



Spooner Area School District 2012 Community Survey

Executive Summary of Findings

This report presents findings of a community telephone survey conducted in the Spooner Area School District (SASD) August 20-24, 2012.

Four-hundred-fifty randomly selected SASD residents ages 18 and older were interviewed by professional, impartial interviewers. The average interview length was nine minutes and 10 seconds. Respondents were selected using a systematic random sampling methodology.

The questionnaire was developed by the independent research firm Banach, Banach & Cassidy (BB&C) following input from representatives of the Spooner Area School District. The 46-question instrument assessed opinions on a wide range of topics, from perceptions of educational quality to perceptions of the importance of various SASD programs and services.

The survey has a 95% level of confidence with a plus/minus 4.3% sampling error at the 50:50 split. (The confidence level for parent respondents is 95% plus/minus 3.7%; for nonparent respondents the confidence level is 95% plus/minus 7.8%.)

The 2012 survey presented Spooner Area School District respondents with many of the same questions as a community survey conducted 2005 and again in 2009. The percentage responses for the comparable questions from these three surveys appear in Section Three of the survey report.

Of course, the 2012 tables in this report also can be compared directly with the tables provided to the SASD in 2005 and 2009.

Note that numbers in the narrative portion of this report may not add to 100 due to rounding or multiple responses to a question.

Grading the Spooner Area School District

Respondents were asked to use the traditional A, B, C, D, F-scale to grade the Spooner Area School District, all things considered. Seventy-four percent of respondents gave the Spooner Area School District a grade of A or B.

As a matter of comparison, when respondents to the 43rd annual *Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools* (which was released August 22, 2012) were asked to grade the schools in their community, 48 percent of the respondents gave their local public schools a grade of A or B.

Just as parents in the national sampling gave higher grades than nonparents, SASD parents awarded the School District a higher grade (80% A or B) than did nonparents (61% A or B). [In this *Executive Summary of Findings* “nonparent” is defined as a respondent without school-age children.]

It is also noteworthy that 21 percent of the Spooner Area School District nonparent respondents could not answer the question (as opposed to just two percent of parent respondents).

Displayed below are the parent, nonparent, and total responses to the question.

5. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to show how well they are doing in school. Suppose the Spooner School District was being graded in the same way. All things considered, what grade would you give the Spooner School District, an A, B, C, D, or FAIL?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
A	99	22.0%	71	23.7%	28	18.7%
B	233	51.8%	170	56.7%	63	42.0%
C	62	13.8%	40	13.3%	22	14.7%
D	16	3.6%	10	3.3%	6	4.0%
F	3	0.7%	3	1.0%	0	0.0%
no response	37	8.2%	6	2.0%	31	20.7%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

In addition to providing an overall grade for the SASD, survey respondents were asked to assign grades to eight other aspects of the School District.

The eight areas rated and the A/B grades are presented below in rank order:

<u>Area Rated</u>	<u>A/B Grade</u>
The quality of Spooner teachers	78%
The quality of the Spooner School District's relationship with the community	74

<u>Area Rated</u>	<u>A/B Grade</u>
Opportunities for citizen involvement in the schools	72%
The Spooner School District’s reputation	72%
The quality of the Spooner School District’s curriculum	68%
[Respondent’s] knowledge of Spooner’s educational program	66%
The quality of Spooner’s principals and administrators	65%
The quality of the Spooner School Board	54%

The totals and percentages for all respondents, parent respondents, and nonparent respondents are presented in Section Two (*Total Number & Percent Responses*) of the survey report.

Information about the Spooner Area School District

People are generally well informed about what is happening in the Spooner Area School District. Eighty percent of the survey respondents say they are “very well informed” or “somewhat well informed.” As one might expect parents are better informed about what is happening in the School District than those respondents without school-age children.

In the display below, note that eleven percent of parents and 37 percent of nonparents say they are “not too well informed” about what is happening in the Spooner Area School District.

