



Hillfield Strathallan College  
Here Excellence is a Way of Life

## HILLFIELD STRATHALLAN COLLEGE

### 2013 Parent Survey - Summary of Findings

*“I am proud to say that my child attends HSC.”*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2013, HSC undertook a comprehensive survey to measure parent satisfaction, expectations and engagement in critical areas of College life. The survey was developed in consultation with an unbiased third party and sent electronically to all parents, with scheduled reminders over a two month period.

Tailored for the HSC learning environment, survey questions were designed to aid us in our strategic planning efforts. Data gathered will help us measure progress towards achievement of our current strategic objectives and provide benchmarks to assess the experience of our families both internally and as compared to those at other independent schools across Canada.

For the survey design, interpretation and results analysis, HSC hired Lookout Management Inc. (LMI), a preeminent survey consultant and specialized provider of market research services in independent education. For more information, visit [www.lookoutmanagement.com](http://www.lookoutmanagement.com).

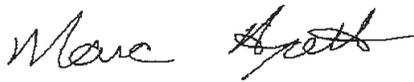
To date, LMI has conducted 113 Parent Surveys for independent schools. On a scale of 1.0 to 5.0, ratings of 4.0 are the norm for schools of a similar caliber, reputation and stature to HSC. We are pleased to share that HSC Parents rated their general satisfaction with the College at 4.2. This is further affirmation for us that the College is meeting standards of educational excellence. We recognize that many ratings are cause for celebration and that others identify for College leadership potential areas for further exploration and consideration.

An initial review of survey findings permits some tentative conclusions. Your responses reinforce the four global themes that emerged as critically important components of an HSC education from our 2011 Parent Survey:

- High Academic Standards
- Safe, Caring, Nurturing Environment
- High Degree of Individual Attention for all Students
- Leadership Development at all Levels

These four themes remain central to our efforts, and will guide us in our strategic planning activities.

For information on our strategic planning process, we invite you to visit the **Strategy at HSC** page on the HSC website at [www.hsc.on.ca/strategy](http://www.hsc.on.ca/strategy).



Mr. Marc Ayotte  
Head of College

## METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The purpose of the 2013 Parent Survey was to provide the College with a deeper understanding of the market we serve – our parents and students. In so doing, HSC is poised to respond more effectively to our families' needs and interests, and do so with improved efficiency in the allocation of available resources.

The survey was designed to:

- measure satisfaction levels, both generally and for specific elements
- measure attitudes about the College
- differentiate respondents by groups (including Variability in General Satisfaction, Grade of Enrollment, Travel Time, Household Income and Tenure with the College)

LMI first conducted parent surveys for the College in 1998 and 2001. However, due to the 12 year gap since the last LMI survey was completed, and the significant changes to the design of the 2013 questionnaire, there are few points of reliable comparison across the three surveys.

## THE 2013 PARENT SURVEY PROVIDES HSC WITH A NEW BENCHMARK

### RESPONSE RATE

Results reflect parental input from 443 completed questionnaires.

This sample size – representing a participation rate of approximately 59.6%, an average response across measured schools – provides for a level of confidence of 99%, plus or minus an error rate of 4%.

The overall sample is more than adequate for the purpose of trending and for strong comparative analysis across major categories. When trends in assessment and combinations of trends can be identified, the refinement and re-direction of activities can respond even more strongly to areas of need.

### BEST SCORE RESULTS

Lookout Management Inc. has to date conducted 113 Parent Surveys for independent schools. We recognize that schools operate in their own unique markets, and that comparisons with HSC are imperfect at best. It may, however, add meaningful perspective to understand that a low score within HSC results (for example, 3.4 on the scale from 1.0 to 5.0) may also be a common low score for all other schools measured.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TOTAL RESPONSE GROUP

All Ratings measured on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0

### PARENTS RATED THEIR GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH HSC AT 4.2

- Parents rated their general satisfaction with HSC at 4.2
- This matches the average score among independent schools surveyed by LMI  
Among 113 parent completed LMI surveys, the best score to date is 4.5.
- When asked if HSC is fulfilling its Mission/Vision, ratings ranged from 4.1 to 4.3

Level of satisfaction with each of the following elements of school life.		
<b>academic facilities</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>acceptance of cultural differences</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.3</b>
arts facilities	4.2	4.1
<b>athletic facilities</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>
attention to individual student needs	4.0	3.9
availability of extra help	4.2	4.0
clarity of the School's mission, vision, and values	4.1	4.1
class size	4.2	4.3
college/university counselling	3.9	3.9
emotional safety of students	4.0	4.0
health and medical services	4.1	4.1
interscholastic athletics	4.0	3.9
<b>lunch program</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.6</b>
parent/teacher conferences	4.1	4.0
physical safety of students	4.2	4.3
<b>sense of community for parents</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>size of the school</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
	<b>HSC 2013</b>	<b>LMI Independent School Average</b>

\* Table Legend

High Scores   
Low Scores 

Level of satisfaction in College communications.		
<b>with your child's teachers</b>		
b) quality of communications	4.2	4.0
<b>c) accessibility, when sought</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>with College/University Counselors</b>		
b) quality of communications	4.1	3.8
c) accessibility, when sought	4.1	4.1
<b>with your child's Division Head</b>		
b) quality of communications	4.2	4.0
<b>c) accessibility, when sought</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>with the Head of School</b>		
b) quality of communications	4.3	4.0
<b>c) accessibility, when sought</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>with the Development/Advancement Office</b>		
b) quality of communications	4.1	4.1
c) accessibility, when sought	4.2	4.2
	<b>HSC 2013</b>	<b>LMI Independent School Average</b>

- 24.2% of respondents rated amount of homework assigned as “too much”
- 22.8% rated emphasis on leadership development as “too little”
- Ratings of publications
  - School-specific e-newsletters (3.9)
  - College e-newsletters (3.9)
  - HSC Review (3.7)
- 31.3% of respondents indicated that their children had used Learning Services for support or enrichment this year
  - These respondents rated the Learning Services helpfulness to their children’s education at 4.1 and its helpfulness to their own efforts to play a more effective role in their children’s education at 3.9.

\* Table Legend

High Scores   
 Low Scores 

Level of satisfaction with each of the following elements of school life.		
mathematical skills	4.0	3.9
<b>coping with peer pressure</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.6</b>
creative thinking skills	4.0	4.0
<b>critical thinking skills</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>intellectual curiosity</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
leadership skills	3.9	3.8
making formal presentations	4.2	4.1
<b>organizing time effectively</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>
reading effectively	4.0	4.0
research skills	4.0	3.9
respect for others	4.2	4.1
self-advocacy skills	3.8	3.8
self confidence	4.0	4.0
setting high expectations for self	4.0	4.0
social skills	4.0	3.9
social responsibility	4.0	4.0
<b>technology skills</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>test-taking strategies</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>
willingness to face new challenges	4.0	4.0
<b>working cooperatively in a group</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>working independently</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>
writing effectively	3.9	4.0
	<b>HSC 2013</b>	<b>LMI Independent School Average</b>

- 46.3% of respondents report having made a donation to HSC in the current school year
- 51.2% anticipate making a donation to the College in the next year
- 66.2% of respondents reported knowing that donations help to cover the full costs of educating their children at HSC
- 88.9% of respondents indicated that HSC was their first choice among schools
- Of the parents whose children first attended HSC in Grade 6 or higher:
  - 35.6% indicated that they held the greatest influence in the decision to attend
  - 11.5% answered that the child most influenced this decision
  - 52.9% described it as equally shared

Level of satisfaction with each of the following elements of school life.		
<b>Having enrolled at HSC, my child will be better prepared for college than would otherwise be the case.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>
I am comfortable with the financial obligations involved in enrolling my child at HSC.	3.4	3.6
<b>I am personally involved at HSC as a volunteer.</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>I am proud to say that my child attends HSC.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>I feel that my child is treated as an individual, with unique needs, interests and talents.</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
I find the parent community to be welcoming.	3.5	3.8
When I receive feedback from HSC, I have a clear understanding of my child's performance.	4.2	4.1
<b>I see HSC as a transformational experience for my child.</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>I would recommend (have recommended) HSC to a friend.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Money spent on education at HSC is well invested.	4.0	4.1
My child derives significant value from participating in HSC community service program.	3.9	3.8
<b>My child has at least one close friend at School.</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>
My child is regularly challenged to meet his or her full academic potential.	4.1	4.1
<b>My child is very involved in out-of-school activities.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>
My child is very involved in HSC extra-curriculars.	4.2	4.0
<b>My child receives academic tutoring from outside HSC.</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>
My interactions with teachers and staff at HSC have helped me to play a more effective role in my child's education.	3.9	3.9
Problems regarding my child are communicated to me in a timely manner.	4.0	3.8
HSC has created an environment in which my child has developed an interest in the broader community.	3.6	3.9
HSC is a place where people from all walks of life are welcomed.	4.0	4.0
HSC promotes a love of learning in my child.	3.9	4.0
<b>HSC faculty genuinely care about my child.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>
The quality of education at HSC meets my expectations.	4.2	4.1
HSC makes a compelling case for my philanthropic support.	3.5	3.6
<b>There is at least one trusted adult my child can talk to at school.</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Time spent on academics, the arts, and athletics is relatively well balanced.	3.9	3.9
	<b>HSC 2013</b>	<b>LMI Independent School Average</b>

## SUMMARY

HSC would like to thank all parents who participated in this vital survey. Findings will be used for planning purposes to continually enhance our learning environment and contribute to the building of a framework for continuous improvement of parental satisfaction.

Variability in satisfaction – by definition – reflects relative successes and challenges. We embrace the discovery of every new opportunity for improvement, and celebrate our successes.

We are tasked as a community to commit to follow-up activities that narrow the gaps between areas of success and identified challenges. Below are some of our preliminary observations, organizational learning and actions from our review of the survey findings to date:

- Review with teachers and staff the strong associations between reported overall satisfaction among parents, and the provision of individual attention to students.
- Confirm for faculty and staff the benefits of overall satisfaction as related to their successes in communications with parents.
- Confirm for teachers the importance of their efforts to engage parents who wish to play more effective roles in their children's education.
- Maintain focus on the development of organizational skills in students.
- Strive to ensure that the breadth of student capability is well matched with the breadth of program delivery along a continuum – with academic support at one end, and academic challenge at the other.
- Advance the conversation among teachers and staff on promoting a love of learning in students.
- Strive for greater understanding amongst parents about the importance of annual giving to the operation of the College, and subsequent greater participation by parents in HSC's annual giving campaign. Participation is well below the average among measured independent schools.
- Seek out ways to improve the overall sense of community for parents and encourage greater levels of involvement from parents as volunteers.

Thank you for your participation in this important benchmarking exercise. We are only strong as a College if we have active participation by all stakeholder groups. Your commitment to ensuring that HSC stays world-class is deeply appreciated.