

Moorhead Area Public Schools

Community Survey (Self-Selected Sample)

Full Report

The School Board of Moorhead Area Public Schools commissioned a planning process to assess the current status of the school district and to develop a strategic plan for the district’s future. During the past few years the school district has seen many changes, including significant building projects and the implementation of major educational enhancements. This fall, for the first time in over a decade, the school district has experienced growth in student enrollment. Now is a good time to assess where the district has been, where the district is at, and where we would like the district to go in the future.

The school district is using Chainsaw Planning, a bottom-up process that begins with input from the individual stakeholders and moves up to the final strategic plan approved by the School Board. The process is designed to be efficient and allow school districts to focus on continuous improvement efforts.

As a part of that process the district conducted a random survey. Community members were also able to respond to a survey online or request a survey from the Superintendent’s Office. The results of the random sample and the self-selected sample are compiled separately. The survey had two basic types of questions. One set of questions asked for community members’ perceptions of the school district. The other questions allowed for the sharing of opinions about what the school district is doing or should be doing.

Demographics

Total respondents: 64

	Number	Percentage
Parent PK-5	15	23.4%
Parent 6-8	5	7.8%
Parent 9-12	6	9.4%
Parent K-12	18	28.1%
Business Person	3	4.7%
Citizen	6	9.4%
Elected / Appointed Official	1	1.6%
Senior Citizen	1	1.6%
Other	9	14.1%

1. Following is the mission statement of Moorhead Area Public Schools. A well-crafted mission statement should clearly and succinctly describe the primary purpose of the school system.

“The mission of the Moorhead School District is to develop the maximum potential of every learner to thrive in a changing world.”

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Agree	85.9%	80.0%	100.0%	83.3%	94.4%
Needs revision	12.5%	20.0%	–	16.7%	5.6%
No answer	1.6%	–	–	–	–
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%
Needs revision	33.3%	–	–	–	22.2%
No answer	–	–	–	–	11.1%

Suggestions for mission statement revision:

Possibility

Students will be self-reliant people of good character who have highly developed academic, communication and life skills to succeed in their own lives while contributing to the well being of their communities.

Concepts and Wording

- Something about “no child left behind” should be included.
- Too often thriving means playing the system. It’s not bad. It just needs a little more focus on what ends up between the ears of children.
- Don’t like the “thrive in a changing world” part.
- Within budget.
- Potential of every learner balanced by the need to ensure competency by all.
- This is what you do isn’t it focus on raising the bottom at the expense of pushing the top 15% to excel.
- Sounds like a lawyer wrote our mission statement.
- The statement seems rather vague.

2. Moorhead Area Public School District has a good public image.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	56.3%	40.0%	80.0%	83.3%	61.1%
No	9.4%	13.3%	20.0%	–	5.6%
Not sure	32.8%	46.7%	–	16.7%	33.3%
Yes, No	1.6%	–	–	–	–
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	33.3%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	44.4%
No	33.3%	–	–	–	11.1%
Not sure	–	50.0%	–	–	44.4%
Yes, No	33.3%	–	–	–	–

Comments related to above item:

Staff

- District leaders could do more to promote Moorhead’s recent success with our star ratings. We have improved greatly and really should be boasting our huge improvement from the previous year. The Moorhead High staff focused a lot of time, energy, and care while preparing students for the tests. Should be more promotion of all the activities and success stories going on throughout our district; the emphasis is too much on sports success stories.
- I have heard exceptional things about the school system and staff and have witnessed it firsthand with each of my children.
- Teachers’ salaries should increase to get better teachers.
- Having hired a counselor that is later arrested for child porn did not do wonders for its public image.

Academics and Behavior

- Class sizes are too high. – 2 comments
- Teachers can not reach the high or middle children because they spend so much time with the lower students.
- People want more for kids, like more activities and more music, and more foreign language for all not the elite few.
- The outstanding special programs offered in Moorhead help to give it a good public image. Moorhead school district is known for its music, language arts and sports programs...the best around.
- Music and sports are thought highly of.
- Class sizes too large in 6th grade. 7th grade has 60 less students yet they have one more teacher than the 6th grade.
- We have only been a part of the public schools for 2 years. I was scared to death to send my kids to public school in Moorhead, especially at the high school. There seems to be a very large problem with discipline and respect in all schools.

Buildings

- Are bigger more beautiful schools really building better students?
- Perception that Robert Asp is for poor kids and Reinertsen is for the richer.
- Myself and most people I know are sending kids to private school after the neighborhood schools closed.
- We probably need to continue to reinforce what we do to personalize the experience for students within the context of larger buildings.
- Schools too large.
- New schools!
- High School still looks far more dated and less savvy than the other high schools in our region. Since so the high school is the school that has the most amount of public traffic (games, performances, assemblies) it needs the most amount of polish.

District Perceptions

- Perception that students are not always recognized as a person, but more as just a number going through the system.
- My impression is there a strong partnership with the colleges, especially the language village in the summer.
- Some things that need changing but overall seem to be doing a good job.
- Comfortable with the elementary system.
- Not as complimentary of the system in higher grades. (The middle school is too big and scary, children have trouble with anxiety because of the size of the school and its structure. The high school is “fine if your child is at least an average student.”)
- We get short attention in the Forum but when we get coverage it is good.
- No overall plan for the district.
- Emphasis on the system not the students.
- Image is definitely improving.
- No more stories about problems at the Junior High!
- Increasing enrollment!
- Media contributes to a skewed image of Moorhead as the lesser of the districts, though I know that isn't the case.
- High taxes, extremely large class sizes, behavior issues and block scheduling reflect poorly on the image.
- District has an excellent image regarding academic achievement and athletics.
- General public – OK; other educators and administrators – not that great.
- Moorhead consistently jumps to pilot programs. Let teachers finish the last plan before jumping on a new one.
- I think it's getting better.

