

WA COVID-19 **STUDENT** **SURVEY 2022**

School Experiences **Topic Summary**

Washington State **Middle School Students**

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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

W UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Brief Overview of the COVID-19 Student Survey:

In February 2022, nearly 8,000 middle school students grades 6-8 completed an online survey to assess behaviors and attitudes across a number of health domains relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information about the survey or to view other reports, please visit:

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey>

The purpose of this document is to describe school experiences within subpopulations of the middle school sample to assess whether certain students have been affected differently than others. This report examines school climate (including engagement and safety) as well as absenteeism and learning by self identified ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, migratory working family status, and financial distress.

Background on School Experiences

- School climate, including connectedness and safety, is associated with adolescent mental health (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018).
- The COVID-19 pandemic created a significant disruption of learning and development, particularly among more disadvantaged students (Garcia & Weiss, 2020).
- School closures during COVID-19 may have increased the likelihood of learning loss among the most vulnerable students due to the rapidity with which they were implemented and underlying inequities (Cicero et al., 2020).
- Identification of students struggling to re-engage with schools may serve to guide safely reopening schools and aid in offsetting the risk for widening disparities in student performance (Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020).

What Does the Middle School Sample Look Like?

Survey participation was voluntary at both the school and student level. Therefore, **this is a convenience sample and is not intended to be generalized to the state population**. It is important to be thoughtful in how you interpret and use these results. When framing the findings, you might consider using language such as “Among participating students...” or “Of students who took the 2022 COVID-19 Student Survey...”.

The proportion of participating students within each demographic category are described in the table below.

Note: Students who reported “I do not know what this question is asking” or “I prefer not to answer” were not included in the analyses described in this document.

Sample Size and Proportion of Middle School Participants by Demographic Group

Race							Hispanic		Disability Status		Migratory Status	
<u>AIAN</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>NHOPI</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Multiple</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
521	408	319	138	3,643	1,533	800	1,969	5,647	475	5,533	776	5,993
(7/1%)	(5.4%)	(4.3%)	(1.9%)	(49.5%)	(20.8%)	(10.9%)	(25.9%)	(74.1%)	(7.9%)	(92.1%)	(11.5%)	(88.5%)
Gender Identity					Sexual Orientation					Financial Distress		
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Transgender</u>	<u>Questioning</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Heterosexual</u>	<u>Gay/Lesbian</u>	<u>Bisexual</u>	<u>Questioning</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
2,375	2,048	103	200	189	3,240	227	524	263	318	487	6,768	
(48.3%)	(41.7%)	(2.1%)	(4.1%)	(3.9%)	(70.9%)	(5.0%)	(11.5%)	(5.8%)	(7.0%)	(6.7%)	(93.3%)	

Key: AIAN = American Indian and Alaska Native, NHOPI = Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. For Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, “Other” refers to students who indicated that “Something else fits better”.

Survey Items to Identify Student Subgroups

Ethnicity:

Students were asked, “Are you Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx?” Students who indicated “Yes” were coded as Hispanic. Students indicating “No” were not. Ethnicity was treated separately from race. That is, a student’s response to this question was independent to their response for a question about race.

Race:

Students were asked, “What is your race?” They were shown a list of racial groups and were instructed to select all that applied to them. Students who selected more than one racial category were included in the Multiple Race category.

Gender Identity:

For gender identity, students were asked, “How do you currently identify yourself?” Students were shown a list of responses that included “I do not know what this question is asking” and “I prefer not to answer.” Students who did not know what the question was asking or who preferred not to answer were not included in the analyses for these respective subgroup comparisons. **Note that this question was not asked of 6th grade students, so all comparisons by gender identity have excluded 6th grade students.**

Sexual Orientation:

Sexual orientation was assessed with the question, “Which of the following best describes you?” This question was followed by a list of choices that included “I do not know what this question is asking” and “I prefer not to answer.” Students who did not know what the question was asking or who preferred not to answer were not included in the analyses for these respective subgroup comparisons. For the purpose of this summary, students that indicated that they identified as “Gay” or “Lesbian” were combined into one category. **Note that this question was not asked of 6th grade students, so all comparisons by sexual orientation have excluded 6th grade students.**

- **LGBTQ+:** In this document, we use LGBTQ+ to describe a diverse and encompassing range of minority sexualities and gender-identities that include (L)esbian, (G)ay, (B)isexual, (T)ransgender, (Q)uestioning and (+) additional gender identities and sexual orientations.

Students Identifying as Having a Disability or Long-term Health Condition:

Disability status was defined by whether a student responded “Yes” to the item, “Are you limited in any activities because of a disability or long-term health problem including physical health, emotional, or learning problems expected to last 6 months or longer?” Students were given the opportunity to select “I am not sure or I prefer not to answer” and these were excluded from analyses of these subgroup comparisons.

Students From a Migratory Working Family:

Migratory working family status was defined by whether a student endorsed the item, “Have you or your family moved in the past 3 years to another school district or city for **temporary or seasonal** work in agriculture, dairy or fishing?”

Financial Distress:

Financial distress was assessed by a student’s response to a single item, “How often during the current school year did you or your family have to cut meal size or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” Students that indicated that their family had to cut meal size or skip meals due to insufficient funds at any time during the past year were categorized as financially distressed.

