Upper Canada District School Board

Culture Survey of Students and Staff

Narrative Report

September 2015

Ipsos Reid
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1400
Ottawa ON K1N 7B7
Tel: 613.241.5802
Fax: 613.248.7981
www.ipsos.ca
Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) has created a strategic plan, featuring key results indicators (KRI), as a part of their accountability framework in order to help in identifying critical success factors that will inform future program directions. The UCDSB has already established a Net Promoter KRI in order to understand their reputation among the greater community and is tracking the Board’s graduation rate as they work towards their system goal of a 90% graduation rate.

To support its strategic goals, the UCDSB has commissioned Ipsos for the development and implementation of a culture survey. Culture surveys help to assess the day-to-day relationship that individuals have with the institutions they belong to or participate in. In the present context, the culture survey is a useful way to understand the current learning environment of students, job satisfaction among staff and in a more general sense to understand the culture of UCDSB schools in terms of how well students and staff are aligned with core district objectives, with the strategic purpose of knowing what areas are in most need of clarity and communication to move forward.

As described in the Accountability Framework set out in the UCDSB’s C.R.E.W. Integrated Strategic Plan, this research will assist trustees in interpreting the success of the Board and communicate with their constituents by providing measurable outcomes of progress towards these goals. This report identifies key areas of success and areas of focus for future initiatives.

In C.R.E.W., service excellence is understood as a part of the culture building initiative. For this reason, the culture survey presents an opportunity to address many goals, as it will build on goals relating to service excellence as well as wellness and work-life balance.

This will serve as a benchmark for evaluating the evolving UCDSB culture and environment as changes are promoted by the Board and implemented across the UCDSB schools. Future waves might include a subset of these questions in order to track key areas for improvement and success over time among different groups, including but not limited to current students/staff, parents and UCDSB high school graduates.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

- assess the spiritual, mental and physical wellness of students;
- assess the effectiveness of professional development, allocation of resources, communication, and the wellness of staff;
- create a dashboard of key results indicators of stakeholder satisfaction and engagement for tracking; and
- understand how students and staff perceive the UCDSB.
2.0 Methodology

2.1 Overview
In order to meet the objectives of the research, an initial baseline study was conducted that involved the following surveys:

1) **Survey of Staff**: A 30-minute online census survey of n=1710 staff conducted between October 31\textsuperscript{st} and December 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2014.

2) **Survey of Students**: Two different surveys among students tailored to their age group and education level consisting of a 5-minute online survey of n=377 primary school students and a 15-minute online survey of n=150 secondary school students conducted between May 31\textsuperscript{st} and July 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2015.

3) **Survey of Parents**: A 15 minute survey of n=609 parents conducted concurrently with the student survey between May 31\textsuperscript{st} and July 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2015. This survey preceded each of the student surveys within the same survey tool and allowed parents to provide consent to their children responding.

2.2 Survey of Students
As the UCDSB is best positioned to administer consent and promote participation in the survey with students, Ipsos was responsible for finalizing the sampling plan, methodology in accordance with appropriate ethics and privacy rules and managing consent from parents through the survey tool. The UCDSB was responsible for the distribution of the survey invitation amongst students.

A survey invitation containing unique invite codes was provided to students to bring home to their parents. A message concerning the nature of the research and a consent form were also attached and provided within the web-based tool used to complete the online surveys. This approach is commonly used within our Ipsos Panel when surveying children and young adults through first obtaining their parents’ consent. This approach also allowed for a portion of the questionnaire to be directed towards parents themselves to assess their attitudes and opinions of the UCDSB.

2.3 Survey of Staff
For sampling staff, all staff members were invited to participate in the survey via e-mail. UCDSB and Ipsos promoted participation through a pre-survey letter/email and video featuring a prominent Board member and Ipsos personnel speaking to the importance of the survey.

