

[Peak to Peak Response to 2014 Annual Family Survey Results](#)

Summary

The results of the 2014 Peak to Peak Annual Family Survey were provided to the Peak to Peak Board of Directors and administration in the spring of 2014. A report detailing the results of the survey was provided to the Peak to Peak community and is available on the school website ([link to 2013-2014 survey results here](#)). In general, responses to the survey statements were very positive. However, there were areas where parents/guardians expressed concerns either through the rating of the question or in their comments. The Board of Directors, Executive Leadership, and principals take the survey results very seriously and have responded with many changes to address the concerns of the Peak to Peak community. The following report, prepared by the Accountability Committee, summarizes those activities. A brief summary of several topics is listed in this section. More details about the survey and the response can be found in the remainder of this report.

Communication with the Community: Parent comments in the survey expressed disappointment with communication from the Board of Directors (BOD) and executive leadership specific to significant school decisions and events. The Board has established a communications committee, increased opportunities for public comment during board meetings, and made efforts to increase opportunities for community interaction. The BOD and the Executive Director of Education (EDE) have completed training related to communications and public relations. The school has installed electronic billboards and launched a new website. For more information about efforts by the BOD and ELT to increase and improve communication, click [here](#).

Technology in the Curriculum: Parents called for more technology instruction at all school levels. Elementary students now have weekly Tech Class with Chrome books taught by a new technology teacher, who is also supporting the addition of more technology into existing curriculum. At the secondary level, Chrome book carts, iPads, and other technology are used to support a wide variety of classes. Additional technology-based electives have been added. Teachers are receiving technology-related education opportunities as part of professional development. For more information about the addition of technology into the classroom and curriculum, click [here](#).

Elementary Math Ability Grouping: Some elementary parents expressed concern that there is not enough movement and flexibility in math ability grouping. “Bubble groups” have been created to ensure the needs of all students are met regardless of class placement. Teachers are tracking movement between groups. For more information about ability grouping in elementary math, click [here](#).

Middle School Electives: Parents requested a greater variety of choices for middle school electives and improved utilization of ACCESS time. Middle school principal, Suzanne Ovelman, reports working each year to offer a wide range of electives and activities for middle school options while operating within the budget constraints of a small charter school. Ms Ovelman encourages middle school families to learn more about current and future opportunities by connecting to her Edline webpage and subscribing to her newsletter. For more information about middle school options, click [here](#).

High School Expectation and Balance: Through a series of new questions in the survey, high school parents expressed support of efforts to address student stress levels and encourage healthy balance. High school principal, Kyle Mathews, is organizing a character education, ethics, and balanced decision-making training program. The K-12 Essential Question (“What would you do if you were not afraid?”) is intended to encourage discussion about taking healthy, challenging risks. Teachers are being educated about brain development research to equip them in supporting students. For more information about these and other related efforts, click [here](#).

Healthy Food Options: Comments in the survey requested a wider variety of healthy food options. The Food Services program is making efforts to increase healthy meal options, including natural and organic beef, whole grains, and fresh and organic produce. For more information about what is happening in food services, click [here](#).

Fundraising: Families requested openness to new ideas in raising money for Peak to Peak. Since the survey, the school has hired a new Major Gifts Officer and Fundraising Events Manager. The new fundraising team has many ideas for raising money for the school and engaging the community in this process. For more information about the team’s plans, click [here](#).

Facility Maintenance and Upkeep: Families expressed concern about general building cleanliness and repairs to aging facilities. Since the survey, the school has hired a cleaning service to supplement permanent janitorial staff. Over the summer, concrete repair and parking lot re-paving projects were completed. Additional repairs and improvement projects are planned for the future and may be sped up if a proposed bond initiative is passed. For more information about facilities improvement activities, click [here](#).

Safety and Security: Parents have expressed concerns about student safety and campus security. Since the survey, a new guest registry system has been implemented. Cameras installed at the main entrances as well as numerous other locations are monitored. Local police have assisted the school security team in establishing emergency response plans. For more information about safety and security systems and procedures, click [here](#).

Introduction

The results of the 2014 Peak to Peak Annual Family Survey were provided to the Peak to Peak Board of Directors and administration in the spring of 2014. A report detailing the results of the survey has been provided to the Peak to Peak community on the website, www.peaktopeak.org. Click on 'About us' > 'Leadership' > 'Committees' > 'Accountability Committee' > 'Survey Results' to access all survey results or [link to 2013-2014 survey results here](#).

