# **2016 Annual Family Survey Results**

# **Peak to Peak Charter School**

Prepared by: Accountability Committee April 2016

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### **2016 Annual Family Survey**

### **Peak to Peak Charter School**

The purpose of the Accountability Committee is to gather and analyze data to assess the school's progress toward its mission and vision and to provide results of that analysis to the Peak to Peak Board of Directors, the administration and the rest of the Peak to Peak community.

### **Preface**

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the results of the Annual Family Survey developed by the Peak to Peak Accountability Committee and conducted from January 15<sup>th</sup> thru January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016. This report and all comments, which are anonymous, are forwarded to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director of Education, and the Executive Director of Operations. The Accountability Committee will provide a follow up report in the fall on what actions the school has taken in response to these survey results.

The Accountability Committee appreciates the time taken by Peak to Peak families to complete the survey and provide meaningful comments. This input helps Peak to Peak continue to improve.

### **Survey Overview**

The annual Peak to Peak survey provides the school administration and the Board of Directors with an understanding of the parent/guardian view of how successfully Peak to Peak is achieving its mission. The results help direct improvement efforts at Peak to Peak. Results from prior years have led to improvements in areas such as technology, facilities, and communication channels to name a few.

The Accountability Committee has used an annual family survey for several years to collect feedback from the Peak to Peak community. The Peak to Peak mission and strategic plan are the basis for the questions. The 2016 survey used original questions relating to the three Quality areas (Instruction, Relationships, and Learning Environment) but revised the wording slightly for clarification.

The Annual Family Survey was administered as an online survey accessible via an email link sent to all families or by logging into an Edline account. The survey was available online for seventeen days and each family was asked to complete questions once for each child enrolled at Peak to Peak. Once respondents completed child/school level specific questions, they were then directed to an additional section of questions.

Questions that were not child specific were answered once per family rather than once for each child. These questions address issues related to the whole school, such as in what capacity parents volunteer, how they view the school's finances, and what, if any, changes they might like to see regarding food services.

Most questions were structured to use a four-point Likert response scale (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*). Along with the four-point scale, '*I am unsure/Not enough information*' was available as an option for those who felt they did not have enough information to respond to the question. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments for each child at the end of the three *Quality* areas (*Quality* of *Instruction, Quality* 

of Relationships, and Quality of Learning Environment), after the Communication, Finance, Does Well/Needs Improvement sections, as well as at the end of the survey. All responses and comments are anonymous.

### **Response Rates**

The 2016 survey response rate was the largest thus far with 466 responses covering 692 students, which represents 48% of enrolled students. This was an increase of 243% over the 285 students represented in the 2015 survey data. Several factors likely contributed to the increased response rate including more frequent direct emails, more education around anonymity, and increased publicity. Response rate tracking indicates a significant uptick in responses on days in which a reminder email was sent as well as the days on which students passed out "sticky notes" before and after school. Table 1 displays the response rate by school level.

Table 1 - Survey Participation										
	2016			2015	2014					
	Actual Responses	Number Enrolled	Response Rate	Response Rate	Response Rate					
ES students	264	456	58%	26%	50%					
MS students	187	402	47%	20%	43%					
HS students	241	580	42%	15%	36%					
Total students	692	1438	48%	20%	42%					

	Number of Responses	Percent
New students	137	20%
Returning students	555	80%

## **Quality Areas**

## **Yearly Comparison**

On the following pages, Table 2- *Combined School Levels* shows a 3-year comparison (2014, 2015, and 2016) of responses for the three Quality areas: Instruction, Relationships, and Learning Environment. The percentages displayed were derived by adding *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* responses together as a portion of the total responses. *Unsure* responses were not included in the displayed data. Arrows indicate where the change in positive response rate from the previous year is greater than the margin of error.

