

Legislative Report

Virtual Schools in Iowa Annual Report



January 15, 2018

State of Iowa
Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
400 E. 14th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

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OVERVIEW

I. CURRENT ENROLLMENT - SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018

Iowa Code Limits the statewide enrollment of pupils in educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet to not more than eighteen one-hundredths of one percent of the statewide enrollment of all pupils. Limits do not apply if the limit would prevent siblings from attending the same school or if the sending district has determined that the educational needs of a "physically or emotionally fragile" student would be best served in the online environment.

Adopt rules that limit the statewide enrollment of pupils in educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet to not more than eighteen one-hundredths of one percent of the statewide enrollment of all pupils, and that limit the number of pupils participating in open enrollment for purposes of receiving educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet to no more than one percent of a sending district's enrollment. Such limitations shall not apply if the limitations would prevent siblings from enrolling in the same school district or if a sending district determines that the educational needs of a physically or emotionally fragile student would be best served by educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet. Students who meet the requirements of section 282.18 may participate in open enrollment under this paragraph "c" for purposes of enrolling only in the CAM community school district or the Clayton Ridge community school district.

When enforcing the enrollment cap, priority must be given to students who have been victims of bullying and harassment.

Iowa Code – 281-15.8(256) Prohibition regarding open enrollment. Open enrollment of students to a school district that offers online coursework is limited to open enrollment to the receiving school districts of Cumberland-Anita-Massena (CAM) and Clayton Ridge, pursuant to Iowa Code section 256.7(32)"c" as amended by 2015 Iowa Acts, Senate File 510, section 99. In implementing any numerical limitation required by Iowa Code section 256.7(32)"c" as amended by 2015 Iowa Acts, Senate File 510, section 99, priority shall be given to students who are documented victims of bullying and harassment, as defined in Iowa Code section 280.28.

Statewide Enrollment Data and District Enrollment Data in Excess of the Cap 2017-2018 School Year, number and percent, for both Iowa Connections Academy (ICA) at CAM and Iowa Virtual Academy (IVA) at Clayton Ridge are presented below. Four districts appeared to exceed the 1.0 percent cap on district enrollment based on fall 2017 enrollment data. The state also appeared to exceed the state cap of 0.18 percent enrollment based on fall 2017 data. When exemptions to the district and state enrollment caps were removed, all districts and the state were within the enrollment cap. The table below summarizes enrollment and exemption data.

District	Resident District K-12 Enrollment	Number Attending Virtual School	Virtual School Enrollment Cap	Number in Excess of Cap	Number of Students Exempt from Cap	Virtual School Enrollment Subject to Cap
Albert City-Truesdale	213	3	2	1	1	2
Ruthven-Ayrshire	222	3	2	1	2	1
Tri-County	274	4	2	2	3	1
West Central Valley	911	11	9	2	11	0
State of Iowa	481,884	904	867	37	39	865

The enrollment cap was exceeded by the above districts and exceeded statewide due to the provision in Iowa Code 256.7(32)(c) allowing for exceptions to the cap for siblings and students who are physically or emotionally fragile. Students who qualify for one of these exceptions do not count against the district or state caps.

Each district may enroll no more than one percent of their resident students in one of the virtual schools, while the state enrollment is capped at 0.18 percent of total state enrollment. This creates a discrepancy whereby the number of students who may enroll in both virtual schools statewide is significantly smaller than the number each district may send through open enrollment. As enrollment approaches the state cap it will be necessary for the Department to put into place a system to enforce the cap equitably.

Reporting Requirements

During the 2012 legislative session, lawmakers amended Iowa Code section 256.7 to address online learning in the state of Iowa. The Iowa Department of Education (Department) was directed by legislation to conduct an annual survey of students attending online schools, to include not less than ten percent of the total number of students enrolled and not less than one hundred percent of students enrolled in online schools who are eligible for free and reduced price meals. In addition, CAM Community School District and Clayton Ridge Community School District shall annually submit to the Department, in the manner prescribed by the Department, data that includes but is not limited to student achievement and demographic characteristics, retention rates, and the percentage of enrolled students' active participation in extracurricular activities.

During the 2015 session lawmakers amended Iowa Code 256.7 with Senate File 510 Section 99. The Department was directed to collect from each district and report on the following:

