



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 2013

DCPS 2013 Student Survey Results

Prepared by the Office of Data and Strategy

Executive Summary.....3

District Results.....4

Response Rates 4

Perceptions of Teachers..... 6

Student Motivation..... 8

Student Satisfaction Index 10

Safety 12

Peer to Peer Interaction..... 14

Other Adults..... 16

Appendix A: Survey Methodology.....18

Overview 19

Previous Results 19

Survey Instrument..... 19

Administration and Data Collection..... 19

Analysis 20

Appendix B: Question by Question Results22

Executive Summary

DCPS administered satisfaction surveys to students in grades 3 and higher in the spring of 2013. In addition to collecting general data on school climate, the survey is also the primary way of measuring progress against DCPS' 4th Capital Commitment Goal that 90 percent of students will say they like their school by 2017. As of 2013, DCPS is well on the way to meet that goal with 78 percent of students saying they like their school.

In addition, the data shows that students are motivated (97% of students overall agreed with questions around trying hard in school and thinking school is important) and rate their teachers highly (89% of students overall agreed with questions like "My teachers challenge me" and "My teachers make me want to learn"). However, DCPS needs to develop strategies to improve peer to peer interactions such as students having things stolen or damaged, getting into fights, or being made fun of for the way they look or talk (only 35% of students overall said these incidents occur rarely or never).

District Results

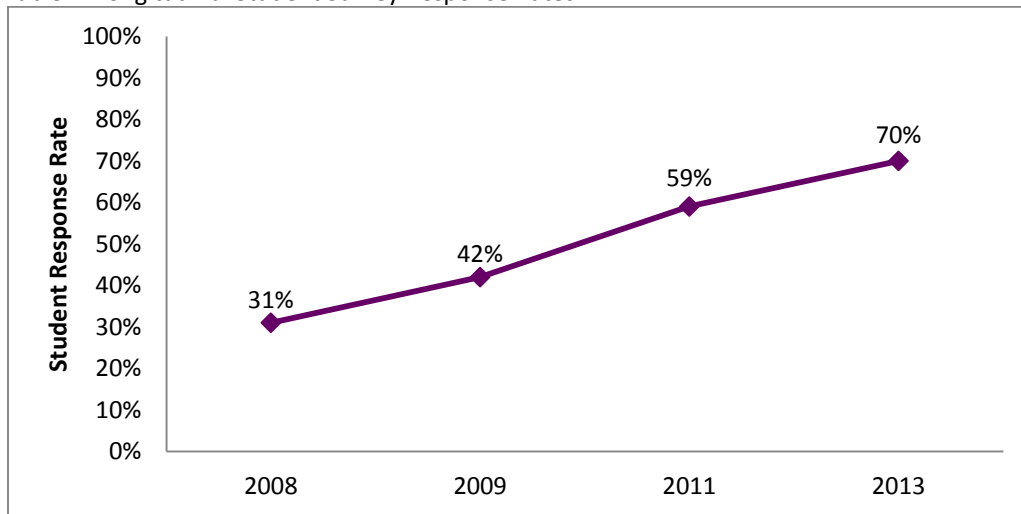
Questions on the survey covered perceptions on teachers, learning, safety, engagement, and overall satisfaction with the school. This section of the report shows a summary of results from the survey, and full question by question results are available in Appendix B. Appendix A contains more details about the survey administration and analysis processes.

After a brief discussion of response rates, the questions from the survey are presented in six categories.¹ For each category, question by question results are presented first, including comparison data from the 2009 and 2011 student surveys when applicable. Percentages in the question by question tables are a combination of the two most positive answers to the question (either “Strongly agree” and “Agree,” “Very safe” and “Mostly safe,” or “Rarely” and “Never”) and exclude any respondents who selected “Don’t know”. The second table within each category shows the combined district result² for that group of questions plus a breakout by demographics (race, school type, and ward).

Response Rates

As shown in Table 1, response rates to the student surveys have increased steadily over the past five years. Table 2 shows response rates broken out by school type. Response rates were highest in elementary schools and lowest in STAY schools (STAY schools, or Schools to Aid Youth, serve older students—primarily those over 18- who are returning to high school to finish their degree).

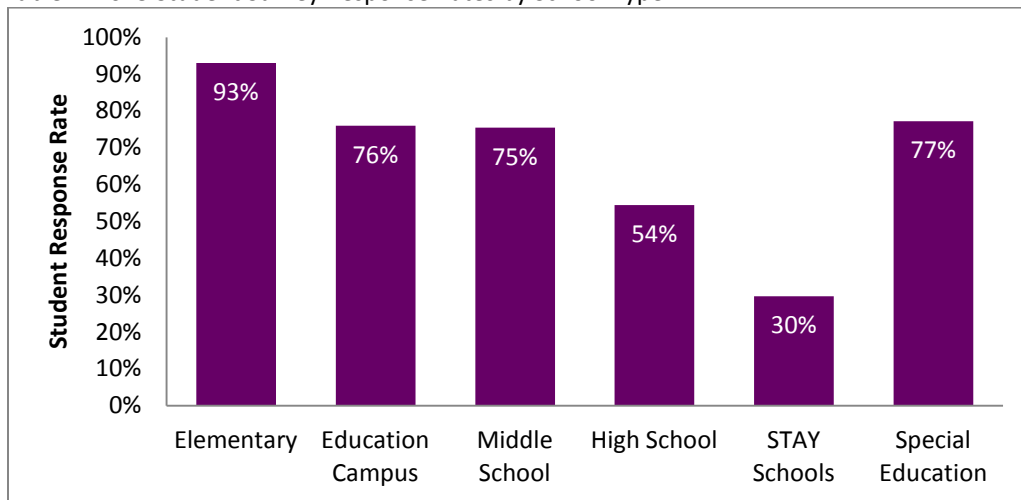
Table 1: Longitudinal Student Survey Response Rates



¹ These categories are based off factor analysis performed on the survey data. Details are available in Appendix A.

² More information about this calculation is found in Appendix A.

