



# CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY ANALYSIS

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by

**Yakoubou Ousmanou**

Manager of Research and Program Evaluation (North Star)

---

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

Rachel Gauthier, *President* • Dr. Carol Mueller, *Vice President*

Dr. Joyce Herold • Patrice Ricciardi • Dr. Roy Phillips

Jansen Robinson • Dr. David Bauer • Ariane Kelly

Sonja Karwacki • Kanae Holcomb, *Student Member*

Sean W. Bulson, Ed. D., *Superintendent of Schools*

Eric Davis, *Chief of Administration*



---

SEPTEMBER 2021

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
Overview .....	4
Key Objective.....	4
Methodology .....	4
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	4
KEY FINDINGS .....	5
APPENDIX A: CLOSED-ENDED SURVEY RESULTS.....	8
APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS .....	9

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

HCPS would like to thank the following people for contributing to the development and implementation of the customer satisfaction survey as well as working on strategies to continuously improve the HCPS customer service delivery.

- Lindsay Bilodeau, *Communications Specialist*
- Jack Getz, *Senior Software Developer*
- Judy Simon, *Administrative Support Specialist – Customer Service*
- Stephanie Wall, *Graphic Designer and Technical Specialist*
- Members of the HCPS Customer Service Task Force (including principals, teachers, employee union representatives, central office staff, board members, community partners)

We thank the following leaders for the development of TRACK which represents Transparent, Responsive, Accessible, and Kind communication. HCPS is committed to providing superior customer service to all stakeholders, including employees, students and their families, and community members. At HCPS, our standards for quality customer service are measured by our TRACK-ing Excellence program.

- Peter Carpenter, *Supervisor of Personalized Learning and Leadership Development*
- Jacqueline Tarbert, *Director of Organizational Development and Continuous Learning*

# INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is committed to providing superior customer service as measured by its TRACKing Excellence program, where TRACK represents Transparent, Responsive, Accessible, and Kind communication. To gauge satisfaction with the district's customer service, HCPS offers a [stakeholder survey](#) on its website (Appendix B).

In this document, the HCPS Office of Research and Program Evaluation presents findings from an analysis of open-ended responses to HCPS' Customer Satisfaction Survey. This analysis is for the responses received during the survey administration window of January 15, 2021, through June 30, 2021. During this period, HCPS received a total of 327 responses (Appendix A: Closed-Ended Results) including 164 open-ended responses (out of a total of 167) after data cleaning. Of the 164 open-ended responses, 10 included comments unrelated to customer service experiences within the district. To keep the findings as salient as possible for HCPS' future decision-making, HCPS excluded these comments from this analysis, focusing on the content contained in the remaining 154 open-ended responses.

## KEY OBJECTIVE

Through an analysis of open-ended responses, HCPS addresses the following research question:

- What suggestions or comments do stakeholders have to improve HCPS' customer service?

## METHODOLOGY

Manual coding of open-ended responses is appropriate when the question asked of respondents is broad, when there are fewer than 500 responses, and/or when the responses are too varied. Manual coding was therefore chosen for the open-ended responses in this survey. To begin, researchers will often clean the data by removing blank, irrelevant, and duplicate responses; and will review the remaining survey responses for major themes, ensuring each response had an accompanying code that communicates the central theme of the respondent's comments. Finally, the analysis portion of this qualitative methodology allows researchers to determine quantitative measurements for the qualitative data, and to count the number of responses related to each theme to determine the theme's frequency.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented in this report, HCPS should consider implementing the following recommendations:



1. **Continue to identify opportunities to celebrate individuals who provide TRACK communication.** A vast majority of respondents (93 percent) expressed satisfaction with their experience and often highlighted the work of an individual employee, and three-quarters (75 percent) specifically thank or highlight an individual employee.



2. **Offer employees trainings on how to de-escalate certain situations and/or how to best work with stakeholders who have high-level concerns about district decision-making and communication.** While very few responses expressed dissatisfaction with their experience (7 percent), those that did often identified district operations as an area for improvement.

