

**DRAFT**

# **Grading System and Adjustment to Board Policy and Administrative Regulation**

**Special Board Meeting  
April 16, 2020**



# Overview of Agenda Item

- Background
- Outline Challenges to giving grades
- Discuss Various Policy Directions
  - Grade possibilities
  - Work to define grading systems in similar situations in the future
- Staff Thoughts on various options



# Background

**March 13th:** Schools Close through Spring Break

**March 20th:** School closure extended to May 4

**April 7th:** School closure officially extends to end of school year

**March 12th:** Board Meeting - grading policies were reviewed



# Background (continued)

**March 12th to 25th:** Input from site administrators, teacher leaders and Association

**March 26th:** Board Meeting - decision agendaized for Board Mtg. on April 7

**March 27th:** Staff, parent and student surveys administered and reviewed for data on current status for organization

**March 26th to present:** Significant public input/concern via email about proposed credit/no credit plan

**April 7th:** Board meeting postponed for further analysis

**April 16th:** Tonight's Board Meeting



# Present Situation

- Teachers need direction to productively plan their instruction for the remainder of the school year
- Monday, April 20 will be an additional teacher work day to plan according to board direction tonight
- There are other issues such as graduation, supporting students and graduating students, and other parts of school operation that need attention
- More time will not provide additional information
- There is no proposal that will satisfy all stakeholders



# UC System Perspective/Pronouncement

- The temporary suspension of the letter grade requirement in A-G courses completed in winter/spring/summer 2020 extends to all students currently enrolled in high school who may apply to UC for admission to fall 2021, 2022 or 2023. For admission purposes, UC will continue to calculate a GPA using all A-G courses completed with letter grades in grades 10 and 11, including summer terms following grades 9, 10 and 11. Courses completed with Pass or Credit grades in winter/spring/summer 2020 will not be used in the GPA calculation but will meet A-G subject area requirements. **No student will be penalized in the campus admission review processes for earning Pass grades in A-G coursework during the winter/spring/summer 2020 terms.**



# Additional Messaging from UC

*Even though honors/AP/IB courses completed with Pass or Credit grades won't be included in the GPA calculation, they will still be counted in the honors course tallies for each student. So, students will still show that they completed a full year of an AP course, but the GPA will only be calculated with the grade from that first semester (the one with the letter grade) and one additional point (if the District went with CR/NC).*

Message to SMUHSD staff from Manager, Policy Implementation & Admissions Evaluation, University of California | Office of the President



# Challenges for Students (continued)

Over 30% of our Students have obstacles that are exaggerated by the present circumstances

## Enrollment

### District Demographics

| Student Group                   | Total | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Homeless                        | 14    | 0.2%       |
| English Learners                | 880   | 9.8%       |
| Foster Youth                    | 11    | 0.1%       |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 2,464 | 27.3%      |
| Students with Disabilities      | 916   | 10.2%      |



# Challenges for Students

- In a survey by a school counselor, over **sixty percent** of students report that they have to help their families with daycare
- Many students are having to work to replace family income lost at this time
- Unemployment, family trauma, sickness, stress, and social isolation are on the rise and reported in District surveys
- Efforts to provide equal opportunity through providing hotspots and chromebooks have helped, but resource differences exacerbate inequalities



# Challenges for All Students

## Economic and Other Costs

- **Untold family job losses, furloughs, economic uncertainty and disruption to routine**
- **All club, sports, extracurricular and co-curricular experiences have been lost**
- **Relationships with teachers, staff members, friends, and romantic interests have been severed**
- **Rites of passage including graduation, senior days, senior prom, and the like will not take place in the same way, if at all**



# Some Challenges for Teachers

- Pre-pandemic grading systems weigh tests and other in-class assessments heavily. These are not practical now.
- Large gaps in student access and motivation for reasons that include differentials in tech access, family/work obligations, comfort with on-line participation, as well as other reasons unknown to staff.
- Many subjects including science, CTE, visual/performing arts, physical education, and those with labs and performance requirements are extremely difficult to teach and learn virtually and the rigor of online learning is not on par with in-person teaching/learning of these subjects



# Challenges for Teachers (cont.)

- Wide variation in teachers' abilities to provide high quality, engaging virtual lessons as well as knowing how long various assessments will take.
- Lingering feelings among teachers that they should be doing more in order to match the experience students had before school closure when this is impossible in a virtual environment
- At present, teachers must also create a new grading system with no experience or training teaching virtually
- Teachers have their personal sources of stress including child care for their own children, relatives, and loved ones.



