

LINCOLN NURSERY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

May 9, 2023

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order and Welcome
Emily Lines

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Secretary Report: Approve 2021-22 Meeting Minutes
Raleigh Werner

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President's Annual Report
Emily Lines

•

Director's Annual Report
Nancy Fincke

Treasurer's Annual Report
Bryan Wynn

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Nominating Committee Report: Review and Approval
of Proposed 2023-24 Board Slate
Mara Rus

2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Nancy Fincke (non-voting member)

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President: Emily Lines

Secretary: Raleigh Werner

Vice President of Development: Kate Brooks

Vice President of Enrollment: Laura Mellen

Vice President of Programs: Anique Lebel

Budget Treasurer: Bryan Wynn

deCordova Liaison: Bridget Healy

DEI Chair: Andrew West

Gala/Fundraising: Emily Beekman

Legal Advisors: Aidan Flanagan & Abigail Flanagan

Room Parents: Vickie Slingerland (B), David Henry (Y), Mara Rus (P), Annie Magee (R)

Staff Search and Development: Lauren O'Neil

Strategic Planning: Mitch Brooks

Welcoming and Social: Colleen Bixby & Caroline Nordstrom

APPROVE 2021-22 ANNUAL
MEETING MINUTES

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 1:

Complete a Strategic Planning process, engaging key stakeholders and committees, to develop a vision for LNS that will provide direction in the coming years. Produce and/or refresh materials that articulate LNS core values and practices, define our target market for enrollment, develop messaging about the uniqueness and value of the school experience and community, and outline the programs that will sustain the school. (President)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 2:

Foster and build school community by offering more opportunities for families to connect meaningfully with one another. This will be achieved by a more open campus to families and more frequent in-person events. (Programs)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 3:

Continue to attract families committed to a Reggio-inspired, cooperative education, while increasing accessibility to a wider demographic of applicants who share these values. Working in partnership across multiple committees, we will fine-tune our marketing strategy and continue to assess core school hours and extended day offerings, tuition and financial assistance, and parent commitments.

(Enrollment)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 4:

Develop specific strategies for executing the goals laid out by the DEI strategic plan. Liaise with development, enrollment, and staff search and development regarding DEI specific goals. Continue to create/support anti-bias education in the LNS community, including (but not limited to) community events, reading lists (for both children and adults), and faculty professional development. Establish indicators of progress and transparency to the LNS community. (DEI)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 5:

Create a plan to reinvigorate our Professional Development offerings to broaden our impact, increase awareness of LNS among potential future faculty members, and consider how Professional Development offerings could generate revenue for the school. (Director and Faculty)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 6:

Further optimize our balance sheet to improve our returns in a low-risk way. Deliver the 2022-2023 budget during this year of strategic investment, and progress toward breakeven operations starting in 2023-2024. (Budget Treasurer)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 7:

Continue to focus on our two major fundraising efforts per year while working to expand our audience of potential donors, increase the number of targeted donation requests, and communicate our case for support throughout the year.

(Development)

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Board Goal Updates

Board Goal 8:

Develop and communicate a clear, concise statement of LNS's educational philosophy and mission that will attract and retain families and faculty who share our priorities and vision. (Strategic Planning)

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT:
Review / Approve Proposed 2023-24 Board Slate

2023-2024 PROPOSED BOARD SLATE

Director: Nancy Fincke (non-voting member)

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President: Emily Lines

Secretary: Raleigh Werner

Vice President of Development: Kate Brooks

Vice President of Enrollment: Laura Mellen

Vice President of Programs: Jenny Rogers

Budget Treasurer: Bryan Wynn

deCordova Liaison: Vickie Slingerland

DEI Chair: Andrew West

Gala/Fundraising Chair: Caroline Fiore

Legal Advisors: Aidan Flanagan & Abigail Flanagan

Room Parents: Christina Hempton (B), Akemi Martin (Y), Liz Curtis-Bey (P), Anique Lebel(R)

Welcoming and Social: Colleen Bixby & Greta Kaplan

MAY 2023 MEETING AGENDA

Welcome and Update
Emily Lines, President

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Approve March 23, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes
Raleigh Werner, Secretary

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Budget Update
Emily Lines, President

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Parent Survey Results
Katherine Ruhl, Special Projects Chair

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Teacher Survey Results
Lauren O'Neil, Staff Search and Development

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Call for Additional Updates/Questions

WELCOME AND UPDATE

APPROVE MARCH 23, 2023 MINUTES

BUDGET UPDATE

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

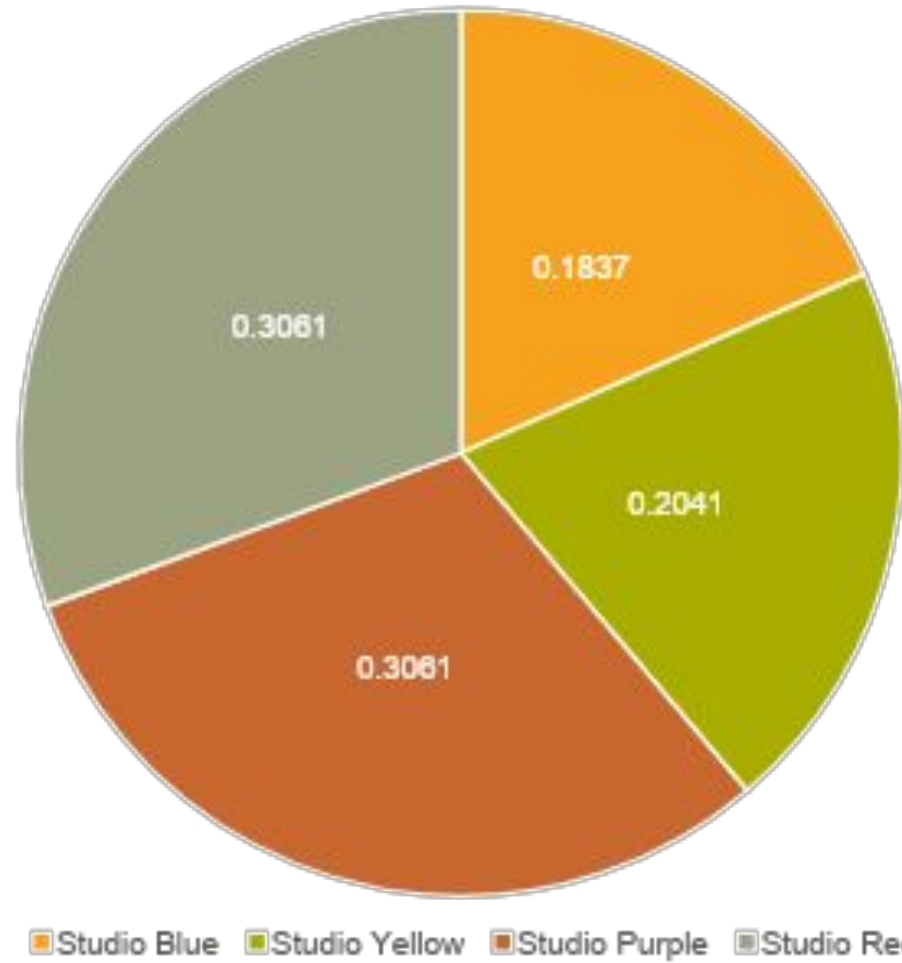
LNS Parent Survey 2022-2023

May Board Meeting Presentation

Q7: In which studio is your child? (If you have children in more than one studio, please complete this survey with one child/studio in mind. Please complete a second survey with your other child/studio in mind.)

