

# Star Kids





## Year 1 Survey and Focus Group Results

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# 1 Key Findings

# KEY FINDINGS

Results presented in this report came from a year-end survey, a summer school survey, and a focus group of Star Kids students. Sixteen students completed the year-end survey, 19 students completed the summer school survey, and 9 students participated in the focus group. Data presented in this report come from the surveys except when noted.

Results showed that many students experienced [improvements in their attitude \(75%\), behavior \(63%\) and efforts to achieve personal goals \(63%\)](#). Students have become more positive and show more respect for each other.

Focus group findings corroborated this, with students reporting that they are [working harder to do well in school](#).

About half of the students reported [significant improvements in critical skills](#). The skill that improved among most students (53%) was respect for others.

Star Kids also [influenced students' education and career goals](#). For example, 67% of students said that the program [helped them consider staying in school](#). In terms of a STEM career, 63% of students said that Star Kids [increased their interest in a STEM career](#).

Over 90% of the students were satisfied with Star Kids. They [liked the small classes and the supportive staff](#). Students in the focus group liked the fact that the teachers take the time to help students learn and understand before moving on to new topics or concepts.

Feedback about summer school was positive. Summer school had a [significant impact on students' attitudes about school](#). Before summer school, only 32% of students felt that doing well in school was very important; after summer school, that percentage increased to over 90%.

# 2 Star Kids Program

# Star Kids Overview

*Star Kids is a unique program that aims to keep high-risk students in school.*

Star Kids is an applied learning program with an emphasis on STEM education. The program targets high-poverty 15-year-old students at Villa Rica High School in Carrollton, Georgia. These students represent 25% of the school's 9<sup>th</sup> grade population and are statistically at highest risk for dropping out of school.

Star Kids offers students a STEM-focused curriculum that features applied learning experiences, project-based learning, and real-world content. Field experiences with rotations through STEM-related area businesses and industries offer students the opportunity to see STEM in real-world settings.

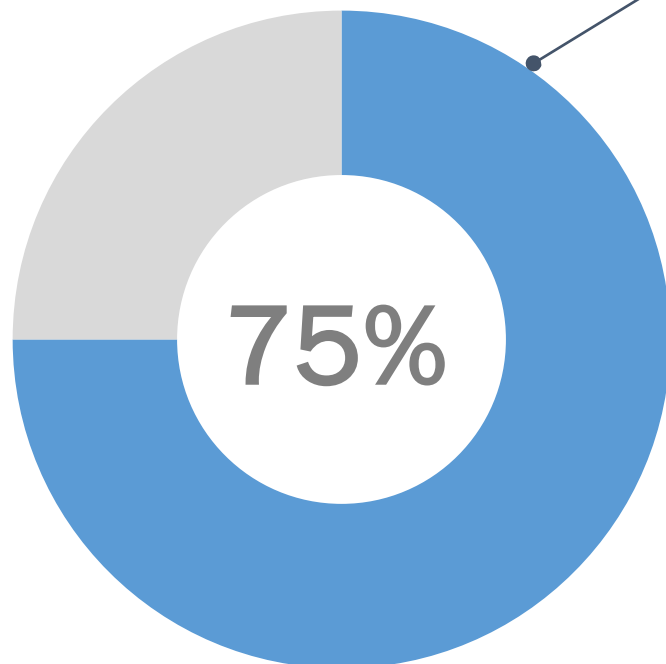
Students spend their afternoons at the College and Career Academy, where they receive instruction from math and science instructors. Low teacher to student ratios ensure individualized attention and support.

In addition to traditional STEM course work, students also take **WorkPrep** skills training classes, where they learn critical skills needed for academic and career success. To round out the program, students receive individual advisory plans that outline their academic goals and needs (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, credit recovery). In addition, the program helps students with non-academic needs, such as housing, healthcare, and basic needs.

# 3 Students' Attitudes, Behavior, Knowledge and Skills

# Star Kids' Students Have a Better Attitude

## Positive Change in Attitude



Three-quarters of Star Kids students reported positive changes in their attitude as a result of participating in the program. When asked how their attitudes have changed, students said...

"I'm happy and a lot more outgoing."

"I haven't been so mad all the time."

