
Report of Findings
Demographic and Psychographic Inquiry
Spring 2011



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I. Project Context

I-A. Introduction

Lyceum Partners + design, a Minneapolis-based consulting practice, with networked partners in San Francisco, Palo Alto, and Washington D.C., crafts meaningful solutions through context driven research. We contracted with Friends School of Minnesota (FSM) to conduct a survey and set of focus groups in order to help FSM better understand their community's demographics, psychographics, and attitudes/behaviors in relation to the points outlined below. This multi-modal engagement methodology was used to collect insightful data in order to produce actionable results that will aid in future strategic planning and allow for assessment of progress against benchmarked, strategic goals. In addition to yielding information, this inquiry process served to engage the community in a meaningful way. Many strongly applauded FSM for inviting the full cross-section of the school community into an inquiry process that provided a constructive channel through which to voice feedback.

Within the context of desiring a deeper understanding of the demographics, psychographics, and attitudes/behaviors of their community, FSM sought a “design partner” to inquire into community perspectives in the following areas:

- Perception of FSM’s *value* as an educational institution and learning community.
- Perception of the *demand* for private education at a range of tuition price points.
- Perception of the *price/value* axis against a range of tuition levels.
- What are the limits of affordability?
- Is FSM pricing itself out of its current market and demography?
- Understand the priority placed on tuition for education as ranked against other *family budget priorities*.
- Explore the questions, “Why did you choose FSM?” and, conversely, for a sub-set of respondents, “Why didn’t you choose FSMN?”

This report presents findings on each of these aspects, as well as spontaneous insights that arose during the inquiry process.

I-B. Report Structure

The general outline of the report is presented in the table of contents. The main body of the report includes an introduction, a discussion of the engagement methodology, an executive summary of findings, the results of the survey data analysis (both quantitative and qualitative), the findings of the focus groups, and an extensive set of appendices. The executive summary will orient the reader to the main emergent themes arising from this demographic and psychographic inquiry. The subsequent data analysis sections unpack these themes in more depth and detail. Finally, the appendices offer the reader the opportunity to delve into the raw data of the surveys;

both in its complete, undifferentiated format, and in specially selected, disaggregated cross-sections.

III-C. Validity Statement

Survey participation for the Current Families Survey (CFS) was strong. 117 respondents completed the survey, allowing for a robust sample size. Ideally, only one respondent from each household was to fill out the survey. Based on our analysis, redundant survey completions were minimal. Basic quantitative analysis techniques were utilized. The mean, median, standard deviation and 95% confidence interval were calculated for each answer. Also, cross-tab analysis was utilized to look at interaction effects among variables and in order to make dichotomous comparisons. For all cross-tabulations, a robust sample size was utilized in order to maintain validity. These practices are consistent with industry standards for basic quantitative analysis. Intermediate and advanced statistical analysis such as t-tests, ANOVA, MANOVA, factor analysis, and regression analysis were outside the parameters of this study due to budgetary constraints.

II. Engagement Methodology

In this project, two data collection projects were launched. The first consisted of three online surveys and the second consisted of a set of four in-person focus groups. Both are outlined below.

II-A. Online Survey

An anonymous and confidential online survey comprised of quantitative (e.g., scaled score, multiple-choice) and qualitative (e.g., narrative, open-ended response, sentence completion) was sent to three subgroups:

1. Current FSM families
2. Families in the FSM wait pool
3. Families who expressed interest in FSM

By capturing demographic, psychographic, and attitude/behavior data the quantitative component of the survey generated a snapshot-in-time of the various personae represented in the FSMN community and their perceptions about particular aspects of FSM. Special attention was given to community members' assessments of FSM's value (cost/benefit) and its position in the list of their life priorities. The survey of families in the wait pool did not gather a high enough response rate to warrant evaluation.

The qualitative component of the survey invited participants to speak in more depth about specific themes outlined in the quantitative portion. For the Current Families Survey (CFS) qualitative queries were grouped into four areas:

- What brought you to FSM and what keeps you here?
- What makes FSM special?
- What does your ideal version of FSM look like?
- What are the most powerful ideas and values associated with FSM?

II-B. Inquiry Groups

Groups of FSM parents and guardians were invited by the FSM survey sponsors to participate in four two-hour consultant-facilitated focus groups. Group 1 consisted of FSM staff that have students enrolled at the school. Groups 2 and 3 consisted of FSM parents/guardians who do not receive tuition aid. Group 4 consisted of FSM parents/guardians who receive tuition aid. These sessions allowed the consultants to get dynamic, real-time reactions to specifically chosen results from the Current Family Survey (CPS). These sessions stimulated rich, data driven discussions that yielded subtle and nuanced understandings of the FSM culture.

III. Executive Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of the most important high-level findings emerging from the (A) consultants' observations and (B-F) surveys. These are distilled to their essential cores and presented in a simple and direct format. The purpose of this executive summary is to give the reader a quick and pithy introduction to the major themes present in this report. The reader can then go deeper into each theme in the subsequent report sub-sections and the appendices.

III-A. Consultants' Observations

Strengths

- 1) The SPICE values pervade the FSM community and are actively a part of everyday school life. People find these values inspirational and they create a basis for FSM's identity and special school culture. Generally, FSM is perceived as effectively embodying these values.
- 2) Parent engagement is very high. Families are highly motivated to do what they can in order to help FSM become the best place it can be. There is a real sense of belonging to a community for most FSM members.
- 3) People are extremely satisfied by the way FSM facilitates growth of the whole student, beyond academics and in the direction of progressive education. This is stated as one of the core reasons people send their children to FSM and keep them at the school.
- 4) The staff, teachers, administration, and community members are genuinely caring people. This comes across clearly.

Areas to Reflect On

- 1) There is a class divide at FSM. Some families expressed feelings of distrust, lack of safety, and misunderstanding in relation to issues of class. Additionally, the consultants noticed that some community members lacked awareness around the concept of privilege and exhibited implicit biases along the lines of socioeconomic status. These are barriers to a strong and empathic understanding of working-class realities present within the FSM community. Further, the financial aid application and award process needs to be clarified. FSM would benefit from proactively communicating more support to aid recipients. This is an area ripe for further investigation and reflection.
- 2) Generally speaking, the FSM community values diversity. However, a disconnect between the idea of diversity and the embodiment of diversity exists. When presented with the demographic findings along socio-economic status and race/ethnicity, FSM community members consistently expressed surprise; assumptions about diversity did not seem to match the data. Some concepts and language around diversity need updating. Our observations support what the FSM leadership has communicated to us: this is an area for growth.
- 3) Perceptions of value are intimately tied to individual family/student experiences with specific teachers. Families expressed concern that adequate personnel review processes

may not be in place. Their perceptions about the quality of academic offerings, and in particular academic rigor, seemed mixed. This profoundly impacted whether families felt they were getting a good value for their tuition dollars, or not.

