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Key Findings

- The percentage of stakeholders who agree the District is on track to improve student achievement was the highest it has been in seven years. The 5% increase resulted in an approval rating of 87% in 2020.
- The percentage of stakeholders who agree schools are on track to improve student achievement also rose from 82% in 2019 to 92% in 2020, and 91% of parents believe *their child's school* is on track.
- Ninety-one percent (91%) of stakeholders agree that the Superintendent is on track to improve student achievement.
- The percentage of stakeholders who believe SCS is of similar or higher quality than neighboring districts rose from 65% in 2019 to 73% in 2020.
- The majority of SCS parents (80%) plan to re-enroll their child next year up from 75% in 2019. Parents who are considering other schooling options primarily cited the global pandemic as a reason for not re-enrolling.
- There was a 76% increase in the number of respondents, 6.934 in 2020 compared to 3,947 in 2019.
- Most Priority schools had one to four community partners, but many District-managed Priority schools still have challenges which can be met through additional community 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 June and July of 2020, SCS administered English and Spanish versions of the 2019–20 District Confidence Survey. Both versions were available for SCS parents, SCS employees, and community members.[1] This report combines the results of the shared questions in the surveys. To include all the 2019–20 respondents and align respondent grouping over the past three years, we report the results for three groups: SCS parents, SCS employees (school and District staff), and community members.

The total number of respondents was 6,934, with 5,015 SCS parents, 1,549 SCS employees, and 370 community members.[2] The number of respondents in 2020 increased from last year (3,947 in 2019) in all three categories, resulting in a 76% increase in total responses.

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[1] The 2018 Spanish version was only available for SCS parents. The 2017, 2019, and 2020 Spanish versions were available for SCS parents, SCS staff, and community members. In 2020, the majority (98%) of the respondents who took the Spanish survey were parents.

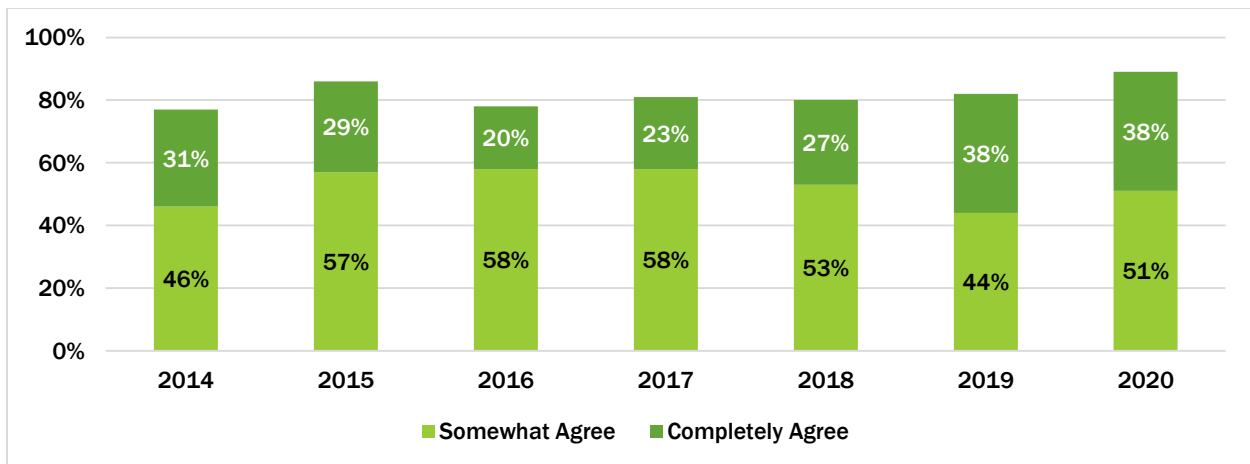[2] Based on the number of respondents who answered more than the parent question.

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 increased from 82% in 2019 to 89% in 2020. This year saw the highest level of agreement in seven years (see Figure 1). The District's rating includes responses about the Central Office and Superintendent.