Key Takeaways from Middle School Students Who Took the Survey

School Climate

- Half of all middle school students (50.3%) reported that they participated in extracurricular activities that were offered through their school or community. Students that identified as Hispanic, LGBTQ+, having a disability, being from a migratory working family, and who were identified as being financially distressed all reported lower rates of participation in extracurricular activities.
- Less than half (44.4%) of all middle school students reported a high sense of belonging at their school. Students that identified as LGBTQ+, having a disability, being from a migratory working family, and who were identified as being financially distressed all reported a lower sense of belonging.
- Two thirds of all middle school students (68.3%) reported that they felt safe at school. Students identifying as LGBTQ+, having a disability, and who were identified as being financially distressed reported a lower sense of safety at school.
- Nearly half (48.1%) of all middle school students reported that they enjoyed school. School enjoyment appeared lower among students identifying as transgender, those identifying as having a disability, or who were identified as being financially distressed.

Academic Engagement

- More than 3 out of 4 (78.2%) of all middle school students who completed this survey indicated that they tried their best at school.
- 41.9% of middle school students reported that their classes were interesting.
- Nearly a third (32.2%) of all middle school students reported that they were absent 3+ days during the past month. Students that identified as transgender (51.7%) and those identified as financially distressed (42.6%) were more likely to report 3+ absences over the past month.
- 70.4% of all middle school students reported that they learned more during this year compared to last year.

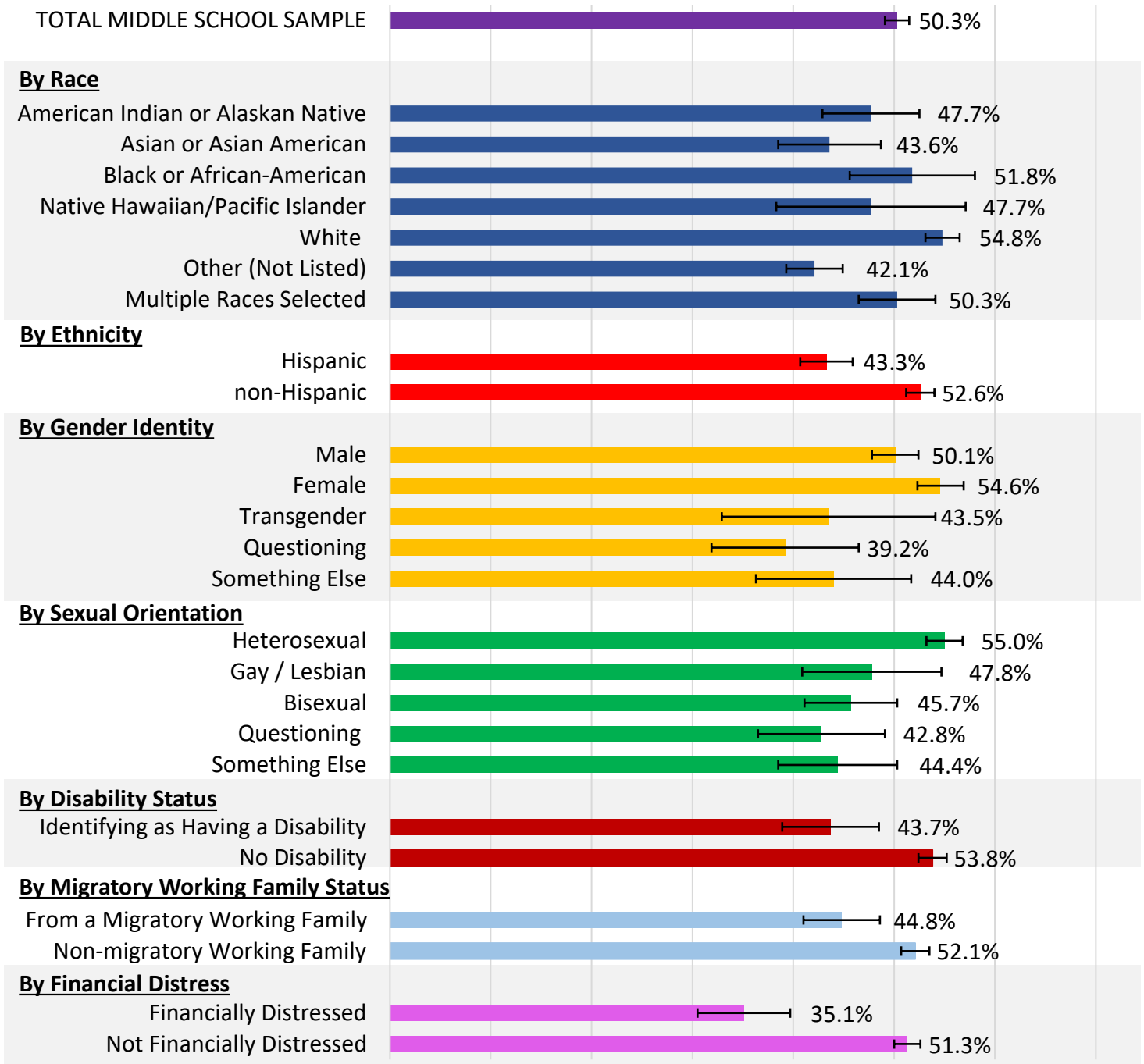
School Experiences: Middle School Students