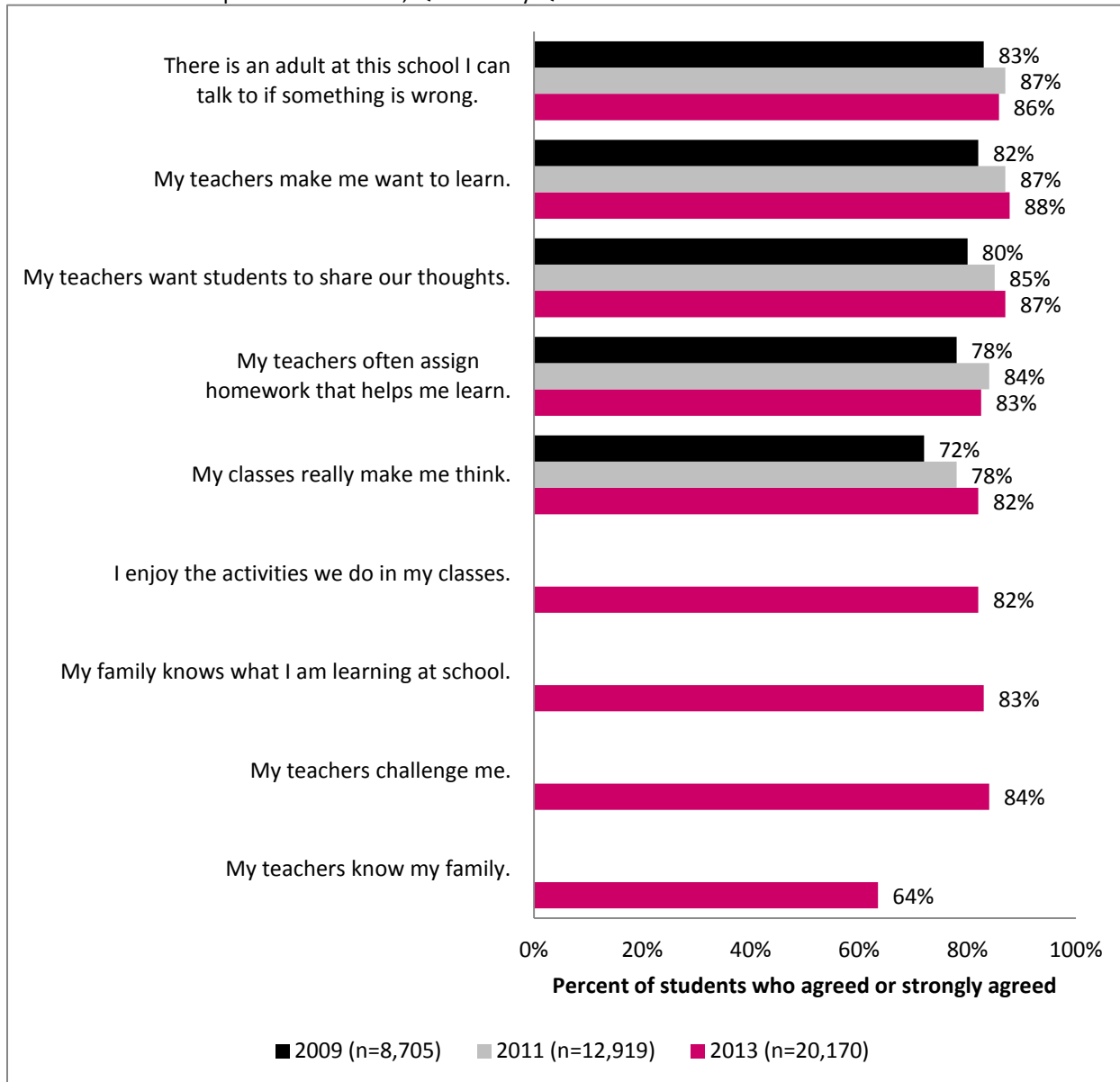
Table 2: 2013 Student Survey Response Rates by School Type



Perceptions of Teachers

Questions in this category asked students about teachers and about what they are studying in school. Table 3 shows the question by question results for the Perceptions of Teachers category. For questions with multiple years of data, the results remained consistent or improved slightly (such as an increase on the question “My classes really make me think” from 78% of students answering positively in 2011 to 82% in 2013).

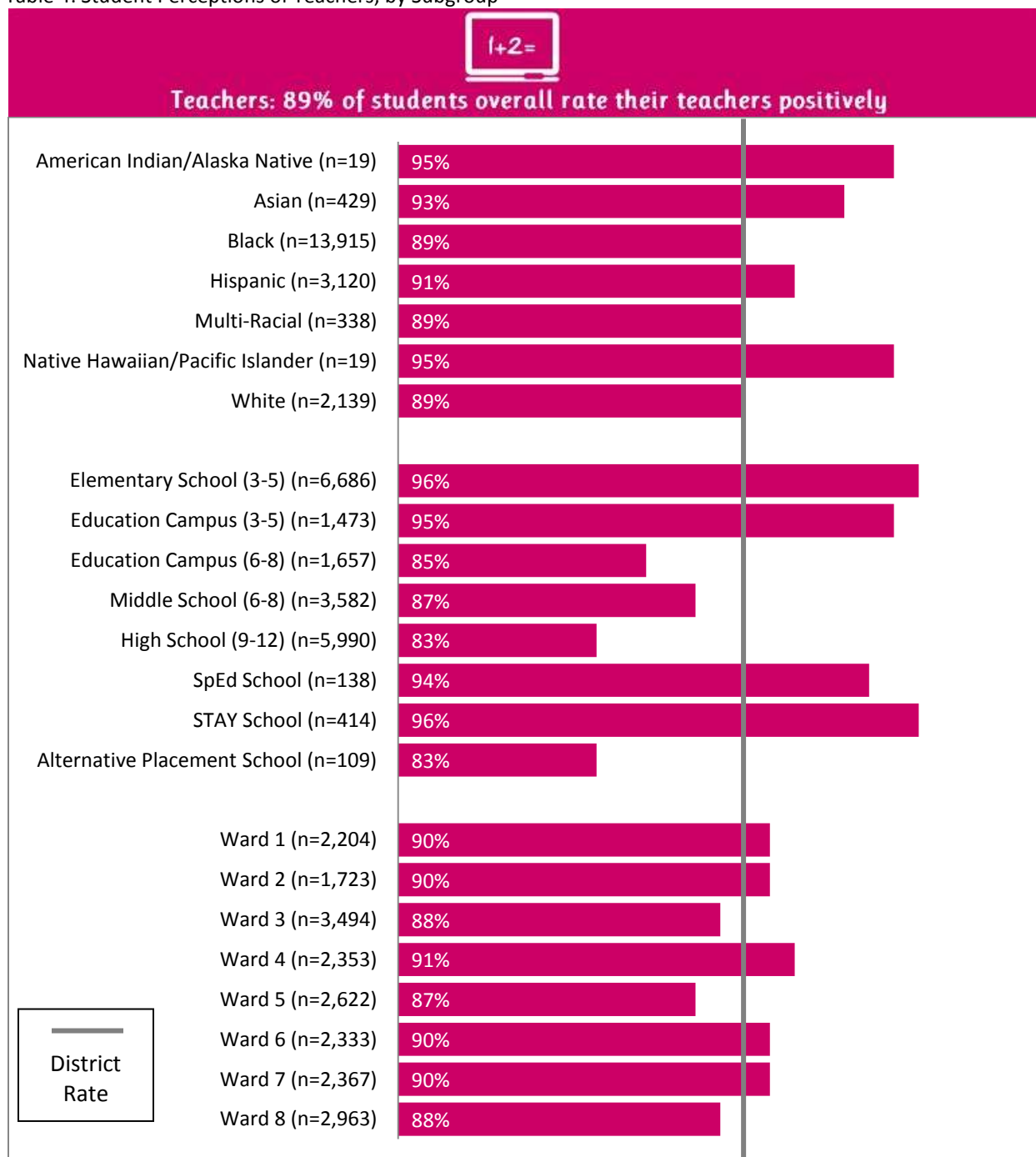
Table 3: Student Perceptions of Teachers, Question by Question³



³ In the question by question tables, all n sizes are based on the number of students in that year who responded to at least one of the questions in the table.

Table 4 shows the questions in Perceptions of Teachers as an overall district score and by subgroup. As explained further in Appendix A, the district score is the percent of students in the district who overall responded favorably to this group of questions (hence why it is greater than any of the percentages for the individual questions). For this category, none of the subgroups are very different from the district score. Elementary students and STAY students felt the most positive about these questions, while high school students felt least positive.

