



GIRLS, DIVERSITY & *the future*

A GIRLS' INDEX™ IMPACT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

THE GIRLS' INDEX IS A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND, LARGE-SCALE, NATIONAL SURVEY designed to develop a deeper understanding of the thoughts, experiences, perceptions, beliefs, behaviors and attitudes of girls throughout the United States. This national report provides insights from a large sample of 10,678 girls about their thoughts, experiences and perceptions on key issues, such as: confidence, body image, friendships, pressure, leadership, career aspirations, school, academics, technology and social media. This companion report, 'Girls, Diversity & The Future', is the third in a series of additional data releases from 'The Girls' Index' designed to examine the demographic and environmental factors that contribute to similarities and differences among girls. The complete Girls' Index report can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/TheGirlsIndexReport>.

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

WE ARE DEVELOPING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING of the thoughts, feelings, behaviors, perceptions and experiences of girls throughout the country. The following key themes are addressed in this report:

1. **CONFIDENCE:** Collectively, girls' confidence declines between 5th and 9th grade and it does not return to pre-middle school levels. However, when the data is disaggregated by ethnicity, the data shows that the confidence of Black girls *increases* from elementary school to middle school and then remains higher than their peers throughout high school. Black girls are also the *most likely* to believe that they are good at a lot of things and believe they are smart enough for their dream job.
2. **LEADERSHIP:** Black girls are the *most likely* to embody key traits of leadership. They are less afraid to speak their mind or share their opinion. Black girls are the *most likely* to embrace being in charge and, when compared to their peers, have an increased belief in their abilities and their leadership potential.
3. **SCHOOL:** Overall 61% of high school girls say they like coming to school. There was *no significant difference* among girls of different races or socioeconomic status levels and their desire to come to school. However, when girls of color attend schools where they are the minority vs the majority, they report feeling less smart and less adequate in specific school subjects.
4. **SUPPORT:** Most girls (76%) report that they have supportive adults they can talk to about serious issues. However, girls who attend the most affluent schools were *nearly 10% less likely* to say they have supportive adults to talk to compared to girls who attend high poverty schools.

THE GROUNDBREAKING
GIRLS' INDEX REPORT
PROVIDES AN
UNDERSTANDING OF
THE THOUGHTS,
EXPERIENCES,
PERCEPTIONS,
BELIEFS, BEHAVIORS
AND ATTITUDES OF

10,678

GIRLS IN THE UNITED
STATES.

THE GIRLS, DIVERSITY
& THE FUTURE IMPACT
REPORT WAS
DEVELOPED TO
PROVIDE A DEEPER
UNDERSTANDING OF
THE DEMOGRAPHIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
VARIABLES THAT
IMPACT GIRLS'
ATTITUDES,
PERCEPTIONS AND
ASPIRATIONS.

THE GIRLS' INDEX™ DATA WAS COLLECTED IN SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WITH GIRLS IN GRADES 5-12.

- 88% PUBLIC
- 7% PRIVATE
- 6% CHARTER

THE PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT LIMITS THE TYPE OF INFORMATION YOU CAN REQUEST FROM K-12 STUDENTS. THEREFORE, OUR DATA DOES NOT INCLUDE INFORMATION ON STUDENT:

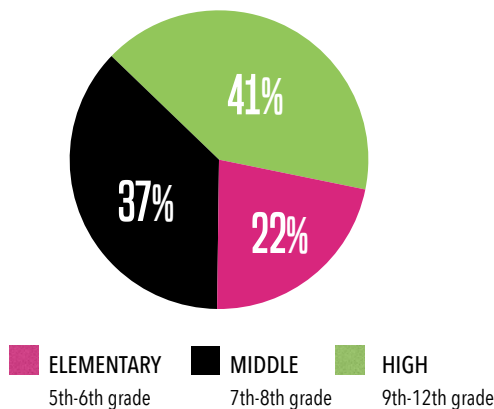
- SEXUAL ORIENTATION/ GENDER IDENTITY
- COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
- TRAUMA OR ABUSE HISTORY
- MENTAL HEALTH STATUS OF STUDENT OR FAMILY
- FAMILY INCOME
- RELIGION

WHO WE SURVEYED ...

