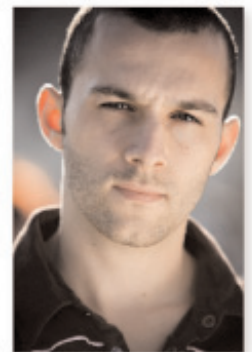


The Power of Know™



**Columbia Public Schools
2014 Survey of Parents, Staff,
and Third-, Fifth-, Eighth-
and Eleventh-Grade students**

Final Report

December 2, 2014



**Columbia Public Schools 2014 Parent, Staff, Student
(Third, Fifth, Eighth and 11th grades) Research
Table of Contents
December 2, 2014**

Introduction	2
Parent Survey	4
Staff Survey	37
Survey of Eighth- and 11th-Grade Students	57
Survey of Third- and Fifth-Grade Students	68
Conclusions	79

**Columbia Public Schools 2014 Parent, Staff, Student
(Third, Fifth, Eighth and 11th grades) Research
Final Report/Introduction
December 2, 2014**

In late October and early November, online surveys covering a wide variety of topics were made available to district parents, staff members and students in third, fifth, eighth and 11th grade. (While the topics were similar in all the student surveys, the third- and fifth-grade version used language that was more appropriate for that audience, while the eighth- and 11th-grade version was a bit more complex in its approach.)

The general topics covered in the surveys were as follows:

- Key factors in judging the quality of a school district (parents and staff only)
- Elements important to a student's success in school, and a separate set of elements for success in a student's career (parents and staff only)
- Climate-based statements about the quality of life in each school building (all participants)
- Demographics pertinent to the specific survey group (all participants)

Additionally, an open-ended opportunity was provided to all participants to share any other thoughts they might have.

With encouragement from the district through various communication venues, the following number of participants chose to complete at least a part of their specific survey:

- Parents – 3,735
- Staff members – 1,287
- Eighth- and 11th-Grade Students – 1,765
- Third- and Fifth-Grade Students – 2,437

As one would expect, 9,224 survey responses produces a veritable mountain of data, creating unique challenges in terms of interpretation. As such, it is important for readers of this report to understand how all this information was interpreted, and to review the information deliberately, looking more for trends and less at individual numbers.

Specifically, weighted scales were applied wherever possible, to provide a clearer picture of the balance of respondent opinion, rather than just a focus on those that scored at the top of a rank order question, for example. Doing so creates a much more accurate picture of the relative importance of each of the evaluated items.

It is also important to review the one open-ended question on each of the surveys understanding that the individual comments, which did not appear in enough quantity to merit inclusion into the chart, are one comment, by one person each. It is also vital to remember that online survey open-ended questions do not present the restrictions that a conversation with an interviewer does. Many respondents take the opportunity to type extensively and share multiple, sometimes disjointed thoughts.

Finally, as a general rule, responses in cross-tabulations – such as comparing staff and parent responses – are presented in boldface type if the score is more than 5% higher than the overall score for that topic, and underlined if it is more than 5% less. (The type on those with this level of difference is also slightly larger, to draw attention to them.)

In looking at this information, it is, again, important to look for trends that suggest a notable level of disagreement – either positive or negative – with the overall score, rather than to fixate on individual responses. Doing so will provide a much clearer picture of areas that shine, and those that may need attention.

**Columbia Public Schools 2014 Parent, Staff, Student
(Third, Fifth, Eighth and 11th grades) Research
Final Report
Parent Survey/Number of responses – 3,735
December 2, 2014**

Introduction

The parent survey began with a set of questions that asked respondents to identify where their child (or children) attends school in the district, and where they live – relative to Providence and Broadway. While these questions were not required to be answered by the survey program, all but 24 respondents provided information on the school(s) their child or children attend, and all but 161 shared information about their location of residence.

The chart below reveals that – with the exception of the small count of CORE and Douglass responses – representation ranged from a low of 36 respondents (Early Childhood Special Education) up to a high of 514 (Rock Bridge High School). In terms of the location of residence, the range was from 413 participants who lived east of Providence and south of Broadway, to a high of 1,714 who lived west of Providence and south of Broadway.

- 1. To begin with, where does your child (or do your children) attend school in the Columbia Public Schools in the 2014-2015 school year?**

Location	Number
CORE	3
Early Childhood Special Education	36
Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary	87
Benton STEM Elementary	48
Blue Ridge Elementary	54
Cedar Ridge Elementary	42
Derby Ridge Elementary	50
Fairview Elementary	222
Grant Elementary	150
Lee Elementary	139
Midway Heights Elementary	92
Mill Creek Elementary	240
New Haven Elementary	54
Parkade Elementary	85
Paxton Keeley Elementary	230
Ridgeway Elementary	119
Rock Bridge Elementary	187
Russell Boulevard Elementary	176

Shepard Boulevard Elementary	152
Two Mile Prairie Elementary	101
West Boulevard Elementary	55
Gentry Middle School	269
Jefferson Middle School	156
Lange Middle School	120
Oakland Middle School	98
Smithton Middle School	193
West Middle School	213
Battle High School	339
Douglass High School	7
Hickman High School	449
Rock Bridge High School	514
Did not answer	24

2. Which of the following best describes where you live?

Location	Number
West of Providence and south of Broadway	1,714
East of Providence and north of Broadway	800
West of Providence and north of Broadway	647
East of Providence and south of Broadway	413
Did not answer	161

Topic: Judging the quality of a school district

Parents were then presented with a list of 11 different factors that, according to the survey, “others have said are important to them, when it comes to judging the quality of a school district.”

Considering that all of these factors have merit, the challenge presented to the parent respondents was a difficult one: Rank order the top four only.

The responses were analyzed, using a 4-point weighted scale, in which each “Most important” response was worth 4 points, down to each “Fourth-most important” answer being worth 1 point. Doing so allows for a clearer picture of the relative importance of each factor, in the minds of those who chose to participate in the survey.

The results show what would appear to be four tiers of answers from the participating parents.

The runaway winner was “Quality teachers and staff,” with 11,846 points. A second-tier group was as follows:

- Nurturing, supportive culture in the school building – 4,880
- Small class sizes – 3,526
- Up-to-date curriculum – 3,365
- Up-to-date safety and security practices – 3,042

The next step down included the following:

- Modern school facilities, including technology for student use – 1,890
- Effective management of financial resources, like tax money – 1,512
- Visionary school district and building-level leadership – 1,197
- Equivalent classes and programs from school to school – 1,051

The two that failed to generate much enthusiasm were:

- Large variety of extracurricular activities available – 629
- Active engagement between the school district and the community – 559

In comparing the opinions of parents, based on where they had children in the district (type of school, rather than individual school), it was interesting to note that the rank order varied little. In fact, the only area where a change of position was more than one spot, up or down, was among parents of high school students. To them, “Small class sizes” is only fifth-most important, while the overall score was third.

(In reviewing these differences by school level of a respondent's child, it is important to note that, for example, those listed as "Elementary School Parent" could also have had children in middle school, high school or both. In other words, they may or may not have been exclusively an "Elementary School Parent" to be listed in the chart under that category. This is intentional, because limiting it to *only* those with a child or children in a certain level of school suggests that the respondent will think only about that school, not the total experience he or she, and his or her children, have had with the district.)

3. Below is a list of factors that others have said are important to them, when it comes to judging the quality of a school district. Please look over the list, and then indicate which one is most important to you, second-most important, third-most important, and fourth-most important from the items on this list. Shown in rank order, based on total points, using a 4-point weighted scale – 4 points for each “Most important,” down to 1 point for each “Fourth-most important” response. A total of 82 respondents skipped this question.

Factor	4-point weighted scale points	Most important	Second-most important	Third-most important	Fourth-most important
Quality teachers and staff	11,846	2,457	568	132	50
Nurturing, supportive culture in the school building	4,880	245	850	510	330
Small class sizes	3,526	123	489	584	399
Up-to-date curriculum	3,365	96	513	555	332
Up-to-date safety and security practices	3,042	268	298	366	344
Modern school facilities, including technology for student use	1,890	23	184	354	538
Effective management of financial resources, like tax money	1,512	93	140	190	340
Visionary school district and building-level leadership	1,197	26	130	225	253
Equivalent classes and programs from school to school	1,051	53	103	156	218
Large variety of extracurricular activities available	629	5	39	121	250
Active engagement between the school district and the community	559	8	37	124	168

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total parent group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school parents.

Factor	Total Parent Rank Order	Elementary School Parent Rank Order	Middle School Parent Rank Order	High School Parent Rank Order
Quality teachers and staff	1	1	1	1
Nurturing, supportive culture in the school building	2	2	2	2
Small class sizes	3	3	3	5
Up-to-date curriculum	4	4	4	3
Up-to-date safety and security practices	5	5	5	4
Modern school facilities, including technology for student use	6	6	6	7
Effective management of financial resources, like tax money	7	7	7	6
Visionary school district and building-level leadership	8	8	9	8
Equivalent classes and programs from school to school	9	9	8	9
Large variety of extracurricular activities available	10	10	10	10
Active engagement between the school district and the community	11	11	11	11

Topic: Factors that impact a student’s ability to succeed

The survey then presented parents with a list of 13 factors that, research suggests, have an impact on a student’s ability to succeed in school.

Once again, respondents were asked to rank order the top four – this time based on which item had the “Biggest impact,” down to which had the “Fourth-biggest impact.” A 4-point weighted scale was applied, and the results once again suggested the presence of four tiers. But the level of separation was quite a bit different than on the previous question.

At the top were two factors:

- A student’s belief in his or her own academic ability – 7,486 points
- Teacher/student relationship – 7,206

The second tier included the following:

- Home environment – 5,365
- Parent involvement – 5,306

A somewhat widely spaced third tier had the following:

- Teacher-to-student feedback – 2,037
- Class sizes – 1,659
- Teacher education – 1,122

Barely registering were:

- Culturally competent teaching (teachers respecting the cultural differences among students) – 570
- Limited student mobility (student stays in the same school, rather than moving regularly) – 424
- Homework – 381
- Participation of the student in preschool – 347
- Diversity within the teaching staff – 288
- Diversity within the student body – 248

Once again, the cross-tabulation by school type showed some modest, one spot movement within the rank order. But, with the exception of a switch in the order of the top two spots among elementary school parents, the factors remained generally in the tiers shown above, whether the respondent was the parent of an elementary school, middle school or high school student.

4. There has been a lot of research done on the impact of various factors on a student’s ability to succeed. Below is a list of 13 of those factors. Please indicate the item from this list you think has the biggest impact on a student’s ability to succeed, which one has the second-biggest impact, which one has the third-biggest impact, and which one has the fourth-biggest impact. Shown in rank order, based on total points, using a 4-point weighted scale – 4 points for each “Biggest impact,” down to 1 point for each “Fourth-biggest impact” response. A total of 96 respondents skipped this question.

Factor	4-point weighted scale points	Biggest impact	Second-biggest impact	Third-biggest impact	Fourth-biggest impact
A student’s belief in his or her own academic ability	7,486	1,121	571	474	341
Teacher/student relationship	7,206	701	878	682	404
Home environment	5,365	658	498	442	355
Parent involvement	5,306	477	641	540	395
Teacher-to-student feedback	2,037	88	201	354	374
Class sizes	1,659	62	143	260	462
Teacher education	1,122	69	96	152	254
Culturally competent teaching (teachers respecting the cultural differences among students)	570	25	58	81	134
Limited student mobility (student stays in same school, rather than moving regularly)	424	13	32	72	132
Homework	381	13	31	58	120
Participation of the student in preschool	347	19	35	48	70
Diversity within the teaching staff	288	14	30	34	74
Diversity within the student body	248	4	30	34	74

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total parent group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school parents.

Factor	Total Parent Rank Order	Elementary School Parent Rank Order	Middle School Parent Rank Order	High School Parent Rank Order
A student's belief in his or her own academic ability	1	2	1	1
Teacher/student relationship	2	1	2	2
Home environment	3	4	4	3
Parent involvement	4	3	3	4
Teacher-to-student feedback	5	5	5	5
Class sizes	6	6	6	6
Teacher education	7	7	7	7
Culturally competent teaching (teachers respecting the cultural differences among students)	8	8	8	8
Limited student mobility (student stays in same school, rather than moving regularly)	9	9	9	10
Homework	10	11	10	9
Participation of the student in preschool	11	10	12	12
Diversity within the teaching staff	12	12	11	11
Diversity within the student body	13	13	13	13

Topic: Importance of various skills in a student's career

Having stated which factors they believe lead to classroom success, the parent respondents were then asked to rate – “Very important,” “Somewhat important,” “Not very important,” “Not at all important” – 13 different skills that may be related to *career* success.