Ipsos recognizes the necessity for anonymity and confidentiality while conducting surveys among employees. As such, Ipsos does not share the identities of any survey respondents and will report only in an aggregated fashion, looking at subgroups of no less than 30 individuals to ensure that there is not ability to identify respondents through the research results.
3.0 Summary of Findings and Future Directions

3.1 Overall Results

The overall results of the UCDSB Culture Survey show that attitudes vary heavily depending on the group being questioned. Whether it is parents, staff, primary students or secondary students, each group holds its own opinions and has its own challenges. The survey results revealed that staff members and students generally view their school differently than they view the UCDSB as a whole. In some instances, stakeholders are more critical of one than the other, usually depending on which entity they feel to be responsible in each given scenario.

The results also show that students, as they move from primary to secondary school, become less positive about their school’s environment, its teachers, and the UCDSB in general. Parent’s attitudes towards the UCDSB and its schools do not reflect the same change of attitude, with most parents continuing to be much more positive than their child attending secondary school. Only half (50%) of secondary students are ready to make decisions on their future or know what they will be doing after high school. Though the most secondary students have a positive attitude for overcoming difficult situations (76%), half have a difficult time coping with the stress of school (49%), and two in five indicated they have trouble with social anxiety (37%).

Most parents are confident that teachers are well trained (87%), care about students (83%), and believe that staff members help develop strong characters (75%) and provide an emotionally safe environment (78%). However, just over half believe the school is doing enough when it comes to student’s mental health (54%) or trust the education system to ensure children get enough physical activity (56%). Moreover, only two thirds (64%) of parents feel their children are well prepared for the demands of life.

Staff perceptions depended heavily on whether they were discussing the UCDSB or their school specifically. Most often, staff member views felt more negatively towards the Board than their specific school. Less than half (46%) agreed that there is good communication within the UCDSB, and only two in five (39%) feel that communication is open and honest. This proportion increased when focused on the staff member’s school itself. One quarter (24%) of staff feel it is safe to challenge the Board, while three in five (60%) feel they can challenge the way things are done at the school level.

Though most (74%) staff members are proud of working for the UCDSB, many were critical of certain aspects of their work. Less than half (46%) of staff members feel they have the staff and support necessary for student success and engagement. Only two in five (40%) feel valued and recognized by the UCDSB, while only half (49%) believe that within their school, spiritual wellness of staff and students is a priority.

In each of the survey’s categories (communication, resources, education, and wellness) there was a substantial amount of information gathered. Continuing on in the summary of findings section, each category’s results are examined in more detail.
3.2 Communication

The UCDSB culture survey looked at the communication the UCDSB and its schools have with staff, teachers, parents, and students, as well as the perceptions each of these groups holds towards the UCDSB. This included not only how the school disseminates information to each of its stakeholders, but also defining the reputation and image of the Board and its schools.

When asked how they currently receive information about school events, half of secondary students selected morning announcements (51%) and teachers (50%). Though most secondary students selected morning announcements as their preferred way of communication (60%), over two in five (43%) selected email as a good way to communicate with them. Currently, less than one in five (17%) secondary students receives communication by email, suggesting there may be potential to pursue this option as an alternative or additional means of communicating with secondary students.

Almost all (95%) parents read all communications they receive from their child’s school and three quarters (74%) feel their child’s school does a good job of communicating with parents. This feeling remains consistent with communication received from the UCDSB, as three quarters (73%) are satisfied with the level of information received by the UCDSB and seven in ten (70%) are satisfied with how the UCDSB communicates with parents.

Only six in ten (61%) staff members read all communication they receive from the UCDSB and just over half (55%) feel the UCDSB does a good job communicating with staff. Conversely, staff members were much more likely to have positive feelings towards communication from the school. Nearly nine in ten (86%) staff members believe they are well informed about what is happening within their school. Around four in five believe school communication frequency is about right (79%), is clear (82%), and has a point (82%). Three quarters of staff members’ feel communications from the school are open and honest (73%), whereas only two in five feel the same way about communications received from the UCDSB (39%).

Half (49%) of UCDSB staff members have contacted the Board at least once in the past year. Of those staff members who have contacted the Board, over half (56%) were due to a human resources issue. Overall, most responses from the Board were considered timely (75%), clear (74%), effective (72%), and adequate (72%).

Over two thirds of both staff (79%) and secondary students (69%) believe their school required at least minor change, while fewer staff, one in five (21%), believed their school needed no change at all. This suggests that, on average, staff members have higher expectations for their school and are looking for at least some improvements to be made.

