Public School Principal Questionnaire

Spring 2008

This is a time of change in education within the District of Columbia. To better understand the differences between public and private schools, this survey asks about policies, practices, and working conditions in your school. It is part of a multi-year study that will examine how public and private school conditions change over time and throughout the District.

Part 1: Admissions and Available Programs

The questions in this section ask about possible requirements for admission and the programs your school may offer.

Q1.   Does your school have any criteria that are routinely used in admitting students? (✓ Check one)

    ❑ Yes
    ❑ No   (go to question 3)

Q2.   Which of the following criteria does your school routinely use in admitting students?
(✓ Check all that apply)

    a.   Interview...   ❑[1]

    b.   Academic performance as measured by a test your school or your school system administers....................   ❑[2]

    c.   Other indicators of academic performance...................   ❑[3]

    d.   Disciplinary record..   ❑[4]

    e.   Extent of special needs...   ❑[5]

    f.   Essay...   ❑[6]

    g.   Other (please specify _____)......   ❑[7]

Q3. Which of the following programs or facilities are available to students in your school?
(✓ Check yes or no on each row)

		Yes	No
a.	Programs with special instructional approaches (e.g., Success for All, Reading Recovery)	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
b.	A foreign language program....................................	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
c.	Advanced placement (AP) courses (high school only)	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
d.	International Baccalaureate (IB) program (high school only)	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
e.	Special instructional programs for non-English speakers..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
f.	Special instructional programs for students with learning problems..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
g.	Special instructional programs for advanced learners or talented/gifted program.......................	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
h.	Music program..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
i.	Arts program...	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
j.	After-school program..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
k.	Before-school program..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
l.	Guidance counselors...	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
m.	Nurse..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
n.	Individual tutors..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
o.	Lunches prepared at the school.............................	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
p.	Computer lab..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
q.	Library/Media Center..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
r.	Gym...	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
s.	Cafeteria...	$\square^1$	$\square^2$
t.	Other, please specify..	$\square^1$	$\square^2$

Q4. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following at your school.
(✓ Check one box on each row)

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor dis-satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very dis-satisfied	Does not apply to this school
School Facilities:						
a. Condition of the building(s)............	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
b. The amount of space available for activities...................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
c. Quality of science labs available......................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
d. Quality of computer facilities available......................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
e. Quality and availability of textbooks and other instructional materials...................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
f. Quality of your library...................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
g. Access to computers and other educational technology (e.g., calculators).........................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
h. Transportation for students to and from school...........................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
i. Accessibility for students with disabilities......................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
Students and Parents:						
j. Student attendance and punctuality..................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
k. Student preparation in subject areas..	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
l. Student motivation to learn........	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
m. Student behavior and/or discipline...................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
n. Parental support for student learning.....................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
Teachers and Instruction:						
o. Teacher expectations for how well students will learn...............	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
p. Provisions for low-performing students.....................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
q. The amount of instructional time in the school day................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
r. Instructional skills and abilities of teachers.................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
s. Subject area expertise of teachers.....................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
t. Teacher attendance and punctuality.................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
u. Teaching staff turnover..............	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6
v. Teacher compensation...............	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5	❑6

Part 2: Classroom Instruction
This section focuses on the ways classroom instruction is organized at your school.

Q5.   Schools sometimes organize instruction differently for students with different abilities and interests. Which of the following does your school do for students? (✓ Check yes or no on each row)

		Yes	No
a.	Within each grade level, all classes in a subject study similar content, but at different levels of difficulty (i.e., typically called acceleration)...	❏1	❏2
b.	Within each grade level, different classes in the same subject study different content according to student ability (i.e., typically called enrichment).............................	❏1	❏2
c.	Within each grade level, classes are a mix of student abilities and teachers create groups within the classroom based on student abilities (i.e., typically called differentiated instruction)..	❏1	❏2
d.	Classes to provide support in basic skills are offered for low achieving students..	❏1	❏2

Q6.   For students who have difficulty learning at the same pace as their classmates, what proportion of these students are provided the following types of support? (✓ Check one box on each row)

		All	Some	Few	None	Not Offered
a.	Place students in special classes..	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
b.	Rely on teachers to provide extra help during regular class times..	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
c.	Treat them as all other students are treated...................................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
d.	Counsel students to enroll in other schools...............................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
e.	Use peers as instructors.............	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
f.	Provide individualized attention from an adult other than the main classroom teacher..............	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
g.	Other (specify) _____....	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5

Part 3: Parental Involvement

This section asks about parental involvement in your school programs.