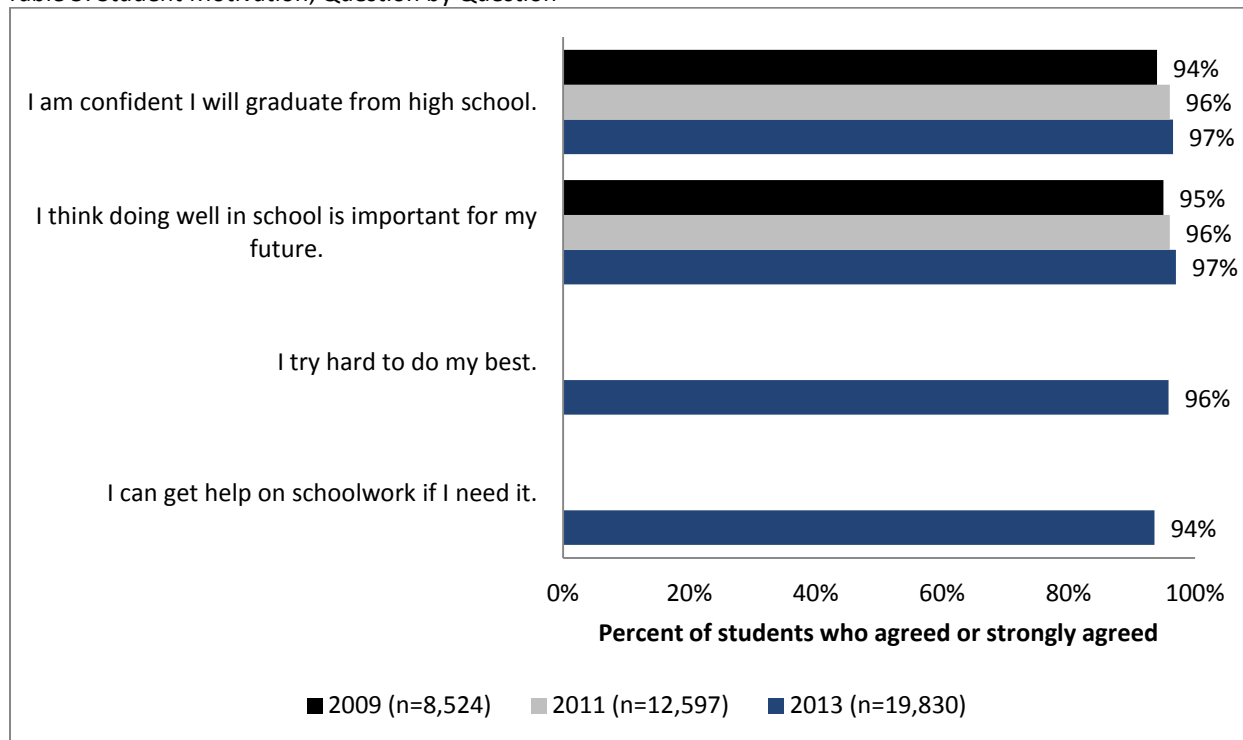
Table 4: Student Perceptions of Teachers, by Subgroup



Student Motivation

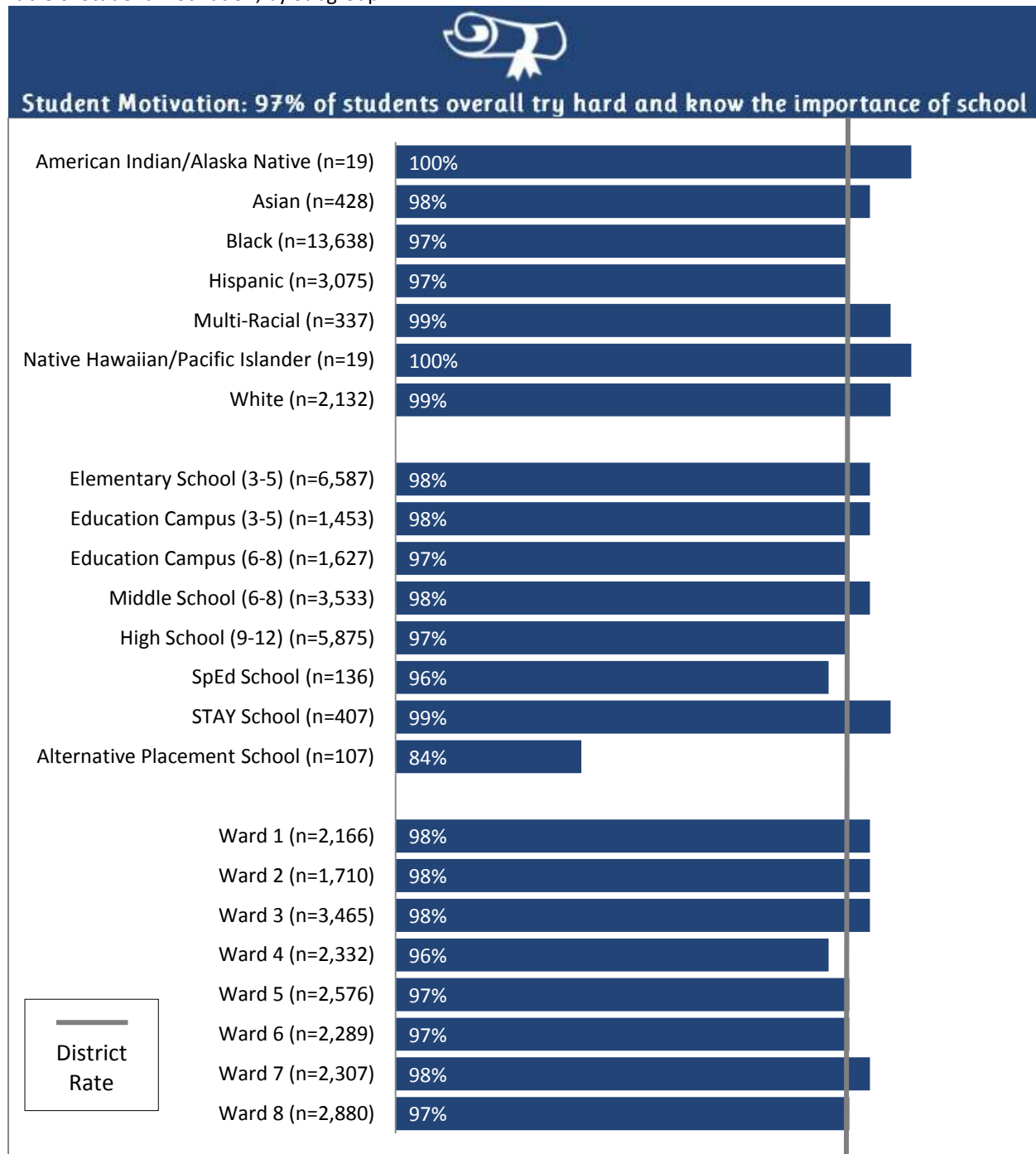
Questions in this category also ask about student learning but are more focused on student motivation. Table 5 shows the question by question results for the Student Motivation category. For the two questions with historical data, being confident about graduating from high school and thinking doing well in school is important for the student’s future, both increased from 96 percent in 2011 to 97 percent in 2013.

Table 5: Student Motivation, Question by Question



As Table 6 shows, students in most all subgroups answered positively to these four questions. The only exception is with students at alternative placement schools, who overall responded less favorably, at 84 percent.