Year to Year Comparison of Positive Responses (Strongly Agree and Agree)					
Combined School Levels	2014	2015	2016		
Quality of Instruction					
My student receives the teacher and instructional support necessary to master the required coursework.	95.1%	92.6%	93.1%		T.
Teachers differentiate levels of instruction to keep my student appropriately challenged.	92.4%	91.3%	90.7%	П	4
Instructional materials and methods used in the classroom meet the academic needs of my student.	93.2%	89.4%	91.1%	П	4
Peak to Peak has prepared my student well for his/her current level of coursework.	93.7%	93.4%	93.8%	П	Ę
Peak to Peak prepares my student so he/she scores to the best of his/her ability on standardized tests.	92.9%	90.7%	90.6%	П	4
Quality of Relationships					
My student has at least one adult at school whom she/he trusts and is comfortable approaching with issues and concerns.	91.5%	94.1%	91.2%		4
I am familiar with and understand the school's Communication Pathways process.	95.1%	96.6%	93.0%	Ш	4
When I have used the school's Communication Pathways in regards to my student, the process has been effective in handling problems and addressing concerns. (LEAVE BLANK if you have not needed to use the Communication Pathways.)	81.1%	90.6%	86.0%		4
Based on this student's experience, I would recommend Peak to Peak to my friends and family.	94.5%	97.8%	94.1%	Ш	4
Quality of Learning Environment					
The school's available technology is adequate for learning.	85.3%	89.6%	87.8%		÷
The Peak to Peak campus and physical facilities are adequate for learning.	93.4%	92.0%	94.6%	П	4
l am well informed about school events and activities.	87.4%	86.9%	87.7%	Ш	=
My student has adequate opportunities for positive extracurricular involvement through the school (MS and HS only).	83.4%	86.6%	84.8%		=
Peak to Peak values each student and encourages students to develop their passions, talents, and interests.	89.2%	92.6%	91.6%		=
The bar charts show a scale of 50% to 100%.					
For the purpose of this graph, "unsure/not enough information" response					
			г.		

Tables 3, 4, and 5 show yearly comparisons of positive responses for each school level respectively.

Year to Year Comparison of Positive Responses (Strongly Agree and Agree)				
Elementary School	2014	2015	2016	
Quality of Instruction				q
My student receives the teacher and instructional support necessary to master the required coursework.	95.0%	92.4%	92.0%	
eachers differentiate levels of instruction to keep my student appropriately challenged.	93.1%	91.5%	91.9%	
nstructional materials and methods used in the classroom meet the academic needs of my student.	93.1%	88.7%	91.1%	
Peak to Peak has prepared my student well for his/her current level of coursework.	95.2%	94.0%	91.8%	
Peak to Peak prepares my student so helshe scores to the best of his/her ability on standardized ests (i.e., PARCC, CMAS, iReady).	93.4%	87.7%	88.8%	
Quality of Relationships				Ą
ly student has at least one adult at school whom she/he trusts and is comfortable approaching vith issues and concerns.	94.3%	93.7%	95.6%	
The Elementary School character education program (monthly character assemblies, service earning projects, monthly character traits, and blue and yellow slips) positively impacts my student.	90.9%	88.9%	95.5%	
am familiar with and understand the school's Communication Pathways process.	95.8%	96.5%	92.7%	
when I have used the Communication Pathways in regards to my elementary student, the process has been effective in handling problems and addressing concerns. (LEAVE BLANK if you have not needed to use the Communication Pathways.)	81.8%	98.3%	91.1%	
Based on this student's experience, I would recommend Peak to Peak Elementary School to my riends and family.	93.8%	98.2%	96.8%	
Quality of Learning Environment				
The Elementary School's available technology is adequate for learning.	83.3%	89.3%	90.2%	
The Peak to Peak Elementary School campus and physical facilities are adequate for learning.	94.5%	94.1%	96.1%	
am well informed about elementary school events and activities.	94.5%	91.5%	95.4%	
Peak to Peak values each elementary student and encourages students to develop their passions, talents, and interests.	90.0%	96.3%	94.7%	
The bar charts show a scale of 50% to 100%.				
For the purpose of this graph, "unsure/not enough information" response	s were not i	ncluded.		

