

NAIS RESEARCH

2014 NAIS Report on the High School Survey of Student Engagement



National Association
of Independent Schools

www.nais.org

About NAIS

The National Association of Independent Schools provides services to more than 1,700 schools and associations of schools in the United States and abroad, including 1,400 nonprofit, private K-12 schools in the U.S. that are self-determining in mission and program and are governed by independent boards. For more information, visit www.nais.org.

NAIS conducts research among schools nationally and then provides you with targeted, digested reports you can use to evaluate your own practices. Our research clearinghouse also identifies external research relevant to independent schools and helps you understand how to use the findings in your work.

See the full suite of NAIS research reports at www.nais.org.

2014 NAIS Report on the High School Survey of Student Engagement

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Background

Methodology

Key Findings

▶ Dimension 1: Cognitive/Intellectual/Academic Engagement Items

- Engagement with Class Activities and Assignments
- Student Engagement in Classroom Discussions
- Student Creativity in Classroom Work
- Attitude Toward Learning
- Level of Effort in Academic Pursuits
- Classes Challenging Students to Their Full Potential
- Class Boredom
- School's Contribution to Skill Development
- Cognitive Engagement with Academic Goals, Future Plans, and Aspirations

▶ Dimension 2: Social/Behavioral/Participatory Engagement Items

- School's Contribution to Student Social Behavior
- Student Participation in School-Sponsored Activities
- Reasons for Going to School

▶ Dimension 3: Emotional Engagement Items

- Motivations for Learning
- Teachers as Motivators for Learning
- Student Excitement About Classes
- Quality of Students' School Work
- Relevance of Current Work Beyond School
- School's Contribution to Student Values
- Feeling Good as a Student
- Positive Relationships with Adults in School
- Positive Relationships with Other Students
- Students Been Picked On or Bullied
- Students Witnessing Acts of Bullying
- Student Opinions on School Rules
- Emotional Engagement with the School
- School as a Reason for Going to School
- Selecting Their Current School if Given a Choice

▶ Student Demographics

- Sex
- Race and Ethnicity
- Parent Highest Schooling Level
- Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility
- Current Grade
- High School Grades
- Type of Classes Taken by Students

Executive Summary

The High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE), administered by Indiana University, is designed to investigate the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of high school students about their school work. This report includes the results of the second year of a three-year pilot study sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the NAIS Commission on Accreditation. The results from students at 59 NAIS member schools that participated in the pilot are organized by the three dimensions of engagement measured by HSSSE.

Dimension 1: Cognitive/Intellectual/Academic Engagement Items

Students taking HSSSE were asked about the classroom activities and assignments that most interest or engage them. Discussions and debates, followed by projects and lessons that involve technology, and group projects are the most engaging activities for NAIS students.

Students are confident that they have the skills and abilities to complete their school work. They enjoy being creative in school and recognize that they put a lot of effort into the work done at school. NAIS students indicated that their school work stimulates their curiosity to learn other things and that they enjoy discussions where answers are not clear and assignments that demand a lot of mental effort. Furthermore, 71 percent of NAIS students agreed with the statement “I go to school because of what I learn in classes.”

HSSSE also included information on the level of effort and participation that students dedicate to their academic work. For instance, 72 percent of NAIS students often attend classes with completed assignments; 65 percent of them often receive feedback from teachers; and 60 percent often ask or answer questions in class. Sixty-four percent of NAIS students reported giving their maximum effort in most or all of their classes, and another 67 percent of students indicated that most or all their classes challenge them to their full potential. Students were also asked whether they feel bored in classes. Eighty-two percent of NAIS students mentioned that

they are sometimes or often bored in class, with the main reason being that the material was not interesting.

Students mentioned the role played by their schools in the development of some academic skills. For instance, 62 percent of NAIS students indicated that their schools have contributed very much to the development of their writing skills, while another 60 percent indicated that their schools contributed very much to the development of their critical thinking skills.

Students also discussed how their schools play a role in their future plans. While 70 percent of NAIS high school students go to school because they want to graduate and go to college, 56 percent attend school to learn skills to obtain a good job.

Dimension 2: Social/Behavioral/Participatory Engagement Items

Fifty-four percent of NAIS high school students reported that their schools have contributed very much to teaching them to treat people with respect. Also, 28 percent of NAIS students said that their schools helped them learn about the lives of other people in the community outside of the school.

While a vast majority of students said that they go to school because of their friends or parents, 57 percent of NAIS students also said that they go to school because of their teachers. Fifty-eight percent of NAIS student reported that they participate in four hours or more of school-sponsored activities per week.

Dimension 3: Emotional Engagement Items

Ninety-two percent of NAIS students said that they are motivated by their desire to succeed in the world outside of school. Eighty-eight percent of them are motivated by the desire to get good grades, and 78 percent are motivated by the desire to learn. Seventy-five percent of NAIS students also mentioned that they are motivated by teachers who encourage them.

One of the reasons parents send their children to independent schools is the focus on character

development and values. Seventy-eight percent of NAIS students indicated that their schools contributed to the development of their personal beliefs and values.

Students also described their relationships with adults in their schools. Ninety-three percent of NAIS students feel supported by teachers, while 81 percent feel supported by the school leadership. Large numbers of students (88 percent) indicated that there is at least one adult in their school who knows them well.

Since one of the main reasons students go to school is that their friends go there, it was encouraging to learn that NAIS students feel safe at school (95 percent), supported by other students (88 percent), and comfortable about being themselves (85 percent). Students also reported on bullying at their schools. While 57 percent of students from NAIS schools indicated that they have never been bullied, only 33 percent mentioned that they have never witnessed acts of bullying.

HSSSE also probed students on their emotional engagement with their schools. Ninety-one percent of NAIS students feel good about being in their high schools; another 75 percent reported that they are an important part of their school community. Sixty-three percent of NAIS students said that they go to school because they enjoy being in school, while 77 percent indicated that, given the choice, they would choose their current school.

Student Demographics

Finally, the last section of this report includes demographic information on students. The majority of NAIS students who participated in HSSSE are females (57 percent). More than half of the students are Caucasian (58 percent), with the second largest group being multiracial students (12 percent).

More than half of the parents of the NAIS students surveyed have a master's, doctorate, or other advanced degree, and only 11 percent of NAIS students said that they are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

NAIS students represented the four high school grades, and 49 percent of them reported receiving mostly As and Bs at school. Thirty-three percent of NAIS students are enrolled in honors classes, while another 33 percent take regular classes.

Background

During the summer of 2012, NAIS and the NAIS Commission on Accreditation launched a three-year pilot study on the use of the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) among independent schools. The HSSSE (pronounced “Hessie”) project serves three primary purposes: to work with teachers and school administrators to use data to improve practices (i.e., teaching and learning); to help educators explore, understand, and strengthen student engagement; and to conduct rigorous research on issues of student engagement. The project is managed on the Indiana University Bloomington campus by the Center for Evaluation & Education Policy (CEEP), a nationally recognized leader in program evaluation and nonpartisan policy research.

The pilot goals include helping schools assess their effectiveness in providing social/emotional support for academic success, developing a way for schools to comply with learning assessment standards of accreditation without using standardized achievement tests, and capturing data that show the value-added experience of an independent school education.

This report includes the results of the second year of the pilot study. In spring 2014, 13,261 students from 59 NAIS member schools from 23 different states located in all regions of the United States completed HSSSE. Participating schools ranged in size from 13 to 912 students.

Methodology

The information in this report is organized by the three dimensions of engagement measured by HSSSE within schools:

- **Cognitive/Intellectual/Academic Engagement:** Describes students' efforts, investment, and strategies for learning — the work students do and the ways students go about their work. This dimension can be described as “engagement of the mind.”
- **Social/Behavioral/Participatory Engagement:** Captures students' actions in social, extracurricular, and nonacademic school activities, including interactions with other students — the ways in which students interact within the school community. This dimension can be thought of as “engagement in the life of the school.”
- **Emotional Engagement:** Emphasizes students' feelings of connection (or *disconnection*) to their school — how students feel about where they are in school, the ways and workings of the school, and the people within their school. This dimension can be described as “engagement of the heart.”

The NAIS responses are compared with those of 11,848 students from 21 public schools (including charter, alternative, and magnet schools) who participated in HSSSE in spring 2013. The public schools represent 10 states, mostly from the Midwest and Northeast regions of the country.

In some instances, totals may add to more or less than 100 percent due to rounding or to the fact that some students did not answer the question.

This report was written by Amada Torres, vice president of studies, insights, and research at NAIS.

Key Findings

Dimension 1:

Cognitive/Intellectual/Academic Engagement Items

The first of the dimensions of engagement measured by HSSSE is cognitive, intellectual, and academic engagement. The following findings describe students' effort, investment, and strategies for learning, as well as the work students do and the ways students go about their work.

Engagement with Class Activities and Assignments

Since research indicates a connection between instructional methods and student engagement, students taking HSSSE were asked to what extent certain classroom activities and assignments interest or engage them.

The most engaging classroom activities and assignments for NAIS students were discussions and debates, with 87 percent of students reporting that these activities engage or interest them some (40 percent) or very much (47 percent). Seventy-nine percent of NAIS students said that projects and lessons that involve technology engage them, and 77 percent indicated that they find group projects interesting. For students from public schools, group projects were the most engaging activities, with 70 percent of them saying that this type of project interests them some or very much.

How much do the following interest or engage you?

Discussions and Debates	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	3%	12%
Very little	9%	19%
Some	40%	41%
Very much	47%	26%

How much do the following interest or engage you? (cont.)

Projects and Lessons Involving Technology	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	6%	12%
Very little	14%	20%
Some	47%	42%
Very much	32%	24%
Group Projects	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	7%	12%
Very little	15%	17%
Some	45%	43%
Very much	32%	27%
Research Projects	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	8%	20%
Very little	20%	27%
Some	47%	39%
Very much	24%	13%
Giving Presentations and Speeches	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	10%	31%
Very little	19%	24%
Some	42%	31%
Very much	27%	13%
Art, Drama Activities, and Role Plays	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	12%	25%
Very little	18%	23%
Some	33%	27%
Very much	36%	22%

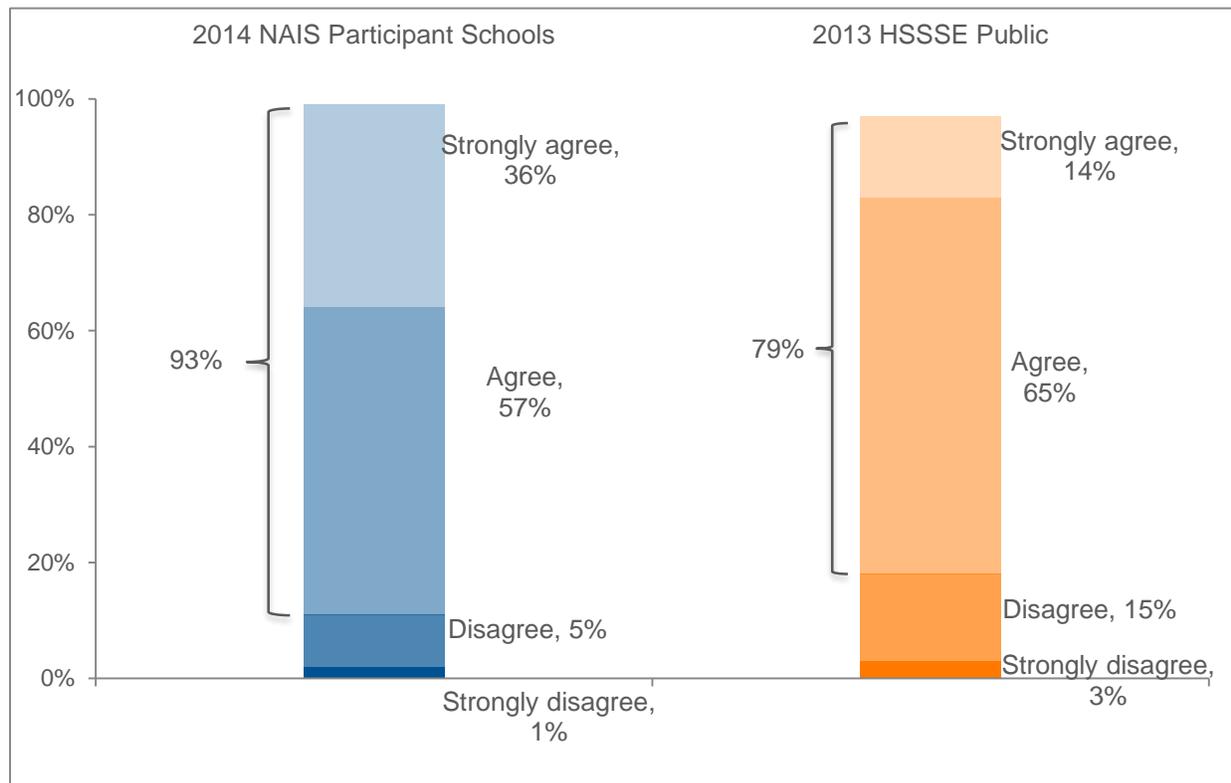
How much do the following interest or engage you? (cont.)

Writing Projects	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	9%	23%
Very little	22%	28%
Some	44%	35%
Very much	24%	13%
Teacher Lectures	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	8%	24%
Very little	22%	29%
Some	53%	38%
Very much	16%	8%
Individual Readings	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Not at all	10%	20%
Very little	28%	29%
Some	44%	36%
Very much	17%	13%

Student Engagement in Classroom Discussions

Students were asked about their teachers' abilities to engage them in class. Ninety-three percent of NAIS high school students agreed (57 percent) or strongly agreed (36 percent) that their teachers engage them in classroom discussions.

