

Parent Perspectives:

Postsecondary Readiness & Planning

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Survey Background

- The survey was conducted among 1,069 Massachusetts parents with children in grades K-12, including oversamples of Black, Latino, and Asian parents. Results in this analysis are from questions only asked of parents with children in grades 6-12.
- The survey was conducted from April 1 – April 14, 2026.
- Data was weighted to known population parameters by parental age, gender, race, education, and region.
- This survey is the 14th wave in a series of polls of K-12 parents in Massachusetts that began in May 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Results in the following slides make comparisons across prior waves where applicable.
- This project was sponsored by EdTrust in Massachusetts with support from The Barr Foundation.

Key Findings

- **Fewer parents now expect their children to pursue a bachelor's degree than at any point in the past three years**, with striking shifts emerging across income, race, and parental education.
- **Widening gaps in confidence about postsecondary readiness and planning supports are emerging.** While parent ratings of school-provided college and career planning support have remained stable overall, persistent gaps across race, community type, income, and parent education level suggest many households still feel unevenly supported in navigating what happens after high school.
- **Access to advanced learning opportunities remains uneven.** While most parents report schools provide enough opportunities to earn college credit - through AP, dual enrollment, and early college - persistent disparities across race, income and region suggest some students still face barriers to fully accessing or benefitting from these pathways.

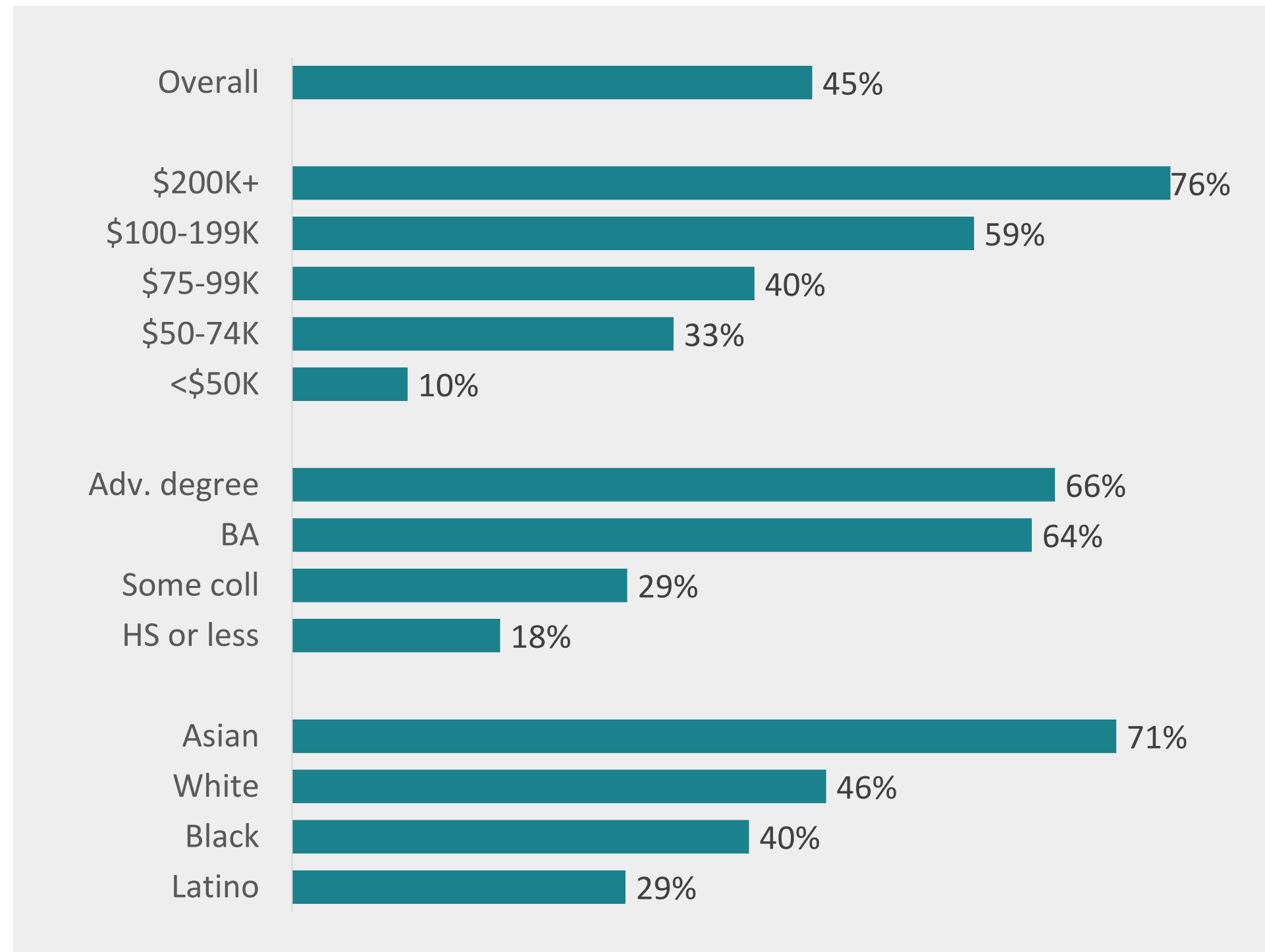
Post-HS Expectations Vary Widely Across Groups

- Parents' own educational experiences continue to shape what they envision their child will pursue after HS.
- Not every parents sees the same road ahead after high school. Plans differ sharply across race, income, and education level.

