



LAKE BLUFF SCHOOLS
DISTRICT 65



The Road
to
success

STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission:

Ensure academic achievement and personal growth for all students through innovative and engaging educational opportunities.



Motto:


Excellence in Education,
Enthusiasm for Life, Every
Student, Every Day.

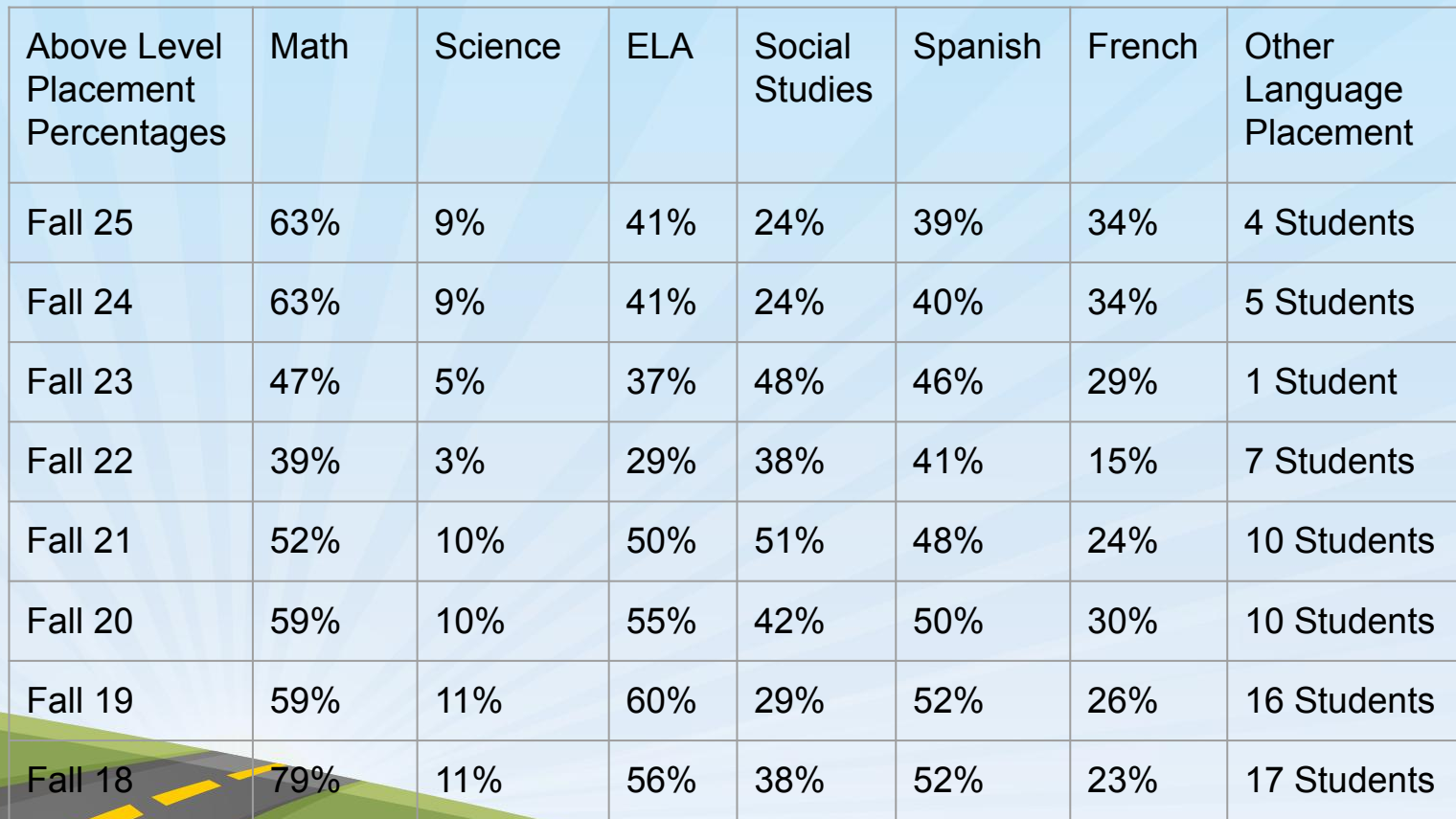


Vision:

