

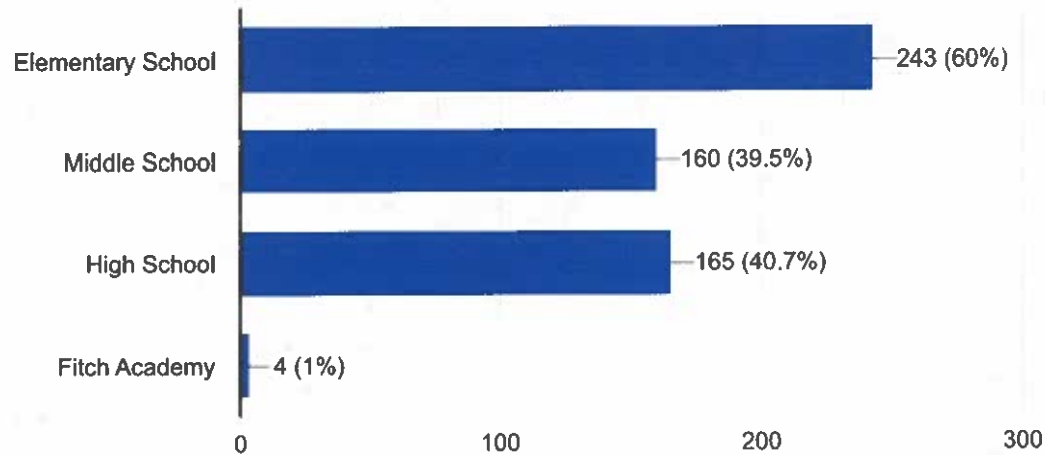
Communications Survey - Community

405 responses

My children attend (Please select all that apply):

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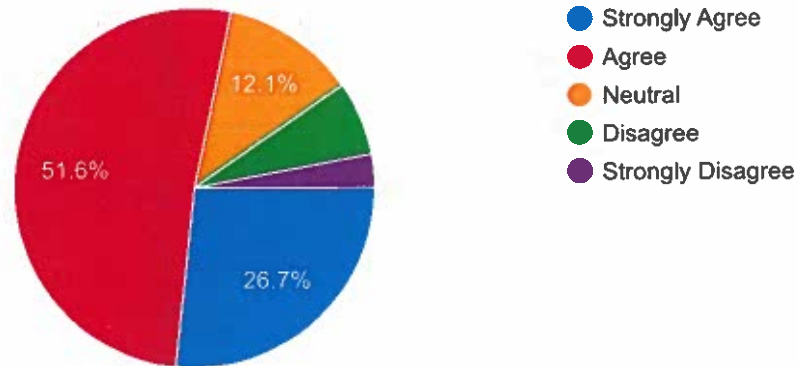
405 responses



The District communicates important information in a timely manner.

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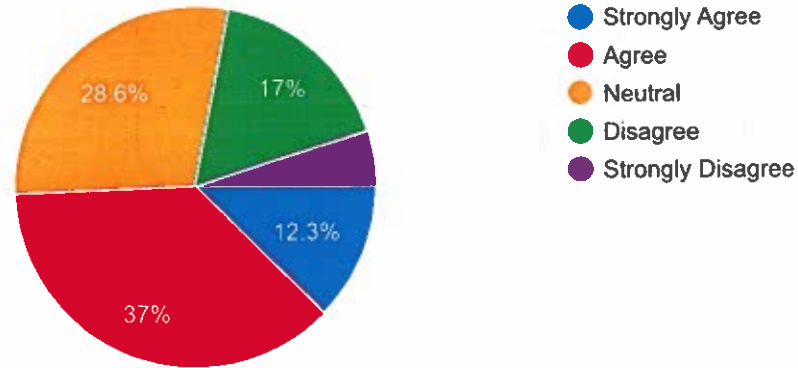
404 responses



The District regularly communicates student successes, including academic achievements, athletic results and visual/performing arts accomplishments.

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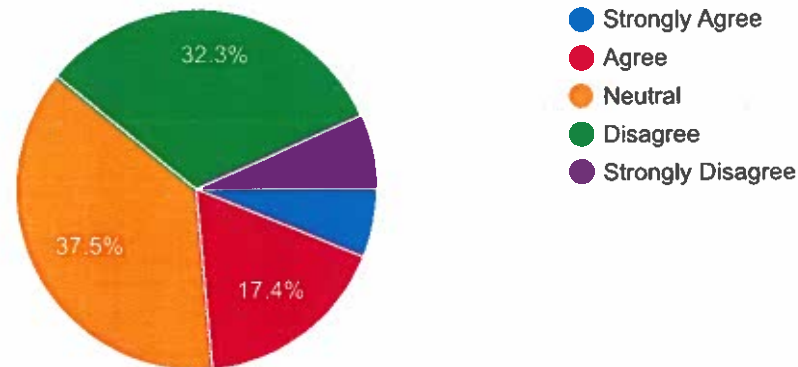
404 responses



The District regularly shares news about the successes and accomplishments of the staff.

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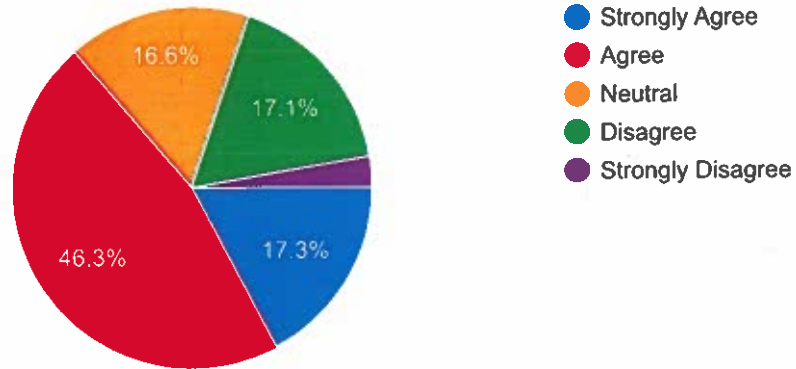
403 responses



I receive messages from the District in a variety of ways - through my mobile device, print or computer.

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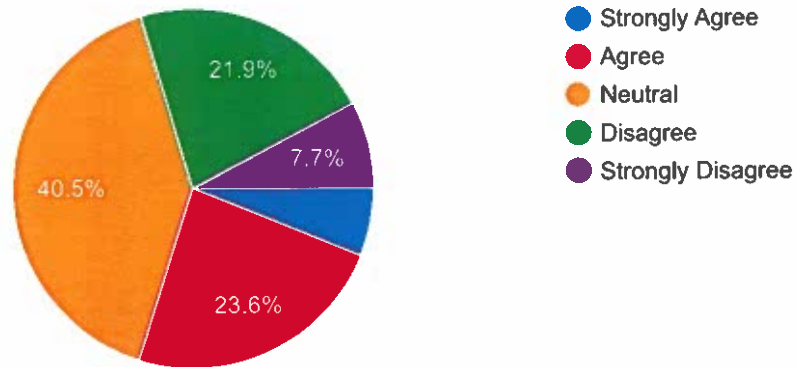
404 responses



The District's website is an engaging destination that provides relevant information that is readily accessible.

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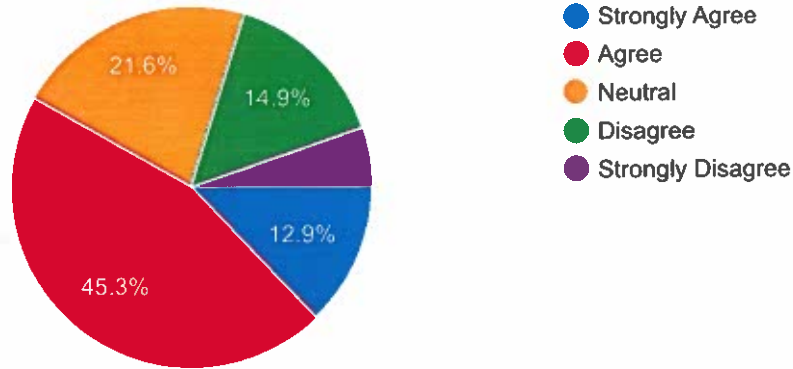
402 responses



I am satisfied with the way I am currently receiving messages from the District.

