

Foster School Report



Boston University School of Education

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Introduction

This report describes findings from the Systems of Supports Survey completed by students in grades 4 to 12, teachers, and parents in Hingham Public Schools. This survey was administered by researchers at Boston University at the request of the district leadership team. The goal of this survey is to better understand the social and emotional strengths and challenges of students from the perspective of parents, teachers, and students themselves. Survey results are designed to provide schools and the district with information about the needs of students, types of support services provided, and any gaps in support services. These results will be used by the district to improve support services. All surveys were completed anonymously (without names or identifying information); therefore surveys do not identify individual students in need of supports. Results are designed to inform the planning and provision of school-wide support services and activities and to determine the professional development needs of teachers.

Students in grades 4 through 12 completed the survey during the school day using a web-based survey software program. All surveys were completed anonymously and students were told that they could skip or leave blank any questions that they preferred not to answer. Students who indicated that they were currently experiencing social or emotional problems were asked a series of follow-up questions about how those problems impacted them. Students who did not indicate that they had current social or emotional problems were skipped-out of follow-up questions. All students were directed to respond to a series of questions about school climate, social and emotional strengths and challenges, and help-seeking.

Parents (including Caregivers) were invited to complete a complementary web-based survey, which included questions about their child's social and emotional well-being, support services accessed, and their satisfaction with support services in the school.

Teachers were invited to complete a web-based survey, which asked them to indicate social and emotional problems they observed among their class of students. The teacher survey additionally asked teachers to indicate how they support students. This survey was designed to provide information to inform professional development activities for teachers. These results are not included in the current report, but are provided to the district for planning purposes.

Executive Summary

Rates of Social and Emotional Problems in Foster School (page 8)

- Overall, **13.7%** of Foster students reported having social/emotional problems in the last 6 months (**7.6%** had slightly raised scores, **0.8%** had high scores, and **5.3%** had very high scores)
- **16.6%** of Foster students reported having emotional problems in the past 6 months (**4.3%** had slightly raised scores, **5.8%** had high scores, and **6.5%** had very high scores)
- **7.3%** of Foster students reported having conduct problems in the past 6 months (**3.7%** had slightly raised scores, **2.9%** had high scores, and **0.7%** had very high scores)
- **15.1%** of Foster students reported having problems with attention/hyperactivity in the past 6 months (**9.0%** had slightly raised scores, **0.8%** had high scores, and **5.3%** had very high scores)
- **22.4%** of Foster students reported having peer problems in the past 6 months (**10.9%** had slightly raised scores, **7.2%** had high scores, and **4.3%** had very high scores)

Group Differences in Social and Emotional Problems (page 8)

Social and emotional problems are reported most frequently by:

- Males (**7.6%**)
- Students in grade 4 (**6.8%**)

Challenges for Students with Social and Emotional Problems (page 13)

Students with social and emotional problems indicated challenges in school:

- Students with emotional problems reported trouble with reading (**25%**)
- Students with hyperactivity and conduct problems reported trouble with math (**40.0%** and **42.9%**)
- Students with emotional and peer problems more often missed a day of school (**93.8%**)
- Students with conduct and hyperactivity problems were more often sent to the principal (**40%** and **12.5%**)

Student Connections with Other at School (page 14)

Students report that when they are upset or having a hard time at school they talk to...

- Parents (**64.5%**)
- Friends at school (**30.7%**)
- Another family member (**23.7%**)
- Teachers (**23.0%**)
- Most students (**66.7%**) said there is at least one teacher or other adult at school they can talk to if they have a problem

Student Use of Social and Emotional Support and Services (page 15)

Students were asked about their use of mental health services:

- **20.0%** of students said that they talked to a counselor, doctor, or therapist about an emotional problem or problems with attention, social problems, or behavior in the past year
- **66.7%** of students with significant social/emotional problems reported they were currently receiving mental health services

Survey Participants

Description of Participants

- 138 students completed the survey (87.9% Response Rate)
- 123 parents/caregivers completed the survey (27.6% Response Rate)

Participants by Grade

Grade*	Students	Parents/Caregivers
Kindergarten	-	18
1 st Grade	-	16
2 nd Grade	-	18
3 rd Grade	-	20
4 th Grade	78	33
5 th Grade	59	14

*One student did not indicate grade level, four parents indicated other grade levels

Participants by Child's Gender

Gender	Students	Parents/Caregivers
Male	69	66
Female	65	57
Other	2	0

Parent's Relationship to Child

Relationship	Parents/Caregivers
Mother	106
Father	16
Step-Mother	1

Child's Race/Ethnicity According to Parent

(note: parents could select multiple race/ethnicity categories)

Race/Ethnicity	Parent Report
Asian/Asian-American	3
Black/African-American	5
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Pacific Islander	2
White or Caucasian	109
Multi-Ethnic	7
Other	1
Not Applicable, Not Sure, or Decline to Answer	4

Description of Surveys Administered

Social and emotional well-being is conceptualized as a core component of student functioning and success at school. Students with social and emotional problems are at increased risk for struggling with the academic demands of school as well as having difficulty developing and maintaining positive relationships with peers and teachers. However, with effective supports, students with social and emotional problems can be quite successful and have very positive school experiences.

Studies of children and adolescents across the U.S. find that approximately 40% have experienced an emotional or behavioral problem within the past year and that these problems increase in adolescence.¹ The most common of these problems is anxiety. About 8% of children and adolescents experience severe emotional or behavioral problems that substantially interfere with their daily functioning.² Studies of the general U.S. population find that only about one-third of children and adolescents with an emotional or behavioral problem receive counseling supports or services.³

Ultimately, the goal for children is not only to reduce the likelihood that they will experience social and emotional problems, but also to build on their ability to positively connect with the world around them. The assessments included in the current survey were designed to evaluate both student challenges and student strengths.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)⁴

Students and parents completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a brief, well-validated measure of child social and emotional functioning (for more information, please see www.sdqinfo.org). The SDQ measures problems in 5 areas: Emotional Problems, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity Problems, Peer Problems, and Prosocial Behavior. Scores on each of these scales above a cut-off indicate the likely presence of a social or emotional problem. Students completed the SDQ for themselves and parents completed the SDQ for their children.