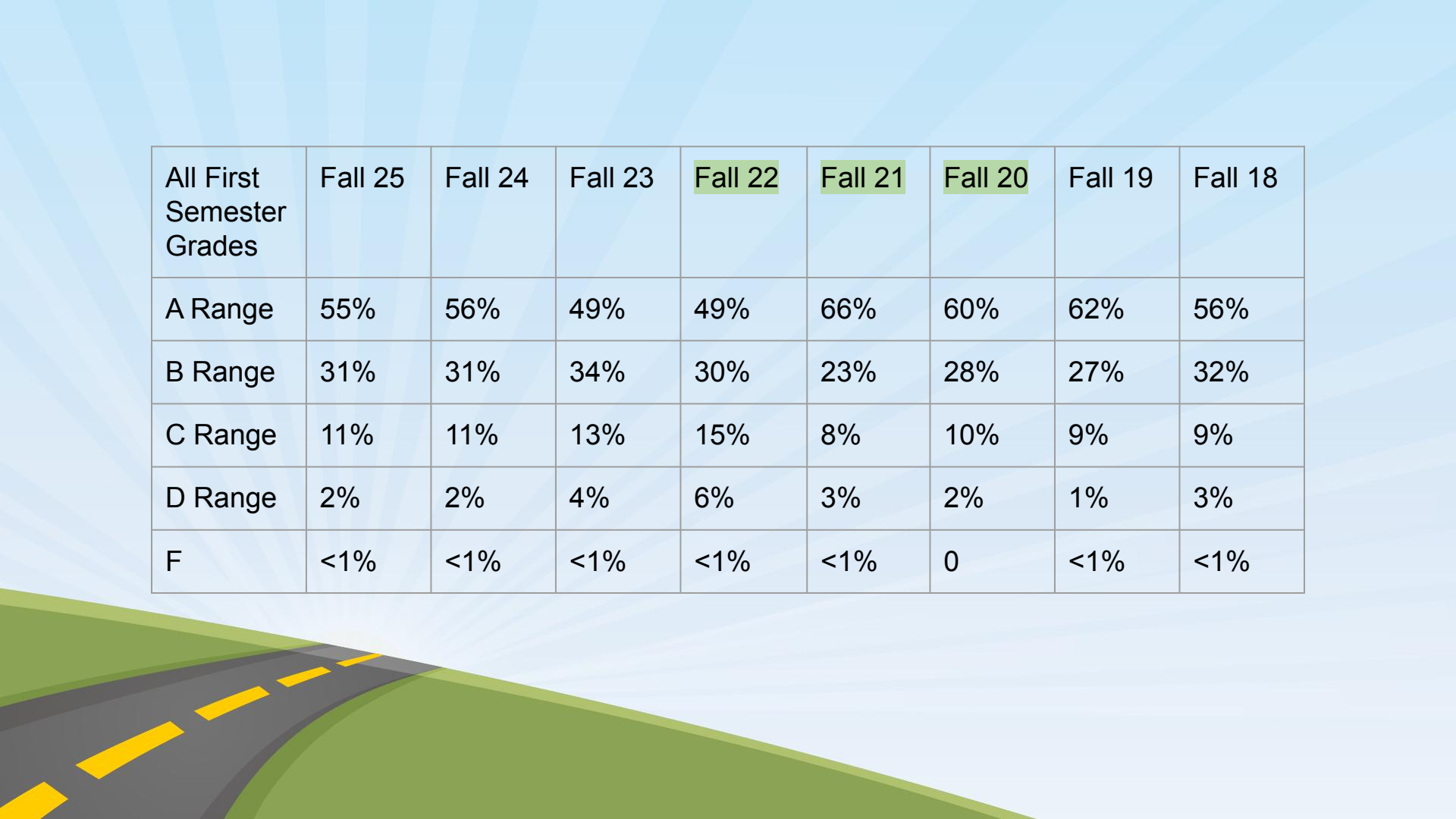
An inclusive community of motivated learners who are inspired to change the world through exploration and collaboration.

Outcomes for this Presentation:

- Review Freshman Placement and Achievement trends for Lake Bluff students from 2018-Present
 - Review survey data from the current 9th grade students and parents
 - Review highlights of the focus group experience with 65,67 and 115 Board and students.
- 
- A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide shows a grey road with yellow dashed lines curving across a green hill. The background of the slide is light blue with a sunburst pattern emanating from behind the text.



Above Level Placement Percentages	Math	Science	ELA	Social Studies	Spanish	French	Other Language Placement
Fall 25	63%	9%	41%	24%	39%	34%	4 Students
Fall 24	63%	9%	41%	24%	40%	34%	5 Students
Fall 23	47%	5%	37%	48%	46%	29%	1 Student
Fall 22	39%	3%	29%	38%	41%	15%	7 Students
Fall 21	52%	10%	50%	51%	48%	24%	10 Students
Fall 20	59%	10%	55%	42%	50%	30%	10 Students
Fall 19	59%	11%	60%	29%	52%	26%	16 Students
Fall 18	79%	11%	56%	38%	52%	23%	17 Students



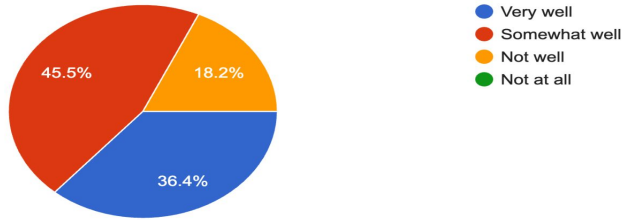
All First Semester Grades	Fall 25	Fall 24	Fall 23	Fall 22	Fall 21	Fall 20	Fall 19	Fall 18
A Range	55%	56%	49%	49%	66%	60%	62%	56%
B Range	31%	31%	34%	30%	23%	28%	27%	32%
C Range	11%	11%	13%	15%	8%	10%	9%	9%
D Range	2%	2%	4%	6%	3%	2%	1%	3%
F	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0	<1%	<1%