# Different Grading Systems Reviewed:

1. **Choice 1:** Student Choice for Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit
2. **Choice 2:** Credit/No Credit for all students
3. **Choice 3:** Credit+ /Credit/ No Credit for all students
4. **Choice 4:** Grades with Compassion



# Choice 1 - Students/Families choose Grades or Credit/No Credit

Students/families would have the option of choosing a letter grade or credit/no credit at some point this semester, potentially after knowing what the grade would be



# Advantages and Disadvantages

## Choice 1 - Students/Families choose Grades or Credit/No Credit

### Advantages

- Allows high-performers who continue to receive high marks to have grades reflected on transcripts
- Continues to provide students' with the progress using A-F grade system
- Provides agency for students/families at a time when this is absent in many areas
- Aligns with current transcript grade system

### Disadvantages

- Grading system will have larger consequences on students who chose CR or No Credit -
- Students who choose C/NC will feel need to explain reasons for choosing this grading option for colleges, etc.
- Regardless of intent, students who are disproportionately affected by pandemic will have to choose C/NC more often



# Choice 2 - Credit/No Credit for All

**All students either receives Credit or No Credit for every class**



# Advantages and Disadvantages : Credit/ No Credit for all Students

## Advantages

- Accounts for the inconsistency in support systems for students (technology, in-person support, home structures, etc)
- Allows all students to maintain GPA that they had in Fall 2019
- Ensures that students who are impacted by virus are not also doubly penalized
- Communicates consistent stance to colleges/universities on grading in SMUHSD
- Will not further exaggerate the inequities with the current virtual learning environment and provide district time to adjust to potential future closures without penalizing students
- Enjoys the broad support of almost all administrators, counselors and teacher leadership

## Disadvantages

- Some students may lose motivation to excel or engage
- Students who were anticipating a GPA bump for honors/AP courses
- Mark will not provide same detail as an A to F grading system



# Choice 3: Credit+ /Credit/ No Credit for all students

Students receive one of three marks on their transcript:

**Credit +:** Students enrolled in courses that provide an extra GPA point would receive an extra point for each course in which they are enrolled.

**Credit:** Students receive credit for their courses and are able to move on to the next level. There is no impact on student's GPA.

**No Credit:** Students do not receive credit for the course, they will need to repeat course as appropriate. There is no impact on students' GPA.



# Choice 4: Grades with Compassion

The Board's expectation would be that every effort would be made to give students the benefit of the doubt in terms of grades. Stated another way, our grading policy should "do no harm" (see attachment)

In this choice, students would receive a mark of either A, B, C, No Credit or Incomplete

The vast majority of grades would be "A" grades



# Advantages and Disadvantages: Grades with Compassion

## Advantages

- Potentially accounts for the inconsistency in support systems for students (technology, in-person support, home structures, etc)
- Allows students to benefit from GPA bump from honors and AP courses
- Ensures that students who are impacted by virus are not also doubly penalized
- Recognizes that many students looked to this semester as an opportunity to boost their GPA, demonstrate improvement, and show their academic ability
- Is the most compassionate model - the system would move toward A grades for most students

## Disadvantages

- Teachers and staff would have to make decisions about grades based on information beyond the normal data (obstacles with technology, home environment, etc)
- Grade inflation - as written, the policy would result in the default grade being an "A" grade
- Challenges to addressing the normal rigor of lab-based courses in remote learning
- Requires students/families to share their challenges
- Does not have the broad support of teachers and administrators
- Challenges our in-process system of support to be vigilant in identifying student needs/challenges



# ■ Staff Recommendation

Staff believes Credit/No Credit and Grades with Compassion are the options with the most merit.

