



Columbia
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2023 Patron Telephone Survey REPORT

January 4, 2024

Completed by: ExcellenceK12

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Columbia Public Schools 2023 Patron Telephone Survey Final Report January 4, 2024

Introduction

The Columbia Public Schools strives to provide its students with a top-notch education and curriculum as well as outstanding facilities, teachers, staff, and administrators.

To ensure it continues to provide this high standard of education, Columbia Public Schools leaders engaged ExcellenceK12 in December 2023 to conduct a random-digit-dial survey with 300 head-of-household, registered voters living within the boundaries of the school district.

This is the eighth time the district has conducted this survey since 2010. However, it's been four years since the last survey. A lot has changed since the 2019 survey, including a global pandemic, which led to the shutting down of schools, hybrid and virtual learning, etc. The aftermath of the pandemic has permanently changed the educational landscape and impacted public opinion of school districts. Additionally, the recent run-up to the inflation has made people more concerned about finances.

This year's findings show Columbia Public Schools continues to excel in many areas and maintain strong support from its patrons. While many of the district factor scores were higher than what we have seen on this type of survey among other schools in the state of Missouri, the happenings of the last few years may have negatively impacted (whether warranted or not) some of the lower-scoring areas.

Based on a 5-point weighted scale – where 5.00=A, 4.00=B, 3.00=C and 2.00=D – 14 of the 18 district factors – as well as the district's overall performance (**3.97**) – received a score of 3.79 or higher. An overall score of 5.00 is only possible if all 300 respondents answered each statement with an A.

“The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event” received the top score of 4.31, followed by “Safety of students” (4.24) and “Quality of school facilities” (4.22).

Patrons were very complimentary about the district's curriculum and academics, as well as the teachers and staff. However, the data showed they also struggled to find a top district strength and an area where the district needed to make any improvements. Patrons who indicated areas of concerns focused on finances and maintaining a quality teaching staff.

The full report follows and includes all the findings and all the questions, applicable data, and cross-tabulations (where applicable). An overall results summary closes the report.

It is important to note the data collected has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5.6%, at the 95% confidence level. (The Margin of Error within the demographic and subgroups is higher because of the smaller number of respondents.)

It is a pleasure to share these findings with Columbia Public Schools leadership and your Board of Education.

FULL REPORT

Finding #1

Survey participants continued to show strong support for the district, giving 14 of the 18 factors – plus the district’s overall performance – high marks. And several of the top-rated factors received a score of 4.00 or higher.

To begin the survey, patrons were asked to rate 18 different people, program, facility, and district/patron relationship factors, plus the district’s overall performance.

Columbia Public Schools is excelling in many areas and has strong support from its patrons. Respondents gave 14 of the 18 factors – plus the district’s overall performance **(3.97)** – a score of 3.79 or higher.

Six of the top-rated factors scored 4.00 or above. All the scores for all the factors are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a 5-point weighted scale has also been applied.

At the top of the list for 2023 were:

- 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 – 4.24
- Quality of school facilities – 4.22
- Performance of district teachers – 4.15
- The district’s graduation rate – 4.07
- Efforts of the district to offer equivalent music, art, athletic programs and activities in its schools – 4.05

All but one of the four lower-scoring factors were not far below 3.79. To determine whether where a respondent lived or one or more demographic characteristics had an influence on his or her score on these lower-rated areas, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted.

In reviewing this data, it is important to keep in mind the “n” number, which is shown at the top of each chart. This is the number of participants in each subgroup. The smaller the “n” number, the higher the Margin of Error and the greater the impact a small number of votes within that group can have on the final score within that subgroup. For example, only 24 respondents have lived in the district up to five years. As such, it is best to look for trends, rather than to focus on individual numbers.

The cross-tabulation analysis showed:

- Parents of past students scored the factors higher than current parents and those who had never had children in the district.
- Male participants scored the factors higher than female participants.
- Those residents who had lived in the district “Up to five years” gave the top score for all but one of the factors.
- There was no consistent pattern in the geographic subgroups.

The other aspect of the grading exercise was the identification of factors that received a “Don’t know” response – rather than a grade – from more than 20% of the respondents. In other words, these factors are not top of mind for a significant percentage of the respondents.

