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Community Survey – Open-Ended Responses

Prepared for Shakopee Public Schools

July 2019

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Introduction

This report is intended to supplement Baker Tilly’s analysis of the community survey we performed for the Shakopee Public Schools. It includes a review of the comments given by participants in response to the survey’s open-ended questions. We have performed some categorizing and a word-frequency analysis in hopes of making the responses more useful as a basis for the District’s discussions and decision making.

Our survey included a random sample of 422 registered voters in the District, who were contacted between June 25th and July 1st. The random sample was designed to provide a representation of the District’s registered voters, with controls for age, gender, race/ethnicity, parent status, and location, among other factors. Women, very frequent voters and older voters were oversampled in our interviews.

While the overall results in our other reports used weighting factors to adjust responses to arrive at a representative sample, such weighting is not practical for the open-ended responses in this analysis. As a result, it would be appropriate to approach these responses as a qualitative look at the most common issues on people’s minds.

Early in the survey, after participants were asked to grade the District, those who gave the District grades other than “A” were asked, “What would Shakopee Public Schools have to do to earn an ‘A’ grade from you?”

Later in the survey, participants were asked two open-ended questions. The first was, “What do you think is the greatest strength of Shakopee Public Schools?” and the second was, “What do you think is the biggest challenge facing Shakopee Public Schools?”

Not every participant had specific thoughts to share regarding each question. For the first question about “A” grades, we received 320 responses. For the question about the greatest strength, we received 341 specific responses, and for feedback on biggest challenges, 386 participants had specific thoughts to share.

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Earning an ‘A’ Grade

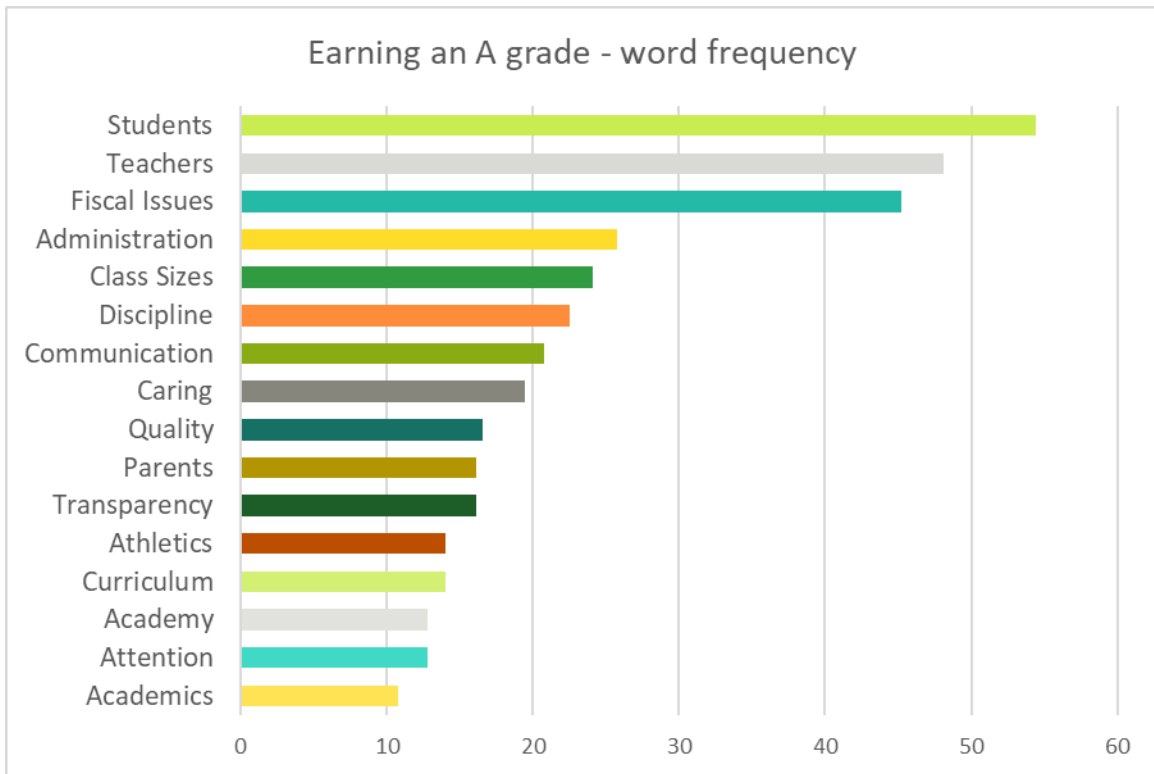
When asked what they thought the District should do in order to earn an ‘A’ grade, the most commonly given responses from our participants were in reference to the impact the District has on its students, the quality of teachers, and fiscal issues (responses relating to budgets, spending, property taxes, and the like). This was followed by responses about the International Baccalaureate program, District leadership and administration, and the convenience of schools close to home.

