

**Exploring Community and Parent Involvement  
in the University District Neighborhood**



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### **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction

The present study sought to explore and describe parent involvement at Weinland Park Elementary School and Medary Elementary School. In order to understand parent involvement at the school, the scope of this study was expanded to encompass not only the levels of current parent involvement at Weinland Park and Medary, but also the barriers to parent involvement, the types of activities that parents would like to be involved with at the school, the areas that families at Weinland Park and Medary have the most need, and the after school activities respondent's children are involved. In addition this study sought to explore the degree and nature of family/parent strengths that can be used to enhance the school community and to foster parent involvement.

Data on parent involvement were collected using a survey instrument developed at Weinland Park Elementary by school administrators with some input from parents of students at the school. The instrument used at Medary Elementary, was modified somewhat to include other response items, however the overall structure was maintained. The instrument was designed to collect information from parents about their involvement at the school using the broad definition of parent involvement mentioned above. Respondents answered each question from a fixed set of possible answers and were able to select as many of the fixed responses as each respondent felt necessary.

During Spring 2003, data were collected at a weekday school event at each of the schools. At Weinland Park, the respondents were limited to parents or caregivers. At Medary, parents, caregivers, other relatives, and community members were given the opportunity to complete the survey. Parents were asked by Weinland Park or Medary volunteers and the respective parents and community members to complete the

instrument. A total of 71 parents/caregivers at Weinland Park and 53 persons at Medary completed the questionnaire. Respondents were given an opportunity to receive a five dollar certificate, through a raffle, for their participation. A convenience sample was used at both sites because there was no systematic way to randomly sample the parents. Although this sampling procedure limits the interpretation of the data to only those persons who completed the survey instrument at each event, the collected data do provide useful, but tentative, information about the extent of parent involvement, family needs, and family strengths at the Weinland Park and Medary elementary schools.

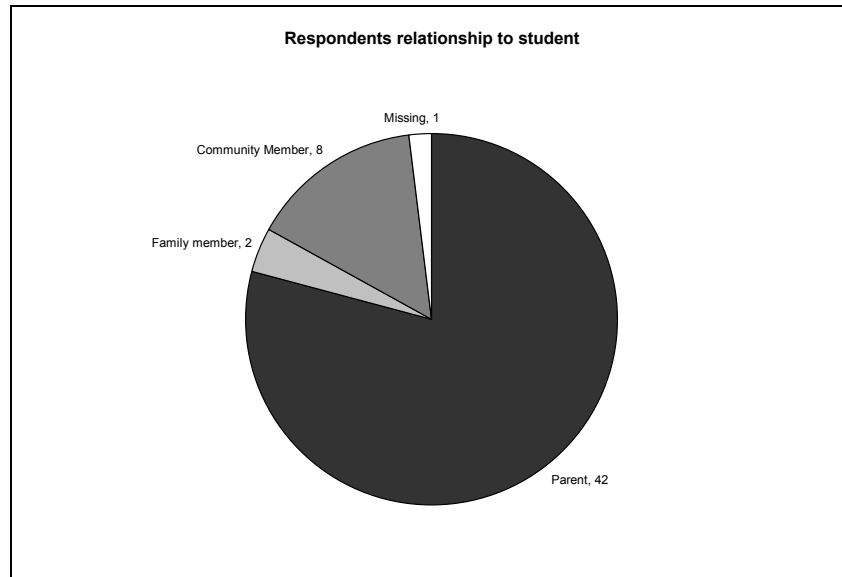
The data and findings will be presented for each school separately.

### **Medary Elementary School**

The following section provides a question by question summary of the data collected from respondents at Medary. This section describes the dispersion of participant responses to each question and includes information on the number of responses that each participant selected for each of the questions.

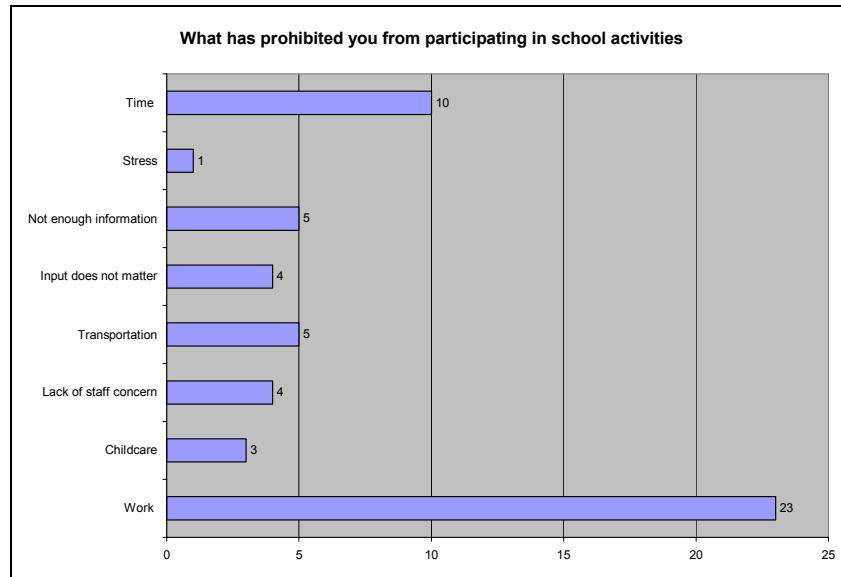
Respondents were asked to specify their relationship to children at Medary. The majority of respondents were parents (79.2%). The next largest group of respondents was community members (15.1%), followed by other family members (3.8%). Less than two percent of the respondents did not specify their relationship to the children. Figure 1 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection to the question about their relationship to children at Medary.

Figure 1



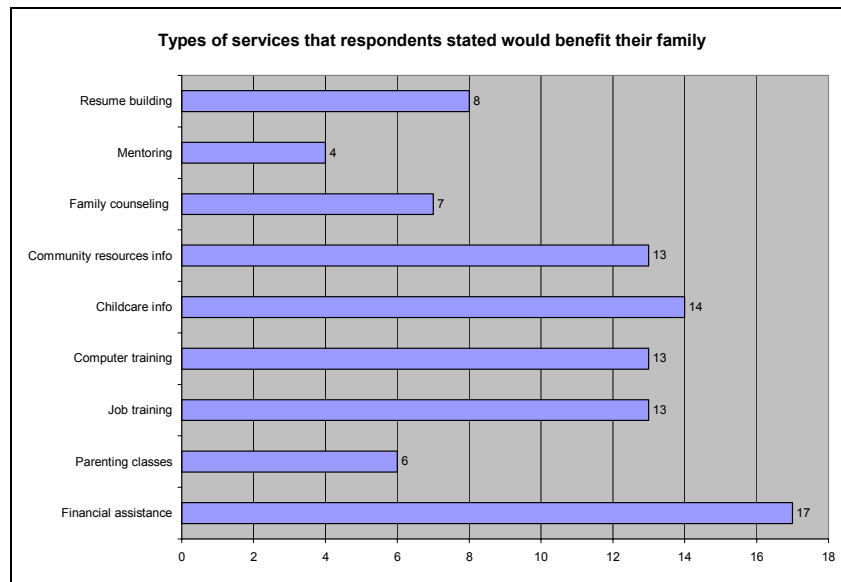
Respondents were asked to specify what has prohibited them in the past from participating in school activities. The majority of respondents (56.1%) stated that work was a major prohibitive factor in school participation. The second most prohibitive factor was not having enough time (24.4%). Transportation and not having enough information were each selected by 12.2% of respondents. Lack of staff concern, lack of childcare, feeling that input does not matter, and stress were each selected as prohibitive factors by less than 10% of respondents. Of the respondents, 22.6% did not select a reason for not participating in school activities. 60.4% of respondents selected one reason. The remaining 17% selected between two to four reasons for not participating in school activities. Figure 2 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 2



Respondents were asked to specify the types of services that would benefit their family. The majority of respondents (53.1%) stated that financial assistance would benefit their family. The second most selected response was childcare (43.6%). Job training, computer training, and community resource information were each selected by 40.6% of the respondents. Resume building was selected by 25% of respondents and family counseling was selected by 21.5%. Parenting classes and mentoring programs were each selected by less than 20% of respondents. Forty-one percent of respondents did not select a service. Of respondents, 22.6% selected one service that they thought would benefit their family, 9.4% selected two services and 11.3% selected three services. The remaining 25.2% selected between four and nine services that they stated would benefit their families. Figure 3 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

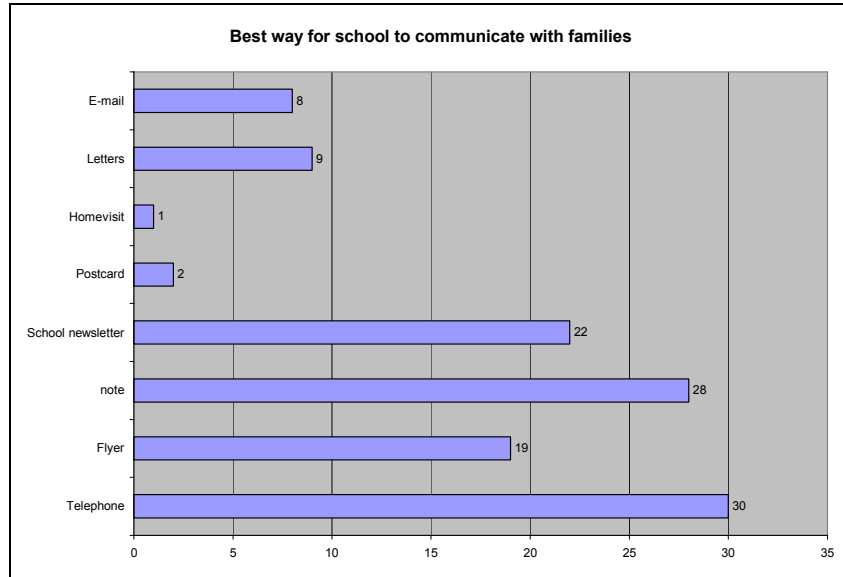
Figure 3



Respondents were asked to specify the best way for the school to communicate with families. The majority of respondents (57.7%) stated that the telephone was the best way to communicate with families. Almost 54% of respondents stated that a note home with students was the best way to communicate with families. A school newsletter (42.3%) was also seen as a good way for the school to communicate with families. Flyers were also considered by 36.5% of respondents to be a good way for the school to communicate with families. Letters, e-mail, postcards and home visits were each selected by less than 18% of respondents.

