



October 16, 2019

Dear Board of School Committee,

Last year, Manchester Proud began a massive community engagement effort that included a Community Survey, Citywide Canvass, School-based Listening Sessions, and Community-based Listening Sessions. Over the course of eight months, thousands of people told us what they loved about the city of Manchester and its schools and where they saw opportunities for improvement.

Below, please find some details about our approach to each element of our community engagement work.

### **Community Survey**

Manchester Proud conducted an online Community Survey between August 2018 and January 2019 to hear from a wide range of community members.

- Promoted survey through various channels, including Manchester Proud’s website and social media; supportive organizations’ social media; emails to anyone who had previously interacted with Manchester Proud; and during community events such as town halls.
- Available in six languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Swahili, and French.
- 983 people completed the survey.
- 31 questions
- 94.4 percent of respondents live in Manchester or used to live in Manchester.
- Fewer than half the respondents currently have a student in the school district.
- 18 percent of respondents work for the district.

***The following questions were on the community survey (asterisks indicate required questions):***

- Do you currently live in Manchester?\*
- If yes:
  - How long have you lived in Manchester?\*
  - Have you ever voted in Manchester?
  - Do you currently have a student in your household who attends a Manchester public school?\*

- Do you have a student who graduated from a Manchester public high school?\*
- If no:
  - What city/town do you currently live?\*
  - Have you ever lived in Manchester?\*
- Do you currently work in Manchester?
- Do you currently work for Manchester Public Schools?

*Strongly Agree / Strongly Disagree:*

- I feel that the neighborhood I live in is safe.
- I feel that the neighborhood I live in is safer than most neighborhoods in Manchester.
- I feel that Manchester Public Schools are doing a good job.
- I feel that the school in my neighborhood is doing better than most schools in Manchester.
- I feel that the teachers in Manchester care a lot about their students.
- I feel that the teachers at my neighborhood school care a lot about their students.
- I feel that the Board of School Committee works in alignment with the needs of the Manchester schools.
- I believe when students graduate from a public high school in Manchester, they are prepared to be successful **in the workforce**.
- I believe when students graduate from a public high school in Manchester, they are prepared to be successful **in college**.
- I believe that the public schools in Manchester receive the right amount of funding.
- I believe that tax dollars invested in Manchester schools are used effectively.
- The stories I hear about Manchester schools in the media (TV, newspaper, radio, etc.) are positive.
- Overall, I believe that Manchester schools are on the right track.

*Open-Ended Question:*

- Use this space to include any additional information related to the questions above.
- Where do you hear about Manchester Public Schools? Check all that apply.
  - Television
  - Radio
  - Newspaper
  - Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.)
  - District website
  - District email
  - Word-of-mouth
  - Other (*space provided to fill in*)

*Open-Ended Questions:*

- In your opinion, what are the top three issues Manchester schools face?

- In your opinion, what are the top three strengths of Manchester schools?

*Demographic Information:*

- Please select your age.
- What is your gender?
- What best describes your race/ethnicity? Choose all that apply.
- What best describes your level of completed education? If currently enrolled, please select your highest degree received.

**Citywide Canvass**

In September and October of 2018, Manchester Proud recruited and trained 85 volunteers to speak with residents about their perceptions of Manchester and the public schools through community canvassing.

- Knocked on 2,000 doors.
- Interviewed 482 people.
- Interviewees included residents from all 12 city wards and 14 MSD elementary school zones.
- Canvassers asked each individual a series of qualitative and quantitative questions, in the same order, regarding their feelings, experiences, and hopes about Manchester in general (as well as MSD schools specifically).
- Each question was followed by an opportunity to elaborate.

***Canvassers asked the following six questions:***

- On a scale of 0-10, how happy are you with Manchester (the city) as your home? 10 being extremely happy, could not be happier – 0 being not happy at all.
- How important are Manchester’s schools to your answer when you said [*repeat the number*]? Are they **very important? Somewhat? A little? Or not at all?**
- What do you love about your neighborhood?
- Do you have any family members, friends, or neighbors who are in Manchester public schools?
- Picture an ideal Manchester ten years in the future. What would that look like? How would you describe it?
- What would you like to see Manchester’s schools doing at that time?

**School-based Listening Sessions**

Between June 20, 2018 and March 7, 2019, Manchester Proud met individually with administrators from every school and held 39 listening sessions for individuals directly connected to the Manchester public schools as school administrators, teachers, support staff, families, and students.

- Manchester Proud extended invitations to listening sessions via presentations to school staff at 16 schools; 27 school-based events such as PTO meetings, Open Houses, and Back to School Nights; personalized emails and reminders; social media posts; and through school newsletters, school websites, and the district website.

- 353 people participated.
- Sessions were limited to 12 participants in order to hear from everyone in the room; confidentiality was a top priority.
- Trained facilitators led participants through four prompts over the course of an hour.
- Participants wrote down thoughts and then shared them aloud.
- Additionally, Manchester Proud offered nine full-day office hours at school sites to accommodate school staff who feared their comments would not be kept confidential by the group.

***Facilitators in school-based sessions used the following four prompts:***

- “I feel that [my school] is doing a good job.”
- “I feel that the Manchester School District is doing a good job.”
- “My hope/dream for [my school] is…”
- “My hope/dream for the Manchester School District is…”

**Community-based Listening Sessions**

Between November 27, 2018 and February 18, 2019, Manchester Proud hosted 23 community-based listening sessions to hear from individuals with a diversity of backgrounds who may not have been reflected in other in-person community engagement activities.

- 171 individuals participated
- Participants represented a number of communities including families who have opted out of the Manchester School District to send their children to charters or private schools; individuals with expertise in students with disabilities; higher education staff; individuals who have immigrated to the United States to Manchester; and the business community.
- Individuals participated in their own languages, specifically Spanish and French.
- Trained facilitators led participants through four prompts over the course of an hour; confidentiality was a top priority.
- Participants wrote down thoughts and then shared them aloud.

***Facilitators in community-based sessions used the following four prompts:***

- “What successes have you seen in Manchester public schools?”
- “What challenges have you seen in Manchester public schools?”
- “How do Manchester public schools impact the community/communities you are part of?”
- “How do the communities you are a part of impact the Manchester public schools?”