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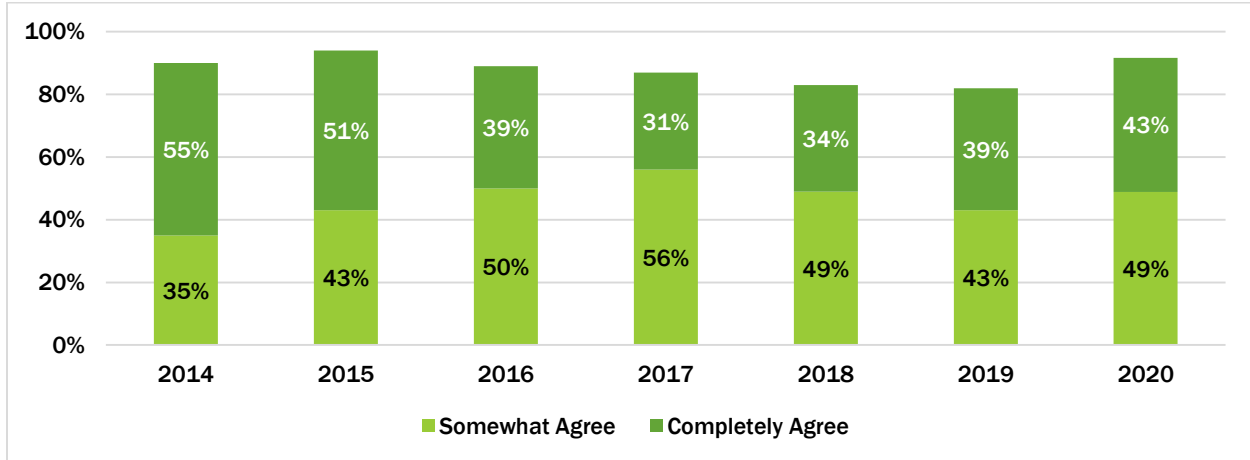

Ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents agree that the **Superintendent**, Dr. Joris Ray, is on track to improve student achievement with 93% of staff and 90% parents in agreement. **Central Office** had an overall rating of 87% with 34% in completely agreement that the Central Office is on track to improve student achievement.

There was also a stark increase in the percentage of stakeholders who agree that **schools** are on track to improve student achievement with an increase from 82% in 2019 to 92% in 2020 (see Figure 2). The percentage of stakeholders who completely agree rose from 39% in 2019 to 43% in 2020.
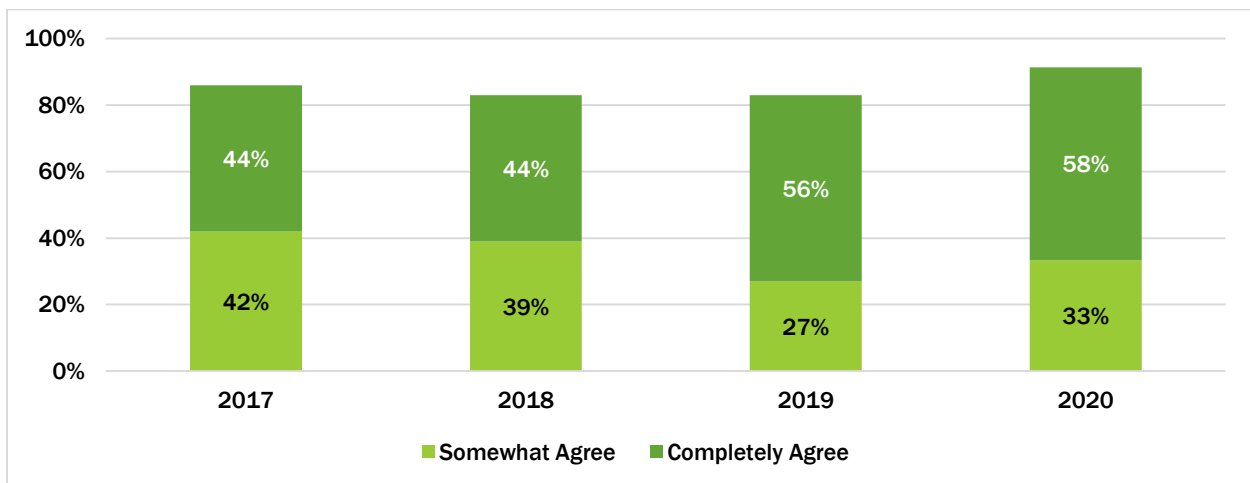
**Figure 2. Percentage of Stakeholders Who Agree that the Schools are
On Track to Improve Student Achievement**

The 2017-2020 surveys asked SCS parents for their level of agreement on whether **their child's school** is on track to improve student achievement. In 2020, 58% of parents completely agreed and 33% somewhat agreed for a total of 91%.[3] This was an 8% increase from the 2019 responses (see Figure 3) due to an increase in parents who were in complete agreement.