Answered: 49 Skipped: 0

84% of families completed the survey



Families are happy at LNS

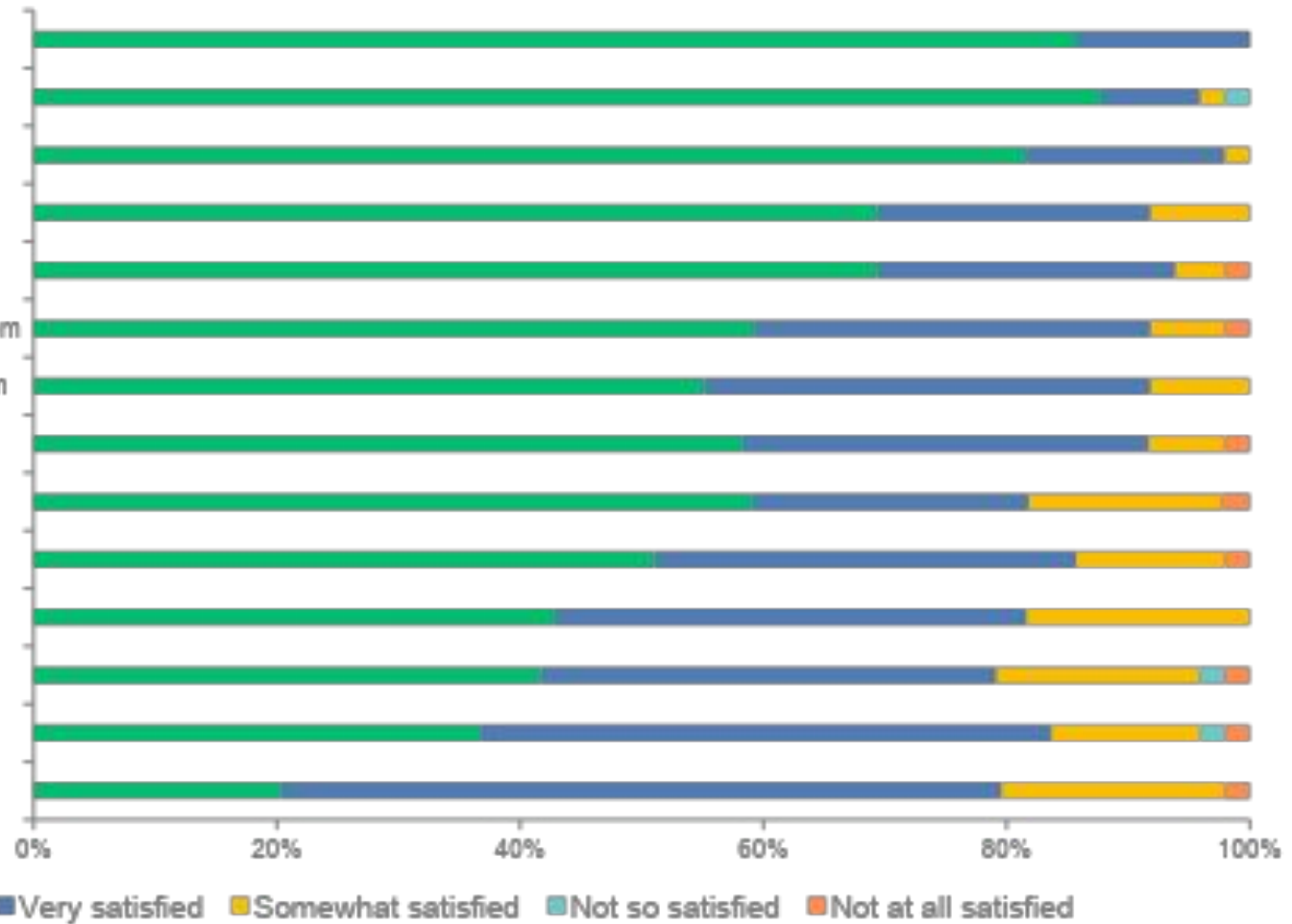
Q3: As a parent at LNS, how would you rate your satisfaction or LNS's performance in the following areas?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 0

100% of families are extremely or very satisfied with the teachers

- outdoors
- location
- Philosophy/Reggio approach
- Family Partnering and time spent in the classroom
- Partnership with the Sculpture Park and Museum
- Co-operative preschool
- Studio Red PreK/K program
- Inclusive community

In areas with the lowest satisfaction ratings, over 80% of people are very satisfied



What should LNS STOP doing? (free responses)

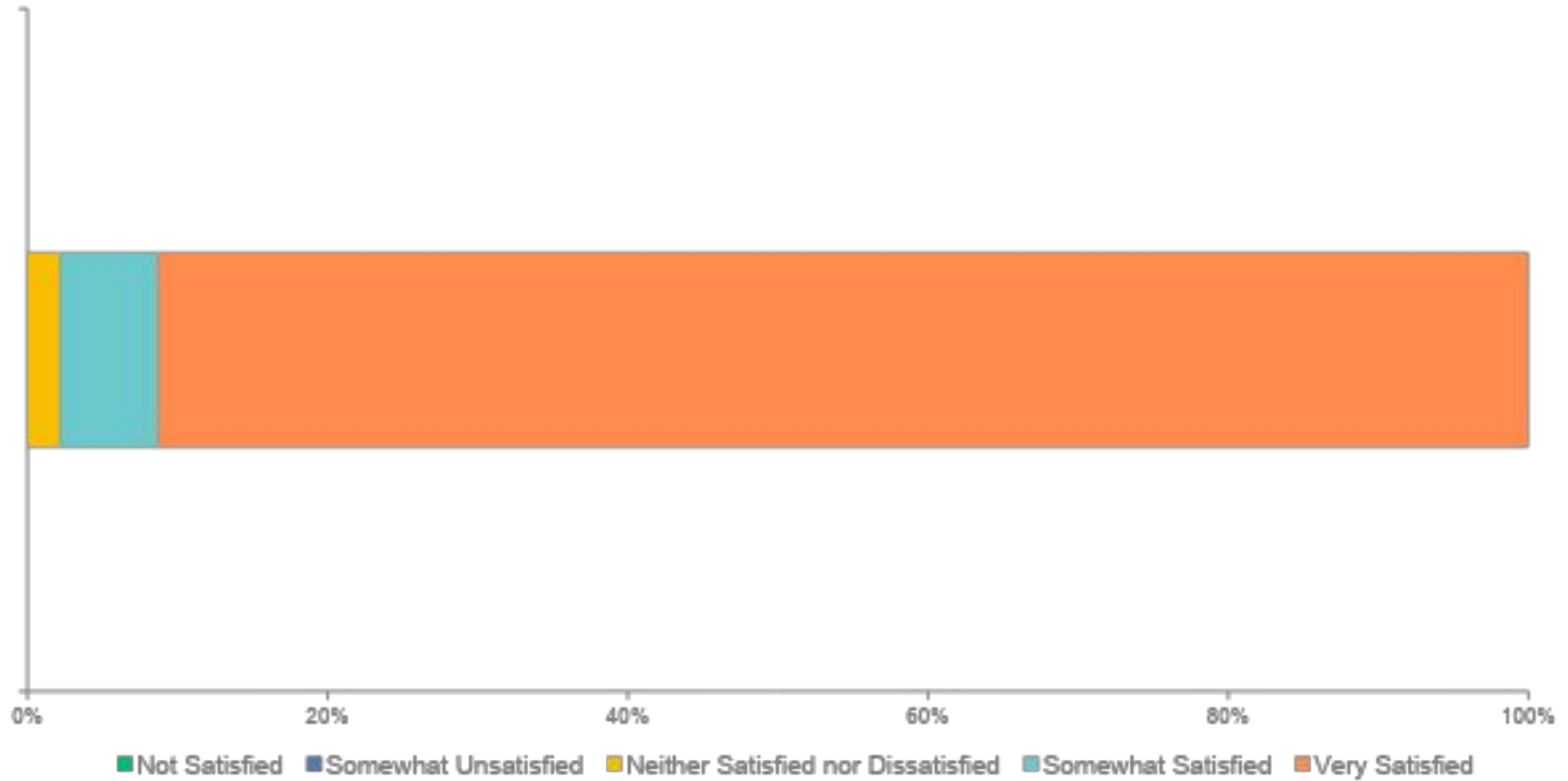
Only repeat response was to rethink family partner requirements

