



School District of Fort Atkinson

SURVEY REPORT
November 2019

Prepared by



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School District of Fort Atkinson has been engaged in a process to gather feedback from the community regarding its school culture and climate, while also working to share information on the district's needs and potential solutions to those needs.

To continue this community engagement effort, the Board of Education and administration requested that a survey be conducted. The survey was organized by the Donovan Group. Input from community members will be used to evaluate community members' opinions on a wide range of issues pertinent to the school district and its students and families.

It is worth noting that, for most of the survey questions, there was a high level of clarity and consistency in terms of the preferences expressed by survey takers. To that end, it is unlikely that more responses would have significantly changed the survey's results.

This report provides a summary of responses to the survey, along with analysis from the Donovan Group team.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The survey was administered using the Donovan Group's survey engine. Efforts were made to ensure that all eligible respondents had the opportunity to take the survey, but that no respondents took it multiple times. In accordance with best practices in online research and to protect the security of the survey, internet protocol (IP) addresses were logged and each response was time-stamped.

To date, there is no reason to believe anyone has taken the survey more than once or that anyone from outside the district has taken the survey.

To encourage residents to take the survey, the school district issued a news release, sent an email to all district parents/guardians, and shared links to the survey several times to social media. The survey was open from October 26 to November 11, 2019.

Finally, it is worth noting that, by design, this data is not based on a scientific sample. Therefore, it should be treated as qualitative data that is similar to data from a large number of focus groups. Because we used a convenience sample, it would be methodologically inappropriate to carry out a regression analysis or attempt to calculate error. Our response pool to date is a solid one that provides sound data to the board.

SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 554 community members completed the survey. To complete the survey, respondents must have clicked "submit" at the end of the survey and answered all the required questions.

Below are the questions and their corresponding responses. The first set of data (in black) reflect the responses of all completed surveys. The second set of data (in blue) indicate responses from a comparison group of district residents who are not current parents of preschool or school-aged students, employees or students. Please note that the comparison group does include parents of former district students.

We typically find the comparison group to be a more accurate representation of the general population. There were 184 completed results in the comparison group. This is a solid comparison group, representing about one-third of the total respondents.

1) What is your age?*

Under 18	0.54%	1.09%
18-25	1.08%	2.17%
26-34	13.00%	11.41%
35-44	29.78%	8.15%
45-54	24.91%	11.96%
55-64	13.00%	26.09%
65 or over	17.69%	39.13%

2) Where do you reside?*

City of Fort Atkinson	64.80%	71.74%
Township of Cold Spring	1.44%	1.63%
Township of Hebron	1.99%	1.09%
Township of Jefferson	2.53%	2.72%
Township of Koshkonong	20.58%	13.04%
Township of Lima	0.00%	0.00%
Township of Oakland	2.89%	3.80%
Township of Palmyra	0.18%	0.54%
Township of Sumner	3.07%	4.35%
Other	2.53%	1.09%

3) How long have you lived in the School District of Fort Atkinson?*

Less than 1 year	2.53%	4.35%
Between 1 and 5 years	10.83%	8.15%
Between 5 and 10 years	13.00%	9.78%
Between 10 and 20 years	22.38%	10.87%
Between 20 and 30 years	19.49%	23.37%
More than 30 years	28.70%	41.85%
I do not live in the District	3.07%	1.63%

4) Please check all of the following that apply to you.*

I do not have children	6.25%	18.05%
I have children who are younger than 4K/Elementary school age	7.71%	6.86%
I have children in 4-year-old Kindergarten	2.50%	0.00%
I have children who currently attend a Fort Atkinson public school (K-12)	30.63%	0.00%
I have children who graduated from or previously attended a Fort Atkinson public school (K-12)	17.40%	31.41%
I have grandchildren who currently attend or have attended a Fort Atkinson public school (K-12)	3.96%	6.86%
I have children who currently attend or have attended a private school	4.58%	0.00%
I have grandchildren who currently attend or have attended a private school	1.25%	2.17%
I attended a Fort Atkinson public school	13.65%	15.52%
I am a community member who has never had children	2.92%	9.39%

I am a Fort Atkinson public school employee	5.52%	0.00%
Other	3.65%	9.75%

5) If your child(ren) currently attend a Fort Atkinson public school, what school(s) do they attend? Please check all that apply.

Jefferson County Head Start or four-year-old kindergarten at a School District partner site (4K sites are Kids Konnection, Fort Atkinson Preschool and Daycare, Parents Cooperative Preschool, and St Joseph’s Catholic Church)	3.34%
Barrie Elementary School	6.83%
Luther Elementary School	7.74%
Purdy Elementary School (including 4K and Early Childhood)	5.16%
Rockwell Elementary School	7.59%
Fort Atkinson Middle School	16.84%
Fort Atkinson High School	19.58%
I do not have school-aged children	32.93%

6) Do you rent or own your home?

Rent	9.62%	11.96%
Own	90.38%	88.04%

Next, we asked respondents a series of questions that were specific to their school or about the district as a whole. The answers here will reflect how respondents answered about the schools their children attend as applicable.

7) Overall, how would you rate the communication at your student’s current school over the last year? Please fill in the blank with the name of your student’s school.