Middle School	2014	2015	2016		
Quality of Instruction					
My student receives the teacher and instructional support necessary to master the required coursework.	95.8%	93.6%	94.1%		
Feachers differentiate levels of instruction to keep my student appropriately challenged.	92.6%	91.0%	90.3%		
nstructional materials and methods used in the classroom meet the academic needs of my student.	92.0%	90.7%	91.0%		
Peak to Peak has prepared my student well for his/her current level of coursework.	92.6%	93.2%	94.3%		
Peak to Peak prepares my student so he/she scores to the best of his/her ability on standardized tests (i.e., PARCC, CMAS, ACT Aspire).	92.4%	93.9%	94.4%		
Quality of Relationships					
My student has at least one adult at school whom she/he trusts and is comfortable approaching with issues and concerns.	87.3%	95.5%	86.6%		
The Middle School ROAR program positively impacts my student.	79.6%	86.0%	73.0%		
am familiar with and understand the school's Communication Pathways process.	93.6%	95.8%	91.8%		
when I have used the Communication Pathways in regards to my middle school student, the process has been effective in handling problems and addressing concerns. (LEAVE BLANK if you have not needed to use the Communication Pathways.)	77.0%	91.4%	86.8%		
Based on this student's experience, I would recommend Peak to Peak Middle School to my friends and amily.	93.9%	98.6%	92.4%	П	
Quality of Learning Environment					
The Middle School's available technology is adequate for learning.	84.7%	90.4%	84.1%		
The Peak to Peak Middle School campus and physical facilities are adequate for learning.	91.0%	88.9%	90.4%		
am well informed about middle school events and activities.	77.7%	76.7%	77.4%		
My student has adequate opportunities for positive extracurricular involvement through the school.	76.1%	83.6%	76.6%		
Peak to Peak values each middle school student and encourages students to develop their passions, alents, and interests.	87.1%	86.8%	85.4%		
The bar charts show a scale of 50% to 100%.					
For the purpose of this graph, "unsure/not enough information" responses t	vere not incl	uded.			

High School	2014	2015	2016		
Quality of Instruction					
My student receives the teacher and instructional support necessary to master the required soursework.	94.7%	91.8%	93.6%		
eachers differentiate levels of instruction to keep my student appropriately challenged.	91.5%	91.4%	89.5%		
nstructional materials and methods used in the classroom meet the academic needs of my student.	94.1%	89.2%	91.2%		
eak to Peak has prepared my student well for his/her current level of coursework.	93.1%	92.8%	95.7%		
Peak to Peak prepares my student so he/she scores to the best of his/her ability on standardized ests (i.e., PARCC, CMAS, PSAT, ACT, and AP tests).	92.9%	91.3%	89.4%		
Quality of Relationships					
My student has at least one adult at school whom she/he trusts and is comfortable approaching vith issues and concerns.	91.6%	93.6%	89.5%		
The community service requirement positively impacts my student and the community.	95.9%	91.4%	91.4%		
am familiar with and understand the school's Communication Pathways process.	95.4%	97.5%	94.2%	П	
When I have used the school's Communication Pathways in regards to my high school student, the process has been effective in handling problems and addressing concerns. (LEAVE BLANK if you have not needed to use the Communication Pathways.)	83.7%	79.1%	80.0%		
Based on this student's experience, I would recommend Peak to Peak High School to my friends and family.	95.9%	96.3%	92.5%	П	
Quality of Learning Environment					
The High School's available technology is adequate for learning.	87.8%	89.2%	87.8%		
The Peak to Peak High School campus and physical facilities are adequate for learning.	94.1%	91.8%	96.1%		
am well informed about high school events and activities.	87.6%	89.3%	86.9%		
My student has adequate opportunities for positive extracurricular involvement through the school.	89.2%	89.3%	90.7%		
Peak to Peak values each high school student and encourages students to develop their passions, alents, and interests.	90.1%	92.5%	92.7%		
Peak to Peak promotes a healthy balance between academic rigor and the other pressures of high school.	77.3%	80.2%	80.4%		
The bar charts show a scale of 50% to 100%.					
For the purpose of this graph, "unsure/not enough information" responses	s were not in	ncluded.			

### **Quality Areas Discussion**

Overall the 2016 survey results continue to show that Peak to Peak families are very positive about the school with 10 of the 14 questions having positive response rates of 89% or higher. Although most questions are rated very highly, looking more closely within the three thematic areas does reveal some changes.

### Quality of Instruction

Quality of Instruction continues to be a strong component of Peak to Peak's operation with all five questions indicating 90% or higher agreement. Notably, the high school level actually increased to 95.7% (92.8, 2015) in one specific area related to student preparation for current level of coursework.

In 2015, 38% of ES parents indicated they were *Unsure* regarding whether their students were prepared for grade level tests, and this decreased this year to 24% ( $12\%\nabla$ ). Elementary school staff and administrators have worked diligently to communicate more information about student testing to Elementary school parents and this seems to be paying dividends.

