

A Student-Focused Schedule: Trimester Model

Meramec Valley R-III
School District



Introductions

- Dr. Carrie Schwierjohn, Superintendent
- Mr. Tom Sauvage, Assistant Superintendent
- Dr. Ketina Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent



Presentation Outline

- District Overview & Secondary Reimagined Process
- Scheduling Options: Choosing Trimesters
- Trimester Characteristics & Considerations
- Checking In & Challenges
- Results
- Questions

Meramec Valley R-III School District

- **Enrollment:** PreK-12th grades- 3,000 students
- **Staff:** 490 staff
- **Location:** 35 miles to downtown St. Louis
- **Schools:** 1 PreK, 5 Elementary, 1 Intermediate, 1 Middle, and 1 High School
- **Assessed Valuation:** \$414,519,763
- **Tax Rate:** \$4.18 (including debt service)

Secondary Reimagined Process

- BOE recognized need for input on future planning & programming
- Engaged stakeholders:
 - Site visits
 - Focus groups
 - Student for a Day Experiences
 - Surveys (parent, student, & staff)

Secondary Reimagined Goal: Scheduling

Committee Recommendation:

Create a consistent and student focused schedule that allows for choice and supports for all students

- Consistent schedules between middle & high school- to help with transitions and consistency
- A schedule focused on student choice, flexibility, and time built into the day for clubs, extra academic support, interventions, and SEL support
- Schedules that are student centered & matches our district needs and offerings
- Having options for interventions or everyday options
- Exploring hybrid options to block

Scheduling Options Explored

- **7 minus 1 Schedule:**
 - 145 contact days, 50 minutes per day: **7,250** instructional minutes
 - Once every 7 days a class is rotated off schedule
- **Modified Block with 2 days of Block Schedule:**
 - Mon., Tues., Fri.-Classes meet for 50 minutes
 - Wed. & Thurs.- Block format with 90-minute classes
 - 137 contact days, 50-90 minute variations: **8,130** instructional minutes
- **Traditional Block Schedule:**
 - Every other day rotation
 - 90 minute periods, 84 contact days: **7,560** instructional minutes
- **Trimester Schedule:**
 - Classes meet every day
 - 70 minute periods, 112 contact days: **7,840** instructional minutes

Process for Selection

Staff Input & Research

- Staff meetings with both secondary school staff
- Zoom meetings with Wisconsin, Indiana, and Seattle Washington schools using trimesters
- Meeting with speciality courses:
 - Band/ Choir
 - AP & Dual Credit
 - Yearbook, and other year long courses
- Final staff survey & presentation to the board of education

Trimesters

Critical Deciding Factors:

- A focus on fewer courses at a time for our students
- Teachers able to focus on a smaller set of students at a time
- Benefit of building relationships and supports with daily student-teacher connections with few courses of focus
- Students able to retake part of a course in the same year
- Ability to build in daily student support & intervention block
- Ability to build in flexible Power Lunch for additional SEL time, clubs, & interventions

Trimesters

Sample:

1 st period	7:30-8:40
2 nd period	8:45-9:55
3 rd period	10:00-11:10
Power Lunch	11:10-12:10
4 th period	12:10-1:20
5 th period	1:25-2:35

- The school year is divided into trimesters, each consisting of: 56/58/56 days. The reason for the longer 2nd trimester is the expectation of snow days during that time.
- The school day would consist of five, 70-minute class periods with students taking only five classes at a time.
- One trimester course will equal a half credit and two trimesters will equal a full credit.

Updated Calendar

Trimester 1- FALL: Aug. 23-Nov. 10

Trimester 2- WINTER: Nov. 14-Feb. 24

Trimester 3- SPRING: Feb. 28-May 25

All grades PreK-12th switched to the trimester calendar & grade reporting

From Idea to Implementation

- School Calendar Changes
- Parent Meetings
- Staff Department Meetings- with guided/leading questions
 - Considering pacing changes, assessment schedules, collaboration on concerns & ideas
- Master Schedule Changes
- Early scheduling key- so that families and students could have a copy of schedule prior to the last day of school (the prior year)

Sample Middle School Student Schedule

1st Period: 7:30-8:40

2nd Period: 8:45-9:55

3rd Period: 10:00-11:10

LUNCH: 11:10-11:40

TRIBE TIME: 11:40-12:10

4th Period: 12:10-1:20

5th Period: 1:25-2:35

	Fall	Winter	Spring
Period 1	8th Language Arts A	8th Language Arts B	Computer Software
Period 2	8th Math A	PE B	8th Math B
Period 3	3D Art	8th Science A	8th Science B
Period 4	8th Social Studies A	8th Social Studies B	Flight & Space
Period 5	PE A	FACS	Ukulele
Total Credits	2.5 Credits	2.5 Credits	2.5 Credits
	7.5 Credits for the year		

What is Tribe Time?

30 minute period in the middle of each day to:

- Students have choices on how to spend their time:
 - Study time
 - Get help from teachers
 - Lunch
 - Club meeting
 - Character Education
 - Decompress
- There will be occasional requirements for students:
 - Meet with counselors
 - Homework recovery
 - Class meetings
- The focus is giving students an opportunity to explore effective time management and give them more control over their day

Sample High School Student Schedule

1st Period: 7:30-8:40

2nd Period: 8:45-9:55

3rd Period: 10:00-11:10

POWER LUNCH: 11:10-12:10

4th Period: 12:10-1:20

5th Period: 1:25-2:35

	Fall	Winter	Spring
Period 1	English 11A	English 11B	Health
Period 2	Algebra 2 A	PE 2	Algebra 2 B
Period 3	Spanish 2A	Chemistry A	Chemistry B
Period 4	US History A	US History B	Spanish 2B
Period 5	Band	Band	Band
Total Credits	2.5 Credits	2.5 Credits	2.5 Credits
	7.5 Credits for the year		

What is Power Lunch?

60 minute period in the middle of each day to:

- Students have choices on how to spend their time:
 - Study time
 - Get help from teachers
 - Lunch
 - Club meeting
 - Test make-ups
 - Decompress
- There will be occasional requirements for students:
 - Meet with counselors
 - Homework recovery
 - Class meetings
 - Scheduling, SEL, etc.
- The focus is giving students an opportunity to explore effective time management and give them even more control over their day

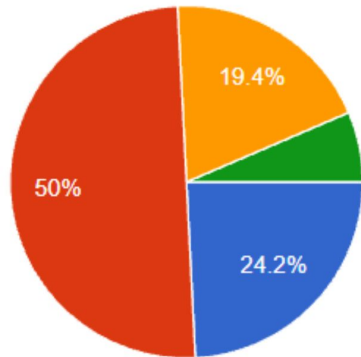
Measurable Goals

- Improve on-time graduation rate
- Decrease number of failing grades & increase GPA
- Increase attendance
- Improve achievement scores
- More graduates with completed college credits
- Intangible benefits:
 - Better home & school balance
 - Social emotional health and well-being focus
 - Student teacher relationships and school connectedness
(clubs during day and seeing fewer teachers daily)

Results

Pulse checks early & frequently to problem solve as needed October 2021:

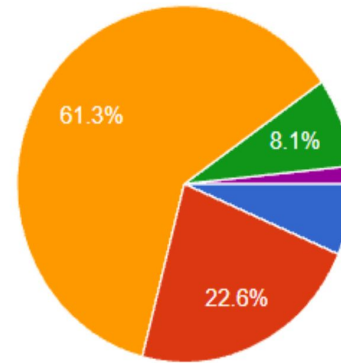
Are you on pace with curriculum to complete your required content at the end of Trimester 1?



