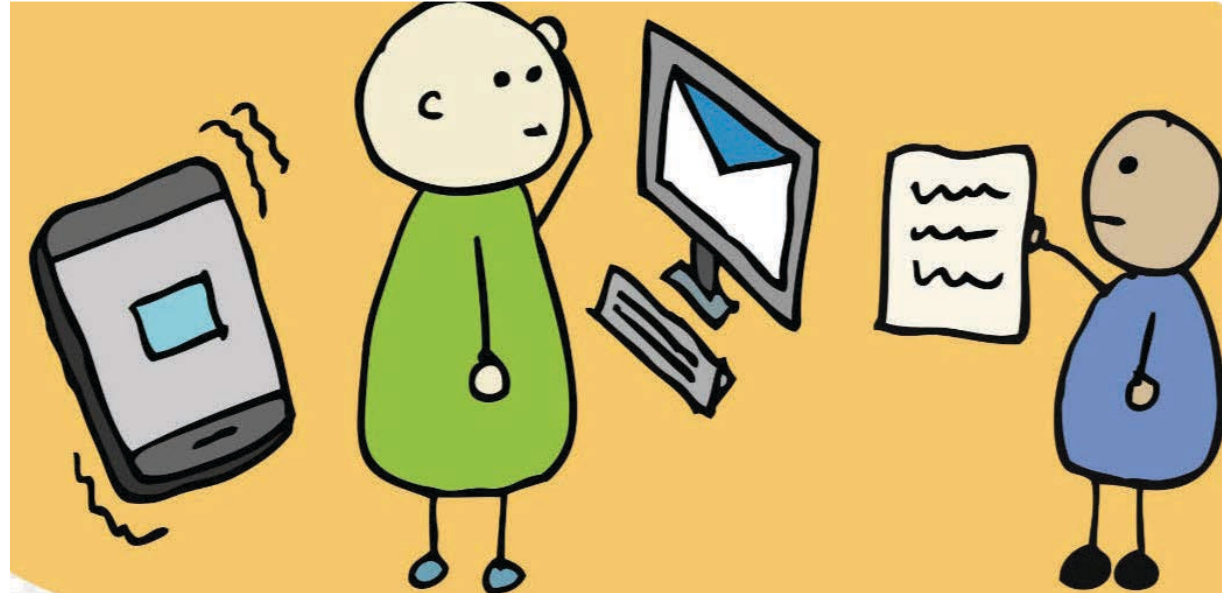


What Do Parents Want in School Communication?



Why is Communication Important?

Quality communication = Positive impressions of school district

- The annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Education Poll, in 2010 found about half of respondents gave their schools a grade of A or B
- Research would suggest those schools that invest in communication, that are open and transparent, receive higher marks from the communities they serve
- BE PROACTIVE in communicating; builds trust and increases parent/community perception of a quality of school district

Communication Traits of Great Schools

Great schools don't just saturate their audiences with information, they also ask for feedback. Feedback provides insight into how your parents are thinking and feeling...and what they are sharing with others.

A service mindset is an important characteristic of good school communication.

All communication should reflect the district's/school's culture, and a good communications plan makes certain that parents are familiar with the goals, mission and values of the district/school.

Administration needs to join in the conversation -- When the superintendent and principals are engaging in regular communication, your parents feel valued and included...and will get more involved as a result.

Brag...when achievements are shared, this builds a sense of pride among your parents...and Recognize...reward parents who embody the district's/school's culture.

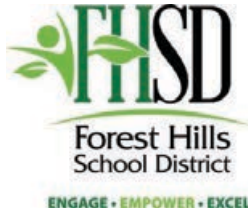
Types of Surveys

- Informal (observations)
- Formal (intentionally asking questions)
 - Face-to-Face (focus groups, interviews)
 - Questionnaires (phone, written, mail, online)

Building a Survey

- determine what you want to know /questions
 - have right people at table
 - stay focused on priorities
- ask for demographic info
 - so you can sort by audience (age, race,

What Do Parents Want In Communication?



Community online survey
Focus groups
(no consultant)



Community phone survey
(with consultant)

www.ohspra.org
@OHSPRA



National phone survey
(they are consultant)

National Survey

- 43,000+ parents in 2011
- Three levels of communication researched:
 - School to home
 - Classroom to home
 - District to community
- Three areas of communication researched:
 - content
 - delivery systems
 - frequency



FHSD Survey

- 325 community members in April 2015 via SurveyMonkey
- Five levels of communication researched:
 - School to parents
 - District to community
 - District to employee
 - District to alumni
 - District to student
- Three areas of communication researched:
 - content
 - delivery systems
 - frequency
- Also asked about education decision-maker in home



KCS Survey



- Conducted with 300 randomly-selected registered voters who reside within the Kettering School District, using a combination of valid residential and cellular telephone listings
- +/- 5.65% overall estimated margin of error, with a confidence interval of 11.3% within which the results can vary
 - May 11 – May 14, 2015
- Areas of communication researched:
 - Frequency of communication
 - Where respondents get information about their schools
 - Preferred delivery methods



Information Desired From Classroom

	Elementary	Secondary
Updates about how well my child is doing in school and how I can help him/her do better.	83	74
Timely notices when my child's performance is slipping.	67	76
Information about my child's behavior and how he/she gets along with other students.	61	37
Information about what my child is expected to learn during this school year.	55	43
Homework and grading policies.	38	48
Classroom events calendar.	39	33
Best ways for communicating with the teacher (e-mail, phone, meetings, etc.).	27	43
Descriptions of daily instructional activities and how they meet the needs of my child.	36	26
Opportunities for parents to volunteer or be involved in the classroom or grade-level activities (field trips, special programs, etc.)	30	16

Information Desired From School

	Elementary	Secondary
Curriculum/educational program changes and updates.	57	55
Descriptions of the curriculum and instructional programs in place at the school.	58	50
Calendar of events/meetings.	48	45
Information about student graduation/course requirements.	9	42
Information about how the school is performing compared to other schools within the school district or neighboring districts.	42	35
Information about student safety incidents and precautions being taken by the school.	37	40
Information about the quality of teaching.	37	38
Information about before/after school and extracurricular programs.	36	34
Parent involvement opportunities.	37	28
Rationale/reasons for the decisions made by the school leadership (principal).	32	33
Description of optional schools or programs available.	26	25
Lunch menus and nutritional information.	19	6
School building construction/renovation updates.	6	6

Information Desired From District

	Parents	Non-Parents
Rationale/reasons for decisions made by the school district	59	65
Curriculum/educational program options	62	57
Information about how well the school district is performing compared to other school districts at the state and national level	53	56
Budget/tax/finance election information and funding updates	43	58
Information about safety-related incidents and precautions on or near school grounds	43	31
School closings and other time-sensitive information	43	30
Calendar of events	38	32
Opportunities for community members to be involved with the schools	22	34
School construction/campus improvements and renovations	14	21
Awards and recognitions	17	17
Student enrollment information	13	14



Information Desired From District



Facilities and construction information

36.25%

Academics (curriculum, programs, test scores, etc.)

35.00%

Events

32.50%

Student and staff achievements

30.00%

District goals

16.25%

HR (trainings, staff contacts, changes, union contracts, etc.)

13.75%

Extracurricular activities

13.75%

Legislative and state mandates

12.50%

Technology in classrooms

11.25%

Information Desired From District

PARENTS:

Academics (curriculum, programs, test scores, etc.)

55.17%

Events

37.93%

Facilities and construction

37.93%

Student and staff achievements

24.14%

Volunteer opportunities

17.24%

Technology in classrooms

13.79%

RESIDENT, NO CHILDREN IN SCHOOL (55-65 mostly):

Student and staff achievements

Key Take-Aways

1. Curriculum and learning are always important topics for parents.
2. What parents want to know changes depending on the source of information and demographics.
3. What parents and non-parents want to know differs.

