

West Hartford Public School District

Agenda Item: Promoting A Positive School Culture
Meeting Date: February 2, 2010
From: Timothy Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Administration
Through: Karen L. List, Superintendent of Schools

Background:

At the December 1, 2009, Board of Education meeting, a report on the District Improvement Plan was presented. Progress on Board Goals was also addressed. Board Goals dealing with Safe Schools will be discussed at the Board meeting on February 2, 2010. A review of school system efforts to promote a positive school culture and reduce bullying will be presented.

Tim Dunn, Rosemarie Bonner, Michael Renkawitz, Karen Kukish, and Roszena Haskins will present.

**Agenda Item:
V.B.1.**

Board Goal: Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved.

Evidence of Success:

The surveys administered were developed by The National Study for School Evaluation (NSSE) and provided a consistent set of questions that can be evaluated both longitudinally and against a representative sample of other schools across the nation. Please see Appendix 1 for a list of the parent opinion survey questions.

In 2008-09 the following schools were surveyed:

Braeburn, Charter Oak, Morley and the two high schools.

The chart on the next page presents the survey results with respect to this objective. There are a series of affirmative statements on the NSSE survey relating to school climate and the environment for learning. These statements cover such issues as the treatment of students, application of school rules, substance abuse, security measures and bullying. The percentage of the parents who strongly agree or disagree with the affirmative statements was averaged for this section and is reported in the chart below. The appendix to this report contains the list of all questions in the survey and which of those questions are used in this report.

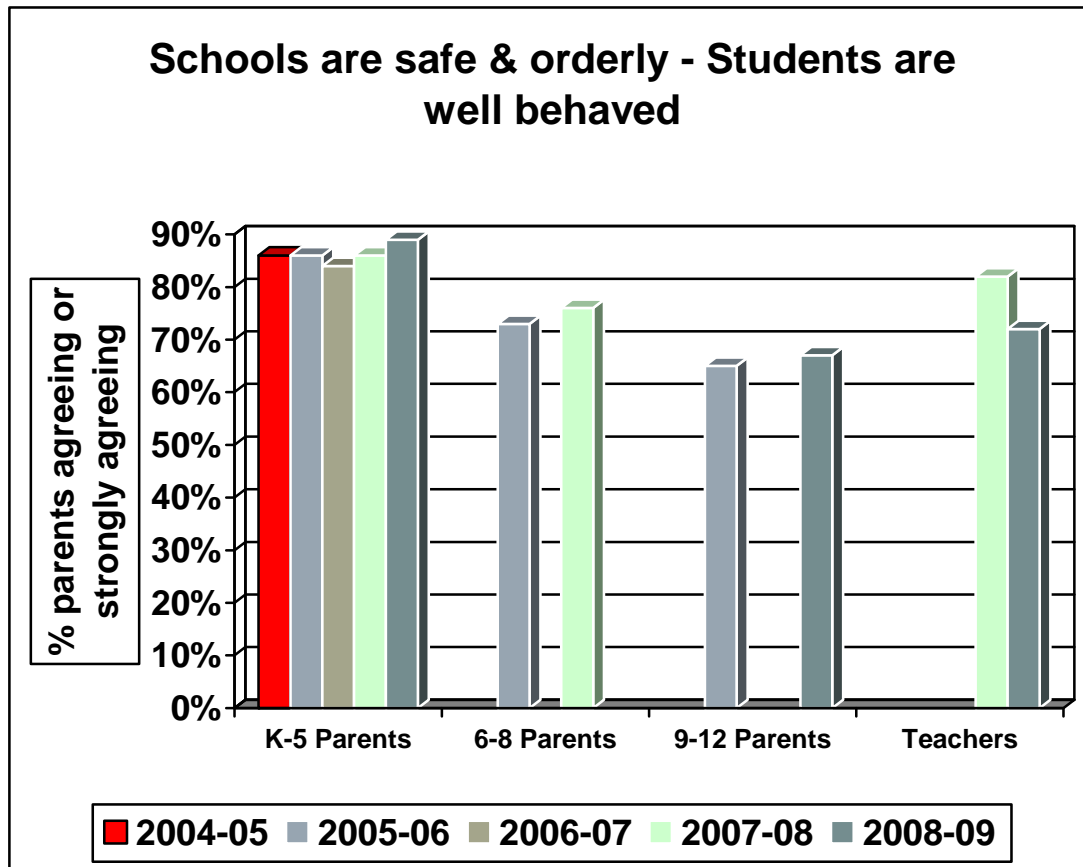
In 2008-09, 89% of elementary parents and 67% of high school parents surveyed marked strongly agree or agree to the affirmative statements in this section of the survey. In 2008-09, 89% of elementary teachers and 54% of high school teachers marked strongly agree or agree to the affirmative statements in this section of the survey (they had a slightly different survey). The tables below summarize the results by question.

