

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009



STUDY OVERVIEW

The Harris Interactive School Poll survey research program was instituted by Lago Vista ISD in the fall of 2008 to help provide information about the experiences and satisfaction levels of key District stakeholders (elementary students, secondary students, teachers and staff members, parents, and community members). District leaders undertook the survey to develop a data-enriched environment for decision-making and to provide these key stakeholders with the opportunity to present their views.

This report concentrates on the best potential improvement, rather than the absolute rating of an area. The concept of continuous improvement is at the heart of the Harris Interactive School Poll program -- all areas of a school can be improved. The research program is designed to ensure the District focuses on items that will make the most difference.

OVERALL RATINGS

The Harris Interactive School Poll program is less concerned with ratings of an area than with identifying areas where improvements will have the greatest impact on performance and satisfaction. Ranges in scores show that it is possible to improve in all areas of student, parent, and employee satisfaction. These ratings should be treated as benchmarks and not as performance measures. The data should be reviewed from the standpoint of helping to set goals within the District.

The average overall ratings for Lago Vista ISD were in the range of those generally found in a business or organization embarking upon a quality improvement program. In fact, the Harris Interactive School Poll research has found many analogies between businesses and schools. It is clear that schools are performing as well as many organizations.

Some key strengths for Lago Vista ISD can be described as follows (all ratings on a 0 to 10 scale):

A = 10, A- = 9, B+ = 8, B = 7, B- = 6, C+ = 5, C = 4, C- = 3, D+ = 2, D = 1, F = 0

- Elementary students (n=203) were most satisfied with their teachers (9.2) and computer technology (8.4).
- Secondary students (n=619) were most satisfied with their principal (7.8) and teachers in various subject areas: Social Studies (8.5), Foreign Language (8.2), Math (7.9), English (7.7).
- Teachers and staff members (n=129) were most satisfied with school atmosphere (8.5), their career (8.5), and various levels of administration: their principal (9.1), their direct supervisor (8.9), and their assistant principal (8.5).
- Parents (n=220) were most satisfied with their child's teachers (8.1), principals/building administration (7.9), and computer technology (7.6).
- Community members (n=194) were most satisfied with the District's teachers (7.4) and computer technology (7.2).

A more comprehensive review of the data follows.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

OVERALL RATINGS (CONTINUED)

Elementary Students (n=203)	2008 Rating
Atmosphere	8.1
Equipment and Facilities	7.9
School Bus	5.5
Computer Technology	8.4
Main Teachers	9.2
Overall Satisfaction	8.4

Secondary Students (n=619)	2008 Rating
Atmosphere	6.4
Equipment and Facilities	6.4
School Bus	5.9
Computer Technology	7.2
Principal	7.8
School Counselor	6.6
Math Teachers	7.9
English Teachers	7.7
Science Teachers	7.4
Social Studies Teachers	8.5
Foreign Language Teachers	8.2
Quality of Teaching	7.6
Overall Satisfaction	7.1

Parents (n=220)	2008 Rating
Equipment and Facilities	6.6
School Bus	7.4
Computer Technology	7.6
Communications/Involvement	7.4
Child's Teachers	8.1
Board of Education	6.9
Superintendent/Central Administration	6.2
Principal/Administration	7.9
Curriculum/Training	7.1
Budget/Budget Process	6.4
Overall Satisfaction	7.7

Teachers/Staff (n=129)	2008 Rating
Atmosphere	8.5
Equipment and Facilities	7.3
Computer Technology	8.0
Parental Support	7.2
School Board	7.4
Superintendent	7.8
Central Administration	8.5
Principal	9.1
Assistant Principal	8.5
Direct Supervisor	8.9
Involvement/Decision Making	7.0
Career	8.5
Students	7.7
Overall Satisfaction	8.2

Community (n=194)	2008 Rating
Equipment and Facilities	6.4
Computer Technology	7.2
Communications/Involvement	5.9
Curriculum/Training	6.3
Teachers	7.4
Administration	5.6
Budget/Budget Process	4.7
Overall Satisfaction	6.0

