



2024 School Climate Survey

Open-Ended Responses

Parent Summary Report

Overview

The 2024 Romeo Community Schools' School Climate Survey included two optional, open-ended questions that survey respondents were asked to complete. Although there was no limit to the length of these individual responses, the intent of the questions was to seek the highest priority answer as it relates to the specific question. Parents, staff, and students in grades 6-12 were asked the same two questions.

In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your (your child's) school?

If you could change one thing at your (your child's) school, what one thing would you change?

This report provides a summary of parent responses. Responses for staff and students in grades 6-12 are available in separate reports.

Summary Report

There were over 5,000 individual answers to the two questions across all survey groups. The responses were screened three times by both Mischoolresearch staff and the District Survey Team. Personal names, vulgarities and profanities were redacted from responses. Inappropriate comments were removed in their entirety.

Initially the district leaders spent several hours analyzing the parent responses with the intent of identifying common "themes" that were mentioned with some level of frequency. The parent responses were then turned over to the principals to be analyzed for the top themes at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

In this district level report readers will find the most prevalent themes shared by parents (at each level). When a theme is identified there will also be a series of actual responses that represent or give examples of the intent of the theme. Major themes in most cases have been mentioned at a rate of 10% or greater of the total responses. Secondary themes may have been documented for use within specific school communities but are not included in this report.

These themes support our overall "Key Takeaways" from this second administration of the survey. Additionally, they are considered in support of the district's Strategic Plan, helping to assess areas of success as well as areas for continued focus and growth. Our Strategic Plan Focus Area teams will also consider themes that may identify areas that need to be included in future efforts. Finally, each principal is conducting a separate analysis of the responses from their school community that will lead to building specific initiatives to improve school climate as needed.

Parent Response Summary

Elementary Level

Question 34: *In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your child's school?*

Theme #1: Teachers and Staff (quality and caring nature)

Summary: A theme from the survey that captures the vast majority of responses is that our parents feel that our staff are the best thing about their schools. Parent feedback provided examples of teachers providing extra support, care and the level of concern shown for the students.

Example responses:

"The enthusiasm from staff trickles down, getting the children engaged and they have fun learning."

"The patience and understanding of the staff within the students. They take the time to understand each student."

"The staff! My girls have had positive experiences with teachers and staff and I believe that plays the biggest role in their ability to learn and enjoy their day at school."

Theme #2: Community feel and building/district culture

Summary: A significant number of parent responses stated a positive culture is present at all levels within Romeo Community Schools. It was also stated that one of our strengths is the community involvement in the school district.

Example responses:

"The positive atmosphere and climate and positive reinforcement."

"The family feel; I feel my kids are well taken care of while there."

"The 'family' feel you receive within the building."

Theme #3: School offerings and programs

Summary: A primary theme in the parent survey results show that the majority of respondents feel positive about the program offerings for our students. Responses

included specific examples such as the curriculum/courses, elective choices, families events and extracurricular activities.

Example responses:

"That they make family nights for the whole school to attend! The kids love going with the whole family and their friends to those days after school!"

"The new CKLA program and how much the teachers care."

"The opportunity they have for a well-rounded curriculum and extracurricular activities."

Question 35: If you could change one thing at your child's school, what one thing would you change?

Theme #1: Facilities

Summary: A number of survey responses indicated the parking lot and need to update the grounds as an area of concern.

Example responses:

"Parking lot"

"Updating the grounds (cracked sidewalks, playground equipment)."

"The parking lot is awful when it comes to pick up and drop off. It would be nice if the sheriff just spent 10 minutes just directing traffic at the end of the day so everyone could get out safely."

Theme #2: Support for high needs students

Summary: There were a number of responses citing a need for more mental health tools for struggling students and resources for at-risk students or students with special needs. Another area of concern was the potential for behavioral issues to disrupt the learning environment.

Example responses:

"Removal of children who hinder learning for the class. Support for teachers who deal with those problem children."

"There have been a few students in my daughter's class last year and again this year that have had behavioral issues. Throwing chairs across the room and students have to exit into the hallways for safety. Just seems like something more should be done with having this big of a disruption, especially as often as it happens."

"The tools available to help students' mental health."

Theme #3: Offerings and programs

Summary: While offerings and programs at the elementary level are viewed positively, areas cited for improvement included more field trips, less fundraising, less homework and more time for play. Responses referred to more performances for parents to attend and an increase in school-based extracurricular offerings. Responses also referenced more assemblies to address issues such as bullying, social media and mental health.

Example responses:

"More learning outside of the school. Educational field trips. Outdoor learning."

"More school-based extracurricular activities for elementary students."

"More performances for the parents."

Parent Response Summary

Middle School

Question 34: In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your child's school?

Theme #1: Teachers and staff

Summary: A theme from the survey that captures the vast majority of responses is that our parents feel that our staff are the best thing about their schools. Parent feedback provided examples of teachers providing extra support, care and the level of concern shown for the students.

Example responses:

"My kids love going to RMS, which tells me the teachers and staff create an awesome and welcoming environment."

