

**Abstract Title Page**  
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**Title:** The cost of agree-disagree: Satisficing and sacrificing reliability.

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## **Abstract Body**

*Limit 4 pages single-spaced.*

### **Background / Context:**

*Description of prior research and its intellectual context.*

Of all the approaches to collecting data in the social sciences, the administration of questionnaires to respondents is among the most prevalent. Among the wide array of approaches to presenting items on surveys, one of the most popular is posing a statement and asking respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement (A-D items). For example the statement, “I like rutabagas.” would be followed by:

*strongly disagree—disagree—neither—agree nor disagree—agree—strongly agree*

These item formats have been widely used on important assessment instruments from the original National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 to the most recent Educational Longitudinal Study of 2012. Despite their popularity, there is broad consensus among survey design experts that using these items introduces excessive error into respondents’ ratings (Converse & Presser, 1986; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009; Fowler, 2009). Oddly, little empirical evidence exists to prove that these items perform worse than alternative item formats. The goal of this research is to provide an initial set of evidence to evaluate the efficacy of this item format.

### **Purpose / Objective / Research Question / Focus of Study:**

*Description of the focus of the research.*

We attempt to answer the following question: what are the specific impacts on survey data quality if one uses statements and A-D response anchors as opposed to questions and construct-specific (C-S) response anchors? We test four hypotheses. First, because A-D scales have the same set of response anchors for every item, we expect that they will elicit more straight-lining (i.e. marking the same response to every item on a page) from respondents. Second, following Gehlbach and Barge’s (2012) findings, we expect that this tendency to elicit straight-lining may increase the reliability of A-D scale scores relative to C-S as measured by Cronbach’s alpha. However, once straight-line responses are removed from the data, A-D scale scores will appear less reliable than C-S scale scores. Third, A-D response anchors are intrinsically bipolar; they range from a theoretical negative infinity point (e.g., strongly disagree) to positive infinity (e.g., strongly agree). C-S items are often designed to be unipolar – ranging from a theoretical 0-point (e.g., do not enjoy at all) to infinity (e.g., enjoy tremendously). For many scale items, we expect most people to have somewhat positive opinions. Thus, we hypothesize that A-D scale scores will be less variable, and thus offer less precision in rank-ordering respondents, than C-S scale scores. Finally, because we expect that A-D items elicit less actual information than C-S items, we expect that A-D scale scores will correlate less well with other measures than C-S scale scores.

### **Setting:**

*Description of the research location.*

(May not be applicable for Methods submissions)

We collected data from a nationally representative *Survey Monkey* panel of parents/primary caregivers for school-aged children. In return for their participation, participants received the chance to win money for a charity of their choosing.

**Population / Participants / Subjects:**

*Description of the participants in the study: who, how many, key features, or characteristics.*  
(May not be applicable for Methods submissions)

Our population ( $N = 1167$ ) was slightly better educated and higher income than the country as a whole and all participants had internet access. This experiment was embedded within a larger research project designed to assess parents/caregivers' relationships with the schools their children attend. Although it is a sample of convenience, we presume our experimental results should generalize to most adult populations of comparable educational levels.

**Intervention / Program / Practice:**

*Description of the intervention, program, or practice, including details of administration and duration.*  
(May not be applicable for Methods submissions)

We employed a split-ballot design, randomly assigning half of the participants to each form (see appendix for a full version of each form). Both forms collected basic demographic information from the participants. The two forms also had three scales which were identical across the forms: an agreeable-acquiescence scale, a social-perspective-taking-effort scale, and an extraversion scale. Four scales, including two parent-school communication scales, a satisfaction scale, and an efficacy scale were phrased as A-D on Form 1 and as C-S on Form 2. Four other scales, involvement, school social perspective taking effort, engagement, and fit, were phrased as C-S on Form 1 and as A-D on Form 2.

**Significance / Novelty of study:**

*Description of what is missing in previous work and the contribution the study makes.*

Because A-D items are among the most prevalent item-types within one of the most common approaches to data collection within education (and the social sciences more generally), even modest measurement problems are likely to generate a myriad of downstream problems (e.g., Type I and Type II errors). Although many survey design textbooks caution against the use of A-D items, there needs to be an empirical basis behind these cautions before scholars can be convinced not to use them. This research begins to build that empirical foundation. We use a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design, allowing us to draw causal inferences about the effects of using A-D items as opposed to C-S items. By using a wide variety of scales of varying lengths, and with different numbers of response anchors, we can assess how well A-D items perform relative to C-S items in general.