- a) *Student achievement* [the same as d) Academic proficiency levels on the Iowa Assessments] *and demographic characteristics*. [Data should be number of students enrolled at each grade level disaggregated by male, female, English language learners (ELL), low socioeconomic status (SES), 504, individualized education program (IEP), white, black, Hispanic, Native American/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander [Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) subgroups]]
- b) *Retention rates*. [Defined as percent of students who return to the school this year from last year]
- c) *Percent of students participating in extracurricular activities*.
- d) *Academic proficiency levels, consistent with requirements applicable to all school districts and accredited nonpublic schools in this state*. [Iowa Assessment is the state assessment. Data should be disaggregated by male, female, ELL, Low SES, 504, IEP, white, black, Hispanic, Native American/Alaska native, and Asian/Pacific Islander (ESEA subgroups)]
- e) *Academic growth measures, which shall include either of the following*:
 - *Entry and exit assessments in, at a minimum, math and English for elementary and middle school students, and additional subjects, including science, for high school students*. [Although only one of these is required both measures would help the district and state evaluate instructional programs in the virtual school]
 - *State required assessments that track year over year improvements in academic proficiency* [Data should be expressed in trend lines over a three-year period so simple cohorts can be tracked]
- f) *Academic mobility. To facilitate the tracking of academic mobility, school districts shall request the following information from the parent of guardian of a student enrolled in educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the internet*:
 - *For a student newly enrolling, the reasons for choosing such enrollment*
 - *For a student terminating enrollment, the reasons for terminating such enrollment* [For mobility and graduation rates, use the following set of reasons why a student might choose enrollment or terminate enrollment so that you can provide percentages by category. Anyplace/anytime learning, illness/injury, bullying/harassment, more/less course selection, under credit/overage, more/less personalized learning, and miscellaneous]
- g) *Student progress toward graduation. Measurement of such progress shall account for specific characteristics of each enrolled student, including but not limited to age and course credit accrued prior to enrollment in educational instruction and course content that are delivered primarily over the Internet and shall be consistent with evidence-based best practices*. [As defined by: a percentage of the credits accrued towards graduation based on how many credits students should have accrued by the end of a given grade]

In addition, the Department is required to survey not less than ten percent of the total number of students enrolled. The students surveyed in grades K-12 are done via email with a survey link. Parents or coaches are permitted to help students in grades K-3 complete the survey.

The Department received the demographic data, student achievement, retention rates, participation, academic proficiency, academic growth, academic mobility, and progress toward graduation from both the Iowa Connections Academy at CAM Community School District (hereinafter “IACA”) and Iowa Virtual Academy at Clayton Ridge Community School District (hereinafter “IAVA”).

II. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA - SCHOOL YEAR 2017-2018

Demographic information, number of students, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

Characteristic	IACA	IAVA
Enrollment	578	326
Male	253	148
Female	325	178
Asian	*	*
African-American	22	29
Hispanic	44	17
Multiracial	38	*
Native American	*	*
Pacific Islander	*	*
White	468	273
English Language Learner	*	*
504 Plan	56	*
Students with individualized education program (IEP)	47	23
Free-Reduced Lunch Eligible	190	80

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that there are fewer than ten students in that particular cell. No data will be publicly reported for those cells, to protect student privacy pursuant to state and federal law.

III. ACADEMIC DATA - SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017 (Most recent data available.)

Achievement data, percent proficient based on the Iowa Assessments, including alternate assessment scores, in reading, math, and science for both IACA and IAVA are presented below. Results are calculated for all grade levels served combined.

	Reading	Math	Science
IACA	85.4	71.7	79.3
IAVA	71.8	63.8	72.0

IACA – Academic Proficiency Levels by Subgroup, percent proficient based on the Iowa Assessments

	Male	Female	ELL	Low SES	504	IEP
Reading	84.0	86.5	0.0	82.8	82.9	66.7
Math	71.8	71.6	100	62.2	67.6	51.9
Science	76.0	81.9	0.0	75.8	74.3	59.3

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that there are fewer than ten students in that particular cell. No data will be publicly reported for those cells, to protect student privacy pursuant to state and federal law. English language learners (ELL), low socioeconomic status (SES), 504, individualized education program (IEP)

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American/AI askan Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
Reading	87.4	66.7	77.3	100	66.7	*
Math	73.5	33.3	77.3	100	33.3	*

Science	82.1	50.0	68.2	66.7	66.7	*
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Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that there are fewer than ten students in that particular cell. No data will be publicly reported for those cells, to protect student privacy pursuant to state and federal law.

IAVA – Academic Proficiency Levels by Subgroup, percent proficient based on the Iowa Assessments

	Male	Female	ELL	Low SES	504	IEP
Reading	64.3	77.4	*	54.1	100	28.6
Math	55.7	69.9	*	45.9	100	21.4
Science	65.5	75.5	*	50.0	*	50.0

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that there are fewer than ten students in that particular cell. No data will be publicly reported for those cells, to protect student privacy pursuant to state and federal law. English language learners (ELL), low socioeconomic status (SES), 504, individualized education program (IEP)

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American/AI askan Native	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
Reading	71.8	69.2	76.9	*	60.0	100
Math	64.1	46.2	69.2	*	80.0	100
Science	73.5	80.0	33.3	*	100	100

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that there are fewer than ten students in that particular cell. No data will be publicly reported for those cells, to protect student privacy pursuant to state and federal law.

IV. RETENTION RATES - SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

Retention rates, defined as the percent of students who return to the school this year from the previous year, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below. Over half of students who attended each online academy in the preceding school year returned in 2016-2017.

