

Paola USD 368

Community Telephone Survey 2018 Final Report



January 14, 2019

**Paola USD 368 School District
Community Telephone Survey
Executive Summary
January 14, 2019**

In late November and early December 2018, a 10- to 12-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected residents of the Paola USD 368 School District who were heads of households (male or female) living within the boundaries of the district.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers, and the completed interviews were divided into three areas, with the number of completed interviews for each area based on the general population pattern, according to district leadership. This means the data contained in this report that includes the opinions of all 400 respondents has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%, at the 95% confidence level. (The Margin of Error within the demographic and geographic subgroups is higher, because the number of respondents in each of these subgroups is smaller.)

The results of the survey are as follows:

“Grading” the district’s performance

Eight of 15 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district’s overall performance – received a grade of “B” (or the statistical equivalent of a “B”) on the traditional A-F grading scale. Those topping the list were “Safety of students,” “Quality of the school facilities” and “The quality of the technology available to students in the classroom.”

At the bottom of the list were “The district’s responsive to citizen concerns,” “Efforts of the district to involve citizens in major decision-making” and “Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent.”

Identification of Patron Hot Buttons

Factors that receive a grade – rather than a response of “Don’t know” – from at least 81% of the respondents in a survey are considered Patron Hot Buttons. These are the factors that typical patrons think of first, when they think about the district. All but one of the Paola USD 368 factors achieved this status. The one that did not – “The district’s record on fulfilling promises made to the community” – is still important, but it simply is not top of mind.

Strengths and areas needing improvement

When asked in an open-ended question to identify the strengths of the district, 76 respondents said, “Teachers.” This was followed by “Strong academics” (68 mentions) and “Community support” (63 mentions).

A similar question asked about areas needing improvement drew an answer of “Managing the money/budget” from 117 respondents. This was followed by 89 mentions for “Don’t know” and 51 mentions for “Communication.”

The last bond issue completed by the district

When asked how they felt about the last bond issued completed by the district, a modest percentage of respondents (42%) said they were “Very satisfied” or “Somewhat satisfied.” The same percentage (42%) of respondents said they were “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” while 6% said they were “Somewhat dissatisfied” or “Very dissatisfied” and 11% said, “Don’t know.”

Whether there is a bullying problem in the district

More than half (57%) of the survey respondents believed there was a bullying problem in USD 368. Only 25% answered, “No” to this question, and 18% said, “Don’t know.”

When those who believed there was a problem were asked about the district’s response to bullying incidents, compared to other districts, 35% said, “It is about the same,” 31% said, “Paola’s response to bullying is much better” or “It is somewhat better,” and 34% said, “Don’t know.”

Expanding/adding programs/facilities in the district

Survey respondents were then asked a variety of questions about ideas for current and potential USD 368 programs and asked to state whether they thought they were “An excellent idea,” “A good idea,” “A fair (meaning less than good) idea,” or “A poor idea.”

First, an overwhelming majority (95%) thought it was “An excellent idea” or “A good idea” to add more career and technical education programs in the schools. Nearly the same percentage (93%) thought the same thing about expanding the STEM programs in the district.

A more modest amount of respondents (78%) thought the same about expanding the alternative education program to the middle school level, while 13% thought it was “A fair (meaning less than good) idea,” or “A poor idea.” The idea of expanding it to the elementary school level was much less popular with the respondents, as 68% said it was “A fair (meaning less than good) idea,” or “A poor idea,” and only 31% said it was “An excellent idea” or “A good idea.”

Again, a more modest amount of respondents (73%) thought it was “An excellent idea” or “A good idea” to add a 1,000-seat performing arts center that would be used by all the schools and available for community use. Slightly fewer (67%) thought the same thing about providing a 1-to-1 program – meaning one computer device, tablet, etc. – to third- through fifth-grade students.

Forming a joint recreation commission and potential mill levy increase

The survey then asked respondents whether they would support the idea of the Paola USD 368 School District and the city of Paola forming a joint recreation commission for activities for both children and adults, if there was no mill levy increase. Ninety-four percent of the respondents

thought it was “Very likely” or “Somewhat likely” that they would support the formation of the commission.

However, that percentage dropped significantly to 68%, when the respondents were asked whether they would still support the formation of a joint recreation commission, if it required a one mill levy increase.

Plans for the Hillsdale Elementary School building

The survey then shifted to the topic of whether the offices of the Special Education Cooperative and Parents as Teachers Program should remain in the formerly closed Hillsdale Elementary school or whether the building should be used differently. Seventy-two percent of the respondents said, “Continue using it for the Special Education Cooperative and the Parents as Teachers program, until enrollment trends warrant reopening it as an elementary school,” followed by “Convert the building into a Career and Technical Education Center,” at 31%, and “Utilize the building for expanded programming within the district,” at 16%.

Sources consulted for school district news

Eight of 20 potential sources are consulted “frequently” for school district news – beyond weather-related school closing information – by more than one out of three respondents. At the top of the list were “Friends and neighbors,” “*The Miami County Republic* newspaper or website,” “Teachers in the district,” and “Other district employees, such as food service staff, para-professionals, custodial and those who work in the front office at individual schools.”