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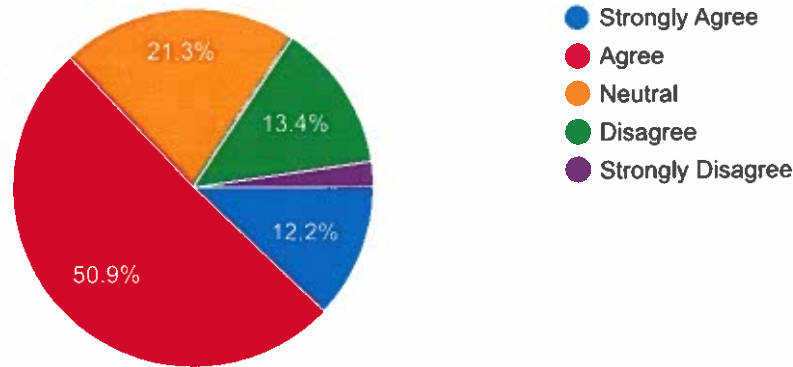
402 responses



I am satisfied with the quantity of messages that I am currently receiving from the District.

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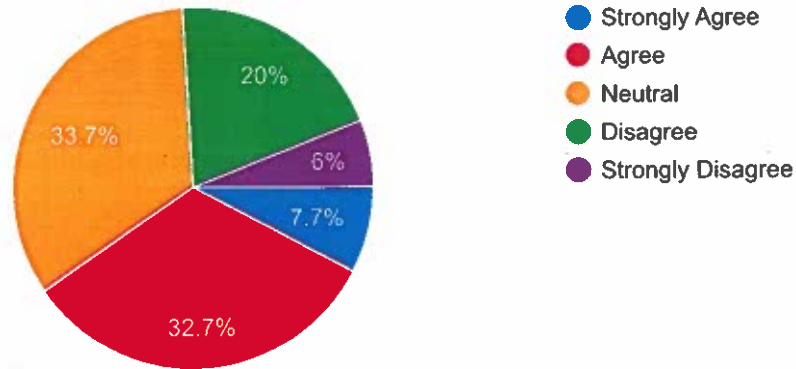
403 responses



The messages the District shares regularly catch my attention and stand out from other messages.

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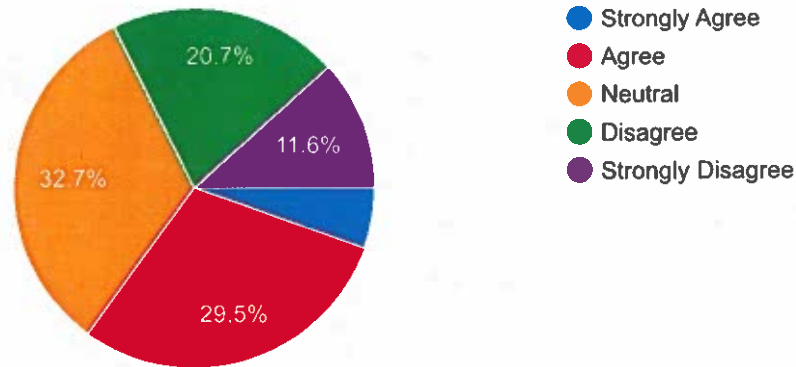
401 responses



The District provides opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the administration.

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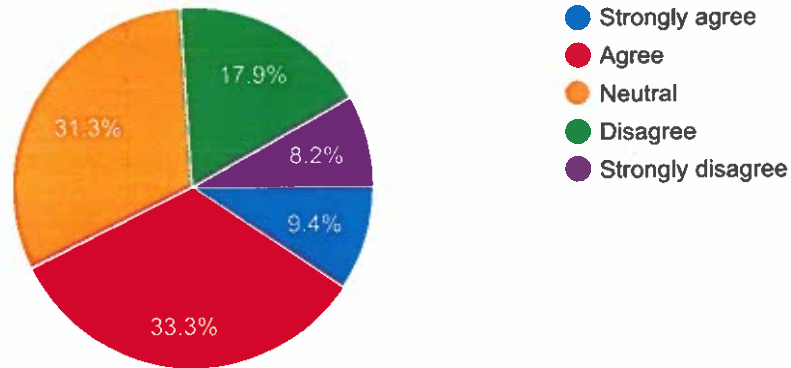
397 responses



The District provides opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the Board of Education.

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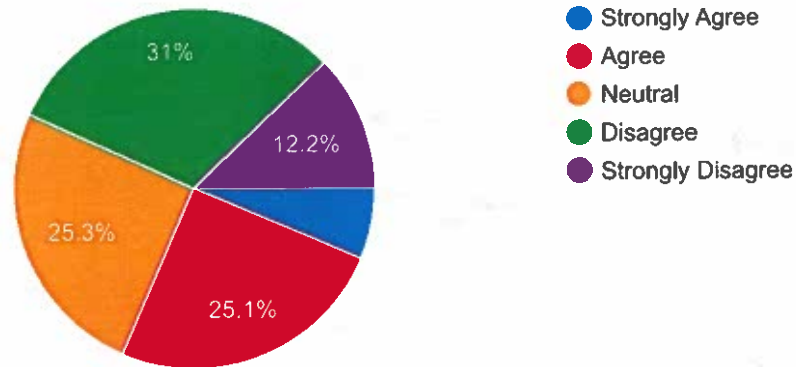
403 responses



I would interact with the District more often if it increased the use of social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

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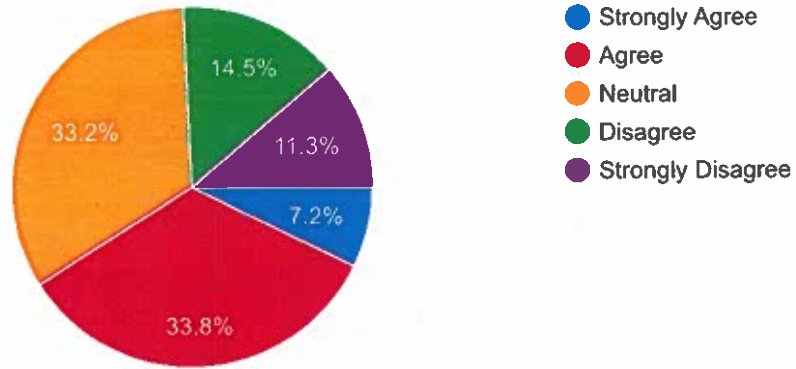
403 responses



The District respects and values dissenting opinions.

