



State-of-the-District Survey REPORT FINAL

February 25, 2020

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**Hiawatha Schools USD 415
2020 State-of-the-District Online Survey
Final Report
February 25, 2020**

Introduction

Uncovering, understanding and managing stakeholder perception has been a focus of Hiawatha Schools USD 415, and these actions are evident by the district conducting its second State-of-the-District (SOTD) survey.

In January, SOTD online surveys were made available to four key constituent groups in the district – parents, staff, community members and high school students. The only differences among the surveys were the demographic questions and some questions were not asked to students because they would not have the knowledge to answer.

The survey was intended to gauge the current views on a variety of aspects of the district's performance, determine what information sources stakeholders use for school district news and information, and seek stakeholders' thoughts on facility needs and usage.

Survey response totals by group included:

Parents - 194
High school students - 170
Community - 114
Staff - 95

Total responses – 573

The total number of survey respondents increased from the previous year's survey by 18 percent. The largest group increase was in community members who went from 42 respondents in 2018 to 114 respondents (171 percent increase) in 2020 – and among the community respondents, there was an increase of 35 percent of non-parent patrons.

Please note, not all individuals who participated answered all the questions – a situation that is typical with online surveys.

The results of the online surveys are shown below, along with comparison numbers from a few

questions that were also on the previous year's surveys. As this data is reviewed, please note the percentages may add to more or less than 100 percent, due to rounding.

1. What grade – A, B, C, D or F – would you give the Hiawatha Schools USD 415 on the following areas? *Results on this question are reported, using a 5-point weighted scale. In this scale, 4.00 is considered the equivalent of a “B,” and “n” is the number of participants in each group who responded.*

District Factor	Parents '20 (n=194)	Parents '18 (n=152)	Staff '20 (n=94)	Staff '18 (n=81)	Community '20 (n=114)	Community '18 (n=42)	Students '20 (n=170)	Students '18 (n=204)
Quality of instruction	4.04	4.25	4.26	4.33	3.77	3.75	3.97	3.85
Quality of the school facilities	3.63	3.77	3.36	3.59	3.39	3.28	3.85	3.57
Value received for the tax dollars spent by the district	3.62	3.74	3.68	3.67	3.49	3.56	3.55	3.03
Preparing students to be college- and career-ready	3.73	3.94	3.98	4.01	3.49	3.55	3.70	3.85
The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.62	3.71	3.89	3.76	3.42	3.23	3.76	3.56
The district's efforts to involve the community in decision-making	3.24	3.48	3.62	3.7	3.06	2.90	3.37	3.25
The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.33	3.61	3.81	3.81	3.10	2.95	3.58	3.26
Safety of students	4.07	4.23	4.38	4.36	3.76	3.88	4.20	4.14
The district's history in keeping its promises	3.54	3.70	3.64	3.54	3.28	3.12	3.60	3.26

Based on a 5-point weighted scale – where 5.00=A, 4.00=B, 3.00=C and 2.00=D – all the district factors in 2020 received a grade above a 3.00. An overall score of 5.00 is only possible if all respondents answered each statement with an A.

The top-performing factor (highlighted) for parents, staff and students was “Safety of students,” while community members rated “Quality of instruction” as the top factor.

The items with the lowest scores included “The district’s efforts to involve the community in decision-making” and “The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns.” While these factors were rated low – which is typical – the staff, community and student rankings of these factors increased in agreement from 2018. However, parents ranked them lower. The district should continue implementing its communications efforts/community outreach – Red Hawk Talks, district newsletter, Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee, for example – and be mindful to have representation from parents.

2. **How important do you think it is that the school district have facilities for vocational/technical programs?** *This question was asked in the spring 2019 Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee survey.*

Response Options	Parents (n=194))	Staff (n=93)	Community (n=111)	Students (n=165)
Very important	85%	75%	78%	47%
Somewhat important	14%	20%	14%	41%
Not very important	1%	1%	5%	6%
Not at all important	0%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	1%	2%	3%	5%

3. **You may or may not know there is overcrowding in the elementary school. How important is it to build a new elementary school?** *Students were not asked this question. This question was asked in the spring 2019 Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee survey.*

Response Options	Parents (n=194)	Staff (n=93)	Community (n=112)
Very important	42%	60%	38%
Somewhat important	33%	30%	34%
Not very important	14%	6%	10%
Not at all important	6%	2%	12%
Don't know	6%	1%	7%

4. **If a new elementary school was built, the district could use the current elementary for another purpose. Read the short list of ideas and mark the ideas you like, if any. If you have a different idea, please share it in "other."** *Students were not asked this question. This question was asked in the spring 2019 Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee survey.*