As in prior years, the most significant area of concern relates to the statement: “There are no problems with bullies at our school” – with about 50% of elementary teachers and parents agreeing with the statement. Another 25% to 30% are neutral and 20% disagree with that statement. That is an improvement from last year’s results when only about 35% of elementary teachers and parents agreed with the statement.

At the high school level, the most significant areas of concern relate to bullying and substance abuse. Only 32% of high school parents and 8% of high school teachers agreed with the statement “There are no problems with bullies at our school.” Similarly only 24% of high school parents and 8% of high school teachers agreed with the statement “Substance abuse is not a problem at our school.”

Board Goal: Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved.



Board Goal: Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved.

**Parent Opinion Survey Results -
School Climate/Environment for Learning**

Elementary Parents

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
29	Teachers at our school treat my child fairly	97% (85%)	3% (10%)	0% (5%)
31	All students and staff at our school are treated with respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender	95% (83%)	43% (9%)	1% (8%)
32	Adequate security measures are in place at our school	94% (76%)	5% (16%)	1% (7%)
33	Cheating is strongly discouraged at our school	91% (86%)	8% (12%)	1% (2%)
34	School rules apply equally to all students	92% (77%)	6% (13%)	2% (10%)
35	Substance abuse (e.g. drug/alcohol) is NOT a problem at our school	92% (71%)	6% (12%)	2% (16%)
36	Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning	97% (89%)	3% (8%)	1% (3%)
37	Safety measures are in place to protect students traveling to and from school	89% (76%)	7% (14%)	4% (10%)
38	There are no problems with bullies at our school	54% (50%)	26% (22%)	20% (28%)
Average Agreeing		89%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		96%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 45,000 parents surveyed nationwide in 2005-06

Board Goal: Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved.

**Parent Opinion Survey Results -
School Climate/Environment for Learning**

High School Parents

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
29	Teachers at our school treat my child fairly	85% (85%)	12% (10%)	4% (5%)
31	All students and staff at our school are treated with respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender	87% (83%)	9% (9%)	4% (8%)
32	Adequate security measures are in place at our school	84% (76%)	15% (16%)	1% (7%)
33	Cheating is strongly discouraged at our school	82% (86%)	11% (12%)	7% (2%)
34	School rules apply equally to all students	74% (77%)	15% (13%)	11% (10%)
35	Substance abuse (e.g. drug/alcohol) is NOT a problem at our school	24% (71%)	24% (12%)	51% (16%)
36	Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning	81% (89%)	14% (8%)	5% (3%)
37	Safety measures are in place to protect students traveling to and from school	57% (76%)	30% (14%)	13% (10%)
38	There are no problems with bullies at our school	32% (50%)	35% (22%)	33% (28%)
Average Agreeing		67%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		86%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 45,000 parents surveyed nationwide in 2005-06

Board Goal: Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved.

