

St. Luke School Commission

2008-2009 Survey

8/10/2009

Bridget Kennedy, Kathleen Leppert, & Jen Money-Brady

Dear Parents,

Following this letter, you will receive the results from the survey completed in late March. We have presented the results at the May and June School Commission meetings. We appreciate the time you took to complete the survey. Please read this letter in its entirety prior to review of the survey. It will help to clarify a number of questions.

For each question you will receive three different items. First, will be the graph of how everyone responded to the question. Second, will be the summary of the comments. And finally, will be our recommendations.

In section one, you will receive graphs of the responses to that specific question. These are the breakdowns of where each person responded to the question.

The next section contains the summary from the comments sections. Each comment was copied in its original form and then categorized to provide information for analysis. The exact comments are not available for release but the School Commission, Principal and Pastor have reviewed these extensively to determine trends and recommendations. We will not release information in the survey that mentions the names of specific teachers whether positive or negative. This is out of respect and courtesy.

Some of the comments sections are divided by favorable and need improvement comments. This was done purely to assist in the analysis process. Also very frequently comments contained multiple responses both favorable and need improvement so that all totals in the analysis do not always add up exactly. Please contact Bridget Kennedy if you require a more detailed explanation of this process.

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Along with the summaries, recommendations are also included. Reviewing the survey results, comments, and receiving input from School Commission members, the Principal, and Pastor, recommendations were compiled. We are interested in your thoughts too. Please contact Kathleen Leppert (Vice President and Board Development/Strategic Planning Committee Chair for School Commission) via email with any comments. kathleen.leppert@gmail.com

The survey was never intended to be a scientific analysis. The goal for School Commission was to get a general read of what parents were interested in, pleased with, concerned with and the direction they were hoping to see the school move. We were looking for major trends amongst the questions and comments. This was achieved. The comments sections and open-ended questions provided a great deal of information. Parents took an extensive amount of time to share their thoughts. As a School Commission, we are very grateful for your interest in St. Luke. You were honest, but respectful, and obviously have a great desire to see our school move in the right direction.

In our original letter to you about the survey, we stated that our school is too good not to make it better. Your participation in the survey has really helped in this endeavor. Thank you. It is our plan to utilize this survey as a baseline to establish and measure goals. We will conduct another survey about the same time next year. This will provide us a means to determine progress and areas where improvement is still

needed. After having been through this for the first time, we fully anticipate the process to move in a much more timely manner next year. Your patience has been appreciated.

All members of School Commission are here to serve you and to represent you. The door is always open so please feel free to contact us. Look for an improved presence on the website this year and better communication on our end. Our meetings usually occur the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Parish Meeting Hall. We hope to see you there.

Many thanks.

Dave Daniels
President
School Commission 08-09

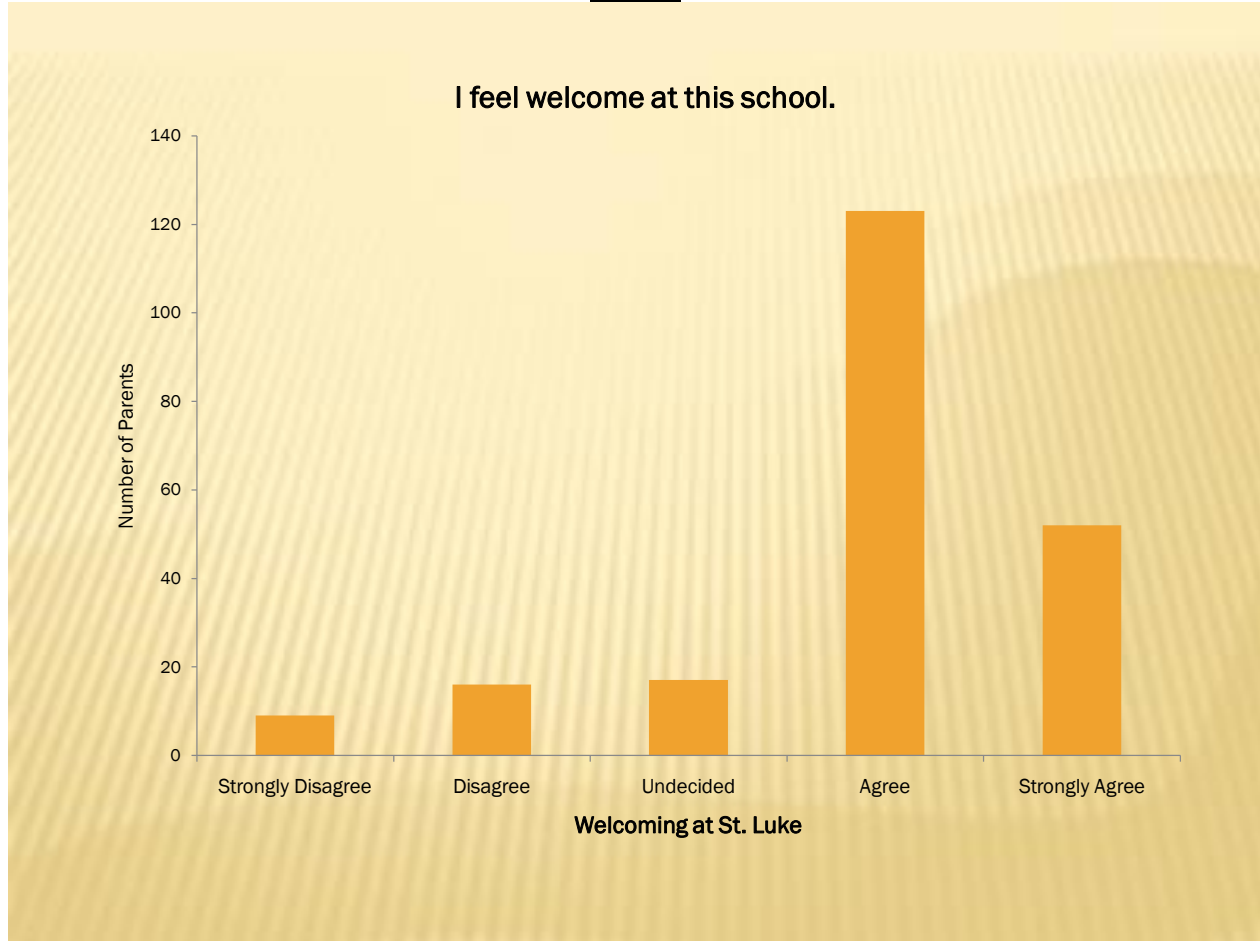
Bridget Kennedy
President
School Commission 09-10

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I feel welcome at St. Luke
Graph



Favorable
Summary and Recommendations

Summary

41 of the 217 people that completed the survey commented on this question. 24 of the 41 comments contained favorable statements. Most statements were general or non-specific such as:

“Everyone is always saying hello and smiling.”

“St. Luke is a wonderfully warm and welcoming community.

People welcome you to the school.”

“I am grateful to have the means to send my child to such a nurturing school.”

There were some specific statements referencing teachers, office staff, administration, and families.

Recommendations

It is recommended that this strength of welcoming be expanded and encouraged for everyone. It sets a wonderful, positive tone for our new families and for all of our children.

Improvement Needed Summary and Recommendations

Summary

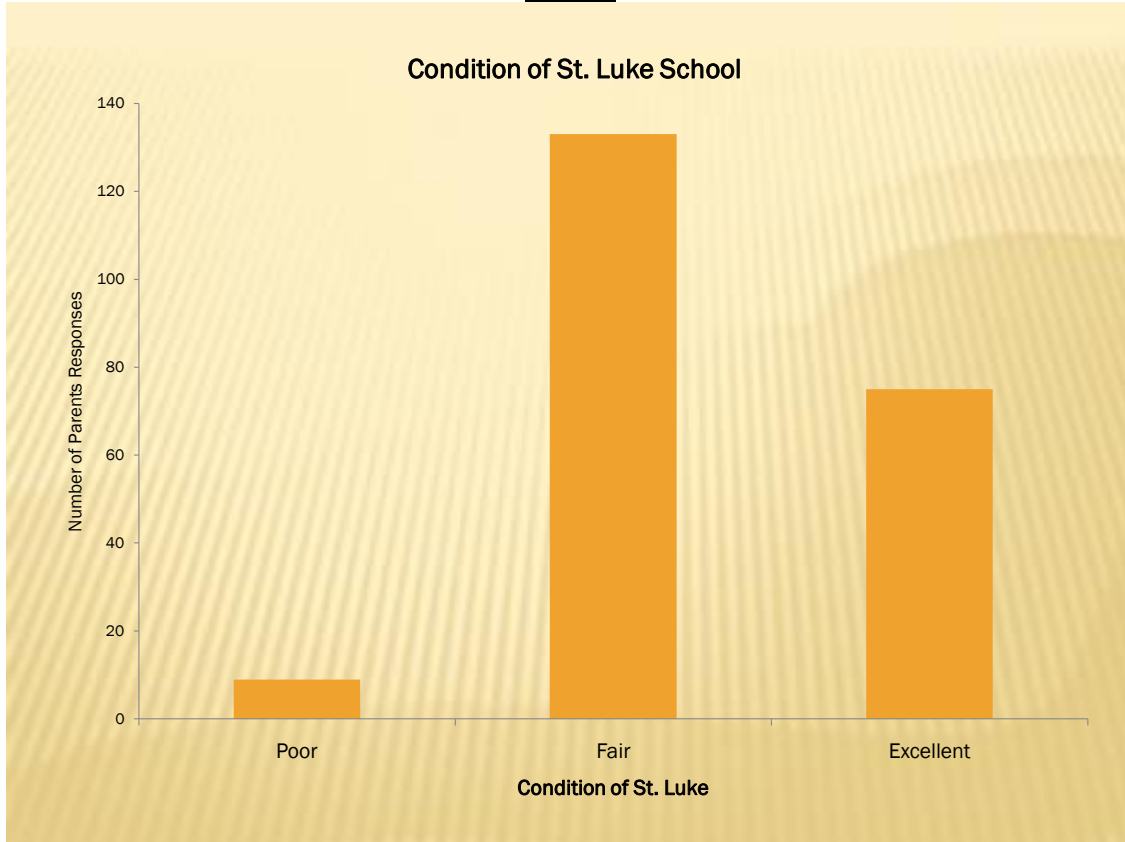
41 people of the 217 that completed the survey commented on this question. Of the 41, there were 22 comments that contained statements that reflected areas for improvement.

Most comments stated that St. Luke could be a more welcoming and open school. People felt that the environment overall could be friendlier and more inclusive. Some stated that it was difficult to break in as a new family. Comments also requested that improved greetings when arriving at the front office would be beneficial. There were concerns about the cliqueness of St. Luke.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the PTO Welcome Wagon and Mentor Families program be built upon to improve the transition for new families to St. Luke. It is also encouraged that everyone at St. Luke make a concerted effort to create a more welcoming and warm environment at our school. Also, greeting people when they arrive at the front office is recommended. Discussion with Fr. Noah has also occurred to look into the addition of “Welcome Families” at Sunday masses, which would be families that greet everyone when they arrive for church. Any other suggestions for improving the welcoming feel at St. Luke School and Church are “welcome.”

Condition of School Facility Graph



Favorable Comments

Summary

Of the 217 people that responded to this question 98 made comments. 34 of the 98 comments made were favorable toward the condition of the school facility.

26 of the favorable comments were non-specific or general comments, such as

“Overall facilities are wonderful.”

“School does a good job.”

“Facilities are more than adequate.”

“Conditions while fair are adequate for a school as teaching environment.”

7 of the favorable comments were about the interior of the school, such as

“I’m pleased with the addition of classrooms, science lab, restrooms, and gym.”

5 of those 7 comments were about the addition of the new gym.

One favorable comment was made about the exterior. It stated that the exterior was “pretty good” and the new sign on 75th Street looked “nice.”

2 people commented about the cleanliness of the school stating that is “clean and orderly.”

Improvement Needed Comments Summary and Recommendations

General Summary

Of the 217 people that answered this question 98 made comments. 62 of the 98 comments fall under the improvement needed category.

Note that many comments contain multiple statements, some positive, some negative, and some suggestions.

Interior Summary

53 comments were made about the interior of the school

Mold comments 12

Cleanliness 25

Bathrooms 18

Hallways 6 (cleanliness)

Repairs 14

Main issue of concern for the condition of our school facility lies in the lack of cleanliness. There were 25 comments made that stated concern about the cleanliness of the interior of the school. Of those comments 24 were about the bathrooms and the hallways.

“Hallway by the cafeteria is disgusting. The walls look dirty and nasty.”

“The school is not very clean and the restrooms consistently smell.”

“The inside of the school is dirty and needs an overhaul.”

12 people commented about the issues with mold in the bathrooms and the classrooms (mainly the downstairs classrooms). Some of these comments stressed serious health concerns because of the mold, such as

“We believe the health of our children is comprised because of this situation. “

“I have seen mold growing on the walls.”

“...after years of issues still have mold and strong odors.”

“The mold in the school needs to be addressed.”

14 comments were made about repairs being needed. Those focused on the drinking fountains, restrooms, and leaks within the school.

Some comments were also made that suggested a “warmer” appearance to the school. The use of brighter paint colors and trying to move away from the “institutional” feel were recommended to make the school more inviting.

Some people suggested a parent pitch in to help with the clean up of the bathrooms, hallways, and classrooms.

Interior Recommendations

The recommendation for the interior of the school is to place immediate focus on the cleanliness of the school with a review of the custodial team and a parent and student pitch in for clean up of the bathrooms and walls. Students in the older grades can receive service hours for their time. It is also highly recommended that the mold issue throughout the school, but primarily in the middle school area, be addressed. This might require a professional team to review or at least a thorough cleaning that could take place during the clean up weekend. It is also suggested that the school look into the purchase of industrial humidifiers that could run to improve the mold situation. This might be something that PTO funds could support. There is a concern about health issues from exposure to mold and some parents have spoken to School Commission members about concerns for their children's health. *

Exterior Summary

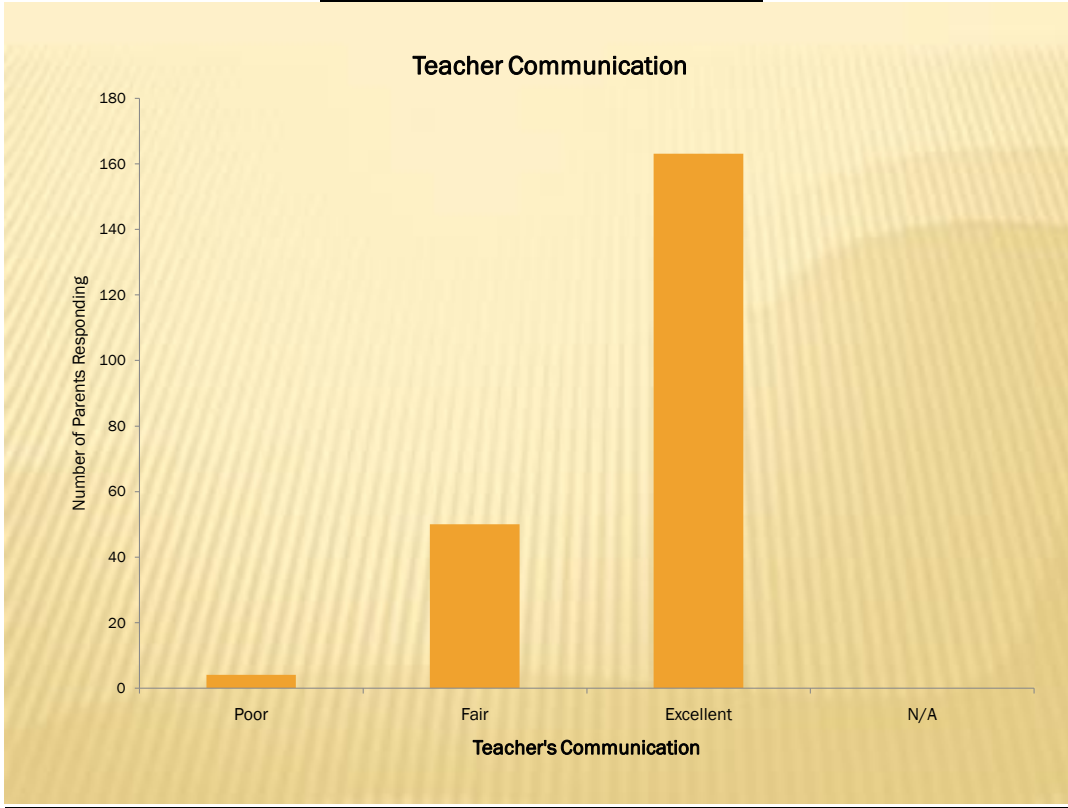
The comments about the exterior of the school referenced safety concerns on the playground and in the parking lots. There were concerns about the debris around the school and that not reflecting well on the school. A number of people also cited concern that the monkey bars on the playground still have not been repaired.

Exterior Recommendations

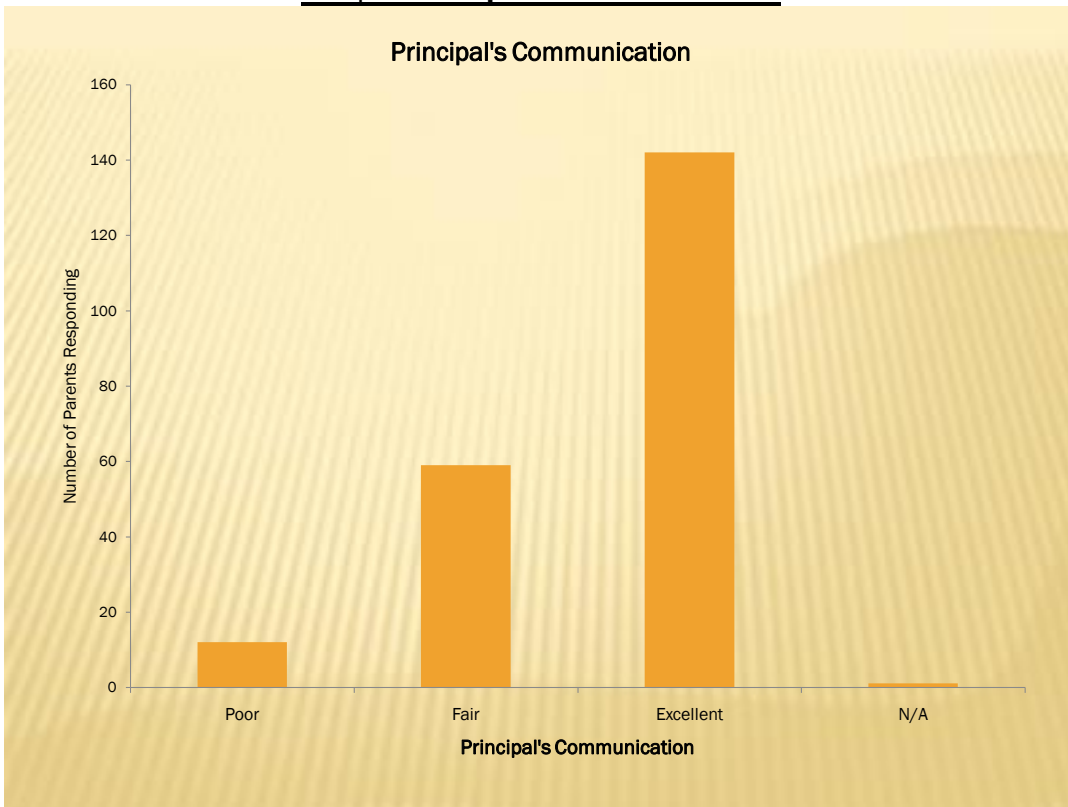
The recommendation for the exterior of the school is to immediately address the missing monkey bar for safety concerns. The parking lot safety issue can be reviewed by the administration and parish. One person suggested improved lighting in the back parking lot because of concern of older parishioners using the parking lot at night. Again to assist with the beautification of the school, a fall and spring clean up by families is recommended and utilized well at other schools. Service hours for students would be available for participation in this event. *

*A joint team from the Church and School via the Buildings and Grounds Committee is being formed to address issues related to the condition of the church and school (both interior and exterior).

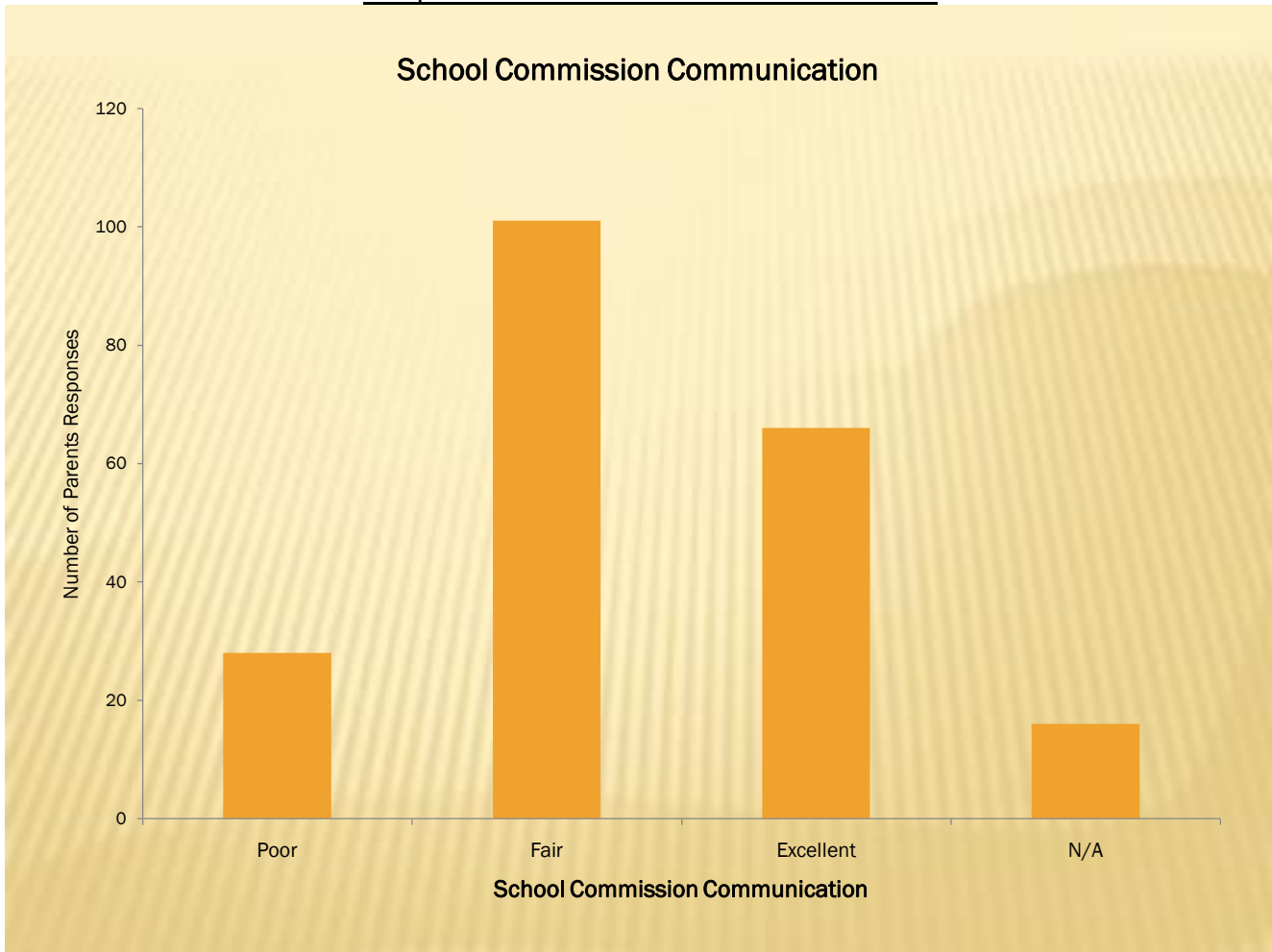
Communication
Graph-Teacher Communication



Graph-Principal's Communication



Graph-School Commission Communication



Favorable Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Of the 217 people who completed the survey, there were 86 total comments for this question. Of the 86 comments, 31 contained favorable responses. Ten people commented on communication related to the Principal. People liked the use of Teacherease, QuickNotes and the Rampage. Communication was regular, helpful and kept people well informed. Regarding Teachers, there were 18 comments with favorable remarks. Almost half of the comments stated that our teachers were good at responding to emails. People also thought the teachers were doing a great job and kept parents well informed. One parent said that it was great to hear positive comments from the teachers. For School Commission, there were less total positive responses about communication. Six parents responded positively. Of those six, five stated that they have noticed an improvement over School Commission's communication compared to previous years. One parent stated that they were just beginning to feel that their concerns were heard.

Recommendations

It is recommended that use of Teacherease and QuickNotes continue to be utilized as much as possible. The teachers use of emails in response to parents and weekly updates or newsletters, especially the model used in the 5th and 6th grades, which was referenced by parents, continue to be done. Any form of positive communication is encouraged. School Commission needs to continue to improve in this area.

Improvement Needed Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Of the 217 people who completed the survey, there were 86 total comments for this question. Fifty-five people made comments that reflect areas that need improvement. Of the 55 comments, 25 responded regarding the Principal. A number of people stated that concerns were not addressed or acted upon or that they did not feel comfortable bringing problems to the Principal. A number of comments centered around not receiving communication, especially about important issues, in a timely manner. There were requests for providing a clear set of measurable goals. Some parents also did not care for the letters from Mr. Weber in the Rampage.

Nine comments contained responses about the teachers. A third of those responses stated that there were some very good communicators at St. Luke and some that were not as good at communicating. A few parents did not like that schoolwork was not distributed in a regular manner. The main area that people commented on needing improvement was regarding communication in the middle school grades. One recommendation was for the school to provide a school wide set of guidelines for communication.

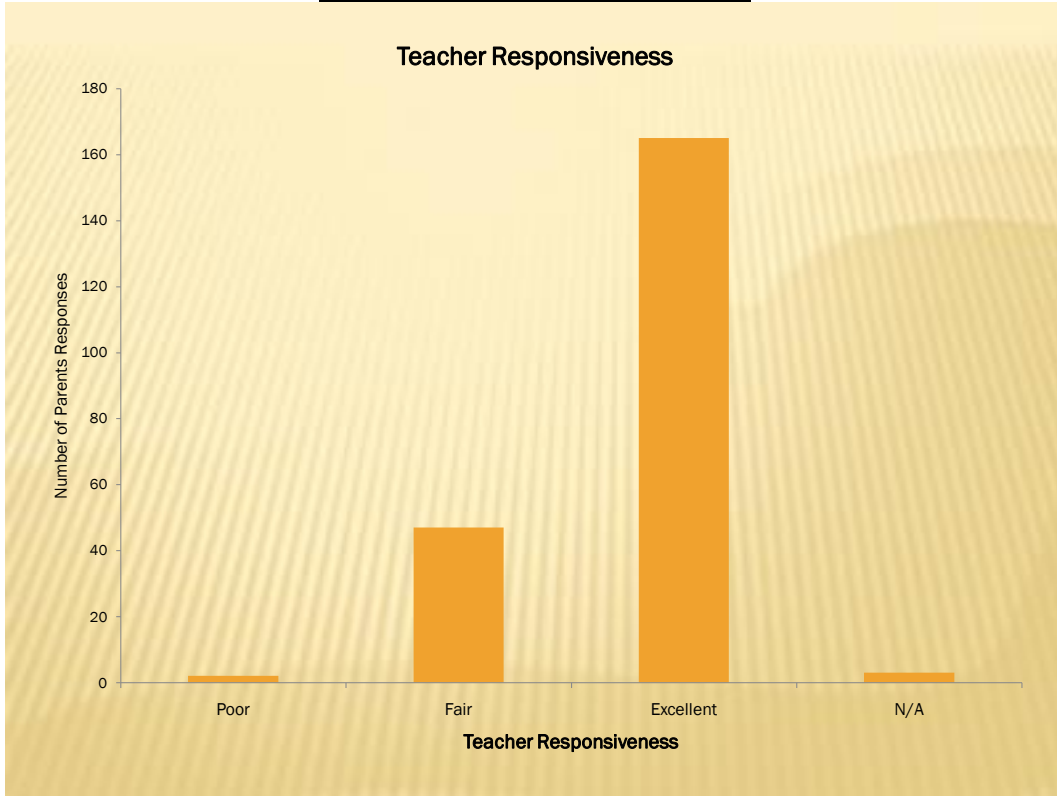
For School Commission, this was an area that will need much improvement. Twenty-nine comments contained responses about School Commission. Fifteen of those people stated never seeing any communication from School Commission at all. There were requests for a clearly stated set of goals and to receive agendas and detailed minutes in a timely manner. Three people felt that communication should be received directly from School Commission. Some people felt that monthly or quarterly

updates would be helpful. There were some responses that stated concerns that School Commission did not speak for the good of all and that parents did not feel welcome at School Commission meetings.

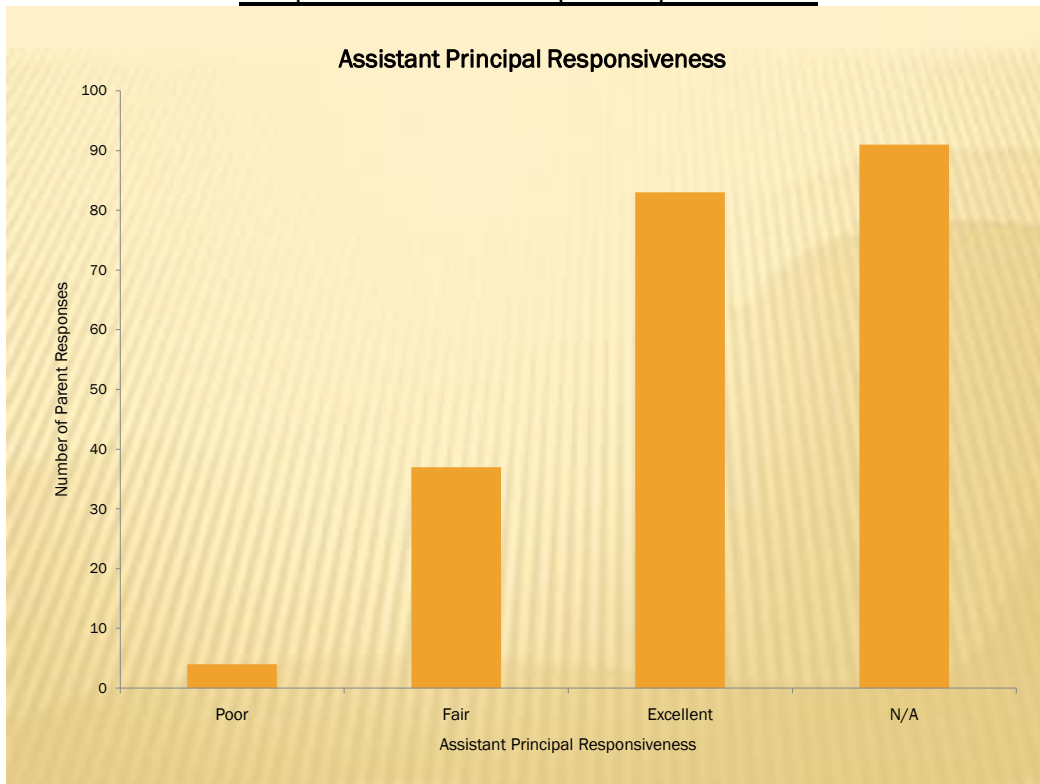
Recommendations

Recommendations for communication from the Principal include working to disperse critical information in a more timely and forthcoming manner, to work towards being more responsive and open to parental concerns, being sure to follow up with any parents that have brought an issue to his attention, and to provide to everyone a clear set of measurable goals at the beginning of the school year. A “contact” form will be used for the upcoming school year to keep record of meetings and to ensure follow through. This form will be used by administration and teachers. For teachers, it is recommended that a set of guidelines be created regarding communicating with parents. For example, determine the amount of time teachers are expected to respond to emails, require that weekly emails be distributed that contain information about topics of instruction, upcoming exams, and upcoming events. The model used in the 5th and 6th grade could serve as an example for the whole school. For School Commission it is recommended that goals are clearly set and communicated with parents. At minimum a beginning and end of year letter should be sent to parents. It is also recommended that all agendas and minutes be provided to parents in a timely manner. The ability for School Commission to distribute its own emails and to increase its presence on the website are important needed. Work towards achieving these goals is taking place over the summer break and will be a primary focus for the new school year.

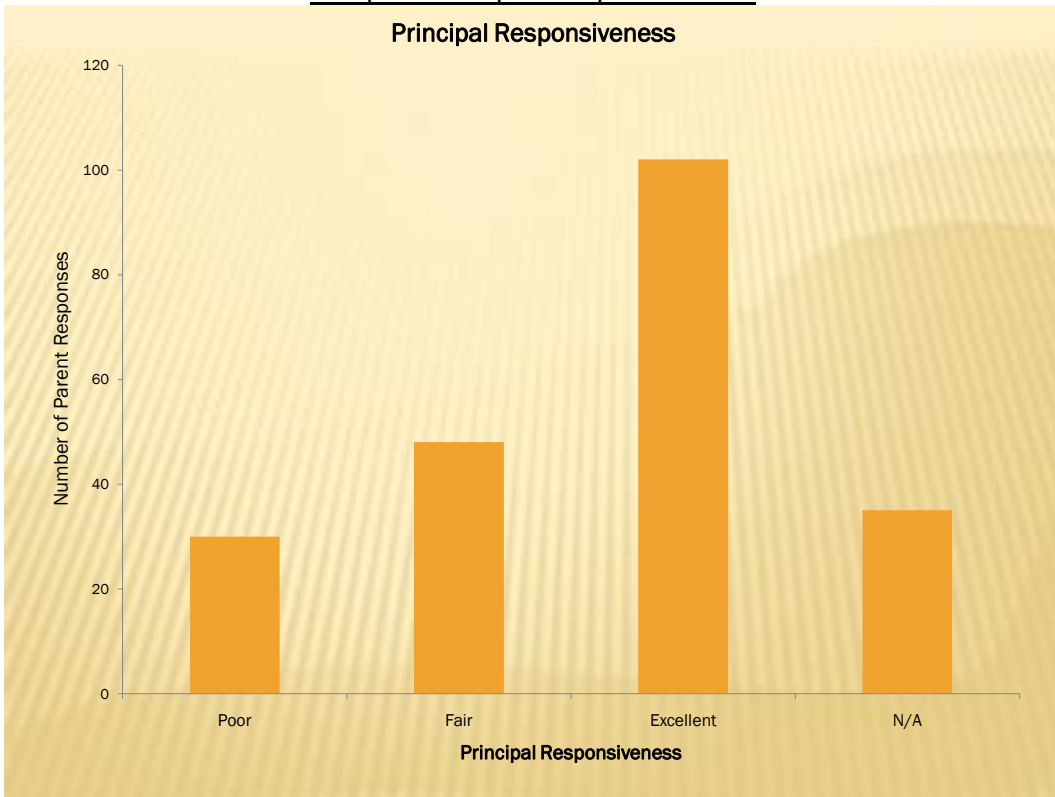
Responsiveness to Your Questions and Concerns
Graph-Teacher Responsiveness



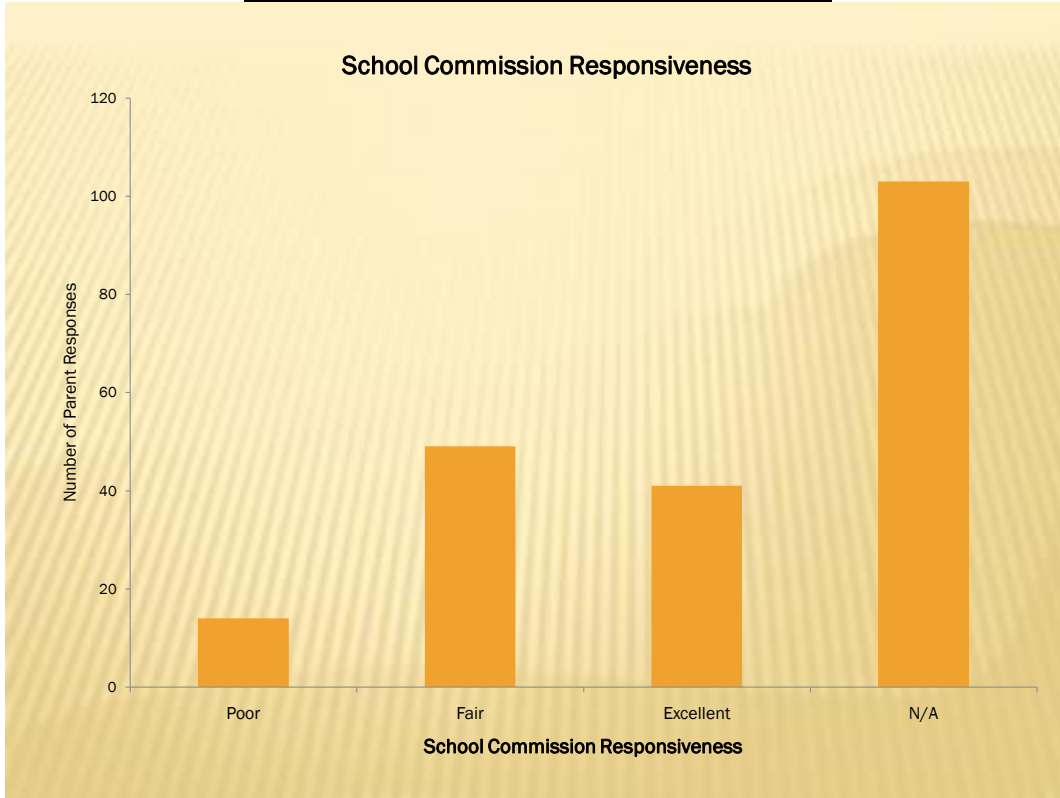
Graph-Assistant Principal Responsiveness



Graph-Principal Responsiveness



Graph-School Commission Responsiveness



Favorable Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Sixty people commented on this section. Of the 60 people who commented 25 comments were categorized as favorable or neutral. Nineteen of the 25 comments were favorable with the remaining six marked as neutral.

Fourteen, the largest grouping, were about the teachers. People stated that the teachers were interested in their children. They also stated that teachers responded in a timely manner and utilized email well. One parent appreciated the good responsiveness in the lower grades.

Seven people commented about the Assistant Principal. Some stated they had not had contact with Mrs. Tillery because it was not needed or she was new. One person commented that she has potential to be a positive for St. Luke.

Four comments were made about the Principal and people felt he was approachable, responded to emails in a timely manner and was interested in what the parents had to say.

Four people also commented about School Commission. People either had not had a need to communicate with School Commission or they thought School Commission was interested in parental issues and concerns.

Improvement Needed Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Sixty people total commented on this question out of the 217 surveys completed. Of the 60 there were 40 comments that expressed areas where improvement is needed. Twenty of those 40 comments were about the Principal. Overall people did not find Mr. Weber responsive to issues they have had. Some stated that he waits you out or is not really interested in a meaningful dialogue unless he agrees with you.

There were three people that expressed serious concern about the bullying in fourth grade, the families that have left and the lack of response to this issue. This topic has received much attention, specifically in that grade and then for the school as a whole.

Fifteen of the comments were about the teachers. If a specific grade or teacher was mentioned, that information has been shared and discussed with Mr. Weber and Fr. Noah. The comments shared appear serious as they are raised throughout the survey. There was also some concern with teachers not responding to emails.

Four people commented on the Assistant Principal. There were a couple negative comments, but mainly people felt she was new and they had had limited interaction with her.

Four people also commented about School Commission. The majority of the responses reflected a desire for School Commission to have real decision-making power.

Recommendations

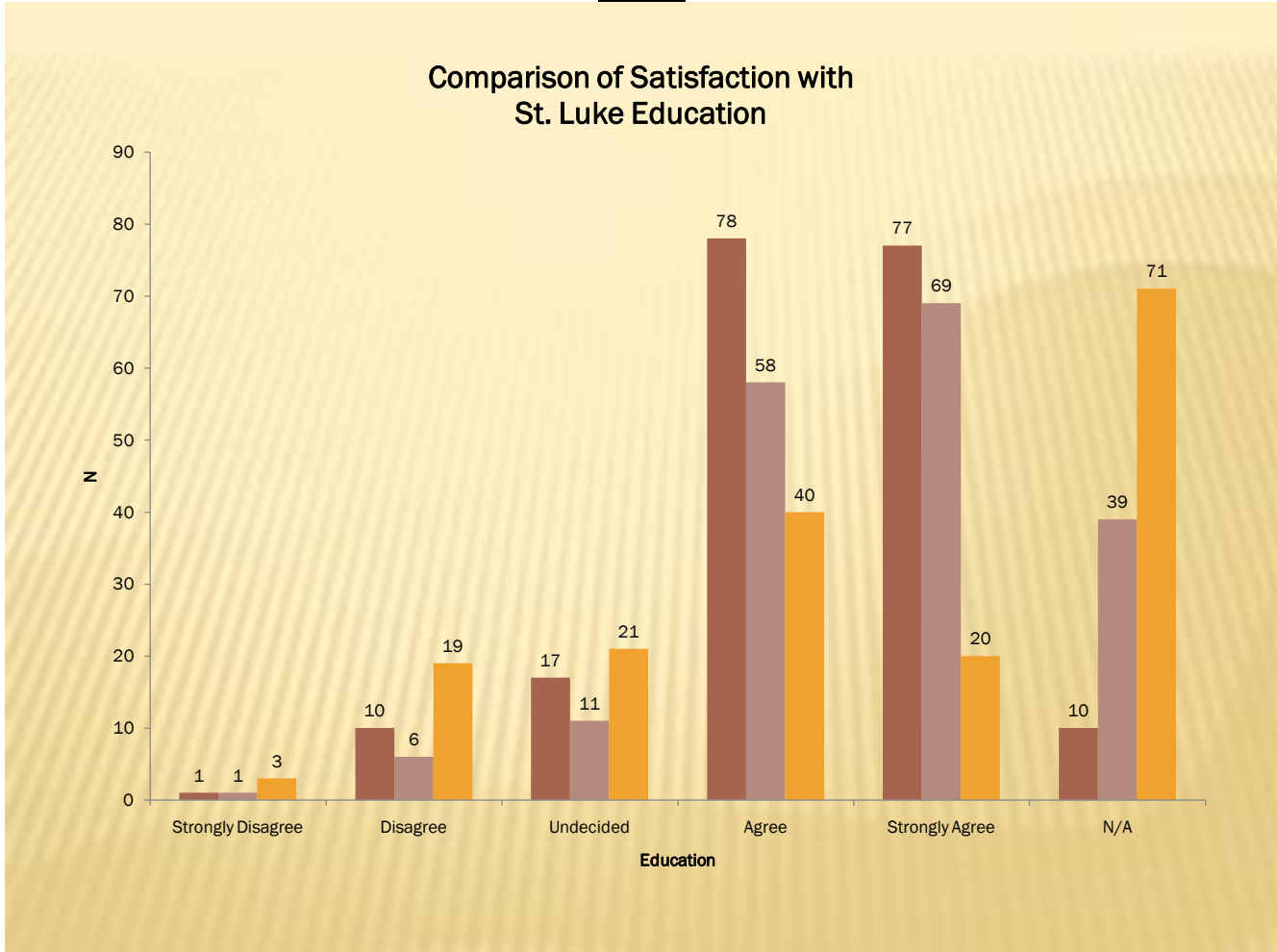
Regarding the Principal, it is suggested that outreach be done to parents as many do not feel that Mr. Weber is responsive to their needs. Some of the comments in this section were very strongly worded reflecting significant dissatisfaction from those who chose to comment. It is also suggested that a formal process be developed for parents who bring issues to the Principal. A meeting or phone call with a written review completed and kept on file and then a certain amount of time a follow-up must be conducted (ie. "contact" form). *These concerns were addressed by Mr. Weber at the June School Commission meeting. Actions are in place per his goals for the year and the implementation of the Parent Contact Sheet to improve in this area.

The issue of bullying in 4th grade needs to be attended to quickly. *The incoming 5th grade will participate in a variety of activities to ensure improvement in this area for the new school year. Parents have been informed. The school as a whole will engage in activities to promote positive behavior and to discourage bullying. All parents, students and coaches who participate in CYO Athletics at St. Luke will participate in a mandatory program from the University of Notre Dame to encourage positive, Christian behavior in sports.

Also, it is recommended that a formal exit interview process needs to be developed for families who choose to leave St. Luke. Parents should be provided a questionnaire that will be reviewed by the Principal and Pastor and possibly the Executive Committee of School Commission. Confidentiality will be guaranteed to parents.

For the teachers, setting up a school wide policy on responding to emails should be established and shared with the parents. The Assistant Principal is new to her position. A better review next year will provide more information. School Commission's role can be discussed with Fr. Noah.

Satisfaction with St. Luke Education
Graph



Favorable Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

98 people responded to this question of the 217 that completed the survey. Of the 98 comments there were 23 comments that contained favorable statements about the education in general at St. Luke. Most comments were about teachers and specific grade levels. Fourth and fifth grade and Middle School English and Language Arts received the most comments. Parents did express very positive comments about the teachers in general and about specific teachers too. Those are being shared with the Principal.

Recommendations

It is recommended that those teachers that received positive comments be made aware (privately) of the parents praise. It is also recommended that the grades and teachers who received positive comments be utilized for their positive influence on students. They could serve as mentor teachers for new teachers or ones requiring guidance. Having teachers observe each other teaching and share thoughts and ideas is a good tool for all of them and thus ultimately benefits the children.

Improvement Needed Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

98 people of the 217 people who completed the survey commented on this section. 88 of those 98 comments included statements that expressed areas where improvement is needed regarding families satisfaction with their child's education at St. Luke.

The main area where parents focused their comments centered around Middle School as a whole and specifically the Math program. There were 34 comments regarding Middle School and Math. Parents requested adding ability grouping in 7th and 8th grade to best meet the needs of all of the students.. Other areas of concern in the Middle School were also mentioned and have been shared with the Principal.

The next largest group where parents commented on improvement being needed was about specific teachers and/or grade levels. These comments have been shared with Mr. Weber and Fr. Noah and follow up will occur.

Other areas that received comments were an interest in expanding the foreign language program to younger grades, an interest in seeing more creative teaching styles, less worksheets and less homework, and an improved enrichment/accelerated program.

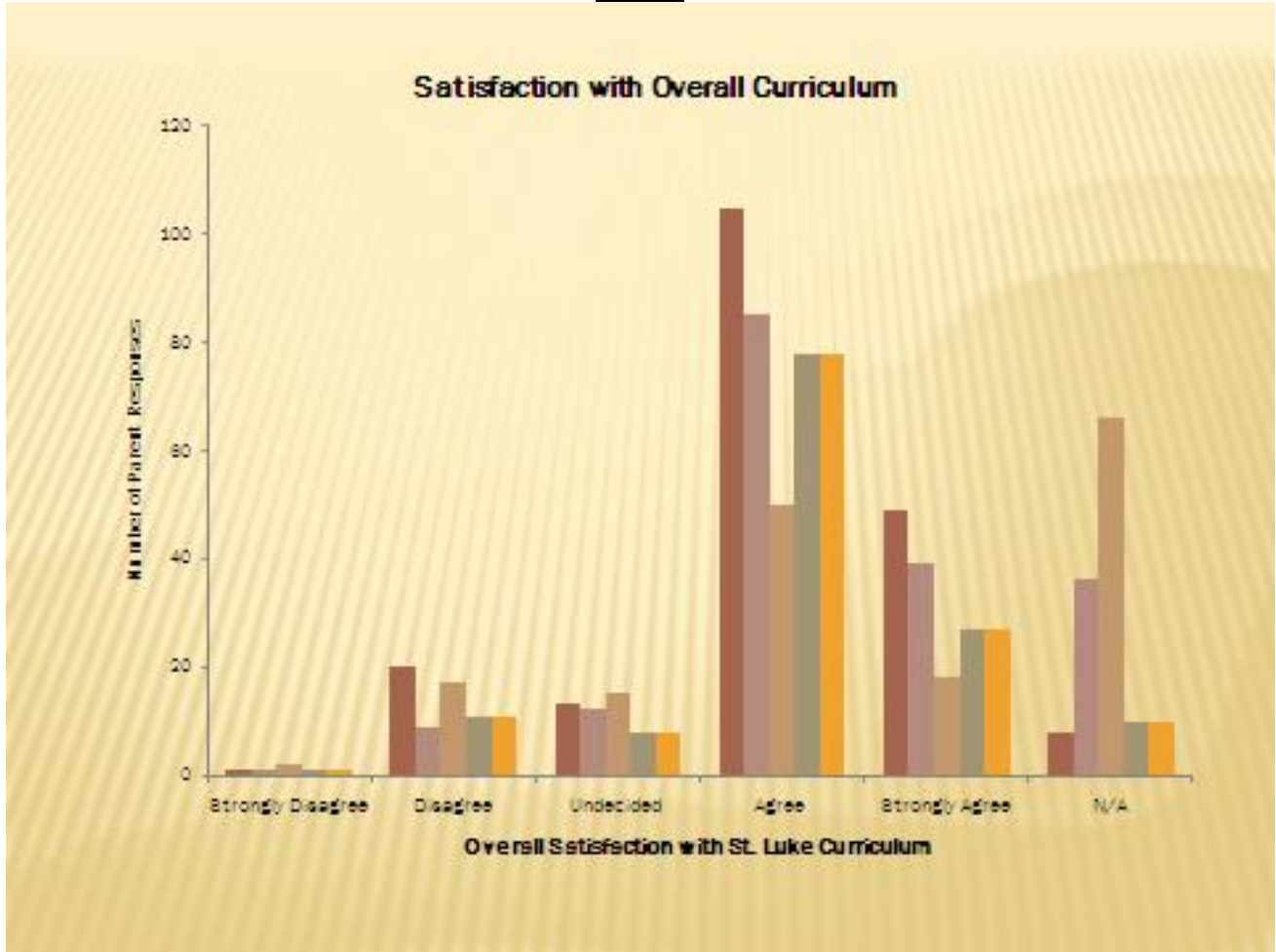
Recommendations

Regarding the Middle School Math program, there will be changes for the upcoming school year and these have been communicated to the parents of 7th and 8th graders. Math will be ability grouped for Middle School students. All students will complete the same curriculum, but at an appropriate pace for each level. The addition of a before school study lab will be offered once a week for 7th and 8th graders. Also the 8th graders and possibly the 7th graders will participate in an online math program to supplement the curriculum. This program is title My Math Lab. Parents and students will receive

instruction on this program and be able to work on it at school or from home. Due to this being a textbook adoption year for Math, a review committee of administrators, teachers, commission members and parents, will be formed to review the Math curriculum for the whole school and the proposed textbooks.

Regarding specific grade levels and teachers, it is recommended that concerns be shared privately by Mr. Weber to the teachers and action plans be developed to improve the situation(s). Providing parents with some sort of evaluation tool at the end of each school year is recommended to identify areas of concern and build on strengths.

Satisfaction with Overall Curriculum
Graph



Favorable Comments Summary and Recommendations

80 of the 217 who completed the survey provided responses to this question. Of the 80, there were 10 people that had comments with favorable statements. The majority of the statements were non-specific or general and reflected that parents were satisfied with the curriculum used at St. Luke.

It is suggested that providing better communication about the curriculum used at St. Luke would assist in increasing the positive responses to this question in the future.

Improvement Needed Comments Summary and Recommendations

Summary

There were 80 comments submitted of the 217 people who completed the survey. 72 of those comments contained information that reflected areas of improvement for St. Luke School curriculum.

24 of the comments expressed a desire to see an improvement in the Math program. Those comments trended towards the Middle School again and ability grouping, although there were a number of respondents who were concerned with the curriculum in Math overall.

11 parents stated that they would like to see the expansion of Spanish being taught in all the grades. A couple parents suggested the addition of Latin or other world languages.

Parents also said they would like to see an improvement in the Enrichment/Accelerated curriculum for students who need to move at a quicker pace. There was also an interest in seeing less homework, less worksheets and more creative, updated teaching styles and curriculum material.

Recommendation

It is again recommended that a review of our Math program occur as stated in previous questions. This will be achieved with the previously mentioned Math Curriculum Committee being formed. Providing the parents with current information about our school curriculum would be beneficial and an ongoing process to ensure that our curriculum is challenging, innovative, while maintaining the core components of an exceptional curriculum. Is there a determined person (Mr. Weber or Mrs. Tillery) who is responsible for the overseeing of the St. Luke curriculum similar to a Director of Curriculum that would be in place in a school district or larger school? *As of publication, Mrs. Katie Miller will be serving in this capacity for the first half of the school year.

What Do We Do Really Well?
Comments
Summary and Recommendations

Summary

217 people responded to this question. There were a couple that left it blank. The response to this section was overwhelming as to what St. Luke does really well:

Most parents felt St. Luke provides an excellent Catholic education, with a safe learning environment and they are pleased with the community at St. Luke.

“Teach the kids what is acceptable and not acceptable behavior, and instill the importance of faith in their lives.”

“Provide an environment that is comfortable and affirming for students and allows them to develop positive self esteem and a love of their religion.”

“Fostering an environment in which the children feel safe physically and emotionally. When this occurs children grow!”

“I feel like my kids get what is most important in life and have an education centered on Christ.”

“Fostering spirituality and the Catholic faith in the students.”

“The school & church community have a strong family feeling - welcoming and caring.”

Parents also praised our teachers and administration. Many liked the structure and discipline of the school and the way carpool line runs. There were parents who also commented on the good communication and strong curriculum.

Recommendations

Continue to build on and celebrate these strengths. It is also very important to utilize this information as we tell our story for internal and external marketing purposes.

What Could We Do Better? Summary and Recommendations

Comments in this section reflect statements from parents in the previous sections, which supports the importance of looking for trends and/or patterns in this survey evaluation.

Most responses focused on Middle School and the Math program, the Principal and issues related to responsiveness and communication. Teachers were commented on, but the comments covered a variety of issues and as previously stated have been presented to Mr. Weber.

Due to the pattern of responses found in this survey, through the various types of questions asked, it is important for us to build on the strengths that we have found and move forward to make improvements in the areas where parents stress concern. Again, this survey will serve as a baseline to measure progress and establish future goals.

If You Could Change One Thing Immediately
Comments
Summary and Recommendations

Summary

All the 217 people that completed the survey, but one, responded to this question. Of the 216 people that responded, 32, the most of any category, responded that nothing needed to be changed, they did not know or they were unsure. The next largest grouping of people was 19 that stated concerns about teachers. Some of these comments were general statements about needing improvement or requesting a more positive attitude and smiling faces. Eleven of the comments were about specific teachers and all of those referenced similar teachers, which have been shared with Mr. Weber and Fr. Noah.

Eighteen respondents commented on the Middle School program. The majority of those comments centered around the math program and concerns about the curriculum and absence of ability grouping. The changes mentioned in previous comments will address these issues. Seventeen people made comments about the Principal. Concerns were related to issues with communication, lack of listening and responding to concerns or issues, especially ones that have been brought to the attention of the Principal repeatedly. These areas of concerns were addressed by Mr. Weber at the June School Commission meeting and will be part of the his upcoming school year goals.

Twelve people were interested in increasing foreign language instruction into the younger grades. A number of people also hoped that the environment at St. Luke would be more positive and welcoming. There were a couple comments hoping to see more smiling faces.

There also was concern about the bullying in 4th grade and the families that have left as a result. Multiple action plans are in place to address this problem and all will be implemented for the new school year. These action plans have been explained earlier in the survey, at the June School Commission meeting, and in the Rampage. Copies of commission minutes and past Rampages are available on the school website under “publications.”

Other comments that received less response were requests for better enrichment or advanced program instruction, a more inviting environment during mass, a change to the current grading scale and improved lunches in the cafeteria.

Recommendations

It is recommended that issues related to specific teachers and/or grade levels be addressed immediately by Mr. Weber.

Some sort of teacher evaluation by parents, possibly similar to surveymonkey.com, should be completed at the close of each year. It is also recommended that a formal process be established if parents bring concerns about a teacher to the Principal. The Parent Contact Sheet, previously mentioned, will meet this need.

Regarding middle school Math, adding ability grouping is recommended for 7th and 8th grade. This could be three different sections or possibly just one accelerated class. It is also suggested that the school

next year review the possibility of incorporating ability grouping in 5th through 8th grade. Also, the addition of the My Math Lab program for 8th graders should be started and monitored as to its effectiveness. The Core 40 should be administered for 8th graders again. Also, the addition of before or after school Math lab/study time should be made available to 7th and 8th graders. *Note recommendations are being implemented.*

Overall, it is suggested that a review of the Math programs be conducted so that the school as a whole has a complete vision for where it wishes to go with Math similar to what has been accomplished with the 6+1 writing traits. Next year is the Math Textbook adoption year so it is recommended that teachers pilot various programs and a team of teachers, parents, administrators and school commission members serve to review the different programs. *Note the above recommendation is also being implemented.*

How Could We Serve You Better
Comments
Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Of the 217 people that completed the survey, most responded to this last question, although 32 stated “no comment” or “NA.” About the same number had positive, non-specific responses.

From that point, the next largest portion of comments focused on communication. Primarily, an encouragement of strong, positive, consistent communication in all areas. Some parents commented that the use of the survey was a good step in communication for St. Luke.

About 20 parents stated that they did not know enough about School Commission, were unsure what the role of SC was, had not heard from the commission, and/or would like there to be improved communication.

Other comments were scattered and covered many of the topics previously mentioned in earlier survey questions.

Recommendations

Overall, it appears that parents are calling out for as much communication as possible. Through the continued avenues already used (QuickNotes, Teacherease, and the Rampage) and improved communication from teachers regarding weekly or monthly updates, more responsiveness from the principal, and a very needed improvement from School Commission, we should all be able to respond well to this request.