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What parents and teachers want to know about schools and how schools can advertise this information using technology

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Abstract

Finding good teachers is becoming very competitive in our nation as a large number of teachers will be retiring and fewer people are entering the profession. Parents are now shopping for the school that they want their children to attend and then finding the home in that district. The possibility of school vouchers is encouraging this. Schools need to be able to advertise information to potential employees and parents of their school district.

The Waukee School district in Waukee, Iowa works to create an informational CD made available to parents and employees is used as an example of what information parents and teachers are interested in. Surveys of current staff members and parents help this district decide what information should be included.

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What Parents and Teachers Want to Know About Schools and How Schools can

Advertise this Information Using Technology

A Graduate Paper

Submitted to the

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Of the Requirements for the Degree

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

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Denise H. Krefting

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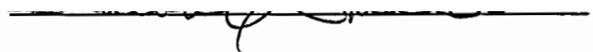
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Abstract

Finding good teachers is becoming very competitive in our nation as a large number of teachers will be retiring and fewer people are entering the profession. Parents are now shopping for the school that they want their children to attend and then finding the home in that district. The possibility of school vouchers is encouraging this. Schools need to be able to advertise information to potential employees and parents of their school district. The Waukee School district in Waukee, Iowa works to create an informational CD made available to parents and employees is used as an example of what information parents and teachers are interested in. Surveys of current staff members and parents help this district decide what information should be included. Several urban schools that have used community support and business advertising tactics are used to support those choices. Examples of surveys of parents and teachers from varying schools are also used to support information included on the CD. These surveys are looking at teacher attitudes toward their jobs and parent attitudes toward student learning. Among the suggestions from these sources are school demographics, district vision statement, standards and benchmarks, technology vision statement, student learning goals, guiding principals, test scores and extracurricular activities.

Introduction:

Schools are competing for student enrollment and thus for federal money to support these children and schools. A business-style approach to promoting schools has started in larger schools and will start to be seen in smaller districts. Schools feel that they are fighting for their lives in an environment where parents shop around for schools looking for the best education for their children. The years when students showed up at the school door are a thing of the past (Borja, 2002). Schools have relied on the local media to tell the positive tale of schools. They are often disappointed when the media ignores good school articles. Schools now need to actively promote their message. Aggressive marketing campaigns are in response to the growing competition of home schooling, charter schools, and private/parochial schools. Schools need to let the community know what they do, why they do it, and what works and what does not (Borja, 2002). Technology is one medium that can be used to enhance school advertising.

The Milwaukee schools spent over $95,000 on advertising their district through television commercials, radio spots, direct mail campaigns, billboards, web site designs and other marketing campaigns. Local businesses also donated radio and television time and other resources. Other schools are following suite. The Detroit school district spent over $180,000 in advertising their schools. In North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district's advertising program cost $480,000; that included personal contact and grassroots support. The

Capistrano schools in San Juan, California are using telephone polls to gauge support and marketing strategies (Borja, 2002).

These advertising campaigns have had interesting results. So far 1,200 more students enrolled in Capistrano during 2001 open registration than a year ago. This is the first such increase in five years. In Detroit, the number of students transferring out of the district has been reduced compared to other years. In Charlotte, enrollment has been growing by about 3,000 students a year. In Capistrano, the voters overwhelmingly supported a $65 million school construction bond (Borja, 2002). These advertising campaigns have made it easier for parents to learn about the local schools and people are now seeing the districts in a more positive light.

The Waukee Community School district, in Waukee, Iowa is one of the fastest growing school districts in the state of Iowa according to Waukee's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (See Appendix A). It is critical that any school district, including the Waukee School District, be able to attract the best educators and support staff. It is also critical that school districts are able to attract students and inform prospective families, who are interesting in enrolling their children into school, about the positive attributes of the district.

Technology can be used to help distribute information to employees and parents. With the use of the Internet, platform compatible CDs and DVDs, and computer systems, current up-to-date information about school districts can easily be made available to parents and employees. At least 83% of the new

employees of the Waukee School District in 2001-02 claim to have used the Waukee school web page to look over the school district before they applied or interviewed for a job. At least 7 % of the new student enrollees in 2001-02 claim to have used the Waukee school web page help them decide which school to attend. These numbers increase annually as more families school-shop and the number of technologies in the home increases.

A review of journal articles within the last ten years was completed for this paper. Search topics were:

1) What parents desired in school systems?

2) What teachers desired in school systems?

3) How schools advertised information to the general public?

To discover how the school web page has been used in the Waukee School District, a survey was sent to all staff members who were employed during the past two school years. An informal survey of students new to the district and their parents asked if they used the school web site to make their decision on which metro school to attend. In addition a survey was sent to Waukee parents and teachers asking them what types of information they would suggest be placed on a CD or web page that would be valuable to them.

This paper will focus on these expectations in the process of creating a web-browser-based CD containing relevant education information of the school district. This CD will be available upon request to parents interested in sending

their children to the Waukee Community Schools and to teachers interested in

working in the Waukee Schools.

Methodology

Several needs assessments have been used to show that parents and teachers use school web pages to find information about schools, and to help compile lists of information that parents and teachers feel would be beneficial to them. The first needs assessment was emailed to all staff asking those teachers hired within the past two years whether they used the school web page before they applied for a job or interviewed with the Waukee School District (See Appendix B). The recipients merely marked "Important", "Not Sure" or "Not Important" view this item as important to them in their decision making process. Another needs assessment containing a possible list of categories, such as school demographics, student learning goals, and district mission statement; for the web pages was sent to parents of students currently attending school asking whether they felt these items were pertinent to families considering to enroll their children at Waukee. This assessment allowed these parents to answer questions with "important", "not sure", "not important" indicating the importance of these items to be included on an informational CD that would be made available to parents. There were 26 questions with spaces for comments as well as an opportunity to recommend additional items (See Appendix C). A third needs assessment was sent to current employees of the Waukee School district asking whether they felt certain items were pertinent to perspective employees. This assessment allowed teachers and administrators to answer questions with "important", "not sure", "not important" suggesting whether they felt these items

should be included on an informational CD that would be made available to educators seeking employment at Waukee. There were 25 questions of this type and a place for teachers and administrators to add additional information that they felt would be relevant as well as a place for comments and a place for their demographics (See Appendix D). These needs assessments provide feedback that was the basis for the type of information included in the informational CD that was created for this project.

A search of the literature including ERIC searches, a search of InfoTrac and additional web searches suggested that educators expect that schools meet several standards to be the best place to work and teach. These searches further suggested that parents are looking for many things in their investigations of the best education for their children. These articles also suggested that colleges and universities, who also compete for students and faculty, advertise their colleges in many ways. Colleges and universities are actively pursuing student and faculty and provide an excellent model for secondary and primary school districts.

