

# Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07



## STUDY OVERVIEW

The Harris Interactive School Poll survey research program was instituted by Del Mar Union School District in the spring of 2007 to help provide information about the experiences and satisfaction levels of key District stakeholders (elementary students, teachers and staff members, and parents). 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 Del Mar Union School District were impressive. While there is always room for a quality improvement plan, this district is to be commended for higher than average ratings in their baseline data.

Some key strengths for Del Mar Union School District can be described as follows (all ratings on a 0 to 10 scale):

- Elementary students (n=1,563) were most satisfied with computer technology (9.3), their teachers (8.9), and equipment and facilities (8.7).
- Teachers (n=239) were most satisfied with their assistant principal (9.4), parental support (9.1), equipment and facilities (8.9), their career (8.9), and their students (8.9).
- Staff members (n=98) were most satisfied with their principal (9.0), the school atmosphere (9.0) and equipment and facilities (8.9).
- Parents (n=1,654) were most satisfied with computer technology (9.0), teachers (8.9), principals/building administration (8.9), and equipment and facilities (8.8).

# Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

## OVERALL RATINGS DATA

Atmosphere	8.4
Equipment and Facilities	8.7
School Bus	7.4
Computer Technology	9.3
Main Teachers	8.9
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>8.5</b>

Atmosphere	8.7
Equipment and Facilities	8.9
Computer Technology	8.7
Parental Support	9.0
School Board	6.6
Superintendent	7.7
Central Administration	7.6
Principal	8.5
Assistant Principal	9.2
Direct Supervisor	8.6
Involvement/Decision Making	7.4
Career	8.8
Students	8.8
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>8.6</b>

Parents (n=1,654)	2007 Rating
Equipment and Facilities	8.8
School Bus	6.0
Computer Technology	9.0
Communications/Involvement	8.6
Child's Teachers	8.9
Board of Education	7.6
Superintendent/Central Admin	7.3
Principal/Administration	8.9
Curriculum/Training	8.5
Budget/Budget Process	7.1
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	<b>8.9</b>

**KEY:**

**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 to HI School Poll Database**



# Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

## OBSERVATIONS OF DATA

Del Mar Union School District had 3,557 stakeholders who responded to the District's first implementation of the Harris Interactive School Poll. Elementary students completed the survey online, while all teachers and staff and parents completed paper questionnaires.

In nearly all functional areas, the District's average ratings are **higher** than our Harris Interactive School Poll database ratings. 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** in the District are more satisfied than those in our database in every functional, including Overall Satisfaction. With an Overall rating of 8.5, this stakeholder group's satisfaction is strong. This is good, but improvement is always possible—among this group, School Bus issues are in need of continuous improvement.

District **teachers/staff** give higher ratings than those in our database for all areas. The Overall Satisfaction rating for this stakeholder group is 8.6, which is strong. Most other areas are strong as well, though a few are in need of continuous improvement. School Board issues are in need of defined focus and an improvement plan.

District **elementary parents** rated all areas higher than our database except School Bus, in which the District rates **1.3 lower** than our database average—a sign for need of defined focus and an improvement plan! Overall Satisfaction was rated an 8.9 by this stakeholder group which indicates strong satisfaction. Still, a few areas are in need of continuous improvement.

Other than the specific areas of concern among each stakeholder group, another point of interest for the district would be the concern over **individual student attention**. This issue appeared as a driver of satisfaction among all stakeholder groups, and was the issue with the greatest impact on teacher satisfaction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Del Mar Union School District 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 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 – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

### ELEMENTARY STUDENTS -- PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for elementary students (grades 4-6) 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 8.5.

Ninety-one percent (91%) 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 Del Mar Union School District concentrate on the following actions:

- Continue to develop additional methods to engage students in and out of the classroom. 45% of the elementary students reported that their main teacher did not give interesting homework. The frequency of this problem increased by students' grade level, from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade (37%), to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade (53%). Students with an “A” self-reported grade point average (GPA) (42%) were *less* concerned with this issue than students with a “B” average (51%) or lower than a “B” average (66%).

15% of the students said their main teacher did not make class fun. Girls (13%) and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students (12%) reported the *lowest* frequencies of concern with this issue. Frequency of concern with this issue increased as self-reported GPA decreased, from students with an “A” average (13%), to students with lower than a “B” average (41%). Also, students at Carmel Del Mar School (31%) reported this concern most often.

Together, these engagement issues accounted for 26% of the possible increase in the level of overall student satisfaction, from the current level of 8.5, to the maximum possible level of 9.7. *In other words, if the frequency of these issues was reduced to 0%, overall satisfaction would increase from 8.5 to 8.8.*

- Examine the quality and quantity of the food served in the lunchroom. 36% of the students said that they did not like the food served in the lunchroom. Students at Torrey Hills School (23%) were *least* concerned with this issue. Frequency of concern with this issue increased significantly by students' grade level, from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade (24%), to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade (52%). This accounted for 8% of the potential for increased overall satisfaction.
- Continue to promote positive relationships among students. 14% of the students said that most other students were not nice to them. Boys (15%) said this more often than girls (12%) did, and students with lower than a “B” self-reported GPA said this most often (42%). Students at Ashley Falls School (7%) and Del Mar Heights School (9%) reported the *lowest* frequencies of concern with this issue. This concern accounted for 8% of the possible rise in satisfaction.
- Develop strategies for assisting students with their behavior at school. 18% of the students said that students were not well-behaved while in school. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (24%) said this most often, while students with an “A” self-reported GPA (16%) said this *least* often. At the building level, students at Ashley Falls School and Del Mar Heights School (both 7%) reported this *least* often.  
  
5% of the students reported that they, themselves, were not well behaved at school. Boys and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (both 8%) reported this most often. Also, the frequency of this issue increased significantly as self-reported GPA declined, from students with an “A” average (4%), to students with lower than a “B” average (22%).

Together, these behavioral issues represented 8% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction ratings.

## Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

- Monitor the comfort level of classrooms. 16% of the students indicated that the temperature in their classrooms was not usually comfortable.  
  
8% of the students reported that, other than temperature, their classrooms were not comfortable. Boys (10%) said this more frequently than girls (7%) did.  
  
Combined, these items represented 8% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction levels.
- Determine the type of assistance students would like to receive from teachers outside of class time. 33% of the students indicated that their main teacher did not help them outside of class time. Boys (37%) expressed concern with this issue more frequently than girls (29%) did. This situation represented 7% of the opportunity to improve.
- Review school rules with students. 18% of the elementary students said the rules at their school were not fair. Boys (23%) and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (25%) expressed the highest frequencies of concern, while students with an “A” self-reported GPA (16%) expressed the lowest frequency of concern. At the building level, students at Torrey Hills School (7%) were concerned with their school rules *least* often. This item accounted for 7% of the potential increase in satisfaction.
- Investigate the condition of school facilities. 14% of the students reported that school buildings and grounds were not clean and in good condition. Girls (11%) expressed lower levels of concern with this issue than boys (17%) did. At the building level, Sycamore Ridge School (5%), Del Mar Heights School (8%), and Ashley Falls School (9%) reported the *lowest* frequencies of concern. This facilities item represented 6% of the opportunity for improvement.
- Address the concerns expressed by some students regarding their relationship with their main teacher. 9% of the students stated that their main teacher did not like them. Boys (10%), 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (11%), and students with lower than a “B” self-reported GPA (31%) reported the highest frequencies of concern with this issue. At the building level, students at Carmel Del Mar School (19%) said this most often. This concern accounted for 6% of the potential for students’ increased satisfaction.
- Clarify computer training needs. 27% of the students felt that their classroom teacher was not prepared to train them on the computer. Boys (30%) said this more often than girls (23%) did, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (32%) said this more often than 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade students (both 24%) did. This concern represented 5% of the possible rise in satisfaction.
- Assess the need for additional seating and/or alternative scheduling in the lunchroom. 16% of the students stated that there was not enough seating in the lunchroom. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students (12%) were *least* concerned with this issue. At the building level, students at Del Mar Heights School and Del Mar Hills Academy (both 4%) were *least* concerned with this issue. This concern accounted for 4% of the gap between the current and maximum possible levels of satisfaction.
- Identify and address safety issues. 3% of the students said they did not feel safe while in school, accounting for 3% of the potential to improve. Students with lower than a “B” self-reported GPA (24%) were most concerned with this issue.
- Provide opportunities for students to work cooperatively on projects and assignments, and encourage them to do so. 12% of the students indicated that students did not help each other with schoolwork. Boys (15%) said this more often than girls (8%) did. The frequency of this issue increased as self-reported GPA

## Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

declined, from students with an “A” average (10%), to students with lower than a “B” average (36%). This represented 2% of the opportunity to improve satisfaction.

- Determine how school computers could better meet the needs of students. 6% of the students indicated that school computers did not meet their needs. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (9%) reported this concern most frequently. At the building level, Ashley Falls School (13%) reported the highest frequency of concern. This situation represented 2% of the potential improvement.

### TEACHERS AND STAFF -- PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

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. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the employees provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their school.

**District Teachers and Staff gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 8.6.** To increase the satisfaction of employees, we suggest Del Mar Union School District concentrate on the following:

- Identify employee concerns regarding lack of time for providing individual student attention. 34% of the employees felt that they did not have enough time for helping individual students. Teachers (45%) reported this more frequently than Other Staff (17%) did. This concern represented 22% of the possible rise in employee satisfaction, from the current level of 8.6, to the maximum possible level of 9.5. *In other words, if the frequency of this issue was reduced to 0%, overall satisfaction would increase from 8.6 to 8.8.*
- Provide additional opportunities for team building and problem solving. 12% of the teachers and staff indicated that their involvement in this area was not adequate. This item accounted

for 21% of the possible rise in satisfaction for this stakeholder group.

- Enhance communication within buildings. 8% of the employees identified communication with their Direct Supervisor as an area for improvement. Teachers (10%) were more concerned with this issue than Other Staff (3%), and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers (19%) expressed this more often than those who teach grades K-5 (9%). This issue accounted for 18% of the possible increase.
- Ensure, as appropriate, the confidentiality of employees’ conversations. 19% of the employees felt that their principal did not treat their conversations as confidential. Teachers (22%) reported a higher frequency of concern with this issue than Other Staff (12%) did. This issue accounted for 16% of the opportunity to increase overall satisfaction for this stakeholder group.
- Outline and address concerns regarding student apathy that affects learning. 13% of the employees identified this as a problem. 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers (17%) were concerned with this issue more often than those who taught grades K-5 (8%). This issue represented 12% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction.
- Identify employees’ expectations for the function of computers in the learning process. 8% of the employees said that computers did not support and extend the learning process. This item accounted for 8% of the opportunity for improvement.
- Address concerns regarding safety. 1% of the teachers and staff said that they did not feel safe while in school. This accounted for 3% of the opportunity for improvement.

# Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

## PARENTS -- PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

An overall model of satisfaction was estimated for parents of students in grades K-6 in the District. This technique allows the prioritization of all the items on the questionnaire and shows which will have the greatest impact on increasing overall parent satisfaction. Items listed on this page are the ones most deserving of attention within the District.

**Parents gave an Overall Satisfaction rating of 8.9.** Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the parents provided a rating of either “A” or “B” for their child’s school. To increase the satisfaction of parents, we suggest Del Mar Union School District concentrate on the following actions:

- Develop strategies and practices to encourage better communication between the school and parents. 18% of the parents said they were not getting enough feedback on their child's performance.  
7% of the parents indicated that teachers did not communicate to them when their child had a problem.  
These communication issues accounted for 25% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction, from the current level of 8.9, to the maximum possible level of 9.6. *In other words, if the frequency of these issues was reduced to 0%, parent satisfaction would increase from 8.9 to 9.1.*
- Determine parental concerns regarding budget restrictions. 29% of the parents said that budget restrictions affected their child’s education. This issue accounted for 13% of the possible increase in satisfaction.
- Determine the types of changes parents would like to see regarding extracurricular opportunities for students. 14% of the parents felt that this was an area for improvement. Parents

who do not volunteer at their child’s school (21%) said this more often than parents who do volunteer (16%). This issue accounted for 9% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction.

- Explore additional means for providing individual attention in the classroom. 13% of the parents said that their child did not receive enough individual attention from teachers. This concern represented 8% of the possible rise in satisfaction.
- Clarify parental expectations regarding homework. 13% of the parents felt that the homework assigned was not appropriate. This concern accounted for 8% of the possible increase in overall satisfaction.
- Continue to identify and address safety concerns. 4% of the parents felt that school did not provide a safe environment for their child. This concern accounted for 8% of the improvement gap.
- Review processes and follow-up procedures for the provision of administrative support to students. 4% of the parents who said that their child needed the administration's support were not satisfied with the support they received. This item represented 6% of the gap between the current and maximum levels of overall satisfaction.
- Address parents’ concerns regarding the handling of district finances. 10% of the parents said that administrators were not responsible in their handling of district finances. Parents of boys (18%) reported this more frequently than parents of girls (12%) did. And, parents who volunteer at their child’s school (17%) expressed greater concern over this issue than parents who do not volunteer (11%). This represented 5% of the potential rise in satisfaction.

## Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

- Consider additional problem-solving strategies for issues brought before the administration. 7% of the parents who said that they took a problem to the administration felt that the problem was not resolved satisfactorily. Parents who volunteer at their child's school (8%) reported this more often than parents who do not volunteer (5%). This concern represented 5% of the gap between the current and maximum levels of overall satisfaction.
- Promote and highlight opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education and school experience. 5% of the parents said their school was less than satisfactory at allowing them to be involved with their child's education. This engagement item accounted for 5% of the gap between the current and maximum possible satisfaction scores.
- Investigate the concern parents have about some teachers. 5% of the parents reported that they have a serious problem with (any of) their child's teacher(s). 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents (12%) expressed this concern more often than parent of K-5 students (5%) did. This issue represented 5% of the potential improvement in satisfaction.
- Continue to promote and reinforce a positive relationship between parents and teachers. 2% of the parents said teachers did not treat them with respect. Male parents (4%) reported this more frequently than female parents (2%) did. This concern represented 3% of the potential for improvement.

## Executive Summary – Del Mar Union School District: 2006-07

### SUMMARY

The information provided in this project will enable Del Mar Union School District 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 several 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 Del Mar Union School District 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 Del Mar 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 individual student attention. Students said that their teacher did not help them outside of class time. Parents said their children did not receive enough individual attention from teachers. Employees, especially teachers, felt they did not have enough time for helping students individually. What are the specific concerns? Why do teachers not have enough time to help their students? Does this lack of time include after school, in class or during the school day, or all of these times? Do students need more help during certain periods of the school year, or for certain classes? Is this a problem among all grade levels and in all buildings? Which students are in need of the most individual attention, and which teachers are having the most difficulty meeting

their students' needs? Administrators should further discuss these issues with students, employees, and parents to discover opportunities for driving change forward.

Once Del Mar Union School District 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 Del Mar' progress, highlight areas where improvement is moving slowly, and revisit the priorities for change. In summary, Del Mar Union School District should be **very encouraged** by these results and **motivated** to keep the quality improvement process moving in the District.