

**ASSESSING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND
THE ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF
THE NORTH DAKOTA COURT SYSTEM**

**Institute for Court Management
Court Executive Development Program
Phase III Project
May, 2007**

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Chief Justice Gerald W. VandeWalle and State Court Administrator Sally Holewa for their support in allowing me to participate in the Court Executive Development Program.

Thanks to Dr. Geoff Gallas, my advisor on this project, for his editing abilities, excellent feedback, and guidance during this project.

Thanks to my dear friend, Kim Reinke, for the many hours she spent proofing, formatting and typing this report.

To my fellow CEDP colleagues in the class of 2007, for their friendship, sense of humor and support throughout the program.

And lastly, to my husband Tim, for his patience and support throughout the countless hours spent on this project.

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I. ABSTRACT

The North Dakota judiciary recognizes that committed and loyal employees have a direct impact on a court's performance. This in turn, improves service to the public, which enhances public trust and confidence in the court system.

The management literature, some of which is reviewed in this report, strongly suggests that the strength of the workplace can be measured by having employees who are "engaged" and feel a profound connection to their employer. This in turn leads to more efficiency, less turnover, and in the case of businesses, a higher profit. Although this has been recognized in the business community, government, and in particular, courts have been slower to embrace this.

In recognition of the importance of employee morale this project sought answers to five questions:

1. What is the quality of the work environment from the employees' perception?
2. Are the relations between staff and supervisors positive?
3. Has the reorganization (see below) improved the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of administrative services from the employee's perception? What is their overall level of job satisfaction?
4. Do the judges perceive that the reorganization has improved the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of administrative services?
5. What should be done to enhance levels of satisfaction in areas identified as low?

Since 1995, the court structure in North Dakota has consisted of seven judicial districts with 42 judges, municipal courts with 75 judges, and the Supreme Court with five justices. Work beginning in 2002 has resulted in the reorganization and consolidation of the previous administrative structure to achieve a more refined,

accountable organization structure and process. In 2004, the Supreme Court, under N.D.Sup. Ct. Admin. Rule 6.1, put an administrative unit structure in place over the seven judicial districts. The administrative structure does not change or diminish the district lines of authority, but it does consolidate the managerial and administrative functions of the business of running the court under one court administrator for every two districts, with the exception of the Northwest Judicial District. Among other objectives this project provides valuable information about the perceptions of leadership judges and court employees concerning the 2004 North Dakota reorganization into four administrative districts.

To establish a baseline measurement of the perceived quality of the work environment and relations between staff and supervisors, and also to assess the perceived success of the administrative reorganization, a survey was conducted of all district employees and judges.

The survey was a combination of two instruments: a measure of employee satisfaction developed by the National Center for State Courts referred to as *CourTools 9* with 20 questions for district court employees only, and a group of ten questions developed with the input of the state and trial court administrators regarding the administrative reorganization, which was administered to both employees and judges.

These surveys were conducted electronically through an on-line survey website. After the analysis was completed, two focus groups were established to discuss and provide recommendations on how to improve areas identified as low and needing improvement.

On a scale of one to four (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree) the employee survey averaged 2.89, the employee survey regarding the

reorganization averaged 2.60, and the judges survey regarding the reorganization averaged 2.78. While these results are higher than the midpoint of 2.50, they do not meet the suggested benchmark of 3.00. Areas that scored lowest were recognition of job performance and communication.

Although the overall results of the surveys were positive, we can do better. Recommended improvement initiatives are a result of reviewing findings from the survey, feedback from two focus groups, as well as a review of the pertinent management literature especially work carried out by the Gallup Organization. Recommendations include: conduct performance evaluations, have regular staff meetings, prepare and disseminate minutes from all meetings, make judicial website a mandatory homepage and post information daily, provide ongoing training for supervisors, and review employee workload for even distribution. This survey will now be done annually to monitor progress in areas that scored low and to work on maintaining higher levels of satisfaction overall. Through these and other improvements, North Dakota can demonstrate its commitment to judicial performance excellence through increased employee satisfaction, improved work environments and ongoing support for all judicial employees.

II. INTRODUCTION

The Court Structure in North Dakota

The original constitution of the state of North Dakota created a judicial system consisting of the Supreme Court, district courts, county courts, and such municipal courts as provided by the law. This judicial structure remained intact until 1959 when the Legislative Assembly abolished the justice of peace courts in the state.

The adoption of a new judicial article to the state constitution in 1976 significantly modified the constitutional structure of the judicial system. The new judicial article vested the judicial powers of the state in a unified judicial system consisting of a Supreme Court, district courts, and such other courts as provided by law. Under the new judicial article, only the Supreme Court and the district courts retained their status as constitutional courts. All other courts in the state are statutory courts.

In 1981 the Legislative Assembly further altered the structure of the judicial system by enacting legislation that replaced the multi-level county court structure with a uniform system of county courts throughout the state.

With the county court system in place, the judicial system of the state consisted of the Supreme Court, district courts, county courts and municipal courts. This changed again in 1995 when the county courts were abolished and the jurisdictional workload transferred to an expanded number of district judges.

Since 1995, the court structure in North Dakota has consisted of seven judicial districts with 42 judges, municipal courts with 75 judges, and the Supreme Court with five justices.¹

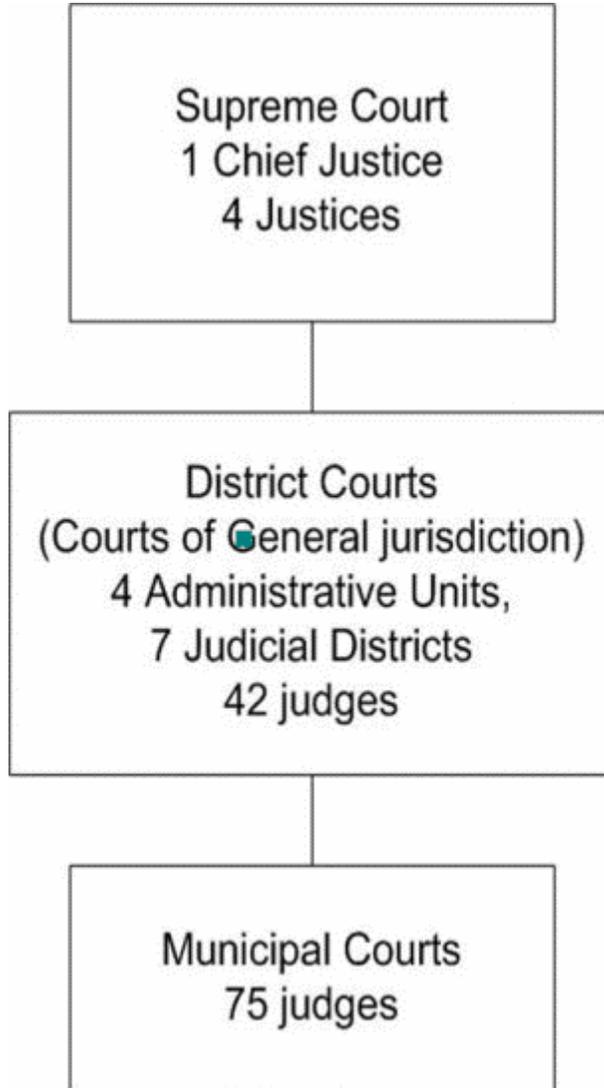
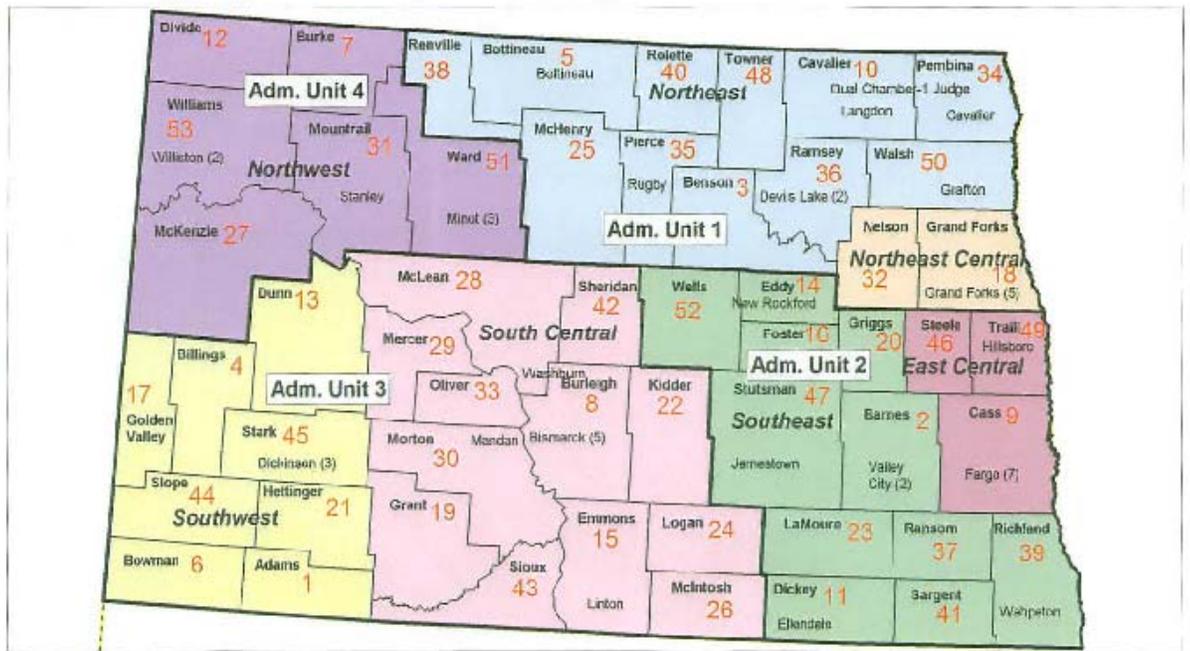


Figure 1 - North Dakota Court Structure

¹ *North Dakota Courts Annual Report 2005*,
<<http://www.ndcourts.gov/court/news/annualreport2005/districtcourts.htm>>

Under the authority granted to the Supreme Court in Article VI, Section 3 of the Constitution of North Dakota, N.D. Sup. Ct. Admin. Rule 6, organized the district courts into seven judicial districts. Those districts consist of the Northeast Judicial District, the Northeast Central Judicial District, the Northwest Judicial District, the East Central Judicial District, the Southeast Judicial District, the South Central Judicial District and the Southwest Judicial District. A map of the state with the districts marked is shown below.²

North Dakota Administrative Units & Chamber Cities - 2006



Judicial Planning Committee

In November of 2002, The North Dakota Judicial Planning Committee completed its initial work in developing planning recommendations for the North Dakota Judicial system. The Committee sought to combine elements of long-term planning and futures planning to enable it to consider not only short-term issues affecting the judicial system but also to identify issues and trends that may affect the judiciary farther into the future. This approach allowed the Committee to begin a process to assist the system in moving beyond short-term planning and crisis management and towards anticipating future demands systematically and consistently.³

The first steps taken by the Committee were the development of a Mission and Vision statement. Based upon information reviewed and discussed in developing these statements, the Committee assembled planning recommendations in each area identified in the Vision Statement. They determined that while all the recommendations of the Vision Statement were important, none could likely be effectively achieved unless the judicial system's administrative and operational support structure was changed to provide a more flexible, informed, and cooperative method for administrative decision-making.

