



MULTICULTURAL YOUTH
LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT

Spring - 2021
Multicultural Youth
Leadership Summit
Event Report

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Introduction

What is The Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit?

The Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit is an annual event that has brought together students and educators from across the state to promote the pursuit of higher education and to empower emerging leaders since 2013. This year, in partnership with Salt Lake Community College, students in 7th, 8th, and 9th grade had the opportunity to virtually participate in leadership development and explore the themes of “Reflect, Reengage, and Reignite,” which was aimed at encouraging students to reflect on their emotional well-being, reengage in the way they view economic justice and financial empowerment, and reignite their commitment to higher education and a rewarding career.



“Due to COVID-19 precautions, the division had to adjust in holding an in-person event to ensure a safe and healthy experience for emerging leaders.”

Due to COVID-19 precautions, the division had to adjust in holding an in-person event to ensure a safe and healthy experience for emerging leaders. This led to the first-ever virtual Leadership Summit where more than 1,000 students and educators from over 40 schools gathered in their classrooms, auditoriums, gymnasiums and homes to join via Zoom over the course of four days. Each day was dedicated to certain regions of Utah to promote geographic inclusivity and accommodate varying schedules. Our young scholars engaged with motivational speakers, participated in panel discussions and breakout sessions, and received access to state-wide youth resources. The overall goal of this program is to expose multicultural youth to pathways of higher education, leadership and career opportunities, and promote a more inclusive and welcoming state in the process.

Our Impact At A Glance

Overview:

Over 1,000 students and educators attended the 2021 Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit from 48 different schools and institutions, and 22 different school districts. Of those schools, 34% of them came from outside the Wasatch Front, including more rural areas such as Cache, Sanpete, Sevier, Tooele, and Washington counties. Comprising the Wasatch Front, 30% of students came from Salt Lake County, while 34% came from Utah County.



At a Glance

Promoting Equity-Minded, Inclusive, and Diverse Leaders

The Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit presented resources and information on mental health, financial empowerment, and college and career readiness—all centered around the theme of “Reflect, Reengage, and Reignite.” Mental health and emotional wellbeing for youth was a much needed and relevant topic according to requests from past participants. Eric Tadehara of the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Dr. LaShawn Williams, a practicing clinical therapist and CEO of Relational Spaces, encouraged students to reflect on their emotional well-being and find ways to manage stress and anxiety. The second breakout session, led out by the Salt Lake Community College Office of Financial Aid and Sponsorships and Kaika Cole, a youth mentor, presented financial basics such as what it means to save, budget, and invest, as well as how to prepare to pay for college

through scholarships or FAFSA applications. The goal was to help students reengage in money management through an economic justice framework to bridge the financial education gap among youth of color. The final breakout session reignited commitments to higher education and rewarding careers through a diverse panel of professionals who affirmed that representation matters. Through their professional and educational experiences, they demonstrated that leaders come in many forms. Additional notable speakers for this year’s event included keynotes and inspiring remarks by Governor Spencer J. Cox, Lieutenant Governor Diedre M. Henderson, Salt Lake Community College president Dr. Dencee G. Huftalin, Salt Lake Community College Student Association President Emily Hernandez Alzamora, and Mohan Sudabattula of Project Embrace who collectively shared messages of unity to the young leaders.

“Mental health and emotional wellbeing for youth was a much needed and relevant topic according to requests from past participants. ”

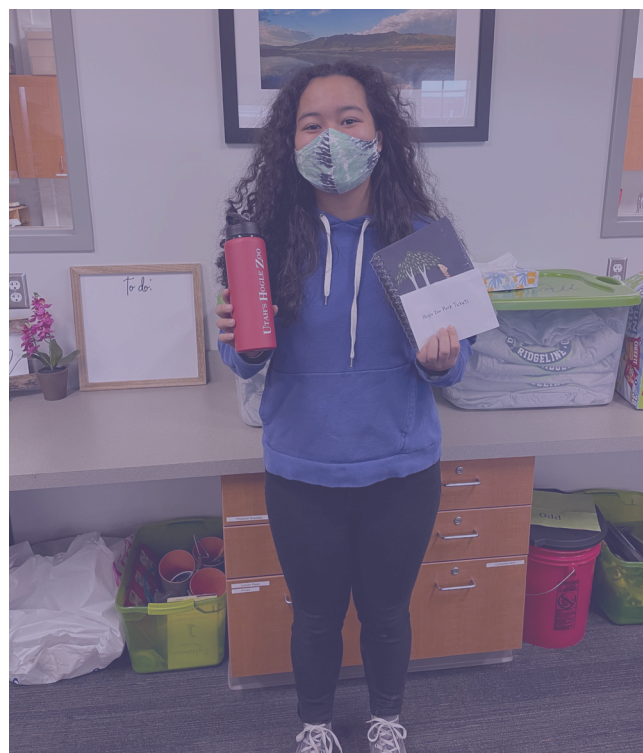


Resilience in the Face of a Crisis

To ensure the health and safety of students and educators in the face of COVID-19, this year's Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit was held virtually. Despite the added challenges of maintaining a similar level of interaction and engagement of years' past, the transition actually increased the reach and attendance capacity of the event because it was not limited by a physical venue or hindered by travel. The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs also acknowledged the rise of digital barriers for certain schools located in Internet-sparse areas or those that lacked enough devices for each student to watch from home. The division remained flexible in working with educators and students to adjust to unique circumstances and promote accessibility

where possible. Some schools broadcasted the event in auditoriums or classrooms where students gathered for a watch party, while others watched individually at home with their own devices. The event also provided captioning for hearing-impaired audiences and there are plans for more robust accessibility services into the future. All in all, students, educators, planning members, and community supporters embraced resilience in the face of a global pandemic that has affected how we engage with each other, but not the ability to cultivate memorable learning experiences for emerging leaders.

"All in all, students, educators, planning members, and community supporters embraced resilience in the face of a global pandemic."



Attendance Report

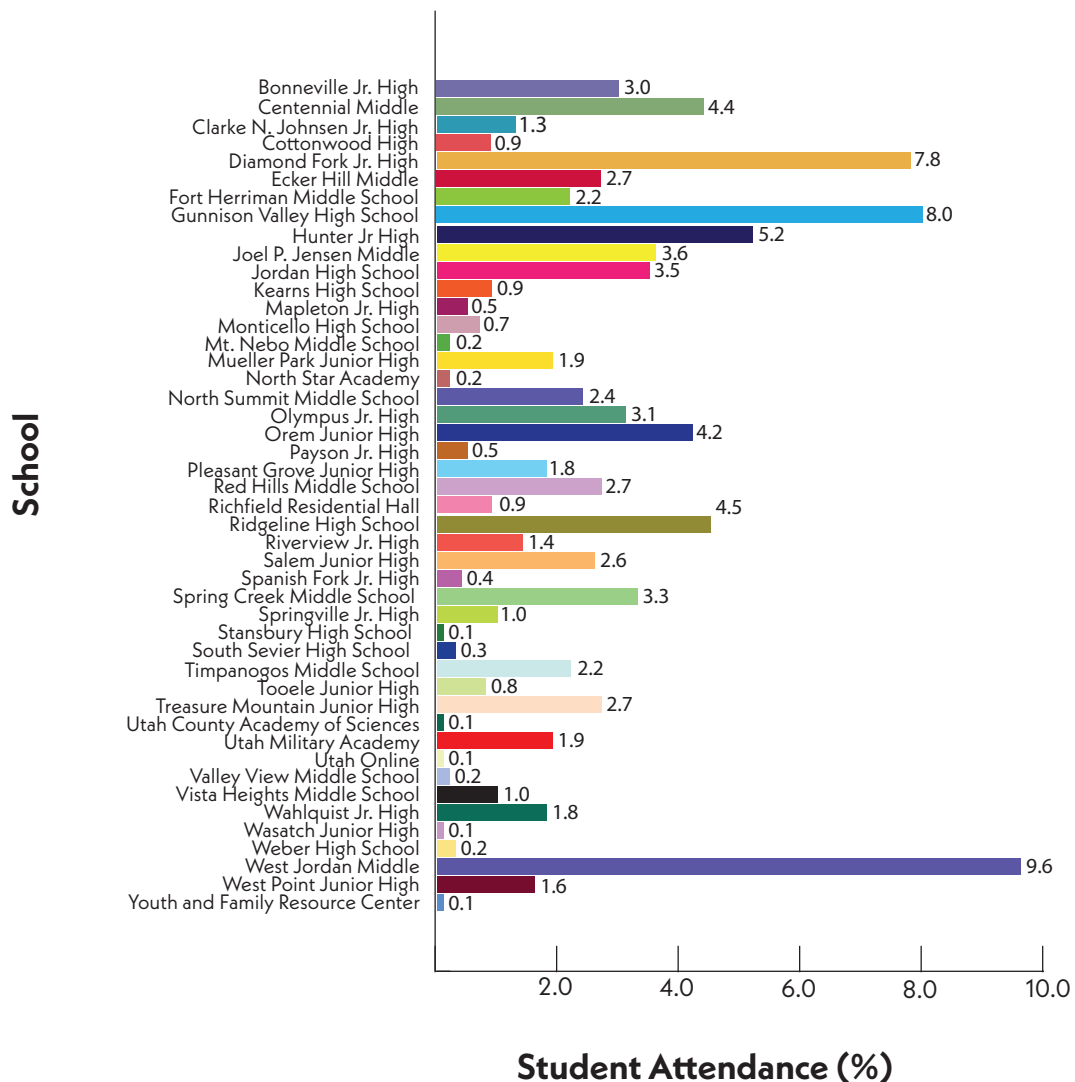
Overview:

For the 2021 Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit, the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs followed an operationalized registration and outreach process that accounted for the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of each school to extend greater access and center equity at every step. Outreach efforts included personalized emails, phone calls, and follow-up with schools and programs that served racially, ethnically, and geographically diverse communities. These areas were identified through consultation with school districts' educational equity coordinators and established partnerships with multicultural extracurricular organizations (i.e., Latinos in Action, Island Teens Advocacy Team, Black Student Union), but wide promotion of the event was done using social media, radio & television interviews, and email marketing. Interested schools applied for slots 3-4 months before the event, then a distribution process based on virtual platform capacity was instituted to accommodate students and educators from across the state.