	Percent of Students
IACA	60.5
IAVA	51.3

V. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES - SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

Extracurricular activity data, percent of students participating in extracurricular activities, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	Percent of Students
IACA	12
IAVA	10

VI. ACADEMIC GROWTH – FOUR YEAR TREND

Academic growth data, percent proficient based on the Iowa Assessments, including alternate assessment scores, in reading, math, and science for both IACA and IAVA are presented below. The percent proficient in reading, math, and science in both online academies has declined between 2013-2014 and 2016-2017.

Reading – Percent Proficient

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
IACA	90.2	87.7	76.1	85.4
IAVA	79.1	74.2	68.9	71.8

Math – Percent Proficient

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
IACA	83.8	84.2	66.5	71.7
IAVA	71.4	66.9	52.3	63.8

Science – Percent Proficient

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
IACA	87.9	87.1	71.6	79.3
IAVA	72.4	75	33.3	72.0

VII. ACADEMIC MOBILITY - SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

Enrollment data, percent of newly enrolled students choosing such enrollment for specified reason, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA
Anyplace/Anytime Learning	34	17
Illness/Injury	16	18
Bullying/Harassment	9	27
More/Less Course Selection	5	0
Under Credit/Overage	9	17
More/Less Personalized Learning	10	14
Miscellaneous	17	18

Enrollment termination data, percent of students choosing to terminate their enrollment for specified reason, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA
Anyplace/Anytime Learning	8	0
Illness/Injury	0	3
Bullying/Harassment	0	0
More/Less Course Selection	0	2
Under Credit/Overage	0	0
More/Less Personalized Learning	51	0
Miscellaneous	41	95

VIII. PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION – SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

Progress toward graduation data, percent of students on track for graduation, for both IACA and IAVA are presented below.

	IACA	IAVA
First Year High School Students	65	54
Second Year High School Students	66	55
Third Year High School Students	72	68
Fourth Year High School Students	64	56
Fifth Year Plus High School Students	82	0

IX. SURVEY DATA – SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

The Department conducted a survey of the students enrolled in both IACA and IAVA (See Appendix A). The surveys were conducted online for the students enrolled in grades K-12. Survey responses indicate that students enrolled in IACA and IAVA understand what is expected of them, how they are performing against those expectations, and are comfortable interacting with their teachers to learn the required material.

X. CONCLUSION

As required by legislation, both IACA and IAVA have submitted the required and available data to the Department for school year 2016-2017. Additionally, the Department has conducted a survey of students enrolled in online schools. The evidence submitted supports that IACA and IAVA are continuing to operate schools with educational instruction and course content delivered primarily over the internet.

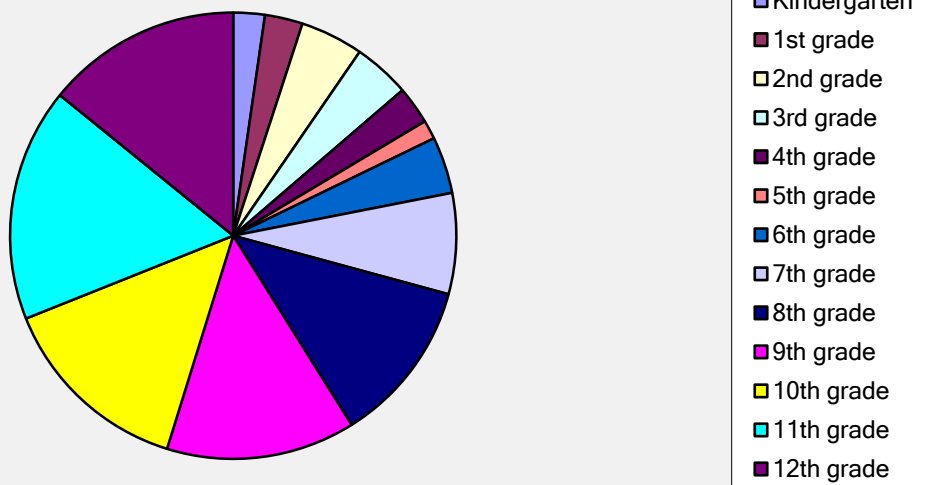
The percent of students proficient in reading, math, and science both districts' online programs substantially increased this school year. Just over half of students that attended either of the programs during the 2015-2016 school year chose to attend again during the 2017-2018 school year. Of high school students, the percent on-track for graduation ranges from a low of 54 percent for first-year high school students at IAVA to a high of 82 percent for fifth-year-plus students at IACA. It is difficult to tell from enrollment termination information why students are choosing to leave either academy, with a large percentage of the responses falling in the miscellaneous category for IAVA students. The largest percentage of enrollment termination for IACA was "More/Less Personalized Learning." All of these pieces of information, taken together with results from last year's review, would again suggest that it may be beneficial to determine (a) to what extent each district is working through its virtual academy to provide an evidence-based multi-tiered system of supports that will support student achievement, (b) what work each district is doing within its virtual academy to support on-time graduation, and (c) if a revised survey on termination of enrollment would glean better information.