GENERAL "RULES OF THUMB" ON RATINGS:

Red = sign of serious issue within the District

Blue = in need of a defined focus and improvement plan

Green = average, in need of continuous improvement

Black = strong, compared with HI School Poll Database

A = 10, A- = 9, B+ = 8, B = 7, B- = 6, C+ = 5, C = 4, C- = 3, D+ = 2, D = 1, F = 0

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

OBSERVATIONS OF DATA

Lago Vista ISD had 1,171 main stakeholders—including 203 elementary students, 619 secondary students, 129 teachers and staff members, and 220 parents—who responded to the District’s first implementation of the Harris Interactive School Poll. In addition, 194 community members completed the community component. All groups completed paper questionnaires.

In several functional areas, the District’s average ratings are directionally higher than our Harris Interactive School Poll database ratings. In other areas, the District’s ratings are directionally lower. The database adds perspective, but what really matters is the District’s own data and how it improves between the current wave and the next wave of measurement. Continued monitoring of the climate among stakeholders will help keep the district on top of current issues.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

- Elementary students in the District rated directionally higher than those in our database in every functional area (including Overall Satisfaction) with the exception of Equipment and Facilities and School Bus.
- With an Overall Satisfaction rating of 8.4, this stakeholder group’s satisfaction is strong.
- While most elementary student ratings are strong, improvement is always possible. Areas for improvement may include Equipment and Facilities and School Bus, which are the *lowest* rated areas. Computer Technology may also be an area of focus, since concerns over availability of school computers was the issue identified as having the largest impact on elementary student satisfaction.

SECONDARY STUDENTS

- Secondary students provided directionally higher ratings than (or on par with) those in our database in the areas of Principal and some of their teachers. All other ratings were directionally *lower*.
- An Overall Satisfaction rating of 7.1 (7.8 at the middle school level and 6.6 at the high school level) was given by this stakeholder group. This rating is average, in need of continuous improvement.
- A couple of the area ratings are strong, while several indicate a need for continuous improvement or defined focus. In particular, areas for improvement may include School Atmosphere and Equipment and Facilities, which had lower area ratings and encompass some of the items identified as having an impact on secondary student satisfaction. Another area may include future preparation concerns, such as preparation for standardized tests, college, and the world of work.

TEACHERS AND STAFF

- District teachers and staff gave directionally higher ratings than (or on par with) those in our database for all areas, including Overall Satisfaction.
- The Overall Satisfaction rating for this stakeholder group is 8.2 (8.0 at the elementary level, 8.3 at the middle school level, and 8.3 at the high school level). This rating is strong.
- Some areas are in need of continuous improvement, while others are stronger. Areas for improvement may include Involvement/ Decision Making and Parental Support, which are the *lowest* rated areas and also include items identified as having an impact on employee satisfaction.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PARENTS

- District parents rated all areas directionally *lower* than (or on par with) our database, including Overall Satisfaction.
- Overall Satisfaction was rated a 7.7 by this stakeholder group (8.2 at the elementary level, 7.8 at the middle school level, and 6.9 at the high school level), which falls in the average range.
- Areas for improvement may include Communications/Involvement, Child's Teacher, and future preparation concerns, all of which had an impact on parental satisfaction.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Harris Interactive does not keep a database of community ratings. Most ratings fell in the range where a defined focus and improvement plan is needed, while some fell in the average range. However, it is typical that community members give lower ratings than stakeholders groups who are more directly involved with the District.
- Overall Satisfaction was rated a 6.0 by this stakeholder group.
- Areas for improvement may include Budget/Budget Process and Administration issues, which had *lower* area ratings and encompass some of the items identified as having an impact on community member satisfaction. Future preparation (preparation for college) is an additional area of interest, as it appeared among other stakeholder groups as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Lago Vista ISD should review all crosstabs to:

1. Identify issues across all stakeholder groups, providing opportunities for driving change forward
2. Define each stakeholder audience (demographically, behaviorally, and attitudinally)
3. Hold focus groups and other qualitative research with key audiences to identify:
 - Which behaviors/beliefs need to be stopped or started among these groups?
 - Understand the context around these groups – what is going on/what is the current situation?
 - What is the competition/what are the barriers for these groups?
 - How are communications with these groups currently handled?
 - What is going well among these groups?
 - Share best practices from other buildings in district



Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for elementary students (grades 4-5) this year. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

Elementary students gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 8.4. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the elementary school students provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their school.