● Strongly Agree
● Agree
● Neutral
● Disagree
● Strongly Disagree

93.8% Rated this a Neutral-Strongly Agree (all but 4 teachers)

Students retention of the content is higher due to the trimester schedule.



● Strongly agree
● Agree
● Neutral
● Disagree
● Strongly disagree

90.4% Neutral-Strongly Agree (all but 6 teachers)

Qualitative Positives Identified by Staff Survey:

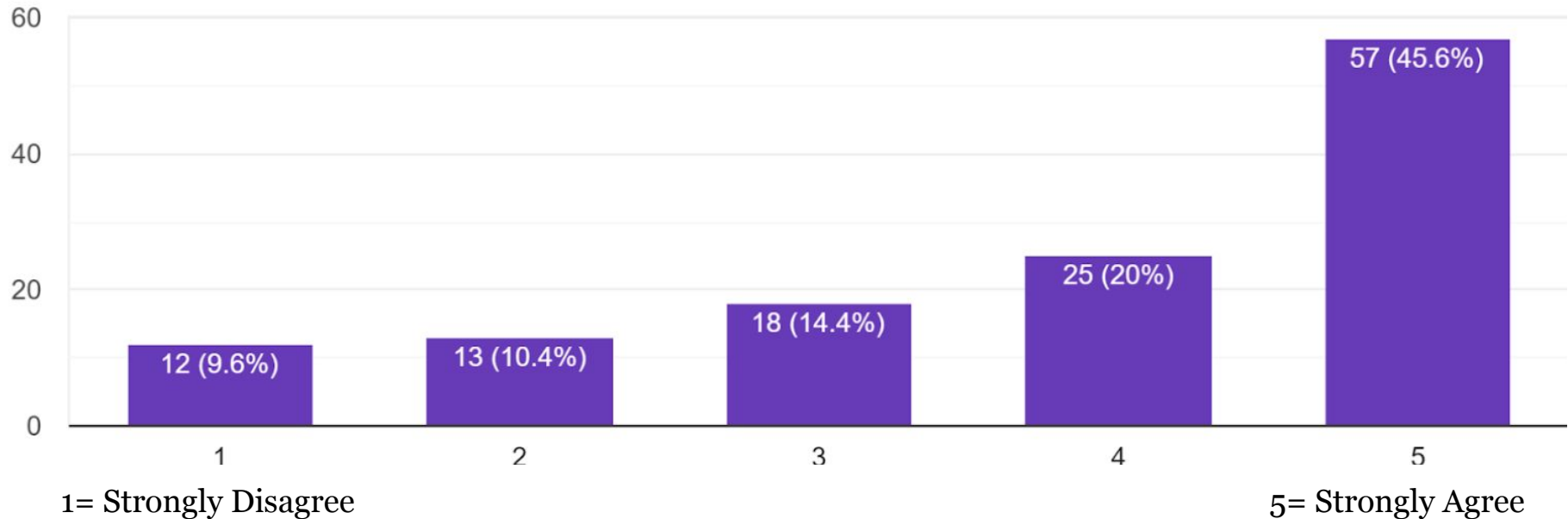
- Don't feel rushed with students in class, better relationships with students.
- Teachers are able to have a plan period every day, which greatly helps in prepping for classes.
- Seeing the students daily and an actual uninterrupted plan period every day; more time daily with students & seeing kids every day seems to help them academically.
- Students are retaining more, we are getting through material much quicker; time to teach content.
- Days seem to fly by. Getting to know students better.
- Less classes means I can focus and give better feedback to the students I have currently.
- I enjoy seeing the kids everyday and getting to know them faster. I have also learned their strengths and weaknesses a lot faster because I don't have as many students to deal with at once.

Items Staff Identified to Problem-Solve

- Classes length and pace is taking time to get used to. We are actually getting deeper into concepts by meeting every day.
- Getting kids to give up Power Lunch and come retake a test or get help is VERY difficult.
- Some kids have a lot of their core classes first trimester, which makes getting their homework done difficult.
- Since students are attending each class every day (instead of every other day), they have less time to complete any homework that is assigned and get behind faster when they are absent/quarantined.

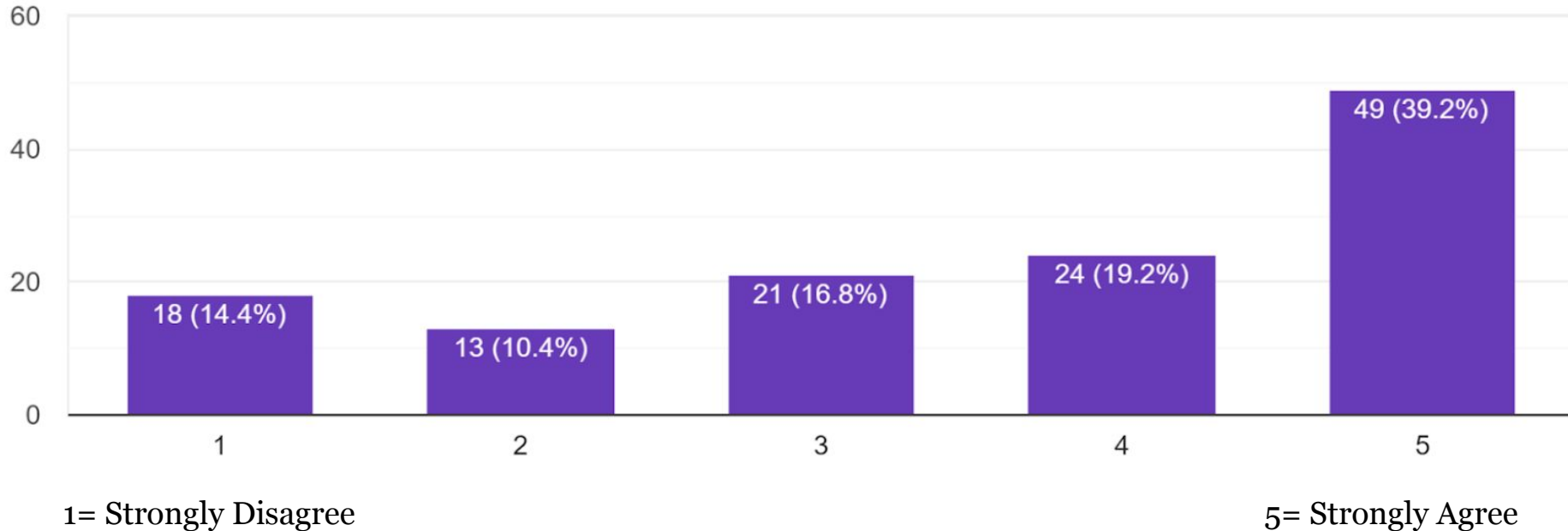
Final Results: Student Survey

Was your coursework load more manageable as a result of trimesters, being able to focus on 5 classes, rather than 7 classes?