APPENDIX A – SURVEY DATA

What grade are you in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Kindergarten	2.3%	5
1st grade	2.7%	6
2nd grade	4.6%	10
3rd grade	4.1%	9
4th grade	2.7%	6
5th grade	1.4%	3
6th grade	4.1%	9
7th grade	7.3%	16
8th grade	11.9%	26
9th grade	13.7%	30
10th grade	14.2%	31
11th grade	16.9%	37
12th grade	14.2%	31

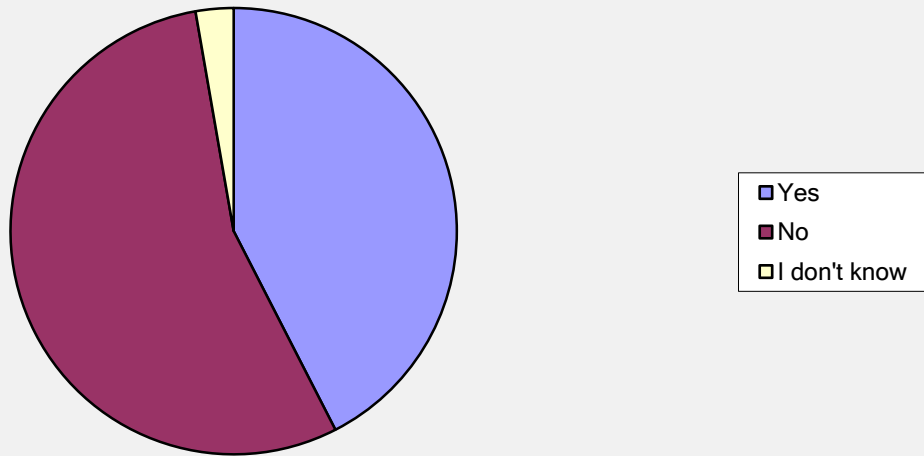
What grade are you in?



Do you start school at the same time every day?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	42.5%	93
No	54.8%	120
I don't know	2.7%	6

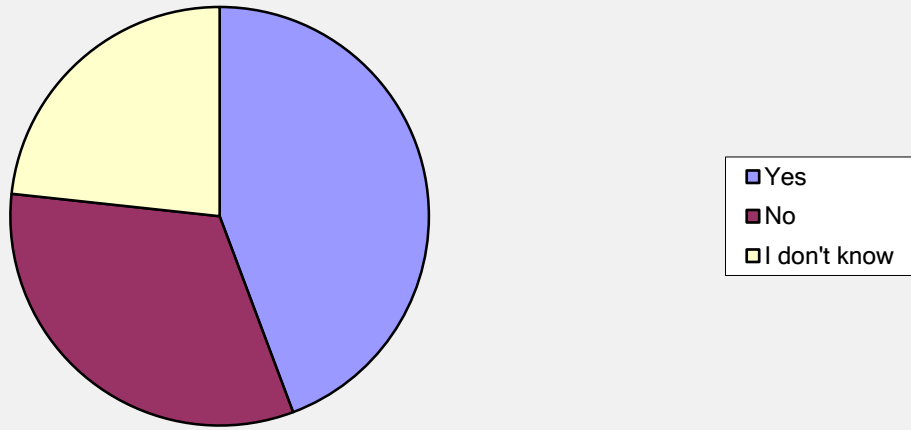
Do you start school at the same time every day?



Do you need to tell your teacher or principal if you will be late or absent from school?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.3%	97
No	32.4%	71
I don't know	23.3%	51

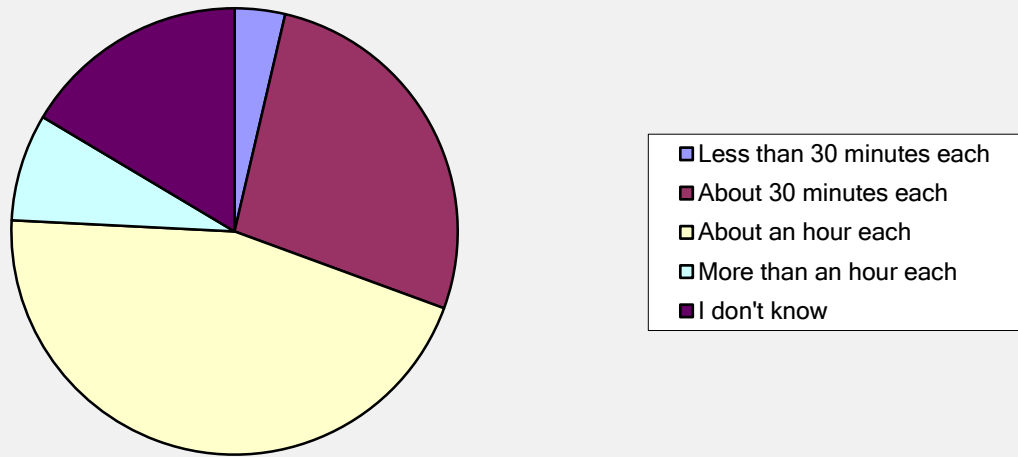
Do you need to tell your teacher or principal if you will be late or absent from school?



