

Peak to Peak Response to 2011 Parent/Guardian Survey Results

The results of the 2011 Peak to Peak Parent/Guardian Survey were provided to the Peak to Peak Board of Directors and administration in the spring of 2011. At the annual meeting in May 2011, 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. Simply click on “About Us” and then ‘Committees’ and ‘Accountability’ to access all survey results.

In response to the 2011 Survey, the Accountability committee has gathered information from Principals and the Executive Director of Operations regarding what has been and is being done at the school to address the concerns that were reflected in the survey and written comments. In general, the responses to the survey statements were very positive. The committee chose to address issues that scored lower than a 90% positive response (Strongly Agree and Agree combined), and issues that might benefit from better communication, indicated by a high “unsure” count.

Standardized Assessments – ‘Peak to Peak prepares my student so he/she scores to the best of his/her ability on standardized assessments such as DRA2, state tests, college entrance exams and/or advanced placement tests.’

About twenty percent of Elementary and Middle School parents/guardians were unsure on this statement indicating increased communication might be valuable. Also, some comments indicated possible confusion regarding “teaching to the test”. While Peak to Peak works to prepare students for testing with the intent that students perform to the best of their ability, this is different than “teaching to the test”. Communication about standardized assessments has been increased through articles in the Speak to Peak and Friday announcements as well as letters from counselors prior to the Explore test for Middle School students.

College Guidance – ‘My student is receiving adequate guidance through the school to choose a college that best fits him/her. (HS only)’

This statement had a fourteen percent negative rating and fifteen percent of respondents were unsure. The positive response to this statement has been consistently increasing year after year and we would expect to see continued improvement in this score. College Counseling has implemented many changes over the past few years and they continue to fine-tune them. Counseling has developed a specific four-year curriculum for college preparation that begins in ninth grade. While freshman and sophomores may not have specific plans for college, the curriculum and counselor sessions are intended to get them thinking about their interests and possible financial options. Students now have the same counselor for scheduling, emotional needs, and college counseling for all four years.

Parents can expect increased communication through emails and parent meetings as these changes are implemented.

Volunteering – ‘I am involved in meaningful ways volunteering at the school.’

The survey showed volunteer participation drops off at the middle school and high school levels. This is a concern for Peak to Peak as volunteering is an important means of building relationships and creating a feeling of community at the school as well as a way to get things done without additional cost. Volunteering looks different for secondary parents and the opportunities to volunteer are now explained at Open Enrollment meetings, at the Academic Planning meeting for parents of incoming sixth graders in the spring, and at the grade level parent meetings at Back to School night. Principal Ovelman has also addressed this issue in the October 2011 Speak to Peak, and in the November 4, 2011 Friday email. Parents can get additional information on volunteering opportunities at quarterly parent coffees, in the Speak to Peak, and in their weekly parent emails announcing grade level events in need of support.

Last year, volunteer coordinators were added at each school level and the Middle School now has parent volunteers assigned to each grade level leader. It is very helpful for parents to complete a volunteer interest survey at the beginning of the school year since volunteer coordinators try to target parents who have expressed interest in particular volunteer opportunities. There continue to be many ways to be involved at the Middle and High School levels.

Community Service – ‘The community service participation by my student has/is having a positive impact on my student and the community.’

This is the first time this question was asked of the middle and elementary school community and was asked specifically to find out the parental awareness of community service at these levels. Based upon the high unsure count there does appear to be a need for increased communication of these student opportunities. The comments showed that parents were unclear what was meant by the term “community service”. The wording of this survey question has been revised for the 2012 survey to include examples. While community service is not a requirement until high school, the elementary and middle school students do have many opportunities to contribute. The principals are using Speak to Peak and emails to better inform parents.

Extracurricular Involvement – ‘My student has adequate opportunities for positive extracurricular involvement through the school.’

Fourteen percent of middle school parents thought there were not adequate extracurricular opportunities. Many activities have been added over the last few years. Student council promotes the available activities and Mr. Chandler discusses them at

lunchtime. The administration keeps track of extracurricular involvement as they think it is an important way of getting kids connected at school. The number of activities is sometimes limited by the availability of volunteers willing to sponsor the activity. Additionally, many students are involved in outside activities that compete for their time.

Finances – ‘The school effectively and efficiently uses its limited finances.’

Fourteen percent of parents answered that they were unsure. There has been a lot of work done recently by the Executive Director of Operations to improve financial communication. All financial records are now available on the website under the ‘Financial Transparency’ option under ‘About Us’. One can research the annual budget, financial statements, salary guidelines, and more. Additionally, Mr. Todd will be writing and presenting commentaries that help explain various aspects of the school’s finances. His first ‘white paper’ was emailed to Peak to Peak families on December 9, 2011. In it he discusses the decision to update and expand the school kitchen and add the ball fields.

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 and administration are open and responsive to the survey results and the comments made by parents.

December 12, 2011