Parent Data

$N = 16$

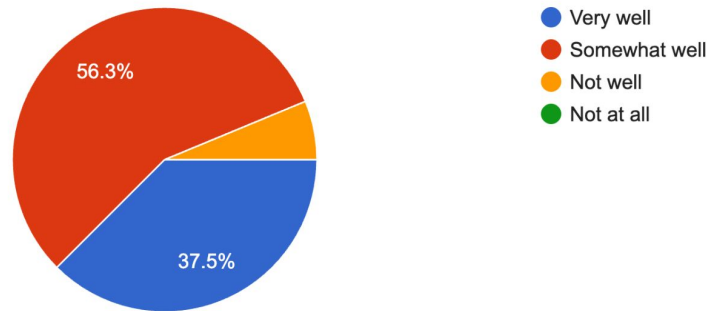
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11 responses



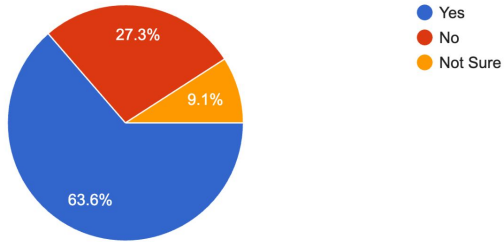
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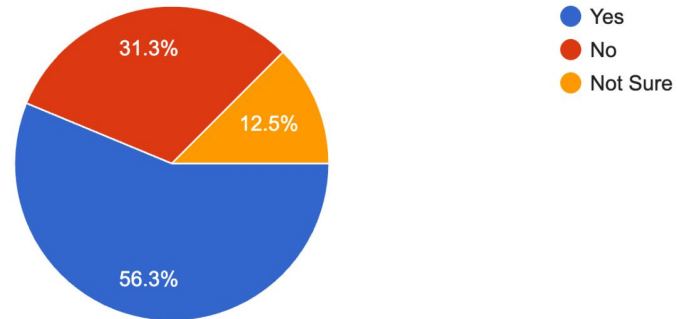
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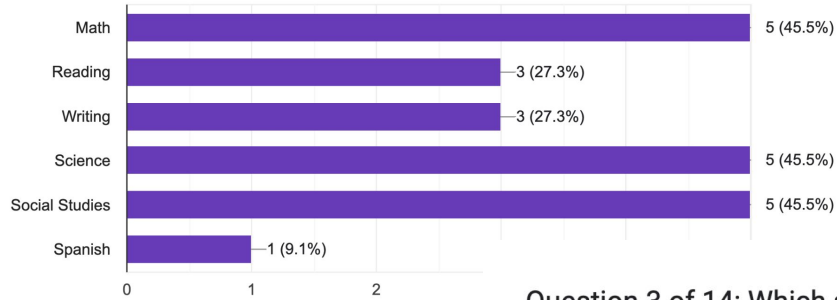
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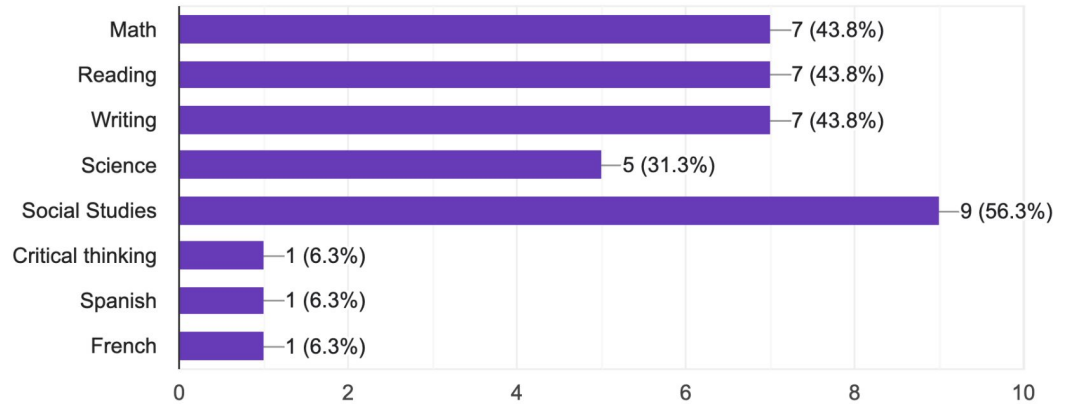
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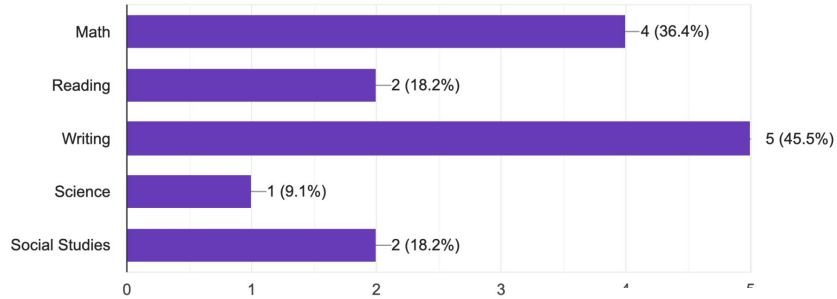
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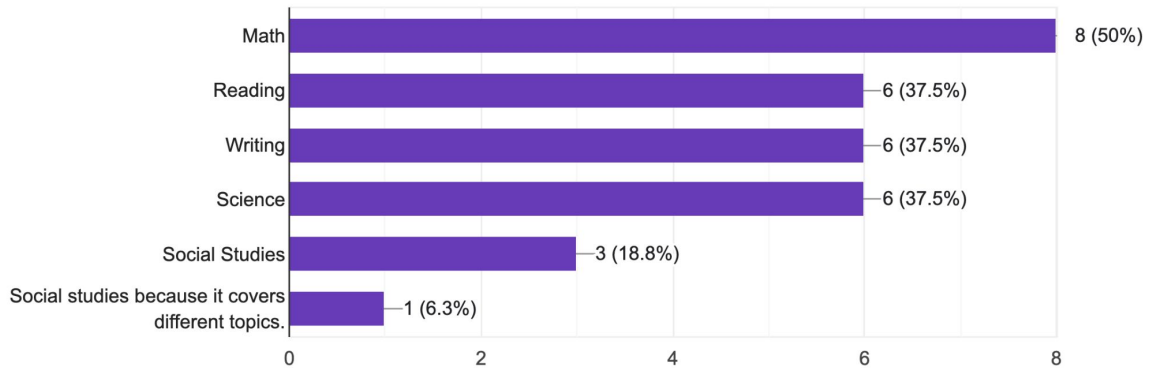
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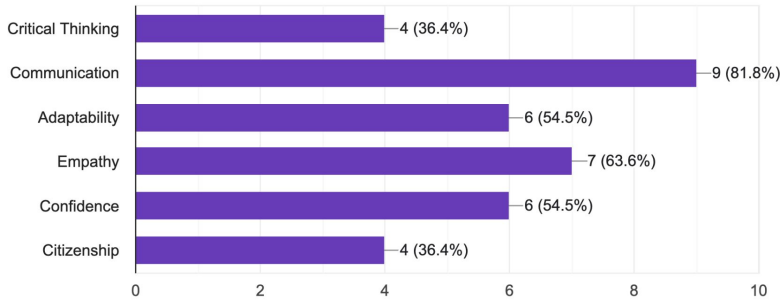
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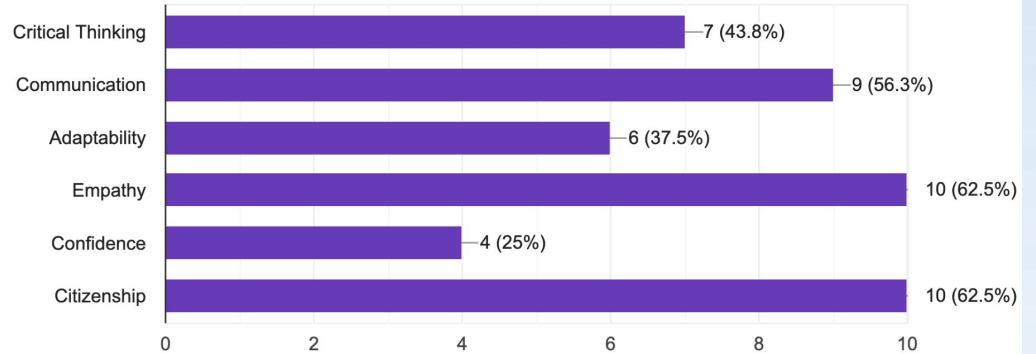
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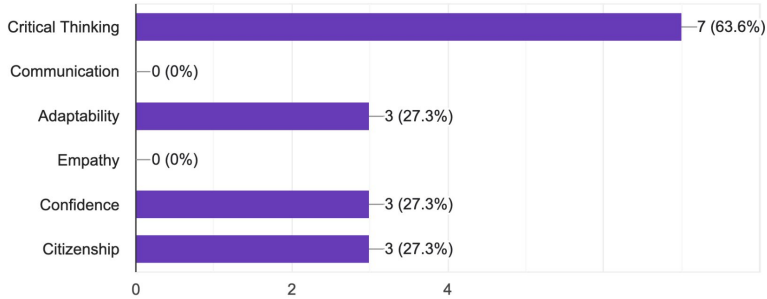
