

ACCIS Individual and Member Survey Results

2020-2021

by Louis Trujillo
College Counselor
Saint Ann's School (NY)

Janet Weller
Associate Director of College Counseling
Roland Park Country School (MD)



ACCIS
Association of College Counselors
in Independent Schools

ACCIS Survey Results

I. Executive Summary

Last fall, the Data Trends and Analytics (DTA) Committee engaged in an in-depth effort to survey our membership both about the makeup of their schools and about themselves as individuals. Though we have collected data in the past, this is the first year we set out to know more about the personal identities our members hold. In so doing, we hope to better know and serve our members and the selves that they bring to this work and this Association.

In order to achieve this, we generated two surveys. For the individual member survey, there were 494 responses, representing a 26% participation rate. For the school survey, there were 235 school submissions, representing a 41% participation rate. For clarity, we have analyzed the survey results by survey type rather than aggregating them.



494 individual responses

26% participation rate

235 school responses

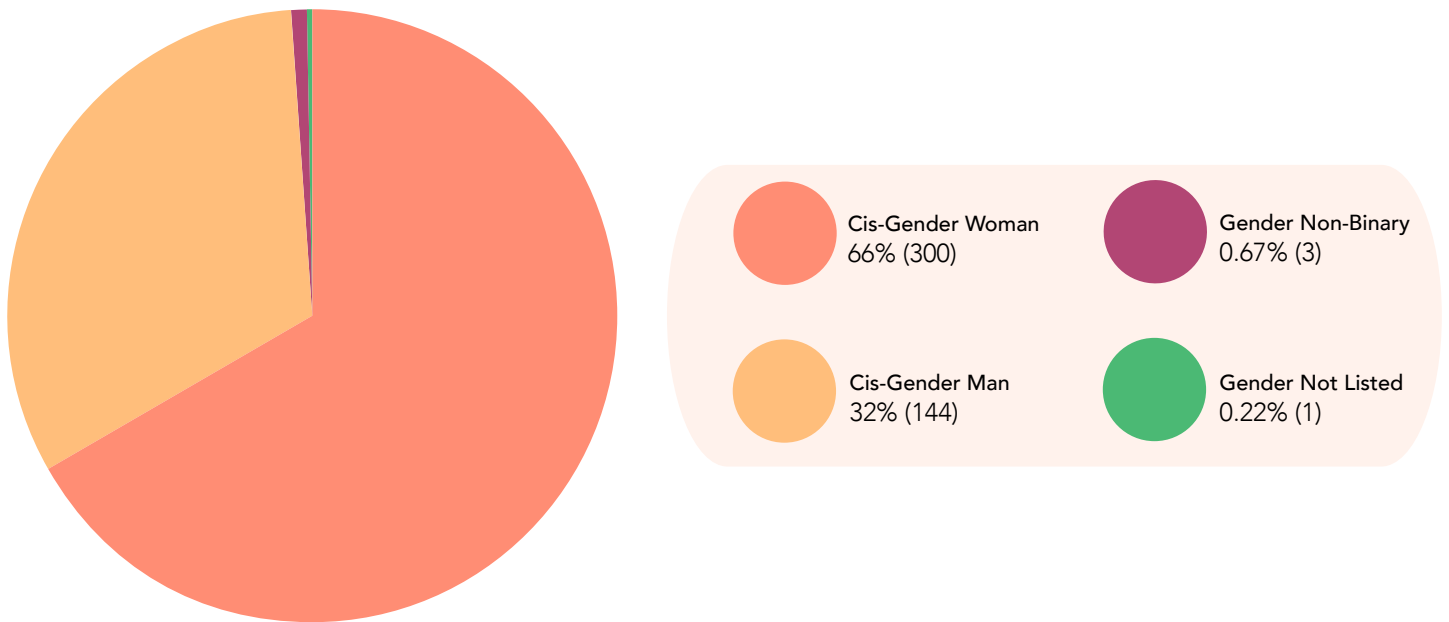
41% participation rate

ACCIS Survey Results

II. Individual Member Survey

Demographics

In our survey, 66% of participants (300 members) self-identified as cis-gender women, 32% (144 members) self-identified as cis-gender men, and 0.67% (3 members) self-identified as gender non-binary. One member noted that their gender was not listed. One guiding question for our survey was to explore gender representation within our association and in comparison to other educational organizations. According to the National Center of Educational Statistics¹, the makeup of non-public school teachers was 74% female and 26% male in the 2017-2018 school year, though it is important to note that NCES does not report gender beyond the binary. Notably, cis-gender women account for about two-thirds of ACCIS as represented by the survey respondents.