**Teacher Opinion Survey Results -
School Climate/Environment for Learning**

Elementary Teachers

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
32	All students and staff at our school are treated with respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender	90% (83%)	9% (8%)	1% (9%)
33	Students are respectful of school and community property	90% (59%)	6% (17%)	4% (14%)
34	Cheating is strongly discouraged at our school	96% (88%)	4% (7%)	0% (5%)
35	Adequate security measures are in place at our school	96% (74%)	3% (13%)	1% (13%)
36	School rules apply equally to all students	90% (71%)	6% (12%)	4% (17%)
37	Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning	98% (85%)	0% (8%)	2% (7%)
38	Substance Abuse (e.g. drug/alcohol) is not a problem at our school	98% (57%)	2% (16%)	0% (27%)
39	There are no problems with bullies at our school	53% (36%)	27% (23%)	20% (41%)
40	School discipline is appropriately maintained at our school	91% (68%)	4% (15%)	6% (17%)
Average Agreeing		89%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		96%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 27,000 teachers surveyed nationwide in 2006-07. Includes all teachers – not just elementary teachers

Board Goal: Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved.

High School Teachers

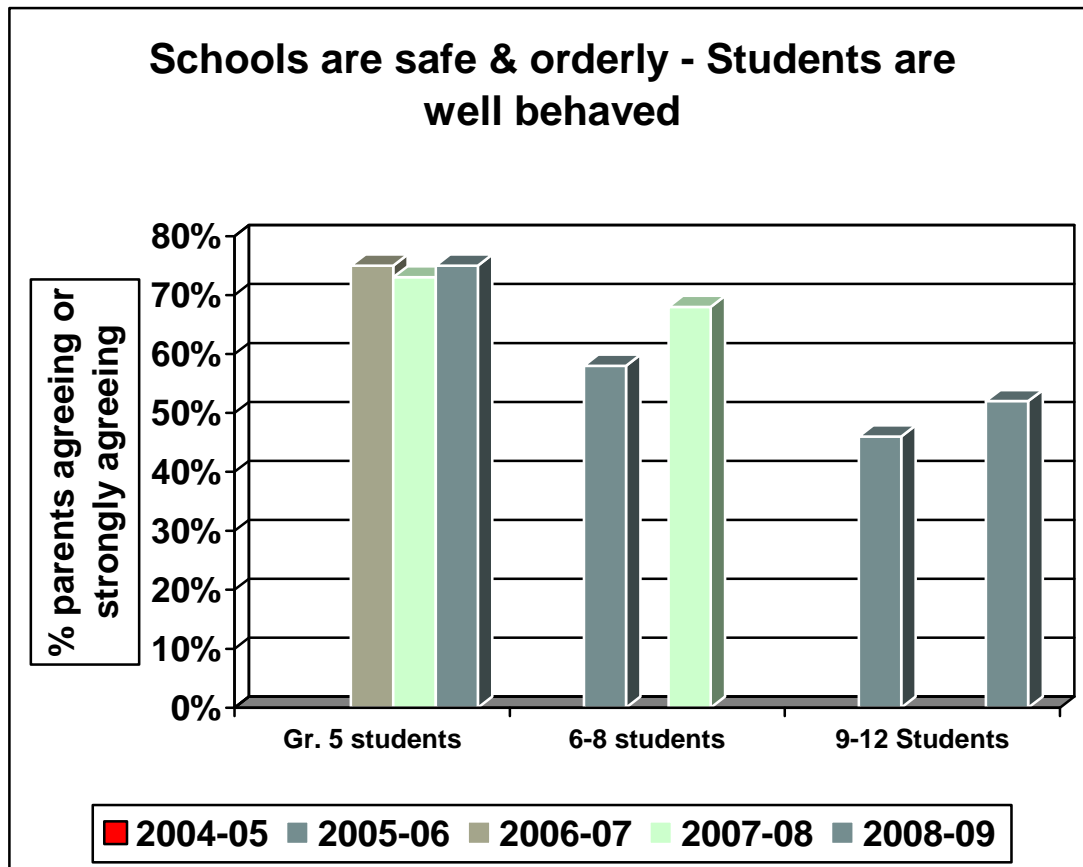
Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
32	All students and staff at our school are treated with respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender	77% (83%)	12% (8%)	11% (9%)
33	Students are respectful of school and community property	46% (59%)	21% (17%)	32% (14%)
34	Cheating is strongly discouraged at our school	72% (88%)	13% (7%)	15% (5%)
35	Adequate security measures are in place at our school	78% (74%)	11% (13%)	11% (13%)
36	School rules apply equally to all students	60% (71%)	12% (12%)	28% (17%)
37	Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning	83% (85%)	11% (8%)	6% (7%)
38	Substance Abuse (e.g. drug/alcohol) is not a problem at our school	8% (57%)	23% (16%)	69% (27%)
39	There are no problems with bullies at our school	8% (36%)	22% (23%)	70% (41%)
40	School discipline is appropriately maintained at our school	58% (68%)	18% (15%)	24% (17%)
Average Agreeing		54%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		70%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 27,000 teachers surveyed nationwide in 2006-07. Includes all teachers – not just high school teachers