**Statistical, Measurement, or Econometric Model:**

*Description of the proposed new methods or novel applications of existing methods.*

We are interested in seeing how well A-D items perform relative to C-S items, and we use a number of different approaches to assess this.

First, we use a chi-square test to compare the proportion of respondents who straight-line on pages which have only A-D items as opposed to respondents who straight-line on the corresponding pages which have only C-S items.

Second, although Cronbach's alpha is an imperfect measure of reliability, it is commonly used to determine how well a scale functions (Sijstma, 2009). Thus, we compare the estimates of alpha for scales with A-D items and for the corresponding scales with C-S items, and test whether the observed differences are statistically significant (Charter & Feldt, 1996). We also compare coefficients alpha for the scales after removing straight-lining respondents.

Third, we use Levene's (1960) test to compare the variability of scale scores obtained from A-D scales to the variability of scale scores from C-S scales.

Finally, we correlate scale scores obtained with A-D scales and scale scores obtained with corresponding C-S scales with scale scores from scales which remained constant across forms. We test the differences between these correlations to see if they are statistically significant (Steiger, 1980).

### **Usefulness / Applicability of Method:**

*Demonstration of the usefulness of the proposed methods using hypothetical or real data.*

Reliably measuring opinions and psychological constructs is crucial in social science research. Improving scale design is an easy, cost-effective way to obtain higher quality, more reliable data. In order to improve scales, researchers need to know what sorts of scales will elicit the highest quality data. Our use of an RCT design, a wide range of scales, and a variety of important outcomes, means that our research will be extremely useful for researchers who are designing their own scales and need to choose between A-D items and C-S items.

### **Research Design:**

*Description of the research design.*

(May not be applicable for Methods submissions)

### **Data Collection and Analysis:**

*Description of the methods for collecting and analyzing data.*

(May not be applicable for Methods submissions)

We collected our responses from the *Survey Monkey* panel of participants. Respondents were randomly assigned to take form A or form B of the survey. Response rates were extremely high; almost 95% of the people who participated in the survey actually answered the questions, although rates were lower for individual items. We conducted our analyses using R (R Core Team, 2013). We conducted most of our tests using user-contributed packages, including psych (Revelle, 2013), car (Fox & Weisberg, 2011), and cocron (Diedenhofen, 2013).

### **Findings / Results:**

*Description of the main findings with specific details.*

(May not be applicable for Methods submissions)

Our hypotheses were largely confirmed. We found strong evidence that web-pages with only A-D items elicited more straight-lining than corresponding pages with only C-S items (see table 1), especially pages with few items. To our surprise, we found that A-D scale scores were frequently less reliable than C-S scale scores even before removing straight-liners (see table 2). As predicted, this difference was exacerbated after removing straight-liners. Although many of these differences were small, the C-S scale scores of our parental involvement scale had an alpha 0.1 higher than the alpha of the A-D scale scores – thus, the differences for certain scales can be particularly consequential. C-S scale scores were almost uniformly more variable than their A-D counterparts, and sometimes dramatically so (see table 3). The evidence for the hypothesis of diminished correlations between A-D scale scores and other measures was less clear, but we did have some suggestive findings. For example, the correlation between A-D scale scores from the school-social-perspective-taking-effort scale and an own-social-perspective-taking-effort scale was .15, while the correlation between the C-S scale scores and the own-social-perspective-taking-effort was .34. This difference is both practically and statistically significant ( $Z=3.15, p=.002$ ), and suggests that A-D items are depressing this correlation.