The full report that follows presents a series of findings, discussion of each of these findings, and all the questions, answers and appropriate cross-tabulations. A brief summary closes the report.

**Paola USD 368 School District
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Finding 1: Survey participants gave eight of 15 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of a “B”) on the traditional A-F grading scale. All but one of the factors – eight of which were among the ones that were graded “B” or better – qualified as Patron Hot Buttons. Hot Buttons are factors that received a grade from at least 81% of the survey respondents (rather than having them say, “Don’t know”). These, then, are the factors that typical residents think of first, when they think about the school district.

In late November and early December 2018, a 10- to 12-minute random dial telephone survey was conducted with 400 heads of households (male or female) living within the boundaries of the Paola USD 368 School District to address a variety of issues.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers, and the completed interviews were divided into three quadrants in quantities that represented the general population pattern in the school district, according to the district leadership. This means the results in this report that reflect the opinions of all 400 respondents have a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%, at the 95% confidence level. (The Margin of Error for the geographic and demographic subgroups is larger, because the number of respondents in each subgroup is smaller.)

Once an individual demonstrated he or she was qualified to participate, he or she was read a list of 15 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors (along with the district’s overall performance) and asked to give each one a “grade” of A, B, C, D or F.

The reason the survey begins with such questions is to make it clear to the respondents this process will not be difficult, while also building rapport with the interviewer – rapport that will be important when the questions become more difficult later in the survey. This question set also provides an excellent snapshot of current patron opinion on a variety of components related to the district and its performance.

All the grades for all the factors are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a 5-point weighted scale has also been applied. In this scale, each grade of “A” is worth 5 points, down to each grade of “F” being worth 1 point. The point values are totaled and divided by the number of respondents willing to offer a grade (rather than saying, “Don’t know”).

Recognizing that securing an “A” in this exercise would require all those with an opinion to say, “A,” the dividing line between areas of strength and those that may need attention is usually considered a “B” (4.00). However, taking into account the Margin of Error, a score as low as 3.80 is still, statistically speaking, a “B.”

Eight of the 15 factors – plus the district’s overall performance – achieved a “B” (or the statistical equivalent) in this exercise. At the top of the list were the following:

- Safety of students – 4.53
- Quality of the school facilities – 4.44
- The quality of the technology available to students in the classroom – 4.27
- Performance of district teachers – 4.04
- Quality of education – 3.95
- Performance of school principals – 3.91

The seven that fell below the 3.80 mark were:

- Preparing students to be college- and/or career-ready – 3.76
- The district’s record on fulfilling promises made to the community – 3.76
- Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom – 3.75
- Performance of the Paola School Board – 3.64
- The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns – 3.53
- Efforts of the district to involve citizens in major decision-making – 3.51
- Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent – 3.48

To determine if where a respondent live or one or more demographic characteristics had an influence on his or her score on these lower-rated areas, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted.

In reviewing this data, it is important to keep in mind the “n” number, which is shown at the top of each chart. This is the number of participants in each subgroup. The smaller the “n” number, the higher the Margin of Error and the greater the impact a small number of votes within that group can have on the final score within that subgroup. As such, it is best to look for trends, rather than to fixate on individual numbers.

The trends seen in this data are fairly typical – whether the district’s scores are higher or lower:

- Respondents age 55 or older had the lowest scores among the age subgroups for every factor, except one (“Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent”).
- Not surprisingly, current student families gave the highest scores on all the factors, with the differences between these scores and those given by “past” and “never” student families often being rather significant.

- The group of respondent's living "Outside the city limits of Paola and north of K-68 Highway," for the most part, gave the highest marks, while the group living "Outside the city limits of Paola and south of K-68 Highway" gave the lowest marks on all the factors.
- There was no consistent pattern based on gender.

The other component of the grading exercise is the identification of Patron Hot Buttons. These are the factors that at least 81% of the survey respondents were willing to offer a grade on, rather than saying, "Don't know." In essence, Patron Hot Buttons are the factors that the respondents appear to consider first, when they think about the school district.

In the case of Paola USD 368, all but one of the factors – "The district's record on fulfilling promises made to the community" – achieved this designation. This does not mean this area is not important to respondents; it's just not top of mind. Furthermore, this high number of Hot Buttons suggests active interest in the district and its news throughout the region.

In addition to the grading exercise, respondents were asked how they felt about the results from the district's last bond issue. Forty-two percent said they were "Very satisfied with the results" or "Somewhat satisfied," 42% said they were "Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," 6% said they were "Somewhat dissatisfied" or "Very dissatisfied, and 11% said, "Don't know."

Questions 1– 2 asked respondents whether or not they were a head of household (male or female) and whether they lived within the boundaries of the Paola USD 368 School District.

To continue with the survey, a respondent had to answer, "Yes" to these questions. As such, those questions are not displayed below.

