

DIFFERENCES IN ADOLESCENT RISK FACTORS BY “PLACE SIZE” 2007 Minnesota Student Survey Statewide Data

Are adolescents who live in rural areas more likely to engage in risk behavior than adolescents who live in cities? Do students who live in suburban areas feel differently about their schools than students in small towns? “Place size” refers to the degree to which a geographic location is urban or rural. Existing research on the relationship of place size to adolescent behavior and opinion has shown that the answers to these questions depend on the particular behavior being considered and the way in which place size is defined.

The Minnesota Student Survey can help us examine whether behaviors and opinions of Minnesota students vary according to the size of the place in which they live and go to school.

What is the Minnesota Student Survey?

The Minnesota Student Survey asks students questions about their activities, opinions and behaviors on a wide range of subjects. Topics covered include tobacco, alcohol and drug use, school climate, physical activity, violence and safety, connections with school and family, and other topics. High school students are also asked questions about sexual activity and gambling. The survey is conducted every three years among 6th, 9th and 12th grade students in Minnesota public schools. In 2007, 81 percent of all 6th grade students, 76 percent of all 9th grade students, and 58 percent of all 12th grade students in regular public schools in Minnesota participated in the survey. Students who did not participate were enrolled in school districts that did not conduct the survey, were absent from school on the survey date or simply decided not to take the survey. The survey is anonymous, and participation in it is voluntary.

How do we define “place size”?

“Place size” is determined by a combination of school district size and geographic location in the state.

- 1 = Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts
- 2 = All other school districts in the 7-county Metro area
- 3 = Non-Metro and the district has more than 2000 enrolled students
- 4 = Non-Metro and the district has 1000-2000 enrolled students
- 5 = Non-Metro and the district has 500-999 enrolled students
- 6 = Non-Metro and the district has fewer than 500 enrolled students

Category 2 represents the suburban Metro area, containing 64 school districts that participated in the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey. While most (38) of the school districts in this category are large (more than 2000 enrolled students), this category also contains smaller sized districts (six with 1000-2000 students, three with 500-999 students, and 17 with fewer than 500 students).

The table below shows the number of students surveyed in 2007 from each place size category.

Category	6th grade	9th grade	12th grade	Total
1	3450	3356	1742	8548
2	22962	23253	16854	63069
3	11296	11873	7990	31159
4	6022	6341	5341	17704
5	3950	4435	3548	11933
6	1401	1455	1280	4136
				136549

How are these results presented?

To create this set of charts, we chose a few of the most interesting questions from the different topic areas covered by the survey. In each chart we divide students into six categories based on the place size that their school district falls into. Each chart presents a single factor, such as cigarette smoking in the last 30 days, and shows the percent of students engaging in that behavior within the different place size categories.

The topics are as follows:

Cigarette use	Property damage
Alcohol use	Stealing
Driving/riding in a car after alcohol or drug use	Carrying a weapon at school
Seat belt use	Perceptions of school environment
Negative feelings (sadness, etc.)	Being a bully OR a victim of bullying
Purposely hurting oneself	Sexual activity
Suicidal thoughts or attempts	Nutrition
Skipping school	Physical activity
Hitting or beating up another person	Perception of weight and actual weight status

Patterns of results

Three rather distinct patterns of variation by place size occur in the results presented here. It should be noted that while a factor tends to show a particular pattern of variation, the pattern does **not** always appear within the responses for every grade level. It is also important to note that similar patterns were found for both male and female students.

In the first pattern, we see certain risk behaviors reported **more often** as place size **decreases**; that is, the behavior tends to be most prevalent in the smallest or next-to-smallest school districts in non-Metro areas of Minnesota. The pattern tends to be **especially evident among 12th grade students**. The behaviors characterized by this pattern are:

- Cigarette smoking (frequency and amount) (9th and 12th grades)
- Alcohol use (frequency and amount)
- Binge drinking (12th grade only)
- Dangerous driving behavior (drove after using alcohol or drugs, ever ride with friends after the friends' use of alcohol or drugs, don't always wear seatbelt when riding in a car (12th grade only))
- Sexual intercourse (12th grade only)
- Not talking about pregnancy prevention or STD protection with every partner (12th grade only)
- Being a victim of bullying at school
- Being a bully at school (9th and 12th grades)
- Eating fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables yesterday

The second pattern that appears in the results shows the behavior reported **less often** as place size **decreases**; that is, tending to be least prevalent in the smallest school districts in non-Metro areas of Minnesota. The factors characterized by this pattern are:

- Lack of exercise
- Marijuana use (12th grade only)
- Not using a condom during last sexual intercourse (12th grade only)

The third pattern that appears in the results shows the behavior or opinion reported **noticeably more often** in the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. For most factors, very little difference in reporting appears among the other place size categories, although in some instances the variation may also resemble the second pattern. This pattern is **often most evident among 6th grade students**. The factors characterized by this pattern are:

- Negative feelings (sadness, discouraged/hopeless; high stress (6th grade only))
- Purposely hurting oneself (6th grade only)
- Suicidal thoughts and attempts (6th grade only)
- Skipping school
- Anti-social behavior (hitting or beating up another person, property damage, stealing) (6th and 9th grades)
- Carrying a gun or other weapon at school (6th and 9th grades)
- Negative perceptions of school (not feeling safe at school, feeling that all or most students make fun of or threaten students of different races or backgrounds)
- Feeling that gang activity is a problem at school
- Drinking three or more glasses of pop or soda yesterday (6th grade only)
- Marijuana use (6th and 9th grades)
- Sexual intercourse (9th grade only)

We also examined a few other factors that did not show any of these three patterns of variation.

- Binge drinking (9th grade only)
- Not talking about pregnancy prevention or STD protection with every partner; not using a condom during last sexual intercourse (9th grade only)
- Methamphetamine use
- Feeling overweight
- Being overweight or at risk of overweight
- Feeling that student alcohol or drug use is a problem at school

What are the limitations of the Minnesota Student Survey?

These reports are based on survey responses from students in regular public schools, charter schools and tribal schools. Students in alternative schools, area learning centers, juvenile correctional facilities and residential treatment programs are not included. In addition, young people who have dropped out of school are not represented, and those who miss lots of school due to illness or truancy may be under-represented.

Where can I find other results from the Minnesota Student Survey?

Results from the Minnesota Student Survey can be found at the following websites:

Minnesota Department of Education:

http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Learning_Support/Safe_and_Healthy_Learners/Minnesota_Student_Survey/index.html

Minnesota Department of Health:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/mss/>

Minnesota Department of Human Services:

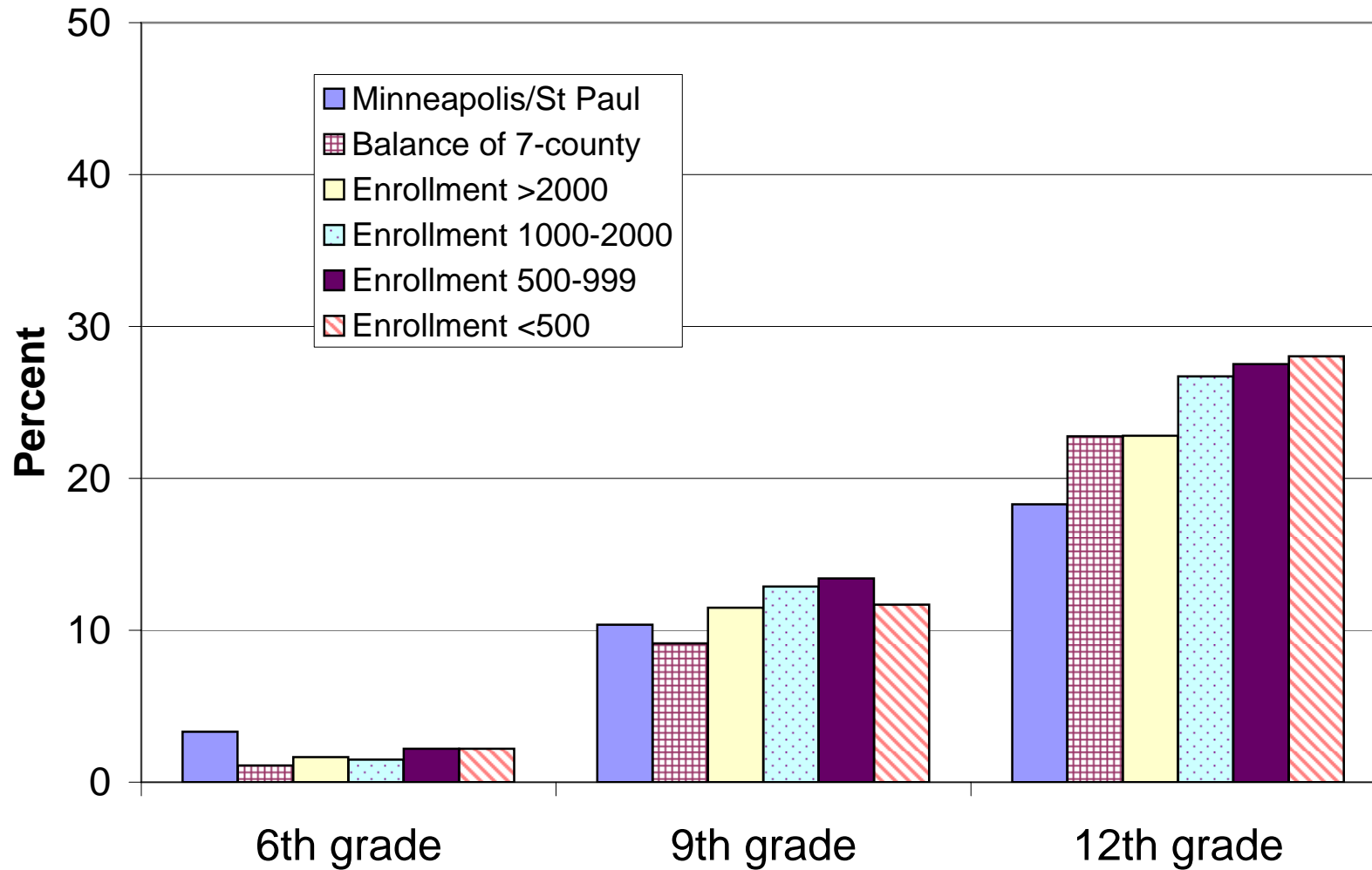
http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/id_007196

<http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/MSS>

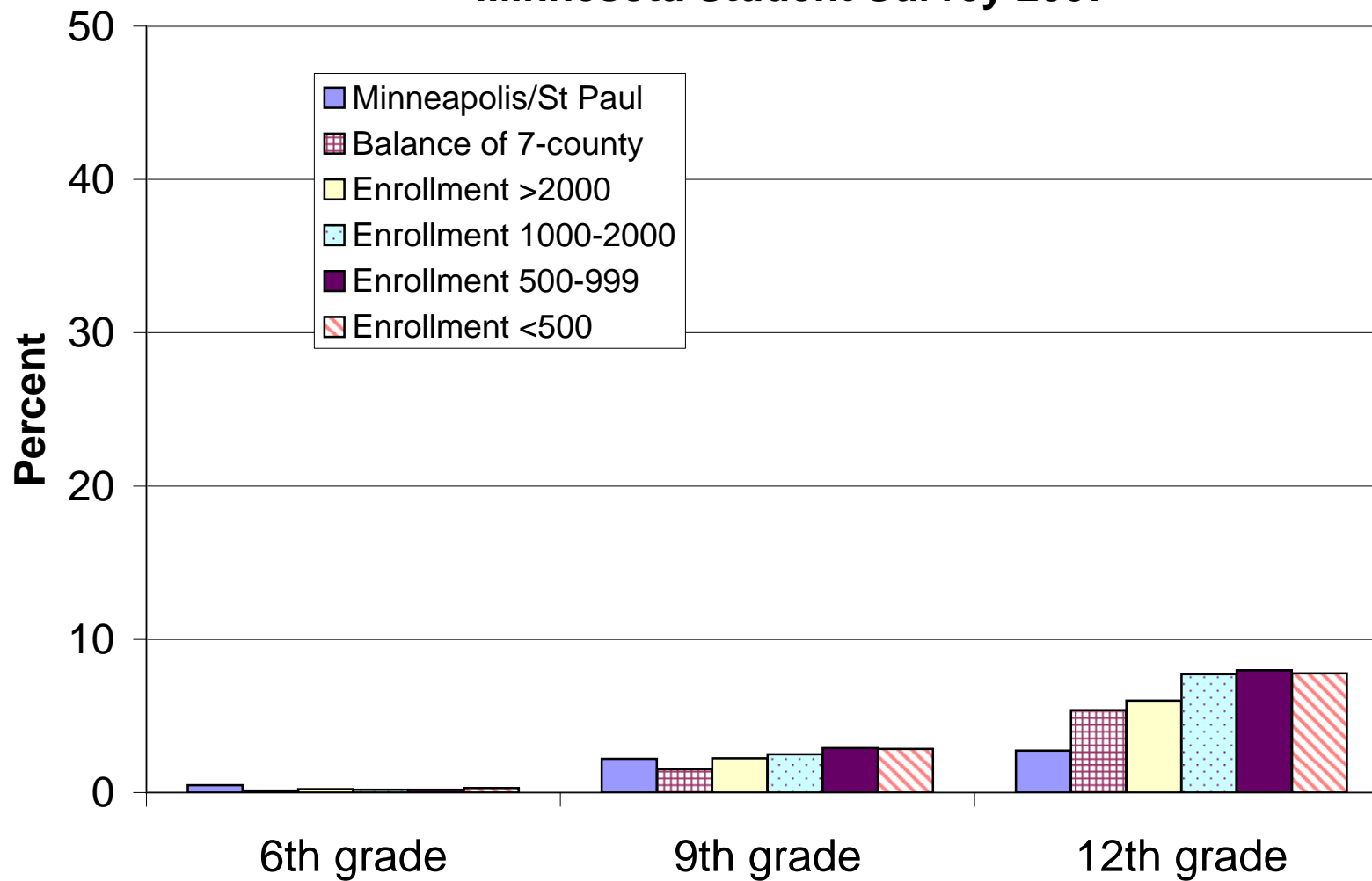
Minnesota Department of Public Safety:

<http://www.dps.state.mn.us/OJP/>

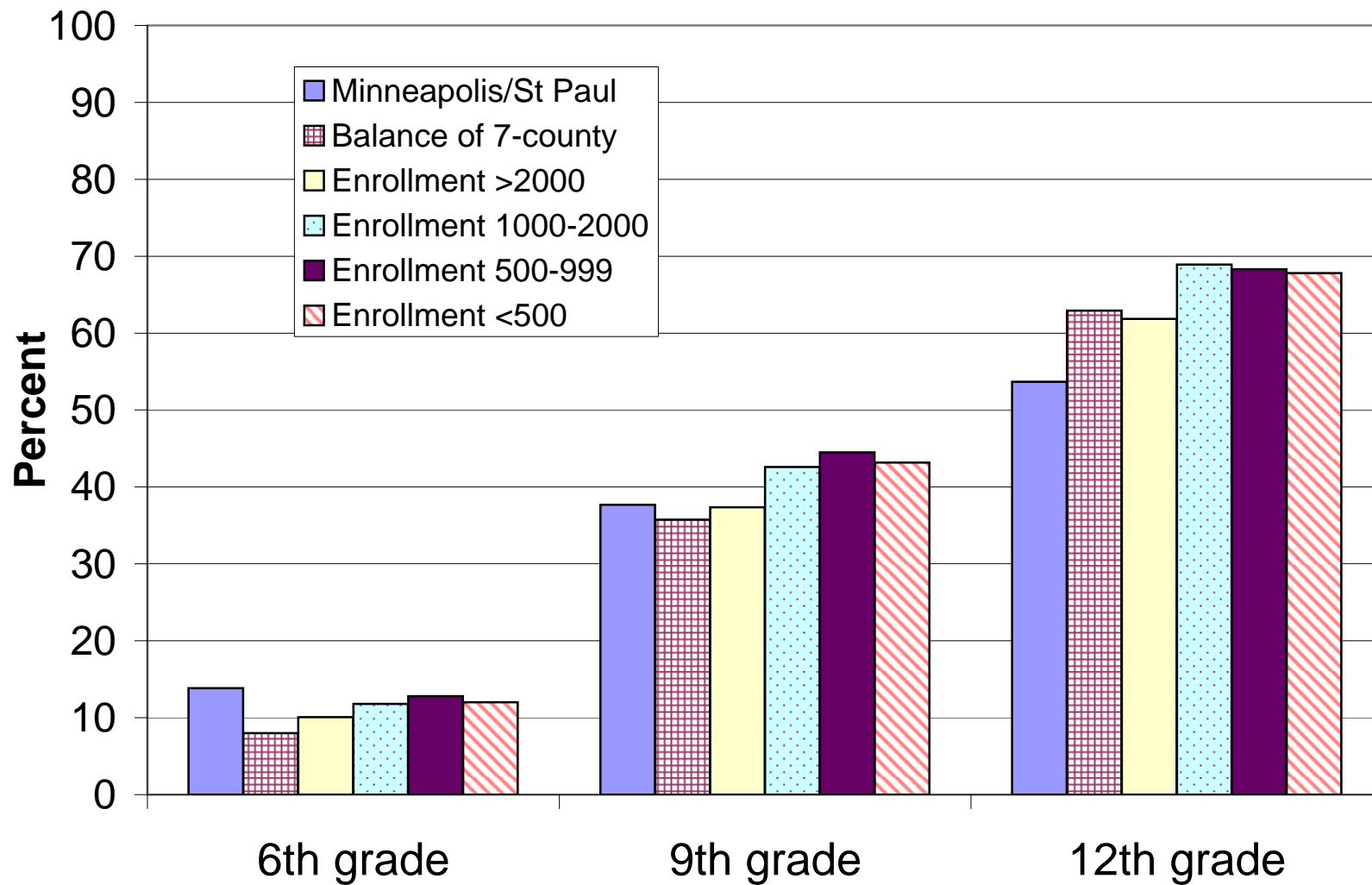
Percent who smoked cigarettes during the previous 30 days Minnesota Student Survey 2007