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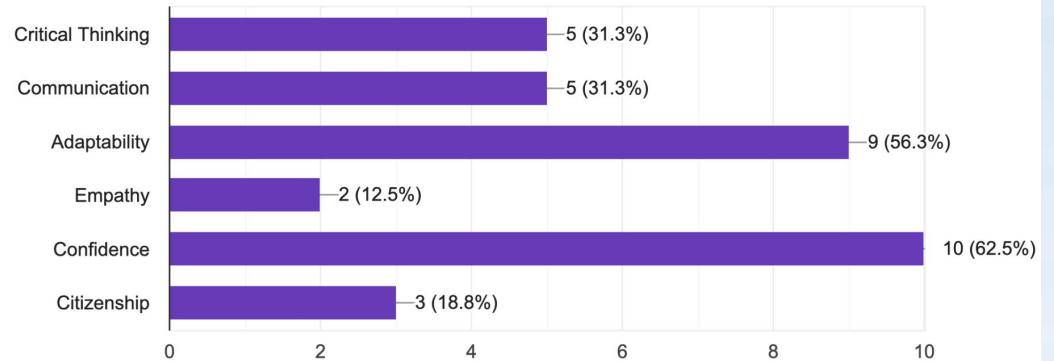
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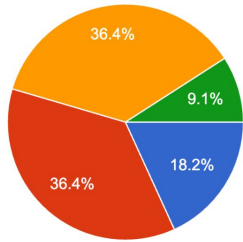
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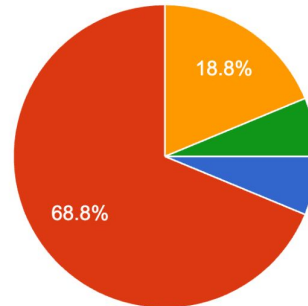
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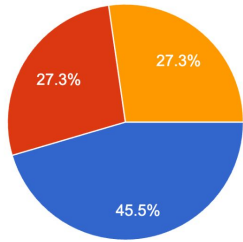
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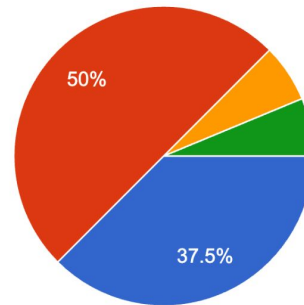
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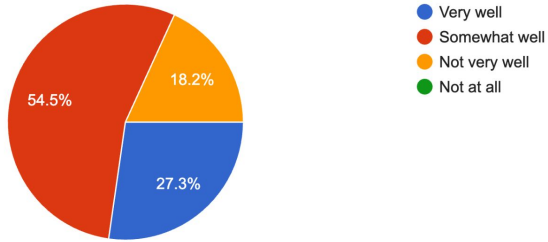
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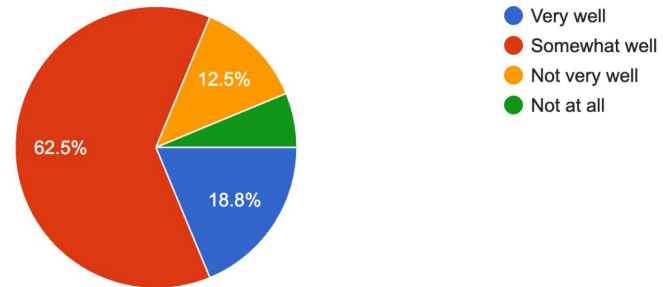
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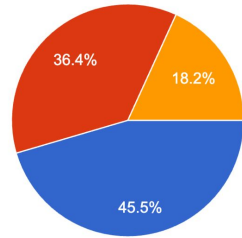
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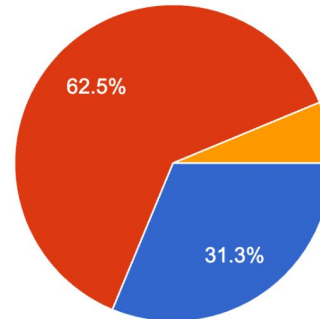
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Summary of comments:

1. Academic Rigor & STEM Readiness

- **Math and Science "Leap":** Some parents reported a gap between middle school prep and high school expectations. Students who were "strong" in math in middle school are now struggling with the pace and depth of high school Math and Science.
- **Pacing and Pressure:** There is one request to increase the pace of 8th-grade math (specifically in the second half of the year) and to reintroduce more homework and letter grades to simulate the high school environment.
- **Placement Concerns:** Some parents expressed frustration with the "Integrated Math" placement and the lack of parental involvement in these decisions.

2. Humanities & Language (Areas of Strength)

- **Spanish Success:** Parents noted that students felt exceptionally well-prepared for high school Spanish, citing challenging teachers and high content volume.
- **History & Social Studies:** The use of Document-Based Questions (DBQs) was specifically praised for giving students a competitive edge over peers from other districts.
- **Language Arts Adjustments:** While preparation is generally good, parents suggested more focus on formal grammar and the ability to demonstrate reading comprehension without relying solely on annotation.

3. Executive Functioning & "High School Skills"

- **Note-Taking & Study Habits:** This was identified as a deficiency. Parents are calling for formal instruction on organizational systems (digital and paper), test-taking strategies, and note-taking.
- **Public Speaking:** Students lack confidence in high school presentations; parents suggest incorporating more frequent, longer-form speeches in 8th grade.
- **Resource Utilization:** One comment indicated a desire for a dedicated MRC/LRC (Media/Learning Resource Center) to normalize seeking extra help, ensuring equity with neighboring schools like Deerpath.

4. School Culture & Environment

- **Social-Emotional vs. Academic Balance:** Several parents feel the current focus is "too soft" or over-indexed on social-emotional supports at the expense of pushing "non-remedial" students to their full potential.
- **Independence:** A recommendation to allow 8th graders more "earned freedom" to foster the self-reliance required in high school.
- **Student Voice:** Feedback suggests a need for teachers to better acknowledge the student's perspective to help them feel heard during the high-pressure transition year.