Q: What would your GRADE LEVEL child most like to do after high school? (Asked of 6th-12th grade)

Parent's own experiences shape expectations after high school

% in 2026 who say their children are likely to start a bachelors after high school

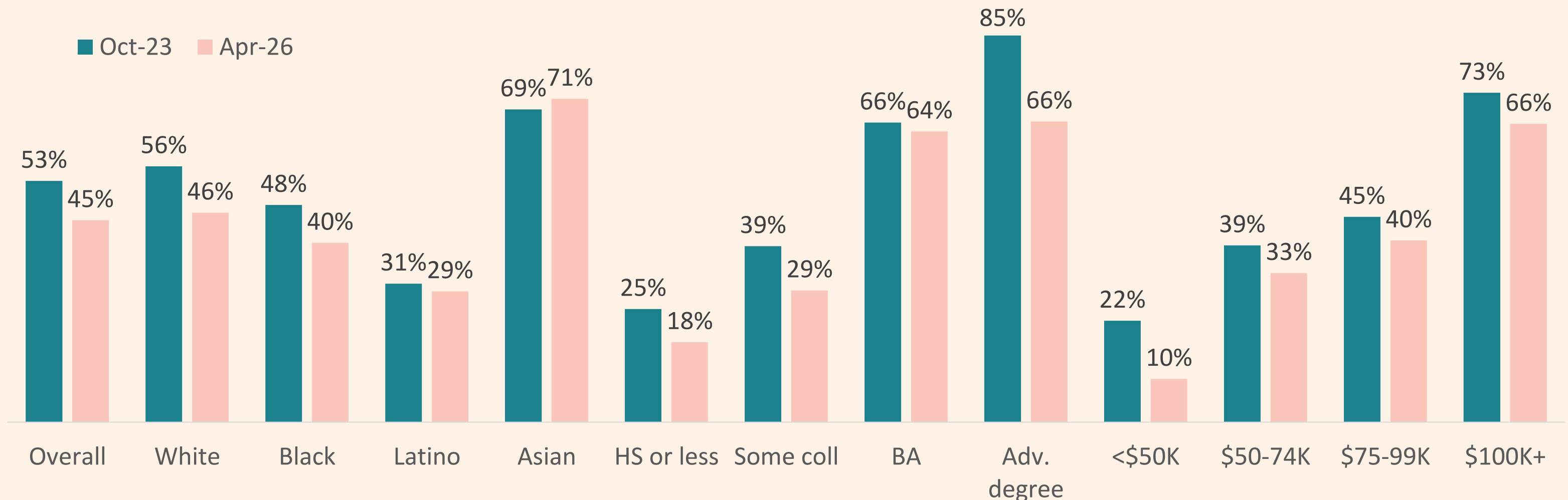


Fewer now see immediate college plans

- Across a range of demographic groups, there has been a sharp decline in expectations of a bachelor's degree. This mirrors broader societal trends.

Parents are now less likely to say child will pursue a BA, sharp decline among parents with advanced degrees.

% who say they think their kids are most likely to start a bachelor's degree after HS



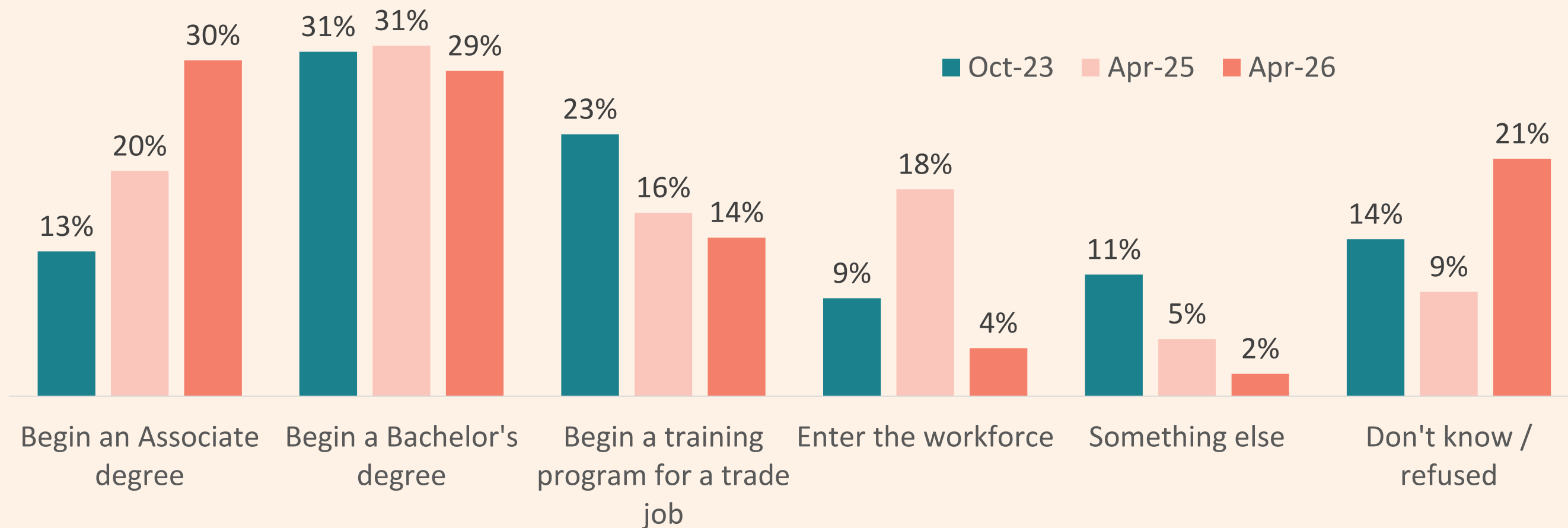
Q: What would your GRADE LEVEL child most like to do after high school? (Asked of 6th-12th grade)