ETHNICITY	GIRLS' INDEX	U.S. CENSUS
Asian	3.8%	4.8%
Black/African American	12.1%	12.6%
Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander	1.4%	0.2%
Hispanic/Latina	9.4%	16.3%
Multiracial	4.7%	2.9%
Native American or American Indian	0.9%	0.9%
White	57.5%	72.4%
Other/Did Not Answer	10.2%	N/A

THE ETHNICITY OF THE GIRLS' INDEX™ SAMPLE COMPARED TO THE REPRESENTATION REPORTED ON THE UNITED STATES CENSUS

GRADE LEVEL OF GIRLS



TYPE OF SCHOOL GIRLS ATTEND

	RURAL	SUBURBAN	URBAN
Total Sample	24%	58%	18%
Asian	37%	42%	16%
Black/African American	3%	37%	58%
Hispanic/Latina	8%	73%	18%
Multiracial	25%	47%	26%
White	32%	55%	9%

THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SCHOOLS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE GIRLS' INDEX™ IS REPORTED BY THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE FREE OR REDUCED-PRICED SCHOOL LUNCH

*6% of schools did not report

	High Poverty (>50% free/reduced lunch)	Medium Poverty (25-50% free/reduced lunch)	Low Poverty (<25% free/reduced lunch)
Total Sample*	29%	27%	38%
Asian	44%	19%	32%
Black/African American	56%	30%	11%
Hispanic/Latina	59%	25%	16%
Multiracial	39%	33%	26%
White	17%	31%	49%

*The sample size of Hawaiian Native, Pacific Islander and Native American/American Indian respondents was too low to secure adequate representation and practical significance.

Just the facts

DURING HIGH SCHOOL, BLACK GIRLS REPORTED THE **HIGHEST RATES OF CONFIDENCE WITH**

69%

DESCRIBING THEMSELVES AS CONFIDENT COMPARED TO THE **LOWEST RATES OF**

54%

REPORTED BY ASIAN GIRLS.

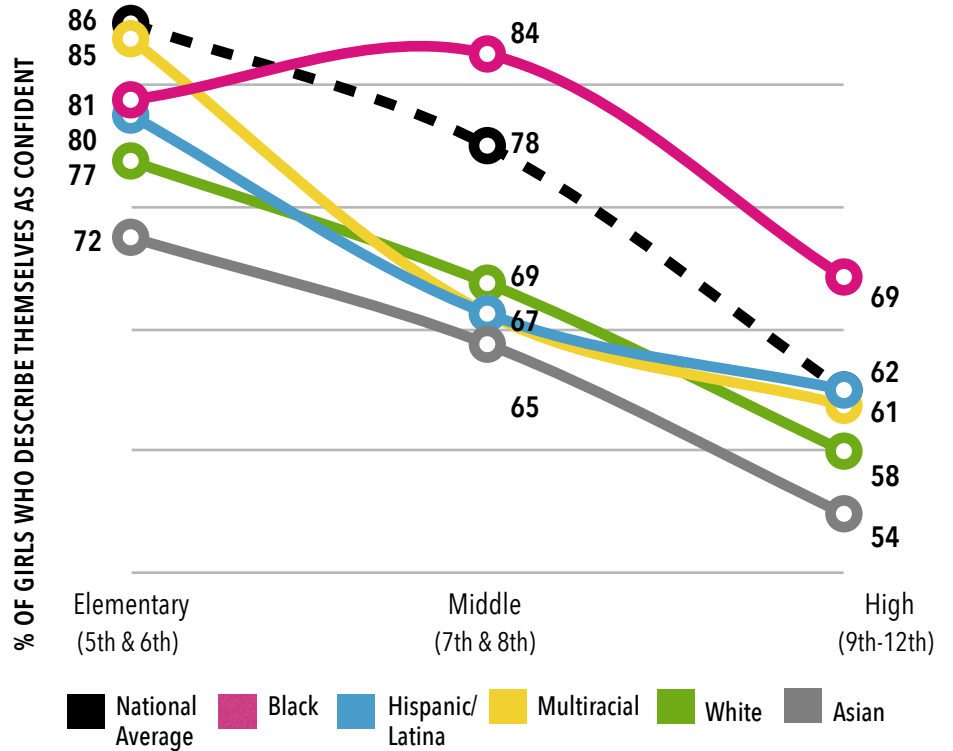
62% OF HISPANIC/LATINA GIRLS, 61% OF MULTIRACIAL GIRLS & 58% OF WHITE GIRLS DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS CONFIDENT.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS **DID NOT PREDICT** GIRLS' REPORTS OF CONFIDENCE.

