

MARCH 13, 2026

2026 Patron Telephone Survey

FINAL REPORT

Columbia Public Schools

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Introduction

The Columbia Public Schools is dedicated to ensuring its students receive a high-quality education with top-notch facilities, teachers, staff, and administrators.

To ensure it continues to provide this high caliber of learning, district leaders engaged ExcellenceK12 in February 2026 to conduct a random-digit-dial survey with 300 head-of-household, registered voters living within the boundaries of the school district.

This is the ninth time the district has conducted this survey since 2010. However, it's been three years since the last survey. While a lot has changed since the 2023 survey, one thing has remained the same – the continued support from patrons and their overall feelings of goodwill toward the district.

This year's findings show the Columbia Public Schools continues to excel in many areas. Several of the district's factor scores were higher than what we have seen on this type of survey among other schools in the state of Missouri.

Based on a 5-point weighted scale – where 5.00=A, 4.00=B, 3.00=C and 2.00=D – all but one of the district factors – as well as the district's overall performance (**4.20**) – received a score of 3.85 or higher. An overall score of 5.00 is only possible if all 300 respondents answered each statement with an A.

“Safety of students” received the top score of 4.48, followed by “The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event” (4.47), and “The district's graduation rate” (4.30).

Patrons were very complimentary about the district's quality of education as well as the support and involvement of the community. However, many could not identify an area where the district needs to improve. Patrons who did provide areas of concern focused on the budget and spending as well as increasing teachers' salaries.

The full report follows and includes all the findings and all the questions, applicable data, and cross-tabulations (where applicable). An overall results summary closes the report.

It is important to note the data collected has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5.6%, at the 95% confidence level. (The Margin of Error within the demographic and subgroups is higher because of the smaller number of respondents.)

It is a pleasure to share these findings with the Columbia Public Schools leadership and your Board of Education.

FULL REPORT

Finding #1

Survey participants continued to show strong support for the district, giving 15 of the 16 factors – plus the district’s overall performance – high marks. And all but four of the top-rated factors received a score of 4.00 or higher.

The Columbia Public Schools is excelling in most areas and continues to receive strong support from its patrons. Respondents gave all but one of the factors – plus the district’s overall performance (**4.20**) – a score of 3.85 or higher.

Eleven of the top-rated factors also scored 4.00 or above – and *all* the scores were higher than the ones from 2023. The scores for all the factors are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a 5-point weighted scale has also been applied.

At the top of the list for 2026 were:

- Safety of students – 4.48 (4.24 in 2023)
- The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event – 4.47 (4.31 in 2023)
- The district’s graduation rate – 4.30 (4.07 in 2023)
- Quality of school facilities – 4.28 (4.22 in 2023)
- Performance of district teachers – 4.25 (4.15 in 2023)
- Performance of school principals and district administration – 4.23 (3.99 in 2023)

As in 2023, the lowest-scoring item was “The district’s history of fulfilling promises” at 3.58 (up from 3.45 in 2023). To determine whether where a respondent lived or one or more demographic characteristics had an influence on his or her score on this lower-rated area, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted.

In reviewing this data, it is important to keep in mind the “n” number, which is shown at the top of each chart. This is the number of participants in each subgroup. The smaller the “n” number, the higher the Margin of Error and the greater the impact a small number of votes within that group can have on the final score within that subgroup. For example, only 22 respondents have lived in the district up to five years. As such, it is best to look for trends, rather than to focus on individual numbers.

The cross-tabulation analysis showed:

- Parents of past students scored the factor higher than current parents and those who had never had children in the district.
- Male participants scored the factor higher than female participants.
- Those residents who had lived in the district “Up to five years” rated the factor the highest.
- Among the geographic subgroups, the respondents living east of Providence and south of Broadway were the least critical of the factor.

The other aspect of the grading exercise was the identification of factors that received a “Don’t know” response – rather than a grade – from more than 20% of the respondents. In other words, these factors are not top of mind for a significant percentage of the respondents.

Different from the previous survey, no factor had a “Don’t know” response above 20%.

Note: Questions 1-3 confirmed the respondents were heads of households and registered voters, and they lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools. A “Yes” answer was required on each question to continue. As such, these questions are not displayed here. All responses with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding.

4. To make certain we have people from all parts of the district participating in this survey, which of the following best describes where you live? *The number of respondents in each segment was identified by the school district as being representative of the population pattern in the district. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
West of Providence and north of Broadway	75
East of Providence and north of Broadway	75
West of Providence and south of Broadway	75
East of Providence and south of Broadway	75

To begin the survey, patrons were asked to rate 16 different people, program, facility, and district/patron relationship factors, plus the district's overall performance.