The table below shows how often the most common terms were used, and how many different respondents used them. “Frequency Score” is a function of how many times a term was mentioned, and how many different people mentioned it. The list below includes only relevant terms; common words without a meaningful link to the question are filtered out.

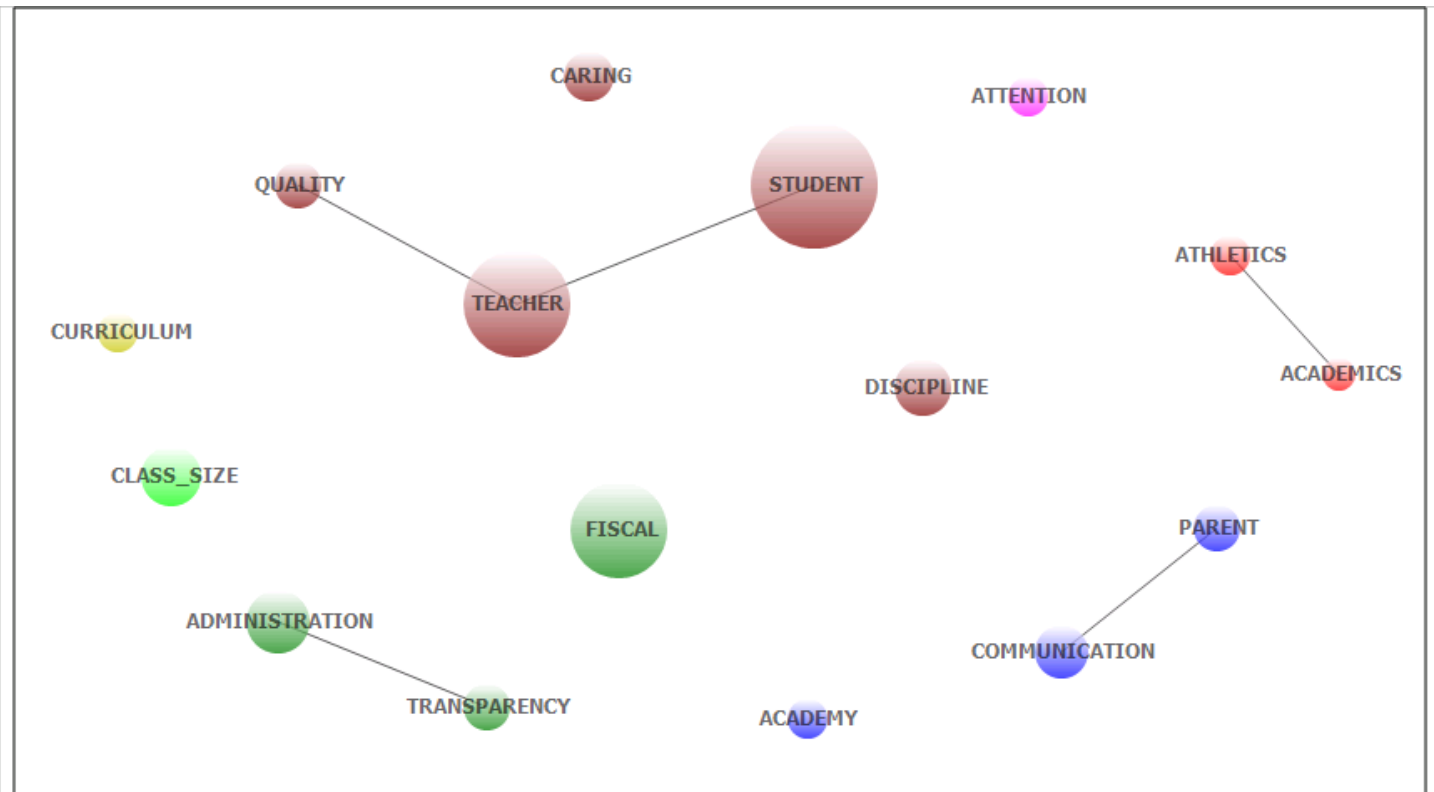
Term	Frequency	Number of Respondents	Frequency Score
Students	88	77	54.4
Teachers	61	52	48.1
Fiscal Issues	50	40	45.2
Administration	21	19	25.8
Class Sizes	20	20	24.1
Discipline	18	18	22.5
Communication	16	16	20.8
Caring	14	13	19.5
Quality	11	10	16.6
Parents	11	11	16.1
Transparency	11	11	16.1
Athletics	9	9	14
Curriculum	9	9	14
Academy	8	8	12.8
Attention	8	8	12.8
Academics	6	5	10.8

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The following chart provides an indication of the word frequencies shown in the previous table.



The map below shows a visual representation of the most common terms. The size of each bubble is an indicator of how often the term was used, while the color and relative location of bubbles shows how often they were linked together.



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District Strengths

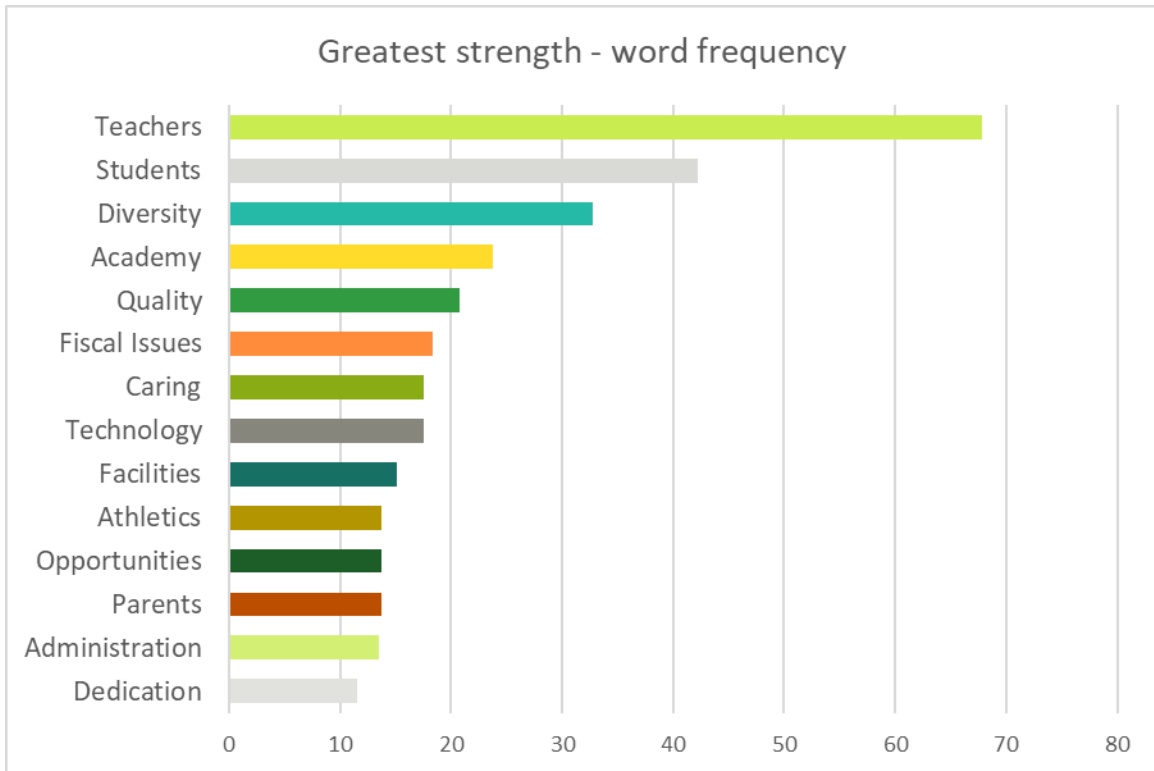
When asked what they thought was the school district’s greatest strength, the most common response by far was in reference to the quality of teachers. This was followed by mentions of the District’s impact on its students, and its handling of diversity of the student body. Other frequent mentions included responses about the Academy program.

The table below summarizes the relative frequencies of the most common terms. As before, the list does not include common words without a meaningful link to the question.

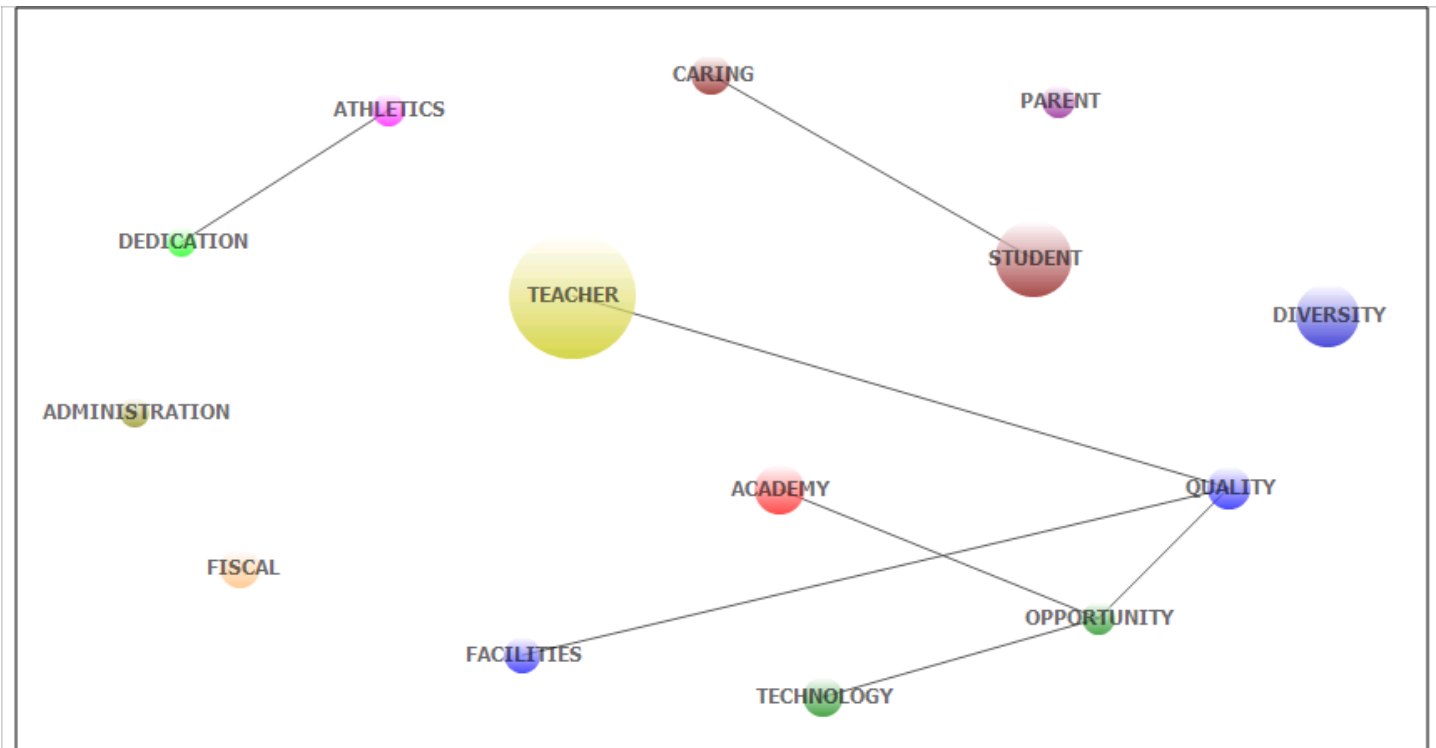
Term	Frequency	Number of Respondents	Frequency Score
Teachers	114	108	67.8
Students	42	42	42.2
Diversity	27	26	32.8
Academy	17	17	23.8
Quality	14	14	20.8
Fiscal Issues	11	9	18.4
Caring	11	11	17.5
Technology	11	11	17.5
Facilities	9	9	15.1
Athletics	8	8	13.8
Opportunities	8	8	13.8
Parents	8	8	13.8
Administration	7	5	13.5
Dedication	6	5	11.6

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The chart below shows the relative frequencies of the topics shown in the previous table.