Staff members are much more likely to feel a change is required for the UCDSB. Almost two in five (37%) staff members feel that the UCDSB requires major change, while less than one in ten (8%) think there should be no change at all. When given the opportunity to provide descriptive words for what it is like to work for the Board, however, four in five (81%) staff members described both the UCDSB and their school (84%) in a positive manner. When asked whether they are proud to work for the UCDSB, three quarters (74%) of staff members tended to agree, whereas only one in ten (9%) disagreed. This indicates that though staff may think there is room for improvement, the UCDSB provides an overall positive work environment to its employees.
When given the opportunity to describe their school in their own words, a higher proportion of primary students (71%) were positive, compared to secondary students (57%). When primary students were asked to select a picture that best depicts how they feel about their school, more than nine in ten (92%) chose a positive image, with over half (53%) choosing the picture representing ‘Happy’. Secondary students were less positive, with only three quarters (73%) of students being at least somewhat satisfied with their education at the UCDSB and two in five (37%) believing there are better places they could go to school. The shift in positive feelings from primary to secondary school is less apparent with students’ parents. Overall, three in five (58%) parents are satisfied with how the UCDSB manages schools in their area.

When considering their favourite things their school has to offer, two in five (41%) primary students mentioned non-subject related activities like recess, sports, and field trips. Primary students’ least favourite things was also topped with non-subject related activities (19%), followed by staff/teachers/classmates (15%) as well as specific class subjects (15%). The results for secondary students showed some similarities to primary students, with most commonly students hope non-subject related activities will never change (21%). However, unlike primary, secondary students believed most strongly that ‘people’ needed to change (19%, 11% specifically stating teachers).

Net promoter scores differed based on whether the respondent was a member of school staff or a parent. While school staff members had relatively higher Net Promoter Scores for the UCDSB as a place for children to go to attend (School: 38, UCDSB: 41), parents’ Net Promoter Scores were higher for recommending the school their child was currently attending (School: 43, UCDSB: 35). Parents of secondary students had a much lower Net Promoter Score (School: 29, UCDSB: 27) than both parents of primary students and school staff.

A minority of parents indicated they are involved with their child’s school on a regular basis. Three in ten (30%) parents identify as regular volunteers at their child’s school, while one in ten (12%) say they frequently support school events. Most parents (61%) claim they are too busy to participate in school events. This lack of presence is being felt by staff, as three in five (62%) would like parents to be more involved.

Most parents and staff believe the public is at least somewhat confident in both the UCDSB and its schools. Parents were much more likely to indicate that the public is completely confident in their child’s school (39%), compared to the UCDSB (21%); whereas school staffs’ results were inversed. Three in ten (29%) staff members indicated that the public is completely confident in the UCDSB, while only one in ten (11%) felt the same public confidence for their school.
3.3 Resources

The UCDSB culture survey examined the Board’s performance in resource allocation by measuring stakeholder perceptions of school engagement, allocation of resources, requesting and receiving resources, the use of technology in the classroom, and the current efforts being made to address mental health and wellness for its staff.

Across all resource measures, staff members were least likely to agree that their school has the resources necessary to engage students. In fact, fewer than half (46%) agree that their school has the staff and support necessary for this task, and only half (52%) agree that their school has the equipment and materials necessary for student engagement. Secondary students, on the other hand, look much more favourably upon school resources. Two thirds of students (65%) agree that the staff at school engage students in learning and over six in ten (63%) believe that their school has the equipment and materials necessary for engagement. Questions measuring how well the UCDSB is doing in facilitating student involvement in their school found mixed results, with three quarters (73%) of secondary students agreeing that they are given opportunities to participate in extra-curricular/student activities of interest to them, however only half (52%) felt empowered to direct their own learning at school.

Though secondary students were more likely than staff members to feel that their school has the resources necessary for an engaging environment, when students’ perspectives are compared with their parents, parents were seen as the most positive. Seven in ten (70%) parents agree that their child is able to explore subjects and topics that interest them within their school’s learning environment.

