

DANIEL GOHL, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
OFFICE OF ACADEMICS*Signatures on File*

DATE: August 10, 2021

TO: All Principals

FROM: Daniel F. Gohl
Chief Academic Officer

VIA: Valerie S. Wanza, Ph.D.
Chief School Performance and Accountability Officer

SUBJECT: **2020-21 BCPS COGNIA SURVEY RESULTS**

This memo and the attached appendix summarize students', parents', teachers', and staff participation in the end-of-year Cognia surveys. Four versions of the survey are made available each spring: those taken by elementary school students (grades 3-5), middle-high school students, (grades 6-12), parents, and staff (teachers and non-instructional staff respond to the same staff survey). These surveys are made available through the Office of Service Quality with the survey administered via the Cognia Survey instrument.

The 2020-21 school year was unique due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic that necessitated all BCPS schools to operate under an innovative learning model until October 16, 2020. While schools reopened physically to students at that time, many students opted to remain learning at home through the 2021 school year under the State-approved Fall and Spring Reopening Plans. This report is presented without comparison to previous results. This decision is due to the unique nature of the 2020-21 school year and the revamping of survey questions and topics present in the surveys in 2020. We do not provide trend data as it is misleading to try to compare prior year's responses to responses from 2020-21.

The Cognia survey results assist schools in the school improvement planning process. Survey results link the Cognia Accreditation Standards to each school's annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) by embedding the survey ratings into the plan. Schools are required to provide school improvement activities that will be used to increase the school's environment and quality of services, and therefore subsequent ratings on the survey. Under the direction of the Office of Service Quality, schools are trained in the survey process and in the generation of survey result reports from the Cognia site. After the completion of the survey process, schools present the survey reports to stakeholders at their School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings.

Participation

The number of elementary student (grades 3-5) responses in 2020-21 was 26,652 out of a possible 45,341. The number of middle-high school students in 2020-21 was 56,451 out of a possible 117,202. The number of parent responses in 2020-21 was 40,165 out of a possible 102,377. The number of staff responses in 2020-21 was 12,770 out of a possible 16,745 (see Figure 1).

The response rates for the 2020-21 school year were 58.8 percent for elementary school students (grades 3 through 5), 48.2 percent for middle-high school students (grades 6 through 12), 39.2 percent for parents, and 76.3 percent for staff (see Figure 2).