All answers with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. In reviewing the verbatim answers shown in this report, it is important to remember each is one response, by one person and is not indicative of a trend.

Also, in reviewing the cross-tabulations (as mentioned above), it is important to keep the "n" number in mind. Groups with smaller "n" numbers can have their scores impacted significantly by a small number of responses. As such, in the case of the cross-tabulations, it is best to look for trends, rather than to focus on individual numbers.

3. **And to be certain all parts of the school district are represented in this survey, can you tell me whether you live...?** *Number of respondents in each segment was identified by the school district as being representative of the population pattern in the district. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Location	Number
Inside the city limits of Paola	200
Outside the city limits of Paola and north of K-68 Highway	100
Outside the city limits of Paola and south of K-68 Highway	100

As you know, students in school are traditionally given a grade of A, B, C, D or F to reflect the quality of their work. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about Paola USD 368 from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Let's start with... *Questions 4 through 19 were rotated to eliminate order bias. However, questions 14 and 15 were always kept together to avoid confusion.*

4. Performance of district teachers

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	55%
C	16%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	5%

5. Quality of education

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	60%
C	15%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

6. Quality of all district communications to the community

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	43%
C	18%
D	5%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	10%

7. Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent

Response	Percentage
A	8%
B	45%
C	34%
D	3%
F	6%
Don't know (not read)	4%

8. The quality of the technology available to students in the classroom

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	50%
C	7%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	12%

9. Preparing students to be college- and/or career-ready

Response	Percentage
A	20%
B	44%
C	19%
D	5%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	8%

10. Performance of school principals

Response	Percentage
A	21%
B	53%
C	12%
D	7%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

11. Performance of the superintendent

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	39%
C	23%
D	2%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	19%

12. Performance of the Paola School Board

Response	Percentage
A	10%
B	42%
C	27%
D	6%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	14%

13. Efforts of the district to involve citizens in major decision-making

Response	Percentage
A	6%
B	48%
C	31%
D	3%
F	5%
Don't know (not read)	7%

14. The district’s record on fulfilling promises made to the community

Response	Percentage
A	11%
B	45%
C	17%
D	6%
F	1%
Don’t know (not read)	22%

15. I’m curious to learn a little more about the grade you just gave. Where has the district fallen short of your expectations in terms of keeping promises it has made to the community. *Asked only of the respondents who answered, C, D or F on question 14. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, are displayed below.*

Response	Number
General feeling of non-trust	36
Don’t know	28
Taxes continue to be higher	22
Other (see below)	5

Verbatim “other” comments

The issue of providing the bus for those who need it.

Promises made to the community have not always been kept but have always been implemented.

They seem to do want they want and say most anything.

Don’t believe much of what they say.

I have a daughter and two nephews that go there and they do not know many of the things they should know. They promise to educate them well.

16. The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns

Response	Percentage
A	7%
B	41%
C	29%
D	7%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	16%

17. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	64%
B	21%
C	12%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	2%

18. Quality of the school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	59%
B	24%
C	14%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

19. Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom

Response	Percentage
A	16%
B	42%
C	19%
D	10%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	14%

20. Thinking now about everything you know or have heard about the district, what overall grade would you give Paola USD 368?

Response	Percentage
A	11%
B	67%
C	16%
D	6%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	0%

Cross-tabulation: Weighted 5-point scale rating for each factor. Factors that scored at 3.80 or higher are the statistical equivalent of a “B” (or better). Factors displayed in boldface type are Patron Hot Buttons, meaning at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” These are generally considered to be what typical residents think of first, when they think about the school district

Factor	5-point weighted scale rating
Safety of students	4.53
Quality of the school facilities	4.44
The quality of the technology available to students in the classroom	4.27
Performance of district teachers	4.04
Quality of education	3.95
Performance of school principals	3.91
Quality of all district communications to the community	3.85
Performance of the superintendent	3.84
Overall grade	3.80
Preparing students to be college- and/or career-ready	3.76
The district’s record on fulfilling promises made to the community	3.76
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.75
Performance of the Paola School Board	3.64
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.53
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in major decision-making	3.51
Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent	3.48

Cross-tabulation: Weighted 5-point scale score for factors that scored under 3.80 by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because five respondents refused to answer this question.

Factor	Overall score	18-34 (n=71)	35-54 (n=180)	55 or older (n=144)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=267)	Female (n=231)	Male (n=169)
Preparing students to be college- and/or career-ready	3.76	3.86	3.78	3.69	3.62	3.83	3.76	3.76	3.76
The district’s record on fulfilling promises made to the community	3.76	3.77	3.78	3.71	3.70	3.85	3.73	3.77	3.74
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.75	3.81	3.74	3.71	3.77	3.74	3.75	3.68	3.84
Performance of the Paola School Board	3.64	3.81	3.70	3.47	3.47	3.68	3.66	3.62	3.67
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.53	3.55	3.54	3.49	3.30	3.54	3.56	3.50	3.57
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in major decision-making	3.51	3.49	3.56	3.47	3.50	3.59	3.49	3.52	3.50
Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent	3.48	3.34	3.59	3.39	3.27	3.43	3.52	3.40	3.58

Cross-tabulation: Weighted 5-point scale score for factors that scored under 3.80 by location of the respondent’s residence, and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Factor	Overall score	Inside the city limits (n=200)	Out/N of K-68 Hwy (n=100)	Out/S of K-68 Hwy (n=100)	Student, yes (n=145)	Student, past (n=132)	Student, never (n=123)
Preparing students to be college- and/or career-ready	3.76	3.85	3.79	3.55	4.08	3.61	3.5
The district’s record on fulfilling promises made to the community	3.76	3.77	3.86	3.62	3.96	3.70	3.56
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.75	3.74	3.85	3.67	3.87	3.70	3.65
Performance of the Paola School Board	3.64	3.63	3.74	3.58	3.91	3.50	3.44
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.53	3.58	3.53	3.43	3.63	3.58	3.35
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in major decision-making	3.51	3.52	3.63	3.40	3.72	3.38	3.40
Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent	3.48	3.47	3.56	3.40	3.79	3.36	3.21

Finding 2: The district’s “Teachers,” “Strong academics and “Community support,” were the most frequently mentioned district strengths. A total of 117 respondents thought the area where the district could most improve was “Managing the money/budget,” followed by “Don’t know” and “Communication.”

The evaluation portion of the survey closed with two open-ended questions offering respondents the chance to share their thoughts on the district’s strengths and on areas where it could improve.

All 400 responses to each question were read and, where possible, coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas to pinpoint the most frequently mentioned areas.

In doing so, “Teachers” (76 mentions) topped the list of strengths. This was followed by “Strong academics” (68 mentions) and “Community support” (63 mentions).

In terms of areas needing improvement, that list was led by “Managing the money/budget” (117 mentions), followed by “Don’t know” (89 mentions) and “Communication” (51 mentions). “Managing the money/budget” is a common one for all school districts on this question. Furthermore, having “Don’t know” be the second top response on this question is good news, because it means a notable percentage of the population has no specific concerns that are top of mind; their issues seem to be more broad-based.

Below the charts for each question are verbatim comments that are either “one-off” items, have more than one idea contained in the comment or are some combination of these factors. It is important to remember when reviewing these that each is one comment, by one person. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in enough quantity to be displayed in the chart associated with the question.

21. What do you think are the district’s strengths? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Teachers	76
Strong academics	68
Community support	63
Facilities	59
Small-town feel	47
Don’t know	30
Good school spirit	22
Other (see below)	21
Good athletics	14

Verbatim “other” comments
Teachers and administration.

Good leadership.

The training of students is the greatest strength of the district.

Quality teachers with parents that support the district.

Lots of extracurricular activities for the students to be involved in.

Facilities are fairly new. The size of our community is small. We should all expect teachers to have more commitment to educating students.

Kids are heavily involved in different events. It makes learning fun.

They care about each student and provide a good education for them.

The school teachers are wonderful. All my children have graduated from Paola and all have graduated universities and become professionals.

I'm not so sure there are any.

School buildings are new looking and very beautiful. Teachers are great.

Maybe the fact that they get a lot of support but are pretty much incapable of guiding.

We love this district. Lots to offer the students and has a great graduation rate.

School spirit is very good. Family atmosphere is there. The community and businesses also support the schools.

In my family, four generations of us have done well here in Paola. I even have a grandson who teaches nearby.

The high-quality new schools. The gyms and football field are excellent. They enhance the school district.

Offer advanced classes to those that need them.

I think the safety of the students and schools is good. At the elementary level, they do work well with children who have learning disabilities.

They do well with those that have special needs.

The administration is trying very hard to work with everyone to do the right things for the students.

22. Where could the district improve? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below*

Response	Number
Managing the money/budget	117
Don't know	89
Communication	51
Emphasize academics over sports	43
Finding more funding for programs	32
Hire more quality teachers	26
OK as is	24
Other (see below)	18

Verbatim “other” comments

They need to teach handwork, like mechanics, plumbing, carpentry construction, etc.

Get them off their phones and games and learn more.

More alcohol- and drug-related classes.

Perhaps an administration that is not in the good old boys network.

Teachers should give more individual help, when students need it.

I don't like the fact that they test so much and that it is tied to financing. It makes the students a pawn.

Put less emphasis on testing.

Start over and teach kids how to manage money and use skills needed to survive.

Commitment to each individual student and attention to each student goes down at the high school level.

Less focus on sports and more on arts and music. Many people would appreciate this.

They don't prepare students for the real world. They teach them how to pass tests, so more money comes into the district.

Bullying needs to be stopped the moment it shows up. There is no bullying, if kids are taught from the start to be the best they can be and be friendly to all.

Helping teach life skills.

The administration should pay more attention to fine arts. Sports programs receive too much attention.

Budget limits have an effect on teachers and programs; they do as well as they can.

More options with trade school classes.

The cost of running schools vs. rate of graduation give the picture.

