District Efficiency Project Survey Analysis

Prepared for Upper Arlington City School District

January 2014

In the following report, Hanover Research presents the results of the Upper Arlington City School District's Efficiency Project survey. It discusses respondents' ratings of the district's current efficiencies as well as which programs the district should prioritize moving forward. The report concludes with a lengthy summary and discussion of respondents' suggestions about how UACSD might maximize its efficiency.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In order to assist the Upper Arlington City School District (UACSD) in determining how best to maximize district efficiency, Hanover Research presents the results of the UACSD Efficiency Project survey.

In the following report, Hanover Research presents the full results of this survey. It contains the following sections:

- **Section I** displays survey respondents' ratings of UACSD's current degree of fiscal responsibility and efficiency, as well as ratings of the quality of the education it provides.

- **Section II** outlines how survey respondents receive the majority of district-related information, and gauges respondent interest in using a district smartphone application, if one were made available to them.

- **Section III** discusses respondents' rankings of several district priorities.

- **Section IV** provides a description of desired district efficiencies, as well as a summary of respondents' suggestions for UACSD improvement.

- **Section V** displays survey respondents' demographic relationship with UACSD.

KEY FINDINGS

- **The most frequently mentioned suggestions regarding district efficiency improvement measures are related to the elimination of paper forms, reduction of paper waste, the utilization of technology for learning and communication purposes, and the reduction of teachers' salaries and benefits.** Though respondents offered many different suggestions for district improvement, the majority of survey respondents identified these four measures as ways in which UACSD can make significant efficiency improvements.

- **The majority of respondents indicated that UACSD should prioritize maintaining reasonable class sizes and providing students with college-level coursework.** Utilizing technology in the classroom was also highly prioritized by most respondents, while other areas such as the availability of visual and performing arts programs or providing a variety of sports, clubs, and extracurricular programs received less support as top priorities in comparison. When considering all of the above areas, providing services for gifted students was the least prioritized program.

- **Nearly 90 percent of respondents indicated that UACSD currently performs at a good to great level on providing a quality education, keeping parents informed, and ensuring students' safety.** Fewer respondents believed that UACSD is doing an

excellent job of managing district tax money, which indicates that this is an area of potential improvement for the district.

- **The majority of survey respondents prefer to communicate with the district using digital technology.** Most respondents prefer to receive district information through technological communication such as emails and visiting the district website, and the majority of respondents would also utilize a district smartphone application if one were developed.

SECTION I: DISTRICT RATINGS

In the following section, Hanover Research discusses the results obtained from the district's Efficiency Project survey regarding respondents' ratings of the district's current efficiency level. Respondents were asked to rate how well the district manages tax funds, the quality of education UACSD offers, how well UACSD keeps parents informed of district business, and how well the district ensures the safety of its students.

CURRENT DISTRICT RATINGS

FISCAL EFFICIENCY

As depicted in Figure 1.1, the results of this survey indicate that **the majority of respondents (64 percent) reported that the district performs at a fair or good level with managing tax money**. Only 18 percent of respondents felt that UACSD does an excellent job of using district tax money effectively and responsibly. Forty-one percent of respondents felt that the district does a good job of managing tax money, and 23 percent felt that the district's tax money management is only fair. Nine percent of respondents believed that the district is poor or very poor at managing tax money efficiently and responsibly, and nine percent responded that they did not know how to rate the district's tax money management.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Figure 1.1 further indicates that **the majority of those respondents (60 percent) believed that UACSD provides an excellent quality of education.** Thirty-six percent believed that UACSD provides a good quality education, and only 4 percent of respondents believed that UACSD provides merely a fair quality of education for its students. In sum, the vast majority of respondents—over 90 percent—believed that UACSD provides a good or great education, and all respondents believed that it provides at least a fair quality of education.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Figure 1.2 depicts respondents' ratings of how well the district keeps parents informed and ensures the safety of its students. These results indicate that the majority of respondents felt that UACSD does an excellent (47 percent) or good (42 percent) job of keeping parents informed. A small minority (less than 11 percent of total respondents) felt that the district is only fair to poor at communicating with parents, indicating that overall, respondents are likely satisfied with the district's level of communication.
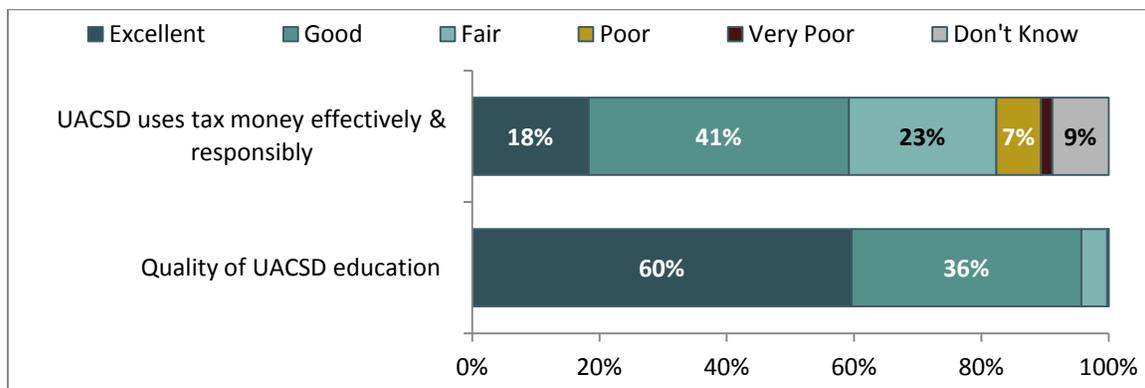
ENSURING STUDENT SAFETY

When asked how they would rate UACSD on ensuring student safety, 37 percent of respondents indicated that the district does an excellent job of protecting students. Forty-eight percent believed that the district does a good job of ensuring students' safety, and

approximately 13 percent of respondents indicated that the district should improve student safety measures. Only 2 percent of respondents indicated that they do not know how well the district ensures student safety.

Considered together, these results suggest that respondents believe the district provides an excellent education for its students, though it can likely improve how it manages and allocates district funds. These results also suggest that respondents believe that the Upper Arlington City School District does an excellent job of communicating with parents to keep them informed, as well as ensuring student safety.

