



# GROWING THROUGH GRIEF

Minnetonka School District



Park Nicollet<sup>®</sup>  
Foundation

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# Growing Through Grief

## Mission/Vision/Values



### **Mission**

- A collaborative community and school partnership, intentionally engaged in helping children and teens, their families and school community through grief related to the death of a family member or friend.

### **Vision**

- To provide grief support to students, families and school communities through peer support groups, individual counsel and crisis response.

### **Values**

- Excellence
- Compassion
- Partnership
- Integrity



# Program Evolution



School District	Year Started	Number of Years Involved	Total # of School Districts
Minnetonka	1997 (pilot)	22	1
Edina	1997-1998	22	2
Hopkins	2000-2001	19	3
Prior Lake/Savage	2001-2002	18	4
Burnsville/Eagan/Savage	2002-2003	17	5
St. Louis Park	2004-2005	15	6
Westonka	2004-2005	15	7
Wayzata	2005-2006	14	8
Eastern Carver County	2005-2006	14	9
Osseo/Maple Grove	2005-2006	14	10
Minneapolis	2007-2008	12	11
AV/Eagan/Rosemount	2010-2011	9	12
Eden Prairie	2015-2016	4	13
South Washington	2019-2020	1	14
New Richmond, WI	2020	1	15

Katy's Story



Park Nicollet  
Methodist  
Hospice

# Growing Through Grief Team



Eight counselors and one program manager trained in mental health, grief and community based crisis support



Growing Through Grief 15 member Advisory Council made up of parents, school employees, PN employees and public officials

# Growing Through Grief Impact



Service Provided	2014-15 School Year	2015-16 School Year	2016-17 School Year	2017-18 School Year	2018-19 School Year	2019-20 School Year
Students Per Week	503	524	521	518	546	627
# of Grief Groups	57	59	60	63	75	90
Average individual sessions per month (Nov- March)	20	20	80	107	104	99
Death Related Crisis Events	14	9	10	9	18	12
People supported through crisis support ( Admin/grps/ student/teacher/commtty – average 300 per event)					5,400	3,600
Hours of Service	10,000 plus	10,000 plus	10,000 plus	10,000 plus	12,000 plus	15,500 plus
Training Sessions provided				2	9	6



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# Why We Do What We Do

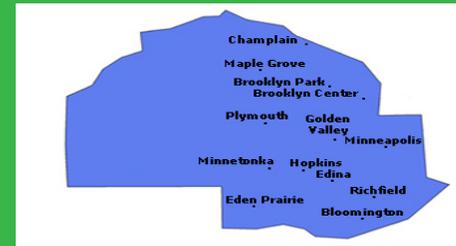
# Grief in Numbers



**1 in 14** children in the U.S. will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18



MN, alone, **71K** children will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18



Hennepin County, **13,090** children will experience the death of a parent by the age of 18



