



SWAN CREEK PRE-SURVEY ANALYSIS

Analysis of feedback data collected from students, parents, and staff regarding their perceptions of the district's online Blended Virtual Learning program at Swan Creek School.

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Office of Research and Program Evaluation collaborated with the principals and staff at the Swan Creek School and district leadership to design a mixed-methods evaluation framework Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) will use to monitor the implementation and the impact of the Blended Virtual Learning Program at Swan Creek School. This collaboration entails leveraging multiple methodologies to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the Swan Creek School's Blended Virtual Learning Program, including survey research, qualitative research (e.g., stakeholder focus groups), and quantitative research (e.g., student data analyses), and a comprehensive capstone report.

The goal of HCPS, in monitoring the implementation and the impact of the virtual learning programs at Swan Creek School, is to ensure that all students will have:

- Access to full range of enriched programs and opportunities in the online learning environment
- Equitable supports that will enhance their learning and success
- The same level of rigorous and comparable teaching and learning offered to face-to-face students

HCPS will create a comprehensive capstone report, focusing on the success of Virtual Program at Swan Creek School, that summarizes and synthesizes findings from the Blended Virtual Learning Program projects. The capstone report will be publicly available via the HCPS website and will include, but not limited to:

1. **Pre- and Post-Surveys** data, findings and recommendations from parents, students, and staff
2. Key findings within and across stakeholder groups (**Online Focus Groups**: Virtual Teaching and Learning Experiences) and presents recommended next steps
3. Summary of best practices including findings from the **Virtual Classroom Observation Tools**
4. Student engagement analysis and student **performance data for all student groups**
5. A comprehensive list of **lessons learned** from implementations (Year 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)
6. Overall key findings and **recommended next steps for program improvements** and/or revisions

In the spring of 2021, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) approved the Swan Creek School Blended Virtual Learning Program. On August 24, 2021, MSDE shared information, at the State Board of Education meeting, related to the monitoring of approved virtual learning program in Maryland for 2021-2022 school year. During the meeting, MSDE provided an overview of the monitoring steps it will take to ensure student success through access to equitable and quality virtual programs at Local School Systems (LSS).

The projects and steps outlined above for the upcoming capstone report and in the evaluation plan, to evaluate and monitor the implementation and the impact of the virtual learning programs at Swan Creek School, are in alignment with the steps taken by MSDE. The implementation and findings of the HCPS program evaluation plan will provide answers to the MSDE "Look Fors" LSS in virtual Programs.

OVERVIEW

In the following report, the Office of Research and Program Evaluation presents findings from two **Pre-Surveys** conducted by HCPS. The goal of these pre-surveys was to collect feedback from elementary, middle, and high school students, parents, and staff regarding their perceptions of the district's online learning program, the Swan Creek School's (SCS') Blended Virtual Learning Program. To this end, Swan Creek School partnered with the Office of Research (Researchers) and other stakeholders to analyze responses to these surveys' open-ended questions.

This analysis will support HCPS in evaluating the SCS program and answers the following research questions:

1. What do SCS staff think would improve professional development or training sessions to strengthen the Blended Virtual Learning Program?
2. What do SCS parents and students think would improve the Blended Virtual Learning program to serve students more effectively?
3. What strategies are SCS students, teachers, and/or staff doing to create a sense of belonging?
4. What concerns or challenges do SCS stakeholders have?

METHODOLOGY

HCPS administered a pre-survey in Fall 2021 to SCS stakeholders, including students in Grades K-12, parents, and staff members.

Before analyzing the open-ended responses, researchers removed blank, irrelevant, or repeated open-ended responses during data cleaning. Researchers also removed answers such as "unsure" and "none," in favor of responses that share meaningful data and appropriately answer the survey question. Themes are then developed using cleaned, relevant response content, only.

The responses of the closed-ended survey questions were provided as a separate report.

MANUAL CODING

The open-ended responses were manually coded to identify the topics most frequently discussed by respondents. Researchers reviewed survey responses for major themes, ensuring each response will have an accompanying code that communicates the central theme of the respondent's comments. Researchers counted the number of times each theme is coded to a response to calculate its frequency, and the total number of responses is then used to calculate the percentage of responses related to that theme. Percentages may sum to over 100 percent due to survey responses coded for more than one theme.

For detailed coding information, please consult the Office of Research and Program Evaluation.

Findings should be interpreted as a reflection of the sample, which may not necessarily align with the perceptions of the population as a whole.

Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 provide information for all manually coded open-ended response questions in the pre-survey.

