



Galena City School District Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey Report April 2017



Prepared for
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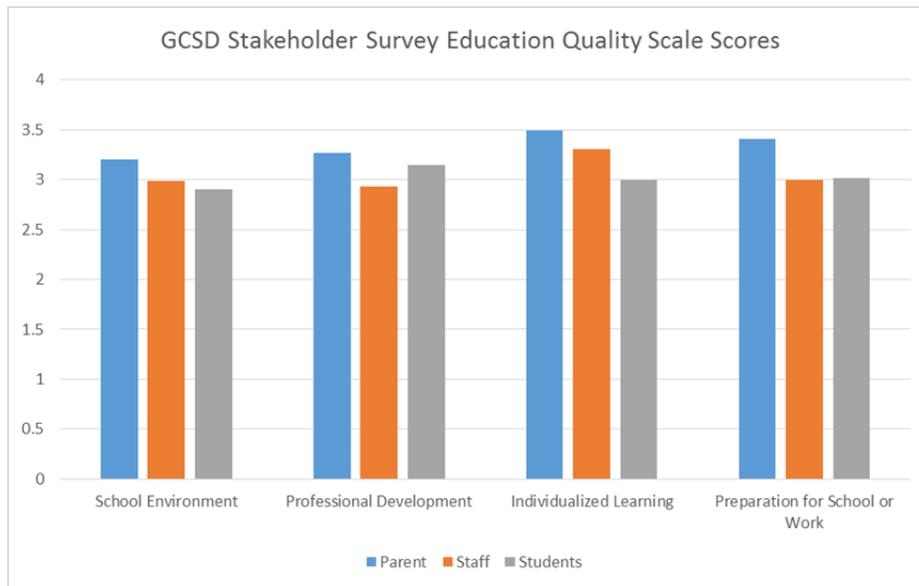
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Executive Summary

The Spring 2017 Galena City School District (GCSD) Strategic Plan Stakeholder Survey gathered community perceptions about the district's strategic plan and its goals. Four questions guided the study. Results are summarized below

Question 1: Do key stakeholder groups perceive that the district is providing quality, standards-based, individualized learning opportunities that result in graduates with post-secondary opportunities?



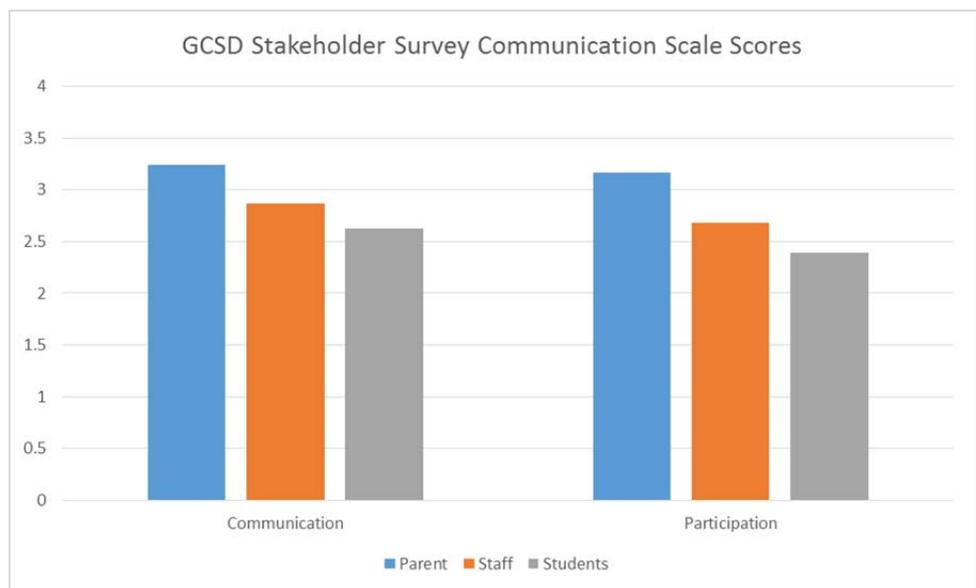
graduates with post-secondary opportunities?

Most stakeholders agreed that the district is offering a quality education to the students. Survey scale scores were positive (a value of 2.5 or greater indicates agreement) for questions about the school

environment, professional development for teachers, individualized learning opportunities and students' preparation for school or work after high school.

Question 2: How do stakeholder groups perceive district communication with staff, students, and parents?