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Item: *There are afterschool activities offered by my school or community (like sports, clubs, youth groups, dance, etc.) that... [I participate in]*

Percent of Students that Reported Participating in Extracurricular Activities

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported participating in extracurricular activities.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “I participate in”, “I would like to participate in but am unable to”, “I do not participate in and do not want to participate in” and “I do not know if there are activities offered by my school or community.” Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “I participate in.”
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

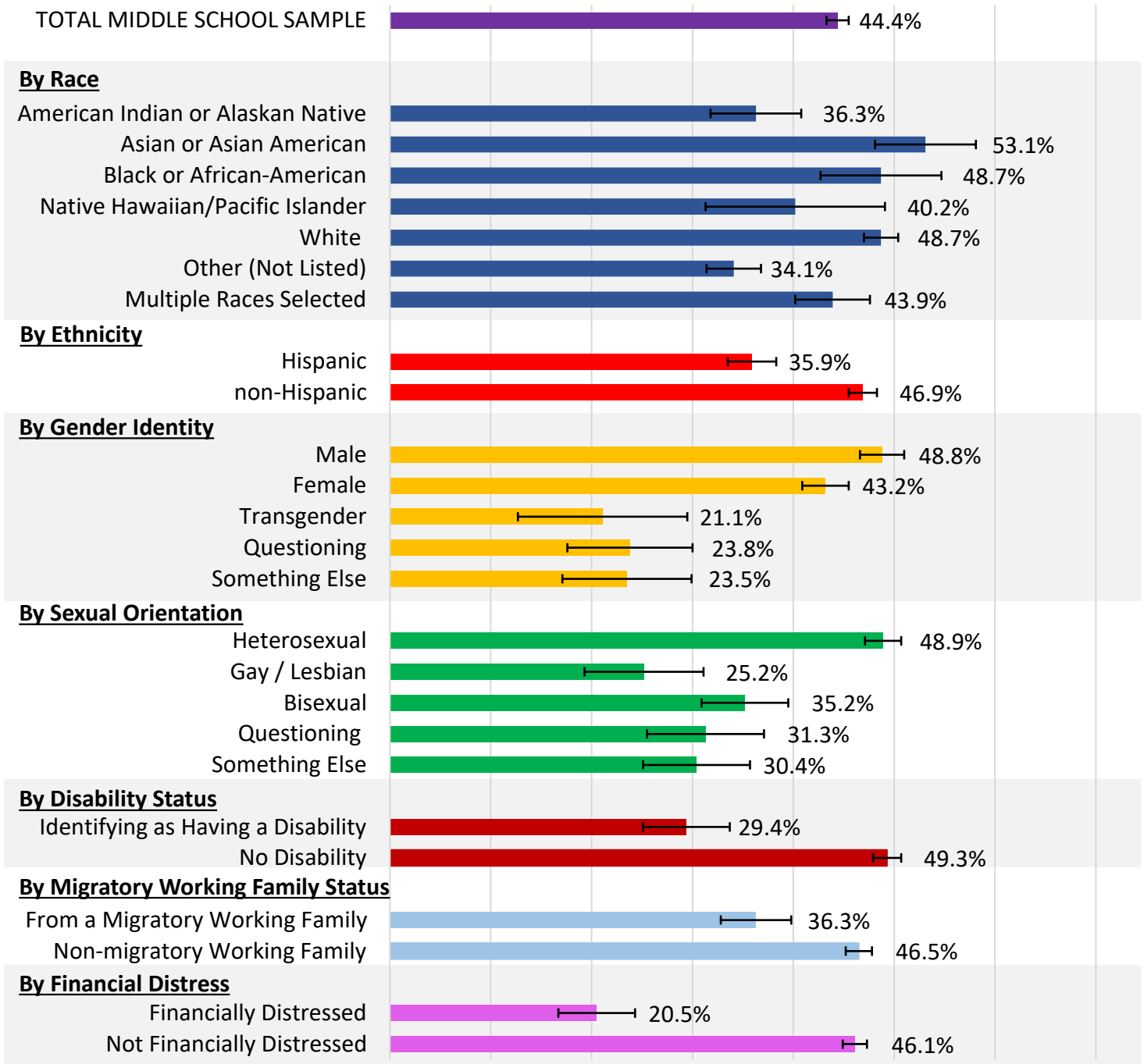
School Experiences: Middle School Students

Sense of Belonging

Question: *In the past school year, how often have you felt a sense of belonging at your school?*

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling a Sense of Belonging “Often” or “Very Often”