As with the previous survey, the only factor was “The district’s history of fulfilling promises,” which also was the lowest graded factor (3.45).

However, “fulfilling promises” is a rather nebulous item. Thus, it would not be in the district’s best interest to place much communication emphasis on this item.

Note: Questions 1-3 confirmed the respondents were heads of households and registered voters, and they 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.

4. To make certain we have people from all parts of the district participating in this survey, which of the following best describes where you live? *The number of respondents in each segment was identified by the school district as being representative of the population pattern in the district. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
West of Providence and north of Broadway	75
East of Providence and north of Broadway	75
West of Providence and south of Broadway	75
East of Providence and south of Broadway	75

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 22 were rotated to eliminate order bias.*

5. Performance of district teachers

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	53%
C	10%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

6. Performance of school principals and district administration

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	42%
C	17%
D	3%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	7%

7. Performance of the Board of Education

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	45%
C	25%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	8%

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

Response	Percentage
A	16%
B	49%
C	20%
D	3%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	8%

9. Quality of education provided to students

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	43%
C	21%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

10. Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students

Response	Percentage
A	25%
B	42%
C	26%
D	1%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

11. Quality of school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	39%
B	47%
C	10%
D	3%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

12. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	41%
B	44%
C	8%
D	4%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

13. Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	35%
C	26%
D	7%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	5%

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

Response	Percentage
A	24%
B	33%
C	29%
D	8%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	4%

15. The district's history of fulfilling promises

Response	Percentage
A	10%
B	32%
C	19%
D	11%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	23%

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

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	36%
C	21%
D	7%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	7%

17. The district's graduation rate

Response	Percentage
A	30%
B	42%
C	15%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	9%

18. The district's efforts to ensure equivalent school buildings, including accessibility

Response	Percentage
A	21%
B	41%
C	19%
D	4%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	12%

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

Response	Percentage
A	18%
B	45%
C	22%
D	5%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	10%

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

Response	Percentage
A	26%
B	41%
C	14%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	15%

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

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	44%
C	25%
D	5%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	4%

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

Response	Percentage
A	43%
B	35%
C	12%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	8%

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

Response	Percentage
A	24%
B	53%
C	17%
D	5%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

Cross-tabulation: Below is the 5-point scale rating for each factor. The factors showing “n/a” from 2015 or earlier were new in 2017. Any factors that had minor wording changes for 2023 are shown, using the current year’s language.

Grade values: “A” grade is 5.00, “B” grade is 4.00, “C” grade is 3.00, and “D” grade is 2.00.

Factor	5-point scale rating/2023	Rating/ 2019	Rating/ 2017	Rating/ 2015	Rating/ 2013	Rating/ 2012
The performance of district employees in making you feel welcome when you visit a school or attend a school event	4.31	4.42	4.31	4.40	4.38	4.45
Safety of students	4.24	4.51	4.28	4.20	4.41	4.27
Quality of school facilities	4.22	4.45	4.33	4.18	4.36	4.05
Performance of district teachers	4.15	4.24	4.26	4.23	4.38	4.35
The district’s graduation rate	4.07	4.10	4.05	4.26	4.33	4.07
Efforts of the district to offer equivalent music, art, athletic programs and activities in its schools	4.05	3.90	4.08	n/a	n/a	n/a
Performance of school principals and district administration	3.99	4.07	4.12	4.07	4.20	4.27
Overall grade	3.97	4.12	4.07	4.13	4.17	4.18
Quality of education provided to students	3.97	4.04	4.16	4.13	4.36	4.34
Offering innovative curriculum and programming for students	3.94	4.12	4.12	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	3.92	3.98	3.90	4.02	4.22	4.30
The district’s effort to ensure equivalent school buildings, including accessibility	3.87	4.10	4.01	3.94	3.87	3.96
The district’s efforts to ensure equivalent academic programming from school to school	3.83	4.11	3.95	3.84	4.07	4.03
The district’s efforts to get the community involved	3.81	3.86	3.82	n/a	n/a	n/a
Performance of the Board of Education	3.79	3.78	3.86	3.74	n/a	n/a
How the Columbia Public Schools is handling the growth in the district	3.75	4.07	3.92	3.99	n/a	n/a
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons	3.73	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.74	3.98
Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent	3.70	3.98	3.83	3.69	3.65	3.97
The district’s history of fulfilling promises	3.45	3.85	3.62	3.46	3.64	3.69

Cross-tabulation: Below are 5-point scale ratings for the factors rated below 3.79 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 the “overall,” because eight respondents did not answer this question.

Factor	Overall score	Age			Length of time living in the district			Student status		
		18-34 (n=57)	35-54 (n=127)	55 or older (n=108)	Up to 5 years (n=24)	5 to 15 years (n=81)	More than 15 years (n=195)	Student yes (n=87)	Student past (n=122)	Student never (n=91)
How the Columbia Public Schools is handling the growth in the district	3.75	3.69	3.74	3.83	3.95	3.75	3.74	3.71	3.77	3.69
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons	3.73	3.74	3.74	3.70	3.73	3.74	3.72	3.55	3.78	3.73
Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent	3.70	3.71	3.80	3.62	3.96	3.70	3.67	3.52	3.74	3.71
The district’s history of fulfilling promises	3.45	3.52	3.45	3.43	3.61	3.42	3.44	3.47	3.47	3.39

Cross-tabulation: Below are 5-point scale ratings for the factors rated below 3.79 by the total survey group by location of the respondent’s residence and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below. Plus, five respondents did not answer the “gender” question.

Factor	Overall score	Location of residence				Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
		W of Prov/ N of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/ N of B’way (n=75)	W of Prov/ S of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/ S of B’way (n=75)	African American (n=13)	Caucasian (n=241)	Hispanic/Latino (n=16)	Female (n=168)	Male (n=126)
How the Columbia Public Schools is handling the growth in the district	3.75	3.81	3.61	3.71	3.87	3.83	3.74	3.81	3.70	3.84
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to patrons	3.73	3.77	3.72	3.67	3.75	3.69	3.68	3.73	3.73	3.75
Value received by patrons for the tax dollars spent	3.70	3.82	3.64	3.67	3.67	3.75	3.67	3.56	3.68	3.75
The district’s history of fulfilling promises	3.45	3.32	3.43	3.53	3.51	3.62	3.39	3.67	3.39	3.52

**Finding
#2**

Unlike past surveys, “Don’t know” topped the list of district strengths. Other top items were “Provides a good education/strong curriculum” and “Caring staff/teachers.” In terms of areas for improvement, “Don’t know” also was the top answer, which is the best place for this response. The suggested improvements included “Continue to hire quality teachers” and “Managing the budget/spending money.”

The evaluation portion of the survey closed with two open-ended questions offering respondents the chance to share their thoughts on the district’s strengths and areas for improvement.

All 300 responses to each question were read and, where possible, coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas to pinpoint the most frequently mentioned areas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown in verbatim form, with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

In doing so, “Don’t know” topped the list of strengths (67 mentions). This was followed by “Provides a good education/strong curriculum” (59 mentions) and “Caring staff/teachers” (52 mentions).

In terms of areas needing improvement, that list also was led by “Don’t know” (106 mentions), followed by “Fine as is/they are the experts” (56 mentions), “Continue to hire quality teachers” (31 mentions), and “Managing the budget/spending money” (24 mentions).

Having “Don’t know” as the top response for both strengths and areas for improvement is an interesting predicament. It is good news because a notable percentage of the population has no specific concerns. However, it is also slightly concerning 22% of the respondents could *not* list something the district is doing well.

The other areas for improvement are typical for school districts on this question.

24. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the Columbia Public Schools?

Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.

Response	Number
Don’t know	67
Provides a good education/strong curriculum	59
Caring staff/teachers	52
Strong community support	35
Prepares kids well for future/college/career	29
Extracurricular activities and programs	21

Other (see below)	20
Facilities	17

Verbatim “other” comments

There are lots of activities for students to be involved in, and they continue to hire good teachers.

Solid special needs options for those needing it.

Solid district with good community support and caring staff – nice combination to have.

The technology continues to be upgraded, and it helps with learning.

They offer a large variety of courses.

Nothing that I can think of right now is too good.

The faculty and support staff, along with administration, inspire students.

Not sure they are focused as they should be. Seem to be too political and a good old boys organization.

The teachers, facilities, and leadership all are excellent.

They have the resources available to be a top-notch district, provided they continue to upgrade teaching positions as needed.

The district seems to be growing, and they continue to stay the course of providing a solid education for anyone who wants one.

I think they seem to care very much about the well-being of all the kids and do their best to prepare them for college and/or a career.

Managing the diversity that continues to change.

Not sure there is much right now.

They have a diverse student body that all can benefit from with an open mind.

Kids are graduating and becoming successful.

I think the teachers do a good job getting the kids ready for college, and they challenge them.

I think they have a good tax base to draw from, and the community supports them.

They tend to plan ahead and have the ability to provide the best education possible.

The staff cares and works with all levels of kids to provide them a solid base to either continue their education or begin working.

25. Where could the district improve? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases, and ideas. Those that were outside of these “common” responses or had more than one idea in the response are shown below in verbatim form with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	106
Fine as is/they are the experts	56
Continue to hire quality teachers	31
Other (see below)	25
Managing the budget/spending money	24
Communication	23
Reduce taxes	19
Stressing academics over athletics	16

Verbatim “other” comments

Use the diverse backgrounds of students and teachers to explore new ideas.

It seems to be getting more and more expensive each year.

I'm not sure the students really understand how to communicate with each other without social media.

I don't hear much. But when I do, it is mostly negative.

Emphasize that technical work is as important as having a corporate job. Oftentimes, it is also more fulfilling.

Need more/need to improve the special needs programs.

Introduce discipline back in the classroom. The students run the classrooms.

Teach the students more interpersonal skills.

At the elementary and middle school levels, teachers and administration have made some poor decisions.

I know it's hard to get bus drivers, but the transportation is slow and often unsafe.

The district needs to work harder on safety on the school grounds.

Reduce classroom sizes, if at all possible.

Teaching kids hate is not acceptable. Other opinions are welcome, and name-calling is uncalled for. Should be done at home but is often not.

I hear stories about bullying of kids. Make sure they feel they have a safe place to report it.

Can always improve technology to keep up with the times.

Go back to teaching the basics.

Inform the public better on what's going on. When something bad happens, it seems to spread like wildfire. When something good happens, no one seems to know about it.

Perhaps traffic flow around the schools could improve. Maybe more lanes for pickup, etc.

Keeping the kids safe and providing security as much as possible.

My son is struggling right now, and he seems to not care. He doesn't enjoy school at all.

Continue to find more nutritional food options.

Make sure the teachers aren't having to go out of pocket for supplies.

Making sure everyone understands expectations and they are held to a high standard.

Improve the facilities when you can.

They could use some more individual time with each student, especially those struggling.

**Finding
#3**

More than three-fourths of the survey participants are aware of and understand the district's brand.

Respondents next were asked how aware they are of Columbia Public Schools' brand and its intended meaning. This was a new question for the 2023 survey.

It seems like the district is hitting its mark, as 78% of the respondents said they were either "Very aware" or "Somewhat" aware of the "brand and what it stands for." And only 21% said they either were "Not very aware" or "Not at all aware."

26. How aware are you of the Columbia Public Schools' brand and what it stands for?

Response	Percentage
Very aware	21%
Somewhat aware	57%
Not very aware	16%
Not at all aware	5%
Don't know (not read)	0%

**Finding
#4**

The *Quarterly Connection* continues to be an important communication vehicle for the district, and the level of satisfaction with the newsletter’s quality and completeness remains strong.

The next set of questions was intended to determine whether patrons still think of the *Quarterly Connection*, the district’s printed, mailed newsletter, as an important resource for district information.

The newsletter saw a slight uptick in readers from 2019, with more than half of the respondents (55%) considering themselves regular readers – every issue or every other issue. One-fourth (25%) said they were infrequent readers – at least once a year or less than once a year. And the number of respondents who have never read the newsletter was 13%. In comparison to other districts we work with in Missouri, these are great numbers.

Those respondents who read every issue or every other issue of *Quarterly Connection* or read it at least once a year were then asked to rate the quality and completeness of the news. The majority of the respondents (80%) thought it was either “Excellent” or “Good.”

The cross-tabulation analysis showed the oldest residents, those with the most time in the district, current parents, and male participants were the most frequent readers of the newsletter.

Among the geographic subgroups, those respondents living east of Providence and north of Broadway read the newsletter *most* often, and those living west of Providence and south of Broadway read the newsletter *least* often.

The next few questions are about the printed communications coming from the district.

27. How often do you read the school district’s printed, mailed newsletter, called *Quarterly Connection*? Is it...? *The choices were read to respondents. Also, the newsletter was called, Quarterly Report prior to 2017.*

Response	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Every issue	37%	40%	44%	32%	43%	57%
Every other issue	18%	12%	15%	23%	14%	13%
At least once a year	14%	18%	9%	16%	9%	11%
Less than once a year	11%	16%	13%	9%	17%	3%
Never	13%	9%	16%	14%	15%	15%
Don’t know (not read)	6%	5%	4%	7%	2%	1%

28. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the news that you see in the *Quarterly Connection* newsletter? *This question was only asked of the 207 respondents who answered, “Every issue,” “Every other issue,” or “At least once a year” on question 27.*

Response	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Excellent	19%	31%	26%	20%	24%	27%
Good	61%	65%	59%	60%	55%	59%
Fair	17%	3%	14%	19%	18%	12%
Poor	2%	0%	2%	1%	3%	1%
Don’t know (not read)	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%

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 the “overall,” because eight respondents did not answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=57)	35-54 (n=127)	55 or older (n=108)	Up to 5 years (n=24)	5 to 15 years (n=81)	More than 15 years (n=195)	Student yes (n=87)	Student past (n=122)	Student never (n=91)
Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	55%	40%	57%	59%	25%	46%	62%	62%	58%	43%
Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	25%	32%	24%	26%	33%	30%	23%	24%	26%	26%
Never readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	13%	19%	13%	10%	25%	17%	11%	9%	12%	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 and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below. Plus, five respondents did not answer the “gender” question.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/N of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/N of B’way (n=75)	W of Prov/S of B’way (n=75)	E of Prov/S of B’way (n=75)	African American (n=13)	Caucasian (n=241)	Hispanic/Latino (n=16)	Female (n=168)	Male (n=126)
Regular readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	55%	55%	64%	49%	51%	54%	56%	38%	52%	60%
Infrequent readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	25%	31%	23%	21%	28%	8%	25%	44%	23%	27%
Never readers of <i>Quarterly Connection</i>	13%	12%	8%	19%	15%	31%	13%	6%	15%	11%

**Finding
#5**

**While visits to the Columbia Public Schools’ website
continue to be modest, most of the respondents felt it was
“Very easy” or “Easy” to navigate.**

The highest number of respondents (35%) said they visited the district’s website “less than once a month.”

The number who visited at least once a month (31%) was up from 2019, while those who have “never visited the district’s website” (34%) decreased by 8%.

Those who visited at least once a month were then asked how easy it was to find their way around, and 88% said it was either “Very easy” or “Easy” to do so. This is a significant drop from 2019 (9%), where 97% were able to easily navigate it.

Additionally, those same respondents were asked to rate the quality and completeness of the information. The majority of the respondents (93%) thought it was either “Excellent” or “Good.”

In the cross-tabulation data, the trend was slightly different than earlier in the survey. The oldest residents were not as frequent visitors to the website as their younger counterparts.

Current parents were the most frequent visitors among their subgroup. Within the geographic subgroups, those respondents living west of Providence and south of Broadway visited the website *most* often, and those living west of Providence and north of Broadway visited it the *least*.

The next few questions are about the district website.

29. Which of the following best describes how often you visit the Columbia Public Schools district’s website? *The choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
At least once a week	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11%	6%
At least once every two weeks	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3%	9%
At least once a month	31%	25%	34%	22%	13%	10%
Less than once a month	35%	33%	30%	36%	32%	22%
I’ve never visited the website	34%	42%	36%	43%	42%	53%

30. Thinking about the last time you visited the Columbia Public Schools district’s website, how easy was it to navigate and to find what you were looking for? *This question was only asked of the 92 respondents who said they visited “at least once a month.”*

Response	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Very easy	48%	56%	43%	45%	39%	43%
Easy	40%	41%	41%	49%	52%	42%
Difficult	12%	3%	16%	5%	9%	14%
Very difficult	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Don’t know (not read)	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%

31. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the information that is shared on the district’s website? *This question was new for 2023 and was only asked of the 92 respondents who said they visited “at least once a month.”*

Response	Percentage
Excellent	52%
Good	41%
Fair	7%
Poor	0%
Don’t know (not read)	0%

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 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 the “overall,” because eight respondents did not answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=57)	35-54 (n=127)	55 or older (n=108)	Up to 5 years (n=24)	5 to 15 years (n=81)	More than 15 years (n=195)	Student yes (n=87)	Student past (n=122)	Student never (n=91)
Regular visitors/CPS website	31%	33%	35%	22%	17%	20%	37%	37%	27%	30%
Infrequent visitors/CPS website	35%	35%	31%	40%	29%	49%	30%	37%	37%	31%
Never visitors/CPS website	34%	32%	34%	38%	54%	31%	33%	26%	36%	39%

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 by location of the respondent’s residence and the race/ethnicity and gender of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. The racial/ethnic groups will not square with the “overall” score, because only groups with at least modest levels of participants are included below. Plus, five respondents did not answer the “gender” question.

Response	Overall score	W of Prov/ N of B'way (n=75)	E of Prov/ N of B'way (n=75)	W of Prov/ S of B'way (n=75)	E of Prov/ S of B'way (n=75)	African American (n=13)	Caucasian (n=241)	Hispanic/Latino (n=16)	Female (n=168)	Male (n=126)
Regular visitors/CPS website	31%	27%	32%	33%	31%	38%	34%	6%	31%	31%
Infrequent visitors/CPS website	35%	39%	39%	33%	29%	38%	33%	56%	33%	37%
Never visitors/CPS website	34%	35%	29%	33%	40%	23%	33%	38%	36%	32%

**Finding
#6**

Columbia Public Schools Television continued to have limited viewers. And those who watched “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes” had very few suggestions for other programming.

The number of respondents who watched CPS Television at least “Sometimes” was up slightly from 2019 (22% vs. 19%). The number one response in 2023, again, was “Never” at 52%.

Like in 2019, most viewers were watching “Scheduled activities” (42 mentions) or “Programs” (24 mentions).

As in the past, respondents struggled to come up with additional ideas for CPS Television programming, with 94% saying, “Don’t know/Not sure/None.”

The next few questions are about the district’s television channel.

- 32. How often do you watch Columbia Public Schools television, either on cable, streamed on the district’s website, or via the videos shared on the CPS-TV website?** *The choices were read to respondents. The percentages for the surveys from 2017, 2015, 2013, 2012, and 2011 are available in previous reports.*

Response	Percentage/2023	Percentage/2019
Every day	<1%	0%
Frequently	5%	9%
Sometimes	17%	10%
Rarely	26%	24%
Never	52%	58%

- 33. What types of programming do you watch on the school district’s television station?** *This question was only asked of the 68 respondents who answered question 32, “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes.” Respondents were allowed to choose more than one response. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number/2023	Number/2019
Scheduled activities (date/time, etc.)	42	51
Programs (music, etc.)	24	32
Meetings with administration	15	14
Student and teacher success stories	14	n/a
School and learning stories	9	n/a
Other	0	2

34. What additional types of programming about the school district would you like to see on Columbia Public Schools Television? *This question was only asked of the 68 respondents who watch Columbia Public Schools Television “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes.” Of those 68 respondents, 64 said, “Don’t know/Not sure/None.” The four other responses are displayed in verbatim form below, with minor edits for punctuation, spelling, and grammar.*

Do a day in the life with teachers, administrators, and students. Follow and report on a typical day.

Jeopardy-type competition.

Maybe daily traffic updates for each school.

General news about what’s going on at each school.

35. How would you rate the quality and completeness of the news that is shared on CPS-TV? *This question was new for 2023 and was only asked of the 68 respondents who watch Columbia Public Schools Television “Every day,” “Frequently,” or “Sometimes.”*

Response	Percentage
Excellent	66%
Good	24%
Fair	3%
Poor	0%
Don’t know (not read)	7%

**Finding
#7**

“Safety and security” is of more interest than in year’s past, while “Information on the district’s finances and budget” continues to be less newsworthy.

Information about “Safety and security” was deemed the most newsworthy for the 2023 survey, with 85% of the respondents expressing interest in this topic.

Other top areas of interest were “Student and teacher success stories” (78%), “News about preparing students to be college- or career-ready” (76%), and “Updates on facilities, construction, and renovation projects” (70%).

While the interest in “Information on the district’s finances and budget” was slightly up from 2019, it still only received interest from 62% of the participants. And the areas with the least interest were “News about test scores and academic achievements” (41%), Transportation news” (34%), and “School lunch and nutrition news” (29%).

36. Please tell me which of the following topics you, personally, are interested in hearing more about from the school district on a regular basis – either in print, electronically, or both. 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.” *The list was read to respondents. The percentages will add to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one choice. “Safety and security” was added in 2015, and “News about test scores and academic achievements” was added in 2019. The “college-ready” and “career-ready” items were added in 2017 and were combined into one item for 2019.*

Response	Percentage/ 2023	Percentage/ 2019	Percentage/ 2017	Percentage/ 2015	Percentage/ 2013	Percentage/ 2012
Safety and security	85%	82%	78%	74%	n/a	n/a
Student and teacher success stories	78%	87%	76%	68%	72%	79%
News about preparing students to be college- or career-ready (combined for 2019)	76%	43%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Updates on facilities, construction, and renovation projects	70%	57%	54%	51%	59%	57%
Information on curriculum and curriculum changes	67%	71%	63%	69%	60%	69%
Information on the district’s finances and budget	62%	56%	68%	64%	77%	74%
School Board news	58%	39%	46%	54%	45%	41%
News about activities and athletics	53%	50%	50%	50%	41%	38%
News about test scores and academic achievements	41%	46%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transportation news	34%	19%	22%	18%	24%	27%
School lunch and nutrition news	29%	24%	29%	35%	28%	23%
None of these (not read)	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	2%
Don’t know (not read)	0%	0%	0%	<1%	0%	0%

**Finding
#8**

Of the 26 sources of district news (aside from weather-related school closing information) four stood out as being the most frequent “first” choice for survey respondents.

To find out the best way to communicate with district patrons, one of the last questions of the survey asked respondents which of the 26 potential sources they consulted “first” for school district news.

Four of the sources were said to be consulted “first” by more than 40% of the respondents. The number one source – which is typical for surveys of this type – was “Friends and neighbors” (78%). This was followed by “The print edition of *The Columbia Daily Tribune* newspaper” at 57%, “Local television stations” at 51%, and “Students who attend school in the district” at 42%.

While the number of district news sources identified as being the most frequent “first” choice was about average, only one was district-related.

37. If you were looking for school district news – BESIDES information about weather-related school closings – which of the following sources would you consult first? *The choices were read to the respondents and rotated. The percentages will add up to more than 100%, because respondents were free to select more than one information source. Items with “n/a” in all the previous years are new to the 2023 survey.*

Response	Percentage 2023	Percentage 2019	Percentage 2017	Percentage 2015	Percentage 2013	Percentage 2012
Friends and neighbors	78%	85%	80%	73%	86%	87%
The print edition of <i>The Columbia Daily Tribune</i> newspaper	57%	52%	57%	61%	58%	61%
Local television stations	51%	34%	64%	56%	42%	68%
Students who attend school in the district	42%	49%	45%	43%	39%	42%
Teachers and other staff members in the district, either in person or via email	39%	46%	42%	39%	37%	39%
The school district’s website	39%	30%	43%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok	37%	29%	25%	15%	9%	6%
Local radio stations	34%	27%	41%	38%	23%	40%
Individual school newsletters	30%	28%	24%	31%	27%	26%
District newsletter (printed <i>Quarterly Connection</i> delivered quarterly to homes)	29%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The School Board, either in person or in the media	28%	42%	37%	32%	24%	27%
The district’s central office administration, either in person or in the media	26%	31%	29%	25%	21%	21%
Principals at district schools	23%	25%	26%	18%	26%	24%
<i>Inside Columbia</i> magazine	22%	28%	23%	25%	16%	21%
Through the school district’s messaging system that connects individual schools and the district to parents through automated phone calls, texts, or emails	20%	32%	30%	22%	15%	9%
The online edition of <i>The Columbia Daily Tribune</i>	18%	10%	15%	13%	9%	14%
Various parent organizations at the schools	16%	13%	19%	17%	11%	14%
The Columbia Public Schools free mobile app	15%	20%	18%	8%	n/a	n/a
The online edition of <i>The Columbia Missourian</i>	15%	9%	6%	4%	2%	3%
CPS-TV, the district’s television and online streaming channel	14%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Volunteering in a school	14%	17%	21%	n/a	n/a	n/a
The print edition of <i>The Columbia Missourian</i> newspaper	13%	23%	13%	11%	10%	12%
<i>VOX</i> magazine	11%	8%	5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Partners in Education program	8%	10%	13%	11%	8%	5%
<i>COMO</i> magazine	6%	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<i>Relocating</i> magazine	2%	1%	2%	1%	n/a	n/a

**Finding
#9**

Nearly all the survey participants feel well-informed by the Columbia Public Schools, and they know where to turn for district information.

The next set of questions – which were new for the 2023 survey – was a continuation of the same theme from the previous section – how well the district is communicating with patrons and the level of ease of tracking down necessary information.

Most of the respondents (91%) said they “Always” or “Sometimes” feel the Columbia Public Schools keeps them well-informed. Only 9% said they “Rarely” feel this way.

Even more respondents (96%) feel this way about knowing “who to ask and/or how to find the information,” if they had a question about CPS. Even fewer (4%) said they “Rarely” feel this way.

38. I feel like CPS keeps me well-informed. *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Always	29%
Sometimes	62%
Rarely	9%

39. If I had a question about CPS, I would know who to ask and/or how to find the information. *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Always	37%
Sometimes	59%
Rarely	4%

Demographics

The final section of the survey collected key demographic information, including:

- In the length of residence category, 65% of the respondents had lived in the district more than 15 years.
- In the age category, 58% of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 87 “Current student” families, 122 “Past student” families, and 91 “Never student” families.
- In the racial/ethnic groups, 80% of the participants were Caucasian/White, 5% were Hispanic or Latino, 5% were mixed race, and 4% were African American/Black.
- In terms of gender, the survey group was 56% female and 42% male. Only one respondent answered, “Non-binary.”

40. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of the Columbia Public Schools? Is it...? *The choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	1%
2 years to 5 years	7%
More than 5 years to 10 years	10%
More than 10 years to 15 years	17%
More than 15 years	52%
I’ve lived here all my life	13%

41. In what age group are you? Is it...? *The choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	4%
25 to 34	15%
35 to 44	22%
45 to 54	21%
55 to 64	22%
65 or older	14%
Refused (not read)	3%

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

Response	Number
Yes, children	87
Yes, both children and grandchildren	0
Yes, grandchildren	38
No	175

- 43. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated?** *This question was only asked of the 213 respondents who answered question 42, “Yes, grandchildren” or “No.” Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	109
Yes, both children and grandchildren	13
Yes, grandchildren	4
No	87

- 44. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic group?** *Is it...? The choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Caucasian, or White	80%
Hispanic or Latino	5%
Mixed race	5%
African American, or Black	4%
Asian	3%
Other	0%
Refused (not read)	2%

- 45. And finally, to which gender do you most identify?**

Response	Percentage
Female	56%
Male	42%
Non-binary	<1%
Prefer not to answer	2%

Overall results summary

Once again, the Columbia Public Schools continues to provide a high-quality education to its students. As mentioned earlier, the scores for most of the district factors exceeded what we normally see for similar districts in Missouri, especially on surveys that have been conducted for multiple years.

While it continues to excel, there are some things the district could do to raise the bar even higher. Specifically:

- Four of the district factors scored below 3.79. However, as mentioned earlier, some of these factors may have been negatively impacted by the events of the past few years.
- Nearly one-fourth of the survey group could not provide a strength of the district. However, most of the survey respondents were aware of the CPS “brand and what it stands for.” Knowing the lengths the Communications Department goes to communicate district news, it’s highly unlikely improvements need to happen in this area.
- Since patrons cited, “Continue to hire quality teachers” as an area of improvement, continue to demonstrate the ways the district is seeking out and hiring top-notch teaching candidates.
- “Friends and neighbors” has been the top source on every survey to date. Continue working to decrease the number of people seeking district news from their “Friends and neighbors” – which equates to listening to gossip – and other non-district-related sources.