Strategic Plan: Community Feedback

371 Responses as of January 5, 2024

PUBLIC SCHOOLS of BROOKLINE

Executive Summary

"Rigorous and challenging academics" scored a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 61.3 and "Strong core subjects" scored 58.6. Conversely, targeted school support for the "individual needs of the school communities" scored the lowest at -25.8. Meanwhile, "culturally-relevant learning opportunities" also scored in the negative at -9.2.

When asked to force rank, the following items scored the highest: 1) Rigorous and challenging academics (67.7%); Strong core subject courses (42.5%); and 3) Caring and nurturing environment (35.3%). Meanwhile, the three lowest were: A) School supports that target the individual needs of the school communities (4.7%); B) Clear and consistent communication (5.8%); and C) Culturally relevant learning opportunities (12.6%).

The qualitative comments underscored these trends. For Goal #1, there were 57 comments that mentioned the need for Achievement, including references to topics such as enrichment as well as rigor. Meanwhile, there were 42 comments that mentioned "Culturally Responsive" (with 15 being constructive or critical) and 32 comments related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), with 9 being constructive or critical. However, related to "Belonging," there was an overwhelming positive opinion with 55 out of 60 comments showing support for this topic. Similarly, the notion of "Safety" elicited 54 mentions, or which 46 were supportive. Moreover, the topic that elicited the most mentions was "Family and Community Engagement," with a total tally of 82 comments under Goal #2.

Given this, it can be surmised that the majority of respondents believe in partnering with families and the community to create safe environments that promote belonging while ensuring that students are held to high academic expectations.

Rigorous and challenging academics

366 responses
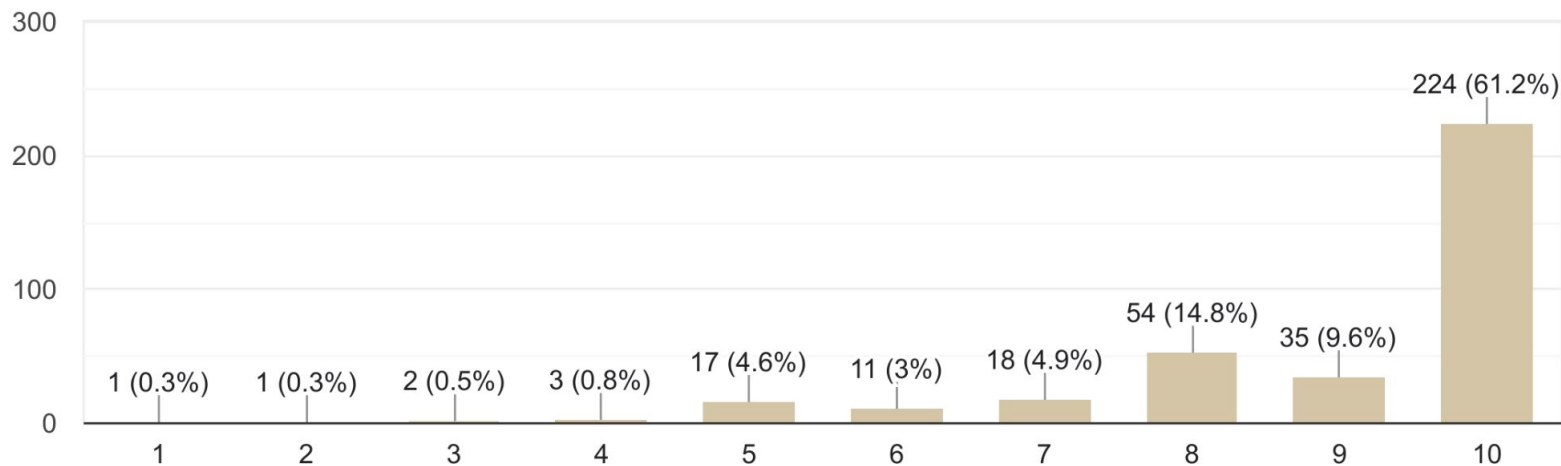
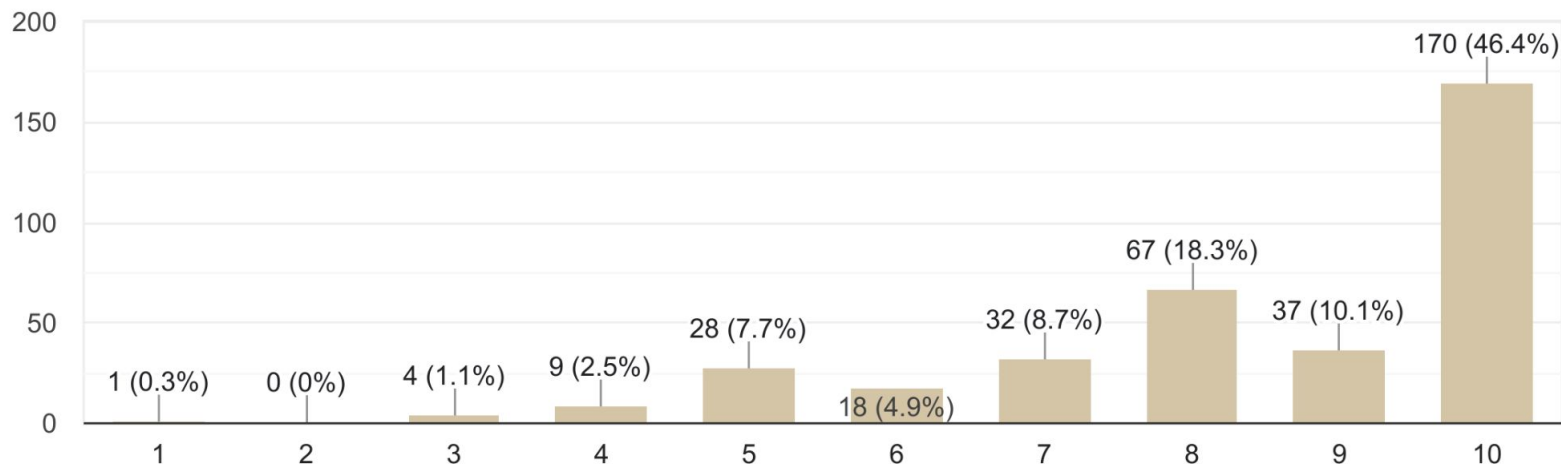## Caring and nurturing environment