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling a strong sense of belonging.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “Never”, “Rarely”, “Sometimes”, “Often”, and “Very Often”. Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “Often” or “Very Often”.
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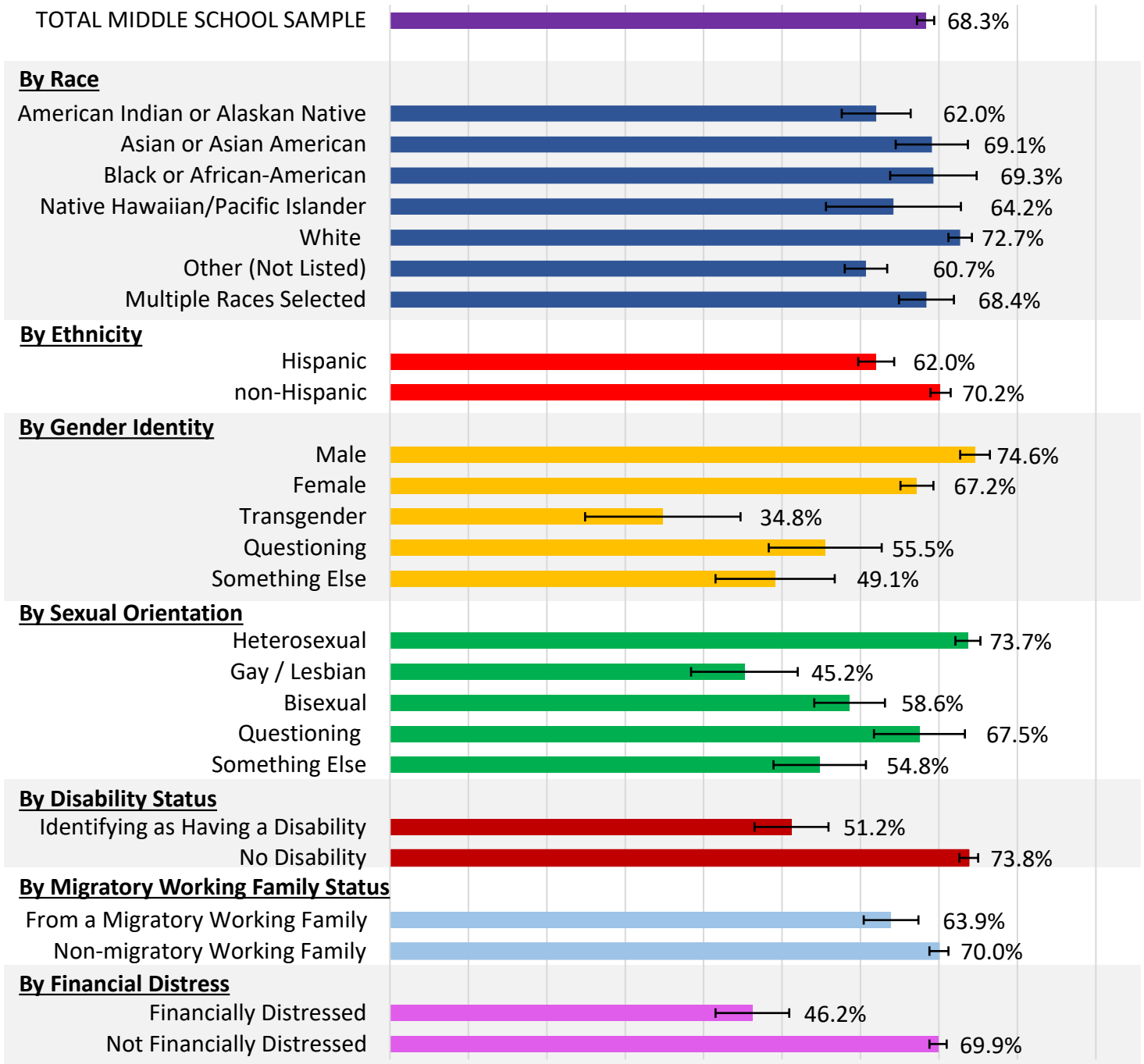
School Experiences: Middle School Students

Feeling Safe at School

Question: In the past school year, how often have you felt safe at school?

Percent of Students that Reported Feeling Safe at School "Often" or "Very Often"