Latino parents rethinking post-HS plans

- While bachelor's degree expectations remain steady, Latino parents are becoming more likely to see associate degrees and less likely to see trade jobs as their child's next step.

Latino parents say children shifting away from trade jobs, increased interest in college pathways

% of Latino parents who say they think their kids are most likely to _____



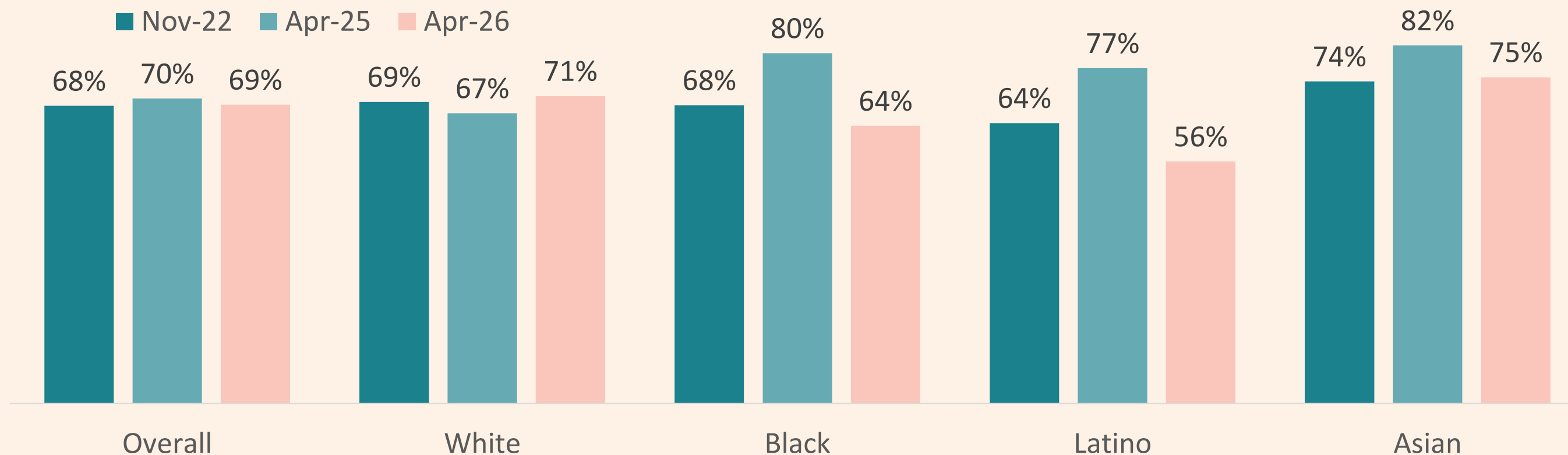
Q: What would your GRADE LEVEL child most like to do after high school? (Asked of 6th-12th grade)

Preparing for life after graduation

- Latino parents report the lowest level of confidence that their child's school is adequately preparing them for life after HS, at 56% in 2026, from 77% in 2025.
- Black parents are also less likely to say their child is prepared this year compared to 2025 (80% to 64%).

Lowest levels of confidence in child's school among Latino parents

% who say their child's school is adequately preparing their child for life after high school



