

GrowCove Civic Organization
Cove Schools - Community Survey Analysis
July 20, 2019

Executive Summary

In May 2019, as a follow-up to community comments and concerns regarding local education that were elucidated during the current Small Area Planning process, GrowCove Civic Organization asked the Superintendent of Huntsville City Schools, Christie Finley, if she would prepare an informational presentation for Cove neighbors. Ms. Finley agreed to an event, scheduled for Monday, July 29th, 2019 at Goldsmith-Schiffman Elementary School.

To provide input for the content of the presentation, GrowCove members developed an online community survey. The survey was structured to provide opportunities for open-ended community questions and praise, along with a multiple-choice list of concerns/priorities. Because GrowCove is a Civic Organization spanning the geography of the historic Big Cove area, possible priorities/concerns were selected for inclusion based on whether they were felt to be more unique, relevant, or disproportionately impactful to Big Cove residents and students in Huntsville High School feeder schools, which are some of the largest and/or most geographically isolated schools in the district, and which as a whole is currently subject to a Federal Desegregation order.

The survey was distributed electronically via the GrowCove webpage, newsletter, social media (Facebook and Nextdoor), and Parent-Teacher Association email lists or groups for schools within the Huntsville High School Feeder Pattern including Goldsmith-Schiffman ES, Hampton Cove ES, Hampton Cove MS, Monte Sano ES, Huntsville JH, and Huntsville HS. The survey was open for approximately two weeks, from July 5-19, 2019. A total of 160 people responded to the survey. All questions were optional, and thus the sample size for each question varied. Detailed results of the survey follow in this report.

In summary, survey respondents are most concerned about current enrollment and growth projections, and the feasibility of new schools in the Cove, especially a high school. Many factors play into this situation, and it is important to have an honest community discussion of issues and possible solutions.

It is our hope that the Superintendent will use this information to craft a presentation addressing the highest concerns and priorities of residents in the Big Cove area of metropolitan Huntsville.

Survey Demographics

160 people responded to the electronic survey. Almost all of them lived within Huntsville city limits in the “Cove” area of Huntsville. 80% had school-age children residing in their households, with the majority of households having 2 or more enrolled in grades K-12.

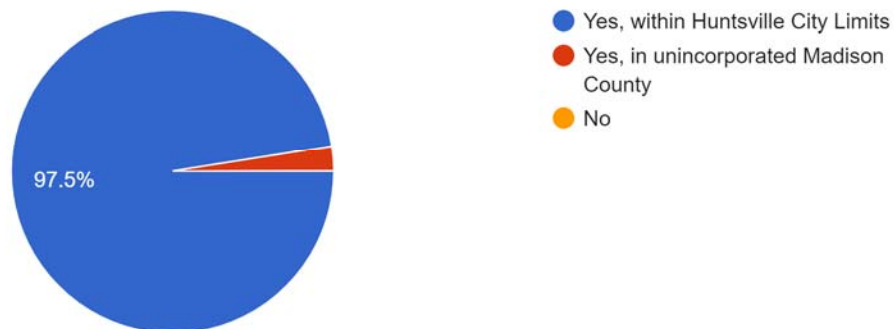
Of the 132 households with school-age children, 127 households have students enrolled in their local assigned schools for the upcoming school year. 5 households plan to utilize choice schools (Magnet, etc), and 5 will have children in private schools. Some households (7) have children enrolled in a mix of public and private.

Regarding past experience (last three years), 112 households had children enrolled in various educational settings, indicating that at least 20 survey respondents were most likely parents of rising kindergartners. 107 of 112 households had enrolled children in their assigned schools over the past three years, 7 households had utilized Choice schools in the district, 6 had students in local private schools, 3 home schooled, and 3 had kids in other states or Alabama counties. All homeschool and most private school families had also had children enrolled in their assigned HCS public school in the last three years.

The demographic section of the survey also asked if people wished to share any more information regarding their specific household educational experience, and approximately 46 households responded. Some experiences were very positive, others negative, and some respondents used the question as an opportunity to expound on current concerns. These submissions were given to HCS administration for review.

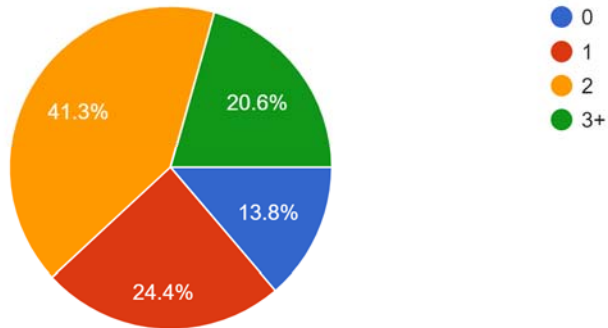
Q. Are you a resident of the Cove?

160 responses

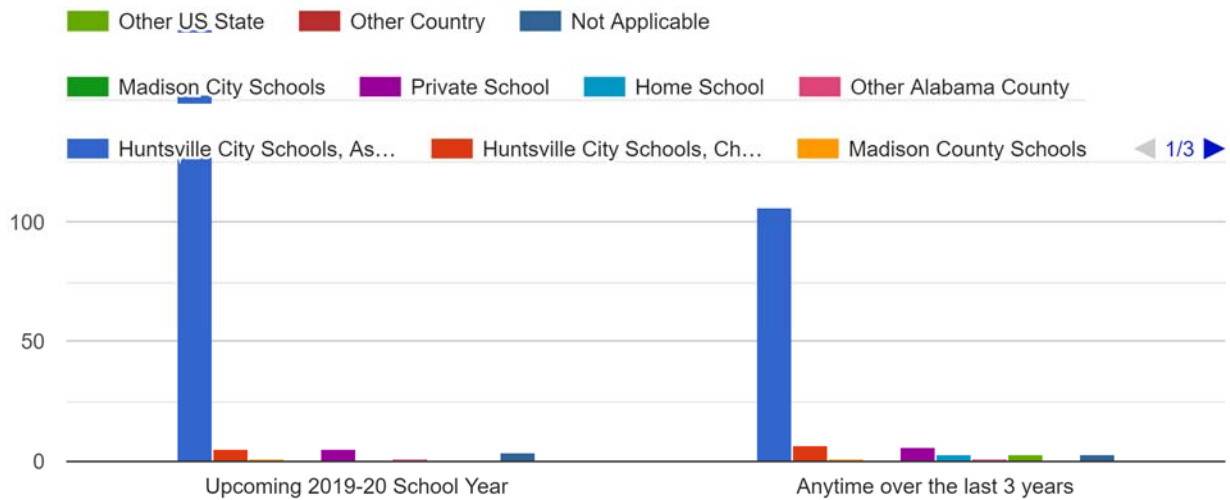


Q. How many school age (K-12) children currently reside in your household, as of August 2019?

160 responses



Q. If you have children age 5-21, where have your children been enrolled in school (K-12)? Please choose all applicable answers.



