

# Communications Survey - Staff

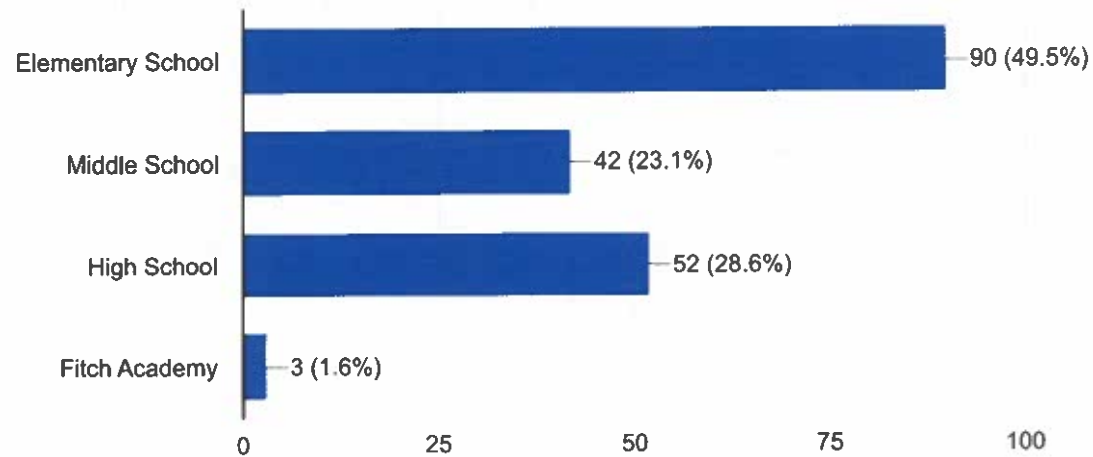
183 responses

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I work at (Please check all that apply):

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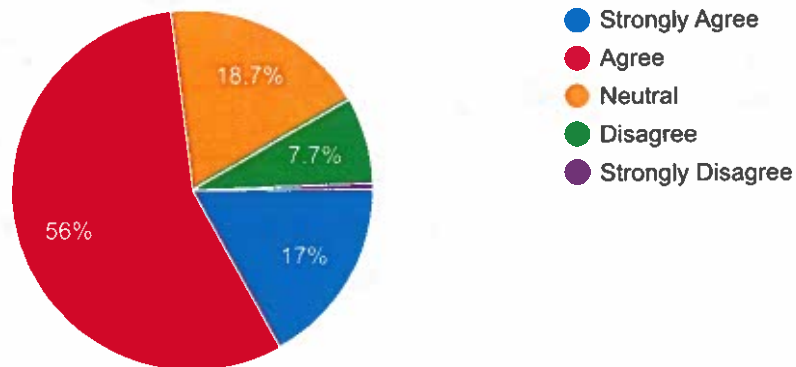
182 responses



The District communicates important information in a timely manner.

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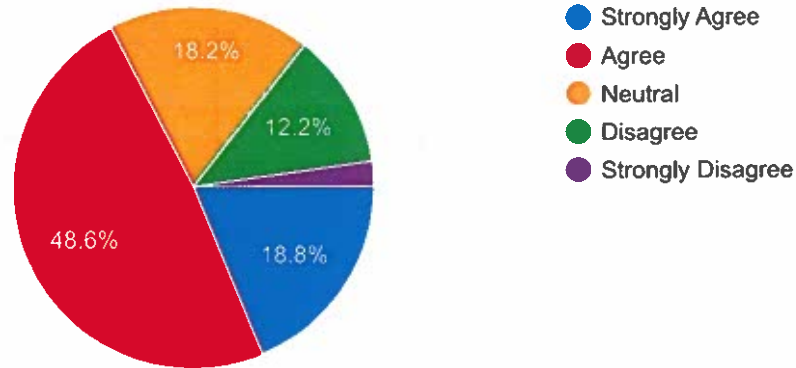
182 responses



