

**January 10, 2018**

**Parent Satisfaction Survey Results for the 2017-18 School Year (collected in November 2017 through an online survey)**

Thank you to everyone who completed this year's surveys. The following summary is a combination of three different surveys: The Preschool Exit Survey (7 responses), the Exit Survey to families who departed at the end of the 2016/17 school year (1 response), and the Parent Satisfaction Survey (69 responses).

In order to show the growth of our school and changes we've made, we compared the results of this year's November 2017 survey to those of last November 2016. You will be able to identify areas that have been addressed because of your feedback and other areas that we continue to work on. Thanks to your feedback and the suggestions made by the School Commission (in our Strategic Action Plan), the Parent-Teacher Club, and faculty and staff, the areas of focus for the 2017-18 school year continue to be:

- **Academic Rigor**- reviewing the Common Core, our current math program, and Spanish preparation for high school
- **Curriculum**- focusing on a more robust music program with greater offerings; technology integration and implementing the 1-to-1 device programs in grades 5-8 (completed January 2018)
- **Communication**- redesigning our website and making it easier for families to pay for services online; perform multiple functions with online forms and surveys
- **Safety/Security**- installing a locking door system for the front entryway (completed in December 2017);
- **Enrollment**- purchasing a bus for transporting students from outside the city limits of Bellingham to increase enrollment; using the bus for field trips and other school functions; expanding the reach of tuition assistance to offer more aid to new families

**Survey populations:**

**2016 (91 respondents)**

- Every grade level was represented approximately equally.
- Primary languages spoken at home included 93% English-speaking, 7% Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Tagalog
- Other languages spoken at home included Cantonese, Hindi, Croatian, and American Sign Language (ASL)
- Only 4% of those surveyed said they needed translation or interpretation for conferences

**2017 (69 respondents)**

- Every grade level was represented by participation of approximately 50% of the families in each grade, with the highest number of respondents coming from grades 1, 3, and 7.
- Although the survey was also translated to Spanish, 96% of the respondents answered that English is the primary language spoken at home.
- Seven families answered that they also speak a language at home other than English.

*The survey results are broken into the following nine categories: **Subject Expectations, Learning Resources, Faith and Spiritual Development, Communication, Technology Integration, Student Safety, Change Ideas, Value, Exit Surveys.** However, we'd like to begin with three pages of the positive comments from families about why they choose Assumption. The survey results and comparisons begin on page five.*

Why have you chosen Assumption Catholic School for your child?

**(Here is a sampling of some of the responses we received.)**

- We think there are many benefits to sending your children to a Catholic school such as high expectations, teaching self-discipline, academics, safe learning environment, and a supportive community.
- At Assumption Catholic School, students are provided with a personal formation experience grounded in the mind, body and spirit. It's not just what they learn that's amazing, it's who they become while doing so.
- Smaller class sizes and caring faith community.
- Assumption Catholic School is our family's choice for education due to the school's ability to consistently create outstanding academic qualities in its students. Also, the sense of community is strong within Assumption Catholic School, with many families coming together to raise and foster the student body.
- As parents, we have only one opportunity, one shot, to provide the best education possible to our children. We choose Assumption because we are confident, the faith based education will be excellent. We love a smaller school with deep family and Church connections. We appreciate the opportunity to help perpetuate the legacy of Assumption Catholic School in hope that other families will have the same opportunity as we have.
- Assumption Catholic School provides an above average educational experience with a caring community and a spiritual foundation.
- We chose Assumption Catholic School because at the time the paper showed higher academic achievements than both the WA averages and the Bellingham school district averages. Also, the valedictorians from three of the schools were graduates of Assumption.
- Assumption is a community of people who come together to support the entire family in academics and faith.
- Our kids feel like they're a part of a family at Assumption and that they are supported by an entire community.
- Great educational quality and faith formation
- Assumption Catholic School is a great place for kids to learn care, respect, love and faith.
- Community, faith foundation and genuine concern for my child's education.
- We are consistently impressed and moved by the teachers' and administration's exceptional commitment to our children. We are grateful for the care, creativity and energy they put into educating and nurturing them every day.
- Learning the Catholic faith while building up a strong academic root and making good long-term friends, Assumption Catholic School has it all.
- This school changed our son, our family, our lives. We went from tolerating a chaotic and harmful public school to seeing our son thrive at Assumption. [Our child] recently said, "Mom, Dad, you should have started me at Assumption in preschool." Each morning, we drive "down the mountain" from Sudden Valley, and at the top of Alabama Hill, we look for the church steeple. [Our child] shouts, "There's my school!" Mom makes the Sign of the Cross. Our gratitude will never go away: exceptional school, faculty, students, and families. We're new to the parish and new to the school, and we love Assumption.

