

Hoover School Community Information Network  
Survey Results – Published March 13, 2007  
Tell Us What You're Thinking.....  
February 23 through March 8, 2007

This survey contained 5 open-ended questions.  
198 surveys were viewed.  
142 surveys were started.  
67 surveys were completed.  
Average time to complete the survey was 8 minutes.

The HSCIN has included all comments given on the survey. Those who responded put forth great effort to put these words down, and we feel we should give those words an outlet.

While we recognize that web surveys are most often utilized by those who wish to voice a particular opinion, we would like to thank **all** who took the time to complete a survey. With 67 respondents taking an average of 8 minutes out of their busy schedules to answer the questions put forth, the total effort equaled almost 9 hours by our Hoover School Community.

Thank you.

## What are your concerns, if any, about your child's elementary school and/or general elementary education in Hoover?

*No foreign language. Too much "feel good" stuff going on. Too much time spent away from actual classroom instruction. Don't like what I hear about the Mobile Math Initiative.*

My concerns are that my child is not getting what he needs. It is assumed that gifted children are so bright they don't need to be taught anything. Teachers are expecting children with high IQ's to already know information without teaching it. The new math initiative is awful. The kids get lots of hands-on activities, but not enough paper-pencil tasks. There are no math textbooks for elementary students.

Keep class sizes small and administrative paperwork to a minimum. Teachers need time and resources to teach. Make sure that teachers are allowed to teach the whole child and not just to standardized tests. My children are bored by the required lessons. They thrive in their enrichment classes. Teachers need the time and support to do more of the enrichment in the classrooms. Right now they are so concerned about teaching basics to a few that they don't always have the flexibility to give more to those who are above average.

*My children have passed the elementary school level in the HCS, however, there are ongoing issues that began there. The math instruction at the elementary level is failing these students; as many others have noted, the math being taught through the fifth grade does not match up with what is expected the day they enter the sixth grade. That disconnect between elementary and middle school should be remedied immediate, if possible, in order for the kids to not lose the first month or more of middle school math instruction. Secondly, the elementary my children attended allowed phonetic spelling; proper spelling should be taught from the beginning. The children shouldn't be brow-beaten about poor spelling, but they should be taught how to spell correctly, before bad habits are created. Thirdly, my oldest child was exposed (for only one year, unfortunately) to a foreign language in elementary school; the others were not. This needs to be reinstated at the elementary level.*

Although I am aware that Hoover Schools usually score well on the SATS, we are consistently behind Mountain Brook and Vestavia. I would like to see that changed. Hoover should be able to score as well or better than these school systems since we have similar resources and teachers.

The greatest concern is surrounding special education. The model for service delivery is inadequate and "behind the times". There has been an astounding increase in the number of children diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders nationally and world wide. The numbers are continuing to increase with the latest estimate being one child in 100 to 150 (up from 1 in 166). The need for well trained professionals to work within a comprehensive, well designed service model is sorely needed in Hoover. At the very least, there needs to be true inclusion classrooms in all the elementary schools where several children are placed in the classroom with a teacher and a paraprofessional trained to work with children on the spectrum. Pull out can then be done as needed to provide more intensive support. (Ideally children are pulled for extra support in reading when their class is working on reading, math during math time, etc.). The current model, with support personnel floating in and out of classrooms for inadequate amounts of time does little to nothing to help with the consistent support these children require to succeed. After traveling to other cities throughout the northeast, meeting and talking with parents of ASD children it is embarrassing to discuss the services available to my child. Even locally, other school systems work off a more up to date, effective service model. Shelby County is one example. While no system is perfect, Hoover has a long way to go in this area. This problem is not going away and as parents become more educated and savvy about advocating for their children demands for better special education services are sure to increase. If Hoover does not meet these demands with real, tangible improvements litigation is sure to increase as well. This will of course be an absolute waste of time and resources that can be better used for helping all of our children.

*Too much focus on where dots fall on yearly adequate progress for smallest segment of elementary population. Kids are not being challenged and certainly not having varied instructional strategies employed for unique learners and allowing them to fly like eagles. We are beginning to provide cookie cutter education and that is dangerous.*

The kids are not challenged enough, particularly with science, history, and languages.

No true "gifted" programs.....It seems that the "no child left behind act" has left behind the "gifted" child!

*Concerned that the teacher-student ratio will grow. We need small numbers*

Overcrowding-We have children that attend Deer Valley and the school just isn't what it once was because of the number of students. There are rumors that we will be re-zoned for Shades Crest, which is unfair because that would be 2 changes in less than 10 years.

The number of non English speaking/children who are behind academically slowing the process down in the classroom in order to help them catch up.

