



Employee Feedback Survey 2020-21 Annual Report



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Message from the Superintendent



June 1, 2021

Dear Staff,

It is my pleasure to share the Santa Clara County Office of Education's 2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey Annual Report.

The contents of this report are organized in three sections, beginning with a *Year in Review* where we document initiatives that were implemented over the past year. In 2020-21, considerable resources went into efforts designed to keep staff and their families healthy and free from the Coronavirus.

Following the *Year in Review* is a summary of findings from the *2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey* which includes a description of the survey methodology and respondent demographics. This year, nearly 600 staff provided feedback in a wide array of areas related to employee engagement and job satisfaction. We learned that the SCCOE is excelling in the areas of *Strategy Alignment*, *Diversity and Inclusion*, and *Collaboration*, and that there is room for improvement in areas that include *Training and Development* and *Focus on Stakeholders*. A description of efforts that are currently underway for further improving in these areas is provided the *Looking Ahead* section of this report.

I want to close by acknowledging all SCCOE staff for their hard work and commitment to public service. In 2020 and beyond, staff have demonstrated great care and resilience by working with countless partners to address the many challenges posed by the Coronavirus and improve outcomes for educators, students, and their families. Together, **#WeAreSCCOE** and we are **#StrongerTogether**.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ann Dewan". The script is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Mary Ann Dewan
County Superintendent of Schools

Year in Review

The SCCOE cares about its employees, the degree to which they find their work meaningful and worthwhile, and their ability to do their jobs effectively and in alignment with the organization's mission and goals. In that spirit the SCCOE conducts a comprehensive annual survey to collect feedback from employees regarding their work experiences – to learn firsthand from staff about factors that are known to contribute to job satisfaction, engagement, production, and retention. This report summarizes findings from the *2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey*.

This section of the report highlights several of the employee-centered initiatives, events, and recognitions the SCCOE made available to its staff in 2020-21. Traditionally, employee-centered initiatives have focused on cultivating a workforce with the desire and know-how to serve stakeholders effectively. This year, initiatives broadened to include efforts to address the many challenges posed by the deadly Coronavirus to staff and members of the broader community.

Keeping Employees Safe and Free from the Coronavirus

On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a stay-at-home order to protect the health and well-being of all Californians and to establish consistency across the state to prevent further spread of the Coronavirus. Beginning promptly on March 20 and expedited by proactive planning leading up to the order, the SCCOE put into effect a series of actions designed to keep employees and their families safe while maintaining operations. Actions included enacting an organization-wide telecommuting policy that established the terms for employees to work from home, to devoting resources to ensure that employees could do so effectively for a prolonged period. With stability in sight, the focus shifted to working with partners to safely re-open SCCOE sites for in-person operations. A brief description of this work is provided below.

- **Increasing Access to Software and Technology Equipment** – To ensure that employees could work effectively from home, the SCCOE used a generous deployment strategy facilitated by the [Technology Service Portal](#), an online system for employees to submit requests for equipment (e.g., laptops, monitors, cameras, headphones, etc.), software, and related support. Largely dependent on individual needs and preferences, employees were permitted to use various virtual meeting platforms and cloud-based systems for sharing and managing workflows. In addition, eligible employees received three one-time stipends during the 2020-21 fiscal year to offset costs, including those related to technology expenses. The first stipend of \$500 was paid on 10/15/2020. Additional stipends were distributed on 1/15/2020 and 6/2/2020.



- Disseminating Public Health Guidance** – One of the SCCOE’s many functions is to serve as a curator of information and resources. In the wake of the pandemic, this responsibility grew to include the collection and release of timely public health guidance to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus (e.g., proper cleaning and sanitation of high-touch surfaces, social distancing guidelines, quarantine restrictions, where to go for testing, etc.) and keep the community informed on the state of its transmission. This information was distributed to employees via regular communication channels (i.e., Monday Memo, COVID-19 Weekly Roundup) and externally, to the general public, through public service announcements via new conferences and the SCCOE’s social media platforms, [Employee Resource Portal](#), and [Stronger Together](#) webpage. To further protect employees, the SCCOE distributed personal protective equipment by mail in the form of care packages that included face masks, filters, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes.
- Facilitating Coronavirus Health Checks, Testing, and Vaccine Distribution** – Reducing the spread of the Coronavirus has required community members to practice protective behaviors, including self-administering symptom checks, engaging in frequent testing, and receiving the vaccine. The SCCOE developed and implemented a health screener policy requiring all employees to conduct daily symptom checks and for supervisors to monitor the statuses of their staff. In addition, through partnerships with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, the SCCOE offered the convenience of on-site testing and, when educators became eligible for the vaccine on March 1, 2021, coordinated the vaccine distribution effort.

Promoting Health and Wellness

With the majority of SCCOE employees working from home beginning in March of 2020, in environments where social distancing influenced isolation and hours of sedentary engagement in virtual meetings became commonplace, SCCOE wellness initiatives took on new meaning. To promote employee health and wellness, the SCCOE continued to offer longstanding resources, such as the *MyStrength* and *Walker Tracker* applications complete with team-based challenges, while adapting traditional wellness events into virtual formats, and disseminating information to raise awareness of the programs available to staff that focus on mental health and wellbeing. Included below is a brief description of health and wellness events and resources available to staff in 2020-21.

- Fitness Applications** – *MyStrength* and *Walker Tracker* are two of several applications promoted by the SCCOE that provide staff with the opportunity to monitor their health and stay physically motivated. With these applications, employees can set health goals based on personal needs, track activities online or through synchronization with smart devices, and compete in individual and/or team-based challenges.
- Virtual Events** – In 2020-21, the SCCOE offered a variety of wellness events virtually. Examples include the *Mindful Pause*, 20-minute sessions occurring every Monday at noon that incorporate guided breathing, stretching, and mindful meditation exercises, *Yoga for All*, a yoga series accessible to employees both new and experienced, and *BEATS!*, a 30-minute morning energizer fueled by uplifting music that occurs one Saturday out of every month.

- **Wellness Resources** – SCCOE employees have several health resources available to them through the *Employee Assistance Program (EAP)* and provider networks (e.g., Anthem, Kaiser). Resources available through providers include mental health self-assessment tools, listings and contacts for assistance programs, and online tips for healthy living. In addition, through EAP, all employees and members of their households can participate in free counseling sessions with licensed professionals and receive virtual consultations or referrals to services that address everyday needs such as childcare.

Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace

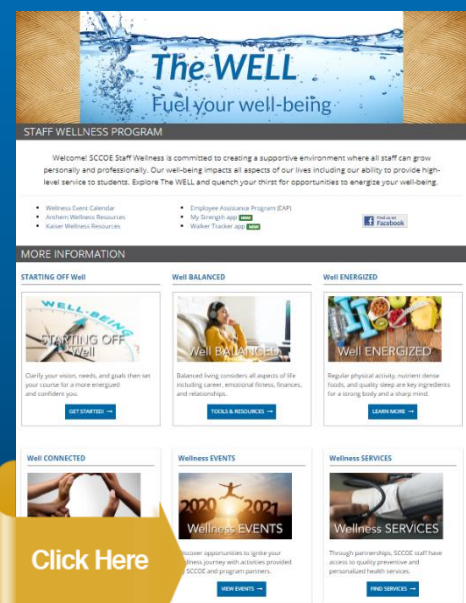
The SCCOE strives to create a welcoming workplace, one where all employees, whether onsite or in the field, respect each other's differences and create opportunities that give voice to those who are often underrepresented. Efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace continued in the Spring of 2021 with two professional learning opportunities designed to strengthen employee understanding around equity principles and practices. The professional learning opportunities included a learning series open to all staff and a book club for Leadership Team Members.