3. Overall, the Moorhead Area Public School District performs well academically.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	73.4%	46.7%	80.0%	100.0%	77.8%
No	7.8%	13.3%	20.0%	–	11.1%
Not sure	17.2%	40.0%	–	–	11.1%
Yes, No	1.6%	–	–	–	–
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%	88.9%
No	–	–	–	–	–
Not sure	–	33.3%	–	–	11.1%
Yes, No	33.3%	–	–	–	–

Comments related to above item:

Curriculum

- Although we are doing well and showing great signs of improvement, we need to continue to set high expectations. Some students do not have a positive mindset about doing high quality work. Some students have an attitude that school should be easy with no outside work assigned to them. The block scheduling requires students to do work outside the classroom. They need to realize that their current “job” until they graduate from high school is school. Along with creating a stronger work ethic, I would like to see students become stronger readers who do not have negative feelings about reading. We need strategies that promote positive ideas about reading so kids do not think it is boring or a chore.
- Curriculum under the block scheduling needs to be reviewed to see where and how it has affected academic performance: positive and negative.
- I thought my answer was “yes” until I learned that a co-worker’s son (a below average student) is only taking 3 courses in his senior year because that is all that is necessary to graduate. He is being allowed to do this despite the fact that his stated goal is to attend college and possibly Seminary.
- Would question the English curriculum. Both of my kids were honor students yet scored low in the English portion of the ACT test. I would be interested to see if the Moorhead scores on the ACT test are lower than state or national averages in the English related areas.
- More emphasis placed on reading of all types. With children constantly bombarded with TV, video games, etc., parents and schools should work cooperatively to increase reading at home and at school.
- Tremendous offering of AP classes.
- Great AP teachers.

General Achievement Perceptions

- I have a child that has an IEP. He is now succeeding because his teachers helped to get this.
- Working towards better academics, based on the latest test results will enhance the performance.
- Some do some don’t, much more should be expected of elementary students.

- If a child is not performing well academically, the school and staff are tuned in to quickly locate the needed resources (before, during, after school, and through free summer school programs). No child is left behind in the Moorhead School District.
- Only OK, I've read our scores.
- The average student is not pushed as far as they could be because expectations have been lowered because of the "at risk" students.
- There are areas to be improved.
- I have really only paid attention to the elementary school scores up until now.
- Generally strong academics.
- Scores seem OK, but closer looks are more disturbing.
- Believe that we go overboard for the top students and less for the average and below.
- When I get my kids' test scores back, I look at the districtwide scores and they are almost always higher than the statewide scores.
- Overall, the district performs well academically. There are still instances where the scores have remained relatively "flat" over the years – with not a lot of improvement. And there are still kids being passed from grade to grade who struggle to read and write. Isn't anyone ever held back anymore?
- Buildings don't equal grades.
- For some it does an extraordinary job. Too many students do not receive encouragement and motivation from anywhere. It's too easy to get lost.
- Teachers go over and beyond what's expected to help students achieve to the best of their ability.
- There are great standout students, but it seems like the middle-of-the-road or lower level students should be performing better.

4. Overall, the Moorhead Area Public School District provides students appropriate opportunities in extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	70.3%	46.7%	80.0%	66.7%	83.3%
No	15.6%	26.7%	20.0%	16.7%	5.6%
Not sure	14.1%	26.7%	–	16.7%	11.1%
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	66.7%	83.3%	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%
No	33.3%	16.7%	–	–	11.1%
Not sure	–	–	–	–	22.2%

Comments related to above item:

Opportunities for All

- Would be nice to see a larger proportion or percent allowed to participate, if the numbers warrant it. When too many are cut, it makes it difficult for those that are not quite as athletic or proficient.
- Although it is great to offer many things, because of the size of the schools, it is often hard to even participate at the lower levels.

- Many varied opportunities for students.
- Need to help some of our minority students connect and take advantage of those activities.
- Could use more programs that Healthy Community Initiative used to have for kids that had to be cut because of funding. There were some really great classes and clubs that no longer exist.
- School may be too big. Possibility of opening new high school should be further explored. Too many kids cut from athletics due to large number turn out.
- Need to encourage all children / students to participate.
- My 7th grade son has (and takes advantage of) several activities.
- There should be opportunities for every kid, not just the privileged ones.
- As much as we are able to offer these activities at low or no additional cost to families, I believe that should be a budget priority.
- Sad that many activities have been discontinued due to lack of funding. Some of them have been privatized and have become too expensive for most families (especially single parent families) to afford.
- Many opportunities for the Moorhead kids to get involved in something that interests them, whether it's a musical, sports, dance line, orchestra, etc. – 2 comments
- Although there are many options, large class size limits the activities one can take part in.
- Low income students may be underrepresented.

Elementary and Middle Level Activities

- Not at the elementary and middle levels.
- School relies on the park district to coordinate organized events for K-5.
- Charging for the 101 Dalmatian participants in the play was a concern to me.
- Younger kids don't have many opportunities through the school district at a low cost.
- If it wasn't for the Park Services, students in grades 6 and below would have little if any opportunities for extracurricular activities.

Music Programs

- Music programs are excellent.
- A school that has been award-winning in the area of music should offer a quality jazz program.
- The musical pit orchestra should be an all-student group rather than hiring adult musicians to fill in most of the slots. I realize this is because adults require less rehearsal time, but this is depriving students of an opportunity to participate in a high school activity that schools of comparable sizes offer to students. The school should hire a director willing to put in time with the students to prepare. I know there are students who want to participate.
- The band program should allow students to participate in state solo and ensemble contest.
- I do not think the students should have music every day, but no study hall.

Block Scheduling

- Block scheduling is NOT the answer. My kids cannot get the classes they need AT ALL. Go back to the way things were.
- How does the block affect those who have full schedules and those who can't fit everything in under a block schedule?
- In high school though, there is a problem with trying to be in two music classes and fit core classes and other electives into a student's schedule. There are sophomore orchestra students who are taking orchestra independent study. It works this year – but will it work next year when they can't be in the upper orchestra classes as independent study students?

General

- Athletics are over emphasized.
- Unfortunately it's at a cost to academics both in money and prestige.
- Overly so.
- This is one area I am impressed with Moorhead.

5. Overall, the Moorhead Area Public School District operates efficiently.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	46.9%	40.0%	80.0%	50.0%	44.4%
No	21.9%	33.3%	–	33.3%	16.7%
Not sure	31.3%	26.7%	20.0%	16.7%	38.9%
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	33.3%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	33.3%
No	33.3%	16.7%	–	–	22.2%
Not sure	33.3%	33.3%	–	–	44.4%

Comments related to above item:

Class and Program Support

- Some class sizes are too small and some are too big.
- Class size at the elementary level are way too high.
- Class sizes are out of control.
- I see several buses that have very few children. Although, I don't like to see kids ride the bus for extended periods of times, I would like to see smaller buses on some routes or more kids on the route.
- I disagree with the lunch system. Too much food going to waste (milk cartons that the kids have to open and then dump because they didn't want to drink them? They couldn't be put back in the cooler?) I am not sure about the other schools, but I have had lunch at Hopkins and it was about the most demoralizing experience of recent memory. I have a lot of ideas of how to operate the lunch system while still maintaining a sense of order (and probably more so). I can't imagine the kids walk out of there feeling like they enjoyed any part of it.
- Schedules of parent / teacher conferences, IEP Evaluations (annual and three year), and mailing of calendars of events is appreciated.

