

John Muir School Parent-Teacher Collective (“PTC”)

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PTC PRIORITIES MEETING MINUTES

April 13, 2020

Time: 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Location: By zoom call

Meeting ID: 883 698 140

Password: 038397

Meeting Goal: The PTC currently funds many of the things that make John Muir so special. This includes supplementing the District and parent fees for outdoor education, the entire art focus program, and community music. The PTC board wants to be sure that we are putting funds, time, and effort on the things that the teachers, parents, kids, and staff value and need the most. At this meeting, PTC members (all JMOS parents, guardians, teachers, and staff) will have the chance to weigh in on next year’s PTC priorities.

Attendees: Pam Kuhn, Rebecca Gyarmathy, Sage Meadows, JoEllen Meyeroff, Melissa Malm, Marcia Ososke, Dave Luczynski, Amy Stewart, Randi Nash, Tabitha Bruce, Amanda Rose

- I. **Call to Order and Meeting Goal:** PTC President Pam Kuhn had trouble logging into call so PTC Treasurer Dave Luczynski called the meeting to order and explained the meeting goal.
- II. **Where do we spend our funds now?** See attached graph. Graph is based on projected, not actual expenses. Majority of our current budget is art focus, with most of that budget used to pay for instructors. Because Elliot (outdoor ed coordinator) was picked up by District, a lot of the outdoor education funds weren’t spent this year. Most of the outdoor ed expenditures are for venue rental, a little for outdoor ed supplies. Music expenses are mostly the instructor. In fact, most of our expenses are for personnel. Melissa and Amy wondered what fundraising expenses were. This includes credit card processing fees, water bottles, winterfaire, and raffle expenses. Currently, there is a \$3,500 surplus for this year and we have \$29,000 in bank account.
- III. **Survey results – what did parents and teachers prioritize in survey?** See attached graph.
 - a. PTC sent out a survey multiple times in newsletter and on facebook. 21 people responded, including 1 teacher.
 - b. **We talked about what people say they love most at JMOS:** outdoor ed trips were most well- loved, followed by small size, and the community. Someone (JoEllen?) mentioned families needing more support, with more focus on paid staff versus volunteers. Melissa stated that art focus used to be almost entirely volunteer-led.

Marcia says that model was changed to provide a more rigorous art program and to cut out the flakiness that happened with volunteers.

- c. **For the priorities survey results**, the top 4 items were outdoor ed, art, academics, and music. Sage suggested that financial and food aid might end up being more important after COVID-19 and that we should be ready for that. Rebecca also mentioned that 10 families had scholarship requests for outdoor ed fees this year, and we should be ready for more next year. She is looking at options like a flat fee across the grades to make it more manageable and equitable across all grades, and we should talk about how much PTC could cover. Amy talked about how she hasn't been able to find anyone to help with the student portable pantry (SPP) next year, and was going to give out the SPP food now for families that might need it, and to get rid of items that might expire. She is working under the assumption that it won't continue next year due to lack of volunteer support. Melissa suggested we put it out again in the newsletter and Facebook with more urgency based on current conditions, make it more clear that if you care about this program and want it to continue, we need your help. Pam said she'd try again.
- d. **Volunteer barriers question:** The top 3 barriers to PTC involvement were: 50% of survey respondents said that they're already volunteering, about 45% said they don't have time, and almost 40% say they can't help during the school day (you could check all that apply, so it doesn't equal 100). Pam noted that board members have a question about how much funds or effort to put into areas that don't have volunteers to support the program. Besides SPP, we haven't been able to find any board members besides Dave who will continue next year as Treasurer. JoEllen suggested we send a ballot home with people in their school folders to recommend/nominate people. This worked at her school. Then someone reaches out to a nominated person and says, "Hey, you got 3 nominations, will you consider leading this position?"

