

the truth about boarding school



The Association
of Boarding Schools

TABS

Allow us to debunk the myths

Boarding schools today are poles apart from their stereotypical Hollywood images, as havens for children of privilege or refuges for troubled teens. Research proves that contemporary boarding schools serve a diverse body of motivated students who study and live in supportive, inclusive academic communities where they learn about independence and responsibility – values that help them achieve success at higher rates than private day and public school students – in the classroom and beyond.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of modern-day boarding schools and the relative value of the boarding school experience, The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), the non-profit membership organization for independent, college-preparatory boarding schools,

commissioned Art & Science Group, a market research and consulting firm based in Baltimore, to study the subject. The results of their detailed assessment, summarized here, debunk many of the misperceptions about boarding schools and offer new insight into the strengths – and advantages – of boarding schools today.

Interviews with current boarding school students reveal what they learn once enrolled, and how boarders spend their time. Interviews with boarding school alumni across generations reveal the long-term, life-changing effects of attending school in a residential setting, and how the lessons and values learned at boarding school influence and shape college experiences and professional success.



Boarding school students and alumni are overwhelmingly satisfied with their academic experiences

For most teenagers, and their parents, it is the high-quality academics that motivate them to apply to boarding schools. About 60% of students enroll in these institutions primarily because of the promise of better education. Those surveyed reported significant enthusiasm for the classroom instruction they received.

- 95% say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their academic experience, compared to 86% of private day or public school students
- 91% report that their schools are academically challenging, compared to 70% of private day and 50% of public school students

- 90% report having high-quality teachers, compared to 62% of private day and 51% of public school students
- Boarding school students spend about 17 hours per week on homework, compared to approximately 9 hours by private day students and 8 hours by public school students
- 90% of mid-career and 80% of late-career boarding school graduates say they would repeat the boarding experience