Figure 1.1: Overall Ratings of UACSD Spending Efficiency (n=2,117) and Educational Quality (n=2,116)

Figure 1.2: Rating of UACSD's Current Ability to Keep Parents Informed (n=2,115) and Ensure Student Safety (n=2,114)
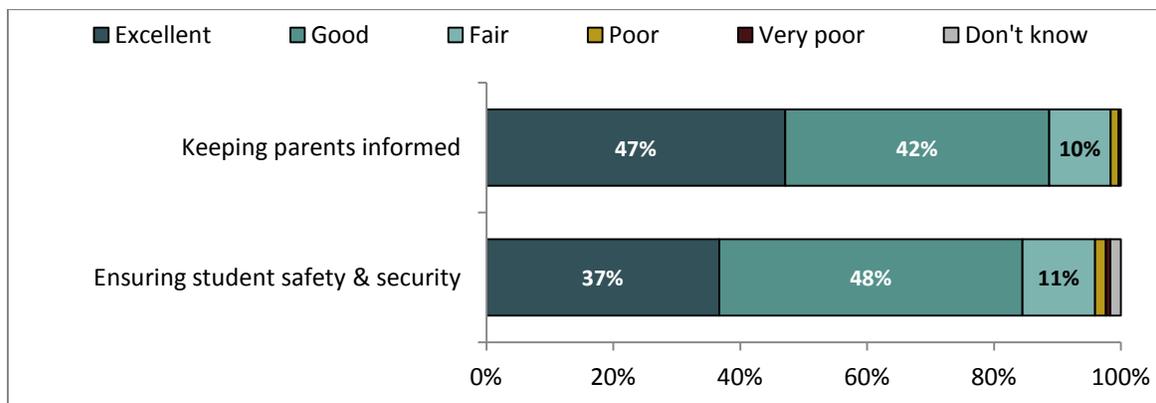
SECTION II: DISTRICT COMMUNICATION

The following section discusses how respondents obtain district-related information. It also provides estimates of respondents' interest in utilizing a smartphone application to obtain school or district information, if one became available.
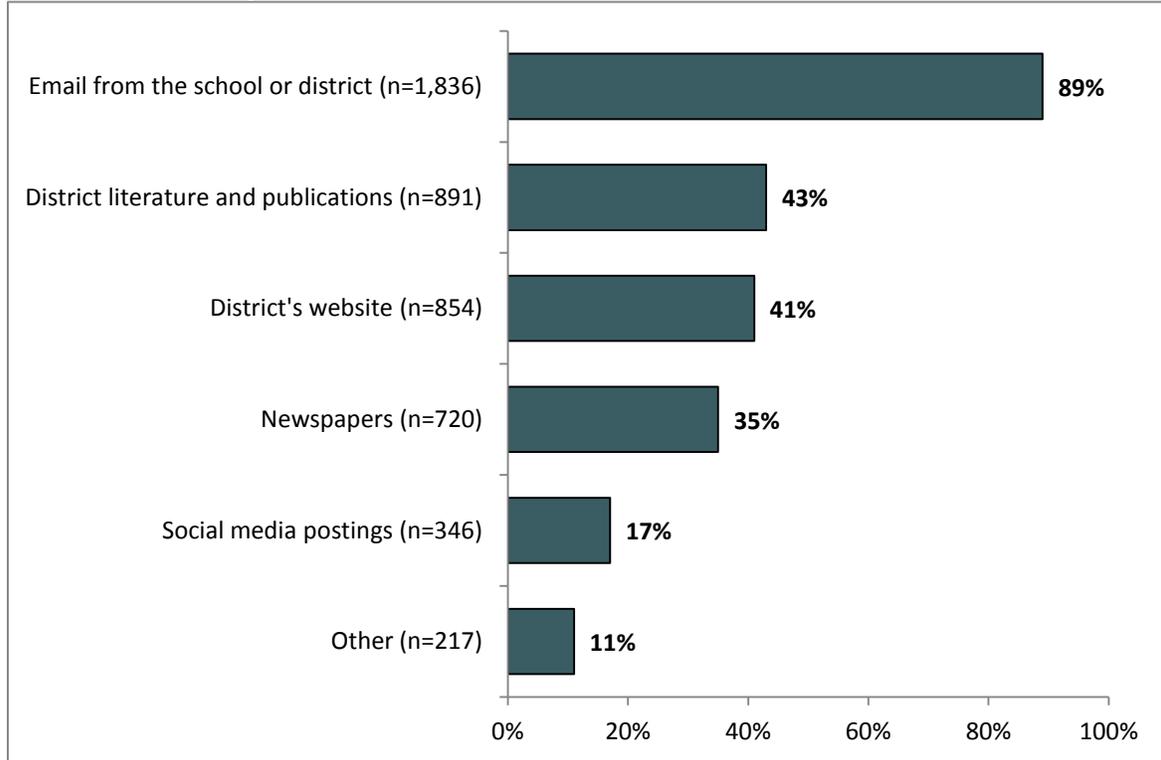
SOURCES OF DISTRICT INFORMATION

Respondents were asked to indicate all methods by which they typically receive district-related information, and results are displayed in Figure 2.1. **The vast majority (89 percent) of respondents indicated that they receive most of their information from school or district emails.** District literature and publications are the second most popular method of communication, with 43 percent of respondents indicating that they typically receive information in this way. The district website (41 percent) and newspapers (35 percent) are also relatively popular methods of obtaining district information. However, only 17 percent of respondents obtain district information from social media postings via Facebook or Twitter, and 11 percent of respondents indicated that they receive district information some other way (e.g., talking with their children, attending PTO meetings, calling the district administration office, etc.).

INTEREST IN UTILIZING A SMARTPHONE APPLICATION

Respondents were also asked to estimate whether they would utilize a district smart phone application, if one were made available to them. As depicted in Figure 2.2, the majority of respondents (64 percent) indicated that they would use such a smartphone application. Twenty percent of respondents indicated that they would not use a district smartphone application, and 16 percent indicated that they were unsure whether they would use such an application.

These results indicate a trend: respondents prefer to communicate with the district using digital technology. Most respondents prefer to receive district information through technological communications such as emails and visiting the district website, and the majority would also utilize a district smartphone application if one were developed.