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

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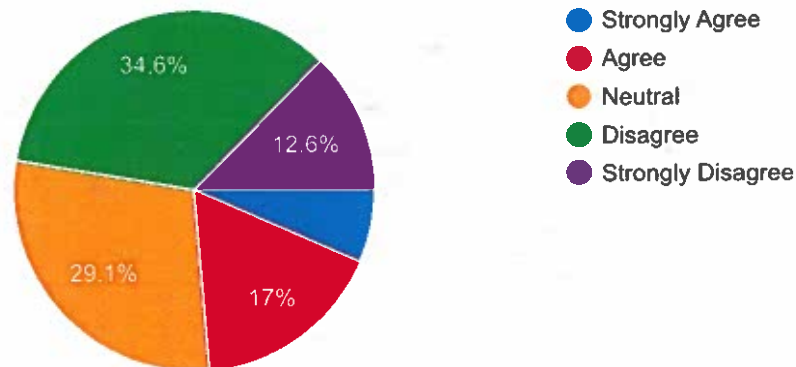
181 responses



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

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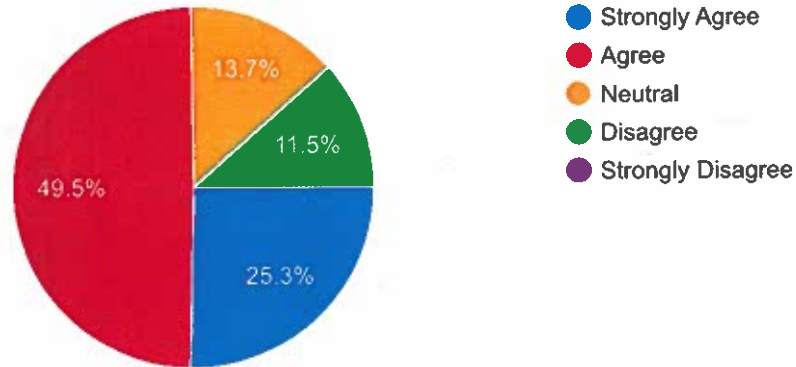
182 responses



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

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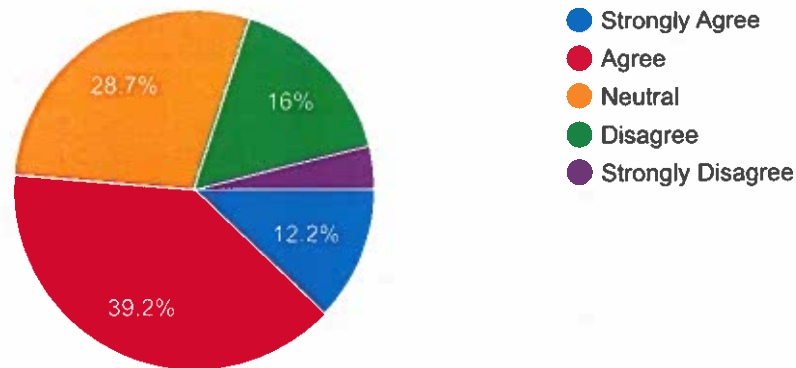
182 responses



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

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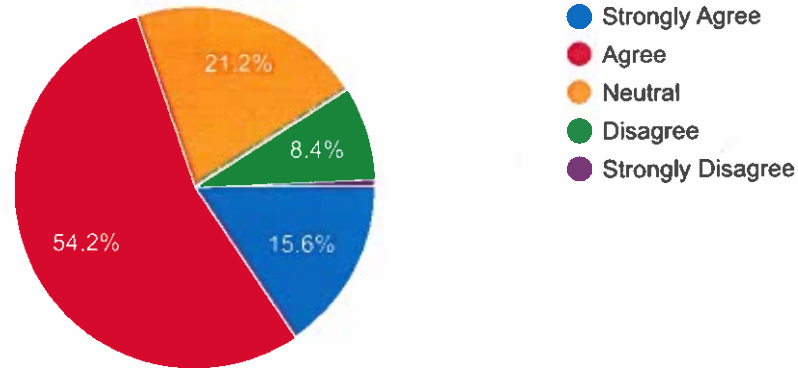
181 responses



