

# WCPS/ Thought Exchange Survey Results

Department of Communications &  
Public Relations  
February 5, 2018

# Survey Questions

**Question 1: *What would you like our schools or the district to improve upon?***

**1,441** Thoughts & **28,252** Star Ratings (*Refers to total number of times each thought received a Star Rating*)

**Question 2: *What do you appreciate about our schools or the district?***

**632** Thoughts & **7,246** Star Ratings

**Question 3: *There has been much discussion lately about WCPS student transfers, school boundary lines and access to magnet style schools. What are your thoughts or questions at this time?***

**689** Thoughts & **6618** Star Ratings

Totals: **2,762** Thoughts & **42,116** Star Ratings for the three questions.

# Demographics of Participants

46.5% Parent Guardians

45.2% Staff Member

4.5% Other

3.6 Community Member

.2% Student

# Insights

Based on participants' thoughts and themes, this analysis is broken down into the following areas:

- Areas of Appreciation
- Areas of Concern
- Redistricting / Magnet Schools
- Community Engagement

Note: The largest conversation in response to the appreciation question (Q2) emerged as **Quality of teachers and staff**. Two other conversations also emerged as areas of appreciation: **Communication and leadership** and **Parent communication and involvement**, which are noted under Community Engagement.

# Areas of Appreciation

## **Q2 - 56.7% of stars (largest theme)**

Participants expressed overwhelming appreciation for the teachers and staff. They described the teachers as dedicated, caring and supportive of students.

\* In addition, participants noted an expressed appreciation of the superintendent for his efforts to improve the district and the opportunity for students to enroll in innovative programs like WEMCHS & WSE.

# Areas of Concern

In response to the improvement question (Q1), the largest conversations were focused on ways in which to better support staff. Suggestions included: *providing more in-class assistance, increasing compensation, and ensuring teachers do not personally pay for classroom supplies.*

In addition, participants would like updated classroom supplies and textbooks.

\* Busing issues, diversity and/or equity of schools, the WSE Lottery administration, and desires for more EC supports for students were also noted by participants.

# Areas of Concern themes

## **Staff Support**

Q1 - 10.8% of stars (largest theme)

Participants would like for staff to be given more support. This means limiting teachers' responsibilities that are unrelated to classroom instruction, providing more classroom assistants, and listening to staff members' concerns.

## **Salary and Benefits**

Q1 - 10.7% of stars

Participants suggested that staff should receive an increase in salary and supplement rates. They expressed that this would make the district more competitive in terms of attracting and retaining quality teachers.

## **Supplies and Materials**

Q1 - 9.6% of stars

Participants would like students to have adequate resources and up-to-date textbooks. They also believe that teachers should not be using their own money to pay for resources.

# Redistricting / Magnet Schools

Five themes emerged around redistricting and magnet schools. There are clear sentiments supporting magnet schools, equal opportunities for all schools across the district, and equal odds in the lottery for every student. Mixed sentiments emerged around student transfers and district boundaries. Some participants would like clear rules regarding transfers, while others would like the number of transfers reduced. Participants also expressed a desire for boundaries to be changed.

# Redistricting themes

## **District Equity and Unity opportunities regardless of the school they attend.**

Q3 - 16.2% of stars (largest theme)

Participants would like to see all students given the same opportunities regardless of the school they attend.

## **Student Transfers**

Q3 - 15.8% of stars

Participants expressed a variety of thoughts regarding student transfers. Some would like to ensure that employees' children can transfer schools to be with them, while others would like clear rules regarding transfer students. Participants also suggested that all schools should offer equal opportunities, especially for sports, to reduce the number of transfers.

## **District Boundaries and Zoning**

Q3 - 15.6% of stars

Participants expressed concerns regarding district boundaries. They would like boundaries to be drawn so that overcrowding could be reduced and students could attend schools closest to their homes. They would also like to ensure that boundaries are not drawn along race and socio-economic lines.

# Magnet School themes

## Lottery System

Q3 - 13.8% of stars (largest theme)

Participants would like each student to have an equal chance in the lottery and equal opportunity for admission to the school of their choice.

## Magnet School System

Q3 - 12.9% of stars

Participants appreciate that magnet schools provide students with the opportunity to focus in one area and develop their strengths. They would like to see more opportunities for this type of programming.

# Community Engagement

Two themes emerged related to community engagement: **Communication and leadership** and **Parent communication and involvement**.

Both of these themes showed high levels of appreciation. Participants are grateful for the opportunity to share their thoughts in this engagement and for schools involving parents and communicating with them.

Although participants are appreciative overall, they would like to see improvements regarding both of these themes. In particular, they would like more staff involvement in decision-making, better communication between school and home, and more parent involvement in schools.

# Communication & Leadership themes

## Appreciation

Q2 - 8.4% of stars

Participants expressed appreciation for the WCPS /Thought Exchange survey. They appreciate the opportunity to share their ideas and that the district is actively soliciting their input.

## Opportunities

Q1 - 5.7% of stars

Participants would like staff to be more involved in district decisions, both by having their opinions heard and by being informed. Participants would also like district leadership to be more involved in classrooms.

# Parent Communication and Involvement themes

## Appreciation

Q2 - 7.9% of stars

Participants highly appreciate the parents who support their children and schools. Parents also appreciate the communication they receive from teachers regarding their children.

## Opportunities

Q1 - 4.2% of stars

Participants would like parents to be more involved in the schools and more responsible for their children's education.

# Final Thoughts

- Comments shared through this survey affirm similar feedback given by smaller samples of parents, staff and community members at the beginning of the district's Strategic Planning process.
- Many concerns shared are out of the BOE's hands, such as teacher pay, reduction of teacher assistants and support staff in recent years, mandated testing, and increased duties on teachers.
- Some concerns shared are in the BOE's hands, however there is no clear consensus by participants for how they should be addressed, such as redistricting, "fair" administration of the WSE lottery, and increasing local teacher supplements (which requires both BOE and Board of Commissioners support).
- Comments do reflect a need for the BOE and district administration to take a closer look at how to address increased interest/desire for having the district offer more local "school choice" and magnet offerings.
- While themes are certainly important, every comment shared should be considered by any district leadership using the survey feedback in its decision making.