Figure 2.1: Main Sources of District-Related Information

Source	Percentage
Email from the school or district (n=1,836)	89%
District literature and publications (n=891)	43%
District's website (n=854)	41%
Newspapers (n=720)	35%
Social media postings (n=346)	17%
Other (n=217)	11%

Figure 2.2: Interest in Utilizing District Smartphone App, If Available (n=2,064)

Response	Percentage
Yes	64%
No	20%
Don't know	16%
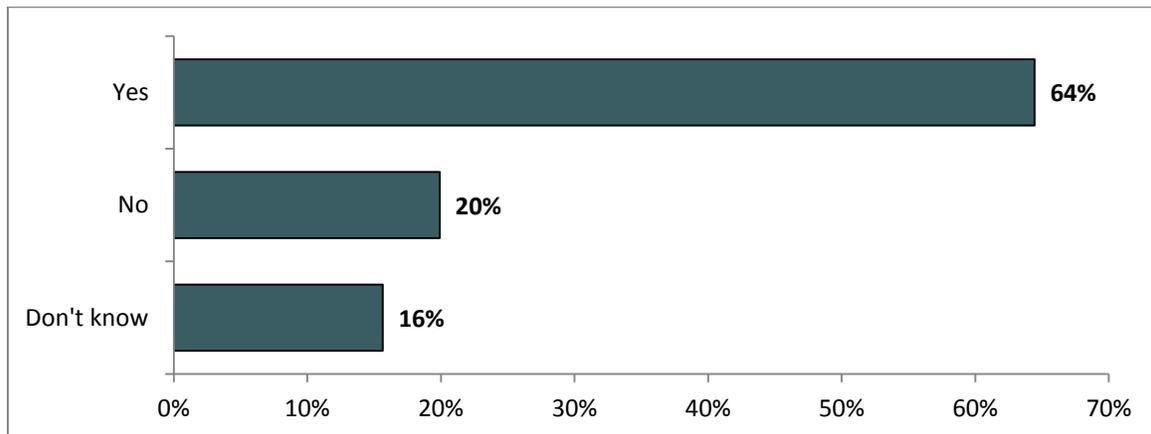
SECTION III: DISTRICT PRIORITIES

In the following section, Hanover Research discusses survey respondents' priority rankings of various areas of district focus.

Respondents were asked to rank UACSD schools on several areas of focus from one to six, where a rank of one indicates the respondents' highest priority, and a rank of six represents the lowest priority. Figure 3.1 displays these results. It should be noted that respondents were only allowed to select one area as a top priority, and the question required each respondent to also select their lowest priority out of the six areas identified. The respondents' selections for lowest priority should not be interpreted as an indication that the area is not important overall, only that it is less important to that particular respondent than the other areas identified.

Half of the surveyed respondents indicated that their first priority for the district is to maintain class size. Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated that this is their second or third priority, and cumulatively, 78 percent of respondents ranked the maintenance of class sizes to be in their top three district priorities. Only 13 percent of respondents ranked maintaining class sizes to be in their bottom two district priorities when compared to other listed agenda items.

College-level coursework was the second-most desired district priority. Twenty-four percent of respondents believed that this should be the district's first priority, and nearly 41 percent of respondents ranked it in their top three district priorities. However, 21 percent of respondents indicated that providing college-level coursework should be one of the district's two lowest priorities in comparison to the other listed areas, indicating that support for this area of focus is mixed.

The use of technology in classrooms was a top priority for 12 percent of survey respondents, and was ranked as second (28 percent) or third (21 percent) priority for the majority of respondents. This indicates that the use of technology is fairly important to the majority of respondents, although most indicated that they feel it should not be prioritized over maintenance of class size or providing college-level coursework.

Fewer respondents (6 percent) indicated that the district should prioritize visual and performing arts programs above all else, though a combined 37 percent of total respondents placed visual and performing arts as one of their top three priorities. This indicates that visual and performing arts programs are of moderate importance to a number of respondents.

Providing services for gifted students was the top priority for 6 percent of respondents. Unlike providing visual and performing arts programs, however, only a combined 28 percent of respondents indicated that services for gifted students should be in the district's top

three priorities. Furthermore, nearly 41 percent of respondents indicated this was their lowest priority in comparison to the other areas.

Finally, only 3 percent of respondents believe that sports, clubs, and extracurricular activities should be the district's top priority when considering all areas. However, a combined 31 percent rated these activities to be in their top three priorities. The provision of a variety of sports, clubs, and extracurricular programs ranks in more respondents' top three district priorities than does the provision of gifted programming.

The results of this survey indicate that a greater percentage of respondents prioritize sports, clubs, and extracurricular activities over providing services for gifted students. Furthermore, 41 percent of respondents believe that the district should make services for gifted students the lowest priority of those considered. This may reflect the fact that services for gifted students only serve a subsection of the student population, while sports, clubs and extracurricular activities are hypothetically open to all students.

Similarly, the majority of respondents indicated that the district should prioritize maintaining class sizes. This is unsurprising, again likely reflecting the fact that class size affects all students, not a select few. College-level coursework was also highly ranked, as was the use of technology in classrooms, clearly indicating that respondents value the both these things. Given the nationwide trend of using technology in classrooms, prioritization of technology in classrooms is also unsurprising.