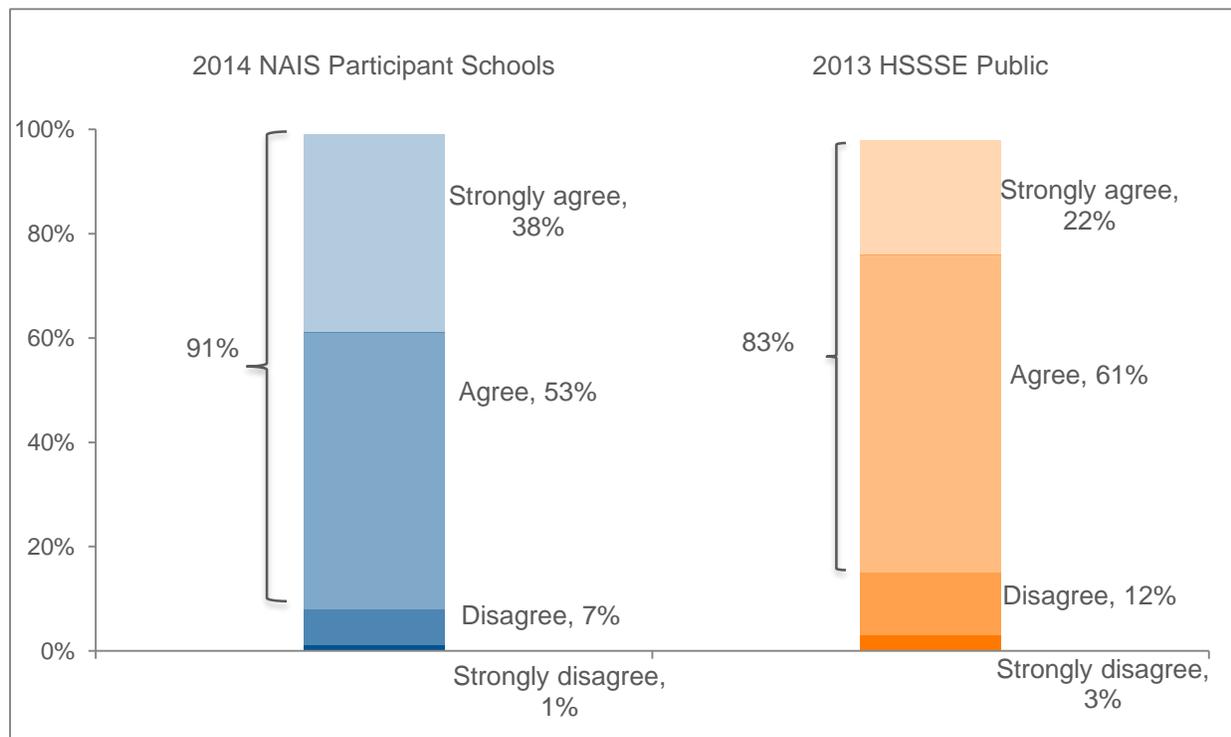
Teachers engage me in classroom discussions.



Student Creativity in Classroom Work

Ninety-one percent of NAIS students reported that they can be creative in their classroom assignments and projects, with 53 percent of them agreeing and 38 percent strongly agreeing with the statement “I can be creative in classroom assignments and projects.” Eighty-three percent of the students from public schools in 2013 also agreed with the assertion.

I can be creative in classroom assignments and projects.

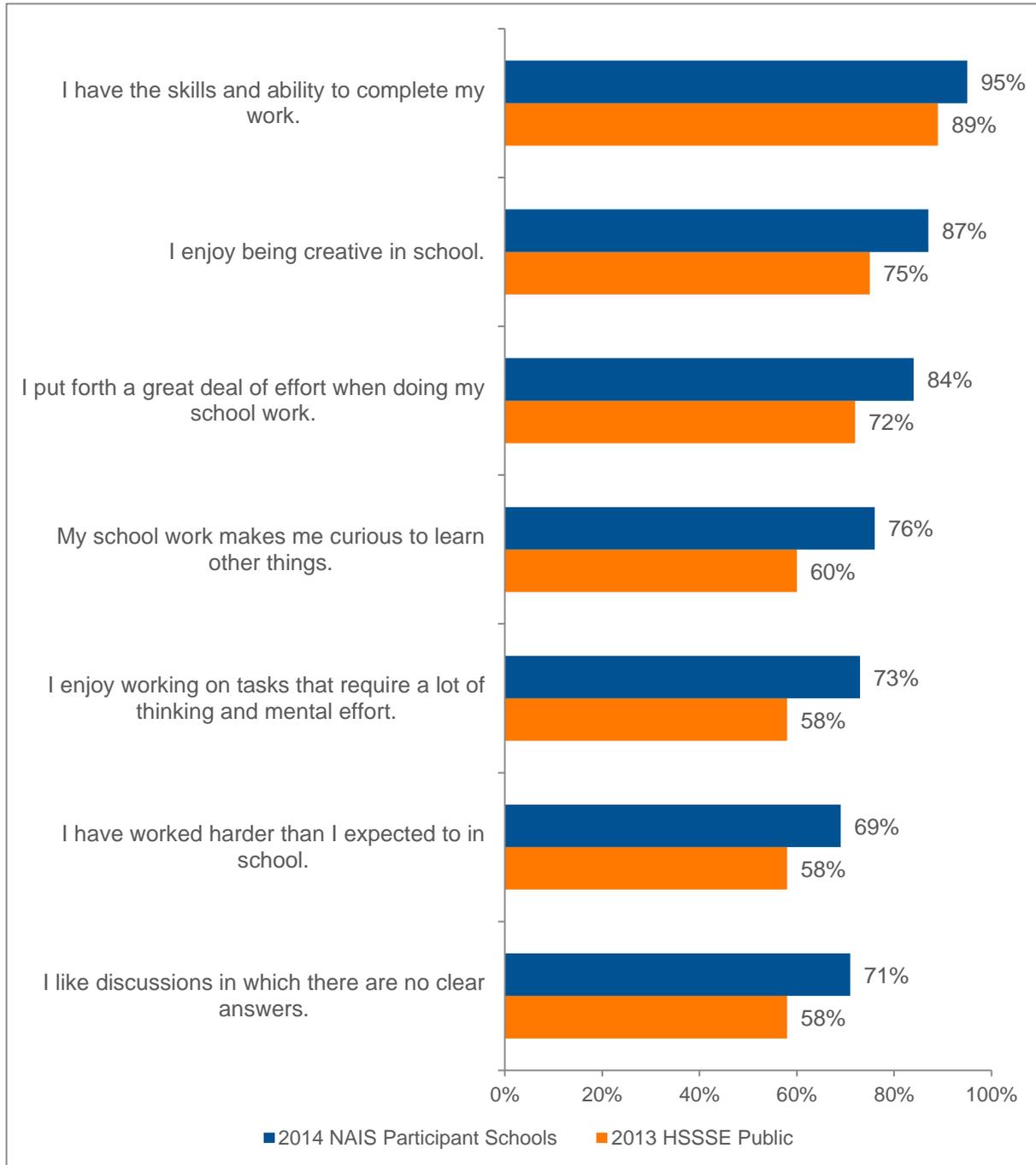


Attitude Toward Learning

Overwhelmingly, NAIS students are confident that they have the skills and abilities to complete their school work. They enjoy being creative in school and recognize that they put a lot of effort in their school work.

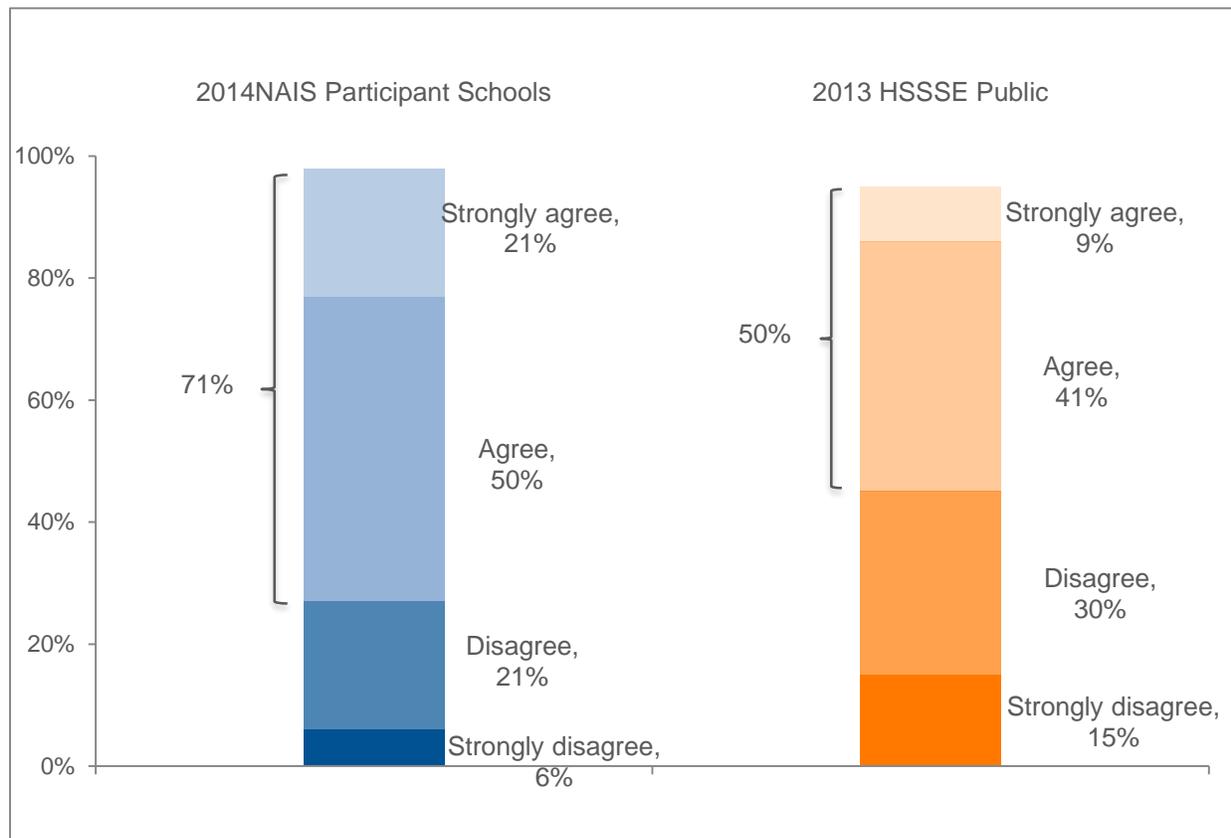
The HSSSE results suggest that students also like to be challenged. A majority of NAIS students indicated that their school work encourages their curiosity to learn other things (76 percent) and that they enjoy discussions where answers are not clear (71 percent) and assignments that demand a lot of mental effort (73 percent). Students from public schools agreed with these statements to a lesser degree.

Students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:



When students were asked whether they agreed with the statement “I go to school because of what I learn in classes,” 71 percent of NAIS students either agreed (50 percent) or strongly agreed (21 percent). In comparison, half of the students from public schools agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion.

I go to school because of what I learn in classes.

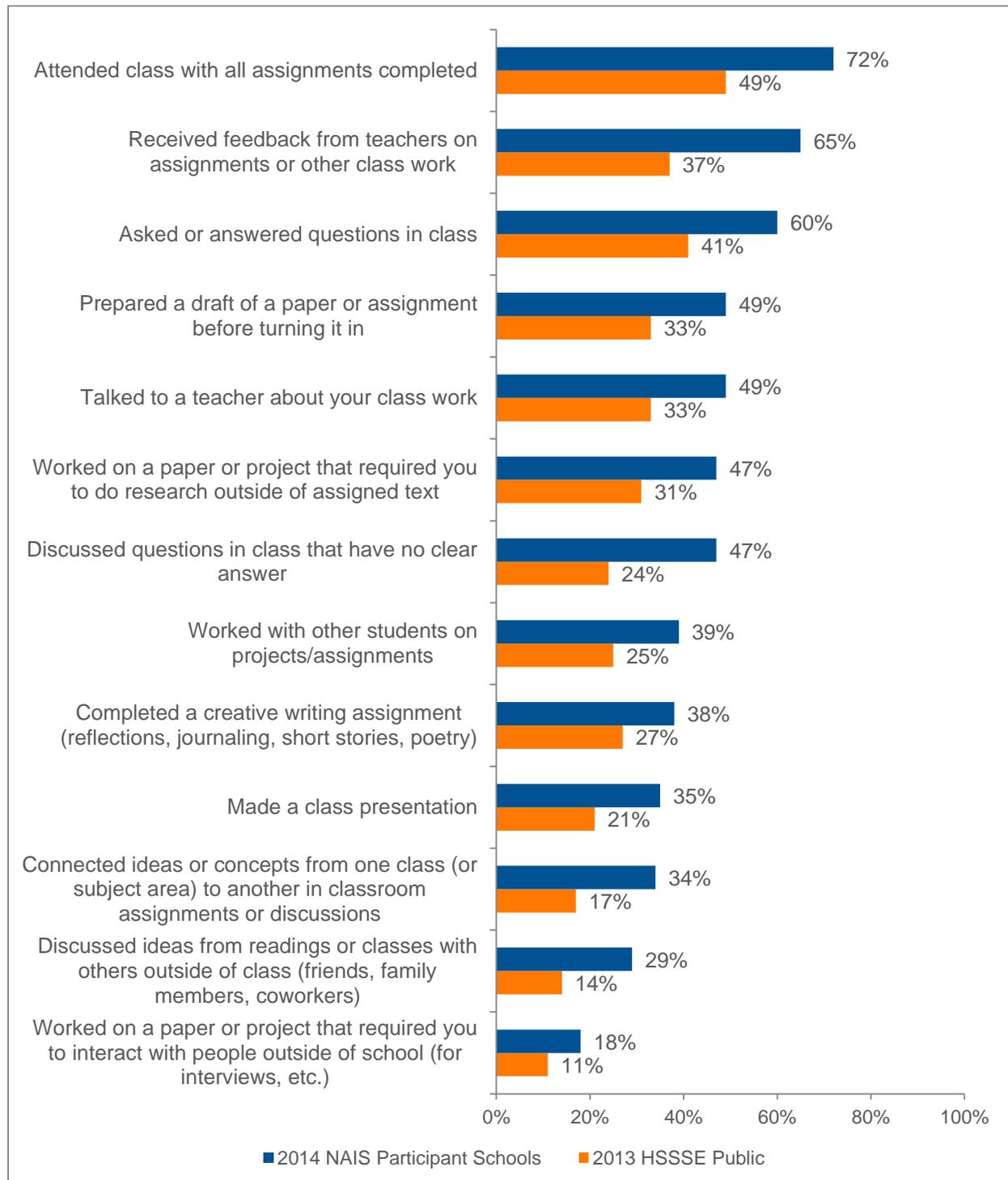


Level of Effort in Academic Pursuits

The HSSSE data also offer information regarding the level of effort and participation that students dedicate to their academic work. For instance, high school students were asked about the frequency of certain activities related to their class work. NAIS students reported a higher level of academic engagement in all of these activities than students from public schools.

