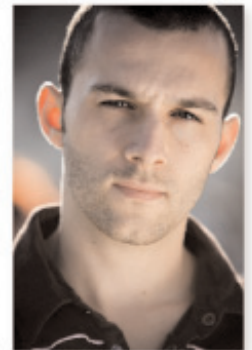


# The Power of Know™



## **Columbia Public Schools 2012 Patron Telephone Survey**

### **Final Report**

**December 31, 2012**



**Columbia Public Schools  
2012 Patron Telephone Survey  
Executive Summary  
December 31, 2012**

In November and December 2012, a 15-minute telephone study was conducted with 400 randomly selected, head-of-household, registered voter patrons residing within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools.

The completed calls to cell phones and landlines were divided into four equal quadrants, using the cross-streets of Providence and Broadway to reflect the general population pattern, according to district leadership. The result is data that has a Margin of Error of 5% (+/-). This means that we can be 95% confident that the results contained in this report for the entire survey group are within 5% of what they would be if all head-of-household, registered voters in the district had participated, rather than just 400.

Generally speaking, the data suggests a community whose support for the district and its work has grown from its already strong showing in 2011, and one whose interest in a variety of school district news has grown as well. Specifically:

- A total of 24 of 27 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district’s overall performance – received a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of “B”), on the traditional A-F grading scale. This represents an increase from 20 of 27 in the 2011 study.
- Six of the graded areas saw statistically significant increases in their scores from 2011, while no area saw a statistically significant decrease. Those areas that saw an increase were, “quality of technology available to students,” “performance of the Central Office administration,” “the district’s efforts to ensure equivalent educational programming from school to school,” “the quality of the district’s transportation program,” “the district’s efforts to ensure equivalent school buildings,” and “class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom.”
- As was the case in 2011, 15 of the 27 areas qualified as Patron Hot Buttons, meaning that they received a grade (rather than a response of “Don’t know”) from at least 81% of the survey participants.



- Teachers, the district's strong curriculum, and strong community/parent support/involvement were the most frequently mentioned strengths. A total of 158 of the 400 respondents could not identify an area needing improvement. Those who did focused on money issues and class sizes.
- When asked to identify the words and phrases they might use to describe the district to a stranger who was considering moving to Columbia, the responses were overwhelmingly positive, and focused on the education provided, the schools, the teachers and the excellence of the district.
- Printed sources (56%) continue to be preferred over electronic sources (39%) for district news. And, the district would be the place most people would turn for school news (65%), as compared to the news media (31%).
- *Quarterly Report* continues to top 50% in "every issue" readership. Those who read it at least once a year give it high marks for its content (86% either "excellent" or "good") and for its look and feel (94% either "excellent" or "good").
- Fewer people visited the district website regularly on this survey than in 2011, while the percentage of those who visited school-specific sites stayed statistically the same as last year. The groups one would expect to have more frequent visits (current district parents and those respondents who consider themselves either "very involved" or "somewhat involved"), did so.
- CPS Television saw no change, statically speaking, in the number of individuals who watch at least once every two weeks, but the fact that this year's number was 11%, while last year's was 7% is, nonetheless, encouraging.
- Only 5% said they had "liked" Facebook pages associated with individual schools or various school-related clubs or organizations, while just 2% said they "followed" Twitter feeds that fit the same description.
- Three story topics saw strong increases in interest from last year to this year: "information on curriculum and curriculum changes" (up 17%), "news about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools" (up 10%), and "news about efforts to close the achievement gap" (up 18%).
- "Friends and neighbors" continued to be a source that would be consulted "frequently" by the highest percentage of respondents (87%). The biggest changes at the top of the source list involved the movement of "local television stations" into the second spot, followed by the print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper (which had been second), followed by students who attend school in the district and local radio stations.



- When asked to name the news source they would consult first, “teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via e-mail” took the top spot, followed by “friends and neighbors” and “the print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper.”

The full report that follows contains a series of findings, discussion of each of those findings, and all the questions, answers and pertinent cross-tabulations. A brief summary closes the report.



**Columbia Public Schools  
2012 Patron Telephone Survey  
Final Report  
December 31, 2012**

**Finding 1: Patrons gave 24 of 27 people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district’s overall performance – a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of “B”) on the traditional A-F grading scale. This is an increase from 20 of 27 on the 2011 survey. In addition, the six areas that had a statistically significant change from their 2011 score all improved versus last year’s survey.**

In November and December 2012, a 15-minute telephone study was conducted with 400 head-of-household, registered voter patrons in the Columbia Public Schools to determine their views on the district’s performance, and to evaluate the efforts by the district to communicate with residents.

As has been the case on the previous two annual surveys, completed calls were divided into equal numbers using the cross-streets of Providence and Broadway to create four quadrants. Cell phones and landlines were both included. Respondents were contacted by professional interviewers, and those who participated were selected by the Random Digit Dialing method, to ensure a true random sample. The result is data that has a Margin of Error of 5% (+/-), meaning that we can be 95% confident that the results contained in this report for the entire survey group are within 5% of what they would be if every head-of-household, registered voter had participated, rather than 400.

After confirming that the individual was eligible to participate, the survey began by asking him or her to “grade” the district – A, B, C, D or F – on 27 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors, plus the district’s overall performance. This list was identical to the past two surveys, providing an excellent opportunity to compare and contrast the scores for three consecutive years.

The benefit of starting this survey with a seemingly simple exercise such as “grading” the district’s performance is three-fold.

First, asking basic questions at the outset alerts each respondent that he or she will not need “inside information” to participate effectively in the survey; all he or she needs is an opinion, based on what he or she knows or on what he or she may have heard from others.



Second, a “soft start” to the survey such as this allows the respondent and the interviewer to build up rapport, which will be crucial as this relatively lengthy survey progresses.

Third, these grades provide insight into where respondents believe the district is performing well, and where it may need to improve, in a much more detailed manner than just a “thumbs up/thumbs down” overall evaluation.

All the grades on all the areas are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a weighted scale is also applied. In this scale, each grade of “A” is worth 5 points, down to each grade of “F” being worth 1 point. The points are totaled and divided by the number of respondents willing to offer a grade (rather than saying, “Don’t know”) to arrive at a number between 1.00 and 5.00 that describes the views of those with an opinion on the topic.

Recognizing that achieving a score of 5.00 is an impossibility, because it would require all those with an opinion to say “A,” the typical dividing line between areas of strength and those which may need attention is 4.00, or a “B.” And, taking into account the Margin of Error for this survey, a score as low as 3.80 is still, statistically speaking, a “B.”

In this survey, 24 of the 27 areas that were graded – plus the district’s overall performance – were rated at a “B” or higher by those who participated. This marks an improvement from the 20 out of 27 seen on the 2011 survey.

Among the highest grades were:

- The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event – 4.45
- Quality of technology available to students – 4.39
- Performance of district teachers – 4.35
- Quality of education provided to students – 4.34
- Preparation of students for college, vocational training or employment – 4.30
- The quality of vocational or technical programming for students – 4.30
- Performance of school principals – 4.27

As was the case in the 2011 survey, six of the 27 areas saw a statistically significant change (meaning more than 5%) from their scores on the previous survey. Unlike the 2010-2011 comparison, however – where five of the six saw a decrease – all six that changed on this survey (again, at a statistically significant level) saw an improvement. Specifically:

- Quality of technology available to students – 4.39, up from 4.08
- Performance of the Central Office administration – 4.21, up from 3.99
- The district’s efforts to ensure equivalent educational programming from school to school – 4.03, up from 3.81



- The quality of the district's transportation program – 3.98, up from 3.71
- The district's effort to ensure equivalent school buildings – 3.96, up from 3.53
- Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom – 3.79, up from 3.49

To determine if the respondent's demographic or geographic characteristics had any meaningful impact on his or her perception of the three lower-rated areas, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted. (In reviewing this data, is it best to look for trends, rather than individual numbers, because the Margin of Error is somewhat to much higher within these groups, because the number of participants is smaller.)

In doing so, the results revealed the following:

- There was no consistent pattern among age-related groups, high-speed Internet (access, or lack thereof), level of involvement with the district, and whether or not an individual voted in the April 2012 election.
- Those living west of Providence and south of Broadway were the lowest on all three areas (in the subgroups based on where a respondent lived), but none of the other three geographic subgroups was consistently highest.
- Those who had lived in the district between five and 15 years were the highest on all three of the lower-rated factors, as compared to others segments in the "length of time living in the district" subgroups.
- Interestingly, current student families were the lowest among the three "student status" groups. The differences from the other groups were noticeable, but not particularly dramatic.

(Caucasians were so dominant that it is best to consider any variations by the other racial or ethnic groups displayed to be highly anecdotal. As such, their differences are shown in the chart, but are not subject to commentary or analysis.)

The second part of the grading analysis is the identification of Patron Hot Buttons, which are the factors that were graded (rather than saying, "Don't know") by at least 81% of the respondents, or more than four out of five survey participants. These are the factors that typical patrons – everyone from the most involved parent down to the individuals who see schools as merely a line on their tax bills – consider first when evaluating the district.

As was the case in 2011, 15 factors qualified for this status. "The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making" joined the list this year, replacing "the district's graduation rate." Having 15 Hot Buttons continues to affirm the active interest of patrons in the life of the Columbia Public Schools. The list of Hot Buttons is as follows:



- The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event
- Performance of district teachers
- Performance of school principals
- Safety of students
- Quality of education provided to students
- Preparation of students for college, vocational training or employment
- The district's efforts to get parents involved
- Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities
- The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons
- Quality of school facilities
- Performance of the Columbia Board of Education
- Value received for the tax dollars spent
- The effectiveness of communications with the public by the Columbia Public Schools
- The district's responsiveness to patron concerns
- The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making

One other piece of data that stands out from this list of Hot Buttons: Each one achieved a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of “B”), meaning the factors that CPS patrons pay attention to the most are among those that score well.

This data continues to affirm that the trend is positive for the Columbia Public Schools, in terms of both patron interest and satisfaction with the district's performance.