14. How well informed would you say you are about what is happening in the Spooner School District – would you say you are very well informed, somewhat well informed, or not too well informed?

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Parent</u>		<u>Nonparent</u>	
very well informed	114	25.3%	86	28.7%	28	18.7%
somewhat informed	248	55.1%	182	60.7%	66	44.0%
not too well informed	88	19.6%	32	10.7%	56	37.3%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

Respondents say their top five sources for information about the Spooner Area School District are:

<u>Information Source</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
Newspapers	18%

<u>Information Source</u>	<u>Total Percentage</u>
School publications/newsletters	15%
My children / students	15%
Friends or neighbors	13%
School District website	11%

Interestingly, more residents are turning to the School District’s website for school information. In 2009 eight percent of SASD survey respondents identified the School District’s website as an information source. And, in the 2005 survey, just one percent of respondents identified the website as an information source.

Note in the display below that parents are most likely to obtain their school information from their children and other students, school publications/newsletters, and the School District’s website. Nonparents are most likely to get their school information from the newspaper, friends or neighbors, and school publications/newsletters.

15. Where do you get your school information?

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Parent</u>		<u>Nonparent</u>	
district publications/newsletters	67	7.3%	43	6.7%	24	8.8%
school publications/newsletters	141	15.4%	104	16.3%	37	13.5%
communication from classroom teachers	53	5.8%	50	7.8%	3	1.1%
school district web site	103	11.3%	96	15.0%	7	2.6%
newspapers	167	18.3%	91	14.2%	76	27.7%
radio / TV	10	1.1%	7	1.1%	3	1.1%
my children / students	134	14.7%	108	16.9%	26	9.5%
friends or neighbors	122	13.4%	70	11.0%	52	19.0%
school employees	82	9.0%	50	7.8%	32	11.7%
self / I am an employee of district	8	0.9%	5	0.8%	3	1.1%
self / school volunteer	10	1.1%	6	0.9%	4	1.5%
don't receive any district information	4	0.4%	1	0.2%	3	1.1%
other	7	0.8%	7	1.1%	0	0.0%
no response	5	0.5%	1	0.2%	4	1.5%
Total	913	100.0%	639	100.0%	274	100.0%

Information about the curriculum and what students are learning is of high interest to both parents and nonparents (mentioned by 27% and 25%, respectively). Both respondent groups identified it as the informational topic of most interest to them.

Two other categories of school information received double digit responses from parent respondents: school activities/events (18%) and sports (10%). Nonparents identified “finance information” and “sports” as their number two and three topics of interest (12% and 11%, respectively).

The display below provides the total, parent, and nonparent responses to the question about school information interests.

16. What types of school information interest you?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
none	22	2.6%	7	1.2%	15	5.7%
information about the curriculum / what students are learning	221	26.3%	156	27.0%	65	24.9%
finance information	69	8.2%	38	6.6%	31	11.9%
information about school teachers /staff	59	7.0%	37	6.4%	22	8.4%
information about goals and priorities	38	4.5%	23	4.0%	15	5.7%
test scores/student achievement	80	9.5%	56	9.7%	24	9.2%
sports	87	10.4%	58	10.0%	29	11.1%
school activities / events	149	17.8%	127	22.0%	22	8.4%
everything	51	6.1%	39	6.7%	12	4.6%
other	36	4.3%	24	4.2%	12	4.6%
can't say/no response	27	3.2%	13	2.2%	14	5.4%
Total	839	100.0%	578	100.0%	261	100.0%

Technology in the home

Eighty percent of survey respondents say they have a computer and printer at home, and ninety-six percent of those respondents say they have access to the Internet. As the display below indicates, more than one-half of the respondents (55%) use their computer to access the School District’s website 1-3 times per week. Parents are more likely than nonparents to access the website.

