

SAU70 2022 Survey Free-Text Answers

SAU70 Strategic Planning Survey June 2022

Based on 503 completed surveys: 83 specific to MCS

Free-Text Answers

Select portions redacted to eliminate potential identifying information for individuals. Each redacted word is replaced by four asterisks: ****.

Only free-text response questions are included in this document

Many respondents wrote free-text answers similar to “No”, “None”, and “Nothing”. Answers like these are not present in this document; these are the differences in counts between “Responses” and “Specific” below; comments from MCS-specific surveys are “MCS”.

Question	Subject	Responses	Specific	MCS	Pages
2	Aspects Valued	187	117	23	2 – 3
4	Challenges	251	194	46	3 – 7
21	Assessments	222	161	32	8 – 11
23	Academic	212	153	36	11 – 14
25	Student Support	176	99	15	14 – 15
27	During School	188	107	14	15 – 16
29	Outside School	155	72	9	16 – 17
31	Physical Environment	191	117	35	17 – 18
33	Transportation	179	109	24	18 – 20
35	Sustainability	150	65	20	20
37	5-Year Initiatives	172	99	27	21 – 22
46	What We Missed	167	103	23	22 – 24
Totals		2,250	1,396	304	

Q2: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q1: Which current aspects do you value the most about our SAU70 schools?*

187 responses. After removing “no” and similar answers → 117 responses → 23 MCS responses

1. As it was not specifically included, we believe that MCS had an incredible basis in whole student learning, learning how to learn (not teaching to the test, eg), and that specials (art, music, foreign language) are as important to a child's development as math and reading; further, that the outdoor education and integrated foreign language (French) need to be maintained as a priority in the curriculum from K-6.
2. I would've also liked to check social cohesion and connections
3. Three options are not enough
4. I am opposed to the decrease in French and Specials at MCS and feel it was rushed without community input
5. I think MCS needs more than one counselor. Bullying was a problem.
6. I think the quality of curriculum and instruction is tied to the quality and quantity of the teachers and staff.
7. The outdoor classrooms and nature activities are excellent
8. Our child suffered from depression this year as a result of another child in the classroom repeatedly belittling **** identity. We struggled for most of the school year with this painful issue and the teacher/ school were unable to resolve the issue for probably 80% of the year. It was a very sad year.
9. Many of these are connected, and all important! DEI efforts are key to creating school where students feel valued and get along well with each other. A solid curriculum allows students to learn while engaging hands-on with real issues in their communities, local and global. Key to DEI are a diverse staff and access to support services. So... all of the above!
10. I find all of the choices to be areas where we could grow.
11. It is well-known in our community that SAU70 schools are failing disabled students. Students in need of supports are not receiving them. Inclusion of disabled students is not consistently practiced in our schools, in spite of decades-old federal legislation mandating it, endless research supporting inclusion in education, and full endorsement of inclusion by the National Association of State Boards of Education, the United Nations and other entities. Children are receiving instruction in special education classrooms because teachers refuse to include them in the general education classroom. Outdoor spaces are not accessible and non-inclusive, indoor spaces lack appropriate accessibility features and require disabled

students to move about the building separate from their peers. It is discriminatory and inequitable. It is outrageous and cruel. Why aren't we doing anything about it? How can we allow this group of already vulnerable children being treated like this? Our SAU administrators should be ashamed of themselves. Please conduct an independent third-party review of this issue with urgency.

12. Please work hard to retain good teachers
13. We value these things, but there is room for improvement in the categories above.
14. Yes, the outdoor programs that **** ** leads are fantastic, and adds a special and unique aspect to MCS , not found in many schools.
15. A strength of MCS is that it facilitates parents getting to know each other at dropoff versus "drive by + dropoff" at some other schools
16. The aspects of MCS that appealed to us the most when we moved to Norwich were the emphasis on outdoor time and the French program.
17. It's hard to choose only 3 items especially as so many go hand in hand.
18. I also value communication between the SAU and parents/families
19. teachers, administrators, and nurturing environment are fantastic
20. I am sorry to say that the question is not useful. All these elements are critical and they should not be ranked against each other.
21. I had a hard time selecting any of the choices. I believe our SAU has a lot of work ahead.
22. Obviously nothing is more important than safety, but assuming you keep everyone safe, the above are the top three choices
23. I place a high value on social-emotional skills too as students have suffered during past 2 years.

Q4: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q3: What are the biggest current challenges adversely affecting quality of life in our SAU70 schools? Please choose up to three of the most important answers for you.*

251 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 194 responses → 46 MCS responses

1. As in the previous question, we are concerned that testing and academic stats are taking precedence over the whole child learning with integrated specials, foreign language, music, and outdoor ed being reduced either in class time or access.
2. is there a reason that administration is not covered in these questions of what may need improvement? also: it looks like this technical issue is still not resolved, above,

i did not choose any of the things you've listed, yet, i cannot submit the form without choosing them. please disregard the issues i marked in the question above.

