



**FOCUS SCHOOL
NEEDS ASSESSMENT/INTEREST STUDY**

– Summary Report –

December 2010

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INTRODUCTION TO SUMMARY REPORT

- In preparing this summary of research findings, an attempt was made to present the information deemed most important and to discuss the data in such a way that will be meaningful and understandable to the reader. Since summaries by their very nature are not comprehensive, it cannot be expected that all findings of potential value will be thoroughly discussed or presented in this report. Therefore, the reader must consider not only this document but also the comprehensive Tabular Results, provided under separate cover, for a more thorough review of these findings.
- For this report, Wiese Research Associates, Inc. (WRA) has relied upon its professional research experience in selecting data for presentation and, where deemed appropriate, has forwarded some possible interpretations with regard to how these results might influence planning or decision making. However, these interpretations are certainly not meant to be the only possible conclusions that can be drawn from the information obtained in this study. Further, no final recommendations or suggested courses of action have been included in this report. Rather, the Learning Community must consider these results, along with information and knowledge possessed outside the scope of this study, when making final determinations and decisions based on the research.
- The format of this report consists of a narrative discussion of key findings, followed by numerous charts that graphically depict the results. This discussion of findings is preceded by a brief description of the study methodology employed for this research.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

- The Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy counties has as its mission to “*create a collaborative environment that promotes academic excellence, the development of educational opportunity and resource equity that maximizes the potential of every child.*” To accomplish this mission, a Diversity Task Force was formed to represent the interests of all eleven school districts within the Learning Community as efforts are made to close the achievement gap and increase socio-economic diversity through the development of focus schools or programs.
- The overall purpose of this research study was to measure interest in and potential need for various focus schools/programs from the perspective of public school families residing within the eleven school districts comprising the Learning Community. This information will assist in establishing criteria that must be met to approve funding for projects proposed by member school districts, as well as identify areas requiring further study when developing specific focus schools/programs so as to best meet the needs of school families.

SAMPLING DESIGN

- With any research project, it is critically important to accurately define and understand the population to be studied. The population is the group from which all sampling takes place and to which the results must be projected. For this study, the “population of interest” was defined as: *Parents/guardians of children enrolled in a public school (grades K-12) located in one of the member school districts within the Learning Community.* However, it should be noted that households with a 12th grader only were *excluded* from the sample.
- The total random sample of n=2,000 parents/guardians was stratified across the eleven member school districts on a proportionate basis. To ensure proper representation, WRA established quotas by district based on *household* counts for students enrolled in public schools located within each district. The number of interviews completed for each district is shown on the following chart.

School District ¹	# Of Completed Interviews	% Of Total Sample
Bellevue Public Schools	191	10%
Bennington Public Schools	25	1%
Douglas County West Community Schools	13	1%
Elkhorn Public Schools	106	5%
Gretna Public Schools	55	3%
Millard Public Schools	416	21%
Omaha Public Schools	812	41%
Papillion-LaVista Public Schools	186	9%
Ralston Public Schools	54	3%
South Sarpy District 46	18	1%
Westside Community Schools	124	6%
TOTAL RANDOM SAMPLE	2,000	100%

¹ Refers to district where student in household is enrolled.

- Sampling for this study was accomplished using lists of enrolled students (school directory information) provided by ten of the eleven school districts. The exception was the quota for Ralston Public Schools. No directory information was supplied by Ralston and therefore, the sample for this district was drawn from listed household data obtained by WRA (with screening required to identify qualified households). Quotas by zip code were established to ensure that the sample accurately represented each district, which also resulted in proportionate samples for each of the six Subcouncils within Douglas and Sarpy counties.

- Since any proposed focus school/program must consider the needs of the entire community and not just those residing in a particular district, sample stability by individual school districts was not required. However, “booster” samples were completed for South Sarpy (additional n=88) and Douglas County West (additional n=57), allowing for greater stability in the results for these two districts when considered *outside* of the total random sample (i.e., these booster interviews are NOT included in the results presented in this report).

ACCURACY OF RESULTS

- The accuracy of research results when random sampling is utilized is a function of both the sample size as well as the obtained results for any given question. The chart below depicts the error ranges achieved for the total random sample of n=2,000 and, more importantly, for selected subsample sizes, given various obtained result percentages.

Expected Standard Error Ranges For Selected Sample Sizes*									
Sample Size	For Obtained Results Of....								
	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
n=2,000	± 1.3	± 1.7	± 2.0	± 2.1	± 2.2	± 2.1	± 2.0	± 1.7	± 1.3
n=800	± 2.1	± 2.8	± 3.2	± 3.4	± 3.5	± 3.4	± 3.2	± 2.8	± 2.1
n=400	± 2.9	± 3.9	± 4.5	± 4.8	± 4.9	± 4.8	± 4.5	± 3.9	± 2.9
n=200	± 4.2	± 5.5	± 6.4	± 6.8	± 6.9	± 6.8	± 6.4	± 5.5	± 4.2
n=100	± 5.9	± 7.8	± 9.0	± 9.6	± 9.8	± 9.6	± 9.0	± 7.8	± 5.9

* Ranges expressed as percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

METHOD OF SAMPLE CONTACT

- Telephone was the method of sample contact for this project. All calling took place from one of WRA's central interviewing facilities in Nebraska. WRA utilized its own staff of trained and experienced interviewers for this project. Each interviewer was fully briefed on the proper administration of the questionnaire prior to sample contact, with surveys monitored while in progress by WRA supervisors. Spanish-speaking only households, when encountered, were called back by one of WRA's bi-lingual interviewers.

INTERVIEWING DATES

- Data collection for this study took place during the last week of October and first three weeks of November, 2010. The average interview length was 18-19 minutes on the phone and a copy of the survey administered to respondents can be found in Appendix A.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- While quotas dictated how the total sample was apportioned across each school district (and within each district based on zip code and FRL data where provided), the remaining characteristics were allowed to "fall out" at random. To gain further insight into who was "listened to" in this study, the reader is referred to the sample characteristics on the following pages. These tables provide a demographic profile of the total sample, as well as the sample characteristics for each Achievement Subcouncil. Note that since subcouncils are defined by school buildings, households with students attending multiple schools could fall into more than one Achievement Subcouncil (and have been included in the results for each).

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTICS	TOTAL SAMPLE (n=2,000)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=229)	SC #2 (n=298)	SC #3 (n=270)	SC #4 (n=521)	SC #5 (n=397)	SC #6 (n=468)
FREE/REDUCED LUNCH¹							
Yes - Eligible	34%	52%	75%	32%	11%	55%	19%
Not Eligible	65%	48%	25%	67%	88%	45%	81%
Refused	1%	--	--	1%	1%	--	--
HOUSEHOLD INCOME							
Under \$25K	16%	26%	39%	16%	3%	26%	12%
\$25K - \$50K	19%	26%	30%	19%	11%	29%	12%
\$50K - \$75K	15%	16%	10%	16%	16%	15%	15%
\$75K - \$100K	19%	12%	9%	21%	24%	13%	23%
Over \$100K	24%	15%	7%	20%	39%	9%	31%
Refused	7%	5%	5%	8%	7%	8%	7%
RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARENT/GUARDIAN							
White	72%	59%	34%	81%	87%	56%	84%
African-American	10%	22%	42%	4%	1%	7%	3%
Hispanic	11%	13%	14%	6%	4%	29%	8%
Other/Multi-Racial	5%	4%	7%	6%	5%	6%	4%
Refused	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%

Percentages total vertically to 100% for each category.

¹Based on school district list information (where available) and Q25.

(Reference: Q24-26)

(Continued)

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTICS	TOTAL SAMPLE (n=2,000)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=229)	SC #2 (n=298)	SC #3 (n=270)	SC #4 (n=521)	SC #5 (n=397)	SC #6 (n=468)
EDUCATION LEVEL OF PARENT/GUARDIAN							
High School Or Less	17%	25%	30%	15%	7%	33%	12%
Trade/Technical/Vocational	6%	8%	10%	6%	4%	6%	6%
Some College	21%	23%	27%	21%	16%	23%	18%
College Graduate	35%	29%	21%	36%	40%	26%	43%
Post-Graduate Degree	20%	14%	10%	21%	32%	10%	20%
Refused	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS IN HOUSEHOLD							
Grade K Through 5							
Yes	67%	68%	68%	63%	70%	67%	66%
No	33%	32%	32%	37%	30%	33%	34%
Grade 6 Through 8							
Yes	38%	43%	40%	43%	39%	39%	39%
No	62%	57%	60%	57%	61%	61%	61%
Grade 9 Through 12							
Yes	35%	44%	47%	35%	33%	40%	37%
No	65%	56%	53%	65%	67%	60%	63%

Percentages total vertically to 100% for each category.
(Reference: Q1, Q2, Q23)

(Continued)

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTICS	TOTAL SAMPLE (n=2,000)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=229)	SC #2 (n=298)	SC #3 (n=270)	SC #4 (n=521)	SC #5 (n=397)	SC #6 (n=468)
PRE-K OR YOUNGER CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD							
Yes	35%	34%	41%	29%	30%	43%	35%
No	64%	65%	57%	71%	69%	56%	65%
Refused	1%	1%	2%	--	1%	1%	--
# OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD							
One	18%	26%	32%	19%	10%	21%	13%
Two	70%	59%	54%	67%	80%	61%	78%
Three Or More	11%	14%	12%	13%	9%	17%	8%
Refused	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
TENURE IN OMAHA							
Less Than 1 Year	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	2%
1 To Less Than 5 Years	9%	9%	3%	5%	9%	14%	12%
5 To Less Than 10 Years	14%	11%	9%	11%	15%	19%	17%
10 To 20 Years	26%	29%	23%	20%	29%	25%	26%
Over 20 Years	47%	48%	60%	62%	43%	38%	42%
Refused	1%	--	2%	--	1%	--	1%

Percentages total vertically to 100% for each category.
(Reference: Q20-22)

(Continued)

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTICS	TOTAL SAMPLE (n=2,000)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=229)	SC #2 (n=298)	SC #3 (n=270)	SC #4 (n=521)	SC #5 (n=397)	SC #6 (n=468)
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE							
Bellevue	8%	--	1%	1%	--	36%	2%
Bennington	1%	--	--	--	--	--	5%
Douglas County West	6%	14%	15%	1%	1%	11%	4%
Elkhorn	6%	--	--	1%	19%	--	5%
Gretna	3%	--	--	--	--	--	12%
Millard	20%	1%	1%	1%	73%	1%	--
OPS	30%	71%	59%	41%	4%	31%	25%
Papillion-LaVista	8%	--	1%	--	--	1%	35%
Ralston	3%	--	--	17%	1%	--	--
South Sarpy	2%	--	--	--	--	4%	5%
Westside	5%	1%	4%	31%	1%	1%	--
Other	1%	3%	3%	1%	--	3%	2%
Don't Know	7%	10%	16%	6%	1%	12%	5%

*Percentages total vertically to 100% for each category.
(Reference: Q3)*

DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

FAMILIARITY WITH THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

(Reference: Figure 1)

- Initial questioning in this study asked respondents to rate their overall familiarity with the Learning Community based on the following description: *“The Learning Community represents 11 school districts in Douglas and Sarpy County, and was formed to create a system for all districts to work together to promote socio-economic diversity and high achievement for all students, and to allocate resources so that every child has equal access to educational opportunities.”* While a rather large majority of parents/guardians interviewed had at least heard of the Learning Community (83%), a much smaller percentage (17%) said they were “very familiar.”
- The differences seen in these results by achievement subcouncil are more than likely a function of the socio-economic status of the household in that those with lower incomes and lower education levels were not as familiar with the Learning Community as their higher income or higher educated counterparts. However, even among those claiming to be familiar with the Learning Community, most of this familiarity is at the “somewhat” level and still a meaningful percentage of parents/guardians are *not that familiar* or *have never heard of* the Learning Community.
- Results here would suggest that efforts are still needed to “educate” even public school families on the purpose of the Learning Community, its mission, and what it hopes to accomplish.

FAMILIARITY WITH PLANS TO CREATE FOCUS SCHOOLS

(Reference: Figure 2)

- When asked to rate their familiarity with plans to create a number of “focus schools” that would be open to all students in the eleven school districts, just over one-third (36%) of the public school families interviewed in this study said they have *never heard of* focus schools. At the other end of the continuum, only 9% maintained they were *very familiar* while another 28% were *somewhat familiar*. These results were fairly consistent by achievement subcouncil, although families whose children attend schools in Subcouncils 1 and 3 were more likely than those in Subcouncils 5 and 6 to have at least heard of plans to create focus schools.

- Other differences worth noting in these results include relatively greater familiarity for plans to create focus schools among African-Americans and among those with higher education levels versus their counterparts. However, even among those segments with greater awareness, room for improvement exists in that familiarity with plans to create focus schools is still fairly low.

AWARENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF THREE FOCUS SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES

(Reference: Figures 3-7)

- Given the moderate levels of familiarity just discussed with regard to plans to create focus schools, it is not surprising to find that awareness of the following three focus school attributes (prior to the survey) was far from universal among public school families:
 - *Focus schools are created to reduce isolation and encourage socio-economic diversity in schools*
 - *Focus schools offer specialized or unique curriculum and experiences for students not available in other schools, in addition to the core subjects*
 - *Focus schools make transportation available to students living more than a mile from the school building*
- Overall, about one-half of the respondents in this study indicated having prior awareness for each of these attributes. However, it is perhaps worth noting that the specialized/unique curriculum component does enjoy slightly higher awareness among families attending schools in Subcouncils 3 and 4, with the lowest awareness for this attribute found in Subcouncil 5. By comparison, the families in Subcouncils 1 and 2 were significantly more likely than those in Subcouncils 4 and 6 to be aware of the transportation component.
- Based on these same descriptions, respondents were subsequently asked to rate how important they would say each of these attributes is when deciding where to send their child or children to school. A 1-to-10 rating scale was used in this questioning where “1” equaled *Not At All Important* and “10” equaled *Extremely Important*.

- Relatively speaking, having specialized or unique curriculum and experiences was rated higher in importance than transportation or socio-economic diversity. However, these results varied significantly by achievement subcouncil, FRL eligibility, race/ethnicity, and household income.
- First, by achievement subcouncil, families whose children attend schools in Subcouncil 1, Subcouncil 2, and Subcouncil 5 rated the importance of these attributes significantly higher than did families attending schools in the balance of the Learning Community. Each of these attributes was also rated higher in importance by those eligible for the free or reduced lunch program and, as would follow, the importance of these attributes decrease as household income increases. These trends held true for all three focus school characteristics, but differences were especially pronounced for the socio-economic diversity and transportation issues.
- Finally, African-Americans and Hispanics also rated these focus school attributes significantly higher in importance when deciding where to send their children to school versus the relative importance of these factors to White families.

LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL FOR CHILD(REN) IN HOUSEHOLD *(Reference: Figures 8-11)*

- When asked about their likelihood to consider a focus school, a solid majority of school families seemed open to at least considering this type of school for one or more of their children, based on the following description:

“Every student wishing to attend a focus school would apply to the school and students can come from any of the eleven school districts within the Learning Community. Focus schools offer specialized or unique curriculum in addition to the core subjects, have a socio and economically diverse student population, and transportation is provided for those living more than a mile from the school.”

Assuming it specialized in or focused on an area of interest to them or their child, parents/guardians rated their likelihood to consider sending any of their children to a focus school when in grades K through 5, grades 6 through 8, or grades 9 through 12.

- While one might expect the potential consideration or appeal of a focus school to vary depending on the grade level of the student, only slight differences were found in this regard. Rather, approximately four in ten (41%) of those with a child in grades K-5 *would definitely or probably consider* sending a child in those grades to a focus school if it specialized in an area of interest to them. This compares to 45% who *definitely or probably would consider* it for grades 6-8 and 48% for grades 9-12. When those who *at least might* consider a focus school are added to the equation, approximately seven in every ten parents/guardians are included (for each grade level).
- Statistically significant differences were found in these results by achievement subcouncil and across socio-economic groups. Regardless of grade level, potential interest in focus schools was strongest among those whose children currently attend schools in Subcouncils 1, 2, and 5. By comparison, those with children currently attending schools located in Achievement Subcouncil 4 are least likely to consider a focus school.
- These results also show that the focus school concept has much broader appeal among lower socio-economic groups. This is particularly evident when comparing the consideration levels among free/reduced lunch eligible families to their non-eligible counterparts. For example, among those with children in grades K-5, six in ten (61%) FRL eligible households would be projected to *definitely or probably consider* a focus school at the elementary level and this compares to 29% of non-FRL families. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of FRL families would *definitely or probably consider* a focus school for one or more of their children when in grades 9-12 versus 40% of those who are not eligible for free or reduced lunch. As would follow, one's likelihood to consider a focus school for any child in the household decreases rather dramatically as household income increases.
- African-American and Hispanic families were more likely than Whites to say they *would definitely or probably consider* a focus school, by about a two-to-one margin. In fact, when those who *at least might consider* a focus school are added, nearly all African-Americans and Hispanics interviewed in this study are included. Still, four in ten White families would at least probably consider sending their child(ren) to a focus school when in grades 9 through 12, while another three in ten might do so. Therefore, potential interest in focus schools exists to a meaningful degree across all racial/ethnic groups.

REASONS FOR BEING LIKELY TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL

(Reference: Figure 12)

- Respondents who indicated they definitely or probably would consider a focus school for one or more of their children (at any grade level) were provided an opportunity to volunteer reasons for their willingness to consider this option. These reasons tended to fall into one of three categories: *open to different or better opportunities*, *student interest or benefits for the family's specific needs*, and *curriculum or academic offerings*. These families clearly perceive a focus school setting as offering a unique or better opportunity than what might be available at their child's current school. In contrast, relatively few families predisposed to considering a focus school for their children mentioned diversity as a reason for their potential interest. Even though socio-economic diversity was cited earlier in the interview as one of three aspects associated with focus schools, only rarely was diversity volunteered as a specific reason for favoring this school option.

FACTORS UPON WHICH CONSIDERATION OF A FOCUS SCHOOL WOULD DEPEND

(Reference: Figure 13)

- *Location or transportation* was mentioned as a factor upon which consideration of a focus school would depend, volunteered by one in five of those who indicated they might consider a focus school for one or more of their children. Issues cited more often than location, however, were the *student's specific interest in attending the school or whether or not it was beneficial for the family's specific needs* (39%), and the *curriculum or academic offerings* (26%). Needing more information about the focus school and its differences, as well as the classroom logistics or teacher qualifications (including class size, test scores, cost/tuition, etc.) were additional factors mentioned often enough to deserve note that would impact one's decision about a focus school.

REASONS A FOCUS SCHOOL WOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED

(Reference: Figure 14)

- As one might expect, a *preference for one's current school or school district* was the primary reason given by those who would definitely or probably *not* consider a focus school for their children (cited by 55% of those not likely to choose a focus school). Other far less frequently mentioned reasons volunteered often enough to deserve note include *location/distance concerns or transportation* and a *dislike for the focus school concept or the Learning Community* (not necessary, no advantages, etc.). It seems the biggest obstacle to focus school consideration is simply a preference for one's current school, especially for those families whose children attend schools in Subcouncils 3, 4, and 6.

POTENTIAL INTEREST IN EIGHT SUBJECT AREAS FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

(Reference: Figures 15-17)

- Households with children in grades K-6 were presented with eight different academic areas or subjects that could be used to develop a focus school for elementary students. Subsequent questioning asked these parents/guardians to rate their potential interest in each subject area using a scale from 1 to 10 where "1" equaled *Very Low Potential Interest* and "10" equaled *Very High Potential Interest* when considering that subject area for a focus school at the elementary level.
- Of the eight subject areas evaluated, *science* (including scientific inquiry through experimentation, field study, and interactive technology) was rated highest in terms of potential interest (mean of 8.2), followed fairly closely by *math with engineering* (mean of 7.9), *math with finance and economics* (mean of 7.8), and *communication arts* which includes writing and speaking skills supported by interactive media (mean of 7.7). *World languages*, where students are given the opportunity to study at least one world language other than English, was also rated fairly high by a majority of these parents/guardians (mean of 7.4).

- By comparison, *performing arts* (including dance, vocal, instrumental music, and drama), *global studies* (social, economic, political, and cultural relationships of people around the world), and *visual arts* (drawing, painting, sculpture, and photography) received relatively lower ratings in terms of potential interest. Still, each generated a high degree of interest (9-10 rating) among a significant minority of these parents/guardians and therefore reasonable potential for even these subject areas perhaps exists when considering focus school programs at the elementary level.
- For the most part, *relative* interest in these eight subject areas (meaning how each ranks from highest to lowest potential interest) is consistent by achievement subcouncil. However, virtually all subject areas were rated higher among households with children attending schools in Subcouncil 2, particularly when compared to the interest levels seen in Subcouncils 3, 4, and 6. While not quite as strong as Subcouncil 2, parents/guardians whose children attend schools in Subcouncils 1 and 5 also rated each of these subject areas higher than their counterparts in Subcouncils 3, 4, and 6.
- Free/reduced lunch eligibility is an indication of socio-economic status and the results here show consistently higher potential interest for each subject area among those who are eligible for free/reduced lunch versus those who are not eligible. However, while the *degree* of interest is greater among FRL eligible households, the *relative* potential interest in the eight subject areas evaluated does not vary between these two groups.

POTENTIAL INTEREST IN TEN CAREER SPECIALTIES FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL (Reference: Figures 18-20)

- Taking into account the interest of any student in their household, or their potential interest for them, parents/guardians with children in grades 4-11 were asked to rate ten different career specialties on a scale from 1 to 10 with “1” being *Very Low Potential Interest* and “10” being *Very High Potential Interest* in a focus school that offered courses in that area. The reader is referred to Question 13 on the survey (see Appendix A) for the brief descriptions provided to respondents for each career specialty.

- On a relative basis, highest potential interest was found for *science/technology/engineering/math* (mean of 7.8), followed fairly closely by *information technology and computer science* (mean of 7.5), and *health sciences* (mean of 7.4). While not rated quite as high on average, a significant minority of parents/guardians also expressed very high levels of potential interest in a focus school that offered courses in the areas of *human services and resources, arts/AV technology/communications, architecture/construction/specialty trades, business/marketing/management, and environmental sciences*. Mean scores for these five specialties were in the 6.7 to 7.1 range.
- At the other end of the continuum, significantly lower potential interest exists for a focus school that prepares students for careers in *manufacturing and transportation systems* or *hospitality and tourism*. While manufacturing and transportation systems is an area that has been identified by Workforce Development as one with a potential labor shortage, any school district offering a focus school or program in this area would likely need to educate parents and students as to the appeal of this career specialty and its benefits in terms of future employment opportunities.
- Earlier results showed that interest in focus schools in general was found to be greatest among families with children attending schools in Subcouncils 1, 2, and 5. As would follow, potential interest in each of these career specialties also tended to be higher within these three subcouncils when compared to the balance of the Learning Community. However, for the most part, the relative ranking of these ten career specialties did not vary by achievement subcouncil (just the degree of interest).
- The potential interest in each of these career specialties was also significantly greater among FRL eligible households versus their counterparts, which is also consistent with earlier results showing focus schools in general to be of greater interest to lower socio-economic groups. Among FRL eligible households, eight of these ten career specialties garnered a mean score of 7.7 or higher out of 10 points possible. Only *manufacturing/transportation systems* and *hospitality and tourism* had lower mean scores, especially among non-FRL families. Overall, it is encouraging to see that each of the various career specialties or course offerings evaluated in this study has broader appeal among those families that focus schools must attract in order to achieve the required socio-economic diversity of the students attending the school.

IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS/PROGRAMS ON FOCUS SCHOOL CONSIDERATION (Reference: Figures 21-22)

- The specialized curriculum offered is not the only potential area of differentiation between a focus school and what might be offered at one's neighborhood school. There are also a number of different instructional methods or programs that could be used or offered at a focus school and each of these carries the potential to influence the decision-making process when it comes to considering a focus school for one's child. Therefore, all respondents in this study, regardless of their initial interest in a focus school, were asked if 15 different methods or programs would cause them to be *more likely to consider a focus school*, *less likely to consider a focus school*, or would it *not really matter* one way or the other.
- Review of these results shows that the opportunity to *earn college credit* (at the high school level) has nearly universal appeal, with fully nine in ten of the respondents indicating that being able to earn college credit would make them more likely to consider a focus school. *Training/internships/employment opportunities* (at the high school level), *involvement and support from local businesses and professional mentors*, and *project-based learning* where students are able to see the connections between classroom activities and real world problems also have the potential to impact focus school consideration to a large degree, with eight in ten parents/guardians indicating they would be more likely to consider a focus school that used that method or offered that program.
- Several other instructional methods and programs were found to positively influence consideration to a meaningful degree. These include *hands-on learning experiences*, *career academies*, *opportunities to go on trips related to studies*, *ability to earn trade school credit*, and *team-based learning*. At the other end of the continuum, two methods or programs that are *not* likely to positively influence decisions and in fact would make families less likely to consider a focus school were *single gender programs* and *single gender schools*. These were the only two instructional methods evaluated that would *negatively* impact focus school consideration.

- As one might expect, those families already predisposed toward considering a focus school reacted more positively to each of these instructional methods or programs when compared to those not likely to choose a focus school for their children. Given that focus schools are more likely to appeal to FRL eligible families, it is not surprising to see that these instructional methods and programs are also more likely to positively influence consideration among families eligible for free/reduced lunch versus their counterparts. However, the extent to which these instructional methods or programs might influence decision making did vary between these two groups. That is, while earning college credit strongly appealed to both groups, having the opportunity to earn trade school credit is significantly more important to FRL eligible families than non-FRL families. In addition, programs that did not rank as high overall in terms of having a positive impact, such as *dual language* and a *Montessori program*, would cause two-thirds of FRL eligible families to be more likely to consider a focus school.

IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS FACTORS ON DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL (Reference: Figures 23-25)

- Respondents in this study were also asked to rate how important each of several factors would be in their decision whether or not to consider sending their child to a focus school that they were potentially interested in, using a 10-point scale where “1” equaled *Not At All Important* and “10” equaled *Extremely Important*. Overall, the factors rated highest in importance among those most likely to consider a focus school were *smaller class sizes*, *programs for talented and gifted students*, *special resources for students needing extra help academically*, *having a pathway where students can continue with the focus curriculum through high school*, and *the specific career path or subject area of focus being offered by the school*. Each of these attributes had a mean importance score of 8.3 or higher among families having the greatest potential interest in a focus school (i.e., those who would definitely or probably consider it).
- While not quite as important as the factors just mentioned, the school being located *close to home*, *how far away or where the school is located (if not close to home)*, *the diversity of the student population*, and *free transportation* were also rated fairly high in importance by those with greater potential for considering a focus school. By comparison, *being able to attend the same school as their friends* and *before/after school care* being available are not as important, relatively speaking.

- Meaningful differences were found in these results by FRL eligibility. As expected, *free transportation* was far more important to families eligible for free or reduced lunch versus their counterparts. *Special resources available for those needing extra help academically* was also rated significantly higher in importance among FRL eligible families, along with the *diversity of the student population* and *before/after school care being available*.
- Overall, it seems that each of these factors is important to enough parents/guardians that none should be ignored when developing focus schools and programs. That is, all appear to have the potential to impact consideration of a focus school to a meaningful degree.
- Respondents were also given the opportunity to volunteer any “other” considerations that would be important to them when deciding whether or not to enroll a student in a focus school. While most of the replies volunteered were not different than those previously rated in terms of importance, additional considerations worth noting include *good teachers/staff*, *the child’s interest in attending*, and *the quality of the curriculum or extra-curricular offerings*.

ACCEPTABLE BUS RIDE DURATIONS BY GRADE LEVEL IF DECIDED ON FOCUS SCHOOL

(Reference: Figures 26-29)

- Later in the interview, respondents were reminded that if they decided to send their child to a focus school, transportation would be provided for students living more than one mile from the school, if needed. Assuming it was the very best school for their student, parents/guardians were then asked what would be the longest amount of time they would want their child on the bus, one way between home and school, when they are in elementary school, middle school or junior high, and high school.
- When considering those with children at that grade level or younger who would definitely or probably consider a focus school (i.e., high potential segment), results here would project that a one-way bus ride of 25 or more minutes would be acceptable for nearly half (44%) of those parents who would consider a focus school for their child when in elementary school. This percentage increases to 63% at the middle/junior high level and 71% at the high school level. While few parents would want even their high school student on the bus for an hour or more, an 18 to 20 minute bus ride is deemed acceptable for the vast majority of parents at any grade level.

- When examining these results by achievement subcouncil, it can be seen that those in Subcouncil 2 have a higher tolerance for longer bus rides, even at the younger grade levels, versus those in the balance of the Learning Community. At the middle/junior high and high school levels, parents/guardians with children attending school in Subcouncils 1 and 5 also demonstrate a somewhat higher tolerance for relatively longer bus rides when compared to those in Subcouncils 3, 4, and 6. Perhaps due to their greater need for transportation, those eligible for free or reduced lunch also volunteered longer times on average as being acceptable when compared to their non-FRL counterparts.
- While location and transportation will obviously play into one's final decision about a focus school, results here would suggest that actual commute times for some students may exceed the duration deemed "acceptable" by many parents, particularly at the elementary level.

INITIAL VERSUS FINAL CONSIDERATION OF FOCUS SCHOOL OPTION *(Reference: Figures 30-32)*

- Given the lack of strong familiarity or even awareness of focus schools on the part of many respondents prior to the survey, it stands to reason that one's perceptions of what focus schools have to offer and subsequent interest in them could well have changed during the interview process. Therefore, near the conclusion of this survey, respondents were provided another opportunity to indicate how likely they would be to consider sending any of their children to a focus school when in grades K through 5, grades 6 through 8, or grades 9 through 12. For each of these grade levels, the number of school families who *definitely or probably would* consider a focus school increased based on information revealed during survey administration. Assuming it specialized in or focused on an area of interest to their student, results here would project that approximately one-half (49%) of those with a child in grades K through 5 would at least probably consider a focus school at the elementary level, and this percentage increases to 59% at the high school level.
- Differences found in these results by achievement subcouncil, FRL eligibility, race/ethnicity, and household income are similar to the trends noted earlier. That is, families with children attending schools in Subcouncils 1, 2, and 5 hold the strongest potential interest in

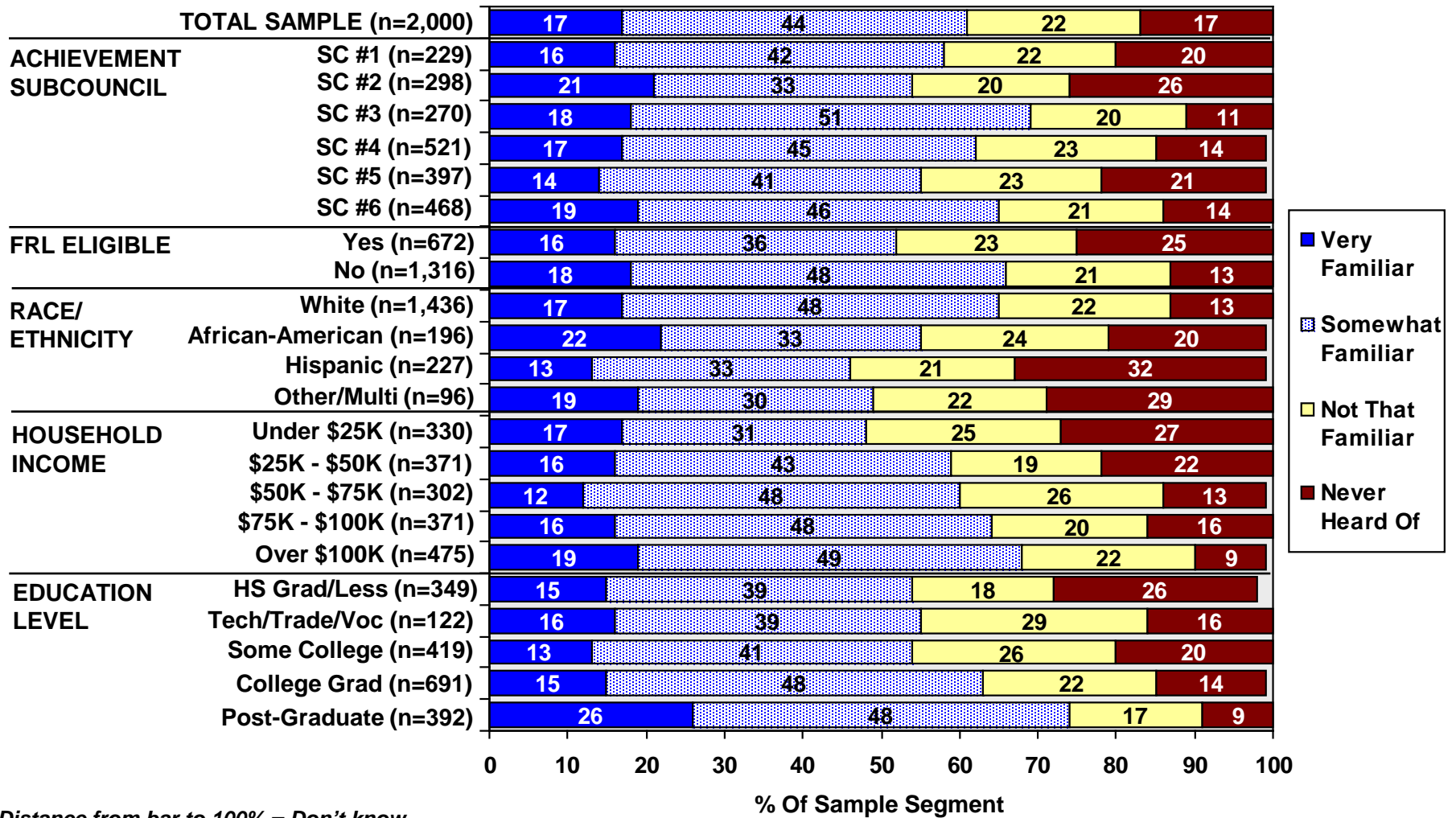
focus schools, along with those who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Interest in focus schools is strongest among African-American and Hispanic households, although reasonable potential exists among White households as well (i.e., 53% of Whites at least probably would consider a focus school at the high school level).

- In summary, results here demonstrate that a large majority of parents/guardians across the Learning Community are at least open to considering the focus school option, if offered. Of course, actual enrollment will depend on several factors, including the subject area of focus, the child's interest in attending, the instructional methods used and programs offered, along with the specific location of the school. Further, the fact that focus schools appeal more strongly to FRL eligible families would seem to support the notion that greater socio-economic diversity could be achieved within the Learning Community through the development of focus schools or programs.

DETAILED RESULTS

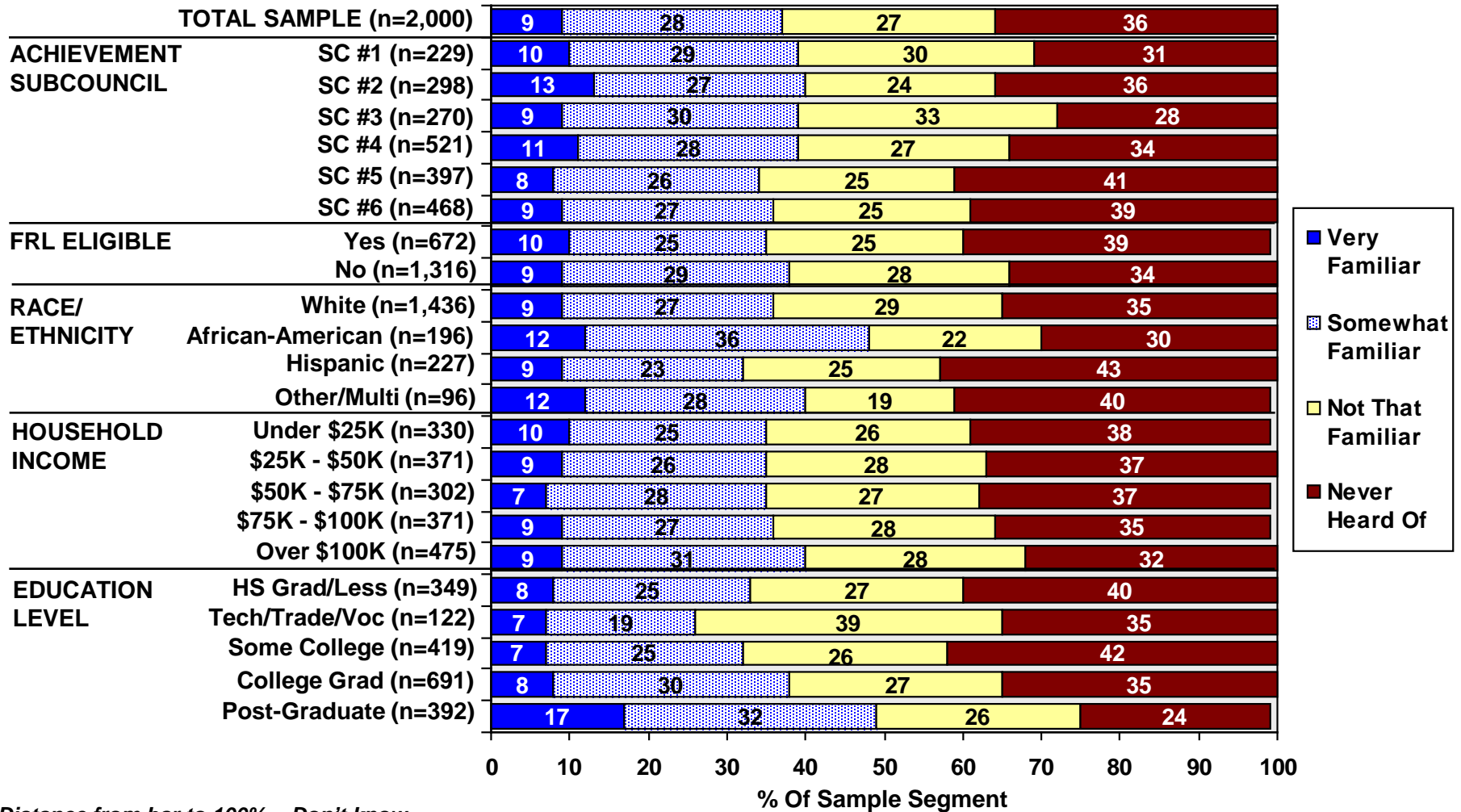
FAMILIARITY WITH THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Figure 1



FAMILIARITY WITH PLANS TO CREATE FOCUS SCHOOLS

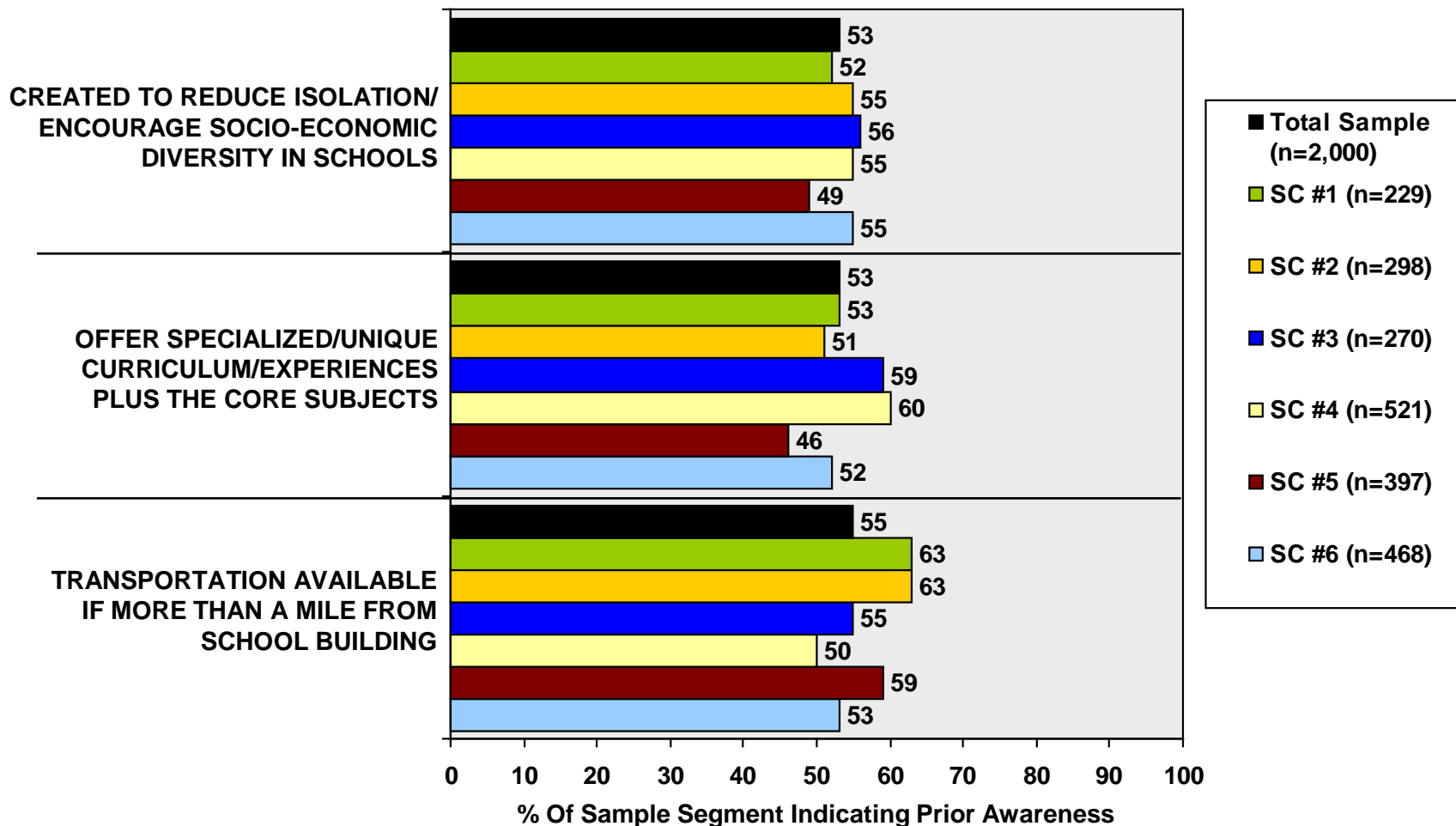
Figure 2



Distance from bar to 100% = Don't know.
(Reference: Q5)

PRIOR AWARENESS OF THREE FOCUS SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES - IN TOTAL AND BY ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL -

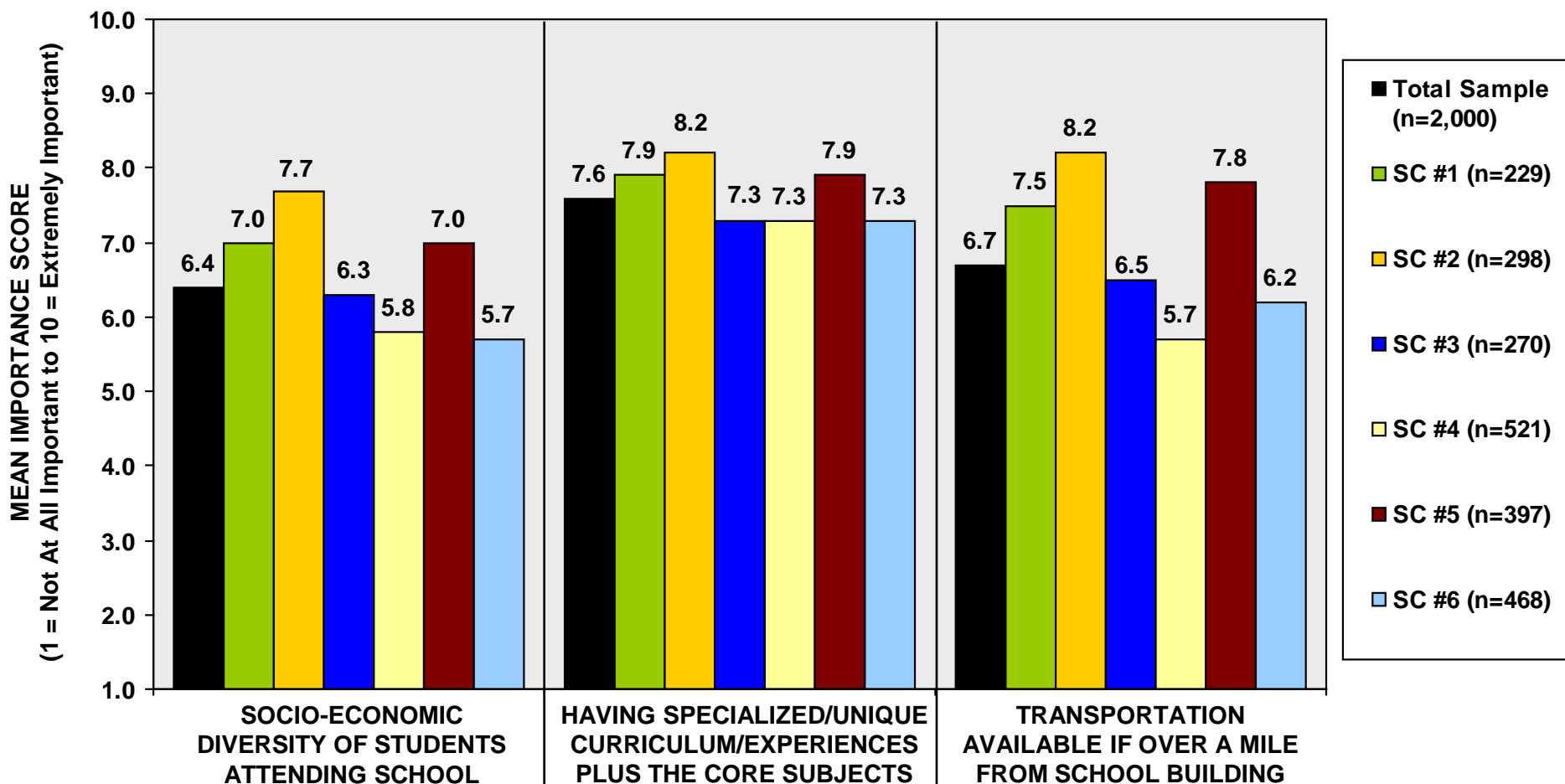
Figure 3



(Reference: Q6A-C)

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THREE FOCUS SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO SEND CHILD TO SCHOOL - IN TOTAL AND BY ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL -

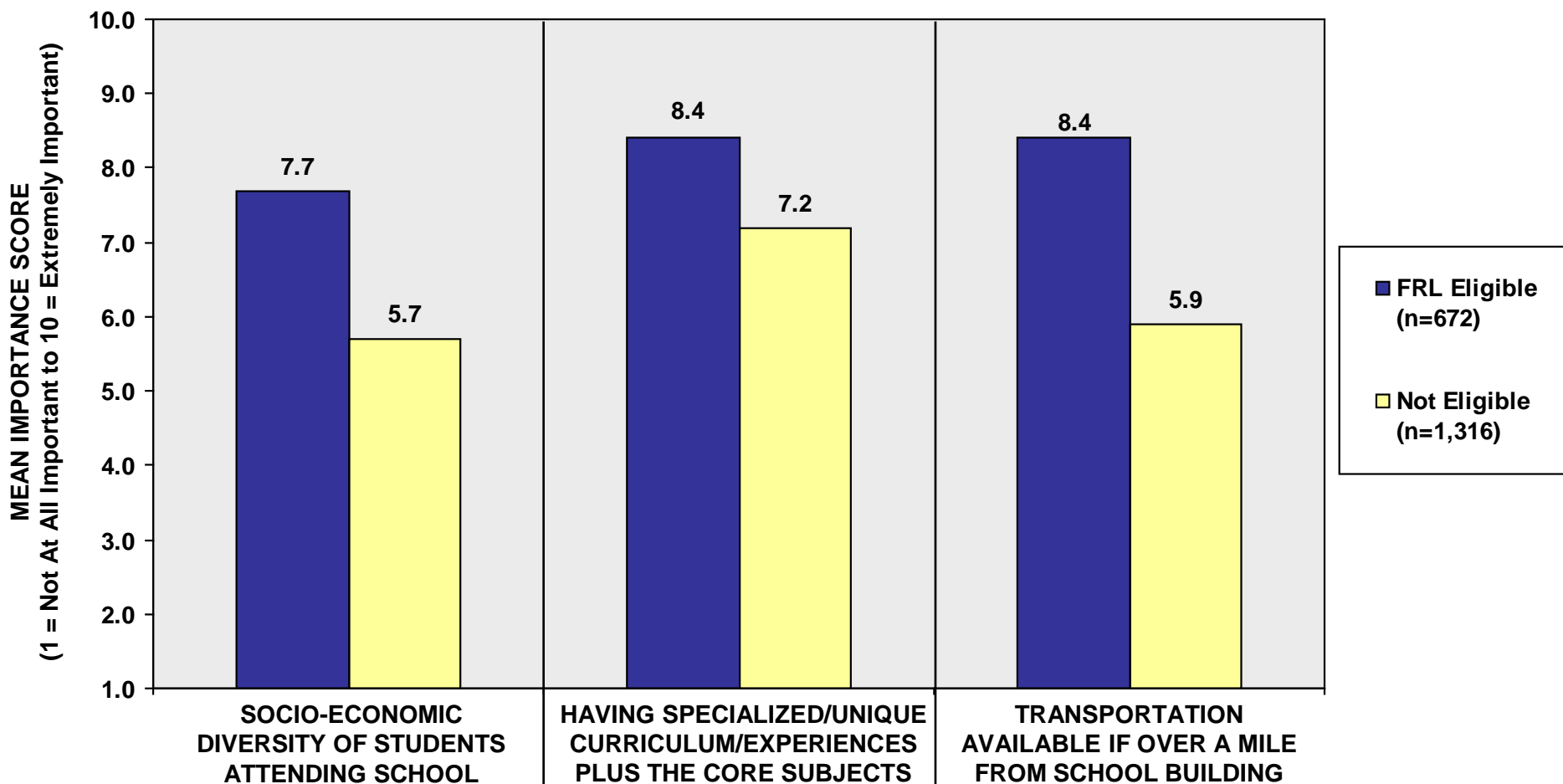
Figure 4



Means scores based on those able to rate.
(Reference: Q7A-C)

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THREE FOCUS SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO SEND CHILD TO SCHOOL - BY FRL ELIGIBILITY -

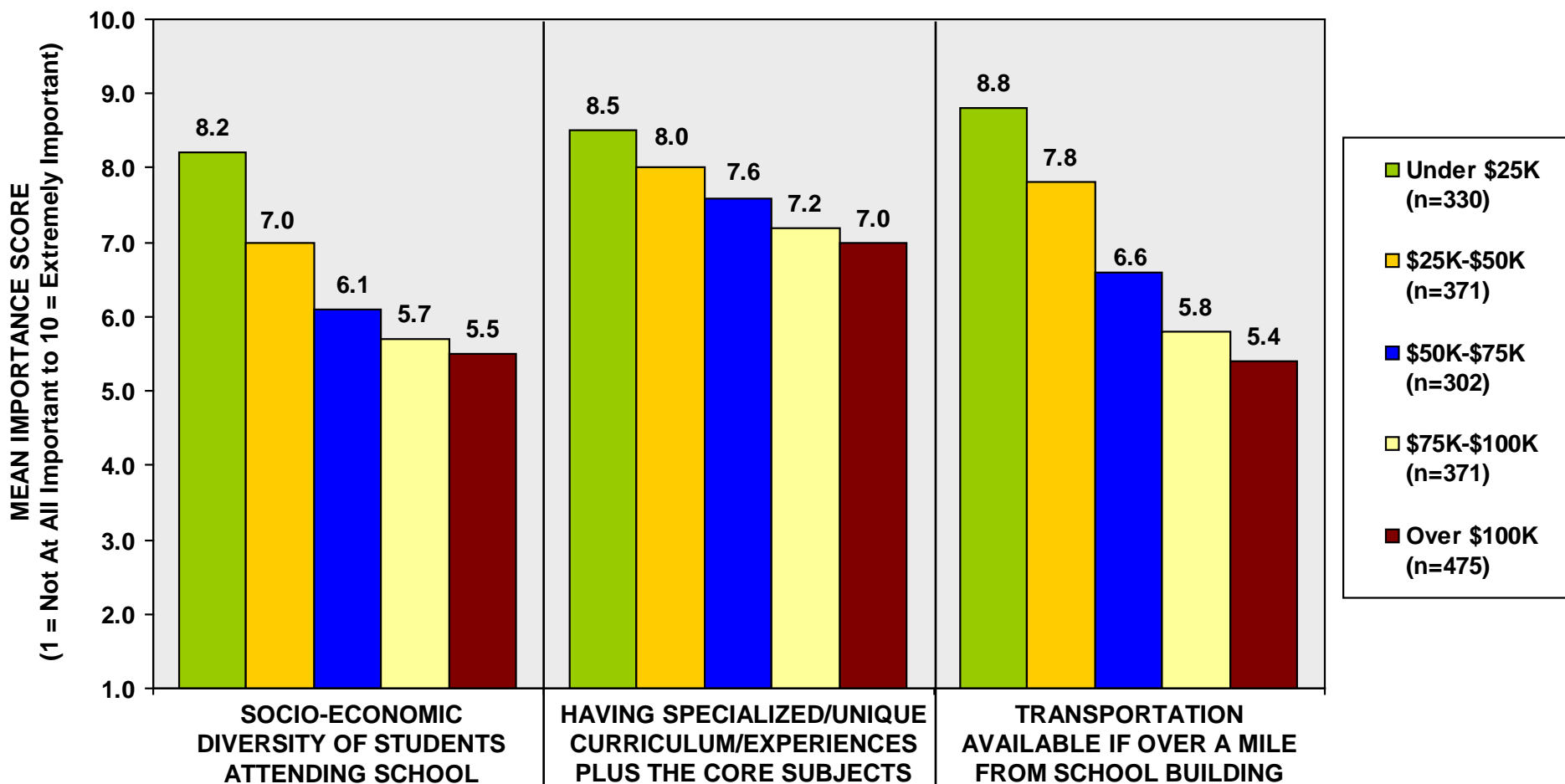
Figure 5



*Means scores based on those able to rate.
(Reference: Q7A-C)*

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THREE FOCUS SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO SEND CHILD TO SCHOOL - BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME -

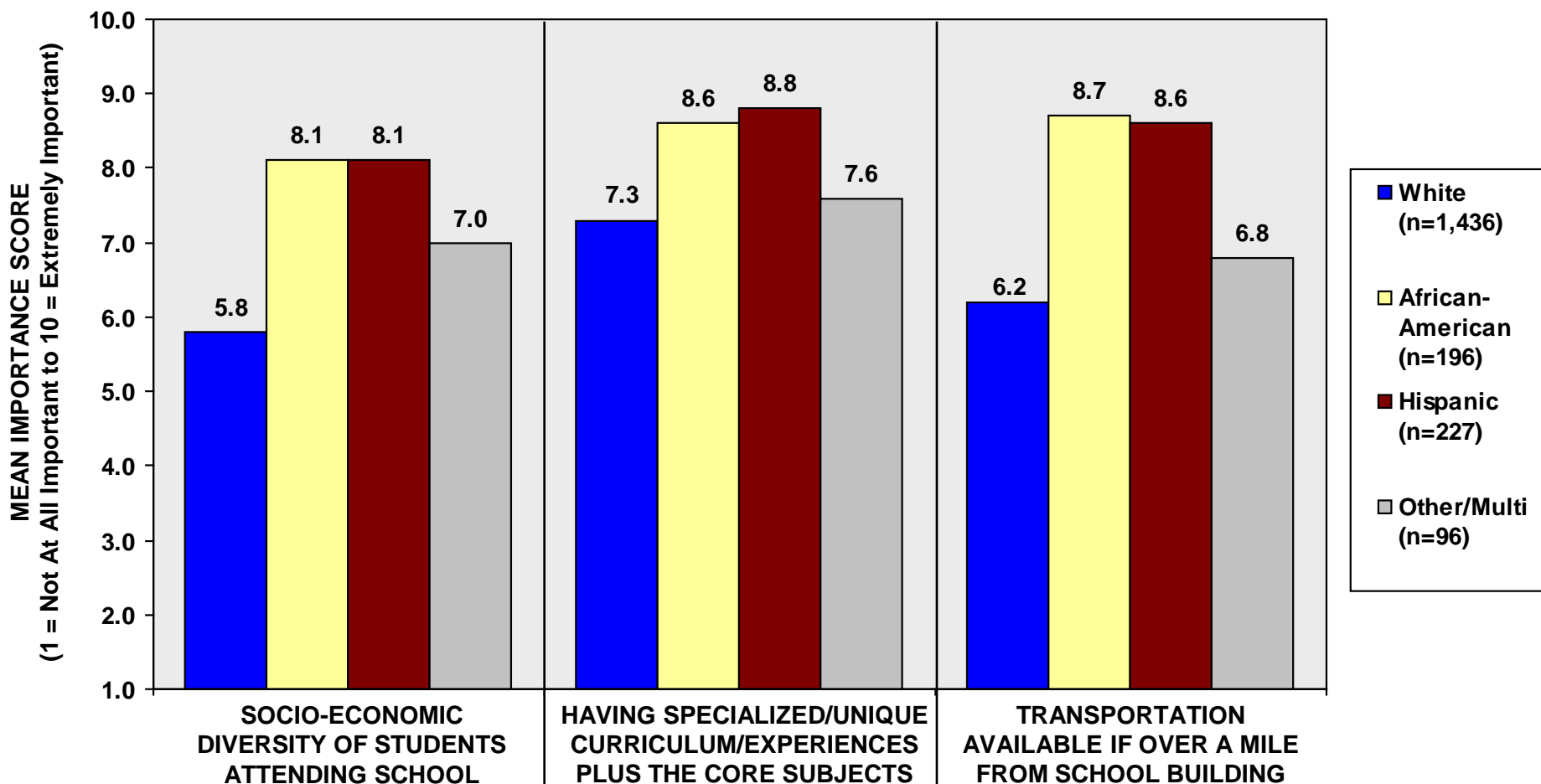
Figure 6



Means scores based on those able to rate.
(Reference: Q7A-C)

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THREE FOCUS SCHOOL ATTRIBUTES WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO SEND CHILD TO SCHOOL - BY RACE/ETHNICITY -

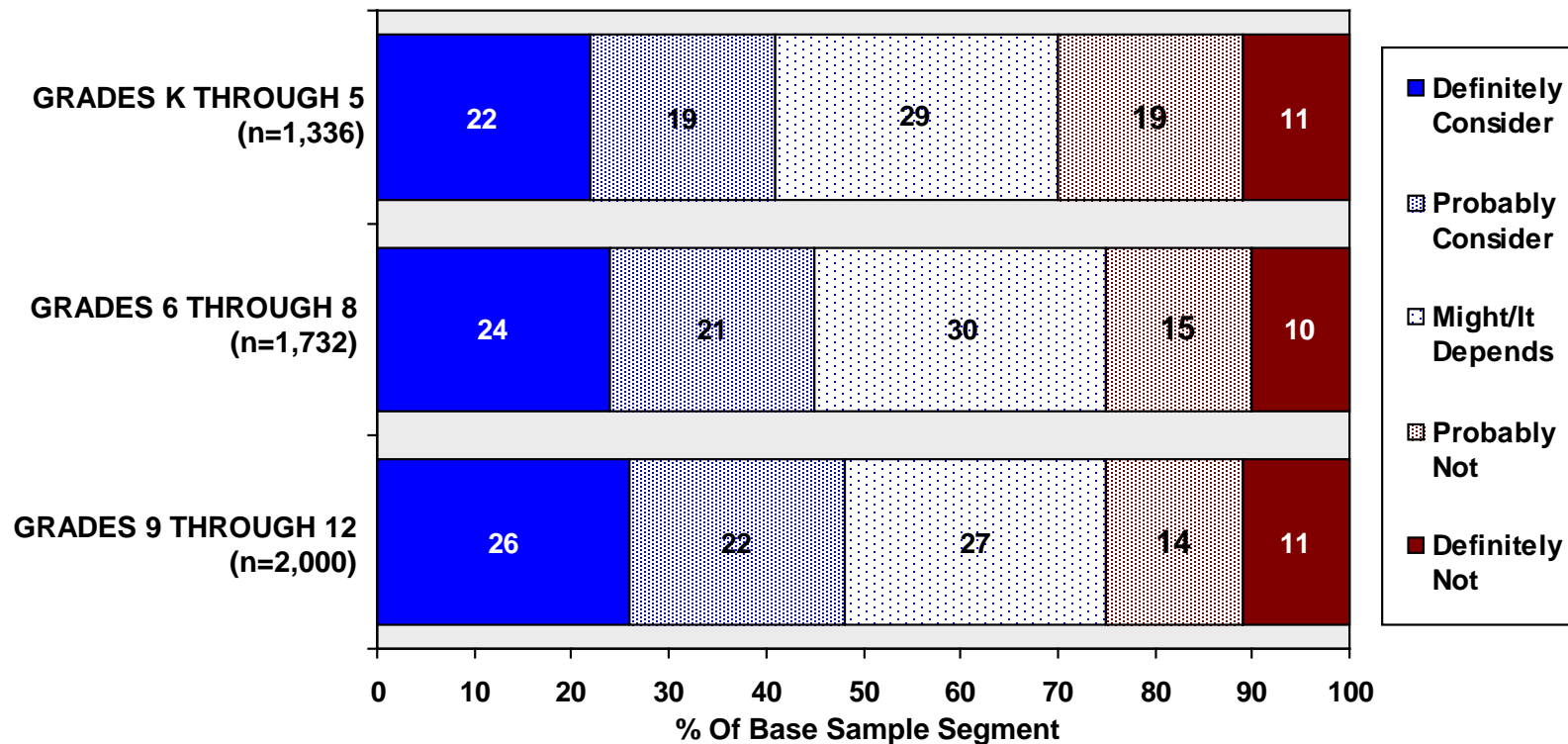
Figure 7



*Means scores based on those able to rate.
(Reference: Q7A-C)*

INITIAL LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER FOCUS SCHOOL FOR ANY CHILD AT THAT GRADE LEVEL

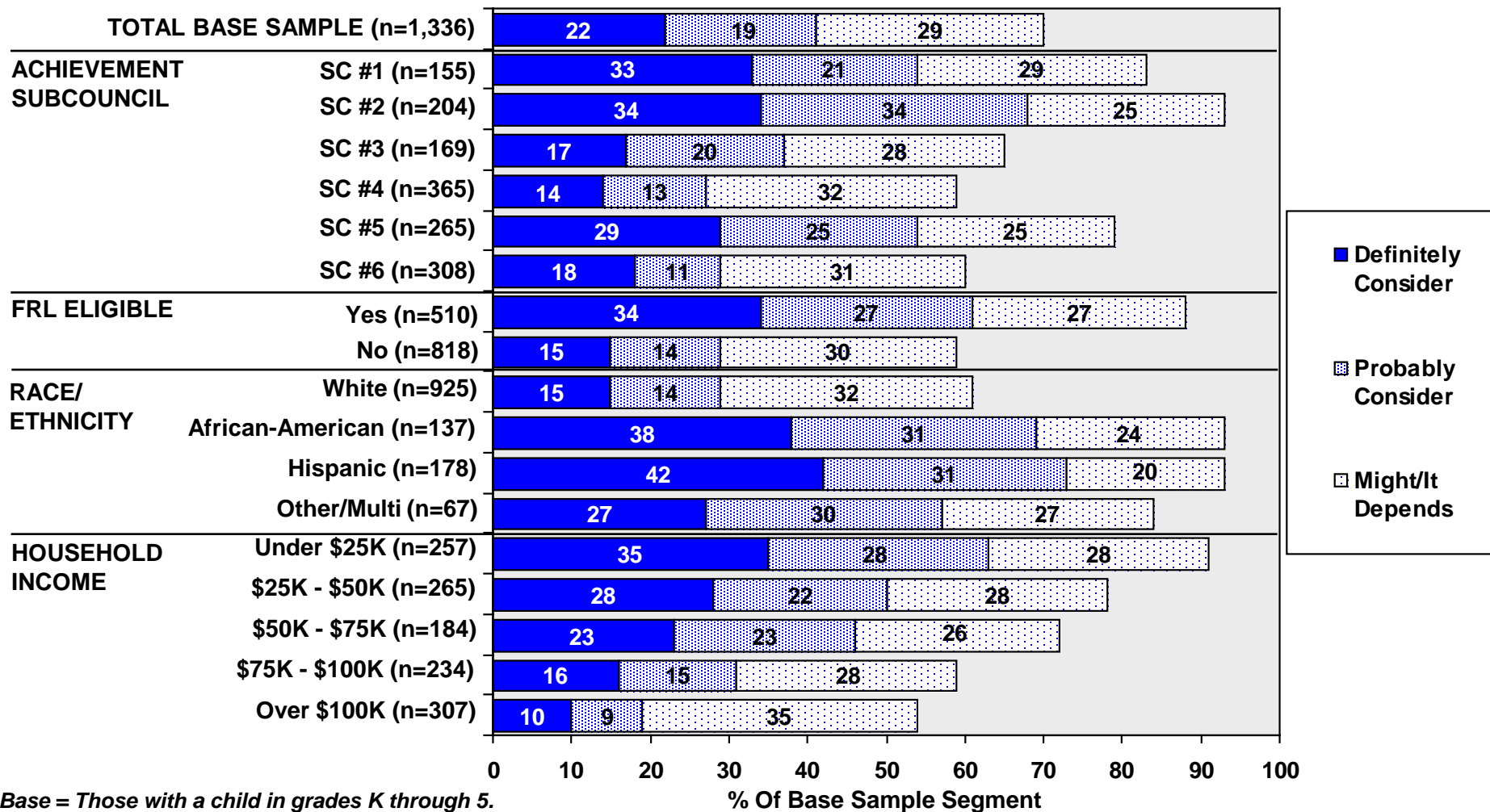
Figure 8



*Base = Those with a child in the household at that grade level or below.
(Reference: Q8A-C)*

INITIAL LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER FOCUS SCHOOL FOR ANY CHILD IN GRADES "K THROUGH 5"

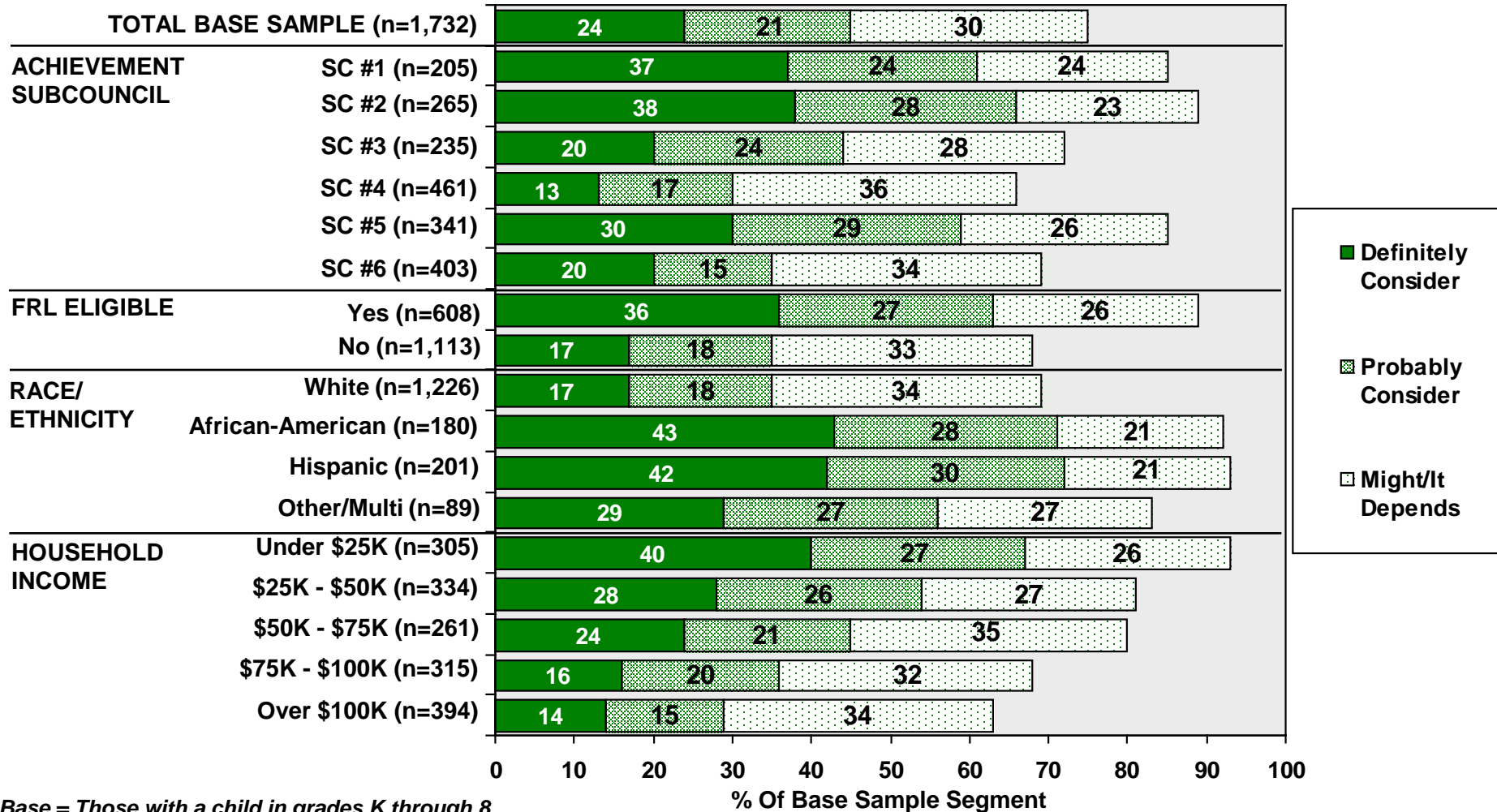
Figure 9



*Base = Those with a child in grades K through 5.
Distance from bar to 100% = Definitely/Probably not consider.
(Reference: Q8A)*

INITIAL LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER FOCUS SCHOOL FOR ANY CHILD IN GRADES "6 THROUGH 8"

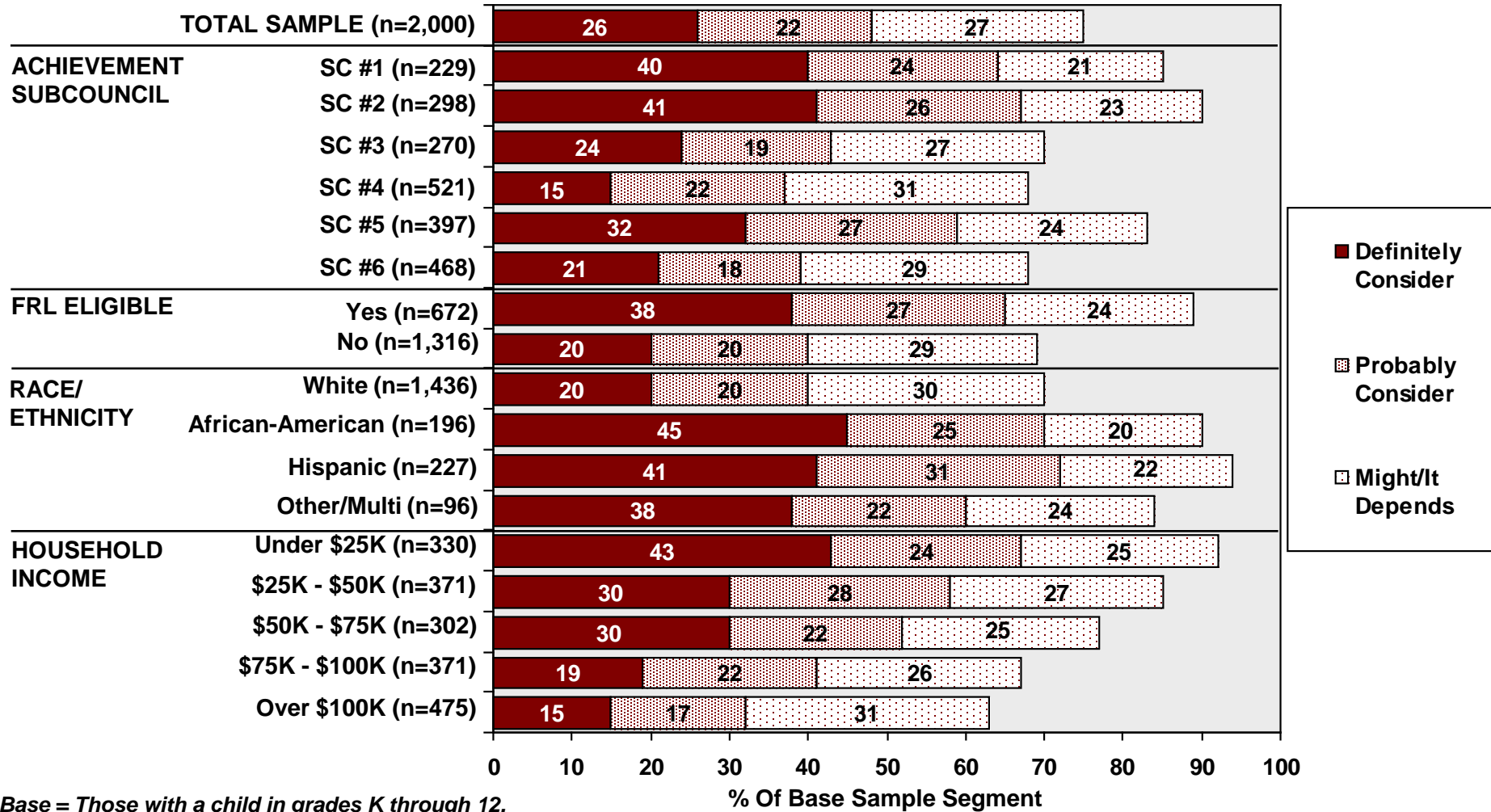
Figure 10



*Base = Those with a child in grades K through 8.
Distance from bar to 100% = Definitely/Probably not consider.
(Reference: Q8B)*

INITIAL LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER FOCUS SCHOOL FOR ANY CHILD IN GRADES "9 THROUGH 12"

Figure 11



*Base = Those with a child in grades K through 12.
Distance from bar to 100% = Definitely/Probably not consider.
(Reference: Q8C)*

VOLUNTEERED REASONS FOR BEING LIKELY TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL

Figure 12

VOLUNTEERED REASON RELATED TO...	TOTAL BASE SAMPLE (n=1,036)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=161)	SC #2 (n=221)	SC #3 (n=126)	SC #4 (n=212)	SC #5 (n=253)	SC #6 (n=188)
DIFFERENT/BETTER OPPORTUNITIES/ UNIQUE/OPEN TO OPTIONS <i>(Different, unique, in-depth, sounds good, better than present school, etc.)</i>	34%	35%	33%	44%	31%	30%	37%
STUDENT INTEREST/BENEFITS/FAMILY SPECIFIC NEEDS <i>(Child's interest/strengths, benefits child, challenging/gifted, special needs, etc.)</i>	33%	29%	28%	36%	37%	29%	37%
CURRICULUM/ACADEMIC OFFERINGS <i>(Curriculum, quality education, emphasis on academics, variety of classes/programs offered, area of focus, etc.)</i>	29%	27%	30%	18%	35%	32%	30%
CLASSROOM LOGISTICS/ METHODS/QUALITY TEACHERS <i>(Smaller class sizes, good teachers/staff, schedule/calendar, etc.)</i>	9%	6%	16%	11%	7%	8%	7%
SOCIAL ASPECTS/DIVERSITY <i>(Diversity, help with social skills, etc.)</i>	8%	9%	9%	10%	7%	5%	7%
LOCATION/TRANSPORTATION	7%	7%	8%	6%	4%	8%	10%
COLLEGE PREP BENEFITS/CAREER FOCUS	3%	1%	4%	5%	5%	2%	2%
ALL OTHER REASONS	7%	7%	5%	6%	9%	7%	8%
DON'T KNOW	6%	11%	8%	6%	3%	10%	2%

Base: Those who would consider sending their child(ren) to a focus school.

Multiple replies accepted.

(Reference: Q9)

VOLUNTEERED FACTORS UPON WHICH CONSIDERATION OF A FOCUS SCHOOL WOULD DEPEND

Figure 13

VOLUNTEERED FACTOR RELATED TO...	TOTAL BASE SAMPLE (n=756)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=78)	SC #2 (n=98)	SC #3 (n=96)	SC #4 (n=222)	SC #5 (n=135)	SC #6 (n=191)
STUDENT INTEREST IN ATTENDING/FAMILY SPECIFIC NEEDS <i>(Child's interest in attending, if beneficial, if unhappy with current school, if met needs, etc.)</i>	39%	24%	34%	45%	42%	36%	36%
CURRICULUM/ACADEMIC OFFERINGS <i>(Classes offered, area of focus, etc.)</i>	26%	26%	28%	23%	28%	21%	28%
LOCATION/TRANSPORTATION <i>(Close location, transportation, safe, etc.)</i>	20%	23%	16%	14%	20%	22%	20%
MORE INFO/FOCUS SCHOOL DIFFERENCES <i>(What's different, need more information, etc.)</i>	17%	26%	13%	11%	22%	11%	18%
CLASSROOM LOGISTICS/ METHODS/ TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS <i>(Teacher/staff qualifications, class size, test scores, cost/tuition, etc.)</i>	12%	13%	17%	11%	10%	13%	13%
COLLEGE PREP BENEFITS/CAREER ORIENTED/VOCATIONAL	3%	1%	--	--	4%	6%	2%
SOCIAL ASPECTS/DIVERSITY	2%	--	1%	5%	3%	2%	2%
ALL OTHER FACTORS	7%	13%	10%	5%	6%	11%	5%
DON'T KNOW	11%	13%	15%	18%	6%	16%	10%

*Base: Those who might consider a focus school for their child(ren).
Multiple replies accepted.
(Reference: Q10)*

VOLUNTEERED REASONS FOR BEING NOT LIKELY TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL

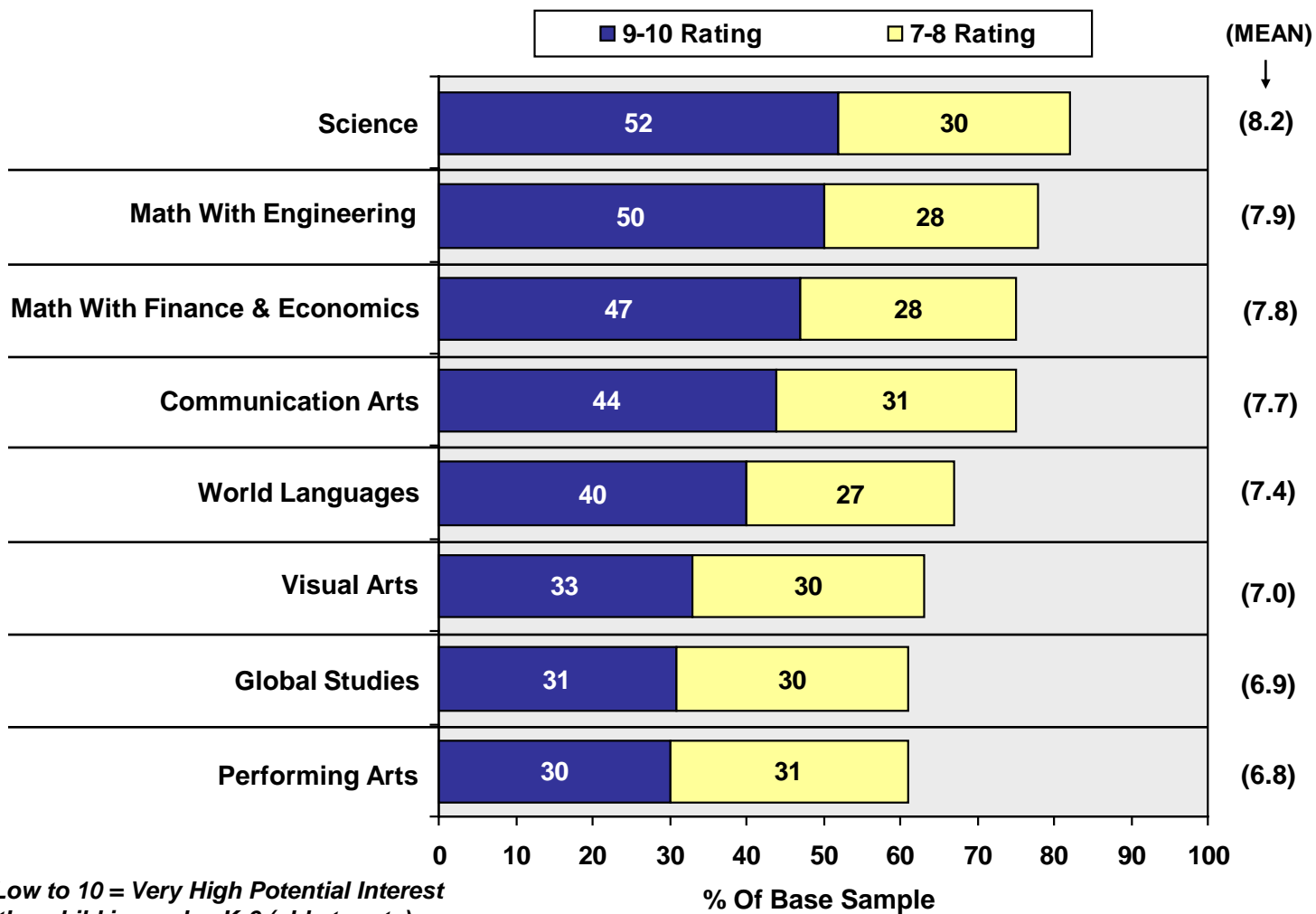
Figure 14

VOLUNTEERED REASON RELATED TO...	TOTAL BASE SAMPLE (n=698)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=55)	SC #2 (n=44)	SC #3 (n=108)	SC #4 (n=237)	SC #5 (n=99)	SC #6 (n=203)
PREFER CURRENT/OTHER SCHOOL <i>(Satisfied with current school/district, prefer neighborhood school, private school, etc.)</i>	55%	35%	34%	61%	59%	42%	58%
LOCATION/DISTANCE CONCERNS/ TRANSPORTATION <i>(Location/distance, bus, unsafe neighborhood, etc.)</i>	12%	13%	11%	8%	12%	13%	15%
DISLIKE FOCUS CONCEPT/LEARNING COMM. <i>(Not necessary, no advantages, dislike/don't believe in Learning Community, etc.)</i>	12%	15%	7%	9%	11%	12%	12%
AGE OF STUDENT (TOO YOUNG/OLD)	9%	16%	18%	6%	10%	8%	6%
FINANCIAL ASPECTS/COST INEFFICIENT <i>(Waste of money, money should stay in district, etc.)</i>	7%	--	5%	5%	7%	10%	8%
NEED TO FOCUS ON BASICS	6%	13%	14%	4%	5%	5%	7%
STUDENT/FAMILY SPECIFIC NEEDS <i>(Child has special needs, depends on focus, etc.)</i>	6%	9%	9%	9%	4%	7%	3%
NEED MORE INFORMATION	4%	5%	7%	3%	3%	7%	4%
SOCIAL ASPECTS/DIVERSITY NOT IMPORTANT	4%	2%	14%	3%	3%	3%	3%
ALL OTHER REASONS	5%	5%	11%	5%	4%	2%	5%
DON'T KNOW	3%	5%	--	2%	3%	6%	4%

*Base: Those not likely to consider a focus school for their child(ren).
Multiple replies accepted.
(Reference: Q11)*

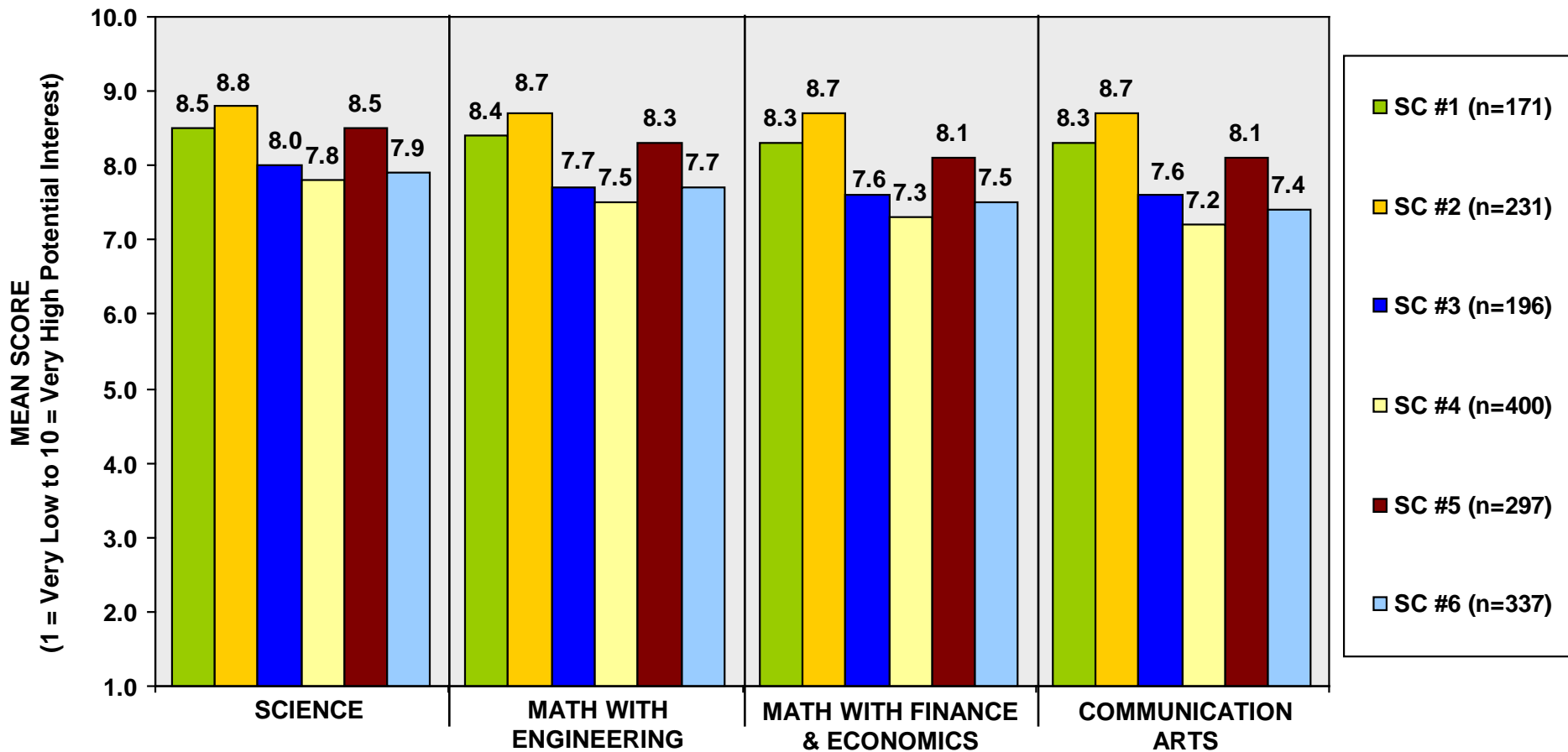
POTENTIAL INTEREST IN EIGHT SUBJECT AREAS FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL (K-6)

Figure 15



POTENTIAL INTEREST IN EIGHT SUBJECT AREAS FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL (K-6) - BY ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL -

Figure 16

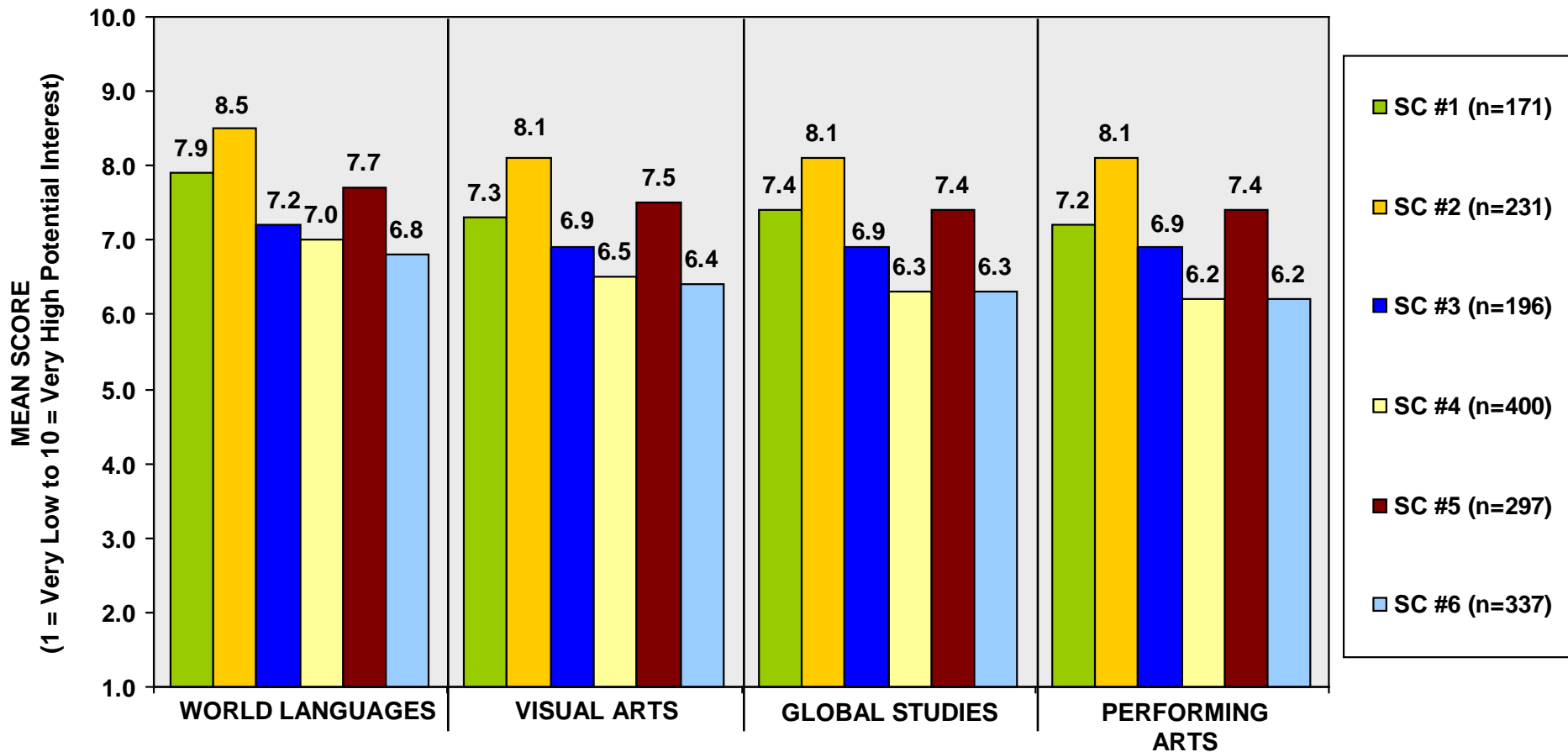


Base = Those with a child in grades K-6 (able to rate).
(Reference: Q12)

(Continued)

POTENTIAL INTEREST IN EIGHT SUBJECT AREAS FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL (K-6) - BY ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL -

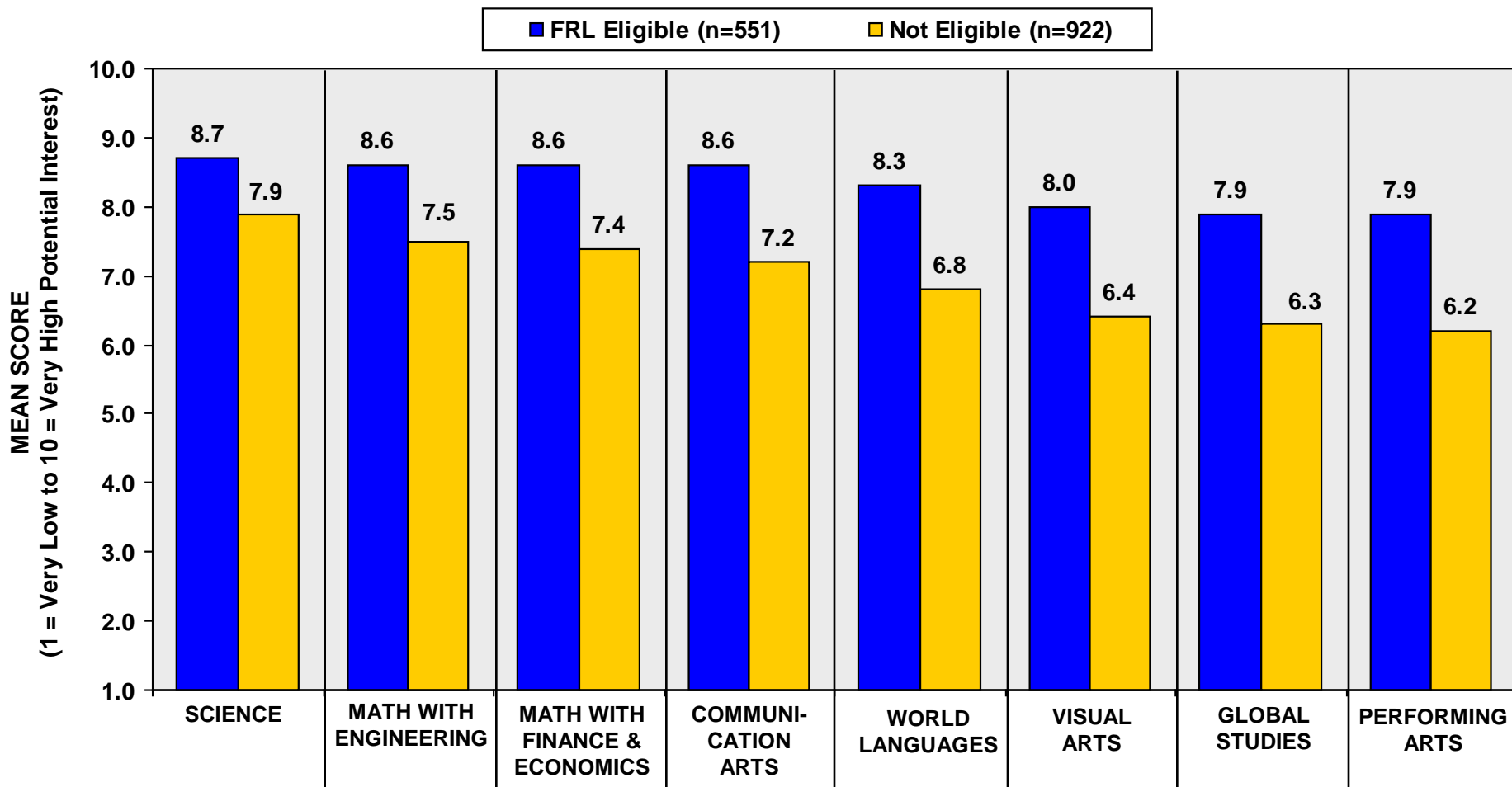
Figure 16
(Continued)



*Base = Those with a child in grades K-6 (able to rate).
(Reference: Q12)*

POTENTIAL INTEREST IN EIGHT SUBJECT AREAS FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL (K-6) - BY FRL ELIGIBILITY -

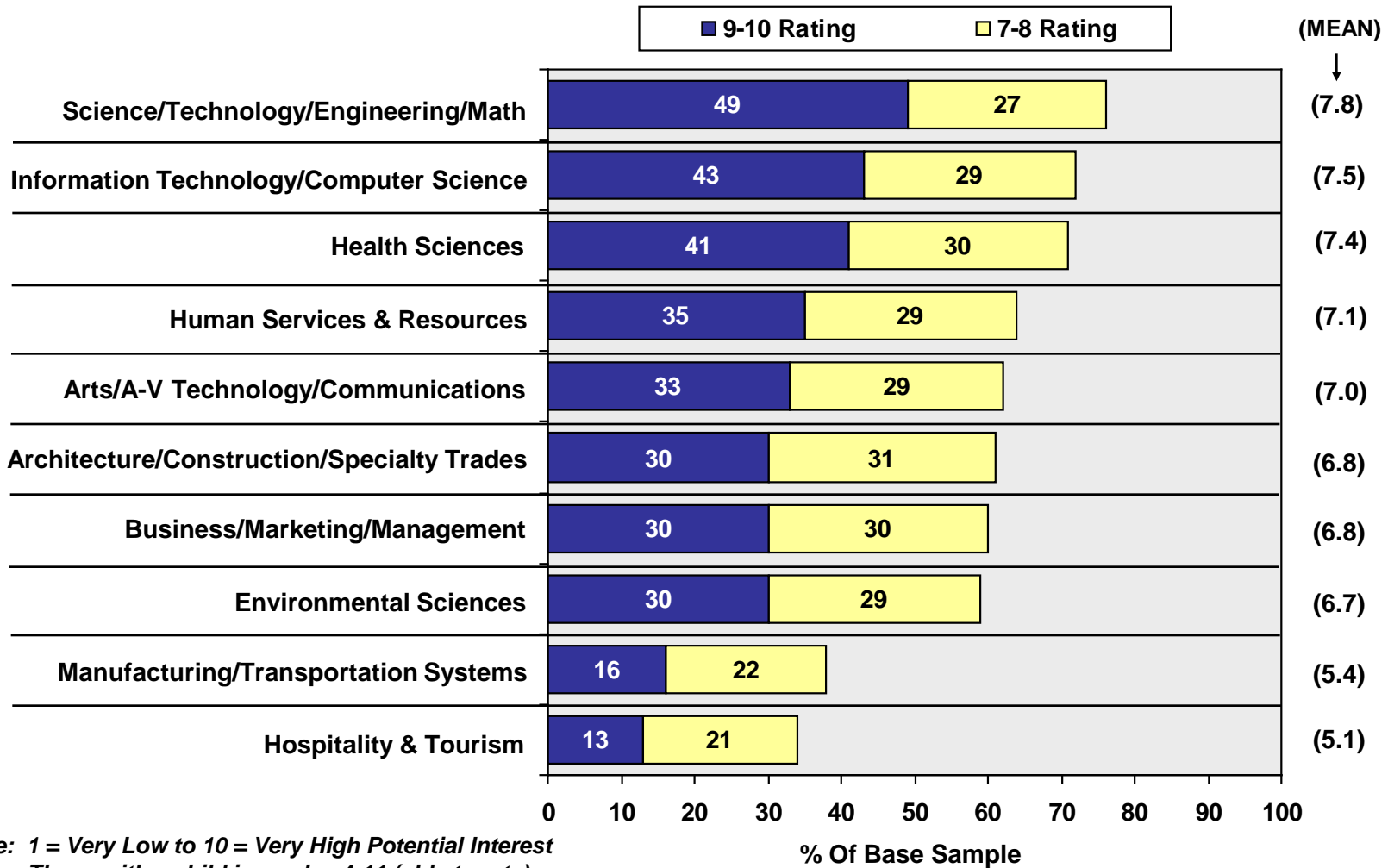
Figure 17



*Base = Those with a child in grades K-6 (able to rate).
(Reference: Q12)*

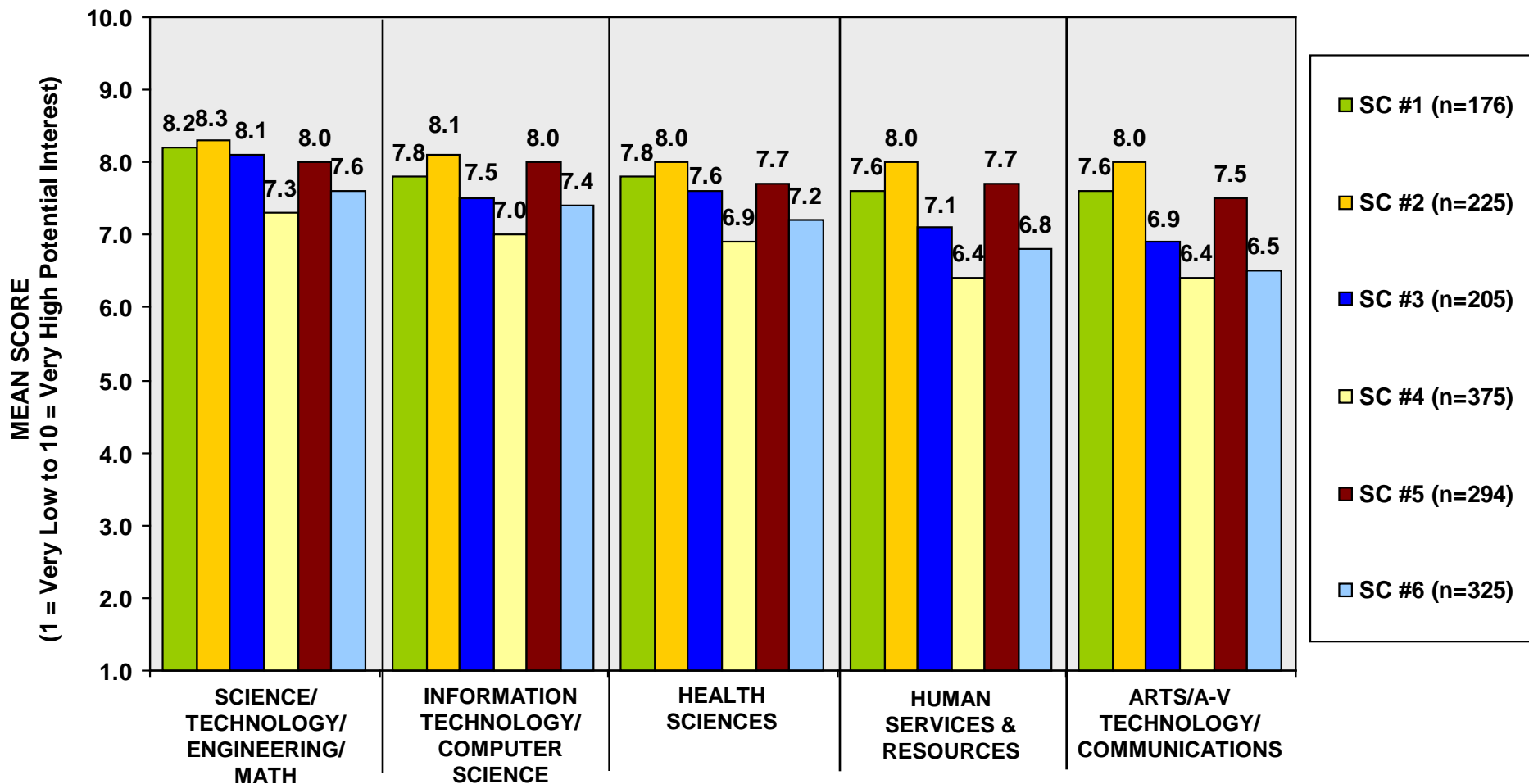
POTENTIAL INTEREST IN TEN CAREER SPECIALTIES FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL – MIDDLE/JR. HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

Figure 18



POTENTIAL INTEREST IN TEN CAREER SPECIALTIES FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL – MIDDLE/JR. HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL - BY ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL -

Figure 19

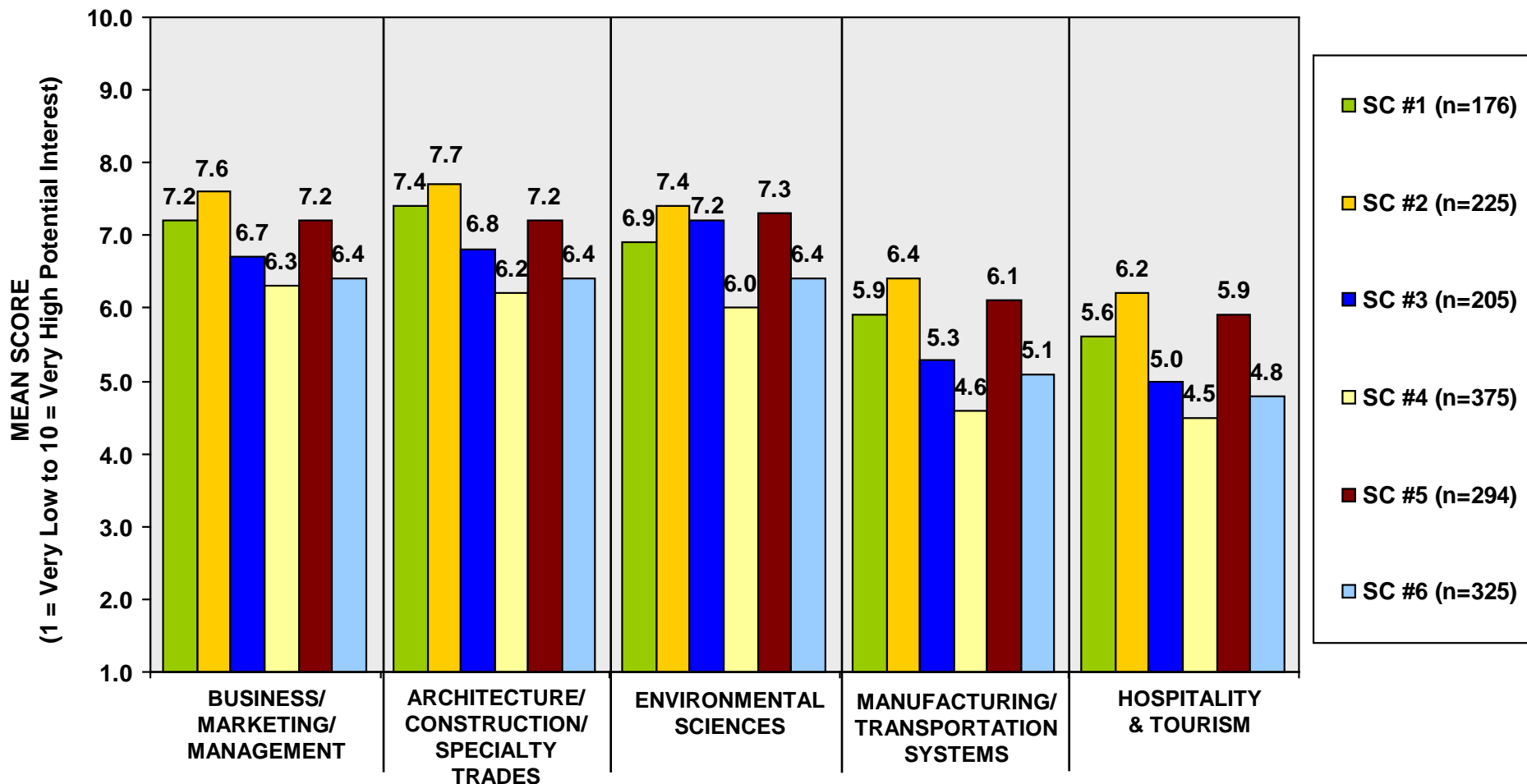


Base = Those with a child in grades 4-11 (able to rate).
(Reference: Q13)

(Continued)

POTENTIAL INTEREST IN TEN CAREER SPECIALTIES FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL – MIDDLE/JR. HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL - BY ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL -

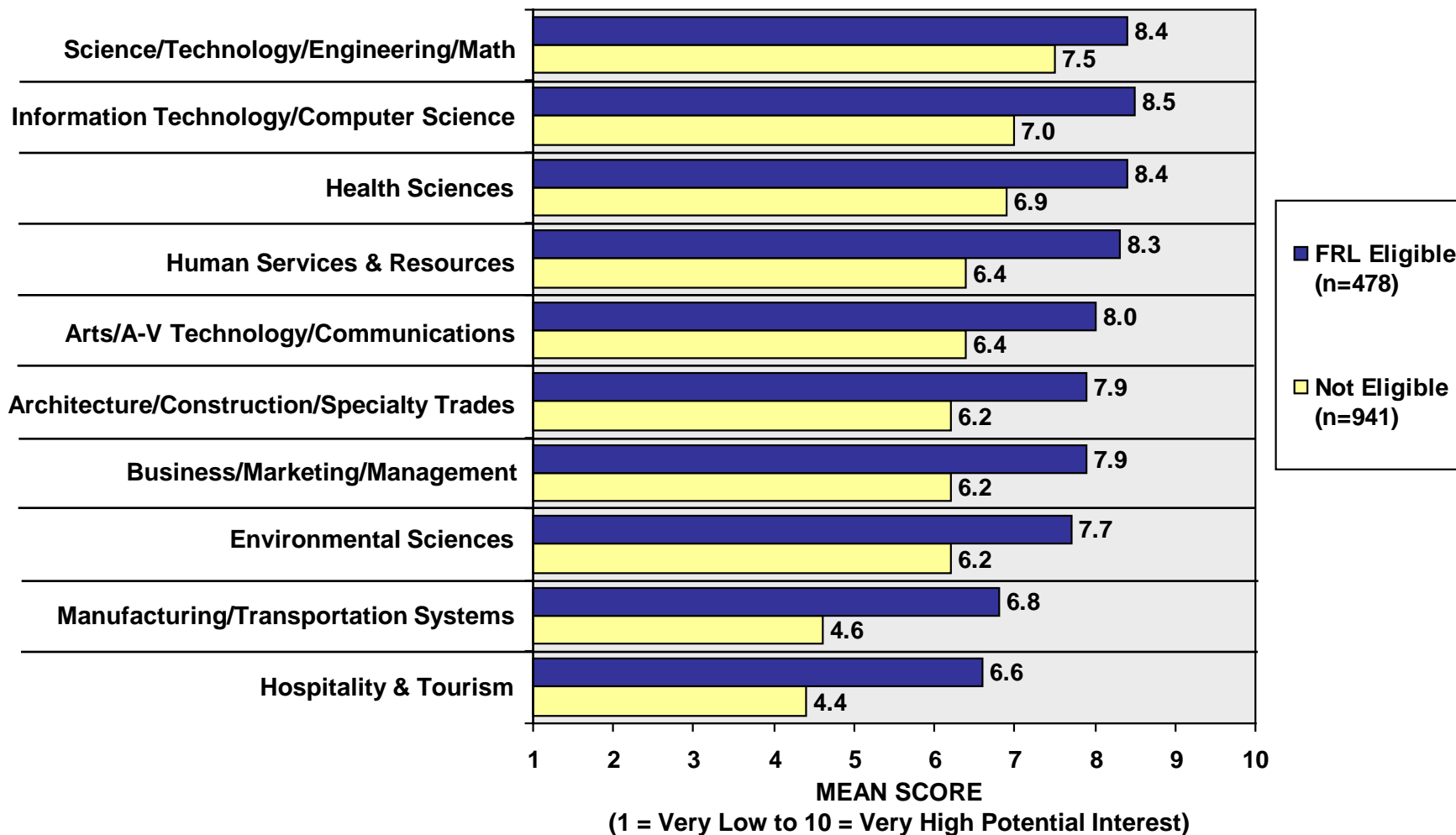
Figure 19
(Continued)



*Base = Those with a child in grades 4-11 (able to rate).
(Reference: Q13)*

POTENTIAL INTEREST IN TEN CAREER SPECIALTIES FOR A FOCUS SCHOOL – MIDDLE/JR. HIGH OR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL - BY FRL ELIGIBILITY -

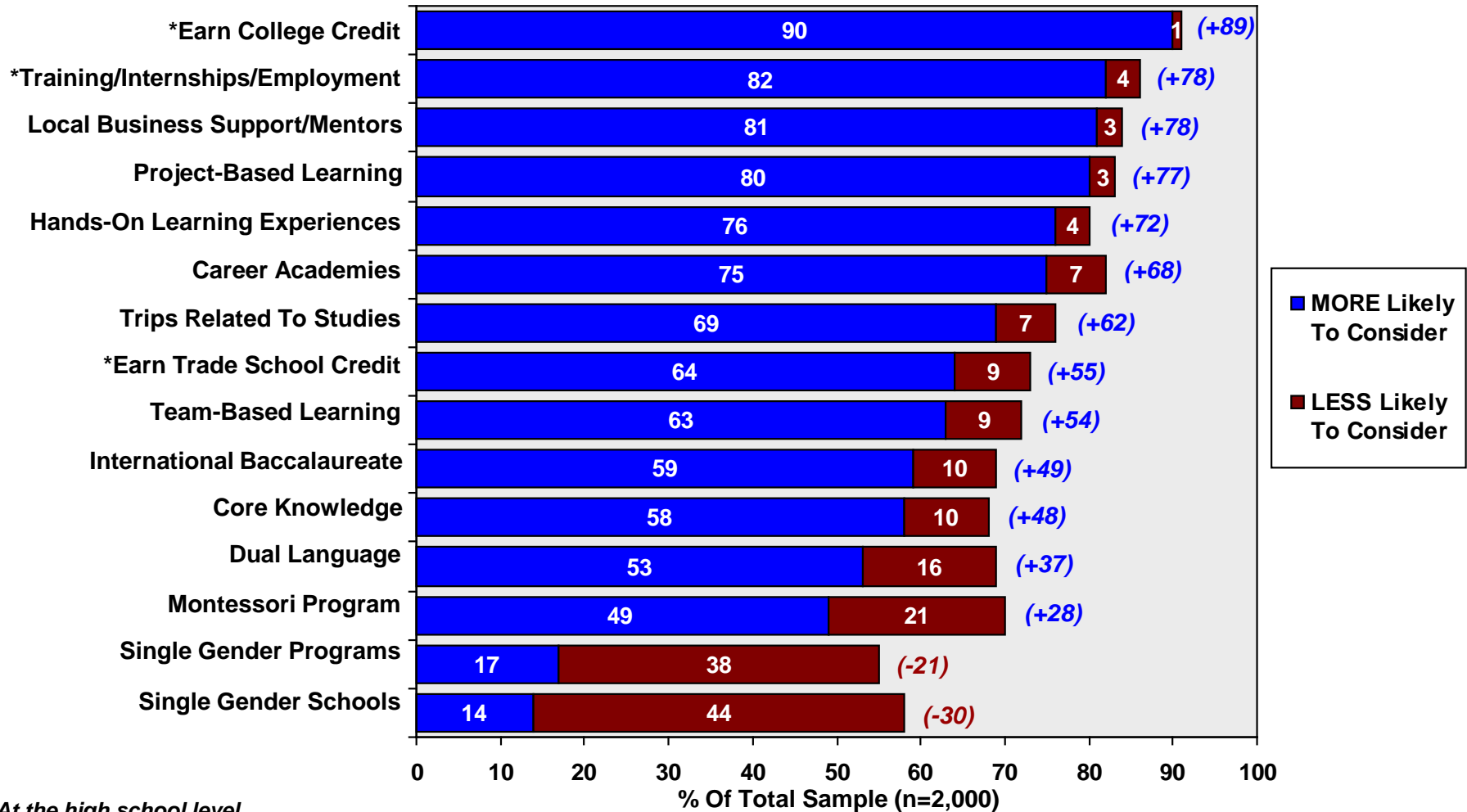
Figure 20



Base = Those with a child in grades 4-11 (able to rate).
(Reference: Q13)

IMPACT OF 15 INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS/PROGRAMS ON FOCUS SCHOOL CONSIDERATION IF OFFERED

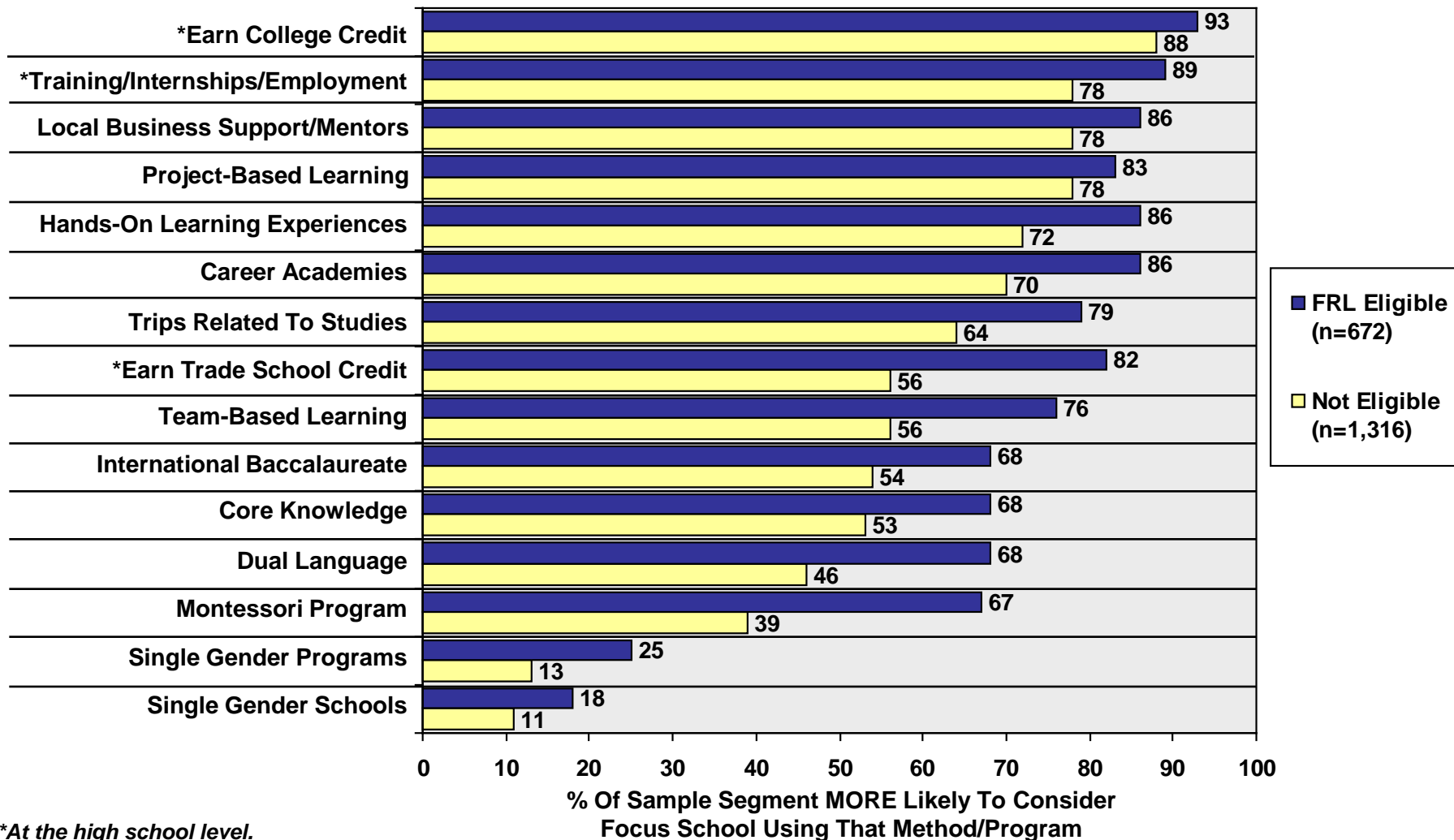
Figure 21



*At the high school level.
Distance from bar to 100% = Doesn't really matter/Not sure.
(Reference: Q14)

IMPACT OF 15 INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS/PROGRAMS ON FOCUS SCHOOL CONSIDERATION IF OFFERED - BY FRL ELIGIBILITY -

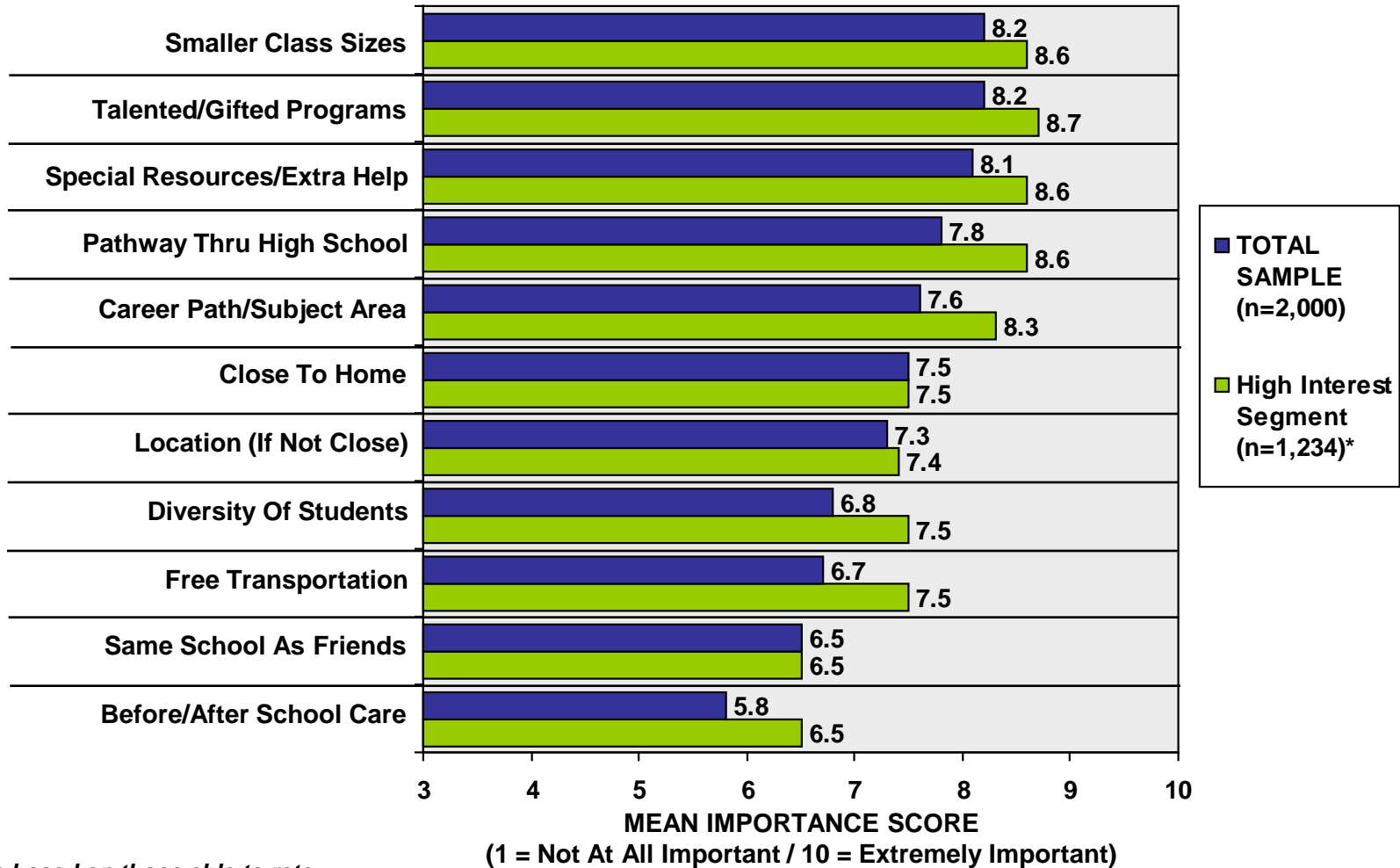
Figure 22



*At the high school level.
(Reference: Q14)

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF 11 FACTORS ON DECISION REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL (IF INTERESTED)

Figure 23



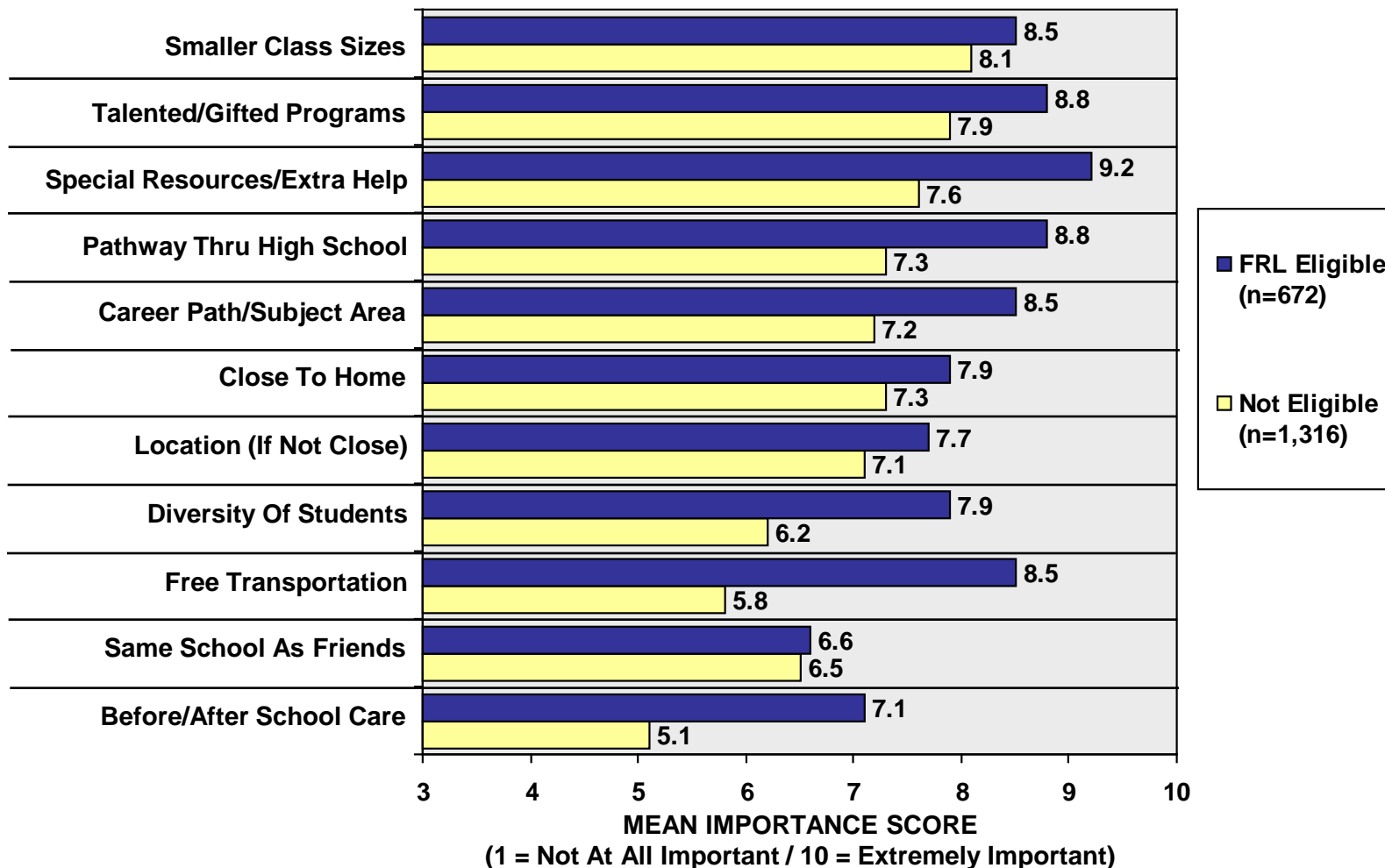
Mean scores based on those able to rate.

*Includes those who would definitely/probably consider a focus school – any grade (final consideration).

(Reference: Q15)

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF 11 FACTORS ON DECISION REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT TO CONSIDER A FOCUS SCHOOL (IF INTERESTED) - BY FRL ELIGIBILITY -

Figure 24



*Mean scores based on those able to rate.
(Reference: Q15)*

VOLUNTEERED “OTHER” CONSIDERATIONS OF IMPORTANCE IN FOCUS SCHOOL DECISION

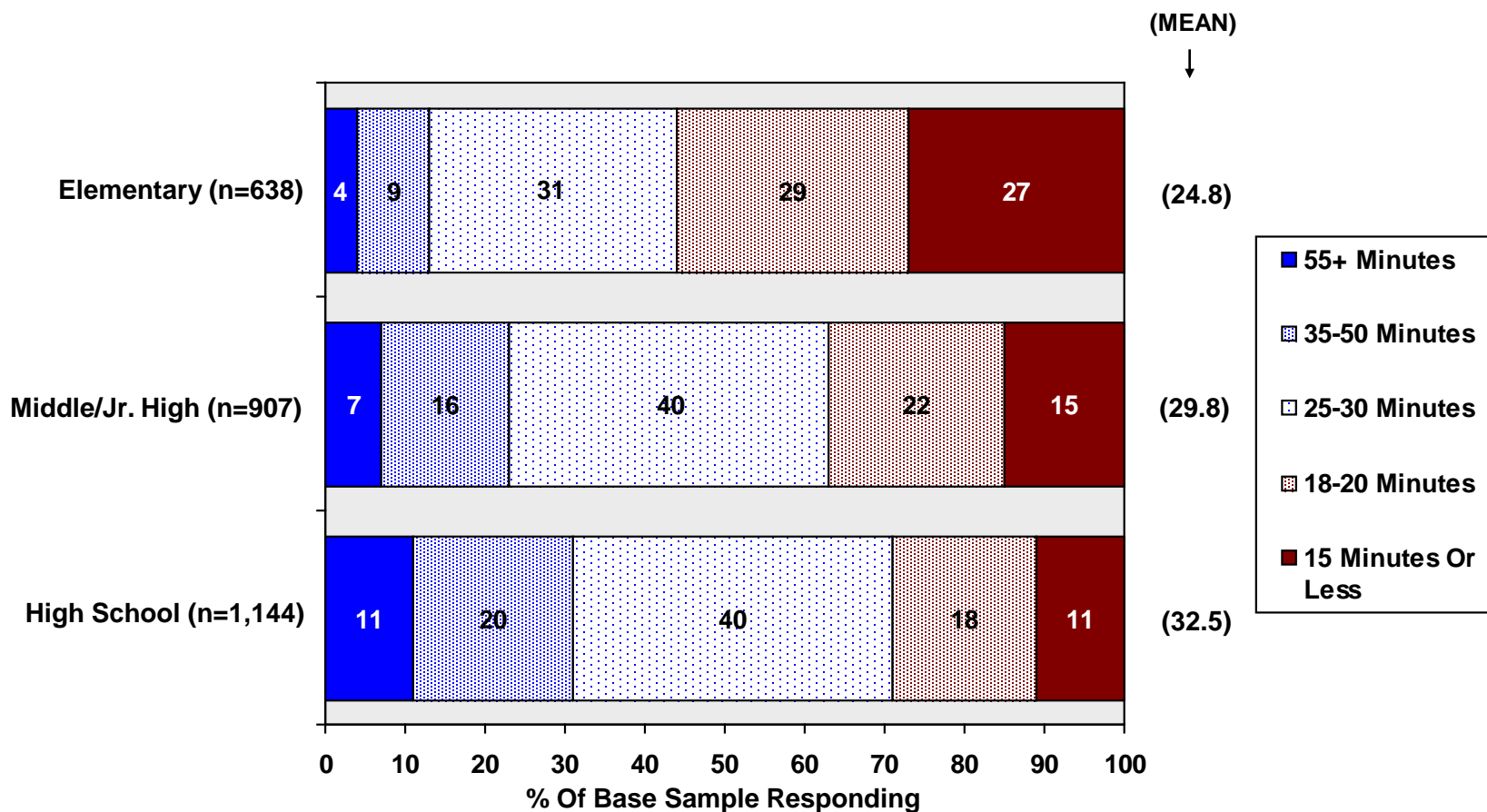
Figure 25

VOLUNTEERED CONSIDERATION RELATED TO...	TOTAL SAMPLE (n=2,000)	--- ACHIEVEMENT SUBCOUNCIL ---					
		SC #1 (n=229)	SC #2 (n=298)	SC #3 (n=270)	SC #4 (n=521)	SC #5 (n=397)	SC #6 (n=468)
CLASSROOM LOGISTICS/QUALITY TEACHERS <i>(Good teachers/staff, class size, success/track record/test scores, schedule, etc.)</i>	15%	19%	21%	14%	15%	12%	15%
STUDENT INTEREST IN ATTENDING/FAMILY SPECIFIC NEEDS <i>(Child’s interest in attending, if met needs, parental involvement, discipline, etc.)</i>	12%	16%	9%	13%	13%	10%	12%
GOOD CURRICULUM/ACADEMIC AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR OFFERINGS <i>(Good education, focus, sports, clubs, etc.)</i>	11%	14%	15%	10%	13%	9%	9%
LOCATION/TRANSPORTATION/DISTANCE <i>(Location, transportation, safe, etc.)</i>	7%	7%	7%	4%	6%	11%	7%
FINANCIAL ASPECTS/COST	5%	3%	3%	3%	6%	6%	6%
NEED MORE INFO/SELECTION CRITERIA <i>(Who can go/lottery, need more info, etc.)</i>	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%
SOCIAL ASPECTS/DIVERSITY	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
ALL OTHER FACTORS	4%	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%	2%
DON’T KNOW	54%	49%	49%	55%	55%	55%	55%

*Multiple replies accepted.
(Reference: Q16)*

LONGEST AMOUNT OF TIME WOULD WANT CHILD ON BUS ONE-WAY IF DECIDED ON FOCUS SCHOOL – BY GRADE LEVEL

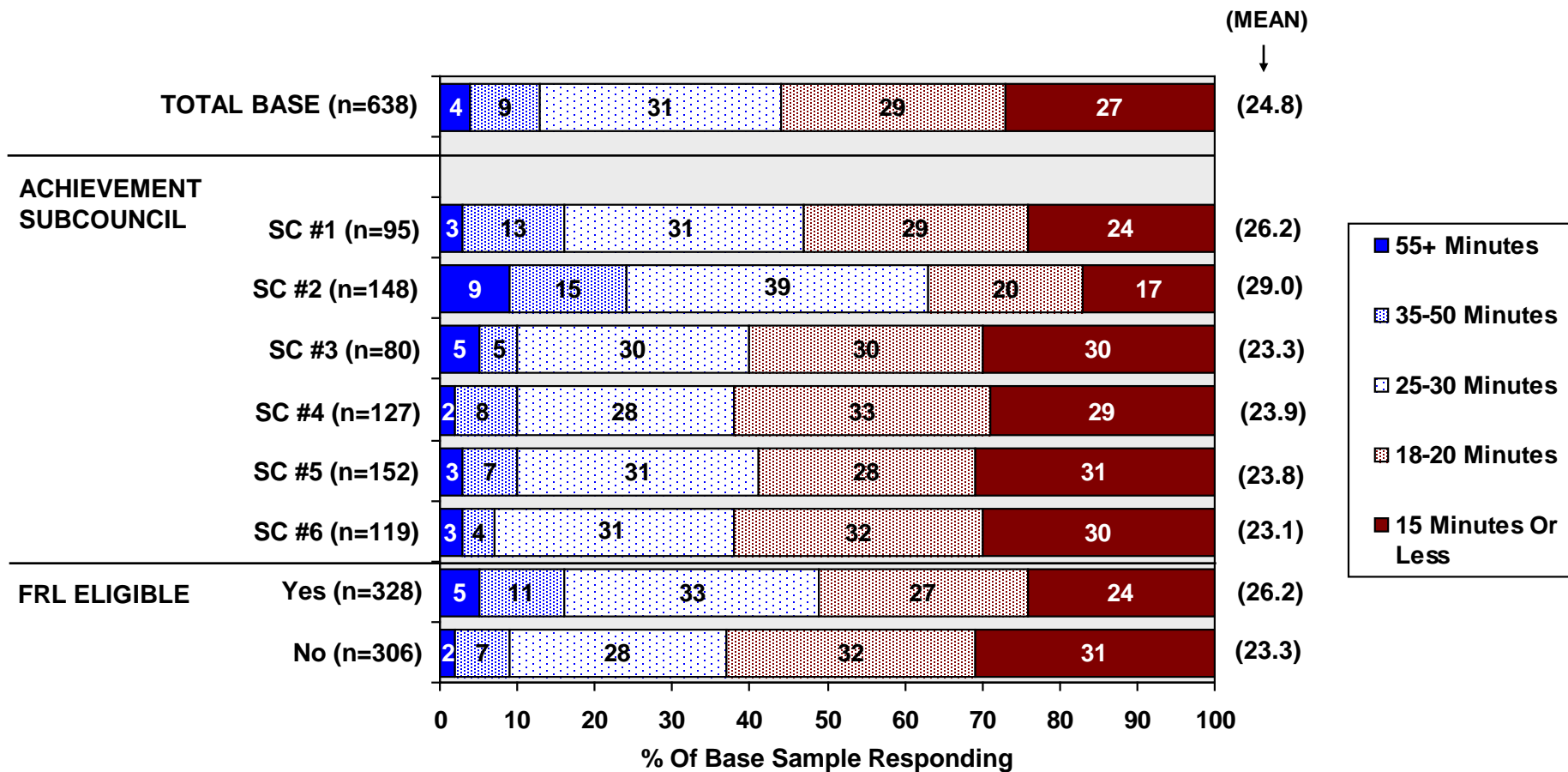
Figure 26



Base = Those with child in those grades or younger who would definitely/probably consider focus school at that grade level (final consideration).
(Reference: Q17A-C)

LONGEST TIME WOULD WANT CHILD IN GRADES "K THROUGH 5" ON BUS ONE-WAY IF DECIDED ON FOCUS SCHOOL

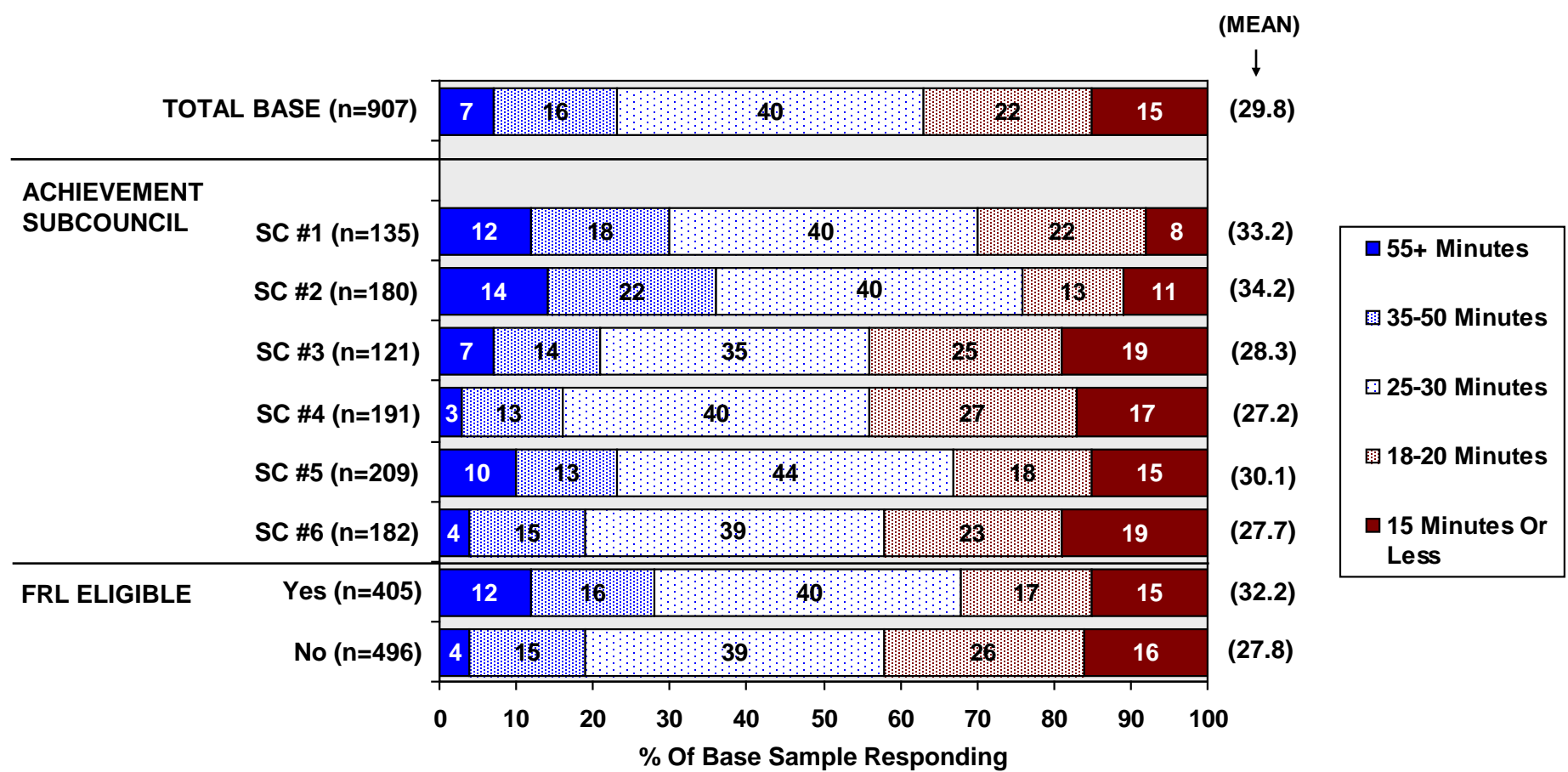
Figure 27



Base = Those who would definitely/probably consider focus school at K-5 grade level (final consideration). (Reference: Q17A)

LONGEST TIME WOULD WANT CHILD IN GRADES "6 THROUGH 8" ON BUS ONE-WAY IF DECIDED ON FOCUS SCHOOL

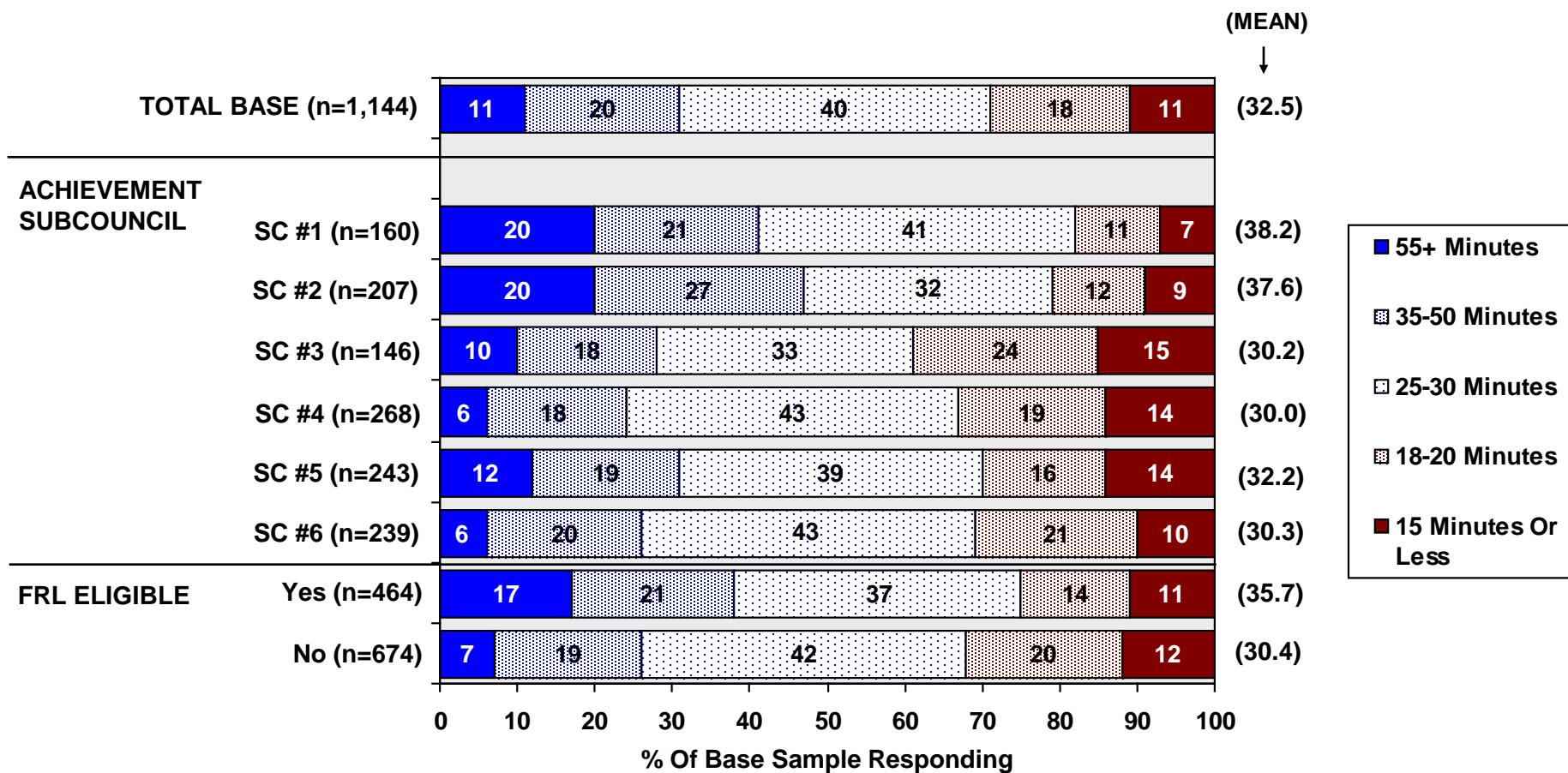
Figure 28



Base = Those who would definitely/probably consider focus school at 6-8 grade level (final consideration). (Reference: Q17B)

LONGEST TIME WOULD WANT CHILD IN GRADES "9 THROUGH 12" ON BUS ONE-WAY IF DECIDED ON FOCUS SCHOOL

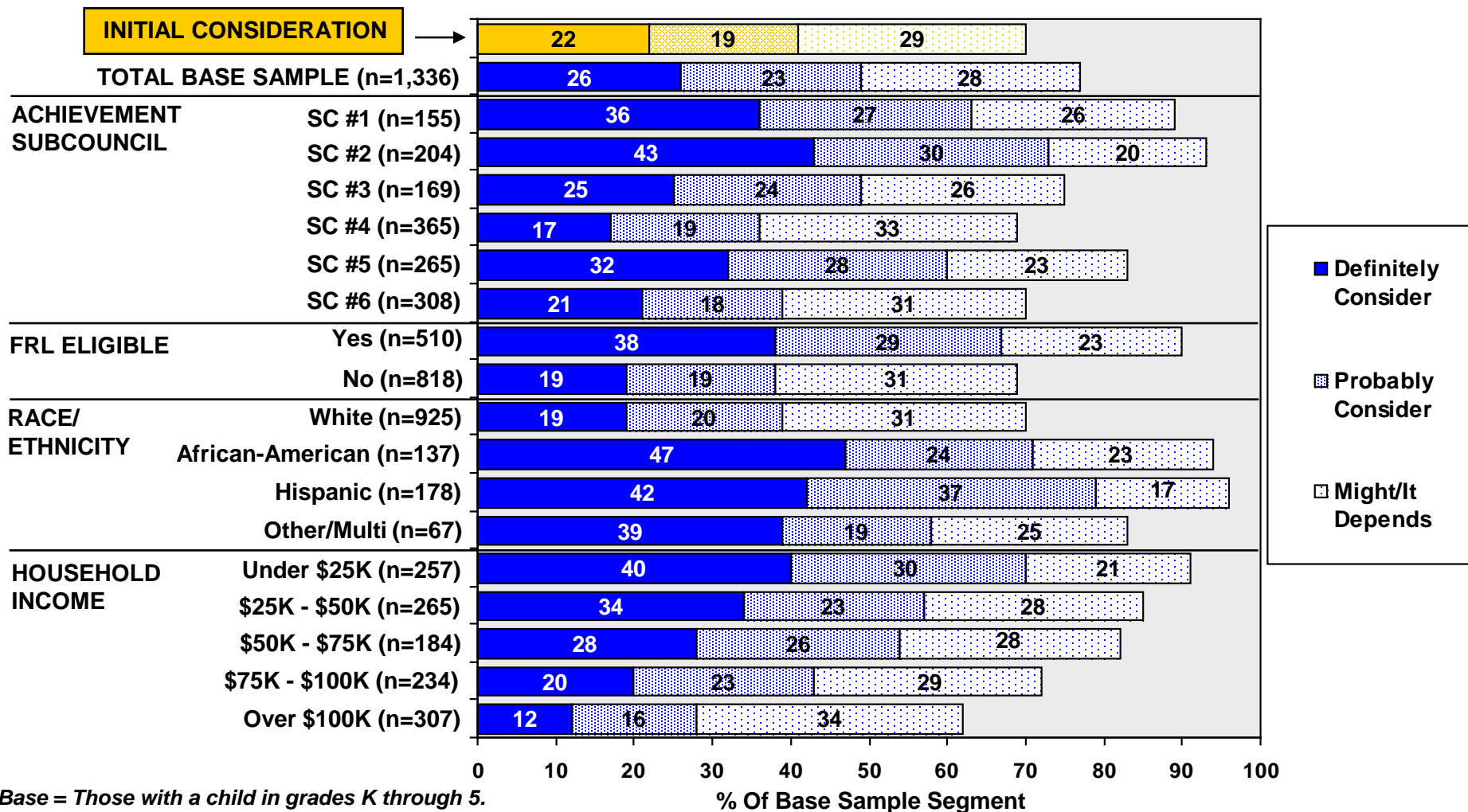
Figure 29



Base = Those who would definitely/probably consider focus school at 9-12 grade level (final consideration). (Reference: Q17C)

FINAL CONSIDERATION OF FOCUS SCHOOL FOR CHILD IN GRADES “K THROUGH 5”

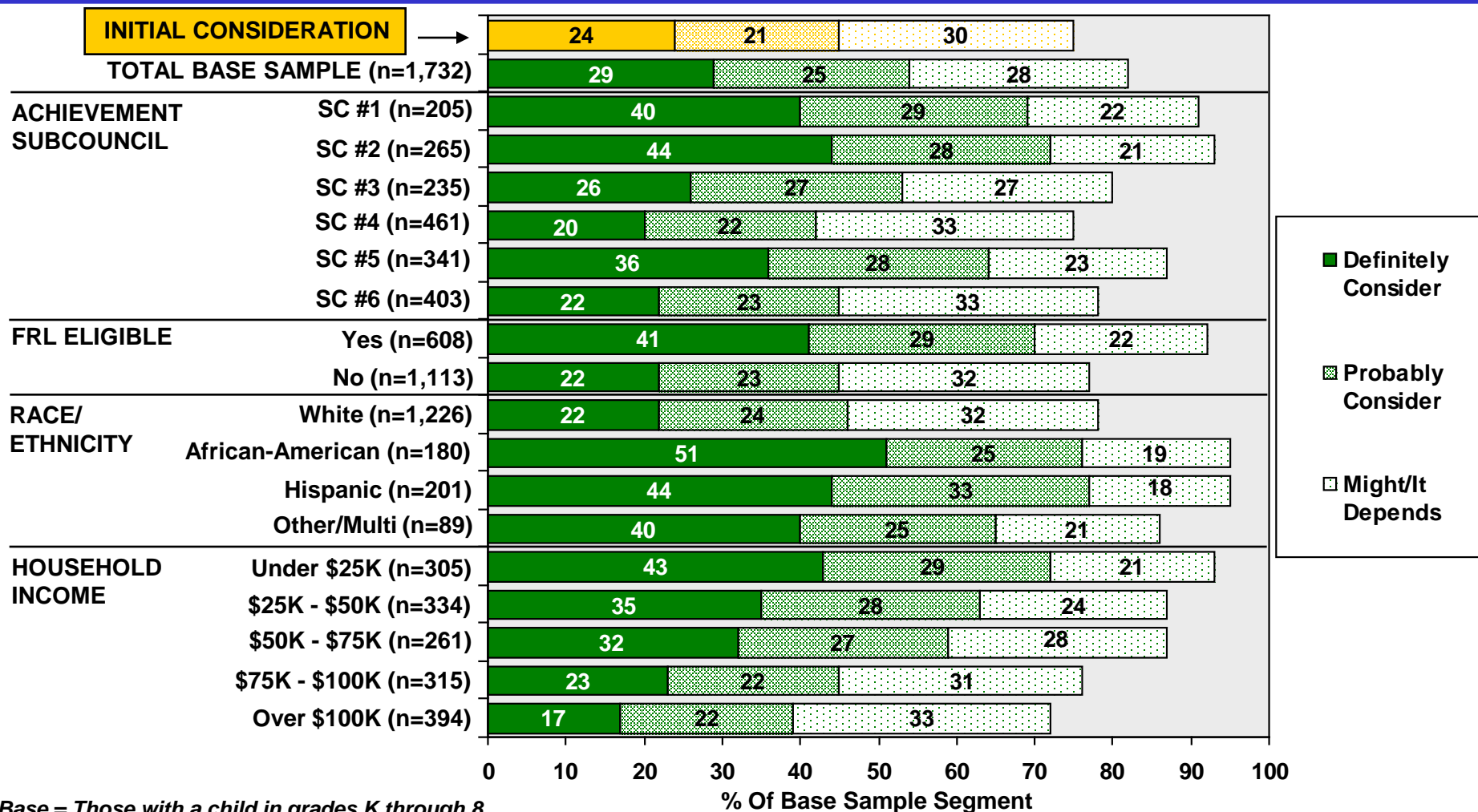
Figure 30



*Base = Those with a child in grades K through 5.
Distance from bar to 100% = Definitely/Probably not consider.
(Reference: Q18A)*

FINAL CONSIDERATION OF FOCUS SCHOOL FOR CHILD IN GRADES "6 THROUGH 8"

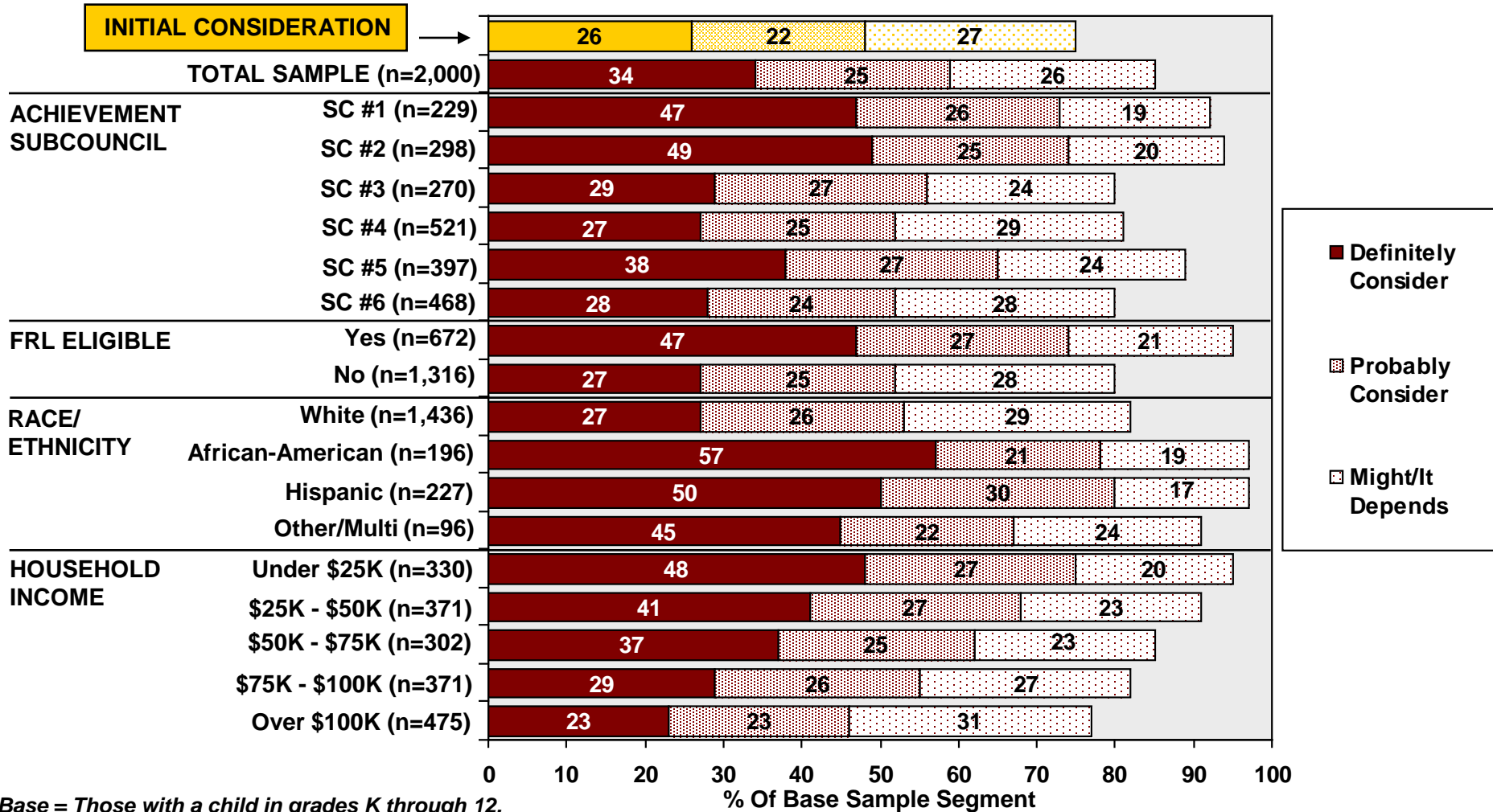
Figure 31



*Base = Those with a child in grades K through 8.
Distance from bar to 100% = Definitely/Probably not consider.
(Reference: Q18B)*

FINAL CONSIDERATION OF FOCUS SCHOOL FOR CHILD IN GRADES “9 THROUGH 12”

Figure 32



Base = Those with a child in grades K through 12.
 Distance from bar to 100% = Definitely/Probably not consider.
 (Reference: Q18C)

**APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

**Learning Community – Focus School Needs/Interest Study
(218) FINAL FOR FIELD**

**Wiese Research Associates, Inc.
October 26, 2010**

INTRODUCTION:

**(ASK FOR EITHER ADULT NAME ON LIST – IF NOT AVAILABLE,
ASK FOR BEST TIME TO REACH AND SET CALLBACK)**

(ONCE DESIRED RESPONDENT ON PHONE, SAY:)

Hello, my name is _____ with Wiese Research Associates, calling on behalf of the Learning Community and its 11 member school districts. As you may have heard, we are conducting a very important survey with a randomly selected sample of parents and guardians who have children attending public school in Douglas or Sarpy County. **(IF NECESSARY, SAY:)** The survey will take about 10-15 minutes depending on your responses.

(INSERT STANDARD INTRO SCREEN DISPOS)

XX (NO CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL) (THANK & TERMINATE)

SQ1. What is your zip code?

(OPEN-ENDED & VERIFY VIA READBACK)

SQ2. Zip Code **(FROM LIST)**

SQ3. School District **(FROM LIST)**

SQ4. Number of students **(FROM LIST)**

1. I'd like to start by just confirming the grade and school each of the students in your household attends.

(FOR EACH STUDENT ON LIST, SAY:)

Do you have a child in **(INSERT GRADE FROM LIST)?**

(IF NO, GO TO NEXT GRADE ON LIST)

Is this child at **(INSERT SCHOOL FROM LIST)?**

(IF NO, OR SCHOOL NOT ON LIST, ASK WHAT SCHOOL CHILD ATTENDS AND RECORD)

(STUDENT # 1:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 2:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 3:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 4:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 5:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 6:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 7:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 8:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 9:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 10:) Grade (K-12), School Name

2. Are there any OTHER students in your household in grades K through 12, counting those enrolled in public school, private school, or who may be home-schooled?
(OPEN-ENDED)

1 Yes --

2 No

3 **(REFUSED)**

2A. Can you give me the grades of these OTHER children, followed by the school they attend, one child at a time?

(RECORD GRADE AND SCHOOL FOR EACH)

(STUDENT # 1:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 2:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 3:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 4:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(STUDENT # 5:) Grade (K-12), School Name

(COUNTING BOTH Q1 AND Q2 – THANK & TERMINATE IF HOUSEHOLD HAS A 12TH GRADER ONLY – SAY:)

For this survey, we are only interviewing parents with students in grades K through 11, but thank you so much for your time – have a great day/evening!

3. In which school district do you live?
(OPEN-ENDED – READ IF NECESSARY)

- 1 Bellevue
- 2 Bennington
- 3 Douglas County West
- 4 Elkhorn
- 5 Gretna
- 6 Millard
- 7 Omaha Public Schools
- 8 Papillion-LaVista
- 9 Ralston
- 10 South Sarpy
- 11 Westside (District 66)
- 96 (OTHER – SPECIFY)
- 97 (REFUSED)
- 99 (DON'T KNOW)

4. How would you rate your overall familiarity with the Learning Community – which represents 11 school districts in Douglas and Sarpy County, and was formed to create a system for all districts to work together to promote socio-economic diversity and high achievement for all students, and to allocate resources so that every child has equal access to educational opportunities? Would you say you are

(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Very familiar
- 2 Somewhat familiar
- 3 Not that familiar but have heard of
- 4 Or, never heard of the Learning Community
- 5 (DON'T KNOW)

5. How would you rate your familiarity with plans to create a number of "focus schools" that would be open to ALL students in the 11 school districts? Would you say you are

(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Very familiar
- 2 Somewhat familiar
- 3 Not that familiar but have heard of
- 4 Or, never heard of Focus Schools
- 5 (DON'T KNOW)

6. Prior to this survey, were you aware that Focus Schools
(ROTATE A-C)

- A Are created to reduce isolation and encourage socio-economic diversity in schools
- B Offer specialized or unique curriculum and experiences for students not available in other schools, in addition to the core subjects
- C Make transportation available to students living more than a mile from the school building

- 1 Yes – Aware
- 2 No – Not aware
- 3 (DON'T KNOW)

7. And how important would you say each of the following is when deciding where to send your child(ren) to school, using a 1-to-10 rating scale where "1" equals NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and "10" equals EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

(ROTATE A-C)
(REPEAT SCALE AS NEEDED)

- A The socio-economic diversity of the students attending the school
- B Having specialized or unique curriculum and experiences for students not available in other schools, in addition to the core subjects
- C Transportation available for students living more than a mile from the school building

- 1 Not at all important
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Extremely important
- 11 (DON'T KNOW)

8. As you may know or have heard, every student wishing to attend a FOCUS school would apply to the school and students can come from any of the 11 school districts within the Learning Community. Focus schools offer specialized or unique curriculum in addition to the core subjects, have a socio and economically diverse student population, and transportation is provided for those living more than a mile from the school.

Assuming it specialized in or "focused" on an area of interest to you or them, how likely would you be to consider sending any of your children to a FOCUS SCHOOL when in grades

(INSERT A-C IF CHILD IN THAT GRADE LEVEL OR LOWER IN Q1-Q2)?

Would you...

(READ RESPONSES)

(SKIP "A" IF NO CHILD IN K-5)

A K through 5

(SKIP "B" IF NO CHILD IN K-8)

B 6 through 8

(ALWAYS ASK "C")

C 9 through 12

- 1 Definitely consider it
- 2 Probably consider
- 3 Might/It depends
- 4 Probably not
- 5 Or, definitely not consider it
- 6 **(NOT SURE)**

(ASK Q9 IF ANY Q8A-C = 1-2. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q10)

9. What makes you likely to consider a focus school for one or more of your children?

(OPEN-ENDED & PROBE FOR SPECIFICS) (RECORD DETAILS)

(ASK Q10 IF ANY Q8A-C = 3 OR 6. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q11)

10. What would your consideration of a focus school for one or more of your children depend on?

(OPEN-ENDED & PROBE FOR SPECIFICS) (RECORD DETAILS)

(ASK Q11 IF ANY Q8A-C = 4-5. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q12)

11. Why are you NOT likely to consider a focus school for one or more of your children?

(OPEN-ENDED & PROBE FOR SPECIFICS) (RECORD DETAILS)

(ASK Q12 IF ANY CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD IN GRADES K-6 FROM Q1-Q2. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q13)

12. Now, I'd like you to think specifically about any child in your household in grades KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 6TH GRADE. I'm going to describe some ACADEMIC AREAS or SUBJECTS that could be used to develop a "focus school" for elementary students.

Taking into account the interest of ANY student in your household in grades K through 6, or your potential interest for them, please rate the following subject areas on a scale from 1 to 10 with "1" being VERY LOW POTENTIAL INTEREST and "10" being VERY HIGH POTENTIAL INTEREST. The (first/next/last) one is

(ROTATE A-H)

(RE-READ THE FIRST COUPLE TIMES & THEN AS NEEDED:)

Using the 10-point scale, how would you rate your interest in that subject area for a focus school?

(REPEAT SCALE)

- A Science – including scientific inquiry through experimentation, field study, and interactive technology
- B Mathematics with engineering
- C Mathematics with finance and economics
- D World languages – where students are given the opportunity to study at least one world language other than English
- E Communication arts – includes writing and speaking skills supported by interactive media
- F Visual arts – includes drawing, painting, sculpture, and photography
- G Performing arts – includes dance, vocal, instrumental music, and drama
- H Global studies – includes the study of social, economic, political, and cultural relationships of people around the world

- 1 Very low potential interest
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Very high potential interest
- 11 **(DON'T KNOW)**

(ASK Q13 IF ANY CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD IN GRADES 4-11 FROM Q1-Q2. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q14)

13. Now, I'm going to describe some CAREER SPECIALTIES that could be offered in a focus school setting at the MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH or HIGH SCHOOL level. Taking into account the interest of ANY student in your household, or your potential interest for them, please rate the following career specialties on a scale from 1 to 10 with "1" being VERY LOW POTENTIAL INTEREST and "10" being VERY HIGH POTENTIAL INTEREST in a focus school that offered courses in that area.

The (first/next/last) one is

(ROTATE A-J)

(RE-READ THE FIRST COUPLE TIMES & THEN AS NEEDED:)

Using the 10-point scale, how would you rate your interest in a focus school that offered courses in that area?

(REPEAT SCALE)

A ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES – includes renewable and natural resources, conservation, and renewable energy

B BUSINESS, MARKETING & MANAGEMENT – includes the areas of marketing, sales, finance, insurance, business management and administration

C HOSPITALITY & TOURISM – includes restaurants, other food services, lodging, attractions, sports and recreation events, and travel-related services

D HEALTH SCIENCES – includes medical and therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health information science, support services, and biotechnology research and development

E HUMAN SERVICES & RESOURCES – includes law, public safety, family and social services, government, public administration, education, and teaching

F ARTS, A-V TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS – includes designing, producing, performing, writing, and publishing multimedia content including visual and performing arts, journalism, and entertainment services

G INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & COMPUTER SCIENCE – includes the design, development, support and management of hardware, software, multimedia, and information systems

H MANUFACTURING & TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS – includes the processing of materials into products, warehousing, and the transportation of people, materials, and goods

I SCIENCE/ TECHNOLOGY/ ENGINEERING/ MATHEMATICS – includes scientific research and professional and technical services related to physical science, social science, and engineering, as well as laboratory and testing services, research and development

J ARCHITECTURE/ CONSTRUCTION & SPECIALTY TRADES – includes designing, constructing, and maintaining the built environment (i.e., buildings, surroundings, etc.)

1 Very low potential interest

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10 Very high potential interest

11 **(DON'T KNOW)**

14. With any focus school, there are a number of different instructional methods or programs that could potentially be used or offered. For each of the following, please tell me if the use of that method or program would cause you to be MORE LIKELY to consider a focus school, LESS LIKELY to consider a focus school, or would that NOT REALLY MATTER one way or the other.

The (first/next/last) one is

(ROTATE A-O)

Would that make you

(READ RESPONSES THE FIRST FEW TIMES – THEN AS NEEDED AFTER EACH ITEM)

A Montessori program – which is a student-centered, individualized instructional method taught in multi-age classrooms, with a hands-on exploratory approach to learning

B International Baccalaureate– which is a high quality international program that develops the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills to live, learn and work in a changing world

C Career Academies – where students study a specific career field, have work place experiences, and are prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation or go on to post-secondary education

D Core Knowledge – where students learn in a structured, teacher-directed setting with pre-determined lessons and clearly defined measures of achievement

E Single gender SCHOOLS (all-girls school or all-boys school)

F At the high school level, would offer training, internships, and/or employment opportunities

G At the high school level, would have the opportunity to earn TRADE SCHOOL credit

H At the high school level, would have the opportunity to earn COLLEGE credit

I Providing hands-on learning experiences where students learn through work, play, and other life experiences

J Project-based learning, meaning students work on real problems and see the connections between classroom activities and the world in which they live

K Offering the opportunity to go on trips where students learn by visiting places related to their studies

L Team-based learning, meaning students work with others in a small group to develop skills that maximize their own and each other's learning by working together

M Involvement and support from local businesses and professional mentors to give students "hands on" learning opportunities

N Dual language – where students would be taught in two languages throughout the day, usually including English and another language such as Chinese, French, or Spanish

O Single gender school PROGRAMS, where classes at a school would be offered for all-girls or all-boys

1 More likely to consider a focus school

2 Less likely to consider a focus school

3 Or, does that not really matter one way or the other

4 **(DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE)**

15. Now, using a scale of 1 to 10 with "1" being NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT and "10" being EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, please rate how important each of the following would be in your decision whether or not to consider sending your child (any of your children) to a "focus" school that you were potentially interested in.

First/next, how important is

(ROTATE A-K)

(RE-READ THE FIRST COUPLE TIMES & THEN AS NEEDED:)

Using the 10-point scale, how important would that be in your decision whether or not to consider a focus school?

(REPEAT SCALE)

A Having smaller class sizes

B Having a pathway where the student can continue with the focus subject or curriculum all the way through high school

C Having a diverse student population

D School being located close to your home

E Free transportation provided

F Special resources available for students needing extra help academically

G Programs available for talented and gifted students

H If not close to home – how far away and/or where the school is located

I Before school and/or after school care being available

J Your child being able to attend the same school as their friends

K The specific career path or subject area of focus offered by the school

- 1 Not at all important
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Extremely important
- 11 **(DON'T KNOW)**

16. What other considerations, if any, would be important to you in deciding whether or not to enroll a child in a focus school?
(OPEN-ENDED & PROBE FOR SPECIFICS) (RECORD DETAILS)

17. As I mentioned earlier, if you did decide to send your student to a focus school, transportation would be provided for students living more than a mile from the school, if needed. Assuming it was the very best school for your student, what would be the LONGEST amount of time you would want your child on the bus, ONE-WAY between your home and the school, when they are in...
(INSERT A-C IF CHILD IN THAT GRADE LEVEL OR LOWER IN Q1-Q2)?
(OPEN-ENDED & RECORD TIME IN MINUTES – ENTER “99” IF “DON’T KNOW”)

- A Elementary school (grades K-5)
- B Middle school or junior high (grades 6-8)
- C High school (grades 9-12)

18. Now that you have heard a little more about what a focus school might offer...Assuming it specialized in or “focused” on an area of interest to you or them, how likely would you be to consider sending any of your children to a FOCUS SCHOOL when in grades
(INSERT A-C IF CHILD IN THAT GRADE LEVEL OR LOWER IN Q1-Q2)?
Would you...
(READ RESPONSES)

- (SKIP “A” IF NO CHILD IN K-5)**
- A K through 5
- (SKIP “B” IF NO CHILD IN K-8)**
- B 6 through 8
- (ALWAYS ASK “C”)**
- C 9 through 12

- 1 Definitely consider it
- 2 Probably consider
- 3 Might/It depends
- 4 Probably not
- 5 Or, definitely not consider it
- 6 **(NOT SURE)**

19. What questions or suggestions do you have about focus schools that might help the Learning Community and school districts as they work to develop these types of schools in the future?
(OPEN-ENDED & PROBE FOR SPECIFICS) (RECORD DETAILS)

Now I just have a few final questions for classification purposes only.

20. How long have you lived in the Greater Omaha area?
(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Less than 1 year
- 2 1 to less than 5 years
- 3 5 to less than 10 years
- 4 10 to 20 years
- 5 Or, over 20 years
- 6 **(REFUSED)**

21. Including yourself, how many adults live in your household?
(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 One
- 2 Two
- 3 Three
- 96 **(OTHER – SPECIFY:)**
- 97 **(REFUSED)**

22. And how many PRE-SCHOOL-age or YOUNGER children are in your household?

(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 One
- 2 Two
- 3 Three
- 4 Four
- 5 Five

96 **(OTHER – SPECIFY:)**

97 **(REFUSED)**

98 **(NONE)**

23. What is the highest level of education you personally have had the opportunity to complete?

(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 Some high school or less
- 2 High school graduate
- 3 Trade/Technical or vocational school
- 4 Some college
- 5 College graduate
- 6 Post graduate degree
- 7 **(REFUSED)**

24. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 **(REFUSED)**

24A. And is your race?

(READ RESPONSES)

- 1 White
- 2 Black or African American
- 3 Asian
- 4 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 5 American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 6 Or, some other race **(SPECIFY:)**
- 7 **(MULTI-RACIAL)**
- 8 **(REFUSED)**

25. Are any of the students in your household eligible for free or reduced (price) lunch?

(OPEN-ENDED)

- 1 Yes (eligible for free or reduced lunch)
- 2 No
- 3 **(REFUSED)**

26. Considering all wage earners in your household, is your total household income before taxes under or over \$50,000 a year?

(OPEN-ENDED)

(IF UNDER, ASK:) Under or over \$25,000?

(IF OVER, ASK:) Under or over \$75,000?

(IF STILL OVER, ASK:) Under or over \$100,000?

- 1 Under \$25,000
- 2 \$25,000 - \$49,999
- 3 \$50,000 - \$74,999
- 4 \$75,000 - \$100,000
- 5 Over \$100,000
- 6 **(REFUSED)**

Thank you so much for your time and opinions – they will be very helpful.

(RECORD/CONFIRM NAME AND PHONE #)

RECORD ONLY - DO NOT ASK

27. Gender

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

28. School District (FROM LIST)

- 1 Bellevue
- 2 Bennington
- 3 Douglas County West
- 4 Elkhorn
- 5 Gretna
- 6 Millard
- 7 Omaha Public Schools
- 8 Papillion-LaVista
- 9 Ralston
- 10 South Sarpy
- 11 Westside (District 66)

29. Ethnicity (FROM LIST)

- 1 Hispanic/Latino
- 2 American Indian/Alaska Native
- 3 Asian
- 4 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 5 Black/African American
- 6 White
- 7 Multi-racial

30. FRL (FROM LIST)

- 1 Eligible For Free Meals
- 2 Eligible For Reduced Price Meals
- 3 Not Eligible

31. Current ELL (FROM LIST):

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

32. Study Phase:

- 1 Random
- 2 Supplemental (Booster)