

Summary of Open Enrollment Leavers School Survey July 2009

Overview

The survey of parents whose children reside in the Madison Metropolitan School District attendance area and attend a public school outside the MMSD was conducted between December 2008 and February 2009. The source of the parent list was compiled from the third Friday in September membership count representing students currently enrolled and participating in the Open Enrollment program. A total of 336 surveys were mailed to households, representing over 400 students. Two attempts to contact households via mail were made two weeks apart. There were 75 households who replied representing over 100 students. The corresponding household response rate was 24 percent.

Descriptive Information

An equal amount of students that attend a school outside of MMSD are continuing students versus students who leave after attending a MMSD school. Of these respondents 70 percent attend districts who share boundaries/neighborhoods with MMSD. For students leaving the district over one quarter (26%) “leave” before ever attending Kindergarten while another one third leave between levels (i.e., elementary school grade 5 to middle school grade 6, middle school grade 8 to high school grade 9). In other words, three of five students who leave MMSD for a non-resident public school district via the Open Enrollment program do so in only three of the thirteen grade levels, i.e., Kindergarten through grade 12.

Survey Responses

Parents whose children attend an area school district cited a variety of issues the majority being environmental concerns with in the school. More than one response option could be selected so the data are presented in terms of both the percentage of total responses as well as the percentage of total unique respondents.

	Environment concern	Closer to home	Child's Choice	Moved – Continue at non-resident dist	Curricular Program	School is Virtual	Attend with Friends	Closer to work	Closer to daycare	After school programming
Percentage of Responses	34%	16%	13%	10%	10%	9%	8%	5%	3%	3%
Percentage of Respondents	61%	28%	22%	18%	18%	15%	14%	9%	5%	6%

The following are examples of comments relating to “Environment Concerns:”

- *Too much time wasted in traditional classrooms/school day*
- *Had a negative experience at the Madison school, also no homework, over-crowded classroom; the child, my grandson, was moving in with me (his guardian) and the change to a new Madison school was too stressful, with other changes going on at the same time.*
- *bullying happening to my son.*

- *Bureaucracy, WEAC, and greed over tax dollars, are what keep Madison schools from being the very best they can be. I have high hopes for broad and positive changes with the new superintendent.*
- *Concerns regarding fights and police being at the school..*
- *I like the smaller town atmosphere of Verona over the big city atmosphere of MMSD*
- *Could not deal with my child's disability. Could not keep her safe.*
- *Liberal philosophy (attempting to ban the Pledge of Allegiance, etc.)*
- *Emerson school was very troubled at the time of our transfer, and we were not allowed to transfer to any other MMSD school.*
- *Negative peer pressure; concern that my children would "get lost" in a large classroom academically. Didn't want our children indoctrinated with an agenda that we do not hold.*
- *The school our children were supposed to go is not an environment we wanted our children in.*
- *Not disciplining kids enough is a huge issue. Disruptive kids need to get out of the classroom and be punished instead of getting lollipops in the office.*
- *Violence, gangs, drugs and alcohol*
- *He wasn't being taught at grade level. He was having lunch stolen daily. The principal at the time told me my son should be grateful he has lunch! Nothing said to child stealing lunch! My son was being hit on school grounds and bus.*
- *Overcrowding, disruptive kids not getting sent out of class or punished for bad behavior. My children are becoming the minority. No money in schools. All the fun stuff is being taken away.*

The following are examples of comments regarding "Curricular Program" concerns:

- *The middle school offered an advanced curriculum in math and was able to challenge him better in all subjects.*
- *Bilingual (program)*
- *Didn't like Sage teachers, their outlook was that they were part-time teachers, therefore didn't have any extra time to do any extra nice or fun things in their class, very sad!!*
- *I believe my kids are receiving a better opportunity for their education. My daughter spent one semester at Glendale and it was a nightmare.*
- *We were not pleased with curriculum that was designed for kindergarten level - very weak considering it is an all day program.*
- *My older girls are in Madison schools. Memorial is pretty good, Toki needs major improvements. I don't want my younger sons ending up there. So many things have been taken away because of no funds and many families can't afford trips therefore no one gets to go. My high school student came from Toki and is struggling and she was an Honor student at Toki, but doesn't feel Toki prepared her at all! Food is awful in Madison, please get healthier food. I feel great about Verona School District and I want to feel that way about Madison but at this time I can't. We are looking at moving into another school district because of all the Madison problems. I've lived in Madison my whole life and never thought I would leave it because of the schools.*
- *My son is now registered with the DPI back in Madison district as a full time homeschooler. The online school was not a pleasing experience regardless of district.*
- *For years MMSD has neglected high achieving kids which has let to a mass exodus out of Madison to Middleton, Waunakee and Verona. If not for open enrollment we would have simply moved away.*
- *Gifted and talented receives 1/100 of the attention of special needs.*

The following are examples of the factor associated with "School/Class Size" concerns:

- *Too many kids in a class due to job cutbacks; other school district has more to offer in the classroom, field trips and just making learning fun and exciting. Verona School District has a great community feel!*
- *Leopold has serious issues and felt more comfortable with smaller school.*

- *Our resident school is Leopold. It is too crowded. We experienced Leopold with our 1st child and not pleased with the chaos of being over-crowdedness and the atmosphere in the classroom.*
- *Madison school was just way to big of a school. Too many kids under one roof.*

The following are examples of examples of the factor associated with “Communication” concerns:

- *Negative teacher attitude, poor communication, unwillingness to work with parents.*
- *I received no help from the school staff regarding my concerns.*
- *Ability to interact with teachers. The teachers not checking emails, voice mails, etc.*

MMSD Options

Two questions asked respondents if they might be interested in attending MMSD schools under specific circumstances. One question inquired about the parent’s interest in enrolling their child in a full-time online school or program option if such a service were offered to students by the MMSD. A second question asked if they would attend an MMSD school other than their home attendance area school on a transfer if they could choose that school. Thirty-two percent of parents whose children were currently attending a non-resident public school district via Open Enrollment responding to the online question indicated they would explore a full-time online program if offered by MMSD. When asked about the option to enroll in MMSD at the school of their choice eighteen percent responded they would be interested.