Jefferson Co Head Start		Rockwell Elementary	
Very effective	72.73%	Very effective	72.00%
Somewhat effective	9.09%	Somewhat effective	22.00%
Not very effective	4.55%	Not very effective	2.00%
Very ineffective	0.00%	Very ineffective	2.00%
No opinion	13.64%	No opinion	2.00%
Barrie Elementary		Fort Atkinson Middle School	
Very effective	71.11%	Very effective	52.25%
Somewhat effective	22.22%	Somewhat effective	29.73%
Not very effective	2.22%	Not very effective	13.51%
Very ineffective	0.00%	Very ineffective	1.80%
No opinion	4.44%	No opinion	2.70%
Luther Elementary		Fort Atkinson High School	
Very effective	92.16%	Very effective	34.88%

Somewhat effective	7.84%	Somewhat effective	46.51%
Not very effective	0.00%	Not very effective	12.40%
Very ineffective	0.00%	Very ineffective	2.33%
No opinion	0.00%	No opinion	3.88%

Purdy Elementary

Very effective	67.65%
Somewhat effective	26.47%
Not very effective	0.00%
Very ineffective	2.94%
No opinion	2.94%

8) Overall, how would you rate the District’s communication over the last year?

Very effective	29.13%	9.38%
Somewhat effective	43.93%	34.38%
Not very effective	10.68%	10.94%
Very ineffective	3.40%	7.81%
No opinion	12.86%	37.50%

9) How would you prefer to receive information regarding the School District of Fort Atkinson? Please check your top three choices.

Email	26.93%	14.00%
Daily newspaper (Daily Jefferson County Union)	6.57%	29.33%
Weekly advertisers (Jefferson County Living, Good Morning Advertiser)	0.58%	2.00%
Local radio (AM – 940 WFAW, FM – WSJY 107.3/WKCH 106.5)	2.33%	9.33%
District mailings	9.48%	13.33%
District/school website (www.fortschools.org)	6.73%	8.67%
District/school newsletters	5.90%	2.67%
Interaction with staff	3.49%	2.00%
Backpack stuffers (4K–5th grade)	4.82%	0.00%
Meetings at schools	0.91%	0.00%
Phone	3.49%	0.00%
Text message	15.54%	1.33%
School Board meetings	1.16%	4.00%
Video/cable, TV/webinars, and/or recordings	0.58%	1.33%
Social media (Facebook/Twitter/other)	9.81%	10.00%
Conversations (community meetings, groups, friends, etc.)	1.16%	0.67%
Not interested in receiving information.	0.25%	0.00%
Other	0.25%	1.33%

10) How often would you prefer to receive communication from your student’s school? Please fill in the blank with the name of your student’s school.

Jefferson Co Head Start		Rockwell Elementary	
Quarterly	4.55%	Quarterly	0.00%
Monthly	13.64%	Monthly	16.00%
Bi-weekly	13.64%	Bi-weekly	18.00%

Weekly	27.27%
Only when important	13.64%
No preference	22.73%
Never	4.55%

Barrie Elementary

Quarterly	2.22%
Monthly	22.22%
Bi-weekly	15.56%
Weekly	31.11%
Only when important	13.33%
No preference	15.56%
Never	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Quarterly	0.00%
Monthly	13.73%
Bi-weekly	17.65%
Weekly	47.06%
Only when important	11.76%
No preference	9.80%
Never	0.00%

Purdy Elementary

Quarterly	0.00%
Monthly	26.47%
Bi-weekly	11.76%
Weekly	44.12%
Only when important	8.82%
No preference	8.82%
Never	0.00%

Weekly	42.00%
Only when important	14.00%
No preference	10.00%
Never	0.00%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Quarterly	0.00%
Monthly	23.42%
Bi-weekly	21.62%
Weekly	33.33%
Only when important	11.71%
No preference	9.91%
Never	0.00%

Fort Atkinson High School

Quarterly	4.65%
Monthly	42.64%
Bi-weekly	12.40%
Weekly	19.38%
Only when important	11.63%
No preference	9.30%
Never	0.00%

11) How often would you prefer to receive communication from the District?

Quarterly	16.26%	18.46%
Monthly	34.22%	26.15%
Bi-weekly	6.55%	4.62%
Weekly	7.28%	10.77%
Only when important	24.03%	27.69%
No preference	10.92%	12.31%
Never	0.73%	0.00%

12) If you had a question/concern about the School District of Fort Atkinson, where would you look first to get answers?

District's website	58.78%	53.13%
District's social media pages	6.10%	7.81%
A Board Member	2.68%	6.25%
A District principal	13.41%	9.38%
A teacher employed by the District	10.73%	9.38%
Another District employee	2.44%	3.13%
A community leader (ex: a member of the chamber or the city manager)	0.98%	3.13%

Other	4.88%	7.81%
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13) Do you visit the District’s website?

Yes	76.21%	56.92%
No	23.79%	43.08%

14) If you answered yes to the previous question, why do you visit the District’s website? Please check all that apply.