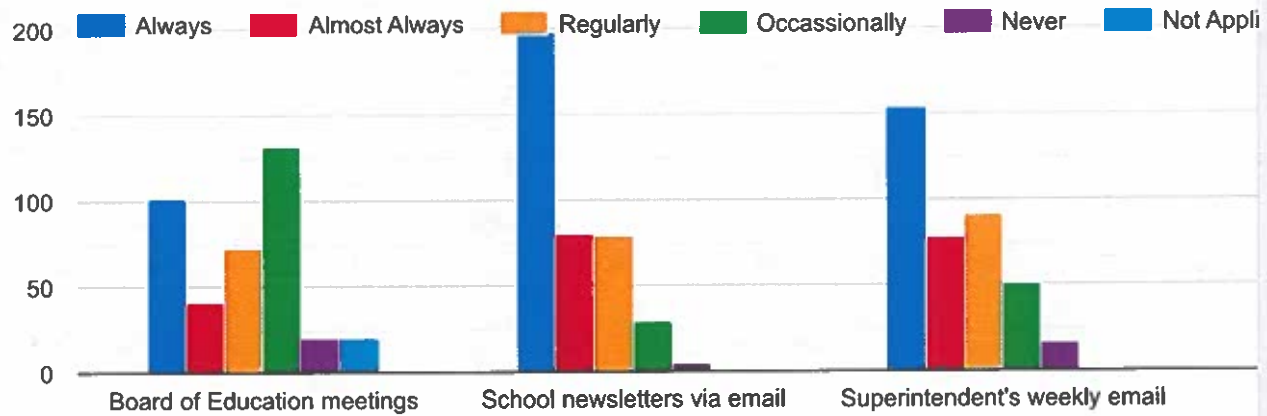
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400 responses



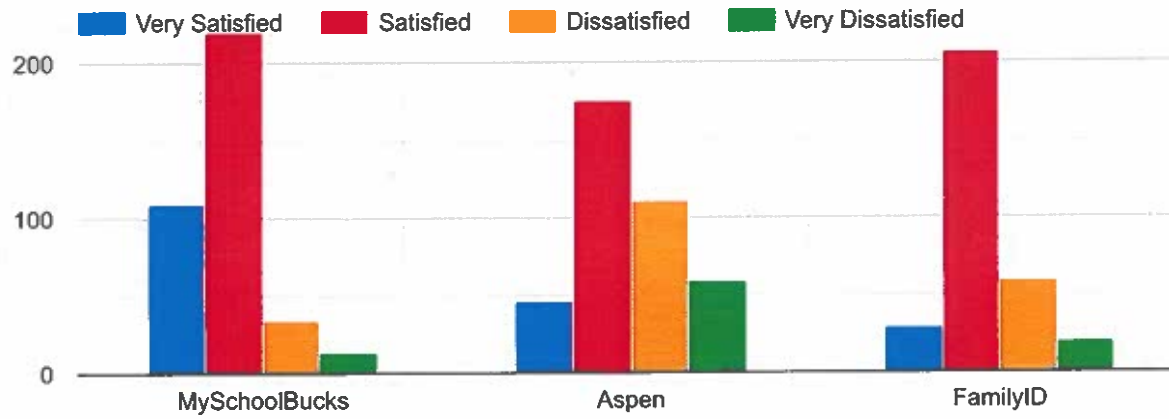
Please rank how much you value the following District communications:

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How satisfied are you with the following portals used by the District.

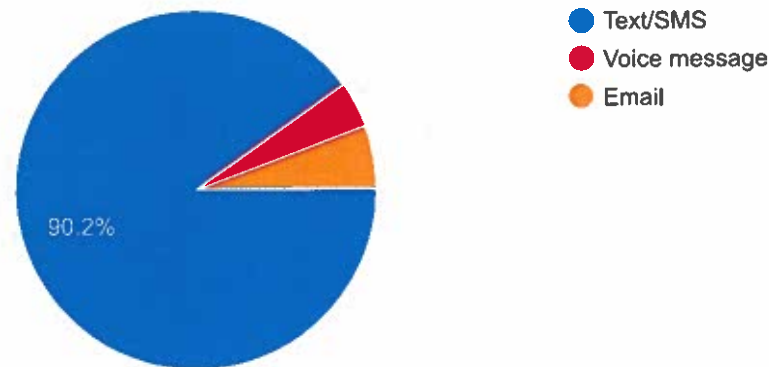
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What is your first preference for critical communications (closings, delays or urgent messages)?

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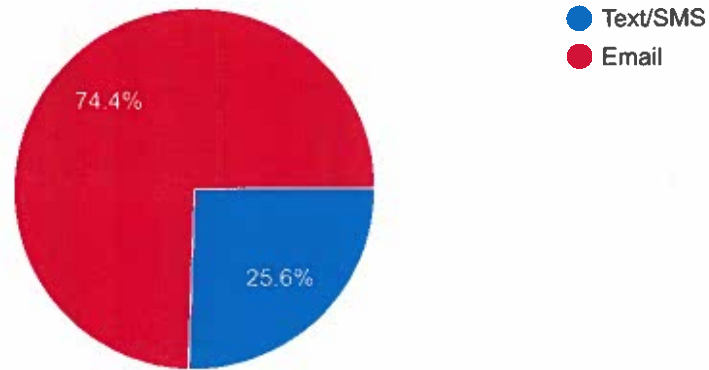
397 responses



What is your first preference for general information (announcements and reminders)?

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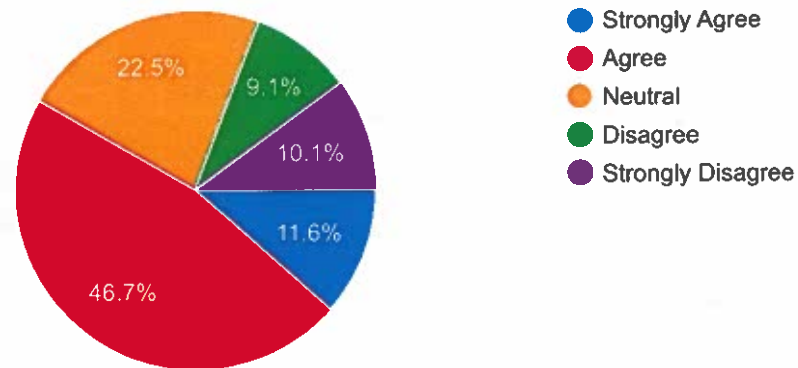
399 responses



The District is open and transparent in its communications.

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396 responses



What ideas, if any, do you have for ways to improve the District's communications?

You need to download the Superintendent's email first in order to read it. This extra step makes me delete without

Let people specify how they want to be contacted, then do that. I don't want snow day calls to my house and cell and husband's cell (three robo-calls at 4am-- really???) *plus two texts and *also emails.

Let's please get rid of repetitive emails. The Sunday individual school emails are fantastic. The Friday principal emails are unnecessary unless they improve and start including different information from what's in the newsletter.

Fewer emails

Stop including links in emails that I have to download to receive messages. If there isn't critical information, don't send an email. E.g., I don't care that Eleanor Roosevelt spoke before congress in 1953. Would rather just not get an email that week.

Update the website to have critical information, like the correct date of school dismissal. If that isn't finalized, then put on there the target date and communicate out when it will be finalized.

Set expectations and standards for teachers/schools to send progress back home. I don't get any communication/graded material back for my children until the the trimester ending report card when it feels too late to make meaningful progress/updates.

Keep up the great work! Thanks for all that you all do! I have been so very pleased with my 1st child's kindergarden year. We love living in the Darien Public School District.

Increase social media. It's a great way to provide info. The website is also not user friendly and can definitely use an upgrade to include photos and accomplishments of the district. Very plain for a community who can do better.

All district "general" emails should be on the Darienps.org website (in case someone missed the info). All sports/club announcements that are through the schools (mostly referring to DHS) should be posted (games/tryouts). There is too much confusion. There should be one hub to be used as a reference.

The only negative comment - and it's a major irritation - is when you have to download the district communication which is always slow and requires multiple steps to read the message. Just send me the email! Don't make me jump through 3 hoops to get to what you want to tell me!!

Make everything as short as possible. Send as few emails as possible. We don't need a weekly superintendent email it's just noise. Communicate when there is a reason only. Maybe a quarterly check in but not weekly.

Like PTO calendar, continuous updates/emails to not have to search history.

Town halls with superintendent and other administrators and board

Improve Aspen it's an uninspiring and clunky portal. Make announcements stand out. Better approach for sharing class pictures than OneDrive.

The websites across the district including parks and rec and sports look very outdated and hard to navigate. Very cluttered and janky. They should be redesigned to be more user friendly. Some don't work properly on mobile.