17 boarding

hours spent per week on homework

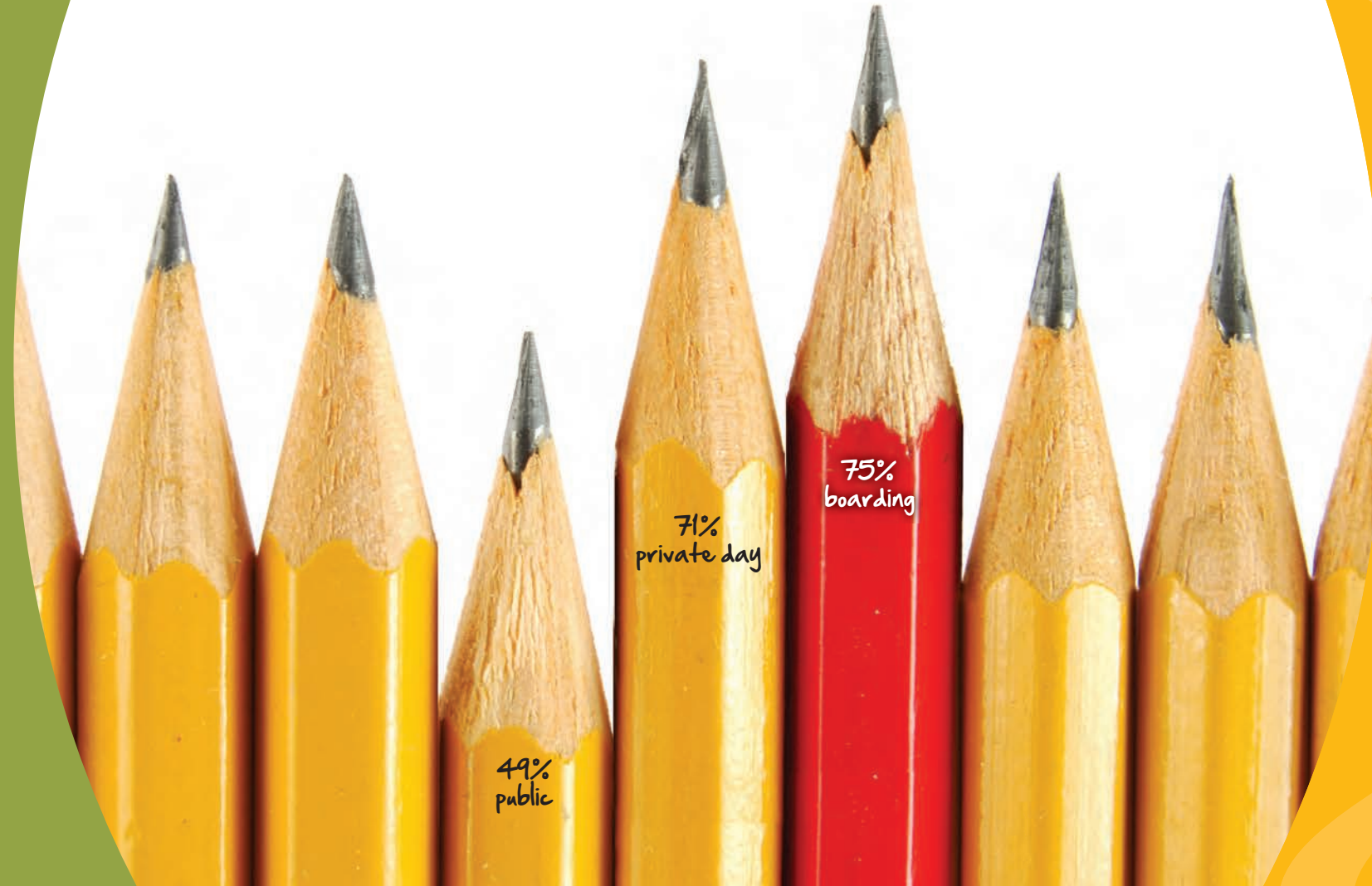


9 private day



8 public

percent of students who report being around motivated peers



Boarding school students use their time more productively than private day and public school students

In addition to enjoying the benefits of serious education and dedicating significantly more time to their studies, boarding school students participate more deeply than other students in extracurricular activities.

- 12 hours per week are dedicated to exercising or playing sports in boarding schools, compared to about 9 hours in private day and public schools
- Boarding school students spend about 6 hours per week on creative endeavors like performing music and painting, compared to 4 hours by private day and 5 hours by public school students

- 35% of current boarding school students spend 7-14 hours per week on nonathletic extracurricular activities like student government and clubs, compared to 27% of other students
- Boarding school students spend considerably less time watching television – about 3 hours per week – compared to 7 hours among private day and public school students, a pattern that continues throughout life
- 75% of boarding school students report being surrounded by motivated peers, compared to 71% of private day and 49% of public school students

Boarding schools encourage positive personal development

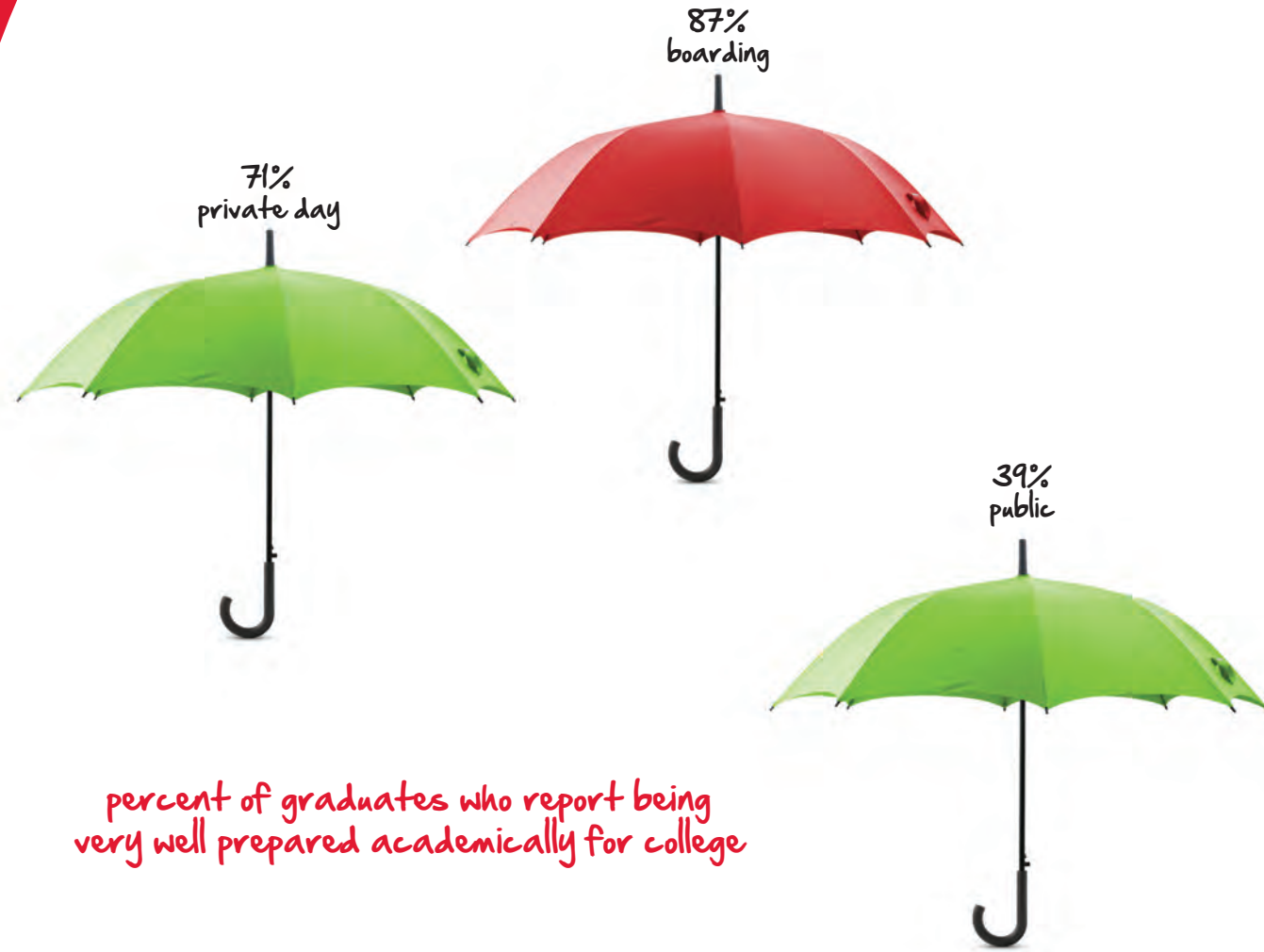
The study indicates that boarding schools play a direct and influential role in shaping the personal values and ethics of their students, fostering a wide array of desirable traits in a supportive and motivating environment. Boarding schools place as much importance on character development and growth as they do on academic success.

