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## CHAPTER 3

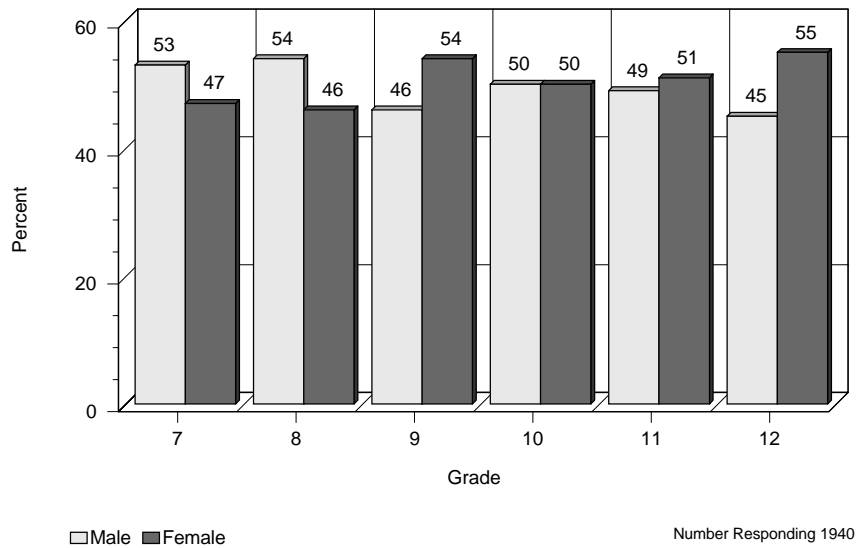
# Characteristics of the Merrimack School District Students and Their Families

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To give readers an overview of local teens, this chapter provides a summary of demographic and family characteristics of the students who participated in the survey.

This report reflects the survey results of 1,940 students. These youth represent 86% of the student population in January, 2000; 90% of middle school students (grades 7 through 8) and 84% of high school students (grades 9 through 12). Of all the youth responding to the survey, 50% were male and 50% were female. Figure 3-1 shows the grade and gender breakdown of the sample. Of the middle school students, 53% were male and 47% were female. Of the high school students, 48% were male and 52% were female.

**Figure 3-1: Students Taking the TAP Survey**  
(By Grade and Gender)



*Note: Due to rounding, some graphs may not total 100%*

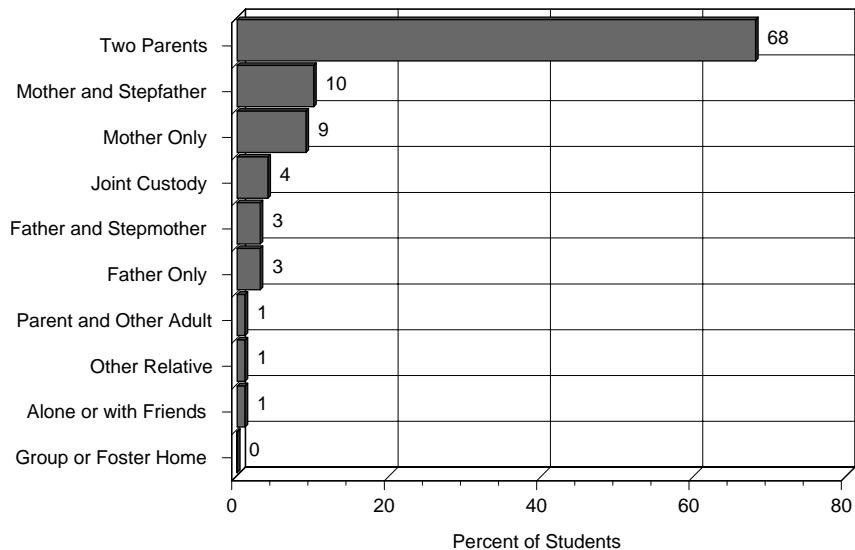
The following chart shows the number of usable surveys from students in each grade.