Have your weekly emails come out on a Friday so you have the weekend to get ready if needed, not on Sunday night's so you have to do a panicked rush to get your kids ready for whatever activity or event was just mentioned. And you important information on the bottom third of emails usually, which is just odd. They should be put together based on importance and notes on activities that require action by the parents.

Information sessions during working hours is not inclusive. CDSP should not represent parent opinions without data supporting they sought all opinions.

I believe more can be done on social media.

The website is difficult to navigate. It is hard to find what I am looking for. Aspen is not user friendly. The interface appears to be outdated and there is not much information available to parents. It is hard to remember how to access all the various systems for school cash, lunch, grades, busing, communicating absences, etc

Consistency and cohesion - current communication is disparate and often sent at unpredictable intervals (too many senders, not enough cues for when to watch for it)

Channels - there are way too many communications channels/apps/websites to keep up with in order to manage the school experience for multiple children especially.

Clarity and transparency - at times, communication is unnecessarily confusing or opaque. Takeaways could be much simpler and clearer.

Volume - without adding more communication touchpoints or channels, I'd like to see more communication vs. less in some cases. It often feels like issues or info are raised too late in the game when questions have already come to the surface among parents.

I'd love to see more about the student & teacher successes! I loved Moments from the Middle last year (my youngest is at DHS now.) Ms. Dunn has sent out something similar. I'd love to see more of them!

The district only values and highlights a select group of people, mainly athletes. It would be nice if all students and staff members felt represented and respected. Communications should emphasize their successes.

it's annoying to have to download the superintendent's pdf every week. note should be in the email directly without download. even worse if i happen to see the email on my phone.

I would prefer that all email communications are in the email itself. Often we get an email that we have to click on a link, wait til it downloads and then open the link in a separate window which is not efficient. It's jumping through extra hoops that are not necessary. If it's an email letter, then it should be presented as such.

It would be helpful if the subject line had a brief description on what's covered. For example MMS Updates- SBACs, FieldTrip Sign Ups, Late School bus.

PLEASE PLEASE find a replacement for Aspen. It's the most unintuitive and antiquated user interface I have seen in over 20 years. I honestly cannot believe we are still using it considering the technology we have in existence today. The fact that you have to include detailed instructions on how to use it is saying something in an of itself. Look at the labels on the different areas of Aspen. It looks as if it's still in beta phase and they are placeholders titles.

Lastly My School Bucks only works on a mobile device. For most of us that work from home, it would be helpful if their website worked as well.

Would love to hear more about our staff

The content is the issue we have. Communicate to parents that they need to hold their kids accountable and get off cell phones and social media and screens! Over and over. The mounting evidence of mental health issues among kids from these factors has to be communicated!

The district needs to do way more to engage with families on social media and promote the successes and activities in its schools, especially as local media coverage dies off. I am truly surprised it does not have a PR person on contract at minimum. The superintendent's letters are lovely but the bare minimum. I was a local newspaper writer and editor for 25 years so I know of what I speak.

Send more timely emails when there is an emergency at one of the schools, and tell parents what the emergency is.

Don't send the message in a .pdf I have to then download from and email in order to read it. I noticed the superintendent has been doing this less, so thank you.

Create Opt-in style email choice by categories. Set up different social media changes for sports, arts, teachers, student government, etc.

There is no forum I know of where the administration responds to questions from parents. We have 3 minutes at BOE meetings to voice our opinion and it is a monologue where our questions get no response. No dialogue, not open, not transparent, no accountability. I have sent a few emails to administration and have never received a single response. It's time for new leadership that cares what parents think.

Sending updates by email - right now they are all links so you can never search email for relevant info

I would prefer the communications to come in the body of the email rather than having to download the communication to read the weekly emails. The extra step is frustrating as I usually check email from my mobile

Board more open to public comment, including from students

Stop the pornography in our schools and let's choose an Administration that's aligned with our town's values

When someone asks a question at a BoE meeting during public comment, an answer should be given or a response provided at the following meeting (if not immediately). I understand there isn't time for full discussion at these meetings, but the current process of speaking at BoE members and getting no response or concrete answer is

Aspen mobile absence summary is incorrect. The detail absence by class you have to click on each to see absences by class. School absences are not marked as school absences- and should not count against the student. Excused absences should not count against the student

Please change the format of email communications so they are not in a downloadable format. It makes it impossible to search for them later.

It would be great if some of the meetings offered at school during business hours (coffee with the principal, etc) had zoom availability so those of us with two income households would have even a chance of attending and feeling like we are part of the school community. This district is very exclusionary towards working parents or families who don't have a full time caregiver at home.

As nicely as everything is written, I would prefer less words to read. But that might be just me.

Send emails using body of the email, rather than as pdf attachments that have to be downloaded

I respectfully emailed Dr. Adley four times over six months to appeal our lack of a bus (email is the way I told to appeal by his secretary) and he never emailed back, even to say he was denying our appeal. After four times we gave up, but surely you would agree that is very poor communication!

I think a monthly district newsletter would upcoming dates and stories across the schools and grades would be interesting. Just because I don't currently have a MMS or DHS student does not mean I am not interested in what is happening there. As a PTO member that attends monthly CDSP meetings, I am always interested in hearing about events and issues at other schools.

Share general teacher-to-parent feedback. Would be useful for us parents to understand, from teachers'/staff perspective, which behaviors, approaches to communication, methods of supporting childrens' education at home, etc are most helpful and why. Maybe a broad, anonymous survey of staff at each level (elem/middle/hs), designed to highlight what they would welcome more of based on anonymized anecdotes of parent interactions, could serve as positive reinforcement as well as examples to follow for parents (who may not realize that they could work with teachers in a more constructive manner). I feel this part of the feedback loop is currently missing.

Please please please don't require parents to access social media in order to see district communications.

Thank you for the survey.

Dhs Instagram that covers sports, theater performances, school events etc

I want to thank the District for all it does to communicate, and for being open to feedback for improvements. I do think social media could be helpful as it's simply a reality of the world we live in! Wondering whether a Communications specialist / officer / employee would be helpful? Thank you once again.

Nitpicky, but eliminate the emails with links to pdf's or similar static letters. Just put the content in the body of the email. Don't make people click through. These types of communications no doubt lose readers who can't be bothered. Besides that, the admin does a great job.

Replace the Superintendent! He's terrible and we're worried that he will hire another asst. who is perverted like District website could be cleaned up and made more user friendly. Aspen can be confusing.
To provide highlights from BoE meetings in a short bulletin.

We thankfully only have 1 child at DHS but if our children were smaller children I would be 100% home schooling them. The fact that our superintendent Dr Addley and his staff/admin chose to gaslight us about the Mermaid book being a lesson in love and acceptance vs the TRUTH that it's about gender identity, transitioning and LGBTQ+ is unacceptable. And that's just 1 fact I don't have time to list everything that has upset so many current and former DPS parents. I went to liberal schools - Greenwich Academy and Wellesley college and am an avid reader. However, I am HORRIFIED by the many sexual/pornographic books available at school libraries for our children. DPS need to focus on teaching the basics of education and stop your woke, sexual preference indoctrination. It is disgusting and I truly hope to see change in the near future.

It would be helpful and productive to have a forum we could engage with the BOE and administration (Addley, Curriculum heads etc) that was a conversation style instead of just public comment with no response. Every couple months making the Board and some Admin accessible to answer public questions would be a lot more transparent and informative to families.

For example, the Board, Addley and Curriculum heads could hold a town meeting to address the pornographic books that have made their way in to our libraries. I would like to hear from the district how books with pictures of boys sucking each others penises does not fall under pornography, which is of course illegal. I understand there is public comment at Board meetings but the board is shielded from addressing the issue so this is where I feel like the district isn't transparent at all.