Survey Questions

1. **What questions do you have about our local Huntsville City Schools? (n=126)**

Most of the people responding to the survey answered this open-ended question. By far, the most pressing concern for local residents was the status of a potential high school in the Cove, with approximately 80% of responses focusing on or including this topic.

The next most common subject was Administration (including teacher support/turnover and finances), followed by safety, transportation, and student relationships. Finally, school lunch, recess, and concerns regarding both gifted and special education rounded out the subjects of open-ended questions.

Verbatim responses, grouped by category, are included as **Appendix A**. Where responses included multiple topics, they appear in multiple categories.

2. **A recent survey conducted by the City of Huntsville Planning Department during the Cove Small Area Planning process revealed that local public schools are considered to be one of our area's greatest strengths. Is there specific praise that would you like to share with HCS administration? (n= 61)**

Survey takers who answered this question praised the teachers and administrators at all of the Cove schools, as well as the school board representative and district superintendent. People were pleased with the increased level of communication and transparency this year within the district and felt that local schools had a very good reputation. Excellent parent/community involvement, PTAs, and volunteer support was mentioned several times. Some survey respondents also specifically mentioned HCMS music programs as great experiences and local models. Verbatim responses are shown in **Appendix B**.

3. **What are your most pressing concerns about our local schools? (Please choose no more than five options, which are listed alphabetically. Detailed questions may be written above in #1.) (n=157)**

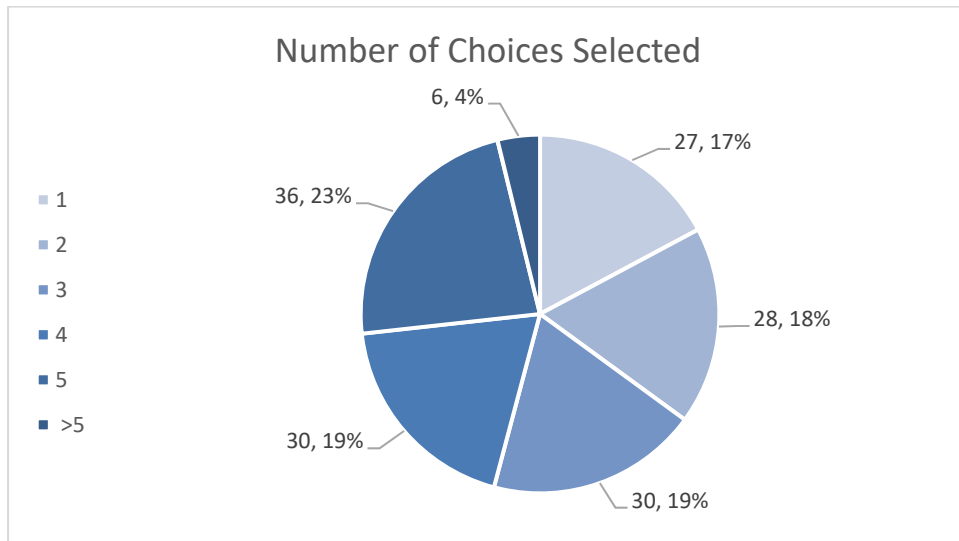
To facilitate standardized responses that would be easier to analyze, we developed a list of concerns/priorities thought to be especially relevant to our geography and school feeder pattern. Following the high level of concern about a possible high school in the Cove, some possible priorities, such as gifted education, special education, and food were also selected for inclusion based on informal feedback from local parents. General education and curriculum were not included as a listed choice as they are relatively standardized

across the district and other higher-level forums may be more appropriate in which to address this topic.

People were allowed to select up to 5 priorities. The list included the following options:

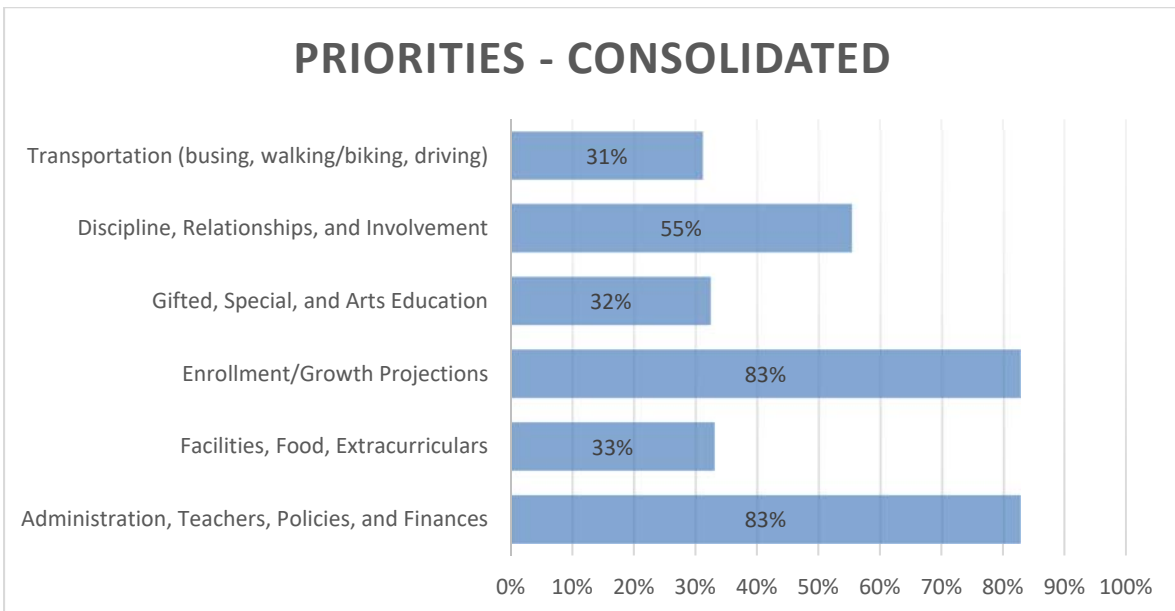
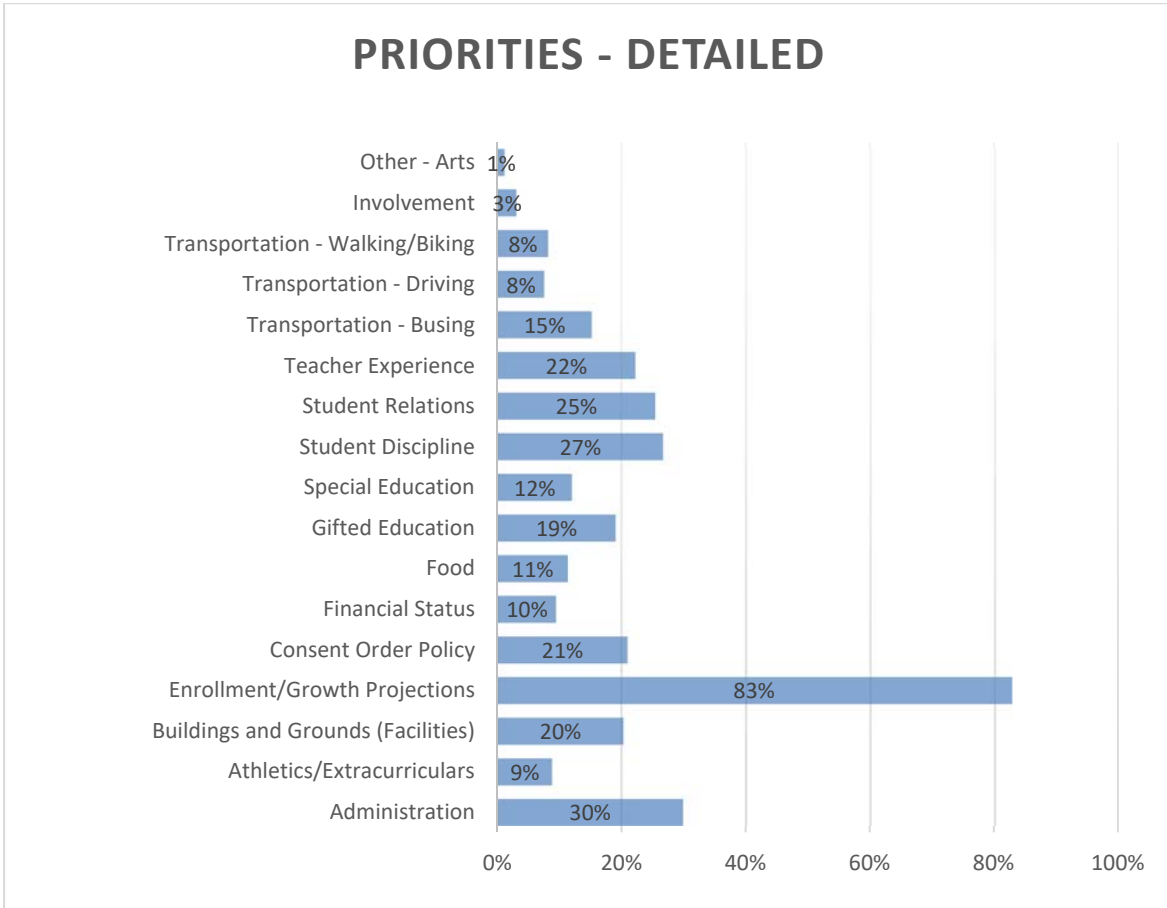
- Administration and Teacher Support
- Athletics or Extracurriculars
- Buildings and Grounds
- Current Enrollment and Growth Projections - Huntsville High School (Cove) Feeder Pattern and District-Wide
- Federal Consent Order Requirements and Status
- Financial Needs and Status
- Food - Meal Choice, Costs, Local Sourcing, etc
- Gifted Education
- Special Education
- Student Discipline - Methods, Effectiveness, Fairness, etc
- Student Relations - Bullying, Inclusion, Character Education, etc
- Teacher Experience and Skills
- Transportation - Busing (Local, Magnet, M-to-M, Policies, etc)
- Transportation - Carpooling, Student Driving
- Transportation - Walking/Bicycling Routes and Access
- Volunteer Needs and Getting Involved in the School or Classroom
- Other

