

 thoughtexchange - *results and insights*



# Introduction

Peninsula School District hosted their first Thoughtexchange conversation in Fall 2016 and learned a lot about our school district and community. We found out how deeply the community appreciates are teachers and learned that classroom sizes were of great concern. We also learned what important questions our community has about your district and look forward to using this information to shape our district's future.

The following document outlines who took part in the conversation and key takeaways as well as the top thoughts for each of the questions asked.

# The Thoughtexchange Process

Thoughtexchange is a group discussion app for modern leaders who want to build relationships while making informed decisions. A simple process ensures everyone is heard, everyone learns and important ideas emerge.

Thoughtexchange can be used to engage groups of 5-50,000 people and patent pending data analysis provides deep insights so customers can take actions that have support.

The right diagram shows the three steps of the Thoughtexchange process. On the following pages, you can find the details of the questions asked and a summary of the findings.



Share answers to open ended questions



Add stars to thoughts shared by others



Discover what is important to the group

## Questions

Q1

What are some concerns you have about our School this year?

Q2

What are some things you appreciate about our School this year?

Q3

What other questions do you have about our School or district?

## Participation



**2,802**  
PARTICIPANTS



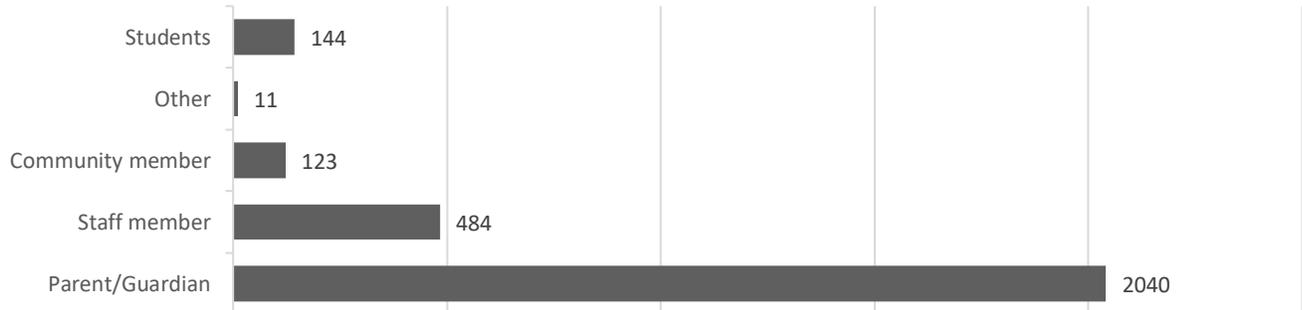
**6,554**  
THOUGHTS CONTRIBUTED



**163,326**  
STARS ASSIGNED

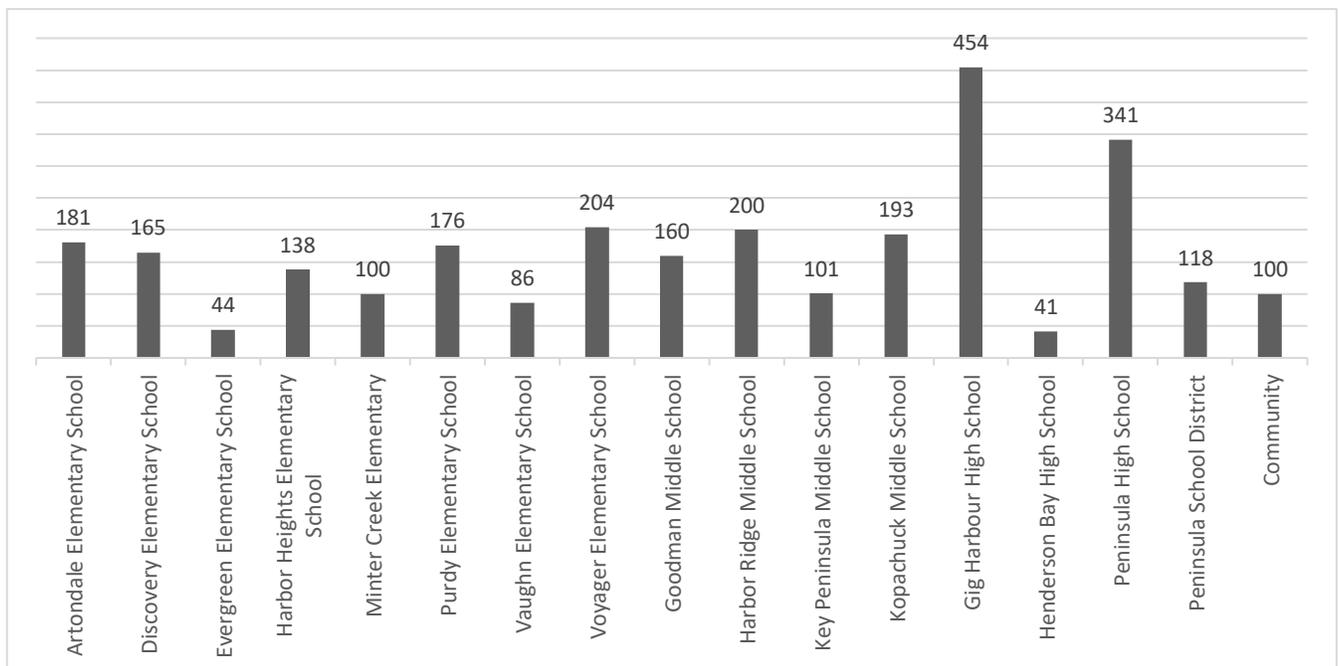
## Participation by Demographic

Each participant is only counted once – regardless of whether he or she took part in the Share step, the Star step, or both. The numbers below represent the unique stakeholders across the community who took part in the conversation broken down by role.



## Participation by School

The Thoughtexchange conversation happens at the school level with an invitation sent out by that school administrator. The chart below shows the number of participants at each site.



## Top Thoughts

These are thoughts that received the most stars in each question. As you review them it is important to remember that unlike surveys where people assess previously determined ideas, in Thoughtexchange all thoughts were contributed by a participant.

Q1

What are some concerns you have about our School this year?

