

ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL



REPORT ON THE 2010 PARENT SURVEY

St. Michaels
University School

REQUIREMENTS

Subject Area

Grade

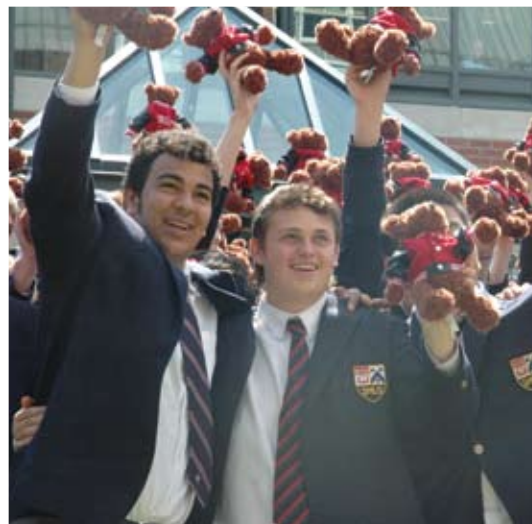
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ELECTIVES

Subject Area

Grade

Plus / Minus
Comment



ABOUT THE 2010 SMUS PARENT SURVEY

Why was the survey conducted?

St. Michaels University School surveys our parents every two to three years to gauge how well we are meeting the needs of our current families. Cumulatively, these surveys help the school establish goals and measure our progress as we continually work toward a higher standard of excellence in fulfilling our mission.

Who did the survey and how was it conducted?

The survey was conducted by Lookout Management Consultants Inc. (LMI), which has done similar parent surveys for 91 independent schools around the world. All SMUS parents were contacted multiple times by email in June 2010 and asked to respond to an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to measure satisfaction levels, both generally and for specific elements; to measure attitudes about the school; and compare results by parent characteristics so that we can learn more about how to meet the specific needs of different groups of parents.

Who responded to the survey?

479 parents responded to the survey, about 39% of the SMUS parent community. Respondents have been with the school an average of 4.1 years. The breakdown of respondents by school and by boarding or day closely parallels the overall population distribution of the school:

	Survey respondents by school	Student population by school
Junior School	17.5%	16.9%
Middle School	21.9%	22.4%
Senior School	60.8%	60.7%
Boarding	22.5%	25.9%

Student gender also closely mirrored the student population of 50% boys/50% girls with 50.3% of respondents having a male child and 49.7% having a female child at the school. Ninety-two percent of respondents provided their range of average household income, which showed us that the majority of respondents (48.4%) have a household income between \$100K-250K, while the rest of respondents were quite evenly distributed above and below that mark (26.5% with a household income greater than \$250K; 25.1% with a household income less than \$100K).



Subject Area

Survey Results: Satisfaction

General

88.7% of parents rated their general satisfaction with the School as either high or very high on the scale of 1 to 5 (very low to very high), for an average rating of 4.4. In other parent surveys conducted by LMI, the highest general satisfaction rating a school received was 4.5, while the average rating in all school surveys conducted by LMI is 4.2.

Rating	% of respondents
1	0.2%
2	1.5%
3	9.6%
4	37.0%
5	51.7%
4.4	Weighted average score
88.7%	% rating 4 or 5

92.3% of parents indicated that SMUS was their first choice of schools.

School Life

Of the 17 specific school-life elements on the survey, 84.1% of parents rated their satisfaction as high or very high, for an average rating of 4.2. The school's academic program achieved the highest level of parent satisfaction, with an average rating of 4.5, and all 17 categories received an average rating of 4.0 or higher.

	Average rating	% rating high or very high satisfaction
Academic program	4.5	92.4%
Physical safety of students	4.4	91.7%
Class size	4.4	89.5%
Breadth of courses offered	4.4	88.6%
Athletic facilities	4.4	88.9%
Outdoor education program (Gr. 6 to 12)	4.4	87.7%
Arts facilities	4.3	86.9%
Leadership opportunities for students	4.3	85.7%
Availability of extra help	4.3	84.1%
Volunteer experiences for parents (if applicable)	4.2	82.2%
Parent/teacher conferences	4.2	82.1%
Chapel	4.2	82.1%
Individual student learning support	4.1	79.1%
Competitive athletics (Gr. 6 to 12)	4.1	79.5%
University counselling (Gr. 9 to 12)	4.0	78.3%
Intramural/non-competitive athletics (Gr. 4 to 12)	4.0	74.8%
Security of personal property	4.0	75.8%
Average for this series	4.2	84.1%

ELECTIVES

Boarding

Asked to rate their experience with the boarding program in 12 categories, boarding parents (108 respondents) gave the highest rating to the “quality of guardianship of my child”, with a 4.4 weighted average and 89.8% signifying high or very high levels of satisfaction. Each category received an average rating of 4.0 or higher. The average rating for the whole boarding series was 4.2, with 81.3% of boarding parents indicating high or very high levels of satisfaction.



