



Southern Illinois University
Department of Psychology
<http://www.arc.siu.edu/>
618-453-3536

Polson SD23 Employee Survey: Final Report

Client: Polson School District #23
111 4th Ave East
Polson, MT 59860
406-883-6355 (Phone)
406-883-6345 (Fax)

Evaluation Team: Jared Klotz, B.A., Project Leader
Sean Cameron, B.A., Associate
Josh Doerner, B.A., Associate
John Lambertus, B.A., Associate
Dustin Nadler, M.A., Associate
Andrew Osifalujo, Intern
Margaret Stockdale, Ph.D., Director

Applied Research Consultants (ARC)¹
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Life Sciences II, Mail Code: 6502
Carbondale, IL 62901

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Executive Summary

The Polson School District Board of Directors commissioned Applied Research Consultants (ARC) to conduct and analyze a survey of the District's employees including Certified (e.g., teachers), Classified (e.g., paraprofessionals, bus drivers, custodians, etc.) and Non-Represented (e.g., District office personnel, food service employees, etc.) staff. The survey questions (See Appendix A) were each open-ended and asked respondents to comment on (a) positive aspects of their school or the District; (b) concerns and recommendations for improvement of the District; (c) concerns and recommendations for improvement of individual schools; and (d) other comments. The Board stipulated to ARC that the context of the survey was concern about morale and conflict within the Board and among the Board, District leadership, and other staff. Concern had been raised that responses would not be kept confidential, therefore ARC took particular caution to preserve anonymity including (a) not soliciting names or any other identifying information on the survey (including not collecting IP addresses for those who took the survey electronically); (b) maintaining the data on ARC's secure server; (c) not mentioning any names in this report even if names were mentioned in the responses; (d) using pseudo-quotes instead of actual quotes to describe the content of responses to particular themes; (e) not releasing the full set of comments to the client; and (f) not analyzing responses from groups in which there were fewer than 5 respondents.

From reading and analyzing the responses to questions 1 and 2 (addressing positive qualities of the District and its schools), it was apparent that although the negative climate in the Polson School District is noted, most employees felt as though the District does many important things well. Specifically, employees mentioned quite frequently that the District *and* their particular school(s) excel at putting the students first and that the District has many high quality teachers and staff members. These themes were evident across all schools and employee classification categories for *each* question, as they were the most commonly stated themes. In addition, employees mentioned that the leadership at the building level, extracurricular activities, and the facilities were all positive aspects of the District. The overall tone of the majority of the responses to the questions regarding what the District and schools do well was hopeful, and the vast majority of employees were able to think of something positive to say.

The questions involving concerns and recommendations for improvement at the District or school level accounted for most of the text. Questions 3 and 3a respectively focused on what areas the District could improve and how these areas could be improved. In these responses, employees primarily discussed the inability of the school board to set aside differences and focus on a common goal as the main problem with the District. The most commonly discussed solution to the Districts' problems was to dismiss current school board members and elect new ones. Closely related was a concern for morale across the school District quite broadly.

Responses also mentioned some student support issues. These issues included being consistent in disciplining students in a standardized way. It was the belief of some that the current disciplinary actions in practice do not properly deter students from acting similarly in the future. It was suggested that to avoid this, the District should enforce discipline policies in a comprehensive manner. Responses also indicated that parents should be involved in the discipline process.

Also, responses indicated that an issue with the District is the removal of classes that non-college bound students tended to take, such as agriculture, home economics, and trade courses. This issue was especially prominent in the questions regarding what could be improved at the school level (Questions 4 & 4a). Responses in these sections tended to mention that it needs to be understood that many students will not go on to higher education and that there should be equal opportunities for students to take courses that more immediately prepare them for the workforce upon high school graduation. Finally, some respondents indicated that they are concerned that classes did not challenge students enough academically in order to adequately prepare them for college. It appears that employees are concerned about both sides of this issue.

General communication at all levels was commonly mentioned as a negative aspect at the District *and* the individual school level. Most of the comments that were made about communication specifically were in regard to the communication between schools, however communication at all levels (i.e. between administration and schools, parents and schools, between faculty, etc.) was a common concern. Often suggested to improve communication was to create more meetings with representatives from different schools. Also, it was mentioned that follow-through of ideas generated at these meetings should be a key concern. Some individuals made note that they felt that their ideas generated at such meetings were disregarded. To ameliorate this, it was suggested that the District nurture a culture that promotes and respects the ideas of others. Many thought that this issue needed tremendous improvement and that the District and schools would be better for doing so.

The response rate for the last question (other concerns) dropped indicating that many employees felt their concerns had been expressed in the previous questions. From the responses that were gathered, however, it appears that some employees felt the need to express or re-express their discontent with administration. Many employees also indicated that they are concerned that the negative climate in the District has drawn the focus away from what is best for the students. Finally, responses indicated that there was skepticism about both the current survey and the *My Voice* survey. These responses indicated specific concerns about anonymity, dissemination and quality of results, and funding for these surveys. Most of these concerns were directed towards the current survey. When the *My Voice* survey was mentioned, however, it was usually to question the validity of the results from this survey.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	7
Individual Question Analyses.....	8
Question 1: “What do you believe the Polson School District does well?”	8
Overall Analysis.....	8
Question 1 – Analysis by School and Classification	9
Question 2: “What does your particular school do well?”	14
Overall Analysis.....	14
Question 2 – Analysis by School and Classification	15
Question 3: “In what areas do you believe the Polson School District needs to improve?”	19
Overall Analyses.....	19
Question 3 – Analysis by School and Classification	20
Question 3a: What are your recommendations for improvement of the District?”	24
Overall Analysis.....	24
Question 3a - Analysis by School and Classification	25
Question 4: “In what areas do you believe your school needs to improve?”	30
Question 4 – Analysis by School and Classification	31
Question 4a: “What are your recommendations for improvement for your school?”	35
Overall Analysis.....	35
Question 4a – Analysis by School and Classification.....	36
Question 5: “Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the <i>My Voice</i> or this questionnaire?”	40
Overall Analysis.....	40
Question 5 – Analysis by School and Classification	41
Appendix A: Polson School District 23 Employee Survey	44

Table of Tables

Introduction Tables

Table 1: Response Rate by School 7

Table 2: Response Rate by Classification 7

Question 1 Tables

Table 3: Themes for Question 1: “What do you believe the Polson School District does well?” 11

Table 4: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 1 12

Table 5: Percent and Frequency of codes by employee classification type for Question 1..... 13

Question 2 Tables

Table 6: Themes for Question 2: “What does your particular school do well?” 17

Table 7: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 2 18

Table 8: Percent and Frequency of codes by employee classification type for Question 2: 18

Question 3 Tables

Table 9: Themes for Question 3: "What Polson School District can improve" 22

Table 10: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 3 23

Table 11: Percent and Frequency of codes by employee classification type for Question 3..... 23

Question 3a Tables

Table 12: Theme for Question 3a: "What are your recommendations for improvement in the District?" 27

Table 13: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 3a: 28

Table 14: Percent and Frequency of codes by classification for Question 3a..... 29

Question 4 Tables

Table 15: Themes for each theme for Question 4: “In what areas does your school need to improve?” 33

Table 16: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 4” 34

Table 17: Percent and Frequency of codes by employee classification type for Question 4..... 34

Question 4a Tables

Table 18: Themes for each theme for Question 4a: “What are your recommendations for improvement in your school?” 38

Table 19: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 4a 39

Table 20: Percent and Frequency of codes by employee classification type for Question 4a” 39

Question 5 Tables

Table 21: Themes for each theme for Question 5: “Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the My Voice or this questionnaire?” 42

Table 22: Percent and Frequency of codes by school for Question 5..... 43

Table 23: Percent and Frequency of codes by employee classification type for Question 5..... 43

Introduction

The Polson School District (SD23) Board commissioned Applied Research Consultants (ARC) to administer and analyze a survey of its employees. The Polson School District Survey was sent to 242 individuals via email and 20 individuals via U.S. Mail. Of these, ARC obtained 161 responses. Among the set of returned surveys were 13 that either contained no data or included only information about the respondent's school and employee classification. This left 148 useable responses for a final response rate of 56% (148 out of 262). As depicted by Table 1, each school was fairly equally represented. There were 6 individuals who reported being at more than one school. As depicted by Table 2, with the exception of non-represented, each classification was also rather fairly well represented in the survey. Only one respondent did not select his or her classification.

The survey contained five open-ended questions with two of those having two parts: (1) What does the District do well (2) What does the employee's school do well? (3) What does the District need to improve upon? (3a) How might the District go about improving? (4) What does the employee's school need to improve? (4a) How might the employee's school go about improving; and (5) Is there anything else you would like to add? To analyze the responses themes were identified in the responses for each question. Once these themes had been clearly defined for each question, the responses for each question were categorized into the set of identified themes – a process called “coding.” ARC associates took appropriate measures to ensure that each associate was coding each question consistently.² The following report contains analyses of the results of this survey.

Table 1: Response Rate by School

Number of Responses	School
40	Cherry Valley Elementary
35	Linderman Elementary
40	Polson Middle School
37	Polson High School
10	N/A

Table 2: Response Rate by Classification

Number of Responses	Classification
40	Classified
100	Certified
7	Non-represented
1	N/A

² Two (2) ARC associates were assigned to identify and clearly define a set of themes for each question. This was accomplished by analyzing 15 randomly selected responses from each question. Once themes were created, each of the pair of ARC associates individually coded 15 more randomly selected responses. The inter-rater reliability of these dually-coded responses was assessed using Cohen's Kappa (K), with the requirement that K values meet or exceed .85 for each question. If this criterion was not met, the pair of coders met to discuss their discrepancies and additional sets of responses were dually coded and analyzed for inter-rater reliability until the criterion of K=.85 was achieved.