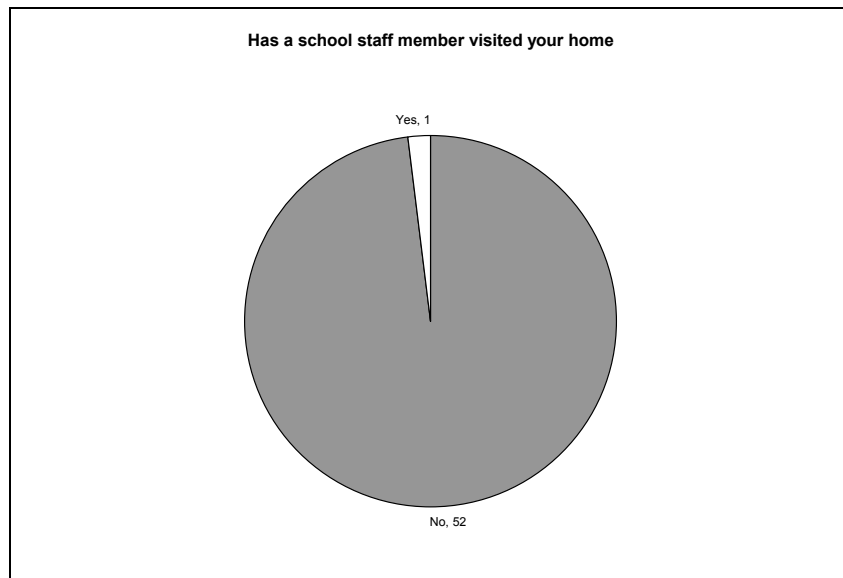
Among the respondents, 1.9% did not select any method of communication, 26.4% of respondents selected one method of communication, 34% selected two methods of communication and another 26.4% selected three methods of communication. The remaining 11.3% selected between four and six methods of communication. Figure 4 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 4



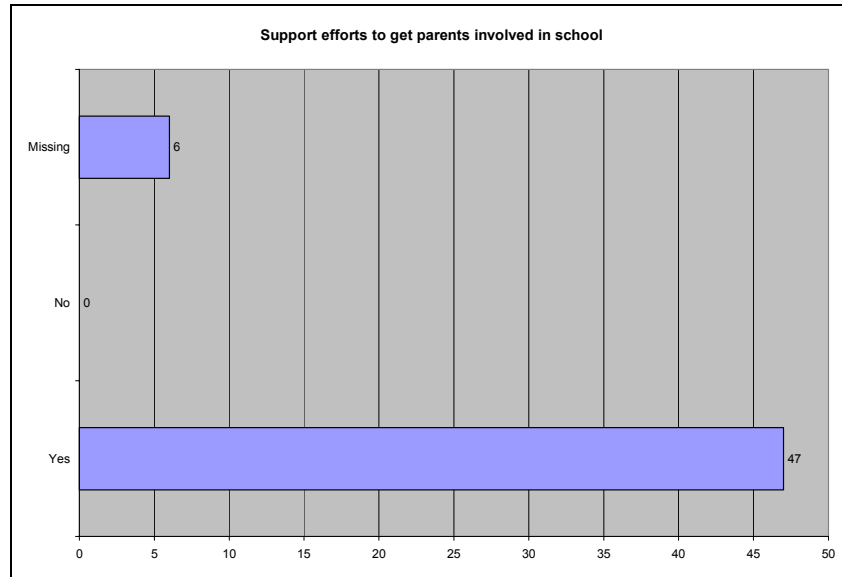
Respondents were asked if they have had a school staff member come to their house for a home visit. Of the respondents, 98.1% had not had a home visit. The one person (1.9%) that had had a home visit rated this visit as being somewhat helpful. Figure 5 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 5



Respondents were asked whether they would support an effort to get more parents involved in the school. Of the parents that responded (n = 47), all of them stated that they would support efforts to get more parents involved in the school. Figure 6 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

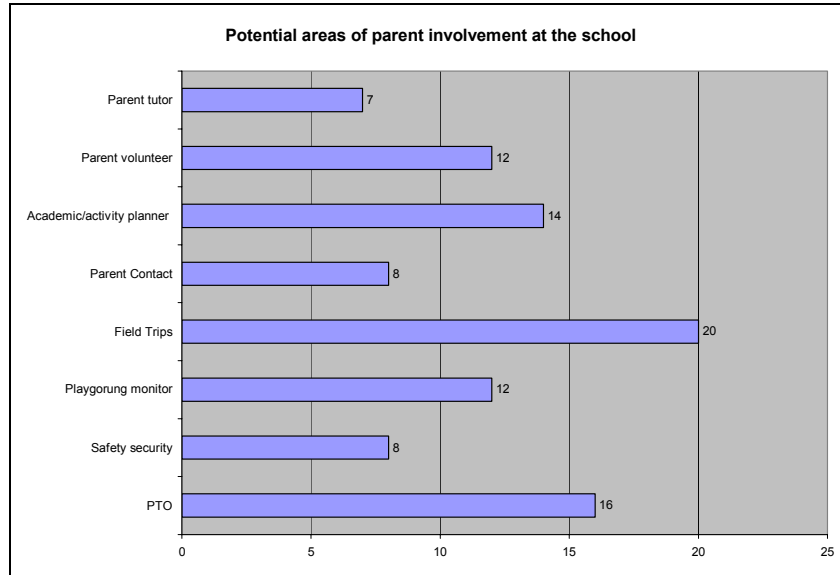
Figure 6



Parents were asked what areas they would like to be involved in at the school. The majority of respondents (50%) selected going on field trips as an activity that they would like to be involved in. Being involved in the PTO was selected by 40% of respondents. Being an activity/academic planner was selected by 35 % of respondents. Being a playground monitor and a parent volunteer were each selected by 30% of respondents. Being a parent contact and being on the safety security were each selected by 20% of respondents. Being a parent tutor was selected by 17 % of respondents. Of the respondents who answered this question, 14.9% did not provide an activity that they would be involved in, 29.8% selected one activity, 21.3% selected two activities, and

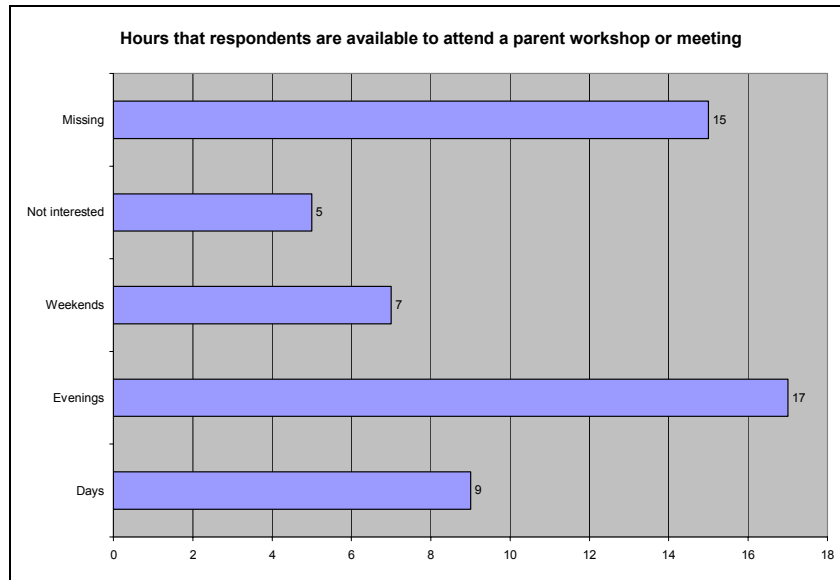
19.1% selected three activities. The remaining 14.9% selected between four and eight activities each. Figure 7 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 7



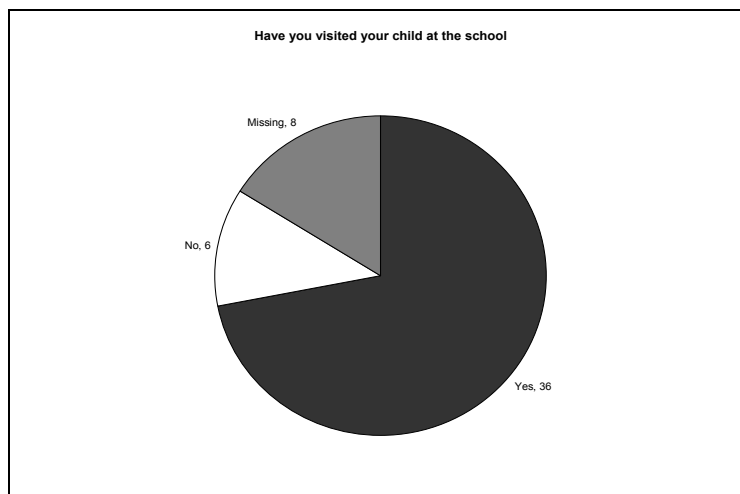
Respondents were asked to specify when they would be available to attend a parent workshop or meeting. The best time for parents to attend a meeting was in the evening (32.1%). Seventeen percent of respondents were available during the day and 13.2% were available during weekends. Of respondents, 37.3% did not answer this question or stated that they were not interested in attending a parent workshop or meeting. Figure 8 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 8