Importance of Determining the Preferred Method

- Can't abandon a method of communication until community clearly says they don't want it any more (less than 10 percent use)
- Electronic vs print/US mail
- Helps determine priority communication channels
- Societal expectations

Preferred Methods

	Parent	Non-Parent
E-mail from the district/school	3.8	3.5
District/School e-newsletters or news updates via email	3.4	3.0
District/School websites	3.3	3.4
Online parent portal (Online access to grades, attendance, assignments, etc.)	3.4	2.7
Telephone messaging system/voice-messaging system/emergency parent notification system	3.3	2.7
District/School print newsletters/publications	2.7	2.7
Text messages	2.6	2.1
Newspaper	2.1	2.7
PTA/PTO meetings/newsletters	2.2	2.1
Newspaper websites	2.0	2.5
Community forums/town halls	2.0	2.3
Television	1.9	2.6
Television station websites	1.9	2.3
Attendance at school board meetings/board minutes	1.8	2.1
Radio	1.7	2.2
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, etc.)	1.8	1.8
District/Education cable TV channel	1.6	2.1

Preferred Methods

Email

61.45%

District website

28.92%

School newsletter

24.10%

Jostle (staff intranet)

18.07%

Mobile app

15.66%

Text messages

14.46%

Forest Hills Journal

12.05%

District newsletter mailed to my home

9.64%

Forest Hills School District Facebook page

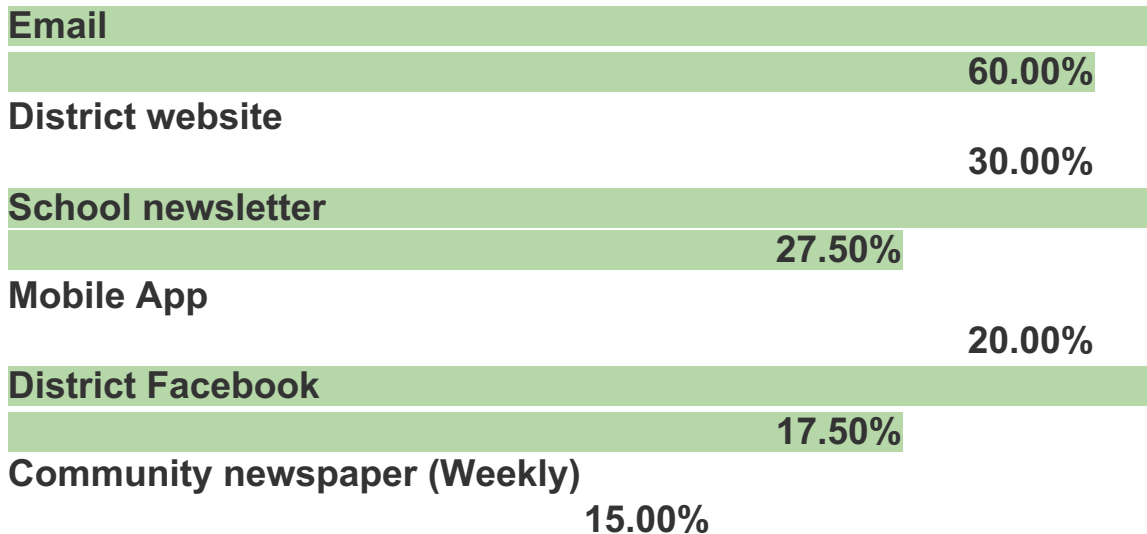
9.64%

Forest Hills School District Twitter feed



Preferred Methods

PARENTS:



RESIDENT, NO CHILDREN IN SCHOOL (55-65 mostly):



Preferred Methods



AMONG ALL:	Parents:	Non-parents:	
29%	45%	23%	Reading school and district literature and publications
19%	17%	19%	Talking with parents and kids who attend the schools
18%	1%	23%	Reading the <i>Dayton Daily News</i>
7%	3%	8%	Viewing social media postings
5%	7%	5%	Talking with teachers that work at the schools
3%	3%	3%	Visiting the website
11%	18%	9%	Combination
7%	6%	8%	Other
1%	0%	2%	Unsure

How do you get most of your information about the Kettering School District?

Forced Choice Battery

www.FallonResearch.com

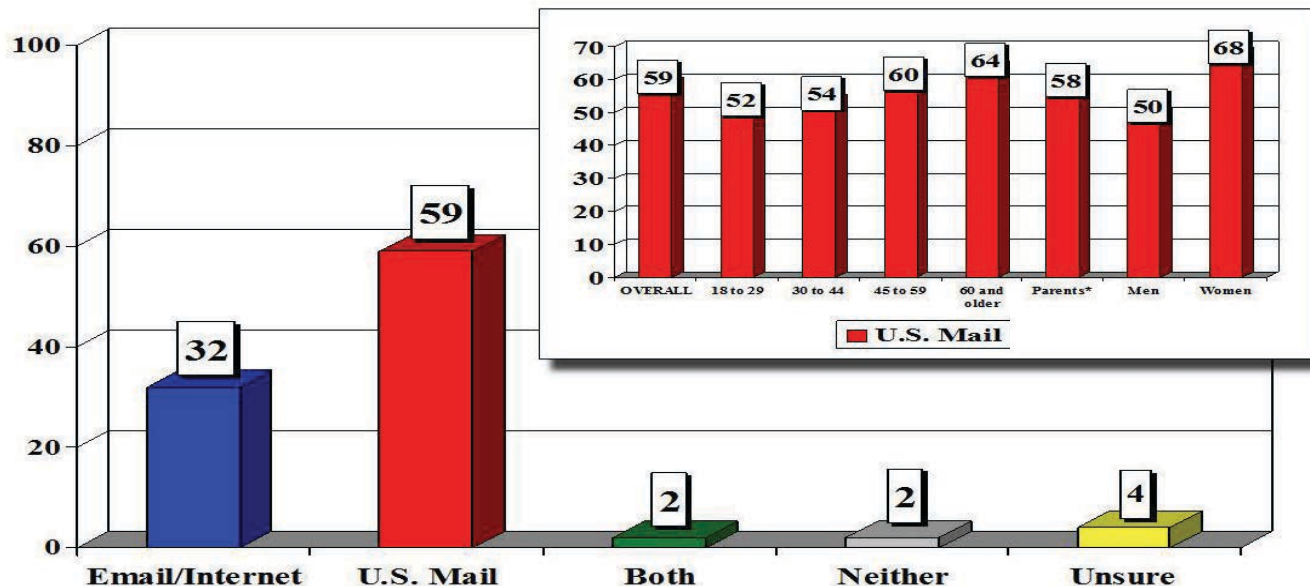
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@FallonResearch



Preferred Methods



As you may or may not know, the District publishes a newsletter for parents and residents of the Kettering School District. In the future, would you prefer that the newsletter be distributed by sending it electronically through email over the Internet or by sending it in the mail through the U.S. Postal Service?

Most Prefer U.S. Mail

* Difference was not statistically significant

www.FallonResearch.com

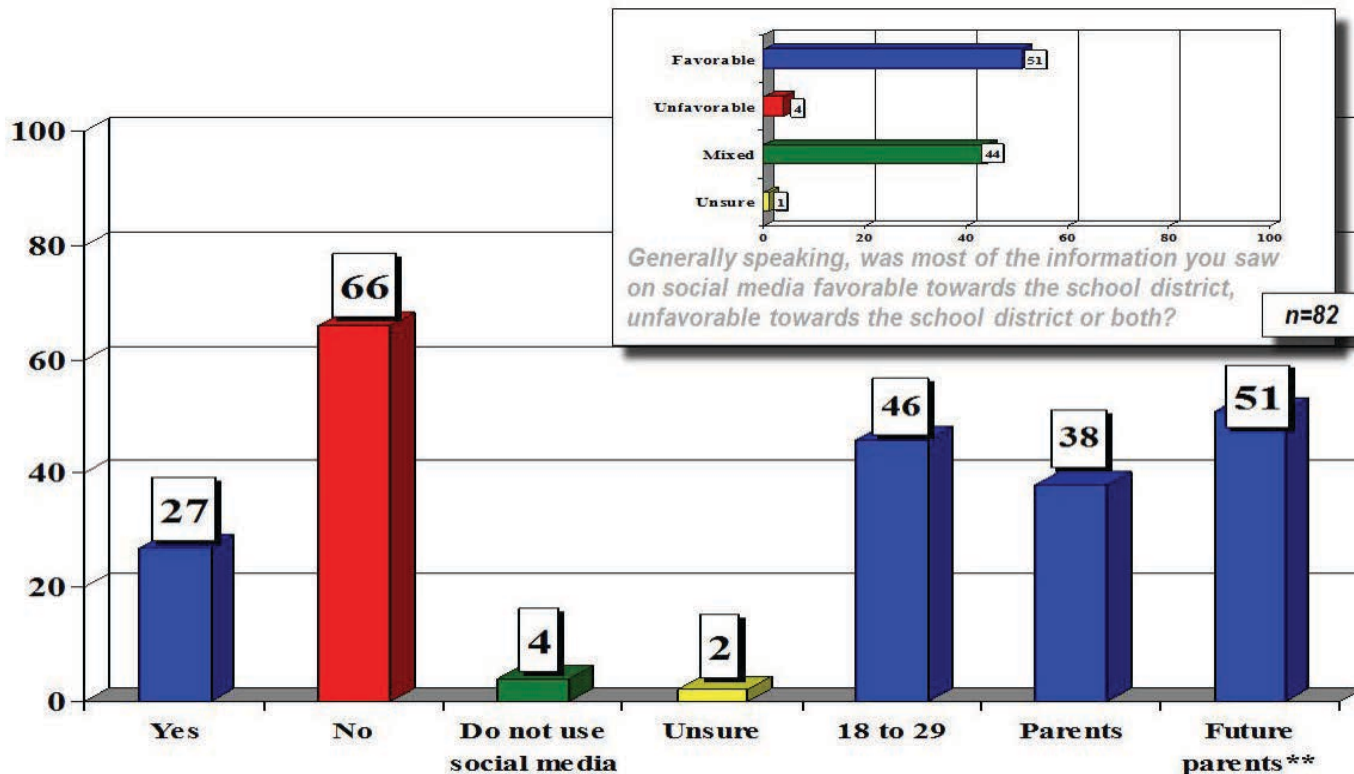
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@FallonResearch



