

Parents' Responses to the Community Survey Report

**Saint John the Baptist Catholic School
12319 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20904**

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**Survey Results
May 20, 2019**

Summary of findings

- On average, SJB parents are satisfied with the school traditions, with an overall mean of 4.26 out of 5 stars (n=78 respondents).
- There is a high degree of participation in school traditions across the school.
- Parents report a likelihood and willingness to volunteer in school traditions listed in the survey (Figure 3).
- Approximately 76% of SJB parents prefer a lower tuition rate and a volunteer requirement (Table 1). Distribution is similar regardless of grade their child(ren) will be entering this Fall 2019.
- The preference to keeping the lunch duty volunteer program and/or having a new volunteer program was roughly split among parents regardless of which grades their children will be attending (Figure 4).
- Identified barriers to not volunteering include:
 - Feelings of having volunteered already and/or getting burnt out from volunteering over the years
 - Being too busy and not having enough time
 - Being unavailable mid-day and can only volunteer remotely
 - Conflicts with work and/or travel
 - Still new and not knowing other parents

About the survey and parent respondents:

The goal of this survey was to hear from parents about their experiences being in the SJB school community. SJB will be reviewing the results to learn about ways to strengthen the school community, identify barriers parents may have, and improve the volunteering system. Parents who responded to the survey are described in Figure 1 (below).

Number of respondents: 78 parents (as of 5/20/2019)

Note: Each child represented (i.e., if a parent had multiple children attending the school), were counted as one parent respondent for every child (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Proportion of Parents Completing the Survey, by Child(ren)'s Grade in the Fall 2019

For which grades is/are your child(ren) entering in this Fall 2019? Select all that apply.

[More Details](#)

 Pre-K – 2nd grade	31
 3rd – 5th grade	25
 6th – 8th grade	43
 Other	6



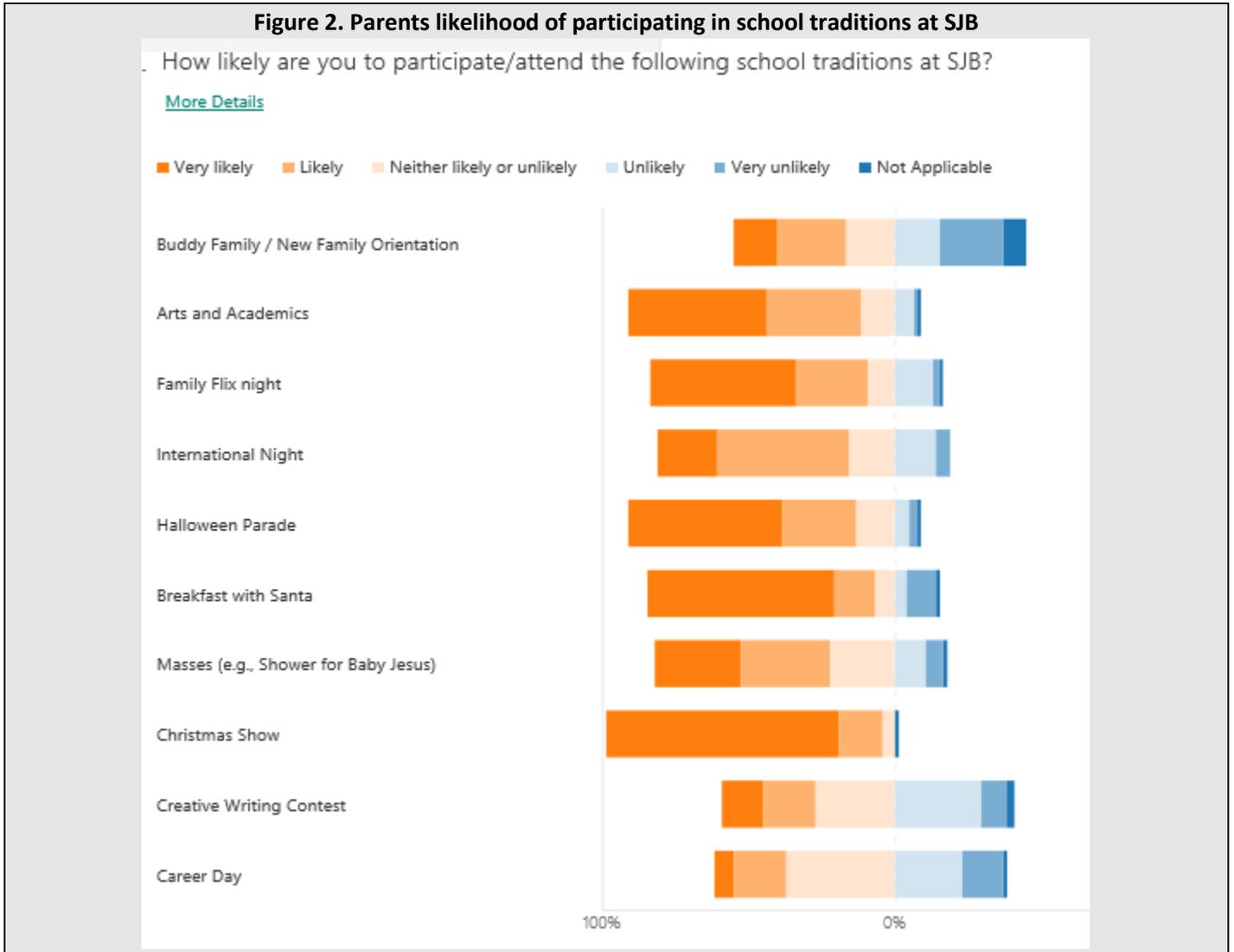
Parent Survey Questions:

The survey asked the following questions:

1. Are you a parent/guardian or student?
2. For which grades is/are your child(ren entering in this Fall 2019?
3. How likely are you to participate/attend the following school traditions at SJB?
4. How would you rate our school's traditions, where one star is dissatisfied and five stars is satisfied?
5. How likely are you to volunteer for the following school traditions at SJB?
6. What barriers affect your ability to volunteer?
7. Which would you prefer, a lower tuition with a volunteer requirement or a higher tuition without a volunteer requirement?
8. Please rate the lunch duty volunteer program at SJB where one star is strongly dissatisfied and five stars is strongly satisfied.
9. Given your rating of the lunch duty volunteer program, which would you prefer?
10. Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns you'd like to bring to our attention at SJB?

Survey Results

- On average, SJB parents are satisfied with the school traditions, with an overall mean of 4.26 out of 5 stars (n=78 respondents).
- There is a high degree of participation in school traditions across the school.

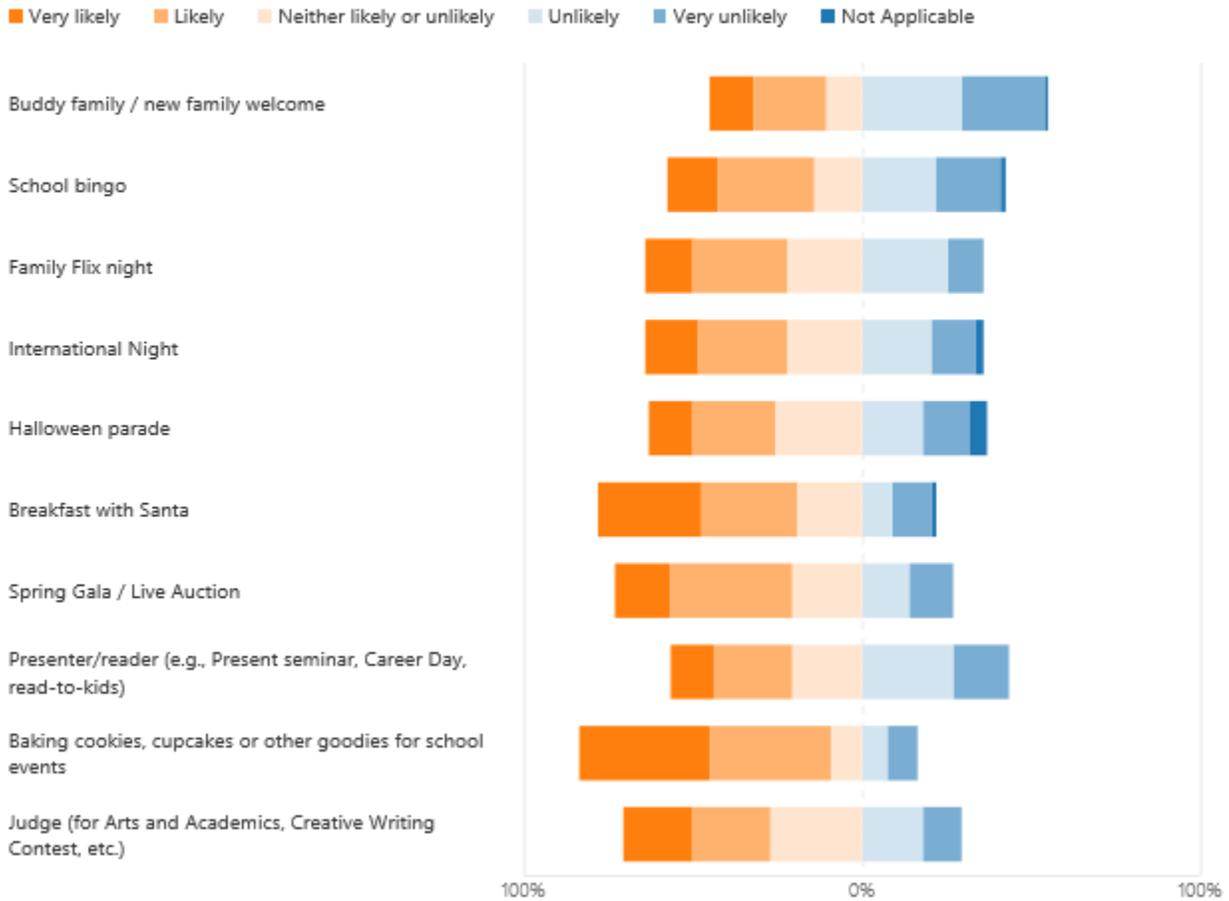


- Parents report a likelihood and willingness to volunteer in school traditions listed in the survey (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Parents likelihood of volunteering in school traditions at SJB

How likely are you to volunteer for the following school traditions at SJB?

[More Details](#)

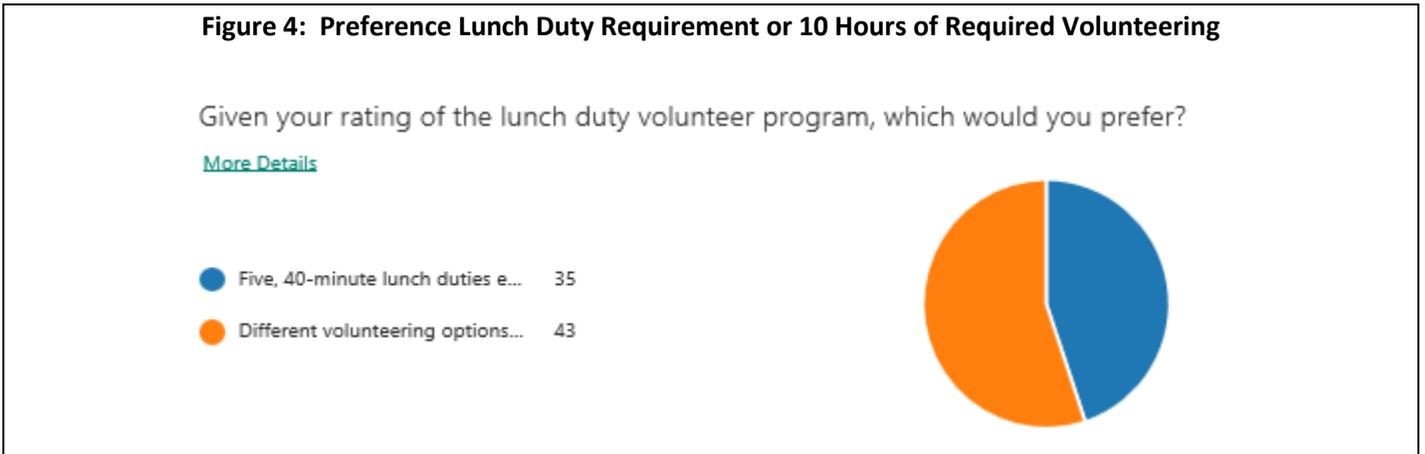


- Approximately 76% of SJB parents prefer a lower tuition rate and a volunteer requirement (Table 1). Distribution appears similar regardless of grade their child(ren) will be entering this Fall 2019.

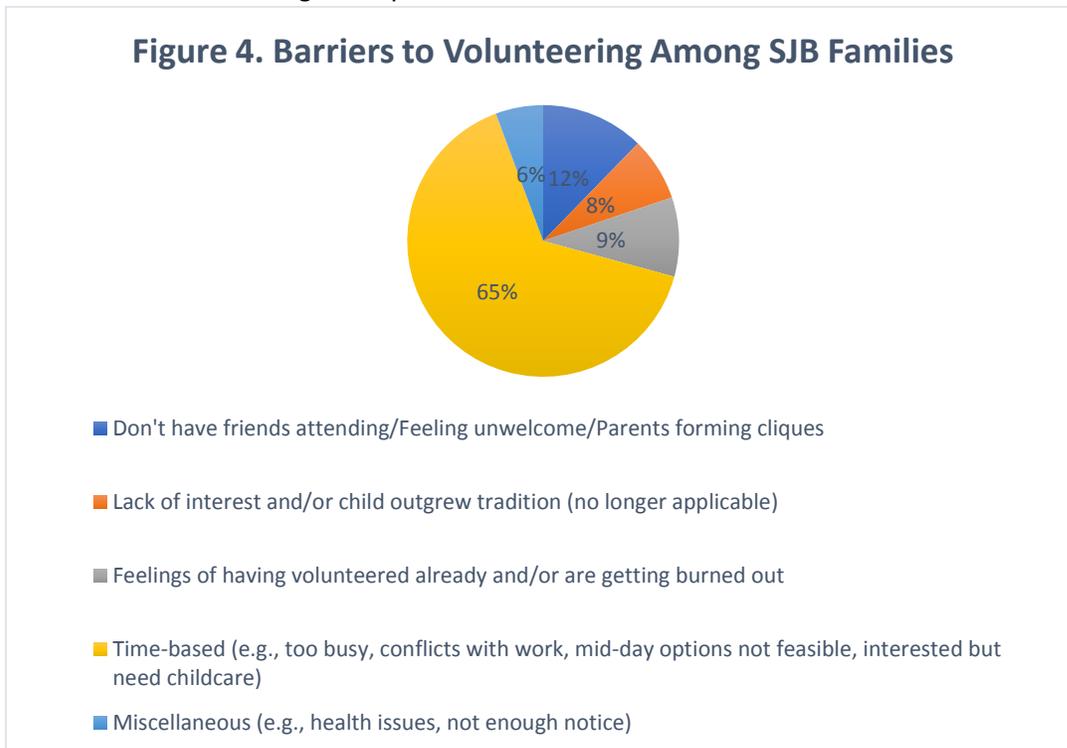
Table 1. SJB Parents' Preference of Lower or Higher Tuition Rate with and without lunch requirement

	Higher tuition, no volunteer requirement	Lower tuition, volunteer requirement
Pre-K – 2nd grade	7	24
3rd – 5th grade	5	20
6th – 8th grade	11	32
Graduating	2	4
Not listed	0	1
Total	25	81

- The preference to keeping the lunch duty volunteer program and/or having a new volunteer program was roughly split among parents regardless of which grades their children will be attending (Figure 4).



- The barriers to volunteering groups were recategorized, given the large number of “other” responses provided in the survey. Barriers mentioned that were described are included in Figure 4 (below). Some barriers expressed include:
 - Feelings of having volunteered already and/or getting burnt out from volunteering over the years
 - Being too busy and not having enough time
 - Being unavailable mid-day and can only volunteer remotely
 - Conflicts with work and/or travel
 - Still new and not knowing other parents



Discussion

SJB received several comments from parents from the last question: "Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns you'd like to bring to our attention at SJB?" A summary of the comments received are grouped into themes:

Theme: Strengthen the SJB Community

- SJB parents want a sense of school community, and applaud the great work to make such activities available to the school.
- There are some traditions parents want to rejuvenate, such as the principal coffee, jogger, and other similar family-friendly activities.
- Parents asked to find ways to increase class involvement with room parents to better facilitate a sense of community.
- Some parents expressed that volunteerism is a great way to get parents to meet other parents and strengthen the school community.

Theme: Need to Improve Volunteerism

- Many parents are concerned about the dearth of volunteers for so many core traditions, and parents are hopeful that this survey can be used to improve volunteering.
- Some parents commented that it feels like the same 20-30 families volunteer for everything, adding that they see the volunteer requirement as helping spread the workload for core traditions, like Breakfast with Santa, International Night and Bingo, to be a success.
- There's concern about volunteerism within the sports programs, and parents felt that getting feedback on this would be important as well.
- Parents highlighted the importance of giving credit towards various volunteering activities that might be seemingly unnoticed:
 - Chaperoning for school field trips should be acknowledged.
 - Help teach the children to give back, and strengthen the connection between the school and the church.
 - Several parents expressed that volunteering for sports (CYO and intramurals) should be counted for credit towards volunteer work.
 - Food pantries and drives/donations should also be credited.

Theme: There is a call for an alternative to the lunch duty requirement

- Several parents (at least 6+) specifically expressed that they do not feel qualified to handle disciplining children during lunch duty and/or noted the difficulty of making it to five lunch duty times as working parents.

Theme: Improving communication and information to parents

- Parents are calling for improved communication throughout the school, including sharing administrative decisions, explaining changes in teaching staff or students, providing more detail to new parents about SJB traditions on websites and brochures, and dealing with behavior or performance issues among teachers and students.

Theme: Miscellaneous comments

- Given the schedule of working parents, making aftercare available beyond 4pm on half-day would be helpful.
- One parent asked to increase the number of activities and clubs geared towards middle school students.