IV. Teacher & Principal Round Robin: What do teachers and staff need?

- a. Randi still wants art to be a main priority. She hopes we can be productive with the funds saved this year. Nothing comes to mind in terms of academic support. Later in the call, Amy advocated for a full-time EA for Randi's class.
- b. JoEllen says hardest part for her is getting people to volunteer. Coordinating parents takes a huge chunk of time, and she'd really like classroom parent volunteers for reading and math. Pam noted the large volunteer demands and asked if K-3 needs all 8 volunteers across 2 classrooms for outdoor days or if there is a minimum. JoEllen says the minimum is 4 parent volunteers for each trip. The priority for JoEllen is more personnel-related, wanting more EA, staff, and volunteer support. EAs has been happening. She also relayed that Emily from Pomegranate Preschool for the Arts is interested in teaching K-1 art all next year, and she's really encouraged by that.
- c. Rebecca has no personal priorities from PTC. She noted that it's so difficult to plan right now because we don't know if we'll have Student Success Act money to help with the art program next year or not.

- d. Marcia says she feels we really need a Plan A and Plan B because of achievement gaps we may see next year. She would love for art focus program to be sustainable and prioritized. She's very proud of the life skills that JMOS imparts through its art and outdoor programs – knit, sew, cook, outdoor skills. Wants music to continue. She doesn't need any "stuff", she just wants to support student experiences and people/personnel to help make that happen.
- e. Channelling Jim, she wanted to say that even though she'd said "no stuff," Jim would say that gear and keeping students safe outdoors should be a big priority. The first round of tents are getting old. Raingear for all sizes, pack covers. We'd like to provide all the gear to help take the burden off families. Amy suggested that all of those requests get forwarded to grants committee because we can potentially write grants for the gear.
- f. Sage says that she doesn't need any instruments but would love a few hours for specialized music instruction for middle-school group advanced players.

V. Open Conversation

- a. Melissa brought up graduation this year and wondering if any of the PTC fund surplus could be applied to help make something special happen for graduates. Could students be spread out at Earth Teach? Usually Marcia does a rite-of-passage process that includes fear circles and culminates in the 8th grade trip and strong leadership skills. Marcia says she is still getting her head wrapped around what might be best idea for graduation ceremony. She has been talking to her students about it and is open to ideas if parents want to email her. We have to wait and see what we can do. Sage has a PA system. Maybe there is something that can be done on the peace stage, earth teach, or what will be the new outdoor space in the new campus? The 8th graders are coming together with ideas with Marcia.

VI. Conclusions

- a. **Do the survey results convey the priority ranking we want for next year?** People indicated generally yes, but Rebecca noted that the playground might want to be ranked higher. The financial and food aid bucket may need to be bigger. Melissa noted that having the survey before COVID means results might not still be true now. She also says that with only 21 people answering, we may not really have a good baseline, and says 8th grade families weren't sure if they should answer since they are graduating. She wonders if we should send survey back out. Marcia suggested we phrase the question differently to "I've got \$100, here's how I want to spend it." Rebecca suggested she might be able to include this in her school climate survey rather than ask PTC to re-send again. Melissa asked if there could be some kind of message around a sliding scale for outdoor ed and art fees next year, with PTC funding the difference. It could be phrased just for the given circumstances, "In light of recent events, we are offering this option this year." Or perhaps a pay on time discount? Rebecca is looking into a flat fee for all families.
- b. **Given limited funds, should PTC still fund the lower ranked items?** There were different responses for this from different people. Melissa said yes, fund it all at

some level. Amy suggested we should just fund the top priorities. Amanda said via chat that she thought we should simplify to make “solid art and extra hands for helping, grants for outdoor equipment.”

