



Ripon Area School District

STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

January 2024



January 19, 2024

To: Dr. Mary Whitrock, Superintendent, Ripon Area School District
From: Perry Hibner, Lead Survey Strategist
Re: Staff Satisfaction Survey

The purpose of this document is to report on the recent Staff Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Donovan Group for the Ripon Area School District. This report provides an overview of the methodology used before outlining a summary of the results and a detailed review of the data.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

The 2023 version of the Ripon Area School District's Staff Satisfaction Survey was first conducted in 2017. The purpose of the survey is to elicit responses from staff regarding their perceptions of four factors identified as important performance indicators: (1) Personal Factors, (2) Satisfaction with Work Environment, (3) Leadership Team, and (4) Compensation, as well as overall satisfaction.

The survey comprises 48 statements, each scored on a 5-point Likert scale along with an open-ended question at the end of each of the four sections. There were also open-ended questions at the end of the survey. The survey allows respondents to participate anonymously.

Data analysis was conducted by the Donovan Group, an independent third party, using accepted practice for quantitative analysis, as used in previous surveys.

The survey was administered using the Donovan Group's survey engine. Efforts were made to ensure that all eligible respondents had the opportunity to take the survey, but that no respondents took it multiple times. In accordance with best practices in online research and to protect the security of the survey, internet protocol (IP) addresses were logged and each response was time stamped.

While the survey security protocols are not detailed, if for some reason it is believed that anyone has taken the survey more than once or that there is any fraud, those responses are removed.

To encourage staff to take the survey, the school district issued regular reminders by email along with verbal reminders.

Finally, it is worth noting that, by design, this data is not based on a scientific sample. Therefore, it should be treated as qualitative data that is similar to data from a large number of focus groups. Because the survey used a convenience sample, it would be methodologically inappropriate to carry out a regression analysis or attempt to calculate error. The response pool to date is a solid one that provides sound data to the Board.

GENERAL SUMMARY

The Staff Satisfaction Survey was initiated on December 5, 2023, and was available to parents through December 16, 2023. At the close of the data collection period, 123 respondents participated in the survey (a decrease of 5 participants in 2022-23). Each of the respondents identified with at least one school/building within which they worked in the district.

We had good participation across all employee groups: administration (6), teaching staff (72), support staff (25), office staff, including technology staff (14), and custodial/maintenance (6). The breakdown by school(s) was: Ripon High School (30), Ripon Middle School (31), Barlow Park Charter Elementary (35), Murray Park Elementary (27), Quest Elementary (18), Journey Charter School (28), ASC (9), and Odyssey Virtual Charter (12).

We also had good participation among the four offerings for years of service: less than a year to 3 years (46), 4-6 years (29), 7-10 years (19), and more than 10 years (29)

The table that follows includes satisfaction averages for each year the survey has been administered along with the number of respondents each year. The satisfaction scores have been consistent the past four years and are significantly higher than they were the first two years the survey was offered. Participation has also remained consistent the past four years.

Overall Satisfaction Scores (Historical)

Results	2016-17	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Satisfaction	3.10	3.56	3.91	3.80	3.89	3.85
Total Respondents	86	85	130	134	128	123

SURVEY RESULTS

The compelling story from this data continues to be that the vast majority of participants agree or strongly agree with every statement and-or question. This is an ongoing trend from 2017.

A review of the data indicates the averages of 21 of the 48 statements scored higher than a year ago. Nineteen of the 48 statements scored at least 4.0, while 42 of the 48 statements scored at least 3.5. The compelling story from this data continues to be that the vast majority of participants agree or strongly agree with every statement and-or question. This is an ongoing trend from 2017, the first year the survey was given.

The results for the RASD Staff Satisfaction Survey mirror or are better than we are seeing with other Wisconsin districts where we administer surveys. Overall, the 2023 data is positive and compelling. It is also worth noting that the number of surveys completed this year (123/2023) is still significantly higher than the first two years the survey was offered (86/2017, 85/2019).

