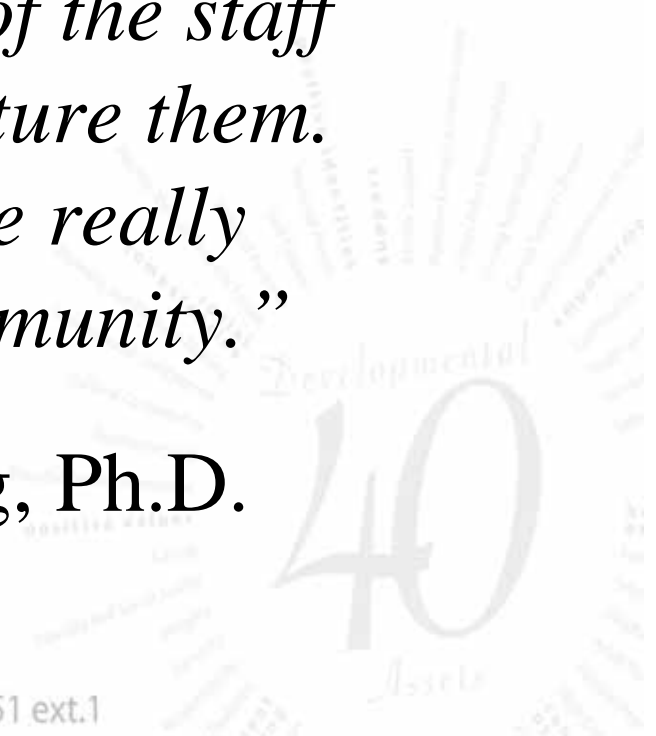


“With a public school like that, I don’t know why anyone would send their child to a private, non-sectarian school. It isn’t just the quality of academics, but clear effort of the staff to reach out to kids and nurture them. Even among the kids there really seems to be a sense of community.”

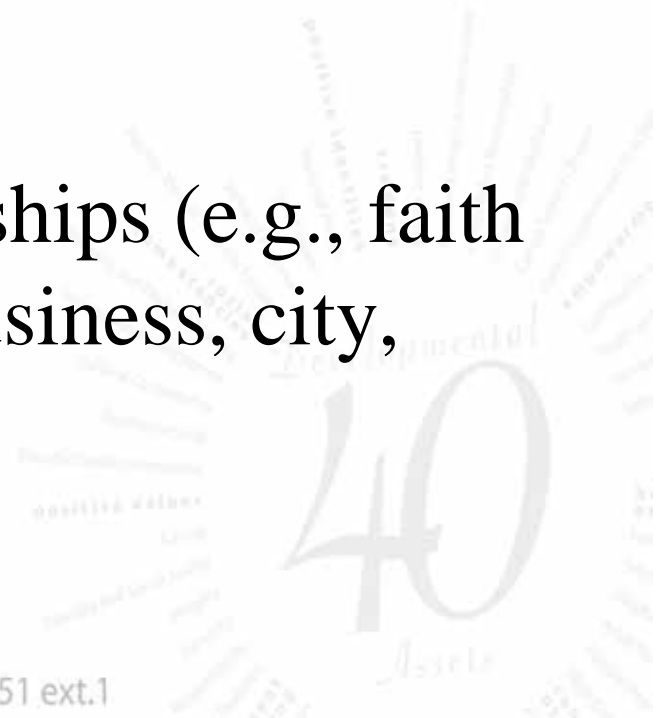
Rabbi Hayim Herring, Ph.D.



Foundation:

What was already in place?

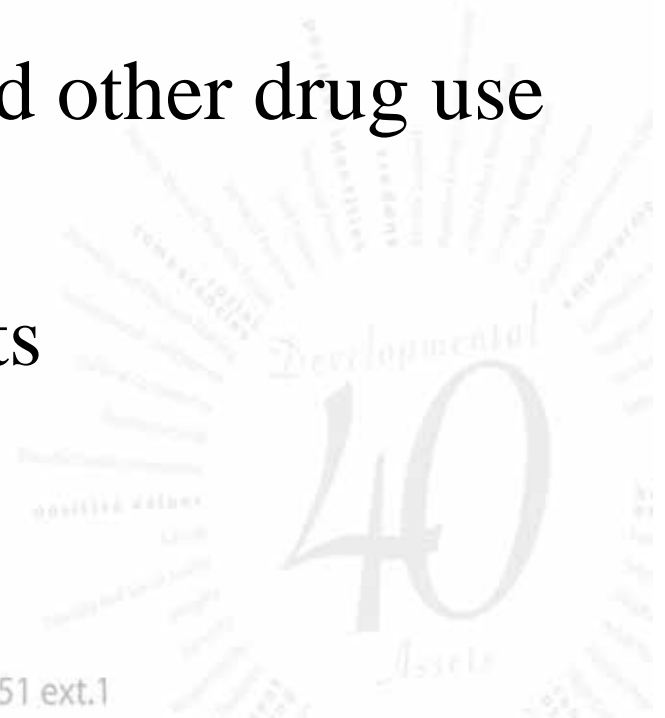
- Asset framework
- Children First initiative
- Community-wide partnerships (e.g., faith community, education, business, city, health)



Goals:

What did we hope to accomplish?

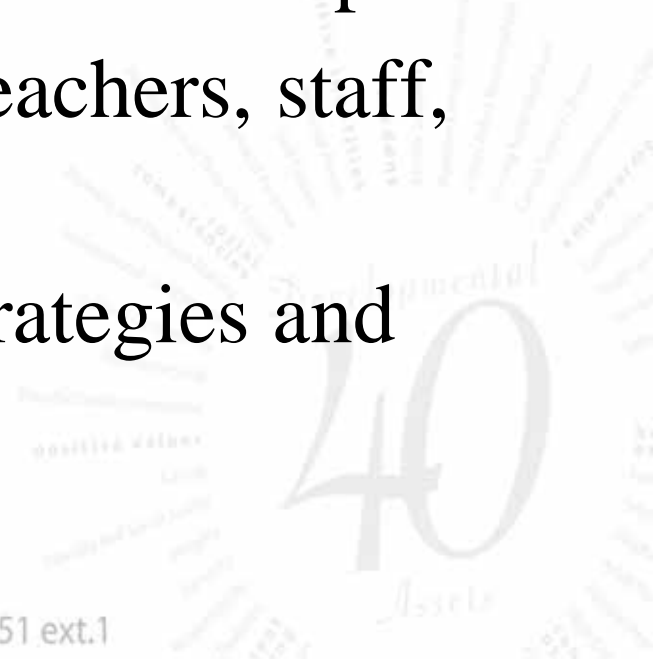
- Reduce academic failures
- Reduce alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use
- Reduce truancy
- Reduce disciplinary incidents



Philosophy:

What is the basis of the program?

- Focus on the whole class
- Strength-based approach/asset development
- Strategies for every level (teachers, staff, students, parents)
- Coordination across both strategies and levels



What is the 9th grade program?



Personnel

- Social Worker
- Therapist
- Coordinator
- 8th Hour Teacher
- Counselor and Administrator



Structural

- Organize 9th grade into blocks
- Reduce class size of block classes
- Block Meetings
- Risk Review
- Monthly Staff Meetings
- Orientation



“At a time when the traditional structures of caring have deteriorated, schools must become places where teachers and students live together, talk with each other, take delight in each other’s company. *My guess is that when schools focus on what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we now pursue so painfully and artificially will be achieved somewhat more naturally.* It is obvious that children will work harder and do things--even odd things like adding fractions--for people they love and trust.”

Nel Nodding, 1998, *Caring: A Feminine Approach in Ethics and Moral Education.*

Process Evaluation Questions

- Resource allocation
- Workplan implementation
- Obstacles or barriers
- Contextual changes
- Perceived impact on students
- Use of preliminary findings



Process Evaluation Methods

- Staff, teacher interviews
- Observation of I Time
- Parent Advisory Group interviews
- Student focus groups
- Monitoring of media coverage



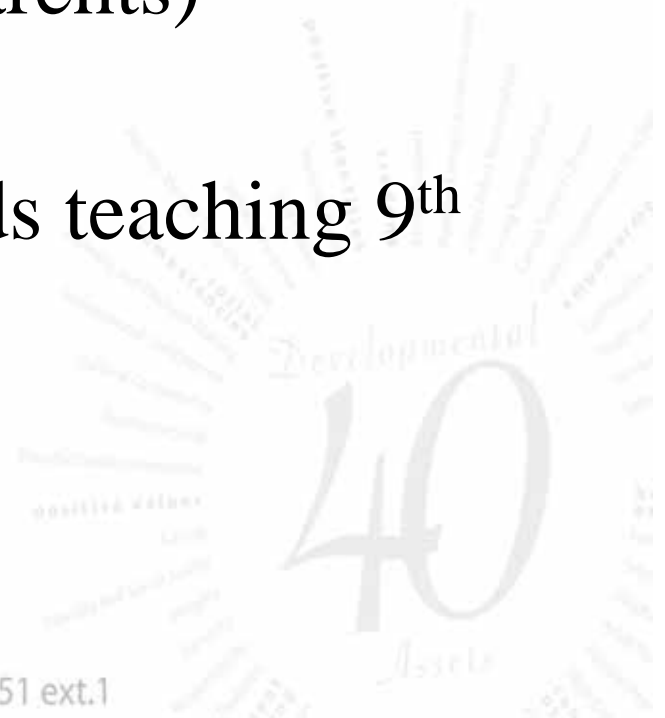
Process Evaluation Findings: What happened during the course of the program?