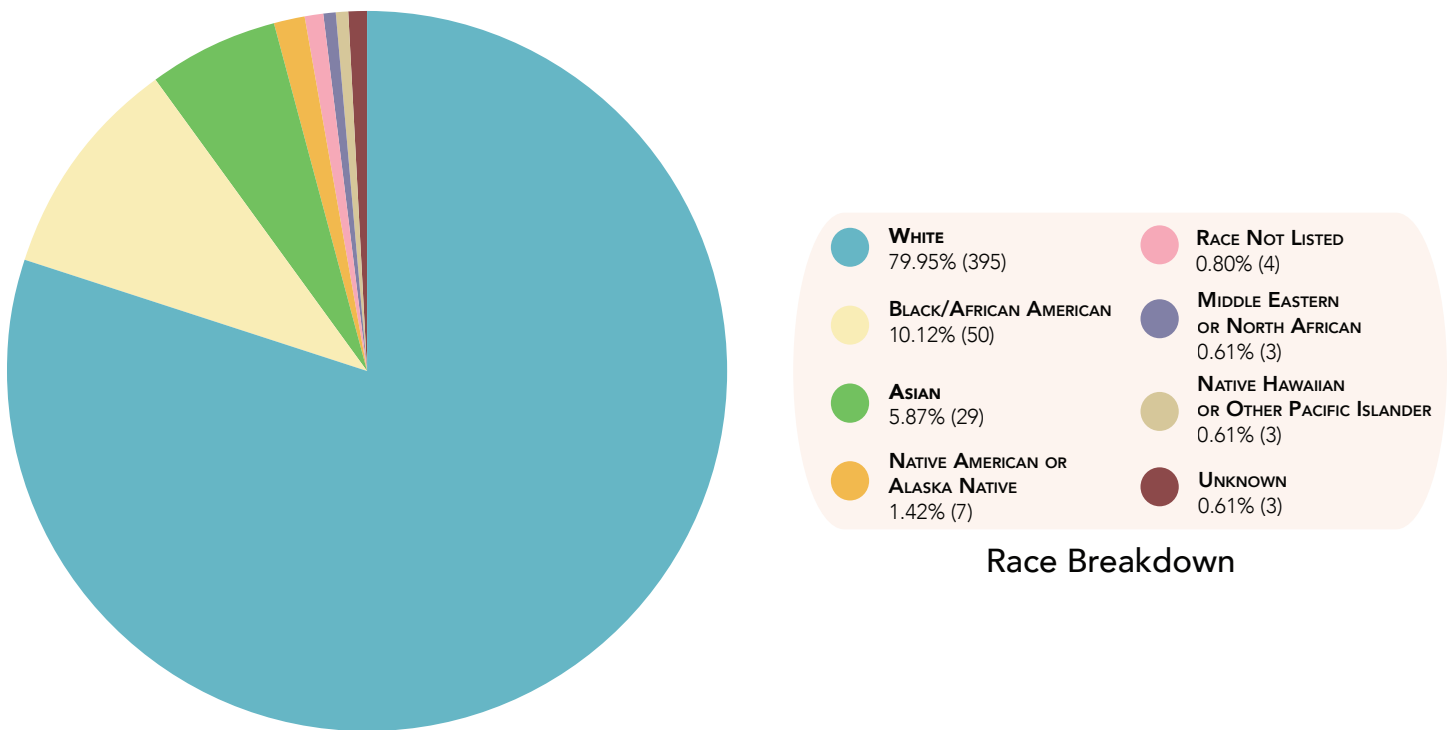


¹ Number and percentage distribution of teachers in public and private elementary and secondary schools, by selected teacher characteristics: Selected years, 1987-88 through 2017-18
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_209.10.asp?current=yes