### **Conclusions:**

*Description of conclusions, recommendations, and limitations based on findings.*

We find evidence that C-S items outperform A-D items on a number of metrics, including the proportion of straight-lining that they elicit, their reliabilities as measured by Cronbach's alpha, the variability of their scale scores, and possibly the strength of their correlations with other measures. Furthermore, the improvement attributable to using C-S items is sometimes dramatic. Thus, we provide empirical evidence that C-S scales perform better in general than A-D scales. Because C-S items are trivially harder to write than A-D items, this provides researchers with an easy way to improve the scales that they design. While we consider these findings to be conclusive, we believe that more work remains to be done, both theoretical and practical. In particular, further research should attempt to determine why C-S items are better than A-D items (e.g., how do the psychological processes differ for the two types of items), under what conditions C-S items do substantially better than A-D items, if there are any cases in which A-D items outperform C-S items, and whether C-S items and A-D items fare differently in different populations.

## Appendices

*Not included in page count.*

### Appendix A. References

*References are to be in APA version 6 format.*

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- Sijstma, K. (2009) On the use, the misuse, and the very limited usefulness of Cronbach's alpha. *Psychometrika*, 74(1), 107-120.
- Steiger, J.H. (1980), Tests for comparing elements of a correlation matrix, *Psychological Bulletin*, 87, 245-251.

## Appendix B. Tables and Figures

Not included in page count.

Table 1: Proportion of respondents satisficing

Page (scales covered)	Number of items	A-D	C-S	p-value <sup>1</sup>
Page 2 (long and short communication)	7	.03	.01	.059
Page 3 (long and short communication)	7	.02	.02	.524
Page 4 (satisfaction)	5	.44	.38	.047
Page 7 (involvement)	5	.14	.08	.004
Page 8 (SSPTE and engagement) <sup>2</sup>	11	.01	.02	.364

<sup>1</sup> p-value associated with the difference in proportions

<sup>2</sup> school's-social-perspective-taking-effort. SSPTE had five response anchors, while engagement had six

Table 2: Reliabilities of scale scores, as estimated by Cronbach's alpha

Scale	Raw			No satisficers		
	AD	CS	p-value <sup>1</sup>	AD	CS	p-value <sup>1</sup>
Long communication	.90	.91	.450	.90	.91	.454
Short communication	.65	.60	.106	.65	.59	.070
Satisfaction	.90	.89	.326	.79	.80	.785
Efficacy	.85	.85	.744	.85	.84	.810
Involvement	.73	.79	.008	.64	.74	.001
SSPTE <sup>2</sup>	.92	.91	.455	.92	.91	.295
Engagement	.74	.77	.246	.74	.76	.303
Fit	.85	.87	.041	.85	.87	.040

<sup>1</sup> p-value associated with the difference in alphas

<sup>2</sup> school's-social-perspective-taking-effort

Table 3: Standard deviations of scale scores

Scale	Raw			No satisficers		
	AD	CS	p-value <sup>1</sup>	AD	CS	p-value <sup>1</sup>
Long communication	.68	.76	.006	.68	.75	.006
Short communication	.64	.64	.874	.63	.63	.755
Satisfaction	.63	.68	.445	.57	.62	.584
Efficacy	.81	.80	.625	.80	.80	.557
Involvement	1.02	1.08	.075	.91	1.00	.009
SSPTE <sup>2</sup>	.80	.90	.002	.80	.90	.003
Engagement	1.13	1.14	.874	1.13	1.14	.894
Fit	.73	.74	.676	.73	.75	.679

<sup>1</sup> p-value associated with the difference in standard deviations

<sup>2</sup> school's-social-perspective-taking-effort



## Appendix: Scales from the two forms of the survey

Note: The first green items are agreeable acquiescence, the first blue are long communication, the second blue are short communication, the third blue are satisfaction-with-school, the yellow are social-perspective-taking-effort, the purple are extroversion, the red are a ranking item, and are not analyzed, the beige are involvement, the orange are school's-social-perspective-taking-effort, the pink are engagement, the grey are school fit, and the second green are efficacy.

### Form 1

**Section I** Before we ask you about your perceptions of the child's school we want to get to know you better. Please answer the questions below to help give us a better sense of how you interact with others generally.