- I wish family partnering were optional or that there were some sort of opt-out potential. I know it's part of the fabric of the Co-op and LNS in particular, but it's hard for two full-time working professionals to commit and we have found ourselves scrambling on occasion. We would jump at alternative ways to contribute to the LNS community (in addition to the assigned roles/jobs).*
- Although we really enjoy the family partner experience, for a number of reasons, this year has been challenging for us to schedule. We certainly aren't advocating for family partnering to stop, but if LNS had given us the option to family partner less frequently, even for a fee, we certainly would have taken it.*

Vast majority of families responded that they couldn't think of anything

Q38: Please rate your overall satisfaction with Lincoln Nursery School this year.

Answered: 46 Skipped: 3

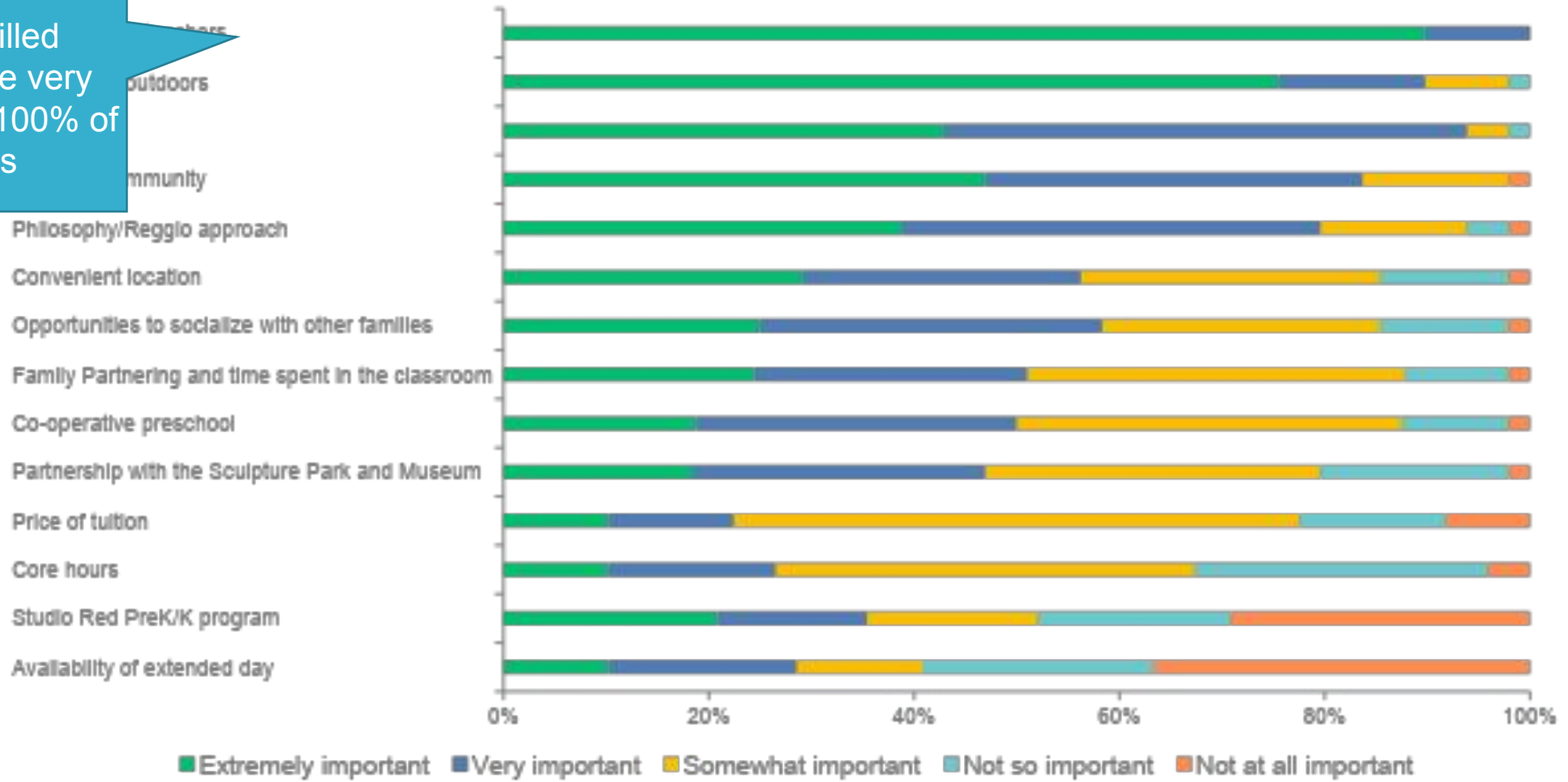


Importance of highly skilled teachers

Q2: How important were the following when choosing LNS?

Answered: 49 Skipped: 0

Highly skilled teachers are very important to 100% of families



What should LNS CONTINUE doing? (free responses)

**34% of families say
attract and retain
good teachers**

- *Continue to hire and retain incredible teachers. The teachers are the difference between LNS and another program. They are thoughtful, skilled, warm, and understand my child on a deep level.*
- *We think LNS teachers are incredible at their jobs and we think we should continue to ensure we have satisfied teachers.*
- *Continue the amazing teaching and community that's created there. From when you walk in to drop off your kid the tone is set. Everyone says hello to each other. It's a very welcoming community. The teachers go above and beyond for our kids. The interventions they make with the kids are setting them up for problem solving and successful social interactions for the rest of their life. It's not just child care. It's teaching our kids invaluable lessons for how to navigate life moving forward.*

**Families want their
children outdoors**

- *We love the teachers and the outdoor time and the play based philosophy.*
- *Lots of outdoor exploration time*
- *Keep great teachers happy and kids outside.*

**Families love
StoryPark posts
and they are an
important part of
the LNS experience**

- *Storypark posts and family partnering! They make an incredible difference in understanding what the children are up to and getting a unique opportunity to learn and experience with them.*
- *I love Storypark. Such a great way to glimpse at what each studio is up to.*

Q29: Please rank the following in terms of most helpful to least helpful in learning about the values of LNS (1 being most helpful and 8 being least helpful)

Answered: 45 Skipped: 4

1. Teachers
2. Studio Meetings (Welcome Back Night in September and Studio Update in March)
3. Enrollment Tour
4. Members of LNS Community
5. Family Handbook
6. New Families Night in June Prior to the Start of School
7. Room Parent
8. LNS Website

General support for core hours extending

What should LNS START doing? (free responses)

Most requests for more community activities – specifically outside of school hours

- It would be nice to have some more events/gatherings as a whole school during the late afternoon/early evening hours so that working parents can partake in school events with their kids and other families.*
- We would love it if there were more opportunities for parents to get together throughout the year. The coffees in the morning are events that dual working families typically can't participate in.*
- More informal parent connection opportunities, not necessarily at the school.*

