



Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017

Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

Author: Carla Shirley, Ph.D.

Key Findings

- The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the District is on track to improve student achievement rose slightly from 78% in 2016 to 81% in 2017.
- The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the schools are on track to improve student achievement dropped slightly from 89% in 2016 to 87% in 2017.
- Across all stakeholders, 21% report that SCS is of higher quality, 49% report that SCS is of similar quality, and 30% report that SCS is of lower quality than neighboring school districts.
- The majority (91%) of respondents report that SCS keeps parents informed of important information.
- The majority (80%) of SCS Parent/Family members report that they will re-enroll their school-age children next year.
- Priority schools have a range of one to ten community/business partnerships, with most schools having three to four partnerships.

Overview

The three key performance indicators (KPIs) addressed in this report are aligned to Priority 5 of Destination 2025: mobilize family and community partners.

This month's KPIs are:

- Priority 5, KPI 1: community survey data; stakeholder confidence and perceptions
- Priority 5, KPI 2: parent survey data; parents' intent to re-enroll students
- Priority 5, KPI 3: community/business partnerships with Priority schools

In May and June of 2017, SCS administered the 2017 Perception & Communication Survey to SCS school-based and district employees, SCS parents/family members, Non-SCS parents/family members, and community members. A Spanish version of the survey, 2017 Encuesta Sobre Percepción y Comunicación, was available to SCS and Non-SCS parents/family members and community members. This report combines the results of the shared questions in the surveys.

The total number of respondents was 4,381, with 1,586 school-based staff, 2,280 SCS parents/family members, 203 district staff, and 312 Non-SCS parent/family and other community members.

Stakeholder Confidence and Perceptions of SCS

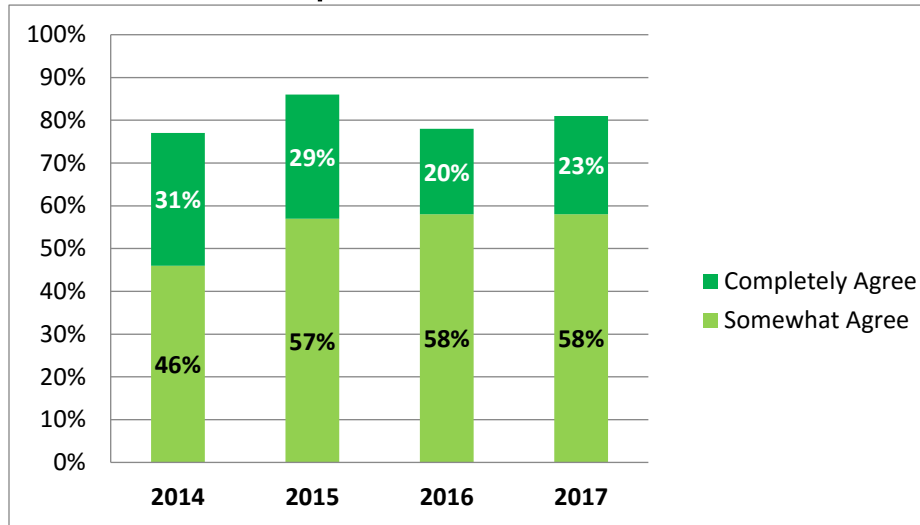
On Track to Improve Student Achievement

The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the District is on track to improve student achievement rose slightly from 78% in 2016 to 81% in 2017 (see Figure 1).



