

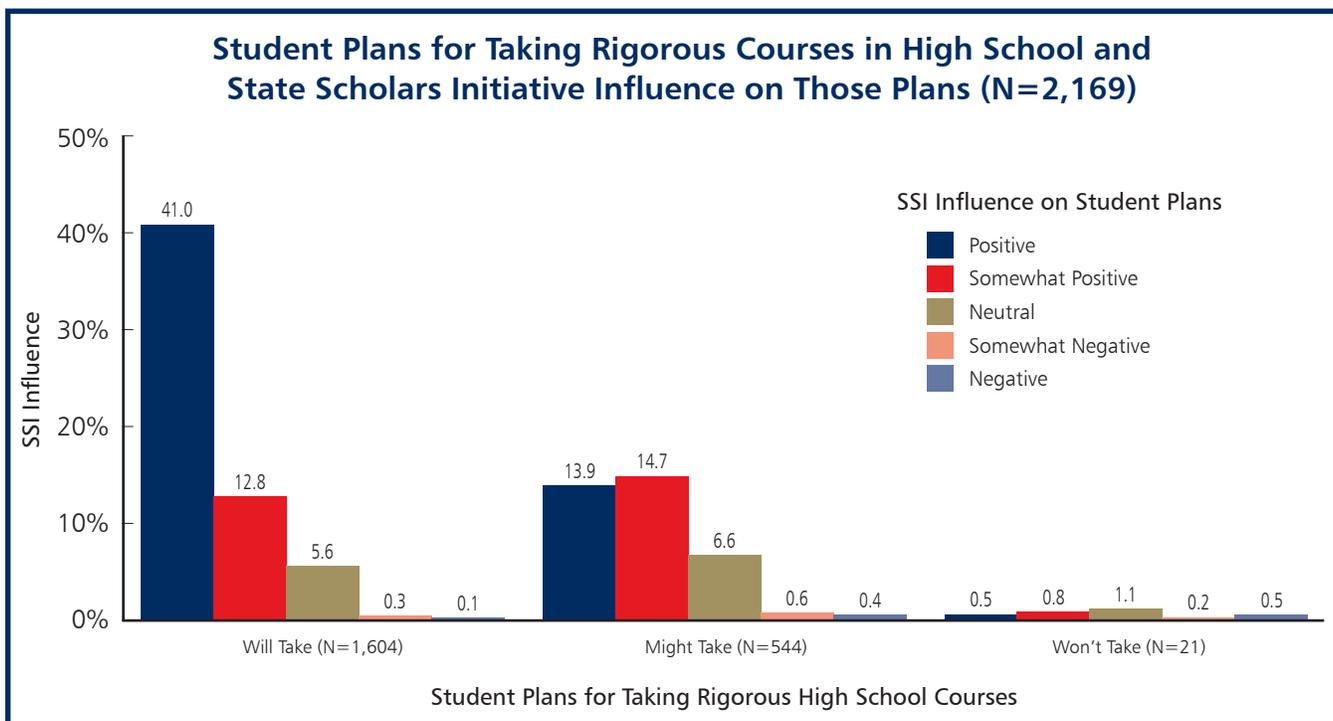
# STATE SCHOLARS INITIATIVE PERFORMANCE DATA



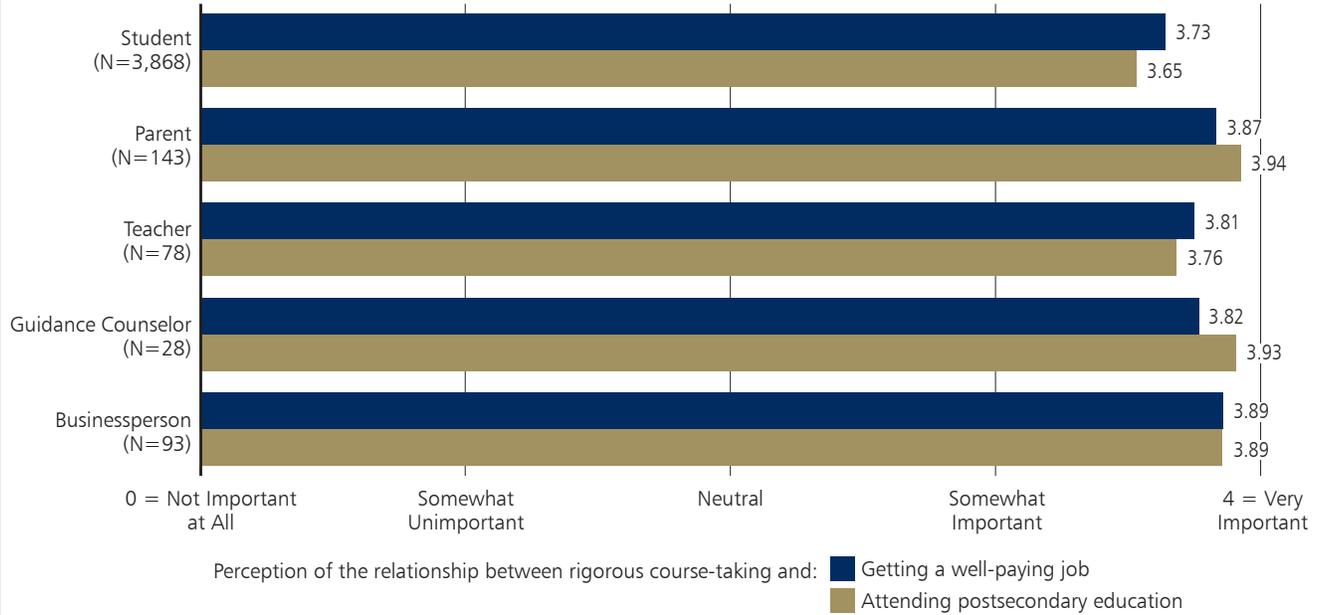
## Perception Survey Data: Highlights from the Annual State Scholars Initiative Report

