

Deerfield School District

**Community Survey
Report**

Prepared by

School Perceptions LLC

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Overview

The Community Survey was conducted for the Deerfield School District in the months of February and March, 2008 by School Perceptions L.L.C. School Perceptions has worked with hundreds of school districts throughout the country and is regarded as one of the nation's leading experts in the gathering and analyzing of stakeholders' perceptions of schools.

Survey Methodology

The survey was administrated and results are presented using School Perceptions' proprietary software. Each potential respondent was issued a unique 16-digit alphanumeric survey identification number. This ensured that every potential respondent had the opportunity to take the survey once but that no respondents could take the survey multiple times. Respondents without access to the Internet and those who were uncomfortable taking the survey online were given the opportunity to take a paper version of the survey.

Respondent Sample

When looking at a group of survey respondents, two important characteristics need to be analyzed, the size of the sample and the representative nature of the sample.

With over 460 people responding to the survey, the size of the respondent group in this data set is adequate to differentiate sub-groups with an acceptable level of accuracy. Furthermore, because of the unique 16-digit user identification system used by School Perceptions, you can be assured that the data set is secure. The margin of error for questions answered by all respondents to the survey is approximately plus or minus 4.7%.

The representative nature of the survey results is good. The median age range of the survey respondents matches the median age for adults from the 2000 census for Dane County. Senior citizens are an important group to have represented in the survey sample. As of 2000, the census data indicates that 9.2% of the community population was over the age of 65. Approximately 11.4% of survey respondents indicated that they were over the age of 65, meaning this group is well represented.

One area where the survey data is not representative is in voting behavior. The survey respondents are more likely to vote than the general population in the area. Approximately 96% of survey respondents indicated they usually vote in elections. This is much higher than the actual percentage of people who vote in either local or national elections. This skewing is normal and not necessarily considered a negative result. To know the thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the voting population is arguably more valuable as having the same information about the population in general.

Overall

The survey results will provide the Deerfield School District with a good data set from which to begin analyzing alternatives and setting priorities for future planning. It is important to note that this survey tool should be one of many factors influencing the direction the school board and administration choose to take.

Demographic Summary

Community Demographic Summary

Are you a resident of the Deerfield School District?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	311	98.73
No	4	1.26

What is your age?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
18-29	19	6.03
30-39	86	27.3
40-49	96	30.47
50-64	78	24.76
65 and over	36	11.42

How long have you lived in the school district?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Less than one year	10	3.17
1-5 years	71	22.53
6-10 years	53	16.82
11-20 years	76	24.12
More than 20 years	104	33.01
Do not live in the school district	1	0.31

Where do you live?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Village of Deerfield	158	50.15
Town of Deerfield	116	36.82
Town of Cottage Grove	35	11.11
Town of Christiana	5	1.58
Town of Pleasant Springs	0	0.0
None of the above	1	0.31

Do you usually vote in elections?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	302	95.87
No	13	4.12

Do you have children younger than elementary school age?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	76	24.12
No	239	75.87

Do you have school age children?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	159	50.47
No	156	49.52

If you have school age children, what schools do they attend? (check all that apply)		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Deerfield Elementary	108	50.46
Deerfield Middle School	40	18.69
Deerfield High School	55	25.7
Public school in a different school district	5	2.33
Private School	1	0.46
Home School	3	1.4
Other	2	0.93

Do you have children or grandchildren that previously attended Deerfield schools?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	87	29.09
No	212	70.9

How do you currently receive information regarding school district issues? (check all that apply)

	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
District mailings	231	74.52
Independent Newspaper	214	69.03
Friends or neighbors	143	46.13
Teachers	116	37.42
From my children	111	35.81
School administration	79	25.48
District web site	73	23.55
Bridges Newsletter	55	17.74
Attend meetings at schools	51	16.45
Elementary PTO	48	15.48
Other school district staff	45	14.52
Cable Channel 4 (WDEE)	39	12.58
School board meetings	25	8.06
Booster Clubs	14	4.52
Other	6	1.94