Appendix: Select Quotes Pertaining to Volunteering/Lunch Duty:

- ... The lunch duty program needs refining. Most kids at SJB come from homes where both parents work, thus making this an onerous requirement. It seems like a legacy from many years ago when it was primarily one parent working. While I indicated we'd rather pay a lower tuition and have required volunteer hours--I think that should not include lunch duty. But volunteerism means investing in the SJB community and school--which needs to happen and it appears as if it is slipping. Also--we are facing some serious challenges with the volunteerism within the sports programs--both for coaching and commissioners for particular sports. As the generation that has been involved for years starts to move on, I worry about the SJB sports programs, feedback about the volunteerism within the sports community would be good to receive as well. ...
- ...Volunteering should be REQUIRED for all families, at whatever threshold is determined. "Buy Out" is a "Cop Out" if you are trying to increase school community spirit. I believe that outside of extraordinary circumstances, all families should be able to find 10 hours per year to contribute in a meaningful way. ...
- ... I think tuition should be whatever it needs to be regardless of volunteer hours. And volunteer hours should be a requirement of all families like it is in other schools so that everything doesn't fall on the same people over and over while families that don't volunteer continue to benefit from our efforts. It should be equal. I don't like the lunch duty program for these reasons: 1) It penalizes parents that work which is not a good feeling. It is inconvenient in the middle of the day when parents are working in DC and VA, even MD, and the commute would be too out of the way, they would have to work out something with their boss, or worse, have to take a vacation day for this requirement which amounts to 5 vacation days. Or, some parents' workloads are simply not amenable to fulfill this requirement when more and more companies are demanding more of their employees. 2) It penalizes the parents that already volunteer so much for other volunteer opportunities because only lunch "counts". It's as if the other ones that require hours upon hours of volunteer work during the week in the evenings plus weekends do not count for anything. These are months long commitments and heaps of effort that go unappreciated because they do not count. It's nice that SJB offers a reception at the end of the year for volunteers, but parents will appreciate more if their hours actually count for something. Parents like these should be exempt from lunch duty which is only less than 5 hours. 3) Why is the onus on parents? Can the teachers be responsible and rotate? Other schools don't require parents to do a lunch duty. 4) If not the teachers, can SJB hire the people they need for lunch duty? The only option then is to have 10 hours for each family to volunteer. That would help spread the volunteer efforts around. Then if those are not fulfilled, then you can penalize with charging \$xx/hour, and then earn even more \$. A program will have to be drawn up. Volunteer opportunities will have to be outlined from the small to big, with some worth more hours and others. But these efforts will be worth it in the end. Despite the above, our family still volunteers a lot because we like the community and the other volunteers that volunteer with us. So it would be nice to not have to be penalized because we can't make it to lunch.
- I always valued lunch duty time, especially when my older children were much younger. It was a way to get a glimpse into the classroom space where my children spent much of their day. I could see the interactions of the kids inside and then go outside and watch them play. I could see them in their environment and feel secure that they were comfortable and happy in their space. And because I could sign up for upper grades and lower grades I could see more than one of my kids. I realize lunch duty can be difficult to cover since it is in the middle of the day, but I've been lucky to work nearby and to sign up quickly and grab the days that I was already planning to be at the school. I will admit, I don't have the teacher genes or gifts, so it was always a very long 19 minutes in the classroom, and it made me appreciate the teachers even more. As my kids got older, I did not like the limited choices where if I did lunch duty in an upper grade I couldn't go outside with them first, I had to go into a lower grade where I didn't know the kids. Everyone is so busy, there must be some magic formula for slicing manageable little pockets of time out of people's days to get them involved both with the school and interacting with the other parents to continue to build the community. Even room parenting is done mostly online these days, which of course makes it easier. And when I am at pickup, rather than parents all gathering outside to chat, everyone is in their cars catching up on email or returning phone calls. We just had our 8th grade spaghetti dinner and it was gratifying (and surprising) that almost every family from the class was represented in some way in person. I wish there had been some activity during that time that would have gotten the parents interacting more with each other, as I know I spent most of the time talking to the people with whom I socialize regularly rather than talking to people with whom I am less familiar. Anyway, I chose lunch duty as the answer to #9, although I am on my way out and I remember fondly the full lunch duty calendars when it was not mandatory and if I didn't sign up quickly I didn't get to come to lunch duty. The idea of someone spending time to ensure mandatory volunteer hours are fulfilled is very annoying to me, I would rather write a check, and it can be painful to work with a person who is reluctantly showing up because they must. Great idea to do a survey, and I wish you the best of luck with finding the magic formula!