



Independent Schools: Preparing Students for Achievement in College and Beyond

Key Findings From the Freshman Survey Trends Report

“Families across the country strive to provide their children with the best opportunities in life. Helping children get a high-quality education is one of the most important gifts parents can give their children.”

– Patrick F. Bassett

Every year, the families of more than half a million students in America choose independent schools (private, nonprofit schools that are governed by boards of trustees). There are more than 1,200 independent schools in the US that belong to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and each is unique in terms of its mission (what it sets out to do) and culture. This diversity of school types allows families to choose the environment that best meets the needs of each individual child.

Independent schools offer a vast array of programs and educational philosophies. There are boarding and day schools, urban, suburban, and rural schools. Some schools are traditional, others are more progressive. Some schools are competitive, while others provide a more nurturing environment. Some serve gifted students, others serve students with learning challenges, while still others serve both.

Most independent schools offer rigorous academic courses within close-knit communities. This environment helps children and adolescents develop into adults who are well-prepared to face the challenges of college and adult life. Many independent school graduates credit their schools with instilling a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. Graduates also cite the ethos of achievement, common at many independent schools, as an excellent foundation for success in college and career.

A partnership between NAIS and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) has enabled researchers to study the attitudes and aspirations of recent independent school graduates as they compare to their larger peer group. These findings offer insights into the ways independent schools help their students succeed:

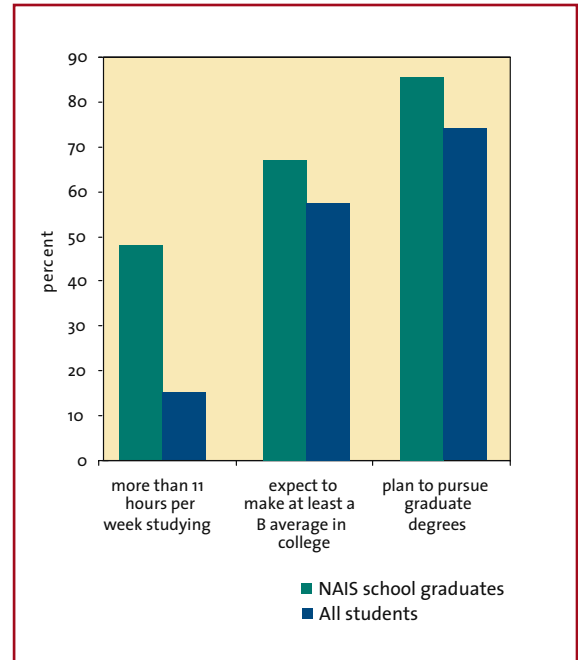
- Independent school graduates are committed to achievement. They have high educational aspirations and work hard to achieve their goals.
- Independent school graduates are comfortable working closely with teachers and are more engaged in class.
- Independent school graduates are engaged in civic life. They are far more likely to vote in elections and to volunteer in their communities.
- Independent school graduates pursue active and educational leisure-time activities.

Please read further for the full report or visit the NAIS website at www.nais.org.

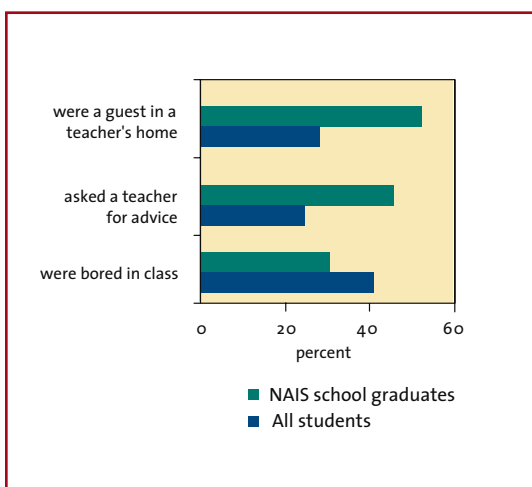
Patrick F. Bassett
President, NAIS

Study Habits and Educational Aspirations

- NAIS graduates were three times more likely than the group as a whole to report that they spent more than 11 hours per week studying or doing homework during their final year of high school (48 percent of NAIS students, compared to 15 percent of all students).
- 85 percent of NAIS students go on to attend “very high” or “highly selective” colleges and universities.
- 34 percent attend private universities.
- 18 percent attend public universities.
- 18 percent attend Catholic or other religious universities.
- More than two-thirds (67 percent) of NAIS students expected to make at least a B average in college, compared to 58 percent of all students.
- 86 percent of NAIS school graduates planned to pursue a postgraduate degree, versus 74 percent of all students.