*Note: Questions 1 through 3 asked respondents whether they were the male or female head of the household, a registered voter, and aware that they lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools. A “yes” answer was required to continue. As such, those questions and answers are not displayed. Percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. In cases where there are long lists of options (such as the news source questions), multiple sources were between .5 and .9, meaning they were rounded up to 1%. This creates a situation where the total for the question is quite a bit more than 100%.*

*In reviewing the individual verbatim comments, it is important to keep in mind that each is one comment by one patron, and not indicative of a trend. Had it been more of a trend, it would have appeared in sufficient quantity to be placed in the chart associated with the question.*





- 4. To make certain that we have people from all parts of the district participating in this survey, which of the following best describes where you live?** *Choices were read to respondents. Numbers of participants in each region were determined by school district leadership in an effort to match the general population patterns in the district. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

| <b>Response</b>                          | <b>Number</b> |
|--|---------------|
| West of Providence and north of Broadway | 100           |
| East of Providence and north of Broadway | 100           |
| West of Providence and south of Broadway | 100           |
| East of Providence and south of Broadway | 100           |

**As you know, students in school are usually given a grade to reflect the quality of their work. Those grades are usually A, B, C, D or F. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Columbia Public Schools from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Let's start with...***Questions 5 through 31 were rotated to eliminate order bias.*

**5. Performance of district teachers**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 41%               |
| B                     | 46%               |
| C                     | 8%                |
| D                     | <1%               |
| F                     | 0%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 6%                |

## 6. Performance of school principals

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 39%        |
| B                     | 35%        |
| C                     | 11%        |
| D                     | <1%        |
| F                     | 2%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 14%        |

## 7. Performance of the Central Office administration

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 33%        |
| B                     | 31%        |
| C                     | 10%        |
| D                     | 2%         |
| F                     | 1%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 23%        |

## 8. Performance of the Columbia Board of Education

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 21%        |
| B                     | 48%        |
| C                     | 17%        |
| D                     | 3%         |
| F                     | 2%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 10%        |

## 9. Quality of education provided to students

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 42%        |
| B                     | 47%        |
| C                     | 8%         |
| D                     | 1%         |
| F                     | 0%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 3%         |

## 10. Preparation of students for college, vocational training or employment

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 39%        |
| B                     | 42%        |
| C                     | 11%        |
| D                     | <1%        |
| F                     | 0%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 8%         |

## 11. Quality of technology available to students

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 36%        |
| B                     | 27%        |
| C                     | 4%         |
| D                     | 2%         |
| F                     | 0%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 31%        |

## 12. Safety of students

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 41%        |
| B                     | 38%        |
| C                     | 14%        |
| D                     | 1%         |
| F                     | 0%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 6%         |

## 13. Quality of school facilities

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 24%        |
| B                     | 56%        |
| C                     | 13%        |
| D                     | 3%         |
| F                     | 0%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 4%         |

## 14. Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 28%        |
| B                     | 53%        |
| C                     | 10%        |
| D                     | 2%         |
| F                     | 0%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 8%         |



**15. Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 14%               |
| B                     | 32%               |
| C                     | 21%               |
| D                     | 2%                |
| F                     | 1%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 29%               |

**16. The quality of the district's Early Childhood programs**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 16%               |
| B                     | 14%               |
| C                     | 5%                |
| D                     | 1%                |
| F                     | 0%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 64%               |

**17. Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 27%               |
| B                     | 39%               |
| C                     | 18%               |
| D                     | 4%                |
| F                     | 2%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 10%               |

### 18. The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 23%        |
| B                     | 30%        |
| C                     | 24%        |
| D                     | 5%         |
| F                     | 1%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 18%        |

### 19. The district's responsiveness to patron concerns

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 24%        |
| B                     | 36%        |
| C                     | 19%        |
| D                     | 5%         |
| F                     | 2%         |
| Don't know (not read) | 14%        |

### 20. The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| A                     | 27%        |
| B                     | 44%        |
| C                     | 18%        |
| D                     | 5%         |
| F                     | <1%        |
| Don't know (not read) | 6%         |



**21. The district's record on making and fulfilling promises**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 15%               |
| B                     | 36%               |
| C                     | 17%               |
| D                     | 6%                |
| F                     | 3%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 22%               |

**22. The effectiveness of communications with the public by the Columbia Public Schools**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 22%               |
| B                     | 49%               |
| C                     | 19%               |
| D                     | 2%                |
| F                     | 1%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 7%                |

**23. The district's performance in closing the achievement gap among its students**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 16%               |
| B                     | 31%               |
| C                     | 20%               |
| D                     | 3%                |
| F                     | 2%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 29%               |



**24. The quality of vocational or technical programming for students**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 25%               |
| B                     | 32%               |
| C                     | 4%                |
| D                     | <1%               |
| F                     | 1%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 38%               |

**25. The balance of spending on academics and extracurricular activities**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 17%               |
| B                     | 41%               |
| C                     | 13%               |
| D                     | 2%                |
| F                     | 4%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 24%               |

**26. The district's graduation rate**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 19%               |
| B                     | 42%               |
| C                     | 10%               |
| D                     | 1%                |
| F                     | 1%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 27%               |





**27. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent school buildings**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 21%               |
| B                     | 38%               |
| C                     | 19%               |
| D                     | 2%                |
| F                     | <1%               |
| Don't know (not read) | 20%               |

**28. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent educational programming from school to school**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 22%               |
| B                     | 37%               |
| C                     | 15%               |
| D                     | 2%                |
| F                     | 0%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 25%               |

**29. The quality of the district's transportation program**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 19%               |
| B                     | 34%               |
| C                     | 10%               |
| D                     | 4%                |
| F                     | 1%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 33%               |



**30. The district's efforts to get parents involved**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 33%               |
| B                     | 42%               |
| C                     | 9%                |
| D                     | 1%                |
| F                     | 1%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 14%               |

**31. The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 48%               |
| B                     | 34%               |
| C                     | 7%                |
| D                     | <1%               |
| F                     | 0%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 11%               |

**32. Overall, what grade would you give Columbia Public Schools?**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| A                     | 32%               |
| B                     | 53%               |
| C                     | 12%               |
| D                     | 1%                |
| F                     | 0%                |
| Don't know (not read) | 2%                |



**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale rating for each factor. Items with a “\*” are Patron Hot Buttons, meaning that at least 81% of the respondents offered a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” These are the areas that typical patrons consider first, when evaluating the performance of the school district. The items in bold changed at a statistically significant level from 2011 to 2012.**

| Factor   | 5-point scale rating/2012 | 5-point scale rating/2011 | 5-point scale rating 2010 |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event* | 4.45                      | 4.45                      | 4.49                      |
| <b>Quality of technology available to students</b>   | 4.39                      | 4.08                      | 4.33                      |
| Performance of district teachers*  | 4.35                      | 4.29                      | 4.38                      |
| Quality of education provided to students*   | 4.34                      | 4.15                      | 4.23                      |
| Preparation of students for college, vocational training or employment*  | 4.30                      | 4.11                      | 4.16                      |
| The quality of vocational or technical programming for students  | 4.30                      | 4.16                      | 4.12                      |
| Performance of school principals*  | 4.27                      | 4.28                      | 4.28                      |
| Safety of students*  | 4.27                      | 4.20                      | 4.29                      |
| The quality of the district’s Early Childhood programs   | 4.24                      | 4.23                      | 4.12                      |
| The district’s efforts to get parents involved*  | 4.21                      | 4.07                      | 4.20                      |
| <b>Performance of the Central Office administration</b>  | 4.21                      | 3.99                      | 3.97                      |
| Overall grade  | 4.18                      | 4.03                      | 4.10                      |
| Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities*   | 4.16                      | 4.01                      | 4.25                      |
| The district’s graduation rate   | 4.07                      | 4.13                      | 3.99                      |
| Quality of school facilities*  | 4.05                      | 3.94                      | 4.17                      |
| <b>The district’s efforts to ensure equivalent educational programming from school to school</b>                   | 4.03                      | 3.81                      | 3.89                      |
| <b>The quality of the district’s transportation program</b>  | 3.98                      | 3.71                      | 3.95                      |
| The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons*  | 3.98                      | 3.97                      | 3.98                      |
| Value received for the tax dollars spent*  | 3.97                      | 3.84                      | 3.94                      |
| <b>The district’s effort to ensure equivalent school buildings</b>   | 3.96                      | 3.53                      | 3.85                      |
| The effectiveness of communications with the public by the Columbia Public Schools*                                | 3.95                      | 3.83                      | 3.82                      |
| Performance of the Columbia Board of Education*  | 3.92                      | 3.91                      | 3.87                      |
| The district’s responsiveness to patron concerns*  | 3.86                      | 3.70                      | 3.56                      |
| The balance of spending on academics and extracurricular activities  | 3.86                      | 3.75                      | 3.78                      |
| The district’s efforts to involve citizens in decision-making*   | 3.83                      | 3.89                      | 3.69                      |
| The district’s performance in closing the achievement gap among its students                                       | 3.79                      | 3.64                      | 3.47                      |
| <b>Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom</b>   | 3.79                      | 3.49                      | 3.52                      |
| The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises  | 3.69                      | 3.63                      | 3.73                      |

**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale ratings for factors rated below 3.80 by the total survey group by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because two respondents refused to answer this question.**

| Response   | Overall score | 18-34 (n=83) | 35-54 (n=162) | 55 or older (n=153) | Up to 5 years (n=57) | 5 to 15 years (n=110) | More than 15 years (n=233) | Student, yes (n=119) | Student, past (n=174) | Student, never (n=107) |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| District’s performance in closing the achievement gap among its students | <b>3.79</b>   | 3.93         | 3.73          | 3.80                | 3.63                 | 3.97                  | 3.76                       | 3.68                 | 3.80                  | 3.93                   |
| Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom            | <b>3.79</b>   | 3.68         | 3.81          | 3.85                | 3.60                 | 3.89                  | 3.80                       | 3.63                 | 3.94                  | 3.80                   |
| District’s record on making and fulfilling promises                      | <b>3.69</b>   | 3.89         | 3.64          | 3.68                | 3.61                 | 3.83                  | 3.65                       | 3.63                 | 3.77                  | 3.65                   |

**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale ratings for factors rated below 3.80 by the total survey group by location of the respondent’s residence and ethnicity of respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with “overall,” because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.**

| Response   | Overall score | W of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | W of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | African-American (n=38) | Caucasian (n=330) | Hispanic /Latino (n=23) |
|--|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| District’s performance in closing the achievement gap among its students | <b>3.79</b>   | 3.81                         | 3.85                         | 3.61                         | 3.91                         | 3.75                    | 3.78              | 4.00                    |
| Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom            | <b>3.79</b>   | 3.79                         | 3.81                         | 3.77                         | 3.79                         | 3.88                    | 3.78              | 3.89                    |
| District’s record on making and fulfilling promises                      | <b>3.69</b>   | 3.67                         | 3.77                         | 3.60                         | 3.87                         | 3.52                    | 3.71              | 3.68                    |

**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale ratings for factors rated below 3.80 by access to high-speed Internet (at either home or work), level of involvement with the school district, and whether or not the respondent voted in the April 2012 election (not all respondents knew whether or not they voted). Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.**

| Response   | Overall score | Yes, high-speed access (n=361) | No, high-speed access (n=39) | Very/Somewhat involved (n=98) | Not very/Not at all involved (n=174) | Involved in the past, not now (n=128) | Yes, voted in April 2012 (n=295) | No, did not vote in April 2012 (n=83) |
|--|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| District's performance in closing the achievement gap among its students | <b>3.79</b>   | 3.78                           | 3.88                         | 3.78                          | 3.75                                 | 3.87                                  | 3.81                             | 3.76                                  |
| Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom            | <b>3.79</b>   | 3.77                           | 4.00                         | 3.68                          | 3.76                                 | 3.95                                  | 3.76                             | 3.87                                  |
| District's record on making and fulfilling promises                      | <b>3.69</b>   | 3.71                           | 3.50                         | 3.79                          | 3.54                                 | 3.78                                  | 3.69                             | 3.72                                  |



**Finding 2: The lists of strengths and of areas needing improvement followed a familiar pattern from past annual surveys, with teachers, the district’s strong curriculum and the active involvement of parents and community topping the list of strengths. Forty percent of the respondents could not identify an area needing improvement, while those who did continued to stress money management and class sizes.**

The survey then turned to an open-ended opportunity for respondents to share their thoughts on the district’s strengths and areas that might need improvement.