Staff

- The high school teachers could use money to update such things as classroom support materials or buy new textbooks or support texts. Teachers can't attend worthwhile workshops that would improve their teaching unless it fits the goals for the school or district. Attending workshops is not promoted and too often rejected. Teachers used to be able to submit plans to rewrite curriculum, create new lesson plans, and work with other teachers in the summer, but those days are gone. We did so many great things in the 1990s that we have not been able to do in the last six or so years.
- Too top heavy.

- No offense but administration gets paid too much. Put money where it belongs: those individuals who have contact with the clients (students). I mean can a school or district run without a principal or multiple administrators – Yes. Can it run without teachers – No. Administrators get 3 to 5 times more money than those who actually perform the function of a school: to work with kids.

Buildings

- I think the new buildings have greatly improved that. I hope those physical plant efficiencies extend to other aspects of the operation.
- Having my child at a large elementary school feels quite impersonal as compared to smaller, neighborhood schools.
- Too much was invested in brick and not the tools inside necessary for day-to-day learning.
- Underground watering systems for a football field, student parking lots, luxury buses for a very few physically gifted students to travel 200 miles to play do not seem to qualify as “education.”

General

- I think of this as primarily a money question and I have no idea.
- Maybe too efficient.
- Because it has to. The fat was sucked out of the system years ago.
- Breaks, especially Christmas, need to be longer to allow more time for traveling.
- How does its efficiency rate with other districts of similar size?
- Not up to speed on the budget aspect of the school district but from an administrative perspective, it appears to run quite efficiently.
- I am not aware of how the district may not operate efficiently.
- Unless one spends a lot of time attending the meetings and/or researching activities, the activities of the district and its board are not very public. The average parent will have very little knowledge of the workings of the administration.

6. Moorhead Area Public School District receives sufficient state aid to adequately support the school system.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	18.8%	13.3%	20.0%	33.3%	22.2%
No	43.8%	46.7%	60.0%	33.3%	38.9%
Not sure	37.5%	40.0%	20.0%	33.3%	38.9%
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	33.3%	–	–	100.0%	11.1%
No	66.7%	50.0%	–	–	44.4%
Not sure	–	50.0%	100.0%	–	44.4%

Comments related to above item:

- Overly so.
- Need to continue to lobby our legislators to increase funding for schools.

- I just assume they do.
- Need to look at running efficiently instead of constantly begging for money.
- Good schools cost money; I feel Minnesota does not spend enough money on K-12 schools.
- There are many times and places that this is not true. Education should be more important than many issues though they continue to be pushed to the back.
- I believe the current management would absorb any amount of state aid and still neglect students in the classroom.
- Funding to support full day kindergarten. – 2 comments
- Title I in middle school.
- Is there specific aid set aside that can be used for middle and high schools to provide the best reading environment – those that incorporate up-to-date technology, software, resource material, and appropriate environments?
- Only aware of school initiated fund raisers and local supporters due to newsletter school distributes.
- More state aid might allow for more opportunities for some.
- We often hear that we can't do certain projects or reduce class sizes or hire more staff because of the lack of funding.
- More funding to help support areas of need.
- State aid has failed to keep up with today's needs.
- Cutbacks from the state hurt things. I think as a regional center we should get more special ed money.
- And it gets worse every year.
- Class sizes are too big at the high school level.
- Computer access needs to be improved.
- Library funding needs to be increased.
- It would be nice to receive more funding from our state but I think we get more than say Fargo, N.D.
- The state has only raised their funding for schools once in the last few years. It isn't enough to keep up with rising costs and added requirements the federal and state governments impose on the schools.

7. Moorhead Area Public School District receives sufficient local tax revenues to adequately support the school system.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	51.6%	40.0%	60.0%	50.0%	55.6%
No	10.9%	20.0%	–	–	11.1%
Not sure	37.5%	40.0%	40.0%	50.0%	33.3%
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	100.0%	50.0%	–	100.0%	44.4%
No	–	–	–	–	22.2%
Not sure	–	50.0%	100.0%	–	33.3%

Comments related to above item:

- Overly so – 1/3 of property taxes in Moorhead are single fixed income households. I pay \$393.95. Half month income as a senior without kids.
- Since much of the burden has shifted from the state to local communities, we probably do get sufficient local support. The district has done a good job of trying to limit its reliance on local taxes.
- If the school district needs more, it should be on the table with our local representatives.
- It’s funny how Joseph’s and Park Christian can get by on so much less. More taxes would just feed the pig.
- We all feel we are paying too much in taxes, yet what is more important than the future of our children. I believe there should be more accountability to the money that is collected.
- I wouldn’t mind paying more.
- It seems that there are always additional programs that could occur if there was more money.
- The funding is inadequate, don’t know if it’s the state or the locals to blame.
- The state of Minnesota gave us a much needed tax reduction. Too bad the Moorhead Schools captured it and even increased our taxes.

8. Moorhead Area Public School District provides quality school facilities.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	75.0%	73.3%	80.0%	83.3%	83.3%
No	17.2%	26.7%	20.0%	–	11.1%
Not sure	7.8%	–	–	16.7%	5.6%
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	66.7%	83.3%	100.0%	100.0%	44.4%
No	33.3%	16.7%	–	–	22.2%
Not sure	–	–	–	–	33.3%

Comments related to above item:

Maintenance and Upkeep

- I think that cleanliness and upkeep are substandard.
- High school maintenance could be improved. When attending activities, the area around the entrance is often cluttered with garbage, the entry way filled with leaves, the bathroom near the theater is less than clean. I think this may influence community members who are not parents to have a negative feeling about the school.
- I do not believe the high school is a quality facility. Band-Aids have been applied rather than address some of the issues with this building. What was redone a few years ago looks like a war zone.
- Wrestling room is too small.
- Some new lockers are too small for high school students.
- The quality of the air in the basement, in particular, is poor because there is a lack of fresh air exchange and dust vents are filthy. Staff and students who have allergies often get headaches and sore throats.