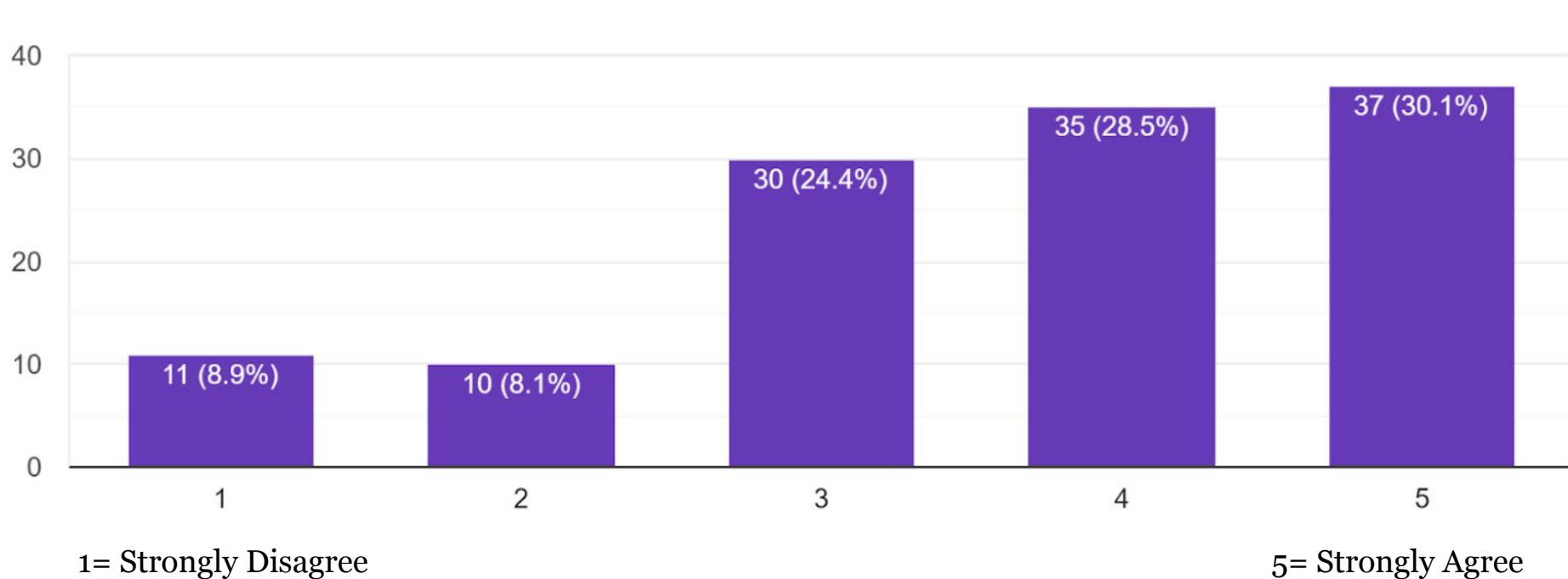
Final Results: Student Survey

Do you feel less stress with fewer courses to manage at once?



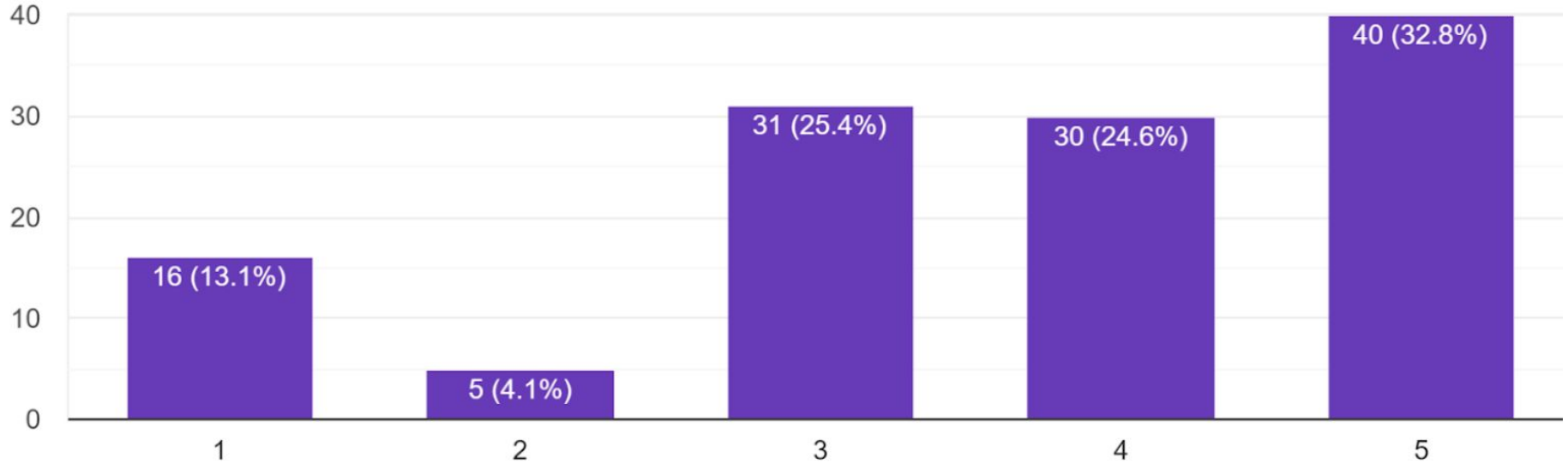
Final Results: Student Survey

Do you feel more connected with your teachers as a result of only having 5 teachers to interact with, instead of 7?



Final Results: Student Survey

Does trimester scheduling meet your course selection needs?



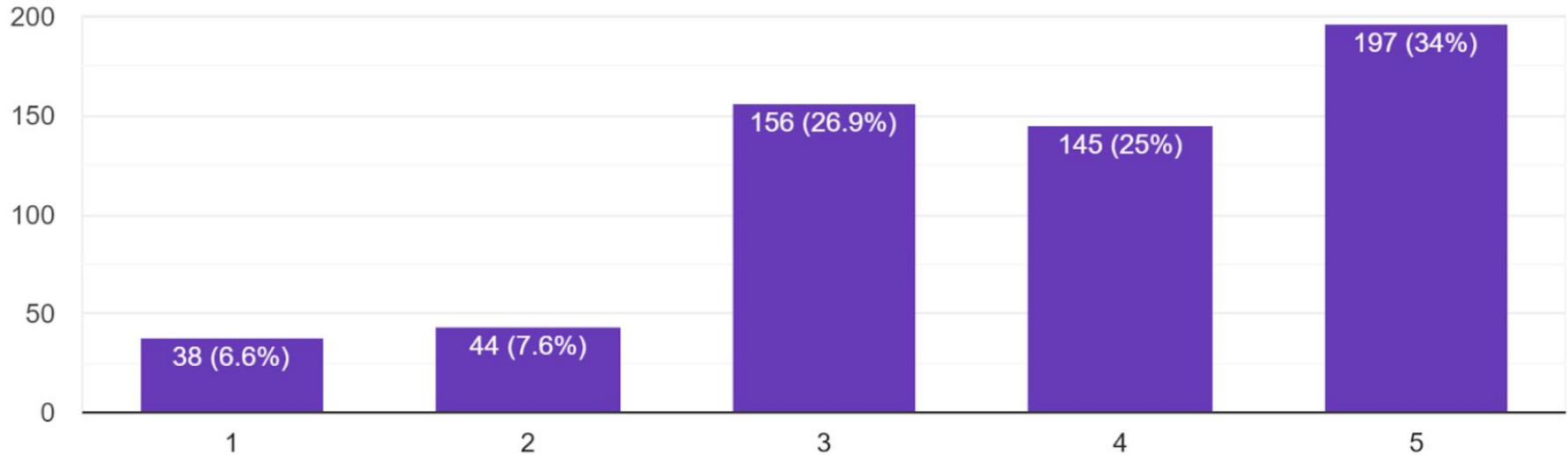
1= Strongly Disagree

5= Strongly Agree

Final Results: Parent Survey

Do you feel your child(ren) was more connected with their teachers as a result of only having 5 teachers to interact with per trimester, instead of 7 teachers per semester?