Equity Learning Series

Hosted in partnership with the National Equity Project, the SCCOE's Equity Learning Series offered four workshops that expanded on required curriculum and trainings that focused on recognizing stereotypes and strategies for interrupting microaggressions. Equity Learning Series topics included (1) *Leading and Working Towards Equity*, where participating employees learned about the unique role each plays in building community in service of equity; (2) *Understanding and Counteracting Implicit Bias*, where lessons around effectively addressing implicit bias in a variety of environments were taught; and (3) *Coaching for Equity*, designed to deepen employee understanding about what it means to support the learning, growth, and development of another adult.

Did you know?

The SCCOE offers a creative mix of activities, events, and learning opportunities to promote staff health and wellness. Participating in light physical activity, such as *Yoga for All* or *BEATS!*, for as little as 20 minutes a day can result in better physical health, reduced stress, and increased concentration. Learn more about opportunities to energize your well-being by visiting **The Well** online at <https://bit.ly/3zbNPGk>.

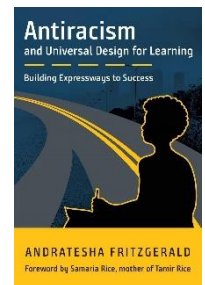


Equity Book Club

In the Spring of 2021, SCCOE Leadership Team members from across the organization participated in Equity Book Clubs that involved guided readings, reflection, and discussion. Topics included understanding systematic racism, creating better educational experiences for students of color, and the steps organizations can take to make staff feel psychologically safe. Each book was carefully selected to promote the kind of professional growth among SCCOE leaders that benefits all employees and fosters a healthy workplace culture. A listing of books selected for the 2021 Spring Equity Book Club, their authors, and a short description for each is provided below.

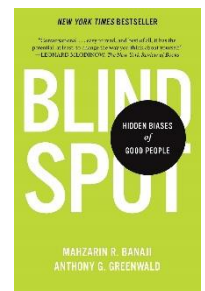
- ***Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning***
by Andrateshi Fitzgerald and Samaria Rice

Andratesha Fitzgerald presents Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in a new light: As an effective framework to teach Black and Brown students. Drawing vivid portraits of her classroom instruction in urban over the past two decades, Fitzgerald shows teachers how to open new roads of communication, engagement, and skill-building for their students. The result? Helping students become expert, lifelong learners who feel honored and loved.



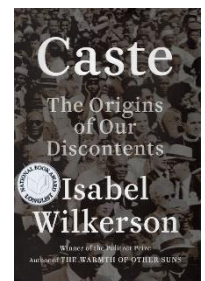
- ***Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People***
by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald

The title's "good people" are those of us who strive to align our behavior with our intentions. *Blindspot* aims to explain the science in plain enough language to help well-intentioned people achieve that alignment. By gaining awareness, we can adapt beliefs and behavior and "outsmart the machine" in our heads to be fairer to those around us. Venturing into this book is an invitation to understand our minds.



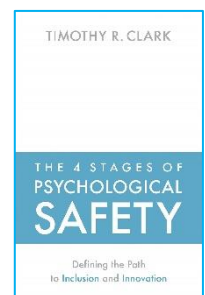
- ***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents***
by Isabel Wilkerson

Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including a divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more.



- ***The Four States of Psychological Safety***
by Timothy Clark

When leaders cultivate psychological safety, teams and organizations progress through four successive stages. First, people feel included and accepted; then they feel safe learning, contributing, and finally, challenging the status quo. Clark draws on psychology, philosophy, social science, literature, and his own experiences to show how leaders can, and must, set the tone and model the ideal behaviors.



Recognizing Employees of the Month

SCCOE employees demonstrate excellence in their service to students, school district, and community stakeholders. Using the [Employee of the Month Nomination Form](#), staff can nominate their fellow coworkers for going the extra mile in their role while providing quality supports and services that align with organizational values. In 2020-21, the SCCOE recognized ten (10) staff from nine (9) different departments with years of service ranging from 1.5 to 39 years.

2020-21 SCCOE Employees of the Month



April 2020

Lisa Mello
15 Years of Service
Paraeducator
Blackford Elementary



May 2020

Mayra Montanez
5 Years of Service
Sr. Inclusion Serv. Specialist
Inclusion Collab.



June 2020

Janice Richason
19 Years of Service
Paraeducator
Chandler Tripp



September 2020

Jamie S. Whitford
5 Years of Service
Admin of Supt. Projects
Office of the Supt.



October 2020

Jessica Taylor
1.5 Years of Service
Admin. Assistant II
D.A. & District Support



November 2020

Theresa Martinez
39 Years of Service
Senior Executive Assistant
Bus., Facil., & Op.



December 2020

Maria Aleta Inciong
12 Years of Service
Educator
Bagby Elementary



January 2021

Alexandria Coronel
2 Years of Service
Admin. Data Tech.
School Climate, Lead., & Instr. Serv.



February 2021

Julie Kimbel
6 Years of Service
Sr. Inclusion Serv. Specialist
Inclusion Collab.



March 2021

Christina Arpante
8 Years of Service
Assist. Director of Creative Impact
Public Affairs

Survey Design, Data Collection Methodology, and Main Findings

This section contains a summary of the *2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey* data elements, collection procedures, and survey findings, beginning with a description of respondent demographics. The presentation of findings includes a summary of traditional survey components, such as items that query employee engagement and satisfaction with career progression opportunities, and newly added items designed to assess employee awareness and utilization of resources that were made available in 2020-21 to keep staff healthy and safe from the Coronavirus.

Methodology

Survey Design

The *2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey* consisted of single, scale, and open-response questions clustered within five (5) distinct sections:

- **Demographics**

Includes five (5) questions that ask participants to identify their SCCOE Division, work-site, remote-work arrangement, and tenure.

- **Health and Safety**

Includes six (6) questions that ask participants to rate their level of satisfaction with health and safety communications and resources distributed by the SCCOE; two (2) items that query participant awareness and utilization of (a) channels used to distribute important information and guidance related to the Coronavirus and (b) SCCOE staff wellness resources available through “The Well”; and one (1) question designed to gather information on staff health and safety practices.

- **Employee Engagement**

Includes one (1) question that asks participants to rate their level of agreement with 21 items tied to employee engagement (i.e., the feeling of fulfillment and achievement that one experiences in their job when they know their work is worth doing).

- **Employee Experiences**

Includes 12 questions that ask participants to rate their level of agreement with components tied to employee engagement and job satisfaction. Components include but are not limited to *Career Progression*, *Strategy Alignment*, and *Diversity & Inclusion*. A complete listing and description of *Employee Experiences* survey components is provided in the *Appendix*.

- **Additional Feedback**

One (1) open-ended question designed to provide participants with the opportunity to share additional feedback regarding the survey and/or their experience(s) as SCCOE employees.

Analysis

The questions included in the survey allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. This report contains findings from a descriptive analysis of *Demographic, Health & Safety*, and *Employee Engagement* items. Participant responses to items included in the *Employee Experiences* section were used to calculate standardized scores, then sorted to identify SCCOE *Areas of Strength* (i.e., the top three (3) domains rated highest by employees) and *Areas of Improvement* (i.e., the bottom three (3) domains rated lowest by employees). Items within identified strength and improvement areas were then subject to descriptive item analyses. Qualitative data were analyzed for common themes. Those offering additional insight into quantitative findings are presented where relevant.