- Our largest reason is the Catholic atmosphere. It is the best the whole child is addressed while being educated. (Body, mind and spirit) Also, Assumption CS is like a big family. I feel a level of security with all the families and never have wondered "Will my child be safe with other families at Assumption?"
- I have heard so many great things about Assumption. When we toured the school in November of last year during Open House, we loved how comfortable\_\_\_\_\_ felt. She had not been to any day care setting before so when we left her to go to the other room and learn more about the preschool program, I was worried that she wouldn't want us to leave her but that wasn't the case. The teachers are wonderful and I can already see a difference in \_\_\_\_\_. She has learned so much and her language/vocabulary has really picked up since she started in September. I look forward to many more years with Assumption.
- There are many reason we sent our children to Assumption, but the two reasons that stand out are academic excellence and school community. It was important for us to have our children challenge in their academics as well as having a sense ownership in their education. It was also important for our children to be in a school environment that creates students with a strong sense of value and respect for our faith, people, tradition and community.
- I believe that Assumption is a big part of why my children are respectful, hard-working, successful kids.
- We chose to send our daughters to Assumption Catholic School because of its academic rigor, commitment to diversity, and promotion of catholic values. Assumption Catholic School was worth every penny spent.
- Small classroom sizes, kindergarten teacher, the number of ways families can be involved in my child's education and school experience
- Assumption offers our children the entire package; it is the most academically rigorous school in Whatcom County that still manages to provide a caring, nurturing environment that allows students to flourish. I believe the teachers at Assumption genuinely love and care about my children. The teachers are exceptional and (thanks to small class sizes) are able to teach to individuals at their level. I love having simple access to the teachers and staff whenever it's needed and getting to be involved in my children's education. The values taught at Assumption mirror what we are teaching at home- it's nice to not have to combat what they are learning at school with our family's values.
- Small classes, greater structure, more rigor and easier to communicate with teachers
- I choose Assumption because I know the environment, teachers, and curriculum are the best that Whatcom County has to offer.
- We believe the top-notch education our son will receive will benefit him later in life. The smaller classes, supportive staff, higher standard of learning, patience, kindness and positive environment is something that is invaluable to us. Also, he is being taught an extension of our core values while he's away from his family, giving him the ability to build a stronger foundation which will carry him through life's lessons with confidence and faith.
- Assumption Catholic School allows my child to have a classroom experience unlike any other. They are able to formulate their core values while in an educational environment that strives for excellence.
- I chose Assumption Catholic School because I want my child to learn in an environment that builds moral character, good work ethic, and challenges them to be better. My concern is that public education is focused on equalizing all students, rather than allowing them to grow to their individual potential. My hope is Assumption can reinforce my children's love of learning and give them the tools to never stop learning.
- We chose Assumption Catholic School because they treat and respect the students as individuals and really care about the growth of our kids. As a new family to the school we were amazed and extremely comforted by the hospitality and welcoming of both the staff and existing student in each of our children's grade levels.