This is a tough decision, with Credit/No Credit having much more support among staff and is being adopted by more school districts



## Next Steps

- Board provides staff direction on grading system for Spring Semester grades
- Staff returns with revised BP/AR in May that reflects Board's direction
- Staff will use Monday, April 20 to assist staff in creating communications to students
- Staff will prepare report to the board in June with findings from our experience and how we would prepare for the fall if virtual learning continues

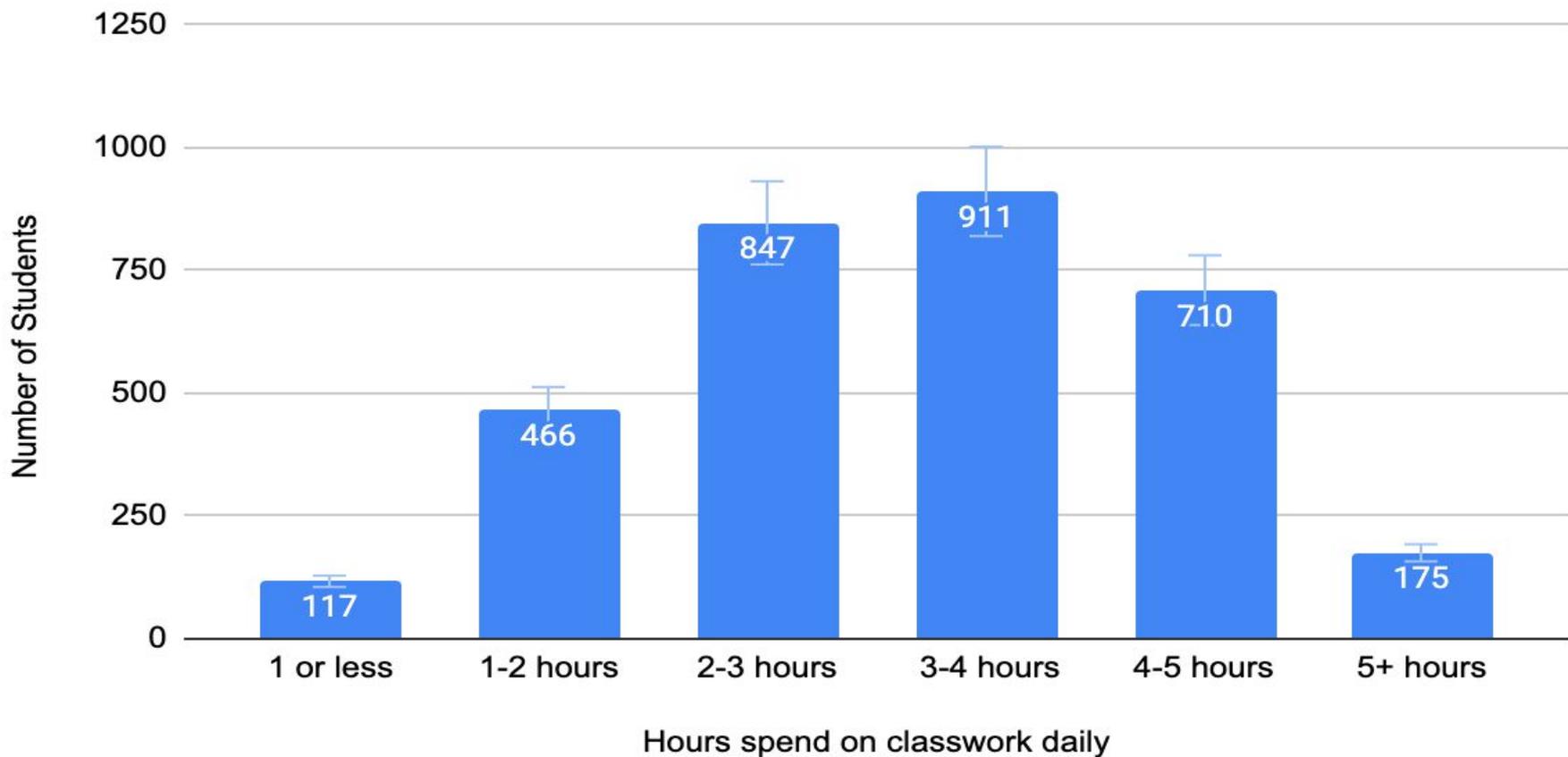


# APPENDIX



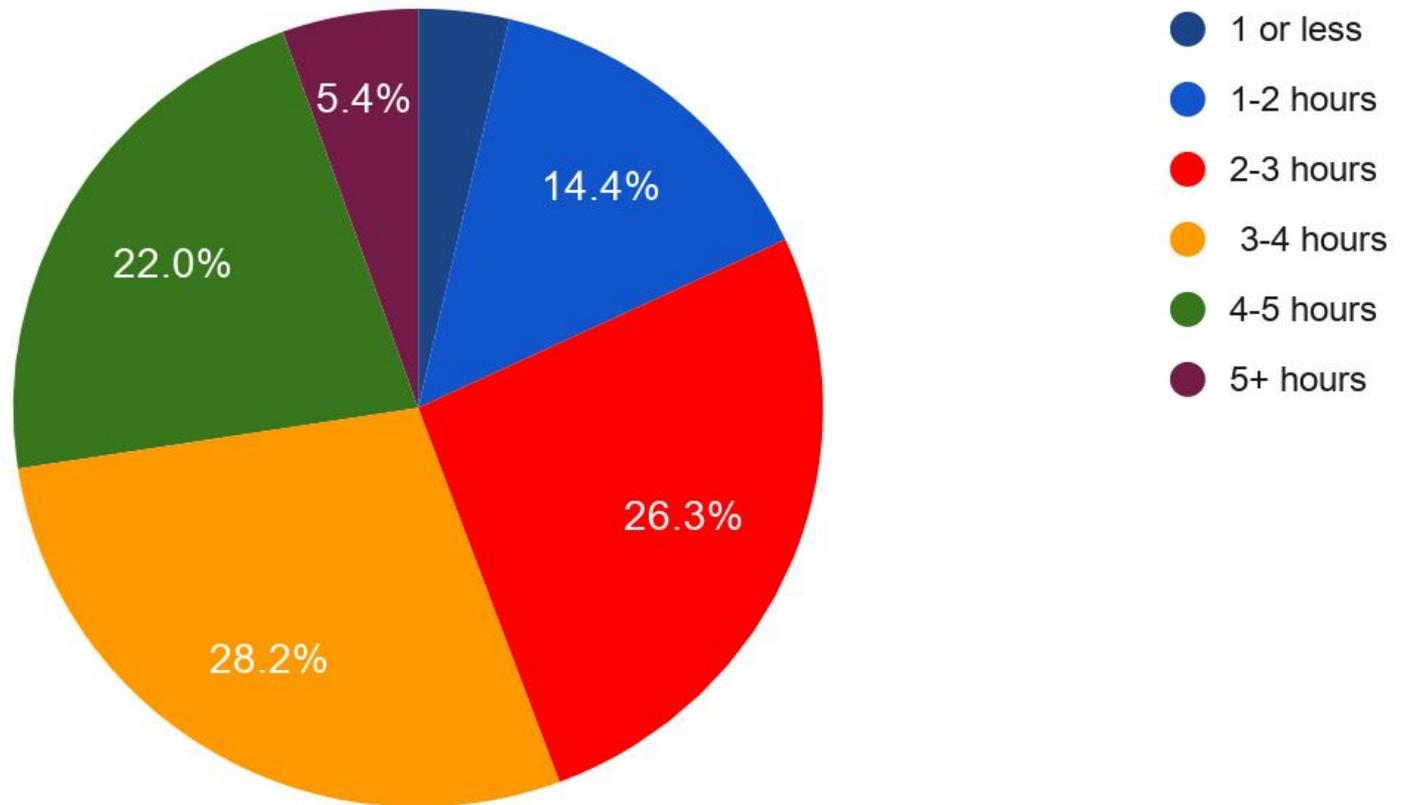
# Time Spent on Classwork

## Hours Students Report Spending on Classwork Daily



# Student Survey

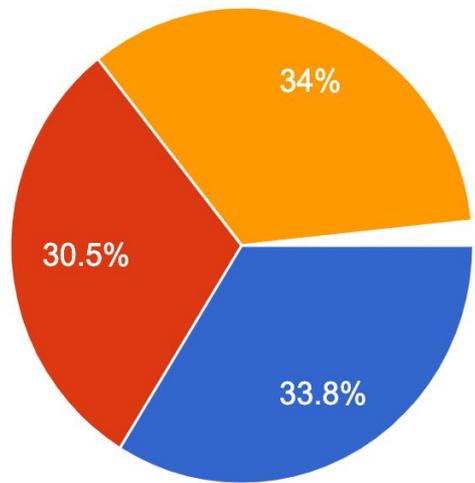
## Percentage of Student Responses by Hours Spent on Classwork



# Optional Question on Student Survey (2573 responses)

Optional Question: Do you currently have responsibilities at home that can make completing school work challenging? (for example, caring for yo...er siblings, caring for someone ill, cooking, etc.)

