Columbia Public Schools

2017 Community Telephone Survey
Final Report

January 8, 2018

PATRON
INSIGHT

Columbia Public Schools
2017 Patron Telephone Survey
Executive Summary
January 8, 2018

In late November through December 2017, a 15-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, head-of-household (male or female), registered voters from across the region that encompasses the Columbia Public Schools.

Calls were placed to landline and cell phone numbers, and the completed interviews were divided into four groups of 100 each, using the cross-streets of Providence and Broadway to create the quadrants. This structure was identified by the district leadership as being generally representative of the population pattern, meaning that the data in this report that reflects the total group of 400 interviews has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%, at the 95% Confidence Level. (The Margin of Error within the cross-tabulation subgroups is larger, because the number of respondents in each subgroup is smaller.)

With modest exceptions, this survey consists of the same questions that have been asked in previous years. The thinking behind such an approach is, of course, to see if anything has changed dramatically. Such was not the case here, and that is good news, because the district already has high scores in most of the areas studied.

Specifically, the findings are as follows:

"Grading" the district
Respondents gave 21 of 26 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district's overall performance – a grade of "B" or better (or the statistical equivalent of "B") on the traditional A-F grading scale.

At the top of the list were, "Quality of school facilities," "The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event," "Safety of students," "Performance of district teachers," and "Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities."

One factor had a drop of greater than 5%, meaning it was outside the Margin of Error and, therefore, was statistically significant. That factor – "The district's graduation rate" – slipped to 4.05 on a 5.00 scale. While a drop is disappointing, it is important to keep in mind that this result is still a solid "B."

One other factor had a score increase of greater than 5%. Specifically, "The district's history of fulfilling promises" increased to 3.62, from 3.46 in 2015. While the 2017 score is still below a "B," it is heading in the right direction.

Identification of Patron Hot Buttons
Factors for which at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade (rather than saying, "Don't know") are called Patron Hot Buttons. These are considered the factors that typical residents think of first, when the school district is mentioned. In the case of the Columbia Public Schools, *all 26 factors qualified*, affirming the presence of a knowledgeable and opinionated population.

Strengths of the district and areas needing improvement
In separate open-ended questions, respondents identified what they considered the district's greatest strengths and areas where it could improve.

Topping the list of strengths were "Teachers," "Strong academics" and "Involved community/support." Areas needing improvement were a little harder to identify, as the number one answer (offered by 118 participants) was "Don't know." This was followed by "Managing money/budget," which is a common response in school districts of all shapes and sizes.

Most important aspects of a school district
When asked to identify – in rank order – the four characteristics of a school district that the respondent considered most important (from a list of 11 options), "Quality teachers and staff" held onto the strong top spot it has always held in this exercise. Interestingly, number two this year (up from seven in 2015) was "Small class sizes." This was followed by "Effective management of financial resources."

Ratings for *Quarterly Connection* newsletter and individual school newsletters or e-newsletters
The reviews of the district's primary publication continued to be strong, with 59% saying they read either "Every issue" or "Every other issue." A total of 85% called the content either "Excellent" or "Good," while 86% said the same thing about the look and feel of the publication.

Readership at the individual school newsletter or e-newsletter level was, as one would expect, lower than for the district-wide publication. But the scores for quality of content and design were in the same neighborhood as those for *Quarterly Connection*.

Use of the district and school-based websites
The district's website was visited at least once a month by 34% of the survey participants – a jump from 22% in 2015. The site received solid scores for its functionality, as well.

School-based website visitation was essentially flat – not unlike the readership scores for school publications. But, once again, the quality of those sites was seen as very strong.

Viewership of Columbia Public Schools Television
Perhaps the most pleasant surprise in the whole survey was the increase in viewership of CPS Television.

Those who said they watched "Every day," "Frequently" or "Sometimes" grew from 11% in 2015 to 25% in 2017. Those who do watch the programming tend to look for similar content as they did last year (and their suggestions for new content were similar as well). However, the jump in viewership was definitely impressive.

Social media utilization continues to grow
When asked if they "liked" or "followed" (whichever nomenclature fit the particular platform) Facebook, Twitter or Instagram sites from local schools, or from clubs and organizations affiliated with local schools, the numbers for Facebook and Twitter (24% and 19%, respectively) continued to grow.

Instagram was new this year, and it began with a solid 10% saying, "Yes."

Topics of most interest to survey participants
In the 2017 survey, a single topic dealing with preparing students for their futures was split into two: "Preparing students to be career-ready" and "Preparing students to be college-ready."

These two subject areas took over the top two spots in a list of factors that respondents said they would like to hear more about from the school district. This was followed by "Safety and security" and "Student and teacher success stories."

Most frequently consulted sources of district news and which ones are consulted "first"
Seven of 30 potential sources of district news were reported to be consulted "frequently" by more than 40% of the survey population. At the top of this list were "Friends and neighbors" (80%), "Local television stations" (64%), and "The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspaper" (57%).

In terms of which source would be consulted first, "The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune*" was first, followed by "Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email."

Bond issue support or opposition
At the time this survey was conducted, there was strong support for both projects slated for an April bond issue election and for the bond issue, itself.

Specifically, 71% said they would be "More likely to vote in favor" of a bond issue, if it included the construction of a new middle school on the south side of the district on land the district already owns, while 74% said the same thing about renovations and expansions to Lee Elementary School.

A very strong total of 89% said they would either "Strongly favor" or "Favor" a no-tax-increase bond issue for the projects that had just been described, if the election were held today.

Following this executive summary is the full report, including a set of findings, discussion of each finding, and all the questions, answers and appropriate cross-tabulations. A brief summary closes the report.

Columbia Public Schools
2017 Patron Telephone Survey
Final Report
January 8, 2018

Finding 1: Survey participants gave 21 of 26 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district's overall performance – a grade of "B" or better (or the statistical equivalent of "B") on the traditional A-F grading scale. One factor ("The district's graduation rate") saw its score drop from the 2015 study by more than 5% – which is the Margin of Error for this survey. However, the grade was still 4.05, or fractionally higher than a "B." "The district's history of fulfilling promises" remained below a "B," but it had a score *increase* of greater than 5% from 2015. All other factors changed less than 5% from last year's study.

In late November through December 2017, a 15-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, head-of-household, registered voters living within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers in the district, and each potential respondent had to confirm that he or she was a head of household and a registered voter to continue with the survey. As in the past, the cross-streets of Providence and Broadway were used to create four quadrants that had 100 respondents in each one. The results in this report that reflect the views of all 400 respondents have a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%. (The Margin of Error is larger in the demographic and geographic subgroups, because the number of respondents in each group is smaller.)

This is the sixth survey of its type for CPS since 2010, and many of the questions are repeated from year to year. This survey also included questions related to the upcoming bond issue – all of which showed a very strong response that will be discussed later in this report.

After confirming his or her qualifications to participate in the survey, each respondent was asked to "grade" 26 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors, plus the district's overall performance, using the traditional A-F grading scale.

Launching a long survey with questions of this type limits the intimidation factor by making it clear that the survey taker is only interested in the respondent's opinion and is not expecting that person to have any detailed information about the graded areas. These questions also help build up rapport, which is essential to keep respondents on the phone through to the end of this very detailed survey.

But this question set has statistical importance as well, by presenting a snapshot of current patron views on a variety of aspects of the district's performance.

All of the grades for all of the factors are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a 5-point weighted scale has also been applied.

In this scale, each grade of "A" is worth 5 points, down to each grade of "F" being worth 1 point. The point values are totaled and then divided by the number of respondents willing to offer a grade (rather than saying, "Don't know") to arrive at a single number between 1.00 and 5.00.