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education funds the State Scholars Initiative (SSI), administered by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). SSI uses business-education partnerships at state and community levels to encourage students in middle and high school to pursue a more rigorous course of study in high school than they might otherwise have taken. WICHE is responsible for providing technical assistance, monitoring, oversight, and cost reimbursement to the SSI business-education partnerships. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) has conducted SSI evaluations on student course-taking and perception data. A second SSI evaluation, conducted by Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University, addresses how these business-education partnerships influenced high school student course-taking.

This summary highlights SSI perception data. Perception surveys were developed by NCHEMS to measure the impact of SSI on the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of students, teachers, parents, guidance counselors, and businesspeople with regard to the importance of rigorous course-taking in high school and its effect on postsecondary and occupational outcomes. These perception surveys were conducted between September 24, 2007, and January 31, 2008, in eight states at 43 different SSI events. Below are some of the key findings from these surveys. One finding is that most students at SSI events plan to take rigorous courses in high school. In addition, for most of them, the initiative played a positive role in influencing these plans.



### Mean Perception of Importance of Taking Rigorous Courses in High School to Future Behaviors by Various Stakeholder

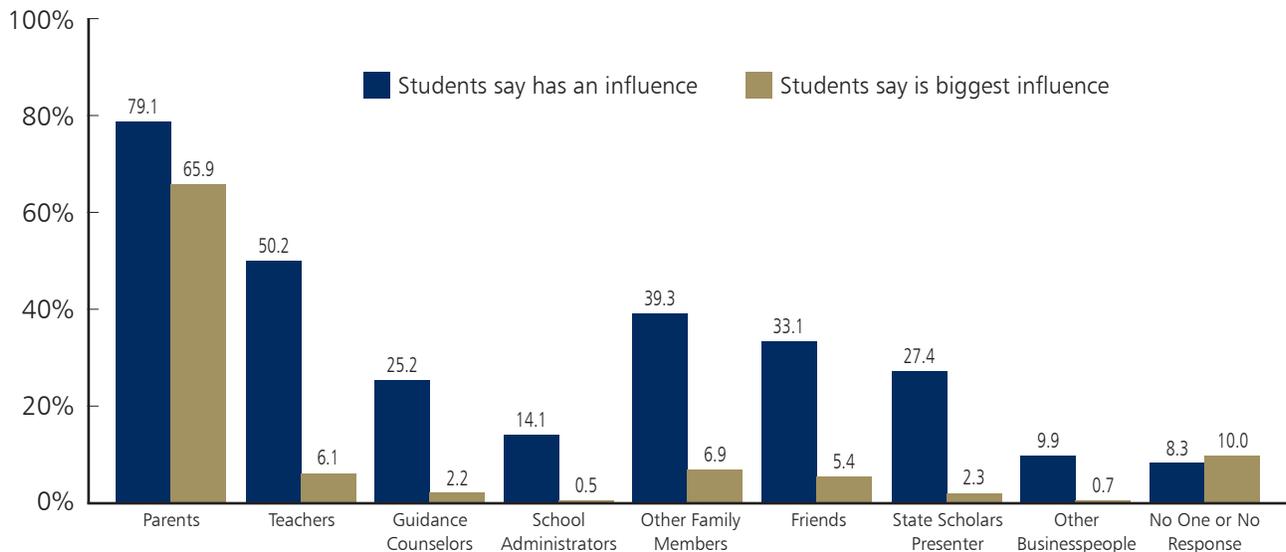


Survey results also show that most students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and businesspeople who are at SSI events agree that taking rigorous courses in high school is important to students' futures, whether that means getting a well-paying job or attending a technical institute, community college, or university. Interestingly, students see rigorous courses as more important for getting a good job