580 responses



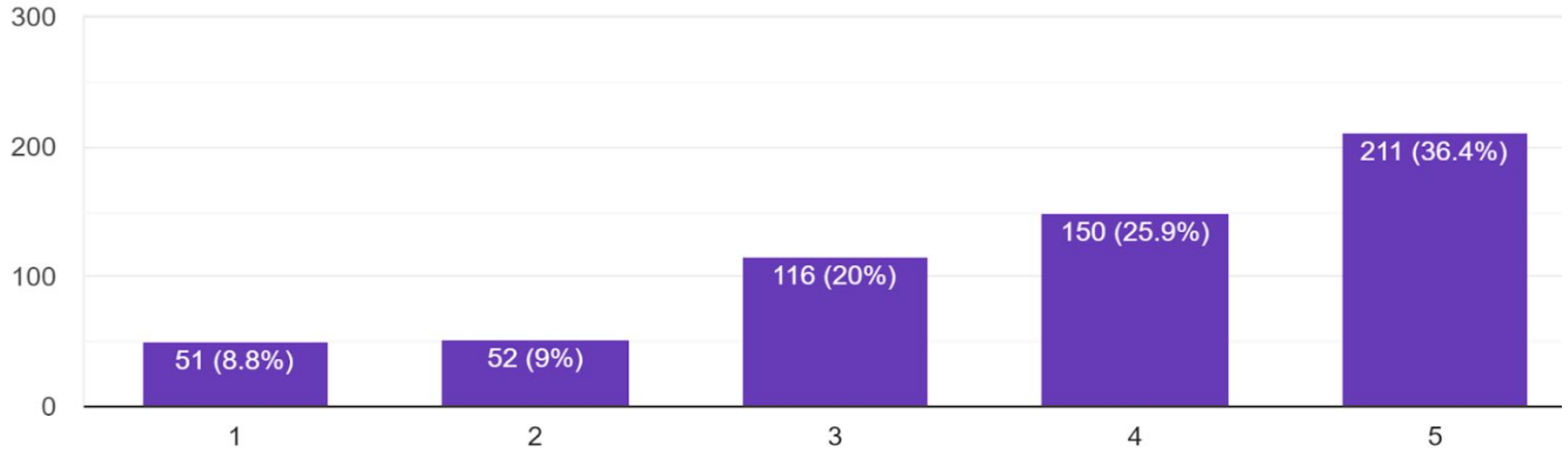
1= Strongly Disagree

5= Strongly Agree

Final Results: Parent Survey

Did your child(ren) feel less stress this year as a result of only having 5 classes to manage per trimester, instead of the traditional 7 courses?

580 responses



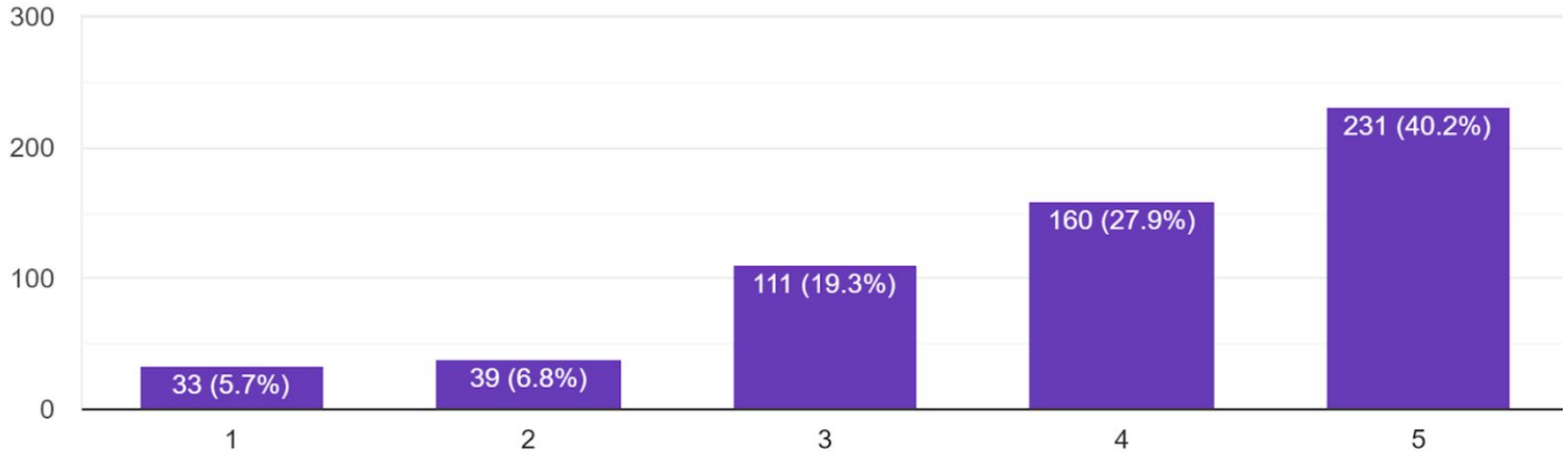
1= Strongly Disagree

5= Strongly Agree

Final Results: Parent Survey

Was your child(ren)'s coursework load more manageable as a result of trimesters, being able to focus on 5 classes, rather than 7 classes?