Board Goal - Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

The percentage of students in grades 5 –12 responding to a survey indicating that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved will increase by 5% per year

The chart below plots the progress of the student opinions. The detailed results for the 2007-08 surveys are on the next two pages. The perceptions of 5th graders were up slightly from last year and the perceptions of high school students were up substantially from two years ago.



Board Goal - Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

The percentage of students in grades 5 –12 responding to a survey indicating that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved will increase by 5% per year

**Student Opinion Survey Results -
School Climate/Environment for Learning**

Elementary School Students

Question	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
11	My school does not allow cheating	91% <i>(91%)</i>	8% <i>(5%)</i>	1% <i>(4%)</i>
12	I am treated fairly by my teachers	75% <i>(78%)</i>	21% <i>(14%)</i>	4% <i>(7%)</i>
13	The principal and teachers at my school care about the students	90% <i>(89%)</i>	8% <i>(9%)</i>	1% <i>(2%)</i>
14	I am happy with my school	75% <i>(77%)</i>	18% <i>(16%)</i>	7% <i>(8%)</i>
15	There are no problems with bullies at our school	45% <i>(38%)</i>	30% <i>(28%)</i>	27% <i>(35%)</i>
Average Agreeing		75%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		92%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 23,000 elementary students surveyed nationwide in 2005-06

Board Goal - Safe Schools – Ensure a safe and orderly environment that promotes learning and respect.

The percentage of students in grades 5 –12 responding to a survey indicating that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved will increase by 5% per year

High School Students

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
23	My teachers treat me fairly	62% (64%)	24% (22%)	14% (14%)
24	Staff in our school display a caring attitude toward students	51% (57%)	33% (27%)	16% (16%)
25	All students and staff at our school are treated with respect regardless of race, religion or gender	54% (69%)	26% (21%)	20% (10%)
26	Cheating is strongly discouraged at our school	78% (77%)	15% (14%)	8% (9%)
27	School rules apply equally to all students	53% (59%)	21% (18%)	26% (23%)
28	Substance abuse (e.g. drug/alcohol) is not a problem at our school	21% (44%)	25% (21%)	54% (35%)
29	Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning	63% (68%)	27% (21%)	9% (11%)
30	Security measures at my school help me feel safe	54% (57%)	32% (25%)	14% (18%)
31	There are no problems with bullies at our school	32% (41%)	30% (24%)	38% (35%)
Average Agreeing		52%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		78%		