Student Attendance Data

Student Attendance by School

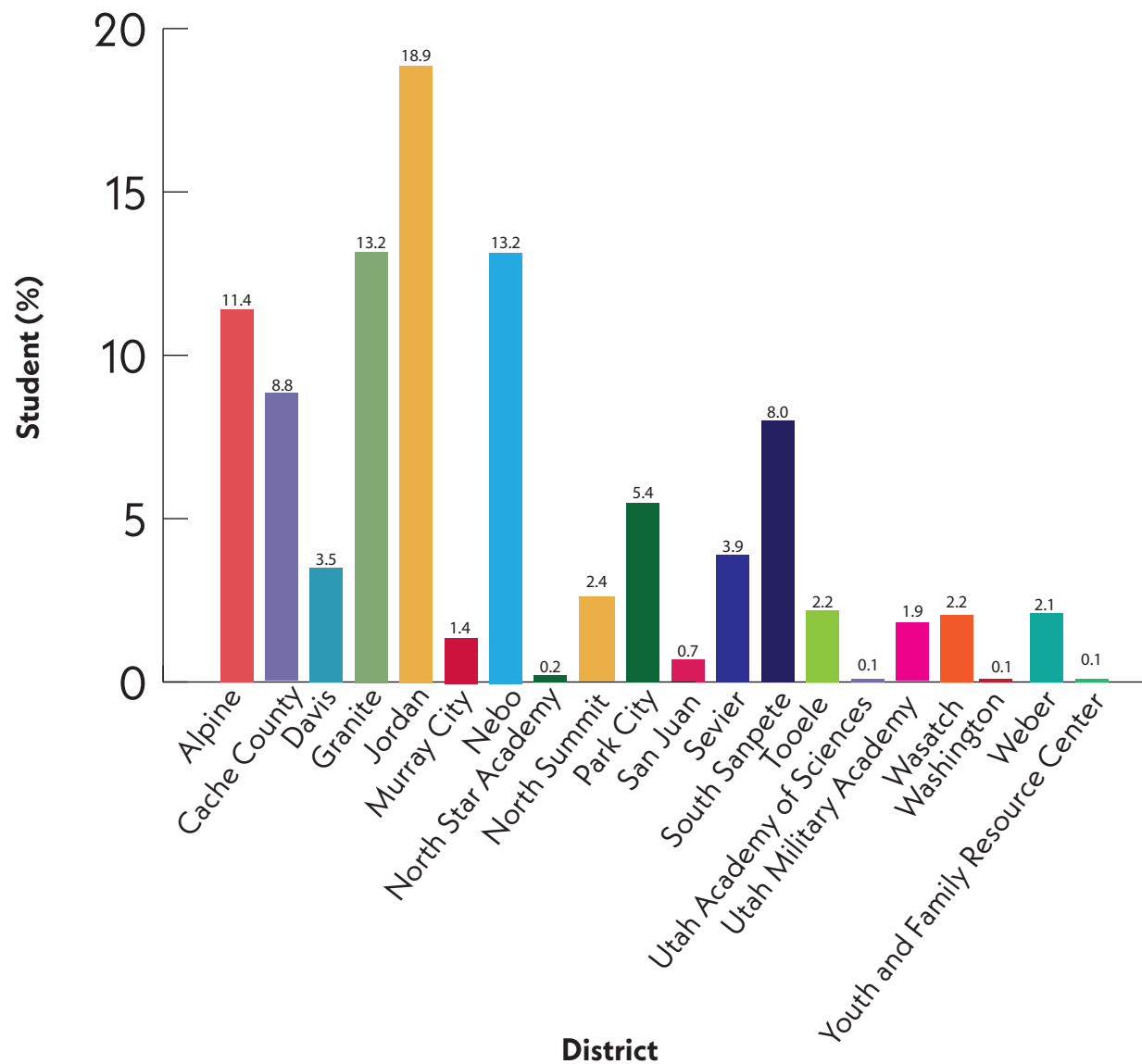
Forty-eight schools attended the Leadership Summit and close to 1,000 students attended the event according to attendance rosters provided by their educators or guardians. The highest contributing school towards attendance was West Jordan Middle School of the Jordan School District.





Student Attendance by District

Of the 48 schools who attended the Leadership Summit, 22 school districts or local education agencies (LEAs) were represented. It included a wide range of LEAs such as Utah Online, Utah Military Academy, and Utah Academy of Sciences. Notably, a wide variety of learning institutions operating under diverse teaching curriculums attended the Summit.

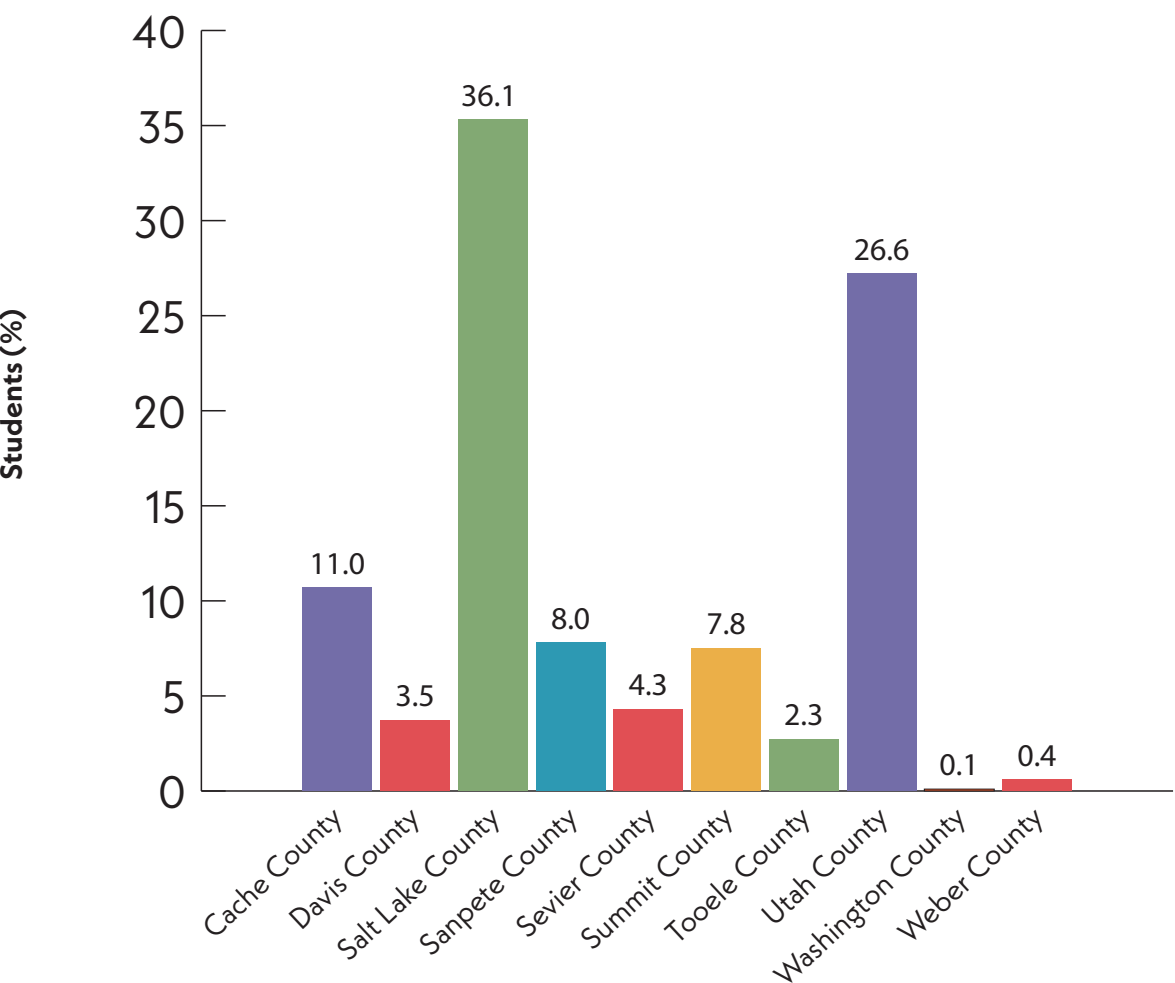




Student Attendance by County

Thirty-three percent of the participating schools came from outside the Wasatch Front and from more rural areas, including Cache, Sanpete, Sevier, Tooele, and Washington counties. Of those in the Wasatch Front, 36% of students came from Salt Lake County. Rural boundaries are defined as outside of the Wasatch Front, meaning a county in the state other than Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, or Weber (U.C.A. § 35A-8501).

