



BEAUMARIS PRIMARY SCHOOL PLANNING SURVEY REPORT

September 2008

School Community Perceptions





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1. BACKGROUND

Beumaris is nearing its final year (2009) of a 5 year Strategic Plan, aimed at developing a 'Whole School Thinking, Learning and Caring Community.' In doing so two key goals were articulated:

1.1. **Strategic Goal One: To develop a whole school learning, thinking & caring community through**

1. Developmental transition through primary school
2. Lifelong learning competencies & strategies
3. Middle schooling culture and skills
4. Values, pastoral care & social skills
5. Productive pedagogy & assessment
6. Creativity & Well Being
7. Core skills, learning, understandings, knowledge and practices
8. Technology, as a vehicle for learning & thinking

1.2. **Strategic Goal Two: To promote high standards of student academic & social achievement through**

1. Motivated & engaged students
2. Inclusive, safe & stimulating learning environments
3. Motivated & capable workforce
4. Strong organisational & management support

2. RATIONALE

Annual Action Plans scaffolded specific action areas not only deliver the vision, but also to initiate annual cyclical reviews. These in turn evaluated where we were at, how we were going and what we needed to do in order to 'flesh out' specific targets and objectives. 2009 will largely be the final year of the Strategic Plan and a time for review as the school moves into its next strategic development phase.

Aspects of the two key goals will be evaluated during 2008/2009 via: data analysis (WALNA; NAPLAN; PIPS; Support Program Assessments; Sub School standardised assessments; Reporting; classroom assessments); staff feedback; student input and school community input.

Feedback from the school community is a critical aspect of the overall review, as it offers closer insights into how our 'customers' perceive our performance and the delivery of planned targets over the past four years. Given the changing demographics and increasingly multi cultural composition of students, this information is critical, not only to measure how we are going, but to also draw on the experiences these families bring with them in suggesting how we might improve our operations and outcomes, as well as what needs to be retained and developed further.

3. SURVEY

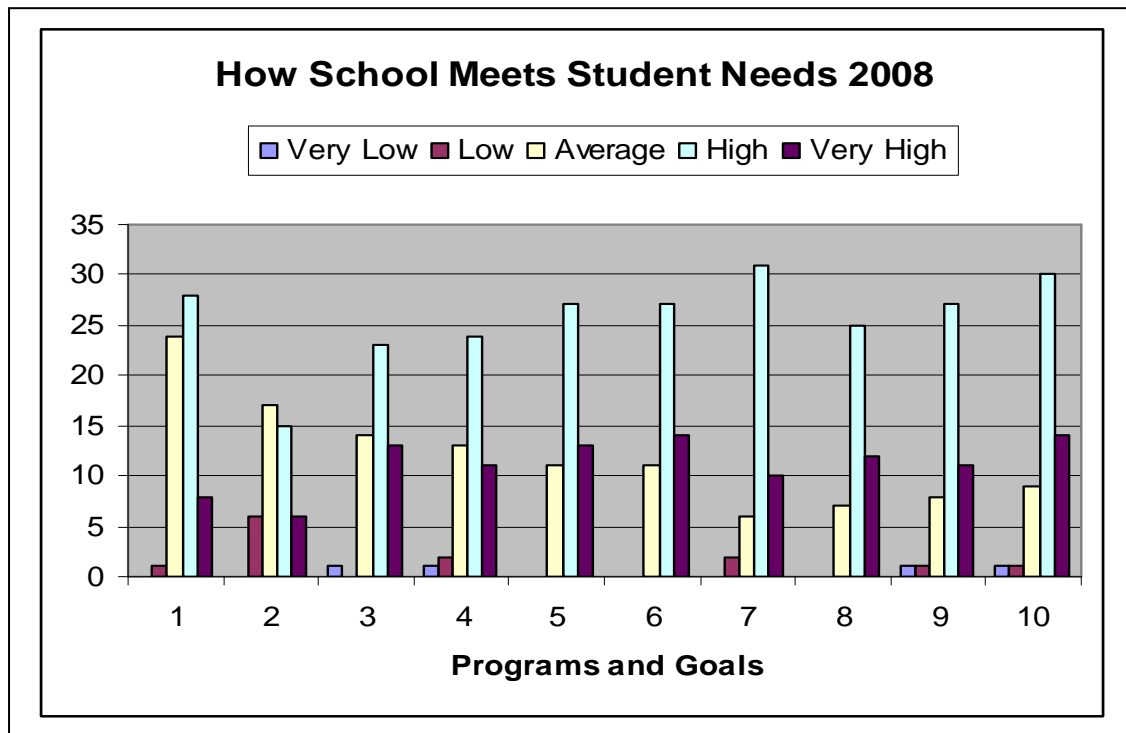
The brief Planning Survey issued to families in 2008 was a similar version of one used previously in 2005. In this manner longitudinal data could provide a more effective picture of: whether we were on target; whether we were responding to parent suggestions; and whether we were value adding over time. The survey was forwarded to all families requesting an early response with regards to perceptions and understandings on a number of school operational aspects to assist with 2009 planning. Of the total around 20% of families responded, which was almost double the response rate in 2005. Follow up from past surveys revealed parents were satisfied and preferred not to respond. However, the significant sample did offer a general view and direction for the school.

4. SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1. How do you feel the school meets the needs of your child/children?

Family perceptions were sought in terms of how the school met student needs in a variety of areas:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Academically | 5. Inclusivity | 8. Citizenship |
| 2. Extracurricular Interests | 6. Health/Physical Well Being | 8. Self Esteem |
| 3. Socially | 7. Student Behaviour | 9. Independence and Confidence |
| 4. Emotionally | | |

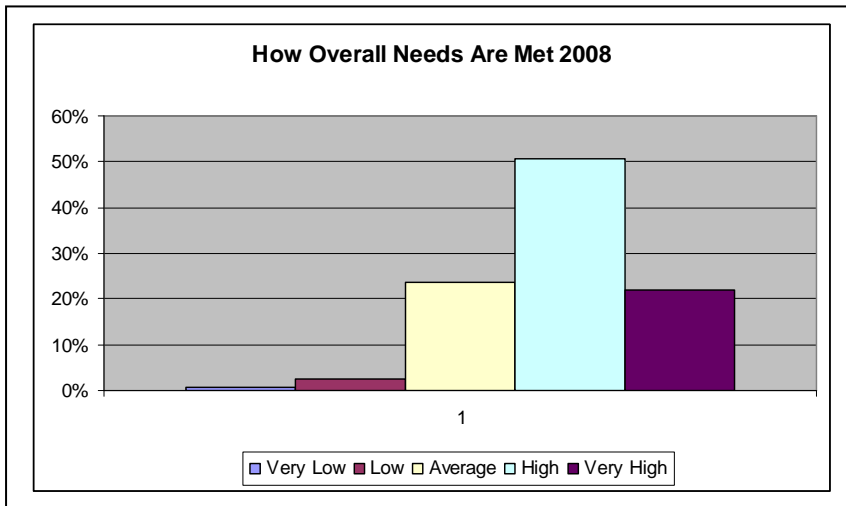


In each category the majority of respondents perceived the school as meeting needs at a high or very high level. Rankings for Academic needs have a higher Average component (39%) than other areas, only 2% of respondents ranked it as low, with some 60% ranking it High to Very High. These figures vary from 2005 where around 30% of respondents ranked this area as average and almost 70% High to Very High. The larger sample may attribute to the variation, as may the demographic changes over the past few years. The number of identified students with learning needs has increased, with a corresponding decline in the number of students identified for PEAC Programs, now below the district average. This shift has realised significant investment in support programs and personnel, perhaps at the expense of catering for other students with needs for extension and TAG programs. We can only surmise the shift in parent perceptions, but it is an area which will require further investigation of our practices over the coming year.

Written comments in later sections largely focused on requests for more special needs support programs and personnel, as well as more extension opportunities. Others question provision for the 'average students' given time and resources put into students with learning difficulties. These were only a minority. The same respondents reflected these views with Social, Emotional and Inclusivity needs.

From feedback comments there is a degree of ambiguity and lack of awareness about the school's extracurricular activities, especially by families with students only in the Junior Sub School. Again this is reflected by a few comments in later sections, with a small minority also suggesting access to all programs be extended throughout all sub schools. However, the percentage is statistically insignificant. The issue of better communication re: program is ongoing and needs to continue to be addressed.

Overall 73% of respondents indicated the school was meeting student needs at a high or very high level, with 24% suggesting an average outcome. Only 4% indicated they felt the school was low to very low.