366 responses

NET PROMOTER SCORE: –9.2

Culturally-relevant learning opportunities

366 responses

Bar chart values:
- 1: 32 (8.7%)
- 2: 4 (1.1%)
- 3: 22 (6%)
- 4: 15 (4.1%)
- 5: 38 (10.4%)
- 6: 37 (10.1%)
- 7: 38 (10.4%)
- 8: 66 (18%)
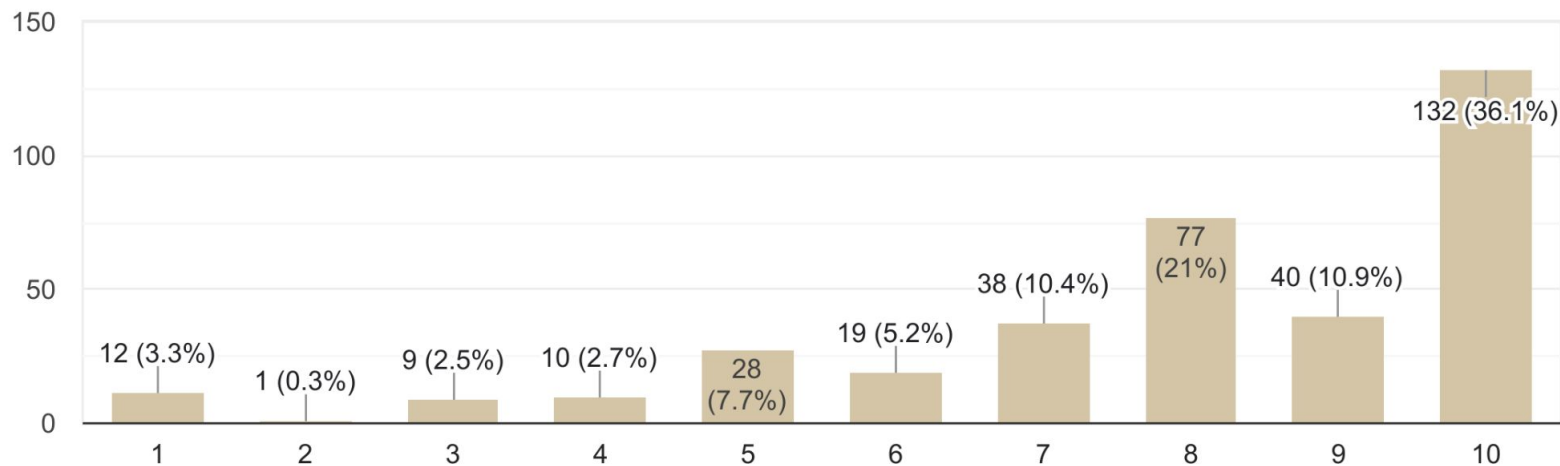- 9: 30 (8.2%)
- 10: 84 (23%)

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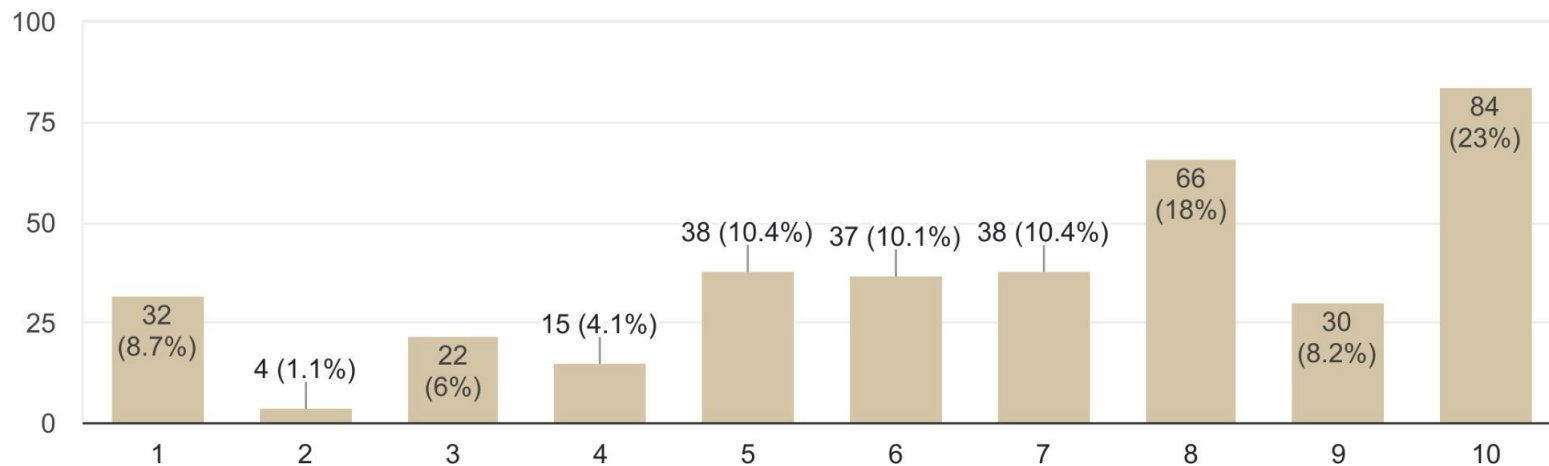
NET PROMOTER SCORE: 25.3