When looking at whether school resources are maintained and allocated effectively, most secondary students agree that school resources were sufficient. Two thirds of students believe school buildings and facilities are well maintained (67%) and that classroom resources, like materials, books, and equipment, are adequate for lessons (64%). Over a third (35%) of students, however, believe that the high number of students in a classroom prevents teachers from giving them the help they need.

Seven in ten (72%) staff members agree that school resources are used responsibly by staff, but only half (50%) believe that the resources within their school are allocated effectively. When asked about resource allocation by the UCDSB, staff members were much less positive. Under a third (29%) of staff members agree that resources are distributed equally from the Board, with almost two in five (38%) actively disagreeing with this statement. Moreover, almost a third (30%) believe that the UCDSB does not effectively allocate resources where they are needed. A higher proportion of staff members agree (32%) than disagree (25%) that classroom resources are not equally allocated between classes in their school, and that it is a problem.

When comparing school staff and secondary student perceptions on school equipment, staff member results continue to be more negative than that of the students. Only half (50%) of all staff agree that their school has the equipment necessary for student success and achievement compared to two thirds of secondary students (65%).

Unlike staff attitudes on the allocation of resources, the same proportion (50%) of staff members agreed that the UCDSB has the equipment and materials it needs to achieve its objective. Two in five (40%) staff members also believe that the Board has the staff and support it needs to achieve its objectives.

Almost half of all staff members (47%) have requested new or additional resources in the past year. The
The top three most requested resource categories were technology (48%), art supplies (30%), and human resources (27%). Resource requests that were most likely to be granted include art supplies or materials (63%), cleaning supplies or materials (56%), sports equipment (53%), and math related resources/supplies (53%). The resource categories with the least likelihood of being granted by the UCDSB were general/curriculum/learning material (24%) and facility resources/maintenance/upgrades (30%).

When asked to identify the personal technology devices they own, two thirds of students confirmed that they own a smartphone (67%), a laptop (67%), or a gaming console (66%). Only a small fraction (2%) of students had no personal devices whatsoever. Two thirds (65%) of students claimed that they at least sometimes get to use their technological devices in the classroom for learning purposes, while fewer than one in five say they rarely or never get this opportunity (17%).

Three quarters (77%) of staff members agreed that they are aware of the health and wellness resources available to them, while one in ten indicated they were not aware of these resources (10%). Fewer than one in ten (8%) agreed that events in their life had negatively affected their job performance and that they were unable to find support at work.
3.4 Educational Programs

Quality of education is a key indicator of success for the UCDSB. In order to maintain the best learning environment possible for its students, the Board must ensure its students are in an environment where they can be innovative and properly prepared for their future, while at the same time give each school staff the chance for professional development and career opportunities.

The quality of teachers and staff working within the UCDSB was rated on a variety of criteria from the perspectives of parents, primary students, and secondary students. Close to nine in ten (87%) parents are confident their child’s teacher is well trained. Over four in five (83%) feel that their child’s teacher cares about the students, however only three in five (63%) believe teachers have taken initiative to support their child when they were having a difficult time. About three quarters of parents feel the staff at their child’s school do a good job helping students develop strong characters (75%) and that staff members provide an emotionally safe environment (78%). A third of parents (38%) indicate, however, that they don’t know how to ensure their child is getting adequate education about mental health specifically.

Student relationships with their teachers were generally positive. Nine out of ten (90%) primary students feel positively towards their teacher. When asked to choose a picture that best represents how they feel towards their teacher ‘Happy’ (37%), ‘Confident’ (16%), and ‘Entertained’ (15%) were most commonly selected. Secondary students, while not as positive as primary students, also rated UCDB teachers and staff favourably. Four out of five students agreed that the teachers and staff at their school are respectful (81%), trustworthy (80%), and friendly (79%). They were, however, less likely to agree that their school has the staff and support necessary for their success and achievement (71%) or that their school’s staff members engage students in the learning process (65%).

Every school must balance the priorities of a multitude of subjects being taught to its students. For this reason, the UCDSB culture survey examined student and parent interest and satisfaction with what is being taught in school. Though both parents of primary and secondary students shared high satisfaction with the quality of teaching of English (86% and 82% respectively) and lower satisfaction for the quality of teaching of Music (64%, 60%), the two groups of parents differed on a variety of other subjects. Most notably, parents of primary students were more likely to be satisfied with the teaching of Art (82%) and French (81%), whereas parents of secondary students were more likely to be satisfied with the teaching of Social Sciences (83%) and Science (83%).