A multitude of forces, internal and external, influence the ability of the judicial system to operate effectively and to ensure that those who seek access to the courts are provided equal access to fair and timely resolution of disputes. External forces affecting the courts include population declines in certain areas and population shifts from one area to another; an aging population; a more racially and ethnically diverse population; the emerging interest in and success of specialty courts, such as juvenile and adult drug courts; emerging technologies; and the expectation by citizens and policy-makers that

³ Judicial Planning Committee, letter to The Honorable Gerald W. VandeWalle, November 7, 2002

courts will operate both efficiently and effectively in providing timely resolution of disputes.⁴

The Committee concluded that too often internal policies, procedures, and practices contribute to confused and inconsistent implementation of system objectives and compromise the judicial system's ability to effectively provide judicial services. A major contributing factor in this regard was the fact that there were seven judicial districts for administrative purposes, each of which had an administrator (with varying degrees of experience and education) who reported to the presiding judge. It was difficult to operate as a whole when each district had an administrator who reported to a different presiding judge, each of which may or may not have been following the same policies and procedures. Perhaps most significantly, the Committee concluded that there was a lack of clarity and commitment concerning the system's need to operate as a whole rather than as a collection of independent parts. Again, having seven administrators reporting to seven presiding judges contributed to this problem.

A common theme in the planning recommendations was the need to consider a more refined, accountable process for administrative authority and decision-making. To reach this goal, the Committee recommended that the state be divided into four administrative units for purposes of assuring effective and uniform implementation of administrative policies and procedures, with the approval of the Chief Justice. A presiding judge would be selected for each unit and a trained trial court administrator should be employed for each unit. To ensure a clear line of authority and responsibility and to ensure effective implementation of policies and procedures, the Committee recommended that the trial court administrator be hired by the state court administrator,

⁴ *Loc. Cit.*

after consultation with the presiding judge and should be supervised by the state court administrator. Trial court administrators and administrative staff would have responsibility in all areas of administrative practice and procedure within the respective administrative units. Trial court administrators would ensure compliance with personnel policies and compliance with administrative policies and procedures adopted by the Council and policies and procedures adopted by the judges within the administrative unit that were *not* inconsistent with Council policies and procedures.

Trial court administrators would have supervisory responsibility for most trial court personnel, including state-employed clerks of court. Law clerks would be hired and supervised by the presiding judge of the administrative unit. Court reporters and secretaries for particular judges would be hired and terminated by the trial court administrator after consultation with the affected judge.

The intent of hiring trained court administrators was that they would be proficient in the Core Competency Curriculum Guidelines developed by the National Association of Court Managers (NACM)⁵. These guidelines are a comprehensive statement of what court leaders need to know and be able to do. Acceptance and use of the Guidelines is widespread among courts. The ten Core Competency areas identified by NACM are:

1. Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts
2. Caseflow Management
3. Leadership
4. Visioning and Strategic Planning
5. Essential Components
6. Court Community Communication
7. Resources, Budget, and Finance
8. Human Resources Management
9. Education, Training and Development
10. Information Technology Management

⁵ National Association for Court Management, *Core Competency Curriculum Guidelines: What Court Leaders Need to Know and Be Able to Do*, NCSC, 2004.

The court administrator would be responsible for operational oversight of the clerks of district court and juvenile court personnel, as well as administrative personnel such as scheduling clerks, district secretaries, and bookkeeping clerks. The court administrator would perform as the local court's liaison to governmental agencies, would be responsible for the budget, facilities, records management, personnel, and contract administration functions.⁶

The Supreme Court adopted the recommendations of the Judicial Planning Committee with a few revisions. The major change was that for geographical reasons, they felt that four administrative units would be more manageable than three. In 2004, the Supreme Court, under N.D.Sup. Ct. Admin.Rule 6.1, put an administrative unit structure in place over the seven judicial districts. The administrative structure does not change or diminish the district lines of authority, but instead consolidates the managerial and administrative functions of the business of running the court under one court administrator for every two districts, with the exception of the Northwest Judicial District. The units consist of:⁷

- Unit One: Northeast and Northeast Central Judicial Districts
- Unit Two: East Central and Southeast Judicial Districts
- Unit Three: South Central and Southeast Judicial District
- Unit Four: Northwest Judicial District

As described later below, the NCSC developed *CourTools 9* was used in this project to measure employee opinions on whether they have the materials, motivation, direction, sense of mission, and commitment to do quality work. Knowing how

⁶ See note 2 *supra*, page 7.

⁷ See note 2 *supra*, page 7.

employees perceive the workplace is essential to facilitate organizational development and change, enhance job satisfaction, and thus, improve service to the public.

Ten questions regarding the reorganization that took place in August, 2004 have been added to the survey. These same questions were used to survey the judges, and also to address the perception of the reorganization from both the employees and the judges' perspective.

The goal of this project is to analyze the results of the survey, and to recommend strategies on how to improve in areas that scored low. This paper seeks to answer five questions:

1. What is the quality of the work environment from the employees' perception?
2. Are the relations between staff and supervisors positive?
3. Has the reorganization improved the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of administrative services from the employee's perception? What is their overall level of job satisfaction?
4. Do the judges perceive that the reorganization has improved the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of administrative services?
5. What should be done to enhance levels of satisfaction in areas identified as low?

The remainder of this report is divided into four sections. The Literature Review describes the books and articles reviewed during this project. The Methodology section describes what data was collected and how it was collected. It also describes the survey instruments utilized and the focus groups conducted. The Findings section presents the results of the survey. Finally, the Conclusions and Recommendations section presents recommended strategies for improving employee satisfaction and to address areas that scored low on the survey.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

While the literature on employee satisfaction surveys is numerous, this project focuses more on a survey of the quality of the work environment and the relationship between staff and management. The following literature is pertinent to this project.

Gallup Organization

For more than 60 years, the Gallup Organization has been a world leader in the measurement and analysis of human attitudes, opinions and behavior. Although the company is best known for The Gallup Poll, most of Gallup's work is in providing measurement, consulting, and education to many of the world's largest companies.

Over the last 25 years the Gallup Organization has interviewed more than a million employees, asking each of them hundreds of different questions on every aspect of the workplace.

In the book **First, Break all the Rules**, the Gallup Organization states that the strength of a workplace can be simplified to 12 questions.⁸ These questions don't capture all of the information, but they do capture the most important information:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?

⁸ Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman, **First, Break all the Rules**, Gallup Press, 1999, p. 28

7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?⁹

According to Gallup, if you can create the kind of environment where employees answer positively to all 12 questions, then you will have built a great place to work.

Gallup discovered that the manager – not pay, benefits, perks or a charismatic company was the key critical player in building a strong workplace. People leave managers, not organizations. So much money has been thrown at the challenge of keeping good people in the form of better pay, better perks, and better training, when in fact; turnover is mostly a leadership and management issue.

The above questions were incorporated in the survey of employees and judges for this project.

CourTools

The concepts of the Gallup Organization were adopted by the National Center of State Courts (NCSC) in the development of their Trial Court Performance Measures. *CourTools 9*, Court Employee Satisfaction, incorporates the above 12 questions into a survey to assess the quality of the work environment and relations between staff and management.

⁹ Ibid, p. 28-29

Selected Articles

The concept of employees leaving jobs because of management was addressed in a newspaper article in the Portland Press Herald titled “Devil boss remind you of anyone?”¹⁰ The article was written as the movie “The Devil Wears Prada” was in movie theatres. According to the article, a Monster Poll says 70 percent of workers think they have a “toxic boss.” Ken Siegel, an organizational consultant and psychologist, said “most bosses are relatively unaware of how they affect the people around them. That provides them with well-grounded excuses of their errant ways. People don’t quit companies, they quit people.”¹¹

This is relevant to this project as the opinion survey will attempt to assess the relationship between staff and management in the judiciary.

“In Praise of Employee Satisfaction,” an article on the Made2Measure website authored by Ingo Keilitz discusses the skepticism of surveying court employees for their opinions.¹² He discusses the fact that companies have already realized the importance of having employees who care about their job, but many courts have not. Using *CourTools 9* to assess and improve how employees think about the work they do is a valuable tool. Most court managers will acknowledge that the engagement, commitment, energy and enthusiasm of the court’s workforce are a valuable asset, but their recognition is often more of a cliché without any practical meaning. He feels that the court culture is starting to change as more courts experiment with measures of employee satisfaction, growth and learning.

¹⁰ Amy Joyce, “Devil boss remind you of anyone?”, Portland Press Herald, Tuesday, July 18, 2006, Section C3.

¹¹ Ibid, Section C3.

¹² Ingo Keilitz, “In Praise of Employee Satisfaction”, November 22, 2006 <<http://made2measure.blogspot.com>,>

People who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged and committed to their jobs, according to Tom Rath in his book *Vital Friends: The People you Can't Afford to Live Without* (Gallup Press, 2006).¹³ They get more done in less time, are more innovative, and more likely to share new ideas. Also, employee satisfaction jumps by 50% and doubles the chance that employees will have favorable impressions about their pay when they have close friendships. “When we asked people if they would rather have a best friend at work or a 10% pay raise, having a friend clearly won,” writes Rath, who heads the Gallup’s Organization’s Workplace Research and Leadership practice.

According to Ingo Keilitz in his article “Friendships in the Workplace Good for Court Performance,” on the Made2Measure website, the lesson for courts and court organizations is that they should make their workplaces more “friend-friendly.” However, Gallup found that many managers and leaders frown on workplace friendships. For courts, where attitudes are shaped by legal and political principles of impartiality and independence, the notion that work life should be separate from nonwork life is probably more prevalent than in the private sector. Courts discourage workplace friendships at their peril. Friendships in the courts do much more than provide a forum for bellyaches about the boss – they foster collaboration and connections, increase motivation, and give people a boost.¹⁴

Question number seven of this survey which states “Someone in the court cares about me as a person” addresses the issue of friends in the workplace.