Figure 3.1: Rankings of District Priorities (n=1,879)
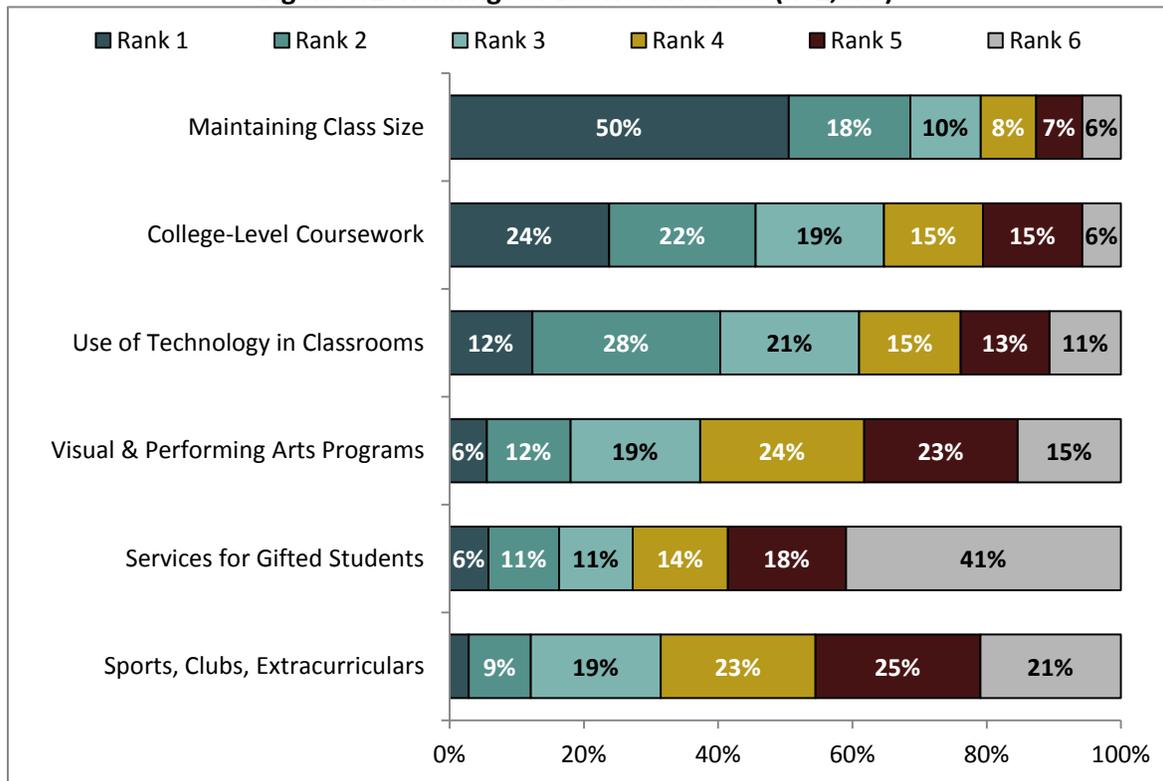
SECTION IV: DISTRICT EFFICIENCIES

In this section, Hanover Research discusses which district efficiency measures respondents desire most, with particular emphasis on the favorability of increasing class sizes as a method to reduce district spending. It also provides a summary of respondents' suggestions on how UACSD might maximize its level of efficiency. Several themes emerged as the most frequently-mentioned suggested strategies.[1]

DESIRED DISTRICT EFFICIENCIES

Figure 4.1 depicts the favorability of multiple district efficiency strategies. Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they do or do not favor several possible strategies to increase the district's overall efficiency.

The vast majority of respondents (84 percent) strongly favor the adoption of electronic forms, such as emergency medical and enrollment documents, rather than issuing paper versions of those forms. The majority of respondents (83 percent) also prefer to have online access to students' information, such as classwork, attendance information, and grades. Seventy-seven percent of respondents endorsed the use of technology to reduce the costs associated with copying and mailing of paper forms, and 66 percent of respondents prefer electronic access to progress reports and report cards. **The high favorability of the adoption of electronic forms and access to various types of student information online reflects a trend toward technological efficiencies.** Making better use of technology as a centralized location that provides access to student information can decrease the money UACSD spends on costs associated with paper forms.

Another highly-endorsed efficiency strategy is the sharing of services. Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that they strongly favor sharing services with other educational institutions, such as providing students with dual-enrollment programs that allow students to earn both high school and college credits simultaneously. Another 53 percent of respondents strongly favor sharing facilities, programs, or additional services with the city of Upper Arlington.

Less strongly favored efficiency strategies are the consolidation of bus stops (37 percent) and offering online course options for students (27 percent). In fact, 30 percent of respondents actually oppose offering online courses for students, and 18 percent oppose the consolidation of bus routes.

Figure 4.2 depicts the favorability of increasing class sizes to reduce district spending. **The results clearly show that the overwhelming majority of respondents—84 percent—oppose increasing class sizes to reduce district spending.** Only 8 percent were in favor of this

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[1] NB: Interestingly, many commenters appear to have interpreted "district efficiency strategies" as "ways to reduce district costs."

change, and the remaining 8 percent were unsure of their preference. These results indicate that respondents would greatly oppose increasing class sizes in UACSD.