Individual Question Analyses

Question 1: “What do you believe the Polson School District does well?”

Overall Analysis

Question 1 asked participants what they thought Polson School District was doing well. Of the total 148 responses, 142 individuals (96%) addressed this question and only 6 left it blank. Two hundred and eighty three total codes were derived from the 142 respondents. While many participants acknowledged the negative climate of the District, only 5% (13) of the responses indicated that there was nothing positive they could think of. Table 3 (below) depicts the different themes that emerged from the responses followed by a description of the theme and finally a “pseudo-quote” that represents the type of responses that were considered a part of this theme. Of the positive aspects of the Polson School District, the three most common overall themes as shown in Table 3 were Students’ Needs (27%), Quality Teachers and Staff (21%), and Leadership (11%).

Responses were deemed to represent the theme of **Students’ Needs** when it was clear in the response that the individual believed that a positive aspect of the District is that the students’ needs are addressed. This was a general category that encompassed many different comments, all of which, however, focused on creating or maintaining an environment that ensured a rich, high quality experience for the students. Most of the responses discussed students’ needs generally rather than specifically. For example, “I think we do a good job of meeting the students’ needs” or variations of this was a common response. Less common were responses that were more specific. One such response involved meeting the needs of academically disabled students. Another discussed meeting the needs of college-bound students.

The theme called **Quality Teachers/Staff** included comments that made note of the faculty or staff (specifically or in general) as an asset to the District. The most commonly mentioned group in this category was the faculty, but the maintenance workers, bus drivers, and other staff were mentioned as well. Note that responses that mentioned principals only as an asset to the District were grouped in the theme called Leadership rather than Quality Faculty/Staff.

If a response noted (specifically or generally) that the school board, principals, superintendent, or simply “administration” was a positive aspect of the District it was placed in the theme of **Leadership**. We feel it is important to note that when Leadership was mentioned positively, it was almost exclusively mentioned at the building level (i.e. principal) or in a general sense (i.e. “the administration”). For instance, many individuals gave vague responses such as “The leadership at Cherry Valley is a huge plus.” Alternatively there were a few responses that said specifically, “I think principal _____ is a great administrator.” This was less common, and nearly always in regards to a principal.

Extracurricular Activities (23, 8%) was a theme composed of responses that mentioned an activity that students engage in outside of class as a positive aspect of the District. These responses were typically specific. Many activities were mentioned, such as speech, drama, ski club, volunteering, academic contests, and athletics. The most commonly discussed Extracurricular Activity was athletics.

The theme named **Facilities** (18, 6%) included responses that mentioned the general upkeep of the school grounds and those who maintain it. Buses and bus drivers were included in this category, though they were infrequently mentioned. The most frequently mentioned group was the maintenance crew, and most responses used possessive terms such as “*our* maintenance crew” implying that each response is discussing the maintenance crew at their specific school (that is, unless there are individuals who work for multiple schools).

Diversity (15, 5%) was a theme that included responses that mentioned some aspect of diversity in a positive light. Most of these responses were general, but some also included discussion of the Native American population. A generic, common response was, “We do a good job of welcoming all students from all backgrounds and cultures into our schools.” Some responses more specifically referenced the Native American population.

Community (14, 5%) was a theme that included responses that mentioned how the District got the community involved. This theme was discussed largely in general; however parental involvement was particularly common.

Professional Development (12, 4%) included responses that noted the positive aspects of professional development within the District. This theme is inherently specific, and included only responses that addressed professional development specifically. Responses that could have meant something other than professional development (i.e. “we are improving every day”) were not included in this category. Positive aspects of professional development in the District were the number of opportunities and encouragement to engage in these opportunities.

The theme called **Technology** (11, 4%) included responses that indicated that technology in general was a positive aspect of the District. Most of the responses in this theme were general. An example of a common response for this theme was, “we have a lot of technology.” Some responses included specific technology such as smartboards or computers.

Finances (8, 3%) was a theme that encompassed remarks that indicated some financial aspect of the District was positive. These remarks were frequently specific and included terms such as funding, salary, compensation, and benefits.

Question 1 – Analysis by School and Classification

Of the 301 codes derived from the responses found for the first question³, 89 (30%) came from the Middle School, 79 (26%) came from the High School, 64 (21%) came from Cherry Valley, 57 (19%) came from Linderman, and 12 (4%) came from individuals who left this section blank. These responses were excluded from analysis for the sake of size and anonymity.

Table 4 breaks these responses down by school. From this data it can be determined that regardless of school, Students’ Needs and Quality Teachers/Staff were the most common themes, which accounted for 48% of the total overall codes. At the Middle School and High School, Extracurricular Activities was the third most commonly mentioned theme, accounting for 11% (10) of the Middle School’s total codes, and 10%(8) of the High School’s. Leadership (10, 16%) was viewed as a very positive aspect of the District at Cherry Valley, whereas Diversity (5, 9%) was the third most popular theme at Linderman.

As delineated in Table 5, certified employees comprised the overwhelming majority of respondents with 211 of the 283 total codes (75%) being derived from their responses. Only 56 (20%) codes were accounted for by Classified employees, and 15 (5%) by Non-Represented employees. These data are more difficult to interpret because there is such a disparity between the number of codes that came from “Certified” individuals and the rest of the classifications. Also, there were so few codes

³The “total” amount of codes went from 283 to 301, which indicates that 18 total codes came from individuals who were associated with more than one school. Thus, if the response was not broken down by school, those codes were included in each affiliated schools count. As a result, the total number of codes is less than the sum of the total codes across all schools.

derived from the responses of individuals who considered themselves “Non-Represented” that it is difficult to draw any conclusions for this particular group.

The three most common themes for Classified individuals were identical to the overall most common themes, Students’ Needs (14, 25%), Quality Teachers/Staff (9, 16%), and Leadership (9, 16%). For Certified individuals, Students’ Needs (58, 27%), Quality Teachers/Staff (46, 22%), and Leadership (23, 11%) were the three most common themes as well. The limited data collected from Non-Represented individuals appears to suggest that this group responded similarly to the Certified and Classified individuals when it came to Students Needs and Quality Teachers/Staff, as these were the top two themes in this category as well with 5 (33%) responses each. However, rather than having Leadership as their third most commonly mentioned theme like Certified (23, 11%) and Classified (9, 16%), Non-Represented individuals third most commonly mentioned theme was Community (3, 20%).

Although unmeasured and not a theme, the tone of the responses suggested that most of the respondents still have a great deal of hope for the District. The tone also indicated that, due to the negative climate in the District, many individuals had a more difficult time coming up with an answer to this question than they thought they should have. Paraphrased, a common remark was, “I used to be proud to say I worked for the Polson School District.” Many went on to discuss the things that the Polson School District *does* do well. The individuals surveyed believe that the Polson School District is doing many important things well, including having quality teachers and staff and attending to students’ needs. Some individuals mentioned that they would like to see the focus brought off of the negative aspects of the District by instead celebrating the things Polson School District does well.

Table 3: Themes for Question 1: “What do you believe the Polson School District does well?,” including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-quote
Students’ Needs	77	27	Program, initiative, or general behavior that reflects a focus on creating or maintaining an environment to ensure a rich, quality experience for the students.	We work hard to make sure that all of the students’ educational needs are met.
Quality Teachers/Staff	60	21	Teachers and staff’s expertise, qualification, dedication, and/or devotion to students.	The teachers and staff that assist in the school’s every-day functioning are an integral part of the PSD.
Leadership	32	11	Authoritative initiatives, specific or general, in terms of running the school District and individual schools.	The leadership in the PIR day was great!
Extracurricular Activities	23	8	Activities related to sports, drama, or other after-school programs that are not implicitly a part of the curriculum.	Extracurricular activities such as the youth ski club and volunteering for the migrant program are great for the District and the students.
Facilities	18	6	Cleanliness, upkeep, or sanitation of school grounds. Also encompassing the presentation of school grounds such as lawns, hedges, and athletic fields.	Our maintenance teams do a great job keeping up the buildings!
Diversity	15	5	Diversity in the Polson School District in terms of culture, race, or ethnicity.	The District hires people who are not from the area allowing for different ideas to be brought into the District.
Community	14	5	Programs that actively engage parents of students, area leaders, and the community at large in activities with the Polson School District.	This District does a great job of getting the community involved in many of our programs.
Professional Development	12	4	Any mention of the idea of professional development in a positive manner.	We have great opportunities for professional development.
Technology	11	4	Use and presence of technology (i.e. smartboards, projectors, and computers).	We seem to have a good amount of technology.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-quote
Finances	8	3	Some aspect of finance (i.e. funding , salary, benefits, compensation).	I think the Polson School District has a fair and competitive compensation program.
Nothing	13	5	Any assertion that the Polson School District is not doing anything well.	I've had a hard time answering this. With all the negativity it is hard to say we are doing anything right.

Table 4: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 1: "What do you believe the Polson School District does well?"