*Class size.*

*Keep the class size as small as possible: 14 in kindergarten, and up to 18 in grades 1-5.*

That the children have the materials they need (i.e. textbooks) and the appropriate curriculum to suit their educational needs.

That she won't get the proper background for future studies -- and hit a wall.

*Hoover spends more money per child than any District in Alabama (including Mountain Brook), our schools should be better than they are. My children go to Greystone Elementary, which have the same type of demographics as Mountain Brook, and yet the word out is that Oak Mountain Elementary offers a better education, even though they have a larger "lower population" than we have in our school. For where our kids come from, I don't think the school provides enough*

*stimulation and quality education. I believe that the expectations for our children and teachers are not high enough and at best, the education our kids get is average (mediocre). On top of that, our children don't even get a foreign language until they get in Middle School (a bit too late), and our math is nothing to brag about. How do other schools do it? I think that it could be beneficial to look at schools that have similar demographics and are extremely successful and see what they are doing.*

*One of my children is going into third grade in Greystone and I am very worried because there is only one or two teachers in that grade that I think could be good enough. If my child is not placed with one of them, we may move her to a private school. We moved from a neighborhood that was zoned for Oak Mountain Elementary. I often think that we made a mistake thinking that Greystone Elementary was equal or better in quality to Oak Mountain Elementary.*

-Experimental math

-Mentally and physically handicapped students in the regular classroom when they should be in special ed classes

-Too much emphasis on low achieving students at the expense of high achievers

Elementary curriculum is very weak. No foreign language for students is absurd.

*My biggest concern after two years in the system is the impact ESL students and special needs students have on a classroom. I have witness for two years how much time teachers are required to spend with these students, in addition to the extra time needed to discipline and correct such children. It has impacted my daughters Kindergarten and 1st grade classes greatly. It just seems that there should be some way to give those children the time and attention they need without slowing down the other children. They should be in separate classes where they can receive special attention tailored to their needs.*

1. Mainstreaming has made it difficult for teachers to give time to students who aren't strugglers, but just need some extra help.

There isn't a system in place to challenge the students who are performing above grade level.

*Would like to see some foreign language classes in elementary school.*

Having enough resources (teachers, computers, aides, material, etc.) is always a major issue at the elementary level. The student population should be evenly distributed amongst the elementary schools where the "favorite schools" (Greystone, S. Shades Crest) get as many students (and the type of student) as other overcrowded schools like Deer Valley.

Academic Challenge

Mobile Math

Communication of principal to parents

the ability of the teachers to differentiate to all the levels of instruction without significant numbers of fulltime aides to help them in the classroom

*I feel good about the Enrichment program my child participates in but would like to see more time available for her and other advanced students to be further challenged.*

I believe more children should have the opportunity to be placed in the Enrichment Program. We moved to Hoover when my daughter was in the second grade. She started out at Rocky Ridge and in the middle of the school year, we bought a home and she was moved to South Shades Crest Elementary. I would have loved for her to have the opportunity to participate in the Enrichment Program but due to her moving schools in the middle of the school year; she missed out on the opportunity for the Teacher and Enrichment program teacher to adequately access her talents. It wasn't her fault that we move here in her second grade year. I really feel that moving schools in her 2nd grade year cost her the opportunity to be in the Enrichment

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program. I also feel that every child should have the opportunity to participate. There are always the same children that get elected for everything because their parent may be more involved, etc. or that parent may donate more money to the school. It should not be based on what the parent can do for the school and every child should have the opportunity to participate in programs such as the Enrichment program. The children should not be elected because their parents donate a lot of money or because their parent can volunteer a lot at school. There are many women that would love to volunteer more but can't due to their jobs. So I feel there should not be any discrimination when evaluating your child for different programs. I feel that the Elementary PTO Executive Board should provide every parent with a copy of the Treasure report when we come to the General PTO meeting. I went to the last meeting and the Treasure gave a brief report of budget but did not go into detail as to where the money goes especially the fundraisers. The parents have the right to know where the fundraising money is going. That is why I feel the parents should all get a copy of the PTO Treasure Report so we have adequate knowledge of where the Fundraising and donation money is going. I also feel that the parents should be able to voice their opinions as to where the donated or fundraising money should go. I feel the money should be used to provide a better education to our children instead of providing an Ice Machine upstairs for the teachers so they don't have to walk all the way to the lunchroom to get ice in their cups. When a parent participates in a Fundraiser or donates money; they should have a say so in where the money goes. At SSC Elementary - the money from our Fall Festival was going to providing an Ice Maker for the teachers. The money should have been used to help further our children's education not provide an ice maker so they will not have to walk all the way to the lunchroom. This is not right; therefore I believe every parent should have the opportunity to voice where they believe the money should go. It should not be left up to the PTO Executive Board - every PTO member should be involved with the decision.