26. How often do you use your computer to access the school district’s website?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
never	123	35.4%	48	19.3%	75	76.5%
1-3 times per week	192	55.3%	173	69.5%	19	19.4%
4-6 times per week	15	4.3%	13	5.2%	2	2.0%
7 or more times per week	16	4.6%	14	5.6%	2	2.0%
no response	1	0.3%	1	0.4%	0	0.0%
Total	347	100.0%	249	100.0%	98	100.0%

Forty-six percent of respondents say someone in their household has a smart phone, and 38 percent say the smart phone is used to access school information. Parents are more likely than nonparents to access school information using a smart phone (42% vs 13%).

Communication between teachers and parents

Seventy-nine percent of parents say they are “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with communication between parents and teachers. However, more than one in ten parents (12%) say they are “not too satisfied” with teacher-parent communication.

When parents were asked what could be done to improve teacher-parent communication, the most frequently mentioned suggestion was “more emails from teachers” (15%). Other responses to the question are displayed below.

20. What could we do to improve communication between teachers and parents?

	Total		Parent	
can't say/no response	25	9.1%	25	9.1%
inform parents immediately about problems	5	1.8%	5	1.8%
more about curriculum/classroom activities	2	0.7%	2	0.7%
more about my child's progress/grades	18	6.6%	18	6.6%
more advance notice on events	2	0.7%	2	0.7%
more classroom newsletters	4	1.5%	4	1.5%
more emails from teachers	42	15.3%	42	15.3%
more frequent communication	10	3.6%	10	3.6%
more notes from teachers	20	7.3%	20	7.3%
more parent-teacher meetings	5	1.8%	5	1.8%
okay as is	81	29.6%	81	29.6%
Other (please specify)	25	9.1%	25	9.1%
parent involvement in the classroom	14	5.1%	14	5.1%
teachers need to welcome parent contacts	2	0.7%	2	0.7%
telephone calls to parents when necessary	19	6.9%	19	6.9%
Total	274	100.0%	274	100.0%

Parents are more likely than nonparents to have been inside a Spooner School District school in the past 12 months (98% vs 63%).

Parents report that their top reasons for visiting a school are:

To attend a school program (24%)

To attend a sporting event (12%)

Parent conferences (12%)

To visit my child's classroom (11%)

To pick up children from school (9%)

To attend a parent meeting/open house (8%)

The number one reason nonparents visit a school is to attend a school program (50%). Fifteen percent of nonparents say they visited a school to attend a sporting event, and ten percent say they attended a parent meeting or open house.

All responses to the question are displayed below.

18. What was the purpose of your most recent visit?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
can't say / no response	5	1.3%	4	1.4%	1	1.1%
enrolling child	5	1.3%	5	1.7%	0	0.0%
graduation	6	1.5%	6	2.0%	0	0.0%
Other (please specify)	38	9.7%	30	10.2%	8	8.4%
parent conference	35	9.0%	34	11.5%	1	1.1%
pick up children from school	33	8.5%	27	9.2%	6	6.3%
school activities/events	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
summer school	5	1.3%	5	1.7%	0	0.0%
to attend a parent meeting/open house	35	9.0%	25	8.5%	10	10.5%
to attend a school program	117	30.0%	70	23.7%	47	49.5%
to attend a sporting event	48	12.3%	34	11.5%	14	14.7%
to meet with a school staff member	30	7.7%	22	7.5%	8	8.4%
to visit my child's classroom	32	8.2%	32	10.8%	0	0.0%
Total	390	100.0%	295	100.0%	95	100.0%

Importance of various programs and services

Survey respondents were presented with a list of eleven programs and services and, in the case of each one, asked to use a five-point scale to indicate how important it is for the Spooner Area School District to offer that program or service. (A rating of one means the program or service is very important while a rating of five means the program or service is not important at all.)

As the displays below indicate, the most frequent ratings for all programs were ones and twos.