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%



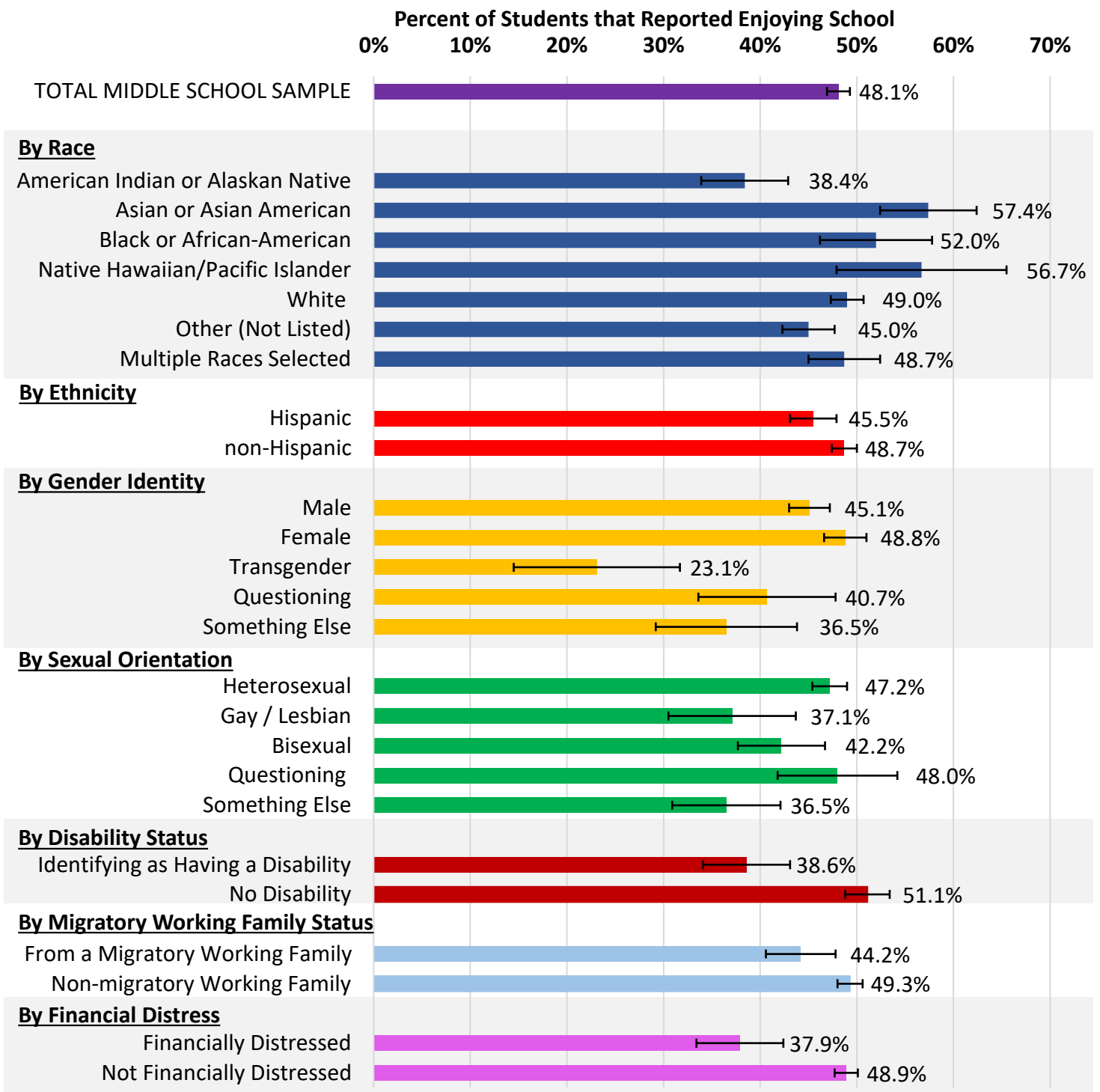
NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported feeling safe at school.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included "Never", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often", and "Very Often". Percentages shown above indicate those who selected "Often" or "Very Often".
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School Experiences: Middle School Students

School Enjoyment

Question: Over the past school year, how often did you enjoy school?



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported enjoying school.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “None of the time”, “A little of the time”, “Some of the time”, “A lot of the time”, “Most of the time”, and “All of the time”. Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “A lot of the time”, “Most of the time”, or “All of the time”.
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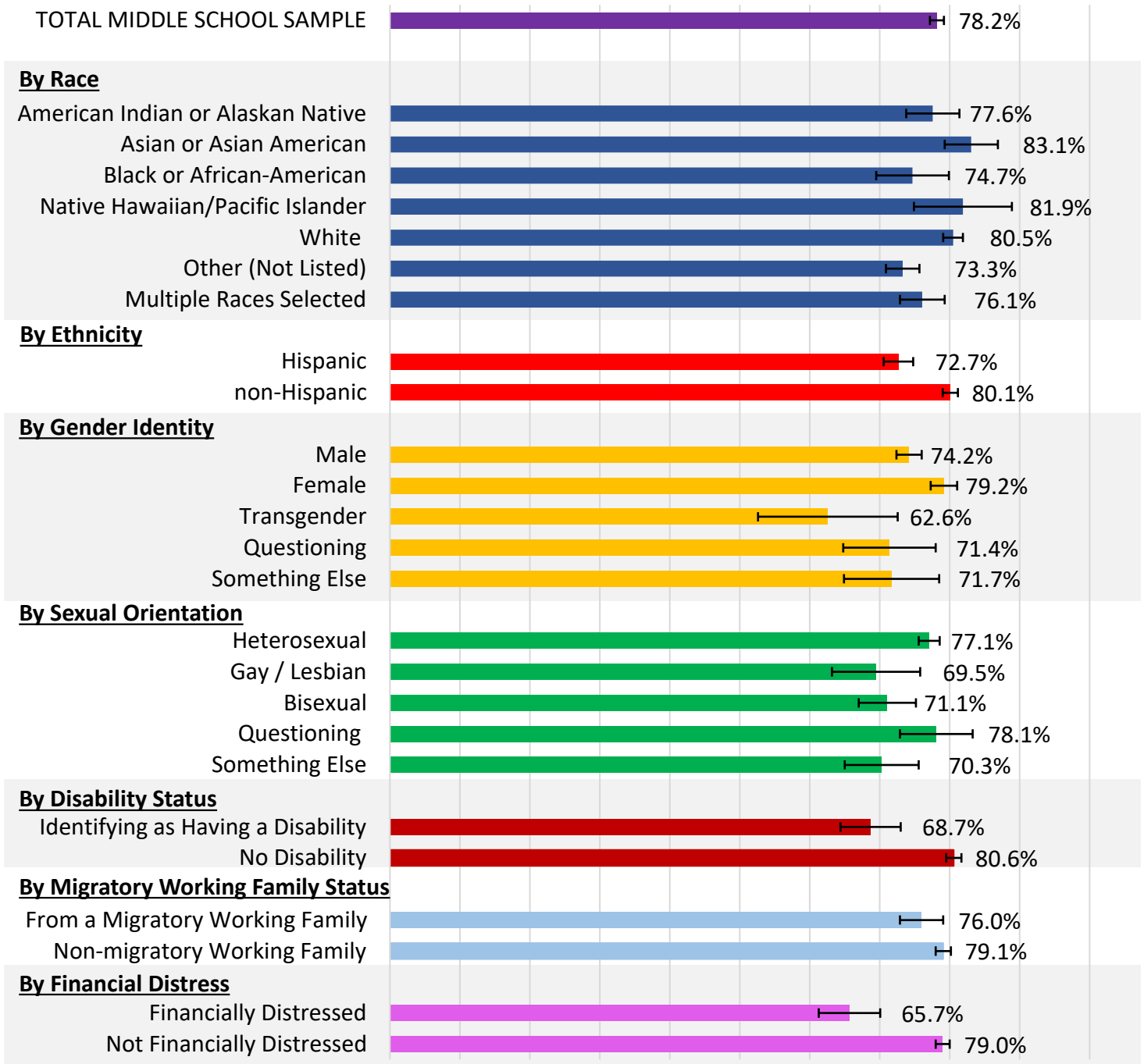
School Experiences: Middle School Students