According to a 1990 study exploring the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher turnover of practicing and former vocational education teachers in Northwest Ohio, it was determined that nine factors are important to teachers: public perception, school support, self-perception, expectations, job satisfaction, job challenge, job effectiveness, effort, and status (Berns, 1990). Administrators may have the most important effect on whether a teacher

continues in that teaching position (Berns, 1990). While not in the majority, several teachers in the Waukee School survey suggested that information about the administrative support and teacher turnover was important.

Another study comparing the attitudes of middle and junior high school teachers toward their jobs and school climate suggested that the middle school teachers, compared to junior high teachers, considered teaching to be more important to them; were more satisfied with teaching and were more likely to choose teaching as a career again; had higher expectations of academic success for their students; were more concerned with their students' affective development; and, finally, reported greater satisfaction in teaching (Ashton, 1981). In another research study (Holdaway and Johnson, 1990), questionnaires were mailed to a 20 % random sample of 131 elementary school principals and to 94 junior high principals in Alberta, Canada looked for job satisfaction. Response rates were 85.5 % in the elementary and 89.4 % for junior high. "Working relationships with teachers" ranked first with both levels. Ranked considerations for job satisfaction in both groups were working relationships with teachers, teaching competence, and staff morale (Holdaway and Johnson, 1990).

A fourth study on school effectiveness underscored the importance of the personal investment and commitment of teachers to education in general, as well as to the particular mission of their own school (Anderman, 1991). It suggested that a school culture that stresses accomplishment, recognition, and affiliation is

related to satisfaction and commitment and that different principal behaviors foster different cultures or "environments" within the school. It used path analysis to examine the relative impact of different leadership behaviors on teacher satisfaction and commitment, focusing on the mediating role of teacher perceptions of school culture. The findings support the notion that principals' actions create distinct working environments within schools, and that these different kinds of environments are highly predictive of teacher satisfaction and commitment (Anderman, 1991).

Extrinsic rewards (higher starting salaries) seem more important to less experienced teachers, while participation in work redesign is associated with job satisfaction among more experienced teachers (Conley and Levinson, 1993). In a study of California teachers where large class sizes, diverse population, shortness of supplies, and inadequate facilities are a concern, some of the correlates of job satisfaction included those involving intrinsic rewards (e.g., professional autonomy, interactions with students and colleagues) and extrinsic rewards (e.g., salary, opportunities for advancement) (Brunetti, 2001). The comment section of the needs assessment of Waukee teachers also suggested that class size, faculty information, and growth would be of interest to prospective employees.

In another study looking at influences of workplace conditions on teacher's job satisfaction, it was found that teachers who are satisfied with their jobs stated that they felt positive about what they knew and that how they taught mattered in

the education of their students (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Those teachers also recognized the importance of on-going professional development. Without a sense of professional competence, let alone growth, some degree of professional unease may result in feelings of dissatisfaction with teachers' instructional success. Teachers' believed that they needed to have access to effective and current instructional strategies and skills. This will allow them to express their ability to use their subject--content knowledge in conjunction with instructional techniques to enable students to meet the standards for the course they are being taught (Ma & MacMillian, 1999). The key factor in maintaining teachers' commitment to the school appears to be their perception of meaningful, organizational involvement. Cultures with characteristics expressed in terms of collegiality and collaboration generally are those types that promote satisfaction and feelings of professional involvement of teachers (Ma & MacMillan, 1999).

Parents are looking at the use of technology to enhance learning. Through a survey determining how tax money in California schools should be used it was found that accountability in education spending was particularly important to those taxpaying parents who wanted their children's schools to offer meaningful online education in an affordable way (Redd, 2000). It was also determined that installing one-to-one e-learning systems, with Internet connectivity, would improve the school climate. In the Carmen Arace Middle School in Bloomfield, Connecticut an 80 % decrease in school suspensions occurred while simultaneously seeing a 35 % increase in students meeting state

reading standards (Redd, 2000). In Hiawassee, Georgia, where the system has been implemented at Towns County Middle School, the system has reached beyond school and into the community, where adult education classes have increased 24 % over the past year with an additional 71 % increase in G.E.D. completions (Redd, 2000).

In the book Teaching with Technology by Sandholtz, Ringstaff, & Dwyer, Scott and Hannifin (2000) make a point of using technology as a tool to enable students to explore problem-solving in learning environments while stressing higher-order thinking skills and collaborative problem-solving strategies. It has been suggested that computer technology should play a vital role in the school reform movement because of its ability to extend traditional classroom practices and support student-centered, open-ended learning environments. Here the student is an active researcher while the teacher is a facilitator of knowledge.

Parent views of the classroom and the use of technology in the classroom differ from teachers. Many parents tend to be removed from the trends and developments in education. The authors suggested that in order for schools to gain support of these parents, the parents must be kept informed and educated about proposed programs and curriculum (Scott & Hannifin, 2000).

An article from the South China Morning Post (2000) revealed that parents in China want more knowledge about the academic achievements of secondary schools and some are willing to relocate to other districts. More than 52 % of respondents said they wanted their children to enter well-known schools. About

68 % of respondents believed these schools would have excellent academic results, 6.5 % instead favoured extracurricular activities. A separate poll of 1,099 people found parents would choose schools for their children according to academic achievement, reputation and the medium of instruction. It also showed 10 % of parents were willing to move to a district where their school of choice was located (South China Morning Post, 2000). With the availability of vouchers and private schooling, this is occurring in the United States as well.

A survey of African American and white parents on their views of the public school system found that African-Americans parents felt the most important goal for public schools was academic achievement for their children (Farkas and Johnson, 1999). Raising academic standards and achievements were considered the foremost priority for 82% of black parents. In fact, black parents were decisive in opting for quality, regardless of race, in hiring teachers and school superintendents. This study also found that despite many differences in their experiences and concerns, white and African-American parents had similar visions of what it takes to educate kids: involved parents; top-notch staff; schools that guaranteed the basics; high academic expectations; standards; safety; and order (Farkas and Johnson, 1999).

In a poll compiled by the Knight-Ridder Tribune News Service, it was found that parents wanted schools to prepare students for the 21st century job market. Parents wanted schools to teach responsibility, respect for authority and working well with others. In addition, parents wanted schools to spend more time

teaching the value of punctuality, problem solving, brainstorming, teamwork and other skills (Fix, 1995). Many parents polled preferred an education that includes occupational skills and structured work experiences to a purely academic one.

Parents of students in the earlier grade levels, more so than parents of pupils in the older grade levels, felt that curriculum and instruction were important. Parents of children in the older grade levels perceived greater increases in success in parent involvement, behavior management, social-emotional development, and overall education (Dismuke, 1994). Parents understand the importance of comparing school size, teacher salaries, pupil instruction expenditures, and academics (Bainbridge & Sundre, 1990). This analysis found that parents of elementary students desired small to very small class sizes elementary students and average size for junior and senior high school students (Bainbridge & Sundre, 1990). Elementary school size is often smaller than middle schools. Parents often worry that no one knew their child well, that their child might "fall through the cracks," and that busy teachers will pay little attention to their child. They felt schools lacked a contact point for dealing with questions or concerns (Williamson & Johnson, 1998). Parents were also concerned with curriculum, safety, and civility. Parents believed their children received "high quality instruction" but were concerned that it was often boring. They felt instruction too often consisted of teacher lecture, seatwork, and testing. Failure to use technology, even where available, was also a concern.

Many of these students routinely used a computer at home but had little access to technology during the school day (Williamson & Johnson, 1998).

Creating a community with a common vision, collegiality, collaboration, and communication became important with parents. Community was identified as the cornerstone of the teaching and learning process (Sykes, 1994). The Parent-Teachers Organization and NEA also supported communication between school and home. Florida PTA President Kay Luzier (as cited in Dismuke, 1994) said, "We've come to realize that to educate the whole child, we must work together with the child's family. The job is too great for us to do alone." (p.23).

Many schools advertised information to the public (Borja, 2002). Colleges and school systems were available online. Students were able to search for colleges that contain the degrees they are interested. Many students were excited that the Web is making the search for a college easier than ever. Articles, rankings, and virtual tours via the web are free. No longer do students have to sit in a library flipping through college guidebooks, or depend on parents and guidance counsellors to point them to a particular university. Dunkelberger (as cited in Guersey, 2000), chief executive and president of Embark.com suggested, "The power has shifted to the student when it comes to research" (p.5).

Schools have found that there is a growing criticism of education with a public that doubts the quality of what is going on in schools (Borja, 2002). There was a growing recognition that grading, reporting, and communicating student

learning are one of educators' most important responsibilities. As the goals of schooling became more complex, the need for communication about student learning becomes increasingly important (Guskey, 2001). Parents were demanding more information about instructional and curricular programs, grade reporting, assessment and assignment information (Guskey, 2001).

School administrators found that they failed to give parents the information they require about their child's school. This can lead to distrust between school and parents (Curriculum Review, 2001). This information follows seven questions:

1. Who are the other kids in the school?

2. What student services are offered? (such as after-school and Saturday tutoring to help for special-needs students and free lunch programs)

3. What shape are the buildings and equipment in?

4. What are the standardized test scores?

5. Is my child safe?

6. What programs do you have? (such as advanced academic and language courses to vocational training, music, sports and extracurricular programs)

7. What are the school's successes? (Curriculum Review, 2001).

According to Simkins (1999) support for public schools can be built in two ways: through good public relations and public engagement. School leaders need to pursue both strategies simultaneously. Fortunately, the World Wide Web

offers easily accessible resources for both approaches. At the simplest level, schools need to get information to the public. Community members cannot be proud of what a school has accomplished or impressed with its programs if they are kept in the dark (Simkins, 1999).

The National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs of the National PTA has a list of standards, quality indicators and sample applications on their web site. According to their web site schools with successful communication standards:

1. Use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis, seeking to facilitate two-way interaction through each type of medium.

2. Establish opportunities for parents and educators to share partnering information such as student strengths and learning preferences.

3. Provide clear information regarding course expectations and offerings, student placement, school activities, student services, and optional programs.

4. Mail report cards and regular progress reports to parents. Provide support services and follow-up conferences as needed.

5. Disseminate information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals, and include parents in any related decision-making process.

6. Conduct conferences with parents at least twice a year, with follow-up as needed. These should accommodate the varied schedules of parents, language barriers, and the need for child care.

7. Encourage immediate contact between parents and teachers when concerns arise.

8. Distribute student work for parental comment and review on a regular basis.

9. Translate communications to assist non-English-speaking parents.

10. Communicate with parents regarding positive student behavior and achievement, not just regarding misbehavior or failure.

11. Provide opportunities for parents to communicate with principals and other administrative staff.

12. Promote informal activities at which parents, staff, and community members can interact.

13. Provide staff development regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of regular two-way communication between the school and the family. (National PTA, 2002 P.1)

Even those schools that have incorporated a majority of these items have found that they have improved relationships with their parents.

According to the National PTA (2002), successful school programs are those whose parent/school interactions follow these standards:

1. Communicate the importance of positive relationships between parents and their children.

2. Link parents to programs and resources within the community that provide support services to families.

3. Reach out to all families, not just those who attend parent meetings.

4. Establish policies that support and respect family responsibilities, recognizing the variety of parenting traditions and practices within the community's cultural and religious diversity.

5. Provide an accessible parent/family information and resource center to support parents and families with training, resources, and other services.

6. Encourage staff members to demonstrate respect for families and the family's primary role in the rearing of children to become responsible adults.

(National PTA, 2002 P#2)

Schools who have proven additional contact with their parents have improved relationships with their parents.

According to the National PTA (2002), a good school is one that meets these student-learning standards:

1. Seek and encourage parental participation in decision-making that affects students.

2. Inform parents of the expectations for students in each subject at each grade level.

3. Provide information regarding how parents can foster learning at home, give appropriate assistance, monitor homework, and give feedback to teachers.

4. Regularly assign interactive homework that will require students to discuss and interact with their parents about what they are learning in class.

5. Sponsor workshops or distribute information to assist parents in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and perform well on assessments.

6. Involve parents in setting student goals each year and in planning for post-secondary education and careers. Encourage the development of a personalized education plan for each student, where parents are full partners.

7. Provide opportunities for staff members to learn and share successful approaches to engaging parents in their child's education.

(National PTA, 2002 P.3)

This list suggests a great deal of work on the part of the schools, but it will improve the relationship between the parents and the school environment.

This paper will focus on these expectations in the process of the creation of a web-browser based CD which will contain relevant education information of

the school district. This CD will be available upon request to parents interested in enrolling their children to Waukee Schools and to teachers interested in working in the Waukee Schools.

The Project

Schools are facing extreme competition for students and federal money. Advertising to the community the positive things that schools do for students will help with this competition. The Waukee Schools plan to advertise in a variety of ways.

Former teachers of the Waukee School District used the Waukee School web site before they applied for or interviewed for a position with the district. Eighty-three percent of teachers surveyed used the web site as well as several substitute teachers. Forty-four percent of parents have mentioned that they looked over the standards, course descriptions, and extra-curricular activities on the Waukee web site before deciding to send their children to the Waukee Schools. With this information it was decided that prospective employees and parents would benefit with access to an informational CD describing the Waukee School district.

The use of the school web site and the creation of an informational CD that will be available on request to parents and teachers are two ways this school will be advertising. A survey of Waukee staff members suggested that several items would be of interest to their peers applying for jobs and should be made available to prospective teachers. The following graph (see Figure 1) is a list of the percentages of those surveyed that felt that the information was important to teachers. (See Appendix E for complete data).
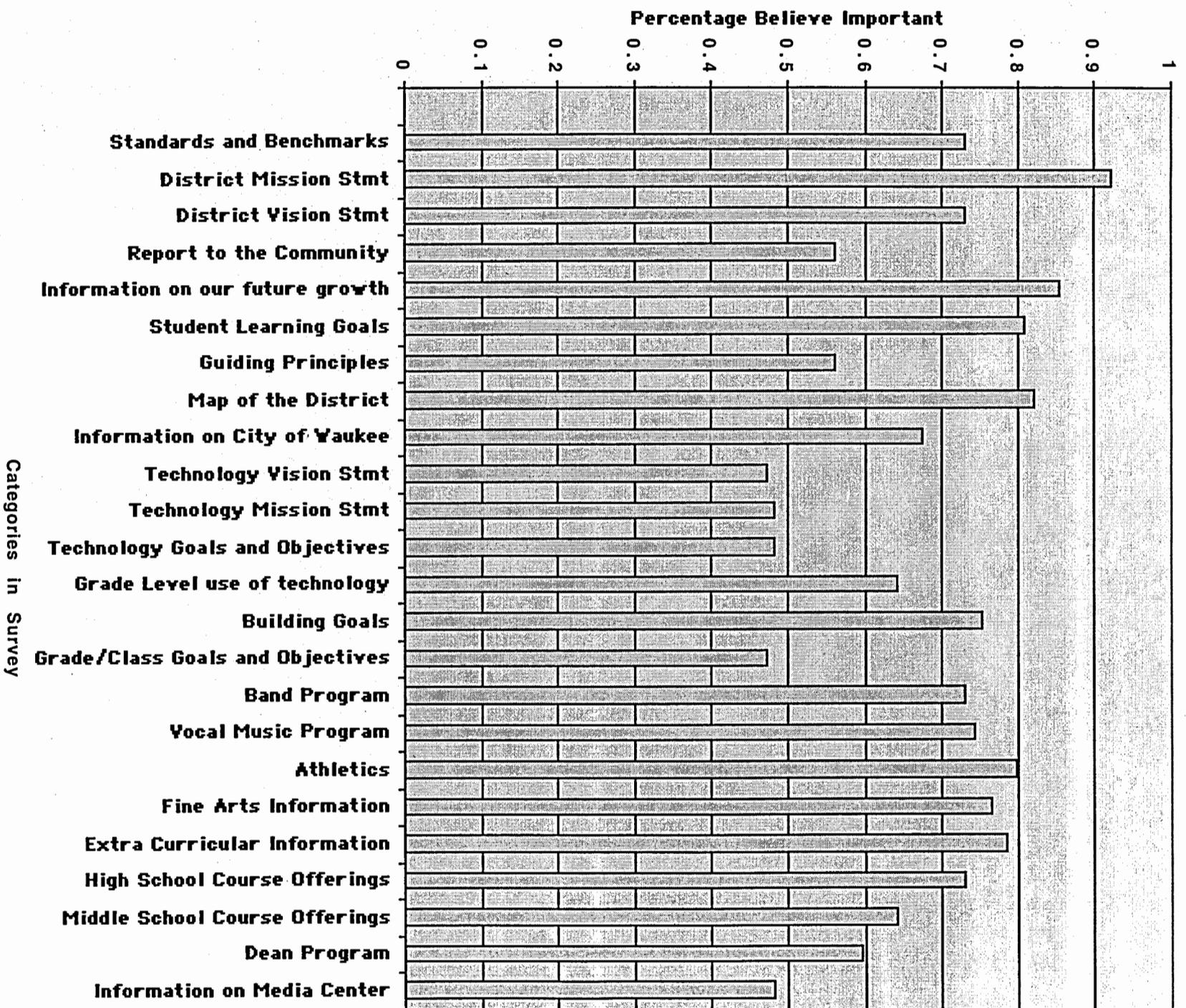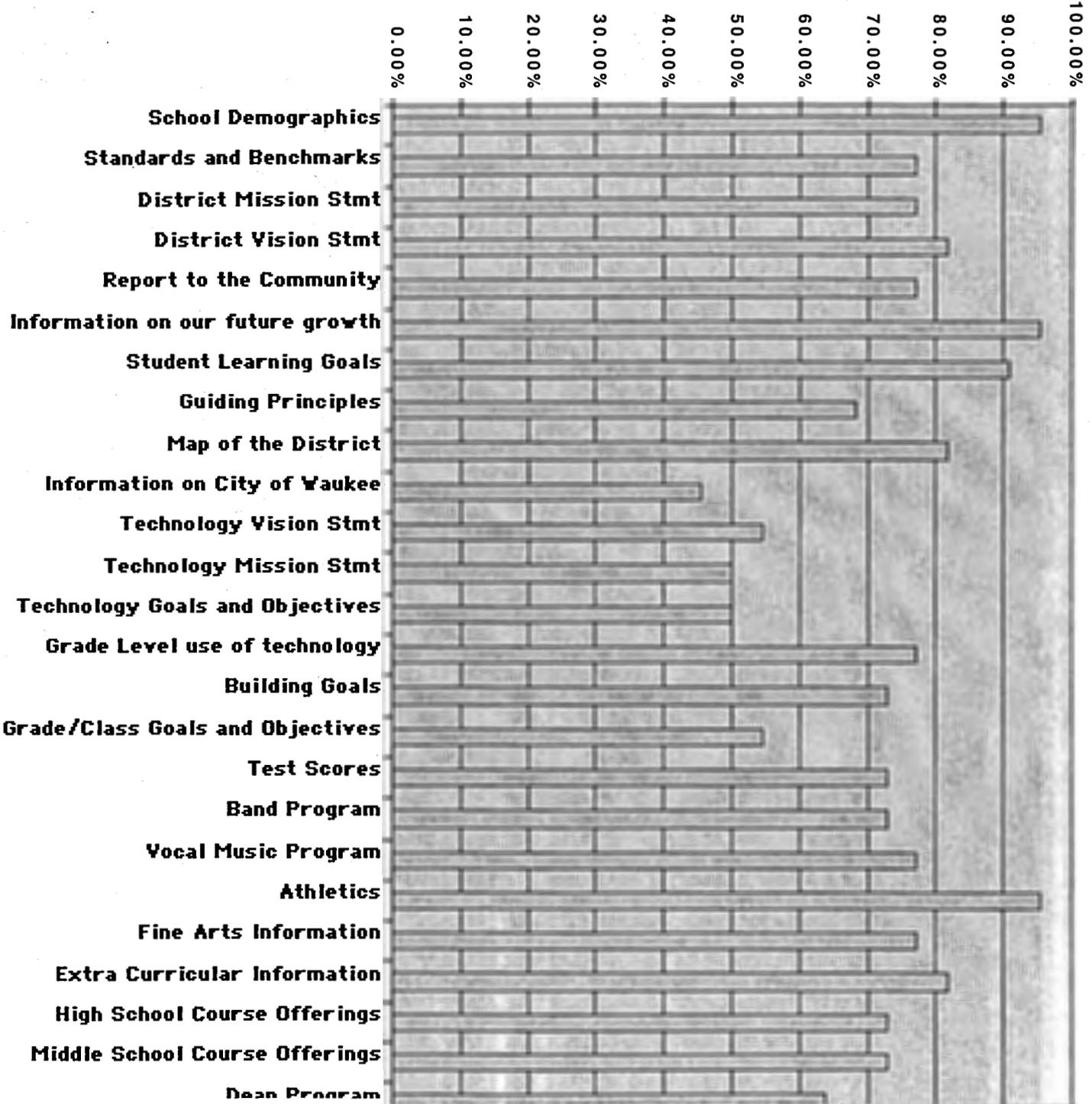
Percentage Believe Important

Categories in Survey

- Standards and Benchmarks
- District Mission Stmt
- District Vision Stmt
- Report to the Community
- Information on our future growth
- Student Learning Goals
- Guiding Principles
- Map of the District
- Information on City of Waukee
- Technology Vision Stmt
- Technology Mission Stmt
- Technology Goals and Objectives
- Grade Level use of technology
- Building Goals
- Grade/Class Goals and Objectives
- Band Program
- Vocal Music Program
- Athletics
- Fine Arts Information
- Extra Curricular Information
- High School Course Offerings
- Middle School Course Offerings
- Dean Program
- Information on Media Center

Figure 1. Teacher Survey

A needs survey of school age parents showed that several items would interest prospective parents of the Waukee School district. The following graph (see Figure 2) shows percentages of those who felt each category was important. (See Appendix F for complete data).

Chart axis: 0.00%, 10.00%, 20.00%, 30.00%, 40.00%, 50.00%, 60.00%, 70.00%, 80.00%, 90.00%, 100.00%

Categories:
- School Demographics
- Standards and Benchmarks
- District Mission Stmt
- District Vision Stmt
- Report to the Community
- Information on our future growth
- Student Learning Goals
- Guiding Principles
- Map of the District
- Information on City of Waukee
- Technology Vision Stmt
- Technology Mission Stmt
- Technology Goals and Objectives
- Grade Level use of technology
- Building Goals
- Grade/Class Goals and Objectives
- Test Scores
- Band Program
- Vocal Music Program
- Athletics
- Fine Arts Information
- Extra Curricular Information
- High School Course Offerings
- Middle School Course Offerings
- Dean Program

Figure 2. Parent Survey

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The survey of the Waukee staff mirrors the literature. Waukee staff and

the research of what teachers want from schools agree that teachers are

interested in working conditions, school ideologies, pay, and school

demographics. Waukee parents and the research of what parents want from

schools show that parents are interested in the learning environment of the

school, course information, standards and benchmarks, proof of learning, and

extracurricular activities for children.

With the information from the need assessment and the research of

journal articles, a flowchart was created describing the hierarchy of the

information for the publication of the Waukee Community Schools advertising CD

that will be made available to prospective parents and teachers (see Appendix

G). This flowchart and information was shared with the administration of the

Waukee School District. The inclusion of building level sites where information

would be added was approved. The web page for the CD was broken into high

school, middle school, elementary schools, athletics/activities/fine arts,

technology, district administration, report to the community, and community

information.

Based upon the information obtained from research of the literature and needs assessments, it was determined that the informational CD would contain the categories portrayed in Figure 3.

School Demographics	District Vision Statement
Standards and Benchmarks	Report to the Community
District Mission Statement	Information on our future Growth
Technology Vision Statement	Technology Mission Statement
Student Learning Goals	Guiding Principals
Map of the District	Information on the City of Waukee
Technology Goals and Objectives	Grade Level use of Technology
Test Scores	Band Program
Building Goals	Grade/Class Goals and Objectives
Vocal Music Program	Athletics
Fine Arts Information	Extra-Curricular Information
High School Course Offerings	Middle School Course Offerings
Dean Program	Information On Media Centers

Figure 3. Categories for Web-based CD

The main screen contained the district beliefs, district mission and vision as well as links to the categories portrayed in Figure 4. (See Appendix H for a sample of the web page).

High School Information	Athletics
Middle School Information	Activities and Fine Arts Information
Elementary School Information	Information on Technology
District Office Information	Report to the Community
Community Information	

Figure 4. Categories for ain screen

The high school category contained information about the high school, dean

(Academic Couselors) program, course description, and extra curricular activities

as portrayed in Figure 5.

Athletics	Art Club
Speech	Mock Trial
Drama	Vocal Music
SADD	Skills USA/VICA
Foreign Language Club	Music
Pep Club	Publications
Debate	Thespian Society
Electrathon	National Honor Society
Technology Fairs and Contests	

Figure 5. High school categories

The middle school category contained information about the middle

school, dean program, and curricular areas as portrayed in Figure 6.

Band	Speech/Drama
Choir	Activities/Clubs
Computer	Math
Physical Education	Science
Art	Social Studies
Language Arts	Foreign Language
Industrial Technology	Family and Consumer Science

Figure 6. Middle school categories

The elementary school contained standards and benchmarks by grade

level and special programs as portrayed in Figure 7.

Kindergarten	First Grade
Second Grade	Third Grade
Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Band	Choir
Computer	Physical Education
Art	Media Center
Guidance	

Figure 7. Elementary categories

The technology page addressed technology vision and mission statement,

technology goals and objectives, and use of technology in each level (See

Appendix I). The district page contained information about student learning

goals, district growth, guiding principals, and district map. Community

Information addressed the city of Waukee.

These CDs will be made available upon request to those parents and

prospective employees who have the technology to view the information, or on

'paper for those who do not. As the literature suggests, parents will be able to

see what Waukee School district will offer their children and prospective teachers

will be aware of the workings of the Waukee School District before they apply to

work in our schools.

Conclusions and Recommendations

What has worked for schools in the past will no longer work in the future. Education is evolving and schools are becoming a market place for students and parents. Many parents decide where to live based upon the schools they want their children to attend. The formats that businesses have used to competitively place their products in the market are necessary to allow schools to also become competitive in the education market. Schools need to use what ever means are available to advertise for these students, while being financially responsible to the constituents of the district. Currently, the Internet and computer software are able to advertise at a reasonable cost but the future of educational advertising is just beginning. Schools must continue to look for ways to bring parents and students into their doors and keep them there. Schools will need to spend time and money finding out what types of information parents need to make a better informed decisions and why parents and students leave their district. All schools will need to change how they inform their community. This will help in many ways other than bringing students to their doors. It will attract better teachers and administrators, assist in voting on bond issues and help in community-based support placing help in buildings.

Parents consider many items when looking at school choices. These items are as diverse as their population and cultures. While many of these considerations currently relate to educational basics and future job knowledge, parents and society are looking at schools to instruct in the social and character

skills that parents had been teaching. As education progresses and society evolves, schools will need to keep in touch with what items parents are looking for in the instruction of their children. This is the information that will need to be advertised.

Teachers consider many items when looking for a job. In the past these items were not extrinsic, but this is changing as our population evolves. While teachers want to be able to make a decent living, this had not been the overlying reason that people teach. However, schools are finding out that they need to be competitive in the job market to find and keep good teachers. This means making information about their district available to teachers so these prospective employees can make better decisions about the places in which they want to work. As society changes so will the decisions that guide people into the educational profession and schools will need to keep in touch with these decisions. This is the information that will need to be advertised and available to staff members.

As society evolves so do the desires and requests that guides decisions on what parents are looking for in their schools. It is recommended that schools have within their means a way to keep on top of these desires so as change occurs school information will be updated to meet these needs. It is also recommended that schools constantly look for economically feasible ways to disseminate appropriate and non-biased information to the public.

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Appendix A Waukee School School Improvement Plan Page 4
Sources of Data Collection

The district uses data from a variety of sources in order to inform decisions. The Waukee School District is the fastest growing district in the state of Iowa. While traditional sources of data are used (see below), of merit is a brief description of data sources that a district with an exploding population pays attention to.

The Waukee School District has worked to establish a relationship with each of the four major communities served by the District. Specifically, a working relationship exists between the District and the Development Directors in the cities' Planning and Zoning departments. As Planning and Zoning departments approve plats and permits, both residential and commercial, copies of these are forwarded to the District. The District then works with the various developers to determine the rate at which the developments will be built and projected completion dates. Commercial building permits are an important indicator of potential tax revenue.

The district works with area realty agencies to determine the rate of sales, as well as to provide accurate information about the educational program and extracurricular services available within the District's schools.

The district also meets regularly with members of the Iowa General Assembly to provide information about the impact of legislation on a rapidly growing district's ability to deliver educational programs and services.

Other sources of data include: the Waukee annual reading and mathematics' assessments, standardized tests, graduation and drop out rates, teacher/student ratios, student and community racial/ethnic data, the Iowa Youth Survey, building discipline and respect data, enrollment trends, tax base, measures of economic wealth, real property tax value, and sources of district revenues.

This data is used to make decisions in the classroom, in the buildings, and in the district. See the building annual improvement goals and action plans below for examples of how this data is used.

Student Learning Goals

Our students are effective communicators, persons of character, responsible citizens, and self-sufficient.

Multidisciplinary Goals

1. To help students understand themselves and others as cultural beings acting within a cultural context;

2. To help students recognize, respect and value the diversity represented in the population of the United States and the world;

3. To help students understand how group membership affects one's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors;

4. To help students understand the dynamics of discrimination, bias, prejudice and stereotyping;

5. To help students demonstrate the skills for effective social action and interaction between racial/ethnic groups, the sexes, and persons of varying abilities and socio-economic backgrounds;

6. The curriculum renewal process will include procedures and activities, which ensure adherence to the multicultural, gender fair philosophy;

7. Specifications for the selection of textbooks and other instructional materials will visibly include the necessity for them to meet multicultural, gender fair criteria;

8. Curriculum guides will direct the multicultural, gender fair content of the programs/courses;

9. Instruction will be delivered in such a manner that each student has an equal opportunity to learn and to identify with the educational program being delivered;

Appendix B Needs Assessment to Waukee Employees of Waukee Web Page

Use

To all staff:

If you are an employee new to the Waukee School District within the past two years, please respond to this email.

Did you use the Waukee School Web page prior to applying for a job at Waukee, or prior to your interview with the Waukee School District?

_____ Yes   _____ No

Appendix C Parent Survey

I am working on my masters project and am creating a CD that will be made available to prospective employees of our school district and to the prospective parents of our school district. In order to do this I need your help deciding what type of information should be included on the CD. If you are the parent of a school aged child please reply to this email and mark the items "Important", "Not Sure "or "Not Important" with various ideas and feel free to include your own ideas on what you think other parents might be interested in. I realize that this is a busy time of the year for all of us and I appreciate you taking the time to fill this out.

Click click your mouse in the [] that represents your answer and mark with the X key on your keyboard.

School Demographics [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Standards and Benchmarks [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
District Mission Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	District Vision Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Report to the Community [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Information on our future Growth [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Student Learning Goals [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Guiding Principals [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Map of the District [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Information on the City of Waukee [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Technology Vision Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Technology Mission Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Technology Goals and Objectives [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Grade Level use of Technology [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Building Goals [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Grade/Class Goals and Objectives [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Test Scores [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Band Program [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Vocal Music Program [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Athletics [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Fine Arts Information [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Extra-Curricular Information [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
High School Course Offerings [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Middle School Course Offerings [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Dean Program [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Information On Media Centers [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Other things you would like to see:	Comments:

Appendix D Teacher Survey

I am working on my masters project and am creating a CD that will be made available to prospective employees of our school district and to the prospective parents of our school district. In order to do this I need your help deciding what type of information should be included on the CD. Please reply to this email and mark the items
"Important", "Not Sure" or "Not Important" with various ideas and feel free to include your own ideas on what you think other teachers might be interested in. I realize that this is a busy time of the year for all of us and I appreciate you taking the time to fill this out.

Click click your mouse in the [] that represents your answer and mark with the X key on your keyboard.

Your Demographics [ ] Elementary[Middle School [] High School [ ] Administration	Standards and Benchmarks [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
District Mission Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	District Vision Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Report to the Community [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Information on our future Growth [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Student Learning Goals [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Guiding Principals [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Map of the District [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Information on the City of Waukee [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Technology Vision Statement [] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Technology Mission Statement [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Technology Goals and Objectives [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Grade Level use of Technology [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Building Goals [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Grade/Class Goals and Objectives [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Band Program [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Vocal Music Program [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Athletics [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Fine Arts Information [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Extra-Curricular Information [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	High School Course Offerings [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Middle School Course Offerings [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Dean Program [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important
Information On Media Centers [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important	Salary/Benefits [ ] Important [ ] Not Sure [] Not Important

Other things you would like to see:	Comments:

Appendix E Results of Teacher Survey

Teacher survey	Important total	%Important	Not Sure numbers	% Not Sure	Not Important totals	% Not Important
Standards and Benchmarks	65	73.03%	18	20.22%	6	6.74%
District Mission Stmt	82	92.13%	3	3.37%	4	4.49%
District Vision Stmt	65	73.03%	19	21.35%	5	5.62%
Report to the Community	50	56.18%	34	38.20%	5	5.62%
Information on our future growth	76	85.39%	10	11.24%	3	3.37%
Student Learning Goals	72	80.90%	16	17.98%	1	1.12%
Guiding Principles	50	56.18%	38	42.70%	1	1.12%
Map of the District	73	82.02%	13	14.61%	3	3.37%
Information on City of Waukee	60	67.42%	20	22.47%	9	10.11%
Vision Stmt	42	47.19%	37	41.57%	10	11.24%
Technology Mission Stmt	43	48.31%	39	43.82%	7	7.87%
Technology Goals and Objectives	43	48.31%	40	44.94%	6	6.74%
Grade Level use of technology	57	64.04%	22	24.72%	10	11.24%
Building Goals	67	75.28%	15	16.85%	7	7.87%
Grade/Class Goals and Objectives	42	47.19%	32	35.96%	15	16.85%
Band Program	65	73.03%	18	20.22%	6	6.74%
Vocal Music Program	66	74.16%	17	19.10%	6	6.74%
Athletics	71	79.78%	14	15.73%	4	4.49%
Fine Arts Information	68	76.40%	16	17.98%	5	5.62%
Extra Curricular Information	70	78.65%	15	16.85%	4	4.49%
High School Course Offerings	65	73.03%	18	20.22%	6	6.74%
Middle School Course Offerings	57	64.04%	25	28.09%	7	7.87%
Dean Program	53	59.55%	30	33.71%	6	6.74%
Information on Media Center	43	48.31%	37	41.57%	9	10.11%
Salary Scale	53	59.55%	23	25.84%	13	14.61%

Suggestions/Comments Teacher Survey

Perhaps the student handbook, the course descriptions, graduation requirements...

Other opportunities available to teachers....classroom time sharing, team-teaching, looping, etc.

Any general information that you could include about the district and its future would be beneficial.

Also, maybe you could include some information about in-service topics--either some we've covered in the past or some we will cover in the future.

Professional Growth Model and evaluation system

District and building committees -for parents and teachers

B.A.T. process

Personalized things--perhaps a quick-time interview with some students on their feelings about attending school here, a parent, a teacher from each building. If I were a teacher trying to decide to come here, I would want to know how this district might benefit my career in some way. In fact, I think the district and building mission statements would look far more meaningful in this context than just the "statement" which so often appears on things--that looks so contrived. But when a person expresses a belief about learning and schools, that is much more powerful. If video wouldn't work for some computer formats, a statement with a person's picture next to it would be the next best thing.

Good luck on your project, Denise--it sounds like a very useful tool

Class sizes and teacher ratio as of now. Items that are uniquely Waukee.

Just a small amount of information on athletics, band, vocal, and extra curricular
activities in case the prospective employee is interested.
Lots of photos--and I have many to share from middle school!
Teacher/administrator/custodian/student interviews about the school--even former
students if you we can find them!
special ed information...
pre school to hs life skills programs..
Perhaps class sizes and #of classes / grade level?
Perhaps you could lump band, vocal, athletics and fine arts into the extra-curricular category.
I don't think salary and benefits should be posted on a web site.
Match Report to the Community stats to ITBS and building goals
student handbook
faculty handbook
Information on band, vocal, athletic programs are not necessary. Maybe just a listing of the activities
that are available, instead of specific information on each one. If someone is interested, they can explore
their interest area.
Some examples of how we use technology in the classrooms. Maybe some actual student works.

I think it is important that the information be well-rounded but not overwhelming.
That's a lot of information, but I think it would be helpful if I was researching the district to determine
housing.
Some of the band/vocal music/fine arts things may be more appealing to someone who has a degree in that
special area. But, personally that is not something I look at when I'm seeking employment. I do however look
at the extra curric. and coaching opportunities.
I would worry about keeping this updated. Our offerings, programs, building goals music programs etc.
is always changing depending on who is guiding the show and what the state says and how much money
the state keeps changing their minds about what we have to work with. What if beyond our control we
can not follow through with what the cd might say. I think you should primarily stick with the facts. The
unchangeable like the name of the town, or things that controllable by us. The other things that we can
not control or set like how much money the state gives- etc. BE careful with. also our test results etc.
report card of the school district to the community. Sometimes what has been published is not true as I kno
It to be around here. Stats can be made to say whatever you want them to say.
I kind of commented along the way! :) This is an awesome idea!!
I think that you should include lots of pictures - they tell the real story. Could you also include a basic or typic
schedule for each building?
I field a lot of phone calls about what we offer Talented and Gifted students, so I think an overview should be
included--listing opportunities.
Grade/Class Goals and Objectives maybe a brief overview (like the curriculum page that we pass out to parer
(from curriculum director), but not our entire curriculum guides
I recently toured some schools in Davenport regarding my stepdaughter. The above were items my husband
and I definitely asked about. Good luck with your project!
DENISE, I THINK YOU SHOULD INCLUDE INFORMATION ON EXTENDED LEARNING PROGRAM - GIFTED AND
TALENTED, K-12. THAT IS A QUESTION PROSPECTIVE PARENTS OFTEN ASK, WHAT DO YOU DO FOR THE GIF
What the district really needs to decide is, how often do they want to change this CD. Ideally it should be up
every year, but that may be a big deal to do.

Appendix F Results of Parent Survey

Parent Survey

Parent Survey	Important total	%Important	Not Sure numbers	% Not Sure	Not Important totals	% Not Important
School Demographics	21	95.45%	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Standards and Benchmarks	17	77.27%	4	18.18%	1	4.55%
District Mission Stmt	17	77.27%	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
District Vision Stmt	18	81.82%	3	13.64%	1	4.55%
Report to the Community	17	77.27%	4	18.18%	1	4.55%
Information on our future growth	21	95.45%	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Student Learning Goals	20	90.91%	2	9.09%	0	0.00%
Guiding Principles	15	68.18%	6	27.27%	1	4.55%
Map of the District	18	81.82%	4	18.18%	0	0.00%
Information on City of Waukee	10	45.45%	8	36.36%	4	18.18%
Technology Vision Stmt	12	54.55%	6	27.27%	4	18.18%
Technology Mission Stmt	11	50.00%	7	31.82%	4	18.18%
Technology Goals and Objectives	11	50.00%	7	31.82%	4	18.18%
Grade Level use of technology	17	77.27%	4	18.18%	1	4.55%
Building Goals	16	72.73%	3	13.64%	3	13.64%
Grade/Class Goals and Objectives	12	54.55%	5	22.73%	5	22.73%
Test Scores	16	72.73%	5	22.73%	1	4.55%
Band Program	16	72.73%	4	18.18%	2	9.09%
Vocal Music Program	17	77.27%	3	13.64%	2	9.09%
Athletics	21	95.45%	1	4.55%	0	0.00%
Fine Arts Information	17	77.27%	4	18.18%	1	4.55%
Extra Curricular Information	18	81.82%	3	13.64%	1	4.55%
High School Course Offerings	16	72.73%	5	22.73%	1	4.55%
Middle School Course Offerings	16	72.73%	5	22.73%	1	4.55%
Dean Program	14	63.64%	8	36.36%	0	0.00%
Information on Media Center	15	68.18%	5	22.73%	2	9.09%

Suggestions/Comments

Check with the other buildings. We received brochures from Waukee Elem. when we enrolled our boys in the school that explained the curriculum and each grade level. We were very impressed with that information. .