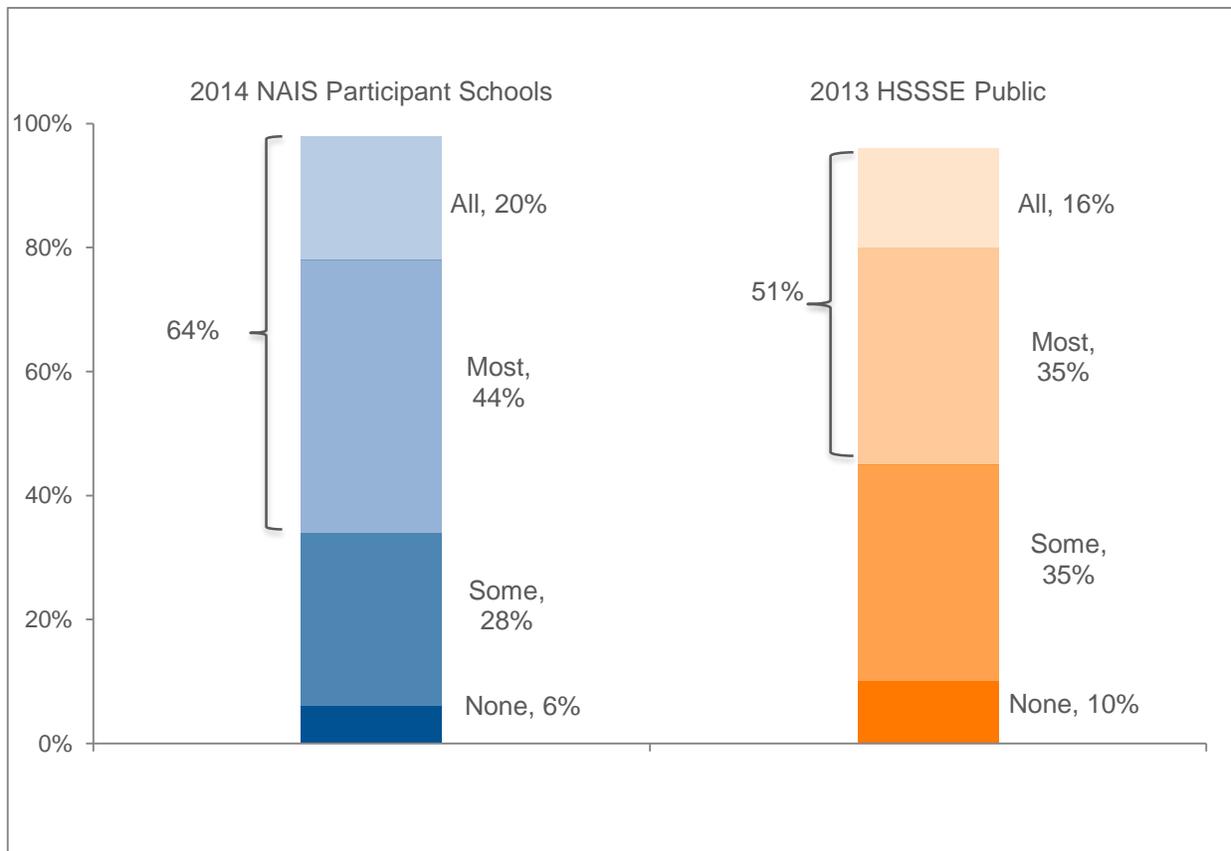
In particular, 72 percent of NAIS students often attend classes with completed assignments (vs. 49 percent of public school students); 65 percent of NAIS students often receive feedback from teachers (vs. 37 percent from public schools); 60 percent often ask or answer questions in class (vs. 41 percent); 47 percent often discuss questions that do not have clear answers (vs. 24 percent); and 34 percent often connect ideas from one class to another in discussions or assignments (vs. 17 percent).

Students often do the following activities during the school year:



Students also reported on their level of effort in their classes. Sixty-five percent of NAIS students declared that they give their maximum effort in either most (44 percent) or all (20 percent) of their classes. This was 13 percentage points above the response of students in public schools.

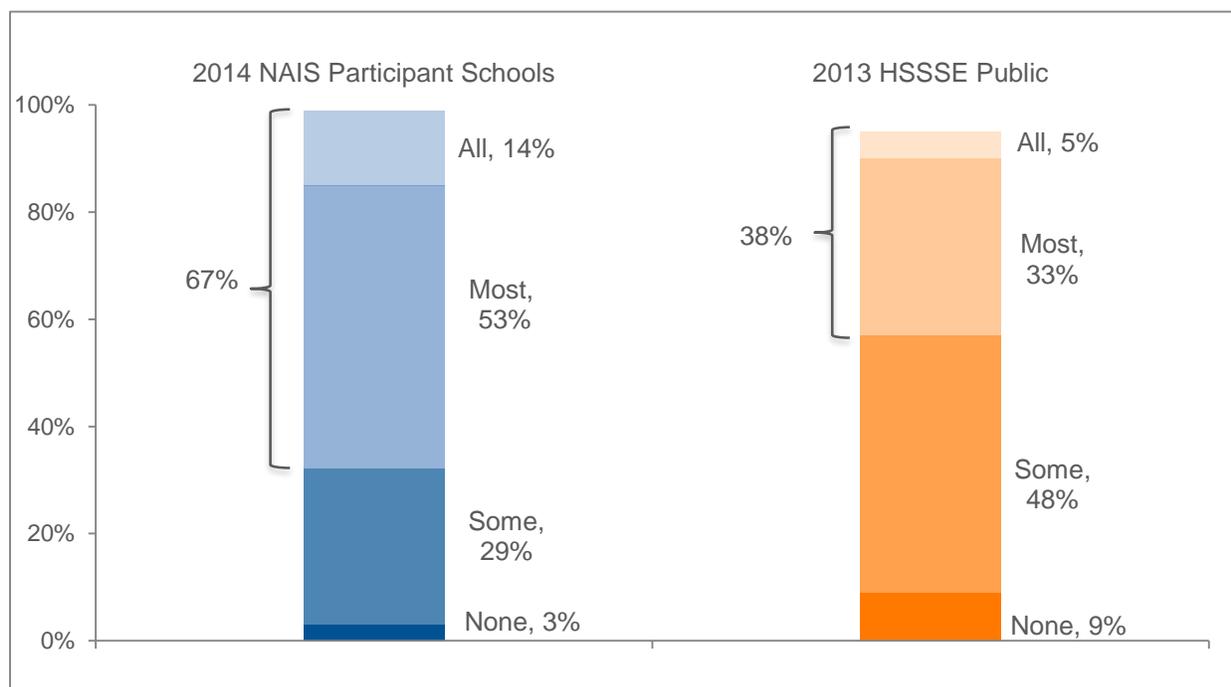
In about how many classes do you give your maximum effort?



Classes Challenging Students to Their Full Potential

Another way to assess students’ academic engagement was by asking students about the number of classes that challenge them to their full potential. Sixty-seven percent of students from NAIS schools reported that most (53 percent) or all (14 percent) of their classes challenge them. This was 29 percentage points greater than their counterparts from public schools (38 percent).

About how many of your classes challenge you to your full academic potential?



Class Boredom

When students were asked whether they are ever bored in class, 82 percent of NAIS students answered that they are sometimes (49 percent) or often (33 percent) bored in class. This compares with 86 percent of 2013 public school students (35 percent are sometimes bored, and 51 percent are often bored). Students also gave reasons for feeling bored: “Material wasn’t interesting” topped the list for students from both types of schools.

Reasons for being bored in class:

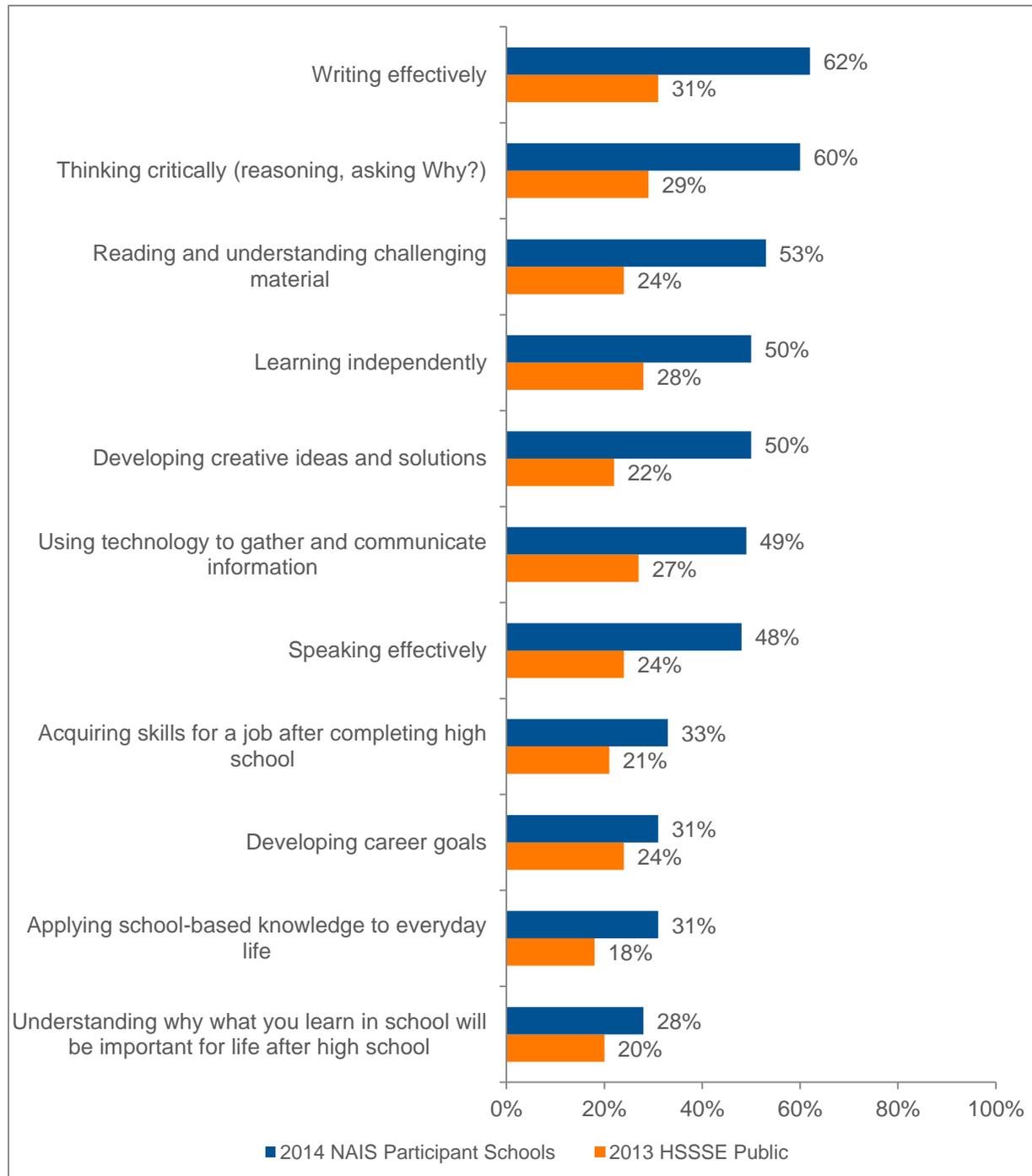
Reason	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public Schools
Material wasn't interesting	79%	73%
Teaching methods not interesting	67%	63%
Material wasn't relevant to me	39%	36%
Work wasn't challenging enough	28%	28%
No interaction with classmates	27%	30%
No interaction with teacher	27%	25%
Work was too difficult	25%	26%

School's Contribution to Skill Development

HSSSE asked students about the role played by their schools in the development of some academic skills, such as writing effectively, thinking critically, reading and understanding challenging material, and developing creative ideas and solutions.

NAIS students attributed the development of these skills to their schools in larger percentages than did their counterparts from public schools. For instance, 62 percent of NAIS students indicated that their schools have contributed very much to their writing skills, compared with 31 percent reported by public school students. Similarly, 60 percent of NAIS students reported that their schools contributed very much to their thinking critically, compared with 29 percent of their public school counterparts.

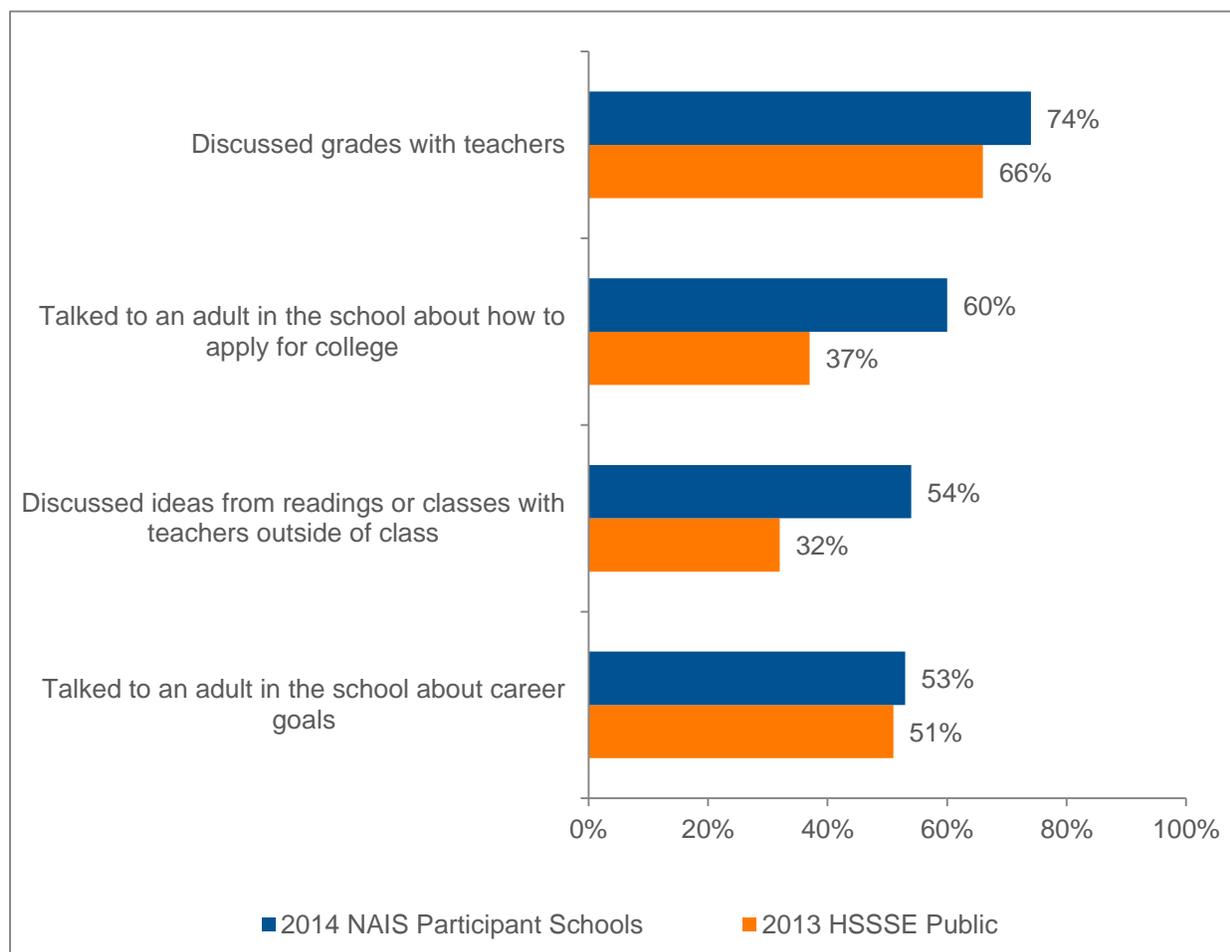
Students stating that their experience at their school contributed very much to the following skills:



Cognitive Engagement with Academic Goals, Future Plans, and Aspirations

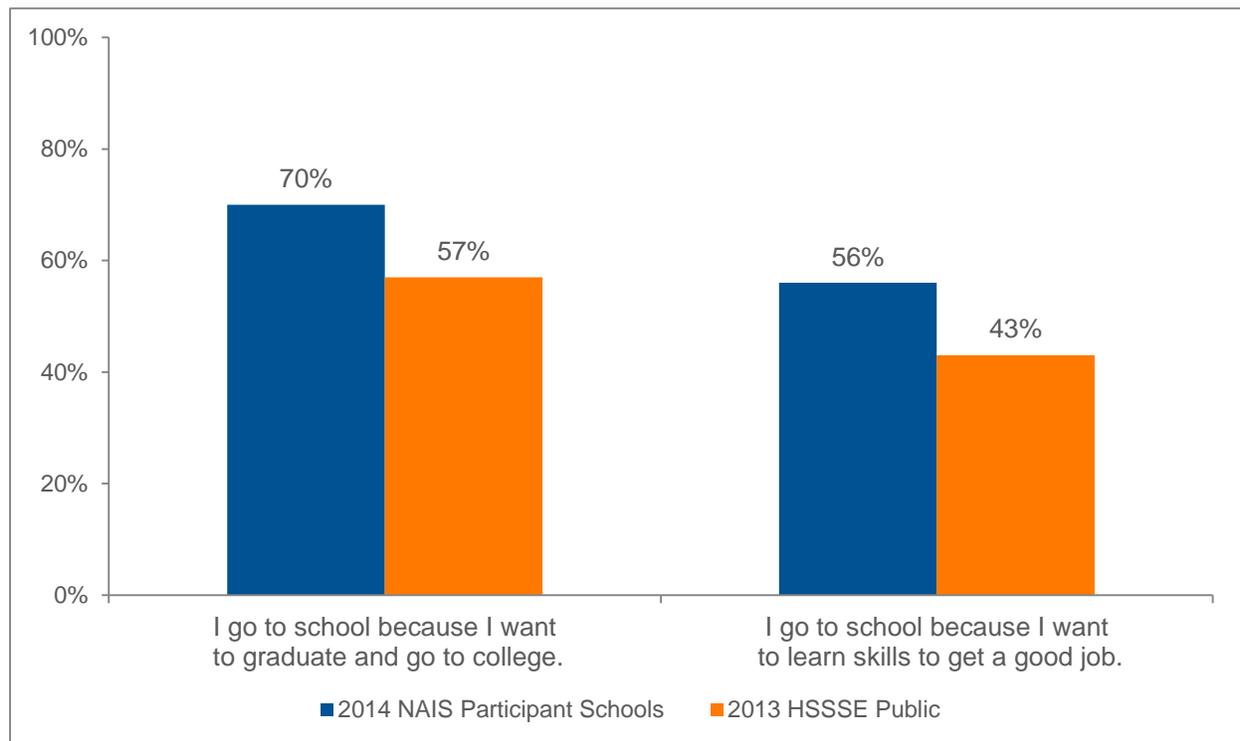
Since faculty and school administrators can play a decisive role in shaping students’ plans and aspirations for the future, it is reassuring to see that more than half of the students at NAIS schools talk about their academic activities or plans with school staff. Sixty percent of them talked to an adult in the school about applying to college. Also, 54 percent of NAIS students continued discussions about readings or classes with their teachers outside of class, while another 53 percent of them discussed career goals with an adult in the school.

Students discussing sometimes or often their academic activities or future plans:



Students also recognize that the education they receive at school is a stepping-stone for continuing further studies at college and that it provides them with the skills they need for work. Seventy percent of NAIS high school students indicated that they go to school because they want to graduate and go to college, while 56 percent mentioned that they attend school to learn skills to obtain a good job.

Students strongly agreeing with the following statements:



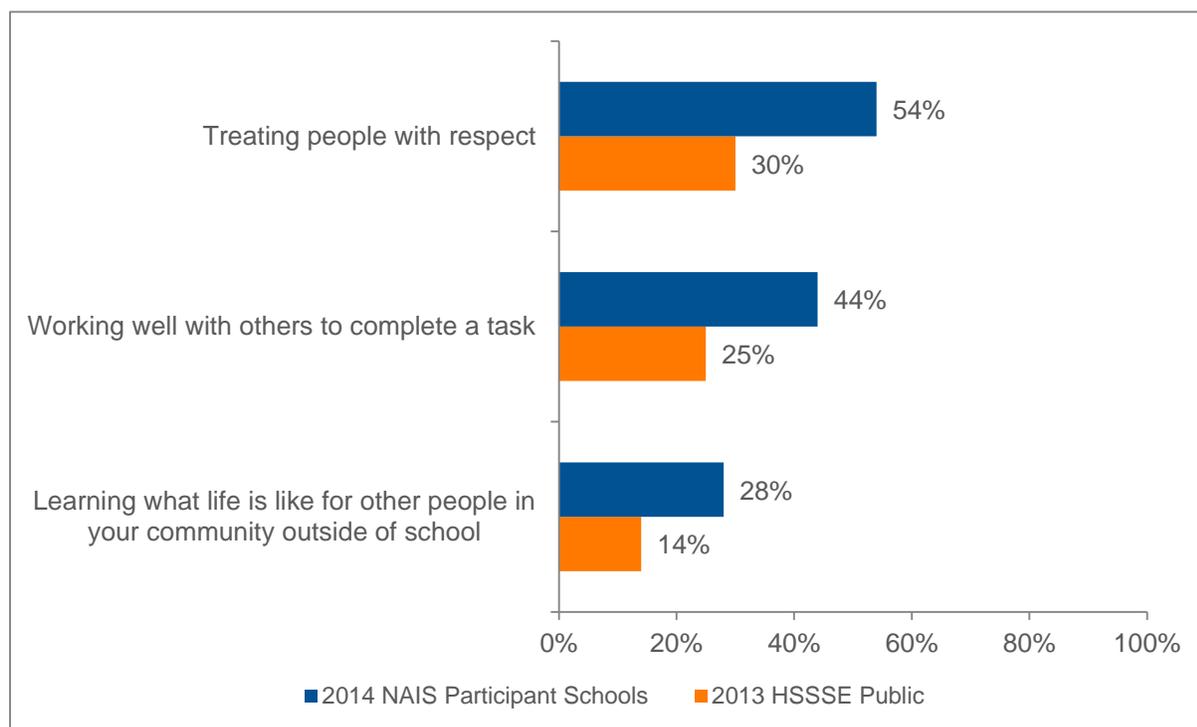
Dimension 2: Social/Behavioral/Participatory Engagement Items

The second dimension of engagement measured by HSSSE refers to the social, behavioral, and participatory engagement, or the ways in which students interact within their school community. This dimension captures students' actions in social, extracurricular, and nonacademic school activities, including interactions with other students.

School's Contribution to Student Social Behavior

Fifty-four percent of NAIS high school students said that their schools have contributed very much to teaching them to treat people with respect, compared with 30 percent of the students from public schools. Also, 28 percent of NAIS students mentioned that their schools helped them learn about the lives of other people in the community outside the school, 14 percentage points higher than the responses of students from public schools (14 percent).

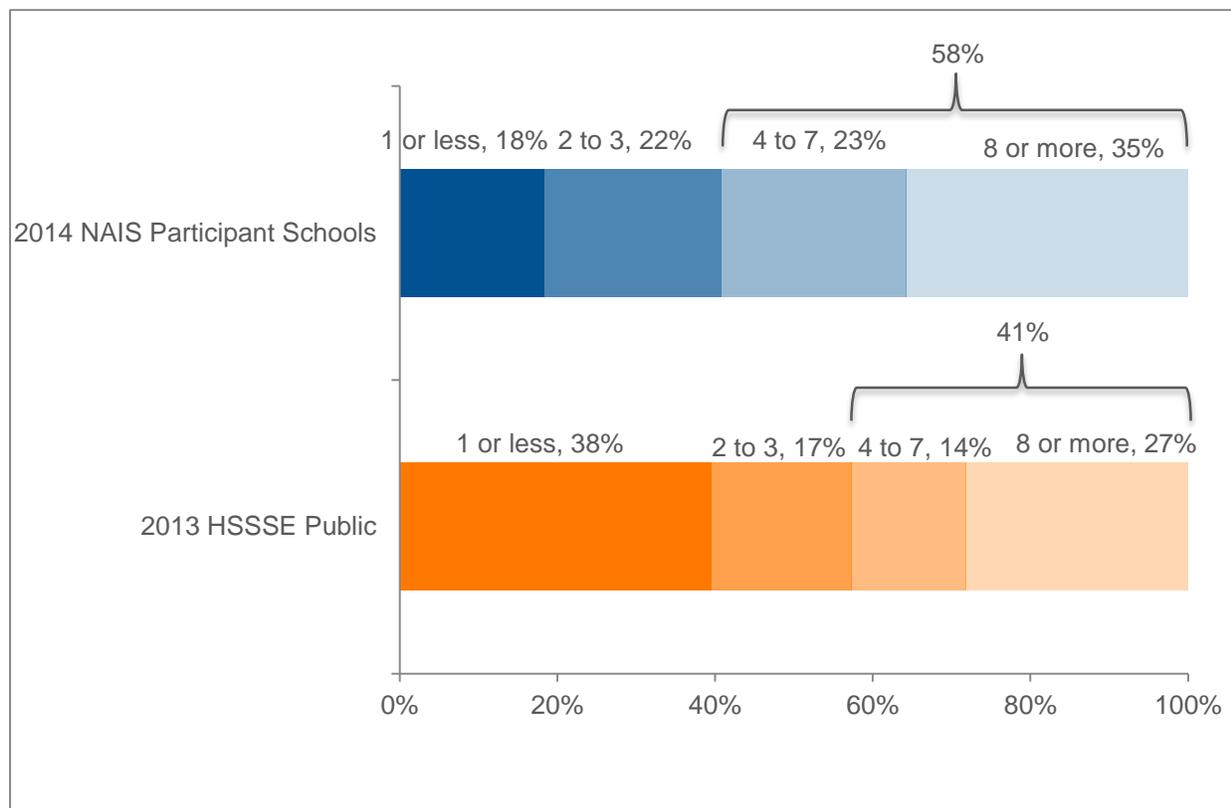
Students indicating that their school has contributed very much to the following behaviors:



Student Participation in School-Sponsored Activities

The level of involvement in school life is reflected in the number of hours spent by students in activities sponsored by their schools, such as clubs, athletics, and student government. Fifty-eight percent of NAIS students reported spending four or more hours per week participating in school-sponsored activities, compared with 41 percent of public school students.

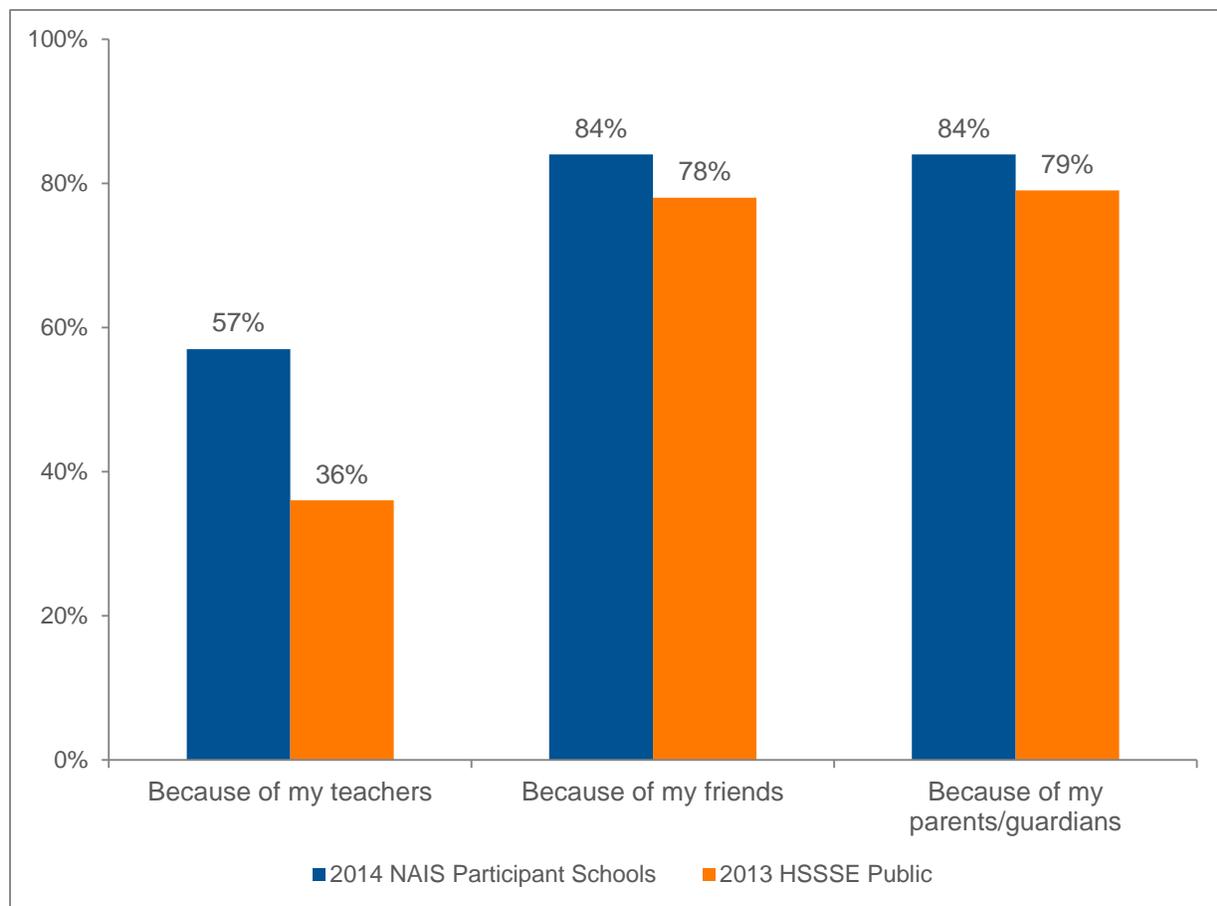
In a typical week, how many hours outside of school are spent participating in school-sponsored activities (clubs, athletics, student government)?