When you interact with someone who states strong opinions, how frequently do you let them voice their opinion without arguing?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time
When someone offers you a choice, how likely are you to say that you are willing to take either option?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
If your friends all want to go out to a place that you don't like, how likely are you to join them anyway?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
How frequently do you go along with other people's suggestions?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time
How likely are you to agree if others have strong opinions about what to do next?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
To what extent do you "go with the flow"?	Not at all	A little bit	Some	A lot	A tremendous amount
When you see different answers to the same question, how likely are you to agree that both answers could be right?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
When everyone else in a group prefers a choice that seems unwise, how frequently do you to just go along with the others?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time

**Section II** The items in this section help give us a sense of the communication and interactions between you and your child's school.

Overall, it is easy for me to communicate with staff at my child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with how often my child's teachers communicate with me.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I always know how well my child is doing in school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially agree, partially disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
When staff at my child's school communicate with me, they are respectful.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

The staff at my child's school are friendly.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Talking with my child's current teacher makes me somewhat uncomfortable.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially agree, partially disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The school staff asks for my advice frequently.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
page break					
The staff at my child's school frequently provides information about how I can help my child learn at home.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterward.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially agree, partially disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall, I am satisfied with the level of detail my child's teachers provide about my child's learning progress.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It is easy for me to understand written materials that I receive from my child's school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Talking with my child's principal makes me uncomfortable.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially agree, partially disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the amount of information that the school provides about my child's behavior in school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I hear back from staff at my child's school quickly when I contact them.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
page break					
<i>Would you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree...</i>					
I am satisfied with the school my child attends this year.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
I am very satisfied with the teachers my child has this year.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
I am satisfied with the academic standards of the school.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
I am quite satisfied with the order and discipline at the school?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
I am satisfied with the way that school staff interacts with parents.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	

**Section III**

The items in this section help us understand more about you as a person and how you think about your child's school.

How hard do you try to understand your child's teachers' point of view?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard
How much effort have you put into figuring out what the school's goals are?	Almost no effort	A small amount of effort	Some effort	Quite a bit of effort	A tremendous amount of effort
When you and the school disagree about what is best for your child, how hard do you try to see the school's view of the situation?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard
How motivated are you to try to understand why your child's teachers behave as they do?	Not at all motivated	A little bit motivated	Somewhat motivated	Quite motivated	Extremely motivated
How hard do you try to understand the school's priorities?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard
Overall, how much effort do you put into figuring out what the principal is thinking?	Almost no effort	A small amount of effort	Some effort	Quite a bit of effort	A tremendous amount of effort
When a member of the school staff seems to be in a worse mood than usual, how hard do you try to understand the reasons why?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard

page break

*I see myself as someone who...*

Is talkative	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is reserved	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is full of energy	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Generates a lot of enthusiasm	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Tends to be quiet	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Has an assertive personality	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is sometimes shy, inhibited	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is outgoing, sociable	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me

**Section IV**

We are interested in learning more about how your child's school communicates with you. Please rank the following items so that #1 is the most frequent type of communication that you have received from the school and #5 is the least frequent type.

The school calls you on the phone  
 The school invites you to special events (e.g., open house, parent-teacher conferences, art/music/sports events, science fairs, etc.)  
 The school provides newsletters, memos, or notices addressed to all parents  
 The school reports on your child's academic progress prior to the end of the marking period  
 The school sends your family personal notes or emails specifically about your child

**Section V** The items in this section help give us a better sense of your perceptions of your child's school and your interactions with the school.

How often does someone in this family...						
...help out at this child's school?	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Almost all the time
...attend special events at school?	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Almost all the time
...volunteer to go on class field trips?	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Almost all the time
...attend PTA meetings?	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Almost all the time
...go to the school's open-house?	Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Almost all the time

page break

How hard does the school try to understand your point of view?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard	
How much effort has the school put into figuring out what parents' goals are for their children?	Almost no effort	A small amount of effort	Some effort	Quite a bit of effort	A tremendous amount of effort	
In the past year, how often have you helped out at your child's school?	Almost never	Once or twice per year	Every few months	Monthly	Every few weeks	Weekly or more
When you and the school disagree about what is best for your child, how hard does the school try to see your view of the situation?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard	
How motivated are teachers at your child's school to try to understand why your child behaves as s/he does?	Not at all motivated	A little bit motivated	Somewhat motivated	Quite motivated	Extremely motivated	
In the past year, how often have you discussed your child's school with other parents from the school?	Almost never	Once or twice per year	Every few months	Monthly	Every few weeks	Weekly or more
How hard does the school try to understand your priorities as a parent?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard	
How often do you meet in person with teachers at your child's school?	Almost never	Once or twice per year	Every few months	Monthly	Every few weeks	Weekly or more