The decision to rate – rather than rank order – these was intentional. Having just spent the last two questions asking participants to select only the top four items, each, from two long lists of factors, it was time to simplify the process and lighten up the difficulty, or risk losing respondents to frustration.

Even so, the answers were still subjected to the same 4-point weighted scale, in the hopes of identifying the top factors among the many that will likely be judged “Very important” by numerous participants.

In doing so, the top five were as follows:

- Communication skills – 12,063 points
- Critical-thinking skills – 11,545
- Problem-solving skills – 11,381
- Grit (perseverance to accomplish goals/work) – 10,929
- Initiative (see an issue and begin to think about how to solve it) – 10,916

It would be safe to say that none of the factors was seen as completely unimportant, based on the scoring. However, the two with the lowest scores did suggest a theme, of sorts:

- Multicultural experiences in school – 8,012
- Being able to speak and read a language besides English – 7,667

Perhaps what was most interesting was the fact that the cross-tabulation by school level showed *no* differences of opinion, in terms of the rank order.

5. How important do you believe each of these skills is, in terms of a student’s ability to be successful in his or her career? Shown in rank order, based on total points, using a 4-point weighted scale – 4 points for each “Very important,” down to 1 point for each “Not at all important” response. A total of 102 respondents skipped this question.

Factor	4-point weighted scale points	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
Communication skills	12,063	2,879	154	31	23
Critical-thinking skills	11,545	2,598	328	73	23
Problem-solving skills	11,381	2,537	346	72	51
Grit (perseverance to accomplish goals/work)	10,929	2,292	525	65	56
Initiative (see an issue and begin to think about how to solve it)	10,916	2,240	599	52	55
Ability to use technology	10,674	2,054	742	102	28
Flexibility and adaptability	10,580	2,008	763	102	55
Math skills	10,425	1,858	943	77	10
Collaboration skills	10,192	1,777	977	64	25
Leadership skills	9,906	1,444	1,259	163	27
Creativity	9,725	1,314	1,378	153	29
Multicultural experiences in school	8,012	564	1,402	685	180
Being able to speak and read a language besides English	7,667	407	1,318	962	161

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total parent group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school parents.

Factor	Total Parent Rank Order	Elementary Parent Rank Order	Middle School Parent Rank Order	High School Parent Rank Order
Communication skills	1	1	1	1
Critical-thinking skills	2	2	2	2
Problem-solving skills	3	3	3	3
Grit (perseverance to accomplish goals/work)	4	4	4	4
Initiative (see an issue and begin to think about how to solve it)	5	5	5	5
Ability to use technology	6	6	6	6
Flexibility and adaptability	7	7	7	7
Math skills	8	8	8	8
Collaboration skills	9	9	9	9
Leadership skills	10	10	10	10
Creativity	11	11	11	11
Multicultural experiences in school	12	12	12	12
Being able to speak and read a language besides English	13	13	13	13

Topic: Agreement or disagreement with climate statements

The substantive portion of the survey closed by presenting parents with a list of statements that “others have said about their child’s (or their children’s) experience at school in the Columbia Public Schools.”

Respondents were asked to either “Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” with each one, based on their child’s (again, or children’s) experience. Those with multiple children were asked to try to provide a response that would reflect the experiences of all their children.

Combining the “Strongly agree” and “Agree” responses, the following statements topped the list:

- My student knows what is expected of him or her at school – 92%
- My student feels welcome at school – 89%
- My teachers treat my student with respect – 88%
- My child feels safe at school – 88%
- I think my student’s teachers are good teachers – 87%
- I feel welcome at my child’s school – 87%

All the statements generated more than a majority saying they would either “Strongly agree” or “Agree.” The five at the bottom of the list – all of which having less than 75% who chose one of those two answers – were as follows:

- Students are generally well-behaved – 73%
- When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously – 71%
- The curriculum is engaging and challenging – 71%
- Bullying is not tolerated – 62%
- The discipline policies are fair to all students – 59%

In the cross-tabulation, high school parents were the most negative on the complete set of statements, with nine of the statements scoring at more than 5% below the percentage for the total parent group, and only one – My student is able to get additional help when needed – scoring at more than 5% above.

Elementary school parents had three statements that scored higher, with none scoring lower, while middle school parents had one of each.

6. Please look at the statements below. Each has been said by other parents about their child’s (or their children’s) experience at school in the Columbia Public Schools. Please say whether you “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with each statement. If you have more than one child at a district school – and their experiences are different – please select an answer that best reflects how you feel about the statement, based on the experiences of all your children. Responses shown in rank order, based on the combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage.

Statement	Combined SA/A	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know
My student knows what is expected of him or her at school	92%	41%	51%	5%	2%	<1%	<1%
My student feels welcome at school	89%	41%	48%	7%	3%	1%	<1%
My teachers treat my student with respect	88%	40%	48%	9%	3%	1%	1%
My child feels safe at school	88%	37%	51%	8%	4%	1%	<1%
I think my student’s teachers are good teachers	87%	42%	45%	10%	2%	1%	1%
I feel welcome at my child’s school	87%	42%	45%	9%	3%	1%	<1%
Students are encouraged to do their best every day	84%	38%	46%	11%	2%	1%	2%
Teachers have my student’s best interests at heart	83%	35%	48%	11%	4%	1%	1%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my student’s school	76%	32%	44%	14%	6%	1%	3%
My student is able to get additional help when needed	75%	30%	45%	14%	4%	1%	5%
Students generally respect other students and their belongings	75%	14%	61%	12%	10%	2%	1%
Students are generally well-behaved	73%	11%	62%	16%	8%	2%	1%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously	71%	30%	41%	16%	6%	3%	4%
The curriculum is engaging and challenging	71%	22%	49%	17%	9%	2%	1%
Bullying is not tolerated	62%	24%	38%	20%	8%	4%	6%
The discipline policies are fair to all students	59%	23%	36%	20%	9%	4%	7%

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total parent group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school parents.

Statement	Parents Combined Strongly agree/Agree	Elementary School Parents	Middle School Parents	High School Parents
My student knows what is expected of him or her at school	92%	94%	90%	90%
My student feels welcome at school	89%	93%	87%	84%
My teachers treat my student with respect	88%	92%	85%	<u>81%</u>
My child feels safe at school	88%	92%	84%	<u>81%</u>
I think my student's teachers are good teachers	87%	92%	85%	<u>81%</u>
I feel welcome at my child's school	87%	90%	85%	82%
Students are encouraged to do their best every day	84%	89%	81%	<u>76%</u>
Teachers have my student's best interests at heart	83%	88%	85%	<u>76%</u>
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my student's school	76%	80%	73%	72%
My student is able to get additional help when needed	75%	71%	81%	84%
Students generally respect other students and their belongings	75%	81%	71%	<u>66%</u>
Students are generally well-behaved	73%	79%	<u>67%</u>	<u>63%</u>
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously	71%	75%	68%	67%
The curriculum is engaging and challenging	71%	69%	68%	74%
Bullying is not tolerated	62%	67%	59%	<u>56%</u>
The discipline policies are fair to all students	59%	65%	56%	<u>51%</u>

Topic: Demographics

As mentioned below, 578 of the 3,735 respondents to the parent survey skipped the entire demographics section, while some who did participate chose the “prefer not to answer” option on one or more of the questions.

While this lack of participation is not ideal, those who did take part show a demographic profile that is similar to those seen in the general patron telephone surveys in the district, but had a somewhat higher percentage of those in the 25 to 54 age groups – which is to be expected, in that this is a parent survey, rather than a general patron survey.

A total of 578 respondents skipped the entire demographic section. As such, these percentages are of the 3,157 respondents who chose to answer. (Answers were required on all the demographic questions, but a respondent who did not want to answer could simply end his or her survey upon arriving at question 7.)

7. How long have you lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools?

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	7%
2 years to 5 years	12%
More than 5 years to 10 years	18%
More than 10 years to 15 years	19%
More than 15 years	32%
I've lived here all my life	11%
Prefer not to answer	1%

8. In what age group are you?

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	<1%
25 to 34	16%
35 to 44	48%
45 to 54	29%
55 to 64	5%
65 or older	<1%
Prefer not to answer	2%

9. Are you...

Response	Percentage
Female	73%
Male	25%
Prefer not to answer	3%

10. And, finally, which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group?

Response	Percentage
Caucasian, or white	79%
Prefer not to answer	9%
African-American, or black	5%
Asian	5%
Hispanic or Latino	2%

Topic: Open-ended comments

The final question offered respondents an opportunity to share any additional thoughts. A total of 796 respondents chose to do so. Their most common thoughts – along with some representative verbatim comments – are displayed below.

11. If you have any other comments to share, please write them here. *Answers below were coded from open-ended responses, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below. Only top answers shown.*

Response	Number
Other (see below)	147
Better discipline/respect	86
Great teachers/staff/administration	81
Great schools	71
Challenge students/eliminate Contract for Honors program	66
Bullying issues	61
Better SPED/behavior management	60
Higher expectations of/better teachers	51
Change school start/end times	38
Better communications	37
Better quality education/curriculum	35
Better safety/security	31
Stronger leadership/decision-making	29
Better use of classroom technology/no iPads	28
Smaller class sizes	27
More diversity/less discrimination	26
Poor redistricting/boundary issues	25
Back to basics/don't teach to the test	24
Improved science/math curriculum	21
More community/parent involvement	20
Reduce amount/improve homework	19
More time/choices for lunch program	18
More one-on-one help/tutoring	17
Don't know/None/Everything is fine	15
Should have multicultural/ethnicity option on survey	15
Transportation/parking issues	15
Poor management/choices athletics/activities	14
Equal/better resources/materials	11
More respect for students	11
Alcohol/drug problems	10
Budgeting/use of taxpayers' money	10
Get rid of Common Core	9

More/better foreign language options	9
More prep for college/the future	9
Better professional development/support	8
More focus on arts education	7
More physical/outdoor activities	7
Great EEC/preschool options	5
Better teacher evaluation system	3
Improve facilities	3

Verbatim “other” comments

My son is a senior at Hickman and also a new student. Although this is his first year in Columbia, all of the staff and teachers made him feel welcome. He has been encouraged and challenged, and we are very impressed with Hickman, the counselors, teachers, principal and students! The choice of classes is amazing and has offered our son great opportunities.

I would like to see the MAC Scholars program truly be more multicultural so that Hispanics and other minorities can feel welcomed. It seems that MAC is only for African-Americans and those who are mixed blacks and whites. I have been told by assistant superintendents that it includes other minorities, but saying the words doesn't make it so.

I feel that the requirement that my child has to take a foreign language in high school is a big waste of their time! It may be a great skill for some kids to learn for their future job, etc., but it should be a choice, not a requirement!

Attempting to judge which four factors have the most influence on student achievement is nearly impossible. All of the factors listed, except maybe extensive homework, are important to student success, all to varying degrees at different times on a student's educational journey.

I did this survey based on Paxton, however, my daughter went to Mill Creek and I thought that school was terrible. If you were not a “cookie cutter” child or you were a stay-at-home mom, it would make for a rough year. However, the powerful parents run that school well.

Please quit trying to close the achievement gap and spending so much effort on this. People are different. You have doctors and trash collectors. You are never going to get everyone equal in society. Anyone can achieve and be whatever they want to. However, some people just want to be McDonald's workers, and that is OK.

It amazes me how often the school asks for money from the students for fundraisers and such. I'm not saying schools should get rid of fundraisers, but I do believe they should be limited and also they shouldn't start in the first month of school. It appeared for a while that the school has been asking for money weekly.

This is the third CPS school my second-grader has attended, and my answers are only in response to Paxton Keeley and the staff there. If asked about the other two schools, I would not share all of the same answers to the above questions.

We have really been pleased with the education that our children have received at CPS. They have always had good teachers, and CPS staff who are genuinely concerned for their education and their well-being. Thanks so much for continuing to strive for excellence! We certainly do appreciate your hard work and dedication!

Differentiated instruction is also a very important factor in how well students learn.

Very unhappy that there is not a full-time nurse available for elementary kids.

Lately, I've been irritated with how the school district has been pushing the Grand Tetons Adventure trip. Not everyone can afford the \$800, and the kids who can't afford to go shouldn't be reminded over and over again that they have been excluded from such an exciting school activity.

Keep up the good work! GO KEWPIES!

I am a grandparent guardian. The problems I'm having are with the students at Battle High only. The teachers are great. I believe the admin is great. The students are something else.