Reasons for Going to School

Not surprisingly, a vast majority of students in both NAIS schools and public schools said that they go to school because of their friends or their parents. However, in the case of NAIS schools, almost three-fifths (57 percent) of students either agreed or strongly agreed that they go to school because of their teachers.

Students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following reasons for going to school:



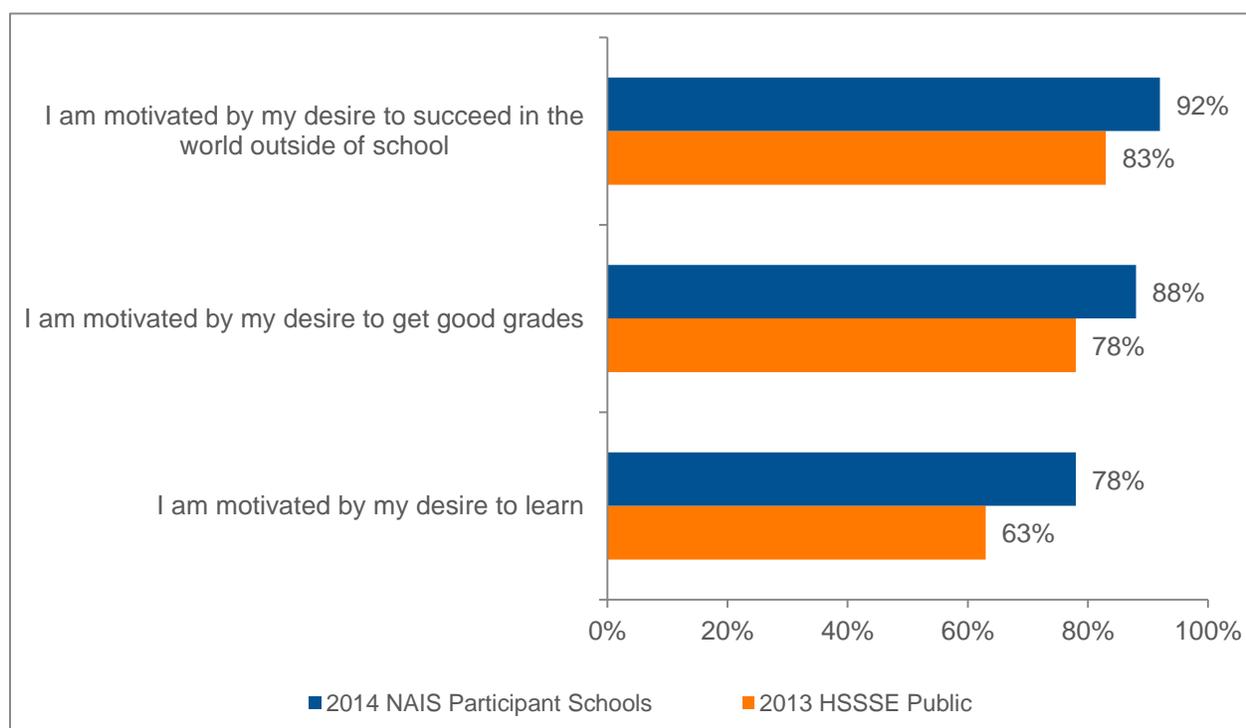
Dimension 3: Emotional Engagement Items

The last dimension of engagement measured by HSSSE is referred to as “emotional engagement.” This dimension emphasizes students’ feelings of connection to their school – how students feel about where they are in school, the ways and workings of the school, and the people within their school.

Motivations for Learning

More than nine out of 10 NAIS students are motivated by the desire to succeed in the world outside of school. Eighty-eight percent of them are motivated by the desire to get good grades, and 78 percent are motivated by the desire to learn.

Students agreeing or strongly agreeing with different reasons that motivate them:

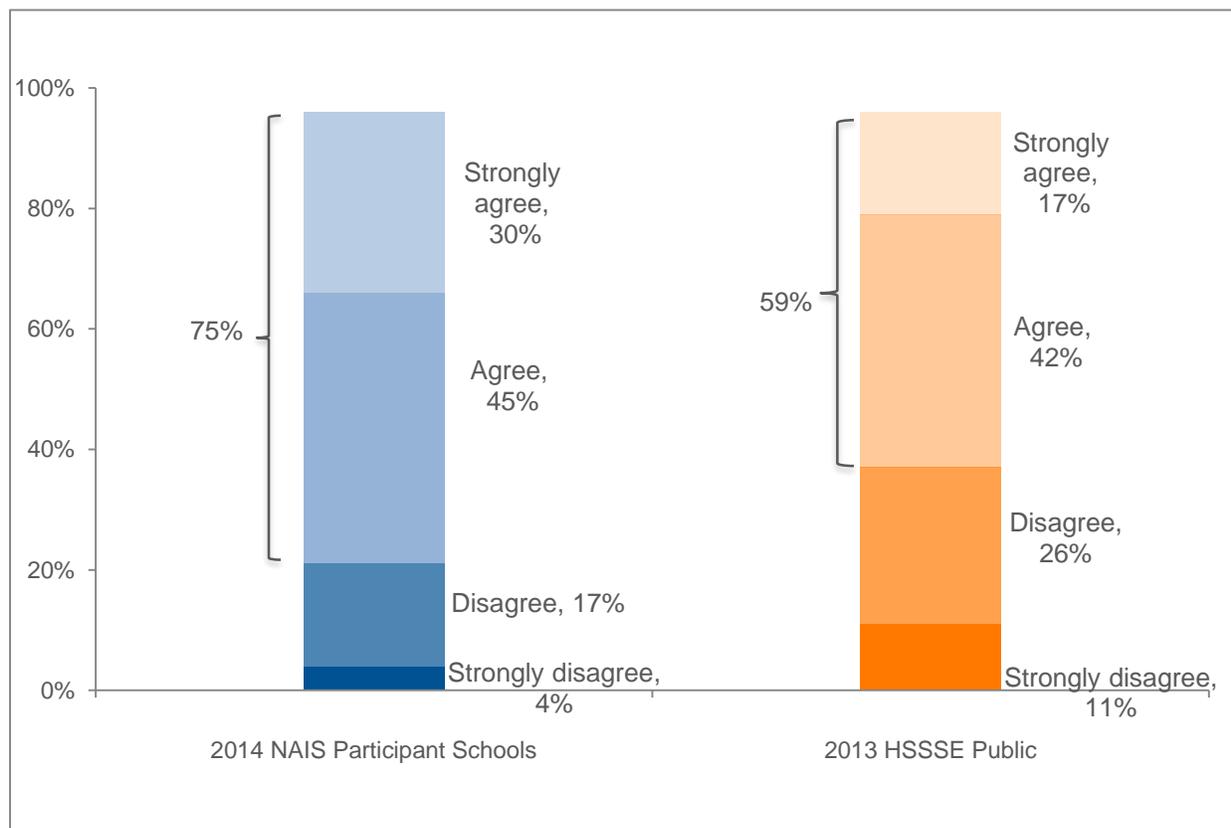


Teachers as Motivators for Learning

While students may arrive at classes with a certain degree of motivation, teachers’ behavior and teaching style, the structure of the course, the nature of the assignments, and informal interactions with other students can have an important effect on student motivation.

It is reassuring to learn that, according to the HSSSE results, 75 percent of NAIS students are motivated by teachers who encourage them. This number represents a 16 percentage point difference with respect to their public school peers.

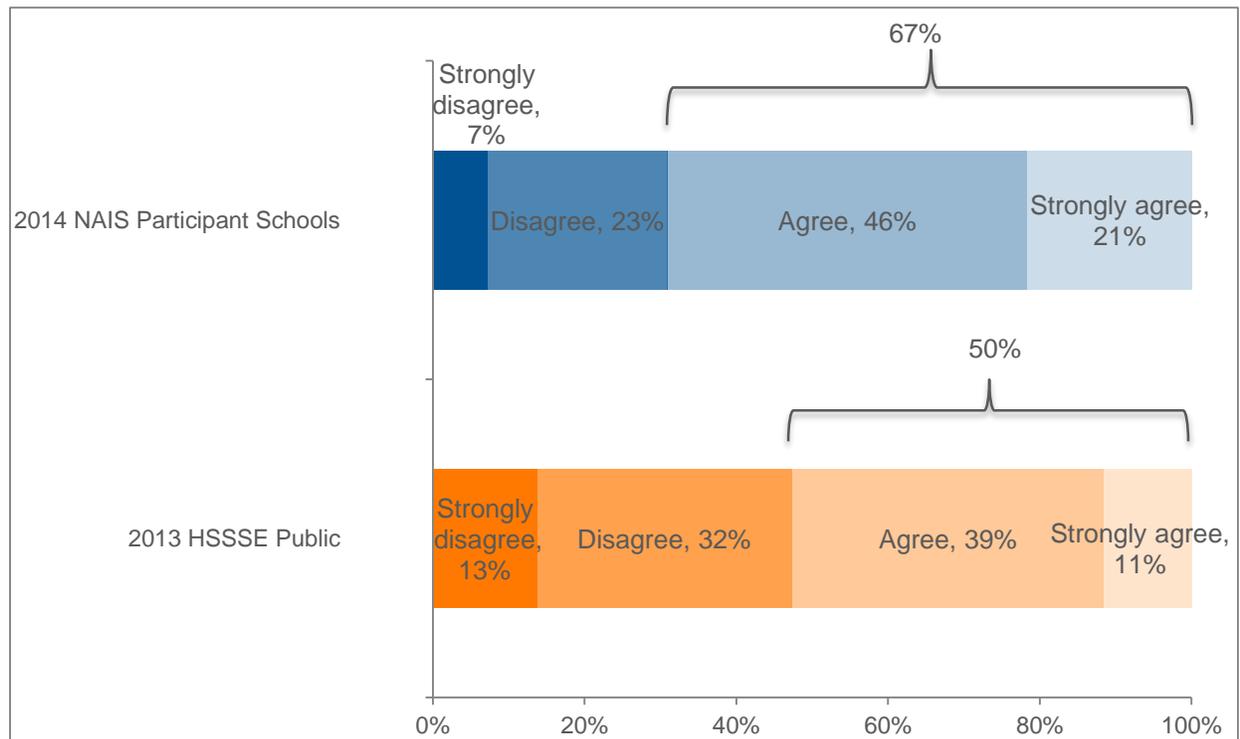
I am motivated by teachers who encourage me.



Student Excitement About Classes

Students were also asked whether they found their classes exciting. While 67 percent of NAIS students either agreed (46 percent) or strongly agreed (21 percent) that they are excited about their classes, only half of the students from public schools agreed with this statement.

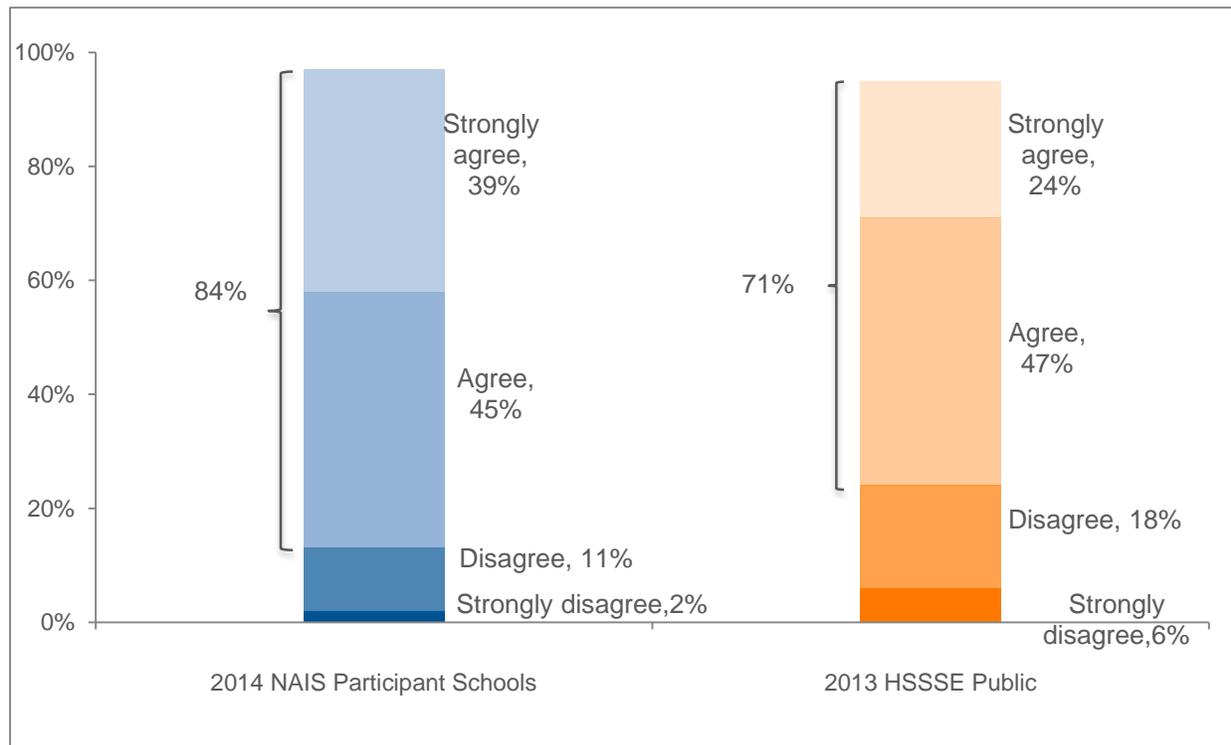
In general, I am excited about my classes.



Quality of Students' School Work

Eighty-four percent of NAIS students agreed (45 percent) or strongly agreed (39 percent) that they are proud of the quality of their school work. Seventy-one percent of students from public schools also agreed with this statement.