Nearly **70%** of teachers have at least one grieving student in their classroom



# Impact of Grief

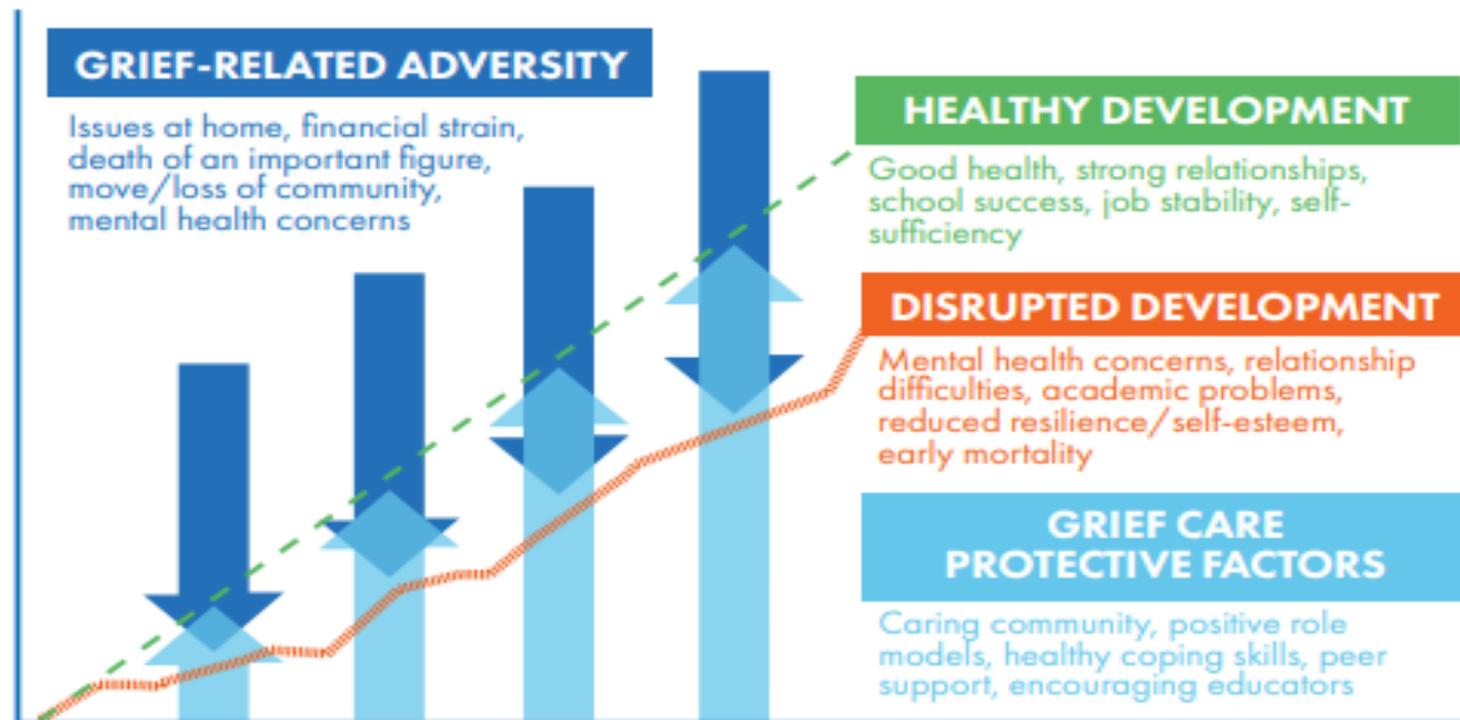


- Suffer in silence (41% don't want to upset surviving parent, trouble finding people to understand and relate)
- Greater risk of depression, suicide and substance abuse
- Difficulty concentrating (observed by 87% of teachers)
- Absenteeism (observed by 72% of teachers)
- Difficulty concentrating in the classroom (observed by 87% of teachers)
- Research: with consistent supports 6 years to move forward

New York Life Foundation and American Teacher Federation Survey, 2012



# Childhood Bereavement: The Cost of Inaction



Graph adapted from: Harvard University Center on the Developing Child

# GTG Impact on SEL



## Social Relationships

- 88% impact on family relationships
- 91% impact with school staff relationships
- 94% impact with classmate relationships

## Emotions

- 91% impact on feeling of sadness
- 91% impact on feelings related to hopelessness
- 82% impact on feelings of guilt
- 93% impact on feelings of loneliness

## Learning

- 97% impact on knowledge of grief
- 99% impact on knowledge of coping skills
- 79% impact on grades
- 76% impact on attendance
- 87% impact on ability to concentrate in the classroom



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# Minnetonka School District

# 2019-20 Minnetonka Highlights



- Fully engaged students
  - 63 students throughout the year
  - 61 in 12 peer support groups
  - intermittent individual sessions throughout the year
  - 844 total student contacts throughout the year (86% group and 14% individual)
- Utilization of all three modalities by staff