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

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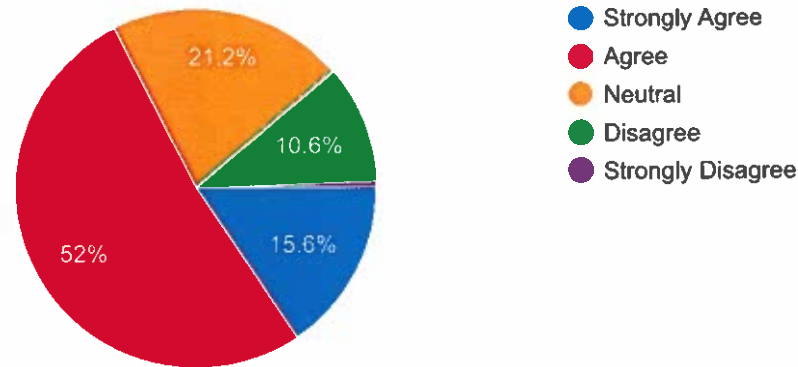
179 responses



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

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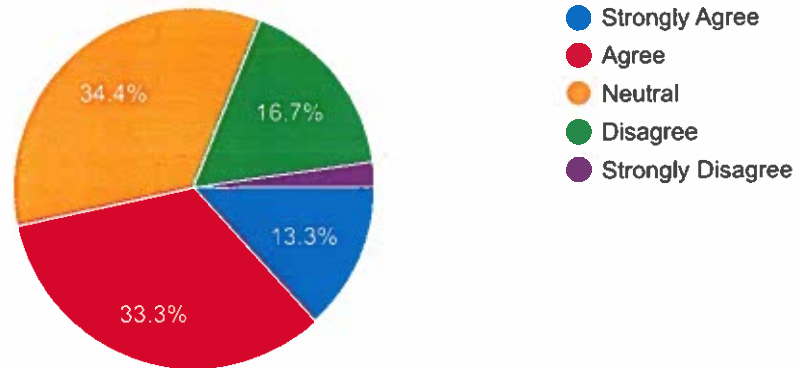
179 responses



The messages the District shares regularly catch my attention and stand out from other messages. They are clear and concise.