I have been told from other parents that there are inappropriate behaviors occurring at the school dances at RBHS. I was told from another parent that teenagers are dancing in a mob and are dancing so close together that they are being sexually stimulated. One other parent told me her son did not want to go to the dance, because of this environment. I was also told by another parent that guests were being let into the dance even if their names were not on the list, since they had to register before the dance if they were going to attend and were not a student at RBHS. I was told the security officer told the parents at the check-in desk to just let the kids in, even if they were not on the list. My daughter attended the dance and I was concerned about her being in that environment. I asked her about the dance about these behaviors but she said, "she couldn't really see what was going on in front." I also got the impression that she was so embarrassed about it that she was not going to tell me about it, even if it was happening.



Please invest in high-quality early childhood for the most disadvantaged students. It is the investment that makes the most difference for needy kids.

The schools being locked is terrible. One door should be open during school hours or activities. Please stop the robocalls.

My biggest concern is that we have not seen any grades since my son has started school there. It's been over three weeks now.

My grandson, for whom I am a guardian, goes to Hallsville Schools, but takes EMT training and a marketing class at the Career Center. He received a terrible concussion playing football and had to miss almost a month of school. Mr. Horn has kept in close touch with us about his medical condition and is currently helping him to complete the course, which he desperately wants to do. Mr. Horn is a very fine person.

Although I am white, my daughter is biracial, black and white. I believe that it's imperative for teachers of all ethnicities to understand the importance of learning about their students' cultures. As a teacher, it's important to learn to adapt teaching styles with students' learning styles. It may take more time and I apologize you aren't paid more, but it's imperative. Not every child learns the same, and I believe there's a large discrepancy on a socio-economic status, not just a racial status.

The questions do not get at working on a student learning plan if needed (it is) and home-school or alternative opportunities, which can be very important in student success.

Found myself using the middle school child's example in most all questions, for whatever that is worth. That's a more complicated place and point in time than the elementary ones.

Are parents informed of the results of this research?

With AP and honor classes, the curriculum is very challenging and engaging. My answer to a part of question 6 refers to the middle school curriculum. The high school course offerings are excellent.

I'd rather see the money spent on iPads used instead on preschools.

I would like to see a survey about special programs in CPS, such as Special Services, ECAs and EEE. It would be nice to be able to express my opinions about these programs specifically.

Year-round school! The kids lose so much over the summer. I'd rather have my kids go to school four days a week and have year-round school. CPS could be a model for the rest



of the state for year-round school. I believe test scores would go up, crime would go down and kids overall would be more successful if we did that.

I am glad to let my son have a chance to learn in your school. He learns a lot of things since he started in the preschool.

Anonymous student feedback/suggestion to teachers/school should be encouraged (such as online or a physical suggestion box).

Great program for autistic children.

We have a lot of new age children – Indigo, Crystalline, Star, etc. – and I feel that the staff needs to know how to see and help these children more. No one seems to know what they are or what that means, so how can they help them in public school?

I have quite a few friends who send their children to private school and I was concerned starting kindergarten this year in a public school that we would get a “lesser” education. I could not be more proud of our school, the teachers and the leadership at Paxton Keeley. I can’t speak for all schools, but this school is amazing and I am so proud to have my son attend a Columbia Public School.

People with children at various schools should have been able to complete more than one survey. The answers for one school may not reflect the answers for the other school.

I am multiracial. I am Caucasian and African-American. It would also be nice to know if this was for this year or all the years together for my children. I have not always felt the same way.

There are multiple things that are the most important, and this survey was not set up right.

I think Lee has enormous but unrealized promise.

CPS needs more accommodations for kids in co-parenting situations, so both homes get mail and progress reports, etc. Otherwise, kids are in the middle.

The substitute teacher for English class in Gentry was very mean to students, as many students told.

CPS is doing good work.

My child attends West Blvd Elementary. I have been more than pleased with all of his teachers and the involvement of the principal and vice principal. I feel that everyone who

works at West Blvd really cares about each and every child there. We are truly blessed that our son attends school there.

Columbia Public Schools needs to offer an alternative education to help students who do not excel in a regular classroom environment. I have a very intelligent child in high school who does not do well in the traditional classroom setting.

Do schools have any way of seeking feedback on individual courses the student is taking each year and their instructors?

I am so very proud of the Columbia Public School system. I have one that graduated from your program and is doing very well in college and a senior who has had a great experience. Thank you for everything!

Disappointed with many aspects of Battle High School, in comparison with other high schools in the district that my previous children have attended.

It has been said many times that boys are treated differently than girls at Mill Creek Elementary. I would really like to see this addressed or looked into.

At my child's school, there are constant distractions in and out of the classroom that I believe are barriers to learning. I also feel there is too much emphasis placed on peer-to-peer tutoring assistance vs. making teachers available to help kids during school hours who are taking regular (Non-AP, honors) classes.

I wish that the teachers had common expectations for all students in the sixth grade. Some seem very strict, while some are very hard. My son is afraid to ask to use the restroom. I think that is a little harsh. I wish the teacher has a little more empathy for the sixth-graders just out of elementary school. Some of the e-mails from teachers are rude, and seem not to support good relationships between school and home.

My son is in kindergarten at Lee and we love it! Mrs. Kilfoyle is awesome at what she does. The entire staff has been great. My son comes home with so much new knowledge on a daily basis, it is amazing. We are lucky to be at Lee and have nothing but good things to say about his special school.

I love CPS and think we are SO lucky to have this type of quality public education in COMO. Special kudos to RBHS and their staff. My two students love it there, and my husband is an alum.

I would like teachers at Smithton to have mandatory office hours in which they are required to stay at least one day a week after or before school for one hour.

I am upset with CPS (Battle), because they told my son he could complete certification 1 and 2 welding in his sophomore and junior year and then they should have certification 3 welding for his senior year. He had a goal and he was excited. He took certification 1 welding his sophomore year and registered for certification 2 his junior year and the class was too full. Now, he knows he will not be certified when he graduates and he has just given up this year! I'm very disappointed in the school making promises it can't deliver.

I understand why, but still resent, the way One Read program was implemented. The letter sent was patronizing and made it seem that it was not an optional program. I also dislike that it is redundant work, since the class is already reading the book in school. So when reading it at home like we were asked to, my child is bored because he has already heard it.

Ridgeway is a wonderful school. We feel very lucky to be a part of it. I wish there was a Ridgeway for middle school. If we had not gotten into Ridgeway, we likely would have pursued private school.

Thanks for asking!

Just ignore student differences. Do not emphasize them. When you keep pushing an agenda of tolerance, it just makes the divide stronger, particularly when CPS is intolerant of Christians.

I want the Montessori Method used in Columbia Public Schools, elementary through high school. A pilot program at an elementary? Montessori could help reform public education in the right direction.

Gentry had/has issues with pornography and girls coming to school without being covered properly. It got much worse at Battle. Bring back Christian values and stop being tolerant of everyone else.

Negative answers on the previous page are based on experiences at Battle High. Positive responses based on Hickman experiences.

This is my son's first year at ECSE. So far, I am very happy with the experience. I am very impressed with the resources Columbia has to offer special needs children.

I absolutely love Grant Elementary! My daughter is in third grade and has been a Grant All-Star since kindergarten. The teachers, staff and Dr. Wingert are close to our hearts. The student body is wonderful. This is an outstanding group of kiddos. I wouldn't want my daughter anywhere else. Excellent school all the way around.

Once my son has finished high school in CPS district, I am eager to get out of Columbia before my daughter has finished elementary school. There is no secondary or HS here that I want her to attend, and I know many teachers that live in Columbia, yet teach outside of the district.

I just read the e-mail that lets parents know what announcements will be tomorrow at school. I was in shock and upset that there will be an announcement suggesting students to stop by a table at lunch to find out about bisexuality, pansexuality, etc. I am sick to my stomach that this will occur tomorrow. This is wrong!

I believe “Wave Time” is not an effective use of learning time. It is not challenging or engaging and my son finishes his work early and is not given any worthwhile tasks/activities to do while he waits for others to finish. He says it’s the only part of school that he doesn’t like. I’d rather him stay in his classroom with his fantastic teacher, Mrs. Yung.

Overall an excellent school experience. Thank you! My biggest problem is parents leaving their cars unattended in the car line that goes around the circle driveway. This blocks all progress in the car lines.

My answers are based upon my child’s two years in CPS.

Very disappointed that the Gentry PE teacher is allowed to go completely off curriculum and overstep his bounds. Principal chooses to ignore it!

My comment is regarding the one “disagree” on my child being able to get help from teachers when needed. She is an honors student without an AUT. Teachers say they’ll be in their classrooms before or after school, but then they’re not there. They frequently have some kind of duty or meeting. She can’t plan ahead for not understanding an assignment and gets frustrated when she can’t find her teacher to ask a question. Some teachers are quick to respond by e-mail (her best solution); others are not. I would like to see a school-wide policy about posting grades and responding to parent/student communications in a timely manner.

Thank you for wanting to know how I feel as a parent of the education my child receives from Columbia Public Schools.

Would like to see feedback via e-mail on survey results for all surveys, which I receive invites to. For instance, participated in school start time survey, and did not ever see results. If you can solicit my opinion via e-mail, I shouldn’t have to go in search of results.

Prior to having children, I have always loved the Columbia Public Schools. I have been here for over 25 years, and I have two children, ages 20 and seven.

I am impressed with the Special Needs program.

I feel as though the ELL curriculum is not the best way to educate the Spanish-speaking students at my daughter's school. We would be very supportive of Spanish immersion at New Haven Elementary, as it would provide a great benefit not only to the ELL students but also expose the English-dominant students to a second language.

My child is only in kindergarten, so my experiences with CPS, are somewhat limited at this point. However, one thing that I find extremely irritating is the policy on medicine. I had to take my child to the doctor, so she could have some cough drops when she had a mild sore throat. That is extreme and ridiculous. I plan on contacting the Central Office about this policy when I have more time.

I do not like the fact that my child watches news in the classroom. I have had an issue with this in the past and was assured that it is not what we adults watch at night, but when my child comes home worried that the group, Isis, is going to come here and hurt people and that when my child has a headache and asked if it is Ebola that shows me that they are, in fact, watching some kind of news that is like what adults watch and that is not OK with me. If parents want their child to be knowledgeable of the world events, then it should be the parents' job to watch it with them and talk to them about it, not the schools.

Politically liberal and non-Christian groups are given priority in the CPS system, while conservative and Christian groups are ignored or harassed by school leadership.

While I believe our schools need to be secure, I am opposed to allowing our teachers to carry firearms on school property. I hope Columbia Public Schools will not allow firearms on the property and ask that if they do, parents are allowed to know which ones carry guns and how they will be securely stored so our children cannot get access to them.

Teachers need to treat kids with respect and in the nice way.

I want to thank Columbia Public Schools for giving my daughter and son the skills to succeed in life. The rest will be up to them.

One of the biggest issues not discussed in this survey is the ability of principals to help teachers and parents work out issues. Some of your administrators excel at this skill, while others are sadly lacking. A poor quality administrator can destroy a school much faster than any other position. CPS has a few administrators that have “failed upward” – i.e., they didn’t make it as teachers, so they went into administration. You have many wonderful teachers, and some of them are not being supported by their bosses.

I believe every school should have Title I available to any child that needs it and not to the ratio of kids that are eligible for free lunch. Children who would be eligible for Title I reading if it wasn’t for this rule, and if they were not minority students could be considered reverse discrimination. Any student that needs help should be able to receive services no matter what their race is. Every school should have Title I services.

We love CPS!

The question on whether or not something will help in a career is not valid. Depending on what career a child picks will decide which parts of their education will help them the most. Engineers and computer techs need math more so than other careers, while journalists and editors need communication and writing skills more. This needs to be adjusted to exclude such generalizations.

I love the fact that the lines of communication between teacher and parent are always open and encouraged to use. Also, the schools outlook on Respectful Attitudes and Peaceful Resolution shows through all the children, not just at school, but other places they go.

This is our first year in CPS and I am very happy with the accessibility of Jeff Middle. Everyone has been very accommodating. We are excited about the Teton trip this summer!

I am very pleased TMP says the Pledge of Allegiance.

Question #4 should have included an option for “Quality of Teaching.” The ability of a teacher to convey the lesson and maintain an ordered learning environment in the classroom has the greatest impact on the ability to learn.

The first two to three questions were unfair. They need to let us expound upon it more.

I think, generally, CPS does a good job under somewhat difficult circumstances regarding state funding.

I know this is statewide. Please keep the A+ program. So many families depend on it for financing college.

I am answering these questions when thinking about Lange Middle School and not Two Mile Prairie.

The only complaint I have is the use of Khan Academy and the expectation my son teach himself Algebra at BHS. I could see Khan Academy used after the teacher has taught the concept, but not as a replacement of instruction.

I do not live in the Columbia school district, but my foster child does, so he continues to go to Columbia schools.

I would prefer students are taught empathy instead of “anti-bullying,” as it is more useful in the long run.

Yoga pants do not belong at school, girls or boys. They belong at yoga class/gym class.

I am so disappointed in the Columbia Public Schools. They are misusing tax dollars by not removing the trailers in the school system as promised five years ago and the list goes on and on. I also received an e-mail from one of the teachers regarding a work assignment that was due and most of the e-mail was in German. I thought we passed a law in Missouri that the primary language was English. I do not speak German, and I don't want to learn German. If this teacher cannot communicate in English, she should not be teaching in the Columbia Public Schools system.

Most of the questions on this survey do not address what I would consider important. It also asks me to evaluate several different teachers at two different schools and three grade levels. How do you expect to make any sense of answers mashed together in such a way?

I wish that the Home Access site was updated daily.

I have been especially thrilled with the Special Education teachers we have had through the years. Midway is an exceptional school! Also, the Autism program at RBHS is incredible and so very helpful!

More research on multi-age classes, not working well at New Haven Elementary.

It is very hard to rank some the questions, since they are all equally important. I also think the last two questions are not black and white. I would rather be able to respond freely to the questions, so the answers are more accurate.

Of the factors linked to student success, I believe that general teacher quality is the most important school-related factor. However, this was not specifically on the list provided.

Our twins are in kindergarten. These questions are posted too early in the year (October) for us to fully know the culture of the school. I wish the Columbia Public Schools would look into the Singapore elementary curriculum and learn from them the best.

This is not a very representative survey. The answers are guided by the allowed responses, and can be swayed in any political stance needed.

Track the rise in school violence, as it coincides with the removal of prayer from schools over time.

A child's personal life should only be the parents' concern. Keep your noses in your own =yard. It hurts a kid's self-esteem when you poke your nose where it doesn't belong. Also, I have it on our contact sheet to contact us at home or my cell phone first and to e-mail lastly but that is not respected by the administrators. If you can't respect personal privacy of the parents, then how can you expect a child to respect the staff? Lead by example.

Our principal neither allows discussion nor innovation. Very frustrating.

It's hard to provide an opinion when the survey is administered within the first two months of the school year. Would better serve your poll if it were administered at the end of the year, so one could adequately rate their experiences.

I'm very concerned about the district's rankings for Missouri school, based on the 2014 MAP scores. I would like an explanation on the drop in many of the district school rankings. Also, as my children get older, they complain about teachers in both middle school and high school who spend class time talking on personal cell phones during class. How can this be allowed? How does the administration observe teacher competence? I have high hopes for the district to implement higher standards and expectations in the future.

Technology for online, live communication.

Teacher-parent communications regarding projects students are working on via technology, such as video chat, like Zoom.

The questions on this survey are biased.

My child is a peer mentor at ECSE building. This is a really fine program. I don't think we should have to pay the fee, however.

I think the "No child left behind" system is a mistake! It is making the public education poorer, limited and low quality! It brings the higher intelligence level students down to

meet the expectations of the lower intelligence students. It should level them by similarities, trying to use all the potentialities that the students have to the highest level possible!

Thank you for conducting this survey. I sincerely hope it will be helpful. Most surveys from Rock Bridge and/or Columbia Public Schools do not appear to take comments from parents seriously.

My student is shy, so in high school so far he engages fully in small classes, but he is rather invisible to teachers and other students in large classes.

More time needs to be given kids to get from class to class. Hard for them to get across school in four minutes with so many kids and visit lockers. Adds to stress of being late.

When our son questioned his instructor regarding his posted midterm grade (D), it took three days to identify three grades, which had not been entered and another week before his online grade was corrected to 92 percent. Teachers should be accountable for accurate and timely posting of grades, just as students are held accountable for their work.

It was very frustrating that our principal was hired after the interim year without feedback from the parents or staff. What are the criteria for retaining a principal year from year?

Thanks for having later high school start times. It has made a big difference in how much sleep my teenager gets.

Please make certain the results of this survey, broken down by demographics, are made public in a readily understandable format. It appears that many of the questions are meant to highlight the fault lines of race and SES within CPS, and I think that having those numbers will be a great conversation starter.

For all the talk about mental health in schools, I have seen no appreciable increase in staff, facilities or programs to address the issue.

This survey only applies to our home school. I would like to fill out a survey for EEE. My responses would be very different, as my satisfaction is very low.

Do not like Fairview at all! Students, teachers, and principals are bullies to my children.

I feel that the three-ring binder system used at my child's school is not a successful one. It weighs too much for my child to pack around all day. I also feel it causes more stress than necessary, because it's overwhelmingly full and flipping through so much to get to what they need isn't easy.

Love is the key to education.

More chances for women to become engineers.

I don't like the setup of the survey questions at the beginning. You are asking me to choose the relevance of only four issues out of a long list of important ones. There isn't a single one on the list that I wouldn't weigh as an expectation of a school environment.

My only complaint with RBHS is that the PTSA meets during the school day (at noon), which automatically excludes my family.

Please start the school year earlier, so it ends before Memorial Day. Coming back after Memorial Day is disruptive to vacations and other summer activities, and the kids have no attention span left. Trying to sync the schedule to MU's is not a sufficient reason to shift the schedule this way.

I have been having much better responses from my son since the district changed over to the Common Core curriculum. The focus seems to be much more geared toward ensuring these kids are successful in college. For the first time since my son began attending Columbia schools, I actually believe that he could successfully attend a four-year college of repute and that makes me happy. I would, however, suggest that English teachers make it commonplace that they make remarks on papers so that students could see what they are doing wrong. Handing back a paper that is completely clean, yet accompanied by a grading sheet where they did not receive 100% leads to confused children. How do they learn if they are not told what they did wrong?

Students are not given enough freedom compared to other schools in the district.

Lice infestations should not be tolerated. Period.

I would rather my child be home-schooled, instead of attending Oakland Middle School. I have never had these problems, until my child started Oakland.

ANSWER TO #7: My child does not live in the district and has been attending school eight years. The reason she attends is because I am an employee for the district. The survey made me select an answer and none fit.

Schools should take care not to impose political views on students, including by the choice of textbooks/materials.

Sometimes, I feel that Fairview can be a bit cliquish, but I am not sure if that is due to regional culture, or school neighborhood culture, or directly related to the school itself. Another issue I find is that boys and girls tend to not speak with each other nor relate

with each other very much. Maybe, I'm wrong? I see this as being very unhealthy. I know when I was a kid growing up in a different Midwestern state, it wasn't like that, but that was back in the 70s, so I don't know if the national culture has changed, or if it is something regional, or specific to the school.

I did not answer the section on what skills I think are important to my child's success in his career, because the career he picks will greatly influence those answers and that career is still an unknown.

My comments that were not highly favorable were for West Middle School, not Rock Bridge High School.

I am a little upset when my child is put in a group of three to five children to do a project two to three of those children do ALL the work and the other children get the same credit, without doing anything. I have heard other parents upset about this. This is at the high school level.

New Haven Elementary's change this year to join first and second grades in the same class has negatively affected my second-grader and a lot of the other second-graders. I disagree with their policy to do this!

This survey, if one has more than one child and particularly in different schools, is extremely difficult to complete with much accuracy. Too many factors that affect one's response to most all these questions. Probably best to ask about one student at a time, in one school at a time. Just a suggestion, for more meaningful data. Another suggestion is to ask about any particular challenges/special needs/diagnoses of the children, as that can really affect answers here.

Question 5 seems a bit odd, considering this is an imagined future career and different career paths require different skill sets. The answers themselves (with the exception of math) were very general and applicable to a variety of careers, but the question, itself, is limiting and may confound your results.

I love that Derby Ridge is on Twitter. It's really nice to see what is going on in the classrooms.

I still do not understand why the district has successful lottery schools, where families are lining up to get a spot. Why are there not more schools like them in the district?

My child is a different race than me, so I kept that in mind when responding to the questions. That is one reason she is not at our "home" school. I wanted her exposed to a more diverse class than what is at our "home" school.

Another transparent attempt to collect agreement with positive opinions about CPS. Seriously, are you blind to the possibility that there are seriously disgruntled people in the district or just unwilling to explore anything that contradicts the “all is well” perspective?

Columbia Public Schools were very low on the state rankings, which was really shocking. Would like some explanation for this, at some point.

**Columbia Public Schools 2014 Parent, Staff, Student
 (Third, Fifth, Eighth and 11th grades) Research
 Final Report
 Staff Survey/Number of responses – 1,287
 December 2, 2014**

Introduction

Staff members who participated in the survey were first asked to identify the location where they worked. (If they worked in multiple locations, they were asked to mark the location where they spent the most time during the work day.)

Most of the schools had participant counts in the 30s or 40s, with Rock Bridge High School being the highest – 113 – down to just four at Cedar Ridge Elementary. Only 15 respondents chose not to answer this question.

As would be expected, certified staff dominated the participants, with 875, followed by administration or support staff (218) and classified staff (132). Sixty-two participants chose not to answer this question.

- 1. So that we can understand the different views from building to building, and from department to department, please check the location where you work. (If you work in more than one location, please mark the location where you spend the most time during the work day.)**

Location	Number
CORE	15
Early Childhood Special Education	22
Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary	39
Benton STEM Elementary	16
Blue Ridge Elementary	33
Cedar Ridge Elementary	4
Derby Ridge Elementary	33
Fairview Elementary	29
Grant Elementary	19
Lee Elementary	25
Midway Heights Elementary	23
Mill Creek Elementary	39
New Haven Elementary	20
Parkade Elementary	34
Paxton Keeley Elementary	33

Ridgeway Elementary	13
Rock Bridge Elementary	37
Russell Boulevard Elementary	32
Shepard Boulevard Elementary	33
Two Mile Prairie Elementary	18
West Boulevard Elementary	21
Gentry Middle School	59
Jefferson Middle School	33
Lange Middle School	38
Oakland Middle School	47
Smithton Middle School	48
West Middle School	45
Battle High School	63
Douglass High School	26
Hickman High School	80
Rock Bridge High School	113
Facilities and Construction Services	1
Aslin Administration Building	86
Career Center	39
Field	13
District-wide	43
Did not answer	15

2. Are you a member of...?

Location	Number
Certified staff (teachers)	875
Administration of support staff	218
Classified staff (hourly)	132
Did not answer	62

Topic: Judging the quality of a school district

Staff members were then asked to rank order the top four (out of 11) factors that are important in judging a quality school district.

Applying the same 4-point weighted scale to the responses, the top three were identical to those offered by parents in their survey:

- Quality teachers and staff – 3,889 points
- Nurturing, supportive culture in the school building – 2,261
- Small class sizes – 1,606

The bottom three, with one minor change of position, were also the same as on the parent survey. It was in the middle where there were notable changes.

Specifically, while parents ranked “Up-to-date safety and security practices” as fifth, staff members ranked it seventh. On the other hand, while parents were not overly concerned about “Visionary school district and building-level leadership,” ranking it eighth, staff members rated it in the fourth position.

This is an important distinction between these two critical audiences, because it points out how parents pay somewhat limited attention to the role of leadership in a district’s success, while staff members believe it rates much higher.

3. Below is a list of factors that others have said are important to them, when it comes to judging the quality of a school district. Please look over the list, and then indicate which one is most important to you, second-most important, third-most important, and fourth-most important from the items on this list. Shown in rank order, based on total points, using a 4-point weighted scale – 4 points for each “Most important,” down to 1 point for each “Fourth-most important” response. A total of 82 respondents skipped this question.

Factor	4-point weighted scale points	Most important	Second-most important	Third-most important	Fourth-most important
Quality teachers and staff	3,889	739	239	92	32
Nurturing, supportive culture in the school building	2,261	193	325	206	102
Small class sizes	1,606	94	218	209	158
Visionary school district and building-level leadership	835	35	96	136	135
Up-to-date curriculum	664	14	90	111	116
Modern school facilities, including technology for student use	624	10	56	123	170
Up-to-date safety and security practices	620	45	55	87	101
Effective management of financial resources, like tax money	513	35	41	66	118
Equivalent classes and programs from school to school	459	23	37	73	110
Active engagement between the school district and the community	297	11	20	55	83
Large variety of extracurricular activities available	149	3	14	27	47

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total staff group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school staff members.

Factor	Total Staff Rank Order	Elementary School Staff Rank Order	Middle School Staff Rank Order	High School Staff Rank Order
Quality teachers and staff	1	1	1	1
Nurturing, supportive culture in the school building	2	2	2	2
Small class sizes	3	3	3	3
Visionary school district and building-level leadership	4	4	4	4
Up-to-date curriculum	5	6	5	6
Modern school facilities, including technology for student use	6	7	7	5
Up-to-date safety and security practices	7	5	9	8
Effective management of financial resources, like tax money	8	9	8	7
Equivalent classes and programs from school to school	9	8	6	9
Active engagement between the school district and the community	10	10	10	10
Large variety of extracurricular activities available	11	11	11	11

Topic: Factors that impact a student's ability to succeed

Staff members were then presented with the same 13 factors that relate to a student's ability to succeed, and asked to identify their top four, in rank order.