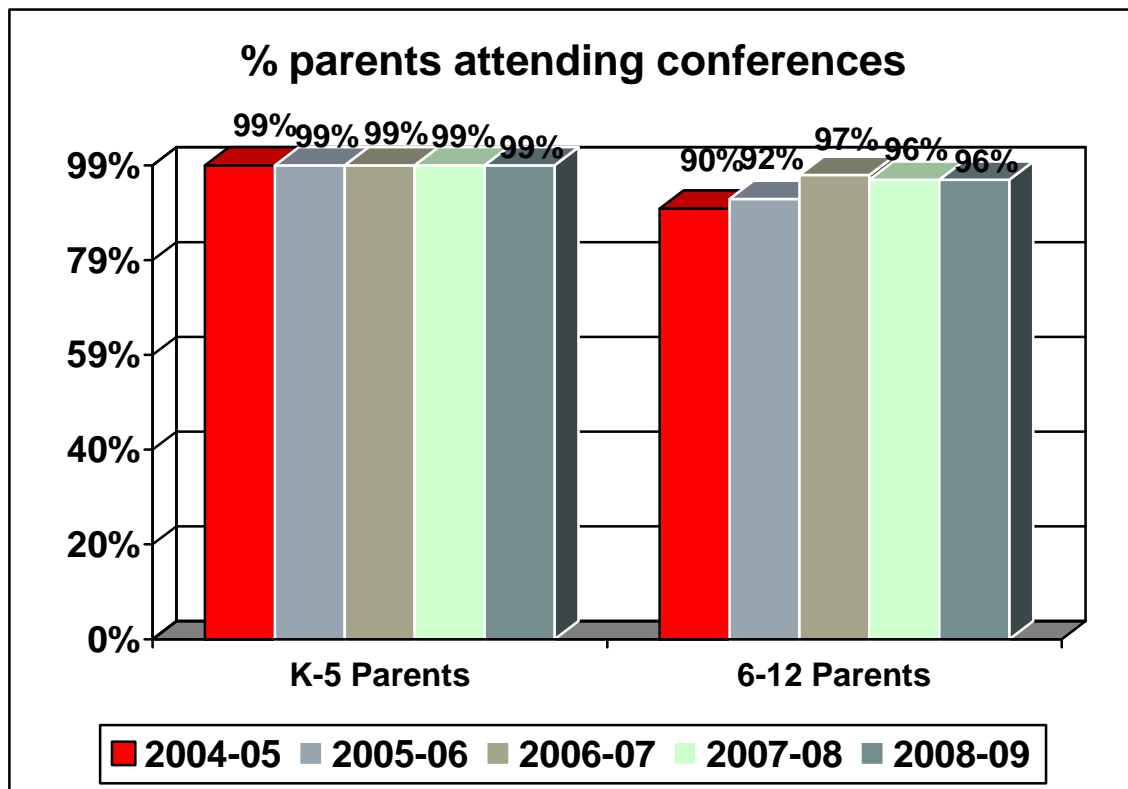
Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 101,000 secondary school students surveyed nationwide in 2006-07

Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

95% of all parents of K-5 students and 95% of parents of students with academic difficulties in grades 6-12 will participate in parent conferencing.

Evidence of Success:

For purposes of this objective a parent conference is defined as a face-to-face meeting, a phone conference, or an extended e-mail exchange. The compilation of the data indicates that 99% of K-5 parents participated in parent conferences – mostly of the face-to-face variety. At the secondary level, 96% of the parents of students in academic difficulty participated in parent conferences.

