



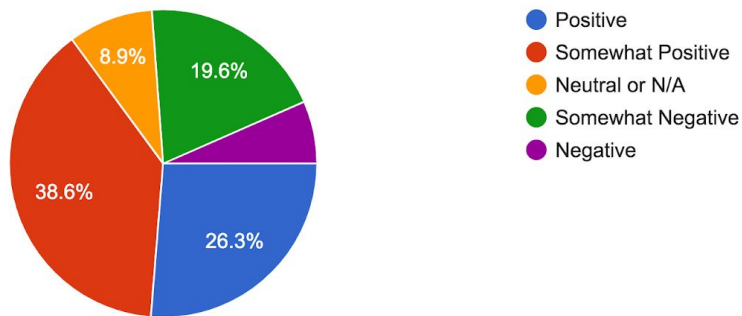
Superintendent Search Community Survey Analysis
As Presented to the Asheville City Board of Education on August 5, 2019

Section 1) General Impressions:

What I Think About Our School System: When asked what they think about Asheville City Schools, 25.6% of survey responders think negatively or somewhat negatively about our district. Asheville City Schools understands this number is too high. We appreciate our community's candor and are dedicated to our students first and foremost. We believe our transparency throughout our Superintendent Search is a step in the right direction, for we want our next longterm leader to know that our most important stakeholders are our students and staff.

What I think about our school system is mostly

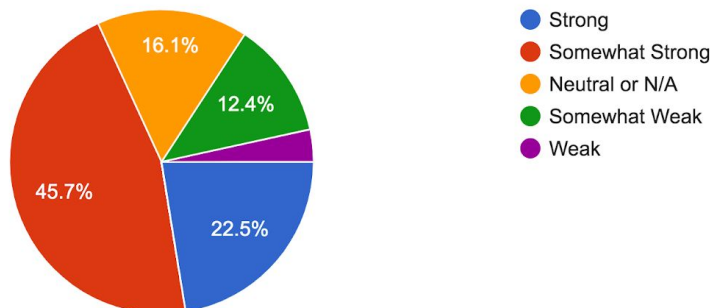
1,020 responses



Support: Our community is by far one of the greatest attributes to Asheville City Schools. We have a robust Volunteer Program comprised of hundreds of individuals, which only aids in our educators' ability to offer differentiated instruction for each student.

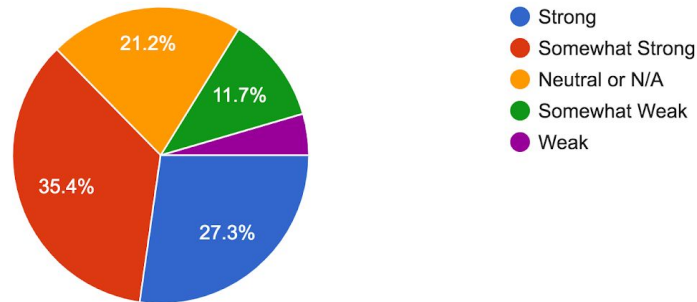
Community support for our schools is

1,020 responses



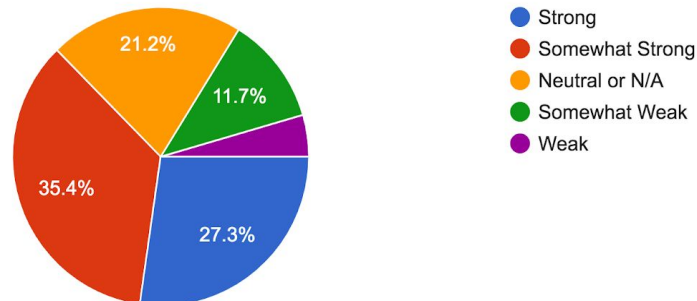
The support my child(ren) get(s) in school is