Once again, using the same 4-point weighted scale, the list, as defined by staff members, was identical in the top four spots to what the parents said they believed:

- A student's belief in his or her own academic ability – 2,849
- Teacher/student relationship – 2,835
- Home environment – 1,974
- Parent involvement – 1,379

The point values dropped off significantly after that. But what was most interesting, once again, was the difference of opinion on some of the factors that fell more in the middle of the list. For example:

- Teacher education was rated seventh by the parents, but 10th by the staff
- Limited student mobility was rated ninth by the parents, but seventh by the staff
- Homework was rated 10th by the parents, but 12th by the staff
- Participation of the student in preschool was rated 11th by the parents, but ninth by the staff

In essence, it appears that the staff places somewhat more emphasis on the student's situation, while parents point more toward the surrounding aspects of the student's experience, such as teacher education.

It is important to remember that there was no disagreement between these two audiences on which factors are the top four; it is simply a modest – but notable – difference of opinion on the rank order of factors more in the middle of the list that are worth reviewing to see some of the differences in how these two audiences think.

The cross-tabulation by staff members, based on the type of school where they worked, showed little difference of opinion – although elementary school staff members gave a slight edge to “Teacher/student relationship,” instead of “A student's belief in his or her own academic ability” for the top spot.

4. There has been a lot of research done on the impact of various factors on a student’s ability to succeed. Below is a list of 13 of those factors. Please indicate the item from this list you think has the biggest impact on a student’s ability to succeed, which one has the second-biggest impact, which one has the third-biggest impact, and which one has the fourth-biggest impact. Shown in rank order, based on total points, using a 4-point weighted scale – 4 points for each “Biggest impact,” down to 1 point for each “Fourth-biggest impact” response. A total of 96 respondents skipped this question.

Factor	4-point weighted scale points	Biggest impact	Second-biggest impact	Third-biggest impact	Fourth-biggest impact
A student’s belief in his or her own academic ability	2,849	411	233	182	142
Teacher/student relationship	2,835	320	338	209	123
Home environment	1,974	245	194	150	112
Parent involvement	1,379	114	164	145	141
Class sizes	738	29	63	121	191
Teacher-to-student feedback	628	19	78	116	86
Limited student mobility (student stays in same school, rather than moving regularly)	434	11	36	78	126
Culturally competent teaching (teachers respecting the cultural differences among students)	390	11	38	73	86
Participation of the student in preschool	223	12	13	42	52
Teacher education	208	7	17	37	55
Diversity within the teaching staff	111	6	6	18	33
Homework	33	0	2	5	17
Diversity within the student body	31	3	1	4	8

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total staff group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school staff members.

Factor	Total Staff Rank Order	Elementary School Staff Rank Order	Middle School Staff Rank Order	High School Staff Rank Order
A student's belief in his or her own academic ability	1	2	1	1
Teacher/student relationship	2	1	2	2
Home environment	3	3	3	3
Parent involvement	4	4	4	4
Class sizes	5	5	5	5
Teacher-to-student feedback	6	6	6	6
Limited student mobility (student stays in same school, rather than moving regularly)	7	7	7	8
Culturally competent teaching (teachers respecting the cultural differences among students)	8	8	8	7
Participation of the student in preschool	9	9	11	11
Teacher education	10	10	9	10
Diversity within the teaching staff	11	11	10	9
Homework	12	12	13	12
Diversity within the student body	13	13	12	13

Topic: Importance of various skills in a student's career

Staff members were then asked to state their views on the importance of 13 various factors that may play a role in a student's level of success in his or her career.

As was the case with the parent survey, the scores were relatively close, because respondents were free to, for example, select "Very important" on all 13 factors. The top five, in the case of the staff members who participated in the survey, were as follows:

- Communication skills – 4,449 points
- Critical-thinking skills – 4,158
- Problem-solving skills – 4,150
- Grit (perseverance to accomplish goals/work) – 4,077
- Flexibility and adaptability – 3,942

In terms of the cross-tabulation by the type of school where the employee worked, there was almost no difference of opinion on the rank order. When comparing the staff results to those offered by the parents, the only notable differences were:

- Ability to use technology was judged sixth by parents, but eighth by staff members
- Flexibility and adaptability was judged seventh by parents, but fifth by staff members
- Collaboration skills were judged ninth by parents, but seventh by staff members

Once again, these differences of opinion were mostly modest and were consistently found below the top tier of answers, meaning that staff members and parents see eye to eye on the most important things that help students to be successful in their careers.

5. How important do you believe each of these skills is, in terms of a student’s ability to be successful in his or her career? Shown in rank order, based on total points using, a 4-point weighted scale – 4 points for each “Very important,” down to 1 point for each “Not at all important” response. A total of 102 respondents skipped this question.

Factor	4-point weighted scale points	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important
Communication skills	4,449	1,063	54	13	9
Critical-thinking skills	4,158	926	131	24	13
Problem-solving skills	4,150	918	130	33	22
Grit (perseverance to accomplish goals/work)	4,077	860	194	19	17
Flexibility and adaptability	3,942	790	235	27	23
Initiative (see an issue and begin to think about how to solve it)	3,863	732	289	21	26
Collaboration skills	3,833	725	290	24	15
Ability to use technology	3,785	671	336	38	17
Math skills	3,519	509	477	25	2
Creativity	3,370	372	575	73	11
Leadership skills	3,315	352	578	83	7
Multicultural experiences in school	2,981	188	589	216	30
Being able to speak and read a language besides English	2,641	118	427	409	70

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total staff group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school staff members.

Factor	Total Staff Rank Order	Elementary School Staff Rank Order	Middle School Staff Rank Order	High School Staff Rank Order
Communication skills	1	1	1	1
Critical-thinking skills	2	2*	2	2
Problem-solving skills	3	2*	4	4
Grit (perseverance to accomplish goals/work)	4	4	3	3
Flexibility and adaptability	5	5	5	5
Initiative (see an issue and begin to think about how to solve it)	6	6	6	7
Collaboration skills	7	7	8	6
Ability to use technology	8	8	7	8
Math skills	9	9	9	10
Creativity	10	11	10	9
Leadership skills	11	10	11	11
Multicultural experiences in school	12	12	12	12
Being able to speak and read a language besides English	13	13	13	13

**Point values were tied*

Topic: Agreement or disagreement with climate statements

Staff members were then presented with climate statements that were similar to those answered by parents (and by the two student groups that participated), but that had modest shifts in language, where necessary, to make them a better fit with a staff member audience.

For example, statements that parents responded to for their children who were students, were converted to more global statements about students in general for the staff survey.

The results show a high combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for each statement – ranging from 94%, down to 60%. Those statements scoring at least 90%, in terms of combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage, were as follows:

- We have good teachers in our district – 94%
- I feel welcome at school or in my department – 93%
- I feel safe at school or in my department – 92%
- Students feel welcome at school – 92%
- Students are encouraged to do their best every day – 91%
- Teachers treat students with respect – 90%

The cross-tabulation by type of school presents a picture of a fairly unified front, with little difference between elementary school, middle school and high school staff members. There is, however, one statistical anomaly that may appear incorrect, but is accurate.

Specifically, all three types of schools were well over 5% higher than the overall score on the statement “Teachers have students’ best interests at heart.” This happened because 233 of the respondents whose answers were included in the “overall” score work elsewhere besides a school building. As such, they had a significant lowering effect on the total score, which is why cross-tabulation scores could all be notably higher than the overall score for this factor.

6. Please look at the statements below. Each has been said by others about Columbia Public Schools. Please say whether you “strongly agree,” “agree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with each statement, based on your experiences. Listed in rank order, based on combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage.

Statement	Combined SA/A	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
We have good teachers in our district	94%	50%	44%	5%	<1%	<1%	1%
I feel welcome at school or in my department	93%	55%	38%	4%	3%	1%	0%
I feel safe at school or in my department	92%	50%	42%	4%	3%	1%	<1%
Students feel welcome at school	92%	30%	62%	6%	1%	<1%	1%
Students are encouraged to do their best every day	91%	47%	44%	6%	1%	<1%	1%
Teachers treat students with respect	90%	38%	52%	8%	2%	<1%	1%
Students feel safe at school	88%	29%	59%	7%	3%	<1%	1%
Students know what is expected at school	86%	31%	55%	8%	5%	1%	1%
Every student has a chance to succeed	84%	39%	45%	8%	7%	1%	1%
Teachers have students' best interests at heart	83%	35%	48%	11%	4%	1%	1%
Students who graduate from our district are prepared for future success	80%	21%	59%	14%	3%	1%	3%
Students are able to get additional help when needed	79%	33%	46%	12%	6%	1%	2%
The curriculum is engaging and challenging	77%	26%	51%	16%	5%	1%	2%
Students generally respect other students and their belongings	77%	8%	69%	12%	8%	2%	<1%
Bullying is not tolerated	74%	29%	45%	15%	9%	2%	2%
Students are generally well-behaved	73%	7%	66%	16%	9%	3%	<1%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously	70%	26%	44%	16%	8%	4%	1%
The discipline policies are fair to all students	60%	21%	39%	18%	15%	65	2%

Cross-tabulation: Rank order for the total staff group, and for elementary school, middle school and high school staff members.

Statement	Staff Combined Strongly agree/Agree*	Elementary School Staff	Middle School Staff	High School Staff
We have good teachers in our district	94%	95%	98%	96%
I feel welcome at school or in my department	93%	92%	93%	93%
I feel safe at school or in my department	92%	94%	94%	90%
Students feel welcome at school	92%	97%	91%	92%
Students are encouraged to do their best every day	91%	97%	93%	91%
Teachers treat students with respect	90%	93%	91%	91%
Students feel safe at school	88%	93%	87%	84%
Students know what is expected at school	86%	91%	84%	81%
Every student has a chance to succeed	84%	87%	83%	87%
Teachers have students' best interests at heart	83%	95%	91%	92%
Students who graduate from our district are prepared for future success	80%	84%	81%	79%
Students are able to get additional help when needed	79%	<u>71%</u>	89%	90%
The curriculum is engaging and challenging	77%	72%	82%	83%
Students generally respect other students and their belongings	77%	81%	73%	79%
Bullying is not tolerated	74%	79%	69%	71%
Students are generally well-behaved	73%	72%	77%	74%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously	70%	74%	68%	68%
The discipline policies are fair to all students	60%	62%	62%	60%

**Total score may not square with individual school level scores, because total score includes 233 respondents who work outside of the three building types described above.*

Topic: Open-ended comments

As was the case in all the surveys, the final question provided an open-ended opportunity to share further thoughts. Only 133 staff members chose to do so. The most frequently mentioned ideas, plus representative verbatim comments, are shown below.

- 7. If you have any other comments, please write them here.** *Answers below were coded from open-ended comments, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below. Only top answers shown.*

Response	Number
Other (see below)	45
Better discipline/respect	25
Better SPED/behavior management	23
Stronger leadership/decision-making	12
Smaller class sizes	11
Better use of classroom technology/no iPads	10
Equal resources/materials	10
Better professional development	7
Improve morale	6
More collaboration/planning time	6
Bullying issues	5
More diversity	5
Attendance issues	4
Get rid of RTI	4
Less data-driven	4
Better prep – non-college-bound students	3
Improve AVID program	3

Verbatim “other” comments

It is difficult to choose just four things of highest importance in our district. All of the items presented are important – the level of importance depends upon the individual student and family.

I think the effort to make everyone culturally sensitive tends to make us sensitive to only some cultures and there is reverse discrimination or racism in classrooms at the high school level that is not being addressed. Some teachers are not accepting of students' beliefs/opinions, unless they align with the cultural norm. I think some of the teacher training currently being done with third-year teachers is the same.

Honors Contracting is not working and this concern isn't being heard. My concern is that people in positions of power do not really listen to teachers. There is an illusion of democracy when 100% of the teachers can vote one way on an issue (like eighth-grade teachers were not in favor of Honors Contracting after a year of implementation), and a superintendent turns around and makes a top-down decision, despite what teachers have said. There is an unfortunate gap between teachers' professional input and what the leaders of our district want. Teachers are doing the hardest part of the work and should actually be listened to and their opinions acted on and respected, rather than leaders in our district pretending to listen and then district leadership doing what it had planned all along. Because of this "vision," high-achieving students in our district are being short-changed, due to the focus on middle- and lower-achieving populations.

I am new to the school nurse role. I am touched by the amount of time our teachers at my school spend doing extra things for their students. I tell everyone that they should work in a school once just to see how hard teachers and staff work to make school challenging and fun for their students.

Please revisit school start times, especially at the middle school level, when students stay up later. 7:20 a.m. is way too early to begin school. Students are not getting enough sleep, and it is not optimal for their learning. I have had numerous parent complaints and there is much frustration in the community.

As a district, we need to start thinking way outside of the box to provide educational experiences that are tailored to the individuals we are serving. We need to prioritize what truly is important to us. Stop buying programs and limit standardized tests! Establish what we believe is right for our kids and stand by it. Then, provide support for our teachers so they can focus on developing creative, critical thinkers.

I am at multiple buildings, and have answered based on just RBHS.

I answered many of the statements for question 6 with "neither agree nor disagree," because I was answering for CPS in general, not just FDHS.

I am proud of the Columbia School District!

Please let us know the results of the survey and also policies and/or changes that occur as a result. Will there be a chance to discuss these topics in groups? Some of the questions/answers could vary by interpretation.

All schools need to share the burden of “homeless” students, not just the Title 1 schools. The district needs to not push lower-performing students into all the Title 1 schools. The Title 1 school teachers are tired of being treated as a dumping ground for the upper schools.

I found it difficult to answer questions in the last section. It is not as cut and dry as agree or disagree.

Question 5 – The one about how important those skills are to be successful in a student’s career. That was a hard question to answer, because most of those things depend on what career you are in. For example, someone who graduates and works in a factory on an assembly line may not need math skills as much to be successful (provided you consider that a career and not simply a job). A student whose career is international translator at UN meetings would definitely need to speak other languages fluently. Ranking those was difficult.

I am not a fan of the Studies program. I feel that English is not as strongly stressed as history.

I enjoy working for CPS. I do believe that the administration cares about our students, teachers and staff. I feel VERY supported by my boss and others that I work with.

New to the district and only teach part time, so some questions were not possible for me to answer.

I am a student teacher, so not technically an employee.

Every year, more and more is expected of me. I simply want to teach. I know data is important, but enough is enough. Let’s have a curriculum that has a base, and every year, we build on that base. I would like to be appreciated for the hard work and the long hours.

Questions 3 & 4 should have an additional comments section, as many of the answers applied to those questions, but we were asked to pick only four. I have more to say about what a quality school district needs and what influences student success. I think we may need to rank those questions by percentiles, not by picking only four responses.

You lose good employees with your 60-credit-hour requirements for some of your job listings. Maybe you should change the wording. What about work experience in the school district?

Out of the 25 years I have been working, Kristen Palmer is hands down the best boss I have ever worked for. Our school has high demands and low success, but I have never seen a person give so much only to receive so little in return. Losing her would be a tremendous blow to this school and the district. Also, parents need to be more involved and held more accountable. The culture and attitudes these children come to school with would not have been tolerated 20 years ago. The political correctness machine has swung too far, and we are not only losing good teachers, but good kids as well.

Stop adding new programs. We are programmed out. I don't care what MU does. Let's stick to what we have and stop adding additional things for teachers to have to train on and deal with. Every single year, there is something new and we are told that "this" program will be here to stay and all the teachers know that this isn't true.

We have a great principal and assistant principal. We have great teachers.

The Career Center provides valuable education to all students. It should be promoted more.

It's inappropriate to place a preschool class in a trailer, without access to a bathroom.

A big concern I see is the lack of access to Early Childhood preschool. We have many kids who enter kindergarten with NO previous experience, so they are coming in with a two- to three-year gap already. I think more access for students and families at the Early Childhood level is very important.

It would be good to see opportunities for advancement for all staff.

One of the most important components to a successful school district is the backing of teachers. Too often we give in to illogical parental concerns without thinking how that will impact the student. We are the professionals in this field. We need to make sure we do not change our standards and what we require our students to do, because of an irate parent. Parents are critical to the success of our students and should always express their concerns, but parents do not always understand the importance of why certain assessments or work is done in school.

There was not an option to rate this as most important: Get the necessary support for the children with mental health issues! Teachers cannot meet the extreme needs of some of these students and still be expected to teach the other 20+ kids in their rooms! This is becoming a bigger problem each year. More students are showing up to school with more and deeper issues than before.

With the amount of academic rigor that is now part of kindergarten, I would like to see Columbia Public Schools go forward with more access to free preschool programs for 4-year-old children and perhaps look into one Pre-K room in each building for those children who have turned 5 but have zero school readiness skills. They are so far behind their peers who have had those experiences. The achievement gap is there before they even walk in the door.

You all have your work cut out for you. Good luck.

If I worked at another school, I wonder if my answers would be the same.

I love the diversity of our school.

We did to what is cheapest instead of what is best for students.

We have preschool teachers at Park Avenue. Please don't forget about us! It makes us feel less valued.

I think CPS is a wonderful place to work and a good school district. Parents need to do their part in making sure their kids are ready to learn and take advantage of the opportunities offered in their schools. It all depends on the individual – in the same school, one student will become a doctor and another will drop out of school – parents-school-staff collaboration is very important.

It is very difficult to generalize the answers to question #6, as I think that all categories apply to different situations. Overall, I think CPS can be the best district, but they have to listen to the feedback when it is given. I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback, but only if it is taken into account when making decisions that affect us all.

Org Goals, plus rallying cry, plus three Board directives, plus FACE, plus MSIP5, plus vision/mission/values, plus filter/focus. They are all aligned, but doesn't that mean they could be consolidated down to just one or two very simple frameworks?

Honor Contracting is a huge disservice to our advanced and highly motivated learners. This concern has been repeatedly voiced by teachers, but is being ignored by the superintendent, and is not in the best interests of kids. I respectfully ask as a parent and teacher that we offer honors level courses in all subjects at the middle school level.

Public education is under assault in our state and country, and we are beginning to see elements of that pop up locally. We need district leaders who will courageously and adamantly support best practices in the face of adversity. At the same time, sometimes that will mean taking unpopular stances with our employees, too, in order to truly progress.

I am concerned with how teachers and other staff members paint pictures of certain buildings that may not be fair or fully informed. I feel it is important that if we are going to paint a picture of our district being the best in the state that we should all support our colleagues.

Hickman High School has a strong culture and positive environment. This can't be said about all buildings within our district. I am proud to be a Kewpie.

Why are you not surveying sixth to eighth grade? You will have no input from middle school students.

I do have concerns about the Common Core committees. I'd like the focus to be on math for a few months and then language arts for a few months. I share information with my team and naturally they have questions. I go back the next month to ask their questions and the topic has moved on to another academic subject! Please, let's at least address things from the previous month.

One size does not fit all. This principle can be applied in many areas/scenarios.

**Columbia Public Schools 2014 Parent, Staff, Student
 (Third, Fifth, Eighth and 11th grades) Research
 Final Report
 Survey of Eighth- and 11th-Grade Students/
 Number of responses – 1,765
 December 2, 2014**

Introduction

Participation in the survey of eighth- and 11th-grade students was strong. Aside from an expected low number from Douglass High School, the participation ranged from 240 at Smithton Middle School, down to 167 at Oakland Middle School.

The ability to mark whatever answer an individual wanted to provide was evident in the survey’s second question, as the number of students claiming to be in eighth or 11th grade doesn’t exactly square with the sum of those identifying themselves as being a student in a specific school on the first question. However, the difference is relatively insignificant.

1. First of all, please choose your school from the list below.

School	Number
Smithton Middle School	240
Lange Middle School	217
Battle High School	202
Gentry Middle School	194
Jefferson Middle School	188
Rock Bridge High School	184
Hickman High School	176
West Middle School	170
Oakland Middle School	167
Douglass High School	24
Did not answer	3

2. Are you in Eighth grade or 11th grade?

School	Number
Eighth grade	1,137
11th grade	587
Did not answer	41

Topic: Agreement or disagreement with climate statements

After the opening demographic questions, the survey for eighth- and 11th-grade students (and the one for third- and fifth-grade students) focused exclusively on the climate statements.

As would be expected, students were not quite as enthusiastic as the parents and staff members, with a high of only 86%, down to a low of 36% combined “Strongly agree/Agree.”

The top five were as follows:

- I know what is expected of me at this school – 86%
- Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school – 78%
- I believe my teachers know the subjects they are teaching – 77%
- I’m confident that I will leave this school with a good education – 76%
- My teachers treat me with respect – 75%

There were five statements that did not have at least 50% of the participating students saying they “Strongly agree” or “Agree.” They were the following:

- The curriculum in this school is engaging – 45%
- The curriculum in this school is challenging – 43%
- The students in my classes are generally well-behaved – 40%
- The students in this school generally respect other students – 40%
- The students in this school generally respect other students’ belongings – 36%

The cross-tabulations revealed the following:

- Eleventh-grade students were somewhat more negative, with five factors being more than 5% below the overall score, and only one being more than 5% above. Eighth-grade students had one statement with a score that was more than 5% below the overall score, and none that were more than 5% above.
- Looking at the middle school responses specifically, Lange Middle School was the most negative, with 14 statements scoring more than 5% below the overall score for eighth-grade respondents. Smithton and West were the most positive, with seven and nine statements (respectively) scoring more than 5% higher than the overall average for eighth- grade students.

- In terms of the high schools – and discounting the very small group from Douglass High School, where just a handful of answers can have a dramatic impact on the score – Rock Bridge was the most positive with nine factors that were more than 5% higher than the overall score for 11th-graders. Battle was the most negative, although that was due to only four statements – a relatively small number – scoring more than 5% below the overall score. The school also had one statement that was more than 5% above the overall result.

3. Below are some thing that other students have said about school. For each one, please say whether you “Strongly agree, “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree,” based on what you think about school. Statements are shown in rank order by the combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage. Not all students answered all the questions.

Statement	Combined SA/A	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I know what is expected of me at this school	86%	39%	47%	9%	2%	2%	2%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	78%	37%	41%	13%	5%	2%	2%
I believe my teachers know the subjects they are teaching	77%	32%	45%	14%	4%	3%	1%
I'm confident that I will leave this school with a good education	76%	30%	46%	14%	4%	3%	2%
My teachers treat me with respect	75%	28%	47%	16%	5%	3%	1%
I think my teachers are good teachers	72%	27%	45%	21%	4%	3%	2%
I feel safe at my school	67%	21%	46%	21%	6%	4%	2%
I feel like I fit in well at my school	67%	24%	43%	18%	6%	6%	3%
I believe my teachers have my best interests at heart	63%	21%	42%	22%	7%	4%	4%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	58%	17%	41%	27%	8%	5%	3%
Bullying is not tolerated at this school	58%	23%	35%	23%	10%	5%	3%
I feel like I can ask my teacher for help with anything	57%	18%	39%	25%	11%	5%	2%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	56%	17%	39%	26%	8%	5%	5%
The school's discipline policies are fair	56%	17%	39%	24%	9%	7%	4%
The curriculum in this school is engaging	45%	10%	35%	34%	12%	5%	4%
The curriculum in this school is challenging	43%	9%	34%	33%	14%	6%	3%
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	40%	5%	35%	35%	16%	8%	1%
The students in this school generally respect other students	40%	6%	34%	33%	18%	7%	2%
The students in this school generally respect other students' belongings	36%	5%	31%	31%	21%	9%	3%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for eighth-grade and 11th-grade respondents.

Statement	Combined SA/A Overall	Eighth grade (n=1,137)	11th grade (n=587)
I know what is expected of me at this school	86%	88%	82%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	78%	79%	75%
I believe my teachers know the subjects they are teaching	77%	81%	<u>70%</u>
I’m confident that I will leave this school with a good education	76%	78%	74%
My teachers treat me with respect	75%	76%	71%
I think my teachers are good teachers	72%	75%	<u>64%</u>
I feel safe at my school	67%	71%	<u>59%</u>
I feel like I fit in well at my school	67%	71%	<u>58%</u>
I believe my teachers have my best interests at heart	63%	63%	62%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	58%	61%	56%
Bullying is not tolerated at this school	58%	61%	<u>51%</u>
I feel like I can ask my teacher for help with anything	57%	57%	57%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	56%	56%	56%
The school’s discipline policies are fair	56%	59%	52%
The curriculum in this school is engaging	45%	<u>38%</u>	53%
The curriculum in this school is challenging	43%	46%	43%
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	40%	39%	44%
The students in this school generally respect other students	40%	41%	38%
The students in this school generally respect other students’ belongings	36%	36%	37%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for all eighth-grade respondents and for eighth-grade students in each middle school. Note: “n” equals the number of participants in each school.