Data Collection

The *2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey* was administered over a 6-week period, from December 3, 2020 to January 11, 2021. During this period, COVID-19 transmission rates were high in the Bay Area and most SCCOE employees were working from home (i.e., telecommuting) in response to school and business closures issued by the state and local government to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus. To maximize the number of responses, SCCOE employees were informed of the data collection effort via an announcement in the SCCOE's *Monday Memo*. The memo was then followed by an email to staff that included an easily accessible hyperlink for completing the survey and a PDF form for those who wished to complete the survey by paper/pencil. Survey reminders were administered on a weekly basis and, when requested, hard forms, including a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope, were mailed directly to staff. These efforts resulted in the collection of 583 responses from SCCOE staff, a 38% response rate.

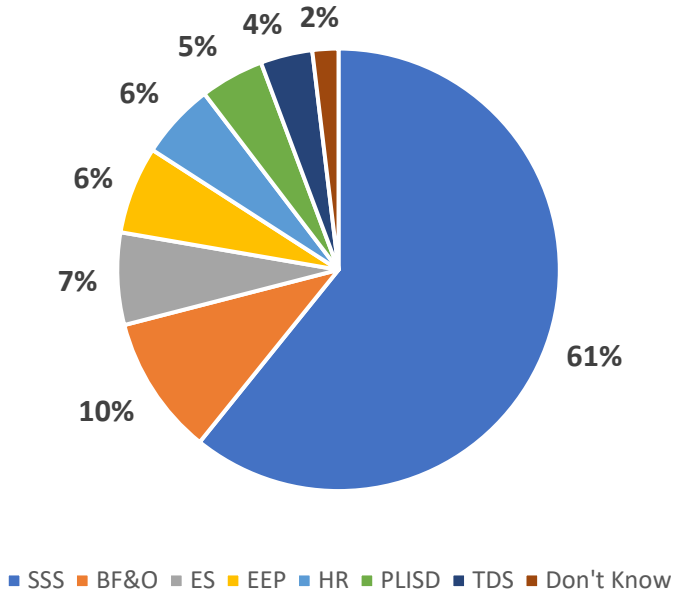
Respondent Demographics

A graphical summary of respondent demographics is provided on the next page. Of the SCCOE staff who responded to the survey:

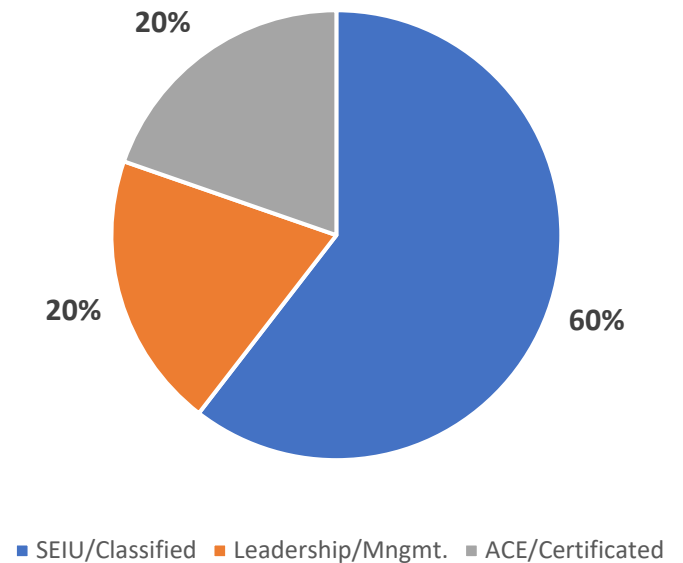
- 61% of respondents selected Student Support Services (SSS) as their Division, followed by 10% who selected Business, Facilities & Operations (BFO), and 6% each who selected Executive Services (ES) and Equity & Educational Progress (EEP).
- 60% of respondents were SEIU/Classified staff, followed by 20% from Leadership/Management and 20% who were ACE/Certificated.
- 44% of respondents have been with the SCCOE for five (5) or fewer years, approximately one (1) in four (4) have tenures that range from 11-19 years.

When asked about work-site, 59% of respondents indicated that they were headquartered outside of the SCCOE Main Office located at 1290 Ridder Park Drive in San Jose, California, and a combined 76% of respondents selected "Mostly Remote" and "Fully Remote" options when asked to identify their telecommuting arrangement.

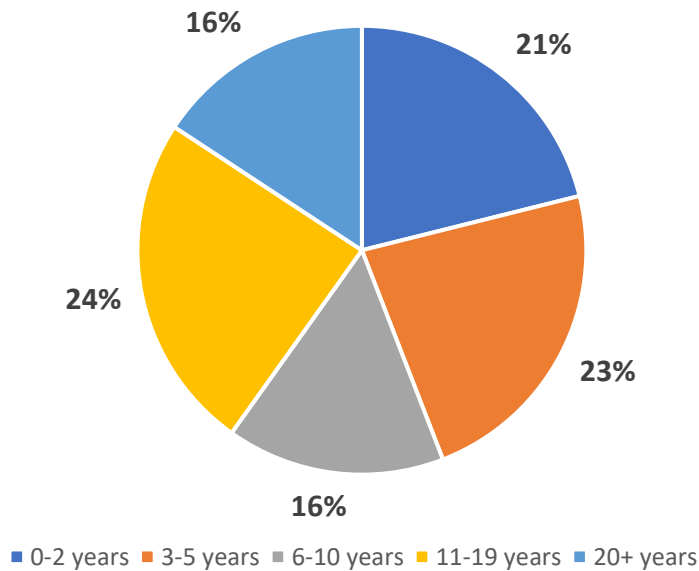
Division (N = 579)



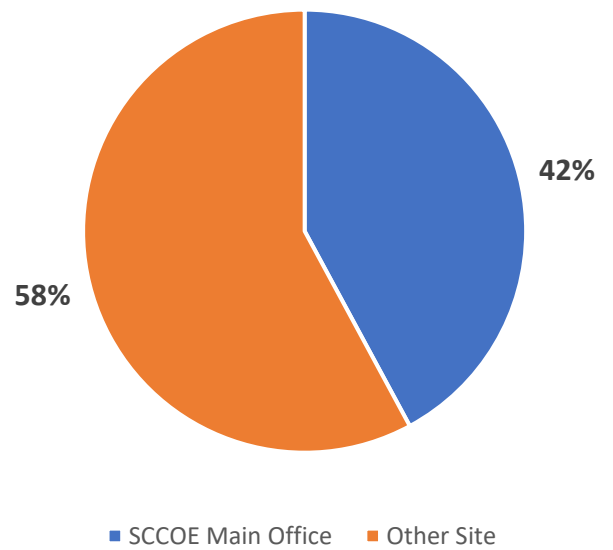
Unit (N = 554)



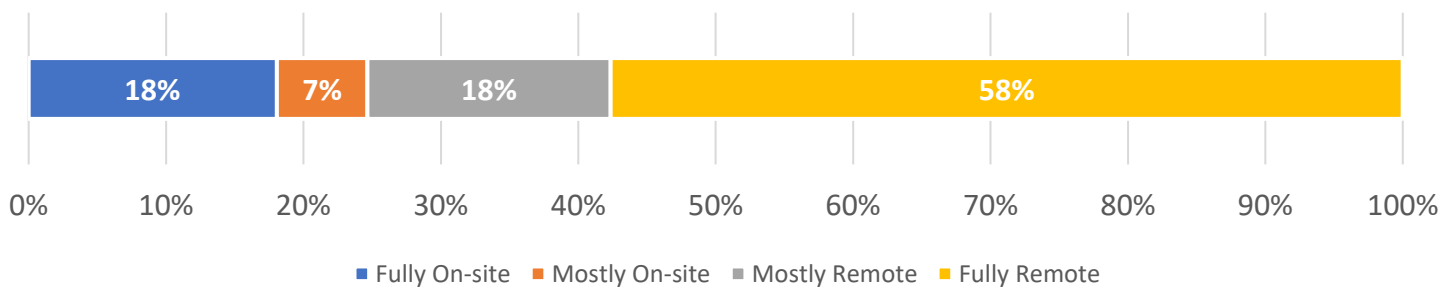
Tenure (N = 578)



Work Site (N = 565)



Remote Work Arrangement (N = 565)



Main Findings

Health and Safety

Employee health and safety have long been a priority at the SCCOE. Prior to 2020, initiatives focused on improving employee health and wellness through various offerings that included physical fitness campaigns, the distribution of self-help resources, support with related applications such as Walker Tracker and My Strength, and biometric health screening and flu vaccinations.