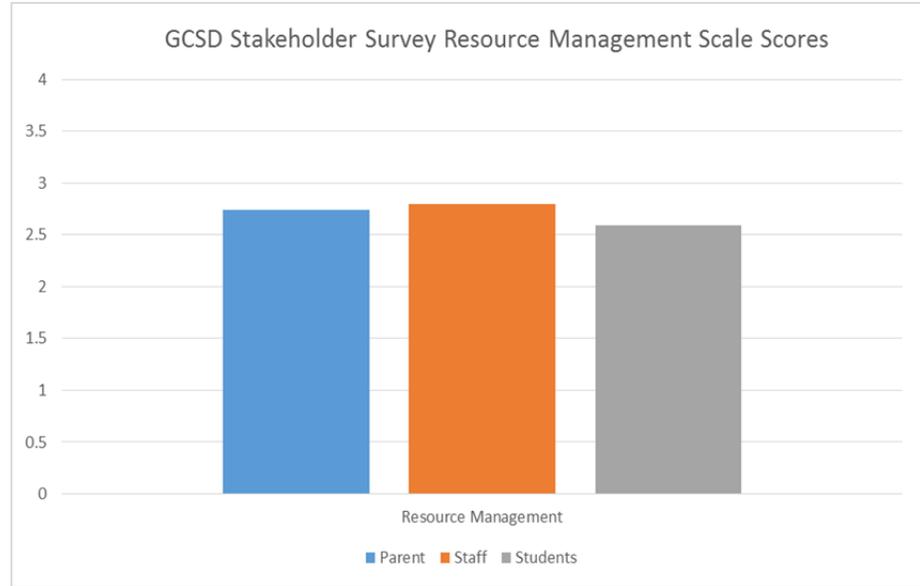
Most stakeholders responded positively to survey questions about communication with the district, including their comfort communicating and perceived access to opportunities to participate in the schools and decision-making. Scale scores



were positive except for student perceptions of participation, which was just below neutral.

Responses to open-ended questions indicated that many people wanted more communication. Responses also indicated 80% of parents prefer school

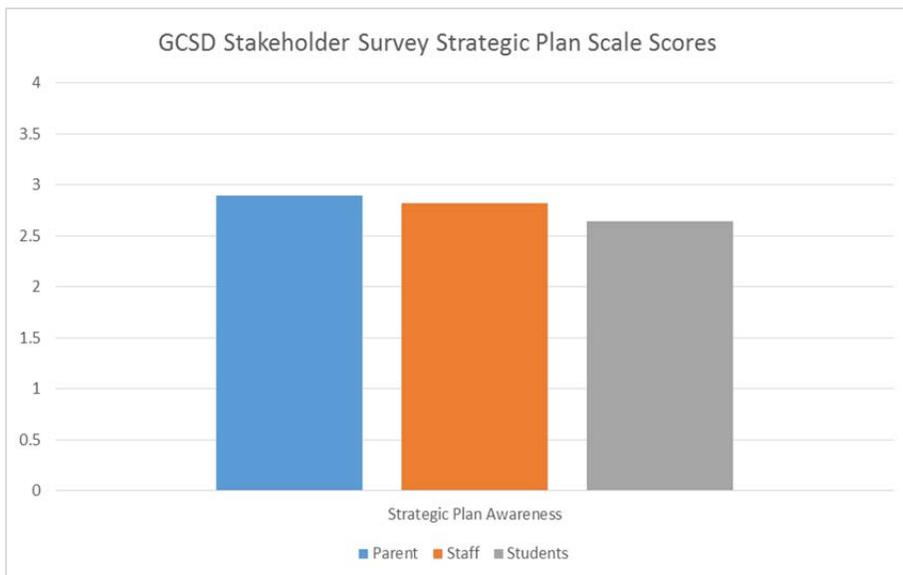
and district communications by email. Several respondents felt that though community input is sought through surveys and Parent Advisory Committees (PACs), the information gathered is not considered in a meaningful way when decisions are made.



Questions 3: How do stakeholder groups perceive GCSD’s allocation of its resources?

Scale scores for survey questions about GCSD’s resource allocation were positive for those that rated the items. However, a high percentage of respondents (more than 30% for all items) answered “don’t know,” which may be another indication communication can be improved.

Question 4: How aware are stakeholders of the strategic plan?



Scale scores for survey questions about GCSD’s strategic plan were also positive for those that rated the items. Again, a high percentage of respondents (between 34% and 49% depending on the question) answered “don’t know.”

Introduction

In 2015, the Galena City School District implemented a three-year strategic plan. The vision is to provide the highest quality educational options for families in the state of Alaska ensuring graduates are well-grounded, well-educated individuals able to maneuver effectively in a dynamic world. The plan's goals were organized under three priorities: student learning, community and stakeholder engagement, and resource management.

To assess the impact of the strategic plan, and to enact a key component of the engagement section of the plan, GCSD surveyed parents, students, and staff for feedback and input. In collaboration with Goldstream Group, the GCSD designed and distributed a survey guided by the following questions:

- Do key stakeholder groups perceive that the district is providing quality, standards-based, individualized learning opportunities that result in graduates with post-secondary opportunities?
- How do stakeholder groups perceive district communication with staff, students, and parents?
- How do stakeholder groups perceive GCSD's allocation of its resources?
- How aware are stakeholders of the strategic plan?