Staff Demographic Summary

Are you a resident of the Deerfield School District?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	17	31.48
No	37	68.51

What is your age?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
18-29	6	11.11
30-39	18	33.33
40-49	12	22.22
50-64	18	33.33
65 and over	0	0.0

How long have you lived in the school district?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Less than one year	1	1.85
1-5 years	1	1.85
6-10 years	1	1.85
11-20 years	6	11.11
More than 20 years	8	14.81
Do not live in the school district	37	68.51

Where do you live?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Village of Deerfield	8	14.81
Town of Deerfield	8	14.81
Town of Cottage Grove	4	7.4
Town of Christiana	1	1.85
Town of Pleasant Springs	0	0.0
None of the above	33	61.11

Do you usually vote in elections?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	51	94.44
No	3	5.55

Do you have children younger than elementary school age?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	11	20.37
No	43	79.62

Do you have school age children?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	18	33.33
No	36	66.66

If you have school age children, what schools do they attend? (check all that apply)		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Deerfield Elementary	4	17.39
Deerfield Middle School	1	4.34
Deerfield High School	4	17.39
Public school in a different school district	9	39.13
Private School	0	0.0
Home School	0	0.0
Other	5	21.73

Do you have children or grandchildren that previously attended Deerfield schools?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	10	18.51
No	44	81.48

How do you currently receive information regarding school district issues? (check all that apply)

	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
School administration	49	90.74
Teachers	32	59.26
Other school district staff	31	57.41
Independent Newspaper	28	51.85
District mailings	24	44.44
District web site	22	40.74
School board meetings	18	33.33
Attend meetings at schools	13	24.07
Friends or neighbors	8	14.81
Bridges Newsletter	8	14.81
Elementary PTO	7	12.96
From my children	5	9.26
Booster Clubs	5	9.26
Cable Channel 4 (WDEE)	3	5.56
Other	3	5.56

Student Demographic Summary

Gender:		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Female	47	51.08
Male	45	48.91

Grade level:		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
11th grade	53	57.6
12th grade	39	42.39

How long have you lived in the school district?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Less than one year	2	2.17
1-5 years	14	15.21
6-10 years	18	19.56
11-20 years	58	63.04

Where do you live?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Village of Deerfield	34	36.95
Town of Deerfield	38	41.3
Town of Cottage Grove	10	10.86
Town of Christiana	0	0.0
Town of Pleasant Springs	0	0.0
None of the above	10	10.86

Do you participate in extra-curricular activities?		
	<u>count</u>	<u>percentage</u>
Yes	77	83.69
No	15	16.3

Data Summary

A note about the sub-groups:

The data from the survey will be presented in various subgroups. This is done to provide clarity and discern patterns. Each of the subgroups is defined below.

Community

This group includes all community respondents including parents and non parents, but not staff or students.

Parents

This group includes respondents who indicated they were parents of school-aged children.

Non-Parents

This group includes respondents who indicated they did not have any children in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Staff

This group includes respondents who indicated they were employees of the School District. Although this is a relatively small sub-group, they are an important group with the closest contact with the school.

Students

This group includes high school juniors and seniors. While they are not tax payers, they have valuable insights for consideration.

Programs & Services

If budget cuts are necessary, please give your recommendation for each program?
(Higher scores indicate a desire to reduce or eliminate the program. Lower scores indicate desire to keep the program)