“Overcrowding. A large number of additional homes are being put in Gig Harbor, with class sizes getting bigger but no expansion. Plans had been in effect for an additional elementary school in the harbor and I'd like to see another push to get that completed.”

49 ★ 13 ?

“Overcrowded classes. We all realize that the more attention kids receive the better they can succeed, in all aspects of their lives. Plus, its got to be difficult on the staff to successfully manage a school that is beyond capacity.”

57 ★ 14 ?

“Children are more than test scores. In our rush to turn everything into data, we risk missing out on seeing the children and encouraging their strengths. Numbers can't describe everything and in our haste to quantify children, we hurt them, especially when scores are not as good as we'd like them to be.”

65 ★ 14 ?

“Facilities and technology need to be updated.”

57 ★ 17 ?

“We are getting more students with very challenging behavioral needs. These students come with many needs that often take away from the support that the rest of the class needs.”

50 ★ 11 ?

Q2

What are some things you appreciate about our School this year?

“GHHS offers a wide range of classes. We are pleased with the number of elective classes offered to our students. This allows them to get an idea of what they might like to study in college.”

52 ★ 17 ?

“Security! Thank you for securing our schools! I feel the kids are so much safer now that the building are locked and guests have to get buzzed in.”

51 ★ 16 ?

“We appreciate communication. We appreciate having access to school information via PowerSchool and websites. We like receiving emails, calls and messages from the District. When it comes to children's education and safety, there can never be too much information and communication.”

55 ★ 16 ?

“Some really great teachers. Enthusiastic, supportive, well-qualified teachers who genuinely care for kids and know how to teach their content areas.”

71 ★ 21 ?

“The school provides a positive environment to the students. It's crucial that we support our children and provide a positive learning environment as this will help foster their growth and learning.”

60 ★ 19 ?

### Q3

What other questions do you have about our School or district?

“What are the long range plans for building new schools? We have amazing students and staff, yet our buildings rank low compared to other schools in our league and surrounding areas.”

111 ★ 34 ?

“Start times. Will we follow Seattle's lead in changing school start times? How many studies have to show that it's better for high school students to start later before we prioritize students' health?”

134 ★ 32 ?

“Plan for accommodating growth in Gig Harbor? Gig Harbor is growing like crazy and has difficulty passing funding for school facilities. What is the detailed plan for accommodating all this growth and the children who come with it (including, but not limited to, paying for facilities needed), when so many of our schools are so crowded already?”

149 ★ 41 ?

“Do we have a long range plan to replace/update facilities?”

114 ★ 33 ?

“Can we promote bonds and levies more effectively? We pay less property tax than any other district in the county. Kudos for the great work but we can and should pay a bit more. Levies need to be passed and the district needs to do a better job of explaining why and then creating a marketing campaign to get the message to the public.”

127 ★ 36 ?

## I Participant Objectives

Has this process increased trust and/or transparency within the district?

“Working with community groups - It is to PSD's credit that it works with so many of our community groups. This cooperation gives the community more buy in to what our schools are doing to build better citizens for our future. We are in this together.”

*Community engagement*

Does the community feel like the school district is listening? And feel valued by the district?

“Community is emphasized - I appreciate that PSD, throughout all of its schools, emphasizes to the students that they are part of a bigger community (i.e. the school as well as Gig Harbor as a whole). I have seen great things come out of community service and giving back.” *Community engagement*

Are there any causes for celebration in the district? Areas of pride?

*Teachers and staff, communication with parents, school environment*

School facilities?

This is a big area of concern, in terms of capacity and the condition of school facilities. Participants see population growth happening in the district and are concerned about resultant overcrowding in the schools.



## I Leadership Objectives

Can we determine the level of support for a future bond or levy?

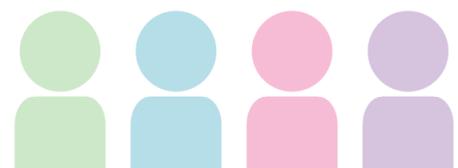
*Address growth and overcrowding, facilities, need new school, funding and finances*

Participants appear to be concerned about capacity and the condition of school facilities in the district, and they seem supportive of the idea to build new schools or improve/renovate current facilities to meet student needs.

Participants have a lot of questions about funding and finances:

“Can we promote Bonds and Levies more effectively? We pay less than property tax than any other district in the county. Kudos for the great work- but we can and should pay a bit more. Levies need to be passed and the district needs to do a better job of explaining why and then creating a marketing campaign to get the message to the public.”

“More funding to build more and new schools.”



## I Organizational Objectives

How are each of the schools doing?

- Teachers and staff are appreciated by every school
- Facilities appears to be a common area of concern
- Class size is a concern to almost all schools except Harbour Heights Elementary School and Henderson Bay High School

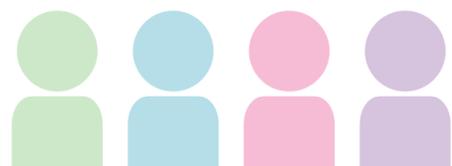
Is the central office supportive of what they are doing? Participants feel hopeful that things will improve with the new leadership.

“For the first time in a very long time, there is a vision for the district - The board and the superintendent seem to be on the same page and moving us forward in a concrete direction.” *Leadership*

“Unity of purpose. I feel thankful that staff work together to challenge students both socially and through curriculum, with the ultimate goal of students' independence and success in the "real world." *Leadership*

How does the community feel about the school facilities?

There are a lot of concerns around the population growth in the district, and leadership is urged to take the initiative to address growth and overcrowding in schools. Concerns also arose over the quality of school facilities, and the condition of school buildings. Participants indicated their interest in having new schools built to help address population growth.



## I Organizational Objectives

**How are teachers doing with focusing on the “whole child” rather than test scores?**

Participants expressed concerns about too much emphasis on test scores:

“Children are more than test scores. In our rush to turn everything into data, we risk missing out on seeing the children and encouraging their strengths. Numbers can't describe everything and in our haste to quantify children, we hurt them, especially when scores are not as good as we'd like them to be.”

Participants also expressed a desire to see a balance between testing and education that focuses on the “whole child”:

“Whole student instruction. I am hoping to see more teaching that involves less focus on test scores and more focus on executive functioning skills, social skills and project based group learning. Those are true work force skills important for students to be positive community members.”