¹³ Tom Rath, **Vital Friends**, Gallup Press, 2006

¹⁴ Ingo Keilitz, “Friendships in the Workplace Good for Court Performance”, August 14, 2006, <<http://made2measure.blogspot.com>,>

In an article in the Gallup Management Journal titled “Why Dilbert is Right, Uncomfortable work environments make for disgruntled employees—just like the cartoon says” there are three types of employees:

1. **Engaged** – employees work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company. They drive innovation and more the organization forward.
2. **Not-engaged** – employees are essentially “checked out.” They’re sleepwalking through their workday, putting time—but not energy or passion—into their work.
3. **Actively disengaged** – employees aren’t just unhappy at work; they’re busy acting out their unhappiness. Every day, these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.¹⁵

This project is seeking to find if employees are engaged, and if not, find ways to engage them in the workplace.

¹⁵ Jerry Krueger and Emily Kilham, “Why Dilbert is Right, Uncomfortable work environments make for disgruntled employees—just like the cartoon says, *Gallup Management Journal*, March 9, 2006, <<http://gmj.gallup.com>>

IV. METHODOLOGY

The research design used to gather the data for this report was the following:

1. Prepare and Administer Survey(s)
2. Form focus groups to make recommendations regarding survey results

Prepare and Administer Survey(s)

CourTools 9 was used as the basis for the employee survey. These twenty questions were developed by the National Center for State Courts as part of their *CourTools – Trial Court Performance Measures* project.

After reviewing these questions, question number four – “I am able to do my best every day” was viewed as potentially ambiguous and was changed to “My time and talents are well used” after consulting with the project directors from the National Center for State Courts. For detail of this survey see Appendix 4 (page 67).

These 20 questions were asked of all district employees. In addition, ten questions were added to the survey that addressed the court reorganization that took place in August 2004. These ten questions were asked of district employees, as well as district judges to evaluate the perception of the reorganization from both employee and judge perspective. These questions were developed with input from both Trial Court Administrators, as well as the State Court Administrator. For detail of this survey see Appendix 5 (page 74).

Because the first 20 questions were directly from *CourTools 9*, there was no need to pretest. However, the ten questions pertaining to the reorganization needed to be pretested for clarity. A sample of five employees and judges was selected and asked to review the questions. There were no problems or issues identified.

In addition to the survey questions, respondents were asked to input their years of service and to identify their unit and division of employment. There was also space provided to add comments if they wished to do so.

The years of service question was set up on the survey to accept alpha characters instead of just numeric, so there were many responses that were not valid, such as “25 plus”, “23+” and “too many”. Because of the invalid responses, this information was not used in analyzing the survey results. In future surveys, this field needs to be changed to accept only numeric responses.

Many respondents questioned the confidentiality of the survey, since they felt that providing their years of service as well as the unit and division they were employed in would make it possible to trace their responses to them. They were assured that individual responses would not be released, and that the analysis would be done in total. However, it’s possible that some respondents did not answer honestly or did not answer some questions at all because of this. In future surveys the confidentiality issue should be stressed and consideration should be given to making some or all of the fields mandatory.

The scale used for the survey follows:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Strongly Agree

Some employees commented that there was no “neutral” box to check, and that they didn’t have an opinion one way or another. This was done deliberately to force employees to express a positive or negative opinion. However, since it made some employees uncomfortable, a neutral box should be considered for future surveys.

For copies of all the survey instruments and the cover letter used in this study see Appendices 1, 4 and 5.

The surveys were administered electronically through an online survey software company called “Zoomerang.”¹⁶ Through this website, surveys can be set up, administered and tallied electronically.

According to the Writing Studio,¹⁷ some of the strengths of electronic surveys include:

1. Cost-savings
2. Ease of editing/analysis
3. Faster transmission time
4. Easy use of preletters
5. Higher response rate
6. More candid responses
7. Potentially quicker response time with wider magnitude of coverage

Some of the potential weaknesses are:

1. Sample demographic limitations
2. Lower levels of confidentiality
3. Layout and presentation issues
4. Additional orientation/instructions
5. Potential technical problems with hardware and software
6. Response rate

Since all employees in the judiciary have access to computers, the sample demographic limitation is not an issue. Also, there was assistance available through the judicial help desk for any technical problems relating to hardware and software. This survey was very straightforward and did not require any special instructions or layouts. Administering this survey electronically was the best choice for this project.

Chief Justice VandeWalle sent a letter electronically to all judicial district employees and judges encouraging them to participate in the survey. His letter was

¹⁶ MarketTools, Inc., <<http://info.zoomerang.com>>

¹⁷ The Writing Studio, Colorado State University, <<http://writing.colostate.edu>>

followed-up with an email providing instructions on how to access and complete the survey. Respondents were asked to complete the survey within two weeks.

The next day, it was realized that the distribution lists used to mass email the employees contained some email addresses of county employees and that some of them had in fact completed the survey. Since their responses were invalid, the survey was immediately halted and a new survey launched. Another email was sent to judicial district employees explaining the problem and providing them with a new link to the survey. It is not known whether or not this affected the response rate.

A second email was sent a week before the survey was due reminding employees and judges to participate.

At the end of the day that the surveys were due, the link to the survey was terminated, and the results downloaded to an excel spreadsheet for further analysis.

All 229.5 district employees across the state were asked to complete the survey. There were 16 partial responses and 179 complete responses for a total of 195. Of these, 11 were totally blank and could not be used, leaving 184 responses or an 80% response rate. However, there were 21 respondents that did not indicate their unit of employment. Response rates by units are as follows:

	Total Employees	Responses	Response Rate
Unit 1	60	43	72%
Unit 2	76	60	79%
Unit 3	55.5	38	68%
Unit 4	38	24	63%
Total	229.5	165	72%

Table 1 – Employee response rate by Unit

Of the total respondents, the breakdown by unit is as follows:

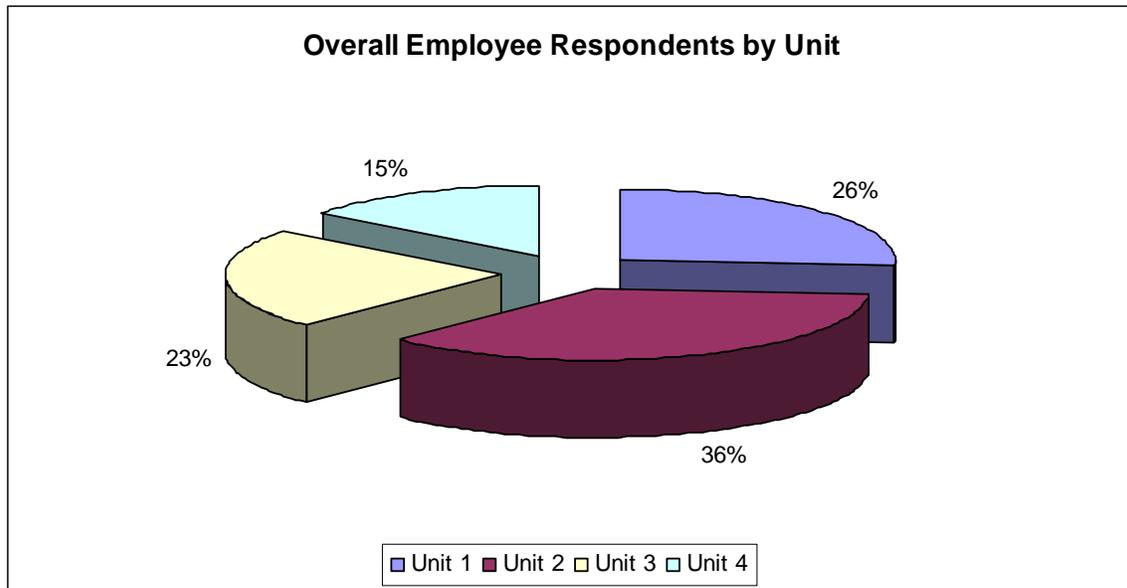


Figure 3 – Overall Employee Respondents by Unit

All 42 judges across the state were asked to complete the survey regarding the reorganization. Thirty-three of forty-two judges, or 79% responded. The response rate by unit is as follows:

	Number of Judges	Responses	Response Rate
Unit 1	11	13	118%
Unit 2	14	10	71%
Unit 3	11	7	64%
Unit 4	6	3	79%
Total	42	33	79%

Table 2 – Judge Response Rate by Unit

As is reflected in the chart above, there were more responses in Unit 1 than there are judges. Either some of the respondents marked the wrong box regarding their unit of employment, or some of the judges in Unit 1 completed the survey more than once.

The overall judge response rate by Unit is as follows:

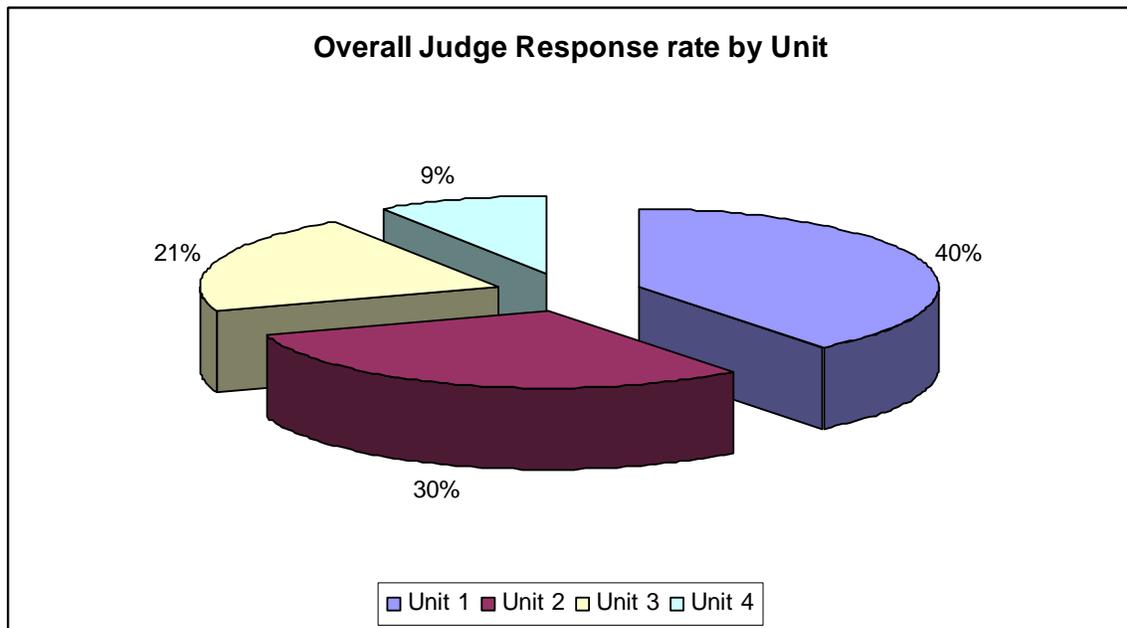


Figure 4 – Total judge response rate by unit

Focus Groups

After the results of the surveys were analyzed, two focus groups were formed to provide feedback and recommendations on areas that were identified as scoring low. The first focus group was comprised of ten randomly chosen district employees representing all four units and each division. The second focus group was made up of three randomly chosen district judges and all four district court administrators. The administrators and judges were not put in the same group as the employees as the employees may have felt intimidated or hesitant to speak honestly with their supervisors and/or judges in the same group.