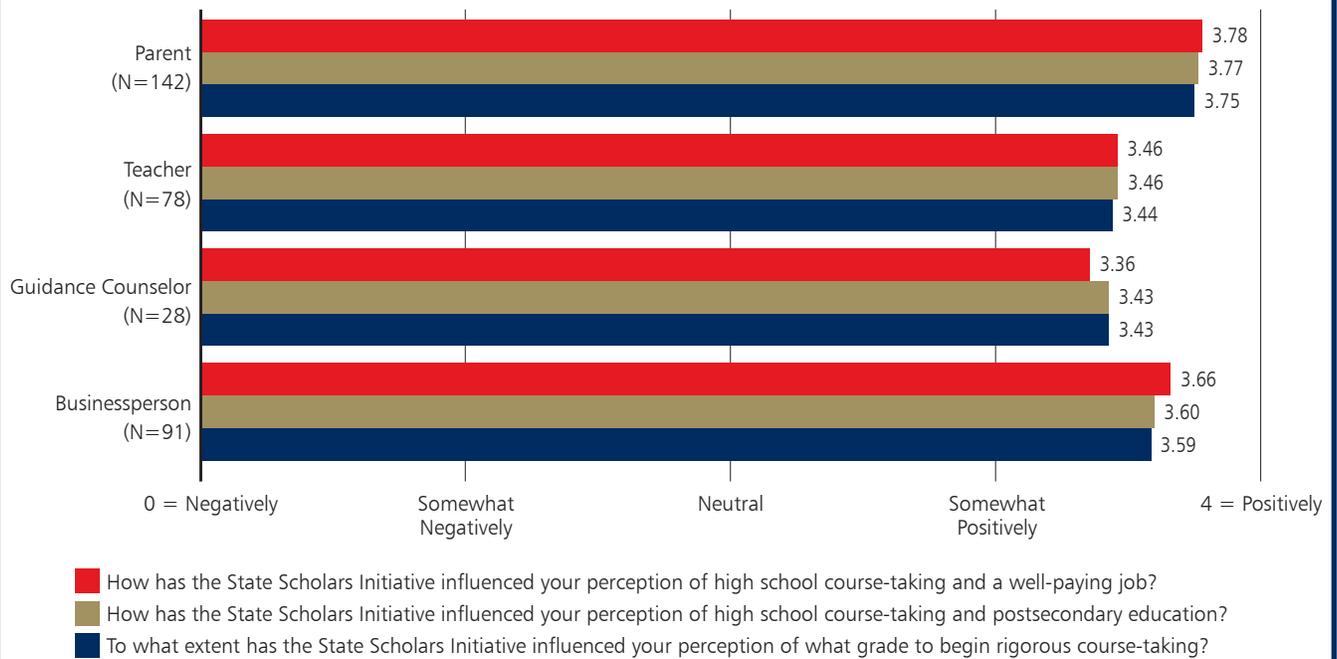
than for going to college, while businesspeople feel rigorous courses are equally essential for both work and college.

Students say that parents are the biggest influence on whether they take rigorous high school courses. However, a variety of other influential people – including teachers, other family members, businesspeople, and friends – also impact student

### Student Perceptions of Who Has an Influence on Them with Regard to Rigorous High School Course-taking (N=3,915)



## Mean SSI Influence on Perceptions of Adult Stakeholders



course-taking behavior. When asked if they actively encouraged students to take rigorous courses in high school, 81 percent of parents said they did, as did 91 percent of teachers, 100 percent of guidance counselors, and 82 percent of businesspeople.

Survey data show that adults predominantly agreed that students should begin taking rigorous courses in 9th grade or earlier. Results also indicate that the State Scholars Initiative has positively influenced all adult stakeholders' perspectives on the importance of rigorous high school course-taking.

In short, the data show that, at least for students attending State Scholars events, SSI has a primarily positive influence. Almost three-quarters of those surveyed said they intended to take rigorous courses and over half said SSI was a positive influence.

Students overwhelmingly agreed that rigorous courses were important to landing a good job or going to college. And adults felt SSI's influence, as well: the vast majority of parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and businesspeople surveyed said State Scholars had positively influenced their perception of the connection between high school course-taking and doing well in life after graduation, whether in college or a job.

To access the State Scholar Initiative full evaluation report, go to [www.wiche.edu/statescholars](http://www.wiche.edu/statescholars).

*This brief was prepared by Karen Paulson, an SSI evaluator and senior associate at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).*



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