



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 1998

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SCHOOLS GET HIGH MARKS ON SURVEY
Schools Graded "A" or "B" by Approximately
75% of All Respondents

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA - DoDEA Director Lillian Gonzalez today released the results of the worldwide Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted in May 1998. Parents, students, teachers, and staff gave schools overwhelmingly positive ratings on items ranging from school climate and computer technology to the school counseling program

One hundred of DoDEA's overseas and domestic schools were selected through a stratified sampling technique to participate in the comprehensive survey rating their satisfaction levels with various aspects of school life and programs. Of the 33,291 responses received from the survey, 9,796 were from elementary students and 10,312 were from secondary students. There were 3,457 responses from teachers/staff, and 9,726 parents responded.

Parents gave their highest rating to teachers and principals/administrators. Elementary students reported the greatest satisfaction with teachers and computer technology, while secondary students chose their school counselors and computer technology. Teachers indicated a high level of career satisfaction and rated both their supervisors and their equipment and facilities very highly.

Responses to all items were analyzed to suggest priorities for change and/or improvement. Over the next few months, districts and individual schools will receive reports on their respective respondents. Given the complexity and volume of the data generated by the survey for DoDEA schools and districts, special orientation sessions will be held in each community as the local results are released over the next few months.

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In the spring of 2000, DoDEA will distribute a follow-up survey to the schools that participated in this initial phase. The current data will serve as a baseline against which the new responses will be measured. Schools that were not part of the initial survey will be involved in a spring 1999 administration. They, too, will receive a follow-up survey 2 years later to indicate any changes that may have taken place in the attitudes or satisfaction levels of the school communities.

The survey was developed and implemented by the Gordon S. Black Corporation, an organization that conducts similar surveys in over 120 U.S. school systems. It was designed to provide the research data required by Goal 9 of the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan: Accountability which includes Benchmark 4, "By the year 2000, DoDEA will become more service-oriented as measured by quality indicators." The survey results will assist schools and school districts to better appraise their success and to identify areas in which improvement will have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction.

MORE.....

1998 DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey

Executive Summary

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**1998 DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey
Executive Summary**

STUDY OVERVIEW

The Customer Satisfaction Survey has been instituted by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) to help provide information about the experiences and satisfaction levels of key school and district stakeholders (students, teachers and staff members, and parents). DoDEA leaders undertook the survey to develop a data-enriched environment for decision making and to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to present their views. Information provided by the study can highlight areas of strength and help to forge a blueprint for the future continuous improvement of the DoDEA system.

As noted in the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan (CSP) (August 1995, Volume 1), DoDEA “exists to build a world of learning and achievement for all students.” This implementation of the Customer Satisfaction Survey research is a direct result of Goal 9: Accountability, that included the benchmark (4) “By the year 2000, DoDEA will become more service-oriented as measured by quality indicators (e.g., customer support, organizational effectiveness, efficiency, quality management).” Note that throughout this report and the appendixes, specific goals and/or benchmarks from the DoDEA Community Strategic Plan will be referenced.

DoDEA piloted this Customer Satisfaction Survey in 100 schools across all districts in DoDEA. The stakeholders surveyed within these 100 schools were parents, teachers/staff and elementary and secondary students. Major issues addressed through this survey were: Equipment and Facilities, Computer Technology, The School Bus, Communications/Involvement, Teachers, Administration, Curriculum/Training, and Overall Satisfaction. Each stakeholder group was asked to respond to appropriate issues for their experiences (i.e., students were not asked about parental involvement issues).

STUDY ADMINISTRATION

DoDEA worked with a contractor, the Gordon S. Black Corporation (GSBC), to revise their standard Customer Satisfaction Survey instrument which has been administered in over 120 school districts across the United States so that items pertained to DoDEA schools and districts (i.e., Was your sponsor deployed this school year?).

The study was conducted in May, 1998. Sample of 100 schools was randomly selected by DoDEA Research and Evaluation to cut across areas and districts; fifteen DoDEA Framework schools were also included. (One Framework school is a primary school and was not included in the survey.) Questionnaires were shipped to 100 sites directly from the contractor. Actual addresses, rather than APOs were used. Postage-paid business return envelopes were supplied to facilitate the return of parent questionnaires. Student and employee answer documents were collected at each school site and returned directly to the contractor. Of the 100 sites in the sample, 99 sites received, completed, and returned the questionnaires. This is extremely impressive considering the time of year; many schools were completing their academic year at exactly the same time they received the questionnaires.

The number of questionnaires for each site was based upon February 1998 enrollment figures. Based on these figures, approximately 48,205 students were enrolled and 4,952 teachers and staff were employed at the 100 sites.

Data analyzed included responses from 10,149 elementary students, 11,029 secondary students, 3,498 teachers and staff, and 10,563 parents. Because no actual population counts were provided to the contractor, it is impossible to know exactly how many surveys were actually given to parents, students, and teachers/staff. For example, if a school enrollment was 500 students, the school received 500 parent questionnaires. However, since we cannot be certain that

they distributed 500 questionnaires, it would be inappropriate to calculate a response rate. However, for informational purposes, a return rate can be calculated that is based on the number of surveys sent with those returned. Of the student surveys, 44% of those sent were returned, 22% of the parent surveys and 71% of the teachers/staff. Although not a response rate, this rate does reflect positively about DoDEA stakeholders' interest in responding to surveys of this type. Appendix A contains the numbers of stakeholders responding to the survey, broken out by grade level of student and teacher or staff.

OVERALL RATINGS

The results from this customer satisfaction survey were extremely positive for DoDEA. Parents, teachers/staff and students identified many strengths within their schools. These ratings (e.g., 8.4 out of 10) are extremely high (most have a numerical rating of 7 or higher) and should be treated as baseline data.

Although satisfaction was rated very highly, DoDEA continues to strive to improve in all areas, thus, some priorities for change will be similar to the key strengths reported here. These data should be reviewed from the standpoint of helping to set goals within the school, district or system.

Graphs pertaining to these data can be found in Appendix B.

Key Strengths: (all ratings on a 0 to 10 scale):

Elementary Students

 Elementary students provide relatively high ratings for their main teacher (8.4 out of 10) and computer technology (8.0 out of 10) (CSP Goal 7 and Benchmarks 10.5 and 10.8).

- 82% of elementary students report their main teacher writes comments on their papers
- 92% of elementary students note their main teacher asks them to answer questions in class
- 88% of elementary students say their main teacher helps them want to learn
- 97% of elementary students use a computer at school (33% use the computer several times a week, while 22% use it every day)
- 84% of elementary students indicate that school computers help them learn
- 72% of students feel their classroom teacher is prepared to train them on the computer

Secondary Students

 Secondary students are most satisfied with their school counselor (7.4) and computer technology (7.1) (CSP Benchmarks 10.2, 10.5 and 10.8).

- 86% of secondary students say that the school counselor helps them with scheduling
- 80% of the secondary students report that the school counselor helps them with problems
- 77% of the secondary students feel their school counselor gives good advice about college
- 88% of secondary students use a computer at school
- 74% of secondary students report that school computers meet their needs

- 73% of secondary students feel school computers help them learn

Teachers/Staff

 Teachers and staff are most satisfied with their career (7.9 out of 10), and various levels of building administration: direct supervisor (7.5 out of 10) and principal (7.5 out of 10) (CSP Goal 7, and Benchmarks 10.1 and 10.3).

- 94% of employees say that they enjoy their work
- 88% of employees indicate their supervisor feels their job is valuable
- 82% of employees report they are challenged to continually improve
- 90% of employees say their direct supervisor shows confidence in them
- 85% of employees note their direct supervisor provides support for their work
- 84% of employees indicate that their direct supervisor shows appreciation for their work
- 89% of employees report their Principal shows confidence in them
- 89% of employees believe the Principal provides direction for the building
- 83% of employees say the Principal provides support for their work

Parents

 Parents are most satisfied with their child's teachers (7.5 out of 10), Principals/Administrators, computer technology (7.1 out of 10),

and equipment and facilities (7.1 out of 10) (CSP Goal 7, Goal 10, and Benchmarks 10.5, 10.8).

- 94% of parents feel teachers treat them with respect
- 80% of parents say teachers provide opportunities for parental involvement
- 79% of parents report that teachers challenge their child to learn
- 90% of parents believe school computers help their child learn
- 83% of parents say school computers meet the needs of their child
- 90% of parents indicate buildings and grounds are clean and in good condition
- 86% of parents say school library meets child's needs

RECOMMENDATIONS: PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

Continuous improvement is at the heart of the Customer Satisfaction Survey -- all areas of a school or district or system can be improved. The Customer Satisfaction Survey program is designed to ensure that a system, district or building focus on items which will make the most difference and have the greatest impact on performance and satisfaction. Some issues have a stronger relationship with overall satisfaction than other issues. This relationship between educational issues and satisfaction is the focus of these results. Thus a stakeholder group may be highly satisfied with an issue, but if this issue has a strong relationship with satisfaction this issue may be a priority of change as well as key strength. In other words, an issue that has a strong relationship with satisfaction as well as a high

rating of satisfaction by the stakeholder group may also become a system-wide priority.

The recommendations within this section summarize the findings identified from survey groups at schools, district and area levels. The results from each of these issues include responses from all sites that were included in the sample.

The recommendations have been categorized by major topic area (e.g., Curriculum/Instruction, Computer Technology, Equipment and Facilities, etc.). Those recommendations that should be considered first are listed first within a category. For instance, the highest priority for elementary students within the Curriculum/Instruction category should be “Consider additional means for engaging students in the classroom.” Second highest should be “Investigate the availability of resources in the school library/media center.” Users of these data should balance these priorities against resources when addressing these recommendations in planning efforts. Each recommendation should be viewed in perspective of what is feasible in terms of resources (i.e., money, time) and training, as well as what may be considered a short-term goal versus what may be considered a long-term goal.

Further explanation pertaining to these areas for improvement is provided in Appendix C.

Curriculum/Instructional:

Elementary Students

- *Consider additional means for engaging students in the classroom.* (CSP Goals 3 and 4)
- *Investigate the availability of resources in the school library/media center.* (CSP Benchmark 10.2)

- *Continue to provide ample opportunities for students to receive extra help, and encourage them to do so.* (CSP Benchmarks 3.1 and 10.2)

Secondary Students

- *Examine the presentation of curriculum in math and social studies classes.* (CSP Goals 3 and 4)
- *Determine how the schools can better prepare students for taking standardized tests.* (CSP Goals 3 and 4)
- *Outline a process for preparing students for the world of work.* (CSP Benchmark 3.11 and Goal 5)
- *Determine how schools can do a better job of preparing students for college.* (CSP Benchmark 5.1)
- *Ensure that avenues for seeking and obtaining extra help are clear and accessible.* (CSP Benchmarks 3.1 and 10.2)
- *Determine the level of support students would like to receive from their school counselor.* (CSP Benchmark 10.5)

Teachers/Staff

- *Develop additional means for helping students to master basic skills.* (CSP Benchmark 3.1)
- *Address concerns that schools do not expect academic excellence from all students.* (CSP Benchmark 10.5)

Parents

- *Review the required academic curriculum.* (CSP Goals 3 and 4)
- *Explore additional means for challenging students.* (CSP Goals 3 and 4)
- *Continue to actively work with parents to meet the special needs of their children.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1 and 8.5)

Computer Technology:

Elementary Students

- *Highlight opportunities to integrate computers into the learning process. (CSP Benchmarks 3.10 and 10.8)*

Parents

- *Optimize training in the use of computers. (CSP Benchmark 3.10)*

Equipment and Facilities:

Elementary Students

- *Examine the condition of school facilities. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*
- *Enhance the comfort level of classrooms. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*

Secondary Students

- *Monitor the comfort level of classrooms. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*
- *Examine the condition of school facilities. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*
- *Re-evaluate students' athletic facility and gym equipment needs. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*

Parents

- *Re-examine the athletic facilities/gym equipment at the schools. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*

School Atmosphere:

Elementary Students

- *Re-evaluate the quality and quantity of the food served in the lunchroom. (CSP Benchmark 10.5)*
- *Review school rules to be certain that all students have a clear understanding of both the rules, and the application of the rules. (CSP Benchmark 6.1)*

Secondary Students

- *Review and clarify the process that is followed at the building level for handling discipline. (CSP Benchmark 6.1)*
- *Review school rules to be certain that students have a clear understanding of the reason for the rules as well as the application of the rules. (CSP Benchmark 6.1)*

Teachers/Staff

- *Determine what changes can be made to school rules and school discipline policies to make both more effective.* (CSP Benchmark 6.1)
- *Implement processes, both formal and informal, for employee recognition.* (CSP Benchmark 10.4)
- *Clarify employees' concerns regarding school rules.* (CSP Benchmark 6.1)
- *Continue to challenge employees to improve.* (CSP Benchmark 10.4)
- *Determine if anything can be done either at the school, district, or system level to enhance employees' work experience.* (CSP Benchmark 10.5)

Parents

- *Ensure that school provides a safe, secure environment for all children.* (CSP Benchmark 6.1)

Communications/Involvement:

Teachers/Staff

- *Review the process that is followed for allowing employees to influence policies that affect them.* (CSP Benchmark 10.3)
- *Enhance communication with building administration.* (CSP Benchmarks 10.1 and 10.7)
- *Provide employees with additional opportunities to influence the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.* (CSP Benchmark 10.1)

- *Define employee expectations regarding the direction that the Principal provides for the building.* (CSP Benchmark 10.7)

Parents

- *Include parents' views in the decision-making process, as appropriate.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)
- *Promote communication between teachers and parents that will highlight students' successes.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)
- *Provide additional feedback to parents when their child has a problem.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)
- *Consider additional problem-solving strategies for issues brought before the administration.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)
- *Monitor the variety and schedule of extracurricular opportunities, and clearly communicate information about the activities that are currently available.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)

Parental Support:

Teachers/Staff

- *Define "parental support" and determine where it is perceived as lacking by teachers and staff.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)

Parents

- *Investigate the reason(s) why parents have problems with some teachers.* (CSP Benchmark 8.1)

DDESS/DODDS

Data representing the schools from each of these school systems are provided in Appendix D. Overall, satisfaction ratings were quite high for each system, with DoDDS secondary students' overall

satisfaction the lowest at a 6.5. Computer technology and main teachers were rated very highly for both DDESS and DoDDS elementary students. Secondary students were not as highly satisfied as elementary students, but this is typical of students as they proceed through school. However, both DDESS (7.5) and DoDDS (7.4) secondary students were highly satisfied with their school counselor. Teachers/staffs in DDESS and DoDDS were both highly satisfied with their career (DDESS: 8.2, DoDDS: 7.7) and their principal (DDESS: 8.2, DoDDS: 7.2). Parents in both DDESS and DoDDS were very satisfied with their child's teachers (DDESS: 7.9, DoDDS: 7.3) and Equipment and Facilities at the schools (DDESS: 7.3, DoDDS: 7.0). Additional executive summaries are being prepared for each area, DoDDS-Europe, DoDDS-Pacific, and DDESS.

FRAMEWORK/NON-FRAMEWORK

Data representing the schools categorized as Framework and Non-Framework are provided in Appendix E. The results within these two groups of schools were also very similar. All stakeholders were very satisfied with their schools. Framework schools' parents and students were more satisfied overall than their Non-Framework counterparts.

Elementary students in Framework schools had an overall satisfaction rating of 7.7 while Non-Framework elementary students' rating was slightly less (7.6). The secondary students at Framework schools were highly satisfied (7.1, Non-Framework: 6.6). Framework parents had an overall satisfaction rating of 7.2 (Non-Framework parents: 6.9). Both the Framework and Non-Framework elementary students were very satisfied with their teachers (8.4 for both), while secondary students rated their school counselor very highly (7.6 Framework, 7.4 Non-Framework). Teachers in both

groups were highly satisfied with their career (7.9 for both groups) and rated their principals very highly (7.7 Framework, 7.5 Non-Framework).

SUMMARY

The information provided through this project will allow the DoDEA to make decisions in a fact-based context, and allow customer and employee satisfaction to help move the system forward. By addressing the concerns listed above and reviewing the data in the full report, DoDEA will maximize student, teachers/staff, and parent satisfaction and therefore productivity and involvement.

The levels of performance are strong in areas and in need of improvement in others. The key is to keep the improvement process moving forward. **Knowing how to improve matters much more than the absolute performance of DoDEA.**

This study should be viewed as the first step in the total quality improvement process. Now that DoDEA has reliable data on satisfaction, schools, districts, and DoDEA can continue to move forward, working towards solutions to the issues surfaced in the study.

Clarification of some issues may be required before a solution can be created. For these, schools and/or districts must convene groups of students, staff, or parents to define their concerns and to suggest solutions. Clarification processes have resulted in clearer direction for continuous improvement planning. For example, one district surveyed by GSBC found that the root cause of elementary children reporting that their main teacher did not give interesting homework was that the students had no clear understanding of the purpose behind many of the homework assignments. This explanation is now part of the process.

Once DoDEA has an improvement plan in place, it will be important to measure progress. The next wave of this study should occur when

enough time has elapsed for the improvements to take hold. The improvements do not need to be large. Continuous improvement is an ongoing process. The objective of a follow-up study would be to document progress, highlight areas where improvement is moving, and to revisit the priorities for change. In summary, DoDEA should be very encouraged by these results and motivated to keep the quality process moving in the entire system.

NEXT STEPS

DoDEA is committed to continuous improvement. Therefore, several things will happen as a result of this survey. Training in the interpretation and use of the results will begin in the spring, 1999. This will help to ensure that all members of each community understand the results and feel comfortable interpreting the data and incorporating it in the improvement planning efforts for fall, 1999.

A pilot training will be conducted with a small sample of schools to ensure that the training sessions meet the needs of the communities and to identify useful strategies for the clarification process.

The training sessions will also be a venue to discuss other issues to be included in the follow-up survey in 1999-2000.

This Customer Satisfaction Survey project was a pilot project with an initial assessment of 100 schools. It is expected that these 100 schools will be surveyed again in spring, 2000 to measure improvements while the remaining DoDEA schools surveyed spring, 1999 and 2001.