The SDQ assesses the following social and emotional strengths and challenges:

- **Total problems** refer to students who indicated high scores on questions across multiple subcategories.
- Feelings of anxiety, depression, and anger; physiological manifestations of these feelings (**Emotional Symptoms**)
- Behaviors associated with acting out, lying, cheating, and stealing (**Conduct Problems**)
- Behaviors related to restlessness, attention, planning, and judgment (**Hyperactivity/Inattention**)
- Social isolation, bullying, relationships with peers and adults (**Peer Relationship Problems**)

¹ Kessler, R. C., Avenevoli, S., Costello, E. J., Georgiades, K., Green, J. G., Gruber, M. J., ... & Sampson, N. A. (2012). Prevalence, persistence, and sociodemographic correlates of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication Adolescent Supplement. *Archives of general psychiatry*, 69(4), 372-380.

² Kessler, R. C., Avenevoli, S., Costello, J., Green, J. G., Gruber, M. J., McLaughlin, K. A., ... & Merikangas, K. R. (2012). Severity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the national comorbidity survey replication adolescent supplement. *Archives of general psychiatry*, 69(4), 381-389.

³ Merikangas, K. R., He, J. P., Burstein, M., Swendsen, J., Avenevoli, S., Case, B., ... & Olfson, M. (2011). Service utilization for lifetime mental disorders in US adolescents: Results of the National Comorbidity Survey-Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A). *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 50(1), 32-45.

⁴ Goodman, R. (1997) The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: A Research Note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38(5), 581-586.

- Trouble with empathy, sharing and helping behaviors (**Prosocial Behavior Problems**) – not included in current report

Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS) ⁵

The Social Emotional Health Survey (SEHS) assesses psychological well-being using measures of gratitude, optimism, zest, persistence, and prosocial behaviors. The SEHS has been validated as a predictor of subjective well-being, academic achievement, and emotional wellbeing among adolescents.

Student Experience Survey⁶

Students completed a brief measure indicating their perceptions of teachers' care and support for their personal development and well-being beyond the classroom.

Cognitive Functioning

Cognitive functioning is defined as perceptions of cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, concentration, processing speed and organization skill (NINDS, 2015)⁷. In this study, cognitive function was tested with 8-items from the NIH toolbox. High scores indicate better self-reported cognitive functioning.

Additional Measures

Students and parents completed additional measures of school functioning, use of supports and services, and help-seeking from adults and peers at school. These measures are described in more detail on the following pages.

⁵ Furlong, M.J., You, S., Renshaw, T.L., Smith, D.C., & O'Malley, M.D. (2014). Preliminary development and validation of the Social and Emotional Health Survey for secondary school students. *Social Indicators Research, 117*, 1011-1032.

Furlong, M.J., You, S., Renshaw, T.L., O'Malley, M.D., & Rebelez, J. (2013). Preliminary development of the Positive Experiences at School Scale for elementary children. *Child Indicators Research, 6*, 753-775.

⁶ Gehlbach, H., Brinkworth, M. E., & Harris, A. (2011). Social motivation in the secondary classroom: Assessing teacher-student relationships from both perspectives. *Online Submission*.

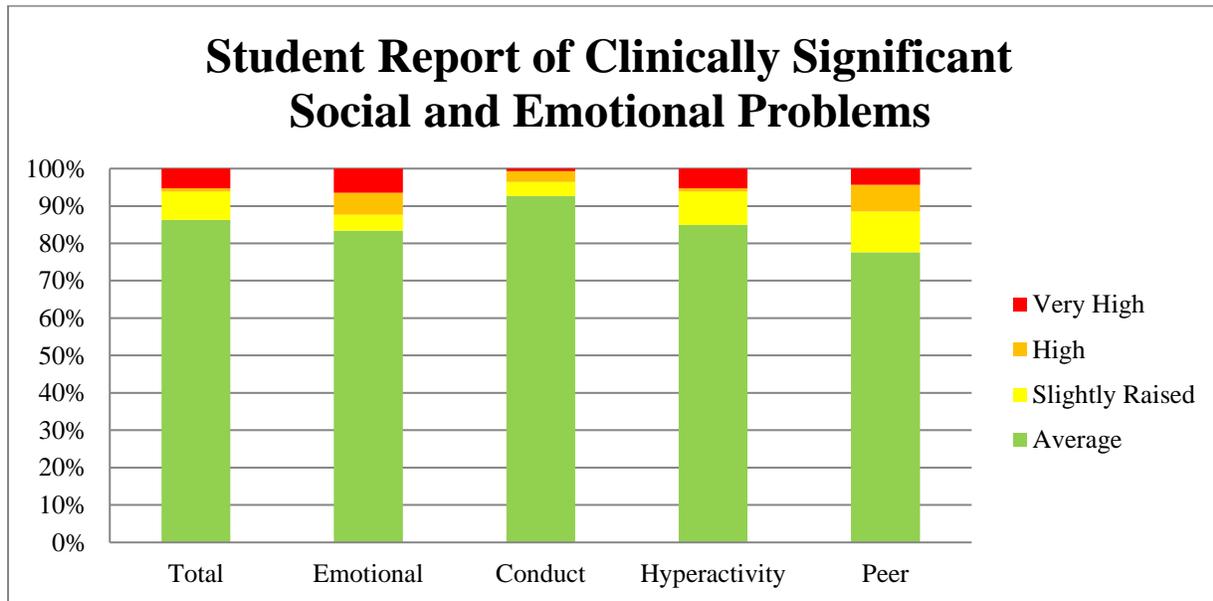
⁷ National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). *User Manual for the Quality of Life in Neurological Disorders (Neuro-QoL) Measures, Version 2.0, March 2015*. Retrieved from:

http://www.healthmeasures.net/images/neuro_qol/Neuro-QoL_User_Manual_v2_24Mar2015.pdf

STUDENT RESULTS

What social and emotional problems are most common among students?

The most common social and emotional problems students reported were peer problems and emotional problems.

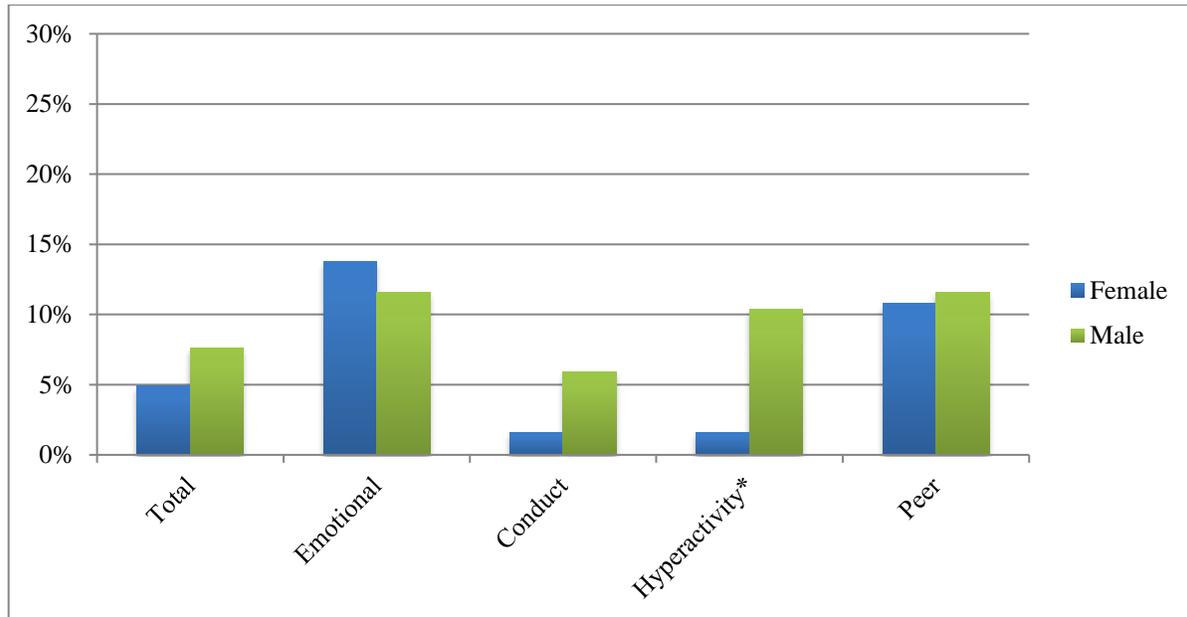


Do social and emotional problems differ across grades and gender?

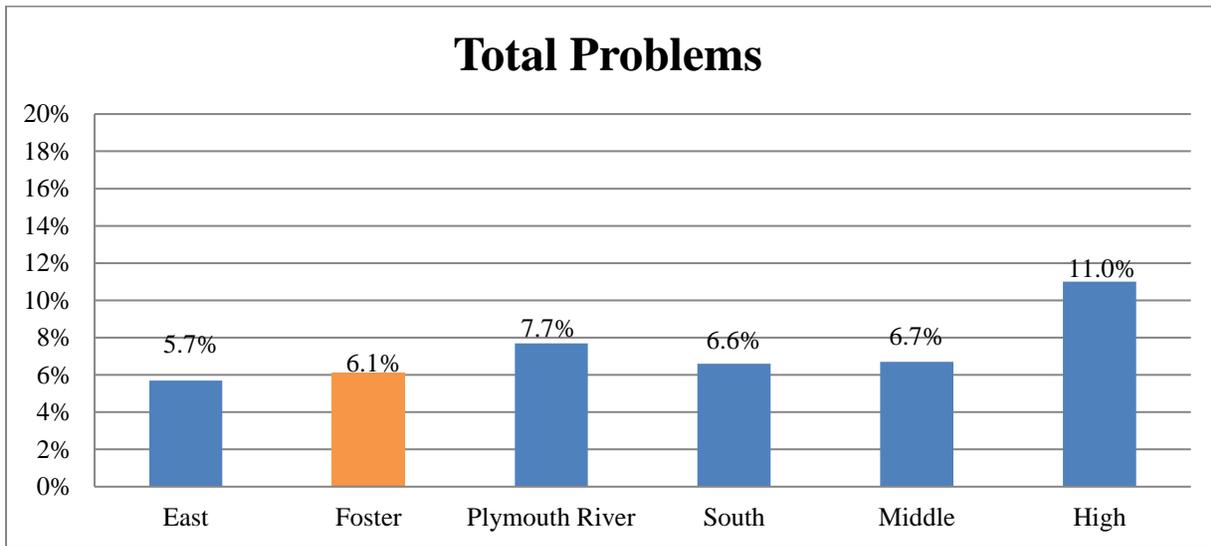
Social and emotional problems reported by students show differences by grade. Both fourth and fifth graders most often reported emotional and peer problems.

	4 th (n=78)	5 th (n=59)
SDQ Total	6.8%	5.4%
SDQ Emotional	14.1%	10.2%
SDQ Conduct	2.6%	5.1%
SDQ Hyperactivity	3.9%	8.9%
SDQ Peer	11.5%	10.2%

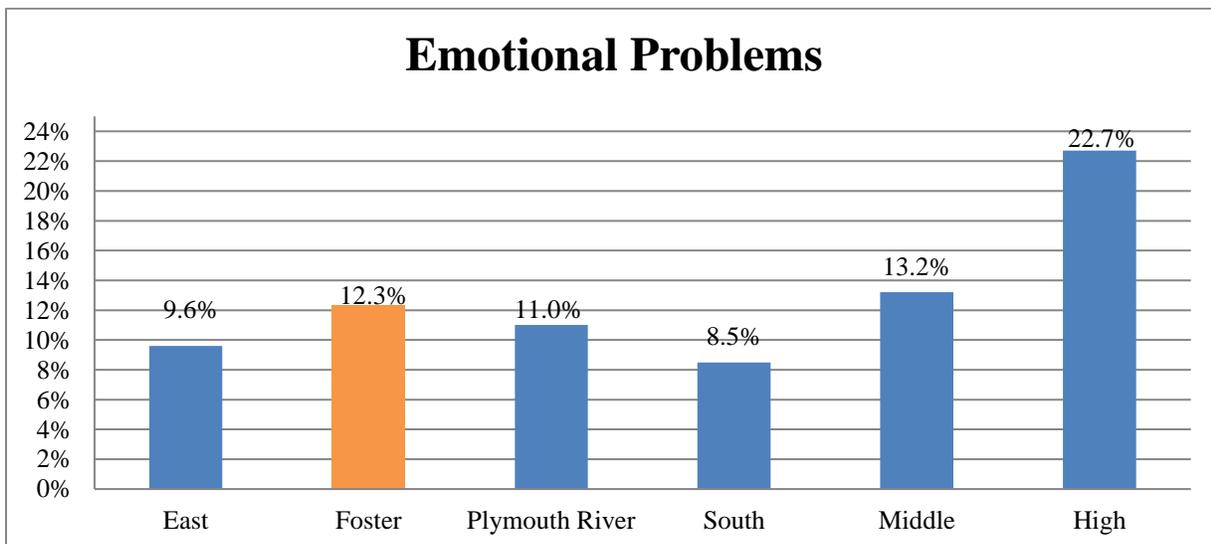
A greater percent of males than females reported social and emotional problems across all domains, with the exception of emotional problems. Differences are statistically significant for hyperactivity.



Do social and emotional problems differ across schools?

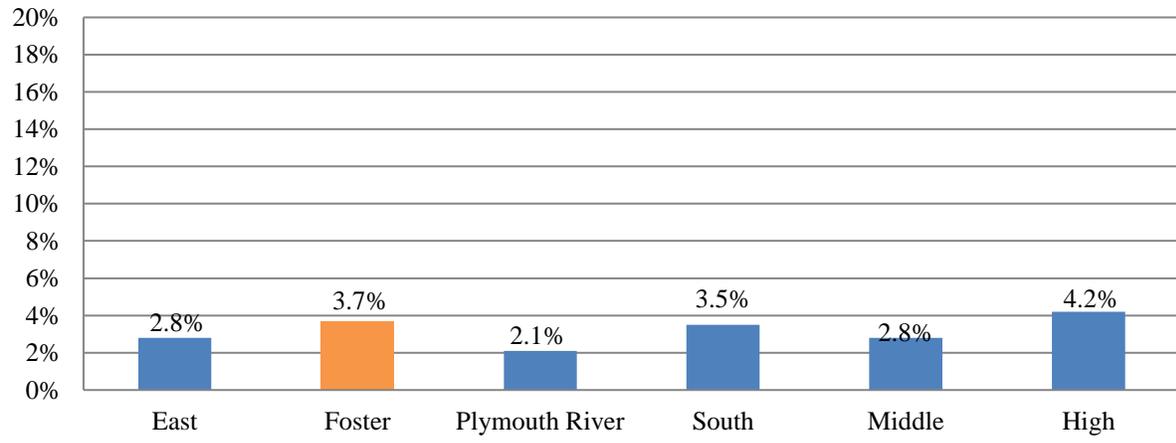


*6.1% represents 8 Foster students with “high” or “very high” Total Problems



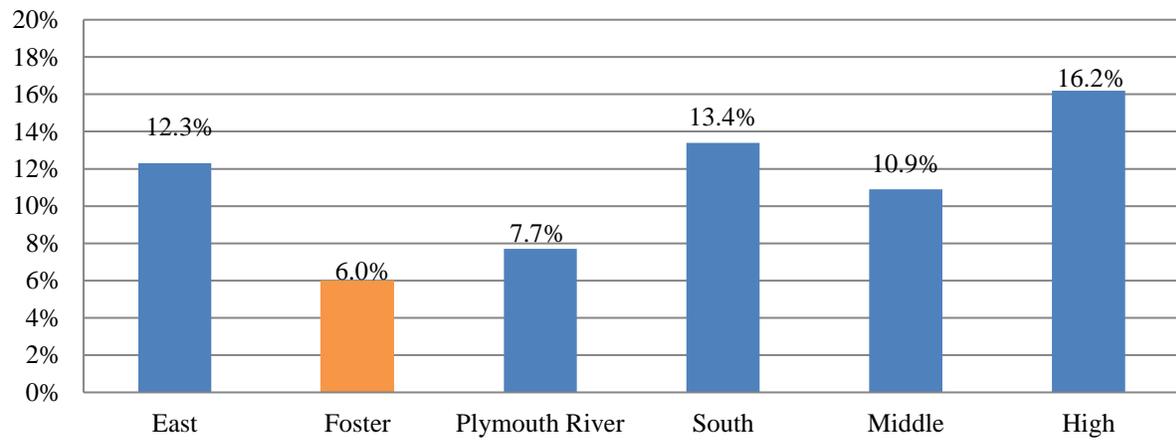
*12.3% represents 17 Foster students with “high” or “very high” Emotional Problems

Conduct Problems



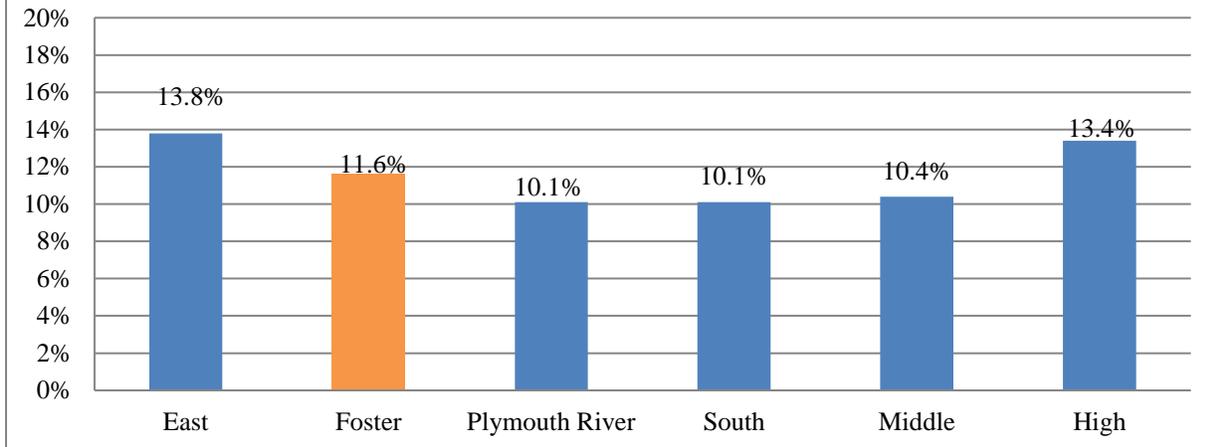
*3.7% represents 5 Foster students with "high" or "very high" Conduct Problems

Hyperactivity/Inattention



*6.0% represents 8 Foster students with "high" or "very high" Hyperactivity Problems

Peer Problems

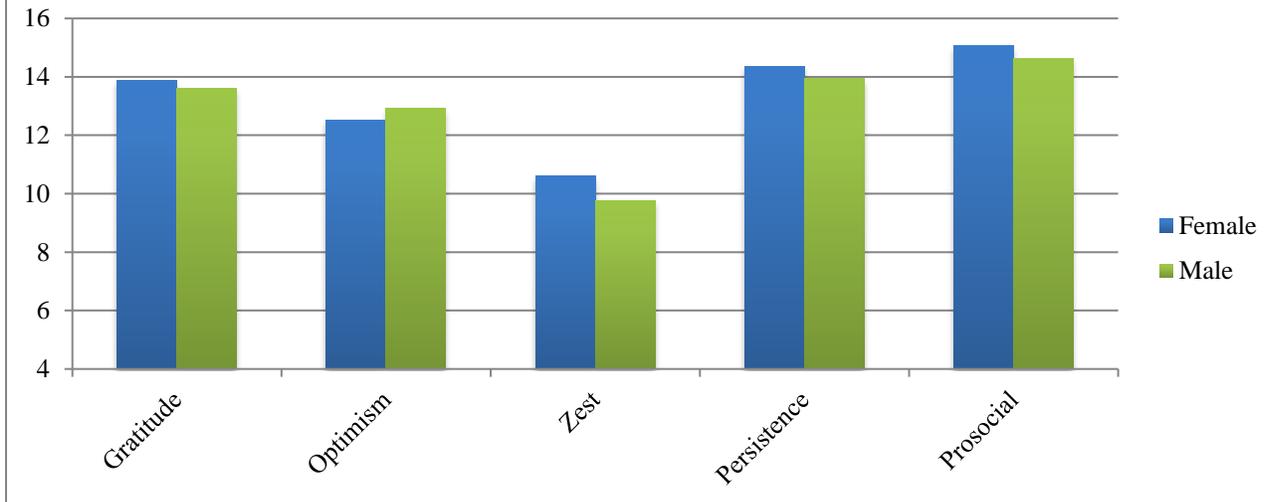


*11.6% represents 16 Foster students with “high” or “very high” Peer Problems

Do social and emotional strengths differ across grades and gender?

In general, students reported a high degree of persistence (e.g., I keep working until I get my schoolwork right), and prosocial skills (e.g., I listen when my teacher is talking). There were no significant differences across gender or grades.

SEHS Scores (Range = 4-16)



How do social and emotional problems impact students?

Students rated how they were doing in each of 3 areas of school functioning. The table below indicates the % of students with each type of social and emotional problem who rated themselves as “Fair” or “Poor” in each area of functioning.

Overall, students with social and emotional problems were less likely to indicate that they were doing well in each area of school functioning. Students with high emotional problems and total problems scores indicated trouble with reading, while students with elevated conduct and hyperactivity problems scores indicated trouble with math.

Student Report: Domain	Total Problems (N = 8)	Students with Emotional Problems (N = 16)	Students with Conduct Problems (N = 5)	Students with Hyperactivity Problems (N = 8)	Students with Peer Problems (N = 15)
Reading	25.0%*	18.8%*	20.0%	12.5%	6.7%
Writing	12.5%	11.8%	20.0%	0.0%	12.5%
Math	28.6%	18.8%	40.0%*	42.9%*	6.3%

* Statistically significant difference from students without an elevated score on each problem scale

The table below indicates the % of students who said that they were late for school, missed an entire day of school, or were sent to the principal’s office because of a behavior problem.

Overall, students at the school with social and emotional problems were more likely to indicate missing school or being sent to the principal’s office.

School Functioning	Total Problems (N = 8)	Students with Emotional Problems (N =17)	Students with Conduct Problems (N =5)	Students with Hyperactivity Problems (N =8)	Students with Peer Problems (N =16)
Late for School	50.0%	64.7%	60.0%	75.0%	62.5%
Missed Day of School	85.7%	93.8%*	80.0%	85.7%	93.8%*
Sent to Principal	12.5%	11.8%	40.0%*	12.5%	12.5%

Who do students speak to when they are having a social or emotional problem?

All students were asked who they speak to about social or emotional problems at school. Students most often spoke with their friends, a teacher, and school counselor.

Source of help	% of Students Who Talk to Person (N = 138)	% rating talking to that person helpful (N = Number of students who found it helpful)
Parent	64.5%	70.5% (N=62)
Friend(s) at school	30.7%	54.8% (N=23)
Another family member	23.7%	50.0% (N=16)
Teacher at school	23.0%	61.3% (N=19)
A brother or sister	17.5%	65.2% (N=15)
School Counselor	16.9%	52.2% (N=12)
School nurse	9.6%	53.8% (N=7)
A coach at school	6.6%	33.3% (N=3)
Assistant Principal	5.2%	71.4% (N=5)
Principal	2.9%	50.0% (N=2)
Club Advisor	1.5%	50.0% (N=1)

66.7% of students said that there is at least one teacher or other adult in the school they can talk to if they have a problem.

Outside of school, **75.9%** said that they could talk to a parent or other adult family member about things that are important to them, **1.5%** said that they could talk to a non-family adult (e.g., religious leader, neighbor), **12.4%** said that they could talk to both family and non-family adults, **3.6%** said that they did not have an adult to talk to, and **6.6%** said that they were unsure.

What supports and services do students with social and emotional problems receive?

93.4% of students agreed that if someone their age felt sad, scared, or stressed, talking to an adult could help them feel better

12.7% of students said that in the past year they wanted to talk to a counselor, doctor, or therapist about an emotional problem or problems with attention, social problems, or behavior.

20.0% of students said that they actually talked to a counselor, doctor, or therapist about an emotional problem or problems with attention, social problems, or behavior

4.7% of students said they are currently meeting with someone at school

7.9% of students said that they are currently meeting with someone outside of school

Received counseling in or out of school	Average SDQ score (N=103)	Slightly elevated SDQ score (N=10)	High SDQ score (N=1)	Very High SDQ score (N=6)
Total SDQ Problems	7.8%	30.0%	100.0%	66.7%

What other life experiences might impact students?

Students were asked whether each of the following had happened to them in the past year:

Life Event	% Who said this happened to them (N=138)
Had a family member who was very sick or badly injured	29.0%
Family member died	21.7%
Student was very sick or badly injured	15.2%
Moved to a new house	14.5%
Changed to a new school	7.2%
Close friend died	7.2%
Parents got divorced or separated	4.3%
Parent lost their job	2.2%

Students were asked if they were bullied in the past year at school:

78.8% said that they were never bullied, **17.5%** said that they were bullied 1-3 times, **2.2%** said that they were bullied 4-6 times, **1.5%** said that they were bullied 10 or more times.

6.5% said that they were harassed or bullied online (Facebook, email, Twitter, Snapchat, etc) or with a cell phone (text messaging, photos, etc).

Students were asked about their use of the internet and social media:

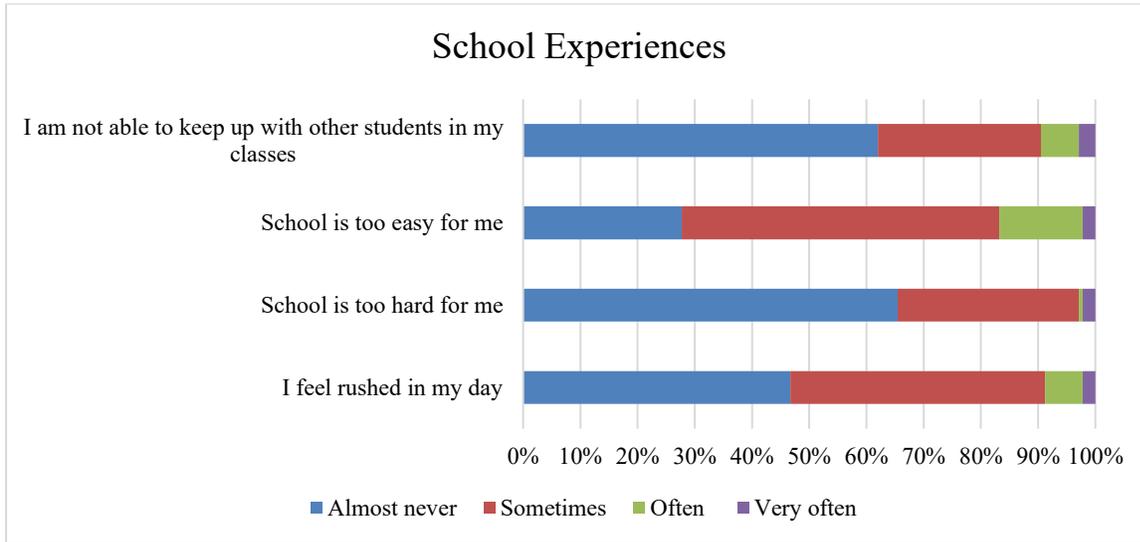
31.6% said that their parents gave them permission to use social media

Of those who said that they have a social media account, **59.1%** said their parents were supervising their account.

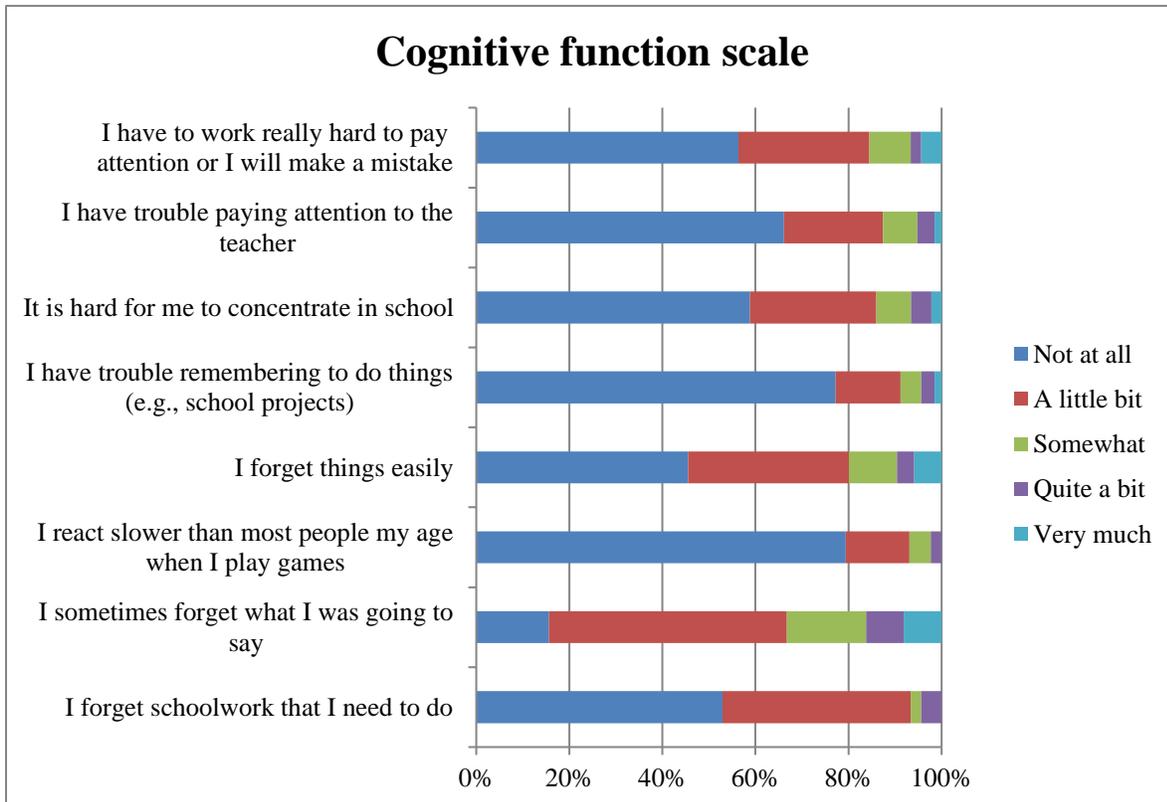
Excluding time doing homework, **51.9%** said that they spend an average of an hour or more a day on the computer or phone (including texting, playing games, or using apps).

22.7% of student said that the time they spend using the phone/internet or watching TV affects their productivity (e.g., work for school) sometimes and **1.5%** said that it impacts their productivity all of the time.

Students were asked to rate their school experiences:



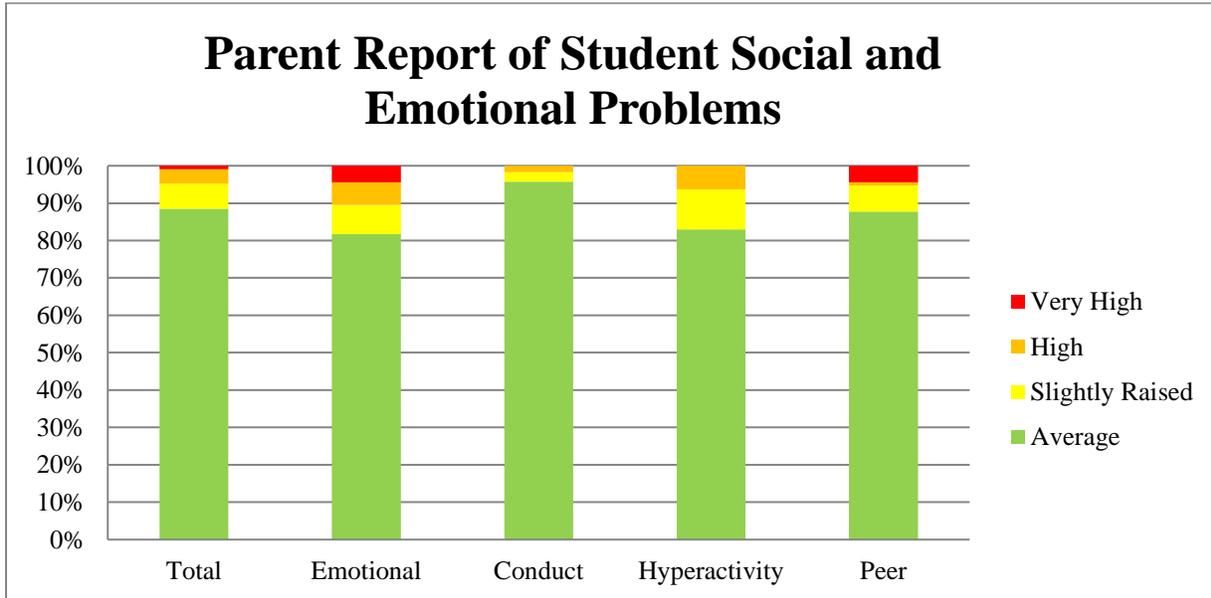
Students reported their perceptions of their own cognitive functioning:



PARENT RESULTS

According to parents, what social and emotional problems are most common among students?

The most common social and emotional problems parents reported among their students were peer problems and emotional problems.



Parents were asked if their child has ever had each of the following social, emotional, behavioral, and learning problems (parents could select all that apply)

Parent Report: Problem Type	% Yes, but not currently a problem	% Yes, and this is currently a problem
Learning Disability	1.9%	13.6%
Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder	3.6%	11.6%
Anxiety Disorder	5.3%	3.5%
Depression	0	3.3%
Developmental disorders (Autism/PDD)	0.9%	1.8%
Significant Acting Out/ Behavioral Problems	6.2%	0.9%
Eating Disorder/ Significant Problems with Eating	1.8%	0.9%
Panic Attacks	3.6%	0.9%
Thoughts of suicide or wanting to die	1.8%	0.9%
Manic Depression/ Mania/ Bipolar Depression	0%	0%
School Phobia	6.3%	0%
Self-harm (cutting, hitting, burning)	0.9%	0%

How do parents report social and emotional problems impact students?

Parents rated how their child was doing in each of 15 areas of school functioning. The table below indicates the % of students with high total social and emotional problem whose parents rated themselves as “Fair” or “Poor” in each area of functioning.

Overall, parents who indicated their children had social and emotional problems indicated their children were doing well in all areas of functioning, with the exception of making friends and maintaining relationships with peers.

Parent Report: Domain	Fair or Poor Functioning (N = 5)
Relationships with Peers	61.5%*
Making Friends	60.0%*
Persistence (trying hard when things are challenging)	60.0%
Sitting Still During Class	40.0%
Optimism (having a positive outlook)	40.0%
Gratitude or Thankfulness	40.0%
Writing	20.0%
Paying Attention	20.0%
Reading	0%
Math	0%
Relationships with Teachers	0%
Finishing Work on Time	0%
Taking Tests or Quizzes	0%
Speaking up in Class	0%
Enthusiasm and energy in approaching work	0%

* Statistically significant difference from students without an elevated score on the problem scale

The table below indicates the % of students whose parents said that they were late for school, missed an entire day of school, or were sent to the principal’s office because of a behavior problem. There were no significant differences between parents who did and did not report their child had an elevated total problems scale.

School Functioning	Total Problems (N = 5)
Late for School	20.0%
Missed Day of School	20.0%
Sent to Principal	20.0%
Missed a Class	0%
Receive Detention	0%
Receive In-School Suspension	0%
Receive Out-of-School Suspension	0%

Who do parents speak to about their child's social and emotional wellbeing?

Parents were asked if they had talked to each of the following people about their student's social and emotional wellbeing at school.

Source of help	% of Parents Who Talk to Person (N = 123)
Teacher or teachers	76.1%
Adjustment Counselor	25.2%
Principal or Assistant Principal	22.2%
Special Education Teacher or Case Manager	20.4%
School Psychologist	17.6%
School nurse	9.3%
School Social Worker	9.2%
Guidance Counselor	8.4%
Club Advisor	1.0%

What supports and services do parents report that students with social and emotional problems receive?

Parents were asked to indicate their perceptions of their child’s need and access to support services.

Need and Support Services	Average /Slightly Elevated SDQ score (N=96)	High/Very High SDQ score (N=5)
Was there a time in the past year when you felt like your child might need help because of problems with emotions or behaviors?	36.5%	80.0%
Was there a time in the past year when someone encouraged you to seek help for your child because of problems with emotions or behaviors?	15.6%	40.0%
Has your child <u>ever</u> received psychological counseling for an emotional, behavioral, or substance problem?	21.3%	60.0%*
Has your child <u>ever</u> received medication for an emotional, behavioral, or substance problem?	5.4%	20.0%
Is your child currently receiving psychological counseling for an emotional, behavioral, or substance problem?	10.6%	40.0%
Is your child currently receiving medication for an emotional, behavioral, or substance problem?	4.3%	0%

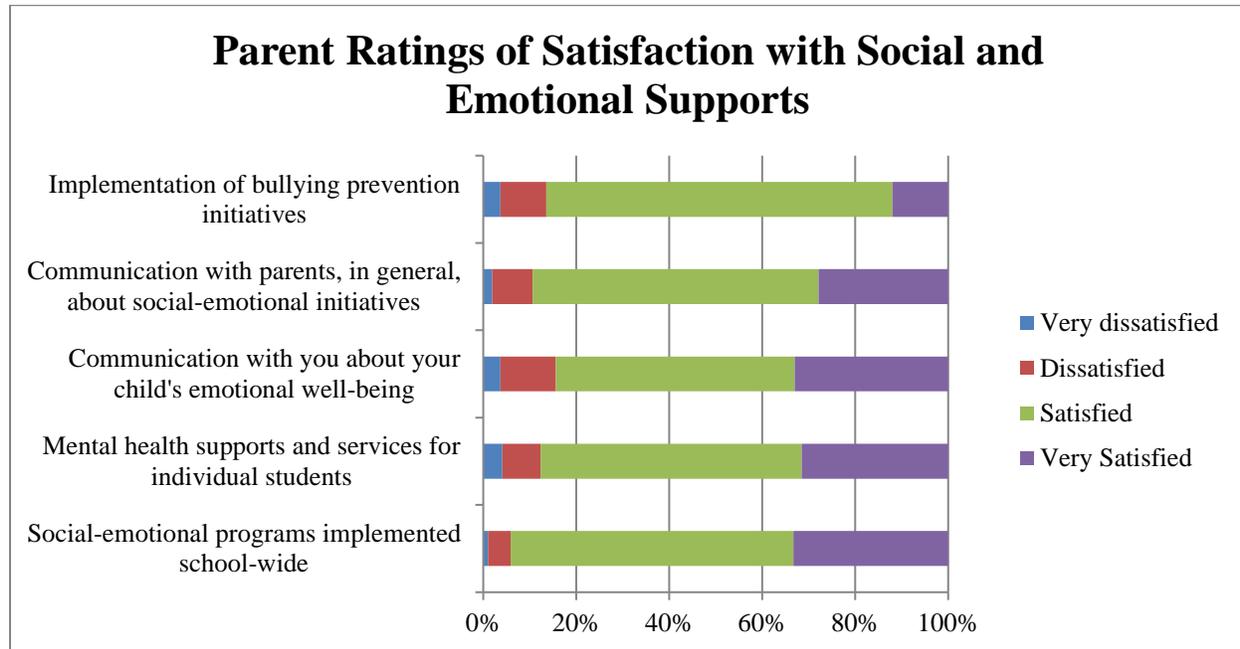
4 parents reported their child currently receives counseling services in school, **1** reported that their child receives counseling from a pediatrician, **11** reported their child current receives counseling services from a mental health provider in the community.

Parents were asked if their child receives services or support at school because of an emotional or behavioral problem.

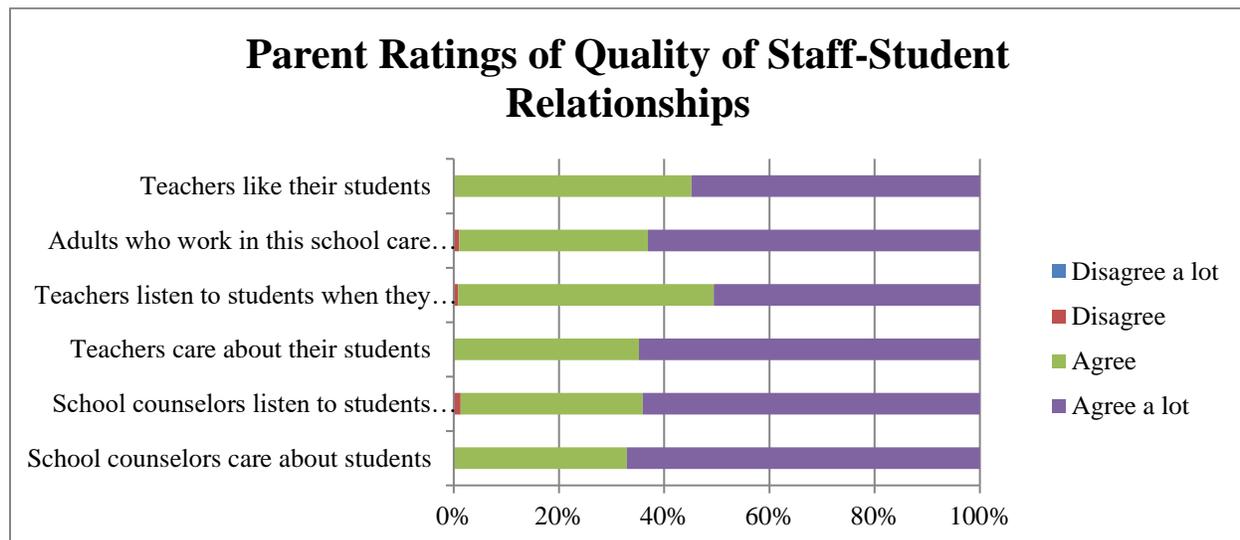
Services at School	% (N)
No	84.5% (N=93)
Yes, through an IEP	9.1% (N=10)
Yes, through a 504 Plan	4.5% (N=5)
Yes, but not through an IEP or 504 Plan	1.8% (N=2)
I don’t know	0

Are parents satisfied with social and emotional supports at school?

Parents indicated their satisfaction with a range of social and emotional supports provided by the school. The majority of parents were satisfied, with the highest level of satisfaction for school-wide social-emotional program implementation.



Parents were asked about their perceptions of their child's relationship with staff at school. Parents indicated a high degree of care and dedication by school staff.



What other life experiences might impact students?

Parents were asked if their child was bullied in the past year at school:

17.3% said that their child had been bullied. Another 15.5% reported that they were unsure

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