III-B. CFS Survey Total

- 1) 57% of FSM families have an annual household income greater than \$100,000. To give context, the median household income in the state of Minnesota is \$55,621 and \$63,114 for the Twin Cities region.
- 2) 94% of primary respondents have a college degree or higher and 90% report that their partner/spouse also has a college degree or higher. As a comparison, statewide 31.2% of Minnesotans (25+ years of age) hold a college degree or higher. For the Twin Cities region, that figure is 39.5%.
- 3) 82% of primary respondents identify as Caucasian and 88% described their partner/spouse's race/ethnicity as Caucasian. Statewide, 88% of Minnesotans describe themselves as Caucasian/White, while in the Twin Cities region 82.5% do.
- 4) 94% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality overall educational experience. Additionally, 82% agree or strongly agree that FSM is a good value for the money they pay, while 17% agree or strongly agree that FSM is too expensive.
- 5) 58% of respondents would *consider* switching schools if tuition (per student) increased by \$2,500. 61% would *definitely* switch at a \$5,000 increase.

III-C. CFS – Males Compared to Females Cross-Section

- 1) Female respondents are 4 times more likely to be single parents (16% versus 4%).
- 2) Female respondents are also twice as likely to have had someone in their household underemployed for 6 or more months in the last 2 years (35% vs. 18%).
- 3) Though males are more likely to strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality education (71% versus 58% for females) and good value for the tuition paid (54% versus 45% for females) they are more likely to consider switching schools if tuition is increased by \$2,500 (68% of males would consider it, as compared to 55% of females).

III-D. CFS – Those Receiving Tuition Aid Compared to Those Who Are Not Cross-Section

- 1) Those who *do not* receive tuition aid are slightly older (only 5% are 39 or under, as compared to 21% of those who do not receive tuition aid). They are less ethnically diverse (88% are Caucasian, whereas 68% of those receiving tuition aid identify this way). Also they are more educated (99% have college degrees and 83% have graduate degrees; for those receiving tuition aid the percentages are 82% and 41%, respectively).
- 2) Those receiving tuition aid were 5 times more likely to have had someone in their household unemployed for 6 months or more with in the last 2 years (35% vs. 7%). They

are also twice as likely to have had a household member underemployed during that period (50% vs. 23%).

- 3) 29% of those receiving tuition aid strongly agree that FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area; 36% see it as too expensive. For those not receiving tuition aid, 45% strongly agree that FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area; only 10% see it as too expensive.
- 4) For those receiving tuition aid, if tuition increased by \$2,500, then 47% would definitely switch schools (for those not receiving tuition aid, only 16% which switch at that level). If tuition increased by \$5,000, then 91% of those receiving tuition aid would switch schools. In comparison, only 50% of those not receiving tuition aid would switch at that level.

III-E. CFS – Those Likely to Switch Schools with Tuition Increase Versus Those Who Are Unlikely to Switch

- 1) Those likely to switch schools after an increase in tuition are twice as likely to earn under \$100,000 per year as compared to their “unlikely to switch” counterparts (54% of the “likely switchers” earn under 100K vs. 26% for those who are unlikely to switch schools).
- 2) Of those likely to switch, 43% receive tuition aid. Of those unlikely to switch, only 7% receive tuition aid.
- 3) 87% of those unlikely to switch strongly believe that FSM walks its talk. In contrast, only 39% of those who are likely to switch strongly believe that FSM walks its talk.
- 4) Only 32% of those likely to switch strongly believe that FSM is a good value for the tuition they pay. And only 28% believe it offers a better value than other private schools in the area.

III-F. Families Who Expressed Interest Survey

- 1) Of those families who expressed interest in FSM 90% agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a better overall educational experience than other schools in the area (both public and private).
- 2) However, of those applicants who were accepted to FSM, 27% declined to attend FSM.
- 3) 60% of those who expressed interest in FSM had an annual income of less than \$100,000. Compare that to only 43% of families who attend FSM earn less than \$100,000 annually.
- 4) 68% of the families who expressed interest in FSM agree or strongly agree that FSM is too expensive.

IV. Current Families Survey (CFS)

IV-A. CFS Selected Quantitative Findings

Five Facts to Consider

- 1) 57% of FSM families have an annual household income greater than \$100,000. To give context, the median household income in the state of Minnesota is \$55,621 and \$63,114 for the Twin Cities region.
- 2) 94% of primary respondents have a college degree or higher and 90% report that their partner/spouse also has a college degree or higher. As a comparison, statewide 31.2% of Minnesotans (25+ years of age) hold a college degree or higher. For the Twin Cities region, that figure is 39.5%.
- 3) 82% of primary respondents identify as Caucasian and 88% described their partner/spouse's race/ethnicity as Caucasian. Statewide, 88% of Minnesotans describe themselves as Caucasian/White, while in the Twin Cities region 82.5% do.
- 4) 94% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality overall educational experience. Additionally, 82% agree or strongly agree that FSM is a good value for the money they pay, while 17% agree or strongly agree that FSM is too expensive.
- 5) 58% of respondents would *consider* switching schools if tuition (per student) increased by \$2,500. 61% would *definitely* switch at a \$5,000 increase.

Additional Selected Facts

Of the primary survey respondents...

Demographics

- 72% are from 3 or 4 person households
- 13% are single parents
- 76% are women
- 81% identify as heterosexual and 86% say their partner/spouse/co-parent are also heterosexual
- 11% identify as lesbian, although none of the respondents identify as gay
- 74% are 40-49 and 65% say their partner/spouse/co-parent is in that same age range
- 94% have finished college or have a graduate/professional degree (while 90% of their partners do)
- 62% did not attend private school (nor did 57% of their partners)
- 59% have 2 children, while 32% have 1 child
- 68% have one child enrolled at FSM, while 28% have 2 enrolled
- 20% have adopted children
- 82% identify as Caucasian and 88% describe their partner/spouse as Caucasian
- 79% have a child of European-American descent, while 10% have South Asian and Multiethnic children and 8% identify their children as African-American

- 100% speak English as their primary language at home
- 15% are Quaker with an additional 29% identifying as Christian (other than Quaker)
- 16% identify as eclectic spiritual, but not religious
- 31% identify as either agnostic/atheist/secular humanist or do not identify as religious/spiritual
- 55% think religion or spirituality is important to them