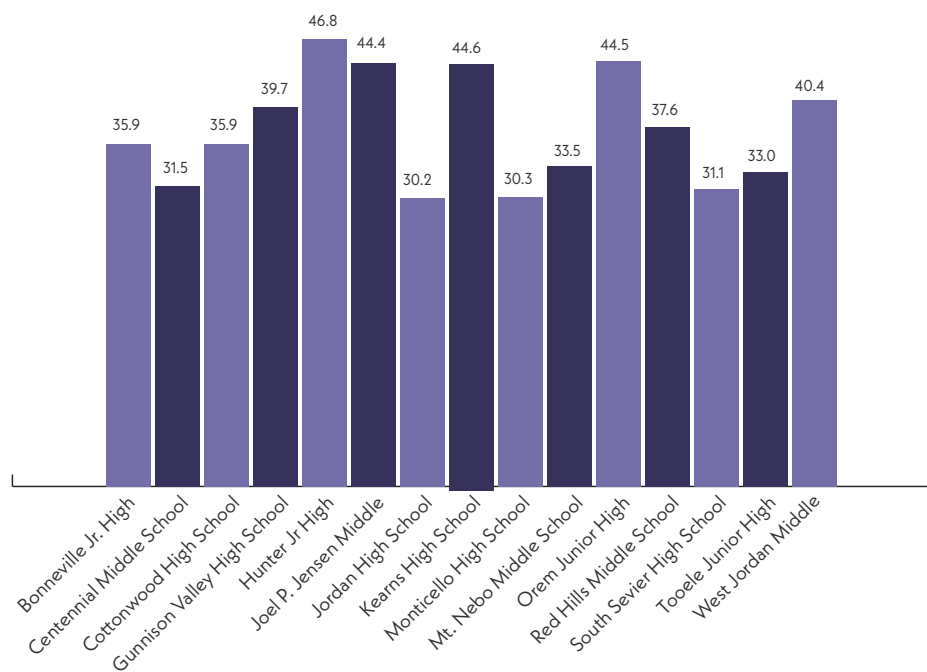
Student Attendance by County (%)



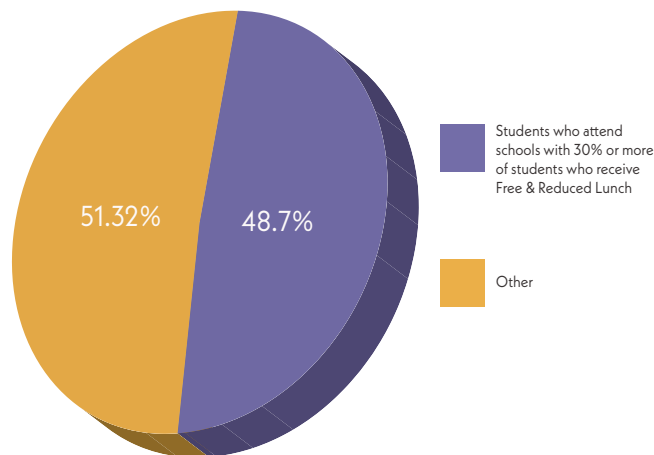


Student Attendance by Free & Reduced Lunch Enrollment

Of 48 participating schools and institutions, 6% of them identified as Title I schools. Forty-eight percent of student participants were enrolled in schools that have 30% or higher of students receiving free or reduced lunches. By taking a targeted outreach approach, the event reflected socioeconomic diversity throughout the schools and was intentional in reaching populations with varying financial situations. The socioeconomic and nutrition program data were gathered from the Utah State Board of Education’s database.



Schools with with 30% or more of students who receive Free & Reduced Lunch



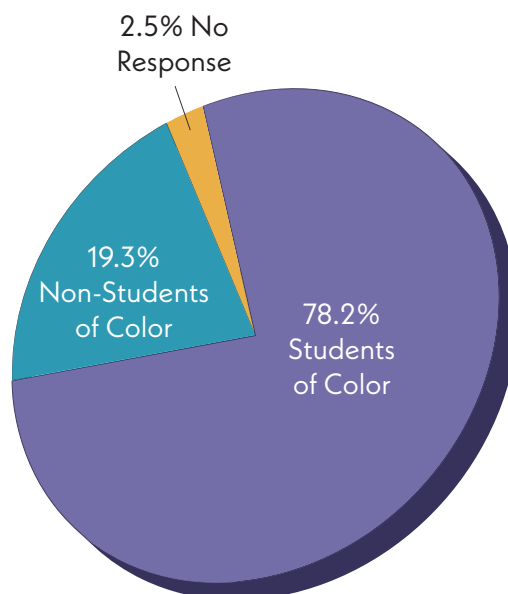
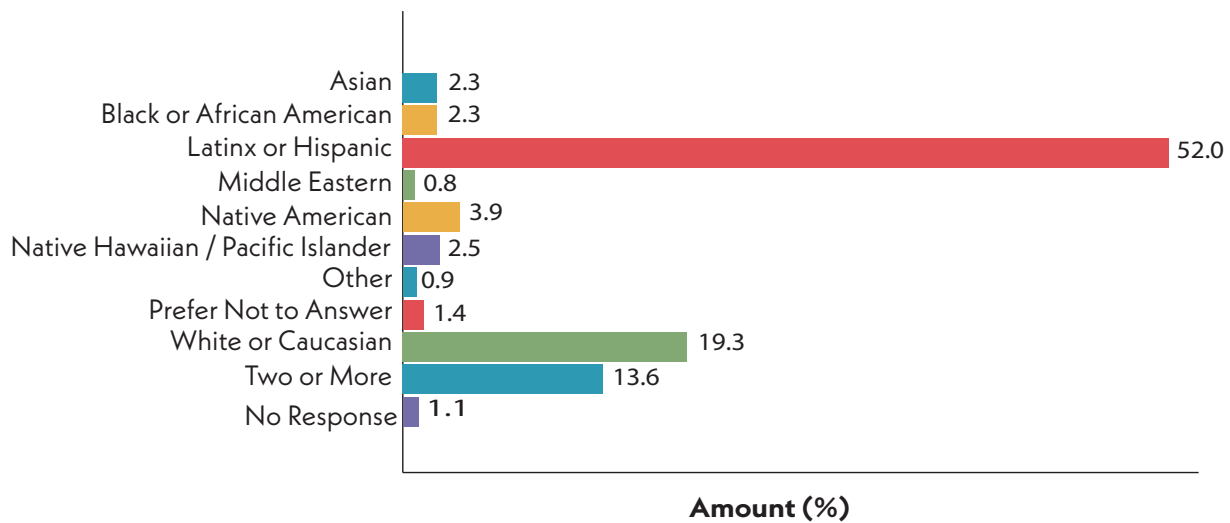
Student Demographics

Overview:

Student demographic data was gathered as part of the pre-registration process on the Eventbrite platform through an optional survey embedded in the form. This resulted in a high response rate for student survey participation, due to both the registration and demographic survey sharing a platform. This year, 648 pre-survey responses were received, meaning 64.7% of attending students also participated in the student demographic survey.

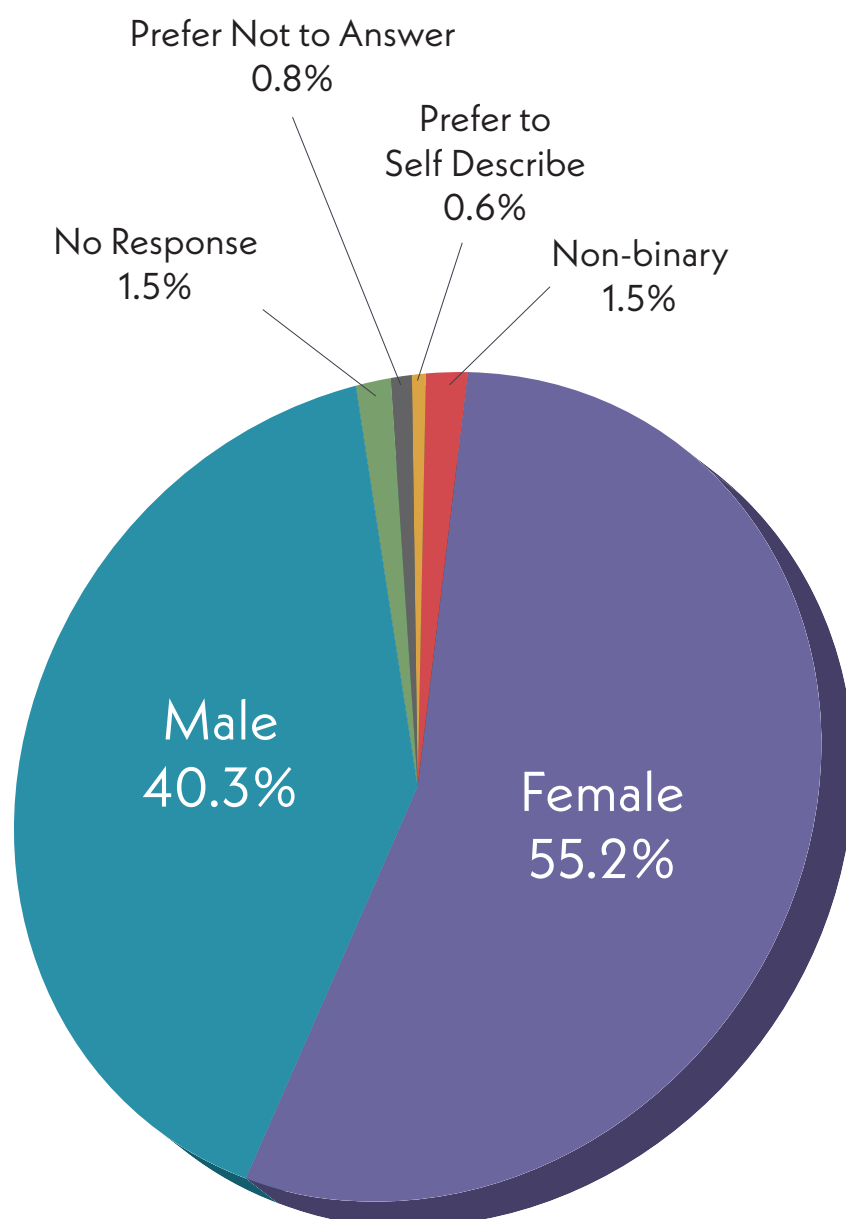
Race and Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic demographics were gathered to gauge the diversity of identities reflected in the students. In sum, 78.2% of students that pre-registered were students of color (including non-white, other, and those of two or more races). The three most represented races and ethnicities in order were Hispanic or Latinx, White or Caucasian, and "two or more races". Those of two or more races ranged from identities such as Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and African American. These figures will allow the division to better understand how events may resonate differently with students who experience intersectionalities of identity and culture.