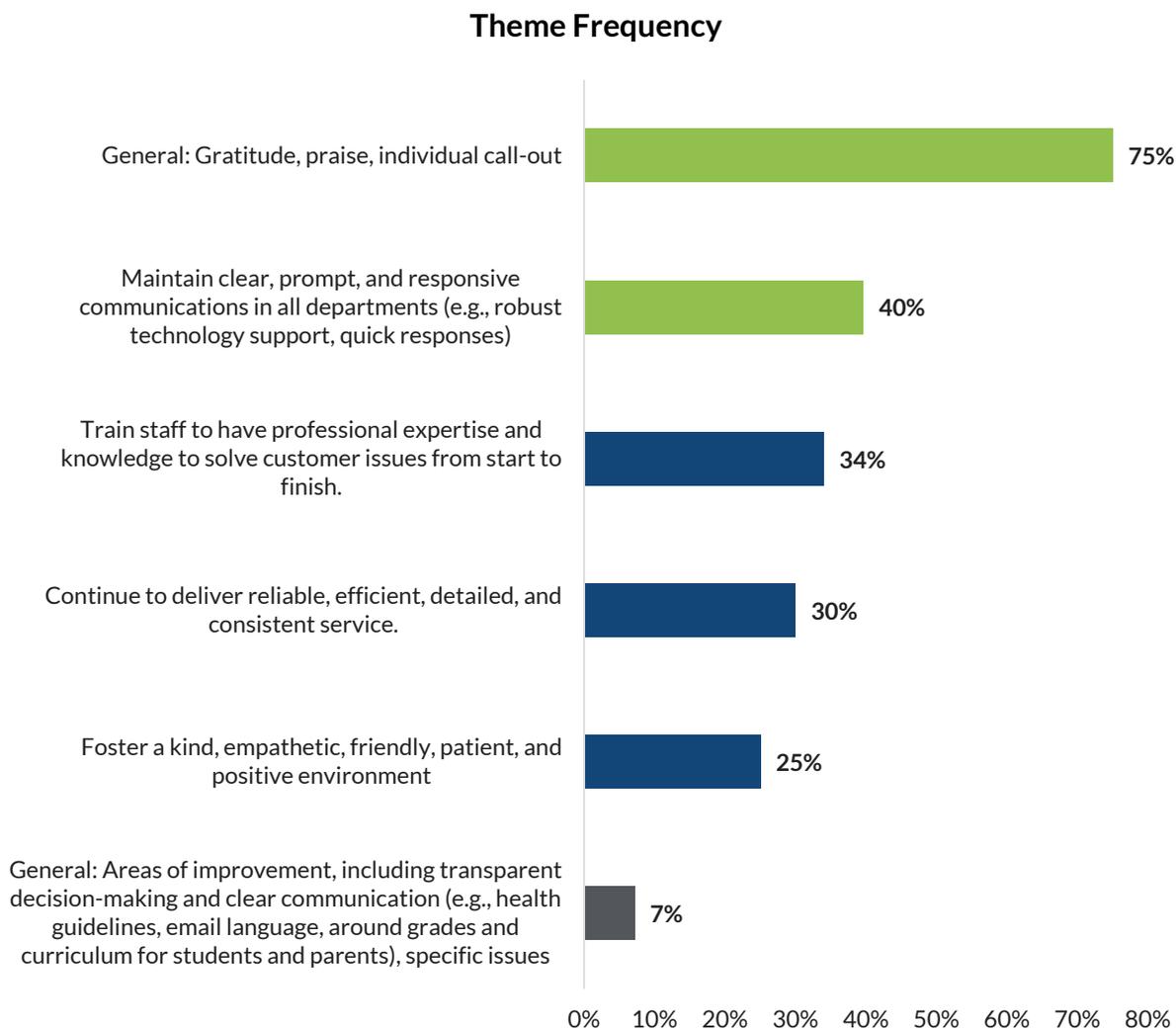


3. **Identify ways to significantly increase the number of survey respondents to have more survey data.** To increase awareness and to encourage participation to receive thousands of survey data per year, HCPS leadership should enhance its outreach campaign to reach more parents, staff, and students. HCPS only received a total of 327 responses in six (6) months. Encourage staff members to include the survey link as part of their Outlook Email signature.

## KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ **Most respondents reported positive experiences and high satisfaction with customer service at HCPS.** Respondents highlighted numerous aspects of customer service strengths, such as clear and timely communication (40 percent), professional knowledge (34 percent), consistent service (30 percent), and friendly employees (25 percent). Three-quarters (75 percent) of responses mentioned specific employee names to publicly show their appreciation.
- ✓ While most responses highlighted strengths of HCPS' customer service, the few responses that identified areas for improvement (7 percent) **note a desire for increased transparency in decision-making and improved communication.**

## OPEN-END RESULTS



Note: This figure indicates the percentage of the 154 coded responses that mention a particular topic. Percentages sum to greater than 100% as some coded responses referenced more than one topic.

## Sample Responses

TOPIC	SAMPLE KEYWORDS	SAMPLE RESPONSES
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>General: Gratitude, praise, individual call-out</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Thank you”</li> <li>• Specific employee names</li> <li>• Compliments</li> <li>• Appreciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The office team, administration and teachers are amazing at HDGES. They are kind, responsive and extremely helpful. I couldn’t be happier with my children attending this school.”</i> – Havre de Grace Elementary</li> <li>• <i>“Chris, thank you for all that you continue to do! It’s truly appreciated.”</i> – Meadowvale Elementary</li> <li>• <i>“Keep up the great work!”</i> – Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> <li>• <i>“No suggestions on improvement -- you all are the best! Just a thank you for always being there for my technology questions.”</i> - Experience at Technology Department, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Maintain clear, prompt, and responsive communications in all departments (e.g., robust technology support, quick responses)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Speedy responses</li> <li>• Clear language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Lisa Patterson is great to work with, and she always takes the time to answer my questions in a timely manner. She is a pleasure to work with!”</i> – Human Resources, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> <li>• <i>“Quick and courteous response.”</i> – Curriculum and Instruction, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Train staff to have professional expertise and knowledge to solve customer issues from start to finish.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalism</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Ms. Miller continued to demonstrate the excellent knowledge, service and support I’m always grateful for during this issue. The big thing is that she doesn’t send me off on a hunt, she provisions me with what I need to complete the task and with the knowledge I need to apply it later.”</i> – Human Resources, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> <li>• <i>“The communication and availability of staff for questions or concerns is excellent. The departments focus on customer service with clear and concise policy guidelines has never been better. The professionalism of the departments leadership is refreshing.”</i> – Transportation, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Continue to deliver reliable, efficient, detailed, and consistent service.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always</li> <li>• Efficient</li> <li>• Helpful</li> <li>• Consistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Gary Stone has helped me on numerous occasions and has always been fast, knowledgeable, and dead-on with what I need. Thank you Gary!”</i> – Business Services, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> <li>• <i>“Kim Debelius is such a positive influence within HCPS. She is always a joy to work with. I know I can count on her anytime to assist with my questions.”</i> – Curriculum and Instruction, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</li> <li>• <i>“Efficient and helpful as always!!!”</i> – John Archer School</li> </ul>

**Important Note:**

- Please note that quotes (comments provided by survey respondents) are reproduced nearly verbatim with few edits to correct typos when needed.

TOPIC	SAMPLE KEYWORDS	SAMPLE RESPONSES
<p><b>Foster a kind, empathetic, friendly, patient, and positive environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pleasant</li> <li>• Kind</li> <li>• Friendly</li> <li>• Patient</li> <li>• Supportive and helpful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Ms. Mack has been very gracious and kind whenever I email her with my questions or concerns. I really appreciate her!” – Meadowvale Elementary</i></li> <li>• <i>“Lisa Patterson has continued to be a ray of sunshine in all communications! She is always so willing to help, and answers anything that may arise. She also does so promptly, and in a very clear, understandable manner. It has been a joy continuing to communicate with her about various questions that have come up through the years!” -- Human Resources, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</i></li> <li>• <i>“Keep doing what you’re doing!! Your cheery attitudes and helpful answers are so appreciated.” – Meadowvale Elementary</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>General: Areas of improvement, including transparent decision-making and clear communication (e.g., health guidelines, email language, around grades and curriculum for students and parents), specific issues</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> <li>• Personal</li> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Student success, increased transparency and responsiveness could be improved if the parents of high school students were included in administration’s communications with students.” – North Harford high School</i></li> <li>• <i>“My questions and concerns were not addressed. Instead, I got a reply that told me “this is not finalized”. Exactly. That’s why I’m making all of my problems aware. Make the replies more personal.” – Educational Services, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</i></li> <li>• <i>“Send emails in easy to understand language!” – Human Resources, Central Office / Forest Hill Annex / Hickory Annex</i></li> <li>• <i>“Greet people like you would like to be greeted.” – Aberdeen Middle School</i></li> </ul>

**Important Note:**

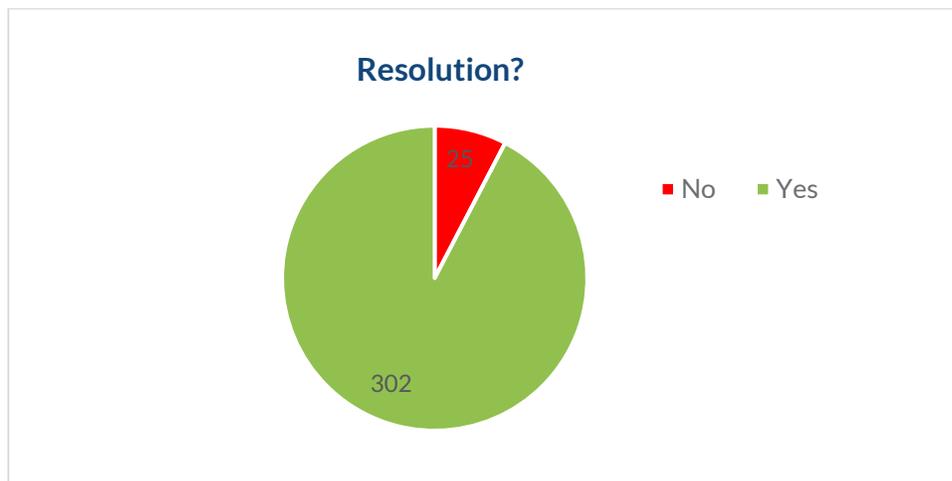
- Please note that quotes (comments provided by survey respondents) are reproduced nearly verbatim with few edits to correct typos when needed.

# APPENDIX A: CLOSED-ENDED SURVEY RESULTS

- Q.1: Overall, how satisfied were you with the customer service provided?



- Q.2: My question was answered and/or my concern was resolved.



- Q.4: I would like to be contacted in regards to this customer service issue.



# APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

## Harford County Public Schools Customer Satisfaction

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is committed to providing superior customer service to all of our stakeholders, including employees, students and their families, and community members. We recognize customer service as a vital component of an organization's culture that, in our case, ultimately affects overall student success.

At HCPS, our standards for quality customer service are measured by our TRACK-ing Excellence program. TRACK represents Transparent, Responsive, Accessible, Consistent, and Kind communication. By submitting this short form, your feedback helps us gauge if we are meeting our standards of excellence.



1. **Overall, how satisfied were you with the customer service provided?** (Required)  
1 Star 2 Stars 3 Stars 4 Stars 5 Stars
2. **My question was answered and/or my concern was resolved.** (Required)
  - Yes
  - No
3. **What school/office/department did you contact?** (Required)  
Select Location-
4. **I would like to be contacted in regards to this customer service issue.**
  - Yes
  - No
5. **Comments / Suggestions to improve our customer service.**

### Survey Link

Click this link below to view the Customer Satisfaction Survey on the HCPS website:  
<https://hcps.org/community/customer-satisfaction-survey/>