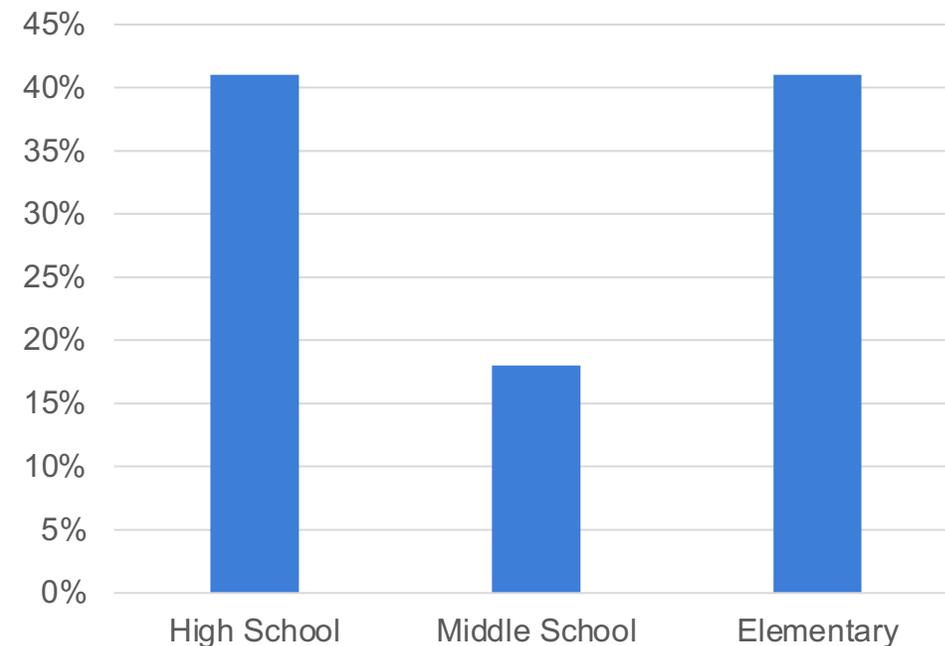
# 2019-20 Minnetonka School Participation



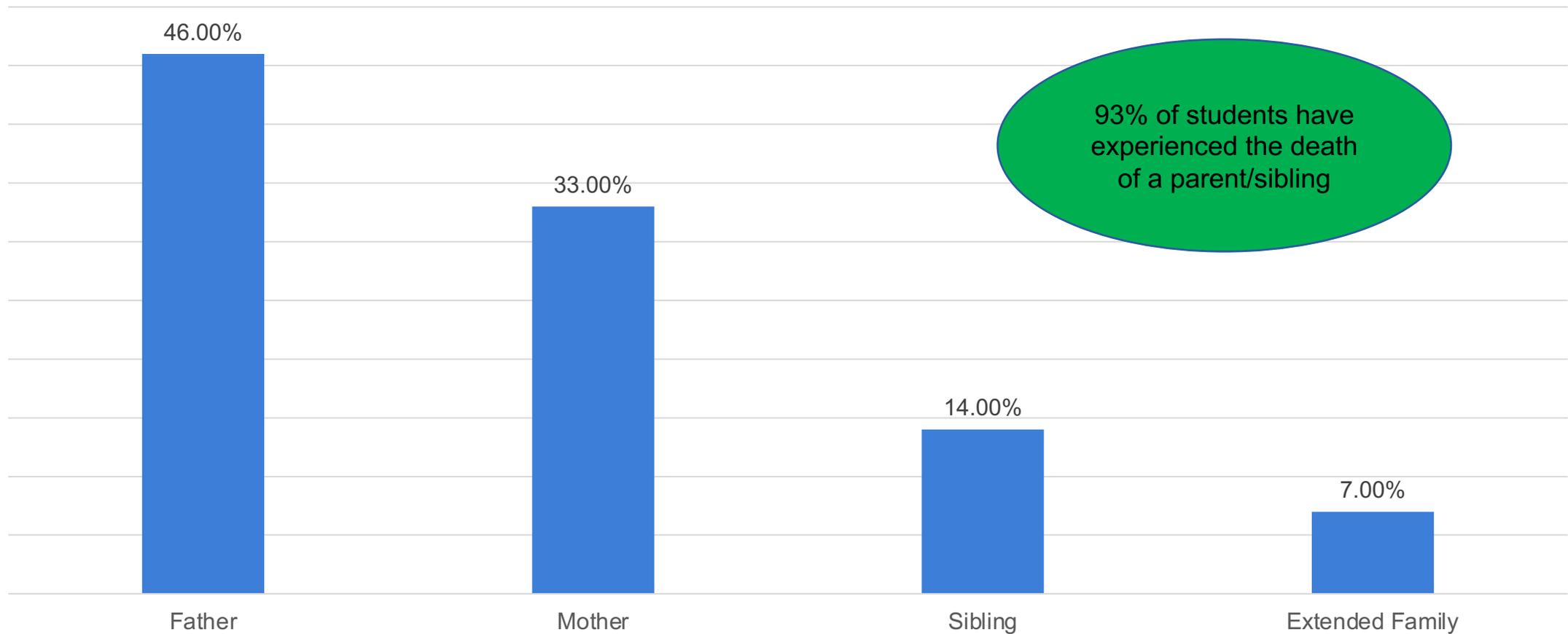
## Participating Schools (8)