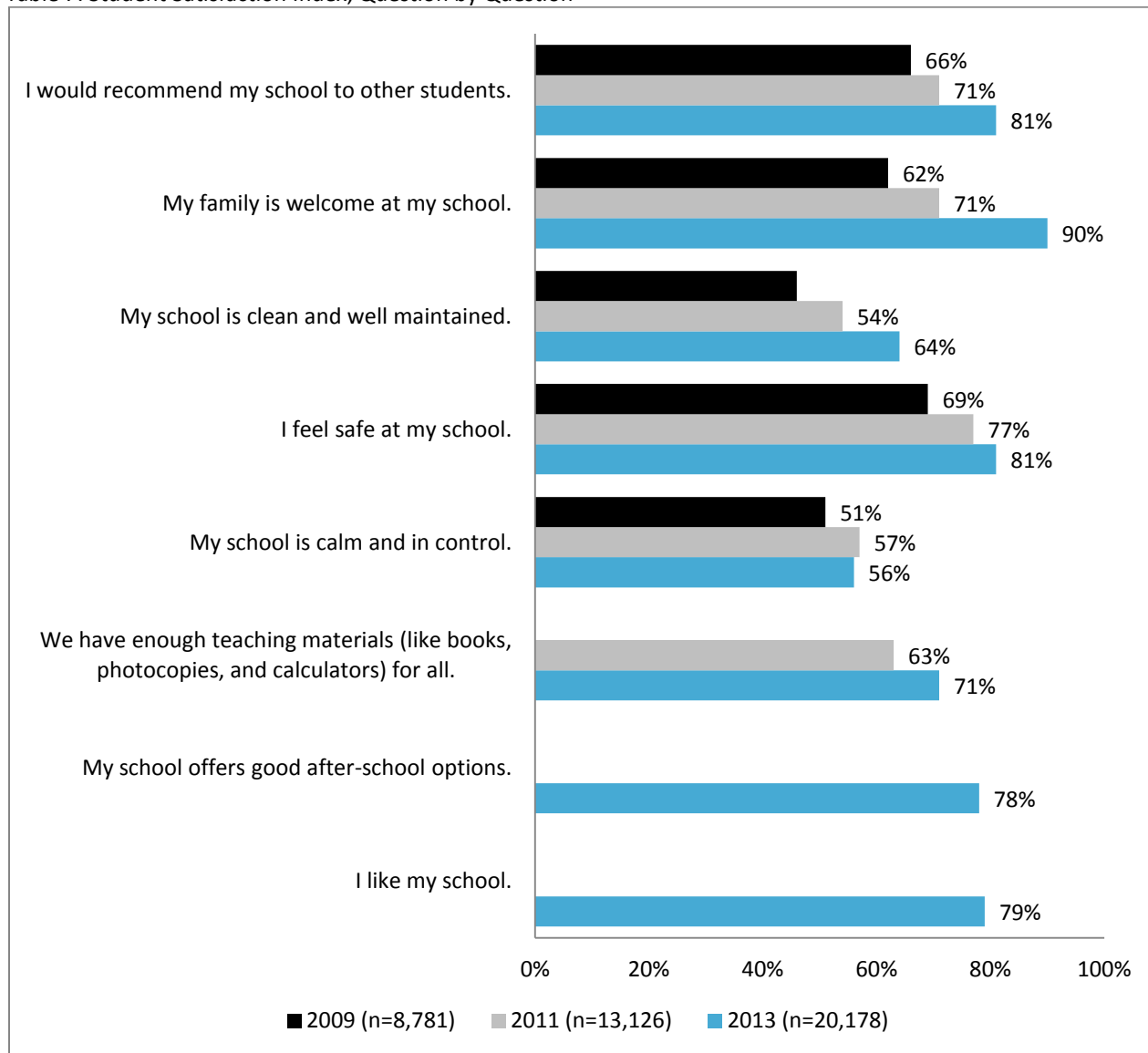
Table 6: Student Motivation, by Subgroup



Student Satisfaction Index

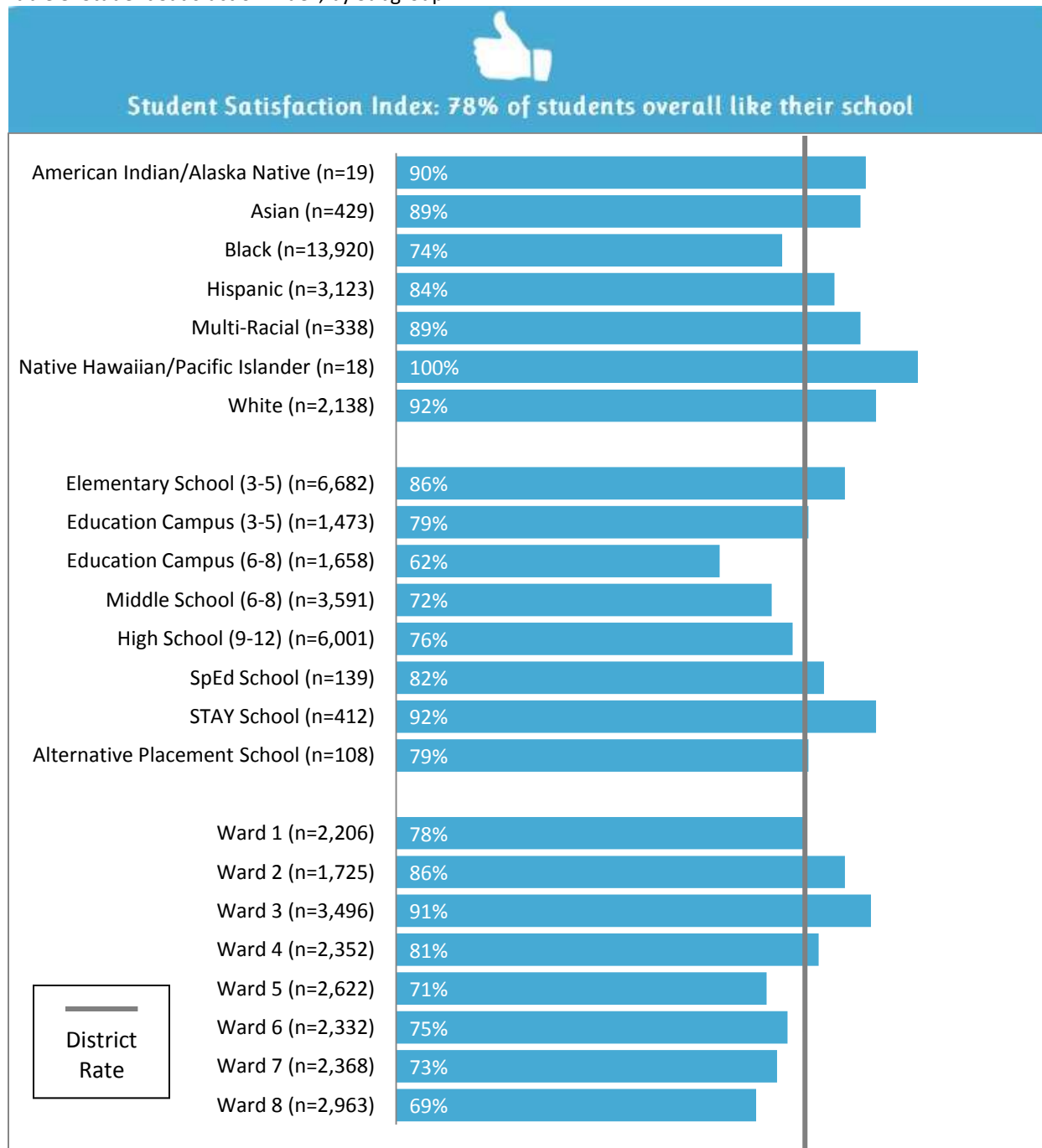
This category contains eight questions regarding a student’s overall satisfaction with their school, as shown in Table 7. Several of these questions showed gains from 2011 to 2013, including questions about recommending the school to other students, having enough resources, and school cleanliness. The question asking whether the student’s family is welcome at the school increased the most (up 19 percentage points, from 71% to 90%).

Table 7: Student Satisfaction Index, Question by Question



This group of questions, when combined, is being used as the primary way of measuring DCPS’ progress against the 4th Capital Commitment Goal of “90% of students will say they like their school.” As shown in Table 8, at the end of the 2012-13 school year, DCPS was at 78 percent as a district. Students in middle grades show the lowest amount of satisfaction, both at traditional middle schools and education campuses. Black students had lower rates of satisfaction, as did students in wards 5, 7, and 8.

