## NCPC Parent Survey: Full Executive Summary Prepared By JustKid, Inc.

## Neighborhood Issues: Attitudes Toward Neighbors

> Nearly one in five (18 percent) parents of elementary and middle school-aged children claim to be "more afraid" to walk in their own neighborhoods than they were last year. Those living in urban neighborhoods are significantly more concerned than those living in rural or suburban neighborhoods ( 26 percent urban, 15 percent rural, and 14 percent suburban). These numbers are nearly identical to the answers to the initial benchmark question posed to parents in 1999 (17 percent claimed to be "more afraid").

- Nearly three in four (74 percent) parents of elementary and middle school-aged children say there has been no change in their attitudes about safety of their neighborhood over the past year.
> More than seven in ten parents strongly or somewhat agree that they know their neighbors (72 percent), say their neighbors know their child (78 percent), and would trust their neighbors to help their child if he/she were in need ( 72 percent). These numbers are all slightly higher for parents of middle school students than parents of elementary school students.

Percentage of Parents Who Agree or Strongly Agree with the Statements

> Parents in rural and suburban areas are more likely to claim to know their neighbors more and have a higher degree of trust than parents in urban neighborhoods. This trend also holds
true for families that have two parents in the home or extended family members in the home -perhaps for the simple reason that there are more opportunities to meet and form bonds with neighbors.

## School Issues: Awareness of Leaders

> Parents are most familiar with faces they see on a regular basis inside their children's school. Nearly nine in ten parents of both elementary and middle school children are aware of and can identify the names of their children's classroom teacher ( 89 percent) and school principal (88 percent). About four in ten parents know the name of the school nurse (44 percent) and five in ten know the name of the guidance counselor (49 percent), while less than one-quarter know the name of the school safety officer ( 23 percent)

- Parents in rural areas are more likely than parents in suburban and rural areas to know the names of nearly all adults in the school. Parents in urban areas are more likely than other parents to say they know the name of the school safety officer (29 percent).
> Parents say that they are more likely to talk with a teacher or another faculty member about educational issues ( 87 percent have talked; the average number of times is three per year) than to talk about social issues such as making friends or getting along with others (62 percent, or an average of approximately two times per year). Only 37 percent of parents say someone from the school has talked to them about disciplinary issues such as suspensions or detentions (mean of one time per year). Similarly, only one in three parents say they have heard any discussion regarding school safety issues such as bullying or weapons in school (the average is less than one time per year). In all cases, parents of boys are more likely than parents of girls to report having a conversation about any of these issues.

Frequency of Parent Communication with Schools About Safety Issues

## School Issues: Getting Involved

> Nearly all parents believe it is extremely or very important to be involved in their child's education through monitoring of child's grades ( 98 percent), ensuring the child attends school ( 97 percent), helping/ensuring the child completes his or her homework ( 97 percent), meeting with their child's teachers ( 95 percent) and attending school activities ( 92 percent). Parents are much less likely to agree with the importance of joining a parent-teacher organization (63 percent), volunteering in a classroom ( 65 percent), or helping to plan and implement activities at the school (68 percent). Participation rates in these activities are similar to importance with approximately 90 percent to 99 percent of parents saying they often or regularly attend events, with the exception of joining a parent-teacher group (52 percent), volunteering in class ( 51 percent) and helping to plan and implement activities at school (51 percent).

- Parents of girls are more likely than parents of boys to both agree with the importance of each of these ways to get/stay involved in their child's school as well as often or occasionally participate at school.
$>$ When asked to describe which of a series of factors limited their involvement in schoolrelated activities, more than six in ten (62 percent) claimed the problem was simply conflicting work schedules. Nearly half said child care activities (49 percent) and involvement in activities with their other children (49 percent) remained a root cause in the lack of involvement.
- Parents in urban areas were more likely than parents in suburban or rural areas to choose each potential limiting factor in getting involved in school-related activities.

Percentage of Parents Saying the Following Barriers Are Significant or Very Significant


## School Issues: Incidents

> When given a list of potential incidents that may have happened in their child's middle school, nearly six in ten parents claimed hearing about a bullying event ( 58 percent) or a fight in school ( 57 percent). Sadly, four in ten parents ( 40 percent) say they had heard of an event in school where children used hate-related words. Parents were less likely to mention issues related to drug use in school (20 percent), drug dealing in school (15 percent), gang activity ( 13 percent) or abuse of a student by a staff member (10 percent), or abuse in a dating situation (7 percent).

- A note of caution - only 11 percent of parents of middle schoolers claim to have heard of any Internet/technology-based harassment (also known as cyberbullying). A recent survey by NCPC showed that nearly 60 percent of students at this age are aware of cyberbullying activities.
- Bullying and fighting were reported most at rural schools. Vandalism, drug use and distribution, gang activity, and abuse of students by staff member or in a dating relationship was mentioned most by parents in urban settings.
> Parents are hearing about each issue from their children five or six times more than from official school sources/communications.

Percentage of Parents Who First Heard About Safety Incidents From the Following Sources


## School Issues: Worry and Prevention

> Parents of middle school students are most worried that their child will be a victim of bullying ( 30 percent), theft ( 20 percent) and sexual harassment (19 percent). Parents are only slightly less worried about their child being a victim of gang activity (17 percent) and hate crimes (17 percent).

- Parents living in urban areas and Hispanic parents are more worried than other parents that their child will be a victim of all of these acts of violence at school.

Percentage of Parents Who Are Extremely or Very Worried Their Child Will Be Victimized By:

> Parents of middle school students are aware of a range of prevention methods used in their child's school. Nearly nine in ten ( 87 percent) of parents say their school requires visitors to check in or sign in at a designated location. More than half of parents say their child's school requires parental involvement in school safety activities ( 59 percent), the school has a drug prevention program ( 58 percent), or that their school has a school safety officer such as a security guard or police officer ( 50 percent). Only some schools have a mandatory dress code (58 percent), character education program (43 percent), a bullying prevention program (42 percent), or a substance abuse program (42 percent).

- Parents living in suburban areas are most likely to say their school has character education and bullying prevention programs.
> More than half of parents say that they would like a telephone call (54 percent) and an email (53 percent) from the school directly to them as a parent as it relates to school activities or problems.
- Urban parents are most likely to want a phone call (58 percent) while suburban parents are most likely to want an email (57 percent).