"The staff creates a positive culture for the students. Everyone appears to love their job and is invested in the students. Staff members know students by name and appear to enjoy the relationships with them. PBIS, Student of Trimester awards, school spirit weeks, team building, Advisory, Leadership Class, sports teams, and Builders Club are some of the best features of the school."

"The teachers that still care about teaching. The teachers that will go out of their way for a student. Go above and beyond. Teachers are excited to be there. They make learning fun!"

Theme #2: School offerings and programs

Summary: A primary theme in the parent survey results show that the majority of respondents feel positive about the program offerings for our students. Responses included specific examples such as the elective choices, curriculum/courses, sports and extracurricular activities.

Example responses:

"My daughter is thriving, which means the school and district provide varied opportunities and the right environment, attitude, and people for that to happen. Thank you!"

"The programs and passionate teachers. My kids are well rounded because they run cross country with coach Jim who is amazing. They play instruments through an incredible music program and Mr Hill is amazing and so inspirational. My older son is able to excel in advanced math classes. We moved to RCS because it's a small community with big opportunities for student growth."

"The teachers that spend their time with extracurricular activities. Those teachers get to see the kids in a special way outside the rigors and stresses of daily curriculum. I think that helps kids become more comfortable and feel more belonging to the school!"

Theme #3: Community feel and building/district culture

Summary: A significant number of parent responses stated a positive culture is present at Romeo Middle School. It was also stated that one of our strengths is the community involvement in the school district.

Example responses:

"The teams that the grades are divided into allows students to have a sense of community and gives them an opportunity to build relationships with classmates and teachers."

"The atmosphere. Romeo Middle School is a loving and caring place for children to learn. The staff care about my child and I have made relationships with some of them simply because they reached out via phone or email."

"The sense of community and how much the teachers actually care. Having moved to the district this year, I'm thrilled with the academic growth I have seen in my 8th grader. As a Romeo alumni myself, I am so happy to have my child in the district getting to experience all that this school and community have to offer."

Question 35: *If you could change one thing at your child's school, what one thing would you change?*

Theme #1: Discipline/behavior

Summary: Discipline, student conduct, and dress code were comments that were stated in the survey. This shows that we still have work to do in the area of expectations for our students. Teaching our students about respect and acceptance is represented in several parent responses.

Example responses:

"I think there needs to be focus on how the kids treat each other. I think more focus on how to treat each other and acceptance of all needs to be focused on. This is an overall problem in the world, not just the school, but it has to start somewhere in order for there to be a change."

"More emphasis on treating each other with respect. The 'bullying' or general attitude about excluding or making fun of each other by the students has been tough to deal with."

"Teach tolerance and acceptance. Make sure the kids are caring for and about each other. Actually do something about bullies."

Theme #2: Academics/grading

Summary: Responses referenced connections to curriculum and instruction and the need for increased rigor, individualized instruction and hands-on learning. We saw a unique reference to reducing technology based learning. The grading policy was also referenced with some frequency in parent responses.

Example responses:

"More hands on study and learning subjects in classes and prep for tests."

"Less learning on only technology. More hand-on learning and holistic approach to learning has been lost in education over the years. Students are just memorizing and not learning to enhance long-term memory. Children are not robots and are not all the same. Therefore, to expect them all to be 'successful' just memorizing the content on a computer screen is not reasonable."

"The grading policy. 80% summative and 20% formative with no retakes. If you have a teacher that gives a 10 question summative and my student gets two wrong, their grade goes down to an 80%. When my student is going for scholarship money for college other students in other districts have an advantage where they are not penalized so harshly for one bad summative. I feel a 60% summative and 40% formative grade would be more fair."

Theme #3: Communication

Summary: Communication was a theme that came up in our parent survey. The responses showed a need for more communication at the building and teacher/classroom level to parents.

Example responses:

"Communication with teachers or weekly updates. It's not consistent between the different groupings in the same grade."

"More communication weekly from the teachers... as far as upcoming tests, projects, homework due."

"I wish teachers communicated with parents, at least once in a while, so that we know what they're studying and doing. I have no idea about anything my child does at school. It helps me support my child and have dinner conversations when I know what they're studying or how they're doing in class. I also wish they mailed home or sent home report cards."

Parent Response Summary

High School

Question 34: In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your (your child's) school?

Theme #1: Offerings and programs

Summary: A primary theme in the parent survey results show that the majority of respondents feel positive about the program offerings for our students. Responses included specific examples such as the academy model, elective choices, sports and extracurricular activities.

Example responses:

"I think the Academy program is such a great opportunity for students to learn more about areas they are interested in. The district has done a great job partnering with local businesses and giving students opportunities to learn about industries and jobs they could pursue in the future."

"The pathway learning model. It has given my child (and many others!) real world information and application for areas of career interest. To my knowledge, Romeo is the only high school in metro Detroit doing this for students. I believe it will have immediate and impactful influence over my child's college and career choices. I am so glad Romeo took this leap of faith to give students an alternative to regular book learning -- without really understanding the 'why' underneath!"