As you know, students in school are usually given a grade to reflect the quality of their work. Those grades are usually A, B, C, D or F. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Columbia Public Schools from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Let's start with... *Questions 5 through 20 were rotated to eliminate order bias.*

5. Performance of district teachers

Response	Percentage
A	37%
B	50%
C	8%
D	2%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

6. Performance of school principals and district administration

Response	Percentage
A	34%
B	42%
C	10%
D	1%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

7. Performance of the Board of Education

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	48%
C	17%
D	6%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	5%

8. Quality of education provided to students

Response	Percentage
A	34%
B	47%
C	15%
D	1%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

9. Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students

Response	Percentage
A	36%
B	40%
C	17%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	5%

10. Quality of school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	43%
B	36%
C	12%
D	2%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	7%

11. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	53%
B	40%
C	4%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	2%

12. Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent

Response	Percentage
A	30%
B	31%
C	24%
D	5%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	8%

13. The district's history of fulfilling promises

Response	Percentage
A	14%
B	33%
C	26%
D	7%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	17%

14. The district's performance in helping students to be college- and/or career-ready when they graduate from high school

Response	Percentage
A	37%
B	39%
C	13%
D	2%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	10%

15. The district's graduation rate

Response	Percentage
A	41%
B	37%
C	10%
D	1%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	11%

16. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent school buildings, including accessibility

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	41%
C	16%
D	1%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	14%

17. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent academic programming from school to school

Response	Percentage
A	25%
B	43%
C	19%
D	3%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	8%

18. Efforts of the district to offer equivalent music, art, athletic programs and activities in its schools

Response	Percentage
A	24%
B	47%
C	11%
D	3%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	13%

19. The district's efforts to get the community involved

Response	Percentage
A	32%
B	38%
C	15%
D	6%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	6%

20. The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event

Response	Percentage
A	51%
B	33%
C	7%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	9%

21. Overall, what grade would you give the Columbia Public Schools?

Response	Percentage
A	35%
B	50%
C	12%
D	2%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

Cross-tabulation: Below is the 5-point scale rating for each factor. The factors showing “n/a” from 2015 or earlier were new in 2017.

Grade values: “A” grade is 5.00, “B” grade is 4.00, “C” grade is 3.00, and “D” grade is 2.00.

Factor	5-point scale rating/2026	Rating/ 2023	Rating/ 2019	Rating/ 2017	Rating/ 2015	Rating/ 2013	Rating/ 2012
Safety of students	4.48	4.24	4.51	4.28	4.20	4.41	4.27
The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event	4.47	4.31	4.42	4.31	4.40	4.38	4.45
The district’s graduation rate	4.30	4.07	4.10	4.05	4.26	4.33	4.07
Quality of school facilities	4.28	4.22	4.45	4.33	4.18	4.36	4.05
Performance of district teachers	4.25	4.15	4.24	4.26	4.23	4.38	4.35
Performance of school principals and district administration	4.23	3.99	4.07	4.12	4.07	4.20	4.27
The district’s performance in helping students be college- and/or career-ready when they graduate from high school	4.22	3.92	3.98	3.90	4.02	4.22	4.30
Overall grade	4.20	3.97	4.12	4.07	4.13	4.17	4.18
Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students	4.17	3.94	4.12	4.12	n/a	n/a	n/a
Quality of education provided to students	4.16	3.97	4.04	4.16	4.13	4.36	4.34
The district’s effort to ensure equivalent school buildings, including accessibility	4.09	3.87	4.10	4.01	3.94	3.87	3.96
Efforts of the district to offer equivalent music, art, athletic programs and activities in its schools	4.00	4.05	3.90	4.08	n/a	n/a	n/a
The district’s efforts to get the community involved	3.97	3.81	3.86	3.82	n/a	n/a	n/a
The district’s efforts to ensure equivalent academic programming from school to school	3.95	3.83	4.11	3.95	3.84	4.07	4.03
Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent	3.88	3.70	3.98	3.83	3.69	3.65	3.97
Performance of the Board of Education	3.85	3.79	3.78	3.86	3.74	n/a	n/a
The district’s history of fulfilling promises	3.58	3.45	3.85	3.62	3.46	3.64	3.69

Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale rating for the factor rated below 3.80 by the total survey group by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with the “overall,” because two respondents refused to answer this question.