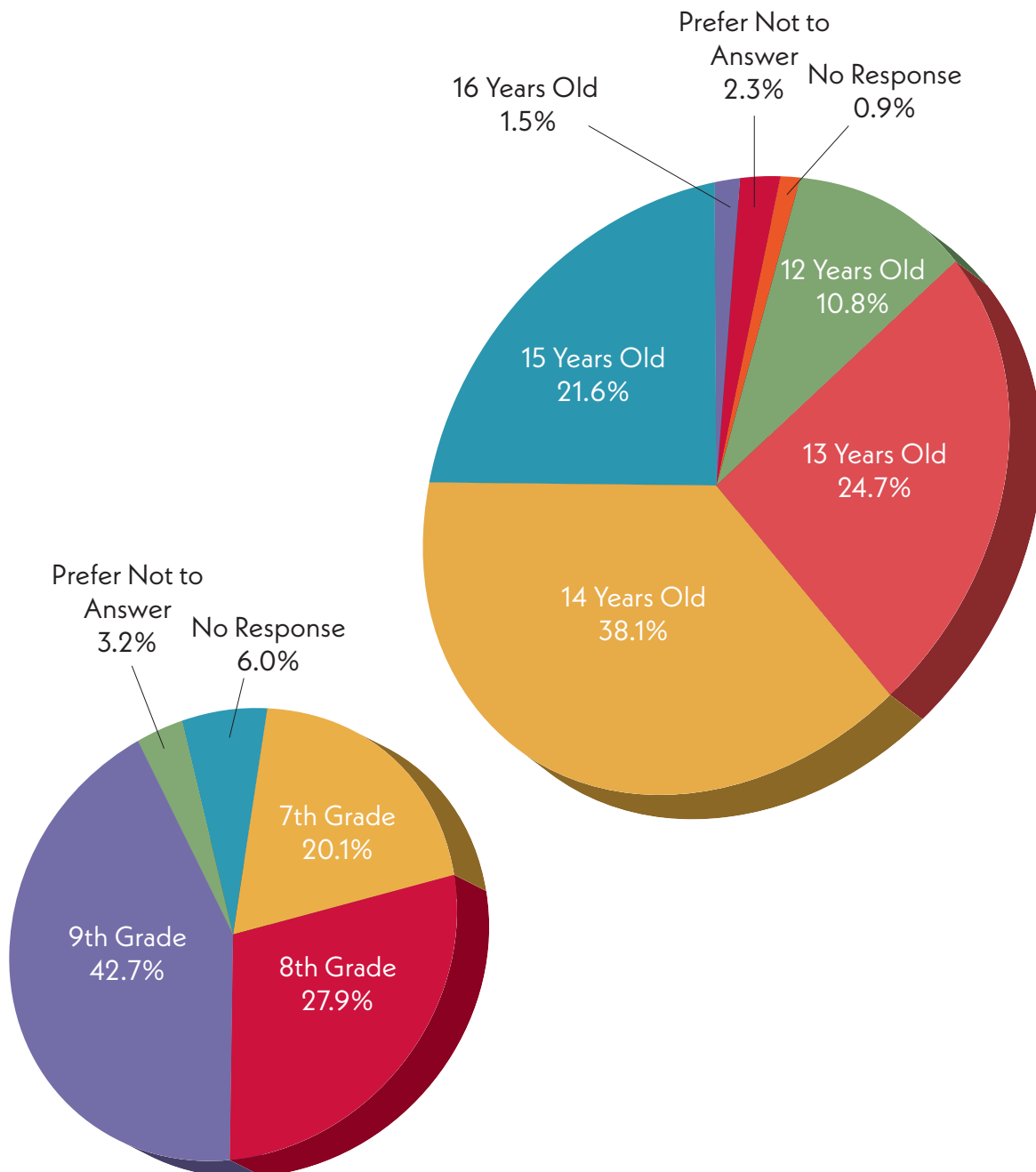
Gender

Gender identity was an important trait to recognize to better understand the lived experiences of students as well as to assess needs for greater outreach efforts to certain groups. The majority of participating students identified as female at 55%, whereas 40% of them identified as male and close to 2% identified as non-binary. The remaining preferred not to answer or self-described using various pronouns (i.e., she, they). These demographics show the Summit's programming appeals to a variety of identities, but can improve in targeted outreach to students in the LGBTQIA+ community to develop leadership opportunities that center intersectional experiences.



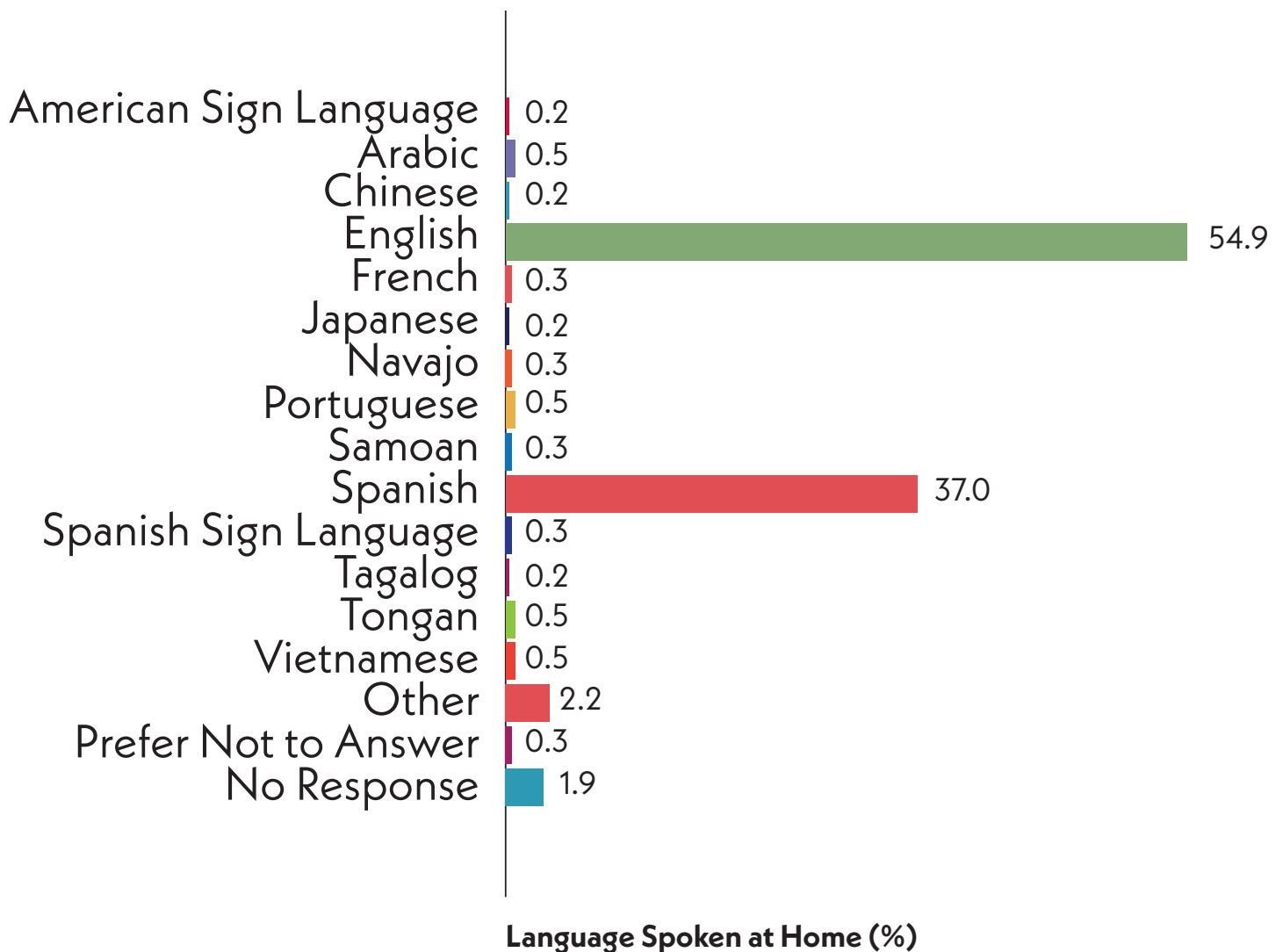
Age and Grade

The majority of the students were 13 and 14, with over 70% being in the 8th and 9th grade. This age range marks a pivotal educational period in the students' lives, where they are most attuned to consider high school plans and extracurriculars considering it is during these years that they are taking classes or engaging in opportunities that will prepare them for certain high school trajectories. It is for this reason that college and career readiness is such a foundational topic at the Leadership Summit and it is important that the division continue to provide information and resources that are relevant to this stage in their educational journey.