School Effort

Question: Over the past school year, how often did you try to do your best work?

Percent of Students that Reported Trying their Best in School

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported trying their best in school.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “None of the time”, “A little of the time”, “Some of the time”, “A lot of the time”, “Most of the time”, and “All of the time”. Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “A lot of the time”, “Most of the time”, or “All of the time”.
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

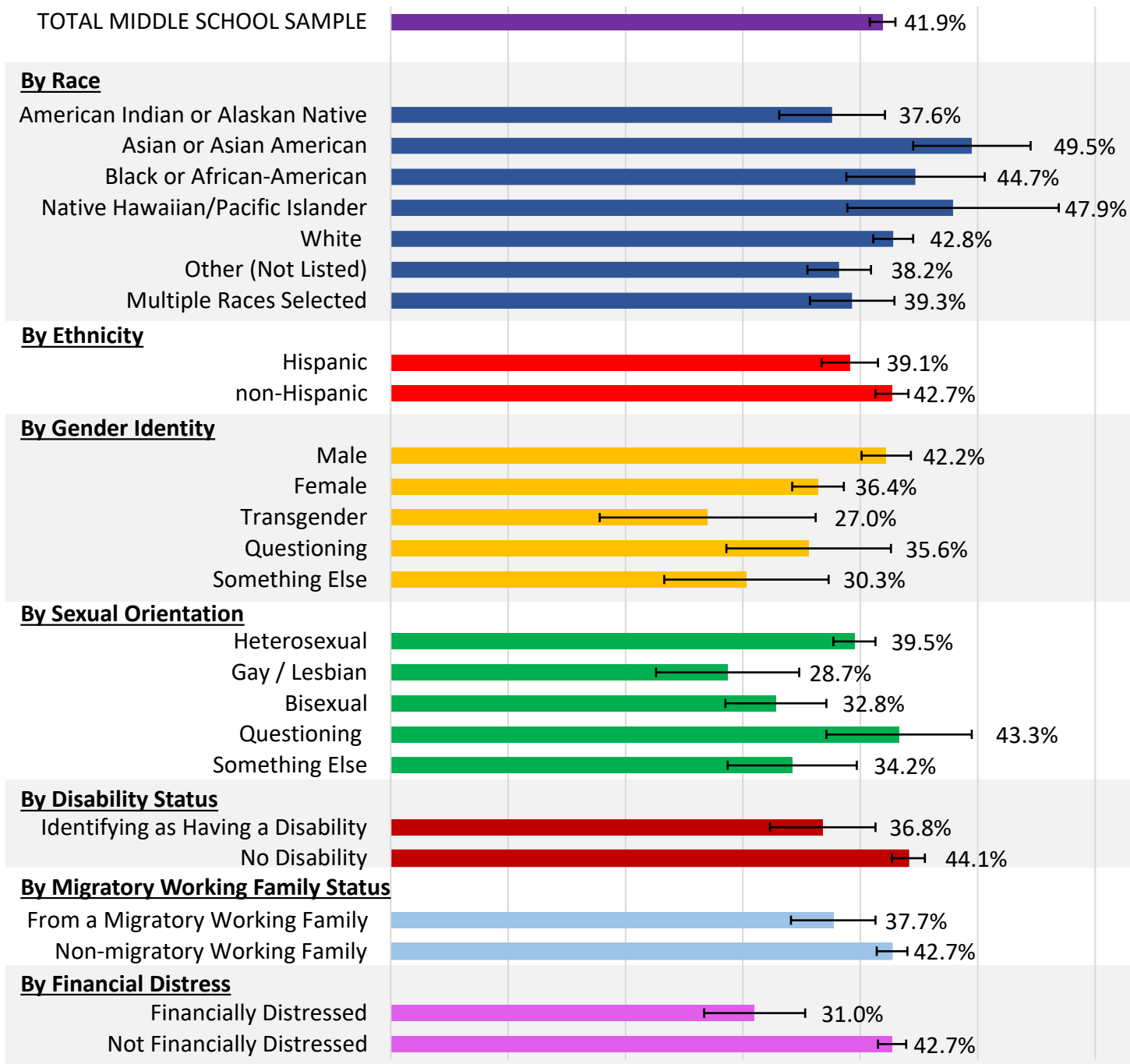
School Experiences: Middle School Students