Figure 1.1: Coded Responses for Grades K-3 Pre-Survey

QUESTION	TOTAL CLEANED RESPONSES	CODED RESPONSES
1: Is there something Swan Creek can do better to help you?	33	33
2: Is there something you want the adults at Swan Creek to know?	21	21

Figure 1.2: Coded Responses for Grades 4-12, Parents, and Staff Pre-Survey

QUESTION	TOTAL CLEANED RESPONSES	CODED RESPONSES
1: Staff – Suggestions for Improving Professional Development	31	31
2: Parent – Suggestions for Improving Program	78	78
3: Student – Additional Resources Needed for Success	24	24
4: Students – Suggestions for Improving Program	316	316
5: Student – At-Home Use of District Device	43	43
6: All – Sense of Belonging	512	512
7: All – Concerns or Challenges	86	86
8: All – Suggestions for Strengthening Program	244	244

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OVERALL KEY FINDINGS

The findings and recommendations below reflect a synthesis of responses across grade levels and roles.

- 1. Teachers expressed a need for professional development that is centered around teacher input.** Teachers noted that they would benefit from more content-specific and differentiated professional development. Teachers also hope to increase collaboration with colleagues and expand the amount of time they have to engage in professional development activities. Teachers, as well as parents and students, also requested training and support around technology and online programs so that teachers may better support students when experiencing technological difficulties.
- 2. Students, parents, and staff expressed that SCS should improve its digital Learning Management System (LMS), ItsLearning.** Respondents report that the platform is not user-friendly and frequently causes computer glitches and lagging. Students also expressed other technological issues, such as not being able to access resources due to website blocks, unreliable internet, and slow computers.

Notes:

- In 2022, HCPS replaced ItsLearning with the Canvas LMS.
 - SCS students were assigned new computers
 - HCPS does not block website identified as educational
 - Given these students are remote, unreliable Internet would not be associated with HCPS.
 - The technology issue of unmuting with distracting sounds in home environment of students is not an issue with technology.
 - “spotty” Internet has nothing to do with the device and losing connection.
- 3. Students and parents frequently expressed concern over the amount of work students are assigned.** Students and parents expressed a need for fewer assignments or more time to complete assignments. Additionally, parents and students request more academic support, either through tutoring or additional physical resources students can have in front of them during virtual learning.
 - 4. Students, parents, and staff highlighted the importance of incorporating social activities into virtual learning to support students’ social-emotional growth.** Respondents recommended organizing interactive activities, such as after-school clubs and community events, for students to participate in virtually or in person. Additionally, many students share that they like collaborating with their peers during the school day and that break-out room activities help with social-emotional engagement and provide a sense of belonging. To note, other students expressed discomfort with breakout rooms and dislike for group projects, so Swan Creek School and/or HCPS may need to explore additional options for collaboration.
 - 5. Virtual learning poses unique challenges to student learning.** For example, students and parents expressed that they need more breaks from the computer screen and more understanding from teachers regarding the difficulties of learning from home. Additionally, respondents shared mixed feelings about the camera policy. Many students expressed a dislike for having their camera on, due to anxiety and discomfort, and would prefer if the policy was optional. However, teachers expressed that without cameras on, it is challenging to engage students and ensure students are attending class. Other virtual-specific challenges included lack of accountability for not engaging or completing work, lack of participation, technology issues, and difficulty translating the curriculum to an online format.

6. **Less than half (42 percent) of student responses indicated that they use their personal computer instead of the district-provided device.** One third (33 percent) of responses share that they use the district device to complete schoolwork and 19 percent shared that they use it to stream music or video.

Notes:

- Personal computer use would allow students to access sites HCPS is required to filter/block.
7. **Many students expressed feeling a sense of belonging.** Students attribute their sense of belonging to their teachers, who provide social-emotional support and often check in with students to assess how they are feeling. Students also attribute their sense of belonging to social activities that foster student engagement, such as spirit weeks, lunch bunches, and breakout rooms.

SECTION 1: STUDENTS GRADES K-3 PRE-SURVEY

This section provides the analysis of open-ended student responses from the K-3 student pre-survey. Slight alterations to quotes were made to improve readability.

QUESTION 1: IS THERE SOMETHING SWAN CREEK CAN DO BETTER TO HELP YOU?

- 52 percent of responses expressed a need for general academic help. Students report needing help in math, reading, writing, and social/emotional support.
- 42 percent of responses included suggestions regarding either 1) a need for more tools and resources; and 2) a need for more breaks.
- 12 percent of responses expressed general appreciation for Swan Creek and its teachers.