ACCIS Survey Results

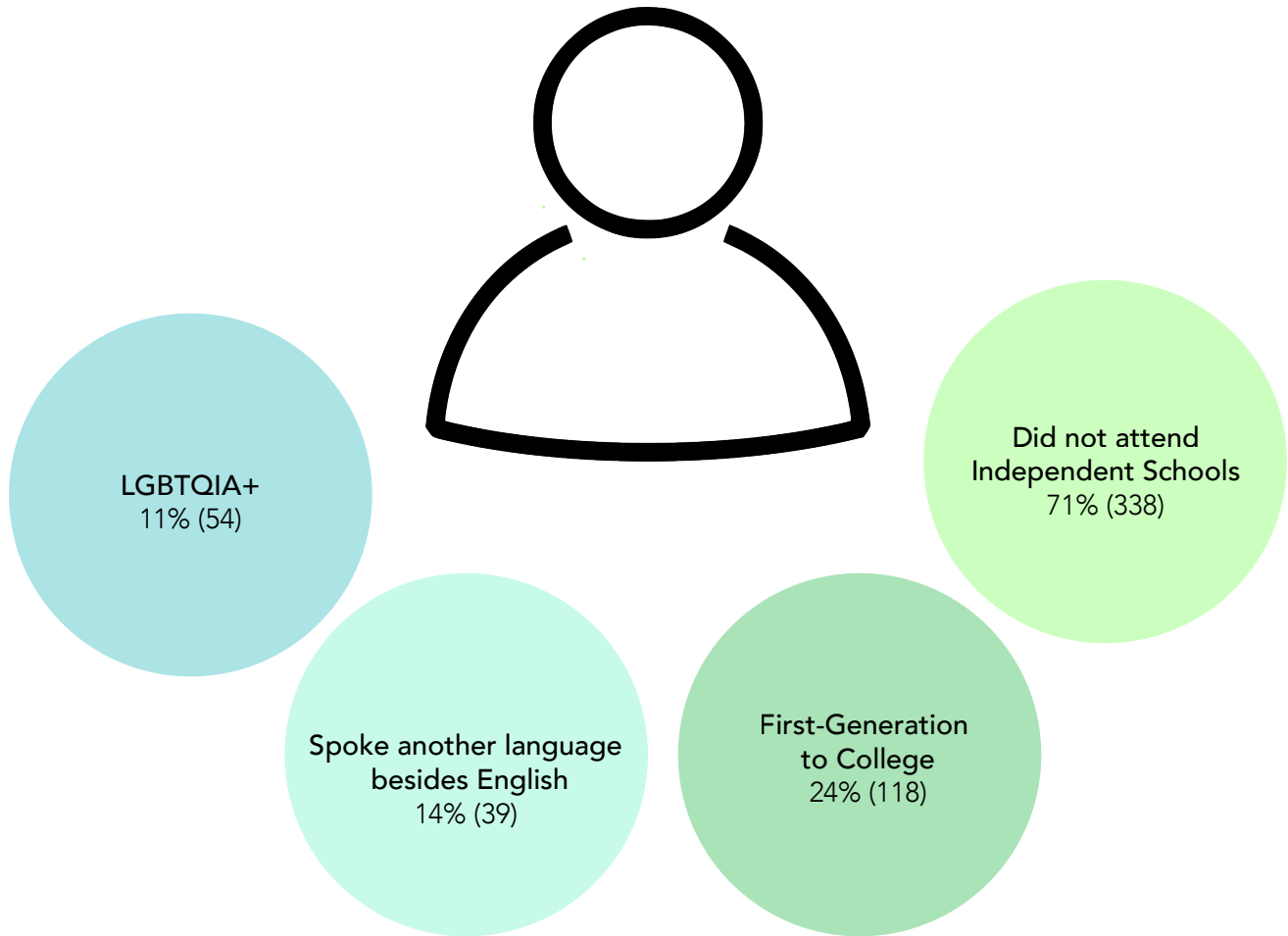
Race, Ethnicity, & National Origin

Of the 494 respondents to the individual member survey, the racial breakdown is as follows: 395 members identified as White; 50 members identified as Black or African American; 29 members identified as Asian; 7 members identified as Native American or Alaska Native; 3 members identified as Middle Eastern or North African; 3 members identified as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; 3 members identified as their race being Unknown; and 4 members stated their race was not listed. 39 members identified as having Hispanic, Latinx/o/a, or Spanish origin from locations including Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico. When asked about national origin, our members indicated the following countries: China, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, United Kingdom, and the United States.



ACCIS Survey Results

Attributes

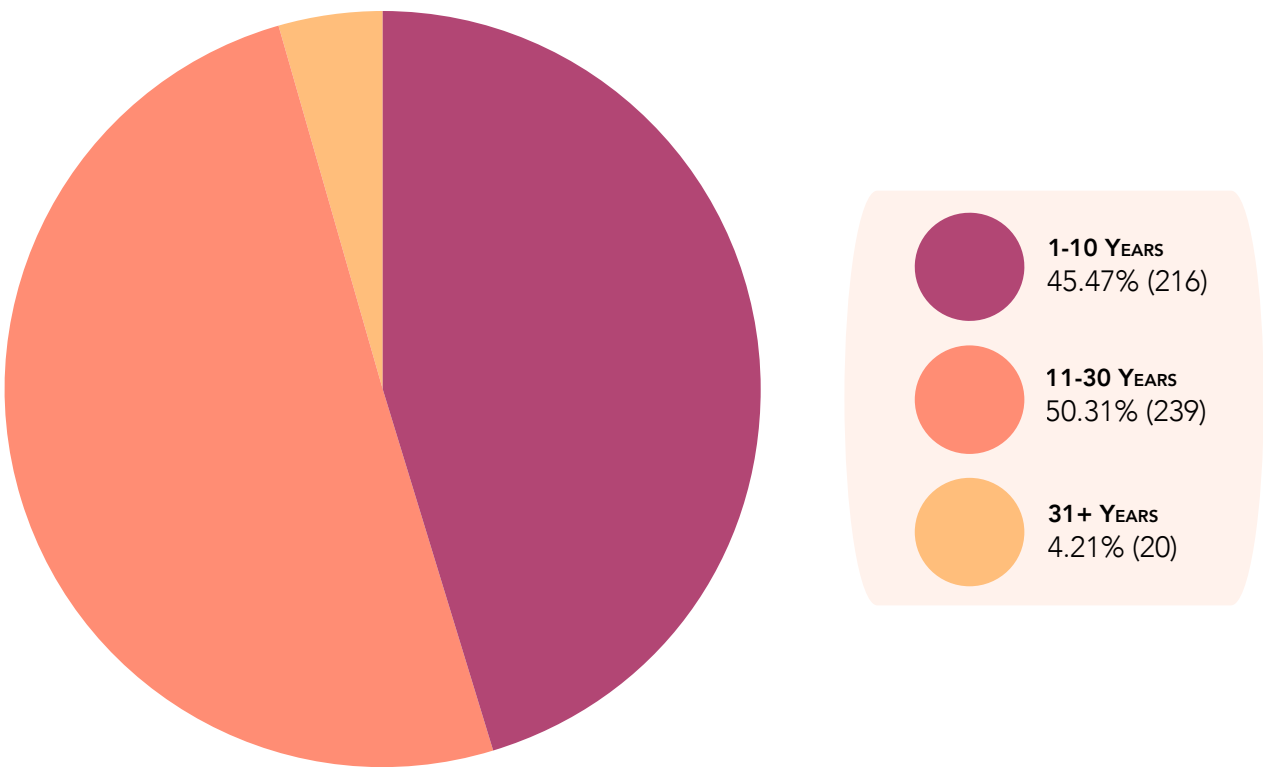


In exploring the attributes of our membership, we sought to illuminate the intersectional and nuanced identities individuals carry. 11% of survey respondents identified as belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community. We felt it was important to highlight the growing multiplicity of languages our members use to communicate with their students and families and learned that approximately 14% of survey respondents spoke another language besides English in their work as a college counselor. Moreover, 24% of survey respondents said that they were first-generation-to-college in their families. 71% (338 members) noted they did not attend an independent school for their own high school instruction.

ACCIS Survey Results

College Counselor's Experience

On the whole, our survey confirmed that ACCIS members are a seasoned and educated group with 50% (239 members) indicating 11-30 years of college counseling experience. More specifically, 20% of respondents (97 members) had 11-15 years of college counseling experience within independent schools. Of 455 respondents, 75% (345 members) have earned a master's degree, doctorate, or professional degree as their highest level of education.