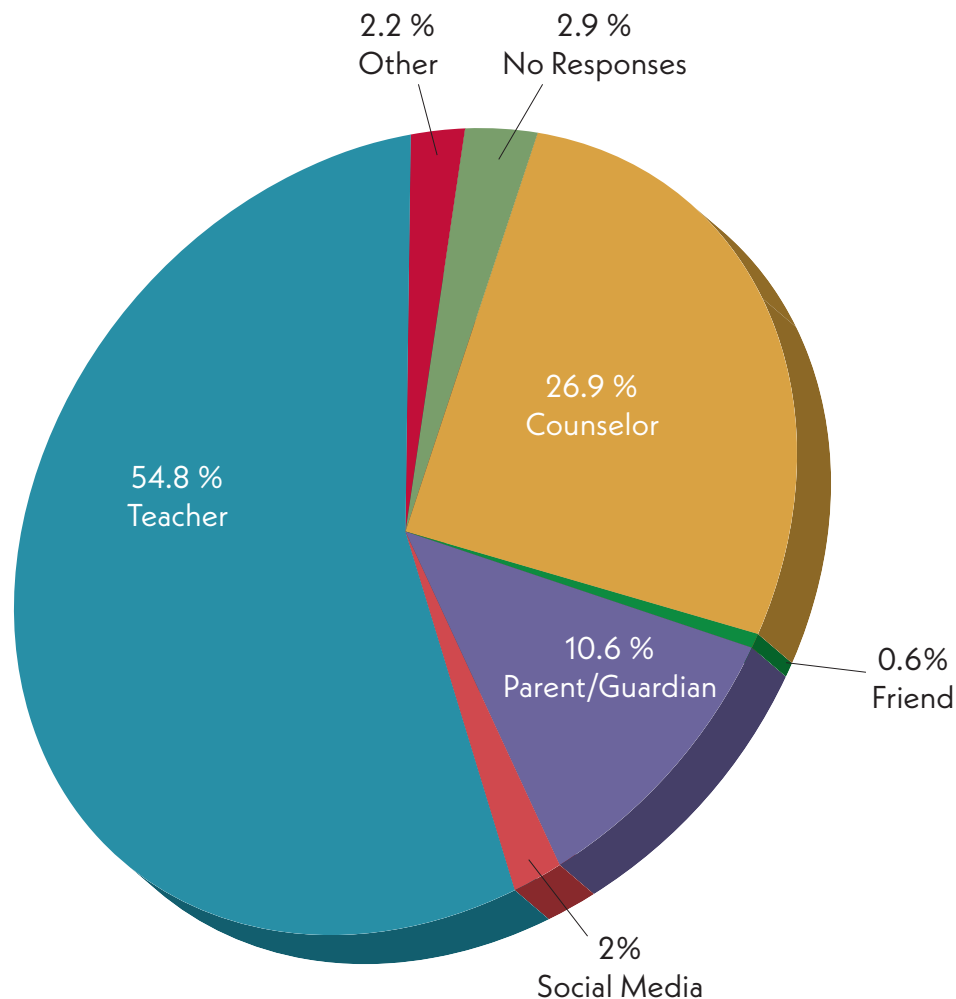
Language Spoken at Home

Though the majority of students reported English as the primary language spoken in their homes, the range of diverse language experiences among the student population was significant, with 42.9% of students reporting speaking a language other than English in their home. After English, Spanish was the highest spoken language at 37%, followed by the option of “other,” which included Nepali, Marshallese, Swahili, Laotian and Bosnian. In addition, some of the students reported Spanish and American Sign Language as their primary home language, asserting the commitment to better understand accessibility needs for non-spoken languages at future events.



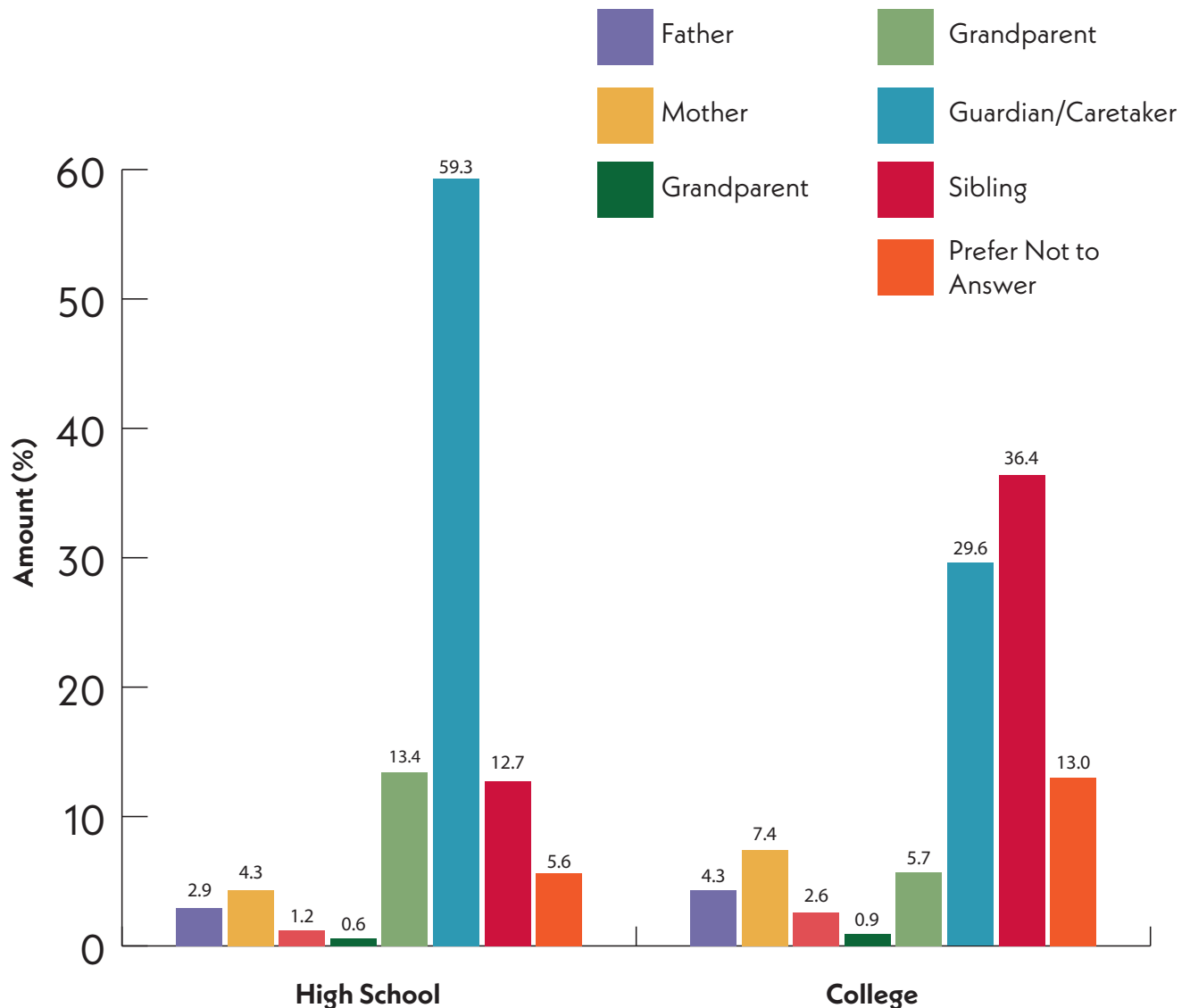
Sources of CTE Information

Career and technical education (CTE) encompasses skilled trades, applied science, modern technologies, and career preparation. This area of education can open many doors for young students, in addition to the pursuit of higher education such as at a two-year or four-year institution. The survey also asked students about where they typically receive information about college and CTE pathways so that future programming and resources could be disseminated through more preferred and effective channels. The figure displays that most students received information from teachers, with counselors and parents/guardians following behind. The division hopes to use this data to extend more resources for students to engage in CTE and college-readiness programs while asserting that educational success comes in many forms.