In comparison to 2005, feedback suggests we have improved our overall capacity to address needs.

	Very Low/Low	Average	High/Very High
2005 Rankings	5%	31%	65%
2008 Rankings	4%	24%	73%
Variation	-1%	-7%	+8%

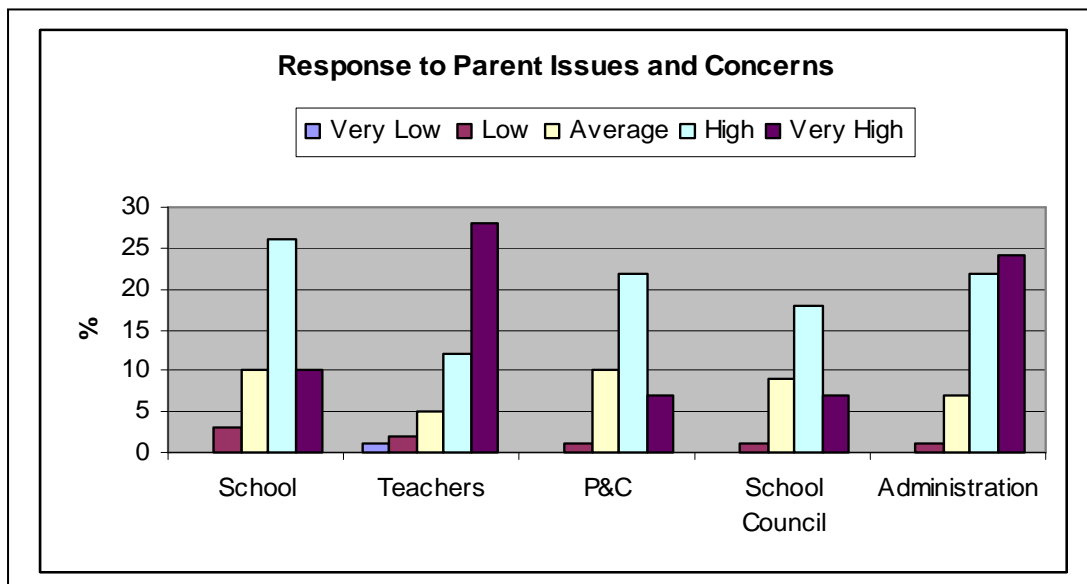
Perceptions by parents suggest the programs and action plans of previous years have been and still are successful. The positive outcome being a continued improvement in how we address local needs within the context of our overall Strategic Plan. In general there is stronger support for the school with parents acknowledging current practices and cultures. This represents a positive message for staff and students alike. There were very few additional comments to this section to influence overall perceptions.

4.1.1. *Proposed Recommendations*

- Further investigation of how we cater for the more able students needs, across the school, with a view to developing more overt and active extension, come TAGs programs and challenges.
- Better communication of school extracurricular activities, including the Awards Programs, to the whole school community. (Perhaps improve parent involvement via Student Services)

4.2. How would you rank responses to your issues and concerns?

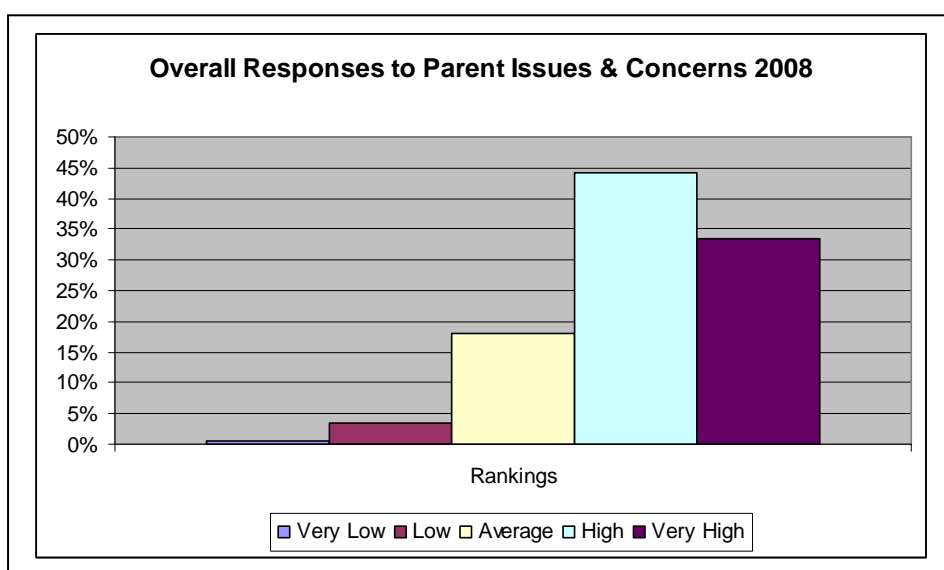
Families were also surveyed about their perceptions in terms of how issues and concerns were responded to by: School; Teachers; P&C; School Council; Administration; and Other.



