

Peak to Peak Response to 2019 Annual Family Survey Results

Summary

The Accountability Committee presented results of the 2019 Peak to Peak Annual Family Survey to the Peak to Peak Board of Directors and administrators in the spring of 2019. A report detailing the results of the survey was also provided to the Peak to Peak community and is available on the school website ([click here for report](#)). In general, responses to the survey relate to these four areas: Quality of Instruction, Quality of Operations, Quality of Opportunities, and Quality of Relationships. Through ratings that families reported and their comments, specific strengths and concerns were identified in each area. The Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team 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 as reported by school leadership.

Quality of Instruction

Generally speaking, Quality of Instruction category responses remained consistent with the previous four years. However, the responses to the two new questions added in 2019, *Peak to Peak measures my student's growth and learning in a variety of ways* and *Teachers use innovative techniques and learning opportunities to address my student's abilities, curiosities, and passion areas* had a comparative lower rating of 79% and 86%, respectively. A high number of unsure responses indicated that more communication and education might be needed.

To address this, the school has started to include more communication in the Friday Digest so that parents and guardians are aware of the steps the school is taking to include various ways to measure students' growth and learning.

Teachers are using innovative techniques in the classroom and will communicate this to parents during conferences. Middle school has continued with project-based learning on a deeper level to engage students. Additionally, middle- and high-school levels have introduced Grade Level Time (GLT) to bring back focused time within the regular school day for students to identify and develop their passions and engage in social and emotional lessons. In elementary school, students have an opportunity to work with a specials-teacher at school, on early release days, and during special schedules to focus on their passion area and character-based work six times during the year. This is based on the interest the student expressed and also on what teachers think is an engaging fit. In middle school, faculty sponsored activities are designed to identify and develop students' passions. In high school, grade level teams meet to address topics such as identity and school culture while also engaging in climate building games and activities across groups. These activities will continue through the school year.

Focus on standardized testing:

At the elementary school level, some respondents expressed a concern regarding the focus on iReady, questioning the applicability, value, and communication of the testing and process. In elementary school, teachers routinely base their assessment on comprehensive information, which includes iReady scores as one part of the assessment base. (i-Ready is a required test for literacy at the elementary level and needs to be given to measure students ability and growth in relation to local assessments.) This year, teachers sent home specific assessment results at the beginning of the year, including information about other assessments and information that helps with instruction and placement. As a school, the emphasis is not only on i-Ready, but on a body of evidence including classroom performance, interests, and other assessment formats. The elementary teaching staff is committed to practices that share information and observations with parents to avoid any over-reliance on i-Ready scores, and will continue to give formal updates of

benchmark assessments like i-Ready each testing window of the school year (generally middle-of-year and end-of-year).

At the middle level, there were concerns regarding focus on i-Ready and need for more differentiated instruction. To address this, the school has introduced other ways to measure student growth in addition to i-Ready. This includes peer level assessment on projects, project based final exams, and re-introduction of an independent seminar as an elective option, where students can measure their own growth. To provide differentiated instruction, middle school has added greater depth to curriculum topics and introduced more project based learning .

In high school, teachers help students to prepare for the SAT with classroom-based lessons as well as targeted PSAT sessions to support students as they acclimate to the format of the exam, and to prepare for content-based questions. For students who score poorly and need extra help, the school is providing additional help with their PSAT course at no additional cost to families.

Student Specific Communications:

For both middle school and high school, there was a concern regarding communication relating to student-specific performance. Communication with our families is of great importance to all staff. The school recognizes that teachers could be more proactive to reach out to parents when there is a change in trend, such as missing assignments for a student; however, teachers try to maintain a delicate balance between student responsibility and parental communication.

To address this, teachers are encouraged to communicate positively with families, not just during conferences. Family-initiated communications are always welcome and encouraged, including emailing teachers, counselors, or staff members with concerns or comments or requesting face-to-face meetings. The email addresses for all staff members can be found on the Peak to Peak website under the Staff tab by selecting "Directory" in the drop-down menu. The directory is also linked at the bottom of every web page in the footer area.

Through the Peak to Peak website, families can follow their student's class pages for more information and updates once they have logged into their accounts. Help documents to guide families through the log-in process, as well as other frequently asked questions, are available on the Parents/Guardians page of the website. Community members are encouraged to reach out for assistance with any technical questions to Jen Dausvardis: jennifer.dausvardis@bvsd.org.