How long are your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 30 minutes each	3.7%	8
About 30 minutes each	26.9%	59
About an hour each	45.2%	99
More than an hour each	7.8%	17
I don't know	16.4%	36

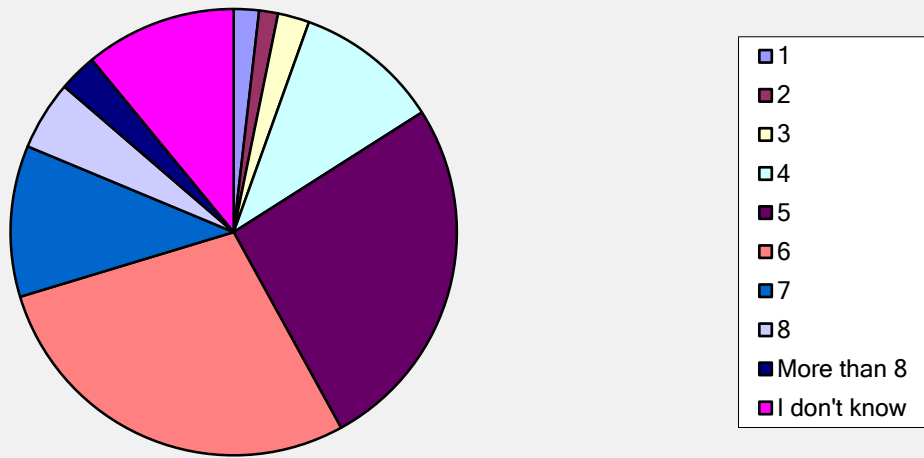
How long are your classes?



How many classes do you have each day?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	1.8%	4
2	1.4%	3
3	2.3%	5
4	10.5%	23
5	26.0%	57
6	28.3%	62
7	11.0%	24
8	5.0%	11
More than 8	2.7%	6
I don't know	11.0%	24

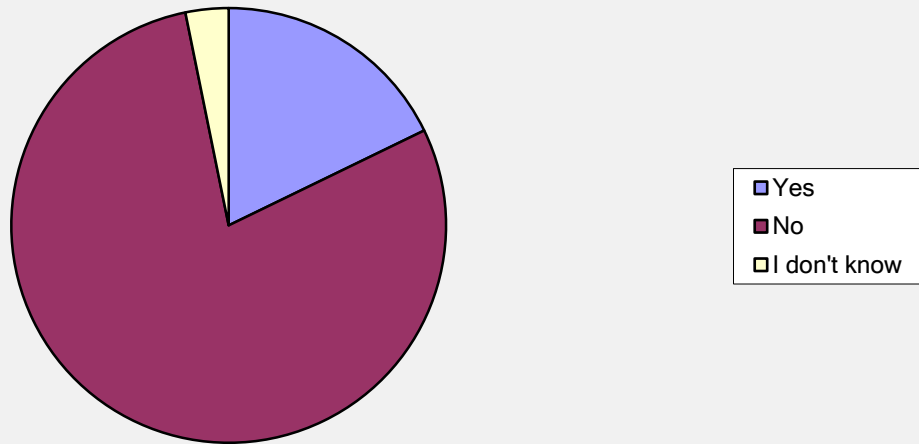
How many classes do you have each day?



Do you finish school at the same time every day?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	17.8%	39
No	79.0%	173
I don't know	3.2%	7

Do you finish school at the same time every day?



How long is your school day?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 4 hours (less than half a day)	8.2%	18
4 hours or more (half a day or more)	84.0%	184
I don't know	7.8%	17

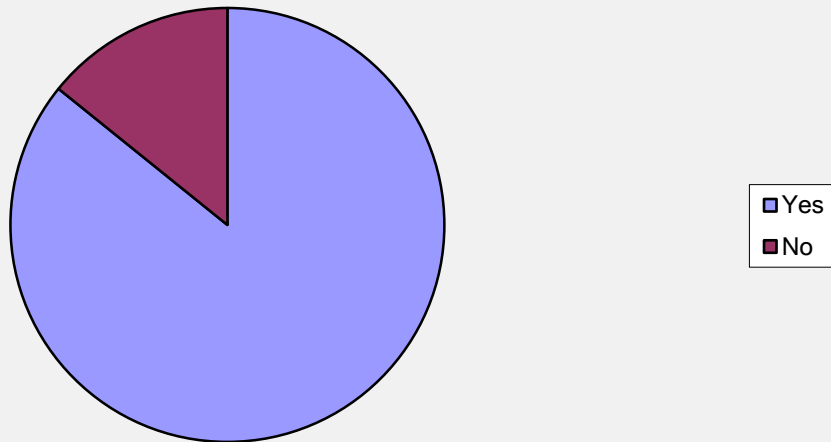
How long is your school day?