2,573 responses



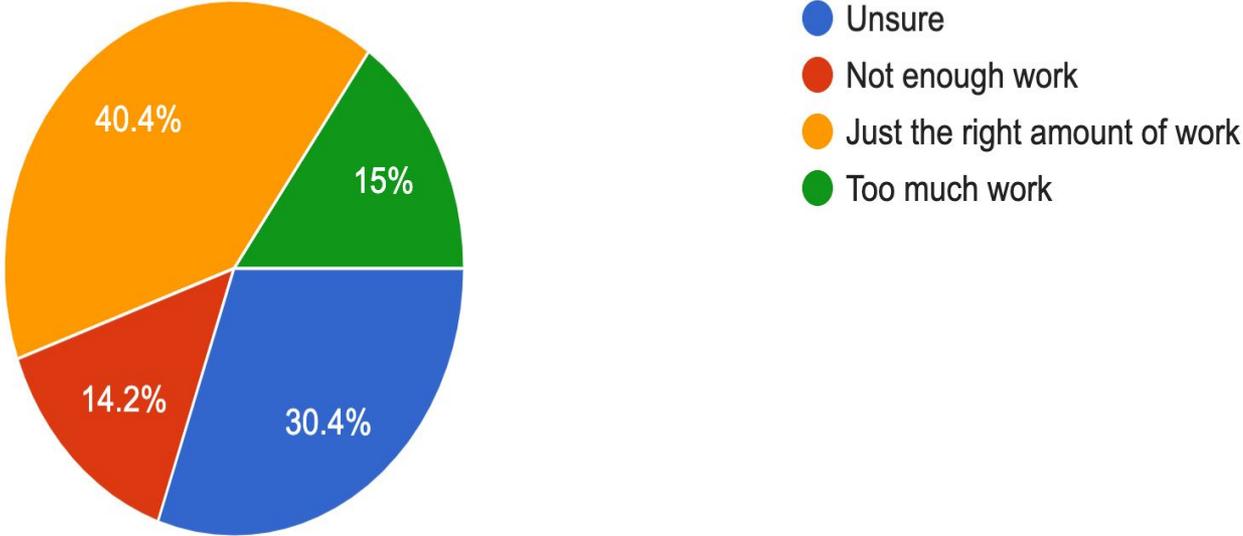
- Yes
  - No
  - Sometimes
  - i work 7-3 everyday min-fri
  - Going to work at a commercial business
  - When my parents are working, I some...
  - I have to teach for taekwondo
  - Musical instrument
- ▲ 1/6 ▼