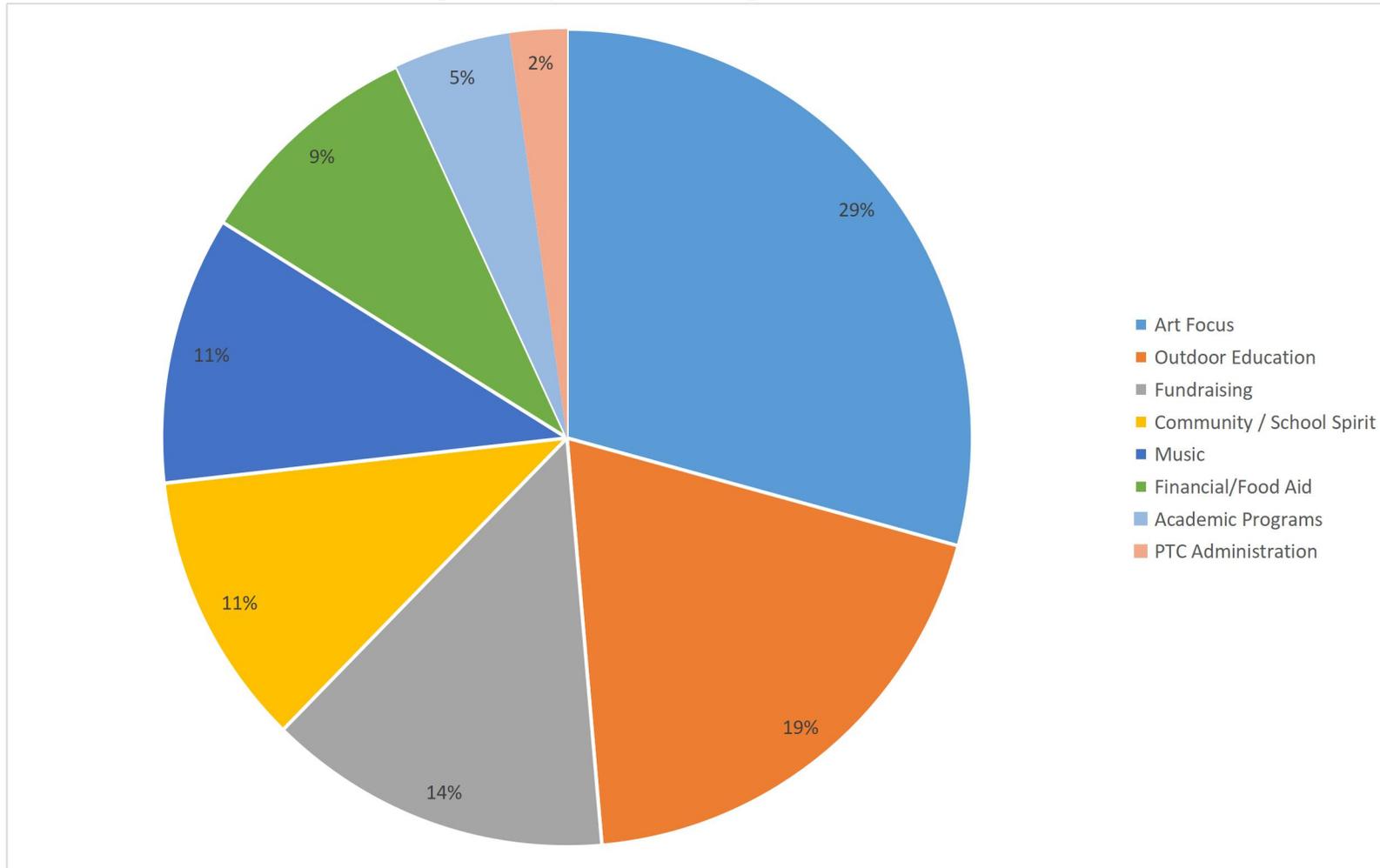
- c. **Should we fund programs that don't currently have volunteer support?** We want art for sure. It would be good to streamline program more. It's been very high quality, the lack of volunteer support is burn out. [didn't catch who had these comments]. SPP had been covered earlier. There wasn't really a satisfactory answer to this question.
- d. **Should funds generally be evenly distributed among the grades?** Pam introduced this question noting that the budget scews towards the older grades, which may be fine since they have longer trips and longer art classes. Dave said he felt that as long as everyone's needs were being met, it doesn't seem to need to be evenly distributed. JoEllen said that with the additional outdoor ed grant and the art focus included, she feels her needs are being met.
- e. Dave noted that having PTC is paying primarily for staffing support/personnel costs. In his research, this seems to be different than most PTAs because we are not set up to be employers. He feels having PTC pay for people who are teaching curriculum during the day is an outlier in terms of the research he's conducted. Melissa says that she knows of at least one school in the Bay Area that pays for a full position at the school. JoEllen wondered if we'd feel better reframing it to be about teacher support and collaboration time. Pam noted that the issue isn't really the framing, it's more about the potential liability and IRS considerations around hiring people.