Factor		Overall score	18-34 (n=65)	35-54 (n=138)	55 or older (n=95)	Up to 5 years (n=22)	5 to 15 years (n=71)	More than 15 years (n=207)	Student yes (n=106)	Student past (n=99)	Student never (n=95)
The district’s history of fulfilling promises		3.58	3.45	3.57	3.65	4.33	3.51	3.60	3.66	3.67	3.35

Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale ratings for the factor rated below 3.80 by the total survey group by location of the respondent’s residence and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Factor		Overall score	W of Prov/ N of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/ N of B’way (n=75)	W of Prov/ S of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/ S of B’way (n=75)	African-American (n=24)	Caucasian (n=232)	Asian (n=11)	Female (n=173)	Male (n=127)
The district’s history of fulfilling promises		3.58	3.48	3.68	3.47	3.69	3.70	3.58	3.67	3.53	3.64

**Finding
#2**

“Provides a good education” topped the list of district strengths. Other top items were “Community support/involvement” and “Teachers/staff.” In terms of areas for improvement, “Don’t know” was the top answer, which is the best place for this response. The suggested improvements focused on budgets and spending.

The evaluation portion of the survey closed with two open-ended questions offering respondents the chance to share their thoughts on the district’s strengths and areas for improvement.

All 300 responses to each question were read and, where possible, coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas to pinpoint the most frequently mentioned areas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown in verbatim form, with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

In doing so, “Provides a good education” topped the list of strengths (71 mentions). This was followed by “Community support/involvement” (59 mentions), “Don’t know” (58 mentions), and “Teachers/staff” (55 mentions).

In terms of areas needing improvement, that list was led by “Don’t know” (94 mentions), followed by “They are doing well/fine” (73 mentions), “Watch budget/expenditures” (56 mentions), and “Pay teachers more” (34 mentions).

Having “Don’t know” and “They are doing well/fine” as the top responses for 56% of the participants on this question is good news because it means a notable percentage of the population has no specific concerns or issues. The other areas for improvement are typical for school districts on this question.

22. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the Columbia Public Schools?

Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.

Response	Number
Provides a good education	71
Community support/involvement	59
Don’t know	58
Teachers/staff	55
Communication	24
Facilities/technology	19
Other (see below)	14

Verbatim “other” comments

Students who wish to work hard can get a good education and preparation for college.

The district has a very good reputation for its academics and its high rate of college-bound students.

Having resources of the university here and available is a plus.

Not sure there are any.

My children will go to private school.

Teachers are dedicated and use their own finances when necessary.

Lots of activities to be involved in.

It has a good reputation and quality teachers. It is one of the best districts in the state.

They do a good job preparing students for college and work.

The district administration provides good leadership.

There is good chemistry among faculty, students, the community, and administration.

Great reputation of being a solid district with diverse studies.

Teachers are high quality and are dedicated. Community support is also strong.

The diversity of teachers and students make for a well-rounded education.

23. Where could the district improve? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	94
They are doing well/fine	73
Watch budget/expenditures	56
Pay teachers more	34
Continue to hire quality teachers	18
Listening patrons	15
Other (see below)	10

Verbatim “other” comments

Keeping phones out of the classrooms is imperative.

Too many to mention.

Continue to expand advanced classes.

Keep men out of women's sports.

Continued education on bullying and how to handle it.

The science curriculum should be emphasized more.

Keep politics out of the school system.

Make sure kids get real-life skills. Often, too much is taught on skills never used again for most.

Improve discipline in the classroom.

Communication skills are not good right now with the youth. Make that an emphasis in teaching.

Finding #3

More than half of the participants think the district is an excellent place to work, and more than three-fourths are aware of and understand the district's brand.

Respondents next were asked two general questions about the Columbia Public Schools. The first was a new question for 2026 and asked respondents to indicate whether they thought the district “is an excellent place to work.” The second question asked them how aware they are of the Columbia Public Schools’ brand and its intended meaning.

It seems like the district is right on track, as 71% of the respondents said they “Strongly agree” or “Agree” it is a “excellent” workplace.

And even more the respondents (87%) said they were either “Very aware” or “Somewhat aware” of the “brand and what it stands for.” Only 13% said they either were “Not very aware” or “Not at all aware.”

24. How strongly do you agree that the Columbia Public Schools is an excellent place to work?

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	19%
Agree	52%
Disagree	4%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	24%

25. How aware are you of the Columbia Public Schools’ brand and what it stands for?

Response	Percentage
Very aware	27%
Somewhat aware	60%
Not very aware	11%
Not at all aware	2%
Don't know (not read)	0%

**Finding
#4**

Facebook was far and away the go-to social media platform for district patrons. Instagram came in at a distant second.

New for the 2026 survey, participants were asked which social media platform they “most often interact with.” The top platform by a large margin was Facebook at 68%. This was followed by Instagram (13%), TikTok (10%), and Twitter/X (9%).

The cross-tabulation analysis showed the oldest residents, those who had been in the district five to 15 years, “never” parents, and male participants were the most frequent users of Facebook.