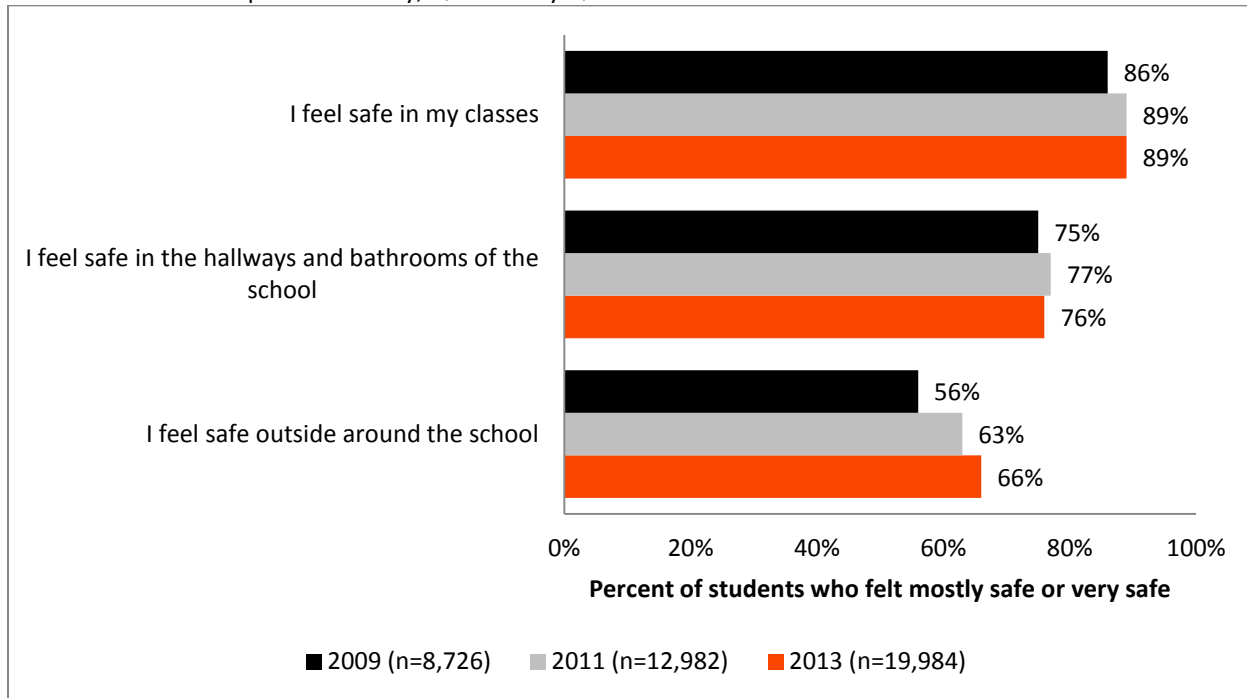
Table 8: Student Satisfaction Index, by Subgroup



Safety

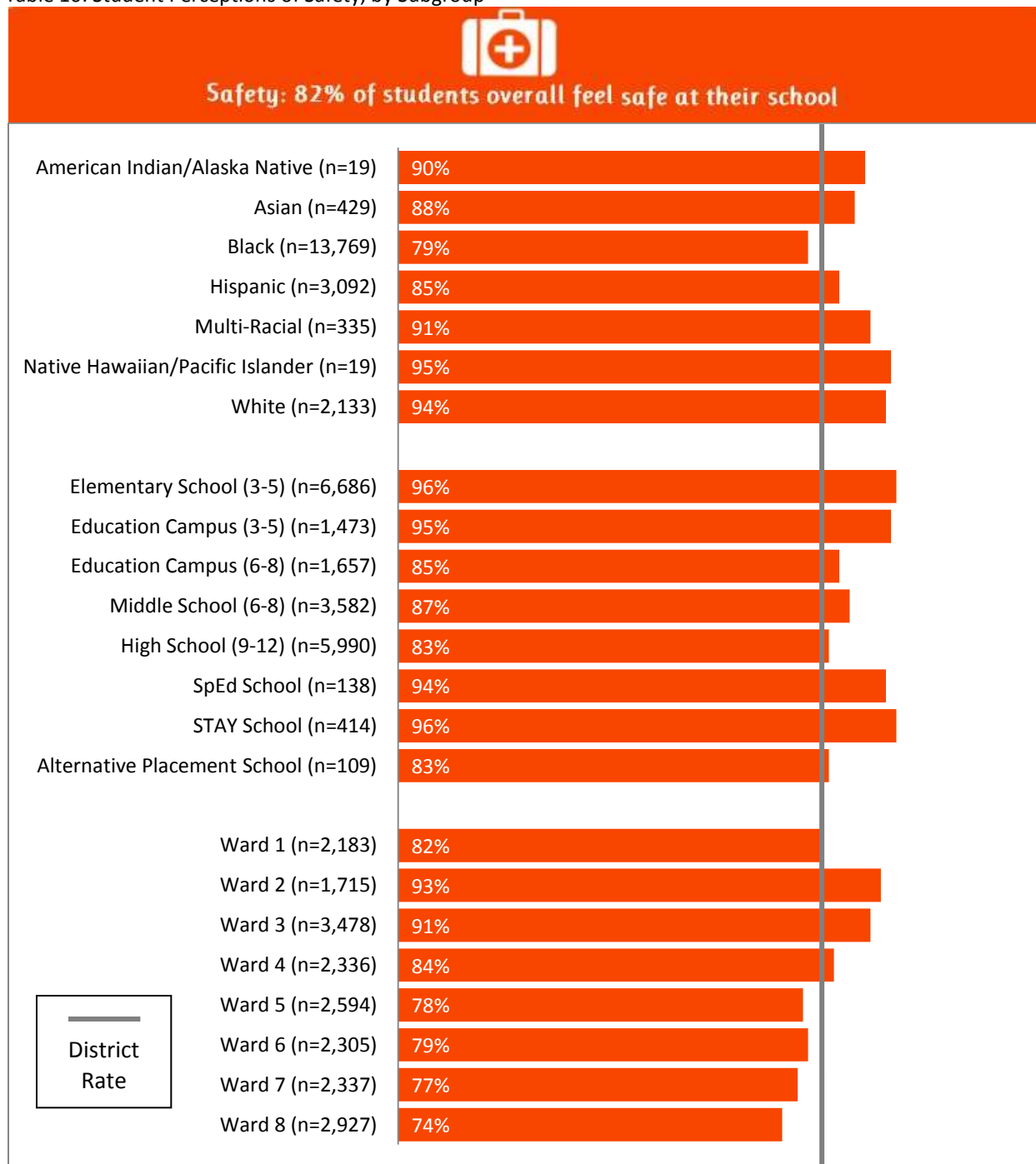
The three questions in this category all relate to how safe students feel in different areas of the school campus. Student perceptions of safety in their classrooms and the hallways remained about the same as in 2011, though perceptions of safety around the school improved, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Student Perceptions of Safety, Question by Question



Overall as a district, 82 percent of students feel safe in their schools, as shown in Table 10. Students in high schools and alternative placement schools feel the least safe, as well as those in Ward 8.