2.1: Sample Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Need for Academic Help	17	52%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Make work a little bit easy.” -Grade 2 student ■ “Extra help with math.” -Grade 3 student ■ “Small groups for math and reading.” -Kindergarten student ■ “Talk to me personally more.” -Kindergarten student
Suggestions	14	42%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “They can make new things for me to do.” -Kindergarten student ■ “Provide more learning tools/toys.” -Kindergarten student ■ “It would help if I could have at least 10-minute breaks.” -Grade 3 student
General Appreciation for Swan Creek	5	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “No this school is perfect to me.” -Grade 2 student ■ “Swan Creek helps me more than red pump with reading.” -Grade 2 student
Total Number of Coded Responses			N=33

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 2: IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANT THE ADULTS AT SWAN CREEK TO KNOW?

- 43 percent of responses expressed general appreciation for Swan Creek.
- 29 percent of responses expressed miscellaneous needs.
- 19 percent of responses expressed a general need for academic or social support.
- 10 percent of responses expressed issues with technology, specifically muting.

Figure 2.2: Sample Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
General Appreciation for Swan Creek	9	43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I love Swan Creek." -Grade 1 student ▪ Thanks for helping me!" -Grade 1 student
Miscellaneous Needs	6	29%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I want a real teacher, not a sub. Better alternative for not having a school computer." -Grade 3 student ▪ "Less students per class would be better." -Kindergarten student ▪ "Make school more fun." -Kindergarten student
General Need for Help (Academic and Social)	4	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I'm confused in school!" -Grade 3 student ▪ "I feel like I'm not making friends because I don't like to talk a lot." -Grade 3 student
Issues with Technology	2	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "That if they're unmuted there might be distracting sounds in the background." -Grade 3 student
Total Number of Coded Responses		N=21	

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

SECTION II: STAFF, PARENTS, STUDENTS GRADES 4-12 PRE-SURVEY

This section provides the analysis of open-ended responses from the staff, parents, and Grades 4-12 students pre-survey. Findings are shared for themes with over 5% responses. Slight alterations to quotes were made to improve readability.

QUESTION 1: STAFF –SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Please take a moment to share your thoughts about how Swan Creek could improve its professional development or training sessions to strengthen the Blended Virtual Learning Program.

- 45 percent of responses expressed that Swan Creek professional development (PD) should be more centered around staff needs. Staff expressed need for more content-specific PD, PD differentiated for various student needs, and PD that is informed by staff suggestions.
- 26 percent of responses expressed positive sentiments and appreciation towards the current professional development and training programs.
- 19 percent of responses expressed a need for more time to engage in PD.
- 19 percent of responses expressed a need for more collaboration among staff members during PD activities.
- 13 percent of responses requested training and support around technology.
- 10 percent of responses expressed miscellaneous needs, such as expanding the budget for PD or implementing programs that track attendance and grade concerns.

Figure 3.1: Sample Staff Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Centered on Staff Needs	14	45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Content-specific training - we have different needs for virtual resources.” -<i>High school staff</i> ■ “Seek input from staff. Find out what they need to know how to use and provide time to learn and explore. Record lessons where teachers are using programs or technology to see how it’s used in real-time.” -<i>Elementary school staff</i> ■ “Continue to provide choice sessions. Allow more opportunities for teacher lead sessions.” -<i>School administrator</i>
Positive Sentiments	8	26%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I’m not sure what more I could ask for. I feel incredibly supported by my colleagues and the administration. If something pops up, then I feel like all I need to do is ask. S far they have anticipated many of my PD needs.” -<i>Middle school staff</i>
Need for More Time	6	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I would appreciate more time to participate in Professional Development sessions during our contracted hours.” -<i>Elementary school staff</i>
Need for More Collaboration	6	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “More time to collaborate and share among colleagues.” -<i>Elementary school staff</i>

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Allow us to share favorite lesson with each other. We teach on an Island, we can't just go next door and ask a colleague.” -<i>High school staff</i>
Technology Support	4	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “An increased amount of PD on simple to use applications and extensions that can be used within a classroom with younger students.” -<i>Elementary school staff</i> “If the district could provide devices that are more likely to not lose internet connection, that would benefit the students with spotty internet.” -<i>High school staff</i>
Miscellaneous Needs	3	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Having a few new ones would be nice.” -<i>Middle school staff</i> “Programs to track attendance and grade concerns.” -<i>High school staff</i>
Total Number of Coded Responses			N = 31

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 2: PARENTS – SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING PROGRAM



Please take a moment to share your thoughts about how Swan Creek could improve its Blended Virtual Learning Program to more effectively serve its students.

- 38 percent of responses expressed that Swan Creek could improve its academic support for students. Responses discuss a range of topics, including a need for tutoring, differentiation of curriculum, extra credit opportunities, more materials, and smaller classes. Responses also discuss the need for less homework and giving students more time away from the computer.
- 38 percent of responses expressed a general appreciation for the program and its teachers.
- 12 percent of responses expressed that the program could be better coordinated and organized.
- 12 percent of responses expressed a need for more parental involvement and communication with families regarding their student’s progress.
- 8 percent of responses expressed a need for more socialization and collaboration among students.
- 5 percent of responses expressed a need for improving technological issues.
- 5 percent expressed concern over testing.
- 5 percent expressed concern over teachers, particularly their lack of responsiveness and communication with parents.
- 5 percent expressed miscellaneous concerns.

Figure 3.2: Sample Parent Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Academic Support	30	38%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "...Separate students according to their ability, teachers should be able to check student work and send students back home with something for a parent to see." - <i>Grade 2 parent</i> ▪ "Additional online time tutoring for virtual students" - <i>Grade 11 parent</i> ▪ "It would be nice if either the online classes where smaller or if the teacher has an aid for support. Furthermore, online tutoring" -<i>Grade 2 parent</i> ▪ "Provide textbooks for assistance in some of the courses. Students need to have something to look at." -<i>Grade 11 parent</i>
Appreciation for Program and Teachers	30	38%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Very happy with the program and instructors." -<i>Grade 10 parent</i>
Ensure Program is Coordinated/Organized	9	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "When teachers are out, there need to be subs. If my child was in his home school and the teacher was out, there would be a sub. He wouldn't be sent home with independent work to do. I work from home and did not expect to sub for my child's teacher." -<i>Grade 2 parent</i>
Parent Involvement and Communication	9	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I understand that teachers are busy, however when a parent reaches out via email it would be nice to receive a response." -<i>Grade 6 parent</i> ▪ "I wish as a parent that I knew more about what exactly is going on (assignments and deadlines etc)." -<i>Grade 9 parent</i>
Socialization and Collaboration for Students	6	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "More socializing options! Like more opportunities for kids to eat lunch together virtually and maybe an after school brief socializing option." -<i>Grade 1 parent</i> ▪ "Maybe, gather all students in a classroom or gymnasium for few hours for them to socialize." -<i>Grade 7 parent</i>
Technological and Online Issues	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The structure more organized, user friendly considering the ages utilizing the web and laptops." -<i>Grade 3 parent</i> ▪ "... I think the students need more resources on technical support. Possibly a list of things to do when your computer is not cooperating." -<i>Grade 5 parent</i>
Testing	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Would like children have a way of taking required tests online instead of having to go in person." -<i>Grade 10 parent</i>
Concerns about Teachers	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Teachers are severely lacking in qualifications. Little to no communication and nonresponsive admin." -<i>Grade 6 parent</i>
Miscellaneous	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "The attendance for students needs to be more precise, I keep getting calls weekly that my son is not at school when I make sure he logs in daily..." -<i>Grade 5 parent</i>
Total Number of Coded Responses			78

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 3: STUDENTS – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES NEEDED FOR SUCCESS



What additional resources are needed to ensure student success in the Blended Virtual Learning Program?

- 46 percent of responses expressed technology issues related to blocked internet sites, issues with muting the class, and problems with lagging computers.
- 27 percent of responses expressed a need for extra educational support, such as tutoring resources and additional time to complete assignments.
- 17 percent of responses requested more resources and tools, such as notebooks and textbooks.
- 6 percent of responses asked for better communication.

Figure 3.3: Sample Student Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Technology	11	46%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Maybe a backup for when ItsLearning is down because when IL is down it can really slow down students’ progress.” -Grade 10 student ■ “Access to more things. lots of videos are blocked on YouTube and some are educational ones, lots of times already a teacher couldn’t do the lesson because a video was blocked” -Grade 8 student ■ “Being able to mute the class while working is a problem for me.” -Grade 5 student
Extra Educational Supports	7	28%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “An easier way to get to missed work to make stuff up that you miss.” -Grade 6 student ■ “Tutoring resources.” -Grade 5 student
Resources/Tools	4	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “U.S. History textbooks, notebooks.” -Grade 8 student
Better Communication	2	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Better student communication”. -Grade 8 student
Total Number of Coded Responses		N = 24	

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 4: STUDENTS – SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING PROGRAM



Please take a moment to share your thoughts about how Swan Creek could improve its Blended Virtual Learning Program to more effectively serve its students.

- 41 percent of responses expressed general appreciation for the program.
- 25 percent of responses expressed a need for better technology, programs, and materials. In particular, students reported issues with their computers, headphones, and WiFi. Students also expressed concern over the online learning system ItsLearning and its glitches, as well as for certain website blocks on their computers. Additionally, students requested more physical resources and materials, such as workbooks, textbooks, and notebooks.

- 22 percent of responses expressed concern over the curriculum and instructional design of SCS. For example, students requested less homework, and more time on their assignments. Students also took issue with how assignments are graded, how some classes are taught and express a need for more personal support. 12 percent of responses discussed the unique challenges of virtual learning and ways that virtual learning can be better conducted. Students do not like the camera-on policy and prefer if cameras were more optional. Students also have mixed feelings about using break out rooms and want participation to feel more comfortable.
- 10 percent of responses expressed concerns and complaints about staff, mostly concerning their lack of knowledge using the technology, the need for more support and time to complete assignments, and their lack of communication with students.
- 8 percent of responses discussed social-emotional support and students’ needs for increased collaboration, interaction, and fun activities to support students’ social-emotional growth.

Figure 3.4: Sample Students Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Appreciation for the Program	129	41%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “It’s a good school and has great teachers.” -Grade 9 student
Better Technology, Programs, and Materials	80	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Non-glitching pages, no requirement for cameras on.” -Grade 7 student ■ “A newer learning system, different from ItsLearning. It causes some slightly annoying issues.” -Grade 11 student ■ “Swan Creek could improve its Blended Virtual program by providing additional resources such as workbooks, textbooks, and notebooks to record information you’ve learned in class.” -Grade 8 student
Curriculum Instruction/Design	70	22%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Swan Creek could offer more programs, classes, and clubs to its online students.” -Grade 11 student ■ “Have time where students take time to talk to the teacher for a break like for the brain or to let go of stress.” -Grade 12 student ■ “Most of my teachers use several different programs, so it’s really hard to keep track of my assignments. Also, the way that my teachers organize/categorize stuff makes it difficult to find important information.” -Grade 8 student ■ “Most of the teachers give way too many assignments to the point where it is exhausting to keep up with. I would do much better in this school if we took more notes instead of doing so many assignments.” -Grade 12 student
Unique Challenges of Virtual Learning	37	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “In my opinion, the only thing that could improve the Blended Virtual Learning Program is not having the camera to be a requirement but let students decide whether they want their camera on in the meeting or not.” -Grade 9 student ■ “Teachers need to be more educated on how to use the technology given so students don’t have to work around the mishaps.” -Grade 8 student
Staff Complaints	32	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Swan Creek can improve with more supporting the students and encouraging the students rather than getting frustrated at them.” -Grade 6 student ■ “They could teach the teachers how to use everything, so when the students need help, the teachers know what to do.” -Grade 7 student

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Social-Emotional Support	24	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Allow mental health days to be excuses for days off to a certain extent of days.” -Grade 12 student “It’s hard to make friends so we need more social things like clubs and activities.” -Grade 4 student “I would say start doing things to get students more involved adding clubs having a senior night school dances maybe even field trips so that even though we’re learning virtually we can still be involved and connected.” -Grade 12 student
Total Number of Coded Responses			N = 316

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 5: STUDENTS – AT-HOME USE OF DISTRICT DEVICE



While at home, for which purposes do you primarily use the district-provided device?

- 42 percent of responses expressed that they do not use the district-provided device, primarily because they prefer to use their personal computer.
- 33 percent of responses expressed that they use the district-provided device for school-related work.
- 19 percent of responses expressed that they use the district-provided device for music and streaming.
- 12 percent of responses expressed miscellaneous purposes.
- 5 percent of responses expressed that they use their device for socializing.

Figure 3.5: Sample Student Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Do Not Use / Use Personal Device	18	42%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I use my personal computer for virtual learning.” -Grade 7 student
To Complete School-Related Work	14	33%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Using the device for schoolwork and responding to school related Emails.” -Grade 8 student
Music and Streaming	8	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Music on YouTube.” -Grade 8 student
Miscellaneous	5	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I usually use my personal pc for school but if I need to take my PC somewhere I will use the provided one.” -Grade 8 student
Socializing	2	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I only talk to some classmates during breaks.” -Grade 7 student
Total Number of Coded Responses			N = 43

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 6: ALL – SENSE OF BELONGING



Please briefly tell us what students, teachers, and/or staff are doing to create a sense of belonging.

- 90 percent of responses expressed a general feeling of belonging, support, and inclusion.
- 48 percent of responses expressed that teachers provide social-emotional support for students to create a sense of belonging. Respondents noted that teachers are personable and often take the time to ask students how they are doing. Respondents described teachers as inclusive, accepting, understanding, kind, and complimentary.
- 21 percent of responses expressed that opportunities for student engagement and socialization create a sense of belonging. Respondents noted school activities like Lunch Bunches and Spirit Weeks, as well as classroom collaboration through breakout rooms and group projects where students learn about their peers.
- 19 percent of responses expressed that teachers provide academic support to students and work to meet students’ needs, keep students informed, and provide academic support and help when they can.
- 7 percent of responses expressed feelings of a lack of belonging. Some respondents attribute this feeling to unsupportive teachers, while others just feel out of place.

Figure 3.6: Sample Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
General Feelings of Belonging	256	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Everyone seems to be collaborating as a team.” -High school parent ■ “I feel like a member of the school community.” -Grade 8 student
Teachers Provide Social-Emotional Support	138	48%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Some teachers give us a time at the end of class to talk the them and other students not just about work.” -Grade 11 student ■ “I feel like, when given the opportunity, some teachers attempt to connect with students on a more personal level (remembering little things about them, engaging in their interests, etc.) which helps the class all connect because we can all engage.” -Grade 11 student ■ “My son feels as if his teachers know who he is and they like having him in their classes. He enjoys going to the school.” -High school parent ■ “Talk to students about their likes, dislikes. Spend time having students share personal stories and interests.” -Middle school staff
Student Engagement and Socialization	60	21%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “The breakout rooms have given my child the greatest sense of social and emotional engagement. In-person schooling had many interruptions that didn’t allow him to be heard or be himself at all times.” -Grade 4 student ■ “Breakout rooms and availability for students to help each other.” -Elementary school parent ■ “Lunch bunch is an awesome activity.” -Elementary school parent
Teachers Provide Academic Support	55	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “That the teachers help me when I need help for PLT.” -Grade 6 student ■ “One on one involvement.” -Middle school parent

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
General Lack of Belonging	21	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “My teachers give us check ins with our mental health but if our mental health is doing bad they don’t really do anything about it.” -Grade 8 student “I don’t feel a sense of belonging.” -Grade 9 student
Total Number of Coded Responses			N = 286

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 7: ALL – CONCERNS OR CHALLENGES



Do you have another concern or challenge that is not listed in the previous questions?

- 36 percent of responses expressed concerns over program implementation and program design. In particular, respondents discussed the challenges of the heavy workload, the brief amount of time to complete assignments, and the need for more breaks.
- 33 percent of responses expressed concerns over the unique challenges of virtual learning and issues with students falling behind in school virtually. For example, respondents discussed challenges with time management and distractions, the need for time away from the computer, students’ needs for extra academic support, and students not completing their work. Additionally, respondents discussed “ghosting,” or students who log in, but are not really attending class. Respondents also discussed discomfort with breakout rooms and the camera-on policy.
- 17 percent of responses expressed concern with staff members, particularly with lack of communication and responsiveness.
- 12 percent of responses discussed social-emotional challenges, and the lack of interaction and socialization experienced by virtual students.
- 12 percent of responses discussed technology concerns, particularly with students struggling to effectively use online resources.
- 5 percent of responses expressed concerns over teacher burnout and lack of support for teachers.
- 5 percent of responses expressed miscellaneous concerns.

Figure 3.7: Sample Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Program Implementation and Design Concerns	31	36%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Trying to take content that is taught in a traditional classroom and make it fit in a virtual setting such as Lucy Calkins does not work.” -Elementary school staff “Some teachers are giving too much school homework to do after school hours and it’s hard to do all of it and make it on time, while trying to be connected in family life.” -Grade 9 student “The school day is way too long for virtual learning.” -Grade 2 parent “The frequency of work handed to you and how overwhelming it is to do that work.” -Grade 9 student

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Unique Challenges of Virtual Learning	28	33%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “A challenge is that I can’t talk and ask questions to the teachers face to face every day.” -<i>Grade 10 student</i> ▪ “Students are logging in to class, but they are not participating - no camera, work not handed in, no response in chat.” -<i>Middle school staff</i> ▪ “Break out rooms when I don’t want to.” -<i>Grade 7 student</i> ▪ “Students in the in-person program not utilizing the days we don't see them to complete readings, activities, and assignments.” -<i>High school staff</i>
Staff Concerns	15	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I feel some teachers don't communicate well or respond to emails.” -<i>Grade 10 parent/guardian</i> ▪ “It seems that some teachers are better at managing online teaching better than others. I see some frustrated and others exceling.” -<i>Grade 8 parent</i> ▪ “Teachers responding to more outspoken students. Showing favoritism.” -<i>Grade 3 parent</i>
Social-Emotional Concerns	10	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “My biggest concern is the lack of social/emotional connections with their peers.” -<i>Grade 8 staff</i> ▪ “Just staying informed and having activities/clubs to do. Some teachers are trying to start stuff, but other than that I have no clue what they're planning with that.” -<i>Grade 11 student</i>
Technology Concerns	10	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The computers suddenly freezing crashing.” -<i>Grade 12 student</i> ▪ “Parents and students need more training on the technology/ ItsLearning is not user friendly and you have to go to too many different places to access the work.” -<i>Grade 7 parent</i> ▪ “I don't have access to some educational videos and sites.” -<i>Grade 8 student</i>
Lack of Support for Teachers	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Teacher burnout. Other counties are looking at the calendars and adjusting PD days to days off for teachers to use the days as they feel best fits their individual needs.” -<i>Middle school staff</i> ▪ “I feel a lack of connection with my colleagues. I wish we had time to meet - like once every 2 weeks or so - and have admin attend so we could discuss concerns, ask questions.” -<i>Middle school staff</i>
Miscellaneous	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Don't feel the administration fairly represents the diverse culture of the school” -<i>Noninstructional staff</i>
Total Number of Coded Responses			N = 86

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

QUESTION 8: ALL – SUGGESTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING PROGRAM



Please share any suggestions or comments you have regarding the steps that the district and/or the school should take to strengthen the Blended Virtual Learning Program at Swan Creek School.

- 28 percent of responses commented on the curriculum and instructional design of the SCS program. Responses discussed the need for less homework, more time for assignments, the need to distribute all materials at once, better ways to view grades, and more awareness of student struggles.
- 21 percent of responses expressed general appreciation for the current program.
- 18 percent of responses discussed the unique challenges of virtual learning. Including discussions of student engagement and motivation, camera-on policy, computer fatigue, and the need for technology training for teachers and students.
- 15 percent of responses discussed the need for social-emotional support for students, including opportunities for social activities (in-person or virtual), collaboration among students, and mental health support.
- 11 percent of responses discussed the need for better technology and educational resources, such as notebooks, books, and reliably working websites.
- 9 percent of responses were complaints about the staff or school, mostly surrounding the need for teacher PD on technology use.
- 6 percent of responses discussed the need for better teacher communication and engagement with families.
- 5 percent of responses discussed the need for more support for teachers, including more planning time and better digital resources.

Figure 3.8: Sample Comments by Theme

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Curriculum/Instructional Design	67	28%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Teachers should coordinate their homework assignment amongst each other, so students are not overwhelmed with lots of homework.” -Grade 8 student ■ “Teachers need to slow down & cover material slowly.” -Grade 10 parent ■ “Better way to see missed work.” -Grade 6 student ■ “I feel smaller class sizes and shorter days would benefit the students better.” -Grade 2 parent
Appreciation for Program	50	21%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I believe Swan Creek is doing a wonderful job with the blended program.” -Grade 7 parent
Unique Challenges of Virtual Learning	44	18%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “I think the students will participate more if the teachers didn't peer-pressure the students to put their camera on. So, the students might feel disrespected because their voices are not being heard and valued.” -Grade 9 student ■ “Families committed to online learning and signed a contract about cameras, microphones and engagement. It seems that we are not enforcing these policies and teachers feel like their hands are tied.” -Middle school staff ■ “Maybe less screen time on the computer or maybe like 3-4 hours of school each day.” -Grade 7 student

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Social-Emotional Support	36	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Better student to teacher and student to student connections. (Clubs would help that. Ex: Art, Non-competitive gaming, Homework help, etc.)” -<i>Grade 9 student</i> ▪ “The school district should open more in person clubs such as sports or school dances or prom.” -<i>Grade 11 student</i> ▪ “Emotional support groups.” -<i>Grade 9 student</i>
Need for Better Technology and Educational Resources	26	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Try to streamline the virtual learning programs (computer systems/LMS). The SharePoint, while it holds a lot of great resources, is overwhelming and hard to navigate.” -<i>Elementary school staff</i> ▪ “Better computers more notebooks to write in.” -<i>Grade 5 student</i> ▪ “Using a better system to submit classwork than ItsLearning.” -<i>Grade 7 student</i>
Staff and School Complaints	22	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Train teachers better and make sure they know how to use technology.” -<i>Grade 8 student</i> ▪ “I just wish teachers would be more understanding sometimes things happen.” -<i>Grade 7 student</i>
Better Communication and Engagement	14	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Parents provided communication regarding progress outside of report cards.” -<i>Kindergarten parent</i> ▪ “All I hope to see an improvement in is the communication.” -<i>Grade 9 student</i>
More Supports for Teachers	13	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Providing more digital resources for teachers/ other staff members (all lesson plans that come from district are meant for IN PERSON instruction. Therefore, we basically have to start from scratch on almost everything. We need ideas on how to change them.” -<i>Elementary school staff</i> ▪ “The program was not communicated well to the staff in advance of implementation and throughout the program there has been a continued lack of communication that has led to confusion and disorganization of the program.” -<i>Non instructional staff</i> ▪ “Providing teachers with more planning time (personal & co-planning).” -<i>Middle school staff</i>
Total Number of Coded Responses			N = 238

*Note: Theme responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small to consider it a theme.