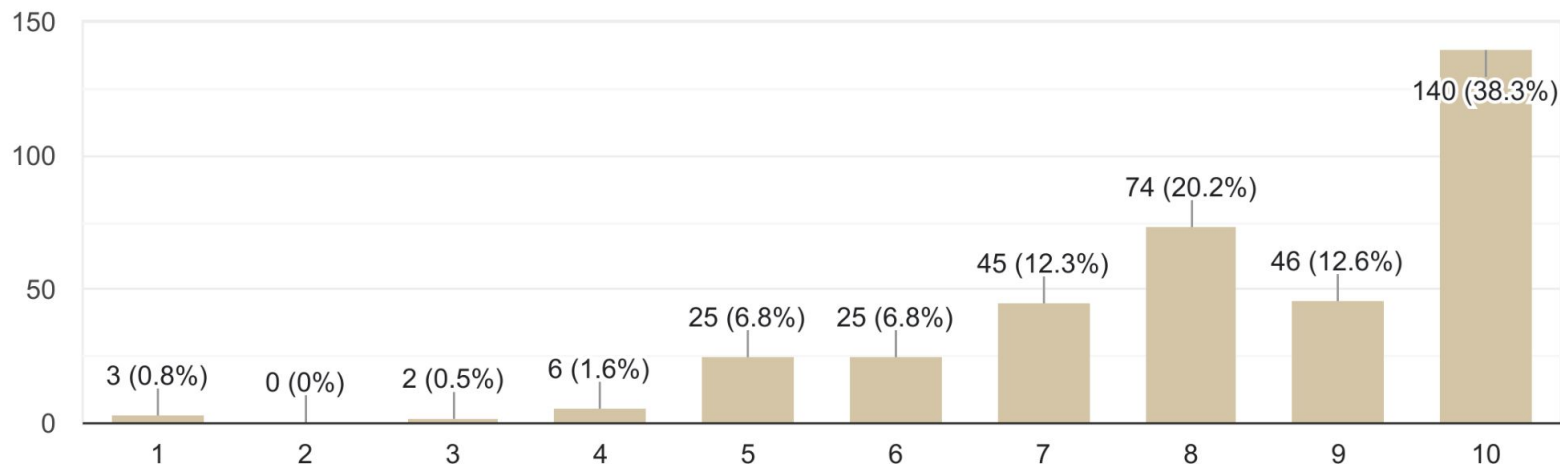School Supports that Focus on Students' Mental and Emotional Health

366 responses

NET PROMOTER SCORE: 34.4

Learning Programs and Opportunities that target students' individual needs
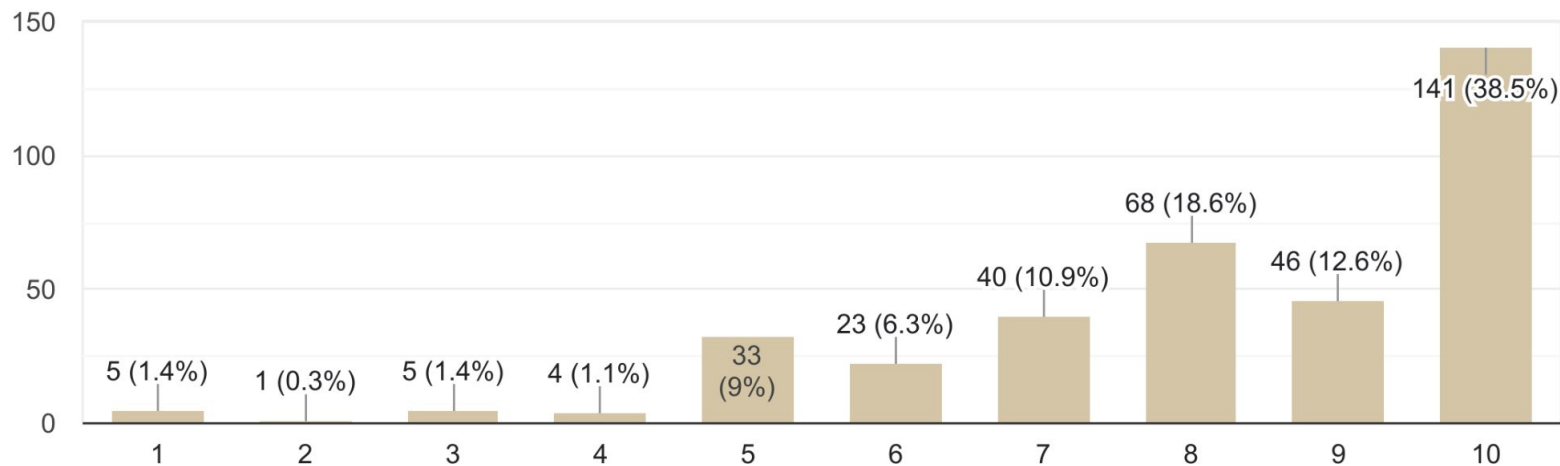
366 responses

Bar chart values:
- 1: 3 (0.8%)
- 2: 0 (0%)
- 3: 2 (0.5%)
- 4: 6 (1.6%)
- 5: 25 (6.8%)
- 6: 25 (6.8%)
- 7: 45 (12.3%)
- 8: 74 (20.2%)
- 9: 46 (12.6%)
- 10: 140 (38.3%)