VII. Meeting was Adjourned by Pam

Next meetings:

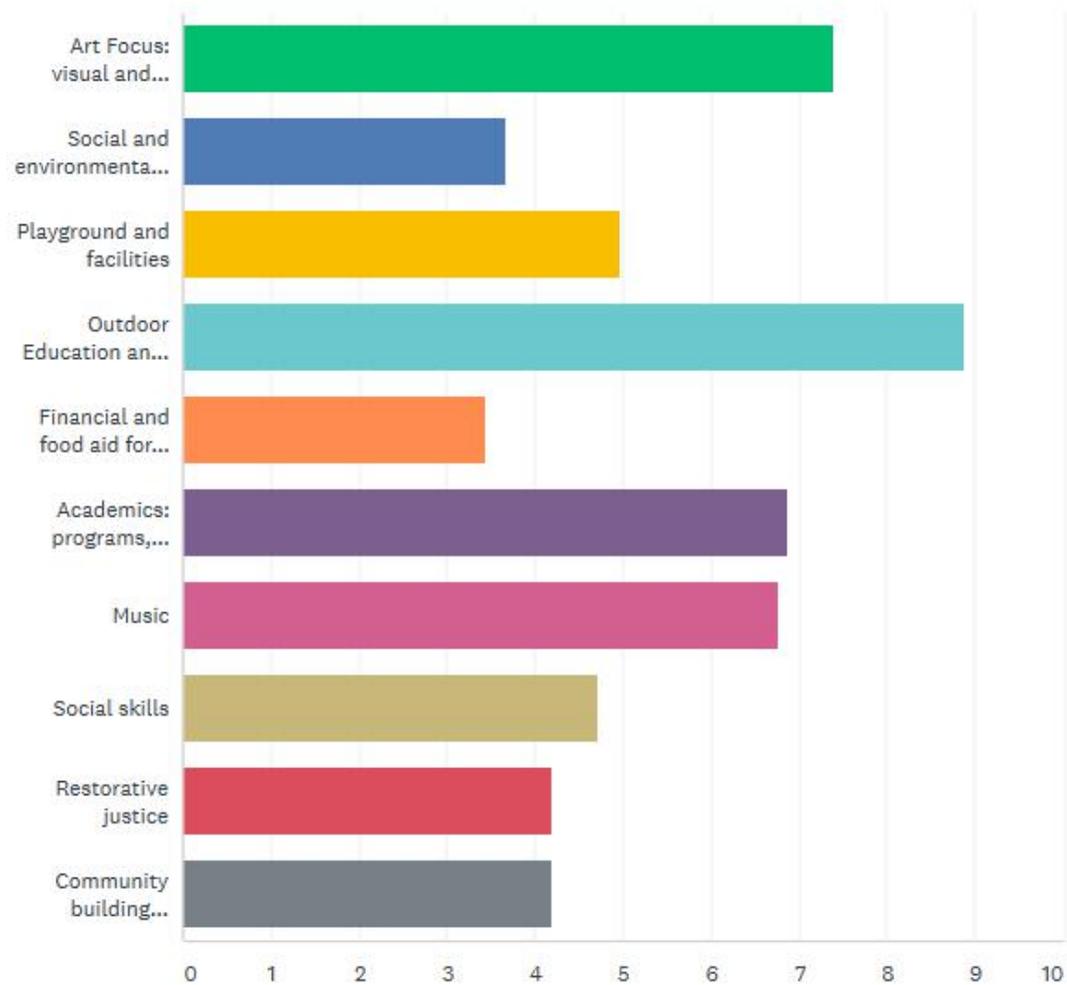
- Regular PTC meeting: Thursday, May 7 from 5-6:30pm (via zoom)
- PTC Budget Development for Next Year: Tuesday, May 12 from 3-4:30pm (via zoom)

2019-20 John Muir Target Expense Budget (\$29,400)



Where should PTC focus its efforts and budget? Please rank in order of priority.

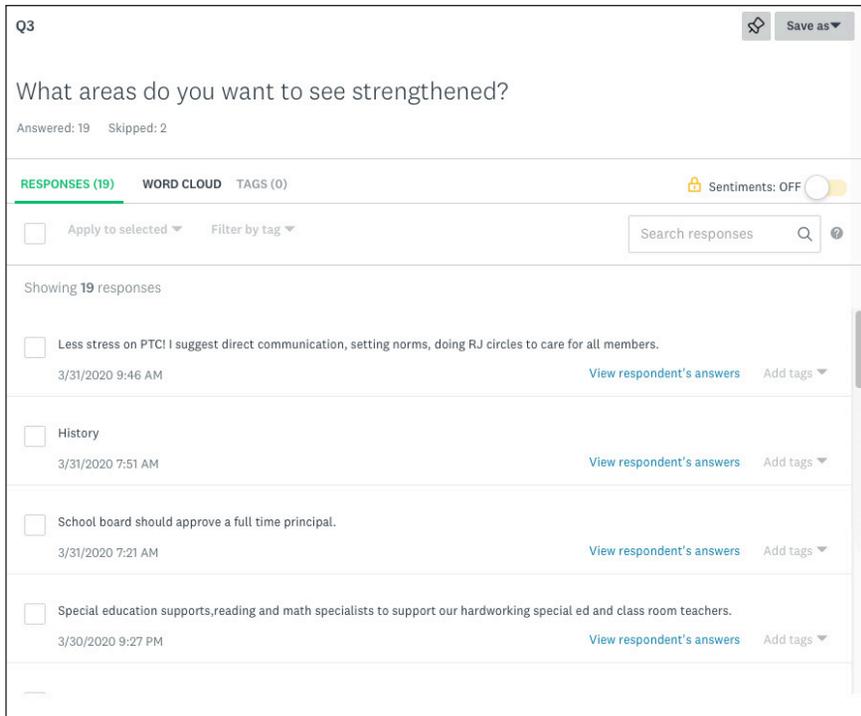
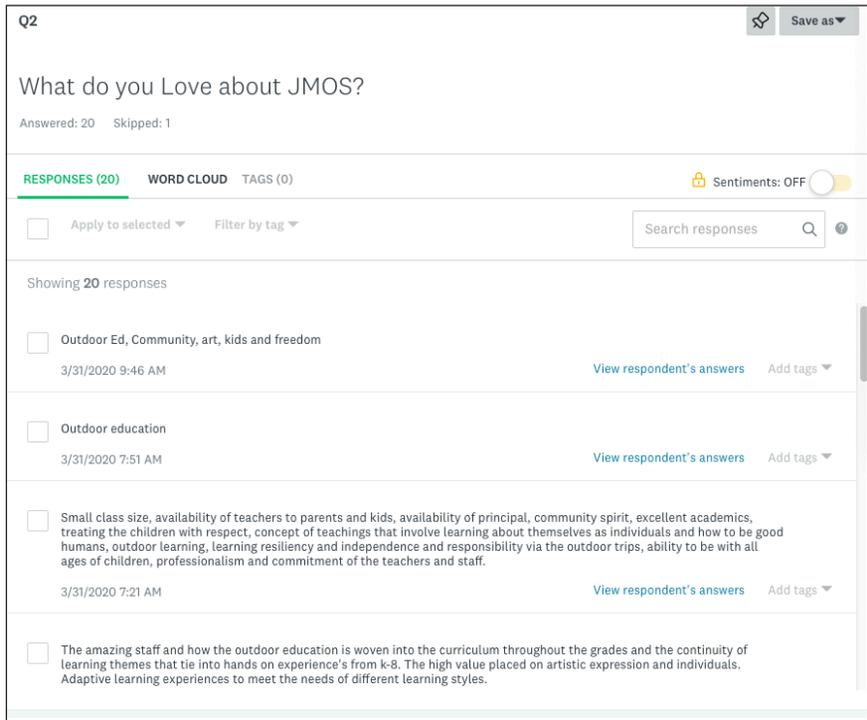
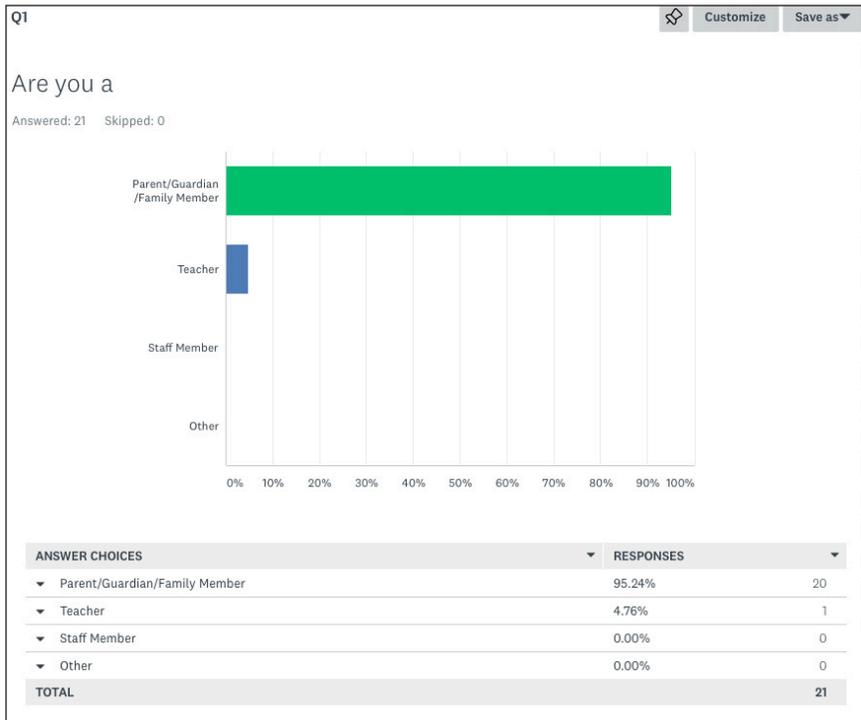
Answered: 21 Skipped: 0