CONCLUSION

While stakeholders did express positive perceptions of SCS, including a sense of belonging and appreciation for SCS teachers, SCS staff also identified many opportunities for improvement. These opportunities include increasing social-emotional support and student interactions, finding a better balance as it relates to screen time, offering more professional development for staff, and improving technology.

APPENDIX: RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

The leadership of Swan Creek School shared the following response to the recommendations included in this report.

1. Teachers expressed a need for professional development that is centered around teacher input.

Our PD plan for the first half of 2021-2022 school year centered on Social Emotional Learning (SEL), as well as the 7 Principles of Instructional Design for Remote Teaching & Learning. Beginning with the second semester, we surveyed teachers on professional needs/desires and differentiated our PD based on response.

- How to Support ELL Students
- How to Respond to Challenging Behaviors and Student Resistance
- Pineapple Peer Observations
- 1st and 2nd Year Teachers: Motivating Reluctant Learners, Mystery Pixel Art, and Content Visits
- Newsletter Updates
- Student Goal Setting
- Vertical Teaming
- Student Email/Communication
- Fountas and Pinnell Training
- Units of Study Walk Through/Feedback with Content Supervisors

2. Students, parents, and staff expressed that SCS should improve its digital Learning Management System (LMS), its Learning.

The Learning Management System is a county-based decision. Swan Creek School has provided feedback related to the LMS and HCPS will be moving to a new Learning Management System (Canvas) for 2022-2023. All HCPS teachers will have required training in the new LMS to prepare them for fall implementation as well as voluntary opportunities. Student and parent support will be provided to all HCPS students and families during the fall of the 2022-2023 school year. Swan Creek School and HCPS has provided students and families support during the 2021-2022 school year through the SCS instructional technology teacher specialist and the Parent Support Hotline.

3. Student and parents frequently expressed concern over the amount of work students are assigned.

SCS uses the same curriculum as every other HCPS school. To address concerns related to work submission, SCS allows for assignments to be submitted by an established (and advertised) deadline. Typically, this is at 11:59pm on the weekend after assigned.

4. Students, parents, and staff highlighted the importance of incorporating social activities into virtual learning to support students' social-emotional growth.

Beginning in December 2021, students in grades 6-12 had club opportunities made available to them. K-5 students began their clubs in March 2022. In both cases, the clubs made available derived from student and teacher input.

Elementary Clubs:

- Origami Club
- Announcements Club
- Lego Club
- Gaming Club
- Animal Club
- Yoga Club
- Writing Club
- Art Club
- Lunch Bunch

Middle/High School Clubs:

- Poetry Club
- PE Intramurals
- SGA
- Yearbook
- Book to Movie Club
- Craft Club
- GSA Club
- Drama Club
- Lunch Bunch

School-based Activities:

- Trunk or Treat
- Fall Festival
- Book Fair
- Picture Day
- Virtual Assembly and Book Talks
- End of Year Picnic (Coming Soon)
- 5th Grade promotion (Coming Soon)

5. Virtual learning poses unique challenges to student learning.

Virtual learning is not a suitable learning method for every student. As such, we have worked with various school personnel, including teachers and counselors, to identify students who are struggling the most. Additional support is provided to those students, but even with additional support, many of those students will need to resume their education at their home school.

- Parent/teacher conferences
- Small group instruction
- Materials and organizational supplies provided to families
- Pupil Personnel visits
- Student Services Team-Interventions
- School Counselor outreach and small groups
- Attendance Team
- Student conferences
- Fit Assessment (Coming Soon) This Fit Assessment is a research-based checklist students and parents can use to determine their “fit” for the blended virtual learning program at Swan Creek.

6. Less than half (42 percent) of student responses indicated that they use their personal computer instead of the district-provided device.

All students are provided with an HCPS Dell Laptop, which contains all the necessary apps for a successful e-learning experience. Students are encouraged to use the HCPS issued device. They are required to use the HCPS issued device for state testing.

7. Many students expressed feeling a sense of belonging.

There is great satisfaction from this finding, yet we will continue to work to make sure Swan Creek School is a safe learning environment for all students