

RESEARCH & GUIDANCE ANALYSIS PREPARED FOR



Stillwater
AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Research & Guidance Test Plan

Introduction

Spring 2022, Stillwater Area Public Schools District commissioned Orman Guidance, Inc. to conduct mixed-method, quantitative and qualitative market research among families that are enrolled within the district, open-enrolled at other schools, or homeschooled.

Orman Guidance researchers were provided with comprehensive briefings from Franke+Fiorella and Stillwater Area Public Schools District communications team members. Data collection was conducted online. Researchers and notetakers utilized pre-approved surveys and discussion guides to ensure implementation of the test plan without bias.

Orman made every attempt to secure the best possible representations of families, including grades of students, race/ethnicity, immigrant families/ESL, household composition, income, work status, and more.

As quantitative datapoints, Orman researchers measured attitudinal responses with respect to enrollment (e.g., factors included in decision-making, including Spanish language immersion), experience with schools and districts (e.g., successes, concerns, and hopes), important considerations (e.g., academics, extracurriculars, the education experience, diversity & inclusion), and performance (e.g., which schools and districts perform best).

From over 1,000 online surveys, Orman Guidance filtered responses to assemble 8 focus groups comprised of 6 respondents each. Many of these qualitative participants also complied with researchers' request to submit images and content related to whether they would recommend Stillwater Area Public Schools, which provided an additional layer of correlative data and insights.

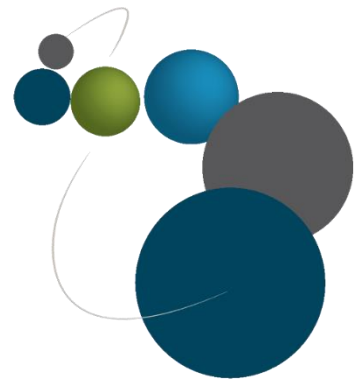
Research & Guidance Objectives

SYNOPSIS

The primary purpose of research and guidance exercise was to uncover and thematize opinions and perspectives of families pertaining to Stillwater Area Public Schools. As demonstrated throughout this comprehensive report, key findings and conclusions from research data may be used with confidence to benefit planning and implementation of targeted, impactful communication aimed at conveying persuasive points of distinction about Stillwater Area Public Schools.

OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED

- *Clarified perspectives* held by the population of Stillwater Area Public Schools and surrounding communities.
- Established *points of distinction* of Stillwater Area Public Schools compared to neighboring districts.
- Verified specific *elements of messaging* that are on-point, believable, enticing, compelling and/or negative or polarizing.
- Identified gaps in *alignment between messaging and experience* with Stillwater Area Public Schools experience.
- Discovered *reasons families may leave* the district of Stillwater Area Public Schools.
- Found opportunities to *tell the unique story* of Stillwater Area Public Schools to attract more families to enrollment.



Methodology

DEFINITION

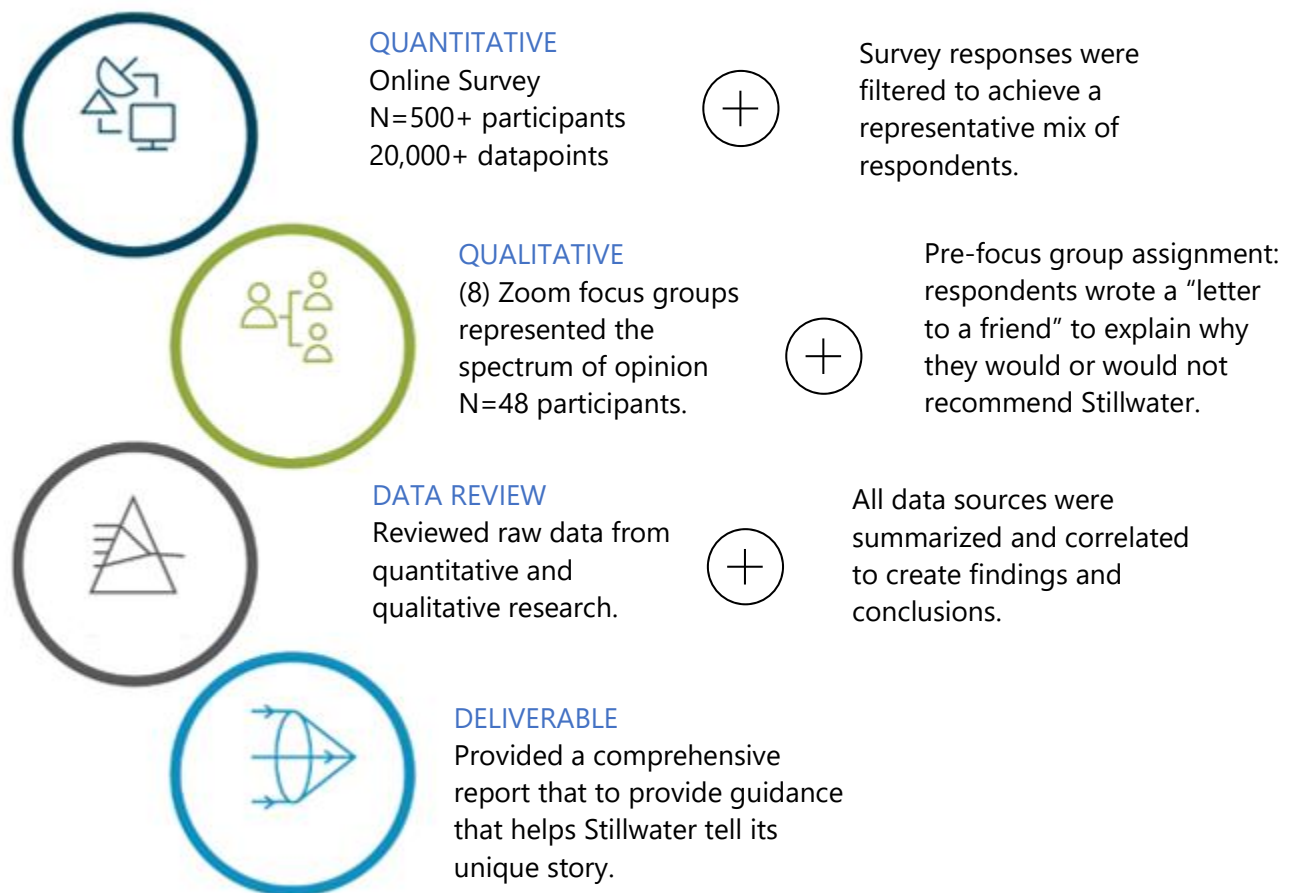
Orman Guidance customized a research and guidance approach that utilized quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Respondents were sourced from Orman databases, general population outreach, geographically targeted lists from Dunhill International, and parent, student, and staff lists provided by Stillwater Area Public Schools.



Disclosures

Participating respondents from lists provided by Stillwater Area Public Schools were fully informed about processes and objectives related to the research study, including assurances of best privacy practices and that emails were provided by the district to Orman Guidance.

Processes



Target Audiences

DEFINITION

To ensure accurate and effective outcomes, cohort (broadly, parents, students, and district employees) constructed target audiences to represent mainstream and “outlier” opinions. Specifically, an outlier is a data point that may differ significantly from higher probability, mainstream findings. Orman researchers ensured inclusion of the broadest possible spectrum of opinions and viewpoints.

Details

PARENTS

Mix of parents of students preK-12, diverse demographics, and orientation to Stillwater Area Public Schools (e.g., residents, open enrollment, satisfaction to dissatisfaction, and more)

STUDENTS

Mix of graduates of Stillwater public High School: diverse demographics and orientation to the school district

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

Mix of administrators, teachers, and support staff employed by Stillwater Area Public Schools

COMMUNITY

Inclusive of Stillwater Area Public Schools District residents without current preK-12 students (e.g., no children and empty nesters)

To the extent possible, data collection was aligned with available census data.



Deployment of Methodology



Finalized research test plan

Consulted with stakeholders to finalize objectives, target audience definitions, research activities, respondent sourcing, best practices, timeline, and deliverables.

Created and approved methodologies

Created, reviewed, and received approvals for data collection tools (questionnaire/survey, respondent screener, engagement exercises, discussion guides are offered for examination in the Appendix).

Data collection

Launched quantitative survey, applied filtration to achieve qualitative participation, engaged respondents for deeper-dive learning, and conducted 8 focus groups.

Data review

Examined, correlated, and thematized data sources to boil down to key findings and conclusions that generate actionable outcomes.

Deliverable

Finalized analyses and delivered comprehensive report.

Composition of Quantitative Research

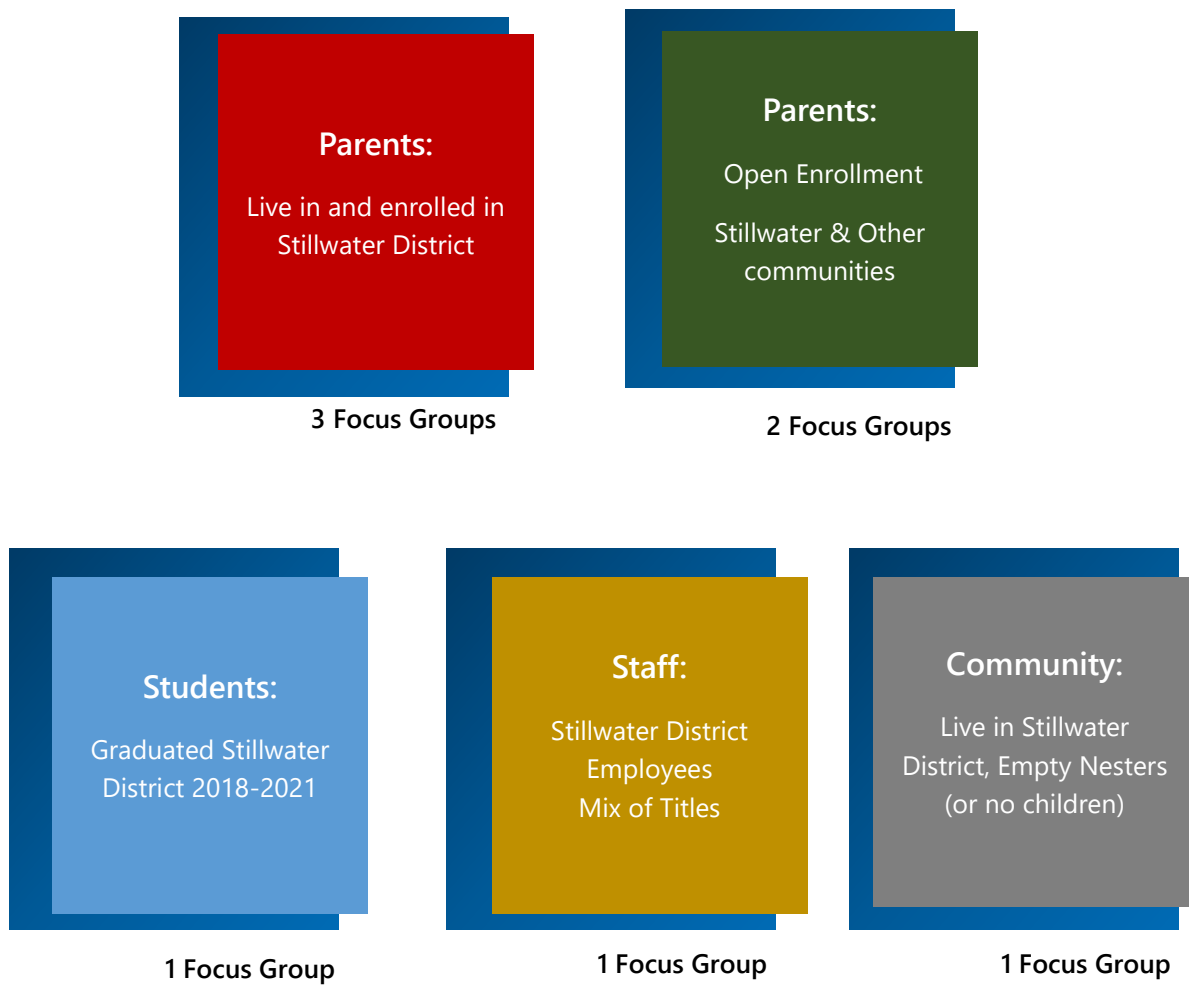
1,011 quantitative survey participants

LIST SOURCE	COHORT	# COMPLETED SURVEYS*
Stillwater Area Public Schools	Open Enrollment <i>reside within District</i> <i>/enrolled outside District</i>	N=127
Orman Guidance/Dunhill	Open Enrollment <i>Mix MN, reside within District</i> <i>/enrolled outside District</i>	N=145
Stillwater Area Public Schools	Enrolled <i>reside & enrolled within District</i>	N=399
Stillwater Area Public Schools	Students <i>Mix: Stillwater Graduates, 2018-2021</i>	N=127
Stillwater Area Public Schools	Staff <i>Mix: admin, teachers, support</i>	N=213

*The number and cohort of quantitative survey participants helps us understand that the study achieved statistical significance; that is, patterns of data are highly likely to be representative of behaviors, attitudes, and opinions that exist naturally among the cohorts of participants. This is referred to in marketing research as a confidence level. Between the number of participants, the patterns of data that exist among them, and parallel comparisons between quantitative and qualitative data, the confidence level is 90% or greater. In lay terms, this means there is a 90% chance that the findings in the data represent behaviors, attitudes, and opinions of the population being studied.

Composition of Qualitative Research

8 focus groups (6 participants each, 48 total)



Marketing Research Hypotheses

The following suppositions and proposed explanations were made on the basis of limited evidence and served as a starting point for further investigation and exploration.

- *Stillwater Area Public Schools is perceived mostly positively by the population, especially for Pony Pride, athletics, and music, but has an increasing challenge of decreasing enrollment.*
- *Points of distinction of Stillwater Area Public Schools compared to neighboring districts are both positive and negative. On the positive side, emphasis on community, academic success, and student support. On the negative side, instability in the top levels of the district's administration as well as school board.*
- *Stillwater Area Public Schools' messaging is in need of realignment, specifically to include the vision of the incoming new Superintendent. There are myriad opportunities to create on-point, believable, enticing, and compelling messaging that are neither negative nor polarizing.*
- *Reasons that families may leave the district of Stillwater Area Public Schools, whether to other districts or to private or charter schools deserves especial attention. Families are choosing other options for a variety of reasons that may include size of school, teacher-student ratio, focus on different curriculum and ideals, religious emphasis, and more.*
- *A faction of parents represent beliefs and opinions that require exploration and quantification among the Stillwater Area Public School District, in particular, social emotional learning curriculum, critical race theory, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and matters that pertain to LGBTQ students and families.*
- *There is a unique story to be told about Stillwater Area Public Schools to attract new families to enroll and convince existing families to remain in the district.*
- *The incoming new Superintendent represents an opportunity to recalibrate, rally, and unite the Stillwater Area Public Schools District.*



Comprehensive Findings: Qualitative & Quantitative Correlations

Positive Aspects of Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Teachers and Staff at Stillwater Area Public Schools are lauded for their care and concern about students

Parents and Students commented very favorably about the care and concern that most teachers and staff demonstrate, particularly in grades PreK-4. Among the many positive things said about the district, teachers in particular are most commonly mentioned, including the following:

Parents

- Teachers are so involved with the kids, they call and email us, it feels so personal.
- Teachers make a genuine investment in their students.
- Teachers live in the district and send their kiddos to Stillwater Public Schools. They are friendly and familiar when you see them out and about, which means a lot to the kids. As a parent, I so appreciate that.
- There is open communication between teachers and parents. I feel like they take care of the family as much as they take care of our children.
- The teachers are great role models, most of the time.

Students

- I really feel good about the connections I made with teachers.
- During the tough times of the pandemic, the teachers helped a lot to keep the community together.
- The teachers themselves are highly educated which makes them all the more credible.
- I felt like the teacher treated us like she would treat her own children. Felt natural, not forced.

Commonly mentioned descriptors for teachers and staff at Stillwater included the following:

Supporting

Caring

Non-judgmental

Helpful

Involved

Loving

Communicative

Take care of the student

Take care of the family

Excited, Enthusiastic, Encouraging

Community orientation: they live here, they send their kids here

Their hearts are in the right place and it shows

They always do the best they can no matter how challenging the circumstances



Positive Aspects of Stillwater Area Public Schools District

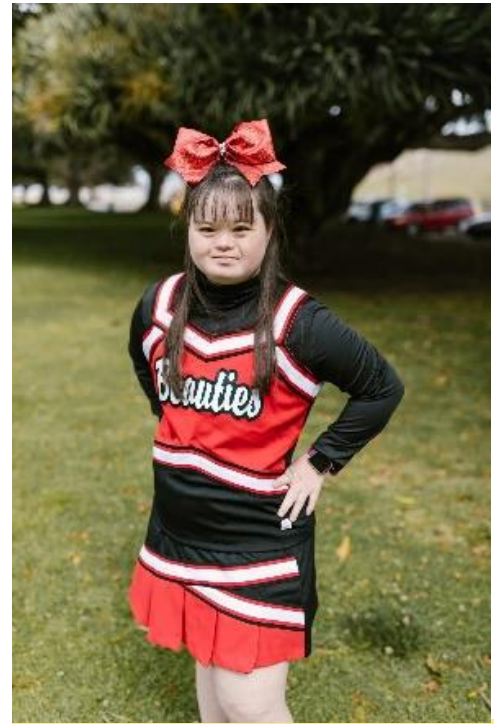
The availability of a wide variety of special education teachers, paras, and specialist services and support ranks highly.

Quantitative study indicates that families with special needs children (e.g., IEP) comprises 20% or more of the student body. Stillwater parents have a great deal of appreciation for program availability and staff that provide the services.

Especially for families that may have had past experience where these services were lacking (coming from other districts, other states, and even other countries), the programs are widely appreciated. The specialists, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists, for example, make families feel supported and understood.

Whether or not they have children in special programs, respondents mentioned the benefit that students realize from being in mixed-ability settings. This provides a higher degree of challenge and helps students not only acquire better skills, but also provides opportunities for friendships and a more positive self-image for everyone involved.

The benefits of this form of inclusion extend from the classroom to families, the school, and the community. Ideally, it helps contribute to the sense of togetherness and helps people understand the importance of respecting our similarities and our differences.



VERBATIM

"For my kid these are big things that someone there to help him. It makes us feel like we have family somewhere that we don't have family. And they make it feel like it's not a bad thing to need these services. There is nothing wrong with him, he just processes things differently. We don't understand anything about what he's going through, but they help us understand. They are so caring, loving, and not only taking care of the student, but they also take care of the family too."

Positive Aspects of Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Athletic and music programs help rally together Stillwater. "Pony Pride" is perceived mostly positively among parents, staff, and recent graduates.

Athletics, music, and the other performance and studio arts in Stillwater are among the stronger aspects of the district. Extracurriculars are perceived positively from a qualitative standpoint, even in the cases where parents say too much emphasis is placed upon them, and too much money as well, particularly on facilities.

Quantitative study places extracurriculars at 39% in terms of an important decision-drivers to enroll, placing it last among the four categories evaluated (the other three being academics, the education experience, and diversity and inclusion).

It is worth noting that parents appreciate that grades 5-7 are required to participate in music and athletics, as it may awaken interests and provide at least a glimpse into future possibilities for them. Furthermore, homeschooling parents reflected positively at the welcome their students received when participating in extracurriculars even though they were not enrolled in Stillwater public schools.

In short, extracurriculars provide a strong rallying point for Stillwater families, whether or not they have children enrolled in the public schools. Respondents reflected a sense of pride for things like Homecoming, Pony Pride, satisfaction in the accomplishments of students, and recognition of Stillwater's excellence in these areas.



Parents also have some negative things to say about extracurriculars.

- Parents with awareness that literacy baselines are not being met bristle at the resources being allocated to sports facilities, in particular.
- Some parents complain that Pony Pride is too closely correlated to sports. Specifically, these parents say that Pony Pride should extend to academics as well as extracurriculars.

Positive Aspects of Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Most parents have a good feelings, overall, about the sense of community in Stillwater. This is especially true of "schools in our neighborhood," including Andersen Elementary.

The small town, neighborhood-community aspect of elementary schools in particular represents the ideal for most parents. This correlates to quantitative data from the perspective that many parents choose where to live based on the home's proximity to good neighborhood schools. It's a matter of comfort, convenience, and hopefully helps mitigate the hours needed for transport. Ideally, parents want their kids to be able to walk or bike to school. They want the school to be small enough that they may come to know and trust everyone that comes into contact with their child.

Using Andersen Elementary as an example, the feeling of *community* is engrained in the experience. Children in that school are taken about the neighborhood, the post office, the police station, and more. The school itself is small enough that people in the administrative offices know by name every child that walks in. Teachers that live in the community are friendly outside of the classroom, and the principal knows everyone.

This primary experience provides a strong foundation as children advance and begin to aggregate into middle and high school.

VERATIM

"The neighborhood feeling of elementary school is so important. You have to start small and keep kids' environment on a smaller, tighter perimeter. so that you as a parent can gradually build their confidence and their trust in people and routines. It is inevitable that the experience begins to expand in middle school, but hopefully by then your child feels a sense of community among the peers they are growing up with."



Opinions About Stillwater Public High School

Parents and former students reflect mixed feelings about Stillwater High. On the positive side, past graduates say they benefited from the variety of academic options and extracurriculars. But parents are increasingly concerned not only about how big the high school is becoming, but how that may impact student readiness for the next phase of students' lives, including college, employment, and functioning in the real world.

Stillwater High School graduates (school years 2018-2021) spoke favorably about what the high school has to offer: AP classes, clubs, athletics, and activities as niche as video production. These opportunities help older students determine their interests and establish next steps in their young lives. Those with interest in AP classes, math, and science in particular, feel that Stillwater needs to do more to establish rigorous coursework with STEM subjects. This correlates to quantitative findings: 82% of former Stillwater high school graduates say that real world academics are *very important*.

Students also mentioned that they wish the school system had done more for them to prepare them for the realities of high school, as big as it is in Stillwater High School. The transitions from elementary to middle school and then to high school deserve attention so that students feel better prepared. To the extent possible, elementary aged and middle schoolers should be encouraged to experience the high school (e.g., science clubs, adventure clubs).

For former high school graduates, experiences with the transition from high school to the next phase of life were mixed. Some students commented favorably on their interactions with guidance counselors, and advisors, while others felt they received little or no support.

Critical considerations:

- *Parents are aware that the Stillwater High School census is growing. They are more and more concerned about the need for planning to address the growth.*
- 56% of Stillwater area parents report having children in age ranges that represent grades PreK-4.
- 43% have children in grades 5-8. The needs of Stillwater High School will continue to grow. To increase parents' confidence in the school as an enrollment option, they need to understand whether there is a plan in place to address the needs, what the plan is, and what benchmarks and measurements indicate the path to success.
- About 75% of former Stillwater graduates students as well as current Stillwater teachers say the focus should be on academics from a broad worldview, and diverse perspective. Broad curriculum and tailored experiences are most important to these two cohorts.
- 63% or more of parents similarly want the focus placed on academics, graduation, practical skills, and preparation for college where applicable.

Concerns About Stillwater Area Public Schools District

It is abundantly clear that families believe that Stillwater has work to do to in the area of academics

Parents expressed particular concerns and complaints regarding low academic performance in Stillwater Public Schools. There are a number of perceived reasons for this, including challenges of the pandemic and the lingering after effects of the quarantine (particularly in Grades 2, 3, and 4). Parents are also worried that Stillwater as a district is simply growing too fast, and that teacher-student ratios are out of balance as classroom sizes increase.

Other concerns related to academic performance pertain to the perception that teachers spend inordinate amounts of time with lower performing students, behavioral disruptions, and special needs.

The fact that schools are often short-staffed and support-deficient is recognized as another reason for lower academic performance. Parents are aware that teachers, paras, substitutes, and specialists must be shared and shuffled unexpectedly depending on staffing levels on any given day.

It was fairly well-known among qualitative participants that test scores are down and that literacy is at a low point, particularly among 3rd and 4th graders. Many parents balk at being asked to fund initiatives outside of academics until such time as test scores and reading at grade level are returned to acceptable levels.

These qualitative findings correlate with quantitative data: 72% say that “academics” is the “most important” consideration when choosing a district or school.

VERBATIM

“A lot of the issues we personally have can be summed up as: this district grew too large, too fast. It’s too big to manage. My main concern is academics and attention. How many kids in the class, are resources available, can they get help? Our experience is that those resources just aren’t there. There are too many kids, too much going on.”



VERBATIM

“Academics are important. The school district asks for more and more money and the test scores are not improving. 58% literacy is such a low standard, it’s laughable. That’s not even a passing grade. It’s insulting to think that we don’t see that it’s not a good enough standard. We need academic achievement on the budget we’ve already established before we hand out more money.”

Concerns About Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Parents and Staff alike reflect concern about logistical challenges, especially transportation

One of the biggest logistical concerns touched on in each of the parent focus groups and the staff focus group relates to transportation and bus driver staffing. There is awareness, of course, that it is not particular to Stillwater Area Public Schools District – it is statewide, nationwide. But parents believe it must be addressed with hiring incentives or other solution.

This qualitative finding correlates to quantitative data. Among the most important considerations in school and district selection criteria is proximity of the school to the home, and the ability to take advantage of a dependable busing program. Obviously, this is of utmost importance to working parents, whether in single or dual-income households.

Parents know that busing is a service under contract with the district, however, they resist the idea that the district should remove itself from the responsibility of ensuring reliable transport for their children. There exists a negative perception that Stillwater as a district exonerates itself from the busing challenges because it has no authority over the company that provides the service.

VERBATIM

"Transportation is such a frustration. We bus across the district, like behavioral needs go to Stonebridge or gifted and talented gets a bus. Spanish Immersion gets no bus. We are zoned to Stonebridge, and it's about two hours of my day to drive them back and forth."

"Our transportation was picked by the school board against the advice of the expert. I got a call today at 6:30 AM to say we had no transportation. It sends us all scrambling for coverage."

"We've done carpooling. We've recently moved so that we are two blocks away from bus pickup spot. I have to check my phone every day to see if the bus will be there or not. It's driving people out of our district!"

Perspectives About Stillwater Area Public Schools District Administration

A pervasive perception of opaque processes is especially frustrating to Parents.

For parents that say they have been “following along” the past several years, there is an overall, perceived lack of transparency related to school board elections, school closures, bonds, allocation of funds, the study done on facilities, the bus garage, and more. Some parents go as far as to say they felt they were outright lied to. Several parents claimed that a past Superintendent went as far as to have their children pose as Stillwater students to advance an agenda.

If any of this is in fact true, Stillwater has a great deal of work to do to follow a process of authentic atonement: acknowledge past mistakes, recognize where errors were made, apologize on behalf of the administration, promise to do better, and offer transparent plans in an attempt to heal the community.

It is worth mentioning here that parents that brought forth these concerns also said they were “shocked (they) had been invited to participate in the focus group,” as they reflected these issues in the open-ended portion of the quantitative survey and felt for certain that their strong concerns would have identified them as trouble makers to be avoided. It speaks well for Stillwater, they said, that their voices were heard. A pledge to listen, even when it is uncomfortable, represents a good start toward healing the community.

Lack of transparency, taxpayers paying more, not understanding why.

Perception and experience with disarray and disfunction within school board.

Infighting, polarization, administrative turnover, visceral disagreements.

Inconsistent communication on most important topics: school closures, new facilities.

Need for 5- and 10-year plan, address past problems, acknowledge mistakes.

Hope that the new Superintendent will rally the community with shared goals that are based on common ground and common sense.

Perspectives About Diversity & Inclusion

The issues surrounding the broad topics of diversity and inclusion are of greater concern to students and staff than to parents.

Teachers and staff contemplate favorably on the ideal that a diverse student body and staff means recognizing the humanity in everyone, inclusive of race, ethnicity, cultures, communities including LGBTQ, values, economic equity, addressing special needs, and opportunities for everyone. The ideal extends to diversity of thought; equity where all are treated equally, and inclusion where all perspectives and voices matter.

From a quantitative standpoint, these themes have far greater importance to teachers, staff, and students than they do to parents (findings at right). In qualitative, teachers, staff, and students speak of their desire for decentralized authority where diverse groups of students and advisors with similar and dissimilar backgrounds may work together and create safe zones.

For parents, a mix of opinion persists, with some that want to embrace diversity, some that want not to recognize differences out of denial that differences exist (or that differences are important), and still others that would like very much to celebrate diversity but are fearful of calling attention to themselves or their families.



Quantitative findings pertaining to Diversity & Inclusion:

Fewer than half of parents believe that Diversity & Inclusion is *very important*, compared to 75% of past graduates of Stillwater High School and 67% of Stillwater District teachers and staff.

The presence of a diverse student population is *very important* to 76% of students and 64% of staff, compared to 43% of parents.

Similarly, the presence of a diverse staff population is *very important* to 71% of students and 63% of staff, compared to 41% of parents.

The opportunity for a broad world view is *very important* to 77% of students and 73% of staff, compared to 56% of parents.

Perspectives About The Education Experience

While a vocal minority of parents at school board meetings may speak against the concept of Social Emotional Learning, the quantitative data makes plain that the majority of parents, teachers, staff, and students believe it is very important.

Teachers, students, and parents widely agree that social-emotional learning (SEL) is an important piece of current education models because it teaches life skills, including the ability for children to better understand themselves, develop a positive self-image, take personal responsibility, and forge healthier relationships. In a social media environment fraught with unrealistic portrayals, it can also help students to build confidence and self-esteem.

One of the many objectives of this study was to understand the extent of agreement or disagreement among cohorts of respondents about social-emotional learning. In qualitative settings, respondents played back understanding that SEL may help students set personal goals, persevere in the face of adversity, think critically about social justice, and empathize with others.

Teachers also believe that SEL is vital in the classroom because it helps prepare students to reason and make better decisions. In the face of bullying, anxiety about safety, religious and LGBTQ intolerance, SEL has the potential for myriad, positive ripple effects. *Most* teachers, parents, and students believe SEL is *very important*.



Quantitative findings pertaining to
The Education Experience:

The opportunity to advance Social Emotional Learning is equally embraced by parents, students, and staff, with 69% or more saying that SEL is *very important*.

Tailored educational experiences are rated a little less important: 54% of parents, 61% of staff, and 64% of students rated the educational approach as *very important*.

Surprisingly, the teacher-student ratio, that is, the size of the classroom (and the size of a high school class) is far less important to students than it is to parents and staff. Only 28% of Stillwater High School graduates said the issue is *very important*, compared to 71% of staff and 68% of parents.

Why Families Leave the District or Opt for Private or Charter Schools

Parents' decision to enroll their children outside the boundaries of a school district is based on a number of considerations, including values, religious philosophy, and perception of quality of education. Geography, convenience, and teacher-to-student ratio are other considerations.

Open enrollment comprises some 13% of Stillwater Area parents that responded to the quantitative survey and includes options such as private, charter, online schools, and homeschooling. This includes parents that opt to enroll outside the district they reside in and parents that opt to enroll in private or charter schools inside the district.

For most parents, the decision to open enroll is based on many factors and is not taken at all lightly. Weighing their options, parents consider what they believe their child needs, education philosophies, religious influences, classroom sizes, location, and affordability where applicable. Although these reasons were not quantified in the survey, we deduce from the qualitative data that top 3 priorities for open enrollment decision is based on 1) philosophy/religion, 2) size of school and/or classroom, and 3) proximity to residence or employment as a matter of convenience for the parent.

Considering reasons that families may open enroll inside or outside the Stillwater School District, it is clear from quantitative data that in particular, St. Croix Prep ranks highly for academic achievement and college/career readiness, level with or exceeding Stillwater Public Schools (see data at right).



There is plenty of gray area in terms of which schools or districts perform best in categories like college/career readiness, tailored educational opportunities, academic achievement, and extracurriculars. Most commonly, parents say “I don’t know” which school or district performs best (e.g., 42% or more).

However, in the category of academic achievement, 32% of respondents believe St. Croix Prep performs best compared to just 12% that believe Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best. When it comes to rating which school is the best option, overall, 32% say Stillwater compared to 10% that say St. Croix Prep.



Comprehensive Findings: Quantitative

Participation by Cohort of Survey Respondents

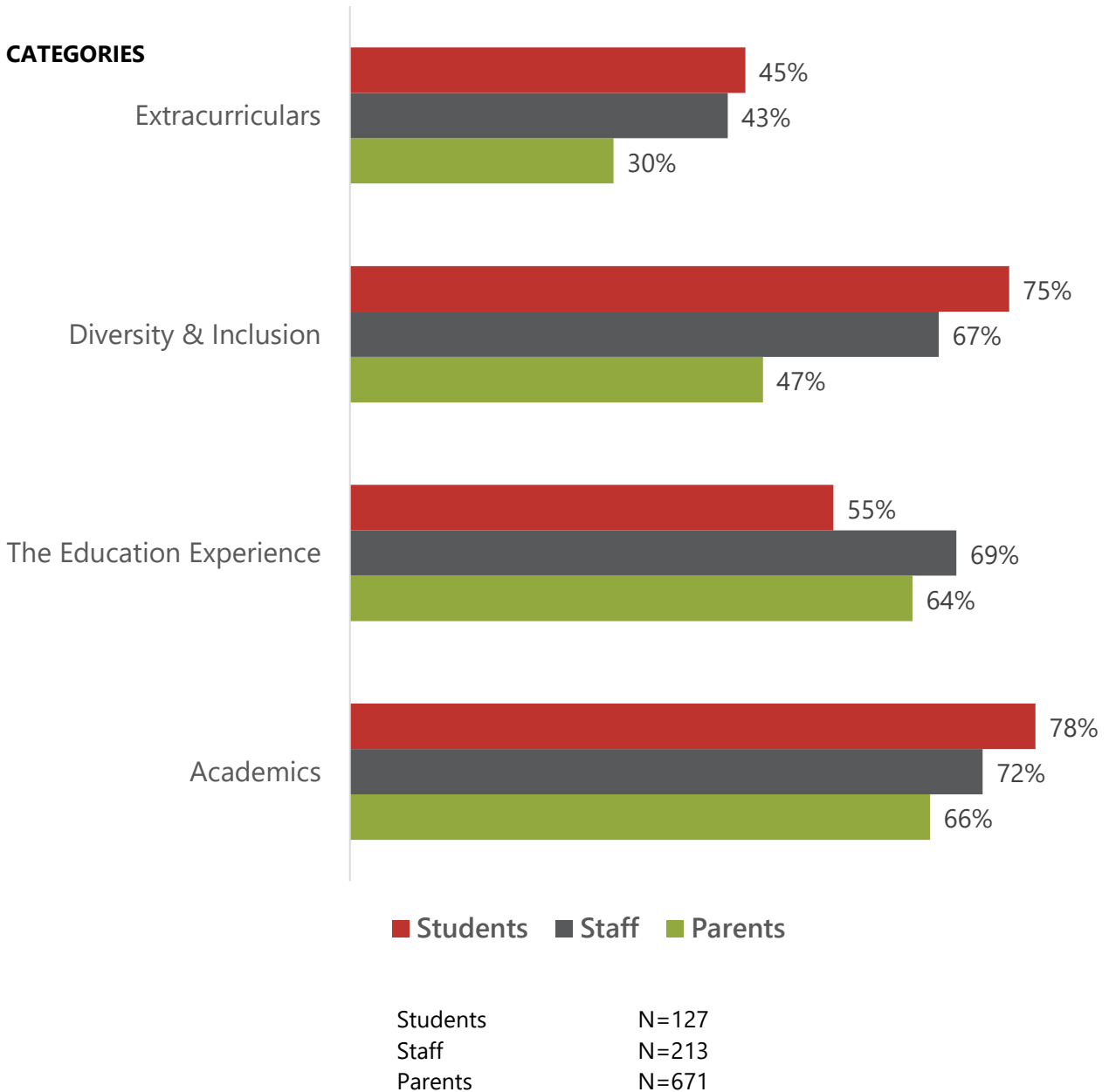
Stillwater Area Public Schools

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Students <i>Mix: Stillwater Graduates, 2018-2021</i>	N=127
Staff <i>Mix: admin, teachers, support</i>	N=213

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Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

Most important categories of considerations when choosing a school or district



Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

Most important categories of considerations when choosing a school or district ("5" on 1-5 scale)

ACADEMICS

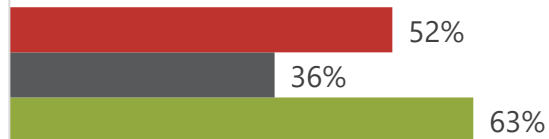
Flexible learning opportunities



Broad curriculum



College preparation



Graduation rates



Real world learning opportunities



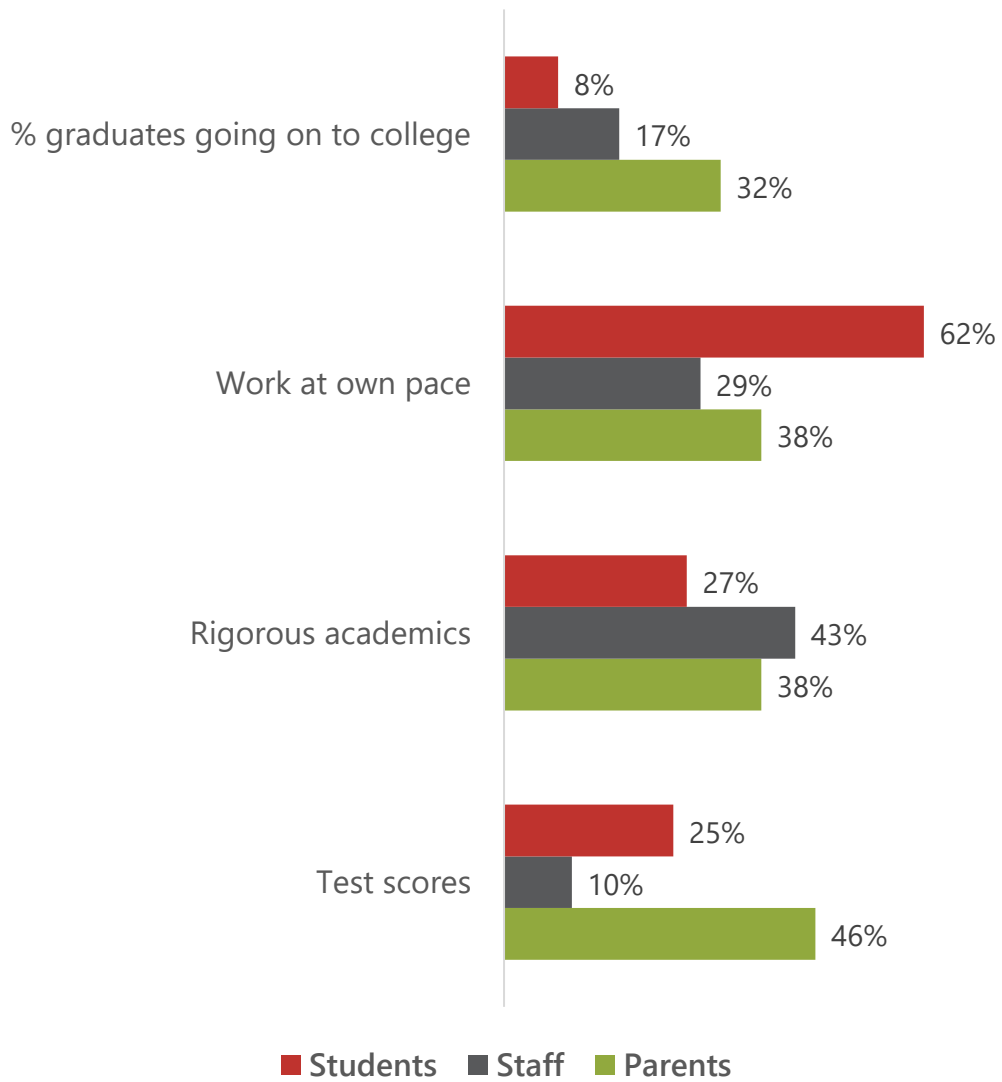
■ Students ■ Staff ■ Parents

Students	N=127
Staff	N=213
Parents	N=671

Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

Most important categories of considerations when choosing a school or district ("5" on 1-5 scale)

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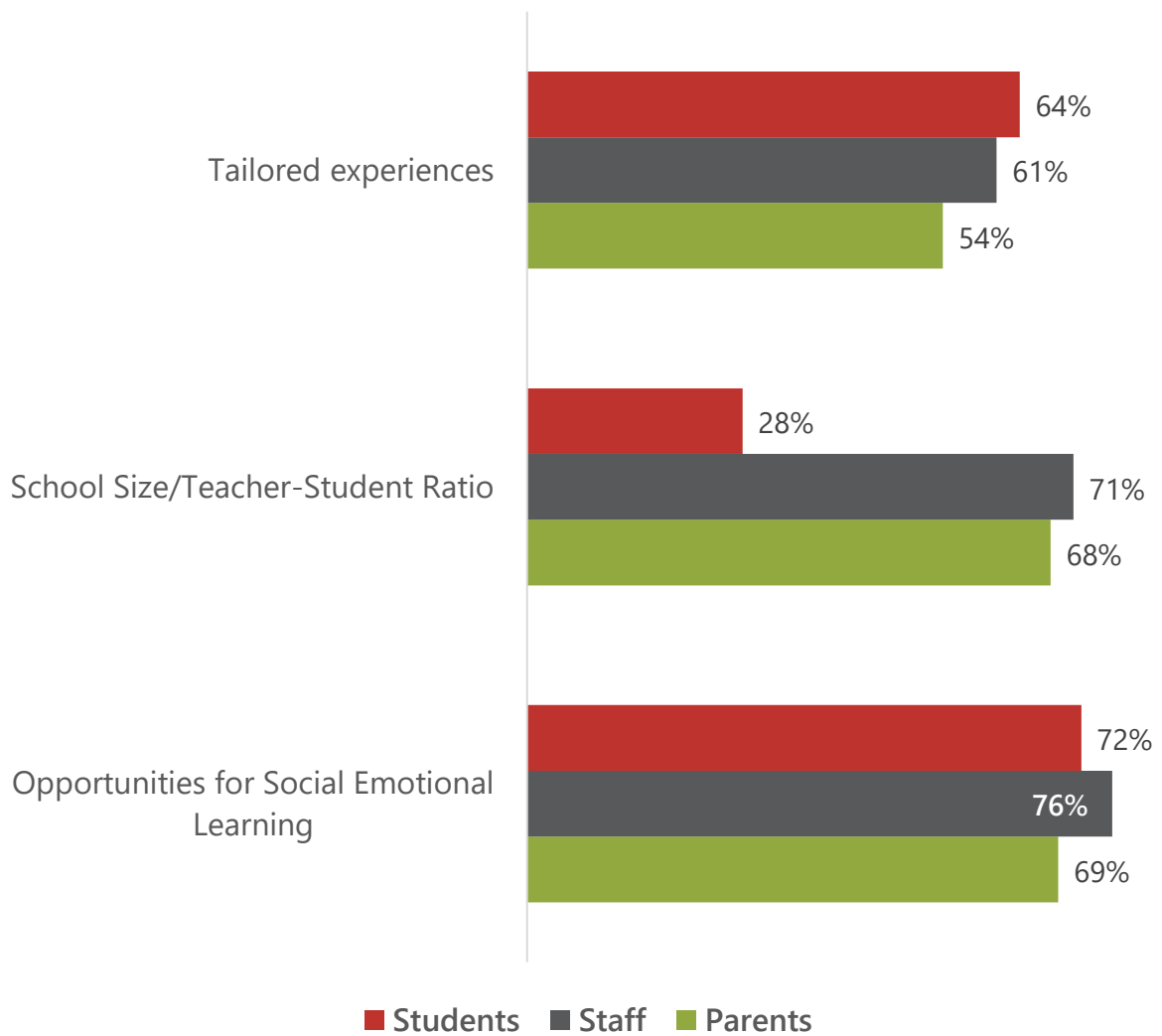


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THE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

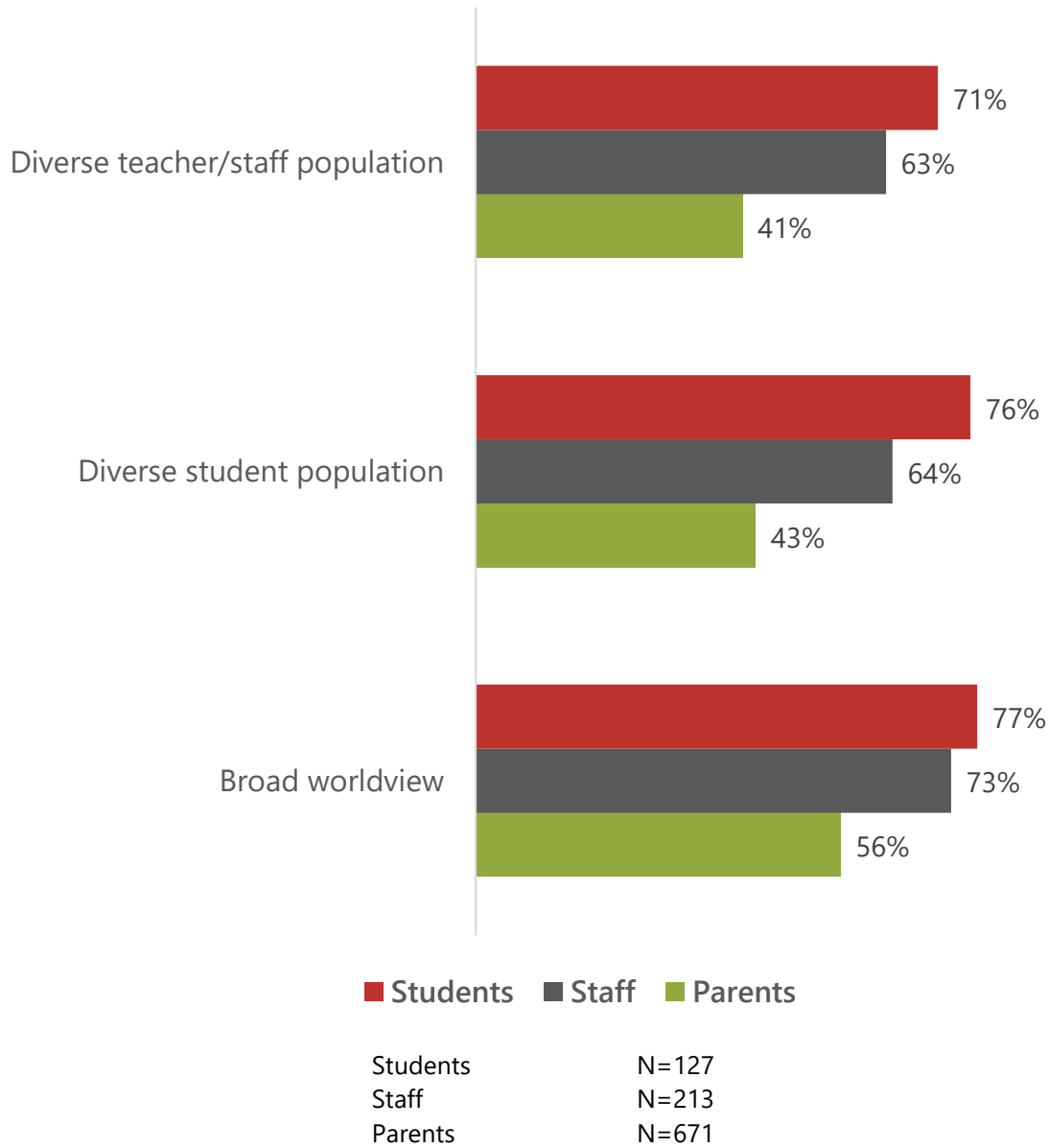


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Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

Most important categories of considerations when choosing a school or district ("5" on 1-5 scale)

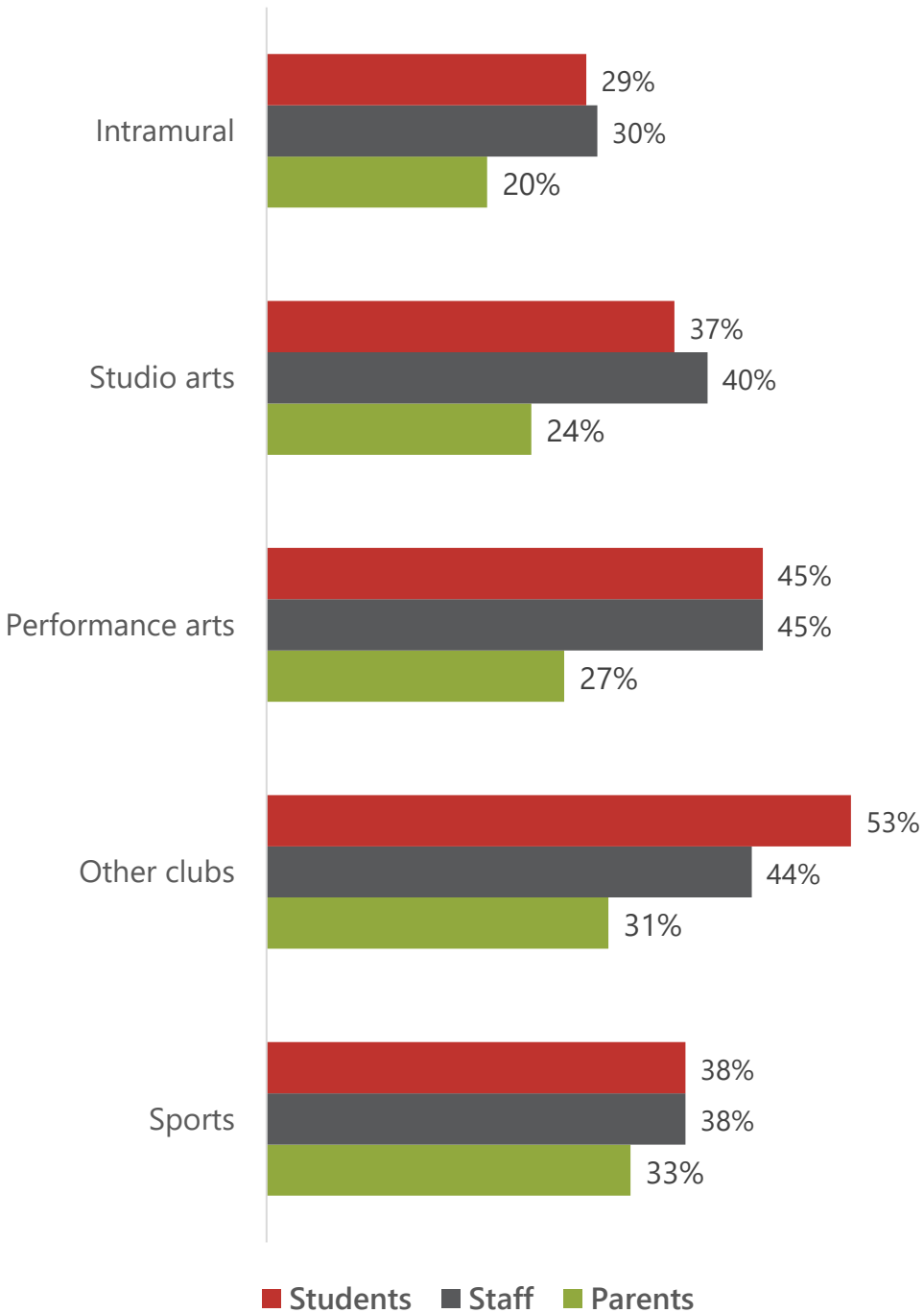
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

Most important categories of considerations when choosing a school or district ("5" on 1-5 scale)

EXTRACURRICULARS

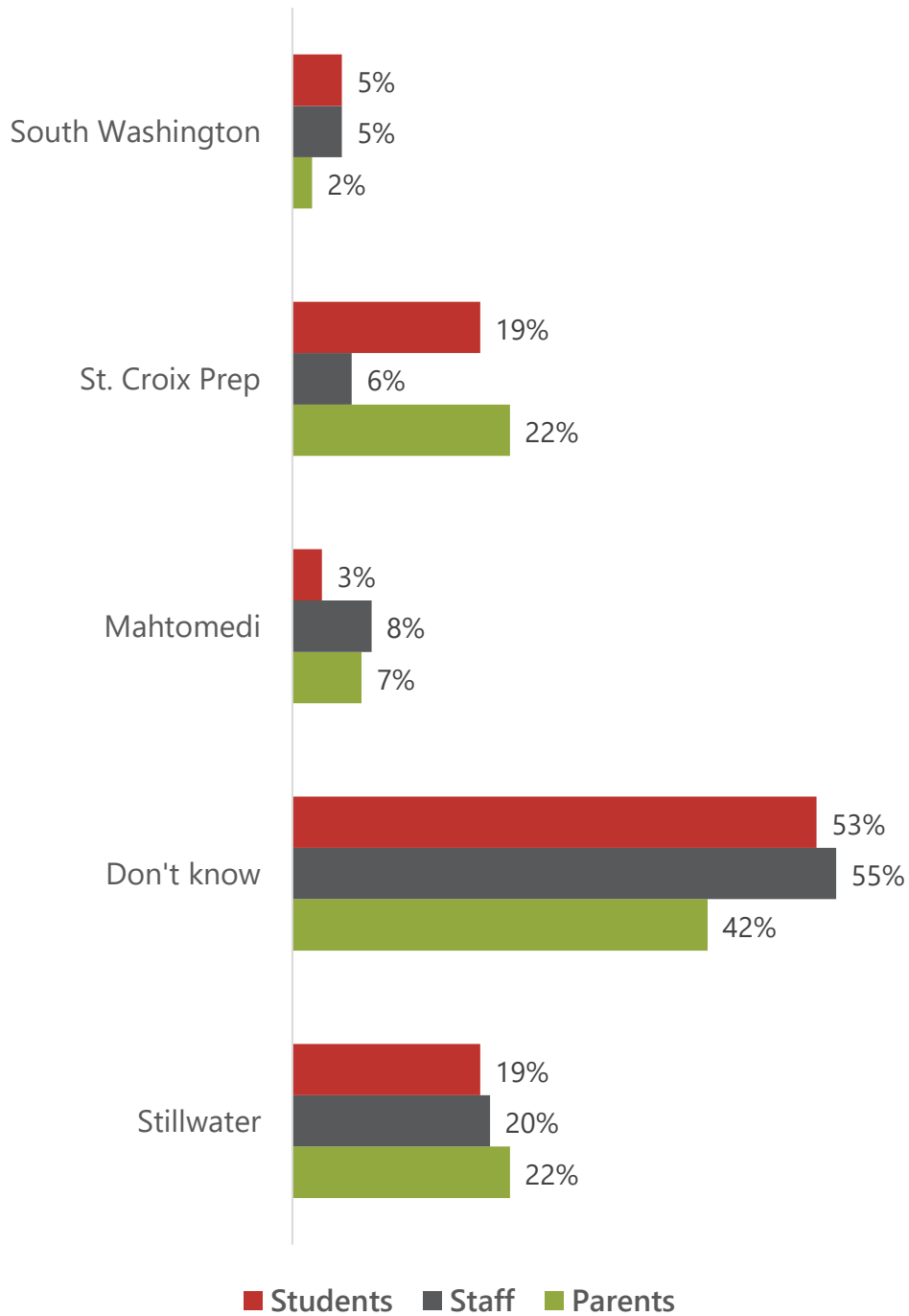


Students N=127
Staff N=213
Parents N=671

Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

School or District that Performs Best

COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

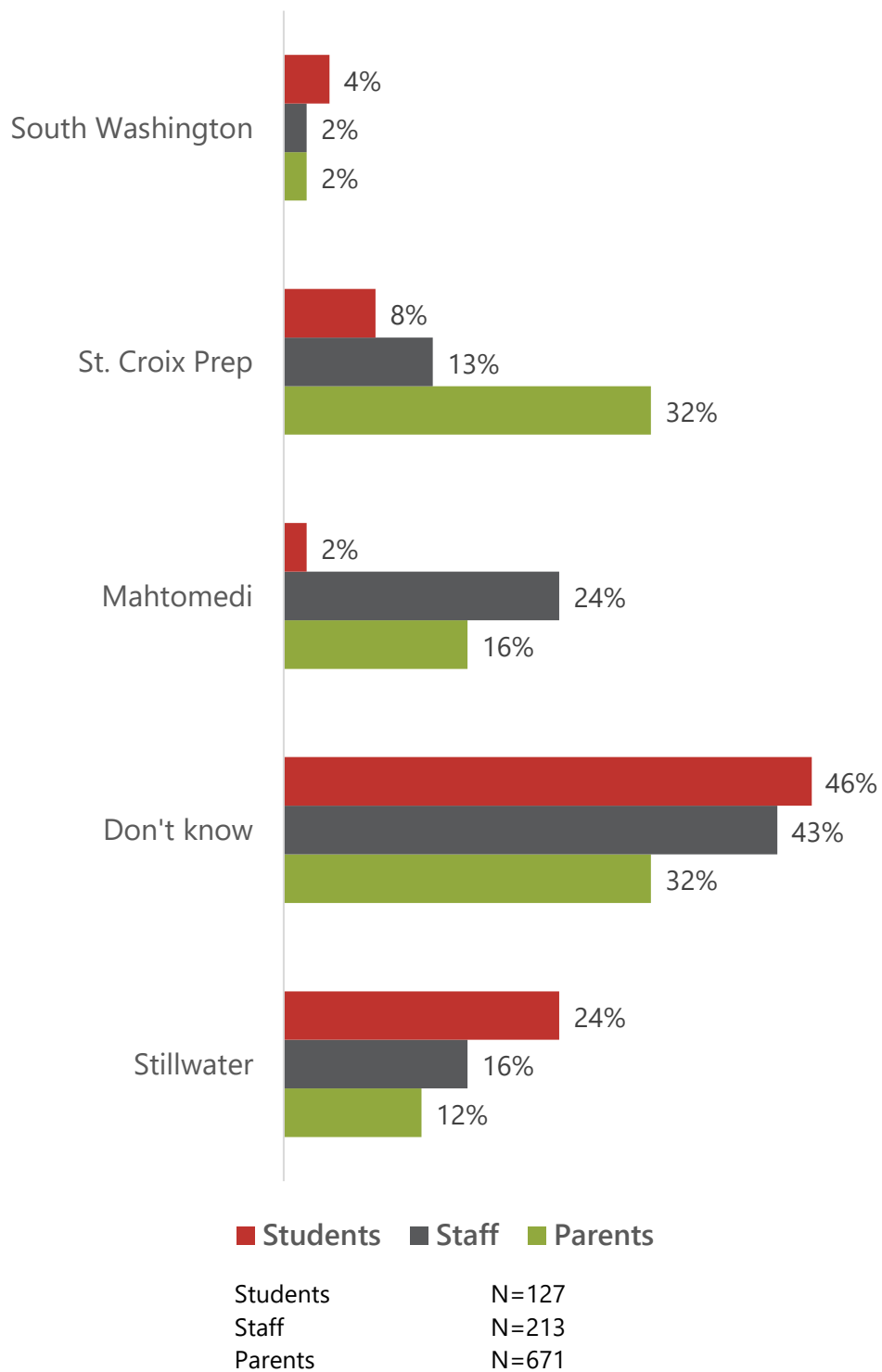


Students N=127
Staff N=213
Parents N=671

Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

School or District that Performs Best

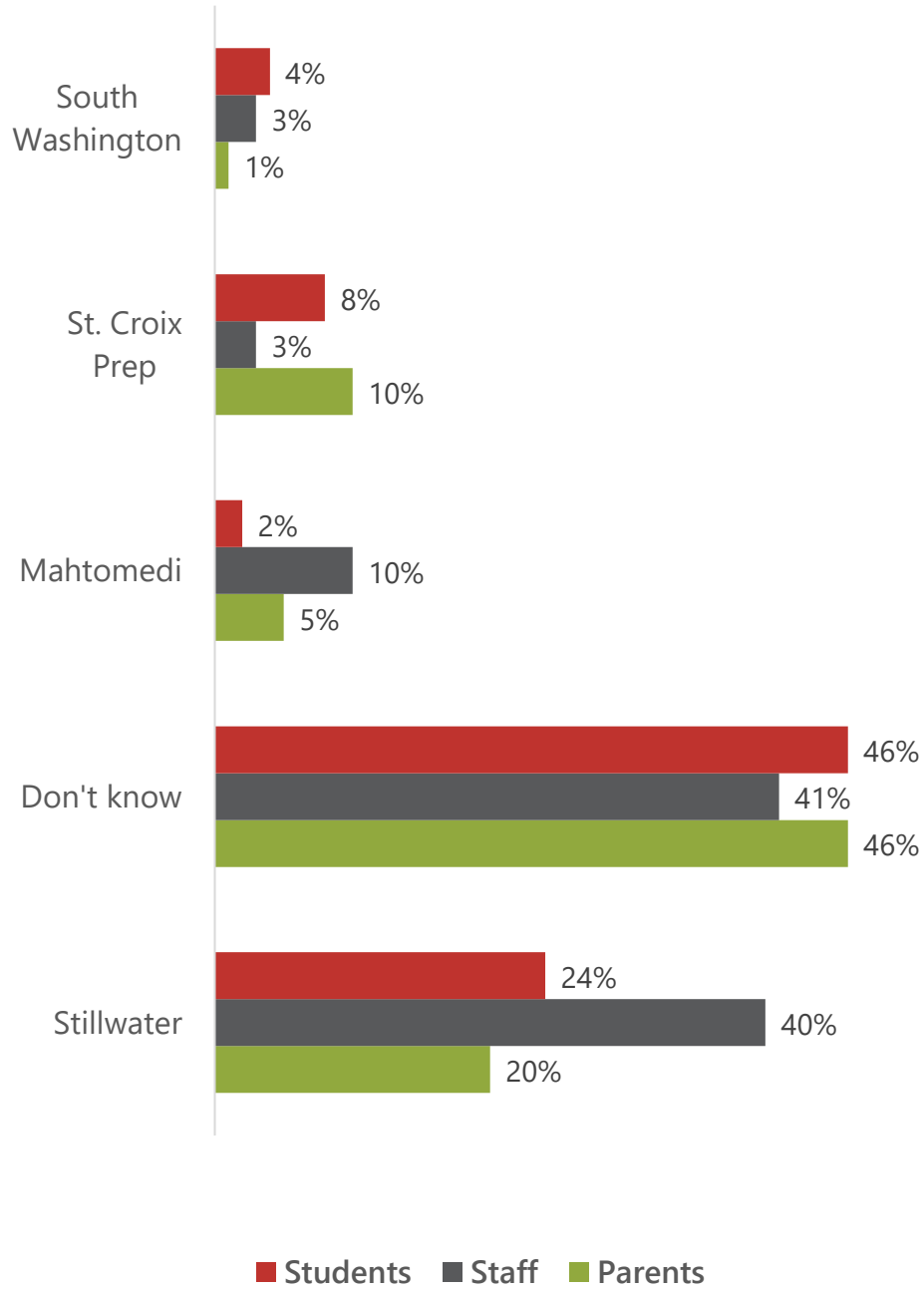
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

School or District that Performs Best

TAILORED EXPERIENCES

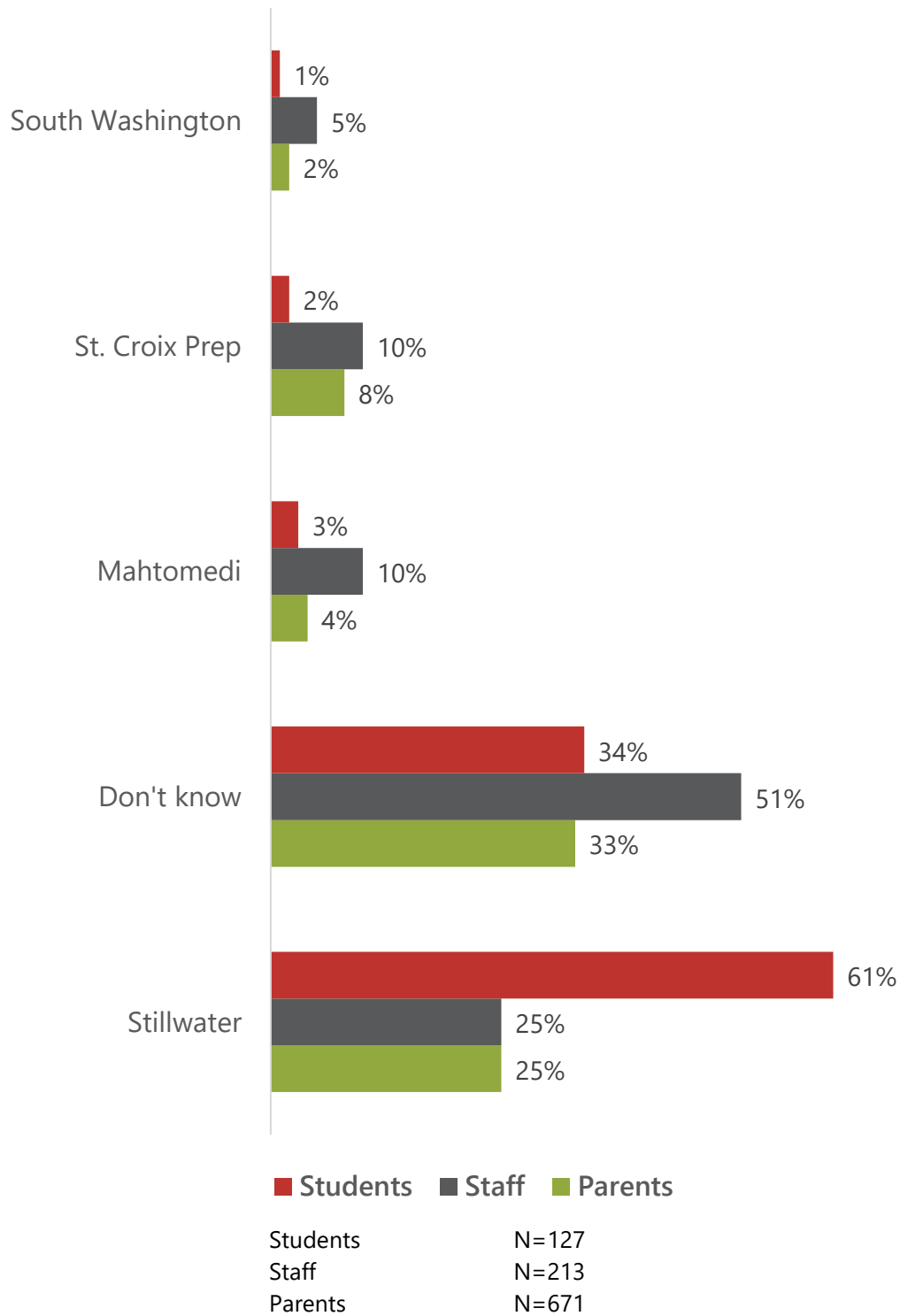


Students	N=127
Staff	N=213
Parents	N=671

Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

School or District that Performs Best

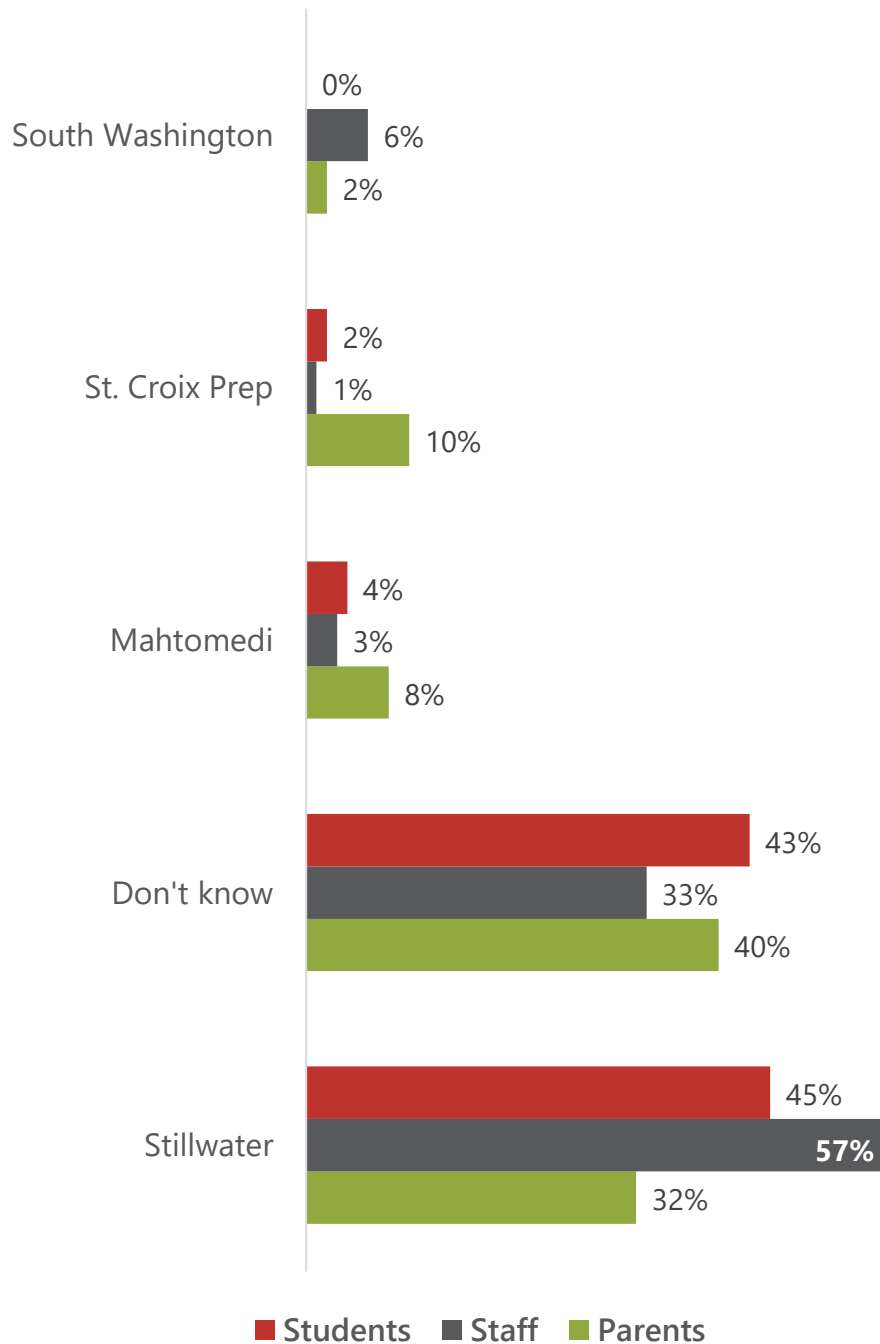
ARTS, CLUBS, & ATHLETICS



Cross-Tabulated Findings by Cohort of Survey Respondents

School or District that Performs Best

BEST OPTION, OVERALL



Students N=127
Staff N=213
Parents N=671

Representation of Survey Respondents: Parents

This study was designed to concentrate on learning opportunities among Stillwater Area Public School District cohorts:

- a) Parents of PreK-12 age students that reside in and/or are enrolled in Stillwater Area Public Schools
- b) Staff, teachers, administrators, support personnel employed by Stillwater Area Public School District
- c) High School graduates of Stillwater Area Public High School

High-level findings, School Year 2021-2022

- **Population growth is indicated:** 56% of parents have PreK-Grade 4 students
- **In-person learning represents majority preference:** 80% of respondents indicated
- **Public School enrollment accounts for less than half:** 47% respondents indicated public school
- **Open enrollment comprises about 13% of residents within Stillwater Area Public School District**
 - This compares to about 10%, statewide
- Private School and Charter School enrollment are reported at 11%, each
- Online School enrollment is reported at 7%
- Homeschool enrollment is reported at 4%

Intentions for School Year 2022-2023

- Differences between School Year 2021-2022 and intention for School Year 2022-2023 are 2% or less. To be clear, there are no significant changes from school year to school year except for online enrollment, however, data for online enrollment is reflective of mandatory distance learning. There is a strong preference for in-person learning models.

