The Charter School of Wilmington

Community Surveys: Results and Implications
Presented by Dr. Scott Joftus and Amy Cox
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The Charter School of Wilmington has some real strengths to build on as well as some questions about how to best support students and how all members of the CSW community can work together towards the same mission.
Notable Strengths

• Parent engagement is strong, and most parents are happy with CSW across nearly every dimension.

• Most parents, scholars, and faculty and staff would recommend CSW to others.

• Both parents and students reported that CSW’s academic offerings are strong.

“\textit{The reputation and rigor is spot on ... So proud to say that my children go to CSW.}”
Notable Strengths

• Staff and students alike report that CSW promotes academic success for all students, regardless of their educational background.

• On the whole, students like and feel supported by their teachers.

“[CSW] teachers ... genuinely care about their students and the subjects they are teaching ... I strongly believe most CSW teachers have our best interests at heart.”

“I love the teachers. They always work their hardest for the students and make sure everybody understands the material.”
EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY: Teachers

My teachers expect me to do my best all the time.

My teachers give me individual attention when I need it.

My teachers are effective at conveying the content and skills I need to be academically successful.

I can talk to my teachers about problems I am having in class.

My teachers often connect what I am learning to life outside the classroom.
Notable Strengths (continued)

• Students are happy with – and participate in – the variety of extracurricular offerings provided by CSW.

• Collegiality among faculty and staff is strong.

• Faculty and staff report a collaborative environment among colleagues and sense of autonomy over instructional decisions.

“CSW continues to give teachers a significant amount of autonomy within the classroom, which leads to higher job satisfaction, better instructional outcomes, and strong student-teacher relationships.”
**COLLEGIALITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I get along well with other staff members at CSW.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel supported by other teachers at CSW.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW supports and appreciates the sharing of new ideas by members of our community.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW reflects a true sense of community.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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Challenges and Questions

Parents are generally quite happy with CSW. The following challenges and questions are therefore focused on opportunities for improvement identified by scholars and faculty and staff.
Challenges and Questions

How can CSW’s board and administration help the school community unite around a shared mission and vision?

• Faculty and staff and students lack a clear understanding of CSW’s mission, and both groups reported that the CSW community is not working together towards the same goals.

• Relatedly, most faculty and staff feel that the board is not effective in its governance or its communication with stakeholders.

“CSW lacks a vision and mission that is current and that the staff buys into it. We need a direction for the future.”
I have a clear understanding of The Charter School of Wilmington's (CSW) mission.

Everyone at CSW works towards the same goals.
“The Board needs to make up its mind and decide are we or are we not a math science school. Are we or are we not a college prep program.”

“Refocus on CSW's core mission of providing world class instruction with a focus on math, science, and technology.”

“[Faculty and staff and administrators] often [have] opposing goals and visions about the future of our school. This is largely because the board is generally disengaged from the day-to-day operation of the school.”
Challenges and Questions

How can CSW’s administration continue to build trust with scholars and faculty/staff?

While parents feel welcome to discuss their feelings and concerns with administrators, faculty and staff and students feel less comfortable.

- Faculty and staff and, to an even greater degree, scholars do not feel that administrators are approachable, and scholars do not trust administrators to act in scholars’ best interests.
- Both faculty and students feel that the administration does not listen to their feedback or suggestions and both perceive the administration as too focused on test scores, rankings, and the school’s reputation.
Challenges and Questions

How can CSW reduce scholars’ stress and support their mental health?

• A common theme among scholar responses – also reported by some faculty – is a high level of stress among scholars and a lack of support for their mental health.
• Many scholars reported that the school needs greater awareness of their mental health.
• Many scholars also do not feel supported by their school counselors.
• Some scholars suggested that coordination among teachers to reduce the number of tests given at once and hours of homework assigned would help to reduce stress.
Challenges and Questions

What steps can CSW take to improve the physical environment of school?

• One of the most common themes among scholars’ open-ended responses – echoed by faculty and staff – was the cleanliness and comfort of the building.

• The majority of both faculty and staff (81%) and students (79%) disagreed that the temperature in classrooms is comfortable year round.
Challenges and Questions

How can CSW increase consistency and reduce racial disparities?

• Faculty and staff and scholars reported that discipline is applied inconsistently at CSW.
• There were large racial disparities in how consistently scholars felt disciplinary policies are enforced, support for phasing, and whether students feel successful at CSW.

“Stop playing favorites when it comes to discipline. Some teachers and admin will let their “favorites” or the “popular kids” off the hook with things like dress code or rude comments they make to other students, while punish others for the most minor infraction.”
EQUITY AND FAIRNESS: Discipline

• Only 42% of scholars and 55% of faculty and staff agreed that discipline is fair and equitable, while more than a third of scholars (36%) and a quarter of faculty (28%) disagreed.

• Meanwhile, only half (52%) of faculty and staff agreed that CSW effectively handles scholar discipline and behavior problems, while just over a quarter (28%) disagreed.
EQUITY AND FAIRNESS: Discipline

- Significant racial and ethnic disparities in responses.
  - Among Black/African-American students, only 28% agreed that discipline is fair and equitable, while 43% disagreed, and among Hispanic/Latino/a students, 35% agreed, while 38% disagreed.
  - Similarly, non-Hispanic white students (69%) and Asian students (69%) were more likely to agree that CSW sets clear rules for behavior compared with Black/African-American students (55%) or Hispanic/Latino/a students (60%). More than a quarter (28%) of Hispanic/Latino/a students disagreed.
While a majority of non-Hispanic white students (61%) agreed that they feel successful at CSW, only half (49%) of students from other racial and ethnic backgrounds agreed that they feel successful at CSW.
EQUITY AND FAIRNESS: Respect and Fairness

People of different cultural backgrounds, races, or ethnicities get along well at CSW. All scholars are treated fairly, regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture. All scholars are treated with respect, regardless of academic ability.

Percentage of Scholars Who Agree/Strongly Agree

- People of different cultural backgrounds, races, or ethnicities get along well at CSW: 73%
- All scholars are treated fairly, regardless of race, ethnicity, or culture: 59%
- All scholars are treated with respect, regardless of academic ability: 50%

Black/A-A Scholars
Scholars of All Other Races
Challenges and Questions

How can CSW help reduce bullying and build respectful treatment of all scholars, regardless of academic ability?

• Both scholars and faculty and staff reported that bullying is a significant issue at CSW.

• A significant portion of both groups also reported that scholars do not respect each other regardless of academic ability, and some scholars reported that phasing contributes to this issue.

“Some of the phasing ... creates a social hierarchy with not much diversity.”
ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY: Student Behaviors

• 59% of scholars and 49% of faculty and staff agreed that scholars bullying other scholars is a frequent problem.
  o Both 9th graders (64%) and 12th graders (66%) were more likely to report that scholars bullying other scholars is a frequent problem compared with 10th graders (50%) and 11th graders (57%).
  o Black/AA scholars were far less likely (31%) to agree that scholars bullying other scholars is a frequent problem compared with scholars of other races (61%).
  o Male scholars (66%) were more likely to report that bullying is a problem than female scholars (55%).
EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY: Phasing

Support for phasing was mixed.

• Half of scholars (49%) agreed: “I believe phasing leads to better scholar achievement,” while 39% of scholars agreed with: “I believe phasing limits a scholar’s ability to grow.”

• Average response differed by race and gender identity. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Asian students support phasing, while just over a third (36%) of Black/AA students do. Other racial groups were more evenly divided, and males were somewhat more likely to support phasing than females.
Challenges and Questions

How can CSW collect and address scholars’ input?

• Many scholars are eager to share their ideas for improving their school experience.

• One of the most consistent responses scholars gave to how CSW can improve is to update its dress code. Many perceive it as too narrow, unnecessarily punitive, and evidence that perception is more valued than student learning.

• A number of other scholar requests popped up throughout, from urinal dividers to improved lunch offerings to a later start time.
Looking Towards the Future

“Our faculty, staff, and administrators genuinely care about our students and their well-being. We appreciate the learning culture that students and teachers work so hard to create... Recently, we have begun to address some challenging issues, and while it has not been smooth, I appreciate the willingness to tackle these issues.”

- A CSW Teacher