



CLIMATE & CULTURE SURVEY RESULTS

Westport Public Schools

October 2026

INTRODUCTION

Westport Public Schools (Westport) is dedicated to creating a safe, secure, and nurturing school environment for students, staff, and families. As part of this ongoing effort, Westport routinely gathers feedback from its community to better understand perceptions of belonging, school climate, and overall experiences. To deepen this understanding, Westport recently partnered with Hanover Research (Hanover) to conduct its annual Climate and Culture Survey.



Climate & Culture Survey

Spring 2026

The following slides provide an overview of the methodology and then the key findings from the survey.

METHODOLOGY

Historically, Westport has conducted a comprehensive climate survey every two years, complemented by a shorter survey in alternate years to monitor progress. This year, Westport has engaged Hanover Research (Hanover) to design and execute its Climate and Culture Survey. Hanover's climate survey measures key, evidence-based indicators associated with climate outcomes through three main constructs including: **School/Building Environment**, **Academic Environment**, and **Social Environment**.



Hanover designed the survey for **students (grades 3-12)**, **parents/guardians**, and **staff**.



The survey was **administered online** in **April and May of 2026**.

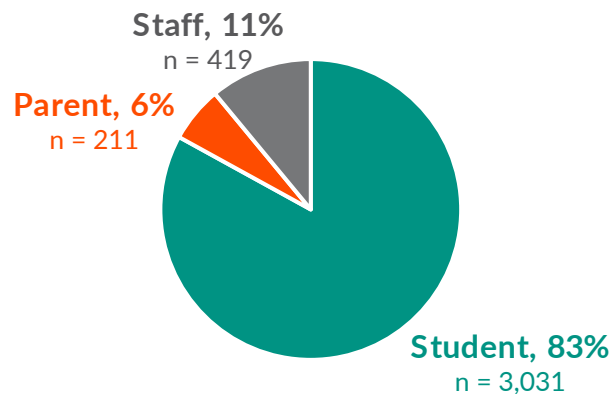


The analysis includes a total of **3,661 respondents** following data cleaning and quality control.

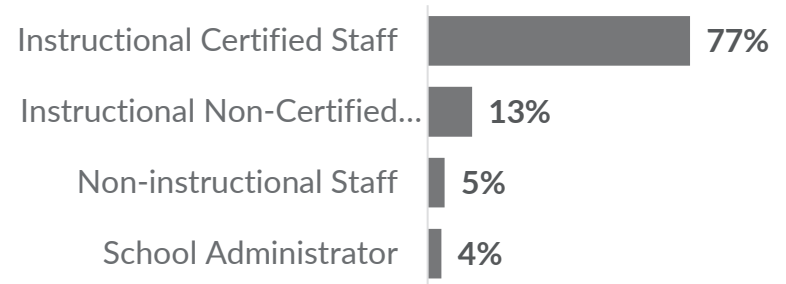
RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The survey included responses from **3,661** students, parents, and staff.