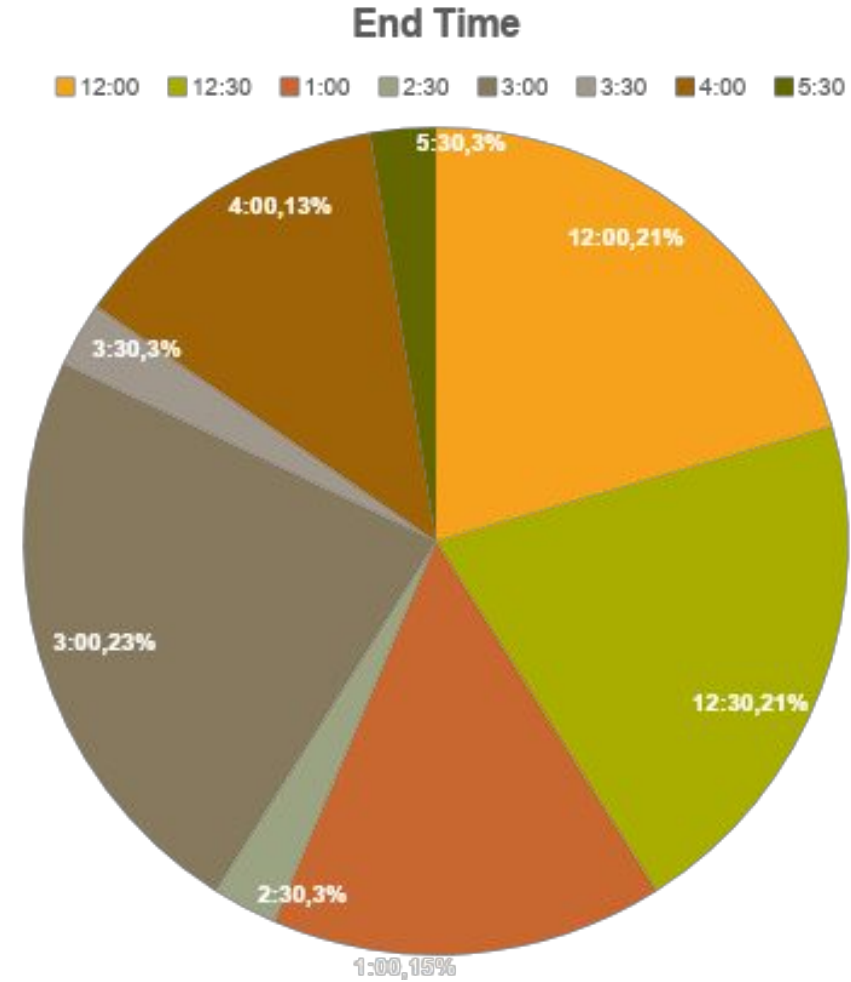
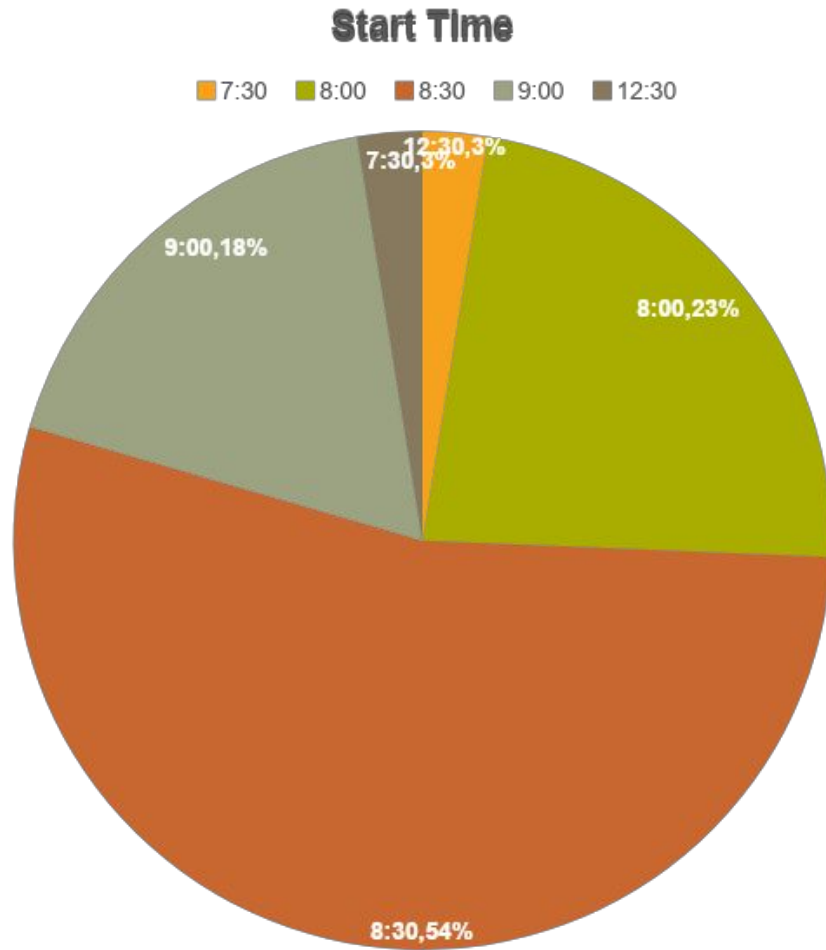
Suggestions to improve outdoor play spaces

- Our family has noticed that the younger studios spend quite a bit of time in the LNS play yards, and we think that it might be good to invest in improving the outdoor spaces inside the gates.*

General support for the core hours extending with some requests to extend the hours further

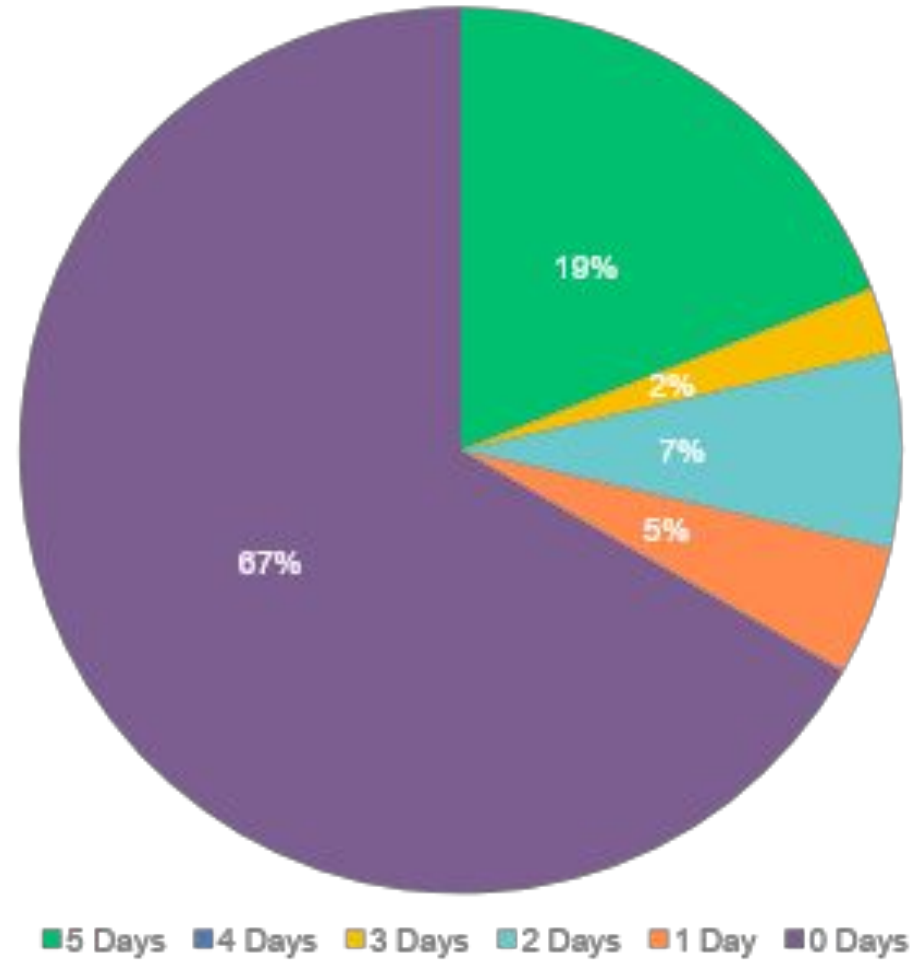
- I think a 4:00 end time would draw in more families with working parents, and I know that's happening next year.*
- Extending the hours of extended day. If inclusion and diversity is important to us, we need to have pick up hours after 5 pm. Without that, our efforts feel performative.*
- Extended the hours. It's fine if the core hours are early, but having an option for an extended day that starts earlier and goes until at least 5 or 6 would be extremely beneficial, especially for families with two working parents. It's impossible to have two working parents and send your kids to LNS without help.*