Figure 1
Number of Cognia Survey Responses, 2020-21

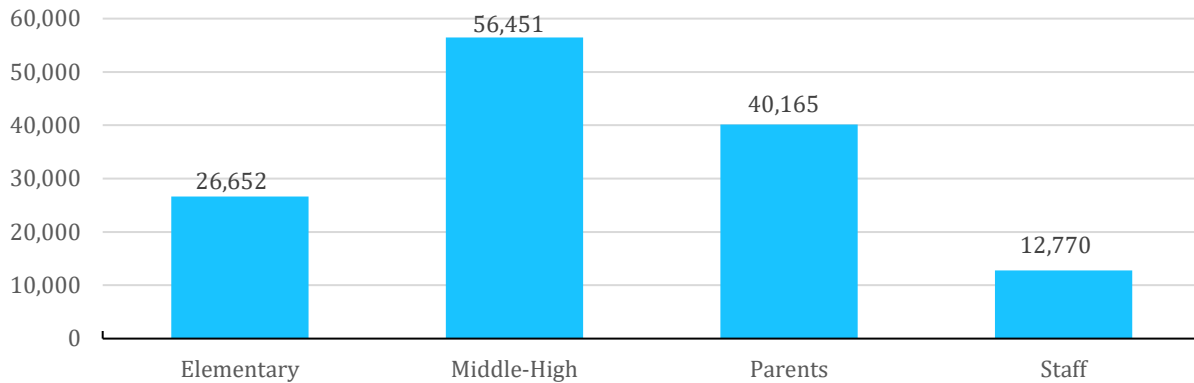
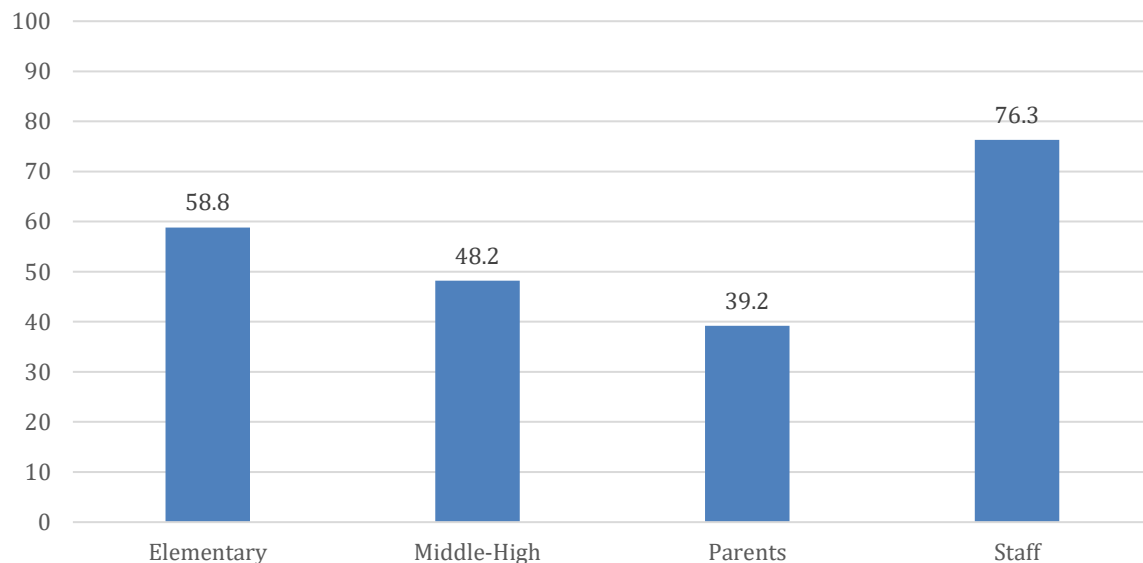


Figure 2
Cognia Survey Response Rates, 2020-21



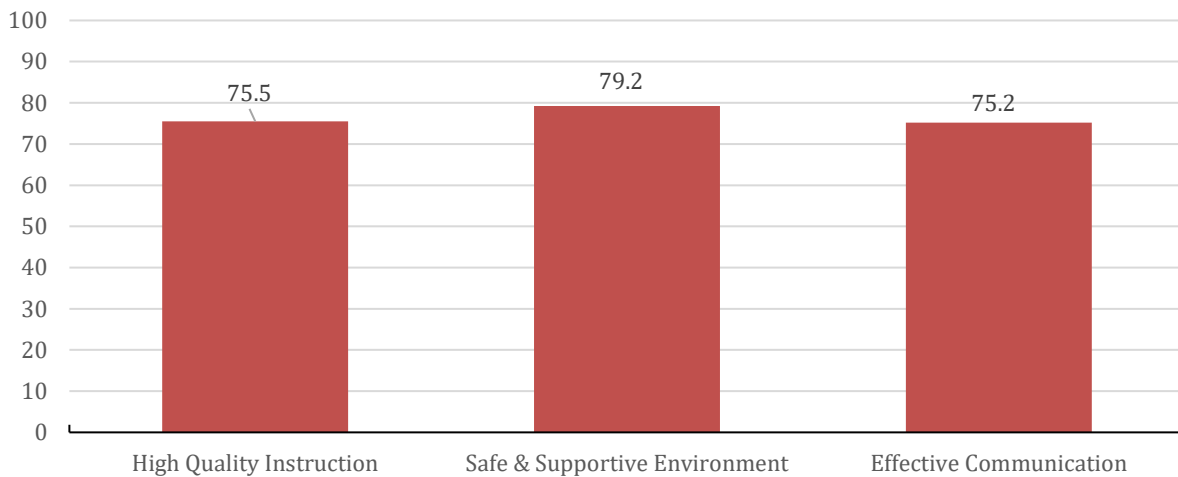
Results

All groups were asked to respond to questions relating to three domains of the school environment: 1) High-Quality Instruction, 2) Safe and Supportive Environment, and 3) Effective Communication. The questions that respondents received varied based on their group membership. For example, students received different questions regarding their school’s High-Quality Instruction than did parents; elementary school students received different questions than did middle and high school students.