Prioritizing the needs of the students could be improved. Probably too much emphasis is put on extracurricular activities and real-life skills teaching could be better.

23. Thinking about the last bond issue that was just completed by the school district, would you say you were...?

Response	Percentage
Very satisfied with the results	24%
Somewhat satisfied	18%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	42%
Somewhat dissatisfied	5%
Very dissatisfied	1%
Don't know (not read)	11%

Finding 3: Fifty-seven percent of the survey respondents believed that bullying was a problem in USD 368, while 25% believed it was not. However, 35% of the respondents who believed there was a problem said the district's response to these incidents was "about the same" as other school districts, and 31% said it was "much better."

The next section tackled the issue of whether bullying is an issue in the Paola USD 368 School District. More than half of the respondents (57%) seemed to think it was an issue, while 25% thought it was not.

Surprisingly, 31% of those same respondents who said, "Yes," it was a problem thought the district's response to bullying was "Much better" or "Somewhat better" in comparison to other school districts. Thirty-five percent said, "It is about the same," and no respondents said, "It is somewhat worse" or "It is much worse."

My next few questions have to do with a wide-ranging variety of ideas and topics related to the school district. In each case, please tell me what you think, remembering that all your responses are confidential.

24. Based on what you know or on what you may have heard from others, do you believe there is a bullying problem in USD 368?

Response	Percentage
Yes	57%
No	25%
Don't know (not read)	18%

25. Again, based on what you know or on what you may have heard from others, when a bullying incident occurs, how would you rate the district's response to that incident, compared to what you may know – or have heard about – other school districts? *Asked only of the 226 respondents who answered, "Yes" on question 24.*

Response	Percentage
Paola's response to bullying is much better	3%
It is somewhat better	28%
It is about the same	35%
It is somewhat worse	0%
It is much worse	0%
Don't know (not read)	34%

Finding 4: The next set of questions dealt with a variety of ideas for current and potential programs in the district. The majority of the respondents thought adding more career and technical education programs, expanding the STEM program, adding a performing arts center, and starting a 1-to-1 program for third through fifth grade were all "Excellent" or "Good" ideas. However, while 78% thought the same about expanding the alternative education program to the middle school level, only 31% said the same about expanding it into the elementary school level.

The survey then turned to ideas about current or potential programs being considered by the district.

Each idea was described in matter-of-fact terms. After the description had been read, the participant was asked whether this was "An excellent idea," "A good idea," "A fair (meaning less than good) idea," or "A poor idea." (While it was not presented as an option, the interviewers did record, "Don't know," if that was the response from the survey participant.)

The purpose of this exercise is to see what ideas stand out as being viewed very positively, which ones seem to be acceptable – even if they don't generate a lot of enthusiasm – and which, if any, should be cause for concern for the district.

The results showed a rather clear distinction, as two of the ideas had a measurable amount of popularity. The combined “An excellent idea/A good idea” scores were as follows (idea descriptions truncated):

- Addition of more career and technical education programs in the schools. (95%)
- Addition of more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs in the schools. (93%)

While they did not receive as high of a score, three of the ideas still had modest support from the respondents. The combined “An excellent idea/A good idea” scores were as follows (idea descriptions truncated):

- Expansion of the alternative education program to the middle school level. (78%)
- Construction of a 1,000-seat performing arts center for use by the schools and the community. (73%)
- Addition of a 1-to-1 program – meaning one computer device, tablet, etc. – for third-fifth grade. (67%)

One idea, however, had more opposition than support. Only 31% of the respondents thought the idea of expanding the alternative education program to the elementary school level was “An excellent idea ” or “A good idea,” while 68% thought it was “A fair (meaning less than good) idea” or “A poor idea.”

26. One idea that has been discussed is the addition of more career and technical education programs in the schools that were formerly referred to as vo-tech programs. Do you think this would be...?

Response	Percentage
An excellent idea	71%
A good idea	24%
A fair (meaning less than good) idea	<1%
A poor idea	<1%
Don't know (not read)	5%

27. Another idea is to expand the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math – known as STEM (SAY AS ONE WORD) – programs in the district. Do you think this would be...?

Response	Percentage
An excellent idea	56%
A good idea	37%
A fair (meaning less than good) idea	4%
A poor idea	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

28. Some people have suggested expanding the alternative education program in the district to the middle school level. Do you think this would be...?

Response	Percentage
An excellent idea	38%
A good idea	40%
A fair (meaning less than good) idea	12%
A poor idea	1%
Don't know (not read)	9%

29. Some have also suggested expanding the alternative education program to the elementary school level. Do you think this would be...?

Response	Percentage
An excellent idea	13%
A good idea	18%
A fair (meaning less than good) idea	31%
A poor idea	37%
Don't know (not read)	2%

30. As you may know, computers are everywhere in schools these days, helping students stay current with the changing technology. The school district is considering having a 1-to-1 program – meaning one computer device, tablet, etc. – available for each third- through fifth-grader. Older students already have these devices in school. Do you think this would be...?

Response	Percentage
An excellent idea	26%
A good idea	41%
A fair (meaning less than good) idea	20%
A poor idea	12%
Don't know (not read)	1%

31. If the district constructed a one-thousand-seat performing arts center that would be used by all the schools and would be available for community use, when it was not needed for school purposes. Do you think this would be...?

Response	Percentage
An excellent idea	30%
A good idea	43%
A fair (meaning less than good) idea	9%
A poor idea	16%
Don't know (not read)	2%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Excellent/Good” and “Fair/Poor” percentages for the current and potential ideas for district programs by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because five respondents refused to answer this question.

Project	Combined percentage	18-34 (n=71)	35-54 (n=180)	55 or older (n=144)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=267)	Female (n=231)	Male (n=169)
Expand CTE programs/ “Excellent/Good”	95%	87%	97%	95%	83%	98%	95%	95%	93%
Expand CTE programs/“Fair/Poor”	<1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Expand STEM programs/ “Excellent/Good”	93%	90%	96%	91%	85%	93%	94%	93%	93%
Expand STEM programs/“Fair/Poor”	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	4%
MS alternative ed program/ “Excellent/Good”	78%	76%	82%	73%	71%	79%	78%	76%	79%
MS alternative ed program/“Fair/Poor”	13%	10%	12%	17%	17%	13%	13%	14%	12%
Elementary alternative ed program/ “Excellent/Good”	31%	38%	29%	31%	27%	30%	31%	29%	34%
Elementary alternative ed program/“Fair/Poor”	68%	59%	70%	69%	73%	70%	67%	71%	65%
1-to-1 for third-fifth grade/ “Excellent/Good”	67%	65%	67%	67%	54%	66%	69%	67%	66%
1-to-1 for third-fifth grade/“Fair/Poor”	32%	35%	32%	32%	46%	32%	31%	32%	33%
Performing arts center/ “Excellent/Good”	73%	75%	76%	70%	68%	71%	75%	74%	72%
Performing arts center/“Fair/Poor”	25%	23%	24%	28%	32%	26%	24%	25%	26%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Excellent/Good” and “Fair/Poor” percentages for the current and potential ideas for district programs by location of the respondent’s residence, and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Project	Combined percentage	Inside the city limits (n=200)	Out/N of K-68 Hwy (n=100)	Out/S of K-68 Hwy (n=100)	Student, yes (n=145)	Student, past (n=132)	Student, never (n=123)
Expand CTE programs/ “Excellent/Good”	95%	95%	93%	95%	96%	97%	89%
Expand CTE programs/“Fair/Poor”	<1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
Expand STEM programs/ “Excellent/Good”	93%	94%	91%	93%	96%	94%	88%
Expand STEM programs/“Fair/Poor”	4%	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%	4%
MS alternative ed program/ “Excellent/Good”	78%	78%	75%	78%	80%	78%	73%
MS alternative ed program/“Fair/Poor”	13%	14%	11%	15%	12%	14%	15%
Elementary alternative ed program/ “Excellent/Good”	31%	33%	28%	29%	34%	29%	28%
Elementary alternative ed program/“Fair/Poor”	68%	66%	70%	71%	65%	70%	69%
1-to-1 for third-fifth grade/ “Excellent/Good”	67%	66%	68%	67%	69%	70%	61%
1-to-1 for third-fifth grade/“Fair/Poor”	32%	34%	30%	33%	30%	30%	37%
Performing arts center/ “Excellent/Good”	73%	72%	76%	72%	73%	76%	70%
Performing arts center/“Fair/Poor”	25%	27%	22%	26%	25%	23%	28%

Finding 5: Almost all the respondents (94%) supported the idea of the USD 368 School District and the city of Paola forming a joint recreation commission, as long as there was no mill levy increase. However, when the idea that it might require a one mill levy increase was posed, that support dropped to 68%.

Along the same lines as the project ideas being considered by the district, the respondents were next asked whether they would support the district in forming a joint recreation committee with the city of Paola, if there was no mill levy increase. The commission would be for activities for both children and adults.

The respondents were given the choices of “Very likely,” “Somewhat likely,” “Not very likely” and “Not at all likely.” The majority of the respondents (94%) said they would be “Very likely” or “Somewhat likely” to support it, while 6% said, “Don’t know.”

However, when they were asked whether they would still support the formation of the commission, if it required a one mill levy increase, only 68% said, “Very likely” or “Somewhat likely.” Twenty-two percent said, “Not very likely” or “Not at all likely,” and 10% said, “Don’t know.”

32. How likely would you be to support the forming of a joint recreation commission between the city and school district for activities for both children and adults, if it could be done with NO mill levy increase?

Response	Percentage
Very likely	54%
Somewhat likely	40%
Not very likely	<1%
Not all likely	0%
Don’t know (not read)	6%

33. What if the forming of this recreation commission required a one mill levy increase? How likely would you be to support it?

Response	Percentage
Very likely	17%
Somewhat likely	51%
Not very likely	14%
Not all likely	8%
Don’t know (not read)	10%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Very likely/Somewhat likely” and “Not very likely/Not at all likely” percentages for the support of the formation of a joint recreation commission with no mill levy increase and support with a one mill levy increase by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because five respondents refused to answer this question.

Project	Combined percentage	18-34 (n=71)	35-54 (n=180)	55 or older (n=144)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=92)	More than 15 years (n=267)	Female (n=231)	Male (n=169)
Joint recreation commission/ “Very likely/Somewhat likely”	94%	90%	94%	94%	95%	91%	94%	94%	93%
Joint recreation commission/ “Not very likely/Not at all likely”	<1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%
One mill levy increase/ “Very likely/Somewhat likely”	68%	56%	71%	71%	73%	67%	68%	67%	70%
One mill levy increase/ “Not very likely/Not at all likely”	22%	28%	20%	22%	22%	21%	22%	23%	21%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Very likely/Somewhat likely” and “Not very likely/Not at all likely” percentages for the support of the formation of a joint recreation commission with no mill levy increase and support with a one mill levy increase by location of the respondent’s residence, and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Project	Combined percentage	Inside the city limits (n=200)	Out/N of K-68 Hwy (n=100)	Out/S of K-68 Hwy (n=100)	Student, yes (n=145)	Student, past (n=132)	Student, never (n=123)
Joint recreation commission/ “Very likely/Somewhat likely”	94%	93%	94%	95%	95%	94%	91%
Joint recreation commission/ “Not very likely/Not at all likely”	<1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%
One mill levy increase/ “Very likely/Somewhat likely”	68%	68%	66%	71%	73%	71%	60%
One mill levy increase/ “Not very likely/Not at all likely”	22%	23%	24%	17%	17%	21%	29%

Finding 6: The survey then turned to the question of whether the district should continue using the former Hillsdale Elementary School for the offices of the Special Education Cooperative and Parents as Teachers program or find another use for it.

The last section about project ideas dealt with how the space at the formerly closed Hillsdale Elementary School should be used. Currently, part of it is occupied by the Special Education Cooperative and Parents as Teachers program.

When asked whether these two groups should continue using that space, “until enrollment trends warrant reopening it as an elementary school,” nearly three out of the four (72%) respondents thought that was the best idea.

However, not everyone was on board, as 31% said, “Convert the building into a Career and Technical Education Center,” and 16% said, “Utilize the building for expanded programming within the district.” (Another 4% said, “Don’t know.”)

34. As you may know, the district is using part of the space at the formerly closed Hillsdale Elementary School for the offices of the Special Education Cooperative and Parents as Teachers program. Other ideas for the building have been discussed, as well. I’m going to read a short list of them. Please tell me which one or ones you like, if any. If you have a different idea, please share that as well?

Response	Percentage
Continue using it for the Special Education Cooperative and the Parents as Teachers program, until enrollment trends warrant reopening it as an elementary school	72%
Convert the building into a Career and Technical Education Center	31%
Utilize the building for expanded programming within the district	16%
Other	0%
Don’t know (not read)	4%

Finding 7: Eight of 20 potential sources of district news (aside from weather-related school closing information) are consulted “frequently” by more than one in three survey respondents for such information.

The final substantive portion of the survey presented respondents a list of 20 potential sources of school district news. As the list was read, participants were asked to say, “Yes,” if they consulted this source “frequently” for school district news (other than weather-related school closing information). If they never consulted the source, or did so only every so often, they were asked to say, “No.”

Eight of the sources were said to be consulted frequently by more than one-third of the respondents. Topping the list, which is typically the case, was “Friends and neighbors,” at 84%, followed by “*The Miami County Republic* newspaper or website,” at 68%. The other top sources were:

- Teachers in the district – 42%
- Other district employees – 38%
- Outdoor marquee signs at local businesses – 37%
- The school district website – 36%
- Local civic clubs and organizations – 35%
- School and teacher emails – 34%

35. I’m wondering who you turn to for information about Paola USD 368. I’m going to read a short list of people and places where you could look for such information. If you consult this source frequently for district news – besides weather-related school closing information – please say, “Yes.” If you consult it only every so often, or you never consult it, please say, “No.” Let’s start with... *Responses are shown in the order of frequency of selection. In the interview process, however, they were rotated. The only exception was “Teachers in the district” and “Other district employees” were always kept together, in that order, to avoid confusion.*

Source	Percentage
Friends and neighbors	84%
<i>The Miami County Republic</i> newspaper or website	68%
Teachers in the district	42%

Other district employees, such as food service staff, para-professionals, custodial and those who work in the front office at individual schools	38%
Outdoor marquee signs at local businesses	37%
The school district website	36%
Local civic clubs and organizations	35%
School and teacher emails	34%
School principals	33%
School and teacher newsletters	32%
Members of the School Board – either in person or when a member of the Board is quoted in the news media	31%
District-sponsored social media sites	30%
The school district’s administration – either in person, or when a member of the administration is quoted in the news media	29%
Coaches and activity sponsors	26%
Social media sites not connected with the district, but where the district or individual school information is sometimes discussed	22%
The Parent Teacher Organization, also known as the PTO	21%
Booster clubs	20%
Textcaster, which is also called Panther Alerts	18%
Infinite Campus	13%
Web- and app-based communication	5%

Demographics

The final questions collected demographic information that was used to create the cross-tabulation data found earlier in the survey. This information is not subject to quota, but it typically presents a very accurate picture of the makeup of the community.

A few highlights from the demographics are:

- 67% of the survey participants had lived in the district more than 15 years.
- 61% were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 145 current student families, 132 past student families (meaning all the students in the household had graduated) and 123 “never” student families.
- Of the current student families, only 13% lost bus transportation, when the district eliminated it for students living less than two and a half miles from school.
- 31% who lost bus service said they would “Very likely” or “Somewhat likely” to pay a fee of \$500-\$750 per year for the service, while 38% said the same about a fee of \$350-\$500.
- 78% would “Definitely” or “Probably” support the idea of keeping the middle school promotion ceremony.
- 58% of the respondents were female, while 42% were male.

My last few questions will help us divide our interviews into groups.

36. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of Paola USD 368?
Is it...? Choices were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	2%
2 years to 5 years	9%
More than 5 years to 10 years	10%
More than 10 years to 15 years	13%
More than 15 years	52%
I’ve lived here all my life	15%

37. In what age group are you? Is it...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	2%
25 to 34	16%
35 to 44	21%
45 to 54	24%
55 to 64	19%
65 or older	17%
Refused (not read)	1%

38. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in USD 368 right now? *Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	131
Yes, both children and grandchildren	14
Yes, grandchildren	69
No	186

39. As you know, when the district was faced with a need to cut the budget, bus transportation for students living less than two and a half miles from their school was eliminated. Did your child or children lose bus transportation as a result of this decision? *Asked only of the 145 respondents who answered question 38, “Yes, children” or “Yes, both children and grandchildren.”*

Response	Percentage
Yes	13%
No	87%

40. If the district offered bus transportation for a fee of five hundred dollars per year to families living less than two and a half miles from school, with a maximum of seven hundred and fifty dollars per family, if there was more than one student in the family riding the bus, how likely would you be to sign up for this? *Asked only of the 19 respondents who answered, “Yes,” on question 39.*

Response	Percentage
Very likely	5%
Somewhat likely	26%
Not very likely	42%
Not all likely	11%
Don't know (not read)	16%

41. What if, instead the cost was three hundred fifty dollars per year, with a maximum of five hundred dollars per family, if there was more than one student in the family riding the bus? How likely would you be to sign up for this? *Asked only of the 13 respondents who did not answer, “Very likely” or “Somewhat likely” on question 40.*

Response	Percentage
Very likely	15%
Somewhat likely	23%
Not very likely	8%
Not all likely	15%
Don't know (not read)	39%

42. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated? *Asked only of the 255 respondents who did not answer question 38, “Yes, children” or “Yes, both children and grandchildren.” Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	120
Yes, both children and grandchildren	12
Yes, grandchildren	7
No	116

43. Finally, every year, the school district has hosted a middle school promotion ceremony for students and their families that typically lasts about 30 minutes. Some school districts have such events, while others do not. Do you think the Paola School District should continue to have such a ceremony? Would you say...?

Response	Percentage
Definitely yes	32%
Probably yes	46%
Probably no	10%
Definitely no	1%
Don't care (not read)	0%
Never heard of it (not read)	1%
Don't know (not read)	10%

Record Gender

Response	Percentage
Female	58%
Male	42%

Summary

The late November and early December 2018 survey of 400 randomly selected residents of the Paola USD 368 School District showed patrons are for the most part happy with their school district.

- They gave about half of the graded factors – plus the district’s overall performance – a grade of a “B” or better.
- They heaped praise on the district’s teachers, academics and community support. And while they had a common concern about “Managing the money/budget,” many had a difficult time identifying any areas of the district that needed improvement.
- Many were satisfied with the last bond issue that was just completed by the school district.
- While there were some concerns about bullying, they thought the district was doing a decent job in addressing it, as compared to other districts.
- They felt very strongly about most of the ideas being considered by the district, including expanding career and technical education and STEM programs, adding an alternative education program at the middle school level, building a performing arts center, and adding a 1-to-1 program for third- through fifth-grade students. However, they were less enthusiastic about adding an alternative education program at the elementary school level.
- They supported the idea of the city and school district creating a joint recreation commission, but they became less supportive, when it was suggested that it might need to be funded by a one mill levy increase.
- They also preferred keeping the Special Education Cooperative and Parents as Teachers program in the old Hillsdale Elementary School building.

As the district looks forward, it should study this data and make a determination about which ideas to consider moving forward with. If one of the ideas does not come to fruition, it is important to acknowledge that it was input from the residents that caused this decision.

Whenever the district moves forward, it will be essential to keep the message simple, benefit-driven and, most of all, repetitive. Always be explaining how each project will benefit the students, parents and community as a whole.