## What are your concerns, if any, about your child's middle school and/or general middle school education in Hoover?

Not enough academic challenge. No advanced classes except for math. Big differences between middle schools in Hoover. Bumpus is the "smart" school; Simmons and Berry are "full of thugs".

*Disruptive behavior in the halls, in the classroom, general lack of discipline regarding language and respectfulness to each other (students), perception of double standard regarding expectations and discipline of different races*

Keep the standards high! I'm concerned that we might be rezoned. I am prepared that rezoning might happen. I can accept a change, but I want to know at least 2 years in advance. If we are told in spring that we will be going to a new school the next, then I will fight it. Given time to become familiar with a new school, I can get behind the idea.

More in-depth understanding of grammar should be taught at this level; continued emphasis upon spelling, roots of words, and sentence diagramming so that these students will speak as an educated person. Poor speech habits should be rigorously corrected; all of the young people I hear (and there are many of them), use improper English regularly.

*Eighth grade instruction should include instruction on how to succeed in high school...how to take better notes in class, how to manage time efficiently, etc. Homework should increase, but not overload, these students.*

The same as above, except that my older child (an excellent student) felt lost and unimportant at both Berry and Hoover High School. I think that the schools should find a way to give more one on one with the students at these grade levels, even though this may take more time and staff due to the size of the student body. Middle School and High School students need guidance more than any other age group.

Fortunately, it is not as bad as elementary, but middle school has a touch of diluted curriculum b/c of emphasis on testing scores. We are only holding ourselves back.

*Curriculum is way too easy. Students should have the opportunity for honors classes.*

No advanced classes except math.

Better prepared for high school

*The middle school my children attend (RF Bumpus) has nothing for gifted students to be challenged (other than advanced math). Dr. Brown is more concerned with hurting the feelings of those who are average than developing a more rigor based program. Also, there is a real problem with too many students in this school. The children have absolutely no freedom at school in order to control the masses. They even have assigned seating at lunch.*

We are at SMS now and I have absolutely no complaints about the education my child is receiving!

Equality among the three schools and the type of teachers teaching the elective courses. Both Bumpus and Simmons have amazing choral programs, yet Berry's program has shrunk to nothing over the past 6 years. There is a red flag there and the administration is ignoring it.

*That she won't get the background for her future -- and hit another wall.*

My oldest child is in 4th grade right now, so he is two years away from going to Berry Middle School. Though I have heard good things about Berry, I still want to make sure that my child has high level courses available to him. He has a high IQ and I would like for him to be stimulated and help him grow at his level, not at an established average.

Bottle-necked academics! Some elementary teachers take time to encourage capable students to work at an accelerated pace. Then, wham! No choice in middle school. Everything is mainstreamed except math. No advanced science, social studies, language arts. Nothing else!!!!!!!!!!!!!! SHAME ON HOOVER! And teachers are so burdened by discipline/cultural/language problems; they don't have time to work with brighter kids.

*I believe middle schools are encouraging preteens to grow up too fast by having dances, etc.*

Middle school program is fine for average or below-average learners, but the really bright kids don't have room to grow. No enrichment opportunities really kill these kids' desire to stretch and learn more.

Not enough advanced courses

*There is a terrible lack of challenge in 8th grade and as a result, there is a huge gap between 8th and 9th grades. This makes the transition for students from middle to high school extremely difficult. There is also a huge lack of challenge for gifted students, with the exception of math, which offers math team. These extraordinarily bright students are not being challenged like they should; therefore, they are not working up to their potential.*

Few opportunities for advanced work or enrichment for gifted students.

Middle schools are frequently given the short end of the stick.

*I am having to "re-teach" everything at home. I don't know if my child missed something in elementary school or if she just learns differently. It has been very hard. If Hoover offers extra*

*help for non-English speaking students at no-charge, why don't they help students that do speak English and have been in the Hoover system since kindergarten.*

Safety is a huge issue in the middle schools, especially Bumpus. Some of the students (boys AND girls) seem to be trying to make a statement by bullying other students, especially in the locker rooms and PE where the coaches don't seem to supervise or care. There is a VERY rough element at the middle schools and would seem to just get worse by high school. The middle school administration needs to pay more attention to what is going on at the student level and get out of their offices more. Overcrowding at Bumpus is also a major factor as this seems to let the bad element run the show. The fundraising for some activities (choir) seems to be a bit out of hand also.

I was surprised when my child got to middle school and found out there was NOT an enrichment program there. There is only Advanced Math and no other advanced programs. I think we may not be challenging our advanced middle school students enough in the areas of writing, literature, science, etc.