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NET PROMOTER SCORE: 34.6

Strong school cultures that set positive schoolwide expectations
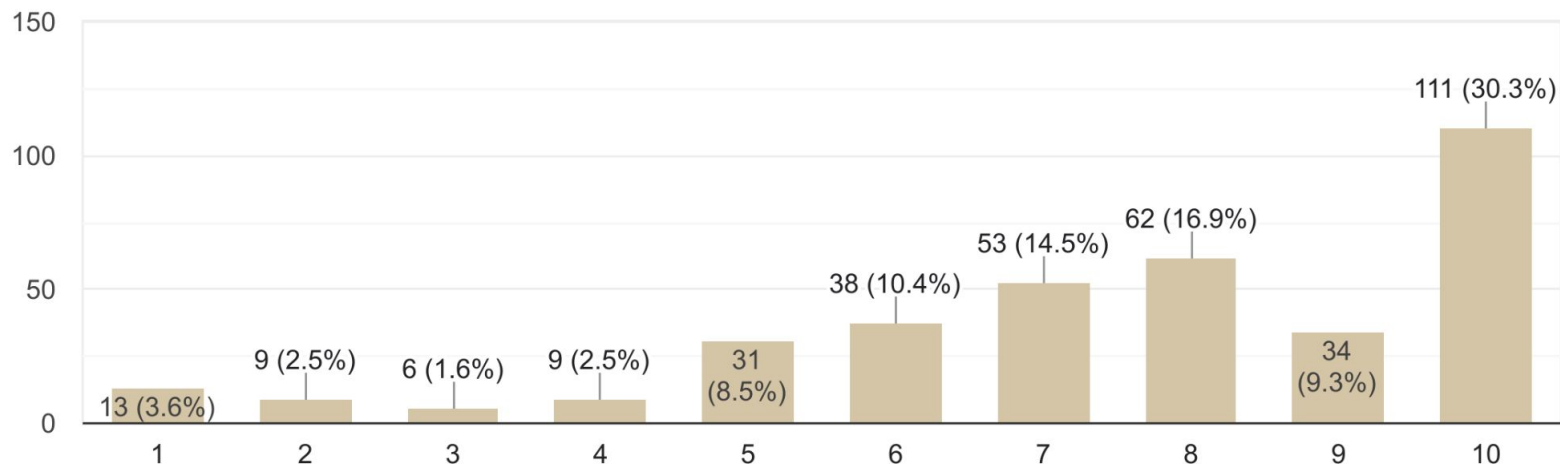
366 responses

NET PROMOTER SCORE: 10.5

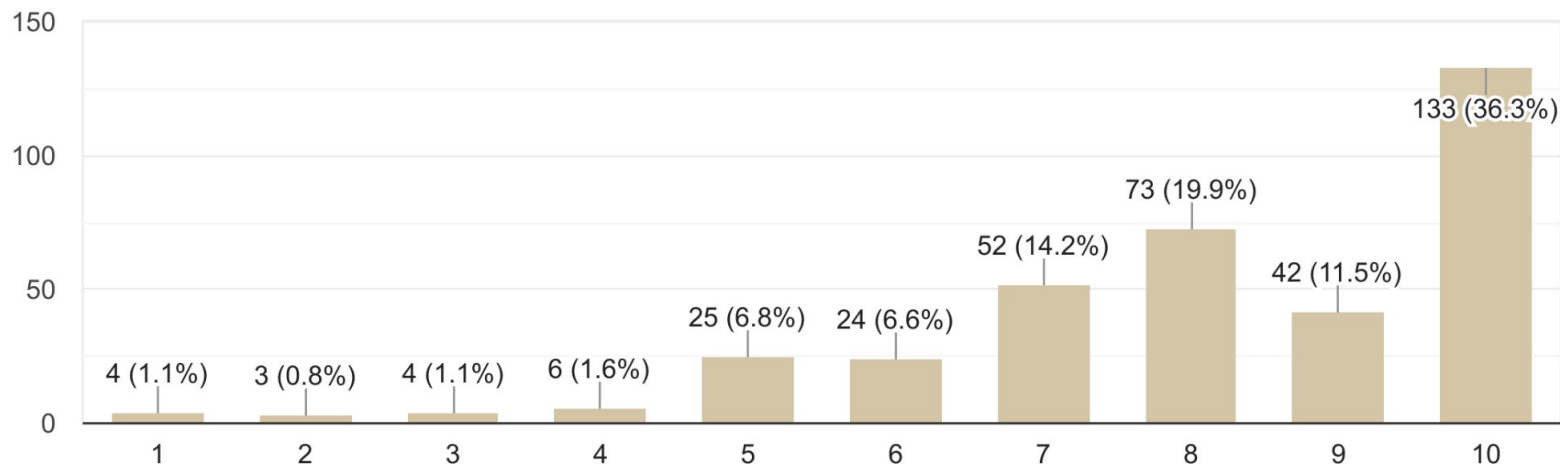Educational programs that support students' social emotional development