Analysis of comments at the end of the *Quality* section indicate that a number of elementary school parents believe the change in homework policy to focus on reading has negatively impacted their student(s), particularly in the subject of math. These parents feel the lack of homework outside of reading is requiring them to do more preparation and work with their children on their own. In contrast to other comments, a few elementary parents stated that they love the change in homework policy. While no homework policy changes were implemented at the secondary level, many middle school parents echoed the opinion that their students should have more homework. A significant number of parents, across school levels, were concerned about an overall lack of academic rigor. Many commented on gifted or high-achieving students who are not academically challenged. Relatedly, high school parents were concerned that AP classes are not on schedule to be ready for the corresponding AP Exams. A few commenters raised corollary concerns about the school's ability to meet widely varied student obligations, including special needs, with existing resources.

In contrast to other comments, several respondents felt that there is too much homework at the high school level, specifically over breaks and holidays, and reported high stress levels for students. Some commented on a disconnect between counselors' and administrators' focus on balance and the workload prescribed by teachers.

Many parents at the secondary levels called for more flexibility in class placements and scheduling in order to better support student's passions and interests. Many would like to see more science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) offerings and more electives, though a few acknowledge the difficulty of that request in a small school environment.

### Quality of Relationships

Quality of Relationship results for the Combined School showed a marked decrease in parent satisfaction across all four questions. While there are specific areas of decrease across all three grade levels, the decline is most notable at the middle and high school levels where three of the five questions show a decrease in parent satisfaction (see Tables 3 and 4 for specific question wording). Several events of the past year likely combine to influence these responses including teacher/staff turnover, lack of a middle school principal, change in parent/teacher

conferences, and policies regarding transgender students. These will be addressed further in the *Needs Improvement* section.

The Middle School ROAR program question continues to record a high number of *Unsure* responses. Although this is the fifth year we have asked Middle School parents about the character program, this question had the highest percentage of *Unsure* answers for the entire survey (35%). At the elementary level, a few commenters expressed a wish for a different character education program for the upper elementary grades.

Many comments praised particular teachers and other staff or raised concerns about certain relationships. Comments specific to individuals, both positive and negative, will be provided directly to executive leadership and the Board of Directors.

#### Quality of Learning Environment

Quality of Learning Environment questions were stable or slightly improved at the elementary and high school level including being well informed about elementary school events and activities (4.1% $\Delta$ ) and facilities being adequate for learning at the high school level (4.3% $\Delta$ ). However, there was a slight decline in middle school parent satisfaction when asked whether the technology is adequate for learning (6.2% $\nabla$ ). Satisfaction with opportunities for positive extracurricular involvement also showed a small decrease (5.8% $\nabla$ ), a change that was reflected in the comments. All of these decreases are small, but warrant continued attention. Results for the other questions are consistent with previous survey data and remained stable at all school levels.

### **Additional Questions Discussion**

### **Volunteering**

In contrast to previous years, approximately 65% of respondents indicate they volunteer in some capacity at Peak to Peak, which is a significant decrease (13%V) from 2015 (78%). Historically, parents report they volunteer most often at the elementary school level, and then volunteering efforts decline in middle school and high school. However, as children progress through school, parents continue to volunteer, but the activities are more widespread and not as concentrated in a specific school level. Analysis of the open-ended comments points to the new background check and fingerprinting requirements as potential barriers to working at the school. Although many parents support this effort, the additional hurdle does seem to inhibit some from volunteering. While most of those who commented have been limited by time and convenience to complete the process, a few are opposed to the practice itself. Figure 1 illustrates where parents spend their volunteer time.

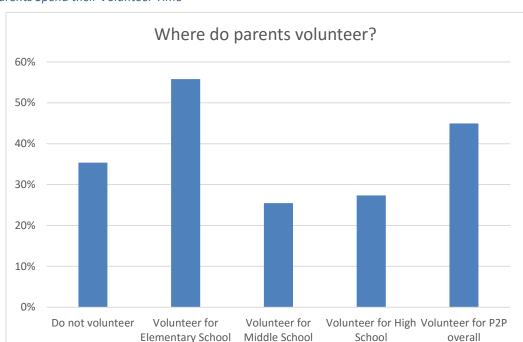


Figure 1 - Where Parents Spend their Volunteer Time

### **Communication Channels**

Ninety one percent of respondents said they *Strongly Agree* or *Agree* that the *Weekly Digest is an effective means to communicate school information* (N=363). A small number of parents offered comments on the communication channels. While some respondents appreciated having information consolidated in the Weekly Digest, many who commented found the amount and format of the information overwhelming. Although many of the commenters still find the redesigned website confusing to navigate, 87% of parents can find the information they need, a 9% increase from 2015.