If you were bullied by someone on your computer or phone, would you know how to report it to your school?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	83.6%	183
No	16.4%	36

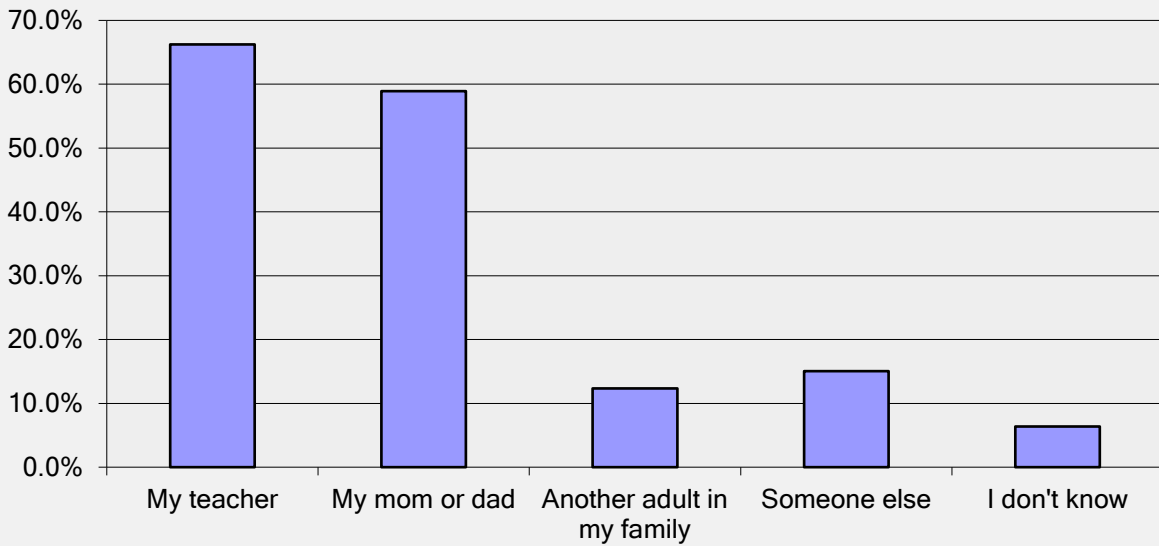
If you were bullied by someone on your computer or phone, would you know how to report it to your school?



Who usually teaches you during school? Check all of the answers that are right for you.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
My teacher	66.2%	145
My mom or dad	58.9%	129
Another adult in my family	12.3%	27
Someone else	15.1%	33
I don't know	6.4%	14

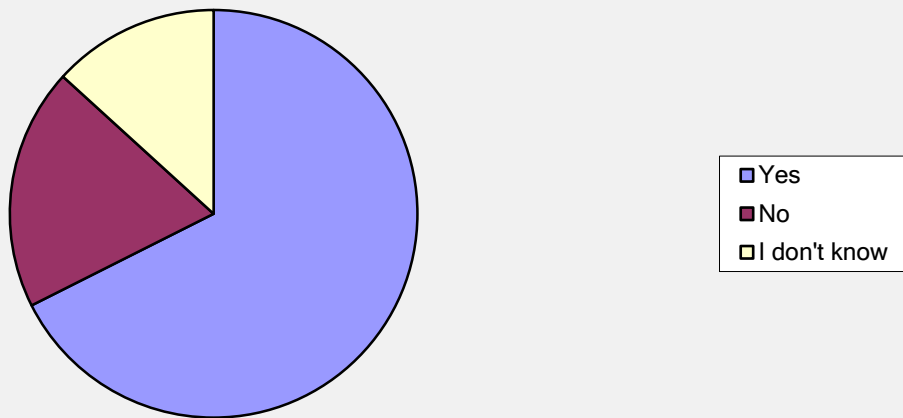
Who usually teaches you during school? Check all of the answers that are right for you.



During your classes, does your teacher spend time talking to you and showing you how to do the things you are learning?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	67.6%	148
No	19.2%	42
I don't know	13.2%	29

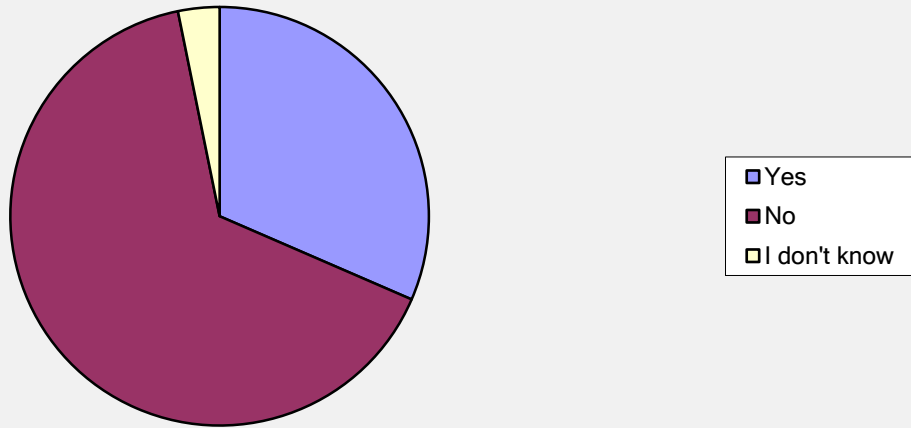
During your classes, does your teacher spend time talking to you and showing you how to do the things you are learning?