Economics

- 85% own their homes with a mortgage
- 43% have annual household incomes of less than \$100,000
- 50% have an income between \$100,000 and 300,000
- 15% have a household member who was unemployed for 6 months or more sometime during the last 2 years
- 31% have a household member who was underemployed during that same time period
- 66% rank mortgage/rent as their number one budgetary priority. The second priority was educational expenses

Tuition and Perceptions of Value

- 71% do not receive tuition aid
- 15% pay their tuition in 1 installment; 39% in 3; 16% in 9; 30% in 12
- 88% pay for tuition out of their current income
- 94% agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality overall educational experience
- 79% agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a better overall educational experience than other schools in the area
- 82% agree or strongly agree that FSM is a good value for the money they pay
- 17% agree or strongly agree that FSM is too expensive
- 70% agree or strongly agree that FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area, while 28% are neutral

Thoughts on Switching Schools and FSM Alternatives

- 58% say that if their children did not attend FSM, they would attend public schools, while 24% would attend charter schools, and only 16% would attend private schools
- 58% would consider switching schools if tuition increased by \$2,500
- 25% would definitely switch schools at that level of increase
- 61% would definitely switch at a \$5,000 increase
- 11% would not switch, regardless of the increase

Mission and SPICE Values

- 94% agree or strongly agree that FSM is fulfilling its mission statement

- 96% agree or strongly agree that the SPICE values are in alignment with their own values
- 87% agree or strongly agree that FSM walks its talk by living the values in its mission statement
- 44% ranked Integrity as the most important SPICE value to them personally and Equality ranked second
- 57% ranked Simplicity 5th

ZIP Code Analysis

Only two zip codes were significant among the CFS families; 26% or 31 families, live in 55105 and 17% or 20 families live in 55104. Both of these zip codes are in Ramsey County in St. Paul. The analytics in this portion are from Ramsey Informatics, which culls information from public records, including tax records, and projected Census data.

The 55105 zip code has 48% of students enrolled in private schools for grades 1-8. The majority of the residents are Caucasian (84%), followed by African American, Asian and Hispanic/ Latino. The estimated median household income was \$62,309, according to 2009 tax records (latest year available).

The households are 50.7% families and the self-reported same-sex unmarried partner households are 0.8% lesbian couples and 0.3% gay male couples. The average household size is 2.1 people and 34% of the residents of this zip code are renters and 66% are homeowners. As of January 2011, the cost of living index in 55105 is 102.1, which is slightly above the United States average of 100.

Like their neighbors in 55105, the residents of 55104 were majority Caucasian (79%), followed by African American (8%), Asian and Hispanic/Latino. Approximately 46% of the residents are renters and 54% are homeowners. The average household size is 2.5 people and the estimated median household income was \$42,767 in 2009 (latest year available).

Only 16.9% of 55104 residents send their children to private school for grades 1-8, and 83.1% send their children to public schools. The households are 52.4% families and the self-reported same-sex unmarried partner households are 0.7% lesbian couples and 0.4% gay male couples. As of January 2011, the cost of living index in 55104 is 98.9, which is slightly below the United States average of 100.

Key Insights

- A majority of respondent families have a household income almost double that of the median household income in the state of Minnesota. The vast majority of respondents receive no tuition aid.
- The parents/guardians in the FSM community are extremely well educated, holding college degrees at levels that are three times the state average.
- Although the vast majority of respondents view FSM as offering a good educational experience at a good value, sensitivity to tuition increases is relatively high.
- The SPICE values resonate deeply throughout the school community and infuse the FSM experience with meaning and purpose.

- The ethnic diversity of FSM is in alignment with the general trends present in the state and the Twin Cities region.
- Half of FSM families do not consider themselves religious. A significant minority of families see themselves as neither religious nor spiritual. Only a small percentage identify as Quaker.
- FSM’s main competitors are not other private schools. Rather, most FSM families consider public and charter schools as alternatives.

Suggested Reflection Questions

1. What is the ideal socio-economic and ethnic diversity FSM would like to see reflected in its community?
2. Given that satisfaction with FSM is high, why are families so sensitive to tuition increases?
3. What balance between religious, spiritual, and secular beliefs is the FSM community ideally seeking?
4. What advantages and challenges come with having such a well-educated community of parents/guardians? How might this fact influence the communication style FSM uses with its families?

IV-B. Selected Qualitative Data from CFS

The qualitative data for this section comes from the first section of the survey, which queried the domains outlined in bold below. These are the main themes that emerged.

Why parents choose FSM

The most oft-cited reason for selecting FSM is the Quaker value system. Quaker values are associated with a welcoming, nurturing, values-based learning environment. Other important reasons for choosing FSM are the small class sizes and the emphasis on conflict resolution among the students. A deep sense of community, demonstrated by the strong connections to the school and to other FSM families, is another significant aspect of the FSM experience for parents. As a school, FSM is set apart by the commitment to diversity and the deliberate focus on developing the whole child, academically and socially.

Vision for the near future

When asked about the ideal future of FSM, current families had strong, positive visions that expanded FSM’s scope with some refinements to the current curriculum and personnel. The most frequently expressed desire was the addition of a high school. The high school would provide continuity for the students; continue to emphasize SPICE values and community. FSM’s high school was often mentioned in conjunction with increased academic rigor, which was the second most-often cited future change. The focus on academic excellence was also often mentioned in connection with reputation, “FSM would be well-known in the Twin Cities for

being a strong academic school.” And, for many parents, FSM’s reputation would extend beyond the Twin Cities as well.

Other desired changes were also directions for continued growth. Many parents want more resources, particularly more dedicated faculty members. Notably, the emphasis was to expand on the existing, first-rate teaching staff. Parents want “excellent, engaged teachers at every level. These teachers would implement innovative and creative strategies for engaging and managing all students.” For many, superb teaching was characterized in terms of strong student-teacher relationships rather than subject matter expertise.

That which makes FSM special

FSM shows a “commitment to live the mission and [allocates] the resources to accomplish this goal.” “It has values that it works very hard to live up to” and for this reason it does “progressive education uniquely well.” There is a genuine emphasis on the social and emotional wellbeing of the students. This shows in how students develop throughout their time at FSM. “The philosophy is unique; they focus on learning by doing” (e.g., conflict resolution, social development).