- Horizon Middle School can be better.
- Students often comment on how the school needs more up to date technology and computers for the number of students enrolled. The use of Word and Excel should be provided to staff and students.
- Yes, though the space at the middle school you call a performance space is substandard. It looks like you went cheap by not including a performance space that was comfortable for spectators.
- Some of the schools, or even classrooms, are not conducive to opening up a child's mind. They are so old and dark and uninviting, who would want to be there?
- I appreciate that the dumpsters near the main entrances of Hopkins and the High School have finally been fenced in.
- Parts of the high school could really use some updating (gym walls, large mural above the main office, hallways).
- The lockers at the middle school and some in the 9th grade wing of the high school are too small. One of our kids can't even fit his two part coat into the locker at Horizon so he only wears 1/2 of it (even in the winter!).
- The new and updated schools are great. I am very hopeful that the school board is developing a long range strategic plan for keeping them looking good. It was very embarrassing to see how standard and long term maintenance issues were handled previously. If we don't address the issue of this maintenance issues, in 5-10 years the new schools will begin to look very dumpy and history will repeat itself.
- The school district has had over the course of time many good facilities and then closes them to later on have to build a new building. (i.e., buying St. Francis for \$1.4 million I believe, opening Voyager [which functioned extremely well], closing it to have more green space for Robert Asp). Keep the good buildings you already have and fix them rather than building new.
- New buildings have small classrooms. Cafeteria in the middle school has no sound barriers – try eating there sometime! Curricular materials should not be shared among students – each student should have their own textbook / materials.

General

- New schools versus the old ones are not fair.
- Overly so.
- I hoped my child would have learned more in school at this point.
- For the most part this is true, but there is definitely room for improvement.
- They are nice and not really needed. Take a look at Riverside after Concordia got done with it.
- They are too big and not enough of them. Students and especially parents are lost in the system.
- The facilities are too large to allow for proper attention to individual student needs.
- The cost is excessive.
- Love the new buildings.
- Love opportunity for pods or houses in grades 6-9.
- Thanks to the direction of our superintendent and other leaders our facilities are now top-notch.
- Since the re-configuration of schools and the addition of new schools, I feel we have very nice facilities.
- I'm very happy with the new and renovated schools in the district.
- They may look nice on the outside, but too bad they skimp on the inside.

9. I would recommend this school district to other families.

	All Respondents (n=64)	Parent PK-5 (n=15)	Parent 6-8 (n=5)	Parent 9-12 (n=6)	Parent K-12 (n=18)
Yes	68.8%	53.3%	80.0%	83.3%	72.2%
No	10.9%	20.0%	20.0%	–	11.1%
Not sure	20.3%	26.7%	–	16.7%	16.7%
	Business Person (n=3)	Citizen (n=6)	Elected / Appointed Official (n=1)	Senior Citizen (n=1)	Other (n=9)
Yes	100.0%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%	55.6%
No	–	–	–	–	11.1%
Not sure	–	33.3%	–	–	33.3%

Comments related to above item:

Academics

- Class sizes are too big and have been a concern for many years. Thirty to thirty-four students per core class is too big. It is difficult to meet with all the students and with more and more students on IEP or have other issues, big class sizes hinder the classroom atmosphere. Discipline is more challenging with bigger class sizes.
- The one drawback, however, is class size. Fargo’s ratio is 18-22 students to each teacher. Moorhead figures Special Ed. teachers into their ratio yet Sp. Ed. teachers never have the class size as regular ed. Thus, regular ed. teachers’ class size suffers. This needs to change. It’s impossible for teachers to get to all students in one class period when the class size is 32 students.
- I recommend the Spanish Immersion Program on a regular basis.
- No better, no worse than area schools, plus Moorhead offers the immersion program.
- I am totally dissatisfied with the block scheduling and feel my youngest child was cheated educationally in comparison to my two older children.
- We’ve stayed in Moorhead because of the schools. I especially appreciate the opportunity for the Spanish immersion program. It is fantastic! The district should really work at maintaining the immersion program through the middle school though.
- Need more communication between the elementary schools & the middle school, and the middle school & the high school. When one of our kids went to high school, they had to take the “Explore” class. It was the most useless class she has ever had. Most of it was repetition from middle school and the counselor said they had no idea what things had been covered in middle school (career exploration in 7th grade, reading in 7th & 8th grade). And after one year administration finally figured out that the class really only needed to be 1 semester instead of 2. Good grief – parents knew it didn’t need to be a year long! There are a lot of kids who need this type of class – but there are also a lot who don’t.
- We are fortunate to have many extracurricular opportunities for students and lots of class offerings. There’s room to create more electives, however.
- The breadth of opportunities is impressive as is the quality of education.
- The high school schedule doesn’t allow for as many electives as my kids want. The new system was supposed to improve it, but they’re actually having more conflicts with courses they want.

- If cost were not an issue, I would recommend one of the private schools, specifically Park Christian or Oak Grove.
- While the programs are wonderful and provide a wide variety of instructional and the arts, I am less inclined to recommend sending kids through a system where they have more of a chance of getting lost in the crowd.
- I am not in favor of the block scheduling at the high school and therefore have some hesitation recommending the district.

Staff

- The teaching staff that I have been tied to have been wonderful and have done wonderful things for and with their students.
- Even though we have areas we can continue to improve upon, Moorhead Schools are very good. The teachers and staff are caring, concerned, hard workers, dedicated, and highly qualified.
- My children have received a “family” welcome in the school. They love their teachers and feel comfortable in the school.
- I especially recommend the schools to others because of the positive experience my daughter has had in middle school orchestra. We need more teachers like those who are able to teach such great personal habits for success.
- The teachers are excellent and care a great deal for each student.

General

- Property taxes are too high!
- I recommend the district to young families on a regular basis.
- I would suggest they go to a private school, they are smaller and are not run by the liberal teachers union.
- I am a Moorhead supporter. However, I often feel that there are better options for families. I do not feel Moorhead is above other choices at this time. I believe there is potential for Moorhead to be top.
- It was once a fantastic school district, but has been going downhill for years.
- We are new to the public school setting, as our boys have attended a parochial grade school up to this point. But our experience with the Horizon Middle School staff, teachers, facilities, etc. have been positive.
- We are proud to be in the district.
- YES – I try to talk my co-workers from Fargo into moving here all the time and I tell them that the schools are better than Fargo.
- For the most part.
- If you live here, what other options do you have?
- The politics are unkind.
- Our buildings are attractive and clean.

10. What positive things are being done within Moorhead Area Public School District that should continue?

Academics and Program Support

- I like the block and skinny opportunities for the high school level. It does give an opportunity for more intense study in some courses.
- I think full day kindergarten needs to be addressed before the government gets it done.
- Discovery.

