



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SAFETY PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY RESULTS

New Hanover County Office of Strategy

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BACKGROUND

On October 18, a public input survey about school and community safety was launched and remained open until November 1, 2021. The survey was posted on the county's website at [NHCgov.com/SchoolSafety](https://nhc.gov.com/SchoolSafety) and was promoted for the following two weeks through numerous communications tactics. It was first announced through a press release, and all local news organizations shared the information with their audiences. The county continued promoting the survey on social media in English and Spanish for two weeks, as well as through the creation of a video utilizing three New Hanover County Schools (NHCS) students that aired on NHCTV and the county's social media outlets. The school district also helped to promote the survey in a weekly recap video and on their social media pages, and individual schools also promoted it on their school-specific websites and social media pages. NHCS also posted it to the NHCS website under District News and sent the survey information and link out to all parents via school messenger text (in English and Spanish). Additionally, paper copies of the survey in Spanish were distributed among local Hispanic businesses. The survey received 2,240 responses, which represents approximately 1 percent of the total population of New Hanover County. The purpose of the survey was to gather direct feedback from the community about school and community safety, reporting incidents and communication, and community programs and resources.

INTERPRETING THE DATA

The survey questions are arranged on a 5-point scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). This analysis calculated the percentage of respondents who answered each question as Agree or Strongly Agree; the percentage of respondents who answered each question as Neutral; and the percentage of respondents who answered each question as Disagree or Strongly Disagree. This analysis will provide a summary of responses for all questions, as well as a comparison of responses by race, ethnicity, and age.

DEMOGRAPHICS

A series of demographic questions were asked to understand who responded to the survey, while still maintaining anonymity. The demographic questions had a "Prefer not to say" option, so respondents were not required to provide any demographic data. The first demographic question asked who the respondent was, with an overwhelming majority of 80 percent responding as a parent or guardian. Approximately 42 percent of the respondents are between the ages of 36 – 45, and 29 percent are between the ages of 46 – 55. When asked about race, 70 percent responded as white, 18 percent responded as "Prefer not to say", and 6 percent responded as Black or African American. When asked about ethnicity, 73 percent responded as Not Hispanic, 22 percent responded as "Prefer not to say", and 5 percent responded as Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin. Females had the highest response rate at 69 percent, with 18 percent responding as male, and 13 percent responded as "Prefer not to say." Less than 1 percent responded as non-binary. See Appendix A for the full demographic breakdown.

According to the 2020 Decennial Census, the racial breakdown of New Hanover County is 74 percent white, 12 percent Black or African American, 8 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and approximately 6 percent Other minority. Using this comparison, the survey respondents represent a fairly accurate sample size of our community based on race and ethnicity. However, the amount of "Prefer not to say" responses does make it difficult to determine a true sample size without making assumptions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The survey asked questions about the perception of safety in schools and in the community, bullying in schools, reporting suspicious activity, and communication around programs and resources. The data shows that the majority of

respondents feel safe in their neighborhood. Respondents believe some public schools are safer than others; however, only 17 percent believe all schools are safe. When asked about reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity, 72 percent of respondents feel comfortable reporting activity to law enforcement and 67 percent of respondents feel comfortable reporting activity to a school official. Generally, respondents do not believe corrective action will be taken after reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity or that their identity will be protected if they report such activity. Sixty-five percent of respondents believe bullying is a problem; however, only 17 percent of respondents feel reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration. Slightly less than 33 percent of respondents believe the schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them. Less than 25 percent of respondents feel it is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person’s social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed. Similarly, less than 25 percent of respondents regularly access these programs or resources. Forty percent of respondents know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner. See Table 1 for a full breakdown of responses.

| All Responses | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Questions | Agree/Strongly Agree % | Neutral % | Disagree/Strongly Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 80.18% | 10.89% | 8.71% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 76.03% | 12.77% | 10.18% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 71.47% | 15.09% | 12.63% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 67.32% | 15.00% | 14.82% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 65.22% | 25.09% | 6.74% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 39.55% | 24.06% | 34.11% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 31.70% | 38.04% | 24.51% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 31.52% | 30.00% | 37.63% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 31.34% | 35.80% | 31.16% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 23.53% | 36.03% | 36.74% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 22.77% | 35.27% | 33.44% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 16.79% | 25.76% | 56.92% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 16.61% | 32.90% | 41.52% |