- We wanted a school where our children would not only have a good education but they would be surrounded by friends with supportive and involved parents. Receiving a Catholic education was also important.
- Assumption has been the best school for our four children. The faith, values and expectations that we teach our children at home have been enhanced by the school. Our children have been prepared academically for the next steps in life and are each loving Christian people as well.
- I chose Assumption Catholic School because of the commitment to raising community minded children along with the advanced academic work. It was also very clear that my child would receive a more personalized education.
- We chose Assumption for the curriculum, offerings and moral/religious teachings. But even more than those things, this school reinforces what we're trying to teach at home: kindness, thoughtfulness, responsibility for self and becoming good world citizens.
- We have heard from current Assumption families that the curriculum is rigorous and that they feel their children are getting the best education that is available in Bellingham. Our focus is ensuring a good, solid education for our child.
- We wanted the opportunity for our children to receive a faith based education, in a setting that is supportive in both their educational learning and their spiritual learning. We really appreciated the support they receive from the teachers and administrators at Assumption.
- We chose Assumption Catholic School for many reasons. First, we are a Catholic family with children that were attending a different Christian private school. We wanted our children's' education & faith formation to be more inline with our own spiritual beliefs. We were excited for the class sizes for both our children: big enough for social growth, but not maxed out (therefore stretching the teacher too thin). We appreciate the future opportunities of extracurricular activity variety which includes sports. The teachers my children currently have exude strength, positivity, experience and belief in what they do every day. This is reflected in my children as they continue with their extremely smooth transition from one school to another.
- We wanted our children to receive a Catholic education to augment our teaching at home and church. We felt the discipline and rigor of the educational experience at Assumption was the best fit for our parenting style and philosophy. We have not been disappointed, our children have been able to develop their knowledge, skills, and talents fully.
- We are so pleased with the quality education that our children are receiving at Assumption Catholic School. Great Faculty, Great Leadership, it's an all-around wonderful school. I would recommend them with confidence to anyone!
- Faith community is strong, small class sizes,
- We choose Assumption for the faith based education. Academics are very important to our family but having the Catholic teaching is even more important. Surrounding our children with families with similar beliefs and morals in the early years is also important for us.
- The community feeling of assumption is incredible! I am sure that my kid is well cared for, is feeling loved and is learning at above expected levels!
- The rigorous academics, coupled with the religious teaching, is something our family finds to be crucial for our children.
- Assumption is a great school community for our son. He is an engaged child who is challenged every day. We are blessed to have the financial assistance we receive from the generous supporters of our school. It is that support that makes it possible for him to attend ACS.

## I. Subject Expectations

	Meets or Exceeds Expectations 2016	Meets or Exceeds Expectations 2017
Math	85%	92%
Language Arts	95%	95%
Reading	93%	89%
Science	81%	87%
Social Studies	86%	90%
Faith Formation	93%	96%
Physical Education	94%	95%
Music	57%	64%
Art	80%	85%
Spanish	80%	88%
Overall academic rigor	89%	89%

### **Comments...**

#### **2016**

##### Science:

- More hands-on activities
- Robotics program or programming available
- Collaboration with other schools

##### Math:

- More challenge
- Better understanding of the advanced math options
- Understanding of and implantation of common core curriculum (2 similar comments)
- Have a better sense at the end of the school year what math my child will be in for the following year
- Keep the advanced program

##### Music:

- Chance to learn/play a band instrument (6 similar comments)
- Practice reading music
- Full-time music teacher
- More music displayed at the Christmas program

Art & Spanish: Parents would like students to be prepared for Spanish II in high school. The new Spanish teacher has been a welcome change. Parents would like more variety in the art program and more “works” to be displayed across multiple mediums.

#### **2017**

##### Math:

- Common Core is confusing and the multiple ways to solve the same problem challenges students.
- Parents like the following offerings this year:
  - Geometry offered for eighth graders at Bellingham High School,
  - Sixth graders are participating in seventh grade math
  - Engineering and design program from Ms. Elliott
  - After-school choir

**Music:**

The music this year is better than last year since students get instruction more frequently, however there is a wish for more overall music education. (2 similar comments).

**Writing:**

Good job teaching writing in the lower grades, but is there consistency across the grade levels?

**Art:**

Communicate with families more about the types of mediums and what is being taught at the grade levels. (2 similar)

**Spanish:**

Great program. What is the expectation for how much Spanish should be known by 5<sup>th</sup> grade or by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade?

**Note:**

**In 2016**, the Exit Survey showed that all departing families agreed or strongly agreed with academic expectations. 87% were satisfied with the quality of teaching. None said that academics were influential in their decision to leave the school. Current families rated the following subject areas at meeting or exceeding expectations. For those lower than 85% approval, a sampling of comments was included below.

**In 2017**, the exit survey demonstrated that curriculum needs were not a reason for departing. Only one Pre-K exit survey disagreed with the statement that the curriculum needs met their expectations. All subject areas were rated higher in 2017 than they were in 2016 except in the area of reading.

**II. Learning Resources**

	Meets or Exceeds Expectations 2016	Meets or Exceeds 2017	Not applicable
Classroom materials	88%	89%	2%/1.5%
Support teachers	66%	70%	19%/16%
Facilities	79%	76%	1%/0%
Technology equipment	65%	77%	8%

**2016**

In the Exit Survey, all families agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with operations and facilities at the school.

Comments:

- Music, art, science labs; more technology classes like robotics (2 similar)
- Physical safety- security and structure including restrooms in the gym and school (2 similar)
- More comparable to the more updated Bellingham public schools
- Extra support needed for younger students
- Programming classes; keyboarding classes
- Middle school should have their own devices (1 similar)

**2017**

Comments:

- Like the 1-to-1 implementation, STEM opportunities and robotics (2)
- Would have preferred 1-to-1 start in middle school, not in fifth grade
- More help needed for struggling readers
- New lockers needed and a better locker room for girls
- Bathroom upgrades are needed
- Computer/tech teacher for the primary grades is preferred

III. Faith and Spiritual Development

**2016**

96% of families say this exceeds or meets expectations

- Reason parents have chosen the school, development is as good as or better than other Catholic schools;
- Emotional and social issues could be better handled from a faith and spirituality perspective (Moral education- 1 similar)
- Love that children attend Mass once per week and that there is an emphasis on social justice.

**2017**

93% of families say this meets or exceeds expectations

- There seems to be a focus on social justice and the “right answers” rather than relationship with Christ
- Love school mass once per week (2 similar)
- Sometimes behaviors allowed at school don’t match faith-based practices
- Could there be more focus on spirituality for humanity and less on specific saints and religious practices?
- Could there be more teaching of Catholic beliefs in the middle school?
- Can more sacramental prep be done at school?
- Fr. Scott is good at speaking to kids at their level.

**Co-Curricular**

	Meets or Exceeds Expectations 2016	Meets or Exceeds 2017	Not Applicable
Sports	43%	47%	22%/18%
Chess Club	45%	39%	53%/55%
Math Olympiad	39%	32%	57%/64%
Field Trips	64%	65%	10%/16%
Student Council	41%	24%	52%/63%

Service projects	75%	77%	15%18%
School garden	77%	84%	17%/9%
Boy Scouts	36%	34%	58%/69%
Robotics/Science	n/a	34%	n/a/ 53%
Drama/Missoula	n/a	41%	n/a/ 51%

Comments:

**2016**

- More service-related field trips, more engaging trips, more for Pre-K; Include science or engineering field trips (6 similar)
- Provide more arts-related activities like theater or music
- Can there be more volunteers to offer more after-school activities?
- Different sports to be offered; offer chess more than just once per week
- Spread the service learning throughout the year to include more in the spring
- Boy Scouts is great, but could we also include Girl Scouts and other offerings?
- Offer sports for the lower grades
- Garden project is good, but could there be more options for service learning. There doesn't seem to be enough interest here.

**2017**

- More sports offerings for younger grades (3)
- Missoula shouldn't have had a charge associated with it
- Love the Holy Hoops and the ski program for middle school
- Advertise robotics better and add a science club
- Liked breaking up the variety show and Night of the Arts
- Grandparents Day should be reconsidered and take away pressure of buying books

**IV. Communication**

In 2016, **only 64% of the families surveyed** felt that the communication regarding academic information, calendars, and updates **meets or exceeds expectations**.

Comments:

**2016**

- Calendar needs to be printed and sent home monthly; information can be difficult to find (8 similar comments)
- List information for volunteer positions
- Keep using text messages- good, updated information (3 similar)
- Include: when, where, what, and why
- More mobile friendly version of the website
- Differentiate better between the K-8 and Preschool programs- this is confusing for Pre-K families
- Video newsletters are good, but parents miss weekly newsletters (paper version?) This should include "dates to remember."
- Archive the Wednesday envelopes to be able to access them at a later date

In 2017, **88% of the families surveyed** felt that communication **meets or exceeds expectations**.

**2017**

- Weekly newsletters from teachers are great
- Better navigation needed for website and mobile devices (2 similar)
- Seesaw has been great for families (2 similar)
- Too many links and papers to keep track of. Can you separate into different and similar emails instead?

#### V. Technology Integration

**2016-** Technology expectations- **70%** meets or exceeds expectations

**2017-** Technology expectations- **86%** meets or exceeds expectations

Parents surveyed in this area commented on things like:

- Make it about the teaching and not the technology
- Teach students typing
- Students may be photographed and filmed too much at school
- Prepare students for what they will get in high school, teach about Internet safety and what information is valid and true online.