5. Communication & Logistics

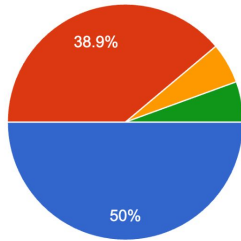
- **Centralized Information:** Parents are requesting a single, centralized website or portal for all transition-related information, rather than having data spread across multiple platforms.

Student Data

$N = 15$

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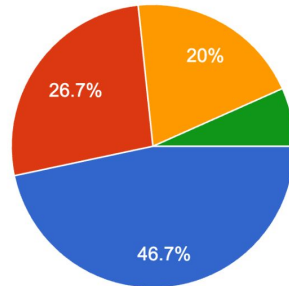
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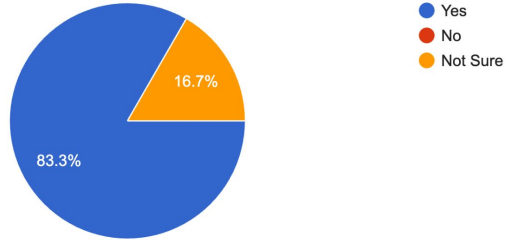
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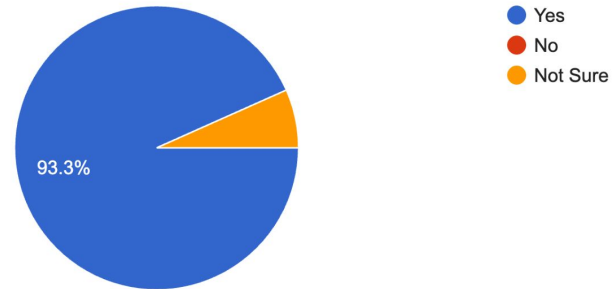
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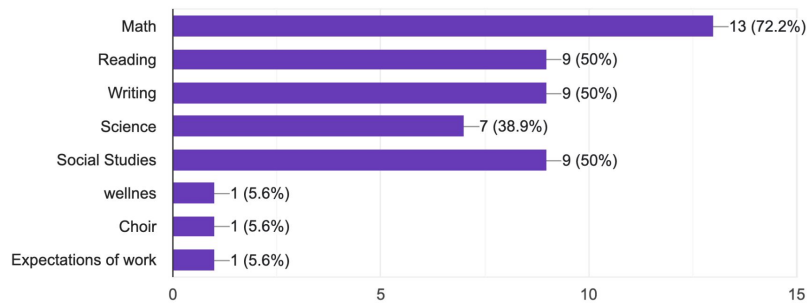
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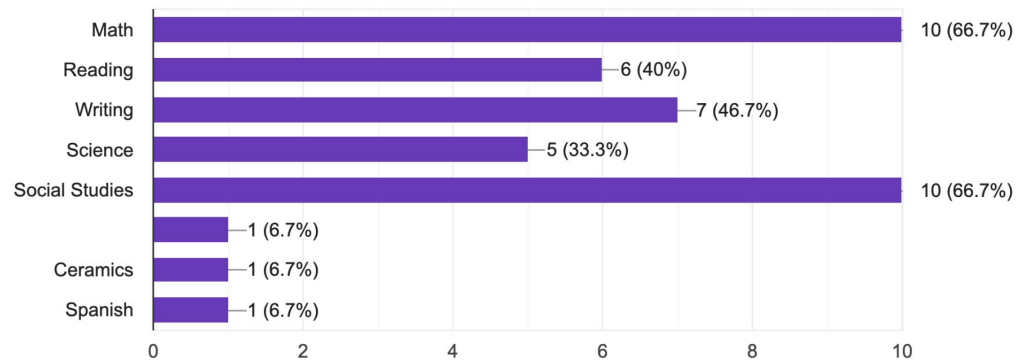
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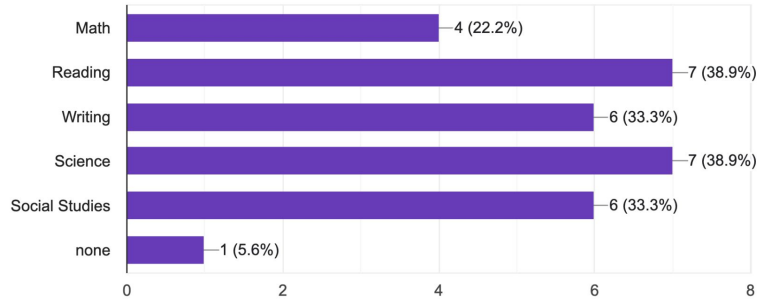
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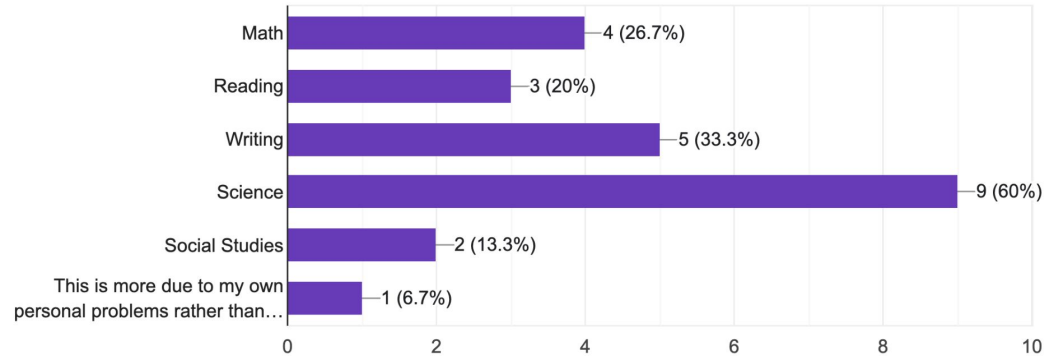
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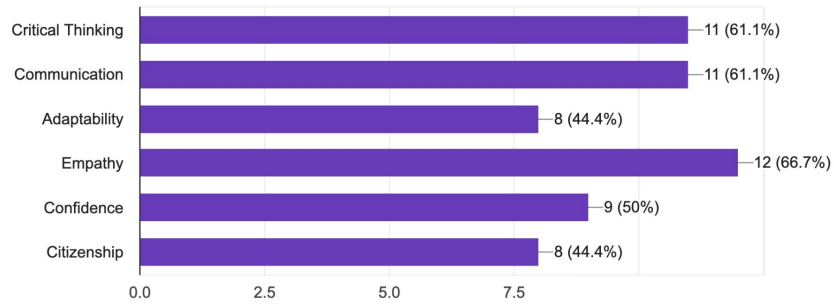