Q24: Assuming the same days as currently offered, what are your ideal start and end times?



Q25: If offered, how many days a week would your family utilize an early drop off option beginning at 8:00am?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 7



Community

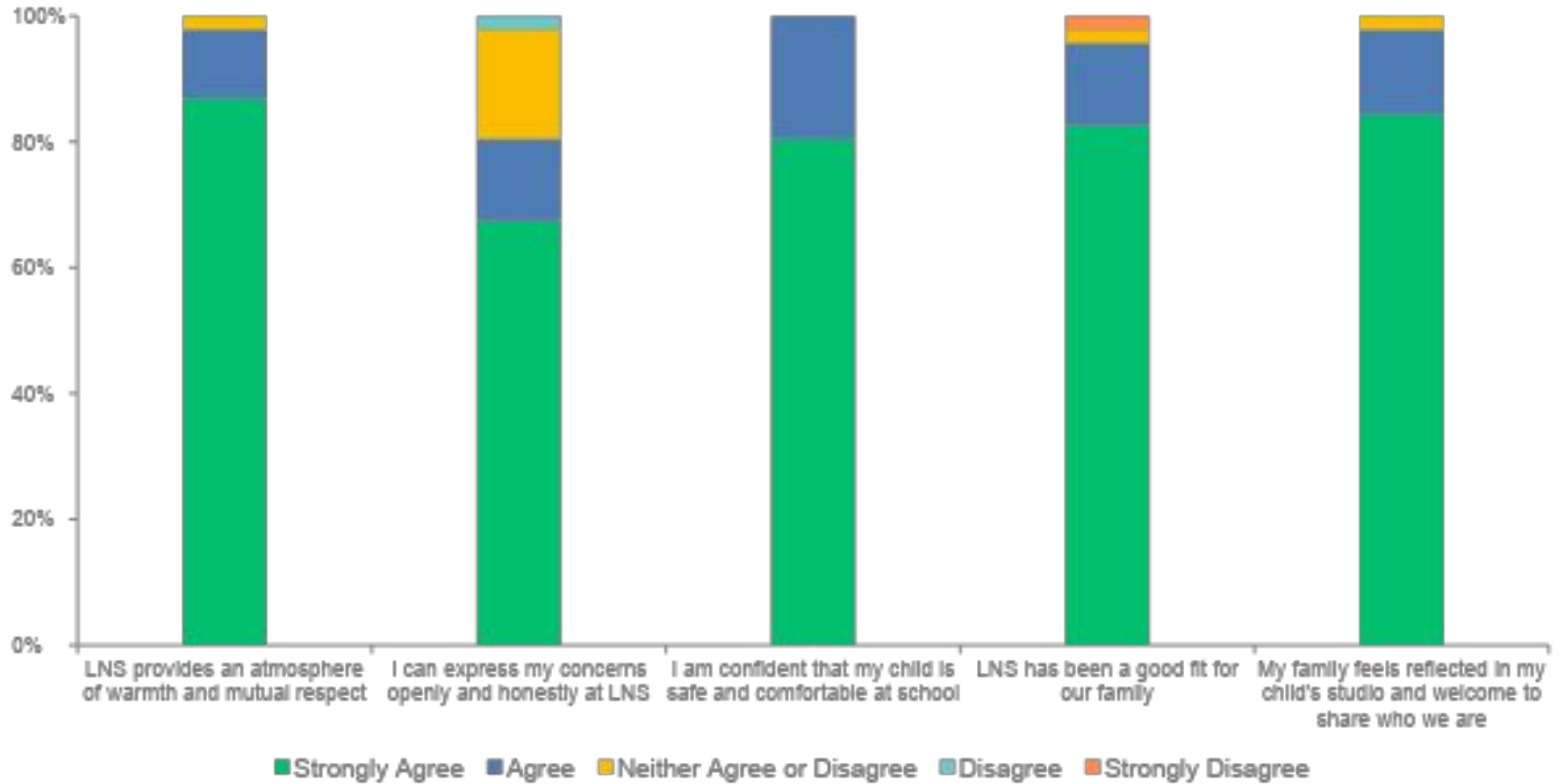
Q30: What social events would you like to see more of?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 20

1. Adult only events with the whole community – especially at times that accommodate working parents
2. Family events with the whole community
3. Events for younger siblings

Q31: Please rate the following statements

Answered: 46 Skipped: 3



PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

Questions?

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

LNS Teacher Survey 2022-2023

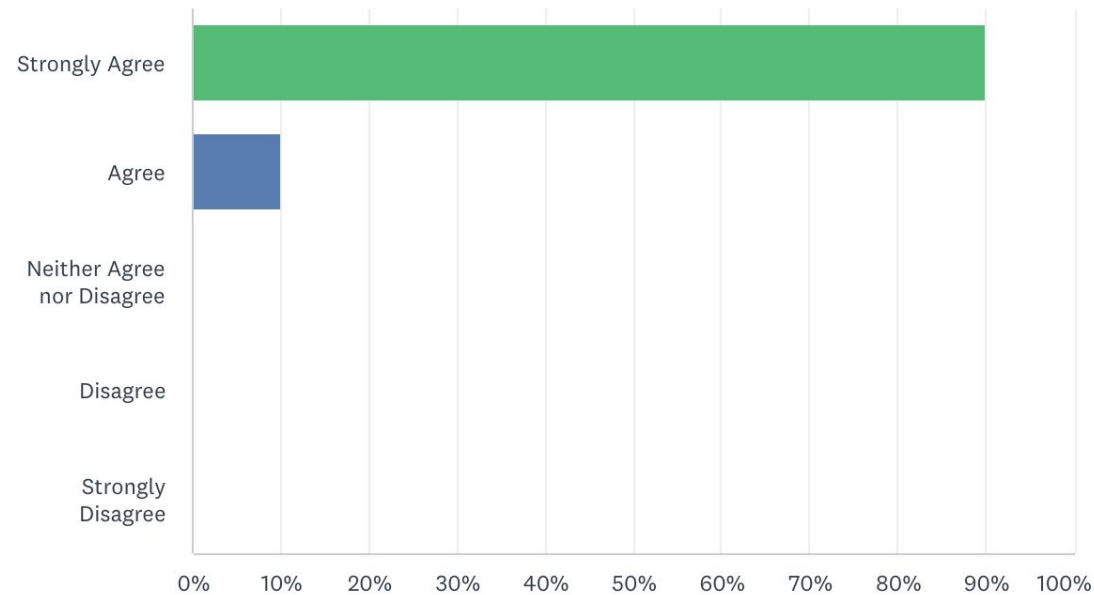
Lauren O'Neil, Chair of Staff Search & Development