Figure 4.1: Favorability of District Efficiency Strategies (n=1,879-1,882)
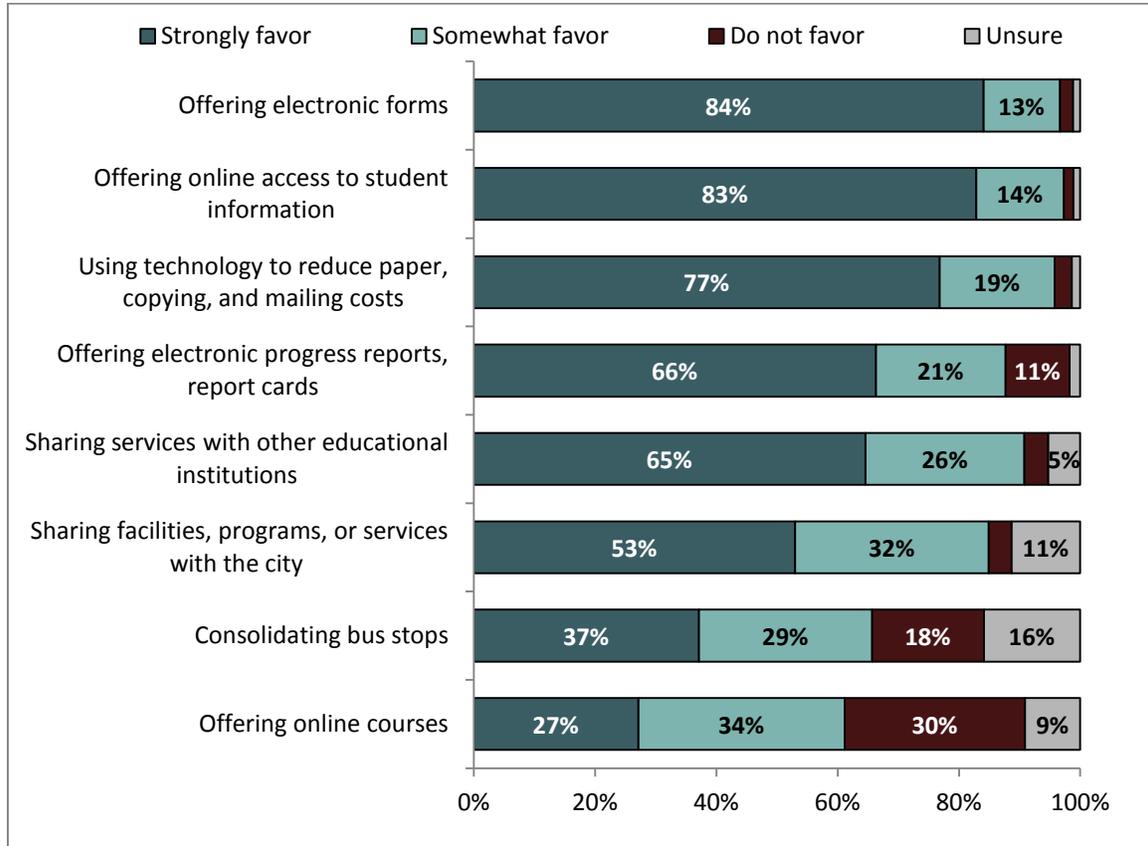
Figure 4.2: Favorability of Increasing Class Sizes to Reduce Spending (n=2,115)
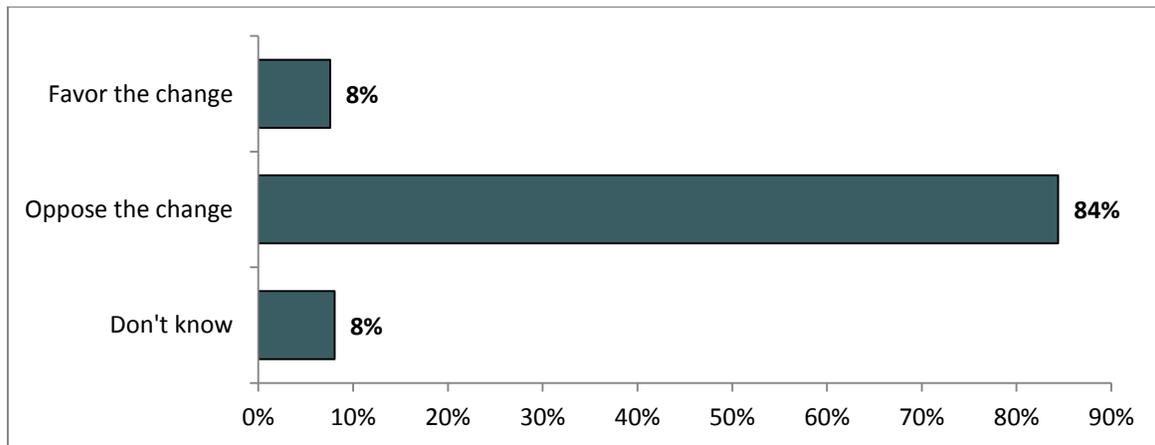
SUGGESTIONS FOR DISTRICT EFFICIENCY

METHODOLOGY

Figure 4.3 summarizes respondents' suggestions for how UACSD might improve its overall efficiency. Respondents were asked to provide any suggestions about how UACSD might increase its efficiencies district-wide. A qualitative assessment of over 870 comments was performed. Response categories were formed based on respondents' comments. The resulting categories are presented in Figure 4.3 according to frequency, such that the most frequently mentioned categories are presented first. A set of sample comments are also provided for each response category. However, due to the high volume of responses and the fact that many responses contained multiple categories, exact category frequencies could not be accurately calculated.

REDUCTION OF PAPER WASTE

The most frequently mentioned suggestions respondents cited as possible ways to increase district efficiency were those related to the reduction or elimination of paper documents and other forms of paper waste. Typically, respondents suggested that UACSD adopt an online repository of digital forms that can be completed once. Several respondents mentioned that having to complete forms such as permission slips, enrollment forms, or medical information forms on paper copies is both wasteful and tedious. Many reported that having to fill out identical forms for each of their children is an inconvenience, and others noted that filling out online or PDF versions of forms means that they are less likely to become lost.

BETTER UTILIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Related to the reduction of paper waste is respondents' desire for the district to maintain **a single cohesive website that hosts all information relevant to students and their parents.** This website should contain all information that a parent might need, including students' grades, any relevant updates, and all necessary forms. Furthermore, multiple comments suggested that the disparate systems currently in operation (e.g., Edline, Powerschool) should be streamlined into one online tool requiring one single login name and password. Parents dislike that their children's information is housed in so many different locations online, and they report often forgetting the separate login information.

Respondents also suggest that the district's adoption of technology should be further extended into the classrooms, as well as used for communicating with parents. Many parents report that the textbooks their children require for class are rarely used, and are heavy to transport between the classroom and home. Rather than continue to adopt paper versions of textbooks, many respondents suggested that UACSD invest in digital or online versions of textbooks instead. Digital technologies should also be utilized for communication purposes, as many respondents indicate that they frequently check their email and are less likely to miss important communications this way.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Respondents also offered suggestions on how the district might become more energy efficient. Simple strategies such as turning off computers and lights when not in use were frequently mentioned. Several respondents even noted that the school lights are frequently on when the school is closed. Some also suggested that USCAD investigate technologies that automatically reduce energy consumption, because their adoption will ultimately benefit the district in the future.

TEACHERS

Aside from suggestions related to reducing paper waste, better utilizing technology, and reducing energy consumption, **the most frequently mentioned comments related to district efficiencies were that of reducing teachers' salaries and benefits.** Most comments contained both suggestions. However, the comments related to what many respondents considered to be the overcompensation of UACSD teachers drew very heated remarks. Respondents noted that they believe UACSD teachers are overpaid relative to similar positions in the private sector and other districts in Ohio, particularly given what respondents considered to be a nine-month work year.

Drawing particularly harsh criticism from respondents was the process by which veteran teachers' compensation is calculated (i.e., by length of time employed). Several respondents suggested that this should be addressed, and teachers should be evaluated—and compensated—on merit, not tenure. Furthermore, respondents were critical of the teacher's union, because they perceive it to have a vested interest in protecting the "least effective members of the union." Several respondents offered suggestions that UACSD might employ to address teacher compensation and evaluation concerns:

- Eliminate the teacher union.

- Introduce retirement incentives, particularly for ineffective teachers or teachers past their "prime."

- Reduce the frequency that teachers must be out of the classroom, which includes in-service days, training days, and grading days. This also reduces the need for substitute teachers.

- Eliminate the practice of "double-dipping," which describes when a teacher retires and is subsequently re-hired in a consultancy or administrative role, simultaneously receiving both retirement benefits and current pay.