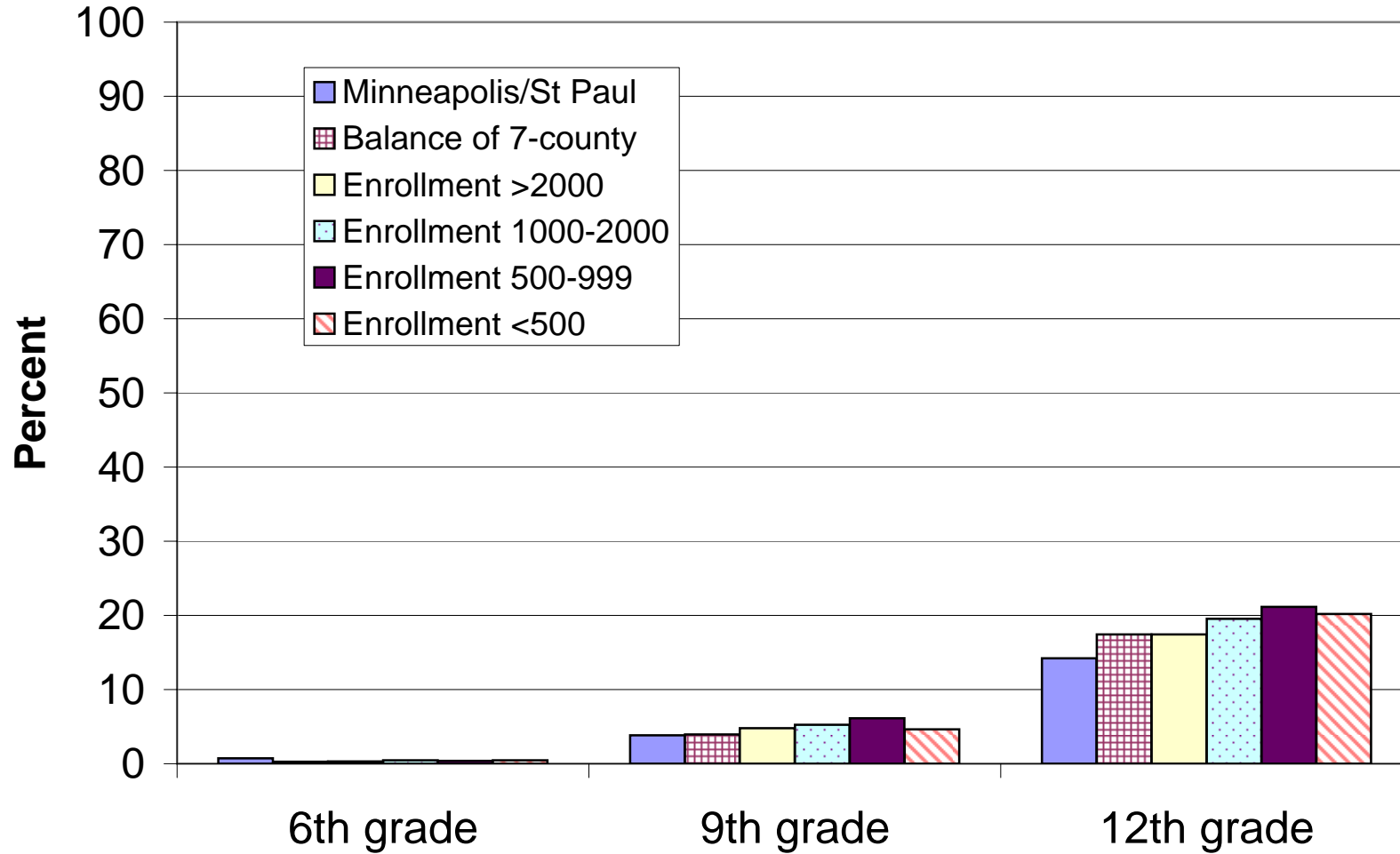
**Percent who smoked half pack or more per day
during the previous 30 days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



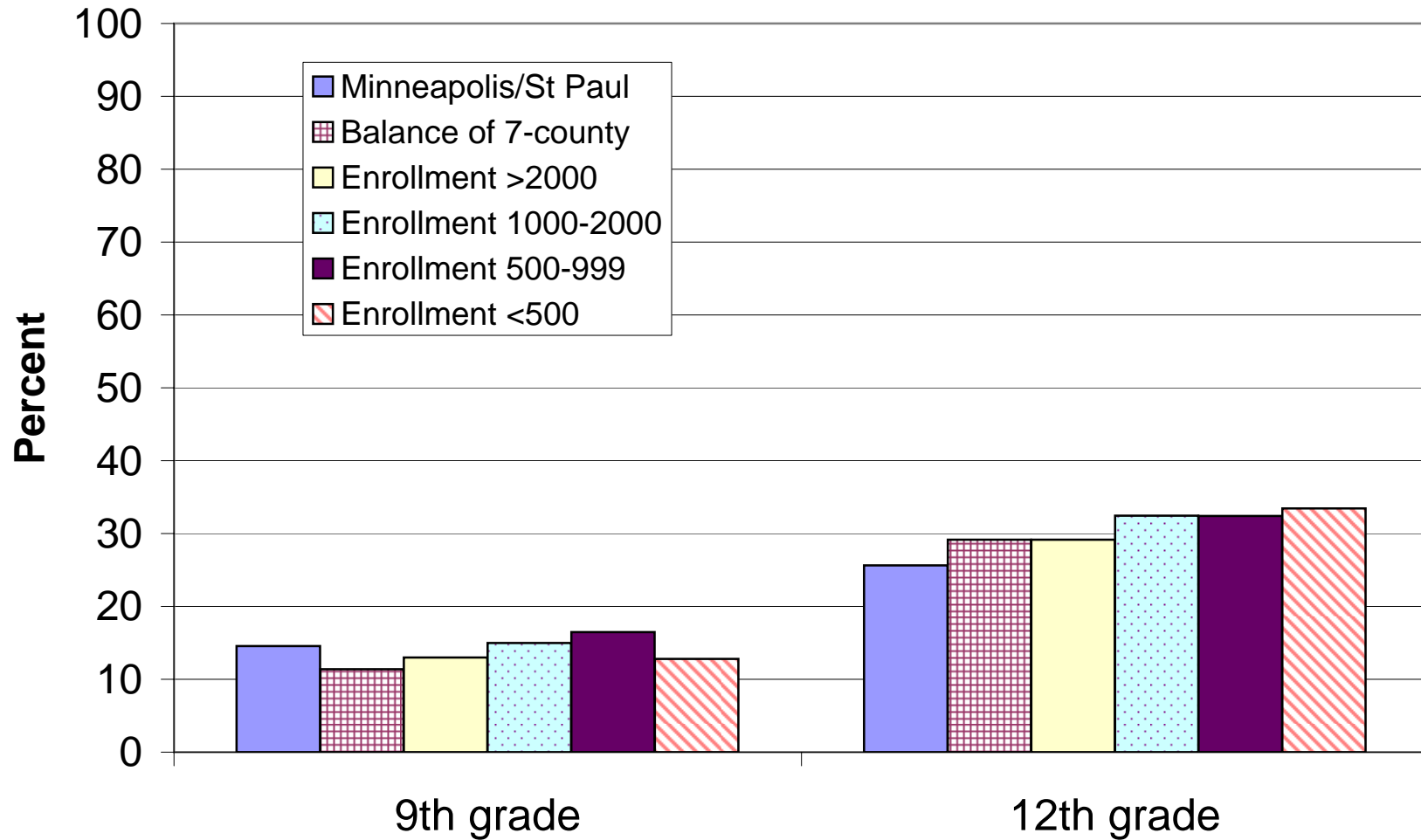
Percent who used alcohol one or more times in last 12 months Minnesota Student Survey 2007



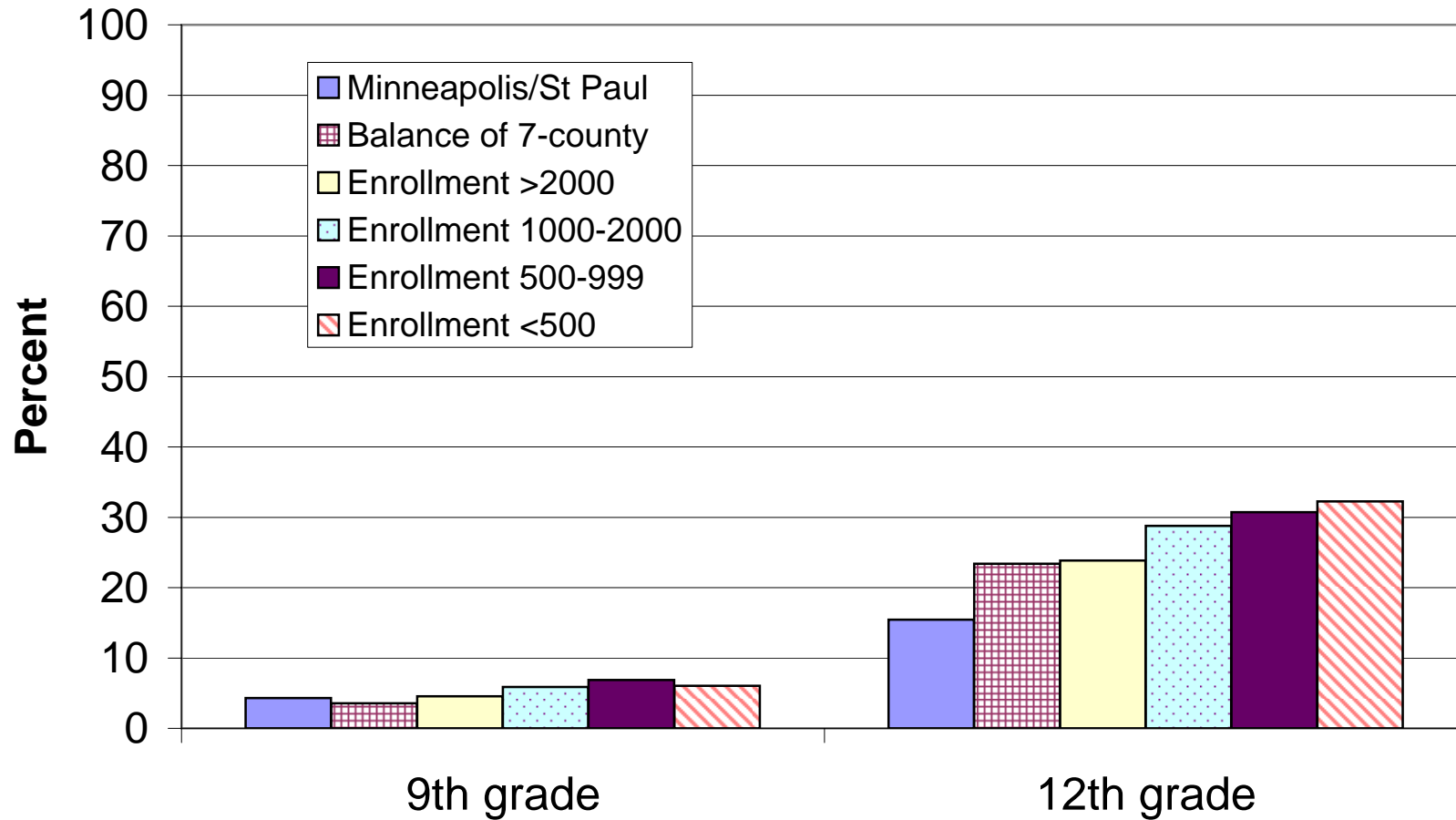
Percent who used alcohol 20 or more times in last 12 months Minnesota Student Survey 2007



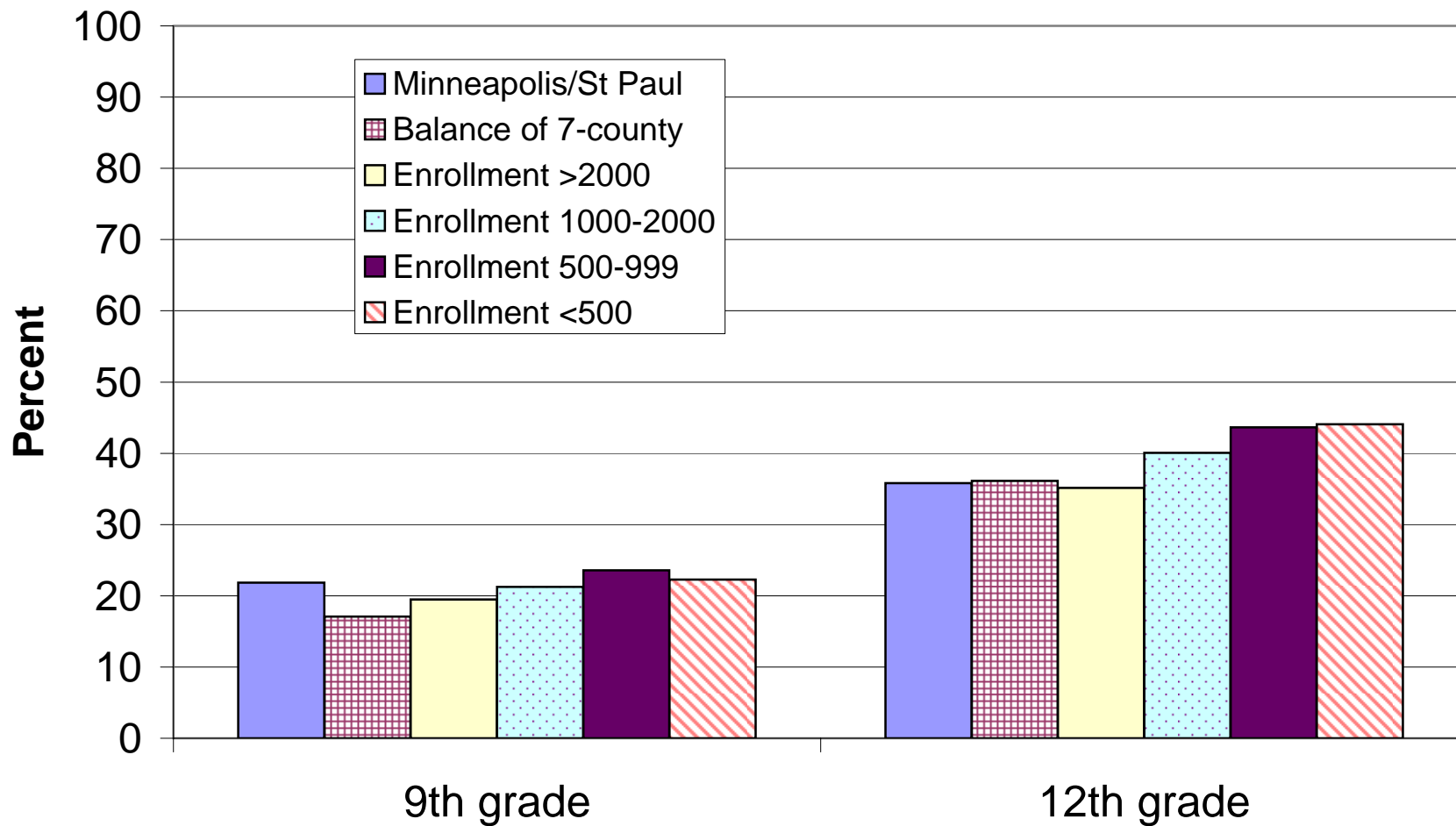
Percent doing any binge drinking in the last two weeks Minnesota Student Survey 2007



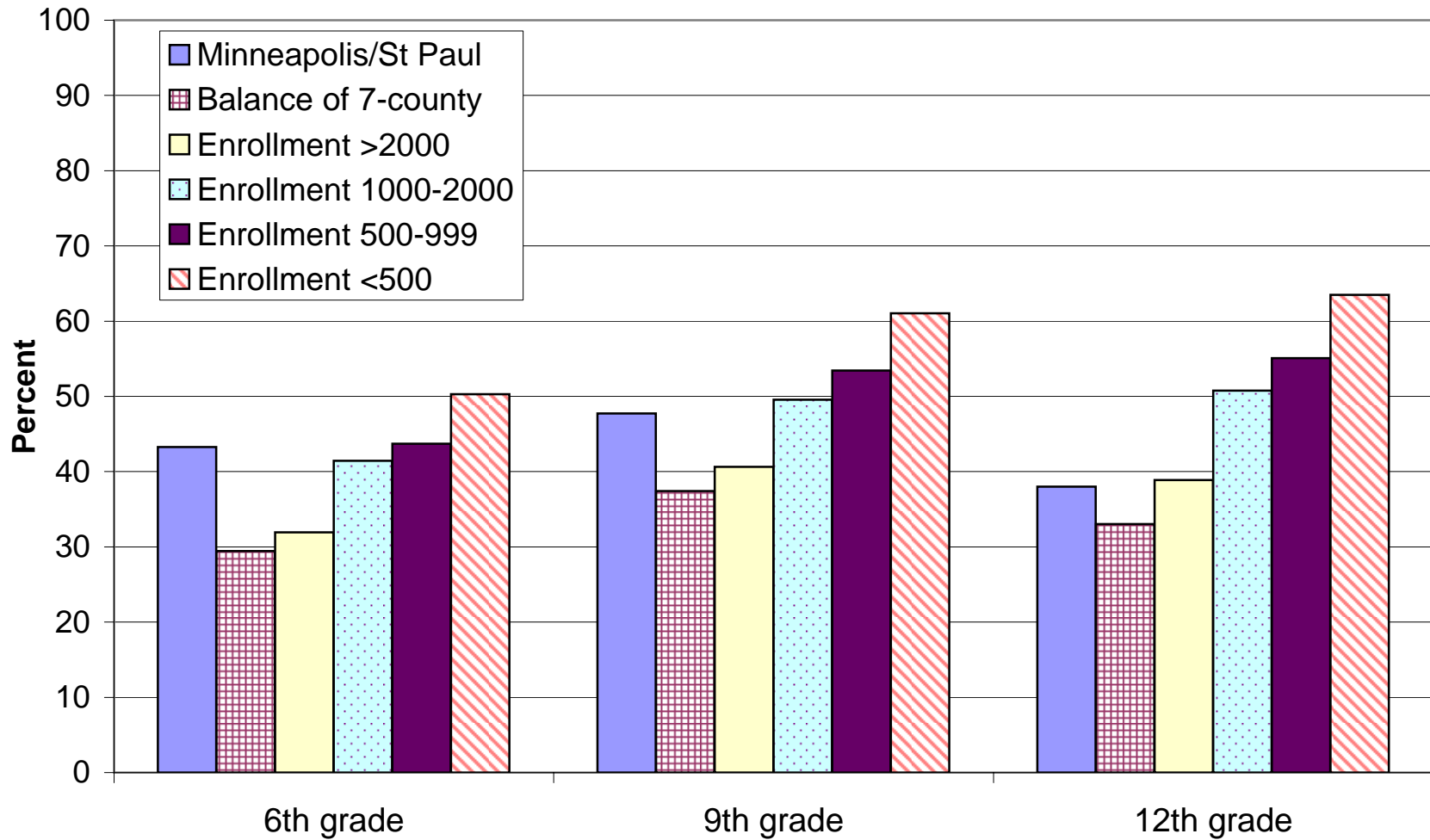
**Percent who drove after using alcohol or drugs
one or more times in the last 12 months
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