- About 70% of boarding school students say that boarding school has helped them develop self-discipline, maturity, independence, and the ability to think critically
- 77% of boarding school students say that their schools provide opportunities for leadership, compared to 60% of private day and 52% of public school students

- About 75% of boarding school students say that their schools provide a supportive environment, compared to about 70% of private day students and 50% of public school students
- Boarding school students enjoy more time with teachers, coaches, and staff members outside class than private day and public school students – about 9 hours per week compared to 4 hours
- About 70% of boarding school students say there is little or no cheating in class, compared to 31% of private day and 26% of public school students



percent of students who say their schools provide opportunities for leadership



percent of graduates who report being very well prepared academically for college

Boarding school students are better prepared for college

As they learn how to live and study independently and self-reliantly, boarding school students develop the skill sets necessary for success in college.

- 87% of boarding school graduates report being very well prepared academically for college, compared to 71% of private day and 39% of public school alumni
- 78% of boarding school graduates say that they were very well prepared for the non-academic aspects of college life, such as independence, social life, and time management, compared to 36% of private day and 23% of public school students
- 41% of boarding school students say that their college or university guidance counselor was very helpful in exploring college options, compared to 23% of private school students and 13% of public school students
- 50% of boarding school graduates earn advanced degrees, compared to 36% of private day and 21% of public school alumni

Boarding school alumni advance more quickly in their careers and are more philanthropic

Research shows that students who graduate from boarding schools achieve faster career advancement than private day and public school students, and are more actively involved in philanthropic causes.

- By mid-career, 44% of former boarding school students achieve positions in top management, compared to 33% of private day and 27% of public school graduates

- By late-career, 52% of former boarding school students achieve positions in top management, compared to 39% of private day and 27% of public school graduates
- Boarding school alumni are more philanthropic: by mid-career 60% give to social service organizations, compared to 46% of all others; 58% to political parties, compared to 33% of all others; and 52% to their colleges, compared to 35% of all others



percent of graduates who achieve positions in top management by mid-career

Myth

Boarding schools are homogenous.

Boarding schools are for problem students who are being “sent away.”

Boarding schools are places where students get into trouble.

Boarding school students have troubled home lives.

Fact

59% of boarding school students describe their schools as having students from many races and ethnic groups as opposed to 19% of private day and 39% of public school students.

60% of respondents applied to boarding school primarily because of the opportunity for a better education.

95% of boarding school students say that their social lives do not revolve around drugs and alcohol, compared to 82% of private day and public school students.

86% of boarding school students report being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with family life.

About TABS

The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) is the official home of college-prep boarding schools and the definitive guide for students and families. The association represents approximately 300 member schools across the United States, Canada and abroad. Go to boardingschools.com to learn more.

About Art & Science Group

Art & Science Group, LLC is one of the nation’s most influential consulting firms specializing in market-related issues facing education and the non-profit sector. The firm conducts highly sophisticated survey research, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and planning for colleges, universities, schools, and other organizations to strengthen their missions, performance, and relationships with key constituencies.

research methodology Art & Science Group interviewed more than 2,700 high school students and adults over the course of 16 months. The total sample comprised approximately 1,000 students and alumni from boarding schools, 1,100 from public schools, and 600 from private day schools (including independent and parochial schools). The findings were compared.

Interviewees included high school seniors, post-college graduates (25- and 26-year-olds), as well as mid- and late-career-level professionals (38- and 39-year-olds and 58- and 59-year-olds, respectively).

To isolate the effects of the boarding experience, samples were drawn and weighted to match public and private day populations based on socioeconomic status, college graduation rates, and gender.

Please visit boardingschools.com/truth to view a list of schools whose generous support funded this research project.

The background of the entire image is a white surface scattered with several apples. Most are green, but one in the lower-left quadrant is a vibrant red. The apples are in various sizes and focus, with some being sharp and others blurred, creating a sense of depth. The logo is positioned on the right side of the image.

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