Q7.   Does your school routinely implement any of the following activities for parents?
(✓ Check one on each row)

	Yes	No
a. Parents informed about student's grades halfway through the grading period............................	❏1	❏2
b. Parents notified when student is sent to the office the first time for disruptive behavior......................	❏1	❏2
c. Parents receive weekly or daily notes about their child's progress......................................	❏1	❏2
d. Parents receive a newsletter about what's going on in their child's school or school system…	❏1	❏2

Q8.   What proportion of parents participate in the following activities in your school?
(✓ Check one on each row)

	All	Some	Few	None	Not Offered
a. Parents speak to classes about their jobs......................................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
b. Parents participate in instruction.	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
c. Parents attend parent/teacher conferences................................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
d. Parents accompany students on class trips....................................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
e. Parents help out with sports activities......................................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5
f. Parent open-houses or back-to-school nights...............................	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5

Part 4: Safety Measures

This section asks about whether your school utilizes certain kinds of safety measures.

Q9.   Does your school currently have the following? (✓ Check yes or no on each row)

	Yes	No
a. A requirement that visitors sign in or check in......	❑1	❑2
b. Metal detectors through which all students must pass each day...	❑1	❑2
c. Random metal detector checks on students........	❑1	❑2
d. A requirement that all or most of the students stay on school grounds during lunch..................	❑1	❑2
e. Drug sweeps...	❑1	❑2
f. Daily presence of police or security persons........	❑1	❑2
g. Video surveillance...	❑1	❑2

Q10.   During this school year (2007-08), how many students were:

Suspended: _____   (number)

Expelled: _____   (number)

Part 5: School Reform Proposals

What is your reaction to the following reform proposals?

Q11**.**   As you know, a number of policies have been proposed in the past decade to improve public schools. Using the scale below, please tell us where you stand on the following proposed education reforms. (✓ Check one box on each row)

	Strongly oppose	Moderately oppose	No opinion	Moderately support	Strongly support
a. Student testing as a way to measure student performance...........................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
b. Scholarships that allow parents to send their children to private schools.	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
c. Merit pay for outstanding teachers.....	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
d. Charter schools.................................	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5
e. More individual school control over budgets...	❑1	❑2	❑3	❑4	❑5

Part 6: DC Opportunity Scholarship Program

This section asks about your knowledge of and experience with the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, administered by Washington Scholarship Fund (WSF)

Q12. How did you hear about the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, the federally-funded scholarship program for students from low-income DC families administered by Washington Scholarship Fund (WSF)? (✓ Check all that apply)

    a. I read about the program in the newspaper but do not know the details... ☐1

    b. I talked to other principals about the program............ ☐2

    c. I have not heard of the program................................. ☐3

    d. Other (please specify _____)........... ☐4

Q13. How many students do you think left your school as a result of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program for the 2007-08 school year? (✓ Check one)

    a. None............................... ☐1

    b. 1-6.................................... ☐2

    c. 6-10................................. ☐3

    d. 11-20............................... ☐4

    e. 21-30............................... ☐5

    f. More than 30................... ☐6

    g. Don't know...................... ☐7

Q14. During the 2007-08 year, have you made any of the following changes specifically to encourage students interested in private schools (or the DC Opportunity Scholarship program) to remain enrolled in your school? (✓ Check all that apply)

    a. Added parent orientation or meeting to describe school offerings and performance................................ ☐1

    b. Encouraged greater parent involvement in school activities... ☐2

    c. Offered additional courses (e.g., introduced a course in computer technology or art)..................................... ☐3

    d. Increased school safety provisions.............................. ☐4

    e. Adjusted disciplinary rules.. ☐5

    f. Altered class sizes.. ☐6

    g. Added tutoring or other special services to help improve academic achievement.................................... ☐7

    h. Other (specify _____)...... ☐8

Thank you for completing this survey.

If you have any questions as you are completing the survey, please call Sabria Hardy at 301-610-5513 or email her at sabriahardy@westat.com.

Please return the survey to:

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