

**Cochrane-Fountain City Schools**  
**Report on Surveys**  
**Prepared by Kalene Engel on June 30, 2018**

**Introduction:** Over the past 18 months, the Cochrane-Fountain City School Board has commissioned three different surveys<sup>1</sup> to receive input on various issues facing the district. Following is a summary report of those surveys:

**Surveys Performed:**

- In February of 2017, as part of an effort to gain community input on a possible facilities’ referendum, the school district, in conjunction with School Perceptions, administered a *Community Survey*.
- In March of 2018, the school district conducted an *Employee Opinion Survey* using a survey adapted from a Wisconsin Association of School Boards template.
- In May of 2018, the school district conducted school *Climate Surveys* of parents, students, instructional and non-instructional staff using free templates offered by the United States Department of Education.

**Participant Numbers & Selected Demographics:**

Community Survey (2/17)	Employee Survey (3/18)	Climate Survey (5/18)
551 Respondents	85 Respondents	148 Respondents
14% were school employees	52% were teachers	58% were students (86 students)
36% had children in the school district	50% were employed in the district more than 10 years	37% were school employees
25% Participation Rate	92% participation rate	Approximate 31% participation rate for students in grade 7-12

**Community Survey (2/17) Summary:** Although the main objective of the Community Survey was to gather input on community support for certain facilities improvements, a few questions regarding communication and student preparation were asked. Additionally, Respondents were given an opportunity to provide narrative responses to open-ended questions. Below are notable responses from those questions:

1. **Communication:**
  - a. **Preferred Communication Method:** Parents preferred receiving communication electronically, while non-parents (non-staffs) preferred receiving communications

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<sup>1</sup> Additional surveys were conducted by Committees of the Board, but those are not summarized in this report. In August of 2017, a survey was conducted by the Website Committee to gather information on a new website design. In March of 2018, elementary staff was surveyed regarding fundraising.

through district mailings and the C-FC Recorder. Conclusion: Both methods of communication need to be used to stay connected to the community.

- b. **Effectiveness:** Most parent respondents (68%) felt that the school website was effective in providing timely and meaningful information; most non-parent/non-staff member respondents had no opinion (62%) on the issue, likely indicating that they did not use the website. Conclusion: Priority should be given to parent needs when designing the new website.

- 2. **School Performance & Satisfaction:** A significant majority of respondents (68%) were satisfied with the district. Of that amount, 15% were “very satisfied” while 53% were satisfied.

Respondents were asked to assign a rating to how well the school was doing in certain areas on the following scale: Great (4); Good (3); Fair (2); Poor (1). The results were broken down by staff, parents (non-staff) and non-parents (non-staff). Staff rankings were overall the highest, while the non-parent(non-staff) rankings were the lowest. Interestingly, the order in which the items were ranked did not vary much by category:

Item	Staff	Parents Not staff	Not parents & not staff
Provide a welcoming environment	3.01	2.86	2.75
Develop student character	2.95	2.80	2.66
Deliver high-quality educational experience	2.85	2.69	2.64
Prepare students for life after high school	2.77	2.60	2.57
Retain high quality, motivated staff	2.58	2.61	2.54
Provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum	2.79	2.64	2.49
Keep public informed	2.65	2.52	2.40
Provide career and college prep and planning	2.60	2.49	2.37
Spend tax dollars wisely	2.63	2.55	2.25

Conclusion: People feel welcome at C-FC, believe it has good staff and students and is doing a good job of educating the students. The school could do a better job with communicating with the public, preparing students for life in the real world and spending tax dollars.

- 3. **Narrative Comments:** Responses to the open-ended questions produced numerous comments. These comments were grouped together by themes, with the following topics generating the largest number of comments:
  - a. Communication by the school needs to be improved—it needs to be accurate, consistent and fairly distributed with respect to the different programs.
  - b. Keeping students safe is a priority; a secure main entrance is needed.

- c. Do not raise taxes and do not spend money on frivolous expenditures that benefit only a few people.
- d. Too much emphasis and funding is given to athletics and not enough is given to education.
- e. Positive attributes of the school include its small size, teachers and staff and friendly atmosphere.
- f. More efforts need to be devoted to kids on the ends of the spectrum (high achievers v. at-risk).
- g. Curriculum needs to include more STEM and other classes to prepare students for careers (i.e. tech ed, computers, etc.)

Conclusions: Items b. and c. relate mostly to the referendum, which was passed in November of 2017. Improvements are needed in the areas of school communication, prioritization of education over extracurriculars (and equity among programs), career readiness and meeting the needs of children at ends of the spectrum.