In 2020, in response to growing concerns regarding the spread of the deadly Coronavirus, the focus shifted to policies and procedures designed to reduce its transmission among SCCOE staff as well as within the broader community. The SCCOE promptly pivoted to a business model that allowed employees to work safely from home, created opportunities for staff to get tested regularly, distributed up-to-date public health guidance, and equipped staff with sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and face masks. Now more than one year later, efforts have grown to include the coordination of vaccines for educators and daily health screening and contact tracing.

The SCCOE used multiple channels to distribute health guidance to staff. Regular communications included the Monday Memo and the COVID-19 Weekly Roundup. In addition, curated resources, including SCCOE-developed public service announcements, were made available to staff via the SCCOE Employee Resource Portal, The Well, and the SCCOE's Stronger Together webpage. These efforts, in addition to those listed above, are the reason why 83% of staff who responded to the survey indicated that they had what they needed to do their job safely, and why 85% expressed comfort in knowing who to approach for related supports.

More importantly, SCCOE information channels played a role in ensuring that all staff were informed on preventative strategies. For example, when surveyed, 98% of respondents indicated that they regularly practiced use of a mask or face covering, the washing of hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, avoidance of crowds whenever possible, and maintaining a social distance of six (6) feet from others outside of the household. Other common health practices for reducing the spread of the Coronavirus that 90% or more of respondents engaged in included using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, staying home when feeling sick, health monitoring, and cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces.

Percent of Staff Who Agree

86%

If I have questions or concerns about PPE for work, I know who to contact.

85%

Communications from the SCCOE have been helpful to me in understanding how to keep myself safe.

83%

I feel comfortable going to my supervisor with any safety concern.

83%

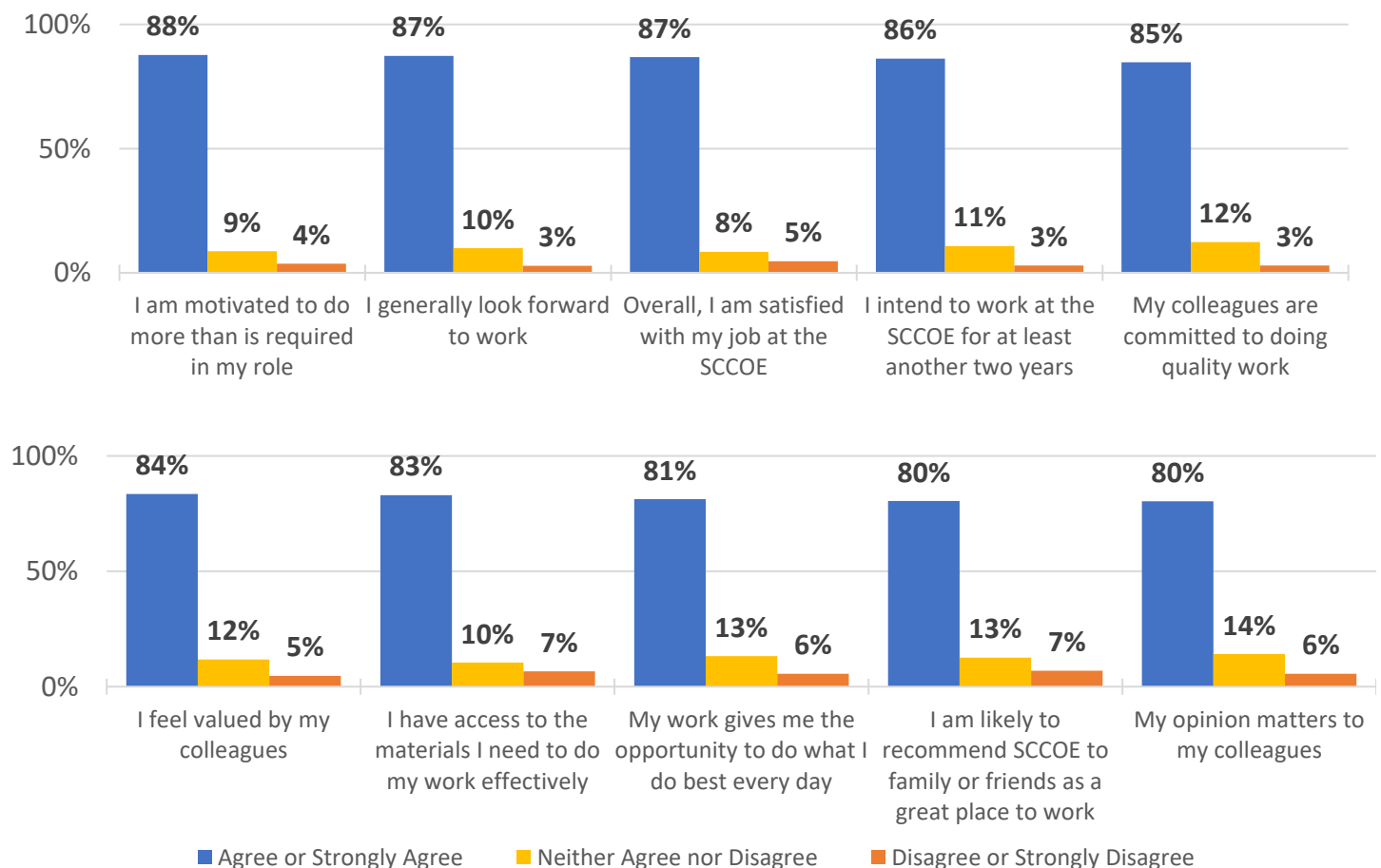
I have the PPE I need to do my job safely.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement, or the feeling of fulfillment and achievement that one experiences in their job when they know their work is worth doing, is an important indicator of job satisfaction, staff retention, and company success. Employees with a high sense of engagement are more likely to be involved in their work, enthusiastic about the organization they work for, and committed to their fellow workers. These are qualities the SCCOE values in its employees and why it continues to invest in opportunities that strengthen communication between staff, leverage collective capacity, and encourage the development of equitable, diverse, and inclusive mindsets.

Understanding its importance, the SCCOE's *Employee Feedback Survey* includes over 20 items, 12 of which align with Gallup's Q¹² index¹, for measuring employee engagement. According to data collected in 2020-21, the majority of respondents self-reported positive attitudes towards areas related to enthusiasm for one's work, enthusiasm for one's employer, and feeling valued by coworkers. Ninety-eight percent of respondents indicated that they are committed to doing quality work, 90% indicated that they had a close friend at work, and 88% indicated that they feel proud to tell people where they work.