	Cherry Valley %(n)	Linderman %(n)	Middle School %(n)	High School %(n)	Not Identified %(n)
Students' Needs	25(16)	32(18)	26(23)	29(23)	42(5)
Quality Teachers/Staff	14(9)	32(18)	19(17)	28(22)	17(2)
Leadership	16(10)	0(0)	10(9)	4(3)	17(2)
Extracurricular Activities	6(4)	4(2)	11(10)	10(8)	8(1)
Facilities	6(4)	7(4)	7(6)	5(4)	0(0)
Diversity	0(0)	9(5)	7(6)	5(4)	0(0)
Community	8(5)	4(2)	7(6)	3(2)	8(1)
Professional Development	11(7)	0(0)	2(2)	4(3)	0(0)
Technology	3(2)	5(3)	4(4)	3(2)	0(0)
Finances	3(2)	2(1)	2(2)	6(5)	8(1)
Nothing	8(5)	7(4)	4(4)	4(3)	0(0)
Total	(64)	(57)	(89)	(79)	(12)

Table 5: Percent (Frequency)of codes by employee classification type for Question 1: “What do you believe the Polson School District does well?”

	Classified	Certified	Non-Represented
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Students Needs	25(14)	27(58)	33(5)
Quality Teachers/Staff	16(9)	22(46)	33(5)
Leadership	16(9)	11(23)	0(0)
Extracurricular Activities	9(5)	8(16)	13(2)
Facilities	9(5)	6(13)	0(0)
Diversity	4(2)	6(13)	0(0)
Community	2(1)	5(10)	20(3)
Professional Development	5(3)	4(9)	0(0)
Technology	4(2)	4(9)	0(0)
Finances	0(0)	4(8)	0(0)
Nothing	11(6)	3(6)	0(0)
Total	(56)	(211)	(15)

Question 2: “What does your particular school do well?”

Overall Analysis

Question 2 asked participants what they thought their particular school within the Polson School District was doing well. Of the total 148 responses, 130 individuals (88%) addressed this question and 18 left it blank. Two hundred and seventy nine total codes were derived from the 130 respondents. Most participants did not acknowledge the same negative climate within their respective school as they did in the District as a whole; only a small number of the responses indicated that there was a negative relationship between certain staff members that they could think of. Instead, most of the participants focused on the strengths of their school's faculty, staff, and administrators. Table 6 (below) depicts the different themes that emerged from the responses followed by a description of the theme and finally a “pseudo-quote” that represents the type of responses that were considered a part of this theme. Of the positive aspects of each individual school, the three most common overall themes as shown in Table 6 were Students’ Needs (79, 28%), having Quality Teachers/Staff (61, 22%), and Extracurricular Activities (27, 10%). Note that these themes are very similar to those of Question 1.

Responses judged to represent the theme of **Students’ Needs** were those that addressed positive aspects of specific schools in ensuring a rich, high quality experience for students. This broad label included many different comments, all of which, however, focused on establishing a learning environment that ensured students received not only quality instruction, but also an environment that catered to their general well-being. Most responses in this category were general (i.e. “We here at _____ put the students first!”) however some questions addressed specific things that the school does well (i.e. “We make sure all of the students’ needs are attended to by _____”). Some specific needs that were mentioned included course offerings, special education, nutritional needs.

Quality Teachers/Staff was a theme that included comments that made note of the faculty or staff (specifically or in general) as an asset to the specific school. The major foci of this theme were the abilities, dedication, and qualifications of teachers and staff. Although again, most comments were general (i.e. “We have great teachers/staff at _____”) a few faculty and staff were singled out. To keep with the anonymous nature of this survey, these specific names have been excluded because they were not mentioned enough times to be considered a theme. The most commonly mentioned group in this category was the teachers, but the maintenance workers, bus drivers, and other in class assistants were mentioned as well. Please also note that these responses often occurred with the most prominent theme, Students’ Needs (i.e. “We have great teachers/staff at _____ who put the students’ needs first!”).

The theme titled **Extracurricular Activities** included comments that made note of activities that students participated in outside of classes (i.e. competitive athletics, speech, drama, etc.) as a positive aspect of the school. The most commonly referred to activity in this category was competitive athletics. Also, this theme encompassed the positives that extracurricular activities brought to the school as a whole. This was the most prevalent theme of all responses behind Students’ Needs and having Quality Teachers/Staff.

Other lesser mentioned themes included the theme of **Administration**, which in the context of Question 2 was comprised of responses that mentioned the school's administrators in a positive light.

Much like question 1, these comments were almost uniformly in regards to the principals and other building administrators.

The themes of **Communication** and **Community Involvement** focused on a how information was passed between school faculty/staff members as well as the community. Communication was typically mentioned in general (i.e. "Here at _____ I believe we have good communication") but a few comments discussed communication with the community at large. The theme of Community typically included programming geared toward involving parents, families and the community organization.

The themes of **Technology** and **Facilities** were often viewed as related and mentioned in the same responses (i.e. "We have lots of technology and clean facilities"). These comments were typically referring to the presence of up-to-date equipment in classrooms and the tidiness and cleanliness of buildings and grounds respectively.

Lastly, only direct references to the **Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI)** were categorized into the theme MBI (8, 3%). Generally, individuals who mentioned the MBI discussed how well it was followed in their particular school and the positive effects of its implementation.

Question 2 – Analysis by School and Classification

The total number of codable responses was expanded from 279 to 302 in the school-level analysis because 20 codes came from individuals who were associated with more than one school; therefore their responses counted for each school with which the respondent was associated. If such an individual's response did not reference a specific school their response was coded for each school with which they were affiliated. Of the 302 codable responses found for the second question, 99 (32%) came from the Middle School, 67 (22%) came from the High School, 78 (26%) came from Cherry Valley, 55 (18%) came from Linderman, and 3 (1%) came from individuals who did not specify a school. Due to the fact that so few codes were derived from individuals who left this section blank, their results were not individually analyzed.

Table 7 breaks these responses down by school. From this data it can be determined that regardless of school, Students' Needs and Quality Teachers/Staff were the most common themes, combining to compose almost exactly half (140, 50%) of the total overall codes. These were also the most commonly mentioned themes at each of the individual schools. Students' Needs accounted for 25 or 32% of the total codable responses at Cherry Valley, 19 or 35% at Linderman, 22 or 22% at the Middle School, and 21, or 31% at the High School. Quality Teachers/Staff accounted for 17, or 13% of the total codable responses at Cherry Valley, 15, or 27% at Linderman, 21 or 21% at the Middle School, and 18, or 26 percent at the High School. The third most commonly mentioned theme was Community Involvement at both Cherry Valley (11, 14%) and Linderman (5, 9%). The third most commonly mentioned theme for the Middle School (14, 14%) was communication. For the High School, the third most commonly mentioned theme was Extracurricular Activities (13, 19%).

As depicted by Table 8, individuals who were certified composed the overwhelming majority with 225 of the 279 total codes (82%) belonging to them. The two most common themes for Classified, Certified, and Non-Represented individuals were Students' Needs and Quality Teachers/Staff, respectively. Students' Needs accounted for 18 of the 45 (40%) total codable responses for Classified

individuals, 59 of the 225 (26%) total codable responses for Certified individuals, and 2 of the 9 (22%) total codable responses for Non-Represented individuals. Quality Teachers/Staff accounted for 8 (18%) of the total codable responses for Classified individuals, 51 (23%) of the total codable responses for Certified individuals, and 2 (22%) of the total codable responses for Non-Represented individuals. Administration (6, 13%) was the third most common theme for Classified individuals, while Extracurricular Activities (24, 11%) was the third most common theme for Certified individuals. Non-Represented individuals had a five-way tie for third most common theme (1, 11%) between Extracurricular Activities, Communication, Community Involvement, Technology, and Facilities.

The nature of the responses suggested that most of the individuals surveyed still have a great deal of pride in their individual schools even if that position does not carry the same weight for the District. The tone also indicated that there is cohesiveness at the individual school level in terms of curriculum, interacting with co-workers, and administrative leadership, that does not equally carry over to the whole District. Most of the respondents surveyed reported positive feelings toward how their school operated. Paraphrased, a common remark was, "I think we do a lot of great things for our students here. We work together with a focus on the students." Overall, the negative sentiments from employees may be directed more at the mechanisms that control District oversight than the issues that hinder the efficiency of schools at the classroom level.

Table 6: Themes for Question 2: “What does your particular school do well?,” including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
Students' Needs	79	28	Concerns for the students' needs specifically (i.e. educational, social, etc.) or generally.	My school puts the children first.
Quality Teachers/Staff	61	22	The efficacy of teachers and/or staff benefits the students in a positive manner.	My school is full of very talented and hardworking instructors.
Extracurricular Activities	27	10	Extracurricular activities (i.e. athletics, clubs, theatre, etc.) are a positive aspect of the school.	Our school excels at athletics.
Administration	26	9	Generally the administration of their school is effective at leading the staff.	We have great administrative leadership and support.
Communication	26	9	Communication is present amongst the staff and is a positive factor in their school.	As staff members we communicate thoughts and ideas to help improve the school as a whole.
Community Involvement	24	9	Their school's interaction with the students' parents, families and community is positive.	We actively engage parents, families and the community in various programs throughout the year.
Technology	16	6	Technology in the classrooms is a positive aspect of the learning environment.	I am proud to say that most of our classrooms are equipped with the most up to date technology.
Facilities	12	4	The facilities (i.e. building itself, maintenance, sports complexes, etc.) are positive.	The grounds and facilities are always very well maintained.
MBI	8	3	Perception that Montana Behavioral Initiative has a positive effect on student conduct.	The MBI program that we have implemented has improved my class drastically.

Table 7: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 2: “What does your particular school do well?”