# Parent/Family Survey

## 3. How much school work is your student expected to complete each day?

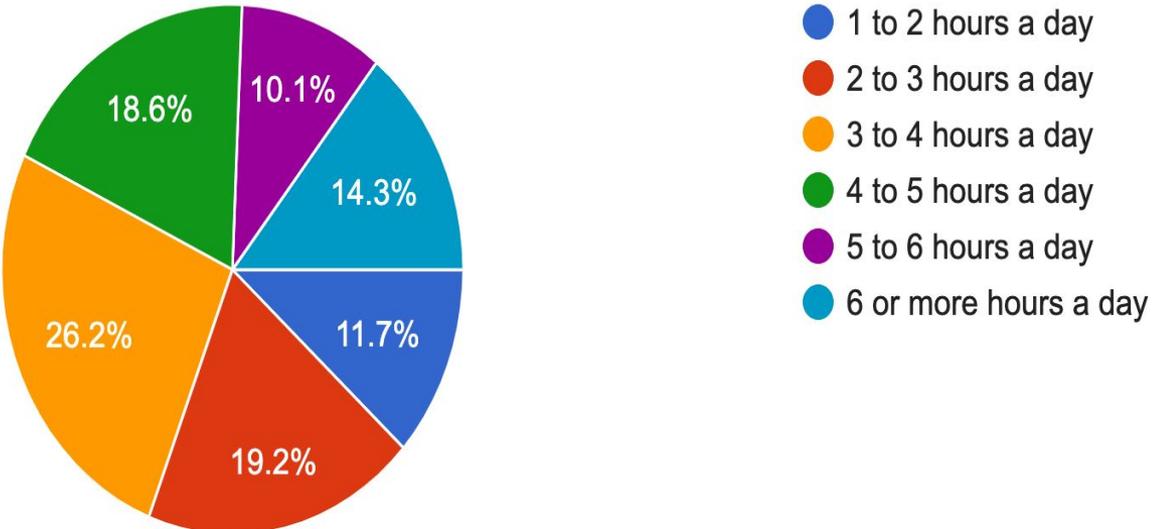
1,031 responses



# Parent/Family Survey

## 2. How much time is your student spending on school work each day?

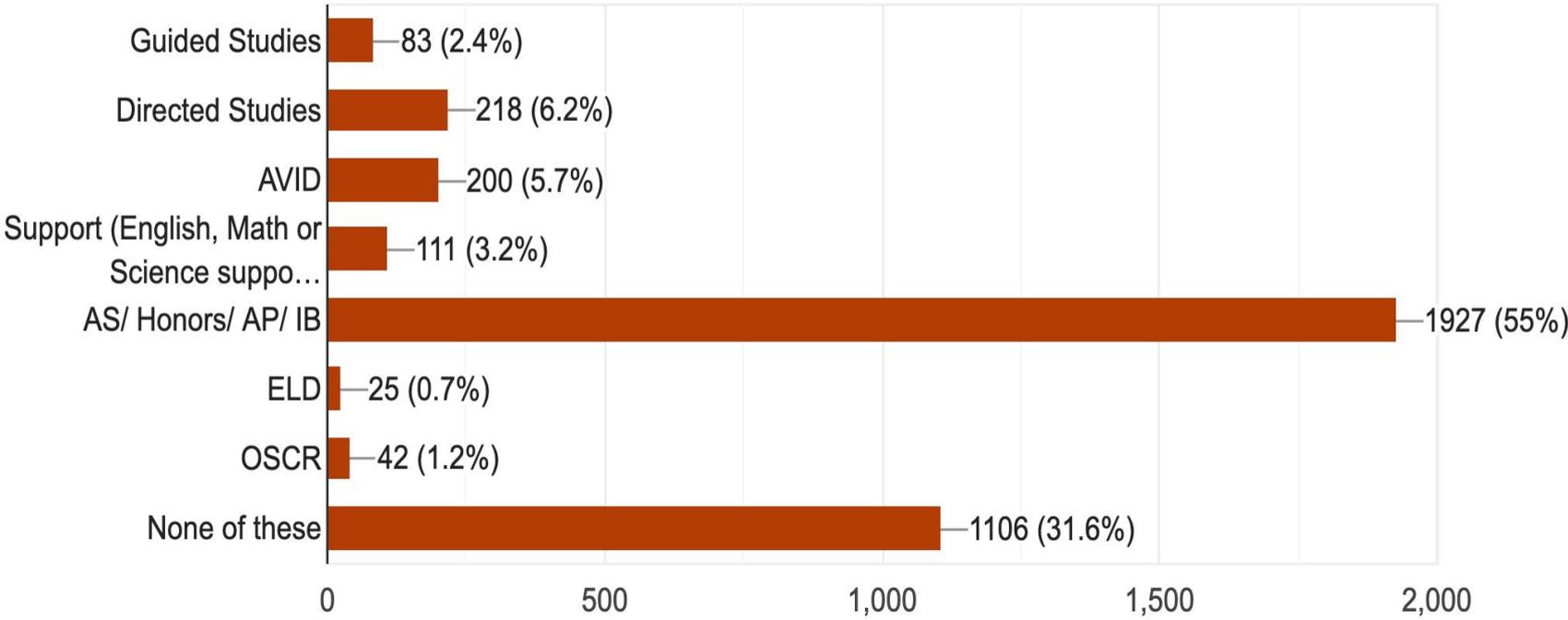
1,023 responses



# Student Survey: 3504 responses

Are you enrolled in any of the following classes? Check all that apply.

3,504 responses



# Challenges for Students

## Percentage of Student Responses Indicating Additional Responsibilities or Demands on Time Outside of School Work (3505 response)