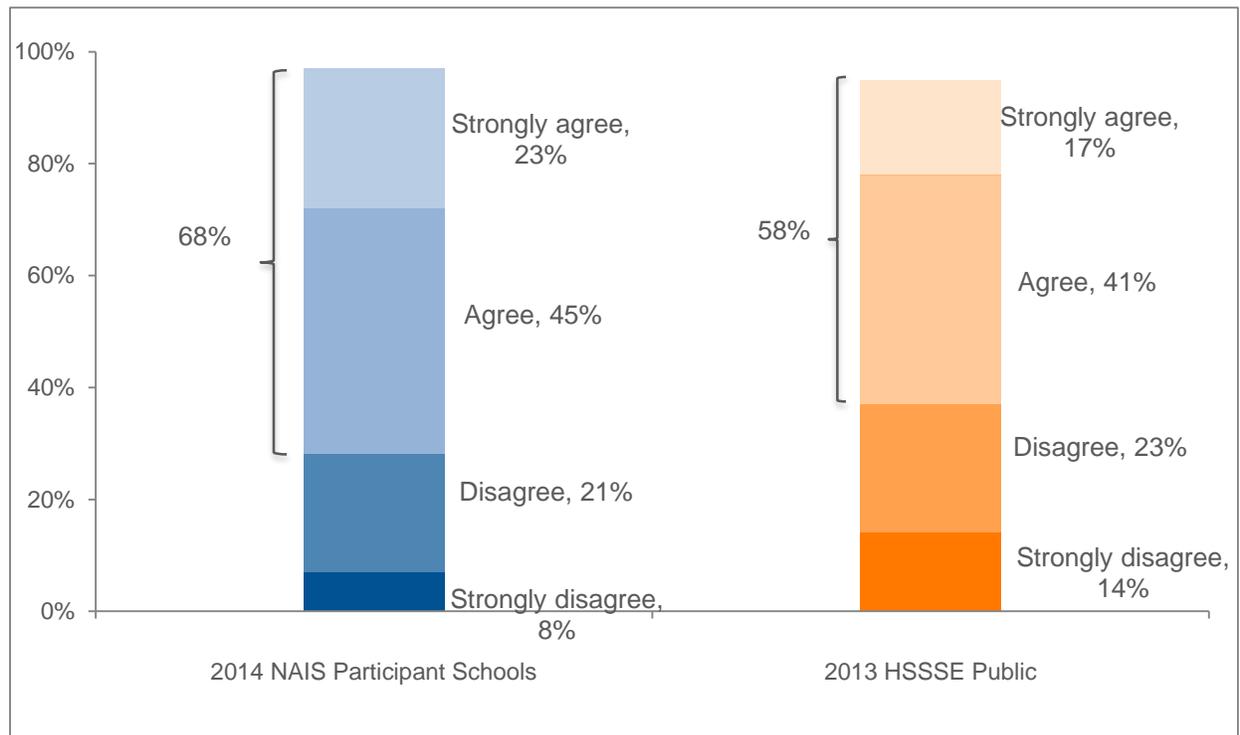
I take pride in the quality of my school work.



Relevance of Current Work Beyond School

Sixty-eight percent of NAIS students agreed (45 percent) or strongly agreed (23 percent) that they can see how their current school work will help them after high school. Fifty-eight percent of their public school peers shared this opinion.

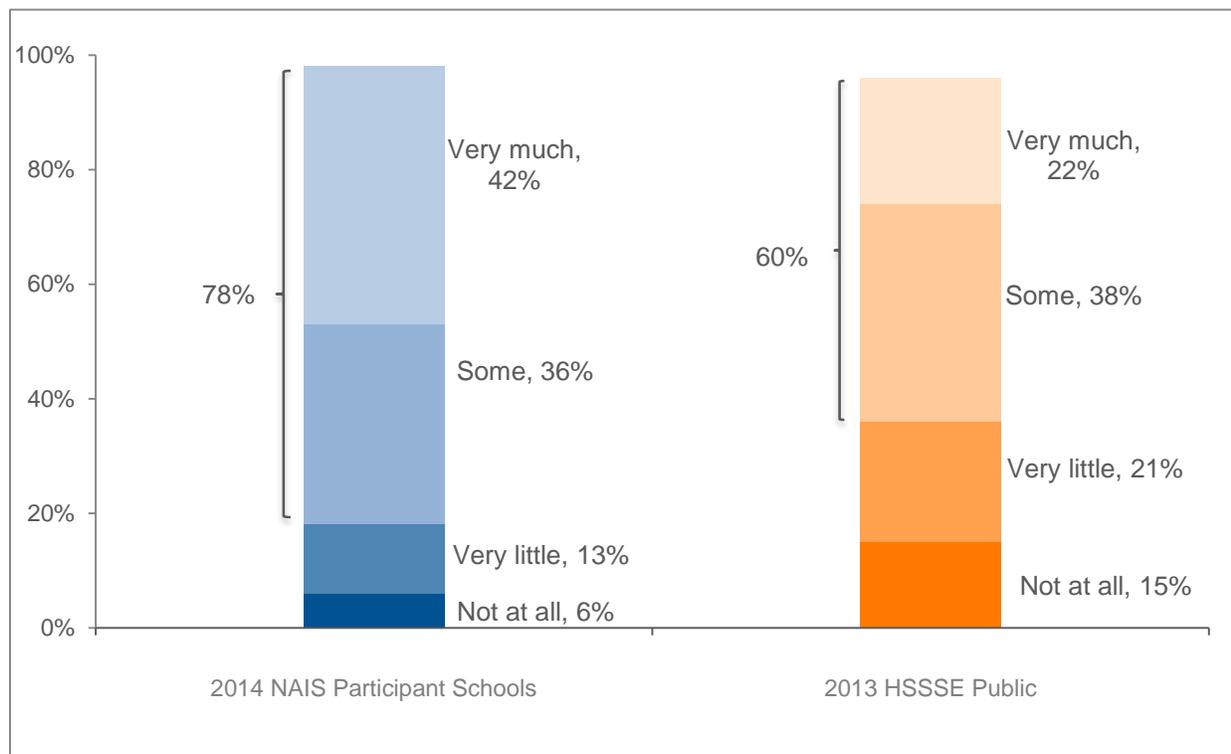
I see how the work I am doing now will help me after high school.



School's Contribution to Student Values

According to earlier NAIS research, the focus on character development and values motivates many parents to send their children to independent schools. The HSSSE results confirm that students, too, feel that their independent schools support character development. Almost 80 percent of NAIS students indicated that their schools contributed some (36 percent) or very much (42 percent) to the development of their personal beliefs and values. Sixty percent of public school students also attributed the development of personal beliefs and values to their schools.

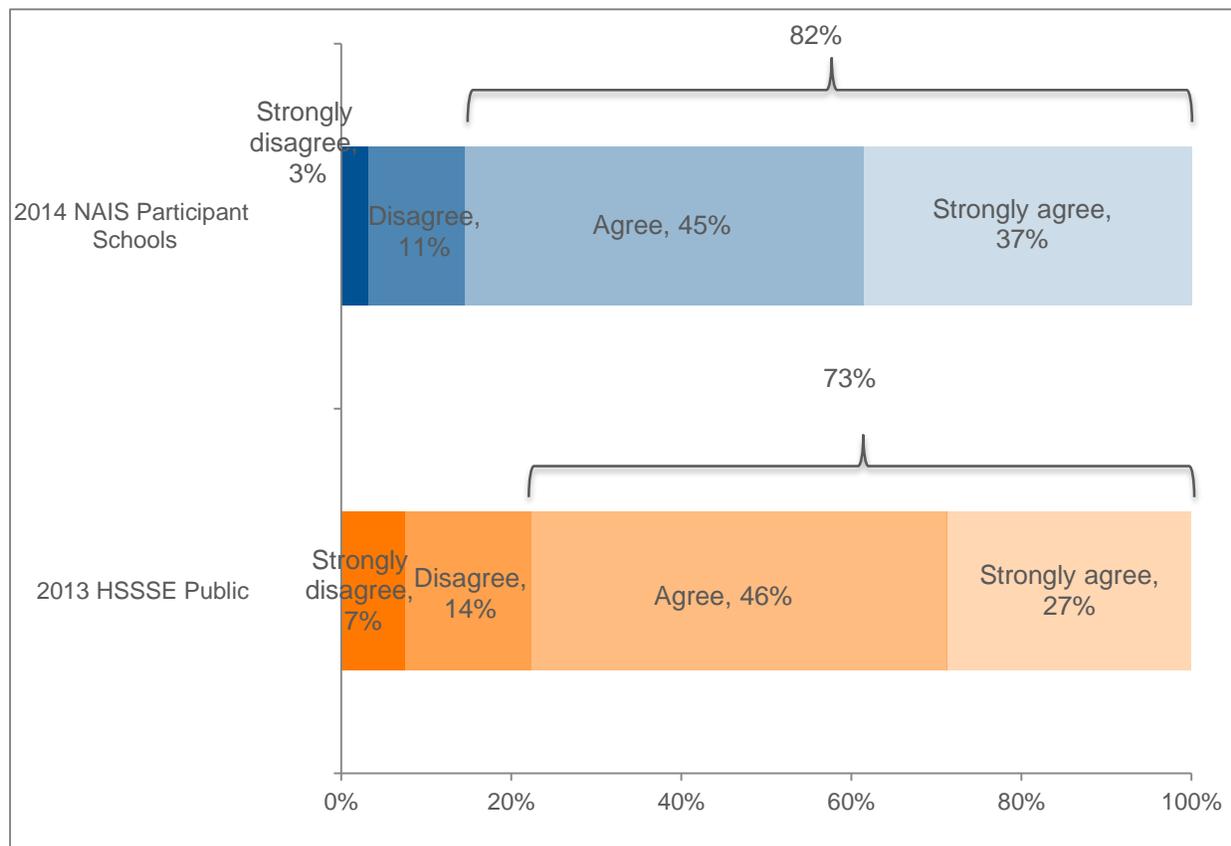
How much has your experience at this school contributed to developing personal beliefs and values?



Feeling Good as a Student

The HSSSE report also included information on student self-esteem. For instance, 82 percent of NAIS students indicated that they feel good about who they are as students (45 percent agreed, and 37 percent strongly agreed). The vast majority of students from public schools (73 percent) also agreed with this statement.

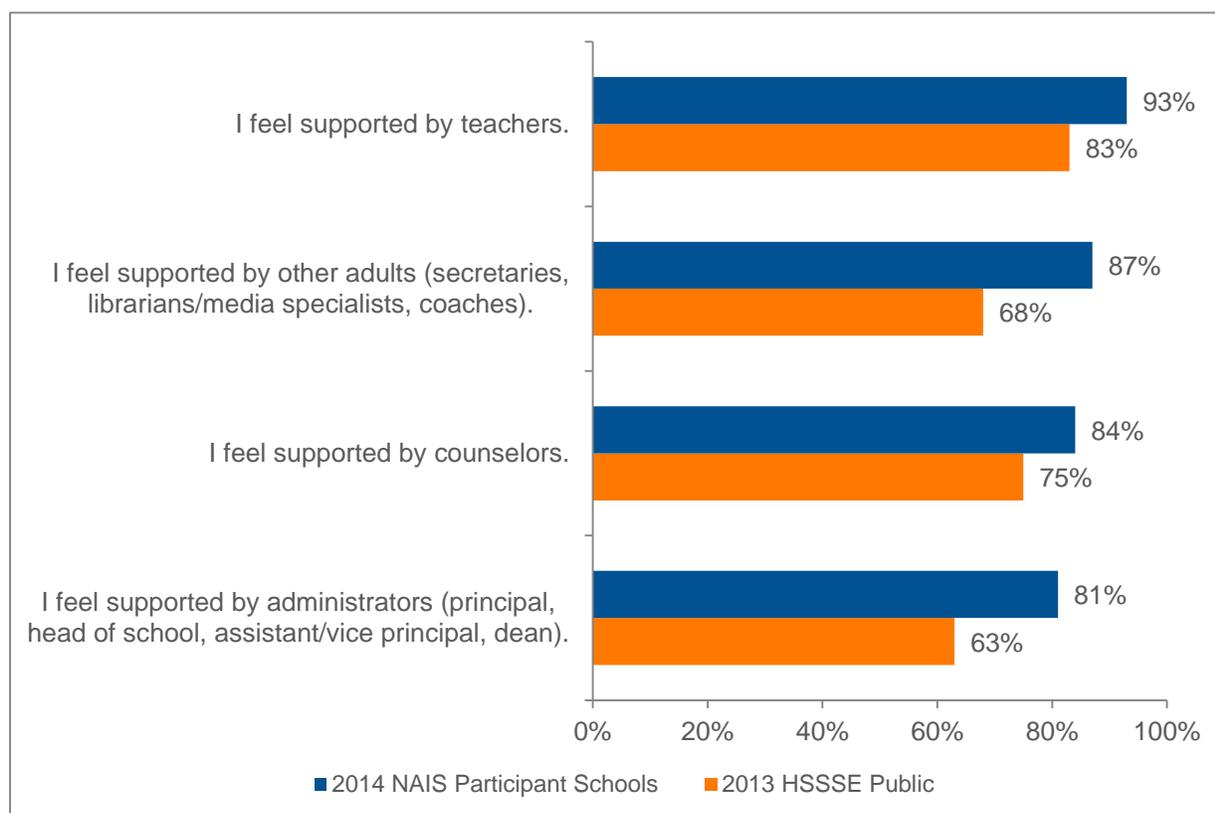
I feel good about who I am as a student.



Positive Relationships with Adults in School

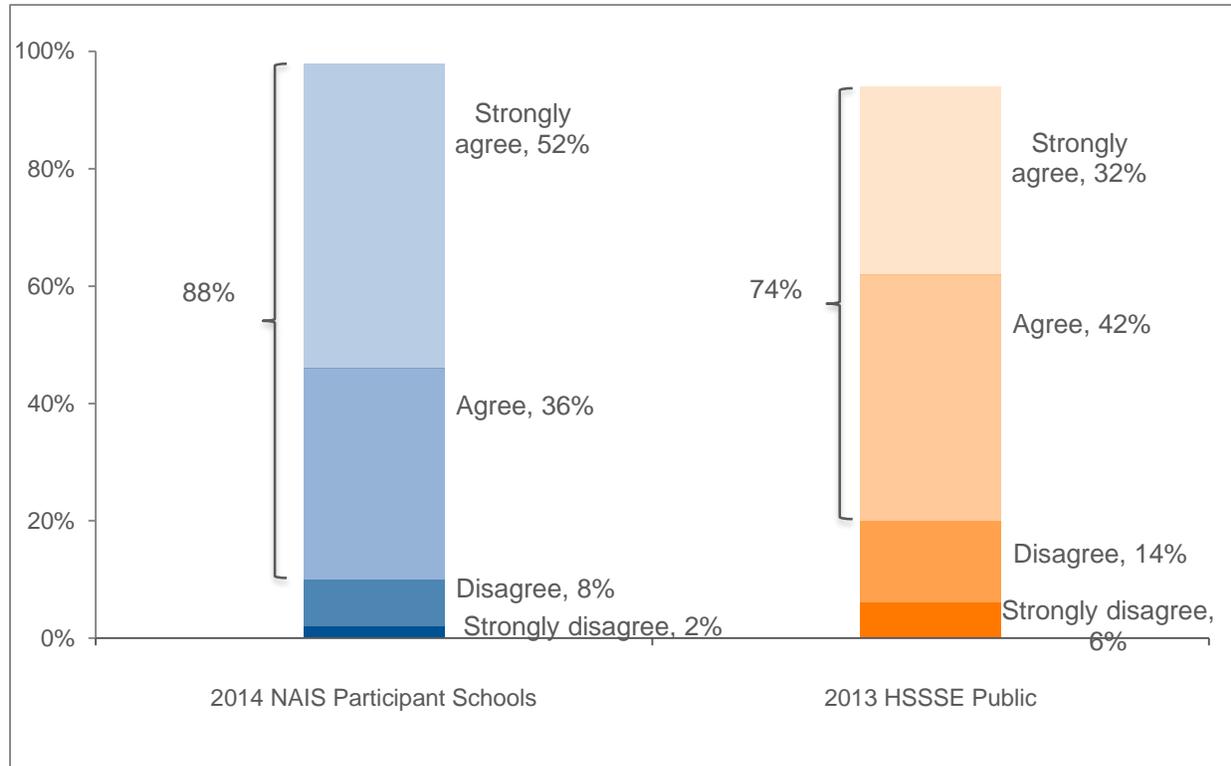
Students shared their opinions about their relationships with teachers, administrators, counselors, and other staff at their schools. Ninety-three percent of NAIS students either agreed or strongly agreed that the faculty at their schools support them. Eighty-seven percent of them feel supported by other school staff, such as secretaries and librarians, and 84 percent of NAIS students feel supported by counselors. Another 81 percent feel supported by the school leadership.