- Require teachers to pay more out-of-pocket for their own healthcare and retirement benefits, decreasing the amount of these costs that the district subsidizes.

- Freeze annual pay increases for teachers.

Despite the overwhelming majority of respondents who recommended cutting teachers' salaries and benefits, that same majority mentioned that eliminating teacher positions

altogether should be a very last resort. The rationale behind this sentiment appears to be that commenters would prefer that all teachers assume a pay cut or that the district freeze all annual pay increases rather than eliminate teacher positions altogether. Several commenters also mentioned that while they believe that the teachers are overpaid at UACSD, they believe that teachers should be compensated fairly and well to continue to attract the best teachers, though the overall level of pay should be reduced to amounts commensurate with other Ohio school districts or the private sector.

ADMINISTRATION

Another issue that drew heated comments was that of administrative overhead. A great number of comments mentioned that **rather than eliminate teacher positions or reduce class sizes to reduce district spending, several administrative positions and tasks should be consolidated or eliminated altogether.** Several commenters mentioned that some positions should be eliminated due to redundancy, and others noted that the majority of administrative costs appear to go to ineffective members of the central administration office. Multiple respondents also noted that school board members have a reputation for spending money unwisely or even irresponsibly, indicating that luncheons and special trips for board members often fall on the district tab.

SHARED SERVICES

Other suggestions for district efficiency were related to the consolidation or sharing of district services with other educational institutions or with the city of Upper Arlington. Respondents suggested sharing trash and recycling services, grounds keeping, and traffic monitoring with the city of Upper Arlington. Others suggested partnering with other schools within the district to share janitors, librarians, and other personnel. While this was mentioned more frequently as a suggestion for the district, several other respondents explicitly requested that the UACSD *not* share janitors and librarians in an effort to save money. They argued that these personnel are essential school assets, and their services should not be shared or cut.

Respondents were mixed on the issue of bus route consolidation. Many respondents mentioned irritation at seeing buses nearly empty on a routine basis, while other respondents expressed displeasure at having no bus routes available at all for their children.

REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF PROGRAMS

Another frequently-mentioned category of responses relates to the reduction or elimination of several programs offered by the district. Extracurricular programs, clubs, and sports offerings received a great deal of attention. Parents suggested that sports should be "pay-to-play," and other parents recommended cutting the less popular clubs and sports altogether. Some parents were extremely vocal in their opinion that the district unfairly prioritizes sports—particularly football—over other academic extracurricular programs, and suggested that the district shift its priority from athletics to academics.

Many respondents also **suggested that the schools themselves streamline course offerings.** Several respondents mentioned that there are too many electives to choose from, and that the schools should go "back to the basics" of instruction. Rather than focusing on providing a variety of programs, they suggested that the district augment basic instruction for all students. Several respondents also mentioned that they would like to see language classes streamlined, and that the district should only offer what they consider to be the most useful world languages (i.e., Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish). Others were vocal about the elimination of the International Baccalaureate program in favor of the more broadly-applicable Advanced Placement (AP) programs. They argue that the IB programs are less well-regarded and serve far fewer students than would AP programs.

SCHEDULING

The final major category of suggestions relates to the district's scheduling. **One surprisingly frequent comment suggested that the district align its break schedule with the Ohio State University (OSU) break schedule.** Many UACSD students' parents or babysitters attend or work at OSU, and misaligned schedules can cause unnecessary childcare issues and restricts the time families can spend together.

Other respondents suggested that school should begin later in the calendar year (i.e., after Labor Day). In addition to being more convenient for most families with summer schedules, commenters argue that adjusting the start date would have the added benefit of saving on air conditioning and energy costs. Commenters also suggested that school might be extended by a half or full hour per day to accommodate for a later start time. Some parents also suggested that elementary, middle, and high school start times be staggered to accommodate parents of children attending multiple district schools.

MISCELLANEOUS

The following suggestions were made multiple times, but do not fit into any of the aforementioned themes:

- Some commenters mentioned that the district focuses too narrowly on providing services for gifted students, and neglects those students with special needs or who need additional help. Commenters mentioned the need to provide early intervention for such students as early as preschool.

- Multiple commenters suggested that facilities within the schools should be updated.

- Parents suggested that they would be very willing to assume some administrative or assistant tasks on a volunteer basis, and suggested that the district solicit parent volunteers whenever possible to cut costs.

- Several commenters suggested that the district explore alternative forms of funding, such as grants, endowments, and large donations.

Figure 4.3: Suggestions to Increase District Efficiency

THEME	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Eliminate paper waste	▪ "Cut down on paper with online information and paperwork." ▪ "Streamline the communication process and eliminate all paper as much as possible."
Create one online tool for all necessary resources	▪ "Use more electronic resources for students (online homework, text books on tablets, online forms and signups, etc.) Ideally this would be through on[e] consolidated system for all schools district-wide, to cut down on multiple logins and confusion among the students and parents." ▪ "I am tired of having multiple logins and passwords (lunch fees, Edline, PowerSchool) to do school business. Streamline all school business and info into one log in and make it easy for me as the tax payer that keeps you funded."
Utilize digital technology for learning and communication	▪ "Eliminate expensive paper textbooks in some subjects as appropriate and rely on selected open access, print or digital materials by unit/subject." ▪ "I think instead of mailing us a bunch of info, we should get emails, because I check it more and I wouldn't lose the email either if I got it in that form."
Become more energy efficient	▪ "Consider programs that would allow district schools to reduce its energy output-- perhaps lights that turn off automatically or education of students and faculty to turn off electricity when not in use. " ▪ "Cut costs on energy usage (electricity, water, natural gas, etc.) - better budget on energy usage." ▪ "Reduce electrical costs i.e. lights and computers [off] when no one is using them."
Reduce teacher salaries	▪ "The entire cost issue is in the teacher salaries and benefits. While they are good teachers, in an open market, they are overpaid. Until this is addressed, the rest of this stuff can help, but is basically window dressing. " ▪ "I want our schools to stay strong and competitive, but I believe the teacher salaries for some of the veterans has gotten way out of line. If there was an early incentive for retirement offered to reduce some of this overhead and bring in fresh teachers with more technology talent, I would favor this expense. I am speaking from experience of a teacher I think is past their prime!"
Offer salaries at a level commensurate with other districts/private sector	▪ "Make kids the focus of the schools and not teachers/administrators. Bring teacher salary and benefits in line with what other central Ohio districts are compensating their teachers." ▪ " Big reductions in the overly generous retirement packages. Bring those benefits down to the low end of the private sector. Being a government employee demands no risk taking and your job is not subject to market forces therefore your guaranteed benefit retirements should not be on the backs of children."
Reduce time teachers spend outside the classroom	▪ "Fewer meetings for teachers during the day which in turn means fewer substitutes, consolidated in-service days maybe even fewer." ▪ "Keep the teachers in the classroom more. Less training during school days. Eliminate grading days."