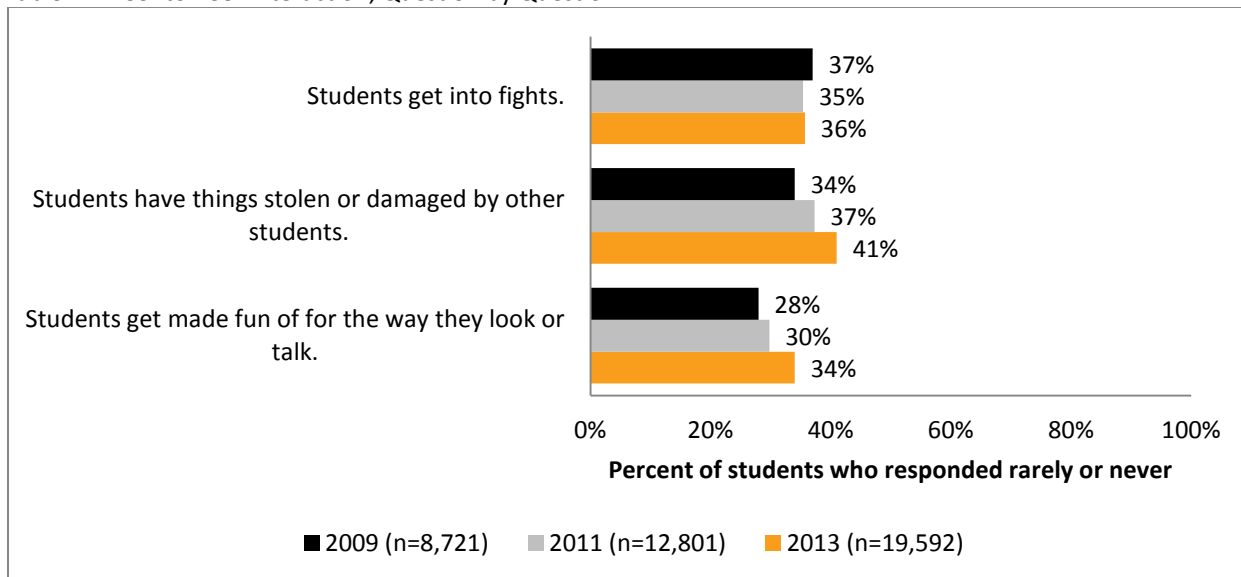
Table 10: Student Perceptions of Safety, by Subgroup



Peer to Peer Interaction

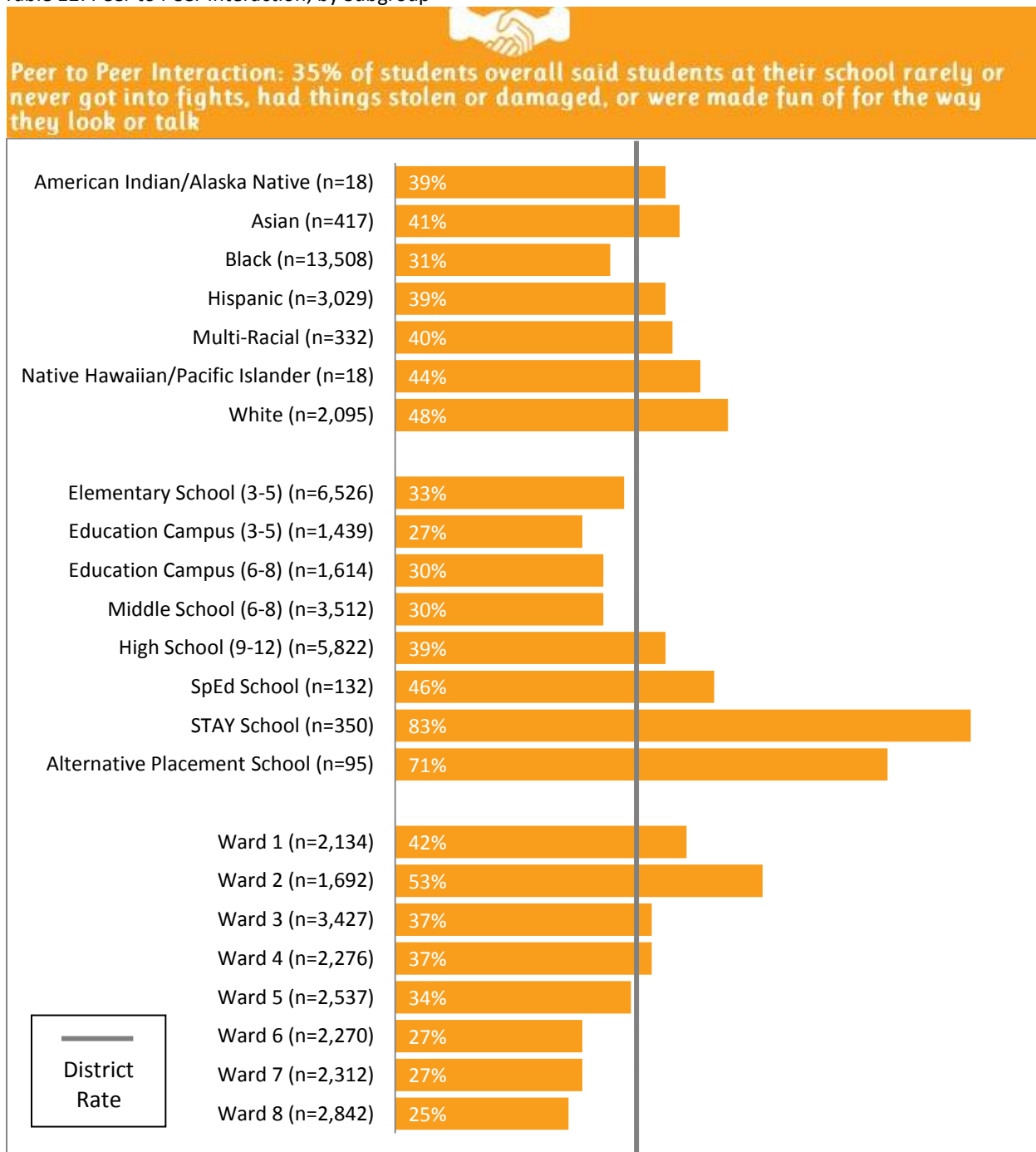
This group of questions asks how often students at a school get into fights, have things stolen or damaged by other students, or get made fun of for the way they look or talk (Table 11). Students answered much less positively on these questions than in any other category, though the responses are slightly more positive than in past years (in this case, responding “rarely” or “never” was considered a positive response).

Table 11: Peer to Peer Interaction, Question by Question



As Table 12 shows, 35 percent of students in the district overall responded positively to these questions. This is consistent across most subgroups, with the exception of STAY school students and those at alternative placement schools which scored higher than the district average. Ward 2 also scored slightly higher than the district average.

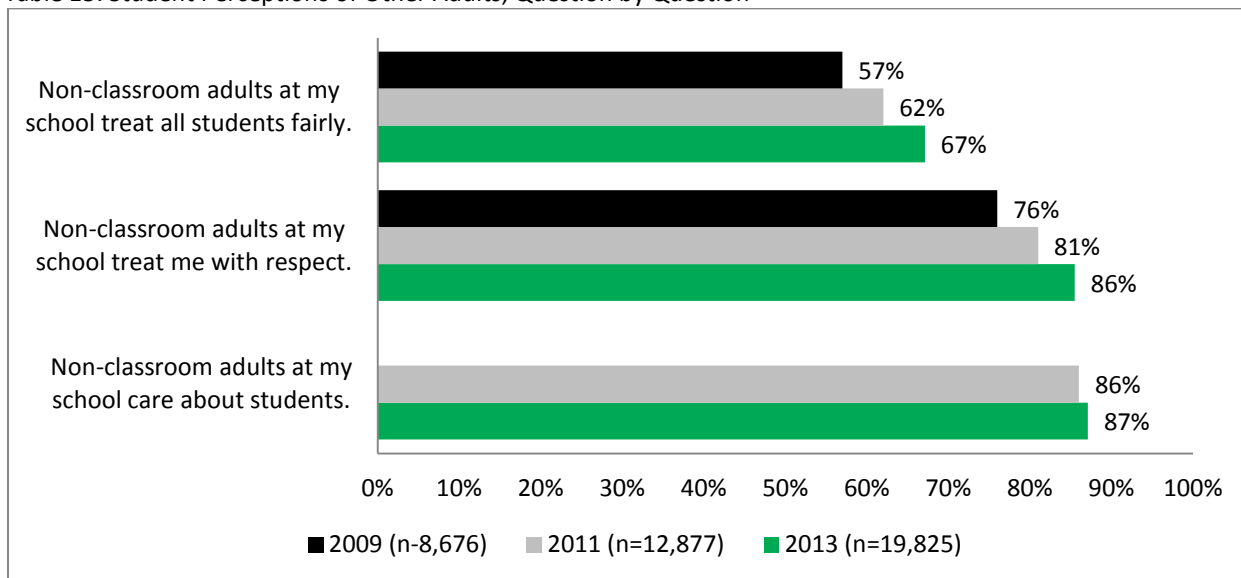
Table 12: Peer to Peer Interaction, by Subgroup