Statement	Combined SA/A 8th grade	Gentry MS (n=194)	Jefferson MS (n=188)	Lange MS (n=217)	Oakland MS (n=167)	Smithton MS (n=240)	West MS (n=170)
I know what is expected of me at this school	88%	91%	<u>81%</u>	87%	89%	88%	92%
I believe my teachers know the subjects they are teaching	81%	80%	<u>72%</u>	77%	86%	85%	85%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	79%	79%	<u>72%</u>	80%	76%	86%	78%
I’m confident that I will leave this school with a good education	78%	79%	78%	<u>66%</u>	80%	83%	79%
My teachers treat me with respect	76%	80%	73%	<u>67%</u>	75%	77%	85%
I think my teachers are good teachers	75%	77%	<u>67%</u>	70%	80%	75%	80%
I feel safe at my school	71%	74%	67%	<u>59%</u>	73%	79%	72%
I feel like I fit in well at my school	71%	77%	69%	<u>61%</u>	<u>65%</u>	75%	76%
I believe my teachers have my best interests at heart	63%	66%	62%	<u>55%</u>	60%	67%	69%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	61%	66%	59%	<u>49%</u>	56%	60%	63%
Bullying is not tolerated at this school	61%	65%	66%	<u>51%</u>	60%	60%	68%
The school’s discipline policies are fair	59%	<u>50%</u>	62%	<u>49%</u>	56%	66%	65%
I feel like I can ask my teacher for help with anything	57%	61%	<u>49%</u>	<u>49%</u>	52%	65%	66%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	56%	60%	56%	<u>47%</u>	<u>48%</u>	62%	62%
The curriculum in this school is challenging	46%	37%	34%	35%	41%	39%	45%
The students in this school generally respect other students	41%	45%	56%	<u>19%</u>	<u>31%</u>	51%	43%
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	39%	50%	41%	<u>22%</u>	<u>30%</u>	41%	50%
The curriculum in this school is engaging	38%	43%	49%	<u>38%</u>	46%	47%	53%
The students in this school generally respect other students’ belongings	36%	39%	44%	<u>14%</u>	<u>30%</u>	42%	38%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for all 11th-grade respondents and for 11th-grade students in each high school. Note: “n” equals the number of participants in each school, and the large differences seen in the Douglass results are to be expected, because of the very small number of participants.

Statement	Combined SA/A 11th grade	Battle HS (n=202)	Douglass HS (n=24)	Hickman HS (n=176)	Rock Bridge HS (n=184)
I know what is expected of me at this school	82%	83%	<u>68%</u>	84%	78%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	75%	75%	83%	73%	77%
I’m confident that I will leave this school with a good education	74%	74%	74%	71%	77%
My teachers treat me with respect	71%	73%	74%	67%	72%
I believe my teachers know the subjects they are teaching	70%	72%	74%	72%	66%
I think my teachers are good teachers	64%	65%	74%	60%	65%
I believe my teachers have my best interests at heart	62%	67%	74%	<u>54%</u>	63%
I feel safe at my school	59%	<u>52%</u>	68%	55%	74%
I feel like I fit in well at my school	58%	57%	58%	54%	67%
I feel like I can ask my teacher for help with anything	57%	63%	68%	<u>48%</u>	54%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	56%	52%	71%	52%	64%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	56%	58%	68%	51%	56%
The curriculum in this school is challenging	43%	52%	<u>37%</u>	48%	65%
The curriculum in this school is engaging	53%	39%	63%	43%	50%
The school’s discipline policies are fair	52%	47%	67%	54%	56%
Bullying is not tolerated at this school	51%	46%	67%	52%	59%
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	44%	<u>35%</u>	63%	41%	59%
The students in this school generally respect other students	38%	<u>26%</u>	65%	35%	55%
The students in this school generally respect other students’ belongings	37%	<u>26%</u>	58%	37%	52%

Topic: Open-ended comments

A total of 412 eighth- and 11th-grade students chose to answer the open-ended question at the end of the survey. Their comments are displayed below, along with representative verbatim answers.

- 4. If you have any other comments to share, write them here.** *Answers below were coded from open-ended comments, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed. Only top answers shown.*

Response	Number
Great/fun schools	84
Better discipline/behavior/respect	63
Better teachers/teaching methods	54
Great teachers/staff/administration	40
Bullying/harassment issues	31
Other (see below)	24
Don't like school/too hard	22
Need to challenge students/offer more honors programs	22
More time/better food for lunch program	20
Great students	11
Dress code too strict	8
Feel safe at school	6
Good college/future prep	6
Anti-bullying/respect for each other	5
More one-on-one help/support	5
Better use of classroom technology/no iPads	4
Change school start/end times	4
Crowded classrooms/hallways	4
Get rid of Bruin Block	4
Don't like binder rule	3
Poor redistricting/boundary issues	3

Verbatim "other" comments

I think they should trust us more than they do.

They need to fix these doors on the bathroom and the lockers, get a new PE room. I don't think it's safe that we have an underground railroad as a PE room.

That they say we can't have phones on in class and go on them, but teachers can. The teachers shouldn't be able to go on their phones and go on Facebook or text or go on the Internet. They are the role models. They should show us that it is not right and we can't do that.

I believe that school should be taken more seriously by some of the students that are here; this isn't fifth grade anymore. But basing what class you get by MAP scores isn't always okay. Maybe a student didn't know that specific area in a subject, but is smarter in different areas of that same subject. But, sometimes, the MAP scores are correct. Just don't take it to the extreme.

I think that students should be allowed to have their phones out in the hallway, since we aren't in class. It will not distract us, because we aren't doing classwork.

Some teachers don't ever know how to teach. I do not doubt that they know what is being taught, but I just don't think they know how to teach. Also, a student should be able to drop an AP class if they believe it to be too challenging or that it may jeopardize their grade. School shouldn't be stressful. School should be engaging and interesting. Students should enjoy coming to school, not dread every moment they're in here. If we're going to be here by force, might as well make it enjoyable.

It would be great if we got into the classes that we know more about, instead of basing everything on MAP scores. I got into Algebra 1 instead of Geometry, when I have demonstrated that I can do the Geometry work. I find it extremely unfair.

Being the first year of having block scheduling, it has really been a process to get adjusted to the new curriculum and crowded halls. I get that. When they dismiss us from the cafeteria late and expect us to be there on time, I am slightly irritated. They also dismiss us into a specific hallway, hoping to help the crowded hallways. But if I need to get to a hallway, I will go to that hallway anyway.

My school strongly supports many liberal ideas. There is still a tolerance for the conservatives, but I feel like I would be unaccepted if I expressed my conservative views aloud. The system is imbalanced in this way.

The counselors here are very helpful to a lot of the students.

Honors chemistry teachers need to teach in a way that the students can understand. I took honors chemistry, so I could gain a better understanding of the principles of chemistry to get a head start in preparing for my future career. I feel that rather than putting me ahead, it is holding me back. The teachers also need to actually teach the class, rather than handing out worksheets and sitting behind their computer during the entire class time and not answering questions in a way we understand to actually complete the worksheet. They need to teach the same things as well, because there is only one test and some classes don't teach everything that is on the test, putting those students at a disadvantage.

I like how our school spirit is increasing.

You should allow students with a teacher's pass to go to the Media Center, whether or not they have a purple or gold card, if they have less than two Fs. That's simply being fair in the opportunity for learning. Study hall classes are loud and crowded, and students who may only have one F will much sooner be able to bring that grade up, if they have a peaceful and comfortable environment.

Some of the questions were vague. Not all of the teachers are good or bad, and not all the students are disrupting. If I was answering questions for my regular classes vs. AP classes, I would have different answers.

Regular classes are loud and hard to learn in.

The double standards at my school are outrageous. All students should be allowed the same opportunities, whether they are in a sport or a special program or not.

Zero hour should be available to all students, working or not. You can't say you care about our education, if you won't let us advance ourselves.

Growth mindset is stupid, and teachers don't seem to understand the concept of "I finished my work early."

PE needs to be every day.

I feel like I am not learning a thing in AVID, and the teacher won't let me get out of that class.

Why don't they let us transfer schools anymore?

There needs to be more fun at school and go outside more.

This school has a lot of drugs and bad people.

This school needs to encourage more Science Olympiad than sports activities, because from the way they advertise the club, it seems like it doesn't exist.

**Columbia Public Schools 2014 Parent, Staff, Student
(Third, Fifth, Eighth and 11th grades) Research
Final Report
Survey of Third- and Fifth-Grade Students/
Number of responses – 2,437
December 2, 2014**

Introduction

As was the case with the other surveys, the one for third- and fifth-grade students opened with one question asking them to identify their specific school, followed by a second question asking them to specify whether they were in third or fifth grade.

The question about the specific school showed results that ranged from a high of 235 students from Mill Creek to a low of 44 students at Cedar Ridge. A total of 35 students chose not to answer this question.

This lack of answering became more of an acute issue on the question about grade level, as 958 respondents said they were in fifth grade, 843 said they were in third grade, and 636 did not answer. Given the low number of students who did not select a school, this high count on the grade level question is a bit surprising. Because the anomaly would have played a factor in the accuracy of the cross-tabulation by grade level, that cross-tabulation was not completed.

1. First of all, please choose your school from the list below.

School	Number
Mill Creek Elementary	235
Rock Bridge Elementary	200
Shepard Boulevard Elementary	188
Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary	186
Fairview Elementary	185
Derby Ridge Elementary	164
Paxton Keeley Elementary	147
Parkade Elementary	135
Two Mile Prairie Elementary	118
West Boulevard Elementary	113
New Haven Elementary	113
Midway Heights Elementary	107
Benton STEM Elementary	89

Lee Elementary	86
Grant Elementary	84
Ridgeway Elementary	76
Russell Boulevard Elementary	75
Blue Ridge Elementary	57
Cedar Ridge Elementary	44
Did not answer	35

2. Are you in third grade or fifth grade?

School	Number
Fifth grade	958
Third grade	843
Did not answer	636

Topic: Agreement or disagreement with climate statements

Recognizing that a true Likert Scale (“Strongly agree,” etc.) may be difficult for third- and fifth-graders to comprehend, the scale was adjusted to a simple, “Yes,” “Sometimes,” and “No.” The language on many of the statements was also simplified.

Reviewing the number of “Yes” answers (which would be similar to the combined “Strongly agree/Agree” answers on the other surveys) shows a range from top to bottom – 87% to 34% – which is very similar to the eighth- and 11th-grade results.

In this case, the top six (instead of the top five, because choices three through six had identical scores) were as follows:

- I think that my teachers are good teachers – 87%
- Teachers in my school really care about me – 86%
- My teachers treat me with respect – 86%
- I know what is expected of me at my school – 81%
- I feel safe at my school – 81%
- Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school – 81%

Only two statements did not achieve at least 50% of the respondents saying “Yes”:

- The students in my school respect other students – 36%
- The students in my classes are generally well-behaved – 34%

In the cross-tabulation, the schools that were significantly more positive than the average for all third- and fifth-grade students were:

- Fairview, with eight statements more than 5% higher, and zero that were more than 5% lower
- Lee and Ridgeway with seven statements each that were more than 5% higher, and, again, zero that were more than 5% lower

The schools whose students were more negative were:

- Shepard Blvd., with nine statements more than 5% lower than the overall score, and one statement more than 5% higher
- West Blvd., with eight statements more than 5% lower, and zero statements more than 5% higher
- Rock Bridge, with five statements more than 5% lower, and zero statements more than 5% higher

3. Below are some things that other students have said about school. For each one, please say what you think by choosing either “Yes,” “Sometimes” or “No.” Statements were actually divided into three groups, to spread them out visually for the students. They are shown here all together, in rank order by the percentage of “Yes” answers. Not all students answered all the questions. These statements were actually broken up into three groups, to make it visually less imposing for the students.

Statement	Yes	Sometimes	No
I think that my teachers are good teachers	87%	12%	1%
Teachers in my school really care about me	86%	12%	2%
My teachers treat me with respect	86%	13%	1%
I know what is expected of me at my school	81%	17%	3%
I feel safe at my school	81%	15%	4%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	81%	17%	3%
If I am having trouble learning something, my teacher helps me understand	80%	17%	3%
I feel I fit in well at my school	74%	19%	7%
Most of the time, I have to work hard on my school work	74%	22%	4%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	73%	23%	4%
Bullying is NOT tolerated at my school	72%	17%	11%
The school’s discipline rules are fair	70%	24%	6%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	63%	33%	4%
I get extra help from my teacher with school work that is hard for me	61%	32%	7%
I can ask my teacher for help with anything	60%	32%	7%
Most of the time, my school work is interesting	52%	42%	6%
The students in my school respect other students’ belongings	50%	45%	5%
The students in my school respect other students	36%	61%	4%
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	34%	59%	6%

Cross-tabulation: Percentage of “Yes” responses at each school.