Interested in School

Question: Over the past school year, how often did you think your classes were interesting?

Percent of Students that Reported Thinking their Classes were Interesting

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60%



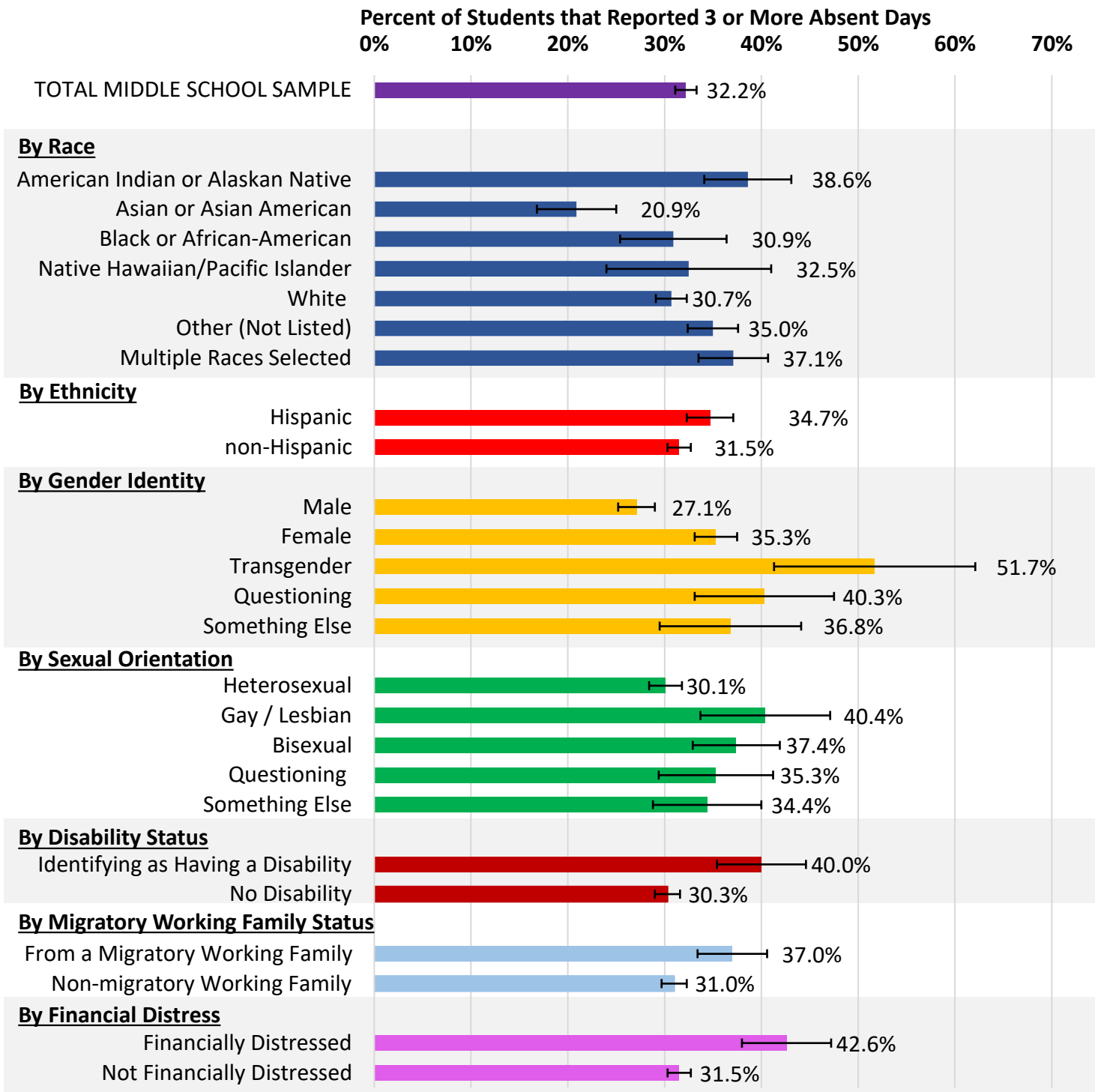
NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported thinking their classes were interesting.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included “None of the time”, “A little of the time”, “Some of the time”, “A lot of the time”, “Most of the time”, and “All of the time”. Percentages shown above indicate those who selected “A lot of the time”, “Most of the time”, or “All of the time”.
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School Experiences: Middle School Students

Absenteeism

Question: During the past 30 days, on how many days have you been absent from school for any reason? Include any days that you missed at least half of the school day.