Respondents were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements regarding aspects of their school environment. Greater agreement indicates higher satisfaction. The full text of each survey statement as well as the district responses for 2020-21 appear in Appendix A. The groups were given statements and asked to rate them on a five-point scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with a neutral category in between. The average level of agreement (the average percent that agreed or strongly agreed) for each group and domain are summarized for the 2020-21 year in the following bar charts.

Figure 3

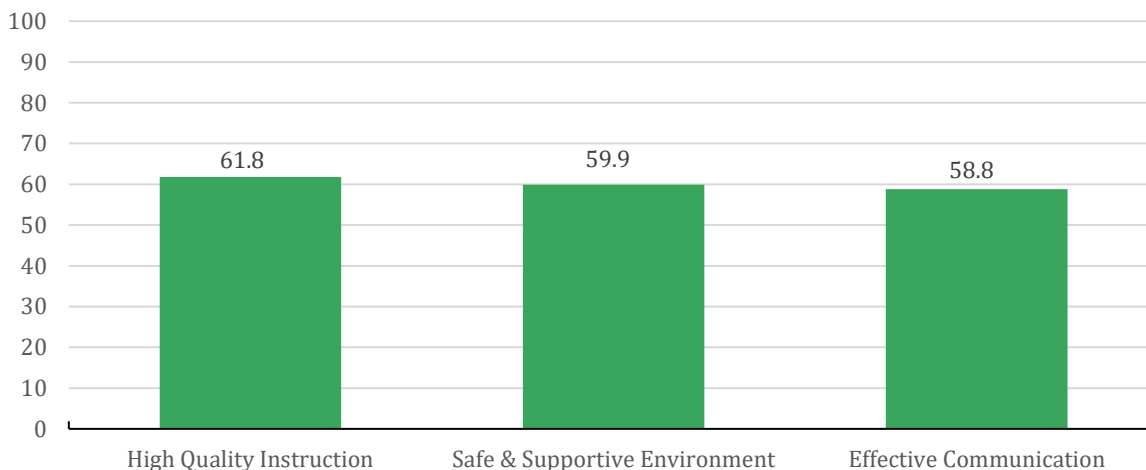
Elementary School (Grades 3-5) Students’ Average Percent Agreement within Each Domain, 2020-21



Elementary school students’ satisfaction with their school environment was high, with the majority of students agreeing with most of the positive statements made about their school in 2020-21 with the exception of three, detailed below. Elementary school students rated their school’s *Safe and Supportive Environment* the highest among the three domains, with High

Quality Instruction and *Effective Communication* similarly highly rated. In 2021, positive statements regarding teachers met with high agreement. For example, from *Safe and Supportive Environment*, the statement: “My teachers care about students,” met with 94 percent agreement. From *High Quality Instruction*, the statement: “In my school teachers want me to do my best work,” met with 97 percent agreement, while the statement: “My teachers want every student to learn,” met with 96 percent agreement. From *Effective Communication* the statement: “My teachers tell students when they do a good job,” met with 90 percent agreement. Out of 41 statements, only 3 met with less than half of students responding with satisfaction. The three statements that fell below 50% agreement were: “I enjoy eating food prepared by the cafeteria,” at 42 percent agreement, which fell under *Safe and Supportive Environment*, “My teachers ask me what I think about school,” also at 42 percent agreement, and “My teachers ask my family to come to school activities,” at 49 percent agreement, both of the last two statements falling under *Effective Communication*. All other positively-worded statements were met with agreement by the majority of elementary school students.