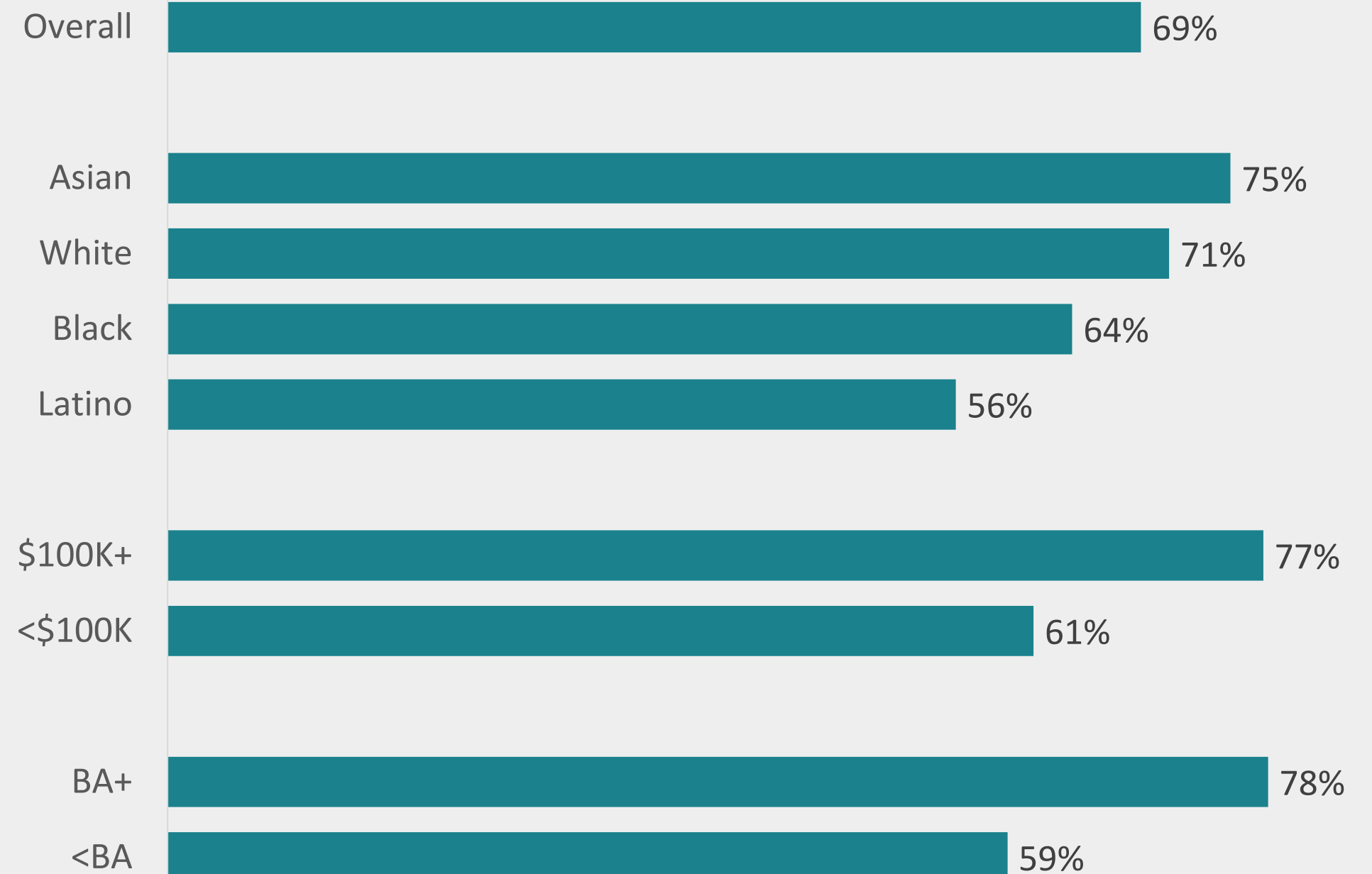
Q: Do you think that your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school is adequately preparing your child for life after high school?

Confidence in schools' post-HS preparation varies

- Parents with lower incomes and lower levels of education are less confident schools are preparing students for life after high school.
- Confidence in school preparation is strongest among Asian and White parents, revealing different experiences across communities.
- Lower-income families grew less confident this year in post HS prep, signaling rising concern about readiness.

Parents with more resources feel their child is more prepared

% in 2026 who say their child's school is preparing them for life after HS



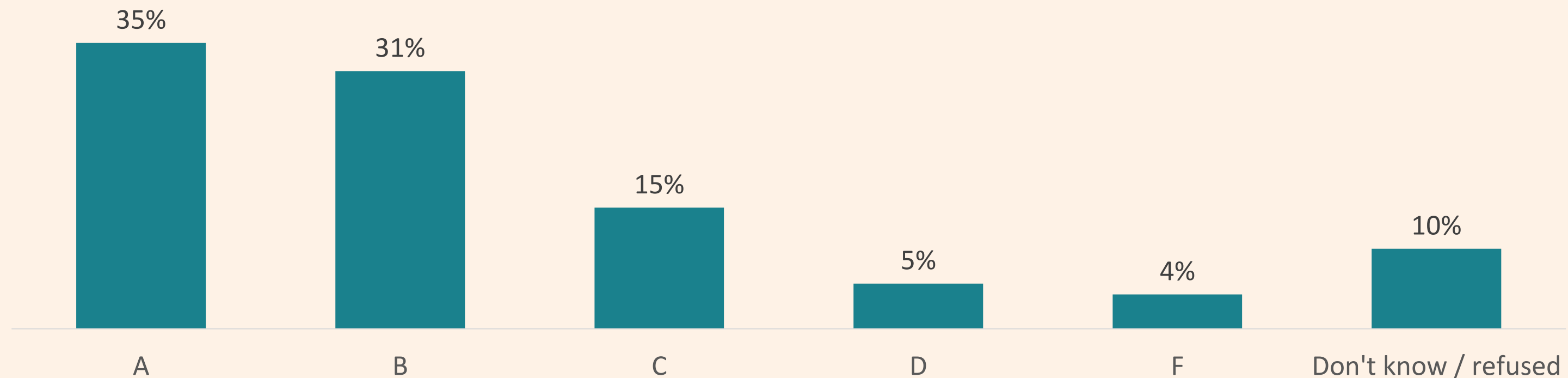
*Q: Do you think that your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school is adequately preparing your child for life after high school?*