63% OF HIGH POVERTY
58% OF MEDIUM POVERTY
&
66% OF LOW POVERTY

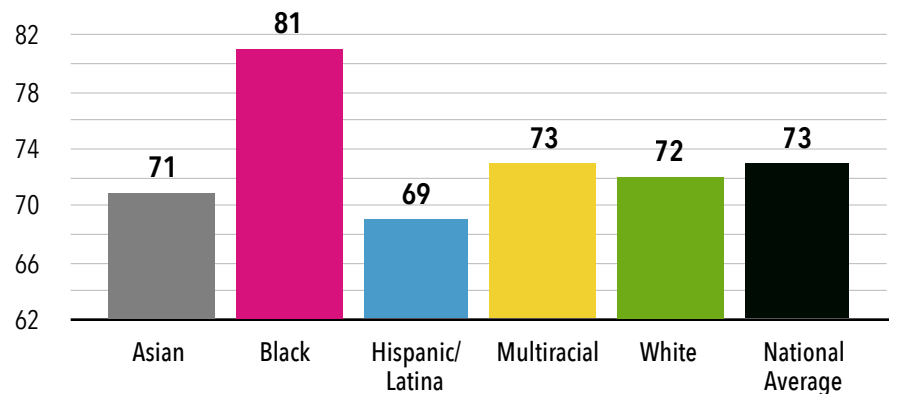
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS CONFIDENT.

GIRLS' CONFIDENCE BY GRADE LEVEL AND RACE



GIRLS EXPERIENCE A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN CONFIDENCE AS THEY GET OLDER. Overall, 26% fewer girls describe themselves as confident in high school as compared to elementary school. Girls who identify as multiracial experience the most significant decline throughout their school years (-24%) and black girls experience the smallest decline (-12%) in their confidence levels.

% OF GIRLS WHO BELIEVE THEY ARE GOOD AT LOTS OF THINGS



KEY INSIGHTS & ACTIONS

BLACK GIRLS ARE MORE LIKELY TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS CONFIDENT AND BELIEVE THEY ARE GOOD AT LOTS OF THINGS WHEN COMPARED TO THEIR SAME AGE PEERS.

Girls experience a significant drop in confidence as they get older, with the most significant decline between 5th and 9th grade. The socioeconomic level of the school that the girls attend did not influence or predict their reports of confidence. Regardless of the school poverty level (high, medium or low poverty), girls rated their confidence levels similarly, with only a 3% difference between the girls who attend low poverty schools and girls who attend high poverty schools (66% describe themselves as confident vs 63%). However, when this data is disaggregated by ethnicity, it is revealed that ***the confidence of Black girls actually increases from elementary school to middle school and then remains higher than their peers throughout high school.*** While Black girls do experience a confidence decline from middle school to high school, they continue to maintain higher confidence rates than any other group throughout the high school years.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Recognize that all girls need confidence building opportunities, not just those who have been labeled "at risk" by a school criterion. Academic achievement, socioeconomic status nor school environment insulate girls from confidence challenges.
- Continually foster confidence building among girls – even among those who appear self-confident. Recognize that confidence can evidence itself differently among different girls. Allow girls to define and describe what confidence means and looks like for themselves. Implement developmentally and culturally appropriate programs and activities that focus on both building *and* maintaining confidence.
- Implement activities and strategies that help girls identify and value their internal strengths, characteristics and accomplishments (i.e. being good at lots of things) while de-emphasizing the importance of external appearance as a primary source of interpersonal value.