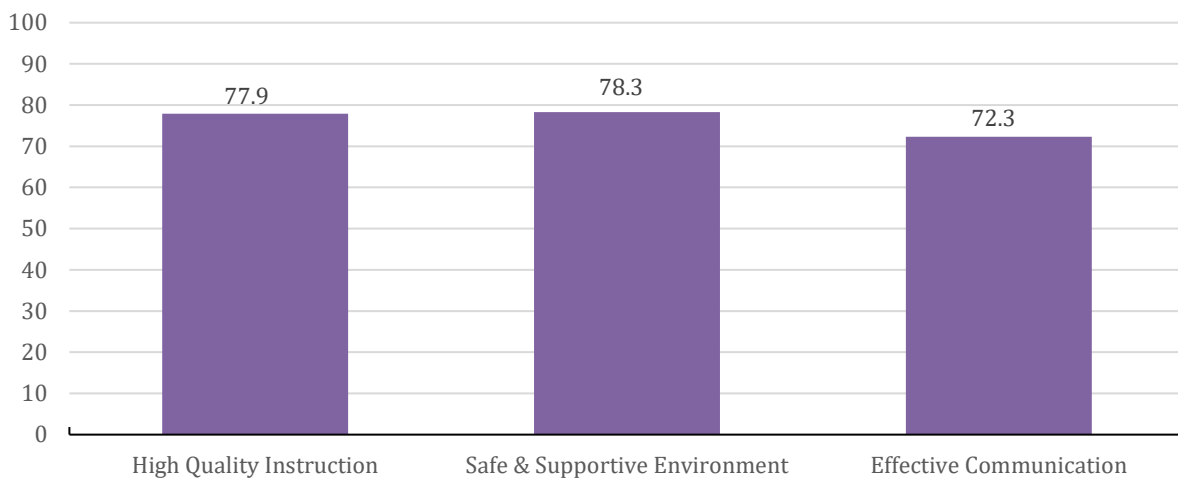
Figure 4
Middle and High School (Grades 6-12) Students’ Average Percent Agreement within Each Domain, 2020-21



Middle and high school students, on average, rated themselves between neutral and agreeing with the positive statements made about their school environment across the three domains. In 2021, they were most likely to agree with the statement: “I use digital tools to complete assignments, such as computers, tablets, or the Internet,” a statement that fell under the domain of *High Quality Instruction*, with 84 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this

statement. Within *Safe and Supportive Environment*, the statement demonstrating the highest level of agreement was: “In my school, programs and services are available to help me succeed,” with 72 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Within *Effective Communication*, the highest-rated statement was: “The principal is accessible via e-mails, texts, phone calls, or personal visits,” with 67 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The statement with which secondary school students showed the least amount of agreement within *High Quality Instruction* was: “Students are encouraged to work in groups regularly,” with 35 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Within *Safe and Supportive Environment* students were least likely to agree with the statement: “I enjoy food prepared by the cafeteria,” with 27 percent of students agreeing or strongly agreeing this statement. Within *Effective Communication* the statement that met with the least agreement was: “The school asks for student input when changing rules or policies,” with 39 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

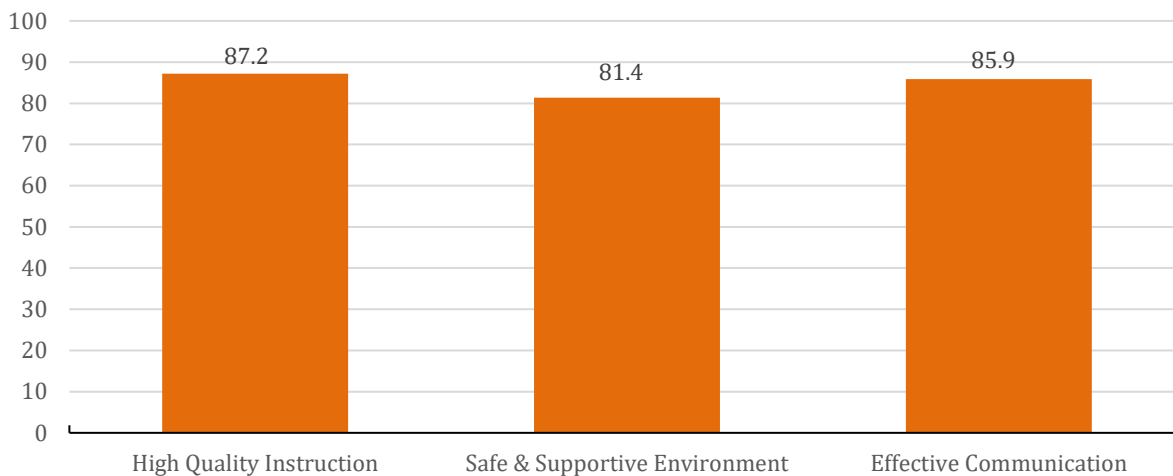
Figure 5
Parents’ Average Percent Agreement within Each Domain, 2020-21