Recognizing that an "A" – meaning a 5.00 – would be next to impossible (because it would require all those with an opinion to say, "A"), the dividing line between areas of strength and those that may need attention is considered a "B," or 4.00. Taking into account the Margin of Error, a score as low as 3.80 is, statistically speaking, still considered a "B."

In the case of the Columbia Public Schools, 21 of the 26 factors – plus the district's "overall" performance – were graded "B" or better (or the statistics equivalent of "B"). This is an improvement over the 17 out of 26 on the 2015 study.

At the top of the list this year were the following:

- Quality of school facilities – 4.33 on a 5.00 scale
- The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event – 4.31
- Safety of students – 4.28
- Performance of district teachers – 4.26
- Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities – 4.19

The following were new to the list this year:

- Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students – 4.12
- Efforts of the district to decrease the number of trailers being used as temporary classrooms at the middle and elementary schools – 3.89
- The district's efforts to get the community involved – 3.82
- Progress the district is making toward its vision – which is to be the best in the state – 3.73

While there was some modest movement in scores for all of the graded factors, only two changed by more than the 5% Margin of Error – meaning that the change was statistically significant.

- "The district's graduation rate" dropped from 4.26 in 2015 to 4.05 on this year's survey. While a decline is always disappointing to the school district, it is important to remember that the score is still above a "B."
- "The district's history of fulfilling promises" increased from 3.46 to 3.62 on this year's survey. While that score is still below a "B," it is heading in a positive direction.

As is Patron Insight's standard practice, all the factors that scored below 3.80 were evaluated via cross-tabulation, to determine if where a person lived or his or her demographic characteristics had any impact on the scores he or she offered on these lower-rated factors.

In reviewing the cross-tabulation data, it is important to focus on the "n" number, which is the number of respondents in each subgroup. The smaller the "n" number, the higher the Margin of Error. Three groups are good examples of what a "small" group looks like, in terms of the participant count:

- Those who have lived in the district up to five years – 37 respondents
- African-American or black respondents – 34
- Hispanic/Latino respondents – 26

In discussion of the cross-tabulation results throughout this report, these three groups will not be mentioned, because their numbers are so small. (The statistics for these group will, however, be displayed along with the other subgroup data.)

The core message on cross-tabulations is this: It is best to look for trends than to focus on individual numbers. In doing so, it was evident that there were no trends where one subgroup – such as female participants versus male respondents, for example – was always higher or always lower. This means the views on these modestly lower-rated items are fairly commonly held and not impacted notably by either demographics or geography.

The other aspect of this section of the survey is the measurement of Patron Hot Buttons. These are the factors where at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, "Don't know." The thinking is that these are the factors that come to mind first for typical patrons, when they think of the school district.

This survey's results demonstrate just how interested the average resident is in the school district, as all 26 factors achieved Patron Hot Button status. This is very rare and, again, suggests the existence of a very interested and opinionated patron community.

Questions 1-3 confirmed that a respondent was a head of household, a registered voter, and aware that he or she lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools. A "Yes" answer was required on each question to continue. As such, these questions are not displayed here. All responses with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. Verbatim comments shown in this report are one comment, by one person each. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in enough quantity to be displayed in the chart accompanying the question.

Also, any shading used on charts on landscape pages is there to enhance readability only and is not meant to imply anything about the data on those rows.

4. **To make certain that we have people from all parts of the district participating in this survey, which of the following best describes where you live?** *Choices were read to respondents. Numbers of participants in each region were determined by school district leadership in an effort to match the general population pattern. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
West of Providence and north of Broadway	100
East of Providence and north of Broadway	100
West of Providence and south of Broadway	100
East of Providence and south of Broadway	100

As you know, students in school are usually given a grade to reflect the quality of their work. Those grades are usually A, B, C, D or F. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Columbia Public Schools from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Let's start with…*Questions 5 through 29 were rotated to eliminate order bias.*

5. **Performance of district teachers**

Response	Percentage
A	38%
B	45%
C	11%
D	2%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	6%

6. Performance of school principals

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	46%
C	15%
D	1%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	7%

7. Performance of the district administration and the Board of Education

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	48%
C	21%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	10%

8. How the Columbia Public Schools is handling the growth in the district

Response	Percentage
A	18%
B	58%
C	19%
D	2%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

9. Quality of education provided to students

Response	Percentage
A	35%
B	44%
C	13%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

10. Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students

Response	Percentage
A	29%
B	42%
C	16%
D	1%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

11. Quality of school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	41%
B	53%
C	4%
D	2%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

12. Efforts of the district to decrease the number of trailers being used as temporary classrooms at the middle and elementary schools

Response	Percentage
A	29%
B	33%
C	21%
D	8%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	8%

13. Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	36%
B	42%
C	13%
D	2%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	7%

14. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	45%
B	40%
C	11%
D	4%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

15. Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom

Response	Percentage
A	14%
B	47%
C	19%
D	3%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	15%

16. Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	41%
C	24%
D	3%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	7%

17. The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making

Response	Percentage
A	20%
B	40%
C	26%
D	6%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	6%

18. The district's responsiveness to patron concerns

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	29%
C	31%
D	7%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	14%

19. The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	41%
C	25%
D	7%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

20. The district's history of fulfilling promises

Response	Percentage
A	15%
B	37%
C	22%
D	8%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	16%

21. The effectiveness of communications with the public by the Columbia Public Schools

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	54%
C	18%
D	4%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	2%

22. The district's performance in helping students to be college- and/or career-ready when they graduate from high school

Response	Percentage
A	36%
B	23%
C	27%
D	9%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	5%

23. The district's graduation rate

Response	Percentage
A	26%
B	42%
C	16%
D	2%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	14%

24. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent school buildings

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	45%
C	14%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	15%

25. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent academic programming from school to school

Response	Percentage
A	20%
B	48%
C	16%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

26. Efforts of the district to offer equivalent music, art, athletic programs and activities in its schools

Response	Percentage
A	25%
B	43%
C	13%
D	1%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	17%

27. The quality of the district's career and technical programming

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	34%
C	11%
D	5%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	19%

28. The district's efforts to get the community involved

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	41%
C	28%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

29. The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event

Response	Percentage
A	47%
B	30%
C	16%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	7%

30. Overall, what grade would you give Columbia Public Schools?

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	55%
C	14%
D	3%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	1%

31. What grade would you give the district on the progress it is making toward its vision – which is to be the best in the state?

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	55%
C	14%
D	3%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	1%

Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale rating for each factor. All the factors were Patron Hot Buttons, meaning that at least 81% of the respondents offered a grade, rather than saying, "Don't know." The items in bold changed at a statistically significant level from 2015 to 2017. Items showing "n/a" from 2015 on back are new this year. Any factors with minor wording changes for 2017 are shown, using the current year's language.