The school seemed very organized to be able to articulate what was happening at each level. We were also impressed with the information on the trips, activities (like the end of the year track meet), and enrichment activities that students would experience throughout the year

I liked the student learning goals. The test score information was also very helpful to me.
Breakfast program is helpful too.
I am not interested in reading mission statements and visions....these are usually a bunch of pretty words that don't mean much! I would rather know the "nuts and bolts" of a school district...test scores, course offerings, activities, etc.
Background info on administrators

Appendix G Flowchart of Waukee CD
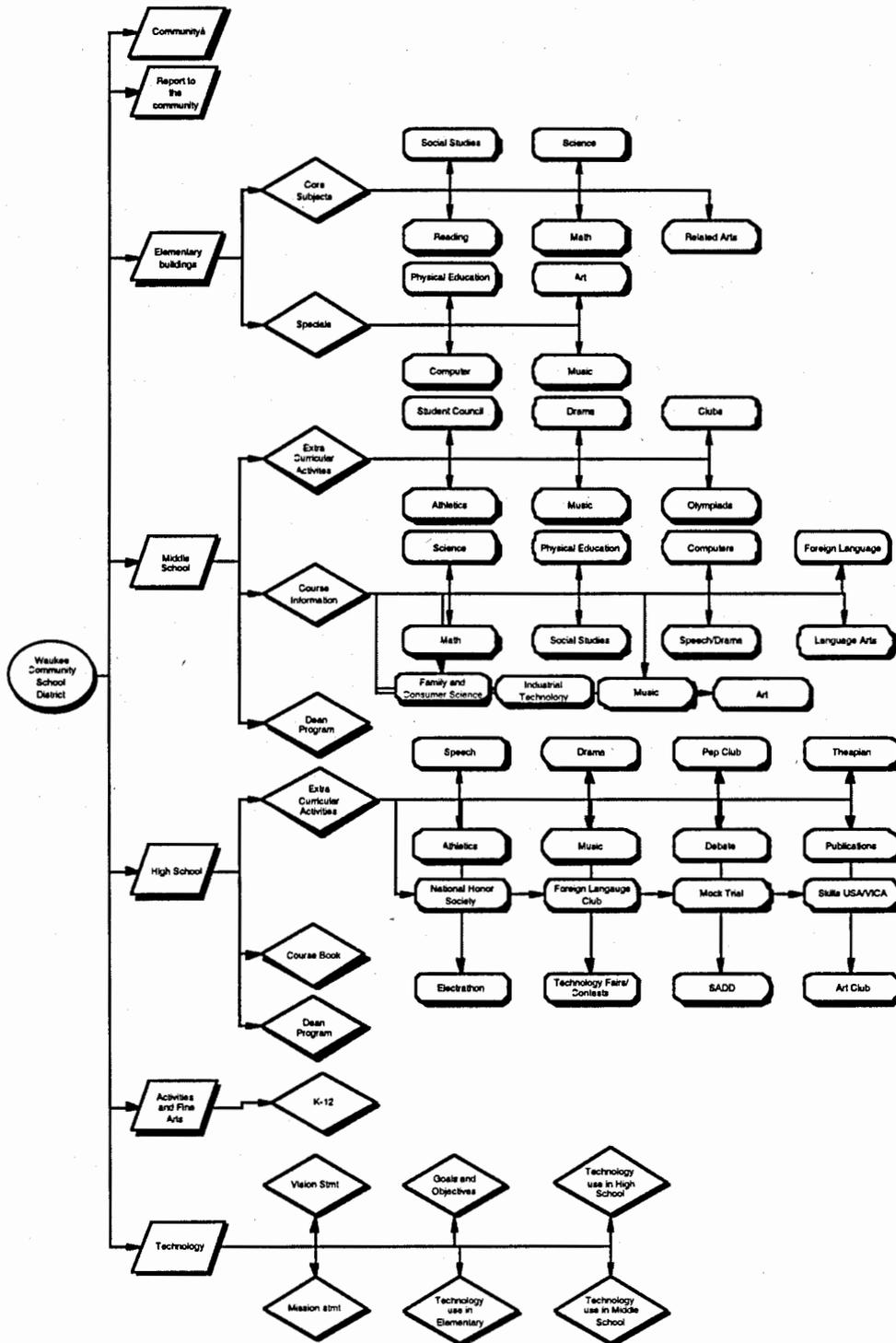
Appendix H Sample page of Waukee CD

Waukee Community Schools

Welcome to the Waukee Community School District

- ▶ *High School*
- ▶ *Middle School*
- ▶ *Elementary Schools*
- ▶ *Athletics, Activities, Fine Arts*
- ▶ *Technology*
- ▶ *District Administration*
- ▶ *Report to the Community*
- ▶ *Community Information*

Waukee Community School Beliefs

We believe that the student is the only person who experiences our entire system. Our system is composed of multiple locations, each serving different student populations, each with its own culture and climate. Our challenge is to overcome the physical boundaries of buildings in order to become a seamless system where continuous learning is valued by a community of caring adults.

Innovative, visionary practices can be successful only if there is policy that advocates meeting the needs of all learners, that maintains the integrity of effective pedagogy, but doesn't bind the system to practices based solely on tradition. Since 1994, the Waukee School District has had stable board membership--only one new member from 1994 to 1999, and one new member in 1999. That board has provided a strong base of policy and support for innovation.

One example of innovation is the implementation of interest-based bargaining. Success in this arena led us to be participants in the Governor's study on teacher compensation. The district has also been co-participants with state ISEA leaders in the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) national conferences open only to state NEA organizations, also related to teacher compensation. Nationally, there is broad acknowledgement that while the traditional salary schedule has served the profession well, there is a need to recognize and compensate teachers from a broader construct.

This construct reflects the growing belief that schools are learning communities where all learn continuously. We believe that teachers are highly effective at providing leadership without seeking administrative positions. We believe that the quality of our teachers has a greater impact on student achievement than reducing class sizes. In our study of how to enhance teacher efficacy, we are discussing alternatives to the traditional salary schedule. Compensating teachers for their leadership will enable teachers to mature professionally, and will allow their experience and expertise to

Appendix I Sample page of Waukee CD

Waukee Community Schools

Technology in Waukee Schools

- ▶ *High School*
- ▶ *Middle School*
- ▶ *Elementary Schools*
- ▶ *Athletics, Activities, Fine Arts*
- ▶ *Technology*
- ▶ *District Administration*
- ▶ *Report to the Community*
- ▶ *Community Information*

Vision Statement

Mission Statement

Goals and Objectives

Technology in Elementary Schools

Technology in the Middle School

Technology in the High School

Vision Statement

Waukee Community Schools enthusiastically accepts the challenge of educating its students, staff and community to become well prepared, contributing members to our global society. This vision includes the use of technology as a tool for learning and living. Learners who are able to interact with a world of varying cultures will form connections that prepares them to be successful in the greater community. They will access and interpret information skillfully, thus becoming life-long learners.