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Perceptions of Home Notes: Parental Involvement in Teaching Social Skills

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Perceptions of Home Notes: Parental Involvement in Teaching Social Skills



POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Walk the Peaceable Walk

Michael Adams
Ryan Shatzer
Sue Womack
Paul Caldarella

Introduction



POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Walk the Peaceable Walk





Parental Involvement

- Teachers and parents share common goals for children
- Parental involvement can
 - Improve Academics
 - Improve Student Behavior
 - Lower Absenteeism



“Many teachers believe that they can only be effective if they have parental assistance with learning activities in the home.”

(Epstein, 1986)



Three Reasons to Involve Parents

- Students primary caretaker
- Natural setting at home and in community
- Opportunities arise at home not at school



(Schulze et al., 1989)



Difficulties with Parental Involvement

- May lack motivation or ability
- Difficult to design programs for parents
- Parents may view programs as a judgment on their ability to parent





Keys to Overcome Difficulties

- Brevity
- Fits Daily Routine



(Shulze, Rule & Innocenti, 1989)



Social Skills

- Social skills are:
“Socially acceptable learned behaviors enabling individuals to interact effectively with others and avoid or escape socially unacceptable behaviors exhibited by others.”
- Teaching social skills is a method of communicating society’s behavioral expectations
- Benefits and risks regarding social skills



Social Skills in Education

- Social skill instruction has traditionally occurred in special education
- “Social skill interventions have begun to target children who do not have identified disabilities but can clearly benefit from deliberate social skill instruction”



Positive Behavior Support



Targeted/Intensive: 3-5% high-risk students

Selected: 7-10% at-risk students (small group)

Universal: 80-90% of students respond to SWPBS

- Social Skills Instruction is among universal intervention programs
- Proactive approach for all students
- SWPBS values parents being partners in their child's educational experience

(Horner & Sugai, 2002; Lane & Beebe-Frankenberger, 2004; Muscott et. al., 2008)



Difficulties

- Generalization and Maintenance
- Lack of teacher support
 - Teachers may feel it is not their role
 - NCLB Pressure



(Siperstein & Bak, 1988; Stokes & Baer, 1977)



Research Aims

- Purpose
 - Evaluate the use of a Home Note program as a way to involve parents in teaching and reinforcing social skills as a universal level PBS intervention
 - Examine stakeholder perceptions of a Home Note program



Method



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Setting

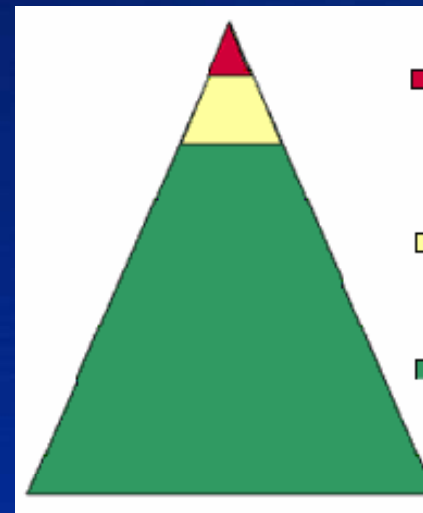
- Suburban Elementary School
 - 436 Students
 - Over 50% Free and Reduced
 - Ethnicity
 - 75% Caucasian
 - 21% Hispanic
 - 2% African American
 - 2% Other





Universal Interventions

- Social Skill Instruction
- Written Praise Notes
- School Pledge





Social Skill Yearly Schedule

Month	Kindergarten	1 st & 2 nd	3 rd & 4 th	5 th & 6 th
September	How to Follow Directions			
October	How to Accept Responsibility			
November	How to Show Appreciation			
December	How to Follow Directions	How to Listen		
January	How to Accept Responsibility	How to Follow Directions	How to Resolve Differences	
February	How to Show Appreciation	How to Accept Responsibility	Review 3 Core Skills	How to Make Decisions
March	How to Follow Directions	How to Show Appreciation	How to Listen	
April	How to Accept Responsibility	How to Listen	How to Resolve Differences	
May	How to Show Appreciation	Review 3 Core Skills		How to Make Decisions



Monthly Schedule

- Week One Teacher
- Week Two Parent volunteer
- Week Three Librarian
- Week Four Various



Home Notes

- Social skills
- Parent teacher committee
- One skill and one Home Note per month
- Distributed and collected by teachers
- Goal 85%



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Name _____ Teacher _____

Grizzly Pride Begins With Me!

Dear First or Second Grade Parent:

Our Grizzly Pride **social skill** for January is:

HOW TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

- Step 1** Look at the person.
- Step 2** Say, "O.K." (or, show you understand)
- Step 3** Do the task immediately.
- Step 4** Report back, if necessary.

This month we are reviewing the social skill, *HOW TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS*. We have discussed these steps at school, but we hope that you will also review the steps to this social skill at home.

In order to help you review these steps, we are asking that you play a **MATCHING GAME** as a family. Hopefully your child can take the lead in starting the game, but you might need to help him/her by reading what is on each card. The game is simple: *Cut apart the cards found on the opposite side of this sheet. Lay out the match game cards, upside down, on the floor or on a table. Family members take turns flipping two cards over to try to get a match.* To get a match you need to match the skill with which step it is, for example, the card that says 'Look at the person.' will match with the card, 'Step 1.' There is also a match for the name of this social skill (How to Follow Directions) and this month (January's social skill). Have fun!

Thank you once again for your help with our Grizzly Pride program. **When you have finished this activity, please sign below, and send this portion of the home note back by Friday** to receive credit on the Grizzly Pride classroom chart. Remember, if at least 85% of the notes are returned, the class earns a reward.

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Cut along the dotted lines and return this section with your child by Friday.

Matching Game Cards

How to Follow Directions	January's Social Skill
Step 1	Look at the person.
Step 2	Say, "O.K." (or, show you understand)
Step 3	Do the task immediately.
Step 4	Report back, if necessary.



POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Name _____ Teacher _____

Grizzly Pride Begins With Me!

The social skill for October is:

HOW TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY.

The steps for this social skill are:

1. Ask yourself. *Did I do it?*
2. Accept the result.
3. No arguing, blaming, or whining.

This month we are going to have a What If? activity. Take this note home and **read the following situations with your family and have a discussion** about what you should do to accept responsibility.

-
- #1 WHAT IF you were playing kickball with a large group of kids during recess at school. When it was your turn to kick the ball, you accidentally hit a school window and broke it. What should you do?
- #2 WHAT IF you walked into your parent's bedroom and saw some money sitting on their dresser. You were all alone and you really wanted to have the money, so you took it. Later on, your parents noticed that the money was missing and asked everyone in your family what happened to it. What should you do?

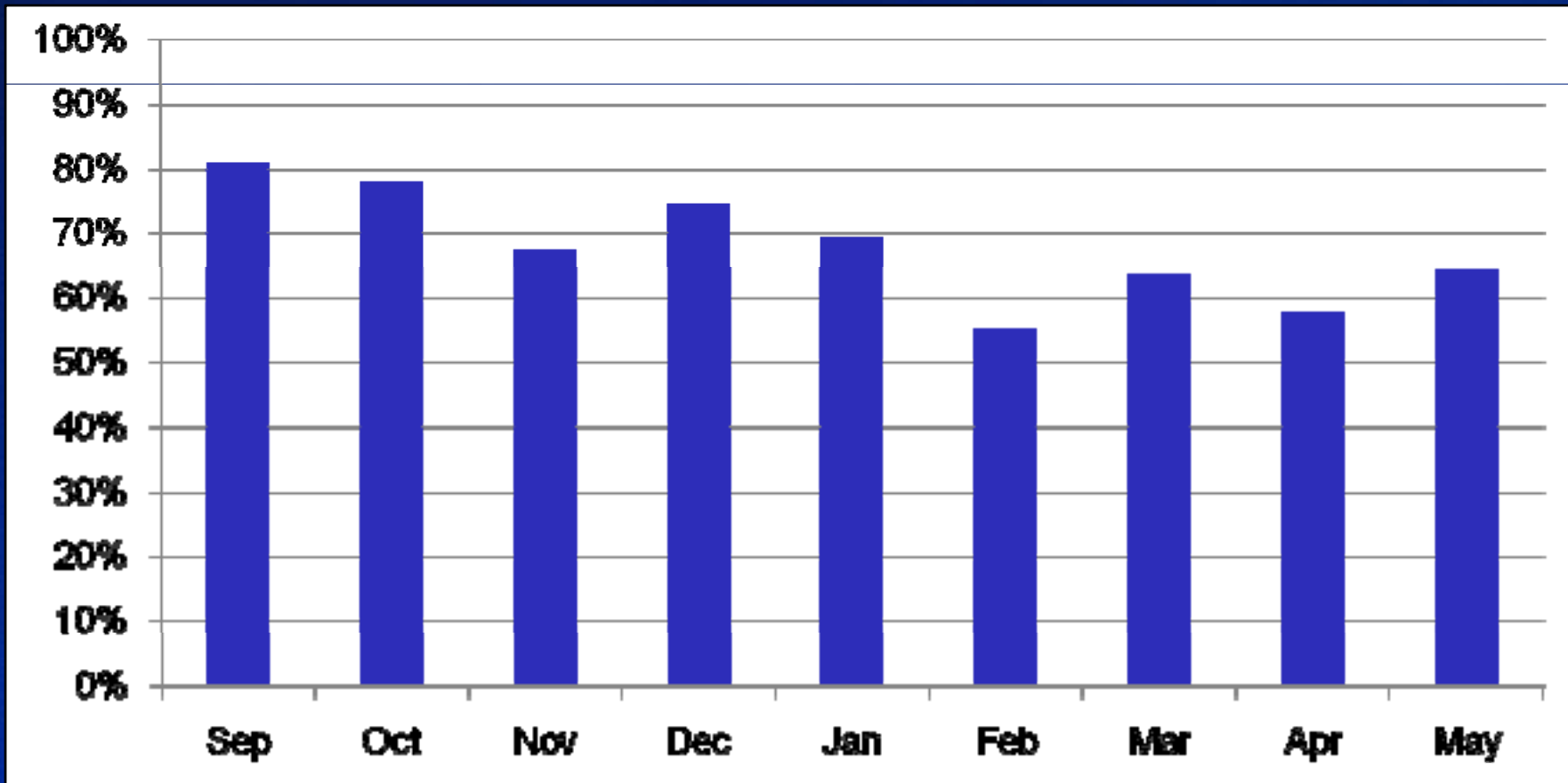
When you have discussed these situations with your family, have a parent sign below and **bring this note back by Friday, October 15th**

_____ parent signature



Home Note Return Rate (2007-08)

- Range: 55% (Feb) – 81% (Sep)
- Monthly Average: 68%





The Survey

- Measured perceptions of:
 - Favorability
 - Time Commitment
 - Effectiveness
 - Ease
 - Continued Use
- Three versions
- 12-15 questions, 7-point Likert scale
- Open-ended comments section



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Items	Teacher	Parent	Student
Students enjoy doing the Home Note activities	X	X	X
Home Notes help students improve their social skills	X	X	X
Home Notes should continue to be used next year	X	X	X
Families continue to use the social skills taught, even after the Home Note activity is done	X	X	X
Home Notes take too much time	X	X	X
Social skills should be taught in school	X	X	
Home Notes should be used more often than once a month	X	X	
It was easy to (distribute/take home) Home Notes	X		X
It was easy to (collect/bring back) Home Notes	X		X
It was easy to track Home Notes	X		
It was easy to get Home Notes signed		X	X
I wish there were more Home Note activities		X	X
Home Notes are an important part of my communication with parents	X		
I like the Home Note part of the School Pride Program	X		
Home Notes help me talk to my child about school		X	
It is important for me to know about the social skills my child is learning in school		X	
I like getting information about the social skills		X	
I like the suggestions of activities to do with my family		X	
Home Notes help students to learn the steps of the School Pride Skills			X
Parents assisted with the Home Note activities			X

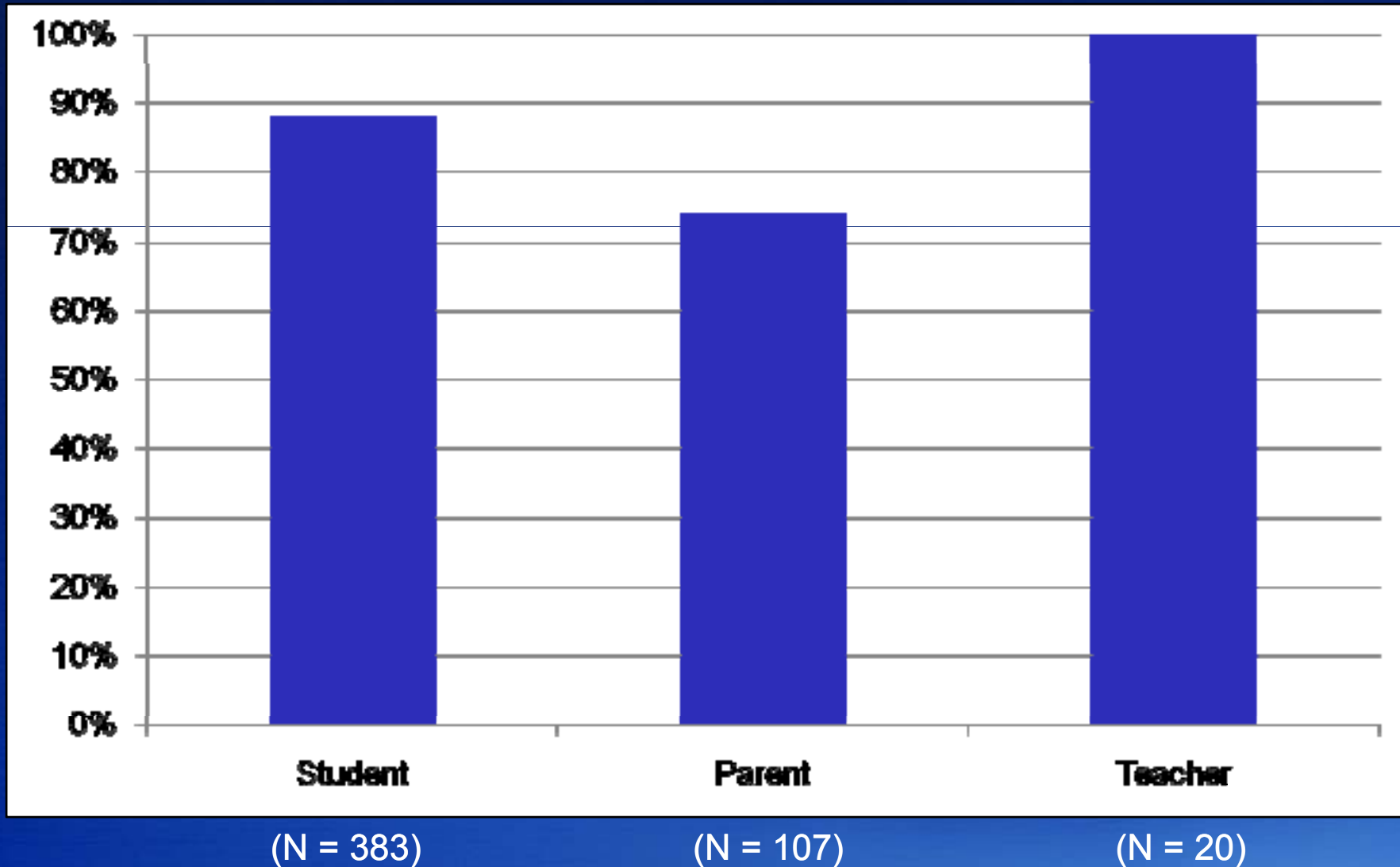


Data Collection

- Students
 - Distributed by teacher
- Parents
 - Stratified random sample across classrooms
 - Paper/Phone Survey
 - Classrooms rewarded
- Teachers
 - Completed at a staff meeting



Survey Response Rate



Results



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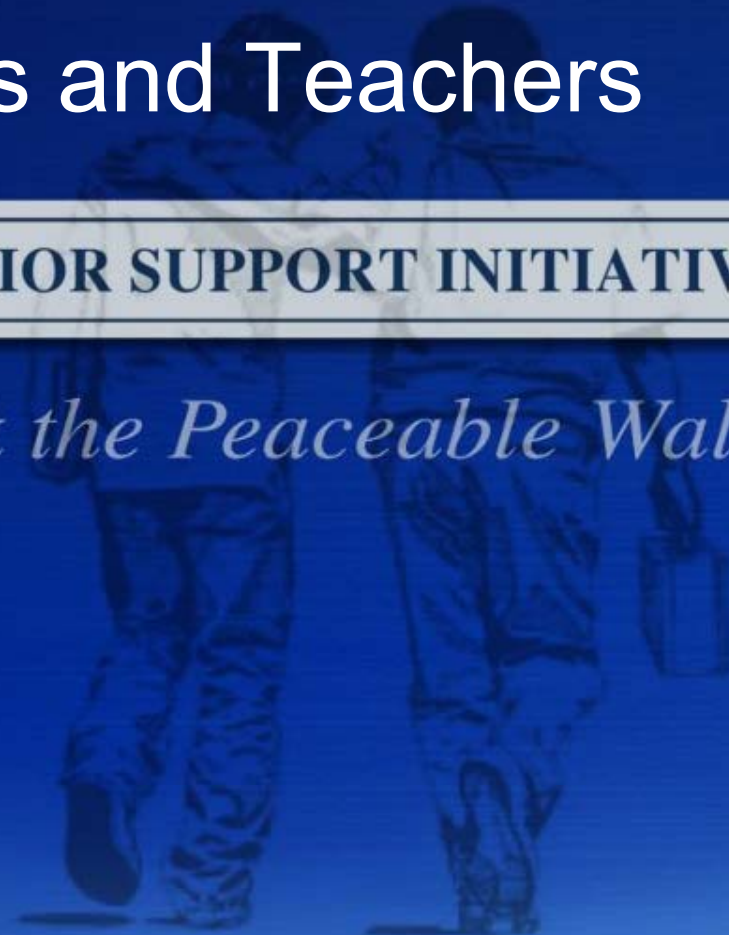


Overall Results: Parents, Students and Teachers



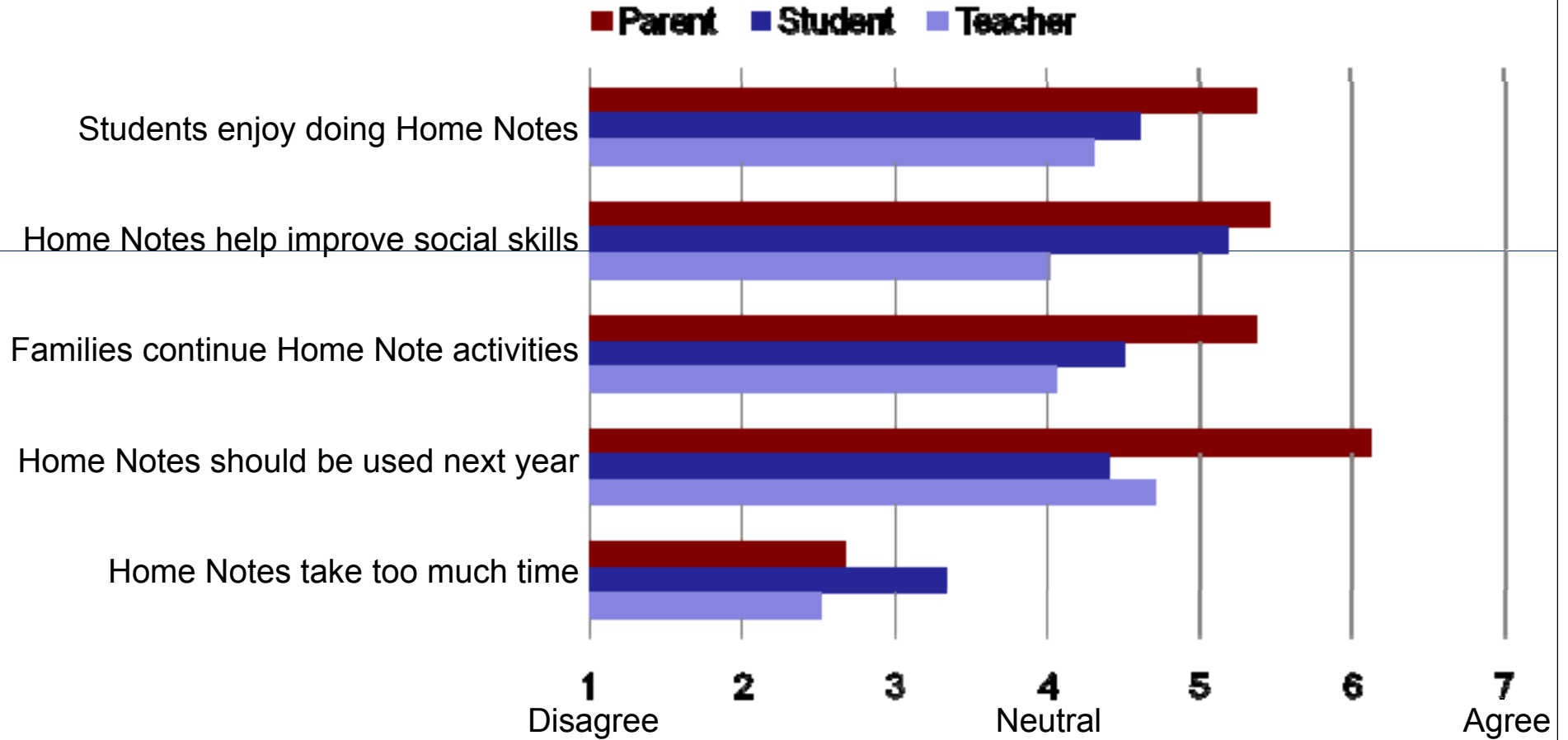
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Walk the Peaceable Walk





Mean Scores by Rater



Differences between Raters (ANOVA):

- Significant F values for each item ($p < .05$)
- Parents gave higher ratings on the first four items
- Students felt that Home Notes took more time than parents and teachers

Parents' Results



POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT INITIATIVE

Walk the Peaceable Walk





Parent Item Responses

Questions	Agree
1. It is important for me to know about the social skills my child is learning in school*	98.1%
2. Home Notes help me talk to my child about school*	94.3%
3. I like getting the information about the social skills*	94.3%
4. Social skills should be taught in school*	93.3%
5. Home Notes should continue to be used next year*	91.5%
6. I like the suggestions of activities to do with my family*	88.9%
7. Home Notes helped my child improve his/her social skills*	79.6%
8. My child likes to do the Home Note activities*	77.8%
9. Our family continues to use the skills taught, even after the Home Note activity is done*	77.8%
10. I like returning the signature slip*	70.1%
11. Home Notes should be used more often than once a month†	45.4%
12. I wish there were more Home Note activities†	29.6%
13. The Home Note activities take too long	11.0%

*Factor I: Favorability ($\alpha = .91$) † Factor II: Increase Activities ($\alpha = .86$)



Parents' Survey Results

- Parents also reported how many Home Note activities they completed with their children
- There was a significant correlation between the number of Home Notes completed and parents' ratings of favorability ($r = .26, p < .01$)
- Parents had similar perceptions regardless of their children's grade level or teacher

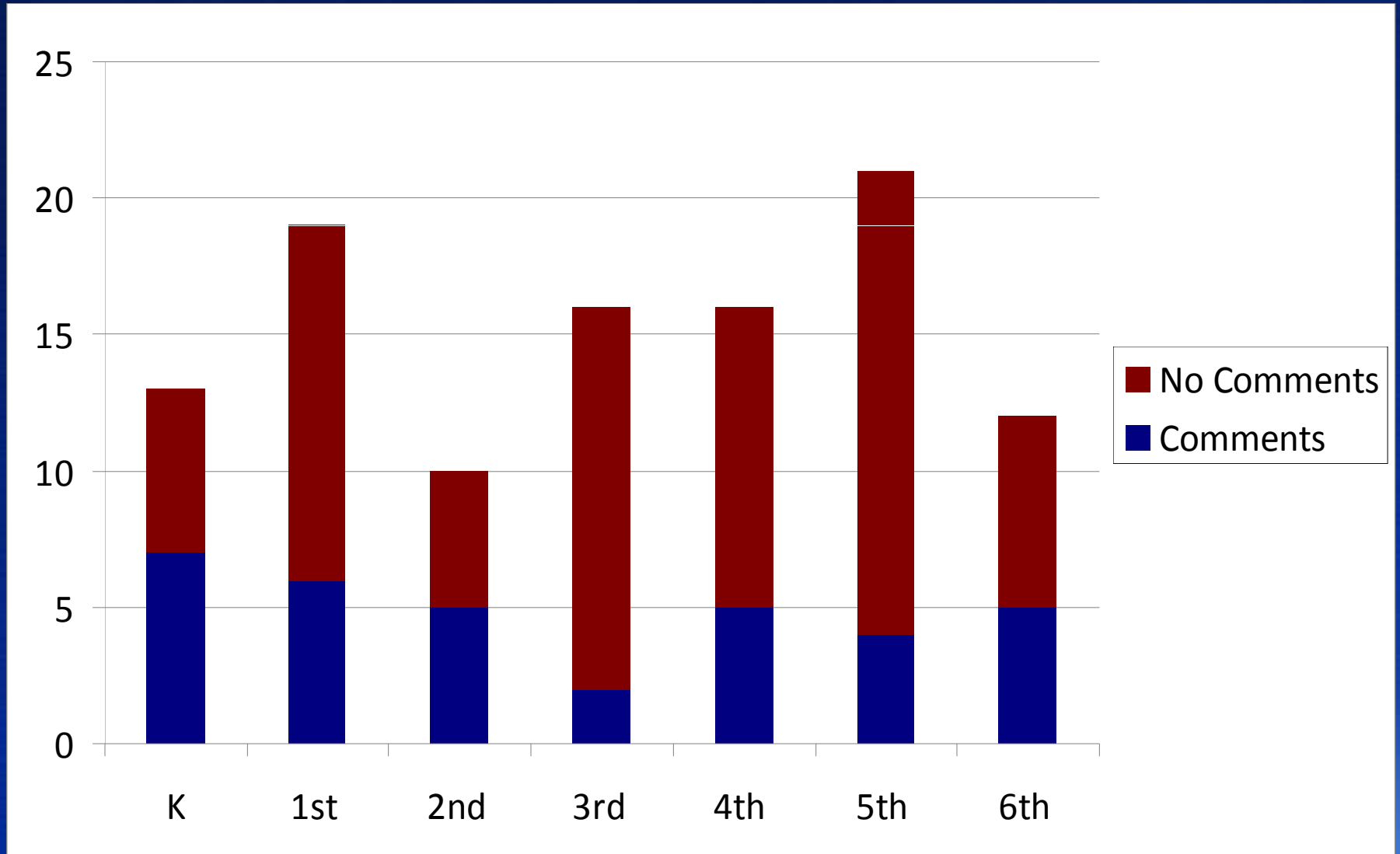


Parents' Qualitative Results

- Open-ended comments section
- 32% of the parents gave comments
 - 34 out of the 107 parents
- Parents responded favorably:
 - Rate of 7:1
- Individual comments:
 - 60% Positive
 - 20% Negative
 - 20% Suggestions



Distribution of Parents' Comments





Parents' Positive Comments

Parent Themes	Sample Parent Comments
Appreciation	"I am grateful to see my child learning these things..." (Parent #4)
Program Worth	"We as parents think this is a great program and we do try to implement the skills in our home. We think any focus on problem solving, responsibility, etc. is very good, especially when families continue to try to use these skills with their children." (Parent of student #302)
Program Impact	"They are always things that will be useful throughout their lives! Thank you!" (Parent #8)
Partnership	"Home note activities is very good idea the way I and my child sit together [and] talk about school. So th[at] way [I] know what my child [is] doing in school." (Parent #54)



Parents' Negative Comments

- 21% of comments were negative (12 of 57)
 - Tended to convey a feeling of burden
 - “They just cause stress to me.” (Parent #52)
 - “For the most part this just feels like one more thing to think about, and I am not sure if my kids really internalize the ideas. I could take or leave the program.” (Parent #10)
 - One felt that the Home Notes implied that parents weren't doing a good job
 - “It seems that most of the skills in these home notes should be taught at home and reinforced at school. They are kind of insulting like we as parents are sending you heathen children with no manners. Thanks for the confidence??? They are an invasive waste of time.”(Parent #76)

Students' Results



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Student Item Responses

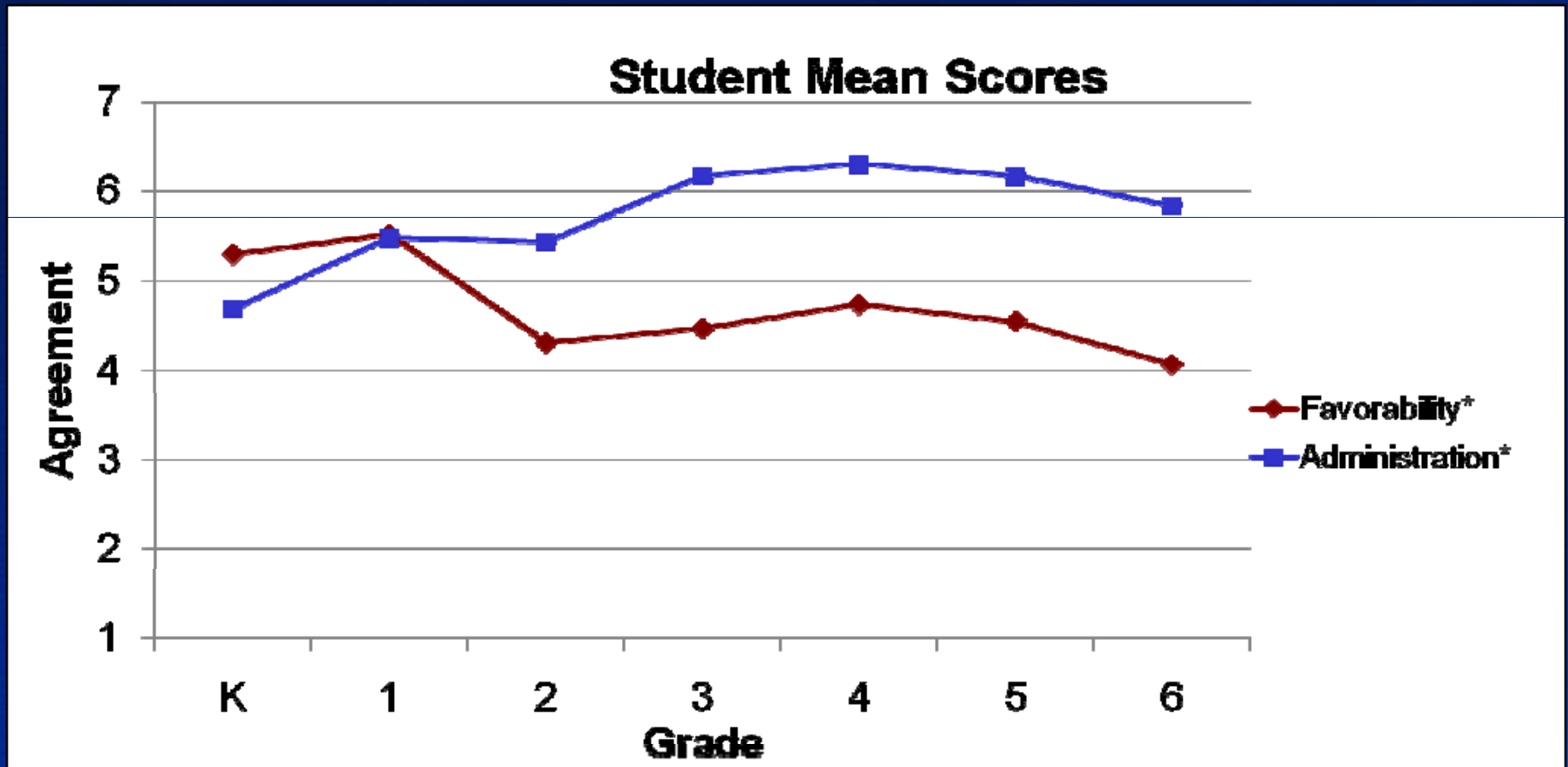
Questions	Agree
1. It was easy to take Home Notes home†	85.2%
2. It was easy to get Home Notes signed†	81.3%
3. It was easy to bring Home Notes back to my teacher†	72.2%
4. Home Notes helped me learn the steps of the School Pride Skills*	71.4%
5. My parents did the Home Notes activities with me	66.2%
6. Home Notes helped me do the School Pride Skills more than before*	65.9%
7. I like doing the Home Note activities*	56.7%
8. I would like to do Home Notes again next year*	51.7%
9. My family uses the School Pride Skills taught, even after the Home Note activity is done*	51.3%
10. I wish there were more Home Note activities*	38.0%
11. The Home Note activities take too long to do	31.2%

*Factor I: Favorability ($\alpha = .82$)

† Factor II: Administration ($\alpha = .70$)



Difference Between Grades



*Significant F values:

Favorability: $F(6,376)=7.39, p<.001$; Negative linear trend $F(1,376)=26.64, p<.001$

Administration: $F(6,375)=12.05, p<.001$; Positive linear trend $F(1,375)=39.23, p<.001$



Students' Qualitative Results

Student Themes	Sample Student Comments
Like	I love them so much. (Student #417, 1 st Grade)
Fun	I like the activities - they help me learn while having fun. They help to show [School] Pride! (Student #199, 4 th Grade)
Beneficial	I think they help you be a better person. (Student #101, 3 rd Grade) They help us to be nice to others. (Student #17, 5 th Grade) I think that they will help other kids get along better and be kind and also be polite. (Student #75, 6 th Grade)
Family Activities	I think that home notes are a fun way to get the family involved, and to bond with each other. (Student #383, 6 th Grade)

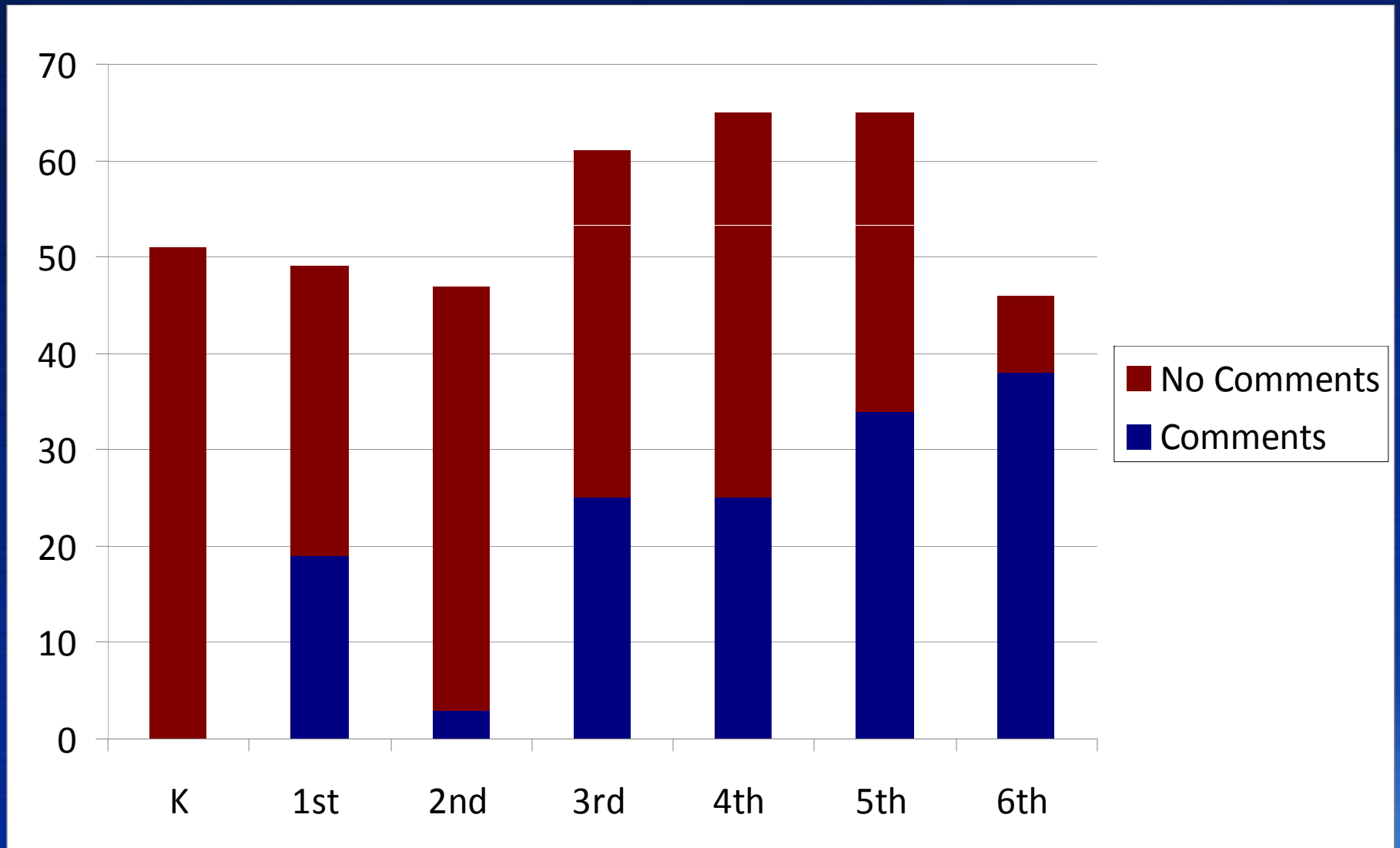


Student Negative Comments

- Dislike
 - Simple statements of not liking, but without a given reason (15/170, 8.8%, evenly distributed across 1-6 grades)
- Boring-5 (2.9%)-all 5th & 6th)
- More Work- (2.9%)-all 5th & 6th
- Not Fun-7 (4.1%)-six were 3rd-6th



Distribution of Students' Comments



Teachers' Results



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Teacher Item Responses

Questions	Agree
1. Distributing Home Notes is easy for me to manage	90.0%
2. Social Skills should be taught in school	89.5%
3. Collecting Home Notes is easy for me to manage†	75.0%
4. Home Notes should continue to be used next year*	65.0%
5. My students like doing the Home Note activities*	60.0%
6. Tracking Home Notes is easy for me to manage†	57.9%
7. I like Home Notes as part of the School Pride Program*	55.0%
8. Home Notes help my students improve their social skills*	35.0%
9. Home Notes are an important part of my communication with parents*	30.0%
10. Families use the social skills taught even after the Home Note activity is done*	21.1%
11. Home Notes take too much time†	10.0%
12. Home Notes should be used more often than once a month	5.0%

*Factor I: Favorability ($\alpha = .90$)

† Factor II: Administration ($\alpha = .88$)



Teachers' Survey Results

- Open-ended comments
- Although not significant, a negative correlation exists between the teachers number of years they used Home Notes and their favorability towards the program
($r = -.38, p = .10$)
- Teachers' perceptions did not differ by grade level



Summary

- Program
 - Easy to administer fit daily routine
- Perceptions
 - Parents were most favorable
 - Students had favorable perceptions
 - Teachers were neutral
 - Wanted to continue using program
 - Repetitive after six years
- Further research
 - Addition of Outcomes Measure
 - Look at effects across tiers



Suggestions for Improvement

Parents

- Inform Early of the Scope
- Consolidate across grades
- Keep them involved in the process

Teachers

- Get teachers more involved
- Share what you learned here

Students

- Integrate with Homework
- Consistency in Procedures
- Activities that appeal to a broad age range



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