## What are your concerns, if any, about your child's high school and/or general high school education in Hoover?

*Hoover High School is just too big. I like the Academy programs, but it doesn't address the athletic opportunities being very slim for anyone but elite athletes. Way too much emphasis on athletics at Hoover High. I hear the student population is pretty much unsupervised, too. Discipline is not consistent among administrators and students are being punished out of proportion to their "crime".*

Not enough resources for the regular ed or gifted student, focus is on bringing other to standard or special needs and the regular students suffer

The high school is very proud of it's diversity but the students segregate themselves in lunch, at sporting events, etc. Needs to be addressed. Need for more problems solving skills to be taught. Higher level of thinking regarding activities in all classrooms.

*Zoning and school overcrowding is a concern.*

Right now we are zoned for Hoover High. My hope is that my children will be able to enter the IB program or another advanced track. I am concerned that the Freshman Center will make it more difficult for them to enter some of the other programs. I'm also concerned that sports are given more attention than the arts and academics. Balance is nice.

My first concern is that I was told my high-school age child would be treated as though he/she was in college; that is WRONG! These children entering high school are 14-15 years old, not over 18. The four years of high school should gradually lead up to their being treated as college-age adults, but they certainly do not start ninth grade as such. There is a huge amount of maturation that will occur during those four years, and they should emerge from their senior year ready to act and be treated as the young adult they are at that time. However, ninth grade is too soon to expect that level of maturity, and I want to be informed of his/her activities. (CONTINUED IN NEXT PARAGRAPH)

*Secondly, the math program as a whole need better qualified teachers who can really teach and explain complex concepts to the students. Too often, they hurry through the curriculum, give a test, and move on to the next section, regardless of whether or not the students have understood*

*and grasped the previous section. Consequently, they are lost and move along, just going through the motions.*

Do not have a child in high school system yet and not familiar with curriculum yet.

Consistency of teachers and curriculum.

*Why doesn't Spain Park have an IB program that Hoover High has? Why should a Spain Park child change schools to go to an IB Program?*

Great concern with principal at Spain Park and teachers with tenure that parents can not do anything about

HHS has been such an awesome experience. The school is constantly looking to strengthen the curriculum. The teachers are very attentive and communication is better than at the middle school level. This school is dedicated to raising the bar! My only complaint (trivial) is that they did away with message signs and banners near the entrance of the school. You now have to purchase an ad on BUCSTV.

*I have a child at the High School and truly believe that Hoover High is doing an excellent job academically and otherwise. I get VERY tired for the bad press that HHS gets about children who are bad - it over powers the biggest majority of the kids who are there to learn and to just experience being a typical teen going to club meetings, ballgames, etc.*

I want to see a strong, honorable HHS again. HHS has had so many things happen to it. It is a FANTASTIC school with great teachers and students. It is time for the school to become a leader again and pull together for the community. It will take a strong, honorable, knowledgeable and caring leader. There are several wounds that will need time to heal. I don't really agree with the 9th grade building but it is done. Mr. Nalls will do a great job.

Funding for the fine and performing arts at Spain Park seems to be little to nothing in some of the departments. Some are struggling to fundraise enough money to operate and order the things they need while others get budget money and have money to burn. Why do some have brand new band uniforms and some are fighting to order music in the choir?

*That she be so lost without background that she'll get lost in all the walls.*

I don't know enough about Spain Park High yet.

"Academically qualified" teachers who cannot teach, forcing parents to hire tutors or teach the materials at home. Honors/AP programs that substitute extra busy-work for accelerated curricula.

*HHS is too big. In order to participate in extra curricular activities there is such competition and only a few are truly involved in their school. It is easy to be anonymous for the average student. I believe there is a big drug problem, also. I also do not approve of Two-a Days. What is Hoover promoting with this show? Certainly not the character they so boldly proclaim with their Finley award winners.*

Not enough honors classes. It's AP or nothing.

Hoover High is just so big, that it is easy to get lost in the shuffle. I also feel that too much academic advising is done by classroom teachers who don't really have the whole picture. I appreciate the parent/advisor conferences, but I wish that the advisors would wait for those before addressing things with the students, without the entire picture.

*Having needs met.*

High schools are getting too big. The optimum size should be 1800, not over 2000.

My primary concern is the number of stories coming out of Spain Park High School regarding Mr. Broadway. Students, parents, and teachers bring stories with far too much consistency to be ignored. I feel strongly that this needs to be looked at very closely.

*Concerned about the size of Hoover and the lack of size of Spain Park. Spain Park needs to care if fair share of the student load. Also, the principal at Spain Park is from the dark ages and needs to go back to Dog Patch, AL where he seems to have come from. He is a terrible representative of SP and of the HCS.*

I am concerned that the "Two A Days" show is way too distracting and I'm embarrassed by how it portrays us. People I've talked to who live out of town think it gives the impression that all we care about in Hoover is football and winning and nothing else really matters.

## What are your concerns, if any, about our school system?

No vision. No goals. No plan. No accountability. Who's in charge? Too much autonomy among principals. Not enough professional development. Too much emphasis on athletics. Decisions are made by too few people without adequate public discussion or adequate public input. It appears the Board is too close to the Council and that makes me worry about the \$80 million windfall coming. Will that money be used to better the City of Hoover or the classrooms in Hoover City Schools?

*It is the business of education, we need to apply some business practices to our operation; let the superintendent run the day to day operations of the system, BOE provides broad guidance and stays out of the way while the superintendent executes; we need to realize that not all of Hoover's children will or want to attend and graduate from college - we need to open old Berry up as the Hoover School of Academic Excellence and it house all the academic academies from both high schools, the IB program, the alternative school, offer a vocational tech department and the special needs programs to include pre-school if that would make it the least restrictive option*

I feel like the school system does not care what parents think. Basically, they do what they want to do regardless of what parents think. Elementary education is not important to them. The school system does what they want to do without regard to what parents want.

For example: Parents desperately want a math textbook, yet Deborah Camp refuses to give us one. Why? Is she that stubborn? What is her background in elementary education anyway? Wasn't she a secondary teacher?

Even the state board of education refers to Hoover City Schools as the renegade school system. They think they are above the law even. I've seen IEP's ignored, GEP's ignored, the central office does what they want regardless. I was told by the gifted ed. specialist at the state department that Hoover City Schools does the BARE minimum for gifted children required by law. They are not happy about it there either.

Hoover Schools seem to be on the road to becoming a less academically prestigious school, i.e. lower standards, academically

*I'd like to see us:*

- 1. Planning for growth.*
- 2. Measuring up to the best schools in the nation, not just in Birmingham.*
- 3. Thinking of ourselves as a part of an international community, not just a southern town.*

Too much emphasis is placed on the lower-achieving students at the expense of those capable of being high-achievers. Resources have been shifted from enrichment programs to fund programs for the lower levels. (CONTINUED IN NEXT PARAGRAPH)

Many others say that athletics is given too high a regard in our schools. I can understand their thinking that is true, and no one wants stronger academics than I do; however, there is value in winning sports programs. These build school pride and community support for the schools. Being a part of a team gives students a group they can relate to and identify with...an important factor with such large schools.

The amount of lower income and immigrant children is increasing rapidly. How can we compete with Mt. Brook and Vestavia with these demographics?

*Too much emphasis on testing and getting federal funds. Let's be creative. WE DO NOT SUPPORT FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES in Elementary school!*

Rigor of studies vs. athletics.

The attitude is pervasive throughout the kids' attitudes and amongst the community. As a society, we need to show kids how important studying and reading are - rather than who wins which football, baseball, basketball game, etc...

I feel that the school board is run by the city council.

*That we go forward. Stay strong academically, we are so much bigger than Homewood and Vestavia. Sports does not need to be the top priority*

There doesn't seem to be a strategic plan. No one seems to be planning for additional schools. We also are terrible stewards. To leave the old Berry site empty and just sitting there without using it is a waste. Personally, I think it should be sold, but do something sell it or use it!

My biggest concern would be our current board who I believe has an agenda of their own - which most likely would not benefit the system as a whole - just the Spain Park side of town. I don't believe they are trustworthy and I don't believe they have the system as a whole best interest at heart.

*I hope it is now time to start building the trust and reputation that Hoover deserves. My thanks to this website for providing information to the public that in the past was impossible to get. This parent website has helped to make the school board accountable – I hope – to the public. Hoover is an amazing place to live with great schools and great people. We need to learn to work together and provide information to help build a strong community.*

Too much attention/money is given to special interests (i.e. sports, band, "pet causes") and too little is given to the basic needs of our children.... the best education possible.

The School board must go. The individuals on the School Board each have their own personal agenda and will stop at nothing to see it accomplished. Suzy Baker also needs to observe the system's Dress Code if she is to appear in the schools. We do not allow our young women to walk around barely covered and she is setting a terrible example for our girls. If she needs a sweater, I will be happy to buy one for her.

*That no one can make a plan for anybody's future. All of Hoover seems to run off EGO instead of intelligence. Do these people read? Why do they keep reinventing the wheel? Follow the path of successful systems!!!!!!*

Is the money spend wisely? Are our children cheated out of a possible better education?

That we have a superintendent of an Educational institution without a shred of experience in education!! This is the saddest day of my life as a parent of a Hoover student thus far.

*We have a superintendent who has never taught in a classroom or been an administrator in a school. No one can possibly understand the challenges faced everyday by teachers and administrators. How can he know what is the best curriculum for Hoover? Should he place his trust in others or should he have firsthand knowledge himself? The school board is out of control and should be elected by the public. I also believe that Hoover is not doing enough to work with Hispanics and minorities.*

We're fine being average. That's a problem. Mediocrity and the status quo rule the day. I'm very worried about the size of our high schools. They're way too big. The students lose themselves unless they push to be involved. Some kids just aren't going to push. Families are held at a distance when it comes to making decisions about their children's schools. wrong wrong wrong way to do business. If you want to create ownership, you have to give people a say in the decisions.

I am concerned that growth is not being managed properly. The recent article in the paper that the new superintendent does not support a 3rd high school really alarmed me. I do not believe cramming 2500 or more students into Hoover high is the right answer. I moved to Hoover two years ago believing there would be a third high school and that growth areas like Deer Valley and Bumpus would be managed well. I am not impressed with what I have seen thus far and I am wondering if I made a mistake moving here. Bumpus is close to capacity and Deer Valley is growing rapidly. I will be extremely unhappy if we wait so long to build new schools that our children end up in trailers in the parking lots.

*Far too many to list. In the immediate there is too much control by those who have no business interfering.*

Parents say they want a quality education for their child, but they fail to follow up on this desire. Too many excuses are given for lack of student planning and preparation. Parents pull their child out of school for vacations, BALL GAMES, and various other reasons yet expect their child to be qualified to take summative evaluations. Family vacations are EXPECTED to be excused absences, but what does that really mean. ANY absence is almost always qualified as "excused", but even if it's not, students are allowed to make up work. Students (and parents) aren't held accountable. The buzz term "academic rigor" is thrown around, but parents don't really want this when it comes to their own child. Excuses, excuses, are provided about how the school, i.e., teacher, is being too hard.

Academics are very important, but our teachers are being asked to do so much paperwork and extra things, that their focus gets sidetracked from where it should, THE EDUCATION OF THEIR STUDENTS. I just don't want us to get so big that we lose our personality and small town feel.

*I am concerned that with the tremendous growth, it will be increasingly more difficult to meet the individual needs of all the students.*

Not addressing special ed. population appropriately. Losing funding for schools.

Zoning discussions will have to come up again, but many parents are emotionally tied to their current middle/high school and will make any transition difficult.

*Our school system suffers greatly in the area of discipline. The zero tolerance policy is inherently flawed and groups all kids in the same category. All kids are different and so are the situations.*

The Board of Education -- period. There is so much anger and mistrust towards this board. They have a great deal of work to do to regain the public trust. I'm not even sure it's possible.

That the BOE is way too involved in the running of the schools. BOE members should not be visiting the schools and commenting on curriculum and how the individual school is run. Also, they BOE should follow the system's own dress code when visiting the schools and at BOE meetings.

I am not sure that we are prepared to handle the diversity of our current school population. Many schools have little or no economic diversity while others have a greater amount and along with that comes greater academic challenge. Research has proven that there is greater academic challenge tied with lower socioeconomic status. Another concern is that we are unprepared for the language diversity facing our school system. If you look at the testing data from recent years, you will notice a steady decline in some schools performance and if you follow those through to the middle schools you will also see a decline in these scores. I am concerned that some of this maybe due to the language and socioeconomic barriers facing our teachers. I do not feel that there is adequate classroom support for many teachers. In some schools where the principal is less willing to be approached and responsive to teachers in the classroom this creates lower teacher morale and overworked teachers. The principal has to be willing to listen and respond to the teachers. In our school there is much distrust between the teachers and the principal. Many teachers feel as though they cannot be honest with the needs inside the classroom. Differentiation is good to a certain extent; however, with a wide level of academic difference then without proper support differentiation is almost impossible for the teachers to implement. You have much attention being applied to the lower academic spectrum and less to the higher end academically.

*I'm concerned about the behavior of the coaches at HHS displayed on the Two-A-Days show. They seem to think that they can say anything in the heat of the moment and it's okay just because it's football. They don't seem to be men of character and seeing them in action has not made me proud of our program. I'm not looking for perfection in any human being, but I'm not sure what we want our students to learn from them.*

Our current school board is a joke. They each have their own personal agendas and are not looking out for the best interest of our students. Certain female members of the Board also need to take a look at the System Wide Dress Code when they enter the schools. On more than one occasion, a certain female Board Member has come into the high school with clothing on that students are sent home for. What kind of direction are we giving our children if we can't control our own school board members?