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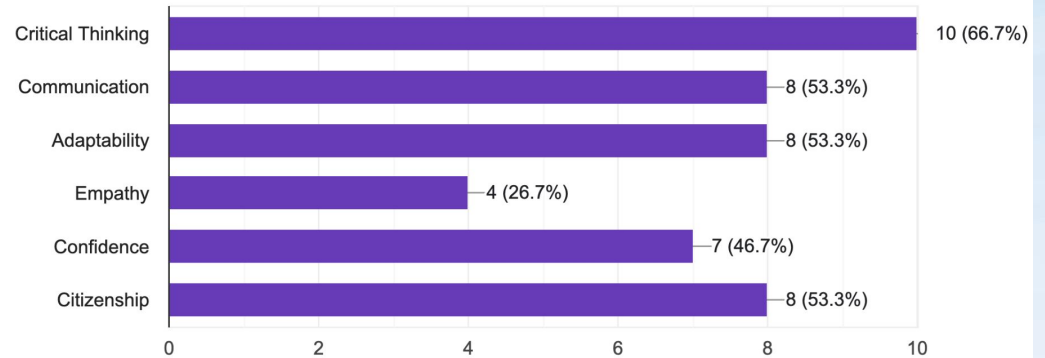
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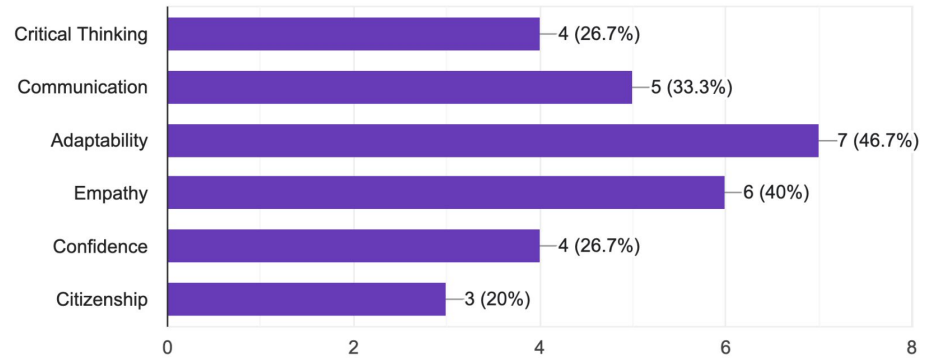
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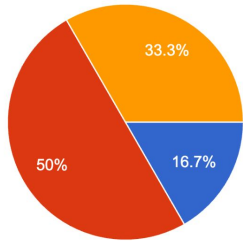
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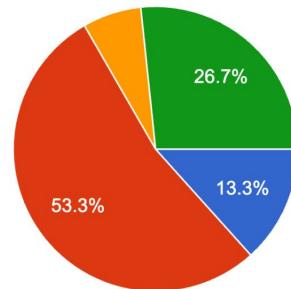
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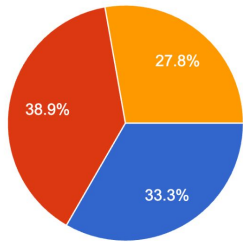
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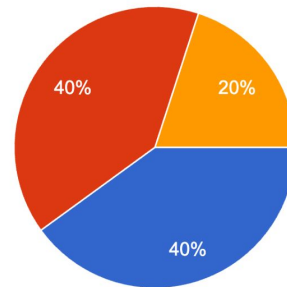
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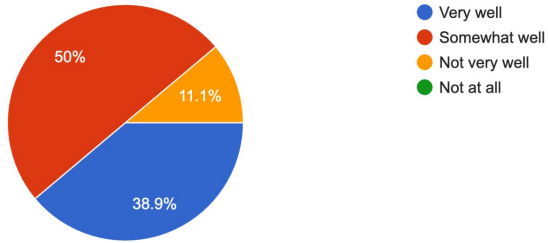
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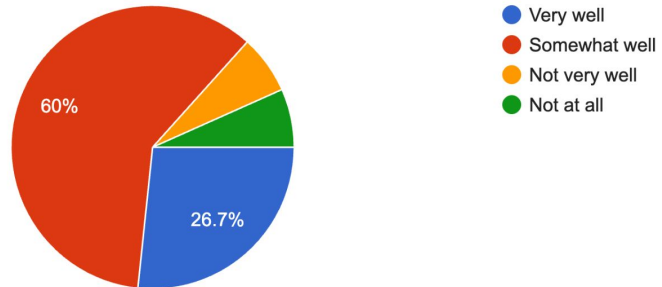
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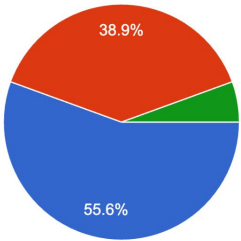
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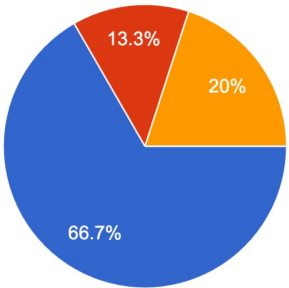
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1. Executive Functioning & Study Habits

