



2024 School Climate Survey

Open-Ended Responses

Student 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. Small groups of students in grades 3-5 were asked the two questions in an in person focus group format.

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 student responses. Responses for parents and staff 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 staff responses with the intent of identifying common "themes" that were mentioned with some level of frequency. The staff 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 staff (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.

Student Response Summary

High School

Question 26: *In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your school?*

Theme #1: Academies, pathways and block schedule

Summary: The investment in the academy model and its positive impact on students was evident throughout the responses. The block schedule, pathway courses and more electives continue to make learning relevant and give students choice and autonomy in their education.

Example responses:

"The pathways and the way they set us up for college and a career planning future."

"I like the academy system. I believe it helps to better prepare kids for the real world."

"I like the day schedule when you have four classes a day."

Theme #2: Teachers and staff

Summary: A primary theme among high school student responses indicated that teachers and other staff members in the building are a highlight of their educational experience. Students provided examples of teachers who care about them and their learning. Of particular note was the fact that teachers demonstrated kindness and care for the students' overall well-being. Students also valued that teachers were willing to listen and make time for them.

Example responses:

"The staff in any office in the building. They help students with whatever they need."

"The teachers, because most teachers are willing to put in the effort to work with kids to help them learn and seem to enjoy talking and interacting with the kids."

"The teachers at the school are probably the best group of teachers that they could possibly have. All are great and nice in their own ways."

Theme #3: Students/Social/Friends

Summary: A common thread among student responses was the importance of having time to interact with friends. Comments demonstrated a positive attitude towards the social aspect of school.

Example responses:

"Getting to see my friends everyday and people I might not see outside of school."

"Seeing my friends, working on subjects I enjoy, pursuing personal projects, and being among people who care about me."

"Being a part of the student body and making friends."

Question 27: If you could change one thing at your school, what one thing would you change?

Theme #1: Curriculum/instruction

Summary: A number of survey responses were less about the quality of the curriculum or instruction, but the ability to manage the daily workload. Students expressed frustration with the grading system and assessments. A common thread was a desire for more time for extracurricular and social activities.

Example responses:

"The amount of homework. I feel like these things should be done in school because we are here for most of our day and some of us don't have time when we get home."

"If you have a positive grade in the class and the teacher notices you put in effort and work, and is trying to understand the concept. They should be able to retake the test with the teacher's permission."

"I would change some of the ways that teachers teach and make it more interactive."

Theme #2: Behavior/discipline

Summary: Fostering an environment of respect among students and toward teachers was a common theme among student responses.

Example responses:

"The way students are disrespectful to their teachers and classmates."

"To be honest, it wouldn't have to do with any of the amazing staff, teachers, principals, or anyone that helps the school be a wonderful place. I would change the fact that students would truly be respectful to the adults that help them be the best version of themselves."

"Social aspects, many students are very very disrespectful to teachers and I see it almost every day, I've apologized to teachers on behalf of them sometimes because it has been so bad."

Theme #3: Teachers/staff

Summary: While teachers and staff are ranked high among the best things about their school, students also see areas of improvement, such as better communication, attentiveness and respect.

Example responses:

"Better communication between students and teachers."

"I feel like some teachers could give less homework, and less stress on the kids."

"Staff need to be more attentive. There's bullying going on but they're not paying close enough attention to it."

Student Response Summary

Middle School

Question 26: *In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your school?*

Theme #1: Teachers and staff

Summary: It's no surprise that students should rank their relationships with teachers and staff high. The student survey showed that staff make a positive impact in their school day with their willingness to help with their learning and make them feel safe.

Example responses:

"In my opinion, the best thing about my school is the staff members who get down to a relatable level with their students and encourage them to learn."

"In my opinion the best thing at our school is the staff/teachers. Whenever you need help with something or whenever something is bothering you, your teachers will help you."

"In my opinion the single best thing about my school is, I can feel safe with being open minded with my teachers. I don't have to struggle to find a teacher for help, I can just ask any one of them."

Theme #2: Lunch

Summary: The choices and variety of lunches served in their building received high marks from many middle school students. Some of the comments went beyond the quality of food to their appreciation for the social aspects of their school day and the overall positive environment.

Example responses:

"The lunches because there are so many more options than in elementary school."