Other Adults

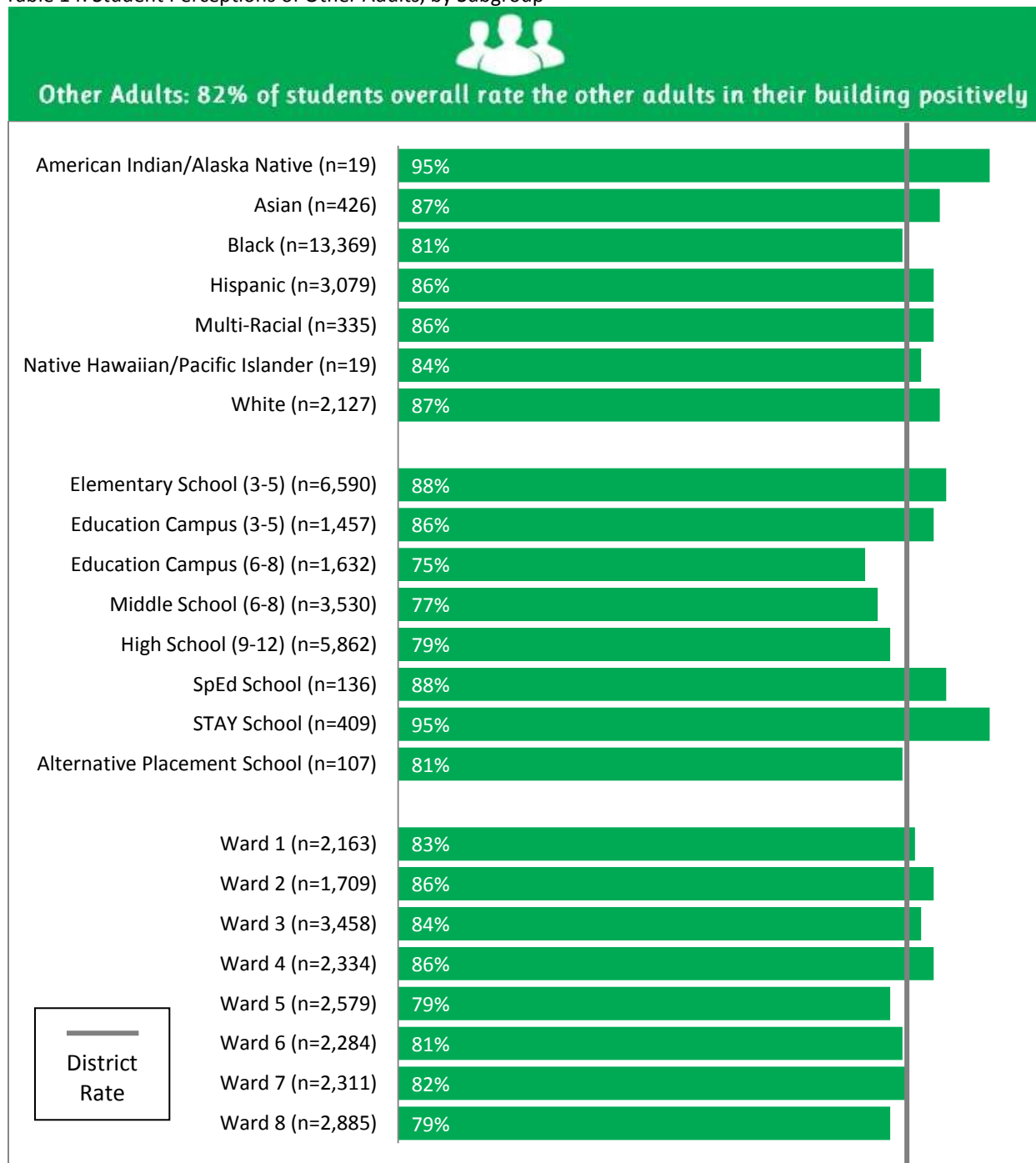
Table 13 shows the results from questions about other adults in the building (besides teachers), including whether they treat all students fairly, with respect, and care about students. All three questions scored slightly higher than in previous years.

Table 13: Student Perceptions of Other Adults, Question by Question



Across the district, 82 percent of students rated non-classroom staff as positive (Table 14). Responses were lower for secondary grades (6-8 in both education campuses and middle schools as well as high schools and alternative placement schools). Wards 5 and 8 also received lower ratings.

Table 14: Student Perceptions of Other Adults, by Subgroup



Appendix A: Survey Methodology

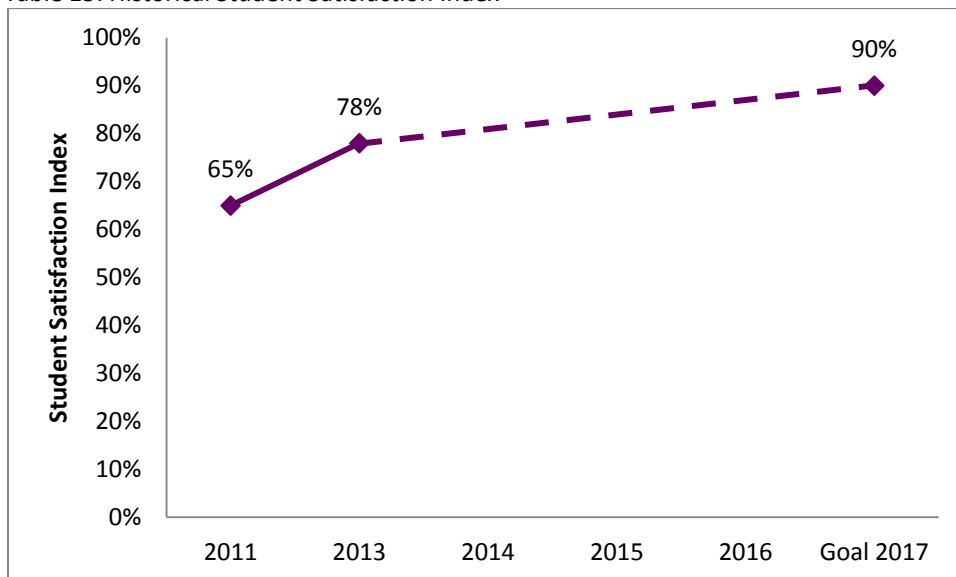
Overview

DCPS administered student surveys in May and June 2013 to students in grades 3 and higher. This year marked a change in the grades surveyed as DCPS included third and fourth graders for the first time. The surveys covered topics from perceptions of teacher quality to facilities to safety. The Office of Data and Strategy (ODS) managed the survey administration process for the district, and each principal designated a Survey Liaison to serve as a point of contact for the school.

Previous Results

DCPS also administered student surveys in 2011, including some of the same questions as in 2013. Table 15 below shows the results of the Student Satisfaction Index including data from 2011. This chart is not part of the larger report because data from previous years are not considered comparable to the 2013 results due to a difference in questions used, question wording, and a different population of students surveyed (grades 3 and 4 were included for the first time in 2013). More information about the methodology is found below.

Table 15: Historical Student Satisfaction Index



Survey Instrument

The 2011 instrument heavily influenced the 2013 version in order to maintain longitudinal data, though many questions were cut to reduce the overall length of the survey, thereby reducing the burden on schools and accommodating the younger students. Some of the survey language was also modified to better match the reading level of elementary students. To solicit feedback on changes to the instrument, ODS ran a working group of central office and school staff in spring 2013. The working group also provided feedback on survey administration logistics.