574 responses

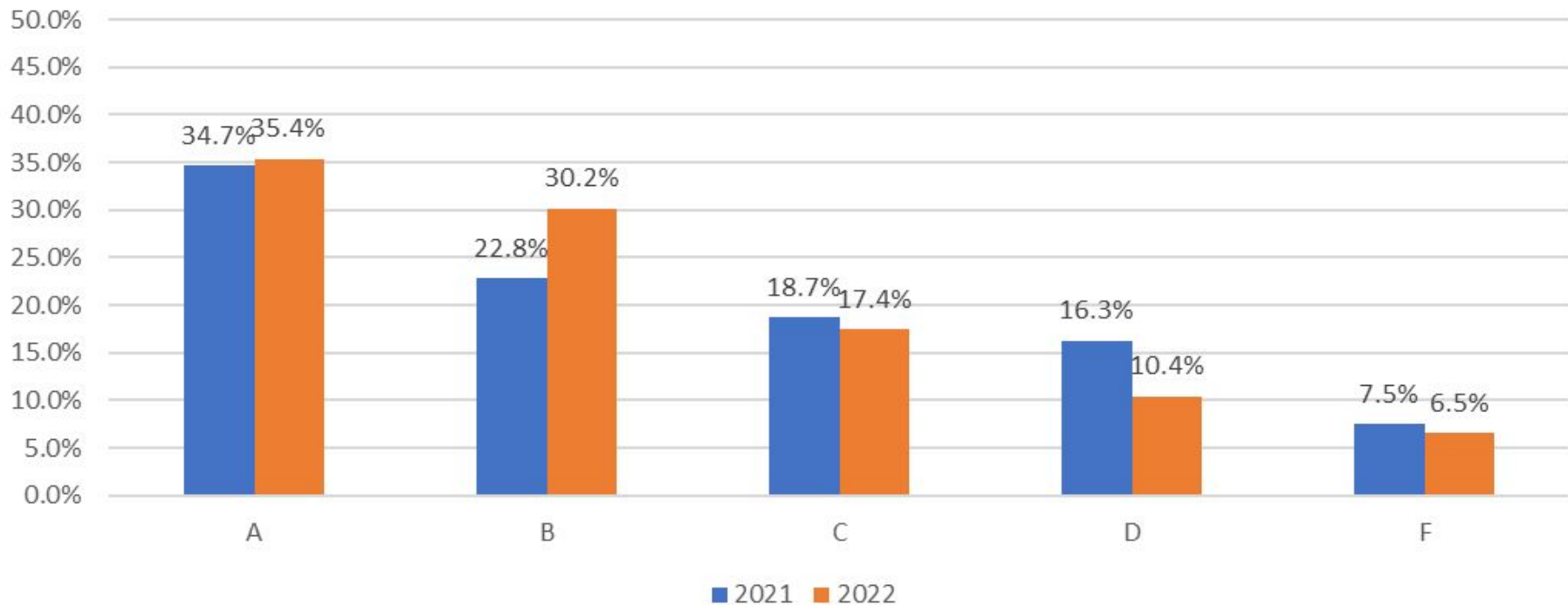


1= Strongly Disagree

5= Strongly Agree

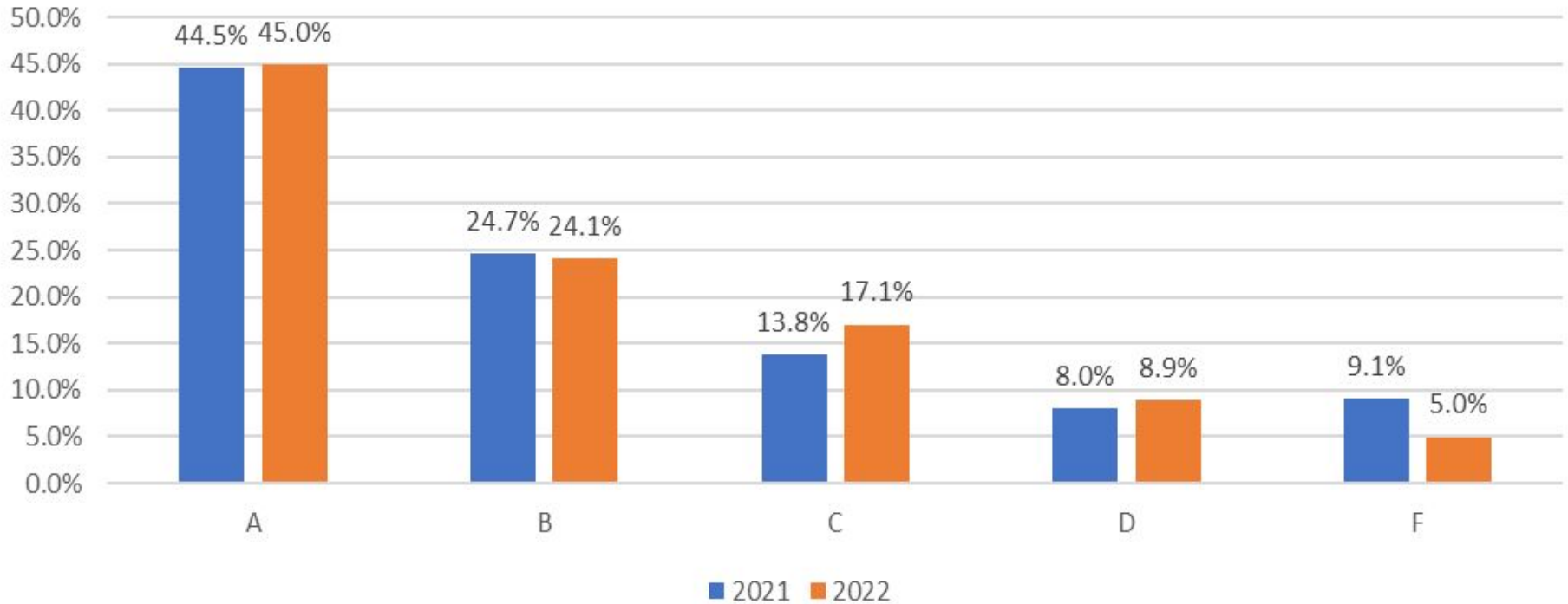
Grade Distribution

7th Grade 2021 vs. 2022 Spring Semester



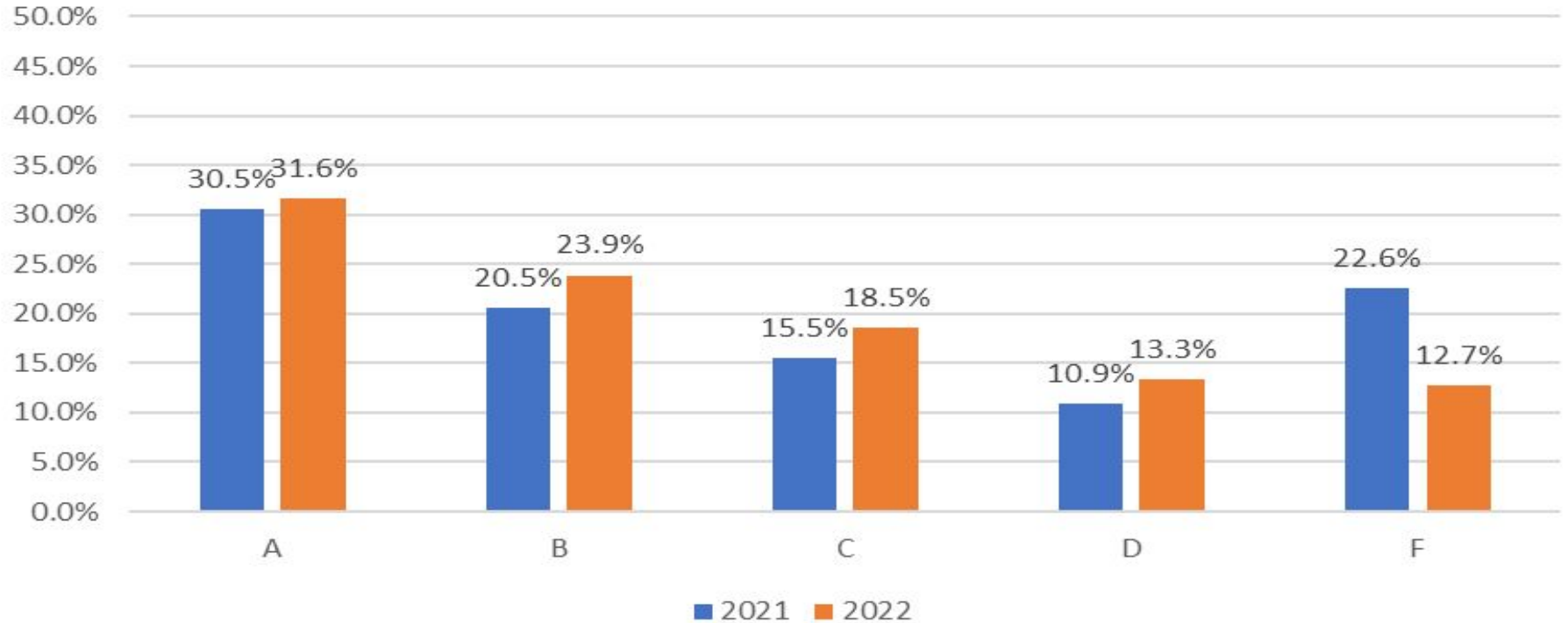
Grade Distribution

8th Grade 2021 vs. 2022 Spring Semester



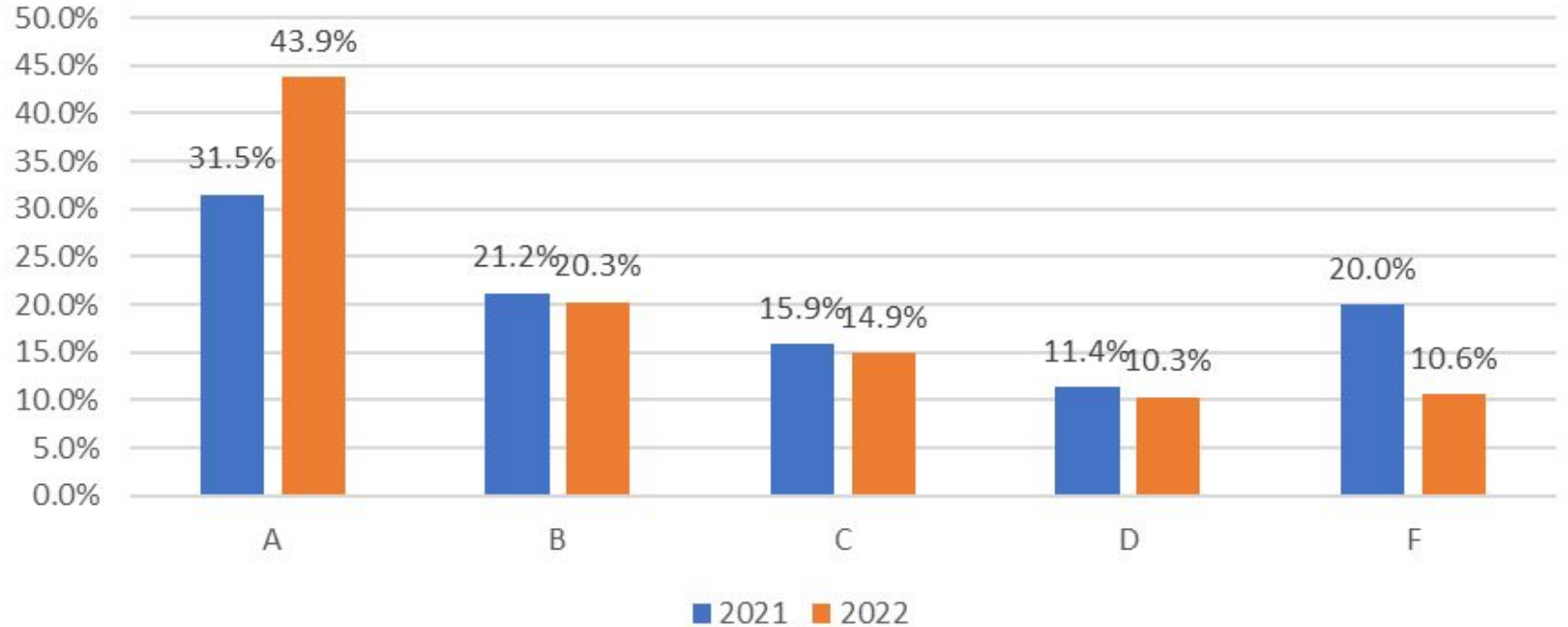
Grade Distribution

9th Grade Spring Semester 2021 vs. 2022



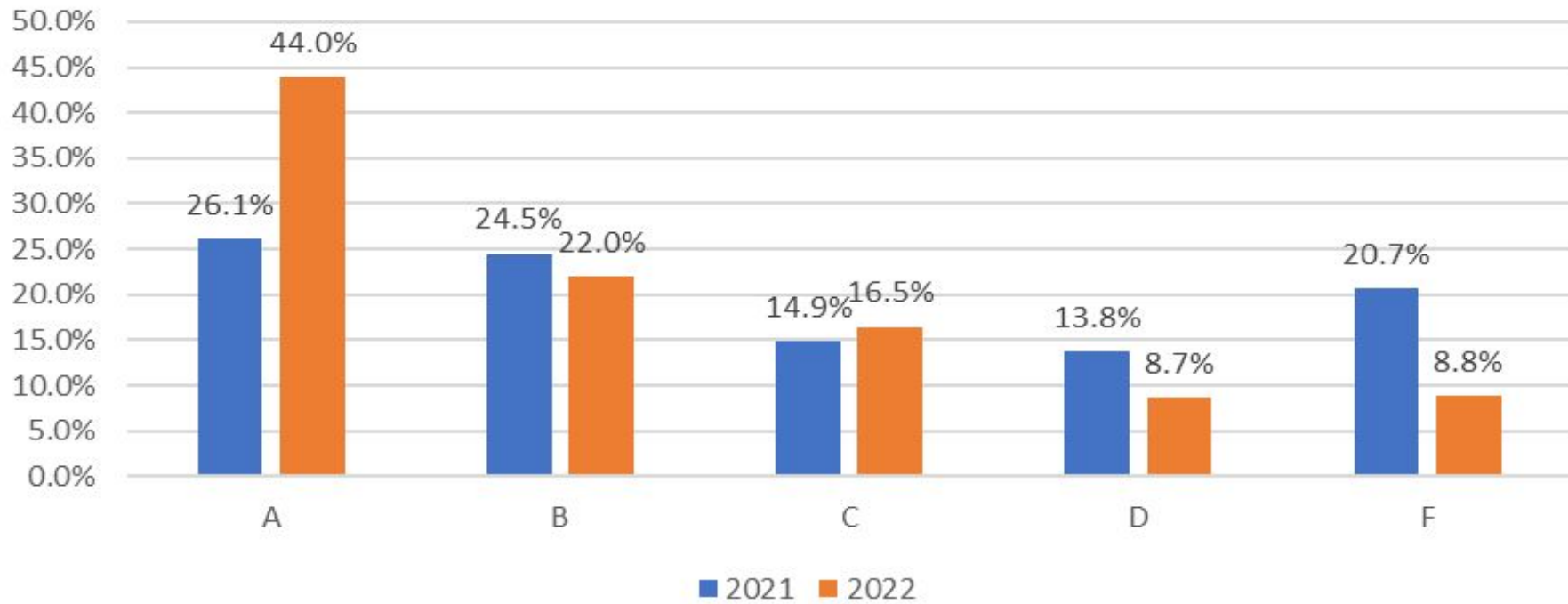