As in the previous section, bubble size is an indicator of frequency, while the color and relative location of bubbles shows how often they were linked together in a response.



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Biggest Challenges for the District

The last open-ended question asked participants for their opinion about the biggest challenge facing the school district. For this query, the most commonly given responses from our participants were in reference to fiscal issues (budgets, spending, taxes, etc.), teacher quality, and diversity issues.

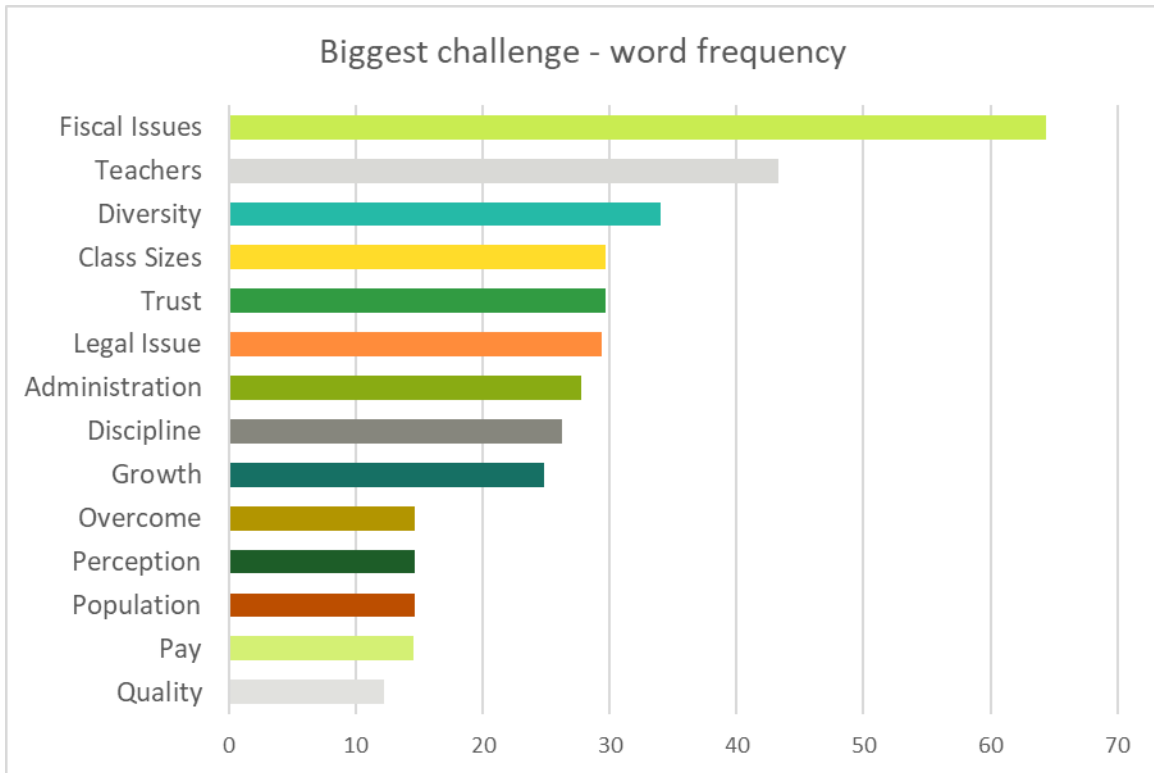
Other frequently-cited challenges were in regards to class sizes, and restoring trust between the community and the school district..

As before, the table below shows the most common terms and topics.

Term	Frequency	Number of Respondents	Frequency Score
Fiscal Issues	109	99	64.4
Teachers	42	36	43.3
Diversity	29	26	34
Class Sizes	25	25	29.7
Trust	25	25	29.7
Legal Issue	19	11	29.4
Administration	22	21	27.8
Discipline	19	16	26.3
Growth	19	19	24.8
Overcome	9	9	14.7
Perception	9	9	14.7
Population	9	9	14.7
Pay	8	6	14.5
Quality	7	7	12.2

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The following chart provides an indication of the word frequencies shown in the previous table.



The map below is consistent with those shown earlier.