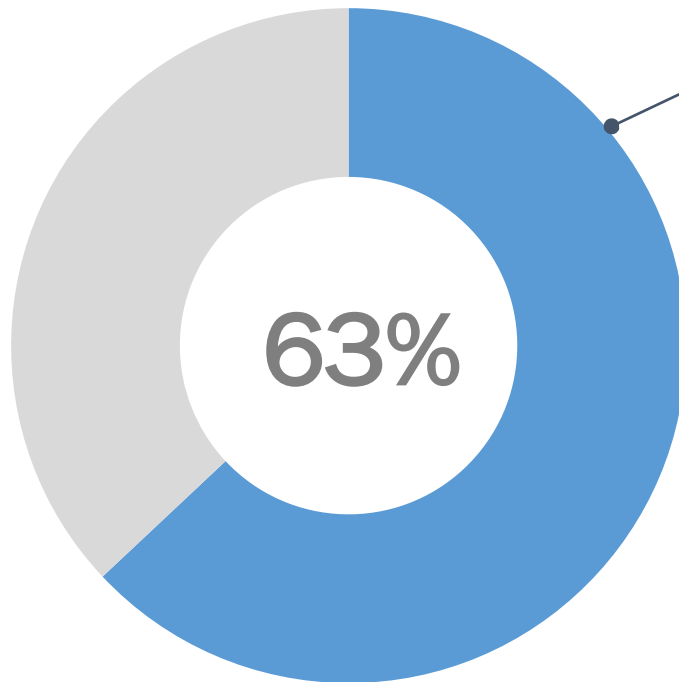
"I started wanting to care."

"Before, I just cared about passing class with a 70, but now I am passing with A's. I want my grades to be A's."

"You have more confidence after you come here."



# Star Kids' Students are Behaving Better



## Positive Change in Behavior

Almost two-thirds of students reported positive changes in their behavior as a result of Star Kids. When asked how their behavior has changed, students said...

“Going to school.”

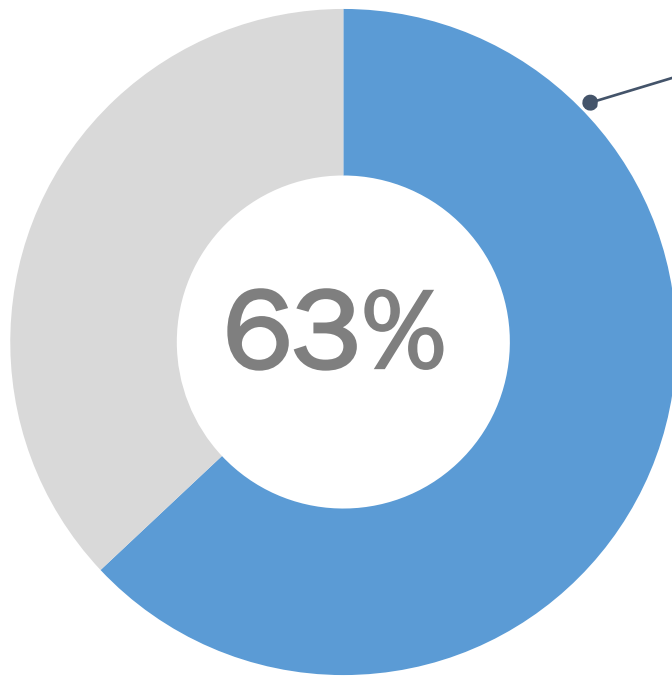
“I don’t sleep in class.”

“I have actually started doing my work.”

“I was quiet at first but now I am open about more things.”

“I have more manners.”

# Star Kids Resulted in Greater Gains in Achieving Goals



## Greater Achievement Toward Goals

Almost two-thirds of Star Kids students reported greater gains toward goal achievement as a result of participating in the program. One focus group participant stated that his/her goals have “changed in a good way.” When asked about their goals, students said...

