

Parent Surveys 2008

A report for Saint Paul Public Schools

In its *Strategic Plan for Continued Excellence (2006-2011)*, Saint Paul Public Schools re-commits to providing a premier education for all in the community. Their vision for the future imagines every student inspired, challenged, and cared for by exceptional educators; families welcomed, respected, and valued by exceptional schools; and the community united, strengthened, and prepared for an exceptional future.

The school district contracted with Wilder Research to conduct a study to examine three of the 10 outcomes being used to measure these goals. The outcomes being examined with this study include:

- Improve school and classroom management
- Build strong partnerships
- Create safe, welcoming, and respectful environments

This report provides the baseline data from parent surveys that were conducted in summer 2008. Wilder Research will conduct annual parent surveys for the next four years to examine any changes that are observed compared with this baseline data.

Methods

Students from all schools within the district were randomly selected for this survey, in order to ensure representativeness of the data at the district level. Parents of selected students were asked to complete the survey in English, Hmong, Somali, or Spanish.

Overall, 642 surveys were completed by elementary school parents and 605 surveys were completed by secondary school parents. The final response rate for

this survey was 47 percent. The sampling error for this survey is 2.7 percent or less. The group of parents who were surveyed is representative of the entire district in terms of race/ ethnicity, income, and geographic location.

Key findings

Overall, this survey found:

- A high degree of satisfaction among parents with Saint Paul Public Schools
- A generally positive experience with the school environment and school staff
- Preference for mode of communication varied by race/ethnicity and English Language Learner status

Most parents:

- Feel they are contacted right away when their child has a problem
- Know how to help their child be successful in school
- Do things to ensure their child's success such as reading with their child, checking up on their child's homework, and talking with their child about the importance of doing well in school
- Never had to visit their child's school for a disciplinary reason

A small number of parents:

- Feel strongly that their children are not safe, mainly on the school bus and related to issues of bullying from other students
- Chose the parent portal as their preferred mode of communication with their child's school

continued

Some notable differences

In every instance where differences between groups are 10 percent or greater, these results are reported.

Differences by race/ethnicity:

- Parents of Asian American, African American, and Hispanic students were more likely than parents of Caucasian or American Indian parents to report visiting their child's school once a month or more often for behavior-related problems (16%, 15%, and 9% vs. 2% and 0%, respectively) – alternately, parents of Asian American students were less likely than parents of other racial/ethnic groups to report having never visited their child's school for a non-disciplinary reasons
- 74% of African American parents, 68% of Hispanic American parents, 50% of Caucasian and American Indian parents, and 46% of Asian American parents reported talking to their child daily about the importance of doing well in school
- Parents of Caucasian students were more likely than parents of students of other races/ethnicities to agree that they have a positive relationship with at least one staff member of their child's school and that they have a positive relationship with other parents at their child's school
- African American parents were slightly less likely to agree that overall their child is getting a good education compared with parents from other racial/ethnic groups (84% vs. 91-96%)

Differences by income (lower income = child receives free or reduced price school lunch):

- Lower income parents were more likely than higher income parents to have visited their child's school for behavior-related reasons, and less likely to have visited for non-disciplinary reasons
- 16% of lower income parents vs. 6% of higher income parents reported receiving information about their child from the school nearly every day
- 40% of lower income parents vs. 20% of higher income parents agreed that they have to struggle to get their child's school to provide needed services
- Higher income parents were more likely than lower income parents to agree that they have a positive relationship with at least one other parent from their child's school

Differences by ELL status:

- Parents of ELL students were more likely than parents of non-ELL students to have visited their child's school for behavior-related reasons, and less likely to have visited for non-disciplinary reasons
- 90% of parents of ELL students vs. 80% of parents of non-ELL students reported that their child's school contacts them right away if there is a problem
- In terms of preference for mode of communication with the school, parents of ELL students prefer letters and notes, in-person meetings or conferences, and phone calls from teachers and other school staff, whereas parents of non-ELL students preferred email
- 48% of parents of ELL students agreed that they have to struggle to get their child's school to provide needed services, compared with only 23% of parents of non-ELL students
- 51% of parents of non-ELL students vs. 29% of parents of ELL students felt that their child's school had given them information about how to help their child go to college or other postsecondary
- Parents of non-ELL students were more likely than parents of ELL students to agree that they have a positive relationship with at least one staff member of their child's school and that they have a positive relationship with other parents at their child's school

PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

■ Elementary
■ Secondary

OVERALL SATISFACTION

My child receives a high-quality education at school.



BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

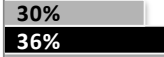
If my child has problems at school, a teacher or school staff member contacts me right away.



When I discuss concerns about my child with school staff, I am satisfied with how they respond.



I have to struggle to get my child's school to provide services that my child needs.



CREATE SAFE, WELCOMING, AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS

My child is safe at school.



I feel welcome in my child's school.



School staff understand and respect the values and traditions that are important to my family.



I have a positive relationship with at least one staff member at my child's school.