Factor	5-point scale rating/2017	Rating/2015	Rating/2013	Rating/2012	Rating/2011	Rating/2010
Quality of school facilities	4.33	4.18	4.36	4.05	3.94	4.17
The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event	4.31	4.40	4.38	4.45	4.45	4.49
Safety of students	4.28	4.20	4.36	4.27	4.20	4.29
Performance of district teachers	4.26	4.23	4.38	4.35	4.29	4.38
Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities	4.19	4.04	4.26	4.16	4.01	4.25
Quality of education provided to students	4.16	4.13	4.36	4.34	4.15	4.23
The quality of the district's career and technical programming	4.13	4.18	4.07	4.30	4.16	4.12
Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students	4.12	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Performance of school principals	4.12	4.07	4.20	4.27	4.28	4.28
Efforts of the district to offer equivalent music, art, athletic programs and activities in its schools	4.08	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall grade	4.07	4.13	4.17	4.18	4.03	4.10
The district's graduation rate	4.05	4.26	4.33	4.07	4.13	3.99
The district's effort to ensure equivalent school buildings	4.01	3.94	3.87	3.96	3.53	3.85
The district's efforts to ensure equivalent academic programming from school to school	3.95	3.84	4.07	4.03	3.81	3.89
How the Columbia Public Schools is handling the growth in the district	3.92	3.99	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The district's performance in helping students be college- and/or career-ready when they graduate from high school	3.90	4.02	4.22	4.30	4.11	4.16
Efforts of the district to decrease the number of trailers being used as temporary classrooms at the middle and elementary schools	3.89	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Performance of the district administration and the Board of Education	3.86	3.74	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The effectiveness of communications with the public by the Columbia Public Schools	3.83	3.86	3.77	3.95	3.83	3.82
Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent	3.83	3.69	3.65	3.97	3.84	3.94
The district's efforts to get the community involved	3.82	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons	3.80	3.70	3.74	3.98	3.97	3.98
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.76	3.66	3.80	3.79	3.49	3.52
Progress the district is making toward its vision – which is to be the best in the state	3.73	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making	3.72	3.63	3.68	3.83	3.89	3.69
The district's history of fulfilling promises	3.62	3.46	3.64	3.69	3.63	3.73
The district's responsiveness to patron concerns	3.58	3.46	3.77	3.86	3.70	3.56

Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale ratings for factors rated below 3.80 by the total survey group by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and "age" will not square with "overall," because 17 respondents refused to answer this question.

Factor	Overall score	18-34 (n=94)	35-54 (n=163)	55 or older (n=126)	Up to 5 years (n=37)	5 to 15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=271)	Student, yes (n=117)	Student, past (n=157)	Student, never (n=126)
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	**3.76**	3.54	3.77	3.90	3.83	3.70	3.78	3.75	3.85	3.66
Progress the district is making toward its vision – which is to be the best in the state	**3.73**	3.72	3.71	3.80	3.65	3.82	3.72	3.75	3.81	3.62
The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making	**3.72**	3.88	3.69	3.66	3.91	3.80	3.67	3.81	3.65	3.75
The district's history of fulfilling promises	**3.62**	3.68	3.57	3.63	3.68	3.76	3.56	3.71	3.57	3.59
The district's responsiveness to patron concerns	**3.58**	3.55	3.54	3.66	3.58	3.56	3.59	3.61	3.60	3.53

Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale ratings for factors rated below 3.80 by the total survey group by location of the respondent's residence, ethnicity of the respondent and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Factor	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	African-American (n=34)	Caucasian (n=308)	Hispanic/Latino (n=26)	Female (n=228)	Male (n=172)
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.76	3.80	3.58	3.94	3.76	3.88	3.75	3.81	3.80	3.71
Progress the district is making toward its vision – which is to be the best in the state	3.73	3.79	3.66	3.85	3.63	3.87	3.71	3.92	3.73	3.73
The district's efforts to involve citizens in decision-making	3.72	3.70	3.70	3.82	3.66	3.55	3.72	3.88	3.75	3.69
The district's history of fulfilling promises	3.62	3.66	3.52	3.80	3.49	3.67	3.59	3.77	3.61	3.62
The district's responsiveness to patron concerns	3.58	3.61	3.47	3.67	3.53	3.52	3.57	3.84	3.62	3.54

Finding 2: "Teachers," "Strong academics" and "Involved community/support" were most frequently identified by survey participants as strengths of the district. A total of 118 respondents were unable to identify an area needing improvement. Those who were able to do so focused heavily on "Managing money/budget," which is currently a very common refrain among school district patrons throughout the United States.

The evaluation portion of the survey concluded with separate open-ended questions that asked respondents to identify what they considered to be the district's greatest strengths and where the district could improve.

The comments were coded, meaning that common words, phrases and ideas were gathered together to identify the most frequently held opinions. In doing so, there were some familiar and very positive ideas expressed on the subject of strengths.

Specifically, "Teachers" was the most frequent response (80 mentions), followed by "Strong academics" (72 mentions), "Involved community/support" (56 mentions) and "Diversity" (48 mentions).

In terms of areas needing improvement, 118 individuals were unable to think of anything. This is actually a good sign, because it means that almost one in three individuals does not have any concerns that are top of mind.

The most common response on the subject of improvements was a familiar one in school district everywhere, "Managing money/budget" (105 mentions). This was followed by "Communication" (36 mentions) and "Reduce taxes" (34 mentions).

After the charts associated with each question are individual verbatim comments. These are thoughts expressed by respondents that were either of the "one-off" variety, had more than one idea contained in the thought, or something else that made them an anomaly.

In reviewing these comments, it is important to keep in mind that each is one comment, by one person. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in sufficient quantity to be displayed in the chart associated with the question.

32. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the Columbia Public Schools?
Responses were coded, based on common words, phrase and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.

Response	Number
Teachers	80
Strong academics	72
Involved community/support	56
Diversity	48
Don't know	43
Other (see below)	39
Facilities	24
Having a major university as a resource	20
Managing the growth of the district	18

Verbatim "other" comments

I like the AEO thought process the district uses as its core mission.

The facilities and the staff.

The administration tries hard to do the right things.

Their teachers and facilities.

I would say diversity and the community support that's provided.

Good teachers, counselors and administration.

Their advance planning for the facilities' needs is very good to prevent overcrowding.

Growth and communication. The facilities.

Besides having a solid faculty, they do a good job of getting our kids ready for college.

Very good international student programs.

I can't think of any. They need help.

The diversity we have at the school and overall caring of our kids.

It's a safe district with lots of diversity.

Strong community support. We are proud of our city and school district.

Teachers and it's a safe district.

They have a good staff of teachers who care about their students. Strong community support.

School facilities are nice and well-cared for. Community support.

I think their teachers are excellent. They care about the students and they get a good education.

The Zero Tolerance law.

Lots of opportunities to expand knowledge through activities and having MU here helps as well.

Faculty and facilities.

Quality teachers. The diversity of the curriculum. The Career Center is great.

The administrators have a good vision.

The high schools are doing a good job in preparing students for college and careers after graduation.

I would say their teachers. It's a pretty average district.

The community is behind them. They have great support, which makes for a strong system.

The teachers care, and they are continuing to hire better ones.

Plenty of extracurricular activities to get the students involved in.

They try very hard to deal with diversity and growth.

The present superintendent. The teachers.

I like what they did with the renovations at Douglas High School.

Superintendent of the district.

The diversity I see here is a plus, and they are trying hard to provide the best education possible.

Its history. It's known for good schools. Teachers really want to come here to teach.

Their teachers and it's a pretty safe district, considering being in a metro-type area.

A wide range of course offerings, being able to offer different tracks for career opportunities.

The quality of education, which is provided by all the opportunities they make available to the kids to learn in.

Tutoring on a one-on-one basis.

Strong district with a good reputation.

33. **Where could the district improve?** *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrase and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	118
Managing money/budget	105
Other (see below)	47
Communication	36
Reduce taxes	34
Need to emphasize academics over athletics	23
Reduce class sizes	21
Preparing students for careers	16

Verbatim "other" comments

In vocational training. Need better preparation of students for jobs and/or college.

I guess just more education to the public. Where the funds are being spent and their need for increased funding, just so they are aware of what is going on.

Drugs are a big problem today.

I think they are doing an excellent job.

Parental guidance at home and strong leadership in the schools.

They can always continue to improve and ensure safety for staff and students.

Provide strong science and math programs.

Allocation of tax money.

Drugs and alcohol.

Academically.

Safety for students and teachers.

Improve the "it's my right" attitude among both parents and students. Kids are spoiled. Work for what you get.

More effort in graduating the average student.

Understand that kids don't progress at the same rate, so don't force them through the system.

Improving our facilities, staff and administration.

Special services. We know it's because of funding, but it would be nice to have more special services.

Support of teachers.

They know what they are doing. I'm not an expert.

Alcohol is a problem in high school and it will become one in middle school, if we don't get a handle on it.

Communications with the public on district concerns and keeping our children safe.

Just continue with the strong leadership.

Maintain what we have better and not so much spending money.

Take out some of the top administrators. Have more security at middle schools and high schools.

Go back to the basics, without all the electronics, and teach kids how to communicate and prepare for a career.

There are a lot of areas that need improvement. I guess it starts at the top.

They need more money to fund the needed programs.

The dress code: Enforce it.

Creating discipline in respecting others, getting work done and how to prepare for the real world.

Reach out to parents for more parental involvement.

The middle schools are not getting students ready for high school and independence.

School buildings need to be worked on equally.

They need a close look at the principals, because they are the leaders.

Better facilities in some areas are needed.

To help build the reputation back from the negative influence a patron caused in the district that was so wrong.

I know they are concerned and offer communication lines for bullying, but they need to educate more about it. It is a problem.

Everything they do seems to backfire. Start with good teachers and administration.

Utilize the university and what they can provide more.

We badly need to improve in helping children learn to read early. More parental training. More mentoring of teenage girls who are giving birth at an early age.

Educate on bullying.

Too many drugs among our students. Much of it is because of lack of supervision at home.

Find a way to get more money.

Just give the teachers more resources. More school budget to help the teachers in the classroom.

More flexible individual studies. Follow through. Offer a class that a student can go to full range and not be cancelled.

Our schools are becoming more of a baby-sitting service for 12 years. I would like to see more personal involvement from parents.

Hiring more quality teachers.

Create more programs for those not going to college, like teaching a trade skill.

Continue to hire quality teachers.

Finding 3: While there was some slight movement on the list of "most important" aspects of a school district, the general pattern remained the same as in previous studies. The one notable change is that "Small class sizes," which had been deemed the seventh-most important characteristic (out of 11) in 2015, jumped all the way up to second place.

The next section of the survey asked respondents to identify, from a provided list, the four factors (in order) that were most important to them when it came to their school district.

The results were analyzed, using a 4-point weighted scale, in which each response of "most important" received 4 points, down to each "fourth-most important" answer earning 1 point.

The points are totaled to identify a rank order of the views of all patrons. While the actual number of points for each factor is somewhat immaterial, it does indicate the "distance," if you will, between one factor and another.

As has been the case on all three years this question set has been asked, the runaway top choice was "Quality teachers and staff" (1,203 points). This was followed by "Small class sizes" (451 points), "Effective management of financial resources" (400 points) and "Up-to-date safety and security practices" (373 points).

This breakdown is the perfect example of how the points should be thought of when looking at these results. After the top vote-getter, the next three are relatively close. The one area that stands out as a significant difference from the 2015 study is class sizes. In the previous survey, it was in seventh place, and the one before that in fourth place. In 2017, it is second.

Whether there is any particular reason for the jump is something that the district would be better suited to answer, but the significant change in the score was quite noticeable.

34-34c. **I'm now going to read a list of factors that others have told us are important to them when it comes to the school district. When I finish reading the list, I'm going to ask you which one of these items is most important to you. Many of these will probably be very important to you, but I'll want to know which one is most important. Which is second-most important? Third-most? And, finally, fourth-most?** *List was read and rotated. The number in parenthesis is the rank order.*

Factor	Most important	Second-most important	Third-most important	Fourth-most important	4-point weighted scale points/2017	4-point weighted scale points/2015	4-point weighted scale points/2013
Quality teachers and staff	229	68	35	13	1,203 (1)	996 (1)	1286 (1)
Small class sizes	41	55	47	28	451 (2)	279 (7)	476 (4)
Effective management of financial resources	35	29	59	55	400 (3)	513 (2)	478 (T2)
Up-to-date safety and security practices	27	40	36	73	373 (4)	434 (3)	478 (T2)
Nurturing, supportive culture in the school buildings	12	72	30	25	349 (5)	344 (6)	196 (6)
Up-to-date curriculum	16	31	52	61	322 (6)	389 (4)	394 (5)
Modern school facilities, including (1-to-1 – added in 2017) technology for student use	6	37	39	39	252 (7)	365 (5)	130 (9)
Equivalent classes and programs from school to school	3	43	33	34	241 (8)	152 (9)	150 (8)
Visionary district and building-level leadership	18	8	28	16	168 (9)	250 (8)	189 (7)
Active engagement between the district and the community	9	5	24	18	117 (10)	109 (10)	49 (11)
Large variety of extracurricular activities available	4	9	8	10	69 (11)	69 (11)	70 (10)

Finding 4: "Printed" news content retook the top spot from "Electronic," in terms of the survey participant's preference (although the margin was fairly slim). The school district saw a solid jump in support for it being the place that typical residents would most likely consult for such news, rather than the news media.

Turning to the subject of communication, respondents were asked to state their preference for receiving school news – printed or electronic form – and whether they would most likely consult the school district or local news media for such information.

Up until the 2015 study, a majority of respondents had selected "printed." In that study, however, "electronic" was selected by 50%, with 47% choosing "printed."

This year, the results returned to familiar territory, with 52% choosing "printed" and 43% selecting electronic.

In terms of whether the participant would be more likely to consult information from the district for school news or the news media, the school district has always been the leader. This year, the score was 58% for the school district and 31% for the local media. Interestingly, while the school district was still the preference in 2015, the score was only 46%. This is not as much of a surprise, considering that 2015 was also the year that "electronic" was the choice over "printed."

The cross-tabulations show patterns that would be expected, with current student families and young respondents among those preferring electronic. However, the school district was solidly the source of choice among all the cross-tabulation subgroups.

35. There are a lot of ways that a school district can share information with members of the community. Generally speaking, do you prefer receiving information about what's going on in the school district in a printed form, such as in newsletters or stories in the newspaper, or in an electronic form, such as emails, email newsletters and websites?

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Printed	52%	47%	52%	56%	52%	58%
Electronic	43%	50%	46%	39%	41%	37%
It depends on what I'm looking for/not always the same (not read)	5%	4%	2%	5%	8%	4%
Don't know (not read)	0%	0%	<1%	0%	0%	1%

36. When you are looking for information about what's going on in the school district, are you more likely to consult information provided by the district, itself, or are you more likely to look to the news media?

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
School district	58%	46%	62%	65%	58%	61%
News media	31%	37%	27%	31%	27%	22%
It depends on what I'm looking for/not always the same (not read)	8%	15%	11%	3%	14%	17%
Don't know (not read)	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Cross-tabulation: Preference for printed versus electronic news, and for school district-provided news versus the news media by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and "age" will not square with "overall," because 17 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=94)	35-54 (n=163)	55 or older (n=126)	Up to 5 years (n=37)	5 to 15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=271)	Student, yes (n=117)	Student, past (n=157)	Student, never (n=126)
Printed	**52%**	47%	49%	59%	41%	46%	56%	44%	59%	52%
Electronic	**43%**	48%	45%	38%	54%	50%	39%	54%	37%	41%
School district	**58%**	54%	60%	58%	46%	52%	61%	64%	58%	52%
News media	**31%**	32%	28%	33%	38%	28%	21%	27%	35%	30%

Cross-tabulation: Preference for printed versus electronic news, and for school district-provided news versus the news media by location of the respondent's residence, ethnicity of the respondent and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial and ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	African-American (n=34)	Caucasian (n=308)	Hispanic/Latino (n=26)	Female (n=228)	Male (n=172)
Printed	**52%**	57%	57%	47%	48%	53%	54%	31%	52%	53%
Electronic	**43%**	36%	39%	47%	51%	47%	41%	69%	43%	43%
School district	**58%**	58%	58%	54%	61%	62%	59%	54%	56%	60%
News media	**31%**	31%	33%	32%	29%	29%	30%	27%	32%	30%

Finding 5: Readership of *Quarterly Connection* (previously known as *Quarterly Report*) remained strong, as did the perception of the quality of the content, and the look and feel of the publication.

One of the ongoing question sets in this survey has been a review of the district's publications in terms of readership frequency and perception of the content quality and visual appeal.

This year, that trend continued with the renamed *Quarterly Connection*, while identical questions about *The Yearbook* were dropped.

The highlights from this section:

- 59% of participants read either "Every issue" or "Every other issue," as compared to 55% in 2015. (This means that, statistically speaking, the readership remained steady.)
- 85% called the quality and completeness of the news in the publication either "Excellent" or "Good," as compared to 80% in 2015 (once again, these numbers are statistically identical to 2015).
- However, there was a slight statistical difference of 6% in terms of how the publication looks. In this year's survey, 86% of the respondents called it "Excellent" or "Good," compared to 80% in 2015.

The cross-tabulations should be reviewed by readers of this report, but the differences from subgroup to subgroup are essentially unremarkable.

My next few questions are about the printed communication pieces coming from either the district or from individual schools in the district.

37. How often do you read the school district's printed newsletter, called *Quarterly Connection?* **Is it...?** *Choices were read to respondents. Also, the publication was called, Quarterly Report during previous survey periods.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Every issue	44%	32%	43%	57%	54%	49%
Every other issue	15%	23%	14%	13%	15%	18%
At least once a year	9%	16%	9%	11%	11%	14%
Less than once a year	13%	9%	17%	3%	6%	7%
Never	16%	14%	15%	15%	13%	12%
Don't know (not read)	4%	7%	2%	1%	2%	1%

38. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the news that you see in the *Quarterly Connection* **newsletter?** *Asked of the 271 respondents who read "every issue," "every other issue," or "at least once a year." Percentages are of 271 respondents.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Excellent	26%	20%	24%	27%	19%	28%
Good	59%	60%	55%	59%	61%	57%
Fair	14%	19%	18%	12%	15%	13%
Poor	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Don't know (not read)	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%

How about the way that *Quarterly Connection* looks? *Percentages are, again, of the 271 respondents who read Quarterly Report at least once a year.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Excellent	27%	18%	25%	29%	23%	21%
Good	59%	62%	57%	65%	64%	72%
Fair	11%	18%	15%	6%	10%	5%
Poor	3%	2%	2%	0%	<1%	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%	0%	0%	<1%	3%	3%

Cross-tabulation: "Regular readers" (every issue or every other issue), "Infrequent readers" (at least once a year or less than once a year), and "Never readers" of *Quarterly Connection* by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and "age" will not square with "overall" score, because 17 respondents refused to answer this question.

Factor	Overall score	18-34 (n=94)	35-54 (n=163)	55 or older (n=126)	Up to 5 years (n=37)	5 to 15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=271)	Student, yes (n=117)	Student, past (n=157)	Student, never (n=126)
Regular readers of *Quarterly Connection*	**59%**	57%	59%	56%	57%	59%	59%	60%	58%	58%
Infrequent readers of *Quarterly Connection*	**22%**	20%	22%	26%	24%	25%	21%	23%	24%	17%
Never readers of *Quarterly Connection*	**16%**	17%	16%	14%	16%	14%	16%	13%	15%	19%

Cross-tabulation: "Regular readers" (every issue or every other issue), "Infrequent readers" (at least once a year or less than once a year), and "Never readers" of *Quarterly Connection* by location of the respondent's residence, ethnicity of the respondent and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participation are included below.

Factor	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	African-American (n=34)	Caucasian (n=308)	Hispanic /Latino (n=26)	Female (n=228)	Male (n=172)
Regular readers of *Quarterly Connection*	**59%**	58%	67%	51%	59%	65%	58%	62%	58%	59%
Infrequent readers of *Quarterly Connection*	**22%**	26%	14%	30%	19%	29%	21%	23%	22%	23%
Never readers of *Quarterly Connection*	**16%**	14%	14%	16%	18%	6%	16%	15%	16%	15%

Finding 6: The 29% of survey participants who recalled seeing one or more individual school newsletters – either printed or e-newsletters – during the last year, gave these publications good marks.

In an effort to focus more on what comes from the schools themselves, the survey then asked respondents whether they recalled any printed newsletters or e-newsletters from individual schools over the last year. More than one in four (29%, specifically) said they did.

Those individuals were then asked similar questions regarding their views on the content (80% called it either "Excellent" or "Good") and how the publications looked (84% combined "Excellent/Good").

As such, while the readership may not be extremely high, the perception of the quality of these publications is quite strong.

40. Do you recall seeing one or more individual school newsletters – either printed or e-newsletters during the last school year?

Response	Percentage
Yes	29%
No	61%
Don't know/ Don't remember (not read)	10%

41. How would you rate the individual school printed newsletters or e-newsletters you saw in the last school year on the quality of the information presented? If you saw more than one individual school newsletter, please answer based on your overall feelings. *Asked only of the 117 respondents who answered question 40, "Yes." Percentages are of 117.*

Response	Percentage
Excellent	22%
Good	58%
Fair	17%
Poor	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

42. How about the way that the individual school printed newsletters or e-newsletters looked? Again, if you saw more than one individual school newsletter, please answer based on your overall feelings. *Asked only of the 117 respondents who answered question 40, "Yes." Percentages are of 117.*

Response	Percentage
Excellent	28%
Good	56%
Fair	15%
Poor	0%
Don't know (not read)	2%

Finding 7: Utilization of the district website saw an increase over 2015, while individual school website utilization remained solid, but had no meaningful growth. The functionality of these sites continued to be judged very positively.

Continuing with the theme of communication, the survey then asked sets of questions about the respondent's habits related to the district and individual school websites.

Those who said they visited the district website at least once a month jumped to 34% from 22% in 2015. Combined with those who said they visited the site less than once a month – but had at least visited the site – the scores were 64% (2017) versus 58% (2015).

The ease of use dropped off a bit – from 94% "Very easy/Easy" in 2015 to 84% in 2017. However, those marks are still quite high.

Individual school websites also saw an increase in utilization. Those visiting at least once a month increased to 35% from 28% in 2015. Respondents who have at least visited an individual school site once were statistically flat, with 59% this year and 63% in 2015.

Also flat – but very high – was the perception of the ease of use. In 2017, the combined "Very easy/Easy" score was 85%, while it was 88% in 2015.

The new few questions are about websites.

43. Which of the following best describes how often you visit the Columbia Public School District's website? *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
At least once a week	n/a	n/a	11%	6%	11%	12%
At least once every two weeks	n/a	n/a	3%	9%	12%	9%
At least once a month	34%	22%	13%	10%	6%	11%
Less than once a month	30%	36%	32%	22%	20%	23%
I've never visited the website	36%	43%	42%	53%	52%	47%

44. Thinking about the last time you visited the Columbia Public School District's website, how would you rate how easy it was to navigate and find what you were looking for? *Asked only of the 134 respondents who said they visited "at least once a month." Percentages are of 134.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Very easy	43%	45%	39%	43%	38%	41%
Easy	41%	49%	52%	42%	59%	52%
Difficult	16%	5%	9%	14%	4%	6%
Very difficult	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%

45. What about the websites for individual schools in the Columbia Public Schools? Which of the following best describes how often you visit one or more of them? *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
At least once a week	n/a	n/a	22%	14%	16%	13%
At least once every two weeks	n/a	n/a	10%	11%	10%	9%
At least once a month	35%	28%	15%	12%	10%	10%
Less than once a month	24%	35%	7%	3%	11%	22%
I've never visited an individual school website	41%	37%	47%	61%	55%	47%

46. Thinking about the last time you visited an individual school website, how easy was it to find what you were looking for? *Asked only of the 141 respondents who answered question 45 either "at least once a week," "at least once every two weeks," or "at least once a month." Percentages are of 141.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Very easy	40%	46%	54%	24%	39%	24%
Easy	45%	42%	36%	63%	52%	74%
Difficult	14%	12%	10%	12%	9%	2%
Very difficult	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

Cross-tabulation: "Regular visitors" (at least once a month), "Infrequent visitors" (less than once a month), and "Never visitors" to the Columbia Public Schools website and individual schools' websites by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and "age" will not square with "overall" score, because 17 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=94)	35-54 (n=163)	55 or older (n=126)	Up to 5 years (n=37)	5 to 15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=271)	Student, yes (n=117)	Student, past (n=157)	Student, never (n=126)
Regular visitors/CPS website	34%	40%	31%	30%	27%	32%	35%	50%	27%	22%
Infrequent visitors/CPS website	30%	34%	28%	31%	35%	34%	28%	27%	29%	34%
Never visitors/CPS website	36%	26%	41%	39%	38%	35%	37%	23%	44%	39%
Regular visitors/individual school websites	35%	38%	36%	31%	27%	36%	36%	60%	27%	22%
Infrequent visitors/individual school websites	24%	29%	27%	17%	35%	25%	23%	19%	20%	34%
Never visitors/individual school websites	41%	33%	37%	52%	38%	39%	41%	22%	52%	43%

Cross-tabulation: "Regular visitors" (at least once a month), "Infrequent visitors" (less than once a month), and "Never visitors" to the Columbia Public Schools website and individual schools' websites by location of the respondent's residence, ethnicity of the respondent and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participation are included below.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	African-American (n=34)	Caucasian (n=308)	Hispanic/Latino (n=26)	Female (n=228)	Male (n=172)
Regular visitors/CPS website	34%	34%	38%	32%	30%	21%	33%	38%	32%	35%
Infrequent visitors/CPS website	30%	26%	32%	33%	30%	35%	32%	23%	27%	35%
Never visitors/CPS website	36%	40%	30%	35%	40%	44%	35%	38%	41%	30%
Regular visitors/individual school websites	35%	36%	39%	35%	31%	29%	34%	31%	34%	37%
Infrequent visitors/individual school websites	24%	19%	25%	26%	27%	15%	26%	35%	27%	21%
Never visitors/individual school websites	41%	45%	36%	39%	42%	56%	41%	35%	39%	42%

Finding 8: Columbia Public Schools Television – either on cable or streamed through the district's website – saw a notable increase in viewership. Those who watch at least "Sometimes" grew to 25% from 11% in 2015.

Impressively, the percentage of survey participants who watch CPS Television "Every day," "Frequently" or "Sometimes" increased to 25% from a more typical (for school districts of all shapes and sizes) 11% in 2015.

While what these individuals watch and what they would like to see – or see more of – may or may not be instructive to the district, the fact that the viewership more than doubled suggests that there may, in fact, be hope for a medium that has usually lagged far behind others in school communications.

47. **How often do you watch Columbia Public Schools Television, either on cable or streamed on the district's website?** *Choices were read to respondents. Answer choices and question were modified in 2015. Options for surveys from 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010 are available in previous reports.*

Response	Percentage/2017	Percentage/2015
Every day	1%	0%
Frequently	6%	2%
Sometimes	18%	9%
Rarely	17%	29%
Never	60%	61%

48. **What types of programming do you watch on the school district's television stations?** *Asked only of the 95 respondents who answered question 47 either "Every day," "Frequently" or "Sometimes." Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Scheduled activities (date/time, etc.)	44
Programs (music, etc.)	29
Meetings with administration	15
Other (see below)	7

Verbatim "other" comments

I can't remember.

Graduations.

What's offered.

Varies.

I like the School Board meetings. I watch the choirs.

It depends on what they are presenting.

When they have interviews with school administrators on TV.

49. What additional types of programming about the school district would you like to see on Columbia Public Schools Television? *Asked only of the 95 respondents who watch Columbia Public Schools Television "Every day," "Frequently," or "Sometimes." Of that 95, 90 said, "Don't know/Not sure/None." The five other responses are displayed in verbatim form below.*

Maybe, science classes.

Sports.

Cooking classes.

Music, communication, government.

I enjoy when they tape the school programs.

50. Do you have satellite TV, such as Direct TV or Dish Network? *This question was new for 2017 and was asked only of the 238 respondents who said they "Never" watch Columbia Public Schools television. Percentages are of 238.*

Response	Percentage
Yes	19%
No	81%

Finding 8: Social media utilization continues to grow among the typical residents who participated in this survey.

As has been the case in the last four surveys, respondents were asked if they were connected ("like" for Facebook and "follow" for Twitter) to pages and accounts associated with individual schools in the district or "various school-related clubs or organizations."

The trend continued north, with this year's numbers being 24% for Facebook and 19% for Twitter.

In 2015, Instagram was introduced to this survey in the form of a speculative question. In other words, if schools or school-related clubs or organizations *had* an Instagram account, would you follow it?

This year, the question was identical to the phrasing for the other two social media outlets. Participation was slow to start, at 10%, but it will likely grow, if Instagram follows the pattern of Facebook and Twitter utilization among CPS residents.

In terms of the cross-tabulations, the results show no surprises as younger and middle-aged residents, along with current student families, were more active users of these media options.

51. **Have you clicked "like" on Facebook pages associated with individual schools in the district or various school-related clubs or organizations?**

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Yes	24%	19%	10%	5%
No/Don't use Facebook (Just "No" for 2017)	67%	81%	91%	95%
Don't use Facebook (separated in 2017)	9%	n/a	n/a	n/a

52. Do you currently "follow" Twitter feeds associated with individual schools in the district or various school-related clubs or organizations?

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Yes	19%	11%	8%	2%
No/Don't use Twitter (Just "No" for 2017)	60%	89%	92%	98%
Don't use Twitter (separated in 2017)	22%	n/a	n/a	n/a

53. Do you currently "follow" Instagram accounts associated with individual schools in the district or various school-related clubs or organizations? *This question was new in 2017.*

Response	Percentage
Yes	10%
No	70%
Don't use Instagram	20%

Cross-tabulation: Percentages of those who engage with district schools, clubs or organizations via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and "age" will not square with "overall" score, because 17 respondents refused to answer this question.

"Yes" percentages	Overall score	18-34 (n=94)	35-54 (n=163)	55 or older (n=126)	Up to 5 years (n=37)	5 to 15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=271)	Student, yes (n=117)	Student, past (n=157)	Student, never (n=126)
Facebook	24%	32%	29%	13%	16%	33%	23%	38%	14%	25%
Twitter	19%	28%	22%	9%	8%	27%	17%	32%	10%	17%
Instagram	10%	13%	12%	6%	11%	15%	8%	18%	4%	9%

Cross-tabulation: Percentages of those who engage with the district schools, clubs or organizations via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by location of the respondent's residence, ethnicity of the respondent and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participation are included below.

"Yes" percentages	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	African-American (n=34)	Caucasian (n=308)	Hispanic/Latino (n=26)	Female (n=228)	Male (n=172)
Facebook	24%	21%	29%	20%	27%	12%	24%	31%	22%	27%
Twitter	19%	16%	24%	14%	20%	6%	19%	27%	17%	21%
Instagram	10%	7%	10%	11%	11%	0%	6%	15%	10%	9%

Finding 9: The most significant finding from the question regarding topics that would be of most interest to survey respondents was the two newest ideas – "News about preparing students to be career-ready" (87%) and "News about preparing students to be college-ready" (81%). While there was some movement elsewhere on this list (in terms of the percentage expressing interest in the topic), it was not dramatic.