Overall, how much effort do you think the principal puts into understanding what parents are thinking?	Almost no effort	A small amount of effort	Some effort	Quite a bit of effort	A tremendous amount of effort
How involved have you been with a parent group(s) at your child's school?	Not at all involved	A little involved	Somewhat involved	Quite involved	Extremely involved
When your child is in a worse mood than usual, how hard does the school staff try to understand the reasons why?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard

**Section VI**

These items help us better understand the different ways in which you and your child interact with each other and with the school.

How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well
I know how to help my child do well in school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree very strongly
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well
I don't know how to help my child make good grades in school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree very strongly
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well
I don't know if I'm getting through to my child.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree very strongly
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not good at all	Mildly good	Fairly good	Quite good	Extremely good
page break					
I make a significant difference in my child's school performance.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree very strongly
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No belonging at all	A little bit of belonging	Some belonging	Quite a bit of belonging	A tremendous amount of belonging
Other children have more influence on my child's grades than I do.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree very strongly
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well

I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not comfortable at all	Mildly comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Quite comfortable	Extremely comfortable	
I don't know how to help my child learn.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly

## Form 2

**Section I** Before we ask you about your perceptions of the child's school we want to get to know you better. Please answer the questions below to help give us a better sense of how you interact with others generally.

When you interact with someone who states strong opinions, how frequently do you let them voice their opinion without arguing?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time
When someone offers you a choice, how likely are you to say that either option is okay?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
If your friends all want to go out to a place that you don't like, how likely are you to join them anyway?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
How frequently do you go along with other people's suggestions?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time
How likely are you to agree if others have strong opinions about what to do next?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
To what extent do you "go with the flow"?	Not at all	A little bit	Some	A lot	A tremendous amount
When you see different answers to the same question, how likely are you to agree that both answers could be right?	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Quite likely	Extremely likely
When everyone else in a group prefers a choice that seems unwise, how frequently do you to just go along with the others?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time

**Section II** The items in this section help give us a sense of the communication and interactions between you and your child's school.

Overall, how easy is it for you to communicate with staff at your child's school?	Not at all easy	Slightly easy	Somewhat easy	Quite easy	Extremely easy
How satisfied are you with how often your child's teachers communicate with you?	Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Quite satisfied	Extremely satisfied
How frequently do you know how well your child is doing in school?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time
When staff at your child's school communicate with you, how respectful are they?	Not at all respectful	Slightly respectful	Somewhat respectful	Quite respectful	Extremely respectful
How friendly are the staff at your child's school?	Not at all friendly	Slightly friendly	Somewhat friendly	Quite friendly	Extremely friendly
How uncomfortable does talking with your child's current teacher make you?	Not at all uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	Moderately uncomfortable	Quite uncomfortable	Extremely uncomfortable
How frequently does the school staff ask for your advice?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time

page break

How frequently does the staff at your child's school provide information about how you can help your child learn at home?	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Often	Almost all the time
If your child misbehaved at school, how soon would you know about it afterward?	I would never know	I would know much later	I would know a short while later	I would know soon	I would know immediately
Overall, how satisfied are you with the level of detail your child's teachers provide about your child's learning progress?	Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Quite satisfied	Extremely satisfied
How easy is it for you to understand written materials you receive from your child's school?	Not at all easy	Slightly easy	Somewhat easy	Quite easy	Extremely easy
How uncomfortable does talking with your child's principal make you feel?	Not at all uncomfortable	Slightly uncomfortable	Moderately uncomfortable	Quite uncomfortable	Extremely uncomfortable
How satisfied are you with the amount of information that the school provides about your child's behavior in school?	Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Quite satisfied	Extremely satisfied
How quickly do you hear back from staff at your child's school when you contact them?	Not at all easy	Slightly easy	Somewhat easy	Quite easy	Extremely easy

page break

<i>Would you say that you are very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, or very satisfied...</i>					
With the school your child attends this year?	very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied	
With the teachers your child has this year?	very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied	
With the academic standards of the school?	very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied	
With the order and discipline at the school?	very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied	
With the way that school staff interacts with parents?	very dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	somewhat satisfied	very satisfied	

**Section III**

The items in this section help us understand more about you as a person and how you think about your child's school.