**Figure 3. Percentage of Stakeholders Who Agree that their Child's School is
On Track to Improve Student Achievement**

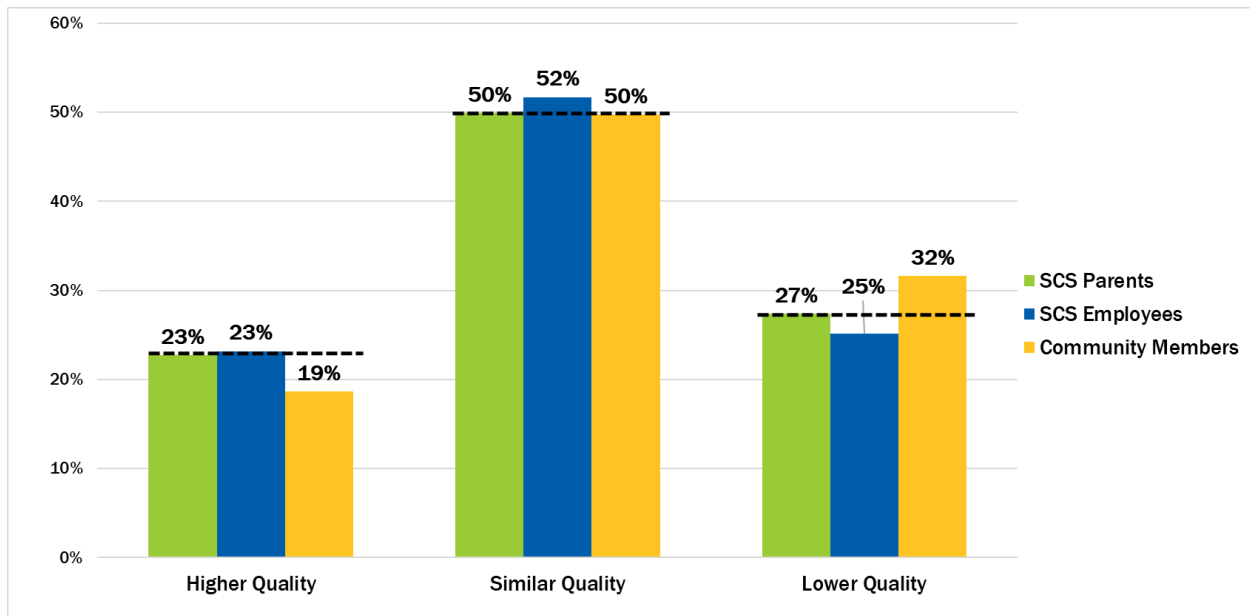## SCS Quality Compared to Neighboring Districts

Across all stakeholders, 23% report that SCS is of higher quality, 50% report that SCS is of similar quality, and 27% report that SCS is of lower quality than neighboring school districts. The percentage of respondents reporting that SCS is of higher or similar quality (73%) increased from 65% in 2019. Although the higher quality rating decreased (23% vs 27% in

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[3] Parents had the ability to rate up to three of their children's schools for this item.

2019), the similar quality rating increased significantly (50% vs 38% in 2019) since last year. By group, community members perceive the quality of SCS as lower than SCS parents and employees (see Figure 4[4]).
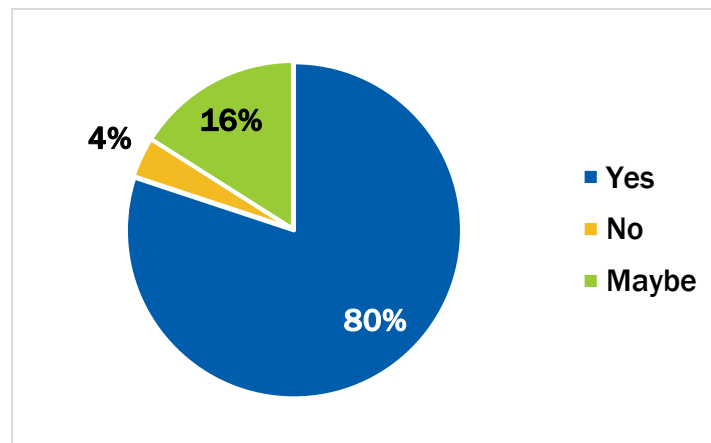
Figure 4. Percentage of Perceived Overall Quality of SCS Compared to Neighboring School Districts

Parent's Intent to Re-enroll Students

The majority (80%) of SCS parents report that they will re-enroll their school-age children next year (see Figure 5). Parents' plans for re-enrollment increased since last year (75%).

Figure 5: Percentage of SCS Parents/Family Members who Intend to Re-Enroll their School-Age Children Next Year

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[4] As in 2019, the across-stakeholder dotted lines and by-group results include SCS parents, SCS school-based and District employees, and community members.

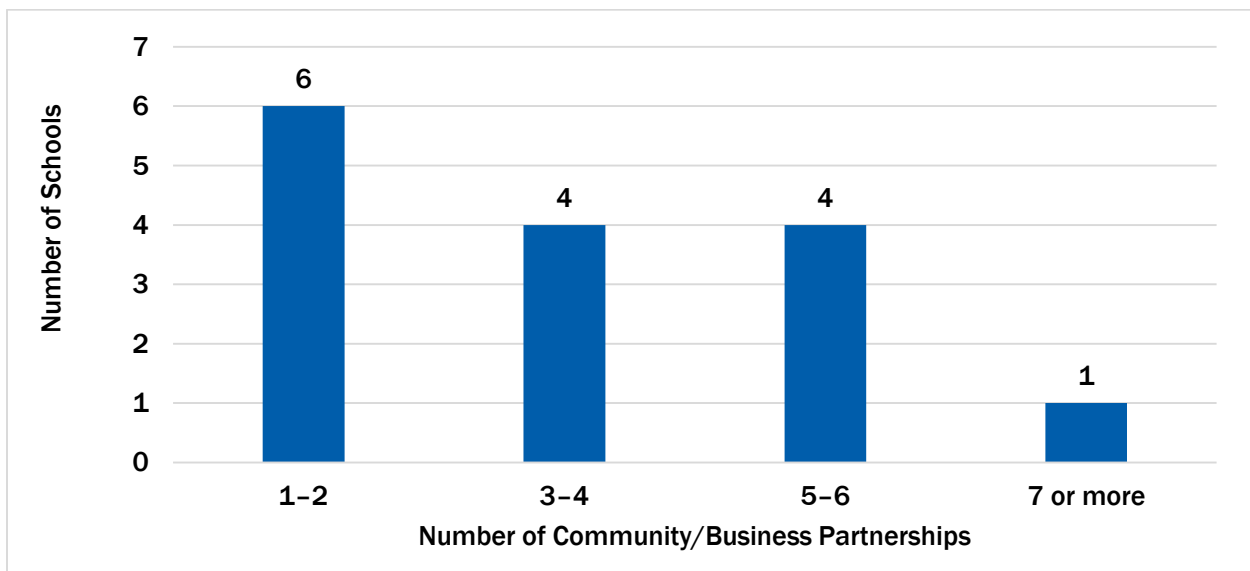In 2020, approximately 93% of the parents completing the Spanish version said that they would re-enroll their children compared to 71% of the parents completing the English version. The primary reason parents considered not re-enrolling was concern around the global pandemic. (Appendix A provides complete themes and related comments based on qualitative analyses of English and Spanish-speaking parents' explanations for why they may not re-enroll or will not re-enroll their children in SCS next year.)

Priority Schools' Community/Business Partnerships

SCS currently has 18 schools (15 District-managed, three charter) on the State Priority List because they are in the bottom 5% for student achievement across Tennessee. Based on 2019–20 school reports to Family and Community Engagement, District-managed Priority schools had a range of one to seven community/business partnerships. Two thirds of the Priority schools (67%; 10) had one to four partnerships (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Number of Community/Business Partnerships with Priority Schools

Priority Schools Needs Assessment

In spring 2020, District-managed schools were asked to complete a community needs assessment survey to identify assets and gaps related to student and family needs within and outside of schools. This section summarizes open-ended comments that principals provided near the end of the survey about needs and challenges that they still need support to address. The themes may help District leaders determine opportunities for new investments, new community partnerships and different resource allocations to improve school/community assets going forward.

Physical Plant Needs for Priority Schools

When asked to assess plant needs, **painting** was the most frequent response given (26%). Examples of such responses include things like "painting inside and out", "painting of classrooms", "painting of the halls", etc., then **general maintenance** (16%) and **HVAC** needs

(11%) were the next most frequent responses, examples include "pressure washing", "high dusting-remove dust from light fixtures", and "consistent heating and air conditioning" and "classroom heating/AC" respectively. These first three categories account for over half (52%) of all responses from Priority schools.

Priority Schools' Physical Plant/Building Needs		
Services Needed	Responses	
	%	n
Paint	26%	10
General Maintenance/Repair/Cleaning	16%	6
HVAC/Electrical	11%	4
Roofing	8%	3
Flooring/Carpet Removal	8%	3
Doors/Windows	8%	3
Paving/Concrete	5%	2
Furniture/IT	5%	2
Plumbing/Leak	3%	1
Construction/Renovation	3%	1
Additional space/Storage	3%	1
Other	5%	2
Total		38

Additional School Support Needs for Priority Schools

Responses for additional school services were led by **parent/family services** (32%), **health and wellness** (24%), **transportation** (13%), **tutoring and mentoring** (11%). Parent/family services included examples like "curriculum training for parents" "support for adult GED", with most responses indicating a need to support furthering the education or training of parents. Health and wellness responses were mostly related to behavioral and mental health to support SEL for students. Transportation responses highlighted a need to support students with getting to after school activities and community centers.

Priority Schools Support Needs		
School Services	Responses	
	%	n
Parent/Family Services	32%	12
Health and Wellness	24%	9
Transportation	13%	5
Tutor/Mentoring	11%	4
Staffing	8%	3
Athletics	4%	2
Technology	3%	1
Facilities	3%	1
Other	3%	1
Total		38

Additional Community Support Needs for Priority Schools

There were much fewer responses for additional community services compared to school services and plant needs. Most responses indicated a need for **health and wellness** (36%) as well as f**amily services** (21%). The **health and wellness** responses share some overlap with responses of the same categorical name for school services, with the most prevalent need being mental and behavioral health services. **Family service** needs identified as an additional community service were geared toward parenting skills and providing additional resources to families.

Priority Schools' Community Support Needs		
Community Service	**Responses**	
	%	%
Health and Wellness	36%	5
Family Services	21%	3
Transportation	14%	2
Job Training/Placement	7%	1
Facilities	7%	1
Public Safety	7%	1
Other	7%	1
Total		**14**

Overall, the additional services identified in the school and in the community align in support of continued education and job training for parents, health and wellness services for the whole family, and additional supports for students by means of transportation to activities and community centers.

Major Challenges in the School and/or Community

The major challenge that most respondents identified is **poverty/housing/food** (23%). This challenge is inclusive of comments on unemployment rate, mobility rate, and homelessness. The next major challenge highlighted in responses is **behavioral/mental health** (18%). This being presented as a major challenge aligns with the additional services that respondents would like to see in the school or community. **Parent/community involvement** (13%) included comments advocating for more community partners, more engagement with PTA, mentorship, and overall community ownership of school/student support.

Priority Schools' Challenges		
Major Challenges	**Responses**	
	%	***n***
Poverty/Housing/Food	23%	9
Behavioral/Mental Health	18%	7
Parental/Community Involvement	13%	5
Safety	10%	4
Academics/Programs	8%	3
Attendance	5%	2
Staffing	5%	2
Technology	5%	2
Funding	3%	1
Transportation	3%	1
Recruitment	3%	1
Other	10%	4
Total		**40**

District Recommendations

Several District teams identified current initiatives and plans for next steps that address stakeholders' feedback on specific areas that need improvement, including school-level experiences, district-level experiences, and community perceptions.

Improve School-Level Experiences

<u>Current Initiatives</u>

- Continuous focus on customer service with Customer Service WORKS program
- Communications PROs have increased social media presence and positive storytelling at the school level
- Continuous collaboration between FACE and Schools & Leadership Office to support feeder patterns
- Increased focus on SEL and discipline practices along with parental involvement in these processes
- Development of communications tool kits for principals to share important information and updates with parents

<u>Next Steps</u>

- Customer Service WORKS - continue to implement school-based customer service recognition programs inclusive of recommendations and rated service experiences
- Ensure customer service training occurs throughout the year
- Continue the PRO initiative
- Continue to provide principals with communications tool kits to ensure consistent messaging across all schools

Improve District-Level Experiences

Current Initiatives

- Development of Spotlight 901 webpage to share best practices of schools
- Increased cross-collaboration between teams to provide families with resources during school closure (e.g., instructional packets, meals, SEL supports)
- Increased awareness of community events
- Intentional focus on consistent District and community-wide messaging
- Feedback opportunities for all stakeholders regarding major District decisions (e.g., surveys, student input sessions, listening sessions– sponsored by Student Affairs & FACE)
- Expanded resource page with addition of community information

Next Steps

- Increased support from the Parent Welcome Center
- Continue to tell our story as Shelby County Schools utilizing all platforms
- Create additional ways to receive stakeholder feedback and engage the community virtually (e.g., virtual community chat, online trainings)
- Resource Page - strengthen resource pages on District sites to support families' academic and non-academic needs as well as bolster available content for community partners and other stakeholders' commitment to advancing District initiatives

Improve Community Perceptions

Current Initiatives

- Ensuring collaboration efforts with community partners align with the needs, vision, and goals of SCS
- Expanding outreach efforts on District social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and outlets (e.g., 88.5FM, C19TV, website) to keep the community informed
- Consistent messaging and updates directly from Superintendent Ray each week
- Involving community leaders in planning and decision-making task forces
- Partnership Listing (business, non-profit, and faith-based community partnerships)

Next Steps

- Enhance the alignment of community partner support with SCS needs using our partnership with the Harvard Government Performance Lab
- Partnership List - continue to implement Adopt-a-School Partnership programs for schools with special attention to high-need Priority schools and expand distribution of District announcements (e.g., Superintendent's Weekly Address) to include key partnership organizations
- Multicultural Services - expand partnerships with key providers of multicultural and multilingual supports within the community to ensure open communication channels for families and other stakeholders

APPENDIX A: Parents' Explanations for Maybe/Not Intending to Re-Enroll Students in SCS Next Year[5]

Key Themes

- Concerns around COVID-19 and re-entry into schools during the pandemic
- Academic quality
- Poor experience with staff and teachers

Concerns Stemming from the Global Pandemic

Over half of all respondents who gave an explanation cited the pandemic as a reason for possibly not re-enrolling. Comments ranged from worry about children and staff getting sick or transmitting the virus to how virtual schooling will be managed.

- I am not sure about sending my kids to school, because of the pandemic, I believe, in my opinion, you should wait more time before reopening the schools. *[Original comment in Spanish[6]: No tengo la seguridad de mandar a los niños a la escuela, por el problema de la pandemia, creo en mi opinión, debieran esperar más tiempo antes de reabrir las escuelas.]*

- Considering homeschooling as the option of 6+ hours per day of virtual learning with no flexibility is not age appropriate.

- My son is in kindergarten, so if SCS goes to all online instruction or a hybrid model that I cannot accommodate with my job, I will have to look at private school options.

- Until this pandemic is contained and controlled, my child will not attend.

- Our school is overcrowded, and I can't imagine how it can be made safe for that many children to be in the building together until we have a vaccine for Coronavirus.

- My son's immune system isn't as strong as other kids, I'm not putting him at a bigger risk by sending him…

- Undecided for the upcoming year. My main concern is the safety of my child during this pandemic.

- The District is putting students and teachers lives in danger returning to physical campus thus lack of concern for students and employees.

- Only in a virtual setting for the 1st semester and after that according to what is happening based on Covid-19 in Shelby County.

Academic Quality

Parents who are considering not re-enrolling their child with SCS were looking into alternative schooling options due to the academic quality they felt their child received in Shelby County Schools.

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[5] Eighty-four percent (747) of parents who responded "maybe" or "no" to the re-enrollment questions provided an explanation.

[6] Translation provided by the ESL, English as a Second Language Department.

- Prefer for my child to attend one of the municipal schools as they are on a higher academic level than SCS. My child's current school is top notch and I love it. This is my child's final year and will be going to Middle School. SCS middle schools are struggling compared to the municipal school districts.

- I am considering other options. I feel like I did a disservice to my oldest when I enrolled him in SCS schools. The rigor and level of engagement were lacking.

- We have enrolled our child at the school but if she is too ahead and does not receive appropriate lesson plans, we will need to reconsider our options. She was 99% and did not get into CLUE.

- Quality of education is poor with crowded classrooms.

- My children continue to dread going to school due to excessive amount of testing. There seems to be more test vs. actual learning.

- Interested in seeing how our rigor of learning compares to other options.

Previous Experience with School Staff and Teachers

Parents also reported previous experiences with school staff and teachers as a reason for considering alternative options. Parents voiced concern over teaching practices as well has how principals and administrative staff handled issues in the past.

- Too many problems with the teachers, no interest for the students.

- Teachers and principals treat all children the same and deal with them unfairly.

- Poor teaching ethics, teachers are rarely concern[ed] about student grades, poor getting in contact with parents about important information.

- Overall, the material and many of your teachers are not in tune with the students. You all focus to much on test scores and not the children.

- For most of the 2019- 2020 school year the students didn't have consistent teachers. There was a big turnover of teachers. Very unacceptable. […] We must do better for our kids.