Exceptionally high rankings of 80% plus were given to school staff, both teachers and Administration in terms of responding to parents. From 2005 these rankings are slightly higher for teachers (79%) and markedly higher for Administration (up from 65%). The latter may reflect stabilisation of the Admin team with appointment of substantive staff. Regardless parent perceptions are very supportive of interactions and responses by school staff. Comments to the contrary in later sections tend to be by a very small minority with a particular historical case issue that may or may not have resolved itself. Their perceptions have not impacted on the overall result, but at the same time the school aims to address all issues and concerns, sometimes not to the satisfaction of all parties. The school will continue to do so in the future. Overall perceptions suggest 71% of respondents rank the school as either High or Very High in addressing parent needs. Less than 1% ranked the school as Low. This is a positive outcome.

Both P&C and School Council were also positively regarded, but not to the same extent. Later comments suggest more awareness information is required.

Overall parent perceptions are very positive (78% High to Very High) with regard to issues and concerns being addressed. Only 4% of parents responded with a Low ranking. Again there has been a slight increase in positive perceptions since 2005.



Again there very few additional comments, which varied and were quite specific about singular items:

Positive Comments	Everything satisfactory; Love extracurricular Parent Performance night; Love rotational organisation of Athletics Carnival; Teachers always available to talk to when needed
Negative Comments	Slow response when appointment with principal was requested; More help for special needs children; Better response for special needs children

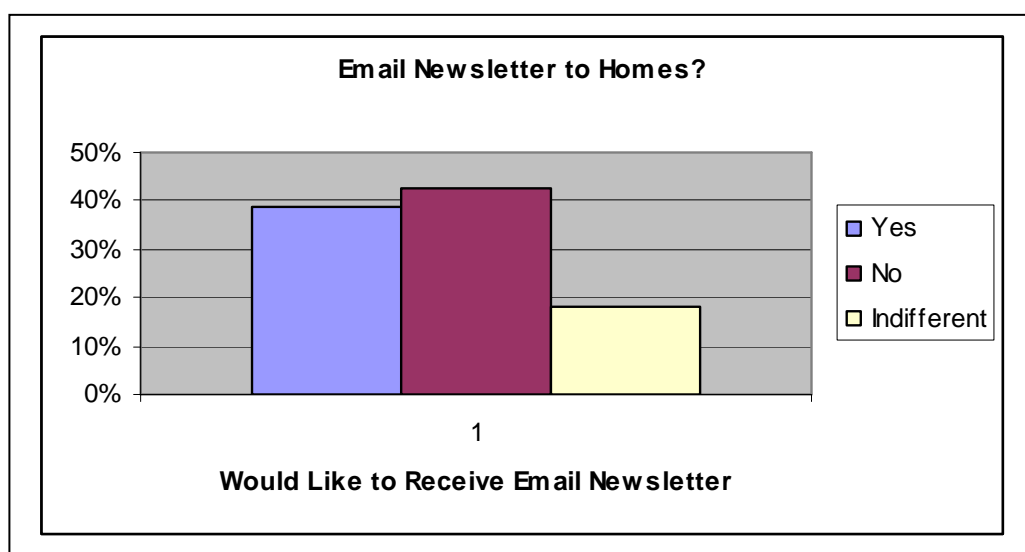
4.2.1. Proposed Recommendations:

- Continue to ensure parent issues and concerns are responded to and addressed.
- Promote the operations, role and structures of the P&C and especially the School Council
- Promote parent involvement in various programs, via Student Services.