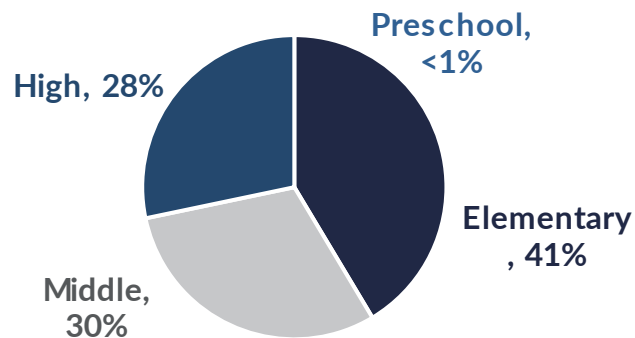
Respondent Groups



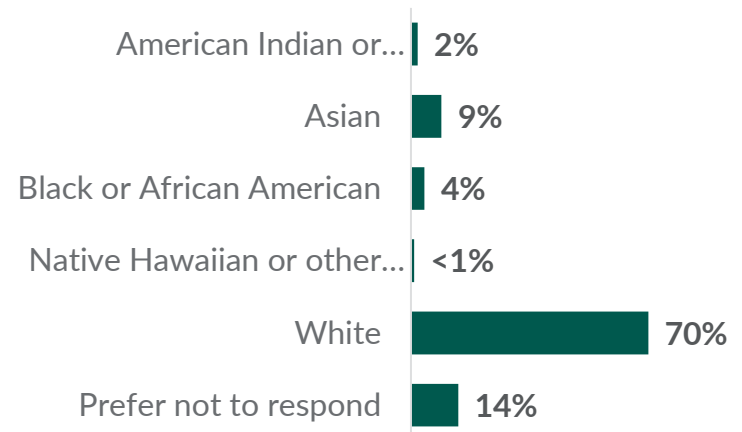
Staff Role



School Level Groups



Race/Ethnicity



CLIMATE & CULTURE SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS

SCHOOL & BUILDING ENVIRONMENT

Areas of Strength



Students, parents, and staff indicate that Westport Public Schools is a safe and supportive environment for student learning.

Students at my [child's] school...
% Agree + % Strongly Agree



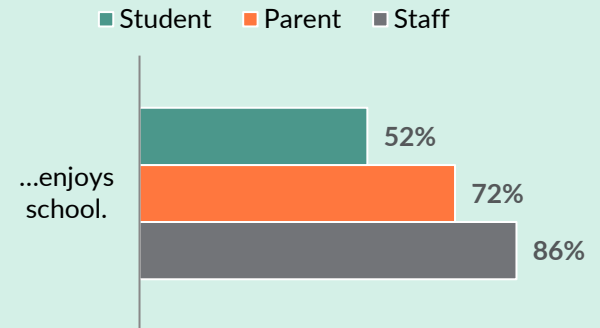
My [child's] school...
% Agree + % Strongly Agree



Areas for Improvement

Students indicate room for enhancing student enjoyment at school. While most parents and school staff report that students like school, a lower proportion of students (52%) hold the same view.

Students at my [child's] school...
% Agree + % Strongly Agree



ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

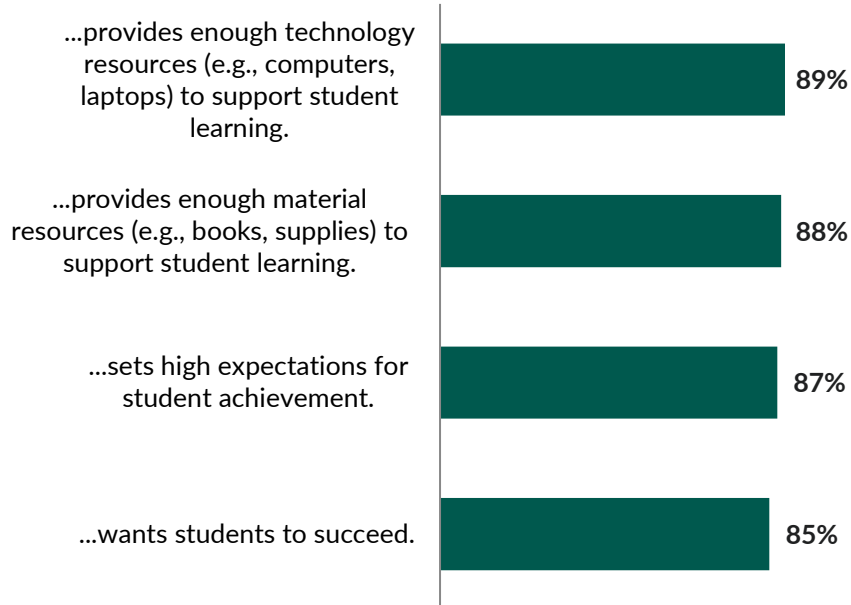
Areas of Strength



Survey participants express high perceptions of the resources and academic expectations that students receive.