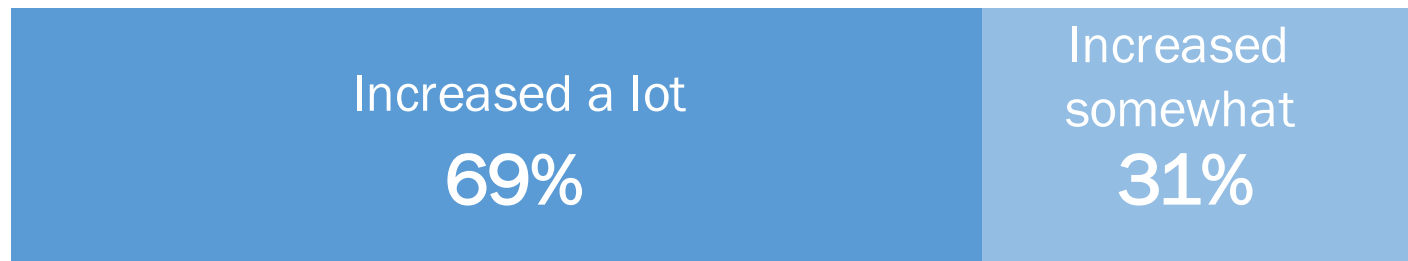
“I want to go to college.”

“I want to go to a 4 year school.”

“Get a job.”

# The Program had a Positive Impact on STEM Knowledge

All Star Kids students reported an increase in STEM knowledge as a result of participating in the program. Over two-thirds of the students said their knowledge “increased a lot.”



# Students Reported Improved Skills



About half of the students reported maximum or significant improvement in critical skills.

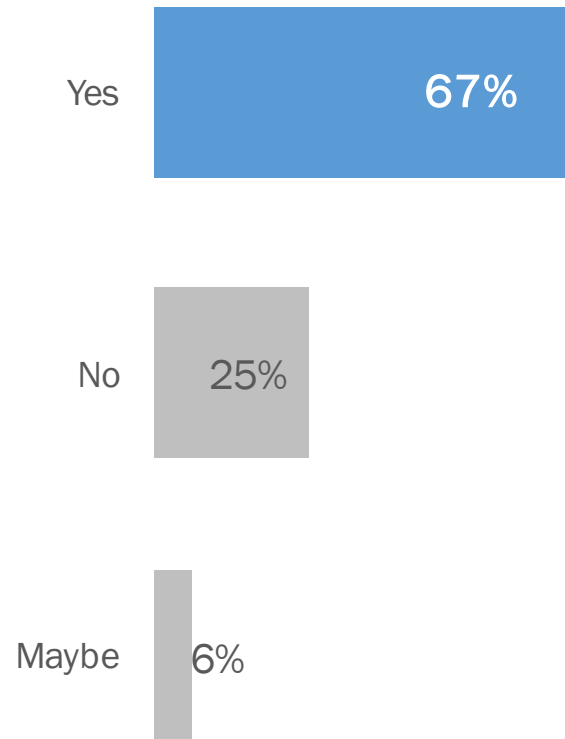
Respect for others was the most commonly reported improved skill, with 56% of students reporting maximum or significant improvement. Problem solving skills and the ability to conduct research improved for less than half the students (44% each).

Students in the focus group mentioned that the life skills component of the program was critical in improving their “soft skills.” One student stated, “I remember the first day; the most important word is integrity and effort.”

