

### Survey Responses from Staff (February 26, 2018)

Of the five areas below, check on the three which you believe are the most critical for the Exploris' long term success.

Diverse and well equipped personnel
Facility, Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality, Strong Board
Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality, Strong Board
Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality, Strong Board
Facility, Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Diverse and well equipped personnel
Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality, Engaged and supportive community of students and parents, staff longevity
Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality, Living up to our mission and vision
Facility, Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Facility, Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Diverse and well equipped personnel, adequate staffing
Facility, Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Facility, Diverse and well equipped personnel, Fiscal vitality
Diverse and well equipped personnel

What questions, comments or concerns do you have regarding the future facility on Kindley Street?

Space & flexibility to change the spaces as we need ?  
Outdoor space for play or outdoor time?

What is a realistic time frame for relocating?

Meeting building deadlines, more realistic picture of what we can expect the first year in the building (physical space, resources, furniture)

Meeting deadlines, realistic renderings of what the building and the property will look like the first year we are there; When will the groundbreaking happen?

When will ground breaking be? Meeting deadlines.  
What will the first year look like? Will the building be ready for us?

none

Green space for play. ALL grade levels need safe spaces for physical activity, meeting, etc. Being in nature is a core value and it's proven to be great for learning, relieving anxiety, and happiness! Gardening, nature journaling, and studying nature have always been a part of Exploris. This may seem silly, but functional furniture that reflects our core value of collaborative learning while also allowing for independent learning. Also a Scale-Up model <http://scaleup.ncsu.edu/> provides for students to work in collaborative groups with access to multiple screens and whiteboards for brainstorming, planning, etc. There's no more "front" of the room. Technology is also a key element of this. In the 21st century, this generation must be proficient in using tech to learn. It goes far beyond pointing and clicking.

Originally, I heard that groundbreaking was supposed to happen April 2017, then Nov 2017, then by the end of Jan 2018 (all from administration). Now it's late Feb. Stop giving exact dates unless there is surety that it will happen. We are losing credibility.

Are we going to move in as projected? or will it be delayed?

I have design concerns.

I believe our co-teaching model depends on having a number of small break out spaces. Engagement relies on controlling student energy. I feel like the new design lacks these "nooks."

Our original building and our current middle school have 6 small work spaces for 5-20 students. They are not small walled spaces, but nooks with 2-3 walls.

I'd really like for the faculty to again dig into how we designate space and its use.

I feel that we are not in a place to take on such a challenge. Our school is lacking staffing, technology, parent support, and consistency. In the past several years, Exploris has been surviving, and not thriving. There is not an employee that does not love Exploris, but we are all doing way more than our job description, and it is wearing on all of us.

I want to ensure the space is developed to be flexible. While it might make sense for classes to hold 40 students now, will that always be the case? I have been through two school building developments. One created a great space that will work for decades, the other did not.

As we all know, construction can sometimes be delayed. What is the plan for a possible delay in construction? I know it is still on schedule but it would be helpful to have a Plan B so the middle school doesn't have to spend a week finding alternative learning spaces like we did when the elementary school was delayed.

Space. I hope we will have space that can be utilized for some of our special needs students. Having a quiet place where a small group can work and not be distracted is essential. right now- space is limited and there are times where an open and free flowing area can be overwhelming for students. Flexible space..with the ability to have some privacy is important.


What questions, comments or concerns do you have regarding the organization's fundraising needs over the next three to five years?

Can we be more connected to fund raising and how teachers can help?  
Information sessions about pamphlets and marketing materials we can use to promote to parents - is this available for us to use?

Please don't focus on the building to the detriment of our teachers and students. Our teachers are paid less than Wake County, and we have been told in the past that we couldn't ask for parent donations, Gofundme, etc., because that would take away from the building fund.

I am concerned about our reach. We have supportive families, but what other entities can we rely on?

Concerned that parents feel pressured to give a certain amount of money to the fundraising

Who else can we reach out to for fund raising?

I'm concerned that it is the central focus vs funding current school needs

How does a focus on the bottom line impact the original ideas Exploris was founded upon of small class sizes and our core values? How do we address parent concerns of feeling like they are constantly being asked for money for field trips, supplemental resources, etc and to fund tech, building, whatever...

If all money is going to the Capital Campaign, how do we insure that other needs get funded, too? E.g., scholarship money for field experiences?

Budget always a concern and a challenge for every school year. Will there be enough money to provide all necessary equipment and furniture for the new building?

I believe that EVERY single family should be required to attend a fiscal workshop.

- Do not receive Facility Funding.
- Cost of land outside of downtown and downtown.
- Cost of building per square foot compared to WCPSS.

They have some impression that this is a fancy, unnecessary expense. We need to dig in with them and fully educate them on the incredible DEAL we are getting. This was sound fiscal decision making.

Our faculty is FULL OF MASTER TEACHERS yet we do not use them to run parent education. I think teachers can develop some interesting, thoughtful engaging workshops for parents!

My concern stems from a perception that the school needs a lot of donors due to the amount people are giving. How can we get some consistent, large scale donors?

It would be nice to have an update about our Capital Campaign success thus far and what the next steps will be.

What questions, comments or concerns do you have in regards to the school staffing plan/needs (current and future)?

We are extremely lean in terms of staffing. Everyone is doing more than just their own job. Everyone feels appreciated, but very overworked. We continue to add to crew sizes and expect the same types of learning and results as when Crew sizes were at 15-16.

Are we looking for more math & science qualified teachers?

We are going to lose ( through attrition) two qualified math & science teachers in middle school in the next 2-3 years - are we looking at hiring teachers with these qualifications?

Male teachers would be a definite benefit for middle school.

Do we need to add more EC and special services (counselors, intervention staff, support staff) to meet the needs of our students?

As a "global school" should we offer an actual language class? Does the Global Cultures and Languages need to be tweaked? Is it enough to market ourselves as being able to solve problems around the world? Should it be brought down to the Elementary level?

We need to at least match Wake County Schools pay and benefits.

When will we know? We need time to organize materials and think about who we are partnering with.

There needs to be one TA for each classroom K-2; concerned that we won't have enough time to prepare for next school year with our new co-teacher and with what grade level we'll be teaching, and WHERE we'll be teaching.

Will teachers be on the interview teams. Will we be given time to meet with this team mate before the school year starts? I think we will need ample time to meet this new team mate, plan with the team mate...

They continue to add students and we need more support staff

With our increased EC population and the plan to increase socio-economic diversity which sometimes also is coupled with a need for student learning support, how will we meet these staffing demands and how will it change the structure and culture of our school? 6th grade has at least 1/3 identified with needs for support through 504s and IEPs. As with most students, one-size does NOT fit all and the diverse needs of the EC population must be met with fidelity. On the flip-side, another 1/3 have needs to be challenged above grade-level. All of these things take time for deep quality planning with all key players. It is ineffective and inefficient for EC teachers to be providing services to students during a team planning time because then they are unprepared to provide support services during regular classtime or in small pullout groups during regular classtime. They do not have the opportunity to dig deeply into the content and provide feedback on modifications for the multitude of diverse students that are required to meet the requirements of IEPs and 504s. General education teachers can do this too, but it is most effective when done in partnership with our experts in EC. Pull-out time is necessary outside of core classes, so you can't take that away, but equally important is planning with the team for core instruction. Asking us to stay to plan outside of our regular working hours is also not sustainable. How can Exploris be innovative with time, money, resources, ideas, scheduling to solve this growing need and be a leader for others?

How do we bring on so many new staff, year after year, in an efficient, productive manner that maintains our Exploris values and quality? (I.e., how do we grow so quickly and not lose our bearings?)

As our school grows, we seem to have a greater EC student population and right now we don't have enough staff for all the needs of those students. This population could keep increasing and we need to

be prepared for that. One counselor for the whole elementary and middle school is not enough.
Diversity is utmost priority! Diversity in faculty. Diversity in student body.
We need support staff. We need another counselor, an instructional coach,an additional math teacher at the middle school, an EC Director, and another EC teacher. As I have said, everyone is doing much more than their job description. Staff is willing to pitch in, and we do love our jobs, and love this school; however there are aspects that are suffering (discipline, differentiation within classes, core instruction, relationships with parents, and general student support).
None
Our EC population continues to rise and additional staff members are needed. Will we be able to hire additional EC staff in the coming year? Will staff members be able to receive professional development to help classroom teachers meet the needs of EC students? There also is no planning time for EC teachers and grade level teachers to plan together which creates complications.
Exceptional Children Our staffing, facilities and structure are not equipped to handle the level of need we have in our students. Some of the needs of our students require intense programing in very specific areas.

What questions, comments or concerns do you have in regards to the governing board structure and member recruitment?
It is my fault for not being more in touch with the board and it's nuances. I need to attend board meetings.
N/A
N/A
are we planning to add to our board staff?
How do we recruit? How do we make sure that our board reflects diversity in multiple ways but still is committed to the Exploris vision and mission?
How do we recruit a board with fewer parents on it? Is that truly preferable? Or is that just what Board on Track suggests, and we don't really buy into it?
Member recruitment should lead to recruiting individuals that know very well how our school functions, our mission and values.
Faculty inclusive. Multiple faculty members should be in EVERY CONVERSATION about vision/strategy.
None

What questions, comments or concerns do you have in regards to our student demographics?

I would like to see a more diverse population and that pulls from our nearby neighborhoods.

I believe that our student population should be more diverse in all ways, and that we need to understand that it takes time to accomplish our student population to be as diverse as Wake County, so this is a process that will take time and effort.

I would like to see us become a more diverse school. I would be happy to be on this team if one is formed. I am still new to Exploris so I am not sure what has been done in the past.

My biggest concern is in meeting the needs of all students. I have seen the classes gain more students, and the number of teachers stays the same. The burden on the teachers to have a crew of 19 kids, manage planning and differentiate content to accomodate various abilities/disabilities is a great undertaking if we expect them to have balance in all areas of life. The classrooms need to be equipped with technology that is functioning well. Otherwise a chunk of time is dedicated just to getting signed in.

Greatest concern is addressed above with EC/504, diverse learning needs.

How will we provide meals for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch? How will we help fund overnight field experiences for students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged? Will we provide transportation options?

We have been talking about the lottery and socioeconomic disadvantaged students, but we need to be more focus on the population we have currently, including a high percent of EC students, and on meeting their needs, to continue being a successful school.

We must reflect demographics of Wake County!

We need to have the necessary resources, space, and teacher training to adapt to our changing demographics.

I think it is important to increase diversity at our school, however training our staff and preparing for this..will be very important.

Over the next five years the school will expand in many ways, specifically in its fiscal planning. What questions, comments or concerns do you have in regards to the school's short and long term fiscal needs?

Do we have everything in place so that our education and staff matches the splendor of the new building? It would be the ultimate shame to me if the physical school is world-class, but it is filled with underpaid teachers who don't have the resources to get the materials they need.

Open mindset and willingness of the staff to see the bigger picture and endure the bumps along the way!

N/A

NA

Are we a school or a business?

Will the yearly budget be enough to meet all our needs? Teacher salary increase equivalent to Wake Co.?

We are too administrative/support staff heavy.  
We need to look closely at models where % of all faculty with students.

Our original design had ALL but 2 members with students at least 4/5 of day. It concerns me that we keep hiring new positions, yet these positions do not have specific, dedicated time with children.

We are ALL busy. We can ALL busy ourselves on computers. We must push ourselves to hire and design positions that put most of our faculty in classrooms and in contact with children.

Class sizes have continued to increase almost each year. Will this continue to happen?

What other topics or areas should the board and leadership be addressing?

Are we a business or a school?

With so much growth and new staff (which are not bad things) over the last few years and into the next, what structures do we have in place to maintain the integrity of the things that make us Exploris? (core values, relationships etc)

How are we going to support the growing Spec. population? The importance of supporting teachers with PD and other necessary tools to support the staff as we grow and change alongside our great school!

We need a robust policy regarding discipline and consequences for students that is enforced and supported on all grade levels.

Work-Personal Life balance of staff -staff longevity is important to the success of Exploris. When I first heard about Exploris, I wanted to be a teacher here, but there were NEVER any openings. People rarely left. I thank Andrea all the time for deciding to stay home with her babies, and Laura for recommending me to 6th grade, otherwise I wouldn't be with my wonderful team. Some of what has made Exploris so successful and the learning experiences so powerful is the teamwork that went into the planning, refining, reflecting, and relationships with community and experts that were built over years and years of working together. There is a collective history that builds over time and hones and improves our practice. We are not teachers who pull the 'ol lessons out of the filing cabinet, we constantly reflect and modify and push each other to make it better and to meet the needs of the group we have that year. We need to keep "our people" (sometimes people aren't Exploris); we need to keep them happy, healthy, and satisfied to make this thing work in the long run, otherwise you'll just have a fancy building with a name that meant something a long time ago. I hope that we don't forget our past as we move into this exciting new future.

Teacher Benefits.

We are no longer competitive with Wake County. We attract teachers that want children to go to Exploris, or teachers that can "afford" to walk away from state retirement.