Among the geographic subgroups, those respondents living west of Providence and south of Broadway went to Facebook *most* often, and those living east of Providence and south of Broadway visited the site *less* often.

Once they provided that response, participants were given the opportunity in two open-ended questions to provide suggestions for the content they would like to see on Facebook and suggestions for the content they would like to see on the other social media platforms.

For these two questions, the responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas to pinpoint the most frequently mentioned areas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown in verbatim form below the chart, with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

For Facebook, “Daily news stories” topped the list of suggested content (76 mentions). This was followed by “Don’t know” (65 mentions) and “Flyers/newsletters” (58 mentions).

For the other social media platforms, that list was led by “Don’t know” (127 mentions), followed by “Similar content” (84 mentions) and “Board meetings” (49 mentions).

26. Which social media platform do you most often interact with?

Response	Percentage
Facebook	68%
Instagram	13%
TikTok	10%
Twitter/X	9%

27. What type of content would you like to see on Facebook? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Daily news stories	76
Don't know	65
Flyers/newsletters	58
School calendar	53
Awards earned	25
Results of activities	13
Profiles of new hires	10

28. What type of content would you like to see on other social media platforms? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	127
Similar content	84
Board meetings	49
Award ceremonies	22
Speeches/debates	17
Other (see below)	1

Verbatim “other” comments

The results of this survey.

Cross-tabulation: Social media platforms by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with the “overall,” because two respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=65)	35-54 (n=138)	55 or older (n=95)	Up to 5 years (n=22)	5 to 15 years (n=71)	More than 15 years (n=207)	Student yes (n=106)	Student past (n=99)	Student never (n=95)
Facebook	68%	66%	68%	72%	73%	76%	65%	70%	65%	71%
Instagram	13%	15%	11%	13%	23%	4%	14%	9%	18%	11%
TikTok	10%	11%	9%	11%	0%	7%	13%	12%	8%	10%
Twitter/X	9%	8%	12%	4%	5%	13%	8%	8%	9%	8%

Cross-tabulation: Social media platforms by location of the respondent’s residence and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/ N of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/ N of B’way (n=75)	W of Prov/ S of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/ S of B’way (n=75)	African-American (n=24)	Caucasian (n=232)	Asian (n=11)	Female (n=173)	Male (n=127)
Facebook	68%	65%	72%	76%	60%	75%	67%	73%	66%	72%
Instagram	13%	15%	9%	12%	15%	8%	12%	18%	13%	13%
TikTok	10%	9%	13%	8%	10%	4%	12%	0%	10%	11%
Twitter/X	9%	11%	5%	4%	15%	13%	9%	9%	11%	5%

**Finding
#5**

The *Quarterly Connection* continues to be an important communication vehicle for the district, and the level of satisfaction with the newsletter’s quality and completeness remains strong.

The next set of questions was intended to determine whether patrons still think of the *Quarterly Connection*, the district’s printed, mailed newsletter, as an important resource for district information.

The newsletter saw a slight decrease in readers from 2023, but nearly half of the respondents (47%) considered themselves regular readers – every issue or every other issue. More than one-third (34%) said they were infrequent readers – at least once a year or less than once a year. And the number of respondents who have never read the newsletter was 15%. In comparison to other districts we work with in Missouri, these are great numbers.

Those respondents who read every issue or every other issue of *Quarterly Connection* or read it at least once a year were then asked to rate the quality and completeness of the news. The majority of the respondents (81%) thought it was either “Excellent” or “Good.”

The cross-tabulation analysis showed the oldest residents, those with the least amount of time in the district, current parents, and male participants were the most frequent readers of the newsletter.

Among the geographic subgroups, those respondents living east of Providence and south of Broadway read the newsletter *most* often, and those living east of Providence and north of Broadway read the newsletter *least* often.

The next few questions are about the printed communications coming from the district.

29. How often do you read the school district’s printed, mailed newsletter, called *Quarterly Connection*? Is it...? *The choices were read to respondents. Also, the newsletter was called, Quarterly Report prior to 2017.*

Response	Percentage/ 2026	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Every issue	31%	37%	40%	44%	32%	43%	57%
Every other issue	16%	18%	12%	15%	23%	14%	13%
At least once a year	13%	14%	18%	9%	16%	9%	11%
Less than once a year	21%	11%	16%	13%	9%	17%	3%
Never	15%	13%	9%	16%	14%	15%	15%
Don’t know (not read)	4%	6%	5%	4%	7%	2%	1%

30. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the news that you see in the *Quarterly Connection* newsletter? *This question was only asked of the 181 respondents who answered, “Every issue,” “Every other issue,” or “At least once a year” on question 29.*