**Employee Survey (3/18):** The Employee Opinion Survey was conducted in order to determine how employees perceived specific issues and to gauge job satisfaction. The survey was conducted near a time when a revised compensation plan was being considered, which was intended to address some of the inequities that had arisen following Act 10. WASB issued a 23 page summary of the report, which includes a summary of the major findings. All Board Members are encouraged to read the entire report.

1. **Job Satisfaction:**

- 73.5% of respondents would recommend CFC as a good place to work
- 97.6% feel that the work they perform is meaningful
- The biggest factor that contributes to job satisfaction is support from their supervisors (67%) and the second biggest factor is compensation and benefits (59%)

Conclusion: People like working at CFC and appreciate good supervisors.

2. **Support from Co-Workers:**

- 76.8% of respondents report that coworkers help them perform their duties
- 23% report having concerns about coworkers that they have not shared with supervisors

Conclusion: People are satisfied with the support they get from co-workers. A better system/process needs to be established so that employees feel more comfortable sharing their concerns about their coworkers with supervisors.

3. **Working Conditions:**

- Over 80% of respondents indicated (1) that their work hours were reasonable; (2) that they feel secure in their continued employment with the district; (3) that their work location is clean; (4) that they feel safe in their work environment; (5) that they have adequate space to perform their duties.
- Respondents reported a significantly lower level of satisfaction (only 59.8%) with availability of computer and technology resources and support.

Conclusion: Additional information is needed to determine what technology resources are unavailable or lacking.

4. **Compensation and Benefits:**

- Over 80% of respondent felt their leave time was adequate and understood their benefit structure.
- 64.2% of respondents felt that their pay was fair.
- Only 40.7% of the respondents felt that their pay was competitive with other districts.
- Only 1/3 of respondents felt that pay practices were administered consistently for all employees.

- Only 25.3% of respondents felt that the pay structure encouraged them to continue their education.

Conclusion: The survey was administered at a time when the compensation structures were being reviewed and revised, so some of the Respondents may have answered based upon the “old” system and some may have answered based upon the “new” system. If education is considered to add value to an employee, then the compensation schedule should reflect that.

5. **Administrative Communications:**

- Compared to other questions, there was an overall lower level of satisfaction regarding administration communications with staff.
- 50.7% of respondents felt that the administration kept them informed about the work of the school board and only slightly more (51.9%) felt that administration provided a way of recognizing important staff accomplishments.
- Satisfaction regarding the accuracy and frequency of communications was higher, but still only in the 64% range.

Conclusion: Emphasis should be placed on establishing clear, consistent, timely and accurate communication from administration to staff. Lack of communication (or inaccurate communication) can lead to misinformation and rumors, which can negatively impact the school climate.

6. **Human Resources Services and Support:**

- Over ¾ of respondents indicated that administrative staff were well-informed and helpful in responding to questions about salary and benefits and that they protected confidential information appropriately.
- A significantly smaller percentage of people felt that the salary and benefits forms were easy to access and understand (58.2%) and that they received timely and accurate answers to their questions (56.4%).
- Only 32.9% stated that they understood their retirement options available to them through the school (and 35.4% had no opinion, which might mean that they have no retirement benefits).

Conclusion: Employee handbook information regarding retirement benefits needs to be clarified. Increased efforts to clarify salary and benefits information and to make forms more accessible should be undertaken (i.e. videotaping the benefits presentation(s) and making them accessible on the employee portal, doing a FAQ section to the employee handbook, rewriting the employee handbook sections to improve clarity, placing forms/information in a prominent location on the employee portal of the website).

7. **Supervisor Support:**

- a. 91.1% of respondents stated that they were allowed to make decisions within the scope of their authority.

- b. Roughly 50% of respondents felt that they were given clear direction (55.7%), received useful feedback (53.2%) and were encouraged to provide suggestions for improvement (51.3%).
- c. Only 15.2% of respondents felt that recognition was given to top performers (and 48.1% had no opinion).

Conclusion: Job duties should be clearly defined by position descriptions and bidirectional (both ways) feedback should be encouraged. Anonymous suggestion boxes could be used to eliminate any concerns regarding retaliation. Even though a lower percentage of people felt that top performers were given recognition, in a previous question only 22% of people felt that recognition was an important aspect of their job, so the lower percentage may not be significant.