Statement	Yes/Total	Yes/Alpha Hart Lewis (n=186)	Yes/Benton STEM (n=89)	Yes/Blue Ridge (n=57)	Yes/Cedar Ridge (n=44)	Yes/Derby Ridge (n=164)
I think that my teachers are good teachers	87%	91%	<u>81%</u>	87%	90%	88%
I know what is expected of me at my school	81%	90%	82%	80%	92%	<u>80%</u>
Teachers in my school really care about me	86%	90%	<u>76%</u>	89%	89%	85%
My teachers treat me with respect	86%	90%	<u>76%</u>	91%	81%	88%
I feel safe at my school	81%	78%	<u>70%</u>	<u>67%</u>	<u>72%</u>	79%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	81%	84%	<u>72%</u>	<u>72%</u>	81%	76%
If I am having trouble learning something, my teacher helps me understand	80%	82%	76%	80%	79%	82%
I feel I fit in well at my school	74%	70%	69%	69%	76%	77%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	73%	84%	74%	70%	84%	72%
Bullying is NOT tolerated at my school	72%	69%	74%	70%	84%	<u>57%</u>
Most of the time, I have to work hard on my school work	74%	76%	81%	74%	82%	80%
The school’s discipline rules are fair	70%	<u>61%</u>	64%	71%	70%	73%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	63%	68%	<u>56%</u>	67%	<u>49%</u>	59%
I get extra help from my teacher with school work that is hard for me	61%	64%	<u>49%</u>	<u>41%</u>	72%	60%
I can ask my teacher for help with anything	60%	67%	57%	59%	68%	63%
Most of the time, my school work is interesting	52%	51%	56%	<u>44%</u>	61%	57%
The students in my school respect other students’ belongings	50%	<u>40%</u>	46%	52%	49%	44%
The students in my school respect other students	36%	<u>28%</u>	<u>24%</u>	31%	40%	<u>20%</u>
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	34%	<u>27%</u>	<u>19%</u>	57%	50%	<u>23%</u>

Statement	Yes/Total	Yes/Fairview (n=185)	Yes/Grant (n=84)	Yes/Lee (n=86)	Yes/Midway Heights (n=107)	Yes/Mill Creek (n=164)
I think that my teachers are good teachers	87%	93%	92%	93%	94%	84%
I know what is expected of me at my school	81%	89%	90%	89%	88%	88%
Teachers in my school really care about me	86%	91%	90%	90%	89%	81%
My teachers treat me with respect	86%	87%	87%	89%	90%	86%
I feel safe at my school	81%	90%	87%	89%	82%	85%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	81%	83%	76%	83%	85%	81%
If I am having trouble learning something, my teacher helps me understand	80%	77%	83%	86%	80%	84%
I feel I fit in well at my school	74%	80%	82%	77%	<u>64%</u>	76%
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	73%	74%	73%	79%	68%	74%
Bullying is NOT tolerated at my school	72%	79%	82%	73%	60%	78%
Most of the time, I have to work hard on my school work	74%	78%	<u>78%</u>	68%	68%	73%
The school's discipline rules are fair	70%	79%	82%	81%	72%	69%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	63%	64%	78%	62%	<u>55%</u>	59%
I get extra help from my teacher with school work that is hard for me	61%	60%	<u>50%</u>	61%	64%	65%
I can ask my teacher for help with anything	60%	59%	55%	63%	60%	63%
Most of the time, my school work is interesting	52%	59%	52%	58%	53%	53%
The students in my school respect other students' belongings	50%	45%	52%	56%	59%	62%
The students in my school respect other students	36%	50%	41%	39%	35%	40%
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	34%	40%	35%	33%	44%	46%

Statement	Yes/Total	Yes/New Haven (n=113)	Yes/Parkade (n=135)	Yes/Paxton Keeley (n=147)	Yes/Ridgeway (n=76)	Yes/Rock Bridge (n=200)
I think that my teachers are good teachers	87%	90%	88%	86%	88%	83%
I know what is expected of me at my school	81%	83%	83%	90%	89%	90%
Teachers in my school really care about me	86%	87%	86%	85%	89%	84%
My teachers treat me with respect	86%	90%	88%	81%	89%	80%
I feel safe at my school	81%	84%	81%	84%	85%	<u>72%</u>
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	81%	84%	79%	88%	90%	80%
If I am having trouble learning something, my teacher helps me understand	80%	81%	81%	82%	90%	<u>73%</u>
I feel I fit in well at my school	74%	77%	68%	82%	83%	<u>69%</u>
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	73%	75%	<u>62%</u>	72%	78%	69%
Bullying is NOT tolerated at my school	72%	<u>65%</u>	74%	74%	88%	70%
Most of the time, I have to work hard on my school work	74%	76%	79%	70%	67%	74%
The school's discipline rules are fair	70%	77%	<u>62%</u>	72%	73%	<u>61%</u>
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	63%	67%	64%	67%	79%	65%
I get extra help from my teacher with school work that is hard for me	61%	64%	57%	61%	71%	57%
I can ask my teacher for help with anything	60%	56%	57%	59%	65%	56%
Most of the time, my school work is interesting	52%	57%	50%	<u>45%</u>	52%	52%
The students in my school respect other students' belongings	50%	62%	<u>37%</u>	60%	70%	<u>36%</u>
The students in my school respect other students	36%	50%	<u>29%</u>	47%	49%	<u>28%</u>
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	34%	37%	34%	36%	38%	34%

Statement	Yes/Total	Yes/Russell Blvd. (n=75)	Yes/Shepard Blvd. (n=188)	Yes/Two Mile Prairie (n=118)	Yes/West Blvd. (n=113)
I think that my teachers are good teachers	87%	88%	83%	86%	<u>81%</u>
I know what is expected of me at my school	81%	86%	87%	84%	<u>81%</u>
Teachers in my school really care about me	86%	88%	84%	84%	<u>82%</u>
My teachers treat me with respect	86%	88%	82%	84%	84%
I feel safe at my school	81%	83%	79%	78%	77%
Everyone has a chance to succeed at my school	81%	83%	<u>71%</u>	80%	84%
If I am having trouble learning something, my teacher helps me understand	80%	83%	<u>73%</u>	77%	80%
I feel I fit in well at my school	74%	83%	70%	72%	<u>66%</u>
When I have a concern or problem, it is taken seriously by my teachers	73%	78%	70%	77%	68%
Bullying is NOT tolerated at my school	72%	81%	<u>65%</u>	74%	<u>65%</u>
Most of the time, I have to work hard on my school work	74%	<u>62%</u>	73%	76%	74%
The school's discipline rules are fair	70%	86%	<u>59%</u>	66%	68%
I think that students in my school are encouraged to do their best every day	63%	66%	<u>54%</u>	<u>54%</u>	60%
I get extra help from my teacher with school work that is hard for me	61%	72%	63%	61%	<u>54%</u>
I can ask my teacher for help with anything	60%	65%	67%	<u>53%</u>	55%
Most of the time, my school work is interesting	52%	62%	<u>42%</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>42%</u>
The students in my school respect other students' belongings	50%	53%	<u>42%</u>	55%	45%
The students in my school respect other students	36%	31%	<u>29%</u>	43%	<u>24%</u>
The students in my classes are generally well-behaved	34%	<u>22%</u>	<u>26%</u>	36%	<u>22%</u>

Topic: Open-ended comments

A total of 965 third- and fifth-grade survey participants shared comments via the open-ended question that closed the survey. The comments that were most substantive are noted below, along with verbatim comments that did not appear in quantity, but seemed to merit specific attention.

- 4. If you have any other comments to share, please write them here.** *Answers below were coded from open-ended comments, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed. Only top answers shown.*

Response	Number
Great/fun schools	421
Great teachers/staff/administration	155
Bullying issues	79
Better discipline/behavior/respect	47
More time/better food for lunch program	51
Staff/teachers mean/not helpful	35
Great students/friends	34
Feel safe at school	33
Don't like school/too hard	30
Anti-bullying/respect for each other	28
Other (see below)	22
More field trips/sports/activities	14
Fewer restrictions for/more recess time	13
Lunch staff is rude/mean	11
School is boring/not challenging	11
Better explanation of/less homework	6
Change school start/end times	6
More/better playground equipment	4
Better facilities	3
Good clubs/programs	3
Good fundraisers	3
Like the iPads	3
Too many peaceful bodies and voices signs	3

Verbatim “other” comments

I wish middle school could be like Ridgeway.

Ridgeway is a very nice school, however, because I go to EEE, not everything is very interesting.

I sometimes feel unsafe when something is wrong and we can't fix it. I get really scared, and I want my mommy to come and help. She is a good fixer and a good helper.

Some of the subs at our school don't listen to us or don't want to listen to us when we are trying to help them. They can also yell at us a lot when we try to tell them they are doing something wrong.

There is a limited amount of absences. If you're sick a lot, it really is not fair!

I think that we should be able to play kickball on the basketball courts, because nobody plays on them, and we can get our energy out so when we go to class and we're more relaxed.

The older students set good examples for the younger students.

At TMP we do lots of learning, and we do something called RTI (Response To Intervention), which is a reading program that helps teach students' C.A.F.E. (Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, and Expand Vocabulary) as well as reading basics for their age. Children switch classes for this. The whole school does this.

My school needs someone to direct traffic, because there are people who need to stop and wait so the buses are let out.

I think all grades should be able to play on the black top, because when I was in kindergarten we were not able to play on the black top.

I think the teachers can be more helpful when they give us a paper to study or a book, because we don't know what to study. They just say take it and study.

Fast Math bothers a lot of people, including me. I will do all of the problems correct, and it will say I got 16 or so right.

Fifth-graders help to teach other kids to be kind and safe.

Buses need to be safer. The kids are not good on buses, and it's driving the bus drivers crazy. Kids should be better behaved on the bus to school.

I don't think some of the celebrations are fair, because people don't get to participate.

I think that we need to get a new vice principal.

Fast Math is sometimes wrong, so I often get mad at it.

My school needs more reading and less writing.

The equipment at my school is unsafe.

The bus drivers are nice to us.

Shepard is okay. I'm just excited to go to middle school.

I think that fitness at this school is not the greatest. I think you could work on it a lot.

Conclusions

As noted in the introduction, the large amount of data created by such a research undertaking leads to challenges in interpretation, and the risk of a reader fixating on a number here or there, which makes it difficult to step back and see the bigger picture.

That “bigger picture” would include the following:

- **The district holds a place of high regard – and is the subject of acute interest – in the parent community and, one can infer, the community at large.**

While the students were essentially mandated to take the survey, and staff members are used to completing research studies on various topics, the fact that close to 4,000 parents took the opportunity to share their thoughts shows that the efforts to engage in two-way communication are noted and appreciated.

- **There is much common ground among the adult audiences on areas of importance in a district, for students in the classroom and for students in their careers.**

Perhaps the most interesting data in the entire study was the rank ordering of the key factors in a quality school district and in a student’s ability to succeed, and the rating of the importance of various factors in a student’s career success path.

Studying the cross-tabulations side by side, it’s clear that there were only modest differences of opinion on these topics – both in terms of the parents of students by school type, staff by school type, and parents versus staff.

In fact, most of these differences were in areas that one might expect. For example, the presence of visionary leadership at the building and district level was seen as being of middling importance by parents, but rose quite a bit higher on the staff members’ chart. That’s because staff members know the impact that great leadership has on their ability to succeed and on the students’ ability to shine. On the other hand, parents tend to see leadership as enabling staff members to do their job, choosing instead to keep their focus on the classroom and the teachers therein.

- **The climate statements create a road map for improvement.**

The pattern of responses on the climate questions revealed CPS to be a fairly typical district.

Students (and their parents) were more supportive at the younger grades, and grew a bit less enthusiastic as the child aged. (Perhaps the only area that was a bit of a surprise was the fact that students at all age levels were much more critical of their peers' behavior than might be expected – and notably more critical than their parents' evaluation of the same behavior.)

Where this climate data is most helpful, however, is in studying the individual buildings and whether they trend more positively, or more negatively, than the overall scores on these topics. The information gathered in this case shows the buildings where the climate appears to need some attention and those where students seem to be most content.

In reviewing this data, it is important to see a negative pattern (meaning a high number of statements scoring negatively, in comparison to the overall score) as a growth opportunity, rather than as punitive. This data becomes a benchmark from which growth can occur, if it is used with this in mind.

It is likely that much of this information will not come as a surprise; buildings where there are climate struggles tend to be well-known by district leadership. Even so, this exercise has put numbers to the “feelings,” creating an opportunity to focus improvement initiatives where they are most needed.