The number of selections varied by respondent as shown in the next chart. For 157 respondents, a total of 519 selections, including 16 custom “other” priorities were chosen.



To further clean up the data for analysis, the 16 “Other” responses were analyzed and recoded to be included under existing topics, as applicable. Enough “other” responses included arts

education to keep that as a standalone category. 8 “other” responses duplicated existing choices and were removed. The full dataset can be seen in **Appendix C**. The next figures show a detailed and consolidated view of priorities chosen by respondents.



By far, and in continuation of the trend seen in responses to Question 1, the vast majority of people (83%) considered current enrollment and growth projections to be one of their top concerns. Aside from Monte Sano Elementary school, the schools in the HHS feeder pattern are among the largest in the district and many parents are worried about overcrowding, in terms of both school capacity and classroom sizes. Some respondents recognized that district finances and policies (Federal Consent Order in particular) were intricately tied to the topics of Enrollment and Facilities, as outlined in the Strategic Plan and Consent Order documents, and also selected these choices among their most pressing concerns.

Based on the survey, there seems to be a significant need to understand exactly how these items affect each other, and what solutions might exist to alleviate classroom pressure at all levels (ES, MS, and HS) within the district and within the Cove geography in particular.

After district-level concerns and how they played out in the Cove geography, survey respondents identified student issues and support (discipline, relationships, and parent/community support) as their next biggest priority. Gifted Education and Bus Transportation were also within the top priorities of 15-20% of responders.

Discussion

In light of creating a presentation tailored to local concerns, and the limited amount of time available, it would seem ideal to focus on school enrollment and growth projections, with reference to the consent order, finances, and strategic plan for the District. There is confusion about whether and how a high school (or any new schools or classrooms) could be built in the Cove area, and it is important to provide clarification on the topic.

Many parents are rightfully concerned about the long distances that students must travel to attend high school or choice schools (magnet, Majority-to-Minority, etc), and the real dangers posed by the mountainous roads linking the Cove to more central parts of Huntsville, despite the improved asphalt that is being installed this year. The consent order seems to recognize the challenges of this particular geography and has a lower target threshold for M-to-M transfers (Section II.D.7) used to move towards unitary status. However, it seems unlikely that our current development patterns and solutions (limited magnet or M-to-M busing) will result in achieving the desegregation goals set forth by the consent order.

What are the necessary prerequisites for building new schools or classrooms in the Cove? What new and creative solutions can we consider to work towards new facilities in a near-term fashion? What would new facilities cost; can we find efficiencies (such as resource-sharing with Parks & Recreation); and will our financial status or local regulations allow new bonds, impact fees, or other school funding mechanisms?

With the expansion of Cecil Ashburn that may make busing between the Cove and South Huntsville more feasible, and potential space available within certain nearby Madison County Schools, is it possible to consider rezoning or creative inter-district arrangements? Can we explore the creation of

a magnet or “satellite” school within the Cove that could attract a more diverse population? What higher-level city policies or incentives can increase resident diversity so that the Cove can “grow/shift from within”, or otherwise limit new development that may be antithesis to educational or other community goals currently in development via the Small Area Planning process?

If a private high school were to be built in the Cove, how would it affect Huntsville City Schools? Would it bring HCS closer to compliance with federal guidelines or be detrimental to this goal? What lessons can be learned from Gardendale’s experience? Unfortunately, these are not easy questions to ask or answer, but it is necessary to have a community discussion and collaborative effort between all involved parties to address concerns and support our schools and school district.

APPENDIX A – Categorized open-ended responses to Question 1

Enrollment and Status of a High School?

When will we have a high school built on the Hampton cove side.
As a family new to the Cove area, we've heard several reasons why this area may not be able to build a public high school here on this side of the mountain for Hampton Cove Middle school to feed into...is that really true?
When will Hampton Cove get a High School?
Are there any plans to build highschoools in the Cove area?
What considerations other than the school desegregation order, are impacting this general area from getting a high school?
If a high school will be built here in the cove to serve our needs.
What is the plan to improve special education in HCS and are there plans to build a high school in the Cove? 16-18 year olds driving over the mountain and having a 20-30 min drive depending on traffic is unacceptable.
When is Hampton Cove area getting a high school?
When will Hampton Cove have a high school?
Given the rise of students in this area, will there ever be a high school for this area?
What is the plan for overcrowding at Goldsmith Schiffman? Our area is growing so rapidly...what are the plans to accommodate the new construction and inevitable continued growth of our schools?
Are there any plans for a high school in Hampton Cove? What security measures are being taken to keep our kids safe from things like school shooters? Thank you!
Are there thoughts to bring in a High School to this area?
The possibility of building a high school for the continuously increased population of our area.
What parameters must be met before a new high school can be approved for the Hampton Cove area? What are the chances we will get a high school in the next 5-10 years? I do not want my children to have to drive over the mountain.
When will Cove get a High School?
When will a high school be in order for the Cove area?
What's the future of the VERY large music education program at HCMS while only allowing one educator?
What is HCS doing to address capacity issues at GSES?
is there a high school coming to Cove area?
Is there a plan to build a high school in the Hampton Cove area?
What are the plans to handle additional growth including the need for a high school?
What are they going to do about the growing cove and more schools here? Bus situation is rough too
What is the plan to accommodate the increase in students and overcrowding in this area?
What problems are being reported at the middle school and how are you addressing them?
Is there any way HCS could look at the lunch and recess arrangements to benefit the kids?
Over crowding in Hampton a cove Schools. My kids attend Goldsmith and with the amount of students and both Hampton's cove and Goldsmith is the city looking now to expand Hampton Cove Middle School?
What is being done to get Huntsville city schools to score all As on their yearly academic reports like Madison city schools? What is being done to better our school system to get Alabama higher on the list of public education nationwide, being #49 is embarrassing.
Can we get a high school out here in Hampton cove?
The Hampton Cove area needs a High School! The dangers of our students traveling to HHS from HC/OCR is very real. I have been told the consent order will "never allow that" because of the racial composition of HC residents. Which to me, sounds like reverse racism! There are too many white students in Hampton Cove to warrant a high school? Say that out loud. Now reverse the skin color to be any other and say that out loud and I think you'll find that to be met with disapproval. I just can't understand why- if kids are being bused into our elementary schools (M2M transfers), why couldn't a new high school be built in HC and the same thing happen at that level if it's required by the CO? Why is the burden on ALL high school students in HC to travel to HHS, when there is arguably enough high school age students to populate a high school within the Cove.

What is plan for adding on to gses? When can we get a high school? It is long overdue. Why can't we have two full time gifted rather than piecemeal?
Why isn't there a high school planned for Hampton cove since Huntsville highschool is already overcrowded and more home are being build in the Hampton cove area.
Will there be more schools built to help with overcrowded GSES? Has re-districting been thought of as an option to send more kids from Taylor Rd to HCE?
Given the Cove's recent growth and the continuing increase in population, what are the plans for the burgeoning population of students at the elementary schools and Hampton Cove Middle School? Classrooms are at or near capacity in all of the schools. And with that, are there any plans for a possible high school in the Cove?
When will we get a high school
Are their plans to build additional elementary schools and a high school in the Cove to accommodate the growing number of students in our area?
When will Hampton Cove be afforded a High School?
What steps is HCS taking to plan for continued growth in the Cove area with only 2 elementary, 1 middle, and no high schools in the area? We are very concerned that the existing schools are not going to be able to handle the continued growth. What must be done to plan for a local Cove area high school that doesn't require 16 year olds to drive ~30 minutes to school over the mountain?
I would like to know when we will have a high school in the Hampton Cove area!
When will the Cove get a high school?
When are we getting a high school on this side?
If growth in Hampton Cove area continues at current pace, at what point will planning proceed for high school in Hampton Cove.
When will Hampton Cove get a High School? It is a must.
Will Hampton Cove ever get a HS?
Will we ever get a high school in the cove?
What is going to be done about overcrowding in the Grissom and HHS?
When will a HS be built to address growth and early driver safety?
The cove area schools are rapidly growing. What is the plan to address future growth to avoid overcrowding? Are there plans for a High School in the Cove?
Why is city annexation and school zoning so ridiculous?
When will there be a high school in the Hampton cove area?
Can the Cove area ever get a high school? Why does the demographics suddenly matter in high school when they dont in elementary or middle school?
Any chance at a high school on our side?
Will we ever get a high school in Big Cove?
When will they be building a high school on this side of HC/OXRDS?
When will a high school be built on the east side (Hampton Cove area) of Huntsville?
When are we getting a high school in Hampton Cove?
Overcrowding
Will there be a high school built out here in the cove area?
How are so many new neighborhoods being zoned for goldsmith schiffman elementary when it seems to already be at capacity? Especially when Hampton Cove Elementary is actually closer? Additionally, we truly need a closer high school. Huntsville High is too far.
Will a high school be built for the cove area? What will it take to make that happen? With the current and projected growth for this area, it does not make sense to continue to send our kids over governors to HHS when we already have 2x ES and a MS in our community.
Why can't a high school be put in Hampton Cove area?
What are you planning to do about the growth in the cove area? The area has more and more residents moving in and the schools seem to be reaching capacity. Also, when will Cove residents get a high school? The need is significant and there is no denying it.
Will there be another school added in order to support the growth happening in the cove and all of Huntsville?

I want to know what's going to be done about the high school situation and why it's so difficult to put one on this side of the mountain.
When will a high school be closer to Hampton Cove area?
What is the plan for growth of the schools in the area with Goldsmith-Schiffman at capacity?
What are the plans for overcrowding as the Cove area continues to grow at a rapid pace?
With the growth out here, most residents are hoping a high school will be built out here. Is there any plan for this? I worry that the growth out here (and in Huntsville in general) will outgrow Huntsville High School within the next few years. The most logical thing to do would be to make a new high school for this area since we are so far away from HHS already.
Why does Hampton cove not have a high school and what can be done to acquire one?
Are schools reaching capacity with all of the new development? Will we see a cove high school in the coming years? We are very interested in the magnet schools, but they are quite far from the cove. Any chance of a magnet school over here?
When is the Hampton Cove area getting a high school?
How do they plan to accommodate the growth of the area with the current schools that are already close to or at max capacity? Including Huntsville High. How do they justify the extra traffic over Governor's Drive by not building a high school on the cove side of the mountain? Not to mention the extra risk of accidents on an already accident-prone road being driven by newer, inexperienced high-school aged drivers?
When will a High School be build in the Owens Cross Roads/Hampton cove/Big cove area
Will Hampton Cove get a highschool
Are there plans for the continued growth of Hampton Cove are and over crowding of schools?
How are you going to reduce class size? How long until a high school is built on this side of the mountain to ensure the safety of our students?
Are there plans for a High School in the Cove?
Will there be a Hampton Cove High School?
I would like to know how HCS plans to handle the influx of people moving into the Hampton Cove/Owens Cross Roads region? We have overpopulated schools and no high school. It cannot be maintained much longer. HCS must reevaluate the order which prohi its a high school in this area. We need a high school.
How will the district handle the fact we have outgrown GSE and the middle school?
How are the school officials going to zone related to the incoming population?
When will a high school be build in Owens Cross Roads?
What are plans for expanding schools in Hampton a cove?
When will we be getting a high school in the cove????
How do you plan to incorporate the growing community in Owens Cross Roads within the current school system. Our elementary classes are already busting at the seams.
The cove area is growing so quickly - when will there be a high school in Hampton Cove? It is desperately needed. Huntsville High is too far away and getting too overcrowded! Also need better security protocols at HCES, secure entry points.
Overcrowding would be my main concern. We need a Hampton Cove High School; that would remedy the situation. More and more people are integrating into Huntsville daily. By the time all the kids enter the city schools there education/teaching ability will not be the same. In other words, Huntsville has prided itself with excellent education goals, test scores, graduation attendance. The list goes on and on. If we have too many kids to one class, the teacher cannot keep up. What if students fall between the cracks? A high school in Hampton Cove is a great idea and it would bring jobs to the area as well
How do we continue success in the schools in our community? Where can we improve the most? What are some ways we get parents involved in our community to be better stakeholders in education? How are we getting discipline back on track? What improvements need to be made to the cove schools (physical) to keep up with growth/anticipated growth? When will there be a high school in the cove?
Hampton Cove needs its own high school. With lots of new residents moving in, we are in desperate need. Teens driving over the mountain to/from school and extracurriculars is not ideal, especially on congested roads during rush hour. Please consider planning a high school for the area. What criteria must be met to get a high school?