Preferred Methods

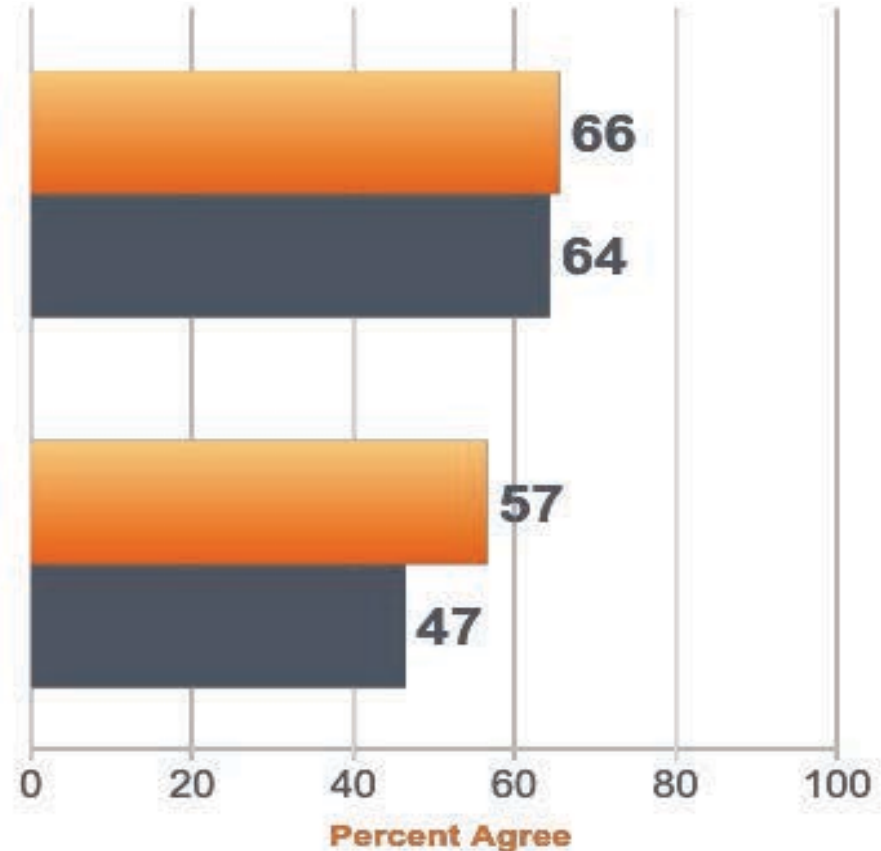


Over the last year, have you seen or noticed any news, information or posts about the Kettering School District on social media, such as the Facebook and Twitter accounts of friends, parents or others in the community?

Two-Way Communication

There are adequate opportunities for me to express my concerns and opinions about important issues impacting schools.

Concerns and opinions expressed by parents and the community are seriously considered by school district leaders.



Two-Way Communication: Social Media



www.ohspra.org
[@OHSpra](https://www.facebook.com/OHSpra)



Kettering City Schools
Create Page @Username

Home
About
Photos
Events
Reviews
Likes
Notes
Videos
Posts
Services
Shop
Manage Tabs

College and Career Day 2016
The Kettering City Schools are all about preparing students to be college- and career-ready! Check out this video overview of College and Career Day 2016, which was held last week at Fairmont High School. The video was produced by students in the Fairmont Interactive Media Tech Prep Program.

642 people reached

Like Comment Share

Haley Gabon, Joe Gyenes and 10 others

Kevin R. Lamar Cursive hand writing?
Like Reply Message 22 hrs

Write a comment

Kettering City Schools added 2 new photos
Published by Karl Basson (P) · November 7 at 3:35pm ·

YOU are invited! Learn about all that Fairmont High School has to offer students during the Fairmont Open House this Wednesday, November 9, at 6 p.m.

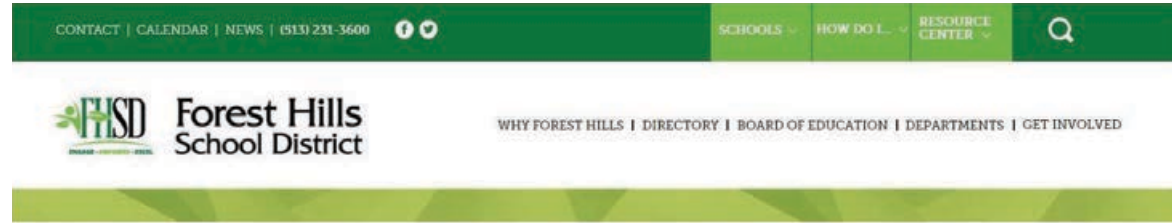
Two-Way Communication: Social Media



This is the OFFICIAL Kettering City Schools Facebook page for all past, present and future students, teachers, friends, business partners & others who support the mission and vision of our school district to share news & info about the district. We welcome all comments, including criticism. By using or accessing a Kettering City Schools Facebook page, you agree to comply with Facebook's Terms and Conditions. We will delete any content that is a violation of these terms or is contrary to our organization's values. Personal attacks, vulgarity or racism will not be tolerated and will be deleted immediately. Comments not related to the original post will also be deleted. By accessing, affiliating with or commenting on this page, your identity may be visible to third parties not affiliated with the Kettering City Schools. In addition, third parties may be able to access your profile and personal information. The Kettering City School District is not responsible for access to your identity, profile or personal information by third parties. It is the express responsibility of the user, or his/her parent or guardian, to protect the user's identity, profile and personal information.



Two-Way Communication: Website



≡ Contact Us?

We pride ourselves on serving you and providing students with a quality educational experience. We welcome comments and questions-- please reach out to us at any time! (Please be sure to provide complete and accurate contact information so we can respond as soon as possible.)

Name *

Email Address

Phone Number

Subject

Message

www.ohspra.org
[@OHSPRA](https://twitter.com/OHSPRA)



<https://www.foresthills.edu/contact-us.html>

Two-Way Communication: Website

- 50 inquiries since Sept. 10:
 - tech help
 - touring schools
 - scheduling
 - absence