366 responses

NET PROMOTER SCORE: 29.8

Strong individual connections between students and teachers

366 responses

Bar chart values:
- 1: 4 (1.1%)
- 2: 3 (0.8%)
- 3: 4 (1.1%)
- 4: 6 (1.6%)
- 5: 25 (6.8%)
- 6: 24 (6.6%)
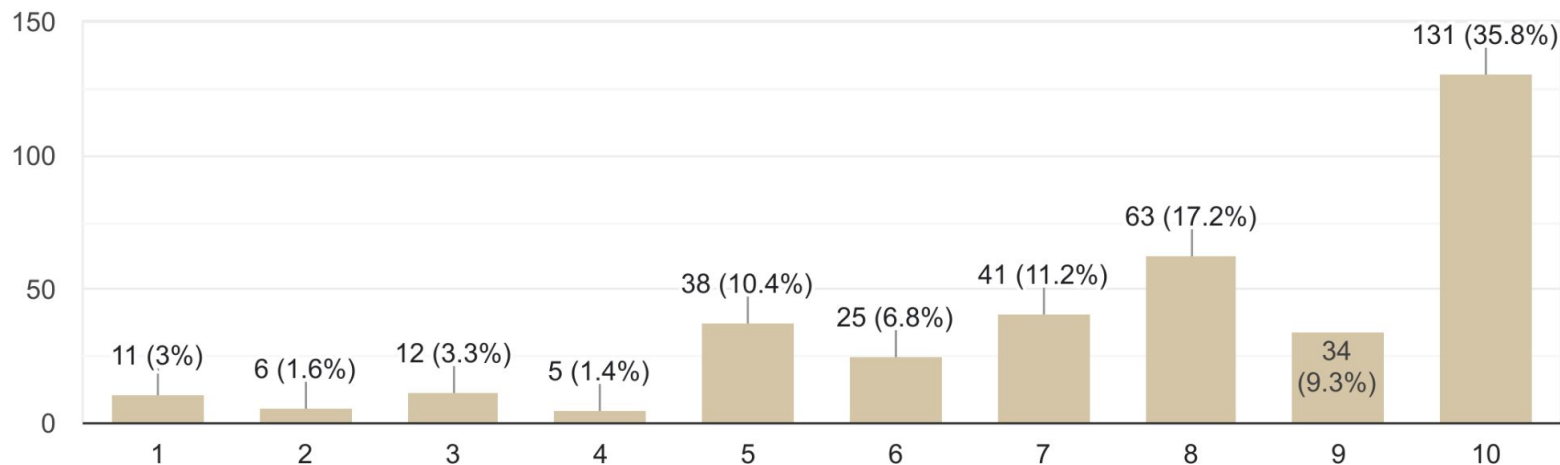- 7: 52 (14.2%)
- 8: 73 (19.9%)
- 9: 42 (11.5%)
- 10: 133 (36.3%)

NET PROMOTER SCORE: 21.3

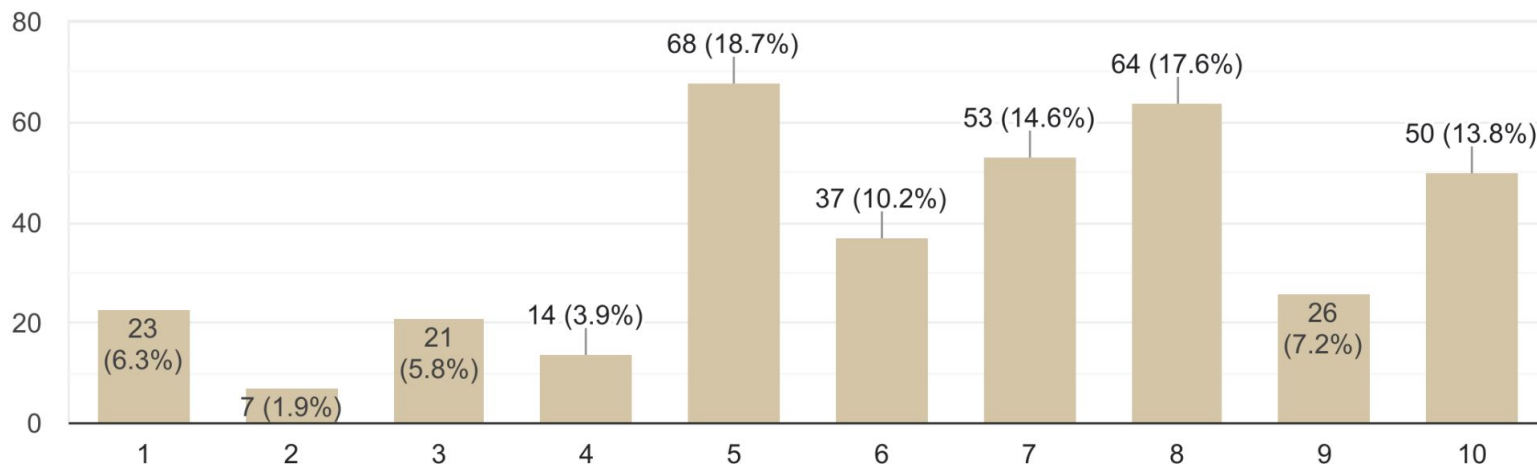School buildings and supports that focus on students' physical safety

366 responses

NET PROMOTER SCORE: -25.8

School supports that target the individual needs of the school communities

363 responses

- 1: 23 (6.3%)
- 2: 7 (1.9%)
- 3: 21 (5.8%)
- 4: 14 (3.9%)
- 5: 68 (18.7%)
- 6: 37 (10.2%)
- 7: 53 (14.6%)
- 8: 64 (17.6%)
- 9: 26 (7.2%)
- 10: 50 (13.8%)

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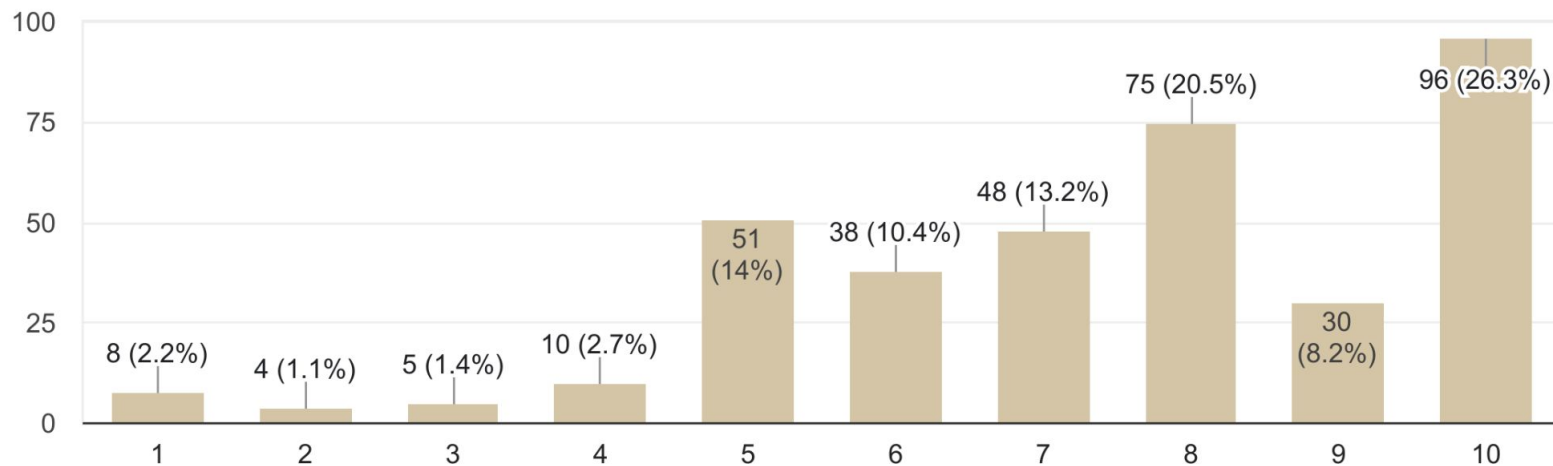
Programs and supports targeted at struggling students