Working Closely with Teachers



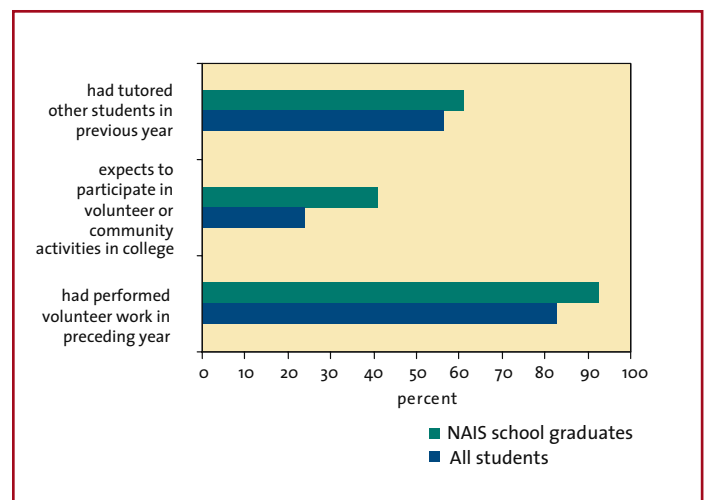
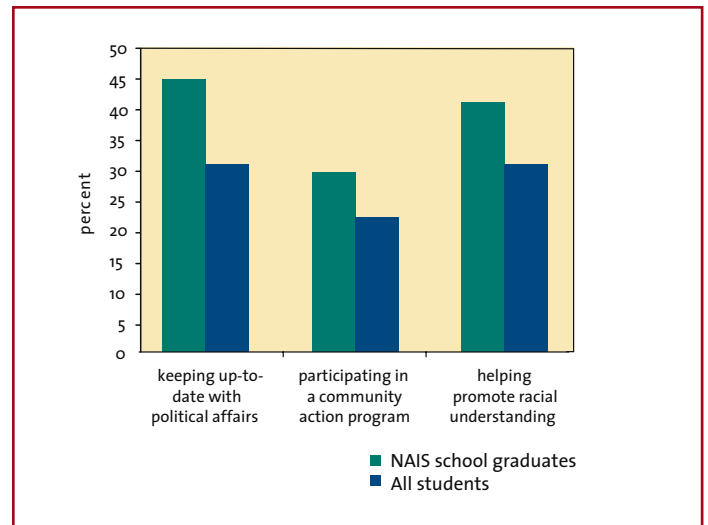
- NAIS students were far less likely than the group as a whole to report that they had been bored in class during the preceding year.
- NAIS graduates were almost twice as likely to have “asked a teacher for advice after class” (46 percent for NAIS students, 25 percent for all students) or to have “been a guest in a teacher’s home” (52 percent for NAIS students, 28 percent for all students) within the previous year.

Civic Responsibility and Social Attitudes

Almost three-quarters of the students surveyed said that raising a family was “essential” or “very important” to them, regardless of the type of secondary school they attended.

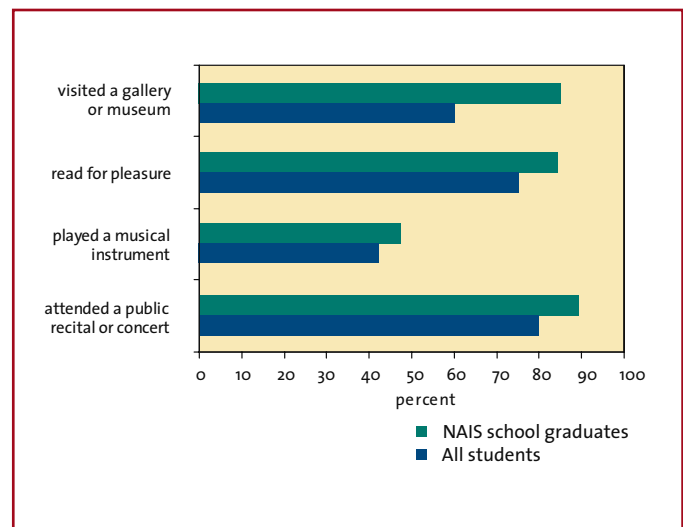
There were several areas, however, in which independent school graduates differed significantly from their peers:

- NAIS graduates were far more inclined to consider “keeping up-to-date with political affairs” essential (46 percent NAIS, 31 percent all).
- 37 percent of NAIS students and 25 percent of the whole group reported that they had voted in a student election within the last year.
- 30 percent of independent school graduates thought that “participating in a community action program” was essential, versus 23 percent of the total group.
- 93 percent of NAIS graduates and 83 percent of all students had performed volunteer work in the previous year.
- 41 percent of NAIS graduates said they expect to participate in volunteer or community activities in college, versus just 24 percent of the whole group. In both groups, young women were twice as likely as young men to report that they planned to volunteer.
- 61 percent of NAIS school graduates had tutored other students during the preceding year, compared to 56 percent of all students.
- “Helping to promote racial understanding” was rated essential by 42 percent of NAIS graduates, compared to 32 percent of all students.
- NAIS school graduates were far more likely to have socialized with someone from another racial/ethnic group during the preceding year (82 percent for NAIS graduates, 70 percent for all).



Recreational Activities

- In the year prior to the survey, NAIS school graduates were more likely to have...
 - attended a public recital or concert (89 percent NAIS, 80 percent all)
 - played a musical instrument (47 percent NAIS, 42 percent all)
 - spent time reading for pleasure (84 percent NAIS, 75 percent all)
 - visited an art gallery or museum (85 percent NAIS, 60 percent all).
- More than two-thirds (67 percent) of NAIS graduates spent six or more hours per week exercising or engaging in sports during the last year of high school, compared to 50 percent of all students.



More information about the Freshman Survey Trends Report

The Freshman Survey Trends Report is a longitudinal study of the American higher education system that charts national normative data on the characteristics of students attending colleges and universities as first-time, full-time freshmen. The survey is conducted annually by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), based at the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Independent schools are distinct from other non-public schools in that they are independently governed by a board of trustees, and they are funded primarily through tuition, charitable contributions, and endowment income. To be eligible for membership in NAIS, schools must be accredited, nondiscriminatory, 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations.



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