



Glen Ellyn School District 41
2020 Staff Survey Comment Analysis
April 1, 2020

The Comment Analysis Summary is intended to identify and represent the prevailing themes collected through the comments gathered in the staff survey. A major theme is identified as a result of having multiple participants referencing similar issues or concerns. Supporting comments are included verbatim within each theme.

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While respondents are supportive of the FLES program, some feel it is not a good fit for all students.

Students are benefiting and enjoying the FLES program. However, many students with significant learning disabilities and autism struggle greatly during this time. It would be beneficial to allow students with these levels of needs to be exempt from the FLES program to allow them to work on their academic, behavioral and functional needs.

While I am proud of the district for championing dual language, I think there are plenty of deficiencies that our students have that should come before dual language. Some of our students cannot spell or write in English, and we are having them then struggle in two languages.

While I fully support learning a second language, there are many times this year in which students struggling in every class cannot get the support needed because of the mandated foreign language class. If they are struggling as much as they are in their core classes, I see more benefit in them being in a support class than in a foreign language class. How to determine who could opt out/qualify for no foreign language is above my pay, but I think it is something to strongly consider.

I think overall, for most students Specialization and Foreign Language benefits them. For some students who really struggle learning English, I am not sure that Spanish is a good fit for them.

I believe that there should be the ability to opt out of learning a foreign language if students are struggling with learning in their primary language.

In response to the foreign language question, while I believe that it benefits most, I do think we should allow some flexibility with team decisions regarding whether a student would benefit more from not participating in a foreign language rather use that time to help support their other extreme deficit areas/areas of improvement whether they are significantly below their peers in reading, math, social-emotional, etc.

While I feel learning a second language can be highly beneficial to many students, we need to have flexibility with this. There are some students who this can be detrimental for (i.e. students with significant speech and language delays). Staff and parents should have the option to decide on a case by case basis for each student. Plans for students who are not included in FLES should be thought about in advance.

Language learning is beneficial for students. Not all students should be forced to take a FL. If students are struggling with reading and writing they should have an intervention class or a SPED resource class to improve on basic English skills they are lacking to catch them up to grade level.

There are benefits as shown in research. However, I disagree with providing students who have IEPs and other special learning needs foreign language instead of support in reading and math.

Some respondents share concerns regarding their workload.

If I notify a friend about a vacancy in our district, I will forewarn them about the teacher workload. Larger class sizes and the possibility of teaching multiple content. Meanwhile, having the expectation to keep raising test scores, as class period time decreases and student anxiety keeps growing.

heavy caseloads, no co-teacher planning time

Our work load is unreasonable. Teaching seven subjects a day and trying to "keep up" with our scope, while adding additional tasks, is completely unrealistic.

The workload of teachers is completely unreasonable and unsustainable. We are asked to do more than is possible to do in a single day. The amount of paperwork and documentation for MTSS is laborious and takes away for actual teaching time. Students with significant needs are grouped together in one classroom. Teachers in these classrooms have to complete significantly more paperwork and attend more meetings which take place during the school day. This means time away from the classroom which is not a good idea when students are already struggling.

Time is the biggest resource that we are lacking. We continue to add requirements to our day when we already have more curriculum than what fits in a day. Our curriculum doesn't allow us to take the time to support students on an individual basis without becoming behind in the scope and sequence. There is very little wiggle room from day to day and needs arise that have to be addressed. All of our focus is on academic learning. There needs to be time allotted to focus on social emotional things that come up within our days as well. With this, I don't mean a scripted program, but rather the time to address, for example, a recess issue and in doing so we don't feel like we now just missed phonics and we're behind.

I think that in our district, there are a few teachers who do most of the curriculum and planning work, and many other teachers do not. How can we make the workload more equitable and share the responsibilities for planning curriculum across the district?

I do not have enough time in the day to get done everything that is required in my job. Most days I work 10-12 hours to stay on top of everything or else I will drown. By the time my 40 minute plan comes, it takes me the entire time just to sort out the day and figure out where to start. When we do have "work" time, we always get pulled into meetings which require follow up and more work. Teachers are stretched way too thin.

I think that the workload of the SST team is a little too much. We spend our whole school day (even plan time and lunch some days) meeting the needs of the students, that there is no paid work time for the paperwork portion of the job. It is hard to collect data throughout the day, get IEP's written on time, proactively communicate with families, on top of my personal life outside of school.

Respondents feel that more should be done to support those students who require additional support.

I feel that we have not put supports in place for all of our students. We do not have enough service providers to meet the needs of our students.

Our district is asking us to provide services for all kids without additional resources in order to provide this to all students in order to include them fairly.

Special education team members do not have any type of digital technology within their classrooms, which can make it hard to meet some needs of students or match the curriculum being offered in the general education room.

I'm borderline on many of these questions. I do think more could be done to support students with IEP and 504 plans. And more can be done to teach empathy among students. I believe most of this stems from having inclusion put in place too quickly.