	Non Parents	Parents	Staff	Students
1	Field trips K-12 1.95	Field trips K-12 1.73	Field trips K-12 1.68	Summer school 1.69
2	Summer school 1.79	Summer school 1.68	School-to-work - HS 1.56	At-risk programs 1.58
3	Family/Consumer Education - MS & HS 1.7	Family/Consumer Education - MS & HS 1.6	Summer school 1.56	Instructional Aides - K-6 1.56
4	K-8 clubs and academic activities 1.65	At-risk programs 1.57	MS sports 1.46	Business education – MS & HS 1.56
5	HS sports - freshman 1.62	K-8 clubs and academic activities 1.56	HS sports - freshman 1.42	K-8 clubs and academic activities 1.37
6	Foreign languages K-12 1.61	HS sports - freshman 1.48	K-8 clubs and academic activities 1.39	Family/Consumer Education - MS & HS 1.36
7	MS sports 1.57	School-to-work - HS 1.47	HS clubs and academic activities 1.37	MS sports 1.33
8	School-to-work - HS 1.55	MS sports 1.43	Family/Consumer Education - MS & HS 1.37	Computer Education K-12 1.32
9	HS clubs and academic activities 1.54	Foreign languages K-12 1.42	Foreign languages K-12 1.31	Foreign languages K-12 1.32
10	At-risk programs 1.54	Health education 1.41	Business education - MS & HS 1.27	Health education 1.32
11	Instructional Aides - K-6 1.5	Instructional Aides - K-6 1.38	Band for grades 5-12 1.24	HS sports - freshman 1.32
12	Vocal Music for grades K-12 1.45	Vocal Music for grades K-12 1.35	HS sports - junior varsity 1.22	School-to-work - HS 1.29
13	Art for grades K-12 1.43	HS clubs and academic activities 1.31	Health education 1.18	Technology education - MS & HS 1.28
14	HS sports - junior varsity 1.41	Band for grades 5-12 1.3	Instructional Aides - K-6 1.18	Art for grades K-12 1.25

15	Band for grades 5-12 1.4	Business education - MS & HS 1.26	HS sports - varsity 1.16	Field trips K-12 1.21
16	Health education 1.35	HS sports - junior varsity 1.26	College preparation / Advanced placement classes 1.16	Vocal Music for grades K-12 1.21
17	HS sports - varsity 1.31	Art for grades K-12 1.24	Vocal Music for grades K-12 1.16	Band for grades 5-12 1.2
18	Business education - MS & HS 1.26	HS sports - varsity 1.21	At-risk programs 1.14	HS clubs and academic activities 1.2
19	College preparation / Advanced placement classes 1.24	College preparation / Advanced placement classes 1.2	Computer Education K-12 1.12	College preparation / Advanced placement classes 1.15
20	Technology education - MS & HS 1.23	Technology education - MS & HS 1.18	Technology education - MS & HS 1.11	HS sports - junior varsity 1.12
21	Computer Education K-12 1.15	Computer Education K-12 1.12	Art for grades K-12 1.11	HS sports - varsity 1.08

Analysis:

If budget cuts are necessary, parents, non-parents, and staff members felt funding for summer school and field trips should be reduced first. There was also consensus among the adults on which programs to keep fully funded: college preparation/advanced placement classes, technology education at the middle and high school and computer education had the most support.

Academics & Instruction

Percent of participants responding "Yes"

Question	Non Parents	Parents	Staff	Students
Should the district increase current class sizes at the elementary level in kindergarten through 3rd grade to save money by cutting teaching positions?	Yes – 31% Not sure – 8%	Yes – 15% Not sure – 4%	Yes – 3% Not sure – 2%	Yes – 18% Not sure – 22%
Should the district increase current class sizes at the elementary level in grades 4-6 to save money by cutting teaching positions?	Yes – 34% Not sure – 10%	Yes – 18% Not sure – 9%	Yes – 13% Not sure – 4%	Yes – 19% Not sure – 25%
Should there be a minimum class size placed on high school classes?	Yes – 70% Not sure – 11%	Yes – 64% Not sure – 21%	Yes – 72% Not sure – 9%	Yes – 37% Not sure – 12%
Should the district expand access to high school Internet based courses and offer these in place of courses with low enrollment?	Yes – 66% Not sure – 15%	Yes – 68% Not sure – 17%	Yes – 59% Not sure – 26%	Yes – 57% Not sure – 26%
Is having up-to-date technology including software and hardware important?	Yes – 76% Not sure – 12%	Yes – 84% Not sure – 9%	Yes – 94% Not sure – 2%	Yes – 87% Not sure – 10%
Is having up-to-date textbooks and learning materials replaced on a regular basis important?	Yes – 74% Not sure – 14%	Yes – 82% Not sure – 9%	Yes – 89% Not sure – 6%	Yes – 82% Not sure – 8%
Should the district expand programs for talented and gifted students (TAG)?	Yes – 32% Not sure – 20%	Yes – 32% Not sure – 26%	Yes – 44% Not sure – 31%	Yes – 37% Not sure – 29%