- Junior Great Books.
- The morning Title 1 assistance.
- Tuesday / Thursday Excel.
- Special services for those in need, programs for advanced students.
- Advanced classes are a definite plus as are special education classes.
- We like the concept of “houses” in the middle school setting. It seems to be the best way to personalize a large educational facility.
- Moorhead needs to continue a full spectrum of educational and co-educational opportunities. It is essential to meet the needs of all students.
- Also, the Discover program is much appreciated. Again, I wish it was available all year, as opposed to a few weeks each year.
- Support education. Make available classes students have signed up for. Block scheduling takes away their opportunities.
- Lower class sizes. Don’t let the attention go to a few and neglect the majority of the good students, that will give you a good image, if they are given opportunity.
- Offering a well-rounded assortment of classes that include a wide variety of the arts as well as academics.
- Increased student achievement and success.
- We need to continue to work on the attendance policy at the high school. There have been some changes, but it can continue to improve. Hold the parents more accountable with the attendance issue for repeat offenders. Make home visits if necessary.
- The once a year character building sessions are very important for the students. While learning is critical, we must not overlook the development of the student character.
- Classroom curriculum.
- Early childhood education.
- Attempting to establish small groups of cohort students. The groups are too big and there’s not enough continuity, but it is an attempt.
- The healthy foods choices in the vending machines.
- Continue assessing student achievement and focusing on areas that need improvement. Don’t make excuses for the results; work on improvement, however painful it may be to some people within the district.
- Technology upgrades.
- Focus on math in upper grades.
- Tests.
- Technology training.
- PowerSchool.
- Cooperative Learning.
- Embracing computers and electronics.

Spanish Immersion

- Spanish Immersion Program. – 4 comments
- Spanish Immersion is a great program which should be expanded to middle school. – 2 comments
- Please continue the Spanish Immersion Program. It’s a unique program and it addresses a critical need for our students and families – world fluency. I would encourage the district to explore additional ways to strengthen and expand all of its language offerings. That will only help our students in an increasingly competitive global economy. The Spanish Immersion program can serve as a model of how we can use innovation to remain a leader in this area.
- Immersion should be expanded.

- Spanish Immersion Program – this is an awesome opportunity for kids, an opportunity that goes way beyond just learning Spanish. For my kids, learning a second language has taught them so much about other cultures and has made them much more globally aware. My daughter completed 6 years in the program and took French class this year. She said French was easy for her and she understood the teacher on the first day of class because it was similar to Spanish. I feel like they are better students because of this program. Way to go Mrhd #152!
- The Spanish Immersion program has been an incredibly positive experience for our family. I only wish it could be extended to at least the middle school level.

Arts

- Senior high drama program.
- Middle school orchestra.
- Music education must continue.
- Orchestra program is a jewel.
- Music programs – excellent opportunities.
- Music and debate – expand if possible.
- Continue the fine music and theater experiences.
- Moorhead theater department and its productions are a huge asset to the district. We are putting out top-notch shows that involve so many students learning life skills.
- Excellent music and theater programs.
- The theater program is strong at the high school. I would like to see more theater opportunities at the elementary level. If we have band and choir, why not theater?
- Orchestra Program – I can't say enough good things about the orchestra program. Being part of a good orchestra gives the kids something to be truly proud of.
- Music / Theater program – every year I go to the musical at the high school and am truly amazed at the talent in this school district! Keep up the good work.
- Theater – excellent at all levels from middle school through high school.
- Music / drama.

Extracurricular

- Athletics. – 2 comments
- I also believe the balance of co-curricular activities is wonderful. It's great that we have students achieving at the top level statewide in everything from athletics to theater and beyond.
- As many extracurricular opportunities as possible for students.
- Good extracurricular programs / activities. – 3 comments
- Good extracurricular opportunities and successes.

Staff, Staff Development and Communication

- Quality teachers.
- Quality teaching.
- Staff / teachers – Most are great. – 2 comments
- Creative teachers and supportive colleagues are the most positive aspect of teaching and being a part of Moorhead Public Schools.
- Giving time to teachers for collaboration on Wednesday mornings is very valuable and should continue in the following years. Working on literacy goals for the high school is important and we're just getting started. Teaching all teachers reading strategies to use in their classrooms needs to continue.
- Pursuit of teachers who bring cultural diversity.
- I have been very pleased with my children's teachers. They are positive and kid-centered.

- The teaching staff is highly qualified. Teachers are working together and collaborating to improve learning opportunities for all students. Teachers are taking time to educate themselves on best practice to improve their instruction.
- Hiring of some excellent teachers.
- Great use of e-mail to be able to contact teachers. The teachers are very responsive.
- The extended conference time to help facilitate communication with all teachers has been good.

General

- This survey is a positive thing. Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.
- Good facilities / buildings. – 2 comments
- Not sure.
- Their actions keep building enrollment at the private schools.
- I think the growth has been important and a promotion by the school district.
- The constant review process and focus on the future.
- Our kids are getting a good education with many fine teachers.
- Keep learning expectations high.

11. What less than positive things are being done within Moorhead Area Public School District that should be discontinued?

Class and Program Support

- Large class size. Class size should be no more than 20.
- Too high class size. – 4 comments
- A class size of 36+ in a writing class along with many other core classes is outrageous.
- Primary class sizes should be significantly smaller.
- Need all day kindergarten. – 3 comments
- Moorhead needs to seek creative ways in which to meet the educational and personal needs of all students. All students do not learn in the same style and therefore alternative modes of delivery should be expanded and developed.
- Spanish Immersion – I wish my kid’s class at Hopkins was 19 students like the immersion classes.
- Immersion Prog. nice alternative but not necessary and hasn’t proven itself.
- I am not in favor of the Spanish Immersion Program in the Moorhead School District. I don’t think it draws students to Moorhead, but rather the time and energy should be given to support second language learners and low income families.
- Gifted and Talented programming seems to serve fewer students who are being ignored in classrooms because they are in the 85%. They aren’t being challenged, they are being ignored.
- Maybe some more work to help students with special needs.
- Required music classes for all grades at the Middle School. I would like to see a study hall for children who are taking private music lessons or some other options for non-musical kids. I don’t think Exploring Music should be required for three years for kids that aren’t in band, orchestra or choir. They are watching movies every Wednesday so apparently there isn’t enough curriculum to fill the time.
- Music every day and no study hall offered (Horizon).
- More work in reading, writing, and math (especially). As I work with my child in these areas, I wonder what the teachers are accomplishing during the school day.
- My only personal concern is with the “healthy lifestyles” class at the middle school. The curriculum is not available for parents to review and much of the content is anything but healthy.
- High school needs an attendance policy and more credits required. Too many students are not taking extra classes because they have the option to not be at school at all.

- Consolidating schools so that there are ever increasing populations in fewer buildings, resulting in too large class sizes. Failure to firmly deal with bullying, intimidation and harassment early.
- Warehousing of students, particularly the very young. Sanitizing of too many subjects, particularly history. Skewed priorities.
- More help for those who struggle in school, both outside and inside the classroom, provide opportunities like discovery type programs to those who do not excel.
- Perhaps the process of using class time in middle school for preparing for standardized tests should be discontinued unless the student shows a great need for it.
- Although below average and average students may need additional attention (teachers' time), do not forget to challenge (and provide adequate teaching time) to the above average students.
- Letter grades for sixth graders.