Both focus groups were asked the same questions by an objective facilitator. Areas that scored low were identified and the groups were asked to provide feedback on why they felt these areas were low and to make recommendations on how to improve. See Appendix 3 (page 66) for the focus group questions. These results will be discussed in the Findings section of this report.

V. FINDINGS

The findings of the survey will be broken down as follows:

1. Statewide
 - Employee Survey
 - Employee Survey by Unit
 - Employee Survey by Division
 - Employee and Judge Survey
2. Units 1 - 4
 - Employee Survey
 - Employee Survey by Division
 - Employee and Judge Survey
3. Focus Groups Results

Statewide – Employee Survey

The first 20 questions of the survey measure employee satisfaction regarding the resources available to do their job, as well as their working relationship with their supervisor. Given the rating scale used of one to four, anything above 2.5 is viewed as positive.¹⁸ However, when translating this to a percentage, it equates to 62.5%. This means that in the areas addressed by the survey, the average employee is only satisfied 62.5% of the time. I would suggest that a benchmark of 3.0 or 75% be the goal.

According to The Gallup Organization in their book, **First, Break all the Rules**, companies who scored in the top 25 percent on their employee opinion survey were measurably more productive and had much higher employee retention rates.¹⁹

¹⁸ Although 2.5 is the midpoint of the scale so technically anything above that is positive, 3.00 is the suggested minimum benchmark. It is important to acknowledge that a ranking of 3.00 is only 75% of the highest possible score, which is 4.0.

¹⁹ See note 8 *supra*, pages 39-40.

The following six questions scored greater than 3.0 when the scores of all respondents were averaged:

Question	Average
I understand what is expected of me.	3.27
I have the resources necessary to do my job well.	3.09
My coworkers work well together.	3.02
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court.	3.13
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.13
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.25

Table 3 – Statewide – Employee Survey Scores Greater than 3.00

The following 13 questions scored between 2.50 and 3.00 when the scores of the respondents were averaged:

Question	Average
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.66
My time and talents are well used.	2.91
Communication within my division is good.	2.76
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.51
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.89
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.75
The court is respected in the community.	2.97
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.85
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.75
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	2.96
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.66
I enjoy coming to work.	2.91
I am treated with respect.	2.99

Table 4 – Statewide – Employee Survey Scores between 2.50 and 3.00

The following question scored below 2.50, which means the majority of respondents disagreed or answered negatively to the question:

Question	Average
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.34

Table 5 – Statewide – Employee Survey Scores below 2.50

The overall average for the 20 questions is 2.89. Given the scoring scale of 1-4, this means that although the average score is positive, it translates to a percentage of 72.2%.

Statewide – Employee Survey by Unit

The results of the employee survey show that there is very little variance between units regarding employee satisfaction:

	Average
Unit 1	2.88
Unit 2	2.87
Unit 3	2.99
Unit 4	2.92
Average of all Units	2.89

Table 6 – Employee Survey Summary by Unit

The scores range from a low of 2.87 in Unit 2 to a high of 2.99 in Unit 3.

Statewide – Employee Survey by Division

When completing the survey, employees were asked which division they were in – Juvenile, Administration or Clerks. The survey results broken down by these divisions are as follows:

	Juvenile	Administration	Clerks
I understand what is expected of me.	3.31	3.90	3.18
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.64	3.24	2.68
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.20	3.74	2.97
My time and talents are well used.	2.96	3.54	2.90
Communication within my division is good.	2.84	3.41	2.71
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for	2.64	3.27	2.42

doing a good job.			
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	3.02	3.58	2.86
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.76	3.38	2.71
The court is respected in the community.	3.18	3.60	2.97
My coworkers work well together.	3.27	3.70	2.95
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.82	3.41	2.90
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court	3.24	3.79	3.05
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.96	3.46	2.62
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	3.13	3.68	2.78
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.64	3.32	2.60
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.56	3.03	2.32
I enjoy coming to work.	3.07	3.53	2.82
My coworkers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.47	3.84	2.99
I am treated with respect.	3.16	3.67	2.92
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.38	3.84	3.26
Overall Average by Division	3.01	3.55	2.83

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 7 – Statewide – Employee Survey by Division

Seventeen of one hundred eighty-four respondents or 9% did not respond as to their division of employment.

The Administrative Division clearly scored the highest with an overall average of 3.55 and no questions scoring below 3.0.

The Juvenile Division was the next highest with an overall average score of 3.01 and 11 questions scoring above 3.0. Nine of the scores fell between 2.5 and 3.0, and no questions scored below 2.5.

The Clerk Division scored the lowest with an overall average score of 2.83. Only three questions scored above 3.0, 15 questions scored between 2.5 and 3.0 and two

questions fell below 2.5. Both questions below 2.5 related to the lack of communication regarding job performance.

These scores can be broken down by unit and division as follows:

	Juvenile	Administration	Clerks
Unit 1	3.22	2.58	2.78
Unit 2	2.99	2.91	2.77
Unit 3	2.90	3.15	2.96
Unit 4	2.83	3.30	2.95
Average of all Units	3.01	3.55	2.83

Table 8 – Employee Survey Summary by Unit by Division

In the juvenile division, the scores range from a low of 2.83 in Unit 4 to a high of 3.22 in Unit 1. In the administrative division the scores range from a low of 2.58 in Unit 1 to a high of 3.30 in Unit 4. Finally, in the clerk division the scores range from a low of 2.78 in Unit 1 to a high of 2.96 in Unit 3.

The difference between the low and high in the clerk division (.18 points) is not significant. However, the difference between units in the juvenile division (.39 points) and the administrative division (.72 points) is significant. Since the job responsibilities and duties are virtually the same, the difference in scores is most likely attributable to relationships between the employees and their supervisor.

Statewide - Employee and Judge Survey

Following are the results regarding the ten questions from the employee and judge survey addressing the court reorganization:

Questions where average responses are above 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	3.38	3.21	3.30

Table 9 – Statewide – Employee and Judge Survey Scores Greater than 3.00

Questions where average responses are between 2.50 and 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.	2.66	2.65	2.66
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	2.71	2.38	2.55
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	2.82	2.45	2.64
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	2.77	2.54	2.66
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	2.60	2.50	2.55
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	2.75	2.43	2.59
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	2.67	2.51	2.59
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.	2.70	2.80	2.75
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	2.75	2.54	2.65

Table 10 – Statewide – Employee and Judge Survey Scores between 2.50 and 3.00

There were no questions where the average score was below 2.5

In all questions except one (The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me) the judges scored higher than the employees. The questions with discrepancies of greater than .20 between employees and judges are:

Question	Difference
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	.33
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	.37
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	.24
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	.32
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	.21

Table 11 – Statewide – Employee and Judge Survey Largest Discrepancies

When breaking these results down by unit, the judges scored higher in all units:

	Judges	Employees	Difference
Unit 1	2.67	2.47	.20
Unit 2	2.87	2.58	.29
Unit 3	2.90	2.85	.05
Unit 4	2.73	2.58	.15
Average of all Units	2.78	2.60	.18

Table 12 – Employee and Judge Survey Summary by Unit

When looking at the judge’s scores in each unit, they range from a low of 2.67 in Unit 1 to a high of 2.90 in Unit 3.

Interestingly, the employee scores were similar in regard to units with a low of 2.47 in Unit 1 to a high of 2.85 in Unit 3.

Unit 1 – Employee Survey

Overall the average score of the first 20 questions in Unit 1 was 2.88. A summary of the scores follows:

Question	# of Questions	Percent
Questions scoring greater than 3.0	7	35%
Questions scoring between 2.5 and 3.0	12	60%
Questions scoring less than 2.5	1	5%

Table 13 – Unit 1 Employee Survey Summary

The detail of these questions follows:

Question	< 2.5	Between 2.5 & 3.0	> 3.0
I understand what is expected of me.			3.14
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.		2.74	
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.			3.07
My time and talents are well used.		2.84	
Communication within my division is good.		2.63	
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.		2.53	
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.		2.98	
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.		2.67	
The court is respected in the community.		2.86	
My coworkers work well together.		3.00	
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.		2.88	
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the courts.			3.16
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.		2.77	
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and			3.07

contribution to my division.			
I feel free to speak my mind.		2.53	
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.44		
I enjoy coming to work.		2.91	
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.			3.02
I am treated with respect.			3.02
I am proud that I work in the court.			3.35

Table 14 – Unit 1 Employee Survey Detail

Sorting these questions from lowest to highest results in the following:

Question	Score
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.44
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.53
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.53
Communication within my division is good.	2.63
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.67
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.74
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.77
My time and talents are well used.	2.84
The court is respected in the community.	2.86
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.88
I enjoy coming to work.	2.91
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.98
My co-workers work well together.	3.00
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.02
I am treated with respect.	3.02
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.07
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	3.07
I understand what is expected of me.	3.14
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court.	3.16
I am proud that I work in the court	3.35

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 15 – Unit 1 Employee Survey Scores Lowest to Highest

Unit 1 – Employee Survey by Division

When reviewing the results by division, the breakdown below shows an average for the juvenile division of 3.22, the administrative division of 2.58, and the clerk division of 2.78 as follows:

Question	Juvenile	Administration	Clerks
I understand what is expected of me.	3.42	3.67	3.00
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	3.08	2.33	2.71
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.17	2.33	3.10
My time and talents are well used.	3.08	2.00	2.90
Communication within my division is good.	3.08	2.33	2.48
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.92	2.67	2.38
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	3.25	3.00	2.81
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	3.00	2.33	2.48
The court is respected in the community.	3.17	2.00	2.90
My coworkers work well together.	3.42	2.33	2.95
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	3.17	2.33	2.90
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court	3.50	3.00	3.05
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.92	2.67	2.71
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	3.58	3.67	2.76
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.92	2.67	2.33
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.83	1.67	2.38
I enjoy coming to work.	3.33	2.33	2.76
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.67	2.33	2.81
I am treated with respect.	3.42	3.00	2.86
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.50	3.00	3.33
Overall Average	3.22	2.58	2.78

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 16 – Unit 1 Employee Survey by Division

Seven of forty-three employee respondents (16%) did not respond as to their division of employment.