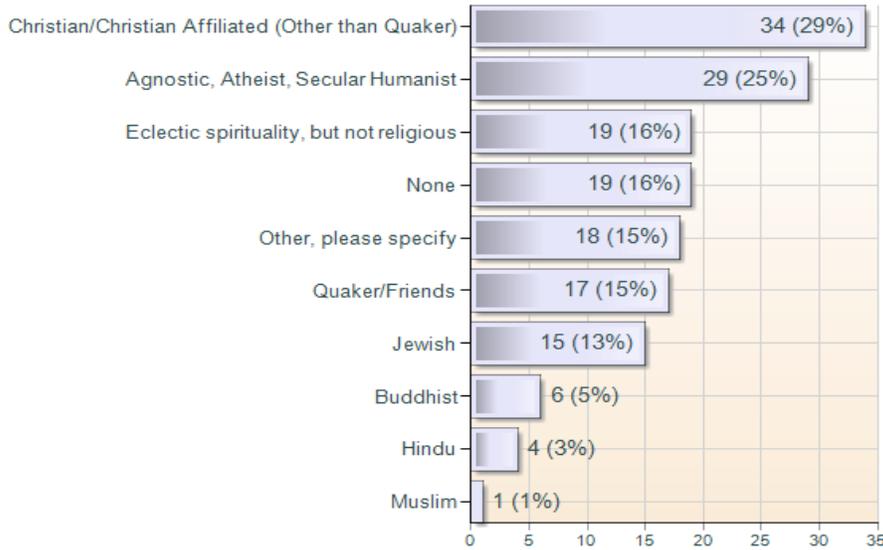
Also, FSM is a special community that has a “genuine spirit.” One parent said, “I didn’t realize that we were getting friends for ourselves when we were choosing a school for our children.” There’s a sense that everyone truly “knows and cares about each other.” In short, “FSM believes in and encourages an excellence that starts but doesn’t end with learning, with academic behavior or accomplishment. [It promotes] an excellence that has to do with caring in the best possible way, not just for yourself, but also for any smaller or larger community you might be a part of.”

Phrases/ideas most associated with FSM

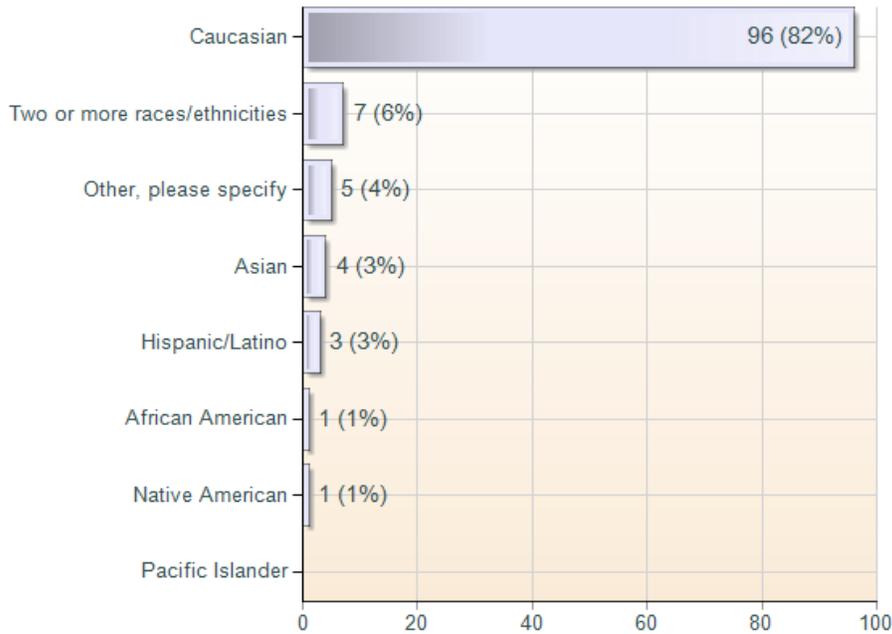
- Community
- Peace and conflict resolution
- Progressive education
- SPICE Values
- Whole person learning

IV-C. Selected Charts of Quantitative Data from CFS

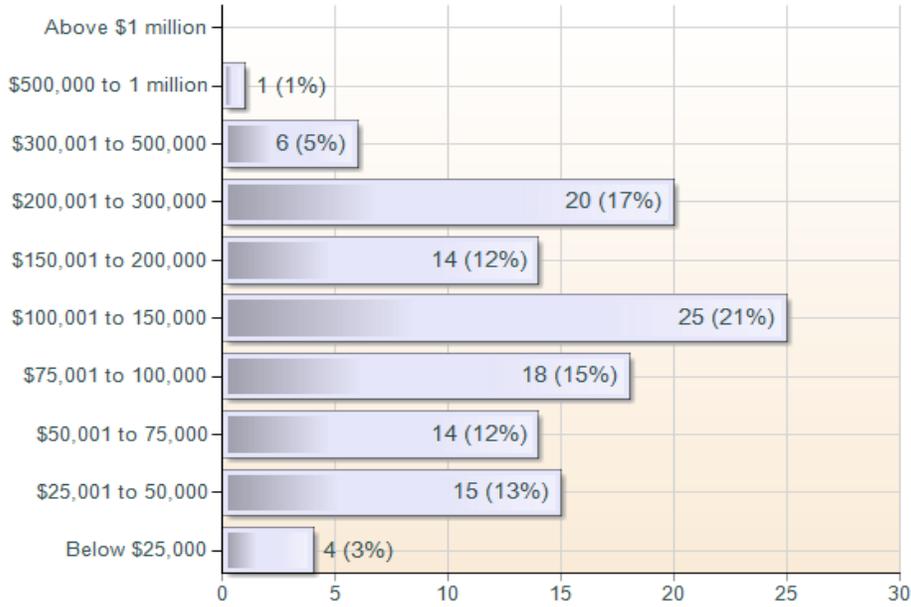
**What, if any, religious or spiritual tradition is practiced in your household?
(If more than one, please mark all that apply.)**



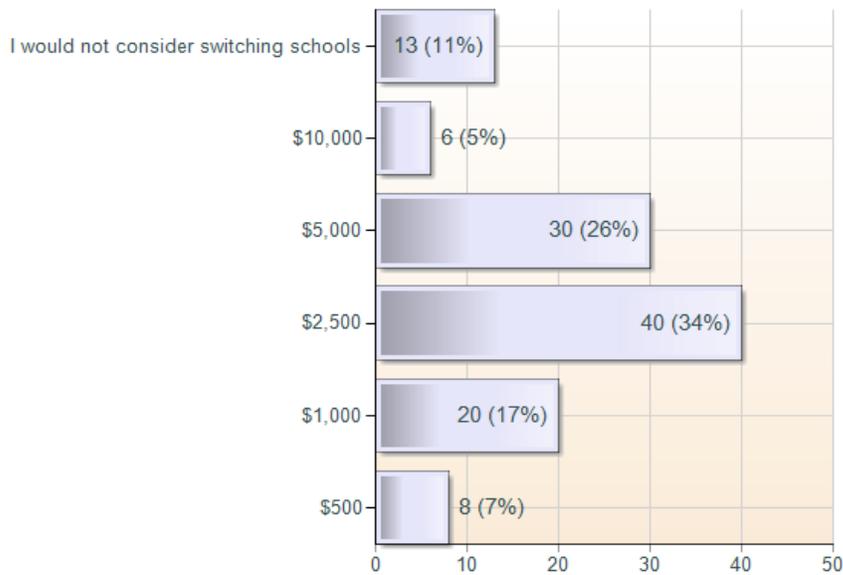
What term best describes your race/ethnicity?



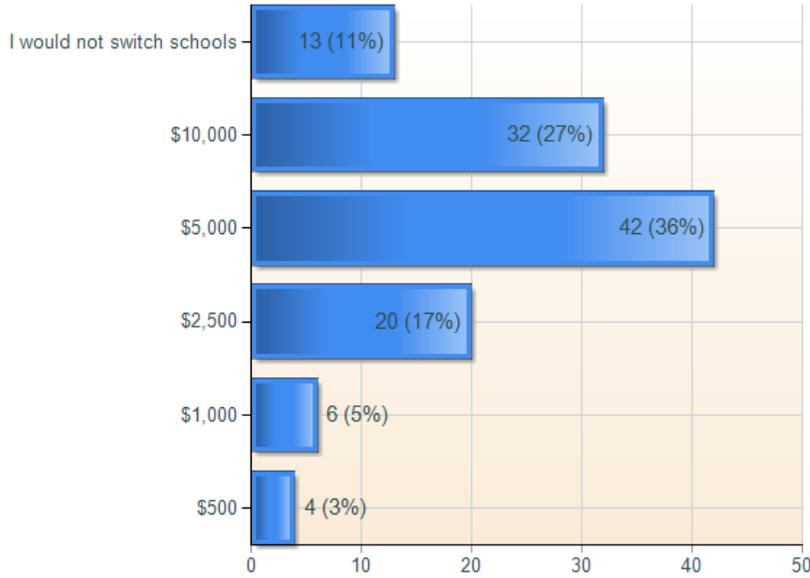
What is your annual household income (before taxes)?



If the FSM yearly tuition you pay were to increase, at what amount of increase would you consider switching schools?



If the FSM yearly tuition you pay were to increase, at what amount of increase would you definitely switch schools?



IV-D. Dominant Persona Arising from CFS

Grouping the demographic domains of education level, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and age generated the following dominant persona, exhibited by 40% (47 out of 117) of the respondents. They are the single largest group, by far, that have these key demographic indicators in common. Their attitudes on a range of topics is presented below. Their aggregated survey results are presented in Appendix B.

Dominant Persona Description

Well-educated (college and/or graduate school degrees), heterosexual, Caucasian women ages 40-59 emerged as the dominant survey respondent persona. It's hypothesized that they are also the main communicators with the school on behalf of their families. Therefore, understanding their perspectives on key issues is an essential component of crafting a clear and effective school-wide communication strategy.

Few (11%) are Quakers. The majority are agnostic, atheist, spiritual but not religious, secular humanists, or do not identify with a religious or spiritual tradition (69%). Most of these women attended public schools for kindergarten-12th grade (60%) and have 2 children (70%) with 1 child enrolled at FSM (66%). The vast majority (89%) of these women are working parents. Integrity (47%) and equality (40%) are the two most important Quaker values to this group, while simplicity ranked (68%) as the least important. Their families utilize the extended

day program at a very high level (85%). If their children did not attend FSM, a majority of them said they would have their kids attend public school (58%). Almost all of them agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality education (93%), better education than other schools in the area (79%), and is a good value (88%).

Dominant Persona financial profile

- 67% of their households earn between \$100,000-300,000 annually
- 83% are homeowners with mortgages
- 89% pay full tuition without financial aid
- 89% pay tuition out of current income
- 62% use 1-10% of household income before taxes on FSM tuition

Suggested Reflection Questions

- 1) In what ways might FSM implicitly or unconsciously cater to the dominant persona?
- 2) How might implicitly or unconsciously catering to the dominant persona affect those who fall outside the parameters of this persona?
- 3) How could further analysis of this dominant persona be useful?

V. Families Who Expressed Interest FSM: Quantitative Survey Findings

Four Facts to Consider

- 1) Of those families who expressed interest in FSM 90% agree or strongly agree that FSM offers a better overall educational experience than other schools in the area (both public and private).
- 2) However, of those applicants who were accepted to FSM, 27% declined to attend.
- 3) 60% of those who expressed interest in FSM had an annual income of less than \$100,000. Compare that to the fact that only 43% of current families attending FSM earn less than \$100,000 annually.
- 4) 68% of the families who expressed interest in FSM agree or strongly agree that FSM is too expensive.

Additional Selected Facts

Of the survey respondents...

Interest Level

- 55% inquired, toured the school, or attended an open house, but did not apply
- 27% inquired, applied and were accepted but declined the offer
- 9% inquired but did not tour the school and did not apply
- 9% started but did not finish the application process
- 77% expressed an interest in kindergarten

Demographics

- 68% have graduate degrees
- 83% have Caucasian children
- 17% have children of color
- 95% attended public school at least part of K-12th grade
- 35% have annual household incomes between \$100,000 and \$300,000
- 60% have annual household incomes of less than \$100,000
- 95% speak English as their primary language at home
- 5% Quaker, with an additional 32% identifying as Christian (other than Quaker)
- 23% identify as eclectic spiritual, but not religious
- 32% identify as agnostic/atheist/secular humanist
- 14% do not identify as religious or spiritual

Perception of FSM

- 100% agree or strongly agree that the SPICE values align with their own values
- 43% ranked peace as the most important SPICE value
- 72% consider technology integration in education important to extremely important
- 82% think the quality of FSM's academic programs is very good to excellent
- 64% think the teachers at FSM are very good

- 90% agree to strongly agree that FSM offers a better overall educational experience than other schools in the area, both public and private
- 67% strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality overall educational experience
- 68% agree or strongly agree that FSM is too expensive

Key Insights

- Overwhelmingly respondents thought FSM offered a good quality educational experience, but a significant number chose not to attend or seriously pursue attendance.
- Kindergarten was the most popular entry point into FSM.
- Expense was a significant factor why people chose not to apply and/or enroll.

Suggested Reflection Questions

- 1) How might FSM make a stronger case for affordability to families interested in attending FSM?
- 2) What can FSM do to more fully understand the decision making process of prospective families?

IV. Cross-Sectional Analysis of Quantitative Data (Current Families Survey)

After extensive analysis, what follows are a selection of significant cross-sections of data that we want to highlight and consider.

IV-A. Who are FSM’s “strong advocates”?

The following are factoids associated with those who could be considered FSM’s “strong advocates.” To qualify for this grouping, respondents strongly agreed with two key statements: “FSM offers a good quality of education experience” and “FSM is a good value for the amount of tuition you pay.” The percentages from these strong supporters are compared to the general sample percentages. The factoids that are not reported for the strong supporters did not significantly differ from the general sample. Out of the 117 total respondents, 47 (40%) were considered strong advocates.

Four Facts to Consider

- 1) Compared to the general sample, where males comprised 24% of the respondents, within the “strong advocates” group, males had a higher level of representation (32%).
- 2) “Strong advocates” are significantly less likely to consider switching schools if tuition increased by \$2,500. 40% of “strong advocates” said they would *consider* switching school at that level of increase, 58% of the general sample said they would. Similarly, if tuition increased by \$5,000, 43% of the “strong advocates” said they would *definitely* switch schools, while 61% for the general sample would switch.
- 3) 94% of the “strong advocates” strongly agree with the mission statement “FSM prepares children to embrace life, learning and community with hope, skill, understanding and creativity.” The general sample was 69%.
- 4) 96% of the “strong advocates” strongly agree that SPICE values are in alignment with their values, whereas 79% of the general sample strongly agreed. Further, 87% of the “strong advocates” strongly agreed that FSM walks its talk when it comes to the SPICE values. In the general sample only 56% strongly agreed.

	Strong Advocates	vs.	General Sample
Demographics			
• Gender:	Female	68%	76%
	Male	32%	24%
• Age:	30 to 39	15%	9%
	40 to 49	66%	74%
• Attended private school during any part of K through 12:	Yes	53%	38%
• Number of Children:	1	38%	32%
	2	51%	59%

- Children Enrolled at FSM:

1	77%	68%
2	21%	28%

Tuition and Perception of Value

- Tuition Installments:

9 or 12	51%	46%
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- Would consider switching schools at a \$2,500 tuition increase:

	40%	58%
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- Would definitely switch at a \$5,000 tuition increase:

	43%	61%
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Mission and SPICE Values

- Percentage who “strongly agree” with the statement “FSM prepares children to embrace life, learning and community with hope, skill, understanding and creativity.”

	94%	69%
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- Percentages who “strongly agree” that SPICE values are in alignment with their values:

	96%	79%
--	-----	-----
- Percentage to “strongly agree” that FSM walks its talk:

	87%	56%
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- Percentage who rated “extremely important” when asked how important each SPICE value was in their lives:

Simplicity	38%	22%
Peace	64%	55%
Integrity	87%	76%
Community	68%	49%
Equality	81%	69%

Key Insights

- Males and younger parents/guardians are slightly more likely to be strong advocates.
- Those with one child, or a single child enrolled at FSM, are slightly more likely to be strong advocates than those with 2 or more children.
- Your strong advocates are significantly less sensitive to tuition increases than the general sample.
- People who resonated deeply with FSM SPICE values on a personal level were significantly more likely to be strong advocates.
- Those who believe that FSM walks its talk are significantly more likely to be strong advocates.

Reflection Questions

1. How can resonance with the SPICE values be enhanced and spread throughout the community?
2. How can resonance with SPICE values be leveraged to enhance allegiance to FSM and its mission?
3. What are the most powerful ways in which FSM demonstrates that it walks its talk? How might it do a better job?

IV-B. How do the perceptions of the families of those who receive tuition aid differ from the perceptions of those who do not?

The following is a dichotomous comparison between respondents who receive tuition aid and those who do not, presented in the format “Tuition Aid - % vs. No Tuition Aid - %.”

Four Facts to Consider

- 1) Those who *do not* receive tuition aid are slightly older (only 5% are 39 or under, as compared to 21% of those who do not receive tuition aid). They are less ethnically diverse (88% are Caucasian, whereas 68% of those not receiving tuition aid identify this way). Also, they are more educated (99% have college degrees and 83% have graduate degrees; for those *not* receiving tuition aid the percentages are 82% and 41%, respectively).
- 2) Those receiving tuition aid were 5 times more likely to have a household member who was unemployed for 6 months or more within the last 2 years (35% vs. 7%). They are also twice as likely to have a household member who was underemployed during that period (50% vs. 23%).
- 3) 29% of those receiving tuition aid strongly agree that FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area; 36% see it as too expensive. For those not receiving tuition aid, 45% strongly agree that FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area; only 10% see it as too expensive.
- 4) For those receiving tuition aid, if tuition increased by \$2,500, then 47% would definitely switch schools (for those not receiving tuition aid, only 16% which switch at that level). If tuition increased by \$5,000, then 91% of those receiving tuition aid would switch schools. In comparison, only 50% of those not receiving tuition aid would switch at that level.

	Tuition Aid	vs.	No Tuition Aid
Demographics			
• Gender: Female	71%		78%
• Age: 30 – 39	21%		5%
40 – 49	68%		76%
50 – 59	12%		18%
• Race/Ethnicity:			
Caucasian	88%		68%

- Partner/Spouse's Race/Ethnicity:

Caucasian	81%	91%
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- Education:

College Degree	82%	99%
Post Graduate	41%	83%
- Partner/Spouse's Education:

College Degree	69%	96%
Post Graduate	31%	80%
- Are Quakers: 24% 11%
- Rate Spirituality/Religion as "Extremely Important"

24%	5%
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Economics

- Unemployment of someone in household for more than 6 months in last 2 years:

35%	7%
-----	----
- Underemployment of someone in household for more than 6 months in last 2 years:

50%	23%
-----	-----
- Of those receiving Tuition Aid, 76% receive over \$5,000 per student.
- Pay Tuition in 3 Installments:

29%	43%
-----	-----
- Pay in 12 Installments:

44%	24%
-----	-----
- Percentage of Income Spent on FSM Tuition:

Between 1 – 10%	41%	58%
Between 11 – 25%	47%	36%
Between 26 – 50%	9%	0%

Perception of Value and Quality

- FSM offers a better quality of education than other schools in the area:

Strongly Agree	50%	35%
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- FSM is too expensive – Agree or Strongly Agree:

36%	10%
-----	-----
- FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area - Strongly Agree:

29%	45%
-----	-----
- Consider switching schools if tuition increased by \$2,500:

85%	50%
-----	-----
- Definitely switch schools if tuition increased by:

\$2,500	47%	16%
\$5,000	91%	50%
- Extended day care program is "extremely important" to their family's choice to attend FSM:

14%	31%
-----	-----

SPICE Values

- FSM walks its talk, in terms of the SPICE values:
41% 61%

Key Insights

- Families who receive tuition aid tend to be slightly younger, more ethnically diverse, and, though well educated, less well educated than those who do not. Also, Quakers receive aid at higher levels and are more likely to rate spirituality/religion as extremely important to them.
- Those who receive tuition aid experienced significantly higher levels of underemployment and unemployment in the recent past.
- Respondents who receive tuition aid have a more favorable view of the quality of educational experience FSM offers, as compared to those who do not receive tuition aid. However, have a less favorable view of its economic value and are more likely to view it as too expensive. Further, they demonstrate significantly more sensitivity to tuition increases.

Suggested Reflection Questions

1. In what ways do the identities of these two groups differ? How do their relationships with FSM differ?
2. How do the needs of these two groups overlap? How are they distinct?
3. In what ways can FSM reach out and form a stronger bond of trust and understanding with the families who receive tuition aid?

IV-C. How do male and female respondents compare?

The following is a dichotomous comparison between male and female respondents, presented in the format “Male - % vs. Female - %.” Again, if a specific factoid is not reported, then there was not a significant gender difference.

Three Facts to Consider

- 1) Female respondents are 4 times more likely to be a single parent (16% versus 4%).
- 2) Female respondents are also twice as likely to have had someone in their household underemployed for 6 or more months in the last 2 years (35% vs. 18%).
- 3) Though males are more likely to strongly agree that FSM offers a good quality education (71% versus 58% for females) and offers good value for the money paid (54% versus 45% for females), they are more likely to consider switching schools if tuition is increased by \$2,500 (68% of males would consider it, as compared to 55% of females).

	Male	vs.	Female
Demographics			

- Age:

40 – 49	82%	71%
50 – 59	7%	19%
- Identify children as having special needs:

	14%	27%
--	-----	-----
- Single parent:

	4%	16%
--	----	-----
- Household member was underemployed for over 6 months in the last 2 years:

	18%	35%
--	-----	-----

Perception of Quality and Value

- “Strongly agree” that FSM offers a good quality educational experience:

	71%	58%
--	-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that FSM is a good value for the amount of tuition:

	54%	45%
--	-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that FSM is a better value than other private schools in the area:

	50%	37%
--	-----	-----
- Would consider switching schools at a tuition increase of \$2,500:

	68%	55%
--	-----	-----
- Would definitely switch schools at a tuition increase of \$5,000:

	68%	60%
--	-----	-----

Mission and SPICE Values

- Percentage who “strongly agree” with the statement “FSM prepares children to embrace life, learning and community with hope, skill, understanding and creativity.”

	79%	66%
--	-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that SPICE values are in alignment with their own values:

	75%	81%
--	-----	-----
- SPICE values are “extremely important” to your daily life:

Simplicity	29%	20%
Peace	39%	60%
Integrity	71%	78%
Community	36%	53%
Equality	61%	72%
- SPICE values that are “extremely important” to teach students:

Peace	61%	73%
Community	64%	78%

Key Insights

- Male respondents were slightly younger than female respondents.

- Males who responded were less likely to identify their children as special needs than females.
- Female respondents were more likely to be single parents.
- Male respondents were more likely to view FSM as giving a better quality educational experience, as being a good educational value in itself, and as being a better value than other schools in the area.
- Males are more likely to believe that FSM is fulfilling its mission.
- Female respondents perceived the SPICE values, as a group, as being more in alignment with their own values. However, males and females resonated with different. Males were more likely to value simplicity, while females more highly valued the other four SPICE values.
- Female respondents, as compared to their male counterparts, viewed the values of Peace and Community as more important to teach students.
- Even though males have a better perception of FSM and more positive about its ability to offer a good quality and value education, they are much more price sensitive.

Reflection Questions

1. What are the ways in which gender may influence perception of FSM?
2. How can FSM be savvier about understanding and responding to these differences?

IV-D. What are the differences between those who would be likely to switch schools over tuition increases and those who are unlikely to switch schools?

The following factoids compare those respondents who said they would “definitely switch schools” if tuition were to increase by \$5,000 vs. those who said they would not switch until tuition increased by \$10,000 OR they would not switch schools, period. In other words, this is a comparison of those sensitive to tuition increases vs. those who are more resilient to tuition increases.

Four Facts to Consider

- 5) Those likely to switch schools with an increase in tuition are twice as likely to earn under \$100,000 per year (54% earn under 100k vs. 26% for those who are unlikely to switch schools).
- 6) Of those likely to switch, 43% receive tuition aid. Of those unlikely to switch, only 7% receive tuition aid.
- 7) 87% of those unlikely to switch strongly believe that FSM walks its talk. Contrast that with only 39% of those who are likely to switch.
- 8) Only 32% of those likely to switch strongly believe that FSM is a good value for the tuition they pay. And only 28% believe it offers a better value than other private schools in the area.

Likely to switch vs. Unlikely to switch

Demographics

- Percentage of respondents who attended private school at some point during their K through 12 education: 32% 49%
- Those who hold a post-graduate or professional degree: 65% 80%
- Reported race/ethnicity as Caucasian: 79% 87%
- Partner's race/ethnicity reported as Caucasian: 84% 95%
- Partner/spouse holds a post-graduate or professional degree: 56% 87%
- One child enrolled at FSM: 65% 73%
- Identify their children as having special needs: 74% 80%

Economics

- Yearly Income Under \$100,000: 54% 26%
- Yearly Income Above \$100,000: 46% 74%
- Unemployed for 6 months within the last 2 years: 18% 11%
- Underemployed for 6 months within the last 2 years: 38% 20%

Tuition and Financial Aid

- Do not receive tuition aid: 57% 93%
- Receive more than \$5,000 in tuition aid per student: 33% 4%
- Pay tuition in 1 installment: 10% 22%
- Pay tuition in 12 installments: 33% 24%
- Use the extended day program: 74% 89%

- Of those who use the extended day program, they rated it as “extremely important” to their decision to attend FSM:

21%	32%
-----	-----
- Mortgage/Rent is 1st priority:

72%	56%
-----	-----

Perceived Value and Quality

- “Strongly agree” that FSM offers a good quality educational experience:

51%	78%
-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that FSM offers a better educational experience than other schools in the area:

33%	49%
-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that FSM offers the best educational experience of any school in the area:

19%	31%
-----	-----
- “Strongly agree that FSM is a good value for the tuition amount paid:

32%	71%
-----	-----
- Either “agree” or “strongly agree” that FSM is too expensive:

25%	4%
-----	----
- “Strongly agree” that FSM is a better value than other private schools in area:

28%	60%
-----	-----
- If their child was not attending FSM, he/she would attend some other private school (as opposed to public):

13%	22%
-----	-----

Mission and SPICE Values

- “Strongly agree” that FSM fulfills its mission statement:

60%	84%
-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that the SPICE values are in alignment with their own values:

75%	87%
-----	-----
- “Strongly agree” that FSM walks its talk:

39%	82%
-----	-----
- SPICE values are “extremely important” to their daily lives:

Simplicity 15%	33%
Integrity 74%	80%
Equality 67%	73%

Key Insights

- Those who are resilient against tuition increases earn more money than those who sensitive to them. In addition, the resilient group was more likely to have attended a private school during some point of their K through 12 educations (as were their partners/spouses).
- “Unlikely switchers” have a much more positive view on FSM's value for their tuition dollars and are much more positive about the quality of education FSM provides.

- “Unlikely switchers” are much more likely to perceive FSM as fulfilling its mission statement and of walking its talk. They also resonate more deeply with the school's SPICE values.

Reflection Questions

1. What would it take to enhance resilience to tuition increases up and down the economic ladder?
2. Given that sensitivity to tuition increases differs based on income, what would a tuition structure responsive to these differences look like?
3. What specific factors seem to predict sensitivity to tuition increases vs. resilience to tuition increases?

V. Focus Groups Discussion

V-A. Focus Group 1 – FSM Staff Parents/Guardians

The following is a summary of selected findings from the four focus groups, which totaled over 45 participants ranging from staff, faculty, board members, parents/guardians new to the school, and those experienced with FSM.

Context, tone, repeated themes, and surprises

The group consisted of 12 participants, 2 facilitators and 1 interested observer from Lyceum Partners. The session lasted 90 minutes and was held in a classroom at FSM.

Surprises Expressed by Participants

Socio-economic and Ethnic Diversity

“Surprised by how much income some families have. People live very modestly.”

“I was surprised there was such a high percentage of families paying full tuition.”

“I really thought we had more families on tuition aid. I also thought we had more families on the lower end of the income spectrum.”

“I felt surprised at just how lacking in ethnic/racial diversity we are.”

Repeated themes

Community at FSM

“I think we have more work to do with our own staff about who the community is and is not”

“Friends is moving away from its granola roots and becoming more elite.”

“As staff, we don’t much of voice in the life of FSM.”

Differences between the administration and staff

“It’s hard to be specific about concerns as a teacher with administration in the room”

“Separate administration from staff in these value-laden discussions”

Tone

The general tone was one of thoughtful appreciation for the community and its values.

Suggestions for translating results into action

- Have separate focus groups for staff and administration, if this survey process is repeated in the future.
- Use a conflict resolution approach to discuss issues with staff members and the administration, including the Board.
- Set up a regularly scheduled feedback forum to facilitate better communication between the administration and staff. The forum would address written concerns as well as concerns shared in a “Town Hall” format. Part of this forum could be virtual so that written concerns are posted to the group and the evolving discussion may be

tracked over time.

V-B. Focus Group 2 – FSM Parents/Guardians (No Tuition Aid)

The following is a brief summary of selected findings from the second focus group, according to the main themes that emerged during discussion. Quantitative data from the structured exercises is included at the end.

Context, tone, repeated themes, and surprises

There were 14 participants, 2 facilitators and 1 interested observer present in the classroom.

Surprises

“My middle school son says that none of his friends at school have tried smoking or drinking. And he tells me a lot.”

“I’m shocked that simplicity was consistently ranked the least important SPICE value.”

“There needs to be a better understanding of boys and boy energy. Middle school boys are not valued at this school.”

“The cost of tuition is not a concern. Affordability is secondary to value.”

Repeated themes

Diversity at FSM

“I worry that we [FSM community] are being hypocrites about diversity. What are we not seeing?”

“There needs to be a lot more diversity in the new hires at FSM.”

“The fact that there are no gay male parents at FSM is odd and problematic.”

Academic Rigor vs. Academic Vigor

“This is a valuable analysis—academic vigor and the depth of learning are most important for children. Grades are not.”

“Academic vigor should be at the heart of the curriculum.”

Tone

This group was overwhelmingly positive; they expressed profound appreciation for the education provided by FSM and its values.

Suggestions for translating results into action

- Increase extracurricular offerings for middle school boys.
- Open a dialogue with parents, teachers and administration about Quaker identity, homogeneity and types of diversity.

V-C. Focus Group 3 – FSM Parents/Guardians (No Tuition Aid)

The following is a brief summary of selected findings from the third focus group, according to the main themes that emerged during discussion.

Context, tone, repeated themes, and surprises

There were 15 participants, 2 facilitators and 1 interested observer present in the classroom.

Surprises

“Creating a conflict resolution program between the parents and teachers is a good idea.”

“With a tuition increase, health insurance for staff is a matter of justice.”

Repeated themes

Value

“Value is intimately connected experiences with specific teachers.”

“Worth ascribes things to their proper place and value just compares money with ideas. FSM has great worth.”

“If something offers enough value, my feeling about how affordable it is may change.”

Diversity at FSM

“There needs to be a more diverse group of students—with diversity including values, academic potential, and behaviors as well as race/ethnicity.”

“I’m concerned about class diversity. We have some racial diversity among the students but income diversity is not really there.”

Academic Rigor vs. Academic Vigor

“In middle school, the humanities are quite rigorous. Math and science might be able to increase rigor in that sense, but we want to be well prepared, not college ready.”

“I send my children to FSM to become lifelong learners, not to be college ready after grade 8.”

Tone

This group was passionate in their commitment to the school; the FSM community was clearly a central concern in their lives.

Suggestions for translating results into action

- Communicate long-term financial concerns of the school to the parents, specifically in terms of the any possible tuition increases.

V-D. Focus Groups 4 – Parents/Guardians Who Received Tuition Aid

Note: These results are combined with results from the survey and integrated throughout this report. It was decided that this was a most appropriate way to present this data.