# 4

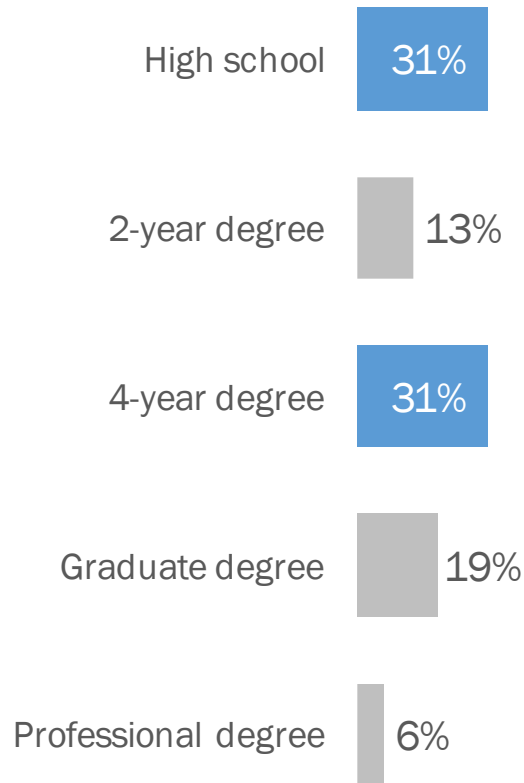
## Students' Education and Career Goals

# Star Kids Helped Students Consider Staying in School



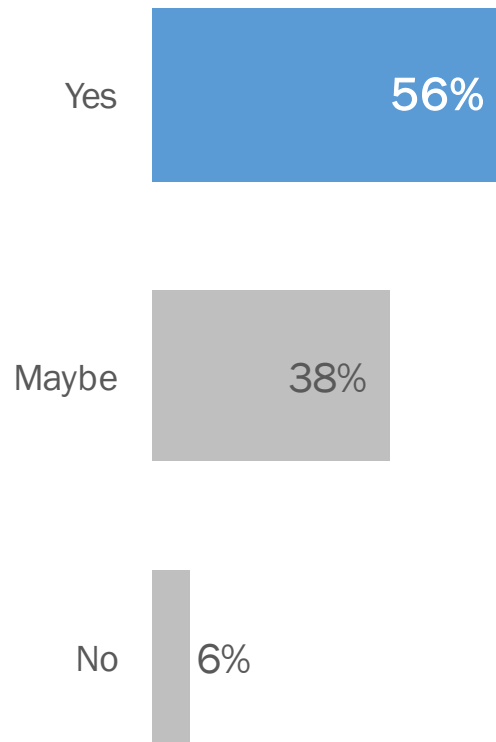
Most students reported that participating in Star Kids helped them consider staying in school. Students in the focus group also discussed how their attitude about coming to school has changed. Students who never wanted to go to school are now eager to attend because of the program. One student said, “There are a lot of us that are actually trying to come to school. I enjoy coming to school. You wake up and you want to come.”

# Many Students Want to go to College



About one-third of the Star Kids students want to complete high school and another one-third want to get a 4-year college degree. One-quarter want to pursue a graduate (e.g., master's, doctorate) or professional (medical, law, business) degree.

# Many Students Want to Participate in 12 for Life



Over half of the students who completed the survey and five of the nine focus group participants said they would like to participate in 12 for Life when they become eligible. Students can enter 12 for Life when they turn 16 years old. 12 for Life continues the effort to keep at-risk students in school, while providing real-world work experience.



# Star Kids Resulted in an Increased Interest in STEM Careers

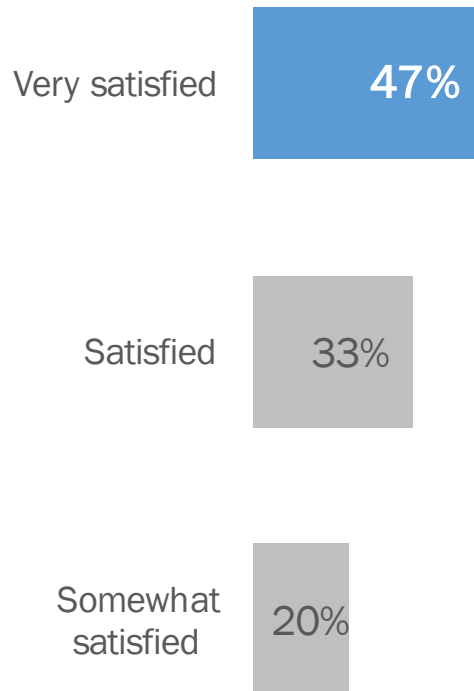
**63%** of students reported that Star Kids influenced their decision to pursue a STEM career.

Students were interested in the following careers:

- ❖ nursing,
- ❖ math,
- ❖ science, and
- ❖ technology.

# 5 Program Satisfaction

# Students Liked the Star Kids Program



95%

of Star Kids students were **satisfied with the program.** Of students who were satisfied with the program, almost half reported that they were “very satisfied.”

# Students Liked Many Aspects of Star Kids

- ✓ **Smaller classes** made it easier to learn compared to larger classes because students received more individualized attention.
- ✓ The program **helped students**: 1) develop a good **attitude**, 2) **focus on succeeding** in school, 3) learn to **work with others**, and 4) develop important **skills**.
- ✓ **Teachers and staff** focused on supporting students' efforts to succeed and allowed students time to learn before moving on to new topics.