	Average rating	% rating high or very high satisfaction
Quality of guardianship of my child	4.4	89.8%
Ability to reach residential staff, when I feel the need	4.3	86.1%
Ability to reach my child, when I feel the need	4.3	84.3%
Residence rules and expectations	4.3	85.2%
Study hours	4.2	84.3%
My child's peer relationships in Boarding	4.2	80.4%
Overall residential experience for my child	4.2	80.6%
Quality of relationship with roommate	4.1	81.5%
Quality of health services	4.1	83.3%
Maintenance of residential buildings	4.1	74.8%
Dorm room	4.0	71.2%
Weekend activities and programs	4.0	74.5%

Communication

The lowest satisfaction scores from this survey were in the area of communication, although a majority of parents still rated high or very high levels of satisfaction in each of the specific communication areas.

When responses are crossed with grade, communication satisfaction levels are noticeably lower among Senior School parents. LMI indicates that this is a common result in the schools it surveys: as older students become more responsible for their own schedule and their own learning, parents become less involved day-to-day with the school and find it more difficult to stay apprised of their child's life at school. We want parents at all grade levels to feel informed and connected, and consider this area an excellent opportunity to improve our performance.



	Quantity		Quality		Accessibility, when sought	
	Average rating	% rating high or very high satisfaction	Average rating	% rating high or very high satisfaction	Average rating	% rating high or very high satisfaction
With Teachers	3.9	69.6%	4.1	79.7%	4.4	86.8%
With Homeroom Teachers/Advisors	3.8	66.5%	4.1	76.9%	4.3	85.5%
With School Directors	3.9	69.4%	4.1	75.0%	4.2	80.9%
With Head of School	3.7	61.2%	3.8	65.3%	3.9	70.4%

Survey Results: Attitudinal Measures of Agreement

Parents were asked to use a 5-point scale to indicate their level of agreement (strongly disagree to strongly agree) with 32 statements about the school, such as “I see SMUS as a transformational experience for my child” or “the school makes a compelling case for my philanthropic support”. Parents agreed or strongly agreed with 22 out of the 32 statements, with the highest level of agreement for “SMUS has an excellent reputation”, at 4.5. The lowest agreement was for the statement “Day and Boarding students interact well together”, at 3.5. The average for the entire series of statements was 4.1, where 23.4 parents agreed with a statement for every one parent who disagreed.

Growth of the Child

Parents felt that SMUS had made a contribution to their child's growth in 14 of 17 categories. Parents see the strongest impact in their children's critical thinking skills and ability to work cooperatively. The three categories with a weighted average below 4.0 were organizing time effectively (3.9), test-taking strategies (3.9) and coping with peer pressure (3.8). The weighted average for this series was 4.1.

Measures of Balance

Parents were asked to rate how well they feel the school achieves balance in its programs using a 5-point scale, where 1 is too little, 3 is about right and 5 is too much. Eight of the 14 categories received a 3.0, including focus on the arts, community service and sportsmanship; level of academic challenge and support; emphasis on leadership development; amount of homework; and efforts to promote moral growth. The highest average score was 3.2 for focus on athletics, with 20.9% of parents rating it as too much. The lowest average score was 2.7 for amount of communication from teachers about their child's experience, with 28.6% of parents rating it as too little.

Investments for the Future

If the school were to raise some additional funds in the future for investment in a major initiative, we asked parents to choose three possible initiatives that were most important to them. The scholarship and bursary program was selected most often – by 49.3% of parents. Facility improvements for Junior and Middle Schools were cited by a proportion of parents that almost exactly mirrors the proportion of Junior and Middle School parents in the total SMUS population.

Using the Survey Data to Make an Excellent School Better

In its analysis and recommendations, LMI called the SMUS Parent Survey a “good news report” that demonstrated high levels of satisfaction and strong support for how the school is executing on its mission and vision.

While keeping our focus on the things we do well to ensure that we remain strong, we will also look carefully at the areas with lower results – particularly communication – to close the gap between these and our strengths.

As a parent, you may be asked in the coming months to participate in a facilitated feedback session. These sessions will give us the detail we need to effectively close the performance gap and better meet your needs as well as the needs of your children.

We welcome your questions and comments about the 2010 Parent Survey:

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St. Michael's University School

Outstanding preparation for higher learning and for life.