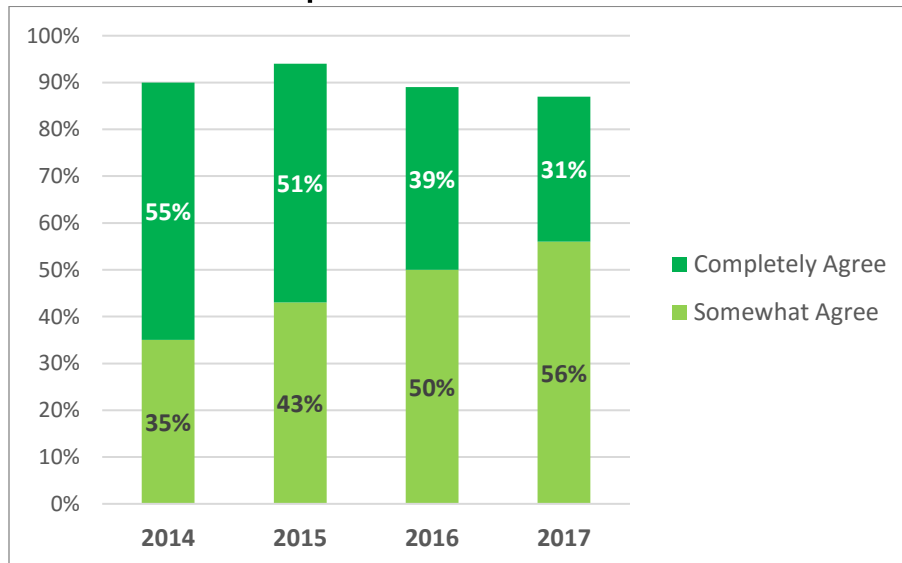
Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017
Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

Figure 1. Percentage of Stakeholders Who Agree that the District is On Track to Improve Student Achievement



Although confidence in SCS schools themselves remains relatively high, the percentage of stakeholders who agree that the schools are on track to improve student achievement dropped slightly from 89% in 2016 to 87% in 2017 (see Figure 2). A new question in the 2017 survey asked SCS parents/family members for their level of agreement on whether their children’s schools are on track to improve student achievement, and 44% completely agreed and 42% somewhat agreed. A higher percentage of parents completely agree that their child(ren)’s schools are on track (44%) versus SCS schools in general (31%).

Figure 2. Percentage of Stakeholders Who Agree that Schools are On Track to Improve Student Achievement



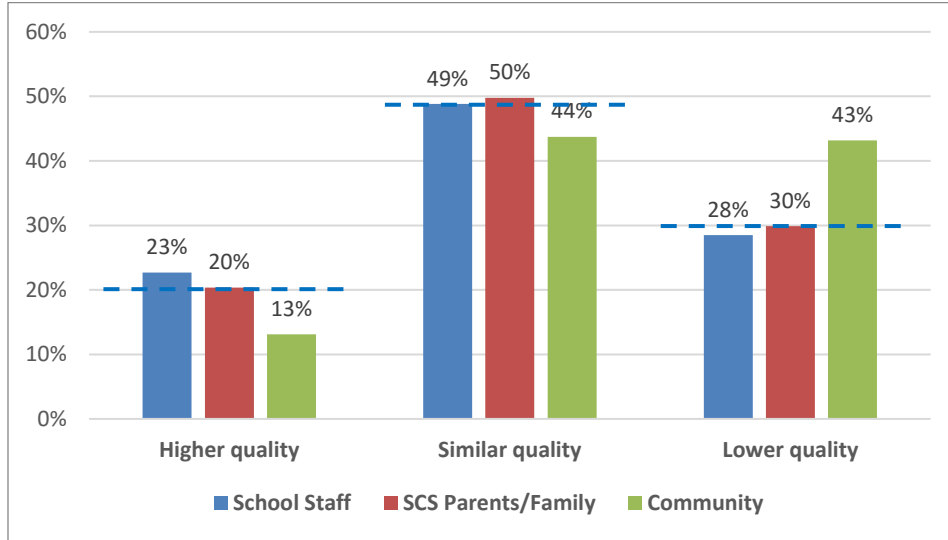


Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017
Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

SCS Quality compared to Neighboring Districts

Across all stakeholders, 21% report that SCS is of higher quality, 49% report that SCS is of similar quality, and 30% report that SCS is of lower quality than neighboring school districts. By group, community members perceive the quality of SCS as lower than SCS school staff and SCS parents/family members (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of Perceived Overall Quality of SCS Compared to Neighboring School Districts



The respondents were asked to explain their rankings of SCS compared to neighboring districts. Those who ranked SCS as higher quality and some who ranked it as similar quality focused on these assets:

- Broad selection of programs, activities, and services
- Diverse learning environment
- Better able to meet needs of all students
- Qualified and caring teachers
- Good relationships among parents, students, and schools

The following quotations illustrate these themes:

Wider selection of programs and curriculum in general, better diversity and representation of humankind. -School staff

The number of specialized programs, the optional schools offerings, the number of arts and cultural programs, and the level of support for parents and students far exceeds the neighboring school districts. -SCS Parents/Family

We have the tools to shape those who are not as fortunate as neighboring districts, and we do a great job. -School staff



Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017

Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

In my opinion, I believe the SCS Teachers have more experience and knowledge of what the children need to become successful. -SCS Parent/Family

The staff and administration are competent and professional. Teachers perform at a high level, and the principal is an exceptional role model for the students. -SCS Parent/Family

The majority of the stakeholders ranked SCS as of similar quality to neighboring school districts, but their reasons for doing so varied widely from SCS being just as good as neighboring districts to all districts having positives and negatives, and to all schools in the county being of average quality.

The following quotations illustrate these themes.

I feel like most SCSs have just as much to offer students as neighboring districts. -SCS Parents/Family

I think we are comparable. I think the perception of some may be that the quality is lower. I do not think the quality is lower. However, I think that our students are more from environments of poverty that make their learning more challenging and therefore skews the perception of the quality of SCS. -School staff

Each district has its issues. We have more to offer our community and students. The other district seems to appreciate their employees better. It evens out. -School staff

There are under performing schools in both Shelby county and neighboring communities. Both have great AP and optional programs available. -SCS Parents/Family

Our school district isn't performing at a top-tier level, but it is similar to the districts around us that have similar circumstances. -School staff

Equally subpar and needing stronger central leadership. -Community Member

The stakeholders who ranked SCS as lower quality than neighboring districts focused on these challenges or gaps:

- Low academic performance
- Low parental involvement
- Fewer resources
- Poor relationships among parents, students, and schools
- Student behavior issues

The following quotations illustrate these themes:

The students are low performing, there is very little parent involvement. -School staff

SCS does not provide basic needs, safe and clean facilities, and spends more time testing than teaching. -SCS Parents/Family

I feel the SC school system doesn't provide enough resources for children to prepare them for next grade promotions and college readiness. -Community Member

I don't believe enough teachers and schools are completely invested in the success of our children. -SCS Parents/Family



Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017

Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

The leadership principal & instructors (teachers) do not care for communicating with parents. -SCS Parent/Family

Behavior issues obstruct the learning environment for students who are focused on learning. -SCS Parent/Family

It appears that you all have discipline problems, lower test scores, and not enough financial resources to properly educate the students you have. -Community Member

SCS' Greatest Strengths

Respondents ranked the top three (out of eleven) characteristics that they view as SCS' greatest strengths. Overall, the top three identified strengths were:

1. *Variety of school & academic program options*
2. *Effective teachers & school leaders*
3. *School Safety*

Each group selected the first two characteristics listed above as part of the top three strengths, but there were a couple of differences from the overall rankings in the group results. School staff chose the same top three characteristics but ranked *Effective teachers & school leaders* first and *Variety of school & academic program options* second. SCS parents/family members' choices and rankings were the same as those for the respondents overall. Community members selected *Community Partnerships* as the top SCS strength, followed by *Variety of school & academic program options* second and *Effective teachers & school leaders* third. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Stakeholder's Rankings of SCS' Greatest Strengths by Group

District Characteristic	School Staff Ranking	SCS Parents/Family Ranking	Community Ranking
<i>Variety of school & academic program options</i>	2	1	2
<i>Effective teachers & school leaders</i>	1	2	3
<i>School Safety</i>	3	3	-
<i>Community Partnerships</i>	-	-	1

The high rankings of *Variety of school & academic program options* and *Effective teachers & school leaders* reflect the reasons listed above for stakeholders' higher or similar assessment of SCS compared to neighboring school districts.

SCS' Greatest Weaknesses

Respondents ranked the top three (out of eleven) characteristics that they view as SCS' greatest challenges. Overall, the top three identified challenges were:

1. *Effective teachers & school leaders*
2. *Parent Involvement*
3. *Support (Special Education, Intervention, English as a Second Language, etc.)*

Each group selected the first characteristic listed above as part of the top three challenges, but there are a few differences from the overall rankings in the group results. School staff chose the same top three characteristics but ranked *Parent Involvement* first and *Effective teachers & school*



Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017
Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

leaders second. SCS parents/family also chose the same top three characteristics but ranked *Support (Special Education, Intervention, English as a Second Language, etc.)* second and *Parent Involvement* third. Community members ranked *Effective teachers & school leaders* first, *Extracurricular activities (arts, athletics, clubs, etc.)* second, and *School Safety* third. (See Figure 5).

Figure 5: Stakeholder’s Rankings of SCS’ Greatest Challenges by Group

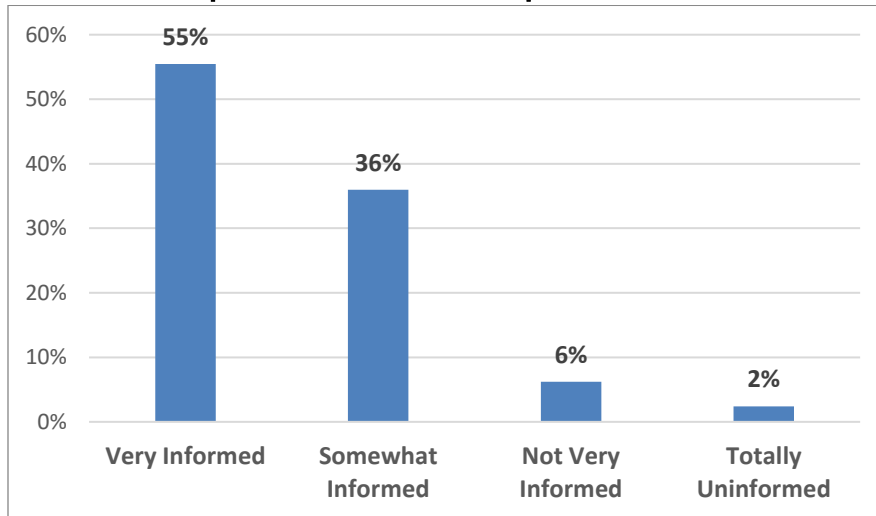
District Characteristic	School Staff Ranking	SCS Parents/Family Ranking	Community Ranking
<i>Effective teachers & school leaders</i>	2	1	1
<i>Parent Involvement</i>	1	3	-
<i>Support (Special Education, Intervention, English as a Second Language, etc.)</i>	3	2	-
<i>Extracurricular activities (arts, athletics, clubs, etc.)</i>	-	-	2
<i>School Safety</i>	-	-	3

Stakeholders report *Effective teachers & school leaders* as both a strength and a weakness for the district. The rankings of this characteristic and *Parent Involvement* as top challenges reflect the reasons listed above for stakeholders’ lower assessment of SCS compared to neighboring school districts. The inclusion of *Support (Special Education, Intervention, English as a Second Language, etc.)* as a top challenge may reflect stakeholders’ concerns about SCS lack of financial and other resources needed to meet students’ needs.

SCS District’s Efforts to Keep Parents Informed of Important Information

The majority (91%) of respondents report that SCS keeps parents informed of important information (see Figure 6). Fifty-eight percent of SCS Parents/Family members report that SCS keeps them very informed and 34% report being somewhat informed.

