



Saint Paul
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Safety Engagement: Findings & Analysis

Board of Education Regular Meeting

May 23, 2023

Safer SPPS: Safety Engagement Plan

SPPS gathered information to guide discussions and next steps on safety improvements in and around SPPS schools and buildings.



- Understand more about how our students, families and staff perceive their personal safety
- Gather information around experiences with physical violence from students, families and staff
- Learn more about the effectiveness of district emergency training and procedures
- Solicit information on safety improvements
- Use the results from these engagements to inform short-term and longer-term school safety plans and procedures

School safety engagement activities related to data collection in the district

- Perspectives on safety
- Experience with physical violence
- Safety ideas
- Safety policies, measures and procedures
- Focus areas

Data Collection & Findings

Data Collection



Surveys

- Three surveys were administered for students, parents/guardians and staff



Student Listening Sessions

- 13 student listening sessions at all high schools facilitated by Board of Education members



Community Conversations

- One Marnita's Table event hosted at Washington Technology Magnet



Parent Meetings

- Four language-specific safety meetings with Parent Advisory Councils
- One safety meeting with the African American Parent Community
- One safety meeting with the Hmong Parent Community
- One safety meeting at Harding that included seven languages

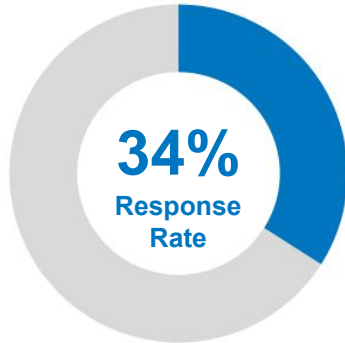


School Board Listening Sessions

- Two Principal listening sessions with Board of Education members

Survey Procedures and Response Rates

Students (Grade 6-12)



Total Sent: 10,575

Total Responses: 3,557

Timeline: 4/18-28

Administration: Survey pushed to student iPads

Parents/Guardians (Grade PreK-12)



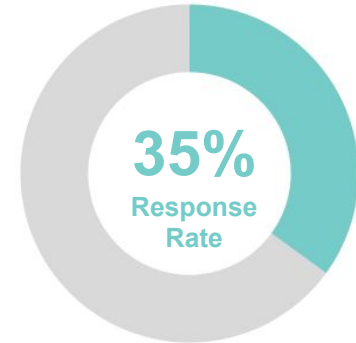
Total Sent: 31,020

Total Responses: 2,371

Timeline: 4/25-5/1

Administration: Email

All Staff



Total Sent: 6,995

Total Responses: 2,418

Timeline: 2/24-3/3

Administration: Email

Overall Public Participation

Engagement Activity	Count
Student Safety Survey	3,557
Staff Safety Survey	2,418
Parent/Guardian Safety Survey	2,371
Parent/Guardian and Student Listening Session at Harding	253
Parent/Guardian Listening Sessions across the District	184
Marnita's Table at Washington Tech	175
Student Listening Sessions with the Board of Education	157
Board Listening Session at Washington Technology	63
Board Listening Session with School Administrators	8

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS = 9,186

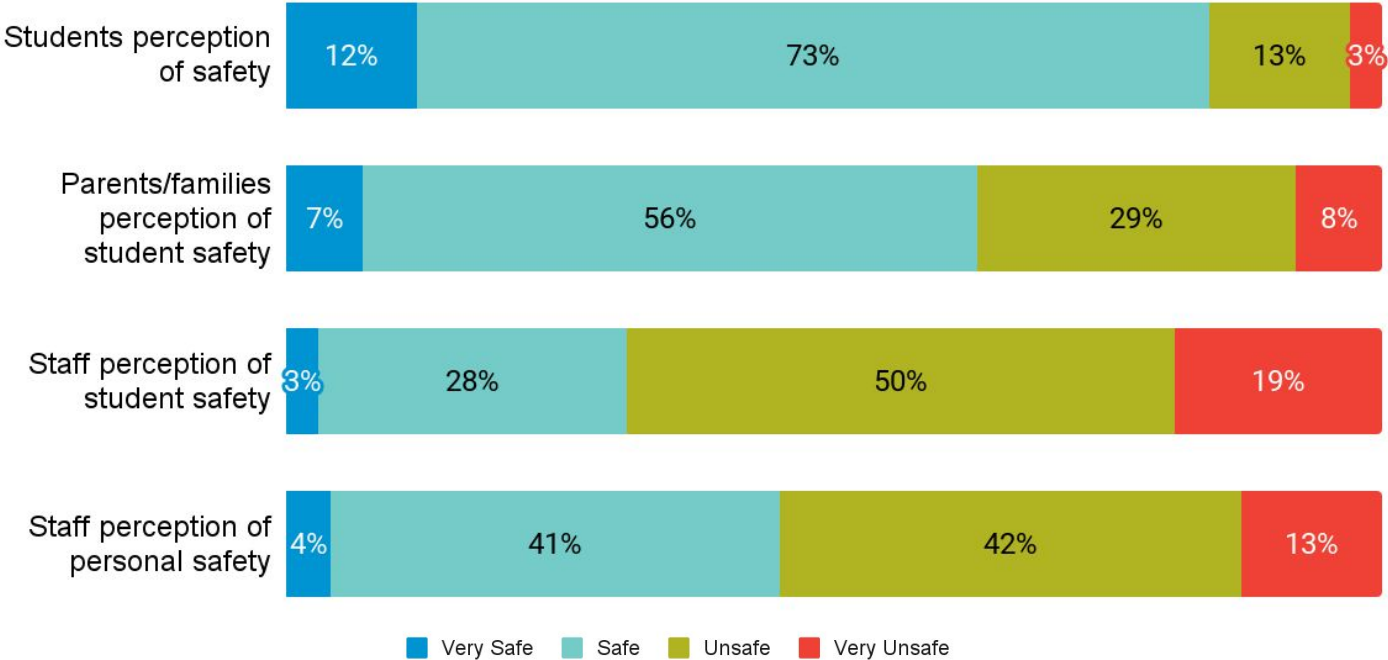
Perceptions of Safety

Perceptions of Safety from Students, Families and Staff

- Families and staff report better perceptions of safety at the middle and elementary school levels than high school
- Staff at middle and elementary schools report greater concerns of safety than families
- High school students report better perceptions of safety compared to families and staff

Perceptions of Overall High School Safety

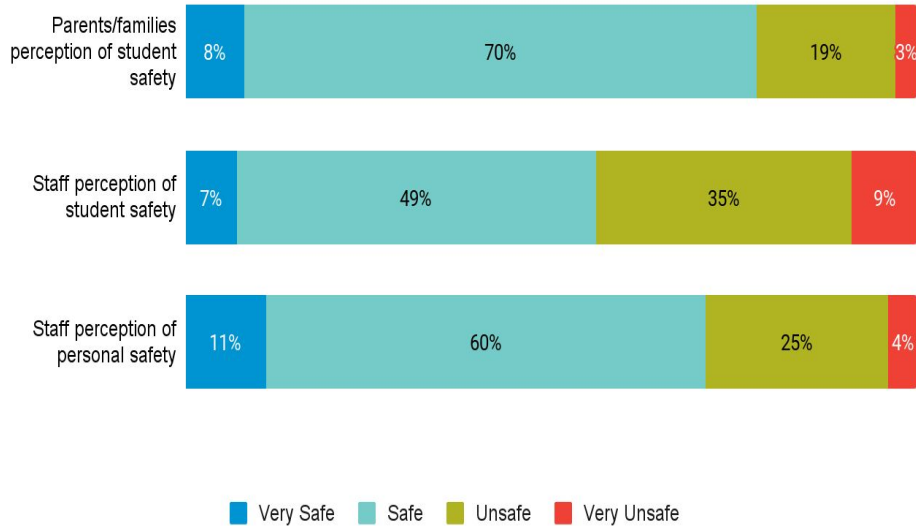
Differences exist across students, families and staff



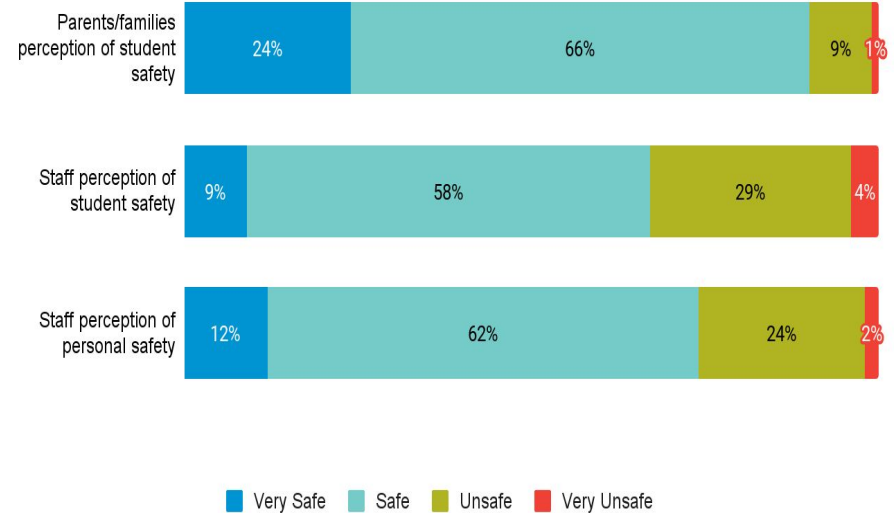
Perceptions of Overall Middle and Elementary Safety

Families and staff report higher levels of safety at middle and elementary schools

Middle Schools

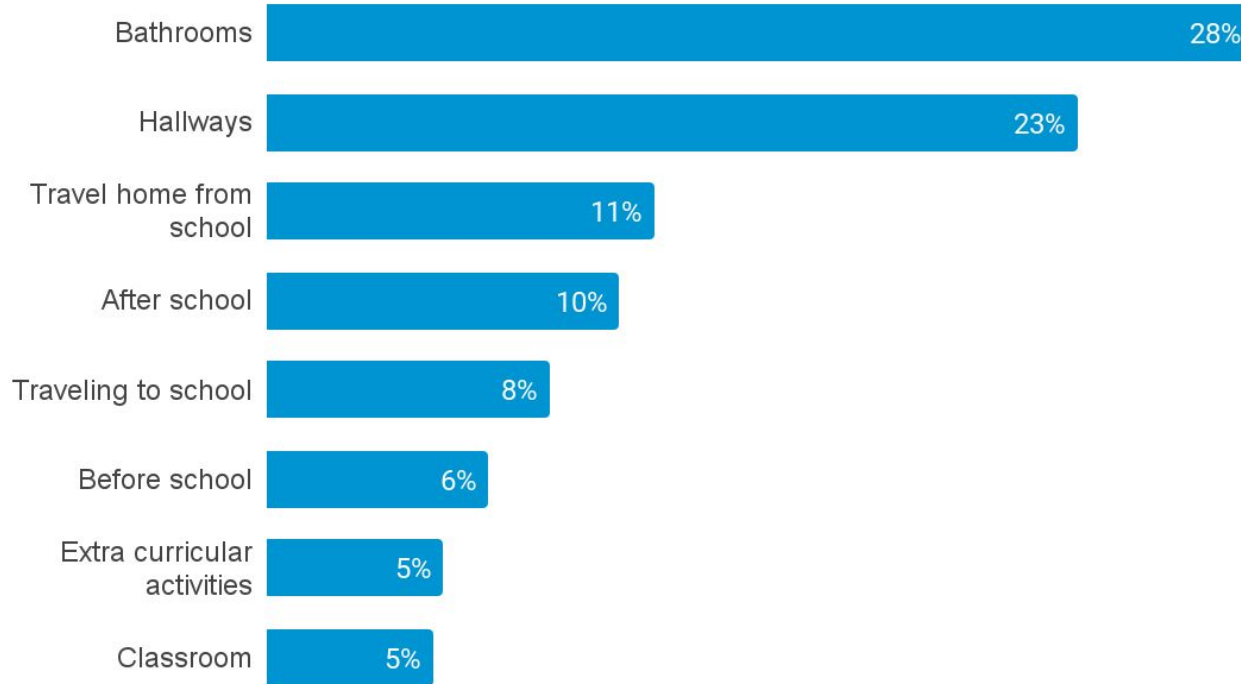


Elementary Schools



Safety Perceptions of Students by Location

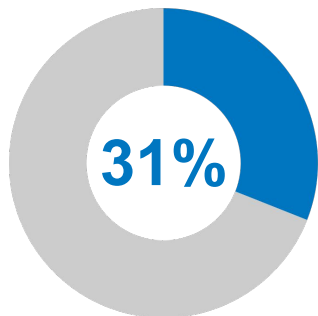
Students reported feeling most *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in bathrooms, hallways, and traveling to and from school



Student Safety Perceptions by Bathroom Type

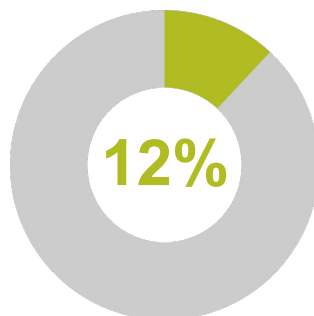
Students feel safer in inclusive restrooms

Traditional Restrooms



31% of students feel *unsafe* or very *unsafe* in traditional restrooms

Inclusive Restrooms



12% of students feel *unsafe* or very *unsafe* in inclusive restrooms

My student will not use the bathrooms at school for fear of violence and exposure to drugs. They try and “hold it” all day.

Parent comment during listening session

Student Safety Perceptions in the Hallway

- In addition to bathrooms, hallways were spaces consistently rated where students feel *unsafe* or *very unsafe*
- Approximately 23% of students feel *unsafe* or *very unsafe* in the hallways during school
- Staff selected hallways and common areas as the place that they feel least safe with 45% selecting that they felt *unsafe* or *very unsafe*

I am concerned about students roaming hallways and letting people in who don't belong in the building. Even with alarms on doors, I am concerned about the safety of my children.

Parent comment from safety survey

Student Safety Perceptions of Transportation

- Most students feel *safe* or *very safe* traveling to and from school (92% and 89%), but those who take Metro Transit report higher rates of feeling *unsafe* or *very unsafe* compared to students who use other forms of transportation
 - Students who ride Metro Transit generally feel safer in the morning compared to the afternoon

Metro Transit	Safe or Very safe in the Morning	Safe or Very safe in the Afternoon
City Bus	82%	72%
Light Rail	67%	58%

SPPS is not taking enough regard for the students who take public transportation. I've already been involved in an incident with my friend where we were both attacked/assaulted by an adult. We now both have to be driven to school.

Student comment from safety survey

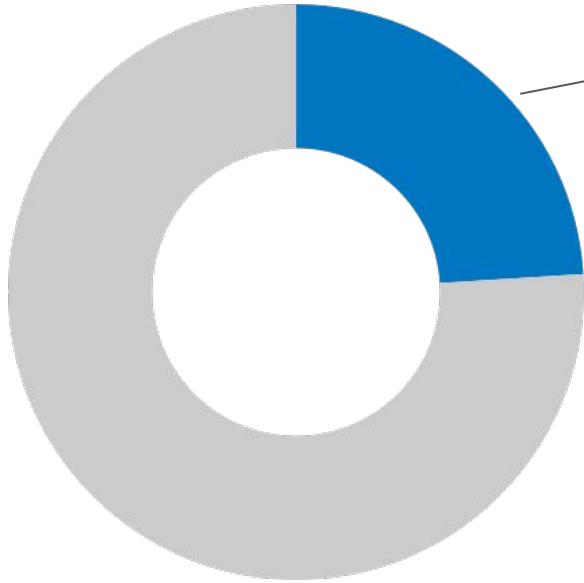
Physical Violence

Experiences with Physical Violence

- Families at middle and elementary schools report higher levels of physical violence than at the high school
- Most staff at the high school level report experiencing or witnessing physical violence
- Most students are not involved in physical violence at school
- The greatest safety concerns for students, families and staff are weapons and student-on-student violence

Physical Violence in Schools Reported by Families

Almost one in four families report experiencing physical violence at school



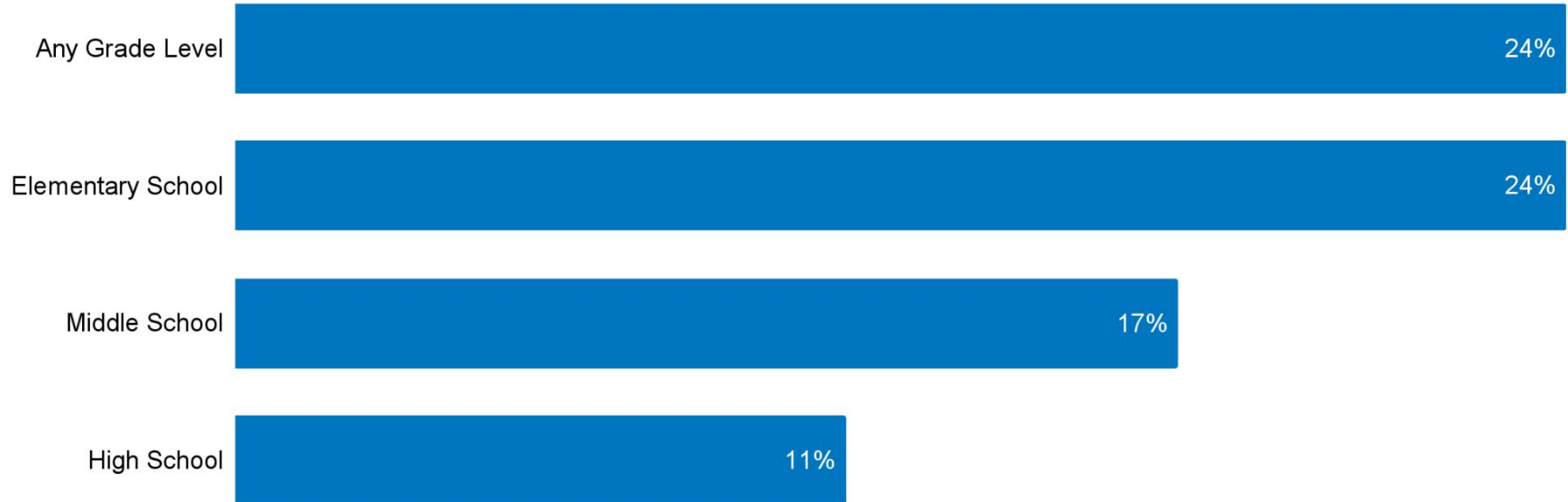
24%

of SPPS families report at least one of their children being a victim of physical violence at their current school.

Physical violence includes being punched, kicked, slapped, pushed down, hair pulled, being in a fight or being shown a weapon as a threat.

Family Reported Physical Violence About Their Children in School Buildings

Families at lower grade levels report higher incidents of physical violence



High School Student Experiences with Physical Violence

Most high school students have not experienced physical violence



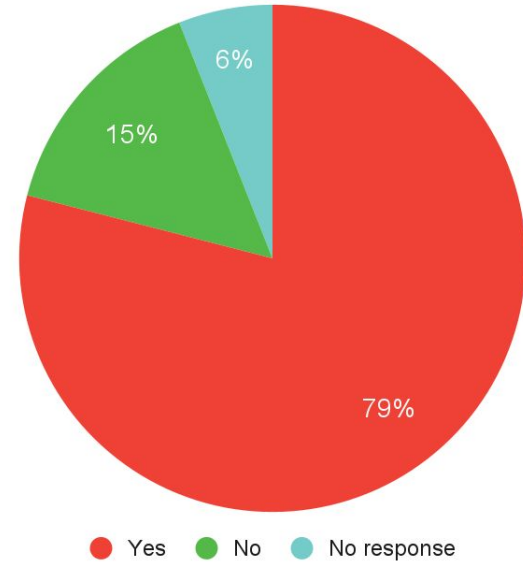
High School Staff Experience with Physical Violence

Most high school staff have witnessed or experienced physical violence

Comments from Staff about Physical Violence

- The majority of staff did not feel equipped to deal with the situation when they witnessed or experienced physical violence
- Many staff have been involved in multiple incidents, sometimes with the same student(s)
- Most staff were not satisfied with the outcome after an incident of physical violence and did not feel supported by their building administrators
- Staff often felt helpless to prevent, improve or resolve the situation

Witnessed or Experienced Physical Violence



Primary Safety Concerns from Students, Families and Staff

Weapons and student-on-student violence are top concerns across groups and school levels

School Setting	Stakeholder Group	Top Concern	Second Concern
High School	Students	Weapons (29%)	Student on student (17%)
	Parents/Families	Weapons (43%)	Student on student (16%)
	Staff	Weapons (40%)	Student on student (23%)
Middle School	Parents/Families	Weapons (27%)	Student on student (19%)
	Staff	Student on student (36%)	Weapons (32%)
Elementary	Parents/Families	External people entering (39%)	In-person bullying or threats (17%)
	Staff	Student on staff (25%)	Student on student (20%)

Respondents could only select their most important concern.

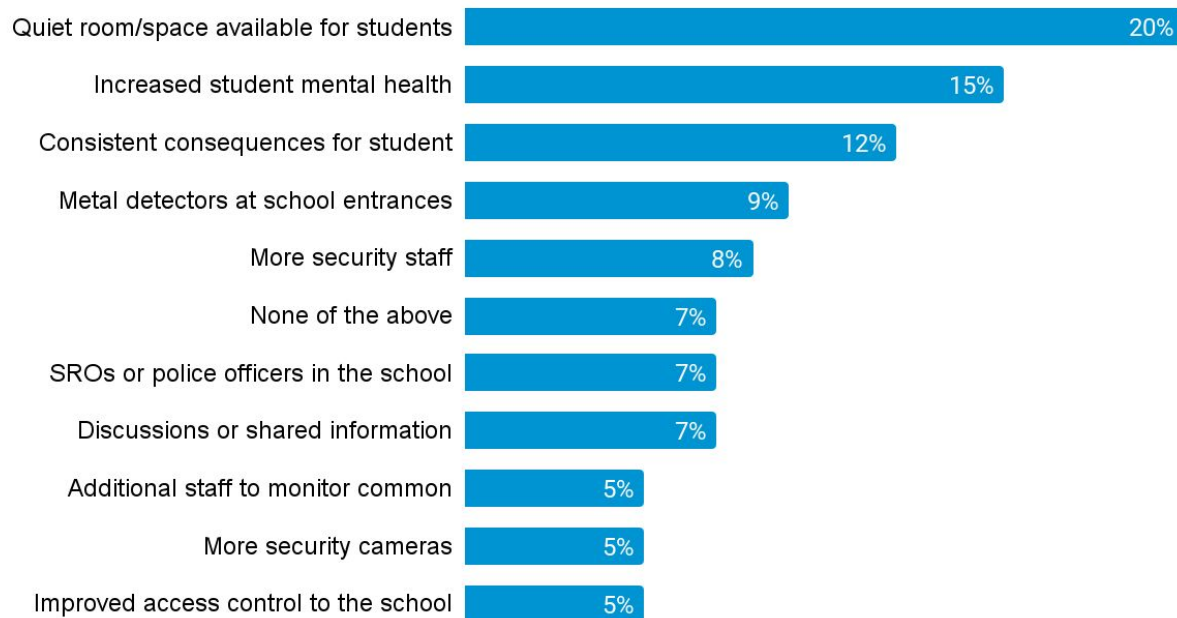
Safety Ideas

Safety Ideas from Students, Families, Staff and School Administration

- On the safety survey, students selected a quiet space for them to go and increased mental health support staff as the top two options
- During listening sessions, students recommended identification cards to monitor entries and exits, calming break rooms for students to reset, and restorative practices when conflicts arise
- Increased mental health supports and consistent consequences for behavior were in the top three choices for students, families and staff
- School administrators met with members of the Board of Education and recommended School Resource Officers (SROs) because they do not have training on how to disarm people with weapons, and more cameras and security to monitor doors and hallways

Student Safety Ideas

On the safety survey, students selected a quiet space for them to go when they needed to calm down or decompress and increased mental health support staff as the top two options in having a positive impact on school safety



Mental health support is difficult to find and access for students, especially the students who need it the most. There also isn't a convenient space for students to have a quiet environment that's stress free.

Student comment from safety survey

* Students could pick their top two options.

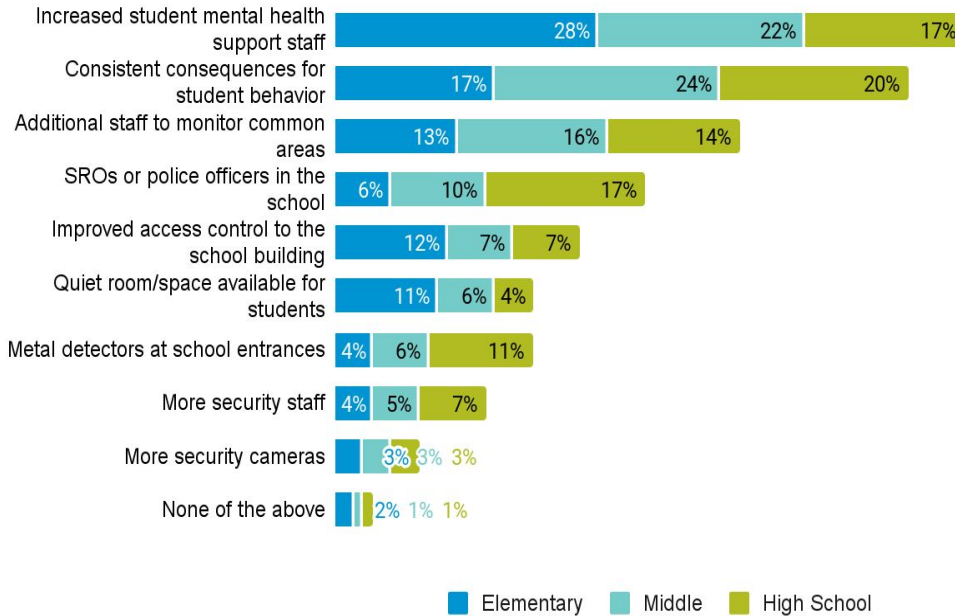
Student Ideas for Safety Improvements

During listening sessions, students presented a number of ideas to improve safety:

- Student identification cards: how they are issued, monitored and used
- Calming/break rooms for students to reset
- Restorative practices
- Transportation provided by SPPS
- Incentives for making positive choices
- Increased after-school programming

Family Ideas for Safety Improvements

High school and middle school families rank consistent consequences for behavior as the first choice. Elementary school families are more interested in mental health support.



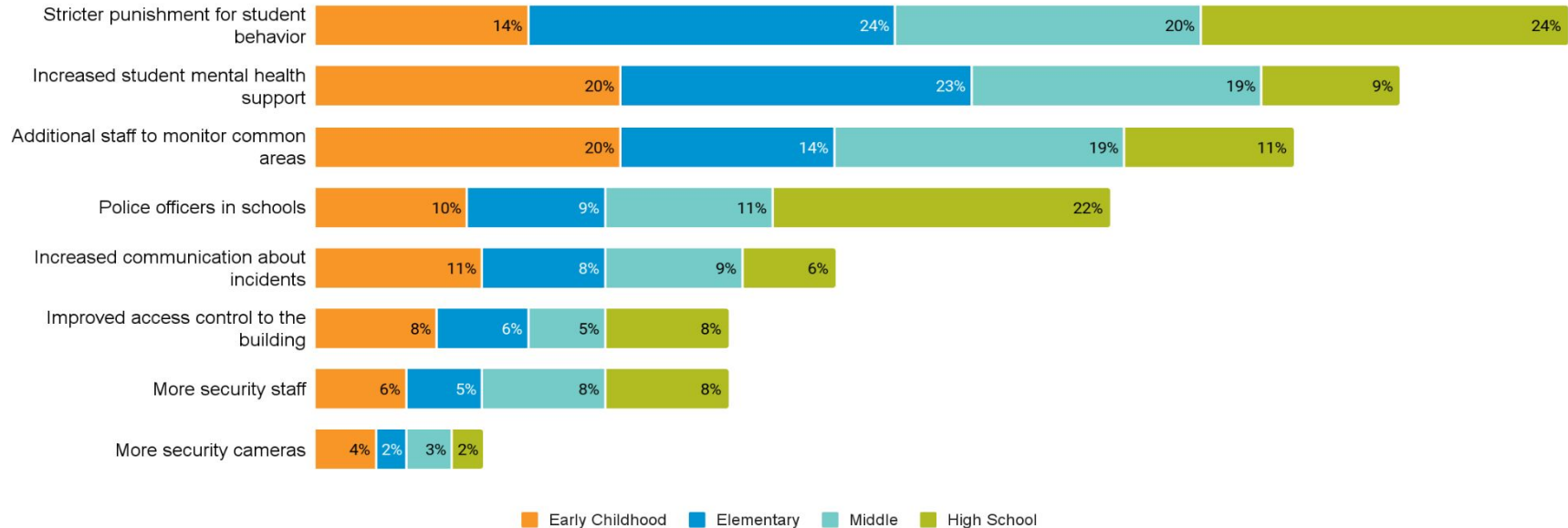
Make it clear that students are there to learn and bad behavior will have consequences. Have clear, consistent communication with the community about disruptive incidents and disciplinary action.

Parent comment from safety survey

* Parents/families could pick their top two options.

Staff Ideas for Safety Improvements

Beliefs about improvements to safety varied by school setting. High school staff are the most strongly in favor of police officers in schools. Middle, elementary and early childhood staff are more interested in mental health support.



* Staff could pick their top two options.

Similarities Across Students, Families and Staff

Consistent consequences for student behavior and increased mental health supports were common themes across all groups surveyed

Highest Rankings

- Increased mental health supports was the highest or second-highest rated option among all three groups
 - Among staff and families in lower grades, increased mental health supports ranked highest
- Consistent consequences was in the top three among all three groups
 - Among staff and parents in higher grades, consistent consequences for student behavior ranked highest

Lowest Rankings

- More security cameras was listed as the lowest option for all three groups
- Staff and families ranked more security staff second lowest, while students ranked it higher on the list

School Administrator Ideas for Safety Improvements

Principals met with Board of Education members to discuss concerns and recommendations

- Bring back School Resource Officers (SROs) to schools
- More cameras and security to monitor doors and hallways
- Increased communication
 - Include school leadership in district safety conversations
 - Provide more information about students who are being transferred
 - Allow time and space to discuss safety concerns with school administration

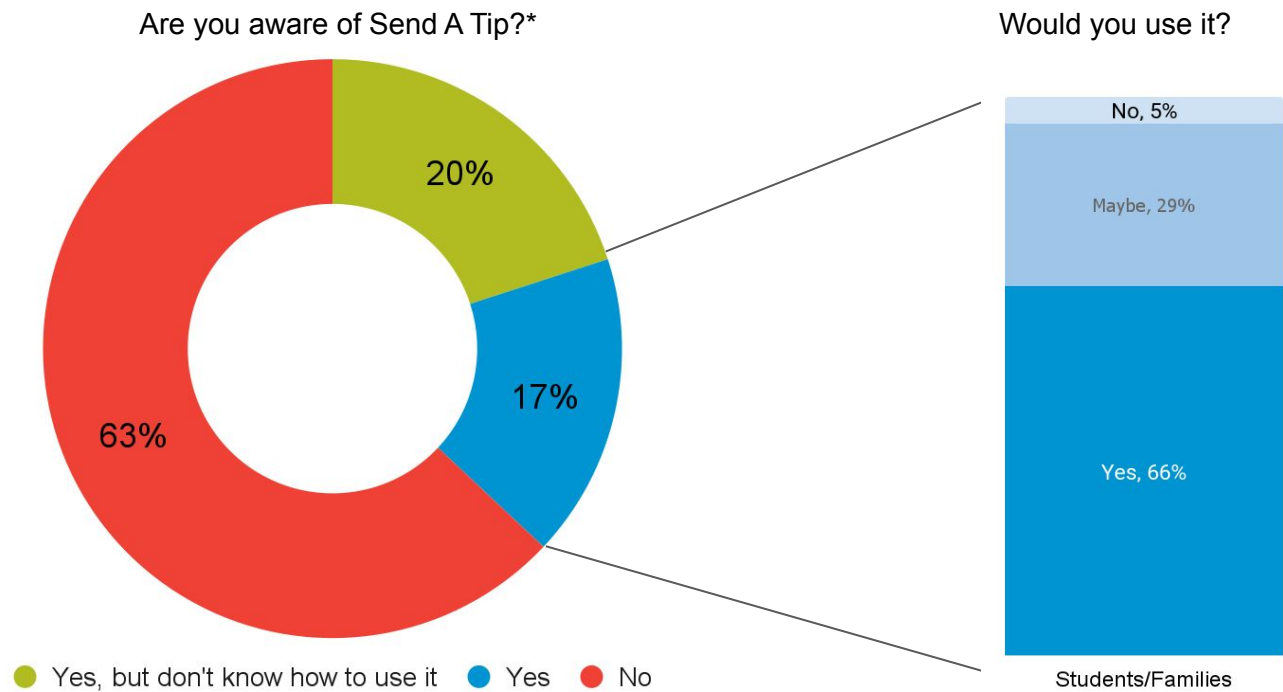
Safety Policies, Measures and Procedures

Safety Policies, Measures and Procedures Summary

- More awareness about Send a Tip is needed. The people who know about it are willing to use it
- Students and staff know and understand different security procedures
- Most students feel comfortable interacting with security staff and think having these staff in schools is a good idea
- Overall, students are supportive of SROs
- SROs were a higher ranked choice on the safety survey from high school staff compared with middle and elementary staff
- Families ranked SROs as the third highest choice
- School administrators discussed the need for SROs

Send a Tip

Most students and families aren't aware of Send A Tip, but for those that are, they would use it

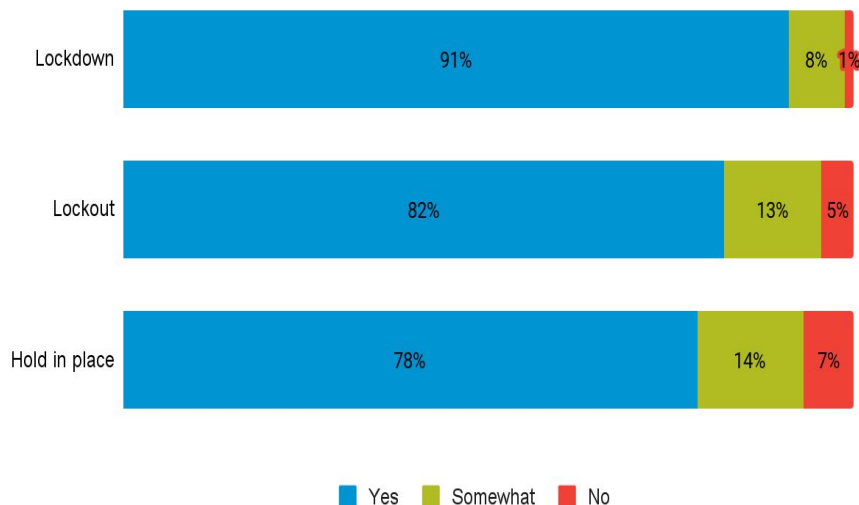


*Only those who responded Yes were shown the question *Would you use it?*

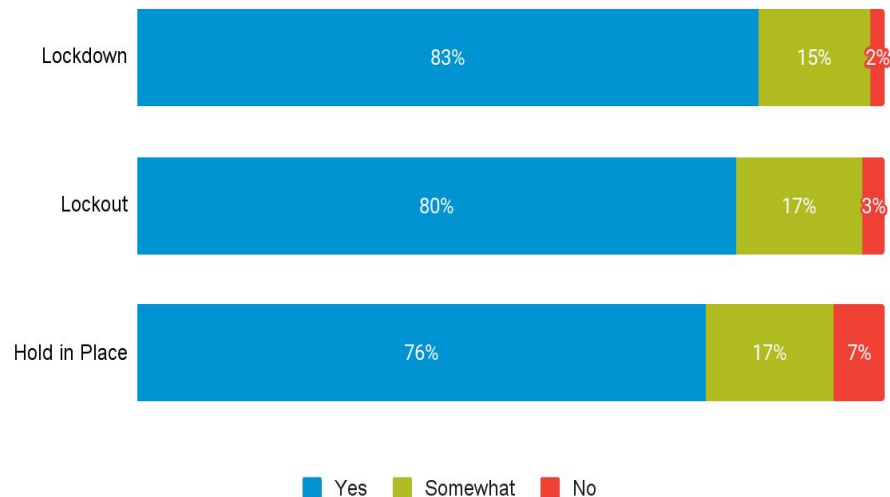
Safety Procedures for Students and Staff

Staff and students know about safety procedures

Students understanding of role in following procedures

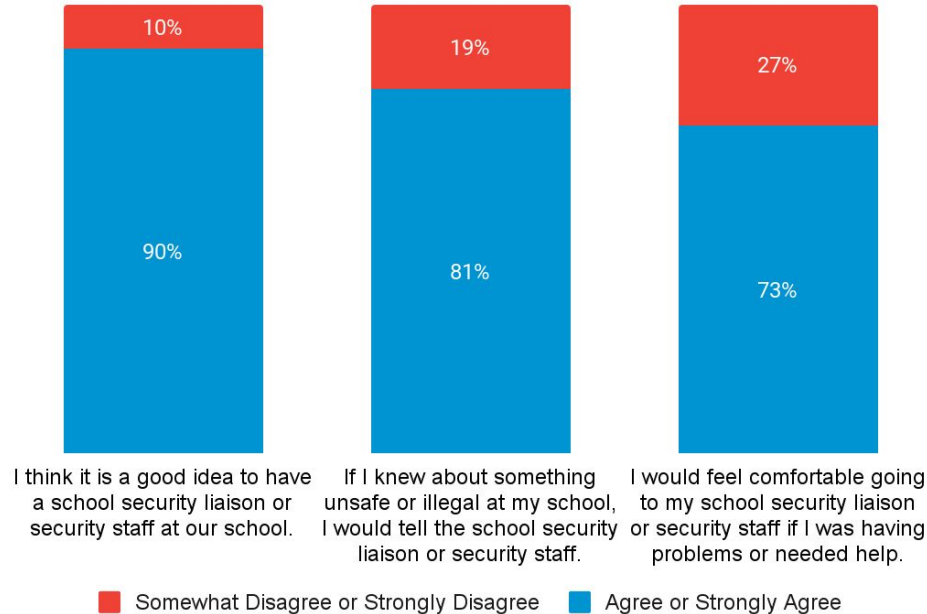


Staff understanding of the following procedures



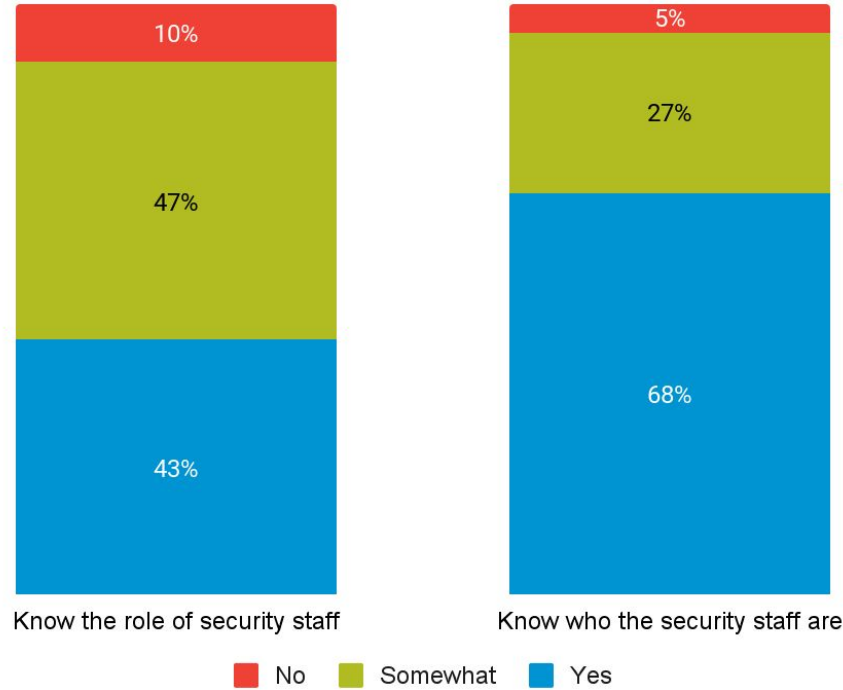
School Security Staff

Students feel comfortable going to school security staff if they need help or see something unsafe
The majority of students think security staff are a good idea



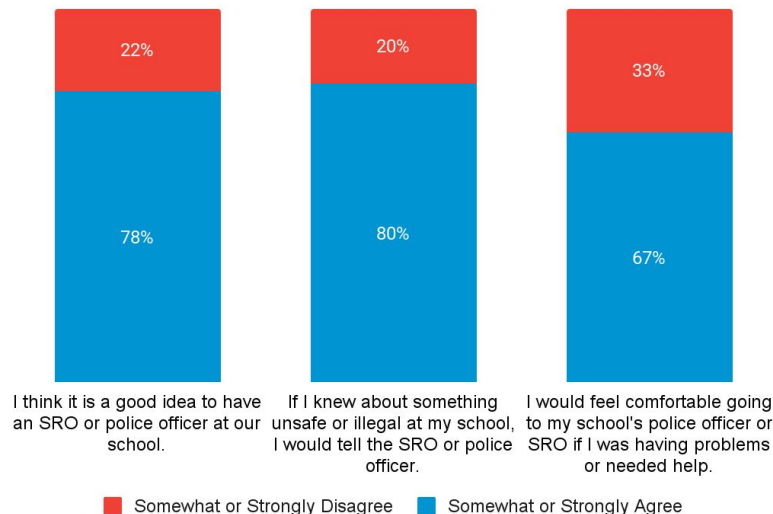
School Security Staff

Staff generally know who the school security staff are and their role in the school

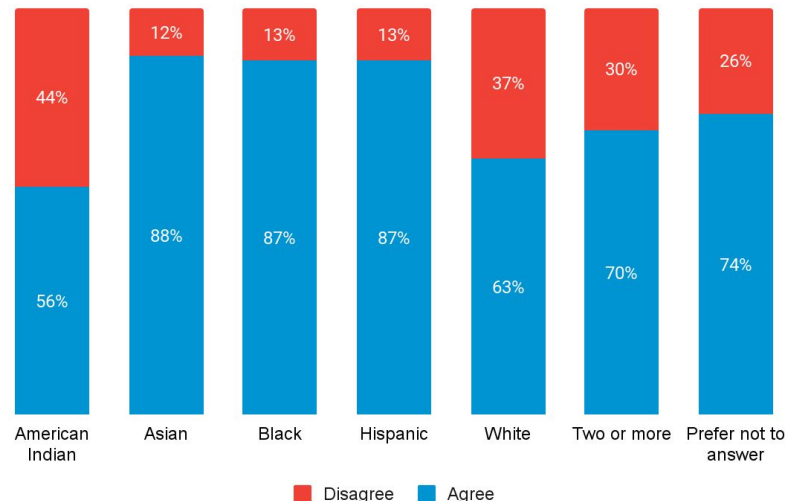


Perspectives on School Resource Officers (SROs) from Students

Overall, SPPS students think SROs are a good idea, 78%. This is somewhat less than the state average of 92% (MN Student Survey, 2023).



Perspectives on SROs varied somewhat by self-reported race. American Indian and White students are notably less likely to endorse SROs being in schools.



Perspectives on SROs from Staff and Families

- During listening sessions, perspectives from staff and parents/guardians around SROs were mixed; many people spoke for and against reinstating police officers in schools
- When asked on the safety survey to rank ideas for safety improvements in schools, high school staff and families ranked SROs as the third highest choice
- SROs were not in the top three for middle or elementary school families
- School administrators recommended bring SROs back as one of their three top safety improvement ideas

Bring back qualified and vetted police officers inside the schools. It is a great opportunity to humanize police officers, and build community relationships.

Parent comment from safety survey

I appreciate the lack of police presence at the school, and the controlled entrances. It's safe without feeling militarized.

Parent comment from safety survey

Overall Findings

- Feeling unsafe is more common among staff and families than students
- The greatest safety concerns for students, families and staff are weapons and student-on-student violence
- Students report bathrooms, hallways and traveling from school as top safety concerns
- Most students have not experienced physical violence
- Families report that most students in their family across all grades levels have not experienced physical violence
- Most staff have experienced or witnessed physical violence

Overall Findings Continued

- Most students and families are not aware of Send A Tip
- The majority of students and staff know and understand safety procedures in their schools
- Most students and staff, including school administrators, support security staff and School Resource Officers (SROs) in buildings
- Increased mental health supports and consistent consequences for behavior were in the top three choices for students, families and staff as improvements that could be made toward safer schools

Focus Areas

System Adjustments

- Introduction of digital hall passes
- Collaborative walkthroughs of high schools
- Return of yellow buses
- Office of Neighborhood Safety collaboration
- Calming rooms at 30 schools for students and 8 for staff (ARP funds)
- Inclusive restrooms at Como, Humboldt and Johnson
- Enhanced security measures

Focus Areas from Findings

- Importance of Send A Tip
- Bathrooms and hallways
- Presence of security staff
- Continue to expand opportunities for trusted student/adult relationships

Questions?