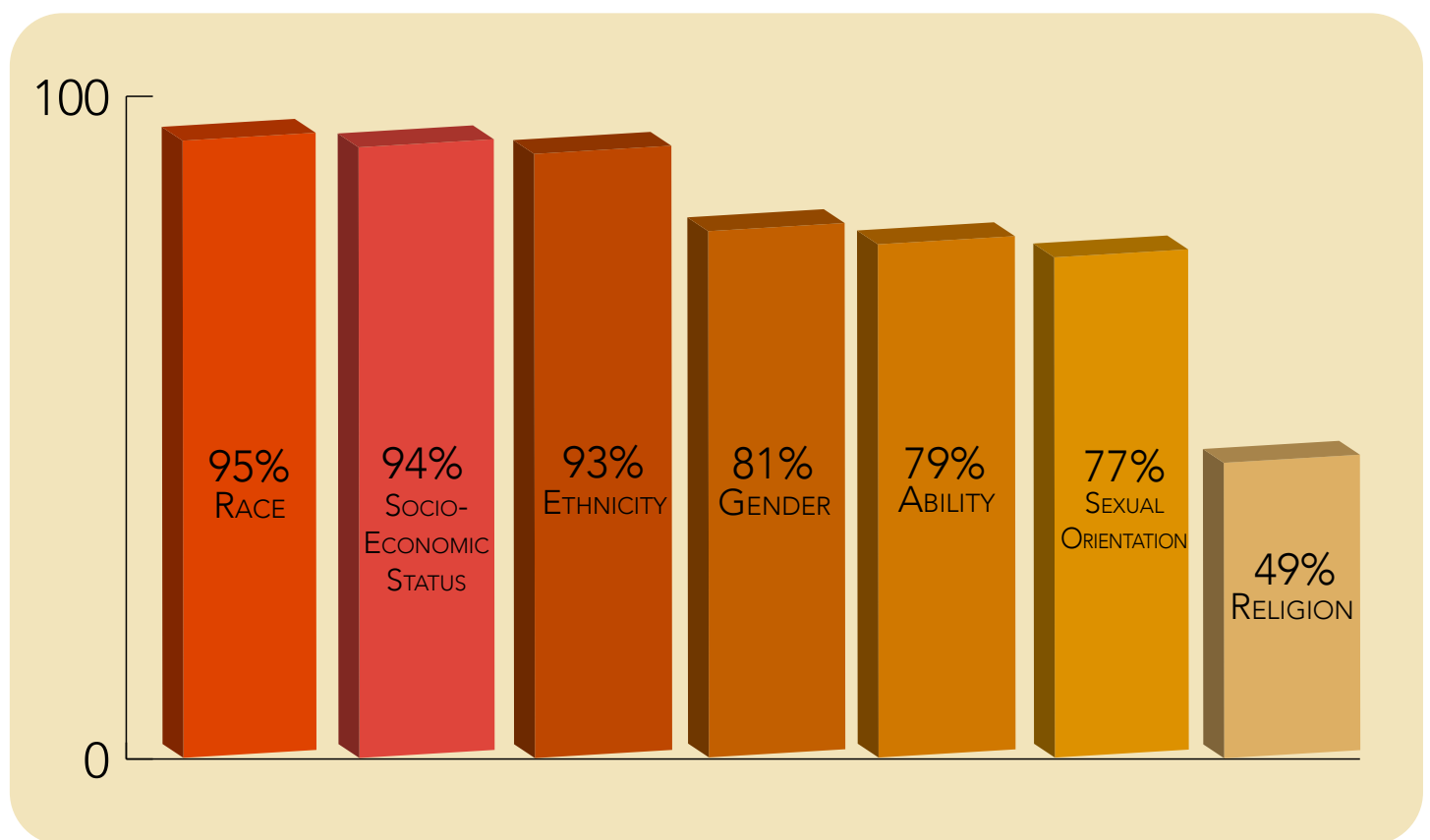


Years of College Counseling Experience

ACCIS Survey Results

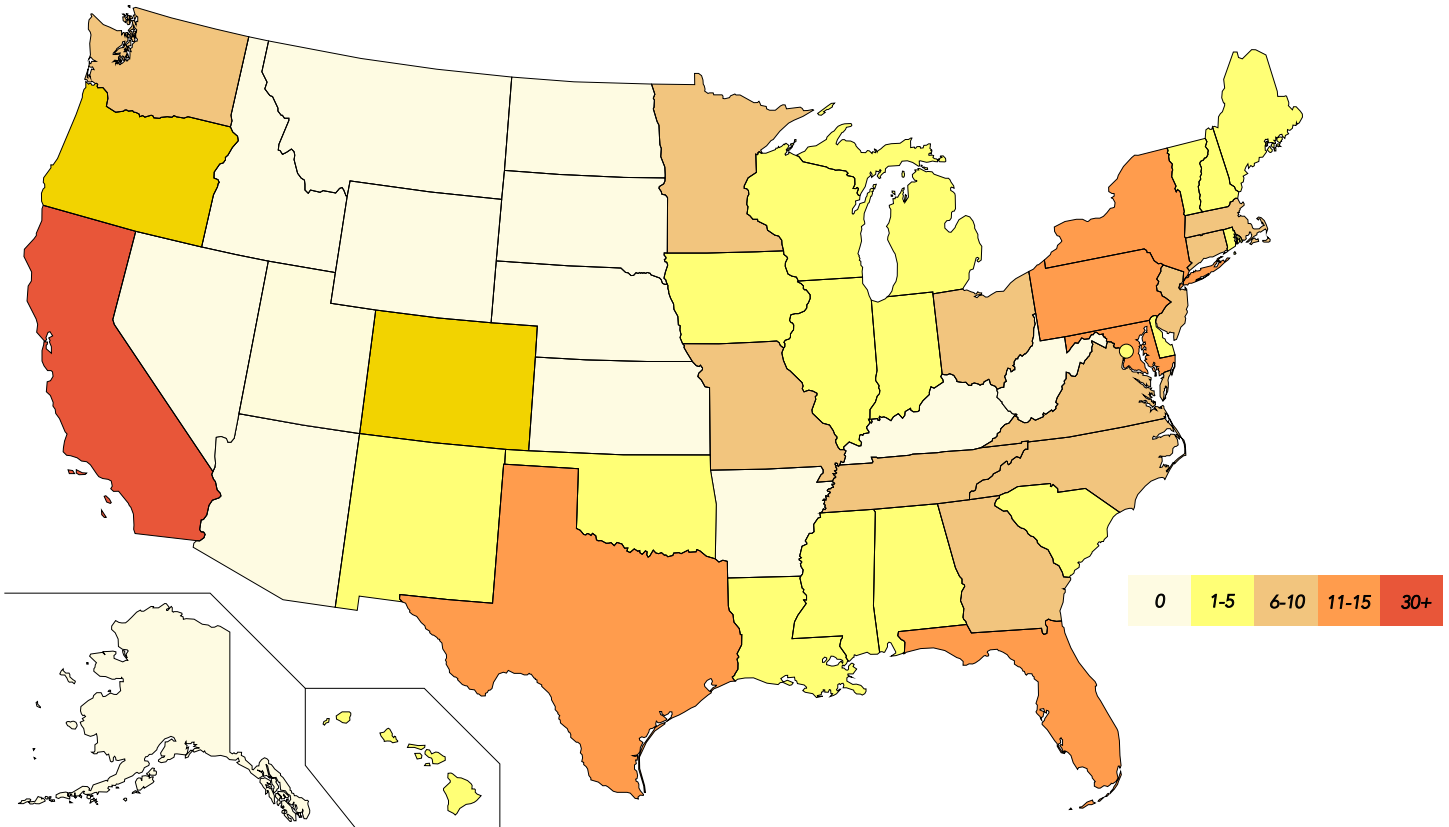
Identity Markers and Their Intersection with the College Process

We wanted to explore our member's feelings about the intersection of identity-markers and college counseling. We employed a set of Likert scale questions. 95% believed that race and its intersection with the college process were very/extremely important to discuss. 94% believed that socioeconomic status and its intersection with the college process was very/extremely important to discuss. 93% believed that ethnicity and its intersection with the college process were very/extremely important to discuss. 81% believed that gender and its intersection with the college process were very/extremely important to discuss. 79% believed that ability/ableism and its intersection with the college process was very/extremely important to discuss. 77% believed that sexual orientation and its intersection with the college process was very/extremely important to discuss. 49% believed that religion and its intersection with the college process were very/extremely important to discuss.



ACCIS Survey Results

III. School Survey



While ACCIS's members span from coast to coast as well as abroad, we noticed an absence of survey responses from schools in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. The top five states represented among responding schools were California, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Florida. One international school member also responded to our school survey. Our survey results show strong ACCIS presence across the country, but perhaps indicate the need for outreach in states not strongly represented, to determine if there are unaccounted ACCIS schools there or a need for deeper engagement.