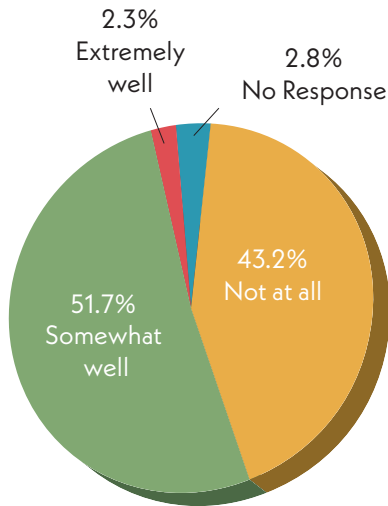
Graduates in Family

Part of the survey also asked students about their family's educational background. The data revealed that mothers were most often the parent/guardian to earn a college degree and complete high school as compared to fathers. This is a similar trend seen in 2019's Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit. This year's data showed that siblings were marked as the most frequent family member to graduate high school. However, it should be noted that out of all the questions contained in the survey, the two questions asking about high school and college graduation were the most "skipped" or left blank. The trends shown by the data, as well as the hesitation to answer it, prompt the division to explore and centralize efforts to encourage youth and parents to pursue education in all available forms and build pathways of access for those that lack the mentorship and financial means.

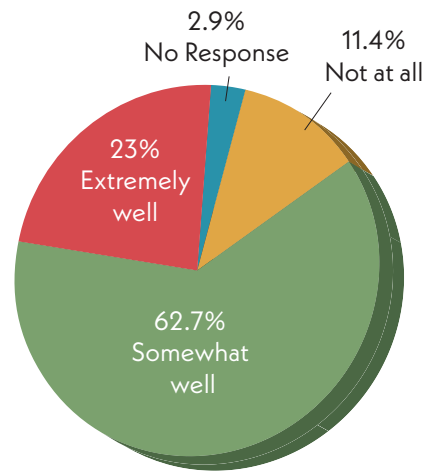


Familiarity With Event Topics

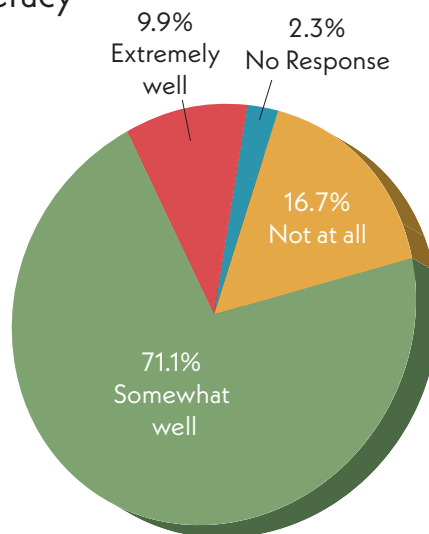
The final questions of the survey captured the students' familiarity with breakout session topics such as financial literacy, mental health, and college and career readiness. This proved to help guide the division in planning the breakout session curriculum to better respond to the varying levels of understanding among students. For all three topics, most students answered that they felt their current knowledge was at the level of "somewhat well." Financial literacy was the topic that students were least familiar with, whereas mental health was the topic they were the most familiar with, followed by college and career readiness. This style of pre-evaluation in regards to event topics will continue to be implemented to better prepare the delivery of resources and information during the event.



Financial Literacy



Mental Health



College & Career Readiness

Student & Educator Event Experience

Overview:

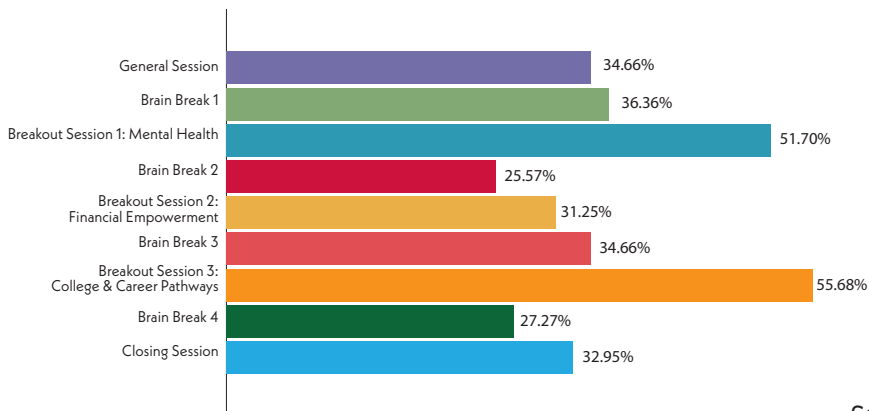
A post-survey was distributed among attending students and educators to gather reception and responses to the event in more detail. To encourage participation and compensate for time, gift cards were offered to students so they saw value in sharing their feedback. In total, we received 176 responses from students and 15 responses from educators.

Feedback on Breakout Sessions

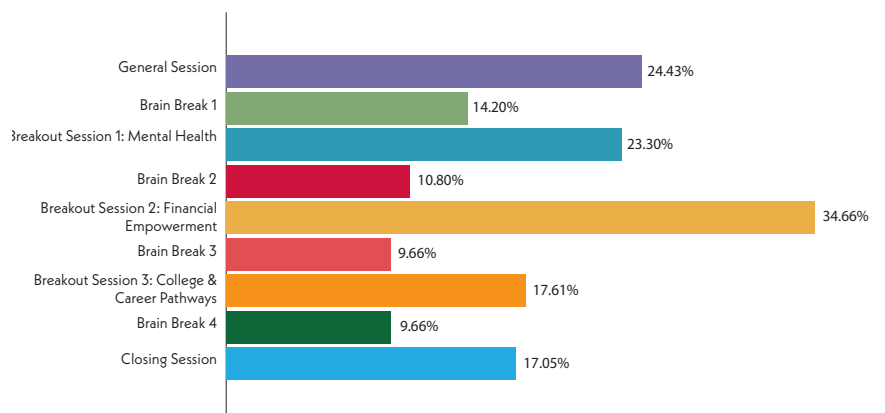
Student Feedback

Our initial questions asked which areas of the Leadership Summit students and educators liked the most as well as the least. For students, the most popular session was the College and Career Pathways Panel with some noting that they appreciated the diverse stories and experiences shared by panelists and that it was a positive note to end on, given it was the last session. Students' least favorite session was the Financial Empowerment session as it could have benefited from increased engagement and more relevant tips considering the age base. Middle school and junior high students are not readily eligible to apply for FAFSA grants, therefore more information about scholarships that they are currently able to apply for would be beneficial for future sessions.

Students, what areas of the Leadership Summit did you like the MOST?



Students, what areas of the Leadership Summit did you like the LEAST?

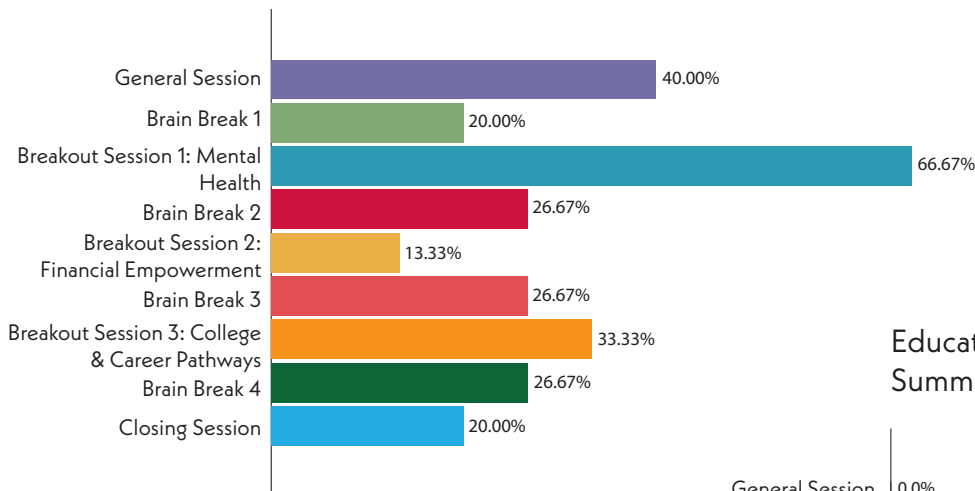


Feedback on Breakout Sessions

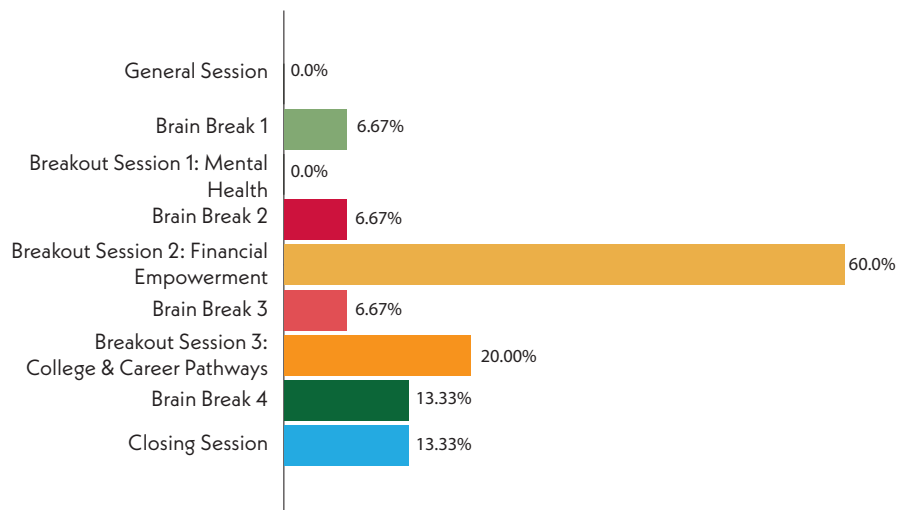
Educators Feedback

Educators also reported that their least favorite session was the financial literacy session for similar reasons. In contrast, the most popular session for them was the mental health session because of the need for mindfulness and emotional health during a pandemic that has disrupted many routines and activities that youth are used to. In general, having some kind of pre-discussion guide to prepare students for the topics presented would have been helpful so that students could be more engaged and ready to dive into important topics.