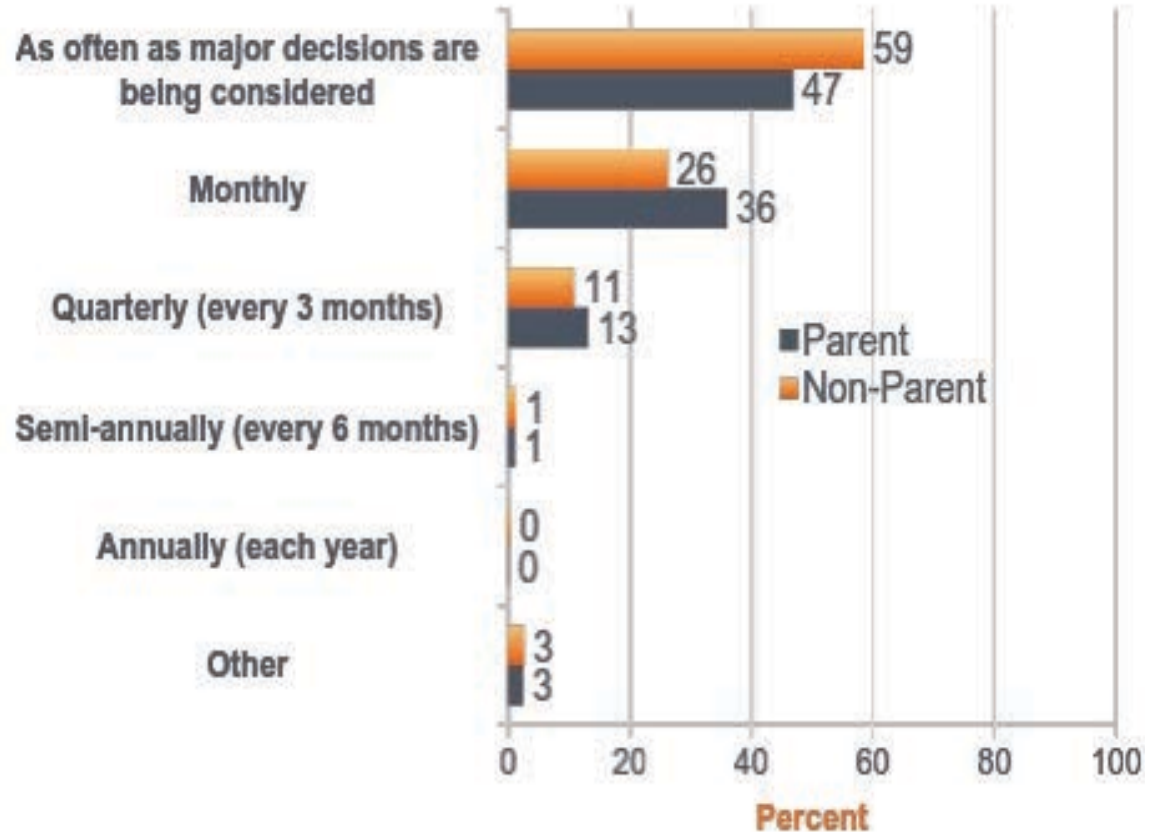
www.ohspra.org
[@OHSPRA](#)

I forgot to also mention how easy it was to reach out to the district from the new site! Very, very nice!

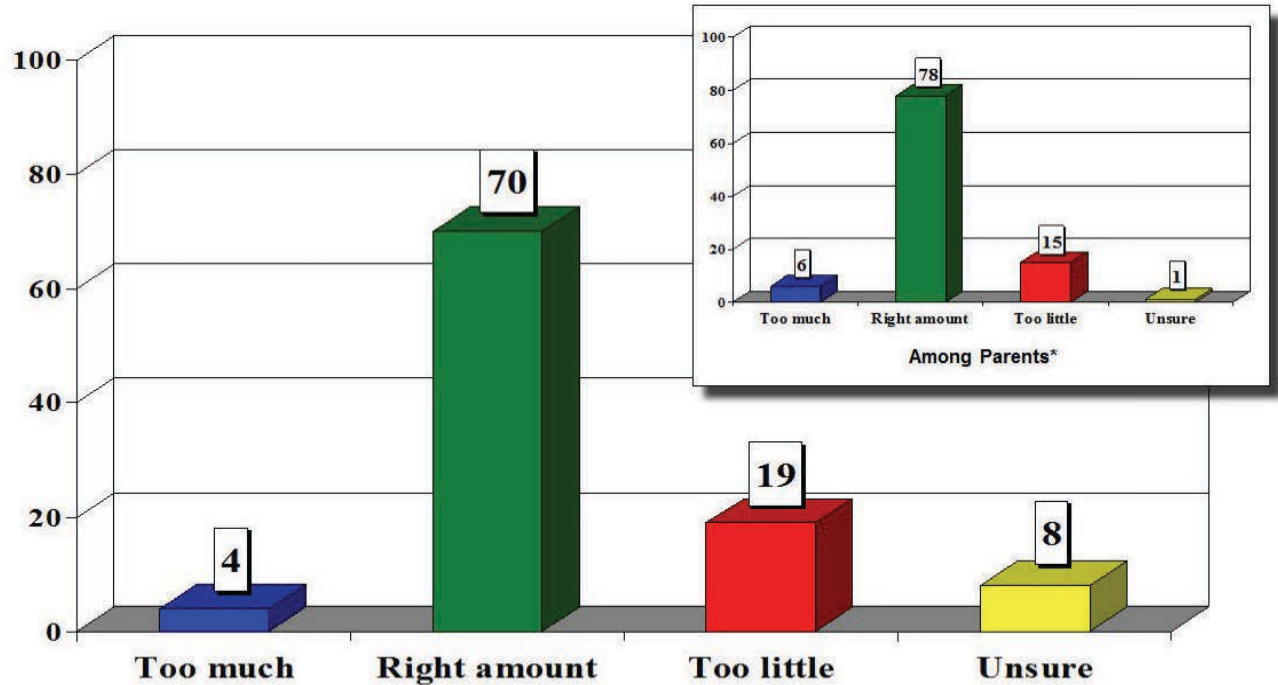
Pass it along. A busy, working Mom really appreciated the ease with which she was able to ask and get an answer!



Preferred Frequency



Preferred Frequency



www.ohspra.org
[@OHSpra](https://twitter.com/OHSpra)

Thinking about the amount of communication that you get from the Kettering School District, would you say it is too much, about the right amount or too little?

Most Residents & Parents Content

* Difference was not statistically significant



Preferred Frequency



Receive a good amount of news

60.24%

Receive too much news

8.43%

Would like to receive more news

27.71%

I receive no news from district

3.61%



Preferred Frequency



PARENTS:

Receive a good amount of news

52.50%

Receive too much news

7.50%

Would like to receive more news

37.50%

I receive no news from district

2.50%

www.ohspra.org
[@OHSPRA](https://twitter.com/OHSPRA)

RESIDENT, NO CHILDREN IN SCHOOL (55-65 mostly):

Receive a good amount of news

66.67%

Receive too much news



When You Can't Tell Them What They Want to Hear

- Explain the process that was followed
 - people involved
 - reasons for the decision
- Be prepared to explain why you did not communicate information
- Listen...don't just hear

The biggest
communication problem
is we do not listen to
understand.

We listen to reply.

Key Take-Aways

- don't make assumptions
 - use research to make determinations
- survey often
 - times, tech, people change

“the single biggest
problem in
communication is the
illusion that it
has taken place”

-George Bernard Shaw





NSPRA Communications Survey

Results and Analysis



Quick Background

Focus

- On three levels of communication:
 - School building to home
 - Classroom to home
 - School district to community
- Primarily on parents
- On communication content, delivery systems, and frequency of communication



Quick Background

- Additional findings related to participants:
How well informed are they?
- How they ...
 - Felt about state-wide K-12 issues
 - Rated the quality of education services of the local school district
 - Felt about opportunity to express concerns and have them considered
 - Felt about parent involvement



Quick Background

- Survey offered during February to April 2011 to all 1,627 NSPRA members
 - 105 signed Letter of Intent
 - 50 participated
- 268,917 residents were invited to participate
 - 43,410 responded
 - 16% response rate

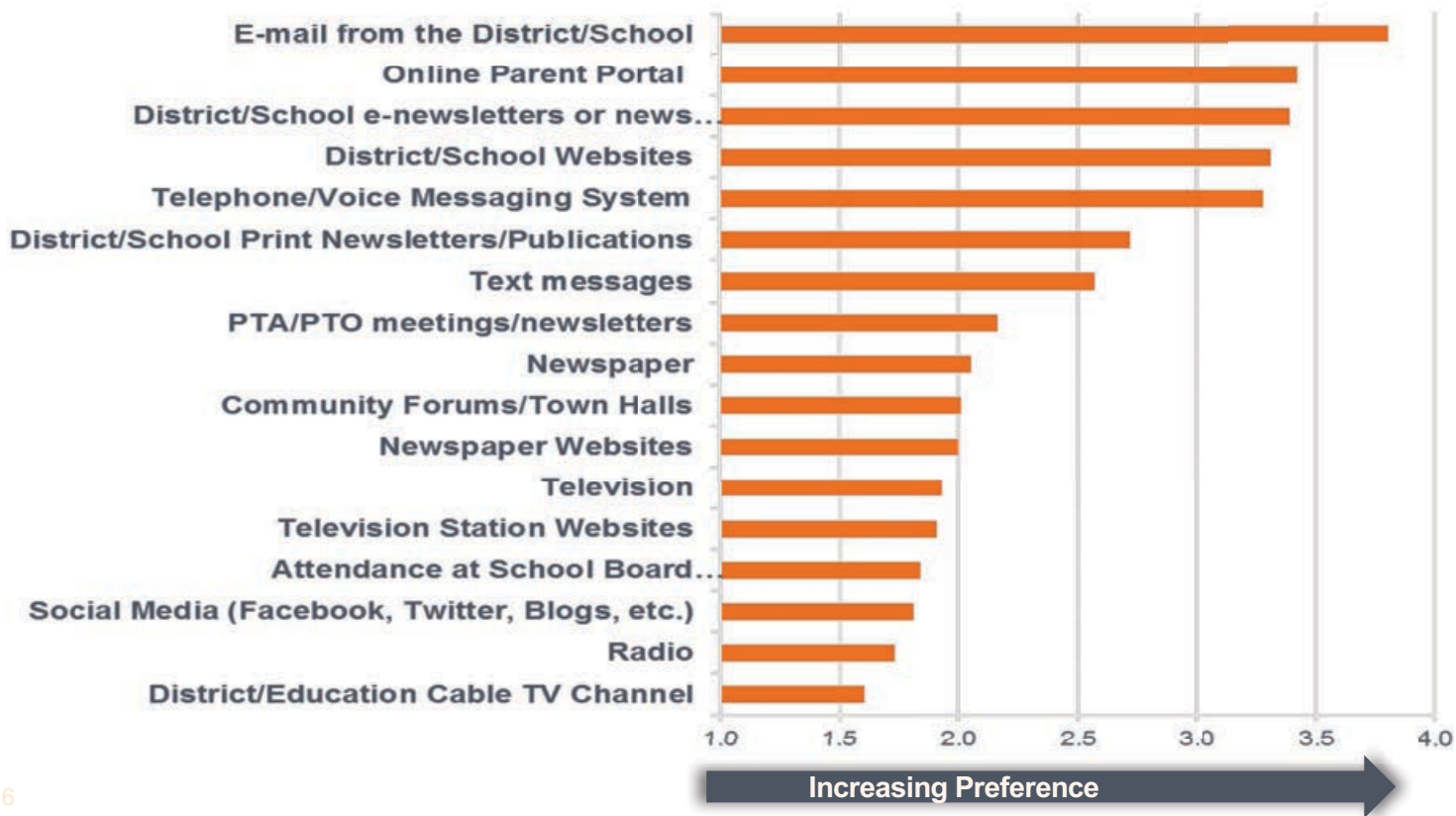


Quick Background

- Parent responses were segregated into elementary or secondary responses
- Participants were asked to respond concerning communication with their oldest child in school



How parents want to communicate with school





Where Respondents Prefer to Get Info

	Parent	Non-Parent
E-mail from the district/school	3.8	3.5
District/School e-newsletters or news updates via email	3.4	3.0
District/School websites	3.3	3.4
Online parent portal (Online access to grades, attendance, assignments, etc.)	3.4	2.7
Telephone messaging system/voice-messaging system/emergency parent notification system	3.3	2.7
District/School print newsletters/publications	2.7	2.7
Text messages	2.6	2.1
Newspaper	2.1	2.7
PTA/PTO meetings/newsletters	2.2	2.1
Newspaper websites	2.0	2.5
Community forums/town halls	2.0	2.3
Television	1.9	2.6
Television station websites	1.9	2.3
Attendance at school board meetings/board minutes	1.8	2.1
Radio	1.7	2.2
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, etc.)	1.8	1.8
District/Education cable TV channel	1.6	2.1
Other	1.3	1.6

Respondents rated common media on a 4-point scale (1=Least preferred to 4=Most preferred) for where they prefer to get information about schools. Average scores for each group are displayed.

Electronic/Internet-based sources like email, e-newsletters, district websites, and parent portals tended to be the most preferred information sources.



Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Responses for parents and, for the most part, non-parents can be divided into 3 clusters:
 - New media from school districts
 - Traditional media and tactics
 - TV, radio, Twitter, blogs, etc.
- Preferences could be seen as a matter of trust



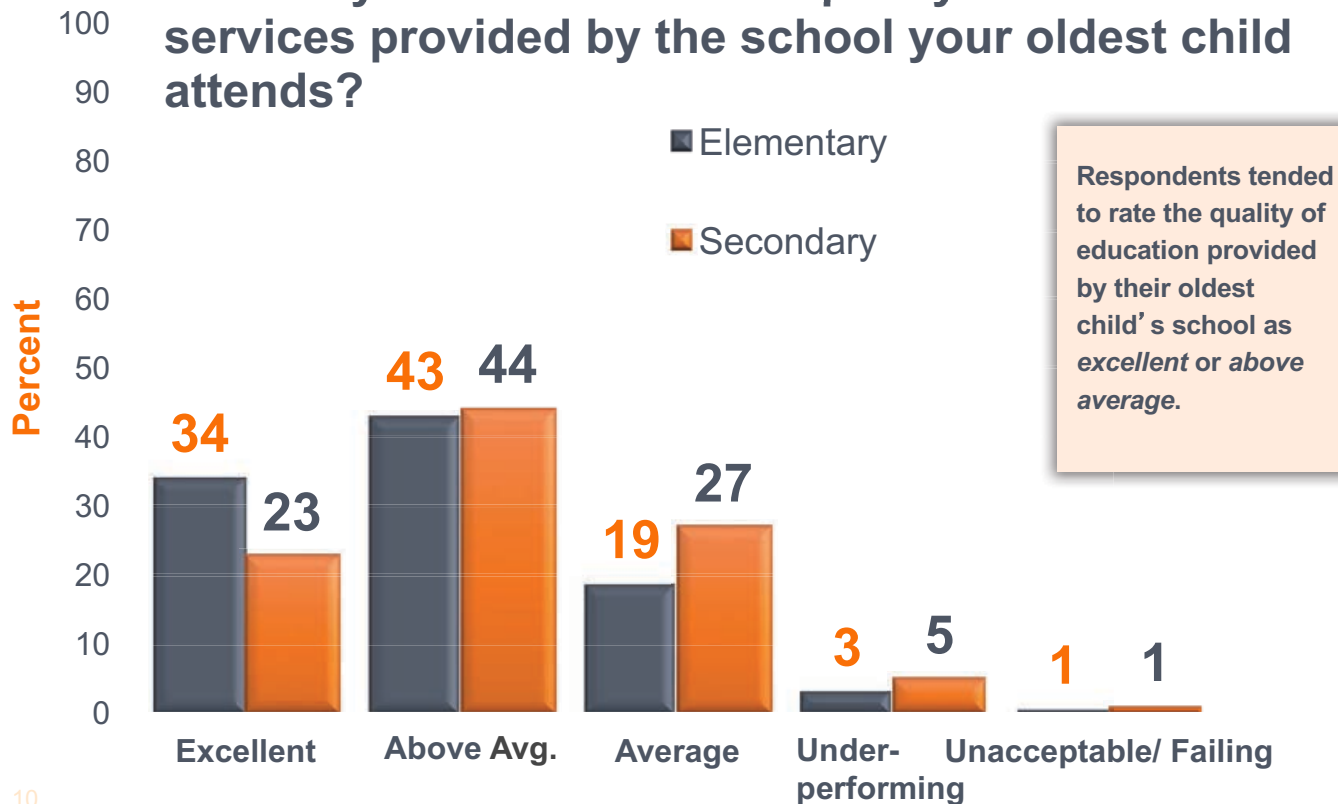
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Transparency by school district in open e-communication is seen as the priority go-to source of credible information in NSPRA member districts
- Other traditional sources are not as preferred
- Low ranking for TV, radio, Facebook, Twitter may show a credibility problem or not yet used frequently enough by target audiences



Quality of Education for Child's School

How do you rate the overall quality of education services provided by the school your oldest child attends?





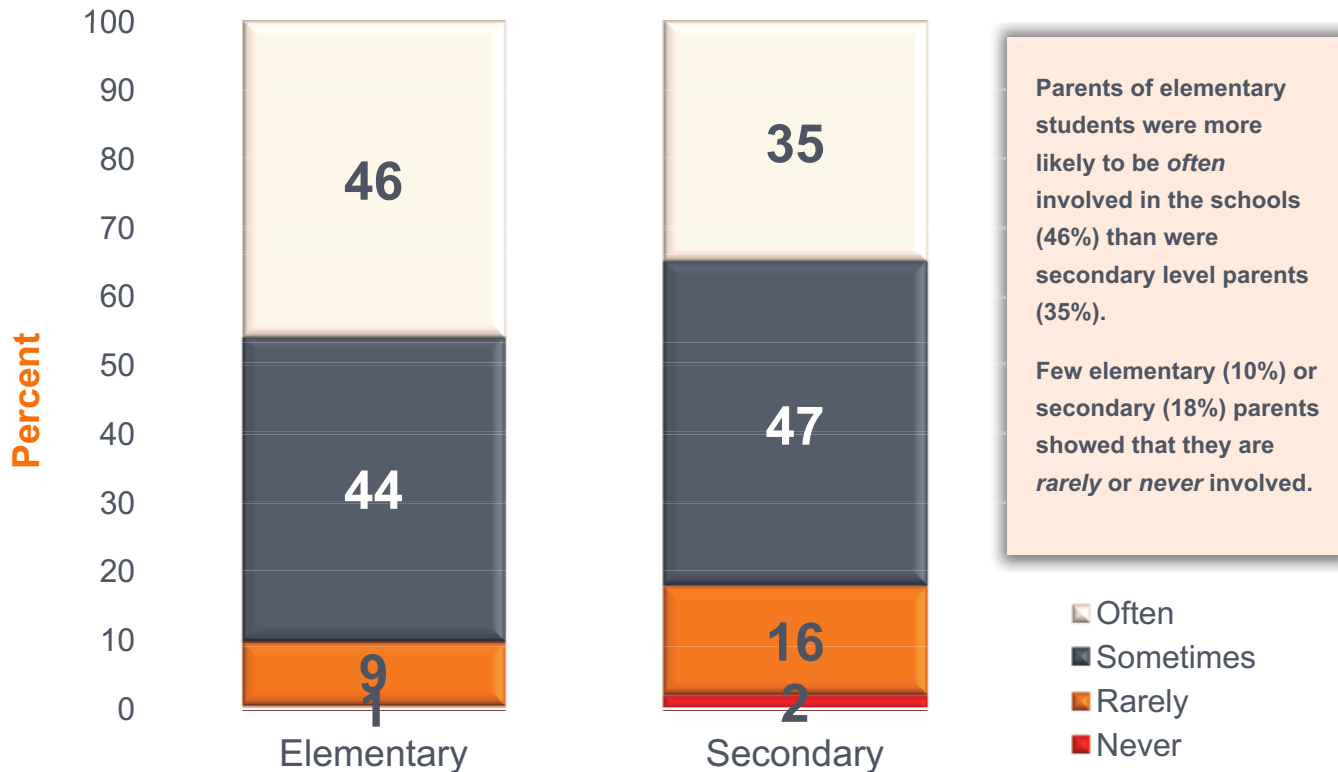
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- In an era of intense focus on the return on investment for taxes, results indicate those institutions that value transparency through their investment in communication are the first choice for information
- Open communication leads to greater trust and appreciation for the services provided



Parent Involvement at School

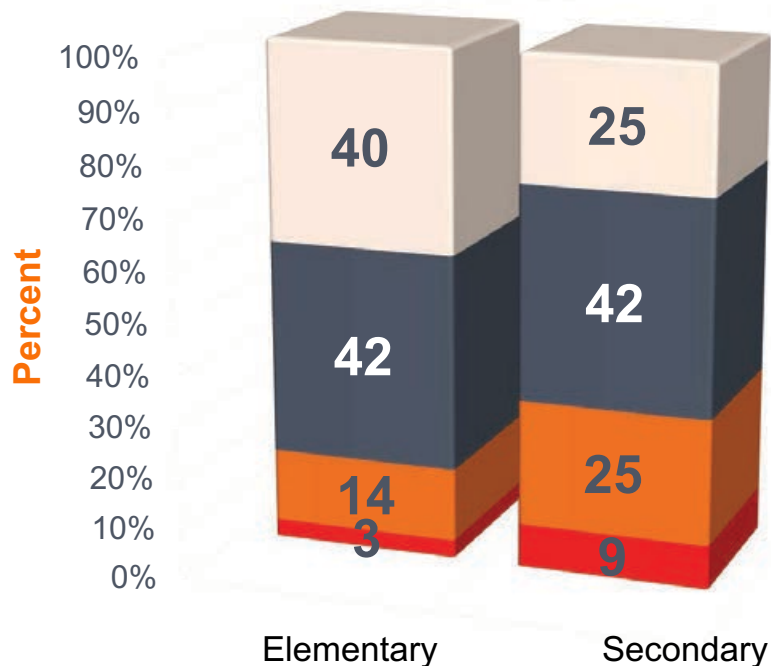
How often are you involved in your child's school?





Parents' Feelings of Being Informed

How well informed do you feel about the events, activities, and issues at the school your oldest child attends?



Elementary school parents were more likely than secondary parents to indicate that they feel *very well informed* about issues at their child's school (40% vs. 25%).

As many as one-third of secondary parents showed that they were only *somewhat* or *not very well* informed.

- Very well informed
- Pretty well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not very well informed



Information Desired from School

What information are you most interested in receiving from your child's school?

	Elementary	Secondary
Curriculum/educational program changes and updates.	57	55
Descriptions of the curriculum and instructional programs in place at the school.	58	50
Calendar of events/meetings.	48	45
Information about student graduation/course requirements.	9	42
Information about how the school is performing compared to other schools within the school district or neighboring districts.	42	35
Information about student safety incidents and precautions being taken by the school.	37	40
Information about the quality of teaching.	37	38
Information about before/after school and extracurricular programs.	36	34
Parent involvement opportunities.	37	28
Rationale/reasons for the decisions made by the school leadership (principal).	32	33
Description of optional schools or programs available.	26	25
Lunch menus and nutritional information.	19	6
School building construction/renovation updates.	6	6

Respondents indicated the type of information they wanted to receive from their child's school. The most requested kind of information concerned the curriculum and educational programs, with more than half of the respondents expressed interest in this type of information.

Secondary parents were also interested in learning more about graduation and course requirements.



Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- There is far more opportunity for one-to-one parent interaction with teachers at elementary grades. Schools need to find better ways to interact with the parents of secondary school students.
- Parents expressed direct interest in what their children are learning. We need to do a better job of communicating the curriculum, its intent, and how young people will apply their learning in future endeavors.



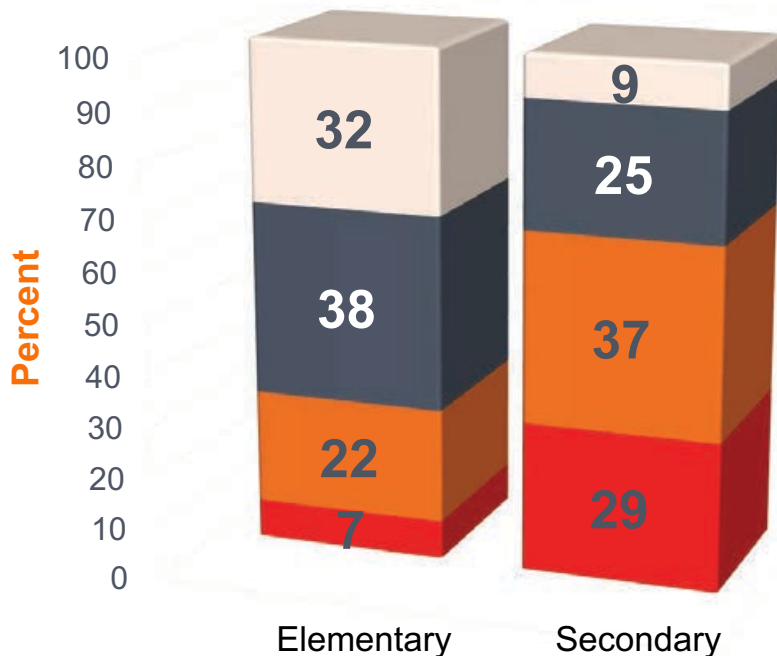
Communications from the Classroom

Parents of school-aged children answered these questions



Informed about the Classroom

How well informed do the teachers of your oldest child keep you about classroom activities, events and requirements?



Parents showed a desire for more communications from the classroom teachers.

One-third of elementary and 9% of secondary parents said that they feel *very well informed* about the activities in their child's classroom.

Only one-third of secondary parents said they are *very well* or *pretty well* informed.

- Very well informed
- Pretty well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not very well informed



Questions about the Classroom

What information are you most interested in receiving from your child's teacher?

	Elementary	Secondary
Updates about how well my child is doing in school and how I can help him/her do better.	83	74
Timely notices when my child's performance is slipping.	67	76
Information about my child's behavior and how he/she gets along with other students.	61	37
Information about what my child is expected to learn during this school year.	55	43
Homework and grading policies.	38	48
Classroom events calendar.	39	33
Best ways for communicating with the teacher (e-mail, phone, meetings, etc.).	27	43
Descriptions of daily instructional activities and how they meet the needs of my child.	36	26
Opportunities for parents to volunteer or be involved in the classroom or grade-level activities (field trips, special programs, etc.)	30	16

The most requested information from the classroom teachers concerned students' performance and how parents can help their child to do better in school; secondary parents also request notification if their child's performance is slipping.

The least requested information concerned opportunities for parent involvement in the classroom.



Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Parents' desire for classroom information extends beyond the curriculum; they want information, resources and tips they can use to help their child succeed.
- The clear message here is no surprises ... parents don't want to wait until the end of a marking period to learn their child is struggling.



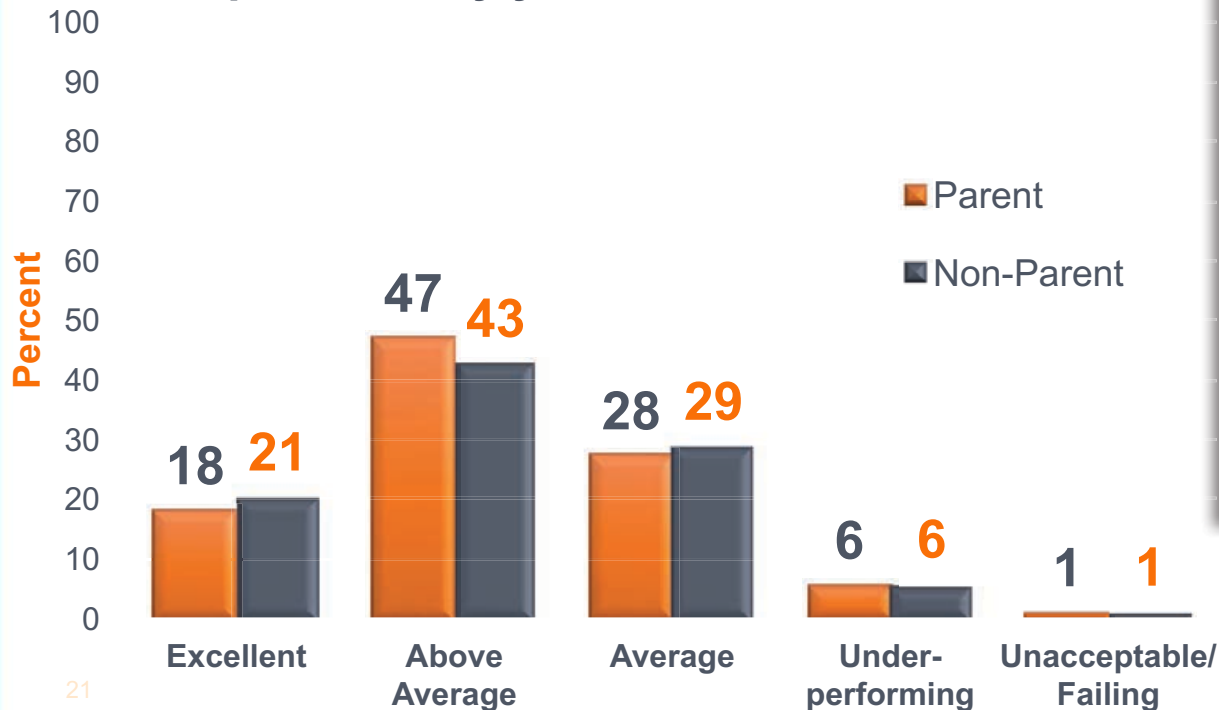
Communications from the School District

All respondents answered these questions



Overall Ratings of School District

Overall, how do you rate the quality of education services provided by your local school district?



There was substantial agreement among the respondent groups about the overall quality of education services provided by the school district.

More than 64% of parents and nonparents indicated that the education services were *above average* or *excellent*.



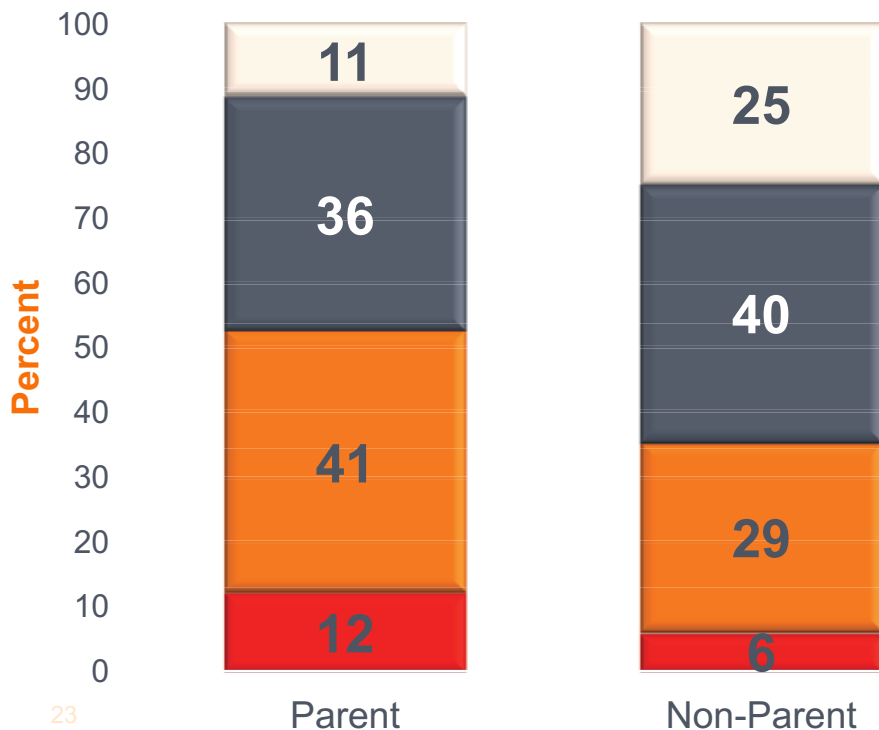
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- The annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Education Poll, in 2010 found about half of respondents gave their schools a grade of A or B
- This research would suggest those schools that invest in communication, that are open and transparent, receive higher marks from the communities they serve



Feelings of Being Informed

How well informed do you feel about the issues impacting education in your local district?



Interestingly, non-parent respondents indicated that they tended to feel better informed about school district issues than parents with 65% indicating that they are *very well or pretty well informed* compared to 47% among parents.

- Very well informed
- Pretty well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not very well informed



Information Most Wanted from School District

	Parents	Non-Parents
Rationale/reasons for decisions made by the school district	59	65
Curriculum/educational program options	62	57
Information about how well the school district is performing compared to other school districts at the state and national level	53	56
Budget/tax/finance election information and funding updates	43	58
Information about safety-related incidents and precautions on or near school grounds	43	31
School closings and other time-sensitive information	43	30
Calendar of events	38	32
Opportunities for community members to be involved with the schools	22	34
School construction/campus improvements and renovations	14	21
Awards and recognitions	17	17
Student enrollment information	13	14

The information most desired from the school districts varied across the respondent groups.

All groups showed a need for rationale for district decisions. Non-parent groups expressed a greater desire for budget and funding information.



Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Parents' focus is on the classroom; when confronted with district-wide issues they are less informed
- Among the reasons for this may be the busy lives led by most parents, juggling careers with students' extracurricular activities



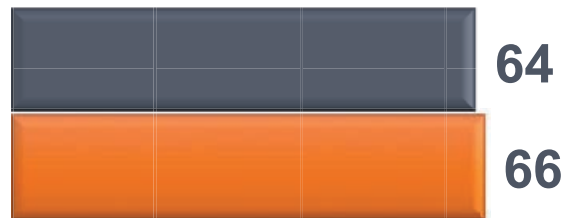
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Non-parents are more concerned with big-picture issues; tax burden, district rankings and the impact on their property values



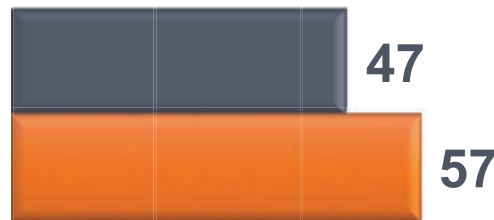
Opportunities to Express Concerns

There are adequate opportunities for me to express my concerns and opinions about important issues impacting schools.



Two-thirds of parents and non-parents indicated that there are adequate opportunities to express views about the issues impacting the schools.

Concerns and opinions expressed by parents and the community are seriously considered by school district leaders.



However, less than half of parents (47%) and 57% of non-parents believe that their views are seriously considered by the school district leadership.

■ Parents
■ Non-Parents

0 20 40 60 80 100

Percent Agree



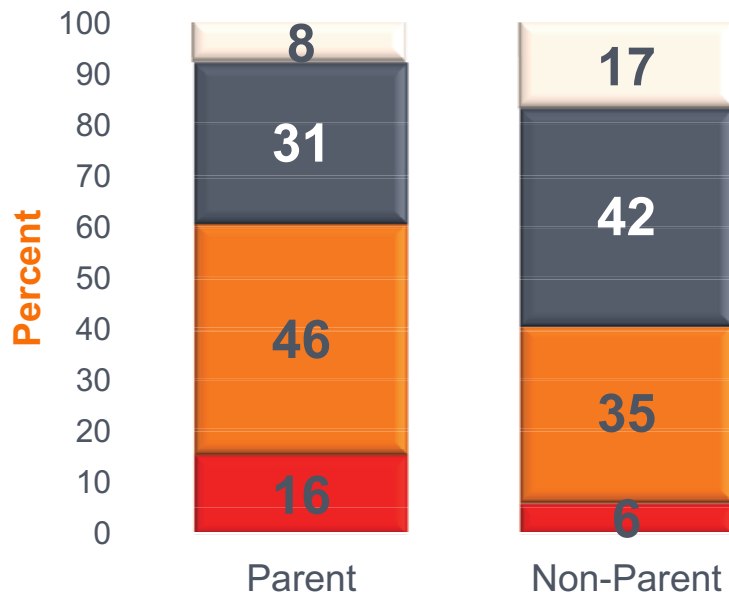
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Schools that communicate well with their communities do more than provide one-way communication, they provide opportunity for dialogue and criticism
- These results indicate schools that invest in communication are perceived to be open to the concerns and opinions of their constituents



Awareness of Statewide Issues Impacting Education

Overall, how well informed are you about issues impacting public education in your state?



Overall, respondents tended to feel less well informed about impacting education. statewide issues

39% of parents indicated that they are *pretty well or very well informed*. Less than 20% of all respondent groups indicated that they are *very well informed*.

This finding shows an opportunity for school districts to highlight how statewide decisions and issues impact the schools within the local community.



Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Results indicate the most trusted source of information is from schools themselves. Respondents feel a sense of ownership in their schools, and express satisfaction in the amount of information they are receiving.



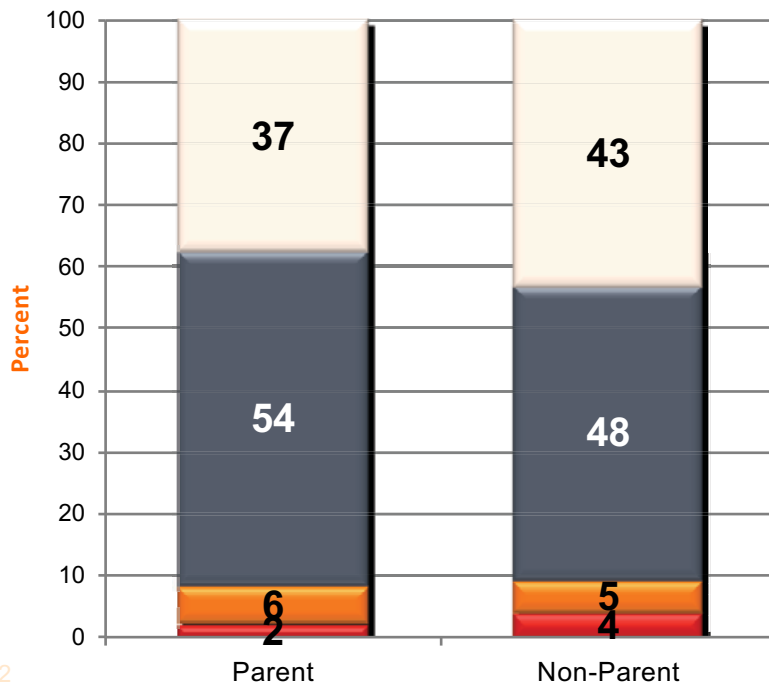
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Sources of information further from the district are less direct and it's often difficult to determine what impact they have on the district itself
- Districts need to do a better job of interpreting state and federal issues for their constituents, and the impact on the district, children and families



Finding Information About Schools

Considering all of the sources of information about the schools available to you, are you able to find information that is important to you?



62% of parents and 57% of non-parents say that they either have to spend time and effort to find information about the schools, usually cannot find the information, or have not looked for information.

- ☐ Yes, I can find what I am looking for easily.
- ☐ Yes, but it takes some time and effort.
- ☐ No, I usually cannot find what I need to know.
- ☐ I have not needed to find information about the schools.



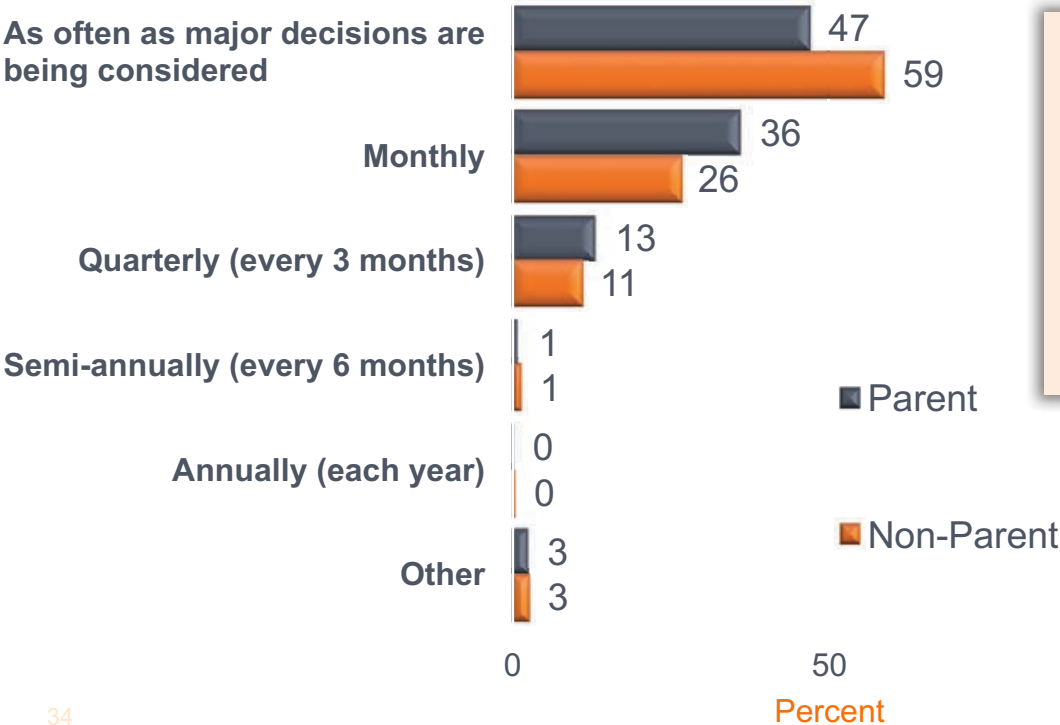
Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- Parents are often looking for specific information on programming and other options for students, which may require inquiries that extend beyond a web site review or a single telephone call
- Schools may need to do a better job of being customer focused with their responses to telephone inquiries.



Frequency of Updates from District

How often should the school district provide updates to parents and the community?



Respondents believed that the district should provide updates to the community as often as major decisions were being considered.

Most respondents showed little support for quarterly or less frequent updates.



Commentary and Possible Assumptions

- People want information now; they'd like schools to be proactive in their communication
- This reinforces respondents' desire for schools to be the first choice for information, as they do not want to search for information, nor do they want to wait for secondary sources to report the information