



OVERVIEW OF PUSD SURVEYS

Methodology

The Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) conducted five surveys between February 15 and March 14, 2016. All surveys were conducted in both English and Spanish. These included:

- An online survey of 1,865 current PUSD parents with children in grades K-10.
- A survey of 265 former PUSD parents, conducted online and by telephone.
- An online survey of 82 parents who live in the PUSD area and who have children in one of the seven local preschools that participated in the survey.
- An online survey of 493 parents in the five local charter and private schools that agreed to participate in the survey.
- An online survey completed by 684 PUSD employees, parents, students, and community members. This survey was accessed from the District's website.

Key Conclusions

Overall, the District earned very high satisfaction ratings from current parents (and staff). These parents were searching for safe, welcoming, academically strong schools with great teachers, and most of them found what they were seeking in the PUSD. Current preschool parents are looking for the same things, and clearly the District has many success stories to share with these parents.

But we also found that former parents and parents at local private and charter schools have strong concerns about the District. Still, 32% of former parents say they might consider returning to the PUSD, and 32% of private/charter parents said they have considered enrolling their children in the PUSD.

Former parents express strong concerns about academics, from boredom and lack of rigor to their children's "slipping through the cracks," and not finding a teacher or academic program that was right for their children.

A second strong factor that led parents to find alternatives to the PUSD or to remove their children from PUSD schools was concern about the safety of their children and the behavior of other students at PUSD schools. This is especially the case among minority and lower-income parents. Addressing student behavior and discipline

issues will be at the heart of efforts to retain and attract parents to the PUSD. Without a sense of confidence that children will be in a safe and effective learning environment, many parents, and especially those whose children are most directly affected by an unsafe school, will lack confidence in the District's commitment to retaining them.

A third evident concern voiced by parents was a perception that class sizes are too big in the PUSD, and a fourth theme we saw across the surveys was a sense expressed by parents that the District was not being responsive to them. Further, parents who are least likely to return to the District were more likely to mention problems with specific teachers and other staff.

In contrast, parents at charters and private schools value the higher academic standards, safe campuses, and responsiveness of school staff to their concerns. In other words, what many former parents found lacking at the PUSD is precisely what private and charter school parents find in abundance.

The surveys were consistent in what changes the District could make that current parents would find most important in deciding whether to stay in the PUSD, and that former parents would find most important in deciding whether to return.

Parents found the most appealing of these potential changes to be high-achieving, college-prep academies, with smaller class sizes, enrichment, and a focus on readiness for higher education. Interest in this opportunity does not vary significantly by income or race/ethnicity.

A second change of extremely high importance to parents considering the PUSD would be a real and visible effort to address bullying and student discipline issues and to address the emotional and social concerns of students. These concerns were addressed by parents regardless of race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

Finally, parents want to know that their teachers and principals, and the District as a whole, will listen, respond, and be held accountable to concerns about safety and academics and about the needs of their children.