366 responses
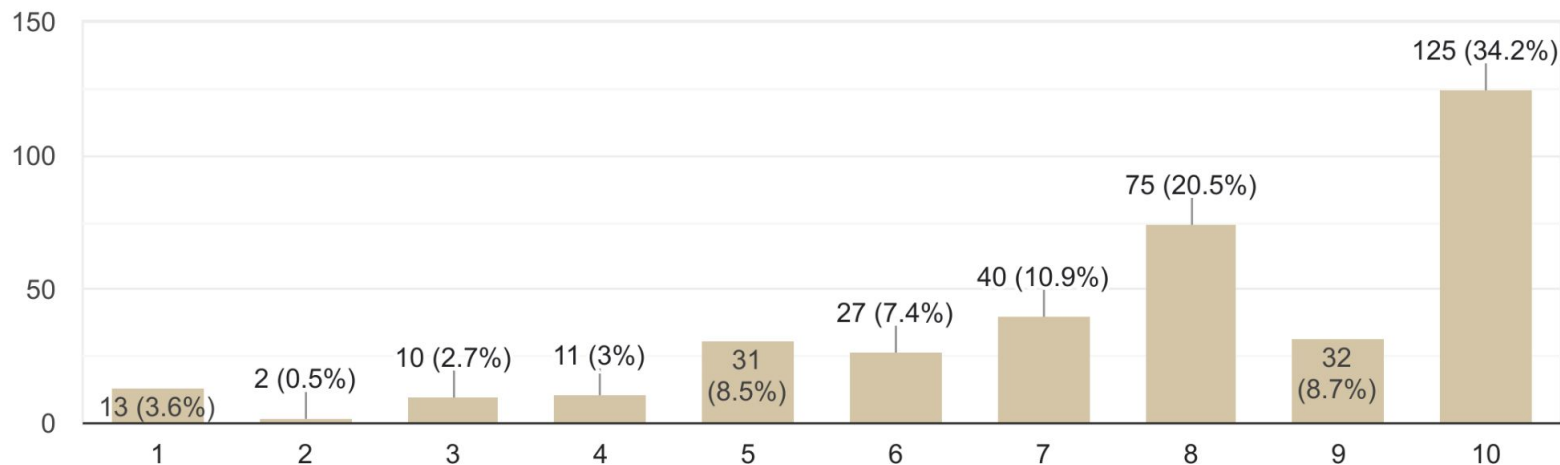
Strong core subject courses

366 responses

Using the same categories as above what are the top three most important areas the district should focus on. Please check only 3 boxes.