Percent of Staff Who Agree



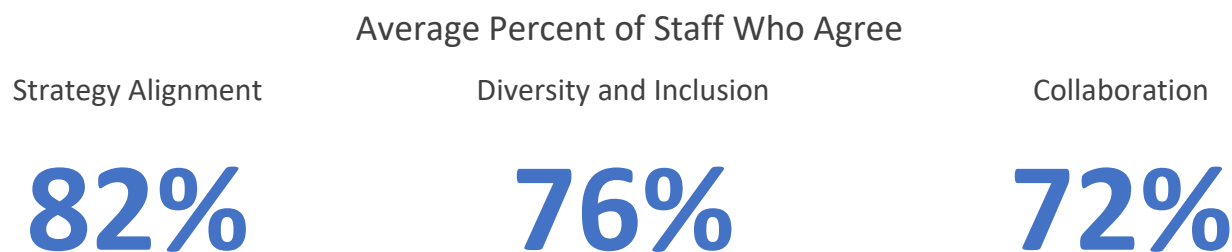
¹Harter J.K. et al. (2009). Q12 meta-analysis: The relationship between engagement at work and organizational outcomes (Whitepaper), Gallup Organization.

Employee Experiences

The SCCOE collects data on employee experiences in various forms and at various points in the employee lifecycle. Current efforts include an entrance survey that gauges one's onboarding experience, pulse surveys designed to collect timely feedback related to the employee experience, exit surveys that ask employees to provide information that helps the SCCOE understand the circumstances surrounding why one is leaving the organization, and the annual *Employee Feedback Survey* which is designed to assess the experiences of employees at a more extensive level. The *Employee Experiences* items included in the *Employee Feedback Survey* allow for the measurement of employee perceptions in key domains tied to job satisfaction, such as career development, focus on stakeholders, and interactions with coworkers and supervisors. This section of the report includes a summary of *Areas of Strength* (i.e., the top three (3) employee experiences domains rated highest by employees) and *Areas of Improvement* (i.e., the three (3) domains rated lowest by employees).

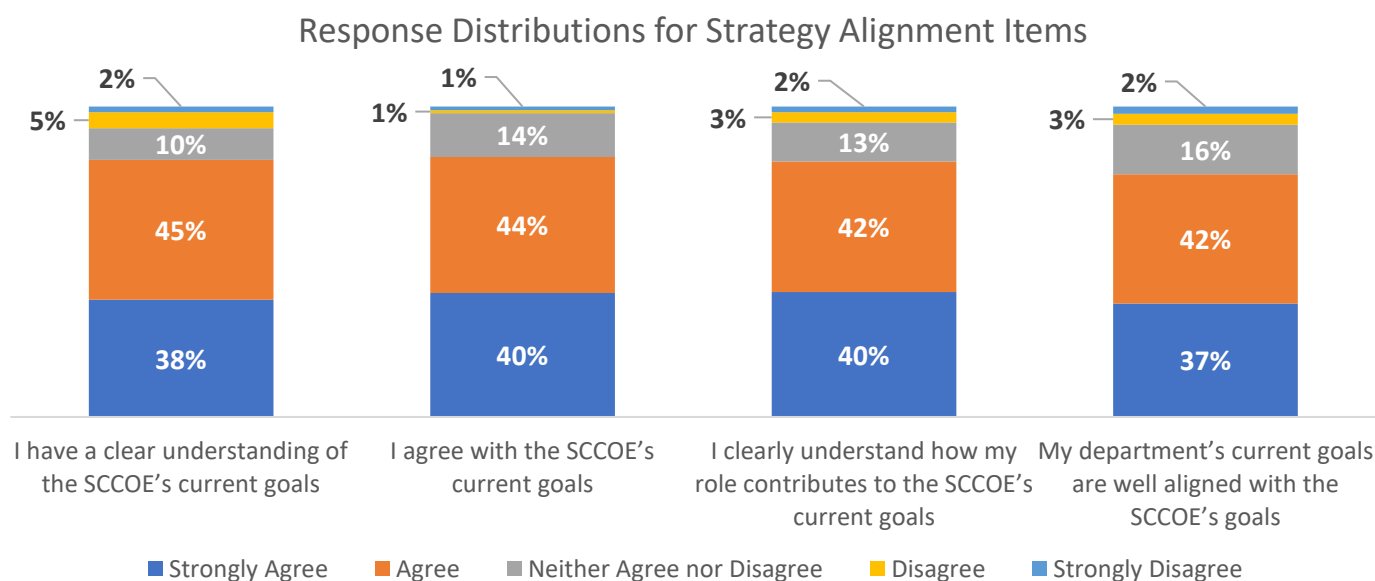
Areas of Strength

The domains *Strategy Alignment*, *Diversity and Inclusion*, and *Collaboration* were rated the most favorably by SCCOE staff.



Strategy Alignment

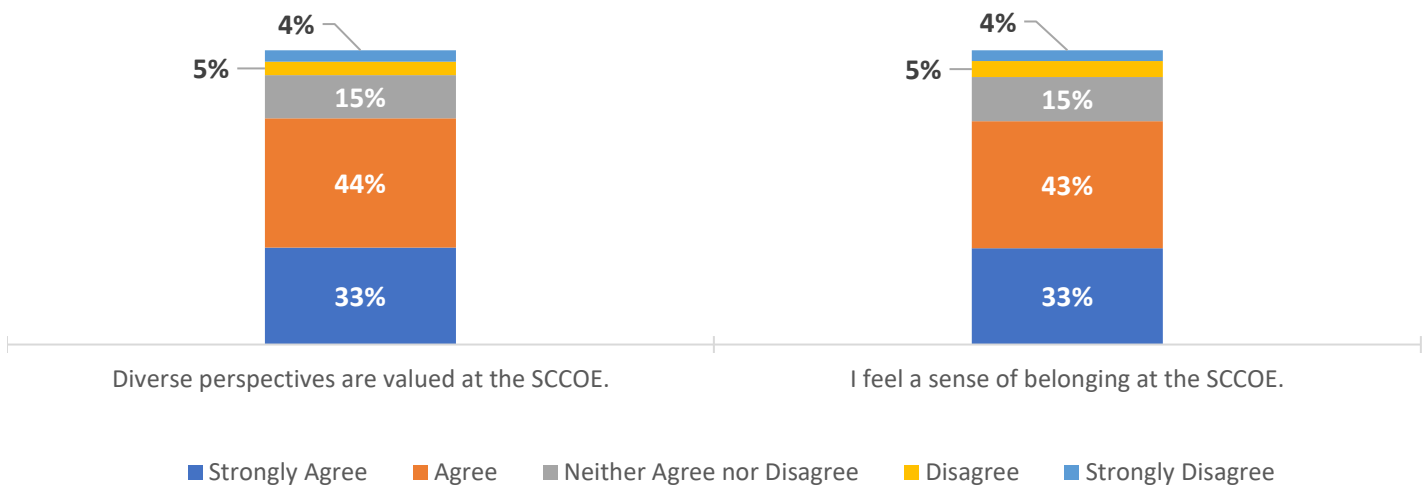
Strategy Alignment is the extent to which employees are aware of and can align their own professional goals with those of their department and the greater organization. Eighty percent or more of respondents indicated that they agree with the SCCOE's goals, have a clear understanding of them, and feel their work contributes to achieving those goals.



Diversity and Inclusion

The *Employee Feedback Survey* includes two (2) items that measure staff perceptions of *Diversity and Inclusion*, the degree to which an organization values and is inclusive of diverse perspectives and to which those values are reflected in its initiatives and workforce. Diversity and inclusion are two of the SCCOE's guiding principles and topics of a diversity and inclusion, along with equity, were a focus of staff professional development in 2020. Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported that diverse perspectives are valued at the SCCOE and 76% indicated that they feel a sense of belonging.

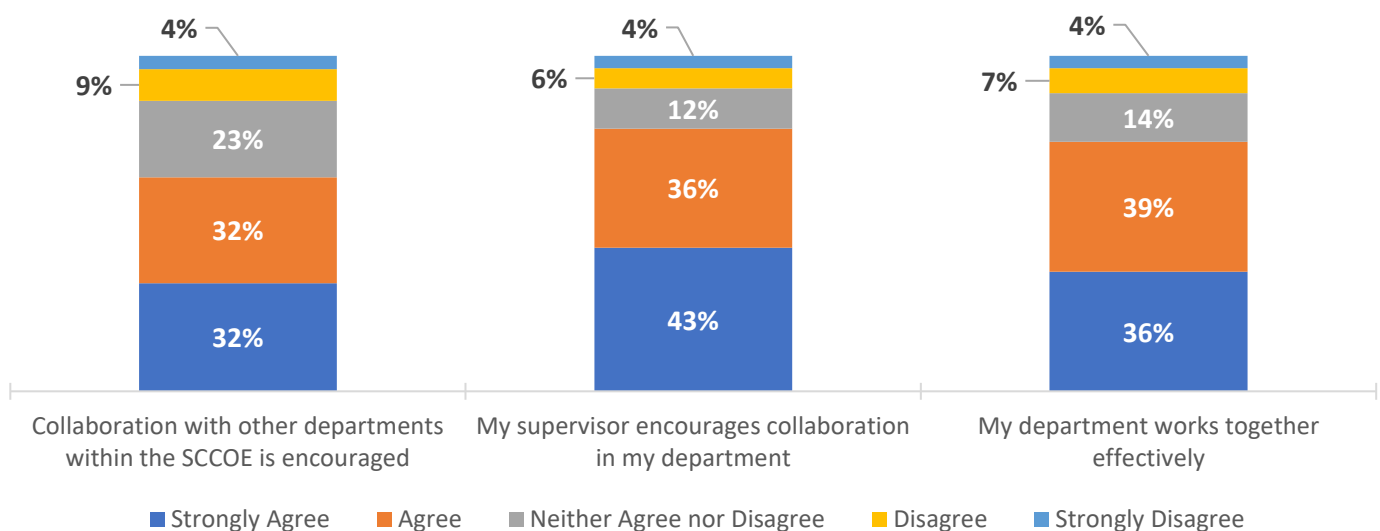
Response Distributions for Diversity and Inclusion Items



Collaboration

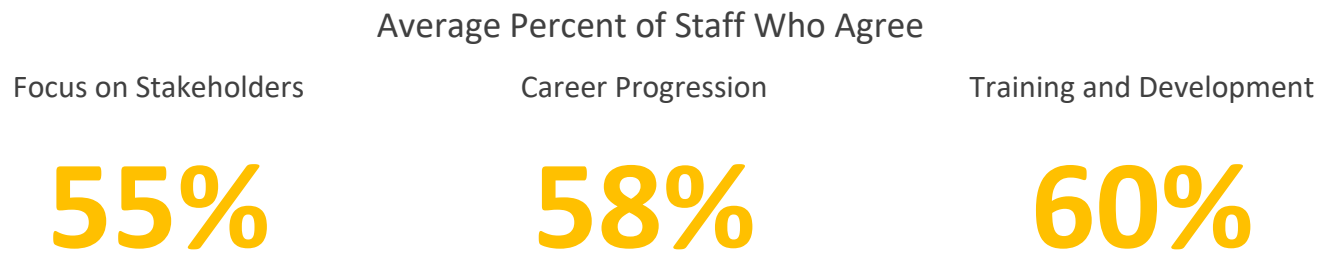
Collaboration is the extent to which employees feel they can engage and leverage collective capacity (i.e., the knowledge, experience, skillset, and resources of others both within and outside of their department and the organization) to think through problems and complete tasks. At the SCCOE, collaboration is highly valued and encouraged in Strategic Action and other workstreams. Approximately 80% of respondents reported that their supervisor encourages collaboration within their department and 75% feel their department works together effectively.

Response Distributions for Collaboration Items



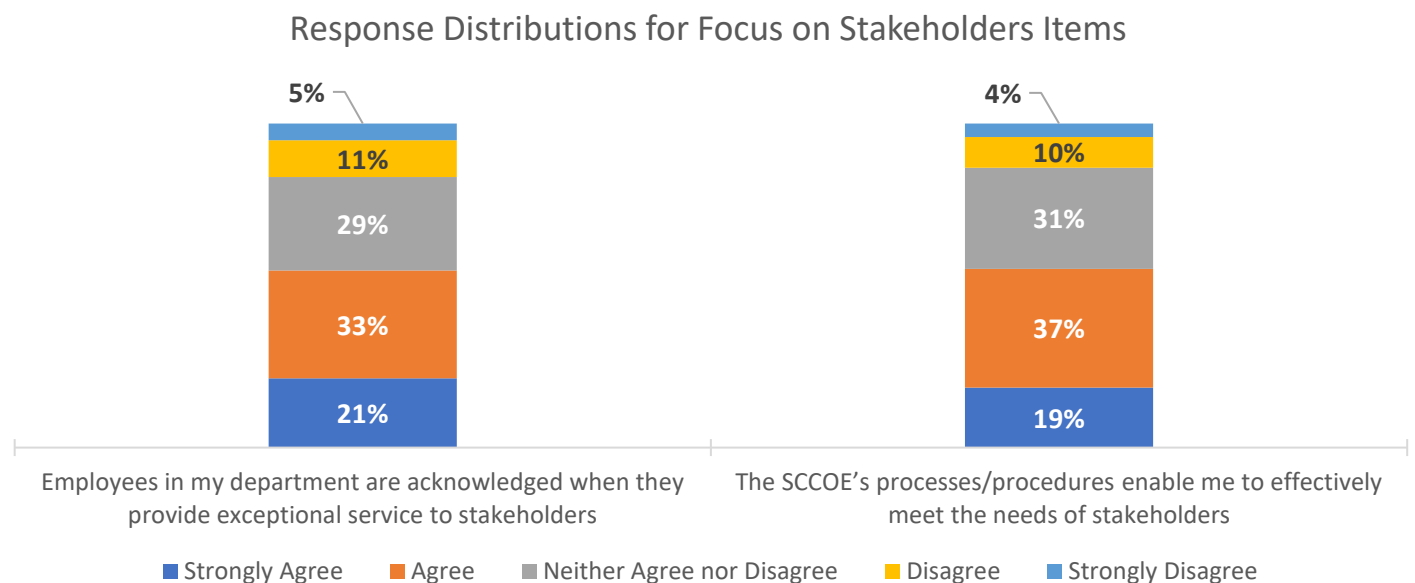
Areas of Improvement

The domains *Focus on Stakeholders*, *Career Progression*, and *Training and Development* were rated the least favorably by SCCOE staff. However, a supplemental analysis that compares weighted averages indicates that staff ratings improved from 2019-20 to 2020-21.



Focus on Stakeholders

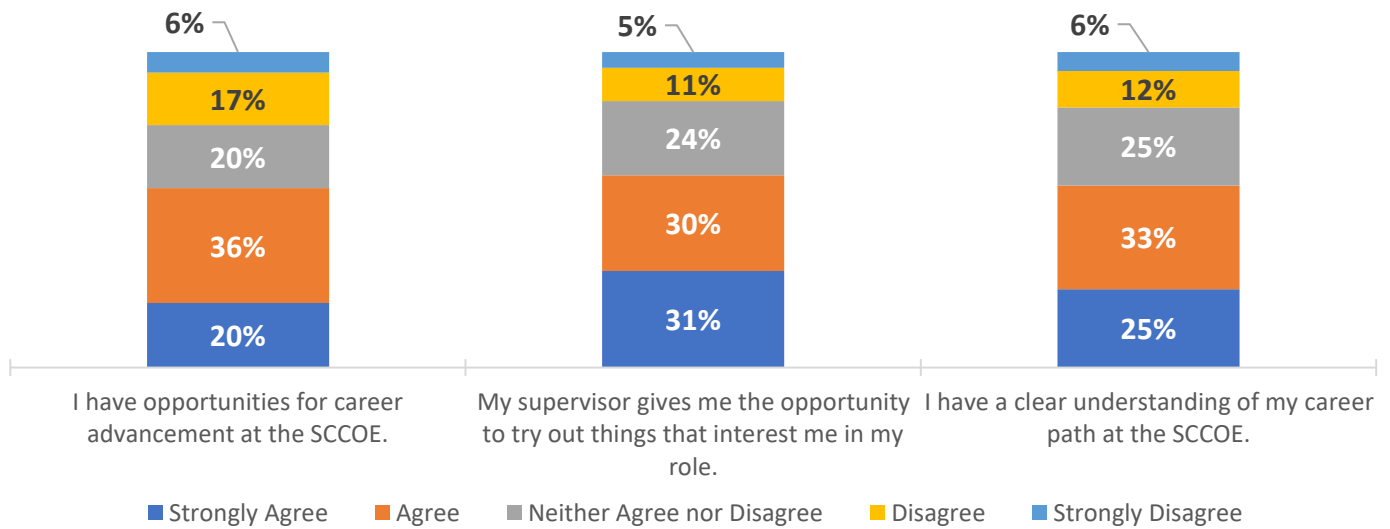
In 2020, SCCOE staff demonstrated their commitment to stakeholders (i.e., Santa Clara County’s districts, schools, students, and communities) by providing traditional supports and services while responding to acute needs presented by school and business closures. Efforts included everything from making sure that educators had the tools to engage students in distance learning, to distributing meals, personal protective equipment, and digital devices. Despite the pivotal role staff play in achieving the SCCOE’s goals, 55% of respondents feel more can be done to acknowledge staff when they provide exceptional service and 56% indicated that they could better meet the needs of stakeholders if processes and procedures were improved.



Career Progression

Career Progression items measure staff perceptions of opportunities for career development and advancement. Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they have a clear understanding of their career path at the SCCOE and 56% feel they have opportunities for career advancement. The percent of respondents who feel their supervisors provide opportunities for them to “to try out things of interest” was slightly higher at 61%.

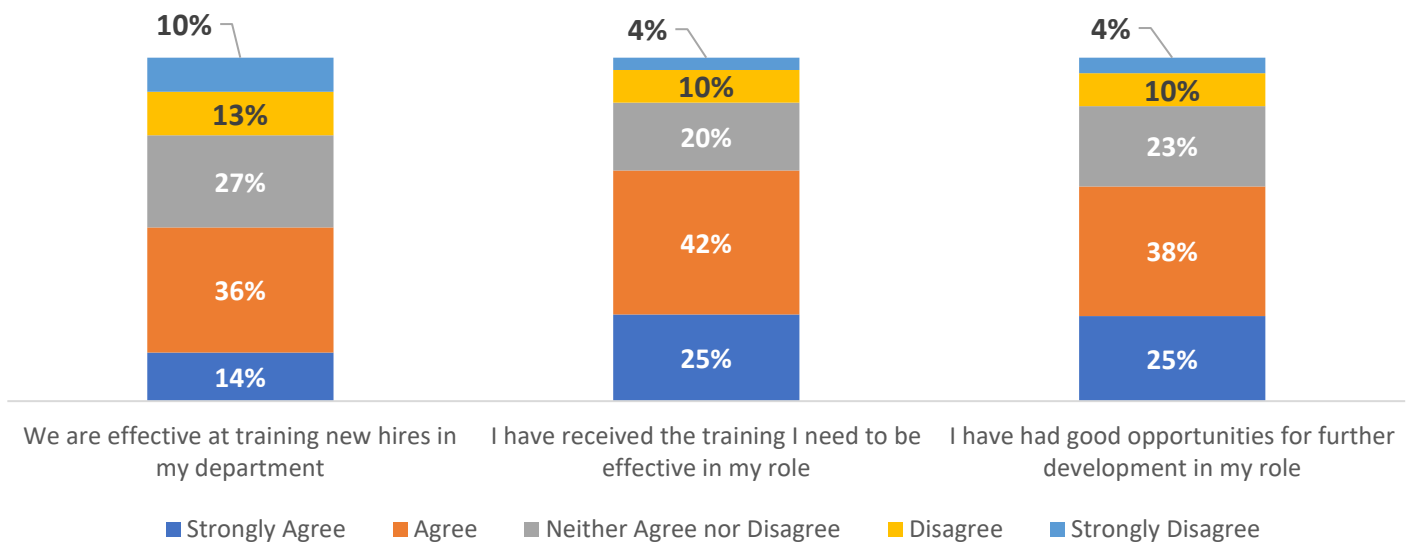
Response Distributions for Career Progression Items



Training and Development

Training and Development items measure the extent to which employees feel they are adequately trained for their jobs or are given opportunities for further professional growth. Like ratings for *Career Progression* items, most participants rated items in this section favorably. Over two-thirds of respondents reported that they received the training necessary for them to be effective in their role, however, only 50% feel their department is effective when it comes to training new hires. Sixty-three percent of respondents reported that they have had good opportunities for further development in their roles.

Response Distributions for Training and Development Items



Looking Ahead

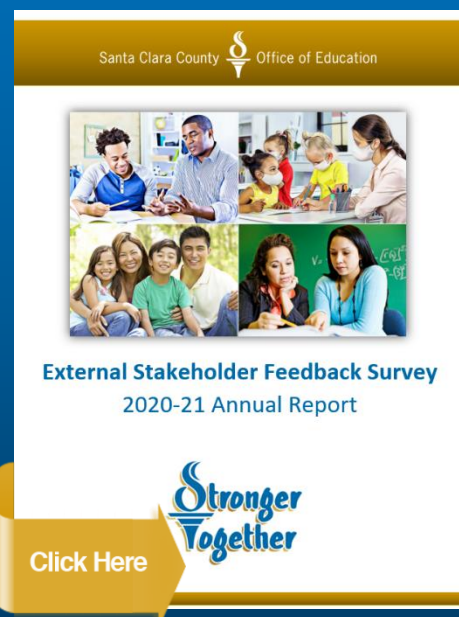
The *2020-21 Employee Feedback Survey* provided SCCOE staff with the opportunity to submit feedback regarding their work experiences in areas associated with employee engagement and job satisfaction. In 2020-21, the survey was expanded to include additional items that queried knowledge and utilization of health and safety resources provided by the SCCOE to keep employees safe and free from the Coronavirus.

Nearly 600 staff responded to this year's survey. Feedback indicated that the health and safety strategies implemented by the SCCOE were well received. Efforts included an information campaign, supporting staff in work-from-home environments, distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies, and Coronavirus testing and vaccine coordination. Ninety-eight percent of staff who responded reported knowledge and practice of protective behaviors such as wearing a mask in public spaces, maintaining social distance, and regularly disinfecting high-touch surfaces. In practicing these behaviors, SCCOE employees not only serve as models within the community, but directly contribute to the decline in the county's positive case rates. Now in the yellow tier within California's *Blueprint for a Safer Economy*, Santa Clara County officials are preparing to lift social distancing requirements and certain restrictions on businesses.

In addition, employee responses offer insight into areas where the SCCOE is excelling as a premier service organization; staffed by employees who feel valued by their coworkers and a sense of fulfillment in their roles. Employees reported high levels of engagement. Eighty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they are motivated to do more than is required of them in their role, and 87% look forward to attending work each day. Employee responses to traditional survey elements suggest that strategic alignment within the organization, the SCCOE's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, and the degree to which employees feel they can collaborate with other staff when completing tasks, are the primary factors contributing to positive employee outlook. Ratings in other areas suggest more can be done to acknowledge staff when they provide exceptional service, increase opportunities for career advancement, and ensure that new hires are properly trained. A description of several strategies that address these areas is provided in the remainder of this report.