College and career planning

- Two-thirds of parents give their child's school high ratings helping students navigate college and career planning. However, 1 in 10 families remain unsure on how their child's school is doing.

Majority of parents feel schools are helping with college and career planning supports

% who give their child's school a grade ___ for helping college and career planning supports



*q: Using the letters A, B, C, D, and F, how would you grade your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school in the following areas? Helping students take steps to achieve their college or career plan.*

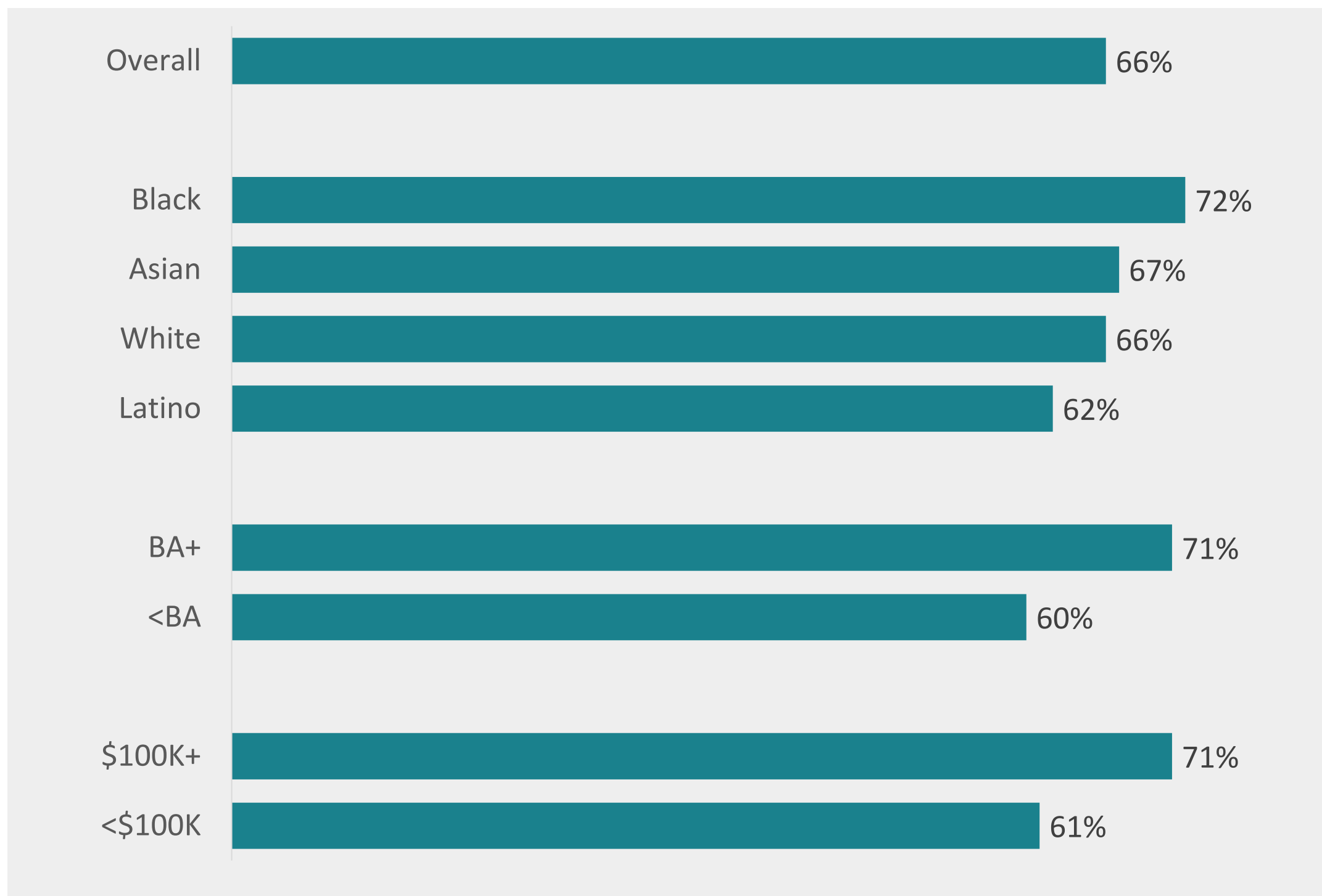
Not all parents confident in college/career support

- Latino parents are less likely than other parents to give schools high marks for college and career planning support.
- Higher income parents and those with a BA or higher are more confident schools are helping students prepare for life after high school.