4.3. Would you prefer the school newsletter to be emailed to you?

Part of our strategic journey has been the up-skilling and implementation of IT and Smart Technology hardware and software, integrated in learning pathways. This has also included IT workshops for parents and the development of home – classroom technology links via Blogs and email. Part of the transition has been an upgraded web site which is interactive and an essential resource for parents regarding: information; enrolments; employment; special activities; news; surveys; and many other things. The site is not only well used by the school community but also by others, globally.

In an attempt to streamline communications the survey asked parents if they would prefer to receive an emailed copy of the school newsletter. The response to date has not been overly positive, but more so than in 2005. Most parents still wish to receive a hard copy in preference to an electronic version. Despite having made an extended version available on line, with additional pictorial information, 'old habits' have proven difficult to change. The aim to connect to each home via newsletter and reduce our own 'carbon print' through volumes of paper has only received slightly increased support from 2005. It is an area which will require further awareness promotion.



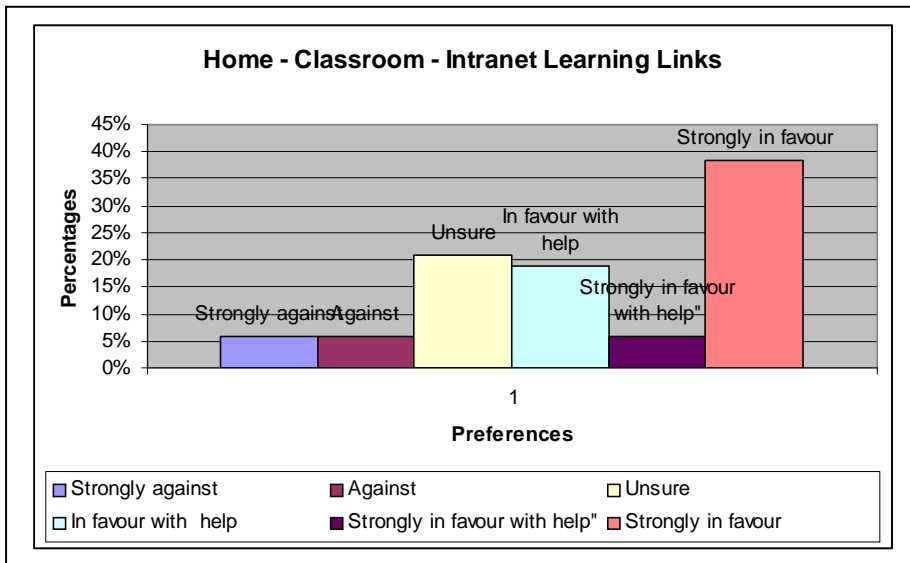
In all 39% of respondents indicated a preference for electronic newsletters. Some 43% disagreed and 18% remained indifferent. In 2005, 7% said yes, 60% disagreed and 33% were indifferent. There has been a significant shift towards achieving our goal, but more promotion and awareness raising needs to be undertaken. This may be possible in 2009?

4.3.1. Proposed Recommendations:

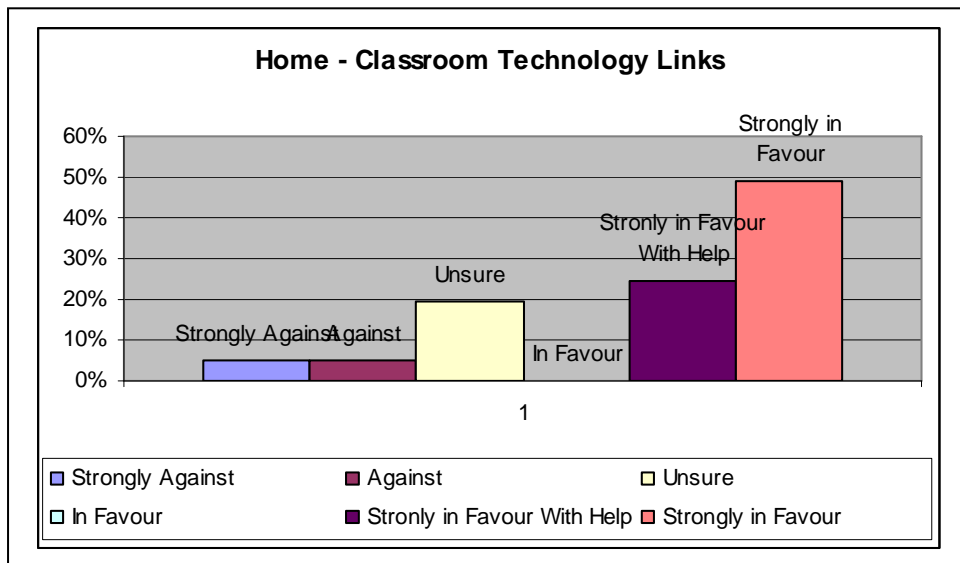
- Continue to promote awareness and the need to move to a paper free newsletter in 2009, with continuation of the download service on the school web site.

