

Peak to Peak Response to 2013 Parent/Guardian Survey Results

The results of the 2013 Peak to Peak Parent/Guardian Survey were provided to the Peak to Peak Board of Directors and administration in the spring of 2013. At the annual meeting in May 2013, a summary of the results was presented to the Peak to Peak community. The results can be viewed on the Peak to Peak website, www.peaktopeak.org. Click on “About Us” > ‘Committees’ > ‘Accountability’ to access all survey results or [link to survey results here](#).

In response to the 2013 Survey, the Accountability committee gathered information from the Executive Director of Education (Ms. Reeser), the Executive Director of Operations (Mr. Todd), and the principals and acting principal (Mr. Mathews, Ms. Ovelman, Ms. Christensen), regarding what has been, and is currently being, done at the school 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 a question or in their comments. Those areas are addressed here. The Board, Executive Leadership, and principals take the survey results very seriously and have responded with many changes to address the concerns of Peak to Peak’s parent community.

Quality of Instruction at the Elementary Level

The data showed a decline in the positive response regarding the *Quality of Instruction* questions for the elementary level. While the positive ratings of each question came in at 88-89%, these ratings have declined in each of the past two years. There were many positive comments about instruction and particular teachers and grade levels, but there were also numerous comments voicing concerns about the instruction some students were receiving.

The elementary school is working to pinpoint certain strategies (research-based, effective methods) that will be the focus for K-5 instruction. This will help to raise the quality of instruction across the grade levels and maintain a consistent core of instructional strategies. This will also help ensure that each student gets the individual instructional support they need. Teachers and grade levels will still be very unique and individual in their approach to instruction, but the consistent use of similar strategies will continue to provide a common base for student learning.

Climate and Environment at the Middle School Level

Parents commented that they would like the Middle School environment to feel more supportive and encouraging to both students and parents. Ms. Ovelman has implemented a number of new plans this year to address this concern.

- Ms. Ovelman’s principal fusion page is regularly updated to keep parents informed. [Link to fusion page](#)
- New events are being added throughout the year to include both parents and students on a more informal, interactive, and personable level.
- Scheduled off-campus coffees with Ms. Ovelman are available for parents as well as some sessions held prior to the end of the school day for parents to learn about different topics such as how to use Infinite Campus.
- The three parent volunteers who coordinate Middle School volunteering for each grade level are helping with climate ideas.
- Teachers are assisting with discipline in the hallways so that Ms. Ovelman can focus more on being helpful and friendly to students.
- Access has been revised again to concentrate more on connections and relationships through fun activities rather than through a rigid academic curriculum.

Climate and Environment at the High School Level

Parents are concerned the high school academic environment is stressful. High school students are challenged academically and are expected to plan for college. While each student reacts differently to these challenges, this can be very stressful. There are some new strategies initiated by Mr. Mathews to help relieve some of this stress.

- Mr. Mathews is working with the High School staff to focus on balanced approaches to being successful at Peak to Peak.
 - Principal messages to the community via his fusion page [Link to fusion page](#)
 - Teacher messages and flexibility in the classroom based on individual/equitable needs
 - Frosh field days, Soph leadership “built-in opportunities”, Junior balance field trip, Senior JUMP day events
 - No homework weekends each semester
- The High School staff is working to create a “growth” mindset
- Across 9-12, High School staff is focusing on leadership opportunities for all students and helping every student find leadership options that work with their strengths.
- Character and wellness focus
 - Mental health, eating healthy, getting sleep, self-advocacy skills
 - 9-12 focus on malleable intelligence, growth opportunities in achievement as well as character, healthy risk taking and rebounding from failure
 - Colorado Business in Ethics Alliance pilot survey work on character, grit and traits that make individuals successful over the long-haul
 - Continue developing a culture of celebration and recognition – positive referrals, notes to students, submitting works and students for awards, etc.

Climate and Environment for the Parent Community

Survey comments showed that parents would like to feel more engaged and have a stronger sense of community. The Board of Directors has committed to increasing the level of community/volunteer engagement this year at Peak to Peak. This will be accomplished by board members attending a wide variety of school events, making personal connections with parents and community members, increasing the board's level of involvement with fundraising initiatives, and formulation and approval of a budget line item for the volunteer coordination team (VCT) to support their efforts to coordinate volunteer work at the school. The board has already started making a concerted effort to enhance and improve communication with the entire community, including students, staff, parents, guardians and other family members and volunteers. We've begun regular use of the board fusion page on the school's website to post announcements, and have written articles that appear in the weekly Friday digest that is emailed to all families. The Board will also continue to solicit feedback from staff, families, students, and other community members. Finally, the Board has committed to respond to any and all communications in a timely and appropriate manner.

Technology

The continued decline in the positive rating on the technology question, along with numerous comments, showed parents think the school needs new hardware, software, and technology training. Peak to Peak has implemented a significant change by buying technology services from BVSD. This increased the school's purchased services costs with BVSD, but reduced the Peak to Peak budget for technology. Over the summer all cabling, fiber, switches, and wireless networks were upgraded or replaced and brought up to BVSD standards. Peak to Peak is now on a regular refresh cycle with BVSD so that every two years, half of the computer equipment will be replaced. Financially this was a net wash, maybe even a net gain. Thus far support from BVSD has been good. This change also allowed each student to have a BVSD email account. These changes are in addition to the iPads that were purchased last year with the Auction proceeds. Teachers at all school levels have been learning new educational apps to use with their students.

Communication

The comments and results of the communication questions on the survey indicated that parents find emails the most effective means of school communication, but would like to see fewer of them and more targeted content. The new Friday Weekly Digest emailed to parents each Friday afternoon addresses these issues. The Digest contains information for the following week with links to the fusion pages of the principals, the EDE, and the board. These fusion pages allow for more frequent updates that can easily be accessed by those parents who have an interest. While the school website has design limitations, it has been reorganized so that information is easier to find. Response to the survey indicated many parents were no longer reading the monthly Speak to Peak and it has been

discontinued. A new monthly document called Student Accomplishments and Puma Points of Pride showcases things that have been happening at Peak to Peak. A link to it will be included in the Weekly Digest or it can be viewed on the website under School Info > Accomplishments.

Staff Salaries

Comments related to staff salaries demonstrate that parents are very supportive and appreciative of Peak to Peak teachers, and want to make sure the teachers are paid accordingly. With the recent change to the teacher pay scale at BVSD this was a hot issue last year. Following much discussion and analysis, the board adopted a new compensation system for teachers and counselors that includes a published scale benchmarked at 90% of the new BVSD pay scales along with a bonus pool of \$166,400. Seventy-five percent of the bonus portion will be based on teacher rubric scores and the remaining 25% based on student test scores. The overall average base salary increase for teachers and counselors for 2013-14 was 4.1%. The bonuses will average an additional 3.9% in pay, making the overall average increase in pay 8.0% for 2013-14. [Link to Compensation Information](#)

Safety and Parking

Concerns regarding safety centered on campus security and access to buildings. Additional comments expressed concerns on safety in the parking lots. With the exception of the front doors to the north and south buildings and one door on the west side of the cafeteria, all doors are locked on campus except during passing periods. Increased video surveillance has been added to the exterior of the buildings. Peak to Peak is investigating adding additional video surveillance that could be monitored on an ongoing basis. The school has cameras on the inside of the buildings and a new mirror was added to increase the view of the south entry door. Magnets were added on all internal doors to allow for quick locking in lockdown situations. A priority for use of any money that may come from the proposed 2014 BVSD bond issue will be investments in safety and security, including airlocks for the north and south buildings and enhanced security with visitors. [Link to Campus Safety Information](#)

The number of parking spaces was greatly increased in the summer of 2010 and again with the ball field lot in 2011. These additions improved the traffic flow and parking availability. High school students are required to park in the west parking lot since it is the only lot big enough to accommodate all the student drivers, and makes supervision of students more effective for administrators. When Peak to Peak is able to complete the Campus Build Out project additional parking will be added in the east parking lot.

Food Service

Long lines and crowding in the cafeteria as well as taste of the food were concerns for parents. The long line and short eating time mainly affects the elementary lunch since only 20 minutes is allotted. Middle School lunch is 35 minutes and high school lunch is 45 minutes, which allows adequate time for students to get through the lines and eat. To address the elementary lunch problem, food services has purchased a third hot serving table which allows for three serving lines (instead of two) and reduces the time for students to get through the lines to seven minutes or less.

The food taste issue is being addressed by bringing in new food vendors, using more organics and natural food products, making all soups from scratch, using roasted meats for sub sandwiches that are sliced fresh in the kitchen each day (instead of processed meats), and bringing in new recipes to the menu.

Finances

Survey results showed that some parents would like a better understanding of funding priorities. In particular, parents expressed uncertainty regarding CPD's (Center for Professional Development) role at Peak to Peak, its value to the student, and how it fits financially. Additional information has been added to the website explaining the history of Peak to Peak's Professional Development and how CPD evolved. [Link to Professional Development history](#)

In response to community requests, the school introduced a way for parents and guardians to target their annual gift donations to five specific areas where the school has a financial need. Also, two new fundraising key performance indicators (KPIs) were implemented to help increase community understanding of the efficiency of Peak to Peak's fundraising efforts. [Link to White Paper](#)

The financial transparency page on the Peak to Peak website has posted budgets, audits, check registers, credit card transactions, investment reports, and eight white papers written by Mr. Todd about finances at Peak to Peak. Pie charts of revenues and expenses have recently been added to the website. [Link to Financial page](#) In addition, Mr. Todd regularly updates the board, Accountability Committee, FBC (Finance Budget Committee), ELT (Executive Leadership Team), HOD (Hiring and Organizational Development committee), and staff on school finances on an ongoing basis. He also provides a financial summary at the annual meeting each year. Mr. Todd's phone number and email are available on the website and all parents are encouraged to contact him if they have questions or concerns about the school's finances. Peak to Peak has achieved and maintained for three years a "BBB+" credit rating, placing it among the top ten charter schools in the country for financial management.

Mandarin program for Middle and High School

At the time of the survey there were concerns expressed about the Mandarin program for middle and high school students. After ongoing difficulties with staffing a Mandarin teacher, the program was discontinued. This was communicated to parents last spring. Students switched to Spanish or French and those in the High School who needed a waiver on the completion of their language requirement received one. Peak to Peak would like to add Mandarin in the future but will not do so until there is an available supply of teachers who know Mandarin well and can teach at the level of quality Peak to Peak expects.

There are always areas where Peak to Peak can improve, even given the very positive results of the survey. The Accountability committee appreciates that the board, 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

December 3, 2013