The Juvenile Division had no questions below 2.5, five questions between 2.5 and 3.0, and 15 or 75% of their questions scoring greater than 3.0.

The Administrative Division had 11 (55%) scores less than 2.5, seven questions between 2.5 and 3.0, and only two questions scoring greater than 3.0

The Clerk Division had five questions with scores less than 2.5, 12 questions (60%) with scores between 2.5 and 3.0, and only three questions with scores greater than 3.0.

Unit 1 – Judge and Employee Survey

Following are the results from the ten questions in the employee and judge survey addressing the court reorganization:

Question where average responses are above 3.00

Question	Judges	Employees	Average
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	3.33	3.28	3.31

Table 17 – Unit 1 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Greater than 3.00

Questions where average responses are between 2.50 and 3.00

Question	Judges	Employees	Average
Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.	2.54	2.51	2.53
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	2.69	2.44	2.57
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	2.73	2.29	2.51
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.	2.69	2.88	2.79

Table 18 – Unit 1 Employee and Judge Survey Scores between 2.50 and 3.00

Questions where average responses are less than 2.50

Question	Judges	Employees	Average
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	2.67	2.29	2.48
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	2.46	2.12	2.29

I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	2.38	2.42	2.40
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	2.54	2.28	2.41
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	2.64	2.16	2.40

In all questions except two (I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court, and The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me), the judges scored higher than the employees. The questions with discrepancies greater than .20 points between employees and judges are:

Question	Difference
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	.35
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	.47
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	.25
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	.38
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	.44
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	.26

Table 19 – Unit 1 Employee and Judge Survey Largest Discrepancies

Only one question scored above 3.0, and five questions actually scored below 2.50. Although the judges' scores were higher in all questions except two, they also had only one question with a score above 3.0. All but one of their questions did not meet the suggested benchmark of 3.0.

Unit 2 – Employee Survey

Overall the average score of the first 20 questions in Unit 2 was 2.87. A summary of the scores follows:

Question	# of Questions	Percent
Questions scoring greater than 3.0	5	25%
Questions scoring between 2.5 and 3.0	14	70%
Questions scoring less than 2.5	1	5%

Table 20 – Unit 2 Employee Survey Summary

The detail of these questions follows:

Question	< 2.5	Between 2.5 & 3.0	> 3.0
I understand what is expected of me.			3.27
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.		2.61	
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.		2.91	
My time and talents are well used.		2.85	
Communication within my division is good.		2.80	
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.		2.52	
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.		2.90	
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.		2.75	
The court is respected in the community.		2.97	
My coworkers work well together.			3.05
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.		2.78	
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the courts.			3.12
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.		2.75	
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.		2.85	
I feel free to speak my mind.		2.76	
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.40		
I enjoy coming to work.		2.83	
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.			3.07
I am treated with respect.		3.00	
I am proud that I work in the court.			3.21

Table 21 – Unit 2 Employee Survey Detail

Sorting these questions from lowest to highest results in the following:

Question	Score
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.40
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.52
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.61
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.75
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.75
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.76
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.78

Communication within my division is good.	2.80
I enjoy coming to work.	2.83
My time and talents are well used.	2.85
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	2.85
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.90
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	2.91
The court is respected in the community.	2.97
I am treated with respect.	3.00
My co-workers work well together.	3.05
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.07
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court.	3.12
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.21
I understand what is expected of me.	3.27

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 22 – Unit 2 Employee Survey Scores Lowest to Highest

Unit 2 – Employee Survey by Division

When reviewing the results by division, the breakdown below shows an average for the Juvenile Division of 2.99, the Administrative Division of 2.91, and the Clerk Division of 2.77 as follows:

Question	Juvenile	Administration	Clerks
I understand what is expected of me.	3.24	3.45	3.21
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.65	2.64	2.62
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.24	3.00	2.68
My time and talents are well used.	2.82	3.18	2.72
Communication within my division is good.	2.71	2.82	2.86
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.82	2.70	2.28
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	3.18	3.09	2.68
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.76	2.82	2.69
The court is respected in the community.	3.12	2.91	2.90
My coworkers work well together.	3.35	2.73	2.97
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.59	2.73	2.90
I understand the connection between the work I	3.29	3.27	2.93

do and the mission and goals of the court			
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	3.06	2.55	2.62
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	3.00	3.00	2.66
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.65	3.00	2.69
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.59	2.55	2.25
I enjoy coming to work.	3.00	2.82	2.76
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.29	3.00	2.90
I am treated with respect.	3.18	2.91	2.93
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.35	3.09	3.14
Overall Average	2.99	2.91	2.77

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 23 – Unit 2 Employee Survey by Division

Two of fifty-nine respondents (3%) did not respond as to their division of employment.

The Juvenile Division had no questions below 2.5, ten questions between 2.5 and 3.0, and ten questions scoring greater than 3.0.

The Administrative Division had no questions scoring below 2.5, 15 questions (75%) between 2.5 and 3.0, and five questions scoring greater than 3.0

The Clerk Division had two questions with scores less than 2.5, 16 questions (80%) with scores between 2.5 and 3.0, and only two questions with scores greater than 3.0.

Unit 2– Judge and Employee Survey

Following are the results from the ten questions in the employee and judge survey addressing the court reorganization:

Question where average responses are above 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	3.40	3.18	3.29

Table 24 – Unit 2 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Greater than 3.00

Questions where average responses are between 2.50 and 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.	2.60	2.71	2.66
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	3.00	2.38	2.69
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	3.11	2.55	2.83
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	2.89	2.54	2.72
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	3.20	2.39	2.79
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.	2.60	2.65	2.62
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	2.90	2.47	2.69

Table 25 – Unit 2 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Between 2.50 and 3.00

Question where average response was less than 2.50

	Judges	Employees	Average
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	2.50	2.48	2.49
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	2.50	2.42	2.46

Table 26 – Unit 2 Employee and Judge Survey Scores less than 2.50

In all questions except two (Supervisory roles are clear within my unit, and The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me) the judges scored higher than the employees. Questions with discrepancies greater than .20 points between the employees and judges are:

Question	Difference
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	.63
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	.57
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	.35
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	.22
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	.81
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	.43

Table 27 – Unit 2 Employee and Judge Survey Largest Discrepancies

There was only one question where the average score of the judges and employees was greater than 3.0, with the bulk of the questions falling between 2.5 and 3.0. The judges actually had four questions that scored above 3.0. This and the fact that the judges scored higher in all questions except two indicates they have a more positive perception of the reorganization than the employees. However, overall the results were not positive.

Unit 3 – Employee Survey

Overall, the average score of the first 20 questions in Unit 3 was 2.99. A summary of the scores follows:

Question	# of Questions	Average
Questions scoring greater than 3.0	7	35%
Questions scoring between 2.50 and 3.0	12	60%
Questions scoring less than 2.50	1	5%

Table 28 – Unit 3 Employee Survey Summary

The detail of these questions follows:

Question	< 2.5	Between 2.5 & 3.0	> 3.0
I understand what is expected of me.			3.41
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.		2.81	
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.			3.36
My time and talents are well used.			3.06
Communication within my division is good.		2.78	
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.		2.70	
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.		2.97	
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.		2.97	
The court is respected in the community.			3.16
My co-workers work well together.		2.95	
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.		2.89	
I understand the connection between the work I do and the			3.16

mission and goals of the courts.			
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.		2.95	
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.		2.97	
I feel free to speak my mind.		2.76	
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.43		
I enjoy coming to work.		2.97	
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.			3.22
I am treated with respect.		2.94	
I am proud that I work in the court.			3.27

Table 29 – Unit 3 Employee Survey Detail

Sorting these questions from lowest to highest results in the following:

Question	Score
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.43
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.70
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.76
Communication within my division is good.	2.78
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.81
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.89
I am treated with respect.	2.94
My co-workers work well together	2.95
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.95
I enjoy coming to work.	2.97
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.97
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.97
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	2.97
My time and talents are well used.	3.06
The court is respected in the community.	3.16
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court.	3.16
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.22
I am proud that I work in the court	3.27
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.36

I understand what is expected of me.	3.41
Score < 2.5	
Score Between 2.5 and 3.0	
Score > 3.0	

Table 30 – Unit 3 Employee Survey Lowest to Highest

Unit 3 – Employee Survey by Division

When reviewing the results by division, the breakdown below shows an average for the Juvenile Division of 2.90, the Administrative Division of 3.15, and the Clerk Division of 2.96 as follows:

	Juvenile	Administration	Clerks
I understand what is expected of me.	3.40	3.45	3.25
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.50	2.91	3.00
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.33	3.45	3.42
My time and talents are well used.	3.00	3.27	3.09
Communication within my division is good.	2.70	3.09	2.67
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.50	2.91	2.75
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.80	3.09	3.08
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.70	3.36	3.00
The court is respected in the community.	3.30	3.09	3.25
My coworkers work well together.	2.60	3.45	2.75
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.90	3.09	2.83
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court	3.10	3.18	3.17
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.90	3.09	2.83
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	2.90	3.18	2.92
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.50	3.09	2.75
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.50	2.45	2.50
I enjoy coming to work.	2.89	3.09	2.83
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.40	3.27	3.09
I am treated with respect.	2.80	3.27	2.73
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.30	3.27	3.33

Overall Average	2.90	3.15	2.96
Score < 2.5			
Score Between 2.5 and 3.0			
Score > 3.0			

Table 31 – Unit 3 Employee Survey by Division

Four of thirty-seven respondents (11%) did not indicate their division of employment.

The Juvenile Division had no questions below 2.5, 14 questions (70%) between 2.5 and 3.0, and six questions scoring greater than 3.0.

The Administrative Division had one question scoring below 2.5, two questions scoring between 2.5 and 3.0, and 17 questions (85%) scoring greater than 3.0

The Clerk Division had no questions with scores less than 2.5, 12 questions (60%) with scores between 2.5 and 3.0, and eight questions with scores greater than 3.0.