Did you know?

The SCCOE conducts an annual survey to collect feedback on services and supports provided to external stakeholders. In 2020-21, over 500 teachers, administrators, and staff with partner agencies responded to the survey. Respondents reported the highest levels of interaction and overall satisfaction with the SCCOE in the past 6 years of data collection. For more information visit <https://bit.ly/3zcoHz4>.



Acknowledging Staff for Exceptional Public Service

The SCCOE believes its staff and their commitment to public service are its greatest asset. In 2020-21, employees demonstrated their commitment by working tirelessly alongside partners to ensure that the needs of students, families, and educators were met. For many, this meant taking on new roles and responsibilities including assignments to new posts. From March of 2020 to the present date, SCCOE staff were instrumental in providing vital services to mitigate the impact of school and business closures on stakeholders.

- **Supporting School Campus Reopening Plans** – In support of the safe reopening of schools to in-person instruction, SCCOE staff facilitated the distribution of more than 1.6 million in PPE to schools and district offices, and staffed vaccination clinics that resulted in over 3,000 Santa Clara County educators and countless other, essential workers receiving a Coronavirus vaccine.
- **Advancing Digital Equity** – School closures exposed longstanding divides in student access to computing devices and stable, high-quality Internet service; both of which are essential for students to engage in distance learning, stay connected, and access other resources. In response, SCCOE staff procured over \$14.5 million in funds to purchase computing devices, mobile hotspots, and Internet service for students in need.
- **Distributing Meals and Other Essential Goods** – School and business closures that occurred following the Governor’s shelter-in-place order, in addition to operating restrictions imposed by the *Blueprint for a Safer Economy*, resulted in economic hardship for many student households. To offset this burden, SCCOE employees worked with school partners, municipalities, and non-profit organizations to safely distribute over six (6) million meals to families and ensure that all students in-need had access to essential goods such as soap, toothpaste, and feminine hygiene products.
- **Supporting Early Learning Providers** – Early learning providers were among the hardest hit in the service industry. Those who reopened after the shelter-in-place order was lifted were forced to do so under new guidelines that reduced the number of children that could be served, which negatively impacted provider revenues and staffing. SCCOE staff and partners responded by distributing over \$5.2 million in funds to sustain operations for existing providers and nearly \$3 million in PPE and cleaning supplies to ensure children were cared for in Coronavirus-free environments.



Additional details regarding the services SCCOE employees performed over the past year in direct response to the Coronavirus and its effects are provided in the *2020-21 External Stakeholder Feedback Report*, which includes a summary of findings from the SCCOE's annual stakeholder survey. Year after year, stakeholders report high praise for SCCOE staff. For example, this year, 90% of stakeholders who responded to the survey rated employees as responsive, knowledgeable, and professional.

Cultivating Strong Leadership

The SCCOE recognizes the importance of acknowledging staff for their outstanding performance. One of the ways this is accomplished internally is through the Employee of the Month process, which provides staff, whether supervisors or coworkers, with the opportunity to nominate one another on a monthly basis. More information on this process in addition to a listing of employees recognized in 2020-21 is provided in the *Year in Review* section of this report.

Beyond the Employee of the Month process, the SCCOE is working to cultivate a culture of leadership among all staff with the goal of creating a work environment where employees not only receive recognition and praise more frequently, but feel psychologically safe, gain greater ownership of their work, and have the freedom and resources they need to be innovative. Employees are encouraged to participate in SCCOE professional learning opportunities where they can learn and grow alongside their colleagues. Current offerings include Champions for Leadership and the Equity Learning Series. Supervisors are encouraged to create regular opportunities to engage staff in conversations regarding their performance and aspirations at the SCCOE in addition to conducting regular performance appraisals. The SCCOE *Living Our Values Everyday (LOVE) Notes* are utilized in both paper form and electronically to recognize staff.

New professional learning offerings designed to cultivate strong leadership are in-store for the upcoming year, beginning with a second book club series that focuses on topics of leadership, coaching, and the art of asking questions instead of delivering commands. Participating employees will learn more about the principles of emotional and conversational intelligence and how they apply to effective leadership. With this series, the SCCOE will support employees as they facilitate positive change in one another. In effect, this will contribute to the development of stronger relationships between staff and a more welcoming and inclusive work environment where diverse perspectives are valued.

Improving the Onboarding Experience

The SCCOE prides itself on finding exceptional talent with the knowledge and determination to make thoughtful contributions to work that furthers the organization's mission and goals. This includes carrying out day-to-day operations for existing programs and services as well as responding to acute challenges. In 2020-21, employees demonstrated the latter by providing vital services to stakeholders impacted by the Coronavirus. In years past, staff have been instrumental in supporting communities affected by power outages, wildfires, and floods.



On par with the time and resources needed to recruit and cultivate exceptional talent, the SCCOE has invested in ways to improve its onboarding procedures to ensure that new hires receive the training and resources they need to be successful in their roles from day one. To facilitate this goal, the SCCOE's Human Resources Division has published a step-by-step checklist that lists tasks to be completed by hiring managers both before (e.g., steps for setting up a functional workstation prior to the new employee's arrival) and throughout the employee's first year of service. Now available for download on the SCCOE *Intranet* (see *Onboarding Resource Center*), the *Onboarding Guide* includes embedded links to a wide variety of documents of interest including welcome letter templates, an access card request form, and the *Employee Compliance Handbook*.

The *Onboarding Guide* also provides hiring managers with recommended completion dates for certain activities. For example, on the first day, hiring managers should ensure that new employees are registered for the HELLO Orientation, where they will learn more about the organization, how their roles are connected to the SCCOE's vision, mission, and goals, and where they will begin to develop a deeper understanding of their professional strengths. With careful consideration to its scope and content, it is recommended that hiring managers schedule a new hire's start date within one week of a HELLO Orientation.

Appendix A: Employee Experience Domains

Domain	Number of Items	Percent of Agreeable Responses (2020-21)	Weighted Average (2019-20)	Weighted Average (2020-21)	Difference (2019-20 to 2020-21)	Percent Change (2019-20 to 2020-21)
Strategy Alignment	4	82%	0.88	1.14	+ 0.26	↑ 30%
Diversity & Inclusion	2	76%	0.74	0.97	+ 0.23	↑ 31%
Collaboration	3	72%	0.56	0.94	+ 0.38	↑ 68%
Providing Quality Services & Programs	2	71%	0.59	0.87	+ 0.28	↑ 47%
Communication	3	71%	0.40	0.84	+ 0.44	↑ 110%
Resources	3	70%	0.41	0.78	+ 0.37	↑ 90%
Supportive Management	4	67%	0.64	0.78	+ 0.14	↑ 22%
Pay & Benefits	3	66%	0.25	0.63	+ 0.38	↑ 152%
Recognition	3	63%	0.60	0.68	+ 0.08	↑ 13%
Training & Development	3	60%	0.34	0.59	+ 0.25	↑ 74%
Career Progression	3	58%	0.49	0.59	+ 0.10	↑ 20%
Focus on Stakeholders	2	55%	0.31	0.55	+ 0.24	↑ 77%

Notes: Domain weighted averages are calculated by summing the number of responses for each response option across items, multiplying that sum by the weight assigned to each response option, and dividing by the total number of responses collected for all items within a domain. Weighted averages range from a low of -2 to a high of +2. Weighted averages above 0 are indicative of employee feedback that is generally positive.



1290 Ridder Park Drive
San Jose, CA 95131-2304
www.sccoe.org