The top three subjects that both primary and secondary student parents want to discuss with their child’s teacher are performance in reading and writing (92% and 86% respectively), performance in mathematics and sciences (93%, 90%), and whatever the teacher thinks is important to discuss (91%, 84%). When taking into account only the top priority selected, a much higher proportion of parents of primary students selected performance in reading and writing (47%) as their top priority, while a much higher proportion of parents of secondary students chose mathematics and sciences (36%) as their top priority.

The most popular subjects among primary students were science (14%), math (9%) and history (7%), however many students gave responses focused on topics of interest, rather than identifying a direct subject. These topics primarily focused around nature, like animals, dinosaurs, and the environment (12%). Primary students were also asked which subject they believe they are best at. Most believed
they were best at gym class and sports (27%), Art (24%), or Math (21%), while drama (5%) and science (4%) were selected less often.

Secondary students were asked several questions about their outlook on their future. Most secondary students are confident that they will graduate (89%), but many are unclear on where they are headed after school. Only half feel prepared to make decisions about their future (50%) or have a clear plan on what they want to do when they graduate (51%). In fact, one third (32%) of students have no idea what they want to do after high school. Only three in five (62%) secondary students feel they are able to take courses and learn skills at school that will help them achieve their goals. A troubling figure when four in five (82%) students believe developing their skills is at least as important as passing classes. Over one third of students (35%) feel they have not participated in engaging or pertinent programs or classes in the past year.

When looking at post-secondary education, over four in five secondary students (83%) are at least slightly motivated to pursue university or college. Just over one in ten (13%) of those in grades 9-12 plan to enter the workforce or an apprenticeship directly after school, while a quarter of those (27%) in grades 7-8 had never given plans past secondary school any thought. Students in grades 9-12 are twice as likely to indicate they plan to attend a college program (40%), compared to students in grades 7-8 (21%).

Staff members were at least somewhat confident that they have had the opportunity to be innovative at work (84%), with almost half of being completely confident (47%). Secondary students had much lower confidence with fewer than six in ten (56%) indicating they were at least somewhat confident that they are given the opportunity to be innovative at school. Only one in five (20%) were completely confident.

Staff members’ professional development in the UCDSB was measured through several different questions. Three in five (58%) staff members agreed that the UCDSB provided them with the professional development opportunities they need to be successful. Only over a quarter (28%) of staff members believe they are often asked to complete tasks that are outside their area of expertise and qualifications; while two in five (39%) agree that their talents and skills aren’t being put to their full use at the UCDSB. Overall, these results indicate that most staff members are receiving the correct level of professional development support.

Over four in five (83%) staff members believe that it is important for the UCDSB to offer development assignments or internal job opportunities to employees. Fewer than half (46%), however, feel that the UCDSB allows them to advance through these means. Similarly, over two in five (45%) believe that the UCDSB offers plenty of opportunities for developing skills. That being said, when asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement ‘Development of professional skills is not encouraged at the UCDSB’, fewer than one in five (16%), agreed.

Most staff members take professional development seriously. Three quarters (75%) of respondents believe that developing their expertise is as important as getting a promotion, with almost half (45%) in strong agreement. Three in five (59%) have a plan for how to develop their skills and expertise within the UCDSB.

When asked about job recognition, only half (51%) believe they know what the UCDSB recognizes as good performance, and even fewer agree that those who perform well at the UCDSB get recognition for it (38%). Nineteen in twenty of staff members (95%) agree that they feel qualified to do their job.
Three in ten (28%) staff members have applied for at least one career opportunity within the last year. Of those who have applied for a job, four in five (79%) applied to a position within the UCDSB, while just over a third (36%) applied outside of the UCDSB. Of those who applied for jobs within the UCDSB, three in five (57%) were unsuccessful. Two thirds (68%) of those who were unsuccessful received a clear explanation of what skills need development in order to be successful in the future.
3.5 Wellness

Wellness within the UCDSB is measured through the lifestyle and mental and physical well-being of students and staff. The topics in this section include all stakeholder perceptions on building healthy relationships at school, how students and teachers maintain a work-life balance, general physical and mental health, and the UCDSB’s acceptance of different cultures, religions and lifestyles.

Nine in ten staff members (90%) and nineteen in twenty secondary students (96%) confirmed having friendships with people at their school. These proportions decreased when respondents were asked about their trust in their colleagues/fellow students. Four in five staff members (79%) agreed that they trust the people they work with, while only three in five secondary students (59%) trust the students they go to school with.

While almost nine in ten (86%) staff members agreed that people at the UCDSB are respectful to others, just over two in five (44%) secondary students thought the same of other students. The same discrepancy of opinion was apparent when analysing the results for friendliness at the UCDSB. Around nine in ten (88%) staff agreed that people at UCDSB are friendly, while just over three in five (64%) secondary students thought that the other students are friendly. The much lower results from secondary students suggest that the atmosphere within UCDSB may be more abrasive for high schoolers than teachers and staff realize.

Primary students were very positive about their classmates. Two thirds of primary students felt their classmates were best described as ‘friendly’ (68%), while one in seven (15%) feel ‘happy’ about their classmates.

Looking at work-life balance, staff members were asked to compare the number of hours they are currently working with the number worked last year. Three in five (60%) responded that their working hours are about the same as last year. Just over one quarter (28%) responded they now work more hours than last year, while a small proportion (12%) stated that they are now working fewer hours. When presented with the same question, almost half of secondary students (46%) indicated that they are currently working more hours compared to last year. For staff members and secondary students, two in five (41%) are concerned with their hours spent working.

Results show that almost six in ten (56%) staff members work more than 40 hours a week. Just fewer than half of staff members agreed that they always or often spend time working over the weekends (46%), working past 5pm (43%), or stay connected to work during a vacation (35%).

Staff member and secondary student healthy living was examined through measures such as exercise, nutrition, and sleeping habits. When compared against each other, the results show that secondary students are much more likely to exercise regularly (62%), than staff (38%). For nutrition, a much higher proportion of staff (73%) indicates they have a healthy balanced diet, compared to students (64%). The sleeping habits of staff and students are on a par (secondary students: 68%, staff: 71%).

When looking at staff alone, three quarters (74%) of employees rate their physical health as good or excellent. Staff members’ weakest healthy living criteria was in exercising for at least an hour a day at least three times a week, where only one in five indicate they do so (19%). As a follow-up question, staff members were asked to think about their professional and personal life balance, to which almost half said they do not feel gives them enough time to exercise (46%). Despite this, only one in ten (10%) feel
that exercise is not a priority to them.

Furthermore, even though close to two thirds (64%) feel they have achieved a balanced work and personal life, half (49%) also say they don’t have enough time to spend on hobbies, while four in ten (39%) believe they don’t have time to be with friends or family.

A much higher proportion of staff members (78%) feel that they have good mental health compared to secondary students (65%). In fact, one third of students (33%) believe they have low mental health which needs attention.

Generally, staff view working at their school positively, with four in five (79%) feeling free to be themselves at work and two thirds (67%) feeling valued and recognized by their school. Only two in five (40%) felt the same recognition from the UCDSB, suggesting that the bond between staff within schools is stronger than in the UCDSB as a whole. Half (49%) of employees feel that the spiritual wellness of staff and students is a priority within their school. The top three most prevalent health and wellness related issues staff members see facing their colleagues is stress/burnout (85%), job stability (52%), and anxiety (49%).

Most secondary students have a positive attitude, with three quarters (76%) believing they can always manage to solve difficult problems if they try hard enough, and two thirds (68%) of respondents saying they have a strong support system. When asked about the stresses at school, however, many secondary students did have negative feelings. Only half (52%) of respondents find it easy to manage pressure at school, at home, and in social groups, and about the same portion (49%) have a difficult time coping with stress at school. Close to two in five secondary students also agreed that they have trouble with social anxiety (37%), and feel they don’t have much energy (37%).

Parents also gave their perspective of health and wellness for students within the UCDSB. While nine out of ten (88%) parents feel their child is able to engage and build respectful friendships, less than two thirds (64%) believe their child is well prepared for the demands of life.