- Minnetonka High School
- Minnetonka Middle East
- Minnetonka Middle West
- Scenic Heights Elementary
- Minnewashta Elementary
- Deephaven Elementary
- Groveland Elementary
- Excelsior Elementary

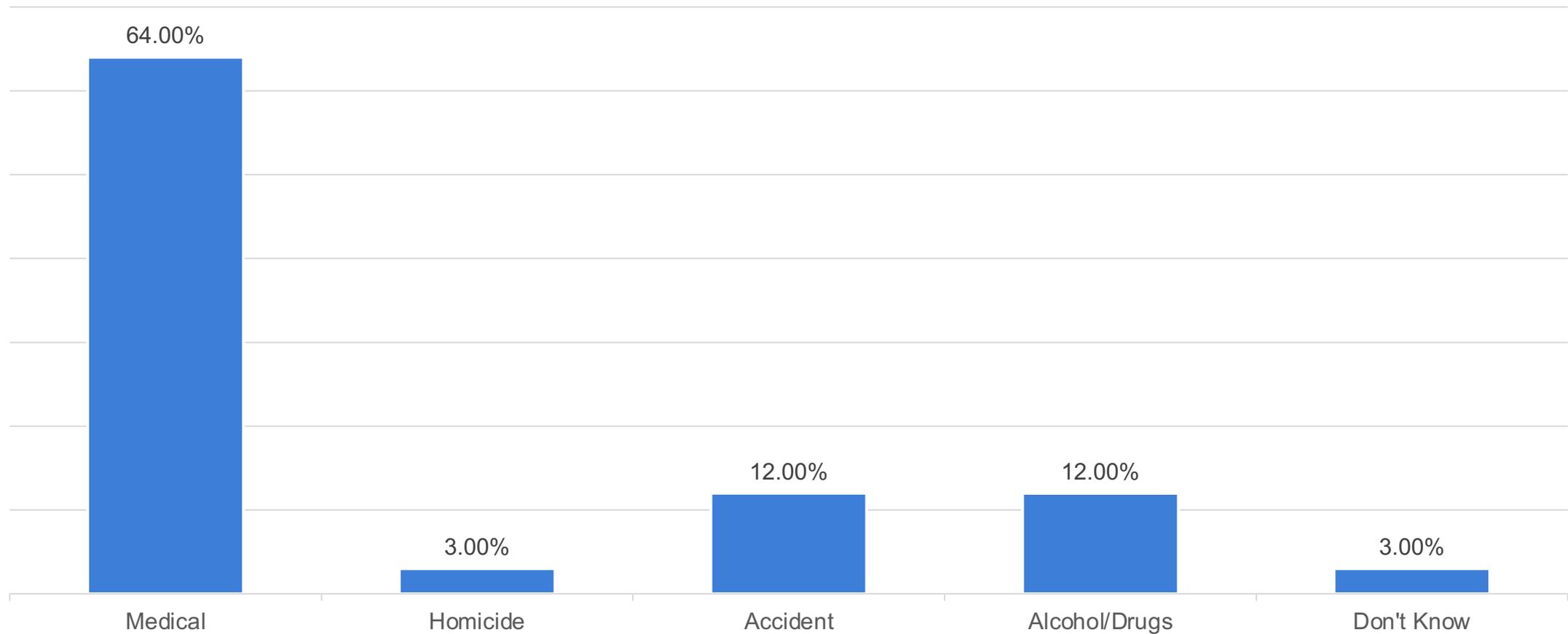
## Grade Level



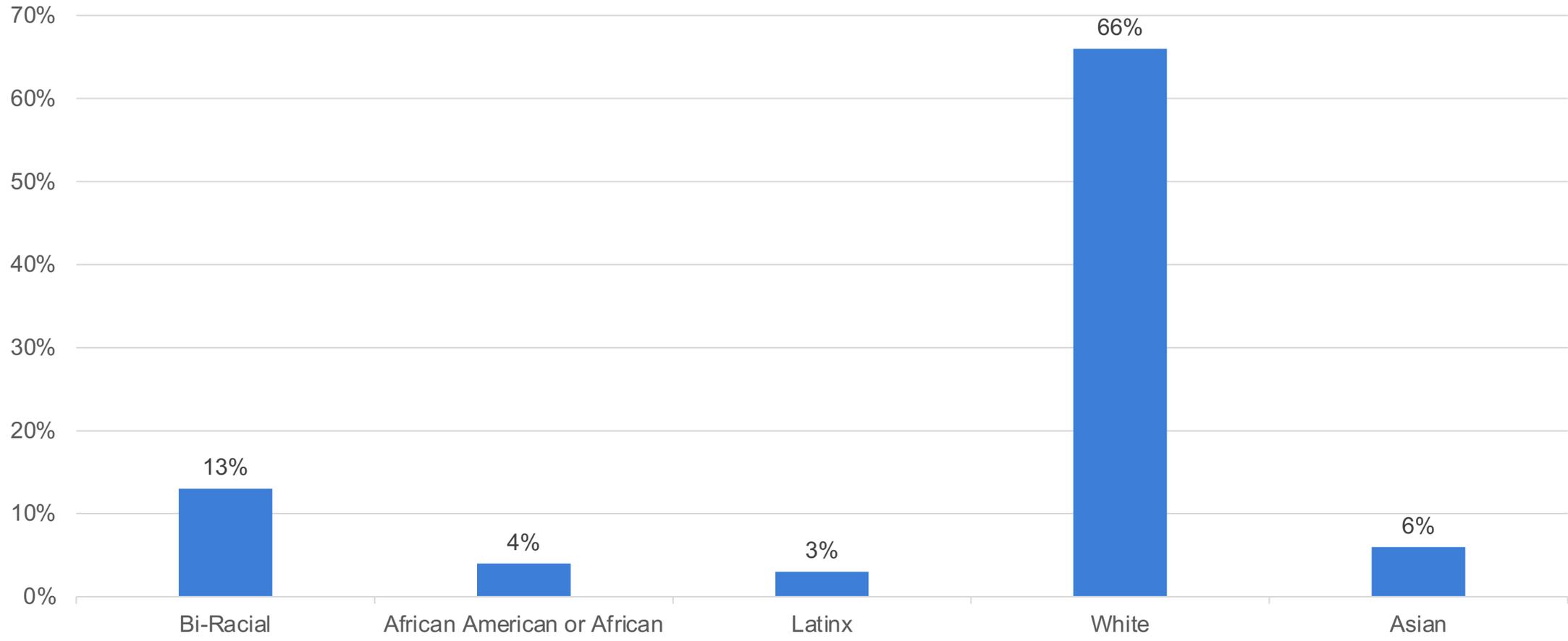
# 2019-20 - Minnetonka relationship of the family member or friend that died