Students agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel supported by faculty and school staff:



It was also reassuring to find that a large number of students reported that at least one adult in their schools knows them well: 88 percent of NAIS students and 74 percent of 2013 public school students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

There is at least one adult in this school who knows me well.



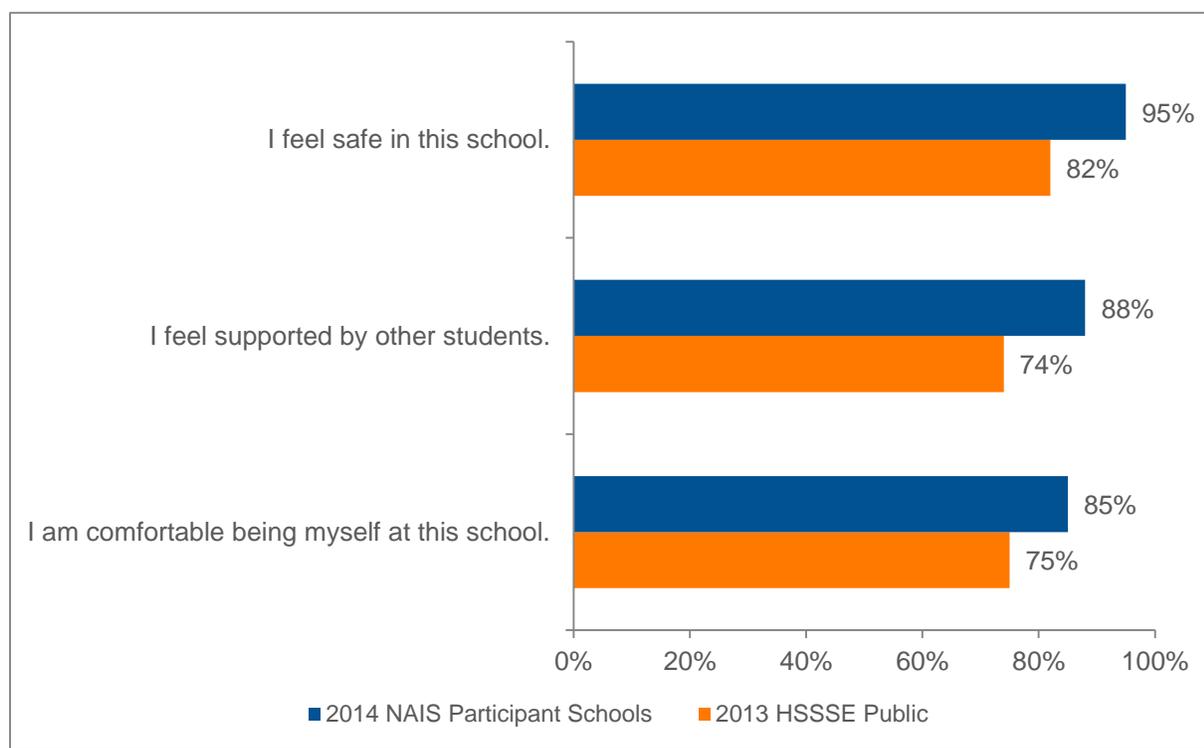
Positive Relationships with Other Students

Since one of the main reasons students go to school is because their friends go there, it was encouraging to find that students feel safe at school, supported by other students, and comfortable about being themselves. Ninety-five percent of NAIS students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe at school. Eighty-two percent of public school students also agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

There were important differences in students' perceptions on the support they received from other students. While 88 percent of NAIS students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel supported by other students," only 74 percent of public school students feel supported by their peers.

Eighty-five percent of the students from NAIS schools agreed or strongly agreed that they feel comfortable being themselves at school, compared with 75 percent of public school students.

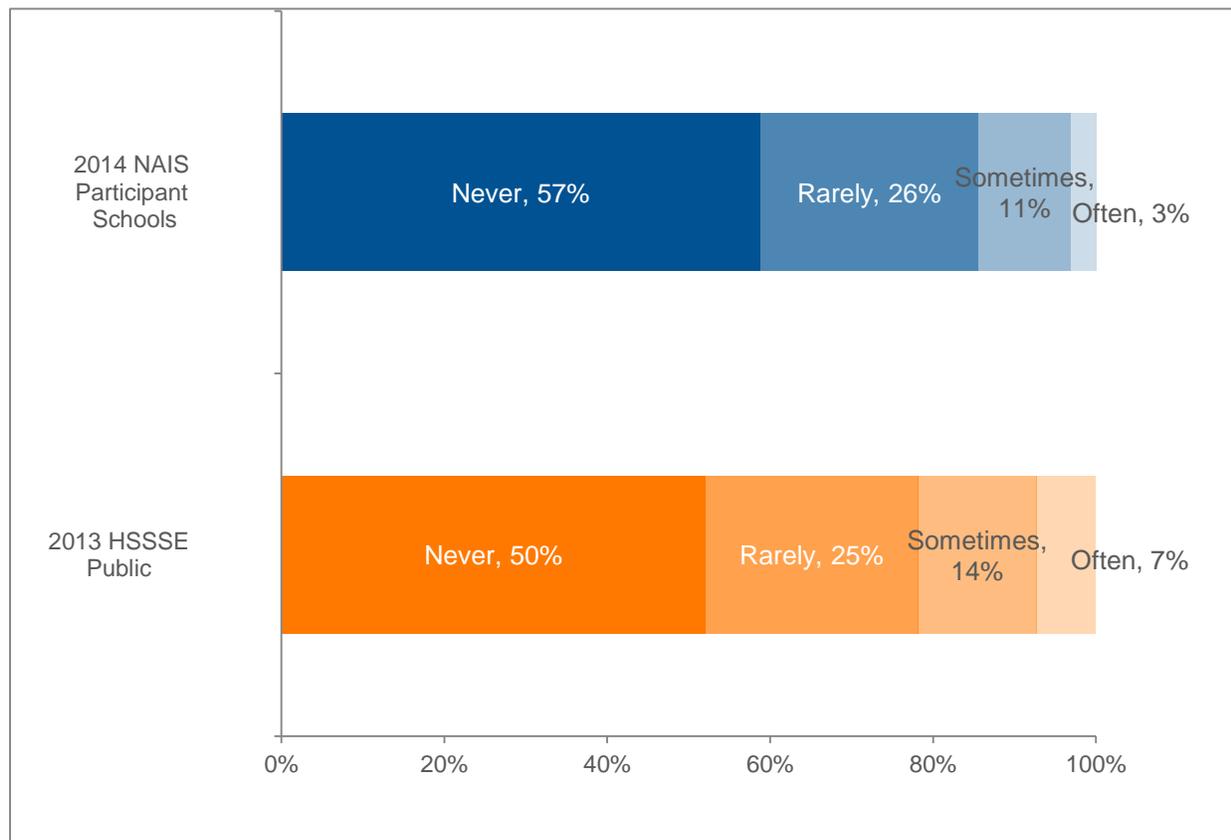
Students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:



Students Being Picked On or Bullied

Another indicator of student well-being relates to the amount of bullying at a school. Fifty-seven percent of students from NAIS schools indicated that they have never been bullied, followed by 50 percent of students from public schools.

During this school year, how often have you been picked on or bullied by another student?

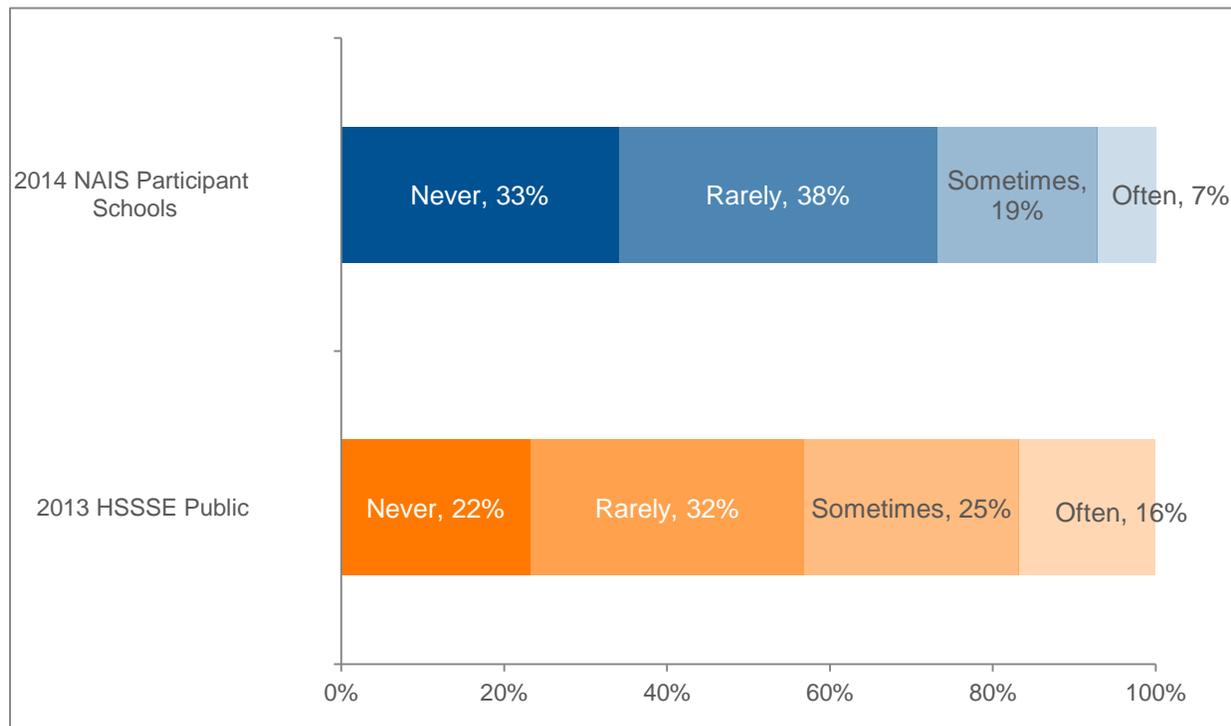


Students Witnessing Acts of Bullying

Similarly, students were asked whether they had witnessed an act of bullying. The percentage of students saying that they had never witnessed bullying was 33 percent at NAIS schools and 22 percent at public schools.

These numbers indicate a discontinuity between students’ responses about being the subjects of bullying and students’ responses about witnessing bullying. While 40 percent of NAIS students indicated that they were rarely (26 percent), sometimes (11 percent), or often bullied (3 percent), 64 percent of students said that they had witnessed acts of bullying. This gap was slightly wider for public school students – 73 percent of them said that they had witnessed acts of bullying compared with 46 percent who reported that they had been picked on or bullied.

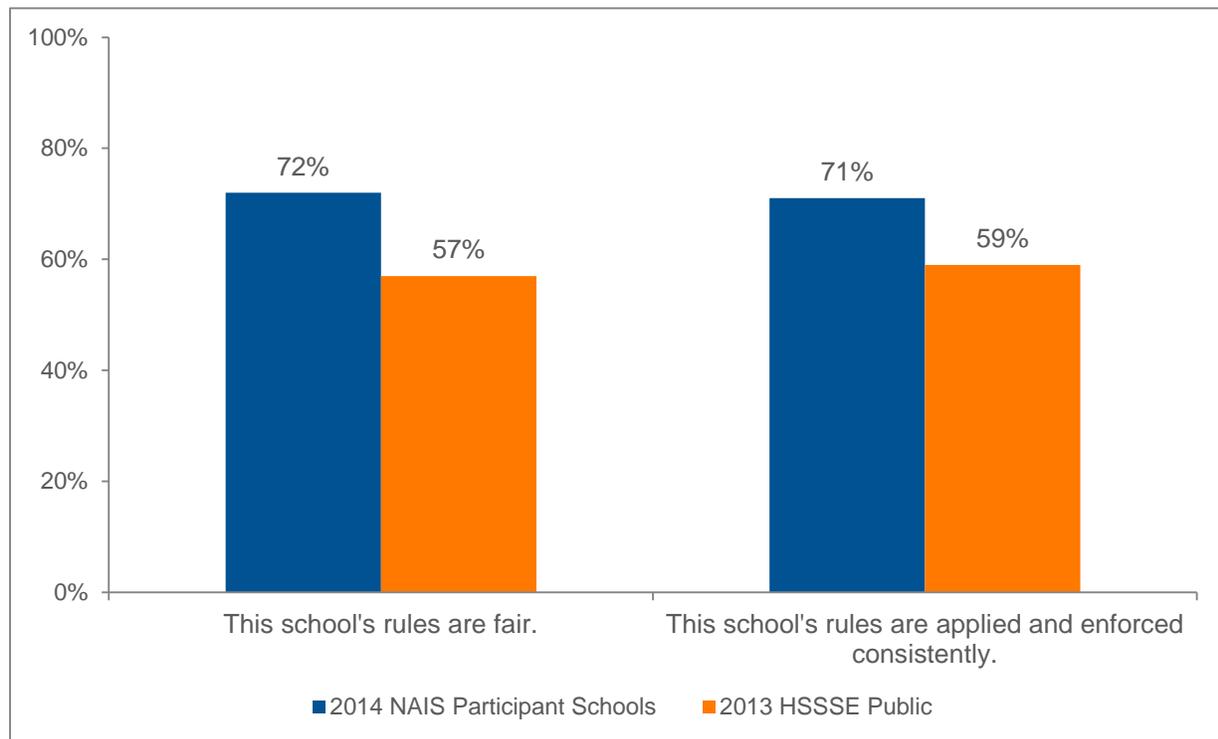
During this school year, how often have you witnessed an act of bullying?