Sixty-eight percent of parents say *Edline pages* (such as those of the principals, the Executive Director of Education, and the Board) are a source of information which is relatively unchanged from 2015. A small number of comments indicate a desire for teachers to update these pages more consistently. A few were unaware of Edline or how to access it.

For respondents who have used the *Communication Pathways for a policy question* (N=153), 81% report that *the process has been effective in handling problems and concerns*, a rate which is unchanged from last year. Table 6 provides an overview of parents' satisfaction with various communication channels.

Table 6 – Communication Channel	Effectiveness
Weekly Digest	91%
School Website	87%
Edline Pages	68%
Communication Pathways (policy issues)	81%

#### **Finances**

Positive responses to the question *I provide financial support to the school at a level that is significant or meaningful to my family* declined this year to 87% ( $7\%\nabla$ ) from 93% (2015). Results regarding whether *the school effectively and efficiently uses its finances* also decreased ( $5.8\%\nabla$ ) from last year to 88% (N=400). Some comments in this section mentioned concerns about transparency and separation between school funds and the scholarship fund as discussed in the needs improvement section below.

#### **Food Services**

As a result of previous survey comments and at the request of the Food Services committee, three questions related to school food were added to this year's survey. These questions attempted to determine how knowledgeable parents were about menu options, nutritional information, as well as future preferences for the food program. Figure 2 displays the breakdown of responses for the first two questions. In response to the 3<sup>rd</sup> question regarding preferences *for the future of the Food Services Program at Peak to Peak*, parents stated they would like to see more locally sourced and organic ingredients. Comments regarding Food Services weighed heavily towards a desire for healthier, tastier foods, with many requests to explore BVSD's lunch program.

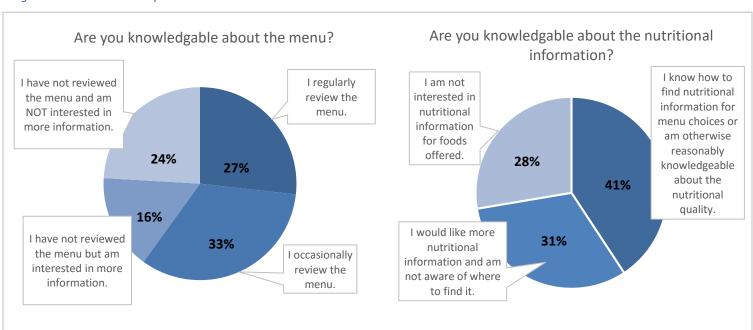


Figure 2 -Food Services responses

### Areas Peak to Peak Does Well/Areas that Need Improvement

The last segment of *Additional Questions* involved parents' thoughts about areas Peak to Peak did well, and what areas needed improvement. An illustration of the results is shown in Figure 3.

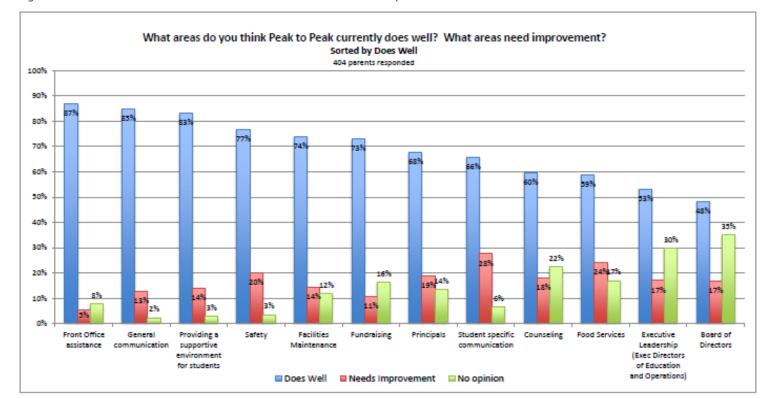


Figure 3 - What areas does Peak to Peak do well? What areas need improvement?

The illustration clearly shows that parents feel Peak to Peak does most things well. In comparison to 2015 results, only two categories show more than a 2% decrease from 2015 rankings: *Principals* (2015, 76%) and *Board of Directors* (2015, 54%). The *Unsure* level for the Board of Directors increased by 10% which likely affected the "*Does Well*" rating. The majority of comments related to the principals (n=21) focused on the need for, and anticipation of, a new middle school principal. Comments related to the board of directors (n=68) were much more varied and significant themes will be addressed both here and in the *Final Comments* section.