Response	Percentage/ 2026	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Excellent	23%	19%	31%	26%	20%	24%	27%
Good	58%	61%	65%	59%	60%	55%	59%
Fair	15%	17%	3%	14%	19%	18%	12%
Poor	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Don’t know (not read)	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%

Cross-tabulation: “Regular readers” (every issue or every other issue), “Infrequent readers” (at least once a year or less than once a year), and “Never readers” of *Quarterly Connection* by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with the “overall,” because two respondents did not answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=65)	35-54 (n=138)	55 or older (n=95)	Up to 5 years (n=22)	5 to 15 years (n=71)	More than 15 years (n=207)	Student yes (n=106)	Student past (n=99)	Student never (n=95)
Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	47%	48%	43%	52%	50%	48%	46%	58%	47%	34%
Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	34%	31%	36%	36%	23%	34%	36%	28%	37%	39%
Never readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	15%	20%	17%	8%	23%	15%	14%	9%	11%	24%

Cross-tabulation: “Regular readers” (every issue or every other issue), “Infrequent readers” (at least once a year or less than once a year), and “Never readers” of *Quarterly Connection* by location of the respondent’s residence and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/ N of B'way (n=75)	E of Prov/ N of B'way (n=75)	W of Prov/ S of B'way (n=75)	E of Prov/ S of B'way (n=75)	African-American (n=24)	Caucasian (n=232)	Asian (n=11)	Female (n=173)	Male (n=127)
Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	47%	44%	43%	48%	53%	50%	47%	55%	45%	50%
Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	34%	35%	40%	32%	32%	33%	35%	45%	35%	35%
Never readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	15%	19%	10%	17%	9%	13%	15%	0%	17%	12%

**Finding
#6**

While visits to the Columbia Public Schools’ website continue to be modest, almost every respondent thought it was “Very easy” or “Easy” to navigate.

The highest number of respondents (40%) said they visited the district’s website “less than once a month.”

The number who visited at least once a month (36%) was up from 2023 (31%), while those who have “never visited the district’s website” (24%) decreased by 10%.

Those who visited at least once a month were then asked how easy it was to find their way around, and 98% said it was either “Very easy” or “Easy” to do so. This is a significant increase from 2023 (10%), where 88% were able to easily navigate it.

Additionally, those same respondents were asked to rate the quality and completeness of the information. Most of the respondents (97%), again, thought it was either “Excellent” or “Good.”

In the cross-tabulation data, the middle-aged residents were not as frequent visitors to the website as the others in the “age” subgroup. Not surprisingly, current parents were the most frequent visitors among their subgroup.

Within the geographic subgroups, those respondents living west of Providence and south of Broadway visited the website *most* often, and those living east of Providence and south of Broadway visited it the *least*.

The next few questions are about the district website.

31. Which of the following best describes how often you visit the Columbia Public Schools district’s website? *The choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage/ 2026	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
At least once a month	36%	31%	25%	34%	22%	13%	10%
Less than once a month	40%	35%	33%	30%	36%	32%	22%
I’ve never visited the district’s website	24%	34%	42%	36%	43%	42%	53%

32. Thinking about the last time you visited the Columbia Public Schools district’s website, how easy was it to navigate and to find what you were looking for? *This question was only asked of the 108 respondents who answered question 31, “At least once a month.”*

Response	Percentage/ 2026	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Very easy	57%	48%	56%	43%	45%	39%	43%
Easy	41%	40%	41%	41%	49%	52%	42%
Difficult	2%	12%	3%	16%	5%	9%	14%
Very difficult	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Don’t know (not read)	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%

33. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the information that is shared on the District’s website? *This question was new in 2023 and was only asked of the 108 respondents who answered question 31, “At least once a month.”*

Response	Percentage/ 2026	Percentage/ 2023
Excellent	45%	52%
Good	52%	41%
Fair	3%	7%
Poor	0%	0%
Don’t know (not read)	0%	0%

Cross-tabulation: “Regular visitors” (at least once a month), “Infrequent visitors” (less than once a month), and “Never visitors” to the Columbia Public Schools’ website by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with the “overall,” because two respondents did not answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=65)	35-54 (n=138)	55 or older (n=95)	Up to 5 years (n=22)	5 to 15 years (n=71)	More than 15 years (n=207)	Student yes (n=106)	Student past (n=99)	Student never (n=95)
Regular visitors/CPS website	36%	43%	30%	40%	27%	35%	37%	59%	30%	16%
Infrequent visitors/CPS website	40%	31%	46%	40%	45%	48%	37%	27%	43%	51%
Never visitors/CPS website	24%	26%	24%	20%	27%	17%	26%	13%	26%	33%