In response to the 2014 Survey, the Accountability Committee gathered information from the Board of Directors, Executive Director of Education (Ms. Reeser), the Executive Director of Operations (Mr. Todd), and the principals (Mr. Mathews, Ms. Ovelman, and Ms. Christensen) as well as the Facilities Director (Mr. Wilcox), Major Gifts Officer (Ms. Steuer) and Fundraising Events Manager (Ms. Hirt) regarding what has been done and what is currently being done to address concerns that were reflected in the survey. In general, responses to the survey statements were very positive, however there were areas where parents/guardians expressed concerns either through the rating of the question or in their comments. These are the areas addressed in this report. The Board of Directors, Executive Leadership, and principals take the survey results very seriously and have responded with many changes to address the concerns of the Peak to Peak community.

Communication/ Board of Directors

Parent comments in the survey expressed disappointment in the way communication with the school community had been handled. Through comments in the survey, they expressed their desire to have more openness and transparency from the Board of Directors. Parents would like the board and the Executive Director of Education to continue efforts to improve communication with the community as well as external public relations. In response to these concerns, the Board of Directors (BOD) has made a concerted effort to increase and improve communication with the community. The BOD completed more intensive training this summer, including some specific to communication skills. Actions include the addition of electronic billboards around campus, a new website, and corresponding mobile application. Additionally, Peak to Peak is partnering with *Creative Alliance* (a local marketing firm) to develop a more comprehensive marketing plan. Components of the marketing plan are already in place, such as the P2P Facebook page.

The board has established a Communications Subcommittee. Board meetings have been revised to promote communication and relocated to a larger space to accommodate more attendees. The board now takes public comments about agenda items during discussion of those items when possible. For those unable to attend board meetings, the Weekly Digest (posted on the Board's web page) includes a summary of the content of the meeting. Individual board members rotate responsibility for writing a more detailed review of the meeting to offer greater context and clarification. In order to promote community engagement, the board continues to strive to have at least one board member at as many school meetings, functions, and events as possible. BOD members continue to attend and

participate in meetings of all standing committees. The board redesigned the Annual Meeting, hosting it off-campus but nearby, with an additional hour dedicated to socializing. This new venue and format increased attendance and offered additional opportunities for communication and interaction between school leadership and the community.

The Executive Director of Education (EDE) recently completed a Public Relations course from which she gained new tools to encourage communication. As part of the course, she wrote a communication plan including norms and channels to promote interaction among all members of our community.

In an effort to show the community that the BOD has heard parents' concerns regarding last fall, the board approved the Community Enhancement Subcommittee's recommendations in February 2014. The BOD completed Recommendation 2.1 (outside consultant to administer Organization Trust Index), 2.3 (staff survey done by outside party), 2.4 (public comment response), 2.5 (community opportunities to build cohesion-plans in the works), in accordance with the subcommittee's timeline.

Technology in the Curriculum

Parents would like to see more technology instruction throughout all school levels. This concern is repeated from previous survey results. Peak to Peak is implementing and enhancing technology in the curriculum across all grade levels.

- At the elementary level, Michelle Eckstein has been hired as the Technology Teacher. Using the 90 Chrome books (mostly purchased with funds from the Auction) she is introducing computer skills to K-5 students through a Tech Class once per week, with a focus on keyboarding and word processing. Teachers are exploring ways to infuse technology into regular class time with support from Ms. Eckstein. AlphaSmarts (portable word-processing keyboards) and iPads also continue to be used as technology tools throughout elementary.
- At the secondary level, Chrome book carts are being used in English and Social studies classes to support online programs for essay review, collaboration, formative feedback, and authenticity checks. Spanish classes are using new applications for authentic listening and speaking opportunities. iPads are used for individual/group reflections on literature, personal financial literacy, and for ACT/math instruction. Teachers have crafted hundreds of online videos to support scaffolded instruction with problem solving based on the content of the ACT and courses of study.
- A Middle School technology elective has been added this year and Robert Hettmansberger and Gayle Van Tol are working together to tweak the curriculum to differentiate between basic tech skills and more advanced computer skills.
- An Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science class and a post-AP computer science/professional class are now available.
- Engineering curriculum aligned with Next Generation Science Standards is being

implemented in 6 to 12th grade Science and Technology curriculum.

- Teacher in-service days have technology offerings.
- Graduation requirements are being upgraded with current technology practices that colleges and universities expect.
- Computer skills will become increasingly important as state and national testing move away from paper and pencil based assessment to online administration.

Ability Grouping for Math in Elementary School

Some elementary parents expressed concerns through the survey about ability grouping for math. Many of these parents would like to see more movement between classes. At the elementary level, students are divided between classes based upon the results of benchmark testing, classroom performance, and needs assessments. The goal is to keep students placed in groups with other peers working at a similar level, in order to best provide differentiated instruction within each class. Within each math class, teachers do additional grouping. “Bubble groups” have been created within each math class to provide extra time and enrichment. The purpose is to maintain the current grouping of students while meeting the needs of all. Teachers are tracking the number of students moved up or down within ability groups.

Last year was the first year of the new math curriculum. Teachers are very happy with the program and feel confident about it going into this school year. The curriculum provides a lot of opportunity for differentiation within each lesson, which benefits students of all ability levels. Teachers are comparing data for different grades. Talented and gifted (TAG) students are showing the highest growth, which is not typically the case.

Electives for Middle School

Parents commenting in the survey would like to see a greater variety of choices in middle school electives. Correlated with these comments, parents indicated ACCESS time did not appear to be well utilized. The middle school principal, Suzanne Ovelman, reports having worked consistently to ensure each year a variety of electives are available for middle school students. She concedes the choices are limited by the budget of a small, charter school. She feels confident a range of options are available to suit different interests and are appropriate for a middle school environment. Electives currently offered include:

- Visual Art (Exploratory Art and Mixed Media Approaches)
- Health (one semester required)
- Music (several choir, band, and orchestra options)
- Theater (multiple options)
- PE (lifelong fitness- required)

- Technology (Exploratory Computing and Introduction to Information Technology)
- Student Aide
- Study Hall

All information regarding electives and all middle school course descriptions can be found on the school web page by selecting 'Curriculum' under the 'Academics' menu or [click here](#). Ms. Ovelman encourages parents to register on her Edline Page, where a myriad of information is available weekly (including those regarding elective options).

ACCESS information can also be accessed through the web page and Ms. Ovelman's Edline Page. According to the web page, "Access is a way to build character and community lessons into the middle school curriculum, but is also an opportunity for students to have some fun through planned assemblies, activities, competitions, and student-selected clubs." Ms. Ovelmann reports the ACCESS periods which are not dedicated to character and community-building lessons are frequently used as well-needed study halls. With an increase in work and expectations in middle school, she sees value in a study hall in the seven period day. How these study halls are utilized is up to the individual student.

High School Expectations and Balance

At the request of the high school principal, Kyle Mathews, last spring's survey included new questions pertaining to the balance between academic rigor and the other pressures of high school. Concerns about the level of stress in high school students were raised in comments from the previous year's survey. In this year's survey, parents supported and appreciated efforts at the high school level to promote a healthy balance. In support of this effort school-wide, Peak to Peak has established a K-12 Essential Question: "What would you do if you were not afraid?" Recent studies, supported by anecdotal evidence from Peak to Peak staff, find students are less willing to take risks for fear of being graded down or socially ostracized by peers. Discussion of this question is intended to help guide students and staff to take healthy, challenging risks in their academic, athletic, artistic and creative environments.

Peak to Peak staff is creating programs to address expectations and balance. Mr. Mathews has spearheaded a character education, ethics, and balanced decision-making training program (called the Peak Core Competencies and Core Score curriculum) to take place over four years in the high school. This is the pilot year with 9th graders. Students self-assess using a survey and are assessed by external raters (including parents/guardians, coaches, pastors, community members of trust, and/or staff) to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Mr. Mathews recently secured a \$10,000 grant from the Denver Rotary to help put this plan into place. Program design started in early 2013 in collaboration with the Colorado Ethics in Business Alliance. For more information, see the school website - select 'Peak Core Competencies and Core Score' in the 'Curriculum' menu after selecting 'High School' from 'K-12 School' menu or [click here](#).

In addition, administration is presenting research to teachers on brain development each month with the goal to share information, help students understand what they are experiencing, and to reduce their stress while pursuing their passions/interests. A strengths survey will also be taken by all students, with results to be shared in October with students and parents at a mandatory parent night meeting.

Food Services

Comments from the survey show that parents would like healthier options from Food Services. Peak to Peak is working to offer a wide variety of healthy options within the regulatory requirements the school is subject to as a School Food Authority. The Food Services program is currently working on developing a webpage that will provide more information about offerings at Peak to Peak. Food Services has made the following efforts to ensure a variety of healthy meal options:

- All beef served comes from Anderson Beef and is natural and organic.
- All bread served is whole grain.
- One item every day on the salad bar is organic, in addition to fresh produce from the Peak to Peak garden.
- The main dish always has a meat/meat alternate and a grain.
- Students can have as much fruit and vegetables as they prefer.
- Students can choose regular or organic milk.
- Secondary students are offered at least one main entree and usually two.
- Students also have access to the salad bar, fresh fruit, yogurt, fruit cups, juice, cheese sticks, granola bars, soups, and sub sandwiches.
- Cookies and healthy chips all meet the smart snack guidelines.
- Homemade soups are offered daily, prepared on site each day.
- Breakfast is served daily that includes a variety of choices: whole grain of some type, fresh fruit, milk, juice, hot sandwiches, cereal, regular or Greek yogurt, parfaits, cheese sticks and granola bars.

Fundraising

The survey results indicate that families would like to see greater openness to new ideas in raising money for Peak to Peak. The school has recently hired Robyn Steuer as *Major Gifts Officer* and Rachel Hirt as *Fundraising Events Manager*. The fundraising team members are new to the school and/or roles and excited to bring fresh energy to Peak to Peak and to engage as extensively as possible with the school community. The fundraising team will be working to demonstrate a greater openness to new fundraising ideas and to re-energize the community around raising money the team through the following:

- Holding one-on-one and small group meetings with parents, past parents and Board members to gather ideas, create buzz and gain buy-in moving forward.
- Actively shifting the focus of event-based fundraising at Peak to Peak to be more parent/volunteer driven in order to create ownership within the community and properly leverage social networks within Peak to Peak.
- Reviving the *Friends of Peak to Peak* moniker as well as overhauling their web presence to communicate an approachable and friendly organization.
- Assessing existing events, building relationships and gathering extensive feedback so that activities may be optimized in coming years.
- Building standard practices around fundraising events so that community members have a solid understanding of the types of events in which Peak to Peak can participate.
- Reviewing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure metrics resonate with the community and that the metric around the cost of raising money is streamlined and clear.

Facilities

Survey comments requested improvements to the general cleanliness of the campus and buildings, particularly bathrooms, and repairs to aging facilities, such as cracks in the concrete. John Wilcox, the *Facilities Director*, stressed that the Facilities Department strives to do more with less, recognizing the prioritization of spending towards classroom instruction before building maintenance. While Peak to Peak has increased the size of its custodial staff over the past ten years, the number of custodians per square foot of building space is still well below industry standard. Since last spring, Peak to Peak has hired a cleaning service to manage nightly general cleaning of the South Building. The change was made to address difficulties in maintaining permanent staff for this position and has resulted in more consistent cleaning campus-wide.

Over the summer, projects to repair concrete and re-pave parking lots were completed. Mr. Wilcox recognizes that more repairs are necessary and will be prioritized based upon cost and need. Executive Director of Operations, Sam Todd, indicated that if the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) 2014 bond initiative passes, it is hoped that some projects that have been earmarked with replacement reserve monies will be completed, freeing more annual money for routine maintenance and repairs.

Safety and Security

Parents who commented on safety are concerned about security and access at school entrances and the openness of the campus. The same theme was raised in the 2013 Parent Survey and continues to be a concern. Since the survey was conducted, a new guest registry system has been installed (purchased with a donation from a family). The system screens visitors using picture identification and state and national data bases. The front office

personally escorts unknown visitors. Administration is alerted and authorities contacted if any confirmed sex offenders attempt to enter.

Internal cameras have been installed at the three main entrances—north building lobby, south building lobby, and both doors at LMC. The cameras are monitored in the main and counseling offices. Sixteen other cameras are in place throughout the school (parking lot, hallways, auditoria) and are used for campus security. The school has installed soft barriers with signage in both lobby entrances directing visitors to stop and sign in as well as sign out prior to departure. Administration is stationed at doors at the beginning and end of each school day. The North lobby gate is pulled at 3:20pm to provide a safe place for students waiting for rides home. Locked entrances, including double doors, cameras, and phones, may be added with BVSD bond funds if that initiative passes.

Working with Lafayette Police Department and Flatirons Community Church, full evacuation plans have been established to relocate all students, staff, and guests to the church building in event of an emergency. K-12 Shelter-in-Place plans for tornado drills and lock-out plans were put in place in collaboration with BVSD Security Director, Chris Wilderman. Ongoing safety training with the K-12 Executive Leadership Team (ELT) occurs on a monthly basis.

Conclusion

There are always areas where Peak to Peak can improve, even given the very positive results of the survey. The Accountability Committee appreciates that families have participated in that improvement through their responses to the survey. The Committee also is grateful that the Board of Directors, the Executive Director of Education, the Executive Director of Operations, the principals, and supporting administration are open and responsive to the survey results and the comments made by parents.

The Accountability Committee
October 17th, 2014