Is any consideration being given to building a high school in the Cove?
What is the plan for an increasing need for more schools in the Hampton Cove area?
What are we going to do about the expanding growth of the cove in relation to GSES? We are overcrowded with more homes being built that appeal to the young elementary age families.
How many students will be at GSES this year and how close is the school to capacity? Is there a plan to build any additional school (elementary, middle or high school) before the current schools are over capacity? Is there currently any rezoning scheduled for HCS?
1) the cove seems to be growing very quickly, Goldsmith seems it will be at capacity very quickly if it's not already, what are the plans to accommodate this growth to keep student -teacher ratio size as small as possible? 2) Between the size and projected growth of both Hampton cove elementary and Goldsmith, I feel certain this area could support a highschool. Currently we are sending our highschoolers over dangerous and crowded governor's drive everyday, why are there still no plans to build a highschool in the cove area?
1. As the number of HCES/GSES/HCMS 5th-8th graders (enrollment # received from school offices) was 53 students shy of the number of students for a 7A high school (the largest qualification in the state) at the beginning of last year, and knowing the area has grown since then and continues to grow rapidly, what has been planned toward completion of a high school on this side of the mountain by the time these students are in high school? What is the projection for the number of cove students in grades 9-12 one year from now? Five years from now? 2. What studies have been done concerning the safety of sending large numbers of students in buses or as student drivers over Monte Sano mountain twice each day until a high school can be completed? What traffic studies have been done on the reduction in traffic over Governors Drive once the student drivers, buses, and parents on high school related trips are eliminated upon the completion of a high school on this side of the mountain? 3. Every time I have witnessed the high school question being raised to a public official (many times), the rehearsed response is, "We have a consent order." Everyone is aware of this. Please point out the section of the consent order stating that a new school cannot be built when the growth of student population necessitates an additional school. Please point out the section of the consent order that states student safety may be compromised as a result of the consent order, as safety is indeed compromised when this number of students is put over a curvy mountain road multiple times a day. 4. What is your projection for enrollment numbers for HCES, GSES, and HCMS five years from now? One year from now? What is the plan to accommodate them as each school is quickly running out of space?
*Overcrowded (of our Hampton cove area schools) *LACK of SECURITY!!! gates should be around ALL external playgrounds- GSES is on a main road w complete openness to anyone to come on property w children at anytime during outside play- or children can EASILY leave the area- on a BUSY roady. This is absolutely crazy that it is not enclosed for safety reasons- easy fix w fence around.
Is there a plan to build a high school in the cove area?
Will Hampton Cove ever get a high school?
When will we have a high school?
My main concern is the development and growth of Hampton Cove and Owens Cross Roads and how the current schools with accommodate this large and continuous growth. I feel that we need more schools out here and certainly a high school.
Will HCS ever consider putting a high school out in Hampton Cove?
What is being done to meet the demands of the growing community?
Will there be a high school built in the 35763 zip code area?
Will GSES be expanded, it is on the verge of overcrowding?
How are the larger classroom sizes being addressed?
Is the future planning for expanding the size of the schools in oxr or building additional schools? I am a teacher and a parent of students and I'm nervous about the ever expanding class sizes. We are busting at the seams.
When will a high school be built in the Cove area?
When will we be getting a new city high school for HC?

Administration, Finances, Curriculum, Teacher Support, etc

What are the 3 top things HCS is doing to improve the financial situation?
Why aren't trade related electives offered as well as tech and college oriented ones.
What is being done to get Huntsville city schools to score all As on their yearly academic reports like Madison city schools?
What is being done to better our school system to get Alabama higher on the list of public education nationwide, being #49 is embarrassing.
Can we get a high school out here in Hampton cove?
What is being done to retain high quality teachers? That is one of the most important things to keep a school district in good standing in the ratings and in parents' minds.
How does Huntsville City Schools plan to keep our schools highly rated when resources are being taken away and our numbers are increasing?
Why are the rankings dropping so much relative to other competitive peer public schools around the state?
What is the plan for creating a financially stable district?
How does HCS plan on retaining residents and attracting new ones from moving elsewhere when school services are being cut year after year?
What is being done to proactively serve children in special education programs in regards to hiring skilled aides and teachers?
why can't teachers find jobs with the turnover rate so high in HCS?
Are we going to have enough money to hire back some of the pink slipped teachers. Specially the band director assistants.
Why are we ranked so low statewide in teacher pay???
Why are we still under a desegregation order?
Why are you allowing aides and other support personnel to be paid less this year?

Safety / Security

With the budget cuts and removal of technology specialists in school, I'd like to understand what oversight and safeguards are being put in place to monitor internet usage, ensure firewalls are working at all times, and to ensure adherence of technology usage against the established curriculum.
I don't understand why the requirement for shorts to reach mid thigh was passed?! The rule for not wearing oversized clothing was explained bc weapons or other dangers could be hidden in clothing multiple sizes larger than needed-but there is no explanation for the rationale behind having shorts be mid thigh! Huntsville City Schools, this is a ridiculous regulation placed on our students (and let's face it-female students) and parents who now will be required to purchase virtually an entire new wardrobe for their daughters. All so as not to distract male students-when will it be the responsibility of male students to control themselves regardless of what their peers are wearing?
Also-please lengthen and/or secure recess for children daily. Studies repeatedly show that children need unstructured playtime daily. This increases positive behavior and encourages productive learning, yet, recess times continue to be shortened and used as behavioral consequences.
Daily PE for all students is a dangerous environment. At GSES I can speak to the gym having a hundred or more students crammed into the gym at one time with one or two teachers. The children are not safely monitored, physical education isn't conducted effectively in groups that size. Crowd control cannot be maintained. I urge you to visit a school and sit in on PE time unannounced, and then conduct an audit of how many injuries/fights/altercations take place during PE time. The number is far too high.
The amount of money individual families have to pay to play a HS level sport is unprecedented. \$1400 for JV? There has to be a better way.
The cove area is growing so quickly - when will there be a high school in Hampton Cove? It is desperately needed. Huntsville High is too far away and getting too overcrowded!

Also need better security protocols at HCES, secure entry points.

*Overcrowded (of our Hampton cove area schools)

*LACK of SECURITY!!! gates should be around ALL external playgrounds- GSES is on a main road w complete openness to anyone to come on property w children at anytime during outside play- or children can EASILY leave the area- on a BUSY roady. This is absolutely crazy that it is not enclosed for safety reasons- easy fix w fence around.

Transportation

1. As the number of HCES/GSES/HCMS 5th-8th graders (enrollment # received from school offices) was 53 students shy of the number of students for a 7A high school (the largest qualification in the state) at the beginning of last year, and knowing the area has grown since then and continues to grow rapidly, what has been planned toward completion of a high school on this side of the mountain by the time these students are in high school? What is the projection for the number of cove students in grades 9-12 one year from now? Five years from now?

2. What studies have been done concerning the safety of sending large numbers of students in buses or as student drivers over Monte Sano mountain twice each day until a high school can be completed? What traffic studies have been done on the reduction in traffic over Governors Drive once the student drivers, buses, and parents on high school related trips are eliminated upon the completion of a high school on this side of the mountain?

3. Every time I have witnessed the high school question being raised to a public official (many times), the rehearsed response is, "We have a consent order." Everyone is aware of this. Please point out the section of the consent order stating that a new school cannot be built when the growth of student population necessitates an additional school. Please point out the section of the consent order that states student safety may be compromised as a result of the consent order, as safety is indeed compromised when this number of students is put over a curvy mountain road multiple times a day.

4. What is your projection for enrollment numbers for HCES, GSES, and HCMS five years from now? One year from now? What is the plan to accommodate them as each school is quickly running out of space?

What are they going to do about the growing cove and more schools here? Bus situation is rough too

Bike

What road adjustments (etc) are being made to ensure safety of bike riders..Taylor road is very dangerous, and there is alot of traffic..

Student Relations & Student Discipline

My question is two fold: bullying, in my opinion, is not taken seriously enough in Huntsville City's schools. I think it starts with what a true definition of what bullying is. Any time a child feels threatened, made fun of, laughed at, belittled, backpack intentionally stepped on, computer intentionally tossed on the floor, it should be taken care of the first time. Not ignored, not wait for another incident. What might seem as something insignificant can affect someone enormously. A child's mental health is not something to be taken lightly.

Secondly, I find it particularly disrespectful that Huntsville High School is not PERMITTED to purchase, erect, draw, conceive, or anything of the like, in Memoriam for Nigel Shelby. It shows a complete lack of morals and ethics.

And it is beyond hurtful, as a parent, that some form of memory of his presence at the school isn't shared.

What is the plan to accommodate the increase in students and overcrowding in this area?

What problems are being reported at the middle school and how are you addressing them?

Is there any way HCS could look at the lunch and recess arrangements to benefit the kids?

I don't understand why the requirement for shorts to reach mid thigh was passed?!! The rule for not wearing oversized clothing was explained bc weapons or other dangers could be hidden in clothing multiple sizes larger than needed-but there is no explanation for the rationale behind having shorts be mid thigh! Huntsville City Schools, this is a ridiculous regulation placed on our students (and let's face it-female students) and parents who

now will be required to purchase virtually an entire new wardrobe for their daughters. All so as not to distract male students-when will it be the responsibility of male students to control themselves regardless of what their peers are wearing?

Also-please lengthen and/or secure recess for children daily. Studies repeatedly show that children need unstructured playtime daily. This increases positive behavior and encourages productive learning, yet, recess times continue to be shortened and used as behavioral consequences.

Daily PE for all students is a dangerous environment. At GSES I can speak to the gym having a hundred or more students crammed into the gym at one time with one or two teachers. The children are not safely monitored, physical education isn't conducted effectively in groups that size. Crowd control cannot be maintained. I urge you to visit a school and sit in on PE time unannounced, and then conduct an audit of how many injuries/fights/altercations take place during PE time. The number is far too high.

The amount of money individual families have to pay to play a HS level sport is unprecedented. \$1400 for JV? There has to be a better way.

What are they doing to teach Appreciation for diversity? How are they encouraging discussion around this?

Special Ed & Gifted Ed

What is plan for adding on to gses? When can we get a high school? It is long overdue. Why can't we have two full time gifted rather than piecemeal?

There needs to be more qualified instructional assistants in special education classes.

Aside from GATE, why is no acceleration or ability grouping offered (in an easily accessible, not-parent-driven way) in elementary grades?

Arts Education

I have concerns about arts education at Huntsville City Schools. Please tell me why you allowed the principal at Hampton Cove Middle School to get rid of the assistant band director?

When will a high school be in order for the Cove area?

What's the future of the VERY large music education program at HCMS while only allowing one educator?

Recess

What is the plan to accommodate the increase in students and overcrowding in this area?

What problems are being reported at the middle school and how are you addressing them?

Is there any way HCS could look at the lunch and recess arrangements to benefit the kids?

I don't understand why the requirement for shorts to reach mid thigh was passed?! The rule for not wearing oversized clothing was explained bc weapons or other dangers could be hidden in clothing multiple sizes larger than needed-but there is no explanation for the rationale behind having shorts be mid thigh! Huntsville City Schools, this is a ridiculous regulation placed on our students (and let's face it-female students) and parents who now will be required to purchase virtually an entire new wardrobe for their daughters. All so as not to distract male students-when will it be the responsibility of male students to control themselves regardless of what their peers are wearing?

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students crammed into the gym at one time with one or two teachers. The children are not safely monitored, physical education isn't conducted effectively in groups that size. Crowd control cannot be maintained. I urge you to visit a school and sit in on PE time unannounced, and then conduct an audit of how many injuries/fights/altercations take place during PE time. The number is far too high. The amount of money individual families have to pay to play a HS level sport is unprecedented. \$1400 for JV? There has to be a better way.

School Lunch

What is the plan to accommodate the increase in students and overcrowding in this area?
What problems are being reported at the middle school and how are you addressing them?
Is there any way HCS could look at the lunch and recess arrangements to benefit the kids?

I would love to hear Ms. Finley's thoughts on any of the district's plans to improve the nutritional value and quality of school food.

I have personally become very passionate about this issue at my daughters' elementary school and I am in the process of forming a nutrition committee and school garden club. I strongly support school lunch and breakfast, but what is served at the school is, in my opinion, not in the best interest of our kids and their education. It doesn't appear that food is actually cooked - it is primarily packaged and processed. It may meet the USDA standards for calories, whole grains and low sodium etc., but these foods are not real foods - they are loaded with sugar and chemical food additives, flavorings and colors. Some of the items that are available for my daughters to purchase at the lunch line, such as Doritos and Pop-tarts, have essentially no nutritional value and should not be available in elementary schools.

I will email a copy of "Rethinking School Lunch" prepared by the Center For Ecoliteracy separately, and I strongly hope that Ms. Finley will read it and reflect on the ideas presented. Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to request a meeting with Ms. Finley during this school year to discuss the issue of school food. There are many resources available, such as the Chef Ann Foundation, that provide funding, education, training and materials to school districts that commit to getting their kitchens cooking again. Many schools around the country are implementing amazing programs to improve the breakfasts and lunches they provide everyday.

Here are just a few paragraphs from the "Rethinking School Lunch" guide:

It's a Public Health Issue: The current crisis in diet-related illness has been well documented. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, poor diet and physical inactivity are responsible for as many premature deaths as is tobacco. Obesity increases the risk of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, osteoporosis, and many cancers. This crisis is a tragedy. It also presents an opportunity to marshal public support behind efforts to address it.

It's an Academic Performance Issue: A growing body of research connects better nutrition with higher achievement on standardized tests; increased cognitive function, attention, and memory; and an array of positive behavioral indicators, including better school attendance and cooperation. Hungry teens are more likely to be suspended from school, experience difficulty getting along with other children, and have no friends.

Undernourished children are more likely to repeat a grade and require more special education and mental health services. Nutrient deficiencies, refined sugars and carbohydrates, pesticide residues, preservatives, and artificial colorings in food have all been associated with altered thinking and behavior as well as neurodevelopmental disorders.

The School Environment Impacts Students' Food Choices: in the words of the 2010 White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity, "The school environment impacts the behavior, and thus the health and well-being of students.... Children's choices depend on what is visible and easily accessible; seemingly small differences in the school environment can have large impacts on what children eat."

I plan on attending Ms. Finley's presentation on the 29th and am looking forward to starting the conversation about the opportunities to improve school food! I may be reached at (916) 802-4345 or klwalencik@yahoo.com

Thank you very much for your time!

Sincerely, Katherine Courter

APPENDIX B – Alphabetized responses to Question 2 regarding successes

Absolutely love HCES and HCMS!!!! Would love a HS!!!!!!
All of Hampton cove elementary teachers and staff are wonderful
Community involvement and high quality teachers are two of the biggest strengths.
Excellent principals at HCES, GSES, HCMS
Goldsmith Schiffman is a great school with amazing teachers.
Good students, teachers, parents working together produces a good school.
GSES has fantastic administration and faculty.
GSES staff are the bomb.
HCMS Band is phenomenal, love GSES principal
I think Christy Finley is doing a wonderful job.
I would like to praise last years' school year as the best year on record in reporting communication, not at the school level, but at the administration and school board level. The transparency is appreciated!
Jennifer Douthit is a fantastic administrator, and we have been very impressed with the teachers and support staff.
Knowledgeable Teachers who adapt well to changes. We have GREAT teachers.
More transparency from the superintendent and school board
Mrs Spivey is an amazing principal!
Our daughters are still too young for the enrollment in local public schools, but we're hearing great things about GSES, which is where our family is zoned to attend.
Our PTAs are great
Our schools in Hampton cove are incredible!!! Best schools in Huntsville.
Parent involvement is fantastic
Schools have a great reputation
Teachers
Teachers make the difference
Thank you for the much improved transparency and communication.
The 1st grade Owlsome reading program at Goldsmith Schiffman is amazing! My son now reads on a second to third grade level entering 2nd grade!
The families that make up the schools are the greatest strength in any area.
The HCMS band and choir programs are excellent and have been a model of how important music is to education.
The only reason we stay in Hampton cove is for the schools.
The principle of GSES is awesome!
The professionalism and dedication of school staff and educators.
The schools are fantastic. We have huge community and parent involvement. As a teacher, I'm grateful for this involvement.
The staff and teachers are phenomenal and truly care about the individual student and the community.
The staff at GSES does an incredible job with the kids despite being a very large school. The PTA is also wonderful.

The teachers are amazing, and the school is incredible. I loved elementary school and we are looking forward to middle school
The teachers are incredible at Goldsmith Shiffman
The teachers at GSES are great and love the families.
The transition for military families & the resources the Cove schools provide are incredible.
The variety of course offerings is quite impressive, especially in the high schools.
They are dealing very well with overpopulation.
We are very happy with our school system.
We LOVE Goldsmith!! Biggest blessing in our family. The administration is incredible, our staff is loving and knowledgeable. Best schools around!
We LOVE Mrs. Douthit and Mr. Stricklan. Please don't ever move them!!!! Love administration at middle school too
Well organized and cared for community
As a realtor I have clients looking just for our lower level education schools but wonder why we don't have a HS
Continue to create inclusive environments that foster creativity, inquiry, and learning for all students. Continue to hire teachers and administration that are passionate about students first. Everything else, including subject matter, is secondary.
Even though GSES is getting crowded, the teachers and other staff still do a great job!
GSES does a wonderful job with dealing with the amount of students they have. The teachers and Mrs. Douthit are wonderful! That being said-we are running out of classrooms and something needs to be done before it is severely overcrowded.
GSES is an exceptional school and we have been very pleased with the educational options for our children. To keep our schools great and provide stability from year to year, Will the HCS board please quit rotating our GSES principal every few years?
HCES and HCMS has been blessed with some AMAZING teachers. The PTA boards continue to provide excellent support year in and year out. School board member presence in these schools is virtually nonexistent. Parent volunteer support is excellent in the elementary school.
I feel grateful to live by good schools here in the Cove. I just feel concerned that with the continued growth, the schools will not be able to keep up with the needs of the students.
If a Hampton Cove High School doesn't come to the area then the greatest strength mentioned is jeopardized
Yes but it would be better if our high school aged children don't have to take such a long bus ride to downtown from the Hampton Cove area.
How large do our schools need to be in order for a high school to be considered for our area? It isn't necessary for our children to go over the mtn for high school, it's dangerous and we have the student population on this side for discussion of a new high school to begin.
I can't share praise but I can share criticism. As non-parents but taxpayers we are refused an opportunity to go into the schools. Fix that now.
My children attend an elementary school with over 800 students and grows every year. How is HCS planning and preparing for the population growth in the area?
No in fact the topography is why we bought our home and how safe it is. In fact, being a part of the HCS district was a huge concern for me and still is. I do not feel the high school is a draw to this area. It is a turn off due to the distance and the lack of funding to provide a better high school option for this area.
No or N/A response (8)