To increase the satisfaction of elementary school students, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

- **Outline specific concerns regarding access to school computers.** 38% of the students noted that school computers were not available when they needed them. This issue accounted for 76% of the possible increase in the level of overall student satisfaction, from the current level of 8.4, to the maximum possible level of 9.2. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, overall satisfaction would increase from 8.4 to 9.0.*
- **Continue to develop additional methods to engage students in and out of the classroom.** 10% of the elementary students reported that their main teacher did not help them want to learn. This engagement issue accounted for 24% of the possible increase in the level of overall student satisfaction.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for middle school students (grades 6-8) who completed the secondary version of the survey. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

Middle school students gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 7.8. Eighty-six percent (86%) of the middle school students provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their school.

To increase the satisfaction of middle school students, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

- **Examine the presentation of curriculum in the core subjects.** 28% of the students said their Math teacher did not provide helpful feedback on their work.
30% of the students said that they did not like what was taught in Math class.
Combined, these issues represented 20% of the opportunity for increased overall satisfaction, from the current level of 7.8, to the maximum possible level of 9.8. *In other words, if the frequency of these issues was reduced to 0%, overall satisfaction would increase from 7.8 to 8.2.*
- **Examine the quality and quantity of the food served in the lunchroom.** 46% of the students said that they did not like the food served in the lunchroom. 6th grade students (30%) expressed this concern *least* often. This concern accounted for 19% of the potential for increased overall satisfaction.

- **Take steps to counter the negative impact of gossip.** 49% of the students felt that gossip was a serious problem at school, accounting for 16% of the improvement gap. Girls (61%) said this more frequently than boys (46%) did.
- **Provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively on projects and assignments, and encourage them to do so.** 40% of the students said that they did not study with other students before or after school. Boys (49%) said this more often than girls (33%) did. This represented 14% of the opportunity to improve satisfaction.
- **Review policies and procedures for handling discipline.** 26% of the middle school students said that their principal did not handle discipline fairly. 6th grade students (16%) expressed this concern *least* often. This concern accounted for 13% of the improvement gap.
- **Outline student concerns regarding college readiness.** 21% of the students felt that their school was not preparing students for college. This issue accounted for an additional 10% of the potential improvement.
- **Optimize preparation for standardized tests.** 9% of the students stated that their school did not do a good job of preparing them for taking standardized tests, representing 4% of the opportunity to improve. 8th grade students (15%) expressed the highest frequencies of concern with this issue.
- **Continue to integrate computers into the learning process.** 7% of the students indicated that school computers did not help them learn. 7th graders (9%) and 8th graders (17%) said this more often than 6th graders (0%) did. This represented 4% of the opportunity to improve.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for high school students (grades 9-12) who completed the secondary version of the survey. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

High school students gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 6.6. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the high school students provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their school.

To increase the satisfaction of high school students, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

- **Clarify students concerns regarding student parking.** 74% of the students reported that there was not enough safe and accessible student parking. 9th graders (55%) expressed this least often, while 12th grade students (92%) expressed the highest frequencies of concern. This issue represented 27% of the opportunity for increased overall satisfaction, from the current level of 6.6, to the maximum possible level of 9.1. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, overall satisfaction would increase from 6.6 to 7.3.*
- **Review school rules with students.** 42% of the students said the rules at their school were not fair. Boys (50%) said this more often than girls (37%) did. 12th grade students (58%) expressed this more frequently than 9th graders (34%) or 10th graders (35%) did. Also, students with a “C” self-reported grade point average (GPA) (70%) said this more often than those with an “A” average (28%) or “B” average (40%) did. This item accounted for 14% of the potential rise in satisfaction.
- **Devise new strategies for assisting students with their behavior at school.** 32% of the students said that students were not well-behaved while in school. This behavioral issue represented 12% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction ratings.
- **Monitor the comfort level of classrooms.** 31% of the students reported that, other than temperature, their classrooms were not comfortable. Students with a “C” self-reported GPA (53%) reported this more frequently than students with an “A” average (20%) or “B” average (29%) did. This item represented 11% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction levels.
- **Clarify computer training needs.** 29% of the students felt that their classroom teacher was not prepared to train them on the computer. This concern represented 10% of the possible rise in satisfaction.
- **Optimize preparation for standardized tests.** 24% of the students stated that their school did not do a good job of preparing them for taking standardized tests, representing 8% of the opportunity to improve. Frequency of concern with this issue increased significantly as self-reported GPA decreased, from students with an “A” average (10%) to students with a “C” average (41%).
- **Provide opportunities for the principal to spend time with students.** 20% of the students felt that their principal did not have time available for them. This item accounted for 8% of the opportunity for improvement.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

- **Review policies and procedures for handling discipline.** 14% of the high school students said that their principal did not handle discipline fairly. Students with a “C” self-reported GPA (25%) said this more frequently than those with an “A” average (8%) or “B” average (11%). This concern accounted for 5% of the improvement gap.
- **Examine the presentation of curriculum in the core subjects.** 12% of the students said that their Math teacher did not make class interesting. This issue represented 5% of the opportunity for increased overall satisfaction.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

TEACHERS AND STAFF

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for teachers and staff in the District. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

District teachers and staff gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 8.2. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the employees provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their school.

To increase the satisfaction of teachers and staff, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following:

- **Identify policies in which employees would like to have more input.** 34% of the teachers and staff stated that their ability to influence policies that affected them was inadequate. Teachers (44%) expressed this concern more frequently than onther staff members (19%) did. This concern represented 44% of the potential to improve employee satisfaction, from the current level of 8.2, to the maximum possible level of 8.9. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, overall satisfaction would increase from 8.2 to 8.5.*
- **Determine possible means for increasing parental involvement.** 27% of the teachers and staff said that parental in their child’s education was not adequate. This item represented 32% of the possible increase in satisfaction for this stakeholder group.
- **Continue to foster a supportive work environment.** 15% of the employees said that no one has gone out of their way to give them help. This item accounted for 24% of the potential increase in satisfaction.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

ELEMENTARY PARENTS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for parents of students in grades K-5 in the District. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

Elementary parents gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 8.2. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the elementary parents provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their child’s school.

To increase the satisfaction of elementary parents, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

- **Improve the channels of communication between teachers and parents.** 14% of the parents indicated that they did not communicate enough with their child’s teachers. This communication issue represented 34% of the possible rise in satisfaction, from the current level of 8.2, to the maximum possible level of 9.0. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, elementary parent satisfaction would increase from 8.2 to 8.5.*
- **Enhance preparation for standardized tests.** 14% of the elementary parents rated preparation of students for taking standardized tests as less than satisfactory. This item accounted for 34% of the opportunity to improve.
- **Promote and highlight opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education and school experience.** 15% of the parents mentioned that the Superintendent/Central Administration needed to improve at providing opportunities for parental involvement. This engagement item accounted for 32% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction scores.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for parents of students in grades 6-8 in the District. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

Middle school parents gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 7.8. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the middle school parents provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their child’s school.

To increase the satisfaction of middle school parents, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

- **Develop strategies and practices to encourage better communication between the school and parents.** 34% of the middle school parents said they were not getting enough feedback on their child's performance.

30% of parents said the school needed to improve with including their views when making decisions.

22% of the parents said the school needed to improve with keeping them informed about school activities.