Do you work in groups with other students during or outside class?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	31.5%	69
No	65.3%	143
I don't know	3.2%	7

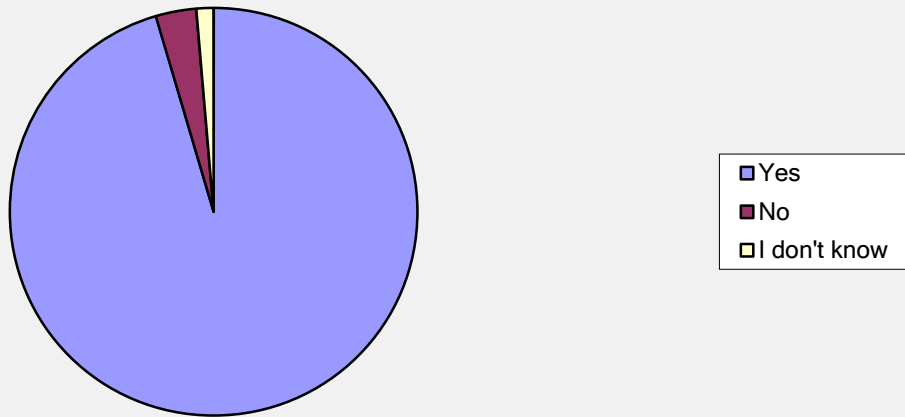
Do you work in groups with other students during or outside class?



Do you have time to work on your own during any of your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	95.4%	209
No	3.2%	7
I don't know	1.4%	3

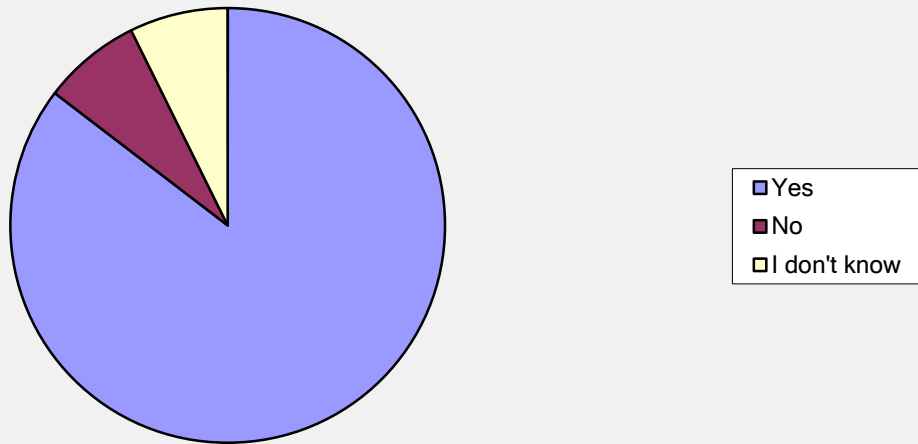
Do you have time to work on your own during any of your classes?



Is there time to study during any of your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85.4%	187
No	7.3%	16
I don't know	7.3%	16

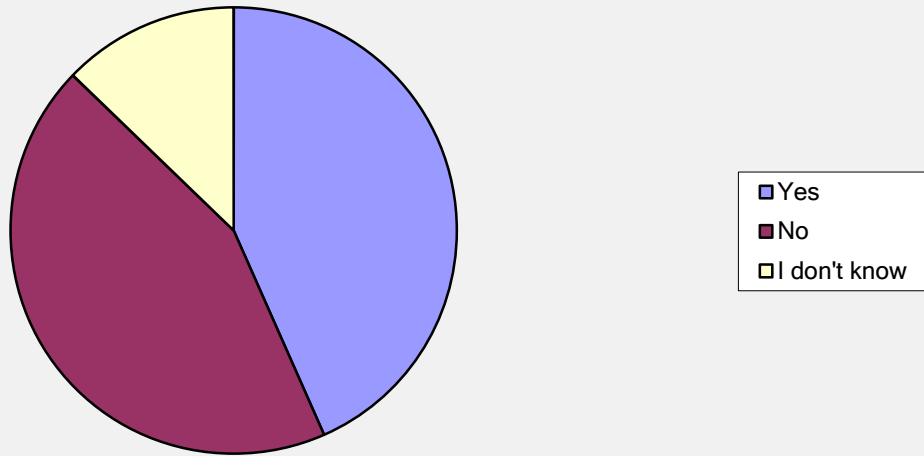
Is there time to study during any of your classes?