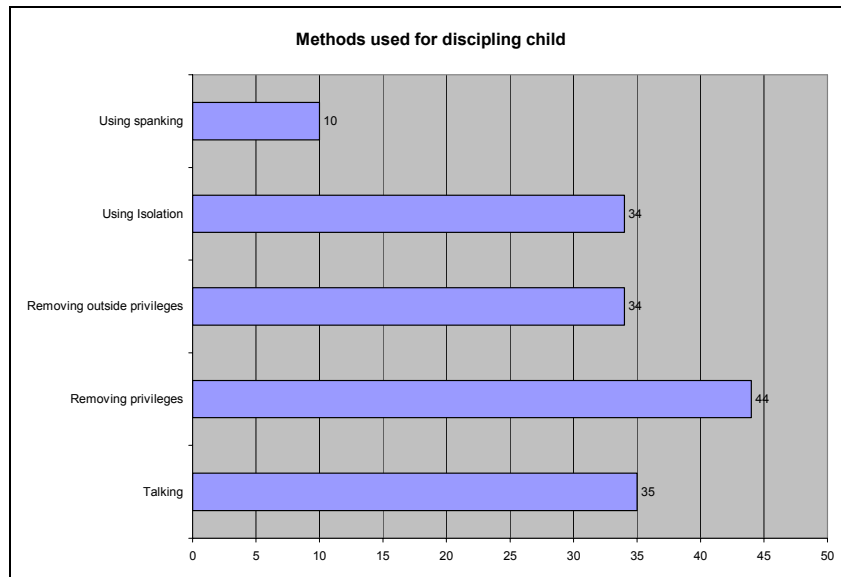
Respondents were asked if they had ever visited their child’s classroom at school. The majority of respondents (73.6%) had visited their child’s classroom. Of respondents 11.3% had not visited their child’s classroom; 15.1% of participants did not respond to the question. Figure 9 provides a graphic illustration of respondents’ selection.

Figure 9



Respondents were asked to state what methods they have used to discipline their child. The method of discipline used by most respondents was removing privileges (88%). Talking with their child was the second most used method of discipline (70%). Removing outside privileges and using isolation were each selected as methods of discipline by 68% of respondents. Spanking was used by 20% of respondents. The majority of respondents (56.6%) used between three and five different methods to discipline their child, 22.6% used two methods and 15.1% stated that they use only one method. Of the respondents 3.8% stated that they do not use any of the mentioned methods to discipline their child and 1.9% did not provide information about what methods of discipline they used. Figure 10 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

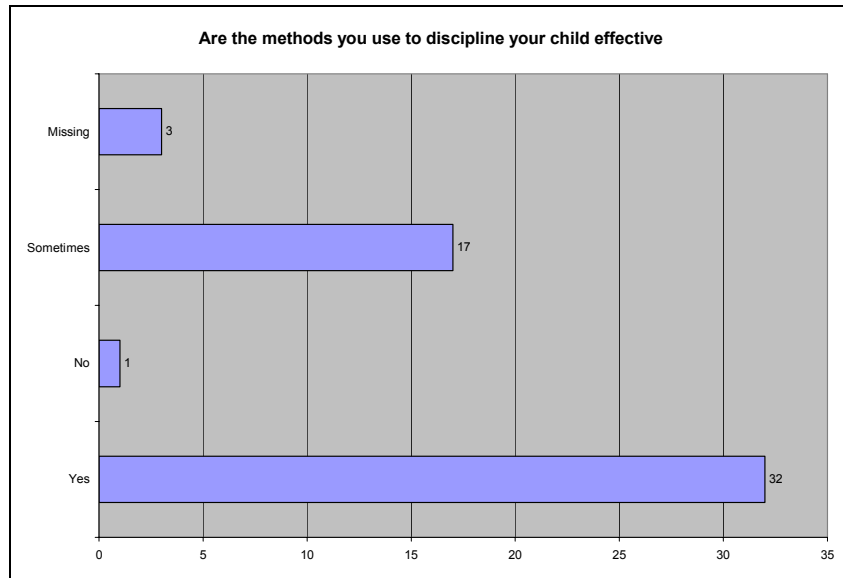
Figure 10



Respondents were asked if the methods of discipline that they have used with their child have been effective. The majority of respondents (60.4%) stated that they were

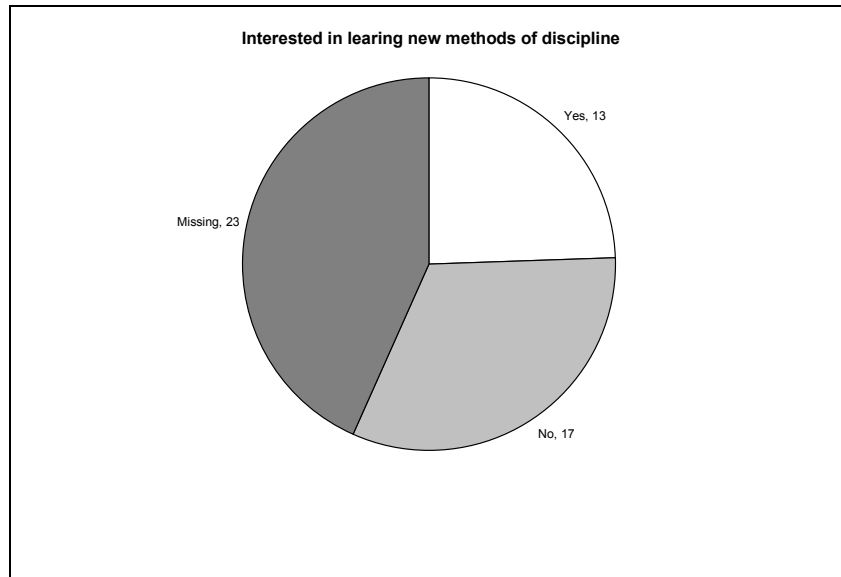
effective. Thirty-two percent of respondents stated that their methods of discipline were effective sometimes and 1.9 % stated that their methods of discipline were not effective. Of the respondents, 5.7% did not provide an answer to this question. Figure 11 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 11



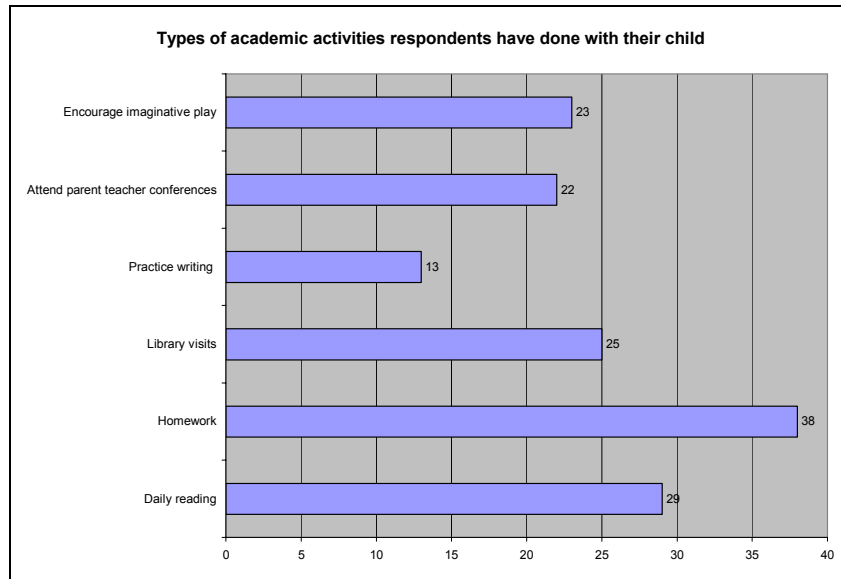
Respondents were asked if they were interested in learning new methods of discipline. Thirty-two percent of respondents stated that they did not want to learn any new methods and 24.5% stated that they would like to learn new disciplinary methods. Thirty-two percent of respondents did not answer this question. Figure 12 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 12



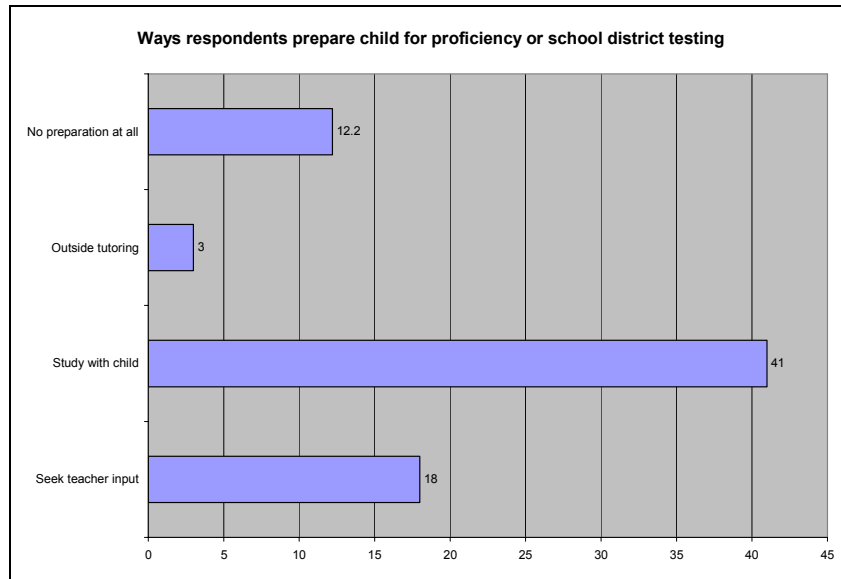
Respondents were asked about the types of academic activities they have engaged in with their child. Helping their child with homework (77.6%) was the most practiced academic activity that parents engage in with their child. Besides doing homework, parents also engaged in daily reading (59.2%), went on library visits (51%), encouraged imaginative play (46.9%), attended parent conferences (44.95), and practiced writing (26.5%). Of the respondents, 15.1% selected one academic activity, 22.6% selected two activities, 22.6% selected three activities, 32% selected between four and six activities, 3.8% selected no activities and another 3.8% did not answer the question. Figure 13 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 13



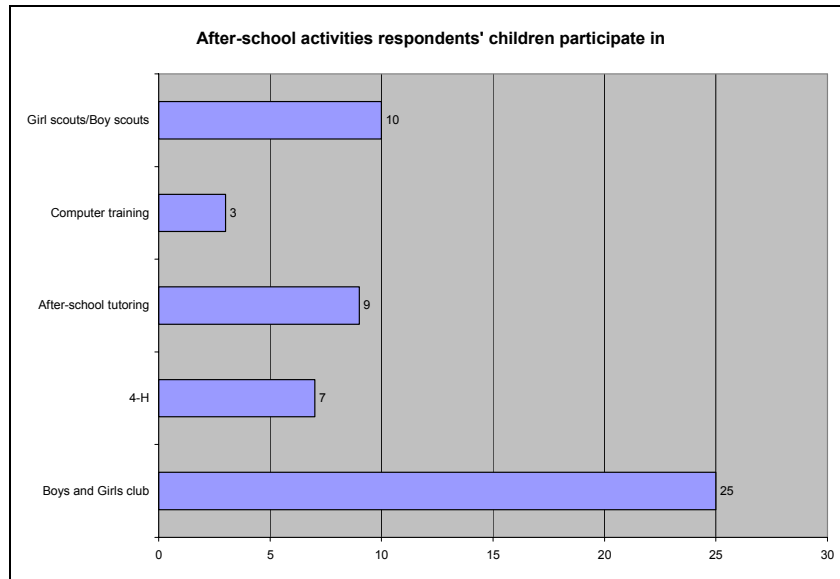
Respondents were asked about the ways that they have prepared their child for proficiency or school district testing. The majority of respondents (83.7%) studied with their child to prepare them for the tests. Seeking teacher input was selected by 36.7% of respondents. Outside tutoring and no preparation at all were each selected by less than 13% of respondents. The majority of respondents (50.9%) selected only one way that they prepared their child for these types of tests, 32.1% selected two or three different preparation strategies, 11.3% of respondents did not select any of the listed methods of preparing their child, and 5.7% of the respondents did not provide an answer to this question. Figure 14 provides a graphic illustration of respondent's selections

Figure 14



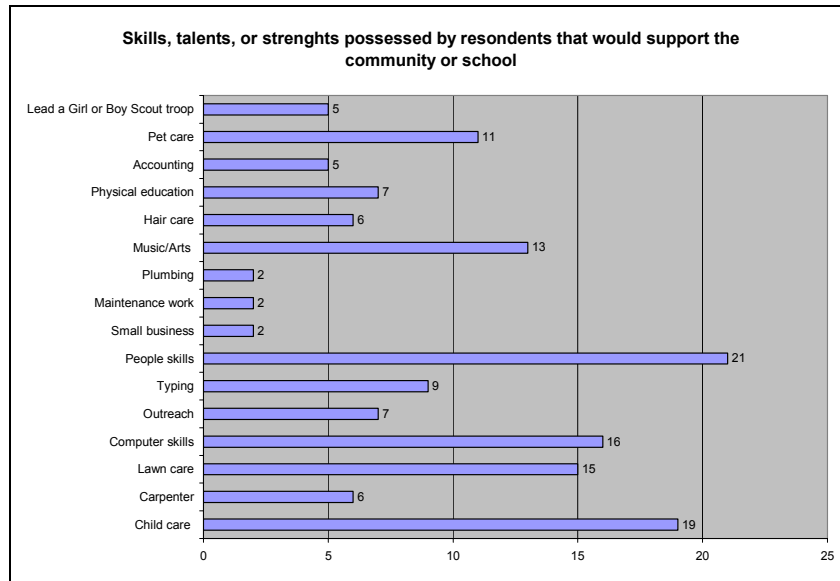
Respondents were asked to specify in which after-school activities their child has participated. The majority of respondents (83.3%) stated that their child participated in the Boys and Girls Club; this is not surprising given that the Boys and Girls Club has a club on-site at the school. The second most selected activity was Girl scouts/Boy scouts (33.3%). After-school tutoring was selected by 30% of respondents, 4-H (23.3%) and computer training (10%) were also selected by respondents as after-school activities which their children participates. Of respondents, 33.3% selected one after-school activity, 13.7% of respondents selected two after school activities, 11.8% of respondents selected between three and five after-school activities, and 3.8% of respondents did not select an after-school activity. Figure 15 provides a graphic illustration of respondent selections.

Figure 15



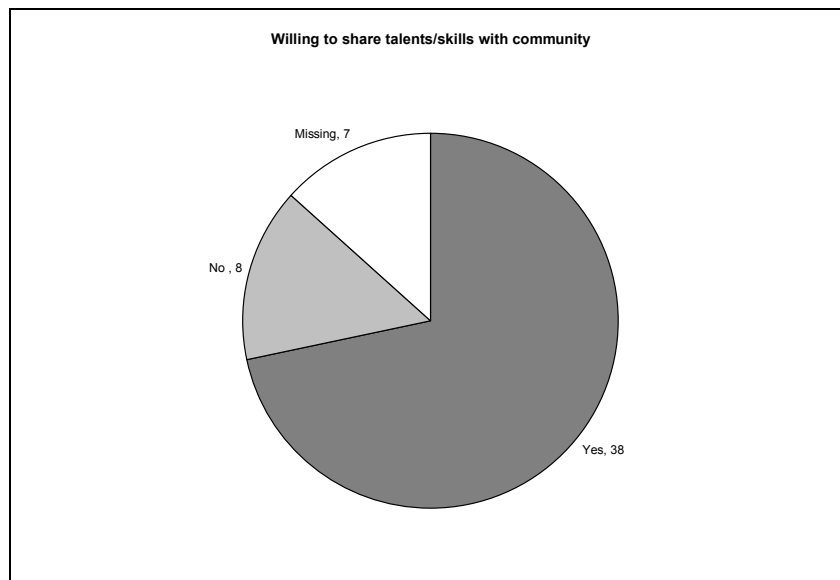
Respondents were asked to identify their skills, talents or strengths that they possess that would support their community or school. The most selected talent was people skills (45.7%). People skills were followed by child care (41.3%), computer skills (34.8%), lawn care (32.6%), and music/arts (28.3%). Carpentry, outreach, typing, hair care, physical education, accounting, pet care, and Girl or Boy Scout troop leader were each selected by less than 25% of respondents. Small business, maintenance work and plumbing were each selected by 4.3% of respondents. Of respondents, 22.6% selected only one talent and 26.4% selected two talents, 35.9% selected between three and nine talents, 5.7% of respondents selected no talents and 9.4% of respondents did not answer the question. Figure 16 provides a graphic illustration of respondent selections.

Figure 16



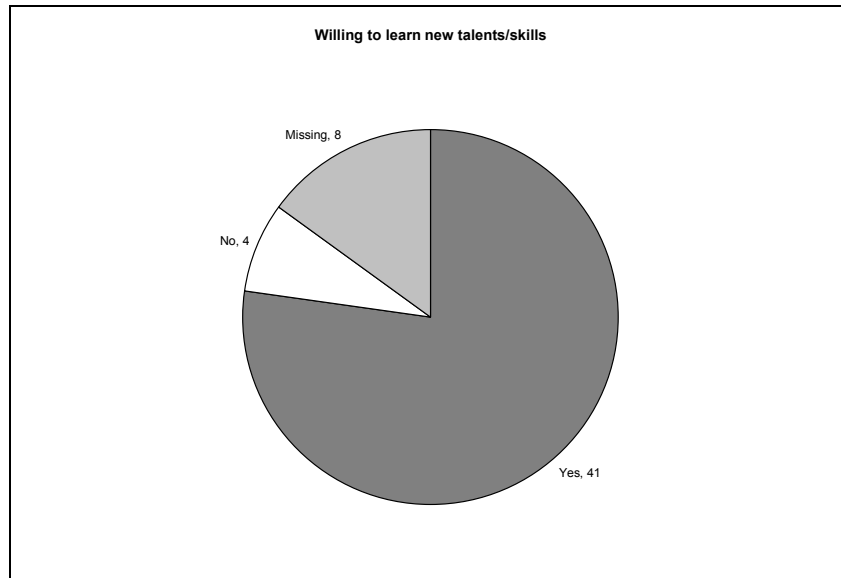
Respondents were asked if they would be willing to share their talents and skills with the community. The majority of respondents stated that they would be willing to share their talents (71.1%). Of respondents, 13.3% did not provide an answer to this question. Figure 17 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 17



Respondents were asked if they would be willing to learn new talents and skills. The majority of respondents stated that they would be willing to learn new talents or skills (77.4%). Of respondents, 15.1% did not provide an answer to this question. Figure 18 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selection.

Figure 18



## **Discussion**

The previous section described respondents' answers to each of the questions contained within the survey instrument. This current section provides a synthesis of these questions. From the information found in this current study, five themes or trends can be identified: 1) barriers to involvement, 2) needs of families, 3) student after-school involvement, 4) parent involvement and 5) family strengths.

The first trend that emerged was related to barriers to parent involvement at the school. Respondents identified a wide range of reasons for not being involved at the school. Although work represented the most often cited reason for not being involved at the school (56.1%), three other factors – not having enough time, not having transportation, and not having enough information – were together selected by 48.8% of

respondents. These four barriers account for the majority of reasons why parents have not been involved in school related activities. Additionally, the majority of respondents (60.4%) selected only one barrier to participation; suggesting that making an impact in these four areas may contribute to increased parent involvement.

Another trend that emerged was related to family need. Families indicated that they had a diversity of need. Five categories of need were each selected by over forty percent of respondents; these categories were financial assistance, job training, computer training, and community resource information. Additionally, forty-five percent of respondents selected multiple needs. The data suggest that families have multiple needs that are currently not being met. One potential intervention would be to provide families with information related to these areas of need, such as a community resource guide.

A third trend that emerged from the data were the after school activities in which students participated. Roughly 96% of respondents indicated that their child was involved in at least one after school activity, with the majority of children being involved in the Boys and Girls Club. Although Boys and Girls Club was the most often cited after school activity (83.3% of respondents), Girl scouts/Boy scouts, after school tutoring, and the 4-H club were each selected by more than 20% of respondents. With the children of respondents being actively engaged in after school programming, these after school programs provide one possible avenue for getting parents involved in school related activities. That is, for parents who are unable to be involved in school related activities, these after school programs provide a second option for parent involvement.

A fourth trend that emerged from the data relates specifically to parent involvement at Medary. Of parents who responded to a question about whether they

would support efforts to get parents involved in school, all of them stated that they would support efforts to increase parent involvement at the school. Parents also specified specific activities that they would want to be involved in; helping on field trips, working with the PTO, being an activities/academic planner, being a playground monitor, and being a parent volunteer, were each selected by 30% or more of respondents. And none of the available responses were selected by less than 17% of respondents. Further, the majority of respondents (55.3%) selected two or more activities. These data suggest that parents want to be involved and that they want to be involved in a diversity of activities.

Closely related to parent involvement is parent availability. The majority of parents stated that they were available during evening hours (32.1%), hours that school is not in session. In addition to evening hours, 13.2% stated that they would be available during weekends, days that school is not in session. Roughly 17% stated that they would be available during school-day hours. This information on parent availability suggests that to get parents involved in school activities, schools may need to provide multiple opportunities at different hours to accommodate parent time constraints.

A final trend that emerged from the data relate to strengths that exist within families. Thirteen of 16 possible response categories were selected by more than 10% of respondents, with five categories – people skills, childcare, computer skills lawn skills and music/art skills – being selected by more than 27% of respondents. Further, the majority of respondents (71.1%) stated that they would be willing to share their skills and a majority of respondents (77.4%) stated that they would be willing to learn new skills. These family strengths coupled with a willingness to share existing and learn new

strengths, suggests a plethora of untapped resources that can be used to improve the school community through an increase in parent involvement.

### Conclusion

With the information learned from this preliminary study, three further OSU – Medary collaborative activities are currently being developed and implemented. First, a resource map is being constructed that will include all identifiable social service resources within the University District. This map, which will take the form of a booklet, will be provided to parents to assist them in locating needed resources that already exist in their community. Parent from Medary elementary schools will be involved in the construction of this book to insure that it meets their needs.

A second activity relates to developing a further definition of parent involvement within the schools. Clearly, parents want to be involved in the schools and parents have a number of strengths that could be tapped into to strengthen parent involvement related activities. Based on this information, researchers from OSU are working with parents, in focus group activities, to further construct a parents’ definitions of parent involvement.

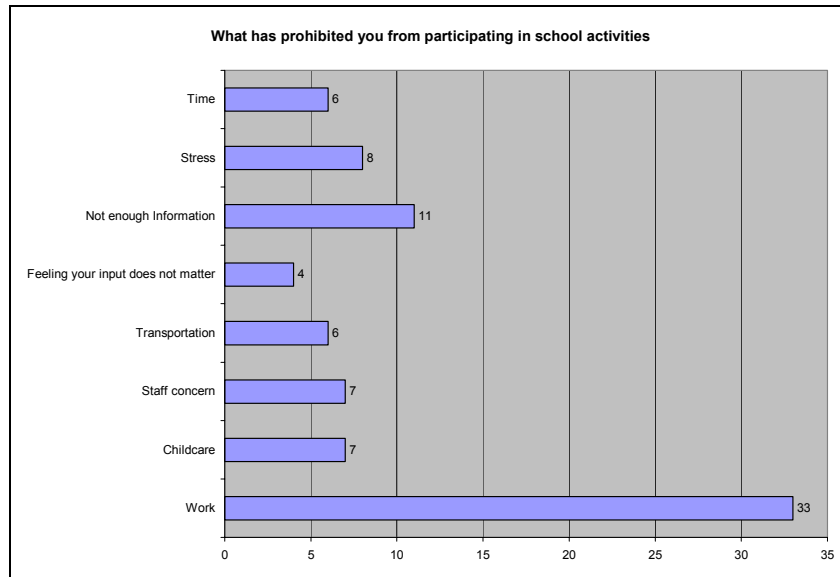
Finally, researchers from OSU are working with the Medary PTO on interventions focused on increasing parent involvement. Using input from parents, researchers are empowering the Medary PTO to put on events, such as meet-and-greets, to encourage all parents of students of Medary to take an active role in their school. Both parents and researchers are learning from each attempted intervention. This collaborative relationship between OSU and the parents will continue at Medary.

## **Weinland Park Elementary School**

The following section provides a question by question summary of the data collected from respondents at Weinland Park. This section describes the dispersion of participant responses to each question and includes information on the number of responses that each participant selected for each of the questions.

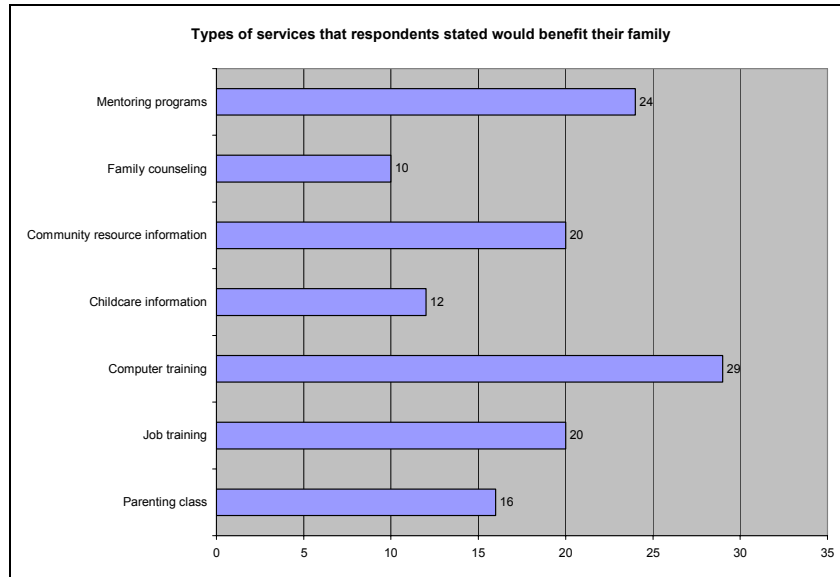
Respondents were asked to specify what barriers have prohibited them from participating in school activities. The majority of respondents (55%) stated that work was a major prohibitive factor in parent involvement at the school. The second most prohibitive factor was not having enough information (24.4%). Stress was selected by 13.3% of respondents. Childcare and lack of staff concern were each selected by 11.7% of respondents. Transportation, feeling that your input does not matter and time were each selected as prohibitive factors by 10% or less of respondents. Of the respondents, 14.1% did not give a reason, 60.6% gave one reason, 16.9% gave two reasons and 7% gave three reasons for not participating in parent involvement activities. 1.4% of the data on barriers to parent involvement were missing. Figure 19 provides a graphic illustration of the distribution of prohibitive factors.

Figure 19



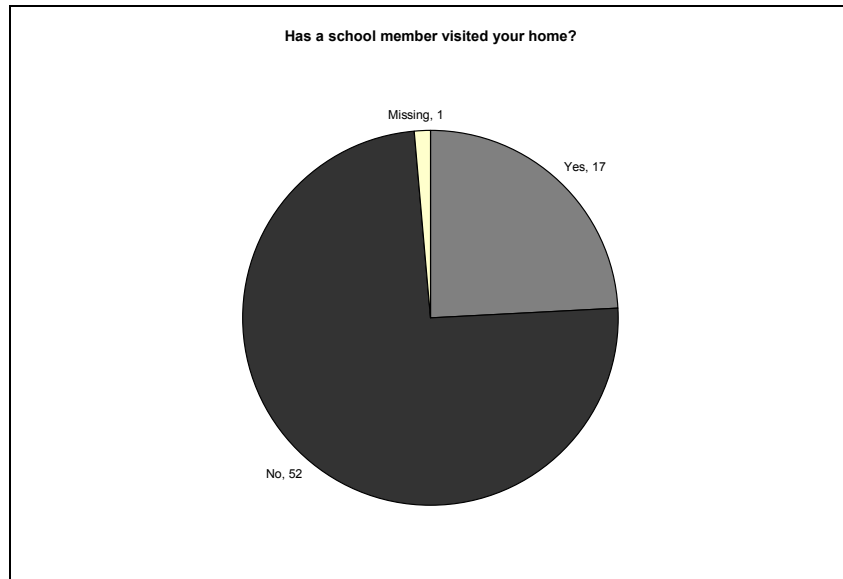
Respondents were asked to specify the types of services that would benefit their family. The majority of respondents (50%) stated that computer training would benefit their family. The second most selected response was mentoring programs (41.4%). Job training and community resource information were each selected by 34.5% of the respondents. Parenting classes were selected by 27.6% of respondents. Childcare information and family counseling were each selected by 20% or less of respondents. Of the respondents, 18.3% did not select a service, 31% selected one service, 23.9% selected two services, 14.1% selected three services, 8.5% selected four services, and 4.2% selected all seven services. Figure 20 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selections.

Figure 20



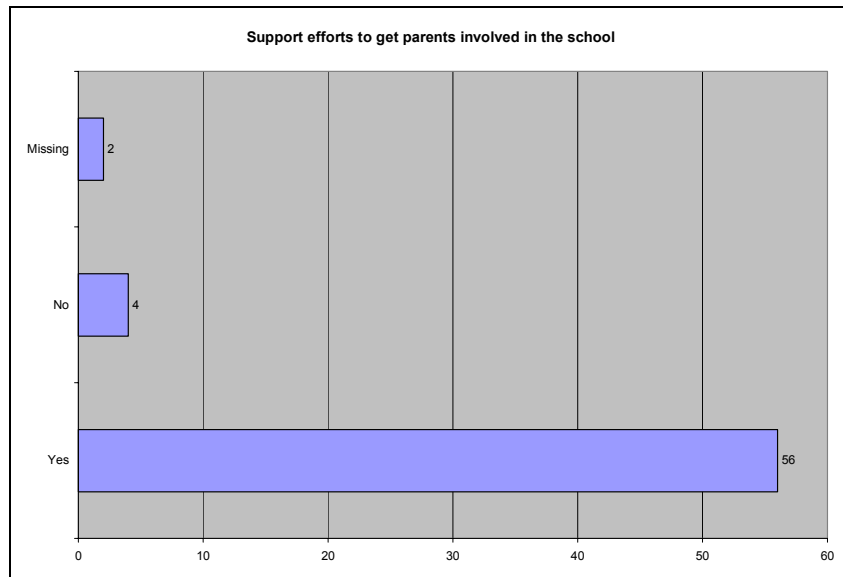
Respondents were asked if a staff member from the school had visited their home. The majority of respondents (74.6%) stated that a school staff person had not visited their home. One person (1.4%) did not respond to this question. Of the 23.9% of respondents who stated that a staff person had visited their home, 76.5% stated that they were very satisfied with the home visit, 11.8% stated that they were somewhat happy with the visit, and 11.8% did not answer this question. Figure 21 provides a graphic illustration of the count of persons who had or had not had a school staff member visit their home.

Figure 21



Respondents were asked if they would support efforts to get parents involved at Weinland Park. The majority of respondents (91%) stated that they would support efforts to get parents involved at the school. Two respondents (2.8%) did not provide a response to this question. Figure 22 provides a graphic representation of respondents responses.

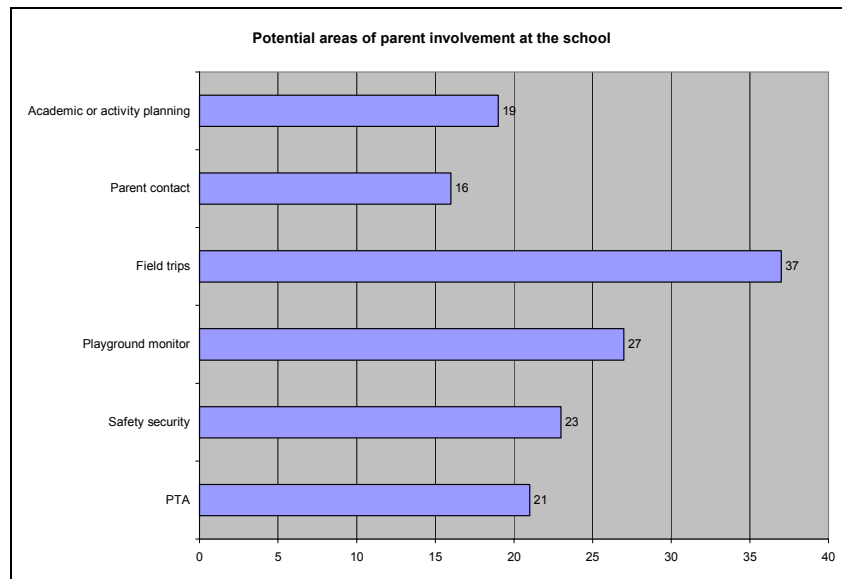
Figure 22



Respondents were asked to specify potential activities at the school in which they would want to be involved. The majority of respondents (61.7%) stated that they would

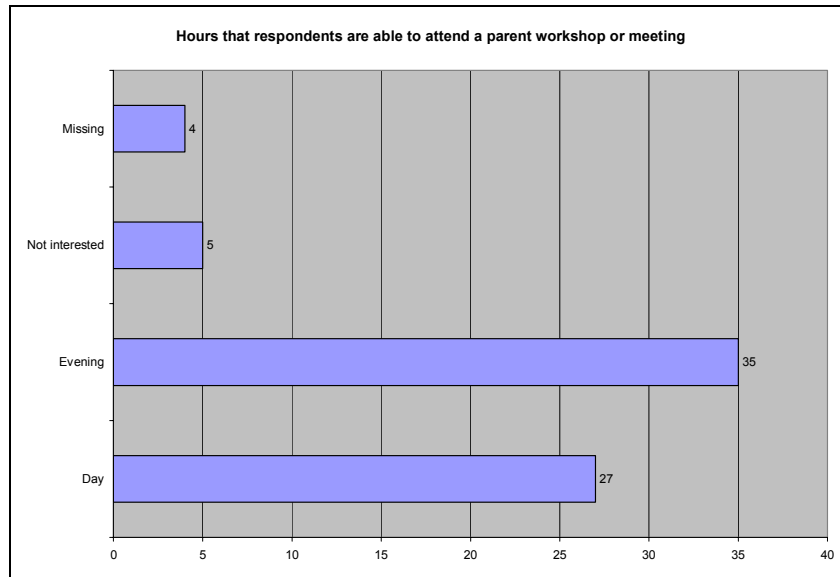
be involved in field trips. Being a playground monitor was the second most selected response (45%), followed by being on safety security (38.3%), being involved in the PTO (35%), being an academic or activity planner (31%), and being a parent contact (26.7%). Of the respondents, 12.7% did not select an area of involvement, 29.6% selected one area, 25.4% selected two areas, 14.1% selected three areas and 15.5% selected between four and six areas of potential involvement. Information was missing for two (2.8%) of the cases. Figure 23 provides a graphic representation of the types of activities that respondents stated that they would be involved in.

Figure 23



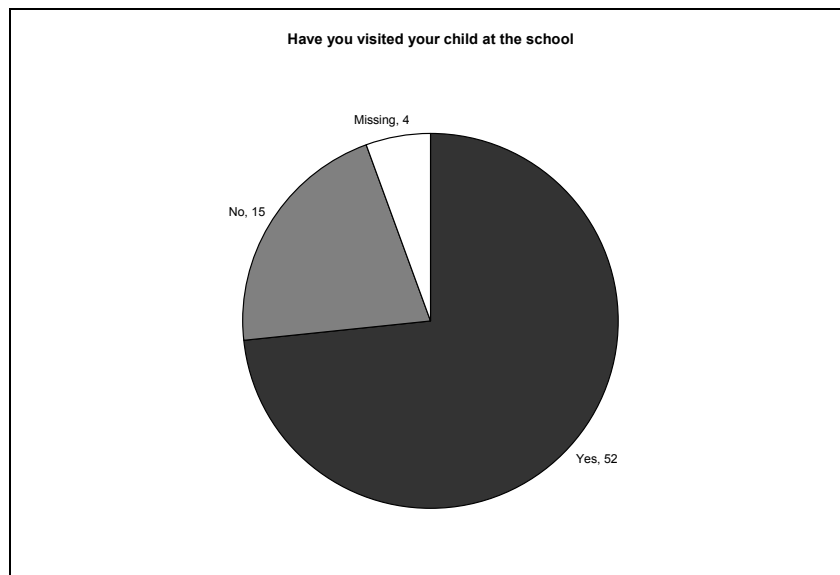
Respondents were asked to specify what hours they would be able to attend a parent workshop or meeting. The majority of respondents (49.3%) selected evenings as the best time to attend a school workshop or a meeting. Day times were selected by 38% of respondents. Not interested and missing responses represented 12.6% of responses. See figure 24 for a visual display of participant responses.

Figure 24



Respondents were asked if they have ever visited their child at the school. The majority of respondents (73.2%) stated that they had visited their child at the school. Four (5.6%) respondents did not provide a response to this question. See figure 25 for a visual display of this information.

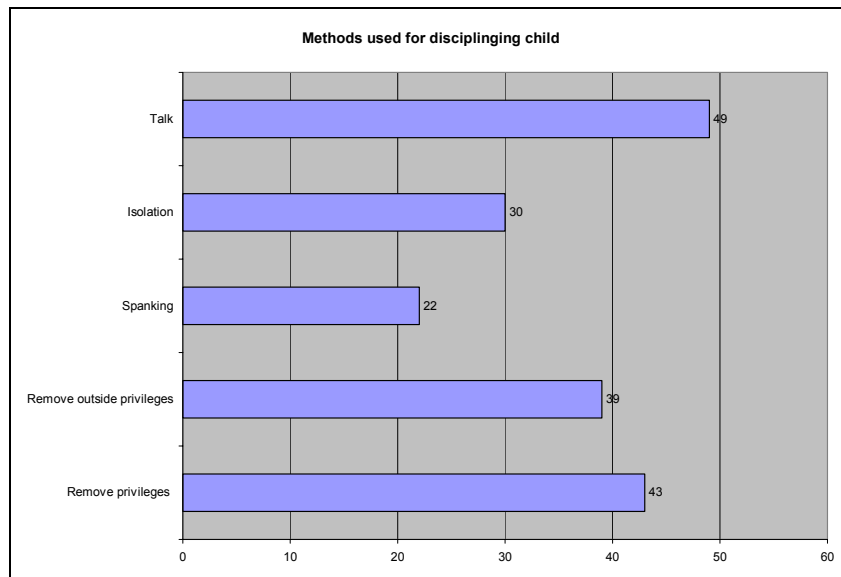
Figure 25



Respondents were asked to specify the methods that they have used to discipline their child. The majority of respondents (72.1%) stated that they talked to their child as a

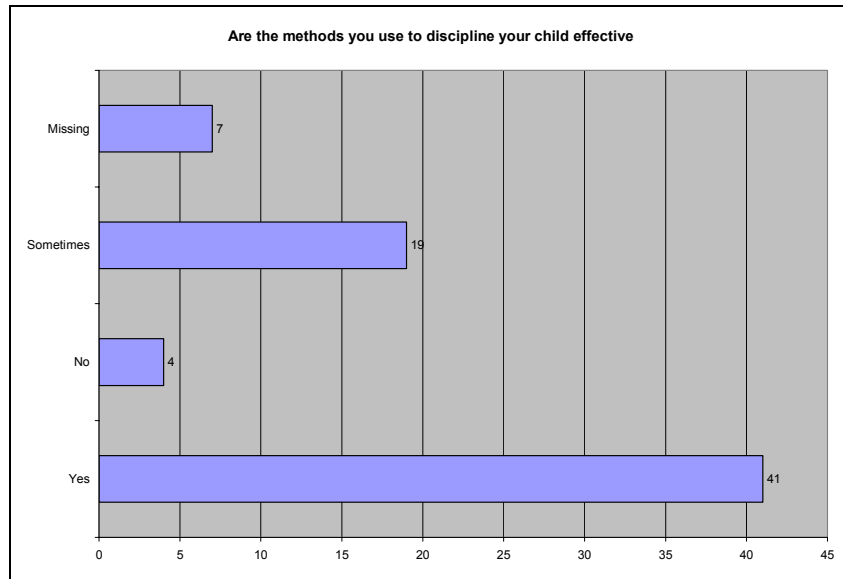
method of discipline. Respondents also stated that the removal of privileges (63.2%), the removal of outside privileges (57.4%), the use of isolation (44.1%) and spankings (32.4%) were methods that they used to discipline their child. Of respondents, 4.2% did not provide an answer or their information was missing, 16.9% selected one category of discipline, 23.9% selected two categories, 35.2% selected three categories, and 19.8% selected between four and five categories of discipline. See figure 26 for a graphic illustration of respondents' selection of methods of discipline.

Figure 26



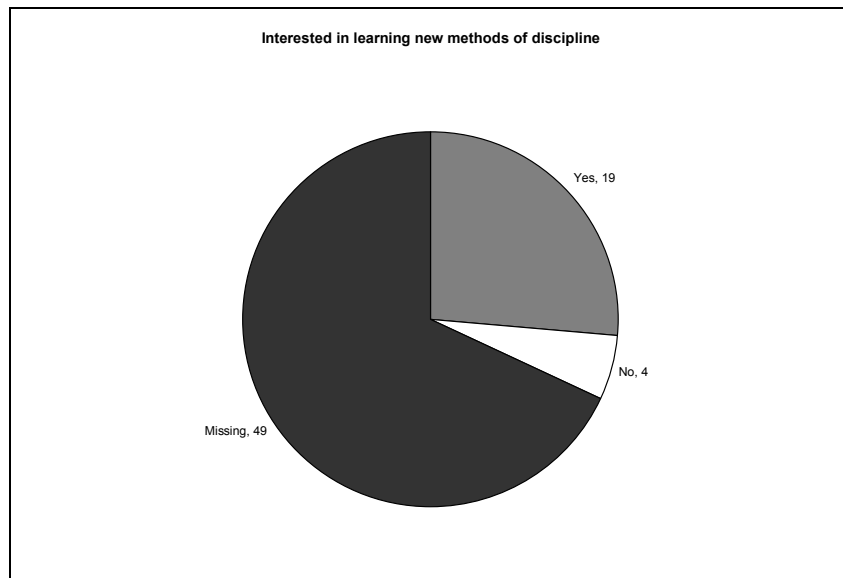
Respondents were asked if the methods they have used to discipline their child were effective. The majority of respondents (57.7%) stated that the methods they used were effective. Additionally, 26.8% stated that the methods they used were only effective sometimes and 5.6% stated that the methods they used were not effective. Seven (9.9%) respondents did not respond to this question. Figure 27 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' answers to this question.

Figure 27



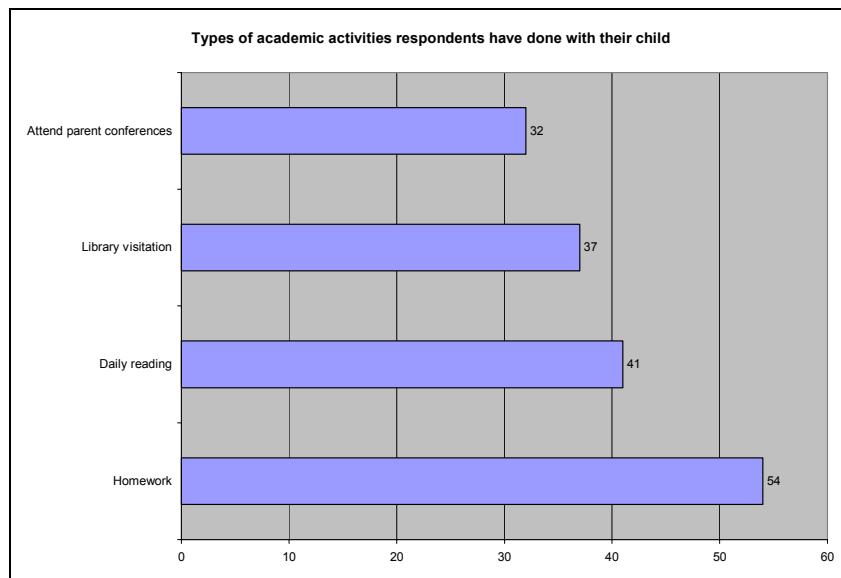
Respondents were asked if they would like to learn new methods for disciplining their children. The majority of respondents (69%) did not provide an answer to this question. Of the respondents who did answer, 26.8% stated that they did want to learn new methods, however 4.2% stated that they did not want to learn new methods. See figure 28 for a breakdown of respondents' answers to this question.

Figure 28



Respondents were asked to specify the types of academic activities that they have done with their child. The majority of respondents (80.6%) stated that homework was an academic activity that they have done with their children. In addition to homework, respondents also stated that they read with their child daily (61.2%), took their child to the library (55.2%), and attended parent conferences (47.8%). Of respondents, 5.6% did not provide a response to this question or their data was missing, 15.5% gave one activity, 33.8% gave two activities, 32.4% gave three activities and 12.7% gave four activities. Figure 29 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' answers to this question.

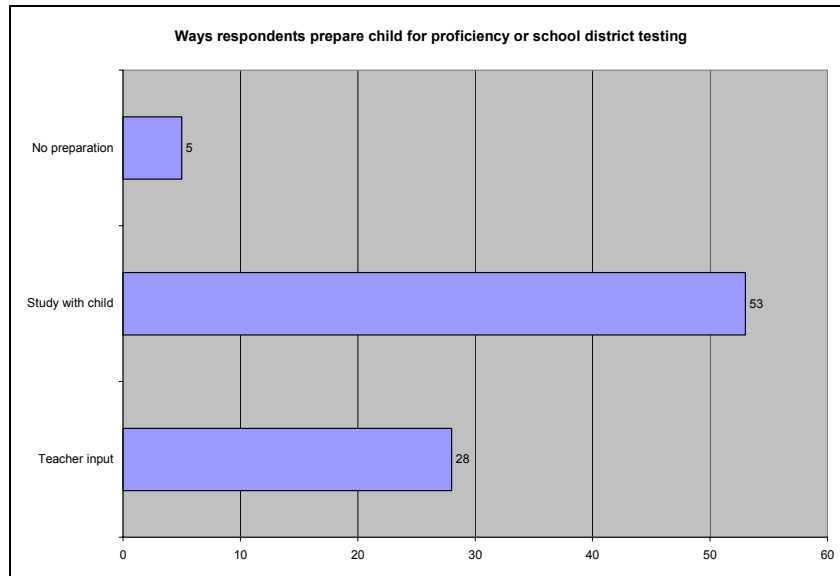
Figure 29



Respondents were asked to specify the ways in which they have prepared their child for proficiency or school district testing. The majority (81.5%) of respondents stated that they studied with their child as a form of preparation. Further, respondents stated that they used teacher input (43.1%) as form of preparation. Only five respondents (7.7%) stated that they did not prepare their child for school district or proficiency tests.

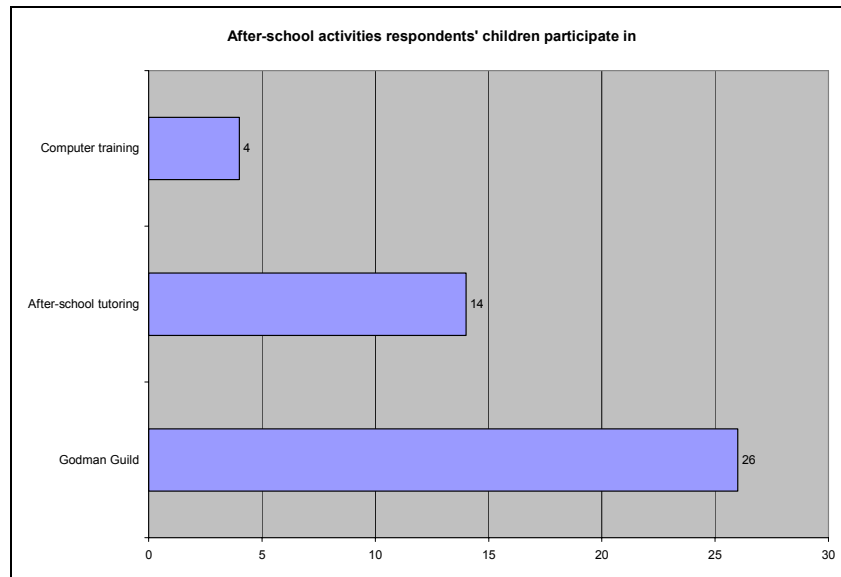
Of respondents, 12.7% did not select a response or their data were missing, 60.6% of respondents selected one method of preparation and 26.8% selected two methods of preparation. See figure 30 for an illustration of respondents' selections.

Figure 30



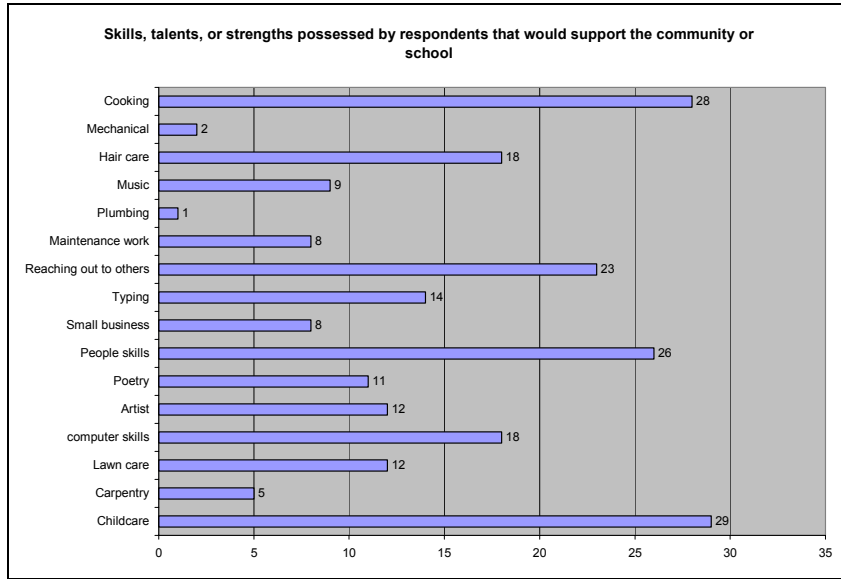
Respondents were asked to specify what after-school activities their child has participated in. The majority of respondents (65%) stated that their child had participated in Godman Guild. This finding is not surprising given that the Godman Guild is located in the close proximity to the school and has associations (i.e., after school program) with Weinland Park. Additionally, respondents' children participate in after-school tutoring (35%) and computer training (10%). The majority of respondents did not identify any after-school activities (40.8%) with 52.1% selecting one after-school activity and 4.2% selecting two or three after-school activity. Figure 31 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' answers.

Figure 31



Respondents were asked to state what skills, talents or strengths they possess that would support their community or school. Childcare was the most selected skill, with 48.3% of respondents selecting it as a skill. After childcare, respondents selected cooking (46.7%), people skills (43.3%), and reaching out to others (38.3%). Thirty percent of respondents selected computer skills and 30% selected hair care. Less than 29% of respondents selected lawn care, artistic skills, sports, or typing as a skill they possess. Less than 19% of respondents selected carpentry, poetry, small business, maintenance work, plumbing, music or mechanical skills as skills they possess. Of respondents, 5.6% did not select a skill, 11.3% selected one skill, 12.7% selected two skills, 9.9% selected three, 22.5% selected four, and 28.1% selected between five and eleven skills. Figure 32 provides an illustration of respondents' selection.

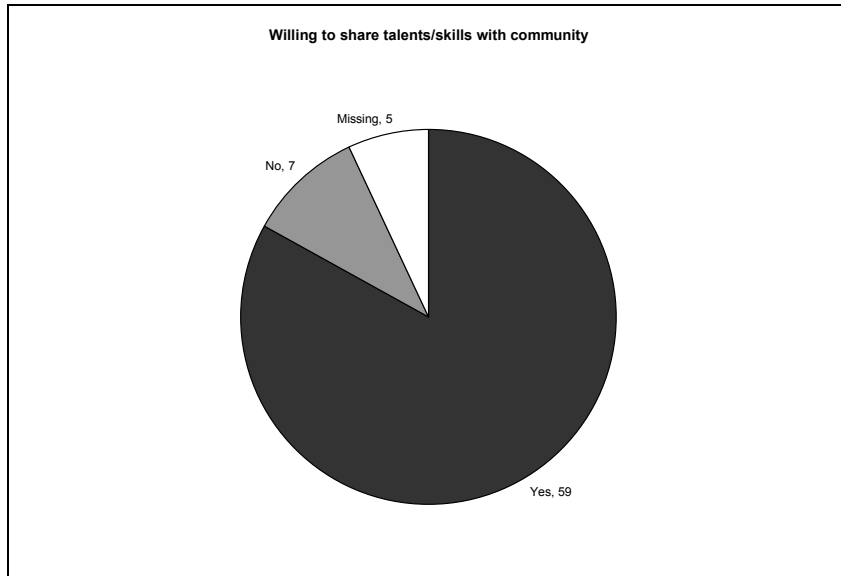
Figure 32



Respondents were asked if they would be willing to share their talents/skills with the community. The majority of respondents (83.1%) stated that they would be willing to share their skills/talents. Five persons (7%) did not provide a response to this question.

Figure 33 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selections.

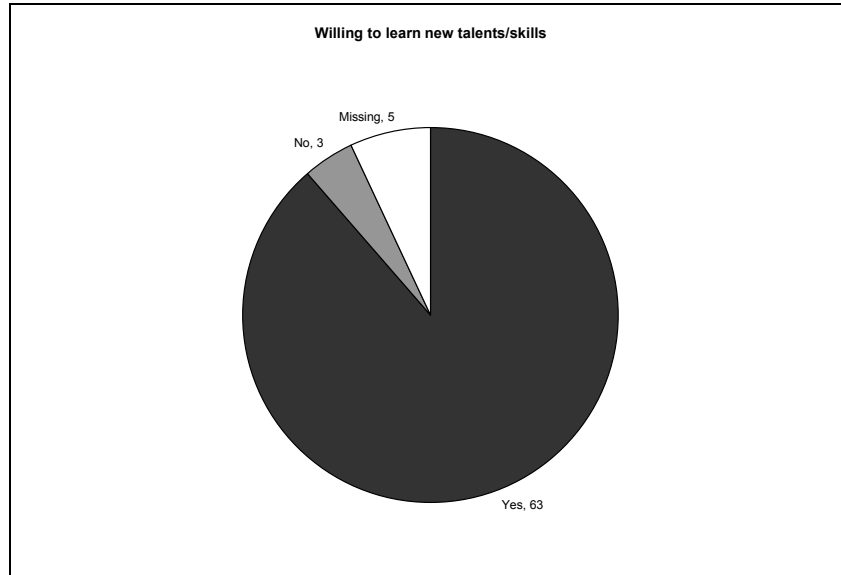
Figure 33



Respondents were asked if they would be willing to learn new talents/skills. The majority of respondents (88.7%) stated that they would be willing to learn new

talents/skills. Five persons (7%) did not provide a response to this question. Figure 34 provides a graphic illustration of respondents' selections.

Figure 34



### **Discussion**

The previous section described respondents' answers to each of the questions contained within the survey instrument for Weinland Park. This current section provides a synthesis of respondents' answers and a corresponding discussion. From the information found in this current study, four themes or trends can be identified with regard to parent involvement at Weinland Park. These four trends are: 1) barriers to involvement, 2) needs of families, 3) parent involvement and 4) family strengths.

The first trend that emerged was related to barriers to parent involvement at the school. Respondents identified a diversity of reasons for not being involved at the school. Although work represented the most often cited reason for not being able to be involved at school (55%), four other factors – not having enough information, stress, child care, and lack of staff concern – were together selected by 61.1% of respondents. These five barriers accounted for the majority of reasons why parents have not been involved in

school related activities. Additionally, the majority of respondents (60.6%) selected only one barrier to participation; suggesting that making an impact in these five areas may contribute to increased parent involvement.

Another trend that emerged was related to family need. Families indicated that they had a diversity of needs. Four categories of need were each selected by over thirty-four percent of respondents; these categories were computer training, mentoring programs, job training, and community resource information. Additionally, 50.7% percent of respondents selected multiple needs. This suggests that families have multiple needs that are not being met. One potential intervention would be to provide families with information related to these areas of need. The development and dissemination of a community resource guide represents one potential way to provide families with information regarding community resources.

A third trend that emerged from the data related specifically to parent involvement at Weinland Park. Ninety-one percent of respondents stated that they would support parent involvement at the school. Parents also specified specific activities that they would want to be involved in; helping on field trips, being a playground monitor, being on safety security, being involved in the PTO, and being an academic or activities planner were each selected by 30% or more of respondents. None of the available responses were selected by less than 26.7% of respondents. Further, the majority of respondents (54%) selected two or more activities. This data suggest that parents want to be involved and that they want to be involved in a diversity of activities.

Closely related to parent involvement is parent availability. The majority of parents stated that they were available in the evening hours (49.3%), hours that school is

not in session. Roughly 38% stated that they would be available during school-day hours. This data on parent availability suggest that to get parents involved in school activities, schools may need to provide multiple parent involvement opportunities at different hours to accommodate parent time constraints.

A final trend that emerged from that data related to strengths that exist within families. Fourteen of 17 possible response categories were selected by more than 10% of respondents, with six categories – childcare, cooking, people skills, reaching out to others, computer skills, and hair care – being selected by 30% or more respondents. Further, the majority of respondents (83.1%) stated that they would be willing to share their skills and a majority of respondents (88.7%) stated that they would be willing to learn new skills. These family strengths coupled with a willingness to share existing strengths and learn new strengths, suggests a plethora of untapped resources that can be used to improve the school community and increase in parent involvement.

### **Conclusion**

With the information learned from this preliminary study, three further Weinland Park-OSU collaborative activities are being engaged in. First, researchers from OSU are working on developing a University District resource map that will include all identifiable social service resources within the University District. Parents from Weinland Park will be involved in the development and construction of the resource map booklet that will be the final product of this activity.

A second collaborative activity involves the actual engagement of parents at Weinland Park. Researchers from OSU and a representative from the University District Extension, are working on identifying and recruiting a small group of parents from

Weinland Park. This small group of parents will spearhead efforts to get other parents of students at Weinland Park actively engaged in school related activities. With the assistance of researchers from OSU, the representative from the University District Extension, and school administrators, this group of parents will develop and implement interventions intended to increase parent involvement at Weinland Park

A final collaborative activity involves a further definition parent involvement. The data from this study suggest that parents want to be involved at the school and that parents have skills and talents that could be used for parent involvement related activities. However, what is missing from the presented data is a clear picture of what parents think parent involvement at the school should be. Because this lack of information represents a substantive gap in knowledge related to increasing parent involvement, researchers from OSU are working with parents, in focus group activities, on constructing a parents' definition of parent involvement.