Table 1: All survey responses

BREAKING DOWN THE DATA

A lot of information can be ascertained by analyzing the data as a whole; however, breaking out the responses by different variables provides valuable insight on how our diverse population perceive these issues. Figure 1 shows the percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses to the question *I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement* by race. Overall, 71 percent of respondents feel comfortable reporting this activity to law enforcement. However, only 50 percent of Black or African American respondents and 48 percent of Hispanic or Latino respondents feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement. Understanding these key differences in responses by race will help drive equitable decision making to address school and community safety.

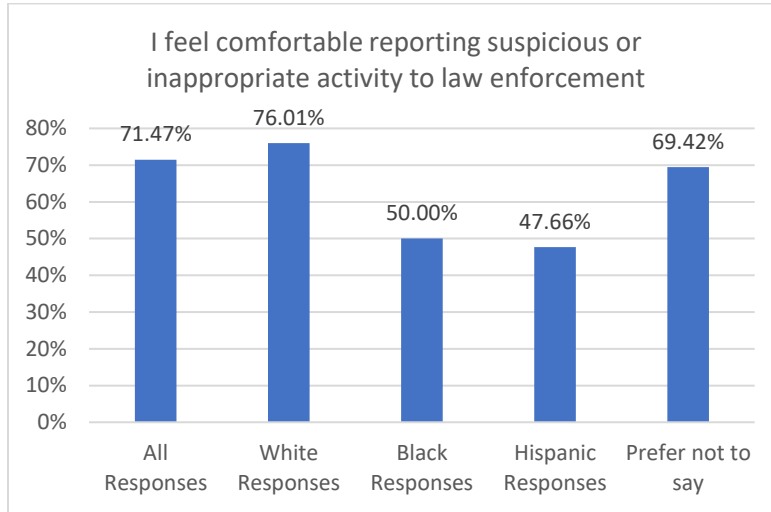


Figure 1: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by race

Similarly, 67 percent of respondents overall agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to school officials, which indicates there is slightly less trust in school officials than law enforcement. However, there is an increase in comfortability reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to school officials among Black and Hispanic respondents, as shown in figure 2. White respondents and those who chose “Prefer not to say” feel less comfortable making reports to school officials than law enforcement.

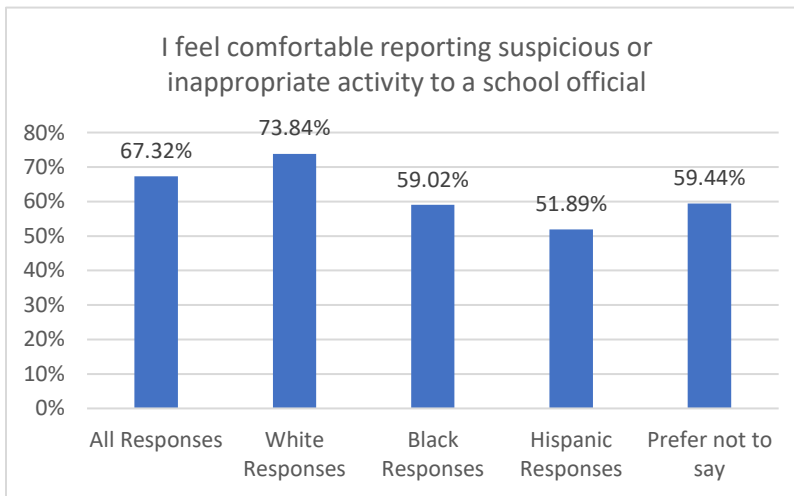


Figure 2: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by race

Nearly all respondents, regardless of race, agree or strongly agree there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County schools. Figure 3 shows there are slight variations between respondents overall, white respondents, Hispanic or Latino respondents, and those who chose “Prefer not to say”. Yet nearly 78 percent of Black or African American respondents agree or strongly agree that there is a problem with bullying in schools. Isolating these responses using demographic data sheds light on concerns that would otherwise be missed by only analyzing the overall responses.

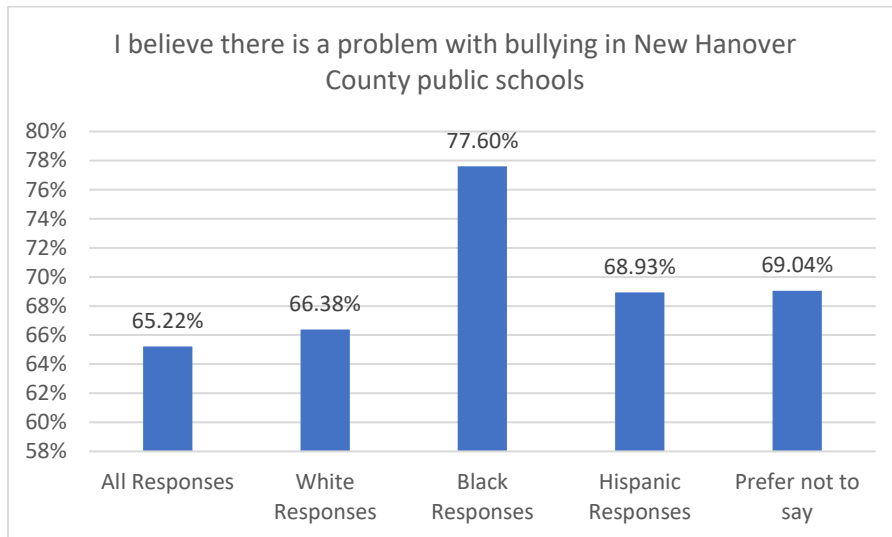


Figure 3: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by race

Approximately 17 percent of respondents overall believe reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration. There are only slight variations between white and Black or African American respondents, and those who chose “Prefer not to say”. Approximately 31 percent of Hispanic or Latino respondents agree or strongly agree that these reports are adequately addressed by school administration. See Appendix B for a breakdown of responses to all survey questions by race.

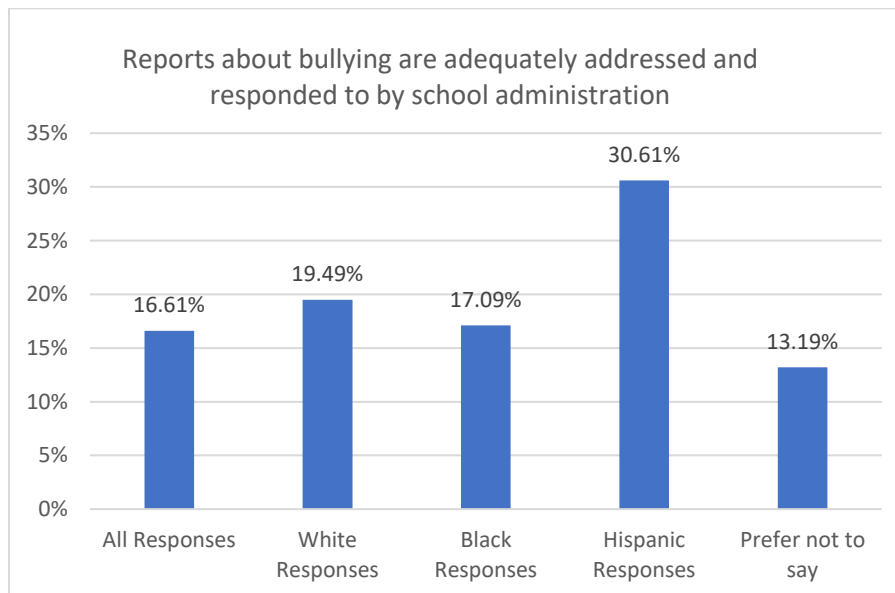


Figure 4: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by race

This survey intended to gather public input on school and community safety, so analyzing the data by age breakdown is important to understand the perception of students, parents, and community members. Approximately 73 percent of respondents aged 26 – 55 and 79 percent of respondents 56 and older feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement. Yet only 50 percent of respondents under 25 and those who chose “Prefer not to say” feel comfortable making reports to law enforcement, as shown in figure 5.

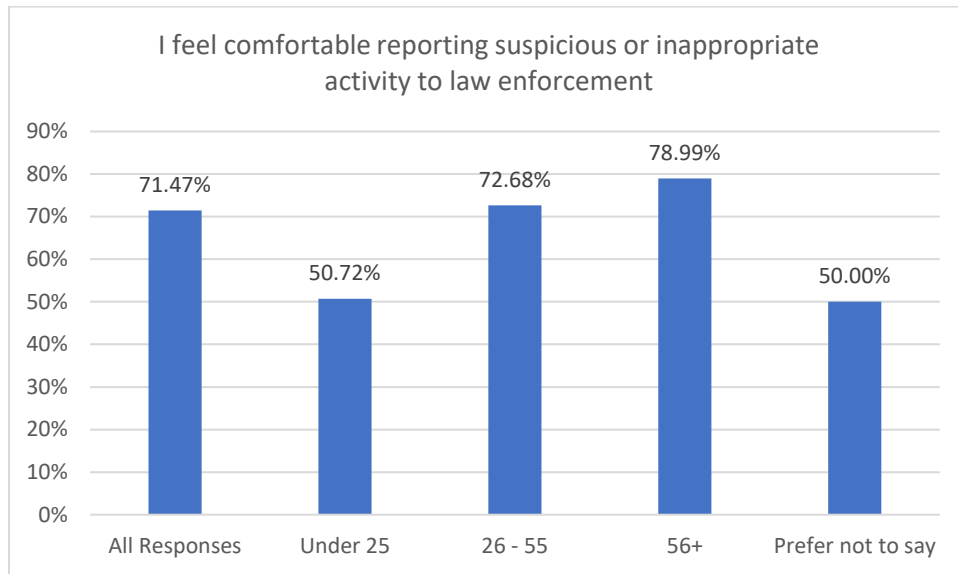


Figure 5: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by age

The response rate is similar for respondents aged 26 – 55 and 56 or older when asked about reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to school officials. Figure 6 shows 58 percent of respondents under 25 and 45 percent of respondents who chose “Prefer not to say” feel comfortable reporting this activity to school officials. This data indicates the younger population has more comfortability making reports to school officials than law enforcement.

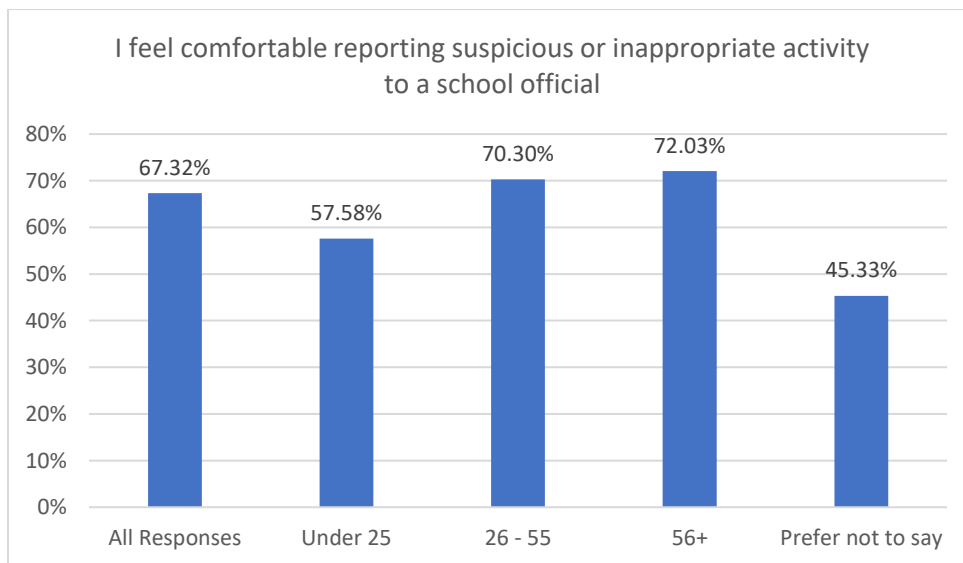


Figure 6: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by age

While 43 percent of respondents under 25 believe their identity will be protected when reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity, approximately 32 percent of respondents aged 26 – 55 and 56 and older believe their identity will be protected. However, only 11 percent of those who chose “Prefer not to say” believe their identity will be protected

when reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity, as shown in figure 7. While it is difficult to gather insight from respondents who choose “Prefer not to say”, the data indicates there are concerns with maintaining anonymity when reporting concerns regarding suspicious or inappropriate activity. The demographic question for age breakdown was a required question on the survey. See Appendix C for a breakdown of responses to all survey questions by age bracket.

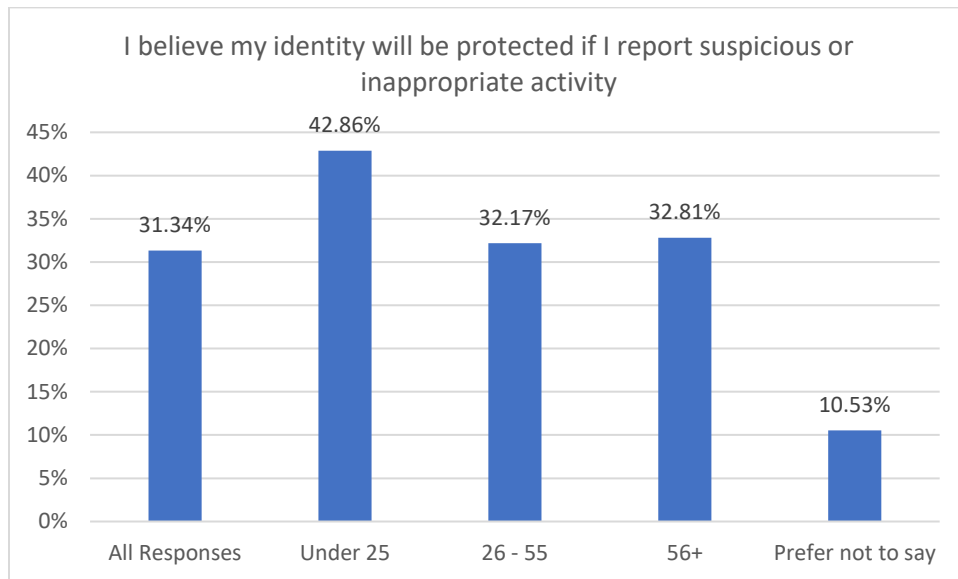
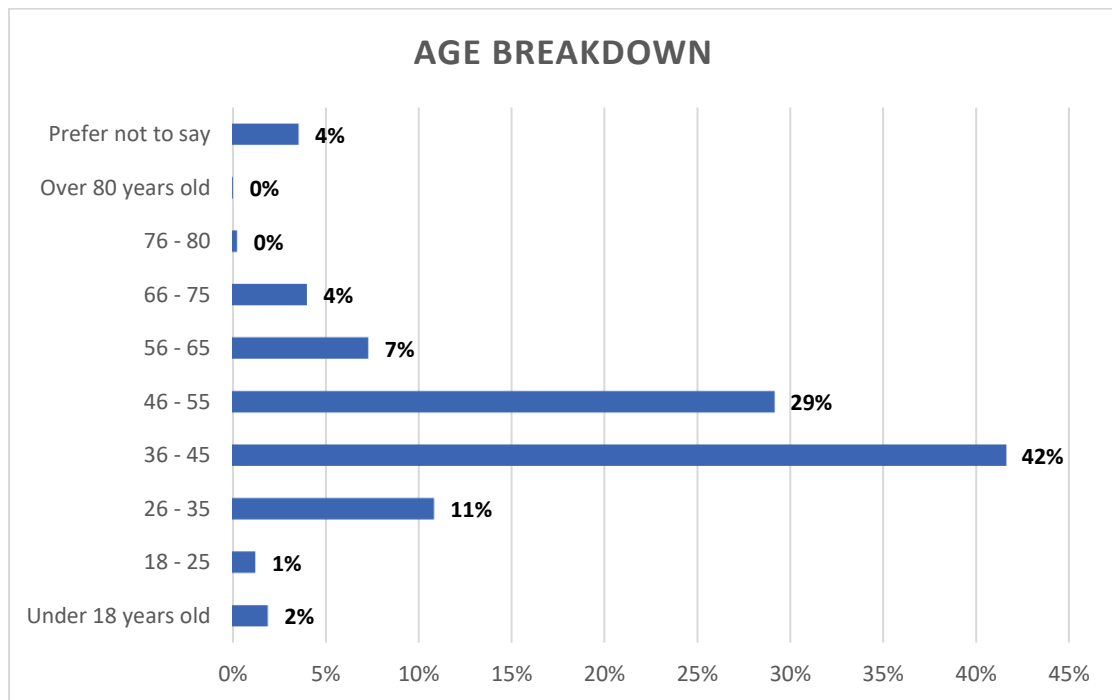
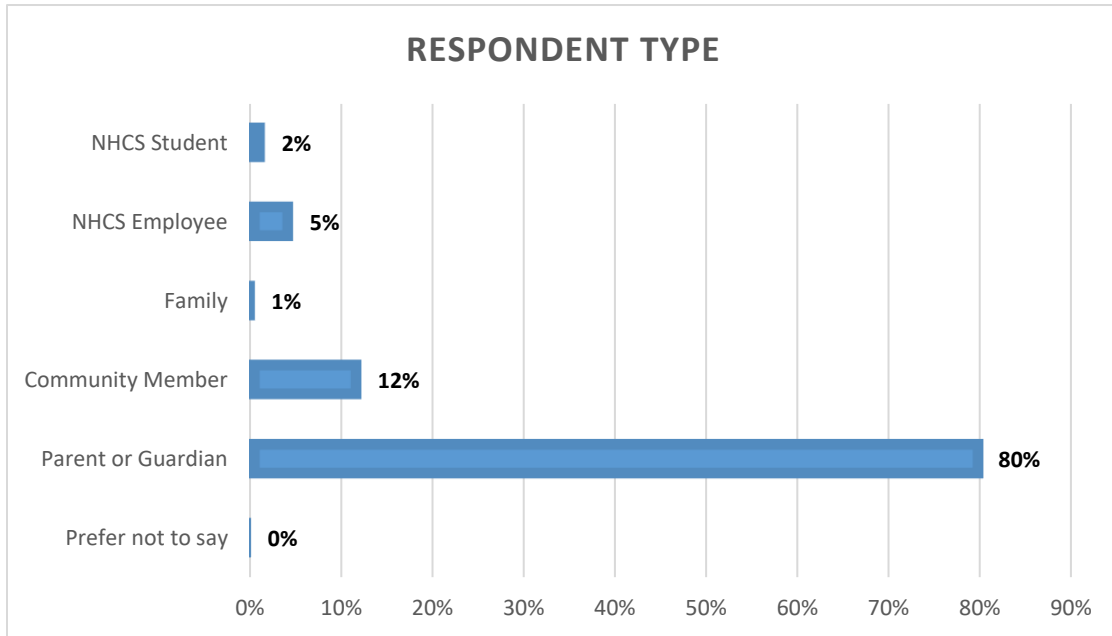


Figure 7: Percentage of Agree or Strongly Agree responses by age

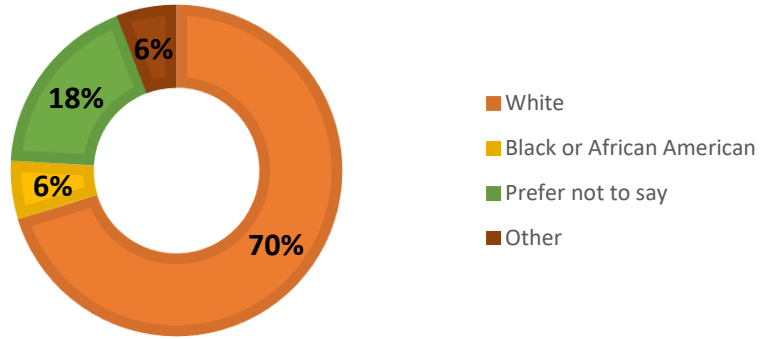
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

New Hanover County thanks the community for participating in this survey and providing invaluable feedback on these important issues. In addition to the data from this survey, information collected from community forums and stakeholders will be used to develop actionable plans to invest in measures that will improve school safety and prevent community violence. This work is ongoing, so please visit <https://www.nhcgov.com/schoolsafety/> for more information and updates on progress.

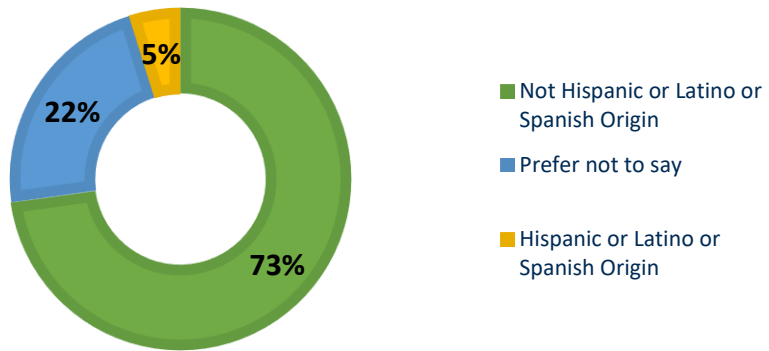
APPENDIX A – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA



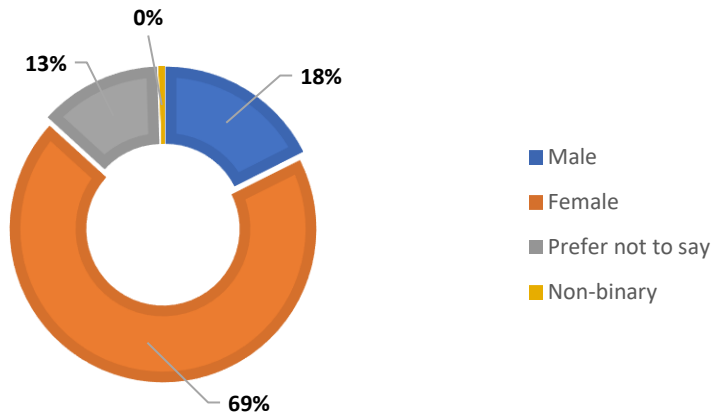
RACE



ETHNICITY



GENDER



APPENDIX B – RESPONSE BREAKDOWN BY RACE

| Responses by race: White | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Questions | Agree/Strongly Agree % | Neutral % | Disagree/ Strongly Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 84.72% | 8.53% | 6.75% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 17.87% | 26.55% | 55.58% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 80.42% | 11.45% | 8.13% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 66.38% | 27.50% | 6.12% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 76.01% | 13.63% | 10.30% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 73.84% | 14.00% | 12.10% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 35.04% | 31.32% | 33.63% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 35.51% | 36.80% | 27.68% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 19.49% | 38.70% | 41.74% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 44.27% | 22.66% | 33.07% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 26.08% | 36.92% | 36.92% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 35.57% | 40.67% | 23.69% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 25.64% | 37.41% | 36.88% |

| Responses by race: Black or African American | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Questions | Agree/Strongly Agree % | Neutral % | Disagree/Strongly Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 60.32% | 23.02% | 16.67% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 16.00% | 28.00% | 56.00% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 68.55% | 16.94% | 14.52% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 77.60% | 16.00% | 6.40% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 50.00% | 26.19% | 23.81% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 59.02% | 17.21% | 23.77% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 25.60% | 25.60% | 48.80% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 21.77% | 37.10% | 41.13% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 17.09% | 20.51% | 62.39% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 29.03% | 29.03% | 41.94% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 29.51% | 40.16% | 30.33% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 32.80% | 36.00% | 31.20% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 23.02% | 31.75% | 45.24% |

| Responses by race: Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Questions | Agree/Strongly Agree % | Neutral % | Disagree/Strongly Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 75.93% | 17.59% | 6.48% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 22.64% | 20.75% | 56.60% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 78.10% | 14.29% | 5.71% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 68.93% | 21.36% | 9.71% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 47.66% | 22.43% | 27.10% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 51.89% | 20.75% | 25.47% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 44.34% | 26.42% | 29.25% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 43.40% | 24.53% | 31.13% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 30.61% | 27.55% | 39.80% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 38.68% | 21.70% | 38.68% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 24.27% | 45.63% | 27.18% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 40.00% | 32.38% | 26.67% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 31.13% | 34.91% | 33.02% |

| Responses by race: Prefer not to say | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Questions | Agree/Strongly Agree % | Neutral % | Disagree/Strongly Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 72.32% | 14.71% | 12.97% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 11.97% | 23.69% | 64.34% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 68.08% | 15.21% | 16.71% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 69.04% | 22.34% | 8.63% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 69.42% | 15.54% | 15.04% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 59.44% | 19.64% | 20.92% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 21.20% | 27.43% | 51.37% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 20.15% | 36.02% | 43.83% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 13.19% | 32.98% | 53.56% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 30.71% | 28.17% | 41.12% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 19.57% | 40.49% | 39.95% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 25.46% | 42.26% | 32.28% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 19.43% | 38.08% | 42.49% |

APPENDIX C – RESPONSE BREAKDOWN BY AGE BRACKET

| Responses by Age: Under 25 | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Questions | Strongly Agree/Agree % | Neutral % | Strongly Disagree/Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 82.61% | 13.04% | 4.35% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 13.24% | 29.41% | 57.35% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 76.81% | 13.04% | 10.14% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 69.57% | 18.84% | 11.59% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 50.72% | 23.19% | 26.09% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 57.58% | 16.67% | 25.76% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 30.00% | 31.43% | 38.57% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 42.86% | 24.29% | 32.86% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 32.81% | 21.88% | 45.31% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 43.28% | 23.88% | 32.84% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 20.31% | 42.19% | 37.50% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 35.82% | 38.81% | 25.37% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 25.37% | 41.79% | 32.84% |

| Response by Age: 26 - 55 | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Questions | Strongly Agree/Agree % | Neutral % | Strongly Disagree/Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 81.55% | 10.56% | 7.88% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 17.43% | 26.44% | 56.13% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 77.71% | 12.39% | 9.79% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 65.56% | 27.95% | 6.49% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 72.68% | 15.34% | 11.82% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 70.30% | 15.91% | 13.68% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 33.13% | 30.76% | 36.11% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 32.17% | 37.22% | 30.56% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 18.41% | 37.54% | 43.93% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 40.99% | 24.40% | 34.55% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 25.57% | 38.44% | 35.82% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 34.51% | 39.65% | 25.78% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 24.96% | 37.29% | 37.69% |

| Response by Age: 56+ | | | |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Questions | Strongly Agree/Agree % | Neutral % | Strongly Disagree/Disagree % |
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 74.52% | 10.81% | 14.67% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 17.37% | 21.24% | 61.39% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 72.69% | 16.92% | 10.38% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 74.90% | 16.86% | 8.24% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 78.99% | 10.89% | 10.12% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 72.03% | 11.44% | 16.53% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 27.34% | 29.69% | 42.97% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 32.81% | 36.76% | 30.43% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 15.51% | 30.61% | 53.88% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 39.42% | 26.56% | 34.02% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 22.82% | 38.59% | 38.59% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 28.22% | 48.55% | 23.24% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 22.13% | 38.34% | 39.53% |

Response by Age: Prefer not to say

| Questions | Strongly Agree/Agree % | Neutral % | Strongly Disagree/Disagree % |
|---|------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| I regularly feel safe in my neighborhood | 68.42% | 18.42% | 13.16% |
| I believe all New Hanover County public schools are safe | 6.41% | 23.08% | 70.51% |
| I believe some New Hanover County public schools are safer than others | 66.67% | 11.54% | 21.79% |
| I believe there is a problem with bullying in New Hanover County public schools | 76.32% | 14.47% | 9.21% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to law enforcement | 50.00% | 18.42% | 31.58% |
| I feel comfortable reporting suspicious or inappropriate activity to a school official | 45.33% | 16.00% | 38.67% |
| I trust corrective action will be taken after I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 14.29% | 20.78% | 64.94% |
| I believe my identity will be protected if I report suspicious or inappropriate activity | 10.53% | 26.32% | 63.16% |
| Reports about bullying are adequately addressed and responded to by school administration | 9.72% | 34.72% | 55.56% |
| I know where to find information or receive communication related to an emergency at a school in a timely manner | 28.95% | 25.00% | 46.05% |
| I regularly access community programs and resources that can support my social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 18.18% | 37.88% | 43.94% |
| The schools provide a way to access community programs so that students can actively participate in them | 26.76% | 30.99% | 42.25% |
| It is easy to find information about programs or resources that can support a person's social, emotional, and physical needs to succeed | 18.67% | 32.00% | 49.33% |