365 responses

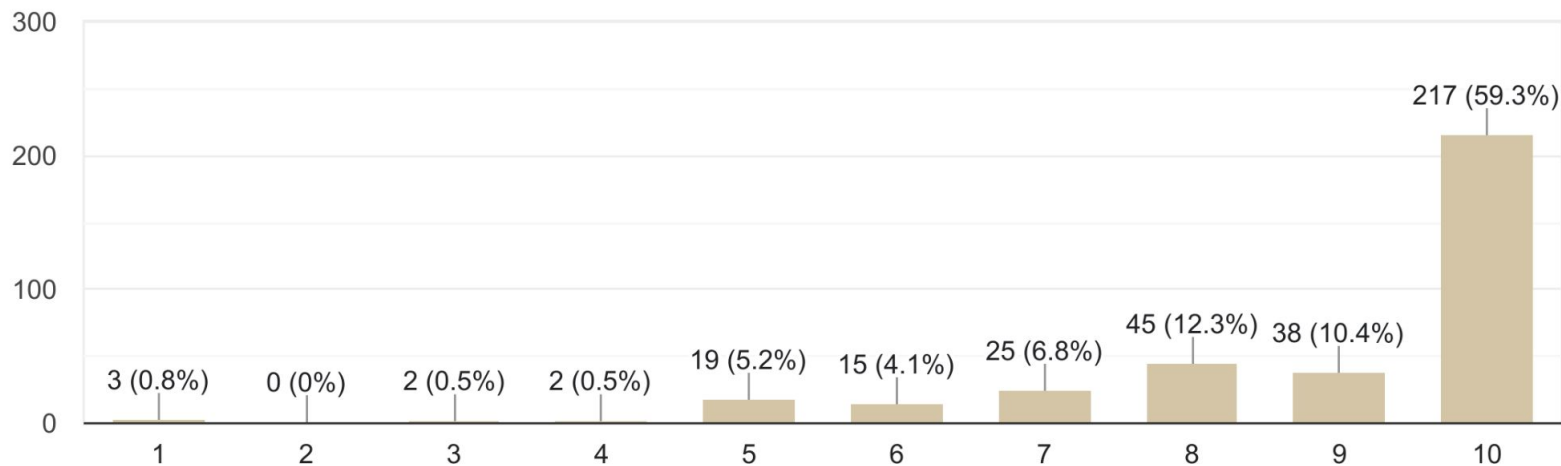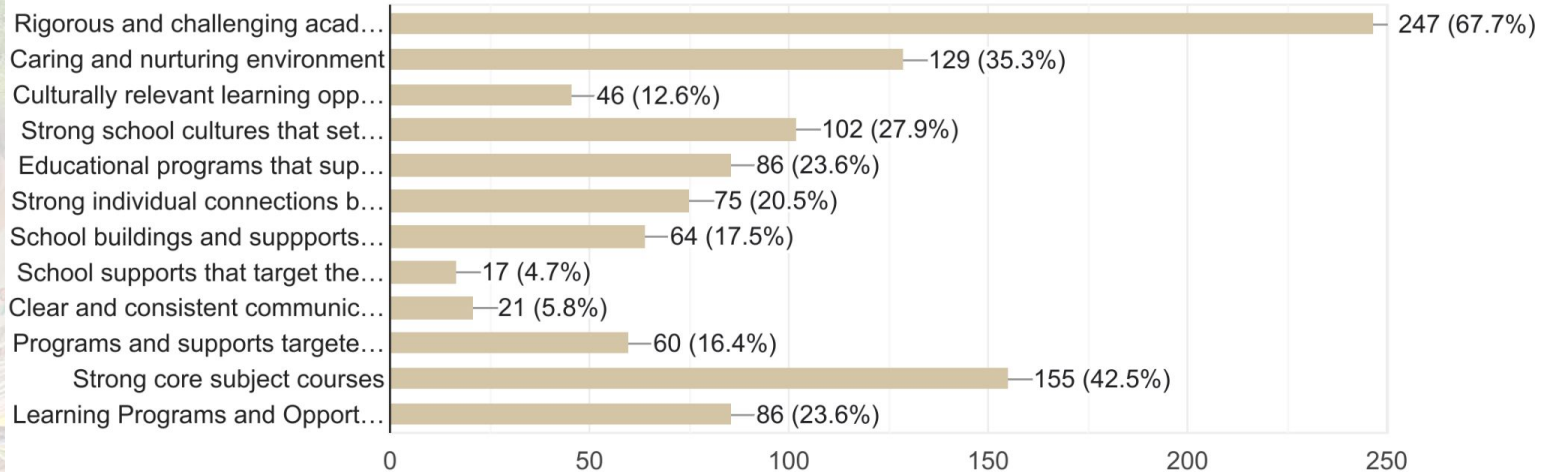| Category	Count (Percentage)
Rigorous and challenging acad…	247 (67.7%)
Caring and nurturing environment	129 (35.3%)
Culturally relevant learning opp…	46 (12.6%)
Strong school cultures that set…	102 (27.9%)
Educational programs that sup…	86 (23.6%)
Strong individual connections b…	75 (20.5%)
School buildings and suppports…	64 (17.5%)
School supports that target the…	17 (4.7%)
Clear and consistent communic…	21 (5.8%)
Programs and supports targete…	60 (16.4%)
Strong core subject courses	155 (42.5%)
Learning Programs and Opport…	86 (23.6%)

GOAL #1

WHAT RESONATED?

57% (125/221) qualitative comments were categorized as supportive, while 33% (72/221) were constructive or critical.

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Culturally Responsive Teaching: 42 mentions, of which 24 were supportive
- Achievement: 40 mentions, of which 19 were supportive
- Evidence-Based Practices: 26 mentions, of 25 were supportive
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) 32 mentions, of which 22 were supportive
- Assessments: 17 mentions, of which 9 were supportive
- Terminology (especially in regards to CRT & DEI): 13 mentions, of which 1 was supportive

WHAT IS MISSING?

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Achievement / Enrichment / Rigor: 57 mentions
- Teachers / Teaching & Learning: 15 mentions
- Benchmarks, Measures, & Outcomes: 11 mentions

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REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

Achievement: The district can not continue to ignore its students who are already doing well. If the emphasis is only to ensure proficiency but not to encourage academic excellence and rigor, ensuring a high level of learning and a strong foundation of knowledge and thinking, the exodus to private schools will accelerate. Students should be challenged regardless of what level they start at. It is not fair to the higher achievers that they are not given the attention and focus provided to others. Also how will educators be supported in providing direct hands on teaching rather than using the internet as a learning source for students.

Culturally Responsive & DEI: It would resonate better if the words 'equitable cohesive, culturally relevant' were eliminated as they are poorly defined and provide the opportunity for dissonance. What does 'equitable cohesive' mean??what does cultural relevant mean (relevant to whom and with regard to what culture?. how does that remain 'consistent' from year to year as the culture and issues affecting us change? How do you avoid the introduction of bias when interpreting 'culturally relevant')? Same point with 'culturally responsive' instruction. These are modifiers to standards that completely interfere with the notion of unbiased measurable outcomes.

Assessments: In terms of measurement of success with respect to students, it is totally focused on MCAS. Would like to see other types of assessment.

Teachers / Teaching & Learning: Empowering teachers. Outcomes based benchmarking as opposed to the MCAS bureaucracy. If anything, the plan sounds a lot like a politically inspired mandate that's going to be forced on everyone and leave even less freedom to teachers than they have today. If we are to attract and retain top talent, we must trust them not mandate them into oblivion with standards and percentage targets.

Terminology: This is mostlly a word-salad of nonsense. The goal here should be rigorous instruction of age-appropriate fundamentals in each content area. Not running a training camp for radical activists.

GOAL #2

WHAT RESONATED?