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported being absent 3+ days in past month.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included "0 times", "1 or 2 days", and "3 or more days". Percentages shown above indicate those who selected "3 or more days".
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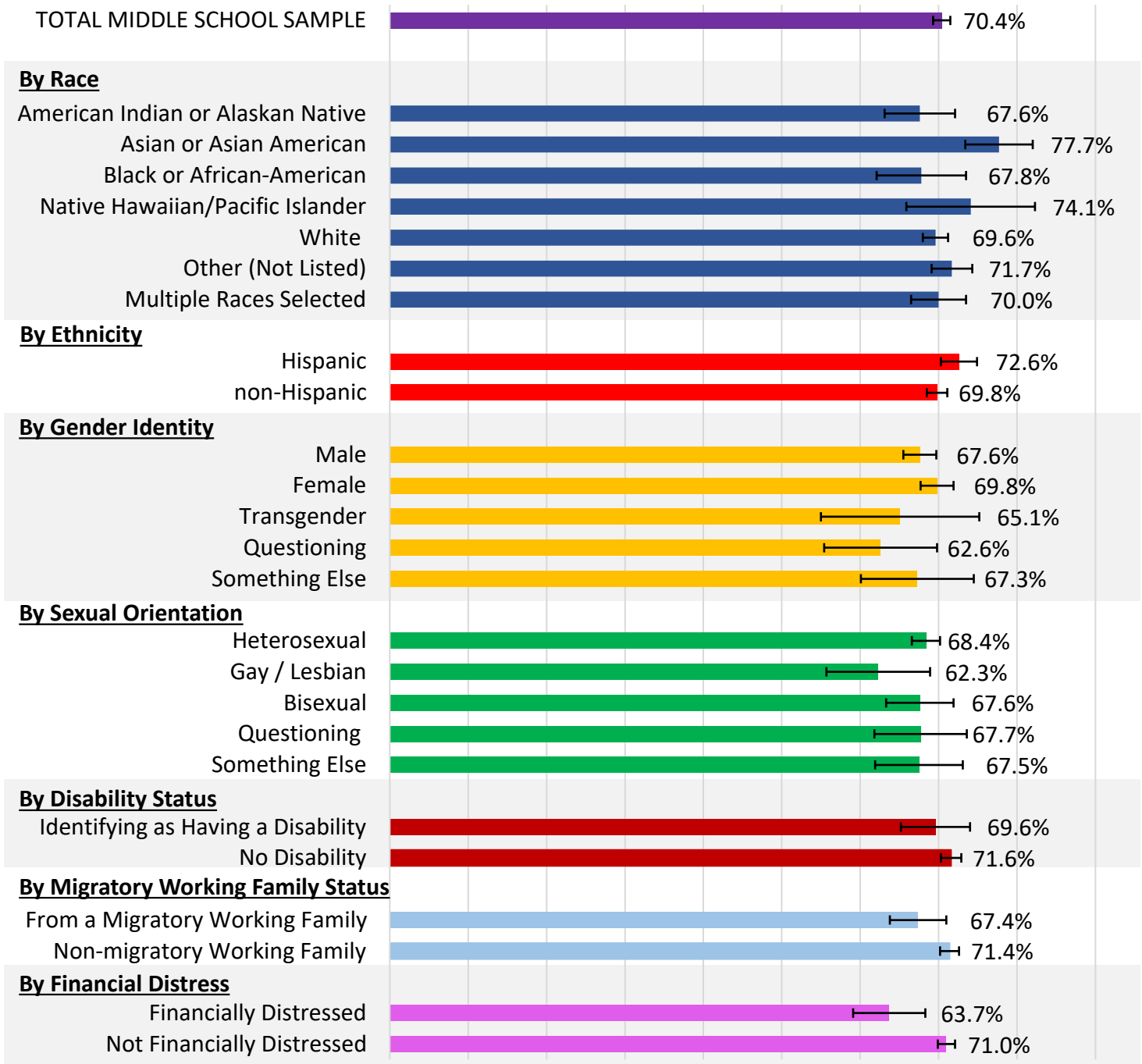
School Experiences: Middle School Students

Learning

Question: How much do you feel you have learned across all of your classes this school year, compared to last school year?

Percent of Students that Reported Learning More than Last Year

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%



NOTES:

- Higher percentages indicate more students within a group reported learning more than last year.
- Prevalence estimates are displayed with 95% confidence intervals, shown with black error bars.
- Response options to this item included "A lot more than last year", "A little more than last year", "About the same as last year", "A little less than last year" and "A lot less than last year". Percentages shown above indicate those who selected "A lot more than last year" or "A little more than last year".
- Please visit <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/covid-19-student-survey> for more information about the survey or to view other reports.

School Experiences: Middle School Students

School Experiences Topic Summary Washington State Middle School Students

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