

Jackson Middle School Site Council's Parent/Guardian Survey on School Climate and Communications



Presentation of Results
11 February 2009

Introduction

In February 2009, Jackson Middle School Site Council surveyed parents/guardians on:

- School Climate - to find out if the school is a welcoming place for parents and if it fosters a sense of community.
- Communication - to see if communication between the school and home is two-way, consistent and meaningful.

Survey Presumptions

- The Survey's underlying presumptions-
 - Parent involvement affects student achievement
 - School Climate affects parent involvement
 - School Communication influences parents' ability/desire to be involved with a students' school.

Survey Structure

- Sections – Two (school climate & communication)
- Questions- Multiple Choice(24) & Open (6)
- Publicity- announced through school e-mail list, at PTA meeting, as well as by PTA E-blast
- Mechanism – On-line (via link) and paper copy
- Completed Surveys- 107 individuals (100 on-line and seven handwritten)

Section 1: School Climate

Is the School Welcoming to Parents?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. Our school building is physically accessible to parents/guardians.	45%	53%	2%	0%	0%
2. It is easy to get around our school (layout, signs).	13%	55%	27%	3%	2%
3. I'm greeted in a courteous manner when I call or visit the office.	33%	56%	7%	1%	3%
4. I know how to communicate with the school administrators (i.e. email, appointment, etc.).	34%	54%	9%	2%	2%
5. Administrators are responsive to parent concerns.	23%	51%	10%	2%	14%
6. Our school has regular events to celebrate our children and foster connections between families.	12%	42%	27%	5%	14%

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the the school climate is welcoming based on our criterion in the survey. Open questions # 7 & 8 provide specific feedback from parents on what's working and what's not working.

Question 7

What specific activities and/or communication does the Jackson community do to make parents/guardians feel welcome?

- 65 Comments & one e-mail
- Top three answers
 - Newsletters (Jackson Journal & PTA Communication)
 - Back to School Night
 - Emails (some teachers)

Question 8

What additional things would you like to see?

- 54 comments
- Top Three Answers
 - Better Communication
 - More opportunities for parent involvement at school
 - More social opportunities after school

Section 2: Communication

How does Jackson Middle School communicate with parents/guardians (i.e., concerning school events and opportunities for students and parent involvement)? Please check all the ways and rate their effectiveness, including the availability of the materials in appropriate languages for your school community.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
9. Visible signs at school in multiple languages	2%	18%	30%	13%	37%
10. Written newsletters and flyers sent home	14%	28%	28%	21%	8%
11. Information sent via regular mail	31%	34%	24%	4%	7%
12. Electronic Jackson Journal	43%	31%	19%	2%	5%
13. Back to school packets	19%	55%	20%	4%	2%
14. School Website	16%	37%	35%	4%	8%
15. PTA Website	8%	21%	19%	1%	51%
16. PTA Eblast	19%	22%	15%	5%	39%
17. Phone calls	17%	29%	22%	3%	29%
18. Teacher Website	19%	20%	15%	4%	43%

The majority of respondents are not aware of several standard methods of communication within the school. Many communication mechanisms are effective for parents when used. Open questions # 19 & 20 provide specific feedback requesting consistent communication by all staff.

Question 19

Are there other effective communication methods used at Jackson Middle School that weren't mentioned above? Please list

- 39 Comments
- Top Three Answers
 - Progress Reports
 - Teacher Web Sites
 - Webgrade

Question 20

Is there additional information you would like to know about the school?

- 32 Comments
- Top three answers
 - Advanced notice of events
 - Information about school/pta/teacher websites
 - Updated calendar for year's events

a. Communication Methods

When I need to, I can easily contact my child's teachers about academic performance and classroom behavior by the following methods:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
21. Email	60%	32%	4%	0%	4%
22. In person	26%	51%	7%	1%	15%
23. Telephone	13%	38%	10%	2%	37%
24. Notes sent with child or put in teachers' mailbox	9%	33%	11%	3%	44%
25. Planners	8%	26%	18%	10%	39%

Ninety-two percent of Respondents agree that email tops the methods for communicating with teachers. *[NOTE: the potential bias of this survey is that 100 of those surveyed (out of 107) responded on-line which might suggest a greater ease with the electronic medium.]*

b. Teacher Communications

My child's teachers provide me with regular information (by email, in writing, or in person) about:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
26. What is happening in the classroom	17%	45%	30%	8%	0%
27. How my student is progressing academically	16%	57%	21%	5%	1%
28. My child's teachers find ways to communicate with parents who don't speak English as their primary language.	1%	3%	1%	1%	94%

Over 1/3 of Respondents did not feel adequately informed about what's going on in the classroom.

Over 1/4 of Respondents did not feel adequately informed about their child's academic progress.