Skyward parent access/check grades, student schedules, etc.	19.28%	4.00%
Search for upcoming events/view calendar	23.55%	23.00%
Access staff contact information	14.25%	10.00%
To view lunch menus	9.78%	3.00%
To view sports/co-curricular schedules	11.49%	13.00%
To learn more about the school district's current events	11.21%	18.00%
To view District policies, bylaws and guidelines	5.32%	11.00%
Review school board agendas/minutes	3.80%	11.00%
PowerSchool	1.33%	7.00%
Other	0.00%	0.00%

15) Do you believe the District is doing its best for all children in their schools?*

Strongly agree	34.00%	27.72%
Somewhat agree	45.93%	46.74%
Disagree	10.31%	7.07%
Strongly Disagree	3.07%	2.72%
No opinion	6.69%	15.76%

16) How would you describe the District to someone who is not familiar with it? *

The majority of the responses here were positive, with individuals indicating they feel the district is good or great, with strong teachers and many options for students. There are the typical negative comments as well, on topics such as students’ academic performance, administration and facilities. A sampling of unedited comments is below:

Positive comments:

- *Sound, strong foundation. Great administrative leadership and teachers & support staff who care. Contributes to strong academic growth to most students. Prepares today's students for tomorrow's challenges.*
- *Welcoming schools and staff. My children are very happy in their schools.*
- *The District has many classes to choose your path. Also, has many clubs and extracurricular for your student to have a well rounded education.*
- *It is a good school district with some great teachers who care about the education that a child receives. However there are some teachers that have given up. Teachers need to be able to say NO to students that do not complete school work. One that needs to stop accepting that it is okay on a daily basis for other students to interrupt learning for those that want to learn. Make the student and the parent accountable.*
- *I frequently brag about our school district during recruitment communications - our district offered options for all types of learners, whether special needs or advanced learners. A wide variety of extracurricular activities is available, including sports, music and arts, and other activities.*

Negative comments:

- *A good school district but it isn't staying competitive. This school district was once THE district in this area and I don't see this as the case anymore. I think other districts are excelling in ways we once did in academic performance.*
- *Falling behind at the moment. Our average ACT scores are low we need to adapt to the changing conditions. Add prep courses find ways to aide kids into proper tracks; college, tech schools, etc*
- *Unfortunately, not favorably. The district (primarily the administrative team and school board) have not stood up for ALL students in the past couple of years. Decisions have been made that have very negatively affected students and staff with very little and/or poor communication from the administrative team. And unfortunately our school board DOES NOT do their due diligence in listening to the community and questioning the administration. Sadly, I feel the currently leadership of the SDFA has greatly lessened the quality reputation our district used to have.*
- *Wastes money on a \$50,000 sign that is not needed or benefits our community. Schools need improvement both technology wise and structurally. This school district favors children that are in sports and ignore children who are "different."*

Next, we asked respondents to answer questions about the schools their children attend. If respondents have children in multiple schools, opportunity was given to submit answers for each school. If respondents do not have children in the district, they were directed to the "Background Information on Funding" section.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

17) Teachers at my student's school have high standards for achievement.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	55.26%
Somewhat agree	31.58%
Disagree	10.53%
Strongly disagree	2.63%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	70.49%
Somewhat agree	24.59%
Disagree	4.92%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	76.12%
Somewhat agree	17.91%
Disagree	4.48%
Strongly disagree	1.49%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	56.86%
Somewhat agree	33.33%
Disagree	5.88%
Strongly disagree	3.92%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	57.58%
Somewhat agree	31.82%
Disagree	7.58%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	45.67%
Somewhat agree	44.09%
Disagree	7.09%
Strongly disagree	3.15%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	38.36%
Somewhat agree	53.42%
Disagree	7.53%
Strongly disagree	0.68%

18) Teachers at my student's school work hard to make sure that students do well.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	60.53%
Somewhat agree	31.58%
Disagree	7.89%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	72.13%
Somewhat agree	22.95%
Disagree	4.92%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	74.63%
Somewhat agree	19.40%
Disagree	4.48%
Strongly disagree	1.49%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	58.00%
Somewhat agree	32.00%
Disagree	6.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	62.12%
Somewhat agree	30.30%
Disagree	4.55%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	42.52%
Somewhat agree	44.09%
Disagree	10.24%
Strongly disagree	3.15%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	37.24%
Somewhat agree	48.97%
Disagree	12.41%
Strongly disagree	1.38%

19) Teachers at my student's school promote academic success for all students.**Jefferson Co Head Start**

Strongly agree	63.16%
Somewhat agree	26.32%
Disagree	10.53%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	65.57%
Somewhat agree	27.87%
Disagree	6.56%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	76.12%
Somewhat agree	17.91%
Disagree	4.48%
Strongly disagree	1.49%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	54.00%
Somewhat agree	36.00%
Disagree	6.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	59.09%
Somewhat agree	28.79%
Disagree	9.09%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	48.82%
Somewhat agree	39.37%
Disagree	7.09%
Strongly disagree	4.72%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	36.55%
Somewhat agree	47.59%
Disagree	14.48%
Strongly disagree	1.38%

SCHOOL SAFETY

20) My student's school sets clear rules for behavior.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	60.53%
Somewhat agree	26.32%
Disagree	13.16%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	59.02%
Somewhat agree	32.79%
Disagree	8.20%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	67.16%
Somewhat agree	25.37%
Disagree	5.97%
Strongly disagree	1.49%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	42.00%
Somewhat agree	46.00%
Disagree	8.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	53.03%
Somewhat agree	34.85%
Disagree	9.09%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	44.09%
Somewhat agree	40.16%
Disagree	11.02%
Strongly disagree	4.72%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	36.55%
Somewhat agree	51.03%
Disagree	10.34%
Strongly disagree	2.07%