THEME	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Reduce number of administrative positions	▪ "Try to reduce the upper level management staff to eliminate duplication of work. Consolidate upper level management positions to save cost and use saving for more teachers." ▪ "Reduce the number of administrators and non-essential employees."
Share/consolidate services with the city	▪ "Share more services with the city of UA." ▪ "Share waste managemnet [sic] with the city, include recycling with the program."
Busing	▪ "Start a small bus riding fee per child per year. If parents choose to drive children instead of paying reducing [sic] bus routes volume use vans in place of buses for low children routes." ▪ "Consolidating bus routes would help. It makes me crazy seeing buses leave schools not even half full. It may mean a few more minutes for the kids on the bus, but it wouldn't kill them."
Eliminate retirement "double-dipping"	▪ "Negotiate better contracts with teachers and stop the double-dipping retired teachers." ▪ "Keep the young, excited, energetic 'cheaper' teachers & get rid [o]f the tenured teachers who have no motivation to do a better job...Stop double dipping...the teachers who retire, take their retirement & come back as 'consultants.'"
Require teachers to contribute more to own benefits	▪ "Increase % of benefits paid by staff." ▪ "Ask Teachers to pay more out of pocket for health care."
Eliminate teaching positions only as a last resort	▪ "Cut administrators, not teachers." ▪ "Explore increasing morale at the school and in community by occasionally not having pay increases in order to not fire teachers." ▪ "Require higher personal percentage investment into their own retirement and healthcare and do not fire teachers and force crowded classrooms."
Reduce number of elective courses	▪ "Consider offering slightly fewer classes at the high school so that there are not as many electives." ▪ "I feel it is not necessary to offer so many high school classes i.e. languages, AP courses, adjusted courses."
Increase teacher and administrator accountability	▪ "Make teachers/administrators accountable for student's success." ▪ "It is vital to create, implement and execute a system of accountability so the items in this survey become reality and are not just propaganda to get the Levy passed! Also, these systems of accountability should be on-going and not just when we are in a recessionary period."
Move from tenure-based to merit-based compensation system	▪ "Evaluate teacher performance on merit & achievement of classroom learning objectives, not on length of tenure. Offer early retirement or a fair compensation package to tenured sub-par teachers." ▪ 'Change union contracts so if layoffs occur they are based on how good the teacher is, not on how long they have existed at the school. Pay good teachers more and not so good teachers, less."

THEME	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Increase district transparency	▪ "It takes transparency to truly understand what efficiencies can be taken. Otherwise you are relying upon groups or individuals to point things out that can be helpful." ▪ "Just be more transparent so that we may have a true opinion obtained by us as individuals rather than one fed to us by district [marketing] or loud voices that may have hidden agendas or beef's [sic] with the district."
Address teacher union	▪ "Get rid of the union." ▪ "Someone other than the union contract (how about the administrators!) needs to be able to promote the good teachers, and fire the bad ones. The unions are outdated and serve the "worst" union members (by preserving their jobs) at the cost of the students and the highly effective teachers..." ▪ "UA Schools must reduce their largest costs - teacher salaries and benefits. This means addressing the Union, which is always treated as impossibility, but someone has got to do it. "
Explore alternative forms of funding	▪ "Explore using teacher time to apply for grants." ▪ "Look for fundraising through endowments, large donations."
Consolidate or outsource additional facility services	▪ "Share services & collaboration and sharing among all schools in the district [sic]." ▪ "Outsource/Contract out periphery services that are not directly related to educational such as Nursing, janitorial, cafeteria services, and bus services. Would save on pension, salary, health care costs, etc. Let someone else do these jobs who can specialize in it --- our focus should be delivering high quality education."
Eliminate the International Baccalaureate program	▪ "In order to eliminate teaching staff redundancies, the IB program should be eliminated. Its cost can't be justified when it continues to serve a very small number of students." ▪ "Eliminate the IB program at the high school. Very few students enroll and it has a disproportionate influence on the curriculum. AP classes that students want and other schools offer (psychology, sociology, etc.) are not available because the decision was made to offer as IB which is a 2 yr. course and AP focused students tend to not be able to fit into their schedules. Based on enrollment, students and parents have clearly chosen that they don't want IB yet the school and teachers continue to push it. Also, when classes are combined to be both AP and IB, teachers often teach it to the standards of the IB curriculum. IB only classes have a definite reputation for being less difficult than AP, which is also frustrating because it appears to inflate GPAs for those students willing to enroll."
Provide early/extra help for students needing extra attention	▪ "I also would like to see the IEP program revamped in such a way that higher level kids on IEPs work at their own pace, where as those that need additional assistance get the time required to help bring them up to where they need to be."