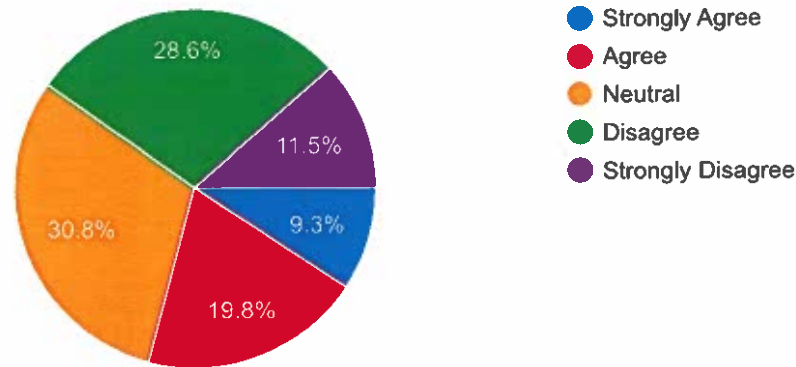
180 responses



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



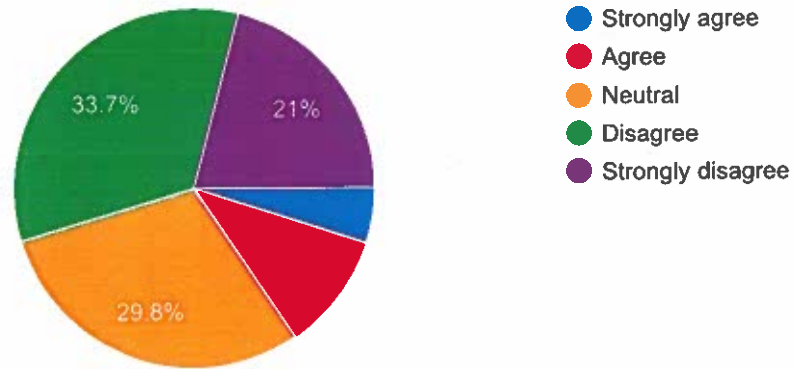
182 responses



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

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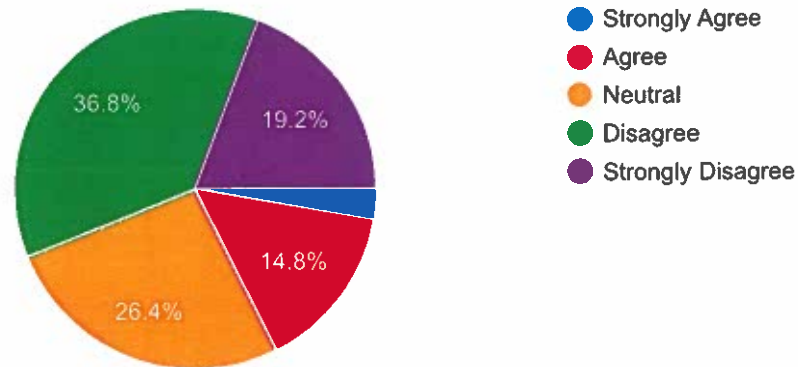
181 responses



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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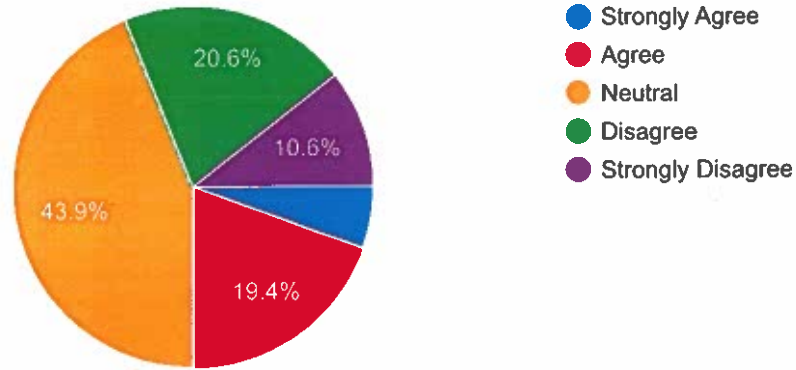
182 responses



### The District respects and values dissenting opinions.

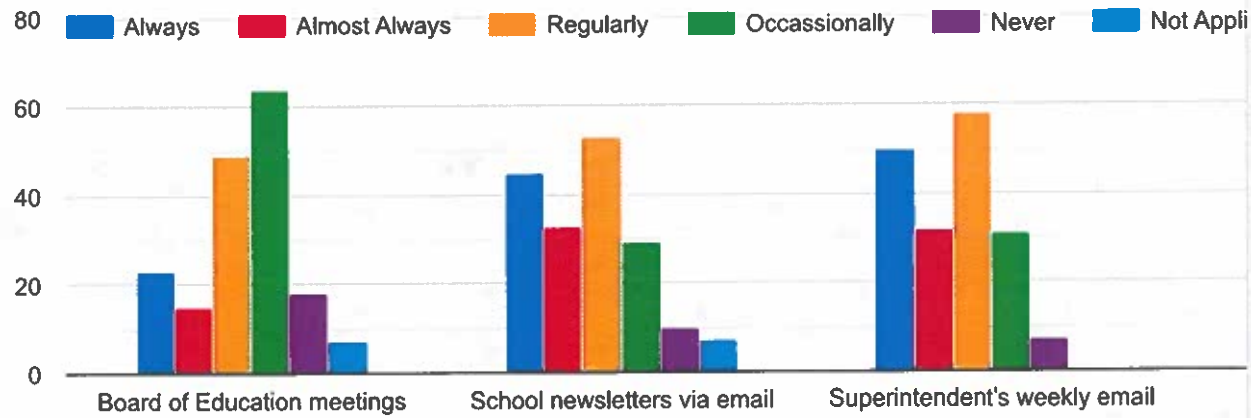
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180 responses