These communication issues accounted for 77% of the possible rise in satisfaction, from the current level of 7.8, to the maximum possible level of 9.0. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, middle school parent satisfaction would increase from 7.8 to 8.7.*

- **Clarify parental concerns regarding teachers.** 14% of the parents said they have ever tried to have their child assigned to a different teacher. This item accounted for 13% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction.
- **Determine how/where preparation for college is perceived as lacking.** 14% of the middle school parents stated that preparation of students for college was less than satisfactory, accounting for 10% of the opportunity to improve.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for parents of students in grades 9-12 in the District. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

High school parents gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 6.9. Seventy-five percent (76%) of the high school parents provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their child’s school.

To increase the satisfaction of high school parents, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

Develop strategies and practices to encourage better communication between the school and parents. 48% of the high school parents said the school needed to improve with including their views when making decisions.

46% of the parents said the school needed to improve with keeping them informed about school activities.

43% of the parents said they were not getting enough feedback on their child's performance.

These communication issues accounted for 67% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction, from the current level of 6.9, to the maximum possible level of 9.0. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, high school parent satisfaction would increase from 6.9 to 8.3.*

- **Determine how/where preparation for college is perceived as lacking.** 52% of the high school parents stated that preparation of students for college was less than satisfactory, accounting for 21% of the opportunity to improve.
- **Clarify parental concerns regarding teachers.** 23% of the parents said they have ever tried to have their child assigned to a different teacher. This item accounted for 12% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction.

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for community members in the District. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

Community members gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 6.0. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the community members provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their child’s school.

To increase the satisfaction of community members, we suggest Lago Vista ISD concentrate on the following actions:

- **Address community members’ concerns regarding their willingness to recommend the district.** 36% of the community members said that they would not recommend the district to parents. This represented 33% of the opportunity to improve, from the current level of 6.0, to the maximum possible level of 8.1. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, community member satisfaction would increase from 6.0 to 6.7.*
- **Clarify concerns regarding the Superintendent.** 30% of the parents mentioned that the Superintendent did not do a good job. This item accounted for 26% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction scores.
- **Determine parental concerns regarding the value of their tax dollars.** 47% of the community members said that the schools did not give them a good value for their tax dollars. Those whose child had attended school in the district (57%) said this more frequently than those whose child did not attend school in the district (39%). This issue accounted for 25% of the possible increase.
- **Determine how/where preparation for college is perceived as lacking.** 26% of the community members stated that the district did not do a good job preparing students for college, accounting for 17% of the potential rise in satisfaction. Those whose child had attended school in the district (40%) said this more frequently than those whose child did not attend school in the district (17%).

Executive Summary – Lago Vista ISD: 2008-2009

SUMMARY

The information provided in this project will enable Lago Vista ISD to make decisions in a fact-based context, and allow customer and employee satisfaction to drive the organization forward. By addressing the concerns listed in this study overview and in the full report, the District will maximize student, teacher/staff, and parent satisfaction and therefore productivity and involvement.

The District's performance is strong in areas and in need of improvement in others. The key is to keep the improvement process moving forward. **The absolute performance of the District matters much less than knowing how to improve.**

This study should be viewed as the first step in the total quality improvement process. Now that Lago Vista ISD has reliable data on satisfaction, the District can continue to move forward, working toward solutions to the issues uncovered in the study. There may be some issues that require clarification before a solution can be created. For these, we suggest that Lago Vista convene groups of students, staff, and parents to define their concerns and to suggest solutions.

An example of this type of issue has to do with preparation for the future. Secondary students, parents, and community members all expressed concern over preparation for college, the world of work, and/or standardized tests. What are the specific concerns? Why do students not feel prepared, and why do parents and community members feel students are not prepared? What specific aspects can be improved upon?

Other important issues are illuminated in the observations of data section and in the full report. Administrators should further discuss these issues with students and employees to discover opportunities for driving change forward.

Once Lago Vista ISD has an improvement plan in place, it will be important to measure progress in the future. The next wave of this

study should occur when enough time has elapsed for the improvements to take hold. The objective of the follow-up study would be to document Lago Vista's progress, highlight areas where improvement is moving slowly, and revisit the priorities for change. In summary, Lago Vista ISD should be **encouraged** by these results and **motivated** to keep the quality improvement process moving in the District.