8. **Technology Service and Support:**

- a. Over 2/3 of respondents reported that they had access to reliability technology (71.7%) and training/technical support (66.7%).
- b. Less than 50% of respondents reported that maintenance and repairs on computer equipment was prompt and effective (47.2%) and that the technology program was effective and efficient (45.3%).

Conclusion: Processes for repairs and maintenance on computer equipment should be reviewed and revised to gain efficiencies and improve timeliness. The system will be reviewed as part of the contract with CCT, so any recommendations from that review should be considered/implemented. Consideration should be given to outsourcing some maintenance/repairs or upgrading devices.

9. **Teacher Support:** (Note: only teachers answered this question).

- a. Over ¾ of respondents reported that they had the resources they needed to teach (75.6), that the primary focus of the district was on successfully educating the students (80.5%) and that administration supported their teaching efforts (82.9%).
- b. Only 58.5% of respondents felt that the School Board supported and appreciated their efforts.

Conclusion: The relationship between teaching staff and the board could be improved, likely through better communication and clear direction. (Possible strategies: Complete a compensation schedule that rewards factors that are valued by the Board as increasing student achievement. Create a communication plan to achieve accurate and timely communications between the school board and teaching staff. Set aside time on Board Agendas to meet and hear from staff and their accomplishments in the classroom).

10. **Curriculum & Instructional Support:**

- Over 80% of respondents reported that they had enough access to instructional materials (85%) and that the curriculum objectives were reviewed periodically with teacher input (82.5%).

- Only 55% of respondents felt that the staff development and in-service programs provided teachers with useful knowledge and skills.
- 41.5% of respondents felt that the current curriculum allowed students to excel on statewide assessments (42.5%).

Conclusion: Further inquiry should be made on the effectiveness of staff development and in-service programs to determine why there is a lower level of satisfaction. This could include targeted surveys prior to the start of school and/or post-training surveys. Attendance at in-service days should be reviewed and new policies regarding attendance may need to be established.

#### 11. **Student Discipline Report:**

- A high percentage of respondents have access to the student code of conduct (100%), understand it (97.5%) and believe it is fair and appropriate (87.5%).
- A slightly lower percentage of people believe they have appropriate assistance to resolve disciplinary problems in their classroom (82.5%).
- A significantly lower number of people feel that the principals provide leadership in setting and maintaining behavioral standards for students (67.5%).
- Only 57.5% of respondents feel that the code of conduct is consistently and fairly enforced.

Conclusion: Having a code of conduct is not sufficient, it must be enforced consistently and fairly. Most teachers believe the school has the appropriate assistance in place to resolve disciplinary problems.

#### 12. **Training and Workplace Safety:**

- 82.7% of respondents stated that the district provides the appropriate tools, technology and working conditions to safety do their job.
- ¾ of respondents agree that they have been given appropriate instruction in emergency procedures.
- 56% of respondents stated that they received the appropriate training for new tasks.

Conclusion: Training procedures should be reduced to writing so they are available for future reference.

#### 13. **School Board:**

- 73% of respondents stated that they understood the role of the school board.
- For most of the questions asked in this section, a relatively high percentage of respondents had no opinion (30%+).
- 53.9% of respondents stated that they would benefit from more open communication with the school board.
- Only 11.7% of respondents felt that the school board and administration worked well together.

Conclusion: See #9. The relationship between the board and administration needs to improve. Clear position descriptions (roles/responsibilities) and performance expectations for administration should be established/enforced.

**Climate Survey (5/18):** In May of 2018, a survey produced by the United States Department of Education with non-modifiable questions were administered to four different groups of people within the Cochrane-Fountain City School District: instructional staff, non-instructional staff, students and parents. Some of the questions asked on the surveys were identical, but many were slightly modified to fit the audience. Responses to the survey were compiled and categorized under similar topics, as further described below:

1. **Discrimination:**

- a. Overall, there were very few concerns about discrimination against either students or staff on the basis of culture, background, ethnicity or sexual orientation.
- b. One potentially significant response was that only 61% of students felt that students were treated fairly, regardless of wealth. By comparison, 82% of teachers and 91% of non-instructional staff felt that students were treated fairly, regardless of wealth.
- c. Another potentially significant response was that 42% of students felt that students were picked on due to physical/mental disabilities.

2. **Mental Health:**

- a. Teachers reported low percentages when asked about the priority the school placed upon addressing student mental health needs (38%); helping children with their social, emotional and behavioral problems (34%); or teaching students strategies to manage their stress levels (32%).
- b. Students reported low percentages when asked about effective strategies to deal with others:
  - i. Students at this school try to work out their disagreements with other students by talking to them (42%).
  - ii. Students work on listening to others to understand what they are trying to say (38%).
  - iii. Students talk about the importance of understanding their own feelings and the feelings of others (30%).
  - iv. Students at this school stop and think before doing anything when they get angry (26%).
- c. 83% of teachers reported that they had the materials, resourced and training necessary to support students' social or emotional needs.

3. **Emergency Procedures:** Nearly all respondents indicated that they knew and understand the procedures to be performed in the event of an emergency (natural disaster, lockdown, etc.)

4. **Facilities:**

- a. Nearly all respondents reported that the facilities were clean and pleasant and did not hinder their work.
- b. The only notable response was that 33% of students agreed that broken things at the school get fixed quickly and 38% reported that the temperature was

comfortable all year round. 55% reported that the bathrooms in the school were clean.

5. **Level of Involvement:**

- a. Most respondents agreed that students were given opportunities to get involved and were encouraged to do so.
- b. Concerns were expressed regarding students' opportunities to participate in decision making. Only 23% of noninstructional staff, 56% of instructional staff and 50% of students felt that students were provided with that opportunity.
- c. Only 51% of the teachers believed that once we started a new program, we followed up to make sure it was working.

6. **School Climate:**

- a. Most respondents spoke positively about how welcome and accepted they felt at the school.
- b. Only 52% of students reported that students respected one another; 63% reported that students like one another and 67% reported that students get along with each other.
- c. Only 54% of students reported that teachers praised them when they worked hard in school.

7. **Discipline:**

- a. Staff felt that student behavior problems were manageable. 94% of teachers and 81% of instructional staff stated that they could manage almost any student behavior problem.
- b. A high percentage of all respondents felt safe at the school: Parents (82%); Students (88%); teachers (90%) and noninstructional staff (100%).
- c. Only 42% of students at the school felt that the school rules were applied equally to all students
- d. 58% of students, 78% of teachers and 77% of non-instructional staff felt that discipline was fair.
- e. 41% of students reported that students at the school try to stop bullying.

8. **Physical Health:** No significant responses were noted with respect to questions asked about physical health and nutrition.

9. **Behaviors:**

- a. The following issues were not considered to be problems at the school: vandalism, student verbal abuse, sexual assault or dating violence, physical abuse of teachers, racial/ethnic conflict and poor student attendance.
- b. Bullying was considered to be a frequent problem at the school by 47% of parents, 43% of students, 50% of teachers and 55% of non-instructional staff.
- c. Teachers and students disagreed on the extent of some problems at school:

- i. 31% of students felt that physical conflict between students occurred often at the school, but 0% of teachers felt that it did.
  - ii. 22% of children felt that student possession of weapons occurred often at the school, but 0% of the teachers felt that it did
  - iii. 44% of children felt that robbery or theft occurred often at the school, but only 9% of the teachers felt that it did
- d. Students reported bad behaviors of other students
  - i. 69% of students stated that students often spread mean rumors or lies about others at this school on the internet
  - ii. 41% of students reported that students damage/destroy other students' property
  - iii. 31% of students report that students at this school threaten to hurt other students

**10. Drugs/Alcohol:**

- a. Student alcohol use is perceived as a problem by adults and as socially acceptable by students
  - i. 66% of teachers; 61% of non-instructional staff and 36% of parents feel that student alcohol use is a problem at this school
  - ii. 82% of students agree that students at this school think it is ok to get drunk
- b. Student drug use is also perceived to be a problem by adults and as socially acceptable by students
  - i. 41% of teachers; 67% of non-instructional staff and 47% of parents feel that student drug use is a problem at this school
  - ii. 61% of students agree that students at this school think it is ok to try drugs
- c. 44% of students feel that it is easy for students to use/try alcohol or drugs at school or school sponsored events without getting caught; 32% of students reported that students use/try alcohol or drugs while at school sponsored events.

Conclusions: Mental health issues have been endorsed by all respondents as being a problem at the school; a schoolwide mental health program is currently being developed and those efforts should continue. Teachers appear capable of handling disciplinary problems in the classroom, so the need for an additional school resource officer is not indicated by this survey. Student drug and alcohol use and its perceived acceptance among students merits further review and possible intervention. Discrepancies between students and teachers reports of other misconduct possibly merits further inquiry. Bullying and other emotionally hurtful behaviors by students could be addressed through social/emotional learning curriculum. School rules need to be enforced fairly and consistently, regardless of who is involved.