Just the facts

46%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS REPORT THAT THEY DON'T SAY WHAT THEY ARE THINKING OR DISAGREE WITH OTHERS BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE LIKED

61%

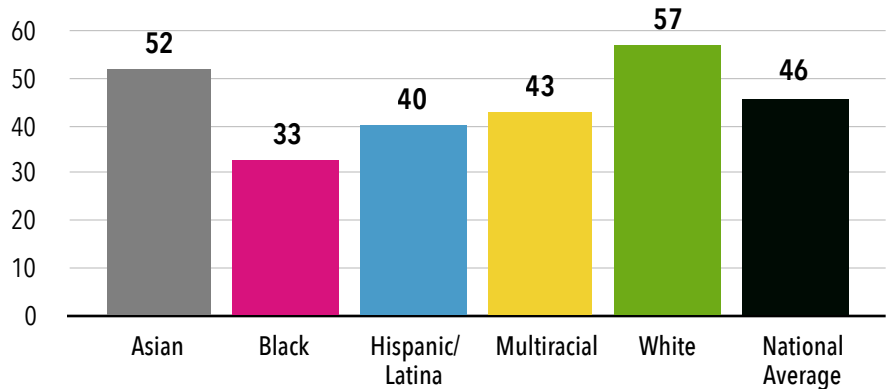
OF GIRLS REPORT THAT THEY LIKE TO BE IN CHARGE

58%: ASIAN
64%: BLACK
56%: HISPANIC/LATINA
64%: MULTIRACIAL
61%: WHITE

40%

OF GIRLS BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN CAREERS THAT ARE BETTER FOR MEN THAN WOMEN

% OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WHO **DO NOT** SAY WHAT THEY ARE THINKING OR DISAGREE WITH OTHERS BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE LIKED



Black girls are the most likely to embody key traits of leadership. They are less afraid to speak their mind or share their opinion. They are the most likely to embrace being in charge and, when compared to their peers, have an increased belief in their abilities and their leadership potential.

OVERALL, **1** IN **3** GIRLS REPORT THAT THEY ARE AFRAID TO BE A LEADER FOR FEAR THAT OTHERS WILL THINK THEY ARE **BOSSY**



% OF GIRLS WHO ARE AFRAID TO LEAD:

34%: ASIAN
23%: BLACK
34%: HISPANIC/LATINA
27%: MULTIRACIAL
31%: WHITE

BLACK GIRLS ARE THE LEAST LIKELY TO FEAR LEADERSHIP. FEWER THAN 1 IN 4 REPORT CONCERN OVER BEING VIEWED AS BOSSY.

KEY INSIGHTS & ACTION ITEMS

BLACK GIRLS ARE EQUIPPED AND EAGER TO LEAD, BUT FACE A WORLD THAT DOES NOT READILY SUPPORT THEIR LEADERSHIP. WE MUST PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP CULTIVATION AND DEMONSTRATION.