My [child's] school...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

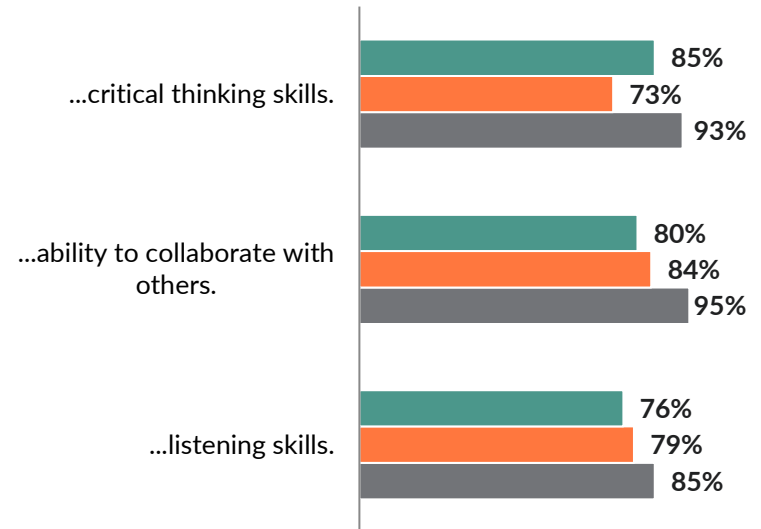


Overall, respondents perceive students' development of essential soft skills at school positively, with students having similar perceptions as parents and staff.

My [child's] school develops students'...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ Student ■ Parent ■ Staff

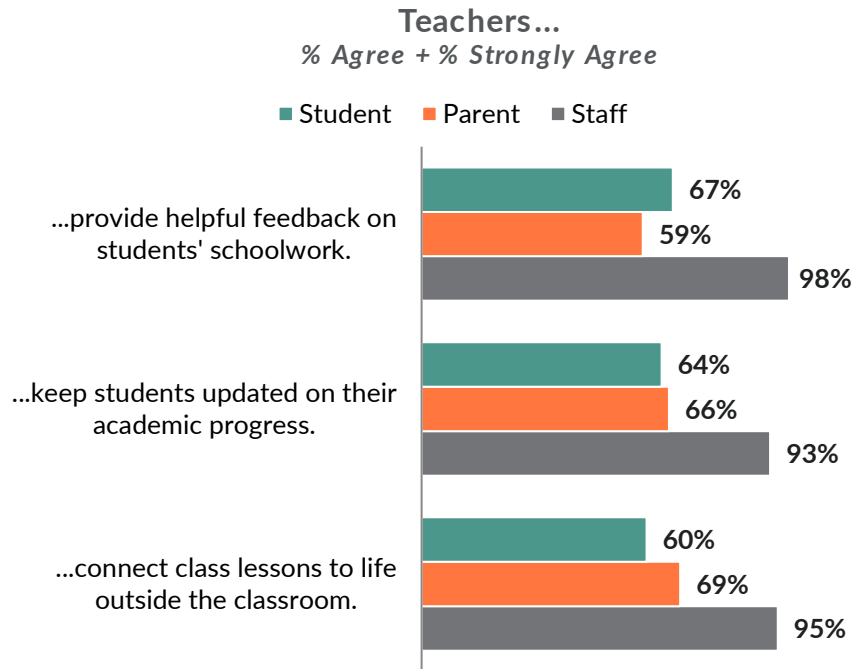


ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

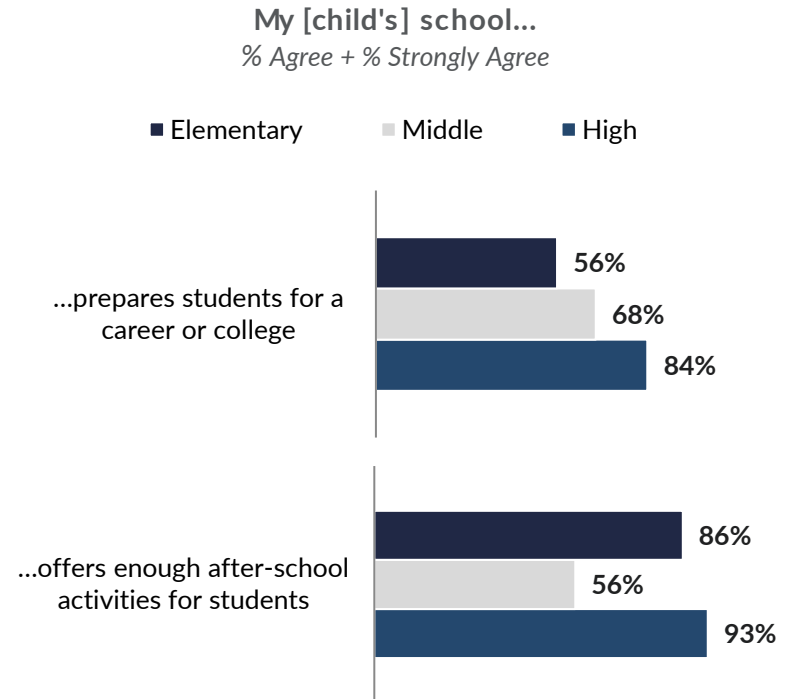
Areas for Improvement



There is room for strengthening teacher feedback to students and connecting lessons to real life, especially according to students. The largest gap between student and staff perceptions pertains to providing helpful feedback on students' schoolwork.



There are opportunities for enhancing high-quality school activities, and career and college preparation, for middle school.



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

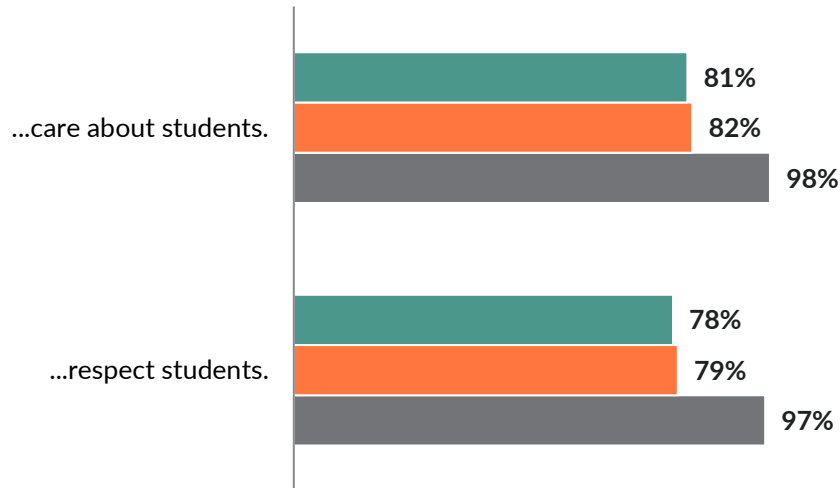
Areas of Strength



Respondents across groups, and consistent across years, report positive relationships between students and staff members. Responses also generally indicate that students have positive relationships with their peers, though opinions vary more across respondent groups.

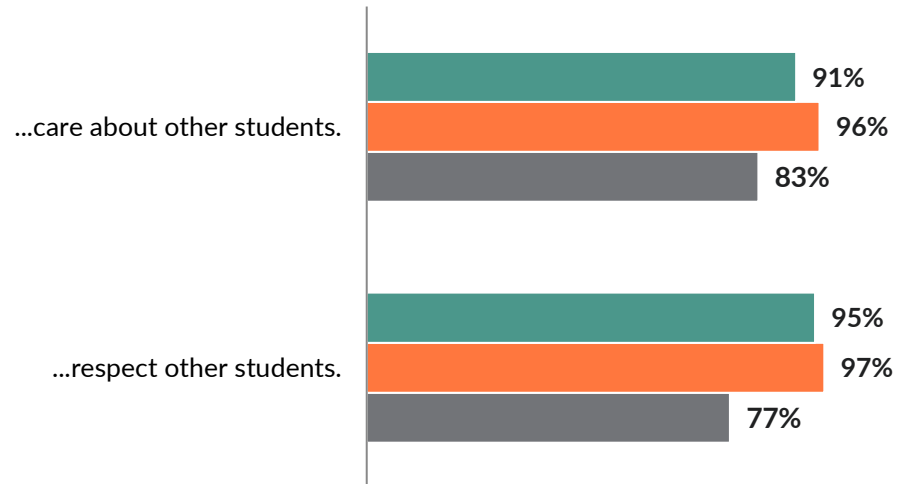
Adults at my [child's] school...
% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ Student ■ Parent ■ Staff



Students at my [child's] school...
% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ Student ■ Parent ■ Staff



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

Areas of Strength

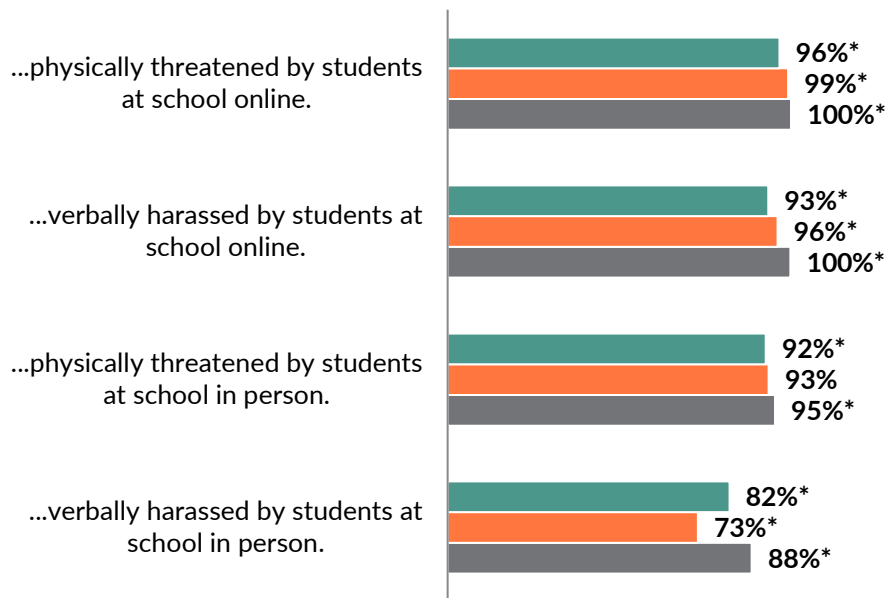


Closed-ended survey responses indicate that bullying and harassment as an area of relative strength, with most respondents reporting that students *rarely* encounter threatening or harassing behavior at school or online. Most students report being able to identify a trusted adult at school whom they can turn to for help.

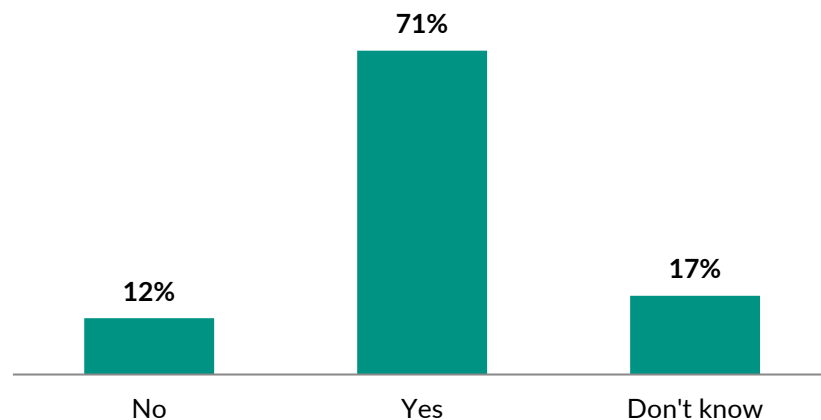
During the past school year, [I have been/ my child has been]...

% 1 Time + % Never

■ Student ■ Parent ■ Staff



Do you have a trusted adult at school to go to when you need help? This could be any adult in the school building, not just your teachers.



Only students answered this question.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

Areas for Improvement

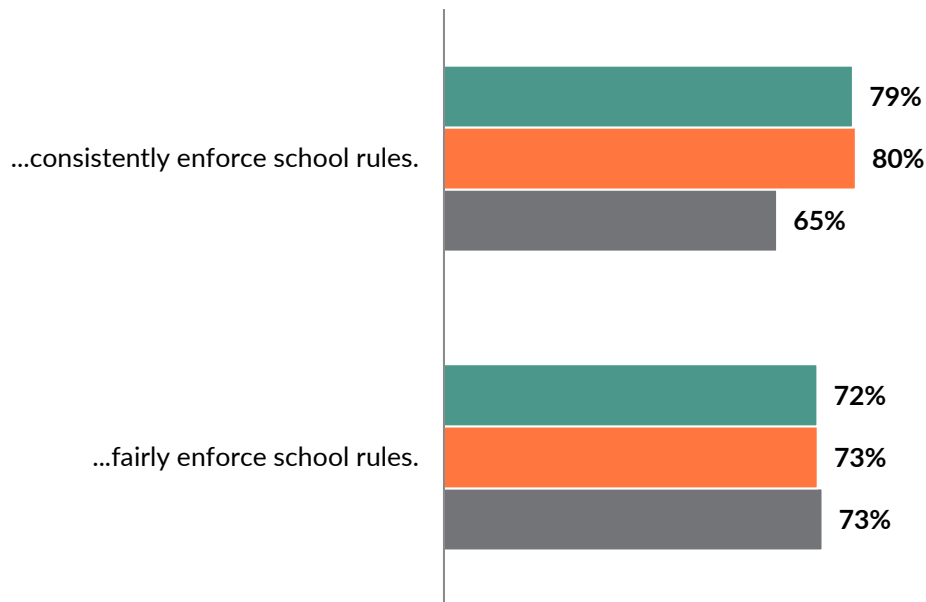


Respondents generally express favorable opinions about student discipline; however, **perceptions still vary about fair enforcement of school rules, especially in middle school.**

Adults at [my/my child's] school...

% Often + % Always

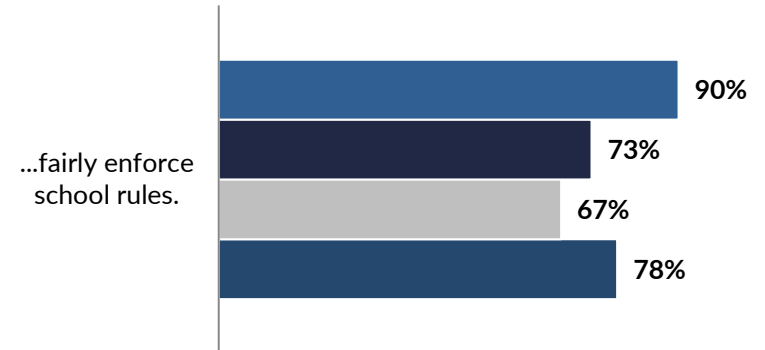
■ Student ■ Parents ■ Staff



Adults at my [child's] school...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ Preschool ■ Elementary ■ Middle ■ High



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

Areas for Improvement



Respondents show comparatively lower confidence in areas of emotional management, conflict resolution, and community involvement, pointing to growth areas in whole-child development efforts.

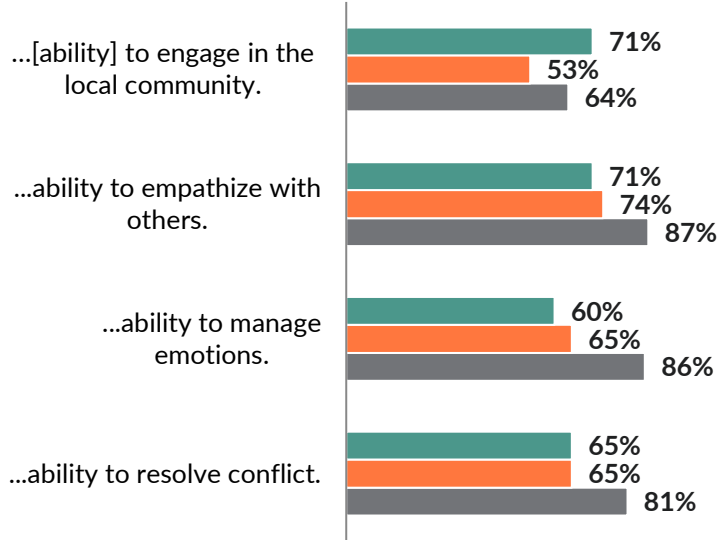


High school respondents report low levels of peer pressure, but highlight feeling pressure due to school expectations.