It also seems that the vast majority of employees hired by the district and/or superintendent are extremely progressive. I draw this conclusion by my interactions with district employees and the comments and choices made by the curriculum heads, and our superintendent himself. In a town where the last 2 BOE elections cycles have overwhelming selected conservative school board leaders, shouldn't there be more balance in hiring district

I am never able to open links from the MMS emails. I constantly get an error on the server they use. I then can't find the same information on the school or PA website. This could be improved.

Tell us more about student achievements. How have SAT scores evolved? How do aggregate SBAC scores look? What areas is the administration focused on in education? How are students doing in writing and grammar?
Allow for more dialogue between teachers/staff and BOE/main office/parents groups

There are too many emails and blasts coming from different sources via emails. It is very hard to keep track of all of the messages. Messages for middle school and high school should be coming via a one stop source unless it is an emergency text or email. Within the one stop website / source, it should be divided by academics, sports, etc., etc. There should also be one part of correspondence that has dates in chronological order for all school activities that contain links with additional / ancillary information. Also, it is very cumbersome to review the superintendent's weekly email message. It contains a link and it is not user friendly. Also, the website should be made configurable where parents can filter between different activities, classes and dates. Also the district could probably save a lot of money by eliminating redundant websites and spam. Again, think one stop shop!

Sometimes (most times) my only access to emails during the day is on my phone. Any messages that have links OR I open a message to have to follow a link to a drive that makes me download a doc on my phone is cumbersome.

Better and user friendly website

Quit being so condescending. Do a much better job informing both parents on Important info.

More proactive

Very minor point - DHS Athletic instagram posts tend to broadcast successes and go silent when the team loses. Spring season has been better but in general if I don't see an update on a team it's usually because they lost. Good to share news regardless of wins/losses. As I said, not really relevant to the big picture but something I've noticed

Superintendent's message is tedious to retrieve via the two-step process, it is too long, too wordy and I rarely open it now. Make it a short concise email with only relevant information. Skip the formalities and niceties about enjoying the weather and so on.

Reduce the number of Communications

To be transparent with their agenda prior to implementing- to be forthcoming

There is plenty of communication about the wonderful achievements of our students. We are clearly an achievement driven community. It would be nice to highlight other things occasionally. The message of achievement is loud and clear what about being a good citizen or community service projects? It would also be nice to get regular communication on the curriculum and changes that are being made when new programs or curriculum resources are being used or purchased by the district. This information can be difficult to find.

Better administrators

It is good but it needs some improvements

Hiring someone to handle full-time

Make them more fun to read/ more engaging. The weekly email from the superintendent is not engaging/fun to read. It seems a formality to check the box and not an update on how our schools and kids are doing. Make it more human, more approachable

Superintendent emails are good and the current length is good

Appreciate the school pto newsletters

I think it could be a great addition to list the top 5-10 achievements of the week

And highlight top 5-10 opportunities that are being pursued.

We are all very good about proclaiming successes.

I think we as a community, including the leadership, spoke more often and more publicly about failures and opportunities to improve it could be transformative for our kids. They believe only successes should be publicized and consequently failures have more shame. If we openly discuss our failures, it takes away the shame and teaches more resilience and problem solving.

I appreciate that it would be atypical to promote and proclaim shortcomings, but. I think it could encourage more empowerment of our students to share the voice in solving for more successful outcomes. It would also demonstrate the value and benefits of failure.

More use of text, I don't think I get any.

I feel that the District picks and chooses the information they want disseminated instead of sharing everything. There should be a commitment to measurement and accountability/reporting on any and all decisions that the District makes, and an annual review of all decisions that is public.

Please don't send pdfs that we have to download. Just say what you are going to say in the body of the email.

Keep doing what you are doing. I appreciate that I can watch the board meetings at my convenience. It has increased my ability to engage with the content since it is posted for the public. I would like to see this continue even though I understand it comes at a cost to the district. For several years, in order for me to attend the meetings, I had to pay a babysitter. My kids are older now, but this is MUCH better!

Centralize apps down to 1. Upgrade aspen.

This administration is pushing a politized agenda that is not aligned with the prevailing values of this town and our family. Those in charge are catering to trends that promote their careers and ego over the value and quality of our children's education. The over-emphasis on non-academic ideology (in terms of time, money and resources) is detrimental to our children's education. The forums available to parents to speak up are contrived to give the impression of an open exchange but it's very clear that dissenting views and probing questions are consistently dismissed/ ignored. Forums are generally one-directional, limited (e.g., max of 3 mins to speak at a BOE meeting) and lack accountability (e.g., the Board is not required to provide a response). Further, Dr. Addley is not transparent about decisions and actions. It's disingenuous, disrespectful and arrogant. We deserve better. We deserve an administration that is committed to providing a quality education to our children above all else and preserving to the (greatest degree possible) a childhood unburdened from politicized pseudo-science masquerading as truth. I hope you asked for this feedback with earnest intentions and won't shy away from listening if it isn't what you expected to I think the district tries. I don't think the board or the administration actually care about hearing dissenting voices. I do not believe either have an open mind to change - sorry. Maybe there is an open mind to your political party but above and beyond that the district has become incredibly CLOSED minded and the communication has followed suit.

Aspen is not user friendly and should be replaced or improved.

would prefer simpler email comms. We receive newsletters from the district, the school, and the PTO all with separate formatting (but frequently with similar information).

High School information is not shared by the school, it is shared by the parents association. The district (not parents) should be responsible for sending out regular communication that includes any disruption to the school schedule - PLC days, SAT testing, finals, field trips, etc. That communication needs to be distributed at least 2 weeks in advance. The communication should also include an array of successes by students at the school, whether it's a club, a performer, or a sport, as well as staff accomplishments. Teachers and coaches should be responsible for distributing pertinent information, not parents - including last-minute changes.

Additionally, district meetings should also be offered in the evening. It seems as though the district is still operating as if there is one parent who is available at all times, whether that is to attend a coffee (during regular work hours) or have the flexibility to pick up their child at any time of the day (frequently during work hours).

We need a complete overhaul of this administration. They are about being held accountable for their lack of transparency and their dishonesty. We also need to get rid of all the pornographic material in our school libraries. Let's also stop devoting so much time to SEL and RULER and get back to the basics of our core subjects.

Remove the click-through PDFs and put content directly in email body.

Recognize that some students are not athletes, and decrease the ableism and racism that permeate all aspects of education in this town. The former directly affects one of my kids and indirectly affects the other, and the reverse is true of the latter.

In-person or virtual events at times that are convenient for working parents

I think the district is doing a good job in communications - the issue is that there is so much information that things can get lost. Allowing people to maybe opt-in for updates on specific areas of interest (e.g. "Curriculum" "Events" "Meetings" etc.) might be a way for people to do that. I also think I am more in the know because I take the time and make the effort to participate in the process. Once you start volunteering your time as a parent, then you get called on for things like focus groups, etc. There may be a lot of people who - because they work full time and can't commit to the PTO, or have other obligations - would like to get involved in things like focus groups but don't know where to start.

Finally, in your question above about our satisfaction with the portals - I don't even know what FamilyID is, so I marked "Dissatisfied". Your survey should have an option for "Don't use" to properly reflect this. Generally with the portals, it's very hard to remember everything (especially since I have children that also attend schools out of district). It would be great if there could be one landing page to access all the portals and some indication of what you use

Text messages need to be sent in a timely manner. There needs to be an easier way to communicate with school for student absences and tardiness. Students need to be contacted if he/she are recorded as late.

Calendar and important material should be easier to locate, the website needs to be updated.

Don't send an email with a link to a letter. Just type the letter right out in the email body.
The Aspen website is not exactly user friendly, could use an overhaul/upgrade.

Optimize for mobile devices. Most of the text in the emails you send is way too small for my tired old eyes, which forces me to wait until I'm in front of my computer to read it.

Aspen is absolutely horrible. Find a better system that is more user friendly. One system for everything would be awesome. Thanks for all you do for our kids!!