Responses to these two questions were coded – meaning that common words, phrases and ideas were gathered together to provide a true picture of the most commonly held opinions.

In doing so, teachers continued to get the most enthusiastic support (mentioned by 112 respondents), followed by the district’s strong curriculum (83 mentions) and the strong community/parent support/involvement (65 mentions).

It is always encouraging when patrons have a difficult time identifying areas needing improvement, and that was the case for the Columbia Public Schools, as 158 respondents said, “Don’t know” to that question. The individuals who did have an idea on this topic were led by “manage money/budget” (66 mentions), “smaller class sizes” (57 mentions), “reduce taxes” (43 mentions) and “improve communication” (41 mentions).

This year, an additional question on this general topic was added, asking individuals to state the two or three words or phrases they would use to describe the school district to a stranger who was considering moving to Columbia.

The pattern of support for the district remained strong, as all the answers that were mentioned in sufficient quantity to appear on the chart associated with the question were positive. That list was led by “good education/schools” (104 mentions), “good/excellent district” (91 mentions), and “good/great teachers” (72 mentions). Even those that fell outside of the coded responses which appear on the chart associated with this question, tilted quite heavily toward positive language that the respondents would use to describe the school district in this hypothetical situation.

All told, this is a pattern of responses associated with a successful school district that is well-respected by typical patrons. They like what is happening in the classroom and the community, and they struggle to find any issues of note that need improvement (except for money issues, which makes CPS very typical). The “how would you describe the district?” question completes the picture of a satisfied patron population.

### 33. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the Columbia Public Schools?

*Responses were coded from open-ended comments, based on common words, phrases or ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

| Response                                    | Number |
|---|--------|
| Teachers                                    | 112    |
| Strong curriculum                           | 83     |
| Strong community/parent support/involvement | 65     |
| Good reputation                             | 41     |
| Other (see below)                           | 39     |
| Don't know                                  | 34     |
| Diversity of programs offered               | 26     |

#### Verbatim “other” comments

Good communication from the superintendent to the community. He takes an interest in everything that goes on.

They do a lot to help less-fortunate people.

Safety is good.

The district seems to care.

They are strong in math and history courses.

Provides a good education.

They have a great sports program.

My impression goes back 20 years. Good reputation. I get their newsletter and read every issue.

We really like the Triple E program.

There is a lack of gang violence, so schools are relatively safe, compared to schools in California.

High-quality leadership and teachers. For students who want to achieve, opportunities are there.



With the college in town, there are plenty of resources and opportunities for kids to have access to.

They do college prep well.

They have strong community support and good resources to pull from.

Strong math and reading programs.

College prep is good.

They are looking at the research and working hard in Early Childhood Education. Board is open and welcomes input.

They have improved the facilities, and have three high schools coming.

Strong sports.

Up-to-date technology.

Good variety of courses at the high school level. In the last two years, communication has improved.

They prepare students for life beyond high school. They also accommodate kids with different disabilities.

They are consulting all their stakeholders about decisions. They make a genuine effort to meet a wide variety of needs.

The district offers great opportunities to students and parents, if they wish to take advantage of them.

Good staff and strong academics.

Teachers, principals, technology.

College prep is excellent. AP classes really help. Sports programs have improved.

Environment is pretty safe, and teachers are pretty good.

Good record of students going to college.





At the elementary level, the parents and grandparents are welcome to visit and help in the classrooms.

They compensate teachers better than other school districts.

Technology.

Their focus on excellence. They help students reach their potential.

Progressive, up-to-date methods.

The high school offers many opportunities for expanding knowledge.

Good education with lots of resources at the students' fingertips.

Education is excellent. They are trying to help all students achieve their best. It is difficult to do.

Absolutely nothing.

District produces good kids that graduate.

**34. Where could the district improve?** *Responses were coded from open-ended comments, based on common words, phrases or ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

| Response              | Number |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Don't know            | 158    |
| Manage money/budget   | 66     |
| Smaller class sizes   | 57     |
| Reduce taxes          | 43     |
| Improve communication | 41     |
| Other (see below)     | 35     |

**Verbatim "other" comments**

All schools should be air-conditioned.

Kids need real-life preparation, in addition to college prep. I would also like to receive phone calls about meetings, etc.

Transportation system could be improved.



Improve the quality of education. They need to emphasize actual teaching, rather than testing.

Improve personal communication from schools to parents. Use phone, not just e-mails.

Build some new facilities.

Find a way to stop cliques in the high school that lead to bullying.

I worry about the new boundaries. Hickman may be “dumbed down.” There will be more low achievers at Hickman. The Board also used reserve funds a few years ago. That was a mistake.

Disappointed in the re-districting. Our house value is lower, due to the changes.

The parents who want things changed don’t have a good avenue to do so within the district.

In general, all over Missouri, schools need improvement.

Safety of students. Principals need to be aware of problems. A principal would not talk to me. He said I was not educated. We have a business and have lived here 17 years.

Parental responsibility needs improvement. Trailers need to go.

Special Education program is good in some schools. In others, the response to a Special Ed kid is to send him or her to another school.

Get the elementary buildings air-conditioned. There is a big difference in quality of services at the two high schools. Now, a third high school will have a big impact on that.

I went inside the school I live across the street from, and it just seemed like a little house.

Improve the graduation rate. In a university town, we should have 100% graduating every year.

The proficiency rate for minority students is so low. Need to get rid of the trailers.



Middle school and junior high levels have different quality of offerings. When I told someone on the administrative staff that I thought a teacher needed help, I was told they would look into it. Nothing was done.

Some older buildings need upgrading. Some do not have air-conditioning.

Communication could improve. When a bad incident occurs, the district needs to let parents know immediately, so no misinformation gets out there. We will find out.

Bus transportation.

Overall safety of the students and teachers.

Getting stronger administrators.

In some buildings, safety is a concern. Some AP teachers need to be updated.

Too many dropouts. They need to find a way to reduce the number.

Add foreign language at the elementary level. Add more music courses and programs.

Some teachers pay for their own supplies.

Improve on the basics.

Trying to continue at the current level of programs, with the dwindling resources.

Board could be more responsive to voters.

Longer school hours.

More students should have access to technology.

Close the education gap. Motivate students who are not self-motivated.

Add more programs for Special Needs kids.



**35. Say, for example, you were approached by someone from out of town who was considering moving to Columbia, and that person asked you to describe the school district. What would be the two or three words or phrases you would likely think of first to describe the school district?** *Responses were coded from open-ended comments, based on common words, phrases or ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

| Response                | Number |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Good education/schools  | 104    |
| Good/excellent district | 91     |
| Good/great teachers     | 72     |
| Other (see below)       | 42     |
| Strong curriculum       | 40     |
| Don't know              | 34     |
| High graduation rate    | 17     |

**Verbatim “other” comments**

Very good, well-equipped.

Parents are very involved.

Good diversity of students.

Overall, pretty good.

Small community feeling.

Above average.

Could be improved.

Family-oriented.

Opportunity for a good education.

Keeps up with the times.

Very good, if you have a normal child.

Large and rapidly expanding.



Getting better.

Terrific, focused district.

Be careful when selecting a school.

Room for improvement.

Growing and getting worse.

Overall good.

Best district in state.

Invested and committed faculty.

Nationally acclaimed.

Excellent to superb.

Caring teachers.

Good teachers and curriculum.

Innovative district.

Your child will be challenged.

Better than average.

Good prep for college.

High tax rate.

Perfectly average program.

Very welcoming schools.

Average schools.

Confidence in the district from top to bottom.



High educational standards.

Wants to do well.

Unequal opportunities, based on socioeconomic status.

Works well with the community.

Good reputation.

Caring leadership.

The best in the nation.

High taxes and no clue.

Strong resource base.



**Finding 3: On the question of “printed versus electronic” news, printed continues to be the favorite, with the difference between 2011 and 2012 being statistically insignificant. In terms of the preferred source, both the school district and local news media saw gains, thanks to respondents being more definitive. The school district’s gain in preference was statistically significant, however.**

As was the case with the previous two surveys, the subject of communications began with transition questions about preferences for the respondents.

Printed forms of communication continue to be the preference (56%), as compared to electronic (39%). These two scores were statistically identical to the 2011 and 2010 surveys, suggesting little movement on this topic.

In terms of whether the school district or the news media are the preferred source for school district news, the results show a statically significant increase for the district and, more specifically, a greater willingness among survey participants to commit to one or the other.

The school district was the choice of 65% of the respondents, an increase of 7% from 2011, while the news media grew to 31% (from 27%, meaning that the growth was not statistically significant). The growth on both of these areas comes from the fact that those respondents who were unwilling to pick one or the other decreased from 14% in 2011 to just 3% in 2012. The district picked up the lion’s share of those respondents who were now willing to make a commitment, but the fact that both the district and the news media saw some measure of gain is one more piece of evidence of how interested residents are in the school district and its news.

In the cross-tabulation analysis:

- “Printed” was the preference among all groups, except for those who consider themselves “very involved” or “somewhat involved,” while the group ages 18 to 34 had a tie score. There were, however, two additional groups where print was still the preference, but the scores were relatively close: those who had lived in the district 5 years up to 15 years (3% difference) and current student families (2% difference).
- There was almost universally strong agreement that the school district would be the place respondents would look for information, rather than the local news media. In fact, in only two cases – those living west of Providence and south of Broadway (58% choosing the school district), and the very small group of Hispanic/Latino respondents (57% choosing the school district) was the school district preference below 60%.

What makes these results particularly interesting is data that comes up later in the survey, showing that respondents will look to teachers and other staff members in the district first, when



they are seeking school news, followed by “friends and neighbors,” the print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper, students who attend school in the district and local television stations. This would seem to affirm the data above, suggesting that district-sponsored sources have the edge – particularly when the issue is who an individual would contact “first” – while also indicating that informal sources (“friends and neighbors”) are ahead of the local newspaper, when the need is now.

**36. Generally speaking, do you prefer receiving information about what’s going on in the school district in a printed form, such as in newsletters or stories in the newspaper, or in an electronic form, such as e-mails, e-mail newsletters and websites?**

| Response  | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Printed   | 56%             | 52%             | 58%             |
| Electronic  | 39%             | 41%             | 37%             |
| It depends on what I’m looking for/not always the same (not read) | 5%              | 8%              | 4%              |
| Don’t know (not read)   | 0%              | 0%              | 1%              |

**37. In terms of information about what’s going on in the school district, are you more likely to consult information that is provided by the district itself, or are you more likely to look to the news media to get your information?**

| Response  | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| School district   | 65%             | 58%             | 61%             |
| News media  | 31%             | 27%             | 22%             |
| It depends on what I’m looking for/not always the same (not read) | 3%              | 14%             | 17%             |
| Don’t know (not read)   | 1%              | 1%              | 1%              |



**Cross-tabulation: Preference for printed versus electronic news, and for school district-provided news versus the news media by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because two respondents refused to answer this question.**

| Response        | Overall score | 18-34 (n=83) | 35-54 (n=162) | 55 or older (n=153) | Up to 5 years (n=57) | 5 to 15 years (n=110) | More than 15 years (n=233) | Student, yes (n=119) | Student, past (n=174) | Student, never (n=107) |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Printed         | <b>56%</b>    | 48%          | 58%           | 57%                 | 65%                  | 49%                   | 56%                        | 48%                  | 59%                   | 59%                    |
| Electronic      | <b>39%</b>    | 48%          | 38%           | 36%                 | 33%                  | 46%                   | 37%                        | 46%                  | 36%                   | 37%                    |
| School district | <b>65%</b>    | 66%          | 65%           | 63%                 | 60%                  | 63%                   | 67%                        | 74%                  | 60%                   | 62%                    |
| News media      | <b>31%</b>    | 30%          | 31%           | 31%                 | 35%                  | 33%                   | 30%                        | 24%                  | 34%                   | 35%                    |

**Cross-tabulation: Preference for printed versus electronic news, and for school district-provided news versus the news media by location of the respondent’s residence and ethnicity of respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial and ethnic groups will not square with “overall,” because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.**

| Response        | Overall score | W of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | W of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | African-American (n=38) | Caucasian (n=330) | Hispanic /Latino (n=23) |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Printed         | <b>56%</b>    | 62%                          | 50%                          | 58%                          | 52%                          | 55%                     | 56%               | 52%                     |
| Electronic      | <b>39%</b>    | 34%                          | 47%                          | 36%                          | 40%                          | 37%                     | 38%               | 43%                     |
| School district | <b>65%</b>    | 72%                          | 67%                          | 58%                          | 61%                          | 63%                     | 65%               | 57%                     |
| News media      | <b>31%</b>    | 23%                          | 31%                          | 36%                          | 35%                          | 34%                     | 30%               | 39%                     |

**Cross-tabulation: Preference for printed versus electronic news, and for school district-provided news versus the news media by access to high-speed Internet (at either home or work), level of involvement with the school district, and whether or not the respondent voted in the April 2012 election (not all respondents knew whether or not they voted). Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.**

| Response   | Overall score |
|------------|---------------|
| Printed    | <b>56%</b>    |
| Electronic | <b>39%</b>    |

| Yes, high-speed access (n=361) | No, high-speed access (n=39) |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 54%                            | 72%                          |
| 41%                            | 23%                          |

| Very/Somewhat involved (n=98) | Not very/Not at all involved (n=174) | Involved in the past, not now (n=128) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 43%                           | 60%                                  | 59%                                   |
| 49%                           | 35%                                  | 38%                                   |

| Yes, voted in April 2012 (n=295) | No, did not vote in April 2012 (n=83) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 58%                              | 53%                                   |
| 36%                              | 46%                                   |

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| School district | <b>65%</b> |
| News media      | <b>31%</b> |

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 65% | 64% |
| 31% | 31% |

|     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 69% | 64% | 61% |
| 28% | 32% | 34% |

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 67% | 61% |
| 29% | 35% |



**Finding 4: While the readership of *Quarterly Report* is statistically unchanged, those who read it at least once a year give it higher marks than in 2011 for the quality of the news and for how it looks.**

When asked how often they read the district's *Quarterly Report* publication, 70% said they read "every issue" or "every other issue," which is statistically identical to the 69% who said that in the 2011 survey.

However, among those who read the publication at least once a year, their views on its quality show improvements at a statistically significant level.

Specifically, those calling the "quality and completeness of the news" in the publication either "excellent" or "good" totaled 86% on this survey, compared to 80% in 2011. Those rating the look of the publication either "excellent" or "good" rose to 94% from 87% on the 2011 study.

While the district would likely prefer that all residents read the publication a bit more frequently, there is no question that the perception of *Quarterly Report*'s news quality and graphic appeal continues to be strong among those who do read it at least once a year.

The cross-tabulation analysis showed very little variation, with the exceptions being higher "regular" readership among current student families and those that called themselves either "very involved" or "somewhat involved," and lower numbers among the "never" student family group. (Readership was also high among those living east of Providence and north of Broadway.)

All of this data seems to suggest that interest in the publication remains high, as does the satisfaction with the content, and the look and feel among those who read it on a fairly regular basis.

**38. Thinking now just about the school district's printed newsletter, called *Quarterly Report*, how often would you say you read it? Would you say...***Choices were read to respondents.*

| Response              | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Every issue           | 57%             | 54%             | 49%             |
| Every other issue     | 13%             | 15%             | 18%             |
| At least once a year  | 11%             | 11%             | 14%             |
| Less than once a year | 3%              | 6%              | 7%              |
| Never                 | 15%             | 13%             | 12%             |
| Don't know (not read) | 1%              | 2%              | 1%              |



- 39. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the news that you see in the *Quarterly Report* newsletter, would you say it is...***Asked of the 324 respondents who answered question 38 either “every issue,” “every other issue,” or “at least once a year.” Percentages are of these respondents, not the total respondent group of 400.*

| Response              | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Excellent             | 27%             | 19%             | 28%             |
| Good                  | 59%             | 61%             | 57%             |
| Fair                  | 12%             | 15%             | 13%             |
| Poor                  | 1%              | 2%              | 2%              |
| Don’t know (not read) | 1%              | 3%              | 1%              |

- 40. How about the way that *Quarterly Report* looks? Would you rate it...***Percentages are, again, of the 324 respondents who read *Quarterly Report* at least once a year.*

| Response              | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Excellent             | 29%             | 23%             | 21%             |
| Good                  | 65%             | 64%             | 72%             |
| Fair                  | 6%              | 10%             | 5%              |
| Poor                  | 0%              | <1%             | 0%              |
| Don’t know (not read) | <1%             | 3%              | 3%              |

Cross-tabulation: “Regular readers” (every issue or every other issue), “Infrequent readers” (at least once a year or less than once a year), and “Never readers” of *Quarterly Report* by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because two respondents refused to answer this question.

| Response                                      | Overall score | 18-34 (n=83) | 35-54 (n=162) | 55 or older (n=153) | Up to 5 years (n=57) | 5 to 15 years (n=110) | More than 15 years (n=233) | Student, yes (n=119) | Student, past (n=174) | Student, never (n=107) |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i>    | <b>70%</b>    | 67%          | 72%           | 71%                 | 67%                  | 71%                   | 71%                        | 77%                  | 72%                   | 61%                    |
| Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i> | <b>14%</b>    | 18%          | 14%           | 11%                 | 18%                  | 8%                    | 15%                        | 12%                  | 12%                   | 19%                    |
| Never readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i>      | <b>15%</b>    | 14%          | 14%           | 16%                 | 16%                  | 20%                   | 12%                        | 11%                  | 14%                   | 20%                    |

Cross-tabulation: “Regular readers” (every issue or every other issue), “Infrequent readers” (at least once a year or less than once a year), and “Never readers” of *Quarterly Report* by location of the respondent’s residence and ethnicity of respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with “overall,” because only groups with at least modest levels of participation are included below.

| Response                                      | Overall score | W of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | W of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | African-American (n=38) | Caucasian (n=330) | Hispanic /Latino (n=23) |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i>    | <b>70%</b>    | 66%                          | 77%                          | 70%                          | 69%                          | 71%                     | 70%               | 70%                     |
| Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i> | <b>14%</b>    | 22%                          | 7%                           | 14%                          | 12%                          | 16%                     | 12%               | 30%                     |
| Never readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i>      | <b>15%</b>    | 12%                          | 15%                          | 15%                          | 16%                          | 13%                     | 16%               | 0%                      |

Cross-tabulation: “Regular readers” (every issue or every other issue), “Infrequent readers” (at least once a year or less than once a year), and “Never readers” of *Quarterly Report* by access to high-speed Internet (at either home or work), level of involvement with the school district and whether or not the respondent voted in the April 2012 election (not all respondents knew whether or not they voted). Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

| Response                                      | Overall score | Yes, high-speed access (n=361) | No, high-speed access (n=39) | Very/Somewhat involved (n=98) | Not very/Not at all involved (n=174) | Involved in the past, not now (n=128) | Yes, voted in April 2012 (n=295) | No, did not vote in April 2012 (n=83) |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i>    | <b>70%</b>    | 71%                            | 64%                          | 78%                           | 64%                                  | 74%                                   | 72%                              | 67%                                   |
| Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i> | <b>14%</b>    | 14%                            | 10%                          | 11%                           | 17%                                  | 12%                                   | 13%                              | 16%                                   |
| Never readers of <i>Quarterly Report</i>      | <b>15%</b>    | 13%                            | 26%                          | 11%                           | 18%                                  | 12%                                   | 14%                              | 17%                                   |



**Finding 5: Visits to the district’s website saw a decline, in terms of the number of frequent (at least once every two weeks) users from 2011, while those visiting individual school sites remained statistically unchanged.**

The survey then turned to the subject of websites – both the school district’s and local school sites – and while the local school sites had a similar pattern of usage, as compared to 2011, frequent users of the district’s website declined somewhat.

Specifically, those stating they visited the district’s website either “at least once a week” or “at least once every two weeks” dipped to 15%, from 23% in 2011. School specific sites, however, had a count of 25% on these two answer options, which is statistically identical to the 26% in 2011.

The district site was deemed “very easy” or “easy” to navigate by 85% of those who visited it at least once a month, while 14% called it “difficult.” This was a 10% increase in those calling the site “difficult” over the 2011 study, but the balance continues to be definitely positive on this topic.

On school-specific sites, 87% of those who visited at least once a month called such sites either “very easy” or “easy” to navigate – results that are statistically identical to the 91% who said the same thing in 2011.

The cross-tabulation analysis had few surprises, as current student families and those who consider themselves either “very involved” or “somewhat involved” were much more frequent visitors to the district website, as well as school-specific sites, while older respondents (55 plus), past student families, “never” student families, those without access to high-speed Internet, and those who are no longer involved in the school district were much less likely to visit regularly.

**41. What about the Columbia Public Schools District’s website? Which of the following best describes how often you visit it? Choices were read to respondents.**

| Response                       | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| At least once a week           | 6%              | 11%             | 12%             |
| At least once every two weeks  | 9%              | 12%             | 9%              |
| At least once a month          | 10%             | 6%              | 11%             |
| Less than once a month         | 22%             | 20%             | 23%             |
| I’ve never visited the website | 53%             | 52%             | 47%             |



- 42. Thinking about the last time you visited the Columbia Public School District's website, how would you rate how easy it was to navigate and find what you were looking for?** *Asked only of the 100 respondents who answered question 41 either "at least once a week," "at least once every two weeks," or "at least once a month."*  
*Percentages are of these respondents, not the total respondent group of 400.*

| Response              | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Very easy             | 43%             | 38%             | 41%             |
| Easy                  | 42%             | 59%             | 52%             |
| Difficult             | 14%             | 4%              | 6%              |
| Very difficult        | 0%              | 0%              | 0%              |
| Don't know (not read) | 1%              | 0%              | 2%              |

- 43. What about the websites for individual schools in the Columbia Public Schools? Which of the following best describes how often you visit one or more of them?** *Choices were read to respondents.*

| Response                       | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| At least once a week           | 14%             | 16%             | 13%             |
| At least once every two weeks  | 11%             | 10%             | 9%              |
| At least once a month          | 12%             | 8%              | 10%             |
| Less than once a month         | 3%              | 11%             | 22%             |
| I've never visited the website | 61%             | 55%             | 47%             |

- 44. Thinking about the last time you visited an individual school website, how would you rate how easy it was to navigate and find what you were looking for? If you've visited more than one recently, please tell me, generally, how easy they all are to navigate.** *Asked only of the 145 respondents who answered question 43 either "at least once a week," "at least once every two weeks," or "at least once a month."*  
*Percentages are of these respondents, not the total respondent group of 400.*

| Response              | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Very easy             | 24%             | 39%             | 24%             |
| Easy                  | 63%             | 52%             | 74%             |
| Difficult             | 12%             | 9%              | 2%              |
| Very difficult        | 0%              | 0%              | 0%              |
| Don't know (not read) | 0%              | 0%              | 1%              |



**Cross-tabulation: “Regular visitors” (at least once a week or at least once every two weeks), “Infrequent visitors” (at least once a month or less than once a month), and “Never visitors” of the Columbia Public Schools website and individual schools’ websites by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because two respondents refused to answer this question.**

| Response                                       | Overall score | 18-34 (n=83) | 35-54 (n=162) | 55 or older (n=153) | Up to 5 years (n=57) | 5 to 15 years (n=110) | More than 15 years (n=233) | Student, yes (n=119) | Student, past (n=174) | Student, never (n=107) |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Regular visitors/CPS website                   | <b>15%</b>    | 18%          | 18%           | 10%                 | 14%                  | 15%                   | 15%                        | 26%                  | 9%                    | 12%                    |
| Infrequent visitors/CPS website                | <b>32%</b>    | 28%          | 36%           | 38%                 | 35%                  | 25%                   | 35%                        | 46%                  | 29%                   | 23%                    |
| Never visitors/CPS website                     | <b>53%</b>    | 54%          | 46%           | 58%                 | 51%                  | 60%                   | 50%                        | 28%                  | 63%                   | 64%                    |
| Regular visitors/individual school websites    | <b>25%</b>    | 25%          | 30%           | 17%                 | 26%                  | 23%                   | 24%                        | 45%                  | 13%                   | 18%                    |
| Infrequent visitors/individual school websites | <b>15%</b>    | 14%          | 17%           | 14%                 | 16%                  | 18%                   | 14%                        | 18%                  | 14%                   | 15%                    |
| Never visitors/individual school websites      | <b>61%</b>    | 60%          | 52%           | 69%                 | 58%                  | 59%                   | 62%                        | 37%                  | 72%                   | 67%                    |

**Cross-tabulation: “Regular visitors” (at least once a week or at least once every two weeks), “Infrequent visitors” (at least once a month or less than once a month), and “Never visitors” of the Columbia Public Schools website and individual schools’ websites by location of the respondent’s residence and ethnicity of respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with “overall,” because only groups with at least modest levels of participation are included below.**

| Response                                       | Overall score | W of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) |  |  |  | E of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) |  |  |  | W of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) |  |  |  | E of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) |  |  |  | African-American (n=38) |  |  |  | Caucasian (n=330) |  |  |  | Hispanic /Latino (n=23) |  |  |  |
|--|---------------|------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------|--|--|--|
|  |               | 16%                          |  |  |  | 18%                          |  |  |  | 10%                          |  |  |  | 15%                          |  |  |  | 11%                     |  |  |  | 15%               |  |  |  | 13%                     |  |  |  |
|  |               | 34%                          |  |  |  | 31%                          |  |  |  | 25%                          |  |  |  | 40%                          |  |  |  | 45%                     |  |  |  | 31%               |  |  |  | 43%                     |  |  |  |
|  |               | 50%                          |  |  |  | 51%                          |  |  |  | 65%                          |  |  |  | 45%                          |  |  |  | 45%                     |  |  |  | 55%               |  |  |  | 43%                     |  |  |  |
| Regular visitors/CPS website                   | <b>15%</b>    |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                         |  |  |  |                   |  |  |  |                         |  |  |  |
| Infrequent visitors/CPS website                | <b>32%</b>    |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                         |  |  |  |                   |  |  |  |                         |  |  |  |
| Never visitors/CPS website                     | <b>53%</b>    |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                              |  |  |  |                         |  |  |  |                   |  |  |  |                         |  |  |  |
| Regular visitors/individual school websites    | <b>25%</b>    | 26%                          |  |  |  | 21%                          |  |  |  | 19%                          |  |  |  | 30%                          |  |  |  | 21%                     |  |  |  | 24%               |  |  |  | 30%                     |  |  |  |
| Infrequent visitors/individual school websites | <b>15%</b>    | 19%                          |  |  |  | 13%                          |  |  |  | 12%                          |  |  |  | 18%                          |  |  |  | 21%                     |  |  |  | 15%               |  |  |  | 13%                     |  |  |  |
| Never visitors/individual school websites      | <b>61%</b>    | 55%                          |  |  |  | 66%                          |  |  |  | 69%                          |  |  |  | 52%                          |  |  |  | 58%                     |  |  |  | 61%               |  |  |  | 57%                     |  |  |  |

**Cross-tabulation: “Regular visitors” (at least once a week or at least once every two weeks), “Infrequent visitors” (at least once a month or less than once a month), and “Never visitors” of the Columbia Public Schools website and individual schools’ websites by access to high-speed Internet (at either home or work), level of involvement with the school district and whether or not the respondent voted in the April 2012 election (not all respondents knew whether or not they voted). Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.**

| Response                                       | Overall score | Yes, high-speed access (n=361) | No, high-speed access (n=39) | Very/Somewhat involved (n=98) | Not very/Not at all involved (n=174) | Involved in the past, not now (n=128) | Yes, voted in April 2012 (n=295) | No, did not vote in April 2012 (n=83) |
|--|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Regular visitors/CPS website                   | <b>15%</b>    | 16%                            | 0%                           | 22%                           | 15%                                  | 9%                                    | 16%                              | 12%                                   |
| Infrequent visitors/CPS website                | <b>32%</b>    | 36%                            | 3%                           | 37%                           | 30%                                  | 33%                                   | 33%                              | 30%                                   |
| Never visitors/CPS website                     | <b>53%</b>    | 48%                            | 97%                          | 41%                           | 55%                                  | 59%                                   | 52%                              | 58%                                   |
| Regular visitors/individual school websites    | <b>25%</b>    | 26%                            | 8%                           | 38%                           | 19%                                  | 20%                                   | 25%                              | 20%                                   |
| Infrequent visitors/individual school websites | <b>15%</b>    | 16%                            | 10%                          | 19%                           | 16%                                  | 12%                                   | 15%                              | 19%                                   |
| Never visitors/individual school websites      | <b>61%</b>    | 58%                            | 82%                          | 43%                           | 65%                                  | 68%                                   | 61%                              | 60%                                   |



**Finding 6: Though the trend is somewhat up, viewership of Columbia Public Schools television remains low, with only 17% of survey participants saying they watch it “at least once a month.” While this is a statistically significant increase from the 9% who said this in 2011, it still appears to be a medium that is low on the priority list for residents seeking school district news.**

Columbia Public Schools television saw a slight – although statistically significant – increase in viewership from 9% in 2011 to 17% in 2012, among those stating that they watched “at least once a month.” While this is a notable increase, it does suggest that the district’s television programming is like that of most school districts – viewers are generally hard to come by.

Viewing patterns bounced around quite a bit as compared to 2011, with evening being the dominant time, with 46% of those who watch at least once a month stating that this is when they watched most often. Afternoon viewing among the same group dropped precipitously – from 37% in 2011, down to just 3% in 2012.

Among those who watch at least once a month, 90% called the programming either “excellent” or “good,” an increase from the 83% who said the same thing in 2011.

In essence, it appears that the television programming has a small, but somewhat loyal, following of individuals who value the broadcasts and the information they contain. The issue continues to be, of course, increasing the size of the audience that is willing to make at least an infrequent visit to the station to see what is airing.

With such small numbers of viewers, the cross-tabulation analysis is a bit of a challenge to interpret. What was interesting, however, was the very low viewership among those who are current student families and those who consider themselves “very involved” or “somewhat involved.” This would seem to suggest that audiences with a regular, direct connection to the district have other ways of finding out information and, as such, they bypass the television broadcasts.



**45. How often do you watch Columbia Public Schools television, either on cable or on the district's website?** *Choices were read to respondents.*

| Response                      | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Every day                     | 2%              | <1%             | 1%              |
| A few times a week            | 5%              | 1%              | 1%              |
| At least once a week          | 3%              | 2%              | 3%              |
| At least once every two weeks | 1%              | 4%              | 2%              |
| At least once a month         | 6%              | 2%              | 10%             |
| Less than once a month        | 24%             | 29%             | 28%             |
| I've never watched            | 59%             | 61%             | 53%             |
| Don't know (not read)         | 1%              | 2%              | 4%              |

**Cross-tabulation: “Regular viewers” (every day, up to at least once every two weeks), “Infrequent viewers” (at least once a month or less than once a month), and “Never viewers” of the Columbia Public Schools television by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because two respondents refused to answer this question.**

| Response                          | Overall score | 18-34 (n=83) | 35-54 (n=162) | 55 or older (n=153) | Up to 5 years (n=57) | 5 to 15 years (n=110) | More than 15 years (n=233) | Student, yes (n=119) | Student, past (n=174) | Student, never (n=107) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Regular viewers/CPS television    | <b>11%</b>    | 8%           | 10%           | 12%                 | 12%                  | 9%                    | 10%                        | 4%                   | 13%                   | 12%                    |
| Infrequent viewers/CPS television | <b>30%</b>    | 35%          | 29%           | 28%                 | 35%                  | 30%                   | 28%                        | 38%                  | 24%                   | 31%                    |
| Never viewers/CPS television      | <b>59%</b>    | 57%          | 59%           | 59%                 | 51%                  | 61%                   | 60%                        | 56%                  | 62%                   | 56%                    |

**Cross-tabulation: “Regular viewers” (every day, up to at least once every two weeks), “Infrequent viewers” (at least once a month or less than once a month), and “Never viewers” of the Columbia Public Schools television by location of the respondent’s residence and ethnicity of respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with “overall,” because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.**

| Response                          | Overall score | W of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/N of B’way (n=100) | W of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | E of Prov/S of B’way (n=100) | African-American (n=38) | Caucasian (n=330) | Hispanic /Latino (n=23) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Regular viewers/CPS television    | <b>11%</b>    | 11%                          | 11%                          | 7%                           | 12%                          | 8%                      | 11%               | 8%                      |
| Infrequent viewers/CPS television | <b>30%</b>    | 30%                          | 33%                          | 30%                          | 26%                          | 34%                     | 30%               | 22%                     |
| Never viewers/CPS television      | <b>59%</b>    | 58%                          | 55%                          | 60%                          | 62%                          | 58%                     | 58%               | 70%                     |

Cross-tabulation: “Regular viewers” (every day, up to at least once every two weeks), “Infrequent viewers” (at least once a month or less than once a month), and “Never viewers” of the Columbia Public Schools television by access to high-speed Internet (at either home or work), level of involvement with the school district and whether or not the respondent voted in the April 2012 election (not all respondents knew whether or not they voted). Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

| Response                          | Overall score | Yes, high-speed access (n=361) | No, high-speed access (n=39) | Very/Somewhat involved (n=98) | Not very/Not at all involved (n=174) | Involved in the past, not now (n=128) | Yes, voted in April 2012 (n=295) | No, did not vote in April 2012 (n=83) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Regular viewers/CPS television    | <b>11%</b>    | 9%                             | 21%                          | 6%                            | 10%                                  | 14%                                   | 9%                               | 14%                                   |
| Infrequent viewers/CPS television | <b>30%</b>    | 30%                            | 28%                          | 29%                           | 32%                                  | 28%                                   | 31%                              | 29%                                   |
| Never viewers/CPS television      | <b>59%</b>    | 60%                            | 51%                          | 64%                           | 58%                                  | 55%                                   | 59%                              | 57%                                   |



- 46. When do you most often watch? Is it in the morning, afternoon, or evening?** *Asked only of the 63 respondents who answered question 45 either “every day,” “a few times a week,” “at least once a week,” “at least once every two weeks,” or “at least once a month.” Percentages are of these respondents, not the total respondent group of 400.*

| Response             | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Morning              | 17%             | 11%             |
| Afternoon            | 3%              | 37%             |
| Evening              | 46%             | 29%             |
| It varies (not read) | 33%             | 23%             |

- 47. In terms of providing you information about the activities of the school district, how would you rate the quality of Columbia Public Schools television?** *Percentages are, again, of the 63 respondents who watch Columbia Public Schools television at least once a month.*

| Response  | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Excellent | 27%             | 3%              |
| Good      | 63%             | 80%             |
| Fair      | 10%             | 17%             |
| Poor      | 0%              | 0%              |

- 48. What additional types of programming about the school district would you like to see on Columbia Public Schools television?** *Of the 63 respondents eligible to answer this question, 54 had no recommendation or said, “Don’t know.” The verbatim comments from the other nine respondents are listed below.*

More languages, not just English.

More on safety improvements.

Course descriptions and explanations, prior to enrollment.

Security issues.

I would like to see winter concerts and more of what the students are doing. Also, high school plays.

Updates on construction plans.

Safety measures that have been implemented.





More detailed budget issues.

Maybe use to show sports games or plays.



**Finding 7: Information on the school district via Facebook and Twitter continues to be of only modest interest to those who participated in the survey.**

This year's survey slightly revised the section dealing with Facebook and Twitter (and removed the question about the respondent's likelihood to visit a district blog). Instead of asking if they would participate in these two forms of social media, if the district set up such accounts, this year's survey asked if they have "liked" Facebook pages and "followed" Twitter feeds for individual schools in the district or for school-related clubs or organizations.

In 2011, 19% of survey respondents said they would be "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to "like" a district Facebook page. In 2012, only 5% of the survey respondents said they had done so – even though the question offered more of an opportunity than a "district page," by asking about pages related to individual schools or "various school-related clubs or organizations."

The response to a similar question about Twitter feeds was a bit closer to the 2011 result. In that survey, only 4% said they would be at least "somewhat likely" to "follow" a district Twitter feed. This year's survey group had only 2% who "follow" feeds from, again, individual schools and/or school-related clubs or organizations.

However, while these results may be disappointing to CPS, they are not unusual in other districts where these questions have been asked. As these mediums continue to evolve in terms of their functionality for true communication and the acceptance of them by a broader audience for business purposes, it is likely that these numbers will continue to rise, albeit slowly for the foreseeable future.

**49. Have you clicked "like" on Facebook pages associated with individual schools in the district or various school-related clubs or organizations?**

| Response | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Yes      | 5%         |
| No       | 95%        |

**50. Do you currently "follow" Twitter feeds associated with individual schools in the district or various school-related clubs or organizations?**

| Response | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Yes      | 2%         |
| No       | 98%        |



**Finding 8: The level of interest in news about the district’s finances, curriculum and curriculum changes, discipline programs, and efforts to close the achievement gap was meaningfully higher in 2012 than in 2011.**

One of the more instructive pieces of data collected by this survey each year is found in a question that presents 10 different potential topics, and asks respondents to identify which ones they would like to hear more about from the school district.

The stories that topped 50% (meaning more than half of the survey respondents said they would like to hear more about this topic) were as follows:

- Student and teacher success stories – requested by 79% of the respondents
- Information on the district’s finances and budget – 74%
- Information on curriculum and curriculum changes – 69%
- News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools – 60%
- Updates on construction and renovation projects – 57%
- News about efforts to close the achievement gap – 52%

What was, however, most interesting was the change in the level of interest in the case of five of these six topics, as compared to 2011:

- News about efforts to close the achievement gap – up 18%
- Information on curriculum and curriculum changes – up 17%
- News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools – up 10%
- Information on the district’s finances and budget – down 7%
- Student and teacher success stories – down 6%

Make no mistake, the “finance” and “success stories” topics are still at the top of the list. But, the district’s ongoing communication about its efforts related to closing the achievement gap have clearly made it a topic generating more interest, along with the “curriculum and curriculum changes” topic. Again, more communication makes it more top of mind and, in this case, appears to whet the appetite of respondents for even more updates.

The “discipline” topic saw an increase on this question, and was also the most prevalent topic mentioned (using words and phrases related to this general idea) on a follow-up question that sought additional input beyond the provided list. Recognizing that calling was completed *before* the tragic incident in Newtown, Conn., this means that there is an ongoing, notable level of interest in the topic of safety and security in schools.



While it is impossible for the district to do a lot of focused communication on these topics by demographic or geographic subgroup, the cross-tabulation analysis does provide some interesting reading. While the general order of interest is relatively unchanged from group to group, certain topics clearly are of more interest to some and less to others. As such, this data is worthy of further study and consideration as the district constructs its communication plans for the future.

- 51. The school district provides a lot of information on a variety of topics. But, we want to make certain we are covering what local citizens want to know about. As such, can you tell me which of the following topics you, personally, are interested in hearing more about from the school district on a regular basis? If you'd really be interested in knowing more on this topic, please say, "yes." If you'd only be a little interested – or you wouldn't be interested at all – please say, "no." List was read to respondents. Percentages will add to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one choice.**

| Response  | Percentage/2012 | Percentage/2011 | Percentage/2010 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Student and teacher success stories                                 | 79%             | 85%             | 88%             |
| Information on the district's finances and budget                   | 74%             | 81%             | 74%             |
| Information on curriculum and curriculum changes                    | 69%             | 52%             | 58%             |
| News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools | 60%             | 50%             | 61%             |
| Updates on construction and renovation projects                     | 57%             | 53%             | 53%             |
| News about efforts to close the achievement gap                     | 52%             | 34%             | 41%             |
| School Board news   | 41%             | 47%             | 46%             |
| News about extracurricular activities                               | 38%             | 35%             | 40%             |
| Transportation news   | 27%             | 18%             | 29%             |
| School lunch and nutrition news                                     | 23%             | 21%             | 32%             |
| None of these (not read)  | 2%              | 1%              | 2%              |
| Don't know (not read)   | 0%              | 0%              | <1%             |

- 52. Are there other topics that you would be interested in hearing more about from the district that I did not mention?** *Of the 400 respondents, 359 said, either "Don't know" or "Nothing." An additional 31 mentioned "safety/security measures" (or words to that effect). The other 10 verbatim comments are displayed below.*

Open Lunch policies for the high school.



Sports information.

Individual school success stories.

Special programs that students sometimes get.

Progress being made on Special Education and non-academic programs that focus on preparing for adulthood.

Early Childhood program.

Emphasize some sports successes, or art or music.

Explain where tax money goes.

Update on sports budget and expenses.

What teachers are doing to improve education.

**Cross-tabulation: Interest level in various story topics by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because two respondents refused to answer this question.**

| Story topic   | Overall score | 18-34 (n=83) | 35-54 (n=162) | 55 or older (n=153) | Up to 5 years (n=57) | 5 to 15 years (n=110) | More than 15 years (n=233) | Student, yes (n=119) | Student, past (n=174) | Student, never (n=107) |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Student and teacher success stories                                 | <b>79%</b>    | 73%          | 82%           | 78%                 | 77%                  | 78%                   | 79%                        | 88%                  | 76%                   | 73%                    |
| Information on the district's finances and budget                   | <b>74%</b>    | 75%          | 75%           | 71%                 | 75%                  | 73%                   | 74%                        | 78%                  | 70%                   | 74%                    |
| Information on curriculum and curriculum changes                    | <b>69%</b>    | 73%          | 69%           | 67%                 | 70%                  | 67%                   | 70%                        | 72%                  | 63%                   | 69%                    |
| News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools | <b>60%</b>    | 61%          | 57%           | 60%                 | 60%                  | 59%                   | 60%                        | 62%                  | 59%                   | 58%                    |
| Updates on construction and renovation projects                     | <b>57%</b>    | 57%          | 59%           | 54%                 | 60%                  | 57%                   | 56%                        | 63%                  | 56%                   | 50%                    |
| News about efforts to close the achievement gap                     | <b>52%</b>    | 49%          | 57%           | 48%                 | 47%                  | 45%                   | 57%                        | 54%                  | 53%                   | 50%                    |
| School Board news   | <b>41%</b>    | 41%          | 40%           | 41%                 | 42%                  | 35%                   | 43%                        | 43%                  | 42%                   | 36%                    |
| News about extracurricular activities                               | <b>38%</b>    | 36%          | 38%           | 38%                 | 28%                  | 35%                   | 41%                        | 39%                  | 37%                   | 37%                    |
| Transportation news   | <b>27%</b>    | 25%          | 28%           | 25%                 | 42%                  | 25%                   | 24%                        | 30%                  | 25%                   | 25%                    |
| School lunch and nutrition news                                     | <b>23%</b>    | 17%          | 30%           | 18%                 | 32%                  | 15%                   | 24%                        | 29%                  | 19%                   | 21%                    |

**Cross-tabulation: Interest level in various story topics by location of the respondent's residence and ethnicity of respondent. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.**

| Story topic   | Overall score | W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100) | E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100) | W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100) | E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100) | African-American (n=38) | Caucasian (n=330) | Hispanic /Latino (n=23) |
|---|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Student and teacher success stories                                 | <b>79%</b>    | 79%                          | 77%                          | 82%                          | 77%                          | 84%                     | 79%               | 70%                     |
| Information on the district's finances and budget                   | <b>74%</b>    | 71%                          | 74%                          | 76%                          | 73%                          | 79%                     | 73%               | 74%                     |
| Information on curriculum and curriculum changes                    | <b>69%</b>    | 68%                          | 68%                          | 77%                          | 64%                          | 71%                     | 68%               | 70%                     |
| News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools | <b>60%</b>    | 62%                          | 56%                          | 57%                          | 63%                          | 68%                     | 58%               | 74%                     |
| Updates on construction and renovation projects                     | <b>57%</b>    | 66%                          | 60%                          | 50%                          | 51%                          | 63%                     | 57%               | 43%                     |
| News about efforts to close the achievement gap                     | <b>52%</b>    | 52%                          | 40%                          | 60%                          | 57%                          | 55%                     | 51%               | 65%                     |
| School Board news   | <b>41%</b>    | 37%                          | 41%                          | 48%                          | 37%                          | 42%                     | 40%               | 43%                     |
| News about extracurricular activities                               | <b>38%</b>    | 33%                          | 40%                          | 41%                          | 37%                          | 50%                     | 37%               | 30%                     |
| Transportation news   | <b>27%</b>    | 27%                          | 20%                          | 31%                          | 28%                          | 34%                     | 26%               | 22%                     |
| School lunch and nutrition news                                     | <b>23%</b>    | 25%                          | 21%                          | 24%                          | 20%                          | 21%                     | 23%               | 22%                     |

**Cross-tabulation: Interest level in various story topics by access to high-speed Internet (at either home or work), level of involvement with the school district and whether or not the respondent voted in the April 2012 election (not all respondents knew whether or not they voted). Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.**

| Story topic   | Overall score | Yes, high-speed access (n=361) | No, high-speed access (n=39) | Very/Somewhat involved (n=98) | Not very/Not at all involved (n=174) | Involved in the past, not now (n=128) | Yes, voted in April 2012 (n=295) | No, did not vote in April 2012 (n=83) |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Student and teacher success stories                                 | <b>79%</b>    | 80%                            | 72%                          | 80%                           | 77%                                  | 80%                                   | 81%                              | 70%                                   |
| Information on the district's finances and budget                   | <b>74%</b>    | 75%                            | 64%                          | 77%                           | 72%                                  | 72%                                   | 74%                              | 73%                                   |
| Information on curriculum and curriculum changes                    | <b>69%</b>    | 70%                            | 64%                          | 77%                           | 66%                                  | 69%                                   | 71%                              | 67%                                   |
| News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools | <b>60%</b>    | 59%                            | 67%                          | 58%                           | 57%                                  | 64%                                   | 60%                              | 60%                                   |
| Updates on construction and renovation projects                     | <b>57%</b>    | 57%                            | 54%                          | 59%                           | 52%                                  | 61%                                   | 57%                              | 55%                                   |
| News about efforts to close the achievement gap                     | <b>52%</b>    | 52%                            | 51%                          | 59%                           | 49%                                  | 52%                                   | 54%                              | 51%                                   |
| School Board news   | <b>41%</b>    | 40%                            | 44%                          | 41%                           | 39%                                  | 55%                                   | 41%                              | 40%                                   |
| News about extracurricular activities                               | <b>38%</b>    | 37%                            | 44%                          | 37%                           | 38%                                  | 38%                                   | 39%                              | 34%                                   |
| Transportation news   | <b>27%</b>    | 27%                            | 21%                          | 34%                           | 25%                                  | 23%                                   | 27%                              | 27%                                   |
| School lunch and nutrition news                                     | <b>23%</b>    | 22%                            | 28%                          | 29%                           | 18%                                  | 23%                                   | 24%                              | 20%                                   |





**Finding 9: Nine different sources are consulted “frequently” for school district news (aside from “news about weather-related school closings”) by at least 25% of the survey population – an increase from the count of seven sources achieving this level in the 2011 study. Local television and radio stations saw meaningful jumps in the percentage of respondents who said they consulted them frequently for such news.**

The survey began to draw to a close with a set of two questions that asked respondents to, first, identify which of 24 different potential sources of district news they consulted “frequently” and then, second, which one they would consult first.

General interest in district news appears to have grown somewhat since the 2011 study, as nine of the 24 sources were consulted “frequently” by at least 25% of the survey population (and one additional source hit 24%).

The sources that topped the 25% mark were:

- Friends and neighbors – consulted frequently by 87%
- Local television stations – 68%
- The print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper – 61%
- Students who attend school in the district – 42%
- Local radio stations – 40%
- Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via e-mail – 39%
- The school district’s annual report, called *The Yearbook* – 32%
- The School Board, either in person or in the media – 27%
- Individual school newsletters – 26%

Of this list, those that were new to the upper tier were “local radio stations” and “the School Board, either in person or in the media.” (However, it appears “local radio stations” is hard to get a handle on; in 2010, they were at 32%.)

What was most interesting, however, were the changes in percentages among this top group.

For example, “local television stations” (up 30% from last year) and “local radio stations” (up 23%) saw large increases, with smaller, but still notable increases for “students who attend school in the district” (10%), “the print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper” (7%), the School Board (also 7%), and “teachers and other staff members in the district” (6%). “Individual school newsletters,” on the other hand, saw a 9% decline, while “*The Yearbook*” dipped 12%.

Even so, this data all seems to suggest a continually growing interest in the district’s news, and a preference for consulting a long list of sources to secure the latest information.



**53. In addition to the ones that we’ve already discussed, people get their news about the school district from a variety of other sources. I’m going to read a short list of some of those sources. As I read this list, please say, “yes,” if you also consult this source frequently for school district news – aside from news about weather-related school closings. If you consult the source only every so often – or you don’t consult it at all for school news – just say, “no.” Choices were read to the respondents and rotated. Percentages will total to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one information source.**

| Response  | Percentage/<br>2012 | Percentage/<br>2011 | Percentage/<br>2010 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Friends and neighbors   | 87%                 | 86%                 | 89%                 |
| Local television stations   | 68%                 | 38%                 | 41%                 |
| The print edition of <i>The Columbia Tribune</i> newspaper                                | 61%                 | 54%                 | 61%                 |
| Students who attend school in the district  | 42%                 | 32%                 | 33%                 |
| Local radio stations  | 40%                 | 17%                 | 32%                 |
| Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via e-mail          | 39%                 | 33%                 | 32%                 |
| The school district’s annual report, called <i>The Yearbook</i>                           | 32%                 | 44%                 | 43%                 |
| The School Board, either in person or in the media  | 27%                 | 20%                 | 20%                 |
| Individual school newsletters   | 26%                 | 35%                 | 31%                 |
| Principals at district schools  | 24%                 | 18%                 | 24%                 |
| <i>Inside Columbia</i> magazine   | 21%                 | 18%                 | 25%                 |
| The district’s Central Office administration, either in person or via e-mail              | 21%                 | 18%                 | 19%                 |
| Phone calls from the district’s automated message system                                  | 15%                 | 8%                  | 18%                 |
| Various parent organizations at the schools   | 14%                 | 15%                 | 17%                 |
| The online edition of <i>The Columbia Tribune</i>   | 14%                 | 12%                 | 18%                 |
| The print edition of <i>The Columbia Missourian</i> newspaper                             | 12%                 | 9%                  | 14%                 |
| The school district’s electronic newsletter, called <i>Key News</i>                       | 11%                 | 16%                 | 9%                  |
| <i>The Columbia Business Times</i>  | 10%                 | 11%                 | 16%                 |
| The district’s text message alert system, called CPS Alert                                | 9%                  | 12%                 | 4%                  |
| <i>Columbia Home</i> magazine (was <i>Columbia Home &amp; Lifestyle Magazine</i> in 2010) | 8%                  | 10%                 | 7%                  |
| Social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, or blog sites                         | 6%                  | 4%                  | 2%                  |
| The Partners in Education program   | 5%                  | 4%                  | 3%                  |
| The online edition of <i>The Columbia Missourian</i>                                      | 3%                  | 6%                  | 8%                  |
| After-school clubs, such as Boys and Girls Club, and Adventure Club                       | 2%                  | 2%                  | 4%                  |



**Finding 10: “Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via e-mail” is the source that tops the list of those that would be consulted “first” by survey respondents. This is followed by “friends and neighbors,” “the print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper,” “students who attend school in the district” and “local television stations,” all of which topped 10%.**

While nine different sources would be consulted for school district news by at least 25% of the survey population, which one would they consult first?

The most frequent answer was unchanged from last year’s survey, as 18% said it would be “teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via e-mail.” Spots two and three switched places this year, with “friends and neighbors” coming in second (15%) and “the print edition of *The Columbia Tribune* newspaper” coming in third (14%), although the changes in score were very minimal from the results in 2011 for these two sources.

What was most interesting, however, were the sources that occupied spots four and five. Coming in fourth was “students who attend school in the district,” which saw its score double as a “first source” from 2011 – 12%, as compared to 6%. “Local television stations” saw an even bigger jump, increasing to 11% from just 4% in 2011.

In the evaluation of the “first consulted” sources by type, district-related sources remained in first position, but saw a drop from 54% in 2011. The news media and “informal sources” both saw an increase. While the fact that district-related sources continued to lead (seeming to affirm the results earlier in the study, which suggested that respondents would look to the district first, and the media second), the gap has narrowed. Specifically (results add to over 100%, due to rounding of multiple numbers on a long list):

- All district-related sources: 42%
- News media: 32%
- Informal sources (friends and neighbors, students in the district, and social media): 29%

In terms of print versus electronic versus “human” sources, when push comes to shove, CPS patrons tend to turn to individuals first, electronic sources second, and print sources third. Again, it is important to remember that this question asked respondents to name the source they would consult first, likely suggesting to some the presence of an urgent “need to know.” In these cases, it is clear that hearing it directly from another person (whether that person is a credible source or one who may or may not be completely informed) is the preference.



Specifically (again, results add to over 100%, due to rounding of multiple numbers):

- All “human” sources: 46%
- All electronic sources: 31%
- All print sources: 26%

While this might seem to somewhat contradict the earlier stated preference for print, it comes as no surprise when considering the active engagement with the district (15 Patron Hot Buttons) and the active interest in seeking out news about the district (nine sources consulted frequently by at least 25% of the patrons). This means that the district is a very active topic of local conversation, making it more plausible that typical patrons would ask a friend, a student or a teacher first, before consulting more traditional forms of media – district-sponsored or otherwise.

**54. Of all of the news sources we've discussed, which one do you consult first for news and information about the Columbia Public Schools?**

| Response   | Percentage/<br>2012 | Percentage/<br>2011 | Percentage/<br>2010 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via e-mail | 18%                 | 17%                 | 13%                 |
| Friends and neighbors  | 15%                 | 14%                 | 18%                 |
| The print edition of <i>The Columbia Tribune</i> newspaper                       | 14%                 | 16%                 | 13%                 |
| Students who attend school in the district                                       | 12%                 | 6%                  | 8%                  |
| Local television stations  | 11%                 | 4%                  | 9%                  |
| The school district's website, or websites from individual schools               | 7%                  | 6%                  | 5%                  |
| Individual school newsletters  | 6%                  | 11%                 | 11%                 |
| The printed newsletter from the district, called <i>Quarterly Report</i>         | 3%                  | 8%                  | 3%                  |
| The district's electronic newsletter, called <i>Key News</i>                     | 3%                  | 5%                  | 1%                  |
| The online edition of <i>The Columbia Tribune</i>                                | 3%                  | 2%                  | 4%                  |
| Local radio stations   | 2%                  | 3%                  | 3%                  |
| Columbia Public Schools television station                                       | 2%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  |
| The print edition of <i>The Columbia Missourian</i> newspaper                    | 2%                  | 1%                  | 3%                  |
| Social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter, and blog sites               | 2%                  | 0%                  | 0%                  |
| Principals at district schools   | 1%                  | 2%                  | 2%                  |
| The school district's annual report, called <i>The Yearbook</i>                  | 1%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  |
| The district's text message alert system, called CPS Alert                       | 1%                  | 0%                  | 0%                  |
| The School Board, either in person or in the media                               | <1%                 | 1%                  | 3%                  |
| <i>Inside Columbia</i> magazine  | <1%                 | 1%                  | 1%                  |
| Phone calls from the district's automated messaging system                       | 0%                  | 2%                  | <1%                 |
| Various parent organizations at the schools                                      | 0%                  | 1%                  | 1%                  |
| The district's Central Office administration, either in person or in the media   | 0%                  | <1%                 | 1%                  |
| The online edition of <i>The Columbia Missourian</i>                             | 0%                  | <1%                 | <1%                 |



**Finding 11: The participants in this year’s survey were mostly longer-term residents, heavily Caucasian, and featured a good mix of ages and “student” status groups. Almost three out of four respondents said that they had voted in the April 2012 school bond and operating levy election.**

The final section of the survey collected a variety of demographic information, allowing the data to be divided into groups, based on a host of different characteristics (plus where the respondent lived). This data is not subject to quota, and is merely collected to allow for the cross-tabulations on key questions.

This year’s survey group had the following characteristics:

- 59% have lived in the district more than 15 years, but 27% have lived there 10 years or less.
- More than half (56%) were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- 25% said that they are either “very involved” or “somewhat involved” with volunteer opportunities in the district, while 32% said they had been in the past, but were not any longer.
- Nine out of 10 respondents had access to high-speed Internet – either at home, at work or both.
- There were 119 current student families, 174 past student families, and 107 “never” student families. (The slightly higher percentage of “past student” families would seem to connect with the higher percentage of those saying they “had been involved in volunteer activities in the past.”)
- A total of 83% identified themselves as Caucasian, 10% identified themselves as African-American, or black, and smaller percentages identified themselves as either Hispanic/Latino or Asian. (2010 Census data for Columbia shows 79% Caucasian, and 11% African-American, or black residents.)

**My last few questions will help us divide our interviews into groups.**

**55. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of Columbia Public Schools? Is it...***Choices were read to respondents.*

| Response                       | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Less than 2 years              | 2%         |
| 2 years to 5 years             | 13%        |
| More than 5 years to 10 years  | 12%        |
| More than 10 years to 15 years | 16%        |
| More than 15 years             | 48%        |
| I’ve lived here all my life    | 11%        |



**56. In what age group are you? Is it...***Choices were read to respondents.*

| Response           | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|
| 18 to 24           | 6%         |
| 25 to 34           | 15%        |
| 35 to 44           | 18%        |
| 45 to 54           | 23%        |
| 55 to 64           | 21%        |
| 65 or older        | 18%        |
| Refused (not read) | 1%         |

**57. How involved would you say you are with volunteer opportunities associated with the Columbia Public Schools? Would you say you are...***Choices were read to respondents.*

| Response  | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Very involved   | 8%         |
| Somewhat involved                                       | 17%        |
| Not very involved                                       | 13%        |
| Not at all involved                                     | 30%        |
| I was involved in the past, but I am no longer involved | 32%        |

**58. Do you have high-speed Internet access at home, at work, both or neither?**

| Response              | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| At home and work      | 43%        |
| At home only          | 46%        |
| At work only          | 2%         |
| Neither               | 10%        |
| Don't know (not read) | 0%         |



**59. Are you, or is anyone in your immediate household, employed by the Columbia Public Schools?**

| Response | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Yes      | 2%         |
| No       | 98%        |

**60. In what capacity is this person employed? Is it...***Asked only of the seven respondents who answered “yes” on question 59. General job titles were read, and respondents were free to add others to the list. Only those with at least one mention displayed below. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed.*

| Response           | Number |
|--------------------|--------|
| Classroom teacher  | 6      |
| Food service staff | 1      |

**61. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in the Columbia Public Schools right now?** *Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

| Response                        | Number |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Yes, children                   | 109    |
| Yes, children and grandchildren | 10     |
| Yes, grandchildren              | 68     |
| No                              | 213    |

**62. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated?** *Asked only of the 281 respondents who did not say either “yes, children” or “yes, children and grandchildren” on question 61. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

| Response                        | Number |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Yes, children                   | 166    |
| Yes, children and grandchildren | 8      |
| Yes, grandchildren              | 3      |
| No                              | 104    |





**63. I'm not interested in how you voted; I'd just like to know if you voted in the April 2012 election on the school bond issue and operating levy proposals?**

| Response       | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|
| Yes            | 74%        |
| No             | 21%        |
| Don't remember | 5%         |
| Refused        | <1%        |

**64. And, finally, which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group? Is it...***Choices were read to respondents. Item in quotes was added by one respondent.*

| Response                   | Percentage |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Caucasian, or white        | 83%        |
| African-American, or black | 10%        |
| Hispanic or Latino         | 6%         |
| Asian                      | 2%         |
| "American Indian"          | <1%        |
| Refused (not read)         | <1%        |

**65. RECORD GENDER**

| Response | Percentage |
|----------|------------|
| Female   | 56%        |
| Male     | 44%        |



## Summary

The November/December 2012 survey of 400 randomly selected, head-of-household, registered voter patrons in the Columbia Public Schools suggests a population that has grown (from a very strong position already) in its appreciation for the work of the district, and one whose practices regarding how it gets district news have changed little since the 2011 study.

Specifically:

- The number of factors being graded at a “B” or higher grew from 20 to 24, while the factors below that mark were not dramatically so.
- The foundational elements of a school district’s work – teachers, curriculum, and community support – continue to be noticed in the case of CPS. Aside from comments about money and taxes (which have been common on school surveys for the past several years, as the economy has struggled), the largest percentage of respondents had a hard time pinpointing an area that needed improvement.
- If they were asked to describe the district to a stranger, nearly all respondents said they would speak positively about factors such as the education provided, the district itself and its teachers.
- The preference for printed sources over electronic remains, and the district would be consulted before the news media by a factor of more than 2-to-1.
- *Quarterly Report* continues to have a strong following that likes the content, and the look and feel. Website visitor counts reflect typical patterns – with current district parents and at least “somewhat” involved patrons visiting more frequently.
- CPS television saw some very modest gains in viewership, suggesting that it continues to be a medium in search of an audience (as is the case in most school districts).
- Among the survey group, respondents were not actively attached to Facebook pages or Twitter feeds for district schools, or district-sponsored clubs or organizations. Yet, these tools continue to be smart strategies for the future, as levels of participation are likely to continue to grow (if the patrons in the Columbia School District follow the same slow, but steady, growth in utilization seen in other school districts).
- Interest in various stories that could be a focus area for district communications saw some modest shrinking at the top of the list, but dramatic growth on topics such as “information on curriculum and curriculum changes,” “news about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools” and “news about efforts to close the achievement gap.” And, even though “school discipline programs” was listed in the offered choices, some respondents still chose to also call it out separately in the follow-up question that sought additional input.
- With the exception of growth for local television stations and local radio stations as sources that are consulted “frequently” for district news, the results were fairly similar to 2011. Teachers and others in the district, and “friends and neighbors” would be the first sources consulted by respondents seeking district news.



The key takeaways from this large collection of data would appear to be as follows:

- **Appreciation for the district and its work is growing.**

While the district already had a pattern on the grading exercise that would put it in the upper tier of school districts for whom this research has been completed in the last 20 years, the nearly clean sweep of factors achieving a “B” or better suggests that patrons have an even higher degree of trust this year than they did in 2011. Add in the overwhelmingly positive comments in the hypothetical, “How would you describe the district to a stranger?” exercise, and the picture of support is complete.

- **The communications programs continue to find an audience, though the content of what is presented going forward may need some modest adjustment.**

The scores for *Quarterly Report*, the various websites, and the television network are a continuing echo. Each of these mediums clearly has found a committed audience that likes what it sees. (And, as mentioned earlier, the district can expect modest, but steady, growth in terms of Facebook “likes” and Twitter “follows.”)

What has modified somewhat, however, are the topics that generate the most interest among respondents. While the topics of “student and teacher success stories” and “information on the district’s finances and budget” remained at the top of the list, the spread between them and the stories that followed narrowed noticeably. It would be wise for the district to find ways to expand its coverage of the topics that seem to be trending up, to respond to the interest among patrons.

- **Keeping staff members informed continues to be a key strategy for effective transmission of information.**

With “teachers and other staff members in the district” being the source that respondents would consult first for district news, making certain these individuals have a steady diet of accurate information on the topics of the day is critical to having that same level of accuracy being present in the community.

While such a process is undoubtedly part of the regular communications program for the district, these research results suggest that it might deserve an even higher priority, and that a review of how information gets to staff members would likely be wise to be certain that all avenues are being utilized.