Changes in comparison to previous year's surveys:

- Removed questions related to COVID
- Removed some questions related to salary and benefits and combined this into one question
- Asked more targeted questions around working relationships among and between teachers and staff
- Added questions related to working with DJ and Sisy
- Added more options for responses: e.g. last years options may have been: Agree, or Disagree, and we've added a broader range of options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree or Strongly disagree

At LNS, I feel respected and appreciated by parents.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

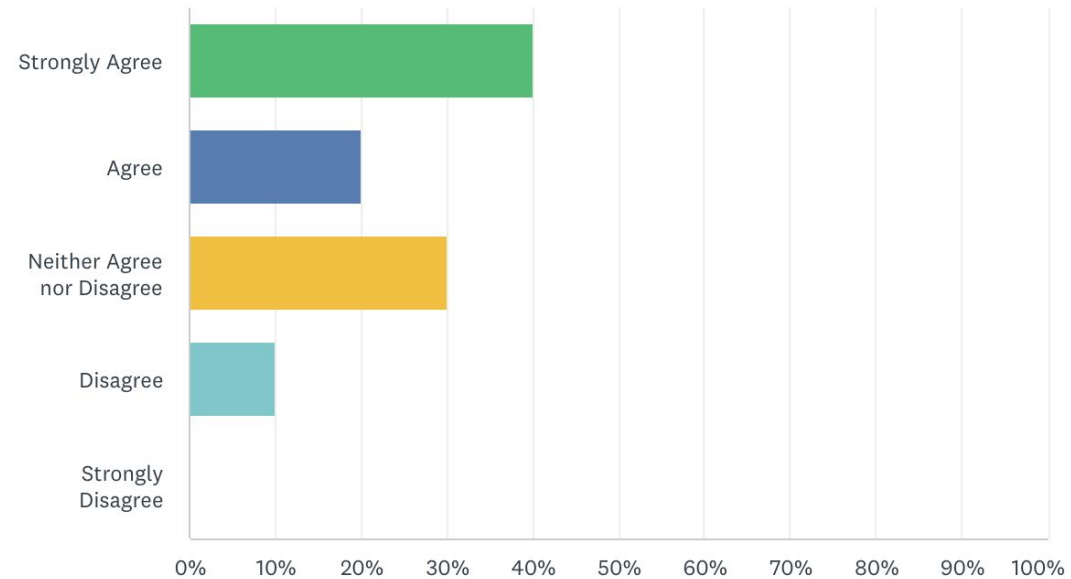


Key comments:

- I feel we have developed strong, positive relationships with the parents in our studio.
- I feel that parents appreciate the work we do and the relationships built. They demonstrate gratitude and kindness towards us teachers.
- Parents are very kind and supportive at LNS. It's clear they want a relationship with us and have so much love and respect. Feels like a partnership.

At LNS, I feel respected and appreciated by my fellow teachers.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

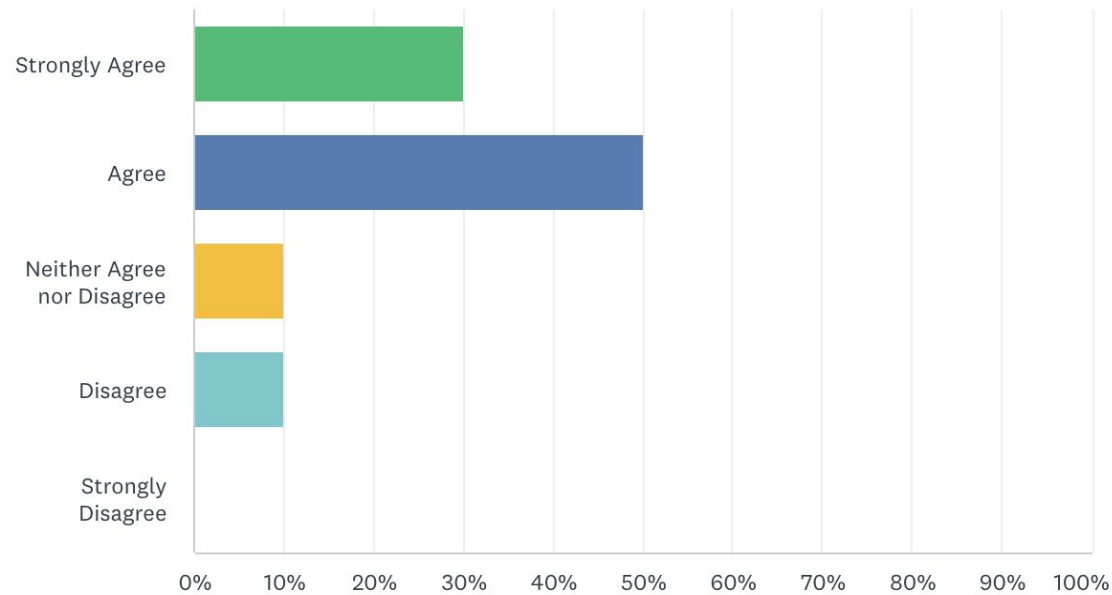


Key Comments:

- Everyone feels a bit disconnected. Overall, I think we all respect each other but there's not a community feeling. Faculty meetings can feel cold.
- Overall, I certainly do. Many colleagues are more friends than work partners, and I value their collaborative support. However, this demanding work can at times create tension and with this it can create feelings of being judged or questioned.
- For the most part I feel we all try to listen to each other and work together in a supportive way in our teaching practice and as colleagues and friends.
- Yes, we have a strong team, and we respect each other's work and are open for communication.

At LNS, I feel respected and appreciated by Nancy.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

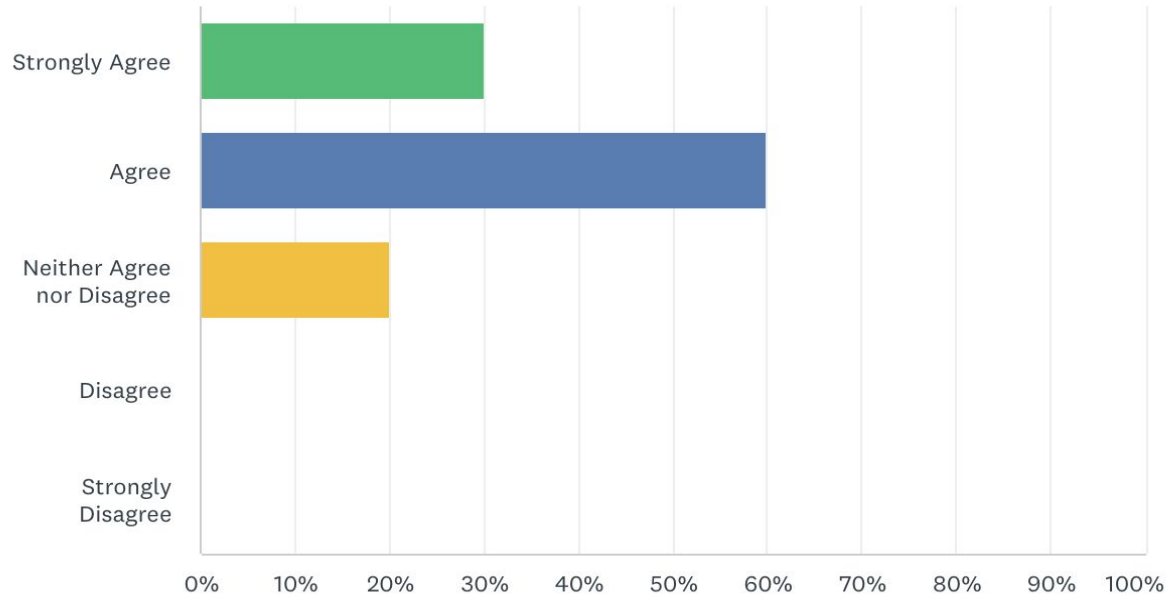


Key comments:

- Yes! Nancy is a wonderful listener and deeply cares for the teachers. Respect and appreciate our ideas, work, great team player.
- Nancy is a listener. When you are listened to, you feel respected. She values/supports the work that we do with children and families.
- I do, and I realize she walks a delicate line of balance between the needs of families (who frankly, are our paycheck) and that of teachers. At times I can feel that my opinion or feelings are not necessarily heard or taken into consideration. When I speak directly with Nancy about this I am always met with a willing listener and with time, we can have meaningful conversation of which I really appreciate.