Schedules, Transportation, Lunch

- Better lunches at Horizon Middle School.
- Middle school early hours are not conducive to students development!
- I hear a lot of complaints from my daughter about the school lunch situation at the Middle School.
- Noon lunches at grade schools are less then appealing to young people.
- I think the schools, especially the high school, should start later in the day so the students will be more apt to learn and enjoy it.
- The busing situation could use a lot of improvement. I am nervous having my kids ride the buses. They have had many poor bus drivers and the district (transportation department) doesn't seem to have much control over it. I'm sure it's because much of the busing is contracted out but the safety of our kids should be of highest priority. Also, there have been quite a few times when my daughter's bus has been late or didn't show up at all. Obviously, I don't think busing should be discontinued and I realize it is a privilege but it needs to be a safe and reliable service.
- Late start mornings.

Block Schedule

- Block scheduling at the high school. – 3 comments
- The block schedule – I don't feel that our students are learning as much and retaining as much as they could with a traditional schedule.
- The lack of options in the skinny classes, makes it very difficult for the students in music for example. My child has had a difficult time this year finding skinny classes to fit next to a music choice. There are very easy ones, but none that are more challenging. She and a few others suggested a Spanish 4 skinny, but it was not advertised throughout the school or department, so it was dropped. I think the object should be encouraging some skinny opportunities also for those in this situation, rather than an open hour, or music sectional, for those who would like the class option.
- The block schedule is reducing the learning at the Sr. High. With the reduction of 17% of information each year in a class our students are behind where they were in previous years.
- Block scheduling is not the answer. Students who are involved in music often do not have it easy scheduling their required classes. Sometimes they are forced to quit a music class in order to get a class such as history, Spanish, or phy ed. The other alternative is that the student is forced to share a class time slot with two teachers. The student has to figure out when to attend the music class and when they should attend the other class. This is unfair to the student and the teachers involved. It sends the message that one class is less important than another. Teachers do enough multi-tasking as it is. Why should they have to think when it would be better to have a student attend their class on a particular day or not. Aren't all days important for a student to attend a class? The pace of creating assignments, teaching lessons, collecting and correcting homework, projects, and papers in a block class is absolutely crazy.

Rarely, if ever, are teachers “caught up.” There’s never a moment to take a breath. English teachers, in particular, who assign many different writing assignments have a difficult time finding extra time to evaluate students’ writing, even though we have developed rubrics and checklists. It is an overwhelming task to grade 63+ research papers while also moving onto the next lessons. If you ask English teachers about the block scheduling it is burning some of us out. A formal assessment / survey about block scheduling should be done so teachers, staff, parents, and students can comment on its effectiveness. We have been doing it for three years and we were told that we would reevaluate it after three years. Well, it’s been three years!

- I think block scheduling has been detrimental to some classes and prevented students from having some opportunities. My children, who are both A/B students have struggled in foreign languages, math, anatomy due to the amount of material that is required to be “digested” each day. Spreading the learning over a longer period of time for these classes will help students. I do understand that for some classes, block scheduling may be preferred, but it seems to me this is not true for the majority of classes.
- The block schedule must be reviewed as promised. There are issues with the schedule for all students at the high school.
- Why have scheduling dates at the High School, when everything is changed for the student, no matter what they want.
- BLOCK SCHEDULING, less than positive is an understatement. If you don’t listen to the students and parents on this issue you are ignoring the most important issue that will EVER face the Moorhead Public Schools.
- Get rid of the block scheduling at the high school. While it may be good for lab classes overall I do not believe that it has been beneficial to my youngest child in comparison to my older children who were not involved with the block. My younger child is missing important pieces within the curriculum that could not be covered due to time constraints.
- Reassessment of the block schedule structure to see if it is actually functioning as designed. Why don’t you survey the students?
- Block scheduling is a disaster. In a time when kids are expected to know more, we are offering them less instructional time. Scheduling is a nightmare for many at the high school due to the block. Many students have “free periods” when they would like to take classes, but the block has made scheduling classes more difficult.
- I have heard, but have no direct experience with it yet, that the block scheduling in the high school can be cumbersome and sometimes difficult to fit the appropriate classes into.
- Having so many free periods – when they can’t get into an elective, they end up with a study hall or free period. It’s a waste of time.

Staff

- We need to have all principals of schools be role models for good communication and public relations for the schools. My experience with the public relations ability of the Middle School principals has not impressed me. There needs to be a Principals 101 class that teaches them how to promote a positive image of themselves and the schools: be visible, be communicative, talk with our students, talk about the importance of character. These examples would then be conveyed to the teachers who need to role model the same positive communication.
- I think teachers should be held more accountable for their actions and attitudes toward teaching.
- Review of teachers should be done more often. Hearing stories of kindergarten teachers not allowing students to use restroom until they wet themselves is not acceptable. Covering up administrators caught in inappropriate positions when if another staff member were to have been caught they would have been fired. Administrative staff caught with their hand in the cookie jar and nothing is done. Police your ranks.

- Horizon Middle School needs to have one principal for each grade level. There are too many students, and too many discipline issues at this age level, for two people to handle. Too much responsibility to handle administrative issues is left to the teachers. Another principal is crucial.
- I believe there needs to be a female principal at the high school. The dynamic of talking to a principal about an issue / concern would be changed if there was at least one female in the administrative role.
- Too much admin.

Parent Involvement and Communication

- I believe that PowerSchool is under-utilized at the Middle School level. In particular, I am referring to teachers who do not keep the “assignments” area up to date (some don’t update at all).
- It seems that it is at times hard to get information from some schools and that you need to really push. This gets better the more you push. Communication between schools and parents could be enhanced.
- No partnership with families.
- I don’t see much parent activity, unless I am missing it since my kids are younger. I think anything that would encourage parents to be involved would benefit the kids greatly, in all regards.
- This survey is a very positive approach! I wish that there were more such surveys done to respond to parents’ issues and concerns. School administrators and teachers operate in a bubble where they feel they know what is best for the students and do not actively seek parental involvement. We send our kids off to school each day and feel a definite lack of input into what is happening to them there.
- More communication needs to be made with parents at the middle school and high school level.
- Updates on things that are happening should be posted on the Web site and included in the announcements. Although not everyone has e-mail and access to the Web, many do. These tools could be better used to keep the parents updated on what is happening and involved in the educational lives of their students.