4.4. What do you think of developing a school/class home link for school and classroom communications as well as learning programs on intranet & via email?

Additionally as school based technology skills and interactions have increased, teachers are also experimenting and developing home – classroom links, typically through Classroom Blogs which include schedules, class information, homework, email facilities, etc. While the initial question was raised in 2005, respondents were positive but also generally unclear and uncertain, as per following graph:



These figures have changed somewhat in 2008, with more people in favour and more polarised responses.



In essence 73% of respondents are strongly in favour, of which 24% have requested some form of assistance. Only 10% were opposed and some 20% unsure. The interesting aspect is the lack of ‘In Favour’ respondents which supports the polarised view and fact the school community is further developed in its use and understanding of IT. This in turn supports our vision and goal: ‘Developing a Whole School Learning, Thinking and Caring Community.’

4.4.1. Proposed Recommendation:

- With the assistance of a Lottery West P&C Grant, the school further develops Smart technology at both school and community level, undertaking a series of workshops for parents and staff alike that will enhance the understanding, skills, implementation and risk management of home – classroom links.

4.5. Any other general comments about future planning for the school:

In order to maximise parent input the survey invited an open ended opportunity to propose future aspects for school development, negative or positive. Responses are summarised below:

Classification	Comments	
Facilities	Canteen is old - needs upgrade; Replace demountables; Fence around school; Soft toilet paper; Hand drier in toilets; Playground on oval; Fence off kids bikes;	19%
School in General	None, keep it up; Continually keep up the improvements	17%
Transport	Seatbelts in buses; Parking;	14%
Support/Special Programs	Meet special needs - better resources; More specialist teachers; More parent meeting opportunities; More assistants for special needs;	11%
Organisation	Composite classes – negative and positive; High class numbers; Synchronise teacher - parent working hours	8%
Teaching - Learning	Maybe more focus on basics; Same syllabus for all kids;	6%
Extracurricular activities	After school clubs; More extracurricular activities for Middle/Junior schools (eg Arts; Chess Club; etc);	6%
Awards	Same kids get badges - need to recognise well behaved students; Year 6's leaving school for Yr 7 to get same rewards/incentive programs in Yr 6;	6%
Sport	Swimming in Summer; More competition;	6%
LOTE	Don't teach French - teach Chinese;	3%
Health & Well Being	School needs to do more about 'obesity epidemic' - no sweets for rewards	3%
Technology	Continue Smart technology;	3%
Communication	Email communication between teachers - parents;	3%
Homework	Levelled home reading;	3%

The majority of these comments are related to matters that are determined by external variables, whether they be capital works, service providers, local curricular links or facilities. These account for over 40% of comments, with regards to ideas for future improvement. Some 20% wish the school to continue as is and keep up the improvements. The remainder consist of one or two comments which statistically are too few to impact upon whole school development. They are generally related to the same matters some parents have raised in relation to a classroom issue or lack of policy awareness.

Overall there is no general area of criticism or future focus need from the school community. This does not signify the school does not need to improve, but rather the fact the challenge will be to continue to maintain and further develop current services and positive outcomes.

4.5.1. Proposed Recommendation:

- The school continues to consolidate and further develop its strategic vision, as a whole school community.

4.6. What do you like about Beaumaris that is worth retaining/even developing further?

In addition to seeking suggestions for improvement, parents were also invited to identify things they valued about the school; things worth retaining and further developing.