### Please rank how much you value the following District communications:

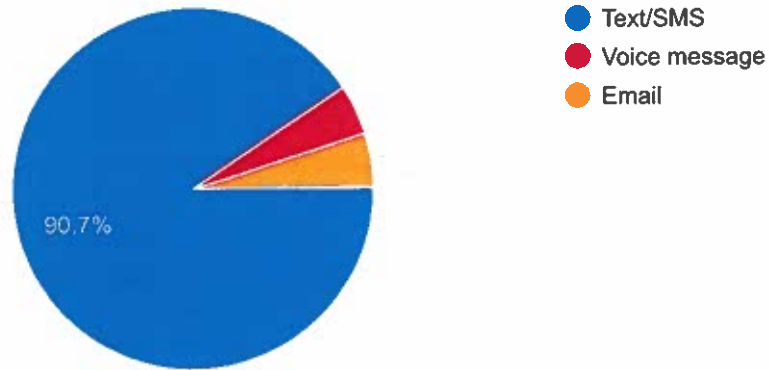
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What is your first preference for critical communications (closings, delays or urgent messages)?

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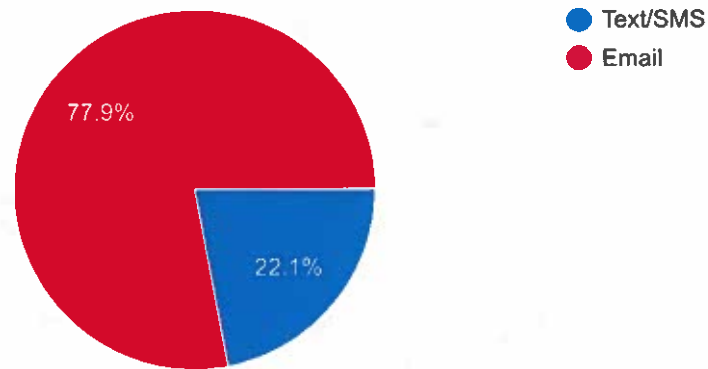
182 responses



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

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181 responses

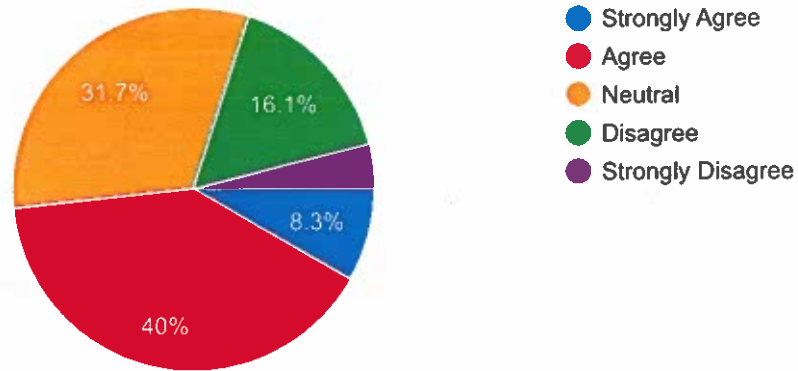




# The District is open and transparent in its communications.

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180 responses



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

61 responses

I said agree a lot in my answers but I don't know what I don't know, it seems great but I wouldn't know about things that you don't share.

Teachers want to know what is going on. However, between the overwhelming amount of work and our own children's districts, we do not always have the time to go to the BOE meetings or find out information about other things. It is NOT that we are disinterested. We just do not always have the extra time.

Increased social media presence, website is difficult to navigate, difficult to find a district wide calendar that is regularly updated. Outlook is not user friendly. We should use Google for everything, especially email. There are too many systems to navigate - website, tepl, Aspen, munis, school cash, my school bucks, frontline, Classroom. Can we streamline?

When texting, it is most helpful to include DPS or Darien Public Schools. My children attend school in Norwalk and when I get weather alerts (delays/closings) it is sometimes unclear which district is sending out information - both come through the same phone number.

I am skeptical that these broad survey questions can get you actionable data. I hope you do follow up interviews with people or get a professional survey design firm to get better data in the future.

None.

The website is, and has been, a very difficult site to navigate. The app through the phone is laughable. The website has numerous links with outdated and/or inaccurate information. The easiest example is this year's school calendar. In the past, after an April BOE meeting they would approve the calendar and update all staff, students and families with the new date that would change due to school cancellations. As of 5/18 it hadn't been...

As far as social media goes...you have to be kidding to think staff should participate in that realm with the sharks. Staff already deals with parents who research their kids teachers and use it against them.