I get the support I need to be able to succeed in my work at LNS.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

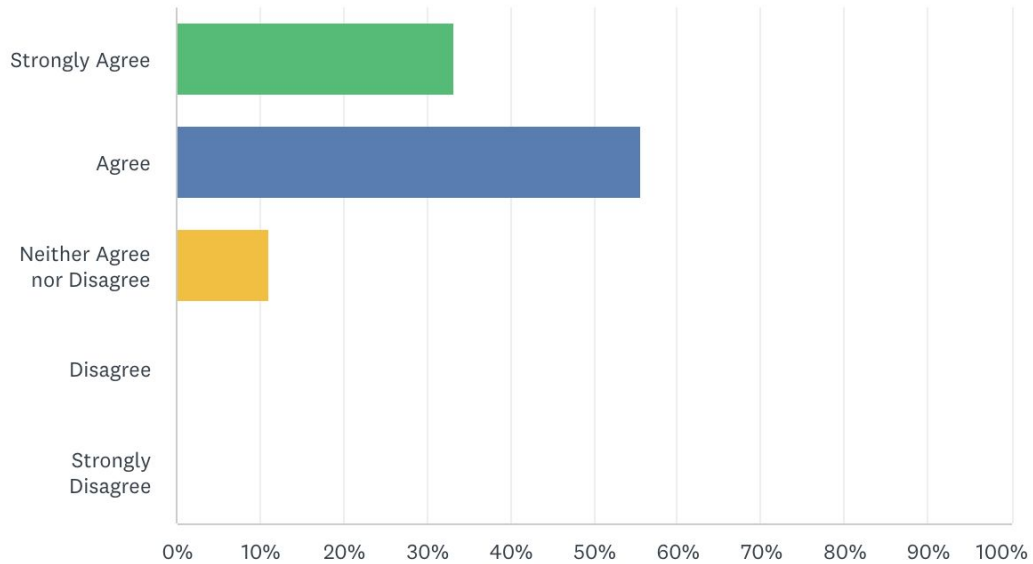


Key comments:

- I feel supported in my work and encouraged to be better. Professional development is encouraged and highly valued.
- I am able to access a lot, be it workshops/education or new materials for the classroom. I appreciate this knowing that we are a small community and the families are very supportive and generous in this endeavor.
- If I need anything, I can find support with Sisy & Nancy. For pedagogic support, I check in with several teachers from multiple studios.

I am satisfied with teaching at LNS.

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



Key comments:

- I am honored to work at LNS with such a strong group of educators and wonderful families.
- I have treasured my time here and LNS will go down as my most memorable teaching experience for a number of reasons. I do feel since Covid however, it has become increasingly difficult. It is hard to point out just what it is but I have a sense of increased pressure to do more, be more, when I want to remain in the simplicity of joyful early childhood.

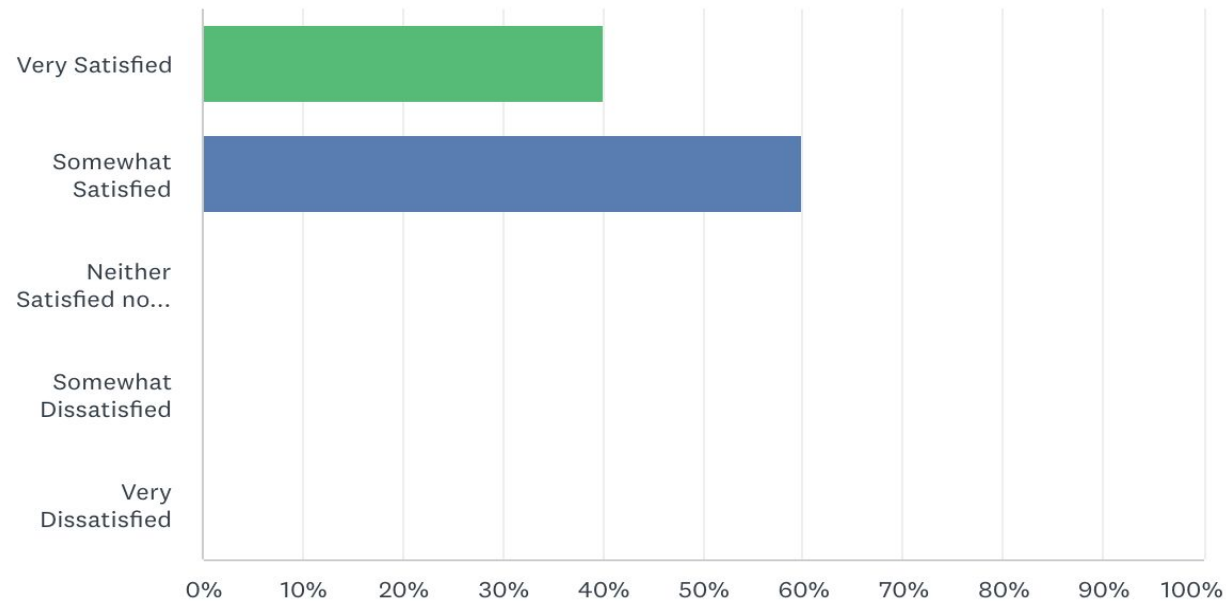
- It can be difficult to juggle all of the "extras" (meetings, documentation, etc.) when feeling exhausted from the morning with the children.
- I love teaching at LNS.
- I very much enjoy working with my co-teacher. The rest of the faculty is very knowledgeable and share that knowledge and their thinking, which is inspiring. Our families are supportive and our environment is very special.

How long do you anticipate teaching at LNS?

- As long as I am able to.
- Hard to know what life will bring - 3 or 4 more years?
- Unsure
- 1-3 more years
- Likely 5 more years should my energy and health continue and that I am still an important aspect of LNS.
- For as long as they have me. I'm far from retirement.
- For as long as they need me - I think.
- I have no plans on leaving soon
- 1-5 more years, depending on family circumstances
- A year or two.

How satisfied are you with your overall compensation package, including salary and benefits?