Are you called on to answer questions during your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	43.4%	95
No	43.8%	96
I don't know	12.8%	28

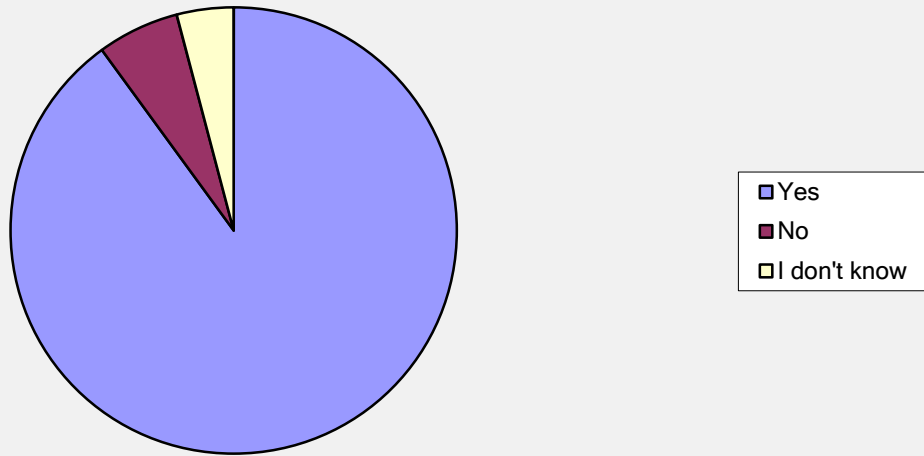
Are you called on to answer questions during your classes?



Can you ask questions during your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	90.0%	197
No	5.9%	13
I don't know	4.1%	9

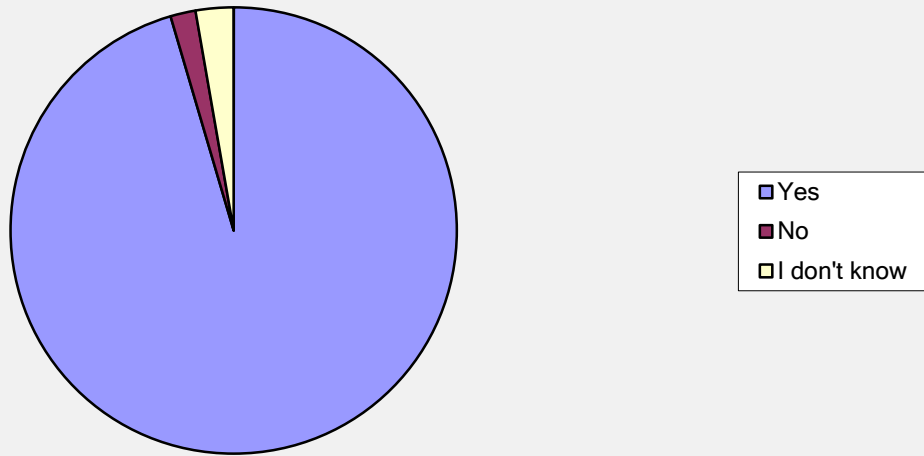
Can you ask questions during your classes?



Do you know how well you are doing in your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	95.4%	209
No	1.8%	4
I don't know	2.7%	6

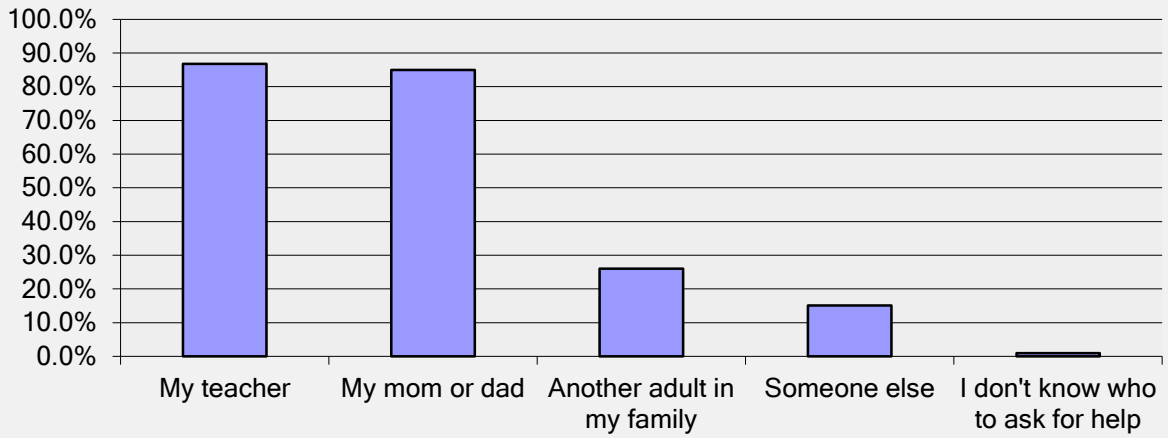
Do you know how well you are doing in your classes?



If you need help with your work, who do you ask? Check all of the answers that are right for you.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
My teacher	86.8%	190
My mom or dad	84.9%	186
Another adult in my family	26.0%	57
Someone else	15.1%	33
I don't know who to ask for help	0.9%	2

If you need help with your work, who do you ask? Check all of the answers that are right for you.



Do you know what your teacher expects you to learn in your classes?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.3%	213
No	2.7%	6

Do you know what your teacher expects you to learn in your classes?