Grade Distribution

10th Grade Spring Semester 2021 vs. 2022

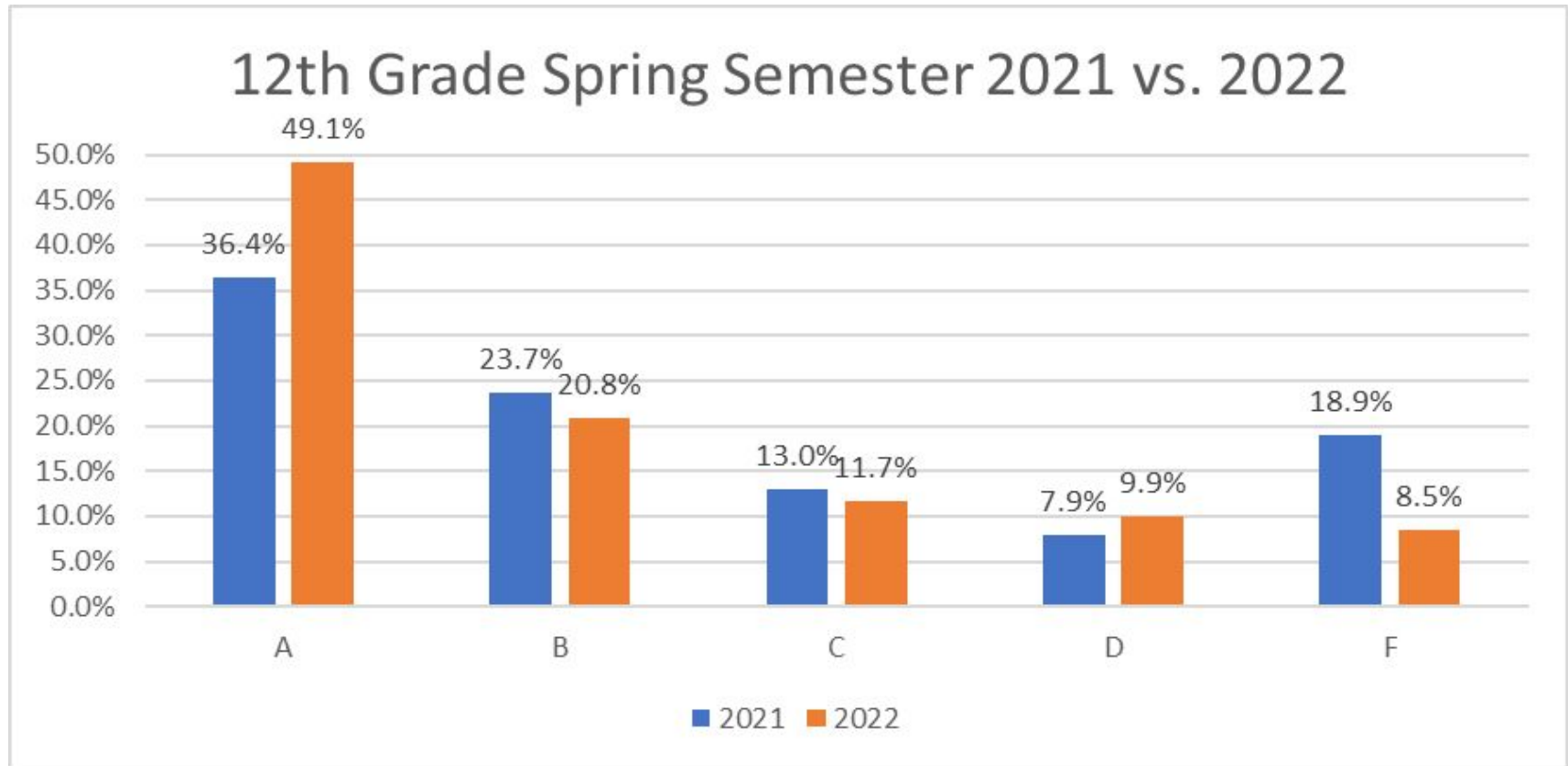


Grade Distribution

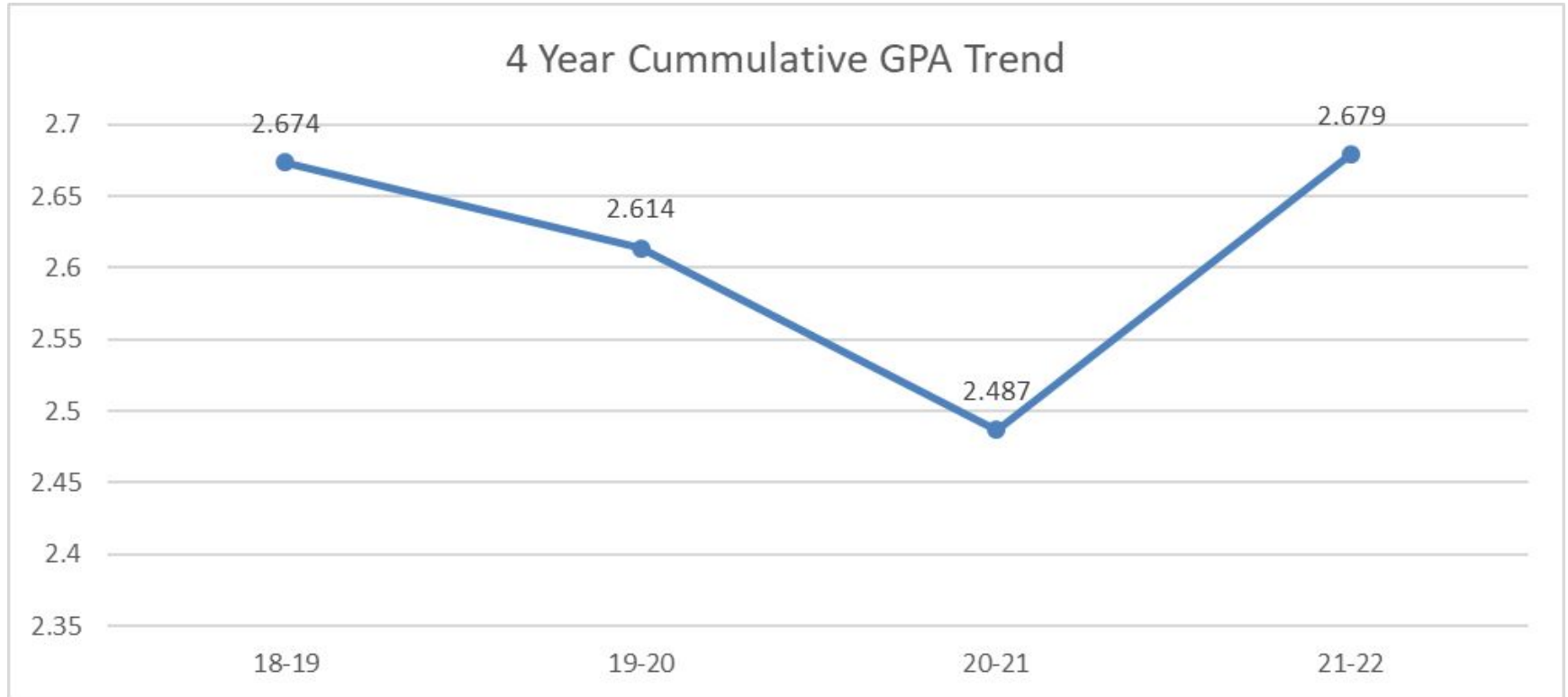
11th Grade Spring Semester 2021 vs. 2022