I have the necessary resources to work with the ESL population, not the SPED population. Full inclusion supports and resources are not always available. The roll out was poorly planned and did not give students or staff adequate support. It's disappointing that our district did not have a comprehensive plan.

There are currently a larger population that require more social emotional learning. They don't or haven't learned perspective taking and other required skills to be successful in the classroom.

The class sizes are too big, which have created issues in being able to teach effectively. In addition, many students need more support but are not always receiving it such as small group instruction and a leveled foreign language class.

We need more Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to help those students who are struggling. We don't have those in place. Students shouldn't be taking Spanish every day if they struggle with Reading.

Struggling students do not have access to the help and support that they need to succeed. No interventions, no periods to re-teach, provide added support.

We need more resources for the diverse needs of our students. We need more support staff to work with our inclusion population. We also need additional specialized staff to meet IEP goals, minutes and to enable co-teaching. We need more OT tools available in classrooms or our buildings such as swings, pods, rollers etc. to help students stay regulated and engaged. Our classrooms are designed for general education students and not for some of the inclusion students we are getting. We need more resources to create classrooms that support the need of these students.

We are desperately in need of more support staff. Some students need one-on-one aides and we are told that that doesn't exist anymore. All of our aides end up going to Early Childhood.

Some respondents shared suggestions to improve District communication.

I often feel that communication between district and building leadership is not clear and teachers are not receiving all information from CSO. Furthermore I feel that decisions are made within my department with building leadership and district leadership does not receive the information.

I constantly have to reach out to ask questions on how to properly complete my job. I am not told information in a timely manner. It is frustrating to always have to ask about how things are done.

Communication on important items and cohesiveness of staff and whole district meetings needs to be improved. Since this new year began, there has not been effective communications of the workings of what is happening at the District administrative level and staff in the district. It often gets trickled down and misunderstood. This in turn causes some discrepancy in building administration and staff communication. There is not a clear expectation for administrations to staff on communication, and that needs to change.

Communication could always be better across the board.

I believe that communication at all levels in this district is one of our weakest links. Communication within teams and PLC's is effective but at the higher levels communication is not always clear, timely and/or given in the first place.

Times and places of events taking place in our school are often communicated at the last minute or after the event has started.

Even though I know what is expected of me most of the time. There are conflicts between what I am being told from the building administration and the district administration. It can be confusing at times

I feel as though information is shared last minute for many things or that emails are not even given a response. I know everyone's job is busy, but it would be nice to receive an email that says, "Got your email! I'll look into this." Or "Let me connect you with ___ to help you." Or be honest and say, "I'm swamped right now and honestly this is not a priority." Just respond. I appreciate the responses and feedback I have received from my building administrators and value their opinion and feedback. Our staff has an amazing bond and community and we are here to support each other.

I believe some of the communication failures are when the planned school event emails are sent and there is not clarification for new staff as to what the event is and what it entails. Example Wolf Pack meetings, I had no clue what it was and what my role was during this time. I was fortunate that I asked a teacher and she explained it to me and later an other teacher invited me to join her Wolf Pack.

We need more "useful" communication to staff members about policies, procedures, protocols, job responsibilities, to help us perform our jobs.

COMMUNICATION. COMMUNICATION. COMMUNICATION! Transparency. Integrity of decision-making, especially as it applies to any decision made per parental pressure.

Respondents express their appreciation for the Board of Education.

I feel that the new board is a much better reflection of our community compared to the previous board.

Our school board has begun to turn around from what I would consider "the dark years" of no trust between school board, admin and teachers. This school board has once again put children first, which is essential for decision making. I applaud the leadership of Bob Bruno and am grateful for his hard work, intelligence, and compassion.

I am exceedingly happy for new representation among the Board. The last Board was negative and divisive and flat out unkind and disrespectful. I trust the new Board so much more.

I finally feel that this board has the ability to act in the ways which are best for students. They are fiscally responsible while meeting the needs of students.

I appreciate that things have calmed down at the board level and people are being allowed to do their jobs.

It is so refreshing to have an intelligent and respectful BOE.

The board is greatly improved over the last year. It is encouraging to see board members treat each other with civility and respect. Love the addition of students on the board.

To be honest, I really appreciate the tone of the Board Meetings this year. I appreciate the fact that the Board Members are getting along so much better and they are having respectful conversations with one another.

When this new Board was seated in the spring of 2019, it was so refreshing to have the President and Vice President in our building to personally share their vision and let us know that we staff are respected and valued. Such a breath of fresh air after a long period of unrest.

For the most part this board has been "a breath of fresh air" compared to a couple previous, toxic, board members.

This school board has made excellent decisions and has really educated themselves on their role within the district.

The Board seems more positive and friendly to staff. I do not hear the crazy, negative stuff like I used to. I don't know much about their priorities or decision making.

There is definitely a better sense of calmness with our Board of Education. I appreciate the atmosphere of respect.