1,020 responses



The support my child(ren) get(s) in school is

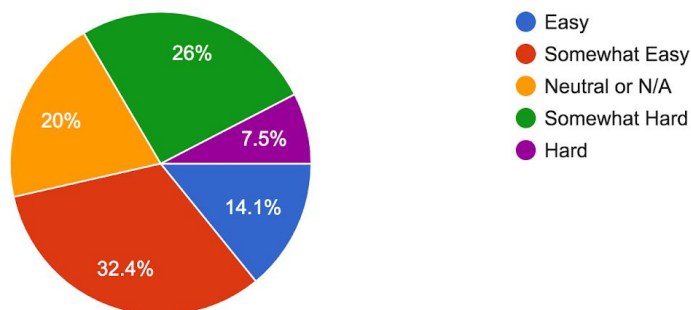
1,020 responses



Asking For Help: Results from this question show 33.5% of survey responder say it's hard or somewhat hard to know whom to ask for help when an issue arrives. This is valuable information for not only the Board of Education but district staff as we begin 2019-2020 school year.

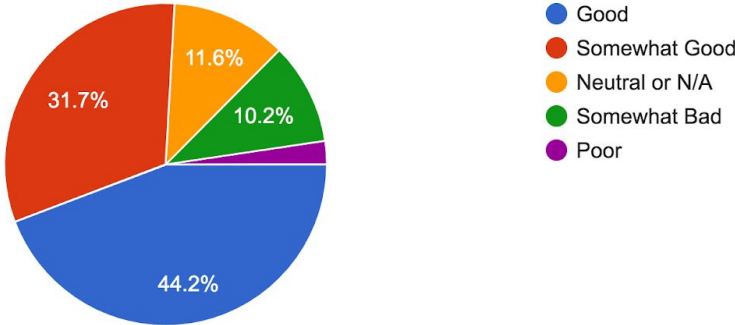
As a parent, knowing whom to ask for help is

1,020 responses



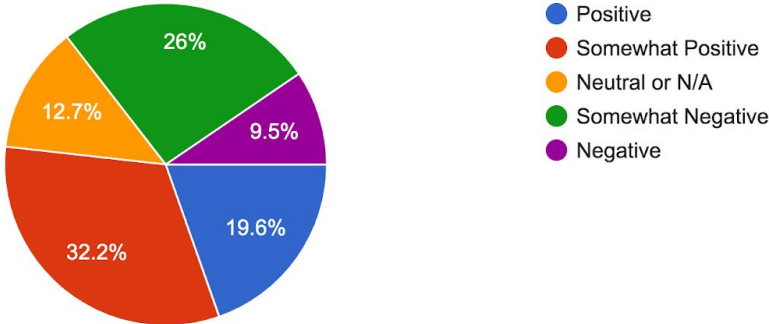
Physical Condition: Asheville City Schools has just completed a three-year \$25 million renovation of Asheville High School and SILSA’s campus. Additionally, Montford North Star Academy received a major upgrade upon its conversion to our newest middle school offering, and Ira B. Jones Elementary School recently had its HVAC system replacement. Furthermore, our Maintenance Department and school custodians diligently work throughout the year to maintain our prestigious campuses.

The physical condition of our schools is
1,020 responses



Perspective: The Asheville City Board of Education asked this question to determine current public perspective. The district is comprised of about 4400 students and 750 staff members who carry out accomplishments through academia, the arts and athletics each day. These results mean we need to do a better job of ensuring our families and community stakeholders know what’s occurring across our campuses.

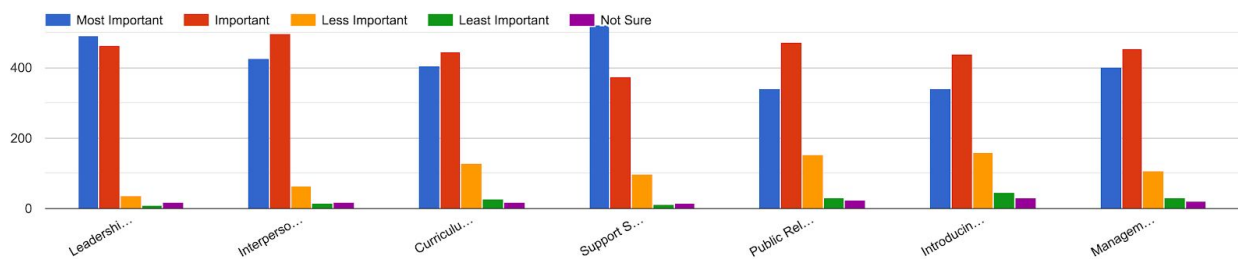
What I hear about our schools is mostly
1,020 responses



Section 2) Superintendent Skill Set:

The Superintendent Search Community Survey too asked stakeholders about skill sets they would like our district's next leader to hold. Based on their feedback, the skills most important to our community are experiences with: Support Services, Leadership and Interpersonal Skills.

How important is each of these skill sets to you?



Breaking this down further, results yielded:

- **(Listed 1st, Ranked 2nd) Leadership: includes making necessary changes and providing training**
 - Most Important - **492**
 - Important - **464**
 - Less Important - **37**
 - Least Important - **10**
 - Not Sure - **17**
- **(Listed 2nd, Ranked 3rd) Interpersonal Skills: includes being sensitive to the needs of others**
 - Most Important - **427**
 - Important - **498**
 - Less Important - **63**
 - Least Important - **15**
 - Not Sure - **17**
- **(Listed 3rd, Ranked 4th) Curriculum: includes what we teach and how we teach it**
 - Most Important - **404**
 - Important - **444**
 - Less Important - **128**
 - Least Important - **27**
 - Not Sure - **17**

- **(Listed 4th, Ranked 1st) Support Services: includes helping students with their social, emotional, mental and physical health**
 - Most Important - **521**
 - Important - **376**
 - Less Important - **97**
 - Least Important - **12**
 - Not Sure - **14**

- **(Listed 5th, Ranked 7th) Public Relations: includes building relationships and being an advocate**
 - Most Important - **341**
 - Important - **472**
 - Less Important - **152**
 - Least Important - **31**
 - Not Sure - **24**

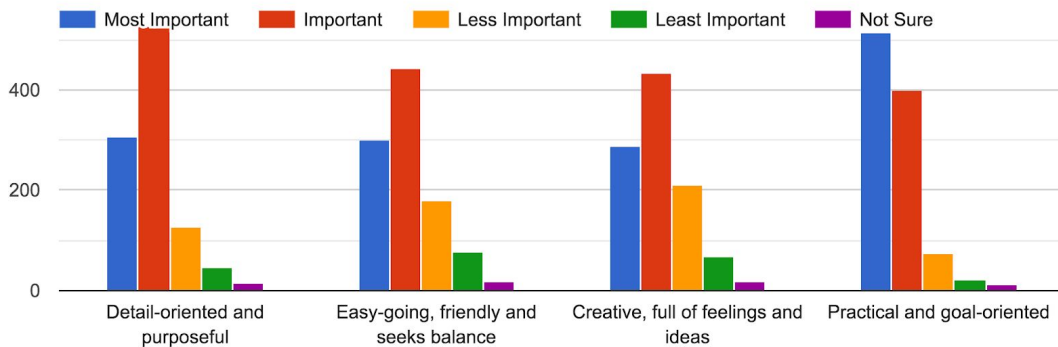
- **(Listed 6th, Ranked 6th)Introducing or embracing innovation: includes technology and equity**
 - Most Important - **342**
 - Important - **440**
 - Less Important - **161**
 - Least Important - **46**
 - Not Sure - **31**

- **(Listed 7th, Ranked 5th) Management: includes managing people, money, programs and facilities**
 - Most Important - **403**
 - Important - **454**
 - Less Important - **108**
 - Least Important - **32**
 - Not Sure - **23**

Section 3) Superintendent Characteristics:

For the third section of their survey, the Asheville City Board of Education asked our community to determine which characteristic is most important for our next leader to possess. Based on these results, our next superintendent should be practical and goal-oriented.

How important is each of these characteristics to you?



Breaking this down further, results yielded:

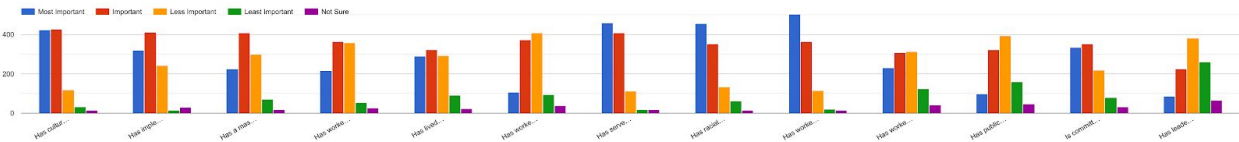
- **(Listed 1st, Ranked 2nd) Detail-oriented and purposeful**
 - Most Important - 306
 - Important - 526
 - Less Important - 128
 - Least Important - 46
 - Not Sure - 14
- **(Listed 2nd, Ranked 3rd) Easy-going, friendly and seeks balance**
 - Most Important - 300
 - Important - 444
 - Less Important - 179
 - Least Important - 77
 - Not Sure - 20
- **(Listed 3rd, Ranked 4th) Creative, full of feeling and ideas**
 - Most Important - 287
 - Important - 435
 - Less Important - 210
 - Least Important - 68
 - Not Sure - 20

- **(Listed Fourth, Ranked 1st) Practical and goal-oriented**
 - Most Important - 514
 - Important - 398
 - Less Important - 73
 - Least Important - 22
 - Not Sure - 13

Section 4) Superintendent Qualifications:

During the Superintendent Qualifications portion of the Community Survey, the Asheville City Board of Education named 13 qualifications and asked participants their thoughts. Of the 13, *has worked with students in a school setting* (503) ranked highest, followed by *has served children and adults experiencing poverty* (460), *has racial equity training* (456) and *has cultural awareness training* (423). Our community wants its next educational leader to continue the district's mission of creating learning environments that ensure Excellence with Equity for all students.

How important is each of these qualifications to you?



Breaking this down further, results yielded:

- **(Listed 1st, Ranked 4th)Has cultural awareness training**
 - Most Important - 423
 - Important - 428
 - Less Important - 119
 - Least Important - 34
 - Not Sure - 16
- **(Listed 2nd, Ranked 6th)Has implemented major change**
 - Most Important - 321
 - Important - 411
 - Less Important - 244
 - Least Important - 14
 - Not Sure - 30
- **(Listed 3rd, Ranked 9th)Has a master's degree or doctorate**
 - Most Important - 225
 - Important - 409
 - Less Important - 298
 - Least Important - 71
 - Not Sure - 17
- **(Listed 4th, Ranked 10th)Has worked as a Superintendent**
 - Most Important - 217
 - Important - 364
 - Less Important - 358
 - Least Important - 54
 - Not Sure - 27

- **(Listed 5th, Ranked 7th)Has lived or worked in Asheville**
 - Most Important - 298
 - Important - 323
 - Less Important - 292
 - Least Important - 92
 - Not Sure - 24

- **(Listed 6th, Ranked 11th)Has worked as an Assistant Superintendent**
 - Most Important - 106
 - Important - 372
 - Less Important - 408
 - Least Important - 96
 - Not Sure - 38

- **(Listed 7th, Ranked 2nd)Has served children and adults experiencing poverty**
 - Most Important - 460
 - Important - 410
 - Less Important - 114
 - Least Important - 18
 - Not Sure - 18

- **(Listed 8th, Ranked 3rd)Has racial equity training**
 - Most Important - 456
 - Important - 352
 - Less Important - 134
 - Least Important - 62
 - Not Sure - 16

- **(Listed 9th, Ranked 1st)Has worked with students in a school setting as a teacher, counselor, behavioral specialist, other**
 - Most Important - 503
 - Important - 365
 - Less Important - 115
 - Least Important - 22
 - Not Sure - 15

- **(Listed 10th, Ranked 8th)Has worked in a North Carolina public school**
 - Most Important - 232
 - Important - 309
 - Less Important - 315
 - Least Important - 123
 - Not Sure - 41