Personal Factors

Seventeen questions contribute to the overall staff perception score of the personal factors contributing to their overall satisfaction. The following table outlines this data by school level:

Comparison data

Question	Teaching Staff 2023-24	Employees with < 3 years 2023-24	Employees with > 10 years 2023-24	Average 2023-24	Average 2022-23	Average 2021-22	Average 2020-21	Average 2018-19	Average 2016-17	Difference 2017-23/24
I feel good about working in public education.	3.81	4.15	3.76	3.91	4.07	4.04	4.34	3.81	3.60	0.31
I look forward to going to work most days.	3.75	4.09	3.72	3.85	4.04	4.05	4.23	3.54	3.52	0.33
I feel my work has purpose.	4.21	4.41	4.10	4.24	4.37	4.38	4.52	3.96	4.26	-0.02
I feel empowered to make a difference.	4.00	4.35	3.72	4.02	4.12	4.07	4.22	3.63	3.48	0.54
I have control in the manner in which I perform my work	3.92	4.11	4.03	4.02	4.14	4.10	4.22	4.06	3.38	0.64
I am able to maintain a healthy work-life balance.	3.28	3.67	3.31	3.42	3.53	3.56	3.75	3.41	2.81	0.61
Professional development sessions have helped me to better meet the needs of students.	2.88	3.37	3.14	3.12	3.36	3.25	3.43	3.36	2.76	0.36
It is important to have career growth/movement opportunities.	4.31	4.35	4.31	4.32	4.29	4.32	4.22	3.99	3.93	0.39
The district offers opportunities for career growth/movement.	3.17	3.41	3.21	3.26	3.25	3.42	3.44	2.94	2.62	0.64
I have opportunities to learn and develop in meaningful ways.	3.38	3.63	3.48	3.50	3.74	3.78	3.95	3.50	3.19	0.31
I am generally happy at work.	3.86	4.00	3.83	3.90	4.10	4.07	4.24	3.87	3.69	0.21
Most days, I feel I have made progress at work.	3.71	3.87	3.79	3.79	4.00	3.94	4.07	3.92	3.52	0.27
The work I do matters to the District.	3.78	4.13	4.00	3.97	3.92	3.87	4.02	3.73	3.50	0.47
I believe my position within the District is secure.	3.82	3.78	4.14	3.91	3.73	3.90	3.89	3.53	3.26	0.65
I feel trusted and valued as an employee.	3.72	4.13	3.76	3.87	3.93	3.81	4.03	3.56	2.88	0.99
I feel personally connected to the people	4.07	4.17	4.07	4.10	4.02	4.20	4.22	3.90	3.83	0.27

in my work area.										
I would refer someone to work in the district.	3.90	4.09	4.00	4.00	4.01	4.05	4.18	3.63	3.12	0.88
Total 2023 respondents 123. Average Personal Factor rate:	3.74	3.98	3.79	3.84	3.92	3.93	4.06	3.67	3.37	0.47

All respondent answers, 2021-23

Question	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
I feel good about working in public education.	4.04	4.14	4.34
I look forward to going to work most days.	3.93	4.09	4.23
I feel my work has purpose.	4.43	4.39	4.52
I feel empowered to make a difference.	4.15	4.15	4.22
I have control in the manner in which I perform my work	4.08	4.16	4.22
I am able to maintain a healthy work-life balance.	3.63	3.59	3.75
Professional development sessions have helped me to better meet the needs of students.	3.17	3.25	3.43
It is important to have career growth/movement opportunities.	4.36	4.20	4.22
The district offers opportunities for career growth/movement.	3.37	3.30	3.44
I have opportunities to learn and develop in meaningful ways.	3.52	3.73	3.95
I am generally happy at work.	4.02	4.11	4.24
Most days, I feel I have made progress at work.	3.89	4.03	4.07
The work I do matters to the District.	4.00	3.95	4.02
I believe my position within the District is secure.	3.86	3.78	3.89
I feel trusted and valued as an employee.	3.91	3.91	4.03
I feel personally connected to the people in my work area.	4.19	4.09	4.22
I would refer someone to work in the district.	3.99	4.04	4.18
Total respondents: 2023-24 (123), 2022-23 (128), 2021-22 (130)	3.91	3.94	4.06

A total of 17 statements were included in this section and 7 scored higher than a year ago with two having the same average score. Eight statements scored at least a 4.0. The lowest scores of 3.17 (professional development) and 3.37 (career growth opportunities) were the same two statements with the lowest scores a year ago, although the career growth opportunities statement did increase by 0.07 from a year ago.

There continues to be a significant difference between those with 3 or less years of experience and their overall scores (3.98) vs. those with more than 10 years of experience (3.79) and teaching staff (3.74).

This section also had the widest gap between the highest score of 4.36 (important to have growth opportunities) and the lowest score of 3.17 (professional development) among all respondents.

Please share your comments about the Personal Factors items above.

In reviewing the 21 responses to this question, there were not evident themes in the data.

Satisfaction with Work Environment

Eighteen questions contribute to the overall staff perception score of the satisfaction with work environment contributing to their overall satisfaction. The following table outlines this data by school level:

Comparison data

Question	Teaching Staff 2023-24	Employees with < 3 years 2023-24	Employees with > 10 years 2023-24	Average 2023-24	Average 2022-23	Average 2021-22	Average 2020-21	Average 2018-19	Average 2016-17	Difference 2017-23/24
I am recognized for my efforts.	3.42	3.72	3.38	3.53	3.63	3.67	3.81	3.51	2.95	0.58
I regularly receive useful feedback.	3.38	3.72	3.34	3.48	3.51	3.51	3.63	3.49	2.86	0.62
I am recognized for the value I bring to the district.	3.26	3.74	3.31	3.44	3.41	3.49	3.67	3.46	2.60	0.84
I trust my supervisor to be open and fair.	4.17	4.35	4.00	4.17	4.10	4.13	4.25	3.82	3.42	0.75
I feel respected and supported in my work.	3.76	3.80	3.72	3.76	3.97	3.99	4.11	3.75	3.14	0.62
I feel respected and supported by my colleagues.	4.17	4.17	4.10	4.15	4.19	4.13	4.24	3.75	3.81	0.34
I believe I can influence decisions in my area of responsibility.	3.90	3.87	3.86	3.88	3.87	3.88	4.09	3.65	3.33	0.55
I believe performance expectations are attainable.	3.92	4.17	4.24	4.11	4.00	4.04	4.04	3.95	3.36	0.75
I am allowed to make decisions about how to do my work.	4.15	4.15	4.21	4.17	4.09	4.10	4.21	4.06	3.38	0.79
I am encouraged to collaborate as a member of the team.	4.25	4.13	4.14	4.17	4.24	4.20	4.41	3.93	3.83	0.34
District employees are professional and courteous when working with parents, students, and colleagues.	4.04	4.07	4.14	4.08	4.13	4.16	4.39	3.98	3.98	0.10

There is an expectation within the District to share ideas to improve overall performance.	3.82	3.89	3.86	3.86	3.94	3.89	4.02	3.68	3.45	0.41
Everyone seems to be working toward the same goal.	3.65	3.63	3.66	3.65	3.66	3.69	3.84	3.24	2.93	0.72
Meeting the needs of students is one of the District's top priorities.	3.89	4.09	4.14	4.04	4.17	4.11	4.33	3.86	3.88	0.16
My school is kept clean.	4.13	4.28	4.17	4.19	4.30	4.23	4.44	3.82	3.76	0.43
My school is well maintained.	4.15	4.20	4.28	4.21	4.23	4.22	4.46	3.82	3.64	0.57
My school is safe.	4.25	4.37	4.31	4.31	4.24	4.24	4.50	3.99	3.60	0.71
I have the materials I need to effectively teach my classes.	4.00	3.85	4.17	4.01	3.97	3.98	4.12	3.54	3.52	0.49
Total 2023 respondents 123. Average Satisfaction with Work Environment rate:	3.91	4.01	3.95	3.96	3.99	4.00	4.14	3.74	3.41	0.55

All respondent answers, 2021-23

Question	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
I am recognized for my efforts.	3.58	3.66	3.80
I regularly receive useful feedback.	3.55	3.52	3.68
I am recognized for the value I bring to the district.	3.42	3.49	3.66
I trust my supervisor to be open and fair.	4.26	4.16	4.26
I feel respected and supported in my work.	3.90	4.00	4.12
I feel respected and supported by my colleagues.	4.18	4.10	4.28
I believe I can influence decisions in my area of responsibility.	3.96	3.91	4.05
I believe performance expectations are attainable.	4.02	3.98	3.99
I am allowed to make decisions about how to do my work.	4.20	4.14	4.20
I am encouraged to collaborate as a member of the team.	4.16	4.26	4.37
District employees are professional and courteous when working with parents, students, and colleagues.	4.01	4.18	4.35
There is an expectation within the District to share ideas to improve overall performance.	3.77	3.95	4.05
Everyone seems to be working toward the same goal.	3.60	3.71	3.83
Meeting the needs of students is one of the District's top priorities.	4.00	4.13	4.28
My school is kept clean.	4.19	4.30	4.40

My school is well maintained.	4.28	4.16	4.42
My school is safe.	4.35	4.23	4.45
I have the materials I need to effectively teach my classes.	3.98	3.93	4.08
Total respondents: 2023-24 (123), 2022-23 (128), 2021-22 (130)	3.97	3.99	4.13

A total of 18 statements were included in this section and 8 scored higher than a year ago. Ten statements scored at least a 4.0. The lowest scores of 3.42 (recognized for the value I provide), 3.55 (regularly receive feedback), and 3.58 (recognized for efforts) were also the same three statements with the lowest scores for the past two years, although the feedback statement increased by 0.03 from a year ago.

The difference between those with 3 or less years of experience and their overall scores (3.91) vs. those with more than 10 years of experience (3.95) and teaching staff (4.01) wasn't nearly as great as in the Personal Factors section.

Please share your comments about the Satisfaction of Work Environment items above.

In reviewing the 15 responses to this question, there were not enough to show a trend or theme.

Leadership Team

Eight questions contribute to the overall staff perception score of the leadership team contributing to their overall satisfaction. The following table outlines this data by school level:

Comparison data

Question	Teaching Staff 2023-24	Employees with < 3 years 2023-24	Employees with > 10 years 2023-24	Average 2023-24	Average 2022-23	Average 2021-22	Average 2020-21	Average 2018-19	Average 2016-17	Difference 2017-23
The district demonstrates consistency in the manner in which it demonstrates values.	3.46	3.78	3.76	3.67	3.69	3.78	3.78	3.35	2.76	0.91
Leadership encourages all employees to make responsible decisions.	3.89	4.00	4.10	4.00	4.05	4.07	4.13	3.99	3.45	0.55
I have access to leadership in times of uncertainty.	3.97	4.20	4.03	4.07	3.95	3.93	4.17	3.81	3.50	0.57
I trust our leadership to make good decisions.	3.71	3.91	3.83	3.82	3.91	3.89	4.22	3.49	2.93	0.89
The District has a clearly defined direction.	3.40	3.72	3.72	3.61	3.93	3.91	4.00	3.51	3.05	0.56
The District has clearly communicated performance expectations to employees.	3.85	3.80	3.97	3.87	3.90	3.93	3.89	3.77	3.12	0.75
The District clearly explains reasons behind decisions on key issues.	3.17	3.52	3.24	3.31	3.54	3.44	3.62	3.13	2.50	0.81

The District is making consistent progress on initiatives.	3.56	3.80	3.59	3.65	3.79	3.71	3.86	3.49	2.88	0.77
Total 2023 respondents 123. Average Leadership Team rate:	3.63	3.84	3.78	3.75	3.85	3.83	3.96	3.57	3.02	0.73

All respondent answers, 2021-23

Question	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
The district demonstrates consistency in the manner in which it demonstrates values.	3.60	3.68	3.78
Leadership encourages all employees to make responsible decisions.	3.98	4.08	4.13
I have access to leadership in times of uncertainty.	4.08	3.98	4.18
I trust our leadership to make good decisions.	3.78	3.93	4.18
The District has a clearly defined direction.	3.61	3.91	4.01
The District has clearly communicated performance expectations to employees.	3.85	3.84	3.91
The District clearly explains reasons behind decisions on key issues.	3.34	3.55	3.63
The District is making consistent progress on initiatives.	3.63	3.80	3.85
Tota respondents: 2023-24 (123), 2022-23 (128), 2021-22 (130)	3.73	3.85	3.96

A total of 8 statements were included in this section and two scored higher than a year ago. One statement scored at least a 4.0 but seven of the eight statements scored a 3.6 or higher. The lowest score of 3.34 was for clearly explaining reasons behind decisions on key issues, which has historically been the lowest score in this section.

The difference between those with 3 or less years of experience and their overall scores (3.63) vs. those with more than 10 years of experience (3.78) and teaching staff (3.84) is similar to what we saw in the Satisfaction with Work Environment section.

Please share your comments about the Leadership Team items above.

In reviewing the 16 responses to this question, there were not enough to show a trend or theme.

Compensation

Five questions contribute to the overall staff perception score of compensation contributing to their overall satisfaction. The following table outlines this data by school level:

Comparison data

Question	Teaching Staff 2023-24	Employees with < 3 years 2022-23	Employees with > 10 years 2022-23	Average 2023-24	Average 2022-23	Average 2021-22	Average 2020-21	Average 2018-19	Average 2016-17	Difference 2017-23
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The district's total salary and benefits package meets my needs.	2.82	2.83	3.14	2.93	3.06	3.25	3.58	3.12	2.55	0.38
The district's total salary and benefits package is competitive with other districts.	3.08	2.71	3.34	3.04	3.14	3.30	3.44	3.24	2.74	0.30
My contributions to the District are appropriately rewarded.	3.17	3.43	3.31	3.30	3.44	3.46	3.59	3.06	2.45	0.85
I receive non-monetary recognition for my contributions.	3.18	3.41	3.21	3.27	3.46	3.56	3.52	3.45	2.57	0.70
There are opportunities to advance within the organization.	3.53	3.76	3.69	3.66	3.46	3.52	3.29	3.10	2.71	0.95
Total 2032 respondents 123. Average Compensation rate:	3.16	3.19	3.34	3.24	3.30	3.42	3.48	3.19	2.60	0.64

All respondent answers, 2021-23

Question	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
The district's total salary and benefits package meets my needs.	2.95	3.09	3.56
The district's total salary and benefits package is competitive with other districts.	3.19	3.15	3.50
My contributions to the District are appropriately rewarded.	3.53	3.45	3.59
I receive non-monetary recognition for my contributions.	3.55	3.45	3.50
There are opportunities to advance within the organization.	3.64	3.52	3.35
Total respondents: 2023-24 (123), 2022-23 (128), 2021-22 (130)	3.37	3.33	3.50

A total of 5 statements were included in this section and four scored higher than a year ago. None of the statements scored at least a 4.0, with the averages for each statement ranging from 2.95 to 3.64. The overall average of 3.37 in the compensation section was 0.04 higher than a year ago, but remains lower than the averages for each of the other three sections.

The results in this section continue to look different than the other three. For the second straight year, those with 3 or less years of experience and their overall scores (3.16) were significantly lower than those with more than 10 years of experience (3.34).

Please share your comments about the Compensation items above.

In reviewing the 14 responses to this question, there were not enough to show a trend or theme.

Open-Ended Questions

In the Open-Ended Question session of the survey, staff were asked three open-ended questions: What is the greatest challenge you face in your role within the District?; What can the district do to

increase your satisfaction and productivity as an employee?; and What should we continue to do that best supports your favorable views of the District? In all, 182 responses were submitted. Sample unedited responses are provided to demonstrate themes for each of the questions.

What is the greatest challenge you face in your role within the District?

Among the biggest challenges mentioned frequently by staff were changing classroom dynamics, behavioral challenges and lack of consequences, communication and input concerns, resources and staffing challenges, and special education challenges. There were 67 comments provided. Below is a sampling of unedited responses to demonstrate those themes.