How hard do you try to understand your child's teachers' point of view?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard
How much effort have you put into figuring out what the school's goals are?	Almost no effort	A small amount of effort	Some effort	Quite a bit of effort	A tremendous amount of effort



When you and the school disagree about what is best for your child, how hard do you try to see the school's view of the situation?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard
How motivated are you to try to understand why your child's teachers behave as they do?	Not at all motivated	A little bit motivated	Somewhat motivated	Quite motivated	Extremely motivated
How hard do you try to understand the school's priorities?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard
Overall, how much effort do you put into figuring out what the principal is thinking?	Almost no effort	A small amount of effort	Some effort	Quite a bit of effort	A tremendous amount of effort
When a member of the school staff seems to be in a worse mood than usual, how hard do you try to understand the reasons why?	Not hard at all	Slightly hard	Moderately hard	Quite hard	Extremely hard

page break

<i>I see myself as someone who...</i>					
Is talkative	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is reserved	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is full of energy	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Generates a lot of enthusiasm	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Tends to be quiet	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Has an assertive personality	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is sometimes shy, inhibited	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me
Is outgoing, sociable	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	Quite true of me	Extremely true of me

**Section IV** We are interested in learning more about how your child's school communicates with you. Please rank the following items so that #1 is the most frequent type of communication that you have received from the school and #5 is the least frequent type.

- The school calls you on the phone
- The school invites you to special events (e.g., open house, parent-teacher conferences, art/music/sports events, science fairs, etc.)
- The school provides newsletters, memos, or notices addressed to all parents

The school reports on your child's academic progress prior to the end of the marking period  
 The school sends your family personal notes or emails specifically about your child

**Section V** The items in this section help give us a better sense of your perceptions of your child's school and your interactions with the school.

Some one in this family...						
...helps out at this child's school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
...attends special events at school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
...volunteers to go on class field trips.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
...attends PTA meetings.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
...goes to the school's open-house.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
page break						
The school tries hard to understand my point of view.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
The school puts a great deal of effort into figuring out what parents' goals for their children are.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
In the past year, I have often helped out at my child's school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
When the school and I disagree about what is best for my child, the school tries hard to see my view of the situation.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
Teachers at my child's school are motivated to try to understand why my child behaves as s/he does?	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
In the past year, I have often discussed my child's school with other parents from the school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
The school tries hard to understand my priorities as a parent.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
I often meet in person with teachers at my child's school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
Overall, the principal puts a lot of effort into understanding what parents are thinking.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	
I have been quite involved with a parent group(s) at my child's school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly

When my child is in a worse mood than usual, the school staff tries hard to understand the reasons why.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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**Section VI**

These items help us better understand the different ways in which you and your child interact with each other and with the school.

How well do you feel your child's school is preparing him/her for his/her next academic year?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well	
I know how to help my child do well in school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
How well do the activities offered at your child's school match his/her interests?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well	
I don't know how to help my child make good grades in school.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
How well do the teaching styles of your child's teachers match your child's learning style?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well	
I don't know if I'm getting through to my child.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
Given your child's cultural background, how good a fit is his/her school?	Not good at all	Mildly good	Fairly good	Quite good	Extremely good	
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I make a significant difference in my child's school performance.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
How much of a sense of belonging does your child feel at his/her school?	No belonging at all	A little bit of belonging	Some belonging	Quite a bit of belonging	A tremendous amount of belonging	
Other children have more influence on my child's grades than I do.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
At your child's school, how well does the overall approach to discipline work for your child?	Not well at all	Mildly well	Fairly well	Quite well	Extremely well	
I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
How comfortable is your child in asking for help from school adults?	Not comfortable at all	Mildly comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Quite comfortable	Extremely comfortable	
I don't know how to help my child learn.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly