



Spring 2024 Strategic Planning Survey – Community and Family Themes

Data as of 6.14.2024

There were 2,040 responses recorded as of June 14, 2024. The roles represented are broken down in the table below:

Role	Share of Responses
Parent/guardian of current MPS student	1,164 (57.1%)
Community member	446 (21.9%)
Former MPS staff	134 (6.5%)
Former MPS parent/guardian (graduated)	88 (4.3%)
Former MPS student (out of high school)	84 (4.1%)
Non-MPS parent/guardian of children who are or will be school-aged	83 (4.1%)
Non-MPS school-aged student	35 (1.7%)

Six (0.3%) did not select a role from the list.

Which specialty program(s) do you value most in a school from the list below? Other (please specify) – 100 responses

The most common responses provided were the following:

- Music
- Language instruction, including expanding the bilingual program to more schools and more diverse foreign language offerings
- Advanced and/or accelerated learning programs such as gifted and talented, dual enrollment, and AP courses
- Business and entrepreneurship
- Expanded career and technical preparation courses (e.g., home economics, woodshop, agriculture, metal work/welding)
- Expanded and enhanced special education services
- Environmental education



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Why did you and your child(ren) choose the MPS school they are attending? Other (please specify) – 46 responses

Approximately 21.7% of respondents listed that they did not have another choice or did not get into their first- or second-choice school as their reason. Of the respondents, 28.3% listed a specific program offered at their current school as the reason for choosing to attend/send their child(ren) there. Of the respondents, 23.9% cited the reputation of the school and staff or the impression they had of the staff and school culture from a school visit as influential in their decision to send their child(ren) to the school. The rest of the respondents listed varying reasons, including the neighborhood and school feeling safe and the school being near their home.

How do you think MPS schools can be improved? Other (please specify) – 531 responses

Responses varied, but the vast majority centered around one of the areas listed below:

- Facilities need to be better maintained – including being thoroughly cleaned daily – and work on buildings needs to be performed by highly qualified staff or reputable contractors.
- Improvements must be made in classroom management and raising the expectations for student conduct to reduce disruptions to the learning environment.
- Improved academic performance, increased rigor in coursework, and lower truancy rates are a must.
- Focus on hiring and retaining highly qualified school-based staff, including teachers, paraprofessionals, safeties, principals, etc.
- Transportation services should be expanded and include more students in their transportation zones.
- Air conditioning should be installed in as many schools as possible.
- Class sizes need to be reduced, and more individualized support should be available for students.
- Improvements must be made to the special education services provided, such as more training for special education and regular education staff and recruiting more special education staff to provide classroom support.
- There should be enhanced safety measures in and around school buildings.
- Invest in enhancements to sport and recreational spaces, including gyms, fields, tracks, pools.
- Increase teachers' pay.

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- “Rightsize” the district by consolidating/merging underenrolled schools and assigning staff according to schools’ need and enrollment.
- Focus on improving the quality of current specialty programs offered at schools – as opposed to expanding offerings – by investing in them and ensuring that high-quality staff is running the programs.
- Integrate social-emotional learning into classroom instruction and increase mental health supports available at each school.
- Offer more opportunities for community and parent engagement and increase the level of transparency with families and the community, especially about the budget.
- A variety of different course and program suggestions were made, including adding more career and technical education offerings (e.g., home economics, woodshop) and expanding music and art courses at every school.

Which specialty programs would you like to see expanded at MPS? Other (please specify) – 116 responses

Several respondents emphasized the need to focus on the basics and increase the number of students at or above grade level rather than on expanding specialty programs. However, those who provided suggestions recommended focusing primarily on the following areas:

- Expanding music and arts programming across the district
- Expanding the current career and technical education pathways offered (e.g., woodworking, auto mechanics)
- Offering more business and finance courses and/or career pathways
- Offering more college preparation and academic acceleration, such as AP courses and gifted and talented programs
- Integrating more life skills across all schools (e.g., financial literacy, home economics, social-emotional skills)

Which methods of communication do you prefer most to receive information from Milwaukee Public Schools? Other methods – 72 responses

Respondents often listed methods that were options to select for this question (e.g., phone call, word of mouth, newsletter). Those who listed a different source primarily listed the following methods: a school messenger app, such as Class Dojo or Remind; traditional media, including local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations; and mail.



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How can we improve your opinions about the district? Other (please specify) – 510 responses

Below represents the most-cited ways that MPS can improve options about the district regardless of whether the respondent had a negative view of MPS:

- More transparency and accountability for district spending and decision making is critical. Many specifically mentioned that they wanted to see a plan that directly connects all spending to how it will improve student outcomes as well as a diversion of funding into the classroom and away from central office positions.
- Community and family members want to see increased engagement and communication with them, including addressing concerns and answering questions in a timely manner.
- Invest in retaining qualified teachers and providing the resources, training, and support for struggling teachers. This includes paying teachers more and providing the necessary coaching and mentoring so that all educators improve their practice.
- Hold higher expectations for student behavior and ensure strict, consistent enforcement of school rules/policies to reduce things such as classroom disruptions, bullying, and violent behaviors.
- Reduce the class sizes.
- Improved academic outcomes for all students, particularly in the core academic areas and in the graduation rate for the district, is crucial for improving opinions and perceptions of the district.
- Community and family members would like to see a detailed plan for rightsizing the district by consolidating/merging schools with low enrollment and distributing staff and resources more equitably.
- Provide more mental health and social-emotional support to students (e.g., trauma specialists, counselors, social workers) to ensure that all students' needs are met.

How do you usually receive or hear information about MPS or a specific school? Other (please specify) – 109 responses

Most respondents listed a form of communication listed in the options provided (e.g., social media, word of mouth). For those who listed a method of communication different from the provided options, the most common responses included parent coordinator communications (e.g., email, newsletters, SchoolMessenger messages), school newsletters, school communications (e.g., email, phone calls), and phone calls or text messages from the school or district.

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