THEME	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Create district review board	▪ "Establish a 3rd party, non-biased volunteer board made up of UA residents who bring professional expertise (CPA's, Business owners etc.) to review the school budgets and provide feedback to the school board and residents on ways they see to reduce expenses while maintaining excellence in the schools. These individuals would have 2 year terms and be elected similar to the school board and City Council members. Their recommendations would be made public and open for discussion with the School Board." ▪ "I think we need a watch dog to look over everything that goes on at all the schools."
Recruit parent volunteers	▪ "Use parent volunteer hours for activities that add more value." ▪ "Look at getting more parent volunteers ESP [sic] in the lower grades."
Go back to the basics of instruction	▪ "I would like to see teachers get back to the basics and TEACH the students, instead of assigning online lessons, which I'm sure adds to the costs. It feels that my child is relying on their peers to get their education." ▪ "Get back to the basics: History and Government, Math, Languages, Literature and Composition, Science -- with Honors/ AP/ IB levels available. I'm overwhelmed by the number of classes offered -- let alone my children. Leave that to college. No need for smart-boards and advanced technology in the elementary/ middle school classrooms. Focus on the basics -- you don't need to 'edutain' students."
Align school break schedules with OSU schedule	▪ "Change the spring break to coincide with OSU due to the massive amount of parents working/teaching there, and the many sitters who are driving over from OSU to pick up our kids." ▪ "Many children either have parents who work at OSU or babysitters who attend OSU. Misaligning spring breaks throws 11 school days into disarray, generally eating into a parent's vacation time, and therefore family time."
Eliminate excessive spending by school board members	▪ "Stop wasteful spending by school board members (trips, luncheons, etc.)." ▪ "Stop giving raises above that of cost of living to school board members."
Introduce pay-to-play sports	▪ "Pay to play for sports, clubs, activities is needed. These programs should be less reliant on district funding." ▪ "Increasing pay to play fees. Allowing high school and middle school students phys. ed credits while they are involved in a sports/marching band season."
Stagger start times for elementary, middle, and high schools	▪ "If the middle school day was moved to an earlier start/end time, the students who ride the bus wouldn't have such a long day. As it is, the students arrive 40 minutes before school starts, and have to wait for the bus 15 minutes at the end of the school day. This makes for quite a long school day for these students. Other districts stagger their school days so they can use the same busses for all their schools."
Later school start date	▪ "School year should start on Labor Day and end on Memorial Day. This will reduce heating, A/C, fuel and lunch costs greatly. Eliminate ALL extra days off as well… If needed add 30 min to 1 hr. to the school day." ▪ "Why not start after Labor Day, like so many other states (Washington, Oregon and Wisconsin to name a few) and go into June when it is cooler."

THEME	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Reduce number of sports and extracurricular activities offered	▪ "If there need to be cuts academics should be last to go and sports and arts extras should be first to go! Academics to me includes classroom size, teachers, and type of classes offered. (get rid of sports, arts, extra before the affecting academics)." ▪ "I believe that UA can spend less on football, and spend more on educational extracurriculars."
Update facilities and equipment	▪ "The school buildings/structure of the buildings need updating (i.e. bathrooms)." ▪ "Need to improve use of technology, update buildings."

SECTION V: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section displays the demographic characteristics of the survey's respondents, including current district enrollment and past graduation figures.
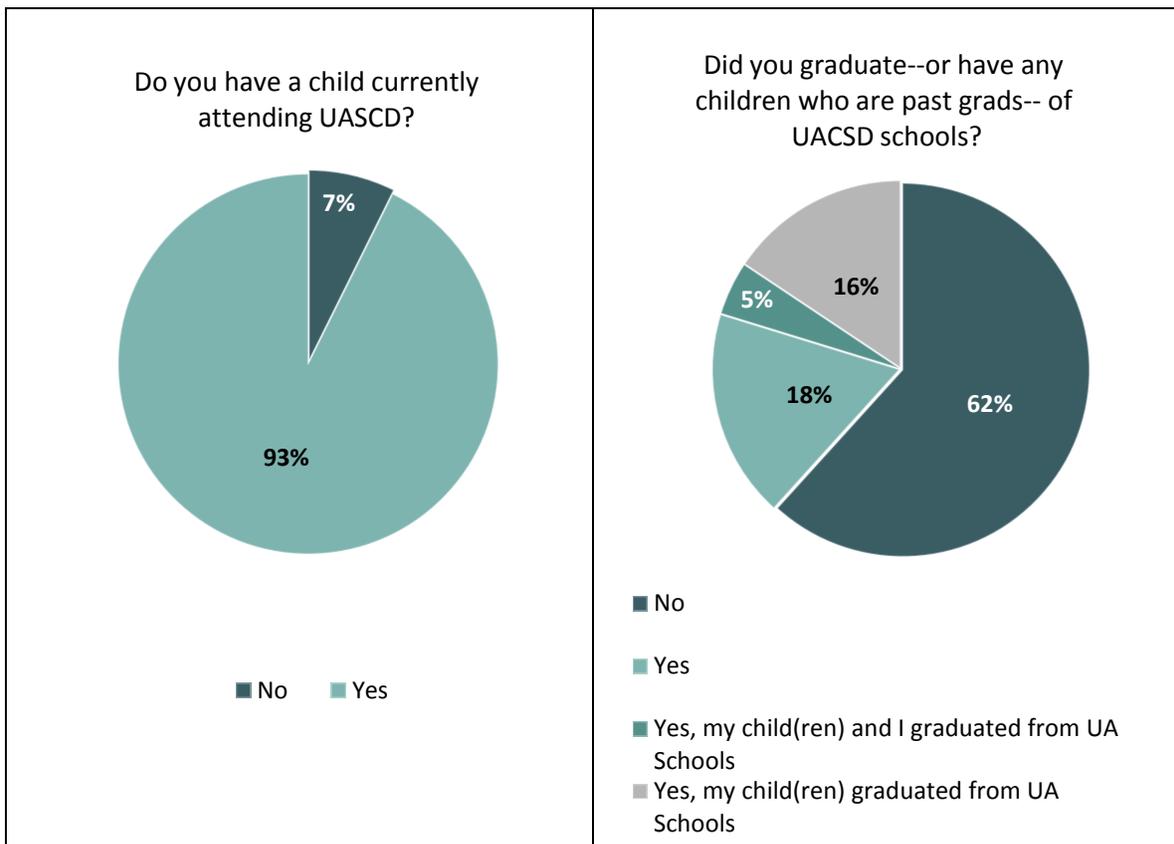
ENROLLMENT

Figure 5.1 displays the district demographic information from 1,881 respondents. The majority (93 percent) of respondents currently have a child enrolled at UACSD schools. Only 7 percent reported not having a child currently attending a UACSD school.

GRADUATION

The majority (63 percent) of total respondents indicated that they neither had graduated nor had a child who graduated from UACSD. Eighteen percent indicated that they had graduated from UACSD, and 16 percent indicated that they had children who graduated from UACSD. Finally, only 5 percent of respondents indicated that they had graduated from UACSD, as well as their child.

Figure 5.1: UACSD Student Enrollment (n=1,881) and Graduation (n=1,862)

Do you have a child currently attending UASCD?

- 7% No
- 93% Yes

Did you graduate--or have any children who are past grads-- of UACSD schools?

- 62% No
- 18% Yes
- 5% Yes, my child(ren) and I graduated from UA Schools
- 16% Yes, my child(ren) graduated from UA Schools

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