- **(Listed 11th, Ranked 12th) Has public service experiences in social services, public health, the military**
 - Most Important - 98
 - Important - 322
 - Less Important - 393
 - Least Important - 160
 - Not Sure - 47

- **(Listed 12th, Ranked 5th) Is committed to learning Asheville's history**
 - Most Important - 336
 - Important - 354
 - Less Important - 219
 - Least Important - 79
 - Not Sure - 32

- **(Listed 13th, Ranked 13th) Has leadership experience in the business sector**
 - Most Important - 86
 - Important - 225
 - Less Important - 382
 - Least Important - 261
 - Not Sure - 66

Section 5) In Your Own Words:

Section 5 gave survey users the chance to answer “What would you like our next superintendent to know, have accomplished or have as a skill set or trait?” Of the 1,020 survey takers, we received 720 open-ended responses.

A preliminary analysis shows that when describing our next superintendent in one or two words, common themes included:

Invested	Practical	Compassionate	Courageous
Committed	Approachable	Kind	Reasonable
Bold	Inspirational	Motivator	Competent
Positive	Trustworthy	Energetic	Visionary
Open-minded	Trauma-informed	Caring	Resolved
Empathetic	A cheerleader	Transparent	Approachable
Problem Solver	Stamina	Clear	Risk-taker
Perceptive	Experienced	Thick-skinned	In-the-moment

Desired Characteristics: Additionally, using quotes from community members, the eight most predominant/desired skill sets, experiences and traits included:

1) Is now, or is willing to become....rooted, knowledgeable and invested in our community

- a) “I’d like a superintendent who is a resident of Asheville, understands the history of Asheville and the district and has experience as a teacher and administrator.”
- b) “We need someone who is invested in staying in this area and not just using Asheville as an opportunity for a better job.”
- c) “One who is highly familiar with the Asheville area. They have roots nearby.”
- d) “It would be great if he/she is from the Western part of North Carolina.”
- e) “Actively seek a local superintendent. There are qualified individuals who can meet the systems needs.

2) Tuned Into Equity

- a) “Equity. Equity. Equity.”
- b) “In addition to a shared analysis of race, I think any new superintendent would need to have spent a substantial amount of time learning about Asheville’s history and engaging with the many different sectors of our community.”
- c) “Equity mindset. Uplift our students of color.”
- d) “We need social justice and restorative practices for our schools and community.”

3) Effective communication and community-building skills

- a) “The next person who steps into this role needs to understand the importance of the culture of the district and has the ability to effectively engage with the community at all levels.”
- b) “I would like the superintendent to care deeply about understanding our community and be willing to work deeply with outside organizations to actively dismantle structural racism.”
- c) A superintendent is the CEO of the school system, sets the vision, empowers staff and hires qualified professionals. He/she should also be an advocate for the school system and the public face of the district on the news, etc.”

4) Knowledge and skills to address the opportunity gap

- a) “The achievement gap must first be attended to through economic means, so that the fundamental needs of these families are met and children come to school ready to learn.”
- b) “I am so tired of our schools being blamed for the equity gap when in it is actually a societal issue that we all have a part in.”
- c) “I want our new leader to address the achievement gap working in partnership with local and state government and our community to address REAL route causes like early childhood learning, food security, poverty.”

5) Proven Track Record/Experience

- a) “Successful experience in leading similar school systems and significantly reducing achievement gaps between white and black + other minority students.”
- b) “We need a courageous, charismatic leader who supports our teachers, fights for all our students and knows how to roll out change to parents in a

way that is clear and understandable. We need a leader with political savvy and a deep commitment to racial equity.”

- c) “Experience at multiple levels of the public school system, preferably spent some time as a teacher.”

6) Believer in school-based management

- a) “The superintendent should spend time in the classroom to get more of an understanding of the day-to-day issues our students and teachers experience.”
- b) “ACS is directing too much funding to admin roles which are replicated in Buncombe County. It’s time to look at a shared services model and redirect funds to student services on the frontlines in the schools.”
- c) “Allow school-based management. DO NOT micromanage.”

7) Versed in effective pedagogy

- a) “Be aware and supportive of learning differences and be comfortable supporting faculty and staff in implementing change to best support those differences.”
- b) “I’d like them to be forward thinking and not be afraid of adopting modern ways to educate our kids. I’d like him/her to put an emphasis on emotional intelligence and take a stand for equity.”
- c) “Knowledgeable of best practices that have worked in similar circumstances or gifted with bold ideas.”

8) Leadership Style

- a) “We need a superintendent who is visible, warm, compassionate and can make decisions and stand behind these decisions.”
- b) “We need a superintendent who is going to serve as a champion for our employees -- it is evident that morale is at an all time low.”
- c) “I’d like an intelligent and creative, people-person who can steer ACS in the direction that best suites Asheville culture and the diverse talents of our student body.”
- d) “The superintendent needs to be able to create a shared, unifying vision and have the strategic leadership skills to make the vision real.”

Perceptions worth exploring/clarifying: Results from the open-ended question also yielded several current, common perceptions of our district. Regardless of whether they are accurate or imprecise, they are the predominant narrative presented by our community. Therefore, these perceptions will be addressed by the Board of Education and district administrators moving forward:

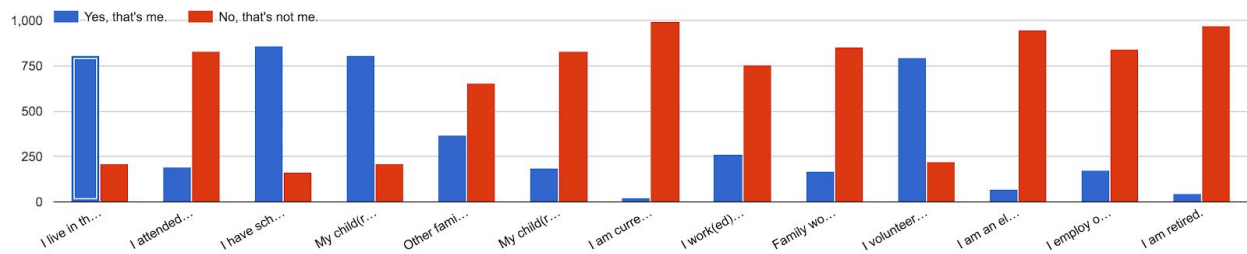
- Teacher turnover is prevalent in Asheville City Schools
- Teachers are bombarded with passing fad initiatives that do not address the day-to-day struggles of the students and their teachers
- Principals cannot lead their schools if they are constantly sitting in meetings at the central office
- Micro-management is too often the style we've seen in this district
- There are way too many people working at Central Office for "huge salaries" when those funds would be better used out in the schools
- The educators in the district pay too much attention to struggling students at the expense of the high flyers
- The current equity model that we've been working through (ICS) does little to give teachers real practical knowledge to solve the systematic issues at hand
- Testing systems don't always measure academic achievement and detract from the overall education process

Section 6) Survey Demographics:

In 2017, 472 community members completed the Superintendent Survey as prepared by the North Carolina School Board Association. By creating an in-house survey that sought and encouraged participation as well as allowed users to offer honest feedback, Asheville City Schools had more than a 100% increase in the number of parents, alumni and community members who participated. In fact, 1,020 community members ensured their voices were heard. As a reminder, our Superintendent Search Staff Survey is open for a few more weeks. Therefore, its results will be presented in September 2019. Additionally, Asheville City Schools is crafting separate student surveys with age-appropriate questions to ensure our most important stakeholders, and reasons why we are all ultimately here, are able to share their opinions on what they most desire in our next long-term leader.

Of those 1,020 community members, 859 self-identified as parents; 807 are residents of the Asheville City Schools district, and 798 are community volunteers. Additionally, we received responses from 191 alumni as well as active participation from local business owners, elected officials, retirees and 25 current students.

Which of these statements describe you?



Survey responders were asked to determine whether a statement described them by answering Yes, that's me. (Blue) or No, that's not me. (Red). Statements included:

- **I live in the Asheville City Schools district.**

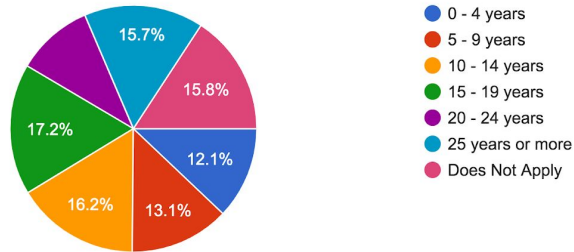
- Yes, that's me. - **807**

- No, that's not me. - **213**

- Of our families that answered "Yes, that's me," to *Do you live in the Asheville City Schools district*, the survey followed up by asking them how long they've been a resident. Results were pretty even across the board, with the highest percentage saying 15 - 19 years (17.2%) and the lowest saying 0 - 4 years (12.1%).

If you live in the Asheville City Schools district, how long have you been a resident?

1,002 responses



- **I attended Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **191**
 - No, that's not me. - **829**
- **I have school-aged children.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **858**
 - No, that's not me. - **162**
- **My child(ren) currently attend(s) Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **809**
 - No, that's not me. - **211**
- **Other family attend(ed) Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **366**
 - No, that's not me. - **654**
- **My child(ren) currently attend(s) schools other than Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **186**
 - No, that's not me. - **834**
- **I am currently a student in Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **25**
 - No, that's not me. - **995**
- **I work(ed) for Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **262**
 - No, that's not me. - **758**
- **Family work(ed) for Asheville City Schools.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **168**
 - No, that's not me. - **852**
- **I volunteer in our community.**

- Yes, that's me. - **798**
- No, that's not me. - **222**

- **I am elected or appointed official, or I serve on a public board/commission.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **73**
 - No, that's not me. - **947**

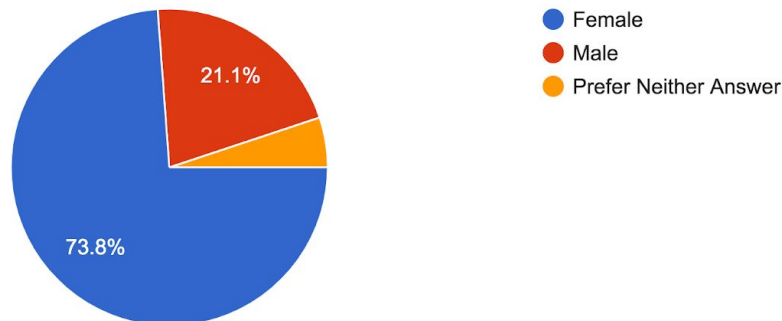
- **I employ others in a business I own.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **174**
 - No, that's not me. - **846**

- **I am retired.**
 - Yes, that's me. - **49**
 - No, that's not me. - **971**

Gender/Age: Additionally, survey responders were predominately female at 73.8%, with many falling between the ages of 30 - 50.

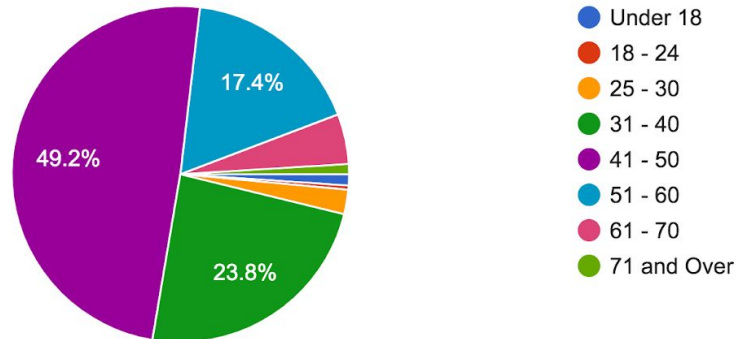
I self-identify as a

1,020 responses



My age is

1,020 responses



Ethnicity: Additionally, 82% of survey respondents identified as White. The second-largest respondent ethnicity was Black at 8.6%.

My ethnicity is

1,020 responses