<u>Total</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
371	7 <sup>th</sup> graders	196	175
339	8 <sup>th</sup> graders	182	157
341	9 <sup>th</sup> graders	156	185
311	10 <sup>th</sup> graders	155	156
326	11 <sup>th</sup> graders	161	165
252	12 <sup>th</sup> graders	114	138

### **Family Characteristics**

Students reported a number of different family living situations. Figure 3-2 shows most students (68%) live with two parents. Other common living situations are single parent households (12%) and step-family households (13%). The remaining 10% of students live in other living situations. When looking at living situations by school level and gender, there are no differences.

**Figure 3-2: Family Living Situations**



Number Responding 1932

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the students reported that their biological parents have been involved in a separation or divorce. This contrasts with the number of students who say that their parents have never been divorced or separated (69%). As Figure 3-3 shows, the length of time since divorce ranges from currently happening now to more than ten years ago.

**Figure 3-3: Biological Parents Divorced or Separated**

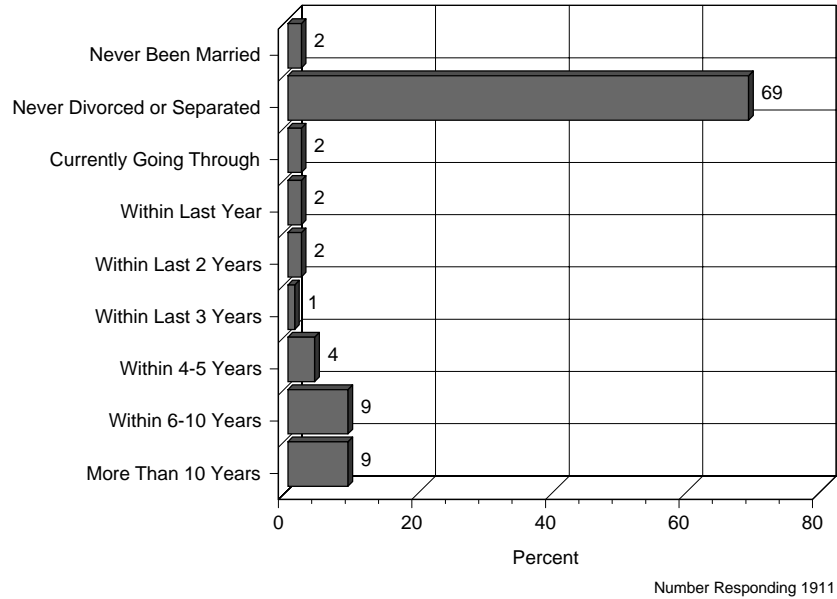
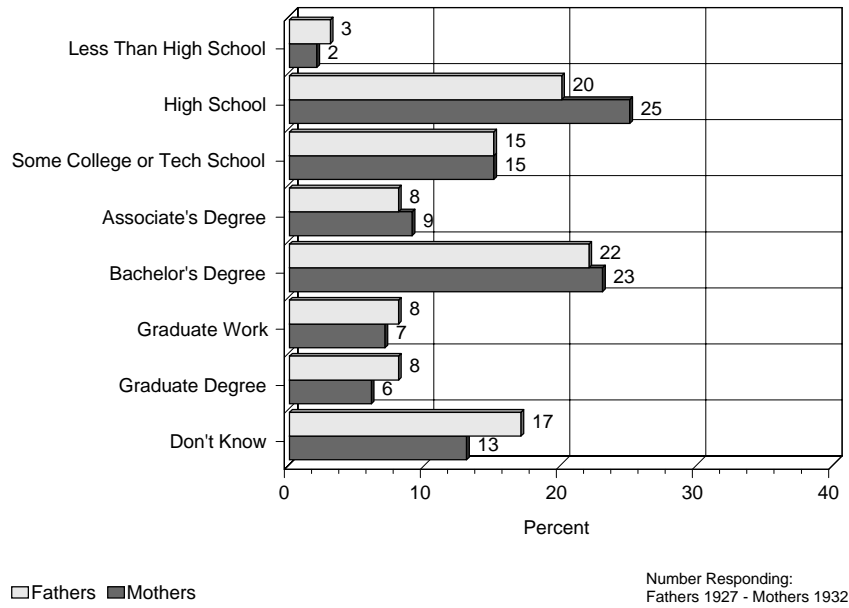


Figure 3-4 shows the range of parental education. Only 3% of all fathers and 2% of all mothers have less than a high school education. In addition, 38% of the fathers and 36% of the mothers were reported to have a Bachelor's Degree or higher. There were no major differences in education levels of mothers and fathers.