#### **Student Safety**

**2016**

Of the families surveyed, 74% said that the school meets or exceeds expectations in the area of student safety. This is, in large part, due to the lack of communication this past year regarding the registered sex offender being allowed on campus. Some of the comments below:

#### **Comments:**

- Could there be a locked front door during the school day? Sometimes people come and go into the lobby and there's nobody at the front desk. (9 similar)
- Hope House and its proximity to the school. (3 similar comments)
- Earthquake preparedness
- Multiple comments about the registered sex offender being allowed on campus last year and the school's policy for this issue (10 similar comments)
- Supervision during the day on campus at recess and at lunch; parking lot (2 similar)
- Locking the door to the playground

#### VI. Student Safety

**2017**

Of the families surveyed, 82% said the school meets or exceeds expectations in this area. 7% say that it is below expectations.

Parents who scored lower in this area commented about these top three concerns from November 2017:

- Location of the Hope House (3 similar)
- Security for the front door, having a "buzz" in system (8 similar)
- Managing traffic in the traffic loop

## VII. What would you change about the school?

### 2016

- Tuition increases (1 similar)
- Technology (1 similar)
- Lack of specialist instructors
- More hot lunches
- More lockers for middle school, fewer books and weight in their backpacks (1 similar) Look into e-books.
- Coordinate early release and holidays with BPS
- Homework overload (2 similar)
- Lower tuition for all Catholic families who want to attend
- More extra curricular programs for elementary (1 similar)
- Alumni program to keep faith and friendships strong through high school
- Fewer graded assignments in middle school- only grade tests and quizzes
- Pay attention to things “below expectations” that make a difference even if they seem small or insignificant
- Raise tuition for less fundraising- more burden now on fewer parents with declining enrollment
- Focus more on faith formation to encourage students’ personal commitment to faith
- One fundraiser to “rule them all” so current fundraising efforts could be turned into educational efforts
- Have a professional school counselor
- New parent orientation
- Higher level math and science (1 similar)
- Parking and security (2 similar); Hope House location
- Drop-off and pick-up procedures (1 similar)
- Streamlined communication structure (2 similar), more external marking
- More scripture study in the younger grades, Bible studies
- Playground
- Bathrooms
- Music and technology programs
- Add a way to pay everything at once to save from writing multiple checks throughout the year
- Rather than more work, more challenging work
- Teachers to give out stamps or pencils rather than candy for reward
- Open discussion for what’s going on in the school
- Change Scrip program
- Teach government to middle schoolers
- Allow for more challenging activities in math and science
- Friendliness of staff and teachers at drop-off and pick up (2 similar)

### If you could change one thing about the school...

#### 2017

- More affordable tuition and more tuition assistance (4 similar)
- Make it more of a neighborhood school
- Longer school day, more school days, and a different start time
- Security (8 similar)
- Nearby Catholic high school (2)

- More consistent treatment of families
- Revisit the Common Core standards for effectiveness (2 similar)
- Review the uniform policy and make changes (2 similar)
- Facilities like the bathroom and the stage in the gym (2 similar)
- Homework policy and grading system for fourth and fifth grades (3 similar)
- Bring in a bus for more students from the county
- Friendliness and attitude of the school towards prior students and families
- More athletic options for the younger students
- More differentiated instruction in the early grades

VIII. The value of an education is worth my money- 92% agree or strongly agree

#### IX. Exit Survey results

**Exit Survey**- curriculum was neutral, academic rigor was neutral, but school met overall expectations

Dissatisfied with leadership, teaching the class, and willingness of the school to listen;

Communication was adequate and parents felt welcomed

Tuition was not a factor; Variety of activities was dissatisfied, things offered were neutral

Fine arts and lack of athletic opportunities were influential

#### **Pre-K Exit Survey**

Majority had attended for two years

100% agree or strongly agree that school met expectations; one strongly disagreed that the curriculum met the needs.

All but one family agreed or strongly agreed with being satisfied in the areas of curriculum; leadership, concerns, communication

Five of seven agreed that tuition was a factor, 1 was neutral and 1 strongly disagreed

5 of 7 agreed or strongly agreed that that varieties of activities met their needs

Two said art and music were somewhat influential, 3 said academics were influential; six said that tuition was a factor.