Figure 6: Percentage Rating of SCS District’s Efforts to Keep Parents Informed of Important Information

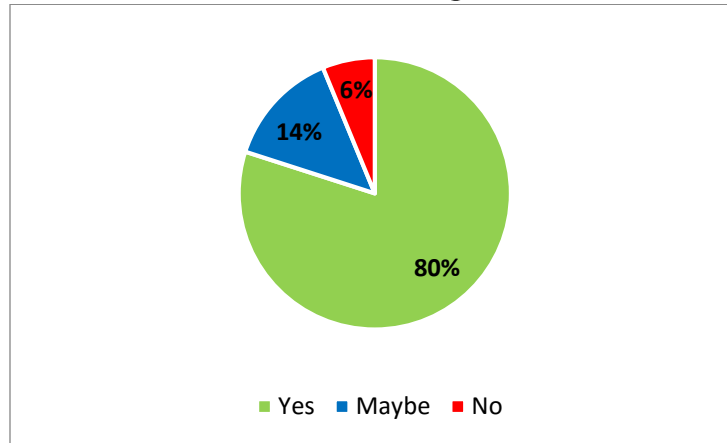




Parents' Intent to Re-enroll Students

The majority (80%) of SCS Parent/Family members report that they will re-enroll their school-age children next year (see Figure 7).

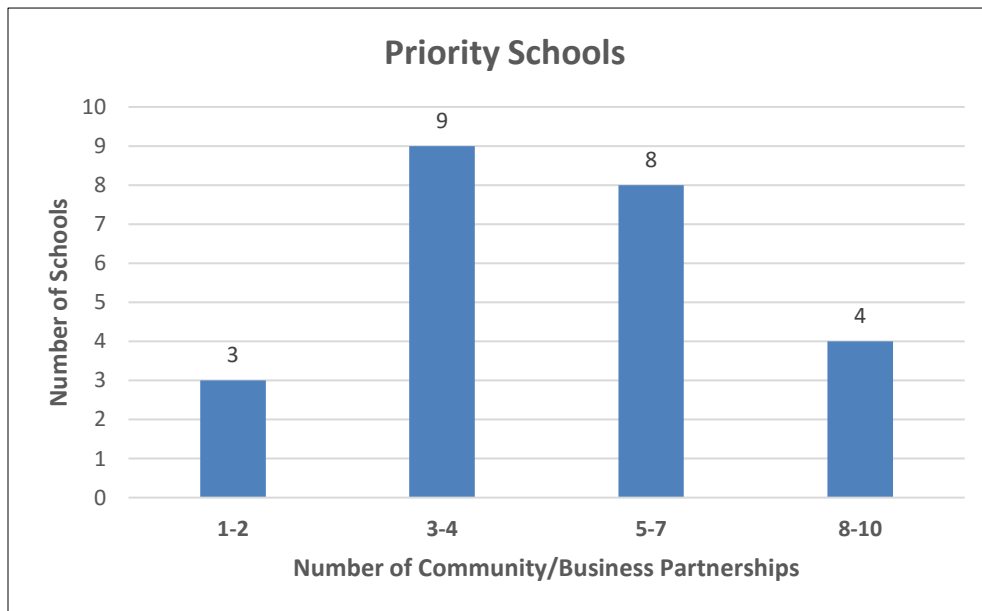
Figure 7: Percentage of SCS Parents/Family Members who Intend to Re-Enroll their School-Age Children Next Year



Community/Business Partnerships with Priority Schools

In the last assessment in 2015, priority schools had a range of one to ten community/business partnerships. Over a third of the priority schools (38%; 9) had three to four community/business partnerships and another third (33%; 8) had five to seven community/business partnerships.

Figure 8: Number of Community/Business Partnerships with Priority Schools





Destination 2025 Monthly: August 2017
Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

Recommendations

- Continue to communicate the variety of school and academic program options, including support services and extracurricular activities, that SCS offers to meet the needs of all students
- Continue efforts to develop effective teachers and school leaders and increase their retention
- Continue using multiple methods to communicate important information to parents/family members
- Use community/business partnerships as opportunities to share information about SCS' strengths and improvements
- Highlight positive news and accomplishments from a wider range of schools in the district
- Highlight the various ways that the Parent Welcome Center can serve parents and students and provide information and resources