It would be great to not receive links from Dr Addley, rather, please put the text of your message into your email. Also, Aspen is beyond horrible - Westport uses a MUCH more user-friendly program - ask them!! My School Bucks is a complete gouge and infuriates me to no end that I am compelled to pay an exorbitant fee every time I need to fund and the maximum amount is miniscule and covers maybe 2 weeks worth of meals - I absolutely hate it. And, thank

The communication should be in the body of the email instead of a link to a separate attachment. Superintendent's emails overlap at times with the principal's email. It would be best if there was only one email coming from the principal (in the body of the email not as a separate attachment) with a section specific for the Superintendent. That way the email traffic would be reduced and a great deal of information would be included in one weekly communication.

I don't like Aspen but I don't know if there are better platforms.

The district website includes very limited information. There should be links in there so that people can join board meetings via zoom easily and without scrambling to find the zoom link for the particular meeting. I don't know if the minutes of the meetings are posted but if they are they should be readily available. Ein information should also be readily available on the website as currently, I have to call and speak with someone to get that info. I have been on the district websites a few times but each time I had to place a call as the information I was looking for was not there
More balance and transparency

It is helpful when we do not have to click on links to access emails. It would be easier if the emails were just in the inbox, (as many of the recent Superintendent's emails have been). I also wish the District would consider school policy on regular communication to parents around sending home student work, (math tests, Foundations tests, etc.) so we could have a better idea about how our children are performing. It is frustrating to only receive this communication through report cards and conferences, as I would love to be able to address difficulties and misunderstandings as they come up. Even my children do not seem to be able to see how they did on tests, so they are not often given the opportunity to learn from mistakes. Thank you.

Aspen needs to be upgraded 100%

I think that there should be a more organized system other than Aspen, which is not user-friendly at all. I wish that information was posted more clearly on the district website regarding events, etc. so I don't have to search through the endless emails that we all get. I also really wish the school would make a point of not just celebrating all of the lacrosse and football and field hockey teams, but do a better job of recognizing the other teams as well as find opportunities to engage with students who might not be on any team or who aren't doing anything super special. I'm really not sure how that would be done. It just seems to me that there is a very big Pool of students that could feel more seen in this district and town. There are also so many activities that students do outside of Darien high school for example, rowing or water polo and it seems that the school could honor these kids even though they're not on a

One idea would be start with a mandate that staff must reply to an email within a certain amount of reasonable time. The weekly superintendent emails should be broken down by school ie. one for elementary one for MMS and one for DHS. If he goes with one email there should be a breakdown of what applies to each school so parents can scroll down to the section that applies to their student. They're also just so broad/surface level. The DHS staff/leaders rarely communicate and when they do it's always a different person, it's confusing, all emails should come from Ellen Dunn not the various VPs sometimes guidance etc.. They should also communicate dates/information well ahead of time. Parents should have important dates for September by June before summer break, everything is very last minute. I have more thoughts to share. Would love to join a committee!

CDSP does a great job informing parents of what is happening in the district on a timely and neutral basis. I do not believe the BOE could do a better job and the BOE might try to "spin" their decisions since the BOE is political by nature. My only suggestion is a monthly newsletter could be helpful to synthesize what has happened, but whatever form the information distribution takes, the district should hire a third-party communications specialist/ company to ensure a factual review of events.

The district does a fine job of communicating relevant information. I think the administration can do better responding to community/parent concerns and being transparent about policy and procedures (or lack there of when it is Emails from DPS should state as such in the sender field...such as the Superintendent communication

Prioritize mobile for critical and time sensitive info (text, then voice). Send notifications for events to attend and info/documentation relating to PPTs etc, sufficiently ahead of time so that parents can arrange work schedules etc.

Don't require email recipient to open a file within an email to access content.

The emails where I need to click and download another document are annoying and I feel a security risk. I also have missed things because when I search my email they do not turn up. Straight regular email is preferred.

I think the district is doing a great job. We love the regularity and frequency of the superintendent emails and look forward to reading them in a weekly basis.

Streamline methods and format of communications and make things more accessible for working parents.

I do not like how certain communications, such as the superintendent's communication, comes in an email that "has to be downloaded" before viewing. I think all email communication should be in line text in the email, not something that has to be downloaded from another source. This is just an added delay and also does not allow for searching of past email communication messages within the email system.

I am not in support of Open Choice whatsoever. I do not believe the district should have the right to spend my money to generously support charitable endeavors. I feel that this was not discussed openly until it came to a decision point. Clarify content of curriculum! Not transparent.

I disagree with the new emphasis on SEL

I feel that the district has zero transparency in certain areas including the inclusion of HIGHLY sexual book content in the school libraries. After telling dozens of parents these books exist they did not believe me and said they had no idea and are absolutely opposed to these books and are shocked the district has not alerted parents to these books. The district also has very little transparency in highly sensitive topics being introduced to elementary level students including topics about sexuality. The district also has little transparency regarding issues such as open choice. When discussing this topic with dozens of friends, they repeatedly have said they had no idea this program was even being considered and they are disappointed the town has not sent communication outlining the program. Very disappointed in the direction the district is moving.

We have grown increasingly concerned around the priorities of the administration and the disingenuous nature of their communication. In particular as it relates to SEL curriculum matters and age inappropriate materials for our kids in elementary school. There has been outright lies and subversion and I don't see how things will improve under this current administration when they continue to blatantly disregard policy and parents concerns to continue to push non-academic, time consuming nonsense down our youngest children's throats under the guise of 'the district's goals'.

Be transparent regardless of the topic/issue, after DEI was brought in quietly through the back door within our district, I have lost trust with our administration and BOE in believing that the academics are the main priority for our school children. The focus on academics has been replaced with DEI without any discussion.

Allow for the BOE meetings to go back to the town hall auditorium so that anyone can attend to listen and engage if desired. Keeping the BOE meetings in the small conference room gives off the impression and desire to not be transparent, or hear from concerned parents on any issue. Limiting the seating area for those who would like to attend is disingenuous for those of us who pay administrative salaries. You all work for us who live here in Darien, actions and behaviors speak much louder than words to placate. Thank you.

Be transparent and respond to parents who inquire about the disturbing content our children are being exposed to. Respond to emails written not in generic form letters. Stand up and explain to parents the reasoning behind the acceleration of SEL curriculum and the decline of academic performance. Provide an in depth curriculum content overview that includes SEL materials so that parents can see the graphic books that are available to our children. The District and Dr Addley are failing our children and are implementing an agenda that oversteps their bounds. They Hire a new superintendent who cares about all of our kids education. That is what they go to school for. Get rid of SEL & the pornographic books in the library. Stop the indoctrination. No Gay pride Month. It can be a day or week like every other Holiday. Great all of the children equally.

I am so angry that inappropriate books regarding sex and gender identity were not removed from our school libraries in spite of many parents complaining. If a group of parents disagrees with these books being in schools, that should be enough reason to remove them. Those who wish to have their kids read these extremely disappointing books, can buy them for their kids. Books such as Gender Queer and Famer. Kids should go to school to learn about academic subjects and leave anything regarding sexual identity and orientation to parents. What is next religion!?

- The district should respect parents and clearly communicate the curriculum.
- teachers should at a minimum send a weekly update to parents sharing the material taught and resources used
- If there are sensitive subjects included parents should be made aware and have the ability to opt out.
- Gender ideology, sexual content and political ideology should not be injected into the learning environment.
- SEL is being used as a distraction and a vehicle for the administration to funnel inappropriate material to our students.
- there should be more transparency on the SEL agenda
- the administration should be held accountable for the harm being done to our students by exposing them to graphic sexual material

There are way too many emails coming from way too many people. There should be 1 communications page/tab for the whole district and it should be broken out by school. So that parents can go to the school for their children and have all communications in one place (and keep them historically!!). Include the person who sent it and the topic so people can easily find what they're looking for. This would help to avoid messages going to spam/junk etc.

There should be other options and tools for parents to voice their thoughts and concerns. The district needs to be more transparent on how they are quietly introducing controversial subjects, all in the name of "DEI", that many parents are opposed to. Please spend more time on academics and less time on SEL and DEI. Please give parents a voice in our children's education.

Curriculum seems to be the hot topic so a big focus on that anytime there are changes/alterations/proposals around that content, especially in areas related to SEL or DEI. Also a summary email each month that recaps the agenda and outcome of the BOE meeting items would be smart and helpful - for those seeking more specific or detailed information beyond that top line recap, you could include the a link to the actual meeting through Channel 79.

Have transparency with regard to all decisions including: background of potential hires, curriculum changes and anything else that will directly affect my children including Open Choice. Transparency is not the forte of the current administration. We pay for the teachers and Administrators and the town's citizens should be aware of and if possible have a choice in the decision process. In the past, Darien has been focused on strength of family, excellent education and a moral and value system that was present with the first founders of our country. Decisions to detract from any of these issues are not acceptable. Sexually explicit anything has no place in the school system. Focus on Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. It's time to stop catering to a small minority.

Be more transparent BEFORE voting on hot-button/controversial issues.

Parents need to be presented information on controversial topics before they are pushed through at the Board's discretion.

A bullet point on a lengthy agenda does not count as transparency. A short concise email outlining both sides of an issue would be greatly appreciated. Many times, parents are first learning about Board decisions (e.g. controversial books) from their local on-line newspapers AFTER the vote.

ALL in person meetings need to be streamlined. Currently, meetings run on and on for hours with nothing being accomplished. Parents with families do not have the time to attend these marathon meetings.

Political leanings and personal views need to stay out the decision-making process.

Too many members of the Board have a political agenda they need to satisfy rather what is best for ALL the students

I believe the administration is deliberately secretive and not open about the inclusion of sexually explicit material in school libraries. Teachers and administration members should either (i) share listings of such books before populating our schools with sexually explicit material or (ii) stop the process entirely and have parents do their job in teaching children about these topics. We do not pay our teachers or administrators to teach out children about such concepts. Teachers and administration should refocus on test results and addressing the very real issue of declining test results in our district and why that is happening. People move to our town for the academic experience and at the moment our teachers and administration are failing our children and taxpayers by delivering an education experience that continues to decline year after year. The school district should focus 100% on academics and when our teachers feel they need to deviate from teaching the core academic skills, the community should be made aware and decisions should be made as to whether our district is the right place for such teachers.

Stop communicating important information with parents when they are heading into a break week or when you know they are clearly not paying attention (ie. When pandemics break out). This is clearly an underhanded attempt to get controversial subject matter through in the "dark of night."

Listen to what all parents are saying not just those that feel "unsafe" or those that are always complaining that we aren't "inclusive" enough.

Stop giving privileges to students in school that claim to be "different". The same rules and consequences should apply to ALL students.

Do not push an agenda on our children. Let parents be parents and raise their children as they see fit.

Let all voices be heard at BOE meetings and don't cut off or correct just the voices you don't agree with.

On a school level, specifically Tokeneke, I am happy with the weekly email school newsletter, and it is a great tool, along with the school Instagram page. On a district level, I find that the superintendent's weekly email doesn't address any hot topics that are brought up during BOE Meetings, and feel like these concerns are swept under the rug, specifically regarding curriculum content. I am not happy with Dr. Addley's communication, as he does not provide clear answers regarding curriculum content, and Julie Droller has also not provided any clear answers regarding curriculum content. Simply avoiding answering questions is not a communication style that will work in this district and I'm very disappointed by their lack of transparency.

I've never received a response from emails I've sent to Dr Addley or MMS principal Dahlstrom. The mass emails I receive feel like they're going through the motions. There's little innovation. Please get on top of the technology piece- we don't have published policies like other schools. There's no channel for bringing up what's working/not working.

The district could improve by leveraging text messages which offer "sound bites" of important matters at hand. If people want more information, an html link could be provided for further details.

Communication tends to drop off as students get older. I would appreciate more specific information from the high school regarding my freshman and the curricular content, special events, athletics, schedule changes, etc. Some sort of weekly, or bi-weekly update would be helpful. One PTO blast is not enough and there are not many communications from admin, with the exception of the guidance department.

District wide weekly newsletter

Frequent disclosure of planned topics during any meetings and allow ample time to research and interact with the administration.

Fix all the communication issues within the school. A committee should be established to review all these various forms of communication and what is working and what isn't and present to the BOE for recommendations. I think best conducted by parents in district but maybe with the assistance of the Harvard Group or a consultant like that!!!!

Stop promoting SEL/DEI and have academics be the focus again.

All sexually explicit materials should be removed from school libraries. It's unacceptable to have pornography available to our children.

I don't have any specific suggestions but appreciate that the District is soliciting input. Thank you for all of your hard work in educating and taking care of our children.

I think the District could share more about Staff, highlighting them so that they feel more valued. Also I would highlight various achievements more including drama, art, etc. as well as sports. I also think more talks and events for parents to meet staff / faculty would be useful.

More people able to get info besides 2 email addresses. Since middle school we have had difficulty getting 3 email addresses total added to the system. We deal with it (only 2) but every year we try to add a third.

The district, and especially the superintendent, love to push their ideology in the dark of night. Hiring Ken Shelton, DEI, SEL, CRT, "Gender Identity", LGBTQ+ issues and the like all suddenly appeared while everyone's focus was on COVID. This admin simply refuses to allow "kitchen table" issues to be handled in the home where they belong. Adley clearly thinks it is the job of the school - and therefore the state - to have a hand in raising our children in a manner that THEY see fit - as opposed to the preferences of US, the parents. The recent uproar over nonsense "literature" like Gender Queer is just a microcosm of the leftist, woke garbage that our children are being fed. Go back to teaching what you're supposed to be teaching... reading, writing, arithmetic, science, history, etc... Stop trying to force your leftist crap down the throats of our children thereby creating a generation of America hating, race baiting, safe space needing, weak minded, resilience lacking "adults". The results are already on full display. Time to reverse

I don't need a weekly superintendent email to start with (rarely says anything important) nor do I then need a weekly principal email shortly following it saying the exact same thing. I have email fatigue from the district

I was not happy with the communication regarding the preschool program. I tried to apply and never got a confirmation about my application. After leaving multiple messages with the director I finally got a response they did not receive my application. I applied again online and never got a response.

The website is hard to navigate so I would work on that. All school emails should have a searchable term to start in the subject line and preferably come from a title not just a name — crowded email inboxes are so hard to keep up with and search. General announcements should all be available and updated in the website or somewhere separate so you don't have to piece together email with sometimes conflicting/updated information. More updates from teachers would be valued at the high school level — there is essentially none. Aspen is terrible!

The district's use of the SchoolMessenger system completely ignores how the community processes and uses messages. The traditional way of sending information in an email allowed parents to later SEARCH their email and retrieve the message quickly when it was relevant. With SchoolMessenger, the parent can see it once, but if they ever want to come back to it again, there's no easy way to search for it among the dozens of PDFs. Does the district expect us to memorize every detail of everything we read? I give up. I bristle at every schoolmessenger link I receive. I make a conscious effort to NOT to click the link because whatever I read is going to be lost and just cause me headaches if I ever need it again. If it is important I figure the district better get me the information some other way. PLEASE STOP USING SCHOOLMESSENGER TO COMMUNICATE; RETURN TO TRADITIONAL EMAIL.

I wish that emails would not have attachments to read the newsletter. Just put the announcement in the actual email. Usually I am on my iphone and when I click on the link to the attachment, it is too hard to read. Please put all communication in the body of the email.