Respondents who indicated *Needs Improvement* in any area were asked for further information. Content analysis of the open-ended responses related to this question is offered below, providing further insight into these areas.

#### **Safety**

Similar to the 2014 and 2015 survey results, parents are concerned about campus safety, specifically about security and access at school entrances and the openness of the campus. Parents also indicated they were hopeful that the buildout would alleviate many of the concerns. Additionally, there were several comments regarding procedures for elementary school drop-off and pick-up related to safety and the need for further supervision during these times.

#### **Communication**

Communication was also indicated as an area in need of improvement and comments focused overwhelmingly on dissatisfaction with the new parent/teacher (P/T) conference procedure for secondary students and a related desire for more student specific communication. (The survey was completed prior to February conferences.) Partly in response to 2015 survey comments regarding ineffective P/T conferences, a new system was developed to improve the process. However, an analysis of parent comments indicates the new solution may have produced

an unintended consequence. Now instead of frustration with the procedure, parents clearly feel more disengaged from their students' teachers (and thus the school) because there is almost no communication unless the child has a specific issue. These results suggest the process and purpose of parent/teacher conferences should be revisited.

### **Fundraising**

Although there was no significant change in *Fundraising* category rankings from 2015, parents did comment (primarily in this section, as well as *Finances* and *Final Comments*) about the Scholarship Fund (frequently referred to as the Endowment). Combining the responses indicates parents would like further transparency regarding how the Scholarship Fund operates, more separation between school operating funds and scholarship operating funds, and a related concern that this may divert donations away from school operating expenses.

#### **Facilities**

Similar to 2015, comments regarding facilities clustered around two main areas: 1) general cleanliness of the buildings and campus, and 2) aging facilities, such as cracks in the concrete. Cleanliness has been a reoccurring theme of this category for several years. Parents are definitely looking forward to the build-out and hopeful that it may address some of the concerns related to infrastructure.

#### **Board of Directors**

Comments related to the Board of Directors (BOD) cover a wide spectrum. One area of clear dissatisfaction is with the new "skeletal minutes" from board meetings. Some parents feel this is not in keeping with attempts at transparency and that it contributes to parental disengagement. A second focus of comments call for greater oversight for the Executive Leadership team, although a few responses called for less oversight. Additionally, there were several comments, in this section and in *Final Comments*, that indicate significant dissension regarding implementation of the transgender student policy and related communication.

## **Analysis of Other Comments**

In addition to rating individual questions, parents/guardians had the opportunity to offer comments in two other sections of the survey: 1) child specific Quality areas and 2) at the end of the survey. Parents commented that they love the school, value the caring and supportive environment, and offered many positive remarks about teachers and counselors and how hard they work.

Another topic relates specifically to Counseling concerns:

- Elementary school parents still feel strongly regarding the need for a separate, dedicated elementary school counselor to address social/emotional issues.
- Parents of older students desire more student-specific contact with their children. Some feel counselors do not make time to develop a relationship with their student or are too focused on academics to provide social/emotional support.
- High school parent comments reflect a desire for counselors to think more about family priorities regarding colleges and student choices. Some parents would like more weight given to financial/logistical issues in the college decision process.

Families expressed disappointment with several key unfilled positions over the past few months, including the middle school principal and secondary science teachers. While several praised recent hires, students were negatively impacted by the delays.

### Conclusion

The 2016 survey showed that families continue to have a very positive view of Peak to Peak, especially in the area of instruction. However, positive responses as to whether parents *would recommend Peak to Peak to friends and family* declined slightly for middle and high school. This decline may simply be a by-product of the increased response rate, nevertheless this item should be closely monitored.

One additional outcome of the increased response rate is the wide diversity of comments and opinions. Parents are fairly equally split on several issues, including the 1) the balance between academic challenge and social/emotional health, 2) services and support for special needs students vs. calls for greater attention for the "middle of the road student", and 3) the AC-E2 transgender guidelines. This creates a unique challenge for the ELT and the Board of Directors to respectfully listen to all voices and clearly articulate the school's mission and vision. Parents, staff, and other stakeholders share responsibility to work together as a community to fulfill that mission for all the students who continue to make Peak to Peak an exceptional school.

The Accountability Committee will continue to monitor and communicate progress made against these and other benchmarks set for Peak to Peak. In the fall of the 2016-2017 school year the Board of Directors and Executive Leadership will provide the community with the responses to the results of this year's survey. This assures the entire community that its input is valued and does impact the school.

The 2015-2016 Accountability Committee