Highlighted areas indicate majority support.

Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities

Percent of participants responding "Yes"

Question	Non Parents	Parents	Staff	Students
Should the district raise the participation fees for athletics if an annual limit is placed on the costs for a family?	Yes – 72% Not sure – 8%	Yes – 71% Not sure – 6%	Yes – 85% Not sure – 9%	Yes – 26% Not sure – 14%
Should the district raise the participation fees for non-athletic co-curricular activities like clubs and drama?	Yes – 68% Not sure – 13%	Yes – 72% Not sure – 10%	Yes – 77% Not sure – 6%	Yes – 27% Not sure – 56%

Highlighted areas indicate majority support.

If specific athletic programs and/or other co-curricular activities were to be reduced, what should be the basis of these reductions?

Primarily on participation numbers	46%	50%	54%	43%
Primarily on cost per student	26%	13%	22%	16%
Not sure	23%	27%	15%	35%
Other	4%	10%	9%	5%

Analysis: Majority support exists to increase fees from all adult respondents.

Other Options

Percent of participants responding "Yes"

Question	Non Parents	Parents	Staff	Students
Should the district combine bus routes and offer fewer stops to reduce costs?	Yes – 54% Not sure – 14%	Yes – 45% Not sure – 15%	Yes – 50% Not sure – 26%	Yes – 49% Not sure – 26%
Should the district continue to pursue collaborative programming and services with surrounding school districts?	Yes – 90% Not sure – 5%	Yes – 93% Not sure – 4%	Yes – 89% Not sure – 7%	Yes – 60% Not sure – 33%

Highlighted areas indicate majority support.

Analysis: Strong majority support exists to continue pursuing collaborative programming and services with surrounding districts.

Middle School / High School Improvement Priorities

How important are the following facility maintenance and improvement needs?

(Absolutely critical = 3, Important = 2, Not important = 1)