	Cherry Valley	Linderman	Middle School	High School
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Student’s Needs	32(25)	35(19)	22(22)	31(21)
Quality Teachers/Staff	17(13)	27(15)	21(21)	26(18)
Extracurricular Activities	6(5)	7(4)	11(11)	19(13)
Administration	13(10)	7(4)	10(10)	6(4)
Communication	9(7)	7(4)	14(14)	3(2)
Community Involvement	14(11)	9(5)	6(6)	6(4)
Technology	3(2)	0(0)	5(5)	6(4)
Facilities	1(1)	4(2)	8(8)	1(1)
MBI	5(4)	4(2)	2(2)	1(1)
Total	(78)	(55)	(99)	(67)

Table 8: Percent (Frequency) of codes by employee classification type for Question 2: “What does your particular school do well?”

	Classified	Certified	Non-Represented
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Student’s Needs	40(18)	26(59)	22(2)
Quality Teachers/Staff	18(8)	23(51)	22(2)
Extracurricular Activities	4(2)	11(24)	11(1)
Administration	13(6)	9(20)	0(0)
Communication	11(5)	9(20)	11(1)
Community Involvement	2(1)	10(22)	11(1)
Technology	4(2)	6(13)	11(1)
Facilities	2(1)	4(10)	11(1)
MBI	4(2)	3(6)	0(0)
Total	(45)	(225)	(9)

Question 3: “In what areas do you believe the Polson School District needs to improve?”

Overall Analyses

Question 3 asked participants in what areas do you believe the Polson School District needs to improve. Table 9 provides a summary of the themes that emerged in the analysis of Question 3. One hundred and thirty seven survey participants (93%) responded to question 3. From these participants a total of three hundred and nineteen codable comments were analyzed. The number of codable comments may be greater than the number people who responded to the question as some respondents may have provided comments that were coded into different themes. Participants indicated the top three themes for areas in need of improvement were School Board 50 (16%), Student Support 48 (15%), and Communication 46 (14%). Areas in need of improvement also included Administration 40 (12%), Superintendent 34 (11%), Public Relations 28 (9%), Curriculum 25 (8%), Facilities 20 (6%), Leadership 17 (5%), and Funding 11(3%).

The most common response amongst participants for what Polson School District needs to improve was comments about the **School Board**. Thirty seven percent of respondents provided a School Board related comment. Participants indicated throughout their responses the School Board needs to set aside their personal agendas and work together to help improve the District. Many respondents also indicated a need for the School Board to alter their focus and make decisions that are student focused. Respondents also noted a strong cloud of negativism that hovers around the School Board, that they feel disrupts morale throughout the rest of the District. Finally, there were respondents that called for the removal of all current School Board members and even asked for a re-election.

The second most common response for participants was comments about **Student Support**. Thirty five percent of respondents provided a Student Support related comment. Comments about Student Support focused on three distinct areas. The first area was the need for the District to develop and enforce school rules on all students not just certain sub-groups of students. Many respondents indicated a lack of follow through on punishments for students that break rules. The second group of responses that were included in this category centered on the need to keep courses for non-college bound students. Several participants indicated that non-college bound students were being hurt by the removal of trade and agricultural classes. The third area that comments focused on was the need to challenge students more, and provide them with rigorous classes. Many respondents indicated that they did not think students were being prepared for college by the level of education they received in Polson School District.

The third most common response for participants was comments about **Communication**. Thirty four percent of respondents provided a communication-related comment. Participants stated that communication needed to be improved in a myriad of locations. The most commonly mentioned area of communication amongst participants was between schools. Specifically, respondents mentioned that communication between schools needed to be improved. As students change from one elementary to another, or move to the middle school then high school, communication can be improved between the schools to make those transitions easier. Participants also mentioned communication could improve between the schools and the administration in charge of the School District. Participants noted that it

can be quite a difficult task to get answers for questions from administration due to a lack of communication skills.

Respondents also indicated a need for improvement with the **Administration**. Many of the comments that were made about Administration discussed the need for a reduction of administrative positions. Comments in this area also voiced displeasure with raises that administrators recently received while other District employees lost their jobs. Respondents also identified the **Superintendent** position as an area in need of improvement. Most of the comments that discussed the superintendent centered on the need to replace that individual. **Public Relations** were another area of concern for many respondents. Participants identified a need to clear the air between the School District and community in order to help secure future Mill Levies.

Another area that participants felt the School District needs to address is **Curriculum**. Many respondents indicated a need for a more cohesive curriculum from grade school to the high school. **Facilities** for the School District were another area that respondents felt could be improved. The comments that focused on Facilities discussed leaking roofs in buildings, need for storage space, and a need for new transportation equipment. **Leadership** was yet another common topic discussed by respondents. Many respondents felt that leadership by administration at the District level, leadership within schools, and leadership by the Superintendent all needed to be improved. Finally, **Funding** was another common theme across participants. Respondents felt that clarity from the School District regarding funding would improve the workplace climate.

The areas that require improvement that were identified by participants most commonly are shown in Table 9 were the School Board and Student Support. The School Board was mentioned 50 (16%) times, while Student Support was mentioned 48 (15%) times. The third most mentioned theme was Communication, which was mentioned 46 (14%) times. Administration was the fourth most popular theme at 40 (12%) mentions. The Superintendent was the next most popular theme with 34 (11%) of respondents mentioning this individual. Table 9 (below) depicts the different themes that emerged from the responses followed by a description of the theme and finally a “pseudo-quote” that represents the type of responses that were considered a part of this theme.

Question 3 – Analysis by School and Classification

Table 10 (below) breaks these responses down by school. Note that the totals are different due to the fact that some individuals marked being a member of more than one school. Of the 318 codes which emerged for this question, 68 (21%) were contributed by Cherry Valley Elementary School employees, Linderman Elementary School contributed 74 (23%), while Polson Middle School accounted for 84 (26%) of the codes, and Polson High School contributed 92 (29%) of the codes. There were 20 additional codes provided from respondents who did not identify a school that they worked at, however they were not included in Table 10.

As shown in Table 10, the percentage and frequencies of how they differed for respondents from each school. Employees at Cherry Valley Elementary responded that top areas that needed improvement were School Board (22%), Student Support (19%), and Communication (15%). Linderman Elementary employees reported improvement needed to be made with Student Support (18%), the Superintendent (16%), and Communication (16%). Polson Middle School employees indicated that

Communication(17%), Administration (15%), and Student Support (14%) were the areas that needed the most improvement. Polson High School employees indicated that they felt these three areas needed the most improvement: School Board (21%), Student Support (13%), and Administration (12%).

Table 11 below shows the percentage and frequency of each for differing classifications of participants. The majority of respondents to survey were categorized as Certified employees as they were responsible 243 (79%) for the codes identified for this analysis. Classified employees were responsible for 50 (16%) of the codes identified in the analysis, and Non-Represented were responsible for 14 (5%) of the codes identified. Three respondents did not identify their Employee Classification so their data was not included in this analysis. Certified employees indicated that the “School Board” (15%), “Communication” (15%), and “Student Support” (15%) were the three areas that were in need of improvement. Classified employees indicated that the “School Board” (22%), “Student Support” (22%), “Communication” (14%), and “Facilities” (14%) were the areas that needed improvement. While Non-Represented employees indicated that “Administration” (21%), “Communication” (21%), and “Public Relations” (14%) were areas that needed to be improved.

Table 9: Themes for Question 3: "In what areas do you believe the Polson School District needs to improve?," including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
School Board	50	16	Concerns about School Board and need for improvement/removal of those individuals.	The School Board members should set aside their personal agendas and get back to focusing on students.
Student Support	48	15	Student issues including behavioral, rule enforcement, and student policy.	Bullying at our schools is way out of hand.
Communication	46	14	Any reference to communication at the District level.	Communication between schools and parents should be improved.
Administration	40	12	Concerns about Administration and need for improvement/removal or reconfiguration of positions.	There are too many administrative positions in our school District.
Superintendent	34	11	Concerns about the superintendent and a need for improvement/ removal of that individual.	The superintendent should listen to the teachers' opinions as decisions are made that will affect our jobs.
Public Relations	28	9	Public relations matters that need to be improved.	The city no longer trusts that school District.
Curriculum	25	8	Inconsistent curriculum between schools, or room for improvement in this area.	Teachers within the same subject areas from different schools should plan out curriculum for their subject.
Facilities	20	6	Unkempt facilities, structures, technology, or transportation.	We need to maintain the facilities we have because they are beginning to fall apart.
Leadership	17	5	Leadership skills of those in the District needing improved.	The leadership skills of those in charge need to be developed further.
Funding	11	3	Funding (i.e. salary, benefits, compensation) needing improvement.	The District needs to be clear what kinds of funds are available for employees.

Table 10: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 3 "In what areas do you believe the Polson School District need to improve?"

Theme	Cherry Valley	Linderman	Middle School	High School
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Superintendent	9 (6)	16(12)	12 (10)	8 (7)
School Board	22 (15)	8 (6)	11 (9)	21 (19)
Administration	13 (9)	8 (6)	15 (13)	12 (11)
Communication	15 (10)	16 (12)	17 (14)	11 (10)
Curriculum	3 (2)	7 (5)	11 (9)	10 (9)
Student Support	19 (13)	18 (13)	14 (12)	13 (12)
Facilities	6 (4)	5 (4)	2 (2)	10 (9)
Funding	1 (1)	4 (3)	4 (3)	4 (4)
Leadership	3 (2)	5 (4)	5 (4)	7 (6)
Public Relations	9 (6)	12 (9)	10 (8)	5 (5)
Total	(68)	(74)	(84)	(92)

Table 11: Percent (Frequency) of codes by employee classification type for Question 3 "In what areas do you believe the Polson School District needs to improve?"

Theme	Classified	Certified
	%(n)	%(n)
Superintendent	8 (5)	12 (28)
School Board	18 (11)	15 (37)
Administration	10 (6)	13 (31)
Communication	12 (7)	15 (36)
Curriculum	3 (2)	9 (22)
Student Support	18 (11)	15 (36)
Facilities	12 (7)	5 (11)
Funding	5 (3)	3 (7)
Leadership	8 (5)	5 (12)
Public Relations	5 (3)	10 (23)
Total	(60)	(243)

Question 3a: What are your recommendations for improvement of the District?"

Overall Analysis

Question 3a asked participants for recommended improvements for the Polson School District. Table 12 provides a summary of the themes that emerged in the analysis of Question 3a. One hundred and thirty-five individuals (91%) responded to question 3a; of which two hundred fifty-nine total codable comments were extracted. The number of codable comments exceeds the number of responses due to many responses containing more than one codable comment (recommendation). Participants indicated the top three themes of improvement were School Board Changes 41(16%), Morale 33(13%), and Communication 30(12%). Improvements in regards to Student Related Improvement 28(11%), Administration 26(10%), and Superintendent 26(10%), Curriculum Changes 20(8%), Funding 18(7%), Facilities 13(5%), Policy Improvement 9(4%), Public Relations 8(3%) and Leadership Improvement 7(3%) were also suggested.

School Board Changes included mostly recommendations to dismiss the current board and elect new members. Thirty percent of respondents provided a School Board related suggestion. The theme to dismiss the school board centers on participant awareness of the tension within the school board. Comments give the impression that board members are unable to work together towards a common goal and that a lot of arguing exists between members at board meetings. Responses highlighted the desire for civility among members while other responses included recommendations towards returning to a more student-related focus. Many respondents depict the board as being out of touch with important issues related to the students due to remaining fixated on personal agendas. Suggestions also include better listening, better teamwork, and less micro-management. For instance, the micromanagement of the superintendent by the board of directors was a concern to participants. Many respondents suggest the board is not allowing the superintendent to perform the job he was hired to accomplish.

Morale, the second most common theme, consisted of mostly the desire for recognition. Twenty-four percent of respondents provided a morale-related suggestion. Many responses in this theme were related to increasing morale through praise and respect. For instance, several respondents suggest that the District focus on and acknowledge the accomplishments of teachers and staff. The impression is that many feel that their hard work goes unrecognized. Also, respondents indicate that morale is low and that the overall workplace atmosphere is toxic. Other respondents indicate that tensions exist within the workplace, and responsibilities are vague, due to the lack of contracts.

Twenty-two percent of respondents included a **Communication**-related suggestion. Suggestions for improved communication between and within buildings were made; often with an emphasis on teamwork. Suggestions were made to increase meetings between schools so collaboration efforts could be increased. Also, suggestions indicate more effective use of meetings and follow-through with the ideas generated at these meetings. Interwoven within the Communication theme was the desire for individuals to be heard and to express opinions without fear of reprisal. Respondents indicate having the desire to communicate about important issues but are afraid that their comments or suggestions will compromise employment. Those who have made suggestions in the past feel that their comments are

disregarded and suggest focus be placed on establishing a culture that increases and respects communication.

Student-Related Improvement suggestions were voiced by 21% of respondents, mainly centered on behavioral issues such as bullying and attendance. This theme contained several suggestions related to comments made in Question 3 (In what areas do you think the Polson District need to improve?). The suggestions included the enforcing of policy for both issues as well as getting parents more involved.

The Administration and Superintendent themes were indicated by 19% of respondents. In regards to **Administration-Related Improvement**, suggestions focused on reduction or replacement of upper level administrators. Suggestions in this theme indicated that respondents feel there are too many administrators for the size of the District. **Superintendent Improvement** suggestions were mostly split between termination of the superintendent and allowing the superintendent to do his job. Other suggestions indicated the need for the superintendent and the school board to work together rather than being in opposition.

The **Curriculum Changes** theme contained several suggestions by 15% of respondents to improve the curriculum. For instance, some suggestions include a common core curriculum between schools. Other suggestions highlighted the need for vocational classes focusing on workforce-bound students.

Funding suggestions were included by 13% of participants and were directed towards better budget management with an emphasis on infrastructure and students. **Facilities** suggestions were made by 10% of the participants. The suggestions in the Facilities theme encompassed building repair, infrastructure improvement, and bus repair. Both of these themes appear to be directly related to concerns in Question 3 about proper allocation of funds.

The remaining themes contained the least amount of responses but were mentioned enough to merit separate themes. **Policy Improvement** suggestions (10% of respondents) indicated a need to develop clearer policies. **Public Relations** (6% of respondents) suggestions included the need to bolster public opinion within the District and might be directly related to concerns in Question 3 about levies. The **Leadership Improvement** theme (5% of respondents) contained suggestions related to the overall need for better leadership in the District. In these suggestions a more broad mention of leadership was mentioned rather than direct indication of the school board, superintendent, principals, or top administrators.

Question 3a - Analysis by School and Classification

A fairly even distribution of codes emerged between each school (Table 13). Across the schools, 232 total codable responses surfaced for question 3a. Of these, 57(25%) were accounted for by Cherry Valley Elementary School respondents, 48(21%) by Linderman Elementary School, 57(25%) by Polson Middle School, and 70(30%) from Polson High School.

Although a similar distribution occurred between schools; salient themes differed. For instance, responses from Cherry Valley Elementary indicate a preference for improvement in the areas of School Board 15(26%), Funding 8(14%), and Students 7(12%). The most frequent suggestions from individuals at Linderman elementary were split equally between, Morale 8(17%) and improvements to

Communication 8(17%) while the second most frequent suggestion involved the Superintendent theme 7(15%). Polson Middle School also tended to comment on Morale 10(18%) and Communication 9(16%), and Administration 8(14%). Polson High School participants most frequently commented on School Board Improvements 12(21%) and Curriculum Improvements 9(13%), and were evenly split on suggestions for Morale 7(10%), Student Related Improvement 7(10%), Administration 7(10%), and Funding 7(10%).

Table 14 delineates percentages and frequency of themes by classification (classified, certified, non-represented) of the participants. Certified respondents provided more suggestions focused on School Board 34(17%) and Morale 28(14%) improvements. Certified participants were more evenly split on Student Related 21(11%), Superintendent 21(11%), Administration 20(10%), and Curriculum 20(10%) suggestions. The Classified Respondents provided more Communication 12(22%) and Funding 9(16%) related suggestions. The number of respondents classified as Non-Certified were too low (<5) for separate analysis.

Table 12: Themes for Question 3a: "What are your recommendations for improvement in the District?," including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
School Board Changes	41	15.8	Disbanding current board. Rehire of new members. Important issues not in-focus. Ulterior motives of board members. Micromanagement of Superintendent by the board of directors.	The school board needs to increase civility among members, focus on the important issues (such as the students), and eliminate personally driven agendas.
Morale	33	12.7	Feedback system needs improvement. Lack of contracts. Teacher and staff recognition. Improved student/teacher ratios. Overall morale of teachers and students.	A system of positive feedback needs to be implemented to increase the morale of staff and teachers.
Communication	30	11.6	Increase communication within and between schools. Involve parents more. Increase communication with all levels of staff and with teachers.	Communication needs to be increased and valued.
Student-Related Improvement	28	10.8	Acknowledgement of good students. Behavioral management needs improved and enforced. Bullying needs to be addressed. Parents need to be more involved with successes/problems. Bus safety.	Students need to be the focus of the District. Behavioral issues are detracting from success while great students go unrecognized. All the while parents are left out of loop.
Administration-Related Improvement	26	10.0	Administrative positions in need of reduction/consolidation. District office needs reduced. Current administrators need replaced.	There are too many higher level administrators for the size of our District.
Superintendent Improvement	26	10.0	38% suggest termination of superintendent. 34% suggest that the school board allow the superintendent to do his job. Needs to be more honest. Superintendent and school board need to work together.	The superintendent needs to either be allowed to focus on their goals or relieved.
Curriculum Changes	20	7.7	Separate curriculum focused for both college-bound students and workforce-bound students. Desire for common core curriculum. Vertical alignment. Vocational options.	Not all students want to go to college and we need to prepare those who do and also prepare those who do not.
Funding	18	7.0	Funding prioritized for student needs and infrastructure. Funding for better benefits. A budget evaluation by outside evaluator.	A priority needs to be placed on money allocated to student needs, repairs, and infrastructure.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
Facilities	13	5.0	Facilities need repaired. Technology infrastructure needs improved. Busses and bus depot need attention.	Some of our buildings are in sad shape and need serious attention.
Policy Improvement	9	3.5	Job descriptions. Contracts. Attendance policy enforcement.	There are many students who are allowed to pass school despite being absent. The attendance policy needs to be used.
Public Relations	8	3.2	Public relations focus by board. Mill Levies.	The relationship between the District and the community needs to be improved or taxes will not be passed.
Leadership Improvement	7	2.7	The need to hire new leadership. Honesty. Integrity.	New leadership is needs to direct this District towards new founded success.

Table 13: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 3a: "What are your recommendations for improvement in the District?"

Theme	Cherry Valley %(n)	Linderman %(n)	Middle School %(n)	High School %(n)
School Board	26(15)	10(5)	7(4)	21(12)
Morale	9(5)	17(8)	18(10)	10(7)
Communication	11(6)	17(8)	16(9)	6(4)
Student Related	12(7)	10(5)	11(6)	10(7)
Administration	7(4)	10(5)	14(8)	10(7)
Superintendent	7(4)	15(7)	11(6)	9(6)
Curriculum	4(2)	4(2)	11(6)	13(9)
Funding	14(8)	0(0)	5(3)	10(7)
Facilities	4(2)	0(0)	2(1)	7(5)
Policy	0(0)	13(6)	4(2)	0(0)
Public Relations	4(2)	0(0)	4(2)	6(4)
Leadership	4(2)	4(2)	0(0)	3(2)
Total Codes	(57)	(48)	(57)	(70)

Table 14: Percent (Frequency) of codes by classification for Question 3a: "What are your recommendations for improvement (in the district)?"

Theme	Classified	Certified
	%(n)	%(n)
School Board	11(6)	17(34)
Morale	7(4)	14(28)
Communication	22(12)	9(17)
Student Related	11(6)	11(21)
Administration	9(5)	10(20)
Superintendent	9(5)	11(21)
Curriculum	0(0)	10(20)
Funding	16(9)	8(8)
Facilities	7(4)	4(8)
Policy	2(1)	4(6)
Public Relations	2(1)	3(7)
Leadership	4(2)	2(5)
Total Codes	(55)	(195)

Question 4: “In what areas do you believe your school needs to improve?”

Overall Analysis

Question 4 asked participants in what areas they believed that their school needs to improve. One hundred and twenty four survey participants (84%) responded to question 4 with 229 total codable comments. Notice the number of codable comments is greater than the number of respondents, as some participant’s responses included two or more codable comments.

The most common theme among all respondents was **Accountability for Discipline**, as 35% of respondents provided a comment that fit this theme. These comments focused on a need for more accountability within the school for administrators, faculty, students, and their parents. Table 15 (below) describes the different themes that emerged from the responses, followed by a description of the theme and a “pseudo-quote” that represents the type of responses that were considered a part of this theme. The Accountability for Discipline theme was coded for comments that discussed the need to be better at holding students accountable for their behavior at school. Many employees expressed a concern for the need to not only discipline students, but to hold parents accountable, and the need for this accountability and discipline to be standardized and enforced for all students. Additionally, many employees expressed a need to hold administration (school board, superintendent, and principals) accountable for ensuring the discipline process was enforced equally and fully across all schools and all students.

The theme **Goal Direction and Solidification** was also seen as a need by a majority of respondents, as 34% of participants provided a comment that fit this theme. Responses within this theme were concerned with the lack of a vocational program or programs for at risk-students, as well as concern with the direction and goals that their school or the District has as a whole. It emerged from these responses that each school and the District as a whole need to have a collaborative and individual direction and set of goals. This direction and set of goals should however, be realistic and attainable. Additionally this District should provide students who are not college bound with vocational opportunities. Finally, the District needs to have a mission of supporting all students, and with this they should work to identify at risk of failing students and implement programs to help those students succeed.

Finally, respondents suggested a need for dealing with **Communication Issues**, both among employees and administration (school board, principals, and superintendent) but also between these individuals, students, and parents, as 33% of respondents provided a comment that fit this theme. This theme included responses with a variety of concerns. In this theme, codes were given for responses regarding the need for school board to provide more clear communication to the superintendent, principals, and other employees. Additionally, communication between schools was commented on frequently, discussing the need for more dialogue between schools as well as among employees within school. Finally, this theme had several comments on the need to communicate more frequently and more clearly with both students and their parents.

Five additional themes emerged from participants’ responses to this item. **Scheduling(Logistics)** was a theme in which responses were concerned about the structure of the school day, including time between classes, considerations with scheduling students (generally problematic students) into the

same classes, and scheduling core or important classes earlier in the day, so that athletes would not miss them as frequently. **Conflict** was another theme which emerged. This theme was responses about the fighting and conflict between faculty, schools, and administration. The next theme that was derived from the comments was **Maintenance and Other Resources**. This theme contained comments regarding the need to fix buildings, create new or expand buildings, and overall concerns regarding maintenance issues. **Collaboration and Support** was the next theme that emerged. This theme contained comments regarding the need for the schools, faculty within the schools, and administrators in each school to work together for the sake of the children and their education. This comment also included comments regarding the need for administrators, especially principals, to show more support of their faculty and assist them when needed. The final theme, **Teacher Development and Promotion**, was comprised of responses regarding the need for better and more professional development and training workshops for faculty as well as the need to recognize and promote faculty who continue to develop and perform well within the school.

Question 4 – Analysis by School and Classification

Of the 229 total codes which emerged for this question, 38 (17%) were accounted for by respondents from Cherry Valley Elementary School, 67 (28%) were Linderman Elementary School, 73(31%) came from Polson Middle School, and 56(24%) came from the Polson High School. There were 2 additional codes provided from respondents who did not identify a school that they worked at, which were excluded from analysis for the sake of size and anonymity. As discussed before, totals are different due to the fact that some individuals marked being a member of more than one school. Thus, if the response was not broken down by school, those codes were included in each affiliated schools count. As a result, the total number of codes is less than the sum of the total codes across all schools.

As shown in Table 16, the percentage and frequency of how each theme differed for respondents from each school. Respondents at Cherry Valley Elementary responded that top needs were Goals and Direction Solidification (21%) and Scheduling (Logistics) (18%). Respondents at Linderman Elementary school however, reported needing more Accountability for Discipline (23%) and to deal with Communication Issues (21%). Similar to respondents from both Cherry Valley and Linderman, respondents from Polson Middle School felt a greater need for dealing with Communication Issues (23%), the need for Accountability for Discipline (21%), and the need for Goals and Direction Solidification (21%). Finally, the most common themes from Polson High School were need for Goals and Direction Solidification (27%) and a need for Accountability for Discipline (20%).

Of the 229 total codes which emerged for this question, 52 (23%) were accounted for by “Classified” employees, 173 (76%) were from “Certified” employees, 2 (1%) came from “Non-represented” employees, and 2(1%) came from employees who did not disclose their classification status. Again because the number of respondents from the non-represented category and those who did not disclose their classification was so small, they are excluded from the analysis. Table 17 shows the percentage and frequency of each theme for differing classifications of participants. Most respondents who identified as “Classified” saw the top needs of their school to be the need for Accountability for Discipline (19%), as well as issues with Conflict (13%) and the need for Teacher Development and Promotion (13%). Certified respondents however, reported Communication Issues (19%), need for

Accountability for Discipline (19%), and the need for Goals and Direction Solidification (19%) as the most important needs of their schools.

Table 15: Themes for Question 4: "In what areas do you believe your school needs to improve?," including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
Accountability for Discipline	44	19	There is an overall lack of administration (Board of Directors, Administration, Superintendent and Principals), faculty, staff, parent, and student accountability.	We need to discipline all students the same. Students and their parents should be accountable for their (the students) behavior.
Goals/Direction Solidification	42	18	No clear goals or direction for curriculum or learning development for the District to follow. There should be a collaboration of the District and its goals.	We have too many goals and no clear direction. We need to provide non-college bound students more vocational opportunities.
Communication Issues	41	18	Failure to communicate key issues amongst faculty, between faculty and parents, between faculty and students.	We need to communicate better between faculty and administration, students, and parents.
Scheduling (Logistics)	27	12	General disagreement about the current scheduling of duration of classes, time between classes, courses athletes are in, and avoiding problematic behavior of students.	Problematic students should be separated. Also, we should have more time between classes for students and athletes should be scheduled for main courses in the morning so they miss less work.
Conflict	23	10	Conflict among staff, board, and administration.	Teachers are always fighting and unsure what the board or superintendent is going to do, as they are always fighting too.
Maintenance and Other Resources	22	10	Physical repairs, staffing to maintain properties/facilities, dietary considerations, and choice of materials used for maintenance (e.g., eco-friendly tactics).	The roof needs fixed. We need more staff on buses and in classes to prevent understaffing. The food we serve should be low in fat and homegrown/locally produced.
Collaboration and Support	17	7	Collaboration, working together, and unity of school. Support from administration.	We need to work together and be supported by our principals/superintendent.
Teacher Development and Promotion	13	6	A need for professional development, training, promotion and the recognition of teachers or teacher promotion.	We need better training and professional development for using technology in the classroom. Teachers need to be recognized for their work and promoted accordingly.

Table 16: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 4 “In what areas do you believe your school needs to improve?”

Theme	Cherry Valley	Linderman	Middle School	High School
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Communication Issues	13(5)	21(14)	23(17)	9(5)
Accountability for Discipline	16(6)	22(15)	21(15)	20(11)
Goals/Direction Solidification	21(8)	12(8)	21(15)	27(15)
Scheduling	18(7)	9(6)	11(8)	11(6)
Maintenance and Other Resources	13(5)	4(3)	8(6)	13(7)
Conflict	3(1)	19(13)	3(2)	13(7)
Collaboration and Support	3(1)	9(6)	9(6)	5(3)
Teacher Development and Promotion	13(5)	3(2)	5(4)	4(2)
Total	(38)	(67)	(73)	(56)

Table 17: Percent (Frequency) of codes by employee classification type for Question 4 “In what areas does your school need to improve?”

Theme	Classified	Certified
	%(n)	%(n)
Communication Issues	13(7)	19(33)
Accountability for Discipline	19(10)	19(33)
Goals/Direction Solidification	15(8)	19(33)
Scheduling	12(6)	12(21)
Maintenance and Other Resources	10(5)	10(17)
Conflict	13(7)	9(16)
Collaboration and Support	4(2)	8(14)
Teacher Development and Promotion	13(7)	3(6)
Total	(52)	(173)

Question 4a: “What are your recommendations for improvement for your school?”

Overall Analysis

Question 4a asked participants what recommendations they had for improving their school(s). A total of 138 respondents (93% of total respondents) commented on this question. There were a total of 171 different comments that were coded into themes. Because respondents were free to comment however they felt appropriate, it made it possible to have more coded responses than respondents. Overall, the most common theme found among employees was improving Team Building And Cohesion (19%) among and between school Districts, administration, faculty, and the community. The next two most common themes were Communication and Resources For Students, both being mentioned 27 times (16% each). Table 18 (below) describes the different themes that emerged from the responses, followed by a description of the theme, and a “pseudo-quote” that represents the type of responses that were considered to belong to that theme.

The **Team Building and Cohesion** theme was coded for comments that expressed a desire to improve how employees and the community work together to improve how the District and those within it perform for the betterment of the education system. Also included in this theme were comments pertaining to how bickering within the District, schools, and community prevented this cohesion and, sometimes, even created a bigger rift between those bickering. The relative dominance of this theme suggests a strong need to overcome what was described several times as “petty bickering” and to come together as a whole to improve the school(s) and community. Several respondents mentioned that they had personally witnessed verbal bickering in the hallways in the presence of students and faculty. They expressed that these instances did not help solve any solutions and probably did more harm than good. These recommendations for improving team building and cohesion also accompanied remarks about how these improvements would increase trust and communication. Many comments described a strong desire for a decrease in these situations and an increase in the amount of effort put forth to bring everyone closer together to achieve better results.

Improvements to **Communication** were suggested not only between those within specific positions (i.e., administration, teachers, parents), but also across positions and to the parents and students in the community. Many respondents felt that this would help keep everyone on the same page. Most respondents who recommended improving communication felt that more effort to communicate would be appreciated and that this effort to improve communication would probably lead to greater teamwork and collaboration (which relates to the top theme mentioned in the overall analysis). Another common response coded as a Communication recommendation was miscommunication. Some respondents felt that information that is disseminated pertained to only a select few and did not affect all employees similarly (i.e., “this information is for them, not me”). Recommendations for improved communication also seemed to stem from messages being sent from various positions to the same audiences requesting contradicting information as far as expectations and task requirements. All respondents who mentioned communication-related comments felt that the issue needed tremendous improvement and that those schools would be better for doing so.

Vocational and Remedial Curricula was an equally recurring theme as Communication. Respondents felt that resources for students were being focused too heavily on preparing students for college. Many felt that even though being college bound was good, not every student has the desire to pursue college. These respondents felt that preparing non-college bound students with more vocational programs and courses that would help prepare them for everyday tasks, such as balancing a checkbook, would be very beneficial. Also, these responses coded into this theme expressed a greater interest in

designing more programs that would facilitate students' abilities to find suitable employment upon graduating from high school, such as an automotive or woodworking program. There were also a few respondents that felt more afterschool programs should be available for the students, such as dance classes. Another recurring recommendation for Vocational and Remedial Curricula involved creating intervention programs designed to target students who may not be keeping up with course materials and possibly end up at risk for failure.

The remaining themes were as follows: **Plans Of Action** (13%) consisted of recommendations about setting goals and providing the District with direction to attain those goals. Some of the coded responses in this theme also suggested minimizing the number of goals to prevent being overwhelmed or losing focus on already established goals. **Maintenance/Repairs** (11%) responses were from respondents who basically wanted the hole in the high school's roof to be fixed, as well as creating a system that allowed for regular inspections to maintain the schools. **Discipline Plans** (10%) entailed recommendations for consistent and more strictly enforced rules to govern the behavioral problems of all students to ensure equal treatment and more obedience. Recommendations for improving **Professional Development, Training, Recognition, and Promotion** (8%) contained comments referring to continuous training for employees, followed by recognition and rewards for those performing well. Some of these respondents suggested that financial rewards weren't necessary, just a simple "thank you" as a sign of appreciation for efforts. The theme of **Leadership Development or Change** (7%) comprised statements expressing a need for improvement of leadership skills for those in leadership positions. Respondents felt that if improvement of leadership skills was not a possibility then new leaders should be brought in that were capable of performing these duties.

Question 4a – Analysis by School and Classification

Across all schools and classification types, 171 total codes were placed into eight broad themes. Respondents from Cherry Valley Elementary School accounted for 29 (17%) codes, Linderman Elementary School respondents accounted for 53 (31%) of the codes, Polson Middle School respondents accounted for 49 (29%) of the codes, and respondents from Polson High School accounted for the remaining 41 (24%) of the codes placed into themes. Additionally, 12 respondents did not identify which school they belonged to; however, they also did not leave any comments regarding improvements to their respective school. Again, those who identified more than one school without specifically mentioning which school they were referencing in their responses had their responses coded into the themes for each school identified.

Table 19 provides the percentage and frequency of the themes for each school. Cherry Valley Elementary School respondents identified that Team Building And Cohesion (24%), Communication (21%), and Vocational And Remedial Curricula (21%) were the top recommendations for improvement to their school. The top recommendations for school improvement at Linderman Elementary School included Team Building And Cohesion (21%), Communication (21%) and Discipline (17%). Polson Middle School respondents identified Vocational And Remedial Curricula (18%) as their top recommendation for improvement, with Team Building And Cohesion, Discipline Plans, and Communication competing for the second highest recommendation for school improvement (16% each). Polson High School respondents felt that Vocational And Remedial Curricula (22%) was the most needed improvement, while Team Building And Cohesion and Plans Of Action were close behind (17% each).

Table 20 provides percentage and frequency of recurring themes coded by employees' classification types. Of the 171 codes that emerged, 39 (23%) came from "Classified" employees, 127 (74%) came from "Certified" employees, and 3 (2%) came from "Non-Represented" employees. Because of the small number of non-represented employees in the sample, their responses are not

summarized. Additionally, seven respondents failed to identify their employee classification type. "Classified" employees recommended that Vocational And Remedial Curricula (23%) should be improved, followed by Team Building And Cohesion, Communication, and Maintenance/Repairs (each accounting for 15%). "Certified" employees felt that Team Building And Cohesion (19%) and Communication (16%) should be improved in their schools.

Table 18: Themes for Question 4a: “What are your recommendations for improvement for your school?,” including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
Team Building/Cohesion	33	19	There is a strong desire to increase team building, unity, and cohesion among and between school Districts, administration, faculty, and the community.	We should work together as a District to better ourselves as a whole and stop bickering. A vocational program, with community input and collaboration would be great for our students.
Communication	27	16	There needs to be more communication among administration, faculty, parents, and students throughout the schools and the District.	Everyone needs to talk to each other. We have so many issues with poor communication between and among administration, faculty, parents, and students.
Vocational and Remedial Curricula	27	16	More resources should be devoted to developing programs and interventions for students who are and are not college-bound, as well as those falling behind.	We need to create a vocational program for non-college bound students. We also need to help out those students at risk of failing out.
Plans of Action	22	13	There is a strong desire for setting attainable and agreed upon goals/direction and following through with them.	We have too many goals, we need to set a few attainable goals, define our direction and then work to attain those goals.
Maintenance/Repairs	18	11	Scheduled monitoring of facilities and fixing existing problems. A need to better utilize physical space and, in some cases, finding additional space.	We need to fix the roof. We need to make sure there are scheduled maintenance checks to prevent any more damage from occurring.
Discipline Plans	18	10	Create disciplinary plans that are carried out consistently and more strictly enforced.	Each student should be disciplined the same, based on the offense. No different treatments for different students.
Professional Development, Training, Recognition, and Promotion	14	8	Create more opportunities for development and training. Also, providing recognition through gratitude and rewards.	Teachers and staff need more opportunity for professional development and training and need to be recognized more.
Leadership Development or Change	12	7	Improve leadership qualities for those in leadership positions or a change of current leaders.	We need to either be training our leaders to be better or to find new leaders to get the job done.

Table 19: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 4a: “What are your recommendations for improvement for your school?”

Theme	Cherry Valley	Linderman	Middle School	High School
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Team Building/Cohesion	24(7)	21(11)	16(8)	17(7)
Discipline Plans	3(1)	17(9)	16(8)	0(0)
Plans of Action	10(3)	9(5)	14(7)	17(7)
Vocational and Remedial Curricula	21(6)	8(4)	18(9)	22(9)
Communication	7(2)	21(11)	16(8)	15(6)
Maintenance/Repairs	21(6)	6(3)	8(4)	12(5)
Leadership Development or Change	3(1)	9(5)	4(2)	10(4)
Professional Development, Training, Recognition, and Promotion	10(3)	9(5)	6(3)	7(3)
Total	(29)	(53)	(49)	(41)

Table 20: Percent (Frequency) of codes by employee classification type for Question 4a: “What are your recommendations for improvement for your school?”

Theme	Classified	Certified
	%(n)	%(n)
Team Building/Cohesion	15(6)	19(24)
Discipline Plans	8(3)	11(14)
Plans of Action	8(3)	15(19)
Vocational and Remedial Curricula	23(9)	14(18)
Communication	15(6)	16(20)
Maintenance/Repairs	15(6)	9(12)
Leadership Development or Change	5(2)	8(10)
Professional Development, Training, Recognition, and Promotion	10(4)	8(10)
Total	(39)	(127)

Question 5: “Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the *My Voice* or this questionnaire?”