# 2019 -20 Minnetonka Student Reported Cause of Death



# 2019-20 Minnetonka Ethnicity





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# GTG Stories

# Brianna's Story – Resilient, Confident and Unstoppable



- Briana is a 2019-20 graduating senior. She is also a seven year participant of GTG. Briana's father died when she was nine years old, in third grade, and living in California. His name is Thomas and he died of pancreatic cancer.
- At such a young age Briana did not know how to respond to the death of her father and was confused like so many other young children her age. She didn't know how this thing called "grieving" was supposed to happen and she began to search for anyone that could related to what she was experiencing.
- Briana was referred to GTG by the school support staff. This is where she met her best friend and they began to explore the concept of grieving together. She realized that although everyone grieves, it doesn't look the same for each person. Her grief counselor helped her reflect on the value of sharing her grief story, hearing other student stories and exploring a variety of coping skills and activities that help externalize feelings she had pent up for so long.
- Prior to GTG, Brianna was struggling with understanding and managing her grief. She was in denial and often blamed herself for the death of her dad. With the help of GTG she was able to find a healthier way to approach life. She states, "I would not have been able to come to the solutions I did without the support of GTG." and "I acknowledged that I was going to be okay and I can do life while grieving"
- As Briana prepares for college, she was asked what three words would describe her after seven years of GTG support and completing her foundational education. She paused, as if being limited to three words would be a challenge. She then shared the words that demonstrated her readiness to take on this next stage of life ... resilient, confident and unstoppable!



# Clover Ridge Elementary - Principal Nathan Feeling Grateful



*"I'm writing tonight with a great deal of gratitude for the services that Growing Through Grief has provided over the past few years, but particularly in the past week.*

*Your team was able to provide professional support and counseling to my students and staff by listening and sharing perspectives of their experiences. Staff members felt completely safe and cared for from your counselors and supported in their grief journey.*

*I cannot thank your counselor enough for all her support. She walked into very difficult situations and completely supported our students, building and individual teachers.  
What an incredible gift!*

*I have such a great appreciation for GTG's work and the importance of supporting kids in their grief process."*

*Thank you, Nathan  
Clover Ridge Elementary  
Chaska, MN*



# Carol – GTG mother finding support after the death of her husband



I am a mother of seven. 11 years ago my husband unexpectedly died when he was out of town. At that time, my children were 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 22 and 23. My 3 teenagers were attending Hopkins High School.

In the weeks following his death, the Program Director of GTG reached out to me at home to inform me of the program in the schools. She was personable with me and the children. Their participation in small group meetings helped them navigate their next several years.

11 years later, I truly believe this program helped them become well balanced and thriving adults.

Thank you Growing Through Grief for the support and commitment to my children's wellbeing.

Carol



I KNOW NOW THAT WE NEVER GET OVER GREAT LOSSES; WE ABSORB THEM, AND THEY CARVE US INTO DIFFERENT, OFTEN KINDER, CREATURES. 





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# Financial Model

# GTG Program



## Average Cost per School District

- \$65,000



## Average Cost per School

- \$7,400



## Average Student Session Cost per month (\$100 per session x 4 sessions per month)

- \$400





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# The Direction of our Vision

# GTG Vision



Objectives	Key Results
Sustain GTG Program Operations	Build and Diversify Revenue
Maintain Current Programming	Focus on Mission, Vision and Values
Deepen and Expand Impact	Build Awareness and Impact
Apply Innovation	Create Online GTG Presence

# Next Steps



## Handouts Included:

- Teaming Agreement
- 2019 Community Impact Report

## Action Items:

- Review and sign the teaming agreement
- Review school needs
- Professional development opportunities
  - [ ] on line (estimated number of participants???)
- SEL Curriculum Standards
- Dr. Peterson Interview?
- Questions/Answers