Other

- Poorly budgeted – need to trim spendthrift ways, expecting seniors to step up instead of parents.
- Charging for play participation (101 Dalmatians / Ellen Hopkins).
- The large schools built where there are no houses.
- The cutbacks in “extra” programs.
- Lack of support for the teachers.
- Instead of having an excuse for every situation, look in the mirror first.
- Restrict use of motor vehicles by students. They pose a hazard to the community, unnecessary expense to the families, and tend to lead to student employment to support the vehicles, rather than for financing their future education and training.
- During the most recent flooding, students from most area high schools were encouraged to help. But in our high school, the principal told me that “we were not asked to help” and so no outreach was planned for the students. My son wanted very much to get out and help the community, but the schools didn’t make that possible. So, what are we teaching our students about responsibility to the community when we do not facilitate such opportunities? I personally was very frustrated and disappointed with this lost potential. I hope the policies will be changed so that the next time we have flooding high school students will be encouraged to help.

12. What things are not being done within Moorhead Area Public School District that should be started?

Class and Program Support

- Full day kindergarten. – 2 comments
- Teacher aides for kindergarten classes if no para.
- Class sizes should be addressed. Core classes should be far smaller than they are.
- Reevaluate block scheduling.
- Better health.
- Funding for staffing school media center hours for longer after school hours is needed.
- We should have foreign language in the elementary as was the practice before the Immersion program. Why do some get all and the majority get no foreign language?
- Career education needs to be expanded and more inclusive. Students leave high school with a focus that is too narrow. Young people simply are unaware of the broad opportunities that are available in the vocational world. Crafts, trades, construction, technology and other fields do not require a college degree but rather have other paths for students. Young people must come to understand that a career does not need to be a straight line but rather is an adventure as one pursues a self-selected passion.
- Chinese.
- More phy ed required for middle school and high school students.
- A review / survey should be done with parents about how the block schedule affects students – need an evaluation as discussed when the block was adopted.
- More work in reading, writing, and math (especially).
- I would also like the gifted and talented program to be evaluated at the elementary level to see if the dollars are being utilized in a way that most benefits the students. I would rather see the students dig deeper into the regular curriculum in science, math and reading than the Discovery program that my kids were in.
- More world language instruction. I think that there are too few offerings in this area.
- Jazz band as a class option. (I understand that with block scheduling this is difficult, but it wasn't offered before blocks were implemented.) High schools of comparable sizes offer jazz band to students. In a school with an "award winning" music program, this seems like huge deficiency to students for whom music is important as athletics is for other students.
- Arts Academy and schools within a school. So many schools have gone this route with success. Moorhead should look at moving to such a model – with Trollwood moving across the river, now is the perfect time.
- Study Hall.
- More reasoning skills. More understandable math for everyone. It's always amazing how many dysfunctional people there are at a business when the computers go down. Athletic achievement gets daily publicity. Academic achievement receives little or no notice.
- I would like to see more mandatory classes for basic life skills. Such as home finances (how to balance a check book, monthly expenses of a family), basic mechanical functions of a vehicle, cooking, grocery shopping, clothes shopping, necessary insurance, etc.
- Our children for the most part are not college ready – especially the middle of the road child – Moorhead addresses special needs and gifted children well but it is at the expense of the average child.

Spanish Immersion

- Language enrichment for Spanish Immersion students beyond fifth grade in both middle school and high school.
- Support for the Spanish Immersion Program beyond the 5th grade. Parent groups have had to work VERY HARD, too hard, to be heard on this issue. It only makes sense to support a program that we have

so much invested in.

- Online course management system (Moodle) for expanded Spanish, accessible homework, and discussion among classmates in protected environment. Moodle is free and used by major colleges (i.e. Oxford).
- Spanish Immersion in the middle school.
- Expand the Spanish Immersion program (or some abbreviated form of it) through Middle School and possibly something into High School. Without some kind of follow-up program, the kids lose their Spanish speaking abilities very fast. They work very hard for many years to have all that slip away within a year or two of not having anything.

Behavior

- Somehow attendance must be addressed.
- High school attendance policy, more credits required.
- More drug and alcohol discussions and programming. The F-M area rates very high in statistics concerning our alcohol use. What are we doing to teach our students healthy lifestyles relating to alcohol? My son is in high school and I don't see how this information is being given to them.
- Moorhead Schools say that they have zero tolerance for bullying and harassment. Any student will tell you that is not true. We need more personnel to deal with disciplining and we need some harsher punishments. Many students feel that there is no justice and they are tired of trying to get help from the adults. It is hard to learn when you have to worry about being bullied.
- Themes of Character Building: all of the schools need to improve how they promote good character. When I visit other schools I've seen prominent themes of character building.

Parent Involvement and Communication

- Having regular contact with parents. Teacher / parent e-mail reports. Having a parent day. Parent day where they could attend with (or instead of) their kids.
- In school community functions for families.
- Something like the "small groups," similar to what Trinity Lutheran (my church, and I am sure other area churches) is doing. This breaks it down for people so they don't feel like such a "small frog in a big pond"! I think most people are more likely to get together with a smaller group, and many assume that a lot of other parents are attending all these PTAs, etc. and that their presence isn't needed, or even welcome.
- I think there is a need for parent education. Although, this is difficult to do, I think it is worth exploring.
- Develop a recommended college path curriculum for those student that have a strong interest in college. Publish and distribute to parents. Don't automatically assume that parents understand this aspect of helping their child choose classes. Also don't assume the student know this. I don't believe they meet that frequently with their counselors to discuss this.
- Right now I feel there is a disconnect between what each of the schools is doing. As a parent, I would like to see more of a K-12 approach to planning for my student. For example, in elementary school you should expect your student to have these skills, middle school, etc. Right now it feels like I haven't been given developmental standards for my kids. This follows along the concept of transformational learning – do we teach our students just information or do we teach them how this knowledge can transform their life?

Extracurricular

- Youth sports at each school, youth theater / choirs at each school, school wide programs in elementary.
- I also think that the schools should offer Rugby as a sport.
- I think it should be required that all students be involved in at least one extracurricular activity per

quarter / trimester. In following, the school would need to provide enough opportunities for the students.

- More sports and health-related opportunities for ordinary students, not just the athletically gifted.

Other

- Parents need to assume more expenses if kids wants are more. My son went to private school. I paid the diff. So 2 income parents need to step up and pay not seniors.
- Get some real administrators not just education people.
- Horizon Middle School needs to have one principal for each grade level. There are too many students, and too many discipline issues at this age level, for two people to handle. Too much responsibility to handle administrative issues is left to the teachers. Another principal is crucial.
- Noon lunches at grade schools are less then appealing to young people.
- Building more and smaller schools.
- Better security in the elementary schools.
- Earlier class starting times or drop-off times for study hall.
- Not sure. – 2 comments
- Kids should answer this one.
- Listen to students, parents, teachers and tax payers.