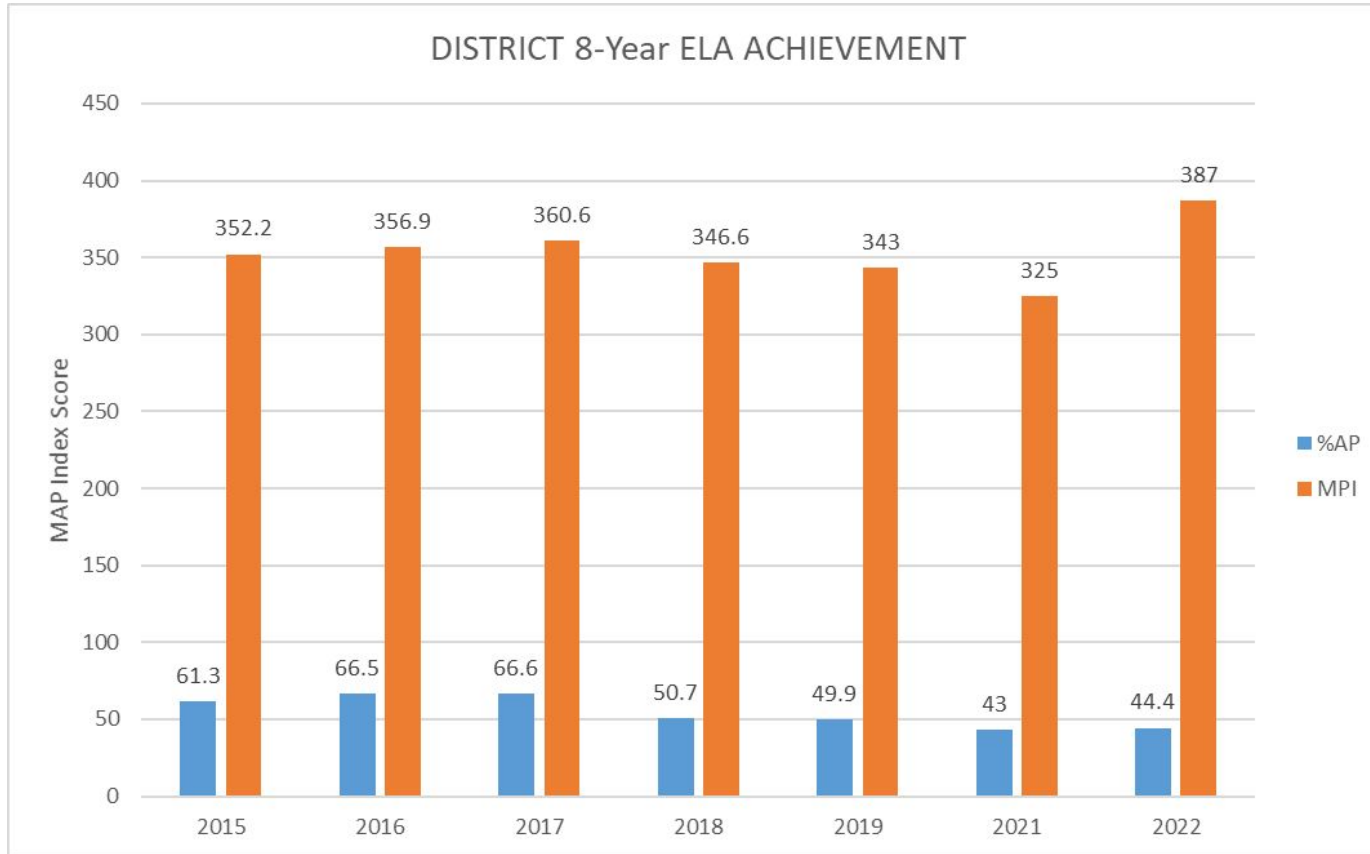
Grade Distribution



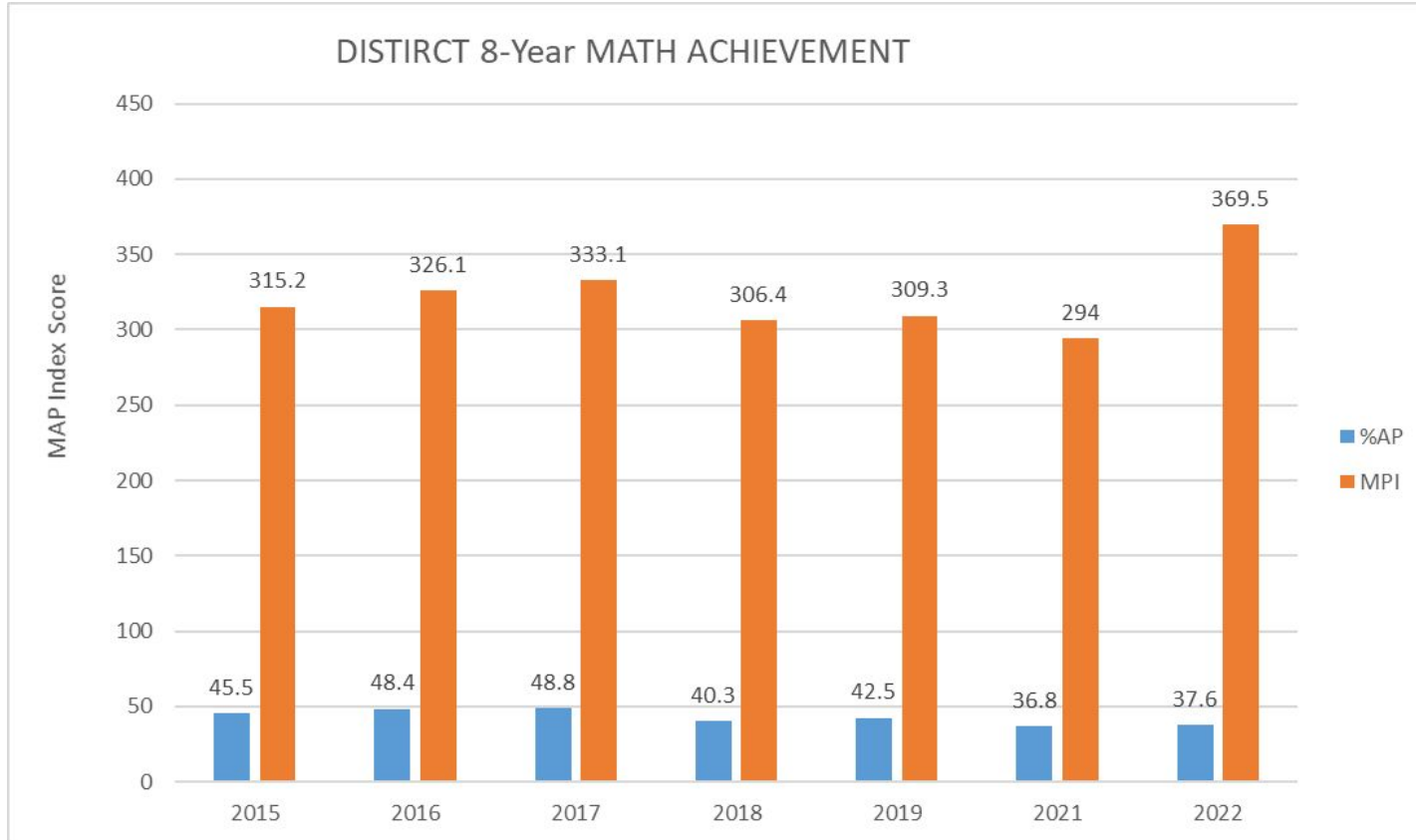
4 Year GPA Trend



State Achievement Trends



State Achievement Trends



Final Student Focus Group Results

- At the beginning, I think the teachers were easing into the idea of shorter classes, so they were giving more work, but then they got used to it.
- Sometimes it feels rushed meeting everyday, it has taken some getting used to.
- With Power Lunch (9-12) and Tribe Time (7-8) I have more time to get some of my homework done.
- I have less stress with homework each day- when I used my time well.
- I have fewer classes to manage at a time, so it is definitely less anxiety and stress.
- I am able to go to clubs now because of Power Lunch.
- I have down time in the day to relax and ability to ask a teacher for help.

»→ **MVR-III Mission:** »→

*Together We Make A Difference In
Doing What's Best For Kids!*

Questions ?