Dr Addley should not have his employment contract renewed. He has had 2 beautiful young children take their lives on his watch. The poor state of the mental health in Darien Schools falls squarely on his shoulders. He's too busy, along with all of his progressive hires (in a conservative town as evidenced by school board elections) pushing ideology that confuses and depresses students instead of educate and inspire. The town should be educating children not indoctrinating and confusing them. All of this is because of Dr. Addley and because of that he should be excused from his position. The 2 suicides alone should have resulted in AT THE VERY LEAST his removal, if not

Coffees morning meeting really cater to parents who do not work full time. It would be nice to have more of a mixture of times for these events.

We've found information can come close to the date it's needed. We often try to get ahead of the game and make an early plan. Sometimes then this can be for naught.

Include links when you reference a document, site, etc.

It seems to me that there is a better system than aspen. It's difficult to navigate and access.

Establish a website to review schools and performance

They could use better the Superintendent Friday notes. It should highlight changes in the curriculum and additional reading materials implemented to the students.

Your communication skills are not the problem. Too much woke ideology for me and my family values.

Make aspen more user friendly. Almost everything is very difficult to find in Aspen.

Communications are like a one way street and need to be more open for parents to provide input. Many times, parents receive information about inappropriate things happening in school from our kids; when we reach out to the administration and faculty, we get canned highly politicized answers. This is totally unacceptable.

Separately, the district is lacking in policy around required communications to parents related to sensitive topics like curriculum and child health issues (social / emotional or other). Faculty and administration is creating division between themselves and parents and between parents and their own children by "keeping secrets" from parents. This is also totally unacceptable.

Finally, it seems that the breakdown in communication even amongst the faculty and administration is poor and has resulted in a lack of accountability for rogue decisions made that have not been approved by the board of education.

ASPEN could be more user friendly

None

Even within this survey, there are blurred lines between administration and the PTOs. Relying on the PTOs to communicate on administrative information can be confusing for parents. The website continues to be problematic for contact information. Chain of communication needs to be better communicated so escalation can be appropriate and efficient. The BOE rarely communicates formally on the business or processes of the board. Without this, unfortunately, they are in a reactive instead of proactive stance.

I think it would be helpful to better publicize agenda items before there are important votes. People here are over scheduled and very busy. So much that goes on politically is "if you know you know." The district can do a better job making sure issues that affect the school community are more widely known in advance of the critical votes. It means nothing to provide the fora for commentary if people don't know there is an important issue on the table. Whether it's social media, local papers, through the wires: key agenda items should be communicated more widely in my opinion. Thank you for organizing the survey and seeking input on this issue - I appreciate it!

It would be great if the District screens the books are students are reading and gave parents the opportunity to opt out of our students reading certain ones. Why are students able to access books in school that have sex acts in them but no book with a mention of God is allowed in? It's no wonder we have the mental health and other issues plaguing our town/nation. Can we please allow in the complete opposite type of book like the one written by Kirk Cameron?

More consideration should be provided to parents who both work as many coffees, meetings, etc are during work hours - limiting tremendously even the possibility of some parents to attend any of these at all, which naturally decreases their voice, making the voices of those in attendance more prominent.

Continue to provide chances for the community to engage and participate instead of just informing, I've really appreciated that this year!

The last day of school (change from Previously agreed upon date) is never communicated. I fact I called the superintendents office to find how how I could receive that information and never heard back.

I would love to have more coffee mornings with the superintendent, principals, Etc.

I would love to hear what deliverables/changes/improvements have been made directly because of parent feedback. (vs only hearing updates but not knowing the origin of the request.)

Much clearer communication on curriculum and controversial topics.
 DHS should make public the annual student awards ceremony. As it is now, students who receive academic awards are invited to attend in an evening, but the winners are not posted or published for the community to appreciate and celebrate their accomplishments. Nor are they publicly acknowledged within the school. We've had two graduate already and I would have loved to have congratulated their classmates who won. But since we weren't invited to the ceremony, we didn't know. We celebrate our award winning athletes but not our scholars and volunteers.

Superintendent and principal weekly emails not all to go out on Friday/the same day.
 Parents need to receive information about staff departures, changes in support hours, teachers being out for illness, etc. before or right at the first day building administration is aware. When this happens, parents need to know the plan going forward. The District and all school websites need a complete overhaul. I find our PTO sites to provide more information, are more user friendly and visually welcoming. There needs to be more content on our District pages.

More student grade specific information

We do not believe that this administration has been transparent with:

- Addressing parental concerns on sexually explicit material in school libraries.
- Discussing the full impact of their continued push for Open Choice and the opening of our schools to Norwalk students, a first step towards regionalization.
- Identifying the reasons why Darien test scores have declined under their leadership.
- Promoting SEL -- rather than academics -- when Darien test scores have declined.
- Aligning their agenda to reflect the values of the community and parents.
- Page of instgram have everything by details of every day what's going on and reminding parents of.

Simplify the e-mail system so that e-mailed letters can be accessed with a single click. The BoE should listen to parents more and the state less.
 I feel like the district communicates timely. It is the school specific info that is not communicated timely or effectively. For example, the SBACS or such a big focus but we never hear about the scores are where our individual school
 A monthly district wide newsletter on happenings across the district and schools to foster a greater sense of community across schools.

Too much attention are given to sports. Achievements in other areas such as music (All state, Western Regional...), quiz bowl do not get mentioned at all at the district and sometimes not even at the school level.

I am not aware of a social media account specific to the District. I follow Theatre 308, DHS 2023 Graduates and other specific accounts, but would follow a broader district account if I knew of one (if there is one, perhaps it needs to be better publicized).

It is generally assumed by the district and the individual schools that families are familiar with the way things are done at the schools and in the district. It is incredibly difficult for new families to the district or to an individual school to know what they need to do when. This includes families who have lived here for some time but have their eldest child going through the school system. My eldest started in the Darien school district as a kindergartner and is now a senior in high school, and all throughout her years in the district, I have had to rely almost entirely on the experience of friends and neighbors whose children are a few years ahead of her in school to tell me what I need to know about how things work within the district and at each school. Instead, the district and the individual schools should assume that every family at every grade level is new to town and to the district. That way, perhaps families will have more information about what they need to do or should do when for their children.

Please stop using the links to a PDF file that need to be downloaded. It is an unnecessary, time consuming process. Body of message can be included in an e-mail communication, there is no need to require the downloading of files to read a simple communication.

I dislike when I have to click a link to view the Superintendent's letter; on my phone I need to go find my download folder and then click on it and to be honest I don't always do it. It's so much better when the copy is in the actual email. I've noticed that more recently and would love it if it continued this way.

Want to be able to view messages on my iPhone without opening links or attachments--doing so often precludes me from reading them or makes it overly complicated.

Provide regular communication emails. Most communication comes through the PTO newsletters not the actual The district is not transparent on the goals of SEL and the use of that curriculum to teach about sensitive issues surrounding gender and sexuality; the district could do a better job of providing rigorous material for children in elementary and middle school that are tracking ahead of grade level benchmarks. We need to shift our focus back to academics and better balance the SEL curriculum with the core, academic curriculum. The middle school communications are very limited and very high level. The principal does not engage enough with parents, teachers or students. Teachers do not communicate enough with parents. In all the years that I have had a child at MMS, I have only had 1 teacher that has regularly sent emails to parents regarding the lesson plans and updating us on progress. We need to be able to have some insight into what our children are learning. Parents are regularly referred back to the DPS website to find information when asked questions about curriculum. The website is not easy to navigate and you often have to click through several layers to find some of the information you are looking for. It almost feels as if they are trying to make it difficult for parents, while at the same time, able to say the material is "there" somewhere.

It would be great if the district was not reactionary. When there are questions or issues to swiftly communicate what the problem and what is happening to solve it. DHS has been doing a much better job with this, this year.

1. Ensure teachers and administrators email BOTH mom and dad when a specific issue arises. Far too often they only email mom.
2. Combine weekly emails from both principal and superintendent.
3. Always include the date, time and location in any email blast that mentions an upcoming event.