A majority of respondents indicated that their schools were comprised of exclusively Day Students (75.32%, or 177 schools). Other responses indicated a combination of Boarding and Day Students at 23.40% (55 schools) or exclusively Boarding Students at 1.28% (3 schools). 60 schools indicated that over 15% of their senior class were International Students, and 6.38% (15 schools) offered the full International Baccalaureate Diploma to their students.

ACCIS Survey Results

Standardized Testing

While we included several questions about testing in our survey, we have highlighted a selection of results below. The PSAT remains a popular option for most schools, while only slightly over half of the respondents offer the Pre-ACT. An overwhelming majority of schools indicated that junior year is when their students tend to take their first official SAT or ACT, with 34% indicating the fall of junior year and 63% indicating the spring of junior year as preferred times to take the test.



PSAT

(9th-11th graders)

99.58% offer it

Pre-ACT

(9-11th graders)

54.67% offer it



ON AVERAGE, WHEN DOES OFFICIAL TESTING START?

34.32%

Fall of 11th grade

63.14%

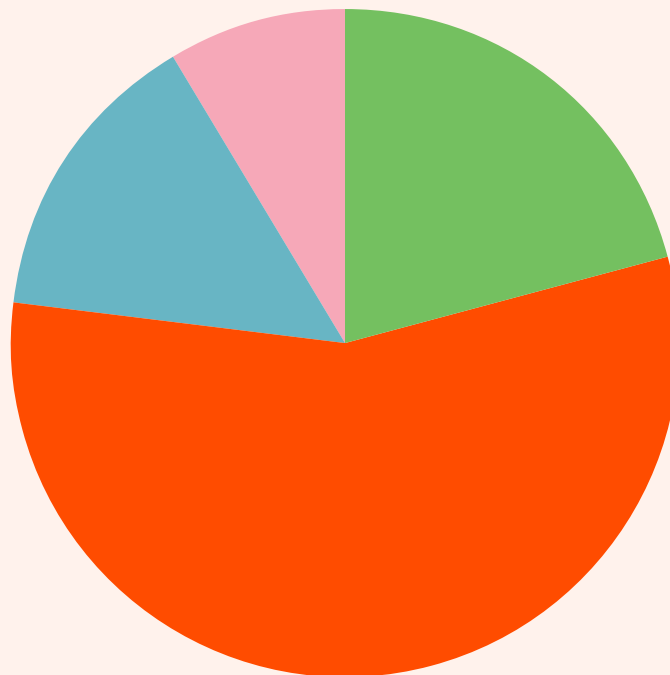
Spring of 11th grade

ACCIS Survey Results

Standardized Testing, Continued

At the time of this survey (which preceded the elimination of SAT Subject Tests by the College Board), only 8.51% (20 schools) categorically did not offer AP courses at their schools while 91.49% (215 schools) offered a combination of AP courses, administration of AP exams, or both. In the next iteration of this survey, we will ask the same question to see if there have been any changes from 2020 to 2021.

Relationship with AP Tests



We offer AP courses, but it is up to the student to decide whether or not to take the AP exam.
20.85% (49)



We offer AP courses, and students enrolled in AP courses must take the AP exam.
56.17% 132



We do not offer AP courses but do administer a number of AP exams.
14.47% (34)



We do not offer AP courses.
8.51% (20)

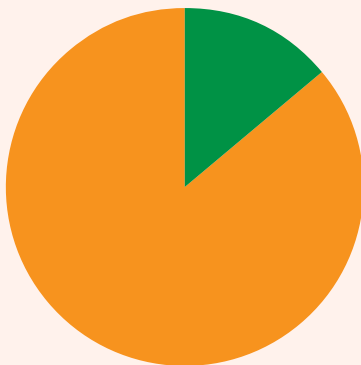
ACCIS Survey Results

Counselors in Context

The number of college counselors employed by the offices of our responding schools varied. Of 235 school survey respondents, 14% (33 responses) run a one-person college office, and 11% (26 responses) employ four or more college counselors. The majority of our respondents report to the Head of School (31%) or the Head of Upper School (45%). Just under a quarter of our respondents employ part-time college counselors in their offices.



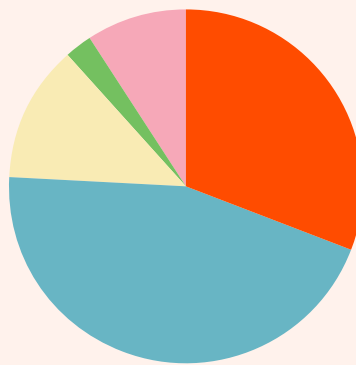
Sole Counselor?



Yes
14.04% (33)

No
85.96% (202)

To whom do you report?



HEAD OF SCHOOL
30.93% (73)

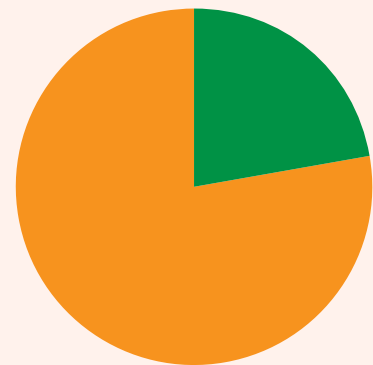
HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL
44.92% (106)

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL
12.71% (30)

DEAN OF FACULTY
2.54% (6)

OTHER
8.90% (21)

Part-time college counselors?



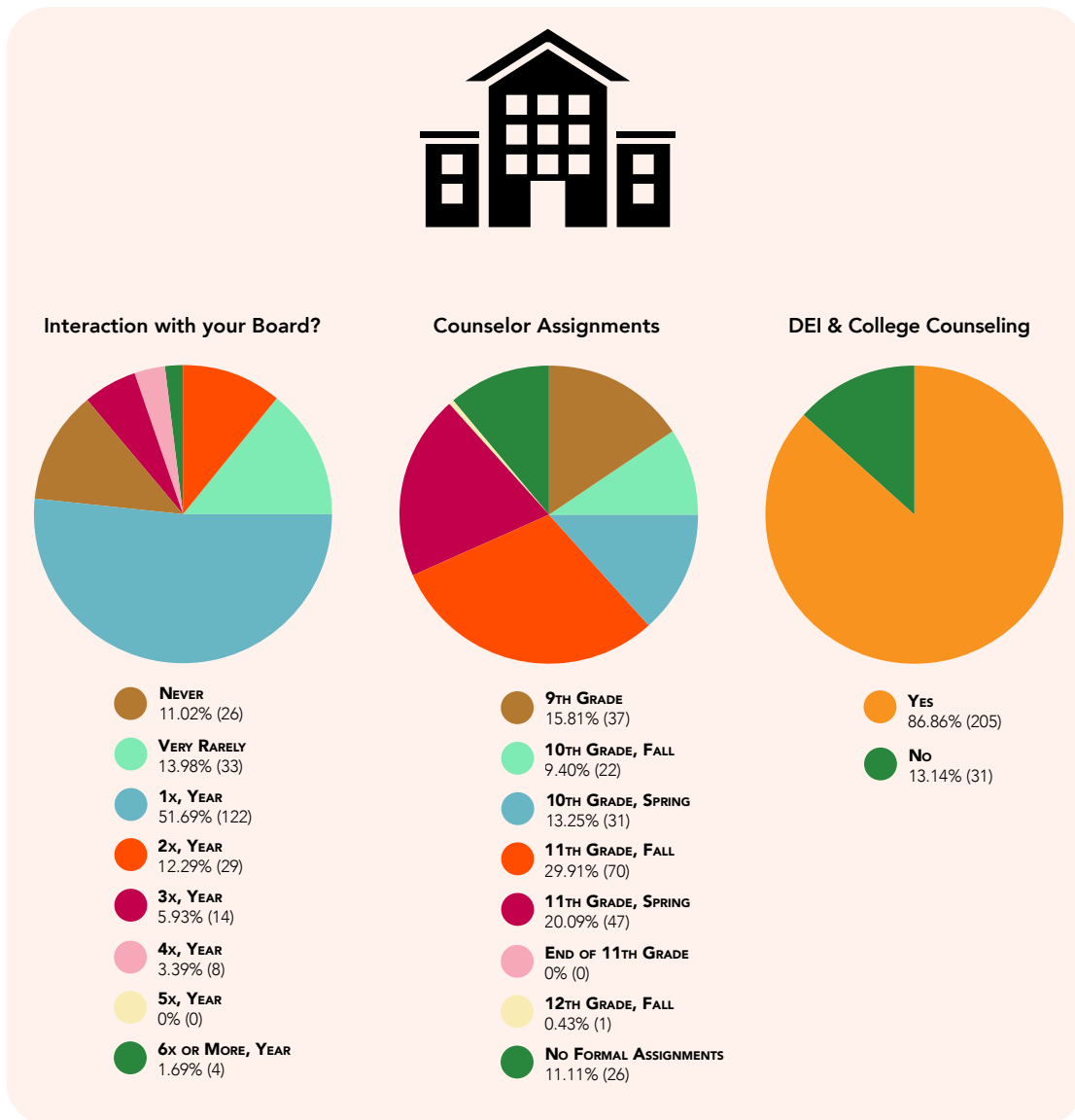
Yes
22.45% (53)