Educators, what areas of the Leadership Summit did you like the MOST?

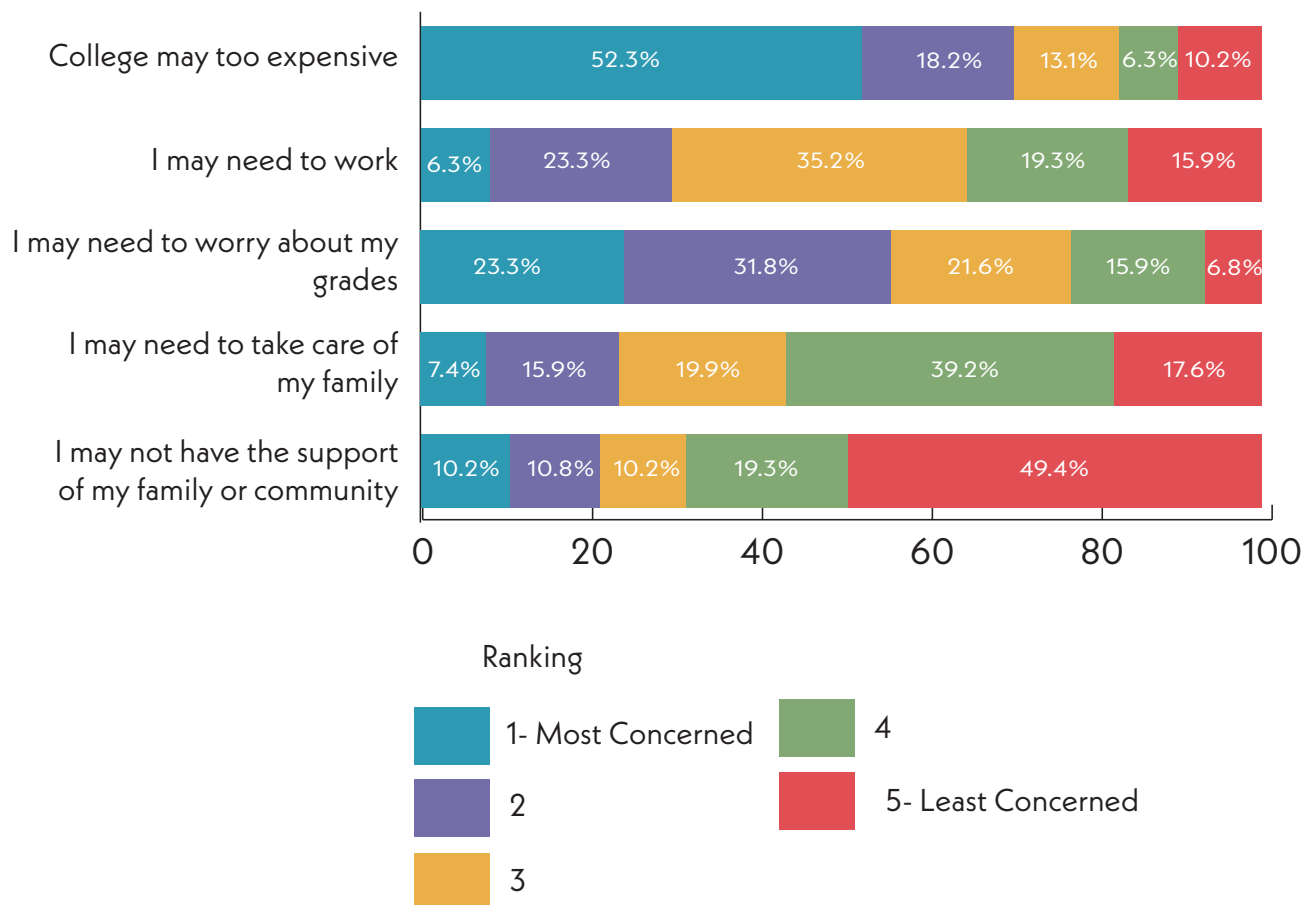


Educators, what areas of the Leadership Summit did you like the LEAST?



Concerns About Going to College

A signature concept of the Summit is college-readiness and pathway exploration. Therefore it was important to understand what some of the barriers or challenges students may face in pursuing higher education. In analyzing the results of the question, "What are concerns you have about going to college?", the top concern students had was "college may be too expensive." Which was similarly shared by students during the 2019 Multicultural Leadership Summit. Moving forward, the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs will prioritize presenting financial aid resources that are accessible and age-appropriate for students in 7th through 9th grade. We will also consider a scholarship opportunity embedded in the event itself. Additionally, sponsors and partners will be key in extending follow-up opportunities for financial aid and literacy so that students have multiple avenues to understand the value of saving for future expenses.

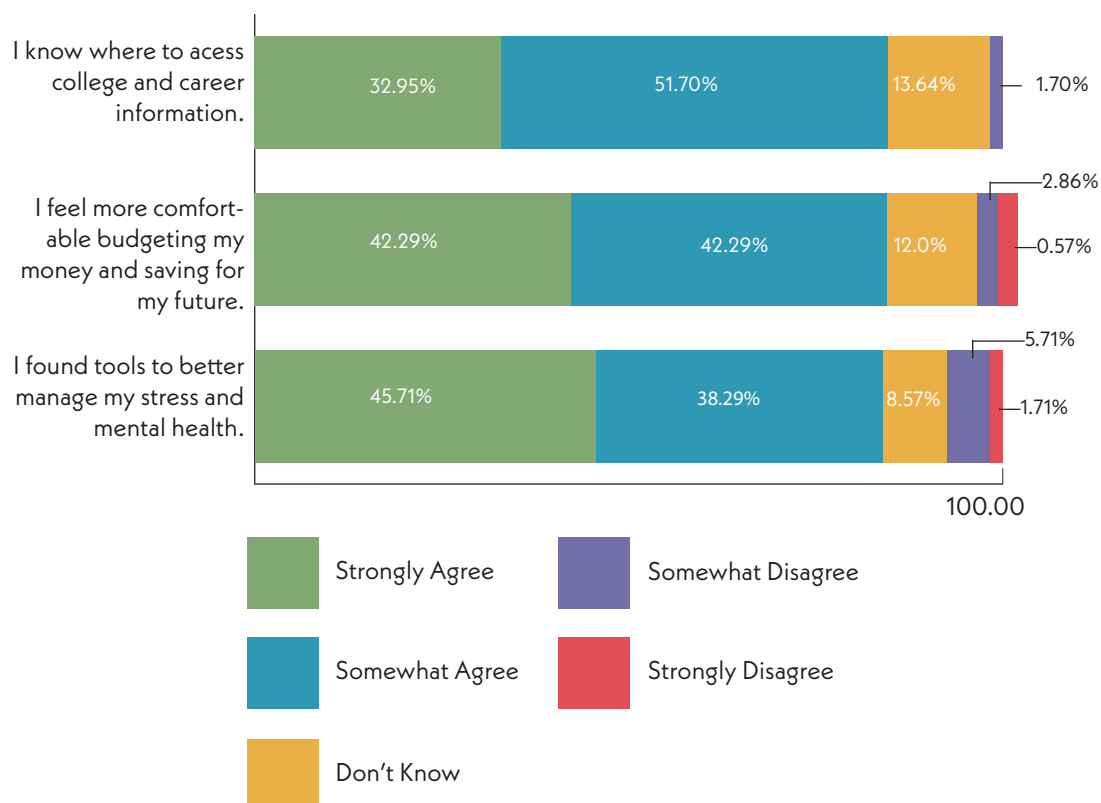


Agree & Disagree Statements

Students were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements based on their experience at the Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit:

- I know where to access college and career information.
- I feel more comfortable budgeting my money and saving for my future.
- I found tools to better manage my stress and mental health.

In response to the first point, a majority of students “somewhat agreed” that they knew where to access college and career information. In contrast, a majority of students shared that they “strongly agreed” that they found tools to better manage stress and mental health. The second point that asked about their comfort level with budgeting and saving money, was evenly split at “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree.” Collectively, students displayed tangible confidence in all three scenarios, but financial literacy and empowerment remains an area of opportunity for further discussion and resource-building.

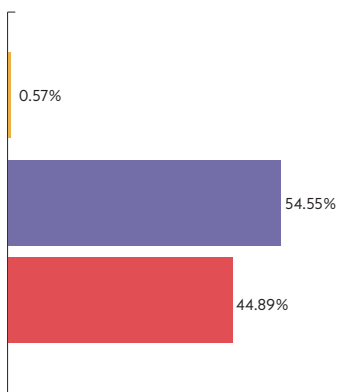


Change in General Knowledge About Break-Out Sessions

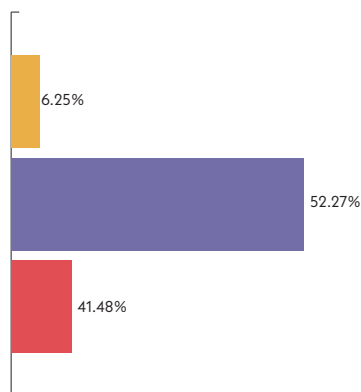
In response to a question in the student demographic survey asking for their initial level of understanding related to the breakout session topics (mental health, financial literacy, college and career readiness), the post-survey asked for how their knowledge of the topics had changed as a result of the Summit. For all three topics, most students responded that their level of knowledge was “somewhat well,” showing a notable grasp of the content. Students shared in their short-response comments that generally the information presented was novel, useful, and diverse in application.

An 8th grader from Wahlquist Jr. High explained, “it taught me many things about mental health that I thought was very useful”, while another expressed that the topics overall were “very helpful and inspired me a lot to think about my future [and] about the impact I can make in the community.”

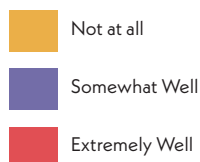
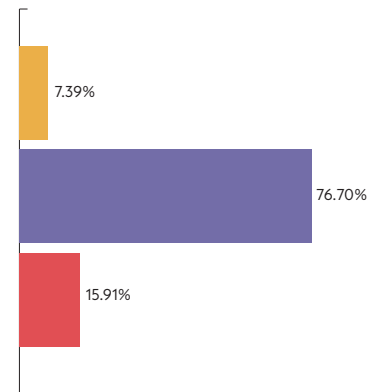
How would you rate your knowledge about Mental Health after watching the Leadership Summit?



How would you rate your knowledge about College and Career Readiness after watching the Leadership Summit?



How would you rate your knowledge about Financial Literacy and Empowerment after watching the Leadership Summit?





Ways to Improve

Students and educators were asked to share what they thought could be improved for the next Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit. This was a short-response question that captured a variety of perspectives and most commonly centered around increased interaction between presenters and students and providing more opportunities for students to engage with each other. Additionally, having featured speakers that reflected the students' age was suggested to allow youth to see themselves directly represented in the details of the day. Educators shared that the Zoom platform allowed for more students to participate, but they also would have benefitted from more Zoom instruction in terms of how the event would engage with their students online. One suggested having details of the event sooner including how the students were expected to participate. The division values the work educators do inside and outside the classroom and moving forward will identify materials that can prompt continued conversations and learning opportunities after the Summit.

"I loved the Summit! It was a great learning experience, but maybe having more speakers and representation from those around our ages (12-15) would be a major improvement."

9th Grader, Cottonwood High

"Spend more time highlighting multicultural people's personal stories of how they have successfully navigated college and career opportunities."

Middle School Counselor

Future Topics

To help plan future events with relevant messages, students and educators responded to the question of “What topics would you like to see at future Leadership Summits?”

Free responses were coded according to repeated themes such as College & Career Readiness, Mental Health, Financial Empowerment & Aid, and Life Skills. The majority of students requested further resources and information on college and career pathways from diverse leaders’ perspectives. It was apparent that environments where personal stories and inspiring experiences are shared, are popular modes of learning for youth. Some wanted more information on financial aid and empowerment to prepare them for major financial milestones like college, tax preparation and investing. Mental health and advice on life skills were also very popular topics that will urge the division to provide well-rounded sessions that center lived experiences, diverse representation, and tangible advice for young, emerging leaders. Educators also encouraged more opportunities for youth to engage in activism, leadership, and learn how to navigate conversations about social issues (i.e., racism, multicultural education), centered around increasing resilience.





Sponsor Appreciation

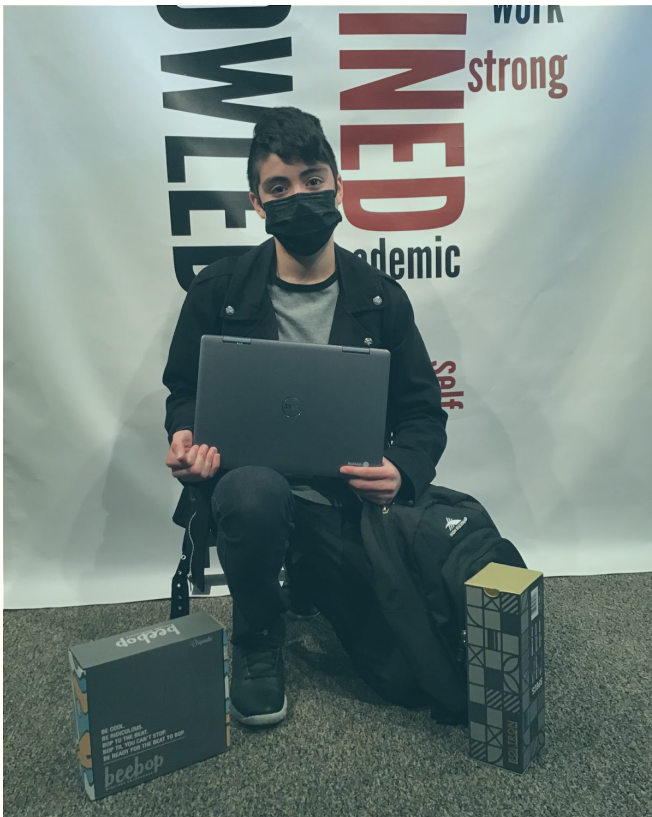
This program would not have been possible without the support of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs (MCA) 2020-2021 Multicultural Youth Leadership Program sponsors:



Our partners helped to underwrite a significant portion of the costs associated with this event to help demonstrate the impact of public-private partnerships. We express our deepest gratitude to the sponsors and partnerships that allow this event to continue year to year.

The Impact of Our Partnerships

Student Prizes



Fernando Nava, student at West Point Jr. High, receives a Chromebook laptop package as a prize item from Multicultural youth Leadership Summit.

In addition to monetary support, we received prize item donations from various organizations to generate excitement among students during the event. Comcast donated Chromebook laptop packages to help bridge the digital divide some of the students may have been facing and all the more exacerbated with online learning due to COVID-19.

One of the recipients was Fernando Nava of West Point Jr. High. His teacher shared, "As part of Fernando's hard-fought quest to raise his grades, he has often taken advantage to voluntarily come into our school on our remote Fridays when there are no in-person classes held, just so he can have better resources to work with and meet with his teachers in person to help improve his work habits and thereby raise his grades. He will definitely put the Chromebook to good use." We thank the many organizations that contributed to this event and to the educators who facilitate experiences for students to learn in and outside of the classroom.

Prize Donors

- Comcast
- Goldman Sachs
- Hogle Zoo
- L3Harris Technologies
- Microsoft
- PBS Utah - KUED
- Purple
- Real Salt Lake
- Sodalicious



Reception

Student Quote

"It was very helpful and inspired me a lot to think about my future not only to be beneficial for me but about the impact I can make in the community."

9th Grader, Cottonwood High School

Educator Quote

"This is my third time attending and you all do a wonderful job making this [an] engaging and hopeful day. Thank you!"

Salt Lake County Educator

Sponsor Quote

"The American Express Center for Community Development is proud to partner with the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs to support the Multicultural Youth Leadership programs. We believe that the goal of these programs, which is to curb the pattern of intergenerational cycles of poverty and racial disparities for underserved students from diverse racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, will have profound impacts on the communities in which these youth will become leaders and respected citizens."

Nicole Stone, American Express

Opportunities For Growth

Overview:

In addition to sharing key impacts from this year's Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit, this report also serves to identify opportunities for growth and learning so that future events can be best tailored to the dynamic needs of students and educators. Upon our analysis of the post-event evaluation responses and an internal team debrief, we have committed to work towards the following goals and internalize lessons learned.



Lessons Learned & Future Goals

Increase Virtual Interaction & Engagement

If in the future we continue to host virtual events, it is important that these spaces have high engagement and interaction. Students reported that they would like to see platforms such as Kahoot or other interactive learning platforms be embedded throughout the event to promote retention and recall of information shared.

Fully Operationalize Accessibility Guidelines

Hosting over 1,000 attendees over a virtual platform came with added responsibility to consider accessibility needs. Through the partnership with Salt Lake Community College, the event was able to offer captioning for two out of the four sessions, but it is a goal to have this service be fully available for all event days to be more inclusive. This will require that the planning team consider ways to operationalize accessibility guidelines for all events so similar protocol is followed consistently.

Prepare Pre-Discussion Guide

Effective communication of event details and assistance with unique questions was a service that educators reported they deeply appreciated. To increase the engagement with students during the actual event, it is recommended that staff provide educators a detailed pre-discussion guide to prepare students for the topics that the Summit will dive into. This will help students formulate questions and ideas to present or share with presenters which will altogether make for a more dynamic and engaging experience. The hope is that the Summit's impact goes beyond the event and encourages more follow-up and development of leadership skills in the classroom.

Allow Greater Flexibility with Event Dates

In the event that the Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit is hosted across multiple days again, it would be more convenient for educators to be able to choose the event day that works best for their school schedule, rather than having it be pre-assigned. Some schools reported that testing or district wide events conflicted with the Summit, therefore allowing greater flexibility in event dates would potentially increase attendance overall.

Conclusion

Since its inception in 2013, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Summit has been providing empowering opportunities for youth to see themselves as emerging leaders. Based on data gathered, students understood the value of the breakout session topics and the importance in investing in themselves and their futures. The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs commits itself to these scholars and to the realization of their potential. Moving forward, the division will continue to foster relationships with key stakeholders such as educators, community leaders, and organizations, who can provide the advisory arm and direction needed to empower the youth of today to become the dynamic leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you!