I have a positive relationship with at least one other parent/guardian who has a child at the same school.



POSTSECONDARY

I want my child to go to college or other schooling after high school (such as vocational or technical training).



I believe my child will continue his/her education after high school.



My child's school has given me information on how I can help my child go to college or other schooling after high school (such as vocational or technical training).



School staff believe my child will continue his/her education after high school.



LEARNING AT HOME

My child's school has given me information on how I can help my child learn outside of school (at home, after school, and in the summer).



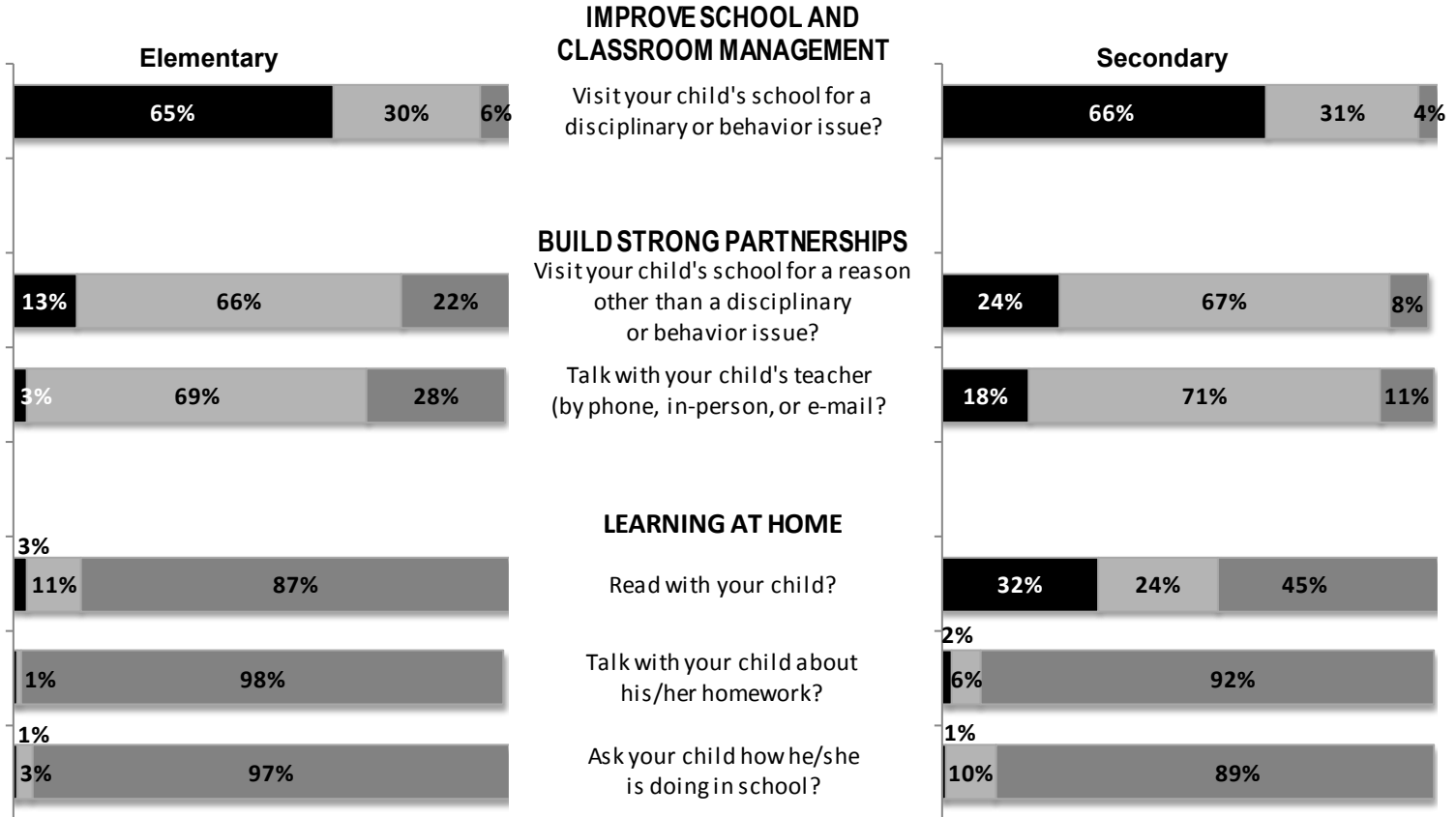
COMMUNICATIONS

The information that I receive from school about my child (such as grades and other progress reports) is clear and easy to understand.



DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR (2007-08), HOW OFTEN DID YOU...

■ Never ■ Twice per month or less often ■ Once a week or more often



Wilder Research

www.wilderresearch.org

451 Lexington Parkway North
 Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
 651-280-2700; FAX 651-280-3700



For more information

This summary presents highlights of the *Parent Surveys 2008 – A baseline study for Saint Paul Public Schools*. For more information about this report, contact Nicole MartinRogers at Wilder Research, 651-280-2682.

Author: Nicole MartinRogers

OCTOBER 2008