I think if you were to have more round table discussions with staff at all levels with BOE members, admin, etc you may get a better idea of what's working and what needs to be improved to help the students/teachers in Darien.

You do a good job. Having administrators of all levels in the buildings for informal chats with staff would be useful.

Improve the timeliness of communications from CS to teachers  
Specifically, when feedback is asked, keep in mind the PLC schedule and not ask teachers to suddenly call a meeting at their grade level to answer questions from CS with less than one week notice.



The District does an excellent and commendable job in communicating with everyone in the community. Congratulations are in order.

There seems to be way too many ways to receive communications these days. I prefer crucial communications to remain simple and centralized.

I really appreciate Dr. Addley's weekly letters home. During the pandemic, they were crucial to keeping us all informed about how things were progressing. Now, they are a nice way to end the week and see what has happened and what we are looking forward to.

The district prides itself on leading curriculum, but is behind on management system techniques including candid communication with all levels, having more of a "flat" management system rather than hierarchical, and using data and inspection to improve operations. As a retired strategy and operations executive, we could do much better with the resources we have if managed differently. I am a resident of Darien as well, and would love to be part of the solution if we go in this direction.

Unfortunately, I have not additional ideas at this time, but I appreciate that you are seeking input from staff.

What about small coffees with teachers and parents at the school level? We currently do large group/grade level coffees, but perhaps 10 parents and 10 teachers/administrators could get together and discuss successes and areas of concern in the building community.

give us information in a timely manner~

Communication of building events and initiatives is often lacking - we don't always get adequate time to adjust our lesson plans when assemblies and other grade level/building events happen. If there is going to be a schedule change or a class dropped, we need time to adjust. Often, teachers plan units during PLC weeks in advance, and changing things last minute puts a big monkey wrench in everything, especially at the end of the year when we are trying to finish up curriculum.

Continue what is working well!

NA

the Board of Education needs to find a way to regularly receive input and information from the FACULTY and STAFF. There should be a Faculty and Staff liaison on the board of Ed just like there are student liaisons on the Board of Education. This could ensure that the Board is getting ACCURATE information about school happenings.

Improve DHS Website

The website needs to provide access to daily needed information like what's the exam schedule?

If there was a way to differentiate the more important news from everything else. I.e. a lot of the district emails on a Friday go unread, so putting important information elsewhere. The best



way, in my opinion, to directly get to staff and community, is texts , but reserve those for very important info. Also, would love to have more of a communication between staff and admin.

This was a hard survey to answer, in that there are different layers of communication and communicators, and different forms of communication. Dr. Addley and Dr. Tranberg are excellent in their communication skills, platforms used, frequency and transparency. Though I would recommend that the Superintendents more frequently highlight the work of teachers so that parents, BOE Members and members of the community can see transparently all the great experiences that are being had with students in classrooms.

I also think that BOE Members should be required (or at least encouraged) to make a minimum of one school visit per month. Visiting schools and having face-to-face communication with staff members during these visits would go a long way toward BOE members seeing and hearing firsthand what is really transpiring in DPS buildings.

At the elementary level, we are VERY frustrated with the lack of communication and progress around curriculum, both coming down to us and going up from us. We are frequently asked to give feedback on units and curricular programs, yet time and time again none of our feedback comes to fruition. Teachers feel unheard and quite frustrated after taking the time to give thoughtful recommendations, only to have them ignored going forward. Administrators at that level seem "dug in" to particular pedagogy and programs, and the communication around curriculum feels disingenuous to us.

A more effective method of communicating around elementary curriculum would be to establish stipended positions for teacher-led Subject Area Committees (SACs) for Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science (and special areas too?). One teacher per subject area per school (5 teachers total per subject) would meet regularly with administration and their own school staffs to help develop effective curriculum solutions, share ideas, projects, successes, challenges, etc. This would establish more effective Inter- and intra- school communications than the current team leader model alone currently does.

In addition, some meetings, presentations, coffees, etc. are quite helpful and engaging, while others are absolutely not (see above), so that question was hard. I guess it depends on the focus area of the meeting and the communicator...

Finally, our District website feels somewhat corporate and cold, and information can sometimes be hard to find. From an elementary perspective, it can be livened up a bit to feel more engaging, while also streamlined to make things easier to access. Sometimes less is more...