Unit 3 – Judge and Employee Survey

Following are the results from the ten questions in the employee and judge survey addressing the court reorganization:

Questions where average responses are above 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	3.43	3.22	3.33
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.	3.00	3.03	3.01

Table 32 – Unit 3 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Greater than 3.00

Questions where average responses are between 2.50 and 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.	3.00	2.86	2.93
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	2.83	2.72	2.78
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	2.83	2.61	2.72

Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	3.00	2.75	2.88
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	2.50	2.86	2.68
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	2.71	2.69	2.70
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	2.71	2.86	2.79
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	3.00	2.92	2.96

Table 33 – Unit 3 Employee and Judge Survey Scores between 2.50 and 3.00

There were no questions where the average response was less than 2.50

In all questions except three (The reorganization has been positive for my unit, The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole, and The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me) the judges scored higher than the employees. The questions with discrepancies greater than .20 points between employees and judges are:

	Difference
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	.25
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	(.36)
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	.22
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	.21

Table 34 – Unit 3 Employee and Judge Survey Largest Discrepancies

Unit 3 had two questions with the average judge/employee score greater than 3.0 and no questions with an average score less than 2.5. The bulk of the questions scored between 2.5 and 3.0, and did not meet the suggested benchmark of 3.0.

Unit 4 – Employee Survey

Overall the average score of the first 20 questions in Unit 4 was 2.92. A summary of the scores follows:

Question	# of Questions	Average
Questions scoring greater than 3.0	11	55%
Questions scoring between 2.5 and 3.0	6	30%
Questions scoring less than 2.5	3	15%

Table 35 – Unit 4 Employee Survey Summary

The detail of these questions follows:

Question	< 2.5	Between 2.5 & 3.0	> 3.0
I understand what is expected of me.			3.35
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.48		
I have the resources necessary to do my job well.			3.08
My time and talents are well used.			3.08
Communication within my division is good.		2.83	
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.30		
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.		2.79	
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.		2.79	
The court is respected in the community.			3.04
My co-workers work well together.			3.21
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.		2.92	
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the courts.			3.17
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.		2.54	
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.			3.04
I feel free to speak my mind.		2.58	
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.08		
I enjoy coming to work.			3.13
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.			3.35
I am treated with respect.			3.21
I am proud that I work in the court.			3.33

Table 36 – Unit 4 Employee Survey Detail

Sorting these questions from lowest to highest results in the following:

Question	Score
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.08
In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.	2.30
I am kept informed about matters that affect me	2.48

My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.54
I feel free to speak my mind	2.58
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.79
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.79
Communication within my division is good	2.83
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things	2.92
The court is respected in the community	3.04
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division	3.04
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.08
My time and talents are well used.	3.08
I enjoy coming to work.	3.13
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court.	3.17
My co-workers work well together.	3.21
I am treated with respect.	3.21
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.33
I understand what is expected of me.	3.35
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.35

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 37 – Unit 4 Employee Survey Lowest to Highest

Unit 4 – Employee Survey by Division

When reviewing the results by division, the breakdown below shows an average for the Juvenile Division of 2.83, the Administrative Division of 3.30, and the Clerk Division of 2.95 as follows:

Question	Juvenile	Administration	Clerks
I understand what is expected of me.	3.17	3.67	3.36
I am kept informed about matters that affect me.	2.00	3.33	2.45
I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.	3.00	3.67	3.00
My time and talents are well used.	3.00	3.33	3.18
Communication within my division is good.	3.00	3.00	2.82
In the last month, I was recognized and praised	1.83	3.33	2.50

for doing a good job.			
Someone in the court cares about me as a person.	2.50	3.33	3.18
I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.	2.33	3.33	2.91
The court is respected in the community.	3.17	3.00	3.00
My co-workers work well together.	3.83	3.00	3.09
I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.	2.67	3.33	3.00
I understand the connection between the work I do and the mission and goals of the court	2.83	3.67	3.27
My working conditions and environment enable me to do my job well.	2.83	3.00	2.18
I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.	3.00	3.67	3.00
I feel free to speak my mind.	2.33	3.00	2.73
In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.	2.00	2.00	2.18
I enjoy coming to work.	3.00	3.67	3.09
My co-workers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.	3.67	3.33	3.50
I am treated with respect.	3.17	3.67	3.18
I am proud that I work in the court.	3.33	3.67	3.36
Overall Average	2.83	3.30	2.95

Score < 2.5

Score Between 2.5 and 3.0

Score > 3.0

Table 38 – Unit 4 Employee Survey by Division

Four of twenty-four respondents (17%) did not indicate their division of employment.

The Juvenile Division had five questions below 2.5, nine questions (45%) scoring between 2.5 and 3.0, and six questions scoring greater than 3.0.

The Administrative Division had one question scoring below 2.5, five questions scoring between 2.5 and 3.0, and 14 questions (70%) scoring greater than 3.0

The Clerk Division had three questions with scores less than 2.5, eight questions with scores between 2.5 and 3.0, and nine questions (45%) with scores greater than 3.0.

Unit 4 – Judge and Employee Survey

Following are the results from the employee and judge survey addressing the court reorganization:

Question where average response is above 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	3.33	3.13	3.23

Table 39 – Unit 4 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Greater than 3.00

Questions where average responses are between 2.50 and 3.00

	Judges	Employees	Average
Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.	2.67	2.43	2.55
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	2.67	2.42	2.54
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	2.50	2.71	2.60
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	3.00	2.63	2.81
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	3.00	2.25	2.63
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	3.00	2.54	2.77
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.	2.33	2.71	2.52
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.	2.50	2.58	2.54

Table 40 – Unit 4 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Between 2.50 and 3.00

There was one question where the average response was less than 2.50

	Judges	Employees	Average
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.	2.33	2.38	2.35

Table 41 – Unit 4 Employee and Judge Survey Scores Less than 2.50

In all questions except the following, the judges’ responses were higher than the employees:

Employee discipline is handled fairly.
Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.
The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.

Table 42 – Unit 4 Questions where Judges’ Responses were Lower than Employees

Questions where discrepancies were larger than .20 between judges' and employee's responses are:

Question	Difference
Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.	.25
The reorganization has been positive for my unit.	.38
I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.	.75
The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.	.46
The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.	(.38)
Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.	.23
Employee discipline is handled fairly.	(.21)
I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.	.21

Table 43 – Unit 4 Employee and Judge Survey Largest Discrepancies

The bulk of the average scores are between 2.5 and 3.0 and did not meet the suggested benchmark of 3.0. Eight of the ten questions had discrepancies of more than .20 between the scores of the employees and the judges', with the judges' scoring higher in six of the eight questions. This should be scrutinized by the Presiding Judge and the District Court Administrator to see why the perspective is so different.

Overall, the average scores in all four units did not meet the suggested benchmark of 3.0 regarding the reorganization. Since the reorganization took place in August of 2004, it's possible that the district courts are still in a transition phase. The District Court Administrator will need to look into this further to find out the source of dissatisfaction.

There was one question that averaged 3.0 in all four units: I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position. This is interesting, as it appears from the above scores that the supervisory lines are not always clear. Again, the District Court Administrators should research this area.

Focus Groups Results

The results of the survey in total as well as each unit individually were reviewed and questions were formulated to address the areas identified that scored low. These questions were asked of each of the focus groups. The comments from the focus groups are listed beneath each question.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Topic - Lack of recognition by supervisors and discussing employee performance

In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.

In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.

1. Why do you think supervisors are hesitant to praise or recognize individual employees?
 - Too caught up in daily work
 - No formal system for evaluations and recognition
2. What type of work/actions do you think deserve recognition?
 - Professionalism
 - Hard work is expected and the focus is more on negative things
 - Consistent, positive attitude
3. How does the lack of recognition affect employee morale?
 - Creates a negative morale
 - Policies are not applied to all employees
 - When one person is not pulling their load, it affects others
 - Supervisor needs to step in and make employees work consistently
4. What specific actions can be taken in this area to show employees their contributions are valued?
 - Performance Reviews
 - Manage change better – should be in person rather than through email or memos
 - More contact with employees – people with direct access to supervisors are more satisfied
 - Provide copies of policies, memos and other correspondence that affects employees
 - Review “chain of command.” Employees have less ability to make decisions.

5. What type of feedback, if any, are you receiving on your job performance?
 - None or very little

6. Do you want your supervisor to talk to you about your performance? Why or why not?
 - Yes – people need that recognition
 - Should be done by supervisor and co-workers
 - Should be used to document performance, workload, accountability and efficiencies
 - Should be a management tool
 - Evaluation should be tied to something as an incentive to do better
 - Should help employees with goal setting
 - There should be a formal evaluation when going off of probation

7. Would you prefer a formal or informal evaluation process? Why?
 - On paper – it helps you remember better
 - Either one.

8. How are problems regarding performance handled in your office and is it effective?
 - They are not being handled
 - Some may be addressed but other employees aren't aware of that
 - Supervisor should let person who made complaint aware that it is being handled, otherwise they don't know

Topic - Communication

I am kept informed about matters that affect me.

I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.

1. Describe the communication among employees within your district?
 - Meetings or phone
 - Poor in larger offices
 - There are no staff meetings
 - Need regular method of communication
 - Through other managers, mostly written – sometimes verbal

2. Does that same level of communication exist at the unit level? What about statewide?
 - There should be meetings of entire office instead of each division
 - The Court Administrator should be disseminating the information – not the supervisors

- Those employees reporting directly to judges or administration are happier with communication
 - Statewide communication – there are mandates with no discussion
 - Statewide – there should be more information provided to employees. Send email and ask for comments
 - Administrators handle decisions differently since reorganization and don't always involve employees.
3. Can you give examples of the type of information that should be communicated to employees?
- All policy and procedures
 - Anything that affects the employees
 - Any pending changes in the courts
4. How can communication be improved at the various levels?
- Supervisors should ask for input
 - Use the website
 - Have better training for new employees
 - Employees are so busy they don't have time to read emails and memos
 - Employees are more likely to read communication when it comes from their administrator rather than from the state
 - Should go through immediate supervisor
 - Should go through supervisors when a division is affected; if entire unit is affected, it should go through administrator
 - Employees don't always read information provided to them or check website
 - There is too much information being sent out

Topic - Administration (reorganization) of Judicial Branch

Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.

Employee discipline is handled fairly.

1. The survey indicated that court policies are not applied uniformly to all employees. In what type of situations is there a perception of inequality or lack of fairness?
- When employees are supervised by a judge rather than an administrator or other supervisor
 - Procedures are not consistent across state
 - Computer programs are not used consistently across state
 - Some employees will help out other divisions and some won't
2. How do you feel about the way employee discipline is handled? Is it fair? Consistent?

- Discipline should be handled one on one.
 - Address problem directly with individual rather than directed to whole group
3. How can we ensure that employees are treated uniformly in regard to policy?
 - Supervisors need to take action
 - Supervisors need to be held accountable for the actions of their employees
 - There's no place to voice complaints safely
 - People are unclear as to chain of command since reorganization
 - Supervisors are not sure of which issues to handle

Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.