29. Guidance and counseling services ... how important is guidance and counseling, would you give it a rating of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	331	73.6%	230	76.7%	101	67.3%
2	68	15.1%	45	15.0%	23	15.3%
3	40	8.9%	18	6.0%	22	14.7%
4	6	1.3%	3	1.0%	3	2.0%
5	4	0.9%	3	1.0%	1	0.7%
no response	1	0.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

30. Music programs such as choir and band

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	234	52.0%	163	54.3%	71	47.3%
2	120	26.7%	84	28.0%	36	24.0%
3	79	17.6%	43	14.3%	36	24.0%
4	11	2.4%	6	2.0%	5	3.3%
5	4	0.9%	2	0.7%	2	1.3%
no response	2	0.4%	2	0.7%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

31. Art

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	200	44.4%	146	48.7%	54	36.0%
2	143	31.8%	100	33.3%	43	28.7%
3	91	20.2%	46	15.3%	45	30.0%
4	10	2.2%	6	2.0%	4	2.7%
5	5	1.1%	1	0.3%	4	2.7%
no response	1	0.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

32. Foreign language

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	202	44.9%	142	47.3%	60	40.0%
2	122	27.1%	81	27.0%	41	27.3%
3	90	20.0%	56	18.7%	34	22.7%
4	12	2.7%	7	2.3%	5	3.3%
5	20	4.4%	11	3.7%	9	6.0%
no response	4	0.9%	3	1.0%	1	0.7%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

33. Health education

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	259	57.6%	179	59.7%	80	53.3%
2	128	28.4%	85	28.3%	43	28.7%
3	48	10.7%	26	8.7%	22	14.7%
4	12	2.7%	7	2.3%	5	3.3%
5	2	0.4%	2	0.7%	0	0.0%
no response	1	0.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

34. Vocational-technical education, which is sometimes called industrial arts

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	258	57.3%	170	56.7%	88	58.7%
2	126	28.0%	86	28.7%	40	26.7%
3	53	11.8%	35	11.7%	18	12.0%
4	8	1.8%	4	1.3%	4	2.7%
5	3	0.7%	3	1.0%	0	0.0%
no response	2	0.4%	2	0.7%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

35. Programs for students who are at-risk

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	295	65.6%	213	71.0%	82	54.7%
2	91	20.2%	52	17.3%	39	26.0%
3	44	9.8%	23	7.7%	21	14.0%
4	6	1.3%	2	0.7%	4	2.7%
5	6	1.3%	3	1.0%	3	2.0%
no response	8	1.8%	7	2.3%	1	0.7%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

36. Programs for gifted and talented students

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	273	60.7%	187	62.3%	86	57.3%
2	119	26.4%	75	25.0%	44	29.3%
3	42	9.3%	28	9.3%	14	9.3%
4	9	2.0%	7	2.3%	2	1.3%
5	5	1.1%	2	0.7%	3	2.0%
no response	2	0.4%	1	0.3%	1	0.7%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

37. Physical education

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	262	58.2%	188	62.7%	74	49.3%
2	120	26.7%	75	25.0%	45	30.0%
3	53	11.8%	30	10.0%	23	15.3%
4	10	2.2%	5	1.7%	5	3.3%
5	4	0.9%	1	0.3%	3	2.0%
no response	1	0.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

38. Family and consumer education (or what used to be called “home economics”)

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
1	168	37.3%	115	38.3%	53	35.3%
2	166	36.9%	114	38.0%	52	34.7%
3	98	21.8%	64	21.3%	34	22.7%
4	10	2.2%	5	1.7%	5	3.3%
5	5	1.1%	1	0.3%	4	2.7%
no response	3	0.7%	1	0.3%	2	1.3%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

39. Sports

	Total	Parent	Nonparent
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1	201	44.7%	165	55.0%	36	24.0%
2	116	25.8%	73	24.3%	43	28.7%
3	97	21.6%	49	16.3%	48	32.0%
4	25	5.6%	10	3.3%	15	10.0%
5	10	2.2%	2	0.7%	8	5.3%
no response	1	0.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

It is also interesting to note that every program and service received a higher percentage of “very important” (or number one) ratings than in the 2009 survey with the exception of *art* and *family and consumer education* (which were each an insignificant one percentage point lower in 2012). All 2012 ratings were higher than in the 2005 survey. (The comparative data can be viewed in Section Three (*Comparable Questions from the 2005, 2009, and 2012 Community Surveys*) of the survey report.

