

Groton Community School Family Survey Highlights 2019-2020

Thank you to all that participated in this year's Family Survey. We know your time is more precious than ever these days, so we truly appreciate the time 51 of our families took to provide feedback on their GCS experience. We examine your comments and input closely every year and it continues to guide us in our annual self-evaluation in addition to helping us make improvements and adjustments in our upcoming school year. We're so pleased that 85% of the respondents indicated that they were "Extremely Satisfied" with GCS overall, but we know there is always room for improvement! A summary of our results are as follows:

GCS undertakes a variety of efforts to get the word out about our wonderful school, but it appears as though we rely on our families the most! More than 68% of our surveyed families said they found out about GCS through family or friends. Whether it's through word-of-mouth or on social media — nearly 40% of our families discovered GCS through an internet search or social media — your opinion matters and people are listening!

Speaking of internet presence, respondents were split on whether they utilized www.grotoncommunityschool.org. It is our goal to make GCS's website interactive so families feel the site is useful to them on a daily basis. One suggestion was to post "helpful resources" that are often sent home by teachers, including suggested apps, recipes for Play-Dough, snack suggestions and more. We will look into adding more helpful resources for families on our Family Login page.

We appreciate the feedback on our distance learning efforts this year, as this was a new and challenging time for us all. It seems the biggest struggle — with more than 65% — was encouraging your child's interest and involvement on Zoom sessions. When you consider the age group of GCS, this was not necessarily a surprise! We were pleased that the majority of you were very satisfied with the communication and curriculum offerings during the closure period. The staff of GCS worked incredibly hard to make sure all children's needs were met, but we recognize that we couldn't meet the largest one that many of you mentioned: childcare. And while we wish we could have met that need, we're thankful for the kind comments that many of you expressed about our Distance Learning efforts, including that we "continued to shine in dedication to learning and maintaining community," and that you were "so grateful for the constant efforts."

Our fundraising team set records this year and it seems our respondents appreciated their efforts, with one family calling the different fundraisers "diverse and accessible, making it easy to support the school in ways that make sense for everyone." One family also valued our efforts not to have families "selling candy, wrapping paper or candles!" However, a few families commented on the number of fundraisers and how they are spaced out throughout the year. One family mentioned that it seemed a "little overwhelming." The Board of Directors, which oversees fundraising efforts, understands that while it may know what's coming up, families — especially our newer ones — may not. Last year we created a fundraising information chart for families to review at the end of the year. We now think it may be beneficial to hand this information chart out at the beginning of the year as well, so families can prepare for what's coming!

This year, we also asked a question regarding the Annual Fund — we were so pleased to see that a number of you felt comfortable giving to this important aspect of our nonprofit school. GCS looks for grant opportunities that not only help us monetarily, but also open up curriculum opportunities that would otherwise not be available to us. For example, the iPads used in each classroom were made possible through a \$10,000 Technology Grant. When applying for those grants, we are asked what percentage of organizational support — which includes the Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, Staff, and Families — that we have in our Annual Fund. In combination with other fundraisers, the Annual Fund is necessary to balance our budget, as tuition fees do not cover our expenses. We believe it is important for our families

to understand how the Annual Fund works to serve our children and we'll do a better job conveying that information in the future. See last year's [Annual Report](#) to learn more.

Finally, more than 70% of you have visited the ***Forward Motion Campaign*** online, no doubt in part because of the visual progress that's happening at 110 Main Street! We're so excited for our families to see this new facility. We are still seeking continued community participation and contributions to fully realize our plans. Many of you wondered on this year's survey if construction had been stopped as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The answer is yes, the state's mandated closure orders did stop construction on the site. However, we are pleased that we are back up and running (as I'm sure most of you have seen). More details on our official "move-back" date will be coming soon!

Some Comments Shared with Us Were:

"We are grateful to have such a wonderful, caring and thoughtful preschool placement for our children. Thank you for all you do!"

"We enjoyed following all the pictures of the progress as the school construction is going on. This year I tuned in to really keep up on the changes due to the pandemic."

"We are so thankful for the opportunities and experiences we have had at GCS. The teachers and staff are beyond remarkable. We will really miss GCS next year! It will always hold a special place in our hearts for building a strong foundation of love, respect, and community in our children. We cannot thank you enough!!!"

"The fundraisers are great and thankfully raise a lot plus I like that they also help you to get to know people more."

"We love GCS and always tell everyone so. Best decision we've made!"