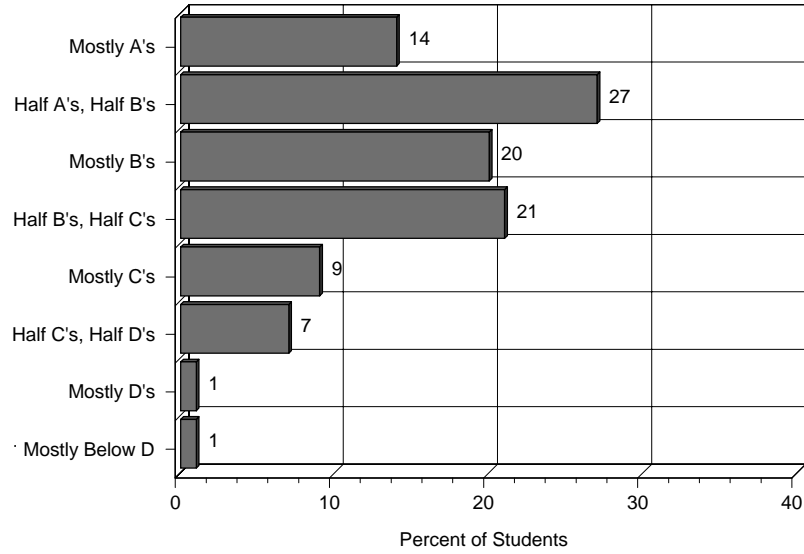
**Figure 3-4: Parental Education Levels**



**School Characteristics**

Most youth (91%) taking the survey reported they usually receive an average grade of "C" or better on their report cards. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the students reported having a "B" average or higher. Figure 3-5 shows the range of answers for the average letter grade teens receive.

**Figure 3-5: Average Student Letter Grade**



Number Responding 1931

Figure 3-6 shows the average letter grade by school level. Middle school students reported higher letter grades than high school students. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of middle school youth reported a "B" average or higher, while 58% of high school youth are in the same category.

**Figure 3-6: Average Student Letter Grade  
(By School Level)**

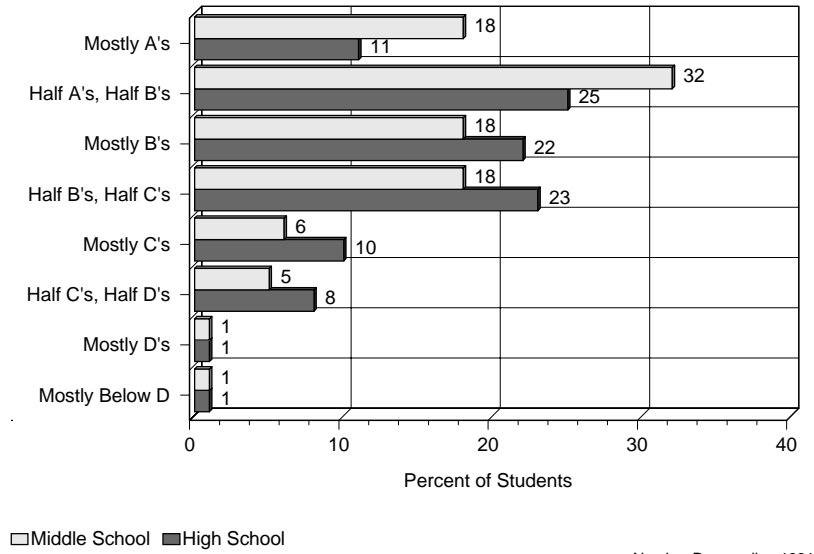


Figure 3-7 shows the differences in average letter grades by gender. It shows that females reported higher average grades than males. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of females reported a "B" average or higher, versus 55% of males.

**Figure 3-7: Average Student Letter Grade  
(By Gender)**