52% (99/190) of qualitative comments were categorized as supportive, while 18% (35/190) were constructive and/or critical.

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Family & Community Engagement: 84 mentions, of which 70 were supportive
- Culturally Responsive & DEI: 27 mentions, of which 12 were supportive (and 5 questioning terminology used)
- Communication: 11 mentions, of which 9 were supportive

WHAT IS MISSING?

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Culturally Responsive & DEI: 19 mentions
- Details: 13 mentions
- Benchmarks, Outcomes, & Measures: 10 mentions

Family & Community Engagement: What resonates with me is that this is common sense. We have always known that communication and connection between home and school is a rocket fuel to student investment, parent satisfaction and student learning. This should not be a revelation to us, this should be a foundational part of our mission. What is our mission, anyway? We need to articulate that consicely, clearly, consistently and much more publicly. We should see it hanging in the halls of every school. It should be an extension of our values. It should be apparent in student and staff behavior.

Culturally Responsive & DEI: Students need to learn to treat other people with empathy and respect, particularly at a time in our culture when social media and other cultural forces are encouraging just the opposite and stoking divisiveness.

Communication: Community is essential! appreciate the district's commitment to effective communication.

Details: I'm curious what action steps will be taken and how to ensure these become sustainable. One thought is that teachers need more time to effective and consistently engage in community engagement. One way to accomplish this is to regularly provide dedicated time to do this important work.

Benchmarks, Outcomes, & Measures: What are the starting points against which metrics will be measured? Why were these numbers chosen? How will you know if you are reaching all caregivers? Or is your satisfaction benchmark X% of respondents? Because if it is, then how do you characterize those who did not respond?

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GOAL #3

WHAT RESONATED?

66% (124/187) of qualitative comments were categorized as supportive, while 21% (40/187) were constructive and/or critical.

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Belonging: 60 mentions, of which 55 were supportive
- Safety: 54 mentions, of which 46 were supportive
- Community & Culture: 15 mentions, or which 11 were supportive
- DEI: 13 mentions, of which 8 were supportive

WHAT IS MISSING?

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Benchmarks, Measures, & Outcomes: 11 mentions
- DEI: 16 mentions, with 10 mentioning Jewish Identity & Antisemitism
- Safety: 13 mentions, with 3 mentions of Security

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Belonging: I think this is extremely important, and I am glad that students' and staff sense of belonging is being treated with such importance. Procedures and processes for students with low school belonging - has the district considered implementing the successful middle school WIN period clubs initiative Jen Maylone has been pioneering at FRR?

Safety: The idea of safety resonates with us, especially today with what we see happening at school across our country.

Community & Culture: Developing a consistent behavior plan with clear expectations will develop a climate and culture.

DEI: I'd like to see a more explicit goal that explicitly calls out proactively battling hate. Throughout the years, we've seen different groups being targeted - Muslims after 9/11, Asians, Black and now Jews. Taking a clear stand against hate of all forms and people should be judged individually and not based on their group (ethnic, religion, etc.) should be a top priority, as this just keeps repeating itself over and over again taking slightly different shapes.

Benchmarks, Measures, & Outcomes: I think we need a benchmark of "by Year X, X% of students, faculty, and staff feel a strong sense of belonging." Endorsing is not equivalent to achieving it. Also, without knowing baselines, it's hard to give feedback on goals.

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GOAL #4

WHAT RESONATED?

40% (60/149) of qualitative comments were categorized as supportive, while 19% (29/149) were constructive and/or critical.

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Transparency: 33 mentions, of which 28 were supportive
- Capacity: 7 mentions, of which 3 were supportive
- Clarity: 7 mentions, of which none were supportive

WHAT IS MISSING?

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Details, Transparency, & Clarity: 16 mentions
- Benchmarks, Outcomes, & Measures: 9 mentions

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REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

Capacity: Current lean-staffing practices and lack of transparency of whole should be contacted about which concerns inhibit the goals of timeliness and transparency mentioned here. I look forward to learning how adequate staffing of student support personnel, high school teachers (to avoid large class sizes), K-8 world language teachers, and specialist will factor into these goals regarding capacity-building.

Details, Transparency, & Clarity: Details re: initiatives and what time commitment outside of teaching would be required.

Benchmarks, Outcomes, & Measures: As far as transparency, curriculum and skill objectives for each grade MUST be published online. Without these it is impossible for parents to "partner" in assessing skills (and whether they have been taught or understood.

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GOAL #5

WHAT RESONATED?

40% (56/139) of qualitative comments were categorized as supportive, while 29% (41/139) were constructive and/or critical.

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Organizational Structure: 13 mentions, of which 8 were supportive
- Information Systems: 9 mentions, of which all were supportive
- Administration: 7 mentions, of which 3 were supportive
- Redundancy: 8 mentions, of which none were supportive

WHAT IS MISSING?

The topics that received the most mentions:

- Details: 10 mentions
- DEI: 9 mentions
- Focus on Teachers: 7 mentions

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Organizational Structure: Central Office has added many positions over the past 5-6 years and cut others. Not sure I know what the organization's "vision" is, exactly, or why we are calling PSB an "organization."

Information Systems: These days, information exchange is important.

Administration: This needs to happen in the near term. With the excessive turnover in recent years - most especially in leadership positions this goal would help us to weather changes with fewer interruptions to service.

Redundancy: Simplify. Less is more. Fewer juggling balls and fewer administrators is better. Keep it lean and efficient.

Details: The tactics for this goal seem vague aside from creating an administrative handbook and providing mentoring programs for BIPOC staff. What would this look like from curricular perspective? Knowing how decisions get made?

DEI: This section could more specifically name the role of policy in creating or removing barriers. Revising policies that lead to inequitable outcomes, and using equity as a lens on all policy creation, should be explicit.

Teachers: The voice of teachers is paramount. Their feedback should be put first.