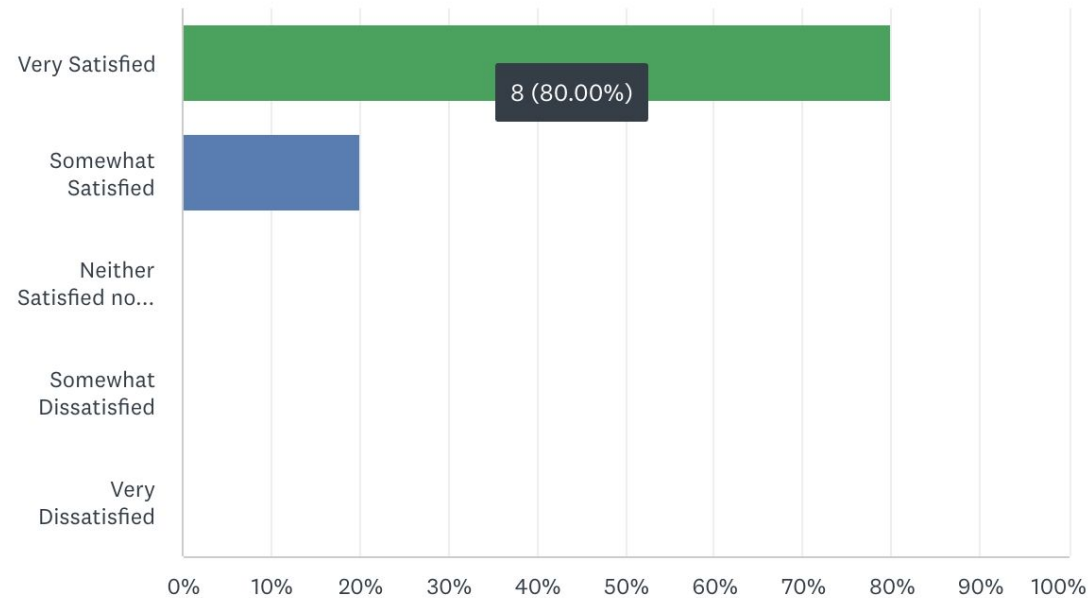
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



- We all know the issues involved in compensation for the early childhood field. I do appreciate that the Board finds ways to help increase our total package.
- I have to put “somewhat,” not because I don't feel that there is enough being done to improve salary and compensation for us, but because there can always be more to better this particular profession of education. LNS has worked hard to improve on this over the years and I am appreciative of this.
- I'm hoping that teacher salary continues to grow. I'm curious if teachers could be paid over 12 months instead of 10. I think it would be so helpful for many of us. I'm very appreciative of the retirement match that started this year. I'd love to learn if the school has plans to provide health insurance for employees.

How satisfied are you with the opportunities for professional development at LNS?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

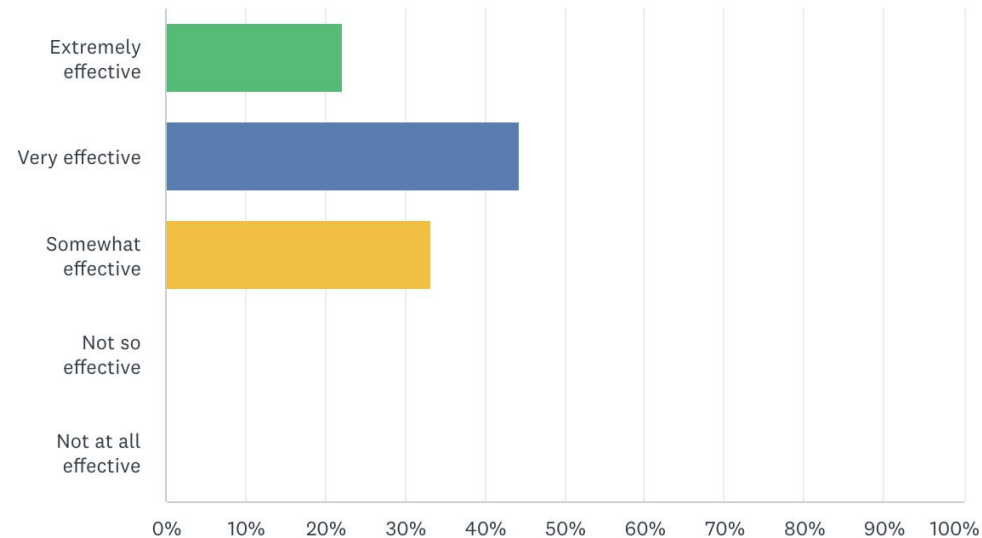


Key comments:

- I find there are many opportunities for professional development at LNS. Nancy/Sisy keep us posted about many events and workshops that are happening in the Boston area. I also look to find many workshops on my own and am an avid reader. I would love for the staff to be able to do more workshops together. Processing and reflecting with your colleagues is invaluable as we look to grow and evolve as a school. It also strengthens us as a community of educators.
- I appreciate the professional development that the school invests in. Continuing to build our knowledge and understanding of the Reggio Emilia approach is important to me. I also enjoy the DEI work that we've been doing this year and hope to do that more.
- The LNS conversations and PD trainings are always thoughtful and challenging. As well, there is ample opportunity for individual PD and outside training opportunities to keep teachers growing.

Please rank Nancy's effectiveness as a leader.

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



Key comments:

- Nancy embodies LNS. She makes time for your ideas, thoughts and concerns. She listens. She is extremely joyful. She loves her work. People and relationships are important to her and thus they are important to the school. She is present in all that she does. She is a researcher, keeping LNS current while also holding and sustaining those values that are the core of the school.
- Nancy leads by example, by sharing her observations, and by listening and asking great questions. She is a remarkable leader who keeps LNS evolving, while preserving what it already does so well.

How have team meetings with DJ influenced your way of working at LNS?

Key Comments:

- Loved them, especially having an L&E person there too. The multiple perspectives helped us really go deep with our topic, influencing our curriculum choices and how we might interface with the larger environment (park/museum).
- DJ has been a great facilitator in our work with design thinking. She consolidates our thinking. She is objective. She is always prepared and finds joy in our efforts. Her perspective on our work/documentation adds depth to our projects with the children. She helps to move our thinking forward. Her knowledge/understanding of the child is so appreciated.
- I love having our team meetings with DJ! She is joyful in her approach and wonderfully supportive of me (us) as we collaborate together on how to elevate and highlight the day to day work we do with the children. She is organized and attentive to making sure she notes our discussions, composing a summary that illustrates our main objectives and struggles as we continue to better our work. Any time with DJ is a huge win in my mind!
- It's been wonderful to have DJ's objective perspective when reflecting on our work. She has been entirely supportive and when things aren't quite working, she's a valuable third voice to adjust and 'relaunch' without any agenda or preconceived ideas of how things should look.

How do your interactions with Sisy influence your work?

Key Comments:

- Sisy is kind and open. She offers her perspectives and thoughts from the heart. She speaks as a parent, assistant director, etc. -- she is an invaluable resource! She always makes time for your questions and stories. She is laughter and I always feel heard when I talk with Sisy. She is very calming and I so appreciate her way of being.
- She's a great listener, so positive and always gives us good feedback. Her interactions with teachers and children add to the work.
- I LOVE Sisy! Not only does Sisy support any and all needs we may approach her with, always with promptness and a wealth of knowledge, she is a joy to share in conversation with and always brings a smile and laugh to my day!
- Sisy is forever the optimist and shines a light on LNS at every turn. She continuously shows genuine interest, care and support for our work.
- Sisy is a good sounding board when chatting about a child or an incident, offering insight and perspective.

Key Takeaways:

- As noted in previous years, we have a large number of teachers who are not far from retirement, we need to continue to be aware of the timelines of these transitions and do our best to prepare to fill those pivotal roles
- Teachers still seem to be affected by the challenges of the COVID years; stress levels seem higher
- Teacher camaraderie seems lower than in previous years

Guiding Questions:

- How can we continue to support our teachers to get back to a “Pre-COVID” sense of joy in teaching and joy in the children?
- How can we continue to develop a cohesive team and synergistic work environment?

Next Steps:

- To facilitate a discussion with teachers and staff at the next staff meeting around support and how to impact these challenges

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

Questions?

ADDITIONAL UPDATES/QUESTIONS