3. questions about the MCS septic and general conditions of the buildings
4. When I say not enough rigor I don't just mean reading writing arithmetic- I mean full well rounded human development
5. the language instruction was "fun" but **** after 7 years can't understand a sentence of French.
6. It seems fairly clear that the school, understandably, puts a lot of resources into remedial instruction, in managing problem behaviors, to ensure that even the "lowest" performing students achieve a solid baseline. It's less clear the degree to which resources are put toward enrichment and challenge for students in need of greater challenge (is there such a thing as "gifted and talented" anymore?)
7. Provide more foreign language instruction at the elementary level. Reading and myth homework for families to do together with their elementary aged child.
8. The lack of homework and experiences like recognition that are supposed to alleviate anxiety is creating anxiety later on when students and families are past a time when they can develop coping skills. The elementary and middle school are being snow plow parents for the students. Also if reading/writing is down at MCS, why isn't reading being assigned and parents being partners in their children's education? Why are we instead taking away elements that enrich and create enjoyment in school?
9. Counselors and the therapy dog are excellent for helping kids. I'm glad they are on staff!
10. The lack of after-school after-care programs at MSC remains a major problem for working families.
11. MCS septic issues are an ongoing concern
12. School transportation that combines k-12 is not ideal. Concerned about younger students on buses with (much) older students. Start time is doable, but early dismissal on Wednesdays and lack of after school care is challenging on families with fulltime working parent(s).
13. I don't feel competent to judge how the school is doing on most of these issues.
14. I think the level of math is too easy. I would also like to see MCS switch to Spanish and have a more rigorous language program.
15. MCS has an opportunity to increase the amount of time spent on core academics. Some teachers in the school are not meeting the expectations that the MCS community expects.
16. My daughter has had an awesome experience at MCS.
17. MCS needs to have their own buses. It is now right that their students are dropped off first and picked up late. It also provides supervision challenges and safety concerns.
18. Speaking as a teacher at a ****, I am absolutely floored at the lack of curriculum continuity across classroom. There is absolutely no standards-based reading instruction happening in many classrooms.

19. It is well-known in our community that SAU70 schools are failing disabled students. Students in need of supports are not receiving them. Inclusion of disabled students is not consistently practiced in our schools, in spite of decades-old federal legislation mandating it, endless research supporting inclusion in education, and full endorsement of inclusion by the National Association of State Boards of Education, the United Nations and other entities. Children are receiving instruction in special education classrooms because teachers refuse to include them in the general education classroom. Outdoor spaces are not accessible and non-inclusive, indoor spaces lack appropriate accessibility features and require disabled students to move about the building separate from their peers. It is discriminatory and inequitable. It is outrageous and cruel. Why aren't we doing anything about it? How can we allow this group of already vulnerable children being treated like this? Our SAU administrators should be ashamed of themselves. Please conduct an independent third-party review of this issue with urgency.
20. The MCS septic situation is unacceptable. Every year, there is some reason to kick the can down the road on the issue. Also, academic excellence does not seem to be a priority of MCS school leadership.
21. Everything feels just fine, however, regarding curriculum, there are a few issues that have come up, particularly around Thanksgiving theme, and the instructional materials depicting happy go lucky Native Americans, and songs for 1st grade that feel dated and frankly quite wrong., In fact, I remember these sheets from when I was in elementary school, so it seems a review might be helpful.
22. I really wish that the septic at MCS was in good working condition and the green didn't smell like poo half the year
23. I have kids at the elementary level and the middle school level- I'm focusing my answer to this question to the elementary level. While I fully appreciate the great balance of play/academics/specials/outdoor time- I think more attention should be placed on academics. Especially in grades 4-6.
24. I would love to see improvements to the MCS playground. I hope that the wonderful outdoor spaces at MCS will be able to be used ALL YEAR next year.
25. The dirth of after school programming at Marion Cross is really, really challenging for families with two working caregivers
26. My remarks are limited to MCS; do not have other experience.
27. Reduction of specials time particularly in the post-pandemic era
28. Inconsistent approach to engaging families this year. Just learned about special open houses and events for certain grade levels at school, but very little done to let families see end of year demonstrations of learning. As a kindergarten family eager to be involved, feeling quite excluded from the school
29. I would like to see more opportunities for enrichment as opposed to focusing so much on intervention. All of our students are ready to soar in at least one area, but they are not always given the chance to expand on their strengths. Focusing on weakness, while important, can suck out the joy of school and learning.
30. Septic issues and unsafe play structures

31. Poor communication from administration at MCS; school is losing the sense of community it once had and parents feel disenfranchised, many long term excellent teachers have left since new administration started
32. I'm very concerned about the proposal to cut specials to make more time for math and phonics. I think this will lower the overall quality of the experience for the students.
33. I think the academics are generally strong but when there is a weak teacher in a subject, or a student needs particular supports, those needs are not always met well enough. There is also a huge concern about the decimation of the French program at MCS. The board and admin are not addressing the huge outcry from parents about the proposed changes to the curriculum for the next year.
34. The playground equipment at MCS needs to be repaired. There are a few items that I noticed that needs to be fixed so shorter kids can climb onto the playground itself.
35. increased communication and transparency is also something both the SAU and administration could improve - perhaps a school parent liaison could help
36. There hasn't been space in the after school program for years. Also, the students losing access to the forest at MCS was really sad. Also, MCS really needs a solution to the failed septic tank.
37. only issue we have at MCS is that academic work in core subjects is not challenging enough, we just supplement at home
38. The septic under play area is a problem and health hazard.
39. HOMEWORK: I support more homework for elementary students, corresponding to 10 minutes per night per grade level of reading and 5 minutes per grade level per night of writing/journaling. If we compare ourselves to a high-quality local private school such as Crossroads--which I think we should do--their academic rigor exceeds ours, and includes homework. AFTER-SCHOOL: Equity dictates that Norwich (where I live) should offer high-quality after-school care that is within easy reach of town so that kids can go attend sports activities whether they have working parents or not, and so that all parents can work if they need/choose to. The town and school should partner to procure funding and to run an after-school program that ideally would also include language immersion! DIVERSITY: Our schools should take an active stance to educate kids about the legacy of white supremacy and about gender diversity, and diversity of other sorts, such as ability, socioeconomic, religion, adopted status, etc. In particular, I would like to see gender identities including binary and nonbinary be explicitly included in literature and language across our elementary school.
40. The MCS building and grounds are not in alignment with the wonderful school and community that are there. I'd love to see the playground updated: we could have such a gem of a play space for our kids! And the septic! ugh.
41. Lack of communication with and respect for parents on the part of **** **** ****, parents feel shut out of decision-making at the school, as well as literally shut out of the building, teachers seem unhappy with current administration. Schedule changes are being implemented that appear to diminish the foreign language and

arts curriculum yet there is no discussion about these curriculums and the effect that a schedule cut has on them

42. As a parent of an MCS student, I'm very displeased with the school's 7-day schedule for students next year. It increases time that students are in seats in their core academic classes (ELA, Math, WIN?), while significantly decreasing the opportunities they have to learn with other amazing faculty in the arts. French is being cut by nearly 50%; students will have nearly 1,000 fewer minutes with **** art class; music class will decrease by almost 500 minutes. This is crazy! Three years ago we moved our family to this community specifically for MCS. This was a local move and not easy to make. It was not in our view, at the time, that core academics would increase so much that the parts of life that living special (art, music, languages, library) would be cut so drastically. Especially at the elementary level, I want my child to learn to LOVE learning. I want them to understand that learning is diverse, opportunistic, challenging, and empathetic. Spending more time in reading/math groups is not going to fulfill the needs in which I know this school was recognized nationally for, and the very reasons in which we relocated here. I don't believe that this immediate direction that MCS administration is steering the school is in the best interest of our lovely children, dedicated teachers, and community. My mark of 'Teacher and Staff Quality' is specific to administration. And according to our child, I don't think that **** has even visited their classroom, simply to enjoy being with kids. It's an elementary school for goodness sake. Show ALL the kids that you care about them.
43. Administration involvement and interactions with the kids and community is lacking. Therefore, trust has not been built and the culture/connection seems lacking.
44. MCS is lacking leadership at the administrative level
45. I'd like to see teachers in the elementary school at MCS (I don't know about Hanover) to be better trained in literacy instruction and best teaching practices - especially with a developmental focus. The schedule and pedagogy are too much focused on adult needs, not children's ways of learning and growing.
46. I feel like the school is great for kids who are naturally great students, and good for kids with significant disabilities, but leaves a lot of the middle-of-the-road kids with significant learning gaps without awareness on the school's part.

Q21: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q5-Q20: The 16 assessment questions*

222 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 161 responses → 32 MCS responses

1. The response choices available are, honestly too broad. There should be a chance on each response to add a qualification. In general, we have noted a drop in effective communication from the administration and district, particularly about changes (particularly reductions in specials, school start time, parent-teacher conference opportunities (open-houses especially), etc. As to Covid communications and response, we feel that there were after-school activity cancellations due to reported outbreaks but there were no changes within the school as far as mitigating risk of our kids being exposed and therefore exposing us at home. In short, we were left wondering why outdoor activities, open houses, performances weren't being restored at the same time that kids were allowed to be unmasked without being tested, or simply continuing the monitoring that kept everyone safe at the peak.
2. i wonder about the way that these questions are formed, thus far, it feels "top down" meaning that admin is asking questions to rate teachers and facilities, without including themselves within the question process. to get a more full and accurate picture, perhaps then entire system should be included in the process.
3. lots of communications but seemingly not a lot of information bring passed
4. Major curriculum changes should have a time for community input
5. I don't think it's ok to rely on a website for academic assistance. that has to be in person or the extra work just won't stick.
6. COVID has been a challenge for all, and a moving target, and the district/school have done well overall, but as things have "opened up" over the past few months, it's felt a bit like the wild west, every man for himself
7. Assessing at the elementary level
8. At MCS no classroom work comes home and there is no consistent teacher communication aside from report cards. If you don't have a child who likes to talk about school you are sending your child into a black box. Parents are not included on committees such as the scheduling committee so unless you don't work and can go to a coffee thing at 8 am or tune into a board meeting when you're trying to parent, decisions come out of left field and take parents by surprise. Homework, and glasswork are windows into your child's school life especially during COVID. MCS used to be welcomed and partners and now we're at arms length. It's really disappointing. As I have never seen my child's academic work, I'm not sure how I can ever comment

9. We have had wonderful help from school and communication, so we may be biased in thinking that it is great!
10. academic assistants are excellent, however more qualified and specialized assistants would be great.
11. Again, not being in the classroom, I do not have an informed opinion.
12. MCS needs a consistent curriculum for ELA across grade levels. When new teachers come in there is nothing for them to refer to, to ensure quality instruction.
13. I would love to see more time dedicated to world language instruction in the early grades. We are missing an opportunity at a key developmental stage. Current programs are great for exposure to language, but more time would help kids actually learn a new language and build empathy and curiosity about new cultures at an early age. I firmly believe that a language should be part of our core academics (as in many countries) rather than a "special."
14. Wish there was apex here. Maybe there is but not for younger grades? My child says school is easy some ways there is time spent to challenge him but other times it seems not
15. My child, who was a struggling reader, received the bulk of **** reading instruction from an untrained para. I was under the impression that **** was seeing a reading specialist.
16. It is well-known in our community that SAU70 schools are failing disabled students. Students in need of supports are not receiving them. Inclusion of disabled students is not consistently practiced in our schools, in spite of decades-old federal legislation mandating it, endless research supporting inclusion in education, and full endorsement of inclusion by the National Association of State Boards of Education, the United Nations and other entities. Children are receiving instruction in special education classrooms because teachers refuse to include them in the general education classroom. Outdoor spaces are not accessible and non-inclusive, indoor spaces lack appropriate accessibility features and require disabled students to move about the building separate from their peers. It is discriminatory and inequitable. It is outrageous and cruel. Why aren't we doing anything about it? How can we allow this group of already vulnerable children being treated like this? Our SAU administrators should be ashamed of themselves. Please conduct an independent third-party review of this issue with urgency.
17. The lack of homework is worrisome. Simply, we are worried that our kids are not developing the discipline to come home and work hard on academic subjects. This is a critical skill.
18. At the upper elementary level: I would like more feedback about how my child is doing during parent teacher conferences. I don't need constant updates, but the information provided during conferences needs to be more comprehensive.
19. I feel like the school does not sufficiently challenge kids who excel
20. By "additional academic assistance", I meant offering more challenging materials.
21. Updated website look did not include updated info. Out of date (and sparse) kindergarten curriculum info

22. Inadequate communication from administration about change in priorities from arts/foreign language toward literacy and math, I don't understand why there are such big cuts to the arts and French, even if there are literacy problems in young kids because of COVID. That shouldn't affect my older child's ability to take French. I also think we should be following CDC guidance about indoor masking when COVID levels are high since we are a Vermont school and could have required masks again like Hartford did.
23. Please don't sacrifice "specials" to add even more time to math. Parents should bear some responsibility for reading and math. Most parents cannot realistically make up the gap in art, music, and foreign languages.
24. In my experience when my students have used supports they have worked well. I am concerned about the access to supports since I receive so little information about my children's progress from the school.
25. communication from administrators and teachers has always been clear and easy to follow for us. we are truly thankful for the clear and consistent communication throughout covid
26. I believe many of the absence related issues would be dramatically improved by masking. It works and there is little evidence that it negatively impacts education or socialization. also again the septic issue is a health hazard. We need sewers in these modern times.
27. MCS's plan to reduce specials needs to be discussed with families. I don't think most families would support it. Also, I don't support cutting French, but I WOULD support a plan to replace it over time with Spanish, which is spoken by so many more people in our country and world than French is.
28. Can't comment about academic assistance from my perspective. Regarding communication, teacher communication at MCS is excellent but **** is too limited, **** is implementing changes without engaging parents in conversation to help understand the reasons for changes and without soliciting any feedback
29. Related not to lunch but snack. I was surprised when my child came home early in the year and told us that there was no snack time built into the day (MCS). I think they were to eat during class or take class time to eat. It seems to promote unhealthy habits of the way we look at food and work that the school and/or school schedule does not support kids to take a break and eat, socialize, and recompose. Was it teachers and/or administration that came up with this plan?
30. Balance is important. Kids need to have time to breathe, connect in person and smile. Time outside of the classroom is important.
31. Children on IEPs for **** are very ill-served by the classroom teachers and special education services provided at MCS. Switching to a seven day schedule (as proposed) doesn't address the sub-standard instruction many kids are getting in ELA. There is no coherent vision of how to raise reading scores and no leadership that parents can see on this subject. It's not just the educational assistants who are (often shockingly) untrained to provide instruction. The whole system needs overhauling. It shouldn't be that families have to fight so hard for their children.

Many parents don't even know there is a problem. It seems like the district wants to put the burden on individual kids and/or pretend there is nothing wrong.

32. WIN and PAL programs are very successful for my child.

Q23: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q22: What are the current most pressing academic needs within our schools?*

212 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 153 responses → 36 MCS responses

1. Yes. None of the responses were close to what we are concerned about. Frankly, there have been too many changes away from the whole-child approach at MCS from before the pandemic, too much focus on reading and math, reductions in the French and other specials curricula (understanding that those subjects are not electives but are key to helping a child learn how to learn, not just do well on tests). Further, effective communication before making sweeping changes is not occurring, and the isolation holding over from the pandemic as well as a loss of institutional memory has made it difficult to keep parents apprised of changes; further, once very-well integrated communications between school and parent has become fragmented such that we feel we have to react to unwanted changes v. being part of the development of the curriculum for our kids as we had experienced prior to the pandemic.
2. there are major unknowns about what the true picture of what is happening within the academic landscape, and how we compare. i'd like a clearer picture. what has been most intriguing and powerful, in the past, has been MCS's effort to use the most current methodology as guidance in school planning. i'm not sure that is still the case. we seem to be leaving behind "best practises" to invest in older educational ideas. why is that? is that, in fact, what's happening? that's what it looks like. it seems that play is being minimized, as well as alternate learning avenues, in favor of a math and ELA only focus, begrudgingly including specials. is this so? if so, why?
3. would be nice to have more time for foreign language, and more foreign language options available
4. Lack of afternoon programs overall
5. Everything feels fine but I disagree with recent curriculum decrease in French and specials
6. please add Spanish to MCS. and more tutoring availability than just before school.

7. I only want more summer opportunities because I don't know what is happening academically
8. Please add spanish language instruction to MCS.
9. During Covid we were disappointed with the reduced time allotted to specials at MCS; hope that does not continue.
10. more academic support programs integrated with the school system(s) and teachers would be very helpful
11. Again, not being in the classroom, I do not have an informed opinion.
12. There should be less french instruction to allow for more time for ELA.
13. I only say academic rigor with respect to math. **** had amazing math instruction at two **** schools. MCS math done with online programs / games at MCS was a big step backwards. Overall though, I think **** has had a wonderful academic experience. And, the social piece of school is the most important in elementary school.
14. There must be a consistent language arts curriculum. It's ridiculous that the teachers are not held accountable to a specific curriculum. As a result, some teachers are choosing what they want to teach
15. Too many of our students are falling through the cracks
16. Please don't change the MCS specials and French program so drastically without community input. We have had an amazing community school with lots of special things.
17. It would be nice to have Spanish and German available, in addition to French, and native speakers when possible.
18. Not enough time to play outside
19. Please support the French program so that it can be successful. The two classes in seven days is NOT sufficient to have a successful program. Spanish is a more relevant language to learn in the US right now. Switch language to Spanish. Keep the LEEEP program, it is wonderful.
20. I would like for all school days to last until 3:10. Having one school day that ends an hour earlier is very challenging from a scheduling perspective and seems like a missed opportunity for learning.
21. Balance of curriculum should be adjusted toward more relevance to the world and critical thinking development. The French program at MCS is very ineffective. The children watch videos and play games most of the time, and aren't learning French.
22. As a parent I have very little visibility into what is being taught.
23. Seems like the right balance this year; worried about planned changes for next year that don't match academic data presented at board meetings (academics are maintaining consistent high levels by TMP, but claim is that they are worsening so more time needed for literacy and math)
24. If we are to have 1.5 foreign language teachers, it would be nice to expand our offerings for the older students to provide them with a choice of French or Spanish/Chinese. This would also speak to our current school community, which includes several native Chinese and Spanish speakers.

25. Specials are not superfluous. Students need this time to be energized for so-called core subjects.
26. I have three concerns: 1. proposed cutting of MCS French program 2. planned consolidation of math 7 and pre-algebra at RMS 3. confusing transition from MCS to RMS (math). There needs to be more coordination of math efforts from MCS to RMS around math placement and instruction. I have been very pleased with the MCS instruction. However RMS and MCS used different placement processes for 7th grade and combined the math 7 and pre-algebra. After my **** lack luster experience with the RMS **** teacher (**** depended on the resident/assistance teach for instruction) I am worried about the ability to actually differentiate appropriately within the combined class. Pre-algebra and math 7 require very different kinds of support for students who learn math easily and those who need more time and remediation. I am also very concerned about the reduction in French time for MCS students in favor of other subjects. The french program is award winning, engaging and most of all fun for students. There should be a way to balance the need for remedial language arts instruction without decimating this program!
27. I really think MCS students should have the option to learn Spanish.
28. seems to be very high demand at our school for after-school extracurriculars, would love to see PTO and parents play more role in helping run after school enrichment programs
29. Do not cut French unless you are replacing it with a rigorous, time-intensive Spanish program. And remember that "specials" are also academic; music is a different kind of math and reading; French is a different kind of speaking, listening, reading and writing; art is a different kind of expression and appreciation. I do not want MCS to reduce the joy and diversity of its offerings for more English language desk work!
30. MCS curriculum in math and foreign language is just not rigorous. Kids are far behind their Hanover peers.
31. I'm concerned about the differences in foreign language programs between Ray/RMS and MCS, not necessarily the difference in the languages being taught but in the approach and proposed instructional time (too little time at MCS)
32. Please see my response to question #4. Thanks-
33. Treat specials as core academics. It's vital kids have more time with Art, Language, PE; we have to get creative and better integrate these subjects.
34. Increase foreign language in K-6
35. Too many specials, not enough time for academic instruction.
36. It's interesting that the above choices don't capture a really pressing problem. It's not so much that there is a lack of standardization (though there is a serious lack of consistency, even within schools) nor is it the case, at the elementary level, that there is not enough "rigor." In fact, I think kids shouldn't have much homework in the early years. In many ways, young kids are being pushed too hard. The problem -- which, unbelievably, is not captured in this survey! - is that the fundamental mission of the Marion Cross elementary school (literacy) is not being met for all children. If you asked 100 people to name the mission of an elementary school, I'm certain the vast, vast majority would say, "to teach kids how to read and write." Why, then, are

so many children in the early years struggling to read and write? This requires major strategic thinking at all levels, and within and across all schools.

Q25: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q24: What are the current most pressing student support and service needs within our schools?*

176 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 99 responses → 15 MCS responses

1. With the isolation produced by the pandemic, we don't see kids in the community as we did prior. We used to have a feeling that the kids in our community were developing into generous, helpful, world-savvy citizens. Perhaps this will return, but we feel the schools need to work hard to re-establish an engagement in the community that seems disrupted.,
2. bullying needs to be recognized and addressed perhaps by a specialist who comes in and does workshops. The way the bullying situation in the **** grade was handled was completely ineffective. please note that **** **** **** a **** **** **** in **** **** **** because **** was bullied. This is a serious topic that should be addressed and the kids should face consequences if it goes on.
3. The changes MCS has made in teaching growth mindset etc has been wonderful
4. The past few years have been isolating for families with younger children (i.e. elementary school). Strengthening bonds between students will help socially. Increasing 1:1 tutoring with supplement in-class learning without taking away from group learning. Mental health / de-stress lessons will help children learn how to deal with these feelings at a young age and practice as they grow.
5. Again, not being in the classroom, I do not have an informed opinion.
6. MCS has been special with a connection to the norwich and surrounding community. Please keep this going
7. I don't feel like I have enough experience with school to answer this, so I am clicking on "Everything feels just fine"
8. **** **** is the best, I hope she is supported
9. I wish more effort was made to help new to school families feel included.
10. Mental health care is so limited in the Upper Valley, I think the more avaiability there is for kids the better. The social isolation of COVID has been really limiting for kids and as we create a new normal, mental health is an area to focus our efforts on.
11. kids report they love their friends and the nurturing environment at MCS
12. I would love to see MCS offer a group to adopted students. There are so many of them (which is wonderful) and school would be a great place for a lunch group or

other group where kids could have their experiences normalized, validated, and shared. In turn, this points to the need for more than one counselor at MCS. **** cannot do all that is needed in our increasingly complex social-emotional world.

13. Far too much focus on emotional development at the cost of kids having a real physical education curriculum (MCS)
14. It starts at the top in our school. If **** **** never shows up at any community events or kids after-school activities, what message are we sending? Community matters and helps one find a sense of purpose. We need to show up for these kids, that's how you connect.
15. I'd like to see a more developmentally based approach to elementary education, with more curriculum flexibility, more targeted and more effective instruction, and more responsive scheduling for children and their families etc. There is a real opportunity to break free of some of the century-old practices that govern education and make it hard for many younger children to learn (and some older ones too)

Q27: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q26: What are the current most pressing concerns for your specific child during the school day?*

188 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 107 responses → 14 MCS responses

1. what is see missing from the previous question is that it assumes the student is struggling with the load, without also questioning whether the school could better meet the student. again, i see a hierarchical issue with the framing of the question. it looks like this technical issue is still not resolved, above, i did not choose any of the things you've listed, yet, i cannot submit the form without choosing them. please disregard the issues i marked in the question above.
2. Some teachers seem to use movies as a substitute for teaching. Movies **** my child and interfere with **** learning, and are pedagogically unnecessary.
3. Wish you were not decreasing French
4. my kid is very resilient but the **** family problem was unfortunate.
5. Child has periodically had some challenges behaviorally, and from a parent perspective a first concern is whether the behavior might fix itself if the child was more challenged by what's happening class, but opportunities for enrichment seem to take backseat to the focus on remediation
6. School is pretty easy for my child. He complains of a lack of opportunity to be challenged

7. We are very concerned with the increased use of computers at school and for homework and lack of (or very limited) restrictions on use of cell phones at the high school.
8. DEI initiatives seem to overlook disability.
9. Primary issues are boredom, lack of academic challenge, and my child's disillusionment with school because of lackluster, unaccountable teachers.
10. The school year has been quite disrupted by covid, but that's unavoidable. Our child has also had some minor issues with other students' behavior, but nothing unusual for children that age.
11. The whole MCS staff needs yearly training on gender, so that every staff member understands gender identity and can comfortably use gender-neutral and gender-affirming language and practices!!!! 2)
12. Parents allowing children to have phones early on (in elementary school) is toxic. School should address and discuss.
13. It's hard to come up with three for each of these. 'Conflict with teachers/staff' refers to **** showing no/little interest at integrating or caring to engage in our child's school life.
14. See above comments on the urgent need to improve ELA instruction.

Q29: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q28: What are the current most pressing concerns for your specific child outside of the school day?*

155 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 72 responses → 9 MCS responses

1. Climate change, guns, Roe v Wade, decline into fascism
2. We have added on enrichment because there is no homework. I'd rather be working with the school and having him do some homework to build routines
3. It has been hard to have playdates and meet families.
4. My child is struggling with the negative things happening in our world : school shootings, war, climate change, pandemic.
5. Our child has had a very easy time with the reading and math homework. The plan to sacrifice specials time for additional phonics and math instructions strikes us as misguided. Parents should bear more responsibility. There is very little reading homework in the lower grades.
6. Everything is fine except there is no after school program!
7. We are fortunate, but we see a need in our community for high-quality, affordable, nearby after school care available to all.

8. Norwich is becoming about impossible to afford to live in. We are a middle class earning family and are finding it very difficult to stay. We **** and will likely find it difficult to ever afford **** **** **** here. If/when **** **** decides that **** making a change with **** ****, we'll have to leave this community.
9. **** feels very isolating for our child.

Q31: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q30: What are the current most needed improvements related to the health and safety of the physical environment of our schools?*

191 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 117 responses → 35 MCS responses

1. FIX THE SEPTIC ISSUE ON THE MCS GREEN! The asphalt around the front playground pools water which freezes in winter and creates hazardous walking conditions.
2. it looks like this technical issue is still not resolved, above, i did not choose any of the things you've listed, yet, i cannot submit the form without choosing them. please disregard the issues i marked in the question above.
3. My son's indoor asthma is worse indoors at school than at home.
4. Septic issues need to be addressed
5. I would feel better if we had common sense gun safety laws
6. keep those doors locked!
7. Septic system resolved at MCS
8. Building is old. Gets hot and cold
9. I would add to the list MCS school grounds and septic issues
10. Again, not being in the classroom, I do not have an informed opinion.
11. Playground upgrades
12. Marion Cross - back playground is a mess and unsafe.
13. Not sure why the facilities in general are not an option. We have broken fences, no trash cans at all, unrepaired holes in the lawn, and our play structure is cracked and rotting
14. There are no security measures that would keep our students safe if a gunman wanted in. Please do not increase security measures.
15. Locally-sourced, homemade, and healthy school lunch would promote student health.

16. We should invest some funds at the MCS campus. The building is getting run down and needs some care. When I see the well maintained grounds at HHS in comparison to those of MCS, there is a stark difference.
17. poor facilities conditions at Marion Cross
18. Septic issue
19. MCS will likely need air conditioning at some point. Also, lack of a functioning septic system at MCS.
20. As I'm sure others might mention, Septic!
21. Effluent/poo on the green in Norwich part of the year.
22. lack of a kitchen to make school meals, and functioning septic system
23. Septic at MCS needs fixing
24. Septic system issues
25. There is not enough space for the number of students we have and the activities we offer. We also need a facility for preparing food for school lunches.
26. The septic system is an issue that everyone hopes to see resolved soon. I'm aware that there are reasons for the delay.
27. SEPTIC - a functioning septic that allows our children to play without the risk of exposure to e.coli
28. MCS needs a solution to the failed septic tank.
29. septic seems to be a major issue at MCS, not sure how parents can help
30. Septic!
31. This question should NOT require 3 answers, since a respondent may feel everything is fine yet be forced to choose problems. The health and safety elements of MCS are being managed beautifully. A special tip of the hat to **** **** and **** ****!
32. Septic at MCS must be a priority
33. Need a new playground at MCS
34. The MCS building is in poor shape and needs renovating.
35. On-going septic issues at school need to be resolved.

Q33: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q32: What are the current most pressing transportation, arrival, and departure needs for our schools?*

179 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 109 responses → 24 MCS responses

1. School start time was changed without appropriate notification, resulting in quite a few latenesses. When we were notified that many kids were now arriving "late" it was noted that the school start time was also still in the school website as the

previous years' start time until parents notified the school. While this may appear minor, it was one of the first moments we realized, apart from the difficulties engendered by the pandemic, that we were lacking the effective communication from the administration that we were accustomed to. It seemed indicative of other oversights that became evident.

2. It takes almost an hour to get home on the bus. It is a six minute drive directly to school.
3. Taking care of the drivers
4. studies have shown kids learn better when they go to school later.
5. We wish the bus stop was much closer, say 1 mile from the house
6. the k-12 students on buses is a concern. If each elementary school had their own bus, perhaps that would help? (at least separate the younger students from middle/high schools)
7. Bus should have a monitor. Driver should not be managing behavior while driving.
8. There is an equity issue related to busing. MCS students have a much longer day and staff are required to have more duties.
9. There should be a sidewalk around the loop so my child can walk to school safely. We live close enough to do so
10. We do not take the bus because my children would be picked up too early and dropped off too late.
11. Please keep the current MCS drop off and pickup. Being able to see and talk to other parents and teachers improves the community connection.
12. I don't feel like I have enough experience with school to answer this, so I am clicking on "Everything feels just fine"
13. I wish it was more clear that the school day was going to start at 8:05 (versus 8:10 last year), but I don't know if that changes anything at all
14. My kids do not ride the bus but their peers have expressed concerns about student behavior on the buses.
15. Parking is ok, but the church parking lot is strained to capacity and the potholes are currently right at the edge of what is passable for smaller vehicles.
16. the busses work well for us, but we are limited by transportation to other activities
17. The drop off area in the morning is congested that when we are walking the cars block the sidewalks and crossing paths. Drop off needs to be at another location that cars can drop off and leave another way.
18. I wish school start and stop times aligned better with the work day. It would be better if school went from 9am-4pm
19. everything feels just fine, had to check another box to submit survey
20. Again, this question should not require 3 answers. I think everything is fine.
21. HHS should not allow solo drivers to have parking passes. Eco and social disaster.
22. Only because I had to respond with 3. Please ignore the general safety of walking/biking and transportation. We live within walking distance.
23. There is abundant evidence that children do better with a later start. The school can provide optional (fee-based) early morning child care if necessary. But it's hard on young and older kids to have to be at school so early.

24. We do not use the bus because the transportation times are far too long at close to 1 hour each way and bus stop is too far from home.

Q35: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q34: What are the current most pressing sustainability needs for our schools?*

150 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 65 responses → 20 MCS responses

1. Lack of A/C will become a bigger issue with rising temperatures. Generally, MCS is run down. Plumbing smells upstairs.
2. it looks like this technical issue is still not resolved, above, i did not choose any of the things you've listed, yet, i cannot submit the form without choosing them. please disregard the issues i marked in the question above.
3. The MCS septic system needs to be fixed!
4. The school lunches seem to create a lot of waste. The broken septic system needs to be addressed.
5. Bringing in school lunch requires containers and generates waste.
6. Septic issues are still a concern.
7. Norwich needs a town sewer. Septic doesn't make sense for this density at school.
8. I don't feel like I have enough experience with school to answer this, so I am clicking on "Everything feels just fine"
9. Everyone loves composting. Why not compost the poo?
10. Fix the septic issue with a LONG TERM solution.
11. MCS Septic solution
12. I do not know what the school is doing on sustainability so can't answer that.
13. The school values all of the above things and has taken reasonable measures in these directions. Great work!
14. Fix the MCS Septic System!!!!!!! I have lived her for 4 years and this is the most pressing problem and is hasn't been addressed in a useful way!!!!!!!
15. FIX THE SEPTIC
16. Upgrading to electric buses would be great.
17. Please replace plastic tableware with washable tableware.
18. Again - mandate car pooling for students. Or they take the bus. Far too many kids hopping in gas guzzling SUVs after school. Alone.
19. I don't have enough information to accurately assess what the most pressing sustainability needs of the school
20. Redo the leach field at MCS

Q37: Do you wish to provide more information about your responses to the previous question or feel that we missed something? Please let us know below. *Re: Q36: Within the next five years, which large-scale initiatives are the most important?*

172 responses. After removing “no” and similar responses → 99 responses → 27 MCS responses

1. Restore previous curriculum arc, integrating specials into academics; restore trust of our wonderful teachers, of whom many have taken early retirements within the past 3 years.
2. i don't see a question about specials, above. i believe that specials are important to the quality of learning for students and the institution, as a whole. more attention to specials, please. it looks like this technical issue is still not resolved, above, i did not choose any of the things you've listed, yet, i cannot submit the form without choosing them. please disregard the issues i marked in the question above.
3. Expand the Rec department
4. Language and music are so important
5. Introduce Spanish at MCS
6. Yes to the languages! For elementary grades, pick one and offere more time.
7. MCS is on the right track with two full day preschool programs!
8. Accessibility, especially to outdoor spaces is lacking and is causing critical inequities in our school.
9. Norwich rec could also play a role in after school activities at MCS.
10. Septic system should be a top priority.
11. By "renovation to existing building" I ONLY mean fix the septic at MCS
12. I would like to see RMS have school sponsored sports. I DO NOT think full day preschool should be included in the school budget. This reduces funding for K-12 needs.
13. It would be wonderful to have school-sponsored robotics, STEM activities, etc
14. Mcs playground is embarrassing
15. At MCS the most pressing issues are the SEPTIC, followed by renovation of the (dangerous and decaying) playgrounds, as well as access to the outdoor classrooms.
16. MCS septic system; SAU70 central scratch kitchen to improve use of local foods and meal quality
17. I would love to see the language offerings expand rather than shrink. However, the most essential thing is that language specials are given adequate time so that actual learning can take place. To my (trained) eyes, the number of hours devoted to French was already close to the bare minimum. The proposal to cut those hours

strikes me as misguided (though I appreciate the process and the good will of the people who came to the decision).

18. Again fix the MCS Septic System!!!!!!! Preschool and aftercare are incredibly important resources for working parents. Transportation in the late afternoon to sports is untenable for working parents. Also Norwich residents should not be treated as non-residents for middle school sports. Norwich rec defers to HPR for middle school age sports and it's not fair to be charged more and given lower priority when we have an interstate school district and no other option for sports.
19. SEPTIC
20. Add Spanish to MCS
21. Improving septic at MCS, academic rigor, and after school enrichment would be our top 3 suggested priorities
22. Sewers at MCS! No more septic on playground!
23. The elephant in the room is: We need SPANISH! Arabic, Japanese, and Mandarin are all well and good, but Spanish is by leaps and bounds the most spoken language in the USA after English, and employment-wise in our country, "bilingual preferred" is synonymous with English-Spanish!!!
24. After school care would go a long way in supporting working parents and building friendships and community.
25. I don't have enough information to decide
26. More support for our teachers, more educational assistants, MCS town green/water, improvements and additional green space playground
27. There was no option (above) regarding improving professional development for teachers and/or large-scale curriculum initiatives. That is telling, in my view. A school is only as strong as its teaching force.

Q46: Did we miss anything that you think is important for us to know? Please put anything here that is not covered by the other survey questions.

167 responses. After removing "no" and similar responses → 103 responses → 23 MCS responses

1. Honestly, ask us what we loved about our school and we'll tell you. This survey is a bear to fill out and has too many gaps. What we'd like is to feel as if we were an integral part of our children's education, which means not being told what is going to be changed just prior to doing it. Quite a few MCS parents in the past have worked hand in hand to develop a type of curriculum that educates the whole child from Kindergarten in the forest to integrating foreign language and other specials with the academics. It's a cop-out to say that drops in reading scores over the disruptions of the pandemic can only be solved by emphasizing academics in the face of previous successes by a curriculum designed by excellent teachers, administrators,

staff, and, yes, parents that have exceptional qualifications as educators themselves. After nearly 3 years of isolation our **** grader FINALLY had the opportunity to read to the pre-K and K kids, as **** would have done in **** grade had the pandemic not thrown us a curve. Rather than bemoan drops in reading test scores, we should look to what made our school successful before, not simply chuck out the integrated curriculum and "buckle down" on extra academics. Our kids used to learn how to work together, to raise each other up. They need that environment again.

2. often, people identify as more than one ethnicity, your form would allow for that. please provide useable forms! i mentioned a technical issue before, and see that the issue is still not resolved. this form has required me to fill in responses i do not hold, in order to be submittable. i will restate, i note that all of these questions are "downstream" stream questions, they question things below the level of the ones asking the questions... leaving the questioners out of the equation. this is a common flaw in surveys, where the questioners forget to include themselves within the systems in question, thereby assuring an incorrect assessment. i need to say that this is the exact same issue that was reported within the schedule creation process, for 2022, somehow, the admin was left out of the focus. i ask again: are you sure that your administration is performing flawlessly? are you sure that admin is reporting issues correctly? or, as is the case with this very form, has admin been left out of the area of question, comment and focus? if so, why? and do you believe that you can arrive at a true assessment without including the guidance system in the process? personally, i don't believe that will be possible, forcing a wrongheaded solution onto the community. what a shame, as simply asking the full question could have rendered the correct answers. thank you!
3. Please don't design the survey so that unanswered questions must be answered, this is a great way to infuriate parents! Honestly!
4. Thank you!
5. I would fully support MCS 6th grade moving to RMS. The current model is not equitable for MCS students arriving at RMS in 7th grade.
6. My daughter has had an amazing experience at MCS. Thank you for all you do to create such a great educational environment. We appreciate it.
7. Better and healthier school lunch options. Very dismayed with the lack of nutritional content and quality.
8. We have two students at MCS,
9. You guys are doing great. I wish the septic was as high a priority as the brand new baseball field we funded in March, but I guess I'm an outlier
10. Give teachers at MCS more planning time. Help retain the teachers that are there. Help prevent teacher burnout by working with teachers to find solutions to problems as well as more planning time.
11. Teachers should be held accountable through high standards, review of their performance, and consequences for failing to meet expectations.
12. Thank you to teachers and staff for all you do.
13. We are generally happy and hope that everyone's answers help us all improve.

14. I have more than one child in school and this survey assumes 1.
15. Parents could be asked to do more. I teach **** at **** and expressed willingness to visit or lend time to activities. I've never been contacted. The current reading gap should be a parent concern as much as a school concern.
16. FIX the MCS SEPTIC SYSTEM!
17. Celebration of other culture's holidays such as lunar new year, day of the dead, diwali, and etc...maybe celebration can include food/drinks from that culture. We are a multiracial family and seeing that the class only celebrate, halloween, sometimes christmas, and valentines day is interesting. Those are commercial holidays. We know it is difficult to celebrate everyone's cultural/religious holidays but it may bring more diversity/understanding in a mainly christian/protestant Caucasian student body.
18. I am shocked that the septic is not included in this survey at all as it clearly hasn't been in the strategic planning process considering how long it has been deficient
19. A better school lunch option at MCS would be very helpful.
20. The curriculum at MCS should mirror that at Ray, and both should have as their number one priority to foster a love of learning, NOT to increase reading and writing scores.
21. Marion Cross appears to be at a point of crisis, with many teachers leaving, many beloved school traditions as well as priorities (foreign language and the arts) being de-prioitized by the new administration, and parents feeling shut out, in a way that cannot be accounted for simply by the pandemic. The new administration is out of step with the priorities of the community, the parents, and the teachers and rather than opening up conversations and getting folks on board with the new administration's priorities, they are quickly and with minimal notice implementing changes that have severe effects on the school culture and curriculum.
22. Many of the questions have an answer of "everything is just fine" but then I can't submit the survey unless I've chosen three options. So, to submit the survey, I have to choose two options that I don't in fact think are problems. I'm afraid this is going to make your data hard to interpret.
23. MCS needs new ****