- Strong start-up
- Teachers know asset framework
- Project seen as response to teacher concerns
- Opportunity for regular teacher meetings
- Means of dealing with crises and challenges
- Student services staff meet with students of greatest need, freeing up teachers

continued...

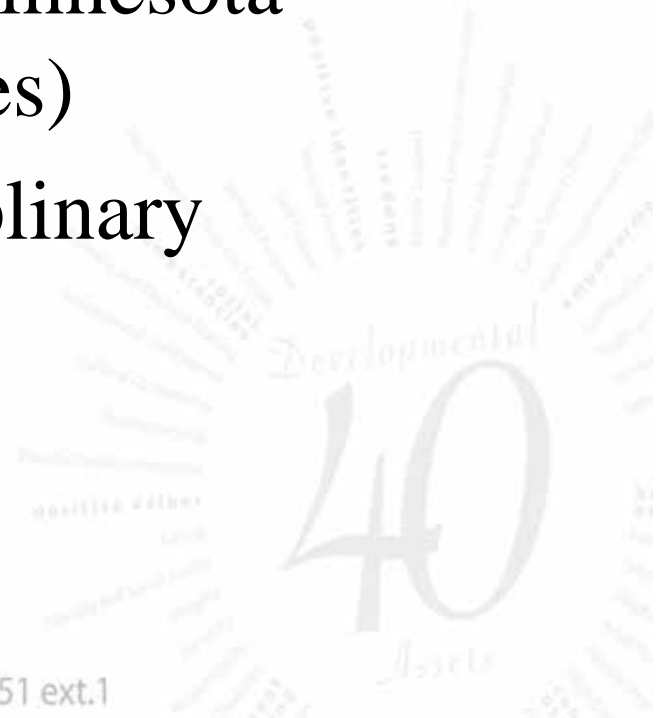
Surprises: Unanticipated Outcomes

- 10th graders remarking on absence of program
- Honors block (teachers and parents) defending program
- Teachers and department heads teaching 9th grade

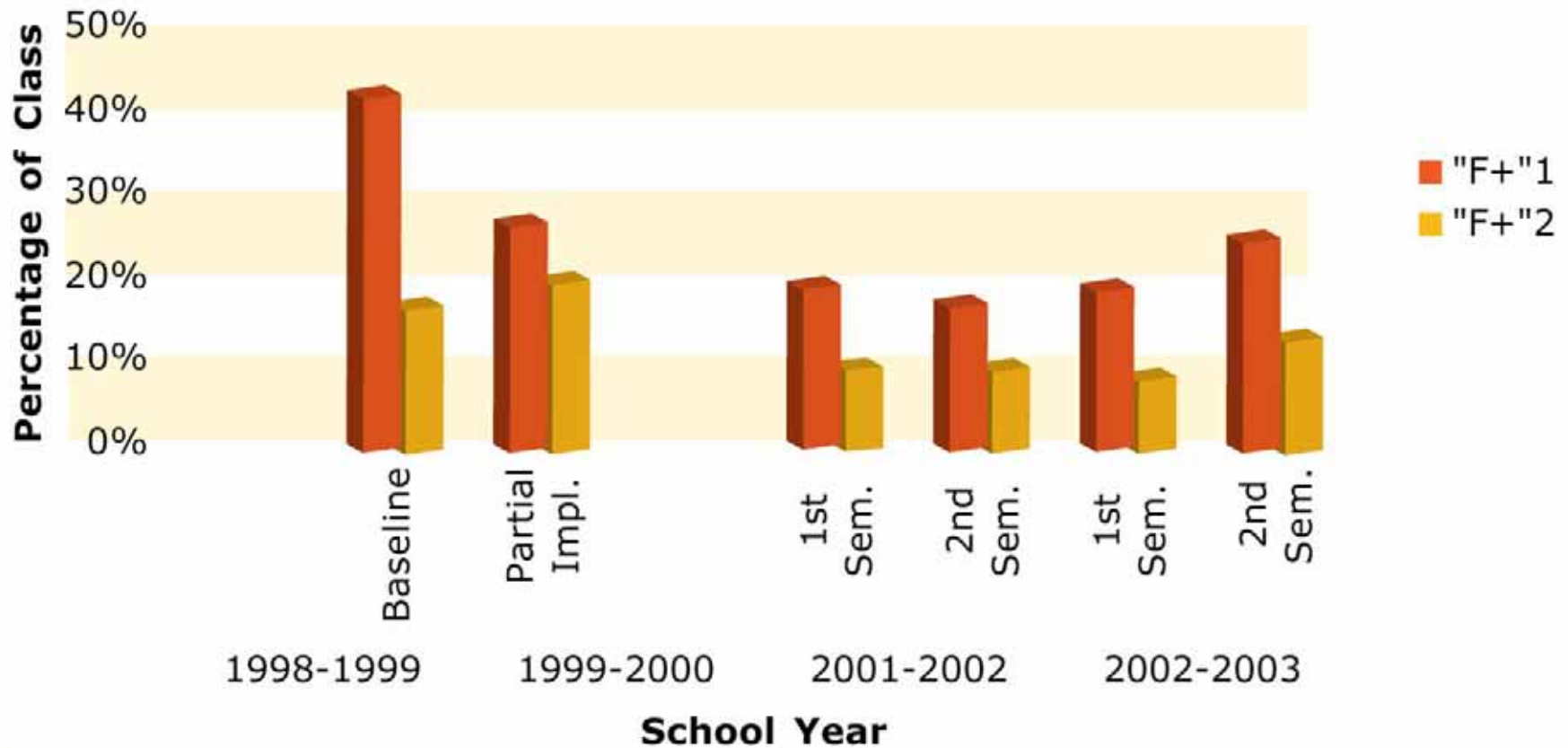


Outcome Evaluation Methods

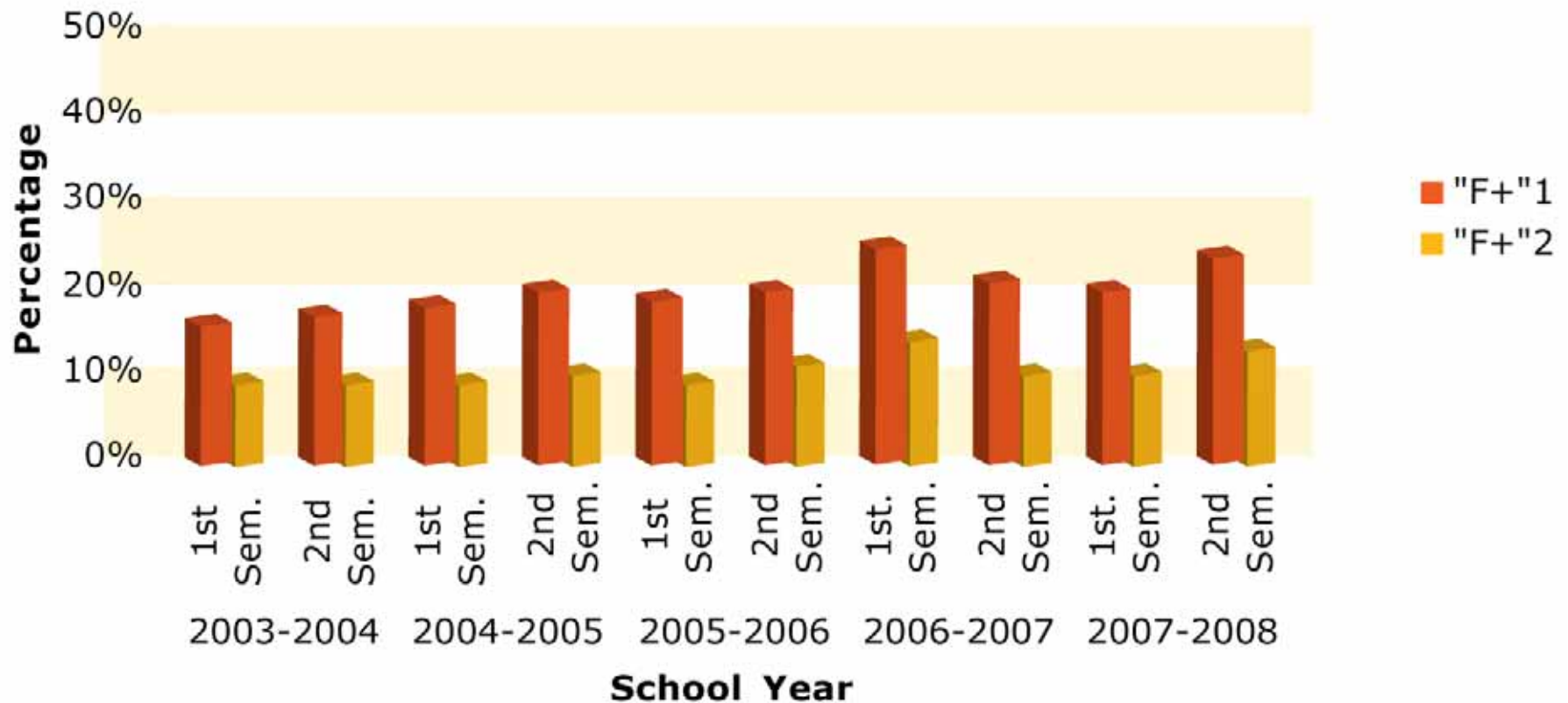
- Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors (Search Institute)
- Minnesota Student Survey (Minnesota Department of Human Services)
- Academic, truancy, and disciplinary incident records



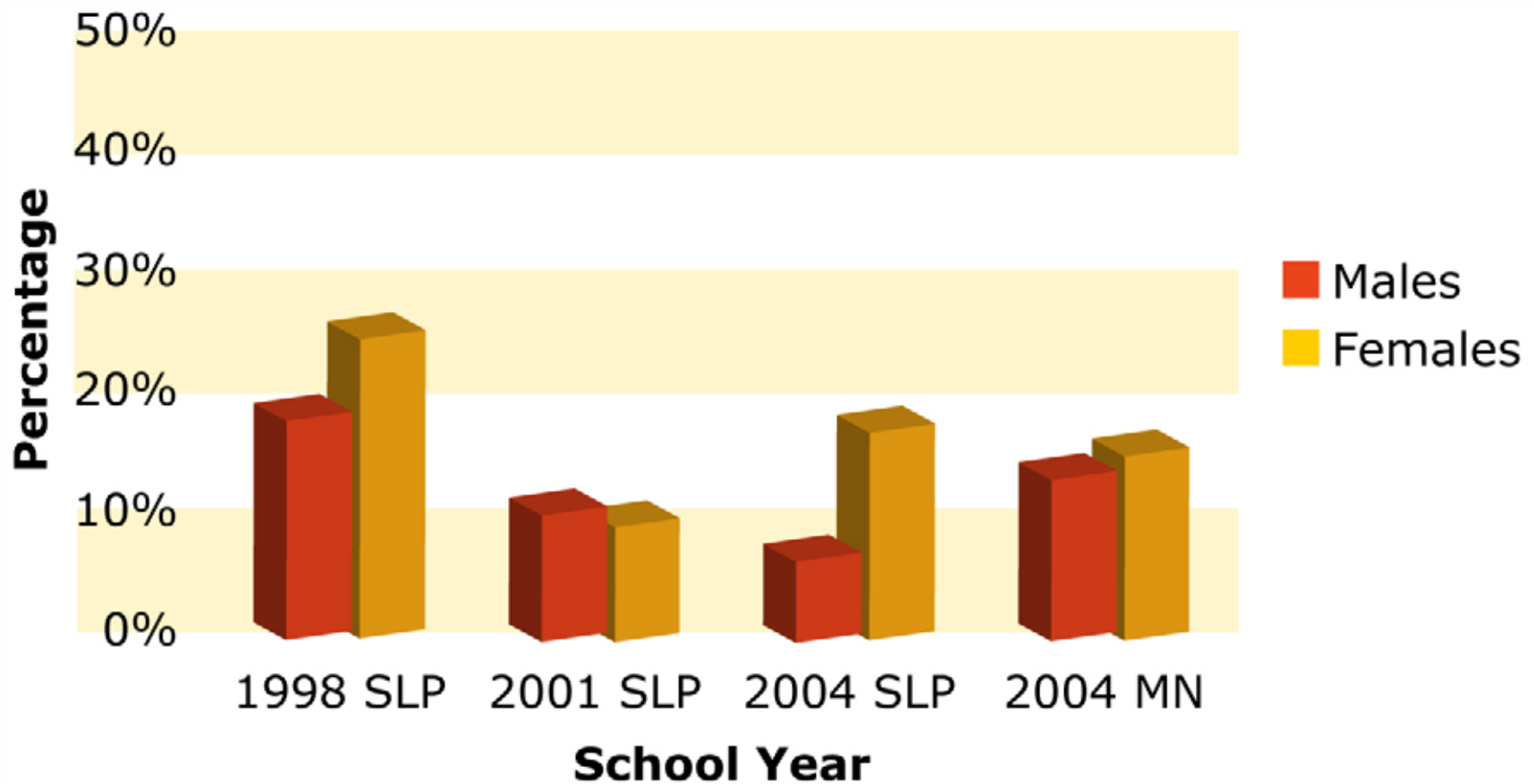
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students Academic Failure Rates



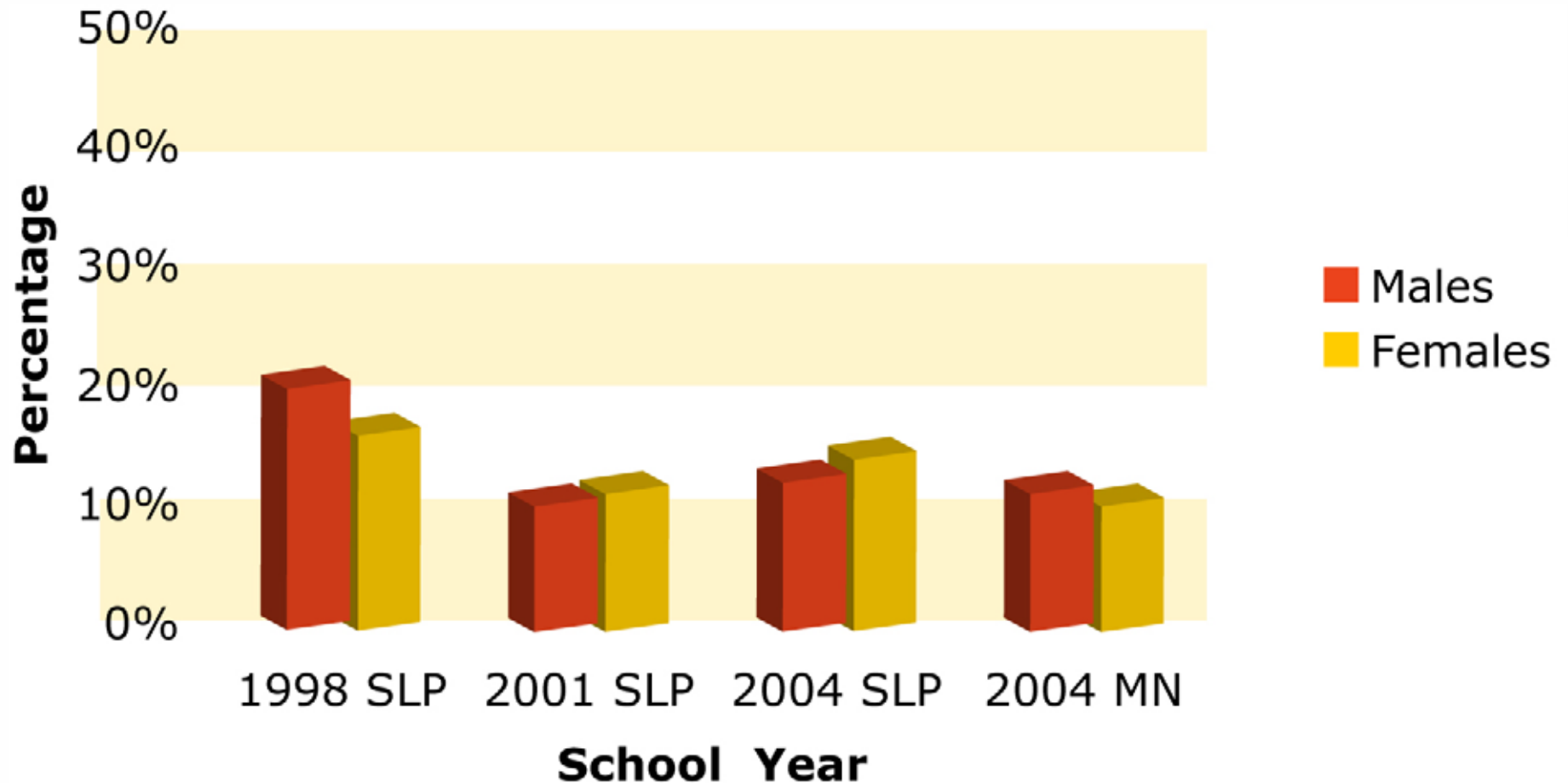
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students Academic Failure Rates by Semester



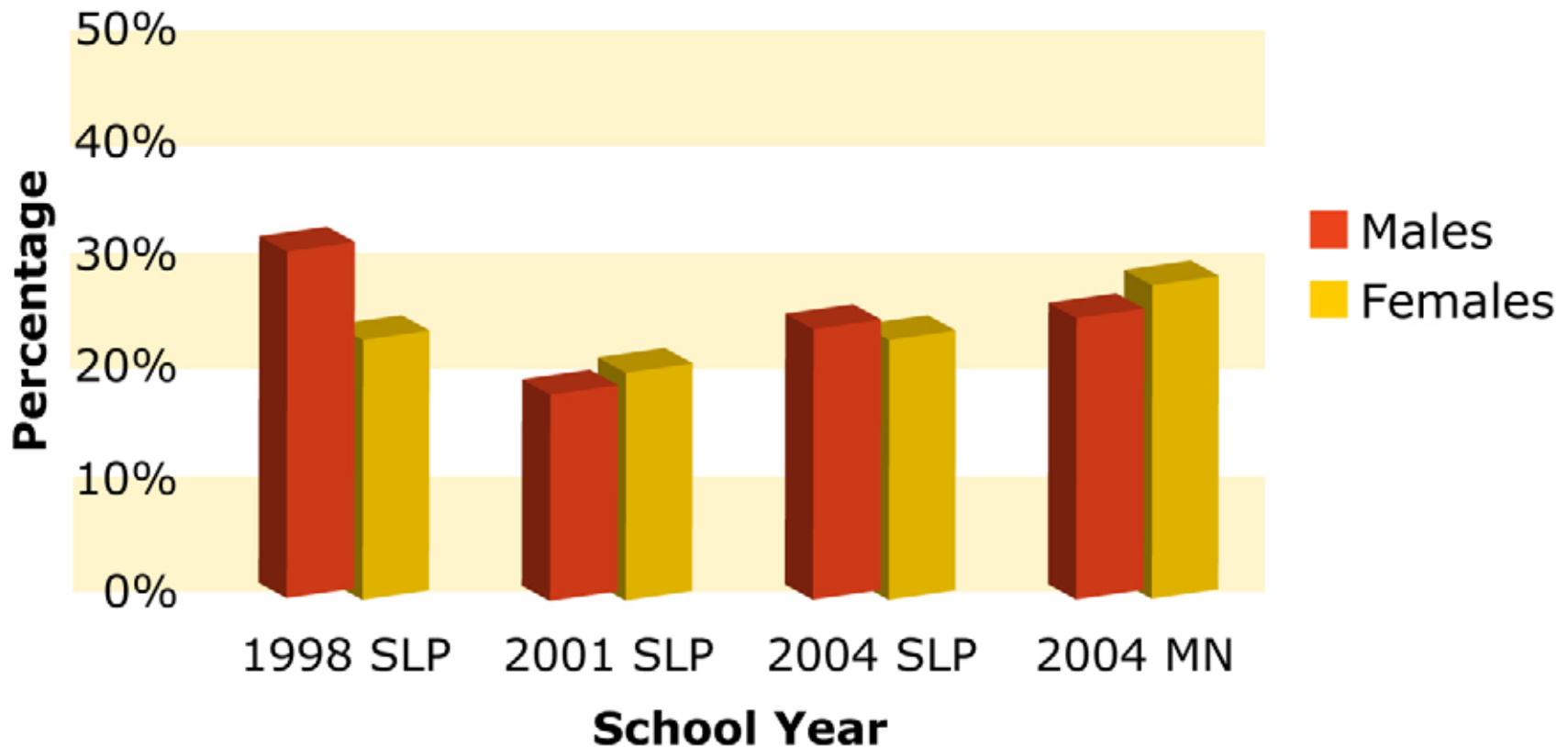
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students Cigarette use in the last 30 days



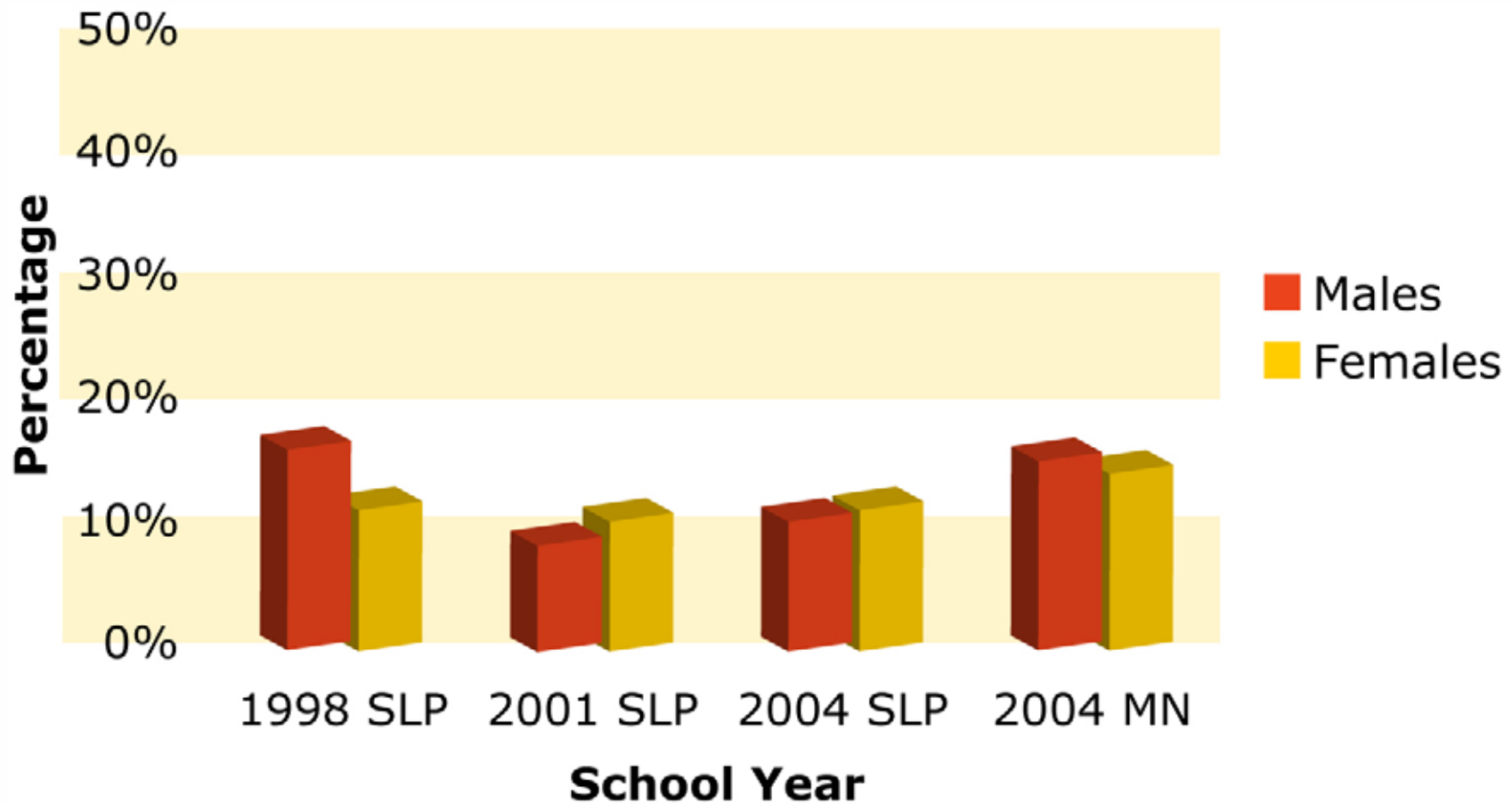
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students Marijuana use in the last 30 days



St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students Alcohol use in the last 30 days