Overall Analysis

Question 5 asked participants if there was anything else they would like to add that has not been covered in the *My Voice* survey or this questionnaire. Because this question was extremely general, there was a wide variety of responses. This resulted in rather general themes. Also, because this question did not address anything new or specific, only eighty-six of the 148 (58%) total respondents completed this question. As depicted in Table 21 the three most commonly mentioned themes were General Administration (16%), Survey Skepticism (16%), and Concern for Students (16%). Although General Administration was the most commonly mentioned theme mentioned 22 (16%) times, it was only mentioned 11 more times than the least commonly mentioned theme, Communication, which was mentioned 11 (8%) times. This implies that there was not much variability in the frequency that each theme was mentioned.

General Administration was a theme that encompassed remarks that were made about administration or administrators that could not *definitely* be categorized better in School Board or Superintendent. If an individual *specifically* said “school board” or “superintendent” in their response, it was *not* included in this theme. Many responses used the word “administration” or “leadership” and these responses were categorized as General Administration. If a response included any sort of vague reference to administration (i.e. “those guys in that office making decisions...”) it was included in this category, even if it was presumed to be alluding to the superintendent or the school board. This means that there were likely responses coded into this category when the individual was in fact attempting to discuss the school board or superintendent. Also, it should be noted that these responses were uniformly negative. Most of these responses were more mildly negative when compared to the type of passionately negative responses that were common in the themes Superintendent and School Board. A somewhat common response included variations of the idea that the schools are running properly and that the administration is getting in the way.

Concern for Students was a theme that contained responses that expressed some worry that the students’ overall experience is being compromised. Keep in mind that this was a rather specific theme, yet it still was tied with Survey Skepticism for being the second most commonly mentioned theme (both mentioned by 21 respondents). This theme tended to contain responses that focused on the students as the ones who are actually being disadvantaged by the negative climate of the District.

The theme called **Survey Skepticism** was a theme that included remarks made about the current survey or the *My Voice* survey in a negative or skeptical manner. This theme, like Concern for Students, was a rather specific theme. Some sub-themes in this category were concern for anonymity, funding for survey, utility of the survey, and the quality and utility of *My Voice* survey data. Many individuals were fearful that they would be punished for their responses because they believed that the survey was not anonymous. Some were concerned with how the survey was funded and whether these funds were used wisely. Others wondered if the results would be used and if anyone was reading the responses. Some mentioned that they were skeptical of the quality of data received by the *My Voice* survey.

The themes called **Superintendent** and **School Board** contained responses that *specifically* discussed the superintendent and school board respectively. These were the third and fourth most commonly cited themes with 18 (13%) and 16 (12%) comments respectively. These comments were also uniformly negative with the exception of a few responses that discussed the possibility that the superintendent was not being given a chance to do his job. **District Unity** was discussed in 13 (10) of the

responses, **Teachers/Staff** was mentioned in 12 (9%), and **Communication** was mentioned in 11(8%). District Unity was a theme of mostly hopeful responses discussing how the District must be reunited or brought back together. Most responses discussed how much potential the District has but is not actualizing due to the negativity. Some responses, however, expressed concern for the District should it *not* reunite. Teachers/Staff was a theme that consisted of responses that discussed, in a uniformly positive manner, the quality of the teachers and staff in the District. These responses were typically more general than specific, and most discussed the teachers rather than the staff. Communication was a theme where individuals discussed the state of communication, in a uniformly negative fashion, in the District. This theme consisted of responses that discussed almost exclusively the lack of communication between the administration and the teachers/staff. Administration in this case was typically discussed generally rather than specifically.

Question 5 – Analysis by School and Classification

Table 22 breaks the responses down by school. Note that the total number of codes in Tables 21 and 22 are different due to the fact that some individuals marked being a member of more than one school. Of the 139 total codes, 51 came from the Middle School, 39 came from the High School, 29 came from Cherry Valley, and only 15 came from Linderman. A total of 5 codes came from individuals who did not identify with a school. It is important to keep in mind while analyzing this data that the data are somewhat more representative of the Middle School and High School, as the total number of codes coming from these schools was 90, while Linderman and Cherry Valley combined to total only 44.

Responses that came from individuals associated with Cherry Valley most commonly focused on Concern for Students (6, 21%), while Survey Skepticism (5, 17%) and School Board (5, 17%) were tied for the second most commonly mentioned themes. Receiving 3 responses each (20%), the most commonly mentioned themes in responses that came from individuals associated with Linderman were General Administration and Superintendent. The second most commonly stated theme were evenly divided among Concern for Students, Survey Skepticism, District Unity, and Communicate, with each mentioned 2 (13%) times. The three most commonly mentioned themes derived from responses from individuals associated with the Middle School were General Administration (11, 22%), Concern for Students (10, 20%), and Superintendent (9, 18%). Responses from individuals associated with the High School indicated that the two most commonly mentioned themes were Survey Skepticism (10, 26%) and Teachers/Staff (7, 18%). There was another four-way tie for third most commonly stated theme including General Administration (4, 10%), School Board (4, 10%), District Unity (4, 10%), and Communicate (4, 10%). The only three themes mentioned by individuals who did not identify a school were Survey Skepticism (2, 40%), School Board (2, 40%), and Teachers/Staff (1, 20%).

Table 23 breaks down the responses by classification. Due to the fact that there were too few codes that were derived from responses who classified themselves as Non-Certified, their comments were not separately analyzed. Table 23 demonstrates that the survey more accurately represents the ideas and themes of the Certified individuals (105), as quadruple the amount of codes came from these individuals as Classified individuals (24). There was a tie between Concern for Students (5, 21%) and School Board (5, 21%) for the most commonly stated theme by Classified individuals. Teachers/Staff was mentioned 4 times (17%), third most often by Classified individuals. There was a tie between General Administration (19, 18%) and Survey Skepticism (19, 18%) for the most commonly stated theme by Certified individuals. There was another tie between Concern for Students (15, 14%) and Superintendent (15, 14%) for the third most commonly stated theme by Certified individuals.

Table 21: Themes for Question 5: “Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the *My Voice* or this questionnaire?,” including total raw number of codes, percent, description, and pseudo-quote for each theme.

Theme	Total Codes	Total %	Description	Pseudo-Quote
General Administration	22	16	Comments about administration that are not or may not be on the school board or the superintendent.	The administration is holding us back.
Concern for Students	21	16	Concern about the students in the District expressed.	What is to come of our students?
Survey Skepticism	21	16	The integrity, dissemination of results, or funding for either the current survey or <i>My Voice</i> survey is questioned.	I hope the results of the survey will bring about change. How do we have money for this?
Superintendent	18	13	The superintendent specifically is mentioned in the response.	Fire the superintendent.
School Board	16	12	The school board specifically is mentioned in the response.	The school board members need to resign.
District Unity	13	10	Discusses the unification or “coming together” of the District.	We need to reunite this great District.
Teachers/Staff	12	9	Teachers or staff members are mentioned generally.	We are blessed to have the quality teachers we have.
Communicate	11	8	Communication of some form (i.e. administration to staff, staff to faculty, etc.) is mentioned in the response.	The administration needs better communication with the staff.

Table 22: Percent (Frequency) of codes by school for Question 5: “Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the *My Voice* or this questionnaire?”

Theme	Cherry Valley	Linderman	Middle School	High School	Not Identified
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
General Administration	14(4)	20(3)	22(11)	10(4)	0(0)
Concern for Students	21(6)	13(2)	20(10)	8(3)	0(0)
Survey Skepticism	17(5)	13(2)	4(2)	26(10)	40(2)
Superintendent	10(3)	20(3)	18(9)	8(3)	0(0)
School Board	17(5)	0(0)	10(5)	10(4)	40(2)
District Unity	10(3)	13(2)	12(6)	10(4)	0(0)
Teachers/Staff	3(1)	7(1)	6(3)	18(7)	20(1)
Communicate	7(2)	13(2)	10(5)	10(4)	0(0)
Total Codes	(29)	(15)	(51)	(39)	(5)

Table 23: Percent (Frequency) of codes by employee classification type for Question 5: “Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the *My Voice* survey or this questionnaire?”

Theme	Classified	Certified
	%(n)	%(n)
General Administration	13(3)	18(19)
Concern for Students	21(5)	14(15)
Survey Skepticism	4(1)	18(19)
Superintendent	13(3)	14(15)
School Board	21(5)	10(10)
District Unity	8(2)	10(10)
Teachers/Staff	17(4)	8(8)
Communicate	4(1)	9(9)
Total Codes	(24)	(105)

Appendix A: Polson School District 23 Employee Survey

Please respond to the questions below. The questions are purposely general in order to provide you with an opportunity to voice your opinion about the current state of our district. We appreciate the time you take to share your thoughts.

Your school:

Your employee classification (check one)

Classified: Certified: Non-Represented:

Please answer the following question. You may continue your answers on the back of the survey, but refer to the relevant survey number.

1. What do you believe the **Polson School District** does well?

2. What does **your particular school** do well? (*If you work at more than one school, indicate which one(s) your answer pertains to. If you are not affiliated with a particular school, you may skip this question.*)

3. In what areas do you believe the **Polson School District** needs to improve?

a. What are your recommendations for improvement?

4. In what areas do you believe **your school** needs to improve? (*If you work at more than one school, indicate which one(s) your answer pertains to. If you are not affiliated with a particular school, you may skip this question.*)

a. What are your recommendations for improvement?

5. Is there anything else you would like to add that has not been covered in the *My Voice* or this questionnaire?