<u>Any General Comments About What You Like About BPS & is Worth Retaining & Developing Further:</u>		
Classification	Comments	
Extracurricular Activities/Programs	Extend music & art to every term; Keep up Arts programs; Assemblies (6); Develop more music throughout the years; Open Night; Performances; Easter Fair; Arts Programs (5);	22%
Positive Staff	Devoted teachers; Pay teachers more; School Principal; Caring & loving teachers/Assistants; Wonderful staff; Wonderful Admin; Friendly staff; teacher Assistants;	13%
School Ethos & Culture	Friendly school; Happy school; Fish philosophy; Fun school; Positive relationships between teachers-parents; Positive relationships between teachers-students; Overall feeling of 'Family'; Good school atmosphere; Great Community Spirit;	11%
Special & Support Programs	Maintain support & extra help; Supportive remedial programs; Maintain & develop Buddy Program (2) ; IEP's are good; Extension groups - develop further;	9%
Awards Systems	Continue merit certificates/awards; Maintain incentives;	6%
General	Keep going; Continue to develop and progress what is needed to be at the forefront of modern education; Keep moving forward as top school in this area;	5%
Self Esteem	Keep up self esteem programs; Confidence building (2); Students self esteem - keep it up;	5%
Sport	Great program; Fitness program; Athletics Carnival; Swimming program;	5%
Citizenship	Continue to develop good citizenship; Student leadership; School Councillors	4%
Technology	SmartBoards are great!; Class Blogs;	4%
Organisation	Synchronise teachers - parents working hours; Positive composite classes (2);	4%
Health & Well Being	Life Education Van is good; Social development; DISCO's to make friends	4%
School & Learning Environment	Clean school; Wonderful environment for children;	3%
Parent Involvement	Continue parent involvement; After assemblies parent - teacher morning teas;	3%
Communication	Advising parents how they can assist struggling children;	1%
High Standards	High academic achievement;	1%
MSB	Excellent student behaviour;	1%

Almost all returns (over 90%) had respondent comments in this section of the survey. Strongest support was shown for Extracurricular Programs, including the Awards System, Citizenship and School Ethos and Culture. These collectively account for over 40% of comments. High regard for staff is confirmed in this section as well, being the second highest individual area for positive comments. The remainder link directly or indirectly to: teaching – learning relationships and programs; learning environment; parent inclusivity; and standards. Parents understand, recognise and appreciate the fact staff take 'the extra yard' to enable such positive outcomes. All comments are positively related to the 2005 – 2009 Strategic plan; its goals, vision and strategic directions for school development.

4.6.1. Proposed Recommendation:

- The school continues to consolidate and further develop its strategic vision, as a whole school community.

4.7. Conclusions:

Overall there has been an even more positive response in terms of school operations, relationships and directions in comparison to 2005. The vast majority of respondents perceive Beaumaris to continue to be successfully meeting expectations. However there is no room for complacency. There is still room for improvement in terms of promoting programs and services to broaden community understanding. So too is there a need to up-skill parents as the school continues to develop its vision and emphasis on IT.

The overwhelming community perception suggests any future strategic planning and school development needs to continue to further develop and mature the vision, goals and directions of the 2005 – 2009 Strategic Plan. Parents are recognising that we have something special at Beaumaris and that something is worth keeping and developing further. This will be the school's future challenge...taking the vision to the next level.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Summary of recommendations:

- Further investigation regarding how we cater for the more able students needs to be undertaken, across the school, with a view to developing more overt and active extension, come TAGs programs and challenges.
- Better communication of school extracurricular activities, including the Awards Programs, to the whole school community.
- Promote parent involvement in various programs, via Student Services.
- Continue to ensure parent issues and concerns are responded to and addressed.
- Promote the operations, role and structures of the P&C and especially the School Council
- Continue to promote awareness and the need to move to a paper free newsletter in 2009, with continuation of the download service on the school web site.
- With the assistance of a Lottery West P&C Grant, the school further develops Smart technology at both school and community level, undertaking a series of workshops for parents and staff alike that will enhance the understanding, skills, implementation and risk management of home – classroom links.
- The school continues to consolidate and further develop its strategic vision, as a whole school community.

Overwhelming community perception suggests any future strategic planning and school development needs to continue to further develop the vision, goals and directions of the 2005 – 2009 Strategic Plan.

In addition we need to also contextualise these recommendations within the context of our overall vision document:

- *Continue to develop and deliver recommendations from the document: 'Developing a Learning, Thinking and Caring Whole School Community!' (See executive summary – Intranet)*

Tony Misich
Principal
January 2009

Discussion Notes:

Recommendations – Suggestions: