

Cambridge Public Schools

Family School Climate Survey Report

Elementary Schools

2004/2005

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Office of Student Achievement and Accountability

in collaboration with
CPS Elementary School Principals

March 2005

CPS Family Survey Report

Elementary Schools 2004/2005

BACKGROUND

The Cambridge Public Schools surveyed families from each of its twelve elementary schools in the fall of 2004. The CPS Family School Climate Survey originated from a national search from Educational Research Services and was adapted slightly as a result of feedback from CPS principals. A copy of the survey is included in the appendix of this document.

A key consideration in the selection of the survey was that it be “family friendly” enough to ensure strong participation. The survey was translated into Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Most schools asked families to complete the survey during fall open houses and/or parent conferences. In a few instances, schools mailed the surveys home to families.

Schools returned surveys to the Office of Student Achievement and Accountability for data entry and analysis.

PARTICIPATION

- 1545 surveys were completed, approximately 45% of the families in Cambridge. The percentage of parents/guardians participating varied by schools and demographic groups.

	Participation	Number
Amigos	41%	92
Baldwin	53%	165
Cambridgeport	77%	199
Fletcher/Maynard	53%	87
Graham & Parks	38%	124
Haggerty	50%	94
Kennedy/Longfellow	39%	152
King	38%	69
King Open	32%	123
Morse	54%	163
Peabody	36%	136
Tobin	42%	141
Total	45%	1545

- Of the surveys returned 1314 (85%) indicated a racial/ethnic category to which the family belonged. Proportionally, White and Asian families completed more surveys than Hispanic and Black families.

	% of Surveys	% of District
Black (n=357)	27%	38%
Asian (n=186)	14%	11%
Hispanic (n=144)	11%	14%
White (n=621)	47%	35%

- 1187 surveys (77%) indicated whether children received Free/Reduced Lunch or Paid for lunch at school. Proportionally, more families with higher social economic status (pay lunch) completed surveys.

	% of Surveys	% of District
Free/Reduced Lunch (n=414)	35%	44%
Pay Lunch (n=773)	65%	56%

One comment made by families was that the survey was given too early in the school year. This was a particular concern for families new to the district and/ or their child's school. The timing of the survey will be taken into consideration in future years.

COMPOSITE INDICATORS

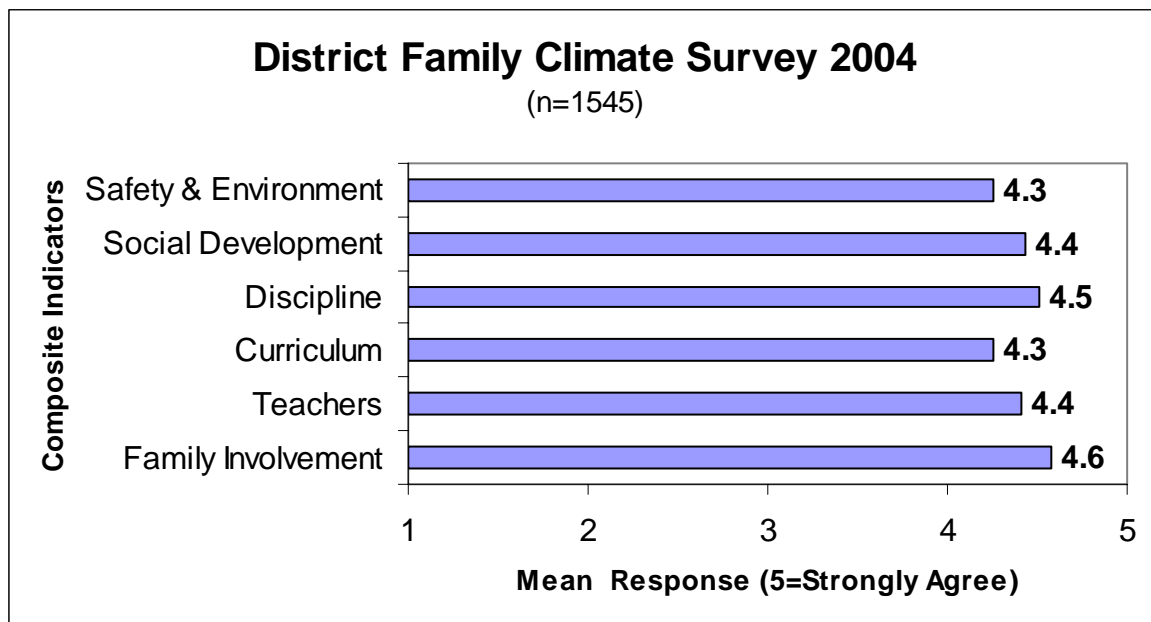
Six indicators were composed from the 31 statements on the survey. The district results on page 5 of this report show how the statements were grouped into each of the indicators. The mean response on a scale from **1 (strongly disagree)** to **5 (strongly agree)** was calculated for each indicator at the district and school level. The differences between racial/ethnic groups, socioeconomic status (lunch program), and grade (elementary versus middle grade) were also examined at the district level. The following describes each of the indicators in more detail:

- **Family Involvement:** an indicator of the degree to which families feel welcomed at the school and how easily they can voice opinions to principals, teachers, and staff.
- **Teaching/Parent Relationships:** an indicator of the degree to which families feel that teachers are excited about their work, keep families informed about their children's progress, and ease of communication.
- **Curriculum & Instruction:** an indicator of the degree to which families feel satisfied with their children's academic progress, whether the curriculum challenges and whether homework is appropriate.
- **Discipline:** an indicator of the degree to which families feel that disciplinary practices are clearly articulated, enforced, and all children are treated fairly.
- **Social Development:** an indicator of the degree to which families feel satisfied with their children's social progress and are content with the social activities offered at the school.
- **Campus Safety & Environment:** an indicator of the degree to which families feel that the school is safe and the degree to which parents are content with the physical structures (school building, playground, etc.).

Summary of Results at District Level

Families in general were very content with the schools that their children attend in Cambridge. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the average response on each of the six indicators was over 4 (agree), ranging from 4.3 to 4.6. Overwhelmingly, families were in agreement with the policies and practices at their children's schools. Families felt welcomed and could communicate easily with the staff; they felt that discipline was effectively enforced and their children were treated fairly. They felt that teachers were excited about their work and expected their children to learn. Families also supported the schools' efforts to facilitate their child's social development.

Two areas where there was slightly less agreement were around the curriculum and the safety and physical appearance of the schools. On the survey itself, the two statements receiving the lowest percentage of families in agreement were, "I like how the playground looks" (72%) and "My child is challenged by his or her schoolwork this year" (76%). Families were also less likely to agree with other statements grouped in these two indicators, such as: "I am satisfied with my child's progress in mathematics (77%), in writing" (80%), and "I feel that my child's personal belongings left at school are safe" (77%).



District 2004 School Family Climate Survey Results

1545 Responses 45% Participation

Family Involvement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
	94.9%	4.5%	0.6%
The teachers and staff whom I know at this school are friendly	97.3%	2.3%	0.4%
I feel welcome at this school	95.7%	4.0%	0.4%
I feel free to voice any concerns to the staff at this school	92.7%	6.5%	0.9%
The principal and teachers make me feel good about visiting this school	94.1%	5.1%	0.8%
Teaching/Parent Relationships			
	89.8%	8.1%	2.1%
The teachers at this school are excited about their work	89.4%	9.8%	0.8%
I can talk to my child's teachers easily	93.9%	4.8%	1.3%
The teachers expect my child to learn	97.4%	2.2%	0.3%
The teachers keep me informed about what my child is learning in school	88.3%	8.9%	2.8%
The teachers keep me informed about how my child is doing in school	88.0%	9.2%	2.8%
The teachers give me ideas about how I can help my child do his or her best	81.5%	13.8%	4.7%
Curriculum & Instruction			
	83.3%	12.4%	4.3%
I think what my child is learning at school is important	98.9%	1.0%	0.1%
My child is challenged by his or her schoolwork this year	76.3%	17.7%	6.0%
I am satisfied with my child's academic progress	83.1%	13.6%	3.3%
I feel the homework assigned is appropriate and reinforces my child's classroom learning	83.8%	13.2%	3.0%
I am satisfied with my child's progress in reading	83.6%	12.3%	4.1%
I am satisfied with my child's progress in writing	80.3%	13.9%	5.8%
I am satisfied with my child's progress in mathematics	76.9%	15.5%	7.7%

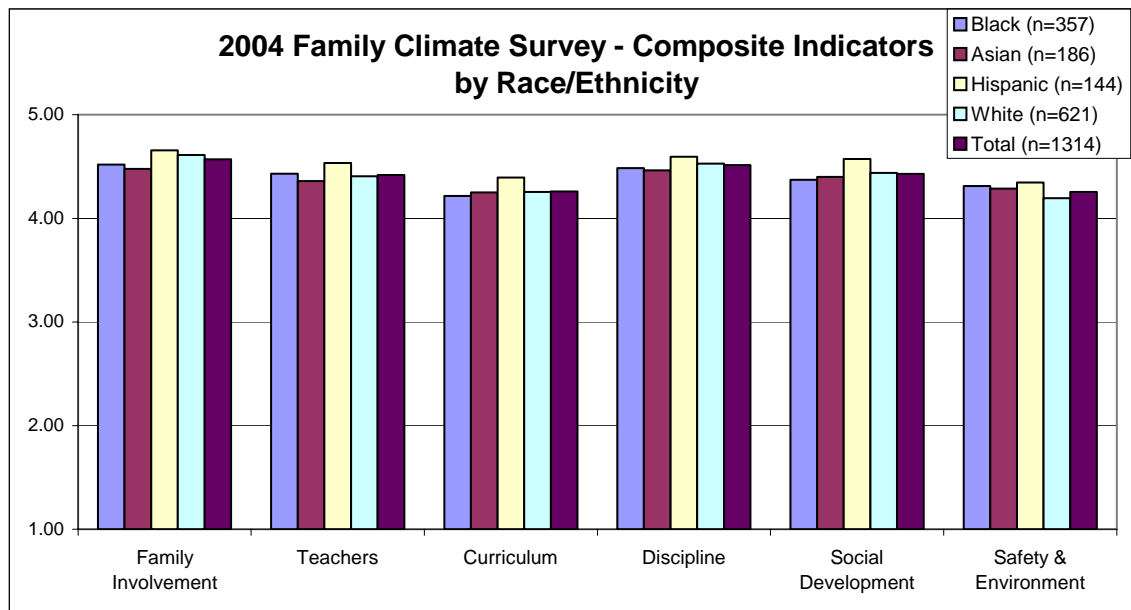
Discipline	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
		90.6%	8.8%
I know what behavior is expected of my child at school	97.3%	2.6%	0.1%
I feel it is important for my child to obey the classroom and school rules	99.5%	0.3%	0.2%
My child's teachers enforce classroom and school rules	89.2%	10.2%	0.6%
My child's teachers reward good student choices and behavior	79.3%	19.6%	1.1%
When it comes to discipline at this school, my child has been treated fairly	87.7%	11.1%	1.2%
Social Development	92.1%	6.9%	1.0%
My child gets along well with other students in this school	93.5%	5.4%	1.1%
I am satisfied with my child's social progress at school	87.8%	10.8%	1.4%
I feel that my child fits in at this school	92.7%	6.4%	0.9%
I think the assemblies, field trips, and other extras at this school are important	94.3%	5.1%	0.6%
Campus Safety & Environment	84.6%	10.4%	5.0%
This school is a good place for my child to learn	95.6%	4.0%	0.5%
I like the way the school looks*	86.5%	7.9%	5.5%
I feel my child is safe at school	91.7%	7.2%	1.1%
I feel that my child's personal belongings left at school are safe	77.2%	17.7%	5.1%
I like how the playground looks	72.1%	15.3%	12.6%

* In 54 of the surveys returned, this statement read "I like the way the school and playground look".

Differences among Racial/Ethnic Groups

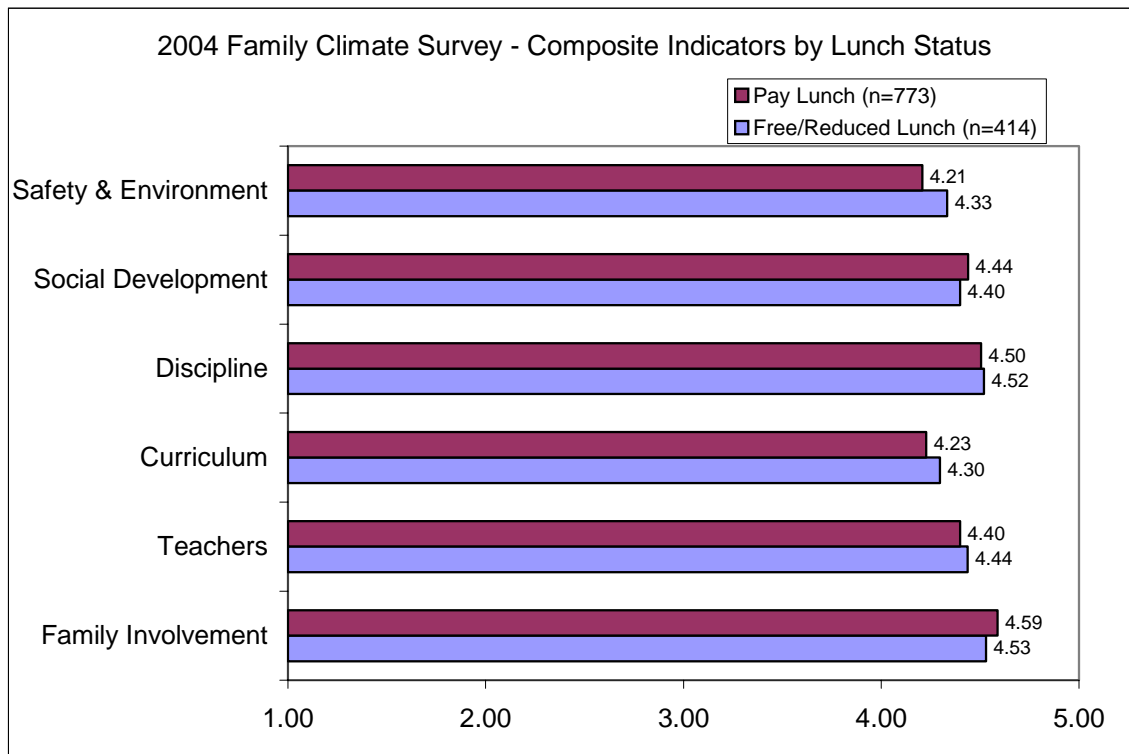
Overall, families of all racial and ethnic groups responded positively to the survey statements. Some differences were found among racial/ethnic groups on the composite indicators. On the Family Involvement indicator, White and Hispanic families were more likely to feel welcomed at their schools, and feel that they could voice their concerns than Black and Asian families. White families were also more likely to be concerned about the safety and physical appearance of the school and playground (Safety and Environment) than Black, Hispanic and Asian families. Hispanic families were more content with the curriculum and the facilitation of their child's social development than White, Black, and Asian families. In addition, Hispanic families were more in agreement with discipline implementation in their schools than Asian and Black families. Within the relationship with teachers indicator, Hispanic families responded more positively to the statements than White and Asian families.

	Family Involvement	Teachers	Curriculum	Discipline	Social Development	Safety & Environment
Black (n=357)	4.52	4.43	4.22	4.49	4.37	4.31
Asian (n=186)	4.48	4.36	4.25	4.46	4.40	4.29
Hispanic (n=144)	4.66	4.53	4.40	4.60	4.57	4.34
White (n=621)	4.61	4.41	4.26	4.53	4.44	4.19
Total (n=1314)	4.57	4.42	4.26	4.51	4.43	4.25



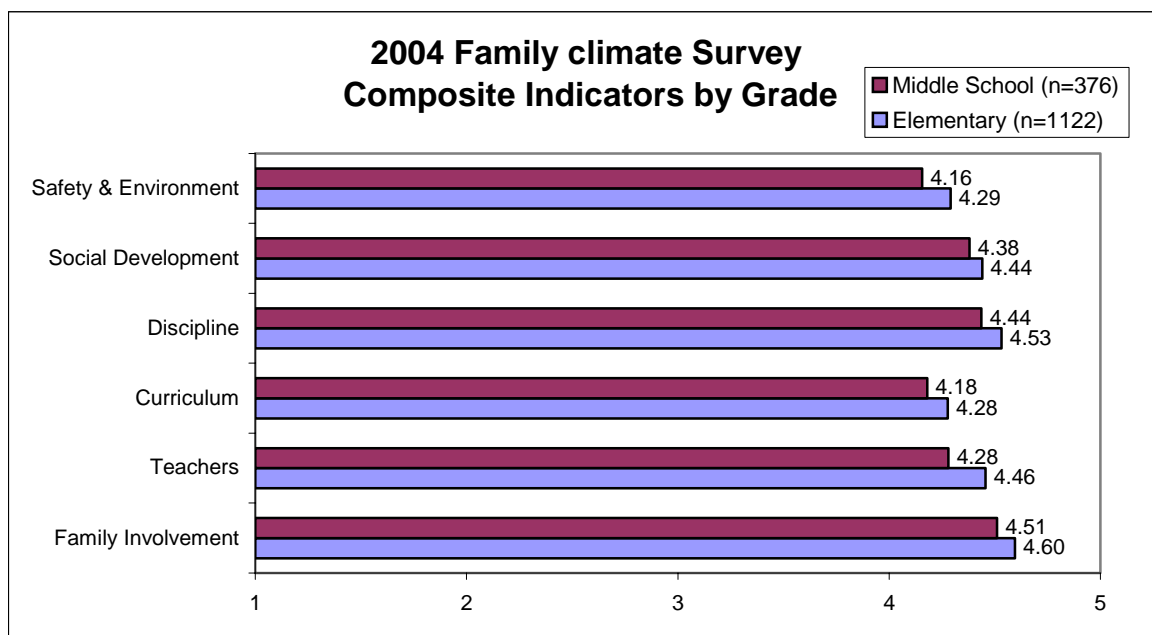
Differences between Socio-economic Status (Lunch Program)

Differences also existed between families whose children receive free or reduced fee lunches and families who pay for their children's lunches. On the Family Involvement indicator, families who pay for their children's lunches were more likely to feel welcomed at their schools, and feel that they could voice their concerns than those receiving free or reduced fee lunches. Pay lunch families were also significantly more likely to be concerned about the safety and physical appearance of the school and playground (Safety and Environment).



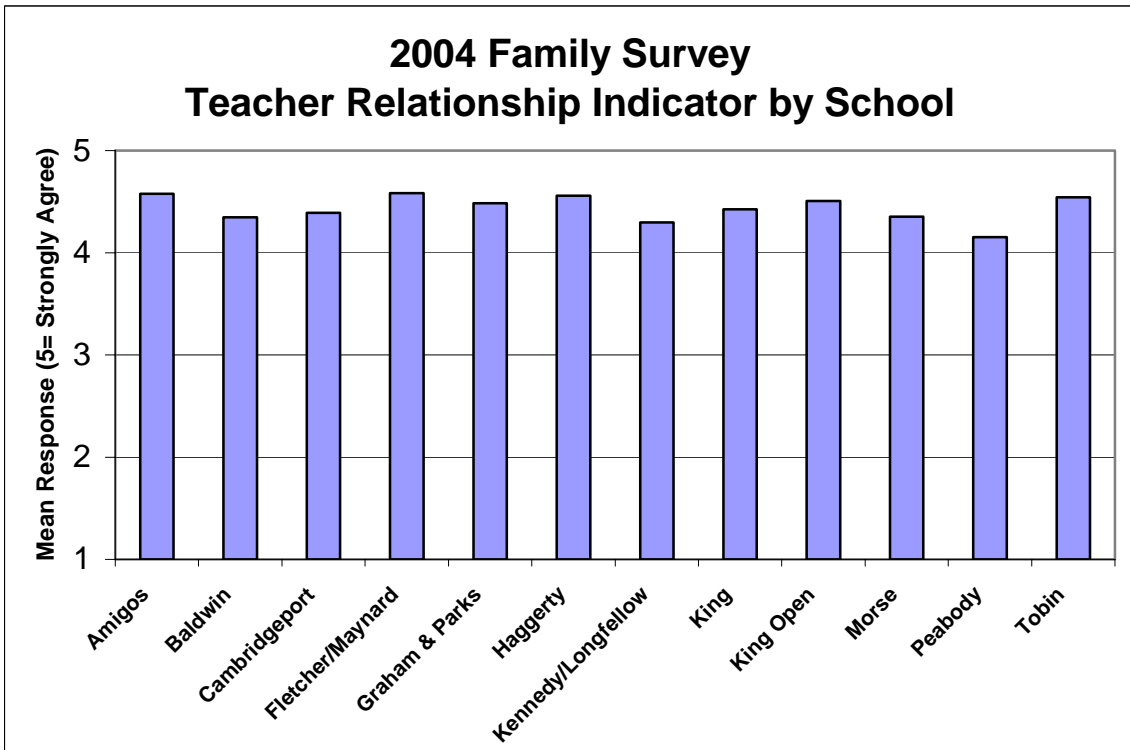
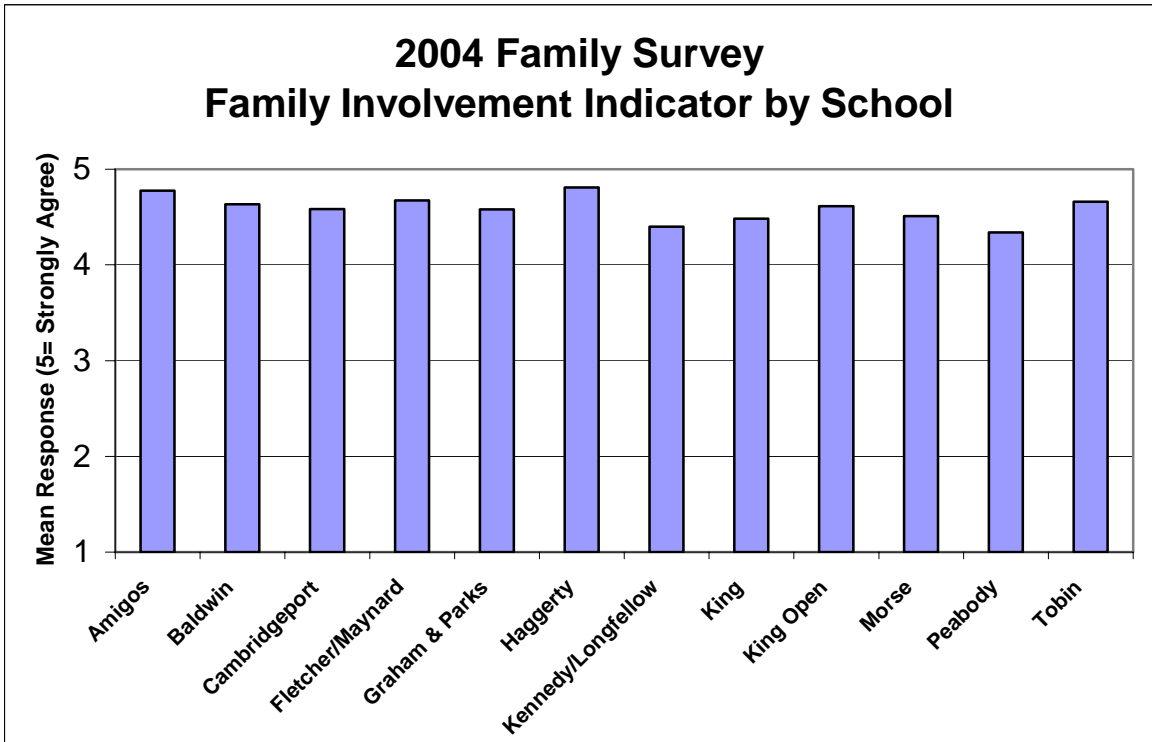
Differences between Grade (Elementary versus Middle Grades)

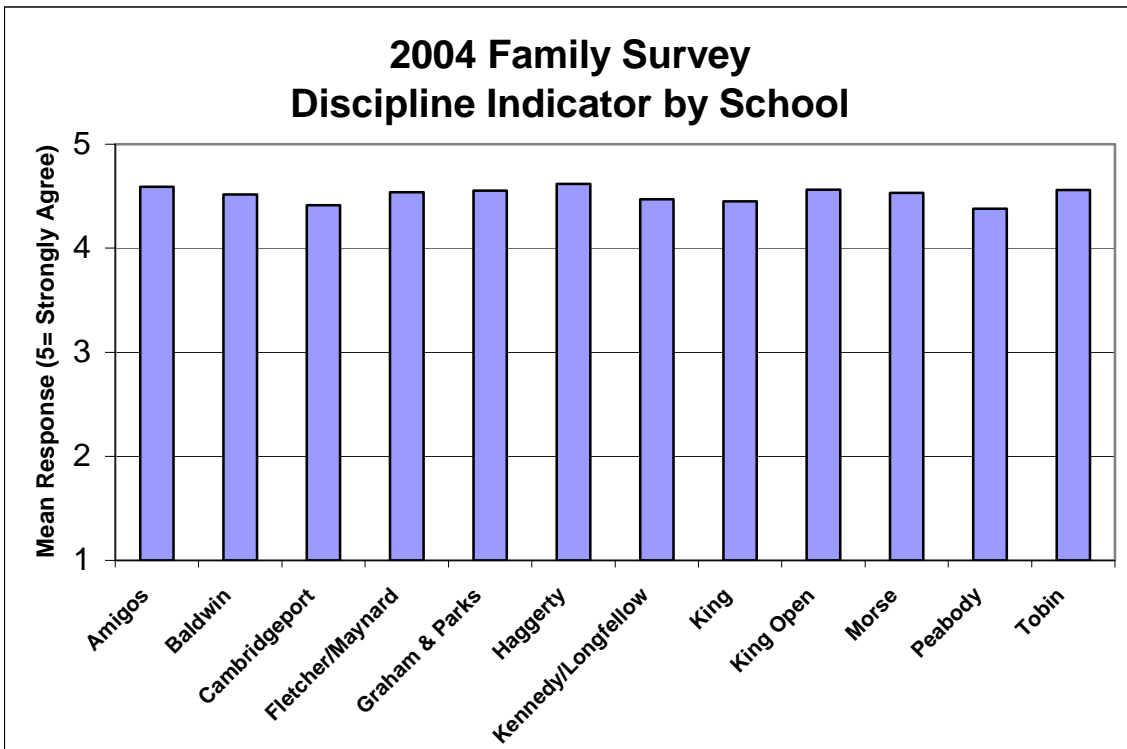
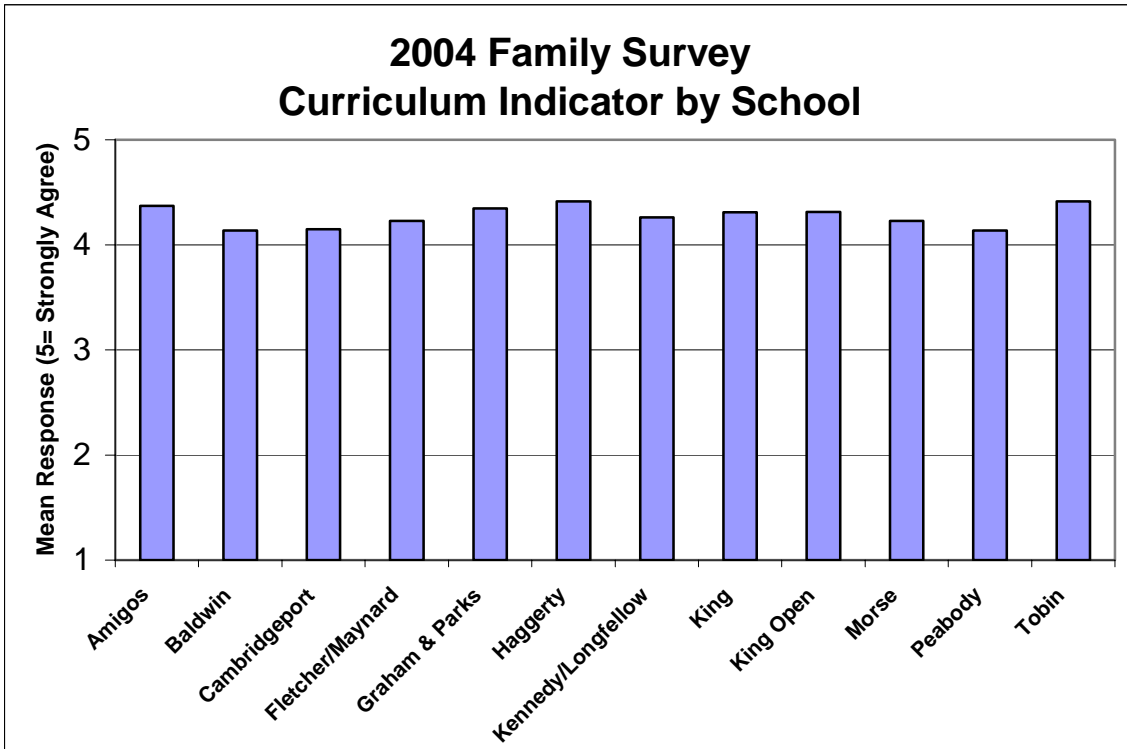
Differences were found between families with children in elementary grades and families with children in the middle grades on all of the indicators with the exception of social development. Families with children in the elementary grades were more likely to feel welcomed at the school and able to voice concerns to staff; they were more satisfied with their children's academic progress; they were more likely to feel that their children's teachers were excited about their work and kept them informed about their child's progress. They also felt that the discipline issues were resolved more fairly and that the playground was more appropriate for their children. They also felt that their children were safer at the schools.

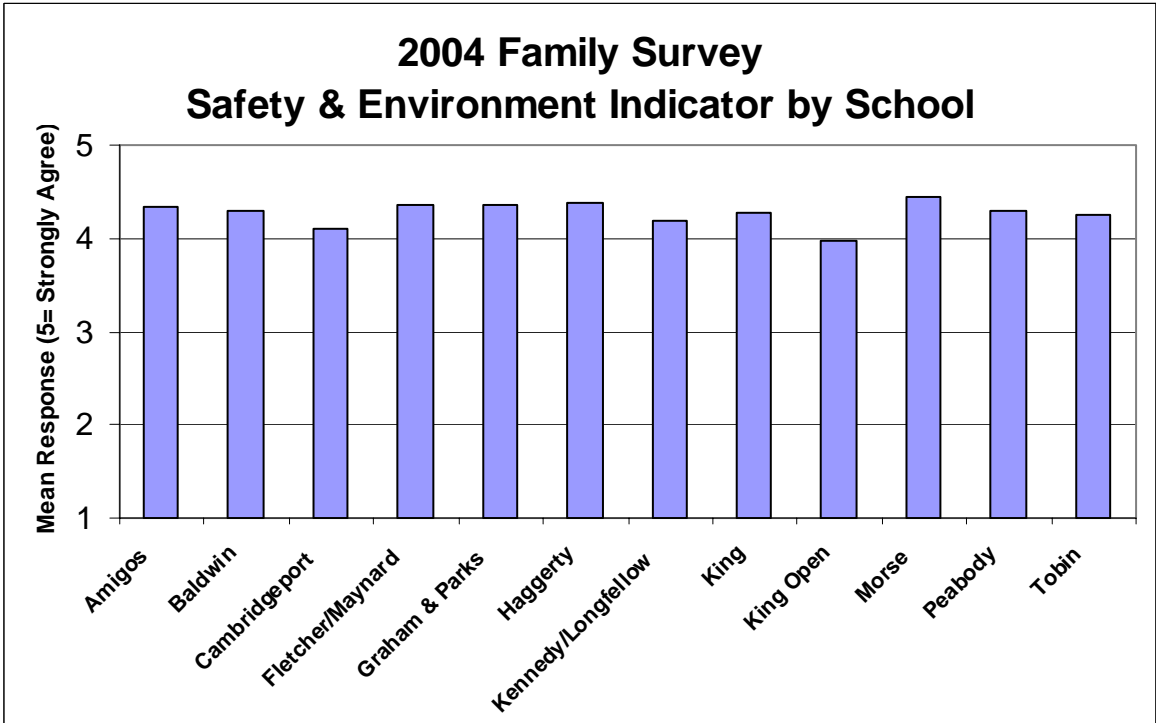
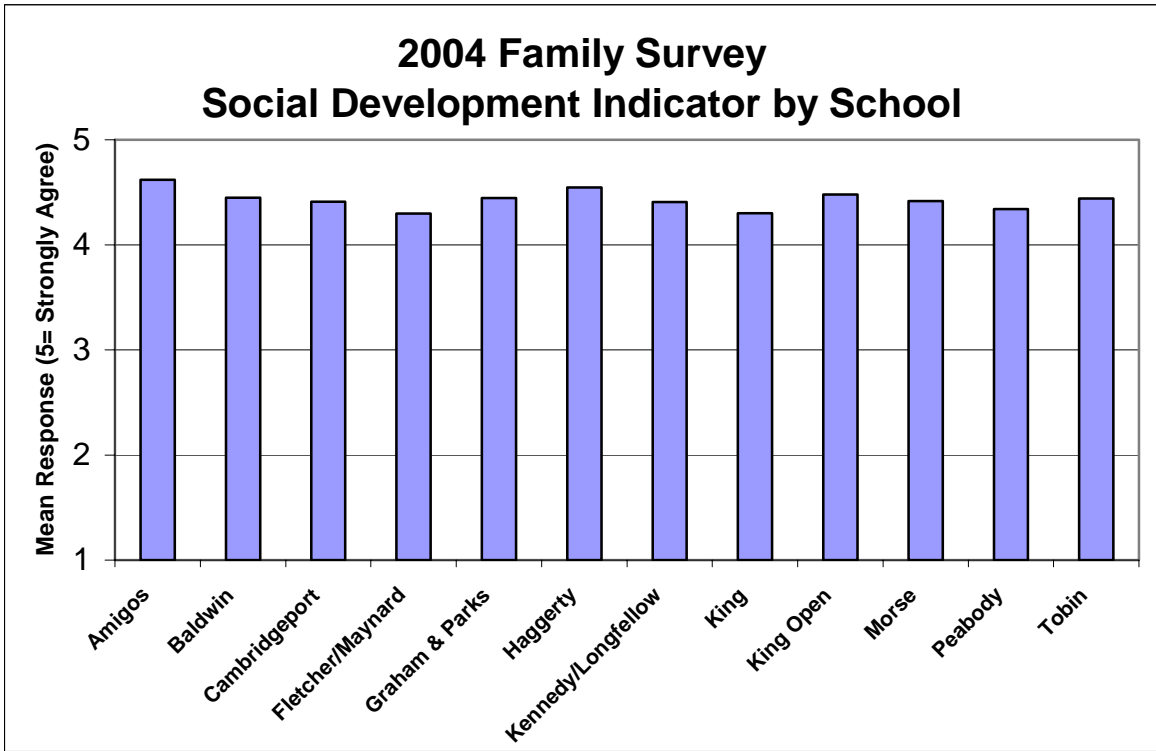


APPENDIX

Composite Indicators by Schools







Family School Climate Survey

Cambridge Public Schools
Elementary Schools
2004-2005

*Presented to Cambridge School Committee April 5, 2005.
Office of Student Achievement & Accountability*

Background

- Survey administered at the request of the School Committee in the fall of 2004
- Schools asked families to complete survey during open houses/ conferences/ mailings
- 45% of families completed survey

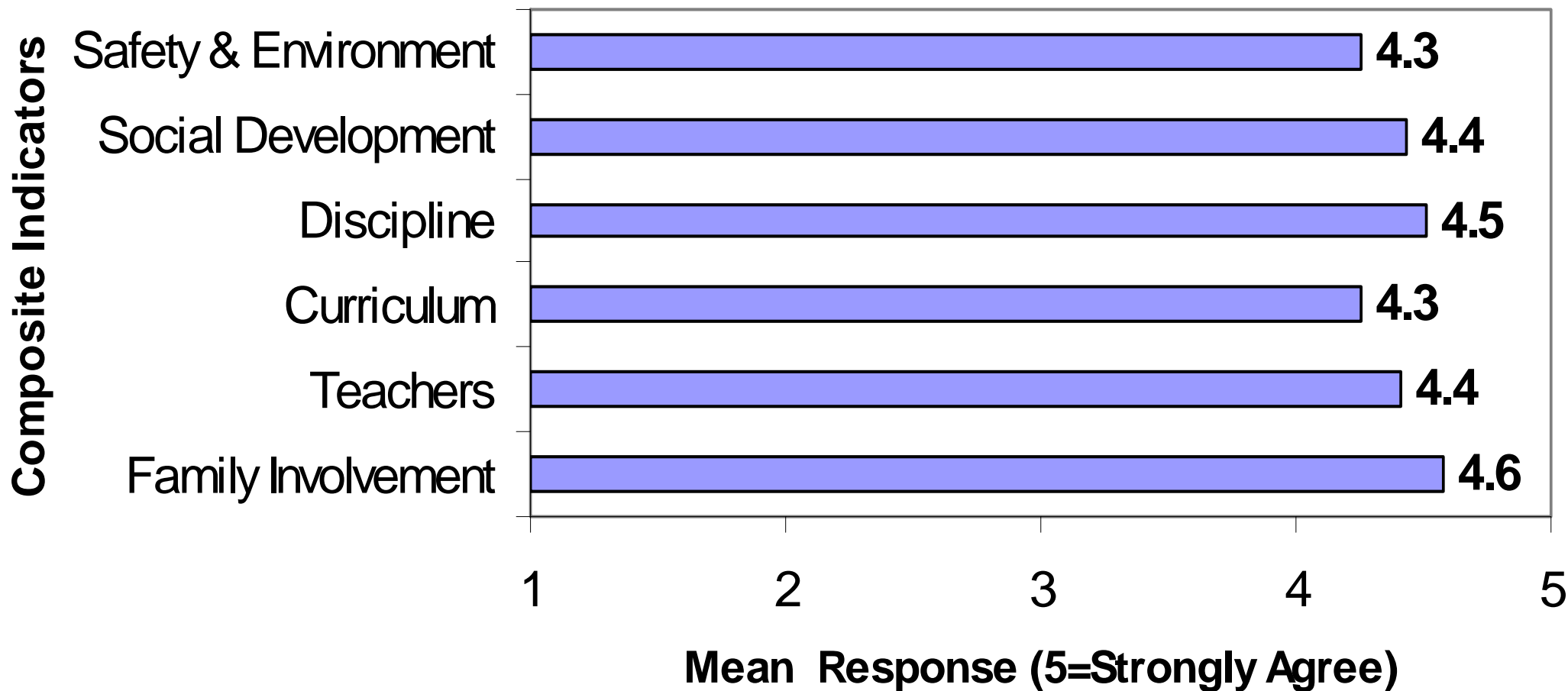
Format of Survey

- Families responded to 31 statements that were grouped into 6 categories
- Response was on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree)

Summary of Results

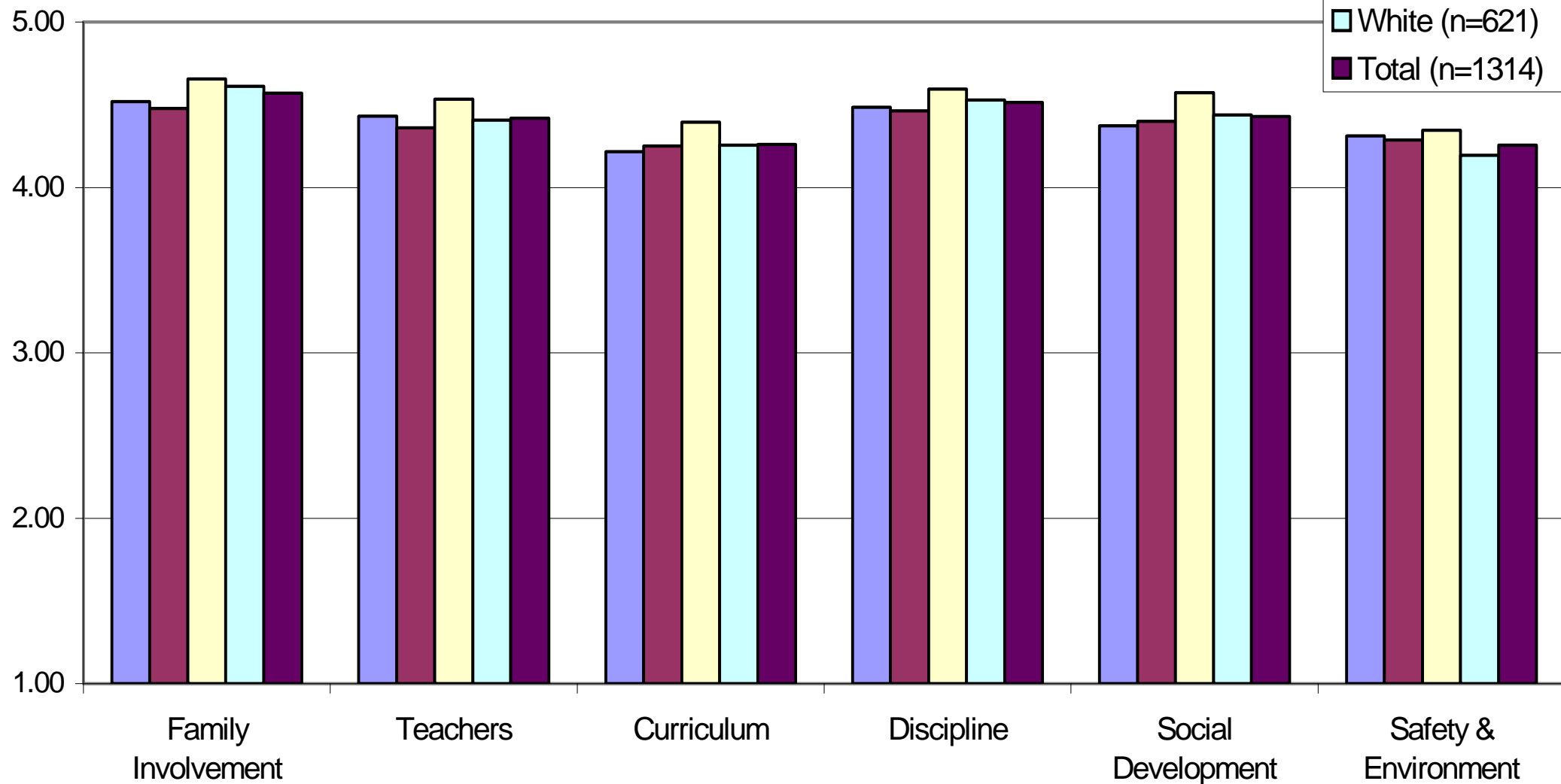
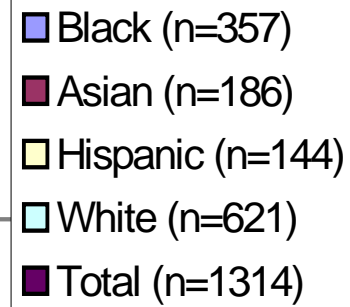
District Family Climate Survey 2004

(n=1545)



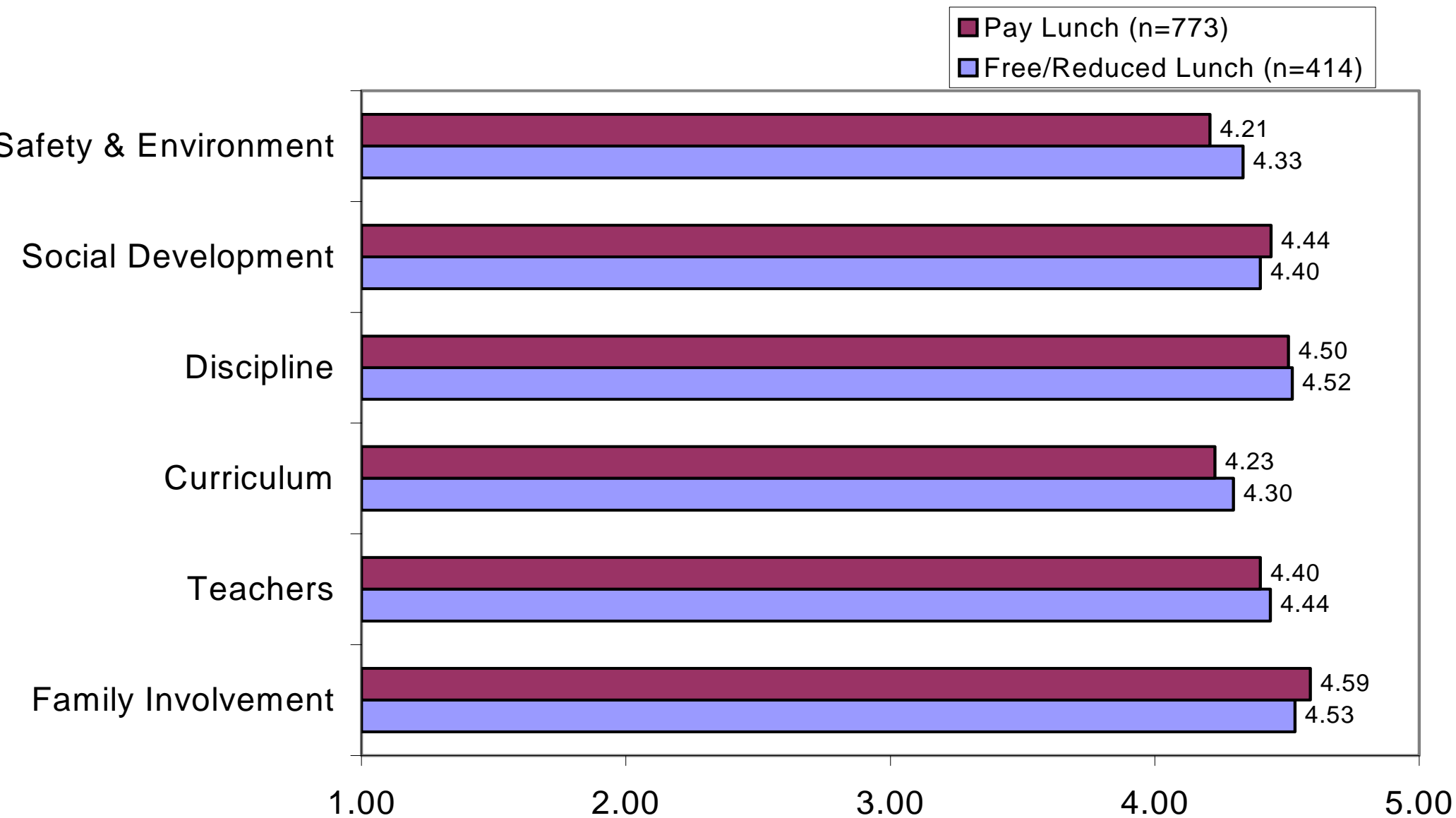
Indicators by Race/ Ethnicity

**2004 Family Climate Survey - Composite Indicators
by Race/Ethnicity**



Indicators by Income Status

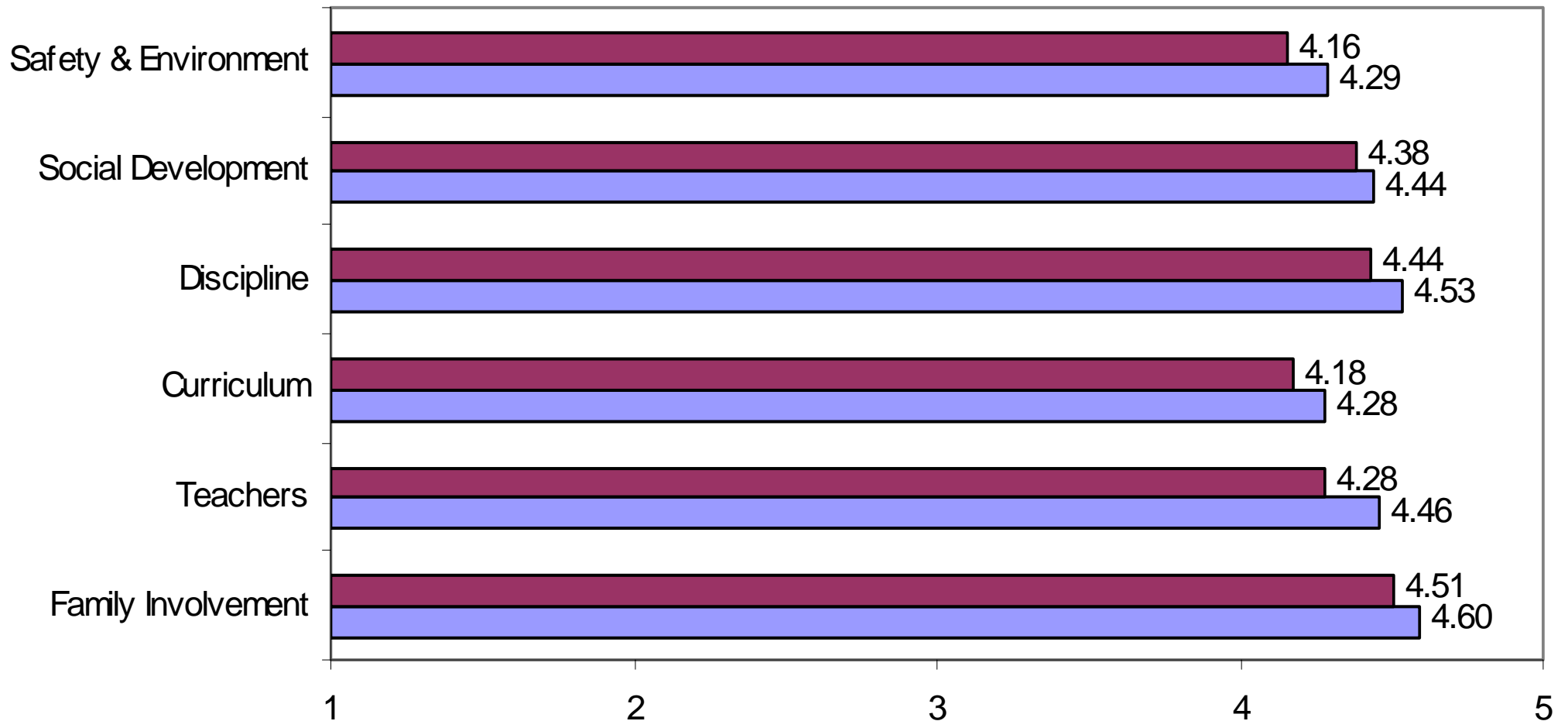
2004 Family Climate Survey - Composite Indicators by Lunch Status



Elementary vs. Middle Grades

2004 Family climate Survey Composite Indicators by Grade

■ Middle School (n=376)
■ Elementary (n=1122)

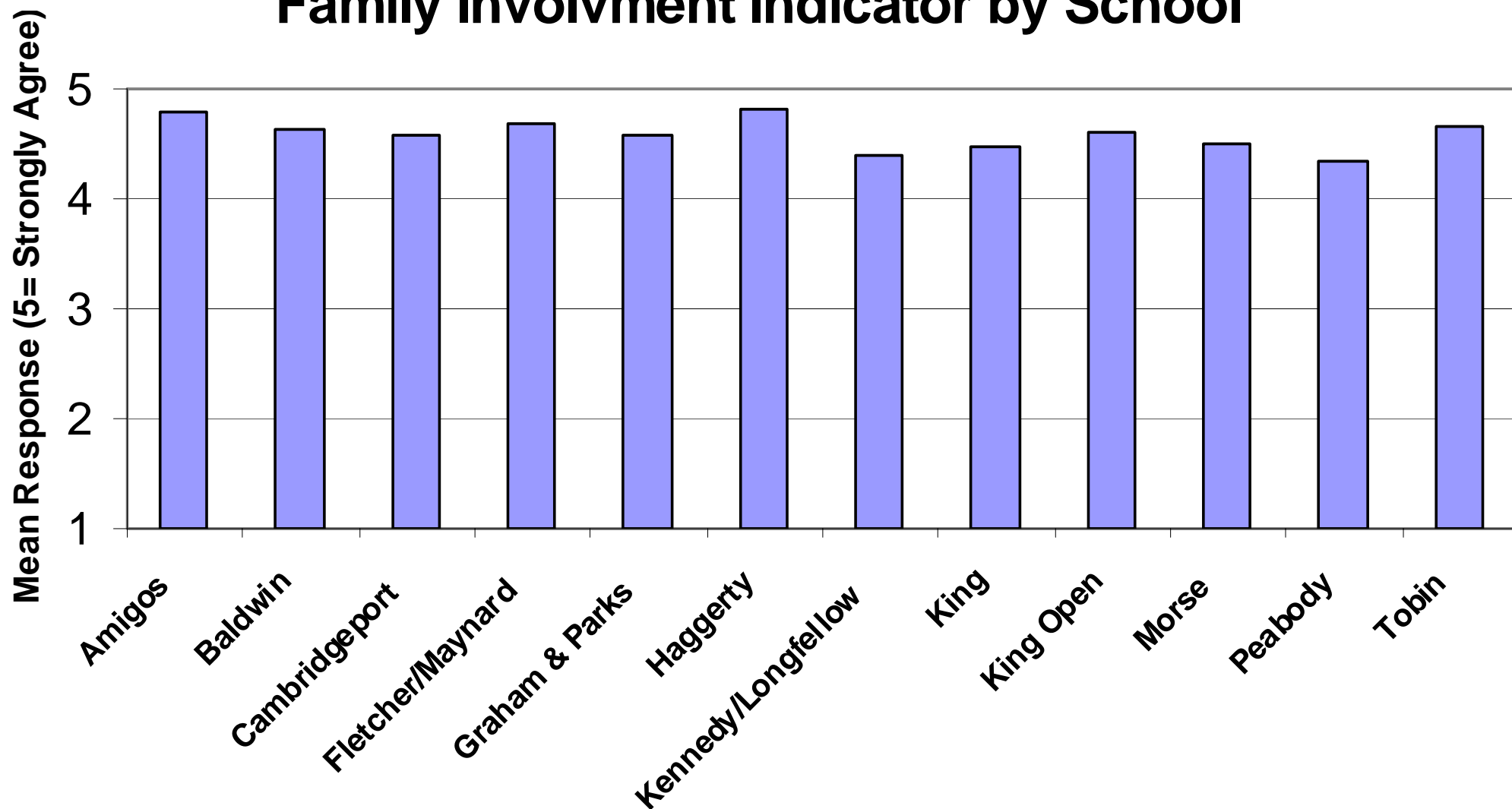


Range of Results

- Great satisfaction with the CPS
- A strong feeling of being welcomed & easy communication with staff
- Effective discipline & fair treatment of children
- High teacher expectations & excitement to teach
- Room for improvement in challenging school work, progress in mathematics, and playgrounds

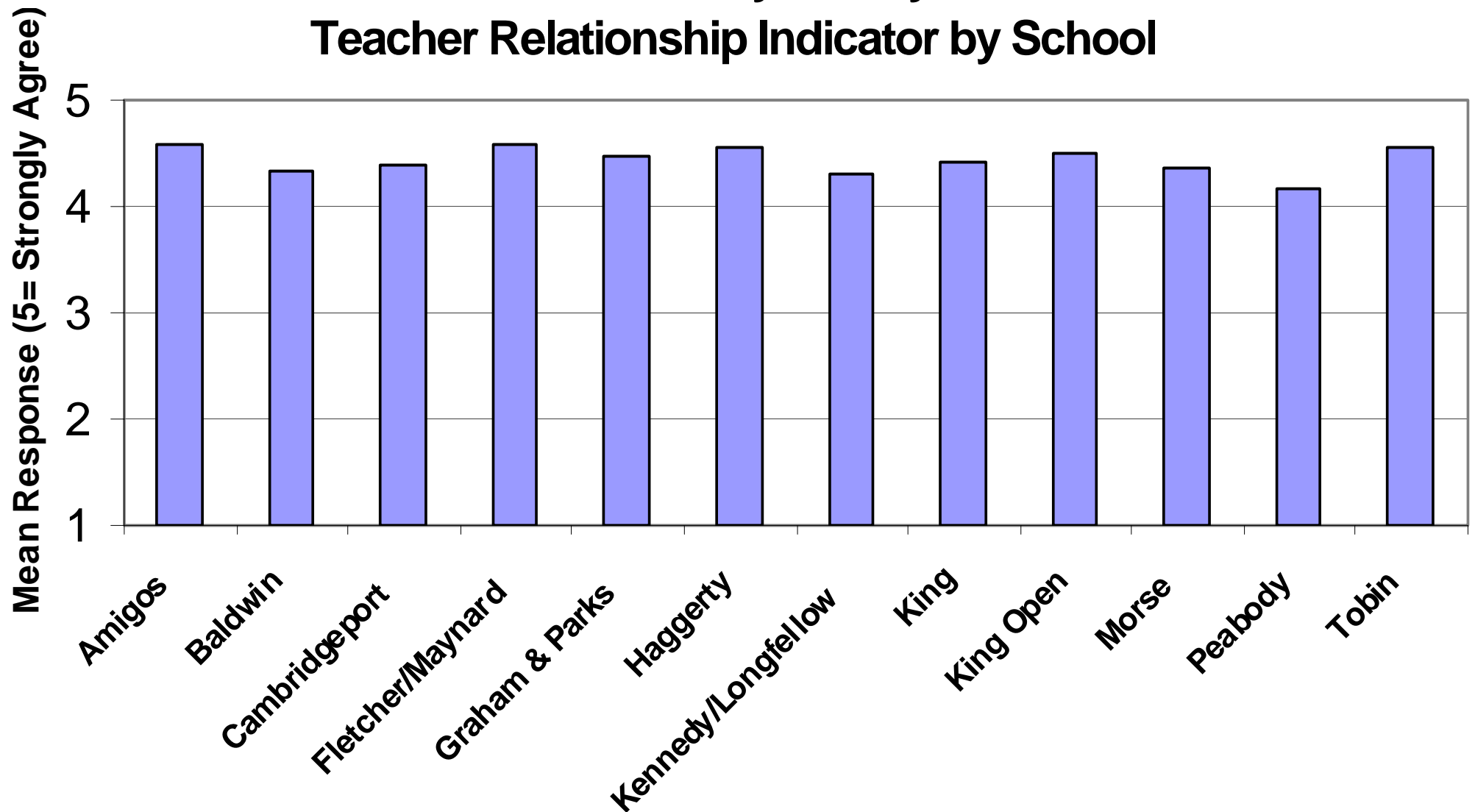
School Comparisons

2004 Family Survey
Family Involvement Indicator by School



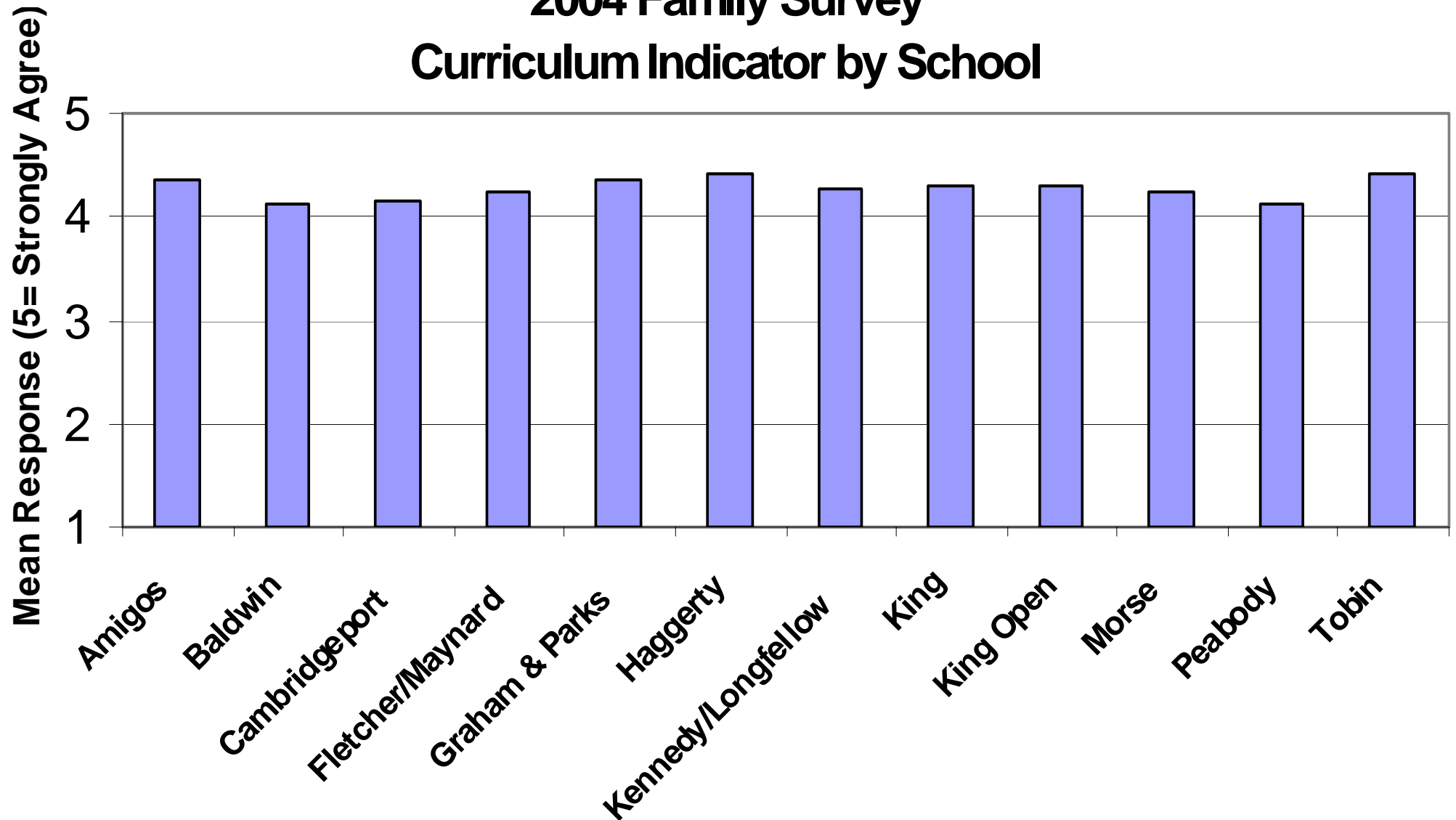
School Comparisons

2004 Family Survey
Teacher Relationship Indicator by School



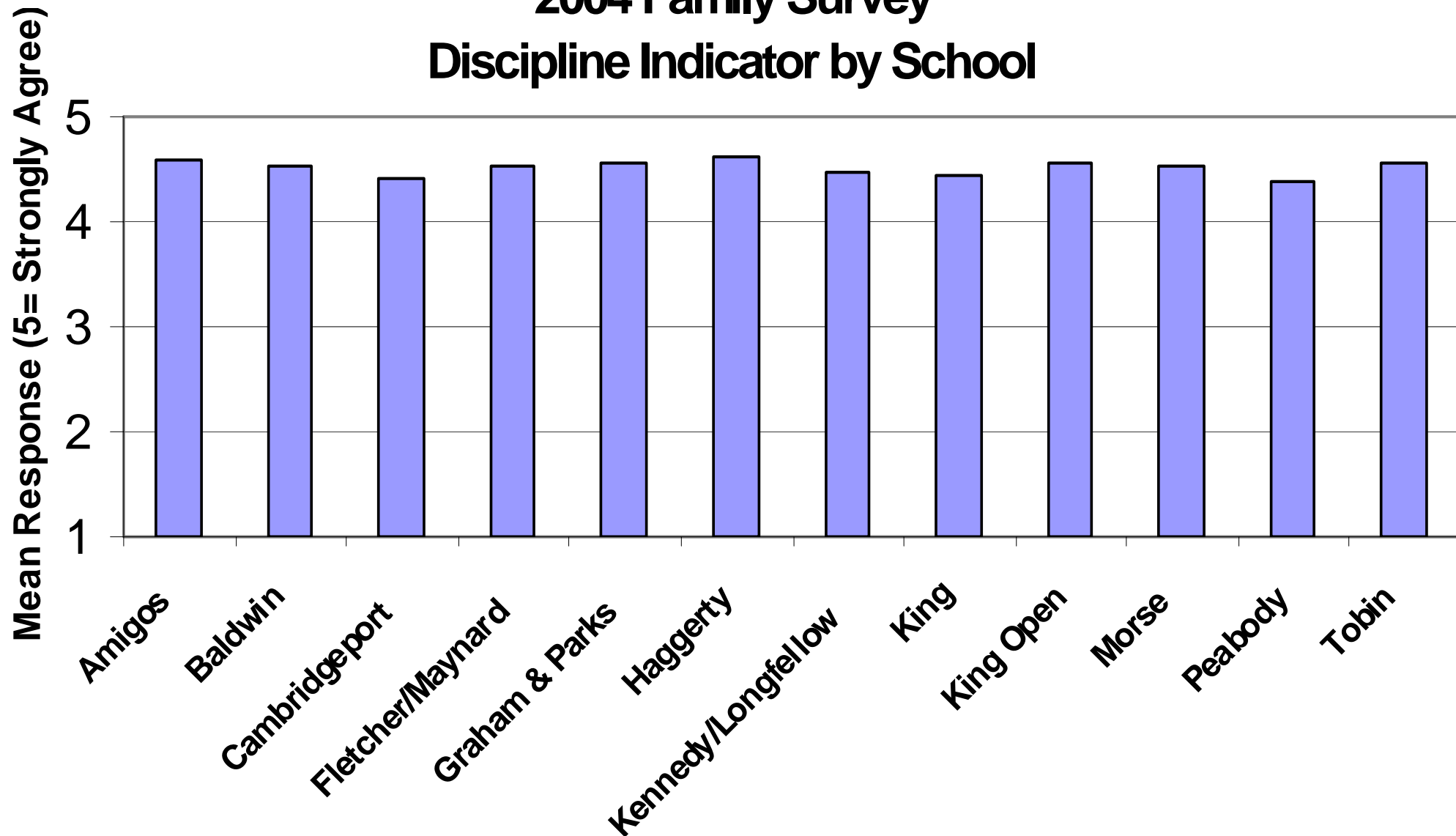
School Comparisons

**2004 Family Survey
Curriculum Indicator by School**



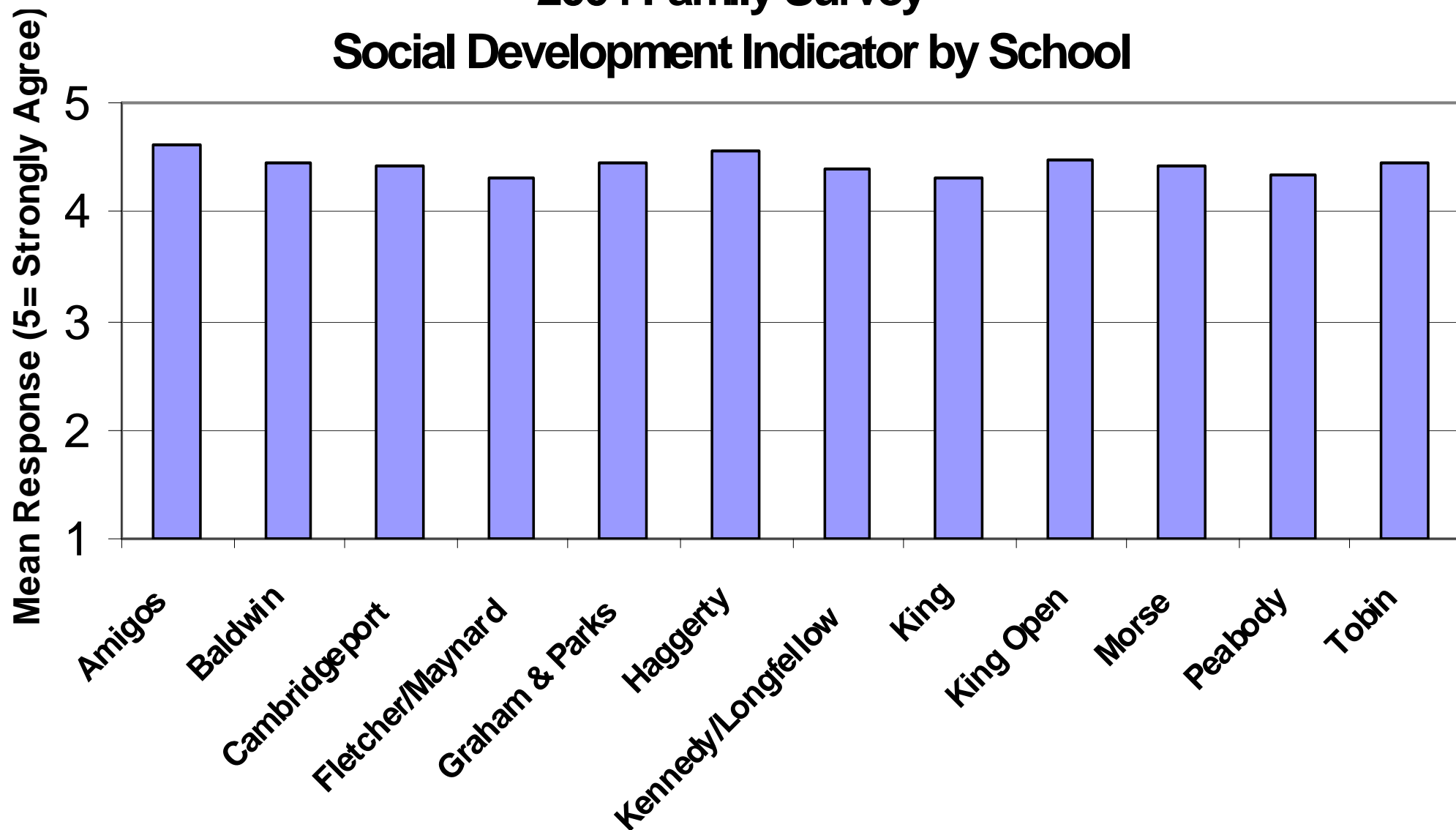
School Comparisons

**2004 Family Survey
Discipline Indicator by School**



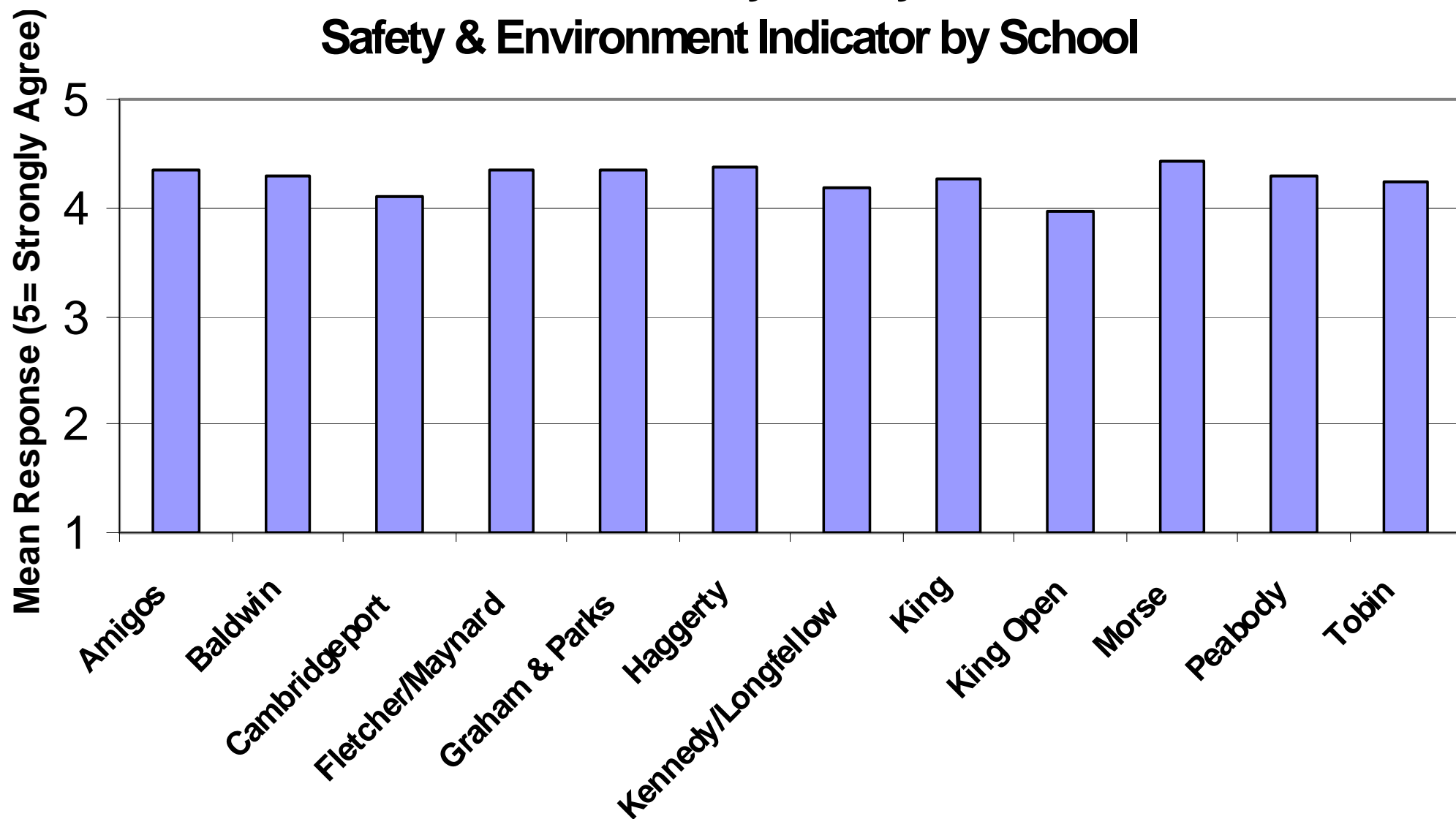
School Comparisons

2004 Family Survey
Social Development Indicator by School



School Comparisons

2004 Family Survey
Safety & Environment Indicator by School



Next Steps

- Results will be reviewed by principals and school communities
- Results will be reflected in School Improvement Plans
- Surveys will be readministered every 2 years in conjunction with Effective School Battery
- Review and improve methodology of instrument and administration