"I think the cafeteria is the best because you're able to hang out with your friends, play on your phone, and eat food."

"In my opinion the personal best thing is how the cafeteria food servers treat me with respect."

Theme #3: Social / Friends

Summary: Spending time with friends ranks high with students at all levels and is an important component of the middle school years, as evidenced by the number of comments about social aspects of school, which contribute to an adolescent's desire to

come to school and overall sense of well-being.

Example responses:

"I believe the best thing that motivates me to go to school every day is getting to see my friends."

"I think it is having close friends. Of course, some friend(s) won't always be true to you, but that's okay, since there is always a friend(s) who will accept you and be a true friend!"

"The best thing about school to me is making friends. I have made all of my friends through either school or extra curricular school activities. My friends make school enjoyable for me. I also love the sports, specifically cross country."

Question 27: If you could change one thing at your school, what one thing would you change?

Theme #1: Behavior/discipline

Summary: Students expressed similar concerns with behavior and discipline as staff members, in particular regarding bullying and the need for consequences for actions. At the same time, some of the disciplinary consequences struck them as too harsh and certain policies in need of review.

Example responses:

"I would change how strict they are about eating, and phones, bathroom passes, etc."

"How some people act and I want them to realize how hurtful words can be."

"One thing that I would change is the punishment for the students who bully or do bad things. I feel like they are not harsh enough and they give too many chances to kids who bully others."

Theme #2: Recess/passing time

Summary: While the importance of giving time for staff to work in teams was mentioned as a positive, there were also responses about needing more time to build and strengthen relationships among staff members. Additionally, the need for intentional department/curriculum planning time as part of the teaming structure was referenced. Improvement to the current teaming model to eliminate cross grade level teams was noted.

Example responses:

"One thing I would change is more passing time in between classes."

"We need recess."

"Not having to go 5 days a week."

Theme #3: Lunch

While for many students the lunch choices and variety received high marks, others were not as impressed. There was also constructive criticism on restructuring the lunch period.

Example responses:

"Make the lunches a little better."

"Lunch should go in order 6th,7th, then 8th, not 6th, 8th, then 7th."

"Longer lunch and more lunch options."

Student Response Summary

Elementary School

The 2024 School Climate Survey provided the two open ended questions to representative focus groups of students in grades 3-5. The building principal and a district administrator met with three groups of students (12-15 per group) from each of the five elementary schools. Responses to the two questions were documented and summarized themes by building. The principles then met to bring all building summaries into a district elementary report that follows.

Question 26: In your opinion, what is the single best thing about your school?

Theme #1: Caring and supportive staff

Summary: A primary theme among elementary student responses indicated that teachers and other staff members in the building are a highlight of their school day. Students provided examples of teachers who care about them and their learning, encourage them, and keep them safe.

Example responses:

“The staff can talk you through difficult things. For example, the social worker helps you feel calm about school and home things.”

“The staff asks how you feel and gives you help, they’re nice and supportive, and they make students feel safe.”

“Teachers and classmates encourage you to try and do well.”

Theme #2: Kind and caring community

Summary: The emphasis on creating a culture of kindness, inclusivity and respect where students feel safe and that they matter is reflected in positive comments from students about their school buildings and the adults charged with their education.

Example responses:

“The teachers and the students are kind, friendly and helpful.”

“I wouldn’t change anything about this school. I love it.”

“The kindness that is spread. Kids and adults are kind to each other.”

Theme #3: Activities and clubs

Summary: Students showed with their responses that they value time outside of school to participate in clubs and activities.

Example responses:

"Different events for our school are special - fun run, mad science, clubs, LEGO, activities."

"Our school has clubs to offer after school."

"Good events - Fun Run, Field Day, assemblies, end of year events, field trips."

Question 27: If you could change one thing at your school, what one thing would you change?

Theme #1: Longer lunch and recess

Summary: Ask any elementary student their favorite part of the day, and lunch and recess are likely to be mentioned. It is no wonder, therefore, that longer lunch and recess ranks high as what they would change about their school.

Example responses:

"Longer lunch and recess."

"Longer lunch - I'm still hungry after and my parents get mad when we don't eat it all."

"Longer recess - we don't have enough time to get all of the energy out."

"More recess time."