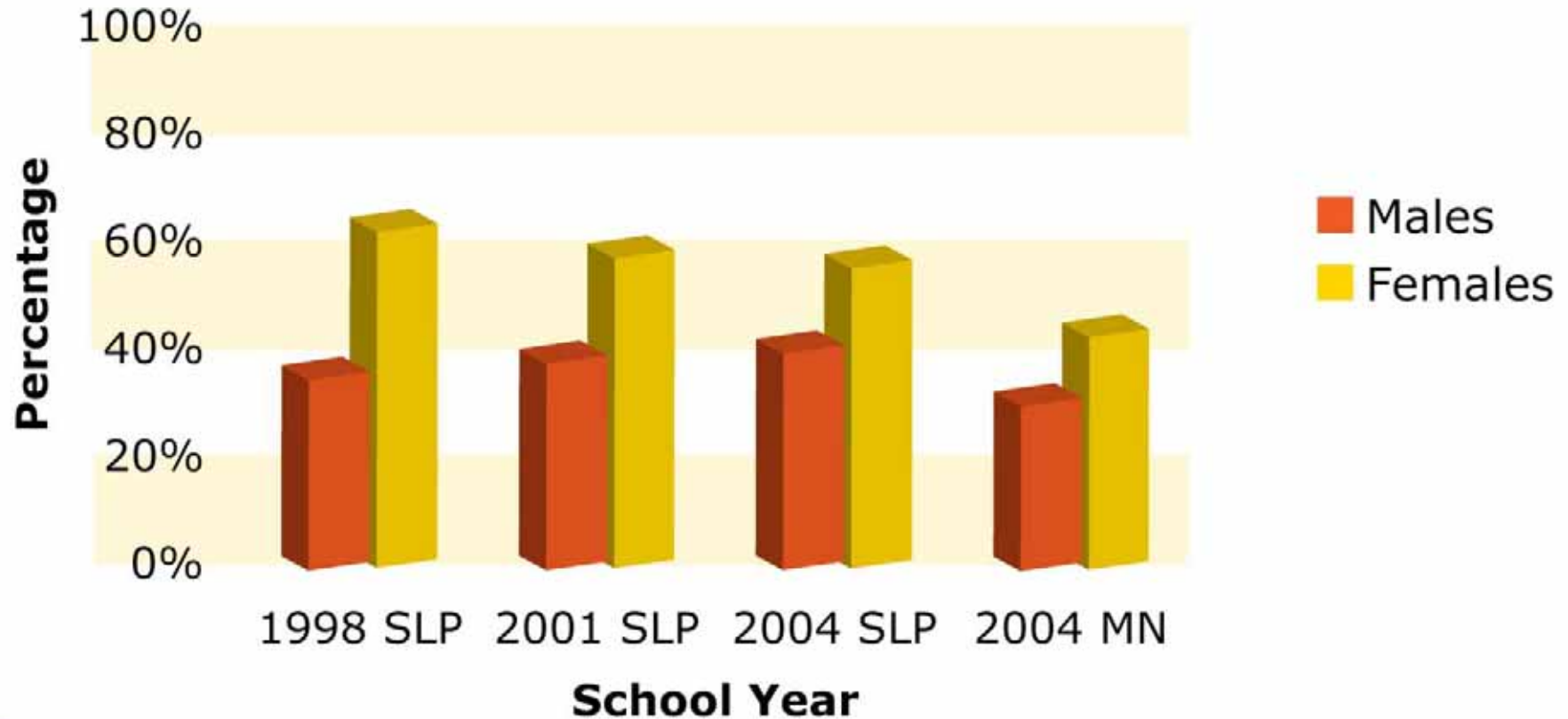


St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students Binge drinking



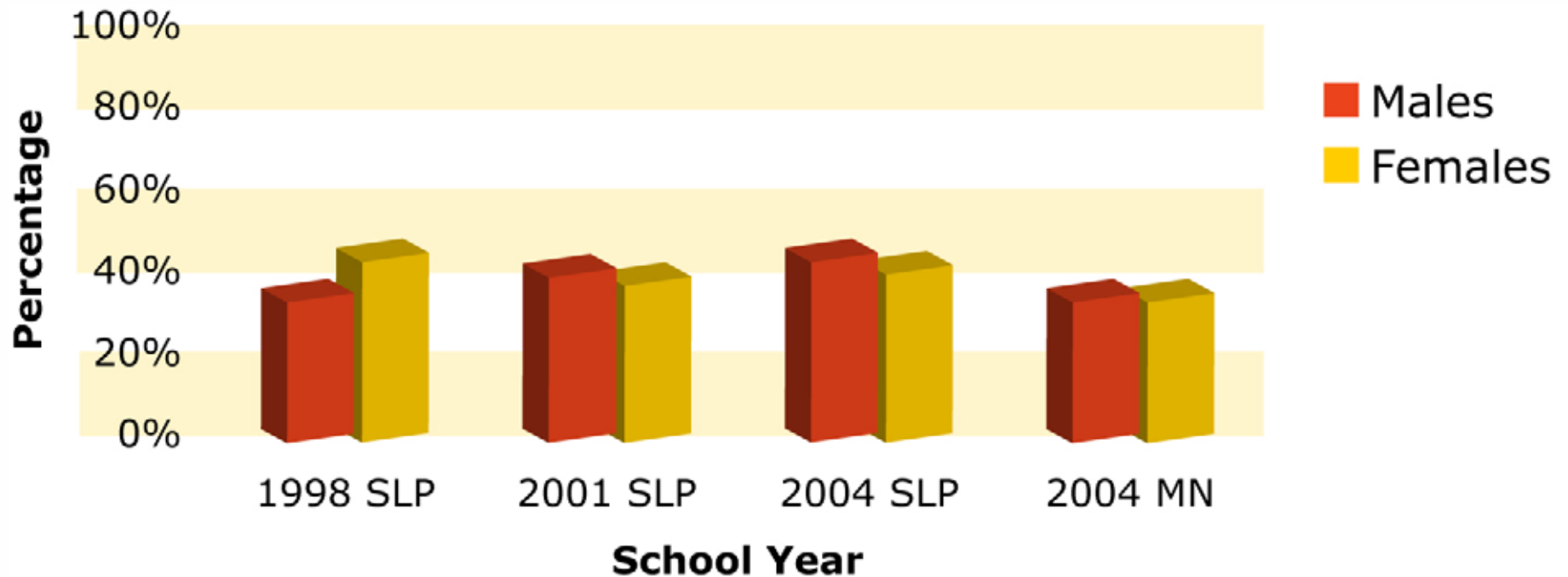
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students

Feelings about school (Like it very much, quite a bit)



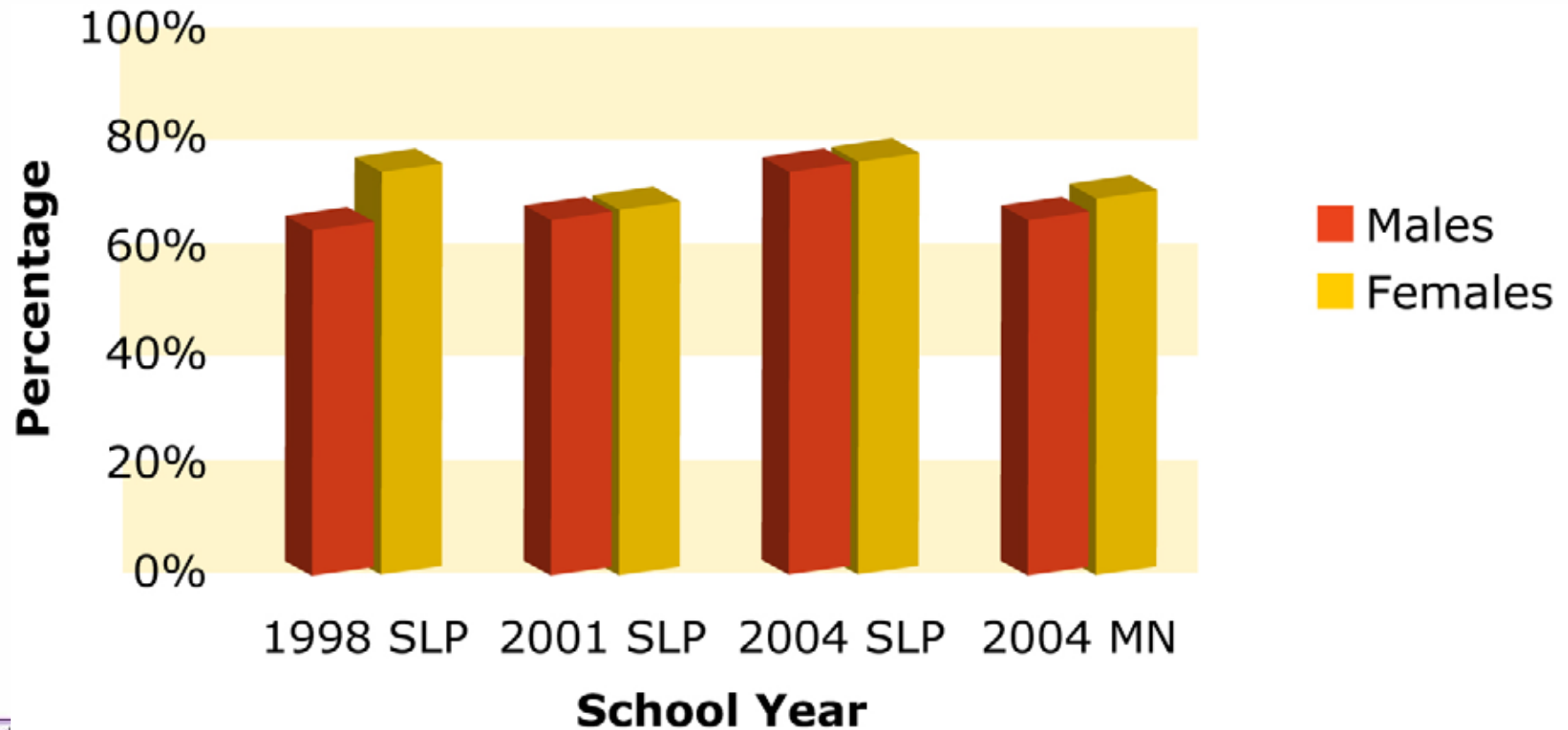
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students

Teachers are interested in you as a person
(all, most)



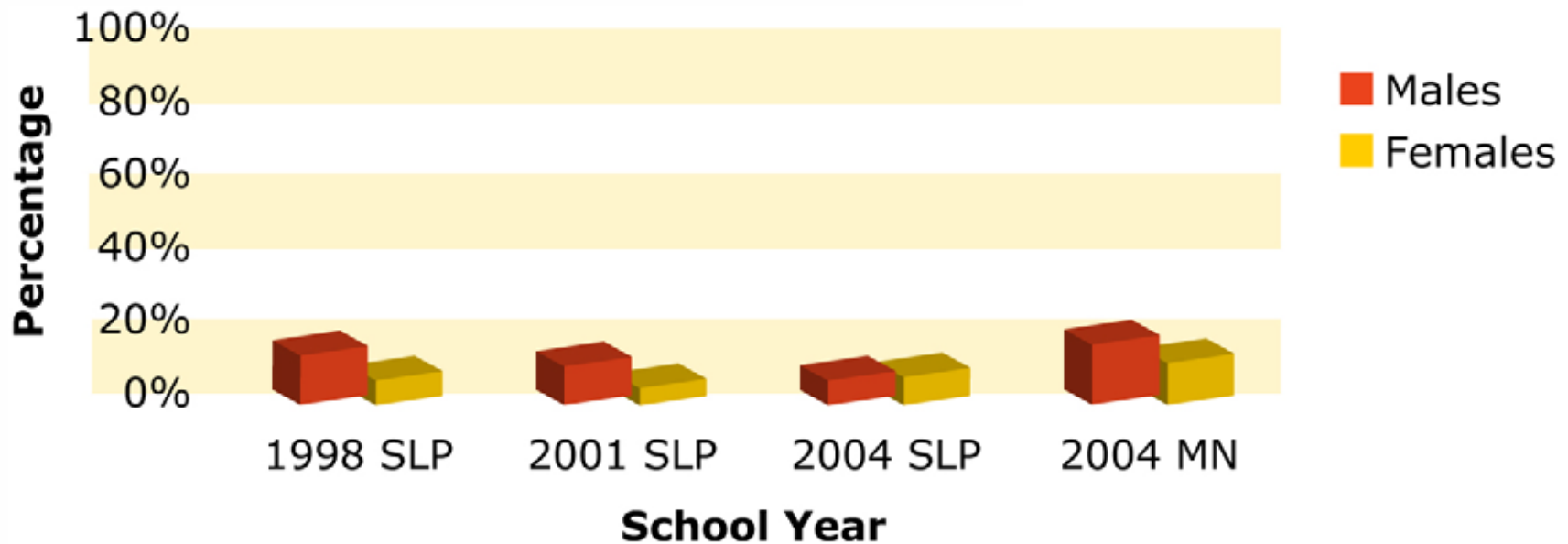
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students

Teachers show respect for students
(all, most)



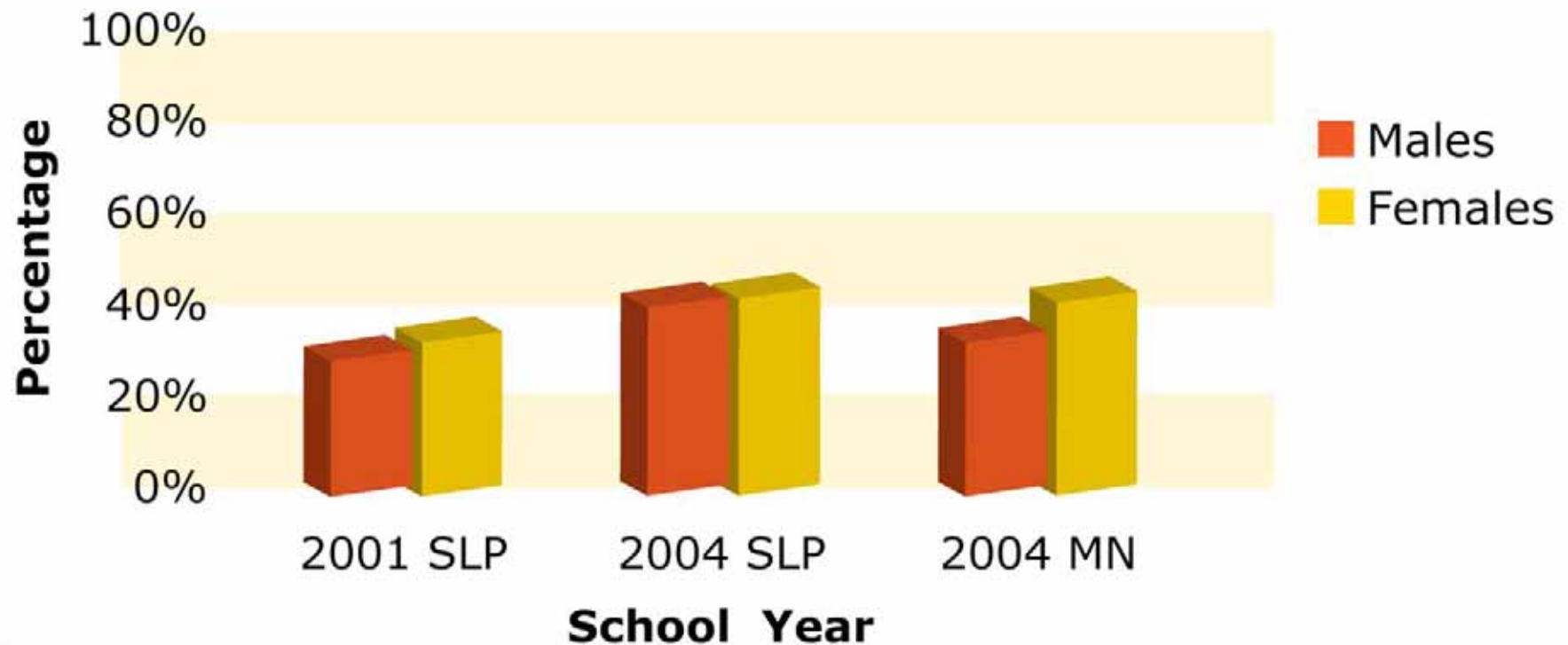
St. Louis Park: 9th Grade Students

**Students in school have made fun of or threatened students of different races or backgrounds
(all, most)**



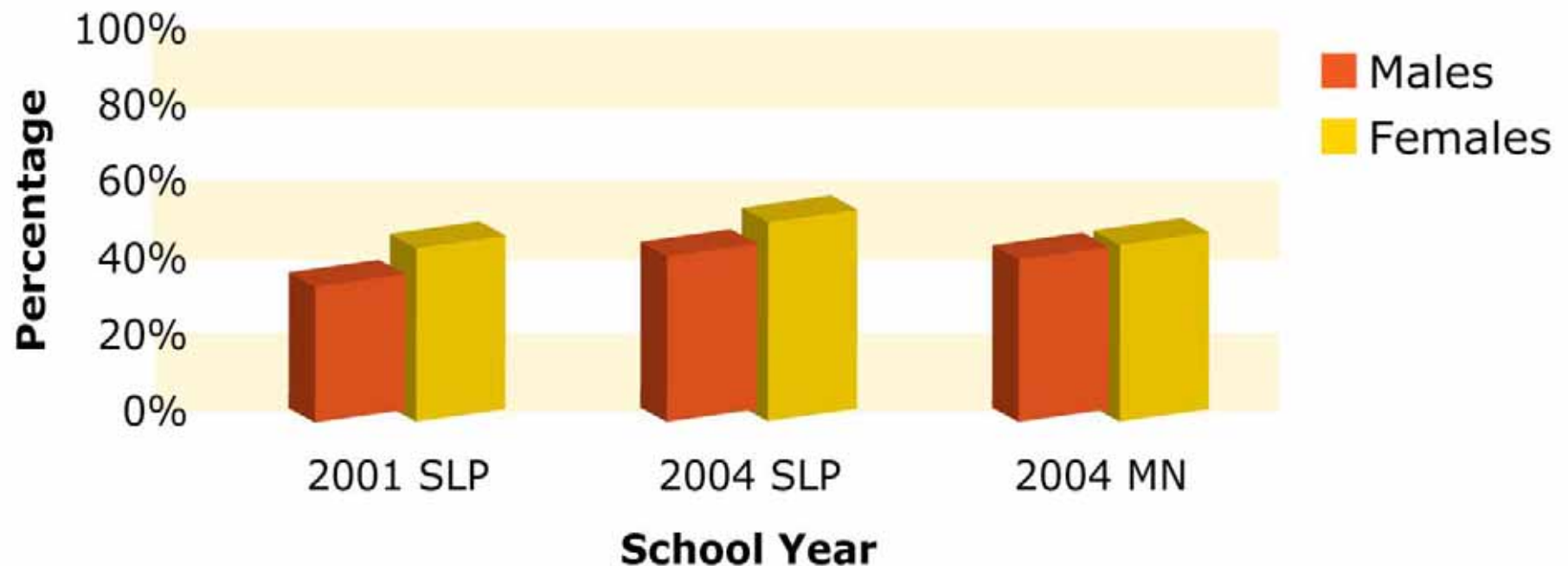
St. Louis Park: 12th Grade Students First Cohort of 9th Grade Program

Feelings about school (Like it very much, quite a bit)



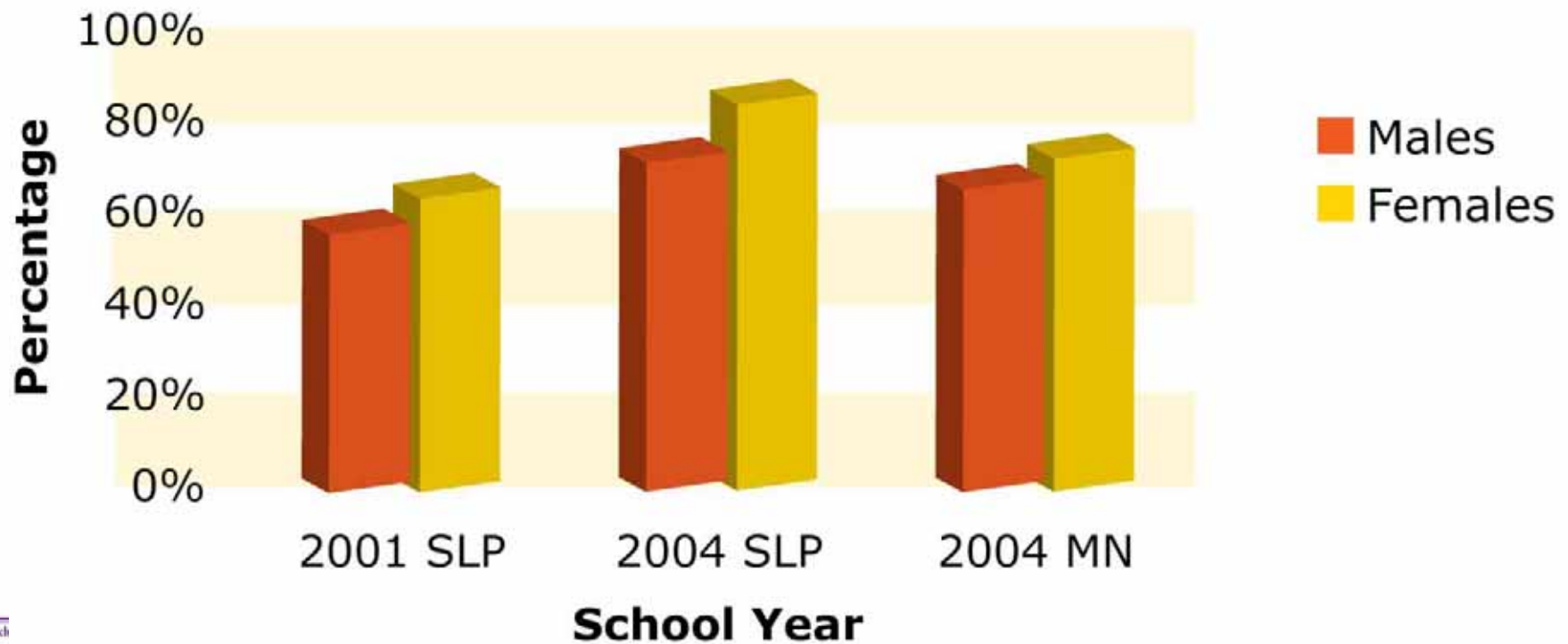
St. Louis Park: 12th Grade Students First Cohort of 9th Grade Program

Teachers are interested in you as a person
(all, most)



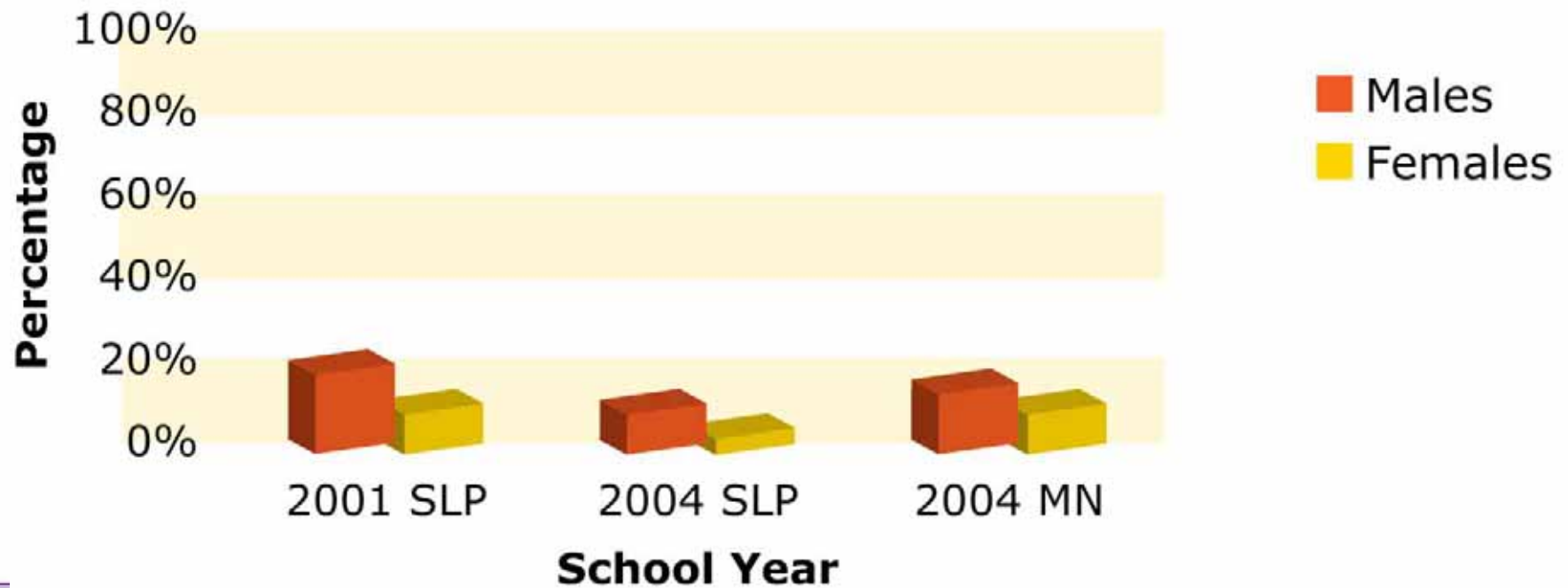
St. Louis Park: 12th Grade Students First Cohort of 9th Grade Program

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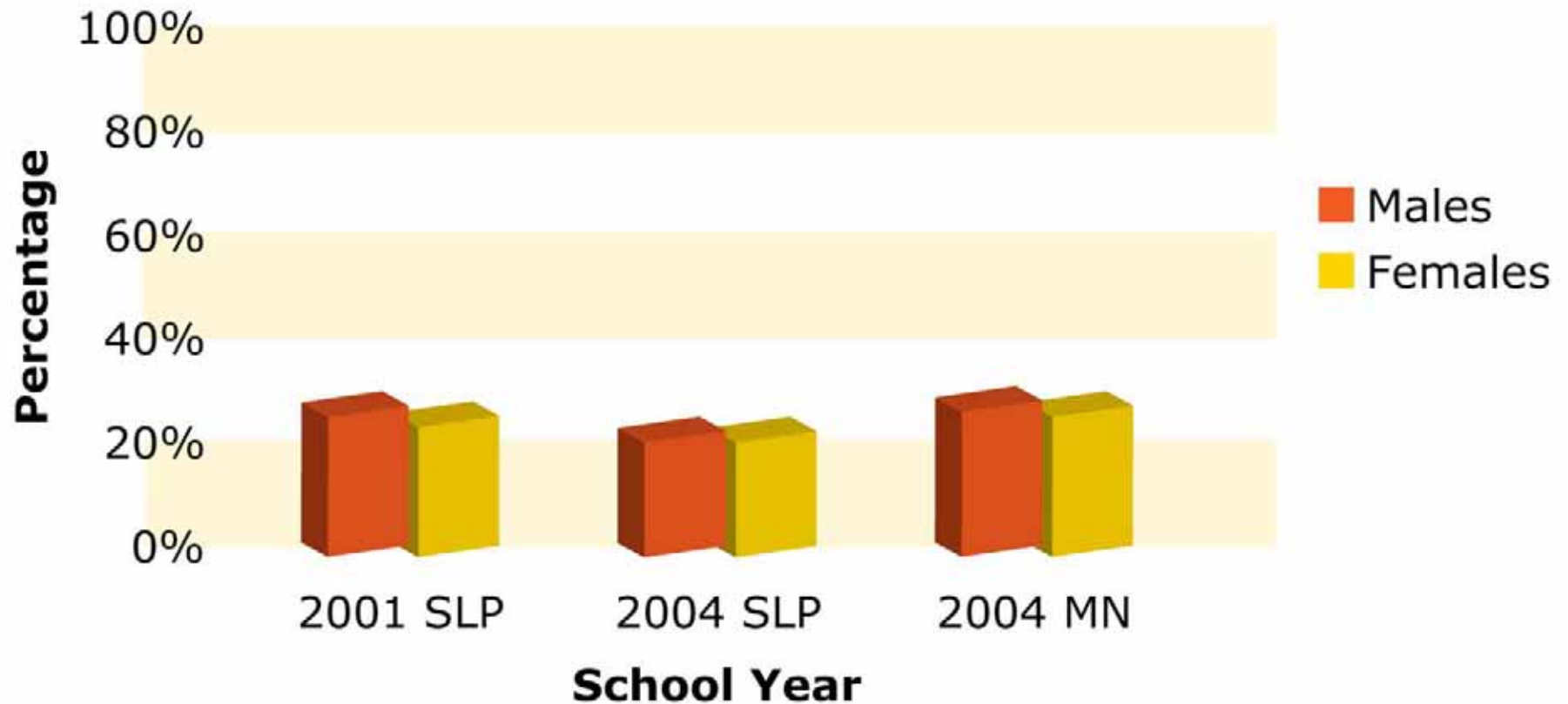
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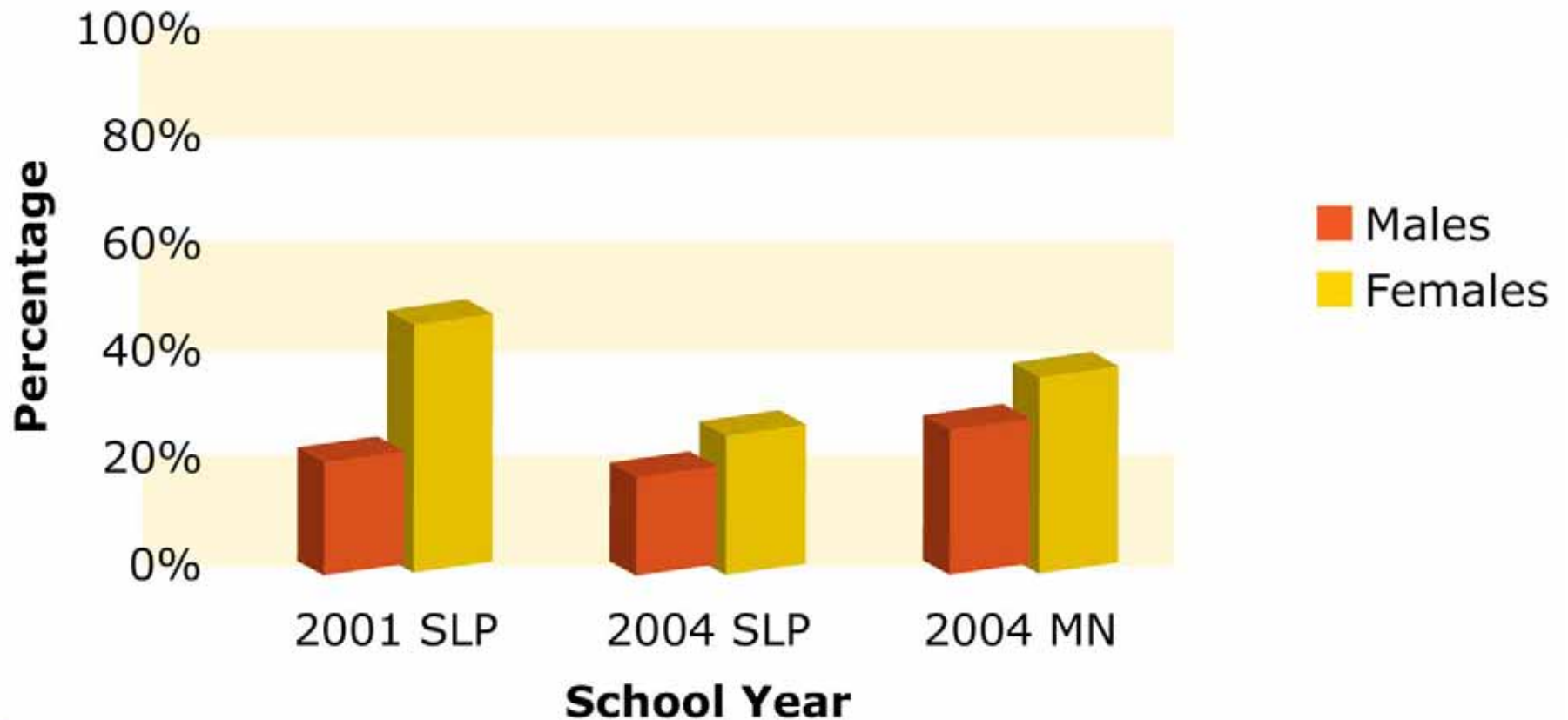
St. Louis Park: 12th Grade Students First Cohort of 9th Grade Program

Cigarette use in the last 30 days



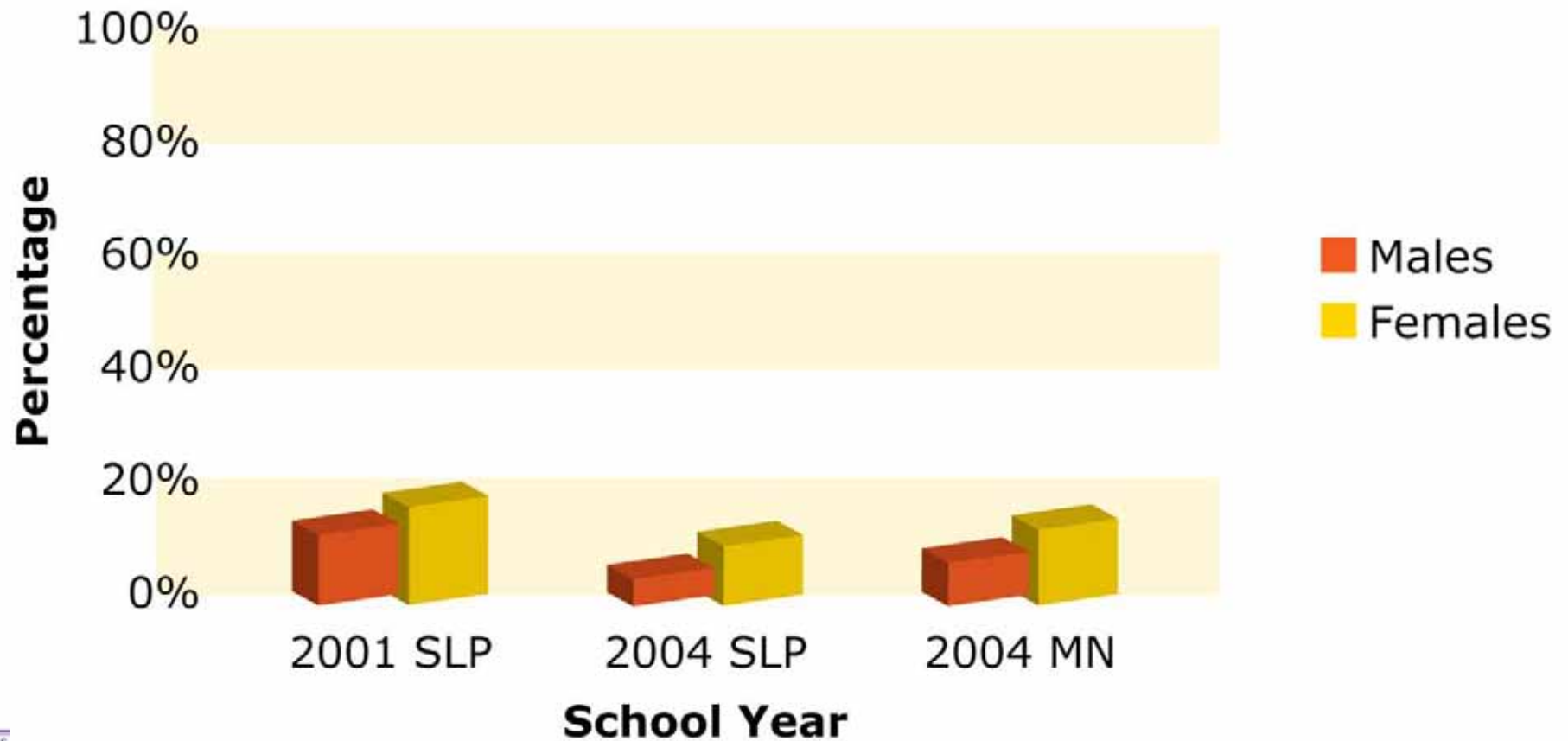
St. Louis Park: 12th Grade Students First Cohort of 9th Grade Program

Thoughts of suicide



St. Louis Park: 12th Grade Students First Cohort of 9th Grade Program

Attempted suicide



“We learned that a dedicated team of support staff, working with a dedicated teaching staff, can accomplish great things with large numbers of students. As a school, the 9th grade has a big impact on the rest of the building, and if they are supported in their transition, they can become better students as they move on to their senior year.

Staff

St. Louis Park High School

“I’ve been at this school a long time, and we’ve struggled with these issues for what seems like forever. We’ve had task forces and all kinds of things. We never had anything that worked until now. So all I can say is, Damn! This thing works. It really works.”

Administrator
St. Louis Park High School

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- And much more!

Thank You!