- **The "Study Gap":** Students reported that because middle school didn't always require rigorous studying to succeed, they entered high school without knowing *how* to study and had to teach themselves on the fly.
- **Explicit Instruction:** There is a strong request for specific workshops or presentations on **time management, planning, and organization.**
- **Note-Taking:** Students suggest that the school should require formal note-taking on readings starting at an earlier age to build the habit.

2. Humanities & Social Studies (Areas of Success)

- **DBQ Preparedness:** Students feel very confident in their **Document-Based Question (DBQ)** writing and annotating skills. They credit their middle school teachers for making them feel more prepared than peers from other districts.
- **Speed & Frequency:** While they feel prepared, students suggested increasing the frequency and speed of DBQ assignments in 8th grade to better match the high school pace.
- **English Skills:** General English preparation and the habit of annotating texts were cited as major strengths.

3. STEM & Curriculum Alignment

- **Science Divergence:** Students noticed a discrepancy between their science curriculum and what students from other middle schools learned, suggesting a need for better alignment with the high school's foundational expectations.
- **Math Support:** A general call for "more math help" was noted to bridge the transition gap.

4. Classroom Environment & Rigor

- **Valuing the "Hard" Teachers:** Interestingly, students explicitly noted that teachers who made 8th grade "harder" and increased the workload actually helped them adapt more successfully to high school.
- **Collaboration:** Students suggested using more **pre-determined groups** (rather than picking their own) to practice flexibility and the ability to work with diverse personalities.
- **Homework Expectations:** Students appreciated having less time to complete homework in class during 8th grade, as it prepared them for the heavy out-of-school workload in high school.



Focus Group Data

The following bullet points summarize the feedback from the PAC regarding the student transition experience to Lake Forest High School (LFHS):

- **Appreciation for Engagement:** Students expressed gratitude for the Board's presence at the Mixer and their genuine interest in the student perspective.
- **Workload vs. Intensity:** Underclassmen noted that while the academic content difficulty was manageable, the **volume of homework** was a significant adjustment, as they now receive assignments in nearly every class nightly.
- **Testing Policy Discrepancy:** Students felt that middle school "retake" policies did not adequately prepare them for the **stricter testing environment** at the high school level.
- **Technology Learning Curve:** The transition from Chromebooks (D65) and iPads (D67) to **MacBooks** at LFHS created technical friction. Students struggled with the new hardware and operating system while simultaneously trying to navigate a new school.
- **Proposal for Tech Preparedness:** Students suggested introducing MacBook training or usage during middle school to eliminate "technology hurdles" during the freshman transition.



Three Common Themes for Celebration

1. Strong School Culture and Student Experience

- Broad agreement on LFHS's **positive, inclusive, and engaging school culture**.
- Praise for **teachers, custodial staff, and security teams** in creating a welcoming environment.
- Wide appreciation for **extracurricular activities**, including **clubs, sports, and leadership opportunities**.

2. Wide Variety of Course Offerings

- High-quality academic opportunities in **electives and advanced coursework**.
- Standout programs: **Business Incubator, journalism, computer science, photography**.
- Students value numerous **AP and honors options** and **career-prep courses**.

3. Successful Transition Support Programs

- Programs like **Freshman Orientation Day** and **Scout Seminar** help students acclimate.
- Strong support for students with **504 and IEP plans**, with potential to expand strategies to all students.
- Flexibility for students to **move into higher-level courses** when prepared.



The background features a stylized landscape with a grey road curving through green hills. From the horizon, numerous light blue rays radiate upwards, creating a bright, airy atmosphere. The overall color palette is soft and pastel.

Questions?