Methods

In order to address our questions, we developed a survey with four sections. The first section addressed the quality of education, and included items about opportunities for individualized learning, teacher professional development, student preparation for post-secondary activities, and school environment. The second section asked about communication and opportunities for participation within the district. The last two sections asked about resource management and the strategic plan itself. We tailored the survey items slightly for each main stakeholder group: staff, students, and parents/guardians of students.

The survey was designed so that the responses of individual items could be averaged into scale scores. In total, we developed eight scale scores. These are described in Table 1 below. For example, to address the question "How do stakeholder groups perceive GCSD's allocation of its resources?" the survey asks respondents to agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I am aware of GCSD's financial priorities.
- GCSD is making good use of its resources.
- GCSD is making an effort to conserve energy.
- GCSD aligns its resources with strategic plan priorities.

Responses are then assigned a numerical value: "strongly disagree" is equal to 1, "disagree" is equal to 2, "agree" is equal to 3, and "strongly agree" is equal to 4. The scores of the four

statements are averaged together for each individual who responds to the survey, thus giving each individual a scale score for “resource management.” We assume that the distance between the four points of each Likert scale are equidistant.

There are several advantages to scale data. Most obviously, scale scores give a more nuanced range of responses than single survey items alone. Where a single item would give only four integer choices, averaging several responses can reflect a score of 3.50 that indicates something stronger than “agree” but not as strong as “strongly agree.” The distributed data also has advantages when considering what statistical tests can help in describing the results of the survey.

Table 1. GCSD Strategic Plan Survey Scales and Item Examples

| Broad Concept | Scale | Examples of scale items |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Quality of Education | School Environment | School is a positive experience. |
| | Professional Development | Teachers at GCSD have the training they need. |
| | Individualized Learning | Teachers help students based on individual needs. |
| | Preparation for School or Work | By the time students graduate from GCSD they are aware of career and post-secondary opportunities. |
| Communication with District | Communication | I know who to contact if I have a concern about GCSD. |
| | Participation | I have opportunities to advise GCSD |
| Resource Management | Resource Management | GCSD is making good use of its resources. |
| Strategic Plan Awareness | Strategic Plan Awareness | I am comfortable with how the district is implementing the GCSD strategic plan. |

Data Analysis

We analyzed the responses using a combination of descriptive statistics and content analysis of open-ended comments. Most items gave respondents the option of choosing “I don’t know.” These answers were included in descriptive tables of the responses for individual items, but they were not included in scale score calculations. We also tested the difference in the scale score between the three stakeholder groups (staff, students, and parents) by analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Survey Dissemination and Response Rate

An electronic link to the survey (hosted in SurveyMonkey) was distributed by email to staff, high school students, and parents in GCSD on March 21, 2017. Reminder emails were sent on March 27 and March 31. The survey was distributed to 3,054 people (2,324 parents, 204

staff, and 526 students). There was an overall response rate of 20.9%, which represented 19.2% of parents (30.9% of GILA parents, 62.2% of SHS parents, and 16.8% of IDEA parents), 56.4% of staff, and 18.2% of students. Tables 3 through 6 provide more specifics on the response.

Table 2. Student Survey Response Rate

| School | Count | Percent of Response |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Galena Interior Learning Academy | 90 | 90.0% |
| Sidney Huntington School | 10 | 10.0% |
| Total | 100 | 100.0% |

Table 3. Student Survey Response Rate by Grade and Gender

| | Count of Female | Count of Male | Percent of Response |
|----------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Grade 9 | 7 | 5 | 12.0% |
| Grade 10 | 13 | 8 | 23.0% |
| Grade 11 | 23 | 13 | 36.0% |
| Grade 12 | 19 | 11 | 29.0% |
| Total | 62 | 37 | 100.0% |

Table 4. Parent Survey Response Rate (respondents were allowed to make more than one choice so totals do not add up to 100%)

| School | Count | Percent of Response |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Galena Interior Learning Academy | 72 | 17.1% |
| Sidney Huntington School | 28 | 6.6% |
| IDEA Homeschool | 324 | 76.8% |
| Other | 6 | 1.4% |
| Total | 422 | 100.0% |

Table 5. Staff Survey Response Rate (respondents were allowed to make more than one choice so totals do not add up to 100%)

| School | Count | Percent of Response |
|--------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Elementary level teacher | 12 | 10.4% |
| Secondary level teacher | 25 | 21.7% |
| Support staff | 50 | 43.5% |
| Administration | 10 | 8.7% |
| Other | 25 | 21.7% |
| Total | 115 | 100.0% |

Limitations of the Survey Findings

As with any survey, there are limitations to this study. First, although almost 20% of our sampled individuals responded to the survey, we do not know the nonresponse error – the difference between estimates produced when only some of the sampled units respond compared to when all of them respond (Dillman et al, 2014). We do not have demographic

data for the non-responders to compare to the responders. Second, although the three surveys have similar structure, differences in response by the three groups may be due to slight wording changes of questions based on groups and/or questions that were not asked of everyone.

Findings

Following is a summary of the findings by theme area: quality of education, communication with district, resource management, and strategic plan awareness. Each section includes an overview of the scale scores by stakeholder groups, the overall responses to each item included in the theme area, and responses to the open-ended questions. Appendices A, B, and C provide item responses by stakeholder group.

Theme Area: Quality of Education

Overall, stakeholders in GCSD perceive that the district is providing quality, standards-based, individualized learning opportunities that result in graduates with post-secondary opportunities. However, parents had a more positive perception of school environment, professional development opportunities for staff, individualized learning, and students' preparation for school or work than either staff or students.

Table 6. ANOVA Results of Quality of Education Scale Scores (The range of possible scores for all constructs is 1.0 for most negative to 4.0 for most positive. A value of 2.5 is neutral)

| Scale | Parent | Staff | Students | All | <i>P</i> for ANOVA |
|--------------------------------|--------|-------|----------|------|--------------------|
| School Environment | 3.20 | 2.99 | 2.90 | 3.11 | <i>P</i> < 0.001 |
| Professional Development | 3.27 | 2.93 | 3.15 | 3.18 | <i>P</i> < 0.001 |
| Individualized Learning | 3.49 | 3.31 | 3.00 | 3.38 | <i>P</i> < 0.001 |
| Preparation for School or Work | 3.41 | 3.00 | 3.02 | 3.27 | <i>P</i> < 0.001 |

School Environment Survey Items

Overall, survey respondents felt that the GCSD provides a positive environment for students. In particular, more than 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “Students are excited about learning” and “School is a positive experience for GCSD students.”

Table 7. Overall Response to School Environment Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Students talk to school staff about their academic problems. | 625 | 17.8% | 62.4% | 19.8% |
| Students talk to school staff about their non-academic problems. | 621 | 27.1% | 44.9% | 28.0% |
| Students are excited about learning. | 632 | 6.3% | 85.3% | 8.4% |
| School is a positive experience for GCSD students. | 628 | 4.5% | 83.6% | 11.9% |

Professional Development Survey Items

An important part of offering quality standards-based education is having trained and valued teachers. More than 60% of respondents felt teachers in GCSD were cared for and appreciated. However, more than 30% of respondents indicated they didn't know about professional growth and development opportunities in GCSD.

Table 8. Overall Response to Professional Development Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|---|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| GCSD organizational culture is focused on professional growth. | 479 | 8.1% | 61.6% | 36.5% |
| GCSD organizational culture is focused on professional collaboration. | 478 | 7.1% | 62.3% | 37.3% |
| GCSD organizational culture is focused on professional innovation. | 475 | 7.6% | 59.2% | 39.5% |
| GCSD cares about its employees. | 478 | 7.3% | 60.3% | 39.9% |
| Teachers at GCSD work as a team. | 583 | 3.8% | 76.0% | 23.5% |
| Teachers at GCSD are appreciated for their work. | 583 | 6.5% | 64.8% | 37.3% |
| Teachers at GCSD have the training they need. | 480 | 8.5% | 59.2% | 35.5% |

Individualized Learning Survey Items

Survey respondents indicated that the district is providing a high level of individualized learning. More than 90% of respondents thought help was available to students that needed it in GCSD and more than 85% of respondents thought students had a variety of learning opportunities and could make decisions about their own education.

Table 9. Overall Response to Individualized Learning Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Help is available to students who need it. | 570 | 3.3% | 91.6% | 4.8% |
| Teachers help students based on individual needs. | 566 | 5.3% | 85.7% | 6.7% |
| Students have a variety of learning opportunities. | 567 | 7.4% | 88.5% | 2.9% |
| Students are able to make decisions about their education. | 568 | 5.3% | 86.4% | 6.4% |
| Students are able to explore areas of personal interest and abilities in school. | 566 | 7.2% | 85.2% | 5.6% |

Ready for School or Work Survey Items

Having post-secondary opportunities means that, upon graduating, students are both academically prepared and aware of what opportunities exist for them. Most survey respondents felt that the district is preparing students to graduate ready for school or work, with more than 70% of respondents agreeing that GCSD instruction aligns with state standards, students are prepared to succeed in college or career after graduation, and they are aware of opportunities.

Table 10. Overall Response to Ready for School or Work Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| By the time students graduate from this school, they will be prepared to succeed at the college or career of their choice. | 565 | 9.9% | 73.8% | 15.5% |
| By the time students graduate from GCSD they are aware of career and post-secondary opportunities. | 563 | 7.3% | 72.8% | 23.6% |
| GCSD instruction is aligned to State of Alaska standards. | 563 | 2.7% | 72.1% | 27.3% |

Open-Ended Responses Related to Quality of Education

As the scale scores indicate, respondents were generally pleased with issues related to the quality of education in GCSD. There were numerous ideas represented in the open-ended responses, including continuing positive actions, activities, or programs. Nineteen percent of the responses were positive about what was already happening. The following examples are illustrative:

Please keep up the great work! I'm thankful my son has the opportunity to be able to attend school where he is exposed to so many new things different from the village he knew as his whole world before. Now, the doors are wide open to him like we've never known before! (Parent)

I don't personally think any changes need to be made. I think GCSD[GCSD] staff are very professional, kind and are always willing to assist. I see that they truly want children to succeed and provide a plethora of learning resources and opportunities. I am very grateful for everything that IDEA has done for my family and would recommend them to anyone. (Parent)

Suggestions for improvement were primarily related to a desire for more programs. Eleven percent of the responses were requests for more types of classes. These included art, music, cosmetology, foreign languages, and AP classes. As one student puts it:

Personally I would appreciate it if GILA were able to put more into the upper level classes in preparation for college. A more intense English course to get a taste of what will be expected in college. Getting the upper level math classes approved for AP credit would be amazing. Also, with all that spare money that the district doesn't have, it would be nice if the school could actually put more into the music and arts programs. Even if actual classes can't be done, at least hire someone specifically for music instead of just hoping that we get another [teacher name 1] or [teacher name 2]. (Student)

Twenty percent of respondents wanted more counseling or advice on career planning and/or meeting academic goals. The following examples are illustrative:

Identify students' post-graduation goals and aspirations early on in their education and strive to match these with relevant learning opportunities/experiences. (Staff)

Have stronger high school advisors to assist students with college selection, college applications, etc. There is NO help from the contact teachers regarding this "bridge" from high school to college opportunities. (Parent)

Hire counselors who are more involved with their seniors. We all need someone in are [sic] life to push us and motivate us. (Student)

Nine percent of comments were related to improving staff skills or district procedures to make the learning experience better for students. The following are illustrative:

Contact teachers should be given the skills that classroom teachers have in terms of understanding childhood development and treating behavior, so they can pass that on to the parent. Parents do not often seem well equipped in areas other than content and curriculum. (Staff)

More tightly align our course assessments with state standards. Provide more professional development on vocabulary content based instruction and backwards curriculum design. (Staff)

Continue educating the teachers and staff in order for them to pass their knowledge on to the students and their families. (Parent)

Other comments included general support for continued homeschooling, individualized learning, and teaching for real learning and not for tests.

Theme Area: Communication with District

Overall, stakeholders in GCSD perceive the district’s communication is effective and that stakeholders are able to participate in decision making. However, parents are significantly more likely to believe so, and importantly, students had a slightly negative perception of their ability to participate in decision making.

Table 11. ANOVA Results of Communication With District Scale Scores (The range of possible scores for all constructs is 1.0 for most negative to 4.0 for most positive. A value of 2.5 is neutral)

| | Scale | Parent | Staff | Students | All | P for ANOVA |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------|-------|----------|------|-------------|
| Communication with District | Communication | 3.24 | 2.87 | 2.63 | 3.08 | $P < 0.001$ |
| | Participation | 3.17 | 2.68 | 2.39 | 2.96 | $P < 0.001$ |

Communication Frequency and Methods Survey Items

Most parents (69%) reported hearing from their student’s teacher at least monthly. In contrast, most parents (69%) reported hearing from the district once per quarter or less often.

Table 12. Parent Survey Response Frequency of Communication from Student’s Teacher (n=357)

| | Communication from teacher | | Communication from GCSD | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| | Count | Percent of Response | Count | Percent of Response |
| Rarely | 13 | 3.6% | 63 | 11.3% |
| About once per semester | 15 | 4.2% | 39 | 24.9% |
| About once per quarter | 84 | 23.5% | 86 | 23.4% |
| Monthly | 114 | 31.9% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Every other week | 26 | 7.3% | 0 | 0.0% |
| About once per week | 83 | 23.2% | 81 | 14.7% |
| Nearly every day | 5 | 1.4% | 25 | 7.2% |
| Whenever I ask | 20 | 5.6% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other | 6 | 1.7% | 51 | 18.2% |

Similarly, most staff reported communicating with families at least monthly. Nearly 40% reported “nearly every day.”

Table 13. Staff Survey Response Frequency of Communication with Parents (n=98)

| | Count | Percent of Response |
|-------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Rarely | 9 | 9.20% |
| About once per semester | 5 | 5.10% |
| About once per quarter | 11 | 11.20% |
| About once per week | 10 | 10.20% |
| Nearly every day | 38 | 38.80% |
| Other | 25 | 25.50% |

Parents overwhelmingly preferred (more than 80%) email communication. Most of those that selected “other” wrote in phone or text message.

Table 14. Parent Survey Response Best Way to Make Contact (n=357)

| | Count | Percent of Response |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Fliers sent home with students | 7 | 2.0% |
| email | 296 | 82.9% |
| paper mail | 18 | 5.0% |
| school Facebook page | 15 | 4.2% |
| Other | 21 | 5.9% |

Communication Survey Items

Survey respondents indicated a positive perception of their communication with school staff and their ability to contact GCSD with concerns. Respondents were less positive about their communication with the school board.

Table 15. Overall Response to Communication Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| The school board has good communication with families. | 546 | 21.8% | 53.3% | 27.9% |
| I know who to contact if I have a concern about the GCSD | 547 | 15.0% | 75.3% | 10.8% |
| I know how to contact the GCSD with my concerns. | 544 | 14.3% | 75.6% | 10.6% |
| I feel comfortable interacting with school staff. | 358 | 2.0% | 94.1% | 3.9% |

Participation Scale Items

Similarly, survey respondents indicated they feel welcome at their school and feel they have opportunities to participate in their school, but indicated less agreement related to participation specific to the school board or the district overall.

Table 16. Overall Response to Participation Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| I feel welcome at the school. | 358 | 2.8% | 87.7% | 9.5% |
| There are opportunities for me to participate in the school. | 357 | 3.6% | 83.8% | 12.6% |
| I have opportunities to advise GCSD. | 543 | 18.0% | 58.0% | 26.7% |
| I keep up with school board news. | 539 | 36.4% | 53.1% | 13.2% |

Open-Ended Responses Related to Communication

As the scale scores indicate, respondents were generally positive about their communication with the school district, but did offer a significant number of improvement suggestions when asked. Suggestions for types of communication included emails, newsletters, better Facebook pages, and/or better use of Powerschool. Several IDEA Homeschool families suggested contacting people through their person email in addition to the IDEA system. Thirteen percent of the suggestions involved face-to-face communication strategies like getting people together for activities or community nights. The following are illustrative:

More "open houses" or a monthly potluck with the community to visit and share what we are doing for their students in school. (Staff)

The pep rallies that happened in the past three years helped a lot with communication because we all were in the gym. Even when the message was passed to the RA's and they read the messages to the group, so we always new [sic] what was going on and what is planned to happen. (Student)

While not a majority, a significant percent of respondents (6%) felt that when offered, community suggestions weren't heard. For example:

The most significant way to improve communication with community members would be to actually respond to and consider the recommendations that come from Parent Advisory Committees or other board created committees. My experience in the past on multiple committees has been that recommendations put forth are ignored and not responded too at all, are looked at but completely dismissed, put forward because they are clearly part of the administrative agenda and representation on the committee was only a formality. (Parent)

Even more communication with the parents and clear communication about how parent surveys have been acted upon. (Parent)

Related to those comments were those that wanted to increase Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) involvement:

Make PAC more friendly. I quit PAC as every single idea I had for clubs/activities the last year I participated in was shot down by the field rep. I often felt like she has her own agenda of what kind of activities she wants instead of what PAC wants, as she often didn't even allow PAC members to say yes or no before she shot the idea down or quickly said, "No space on the calendar" but then would admit she had other ideas on the back burner. I also quit because it just wasn't kid friendly to bring my kids anymore. They could last up to an hour sitting quietly. But then they would start being quietly rowdy looks and I would always feel judged that I wasn't willing to stick technology in front of their faces. (Parent)

Theme Area: Resource Management

While still positive, the overall resource management theme area had a lower scale score than other theme areas. There were not significant differences between the stakeholder groups.

Table 17. ANOVA Results of Resource Management Scale Scores (The range of possible scores for all constructs is 1.0 for most negative to 4.0 for most positive. A value of 2.5 is neutral)

| Scale | Parent | Staff | Students | All | P for ANOVA |
|---------------------|--------|-------|----------|------|-------------|
| Resource Management | 2.74 | 2.80 | 2.59 | 2.72 | P = 0.151 |

Resource Management Scale Items

Less than half of the respondents agreed with the resources management items. It should be noted that this is a result of the large percent of respondents who reported not being aware of the district’s financial priorities, how it uses its resources, its efforts to conserve energy, or how it aligns resources with strategic plan priorities.

Table 18. Response to Resource Management Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|---|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| I am aware of the GCSD’s financial priorities. | 528 | 30.1% | 35.0% | 34.8% |
| GCSD is making good use of its resources. | 531 | 11.9% | 50.3% | 37.9% |
| GCSD is making an effort to conserve energy. | 530 | 7.9% | 42.1% | 50.0% |
| GCSD aligns its resources with strategic plan priorities. | 527 | 5.5% | 42.7% | 51.8% |

Open-Ended Responses Related to Resource Management

Open-responses to the question, “How could GCSD better allocate its resources?” echoed general support for the current situation, or lack of knowledge of the situation. More than 30% of those that wrote a response answered “I don’t know,” sometimes qualifying the response as in this example:

Cannot answer as I am not clear on what resources GCSD has or how those resources are allocated. (Parent)

There was strong support for allocating additional resources to teachers and staff – for hiring, training, and respecting their time. The following are examples from the more than 20 comments that showed such support:

The elementary/middle school students and teachers are struggling big time! We have 4 teachers from K thru 8th grade! We desperately need a math teacher again and also more teachers so there isn't so much combined classes! (Parent)

The district should be willing to allocate more funds to the after school program. Currently teachers are having to share a certain number of fixed slots on each campus and often teachers are staying after school to work with students out of the kindness of their hearts. It would be nice if our time was valued and compensated accordingly. (Staff)

Ensure that academic/staffing needs are met both in Galena and IDEA. I don't know where to go to have a more informed opinion, and I would like to. It's difficult to ask about such information without feeling like I'm being labeled a troublemaker, "nosy", or being told that it's above my pay grade. (Staff)

One thing I that caught me by surprise is that when we have a community member come in to teach us a class and take their own time, we do not pay them anything. I know they volunteer, but their time is valuable and should get something. Just a thought. (Staff)

Several respondents mentioned careful budgeting and utilizing the resources already available. For example:

I realize that with the current state financial crisis it might be hard to foresee what is ahead. I think being conservative fiscally is wise. (Staff)

Increase energy efficiency with GCSD facilities. Continue targeted advertising for GCSD's schools of choice to grow enrollment to offset state funding cuts. (Parent)

GCSD could do more research about how to use the resources we have instead of having contractors outside Galena say they can do the project when they haven't taken all the factors into account. (Staff)

Allow teachers to order from more than one supplier if they can show a significant savings. Coordinate supply orders to avoid overlap or excessive ordering. Provide teachers with a suggested budget for ordering. Eliminate redundant administrative positions. Re-examine training expenses to determine whether we are still agree with those investments. Be cautious about investing in electronic testing or devices as technology tends to advance rapidly and become less expensive with time - and our devices do not help us if they outpace our bandwidth. (Staff)

On the other hand, 5% of respondents (or 14 comments) suggested larger IDEA allotments, more field trips and learning opportunities, and more kinds and varieties of classes. The following comments are illustrative:

It would be great to see a bit more funding for IDEA parents. For instance, allowing for "tech" allotment separate from the general allotment so we can better utilize our allotment for educational materials and opportunities. (Parent)

Art classes. Provide more in the Arts field. Music, art classes for younger kids (Parent)

There were 9 responses about reducing or limiting administration. For example:

Infrastructure (buildings etc.) are important but seem to take priority over staffing and educational needs. The decision this year to keep the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent instead of moving forward with the transition plan, and additionally giving the Superintendent a large raise for the 3rd year in a row is appalling given the State's funding situation and the likely decline in school funding. This is particularly hurtful when our school is understaffed, particularly in the Elementary and Jr. High (which is basically losing all of its teachers). Budget decisions need to be made with academic needs as top priority. It is shameful that this is the Galena City School District but Galena's main school, SHS (the only "school choice" for most of our residents) is underfunded and least supported. (Parent)

Theme Area: Strategic Plan Awareness

All stakeholder groups had a positive perception of the strategic plan, with parents being more positive about the plan than students.

Table 19. ANOVA Results of Resource Management Scale Scores (The range of possible scores for all constructs is 1.0 for most negative to 4.0 for most positive. A value of 2.5 is neutral)

| Construct | Parent | Staff | Students | All | P for ANOVA |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|----------|------|-------------|
| Strategic Plan Awareness | 2.89 | 2.82 | 2.64 | 2.83 | P = 0.028 |

Strategic Plan Scale Items

Similar to resource management, almost half of the survey respondents indicated they were not aware of the details of the strategic plan. While a total of 54% of respondents said they did understand the strategic plan, nearly half of the respondents that either disagreed that they understood the vision or responded “don’t know.”

Table 20. Parent Response to Strategic Plan Items

| | Count | Total Disagree | Total Agree | Don't Know |
|--|-------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| I understand the vision and goals for implementing the GCSD strategic plan. | 504 | 11.9% | 53.8% | 34.3% |
| I am comfortable with how the district is implementing the GCSD strategic plan. | 505 | 9.9% | 48.9% | 41.2% |
| I am optimistic about the implementation of the GCSD strategic plan. | 502 | 9.2% | 51.0% | 39.8% |
| My opinions are considered in the continued development/revision of the GCSD strategic plan. | 500 | 13.2% | 45.2% | 41.6% |
| The GCSD strategic plan reflects the input of teachers/counselors. | 500 | 9.2% | 44.6% | 46.2% |
| The GCSD strategic plan reflects the input of community members. | 499 | 9.0% | 42.1% | 48.9% |
| I understand my role in the overall implementation of the GCSD strategic plan. | 504 | 14.8% | 46.5% | 34.3% |

Open-Ended Responses Related to the Strategic Plan

The final open-ended question on the survey was “What should be the number one priority for the GCSD's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan?” More than 25% mentioned that academics should be first. The following are illustrative:

High academic achievement, including adequate staffing to accomplish this goal, and an attitude of "no compromise". The Strategic Plan needs to be simple and every person - parent, staff, teacher, administrator, student, board member - needs to be able to know and articulate their role in accomplishing the plan. Each of those participants also needs to feel equipped and supported in playing their role. (Parent)

The education of the students in all of the areas: SHS, IDEA and GILA providing a safe environment for them to achieve Grade Level learning while learning to get along with everyone. (Parent)

The student's education in order to be successful. Not keep pushing those who struggle because success can happen. To me, GCSD needs a stricter hand on how they deal with those who choose not to comply. (Student)

Other themes could be classified as more-specific paths to making student achievement a priority. These include supporting staff through salaries and professional development, and supporting a variety of learning styles through special education and extra help when needed. The importance of careful budgeting was another theme. The following examples are illustrative:

While it may not be the number one priority, I believe that all institutions should be leading examples of doing what is necessary to "live within our means." That can and may mean not providing all of the desires of those being served. (Parent)

High academic achievement, including adequate staffing to accomplish this goal, and an attitude of "no compromise". The Strategic Plan needs to be simple and every person - parent, staff, teacher, administrator, student, board member - needs to be able to know and articulate their role in accomplishing the plan. Each of those participants also needs to feel equipped and supported in playing their role. (Parent)

To remember that each of our schools are uniquely different and they should be treated as such. IDEA, IGrad, GILA and the City Schools serve different audiences and we cannot make them all fit into the "school" hole when some are not "school" in the traditional sense. (Staff)

Communication was mentioned as a priority 15 times, and the need was made obvious by the additional 15 comments that were "I don't know" or similar:

Better communication. I feel like there are many decisions that are being made without stakeholder input. By the time community, staff, or student input is solicited the decision has already been made. There were many school board decisions that were made this year without proper input from the community. Our professional development needs an overhaul as well. Our main professional development has been PEAK for 15 plus years. When will we offer more variety? When will be present innovative and new PD? Many of us have been patiently waiting for more. (Staff)

As a homeschooling family with IDEA for 15 years, this is the first I have heard of this. To my knowledge I have never been asked to participate or evaluate any plans. Obviously my opinion could only somewhat address today's survey. (Parent)

The number one Priority should be a dramatic improvement in communication. The second should be staff retention, and development in area's that will make a help in the area of focus. (Staff)

Discussion

The findings of the GCSD Strategic Plan survey indicate overall positive perceptions of the district's progress toward the goals of the strategic plan. In general, stakeholders in GCSD indicated they believe the district is providing quality, standards-based, individualized learning opportunities that result in graduates with post-secondary opportunities. For example, more than 90% of respondents agreed help was available to students who needed it in GCSD, and more than 85% of respondents agreed students had a variety of learning opportunities and could make decisions about their own education. In addition, more than 70% of respondents agreed that GCSD instruction aligns with state standards, that students are prepared to succeed in college or career after graduation, and that they are aware of opportunities. Parents were particularly positive about the quality of education their students are receiving; there was not a significant difference in the responses of parents by school (IDEA, GILA, Sidney Huntington).

Suggestions for improvements to providing quality education centered primarily on providing additional programs such as art and music, improving career planning and preparation, and improving staff skills or district procedures.

Stakeholders also indicate that the GCSD provides a positive environment for students, and that students are excited about learning and school is a positive experience. In addition, most respondents felt that teachers in GCSD were cared for and appreciated, although there was strong support for allocating additional resources to teachers and staff, namely for hiring, training, and respecting their time.

Overall, stakeholders in GCSD also indicated that the district's communication efforts are effective, and stakeholders are able to participate in decision making. However, parents were significantly more likely to agree with this sentiment than students. Students had a slightly negative perception of their ability to participate in decision making. Additionally, respondents indicated that it is easier to communicate with their school than it is to communicate with the district or the school board. Providing opportunities for students to participate in decision making, and opportunities for students, parents, and staff to communicate with the school board, are areas for improvement.

Even though stakeholders did perceive the district's communication as effective, survey respondents were relatively unaware of several important issues in GCSD that were asked about as part of the survey. For example, approximately 40% of respondents were unaware of the allocation of resources in the GCSD and of the strategic plan itself. More than 30% of respondents indicated they didn't know about professional growth and development opportunities in GCSD. And importantly, a significant percent of respondents felt that even when community input was solicited, community suggestions are not taken into account during actual decision making.

Survey respondents made several suggestions for increased or improved use of various types of communication methods, including emails, newsletters, Facebook pages, and/or Powerschool. They also suggest additional face-to-face communication strategies like getting people together for activities or community nights.

Not surprisingly, when asked "What should be the number one priority for GCSD's 2018-2020 Strategic Plan?" the top choice was academics. Other priorities named were more specific paths to making student achievement a priority, supporting staff through improved salaries and professional development, and supporting a variety of learning styles through special education and extra help.

References

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