Secondary Data

- The Minnesota Department of Education says enrollment in public schools is down for school year 2021-2022 compared to school year 2020-2021.
- Private, online, and charter schools keep growing as Minnesota public schools lose more students. The rapid growth of publicly funded charter schools has slowed during the pandemic.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/minnesota-population-change-between-census-decade.html>

<https://education.mn.gov/mde/fam/open/>

<https://www.twincities.com/2022/02/25/more-mn-families-turned-to-private-schools-in-pandemics-third-school-year/>

Enrollment Considerations: Parents

ENROLLMENT DECISION-DRIVERS: PARENTS

Top 3, most important reasons to enroll:

- 64% say "proximity to home"
- 38% say "best option to prepare my child for the real world"
- 35% say "best option, overall"

Middle 3, less important reasons to enroll:

- 30% say "arts, clubs, and athletics"
- 24% say "aligns with my personal values"
- 22% say "recommendations from friends/family"

Bottom 3, least important reasons to enroll:

- 12% say "cultural diversity"
- 8% say "I attended, or my spouse attended"
- 6% say "world language immersion"

INTEREST IN SPANISH LANGUAGE IMMERSION: PARENTS (AGGREGATED ANSWERS)

- 28% say "very interested"
 - 19% say they are "very likely" to enroll
- 22% say "somewhat interested"
 - 12% say they are "somewhat likely" to enroll
- 50% say neutral to not at all interested
 - 69% say they are undecided to not at all likely to enroll
- For *interest*, scale of 1-5 (1=not at all interested, 5=very interested), the weighted average is 3.2
 - For *intention*, the weighted average is 2.4

INTEREST IN SPANISH LANGUAGE IMMERSION: PARENTS (PREK-4)

- Parents with younger children reflect higher interest in Spanish Language immersion
- 34% say "very interested"
- 22% say "somewhat interested"
- On a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all interested, 5=very interested), the weighted average is 3.5

Enrollment Considerations: Parents

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO PARENTS

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), parents of PreK-12 students reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

Considerations in order of importance (percentages listed are averages of top-3 box responses):

- 66% say "academics"
- 64% say "the education experience"
- 47% say "diversity & inclusion"
- 30% say "extracurriculars"

Detailed responses, by listing under each category, according to what is *most important* (e.g., rated "5" on 1-5 scale):

Academics

- 73% say "real world learning opportunities"
- 63% say "graduation rates"
- 63% say "college prep"
- 59% say "broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment"
- 48% say "flexible learning approach that works for my child"
- 46% say "test scores"
- 38% say "rigorous academics"
- 38% say "ability to work at own pace"
- 32% say "percentage of graduates going on to further their education"

The Education Experience

- 69% say "opportunities for social and emotional learning "
- 68% say "school size/class size"
- 54% say "tailored experiences for my child's individual needs"

Diversity & Inclusion

- 56% say "giving my child a broader world-view and multicultural experiences"
- 43% say "diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)"
- 41% say "diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)"

Extracurriculars

- 33% say "sports"
- 31% say "other extracurriculars like clubs, special interests, etc."
- 27% say "performing arts"
- 24% say "studio arts"
- 20% say "intramurals"

Enrollment Considerations: Parents, according to Geography of Stillwater School District

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO PARENTS

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), parents of PreK-12 students reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

Academics: what is “very important”

	South	North/Central
Real world learning opportunities	84%	64%
Graduation rates	66%	59%
College prep	61%	65%
Broad curriculum that serves all students whether headed for college or employment	54%	41%
Flexible learning approach that works for my child	49%	51%
Test scores	42%	51%
Rigorous academics	35%	41%
Ability to work at own pace	37%	40%
% graduates going on to further education	36%	28%

Stillwater School District survey representation

44% South

56% North/Central

Enrollment Considerations: Parents, according to Geography of Stillwater School District

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO PARENTS

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), parents of PreK-12 students reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

The Education Experience

	South	North/Central
Opportunities for social and emotional learning	75%	63%
School size/class size	70%	62%
Tailored experiences for my child's individual needs	50%	58%

Diversity & Inclusion

	South	North/Central
Giving my child a broader world-view and multicultural experiences	60%	52%
Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)	45%	41%
Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)	44%	37%

Extracurriculars

	South	North/Central
Sports	28%	35%
Other extracurriculars like clubs, special interests, etc.	29%	33%
Performing arts	30%	24%
Studio arts	28%	22%
Intramurals	20%	19%

Stillwater School District survey representation

44% South

56% North/Central

Enrollment Considerations: Parents, by Grade Level of Students

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO PARENTS

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), parents of PreK-12 students reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

Academics: what is “very important”

	PreK-4	5-8	9-12
Real world learning opportunities	60%	78%	82%
Graduation rates	54%	64%	70%
College prep	46%	64%	75%
Broad curriculum that serves all students whether headed for college or employment	46%	60%	64%
Flexible learning approach that works for my child	52%	50%	44%
Test scores	52%	46%	40%
Rigorous academics	44%	38%	32%
Ability to work at own pace	34%	38%	42%
% graduates going on to further education	24%	28%	34%

Enrollment Considerations: Parents, according to Geography of Stillwater School District

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO PARENTS

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), parents of PreK-12 students reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

The Education Experience

	PreK-4	5-8	9-12
Opportunities for social and emotional learning	64%	70%	74%
School size/class size	72%	64%	60%
Tailored experiences for my child's individual needs	62%	54%	48%

Diversity & Inclusion

	PreK-4	5-8	9-12
Giving my child a broader world-view and multicultural experiences	60%	56%	60%
Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)	40%	44%	42%
Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)	32%	46%	46%

Extracurriculars

	PreK-4	5-8	9-12
Sports	28%	30%	35%
Other extracurriculars like clubs, special interests, etc.	24%	38%	50%
Performing arts	30%	38%	44%
Studio arts	32%	32%	44%
Intramurals	20%	19%	22%

Enrollment Considerations: Parents

WHICH SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS ARE PERFORMING BEST, ACCORDING TO PARENTS

For each item, parents were asked to indicate which one of the listed schools or districts performs best. The topline findings are as follows:

Arts, Clubs, Athletics

- 57% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best in arts, clubs, and athletics
 - 33% say they do not know
 - Fewer than 5% indicated any other listing (e.g., St. Croix Catholic, South Washington County, Mahtomedi, St. Croix Prep, and Homeschooling)
 - Since the survey was designed to represent a skew to Stillwater Area Public Schools, it is significant to note that over one-third do not know which school or district performs best in this category

Best option, overall

- 32% say Stillwater Area Public Schools is the best option, overall
 - 40% say they do not know
 - 10% say St. Croix Prep
 - 8% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - 7% say Homeschooling
 - Since the survey was designed to represent a skew to Stillwater Area Public Schools, it is significant to note that 40% say they do not know which school or district is the best option, overall

College & Career Readiness

- 22% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best at college & career readiness
 - 42% say they do not know
 - 22% say St. Croix Prep
 - 7% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - There is an opportunity for Stillwater Area Public Schools to challenge St. Croix Prep in this category

Tailored Educational Opportunities (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, unique needs of my child)

- 20% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best at tailored educational opportunities
 - 46% say they do not know
 - 14% say Homeschooling
 - 10% say St. Croix Prep
 - 5% say Mahtomedi Public Schools

Enrollment Considerations: Parents

WHICH SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS ARE PERFORMING BEST, ACCORDING TO PARENTS

For each item, parents were asked to indicate which one of the listed schools or districts performs best. The topline findings are as follows:

Academic Achievement

- 12% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best with academic achievement
 - 32% say St. Croix Prep performs best
 - 32% say they do not know
 - 16% say Mahtomedi performs best
 - It is telling to note that Stillwater ranks lower than St. Croix Prep and Mahtomedi even whole responses from those two listings are far below survey representation from Stillwater

Survey Representation: Teachers, Staff, Administrators

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

Residence

- 58% say their residence is inside the Stillwater Area Public Schools District
- 42% say their residence is outside the Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Children of Stillwater Staff

- 69% say they do not have children that attend Stillwater Area Public Schools
- 31% say they do have children that attend Stillwater Area Public Schools

WHAT TEACHERS BELIEVE IS MOST IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER FOR ENROLLMENT

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), Staff of Stillwater Area Public Schools reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

Considerations in order of importance (percentages listed are averages of top-3 box responses):

- 72% say "academics"
- 69% say "the education experience"
- 67% say "diversity & inclusion"
- 43% say "extracurriculars"

Detailed responses, by listing under each category, according to what is *most important* (e.g., rated "5" on 1-5 scale):

Academics

- 84% say "real world learning opportunities"
- 78% say "broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment"
- 54% say "flexible learning approach that works for my child"
- 53% say "graduation rates"
- 43% say "rigorous academics"
- 36% say "college prep"
- 29% say "ability to work at own pace"
- 17% say "percentage of graduates going on to further their education"
- 10% say "test scores"

The Education Experience

- 76% say "opportunities for social and emotional learning"
- 71% say "school size/class size"
- 61% say "tailored experiences for my child's individual needs"

Survey Representation: Teachers, Staff, Administrators

Detailed responses, by listing under each category , according to what is *most important* (e.g., rated "5" on 1-5 scale):

Diversity & Inclusion

- 73% say "giving my child a broader world-view and multicultural experiences"
- 64% say "diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)"
- 63% say "diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)"

Extracurriculars

- 45% say "performing arts"
- 44% say "other extracurriculars like clubs, special interests, etc."
- 40% say "studio arts"
- 38% say "sports"
- 30% say "intramurals"

Survey Representation: Teachers, Staff, Administrators

WHICH SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS ARE PERFORMING BEST, ACCORDING TO STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF

For each item, staff were asked to indicate which one of the listed schools or districts performs best. The topline findings are as follows:

Arts, Clubs, Athletics

- 25% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best in arts, clubs, and athletics
 - 51% say they do not know
 - 10% say Mahtomedi
 - 10% say St. Croix Prep

Best option, overall

- 57% say Stillwater Area Public Schools is the best option, overall
 - 40% say they do not know
 - <1% say St. Croix Prep
 - 3% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - 6% say South Washington County Public Schools

College & Career Readiness

- 20% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best at college & career readiness
 - 55% say they do not know
 - 6% say St. Croix Prep
 - 8% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - 5% say South Washington County Public Schools

Tailored Educational Opportunities (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, unique needs of my child)

- 40% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best at tailored educational opportunities
 - 41% say they do not know
 - 3% say St. Croix Prep
 - 10% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - 3% say South Washington County

Academic Achievement

- 16% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best with academic achievement
 - 43% say they do not know
 - 24% say Mahtomedi performs best
 - 13% say St. Croix Prep performs best

Survey Representation: Stillwater High School 2018-2021 Graduates

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

Residence

- 77% say their residence was inside the Stillwater Area Public Schools District (during High School)
- 33% say their residence was outside the Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Year Graduated

- 31% graduated Stillwater Area Public Schools 2021
- 16% graduated 2020
- 24% graduated 2019
- 28% graduated 2018

Experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools (years of experience, not grade levels)

- 6% had 1-3 years of experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools
- 16% had 4 years' experience
- 15% had 5-8 years' experience
- 19% had 9-12 years' experience
- 45% experienced Stillwater Area Public Schools all 13 years

WHAT STUDENTS BELIEVE IS MOST IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER FOR ENROLLMENT

Asked to rate categories of enrollment considerations on a scale of 1-5 (1=not at all important, 5=very important), Staff of Stillwater Area Public Schools reflected what is most important within the following categories of consideration.

Considerations in order of importance (percentages listed are averages of top-3 box responses):

- 78% say "academics"
- 75% say "diversity & inclusion"
- 55% say "the education experience"
- 45% say "extracurriculars"

Detailed responses, by listing under each category, according to what is *most important* (e.g., rated "5" on 1-5 scale):

Academics

- 82% say "real world learning opportunities"
- 78% say "broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment"
- 73% say "flexible learning approach that works for me"
- 54% say "graduation rates"
- 27% say "rigorous academics"
- 52% say "college prep"
- 62% say "ability to work at own pace"
- 8% say "percentage of graduates going on to further their education"
- 25% say "test scores"

Survey Representation: Stillwater High School 2018-2021 Graduates

Detailed responses, by listing under each category, according to what is *most important* (e.g., rated "5" on 1-5 scale):

The Education Experience

- 72% say "opportunities for social and emotional learning "
- 28% say "school size/class size"
- 64% say "tailored experiences for my individual needs"

Diversity & Inclusion

- 77% say "giving me child a broader world-view and multicultural experiences"
- 76% say "diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)"
- 71% say "diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, genders/orientations, ethnicities)"

Extracurriculars

- 45% say "performing arts"
- 53% say "other extracurriculars like clubs, special interests, etc."
- 37% say "studio arts"
- 38% say "sports"
- 29% say "intramurals"

Survey Representation: Stillwater High School 2018-2021 Graduates

WHICH SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS ARE PERFORMING BEST, ACCORDING TO STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

For each item, staff were asked to indicate which one of the listed schools or districts performs best. The topline findings are as follows:

Arts, Clubs, Athletics

- 61% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best in arts, clubs, and athletics
 - 34% say they do not know
 - 3% say Mahtomedi
 - <2% say St. Croix Prep

Best option, overall

- 45% say Stillwater Area Public Schools is the best option, overall
 - 43% say they do not know
 - <2% say St. Croix Prep
 - 4% say Mahtomedi Public Schools

College & Career Readiness

- 19% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best at college & career readiness
 - 53% say they do not know
 - 19% say St. Croix Prep
 - 3% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - 5% say South Washington County Public Schools

Tailored Educational Opportunities (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, my unique needs)

- 24% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best at tailored educational opportunities
 - 46% say they do not know
 - 8% say St. Croix Prep
 - <2% say Mahtomedi Public Schools
 - 4% say South Washington County

Academic Achievement

- 22% say Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best with academic achievement
 - 42% say they do not know
 - 9% say Mahtomedi performs best
 - 20% say St. Croix Prep performs best

Opportunities to Rally Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Make the most of opportunities for transparency and co-creation

- Strategize, co-create with Parent-Teacher-Student-Administrator task force
 - Prioritize, plan, present 5-year plans, 10-year plans
 - Offer high-level budget details for public examination
 - Address compensation needs, fair wages, benefits
 - Set goals to address learning gaps that resulted from the pandemic
 - Place emphasis closing literacy gaps
 - Benchmark measurements that focus on reading success by 4th Grade
- Cultivate productive relationships with parents, students, and staff
 - Listen to everyone, but act in accordance with common ground and common sense
 - Provide plenty of opportunities for parents to provide input
 - Meet them where they are: coordinate communication preferences that reach people on their own terms
 - Make the results of this study available (consider multiple Zoom presentations): go above and beyond expectations to ask for opinions and share information
- Address past mistakes and missteps
 - Offer 100% transparency: what mistakes were made? Who made them? How are they being rectified? Who should apologize?
 - Get past the anger. Acknowledge the need to heal.
- Level the playing field, provide equal time, equal opportunities
 - The need for SEL and attention to expansion of diversity and inclusion is necessary, needed, and wanted by the majority of cohorts (parents, staff, and students). Hear out the naysayers, but take a firm, evidence-based position.
- Ask families and staff to contribute to the unique story of Stillwater Area Public Schools



Qualitative Respondent "Homework"

Qualitative Respondent “Homework”

DEFINITION

Upon selection for focus group participation, respondents were invited to contribute “homework” to help Orman researchers better understand their perspectives, experiences, and opinions about preK-12 education, including whether or not they would recommend Stillwater Area Public Schools to a friend. This exercise was *not* a condition of participating in a focus group. Full compliance with the exercise was on the slim side, but we achieve learning from what was contributed.

This section of the report offers a sampling of respondent input in the form of “letter to a friend” and images that details why they would or would not recommend Stillwater Area Public Schools. The following profiles are featured:

Highly satisfied, passionate

-Parent, resident/enrolled in preK-6 Stillwater District

-Focused on bilingual, Spanish immersion

Conflicted but supportive

-Parent, resident/enrolled in Stillwater public High School

-Focused on equity and inclusion

Positive experience, focus on relationships

-"Past" parent, resident/past enrollment in Stillwater District

-Focused on positivity, optimism, relationships, community

Mixed experience, focus on "imperfect fit"

-Parent, resident/enrolled preK-8 in Stillwater District

-Focused on reading, performance of cohorts, parent involvement

Mixed-to-negative experience, focus on inclusion

-Parent, resident/enrolled preK-6 in Stillwater District

-Focused on inclusion, opportunity to improve at the District level

Mixed experience, focus on bullying, problems after 3rd Grade

-Parent, resident/enrolled preK-6 in Stillwater District

-Focused on student-teacher relationship disconnect after 3rd grade

Positive experience, focus on sameness of public schools

-Parent, resident/current enrollment in South Washington County District

-Focused on hopes: safety, inclusivity, respect for all, children's well-being, success

Happy with decision to open-enroll

-Parent, resident of Stillwater District enrolled in New Life Academy

-Focused on child's individual needs, feels child will get lost in the crowd in Stillwater

Respondent profile: *Highly satisfied, passionate*
-**Parent, resident/enrolled in Stillwater District**
-Has 3 preK-6 children
-Bilingual, Spanish immersion

Dear Friend,

We are so lucky to have an incredible public school district! Stillwater Schools are wonderful and I highly recommend you consider joining our Pony District. Here's why: *every* child can attend. Every child has a place, and that place is at their neighborhood school. Our public schools are incredible, and great things can happen when a community gets behind ALL its students, teachers, and schools to be strong and successful.

We love Stillwater schools for their amazing early childhood family programming. The teachers and parent educators are the best: dedicated, caring, engaging. We had support as parents with young kids unlike I've seen in any other state where I've lived, including Iowa, Colorado, and Arizona.

We also have a Spanish immersion program! As a Spanish-speaking parent, having my kids in a bilingual school program is essential to support my goals for my children to be bilingual and biliterate, which allows them to have friends and teachers from many different cultural backgrounds, and opens their eyes to incredible life-long possibilities! An extra bonus is the smaller community size of the immersion program in a much larger district.

Our kids are also learning how to befriend new students, how to be a responsible member of a classroom family, how to work on group projects, and much more.

At Lake Elmo Elementary, we've had professional, kind, caring, dedicated, and knowledgeable teachers. We adore the principal, he is warm, welcoming, is the biggest supporter of the immersion program. He knows his stuff, and my kids love him, too.

What's more, our school community is amazing. We've met so many friendly families, and we have an awesome PTA that creates events where parents and kids can have fun, get to know each other, and support our schools whether it's a spring carnival, book fairs, or movie nights.

I so hope you'll consider choosing our local, public Stillwater Schools for your child's education. They'll be as proud as we are to be Ponies!



I want strong, academic learning that suits my children's needs, in a positive, safe learning environment.

My children will be well-rounded, prepared for life, equipped for healthy relationships. They will be responsible community members and have interest in music, athletics, and culture.



Respondent profile: *Conflicted but supportive*
-**Parent, resident/enrolled in Stillwater District**
-Has 2 high schoolers at Stillwater High School
-Focused on equity and inclusion

Dear Friend,

I would be conflicted about enrolling in Stillwater. From an ethical perspective I believe we must participate in public schooling as it means we are invested in the system.

Conversely there a huge gap in the school's ethos, sense of community, and misplaced values. Not enough is done with respect to equity, community building, and humility. Too much is placed on excellence and outstanding students / groups who stand above or better yet stand on others to succeed. More should be done to support the excellence of the community.

The high school is loud, proud, and rude. The attitude of the teachers, students, and parents is antithetical to good living. We should all learn humility and awareness of others. The environment of the school should be quieter.

I have a few more thoughts about what I hope school can be:

Equity: as someone from a lower class background who was fortunate to benefit from key acts of giving and luck we believe that private education is immoral and support public education by continuing to enroll in these programs. Education should support all students equally and provide those students an opportunity to be part of a wider community.

Humanist: schools should provide a humanist ethos and reinforce caring for and supporting each other as a collective. Focused on bettering ourselves as individuals by uplifting each other.

Secular: schools should be free of any religion - not equal time - but no mention of religion.

My hope is to see my child thrive academically. That doesn't mean being top of the class. To me, seeing my child thrive academically means seeing them feel confidence in learning rather than frustration.



I want all students to be accepted as a whole individual. I love to envision that my children will be accepted for what they are. And with that acceptance made, they feel safe that they can be their best self in class.

Respondent profile: *Positive experience, focus on relationships*

-Parent, resident/past enrollment in Stillwater District

-Had 2 children, experienced Stillwater Public Schools

-Focused on positivity, optimism, relationships, community

Dear Friend,

Personally, we had a fantastic experience with Stillwater Public Schools. Our kids received a wonderful education. There were so many opportunities for the kids to get involved in not only the school, but in the community. We had such positive experiences with every single teacher we encountered. Some of these teachers still stay connected with the kids, years after graduation.

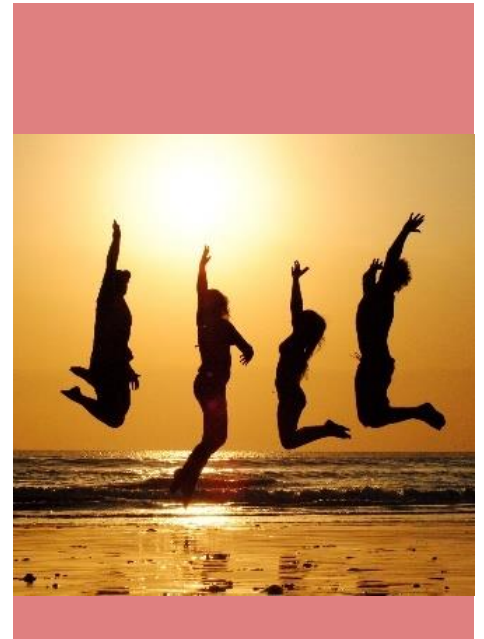
There were also opportunities for the students to take college credit classes, which could save families thousands of dollars in their college education.

The only negative thing I can say is that we lived quite far away from the physical school, so there was a lot of driving back and forth. Sometimes we would be back and forth four times a day. However, I would encourage you to either car pool with some of the neighbors, or simply make the best of that car ride when you have one-on-one time with your kids.

Not only did our kids develop life-long friends and become successful adults, years later, we remain friends with a lot of the parents we met through our kids! My hopes for my children are being realized from the start they had with Stillwater, including a successful future career because of their education, happiness in their lives, and lasting relationships.

I hope you have as wonderful of an experience as we did.

P.S. Don't let those former school board members scare you. I know they made a mess for the future students, but I am hopeful that it all can be overcome with some great leadership!



This school district is great, comfortable, and promising. Anytime you have a question or concern, representatives from the district answer with honesty, patience and I always feel a sense of belonging like I am talking to a friend.

If I had the choice again, where I would send my children to school, I would pick the Stillwater School District. I would not regret my decision.

Respondent profile: *Mixed experience, focus on "imperfect fit"*

-**Parent, resident/current enrollment in Stillwater District**

-Has 3 children, experienced Stillwater Public **Schools**

-Focused on reading, performance of student cohorts, parent involvement

Dear Friend,

If your family is white and middle class, which I call the 60%, I recommend Stillwater Area Public Schools for your kids *only* if you also intend to follow through on exposing them to diversity outside school.

If your student is in the 20% that will do "okay," I think you should consider their unique needs in selecting a school: some of our elementary schools are particularly well-suited for kids with specific diagnoses, and I've heard great things.

If you have a student in the 20% that is likely to struggle, I predict your enrollment in Stillwater will require a lot of advocacies on your part and mixed returns.

If you have Black or brown kids, I recommend you skip Stillwater and send them to schools where they'll see more students of color. Even other east metro suburbs have more diversity.

If you're particularly interested in the Spanish immersion program, Stillwater has a good one.

Now that we have been in the Stillwater district for four years, I see so many similarities of other white, middle-to-upper class Minnesota districts: the student numbers, the whiteness, the privilege, the hyperfocus on sports and achievement, the divisiveness of the community in regard to funding and curriculum. That said, there is a vast array of opportunities available to students in terms of courses, activities, clubs, and social circles.

If you have the ability, becoming involved within your school community will increase your understanding of gaps and enable you to help patch them for your child, and exert positive influence within the school and/or district. Every school community needs involved parents. From the inside, however, I see more clearly than ever that no classroom or school is going to be a one-size-fits-all experience, and our family is a good example of an imperfect fit.



I want our children to develop competence and confidence in reading. This capability is key to pleasure in reading and allows them to educate themselves on anything and everything throughout their lives.

We need curious, critical thinkers. Educators need to embrace the scientific method.

I want my children to see, hear, and feel the impact of community as it relates to social interactions, self-esteem, and inclusion, so they can act to help create a better world.



Respondent profile: *Mixed-to-negative experience, focus on inclusion*

-Parent, resident/current enrollment in Stillwater District

-Has 2 children in Stillwater Public Schools

-Focused on inclusion, opportunity to improve at the District level

Dear Friend,

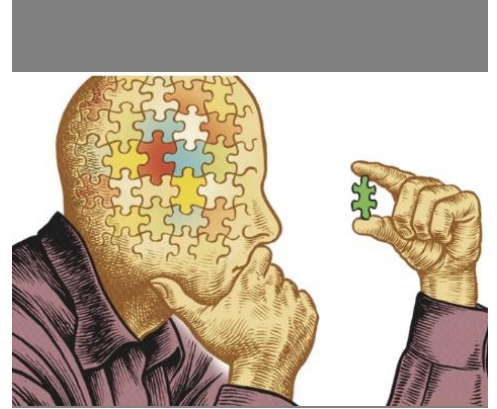
The decision to enroll your child in a district or school involves so much more than academics. I believe that part of learning to be an adult is exposure to differing perspectives and viewpoints, and that politics come into play any time public dollars are involved. For this reason I'm not sure I would recommend Stillwater.

Stillwater has a lot of work to do to overcome racial inequality and other prejudices. The school district administration seems reluctant to address these issues in the face of opposition by a vocal minority. Instead, the board and community members engage in petty grudges and mudslinging. I also believe that heterogeneity and privilege can result in a narrow field of view and infighting over issues that pale in comparison to the larger issues that should take center stage.

When it comes to leading the way to progress, the student body is doing most of the work. And I believe they should.

My perspective is a little unique because we have a child who will prejudice everywhere she goes due to a core part of her identity. We continue to weigh our options for her, including withdrawal from Stillwater.

I do feel the Stillwater administration and staff want to ensure all children feel safe and accepted, but I remain unconvinced there is willingness to put in the work and establish policies and procedures to achieve those goals. And I'm afraid of what that will mean for my child and our family.



I don't know what parents feel they have to fear from people – especially students – that are LGBTQ. I don't know why there is such resistance to including in the classroom the awareness of humanity, that everyone deserves acceptance.

As a parent, I feel fearful for the child of mine that doesn't fit into hetero norms – and I believe we as a family have a great deal more to fear from those who oppose of than they have to fear from us.



Respondent profile: *Mixed experience, focus on problems 4th Grade and beyond*

-Parent, resident/current enrollment in Stillwater District

-Has 2 children in Stillwater Public Schools

-Focused on loving, caring preK-3 teachers, then a disconnect by 4th grade

Dear Friend,

I heard you're shopping around with where to live and you're thinking about Stillwater. That's great! We mostly love living here. Our downtown has a small-town feeling Monday-Wednesday, but then it's super busy. So make sure you buy or build "in the country" because the drivers zip down our streets like it's their personal racetrack. If you choose to live in town, make sure you install a fence and always park in your garage as we have vehicle break-ins as of late.

Since you're asking about whether I would recommend Stillwater public schools, I'd have to say, preK-3rd grade is phenomenal. Teachers care so much, they are so loving with the children, but our experience from 4th grade to 6th grade has been much different, and my kids complain about the teachers, a lot.

As a parent, I tried to help my children see the good in teachers, but it is challenging – especially when my 10-year-old comes home telling me her 4th grade teacher made a comment about her being spoiled or how, in 5th grade, a teacher singled out a student in class because her dad emailed the teacher about a concern.

Also, and I hate to say this, but if your children have any trouble in Stillwater elementary schools with bullying, make sure you don't contact the school social worker. Our 10-year-old was bullied repeatedly, she often came home from school in tears and begged us to not make her go to school. I contacted the school social worker and she brought the bullies together, twice, with my child. It was a terrible idea and it made things worse.

We'll experience middle school next. I'm hoping. Hoping that the teachers project care and concern. Hoping that my child has an easier time, overall.

Our elementary schools are absolutely wonderful. Choose any of them and your children will feel loved and accepted. Well, that is 4th grade. That's a turning point in Stillwater schools. That's when the teachers change, academics are shoved down the kids throats, and unfortunately, kids can come to hate school.



Respondent profile: *Positive experience, focus on sameness of public schools*

-Parent, resident/current enrollment in South Washington County District

-Has 2 children in South Washington County Public Schools

-Focused on hopes: safety, inclusivity, respect for all, children's well-being, success

Dear Friend,

I don't have a lot of advice to give you except to do what is in the best interest of your family. Every family is different and each family has different desires for their family's well-being and education. I also know that every child is different and thrives in different environments. I would advise you to search for what is important to/for your child, as well as your family's current situation and what may be important to you in the future.

But I also believe that from school district to school district in this part of Minnesota, things are the same. If you are seeking information about the South Washington Country District, my view is that it is learning how to cope with its growth. The community places a lot of importance on education and youth activities, which we appreciate.

We have had nothing but great instructors and teachers, so far. I feel very comfortable sending my child to school here and I can see a lot of growth potential if she continues to be enrolled in this school district. I am hoping this is a community which she can grow into and become a part of.

My hopes are that my child receives a well-rounded education. That she is allowed to explore and challenge thoughts and ideas in a safe and inclusive environment which also encourages children to think critically and creatively.

No matter where you send your children to school, I would hope that they be given access and the opportunity to explore and discover a wide variety of ideas, subjects, and activities that interest them.



I am hopeful that South Washington Country district helps our students be surrounded by teachers, peers, and a community that embraces differences, respects thoughts and opinions, and genuinely cares for our children's overall well-being and success.

Respondent profile: *Happy with decision to open-enroll*

-Parent, resident of Stillwater District enrolled in New Life Academy

-Focused on child's individual needs, feels child will get lost in the crowd in Stillwater

Dear Friend,

Thank you so much for reaching out about which school district and school to enroll your child in. It's a large decision, and one that can't be taken lightly. I live in Stillwater, and we do have an amazing school district, but we instead chose to enroll our daughter at New Life Academy and recommend that you do the same.

For our daughter, Stillwater public schools wasn't even in the running because of how big and daunting it feels. Our daughter would be lost in the crowd because she is quiet, on the timid size, and doesn't always speak up and advocate for herself. Sure, she could coast through, do well academically, make a few friends along the way, but would she be seen, and if seen, understood? After thinking through the different elements of your child's individual needs, I encourage you to think about your values as a family.

I want to say that I think all of the school options on the east side of the metro provide the same level of academic rigor. No matter where you go whether it be Stillwater, St. Croix Prep, River Grove, St. Croix Catholic, Woodbury, or New Life Academy, your child will inevitably be set up for success academically. Because of that, we thought through other aspects to make our decision. With that in mind, I encourage you to ponder a few things.

First, who is your child? When I pondered this about our daughter, I needed to be realistic. I assessed what I have seen up until this point in her educational abilities, her social abilities, and how she's growing emotionally. At this moment, she is your average American student, doing pretty well in school, grasping concepts, but hasn't shown any signs of being on the higher or lower end of the learning scale.

When I thought through all of this, it made sense to enroll at New Life Academy but we also put her name in the lottery at St. Croix Prep and River Grove because of the smaller school setting and class sizes. We haven't regretted our decision.

My hope is to see my child thrive academically. That doesn't mean being top of the class. To me, seeing my child thrive academically means seeing them feel confidence in learning rather than frustration. I want learning to feel like a challenge, but one that they can accomplish, and one that they are excited to accomplish. Learning doesn't have to feel like an uphill battle.





Quantitative Survey Open-Ends

Qualitative Input from Quantitative Survey

DEFINITION

Over 1,000 individuals participated in the online survey. The survey was carefully designed to achieve as high a completion rate as possible by embracing the challenge of creating neutrally-phrased, brief questions. Results from the survey indicate that 75% of the respondents input answers for 80% or more of the questions, indicating a high level of interest in participation in the study.

Within two-thirds of the survey, questions and answers were constructed in a mix of closed-end bases, that is, questions that offered multiple choice, Likert-type scales, and polar/general (e.g., yes/no) responses.

For one-third of the survey, researchers created impartial open-ended questions to create opportunities for respondents to input complete perspectives, opinions, and experiences on topics such as *hopes, successes, and concerns* about preK-12 education. Not surprisingly, drop-off was most likely to occur when a respondent faced an open-ended question, however, from an analyses standpoint, interpretations do not differ from closed-end to open-ended data.

A representative mix of responses from the open-ended survey questions are included in this section. These inputs represent concerns from parents, students, and staff about things like mental health, student leadership, academic achievement, lack of diversity, problems with the school board and the way meetings are conducted, budgeting, and more.

We found a great many consistencies in the considerable, thorough parent, student, and staff input. These are categorized, unedited, according to cohort.

Survey Input: Parents

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for your child or children with respect to their experience in school? The word “hopes” is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever “hopes” means to you.

We hope to prepare our children for diversity & Inclusion in the real world

- Exposed to different cultures
- Stay curious and hopeful in the world
- Hope for more BIPOCs teachers and staff
- Hope that students have BIPOC teachers and staff that look like them
- Focus on unity, which won't happen if we're promoting division
- Being surrounded by a diverse group of children/backgrounds/ideals
- Compassion for others, exposure to diversity
- Awareness of the larger community and world

We hope we can address social & emotional learning in school

- Grow socially
- Be willing to accept all people
- Hope school puts an emphasis on character building and skills beyond academics
- Training in social-emotional learning methods and eliminating demeaning practices
- Improved social and emotional learning in class
- Disruptive and troubled kids get the attention they need

We hope our children are taught practical skills

- Require life skills for all, including things like cooking and gardening
- Learn things relevant to advancing in the modern job market
- Public speaking skills, needed for the even the most brilliant people in the workplace
- Strong work ethic, not afraid to ask questions
- Transition program that teaches independent living, not just for those with special needs

We hope our children become critical thinkers

- That they learn how to learn, especially how to sniff out truth versus propaganda
- Teach how to think not what to think
- Critical thinking, logic, connect the dots, form own opinions

We hope we can focus on the future, and stay hopeful & optimistic

- Options to explore vocations and college-level courses
- Curious, love of learning, strive to be the best version of self in every aspect of life
- That they see opportunities to serve and be a light for others
- Equip my child to see hope in opposition, strength in who she is created to be
- Care for self: spiritually, mentally, and physically
- Fit to help those around them

Survey Input Summary: **Parents, Students, Teachers & Staff**

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for your child or children with respect to their experience in school? The word “hopes” is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever

Parents	Students	Teachers & Staff
Friendships/Relationships	Diversity	Leadership
Academics	Inclusion	Support
No masks	Real world learning	Mental health
Respect	Student involvement	Unity
	Listen	Clear communication
	Public health	

Survey Input: Parents

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for your child or children with respect to their experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope we can refocus on academics & curriculum

- Focus on test scores/how we can catch kids up from last couple years
- Hope for continued assessment techniques that always have been the standard
- Avoid grading because we want to be inclusive, equitable
- Students who work hard and put in the work deserve to receive the grade they have earned
- Explore courses that help them determine areas of study for college
- No more standardized testing
- Put more focus on content learning, reading, math, and other core academic subjects
- Teach the fundamentals: Math, English, Writing, Science, Economics
- Teach children to value merit
- No politics in the curriculum
- Stillwater schools need to catch up with other schools in offering an online option with in-person individual classes as necessary
- Stillwater is way behind the times on offering hybrid approaches that entail in-person as well as online learning
- Slow down! Instead of plowing through material, get to know kids and what they need
- It is hard for teachers to differentiate curriculum and meet the needs of each student, but hopeful that something can be done to address it because it is so important

We hope communication improves on all levels

- Hope for better communication from the school and teachers, what's going on, what needs work, more transparency
- Better communication from teachers fosters trust with the students
- We need more connection and encouragement between student and teacher: meet my child where she is, not where you think she should be
- We need transparent language about the need for the district to stabilize
- More active engagement from district leadership with our schools
- More opportunities for parents to serve, communicated from the district and the classroom

We hope budgets are utilized according to the most important needs

- Hope that state and federal funding for schools allows for teacher pay increases and reducing classroom sizes
- Properly funded programming and awareness of emotional well-being
- We need funds for emotional intelligence awareness and teaching

We hope the busing situation improves

- Consistent and reliable busing for school **and** activities

Survey Input: Parents

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for your child or children with respect to their experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope we can effectively make a post-COVID transition

- We need to bring normalcy in our kids' lives after the tragic last couple of years
- We need to set goals, post-Covid, to ensure our children thrive
- Hope we can regain the educational foundation we had, pre-pandemic
- Use our pandemic experience to normalize into the curriculum the better, flexible learning options for those who want them

We hope to put more focus on mental health & relationships

- Hope my children do not face any bullying and have great friendships
- Hope that all students learn to obey leadership
- Everyone should have ample room and safety to express themselves
- Hope my children feel valued and included

We hope that behavior & discipline are addressed

- Hope that the bullying policies are actually followed
- That "bullying" and "girl drama" issues we hear about get addressed
- That children learn socioemotional development as well as academics
- Hope for a calm atmosphere
- Hope that the district can publicly define what constitutes a hate crime and offer safe and effective ways of reporting
- That we create goals for less drama in peer groups as teens manage pressures of diversity, peer pressure, in a social media culture

We hope the new Superintendent can rally and unify the district

- We need unity in the school district, in the schools, and in the community
- We hope for a spark, some excitement, to pursue rallying the district with vigor

Survey Input: Staff

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes with respect to your experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope to do better with diversity & Inclusion

- Racism within our school staff is my top concern. It was very sad to watch school staff deliberately work together to *not* have the school principal succeed. He was treated with zero respect by many and no matter what he would do he was questioned. The microaggressions were horrific and the macroaggressions grew as they gathered in numbers to eliminate him.
- Where is the statement about equity? At the beginning of the year, we were told the district was going to put out messaging supporting diversity and the rights of all students. This messaging never happened, and it honestly seemed intentional to avoid potential conflict.
- I have concerns about how some colleagues, at all levels, view students and families that are different from them. I hope we can change that.
- Lake Elmo's diverse student body makes me feel hopeful. The teachers at Lake Elmo use Responsive Classroom and celebrate diverse learners.
- I hope all schools in our district will continue moving towards a diverse teachers and staff.
- The drive for inclusion and celebration of diversity inspires me. Continue to unify our diverse population; helping students to understand and celebrate one another.
- I am an advocate for conversations about race in our building.
- I hope we can bring an end to inequitable educational opportunity based on socioeconomic status. We need to understand equity in everything, that will allow us to finally begin to level the playing field for all our students.

Survey Input: Staff

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes with respect to your experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope we can focus on the needs of each student

- Hope we can move away from the high school's only goal, which is to get the lowest achieving students to pass. All new programs, resources, and ideas are geared toward the most at-risk students. The trade-off is lack of support and direction for our highest achieving students. We are not competing with St. Croix Prep, Cretin, Woodbury, Hill Murray, and Mounds Park Academy for the at-risk kids.
- Students and teachers need more opportunities to be empowered at the high school to help increase engagement, diversity of opinion, and creating a sense of student ownership of the building culture.
- Hope that our students can start to thrive again after a long 2 years.
- Hope we can get more and more students to participate in sports, experience a diverse student body, and build cooperation and teamwork.
- Hope the new Superintendent emphasizes equity and mental health. The past few years have been so difficult on our students, they need us to help them back to some stability in mental health and social supports. I also hope for some recognition for ALL our students' successes.
- Let's see more girls' sports (often the most successful but underfunded programs in the district) highlighted versus that one time the football team won a game. Nice stadium though. Let's invest in ALL our students' futures, college bound or not, academic all-stars AND the ones with different abilities but whose contributions are no less impressive.

Survey Input: Staff

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes with respect to your experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope we can effectively address behavior & discipline

- Hope we can pivot to address the numerous social and emotional issues that our students experience today
- Hope we can focus students have a sense of responsibility to their school community. Many more students just don't seem to care about their role or contribution to that community.
- There has been a decrease in our expectations for proper student behavior, combined with a lack of holding students accountable for problematic behavior. I have hope we can address that and increase our expectations for our kids.
- We have and must continue to adapt and respond to students emotional and behavioral needs.
- Students have higher level of disengagement/apathy now compared to before COVID. Inconsistency of attendance policies at the high school for students. It has been a difficult year for teachers and students, but lack of physical attendance by students and no clear set of consistent and logical consequences makes teaching very difficult when dozens of individual cases must be constantly addressed with requests to make up tests and material. Integrity of the pedagogical process and experience of in-class learning becomes negatively affected and school culture decreases as students don't prioritize it when there is no consistent accountability. I hope we can prioritize these concerns and ensure that students and parents understand that we need to work together to rectify this.

Survey Input: Staff

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes with respect to your experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope we have better and more effective leadership

- We are starting new again with the district level leadership. it will be important for all staff in the district to have clear direction from the new leadership. The new superintendent and the staff at Central must communicate effectively with all the buildings and district staff. The health and wellness for all is going to be important in this new journey, hopefully together.
- Hope we can have more opportunities for shared governance: there is little to no opportunities for teachers to be involved in decision-making or have their voices heard. Power is held close at the top. This leads to a lot of bad policies for the students.
- We've had so much turnover that I hope we can have better leadership from Central Services is a primary concern. I have no idea who oversees anything anymore.
- Hope we can work together and learn from each other. Listen and work with different departments, areas, and schools, even in the lower-level positions. There is so much to be offered and ideas to be shared. A collaborative school district is better than a competitive one, and it's important to keep open minds. With the website update, PowerSchool update, and others, this is a time we need to come together to learn and enhance as a district. I hope the school board and superintendent participate in a focus group/take feedback seriously.
- Leadership turnover means initiatives and momentum district wide can be lost. And I hope this can be stabilized. How can we keep great leaders and cut the slack with old ones who aren't pulling their weight?
- Stillwater's first Black Principal has been amazing, fun, and engaging, especially our BIPOC students. I hope we can attract and retain more POC in leadership positions.
- Having a Cultural Liaison is a big success with students of color and their needs.
- Stillwater used to be a leader among Minnesota Public Schools and in the nation. There's no reason we should be looking to So Washington County and Mahtomedi thinking "What should we do?" Stillwater is capable of leading the way to student success. I hope we can move our district into a position of leadership in the state and nation.
- Let's work together to bridge divisiveness and support our students, staff, and faculty. The last few years have taken a toll on so many emotionally, we can use this as teaching experiences and to help us navigate more efficiently through challenging times and be there for our families and students.

Survey Input: Staff

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes with respect to your experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope to address rapid population growth and Teacher-Student ratio

- Make a difference with smaller class sizes that foster connections and build relationships with students and families.
- Space is a big concern, specifically in our growing numbers of site-based programs.
- Accommodate the growing number of English learners with enough space, resources, staff, and teachers to support them.

We hope to increase staff and resources

- We are trying to prepare the path for the kid rather than the kid for the path.
- Students are academically behind where they "should" be, and no supports nor resources are being provided to help teachers do more for the students.
- Starting initiatives without research and scrapping it when it doesn't work; then, starting something new, and the cycle repeats.
- Strain on teacher prep time (due to transportation, lack of substitutes, meetings, report cards, prepping for conferences/IEPs, and more)

We hope to improve the School District culture

- We need informed, culturally responsive leadership that is not afraid to engage in difficult conversations and take actionable steps towards improving equitable learning environments and access for all students.
- Students and teachers need more opportunities to be empowered at the high school to help increase engagement, diversity of opinion, and creating a sense of student ownership of the building culture.
- This past school year has seen the best participation in non-class activities. (e.g., BLAST week, Sporting event spectators, Homecoming, extracurriculars). We need more successes like that.
- We need a shift towards a better school district culture, but we can't just assume it will continue to improve on its own, we need to be deliberate with it.

Survey Input: Staff

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes with respect to your experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope to provide our students with real world learning opportunities and practical life skills

- There is a lack of hands-on classes such as Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS), elective arts, and trades.

We hope we can effectively convey to the community how great our teachers and staff are

- Teachers and staff are genuinely invested in most students' academic and social-emotional needs. They have passion and drive.
- Teachers worked tirelessly to provide appropriate levels of support for kids during the pandemic. After years of COVID response, distance-learning, and unknown challenges, we are still sane. We weathered the pandemic better than most and provided plenty of PPE.
- We are resilient. We have made it through some of the most challenging times in the world and we did it together. Our students are important to all of us. We worked hard together to do the best for our students learning a whole lot of new things! This could not have been done without the resources given and efforts by everyone in the district.
- It has been a very tough year and staff have really put forth their best effort to do right by students and stay positive.
- Stillwater teachers and staff should be proud for giving support to our students in such difficult times.

We hope we can recognize the importance of Work/Life Balance

- It is so important to find a healthier balance between work life and home life!
- We need to put emphasis on our mental health. You can't pour from an empty cup!

Survey Input: Students

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for future students with respect to their experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you.

We hope future students have more real world and practical life skills learning opportunities

- I wish we had the option to learn life skills like home economics and shop classes. I took a music class and a world language class, and I could not take any additional electives because of music and language.
- There are few options for classes that teach "real world" important things that students need to know before college, like home economics and budgeting. A good example of a successful real world class is the Personal Finance class.
- There is too much focus on standardized testing rather than teaching valuable information we actually need in the real world.
- Preparation for after high school is a joke. The courses offered are not relevant.
- Stillwater schools pushes college hard, but I think they should support kids who want to go into the trades just as much. There are not enough opportunities for students to explore different careers during high school, in school.
- We need to modernize education: sex education, taxes, mental health, and more electives. Expand on what a real education is. It's not just about the test scores.
- High school should help students discover the things they love to do.

Survey Input: **Students**

Hopes for School Year 2022-2023

Survey Question: As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for future students with respect to their experience in school? The word “hopes” is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever “hopes” means to you.

We hope for more representation of people of color, diversity & inclusion

- Diversity is sorely lacking in instructors and staff.
- I was the only person of color in my friend group. I didn't make another Black friend until college.
- I hope Stillwater continues to make opportunities for all students, focus on diversity and inclusion, in hopes to decrease the achievement gap as well as close racial and economic achievement gaps.
- Stillwater should focus more on uplifting students of color, as well as different economic status, sexualities, and abilities.
- I felt underrepresented as a low-income student with the student body being middle/upper class.
- Stillwater needs to invest in low-income students to give them a fighting chance to halt the cycle of poverty. Low income students desire access to opportunities such as class trips, year books, and more. Yearbooks should not be \$90+, especially if there are no quotes or senior pictures. There is no need for half of the book to be ads. Gives the impression of money hogs.
- Teachers assume that every student is of privilege, that they have access to Wi-Fi and a printer at home and can do four or more hours of homework every night after school.
- Toxic school culture involving entitlement.

We hope that Special Needs students can continue to be addressed

- I had a great experience with the IEP system, and I really liked the inclusion of special needs students and interaction of all ages.
- Stillwater must accommodate students with learning disabilities, especially IEPs. Help students with learning disabilities graduate.

Survey Input Summary: Parents, Students, Teachers & Staff

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Parents

Busing

Politics

Bullying

Masks

Students

Diversity

Support

Administration

Bullying

Teachers & Staff

Leadership

Burnout

Mental health

Behavior

Division in community

Survey Input: Parents

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Persistent bullying continues to be a big problem

- My son is being bullied because he is gay. This has been a problem for too long.
- I've been getting reports from our 6th grader that Oakland Middle school is rough, and that there are fights.
- There is increased bullying in school, and at times my kids feared select troubled kids. They have been called numerous vulgarities, threatened, physically taunted and more.

Anxiety and mental health are growing concerns

- Overall, student anxiety has increased, especially because of active school shooting drills.
- School safety: it is hard to learn when you're scared of going to school due to threats and violence. It doesn't help when staff and teachers are burned out and don't have the energy to deal with all the anxiety.
- Physical and mental well-being of students is a major concern.
- There is a proliferation of street drugs in the high school bathrooms. My son will not go to the bathroom during the day.

Grading and academics are getting more and more lax

- Struggling in school, hard work does not always equate to passing grades
- Very frustrating that elementary students are not up to grade level with academic achievements
- Inability to let kids grow and excel at their own pace. There are limited additional opportunities for learning. Academically, we want to make sure our kids don't fall through the cracks
- Teachers have low expectations of students
- Teaching geared towards the students that are underachieving does not challenge students that are high achievers.
- Most teaching seems geared toward high-performing students; mid-level students fall through the cracks easily unless parents insist on additional support, which is very limited.

Survey Input: Parents

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Need to do something about the overly vocal parents that are solely focused

- Concern for so much negativity by a certain portion of population that are focused on "reading, writing, arithmetic" and a complete disregard for social/emotional needs of students.
- Some parents are preventing the schools from teaching emotional, social skills, which are practical things that apply to real life

Concerned about how leadership is communicated

- There should be a greater opportunity for Student Leadership development
- The way some staff engage and communicate with their students, we as parents can tell they have less tolerance for some than others
- The school board and its leadership are of serious concern to me.
- The district's obvious mismanagement of the budget is concerning.
- The drama at the school board is embarrassing. It is a disgrace to the whole community. Parents need to behave better, school board members need to do a better job asserting themselves, and overall, things need to run more professionally. The drama is running the show.

Very concerned about the busing situation

- Our route has been cancelled many times and the sub drivers never know the routes and where they are going. My kids have gotten off the bus crying because they were scared that they weren't going to make it home. This has happened several times.
- The bus for my middle school student only shows about 50% of the time.
- There is a serious lack of consistent busing and 1-2 hours' notice that there is no bus is unacceptable.

Survey Input: Staff

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns you experienced in school this past year? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Some grading policies are getting to be too lax or too strident – needs to be a balance

- Sometimes I think we're letting the under-performing students get away with more while not implementing student responsibility.
- We are focused too rigidly on everyone needing to learn the same way in a traditional classroom, especially in young years, and threatening recess for not being able to be a perfect student in elementary.

Over-emphasis on athletics

- Stillwater puts all the money into sports and not enough into the arts. I wish they cared as much about the students involved in arts as they did in the athletes.
- Please put money into more departments rather than just sports.
- There is such a large focus on sports. There was a new football stadium and new gymnasium built several years ago, even though the auditorium is too small to accommodate even half of the school's students, while the music and theater department have both consistently excelled in competitions and events!
- Sports opportunities don't really exist for students unless they are among the top performers. Students cannot participate simply for the fun of it.
- Sports opportunities for girls should be uplifted and recognized more often.

We need more cultural awareness events

- We need to continue to place emphasis on celebrating our differences, which is part of education, learning to live with and accept differences.

Survey Input: **Students**

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns you experienced in school? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Inconsistencies in teaching styles

- It felt like there was too much of a gap in difficulty level between AP and regular level classes. AP History is highly difficult but regular history always felt dumbed down. There is no middle ground class between AP and regular.
- Most learning opportunities are catered to students that do well without hands-on learning. Students should be assessed on learning style and then teaching style should be tailored to the individual as appropriate.
- Having a wide range of teaching effectivity. Some teachers were very influential, and some were unbearable.
- Classes of the same level and topic taught by different teachers had widely different results. Please streamline course curriculum so that experiences are similar when students have different teachers.
- Stillwater needs an increase in culturally responsive teaching.
- There should be less politics in schools, and teachers who don't push political views.
- Staff are not held accountable for problematic behavior enough.

Teachers don't have what they need

- I hope they take some time with teachers, paras, and staff at every level and hear out what they need. Support all teachers, not just tenured ones. Don't keep teachers around just because they are tenured. Teacher assessments need to happen regularly.
- Stillwater has a lot of great, personable teachers who truly care. Staff are willing to help any student in need.

Survey Input: **Students**

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns you experienced in school? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Stillwater needs to find some balance with rules and discipline

- Stop allowing staff and security to harass innocent students in hopes of "preventing vaping". Increase the punishment for being caught. Stop following children into bathrooms. Stop locking bathrooms.
- Review policies and guidelines, especially hired security at the high school. Do a better job defining "appropriate conduct."
- Place a higher priority on the bullying policy and follow-through on discipline.

Stillwater needs to do better with mental health and counselors

- I talked to my counselor and she was absolutely baffled and had no idea what to do about my problem.
- The counselors seemed burned out to the point that they wouldn't help with extra academic help, emotional help, and more. I hope they can get some new counselors who aren't burned out.
- Mental health of the students is a major issue. I think there should be a mental health month where every student has a meeting with their counselor to let off steam, talk about concerns; sometimes it's too hard to reach out when you need help.
- I hope they meet with students and let them be honest about the struggles they are having in and out of school and offer real support.
- The meaningless attempts to help students with futures. Not once while I was there did I get counseling for my future plans.
- My counselor was impersonal.
- Not providing proper grief/counseling support for traumatic events. There were so many threats made to the school during my time there.

Survey Input: Students

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns you experienced in school? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Stillwater needs better leadership

- Stillwater needs a Superintendent who listens and takes action in favor and support of what teachers and students need throughout the district.
- Understand that the teachers know what the students need better than the administration.
- We deserve transparency.
- School board fighting and toxicity does not set a great example.
- Huge disconnect between School Board and the needs of students, families, and teachers.
- I just hope Stillwater Public Schools get their shit together.

Stillwater needs to do a better job with diversity & inclusion as well as student leadership

- Diversity and inclusion is seriously lacking at SAHS. Every student should feel heard and respected. School staff needs to take students complaints and frustrations about this seriously.
- Listen to students. Students deserve to be involved in decision-making that directly affects us.
- Peaceful protests should be allowed without punishment.
- There should be a way to make students feel more heard, I didn't feel heard most of the time.
- Racism and homophobia was often left unaddressed and without school administration taking any action.
- There is not enough representation for POC students or active anti-racism in the school.
- There is sweeping ignorance toward different backgrounds. I just hope that Stillwater addresses racism and acts in such a way to recognize it and do better to prevent it.

Stillwater needs to do a better job communicating expectations for behavior, especially respect

- Lack of respect that students have for teachers and administration leads to so many incidents.
- Everyone should feel welcome and at-home at school.
- I was bullied all through my time in Stillwater schools.
- I worked at McDonald's and got McDonald's coupons thrown at me daily.
- Cliques are pervasive at the high school level.

The classroom teacher-student ratio is getting too big, the school feels too large and impersonal

- The junior high and middle school is one of the things that made Stillwater unique. 9th graders being the oldest in a junior high makes them more mature. It works better having the age gap be smaller in the high school, better socially, for development, and then the high school wouldn't be so huge.
- At graduation, I saw people walk across the stage who I'd never seen before. I wish the school did more to foster getting to know your classmates.
- Class sizes are too big. We need smaller class sizes to receive direct support from teachers. It is too easy to fly under the radar.

Survey Input: **Students**

Concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns you experienced in school? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

There is a significant problem with substance abuse at Stillwater

- Students vape and smoke in the bathrooms.
- Use of alcohol, drugs, and parties among students
- Abundance of substance use among the student body
- I understand the issue we had in the school with vaping and other drugs, but at some point it felt like we were all in trouble for it with the lockdown of bathrooms and other precautions that were taken.

Stillwater must do better with Special Education

- Stillwater does not accommodate students with learning disabilities well.
- Students with IEPs don't get enough help.
- Stillwater staff and students need to stop the reoccurring and blatant shaming of students with learning disabilities.

Need to address school pride

- There seems to be a lack of school pride and events. Not once did the school make the events prideful, it's always about image.
- I think it's always about optics, like, how will this look in a picture? But not really about the overall culture of the school, students, or staff.
- I hope the school does a better job at promoting morale and school spirit.

Survey Input Summary: Parents, Students, Teachers & Staff

Successes: Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 successes your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you.

Parents

In-person

Friendships

Socialization

Connections

Grades/Test scores

Students

Teachers

Graduation

Arts

Honors

Relationships

Teachers & Staff

In-person

Transition from COVID

Support

Teamwork

Survey Input: Parents

Successes: Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 successes your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you.

Return to normal, routine, in-person, post-Covid

- Transition to in-person, post-Covid
- Access to teachers with in-person learning
- Catching up to grade level after losing previous in-person learning
- Face-to-face contact with teacher
- Being able to participate in field trips and large social events again
- Return to a sense of normalcy
- Accelerated learning in classroom compared to remote.
- Opportunity to engage in-person with peers and teachers
- Reacclimating socially, peer-to-peer
- Consistency with in-person learning and environment

Teachers and staff continue a standard of excellence

- Every single teacher and administrator we've encountered has been welcoming and responsive, especially in elementary school
- Most of the teachers and guidance counselors are amazing and truly care
- Found teachers who care about them through extra-curricular activities
- Teachers and staff are advocates for my child, allowing him to thrive, he is learning that school is enjoyable and there are other adults in his life that care for him.
- High quality, excellent teachers
- We were promptly made aware of her need for additional help thanks to her teacher's communication with us.
- Removal of toxic board members

Survey Input: Parents

Successes: Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 successes your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you.

Strong academics and curriculum

- Elementary curriculum is dynamite
- Building proficiency in math
- Progress in math and reading
- Terrific before and after school program
- Access to quality AP classes
- Big growth in Spanish speaking/comprehension for 1st grader
- Access to learning material online (vs textbook, paper only)
- Academically challenged
- More confidence in classwork
- Academic rigor

Doing better with inclusion, real world learning

- Learned about systems and who they benefit
- Teaching kids to be inclusive, good emphasis on social skills
- Developing character
- Full Inclusion of Special Ed Students in General Ed classes
- Structure and a great learning environment
- Further engagement in OT services and speech services
- Exposure to outdoor learning environments
- Specialist time for growth and learning (media center, gym, art, music)
- Having school events to allow the community to help support the school – volunteers
- Meeting a diverse group of children and adults
- Learning how to adapt to different learning and teaching styles
- Inclusivity of non-binary children
- Learning about the natural world.

Survey Input: Parents

Successes: Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 successes your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you.

Strong extracurriculars

- Enjoyed sports - grew as an individual
- Committed to choir, had to be responsible and organized

More emphasis on mental health & relationships

- Seeking mental health help when needed
- Increased confidence
- Found the right fit for my daughter's mental health - she moved
- SEL opportunities (BARR)
- Our 8th grader has made many friends and is overcoming some social anxiety
- Improved emotional regulation
- Learning to navigate social situations
- Confidence building in social skills
- Group work in classroom promoting friendships and teamwork
- Time with friends and classmates in school - better mental health
- Renewed friendships
- Reconnecting with friends and social development
- Making new friends and feeling a sense of community
- Being accepted as "mentor" for incoming freshman next year
- Learning how to advocate for themselves, on their own
- Time with friends that we didn't have during distance learning
- Completing the year without any mental health problems
- Positive social experience at school - they feel safe, cared for, valued
- School facilitating accommodations for my child who experienced a mental health crisis

Survey Input: **Students**

Successes: Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Survey Question: Thinking of your experience, what would you say are the top 3 successes you experienced in Stillwater Area Public Schools? ? The word “successes” is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever “successes” means to you.

Academic achievement

- I got great grades that helped me get into the college of my choice.
- I earned grades that I am proud of and graduated with more credits than required.
- I got a 5 on the Advanced Placement Government exam.
- I got a 30 on the ACT.
- I got a terrific SAT score.
- The National Honors Society, Link Crew, and Debate made me into a well-rounded person.
- I earned a scholarship for college.
- I was able to get the help I needed to graduate when I thought I wouldn't be able to. SAHS is successful in their willingness to work with students to help them succeed academically.
- I learned how to set and achieve goals.

Arts/music achievements

- We had a great theater program, great choirs.
- I had the chance to entertain all my interests in sports and music through school-sponsored teams and programs.
- The performing arts programs was a home for me, and it was a pleasure to participate in them.

Friendship and connection

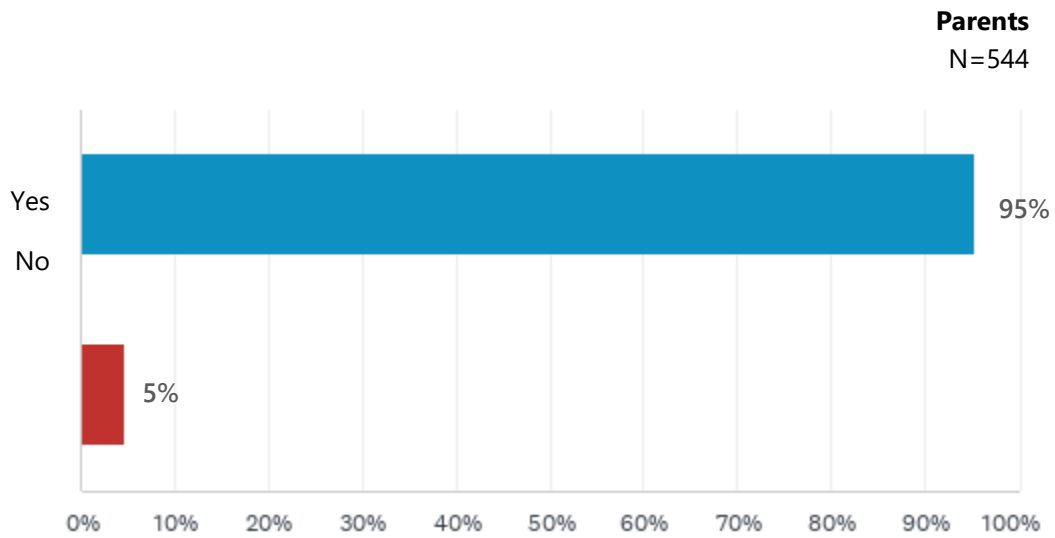
- I made friends that I feel like I will have my entire life.
- I feel like I learned how to be a good person in Stillwater schools.
- I learned how to build valuable and meaningful relationships with peers, teachers, and faculty.
- I learned how to maintain healthy relationships with friends and most teachers.
- It was great to feel like a part of a larger community.
- I usually felt safe and heard among friends at school.
- Stillwater Area Public Schools allowed me to experience diversity at a young age and learn about different people while growing up.
- The diverse student body helped me learn respect for my peers.



Quantitative Tables

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

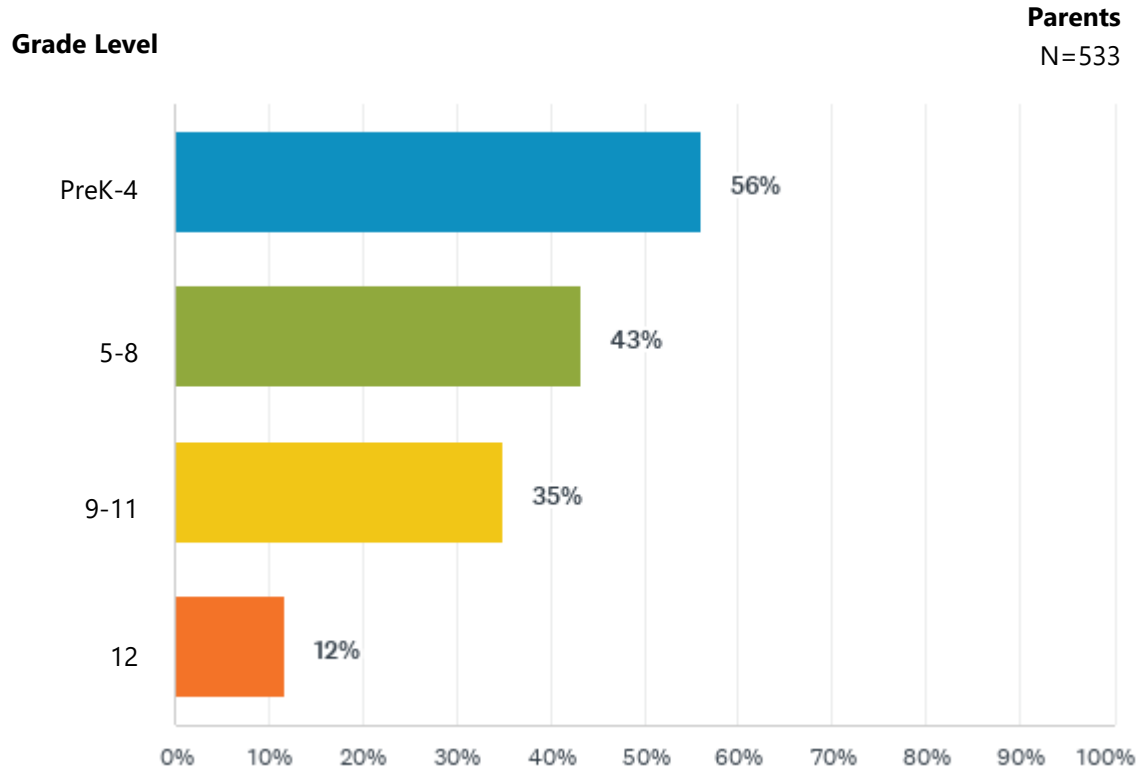
SURVEY QUESTION: Do you have children who live with you, who are currently enrolled in PreK-12 education, whether in-school, online, or homeschooled?



COUNTS	
Yes	544
No	26

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Which of the following categories represent school year 2021-2022, PreK-12 grades of your children? Check all that apply, please.



RESPONSE CHOICES	COUNTS
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PreK-4	299
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5-8	231
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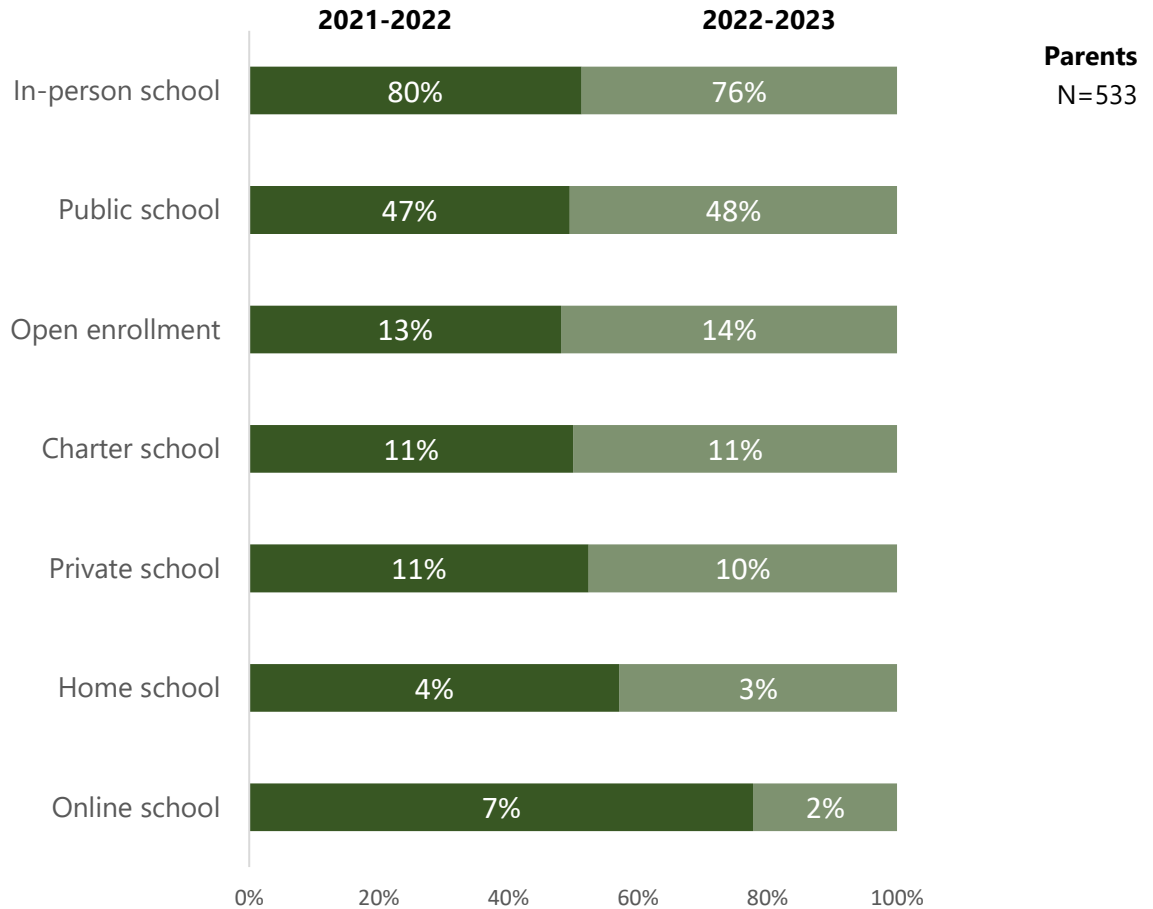
9-11	187
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12	63
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PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Which of the following represents the **current experience** of your children in grades PreK-12? Check all that apply, please.

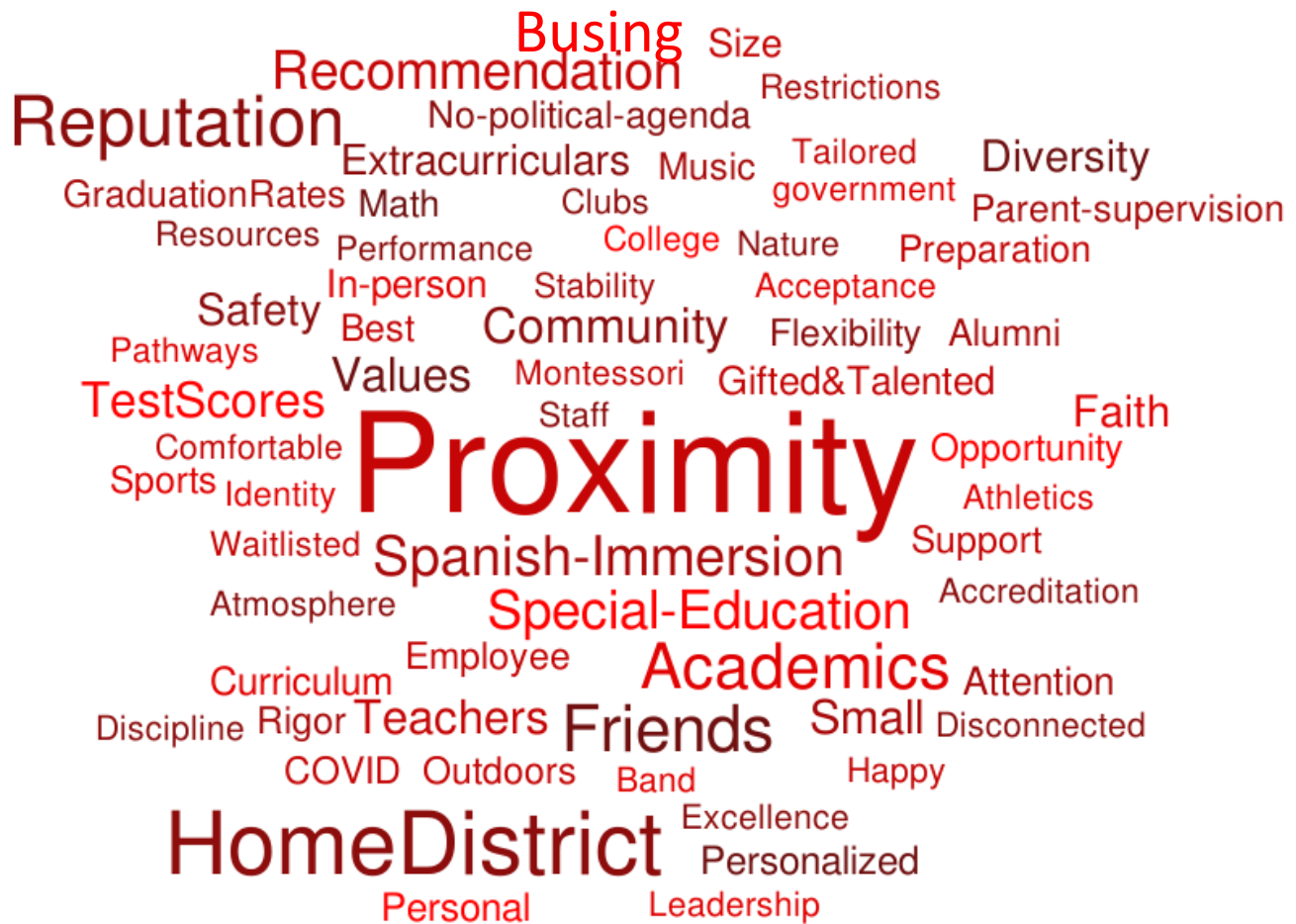
SURVEY QUESTION: Thinking ahead to **School Year 2022-2023**, which of the following represents your **intention to enroll** your children in grades PreK-12? Check all that apply, please.



	2021-2022	2022-2023
RESPONSE CHOICES		
In-person school	425	402
Public school	250	251
Open enrollment	70	75
Private school	59	56
Charter school	62	53
Online school	22	18
Home school	39	12

SURVEY QUESTION (open-end): When you think about how you made the decision to enroll your child in the school, what were some of the most important reasons to do so?

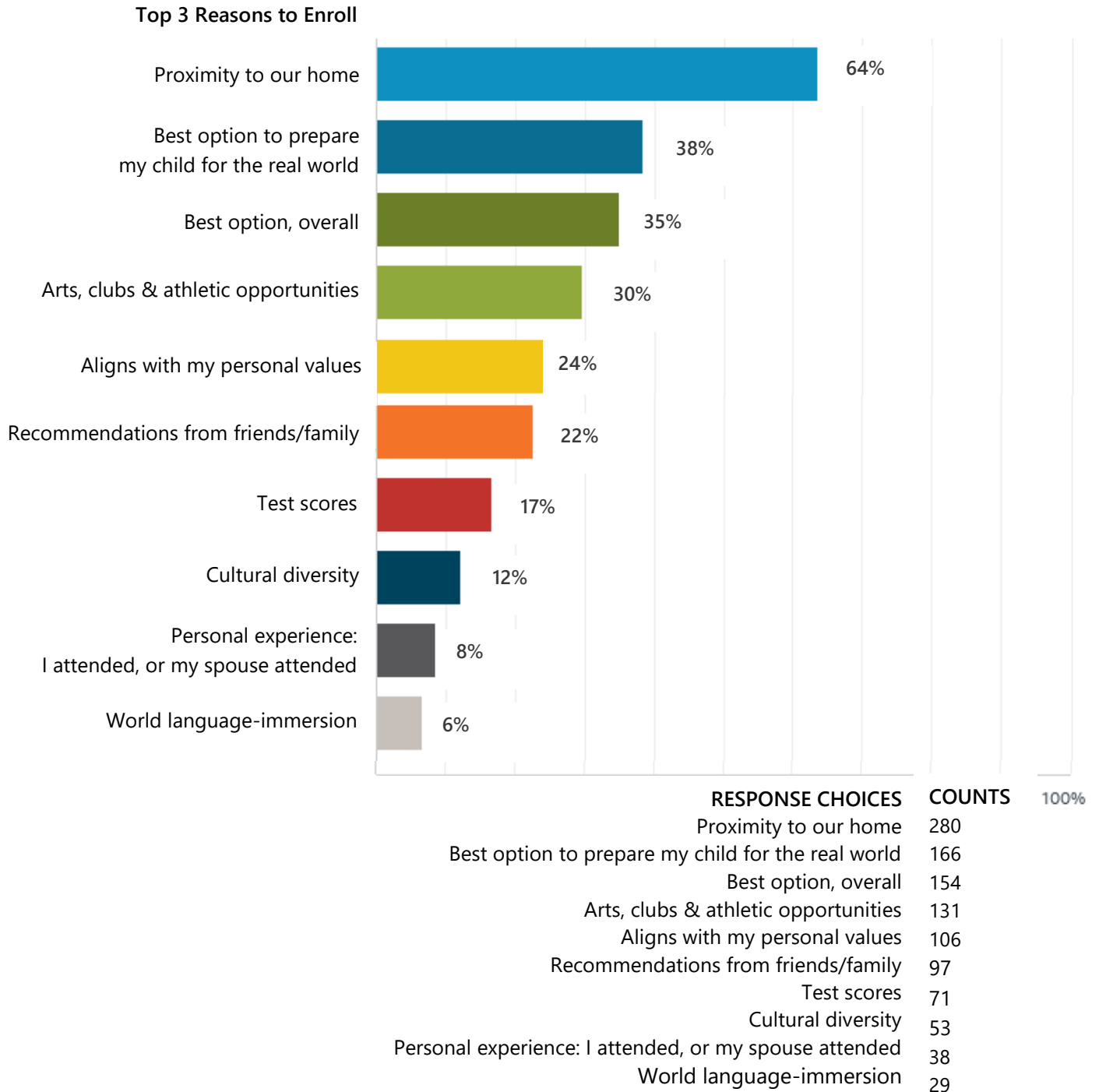
Parents
N=399



PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: When it comes to **decision-making about the school district** you enrolled or will enroll your child or children in, which of the following best describes the **top three reasons**?

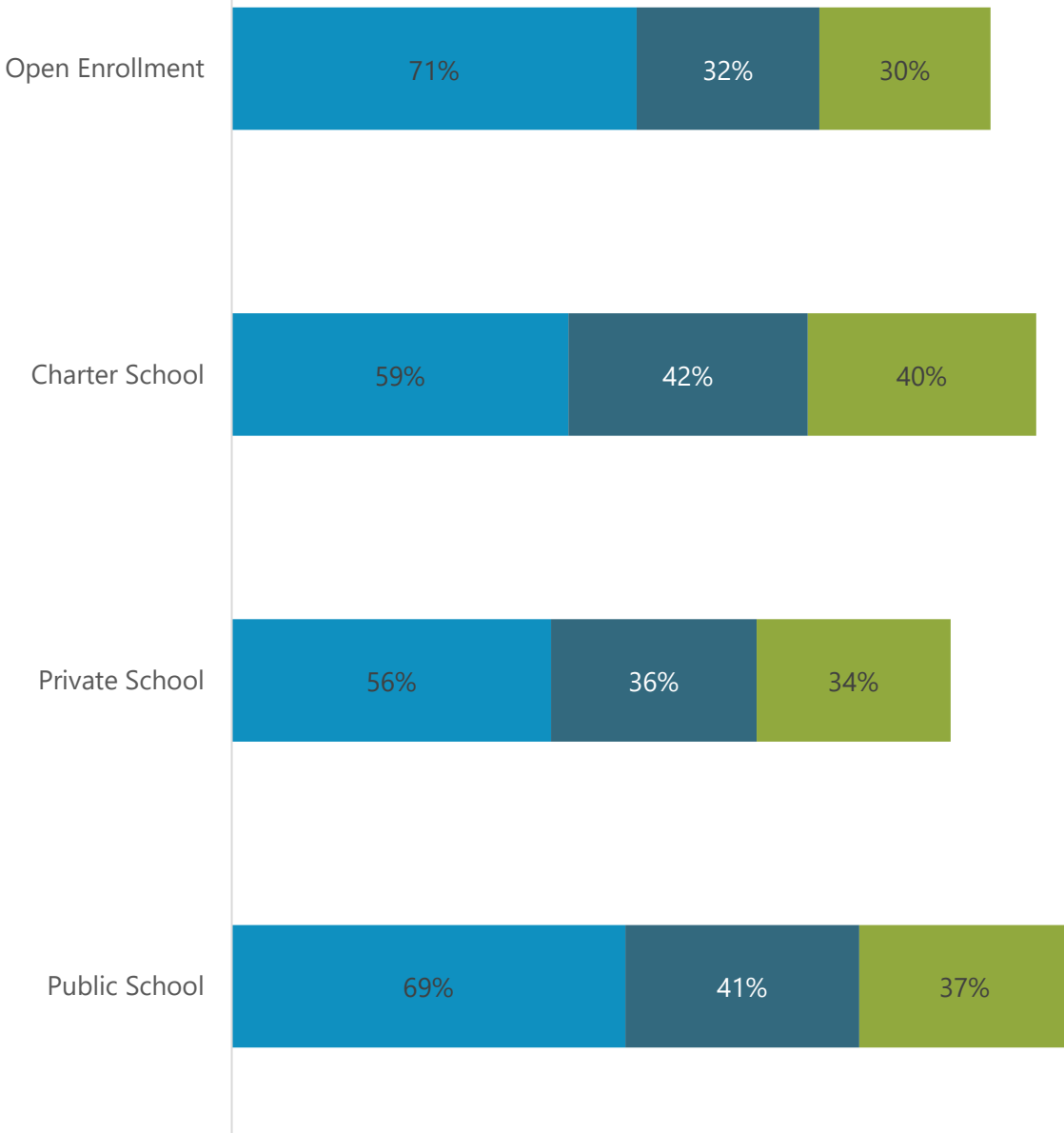
Parents
N=433



PARENTS OF PREK-12: Crosstab by Enrollment

SURVEY QUESTION: When it comes to **decision-making about the school district** you enrolled or will enroll your child or children in, which of the following best describes the **top three reasons**?

■ Proximity to our home ■ Best option to prepare my child for the real world ■ Best option, overall



PARENTS OF PREK-12: Crosstab by Enrollment: Charter Schools

SURVEY QUESTION: When you think about **how you made the decision** to enroll your child in the school, what were **some of the most important reasons to do so?**

Reasons parents in Stillwater Area District opt for Charter Schools

Academics, rigor, excellence, best core curriculum, prep for academic success

Curriculum depth and broad course offering

Small size of school

Teacher student ratio, nurturing, individual attention

Proximity to our home

Low crime

Test scores, state/national rating/ranking

Athletics, music, arts, clubs

Ethics, personal values

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Crosstab by Enrollment: **Open Enrollment**

SURVEY QUESTION: When you think about **how you made the decision** to enroll your child in the school, what were **some of the most important reasons to do so?**

Reasons parents in Stillwater Area District opt for Open Enrollment

Proximity to our home

Best learning/growing opportunities for my child

Teachers care about students' well-being as opposed to tests scores

Administration stressed importance of equity and social justice

Cultural diversity, diversity, inclusivity, diversity, consideration for LGBTQ

Safety, attention to bullying

Access to the best extracurriculars

Media, arts, language, music

Spanish immersion

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION (open-end): Thinking of your family's **experience this past year**, what would you say are the **top 3 successes** your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you.

Top 3 Successes 2021-2022 School Year

Parents

N=399



SURVEY QUESTION (open-end): Thinking of your family's **experience this past year**, what would you say are the **top 3 concerns** your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you.

Parents
N=399



SURVEY QUESTION (open-end): As you **think ahead to the school year 2022-2023**, what would you say are your **top 3 hopes** for your child or children with respect to their experience in school? The word “hopes” is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever “hopes” means to you.

Parents
N=399



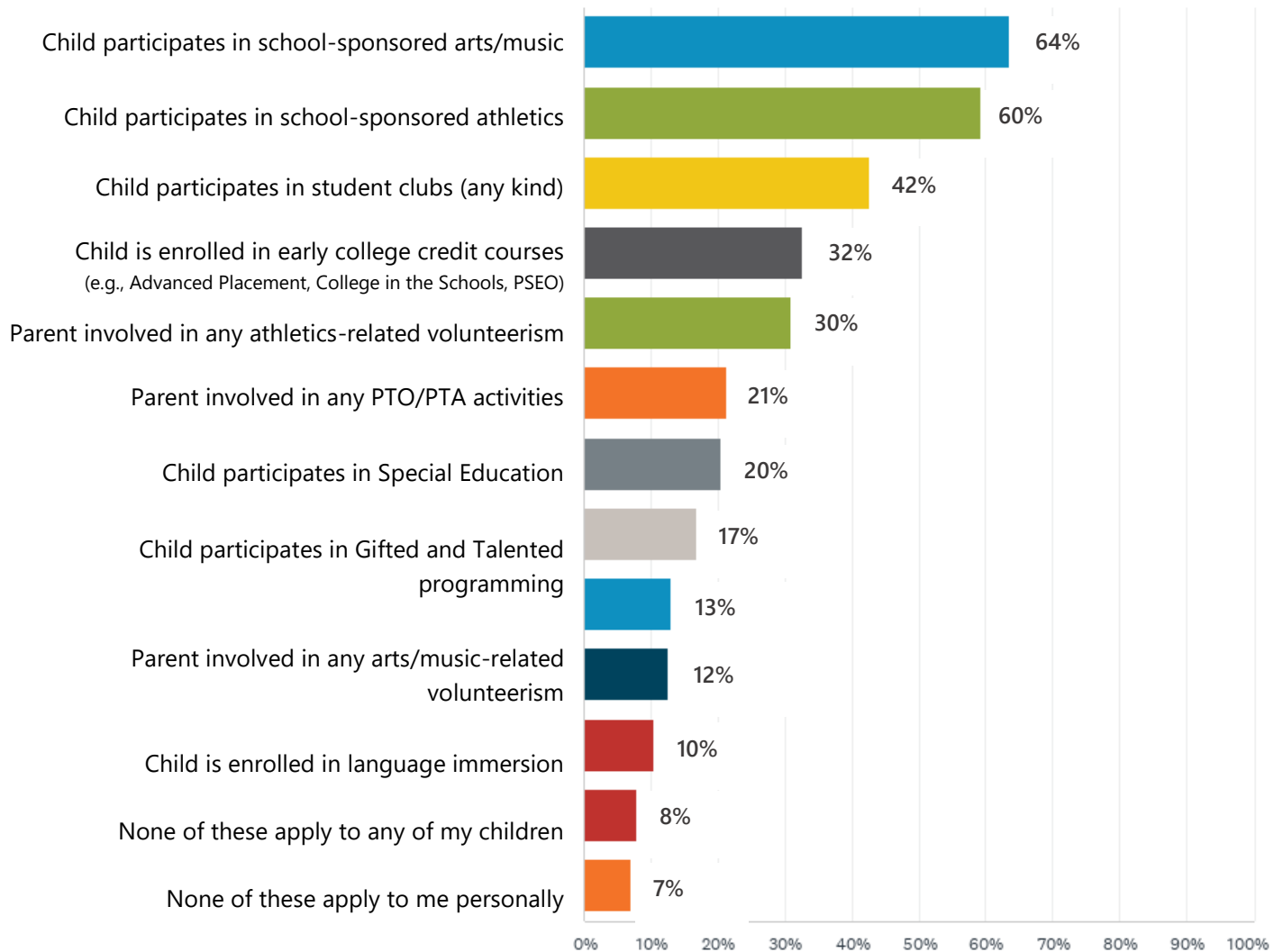
PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review the following list and indicate which if any apply to any of your children or to you personally. Please note these are school-related, not activities you engage in with any private party or organization.

Parents

N=433

see counts on next page



PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review the following list and indicate which if any apply to any of your children or to you personally. Please note these are school-related, not activities you engage in with any private party or organization.

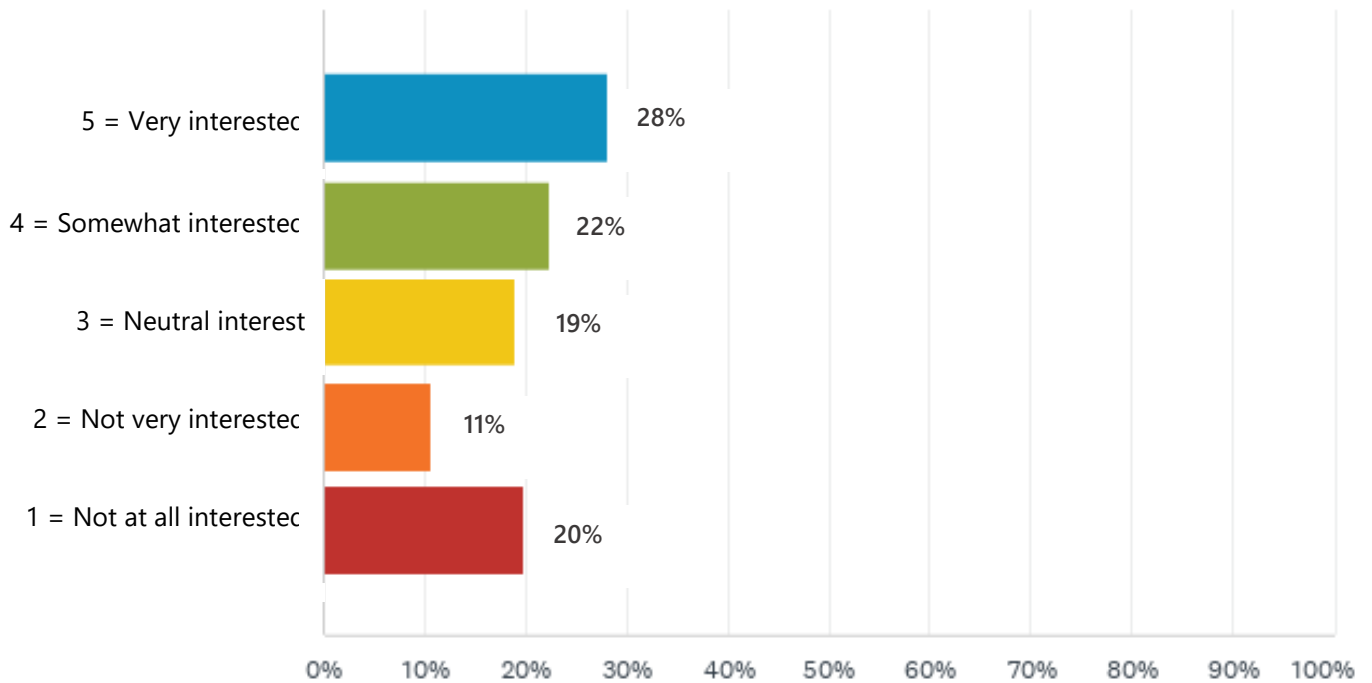
RESPONSE CHOICES	COUNTS
Child participates in school-sponsored arts/music	269
Child participates in school-sponsored athletics	251
Child participates in student clubs (any kind)	180
Child is enrolled in early college credit courses	138
Parent involved in any athletics-related volunteerism	131
Parent involved in any PTO/PTA activities	90
Child participates in Special Education	87
Child participates in Gifted and Talented programming	71
Parent involved in any arts/music-related volunteerism	55
Child is enrolled in language immersion	53
None of these apply to any of my children	44
None of these apply to me personally	33
Child participates in student government activities	30

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: How interested are you in a **Spanish Language Immersion** program for your child or children? Please answer on a scale of 1-5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all interested" and an answer of "5" means "very interested". Of course, you may use any number 1-5 to indicate your interest level.

Parents
N=420

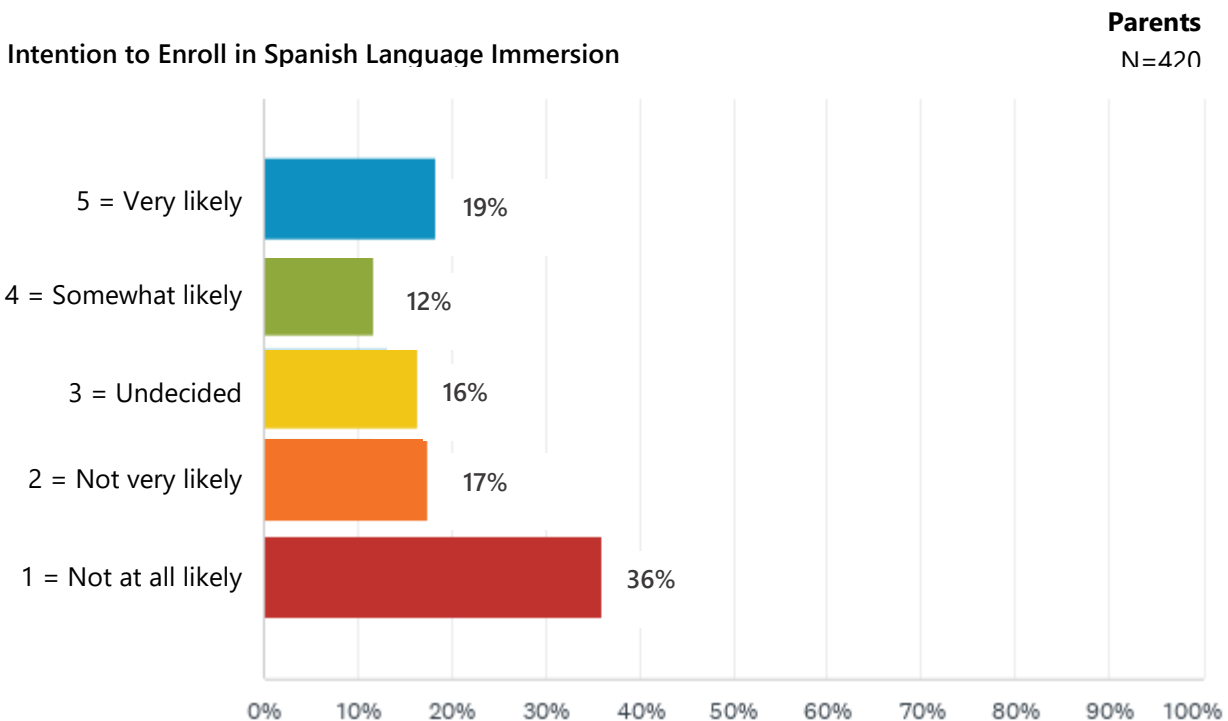
Interest in Spanish Language Immersion Enrollment



#	RESPONSE CHOICES	COUNTS
5	Very interested	115
4	Somewhat interested	92
3	Neutral interest	78
2	Not very interested	44
1	Not at all interested	81

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Regarding your interest in Spanish Language Immersion, which of the following best represents your **intention to enroll** your child or children in Spanish Language Immersion programming? Please answer on a scale of 1-5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all likely to enroll" and an answer of "5" means "very likely to enroll". Of course, you may use any number 1-5 to indicate your intention.



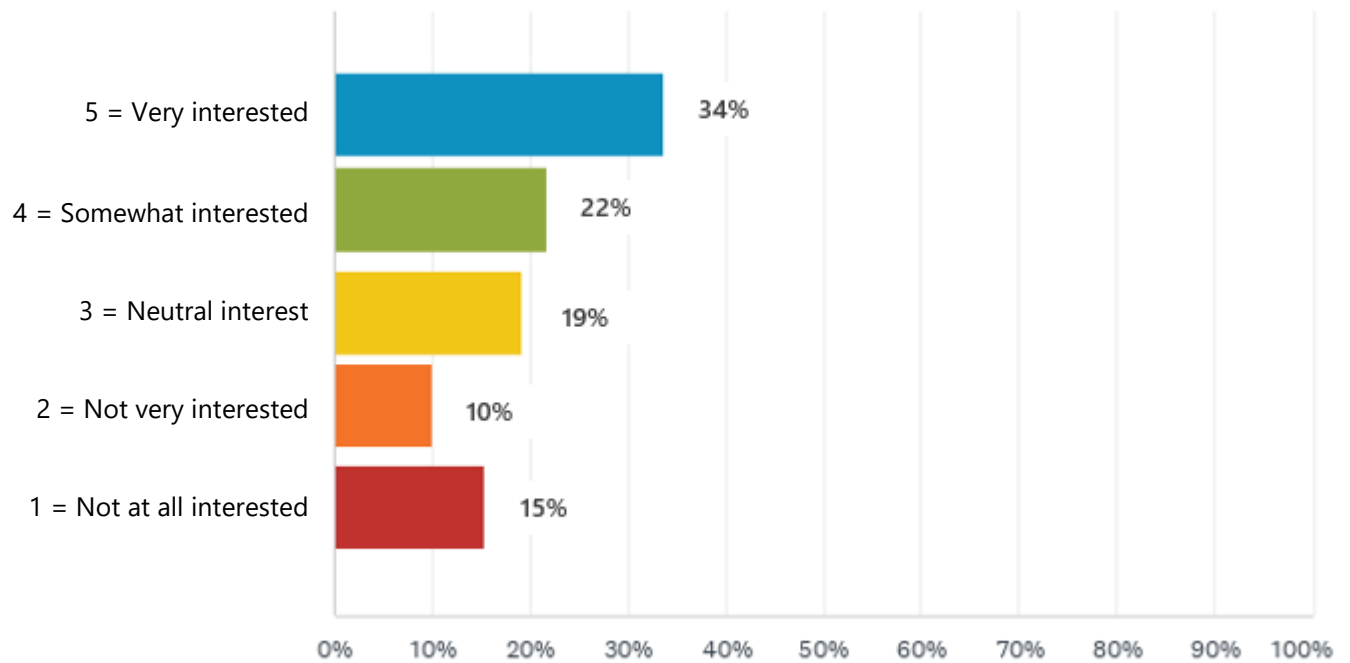
RESPONSE CHOICES	COUNTS
Very likely	70
Somewhat likely	45
Undecided	63
Not very likely	67
Not at all likely	138

PARENTS OF PREK-4

SURVEY QUESTION: How interested are you in a **Spanish Language Immersion** program for your child or children? Please answer on a scale of 1-5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all interested" and an answer of "5" means "very interested". Of course, you may use any number 1-5 to indicate your interest level.

Interest in Spanish Language Immersion Enrollment

Parents
N=240



#	RESPONSE CHOICES	PreK-4 COUNTS
5	Very interested	81
4	Somewhat interested	52
3	Neutral interest	46
2	Not very interested	24
1	Not at all interested	37

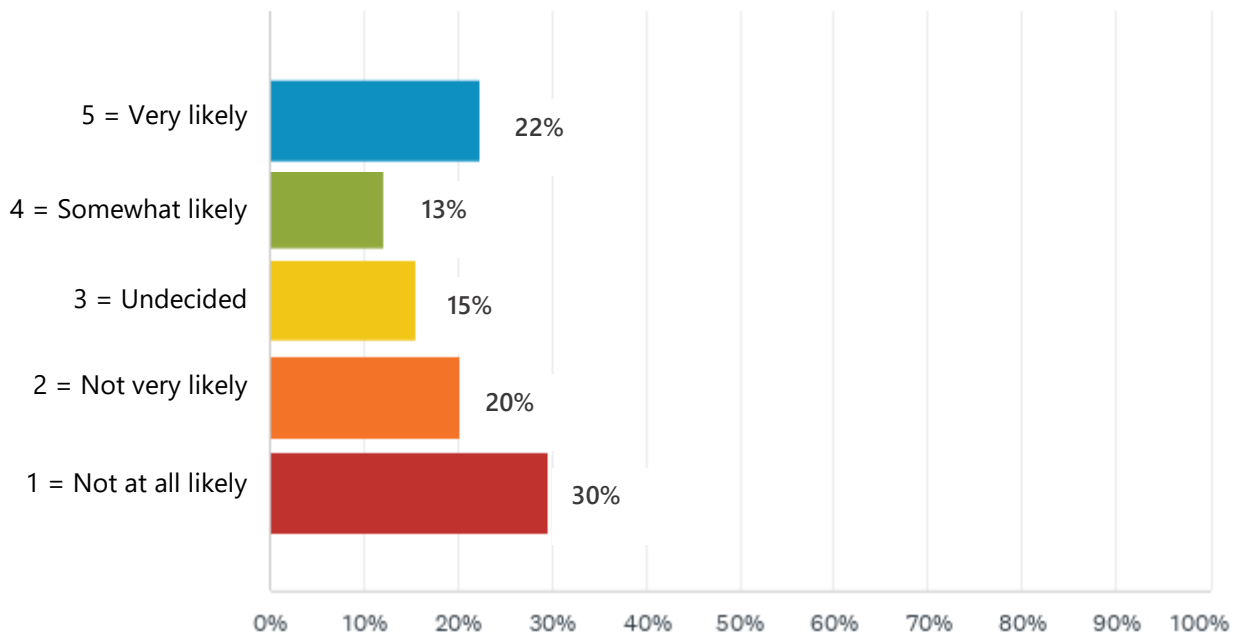
PARENTS OF PREK-4

SURVEY QUESTION: Regarding your interest in Spanish Language Immersion, which of the following best represents your **intention to enroll** your child or children in Spanish Language Immersion programming? Please answer on a scale of 1-5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all likely to enroll" and an answer of "5" means "very likely to enroll". Of course, you may use any number 1-5 to indicate your intention.

Intention to Enroll in Spanish Language Immersion

Parents

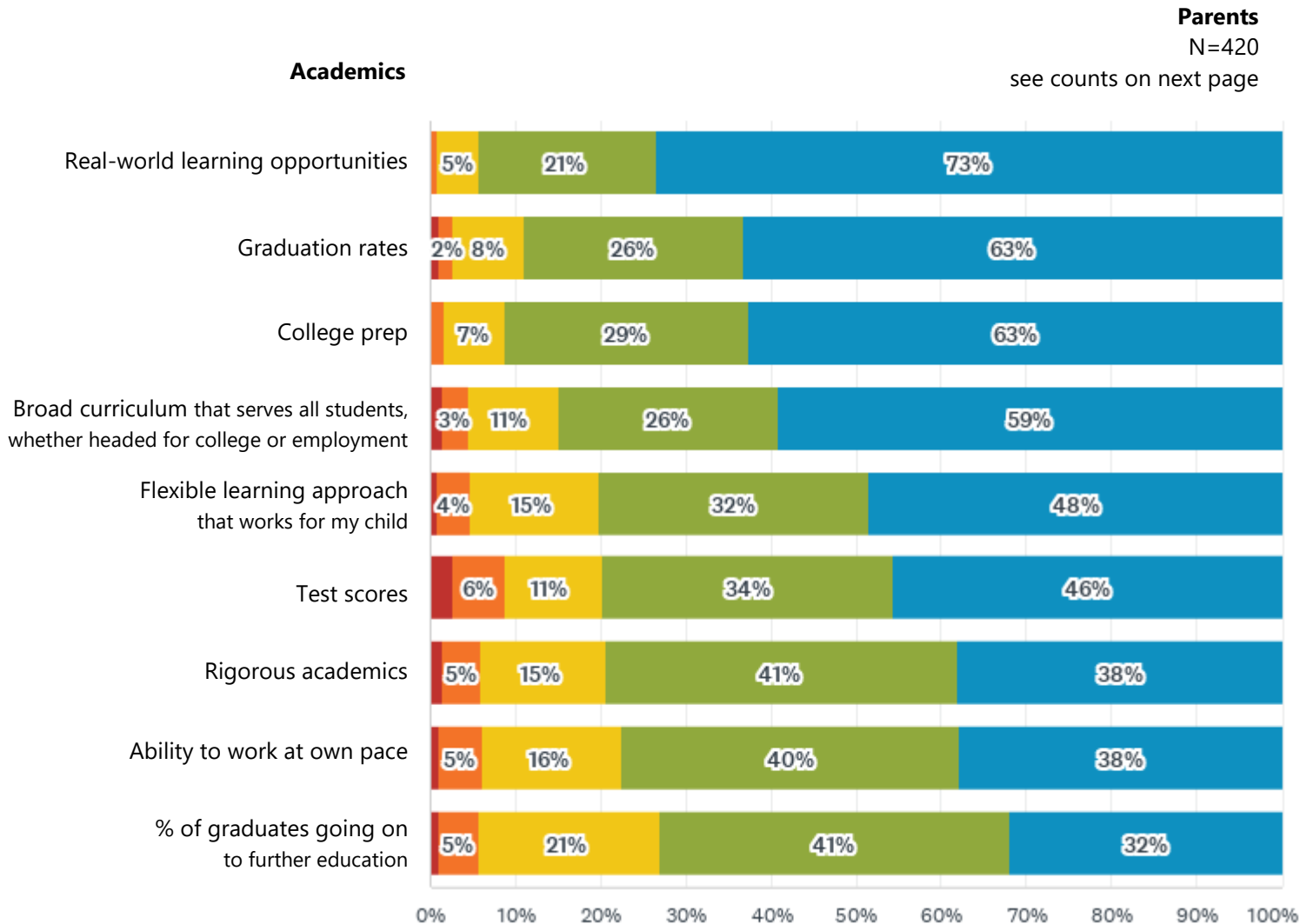
N=240



RESPONSE CHOICES	PreK-12 COUNTS
Very likely	70
Somewhat likely	45
Undecided	63
Not very likely	67
Not at all likely	138

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** you might think about **when choosing the school** your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its **importance on a scale of 1 to 5**, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.



PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** you might think about **when choosing the school** your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its **importance on a scale of 1 to 5**, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Academics		1=Not at all important				5=Very important
RESPONSE CHOICES	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	COUNTS				
		1	2	3	4	5
Real-world learning opportunities	4.6	0	3	21	87	307
Graduation rates	4.5	4	7	35	108	264
College prep	4.5	1	6	30	119	261
Broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment	4.3	6	13	44	108	247
Flexible learning approach that works for my child	4.2	3	17	63	132	202
Test scores	4.1	11	26	47	143	190
Rigorous academics	4.1	6	19	61	173	159
Ability to work at own pace	4	4	22	68	166	158
% of graduates going on to further education	3.9	4	20	89	172	133

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

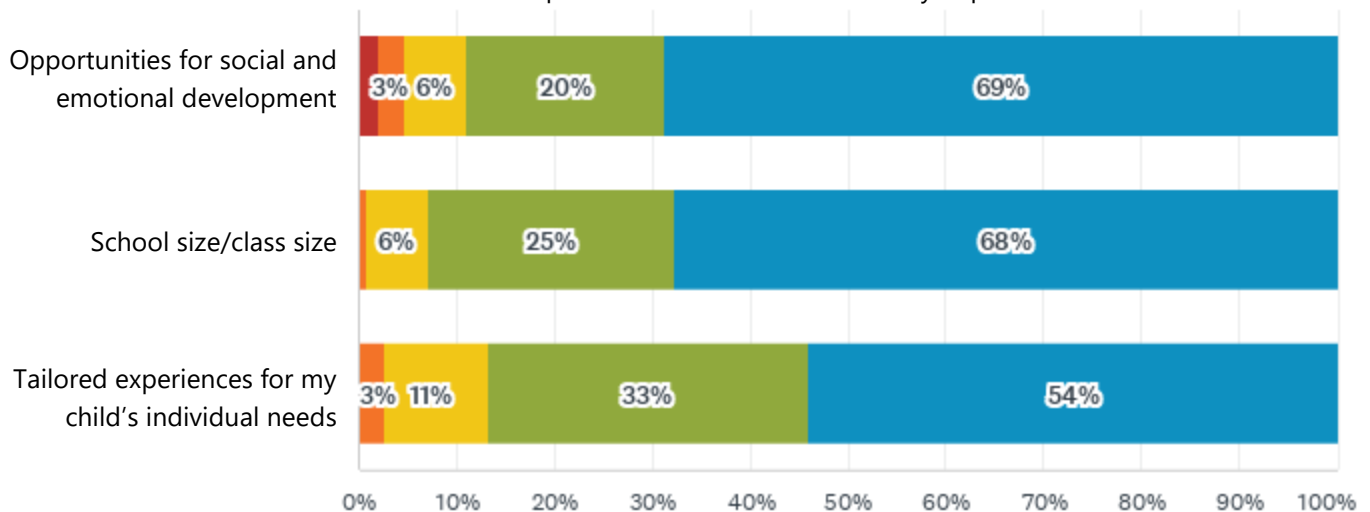
SURVEY QUESTION: Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** you might think about **when choosing the school** your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its **importance on a scale of 1 to 5**, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Parents
N=420

The Education Experience

1=Not at all important

5=Very important



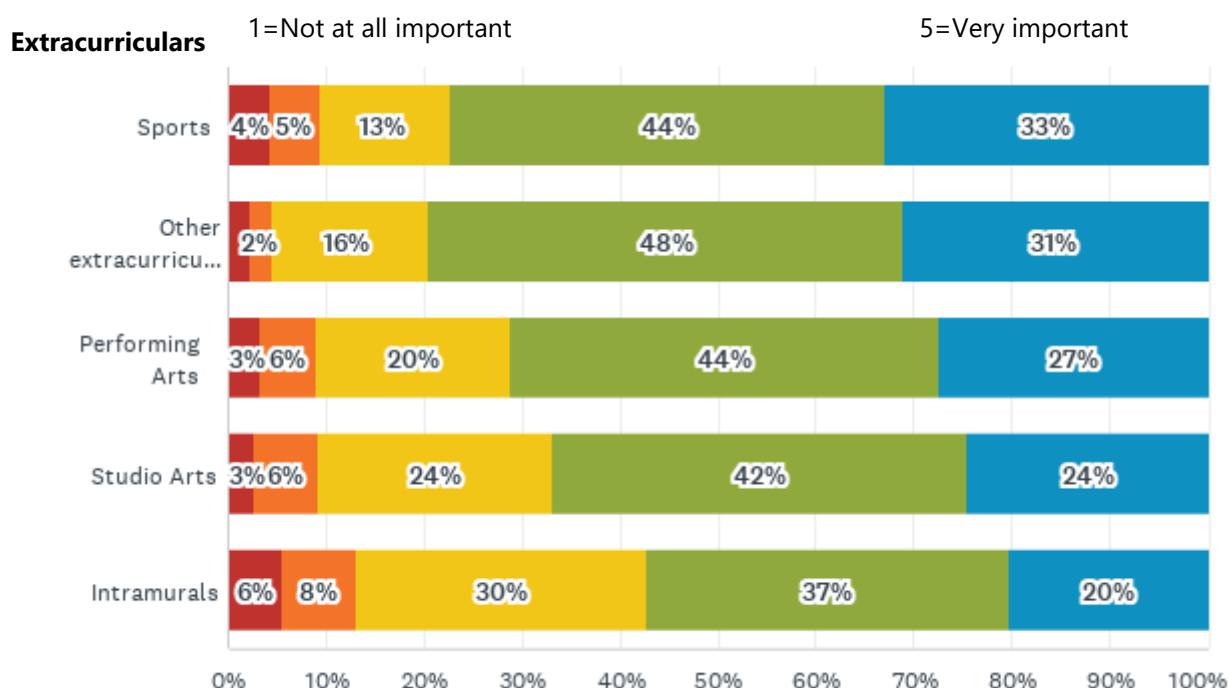
RESPONSE CHOICES	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	COUNTS				
		1=Not at all important	2	3	4	5=Very important
Opportunities for social and emotional development	4.6	9	11	26	85	280
School size/class size	4.4	0	3	27	105	284
Tailored experiences for my child's individual needs	4.2	0	11	45	137	227

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** you might think about **when choosing the school** your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its **importance on a scale of 1 to 5**, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Parents

N=419

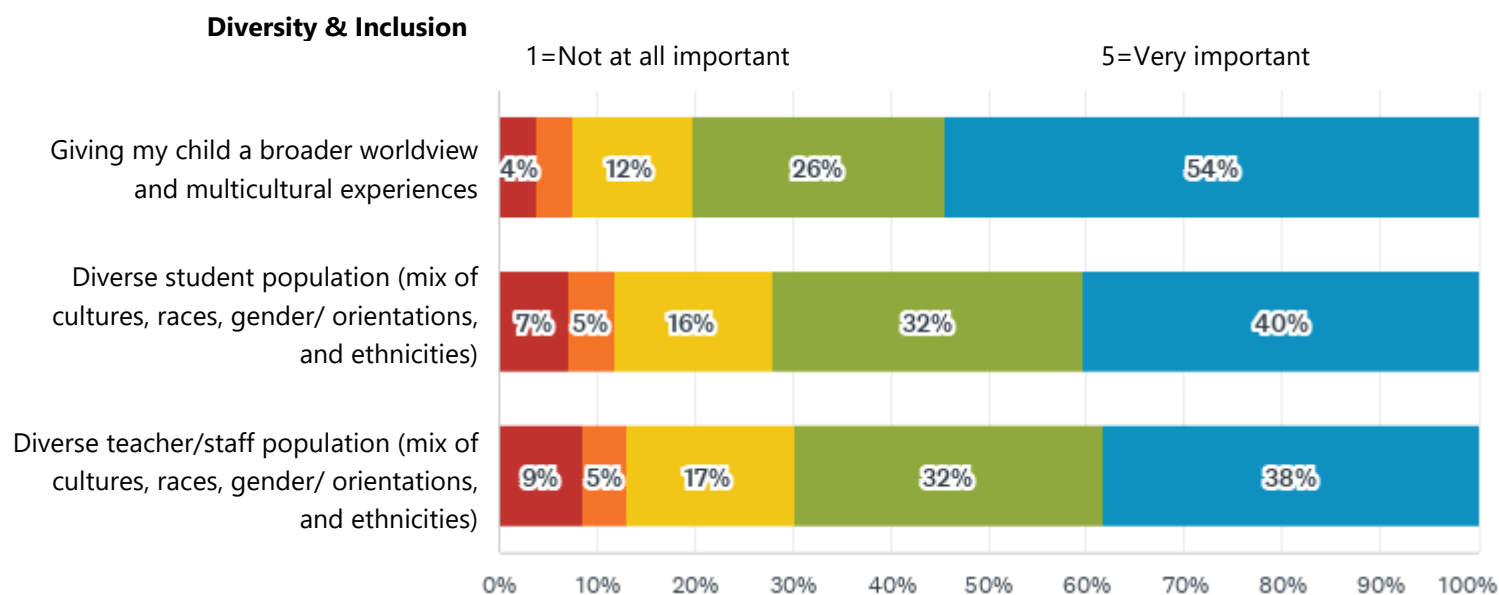


		1=Not at all important 5=Very important				
RESPONSE CHOICES	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	COUNTS				
		1	2	3	4	5
Sports	4.1	18	21	56	185	137
Other extracurriculars (clubs, interests, etc.)	4.0	9	10	66	202	130
Performing Arts	3.8	14	24	83	183	115
Studio Arts	3.7	11	27	100	177	102
Intramurals	3.5	23	32	124	154	85

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** you might think about **when choosing the school** your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its **importance on a scale of 1 to 5**, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Parents
N=419



RESPONSE CHOICES	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	COUNTS				
		1	2	3	4	5
Worldview & multicultural experiences	4.2	16	16	51	108	228
Diverse student population	3.9	30	20	67	133	169
Diverse teacher/staff population	3.8	36	19	72	132	160

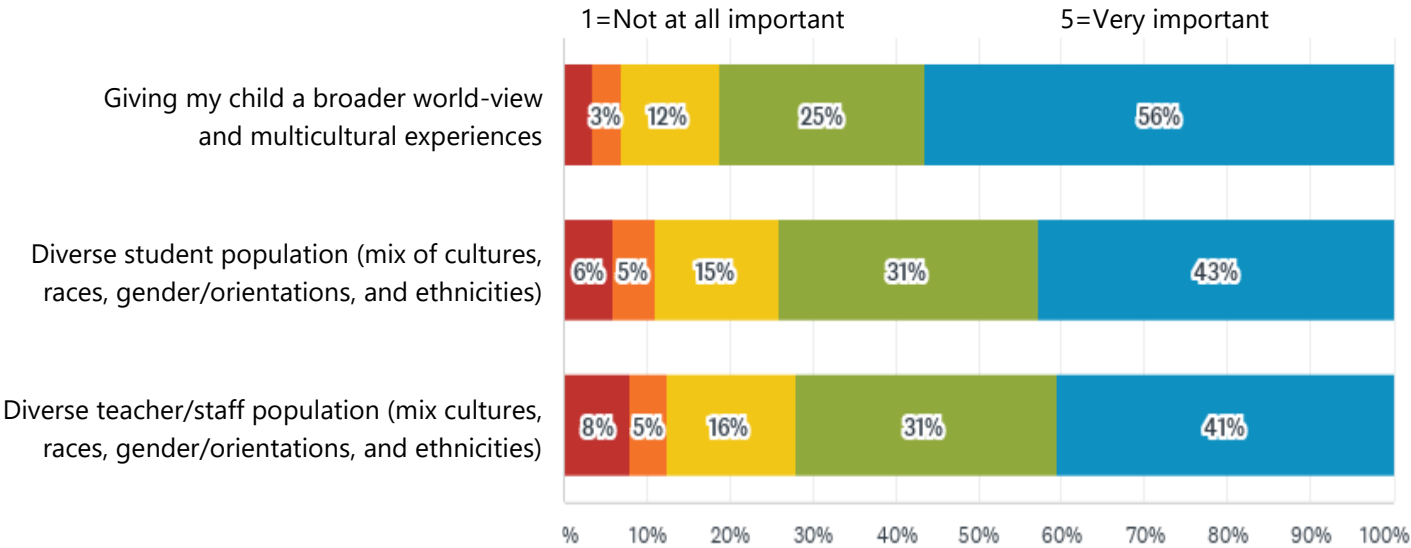


PARENTS OF PREK-12: Stillwater Area Public School District Parents

SURVEY QUESTION: Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** you might think about **when choosing the school** your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its **importance on a scale of 1 to 5**, where an answer of “1” means “not at all important” while an answer of “5” means “very important.” You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Parents
N=277

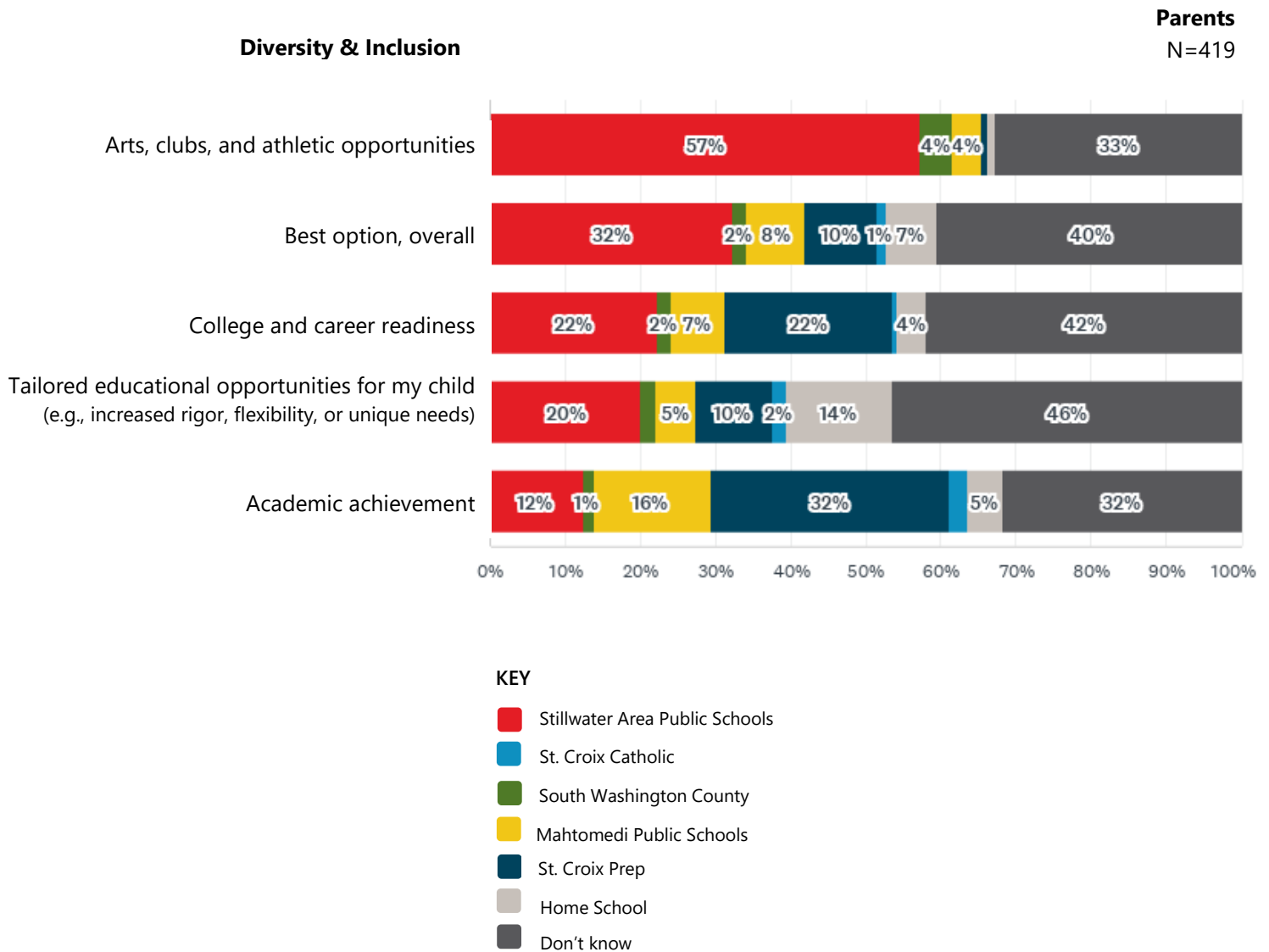
Diversity & Inclusion



RESPONSE CHOICES		WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Giving my child a broader world-view and multicultural experiences		4.3
Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)		4
Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)		3.9

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: For each item on the list, please indicate *which one of the schools or districts* you believe performs best.

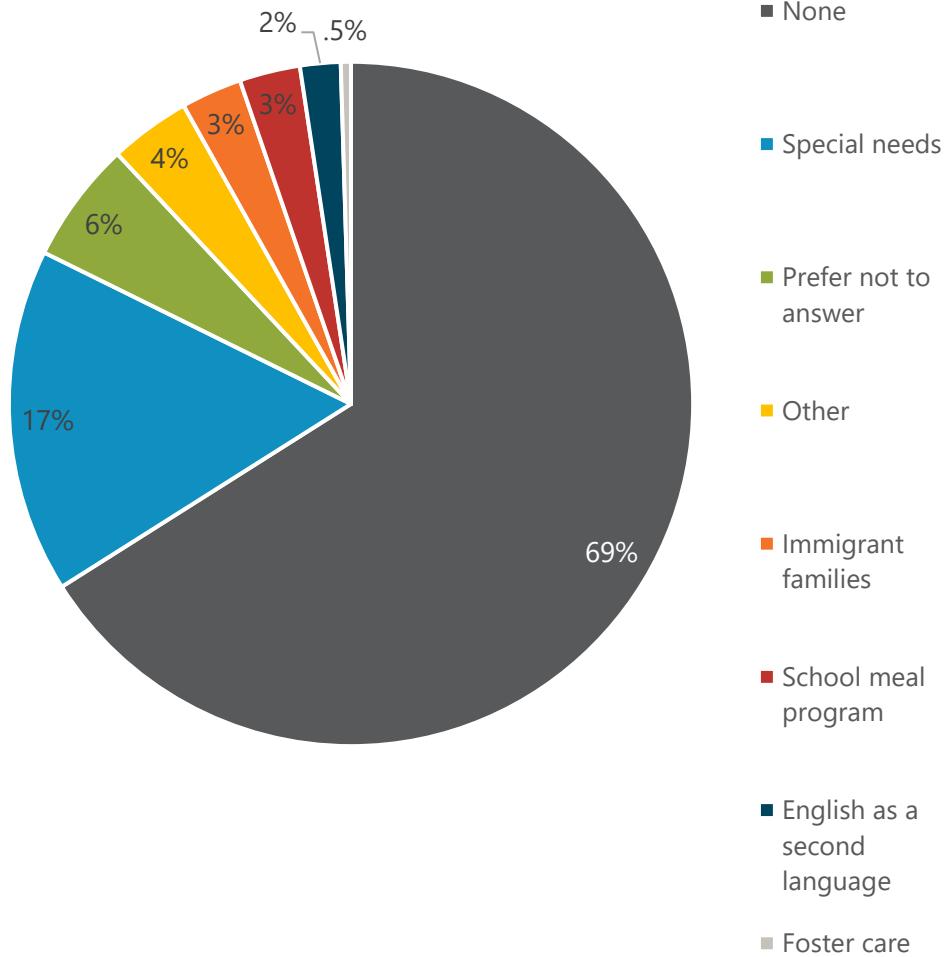


PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

SURVEY QUESTION: Our researchers want to make the best possible efforts to include everyone in our study. Will you please indicate which if any of the following apply to your family? Check all that apply.

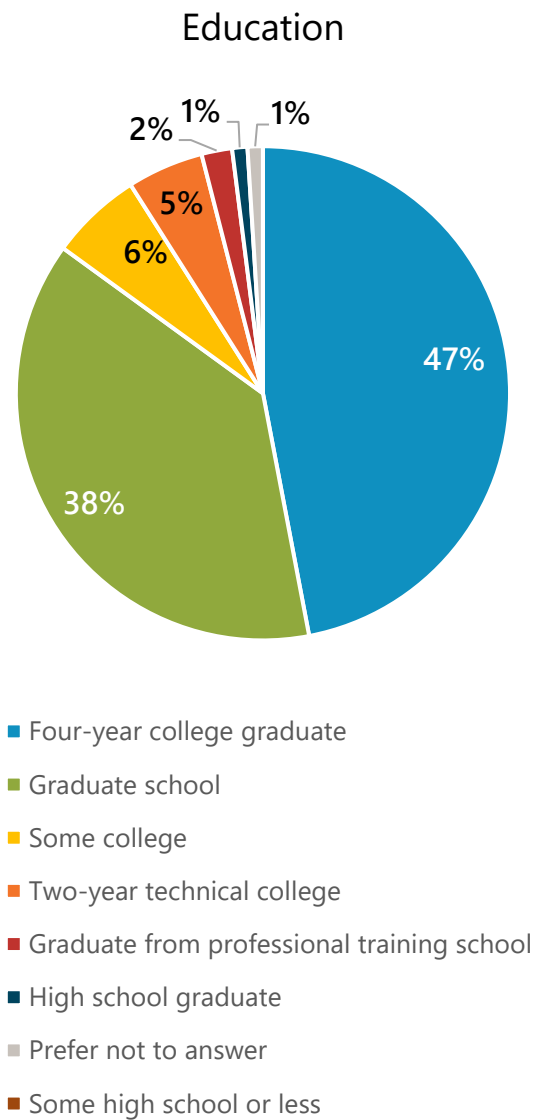
Applicable Family Situations

Parents
N=419



PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

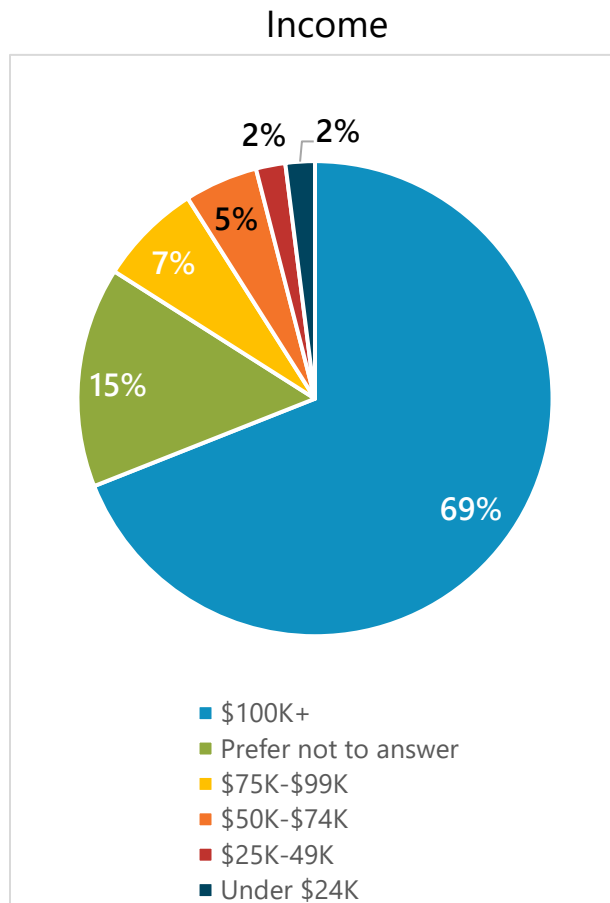
Demographics



Parents
N=419

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

Demographics



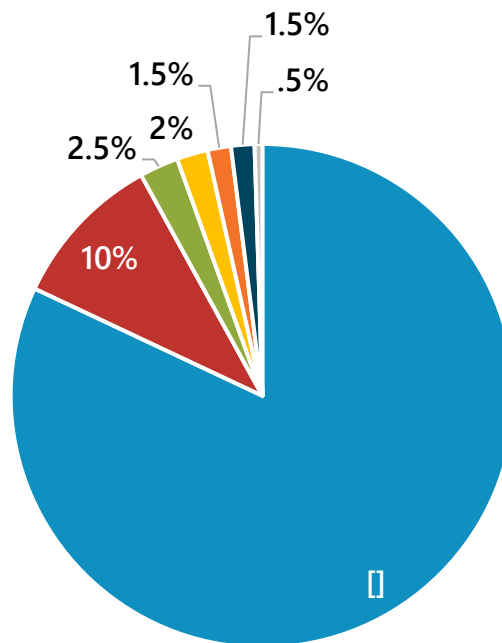
Parents
N=419

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated

Demographics

Ethnicity

Parents
N=419

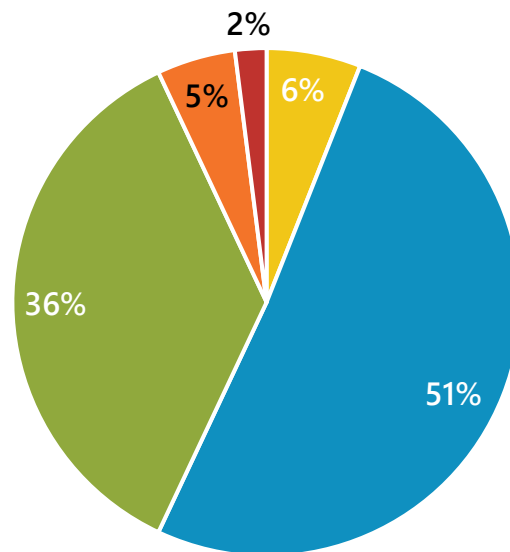


- White/Caucasian
- Prefer not to answer
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Mixed Race
- Black/African American
- American Indian

PARENTS OF PREK-12: Aggregated
Demographics

Age

Parents
N=419

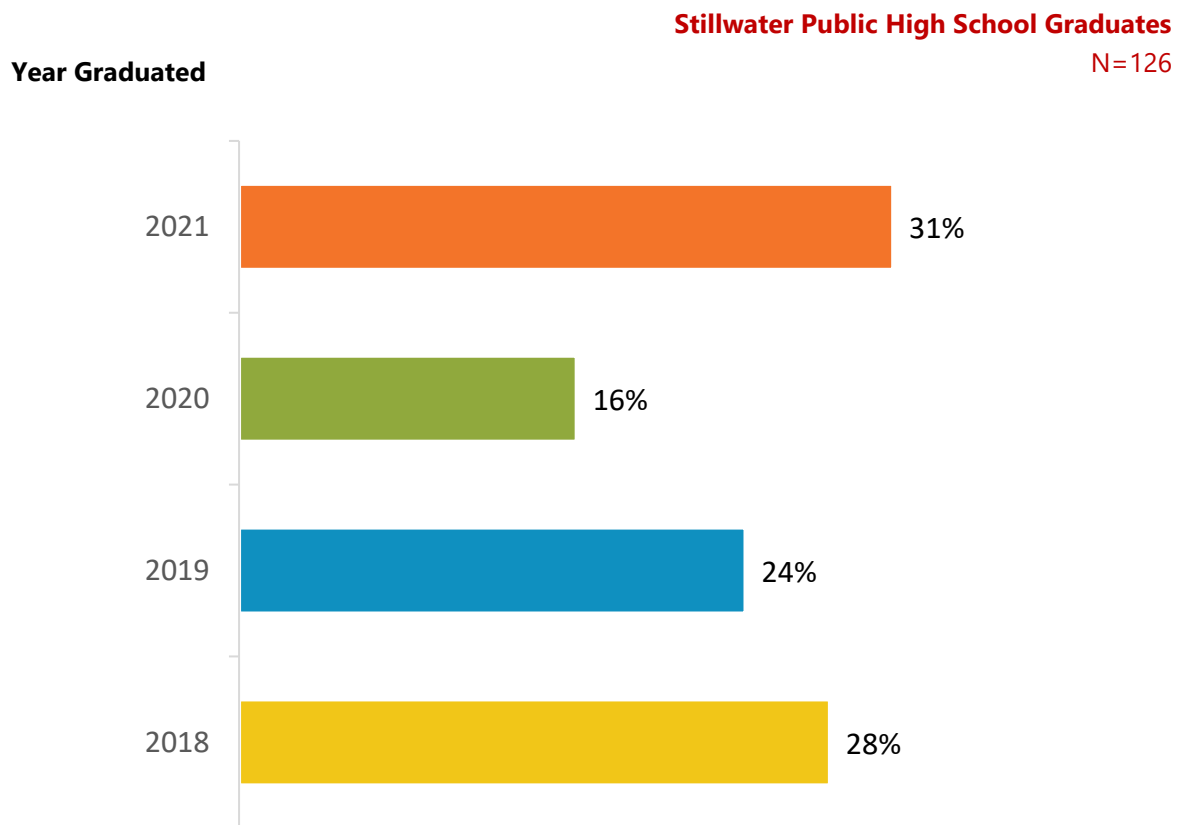


- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- Prefer not to answer

STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



SURVEY QUESTION: What year did you graduate from Stillwater High School?



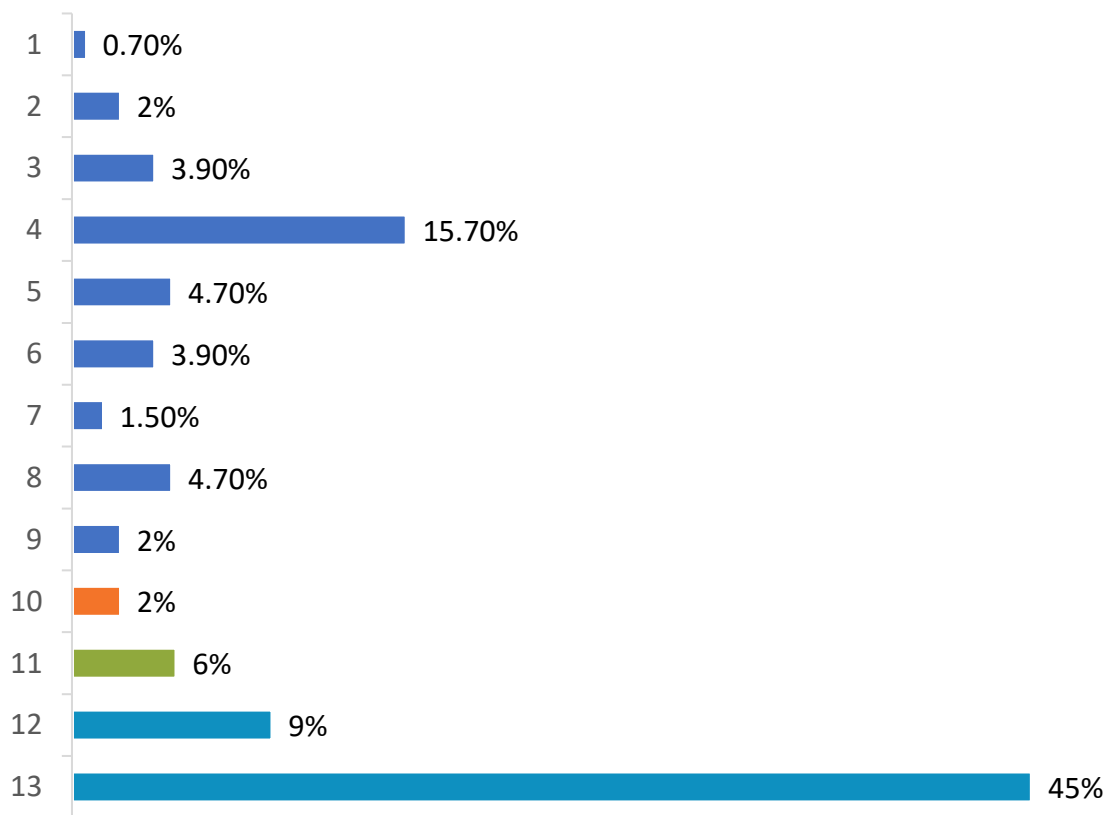
STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



SURVEY QUESTION: For how many years did you attend Stillwater Area Public Schools?

Stillwater Public High School Graduates
N=126

Number Years Attended Stillwater Area Public Schools



Top 3 Successes with Stillwater Area Public Schools

N=78



Top 3 Concerns Regarding Stillwater Area Public Schools

N=78



Top 3 Hopes for Stillwater Area Public Schools

N=78



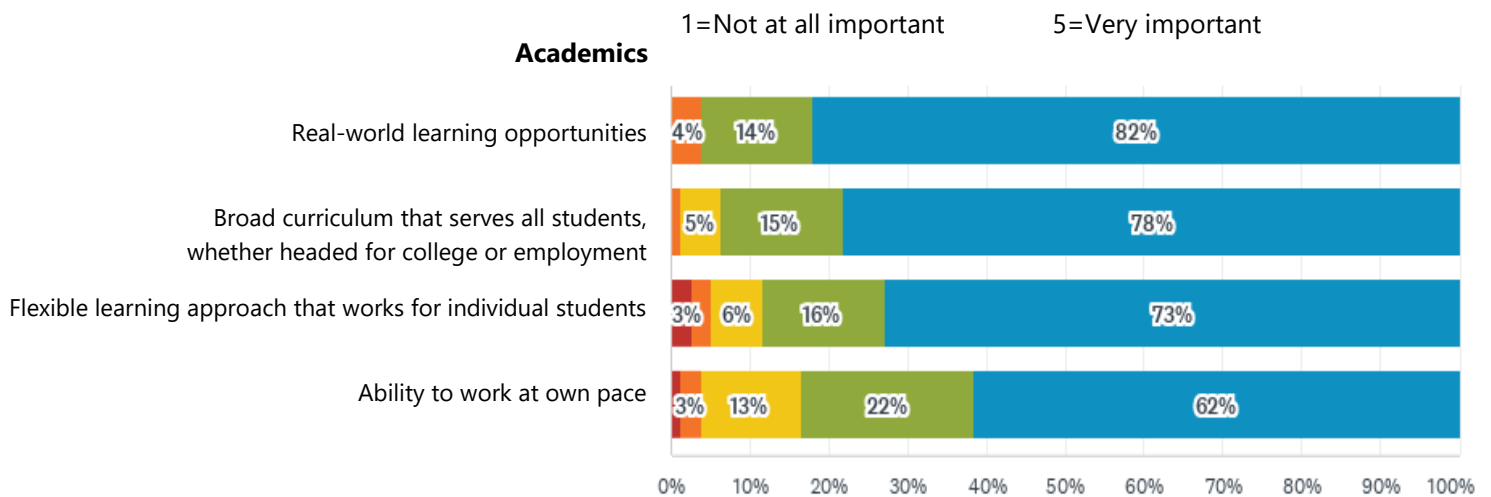
STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Stillwater Public High School Graduates

N=78



Real-world learning opportunities	
Broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment	
Flexible learning approach that works for individual students	
Ability to work at own pace	

WEIGHTED AVERAGE

4.8

4.7

4.5

4.4

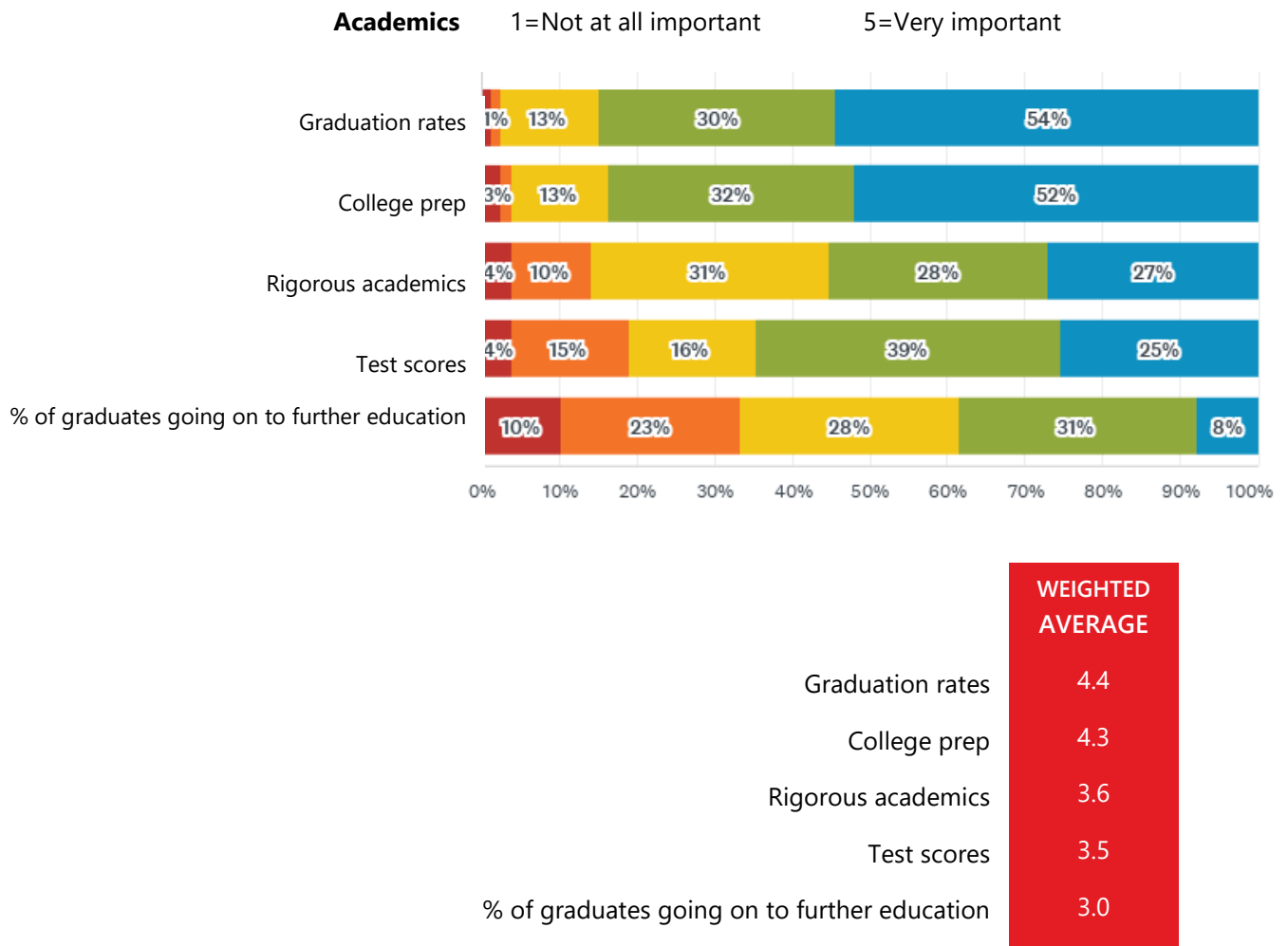
STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Stillwater Public High School Graduates

N=78



STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

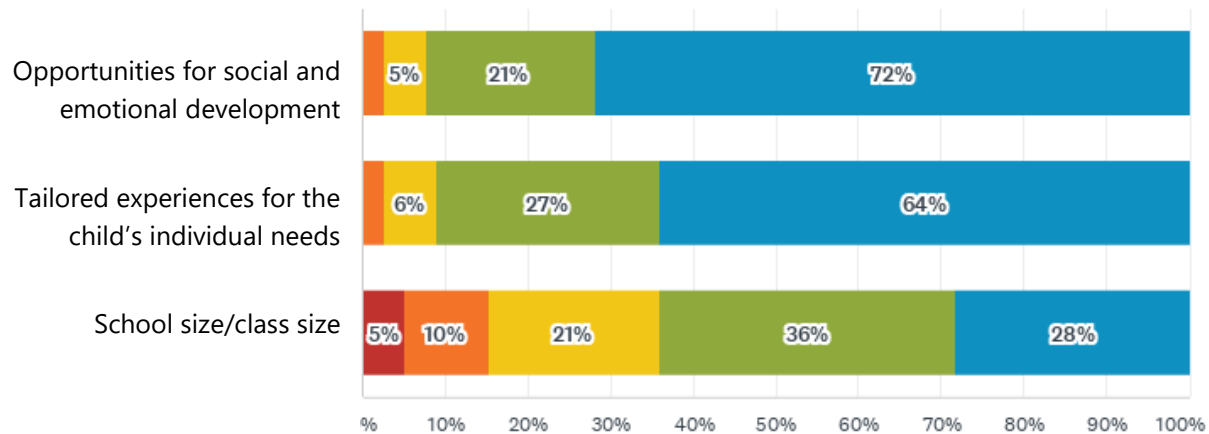
Stillwater Public High School Graduates

N=78

The Education Experience

1=Not at all important

5=Very important



Opportunities for social and emotional development

Tailored experiences for individual needs

School size/class size

WEIGHTED

AVERAGE

4.6

4.5

3.6

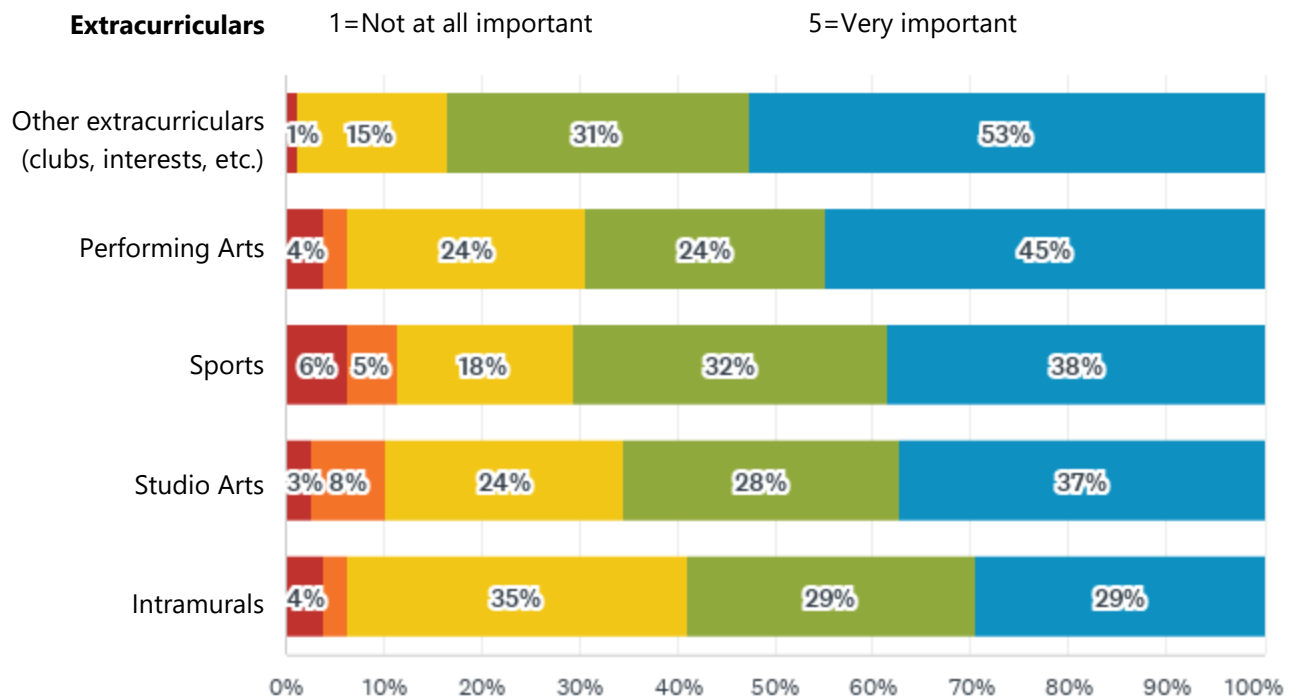
STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Stillwater Public High School Graduates

N=78



	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Other extracurriculars (clubs, interests, etc.)	4.3
Performing Arts	4.0
Sports	3.9
Studio Arts	3.9
Intramurals	3.7

STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

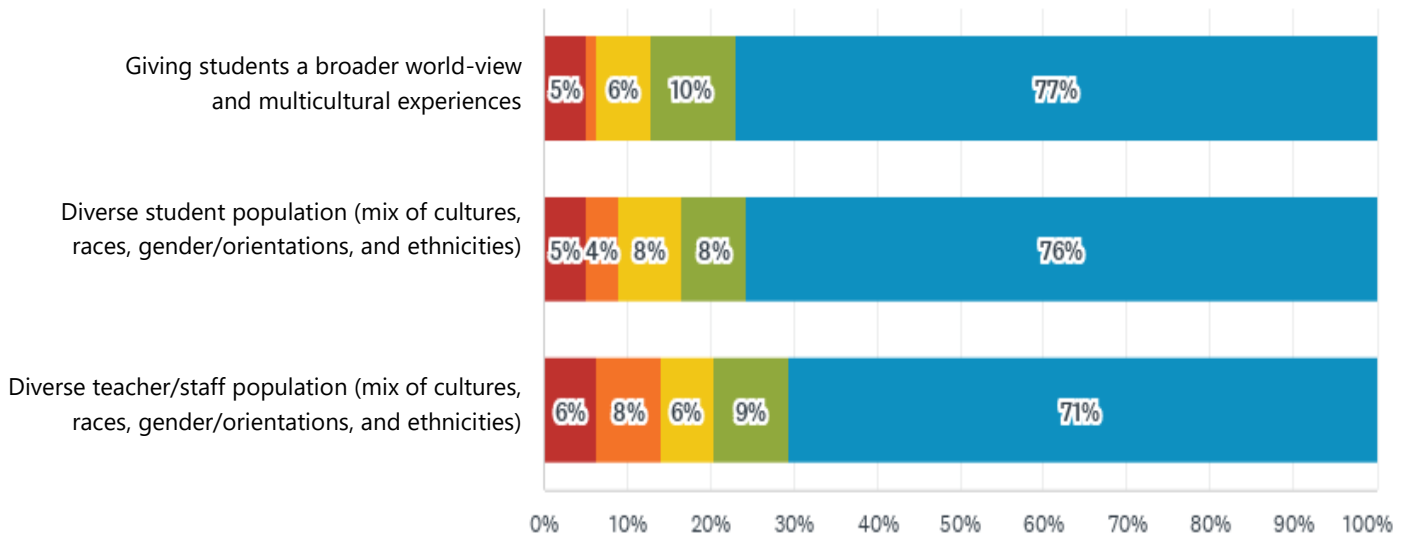
Stillwater Public High School Graduates

N=78

Diversity & Inclusion

1=Not at all important

5=Very important



WEIGHTED AVERAGE

Giving students a broader world-view and multicultural experiences	4.5
Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)	4.4
Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)	4.2

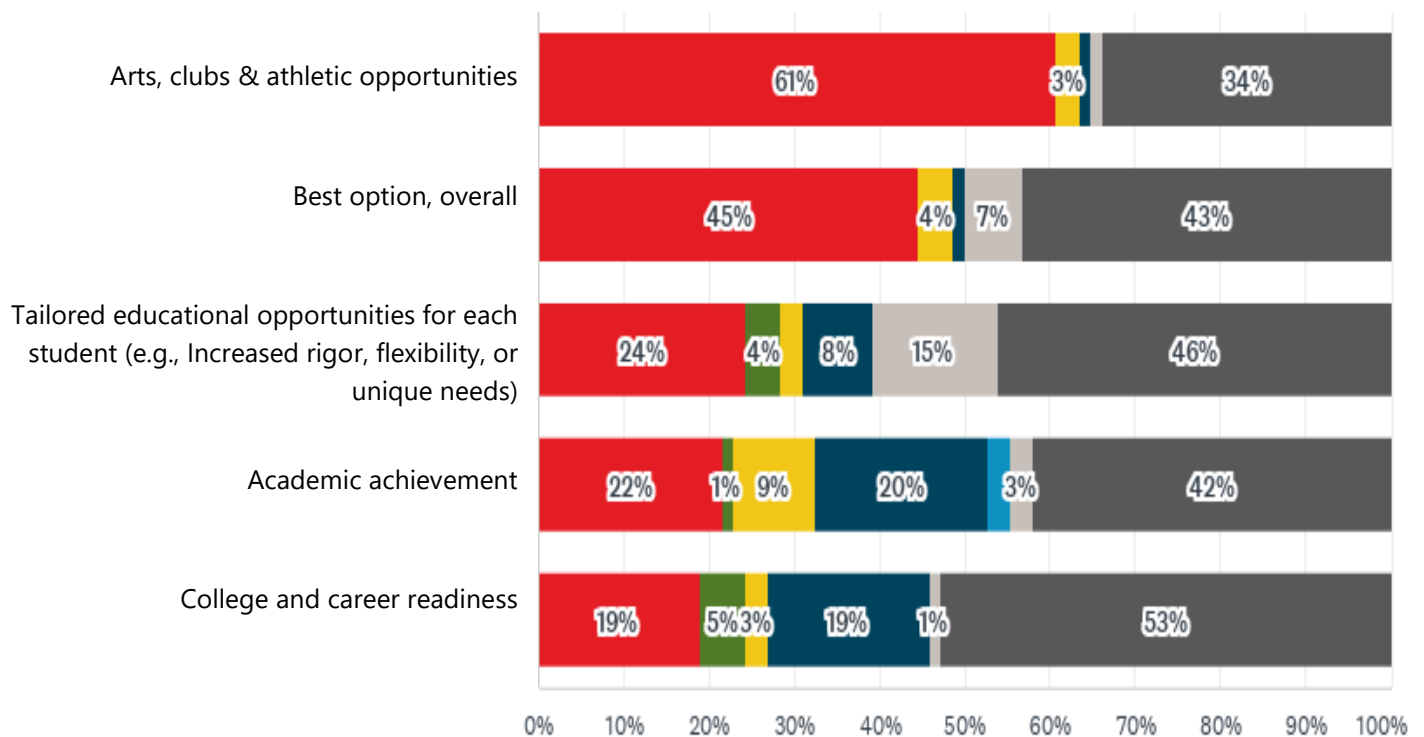
STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



SURVEY QUESTION: For each item on the list, please indicate which one of the schools or districts you believe performs best.

Stillwater Public High School Graduates

N=78



KEY

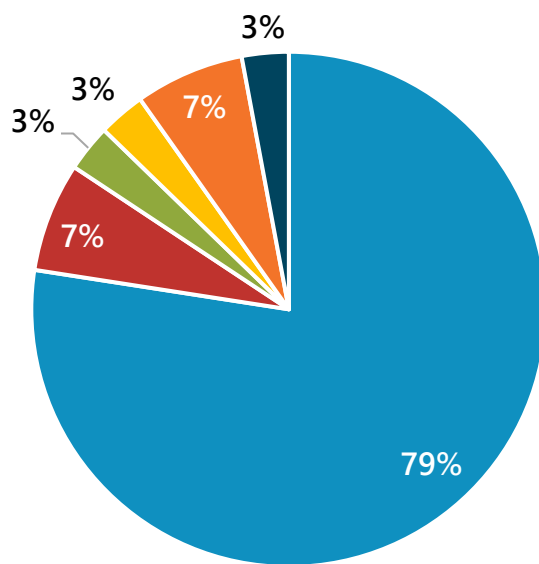
- Stillwater Area Public Schools
- St. Croix Catholic
- South Washington County
- Mahtomedi Public Schools
- St. Croix Prep
- Home School
- Don't know

STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Demographics

Ethnicity

Stillwater Public High School Graduates
N=78



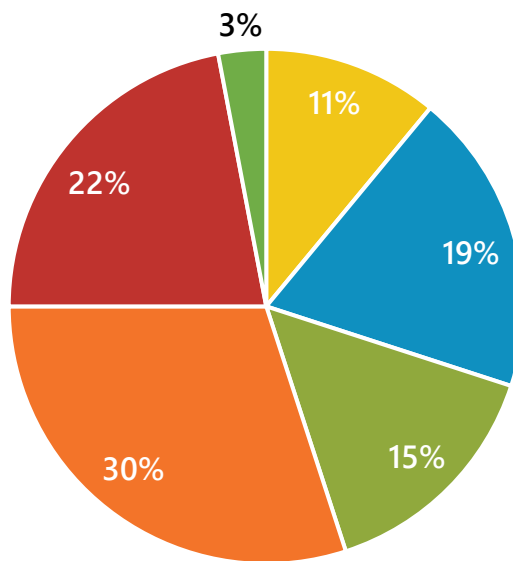
- White/Caucasian
- Prefer not to answer
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Mixed Race
- Black/African American

STILLWATER PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Demographics

Age

Stillwater Public High School Graduates
N=78



■ 18 ■ 19 ■ 20 ■ 21 ■ 22

SURVEY QUESTION (open end): What is the position you hold at Stillwater Area Public Schools, and in what department?

Position

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=205



STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF

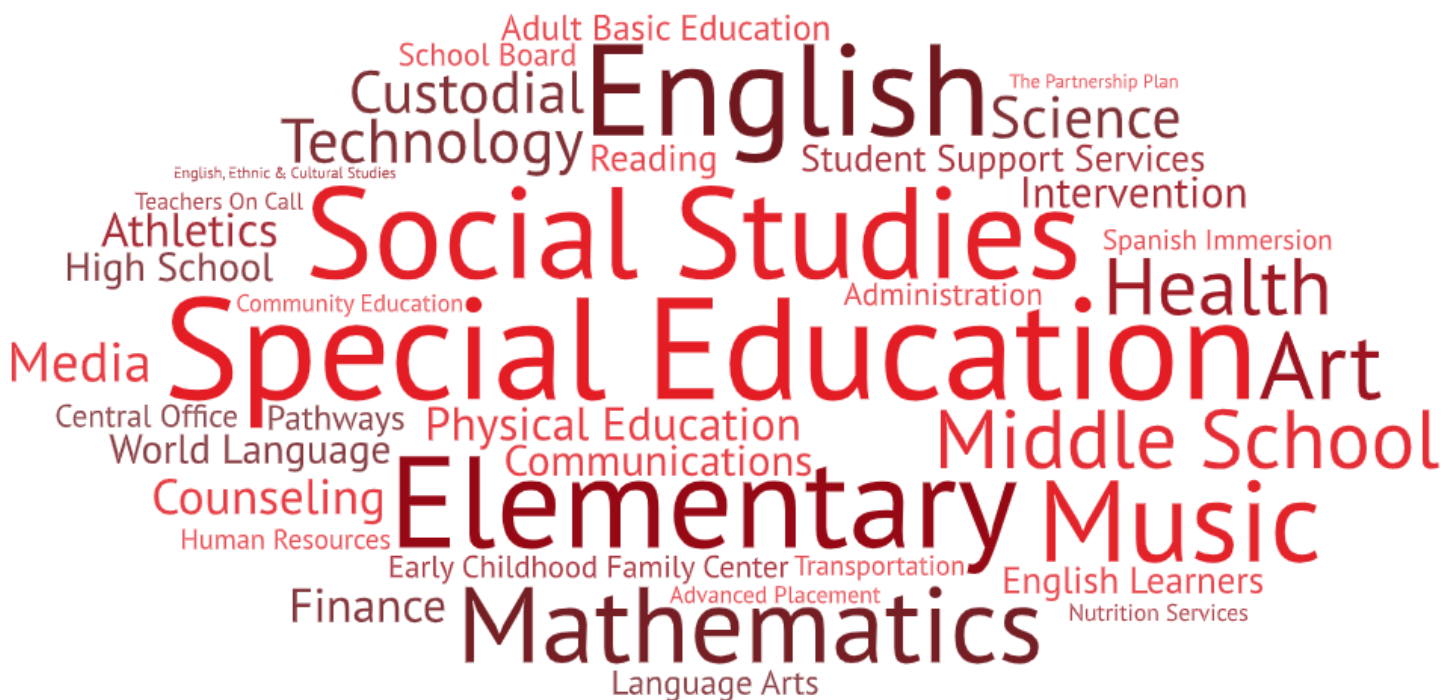


SURVEY QUESTION (open end): What is the position you hold at Stillwater Area Public Schools, and in what department?

Department

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=205



Schools

N=205

[illegible]

STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS **STAFF**



SURVEY QUESTION (open end): In which school or schools do you work?

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=205

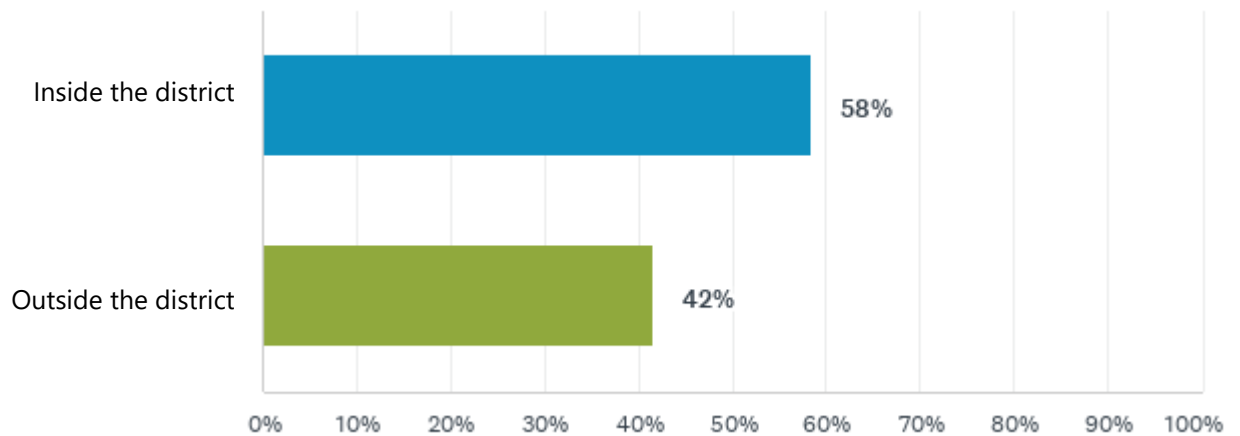
SCHOOLS	COUNTS
Stillwater Area High School	63
Lily Lake Elementary	24
Stillwater Middle School	23
Oakland Middle School	20
Andersen Elementary	13
Brookview Elementary	13
Lake Elmo Elementary	11
Rutherford Elementary	11
Rutherford Elementary	11
Afton-Lakeland Elementary	10
Central Services	10
Early Childhood Family Center	6
Stonebridge Elementary	5
Oak Park Elementary	3
The Bridge Transition Program	2
Special Education	1

STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS **STAFF**



SURVEY QUESTION: Is your residence within the Stillwater Area Public Schools District, or outside the district?

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff
N=205



COUNTS

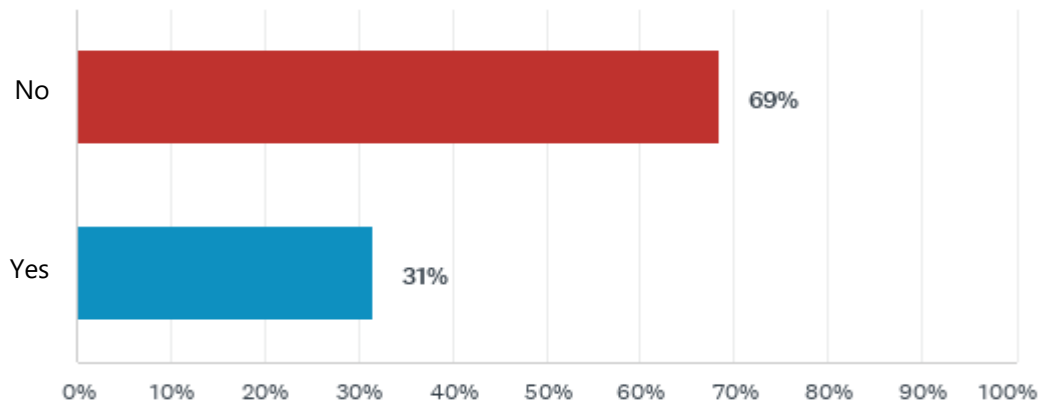
Inside the district	122
Outside the district	87

STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS **STAFF**



SURVEY QUESTION: Do you have children that attend Stillwater Area Public Schools?

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff
N=205



COUNTS

No	67
Yes	146

Top 3 Successes 2021-2022 School Year

N=150



SURVEY QUESTION (open-end): Thinking of your **own experience**, what would you say are the **top 3 concerns** with respect to Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word “concerns” is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever “concerns” means to you.

Top 3 Concerns 2021-2022 School Year

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=154



Top 3 Hopes for the 2022-2023 School Year

N=152



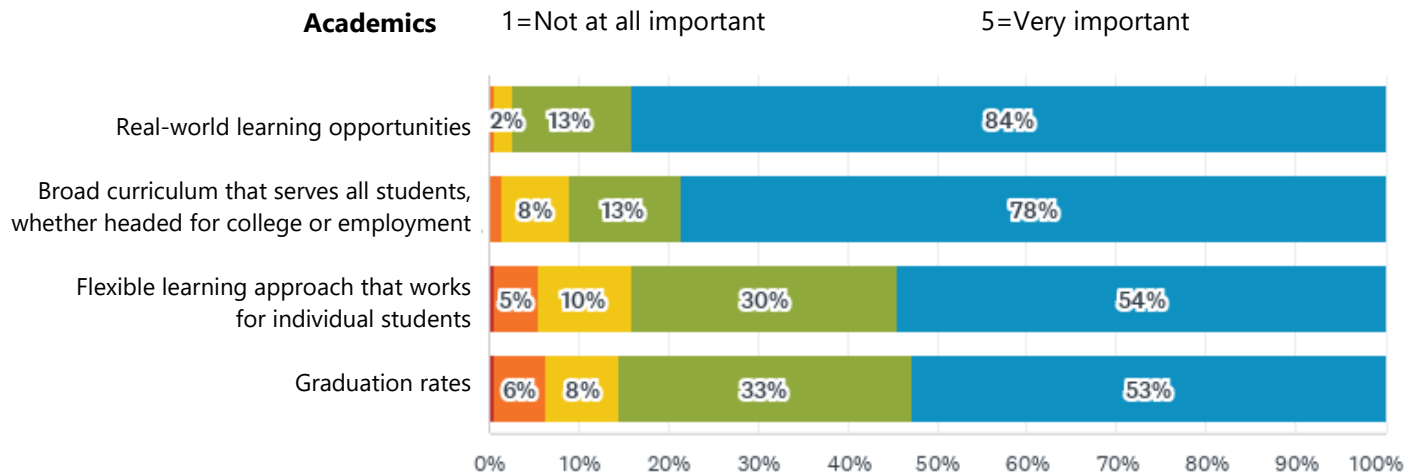
STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=145



Real-world learning opportunities

Broad curriculum that serves all students

Flexible learning approach

Graduation rates

WEIGHTED AVERAGE

4.8

4.6

4.3

4.3

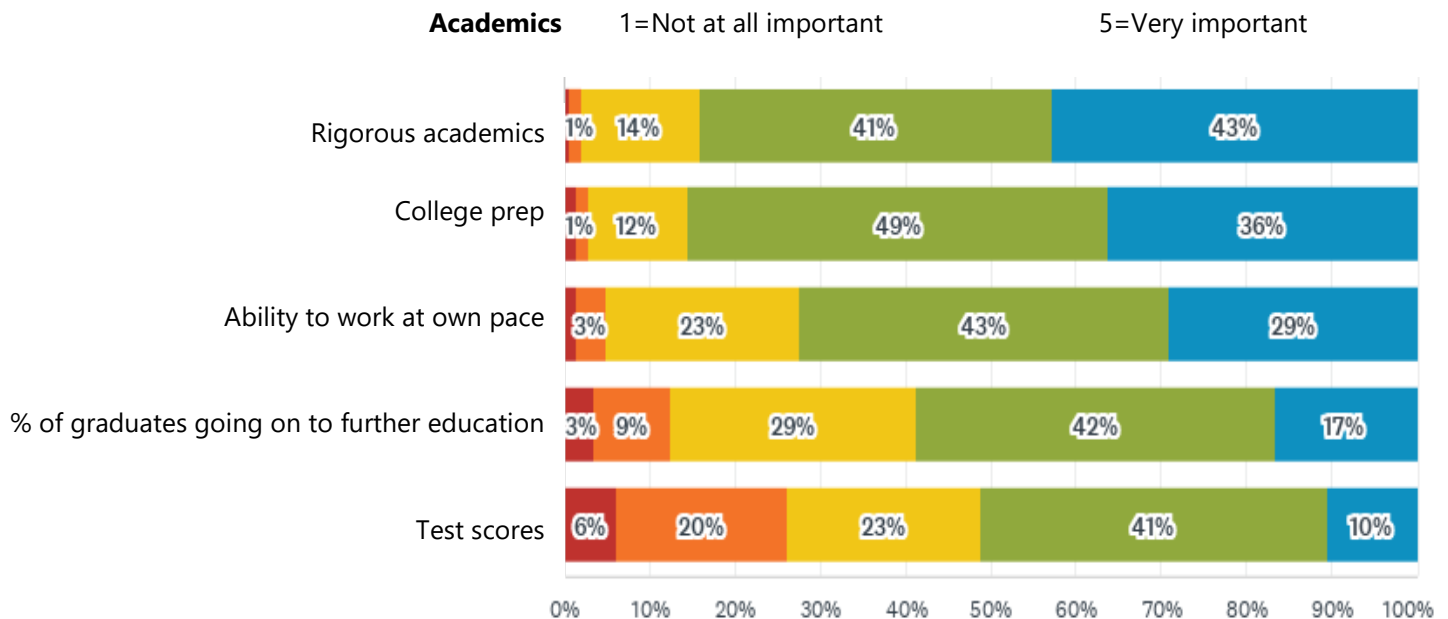
STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=145



	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Rigorous academics	4.2
College prep	4.1
Ability to work at own pace	3.9
% of graduates going on to further education	3.4
Test scores	3.2

STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF



Please review each of the following **categories of considerations** parents may think about when **choosing the school** their child attends. As you read each, please indicate **your opinion** of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

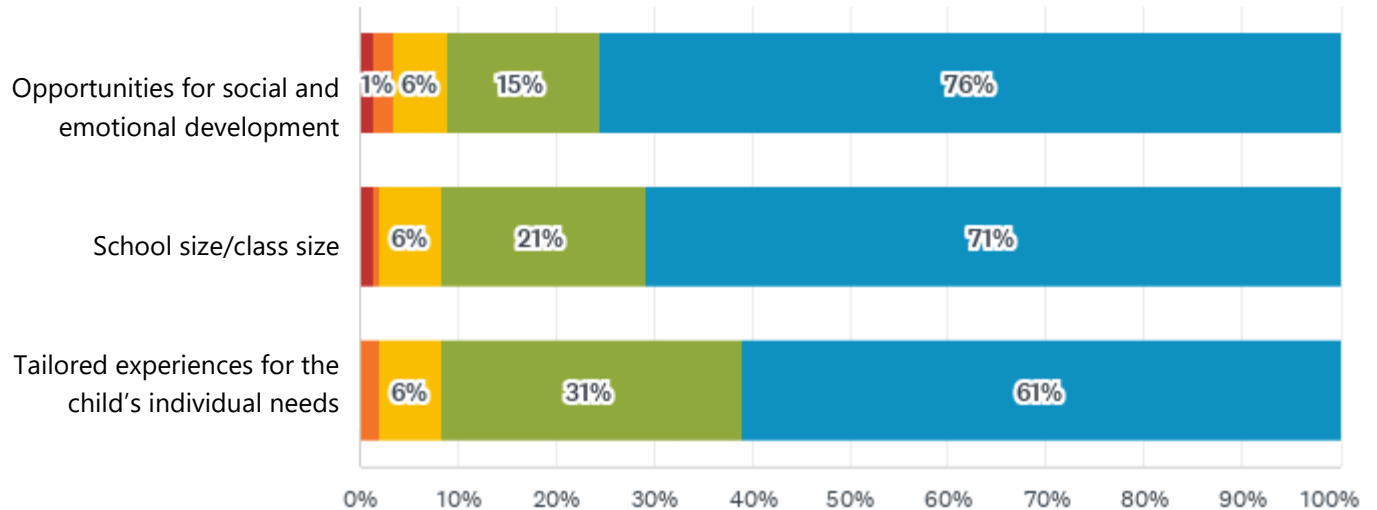
Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=144

The Education Experience

1=Not at all important

5=Very important



Opportunities for social and emotional development

WEIGHTED
AVERAGE

4.7

School size/class size

4.6

Tailored experiences for my child's individual needs

4.5

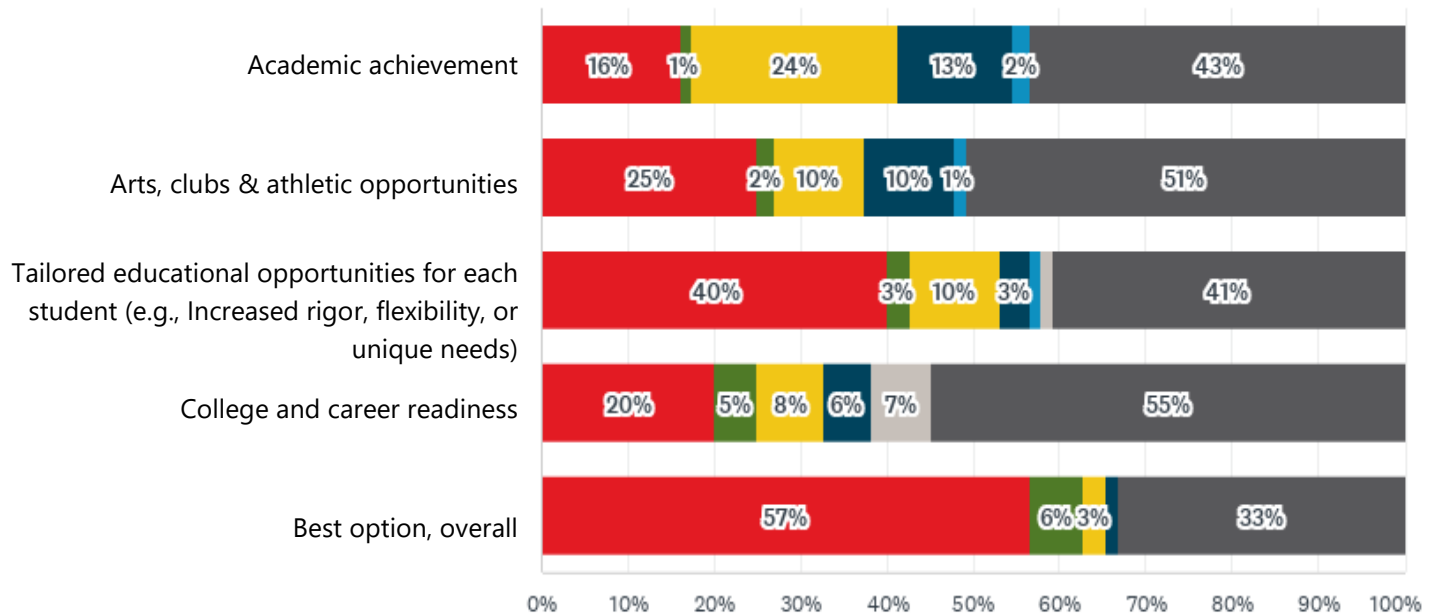
STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS **STAFF**



SURVEY QUESTION: For each item on the list, please indicate which one of the schools or districts you believe performs best.

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=145



KEY

- Stillwater Area Public Schools
- St. Croix Catholic
- South Washington County
- Mahtomedi Public Schools
- St. Croix Prep
- Home School
- Don't know

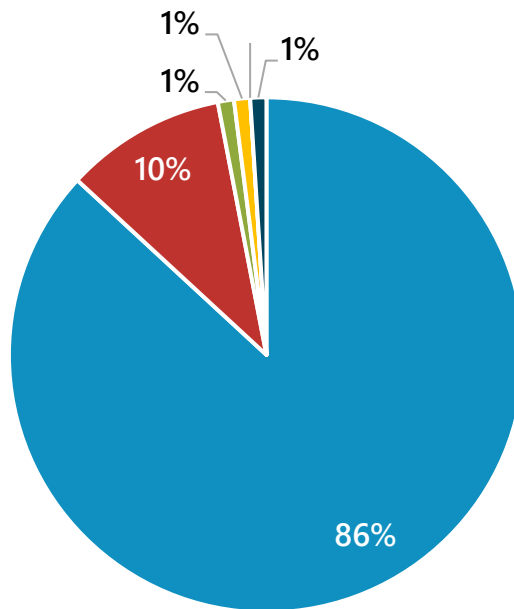
STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS **STAFF**

Demographics

Ethnicity

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

N=143



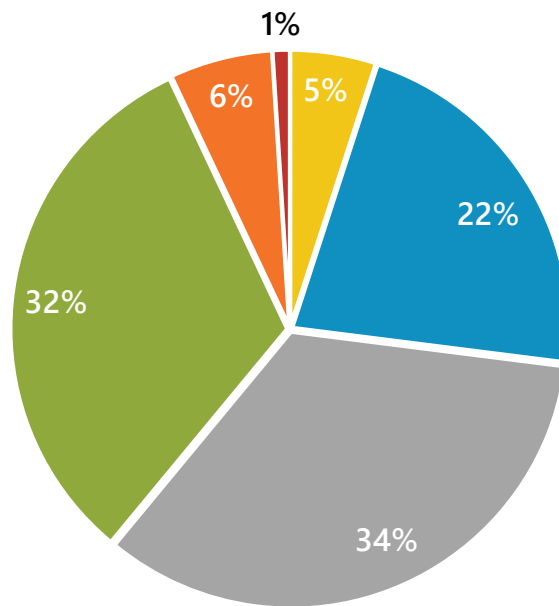
- White/Caucasian
- Prefer not to answer
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black/African American

STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS **STAFF**

Demographics

Age

Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff
N=143



- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- Prefer not to answer



Appendix

Code of Data Collection Ethics: Insights Association

Section 1

1. Prioritize data subject privacy above business objectives.
2. Be honest, transparent, and straightforward in all interactions.
3. Respect the rights and well-being of data subjects and make all reasonable efforts to ensure that data subjects are not harmed, disadvantaged, or harassed as a result of their participation in research.
4. Always distinguish between research and non-research activities so as to maintain public confidence in the integrity of research.
5. When engaging in non-research activities (for example, promotional or commercial activities directed at data subjects, including but not limited to advertising and direct marketing), do not permit any direct action toward an individual based on his or her participation in research without their consent. Such consent can enable non-research activities to utilize research techniques for certain types of customer satisfaction, user, employee, and other experience activities.

Section 2

1. Promptly identify themselves to data subjects so that the participants can easily verify researcher identity and credentials.
2. Clearly state the general purpose of the research as soon as methodically possible.
3. Ensure that participation is voluntary, based on accurate information about the purpose and nature of the research.
4. Respect the right of data subjects to refuse requests to participate in research.
5. Respect the right of those already engaged in research to terminate their participation or refuse requests for additional or other forms of research participation.
6. Upon request, permit data subjects to access, correct or update any PII held about them.
7. Limit the use of incentives only as a means to encourage participation in research.



The **Insights Association** consists of 325 member companies and their 32,000 employees. It represents \$8 billion in global annual revenue (about 85% of the U.S. research industry and 30% of the global research industry).

IA's members annually reaffirm their adherence to the IA Code of Standards and Ethics for Marketing Research and Data Analytics, an internationally respected code of business and professional standards.

Insights Association has achieved unique status among all North American associations by serving as an active representative on numerous global initiatives and as chief liaison with several leading international

Code of Data Collection Ethics: Insights Association

Consent

1. Obtain the data subject's consent for research participation and the collection of PII or ensure that consent was properly obtained by the owner of the data or sample source.
2. If known at the time of data collection, inform data subjects if there are any activities that will involve re-contact. In such situations, the researcher must obtain the data subject's consent to share PII for re-contacting purposes. Re-contacting data subjects for quality control purposes does not require prior notification.
3. Allow data subjects to withdraw their consent at any time.
4. Obtain consent from the data subject prior to using his/her data in a manner that is materially different from what data subject has agreed.

About The Insights Association

Launched in 2017, the Insights Association was formed through the merger of two organizations with long, respected histories of servicing the market research and analytics industry: CASRO (founded in 1975) and MRA (founded in 1957). IA protects and creates demand for the evolving Insights and Analytics industry by promoting the indisputable role of insights in driving business impact.

Specifically, the association:

- Provides government advocacy through legislative, regulatory, and judicial means
- Cares for and improves the industry's image in the eyes of the media and public
- Markets the business case for industry products and services to buyers and users
- Sets and enforces professional standards
- Establishes and reinforces best practices
- Helps members grow their businesses, their departments, and themselves as research professionals

The Respondent Bill of Rights

What Are Your Rights If Interviewed?

Your participation in a legitimate research study is very important to us, and we value the information you provide. Therefore, our relationship will be one of respect and consideration, based on the following practices:

- Your privacy and the privacy of your answers will be respected and maintained.
- Your name, address, phone number, e-mail, personal information, or individual responses will not be disclosed to anyone outside the research project without your permission.
- You will always be informed in advance if an interview is to be audio recorded or video recorded (as in the case of telephone or in-person studies). Additionally, you will be told of the intended use of the recording.
- Upon request, you will be informed of the privacy policy that applies to your participation in the research study.
- The researcher will be identified to you. You will be told the name of the research organization and the general nature of the survey.
- You will not be sold anything, or asked for money, under the guise of research.
- You will be contacted at reasonable times, but if the time is inconvenient, you may ask to be re-contacted at a more convenient time.
- Your decision to participate in a study, answer specific questions, be re-contacted at another time, or discontinue your participation will be respected.
- You are assured that the highest standards of professional conduct will be upheld in the collection and reporting of information you provide.

Survey, opinion, and marketing research is an important facet of our democratic society, allowing everyone to express their views on political and social issues, as well as on products and services.

Questionnaire: Parents/Community

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Schedule (tentative)

Tuesday, May 24th

Times

12:00 PM 2:00 PM

Schedule (tentative)

Wednesday, May 25th

Times

9:00 AM 3:00 PM 5:00 PM

Community

Number to recruit

N=6 (each session)

Definitions

Mixed groups

Parents

Each session should be comprised

Mix demographics, geography, and perspectives of Stillwater Area Public Schools

-Have children that attend Stillwater Area Public Schools OR other area districts

-Mix in-district and open enrollment

-Skew to younger families (e.g., preK-8)

-Mix education (in-person/online): public, private, charter, homeschool, charter

Community

Mix demographics, geography, and perspectives of Stillwater Area Public Schools

-Do not currently have children that attend preK-12

-May have had children that previously attended Stillwater Area Public Schools

-Currently live in Stillwater Area school district, mix length of time of residence

Geography

Recruit mix of Afton, Bayport, Baytown Township, Grant, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Lake St. Croix Beach, Marine on St. Croix, May Township, Oak Park Heights, St. Mary's Point, Stillwater, Stillwater Township, West Lakeland Township, Withrow, and Woodbury

Schools

Recruit mix of Early Learning, Afton-Lakeland Elementary, Andersen Elementary, Brookview Elementary, Lake Elmo Elementary, Lily Lake Elementary, Rutherford Elementary, Stonebridge Elementary, Oak-Land Middle School, Stillwater Middle School, Stillwater Area High School, St. Croix Valley ALC, Bridge Transition, St. Croix Preparatory Academy, St. Croix Catholic, **Mahtomedi Public Schools***, River Grover Elementary, Hill-Murray, New Heights, Salem Lutheran, **South Washington County Public Schools***, Online Schools (any), Homeschool

Considerations

Ensure robust Stillwater Area representation that fit Community" definition

*75% Stillwater district taxpayers do not currently have preK-12 children

-Blind approach *except for* names provided by Stillwater Area Public Schools

-The omission of a "gender" question is deliberate

***See back page for lists of these schools**

INTRODUCTION

Greetings! Orman Guidance, a Minnesota-based market research company, is engaged in independent study of preK-12, public and private education in Minnesota. Founded in 1975, Orman Guidance follows best privacy practices and has contributed thousands of research studies to Minnesota.

We are conducting this survey to prepare for focus groups to explore how Minnesota communities think and feel about preK-12 education and we would like to include your opinions. The survey input is completely confidential, and your anonymity is assured. You are under no obligation to participate. This is a unique chance to make your voice heard and provide input on issues that are important to you. If you are invited to participate in a focus group, you will be compensated.

The purpose of the focus group is to explore these topics:

- A. What is most important to you about preK-12 education
- B. What you believe to be the unique story of *your* school district
- C. How preK-12 education may provide students with the best opportunities to succeed

In order to represent the best possible mix of people, we have prepared this survey, which will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. We want to hear from as many people as possible that represent a mix of public and private preK-12 schools, online and in-person models, charter schools and homeschoolers. It is just as important to hear from people that do not have children and those who have adult children.

If you would like to be considered for the focus group, please provide your contact details at the end of the survey.

Are you willing to proceed?

Yes () CONTINUE
No [] END

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULING OPT-IN

The focus group will take place the week of May 23rd, on the Zoom platform. A mix of timeslots are offered. The focus group will last about 90 minutes. Are you available during this time to participate?

Yes () CONTINUE
No [] END

GEOGRAPHY

[1A] Next, in the space provided, please indicate the name of the city you live in:

RECRUIT MIX

[1B] Please also indicate the name of the school district you live in:

RESPONDENT AGE, CHILDREN

- [2A] We would like to represent the best possible mixes of ages in our focus groups. May I ask your age, please?

_____ RECRUIT MIX IN EACH GROUP

- [2B] Do you have children that live with you, that are currently enrolled in preK-12 education, whether in-school, online, or homeschooled?

Yes () CONTINUE

No [] SKIP TO [4A]

- [2C] Which of the following categories represent school year 2021-2022, preK-12 grades of your children? Check all that apply, please.

PreK-4 ()

5-8 ()

9-12 ()

PROGRAMMING NOTE: SKEW K-4 and 5-8 (UPON RESCREEN, DO NOT INVITE ANY RESPONDENT THAT ONLY HAS A 12TH GRADER

PREK-12 EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

- [3A] Which of the following represents the current experience of your children in grades preK-12? Check all that apply, please.

In-person school ()

Online school ()

Public school ()

Private school ()

Homeschool ()

Charter school ()

Open enrollment ()

- [3B] As applicable, please indicate the name or names of the schools your preK-12 children currently attend. This question is asked solely for the purpose of ensuring the best possible mix of schools in our research.

- [3C] When you think about how you made the decision to enroll your child in the school, what were some of **the most important reasons** to do so? Please use the space below:

- [3D] Thinking ahead to School Year 2022-2023, which of the following represents your intention to enroll your children in grades preK-12? Check all that apply, please.

In-person school ()
Online school ()
Public school ()
Private school ()
Homeschool ()
Charter school ()
Open enrollment ()

- [3E] Thinking of Language Immersion curriculum for your children, which if any of the following are of *interest* to you? Please answer on a scale of 1-5, where an answer of "1" means, "not at all interested" and an answer of "5" means "very interested". Of course, use any number 1-5 to indicate your interest level.

Spanish immersion	()	1	2	3	4	5
Others (specify):						
_____	()	1	2	3	4	5
_____	()	1	2	3	4	5

- [3F] Regarding your interest in Language Immersion, which if of the following best represents your intention to enroll your child or children in Language Immersion curriculum? Please answer on a scale of 1-5, where an answer of "1" means, "very unlikely to enroll" and an answer of "5" means "very likely to enroll". Of course, use any number 1-5 to indicate your intention.

Spanish immersion	()	1	2	3	4	5
Others (specify):						
_____	()	1	2	3	4	5
_____	()	1	2	3	4	5

CHILDREN/FAMILY SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- [4] Next, we'd like to ask about you and your children's participation in school-related activities. We'd like to gain as many perspectives as possible, including parents and children that are not involved in school-related activities. If your children are no longer in school, please answer from the perspective of when they were.

Please review the following list and indicate which if any apply to any of your children or to you personally. Please note these are school-related, not activities you engage in with any private party or organization.

Child participates in school-sponsored athletics ()

Parent involved in any athletics-related volunteerism ()

Child participates in school-sponsored arts/music ()

Parent involved in any arts/music-related volunteerism ()

Child is enrolled in early college credit courses
(e.g., Advanced Placement, College in the Schools,
PSEO, etc.) ()

Child is enrolled in language immersion ()

Child participates in any student government activities ()

Parent involved in any PTO/PTA activities ()

Child participates in Gifted and Talented programming ()

Child participates in Special Education ()

None of these apply to any of my children ()

None of these apply to me personally ()

NOTE: IN EACH FOCUS GROUP, RECRUIT A MIX OF STUDENT AND PARENT SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT AND ACTIVITY

PERSPECTIVES & OPINIONS

- [5] When it comes to your child or children's experience with school this past year, it is important to understand as many perspectives and opinions as possible as the school year 2021-2022 comes to a close. Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 successes your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

- [6] When it comes to your child or children's experience with school this past year, it is important to understand as many perspectives and opinions as possible as the school year 2021-2022 comes to a close. Thinking of your family's experience this past year, what would you say are the top 3 concerns your child or children experienced in school this past year? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

- [7] As you think ahead to the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for your child or children with respect to their experience in school? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

[8A] Please review each of the following categories of considerations you might think about when choosing the school your child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

PROGRAMMING NOTE: EACH ATTRIBUTE BELOW WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A 1-5 SCALE

Academics

Test scores

Graduation rates

College prep

Rigorous academics

Real-world learning opportunities

Ability to work at own pace

Flexible learning approach that works for my child

% of graduates going on to further education

Broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment

The Education Experience

Tailored experiences for my child's individual needs

In-person experiences for social development

Social/emotional and mental health support

School size/class size

World Language Immersion

Extracurriculars

Sports

Studio Arts

Performing Arts

Intramurals

Other extracurriculars (clubs, interests, etc.)

Diversity & Inclusion

Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)

Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)

Giving my child a broader world-view and international experiences

[8B] When it came to decision-making about the school district you enrolled your child or children in, which of the following best describes the top 3 reasons?

Recommendations from friends and/or family	()
Test scores	()
Proximity to our home	()
Arts, clubs & athletic opportunities	()
Cultural diversity	()
Best option, overall	()
World language-immersion	()
Aligns with my personal values	()
Best option to prepare my child for the real world	()
Personal experience: I attended, or my spouse attended	()

[8C] Please review the following list. For each item, please indicate which one of the districts along the top row you believe performs best, for each item on the list. If not sure, please indicate "don't know."

	Stillwater Area Public Schools	So Washington County Public Schools	Mahtomedi Public Schools	Don't Know
Academic achievement	()	()	()	()
Arts, clubs & athletic opportunities	()	()	()	()
Tailored educational opportunities for my child (e.g., Increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)	()	()	()	()
College and career readiness	()	()	()	()
Best option, overall	()	()	()	()

	St. Croix Prep	St. Croix Catholic	Home School	Don't Know
Academic achievement	()	()	()	()
Extracurricular opportunities available	()	()	()	()
Tailored educational opportunities for my child (e.g., Increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)	()	()	()	()
College and career readiness	()	()	()	()
Best option, overall	()	()	()	()

DEMOGRAPHICS

- [9] These final questions will ensure that we have a good mix of the population in our focus groups. What is the highest level of education you personally completed? INFORMATION ONLY

Some high school or less	()
High school graduate	()
Some college	()
2-year technical college graduate	()
Graduate from professional training school	()
4-year college graduate	()
Graduate school	()

- [10] What is your ethnicity? NOTE: *IDEAL MIXES PER FOCUS GROUP AS INDICATED*

White/Caucasian	()
Black/African American	()
Asian/Pacific Islander	()
Hispanic or Latino	()
American Indian or Alaska Native	()
Mix: 2 or more ethnicities	()

- [11] Which of the following broad categories best represents your total, annual household income? RECRUIT MIX

Under \$25,000	()
\$25,000-\$49,999	()
\$50,000-\$74,999	()
\$75,000-\$99,999	()
Over \$100,000	()

- [12] Our researchers want to make the best possible efforts to include everyone in our study. Will you please indicate which if any of the following apply to your family? Check all that apply.

English as a second language	()
Immigrant families	()
Special needs (of any kind)	()
Homeless	()
Foster care	()
School meal program	()

Other (please describe):

RESPONDENT ARTICULATION

- [13] As a final question, when you think about your children's education, please describe your thoughts about opportunities that exist in education. In particular, if you could design the ideal experience, what would you be certain to include and/or exclude, and why? This is a broad concept: there is no right or wrong way to answer, we'd like you to provide as much detail as possible as you answer.

NOTE: ONLY RECRUIT RESPONDENTS WHO DISPLAY SPONTANEITY AND A RANGE OF IDEAS. RESPONDENTS MUST BE ENGAGED AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND. IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS, "I DON'T KNOW" OR OFFERS ONLY A MINIMAL RESPONSE, DO NOT RECRUIT.

Before proceeding to the invitation, take a moment to review the answers the respondent provided:

- 1) Make sure the answers contribute to varied perspectives and opinions about Stillwater Area Public Schools and other public school systems.
- 2) Double check that the focus group represents a range of extracurricular involvement and academic performance.
- 3) Ensure that demographics represent a census-appropriate mix of demographics.



INVITATION

- [14] We would like to invite you to participate in a marketing research focus group on behalf of Stillwater Area Public Schools. The focus group will be led by a moderator who will prompt participants to explore perspectives and opinions about Stillwater Area Public Schools. This is a unique opportunity for you to make your voice heard and to co-create messages and experiences that result in better outcomes for students and communities. Does it sound like something you would like to be part of?

Yes
No

() CONTINUE
[] THANK AND TERMINATE

Stillwater Area Public Schools District

Lily Lake
Stillwater
Woodbury
Arcola
Bayport

Stillwater High School
Stillwater Middle School
Lily Lake
Rutherford
Stonebridge

↑
Central/North

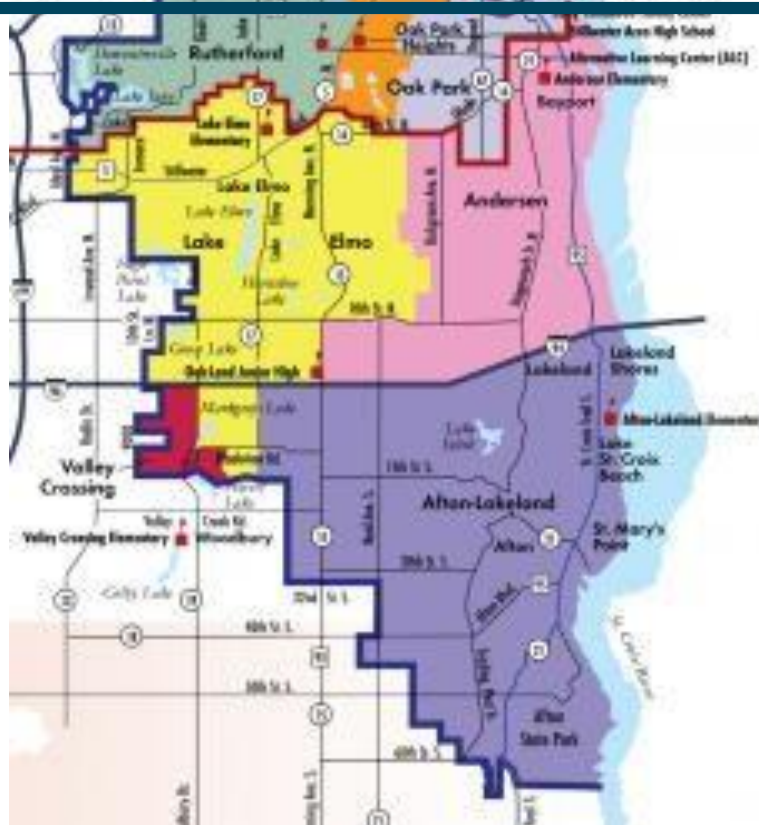


South



Afton
Oakland
Lakeland
Lake Elmo
Oak Park Heights

Afton Lakeland
Brookview
Oakland
Lake Elmo
Anderson



"Competitive" to Stillwater Area Public Schools

Mahtomedi District Schools

Wildwood Elementary
O.H. Anderson Elementary
Mahtomedi Middle School
Mahtomedi High School

South Washington County District Schools

Armstrong Elementary
Bailey Elementary
Cottage Grove Elementary
Crestview Elementary
Elementary Virtual Learning Academy
Grey Cloud Elementary
Hillside Elementary
Liberty Ridge Elementary
Middleton Elementary
Newport Elementary
Nuevas Fronteras Spanish Immersion
Pine Hill Elementary
Pullman Elementary
Red Rock Elementary
Royal Oaks Elementary
Cottage Grove Middle School
Lake Middle School
Oltman Middle School
Woodbury Middle School
East Ridge High School
Park High School
South Washington Alternative High School
Woodbury High School

Questionnaire: Stillwater Area Public Schools Staff

CATEGORY	Perspectives & Opinions
APPROACH, METHODOLOGY	Quantitative Data Collection + Qualitative Focus Groups
TARGET AUDIENCE	Stillwater Schools Staff

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Schedule (tentative)	Tuesday, May 24 th
Time	4:00-5:30 PM
Group ID	Stillwater Schools Staff
Number to recruit	N=6

INTRODUCTION

Greetings! Orman Guidance, a market research company is contacting you on behalf of Stillwater Area Public Schools. Founded in 1975, Orman Guidance follows best privacy practices and has contributed thousands of research studies to Minnesota. We are preparing for focus groups to explore how Stillwater Area Public Schools staff think and feel about the school system, and we would like to include your opinions. The purpose of the focus group is to explore these topics:

- A. What is important to you in the experience of working and serving within Stillwater Area Public Schools, and what you believe is uniquely the Stillwater Area Public Schools story.
- B. What you believe should be expressed to Dr. Michael Funk as the incoming district's superintendent as well as the Stillwater Area School Board.
- C. Your perspectives and ideas for solutions that help clarify the shared goals the district has for its students, their families, and the community.

You are under no obligation to participate. Your responses are held in strict confidence and reported only in aggregate. If you agree to participate in the focus group, you will be compensated for your time and opinions.

In order to represent the best possible mix of Stillwater Area Public Schools staff, we have prepared this brief questionnaire, which will take no longer than 10 minutes. If you would like to be considered for the focus group, please provide your contact details at the end of the survey. We want to emphasize that *all* input – whether survey or focus group, is anonymous and confidential, with strict adherence to best privacy practices. Are you willing to proceed?

Yes () CONTINUE
No [] THANK AND END

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULING OPT-IN

The focus group will take place on DATE at TIME on the Zoom platform, after school hours. The focus group will last about 90 minutes. Are you available during this time to participate?

Yes () CONTINUE
No [] THANK AND END

STAFF OVERVIEW

- [1] What is the position you hold at Stillwater Area Public Schools, and in what department?
NOTE: RECRUIT BEST POSSIBLE MIX, INCLUDING TEACHERS, ADMN, SUPPORT STAFF,
JANITORIAL, KITCHEN/NUTRITION, AND SO ON

POSITION

DEPARTMENT

- [2] Which school or schools do you work in?

- [3] Is your residence within the Stillwater Area Public Schools District, or outside the district?

Inside the district ()

Outside the district ()

- [4] Do you have children that attend Stillwater Area Public Schools?

Yes ()

No ()

PERSPECTIVES & OPINIONS

- [5] When it comes to your personal experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools, it is important to understand as many perspectives and opinions as possible as the school year 2021-2022 comes to a close. Thinking of your own experience this past year in your position, what would you say are the top 3 successes with respect to Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

- [6] When it comes to your personal experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools, it is important to understand as many perspectives and opinions as possible as the school year 2021-2022 comes to a close. Thinking of your own experience this past year in your position, what would you say are your top 3 concerns about Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

- [7] As Stillwater Area Public Schools welcomes a new Superintendent and plans begin for the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

[8A] Please review each of the following categories of considerations parents may think about when choosing the school their child attends. As you read each, please indicate your opinion of its importance on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

PROGRAMMING NOTE: EACH ATTRIBUTE BELOW WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A 1-5 SCALE

Academics

Test scores

Graduation rates

College prep

Rigorous academics

Real-world learning opportunities

Ability to work at own pace

Flexible learning approach that works for students

% of graduates going on to further education

Broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment

The Education Experience

Tailored educational opportunities for students' (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)

In-person experiences for social development

Social/emotional and mental health support

School size/class size

World Language Immersion

Extracurriculars

Sports

Studio Arts

Performing Arts

Intramurals

Other extracurriculars (clubs, interests, etc.)

Diversity & Inclusion

Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)

Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)

Giving students a broader world-view and international experiences

[8B] Please review the following list. For each item, please indicate which one of the districts or schools along the top row you believe performs best, for each item on the list. If not sure, please indicate "don't know."

	Stillwater Area Public Schools	So Washington County Public Schools	Mahtomedi Public Schools	Don't Know
Academic achievement	()	()	()	()
Arts, clubs & athletic opportunities	()	()	()	()
Tailored educational opportunities for students (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)	()	()	()	()
College and career readiness	()	()	()	()
Best option, overall	()	()	()	()

	St. Croix Prep	St. Croix Catholic	Home School	Don't Know
Academic achievement	()	()	()	()
Arts, clubs & athletic opportunities	()	()	()	()
Tailored educational opportunities for students (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)	()	()	()	()
College and career readiness	()	()	()	()
Best option, overall	()	()	()	()

INVITATION

[9] We would like to invite you to participate in a marketing research focus group on behalf of Stillwater Area Public Schools. The focus group will be led by a moderator that will engage participants to explore perspectives and opinions about Stillwater Area Public Schools. This is a unique opportunity for you to make your voice heard and to co-create planning that result in better outcomes for students, families, and the community. We want to emphasize that *all* input is anonymous and confidential, with strict adherence to best privacy practices. Does it sound like something you would like to be part of?

Yes () CONTINUE
 No [] THANK AND TERMINATE

Questionnaire: Stillwater Area Public Schools High School Graduates

CATEGORY	Perspectives & Opinions
APPROACH, METHODOLOGY	Quantitative Data Collection + Qualitative Focus Groups
TARGET AUDIENCE	Stillwater Schools Students (past or present Graduates)
PROJECT OVERVIEW	
Schedule (tentative)	Monday, May 23 rd
Time	4:00-5:30 PM 6:30-8:00 PM
Group ID	Stillwater Schools Students
Number to recruit	N=6

INTRODUCTION

Greetings! Orman Guidance, a market research company is contacting you on behalf of Stillwater Area Public Schools. Founded in 1975, Orman Guidance follows best privacy practices and has contributed thousands of research studies to Minnesota. We are preparing for focus groups to explore how Stillwater Area Public Schools seniors and past graduates think and feel about the school system, and we would like to include your opinions. The purpose of the focus group is to explore these topics:

- A. What is most important to you about preK-12 education
- B. What you believe to be the unique story of *your* school district
- C. How preK-12 education may provide students with the best opportunities to succeed

You are under no obligation to participate. Your responses are held in strict confidence and reported only in aggregate. If you agree to participate in the focus group, you will be compensated for your time and opinions.

In order to represent the best possible mix of Stillwater Area Public Schools students, we have prepared this brief questionnaire, which will take no longer than 10 minutes. If you would like to be considered for the focus group, please provide your contact details at the end of the survey. We want to emphasize that *all* input – whether survey or focus group, is anonymous and confidential, with strict adherence to best privacy practices. Are you willing to proceed?

Yes () CONTINUE
No [] THANK AND END

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULING OPT-IN

The focus group will take place on DATE at TIME on the Zoom platform, after school hours. The focus group will last about 90 minutes. Are you available during this time to participate?

Yes () CONTINUE
No [] THANK AND END

OVERVIEW

[1] Which of the following represents your experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools?

Will graduate this year ()
Graduated before this year
Please specify graduate year: _____ ()

[2] Please indicate your age, please.

NOTE: IF AGE 17, MUST GAIN PARENT'S PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOCUS GROUP

[3A] Is your residence within the Stillwater Area Public Schools District, or outside the district?

Inside the district ()
Outside the district ()

[3B] For how many years did you attend Stillwater Area Public Schools?

PERSPECTIVES & OPINIONS

- [4] When it comes to your personal experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools, it is important to understand as many perspectives and opinions as possible. Thinking of your own experience, what would you say are YOUR top 3 successes with respect to Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word "successes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean accomplishment, satisfaction, achievement, or whatever "successes" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

- [5] When it comes to your personal experience with Stillwater Area Public Schools, it is important to understand as many perspectives and opinions as possible. Thinking of your own experience, what would you say are YOUR top 3 concerns with respect to Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word "concerns" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean worries, frustrations, dissatisfaction, or whatever "concerns" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

- [6] As Stillwater Area Public Schools welcomes a new Superintendent and plans begin for the school year 2022-2023, what would you say are your top 3 hopes for Stillwater Area Public Schools? The word "hopes" is used to encourage candid perspectives and opinions: it could mean goals, desires, assumptions, or whatever "hopes" means to you. List more than 3 if you'd like. Your answers are confidential.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

[7A] Please review each of the following categories of considerations parents may think about when choosing the school their child attends. As a graduate of Stillwater, we would like your opinion of what is important. Please review each, and answer on a scale of 1 to 5, where an answer of "1" means "not at all important" while an answer of "5" means "very important." You may answer any number 1 to 5 for each statement, accordingly.

PROGRAMMING NOTE: EACH ATTRIBUTE BELOW WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A 1-5 SCALE

Academics

Test scores

Graduation rates

College prep

Rigorous academics

Real-world learning opportunities

Ability to work at own pace

Flexible learning approach that works for my child

% of graduates going on to further education

Broad curriculum that serves all students, whether headed for college or employment

The Education Experience

Tailored educational opportunities for students' (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)

In-person experiences for social development

Social/emotional and mental health support

School size/class size

World Language Immersion

Extracurriculars

Sports

Studio Arts

Performing Arts

Intramurals

Other extracurriculars (clubs, interests, etc.)

Diversity & Inclusion

Diverse student population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)

Diverse teacher/staff population (mix of cultures, races, gender/orientations, and ethnicities)

Giving students a broader world-view and international experiences

- [7B] Please review the following list. For each item, please indicate which one of the districts or schools along the top row you believe performs best, for each item on the list. If not sure, please indicate "don't know."

	Stillwater Area Public Schools	So Washington County Public Schools	Mahtomedi Public Schools	Don't Know
Academic achievement	()	()	()	()
Arts, clubs & athletic opportunities	()	()	()	()
Tailored educational opportunities for students (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)	()	()	()	()
College and career readiness	()	()	()	()
Best option, overall	()	()	()	()

	St. Croix Prep	St. Croix Catholic	Home School	Don't Know
Academic achievement	()	()	()	()
Arts, clubs & athletic opportunities	()	()	()	()
Tailored educational opportunities for students (e.g., increased rigor, flexibility, or unique needs)	()	()	()	()
College and career readiness	()	()	()	()
Best option, overall	()	()	()	()

INVITATION

- [9] We would like to invite you to participate in a marketing research focus group on behalf of Stillwater Area Public Schools. The focus group will be led by a moderator that will engage participants to explore perspectives and opinions about Stillwater Area Public Schools. This is a unique opportunity for you to make your voice heard and to co-create planning that result in better outcomes for students, families, and the community. We want to emphasize that *all* input is anonymous and confidential, with strict adherence to best privacy practices. Does it sound like something you would like to be part of?

Yes

() CONTINUE

No

[] THANK AND TERMINATE

Zoom Focus Group Discussion Guide

Orman Guidance, Inc.

STILLWATER AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH & GUIDANCE

May-June 2022

00:00 INTRODUCTION

- Moderator and notetaker introduction, recording disclosures, privacy policy, alert if any real-time viewers. Emphasize privacy and confidentiality: no one is identifiable in any of this process, no one's name is used. The recordings are for internal purposes to ensure we are accurately representing the viewpoints shared in this session.
- Purpose of focus group: to understand your perceptions of area school districts and schools and talk about why families make the educational choices they do. The feedback we gather will help guide decision making on the types of programs and experiences that may be offered. We'll get into specifics in just a moment.
- Before we get started, let's hear from each of you. By way of introduction, please say your first name, who lives at home with you, and – briefly – the main reason you decided to accept our invitation to participate in today's focus group.
- Thank you all! I want to remind you all to do the best you can to share openly, feel free to agree as well as disagree with one another and be as candid as possible. Since this is a Zoom meeting, I will do my best to ensure that we hear from each of you equally to share your thoughts and opinions.

00:10 CONTEXT: OUR FOCUS GROUP FORMAT

- Let's take just a few moments to impart how we conduct focus groups so we can all start thinking about perspectives we want to share.
- FIRST, we will focus on the favorable: we will listen to each other about what you particularly like, enjoy, and appreciate about the school your child or children currently attend. To help our processes along, it will be important to hear the name of the school you are referring to. Along with this part of our discussion, let's also share what you believe to be the unique story about the District where your child or children attend. We will spend 15-20 minutes on this, and there are no parameters about what you might share except that we want to focus on the favorable.
- SECOND, we will discuss perspectives about what you may feel is unfavorable: we want to listen to each other's views and discuss what is particularly bothersome or off-putting about the school your child or children currently attend. Again, to help our processes along, it will be important to hear the name of the school you are referring to. Along with this part of our discussion, let's also share what you believe to be the most important concerns facing the District where your child or children attend. We will spend 15-20 minutes on this, and there are no parameters about what you might share except to be respectful and listen to each other. This is not a debate. We are here to listen as well as share.

- THIRD: we want to hear your viewpoints on enrollment, specifically, why you would enroll your children inside your school district or opt for open enrollment in a school outside your District. Your views on private, charter, and homeschooling are an important part of this part of our discussion. We will spend 15-20 minutes on this as well. Everyone's experience and perspective is important, and we will want to hear from everyone.
- FOURTH: the final part of our time together is focused on solutions: after everything is said and done, we have common goal of seeing our children grow up to be healthy and productive. We will share ideas, listen to each other, and hopefully build upon each other's suggestions for solutions that will help improve our children's experiences and successes with preK-12 education.

00:15 **FAVORABLE: SUCCESSES AND APPRECIATION**

- Who would like to start? Please share what you particularly like, enjoy, and appreciate about the school your child or children currently attend.
- Thinking specifically of your child or children's experience, what is most impactful in terms of your children's success as a result of attending that school? What do you believe to be the most important outcomes for your child?
- What do your children tell you – again, focusing on the favorable – about their experience? What do they think about what the school does very well?
- Thinking about area school districts, what do you believe to be the unique story about the District where your child or children attend? What do you believe to be the unique story about the School (whether public, private, charter, or homeschool) your child or children attend?
- Which area school district or districts rank highly, in your opinion? What if anything does the district do particularly well? Why do you say that?

00:30 **UNFAVORABLE: OFF-PUTTING, BOTHERSOME, OR DEAL-BREAKER**

- Let's next discuss perspectives about what you may feel is unfavorable about your school or district. What is particularly bothersome or off-putting about the school your child or children currently attend? Why do you say that? How important is it? For example, are you considering removing your child or children from the school as a result of your concern?
- What do your children tell you – again, focusing on the unfavorable – about their experience? What do they think about what is not going very well at school?
- On the district level, what are your most important concerns facing the district where your child or children attend? In what ways are you concerned? What if any steps or action do you intend to take? How if at all will you personally become involved? Why do you say that?
- On the district level, what is particularly bothersome or off-putting about the District or School (whether public, private, or charter) where your child or children are currently enrolled? Why

do you say that? How important is it? For example, are you considering removing your child or children from the district as a result of your concern?

- Which area school district or districts have particular struggles, in your opinion? What are those struggles? How important are they? Which district or districts are missing the mark in terms of delivering successful outcomes? How? Why do you say that?

00:50 **ENROLLMENT: SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS**

- Let's next focus on enrollment. Specifically, why would you enroll your children inside your school district or opt for open enrollment in a school outside your district?
- Do any of you want to enroll your children in a school that is inside the school district, but zoned for a neighborhood different than the one you live in? If yes, what are your thoughts about it and what would you want managed differently?
- How do your options for private, charter, and homeschooling factor into this decision? What is most important to you, and why?
- What has prompted you – or what would prompt you – to enroll your children in a district or School (whether public, private, or charter) other than the one you reside in?
- When a school district is intent on gaining enrollment from both inside and outside the district, what are the most important messages they can convey?
- When a parent decides to opt for open enrollment outside the school district, what if anything may alter their viewpoint and prompt them to enroll their children inside the district where they live? Who has personal experience with this? With what message should a school district impart in order to influence parents to re-enroll inside the district?

01:05 **SOLUTIONS: BRAINSTORMING AND IDEATION**

- This is the last part of our time together. For the balance of the session, let's ideate and brainstorm what you envision to be an ideal learning experience. Imagine that a school district wanted to distinguish itself based on the needs and wishes of families and students. Consider yourselves to be on a parent task force if you will as we share and build on ideas.
- What considerations are most important? What key opportunities should a district present families? Why do you say that?
- What would make a district stand out in terms of being attractive to families and students? Focus solutions: after everything is said and done, we have common goal of seeing our children grow up to be healthy and productive. What other ideas and solutions will help improve our children's experiences and successes with preK-12 education?

Probes if not mentioned ALL SECTIONS of the Discussion Guide

- Families' expectations. Vision. Goals.
- What are the most urgent or important opportunities so that all students have the best chance of being successful?
- Probe and clarify goals: what combination of learning methods may complement the experience and create opportunities for the best outcomes.
- What barriers to success exist? How can these barriers be overcome?
- Discuss impact of diversity and inclusion. Recognizing humanity in everyone, how can we recognize diversity and inclusion (race/ethnicity, cultures, celebrating differences, value diversity, economic equity, addressing special needs, opportunities for all, LGBTQ, and more)?
- Programs and approaches, such as self-paced units, personalized pathways of education, enrichment, and more. Is there an opportunity to address achievement gaps (and increase test scores)? What are some ideas about how this could be accomplished?
- Specific to subjects: computer science, computational thinking, and coding program to be successful in the global economy, and how an online academic program may have an impact on their local and international opportunity.
- Offering a language immersion program for students to be successful in the global economy, how an immersive academic program may have an impact on local and international opportunities.
- Keeping students safe and emotionally secure, building trust and collaboration. Offering a respectful learning environment that contributes to outcomes.
- How social and emotional awareness may realign students on an equal opportunity basis to be as academically engaged and successful peers as possible.

01:30 THANK AND ADJOURN

MODERATOR NOTES

- Keep up a flow of questions and responses. Layer ideas: encourage discussion among respondents.
- Follow the timing on the discussion guide to ensure comprehensiveness of qualitative data collection from session to session.
- Reinforce the importance of everyone's viewpoint: if polarizing opinions heat up, intercede with neutralizing language such as, "We want to make sure you know your viewpoints are heard, respected, and appreciated." No one should be on the defensive.
- If needed – that is, if someone begins to escalate, use harsh or ad hominem language, take a moment to level the focus group energy by saying something like, "Let's take a moment to consider that two-way conversations enable productivity – that is, finding common ground."
- Strive for empathy, our shared human experience. Our shared goals. That part of the focus group process is collaborative and building upon ideas, even when we disagree. We want to build bridges, not bonfires.

KEEP THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES FRONT AND CENTER

- *Clarify perspectives* held by the population of Stillwater Area Public Schools and surrounding communities.
- Establish *points of distinction* of Stillwater Area Public Schools compared to neighboring districts.
- Verify specific *elements of messaging* that are on-point, believable, enticing, compelling and/or negative or polarizing.
- Identify *alignment between messaging and experience* with Stillwater Area Public Schools experience.
- *Understand reasons for families to stay* as well as why they may leave.
- Determine the best ways to tell the unique story of Stillwater Area Public Schools to attract more families to enrollment.
- Explore ideas to organize and plan for *referendum messaging that will resonate with voters* and establish the needs of the district.

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ABOUT THE COMPANY

Orman Guidance, Inc. empowers clients to better performance, decision making and profitability through the management and delivery of data-driven consumer insights. The company applies a customized approach that combines quantitative, qualitative, and consumer engagement to produce conclusions and recommendations that evolve.

There is a direct correlation between the validity of market research data and purposeful respondent participation. The key to accurate data and actionable insights is the confidence level that comes from knowing that participants accurately reflect the target audience. Orman's proven processes combine the science of segmentation with respondent engagement

Research activities function optimally with respondents that are earnestly engaged and accurately represent the target audiences. This immersive process enables Orman Guidance to liberate the analysis into a living narrative-deliverable.

Now in its 5th decade of operation with over 10,000 successfully completed studies, Orman's proven processes connect consumers and client to co-creates solutions and a vision for a better world.



Thank you for this opportunity to be of service to Stillwater Area Public Schools



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosemary Sundin".

Rosemary Sundin
President
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(612) 309-9762

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vanessa Mullenix".

Vanessa Mullenix
VP, Consumer Engagement
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Stillwater Area Public Schools | Brand Recommendations

5 August 2022

Project Objectives

- Understand the perceptions of Stillwater Area Public Schools held by various members of the community.
- Better understand why those who have left the district, have made the choices they've made.
- Understand how to better tell the unique Stillwater Area Public Schools story to families and the broader community.

The Process





Key Insights

MAIN MESSAGE

VISUAL IDENTITY

KEY MESSAGES



We prepare students for life not just for college or work.



St. Croix Prep.
Prep for Life.

Build personal character and leadership through classical tradition.

Bold, rigorous and high performance.



St. Croix Catholic School unites with families to form scholars, disciples, and servant leaders.



A faith-filled, safe and nurturing environment

Similar to Hill-Murray but more family emphasis

Unique curriculum snippets, Home Enrichment section.



Ensure passion for life, play, wonder, creativity.

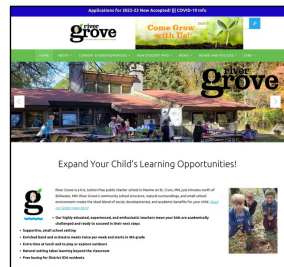


Nurturing creativity, social learning, academics.

We honor the whole child, inspiring curiosity, embracing change, teaching future-ready skills and turning ideas into action.



A place where children thrive



Teacher-powered schools



Igniting a passion for lifelong learning through collaboration, continuous improvement, equity, integrity and relationships.

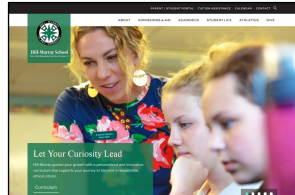


Be Seen.
Be Heard.
Be Bold.

Building our Future



We empower students to embrace their journey by leading with their heads and hearts to make a positive difference in the world.



Fulfill your promise.
Serve others.
Transform the world.

Go Boldly



...our mission is to develop curious individuals who are active and engaged leaders in an everchanging world...



Portrait of a graduate

A long history of excellence

Creating the worlds best workforce

Market Research Overview*

- Mixed-method quantitative and qualitative market research was conducted by Orman Guidance Research in the Spring of 2022.
- Orman Guidance researchers were provided with comprehensive briefings from Franke+Fiorella and Stillwater Area Public Schools District communications team members.
- Audiences: Parents (mix of parents of students preK-12; residents with children in-district; open enrolled, satisfied, dissatisfied, etc.); Students (mix of recent Stillwater High School graduates); District Employees (mix of administrators, teachers and support staff currently employed by SAPS); Community members (e.g., no children and empty nesters).
- Processes: Quantitative – Online Survey N= 500+ participants; Qualitative: Zoom Focus Groups (8 groups); Secondary data review.

*Full market research study is available from District Leadership.

What we've learned from the market research . . .

Perceptions of Stillwater Area Public Schools

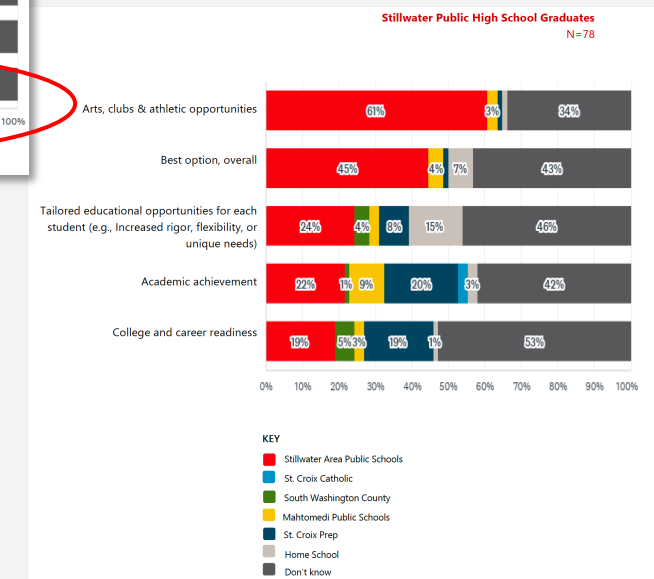
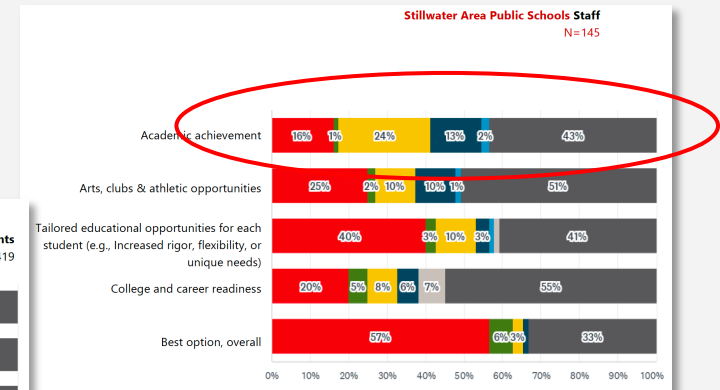
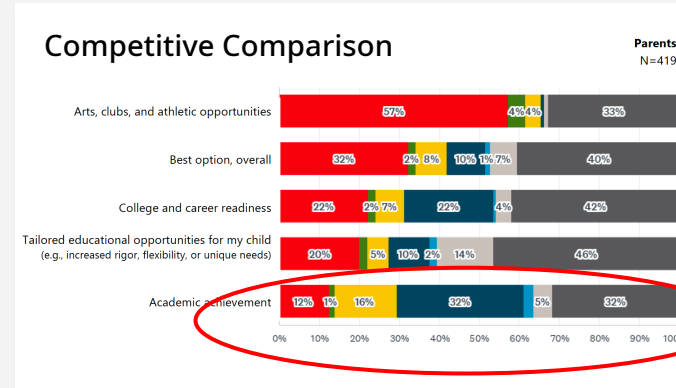
- **Most parents have good feelings, overall,** about the sense of community in Stillwater.
- **Overall, teachers and staff at Stillwater Area Public Schools are commended for their care and concern about students,** particularly in grades PreK-4.
- **The wide variety of special ed services and support ranks highly** with the quantitative study indicating that families with special needs comprises 20% or more of the student body.
- **Athletic and music programs help rally the community. There is definitely a sense of "Pony Pride."** While this is indeed strong, many feel that Pony Pride should extend beyond sports to music, performing arts and academics.
- **Academics and Literacy Scores are frequently mentioned as cause for concern.** Additionally, 72% of all parents surveyed indicate that "academics" is the "most important" consideration when choosing a district or school.

72% say that
"academics" is the
"most important"
consideration when
choosing a district or
school.

What we've learned from the market research . . .

Perceptions of Stillwater Area Public Schools (continued)

- **Comparison of Stillwater Area Public Schools to other choices helps provide insights** into why families may choose options other than SAPS:
 - When it comes to rating which school is the “best option, overall,” 32% of parents say Stillwater compared to 10% that say St. Croix Prep.
 - 32% of parents believe St. Croix Prep performs best in academic achievement compared to just 12% that believe Stillwater Area Public Schools performs best.
 - 32% of parents, and 43% of staff answered “I don’t know”



What we've learned from the market research . . .

Perceptions of Stillwater Area Public Schools (continued)

- The school closures in the northern part of the district and logistical issues with busing have created challenging circumstances for families living in this part of the district.
- **Proximity to Schools:** This is a key factor in why people choose to live where they do.
- **There is concern about the size of the high school today**, and the fact that 56% of Stillwater area parents report having children in the age ranges or PreK-4; and 43% of families report having children in grades 5-8.
- **Among the parents most affected by school closure decisions, some shared that they feel there was an overall lack of transparency** related to things like school board elections, school closures, bonds, funding allocations, facilities studies, etc.
- **Stabilization of District Leadership:** There is a critical need, voiced by many, to stabilize district leadership. Not just at the superintendent and administration level, but at the School Board level, too. Key words and phrases mentioned consistently among students, parents and staff: animosity, struggle, volatility, negativity, divisive, polarizing, political, toxicity, frustration and embarrassing to the district, etc.

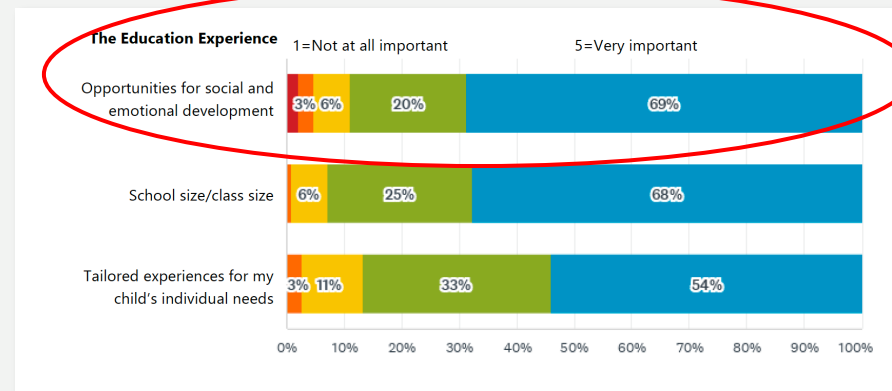
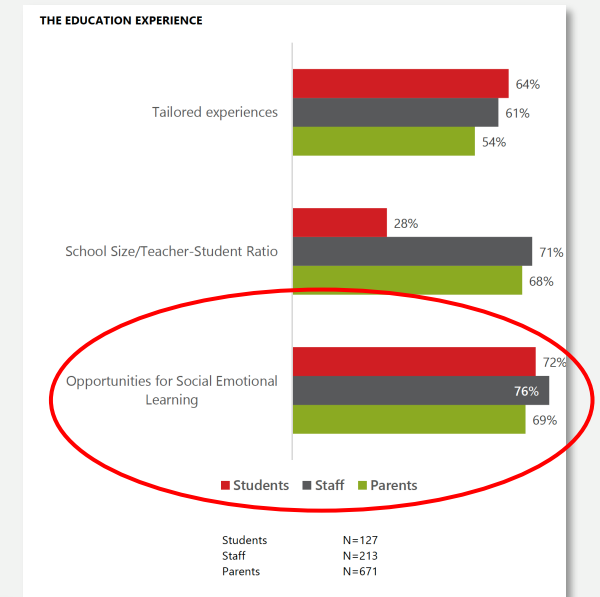
“The opinion and sentiment that ***the School Board and Administration is not optimally functioning is prevalent among all three cohorts:***

- 40% parents
- 38% students
- 44% teachers & staff

“Academics are important. The school district asks for more and more money and the test scores are not improving. 58% literacy is such a low standard, it's laughable.

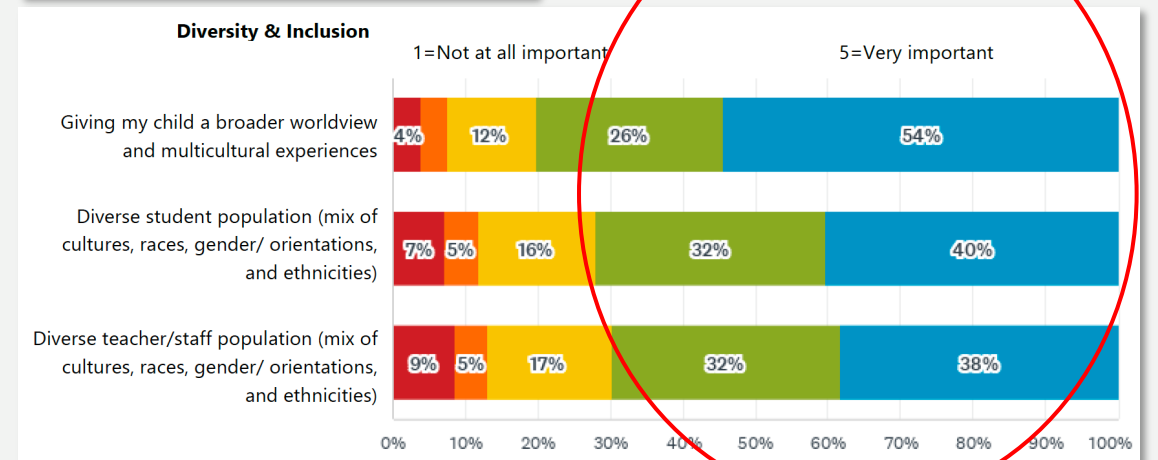
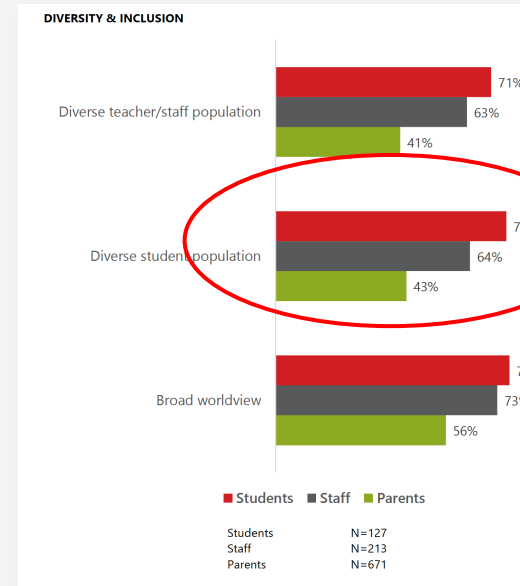
What we've learned from the market research . . .

- **Social Emotional Learning is very important.** The following statistics show the percentages of audience members surveyed who rate “opportunities for social and emotional learning” at a **5 or most important** under education experience:
 - **69% of parents** surveyed
 - **76% of staff** surveyed
 - **72% of students** surveyed
- Further, **89% of parents surveyed rated Opportunities for Social and Emotional Development at a 4 or a 5 (important or most important);** slightly ahead of school size/class size and tailored experiences for my child's individual needs.



What we've learned from the market research . . .

- **Diversity, equity and inclusion are of much greater concern to students and staff than to parents.** The presence of a diverse student population is very important to 76% of students and 64% of staff, compared to 43% of parents.
- We also learned that the **desire to give children a broader world-view** is very important to 56% of parents versus 77% of students and 73% of staff.
- Additionally, having **a diverse mix of cultures reflected in the teacher/staff population** is very important for 41% of parents compared to 71% of students and 63% of staff.



What we've learned from the market research . . .

- When asked about **Successes from the past school year**, the following were the topics mentioned most frequently:

Parents	Staff	Students
In-person	In-person	Teachers
Friendships	Transition from COVID	Graduation
Socialization	Support	Arts
Connections	Teamwork	Honors
Grades/Test scores		Relationships

What we've learned from the market research . . .

- When asked about **Concerns** from the past school year, the following were the topics mentioned most frequently:

Parents	Staff	Students
Busing	Leadership	Diversity
Politics	Burnout	Support
Bullying	Mental health	Administration
Masks	Behavior	Bullying
	Division in community	

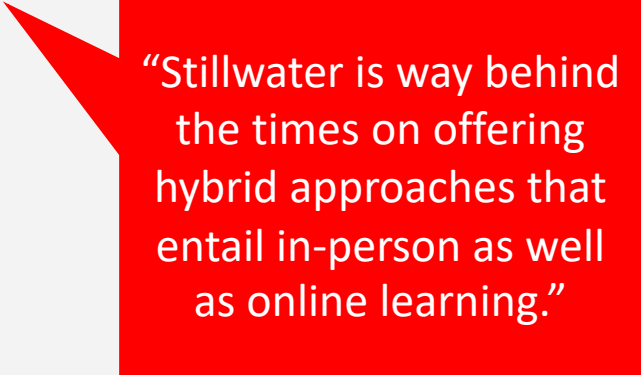
What we've learned from the market research . . .

- When asked about **Hopes** for the 2022-2023 school year, the following were the topics mentioned most frequently:

Parents	Staff	Students
Friendships/Relationships	Leadership	Diversity
Academics	Support	Inclusion
No masks	Mental health	Real world learning
Respect	Unity	Student involvement
	Clear communication	Listen
		Public health

What we've learned from the market research . . .

- **Online/hybrid learning options.** While it was not incorporated as a specific survey item, and only 7% of survey respondents are enrolled in online schools, we heard that some members of the community are interested in having an online or hybrid option available. This would require further inquiry.
- We encourage further review of the research report provided by Orman Guidance as there are many other important findings and data points gathered in the study that will be helpful to district staff as they move forward in strategic planning.



“Stillwater is way behind the times on offering hybrid approaches that entail in-person as well as online learning.”



Our Recommendations

Recommendation | No. 1



Engage with and heal the community.
Start by sharing key research findings
with leadership, staff, parents and
community.

Level set with the facts, acknowledge the past and share via in-person/Zoom meetings and community events, social media, email, etc. Align the school board. Consider bringing in a consultant to aid in the alignment effort, if needed.

Recommendation | No. 2



Create a phased key message platform for the district, tailored to each audience.

The goal is to inspire belief, trust and hope about what is to come. Tailor to: staff, parents, students (middle and high school) and community. Phase 1 establishes trust; Phase 2 lays out the path forward; Phase 3 inspires everyone in the community.

Recommendation | No. 3



Hold a series of Town Hall meetings for staff.

Build trust with staff by establishing an open environment rooted in clear communication where all voices are heard and relationships can be built and nurtured.

Recommendation | No. 4



Engage the community to
co-create what's next for
the district.

Invite members of the community (parents, students, teachers, staff) to participate in task forces to help envision what comes next. Use the learnings from this study as foundational elements for strategy sessions.

Recommendation | No. 5



Develop a roadmap for creating the Stillwater Area Public Schools district of the future.

Articulate a clear mission & vision for Stillwater Area Public Schools. Identify and prioritize those areas that are most pressing like literacy, academic achievement, social emotional support, school/class size and diversity & inclusion.

Recommendation | No. 6



Craft a compelling, differentiated story for Stillwater Area Public Schools.

Based on the research and visioning work for the future, Stillwater Area Public Schools will be in a position to tell its rich, authentic story in a way that connects on a deeply emotional level.

Recommendation | No. 7



Create an educational campaign for the community that focuses on what is needed to prepare kids for the future.

Root the campaign in facts, data from the study especially around social emotional learning and diversity/inclusion, to help the broader Stillwater community understand what skills young adults need to succeed in school today, and the workforce of the future.

Recommendation | No. 8



Create targeted campaigns aimed at families approaching key transition points.

Provide all the reasons they should choose Stillwater Area Public Schools over nearby options based on the research findings like breadth of activities, real-world learning opportunities, etc., depending on students' age and grade level.

Recommendation | No. 9



Signal that change is taking place,
by revitalizing the Stillwater Area
Public Schools brand identity.

Once trust is established, a roadmap is clear and the vision is set, we recommend signaling that change to the community through design that expresses the new, improved Stillwater Area Public Schools brand.

Recommendations

1. Engage with and heal the community. Start by sharing key research findings with leadership, staff, parents and community.
2. Create a phased key message platform for the district, tailored to each audience.
3. Hold a series of Town Hall meetings for staff.
4. Engage the community to co-create what's next for the district.
5. Develop a roadmap for creating the Stillwater Area Public Schools district of the future.
6. Craft a compelling, differentiated story for Stillwater Area Public Schools.
7. Create an educational campaign for the community that focuses on what is needed to prepare kids for the future.
8. Create targeted campaigns aimed at families approaching key transition points.
9. Signal that change is taking place, by revitalizing the Stillwater Area Public Schools brand identity.



Thank you!