21) My student feels safe at school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	73.68%
Somewhat agree	18.42%
Disagree	7.89%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	70.49%
Somewhat agree	26.23%
Disagree	3.28%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	61.19%
Somewhat agree	29.85%
Disagree	4.48%
Strongly disagree	4.48%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	58.00%
Somewhat agree	32.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	54.55%
Somewhat agree	37.88%
Disagree	4.55%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	42.52%
Somewhat agree	46.46%
Disagree	9.45%
Strongly disagree	1.57%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	51.72%
Somewhat agree	42.07%
Disagree	4.14%
Strongly disagree	2.07%

Disagree	6.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

22) My student feels safe going to and from school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	71.05%
Somewhat agree	23.68%
Disagree	5.26%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	73.77%
Somewhat agree	21.31%
Disagree	4.92%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	67.16%
Somewhat agree	22.39%
Disagree	7.46%
Strongly disagree	2.99%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	68.00%
Somewhat agree	22.00%
Disagree	4.00%
Strongly disagree	6.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	63.64%
Somewhat agree	25.76%
Disagree	6.06%
Strongly disagree	4.55%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	59.84%
Somewhat agree	31.50%
Disagree	6.30%
Strongly disagree	2.36%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	65.52%
Somewhat agree	29.66%
Disagree	3.45%
Strongly disagree	1.38%

23) School rules are consistently enforced at my student's school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	60.53%
Somewhat agree	23.68%
Disagree	15.79%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	55.74%
Somewhat agree	32.79%
Disagree	11.48%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	61.19%
Somewhat agree	28.36%
Disagree	7.46%
Strongly disagree	2.99%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	42.00%
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Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	46.97%
Somewhat agree	37.88%
Disagree	12.12%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	28.35%
Somewhat agree	45.67%
Disagree	18.90%
Strongly disagree	7.09%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	24.83%
Somewhat agree	52.41%
Disagree	18.62%
Strongly disagree	4.14%

Somewhat agree	42.00%
Disagree	12.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

24) School rules and procedures at my student's school are fair.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	57.89%
Somewhat agree	28.95%
Disagree	13.16%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	54.10%
Somewhat agree	34.43%
Disagree	11.48%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	70.15%
Somewhat agree	20.90%
Disagree	7.46%
Strongly disagree	1.49%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	46.00%
Somewhat agree	42.00%
Disagree	8.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	54.55%
Somewhat agree	33.33%
Disagree	9.09%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	40.94%
Somewhat agree	46.46%
Disagree	7.87%
Strongly disagree	4.72%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	37.24%
Somewhat agree	53.10%
Disagree	7.59%
Strongly disagree	2.07%

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

25) My student feels successful at school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	65.79%
Somewhat agree	26.32%
Disagree	7.89%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	54.10%
Somewhat agree	36.07%
Disagree	6.56%
Strongly disagree	3.28%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	61.19%
Somewhat agree	29.85%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	43.94%
Somewhat agree	40.91%
Disagree	12.12%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	34.65%
Somewhat agree	48.82%
Disagree	11.81%
Strongly disagree	4.72%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	33.79%
Somewhat agree	54.48%

Disagree	5.97%	Disagree	8.97%
Strongly disagree	2.99%	Strongly disagree	2.76%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	44.00%
Somewhat agree	44.00%
Disagree	6.00%
Strongly disagree	6.00%

26) My student is frequently recognized for good behavior.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	47.37%
Somewhat agree	31.58%
Disagree	21.05%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	39.39%
Somewhat agree	37.88%
Disagree	15.15%
Strongly disagree	7.58%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	47.54%
Somewhat agree	39.34%
Disagree	9.84%
Strongly disagree	3.28%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	30.71%
Somewhat agree	43.31%
Disagree	18.11%
Strongly disagree	7.87%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	55.22%
Somewhat agree	34.33%
Disagree	7.46%
Strongly disagree	2.99%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	16.55%
Somewhat agree	52.41%
Disagree	26.21%
Strongly disagree	4.83%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	36.00%
Somewhat agree	34.00%
Disagree	20.00%
Strongly disagree	10.00%

27) I feel comfortable talking to teachers at my student's school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	57.89%
Somewhat agree	28.95%
Disagree	13.16%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	62.12%
Somewhat agree	27.27%
Disagree	6.06%
Strongly disagree	4.55%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	62.30%
Somewhat agree	26.23%
Disagree	9.84%
Strongly disagree	1.64%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	49.61%
Somewhat agree	35.43%
Disagree	11.02%
Strongly disagree	3.94%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	74.63%
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Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	46.21%
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Somewhat agree	17.91%	Somewhat agree	42.76%
Disagree	4.48%	Disagree	9.66%
Strongly disagree	2.99%	Strongly disagree	1.38%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	52.00%
Somewhat agree	34.00%
Disagree	8.00%
Strongly disagree	6.00%

28) Staff at my student’s school communicate well with parents.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	52.63%
Somewhat agree	34.21%
Disagree	13.16%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	48.48%
Somewhat agree	34.85%
Disagree	12.12%
Strongly disagree	4.55%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	40.98%
Somewhat agree	49.18%
Disagree	8.20%
Strongly disagree	1.64%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	30.71%
Somewhat agree	42.52%
Disagree	21.26%
Strongly disagree	5.51%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	70.15%
Somewhat agree	20.90%
Disagree	5.97%
Strongly disagree	2.99%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	20.69%
Somewhat agree	52.41%
Disagree	20.69%
Strongly disagree	6.21%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	40.00%
Somewhat agree	44.00%
Disagree	10.00%
Strongly disagree	6.00%