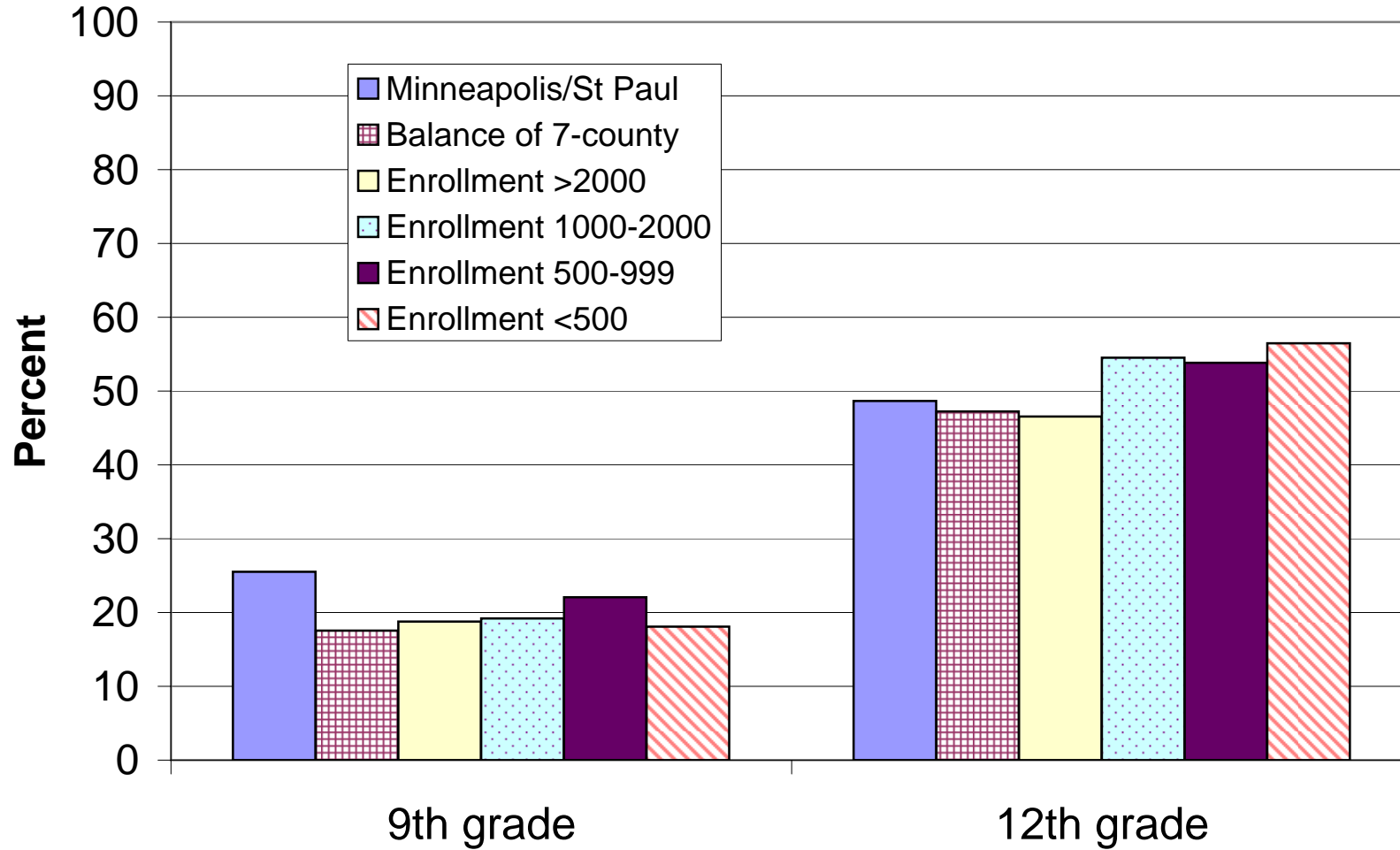
**Percent who ever ride with friends after friends have been using alcohol or drugs
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



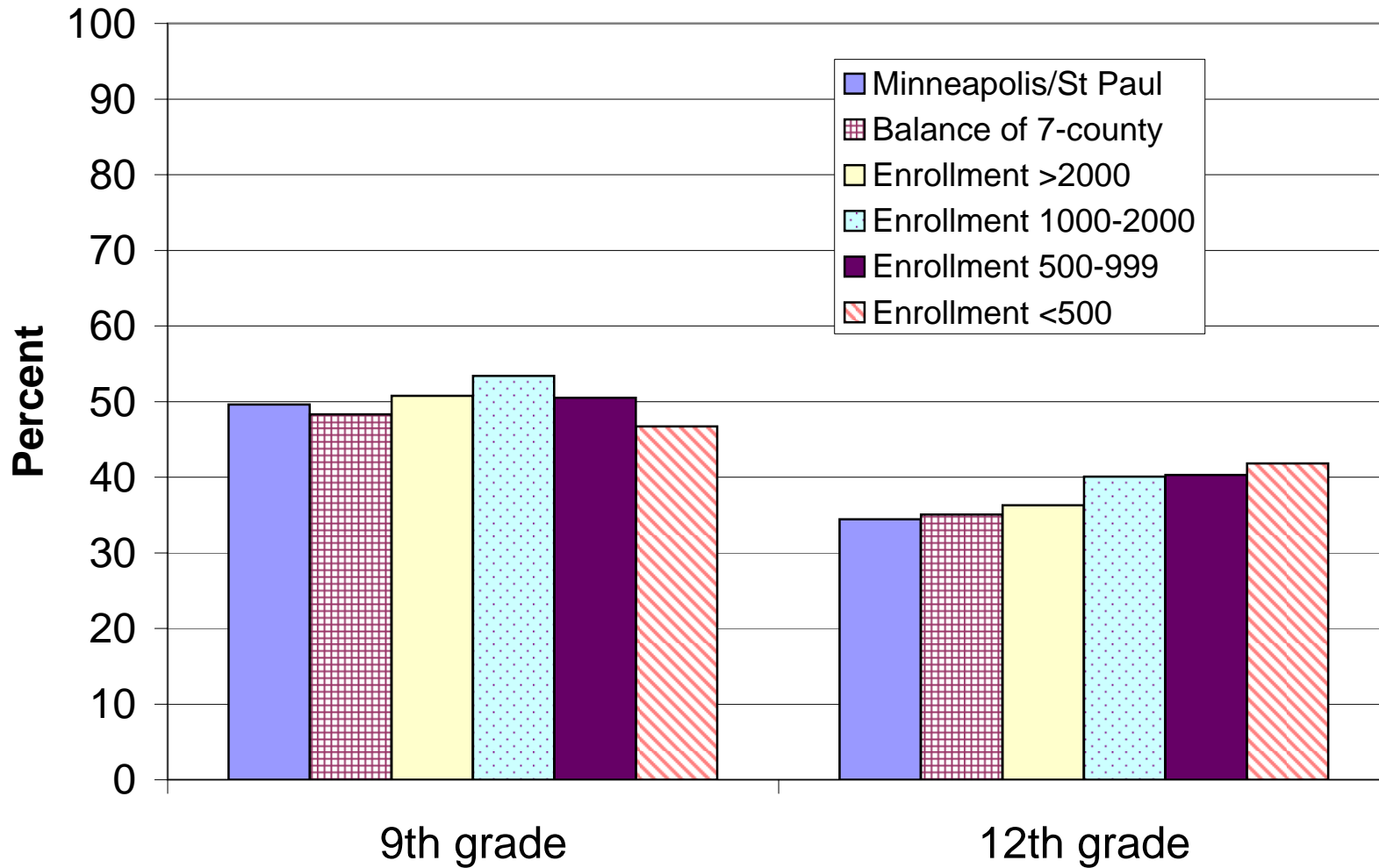
Percent who do not always wear a seatbelt when riding in a car Minnesota Student Survey 2007



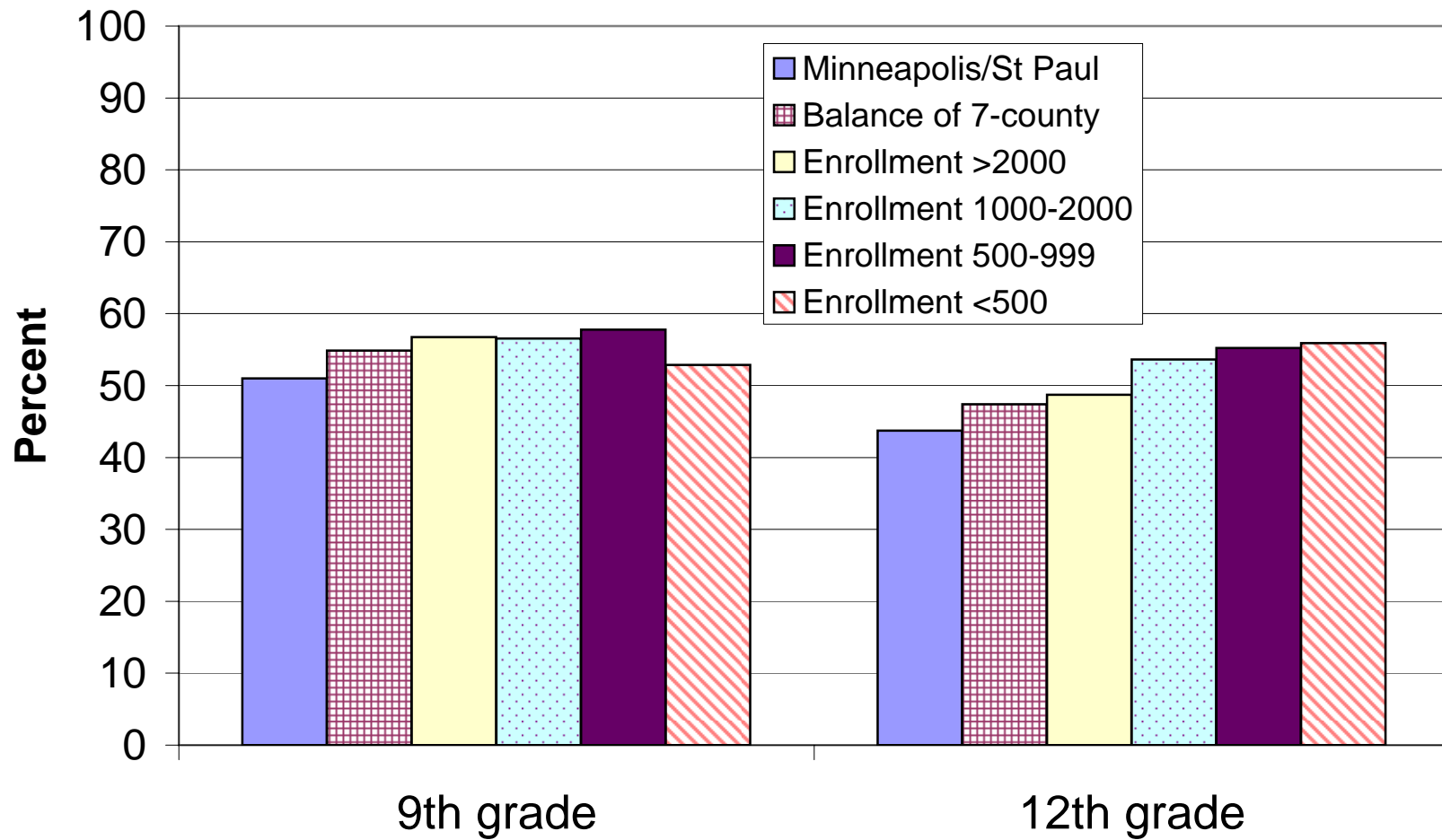
Percent who ever had sexual intercourse Minnesota Student Survey 2007



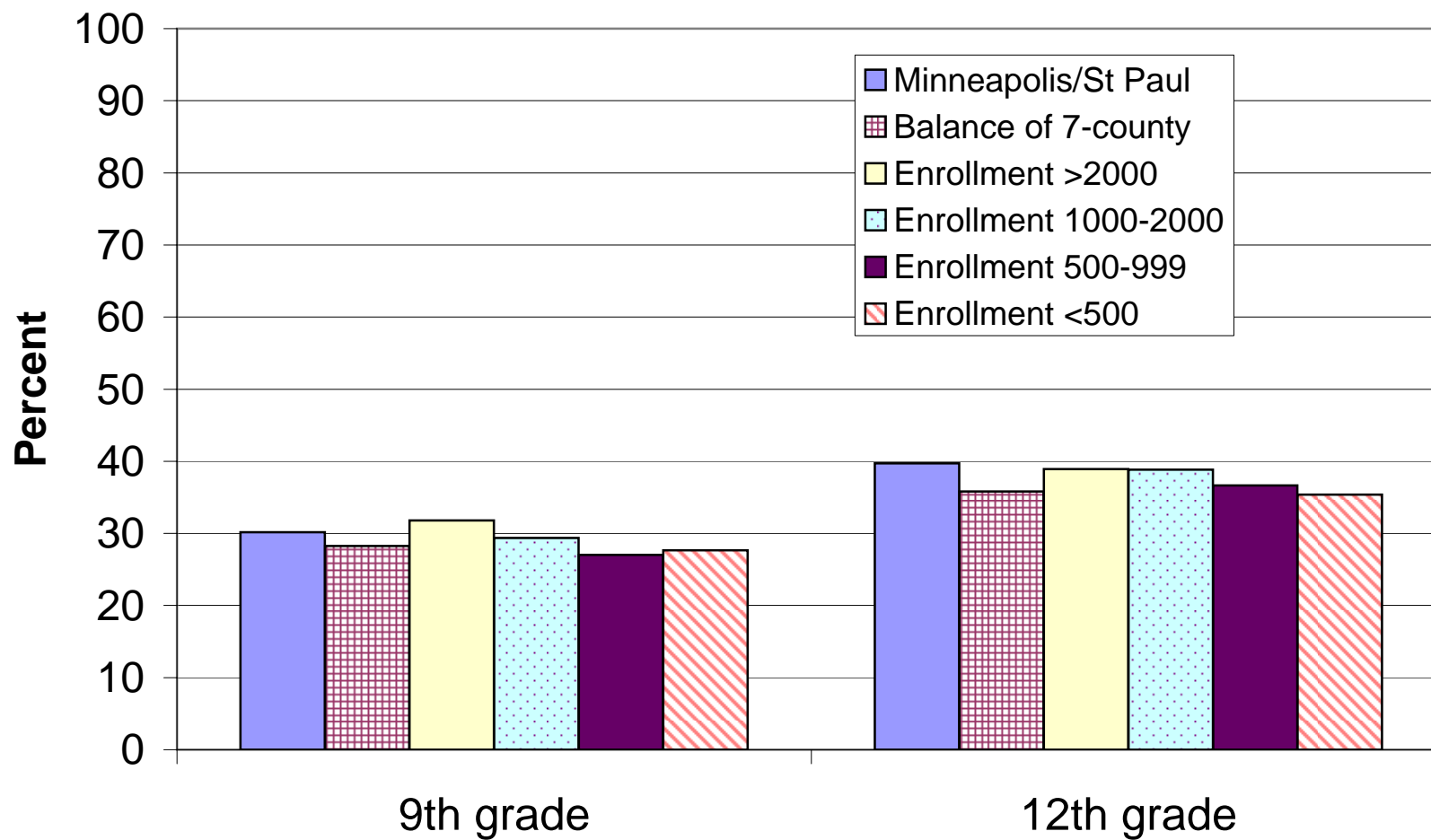
Percent who have not talked about pregnancy prevention with every partner, among sexually active students
Minnesota Student Survey 2007



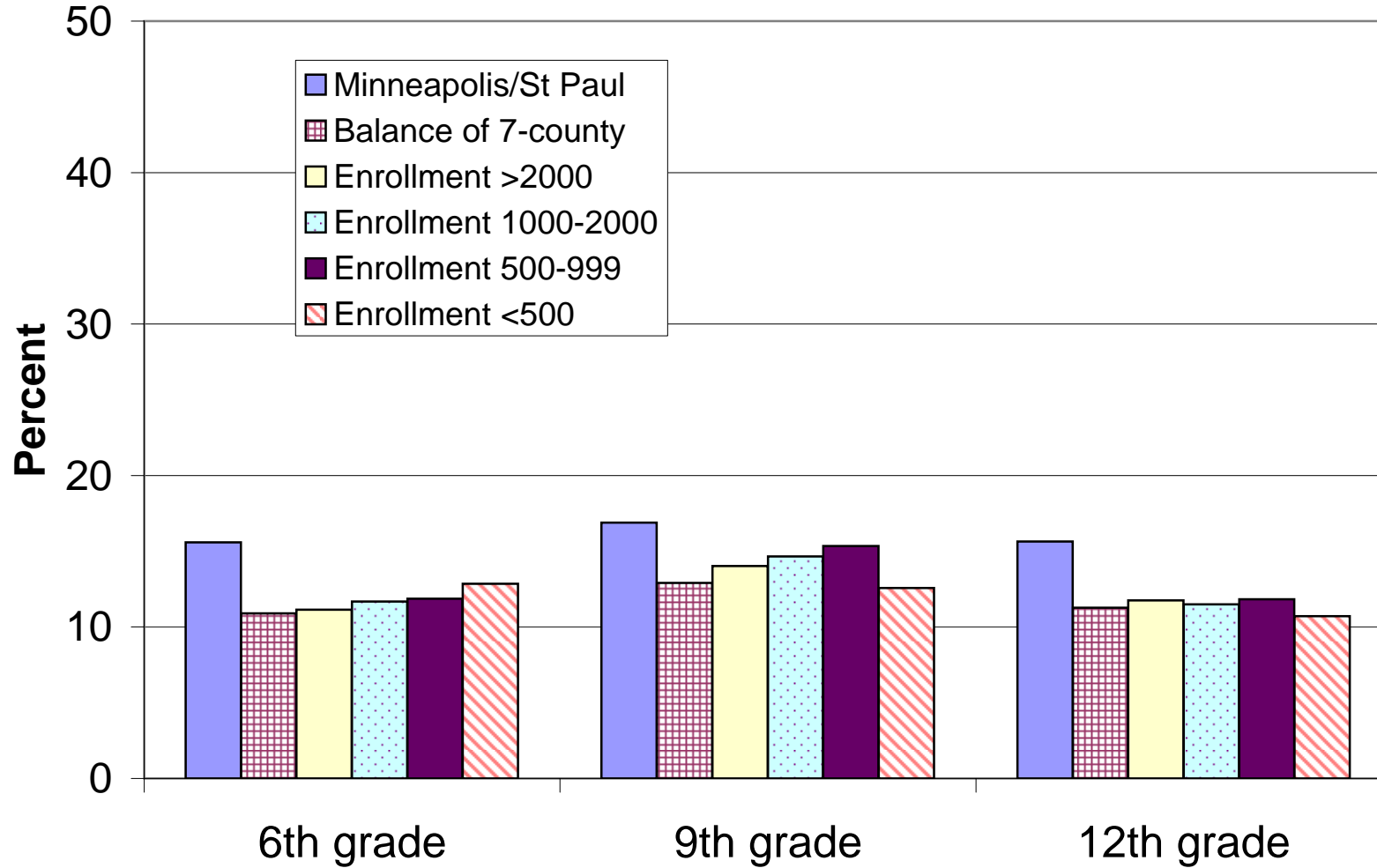
**Percent who have not talked about STD/HIV protection with every partner, among sexually active students
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



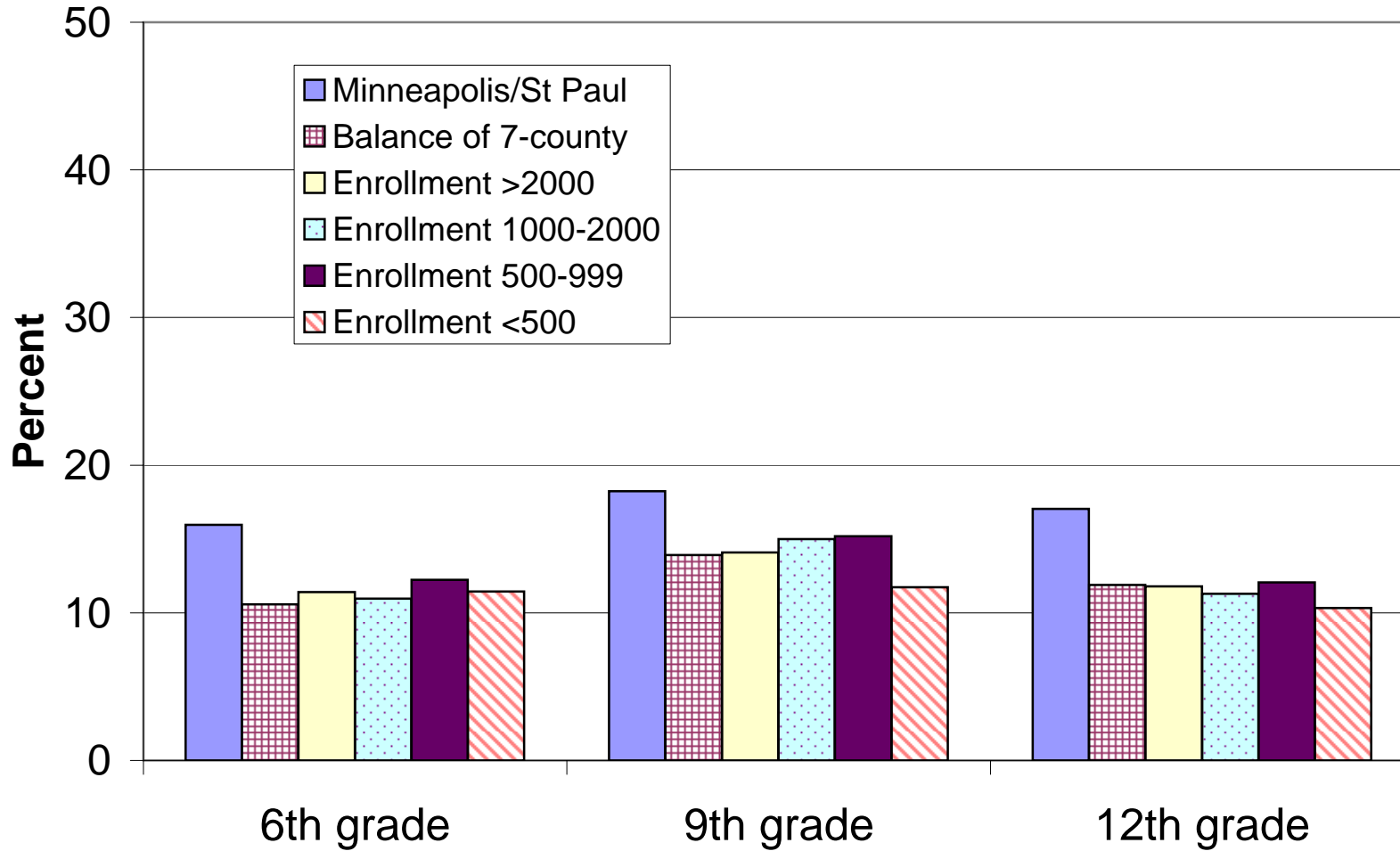
**Percent who did not use a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse, among sexually active students
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



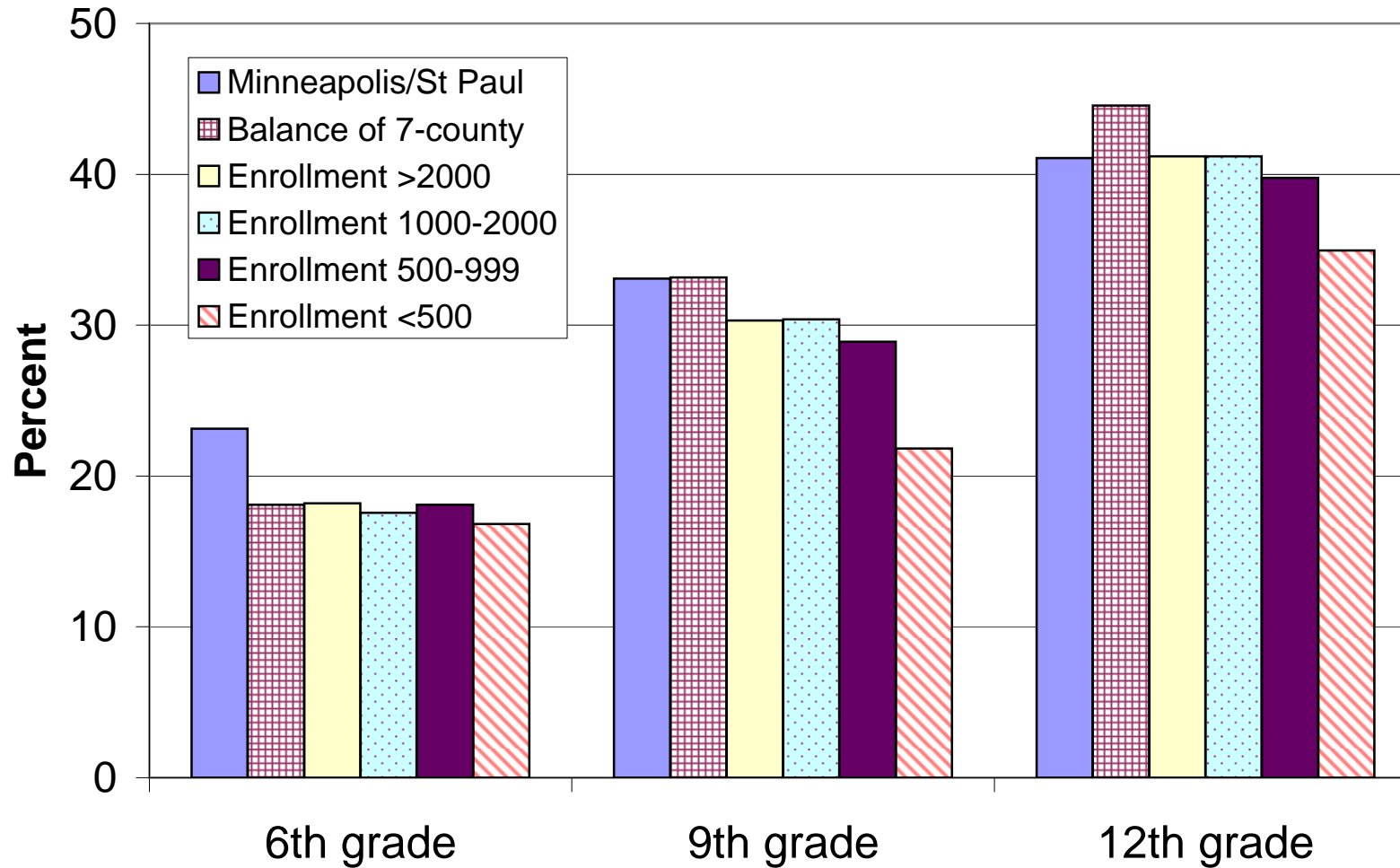
Percent who felt sad all or most of the time in the last 30 days Minnesota Student Survey 2007



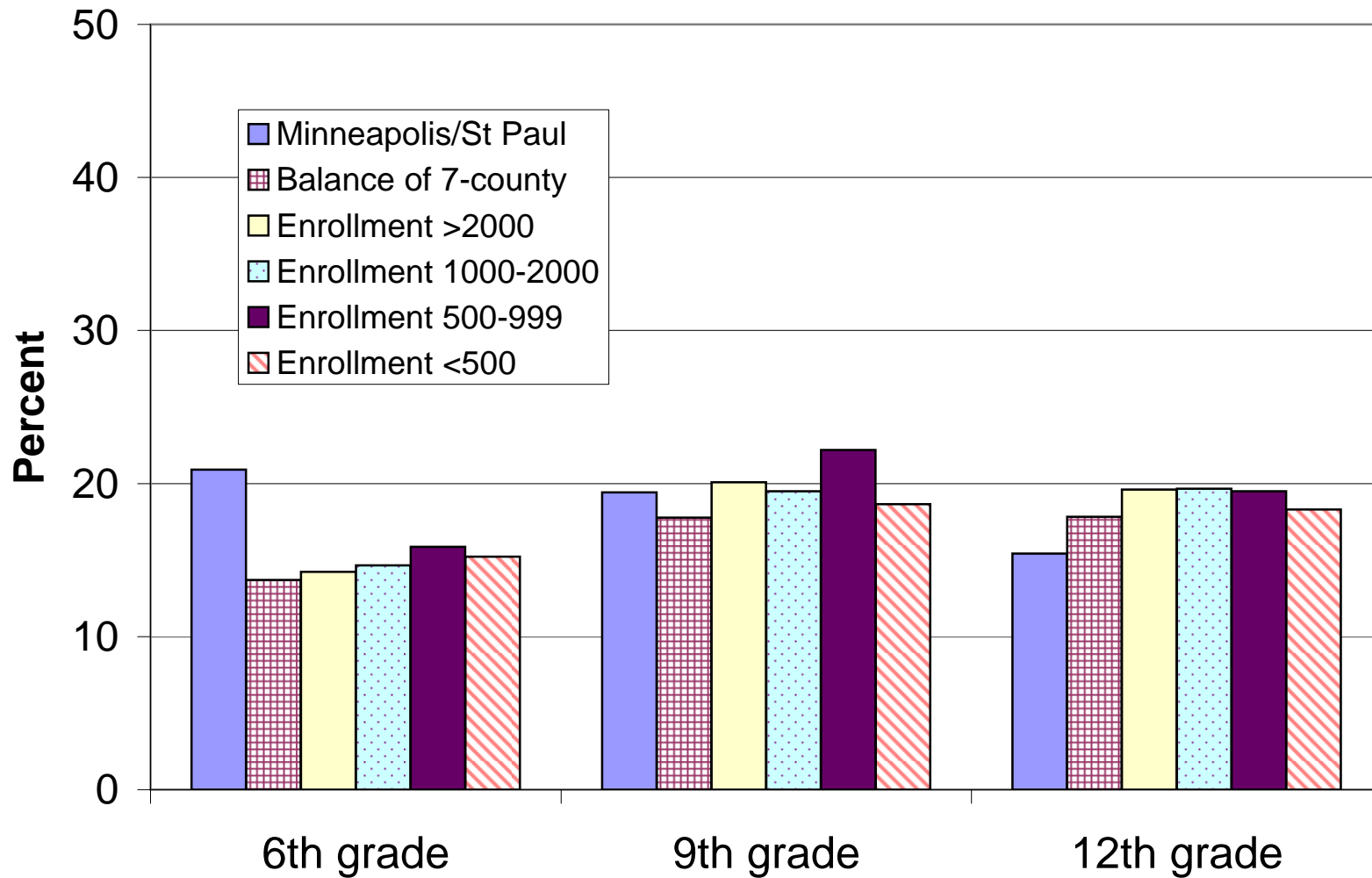
**Percent who felt discouraged or hopeless
(extremely so or quite a bit) in the last 30 days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



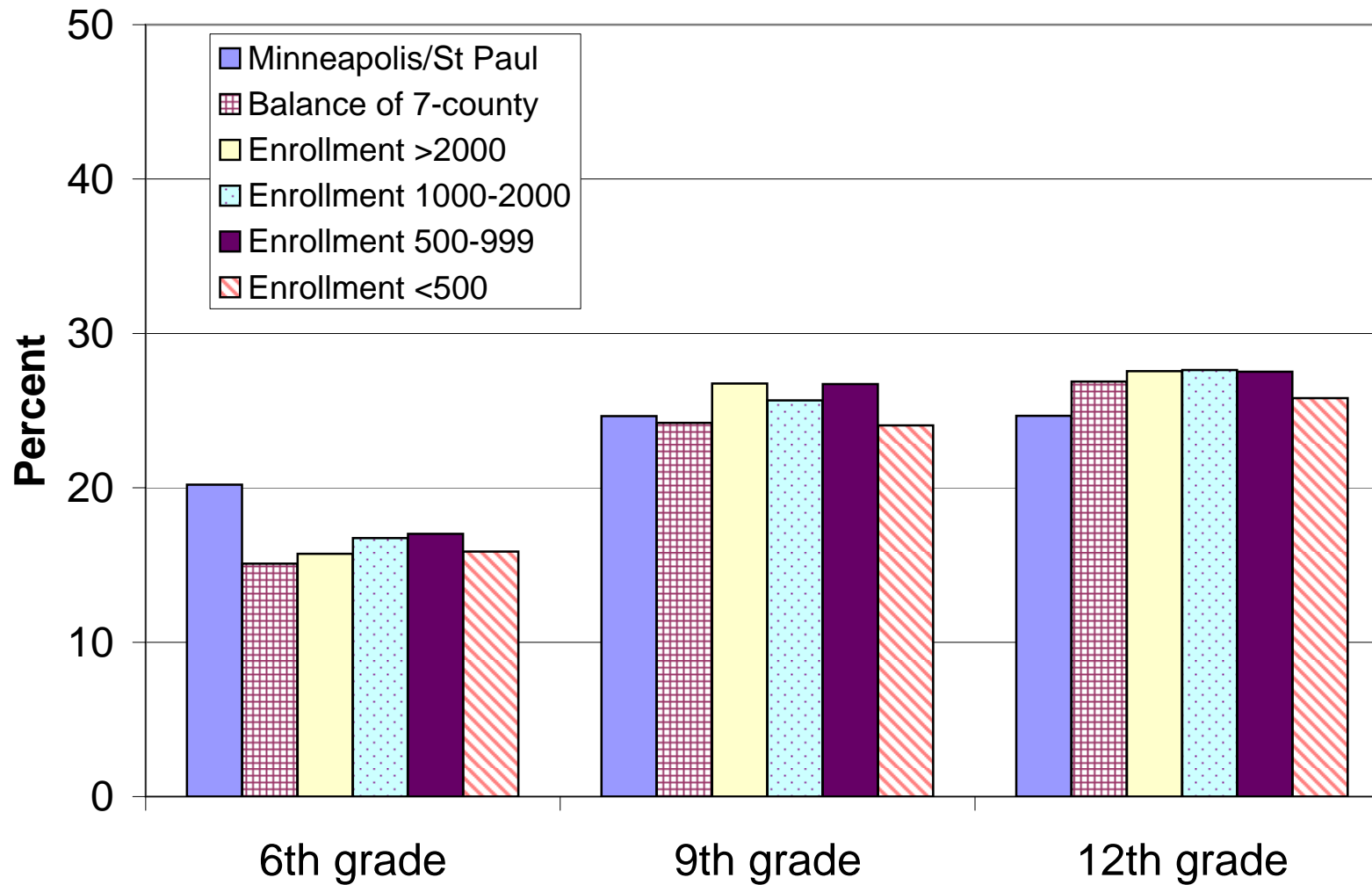
Percent who felt stress or pressure (almost more than I could take or quite a bit) in the last 30 days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007



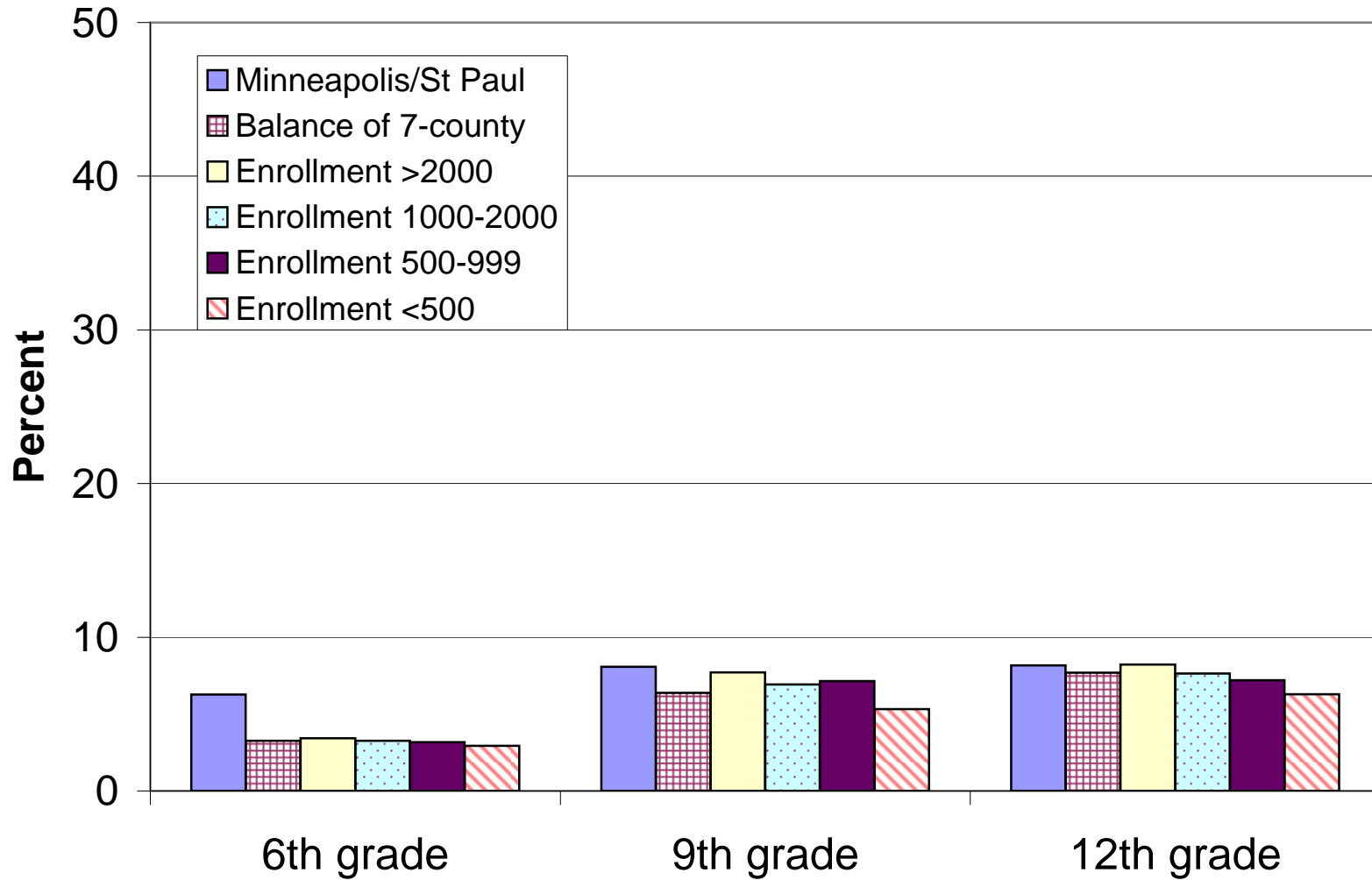
Percent who have ever hurt themselves on purpose Minnesota Student Survey 2007



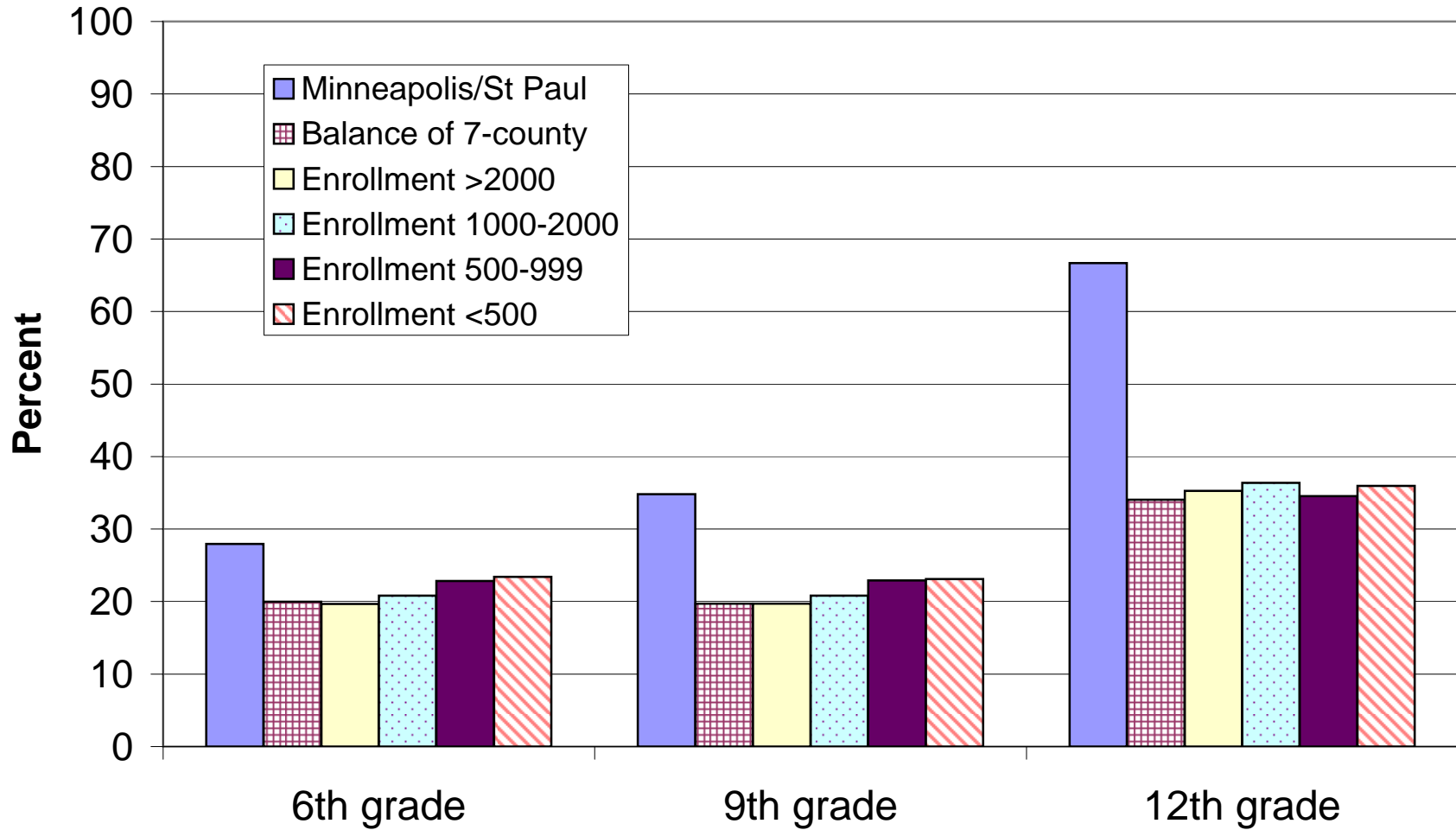
Percent who have ever had suicidal thoughts Minnesota Student Survey 2007



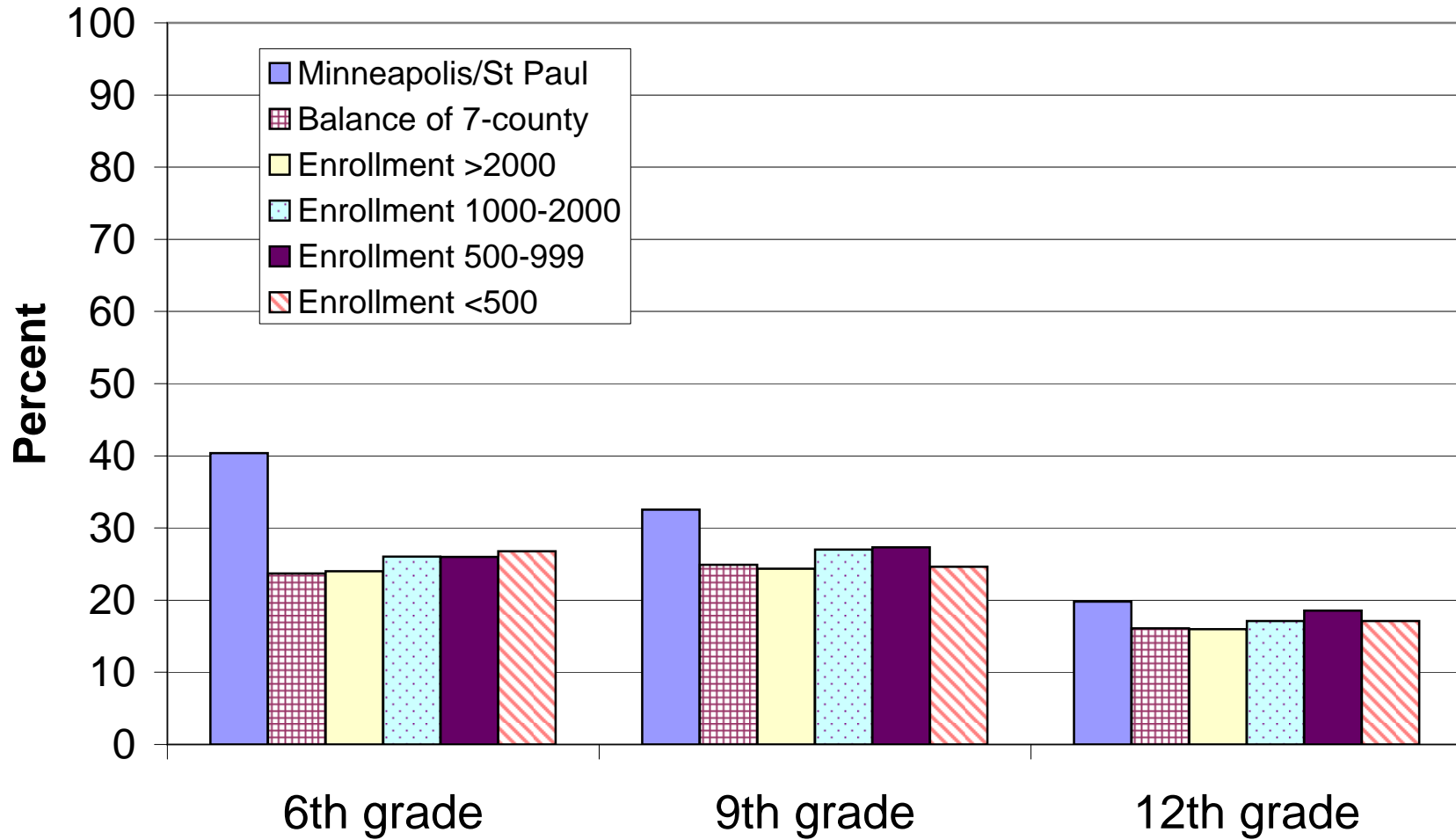
Percent who have ever tried to kill themselves Minnesota Student Survey 2007



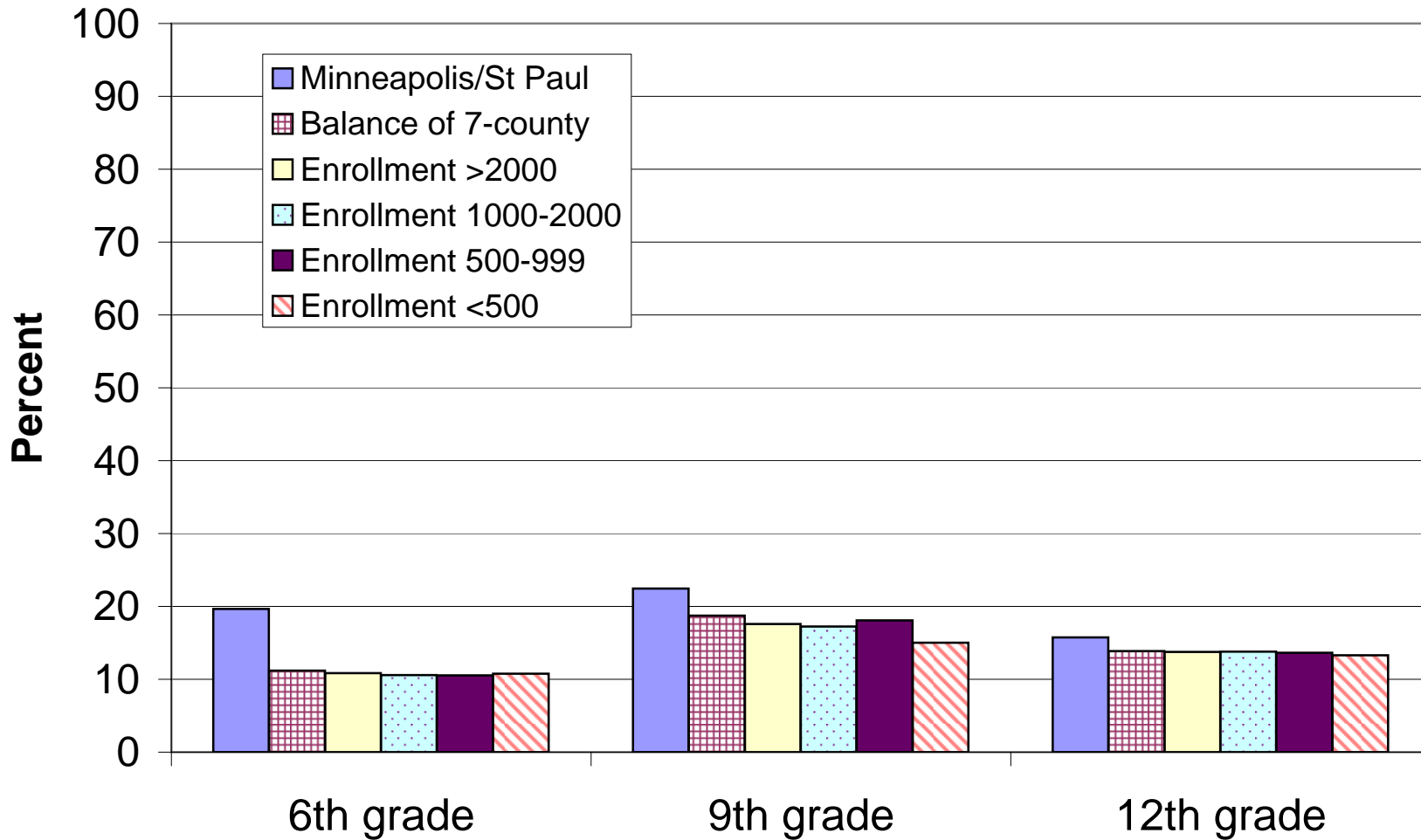
Percent who skipped school one or more times in last 30 days Minnesota Student Survey 2007



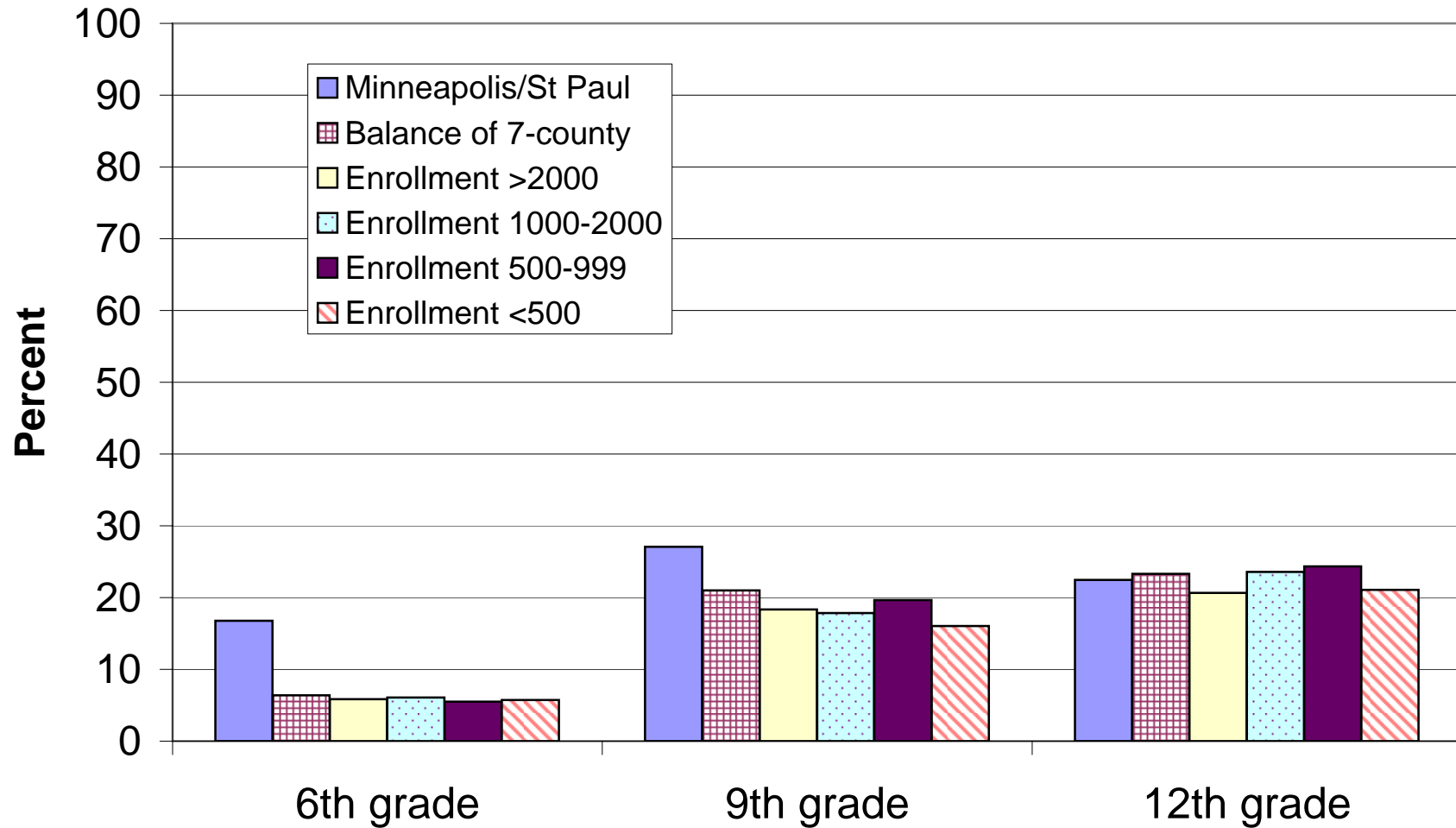
**Percent who hit or beat up another person one or more times
in the last 12 months
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



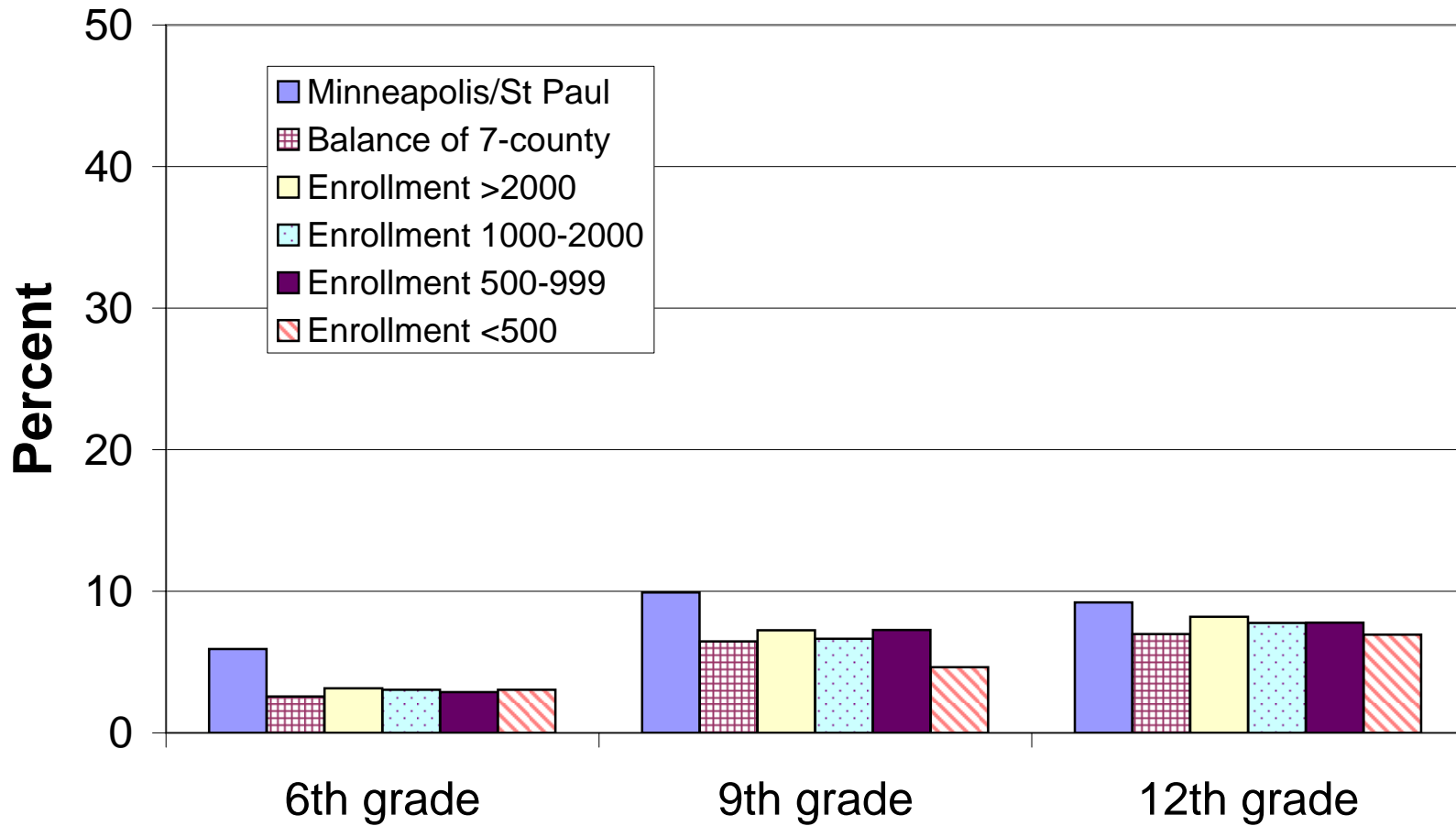
Percent who damaged or destroyed property one or more times in the last 12 months
Minnesota Student Survey 2007



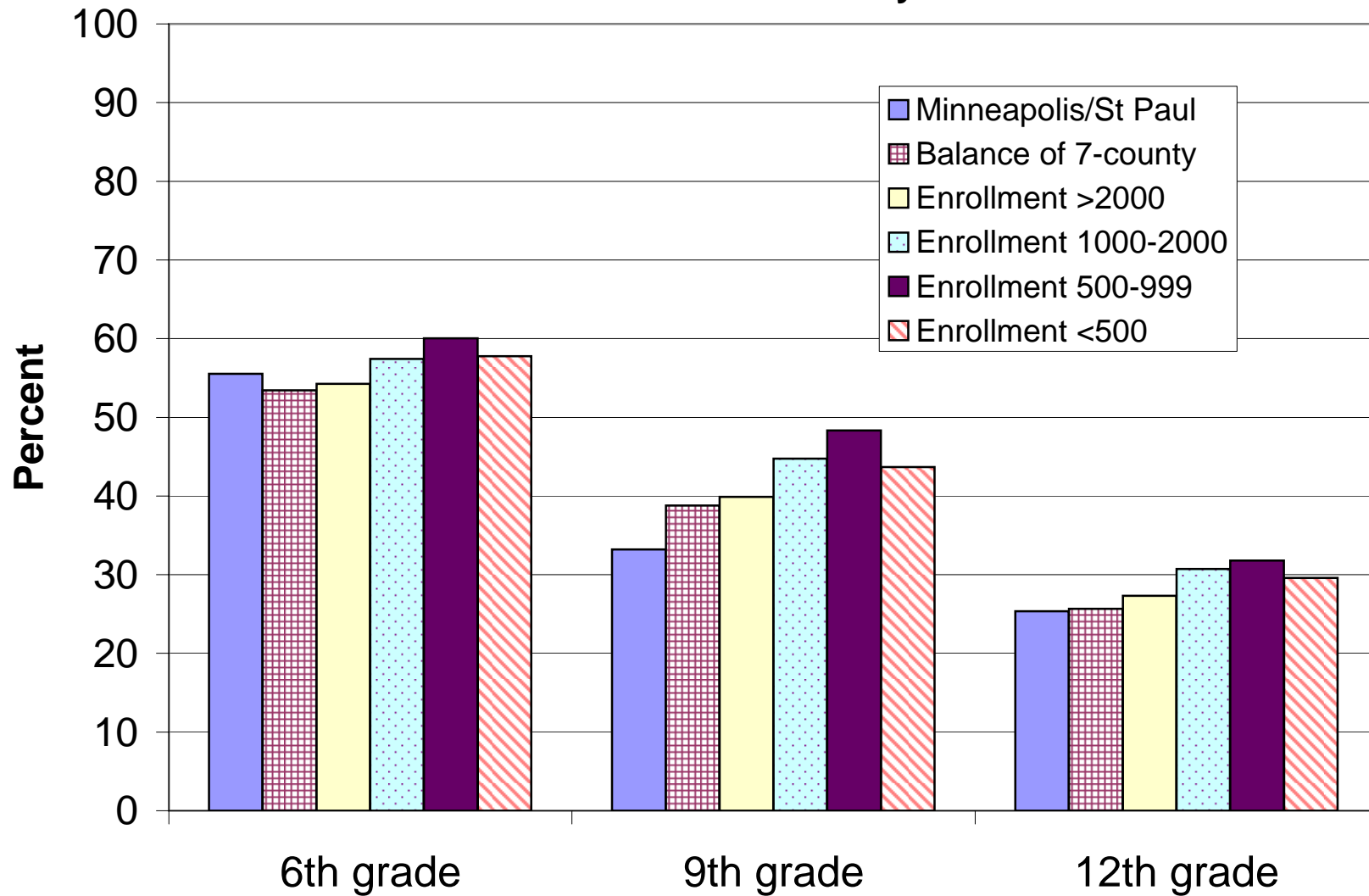
**Percent who stole something from a store one or more times
in the last 12 months
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



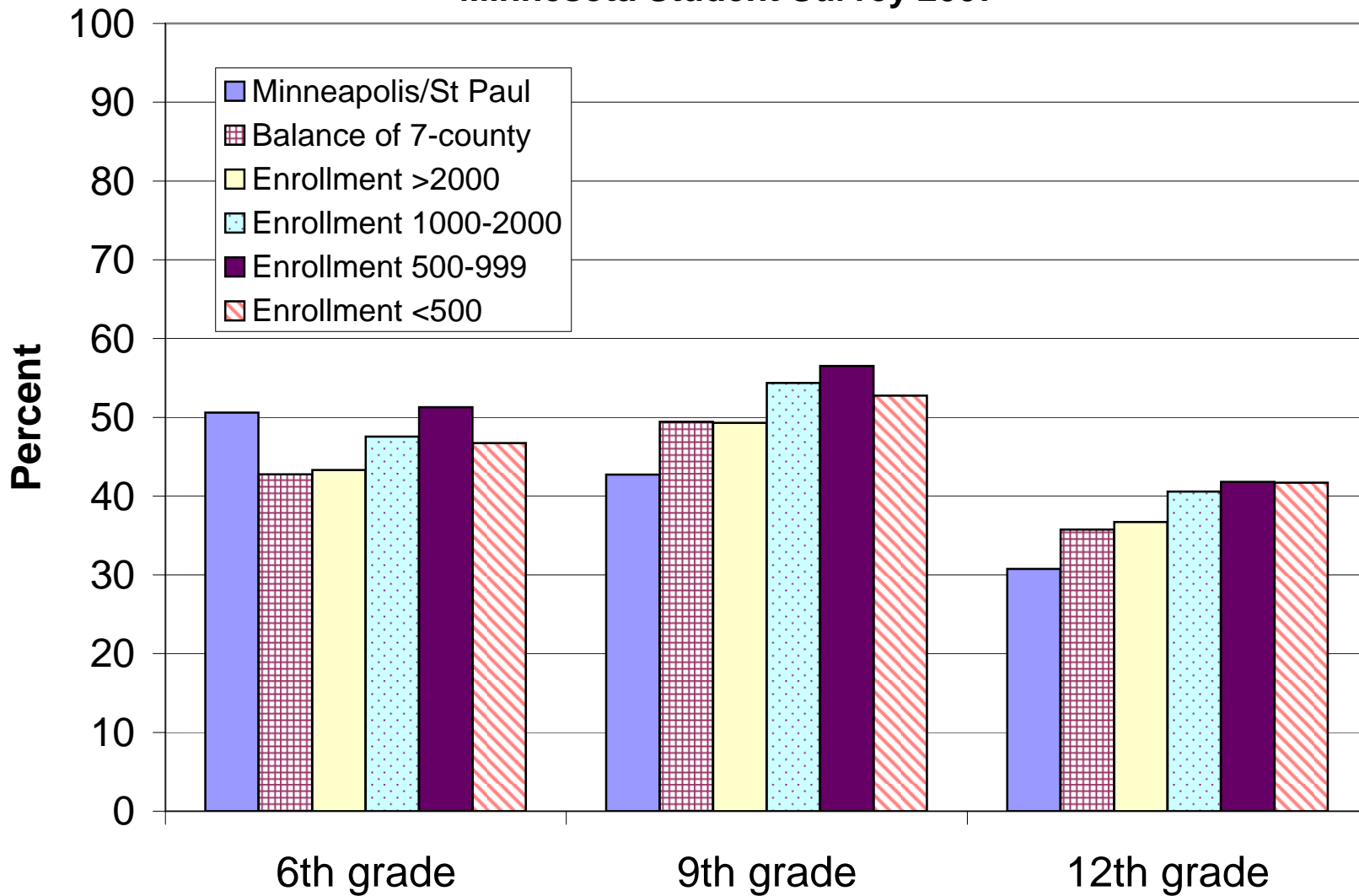
**Percent who carried a gun or or other weapon at school
one or more times in the last 30 days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



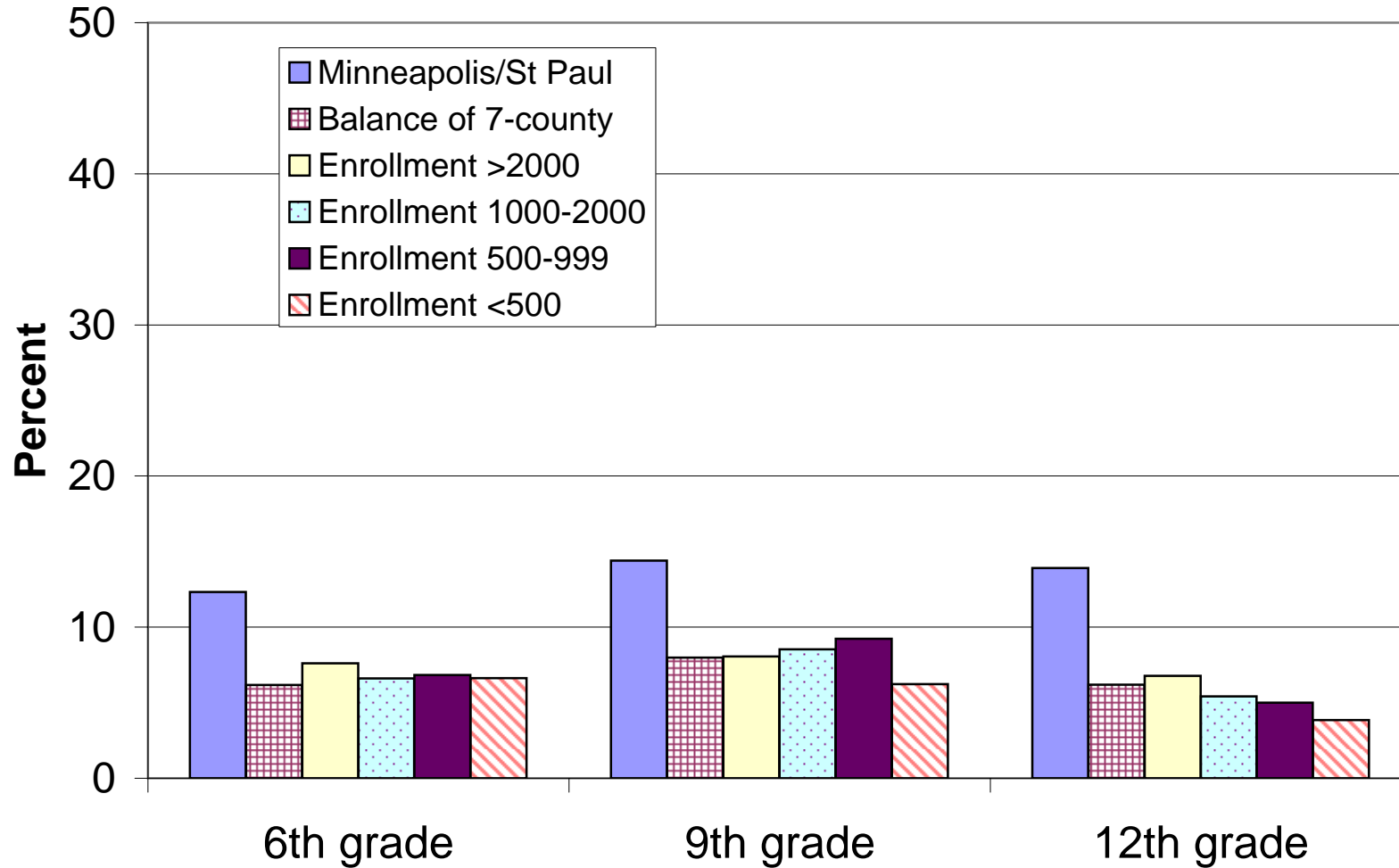
Percent who have been bullied at least once in the past 30 days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007



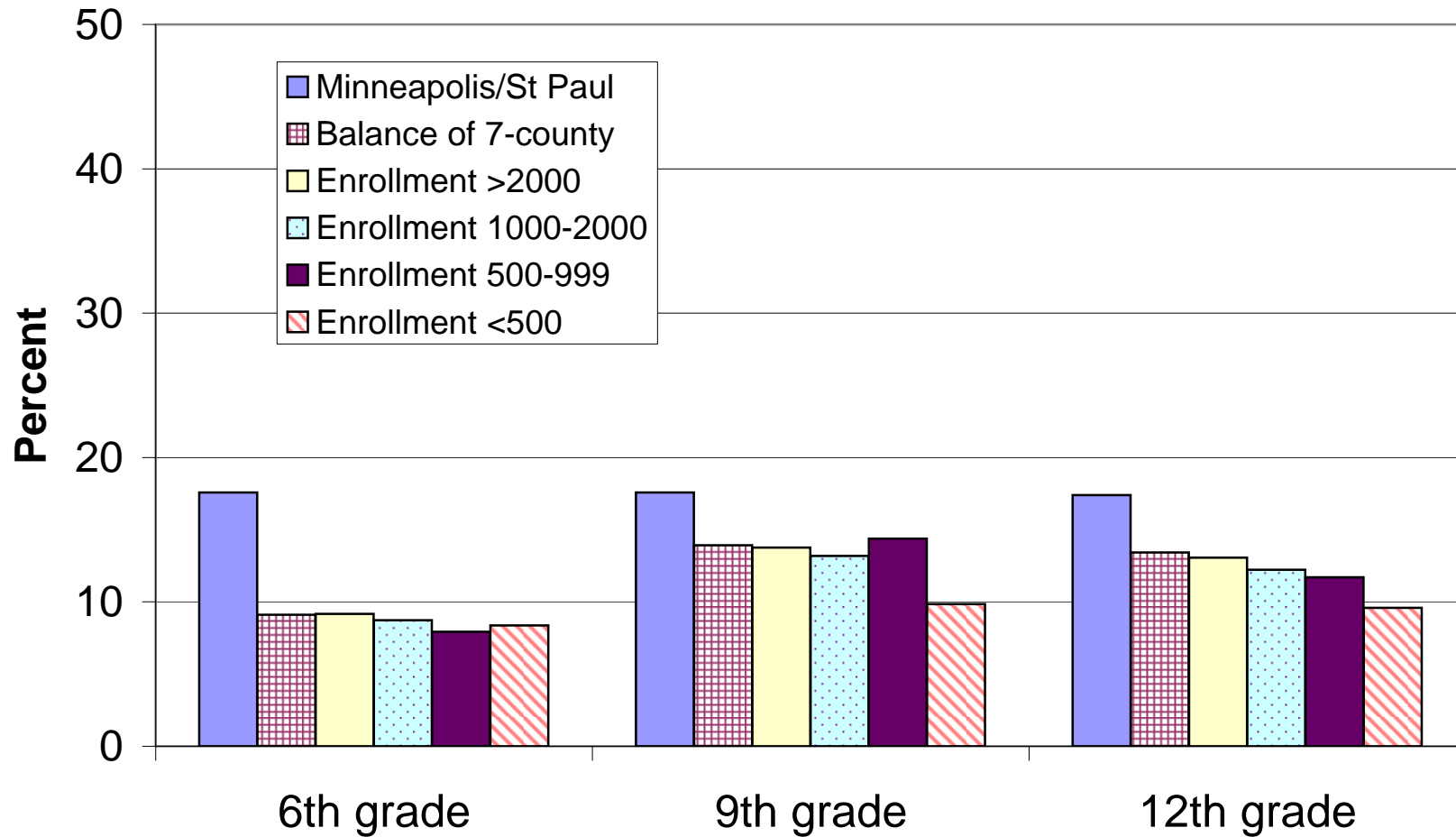
Percent who have been a bully at least once in the past 30 days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007



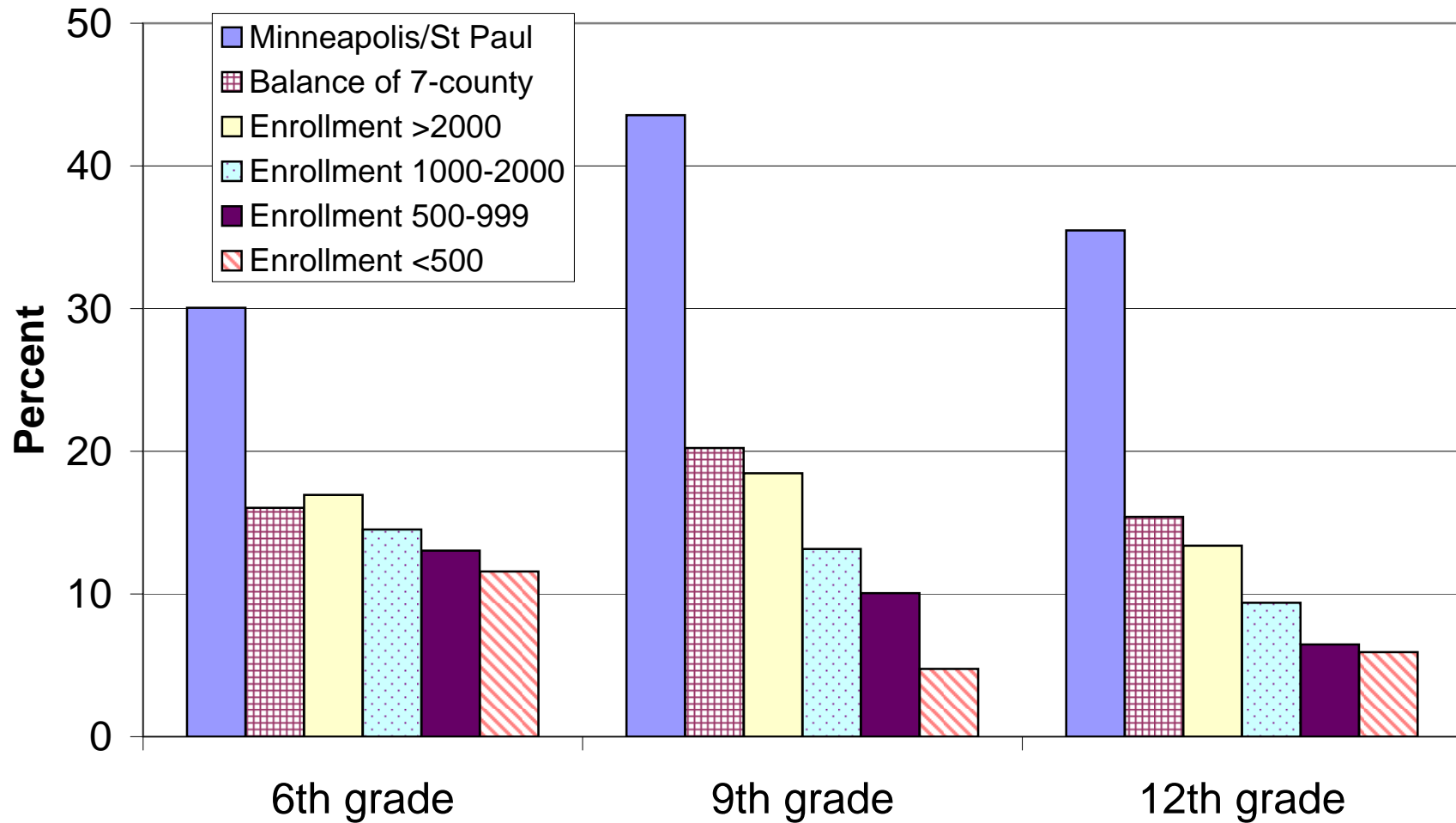
Percent who don't feel safe at school Minnesota Student Survey 2007



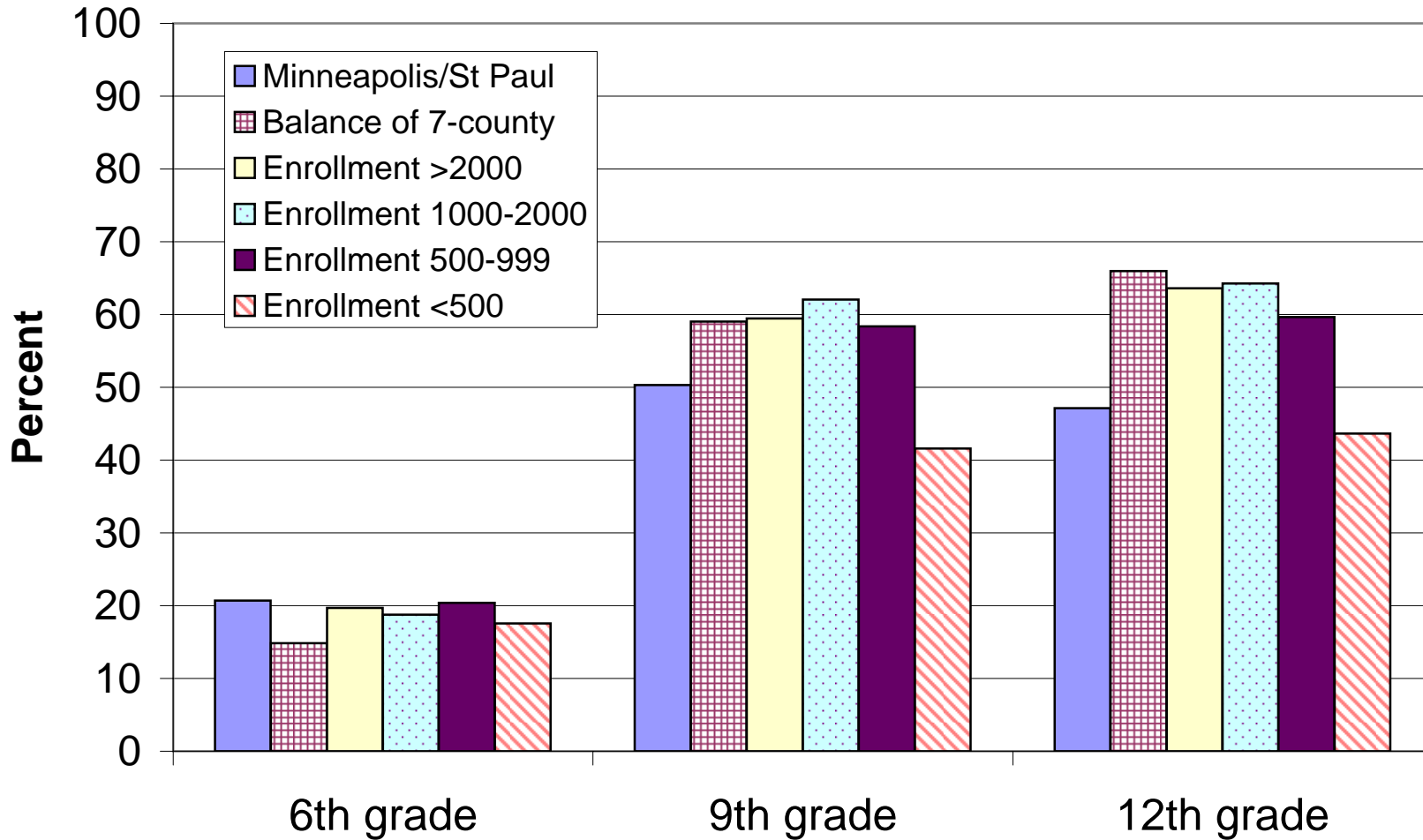
**Percent who report that all or most students have made fun or threatened students of different races or backgrounds
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



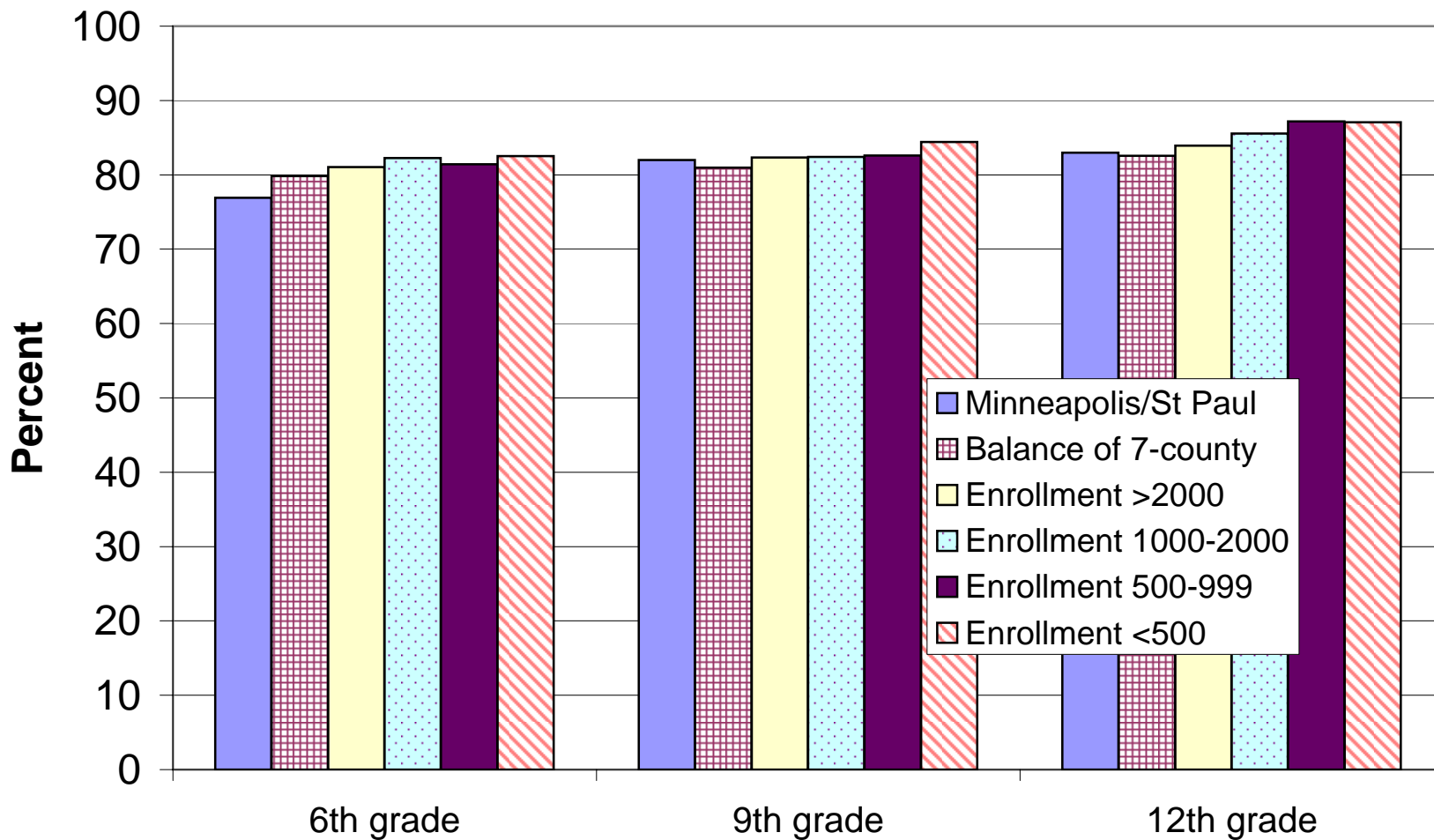
**Percent who strongly agree or agree that
illegal gang activity is a problem at school
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



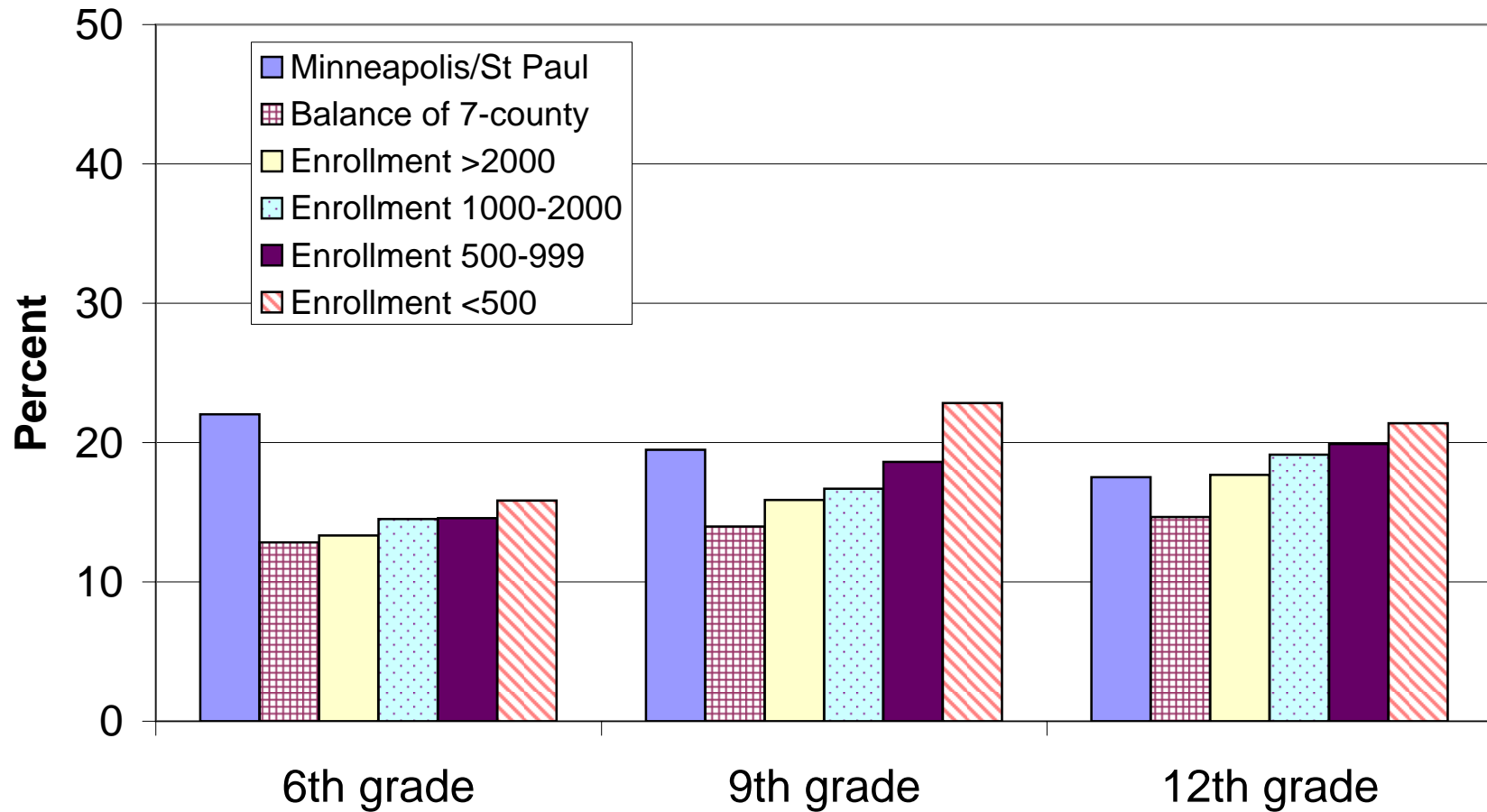
Percent who strongly agree or agree that student alcohol or drug use is a problem at school
Minnesota Student Survey 2007



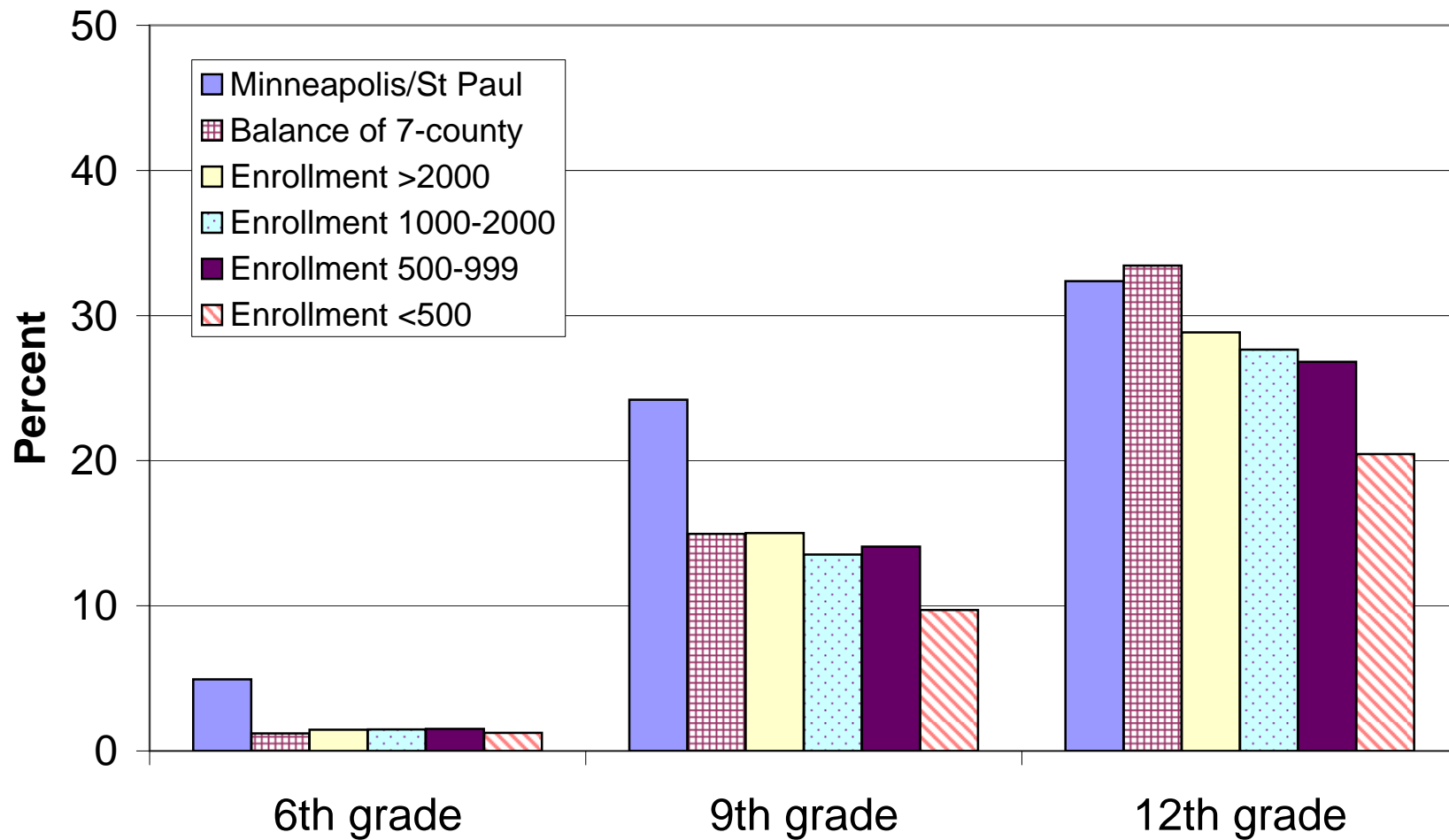
**Percent who ate fewer than five servings
of fruits and vegetables yesterday
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



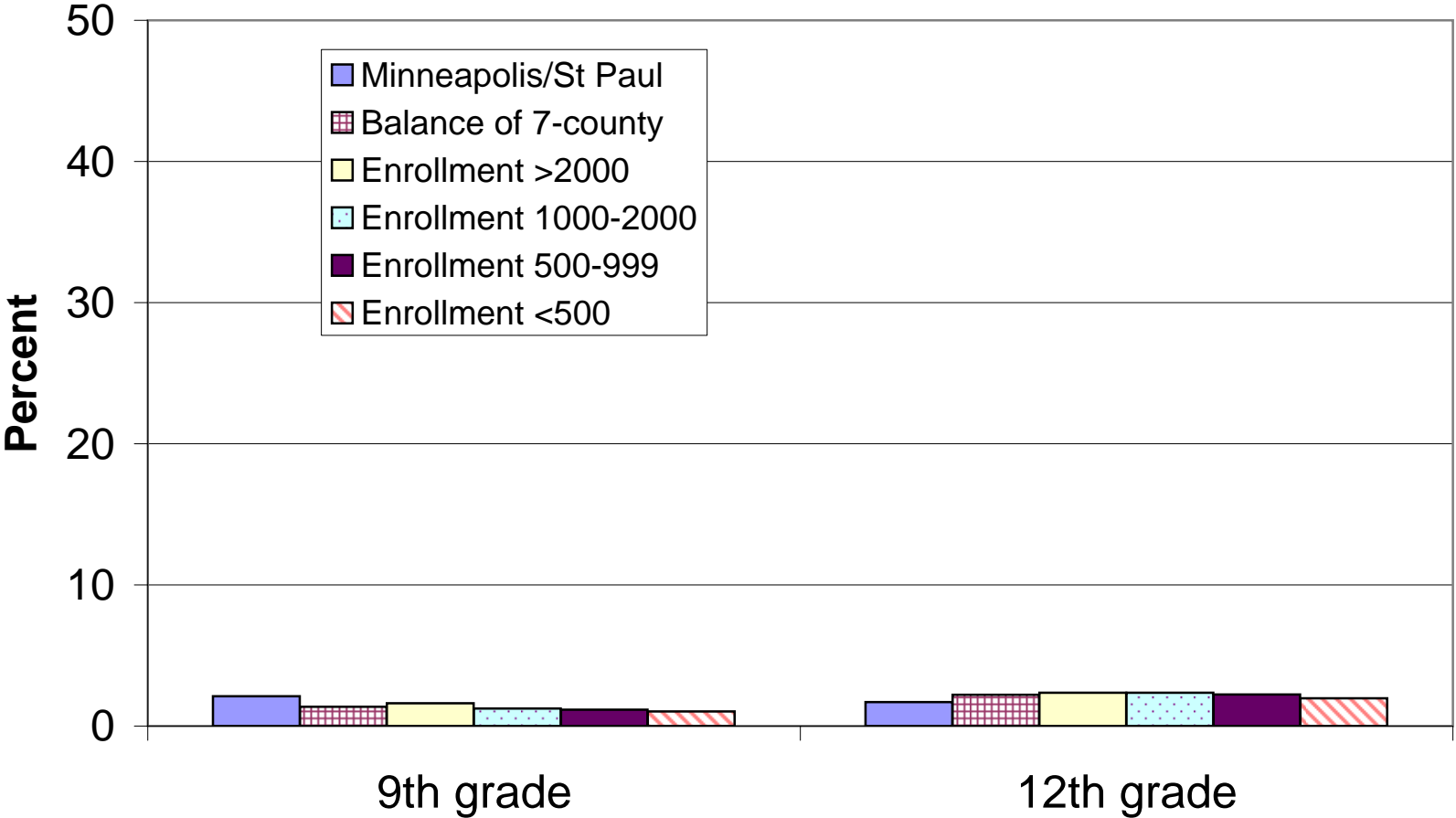
**Percent who drank three or more glasses
of pop or soda yesterday
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



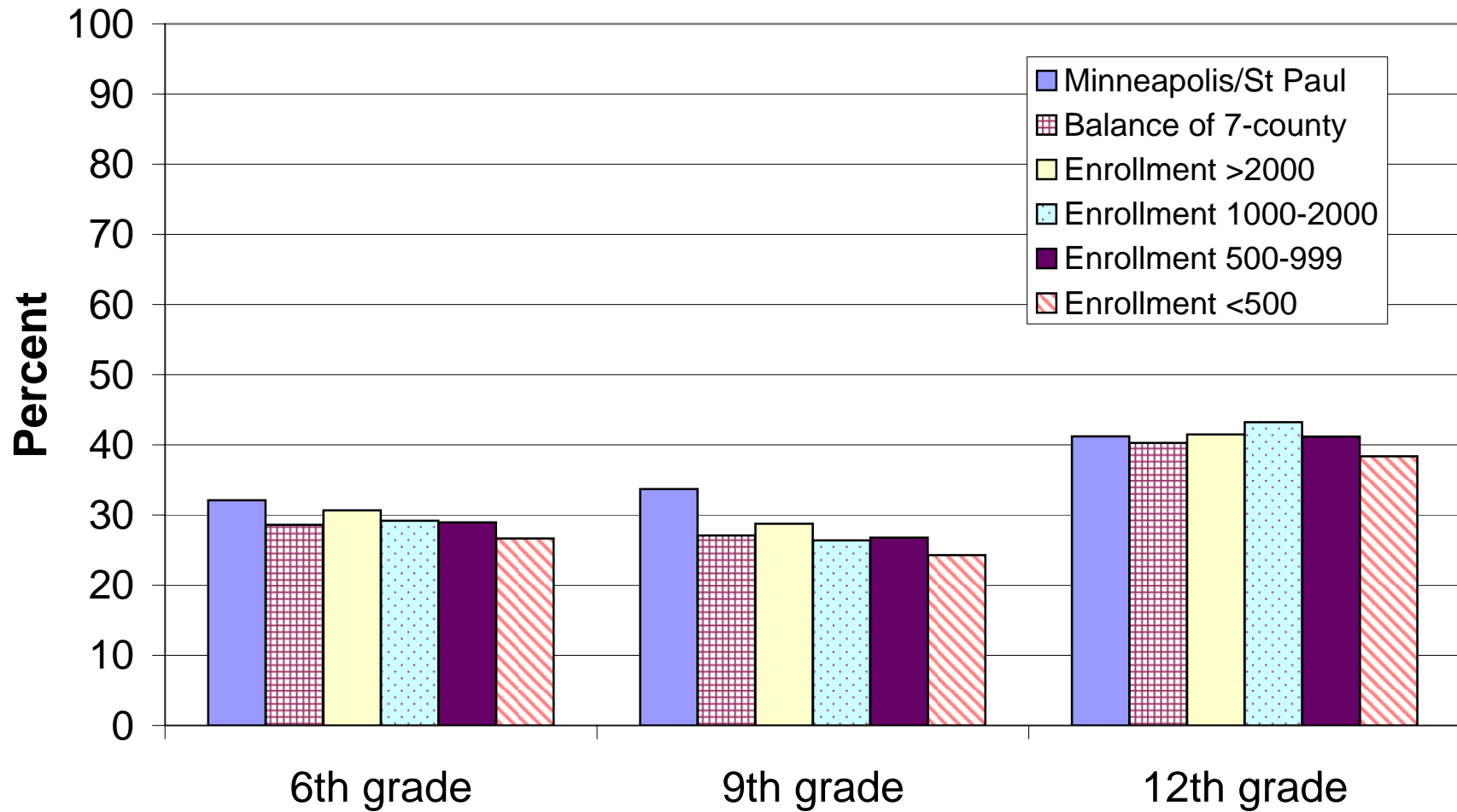
Percent who used marijuana one or more times in last 12 months Minnesota Student Survey 2007



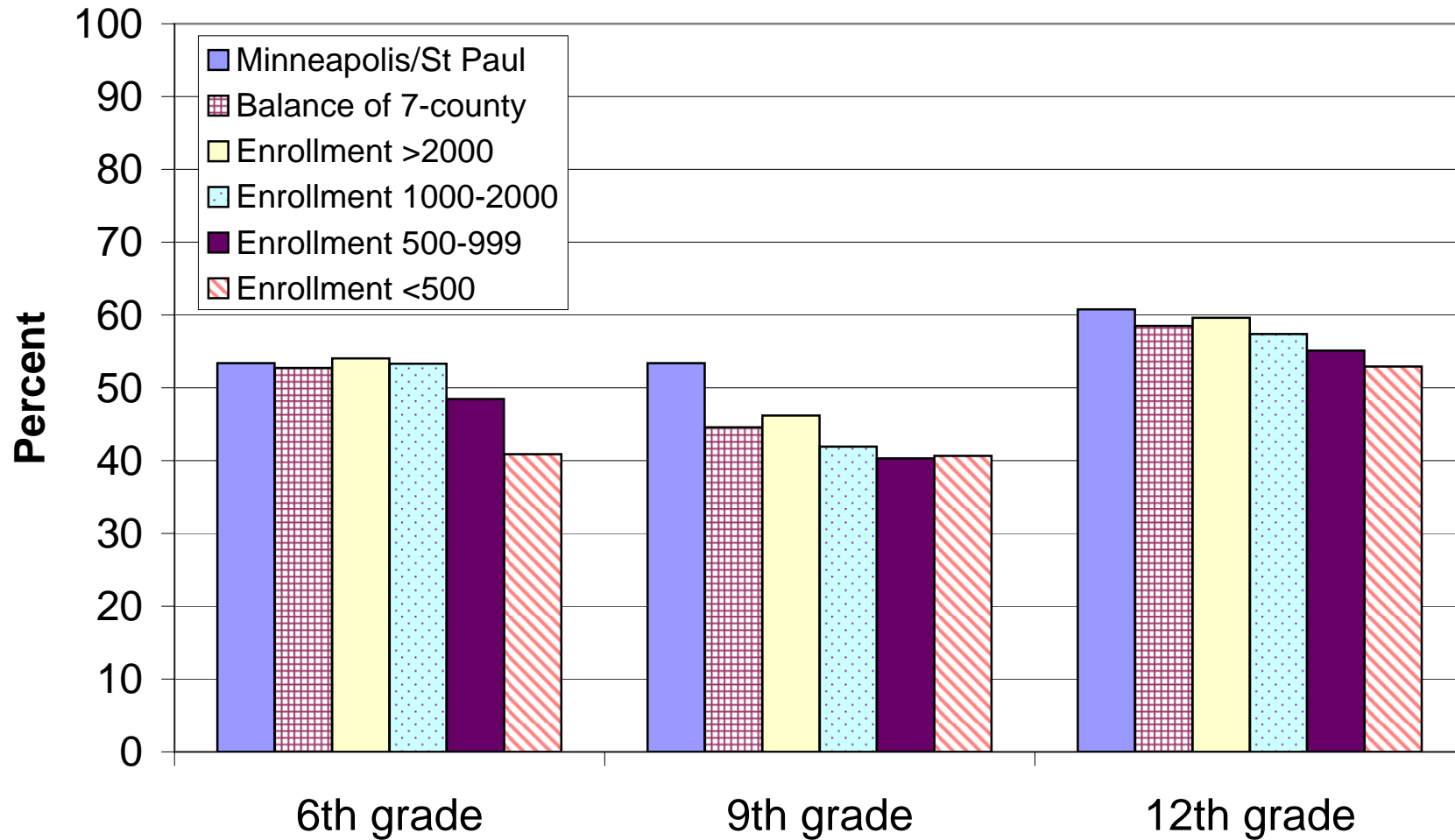
**Percent who used methamphetamine
one or more times in the last 12 months
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



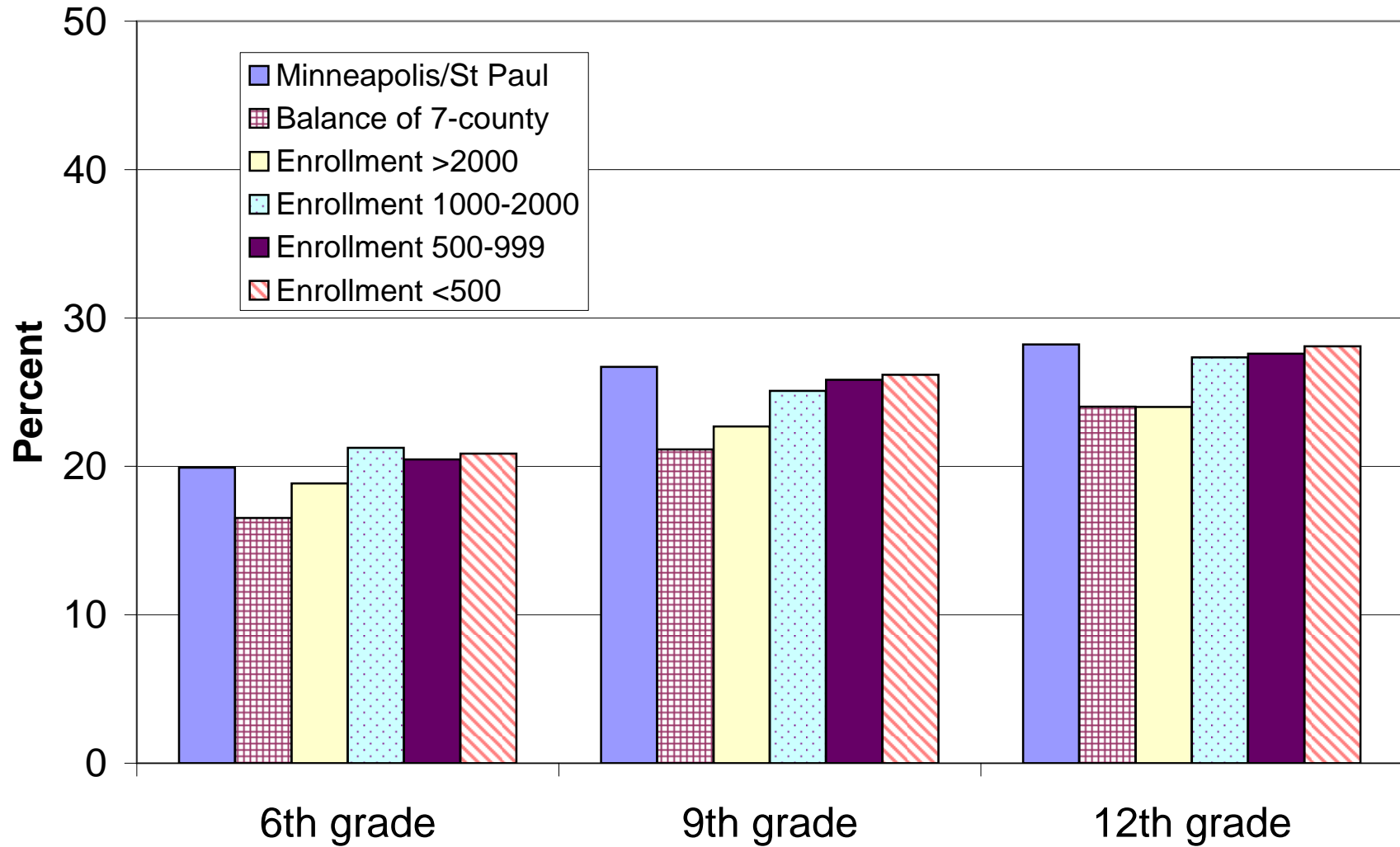
**Percent who did vigorous exercise (at least 20 minutes)
on fewer than three of the last seven days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



**Percent who were physically active for at least 30 minutes
on fewer than five of the last seven days
Minnesota Student Survey 2007**



Percent who feel they are overweight Minnesota Student Survey 2007



Percent who are overweight or at risk of overweight Minnesota Student Survey 2007