Student Opinions on School Rules

Another area tested by HSSSE was student perceptions of school rules. Seventy-two percent of NAIS student consider the rules in their schools to be fair, and almost the same number (71 percent) believe that the rules are applied and enforced consistently.

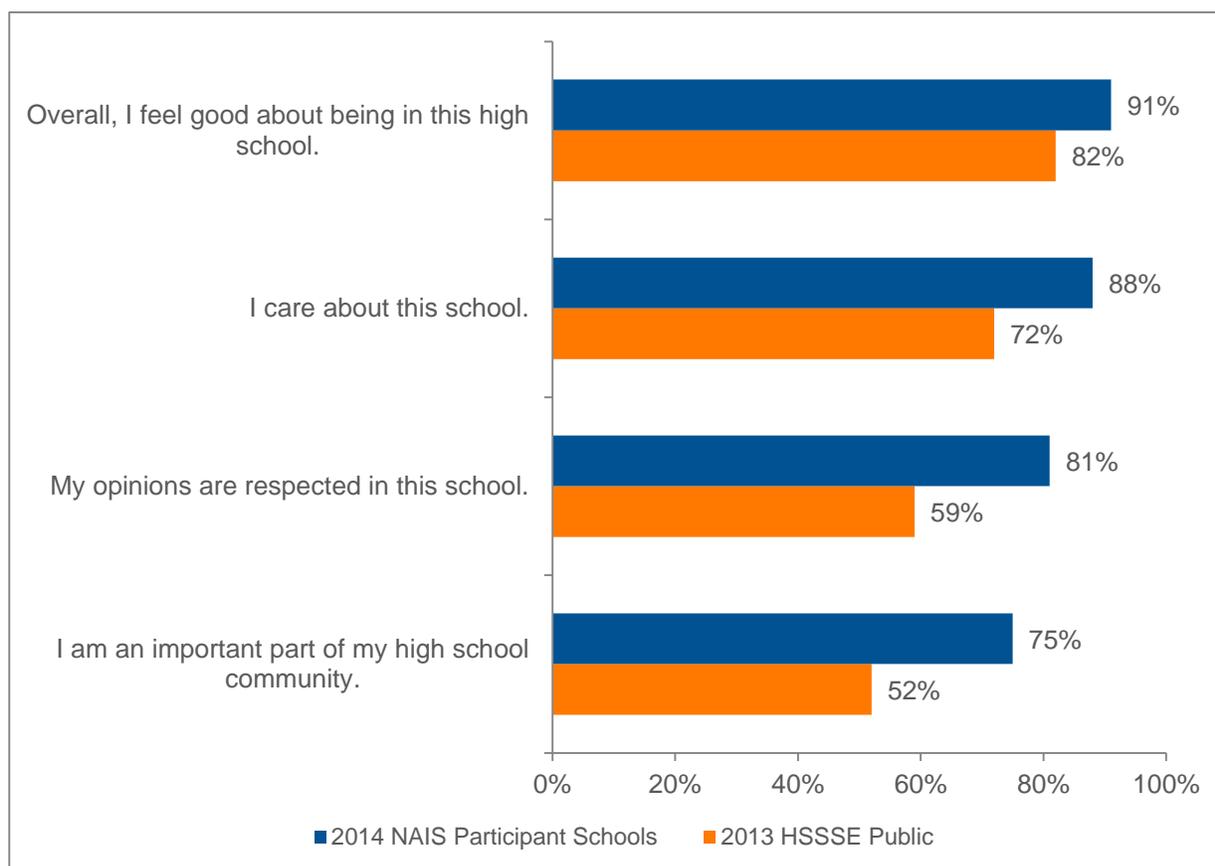
Students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:



Emotional Engagement with the School

To measure students' emotional engagement with their schools, HSSSE probed students on several areas, such as feeling good about being in their school, caring about their school, believing that student opinions are respected, and feeling part of the school community. Ninety-one percent of NAIS students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel good about being in their high schools; 88 percent declared that they care about their schools; 81 percent stated that their opinions are respected; and, 75 percent feel that they are an important part of their school community. These results were quite different from those of public school students. In particular, only 59 percent of public school students feel that their opinions are respected (22 percentage points lower than NAIS student responses), and only 52 percent of public school students feel that they are an important part of the school community (23 percentage points lower than NAIS students).

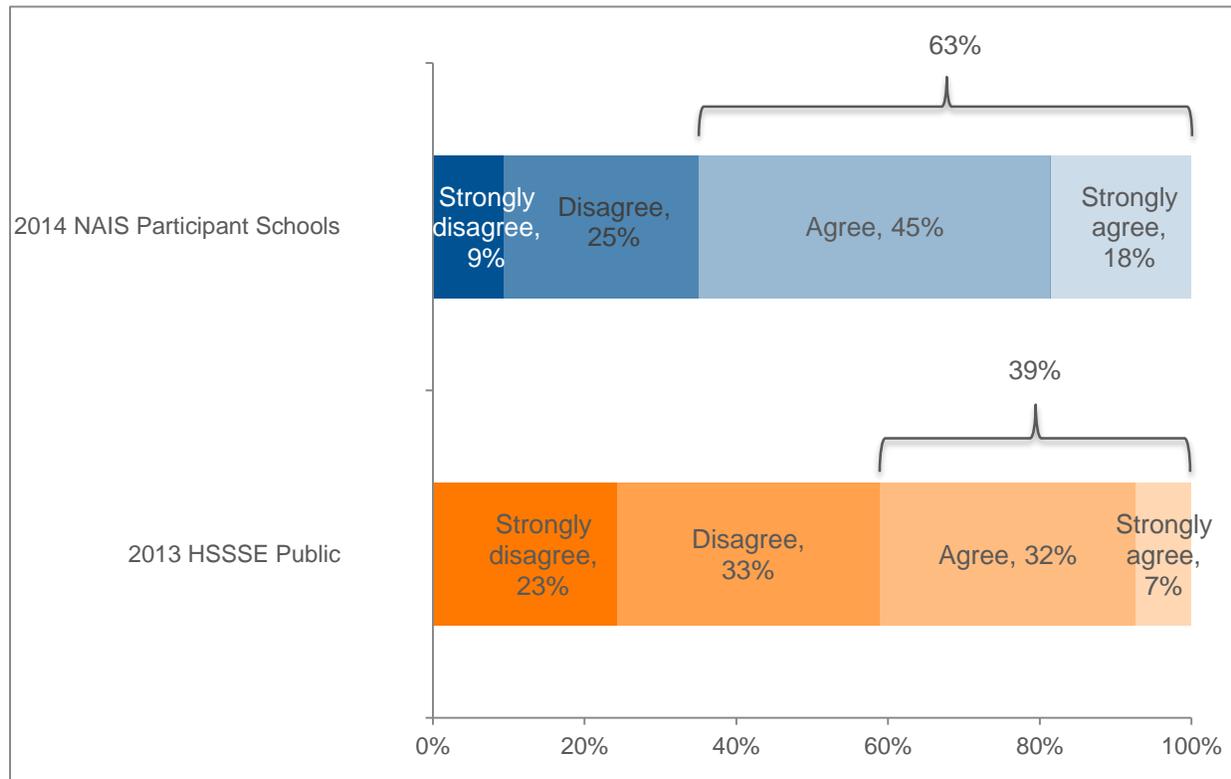
Students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:



School as a Reason for Going to School

Students were asked how much they agreed with the statement “I go to school because I enjoy being in school.” Sixty-three percent of NAIS students either agreed (45 percent) or strongly agreed (18 percent) with the statement. Only 39 percent of students from public schools agreed (18 percent) with the statement.

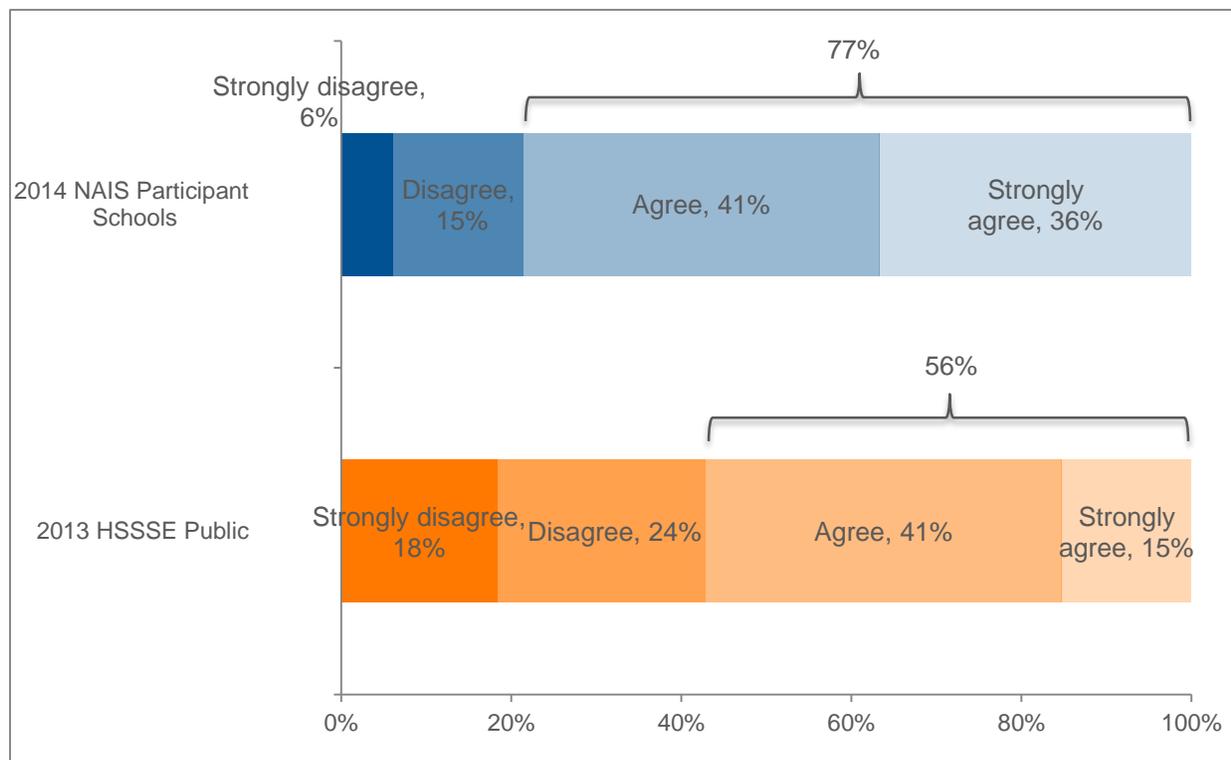
I go to school because I enjoy being in school.



Selecting Their Current School if Given a Choice

Another way to measure how students feel about their schools is by asking them whether they would choose their current high school if they could select one. Seventy-seven percent of students from NAIS agreed (41 percent) or strongly agreed (36 percent) that they would choose their current school. More than half of the students in public schools also agreed with the statement (56 percent).

If I could choose a high school right now, I would choose this school.



Student Demographics

Students who participated in HSSSE reported that they come from a wide variety of backgrounds, representing diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and differences in academic performance, among other identifiers.

Sex

A majority of NAIS school students participating in HSSSE are females. Students from public schools are evenly divided between male and female.

What is your sex?

Sex	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Female	57%	48%
Male	42%	48%
No response	1%	3%

Race and Ethnicity

The largest number of student respondents are Caucasian, particularly in public schools, where they represent 65 percent of the total compared with 58 percent at NAIS schools. The second largest group for both school types is multiracial students. These students represented 12 percent of NAIS students and 10 percent of public school students.

What is your racial or ethnic background?

Race and Ethnicity	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Native American	1%	1%
Asian	9%	3%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%
African American	6%	4%
Hispanic, Latino	5%	6%
White	58%	65%
Other	2%	2%
Multiracial	12%	10%
No response	7%	8%

Parent Highest Schooling Level

Only twenty-eight percent of the parents of both NAIS students and public school students have completed a four-year college degree. However, fifty-five percent of parents of students attending NAIS schools have a master's, doctorate, or other advanced degree, while 21 percent of the public school parents have advanced degrees. Eighteen percent of public school parents' highest level of schooling is a high school diploma, compared with 4 percent of NAIS school parents.

What is the highest level of schooling that either of your parents or guardians completed?

Level of Education	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
Don't know/Not applicable	6%	11%
Did not finish high school	1%	5%
GED	1%	2%
High school diploma	4%	18%
Community college or trade school	2%	10%
Four-year college degree	28%	28%
Master's, doctorate, other advanced	55%	21%
No response	2%	5%

Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

A quarter of public school students reported that they are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch at their schools. That number was only 11 percent at NAIS schools. However, a significant number of students were not aware of their eligibility status.

Are you eligible for free or reduced-price lunch at your high school?

Eligibility	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
No	57%	49%
Yes	11%	25%
Don't know	26%	18%
Prefer not to respond	4%	3%
No response	3%	5%

Current Grade

Participants were distributed across the four high school grades. The largest group of NAIS students were in 9th grade (28 percent), followed by 11th graders (25 percent). The largest group of public school students were 10th graders (33 percent), followed by 9th graders (26 percent).

What is your current grade?

Grade	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
No response	1%	2%
9 th	28%	26%
10 th	24%	33%
11 th	25%	19%
12 th	22%	20%

High School Grades

The largest group of students responding to the HSSSE reported having mostly As and Bs — 49 percent of the students at NAIS schools and 38 percent of the public school students.

Which one of the following categories best describes most of your high school grades?

Grade	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
No response	2%	6%
Grades not used/Don't know	1%	1%
Mostly Ds and below	0%	2%
Mostly Cs and Ds	1%	9%
Mostly Bs and Cs	14%	27%
Mostly As and Bs	49%	38%
Mostly As	32%	17%

Type of Classes Taken by Students

Thirty-three percent of NAIS students reported that they take honors classes, and the same percentage are taking general or regular classes. Thirty percent of public school students are also taking honors classes, with a higher percentage (38 percent) taking general or regular classes.

Which one of the following categories best describes most of the classes that you take?

Type of Classes	2014 NAIS Participant Schools	2013 HSSSE Public
No response	4%	9%
Don't know	14%	10%
Career/Vocational/ Trade	2%	3%
ELL/ESL/Bilingual	0%	1%
General/Regular	33%	38%
Honors	33%	30%
Dual Credit/Advanced Placement	14%	7%
Special Education	0%	2%