29) I feel welcome at my student’s school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	65.79%
Somewhat agree	23.68%
Disagree	10.53%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	66.67%
Somewhat agree	22.73%
Disagree	6.06%
Strongly disagree	4.55%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	70.49%
Somewhat agree	18.03%
Disagree	9.84%
Strongly disagree	1.64%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	47.24%
Somewhat agree	36.22%
Disagree	11.81%
Strongly disagree	4.72%

Luther Elementary

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	68.66%	Strongly agree	46.21%
Somewhat agree	23.88%	Somewhat agree	44.14%
Disagree	4.48%	Disagree	7.59%
Strongly disagree	2.99%	Strongly disagree	2.07%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	54.00%
Somewhat agree	36.00%
Disagree	4.00%
Strongly disagree	6.00%

30) All students are treated fairly at my student's school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	60.53%
Somewhat agree	23.68%
Disagree	15.79%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	42.42%
Somewhat agree	36.36%
Disagree	18.18%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	49.18%
Somewhat agree	34.43%
Disagree	13.11%
Strongly disagree	3.28%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	31.50%
Somewhat agree	45.67%
Disagree	18.11%
Strongly disagree	4.72%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	56.72%
Somewhat agree	31.34%
Disagree	8.96%
Strongly disagree	2.99%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	26.90%
Somewhat agree	55.86%
Disagree	15.17%
Strongly disagree	2.07%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	38.00%
Somewhat agree	42.00%
Disagree	16.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

31) Teachers at my student's school treat all students with respect.

Jefferson Co Head Start

	63.16%
Strongly agree	21.05%
Somewhat agree	15.79%
Disagree	0.00%
Strongly disagree	

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	66.67%
Somewhat agree	22.73%
Disagree	7.58%
Strongly disagree	3.03%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	55.74%
Somewhat agree	31.15%
Disagree	9.84%
Strongly disagree	3.28%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	37.80%
Somewhat agree	47.24%
Disagree	11.02%
Strongly disagree	3.94%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	70.15%
Somewhat agree	22.39%
Disagree	4.48%
Strongly disagree	2.99%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	54.00%
Somewhat agree	34.00%
Disagree	8.00%
Strongly disagree	4.00%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	30.34%
Somewhat agree	59.31%
Disagree	9.66%
Strongly disagree	0.69%

PARENT INVOLVEMENT**32) I attend parent/teacher conferences at my student's school.****Jefferson Co Head Start**

Strongly agree	52.63%
Somewhat agree	13.16%
Disagree	15.79%
Strongly disagree	18.42%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	70.49%
Somewhat agree	3.28%
Disagree	13.11%
Strongly disagree	13.11%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	68.66%
Somewhat agree	10.45%
Disagree	11.94%
Strongly disagree	8.96%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	54.00%
Somewhat agree	10.00%
Disagree	20.00%
Strongly disagree	16.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	68.18%
Somewhat agree	6.06%
Disagree	15.15%
Strongly disagree	10.61%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	67.72%
Somewhat agree	12.60%
Disagree	13.39%
Strongly disagree	6.30%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	56.55%
Somewhat agree	20.69%
Disagree	15.86%
Strongly disagree	6.90%

33) I am actively involved in activities at my student's school.**Jefferson Co Head Start**

Strongly agree	34.21%
Somewhat agree	26.32%
Disagree	21.05%
Strongly disagree	18.42%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	36.07%
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Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	25.76%
Somewhat agree	37.88%
Disagree	22.73%
Strongly disagree	13.64%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	15.08%
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Somewhat agree	34.43%
Disagree	14.75%
Strongly disagree	14.75%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	23.88%
Somewhat agree	49.25%
Disagree	16.42%
Strongly disagree	10.45%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	18.00%
Somewhat agree	48.00%
Disagree	20.00%
Strongly disagree	14.00%

Somewhat agree	41.27%
Disagree	33.33%
Strongly disagree	10.32%

Fort Atkinson High School

Strongly agree	26.21%
Somewhat agree	40.00%
Disagree	25.52%
Strongly disagree	8.28%

34) I frequently volunteer to help with special projects at my student's school.

Jefferson Co Head Start

Strongly agree	18.42%
Somewhat agree	26.32%
Disagree	34.21%
Strongly disagree	21.05%

Barrie Elementary

Strongly agree	21.31%
Somewhat agree	32.79%
Disagree	31.15%
Strongly disagree	14.75%

Luther Elementary

Strongly agree	15.15%
Somewhat agree	40.91%
Disagree	31.82%
Strongly disagree	12.12%

Purdy Elementary

Strongly agree	10.00%
Somewhat agree	34.00%
Disagree	40.00%
Strongly disagree	16.00%

Rockwell Elementary

Strongly agree	15.15%
Somewhat agree	40.91%
Disagree	27.27%
Strongly disagree	16.67%

Fort Atkinson Middle School

Strongly agree	4.72%
Somewhat agree	33.86%
Disagree	46.46%
Strongly disagree	14.96%

Next, respondents were asked to read background information about the District and answer questions about district financial needs.