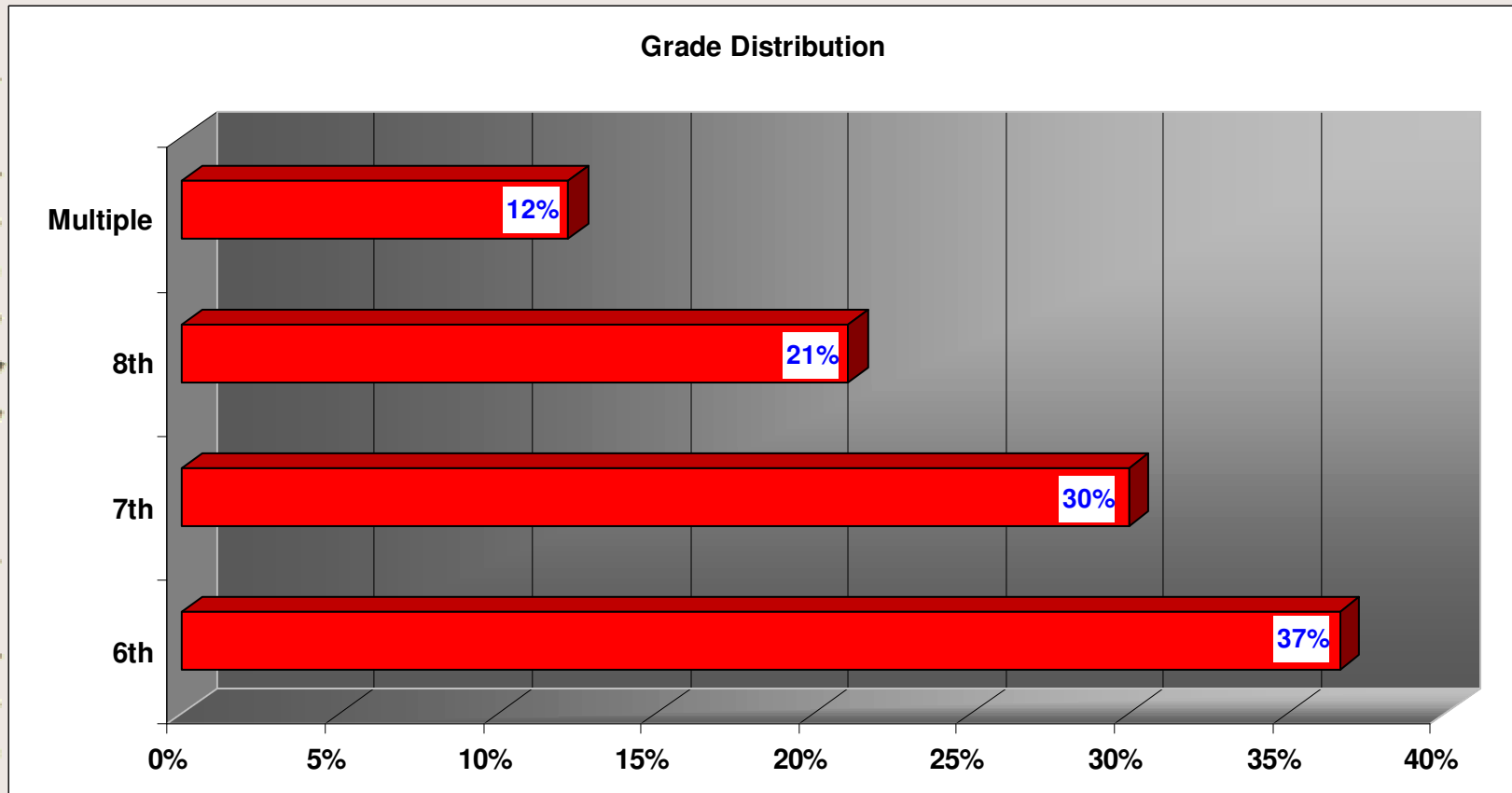
[NOTE: the potential bias of this survey concerning #28 is that the survey was only offered in English thereby perhaps limiting the Respondents to those who speak English.]

Question 29

What communication tools used by your child's teachers do you find most effective? Are there other methods you would like to see teachers use to communicate with parents?

- 88 comments
- Top three answers
 - Emails from teacher (weekly)
 - Webgrade
 - Updated Web Sites

Grade Distribution of Respondents' Students



Initial Reflections



Next Steps

- Review findings individually
- Formulate priorities and potential action items at March Site Council Meeting
- Anything else?



Appendix

Survey Detail

Open Question Comments

The full text of all responses to the open questions are contained in the file “Appendix – Consolidated Open Question Responses.pdf”

Jackson Middle School – Parent/Guardian Survey on School Climate and Communications

Appendix: Full Text of Open Questions

7. What specific activities and/or communication does the Jackson community do to make parents/guardians feel welcome?

1	The newsletter.
2	Newsletter and alerts are great
3	Emails from block teachers re class projects
4	Communication through the newsletter, pta meetings, and teacher emails are the best way to include parents.
5	Back-to-school packet at start of school year; 5th grade welcome for incoming parents; pta's volunteer coordinator e-mails about volunteer needs; up-to-date announcements in front of the school
6	I find the number of activities for parental involvement in the evening to be few. Not sure if this is typical for parents adjusting from elementary to middle school.
7	I like the PTA emails - and letters from the principal. Last year I really liked how Jill Sage would greet parents at one of the early meetings, but I can't remember which it was. Mostly, though, there is a lot of warmth and care by the staff consistently. It is family oriented and I value that so much. The teachers are amazing.

Open Question Response Example