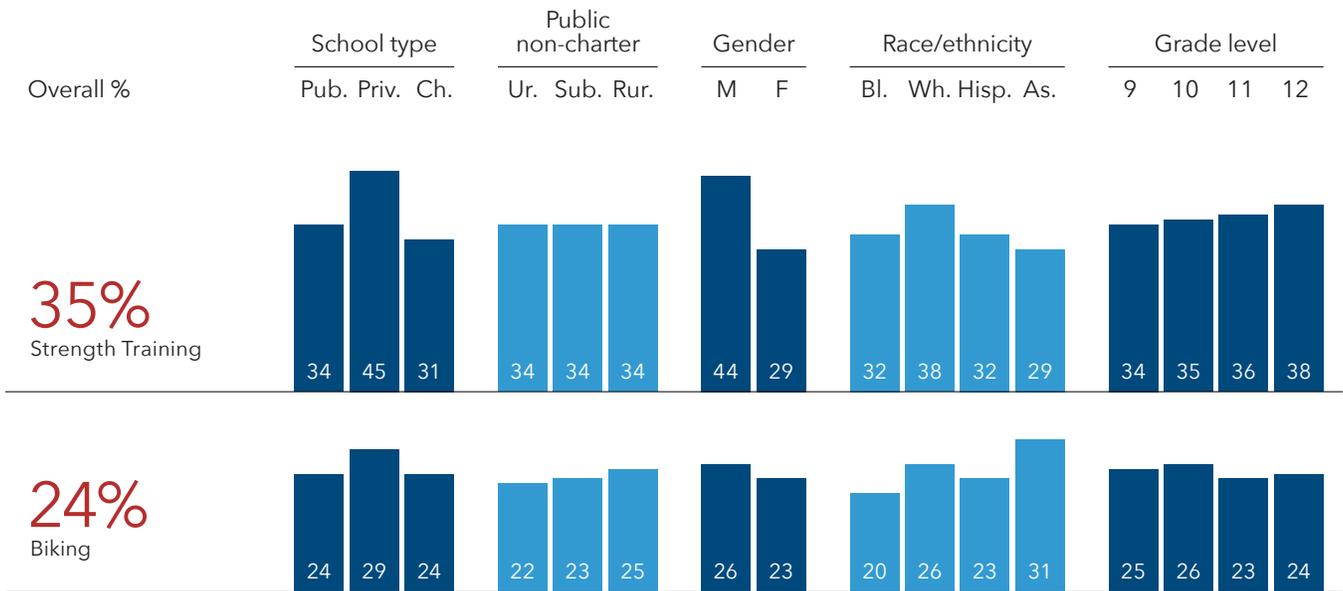
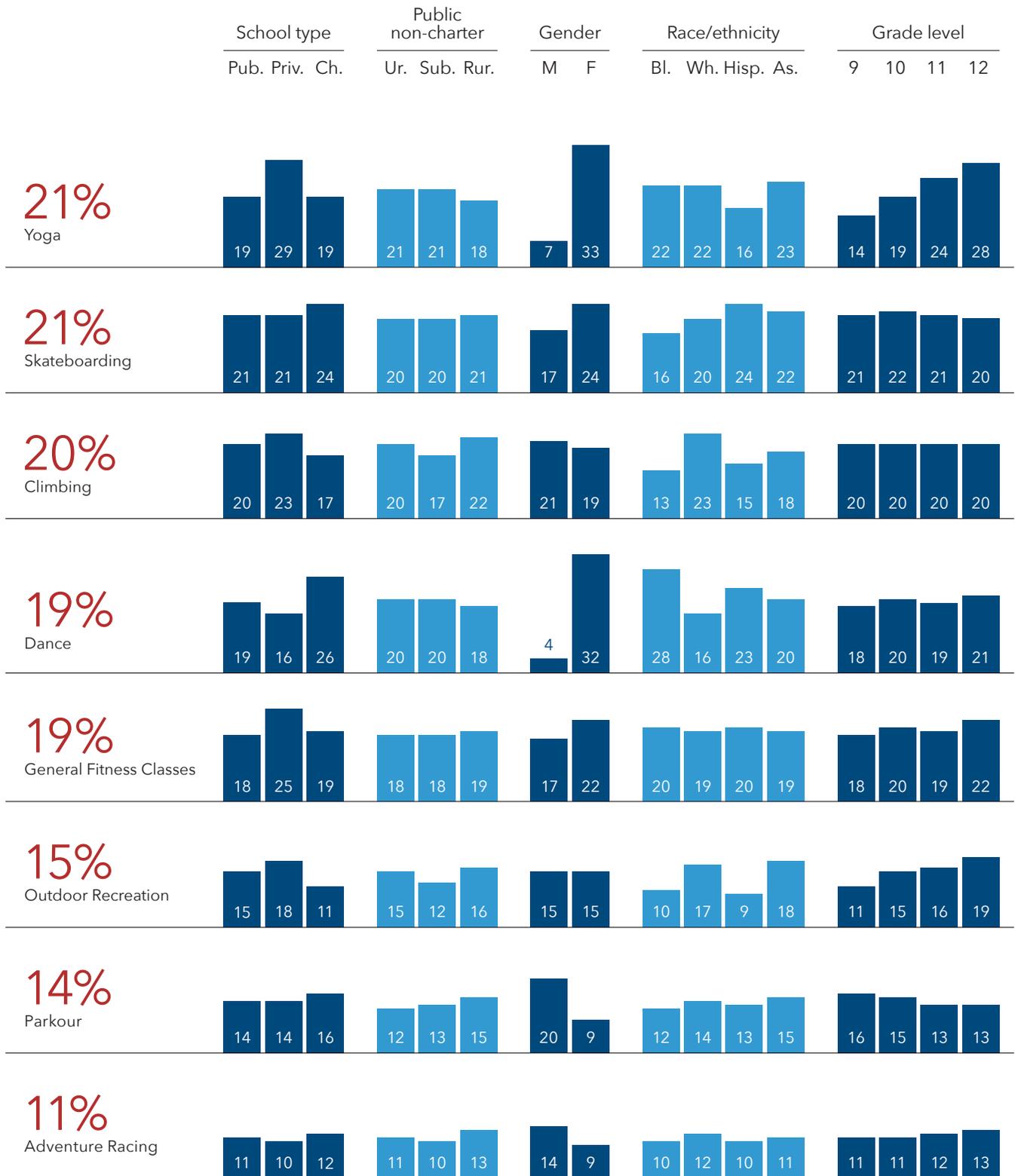


Figure 18 looks at the types of physical activities in which students were interested in participating by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. The most commonly reported activity of interest was strength training (35%), followed by biking (24%), skateboarding (21%), yoga (21%), and climbing (20%).

The most common activities of interest for females were yoga and dance, scoring much higher on both of these than males, but females were also more likely to request skateboarding than males (24% compared to 17%). Males showed a higher interest in activities such as parkour and strength training. There were fewer differences in interests by race/ethnicity, but two patterns that stood out were that White students had higher interest levels in outdoor activities and climbing and Black students were most likely to be interested in dance as an activity (28% vs 19% overall).

**Figure 18: Interest in Physical Activities**





## Section 4: Information about the School

The following section looks at student responses to items asking about the student's school. The first item looks at participation and satisfaction for PE classes offered by the school and the second set of items looks at responses for athletic personnel at the school.

Figure 19 looks at students' responses about their PE class by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. Students in private schools were much less likely to have taken a PE class. Further, there was a slightly higher percentage of students in charters reporting that playing a sport in PE class made them want to play that sport at the school. In addition, students in urban schools were more likely to report that they did not enjoy their high school PE class, while students in rural schools were more likely to report enjoying their PE class. For demographics, males tended to report enjoying PE classes more than females, and Asian students were more likely to report they did not enjoy PE classes than students of other races/ethnicities.

Figure 20 looks at student responses about athletic personnel at their school on topics ranging from nutrition and injury prevention to their relationship with coaches by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. The response scale used for this group of items was a five-point frequency scale, from Never

to Almost Always. To create an overall average by School Type, Urbanicity, Gender, or Grade Level, the scores for each item were averaged together to form a single score from one to five, with lower scores representing less frequency of the behavior described and higher scores representing a higher frequency. Scores across sectors were fairly similar, but charter school students reported a greater level of education on nutrition, especially in comparison to private schools.

For gender, males tended to rate questions higher than females for most items in the scales. The average for males tended to be higher to a greater degree for questions related to nutrition, encouraging athletes to play multiple sports, and forming relationships with coaches. Responses across race/ethnicity were similar, but Black and Hispanic students reported that athletic personnel provided information about nutrition more frequently than students of other races/ethnicities.

One trend that stood out for students at different grade levels was that, as students got older, they were less likely to agree with statements such as "Coaches at my school value every member of the team" and "Coaches at my school have positive relationships with all of their players," which may reflect differentiated treatment in upper grades as students reach higher levels of competition (e.g., varsity instead of junior varsity) for stronger athletes or members of the team.

Figure 19: Ratings for PE Classes

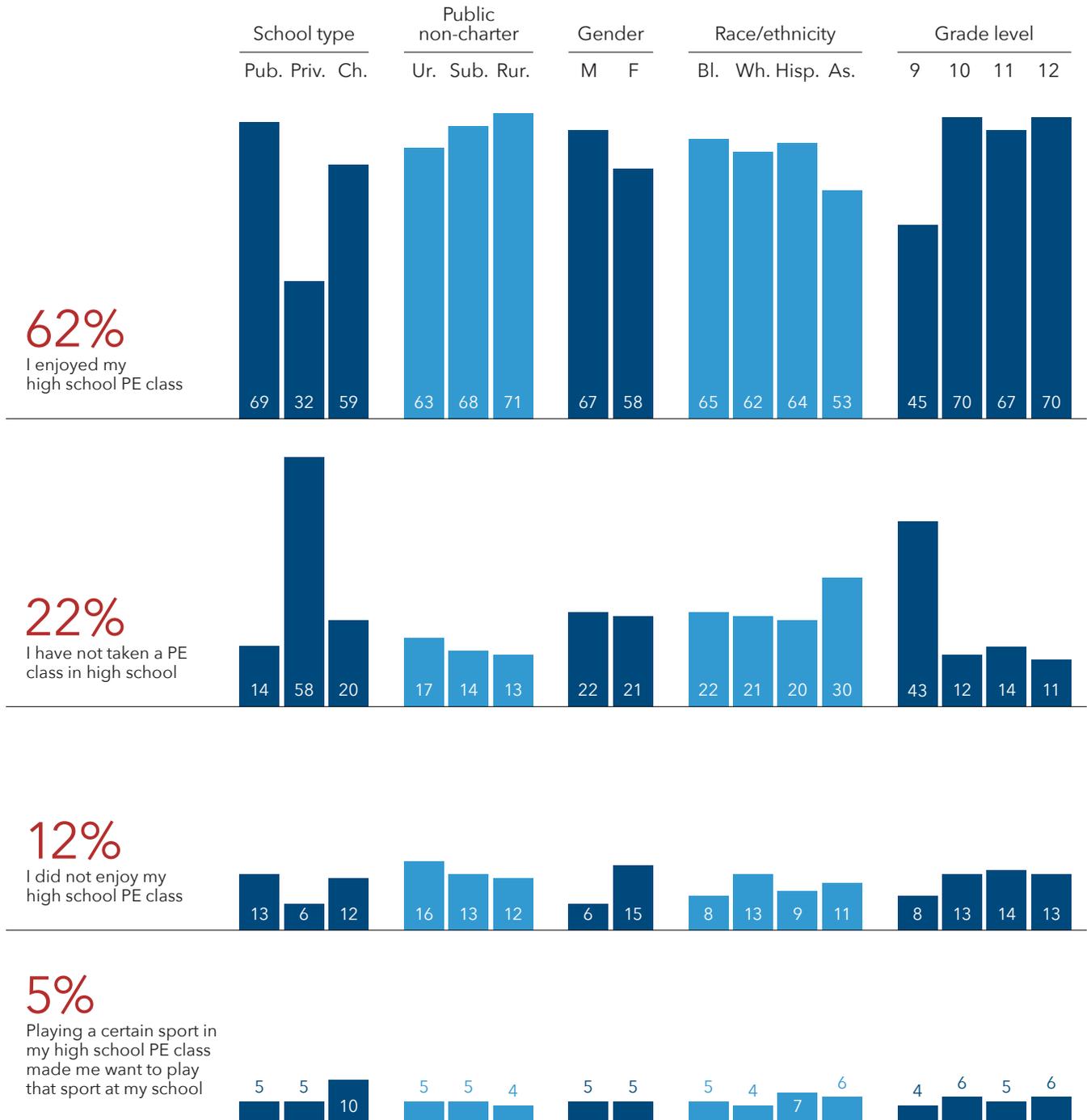
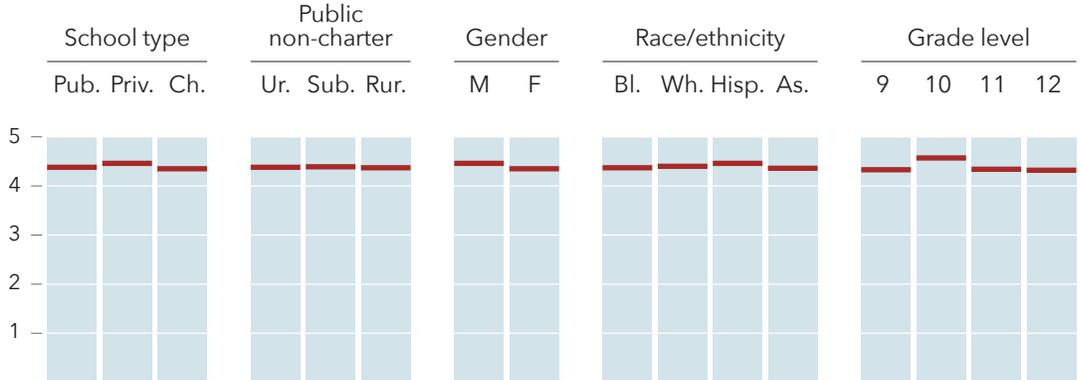


Figure 20: Perceptions of Athletic Personnel at High School

1 - Never; 2 - Rarely; 3 - Sometimes; 4 - Often; 5 - Almost Always

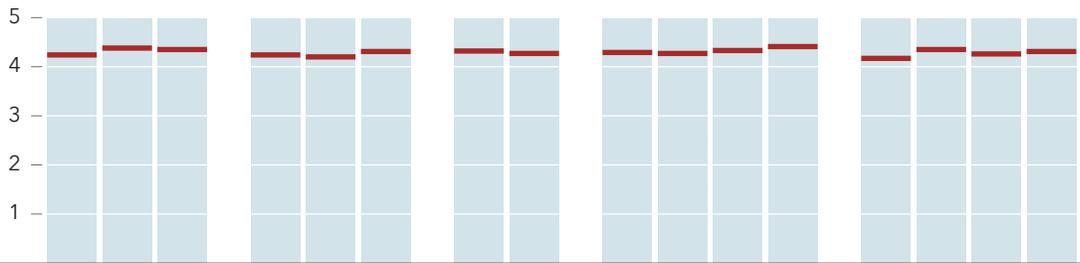
### 4.4

I enjoy playing sports at my school



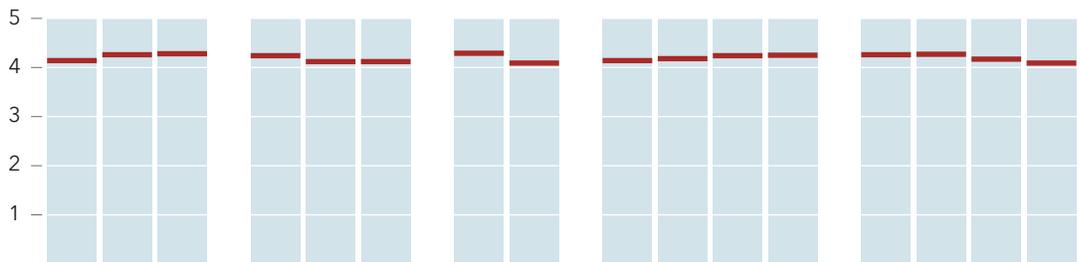
### 4.29

Athletic personnel at my school take steps to protect me from physical injury as much as possible



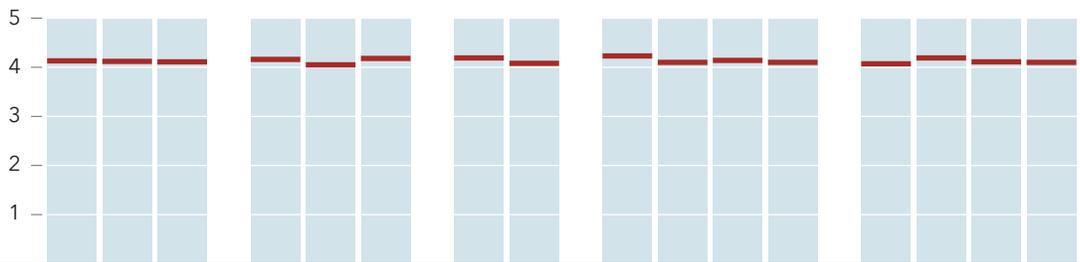
### 4.18

Coaches at my school have positive relationships with all of their players



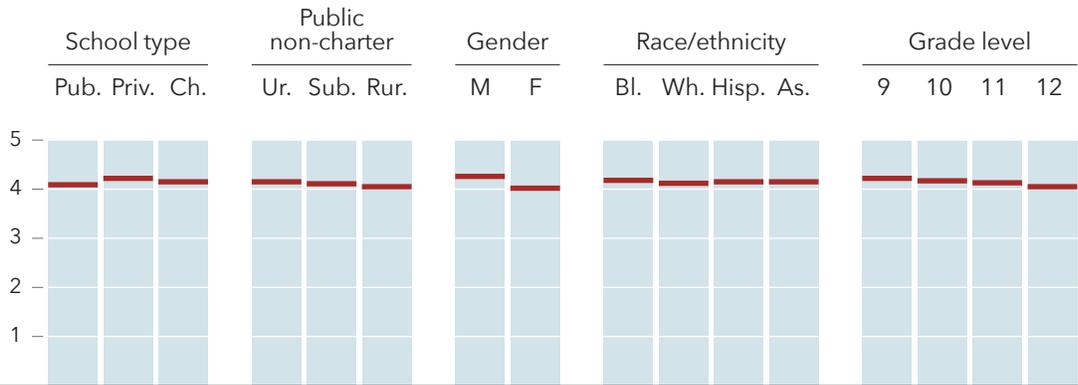
### 4.13

Athletic personnel at my school consistently take steps for heat and hydration that keep me safe



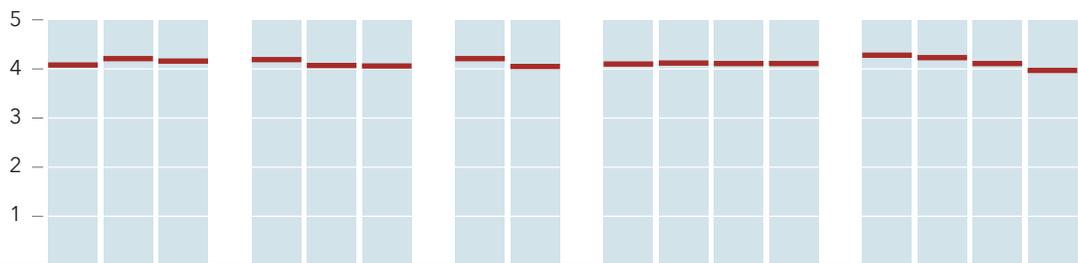
# 4.13

Coaches at my school help me feel good about myself as a person



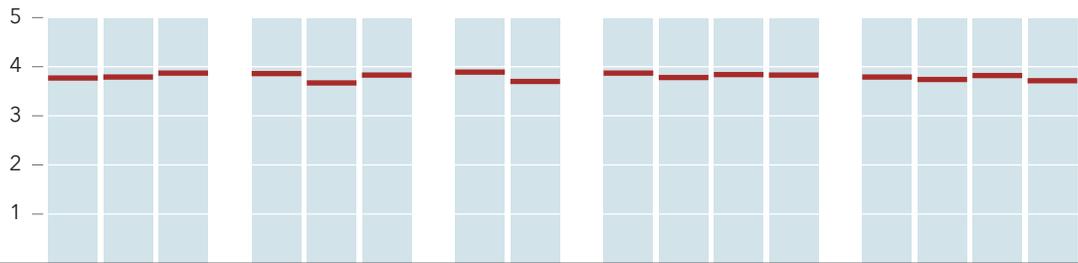
# 4.12

Coaches at my school value every member of the team



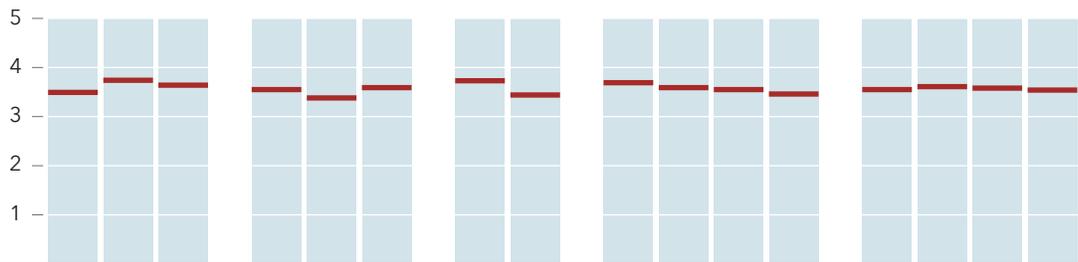
# 3.79

Athletic personnel at my school take steps to make sure our team is safe from bullying



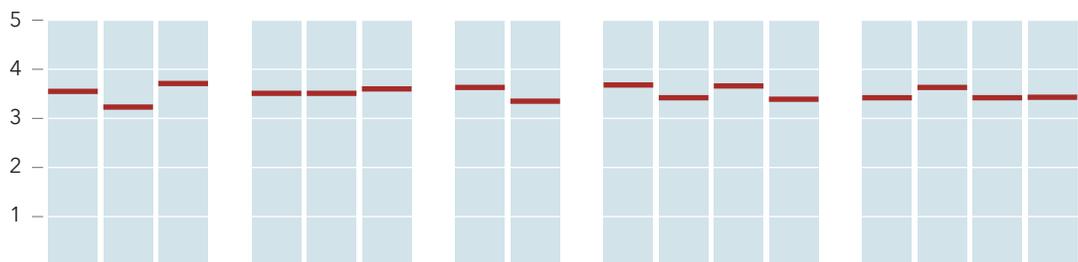
# 3.57

Athletic personnel at my school encourage me to play multiple sports instead of just focusing on one sport



# 3.48

Athletic personnel at my school educate me on good nutrition



## Section 5: Questions Related to COVID-19

The next section reports on how students felt about their experience during COVID-19 between September 2020 and March 2021. It begins with questions about concerns and how schools can reduce these concerns. The section then includes information about how students' interest in sport has changed since COVID-19 as well as what they are missing the most about sports.

Figure 21 looks at student concern for catching or transmitting COVID-19 by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. Roughly two-thirds of students were either very concerned or a little concerned. There was a strong difference between rural and other schools, with rural students having the highest percentage of being “not concerned” about COVID-19 (43.4% versus 34.4% overall) and urban students having

the highest percentage for “very concerned” (31.0% versus 22.4% overall).

Males (42.7%) were much more likely to report feeling “not concerned” (and subsequently less likely to report being “very concerned”) than females (29.4%). These differences also showed up for race/ethnicity, with Black (36.9%) and Asian (37.2%) students much more likely than White students (15.4%) to report being very concerned.

The next question looked at efforts that schools could take to reduce concerns for catching or transmitting COVID-19 while playing sports. Only students that responded “very concerned” or “a little concerned” about catching or transmitting COVID-19 were asked this question, and students were able to select multiple responses, so the sum of the percentages in the figures below is greater than 100.

**Figure 21: Concern for Catching or Transmitting COVID-19 by Playing Sports at your School**

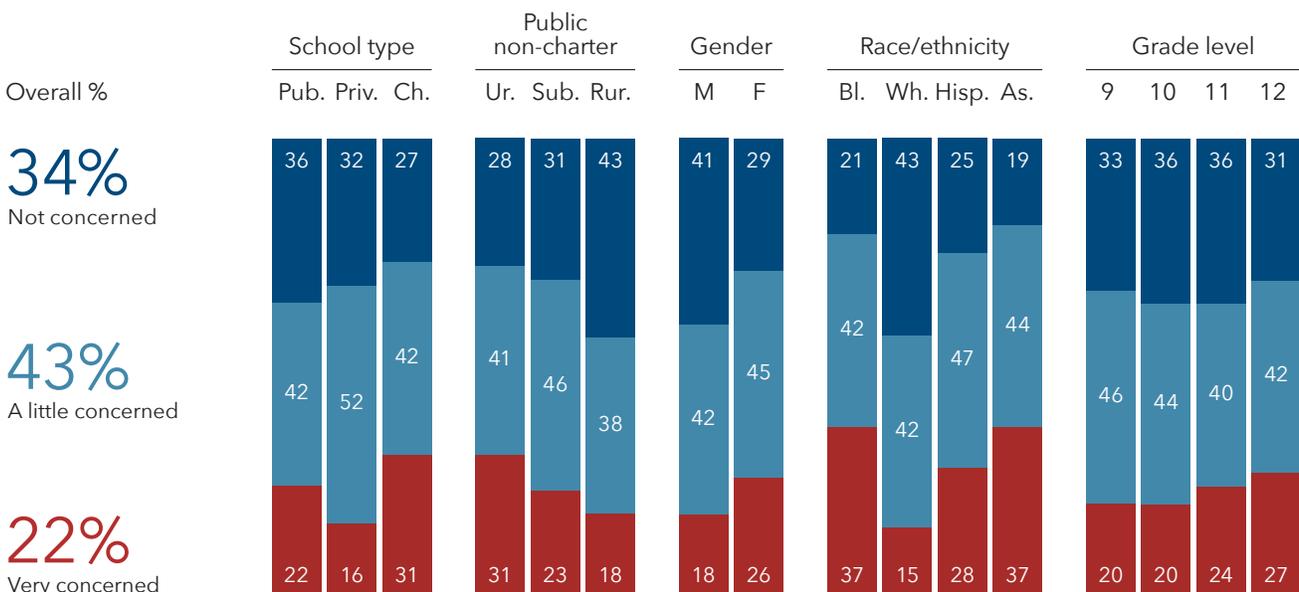


Figure 22 outlines the various practices that students reported as having potential for reducing concerns by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. Overall, protective

equipment was the most common answer across each school type (58% overall), followed slightly by modifying practice (43%) and holding practice with small groups (37%). This trend occurred for race/ethnicity, gender, and grade level as well.

**Figure 22: How High Schools Can Reduce Concern for COVID-19**

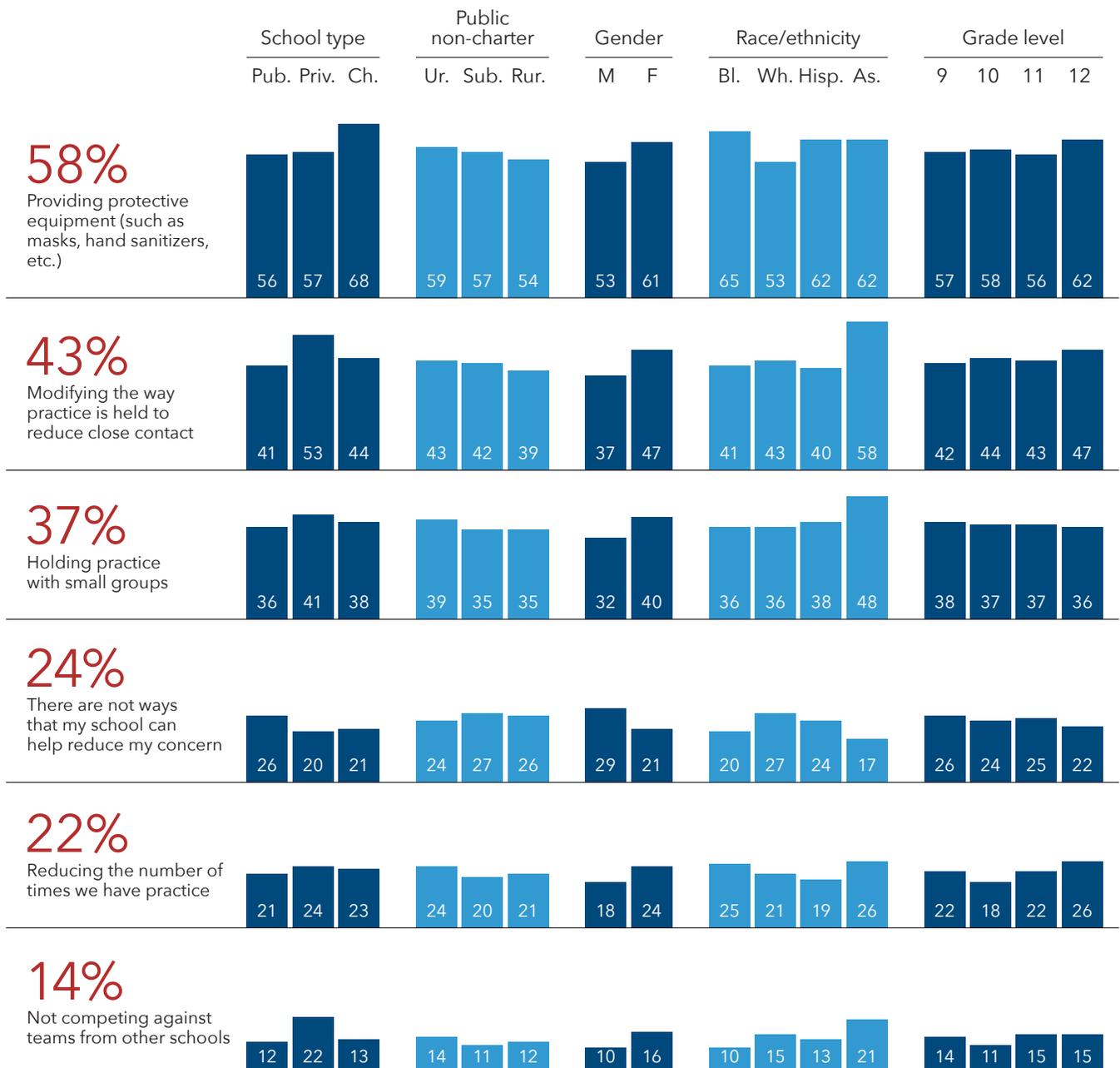


Figure 23 looks at how students' interest in sports has changed since COVID-19 by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. Overall, the most common answer across the board was that interest had stayed the same. Private school students reported the greatest

increases, while charter school students noted the greatest decreases.

There were not large differences in these responses by gender, but Black and White students were more likely to report their interest had grown than Hispanic or Asian students.

**Figure 23: How Interest in Sports Has Changed Since COVID-19**

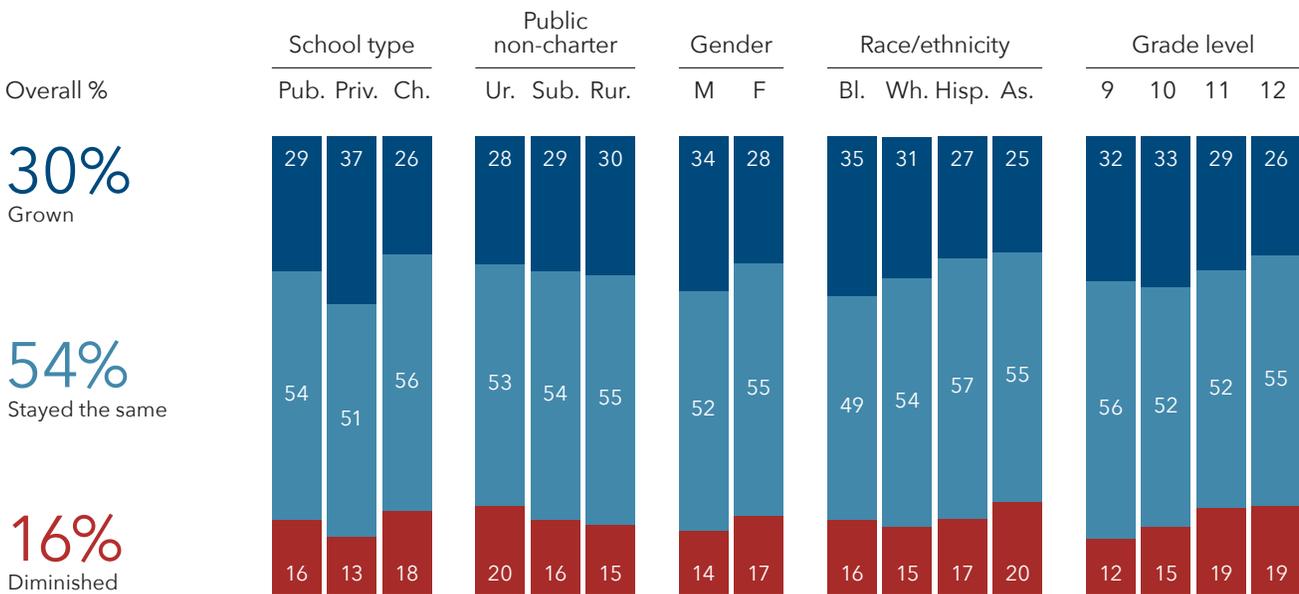
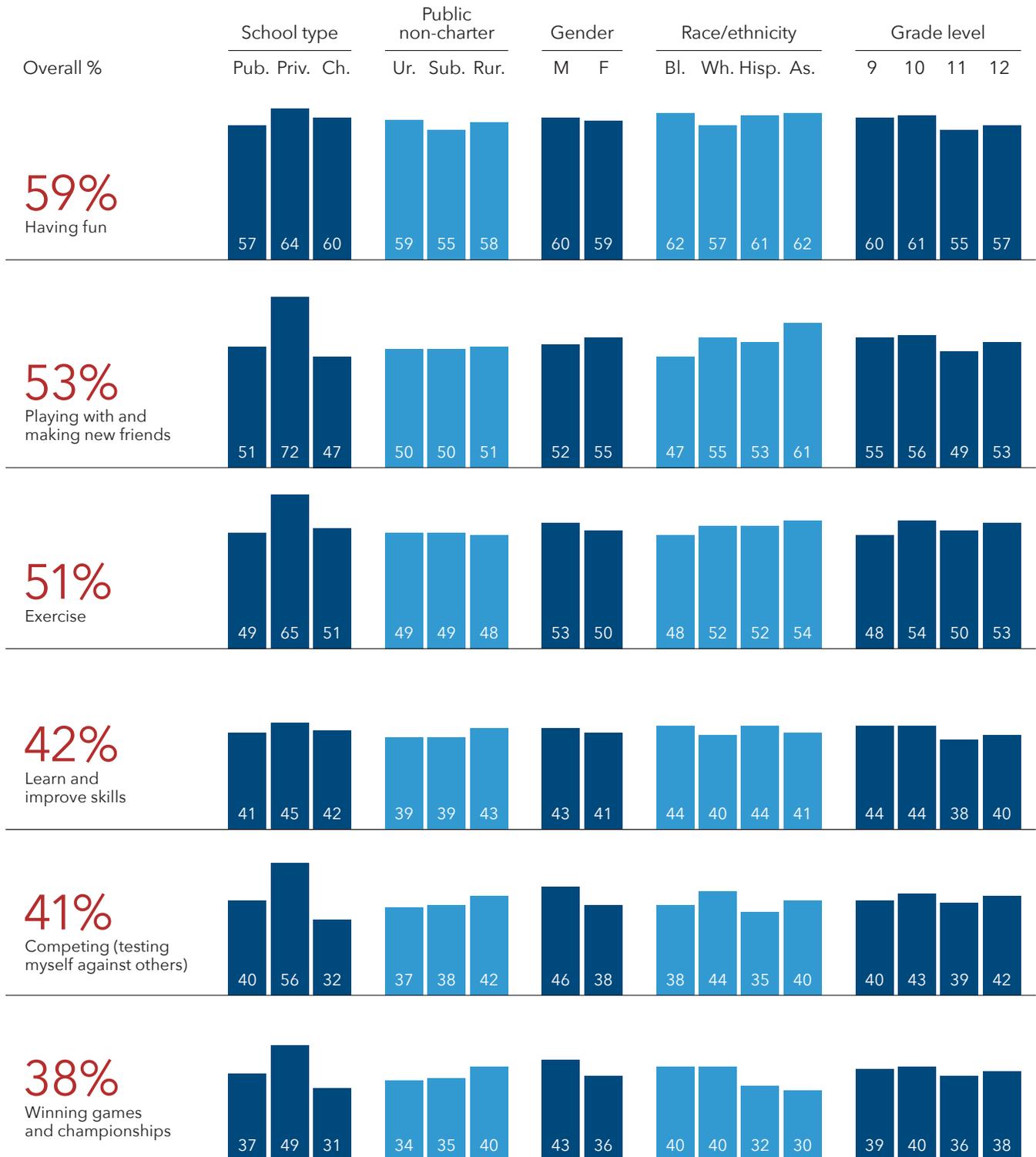


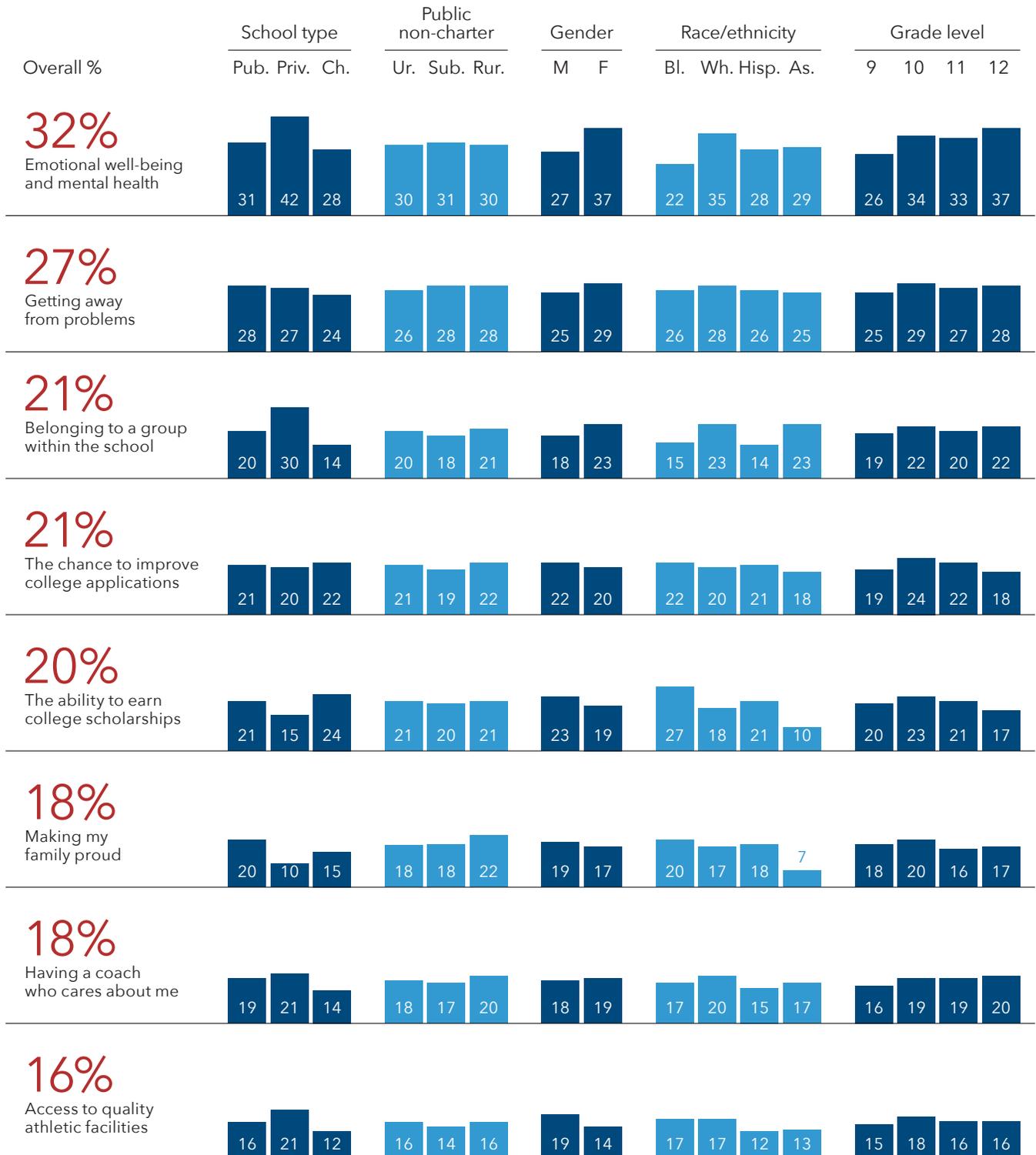
Figure 24 looks at what students are missing about sports since the cancellation of many sports due to COVID-19. For these figures, percentages will sum to greater than 100%, as students were able to select multiple response options for all questions. Figure 24 looks at the breakdown by school type (Public, Private and Charter), as well as urbanicity (Urban, Suburban, and Rural), gender and race, and grade level. Similar to the original motivations reported for playing sports, the most common element students reported missing about sports was having fun (59%), followed by playing with and making new friends (53%) and exercise (51%).

Private school students tended to report higher percentages for social reasons of missing sports.

The earlier reported differences about motivations for sport across gender showed up in this item as well, with males more likely to be missing the competition and winning games, while females were more likely to report missing benefits to emotional/mental health. Similar trends for race/ethnicity reported earlier in motivation for playing sports (e.g., Black students missing the chance to earn scholarships, White students missing for mental health reasons) emerged in what students were missing about sports as well.

**Figure 24: What Students are Missing About Sports Since COVID-19**





## Discussion

Overall, the most popular sports students reported having previously played were basketball (24% of students), soccer (21%), track and field (19%), volleyball (17%) and football (16%). The most requested sport was archery (13%), followed by requests for gymnastics, lacrosse, and bowling (each at 7%). By race/ethnicity, the most requested sport for Black students was gymnastics (13% compared to the overall average of 7%) with this sport being especially requested by females. The most requested sport for other races/ethnicities was archery for White (13%), Hispanic (10%), and Asian students (15%).

The top responses for why students engaged in sports were having fun (81%), exercise (79%), learning and improving skills (66%), playing with and making new friends (64%), and competing (testing myself against others) (59%) and winning games (53%). Responses for motivation to play sports varied by gender and race/ethnicity, with males showing higher rates for winning games (60% for males, 48% for female) and competing (64% for males, 54% for females), while females were more likely to report mental health and well-being (56% for females, 41% for males), belonging to a group (38% for females, 29% for males) and college applications (46% for females, 37% for males). Black students were much more likely than other races/ethnicities to report playing sports for college scholarships (50% versus overall average of 39%) while White students were more likely to report belonging to a group. The most common reasons for not participating in sports included schoolwork (42%), not enjoying sports (32%), not having sports that are of interest (26%), and not trying out because students didn't think they were good enough to make the team (25%).

The most commonly reported physical activity in which students have an interest in participating was strength training (35%), followed by biking (24%), skateboarding (21%), yoga (21%), and climbing (20%). The most commonly reported physical activity in which female students have an interest in participating were yoga and dance, scoring much higher on both of these than males, but they also were more likely to report skateboarding (24% for females compared to 17% for males). Males showed a higher interest in activities such as parkour and strength training. There were fewer differences in interest by race/ethnicity, but two patterns that stood out were that White students had higher interest levels in outdoor activities and climbing and Black students were most likely to be interested in dance as an activity (28% vs 19% overall).

From the scales related to athletic personnel at the school, as student got older, they were less likely to agree with statements such as “Coaches at my school value every member of the team” and “Coaches at my school have positive relationships with all of their players.”

Concerns about COVID-19 differed strongly by urbanicity, race/ethnicity, and gender. There was a strong difference between rural and other schools, with rural students having the highest percentage of being “not concerned” about COVID-19 (43.4% versus 34.4% overall) and urban students having the highest percentage for “very concerned” (31.0% versus 22.4% overall). Males (42.7%) were much more likely to report feeling “not concerned” (and subsequently less likely to report being “very concerned”) than females (29.4%).

These differences also showed up for race/ethnicity, with Black (36.9%) and Asian (37.2%) students much more likely than White students (15.4%) to report being very concerned.

Sports have obviously been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but not surprisingly, students tended to report similar elements they were missing about sports to the original motivations reported for playing sports, such as having fun (59%), playing with and making new friends (53%), and exercise (51%).

### Areas for Future Research

There are several questions that warrant further investigation. Given the number of demographic variables and possible differences that exist within each sport (e.g., do these overall findings still apply for just those participating in soccer?), there are countless research questions that can be answered using these results, each of which could lead to a full report by itself. However, this initial report has identified two key areas that can inform potential programmatic and policy-related decision. Each of these is detailed below:

#### Reasons for Participation by Sport

The overall reasons that students listed for participation in sports were having fun (81%), exercise (79%), learning and improving skills (66%), playing with and making new friends (64%), and competing (testing myself against others) (59%). These findings have implications for decisions about training for coaches and the content of practices. However, while this report provided overall results for the motivations students listed, there is potential to differentiate trainings for coaches by sport. To inform how trainings should be differentiated, it would be useful to investigate how these motivations vary across various sports.

A further breakdown for reasons of participation by sport could also factor in race/ethnicity and gender. The current analysis showed that reasons for participation in sports varied by both gender and race/ethnicity. One example is that Black students were more likely to report that earning a potential college scholarship was a motivating factor in participation. However, these motivations may show further variation by sport (e.g., does this trend stay consistent for both football and other sports that may not have as many scholarships?) and further analysis could inform both recruiting efforts and training programs.

#### Coaching Practices to Develop Social and Emotional Skills by Sport

As students moved into higher grades, they were less likely to agree with statements such as “Coaches at my school value every member of the team” and “Coaches at my school have positive relationships with all of their players”. While this drop may reflect more competitive levels of sports at upper levels (e.g., varsity instead of junior varsity), it also may indicate that different ways of communicating that coaches value players or different methods of relationship building are necessary in upper grades. An analysis of these questions by sport as well as qualitative interviews asking students specially about these practices would provide insight into whether this was a trend by type of sport (e.g., ones that get more competitive or are based on playing time) or if it was a trend that was consistent across all sports. In either situation, training for coaches on SEL practices could be differentiated by either grade level or by sport to better meet the needs of their particular athletes.