## What issue(s) would you like to see our new Superintendent, Andy Craig, place as a top priority?

Goals and a plan! INCLUDE THE LARGER COMMUNITY IN WRITING THAT PLAN!

*2 mile rule for busing needs to go away; need to reduce the amount of time students spend on the bus;*

He needs to do some house cleaning! Andy needs to make sure everyone knows he is in charge. He needs for everyone to realize that parents of this system are the stakeholders, customers, taxpayers, whatever you want to call us and employees for the system are public servants.

First thing he needs to do is to settle these textbook issues with the elementary schools. The 6 MMI schools have very unhappy parents. You have elementary children failing math because they have no textbooks. It might be all right if secondary used no textbooks but guess what??? They do use textbooks and so do colleges.

Elementary children should not be given F's in math. Parents should not be complaining that they can't help their children with math because they do it differently. Math is an exact science, if the kid gets the answer right that is all that should matter.

The high schools are fine right now. Let's get rid of this Mickey Mouse stuff going on at the elementary schools. Give the principals the power to do what they think is best for their teachers and students. Principals are having to go to parents begging us to get involved because they worry about repercussions from Deborah Camp or Ann Dominick. Who is in the classroom? This is a mess!! Andy needs to handle it quickly. Put textbooks back in the elementary classrooms. Visual learners need them. Guess what? 80% of all people learn visually.

*Returning Hoover Schools to a higher level of excellence....all around.*

Academics

Excellence in teaching

Planning for continued growth

\*\*Uniting parents, board, and central office.

More tutoring opportunities for children that are behind academically, such as immigrants and lower socio-economic kids entering our school system.

*Special Education Services*

Changing policy of school system to only provide extra resources in cases of intervention and struggling children to those that are also excelling learners which is becoming fewer and fewer as they sit unattended and underchallenged b/c they test above the magic baseline when they enter their grade. This is completely unacceptable. Teachers should be allowed to teach with accountability. The Federal Gov't gives us money to pave our roads, but certainly does not tell us who to use and how to pave them, it is absurd to think they want this control of teachers. Hoover should stand up and say "NO". I don't see anyone coming to inspect our schools to see if we comply. Our test scores would be the same if not better if teachers were allowed some latitude to breathe and actually do what they are educated to do!

Focusing on academics over athletics at all costs. Not pulling students away from classes for athletic events or pulling teachers out of classes for prof. development. Build in days in the school year for that work. Every day of school should be about SCHOOL and learning.

*Gifted Programs in the Hoover City schools*

Good teachers, communicate with principals, don't forget the kids, I know yours are at Hoover, treat Berry and Spain equally, just because Hoover High has the Hoover name does not mean, Spain Park is any less a Hoover school. Rezoning must be addressed, you can't please everyone.

The old Berry site. We need to do something about the growth in our schools. It is happening so fast that everything is being diminished. Work more closely with the council to slow new home construction and build new, high quality schools.

*I am personally happy to see Andy as Superintendent! I admire his own admission that there needs to be a Education Officer - it takes someone with a great sense of self/integrity to admit he/she doesn't know it all. I think certainly the "rezoning" issue is one we will visit again and I hope he can create a plan that will allow children to stay in their neighborhood schools (MEANING those schools that are the closest and safest distance to a child's home) and at the same time help those at Spain Park and Berry who feel somehow their schools are inadequate to HHS to be happy and confident in their school.*

Class size.

Keep the class size as small as possible: 14 in kindergarten, and up to 18 in grades 1-5.

With the focus on differentiating instruction, it is imperative that classes are small so the teacher will be able to meet the needs of his/her children.

Make our school system number 1 in academics as well as athletics. Make it a proud, honorable, successful place to be again. Build trust between the community, faculty and staff, students, parents, and board. Keep open lines of communication. Do what is right and not what is popular. Have a backbone to stand up to what is right for our students and not just what is right for a few. This is not an easy task but if you are honest and open, the community will be more than willing to work with you. Please make sure people are put in the correct positions because they can do the job and do it correctly not just because they have worked in Hoover and are due a promotion. This is a fresh start. I wish you the best.

*Appointing a special committee (no board members) to evaluate each school's curriculum/learning aids needs and making the fulfillment of those needs a TOP priority!*

The School Board and its accountability to the citizens of Hoover. On more than one occasion, I have heard Board members say that they do not care what the citizens think that they "are in the position and can do whatever they think is best and I don't care what you think."

We do not want the spring break moved to April. It would be our preference for the Spring break to remain in March.

*To make absolutely certain that Hoover meets Federal Standards.*

1. Level in academic instruction.
2. Level of our teachers and administrators. There needs to be accountability.

I think Hoover would be better off if we focused more on "7-a-days" (academics) than "2-a-days." We also need a long-term strategic development plan that will not force established (older) areas to give up their neighborhood schools so that newer developments can enjoy the privilege of staying close to home.

*I would like for Andy Craig to use tax money to hire aides to help teachers in all grade levels. The extra demands of No Child Left Behind are overwhelming staff and they need more people to work with low achieving students. I also believe that reading coaches should work with struggling readers as well as teachers.*

Make a plan with measurable goals. A plan is the one consistent thing that this system needs. Personnel change very fast and if there was a real plan, then personnel could come in and pick up where the last people left off. As it stands, new people get to make it up as they go along.

School growth and building a third high school and managing the growing international population of the schools and ESL students without slowing the learning of our American students.

### *Academics*

I'd like to see more responsible actions from leadership. Giving students a free day to attend an athletic event, which filters down to the middle school, week of no homework, and other "freebies" is uncalled for. How are teachers expected to complete their curriculum when they don't have students in class and aren't able to teach? (CONTINUED IN NEXT PARAGRAPH)

Our school board needs to do a lot more to really be considered concerned about our students and community. They give good lip service to this idea but haven't really done much to prove they are sincere.

The whole idea of a search firm to find a suitable candidate for superintendent was a travesty. Frazier's concept of "you get what you pay for" is a slap in the face to think we paid \$20,000+ only to find we have the best person in America for our system here in our own house. Not to talk badly about Mr. Craig, I don't know the man, but it does seem the BOE could have selected another person who would be better qualified, with an education background, so that we don't have to spend even more money on this academic officer.

We need to get zoning off our minds.

What are the plans for the Jeff. County tax money?

Plans for growth.

Computer Lab teachers in the elementary schools.

All elementary schools to be equal in their amenities, for example, Do they all have 2 computer labs???

*Getting academics up to par. I think the system does a good job with the lower performing students, but the higher performing students aren't challenged enough.*

- 1) Do what is best for ALL students and not give into pressure from the school board, mayor or parents.
- 2) Stop trying to compete with the other over the mountain systems - we are much larger and have a more diverse population we need to address students' individual needs.
- 3) Secure more money for our schools/teachers.
- 4) Don't allow bullying in schools.

We have to address our growing school populations at Hoover High School and some middle schools. The new ninth grade building is short term relief, but we need a 5-10 year plan for future growth. Are mega high schools really best or could we do better with three 1500-1800 student high schools.

*Issues of discipline should be handled on a case by case basis. We have entirely too many kids being sent to Crossroads for trivial issues.*

I sincerely hope that Mr. Craig succeeds in this job. Priority one is going to have to be to win the support of HSC stakeholders. He is currently seen as a puppet of the School Board. He's going to have to prove that he is willing to stand up for what he believes. I absolutely do not want an adversarial relationship to be formed, but he's going to have to prove he's not a lap dog. I wish him luck.

Enough classrooms at the high school so that each teacher has their own room.

*The issue of a 3rd high school and new elementary school are top priority. It is know that Rush Propst does not want a new high school as this would cut his football talent in half but this is NO reason to not build a new high school. Hoover is too big and Spain Park will never seem to take its fair share. Safety at the middle schools (and all schools) needs to be addressed also.*

Perform a review of the principal's performance at each school and an anonymous survey of teachers and parents conducted by central office. Not by the schools. Each year the principal "hand picks" the parents to send the surveys to and this doesn't always represent the entire population. Each school needs to have careful review of test data under the current principal.

We need to prepare our system for the diversity that it is currently faced with.

I would like to see someone brought into the academic planning who has experience with the education of English as a second language population. I realize this is not a problem in all schools, however, in certain schools it must be addressed.

I know that there is much concern over what appears to be "unfair" zoning in reference to the ELL population. I believe that if the challenges are not distributed equally then there should be some adjustment in how the funding is distributed. Certainly, it takes more resources to educate a classroom composed of 16 English speaking students and 3-4 ELL students than a classroom composed of all native English speakers.

I also would like to see him put high priority into increasing our academic standards. We must strive to have our schools become ranked nationally for academics and not just athletics.

Making sure that advanced students in middle school and elementary school are being adequately challenged. I think that so much emphasis is being put on helping the children who are behind, that these kids may be overlooked.

*I believe the Hoover Board should be elected and voted on by the Citizens of Hoover instead of the Board being appointed*

Do not allow current school board members to renew their expiring term. We need new, fresh ideas on the school board that will be able to bust up the block voting that we have now. Someone with a college degree who understands and has experience in the business world and the educational system is what the Hoover School System needs.