Stop patronizing us.

Better implementation of communication (including promotion of events and celebration of successes) at the building-based level. Too often it seems that responsibility is relegated to district newsletters, blogs, etc., which leads to a lack of cohesive community feeling within the building.

I am advisor of a large club at the high school that manages membership fees and expenses of the club (over \$50,000 a year). I would like to see policies to be written and the advisors be



informed of changes. An example is that the BoE decided clubs could not purchase gift certificates. As an advisor, I was never notified of this change, bought 10 five dollar gift certificates to be given out as prizes at my club of 100+ students. I was never notified of this change in writing or verbally and never reimbursed for my \$50 purchase. I feel there should be a written document of policies and if you want all purchases to be approved by administration, then create a policy and a form for it.

The Board of Education should hear directly from teachers. The information they hear at board meetings is an administrative spin on what is actually happening at schools and what teachers/staff actually need.

more information, regularly given, about proposals and questions before the Board of Ed, and decisions made by it

I'm not a huge social media contributor. I, personally and thankfully, haven't had any issues communicating with the district, when I needed to. I understand that all personalities under one umbrella will have conflict, and that is human, as in any work family. It's nice to want to always paint beautiful pictures. Yet, it's also okay to acknowledge imperfections working towards social emotional my growth and a greater and happier compromise for all involved.

The Board of Ed should listen to the concerns of teachers and coaches

We need a centralized calendar with everything on it that is easy to access (school level and/or district). Website photos are stale and need updating.

Less emails

The Website is not user friendly. It's hard to find information and to search. I also find that what I'm looking for is not always on the front page. We used to have an unattractive home page--but it was useful because everything you needed to know was right there with one click.

As a staff member, I don't want to use social media at school to find out about what's going on in school and after school. (I'm not on my phone during the school day) Could the information that is sent via athletic dept (the instagram page) also be shared via email or on the website somewhere. If I had a quick place to click, I could then acknowledge my student athletes or artists directly for a game or performance.

It would be nice if the district did a spotlight feature on a teacher from any of the schools on a regular basis. (Perhaps nominated by another teacher?) Teachers need to feel like they scored a touchdown every once in awhile.

The district is exceptional at communicating school news. Thank you!

More frequent, shorter messages. Emails are lengthy and time consuming to read. Would be better if we had more two-way communication methods (i.e. instant messaging on computers or something like it) so that we receive information as soon as possible, frequently, and briefly. The opportunity to respond/interact would be nice so that we feel our voices are valuable.

Reduce the frequency of the superintendent's weekly email to monthly. Improve the layout of the district website. It would be more helpful to have a Parent view, teacher view and a student

view. We all need different things from the website so it is hard to find needed information in a timely manner.

I would like to find out about school closings from an email/text message instead of seeing it first on TV or News website.

Communications in the form of a newsletter (short articles/pictures) might be nice.

I think the district needs to communicate ALL student successes and happenings in a timely basis. I think the lack of communication, other than in the Darien Times, about an alumna's gift and master class was unacceptable considering the of emphasis and money that the district is now putting on mental health. It was a perfect event to share with the district and in the Superintendents weekly email as well as in the new Director of Mental Health's first communication. I was further disappointed that BOE members, nor (more) administrative staff did not attend this master class. I was disappointed that a BOE member was able to communicate in the paper such a crass and rude comment regarding the attention given to mental health and in particular suicides/deaths in town. I sincerely hope this will be addressed.

Administrative communications should be sent out during working hours

More transparency regarding sensitive matters.

Important decisions directly affecting particular district programs, departments, and buildings at board of education meetings are not effectively communicated. There is no opportunity for dialogue unless we all regularly attend board of education meetings, which is not feasible. The model is from the top down, and we seem to be handed decisions that have already been made without having been able to provide any input.

Communicating information with staff members before sending to parents. Celebrating staff achievements through newsletters and announcements could also boost staff morale.

In all seriousness, do you think you are good communicators? If so, then go back to the drawing board - forget everything you think you know about good communication and start over.

I don't trust anything that comes from administration as genuine. I don't believe you are interested in feedback- only the appearance that you interested. And I don't believe things will change any time soon.

I think communication about curriculum based information needs to improve. For example, changes/updates to curriculum, assessments, instructional resources, etc.

Provide a safe forum for teachers to voice concerns. Engage teachers in problem-solving. Acknowledge and validate what teachers say. Be open and honest with parents.

District communication is notoriously confusing. One person says the color is red and it trickles down like telephone and by the time it reaches the staff it is the color blue. This causes confusion at the very least. It would be awesome if elementary level schools had something like the high schools do with their athletics profiles and social media, or even just highlighting the great things that kids and STAFF are doing. I think that most staff would love to be communicated with in a timely fashion- if we are required to reply to emails from families

within 24 hours, I think staff deserves to receive a reply from administrators within the same time frame. There are no opportunities for teachers to interact with upper level administration and the BOE unless they are hand picked for a selective committee. I think that teachers would love to see admin more present in our buildings for personal communications, but it would also be wonderful to see BOE members in our schools and classrooms to witness the amazing work we're doing every day for the children of this district.

Listen to your staff/faculty.

Keep the websites up to date and user friendly

As a new teacher this year, I was never prompted to sign up for district communications. I did not receive any automated voicemails/phone calls about the snow day this year. When I asked in my school's office, no one knew how to add me to communications, and some people thought I should have been added automatically (but I wasn't). Making sure new teachers are signed up for district communications (outside of just school emails) should be a priority.

By "District," do you mean only Central Services? Or this term meant to includes building level and departmental level communications?

Earlier communication regarding information and offerings for professional development days.

Website can be challenging to navigate. Consider multiple ways to search for and access information.

Please send important emails during work hours. Many Friday emails from admin are sent after the end of the school day.

This question was confusing. "Please rank how much you value the following District communications". It was hard to tell if you're asking if we value it in general or if we value the content of the current communications. (Not sure your answers will be valid.)

It would be nice to have a comprehensive online calendar of all events at all schools on the main website. (Ridgefield has that, and each school is color-coded so it's easy to find what's happening and where.)

Many times in my years here, I feel like the 'last to know' about certain things. It would be nice to have a clearer communication between admin/BOE and the staff.

HR communications (retirement, open enrollment) are always SUPER CLEAR! Tech communications are not usually clear (from Joan or from I.T.). Building communications are wonderful.

Having a building school calendar for staff that's accessible at the middle school would be helpful this ties into the commutation piece a little easier.

Staff should be given the following on a regular basis:

- 1) A copy of the minutes from all BOE meetings and committees (these are on the district website which is in no way user friendly)
- 2) A monthly update from each building/department on staff happenings/accomplishments...not student...staff.



3) The BOE should hold monthly office hours for staff to have an audience with them to better put faces to names and to discuss concerns/accomplishments within the district.

There is currently no meaningful communication between the BOE and the teachers and staff of this district. They sit on high making decisions which directly impact our classrooms but have no clue what it means to be a teacher/staff member in this district.

I am satisfied with the District's communications.

The point on dissenting opinions is key, there used to be more opportunity for this - and it often feels like a dissenting opinions were taken into consideration more seriously than it is now, and most committees feel like rubber stamps/places where the decisions were made already -- not opportunity to make or affect policy, particularly in building policy. It does not seem there is often teacher influence on district policy - or it is only the teachers who might 'go along' on the committees. For example - the block schedule committee seems to have had a particular agenda and outcome from the onset (or at the very least it's intriguing the outcome is quite similar to the initial ideas - and without clear identifications of what the schedule is attempting to accomplish).

Aside from notice to not come to work for a cancellation (which is best done before 5:30), other communications are best through email. Opportunities to engage with the board may be productive for working conditions and boosting morale. In answering some of these questions, I answered in regards to the 'district' not necessarily the 'buidling'. This survey focuses only on District/board communication not necessarily the timliness or clairty of communication from building administration or department heads.

A place that would be helpful to provide feedback is on administrators for the purpose of professional growth and encouraging and staff morale.

Please stop sending information that requires a download to read, which is often the case with the weekly emails from the Superintendent. People do not want to download a weekly message onto their computer. You should be able to open an email and read the message.

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

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