

Earlier this year, the Golden Sands School Board of Trustees commissioned a Community Survey to collect feedback from parents and caregivers about their experience with the school.

The research objectives of this survey were:

- To explore the current perceptions by parents and/or caregivers of Golden Sands School as an environment where children are inspired to learn, and where their learning needs are being met;
- To develop a greater understanding of the School’s connection with the local community; and,
- To identify preferred communication methods to enhance engagement with the community.

The anonymous questionnaire was similar to those conducted by Golden Sands School in the past; some questions re-worded for greater accuracy and monitoring, and other questions added to explore anecdotal evidence of a “bullying culture” within the school.

Of the 455 families enrolled, 504 invitations to complete the online survey were sent. An anomaly occurred and, on some occasions, both parents and/or caregivers were contacted. A statistically robust response rate of 198 surveys were returned, providing an acceptable level of accuracy.

The Board of Trustees refers to several information sources when developing the School’s strategic plan, currently under development, for release in 2020. The information collected from this survey will feed into its ongoing development.

Please see below the Golden Sands School Board of Trustees summary of the results/feedback from the 2019 community survey.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES SUMMARY GOLDEN SANDS COMMUNITY SURVEY 2019

The main themes emerging from the findings of this survey were:

1. General

Those who responded to the survey who had been with the school for one year or less rated the school higher on most measures than those who had been with the school for four or more years. Those who had been with the school for one year or less were more likely to agree that the school has a clear vision and their child/children’s learning needs are met.

2. Healthy and Safe Environments

Of the responses received, an emerging parent concern was GSS’s provision of healthy and safe environments for all students. Another emergency concern was around the management of unacceptable behaviours, with 48% of respondents feeling that their children had experienced some form of bullying (physical or verbal) at GSS.

From the surveys returned, there was a general dissatisfaction with the school’s response to bullying incidents; 40% of respondents were unsatisfied. Also identified from the results was the perception by parents and/or caregivers that GSS does not take bullying seriously; 56% of respondents believed there were no consequences set for bad behaviour, and 36% of respondents were unsatisfied with the action taken.

3. Learning

Most responses indicated that children were enthusiastic about learning (62%), with 58% of responses agreeing that the teachers knew their child/children and their interests. According to 51% of parents and/or caregivers responding, GSS teachers were highlighted as the best thing

about the school. A similar proportion (49%) felt that the school was meeting their child/children's learning needs.

Less than a third of parents/caregivers who responded (30%) felt that the school had high expectations for their child/children; of this group, almost one-third of parents (32%) felt that the school was only focused on average achievement, that those 'left behind' go unnoticed, and that students with greater capability are not being challenged to reach their full potential.

4. Acknowledging achievement

Just over a third of parents who responded (38%) said the school celebrates student talents and achievements, while just over a quarter (26%) disagreed; a similar proportion (27%) said celebrations only occur occasionally.

30% of the response felt that GSS children need tangible rewards, with nearly a quarter of this group mentioning the lack of reward for maths, reading, and other academic subjects.

15% of the community response felt disgruntled with the change in sport awards, and a similar proportion (14%) felt that the PROUD awards were only awarded to a select group.

5. Communication

Most parents and or/ caregivers responding indicated that the communication they receive from GSS is effective (69%). Text messages and emails were considered the most useful communication channel (82%), followed by newsletters (65%), and school reports (42%).

Just over one-fifth of those responding (21%) felt that the School report was not informative enough, was too generic, and hard to understand. In terms of preferred meeting times, 41% of respondents preferred to meet after work (5:30 pm - 6:30 pm), 30% preferred to meet after school (2:40 - 3:40 pm), and 23% preferred to meet in the early evenings (6:30 pm - 7:30 pm).

6. Board of Trustees (BOT)

In general, those who responded felt that the BOT is largely unknown, leading to 41% of parents being 'unsure' as to whether they have confidence in the governance of the board.

Of those who expressed confidence in BOT, 41% indicated they have no reason not to, while another 40% indicated that the BOT was 'Hard working and caring, asking the hard questions'.

7. Senior Leadership Team

44% of responses demonstrated confidence in the Principal/Deputy Principal's leadership of GSS. Nearly a third of this group felt they're doing a good job. This confidence was particularly evident amongst those who had been with the school for one year or less (57%).

49% of respondents highlighted a disconnect between leadership and the rest of the school as the greatest reason for a lack of confidence in the Leadership team, with concerns regarding staff turnover mentioned by 41%.

8. Future considerations

Of the parents and/or caregivers responding, 28% felt there was nothing in particular for the BOT to consider in the upcoming year. Similarly, 25% had the same view for the GSS Leadership team. The key considerations emerging for both the Leadership team, and BOT, were:

- Resolving anti-social/bullying behaviour;
- reviewing the reward system, and;
- addressing staff turnover.