My [child's] school develops students'...

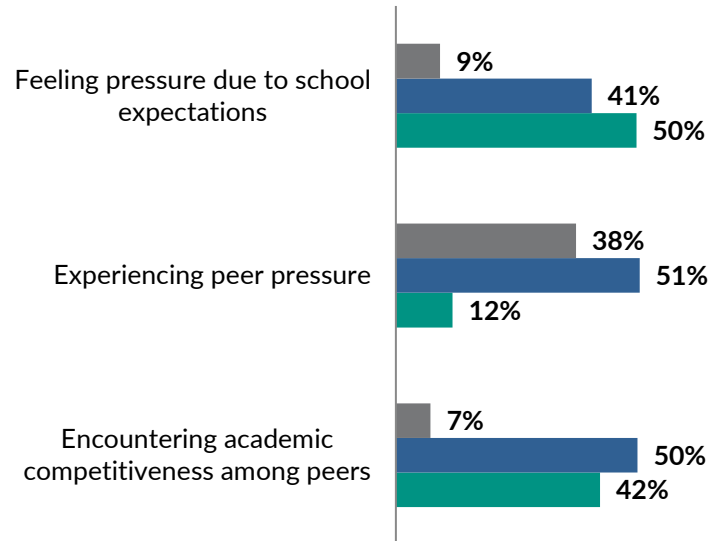
% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ Student ■ Parent ■ Staff



Please indicate how you feel about the amount of each of the following:

■ None ■ Comfortable ■ Too Much



ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

Areas of Strength

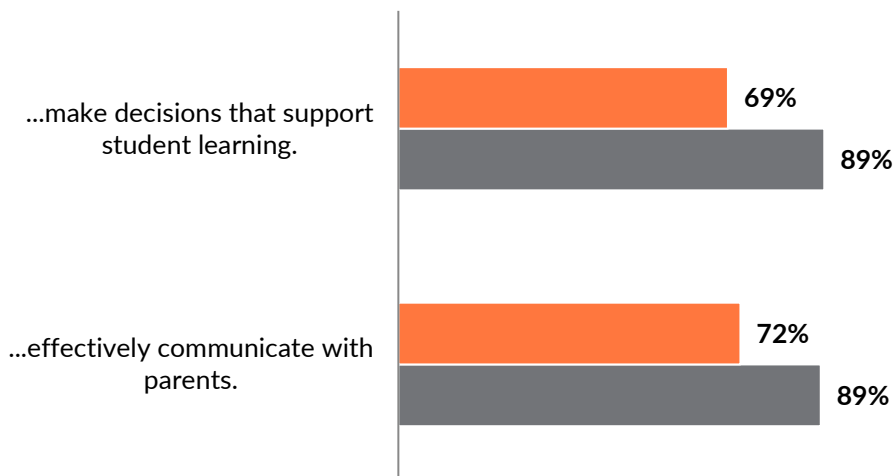


Overall, perceptions of school and district leadership are positive, though there are notable differences between parents and staff.

The administrators at [my school/my child's school]...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ Parent ■ Staff

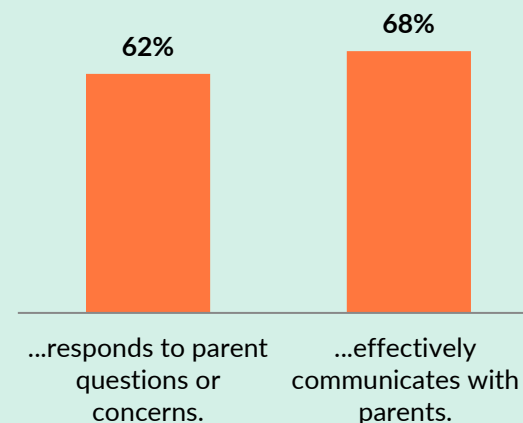


Areas for Improvement

Parent respondents indicate room for growth in the extent of family engagement.