	Non Parents	Parents	Staff	Students
1	Maintain/replace existing roof 2.37	Upgrade electrical wiring and distribution to meet current needs 2.41	Upgrade aging heating and ventilation systems 2.45	Upgrade aging heating and ventilation systems 2.36
2	Upgrade electrical wiring and distribution to meet current needs 2.28	Maintain/replace existing roof 2.37	Increase energy efficiency (i.e. replacement of outdated fixtures) 2.44	Increase energy efficiency (i.e. replacement of outdated fixtures) 2.27
3	Upgrade aging heating and ventilation systems 2.27	Upgrade aging heating and ventilation systems 2.28	Maintain/replace existing roof 2.39	Upgrade electrical wiring and distribution to meet current needs 2.2
4	Increase energy efficiency (i.e. replacement of outdated fixtures) 2.22	Improve computers and technology access in the classrooms 2.25	Upgrade electrical wiring and distribution to meet current needs 2.38	Improve computers and technology access in the classrooms 2.19
5	Improve computers and technology access in the classrooms 2.18	Increase energy efficiency (i.e. replacement of outdated fixtures) 2.16	Improve computers and technology access in the classrooms 2.37	Upgrade football/track/soccer bleachers, foundation, stairs to meet current safety codes 2.15
6	Make building ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant 2.05	Remodel/expand main entrance for security/safety and building access control 1.99	Make building ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant 2.31	Air conditioning in the gymnasiums 2.12
7	Remodel/expand library and computer lab areas 1.79	Make building ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant 1.97	Remodel/expand main entrance for security/safety and building access control 2.27	Maintain/replace existing roof 2.03
8	Upgrade football/track/soccer bleachers, foundation, stairs to meet current safety codes 1.77	Upgrade football/track/soccer bleachers, foundation, stairs to meet current safety codes 1.91	Upgrade football/track/soccer bleachers, foundation, stairs to meet current safety codes 2.01	Provide restrooms at football/track/soccer stadium 2.02
9	Remodel/expand main entrance for security/safety and building access control 1.73	Remodel/expand library and computer lab areas 1.86	Remodel/expand library and computer lab areas 1.94	Provide plumbing to concession area of football/track/soccer stadium 1.92
10	Update space for vocational, technical and career education 1.69	Update space for vocational, technical and career education 1.73	Provide restrooms at football/track/soccer stadium 1.84	Make building ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant 1.88
11	Replace worn floors and carpet 1.66	Replace worn floors and carpet 1.72	Update space for vocational, technical and career education 1.78	Replace worn floors and carpet 1.7
12	Air conditioning in the gymnasiums 1.39	Air conditioning in the gymnasiums 1.56	Replace worn floors and carpet 1.77	Remodel/expand library and computer lab areas 1.7
13	Provide restrooms at football/track/soccer stadium 1.35	Provide restrooms at football/track/soccer stadium 1.5	Air conditioning in the gymnasiums 1.75	Upgrade physical education locker rooms 1.69
14	Expand the kitchen/concessions area in commons 1.3	Upgrade physical education locker rooms 1.46	Upgrade physical education locker rooms 1.65	Update space for vocational, technical and career education 1.68
15	Provide plumbing to concession area of football/track/soccer stadium 1.25	Expand the kitchen/concessions area in commons 1.42	Provide plumbing to concession area of football/track/soccer stadium 1.64	Expand the kitchen/concessions area in commons 1.62
16	Upgrade physical education locker rooms 1.25	Provide plumbing to concession area of football/track/soccer stadium 1.41	Expand the kitchen/concessions area in commons 1.46	Remodel/expand main entrance for security/safety and building access control 1.55

Track/Football/Soccer Field Options

Background: The entire sports stadium was constructed in 1977. The top surface of the track has been replaced about every 8 years as recommended. The track foundation has a life expectancy of about 30 years. The foundation appears to be cracked leaving gaps in the track surface. Resurfacing the track is an option, but the foundation will need to be repaired in the very near future if we hope to continue hosting the Deerfield Classic Invitational, conference track meets and regional meets. These events generate revenue for the district and the community.

This area has been identified as a critical facility need due to the age and condition of the sports stadium. A recently completed study identified four options to redevelop the outdoor running track, soccer and football field.

Option 1: Resurface Track and Field Events

Includes resurfacing and restriping the running track, long/triple jump, pole vault, and high jump. This option does not allow the football field to serve as a regulation soccer field.

Options 2: Reconstruct 6-Lane Track, Maintain Field Events

Includes demolition, earthwork, and rebuilding a 6-lane track with 3" bituminous pavement, all weather surfacing, and fencing. Maintains current field events leaving them on sidelines of football field. This option does not allow football field to serve as regulation soccer field.

Option 3: Reconstruct 6-Lane Track and Relocate Field Events

Includes demolition, earthwork, and rebuilding a 6-lane track with 3" bituminous pavements, all weather surfacing, and fencing. Also includes rebuilding field event areas further from sidelines of football field. Allows for football field to also serve as regulation soccer field for competition and regional events.

Option 4: Construct 8-Lane Track and Relocate Field Events

Includes demolition, earthwork, and rebuilding an 8-lane track with 3" bituminous pavements, all weather surfacing, and fencing. Also includes rebuilding field event areas further from sidelines of football field. Allows for football field to also serve as regulation soccer field for competition and regional events and sectional track events

Option	Non Parents	Parents	Staff	Students
Leave the track and field areas "as is" resulting in discontinuation of use for track and field competitions.	10%	6%	2%	6%
Option 1: Resurface Track and Field Events This would require reconstruction of foundation in the near future.	12%	6%	4%	7%
Option 2: Reconstruct 6-Lane Track and Maintain Field Events	15%	11%	13%	11%
Option 3: Reconstruct 6-Lane Track and Relocate Field Events	23%	35%	34%	14%
Option 4: Construct 8-Lane Track and Relocate Field Events	21%	24%	26%	32%
Don't Know/Not Sure	20%	18%	21%	30%

Financial Support

Percent of participants responding "Yes"

Question	Community	Non Parents	Parents	Staff
Would you support a \$250,000 referendum for each of the next 5 years to help the district maintain current programs and services?	Yes – 60% Not sure – 17%	Yes – 51% Not sure – 21%	Yes – 68% Not sure – 13%	Yes – 79% Not sure – 15%
Would you support a \$400,000 to \$500,000 referendum for each of the next 5 years to help the district maintain current programs and services and address the most critical facility needs?	Yes – 49.52% Not sure – 21%	Yes – 38% Not sure – 25%	Yes – 61% Not sure – 16%	Yes – 68% Not sure – 17%
Would you support a \$500,000 to \$600,000 referendum for each of the next 5 years to help the district maintain current programs and services, address critical facility needs and complete light remodeling work?	Yes – 35% Not sure – 25%	Yes – 27% Not sure – 25%	Yes – 44% Not sure – 25%	Yes – 56% Not sure – 25%
Would you support a \$600,000 to \$700,000 referendum for each of the next 5 years to help the district maintain current programs and services, address critical facility needs and complete a majority of the remodeling projects identified in the facility study?	Yes – 30% Not sure – 24%	Yes – 19% Not sure – 28%	Yes – 41% Not sure – 21%	Yes – 51% Not sure – 28%

Highlighted areas indicate majority support.

In what time-frame should the district begin exploring the option of building a new middle/high school?

	Community	Non Parents	Parents	Staff
5 years	22%	15%	30%	30%
10 years	21%	20%	22%	34%
15 years	6%	8%	5%	6%
20 years	9%	10%	7%	0%
I don't know	26%	28%	24%	17%
Other	16%	18%	13%	13%

Comment Summary

The comment summary was developed in an attempt to identify common themes by first reading all of the comments collected throughout community engagement survey. A theme was identified if multiple respondents refer to similar issues or concerns.

We then selected comments that were representative of each theme and added them to this section to reflect the nature and tone of the theme.

It should be noted that each comment was gathered anonymously. Each comment has been “cut and pasted” verbatim. This summary is not intended to represent all comments submitted; rather we attempted to represent the prevailing themes represented by the majority of comments. The CAC, Board of Education and Administration will use the individual comments for future planning and reference.

- Theme: The district needs to develop a long-term plan focusing on “needs vs. wants”. Many people felt academics, student safety and building maintenance should be a higher priority than sports.
- Theme: With rising costs and tightening budgets, teachers and administrators need to contribute to the financial solution.
- Theme: Most people believe in smaller class size at the elementary school level.
- Theme: People had varying opinions on the value and effectiveness of the TAG program.
- Theme: Given tightening budgets, the district needs to consider all options and ideas including collaborative programming and shared services.
- Theme: People had varying opinions on the best way to provide student transportation.
- Theme: People either strongly agree or strongly disagree with the idea of spending money to improve the athletic fields.
- Theme: Many people need more information before making any decisions on the track and field project.
- Theme: Taxes are already high, so any tax increase will be difficult, especially on people with a fixed income.
- Theme: If the budget needs to be reduced, most people would want to cut sports before academics.
- Theme: Many people had ideas and suggestions on how to fund projects and save money.
- Theme: These are complex decisions. Many people need more information before making any decision on supporting a referendum.