Q: Using the letters A, B, C, D, and F, how would you grade your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school in the following areas? Helping students take steps to achieve their college or career plan.

Uncertainty in school support for college and career plans among some parents

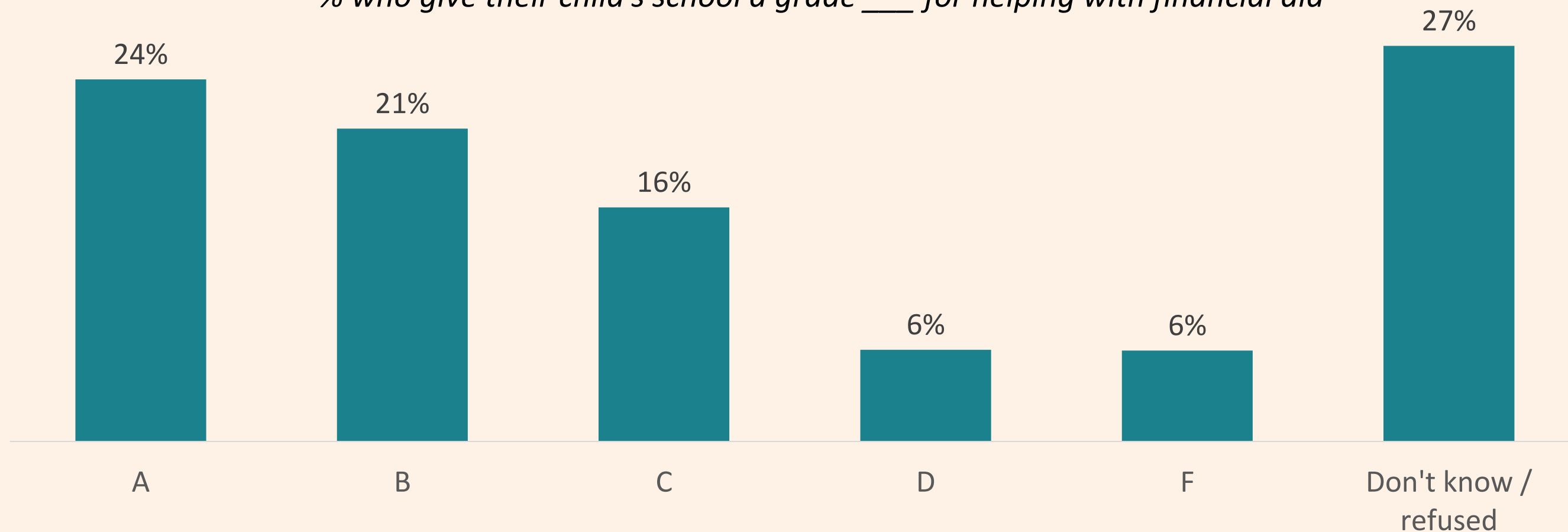
% who give their child's school an A or B for helping college and career planning supports



Parents lack confidence in financial aid support

- Only 45% of parents give schools an A or B for financial aid support.
- Many families remain uncertain about how well schools help navigate the financial aid process.

Financial aid support receives uneven marks from parents
% who give their child's school a grade ___ for helping with financial aid



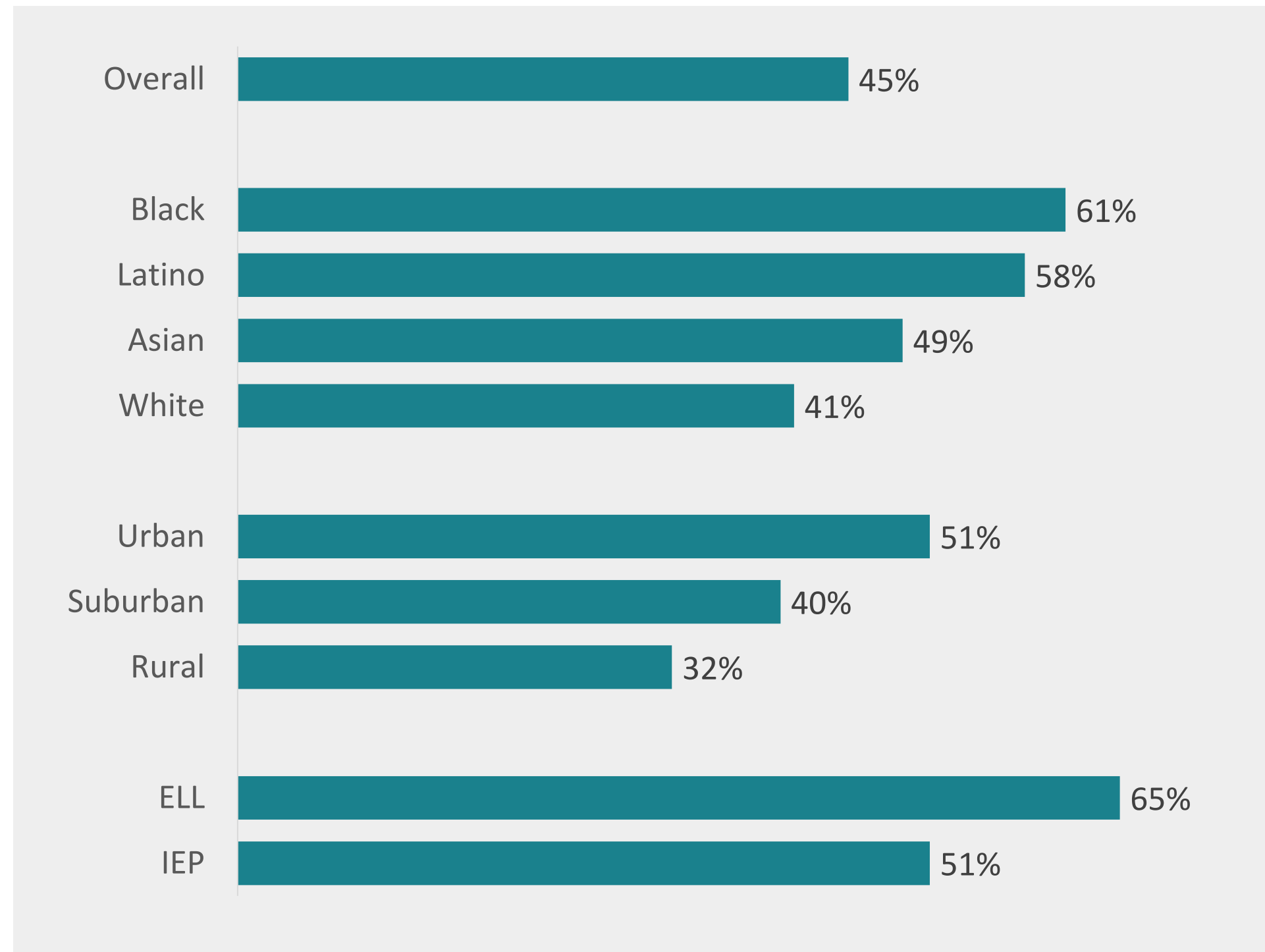
*q: Using the letters A, B, C, D, and F, how would you grade your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school in the following areas? Helping families complete FAFSA and financial aid applications.*

Financial aid support isn't felt equally

- Black and Latino parents are more likely than Asian and White parents to give schools high marks for financial aid support.
- Parents in rural areas are least likely to say schools provide strong financial aid support.
- Parents of children receiving ELL services report especially positive experiences with financial aid support.

Black, Latino, and ELL parents give higher marks for fin. aid support

% in 2026 who give their child's school an A or B for fin. aid support



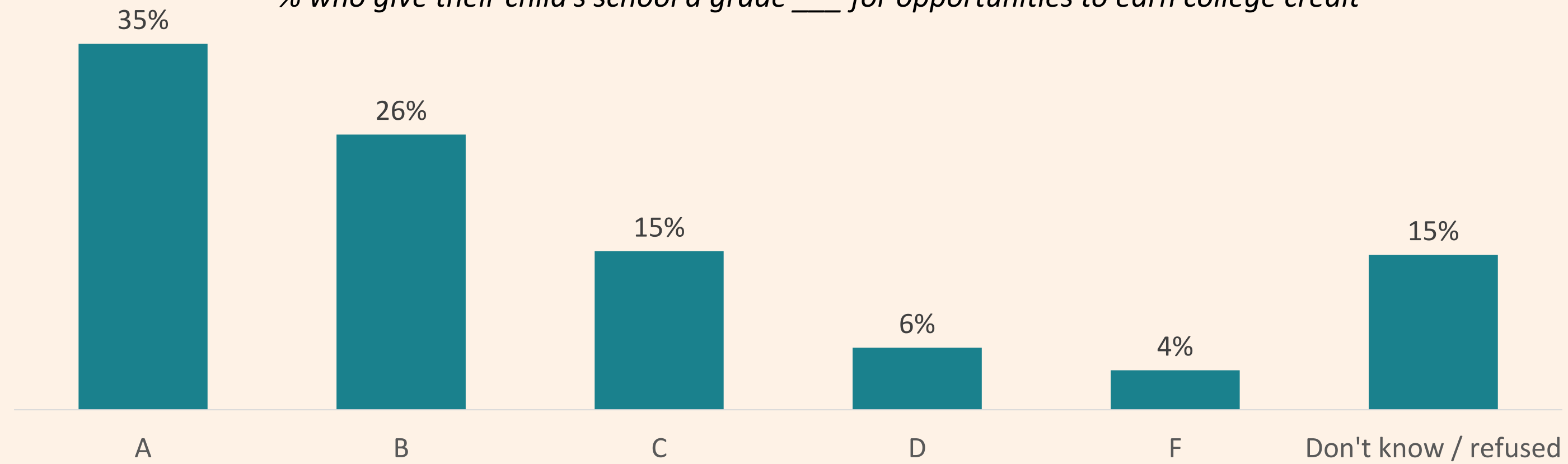
*Q: Do you think that your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school is adequately preparing your child for life after high school? Helping families complete FAFSA and financial aid applications.*

Positive views on college credit access

- Most parents give schools high marks for providing opportunities to earn college credit.
- Despite overall positive ratings, a sizable share of parents remain uncertain about access to college credit opportunities.

Majority of parents give schools an A or B on college credit earning opportunities

% who give their child's school a grade ___ for opportunities to earn college credit



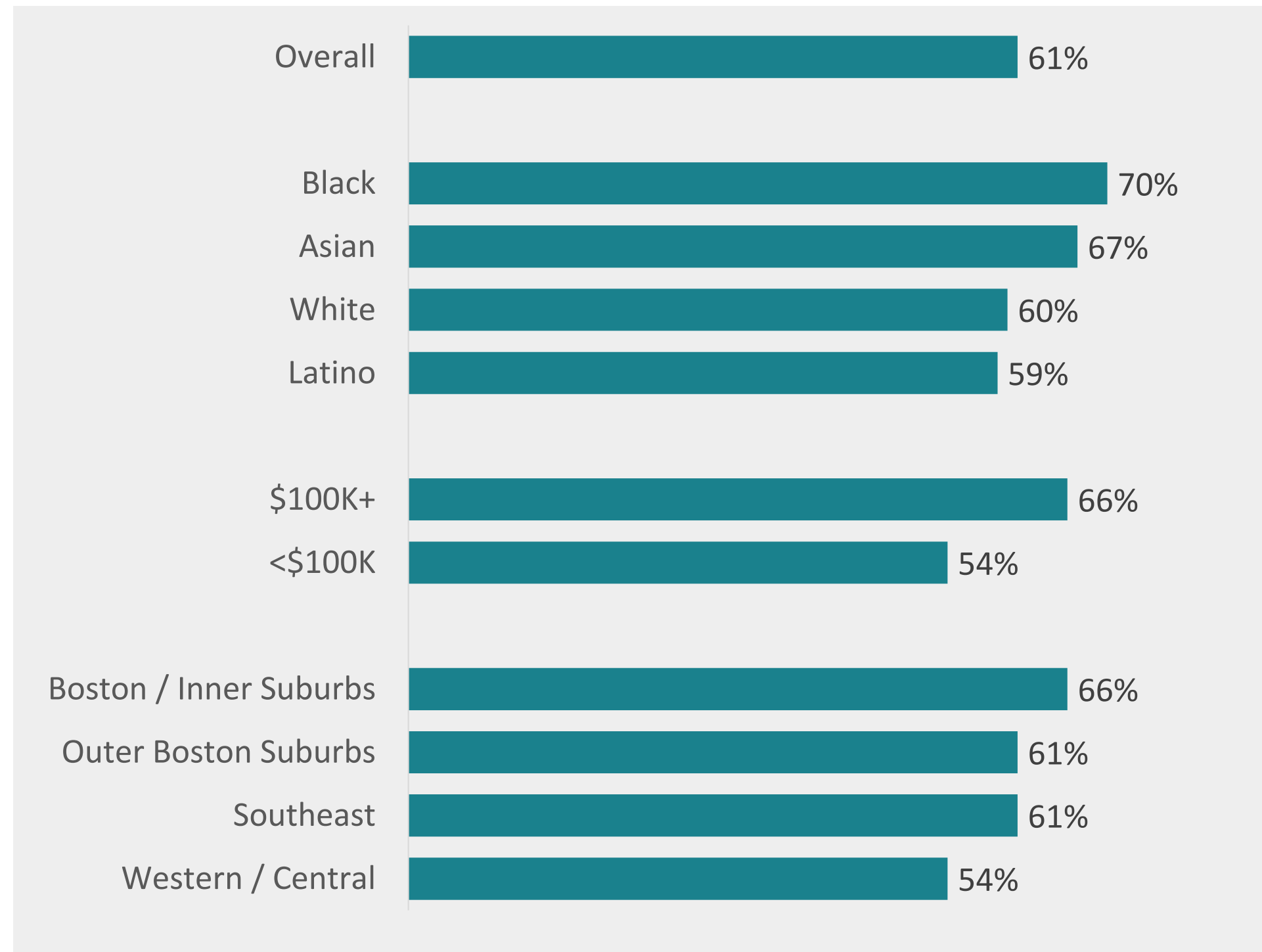
*Q: Using the letters A, B, C, D, and F, how would you grade your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school in the following areas? Offering enough opportunities for students to earn college credit through options such as advanced placement courses, dual enrollment, and early college.*

Access to college credit varies across groups

- Black and Asian parents are the most likely to give schools high marks for college credit opportunities.
- Higher-income parents tend to view college credit opportunities more positively.
- Parents in Western and Central Massachusetts are less likely to give schools top ratings, emphasizing some regional gaps.

Household's experiences college credit opportunities differently

% in 2026 who give their child's school an A or B for opportunities to earn college credit



*Q: Using the letters A, B, C, D, and F, how would you grade your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school in the following areas? Offering enough opportunities for students to earn college credit through options such as advanced placement courses, dual enrollment, and early college*



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