Cross-tabulation: “Regular visitors” (at least once a month), “Infrequent visitors” (less than once a month), and “Never visitors” to the Columbia Public Schools’ website by location of the respondent’s residence and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/ N of B'way (n=75)	E of Prov/ N of B'way (n=75)	W of Prov/ S of B'way (n=75)	E of Prov/ S of B'way (n=75)	African-American (n=24)	Caucasian (n=232)	Asian (n=11)	Female (n=173)	Male (n=127)
Regular visitors/CPS website	36%	35%	37%	40%	32%	33%	36%	45%	33%	40%
Infrequent visitors/CPS website	40%	41%	32%	39%	49%	29%	41%	45%	42%	38%
Never visitors/CPS website	24%	24%	31%	21%	19%	38%	23%	9%	25%	22%

**Finding
#7**

Columbia Public Schools Television continued to have limited viewers. And those who watched “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes” had few suggestions for other programming.

The number of respondents who watched CPS Television at least “Sometimes” was up slightly from 2023 (25% vs. 22%). The number one response in 2026, again, was “Never” at 47%.

Most viewers were watching “Programs” (42 mentions) or “Scheduled activities” (39 mentions).

As in the past, respondents struggled to come up with additional ideas for CPS Television programming. The top response was “No others” (35 mentions), followed by “Budget financial information” (28 mentions).

The next few questions are about the district’s television channel.

34. How often do you watch Columbia Public Schools television, either on cable, streamed on the district’s website, or via the videos shared on the CPS-TV website? *The choices were read to respondents. The percentages for the surveys from 2017, 2015, 2013, 2012, and 2011 are available in previous reports.*

Response	Percentage/2026	Percentage/2023	Percentage/2019
Every day	0%	<1%	0%
Frequently	3%	5%	9%
Sometimes	22%	17%	10%
Rarely	27%	26%	24%
Never	47%	52%	58%

35. What types of programming do you watch on the school district’s television station? *This question was only asked of the 77 respondents who answered question 34, “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes.” Respondents were allowed to choose more than one response. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number/2026	Number/2023	Number/2019
Programs (music, etc.)	42	24	32
Scheduled activities (date/time, etc.)	39	42	51
Meetings	21	15	14
School and learning stories	19	9	n/a
Other	0	0	2

- 36. What additional types of programming about the school district would you like to see on Columbia Public Schools Television?** *This question was only asked of the 77 respondents who watch Columbia Public Schools Television “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes.” Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
No others	35
Budget/financial information	28
Transportation/busing news	11
Other (see below)	3

Verbatim “other” comments

Lunch preparation.

Maybe some debates.

Student cooking class.

- 37. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the news that is shared on CPS-TV?** *This question was new for 2023 and was only asked of the 77 respondents who watch Columbia Public Schools Television “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes.”*

Response	Percentage/2026	Percentage/2023
Excellent	62%	66%
Good	26%	24%
Fair	10%	3%
Poor	0%	0%
Don’t know (not read)	3%	7%

**Finding
#8**

“Student and teacher success stories” were of the most interest this year, while “Transportation news” continues to be less newsworthy.

“Student and teacher success stories” were deemed the most newsworthy for the 2026 survey, with 85% of the respondents expressing interest in this topic.

Other top areas of interest were “News about preparing students to be college- or career-ready” (81%), “Safety and security” (78%), and “Updates on facilities, construction, and renovation projects” (78%).

The areas with the least interest were “News about test scores and academic achievements” (44%), “School lunch and nutrition news” (31%), and Transportation news” (23%).

38. Please tell me which of the following topics you, personally, are interested in hearing more about from the school district on a regular basis – either in print, electronically, or both. If you’d really be interested in knowing more on this topic, please say, “Yes.” If you’d only be a little interested – or you wouldn’t be interested at all – please say, “No.” *The list was read to respondents. The percentages will add to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one choice. “Safety and security” was added in 2015, and “News about test scores and academic achievements” was added in 2019. The “college-ready” and “career-ready” items were added in 2017 and were combined into one item for 2019.*

Response	Percentage/ 2026	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Student and teacher success stories	85%	78%	87%	76%	68%	72%	79%
News about preparing students to be college- or career-ready (combined for 2019)	81%	76%	43%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Safety and security	78%	85%	82%	78%	74%	n/a	n/a
Updates on facilities, construction, and renovation projects	78%	70%	57%	54%	51%	59%	57%
Information on the district’s finances and budget	68%	62%	56%	68%	64%	77%	74%
School Board news	60%	58%	39%	46%	54%	45%	41%
News about activities and athletics	47%	53%	50%	50%	50%	41%	38%
Information on curriculum and curriculum changes	45%	67%	71%	63%	69%	60%	69%
News about test scores and academic achievements	44%	41%	46%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
School lunch and nutrition news	31%	29%	24%	29%	35%	28%	23%
Transportation news	23%	34%	19%	22%	18%	24%	27%
Don’t know (not read)	0%	0%	0%	0%	<1%	0%	0%
None of these (not read)	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%

**Finding
#9**

Of the 22 sources of district news sources (aside from weather-related school closing information) four stood out as being the most frequent “first” choice for survey respondents.