Most staff and parents believe the UCDSB accepts and respects different cultures, religions, and individual lifestyles. Parents, however, were much less likely to give a favourable response than staff. Four in five (82%) staff members feel that the UCDSB respects cultural and religious differences, whereas only three in five (57%) parents feel the same way. Again the same difference was apparent for the second category, with four in five (80%) staff members and three in five (62%) parents feeling the UCDSB respects individual lifestyle choices.
3.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2015 UCDSB Culture Survey is the first installment of a long term tracking survey. This means that the results recorded in this study is a preliminary base line. To make use of this information it is essential to identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the UCDSB and its schools and work to improve upon them. With this in mind, a list of key tracking metrics has been created to measure the UCDSB’s reputation as having a good working and learning environment. The next installment of the UCDSB Culture Survey will once again measure results against each of these metrics to assess whether improvements have been achieved where needed within the UCDSB and its schools.

Communication:

- Fewer than half of staff members (46%) agree that there is good communication within the UCDSB.
- Two in five (39%) staff feel that communication is open and honest within the School Board.
- Just one in three (30%) staff feel there are opportunities to feed their views upwards within the Board, compared to seven in ten (69%) within the school.
- Only a quarter of staff (24%) feel that is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done within the Board, compared to three in five (60%) at the school level.
- Two thirds (65%) of parents of secondary students are satisfied with the level of information they receive from their child’s school.
- Seven out of ten (70%) parents are satisfied with how they receive communication from their child’s school.

Resources:

- One in three (32%) teaching staff feel that classroom resources are not allocated equally and this is a problem.
- Three in ten staff feel resources are equally distributed (29%) and effectively allocated (30%) within the School Board.
- Half of staff (50%) feel that the UCDSB has the equipment and materials it needs and two in five (40%) feel that they have the staff they need.
- Fewer than half of staff feel their school has the staff and support necessary for student success (45%) and for student engagement (46%).
- Only two in five (58%) of secondary students agree that students have the ability to explore subjects and topics of interest in their school.
- Three quarters (73%) of secondary students believe they are given opportunities to participate in extra-curricular/student activities that interest them.
- Half (52%) of secondary students feel empowered to direct their own learning at school.
- Over three in five secondary students believe their school has the resources needed for them to achieve success (65%) and engage them in a learning environment (63%).

Education:

- Two in five (39%) staff feel that their talents and skills are not being put to their full use.
- Although most (83%) staff feel it is important for the UCDSB to offer professional development, only half (55%) feel that professional development is encouraged within the UCDSB.
- Half of staff (51%) know what the UCDSB recognizes as good performance and two in five staff (38%) feel that those who perform well are recognized for it.
- Three in five (63%) parents feel teachers take initiative to support their children when they are having difficulty.
- Four in five (83%) parents feel teachers care about the students.
- Three quarters (73%) of parents believe the staff at their child’s school help to build strong character.
- Four in five (78%) parents feel teachers and staff provide an emotionally safe environment.
- Almost two thirds (65%) of secondary students believe the staff at their school engage students in the learning process.
- Four in five (80%) secondary students believe the teachers and staff are trustworthy.

Wellness:

- Two in five (40%) staff feel valued and recognized by the UCDSB.
- Half (49%) of staff feel that within their school the spiritual wellness of staff and students is a priority.
- One in three (31%) staff that requested health and wellness related resources reported not receiving them.
- Two in five (41%) staff are concerned about the current/increased number of hours they are working.
- Three in five (64%) staff feel that they can easily balance work and personal life.
- Over three in five (64%) parents believe their child’s school prepares students for the demands of life.
- Over half (54%) of parents believe their child’s school is doing enough to address students’ mental health.
- Three in five parents believe that the UCDSB respects different cultures and religions (57%) as well as individual lifestyles (62%).
- Three in five secondary students trust the students they go to school with (59%) and think they are friendly (64%).
- More than two in five (44%) secondary students believe the students at their school are respectful of their classmates.
- Half (49%) of secondary students have trouble dealing with the stress of school.
- One third (33%) of secondary students believe they have low mental health that needs attention.