35) I believe the school district's most urgent financial needs must be addressed now. *

Strongly Agree	43.12%	31.52%
Agree	40.58%	47.83%
Disagree	11.41%	12.50%
Strongly Disagree	4.89%	8.15%

36) How likely are you to support an operational referendum beginning in July of 2020? *

I would definitely support it	39.64%	27.72%
I would probably support it	36.76%	39.13%
I would probably not support it	11.71%	14.67%
I would definitely not support it	11.89%	18.48%

37) How likely are you to support an operational referendum if it results in no tax increase, but with likely reductions in programs and services? *

I would definitely support it	12.43%	13.04%
I would probably support it	16.04%	18.48%
I'm not sure if I would support it	28.29%	26.63%
I would probably not support it	21.44%	19.57%
I would definitely not support it	21.80%	22.28%

38) How likely are you to support an operational referendum if it results in a slight tax increase with no reduction to programs and services? *

I would definitely support it	35.38%	26.09%
I would probably support it	35.74%	36.96%
I'm not sure if I would support it	12.45%	15.76%
I would probably not support it	6.86%	7.07%
I would definitely not support it	9.57%	14.13%

39) How likely are you to support an operational referendum if it results in a moderate tax increase that enhances student programs and services? *

I would definitely support it	29.60%	21.20%
I would probably support it	26.90%	24.46%
I'm not sure if I would support it	19.49%	21.20%
I would probably not support it	9.93%	12.50%
I would definitely not support it	14.08%	20.65%

40) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt that it was the correct solution and if it had no tax increase. *

I would definitely support it	45.31%	35.33%
I would probably support it	36.28%	40.76%
I'm not sure if I would support it	12.82%	14.13%
I would probably not support it	1.44%	2.17%
I would definitely not support it	4.15%	7.61%

41) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt that it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of \$25 per year on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. *

I would definitely support it	44.04%	34.78%
I would probably support it	30.14%	28.80%
I'm not sure if I would support it	10.47%	12.50%
I would probably not support it	5.60%	7.61%
I would definitely not support it	9.75%	16.30%

42) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of \$50 per year on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. *

I would definitely support it	31.59%	22.83%
I would probably support it	26.35%	22.28%
I'm not sure if I would support it	18.59%	19.02%
I would probably not support it	8.12%	13.04%
I would definitely not support it	15.34%	22.83%

43) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of \$100 per year on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. *

I would definitely support it	19.13%	14.13%
I would probably support it	20.04%	16.85%
I'm not sure if I would support it	25.45%	19.57%

I would probably not support it	13.72%	16.85%
I would definitely not support it	21.66%	32.61%

44) Please use the space below to provide additional information you feel the board should keep in mind as it considers an operational referendum.

Comments here were across the board in terms of scope. There were many thoughtful comments about improvement to the district, while being fiscally responsible.

- *As a classroom teacher in a different school district than Fort Atkinson, I know too well how much money gets spent at the administrative level. It seems like there are so many assistants to assistants of curriculum and instruction positions it is unbelievable. I wish school districts did a better job of maximizing their money. It seems like there is so much need for students that positions should be made available to where it is needed the most: in the classrooms working with the students.*
- *I am in support of providing a quality education to our community. I would hope that the school board was not excessive in its requests and kept in mind working family's budgets.*
- *I don't want services to be cut for kids so I am willing to pay a bit more but please understand that many of us in this community are living pay check to pay check the way it is and we don't have a lot of extra to give.*
- *I think the board needs to specifically address the programs that would be cut if the 2016 referendum expires. I also think that a clear budget summary would be helpful to see where the referendum money goes now and in the future.*
- *I would like to see additional funding go towards scholarly essential programs -- like education (math, science, language, arts, history), social well-being initiatives, and healthful and generous lunch programs more so than sports and extracurricular activities.*
- *Keep the basics. Children can't write or read cursive, do math in their heads, make change. Etc. The focus is on the next state mandated exam. Where are the industrial art classes welding, construction, plumbing, heating, even agriculture. This was an ag community not anymore.*
- *We need to focus more on student education and less on administrative pay raises. Provide more classroom resources and higher teacher wage. I will not say yes to a referendum that increases higher up administrative pay raises.*

An explanation between recurring and non-recurring referendum next followed in the survey, after which respondents were asked the following:

45) If the board should seek an operational referendum for the District, which would you prefer?*

A non-recurring referendum (the District must get permission from voters every few years to surpass the revenue limit by a specific amount)	61.59%	65.22%
A recurring referendum (the District can surpass the revenue limit on an ongoing basis, but is limited to a specific dollar amount)	38.41%	34.78%

46) If the District were to enhance academic programs and services through an operational referendum, what areas would you like to see the District prioritize? Check all that apply.

Reading and Writing	8.83%	8.94%
Math	8.51%	8.78%
Science / STEM	8.48%	7.80%

Social Studies	3.76%	3.82%
Art	4.69%	3.74%
Music	5.13%	4.63%
Computer Science	6.13%	6.75%
Business Education / Personal Finance	6.46%	7.15%
Technology Education (Construction, Automotives, Engineering)	7.36%	8.21%
Family and Consumer Education	3.98%	3.74%
Agriculture	3.22%	3.82%
World Language	2.73%	2.85%
Physical Education	2.29%	1.79%
Gifted and Talented services	3.19%	2.60%
Youth Apprenticeship opportunities	6.00%	6.02%
Advanced Placement (AP) Offerings	3.35%	2.93%
Career Education	4.91%	4.55%
18-21-year-old programming	1.88%	2.11%
Special Education Programming	4.83%	4.88%
English Language Learners Services	2.81%	3.25%
Other	1.47%	1.63%

47) Please use the space below to provide additional information for the school board to consider.