To find out the best way to communicate with district patrons, one of the last questions of the survey asked respondents which of the 22 potential sources they consulted “first” for school district news.

Four of the sources were said to be consulted “first” by at least 40% of the respondents. The number one source – which is typical for surveys of this type – was “Friends and neighbors” (82%). This was followed by “District newsletter (printed *Quarterly Connection*, delivered quarterly to homes) and Annual Report” at 45%, “Local television stations” at 41%, and “The School Board, either in person or in the media” at 40%.

While the number of news sources identified as being the most frequent “first” choice was about average, only two were district-related.

39. If you were looking for school district news – BESIDES information about weather-related school closings – which of the following sources would you consult first? *The choices were read to the respondents and rotated. The percentages will add up to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one information source. New for 2026, Facebook and Instagram were listed as separate items, and the “Social networking sites” item was changed to exclude those two sources.*

Response	Percentage 2026	Percentage 2023	Percentage 2019	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2015	Percentage 2013	Percentage 2012
Friends and neighbors	82%	78%	85%	80%	73%	86%	87%
District newsletter (printed <i>Quarterly Connection</i> , delivered quarterly to homes) and Annual Report	45%	29%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local television stations	41%	51%	34%	64%	56%	42%	68%
The School Board, either in person or in the media	40%	28%	42%	37%	32%	24%	27%
Students who attend school in the district	39%	42%	49%	45%	43%	39%	42%
Facebook	36%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The school district’s website	35%	39%	30%	43%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Individual school newsletters	33%	30%	28%	24%	31%	27%	26%
Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email	32%	39%	46%	42%	39%	37%	39%
Local radio stations	29%	34%	27%	41%	38%	23%	40%
Principals at district schools	28%	23%	25%	26%	18%	26%	24%
Through the school district’s messaging system that connects individual schools and the district to parents through automated phone calls, texts, or emails	28%	20%	32%	30%	22%	15%	9%
The Columbia Public Schools free mobile app	24%	15%	20%	18%	8%	n/a	n/a
The district’s central office administration, either in person or in the media	21%	26%	31%	29%	25%	21%	21%
Various parent organizations at the schools	20%	16%	13%	19%	17%	11%	14%
<i>Inside Columbia</i> magazine	19%	22%	28%	23%	25%	16%	21%
Instagram	18%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CPS-TV, the district’s television and online streaming channel	17%	14%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other social networking sites, like Twitter/X, TikTok, Snapchat	15%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Volunteering in a school	12%	14%	17%	21%	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Partners in Education program	5%	8%	10%	13%	11%	8%	5%
<i>COMO</i> magazine	4%	6%	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Finding
#10**

Nearly all the survey participants feel well-informed by the Columbia Public Schools, and they know where to turn for district information.

The next set of questions – which were new for the 2023 survey and slightly reworded for the 2026 survey – was a continuation of the same theme from the previous section – how well the district is communicating with patrons and the level of ease of tracking down necessary information.

Note: Since the 2023 and 2026 response options for the two questions were different, the data for the two years cannot be compared.

Most of the respondents (84%) said they “Strongly agree” or “Agree” the Columbia Public Schools keeps them well-informed. Only 16% said they “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” with this sentiment.

Even more respondents (91%) felt this way about knowing “who to ask and/or how to find the information,” if they had a question about CPS. Even fewer (9%) said they “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree.”

40. Columbia Public Schools keeps me well-informed. Choices were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	25%
Agree	59%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	6%
Don’t know (not read)	0%

41. If I had a question about CPS, I would know who to ask and/or how to find the information. Choices were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	15%
Agree	76%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don’t know (not read)	0%

**Finding
#11**

At least 53% of the respondents felt the upkeep and maintenance of all but one of the district’s facility areas was either “Excellent” or “Good.”

The next questions – which were new for the 2026 survey – focused on how well the district is maintaining and upkeeping its facilities. The response options ranged from “Excellent” to “Poor.”

More than half (53%) of the respondents said the district was doing an “Excellent” or “Good” job for all but one of the seven facilities.