APPENDIX C: Top Priorities and Concerns of Survey Respondents, Sorted

ID	Administration	Athletics and Extracurriculars	Buildings and Grounds	Enrollment and Growth Projections	Consent Order	Financial Status	Food	Gifted Education	Special Education	Student Discipline	Student Relations	Teacher Skills and Experience	Transportation - Busing	Transportation - Driving	Transportation - Walking/Biking	Volunteering	Other	TOTAL SELECTIONS
1	x																	1
2	x																	1
3			x															1
4			x															1
5				x														1
6				x														1
7				x														1
8				x														1
9				x														1
10				x														1
11				x														1
12				x														1
13				x														1
14				x														1
15				x														1
16				x														1
17				x														1
18				x														1
19				x														1
20				x														1
21				x														1
22				x														1
23				x														1
24					x													1
25							x											1
26											x							1

ID	Administration	Athletics and Extracurriculars	Buildings and Grounds	Enrollment and Growth Projections	Consent Order	Financial Status	Food	Gifted Education	Special Education	Student Discipline	Student Relations	Teacher Skills and Experience	Transportation - Busing	Transportation - Driving	Transportation - Walking/Biking	Volunteering	Other	TOTAL SELECTIONS
27															X			1
28	X		X															2
29	X			X														2
30		X		X														2
31			X	X														2
32			X	X														2
33			X	X														2
34				X	X													2
35				X	X													2
36				X	X													2
37				X	X													2
38				X			X											2
39				X				X										2
40				X				X										2
41				X						X								2
42				X								X						2
43				X								X						2
44				X								X						2
45				X									X					2
46				X									X					2
47				X									X					2
48				X										X				2
49				X										X				2
50				X											X			2
51				X											X			2
52						X							X					2
53									X		X							2
54										X	X							2

ID	Administration	Athletics and Extracurriculars	Buildings and Grounds	Enrollment and Growth Projections	Consent Order	Financial Status	Food	Gifted Education	Special Education	Student Discipline	Student Relations	Teacher Skills and Experience	Transportation - Busing	Transportation - Driving	Transportation - Walking/Biking	Volunteering	Other	TOTAL SELECTIONS
55											X	X						2
56	X	X			X													3
57	X		X	X														3
58	X		X	X														3
59	X			X	X													3
60	X			X					X									3
61	X			X						X								3
62	X			X							X							3
63	X								X			X						3
64	X									X	X							3
65	X									X	X							3
66	X									X		X						3
67		X	X	X														3
68		X		X											X			3
69		X							X		X							3
70			X	X	X													3
71			X	X									X					3
72			X						X		X							3
73			X							X	X							3
74				X	X			X										3
75				X	X					X								3
76				X	X							X						3
77				X		X	X											3
78				X			X				X							3
79				X				X									X	3
80				X				X			X							3
81				X				X				X						3
82				X						X	X							3

ID	Administration	Athletics and Extracurriculars	Buildings and Grounds	Enrollment and Growth Projections	Consent Order	Financial Status	Food	Gifted Education	Special Education	Student Discipline	Student Relations	Teacher Skills and Experience	Transportation - Busing	Transportation - Driving	Transportation - Walking/Biking	Volunteering	Other	TOTAL SELECTIONS
83				X						X	X							3
84				X								X		X				3
85													X	X	X			3
86	X		X	X								X						4
87	X		X	X											X			4
88	X			X	X						X							4
89	X			X		X			X									4
90	X			X			X				X							4
91	X			X				X	X									4
92	X			X				X			X							4
93	X			X						X		X						4
94	X			X						X			X					4
95	X			X						X						X		4
96	X			X									X	X				4
97	X			X									X	X				4
98		X	X	X				X										4
99		X		X			X			X								4
100			X	X	X		X											4
101			X	X	X										X			4
102			X	X					X				X					4
103			X	X						X	X							4
104			X	X								X		X				4
105			X	X									X		X			4
106				X	X	X							X					4
107				X	X					X	X							4
108				X	X					X		X						4
109				X			X				X					X		4
110				X			X						X		X			4

ID	Administration	Athletics and Extracurriculars	Buildings and Grounds	Enrollment and Growth Projections	Consent Order	Financial Status	Food	Gifted Education	Special Education	Student Discipline	Student Relations	Teacher Skills and Experience	Transportation - Busing	Transportation - Driving	Transportation - Walking/Biking	Volunteering	Other	TOTAL SELECTIONS
111				X				X		X	X							4
112				X				X		X		X						4
113				X					X	X	X							4
114				X					X				X	X				4
115					X					X		X	X					4
116	X	X		X						X	X							5
117	X		X	X	X	X												5
118	X		X	X	X			X										5
119	X		X	X	X					X								5
120	X			X	X		X			X								5
121	X			X	X							X		X				5
122	X			X		X		X				X						5
123	X			X		X					X	X						5
124	X			X				X				X			X			5
125	X			X						X	X		X					5
126	X			X						X		X	X					5
127	X			X							X	X				X		5
128	X			X								X	X			X		5
129	X				X		X	X			X							5
130	X					X				X		X				X		5
131		X	X	X	X					X								5
132		X		X	X			X		X								5
133		X		X	X					X			X					5
134		X		X			X			X	X							5
135		X							X	X	X	X						5
136			X	X	X	X					X							5
137			X	X		X	X										X	5
138			X	X		X		X	X									5

ID	Administration	Athletics and Extracurriculars	Buildings and Grounds	Enrollment and Growth Projections	Consent Order	Financial Status	Food	Gifted Education	Special Education	Student Discipline	Student Relations	Teacher Skills and Experience	Transportation - Busing	Transportation - Driving	Transportation - Walking/Biking	Volunteering	Other	TOTAL SELECTIONS
139			X	X			X	X			X							5
140			X	X				X		X			X					5
141				X	X	X				X	X							5
142				X	X			X		X	X							5
143				X	X			X					X	X				5
144				X	X					X			X		X			5
145				X			X	X	X	X								5
146				X			X	X		X	X							5
147				X				X	X			X	X					5
148				X				X		X		X		X				5
149				X				X			X	X	X					5
150				X				X			X	X			X			5
151				X					X		X	X			X			5
152	X	X		X		X						X		X				6
153	X		X	X		X	X					X						6
154	X			X	X			X	X			X						6
155	X			X					X	X	X	X						6
156				X				X	X	X	X	X						6
157	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X						8
TOTAL	47	14	32	130	33	15	18	30	19	42	40	35	24	12	13	5	2	511

Original "Other" responses, recoded as applicable: 1) I am concerned with how well our children are being academically prepared and taught compared to other schools and states nationwide. Why is academic achievement not on this list of concerns? 2) We need a high school in HC! 3) Zoning 4) Cove high school? 5) Hampton cove high school? 6) Bringing kids in that aren't technically in the zone for that school 7) Urgent need for high school on this side of the mountain 8) Overcrowded classrooms. 9) We are largest schools in Huntsville city schools. Provide teachers more support! Full time aid in Library, our Music and art teacher should not have to travel! 10) More AP, need string instruments as a fine art choice, too much reliance on technology 11) Recesses 12) Overcrowding in all 3 schools. 13) New high school in Cove 14) A high school out here 15) Quality of after-school care provided by Afterschool Labs 16) Use of technology in the classroom 17) Promoting music and arts in schools