The survey then began a section that presented a list of 12 topics that the district could provide more information about to the general public – if there was interest in having that happen.

A more general question about preparing students for their future (in 2015 and before) was replaced with separate questions dealing with career- and college-readiness.

These two were the top choices, followed by "Safety and security" at 78% and "Student and teacher success stories" at 76%.

The high level of interest in college- and career-ready information presents a gold mine of opportunity for the district to detail its work in a host of different programs designed to fit specific student needs and interests.

54. The school district provides a lot of information on a variety of topics. But we want to make certain we are covering what local citizens want to know about. As such, can you tell me which of the following topics you, personally, are interested in hearing more about from the school district on a regular basis? If you'd really be interested in knowing more on this topic, please say, "Yes." If you'd only be a little interested – or you wouldn't be interested at all – please say, "No." *List was read to respondents. Percentages will add to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one choice. "Safety and security" was added in 2015. The "college-ready" and "career-ready" items were added in 2017.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
News about preparing students to be career-ready	87%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
News about preparing students to be college-ready	81%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Safety and security	78%	74%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Student and teacher success stories	76%	68%	72%	79%	85%	88%
Information on the district's finances and budget	68%	64%	77%	74%	81%	74%
Information on curriculum and curriculum changes	63%	69%	60%	69%	52%	58%
News about programs that maintain and enforce discipline in schools	55%	60%	56%	60%	50%	61%
Updates on construction and renovation projects	54%	51%	59%	57%	53%	53%
News about extracurricular activities	50%	50%	41%	38%	35%	40%
School Board news	46%	54%	45%	41%	47%	46%
School lunch and nutrition news	29%	35%	28%	23%	21%	32%
Transportation news	22%	18%	24%	27%	18%	29%
None of these (not read)	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Don't know (not read)	0%	<1%	0%	0%	0%	<1%

55. Are there other topics that you would be interested in hearing more about from the district that I did not mention? *A total of 345 respondents said, "No." The remaining responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below*

Response	Number
General classroom activities	27
Drug education	12
Discipline/bullying info	9
Other (see below)	7

Verbatim "other" comments

National standardized test scores.

Info on how our district compares to others in the state.

Teachers' negotiations with the Board for contracts.

Drop-out rate.

More about the principals of the schools.

Guns in the classrooms.

Sports.

Finding 10: Seven of 30 different potential sources of school district news – besides weather-related school closing information – are consulted "frequently" for such information by more than 40% of the survey participants.

The survey began to draw to a close with the presentation of 30 potential sources of district news. Respondents were asked to identify those they consulted "frequently" for such information – besides weather-related school closing information.

Seven of the sources topped 40%:

- "Friends and neighbors" – 80%
- Local television stations – 64%
- The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspaper – 57%
- Students who attend school in the district – 45%
- The school district's website – 43%
- Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email – 42%
- Local radio stations – 41%

When asked which one they consult first, those sources topping 10% were as follows:

- The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspaper – 17%
- Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email – 14%
- Through the school district's messaging system that connects individual schools and the district to parents through automated phone calls, texts or emails – 13%
- Students who attend school in the district – 11%
- "Friends and neighbors" – 11%

56. If you were looking for school district news – BESIDES information about weather-related school closings – which of the following sources would you frequently consult? *Choices were read to the respondents and rotated. Percentages will total to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one information source. Items with "n/a" in previous years are new. The school district's website is new to the general question, but not to the follow-up question. However, it was shortened for the follow-up to remove "or individual school websites."*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
Friends and neighbors	80%	73%	86%	87%	86%	89%
Local television stations	64%	56%	42%	42%	38%	41%
The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspaper	57%	61%	58%	68%	54%	61%
Students who attend school in the district	45%	43%	39%	42%	32%	33%
The school district's website	43%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email	42%	39%	37%	39%	33%	32%
Local radio stations	41%	38%	23%	40%	17%	32%
The School Board, either in person or in the media	37%	32%	24%	27%	20%	20%
Through the school district's messaging system that connects individual schools and the district to parents through automated phone calls, texts or emails	30%	22%	15%	9%	12%	4%
Individual school newsletters	24%	31%	27%	26%	35%	31%
Inside Columbia magazine	23%	25%	16%	21%	18%	25%
Social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram	25%	15%	9%	6%	4%	2%
The district's Central Office administration, either in person or via email	29%	25%	21%	21%	18%	19%
Principals at district schools	26%	18%	26%	24%	18%	24%
Volunteering in a school	21%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Various parent organizations at the schools	19%	17%	11%	14%	15%	17%
The Columbia Public Schools free mobile ap for cell phones	18%	8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Columbia Business Times	16%	19%	7%	10%	11%	16%
Columbia Prime magazine	16%	14%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The online edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune*	15%	13%	9%	14%	12%	18%
Columbia Home magazine (was *Columbia Home & Lifestyle* magazine in 2010)	14%	21%	12%	8%	10%	7%
The print edition of *The Columbia Missourian* newspaper	13%	11%	10%	12%	9%	14%
The Partners in Education program	13%	11%	8%	5%	4%	3%
Mediacom Newsleaders	10%	3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Prime magazine	8%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
CEO magazine	7%	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The online edition of *The Columbia Missourian*	6%	4%	2%	3%	6%	8%
VOX magazine	5%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Relocating magazine	2%	1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Move magazine	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

57. Of all of the news sources we've discussed, which one do you consult first for news and information about the Columbia Public Schools? *Only those sources with at least one person selecting it are displayed. Percentages will add to more than 100%, due to rounding.*

Response	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012	Percentage/ 2011	Percentage/ 2010
The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspaper	17%	18%	11%	14%	16%	13%
Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email	14%	12%	19%	18%	17%	13%
Through the school district's messaging system that connects individual schools and the district to parents through automated phone calls, texts or emails	13%	9%	1%/	0%	2%	<1%
Students who attend school in the district	11%	16%	15%	12%	6%	8%
Friends and neighbors	11%	13%	18%	15%	14%	18%
Social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram	7%	4%	3%	2%	0%	0%
Local television stations	6%	10%	4%	11%	4%	9%
Individual school newsletters	5%	8%	7%	6%	11%	11%
Principals at district schools	4%	3%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Local radio stations	2%	5%	1%	2%	3%	3%
The School Board, either in person or in the media	2%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	3%
The school district's website	2%	0%	10%	7%	6%	5%
Volunteering in a school	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The online edition of *The Columbia Missourian*	1%	2%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
The district's Central Office administration, either in person or in the media	1%	1%	2%	0%	<1%	1%
Various parent organizations at the schools	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
The online edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune*	1%	0%	1%	3%	2%	4%
The print edition of *The Columbia Missourian* newspaper	1%	0%	<1%	2%	1%	3%
The Columbia Public Schools free mobile ap for cell phones	1%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Partners in Education program	<1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Finding 11: Support for the two projects set for an April 2018 bond issue, and for the bond issue itself, was very strong.

The last substantive portion of the survey focused on the district's bond issue in April 2018.

Each of the two projects was described – in matter-of-fact terms – in separate questions. After each was read, respondents were asked if including that specific project would make them "More likely to vote in favor," "More likely to vote against," or "It would make no difference in my voting decision."

The results show a high level of support:

- New middle school in the southern part of the district on land already owned by the district – 71% "More likely to vote in favor."
- Renovation and expansion of Lee Elementary – 74% "More likely to vote in favor."

When asked about their support for a no-tax-increase bond issue to address these two projects, 89% said they would either "Strongly favor it" or "Favor it," if the election were held today.

The support for the individual projects and for the bond issue was consistent in the cross-tabulations, as well.

Thank you for staying with me, we are almost done. As you may know, the district is considering asking residents to vote on a bond issue in 2018. There are two projects in this bond issue.

58. **The first project is the construction of a new middle school in the southern part of Columbia on land that is already owned by the school district. If building a new middle school was part of a bond issue, would you be…?** *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	71%
More likely to vote against	3%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	15%
Don't know (not read)	11%

59. Why do you believe you would be more likely to vote against a bond issue that included the construction of a new middle school? *Asked only of the 11 respondents who answered question 58, "More likely to vote against." All verbatim comments displayed below.*

Not sure it's needed.

I don't think it is needed right now.

Don't want a tax increase.

I would need more info.

We can't afford another tax increase.

I want to know the dollar amount budgeted, before I could support it.

Can't afford a tax increase.

Would want more specifics.

Taxes will be increased.

How much is this going to cost to build?

I believe in renovation.

60. The other project is the expansion and renovation of Lee Elementary School. This would add classrooms and reduce the number of trailers being used as temporary classrooms. If this project was part of a bond issue, would you be…? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	74%
More likely to vote against	1%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	19%
Don't know (not read)	6%

61. Why do you believe you would be more likely to vote against a bond issue that included the expansion and renovation of Lee Elementary School? *Asked only of the four respondents who answered question 60, "More likely to vote against." All verbatim comments displayed below.*

Again, don't want a tax increase.

Can't afford it.

Don't trust the money would be spent on renovation.

Taxes will go up.

62. The bond issue we have been discussing would require NO TAX INCREASE. Knowing this, if the election were held today, would you…? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	38%
Favor it	51%
Lean favor (not read)	<1%
Lean oppose (not read)	0%
Oppose it	4%
Strongly oppose it	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

Cross-tabulation: "More likely to vote in favor" percentage for each project idea and combined "Strongly favor it/Favor it" percentage for a potential bond issue by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and "age" will not square with "overall" score, because 17 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=94)	35-54 (n=163)	55 or older (n=126)	Up to 5 years (n=37)	5 to 15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=271)	Student, yes (n=117)	Student, past (n=157)	Student, never (n=126)
More likely to vote in favor, if bond issue included the new middle school	71%	76%	69%	68%	70%	74%	70%	73%	69%	71%
More likely to vote in favor, if bond issue included expansion and renovation of Lee Elementary	74%	72%	76%	71%	68%	76%	74%	76%	76%	72%
Combined "Strongly favor it?"/"Favor it" for no-tax-increase bond issue to address these two projects	89%	89%	90%	86%	86%	95%	87%	88%	87%	91%

Cross-tabulation: "More likely to vote in favor" percentage for each project idea and combined "Strongly favor it/Favor it" percentage for a potential bond issue by location of the respondent's residence, ethnicity of the respondent and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group, and the racial/ethnic groups will not square with "overall," because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/N of B'way (n=100)	W of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	E of Prov/S of B'way (n=100)	African-American (n=34)	Caucasian (n=308)	Hispanic/Latino (n=26)	Female (n=228)	Male (n=172)
More likely to vote in favor, if bond issue included the new middle school	71%	69%	67%	73%	74%	62%	72%	73%	72%	69%
More likely to vote in favor, if bond issue included expansion and renovation of Lee Elementary	74%	71%	71%	73%	80%	68%	74%	92%	74%	73%
Combined "Strongly favor it?"/"Favor it" for no-tax-increase bond issue to address these two projects	89%	92%	85%	88%	89%	94%	88%	100%	91%	85%

Demographics

The final set of questions gathered key demographic information that allowed for the creation of the cross-tabulations in this report. The key statistics from these questions were:

- 68% of the respondents had lived in the district more than 15 years, but 20% had lived there 10 years or fewer.
- 61% of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 117 current student families, 157 past student families and 126 "never" student families.
- 77% of the participants were Caucasian/white, with 9% being African-American/black and 7% being Hispanic/Latino, which is well within the Margin of Error, based on the most recent Census estimate for Columbia.
- In terms of gender, the survey group was 57% female and 43% male.

My last few questions will help us divide our interviews into groups.

63. **How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools? Is it...**_Choices were read to respondents._

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	2%
2 years to 5 years	7%
More than 5 years to 10 years	11%
More than 10 years to 15 years	13%
More than 15 years	56%
I've lived here all my life	12%

64. **In what age group are you? Is it...**_Choices were read to respondents._

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	4%
25 to 34	20%
35 to 44	20%
45 to 54	21%
55 to 64	19%
65 or older	12%
Refused (not read)	4%

65. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in the Columbia Public Schools right now? *Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	113
Yes, children and grandchildren	4
Yes, grandchildren	49
No	234

66. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated? *Asked only of the 283 respondents who did not say either "Yes, children" or "Yes, children and grandchildren" on question 65. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	137
Yes, children and grandchildren	20
Yes, grandchildren	8
No	118

67. And, finally, which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group? Is it...*Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Caucasian, or white	77%
African-American, or black	9%
Hispanic or Latino	7%
Mixed race	3%
Asian	2%
Refused (not read)	2%
Other (not read – "American Indian")	<1%

68. RECORD GENDER

Response	Percentage
Female	57%
Male	43%

Summary

The late 2017 survey of 400 randomly selected, head-of-household registered voters who live within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools has a lot of good news or – at the very least – continues the positive findings from previous surveys. For example:

- Twenty-one of the "graded areas" regarding the district's people, programs, facilities and district/patron relationship factors received a grade of "B" or better. In 2015, the number was 17.

- Interest in the district remained high, as all 26 factors to be evaluated received a grade, rather than a response of "Don't know" from survey participants. In addition, seven different potential sources of district news are consulted "frequently" by more than 40% of the respondents.

- The strengths and areas needing improvement were essentially and echo from 2015, with kudos being dispensed for "Teachers," "Strong academics" and "Involved community support." At the top of the list of areas needing improvement was "Don't know," followed by "Managing money/budget."

- While "Quality teachers and staff" remained the most important characteristic of a school district to survey respondents, "Class sizes" jumped from seventh place to second, making the timing ideal for a bond issue whose passage would lead to the building of a new middle school and the expansion and renovation of an elementary school.

- The district's outbound media content continues to be read and appreciated, and viewership is up for CPS television. Social media from school and school-related clubs and organizations continues to see growth in utilization as well. The district's website and individual school websites are seeing somewhat more traffic and the response to these sites remains positive.

- Printed media continues to hold the edge over electronic – although younger respondents and current student families lean toward electronic. There is, however, no dispute about who to turn to for school district news, as district sources were the choice over the local news media.

- Both bond issue projects drew strong support, and that support grew for a bond issue that would fund these projects while not requiring a tax increase.

Moving forward, the next logical steps would be:

- **Maintain a steady diet of success stories about students and staff.** The results continue to affirm what is seen in almost every district – the "district" is the local school, its students, families and staff, not the leadership. As much as possible, outbound information should be about what happens at the "local level."

- **Continue to be transparent with all financial issues.** Recognizing that there will always be a contingent of individuals who want their school district to "do a better job with the money," this is truly an "all you can do is all you can do" situation. Continue to provide details for those who want them, and simple summaries for those who want the headlines.

- **Ignore the results in this survey on the bond issue and get to work talking about how students will benefit from these two projects.** As you hear many times in sports, everyone starts the playoffs with a 0-0 record. The results in this survey show the district's performance on communicating about these project ideas has been exemplary, to date. But, the information and promotional campaigns must behave as though no one knows anything and work hard to maintain the foundation of support that clearly exists today.