The top six items were:

- The overall appearance of our school buildings – 93% “Excellent” or “Good”
- The condition of our physical education and athletic facilities – 88%
- The condition of our school buildings – 86%
- The condition of our classrooms – 73%
- The condition of our cafeterias – 62%
- The condition of our restrooms – 53%

The remaining area – “The condition of our fine arts and performance spaces” – had less support at 48%. This may indicate that respondents have some concerns about how well these facilities are being maintained.

The next few questions are about the district’s facilities. Please indicate whether the district is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job with the upkeep, maintenance, etc. of the following. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

42a. The overall appearance of our school buildings.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	59%
Good	34%
Fair (meaning less than good)	5%
Poor	0%
Don’t know (not read)	2%

42b. The condition of our school buildings.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	49%
Good	37%
Fair (meaning less than good)	7%
Poor	0%
Don't know (not read)	8%

42c. The condition of our classrooms.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	31%
Good	42%
Fair (meaning less than good)	4%
Poor	0%
Don't know (not read)	22%

42d. The condition of our cafeterias.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	27%
Good	35%
Fair (meaning less than good)	2%
Poor	0%
Don't know (not read)	36%

42e. The condition of our restrooms.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	30%
Good	23%
Fair (meaning less than good)	2%
Poor	<1%
Don't know (not read)	45%

42f. The condition of our physical education and athletic facilities.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	53%
Good	35%
Fair (meaning less than good)	3%
Poor	1%
Don't know (not read)	9%

42g. The condition of our fine arts and performance spaces.

Response	Percentage
Excellent	21%
Good	27%
Fair (meaning less than good)	1%
Poor	0%
Don't know (not read)	51%

Demographics

The final section of the survey collected key demographic information, including:

- In the length of residence category, 69% of the respondents had lived in the district more than 15 years.
- In the age category, 65% of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 106 “Current student” families, 99 “Past student” families, and 95 “Never student” families.
- In the racial/ethnic groups, 77% of the participants were Caucasian/White, 8% were African-American/Black, 6% were mixed race, 4% were Asian, and 2% were Hispanic/Latino.
- In terms of gender, the survey group was 58% female and 42% male.

43. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools? Is it...? *The choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	3%
2 years to 5 years	5%
More than 5 years to 10 years	13%
More than 10 years to 15 years	11%
More than 15 years	54%
I’ve lived here all my life	15%

44. In what age group are you? Is it...? *The choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	2%
25 to 34	19%
35 to 44	26%
45 to 54	20%
55 to 64	19%
65 or older	13%
Refused (not read)	1%

- 45. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in the Columbia Public Schools right now?** *Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	101
Yes, both children and grandchildren	5
Yes, grandchildren	31
No	163

- 46. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated?** *This question was only asked of the 194 respondents who answered question 45, “Yes, grandchildren” or “No.” Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	89
Yes, both children and grandchildren	10
Yes, grandchildren	2
No	93

- 47. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group?**
Is it...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Caucasian or White	77%
African-American or Black	8%
Mixed race	6%
Asian	4%
Hispanic or Latino	2%
Refused (not read)	2%
Other (see below)	1%

Verbatim “other” comments

American Indian.

Native Alaskan.

48. And finally, to which gender do you most identify?

Response	Percentage
Female	58%
Male	42%
Non-binary	0%
Prefer not to answer	0%

Overall results summary

Once again, the Columbia Public Schools is going above and beyond to provide a high-quality education to its students. As mentioned earlier, the scores for all the district factors were higher than the ones from 2023 and most exceeded what we normally see for similar districts in Missouri, especially on surveys that have been conducted for multiple years.

While it continues to excel, there are some things the district could do to raise the bar even higher. Specifically:

- One of the factors – “The district’s history of fulfilling promises” – scored below 3.80. This may be an area the district may want to further explore.
- Patrons cited, “Watch budget/expenditures” as an area of improvement. Some patrons also expressed interest in the district offering “Budget/financial information” programs on the Columbia Public Schools Television. Thus, creating this type of programming could kill two birds with one stone – educate the public about the district’s finance and drive more traffic to the television channel.
- Because Facebook was identified as the most frequently used platform among respondents, the district has an opportunity to prioritize the platform for timely updates, daily news stories, and important district communications to reach a broad segment of the community.
- “Friends and neighbors” has been the top source on every survey to date. Continue working to decrease the number of people seeking district news from their “Friends and neighbors” – which equates to listening to gossip – and other non-district-related sources.
- Patrons seem to feel the district is doing a top-notch job of maintaining most of its building and facilities.

THANK YOU!

The ExcellenceK12 team appreciates the opportunity to complete this important project for the Columbia Public Schools.

For questions, please contact Rick Nobles at **913-484-0920** or [**rick@excellencek12.com**](mailto:rick@excellencek12.com).



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