No
77.54% (183)

ACCIS Survey Results

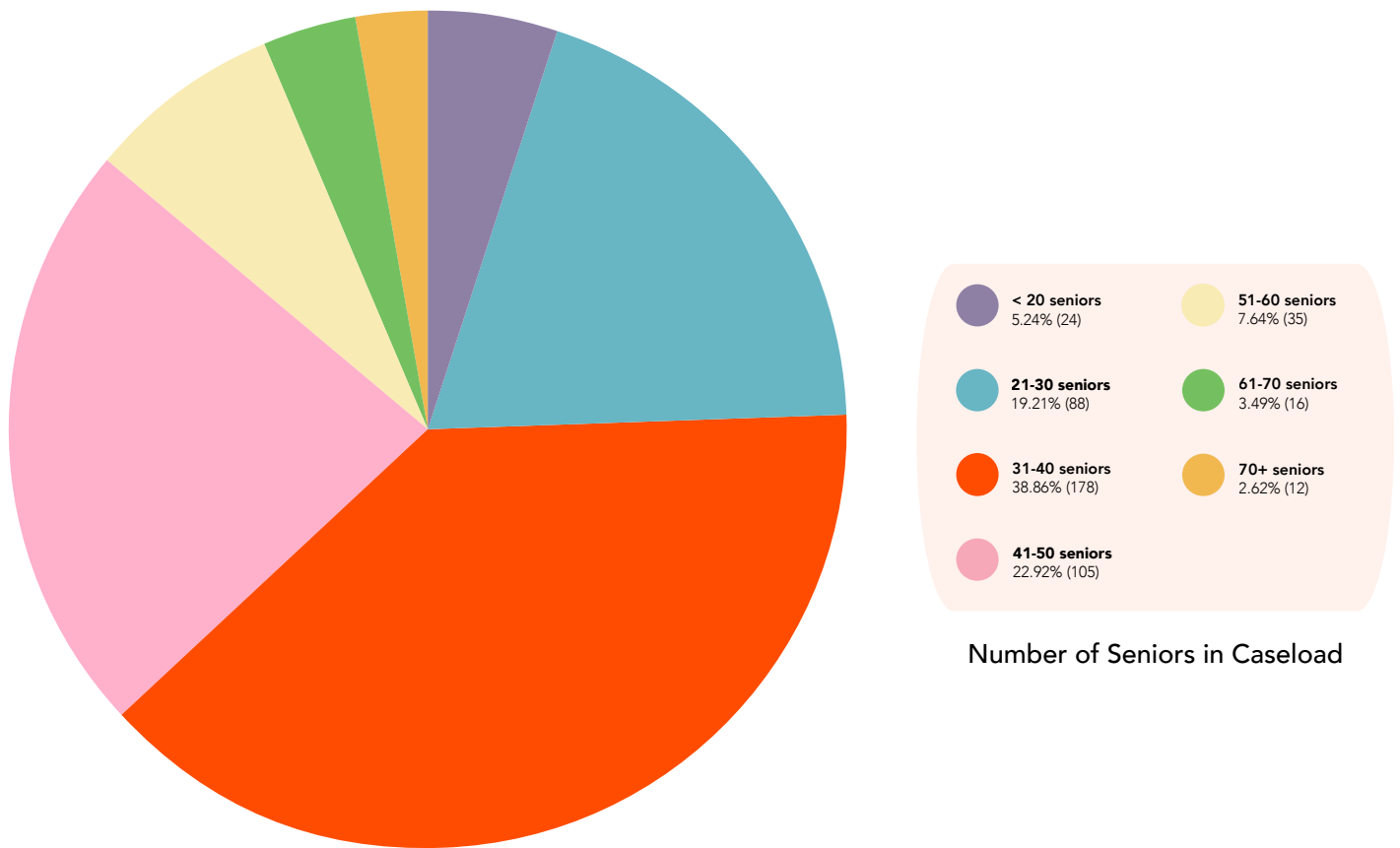
Counselors in Context, Continued

The majority of ACCIS member schools responding to our survey interact with their Board only once a year (52%); but slightly less than a quarter report to their school's governance more than twice in a given year. Roughly half of responding member schools assign students to a college counselor in junior year, 30% in the fall and 20% in the spring. Of note, 11% indicated that there are no formal counseling assignments for students. Collaboration between college counseling and diversity, equity, and inclusion groups at our responding member schools was strong, with 86% (205 schools) indicating a working relationship between these departments.



