



# REPORT on Community Bullying Survey: Goffstown, NH Public School District School Administrative Unit #19

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# **REPORT: PARENT SURVEY 2010**

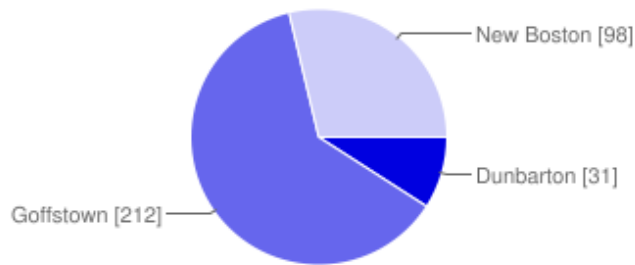
## **Introduction**

This report details the findings from a public survey of parents in SAU #19, conducted during the fall of 2010. The survey was advertised through the school system through a variety of means, and participation was voluntary. Between the three towns, 353 parents opted to participate in the survey. The survey was administered online and no I.P. restrictions were put into place, which permitted parents to take the survey more than once if necessary (e.g., if both parents in the household wanted to respond). Although it was recognized that some parents could theoretically opt to “load” the survey by responding many times, there is no evidence that this in fact happened.

One town in the district participated much less than other towns. This limits the inclusion of that town in some comparisons.

This report is comprised of two major parts. Part I discusses findings for the entire SAU in aggregate. Part II compares findings between the three towns.

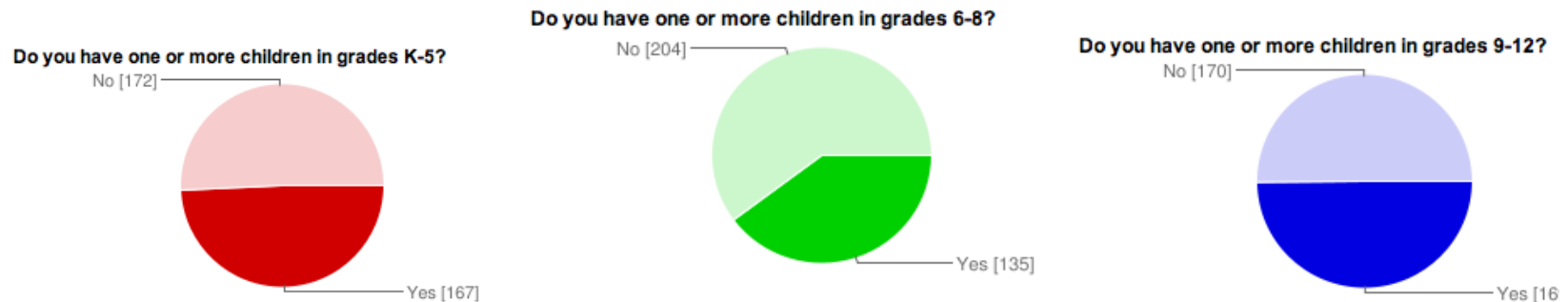
**Please indicate the town in which you live.**



Dunbarton	<b>31</b>	9%
Goffstown	<b>212</b>	60%
New Boston	<b>98</b>	28%

## **Part I: Overall SAU findings, compared by grade level (Elementary (grades K-5), Middle (grades 6-8), High School(grades 9-12))<sup>1</sup>**

Parents from different grade levels were well represented in the survey.



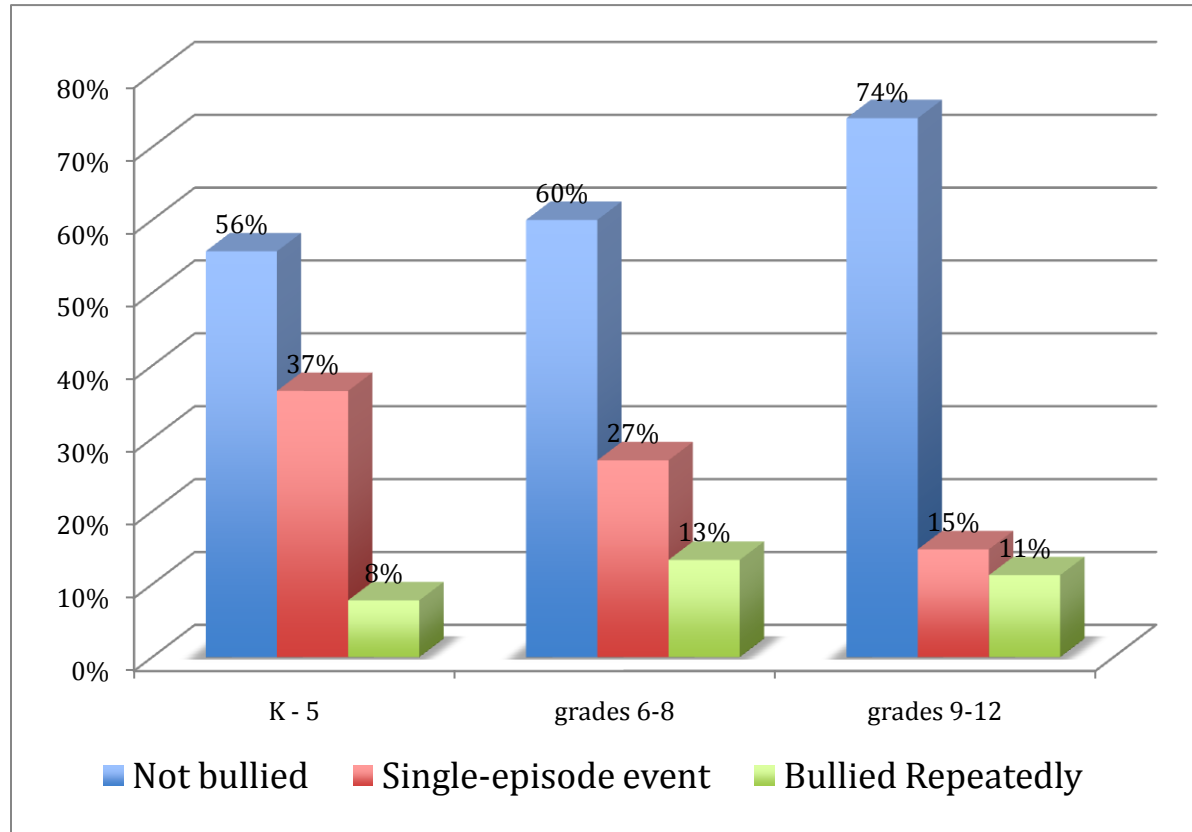
One hundred and sixty-seven (167) parents were answering for their elementary-aged children, 135 parents responded for children in grades 6-8, and 169 parents responded for their high school-aged children (grades 9-12).

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<sup>1</sup> This grade breakdown is only for the purposes of this study. The actual breakdown within this school district is more varied. Schools are PreK-K, PreK-6, grades 1-4, grades 5-8, and grades 9-12.

**Bullying frequency, as reported by parents.**

In the research literature, there is a distinction drawn between a single episode of meanness and *bullying*. Bullying is defined as a repeatedly intentional, cruel behavior targeting a particular victim. Parents were asked about both single-episode events and bullying.



## Patterns in Frequency

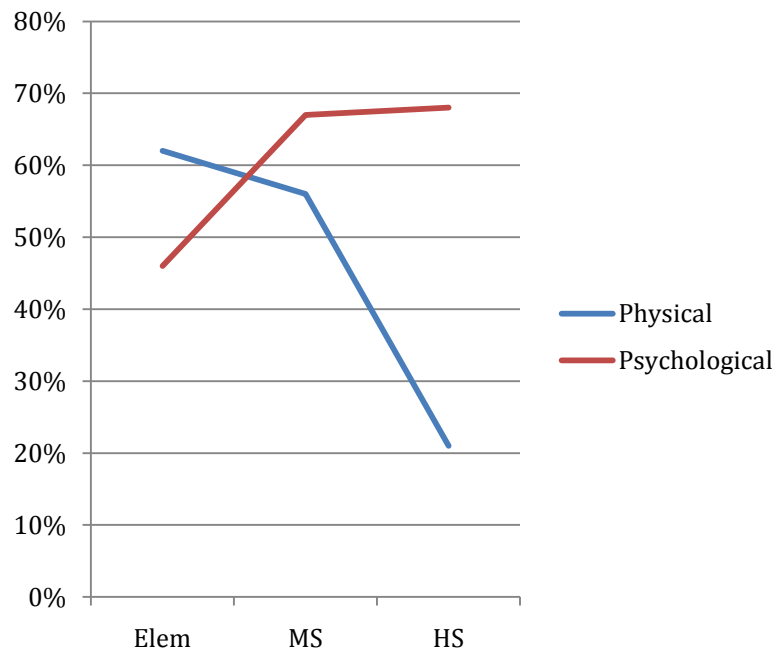
1. Overall, incidents decrease as children mature.
2. Repeated, targeted bullying is least frequent in elementary years, peak during middle school, and decrease slightly in high school.
3. Frequency of “bullying” as reported by parents in this sample is comparable to national statistics. However, when one-time incidents are *not* classified as “bullying,” the frequency reduces measurably.
4. Within grades K through 5, grades 2 and 5 represent “peaks.”
5. Within grades 6 through 8, grades 6 and 7 are “peaks.”
6. Within grades 9 through 12, grade 10 reported the most bullying incidents.

Types  
&

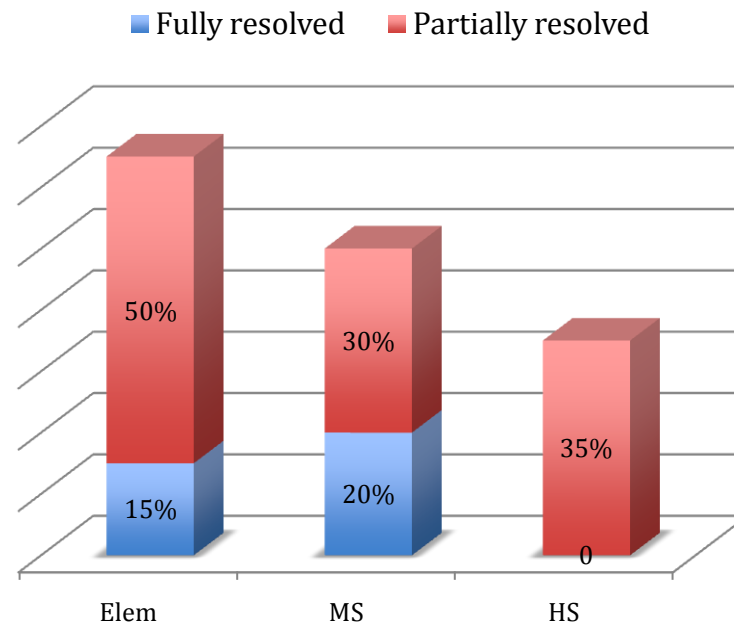
## resolution of bullying.

- a. In grades K through 5, **physical** bullying is most common. Most situations (65%) resolve, as least partially.
- b. In grades 6 through 12, **psychological** bullying is most common. About half of the situations that parents are aware of resolve, at least partially.
- c. By high school, physical bullying had declined to one of the least common types of bullying. Although zero parents felt that an incident had resolved itself fully, approximately 35% felt it had partially resolved.

### Types of bullying over K-12: Percentage of victims reporting physical vs. psychological

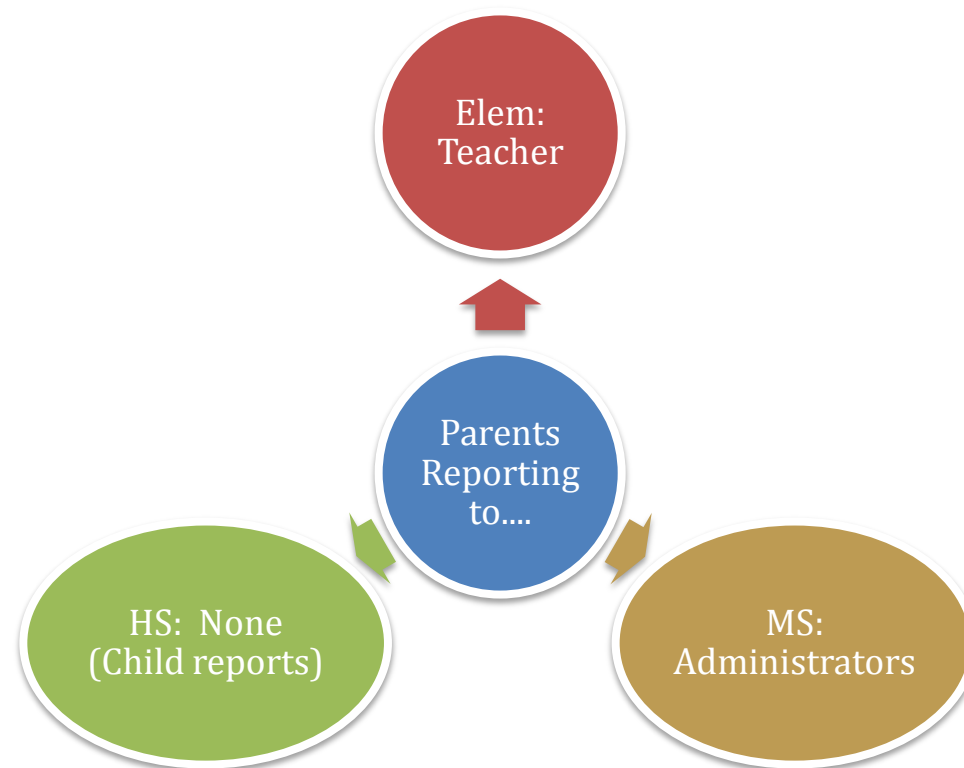


### Yes, the situation was resolved



**Reporting actions by parents change as children mature.**

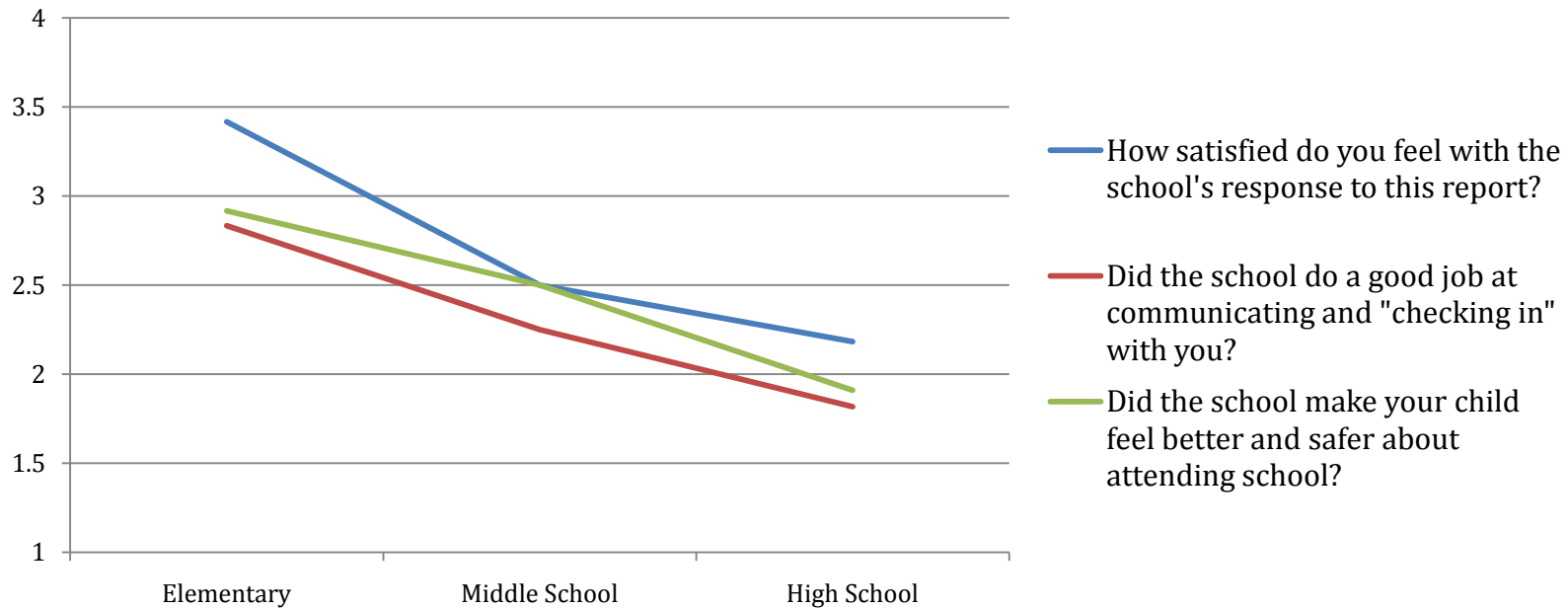
- a. In grades K-5, primary action was reporting to their child’s classroom teacher.
- b. In grades 6-8, parents’ primary action was to report to administrators.
- c. In grades 9-12, parents generally leave reporting up to their child. In the unusual event that they report the bullying themselves, they do so to the guidance/counseling staff.



**Parents' satisfaction with school's response.**

Parents of children in grades K through 5 were largely satisfied with the **initial** response, but some parents felt the **follow-up** could at times be improved. There was no consistent pattern re: the less satisfied parents (e.g., they did not come from one particular town, etc.). Satisfaction was lower among parents of grades 6 to 12 students.

It is important to note how challenging it is to correctly interpret parental feelings about a school's response. Bullying is a very emotional issue for parents and it is difficult to sift apart unrealistic parental expectations (e.g., wanting to know confidential information about children who are not their own) from other dissatisfactions. In addition, it is important to remember that this small sample was largely self-selected, which is apt to skew results. As seen on the chart below, parents scored their school on a scale of 1-4, with 4 being best.

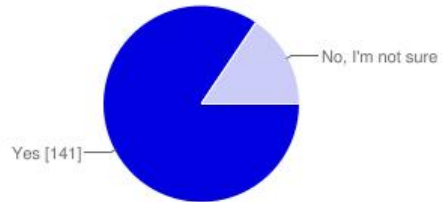




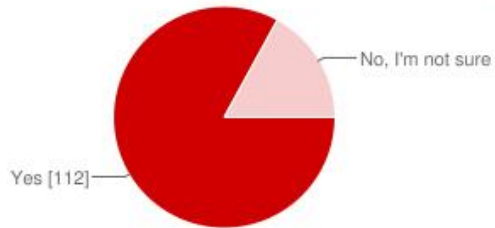
## **Communication between parents and schools.**

All parents responded similarly: overwhelmingly, they know who to go to in the event of a future incident of bullying.

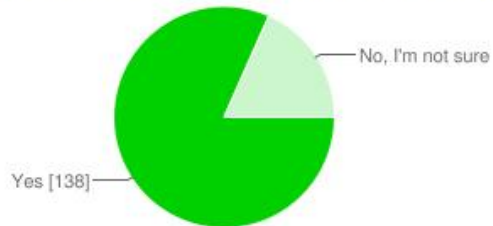
**If your elementary-aged child were to be bullied in the future, would you know who to report this to?**



**If your grade 6-8 child were to be bullied in the future, would you know who to report this to?**

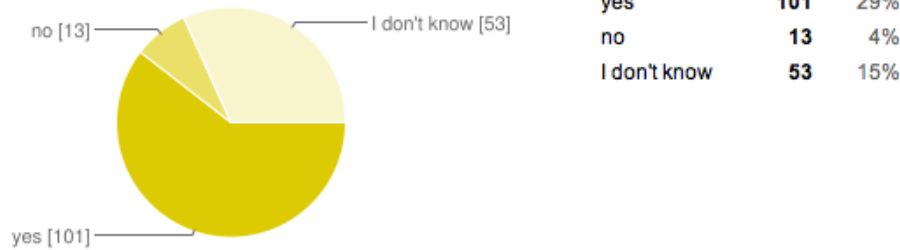


**If your high schooler were to be bullied in the future, would you know who to report this to?**

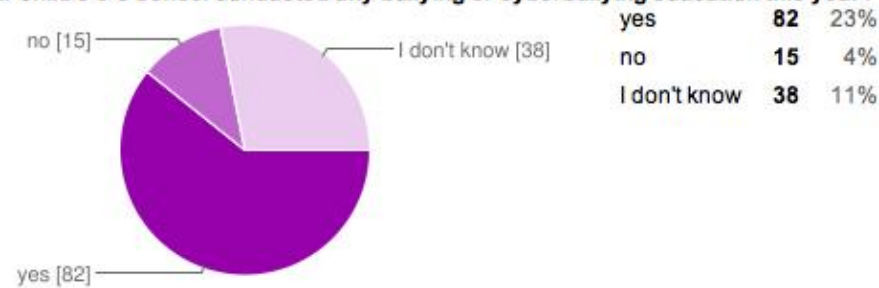


Parents of elementary- and middle-school aged children are aware of the programs going on in the schools. Parents of high schoolers are much less aware of any programs going on in the high school.

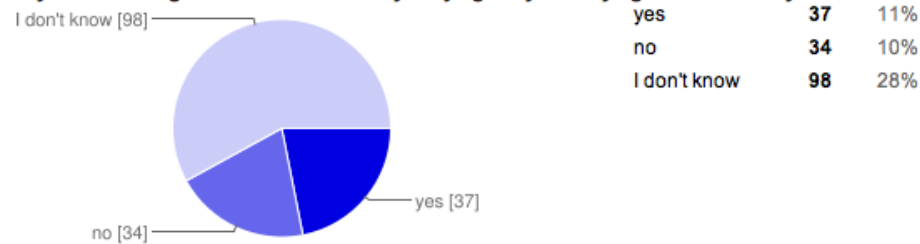
**Has your child's elementary school conducted any bullying or cyberbullying education this year?**



**Has your child's 6-8 school conducted any bullying or cyberbullying education this year?**

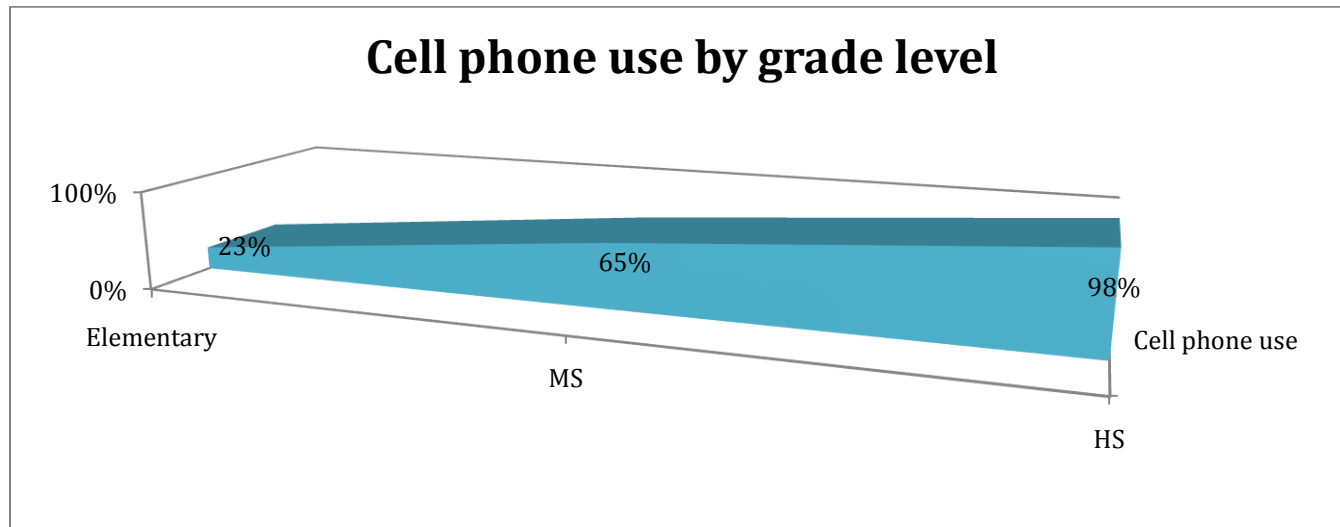


**Has your child's high school conducted any bullying or cyberbullying education this year?**



**Children’s use of technology.**

1. Parents report that their children’s cell phone use begins largely in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, although there is a substantial growth in use between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.
2. About 20-25% of parents of elementary-aged children say they have given their child a cell phone in grades K through 5 (usually in grade 5).
3. 65% of middle school parents say they have given their child a cell phone. Virtually all high schoolers carry a cell phone.
4. Internet use at home, as reported by parents, is 94%-100% for all schools. That includes playing games online, using social networking sites, sending text messages or emails, and completing homework. Educators should assume that all children are online at home.

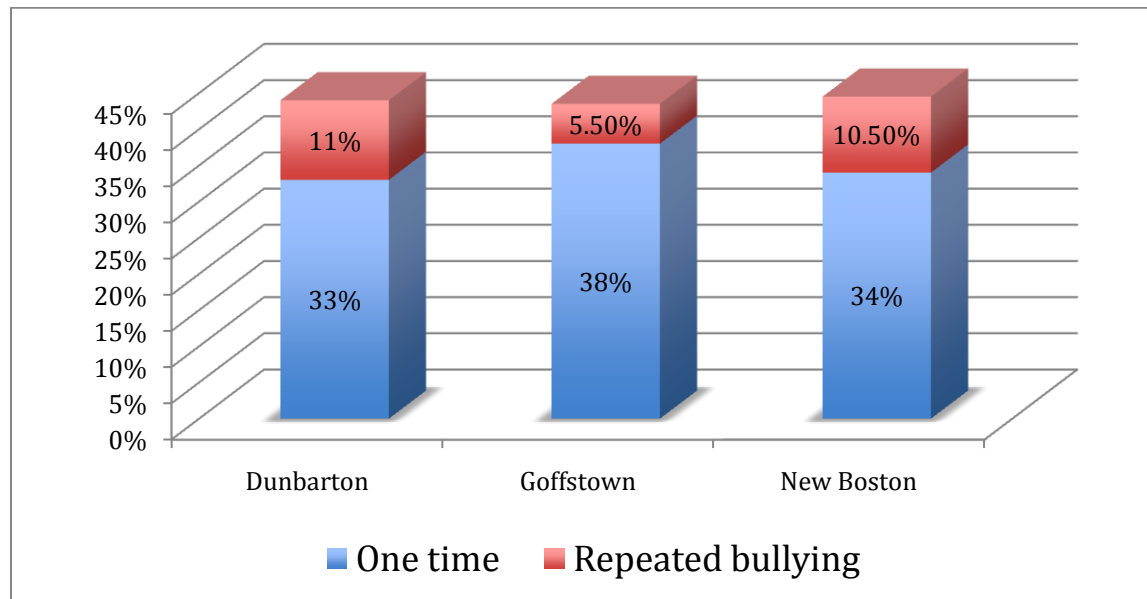


## Part II: Differences and Similarities between towns

Findings in this section compare differences and similarities found between the different towns. These analyses do not further separate towns by grade level. Doing so would reduce the number of respondents in each group to numbers too low to draw meaningful conclusions.

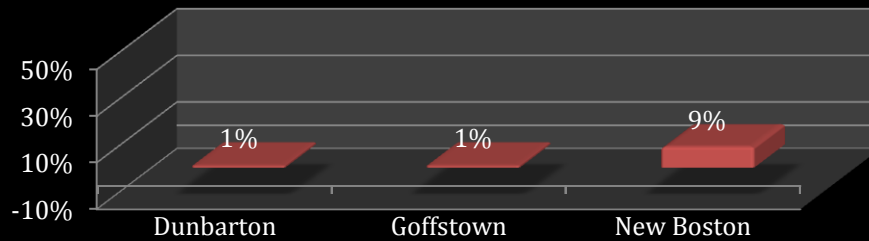
It is also important to recall that significantly fewer parents from Dunbarton responded to the survey. This suggests that the findings from Dunbarton may be less representative of the town's parents in general, and thus, any conclusions about Dunbarton are likely to be less reliable.

The first chart shows between-town differences in one-time and repeated bullying. No large differences in parental reporting of bullying behaviors across towns were observed. Repeated bullying was lowest in Goffstown: there, only 5.5% of parents reported that their children were targeted more than once.

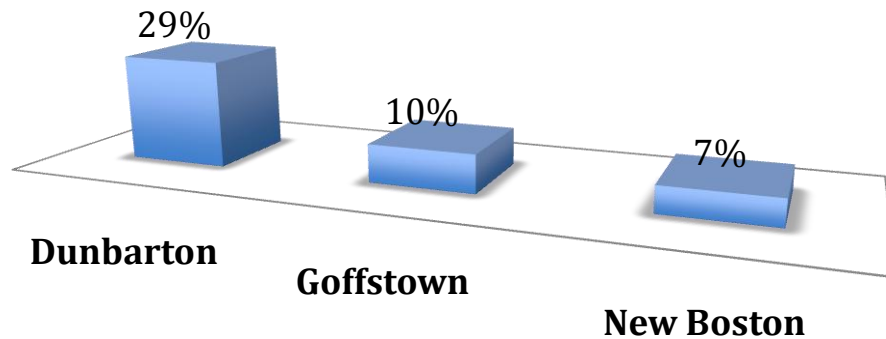


Physical bullying was relatively more common in New Boston elementary schools. However, it's important to note that it was low across all three towns. Psychological bullying was relatively more common in Dunbarton, although the low numbers of parents reporting in Dunbarton renders this difference unreliable. As expected, psychological bullying was found to be more common than physical bullying.

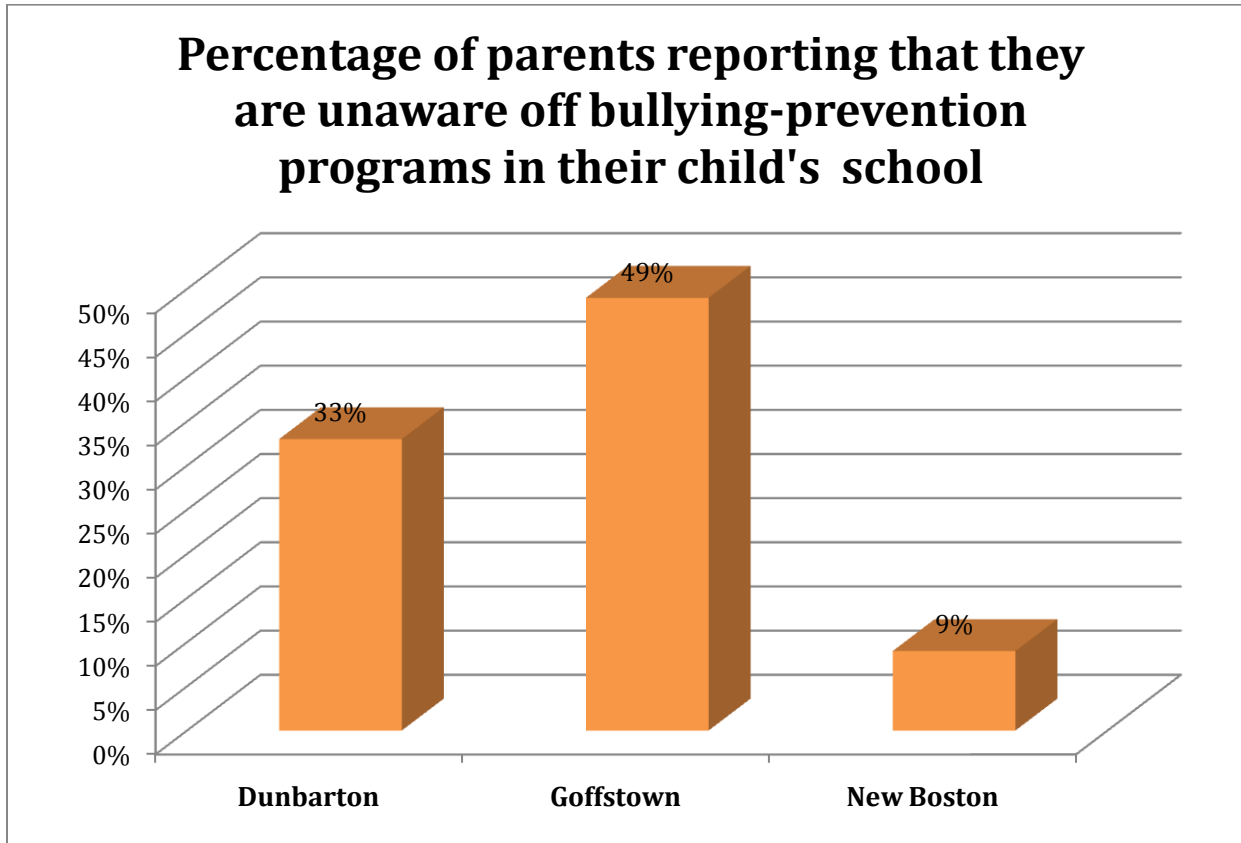
### Percentage of parents reporting physical bullying, by town



### Percentage of parents reporting psychological bullying, by town



Parents from Goffstown were the least aware of school bullying and cyberbullying prevention programs, relative to other towns.



# **Recommendations & Conclusions**

The purpose of this survey was to ascertain the parents' perspectives on bullying and cyberbullying problems in the area schools. The data suggest that the following foci may be most productive in the public schools' parent education programs:

1. All parents, but particularly parents in Goffstown, would benefit from more information about what the public schools are doing to prevent bullying and cyberbullying.
2. There is broad confusion about what bullying is, and what it is not. The schools and the children could benefit from more public awareness of the difference between bullying and conflict. In addition, more public education on this issue would likely reduce the overuse of the term "bullying."
3. The town of Dunbarton should consider why so few parents participated in this survey. It may be due to a smaller population, or, it may be that more public engagement is needed. Dunbarton schools should consider methods to increase public engagement, such as parent information evenings, a webpage for parents, student-led programs, parent/child "homework assignments," etc.
4. Cell phone and Internet use at home, for a variety of purposes (entertainment, communication, and homework) were reported by parents to be extremely common among children, which is to be expected. The schools should consider public education on topics such as the capacity of cell phones for internet use and helping parents discuss electronic issues with their children. This could be accomplished through handouts, parent information events, and webpages.
5. Schools serving children in grades 6 through 12 should consider their communication techniques with parents. Parents should know who takes bullying reports in their child's school. In addition, communications could be improved when bullying is reported, and during follow-up communication. Because follow-up communication was sometimes reported as an issue for grades K-5 as well, it is recommended that the entire District adopt a concrete plan to follow up with reporting parents and children, and "check in" with how children are doing following a bullying report.
6. Clearly, parents report to different individuals at different levels. Classroom teachers in K-5 should know how to handle a bullying report, but that skill is not necessarily important for 6-12 teachers; rather, such training in 6-12 should focus on

school administrators. High school parents should be encouraged to report bullying along with their child as a support mechanism. Keeping high school parents more involved in reporting could improve the resolution rate for high school incidents.

7. Note that bullying is largely NOT physical by 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This is an important evolution that parents, teachers and other educators should understand.