The district...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree



**Note: Parent respondents comprised 6% of the total survey sample.*

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE METHODOLOGY

Open-ended responses require a comprehensive, qualitative approach that seeks to provide depth of understanding to a particular question or topic rather than statistical significance or generalizable conclusions.

After removing invalid, repeat, and blank survey responses, Hanover coded a total of 4,850 responses across the three open-ended questions that were included in this final analysis. The table below details the total survey responses according to respondent groups.

Survey Question	Total Cleaned Survey Responses		
	Parent	Staff	Student
Question 1	67	181	2,021
Question 2	76	179	1,859
Question 3	42	54	371
Total	4,850		

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE KEY FINDINGS (1/2)



CULTURE AND CLIMATE STRENGTHS:

- Respondents across groups describe **schools as safe, welcoming, and relationship-centered environments** where students feel supported by caring educators and connected to their school community.
- Respondents across groups agree that **strong collaboration among staff, positive family partnerships, and a broad range of enrichment opportunities** further reinforce a positive culture and climate.
- Respondent groups highlight Westport's ability to **foster connection** through clubs, athletics, arts, school events, family engagement opportunities, and collaborative staff culture.



CULTURE AND CLIMATE AREAS FOR GROWTH:

- Across respondent groups, the most significant climate concerns relate to **belonging, behavior, discipline, bullying, fairness, and student wellbeing**.
- Respondents across groups, particularly parents and staff, call for **stronger communication, greater consistency in expectations and support, and increased trust and responsiveness** from leadership.
- Students, parents, and staff raise concerns related to workload, academic pressure, stress, staffing capacity, and time demands. Respondents highlight an **opportunity to better balance achievement expectations with the social, emotional, and wellbeing needs** of students and staff.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE KEY FINDINGS (2/2)

GROUP-SPECIFIC FINDINGS:



- **Staff respondents** widely describe Westport as a **strong professional environment** characterized by academic excellence, collaborative culture, and access to instructional resources and professional learning. Respondents identify **student behavior and discipline as the primary improvement concern**, with many calling for more consistent expectations and accountability.
- **Parent respondents** highlight **strong academics, caring educators, and individualized support** as key strengths. Their strongest **concerns center on academic quality and student support**, along with belonging, discipline, wellbeing, and communication with leadership.
- **Students** praise **engaging learning experiences, caring teachers, and the supportive relationships** they experience at school. While many students describe schools as welcoming and inclusive, others raise concerns related to **belonging, bullying, fairness, stress, and academic pressure**, suggesting that student wellbeing remains a key area of focus.

TRENDS ACROSS CLOSED AND OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES:

- **Shared Strengths:** Strong academic expectations, caring relationships, student support, and a commitment to wellbeing.
- **Shared Improvement Areas:** Consistency around behavior, communication, accountability, and student/staff support.

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



Results from this year's survey indicate an opportunity to continue strengthening student wellbeing and support systems. Survey results indicate that students generally feel safe, welcome, and supported. However, students' abilities to manage emotions and resolve conflict emerged as relative areas for growth, and many high school students report feeling pressure from school expectations. Westport should consider building on existing supports to further promote student wellbeing and healthy management of academic demands, particularly at the high school level.



Feedback across respondent groups highlights an opportunity to strengthen consistency around student behavior, discipline, and accountability. Although perceptions of students following school rules improved from last year, respondents continue to differ in whether they believe rules are enforced fairly, and open-ended responses express concerns around behavior, consistent discipline practices, and fairness. Westport should consider reviewing behavior and discipline practices to support clearer expectations, more consistent implementation, and greater transparency in discipline and behavior policy.



Differences in parent and staff perceptions suggest an opportunity to strengthen family communication and engagement. Parents report less favorable perceptions than staff of administrator communication and decision-making, while open-ended responses also call for greater responsiveness from leadership. Westport should consider strengthening consistent, transparent, and two-way communication with families across schools.



Thank you.

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