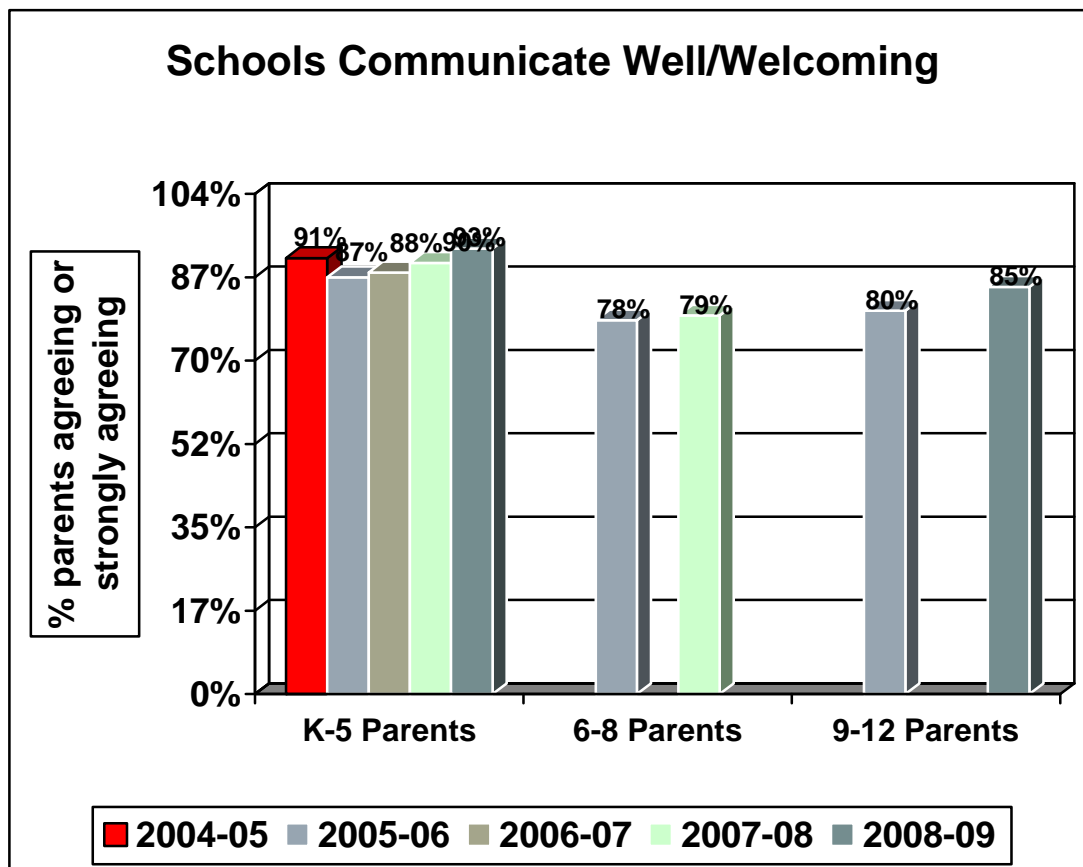


Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively, are welcoming, and adequately address the learning needs of their children.

Evidence of Success:

The figures reported in this chart below are an average of a number of affirmative statements about parent/school relations on NSSE survey. Parents agreeing or strongly agreeing to these statements indicate that the school is communicating well and welcoming. 93% of K-5 parents and 85% of high school parents felt the school was communicating well and welcoming



Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively, are welcoming, and adequately address the learning needs of their children.

Parent Opinion Survey Results - School Parent Relations

Elementary Parents

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
40	Parent opinions are considered when important school decisions are made	87% (68%)	9% (21%)	4% (11%)
41	I am satisfied with the quality of our school's students activities	91% (81%)	7% (12%)	2% (6%)
42	School rules are clearly communicated to parents	96% (90%)	3% (7%)	1% (3%)
43	Our school provides sufficient opportunities for parent involvement	96% (86%)	3% (9%)	1% (5%)
44	Our school uses technology to provide parents with information about our school	93% (82%)	4% (12%)	3% (6%)
45	Parents feel welcome at our school	94% (88%)	5% (8%)	2% (4%)
Average Agreeing		93%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		98%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 45,000 parents surveyed nationwide in 2005-06

Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively, are welcoming, and adequately address the learning needs of their children.

Parent Opinion Survey Results - School Parent Relations

High School Parents

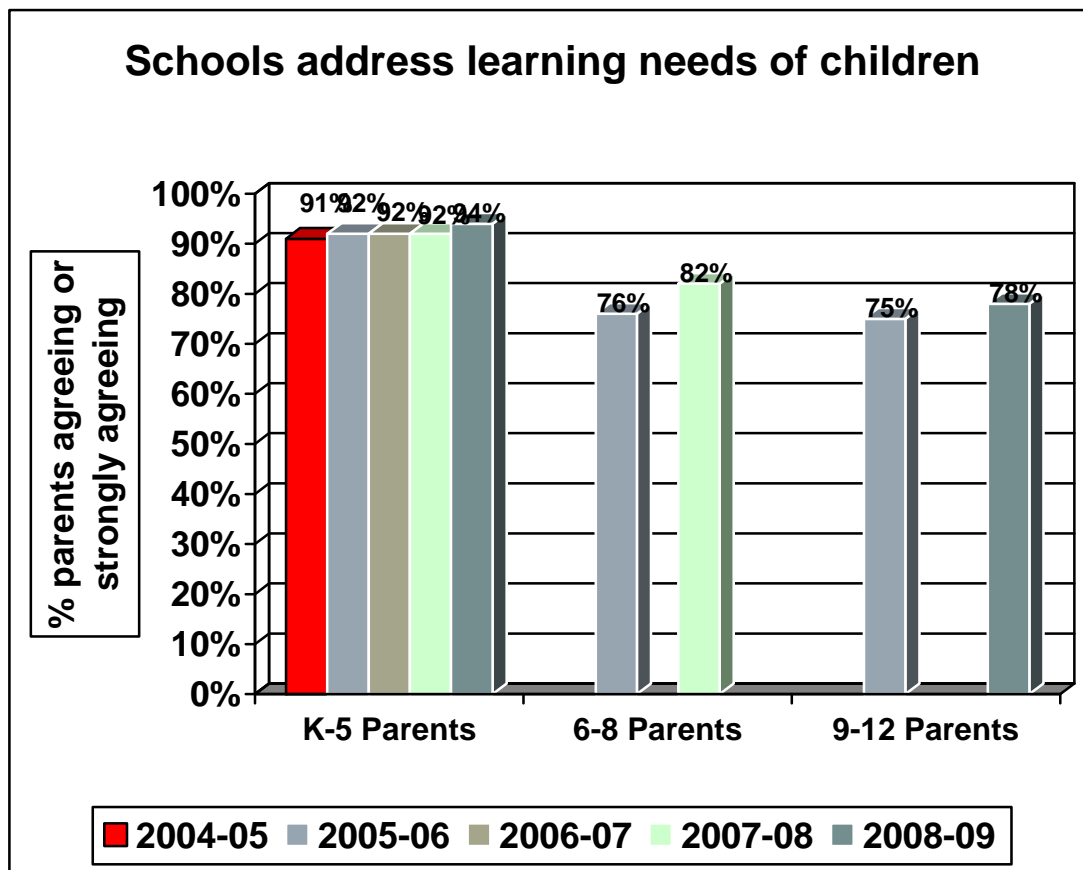
Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
40	Parent opinions are considered when important school decisions are made	78% (68%)	15% (21%)	7% (11%)
41	I am satisfied with the quality of our school's students activities	85% (81%)	12% (12%)	4% (6%)
42	School rules are clearly communicated to parents	89% (90%)	6% (7%)	5% (3%)
43	Our school provides sufficient opportunities for parent involvement	84% (86%)	15% (9%)	1% (5%)
44	Our school uses technology to provide parents with information about our school	85% (82%)	9% (12%)	6% (6%)
45	Parents feel welcome at our school	87% (88%)	10% (8%)	4% (4%)
Average Agreeing		85%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		96%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 45,000 parents surveyed nationwide in 2005-06

Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively, are welcoming, and adequately address the learning needs of their children.

The figures reported in this chart below are an average of a number of affirmative statements about the quality of the instructional program and the ways that a teacher varies instruction and encourages students to do their best. Parents agreeing or strongly agreeing to these statements indicate that the school is addressing the learning needs of their children. 94% of K-5 parents and 78% of high school parents felt the school was addressing the learning needs of the children.



Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively, are welcoming, and adequately address the learning needs of their children.

Parent Opinion Survey Results - Quality of Instructional Program

Elementary Parents

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
1	The education offered to students at our school is of high quality	96% (88%)	4% (9%)	0% (3%)
13	Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students learn	96% (80%)	2% (13%)	2% (6%)
14	Teachers challenge my students to do his/her best work	93% (81%)	4% (11%)	3% (6%)
15	Teachers provide a reasonable and appropriate amount of homework to help students succeed in their studies	88% (78%)	6% (12%)	6% (10%)
16	Teachers hold high expectations for student learning	95% (84%)	4% (10%)	1% (5%)
Average Agreeing		94%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		97%		

Numbers in parentheses are the results from all 45,000 parents surveyed nationwide in 2005-06

Parent and Community Engagement – to promote the value of education in a welcoming school environment

90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively, are welcoming, and adequately address the learning needs of their children.