Administration and Data Collection

All students enrolled in a DCPS school in grades 3 and higher as of April 5, 2013 were eligible to complete the survey. Prior to administering the survey, schools also distributed parental passive consent forms so that families could opt a student out of taking the survey if they wished. Schools submitted to ODS a list of students who were ineligible to take the survey, meaning students either

returned a signed consent form, were no longer attending the school by the date surveys were administered, or could not complete the survey due to cognitive disabilities. ODS removed the ineligible students from a school’s population count and created an “adjusted population” for each school and the district (in other words, ineligible students did not count against a school’s response rate).

The survey administration window ran from May 6, 2013 through June 7, 2013. Schools had the choice of administering a paper/pencil version (Scantron forms) or an online version (through SurveyMonkey) of the survey. ODS made an effort to engage schools in the process earlier so that schools were clear on the purpose of the survey and followed up with schools throughout the process to support them in meeting the deadline. ODS also provided incentives to Survey Liaisons whose schools achieved a 100% response rate. Surveys were administered during the school day and the paper results returned to an external contractor for scanning and then to central office for analysis.

Analysis

Surveys were counted as a response as long as students answered at least one question. One of the goals of the student surveys was to measure DCPS’ progress towards the 4th Capital Commitment Goal of “90% of students will say they like their school.” While the survey instrument did include the question “I like my school,” relying on only one question to track a metric is not a robust method of analysis. Therefore, ODS ran a factor analysis on the thirty main closed-ended questions in order to group them into categories. Factor analysis sorts survey items into factors based on similar response patterns (for example, a student who chose “Disagree” on one item in the factor was likely to also choose “Disagree” on a second item in the factor). The grouping is an indication that the survey items are measuring a similar underlying concept. The 2013 Student Survey grouped into six factors: Perceptions of Teachers, Qualities Related to Liking School, Perceptions of Safety, Student Motivation, Peer to Peer Interaction, and Perceptions of Other Adults.

The second factor, Qualities Related to Liking School, contained the question “I like my school” and was converted to the Student Satisfaction Index to measure progress against Goal 4. The factor itself is expressed by taking an average score for all of the items in the factor. Each student is then assigned a value for the factor ranging from 1 to 4, with 4 being the most satisfied with those items. The Student Satisfaction Index is the percent of students whose factor score was on the positive end of the scale (i.e. above 2.5). Students received a score on the factor if they answered at least one of the questions in that factor. Factors scores and index percentages were also created for the five remaining factors. Items in each factor, including reliability statistics, are found in Table 16 below.

Table 16: Items and Reliability for Each Factor

Factor	Items
1: Perceptions of Teachers ($\alpha = .83$)	Q3: My family knows what I am learning at school. Q4: There is an adult at this school I can talk to if something is wrong. Q9: My classes really make me think. Q10: I enjoy the activities we do in my classes. Q18: Teachers make me want to learn. Q19: Teachers want students to share our thoughts. Q20: Teachers often assign homework that helps me learn. Q21: Teachers know my family. Q22: Teachers challenge me.

<p>2: Student Satisfaction Index ($\alpha = .82$)</p>	<p>Q1: I would recommend my school to other students. Q2: My family is welcome at my school. Q5: We have enough teaching materials (like books, photocopies, and calculators) for all. Q6: My school is clean and well maintained. Q7: I feel safe at my school. Q8: My school is calm and in control. Q11: My school offers good after-school options. Q30: I like my school.</p>
<p>3: Perceptions of Safety ($\alpha = .72$)</p>	<p>Q12: I feel safe outside around the school. Q13: I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of the school. Q14: I feel safe in my classes.</p>
<p>4: Student Motivation ($\alpha = .73$)</p>	<p>Q26: I try hard to do my best. Q27: I am confident I will graduate from high school. Q28: I can get help on schoolwork if I need it. Q29: I think doing well in school is important for my future.</p>
<p>5: Peer to Peer Interaction ($\alpha = .71$)</p>	<p>Q15: Students get into fights. Q16: Students have things stolen or damaged by other students. Q17: Students get made fun of for the way they look or talk.</p>
<p>6: Perceptions of Other Adults ($\alpha = .80$)</p>	<p>Q23: Non-classroom adults care about students. Q24: Non-classroom adults treat me with respect. Q25: Non-classroom adults treat all students fairly.</p>

Appendix B: Question by Question Results

Question by Question Results

20,217 students (70% of eligible students) completed the survey district-wide

Please mark how much you agree or disagree that...	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I would recommend my school to other students	31%	51%	13%	6%
My family is welcome at my school	44%	46%	7%	3%
My family knows what I am learning in school	35%	48%	14%	3%
There is an adult at this school I can talk to if something is wrong	49%	37%	9%	5%
We have enough teaching materials (like books, photocopies, and calculators) for all	30%	41%	21%	8%

How much do you agree or disagree that...	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
My school is clean and well-maintained	20%	43%	24%	12%
I feel safe at my school	32%	49%	14%	6%
My school is calm and in control	15%	41%	30%	14%
My classes really make me think	32%	50%	14%	4%
I enjoy the activities we do in my classes	33%	49%	14%	4%
My school offers good after-school options	33%	45%	15%	7%

How safe do you feel in the following places?	<i>Very safe</i>	<i>Mostly safe</i>	<i>Somewhat safe</i>	<i>Not safe</i>
Outside around the school	29%	37%	24%	10%
In the hallways and bathrooms of the school	42%	34%	16%	7%
In my classes	65%	25%	8%	3%

How often do students in your school...	<i>Often</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Get into fights	25%	36%	23%	10%	7%
Have things stolen or damaged by other students	21%	31%	23%	13%	11%
Get made fun of for the way they look or talk	33%	27%	18%	13%	9%

The teachers in my classrooms...	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Make me want to learn	43%	45%	10%	3%
Want students to share our thoughts	39%	48%	10%	3%
Often assign homework that helps me learn	38%	44%	13%	4%
Know my family	28%	36%	26%	11%
Challenge me	40%	44%	12%	5%

Note: Percentages in this Appendix may differ from those in the full report because "Don't know" responses were excluded from percentages reported in the district- and school-level reports.

Question by Question Results

The adults not in the classroom at my school...	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
Care about students	38%	49%	9%	4%
Treat me with respect	37%	49%	11%	4%
Treat all students fairly	29%	38%	23%	10%

How much do you agree or disagree that...	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I try hard to do my best	61%	35%	3%	1%
I am confident I will graduate from high school	73%	24%	3%	1%
I can get help on schoolwork if I need it	54%	39%	5%	2%
I think doing well in school is important for my future	75%	22%	2%	1%
I like my school	36%	43%	12%	9%

Please mark whether you participate in these activities...	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
I participate in sports at my school	51%	49%
I participate in after-school programs at my school	45%	55%

What after-school option would you most like to see at your school?			
Sports	42%	Languages	4%
Music	9%	Government/Debate	3%
Art	10%	Clubs	15%
Drama	8%	Other	10%

What grade would you give...	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>
your school?	32%	34%	21%	8%	5%

Question by Question Results

The following questions are applicable for students in 9th through 12th grade only.

Are you aware of the high school graduation requirements?	Yes	92%	No	8%
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Are you on track towards high school graduation?	Yes	75%	No	9%
	Not Sure	17%		

What are your plans after high school? (Mark all that apply)			
Continue school	77%	Join the military	6%
Get a job	32%	Other plans	9%
Not sure	8%		

Have you taken any preparation courses to help you prepare for taking college entrance tests like the ACT or SAT?	Yes	42%	No	58%
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Have you taken any college entrance tests? (Mark all that apply)	SAT	75%	ACT	17%
	Other	21%		