Help!

Feedback





Q5 Save as

Teachers/Staff: What instructional tools, professional development, or technology, not paid for by the district, would enhance the educational experience.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 16

RESPONSES (5) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0) Sentiments: OFF

Apply to selected Filter by tag

Showing 5 responses

- The Outdoor Ed grants and planning time are really helpful. I like the idea of nature guides and tools to use while hiking.
3/31/2020 9:46 AM [View respondent's answers](#) [Add tags](#)
- Bussing!!!!!!!!!!!!
3/30/2020 5:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#) [Add tags](#)
- Teaching kids to fluently type this is a skill that will serve them for the rest of their lives, high school, college and work/career.
3/23/2020 1:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#) [Add tags](#)
- Money for teachers to spend extra time planning trips. For instance, I have heard at least one teacher talk about how it's hard to have specific plans up at ET b/c to prep the site, etc. they would have to give up time with their family on the weekend to go plan the activity/set it up.

Q6 Customize Save as

JMOS greatly appreciates and relies on the PTC's volunteer support. Without you, the programs are not possible. Next year, we are in need of people for: PTC Board, Art Focus, Scrip sales, and the Student Pantry Program. What are the barriers to your PTC involvement? Check all that apply.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 3

Barrier	Percentage
Already volunteering	50%
Can't help during school...	40%
Don't know how to get involved	10%
Don't feel welcome	10%
Don't want to	0%
Burnt out	15%
Don't have time	45%
Other (please specify)	20%

Q7 Customize Save as

Have you attended a PTC monthly meeting in the last 2 years?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 1

Response	Percentage	Count
Yes	65.00%	13
No	35.00%	7
TOTAL		20