Parents, in the majority, rated themselves either agreeing and strongly agreeing with the positive statements made about their school environment across the three domains. They were most likely to agree with the following two statements, both falling under *Safe and Supportive Environment*: “Our school provides a safe learning environment,” and “The principal maintains a safe and secure school,” with 85 percent of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each of these statements. The statement under *Safe and Secure Environment* that met with the least agreement by parents was: “Our school has a family resource center and/or a staff member

assigned to work with families,” with 66 percent of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Within *High Quality Instruction*, the statement that garnered the most agreement was: “The principal is a positive education leader at the school,” with 82 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The two statements engendering the lowest agreement within *High Quality Instruction* were: “Through the School Advisory Committee (SAC), the School Improvement Plan (SIP) is regularly reviewed and revised,” and “My child sees a relationship between what is being taught and their everyday life,” both gathering support from 70 percent of parents. Under *Effective Communication* the statement that met with the most agreement from parents was: “Our school communicates information in ways that are easy for families to understand,” with 80 percent of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with that statement. The statement under *Effective Communication* that met with the least agreement was: “The school asks for family input when changing rules or policies,” with 63 percent of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing with that sentiment.

Figure 6
Staff’s Average Percent Agreement within Each Domain, 2020-21



As with parents, a significant majority of instructional and non-instructional staff rated themselves as either agreeing and strongly agreeing with the positive statements made about their school environment across the three domains. Unlike the other groups, who all rated *Effective Communication* the lowest across the three domains, staff rated *Effective Communication* the highest across the domains. In 2021, staff were most likely to agree with the statement: “I am accessible via e-mails, texts, phone calls, or personal visits,” with 95 percent of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement that falls under *Effective Communication*. The lowest agreement within the domain *Effective Communication* was tied to the statement:

“Our school asks families for their ideas on the best ways to communicate school-related information,” with 72 percent of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Within *High Quality Instruction* the highest level of agreement was with the statement: “My lessons provide opportunities for students to be actively engaged in their learning,” with 94 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The lowest indicator within *High Quality Instruction* was: “In our school a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice,” with 76 percent of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Within *Safe and Supportive Environment*, the highest-rated statement was: “The assistant principal(s) maintains a safe and secure school,” with 91 percent of staff voicing agreement or strong agreement with the statement. The lowest-rated statement within *Safe and Supportive Environment*, and indeed, the lowest-rated statement by staff members overall was: “I enjoy eating food prepared by the cafeteria,” with only 41 percent of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Besides this statement, a majority of staff members agreed or strongly agreed with all the other positively-worded statements in the staff questionnaire.

These survey results demonstrate that satisfaction with schools in the BCPS system remains relatively high for elementary school students, parents, and staff. Middle and high school students’ level of satisfaction is somewhat lower than that of the other groups. There are both areas that positively stand out (such as elementary school students’ ratings associated with their teachers and parents’ ratings associated with their principal) and areas to improve on (such as the implementation of changes based on staff feedback) according to each stakeholder group. For a full breakout of how each group rated their respective school environments in each of the domains please see Appendix A.

Please direct any questions or comments concerning this memo to **Richard Baum, Director, Student Assessment and Research, at 754-321-2500**. This memo and Appendix A may also be accessed via the Student Assessment and Research website at <https://www.browardschools.com/sar>.

VSW/DG/RGB/RAA/JC:rs
Attachment

CC: School Board Members
Senior Leadership Team
Directors, School Performance and Accountability