ACCIS Survey Results

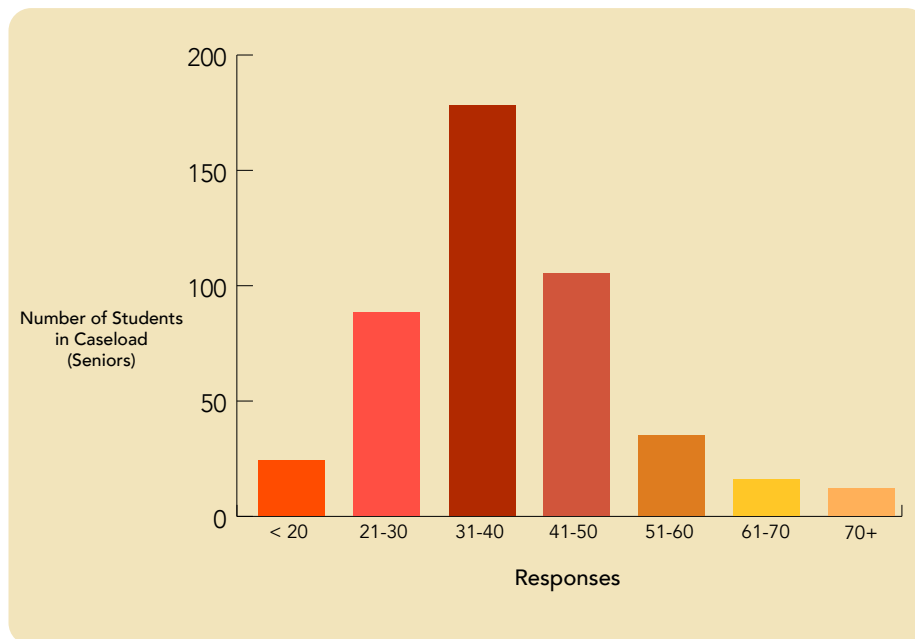
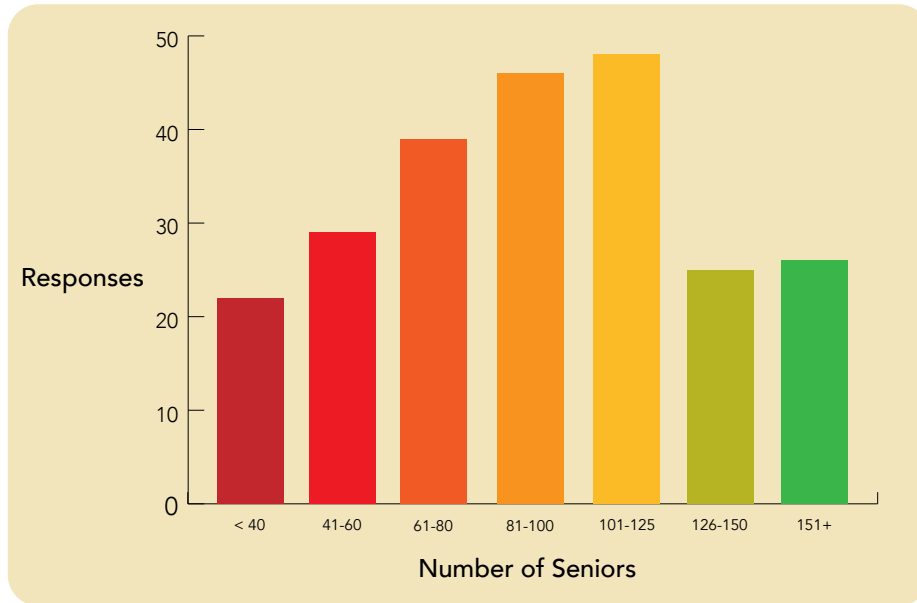
Counselors in Context, Continued



One of the most common questions on our ACCIS College Counseling E-list and a frequent inquiry received by the DTA Committee involves the number of college counselors per office and the student caseload of each counselor. The following visuals provide context on these queries and indicate that a majority of responding members assign between 30 and 40 students to each counselor (39% or 178 schools).

ACCIS Survey Results

Counselors in Context, Continued



ACCIS Survey Results

IV. Conclusions

We hope that these surveys open a door for a deeper analysis of the member and school data to guide our conversations, aspirations, and programming over the coming months and years. Our hope is to systematize and conduct annual surveys to continually refresh this information, always keeping in mind the importance of a DEI lens as we explore the collected data. The full dataset for this publication is available and can be provided upon request.

Acknowledgements:

We want to thank Juan Acosta, Frank Cabrera, Michelle Davis, Professor Hadas Eidelman (Harvard University Graduate School of Education), Natasha Go, Scottie Hill, Emmi Harward, Beth Pili, Stacy Richardson, Ashley Terry, David Thompson, and Alyson Tom for their candor and feedback in strengthening and making us conduct questions through an anti-racist approach. We want to especially acknowledge Alyson Tom for pointing out the problematic framing of a question we included in the original survey, which we removed and is not part of the data used in this survey. We apologize for including it as it uphold the “model minority” myth and how looking at Asian and Asian American communities in aggregate serves to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and erase many populations entirely. We made the mistake of drawing from other survey models in framing this question at a time when we should have looked more thoughtfully at who we, and other surveys, include and exclude.

Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools
April 2021