13. Please provide any additional comments that you would like school district officials to consider in their strategic planning process:

Class and Program Support

- Lower class size. – 3 comments
- More help for teachers in the classrooms that have more than 20 students.
- Full day kindergarten.
- The schedule at the high school must be reviewed. Many students are not in class for hours during the day and in order for this to happen more staff is required.
- Get rid of the block scheduling at the high school. – 2 comments
- The late start at the high school is great in theory but is not used appropriately – this should be for student learning or tutoring but instead I feel a great majority of students misuse this time.
- Consider a different schedule for the sr. high.
- Not enough emphasis on integrating technology in creative ways.
- All students a the Sr. High should have a complete / full schedule. Some students have 1 or 2 periods a day. They should not be roaming the halls or the community. There are many choices of classes.
- My kids like to choose their lunch, thanks for offering so many options.
- Consider if anything can be done to control behavior issues in the middle school locker room. That is a tough place to control....and at times it is still out of control. Getting rid of PE doesn't seem like the right answer. Pairs of adults in the space might help?
- Students, teachers, and parents are jointly frustrated with the block. What is being done to address these concerns? Wasn't the block on trial status? It isn't working.
- The programs offered for special needs kids are another aspect of our school district that are so important. I hope that you won't take those away as it ties right in with the mission of giving ALL learners opportunities.
- What more can we do to prepare children for school, especially in kindergarten? Are we missing anything that other districts are doing that is successful?
- Social Studies and the study of Geography must be kept in the elementary and middle schools. We do not want our students to mimic the "Jay Leno's Man on the Street" mentality (random people on the street are asked where various places are in the U.S. and the World...the majority of responses are quite

embarrassing. For example, when asked where Spain is located, a person would start looking in South America, etc.) Our students need Social Studies and Geography!

- I really appreciate any efforts directed to the development of healthy, environmentally aware adults.

Spanish Immersion

- You need to work on adding a Spanish experience for the Spanish immersion grads in Middle / High School.
- The Spanish Immersion program is what sets the Moorhead District apart from other districts in the area.
- As we look to the long term, I strongly encourage the district to consider the extension of some kind of higher-level Spanish language courses into the middle school to help the Spanish Immersion students maintain the skills they've developed over the first 5 years of school. That could include either advanced sections of Spanish or content-area courses taught in Spanish if we can find a dual-licensed teacher. I am happy to help with that process and have expressed that to the administration.
- I believe that the Moorhead Public School System has been ahead of most systems in allowing the SI program to thrive here. I believe we need to keep building this program and repair relationships lost this school year to ensure the success and future of the program.

Stakeholder Involvement and Communication

- I appreciate the district seeking input from the stakeholders.
- Parental input should be more aggressively solicited on an ongoing basis.
- I think that there should be a yearly district wide safety survey of all students to try to identify safety concerns when they are small (before a shooting rather than after). I do not think there is enough done to dig out safety issues. These problems are usually known by people before they occur but do not surface unless the water gets stirred some and there is a climate of disclosure that is fostered on a regular basis. When there is a school shooting there almost always seems to be a history of bullying that has preceded it.
- Administration, staff and teachers should be more open to new ideas. They should also be more open with the public when creating changes in curriculum (block scheduling, Explore class, 3 years of forced music instruction at the middle school). Some of these things get implemented before the public really knows what is going on. There is no input from anyone outside the schools and then after things are implemented, there is a perception that nothing can or will be changed. It takes an "act of God" to try to change anything.
- Something similar to what the area businesses have for networking: "business after hours".....but I suppose without the bar! (joke, couldn't resist, although.....) anyway, an informal gathering, perhaps with district officials and any teachers, principals etc. that would be willing to give it a try. Maybe some tables with different topics, or "Idea" jars, again, this could break into or lead to small groups. Break it down by school and then topic, whether it's my pet peeve, the lunch hour, or something about the library, hallways, school subjects, field trips, after school activities, the list is endless. We had a meeting tonight at church, just a handful of people. Of course, once everybody started talking, the ideas began to flow. Had it been a larger group it wouldn't have happened. Also, having, say the school board members seated facing the parents, too intimidating for most people. Remove the barriers!
- I think that the schools should not ban Web sites like yahoo mail. To some, that is the only way they can check their mail and some might not be able to access the Internet outside of the school.
- Please, keep students and families in mind when developing a plan that will take us into the future.
- We found it interesting, very little info surfaced about this "random" survey, until today, thank goodness for the Forum.

Buildings and Schedules

- This would be a major change...however when speaking with teachers from other parts of the country, the teachers (and their students) have embraced the concept of year round education. The school year consists of four sessions of nine weeks of school and three weeks of vacation. The teachers indicated the greatest attribute to this schedule is that the shorter breaks to not allow for the students to forget the lessons learned...and in following, less school time is wasted on review.
- Who designed the pick up and drop off area at S.G. Reinertsen? Our new expensive school...check it out at 2:50 on a school day.
- What was the reason Christmas break was so short for the grade schools?
- A new building.
- Traffic flow at middle school – awful.
- I would like to remind officials that bigger is not always better.

Other

- Sometimes we get excited about a new plan, mission, goal, curriculum, etc. and we begin the year ready to tackle and solve problems, but we get off track. We do not always follow through. We get too many irons in the fire, as the saying goes. Let's have better follow through on our goals and see them to the finish line. Sometimes we just need more time and we don't get the time needed to do a thorough job.
- I greatly appreciate the leadership of the superintendent and the high school principal. We need more leadership like theirs.
- Look at reducing administrative staffing and increasing student contact staff (i.e., teachers, paras, secretaries, nurses, etc.).
- The district is too focused on the district and not on the student. Teachers also don't get enough support.
- Work more closely with the Moorhead Parks Department on programs that can combine resources to reduce costs and still allow more opportunities.
- Need to ask what you as a parent is willing to pay (I'm \$400 a year into an empty home). If parents' aren't willing to assume responsibility then perhaps rethinking why they brought kids into world. What "you" are willing to pay. I'm stretched too far!
- Good luck, I can't wait until vouchers are available.
- Be fiscally responsible. Don't make any assumptions regarding the ability to go the public requesting an operating referendum.
- Keep up the good work.
- The school board should make education a priority. Post a few pictures of normal kids around the board room to remind you of that priority. Budget accordingly. Thanks and Good Luck!
- Also, I'm proud of our school system and want it to continue to achieve its mission.