"I love the academies. It has helped my son focus on his goals and study areas that interest him. It has led to his success and the focus of the academies has already set him up for success after graduation next June."

"That my child is able to adjust to high school in the 9th grade academy building which seems less overwhelming than starting out with all four grades combined."

Theme #2: Teachers and staff

Summary: A theme from the survey that captures the vast majority of responses is that our parents feel that our staff are the best thing about the high school. Parent feedback provided examples of teachers providing extra support, care and genuine concern shown for the success of students.

Example responses:

"As a parent I am most pleased with the time and energy from our teachers to go above and beyond their day-to-day teaching. They genuinely care about their students and want them to succeed."

"The relationships that some of my child's teachers have formed with my child. It's nice knowing that my child likes most of the adults that she spends a significant amount of her days with."

"The teachers and the counselors. They care about my child. We are new to this school district and couldn't be more proud of how the school is run."

Theme #3: Community feel and building/district culture

Summary: A significant number of parent responses stated a positive culture is present at all levels within Romeo Community Schools. It was also stated that one of our strengths is the community involvement in the school district.

Example responses:

"The culture of the staff and students in Romeo is great. There is no other school like it in that regard."

"Just a very nice school. My daughter takes pride in her school and is proud to be a Bulldog!"

"My child likes going to school. The kids and staff are welcoming and friendly. They have looked into ways to provide opportunities for a lot of interests at the High School."

Question 35: If you could change one thing at your child's school, what one thing would you change?

Theme #1: Discipline and behavior

Summary: Responses referenced specific examples of inappropriate conduct. The student dress code, cell phone use, bullying and vaping are examples of the topics mentioned in parent responses. Student respect and acceptance of others was noted at a frequency worth consideration. Additionally, there was some voice given to the need for consistent enforcement of rules.

Example responses:

"Inappropriate dress for girls, cell phones allowed at lunch or in class period."

"Address the dress code violations."

"The lack of respect is off the charts. We have rules but they are not enforced. Dress code and phone policies need tightening and strict enforcement. Stop catering to the entitlement mentality of some of these kids and parents who believe the world revolves around their child."

"Not enough accountability on bullying. I am not 100% convinced that the staff is aware of all the bullying going on between students. It's happening on the buses and in and out of school, online/social media."

Theme #2: Academics and grading

Summary: The grading policy was referenced at the highest frequency in parent responses around academics and grading. Although there were other responses in this area, none were represented at any frequency (Examples: rigor/expectations, homework, and improved curriculum).

Example responses:

"The grading is also a very big problem. I have three older children - who graduated from RHS in the early 2000's, and they just laugh at how different things are..... Retakes? What is that? How about this, let's grade them fairly (throw out the 80/20 nonsense - they aren't ready for it) for assignments and projects, then make sure they are PREPARED for testing. If they fail a test, perhaps there would be a 'retake' for the first test of a semester, but after that you know what a teacher expects, and if you do not do your work - you will not pass your tests! Simple."

"Having too much pressure on summatives and exams. I don't feel it's weighted properly. I think it should be 60/40. I feel summatives should have a retake if it's an 80% weighted average."

"Grading. Summatives are weighted way too heavily. Either offer retakes or lower the weight. Way too much pressure on these kids. Especially poor test takers."

Theme #3: Facilities, parking and traffic

Summary: An overwhelming number of survey responses indicated traffic and the parking lot being the area of concern. Specifically, concerns noted safety, poor driving practices, the need for a traffic light and improved procedures.

Example responses:

"Doing something to change the kids speeding out of the parking lot and almost hitting traffic driving on Jewell. This is happening even though there are adults at the exits. They are not doing anything to direct the kids at all. I have almost been hit by two kids in the last two weeks because they are driving recklessly and not paying attention to traffic. Why are the guys even standing there if this is not being monitored? Or put in a light that would be the definitive way to solve the problem."

"End of day departure from the parking lot. My children wait in a long line of cars every day to leave the parking lot. It would be great if the school could figure out some alternatives to the current process of all driving students and parents having to wait for the buses to depart first. Obviously telling parents and students that more students need to ride the bus to alleviate this problem is not something that changes anything. This question inspired me to do some research on funding and I was shocked to see the district has \$66 MILLION! Wow -- with that amount of money, it would seem like there would be enough to put in another traffic light or some other solution to alleviate the amount of time that so many people are wasting waiting in school traffic. Fifteen minutes per day, per person. Over an hour per week Multiplied by the several hundred people that are waiting, that is a waste of a lot of people's precious time!"

"Parking lot flow. Add a traffic light at school entrance/exit at school time to allow students and parents to safely enter/exit the parking lot."

Theme #4: Nothing, I wouldn't change anything...

Summary: It's interesting to note that there were a significant number of responses that referenced "Nothing" or "I wouldn't change anything" to the query: "If you could change one thing at your child's school, what one thing would you change?" This actually presented further support for RHS from parents through this question that typically would present concerns.