1. Describe issues that are not dealt with timely. Are they personnel related? Court related?
 - Both
2. What can be done to resolve issues more timely?
 - Supervisors should handle promptly and be held accountable
 - There are delays built into system due to policies that must be followed

The reorganization has been positive for my unit.

The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.

1. The survey indicated that in some units, employees do not feel reorganization has been positive either for their unit or for the court system as a whole. What do you see as the negatives to reorganization? What are the positives?
 - Negative – employees don't dare handle issues on their own. Employees are less independent. Employees feel slighted. There is too much change.
 - Positive – there is more consistency. The unification of more offices.
2. What can be done to address the areas perceived as negative?
 - Employees need time to adapt to change.
 - Need more support from supervisors.
 - Change should come slower.

The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.

1. Does the trial court administrator understand and support your needs?
 - Most employees are comfortable going to administrator.
 - Some employees are having problems with the administrator.
 - Used to see administrator more before reorganization.

2. What can be done to address this?
 - Better communication

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section summarizes the findings and recommendations of this project, including how to implement suggested recommendations. Many of the recommendations either have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

This research project was very beneficial to the North Dakota Judiciary in gauging employee morale, and identifying areas needing improvement. This holds promise of leading to less turnover and more engaged employees. And, in turn improving morale, efficiency, and providing better service to the public. Other states and courts could benefit from this type of research also.

Overall the employees and judges in the North Dakota judiciary exhibit a positive view of their work environment and the court reorganization. Although the overall averages are positive, at a minimum a score of 3.0 should be the benchmark. This represents 75% of the highest possible score. Neither the employees nor judges reached this benchmark. Any score below 2.5 would be deemed “inadequate or poor.” There were no overall average scores below 2.5. The majority of the questions with average scores below 2.5 were within the individual units regarding the reorganization.

Areas that were identified as needing immediate attention include lack of recognition and communication. Once these areas are addressed and improved, it is likely that other areas will improve as well. Managers should also strive for a more “friend-friendly” workplace, as discussed in the literature review. The importance of this should not be underestimated. This is another area that once improved would create a much happier and less stressful working environment.

The discussion and feedback of the focus groups provided several recommendations to address the issues identified (see Focus Group Questions on page 54). Some of the critical issues identified that need attention include lack of recognition, communication, and supervisory issues as a result of the reorganization. The District Court Administrators should review these recommendations and work with the employees to implement them as appropriate in their Unit.

This is the first time a survey was conducted of judicial employees. This will be done annually to monitor progress in areas that scored low and to work on achieving higher levels of satisfaction overall. Some things to consider for the next survey are:

- Stress Confidentiality so employees feel free to answer honestly
- Consider adding a “neutral” answer to the survey
- Make “years of service” a numeric field so results can be analyzed
- Make all fields mandatory for better analysis

The survey results need to be distributed and reviewed with employees. Employees need and expect resolution, and one of the best ways to do this is through action planning. Action planning is essentially a process in which a manager discusses survey results with his or her employees. Then the group collectively selects specific issues to work on and improve. This process is inherently more valuable than many managers realize, according to Gallup research.²⁰

Gallup discovered that six steps are crucial to making action planning effective:

1. **Introduce** the action-planning session and state its purpose. This will help employees understand what engagement is, why the survey was conducted and what it measures, what the survey items mean to them and

²⁰ Joanne Earl, Melissa Dunn Lampe and Andrew Buksin, “What to do with Employee Survey Results”, *Gallup Management Journal*, August 10, 2006, p 1-2, <<http://gmj.gallup.com>>

to their workgroup, and why action planning is a vital step in improving employee engagement.

2. **Distribute and explain** the survey results.
3. **Discuss** what those results mean for the employees, item by item.
4. **Select** two or three key items to work on over the next 12 months.
5. **Brainstorm** follow-up actions and complete a plan for improvement.
6. **Follow up** regularly on the plan, and on how people are feeling about the progress toward meeting its goals.²¹

It's important to establish ground rules of mutual respect and open dialogue for the process to work effectively. If a supervisor dismisses suggestions, employees are less likely to offer their opinion or to become part of the process. A supervisor also should not determine areas to work on and delegate it to employees to "fix" them. To be effective, the process of determining priorities must be fair and equitable, and it must originate with the group.

A summary of the results of the summary were printed in the judicial newsletter that all employees receive. The detailed results will be provided to the State Court Administrator as well as the Trial Court Administrators in each unit. They need to put in place a plan to communicate the results to the employees and to implement strategies to improve areas that scored low. The employees should be involved in the planning and implementation to make sure their needs are being met and to ensure their "buy-in." Since the survey will be done annually, these areas can be monitored for improvement and plans can be adjusted as needed.

²¹ Ibid. p. 3

North Dakotans exhibit a high degree of trust in their court system.²² Esteemed researchers and national experts David Rottman and Alan Tomkins underline the importance of public trust as follows:

“A court that does not have the trust or confidence of the public cannot expect to function for long as an effective resolver of disputes, a respected issuer of punishments, or a valued deliberative body.”²³

Through this project and the use of the information reported here, the North Dakota judiciary recognizes that committed and loyal employees directly impact court performance. This in turn, improves service to the public, which enhances court performance and, therefore, public trust and confidence in the court system. North Dakota is committed to improving employee satisfaction and work environments and supporting judicial employees system - wide. Follow up work and continuous study of employee attitudes will demonstrate the values of the state court system and its leaders.

²² See note 2 *supra*, p. 53

²³ Rottman, David B. and Alan J. Tomkins, “Public Trust and Confidence in the Courts: What Public Opinion Surveys Mean to Judges,” *Court Review*, Fall, 1999, p. 1.

VII. APPENDIX

Appendix 1. - Letter from the Honorable Gerald W. VandeWalle



State of North Dakota
SUPREME COURT
BISMARCK

September 21, 2006

District Judges and Employees:

The judiciary recognizes that committed and loyal employees have a direct impact on a court's performance. This in turn, improves service to the public which enhances public trust and confidence in the court system.

In order to establish a baseline measurement of the quality of the work environment and relations between staff and supervisors, a survey is being conducted of all district employees. This survey was developed by the National Center for State Courts as a tool for surveying employee opinions on whether staff have the materials, motivation, direction, sense of mission, and commitment to do quality work. Knowing how employees perceive the workplace is essential to facilitate organizational development and change, enhance job satisfaction, and thus, improve service to the public.

In addition, ten questions regarding the reorganization that took place in August, 2004 have been added to the employee survey. A separate survey with these same ten questions was developed for the judges. These questions address the perception of the reorganization from both the employees and the judges perspective.

Susan Sisk has agreed to undertake this survey as part of her research project with the Court Executive Development Program through the National Center for State Courts. The results of the survey will be analyzed on a statewide as well as a unit basis. The results will also be given to the Judicial Planning Committee to assist them in their planning process.

Your participation is critical in establishing baseline results and for identifying areas that need to be addressed. This survey will be conducted on a regular basis in the future, to establish trends and to monitor progress in areas identified as low.

Please take a few minutes in your work schedule to complete the survey. Directions will be sent to you shortly.

Thank you.


Chief Justice VandeWalle

Appendix 2 - Email regarding Instructions for Survey

Sisk, Susan

From: Sisk, Susan
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2006 2:58 PM
To: (Unit 1) Administration Staff; (Unit 1) Clerks of District Court; (Unit 1) Court Reporters; (Unit 1) Judicial Referees; (Unit 1) Juvenile Court Officers; (Unit 1) Juvenile Staff; (Unit 1) Law Clerks; (Unit 1) Secretary Staff; (Unit 1) State Clerks of Court Staff; (Unit 2) Administration Staff; (Unit 2) Clerks of District Court; (Unit 2) Court Reporters; (Unit 2) Electronic Reporters; (Unit 2) Judicial Referees; (Unit 2) Juvenile Court Officers; (Unit 2) Juvenile Staff; (Unit 2) Secretary Staff; (Unit 2) State Clerks of Court Staff; (Unit 3) Administration Staff; (Unit 3) Clerks of District Court; (Unit 3) Court Reporters; (Unit 3) Judicial Referees; (Unit 3) Juvenile Court Officers; (Unit 3) Juvenile Staff; (Unit 3) Secretary Staff; (Unit 3) State Clerks of Court Staff; (Unit 4) Administration Staff; (Unit 4) Clerks of District Court; (Unit 4) Court Reporters; (Unit 4) Judicial Referees; (Unit 4) Juvenile Court Officers; (Unit 4) Juvenile Staff; (Unit 4) Secretary Staff; (Unit 4) State Clerk of Court Staff; Knoebel, Dixie; Fair, Donna; Olson, Rodney; Bleuenstein, Chris
Cc: Holewa, Sally
Subject: Judicial Survey

Good Afternoon.

Below is the link for the survey referred to in Chief Justice VandeWalle's email:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB225KWUAA9JG>

Please take a few moments to complete this survey by October 5, 2006. Your participation is critical, as the results will be analyzed on a unit and statewide basis, and also be given to the Judicial Planning Committee to assist them in their planning process.

Those of you in Unit 1 may have already completed a similar survey. However, this survey is being conducted on a statewide basis, so please take a few moments to complete this one also.

Thank you for your participation.

Susan

*Susan Sisk
Director of Finance
ND Supreme Court
701-328-3509*

Sisk, Susan

From: Sisk, Susan
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2006 10:05 AM
To: (ALL) District Court Employees
Subject: Survey

Good Morning.

Apparently there was a problem with the distribution lists when the survey was emailed yesterday. Some county employees received the survey, and not all district employees did. IT has now set up one distribution list for all district employees.

What this means, is that the survey is invalid (since some county employees responded) and we need to redo it. I apologize for the inconvenience, but it is critical that we get valid survey results. The link to the new survey is:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB225PBBGCGWU>

Also, some of you have inquired as to the confidentiality of your responses. Rest assured, there is no way to track responses back to individuals. The website we are using compiles the information in total and gives us the number of respondents, but does not track who responded. Please be honest in your responses.

For those of you who have already responded, please take a few minutes to respond again. For those of you who haven't, please do. Your input is necessary to make this project successful.

Again, I apologize for the inconvenience.

Have a good day,

Susan

Appendix 3. - Focus Group Questions

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Topic - Lack of recognition by supervisors and discussing employee performance

In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.

In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.

1. Why do you think supervisors are hesitant to praise or recognize individual employees?
2. What type of work/actions do you think deserve recognition?
3. How does the lack of recognition affect employee morale?
4. What specific actions can be taken in this area to show employees their contributions are valued?
5. What type of feedback, if any, are you receiving on your job performance?
6. Do you want your supervisor to talk to you about your performance? Why or why not?
7. Would you prefer a formal or informal evaluation process? Why?
8. How are problems regarding performance handled in your office and is it effective?