The Girls' Index data revealed that Black girls are the most likely to embody important key traits of leadership. In addition to possessing greater confidence than their peers, they are less afraid to speak their mind or share their opinion. Black girls are the most likely to embrace being in charge and, when compared to their peers, have an increased belief in their abilities and their leadership potential. However, being poised for leadership does not necessarily translate into opportunities to lead. These findings challenge us to explore the factors, systems and stereotypes that are holding back Black girls and push us to identify what we need to do individually, programmatically and systemically to address the disparities.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Examine individual perceptions, interactions and experiences with girls and women of color and acknowledge and address implicit biases. For example, is she saying the same things as her white peers, but being identified as disagreeable? Is she using her voice and sharing her opinions, but viewed as aggressive?
- Encourage girls to develop their leadership skills by ensuring opportunities for healthy risk-taking, skill development and growth. In situations where she may be unlikely to take initiative or be selected for a leadership role based on her race or gender, give her the positive feedback and encouragement she needs to take the chance.
- Help girls identify diverse female leaders (or the lack thereof) in their school, community, state and country. Who is the principal, superintendent, athletic director, mayor, faith leader, governor, etc.? Explore, consider and discuss.
- Teach girls effective communication strategies and the value of her voice and opinion. Help her recognize that authentic and reciprocal relationships include sharing individual perspectives and having respectful disagreements.

Just the facts

23%

OF GIRLS IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

and

46%

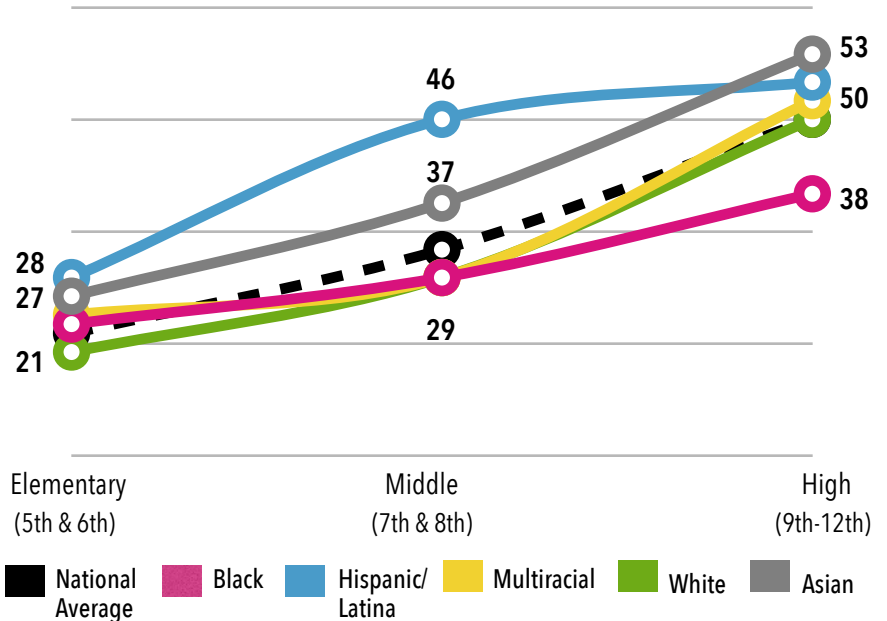
OF GIRLS IN
HIGH SCHOOL
DO NOT THINK THEY ARE
SMART ENOUGH FOR
THEIR DREAM JOB

63%

OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SAY
THAT THEY
LIKE COMING TO SCHOOL

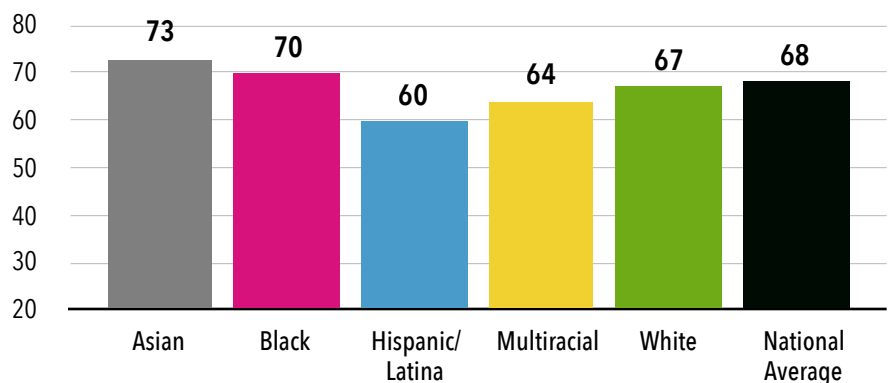
65%: ASIAN
61%: BLACK
64%: HISPANIC/LATINA
62%: MULTIRACIAL
64%: WHITE

% OF GIRLS WHO DO NOT THINK THEY ARE SMART ENOUGH FOR THEIR DREAM CAREER



GIRLS OF COLOR WHO ATTEND MORE AFFLUENT SCHOOLS ARE **LESS LIKELY** TO BELIEVE THEY ARE SMART AND CAPABLE COMPARED TO THOSE WHO ATTEND HIGH-POVERTY SCHOOLS.

% OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WHO BELIEVE THEY ARE GOOD AT MATH & SCIENCE



KEY INSIGHTS & ACTION ITEMS

GIRLS OF COLOR WHO ATTEND SCHOOLS WHERE THEY ARE A MEMBER OF THE RACIAL MINORITY AMONG THE SCHOOL POPULATION NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. The Girls' Index data indicates that race does not exclusively predict the way that girls feel about their academic abilities; rather whether or not a girl was in an environment of same race peers vs non-same race peers contributed to her perception of her abilities. Specifically, if *she was "one of many" - meaning that she is a person of color among mostly other people of color -- she was more likely to rate herself as more smart and capable than if she is "one of few" – a person of color among predominately white students.* It is critical that educators recognize and understand this reality and support their female students accordingly. She may be devaluing her competence despite her actual abilities or performance.

ACTION ITEMS

- Educators must recognize the potential impact that being "one of few" can have on girls of color. Schools should ensure that staff members are trained on issues of privilege, representation, equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Identify and address policies and practices that unfairly impact girls of color. Black girls are more likely to face school suspensions, expulsions and disciplinary actions compared to their white peers. A review of school-wide discipline data can reveal these inequities and provide a starting place for honest conversation and policy reviews.
- Create supportive and challenging spaces for girls to lead and celebrate their accomplishments both in and out of the classroom. Ensure that girls who comprise the racial minority in the school are specifically included, supported, encouraged and challenged to contribute to school-wide programs and initiatives. Efforts that focus specifically on girls of color should be conceptualized and led by girls of color.
- Recognize that girls express their confidence and leadership in a variety of different ways and that all demonstrations of strength should be honored and celebrated. Make school a place where girls are valued and want to be!

Just the facts

78%

OF GIRLS SAY THAT THEIR
**TEACHERS TREAT THEM
LIKE THEY ARE SMART***

81%: ASIAN

77%: BLACK

75%: MULTIRACIAL

69%: HISPANIC/LATINA

80%: WHITE

23%

OF GIRLS REPORT THAT THEIR
**PARENTS PRESSURE THEM
TO BE PERFECT***

28%: ASIAN

28%: BLACK

26%: HISPANIC/LATINA

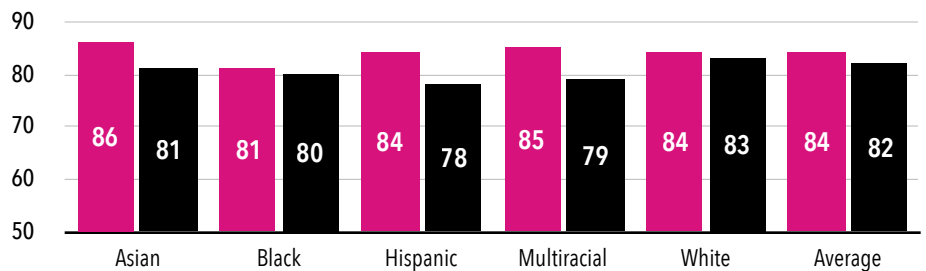
23%: MULTIRACIAL

21%: WHITE

(* THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT
DIFFERENCES IN GIRLS'
RESPONSES TO THESE
QUESTIONS BASED ON SCHOOL
TYPE OR POVERTY LEVEL.)

MOST GIRLS REPORT HAVING SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS & ADULTS THEY CAN TALK TO ABOUT SERIOUS ISSUES

■ % of girls who have supportive friends they can talk to about serious issues
■ % of girls who have supportive adults they can talk to about serious issues



GIRLS WHO ATTEND THE MOST AFFLUENT SCHOOLS ARE
NEARLY 10% LESS LIKELY
TO SAY THAT THEY **HAVE** SUPPORTIVE ADULTS
IN THEIR LIVES COMPARED TO GIRLS WHO ATTEND
HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS.

(70.4% VS 79.8%)

21%

OF GIRLS BELIEVE THAT IT IS
**IMPOSSIBLE FOR GIRLS TO
GET ALONG WITH
ONE ANOTHER**

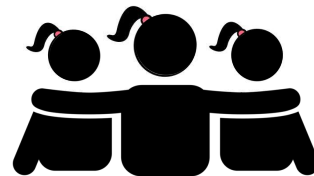
17%: ASIAN

31%: BLACK

31%: HISPANIC/LATINA

19%: MULTIRACIAL

19%: WHITE



76%

OF GIRLS BELIEVE THAT
**MOST GIRLS ARE IN
COMPETITION WITH
ONE ANOTHER**

74%: ASIAN

84%: BLACK

75%: HISPANIC/LATINA

75%: MULTIRACIAL

70%: WHITE

KEY INSIGHTS & ACTION ITEMS

GIRLS OF ALL RACES REPORT HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT FROM BOTH FRIENDS AND ADULTS. HOWEVER, GIRLS WHO ATTEND HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS WERE THE MOST LIKELY TO REPORT THAT THEY HAD SUPPORTIVE ADULTS TO TALK TO

ABOUT SERIOUS ISSUES. It is often assumed that socioeconomic status is predictive of resources and, therefore, support. However, The Girls' Index™ data indicates that more girls who attend high poverty schools report having supportive adults in their lives as compared to girls who attend schools with the lowest amounts of poverty (79.8% vs 70.4%). And while girls reported having supportive friendships, they also reported high levels of competition between girls and, for 20%-30% of girls, the belief that girls cannot get along with one another.

ACTION ITEMS

- Ensure that girls have meaningful, healthy and supportive relationships with caring adults – parents, teachers, school counselors, coaches, youth leaders, mentors, etc. Race, income and school environment do not clearly predict girls' need for support or their perceptions of existing support.
- Educators should recognize that their female students often look to them for care and support and they should assess their own behavior toward their students to ensure that all are treated equitably. When girls perceive that their teachers don't believe they are smart, they are more likely to withdraw and disengage. In The Girls' Index™ research, Hispanic/Latina girls are the least likely to feel that their teachers treat them like they are smart, followed by multiracial girls.
- Help girls establish strong female friendships and relationships with an emphasis on support, open communication and collaboration rather than competition. With three out of four girls reporting that most girls are in competition with one another, there is a significant opportunity to improve their perceptions while ensuring that they are developing strong, supportive and reciprocal relationships.

The Girls, Diversity & The Future Impact Report was made possible by:

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The Girls' Index. Columbus, OH: Ruling Our eXperiences, Inc.

METHODOLOGY: This report examines the thoughts, behaviors, attitudes and perceptions of 10,678 girls in 5th-12th grade in the United States using data from school-based surveys. Learn more at www.rulingourexperiences.org and download the complete Girls' Index Report at <http://bit.ly/TheGirlsIndexReport>.



ROX is a national non-profit leader in programming, research and education focused on girls.

We are committed to creating generations of confident girls who can control their own relationships, experiences, decisions and futures.

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