Response Options	Parents (n=193)	Staff (n=92)	Community (n=110)
Utilize the building for early childhood development and preschool	24%	28%	22%
Move the district office and special education services to the site	19%	21%	17%
Utilize the site for a combination of the above	53%	66%	50%
Don't know	12%	1%	10%
Other – Responses are noted in the report addendum.	12%	9%	18%

5. **Currently, the elementary school uses a small multipurpose room as its gymnasium. How would you rate the need for a gym in the elementary school?** *Students were not asked this question. This question was asked in the spring 2019 Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee survey.*

Response Options	Parents (n=192)	Staff (n=93)	Community (n=110)
Very important	61%	63%	62%
Somewhat important	22%	24%	19%
Not very important	8%	9%	10%
Not at all important	7%	2%	5%
Don't know	2%	2%	5%

6. **How interested are you in learning more about how USD 415's financial processes work?** *Students were not asked this question. This question was only asked in 2020.*

Response Options	Parents (n=193)	Staff (n=93)	Community (n=110)
Extremely interested	35%	44%	40%
Somewhat interested	51%	45%	38%
Not interested	10%	9%	18%
Not at all interested	4%	2%	4%

With significant interest from your stakeholders to learn more about the district's financial processes, it would be worthwhile to have a strategy to communicate this information.

7. Besides your friends and neighbors, what other source do you turn to first for school district news and information?

Communications Source	Total Count '20 (n=558)	Parents '20 (n=189)	Parents '18 (n=137)	Staff '20 (n=94)	Staff '18 (n=72)	Community '20 (n=109)	Community '18 (n=31)	Students '20 (n=166)	Students '18 (n=182)
Newspaper	40	18	13	9	7	9	9	4	15
Radio news	30	7	11	7	7	6	4	10	4
Television news	18	2	1	0	0	3	0	13	7
District leadership (School Board, superintendent)	25	8	1	5	3	1	0	11	2
Building leadership (principals and assistant principals)	27	5	4	17	8	0	1	5	3
Teachers and other staff members	83	22	26	19	26	15	4	27	60
School- or school-district-affiliated social media (Facebook, etc.)	287	116	78	36	19	65	13	70	73
Social media not affiliated with the school district	34	8	3	1	2	8	0	17	18
Other	Responses are noted in the report addendum.								

The top communications source for all the audiences was “School- or school-district-affiliated social media” with “Teachers and other staff members” ranked second. These were also the top two sources in the 2018 survey, except for community members ranking “Newspaper” as the second highest source.

Although social media is the news source your stakeholders turn to first, not every audience uses social media, and a large majority uses more than one communications channel. Therefore, you should employ the C.O.P.E. strategy – create once, publish everywhere.

Consider the ways to use an image and accompanying narrative across digital and printed content. C.O.P.E. is not just about using the same content on different social media platforms. It can be a powerful (and oftentimes freeing) strategy to quickly build effective district and school newsletters, websites, fliers, or other outputs around consistent and strategic content.

- 8. The district is starting a Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee. In this group, there are no meetings. Participants are simply asked to complete a 5-minute online survey – covering school district topics and ideas – about four or five times a year. Would you be willing to take part – at least try the first one or two surveys – to share your input with the district?**

YES	
Parents	43
Staff	8
Community	22

With eight out of the nine factors in Question 1 being graded slightly lower than in 2018 on the parent survey, you should be proactive in reaching out to those individuals who want to be involved in the Virtual Citizens Advisory Committee (VCAC). It will be important to hear the voice of and get this stakeholder group more involved.

The emails for those individuals who are interested in taking part in the VCAC are listed in the attached addendum to this report.

Demographics

Parents: Location of current students

Hiawatha Elementary – 112
Hiawatha Middle School – 85
Hiawatha High School – 96
Chose not to answer – 3

Staff: Length of time working in the district

Less than 2 years – 18
2 years to 5 years – 17
More than 5 years to 10 years – 18
More than 10 years to 15 years – 19
More than 15 years – 21
Chose not to answer – 2

Community: Length of time lived within school district boundaries

Less than 2 years – 5
2 years to 5 years – 7
More than 5 years to 10 years – 9
More than 10 years to 15 years – 19
More than 15 years – 69
Chose not to answer – 5 people

Community: Current student attending school in USD 415

Yes, I have a student attending school in USD 415– 68
No, I do not have a student attending school in USD 415 – 40
Chose not to answer – 6

High school students

High school students – 170
Chose not to answer – 0

ADDENDUM

“Other” verbatim comments

Question: Besides your friends and neighbors, what other source do you turn to first for school district news and information?