Expanding school programming

When asked if the Spooner Area School District should offer more, fewer, or about the same number of before and after school programs for children, most respondents (58%) say the School District should offer “about the same” number of programs.

Similarly, most respondents (47%) say the School District should offer “about the same” number of adult and community education programs.

When it comes to offering a community-based kindergarten program for four-year-olds, both parent and nonparent respondent groups say offering such a program is a good idea (77% and 63%, respectively).

The three questions related to program expansion are displayed below.

21. Do you think the Spooner School District should offer more, fewer, or about the same number of before- and after-school programs for children?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
more	115	25.6%	88	29.3%	27	18.0%
fewer	12	2.7%	8	2.7%	4	2.7%
about the same	263	58.4%	180	60.0%	83	55.3%
can't say/no response	60	13.3%	24	8.0%	36	24.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

22. Do you believe the Spooner School District should offer more, fewer, or about the same number of adult and community education programs?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
more	158	35.1%	110	36.7%	48	32.0%
fewer	16	3.6%	8	2.7%	8	5.3%
about the same	213	47.3%	146	48.7%	67	44.7%
can't say/no response	63	14.0%	36	12.0%	27	18.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

23. Like many Wisconsin school districts, Spooner is considering a community-based kindergarten program for four-year olds. This half-day preschool program would help assure that youngsters are ready to learn when they enroll in regular kindergarten. Do you think offering a kindergarten for four-year olds is a good idea or not?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
good idea	325	72.2%	230	76.7%	95	63.3%
not a good idea	107	23.8%	58	19.3%	49	32.7%
can't say/no response	18	4.0%	12	4.0%	6	4.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

Support for a school referendum

In February 2011 Spooner Area School District voters defeated a school referendum. The reason most people voted against the referendum—according to survey respondents—was related to “taxes already being too high” (38%) and [people] “didn’t understand [the] proposal” (11%). Only four percent of the survey respondents (18 people) said that the School District “didn’t need what was proposed.”

If there wasn’t enough money to operate the Spooner Area School District, most respondents (58%) say the School District should cut programs and seek voter approval of a referendum. Note in the display below that this option was favored by 58 percent parent and 59 percent of nonparent respondents. This response to the question means school leaders will face a difficult decision if and when they have to recommend what programs and services should be cut.

41. Suppose there wasn’t enough money to operate the Spooner School District. Should the schools cut programs and services or should they seek voter approval of a referendum for school operations... or should they do both?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
cut programs	51	11.3%	26	8.7%	25	16.7%
seek voter approval of a referendum	113	25.1%	85	28.3%	28	18.7%
do both	263	58.4%	175	58.3%	88	58.7%
can't say/no response	23	5.1%	14	4.7%	9	6.0%
Total	450	100.0%	300	100.0%	150	100.0%

The good news for the School District is that both parent and nonparent respondents say they would personally support a referendum for school operation (66% and 64%, respectively), as indicated in the display below.

42. Would you personally support a referendum for school operations?

	Total		Parent		Nonparent	
yes	247	65.7%	173	66.5%	74	63.8%
not sure	100	26.6%	72	27.7%	28	24.1%
no	26	6.9%	14	5.4%	12	10.3%
decline to answer	3	0.8%	1	0.4%	2	1.7%
Total	376	100.0%	260	100.0%	116	100.0%

Likes and priorities

“Teachers” were identified as the single best thing about the Spooner Area School District by 20 percent of respondents. Respondents also liked the “academic program” (14%) and the “small town environment” (14%).

When asked their top priority for the School District, “expand the curriculum” and “improve instruction” were mentioned most frequently. Sixteen percent of respondents suggested these two priorities.