



Lawrence Public Schools: A Community Conversation 2026 Report

Lawrence Board of Education
June 22, 2026

Community Conversation 2026



Winter 2026 Community Conversations That Count

Over the past year, we engaged with thousands of students, families, staff, and community members on key priorities for a new districtwide strategic plan. Now, we're checking in on our progress. How are we doing?

Your voice counts. Help shape the future and connect with us. **Share your feedback** on our progress, and provide your input to help **update our strategic plan.**

How are we doing?

From your personal/family experience in Lawrence Public Schools:

- What areas are going well and we should continue to strengthen?
- In what areas do we have opportunities for growth and improvement?
- What else would you like us to know?

Visit www.usd497.org/future to learn more.

We're Listening

You spoke and we're listening. Below are the ways that we have implemented program enhancements in the 2025-26 school year to directly address your feedback:

- Streamlined communications via **ParentSquare**
- **Preschool** classrooms expanded into 4 additional schools, and are coming to every elementary school
- **Elementary science** as an enrichment specials rotation
- Strengthened **KU Jayhawk Blueprint** programming
- Continued districtwide **AVID** implementation to be completed in 2026
- Advanced Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (**STEAM**) focus at Liberty Memorial Central Middle School
- Continued growing **Montessori** programming at New York Elementary

Continue the Conversation

Your voice counts. Select one or all of the options below and provide your feedback.



Scan here and choose a short 5-minute survey or a more in-depth 15-minute survey.

To share your thoughts to open-ended questions, scan here.



Lawrence Public Schools: A Community Conversation 2026



Listening and learning through connection and conversation are among the most important and informative steps for continuous improvement work in the Lawrence Public Schools.

The importance of community conversation is based in the premise that no one knows better the strengths and celebrations, the challenges and areas for improvement than the students, school families, and staff who make up the school community, and the Lawrence community organizations and business partners who support this work.

**As we move forward in planning for the future,
*We want to hear from you!***

Community Conversations 2026



Collected Feedback from:

- **Traditional Survey** (via Sogolytics) (611)
- **Community Conversations** - In-person gatherings
- **Student face to face group conversations**
- convened at all MS, HS, & Program locations
- **Share Your Thoughts Open-Ended Inquiry** (484)

The data shared is clarified from the analysis of open-ended survey responses, both in-person and written, as well as data sets gathered from traditional quantitative survey responses .

The Process

We asked.

We heard.

We are doing.

We Asked

We Heard

We are Doing



Community Conversation 2026



1,394

Total Responses
Across All
Formats



546

Responses from
Families



454

Responses from
Staff

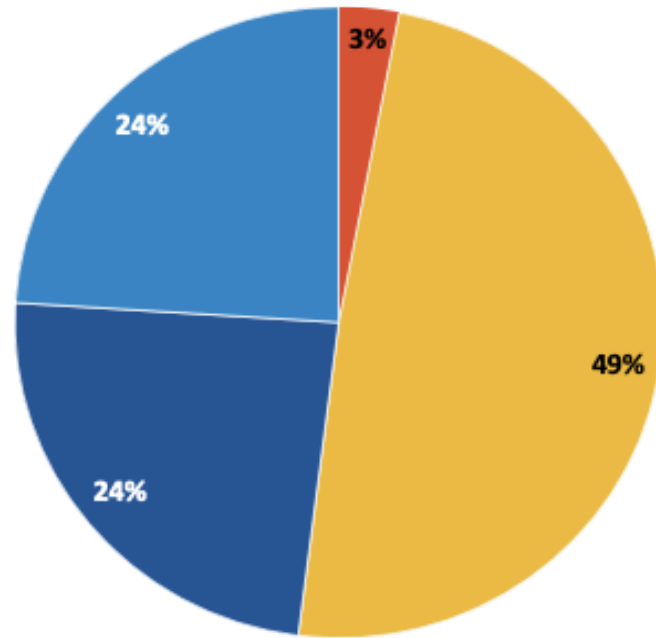


299

Responses from
Students



Responses by Grade Level



- Preschool
- Elementary
- Middle
- High



Key Indicators

- Responses to questions in key areas from the survey serve as **'key' indicators** of school and organizational progress
- Responses to **open ended inquiries provide additional context and add detail in emergent areas**
- Spring 2026 traditional survey inquiry will provide **baseline data** for year-over-year continuous improvement indicators





Primary indicators focus on perceptions of effectiveness and levels of satisfaction in crucial areas:

- educational program & critical mission, teaching & learning,
- school safety,
- a sense of welcome, belonging, and care,
- responsiveness and communication, and
- overall levels of satisfaction

The Process

We asked.

We heard.

We are doing.

We Asked

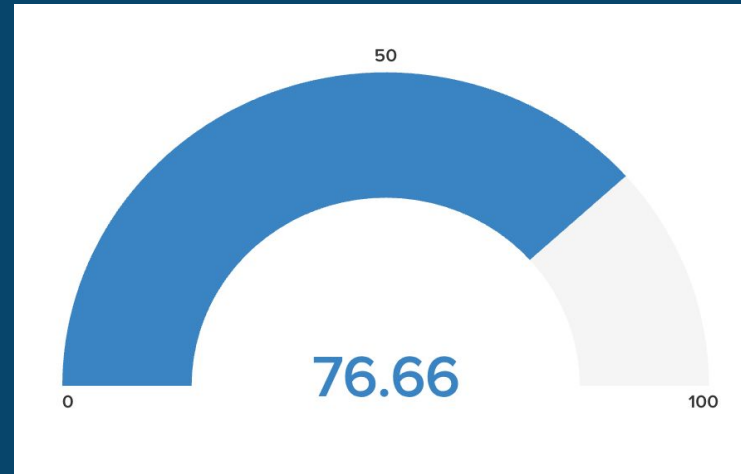
We Heard

We are Doing



Rates of Satisfaction:

"How would you rate overall level of satisfaction at this school?"



557
Responses

Staff & Families

76.66% of **ALL** respondents indicated they are **Satisfied or Very Satisfied** with their overall experience at their school



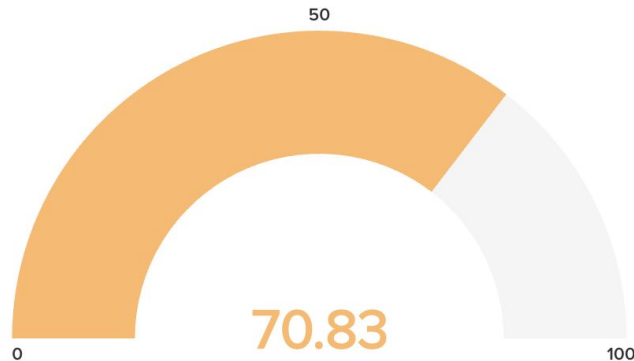
LAWRENCE
Public Schools

Rates of Satisfaction:

"How would you rate overall satisfaction at this school?"

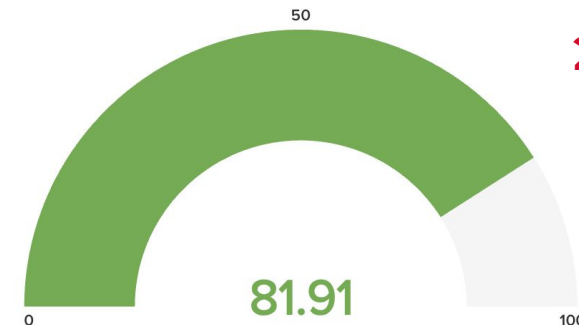
70.83 % of **PARENTS**
indicate they are
Satisfied or Very Satisfied
with the overall experience
at their school

264 Responses



81.91 % of **STAFF**
indicate they are
Satisfied or Very Satisfied
with the overall experience
at their school

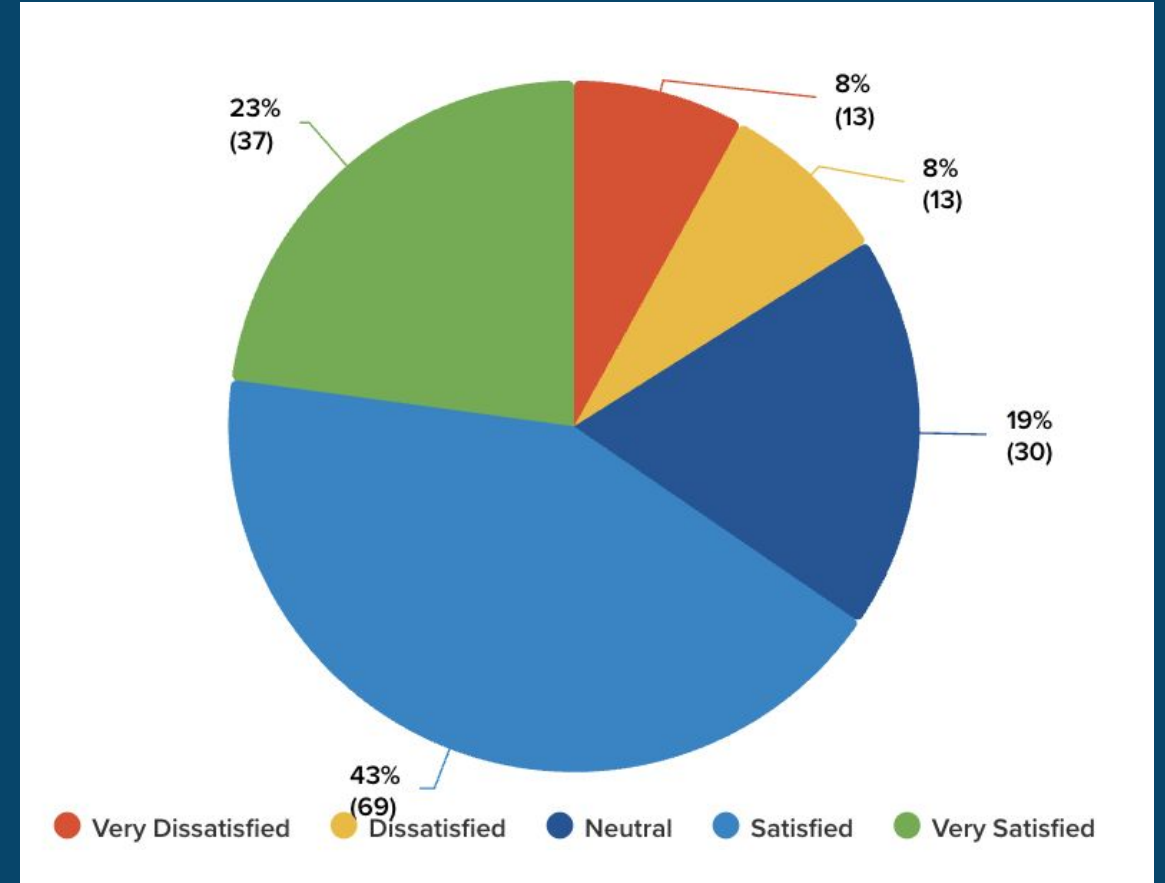
293 Responses



Happiness: "How satisfied are you with your child's overall happiness at this school?"

FAMILIES

66%
responded favorably
satisfied or very satisfied
with the overall happiness of
their child at their school



162 Responses

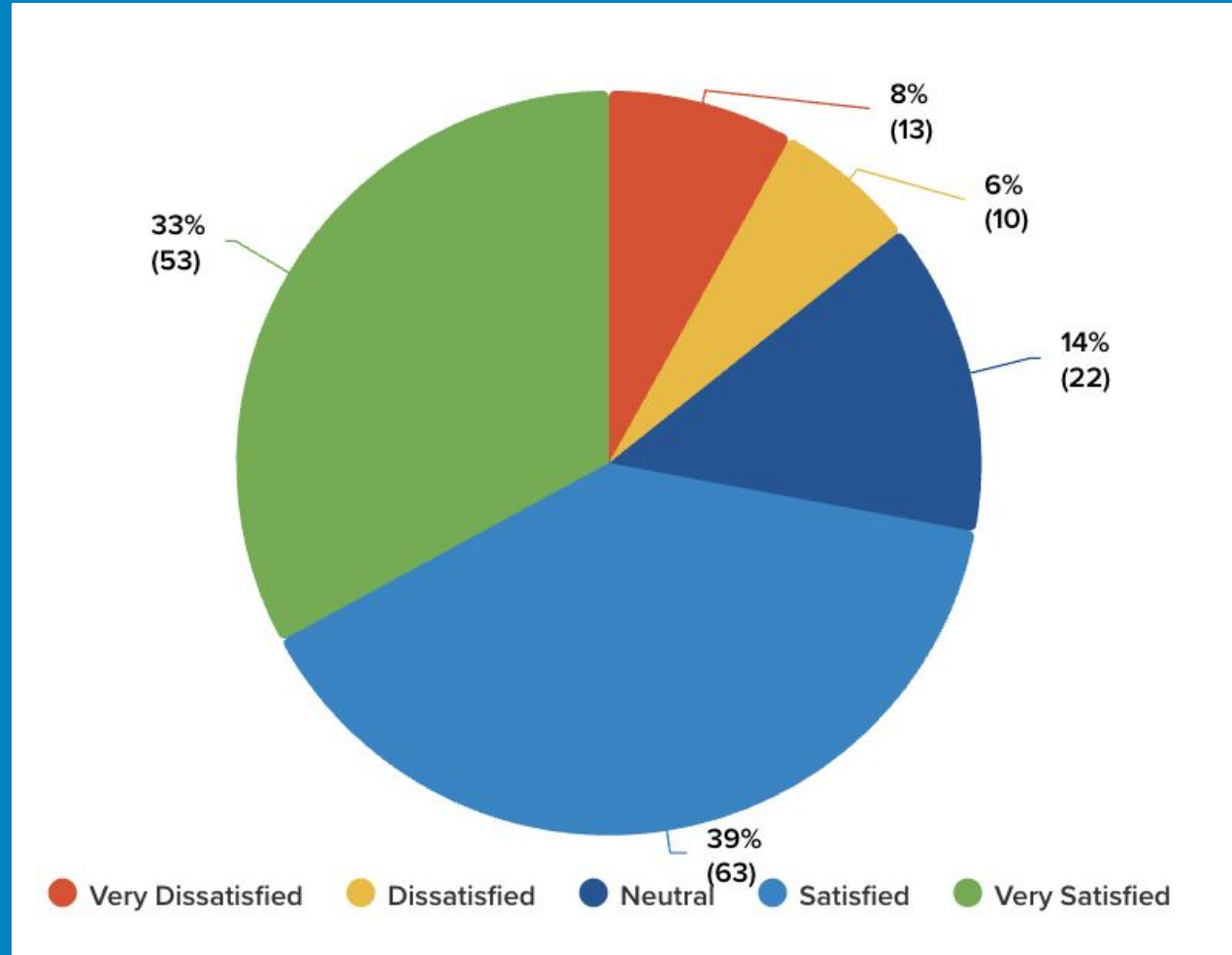
Dignity & Kindness:

"How satisfied are you with the way school staff show dignity and kindness toward students?"

FAMILIES

•72%

satisfied or very satisfied with the way staff show dignity and kindness toward students



One of the highest-performing measures in the dataset

161 Responses

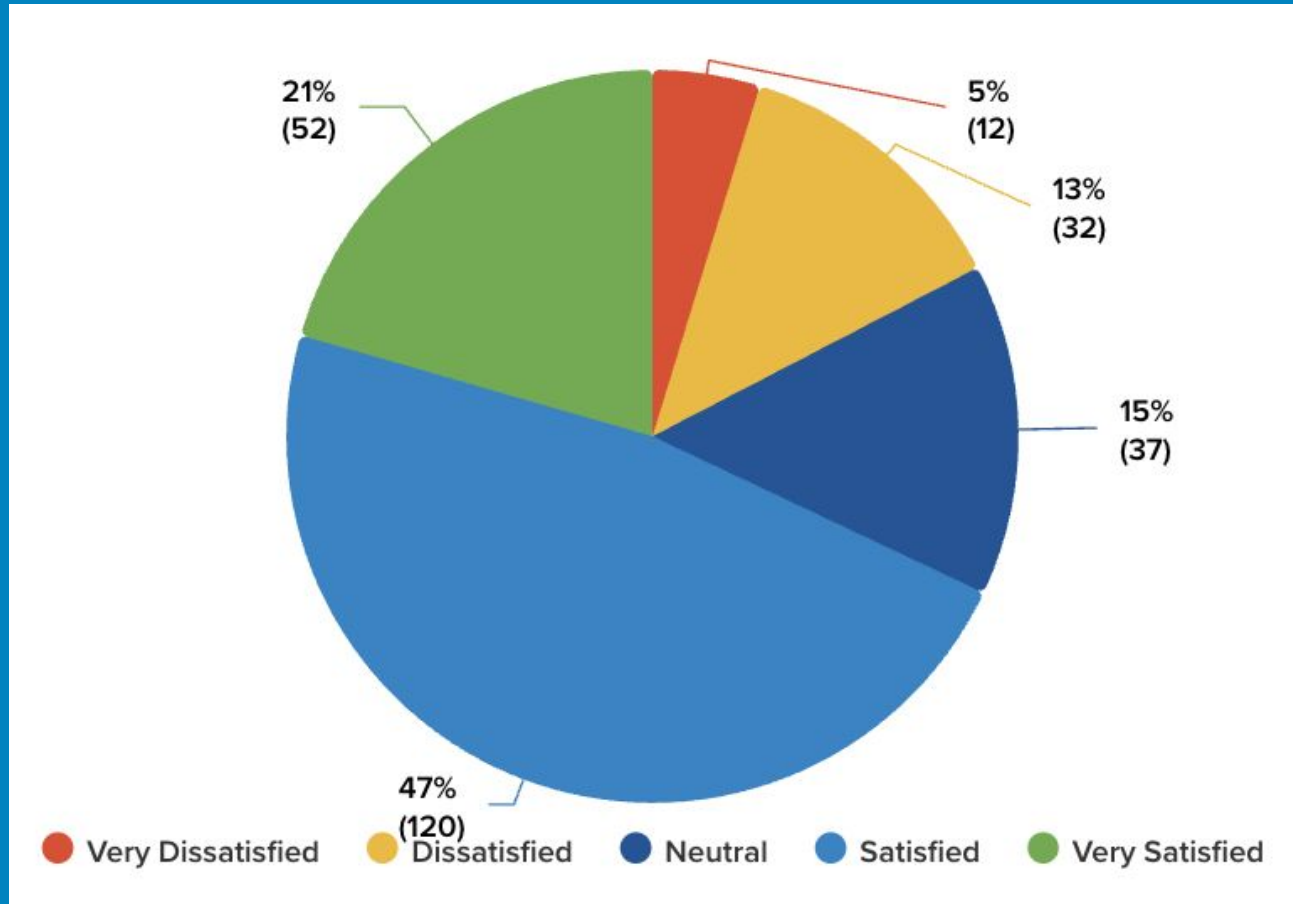


Dignity & Kindness:

“How satisfied are you that students and staff members treat each other with dignity and respect?”

STAFF
• 68%

satisfied or very satisfied with the way students and staff show dignity and respect towards each other



253 Responses



Student Support & Relationships

How well teachers support and care for students

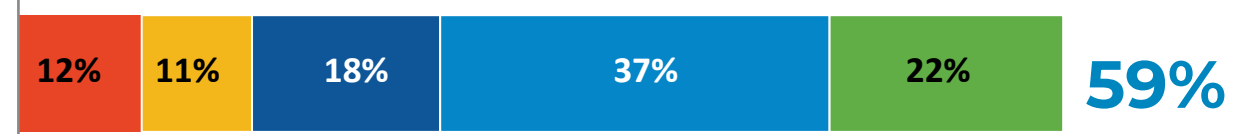
How satisfied are you with how well teachers support and care for students?



How satisfied are you with the support and resources students' receive to meet their individual learning needs?



How satisfied are you with the resources and support this school provides to address students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs?



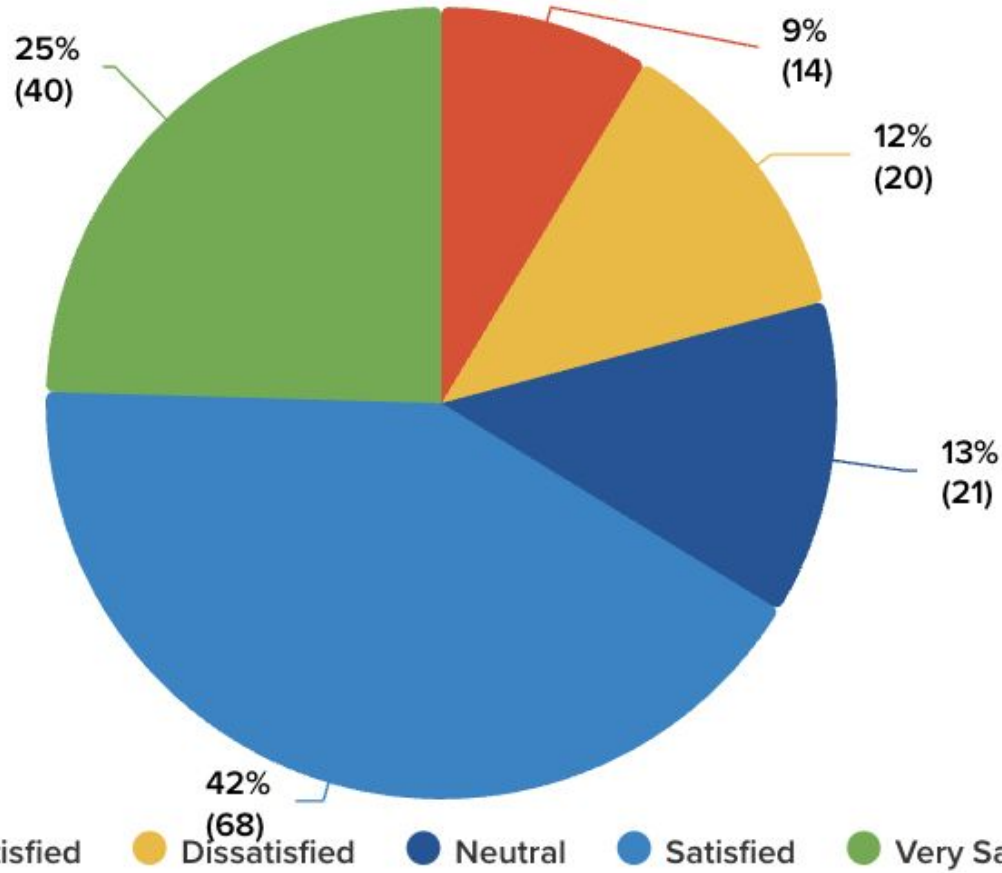
Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

Safety: “How satisfied are you with the level of safety at this school?”

Among FAMILIES

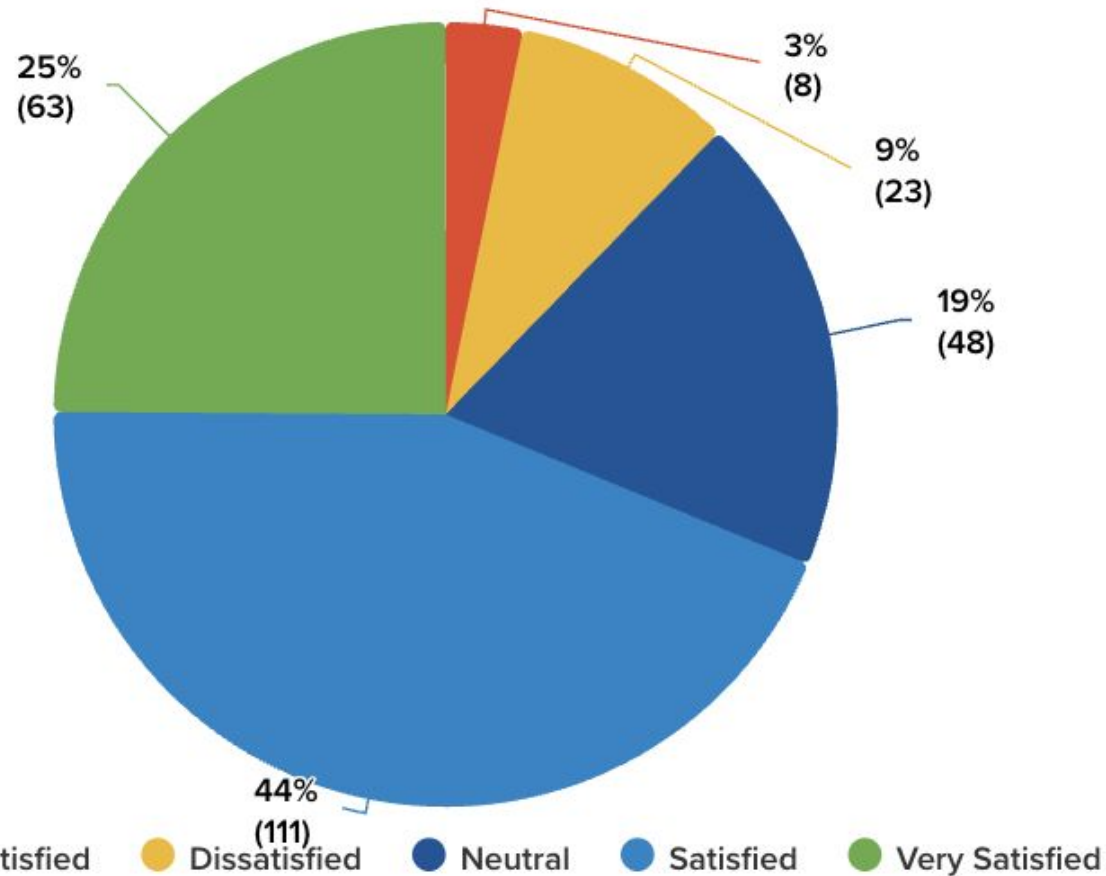
67%

satisfied or very satisfied with level of safety at their school



163 Responses

Safety: "How satisfied are you with the level of safety at this school?"



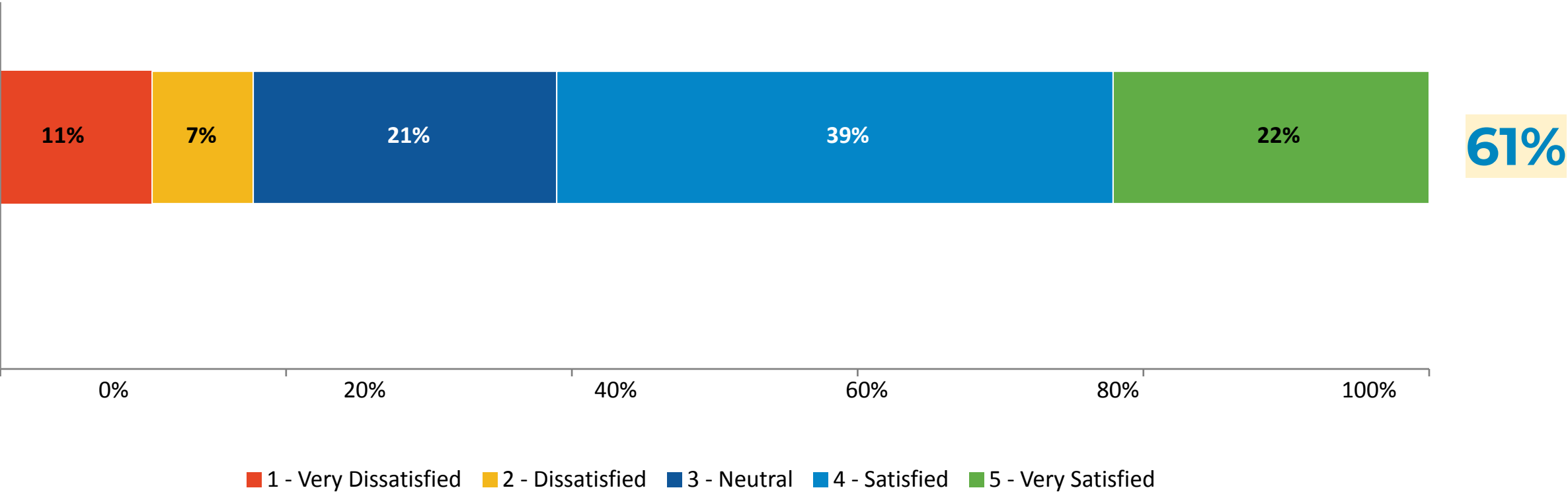
Among STAFF

69% satisfied or very satisfied with how quickly and effectively staff respond to bullying or safety reports.

253 Responses

Overall Quality of Education at this School

How would you rate the overall quality of the education at this school?



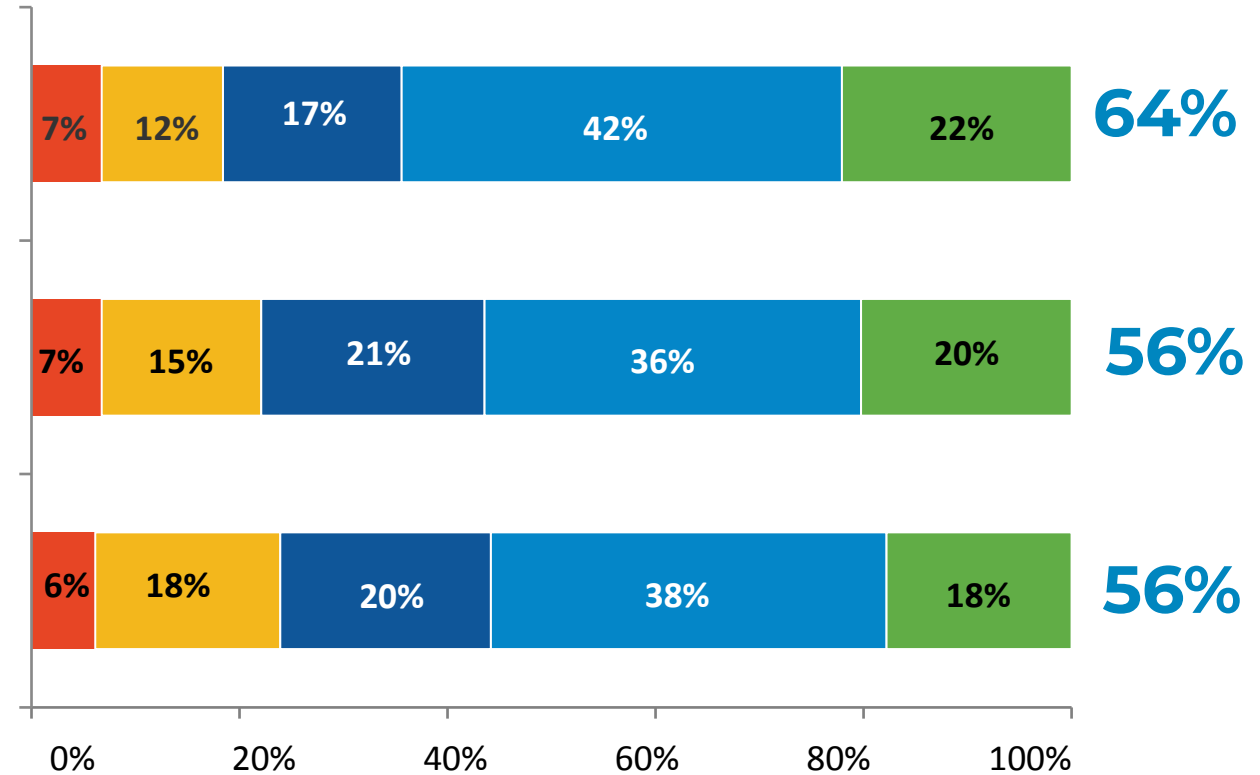
Percent Favorable: 61%

Teaching & Learning

How satisfied are you with the extent to which teachers set high expectations for all students?

How satisfied are you with the academic support opportunities available to students at this school (e.g., intervention, tutoring)?

How satisfied are you with the level of academic challenge students experience in their schoolwork?

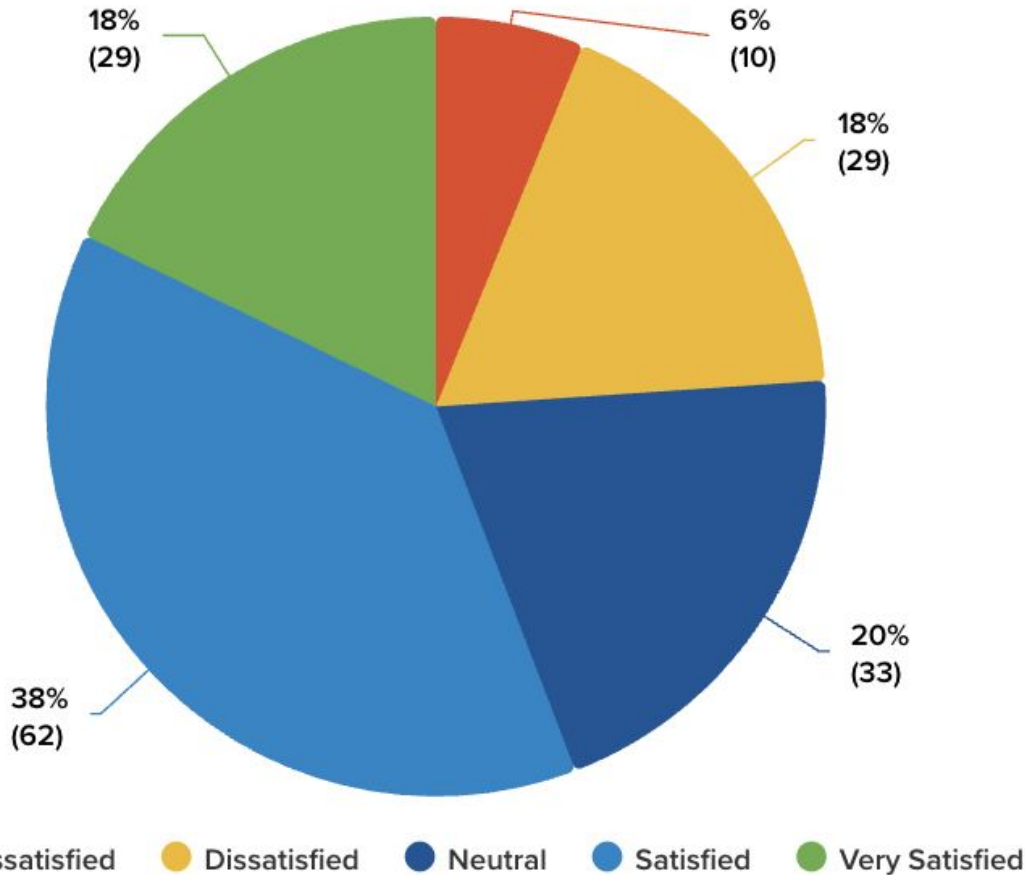


Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

Percent Favorable: 57%

Academic Challenge :

"How satisfied are you with the level of academic challenge students experience in their school work?"



163 Responses

FAMILIES

56% satisfied or very satisfied with level of academic challenge students experience in their school work

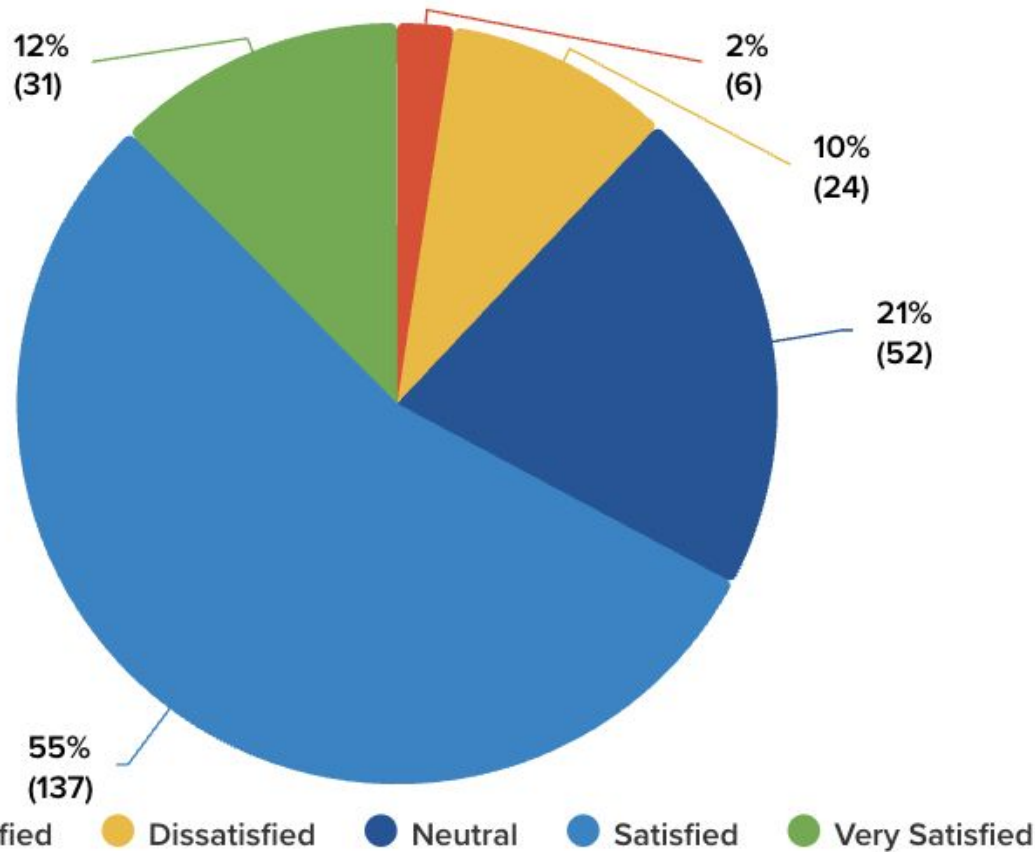
20% shared a neutral response

24% indicated dissatisfaction with level of academic challenge



Academic Challenge :

"How satisfied are you with the level of academic challenge students experience in their school work?"



250 Responses

STAFF

67% satisfied or very satisfied with level of academic challenge students experience in their school work

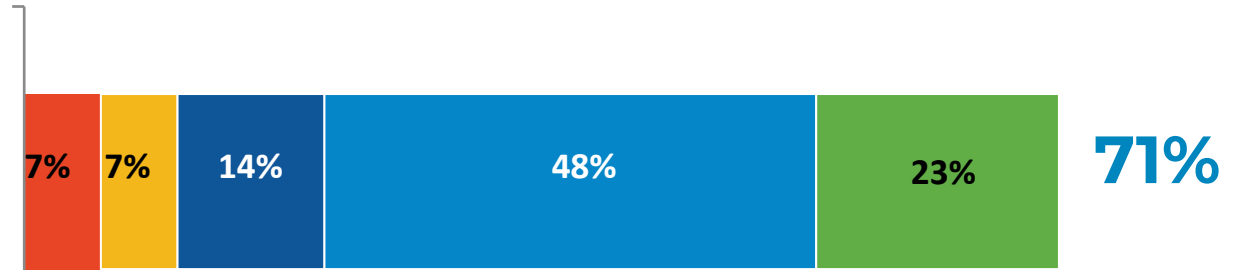
21% shared a neutral response

12% indicated dissatisfaction with level of academic challenge

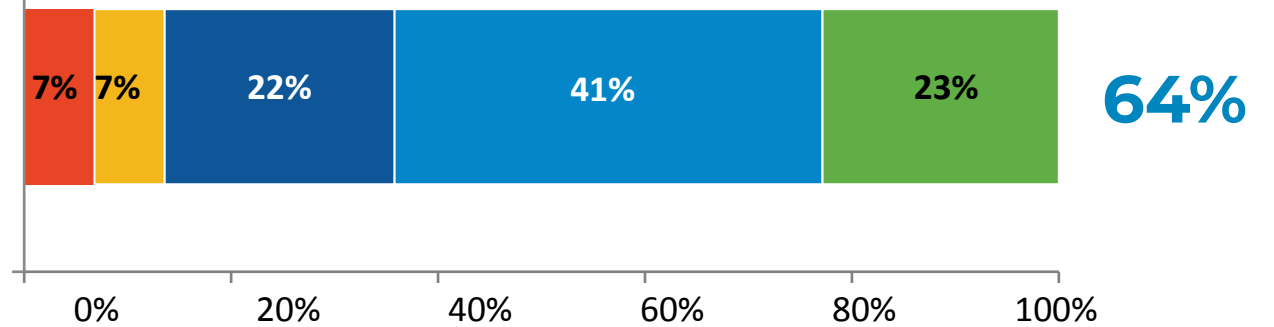


Families - Student Support & Relationships - Support with Problems

How satisfied are you that students have access to a teacher, counselor, or other staff member for help with a school-related problem?



How satisfied are you that students have access to a teacher, counselor, or other staff member for help with a personal problem?



Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

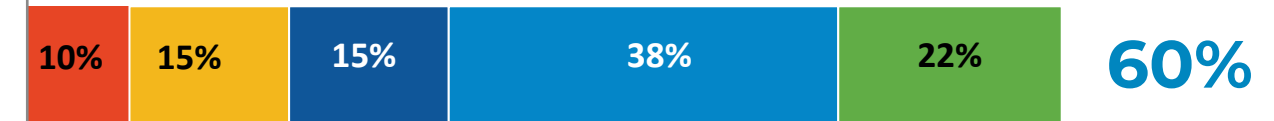
Percent Favorable: 67%

Families - Student Support & Relationships - Support and Care

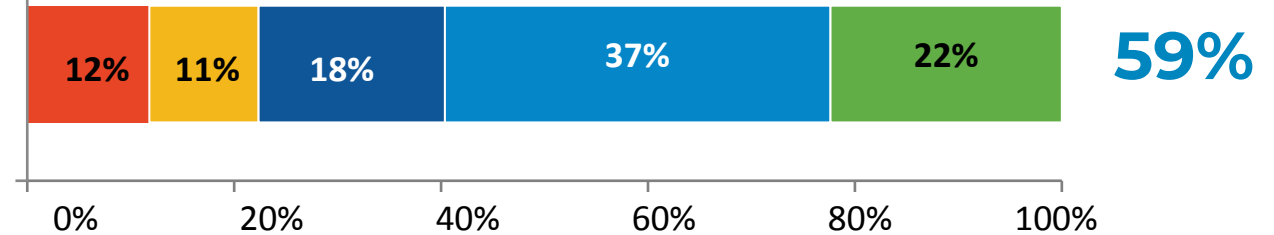
How satisfied are you with how well teachers support and care for students?



How satisfied are you with the support and resources students' receive to meet their individual learning needs?



How satisfied are you with the resources and support this school provides to address students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs?



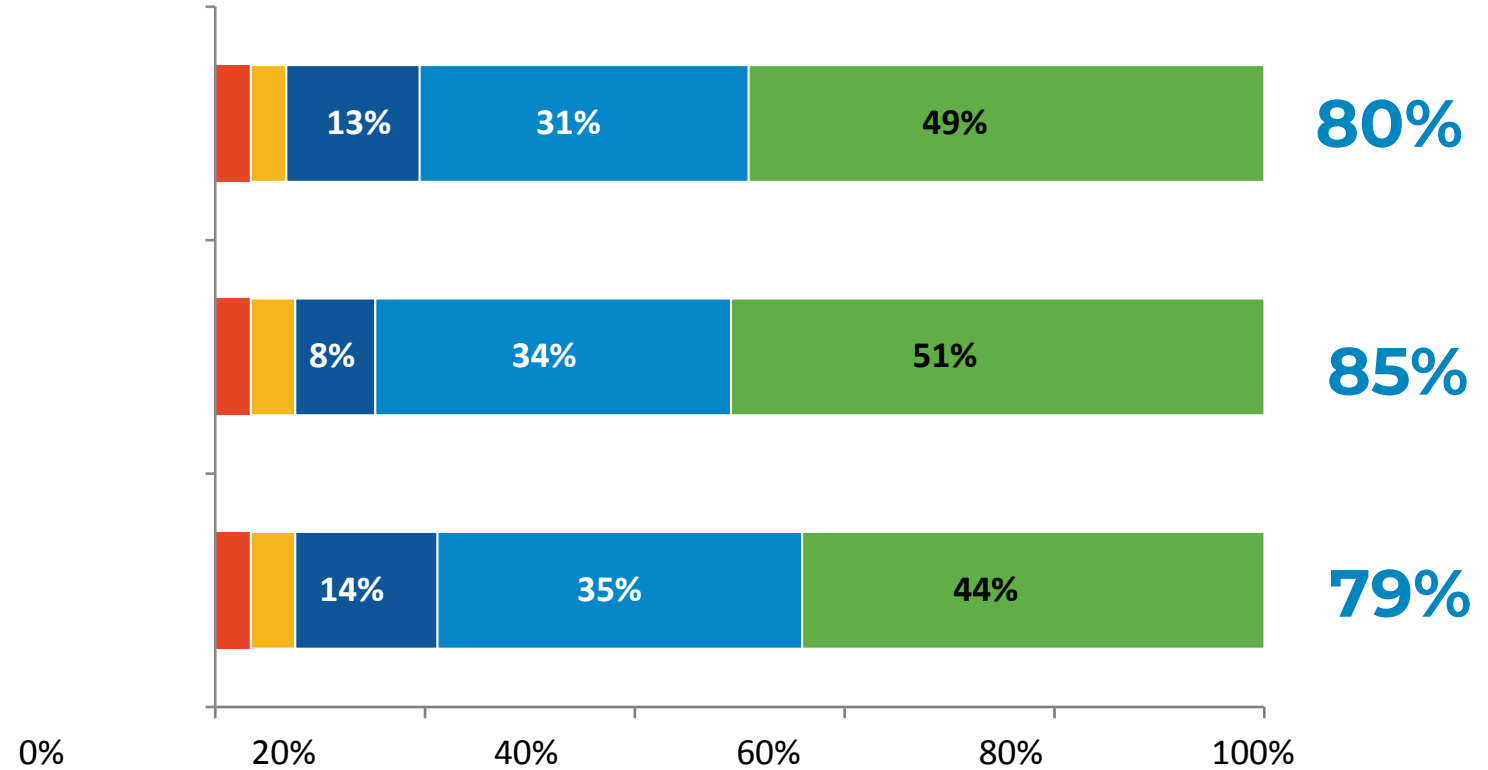
Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

Teacher Responsiveness - How satisfied are you with the following statements?

The teacher was responsive when I had a concern.

The teacher was courteous when I had a concern.

The teacher was helpful when I had a concern.



Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied

Percent Favorable: 81%



Open-Ended Responses

In addition to survey data, we held community conversations with families and community members, focus groups with students, and offered an open-ended survey available electronically.

Themes emergent from responses are represented on the following slides.

What areas are going well and we should continue to strengthen?

- ## Teacher Quality & Dedication

- Students, Staff, & Families praised staff throughout the responses

- ## Sense of Belonging

- Students, Staff, & Families talked about their feelings of being welcomed in their schools and that there is a feeling of belonging

- ## Communication Improvements

- Staff & Families reported improvements with quality of communication and the streamline of using one tool, ParentSquare

362 Responses



LAWRENCE
Public Schools

In what areas do we have opportunities for growth and improvement?

- Communicating more about academic program & enhancing enrichment and opportunities for student postsecondary success
- **Teacher & Staff Compensation**
 - Staff & Families emphasized the priority of compensation competitive with neighboring districts.
- **More Consistent Behavior & Policy Enforcement**
 - Viewed as a need among Students, Staff, and Families
salient example: cell phones

362 Responses





Strategic Themes

In reviewing the body of data collected, including open-ended responses, several major themes emerge from among parent, student, and staff groups.



**PARENT
PERSPECTIVE**

Top Themes: Parents

- **Strong Desire for Competitive Teacher & Staff Compensation**
- **Need for more consistent behavior, discipline & policy enforcement**
- **Concerns about the amount of screen time students experience at school**





Top Themes: Staff

STAFF

PERSPECTIVE

- Strong intent for Competitive Compensation Teacher & Staff
- Desire for Curriculum Coherence
- Need for Consistent Behavior, Discipline & Policy Enforcement





STUDENT

PERSPECTIVE

Top Themes: Students



Concerns about Flow of daily school schedule



Need for more consistent behavior, discipline & policy enforcement: 'Fairness'



Strong desire for more academic challenge & opportunities



THE CROSSWALK

Same Topic, Different Meaning

Several themes appear across every group, and what each group actually means is nuanced. Naming these distinctions is essential to designing the right response for improvement.



Technology

FAMILIES

Concern centers on screen time — too much iPad/Chromebook use, and inadequate internet filtering

STAFF

Concern centers on daily classroom battles over devices, plus frustration with specific tools

STUDENTS

Concern centers on specific tools feeling restrictive; functioning as compliance, not support



Academic Challenge

FAMILIES

Desire academic challenge for ALL students. Their concerns is the challenges available are on the poles of achievement.

STAFF

Desire curriculum coherence to increase academic challenges, thus achievement and to create a consistent experience for students across all buildings.

STUDENTS

simply want to be treated as capable of more — less repetitive work, more hands-on and real-world learning, and more advanced course options



Compensation & Staffing

FAMILIES

Concern is about stability for their child; turnover and long-term substitutes disrupt learning

STAFF

Concern is personal economic well being — wages, benefits, and comparison to peer districts

STUDENTS

Concern is around staffing capacity to handle responsibilities of their role.



A Theme Worth Celebrating



Lawrence Teachers Are A Top Asset

Across nearly 500 responses and every student focus group, one message was consistent: Lawrence teachers are exceptional. Families described them as the reason they stay. Staff described talented, dedicated colleagues. Students praised teachers as knowledgeable, engaging, and personally invested in their success.

FAMILIES

“The teachers are the strength of this school.”

STAFF

Deep collegial care and a strong sense of shared purpose

STUDENTS

Praised as knowledgeable, engaging, and personally invested



The Process

We asked.

We heard.

We are doing.

We Asked

We Heard

We are Doing



Next Steps: beginning July 2026

- **Next Steps** to continue to demonstrate how feedback from students, community and staff informs school and district work
- **Debut: Draft Strategic Plan 2026**
- **Coming in 2026-27: Integrate District Listen and Learn & Community Conversation Activities** into the regular rhythms of day-to-day district Engagement
 - **Community Day in Neighborhood Schools w/ Evening Conversation**
 - **Family Engagement Center Activities**
 - **Pulse Survey**

Next steps goal: Increase response rate for 2026-27