<u>PARENTS</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>STUDENTS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Text/Textcaster – 3▪ Website▪ Not social media. The school should never use it as the only source of getting information out.▪ School website▪ School website - which is totally frustrating with its lack of information.▪ Newspaper▪ All of the above▪ Would have been nice to have a comments question.▪ I also feel there needs to be an additional comment section on these surveys to voice our concerns, as the Board office often ignores our concerns as parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Website▪ Newspaper, district leadership, building leadership, teachers and other staff, social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ School website – 2▪ Can’t really turn to anyone because everything is “top secret.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Parents/Mom – 5▪ District website – 4▪ None/Nothing – 3▪ Text/Textcaster – 3▪ School website – 2▪ Friends▪ The school weather app▪ Mrs. Shefferd▪ All of the above

Question: If a new elementary school was built, the district could use the current elementary for another purpose. Read the short list of ideas and mark the ideas you like, if any. If you have a different idea, please share in “other.” *The students were not asked this question.*

PARENTS

I’m not sure it would be beneficial to move anything there, due to the amount of work it needs because problems with the building were not addressed when they arose.

You could use it to store all of your stupid ideas.

Add on to current school.

Special Ed.

We are the only school in the league with one basketball gym at the high school – forces our children to have late practices on school nights. Maybe we could also upgrade the gym at the elementary school to be used for high school practices.

Sell.

Build a new high school and move 7/8 to old high school.

Vocational purposes?

Add on or remodel.

Vocational education for students and adults.

Use it for specified vocational classes and/or college courses. Have the college courses held there to give a separate atmosphere away from the high school that would feel as if they were in the college setting on campus.

If you build a new grade school, while the high school needs repairs, the district is negligent.

Early childhood and Special Ed services.

Keep the district office where it is. Then use the Special Education for technical school opportunities.

Sell the property to reduce tax burden.

We don’t need a new school, until we finish paying on last repairs.

Vocational education.

Another facility equals more expenses.

Utilize for any other USD 415 needs.

Don't build another elementary school.

Gymnasium.

Put the middle school with the high school and move the elementary school to the middle school and keep all the schools in one area, so they don't have to be bussed across town. I think that would be better for the kids and parents.

I don't believe there is overcrowding. I believe there are people in key positions making irresponsible decisions. Case in point is the new drop off for the school. The new parking lot and how to drop off children is inconvenient. Delaying the drop-off process when we were ensured it would expedite the process.

Possibly NEK-CAP Head Start and Early Head Start partnership could be very beneficial for the community.

STAFF

Hopefully you include preschool for all students!

I don't think we should keep the old building.

A new elementary is not necessary.

Early childhood development and Board office.

Utilize the space as a "club" Space for different school organizations such as KAYS, musical groups, study areas and other clubs.

Remodel it! Why would you move the district offices there? That would be another cost when they have a good building.

Keep the playground available and use the buildings for NECAP or early childhood.

I do not feel it is in the best interest of the district to build a new school at the expense of your employees. Making more room at the elementary does not ensure you will be able to fill all your positions without a competitive wage.

COMMUNITY

It doesn't matter, since the buildings aren't taken care of. With the current track record of building maintenance (entire district), whatever moves in won't be able to stay long.

Focus on making the high school better first. We have leaking ceilings and plumbing problems.

Classrooms for grades. Some grades in the old building and some grades in the new building.

Don't tie up more tax dollars in a building that is still usable.

I am very disappointed there are not spaces to make comments. I would think they would want to know why they were graded below a B or C.

Create a place for the children within the community (include ACES summer food program and a place for children to go in the summer for the parents who need it).s

Sell it to the city.

Don't need a new one.

Use the building for technical training classes; there are so many students where college just isn't the right fit and giving them a trade would greatly impact their lives.

Just add on and save money.

Tutor area for kids who are struggling.

Collaborating with your local Head Start program would be a wonderful idea. Head Start is an amazing program and would benefit families in the community if HES and Head Start were to combine forces and do what is best for these young students.

Sell it.

Add onto the current site, build a gymnasium and maybe move a few other classrooms over to new building. A sheltered walkway can connect the two.

A sports facility or a gym.

Use it for something useful, like a summer lunch program for the kids that is not a jail. Maybe try feeding the kids actual meals, instead of appetizers as a main course. What a waste.

Move pre-k and kindergarten to the annex or a new building and use the rest for 1-4. The annex and tech buildings are not being used wisely. Then you can spend the money on more important things such as the quality of the education.

Donate it for community center.

We don't need another school or tax.

We don't need another school built and don't need our tax dollars spent on useless stuff!