



## Spring 2024 Strategic Planning Survey – Staff Themes

*Data as of 6.14.2024*

There were 1,504 recorded responses as of June 14, 2024. The breakdown of position type represented in the data is listed in the table below:

Position Type	Share of Responses
Administrative staff	209 (13.9%)
Support staff	376 (25.0%)
Teaching staff	919 (61.1%)

*Pick the top 3 ways you prefer to receive information that matters to you about Milwaukee Public Schools. Other (please specify) – 36 responses*

The methods outlined below were additional ways that staff preferred to receive information about MPS:

- Word of mouth
- Directly from their principal (announcement, bulletins, newsletters, email, etc.)
- Staff meetings or professional development days
- MTEA/building representative
- Local media outlets

*How do you usually receive or hear information about MPS or a specific school? Other (please specify) – 85 responses*

The majority of responses fell under the following categories: direct supervisor or administrator such as a principal, manager, or director; email, including e-newsletters; Thursday Updates; staff meetings; MTEA; colleagues; and robocalls.

*I frequently use the following platforms to share information with, or receive updates from, internal audiences, i.e., MPS staff. Other – 191 responses*

The majority of respondents said email or Microsoft 365 (approximately 73.0%). The rest of the respondents indicated that they use various Google platforms (e.g., Google Forms, Google Drive), staff meetings, and text messages as well as school-specific newsletters or sites.



*I frequently utilize the following platforms to share or receive updates with external audiences such as students, parents, and families. Other – 275 responses*

Approximately half of respondents indicated that they use email to share or receive updates with external audiences, followed by phone calls, text messages, Google Voice, Seesaw, and face-to-face conversations.

*Which specialty programs do you value most in a school's offerings? Other (please specify) – 78 responses*

Responses varied, but most answers fell under one of the following areas:

- Regular specials at all schools, such as music, band, arts, and gym
- Strong English as a Second Language (ESL) programs
- Comprehensive special education services
- Social-emotional learning and mental health programs
- Gifted and talented and advanced academic/college preparation programs
- Extracurricular activities and athletics after school

*What factors most influence your decision in choosing the school where you work? Other (please specify) – 139 responses*

The majority of respondents said that they were assigned to their school rather than given a choice of where to work. Other responses included the special education program and/or staff at the school, safe environment and neighborhood, positive school culture and reputation, the class sizes, a desire to serve the specific student population at the school, their department is located at the specific site, and their own children attend the school.

*How do you think MPS schools can be improved? Other (please specify) – 325 responses*

Respondents offered the following additional ways that MPS schools could be improved:

- Reduce classroom sizes.
- Maintain adequate staffing levels for all schools and classrooms.
- Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.
- Enhance the safety and security measures at all schools.
- Hold higher expectations for student behaviors and academic achievement.



- Close/merge underenrolled schools and redistribute staff and resources equitably.
- Ensure that students are placed in appropriate settings for their specific needs and that student assignments throughout the school year are more balanced (e.g., one school is not inundated with a disproportionate number of special education students).
- Assist school-based staff with classroom and behavior management to reduce incidents and disruptions to the learning environment.
- Encourage parent engagement and accountability; educating a child is a team effort.
- Increase the accountability for staff at all levels who fall short of performance expectations.
- Improve facilities maintenance and upgrades, particularly the cleanliness of buildings and installing air conditioning.
- Provide mental health and trauma support for students and staff.

*Which specialty programs would you like to see expanded at MPS? Other (please specify) – 83 responses*

Responses were varied, but some recurring suggestions were the following: expanding trade and career/technical education pathways to include courses in woodworking and mechanics; offering life skills courses such as personal finance and home economics; language programs such as ESL and bilingual education; sports and extracurricular activities; early childhood programs; art-based programming such as music, band, and theater; and accelerated academic programs such as gifted and talented and college prep (e.g., AP courses, dual enrollment).

*What facility upgrades at your building have you seen in the last year that made it a better place to work? Other (please specify) – 227 responses*

The most common updates cited were water bottle stations; new windows, window screens, and/or shades; and technology upgrades such as flat panels, Internet wiring, and updated alarm systems. Other recurring responses included signs or screens for school announcements and/or advertisements, painting, renovations to the gym, and upgrades to outdoor spaces. Approximately 15% did not notice any upgrades to their work site this year.



*Is there anything else you would like to share that we have not covered already? –  
593 responses*

Most of the responses reiterated prior comments provided. A list of the recurring themes for staff members' final feedback is listed below; the list is sorted from most cited to least:

- The cleanliness and basic maintenance of the buildings (e.g., repairs and replacements in a timely manner) are a priority over new upgrades, such as new flat panels, except for air conditioning. The cleanliness of the building (inside and outside) and the proper functioning of all aspects of the building are crucial for students and staff to be able to teach and learn, in addition to providing more “curbside appeal” to the community.
- Hold higher expectations for student behavior and consistently enforce consequences for infractions to increase the safety in the building and reduce classroom disruptions.
  - Full-time counselors, social workers, and school psychologists should be assigned to each school to assist with social-emotional skills and managing students with challenging behaviors.
- Consolidate school buildings to assist with class sizes and staffing issues. Additionally, this would allow schools to provide more courses, extracurricular activities, sports, and support for students due to increased staffing levels at each school, making the school experience more equitable for students across the district.
- Provide differentiated professional development that offers real-world classroom examples and the opportunity to practice the strategies learned. Districtwide professional development often feels irrelevant, disjointed, and/or superficial in the content covered; allowing more school-based professional development and/or teacher choice would permit schools and teachers to participate in learning opportunities that are more relevant to their own and their school's particular needs.
  - Provide more advanced notice of professional development opportunities, mandated or optional, with more flexible options for participating in the learning to accommodate different school schedules and priorities.
- Hold staff at all levels accountable for their job performance and let go of staff who are not meeting expectations; staff members experience burnout when they try to compensate for others' failure to adequately perform their responsibilities.
  - School safeties should receive the training necessary to responsibly and effectively handle student behaviors and must be held accountable for enforcing school rules on a consistent basis.



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Office of Communications and School Performance  
Department of Research, Assessment, and Data

5225 W. Vliet St., Room 224  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

(414) 475-8258 • [mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us](http://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us)

- Recruit and retain qualified, dedicated school-based staff (e.g., teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, safeties).
- Increase the classroom support for regular education teachers teaching students with disabilities, such as providing more special education staff who work within the regular education classroom. Consider placing students with very high needs in non-regular education classrooms to get the individualized attention and support they need.
- Increase transparency on where the district is spending money and how all spending items support classroom instruction and learning.
- Maintain rigorous academic expectations and requirements for student promotion.
- Ensure that all schools consistently offer specials (i.e., music, physical education, art, library time) so that access to these courses is equitable across the district and teachers are guaranteed prep time and/or time to collaborate with peers during the school day.
- Provide teaching and support staff with clearer, consistent, and transparent communication from administration, including from central office. Address concerns and questions in a timely manner.
- Divert more funding and staff currently allocated for central office back into the classroom and consider restructuring many departments in central office to eliminate redundancies.
- Develop new, creative ways to increase parent engagement and collaboration for their students' behavior and academic performance.
- Enhance the security of school grounds, especially the parking lots, with more safety personnel stationed at all entrances and cameras throughout the property.

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