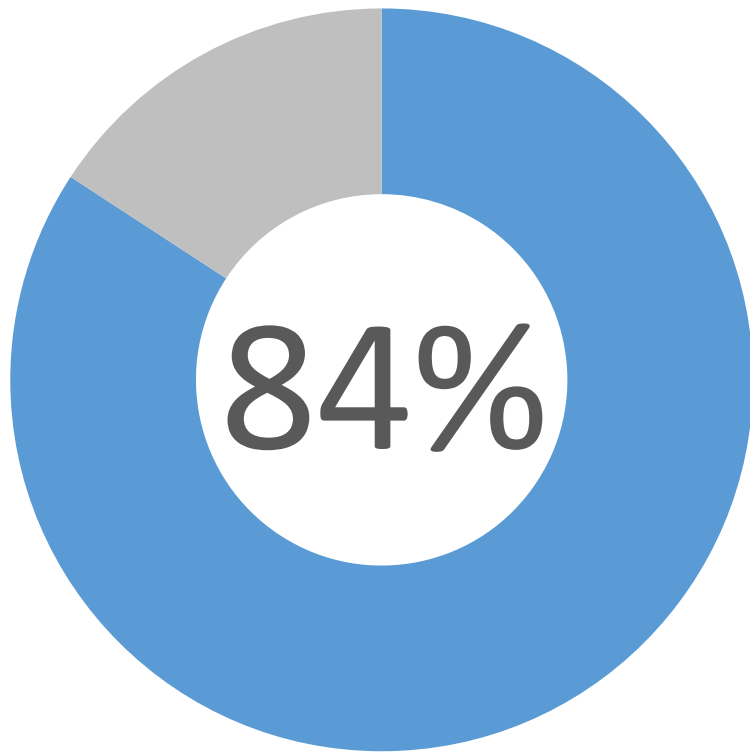
# Students Recommended Some Changes



- ✓ Five students requested the **use of cell phones** on field trips or during the program.
- ✓ One student indicated that s/he would like **more Life Skills time**.
- ✓ One student requested that the program run for **more than four hours** per day.

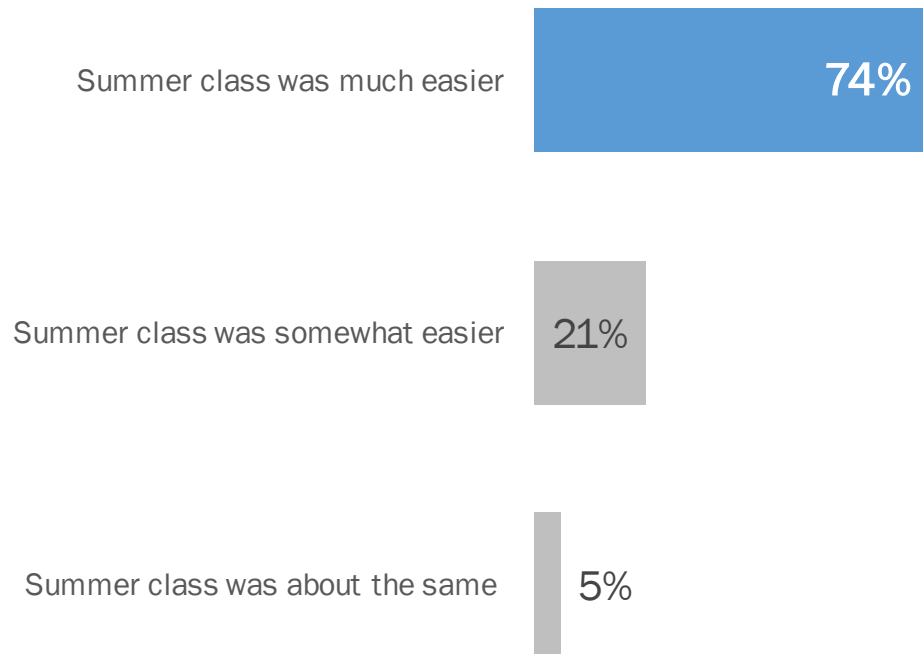
# 6 Summer School Feedback

# Why Did Students Attend Summer School?



The majority of summer school students attended summer school **to retake a class that they previously failed**. The remaining students attended to get ahead in credits.

# How Did Summer Classes Compare to the Regular School Year?

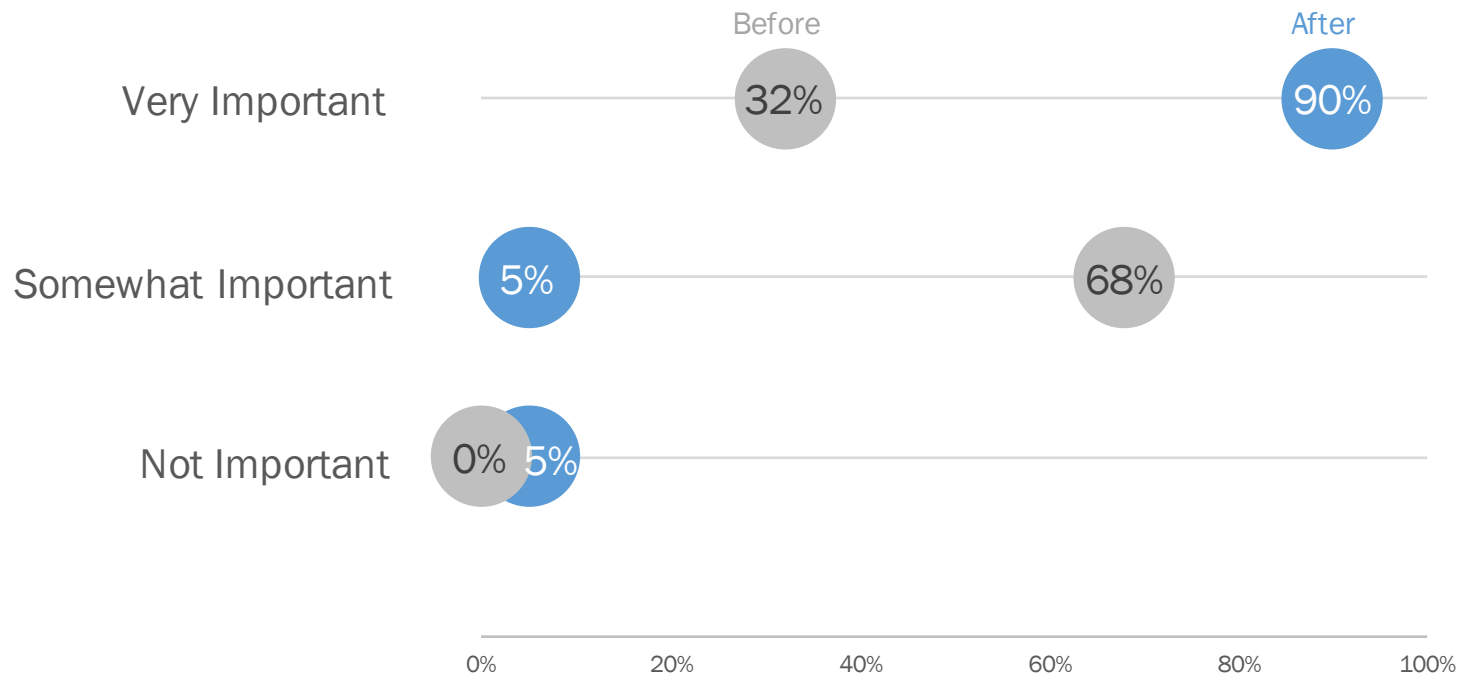


Most students reported that their **summer class was much easier** than classes they take during the regular school year. None of the students reported that their summer class was harder than regular session classes.

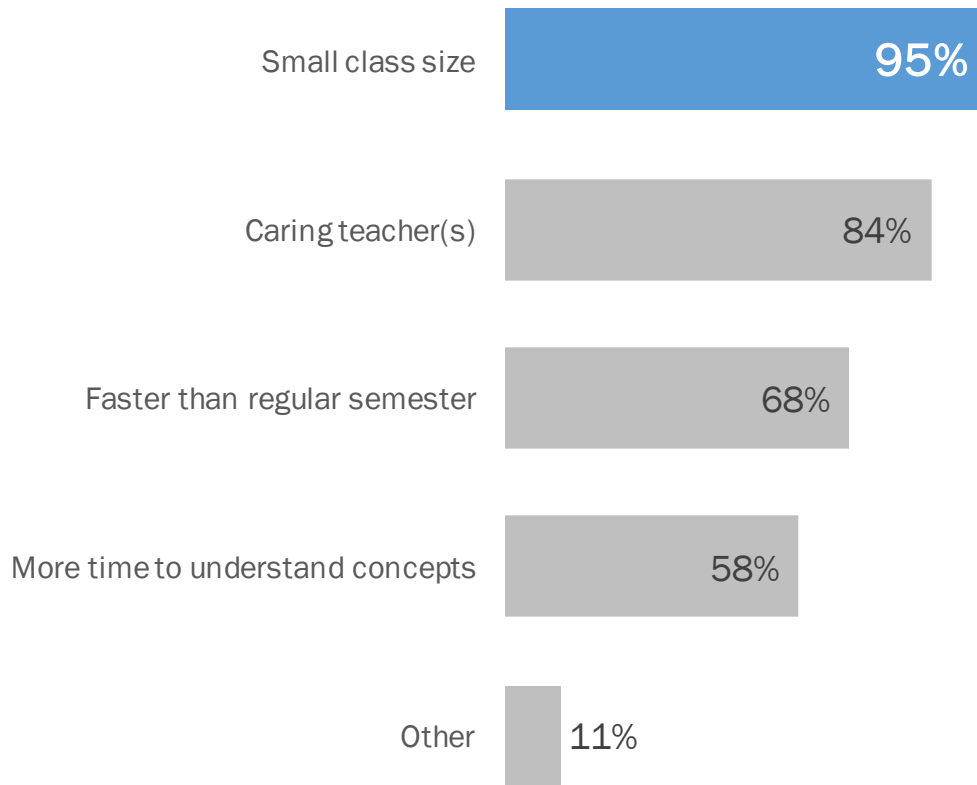


# Students Think Doing Well in School is Important

*After summer school, there was a large increase in the percentage of students who believed doing well in school is very important.*



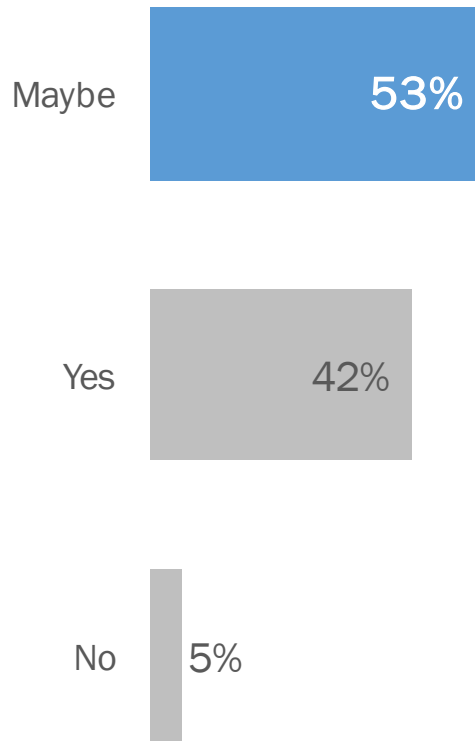
# Students Liked Many Aspects of Summer School



Nearly all students said that the **best part about summer school was the small class size.**

Students also liked the fact that the teachers were caring and that the summer class is faster than the regular school semester.

# Many Students Would Consider Attending Summer School Again



Over half of the summer school students would “maybe” attend summer school in the future if given the opportunity. Just over 40% of students said they would attend again, and one student would not attend again.

# 7 | Summary

# Summary

Overall, the findings suggest positive outcomes for Star Kids students.

The Year 1 Star Kids surveys and focus group were designed to assess program outcomes and satisfaction among participating students. Results suggest that the first year of the program was well-liked by the students and was successful in helping students achieve positive outcomes.

The program had many benefits for students, including improved attitudes and behavior. In addition, students are working harder toward their goals.

Students report a renewed interest in school, and many are putting forth more effort to improve their grades. Summer school students also changed their attitude about the importance of doing well in school.

Students liked the small classes because they received more individual attention from the teacher. Teachers were praised for their caring and supportive attitudes, and the fact that they made sure students learned material before moving on to a new topic. Summer school students liked their summer school experience and many would consider taking a summer class in the future.