

RASD parent/teacher survey receives favorable responses

By Roger Mathews

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The Ripon Area School District (RASD) is using a new company this year to help gauge the district's performance in its annual parent-teacher survey.

The survey, administered online each October, is a barometer of how parents feel about the district and how their students are treated, as well as how district staff view the district as well.

This year's survey was administered by School Perceptions, a company out of Slinger, Wis., that has administered more than 3 million surveys in its 20 years of service.

Daren Sievers presented the gathered data to the Ripon School Board at its monthly meeting Monday, Dec. 16.

The test was administered in two parts. Parents were asked what they thought about the district, how their children were being treated and taught, if they were comfortable with the district and if they would recommend RASD to others.

In the summary for the parents' survey, Sievers told the board that 297 parents took the survey, which was a 17% response (par for the company), and outlined the top-five areas that scored the highest, as well as the bottom-five scores.

Leading the list was how parents were updated on how their children were doing, scoring a 3.94 out of a possible 5-point score, an 85% agreement level and placed the district in the 73rd percentile of other districts. School Perceptions rates thousands of districts each year and ranks them.

High expectations for the child by the district scored a 4.01 and a 90% agreement level. Parents' ability to provide feedback to the district or teachers on their child rated a 3.86 score with a rating of 81% and 62nd-percentile placement.

How parents feel about communication with the district earned a 3.85 score, with an 83% rating and percentile placement of 57th. The last question in the top-five involves whether teachers use material that reflects the family's cultural and racial backgrounds. That answer scored a 3.97, a 91% agreement rating and a 55th percentile.

"This was a particularly strong report," Sievers said of the staff survey results. "We're very excited to report back to you on how the staff reported back to district leaders on how things are going."

Sievers noted to the board that 182 staff members participated in the survey, for a total of 61% of the total staff. He said that was a high number. The top-five questions in the staff survey covered such items

as how the district handled disciplinary issues, acknowledgement of the teacher doing a good job, if they have the necessary materials and training to do their jobs, and if they felt the staff were doing a good job educating students.

The first question of the top-five asked if discipline in the district was handled in a consistent manner, with the results showing a 3.42 score, a 66% agreement and an 85th percentile. The next question asked if the teacher thought they were recognized when they do a good job, resulting in a 3.77 score, a 79% agreement and placement in the 81st percentile.

Training and support to work with students with different backgrounds was answered with a 3.76 score, an 80% agreement level with an 81st percentile. A question about staff doing a good job of educating the students garnered a 4.42 score, the highest score to that point, with a 98% agreement level and an 80th-percentile placement.

The last of the top-five questions asked if all students were respected for their values and beliefs. It scored a 4.03 with a 90% agreement and an 80th percentile.

On the question of how likely the staff member was to recommend the district as a place to work, on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the top, staff responses were rated at a 7.82, a rating that exceeded the average response for that question company-wide with School Perceptions.

Areas that might need attention, according to Sievers, were the bottom-five lowest-rated questions for both parents and staff. These questions did not mean there were problems, but rather they were areas to look at by the school board for possible improvements.

Those questions for parents included having at least one staff member they could go to with concerns, whether the school district provides opportunities for parental involvement and if the parents felt welcome in the school.

Bottom-five scores for staff questions include whether they feel safe at work, whether the district administration is doing what it takes to make the district successful and if the amount of work they are asked to perform is reasonable and manageable.

Now & Then in Ripon ... Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society

Pleasure, Unincorporated hosted New Year's Eve party

For generations in Ripon, people have loved to celebrate the turning of the new year.

One popular New Year's Eve party was sponsored by a Ripon organization called "P.U.," which is an abbreviation of Pleasure, Unincorporated. The symbol of P.U. was the skunk.

P.U. was founded in November 1948 and lasted until the late 1990s. The organization was started for socialization and began with a membership of 30 Ripon couples. Members split into committees to plan various parties, events and activities throughout the year.

It was governed by a board of directors consisting of seven people. The organization was by invitation only and as older couples dropped out, newer couples were recommended for membership by others in the organization.

One of the more popular parties for P.U. was held each New Year's Eve. Annual meeting minutes from Dec. 31, 1993 noted, "The minutes from the 1992 meeting were read while dodging rolls being lobbed from the distinguished group at the next table."

A 50th-anniversary party was



THIS UNDATED INVITATION was sent to members of Ripon's Pleasure, Unincorporated (P.U.) for its New Year's Eve party. The organization was founded in 1948. The building pictured was the Grand View Hotel, which burned to the ground in 1949 and was located where Ripon City Hall is today. *submitted photo*

held for group members Dec. 31, 1995 at the American Legion Hall in Ripon. The cost was \$35 for members and \$55 for guests (equal to \$72 and \$114 today). Music from the 1940s was featured and those attending the party were encouraged to dress like the 1940s.

A 25th-anniversary celebration was held in 1973 in the Pickard Commons of Ripon College. The invitation to the event stated that the board of directors and others would "announce the establishment of a new complex, the P.U. Academy of Fine Arts and Hysterical Museum." The order of events for the celebration included the P.U. sign. The chairman of the P.U. board explained to those attending that might not know that to do the P.U. sign you "place the thumb and forefinger of the left hand on either side of the nose pinching it gently."

The organization's alma mater was then sung which went, "Far within Skunk Hollow prairie, wreathed in sickly green, stand our noble alma mater P.U.'s glorious queen. Lift the glasses, drink it downward, let the ice cubes clink, hail to thee, our alma mater, old P.U. you stink!" It is not sure what musical tune accompanied this song.

This group brought couples in



THIS NEW YEAR'S Eve party invitation for the Ripon organization Pleasure, Unincorporated or P.U. is dated December 31, 1957. The private, invitation-only organization continued having New Year's Eve parties and other gatherings into the late 1990s, when it was disbanded. *submitted photo*



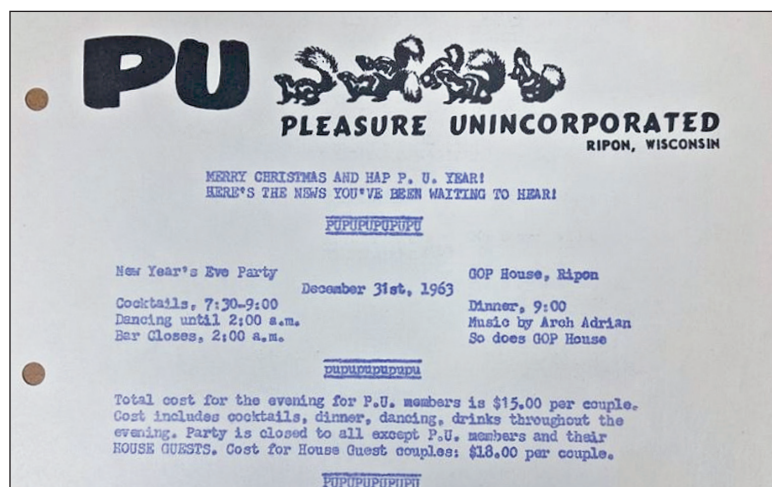
THIS NEW YEAR'S Eve party invitation for Ripon's P.U. organization can be dated between 1953, when the Republican House Restaurant opened, and 1965 when the Ripon Auditorium was torn down. *submitted photo*

Ripon together for five decades of fun. The last known information on the group found in the archives of the Ripon Historical Society is from 1999.

The Ripon Historical Society

is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information follow us at Facebook/riponhistory or www.riponhistory.org.



THIS MIMEOGRAPHED INFORMATION on the 1963 New Year's Eve Party for P.U. is found on the organization's letter head. *submitted photo*