Again, the comments were varied on topic. Many feel it is important to concentrate on the trades and technical skills, as not everyone will continue their education in a university. Many also stated they would need to learn more about expansion, maintenance and expenses before they would be comfortable voting on a referendum. Finally, others thought expansion is too far-reaching and the district should focus on core educational values.

Below is a sampling of responses, which have not been edited.

Share more information:

- *Be forthcoming and honest with the money you need and how you are going to use it. I do not mind my taxes increasing slightly as long as it is going to better students. My worry is that we haven't seen outstanding results based on the last referendum. These results don't necessarily need to be based on state testing, but I want to see and hear good things from students about the schools. There are many times when I hear students are struggling with certain areas (both academically and socially) in school and they don't feel supported. This makes me worried about my own children's futures with this district.*
- *District residents need to know more how board will deal with facilities and operational expenses and still face declining enrollment and new schools taking away current students. Need to get district and city to attract jobs and minorities as well. Make Fort a city and district of choice once again. Retain teachers & students!*
- *I wouldn't support either a recurring or non-recurring referendum with out knowing more about it. Requiring a answer to that question without the option to not do either indicates the bias the school board has in this process. What is meant by enhancing programs? If you don't have money why aren't you sticking to education basics before asking for more money?*
- *I'd like to know about the maintenance and grounds issues that are also plaguing the district. Programs and services are easy to get funding for, but deferring maintenance on buildings is*

almost as important. If there isn't a safe and well maintained school building, then what's the point of a stellar program or service.

Focus on trades, skills and mental health:

- *Help these kids with Real Life skills they can use. Not all of them will go to college and need help preparing for the Real World of the working class.*
- *I think any academic area that would enhanced would be great. BUT, I do feel like there are a couple areas all school districts should enhance. 1) Career Education - I know the district does some but I still feel like the kids leave school with little idea of what careers are really out there. And I feel like the emphasis for career exploration is on kids who plan to go onto college. 2) Apprenticeships and the trades - We are moving into a time in our world where we are going to have a deficit of people in the trades. We really need to spend more time as an entire country talking about how the trades are an OK choice. It's an honest living that can pay very well, often more than a college grad can make at their first job.*
- *Prevention and response to growing mental health needs in students.*

Keep focus:

- *Why the consideration of expanding what is offered? How about Fort schools be recognized for being great at the basic things that matter, rather than being a massive buffet of choices that aren't based off a solid foundation? How about modelling for the future generations what it looks like to live and operate within your means?*
- *Why are you "enhancing" things? You need to get back to bare bones. "Enhancing" Is not necessary.*
- *Priorities should be focused on the basics: the things people need to succeed in any career they may choose to pursue. We would love to see all of it offered, but when we have to choose, that should be the focus. Special education and remediation are huge for kids that are struggling; any deficiencies in their learning need to addressed early and immediately. Regular ed teachers can't do it all by themselves with the tremendous range of learners they encounter daily, especially in the early grades.*

48) If the District were to enhance extra-curricular programs and services through an operational referendum, what areas would you like to see the District prioritize? Check all that apply.

Arts (music, art, theater)	33.48%	29.92%
Sports	19.60%	14.39%
Academic Extracurricular Opportunities	34.15%	34.09%
Other	12.77%	21.59%



November 14, 2019

To: Dr. Rob Abbott, Interim Superintendent
Marissa Weidenfeller, Communications & Community Engagement Specialist
Jason Demorath, Director of Business Services

From: Joe Donovan

Re: Analysis of survey results

The purpose of this memo is to provide some additional analysis of the School District of Fort Atkinson's recent community-wide survey. Specifically, I would like to provide my thoughts on the final section of the survey, which focused on the district's financial needs and asked respondents if they would be open to a referendum that addresses those needs.

This memo is designed to support the formal survey report.

Immediately preceding question #35, respondents were presented with the needs of the district. On that same page, respondents were asked to indicate whether they feel the needs of the district are urgent.

35) I believe the school district's most urgent financial needs must be addressed now. *

Strongly Agree	43.12%	31.52%
Agree	40.58%	47.83%
Disagree	11.41%	12.50%
Strongly Disagree	4.89%	8.15%

After reading some background about the district's financial needs, more than 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the district should address those needs now. This strong level of support was similar in the comparison group, which consists of community members without a direct connection to the district. The comparison group saw just over 79% of respondents say they agree or strongly agree with the statement. These percentages are quite high.

36) How likely are you to support an operational referendum beginning in July of 2020? *

I would definitely support it	39.64%	27.72%
I would probably support it	36.76%	39.13%
I would probably not support it	11.71%	14.67%
I would definitely not support it	11.89%	18.48%

For this question, we saw a high level of support for a referendum in July 2020, with more than 76% of all respondents indicating they probably would or definitely would support it. Perhaps even more interesting, 66.85% of comparison group respondents indicated they probably would or definitely would support it. This is a high percentage of support for both groups.

37) How likely are you to support an operational referendum if it results in no tax increase, but with likely reductions in programs and services? *

I would definitely support it	12.43%	13.04%
I would probably support it	16.04%	18.48%
I'm not sure if I would support it	28.29%	26.63%
I would probably not support it	21.44%	19.57%
I would definitely not support it	21.80%	22.28%

Here, we saw a relatively low level of support, 28.5%, among all respondents for an operational referendum that would include cuts in programs and services, even if there is no tax increase associated with it. These numbers were largely mirrored by the comparison group. Approximately 31.5% of comparison group respondents definitely or probably supported this option. This is a low level of support for both groups.

38) How likely are you to support an operational referendum if it results in a slight tax increase with no reduction to programs and services? *

I would definitely support it	35.38%	26.09%
I would probably support it	35.74%	36.96%
I'm not sure if I would support it	12.45%	15.76%
I would probably not support it	6.86%	7.07%
I would definitely not support it	9.57%	14.13%

Respondents were much more likely to say they probably or definitely would support a referendum with a small tax increase (71.1%) if there were no program/service reductions associated with it. This represents a nearly 43-point difference in support compared to the question above. The same jump existed for the comparison group. Approximately 66% of those in the comparison group indicated they would definitely or probably support this option.

In our analysis, we found this interesting. While we may expect our all-respondent group, a group that includes a large number of parents, to oppose cuts to programs and services, in most districts, the comparison group, comprised of community members who do not have children in the schools, tend to find cuts a more favorable option—especially if it saves money. That was not the case here. It was also not the case, we should note, in a set of similar questions we asked in advance of your last referendum.

39) How likely are you to support an operational referendum if it results in a moderate tax increase that enhances student programs and services? *

I would definitely support it	29.60%	21.20%
I would probably support it	26.90%	24.46%
I'm not sure if I would support it	19.49%	21.20%
I would probably not support it	9.93%	12.50%
I would definitely not support it	14.08%	20.65%

At this point in the survey, we have presented needs and now we are presenting generic solutions and generic tax impacts. This allows us to see community opinion at a high level. While this question saw somewhat lower levels of support (56.5%) than question 38, a healthy majority of the all-respondent group indicated they would support a moderate tax increase if it meant the district could enhance the programs and services it offers to students. For our comparison group, the percentage fell to 45.66%.

It is worth noting that we included an “I’m not sure” option here. For both groups, responses to that question were quite large—at approximately 20%. However, that percentage among the comparison

group was lower than expected. Generally we see the “I’m not sure” option to be much more popular among those in the comparison group. This suggests some level of commitment to option choice.

However, it is impossible for us to discern how, if an election were held today, those who indicated “I’m not sure” would vote. While tradition holds that this number would be split between “yes” and “no” votes, we find that to be an overly rosey prediction.

That said, community members are interested in addressing the district’s needs with an operational referendum.

40) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt that it was the correct solution and if it had no tax increase. *

I would definitely support it	45.31%	35.33%
I would probably support it	36.28%	40.76%
I’m not sure if I would support it	12.82%	14.13%
I would probably not support it	1.44%	2.17%
I would definitely not support it	4.15%	7.61%

Building on the earlier questions, respondents indicated wanting to address your needs. A large majority (81.6%) of respondents said they would probably or definitely support a referendum with no tax increase, as long as they felt it was the right solution.

We find it interesting that the combined percentage of “probably not support” and “definitely not support” for this question is well below the percentage of respondents who disagreed in an earlier question about the urgency of the district’s needs.

41) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt that it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of \$25 per year on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. *

I would definitely support it	44.04%	34.78%
I would probably support it	30.14%	28.80%
I’m not sure if I would support it	10.47%	12.50%
I would probably not support it	5.60%	7.61%
I would definitely not support it	9.75%	16.30%

Again, a large majority of respondents (74.2%) said they would be willing to support a referendum with a tax increase of \$25 per year for a \$100,000 home. For our comparison group, the percentage was 63.6%. For both groups, this is a higher level of support than we typically see for a question like this. It is also typical for the comparison to be more sensitive to tax increases, which was the case here.

We will also note that the percentage of respondents who indicated “I’m not sure” was lower than we typically see.

42) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of \$50 per year on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. *

I would definitely support it	31.59%	22.83%
I would probably support it	26.35%	22.28%
I’m not sure if I would support it	18.59%	19.02%
I would probably not support it	8.12%	13.04%
I would definitely not support it	15.34%	22.83%

While there was somewhat lower support (57.9%) for a referendum with a tax increase of \$50 per year for a \$100,000 home, a clear majority of the all-respondent group were still willing to say they probably or definitely would support a referendum for this amount. That number is largely mirrored by the comparison group, 45.1% of whom definitely supported or probably supported the option.

While the comparison group is lower than the 50% threshold for a comparison group, it is important to note that 19% of that group is not sure. What we find interesting is that a comparatively low percentage, 35.9%, indicated levels of non-support.

As for making a recommendation about this option, we are unable to predict what voter outcomes would be at this level.

43) I would vote “yes” on a referendum question if I felt it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of \$100 per year on each \$100,000 of assessed property value. *

I would definitely support it	19.13%	14.13%
I would probably support it	20.04%	16.85%
I'm not sure if I would support it	25.45%	19.57%
I would probably not support it	13.72%	16.85%
I would definitely not support it	21.66%	32.61%

When giving respondents three options of referenda, with three different possible tax impacts, it is typical for us to see the most expensive option be the least popular. That was the case here, with only about 39.2% indicating they would probably or definitely support a referendum at this amount.

I would be happy to provide additional information and context to these survey results as you see fit. Here again, this survey appears to show that community members have a good sense of the district's needs and understand that a referendum may be needed to address those needs.

Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or would like to discuss further. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to work with you on this effort.