Differentiation/Challenge:

New this year, Peak to Peak is actively trying different approaches towards differentiation in the classrooms at each school level. A working group of 23 staff members has been created with a goal to identify opportunities to implement a variety of differentiated strategies in lesson planning and delivery to support student growth. Each staff member in the group is developing expertise in a targeted area and sharing this learning with the full group. Strategies are then actively piloted with students as appropriate.

Peak to Peak is a challenging college preparatory school with high expectations. To enhance that, the school has introduced new courses and tries to meet a wide array of needs for students.

Support:

At high school, comments focused on a need for students to be challenged and also to receive more support, especially in Advanced Placement (AP) classes. The high school is trying to balance the time needed for college-board curriculum versus real-world curriculum. While the College Board requires understanding of level 1 details with considerable memorization, real-world understanding and applications depend more on how to apply learning than memorizing facts. The school relies on students taking AP classes to do in-depth study outside

the classroom in order to exceed College Board guidelines and expectations for end-of-year examinations.

Teacher turnover:

While some respondents perceived a high turnover rate at a specific school level, the actual overall teacher retention rate last year was 95% for instructional staff. The overall retention rate bounced back from a retention rate of 90% during the previous school year (2017-18) due to a number of retirements in addition to the typical number of departures due to changing life situations.

Quality of Relationships

It was heartwarming to see an increasing trend for the entire school for Quality of Relationships. It was also exciting to see a higher response on the question related to the kids having an adult they can trust. In terms of communication pathways resolution, positive responses showed an upward trend, even if the outcome did not yield a favorable result.

iROAR score:

The iROAR method of recognition was not as well received as compared to other character education at elementary school and community service in high school respectively. Additionally, a high number of “unsure” responses indicate many respondents might need more information and communication around this. Middle school had increased one-on-one recognition of students that exhibit the iROAR values to quarterly recognition this school year and is placing time and energy in highlighting positive role-modelling, with a goal to reach over a quarter of the student populations in a special event outside of the school day. Middle school is also utilizing Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), a well-known system in schools to identify positive behavior and to provide intervention and support as needed. A new Transitions course at sixth grade level, specifically highlights and teaches iROAR in meaningful ways. Furthermore, teachers send home postcards to celebrate students who exemplify iROAR values at school.

Information about activities:

Middle school scored low for the questions related to families feeling they are *well informed about middle school events and activities*. To address this, the school started an Opportunities Fair in which all students actively took part through a scavenger hunt. Posters were also placed in the hallways to inform students about different opportunities and to encourage participation. Grade Level Time (GLT) has been introduced where faculty will sponsor activities catered to explore potential passions with students. The assistant principal and grade-level leaders lead this effort prioritize time for it. School will communicate these activities via the Friday Digest to improve awareness.

Social/Emotional Needs:

The question *Peak to Peak supports the social/emotional needs of this student* is a new question that scored low for middle and high school with the scores being 79% and 76%, respectively. While lower results could be due to lack of clarity for these questions, the school is looking more closely into these concerns.

During Professional Development (PD) time, the elementary-, middle- and high-school assistant principals are leading a working group that includes 27 staff members focused on implementing strategies, integrating resources, and developing interventions to improve staff and student awareness about social/emotional needs. Additionally, the school has tools to embed across the

K-12 curriculum when social/emotional challenges occur. Resources are being dedicated to this effort and intervention strategies are being developed.

Moreover, the school is investing in equity training for instructional staff; specifically, staff are being trained in equity literacy, a program that trains them to identify systems that create injustice and oppression, teaches them how to respond, and to take concrete steps to create and sustain a bias-free environment. The school is also evaluating the possibility of additional counseling FTE next school year.

At the high-school level, the counseling team is working together to bring a speaker, Jenny Hecht, who runs a Sources of Strength (SOS) program actively to Peak to Peak. She presented on coping skills and resiliency, areas that the school wants to focus on as well. Another area discussed was college preparation and social emotional needs. In addition, teachers are using the Indigo assessment to guide and support students' development as they learn about their own strengths and motivators.

At the-middle school level, social/emotional needs will be addressed by incorporating additional counseling and social/emotional programming during Grade Level Time. Introducing a Transitions class at sixth grade to provide students with the skills to succeed in middle school will also help. Specifically, the Transitions class teaches skills in studying, executive functioning, organization, and time management, along with social/emotional support.. Approaches such as Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and PBIS will be useful tools in meeting students' social/emotional needs. One staff member is responsible for overseeing MTSS work for all K-8 students, which includes coordinating communication and support, designing focused instructional intervention in literacy and math, and piloting individualized attention in other subjects as feasible. As discussed elsewhere in this report, PBIS will help in recognizing positive behavior and helping with intervention and support when needed.

Quality of Operations

Elementary school playground:

Several respondents commented on the need for the new or updated elementary school playground. During the 2018-19 school year, a parent-staff committee was convened to design a new playground and to conduct research on other playgrounds in the community. The committee developed a proposal of preferred equipment ideas and physical design, which was presented to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) for review. The Board of Directors and ELT had previously budgeted for the new playground in the 2019-20 school year. In the near future, the school will solicit bids for redevelopment of the playground to meet the recommendations of the committee and hopes to complete the work during the summer of 2020. New playground features will include: nature features and wood elements, climbing structures, swings, modern play equipment, group and individuals play and gathering areas, and reworking of the blacktop activities.

Middle School hallways:

Several respondents commented on overcrowded hallways in middle school. As part of the newly implemented Well Managed Schools program, the school has developed common procedures for the hallway and will go over the procedures during lunch, announcements, and Grade Level Time (GLT). Students' perspectives will also be sought through a survey in regards to this topic.

Quality of Opportunities

Development of passions talents and interests

At the middle-school level, this area continued a downward trend. School is actively taking steps to address this. As discussed earlier in this response, GLT is an approach that is expected to yield positive results as one new outlet for creating passion-based opportunities.

Safety

New security measures were installed in the LMC building. It is locked at all times, and students now have to enter a code to enter the building.

Traffic

Traffic has been a frustration at the intersection of Emma Street and 120th. The affordable housing development being built at Emma Street and 120th will help the traffic situation for Peak to Peak. Broomfield and southbound traffic will be split from Erie and northbound traffic. A traffic circle will also be placed at Emma Street and Canterbury Drive, and a stop light will go in at Emma Street and 120th.

Cleanliness

Custodial staffing has not been increased due to budgetary limits, but this is something that could be reconsidered. New stall partitions were installed to increase privacy and improve appearance in restrooms.

Snow Removal

Peak to Peak has first priority with the snow removal company when there is snow. Last year we had an unusual amount of snow, and it was difficult to keep up with the demand.

Food Services

Peak to Peak offers multiple vegetarian options every day, including the all-organic salad bar, veggie sandwiches, and vegetarian soups. The hot lunch line also has vegetarian options periodically. Food service managers welcome any comments. Peak to Peak menus must meet Colorado Department of Education (CDE) criteria. The highest quality food items are always sought through our vendors, including many organic and locally-grown items.

School Website

There were many comments regarding difficulty navigating the new website, lack of updates on many teacher pages, and disparate means of communicating information about classwork and schedules.

The school launched a new website in the 2018-19 school year. The new website incorporated changes to that architecture based on a study of the analytics from the school's previous two websites. While the school recognizes challenges adapting to the new website, the communications team continues to monitor website data, with an eye toward opportunities to improve. [Technology FAQs](#) are posted on the parents page of the website. However, this does not create a single platform where one can see all of the web pages that they are interested in. Accountability committee members are interested in continuing this conversation further to explore different options.

It is important to note that the search engine on the school's website is designed to "learn" based on the use of the tool. In other words, the more students and families use the search engine, the more effective it becomes. In time, and with regular use, the search engine will become a more reliable resource.

During the first year of implementation (the 2018-19 school year), the communications team learned that the basic calendaring tool was not operating as anticipated. During winter break, the calendaring mechanisms were retooled to address this issue. The communications team is working closely with principals and key staff members to develop strategies for the classroom and course calendars that meet

the needs of both teachers and students. The goal is to create efficient and effective systems so that teachers are able to focus on the primary task of classroom instruction.

As a K-12 school, the technology needs of each grade level, course, and content area vary widely. Where some teachers maintain static content on their webpages, other teachers require students to interact with technology in more dynamic ways. The school is aware of the challenge this poses to our community. Meeting the technology expectations is an ongoing discussion for all members of our community. The communications team is focused on developing a baseline expectation for all teachers so that there is some predictability when accessing course and classroom pages. Beyond this baseline, teachers have a great deal of flexibility when using technology to meet the needs of their students and to best fit their content areas.

Conclusion

There are always areas where Peak to Peak can improve, even given the very positive results of the survey. The Accountability Committee appreciates the family participation 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, principals, and supporting administration are open and responsive to the survey results and the comments made by parents. Survey reports and responses can be found for this year and previous years on the school website or by clicking [here](#).

The Accountability Committee
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