Parent Opinion Survey Results - Quality of Instructional Program

High School Parents

Question	Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
1	The education offered to students at our school is of high quality	87% (88%)	10% (9%)	4% (3%)
13	Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students learn	75% (80%)	21% (13%)	4% (6%)
14	Teachers challenge my students to do his/her best work	71% (81%)	20% (11%)	10% (6%)
15	Teachers provide a reasonable and appropriate amount of homework to help students succeed in their studies	76% (78%)	11% (12%)	13% (10%)
16	Teachers hold high expectations for student learning	80% (84%)	14% (10%)	6% (5%)
Average Agreeing		78%		
Average Agreeing or Neutral		93%		

Appendix 1 – Description of Parent Opinion Survey

These are the 50 affirmative statements in the NSSE Parent Opinion survey that parents are asked to respond on a 5 point Likert scale – Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

The table below shows which statements are used in calculating the results for the Board Goals

Board Goal	Questions Used
90% of parents and teachers responding to a survey will indicate that schools are safe and orderly and students are well behaved	29, 31-38
90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools communicate effectively and are welcoming.	40-45
90% of parents responding to a survey will indicate that schools adequately address the learning needs of their child(ren).	1, 13-16

Quality of Instructional Program:

1. The education offered to students at our school is of high quality.
2. Our school is doing a good job teaching language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening.)
3. Our school is doing a good job teaching mathematics.
4. Our school is doing a good job teaching science.
5. Our school is doing a good job teaching social studies.
6. Our school is doing a good job teaching fine arts (music, visual arts, dance, drama).
7. Our school is doing a good job teaching physical education.
8. Our school is doing a good job teaching health education.
9. Our school is doing a good job teaching foreign languages.
10. Our school is doing a good job teaching career/vocational courses.
11. Our school is preparing students to deal with issues and problems they will face in the future.
12. Students see a relationship between what they are studying and their everyday lives.
13. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities to help students learn.
14. Teachers challenge my student to do his/her best work.
15. Teachers provide a reasonable and appropriate amount of homework to help students succeed in their studies.
16. Teachers hold high expectations for student learning.

Support for Student Learning:

17. Teachers give students extra help in class when it is needed.
18. Teachers are willing to give students individual help outside of class time.
19. Our school offers learning opportunities that support the full range of student abilities.
20. Our school recognizes the achievements of students for all types of accomplishments.
21. The grading and evaluation of my child's schoolwork is fair.
22. Reports on my child's progress are clear and easy to understand.

Appendix 1 – Description of Parent Opinion Survey

23. A counselor/advisor is available to help my child select classes and provide guidance in planning for the future.
24. Effective procedures are in place to support my communication with teachers.
25. In our school, students have access to a variety of resources to help them succeed in their learning, such as technology, media centers, and libraries.
26. Our school's facilities are adequate to support students' learning needs.
27. Our school provides textbooks and supplies that are current and in good condition.
28. Up-to-date computers and other technologies are used in our school to help students learn.

School Climate/Environment for Learning:

29. Teachers at our school treat my child fairly.
30. Class sizes at our school are appropriate for effective learning.
31. All students and staff at our school are treated with respect, regardless of race, religion, or gender.
32. Adequate security measures are in place at our school.
33. Cheating is strongly discouraged at our school.
34. School rules apply equally to all students.
35. Substance abuse (e.g. drug/alcohol) is not a problem at our school.
36. Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning.
37. Safety measures are in place to protect students traveling to and from school.
38. There are no problems with bullies at our school.
39. For the most part, I am satisfied with our school.

Parent/School Relationships:

40. Parent opinions are considered when important school decisions are made.
41. I am satisfied with the quality of our school's student activities.
42. School rules are clearly communicated to parents.
43. Our school provides sufficient opportunities for parent involvement.
44. Our school uses technology to provide parents with important information about our school.
45. Parents feel welcome at our school.

Resource Management:

46. Our school makes effective use of the financial resources available.
47. The quality of schools influenced my decision to live in this community.
48. Our school and grounds are clean and well maintained.
49. Adequate time, space and facilities are provided for student activities (e.g., extracurricular, sports).
50. Our schools have a positive impact on the community's property values.