Topic - Communication

I am kept informed about matters that affect me.

I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.

1. Describe the communication among employees within your district?
2. Does that same level of communication exist at the unit level? What about statewide?
3. Can you give examples of the type of information that should be communicated to employees?
4. How can communication be improved at the various levels?

Topic - Administration (reorganization) of Judicial Branch

Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.

Employee discipline is handled fairly.

1. The survey indicated that court policies are not applied uniformly to all employees. In what type of situations is there a perception of inequality or lack of fairness?
2. How do you feel about the way employee discipline is handled? Is it fair? Consistent?
3. How can we ensure that employees are treated uniformly in regard to policy?

Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.

1. Describe issues that are not dealt with timely. Are they personnel related? Court related?
2. What can be done to resolve issues more timely?

The reorganization has been positive for my unit.

The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.

1. The survey indicated that in some units, employees do not feel reorganization has been positive either for their unit or for the court system as a whole. What do you see as the negatives to reorganization? What are the positives?
2. What can be done to address the areas perceived as negative?

The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.

1. Does the TCA understand and support your needs?
2. What can be done to address this?

Appendix 4. - Zoomerang District Court Employee Survey

District Court Employee Survey pt 2

Results Overview

Date: 10/6/2006 8:52 AM PST
 Responses: Completes
 Filter: No filter applied

General Questions			
1. I understand what is expected of me.			
Strongly Disagree		2	1%
Disagree		7	4%
Agree		105	61%
Strongly Agree		59	34%
Total		173	100%
2. I am kept informed about matters that affect me.			
Strongly Disagree		9	5%
Disagree		55	32%
Agree		94	54%
Strongly Agree		15	9%
Total		173	100%
3. I have the resources (materials, equipment, supplies, etc.) necessary to do my job well.			
Strongly Disagree		2	1%
Disagree		25	15%
Agree		100	58%
Strongly Agree		45	26%
Total		172	100%
4. My time and talents are well used.			
Strongly Disagree		8	5%
Disagree		27	16%
Agree		109	63%
Strongly Agree		29	17%
Total		173	100%
5. Communication within my division is good.			
Strongly Disagree		14	8%

			
Disagree		36	21%
Agree		104	60%
Strongly Agree		20	11%
Total		174	100%

6. In the last month, I was recognized and praised for doing a good job.

Strongly Disagree		27	16%
Disagree		43	25%
Agree		84	49%
Strongly Agree		17	10%
Total		171	100%

7. Someone in the court cares about me as a person.

Strongly Disagree		10	6%
Disagree		26	15%
Agree		105	61%
Strongly Agree		31	18%
Total		172	100%

8. I have opportunities to express my opinion about how things are done in my division.

Strongly Disagree		15	9%
Disagree		35	20%
Agree		101	58%
Strongly Agree		23	13%
Total		174	100%

9. The court is respected in the community.

Strongly Disagree		3	2%
Disagree		24	14%
Agree		121	70%
Strongly Agree		26	15%
Total		174	100%

10. My coworkers work well together.

Strongly Disagree		9	5%
Disagree		22	13%
Agree		101	58%
Strongly Agree		42	24%
Total		174	100%

11. I am encouraged to try new ways of doing things.

Strongly Disagree		5	3%
Disagree		36	21%
Agree		112	64%
Strongly Agree		21	12%
Total		174	100%

12. I understand the connection between the work I do and and the mission and goals of the court.

Strongly Disagree		1	1%
Disagree		18	10%
Agree		111	64%
Strongly Agree		44	25%
Total		174	100%

13. My working conditions and and enviroment enable me to do my job well.

Strongly Disagree		8	5%
Disagree		44	25%
Agree		101	58%
Strongly Agree		21	12%
Total		174	100%

14. I feel valued by my supervisor based on my knowledge and contribution to my division.

Strongly Disagree		12	7%
Disagree		26	15%
Agree		93	53%
Strongly Agree		43	25%
Total		174	100%

15. I feel free to speak my mind.

--	--	--	--

Strongly Disagree		23	13%
Disagree		35	20%
Agree		92	53%
Strongly Agree		24	14%
Total		174	100%

16. In the last month someone in the court has talked to me about my performance.

Strongly Disagree		24	14%
Disagree		77	45%
Agree		59	34%
Strongly Agree		13	8%
Total		173	100%

17. I enjoy coming to work.

Strongly Disagree		6	3%
Disagree		35	20%
Agree		101	58%
Strongly Agree		31	18%
Total		173	100%

18. My coworkers care about the quality of services and programs we provide.

Strongly Disagree		3	2%
Disagree		16	9%
Agree		110	64%
Strongly Agree		43	25%
Total		172	100%

19. I am treated with respect.

Strongly Disagree		4	2%
Disagree		27	16%
Agree		108	62%
Strongly Agree		34	20%
Total		173	100%

20. I am proud that I work in the court

--	--	--	--

Strongly Disagree		3	2%
Disagree		8	5%
Agree		103	60%
Strongly Agree		59	34%
Total		173	100%

Questions regarding Administrative Reorganization under 6.1 which took effect August 1, 2004:

21. Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.

Strongly Disagree		15	9%
Disagree		44	26%
Agree		95	56%
Strongly Agree		15	9%
Total		169	100%

22. Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.

Strongly Disagree		32	19%
Disagree		54	32%
Agree		72	42%
Strongly Agree		12	7%
Total		170	100%

23. Employee discipline is handled fairly.

Strongly Disagree		28	17%
Disagree		48	28%
Agree		79	47%
Strongly Agree		14	8%
Total		169	100%

24. Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.

Strongly Disagree		17	10%
Disagree		55	32%
Agree		89	52%
Strongly Agree		10	6%
Total		171	100%

25. I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.

Strongly Disagree		0	0%
Disagree		3	2%
Agree		131	77%
Strongly Agree		37	22%
Total		171	100%

26. The reorganization has been positive for my unit.

Strongly Disagree		21	13%
Disagree		54	33%
Agree		76	46%
Strongly Agree		15	9%
Total		166	100%

27. I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.

Strongly Disagree		23	14%
Disagree		61	36%
Agree		75	44%
Strongly Agree		11	6%
Total		170	100%

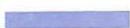
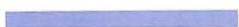
28. The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.

Strongly Disagree		20	12%
Disagree		53	32%
Agree		82	49%
Strongly Agree		12	7%
Total		167	100%

29. The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.

Strongly Disagree		9	5%
Disagree		40	23%
Agree		99	58%
Strongly Agree		23	13%
Total		171	100%

30. The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs

Strongly Disagree		26	16%
Disagree		43	26%
Agree		80	48%
Strongly Agree		18	11%
Total		167	100%

33. I am employed in Unit:

Unit 1		43	26%
Unit 2		60	36%
Unit 3		37	22%
Unit 4		24	14%

34. Division:

Juvenile		45	29%
Administration		31	20%
Clerk		75	49%

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Appendix 5. - Zoomerang District Judge Survey

Zoomerang | District Court Judge Survey: Results Overview

Page 1 of 3

District Court Judge Survey Results Overview

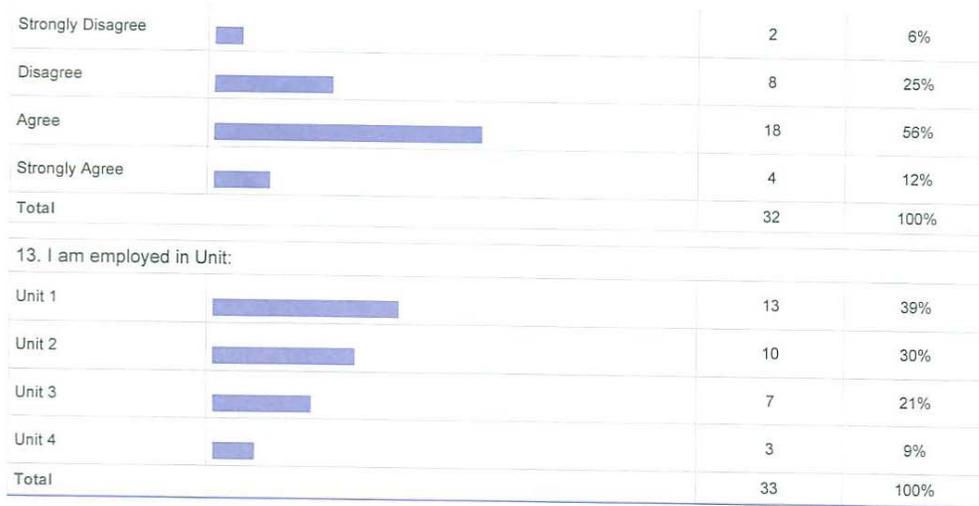
Date: 10/6/2006 8:52 AM PST
Responses: Completes
Filter: No filter applied

Questions regarding Administrative Reorganization under 6.1 which took effect August 1, 2004:			
1. Supervisory roles are clear within my unit.			
Strongly Disagree		4	12%
Disagree		7	22%
Agree		17	53%
Strongly Agree		4	12%
Total		32	100%
2. Court policies are applied uniformly to all employees.			
Strongly Disagree		1	3%
Disagree		9	29%
Agree		19	61%
Strongly Agree		2	6%
Total		31	100%
3. Employee discipline is handed fairly.			
Strongly Disagree		1	4%
Disagree		5	18%
Agree		20	71%
Strongly Agree		2	7%
Total		28	100%
4. Issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.			
Strongly Disagree		1	3%
Disagree		8	26%
Agree		19	61%
Strongly Agree		3	10%
Total		31	100%
5. I am held accountable for the responsibilities of my position.			
Strongly Disagree		0	0%

<http://www.zoomerang.com/web/reports/PrintResultsPage.aspx>

10/6/2006

Disagree		0	0%
Agree		20	62%
Strongly Agree		12	38%
Total		32	100%
6. The reorganization has been positive for my unit.			
Strongly Disagree		4	13%
Disagree		7	23%
Agree		16	53%
Strongly Agree		3	10%
Total		30	100%
7. I am kept informed of changes and issues in the court.			
Strongly Disagree		2	6%
Disagree		9	28%
Agree		16	50%
Strongly Agree		5	16%
Total		32	100%
8. The reorganization has been positive for the court system as a whole.			
Strongly Disagree		3	10%
Disagree		7	23%
Agree		17	57%
Strongly Agree		3	10%
Total		30	100%
9. The role of the Presiding Judge is clear to me.			
Strongly Disagree		3	9%
Disagree		6	18%
Agree		22	67%
Strongly Agree		2	6%
Total		33	100%
10. The trial court administrator understands and supports my needs.			



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Figure 7

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