- *The demands and needs of the students. As the needs are ever changing, we need to continue to change what a "typical classroom" looks like.*
- *Parents. Lack of consequences. Lack of training for the rising number of behavior issues. Students being passed on when they have not completed the work.*
- *Student apathy to learn. It is difficult holding students accountable for the work that isn't completed. When students have high absenteeism, the work does not get done and there are no consequences. Parent support isn't always there.*
- *Not enough substitute teachers—having to give up preps to sub in others' classes makes it tough to get everything done. Please make sure subs feel valued and are offered a competitive rate compared to other districts to incentivize subbing here.*
- *Keeping up with expectations. I think most things are attainable but at the end of the day the challenges of working with kids are energy and time consuming and there never seems to be enough time to get it all done within contracted hours.*

What can the district do to increase your satisfaction and productivity as an employee?

Many responses focused on behavioral support and training, professional development, recognition and additional compensation, improved communication, unified front, and workload and time management. There were 60 comments provided. Below is a sampling of unedited responses.

- *More opportunities for professional development, mental health, and built-in prep time (beyond our 45 minutes).*
- *Acknowledge the specific contributions we make, increase salary, have upper admin more physically present in buildings every week.*
- *Assure preps are uninterrupted. Not stopping to transition students when we could continue to work. Find more behavioral support for students when in classrooms so that the rest of the class can continue when behaviors arise. Bring back a concern for mental health.*
- *I think continued positive feedback and encouragement goes a long way. Seeing what employees are doing and recognizing their efforts is important. Leadership team being visible at all schools is important.*
- *The more communication on why things are happening the better. I feel like it will decrease negative attitudes or people thinking their way is better.*

What should we continue to do that best supports your favorable views of the District?

Focus on positive school culture, communication and feedback, recognition and support for staff, professional development opportunities, and schedule flexibility to help with work-life balance were consistent themes. There were 55 comments provided. Below is a sampling of unedited responses.

- *Incentives & staff appreciation. Continue making sure that staff get planning time together and individually. That is a really great benefit!*
- *Continue to keep the pay scale competitive and have leadership that listens to their staff.*
- *I enjoy the overall freedom and mastery that I feel within my content area and that it is acknowledged. I don't feel like the district tries to micromanage its teachers.*
- *Keep on keepin on. The District has been great and well respected for decades and that's because of its teachers and administrators.*
- *Continue to explore salary. We've made some positive gains in the last few years. Try to continue to find qualified staff. I've seen recent hires struggle for 2-3 years with classroom management, and still struggle with it and decision making. Continue to take teachers and their concerns seriously, and give them some degree of autonomy in the classroom. Continue with the surveys.*

Final Thoughts

Most of the Districts where we administer staff surveys usually see the lowest scores related to four areas: professional development, work-life balance, compensation, and communication. Those four are certainly areas that have consistently scored lower than most others over the years on the Ripon Area Staff Satisfaction Survey and we would suggest the District consider convening staff members from all employee groups and experience levels to consider what efforts could be made to see noticeable improvements.

Districts also ask if there are drivers among the statements on a staff climate survey, meaning do some actionable items, such as high response rate to feedback, lead to better scores. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- **Personal Factors:** Empower employees and allow them to make more decisions. Staffers who feel connected and valued are more likely to look favorably at all aspects of the district.
- **Personal Factors:** Provide more opportunities for educators to learn and develop. Encourage employees to determine what that looks like. This will also help with empowerment.
- **Work Environment:** Provide regular and meaningful feedback about performance, both written and verbal. Develop a mentoring program to help everyone grow and improve.
- **Leadership Team:** Maintain and promote transparency about decisions, expectations, values, and initiatives. However, be careful and focus on a select few vital goals rather than spreading everyone too thin by trying to do too much.
- **Compensation:** Establish a compensation committee. Make sure all employees understand how much is allotted for salaries and benefits. Brainstorm ways to increase salaries, but what will likely have to change (cut in benefits, reduction in staff) for that to happen.