



Summary of Community Engagement Process

Vision and Planning Council

January 8, 2009

Executive Summary

The Beaverton School District has invested in developing a new strategic plan that will guide District decisions and actions in the next five years. The planning process includes three initial phases:

- ✦ A **Community Engagement** phase that includes “discovery” and “priority setting” steps intended to engage the community and identify various interests, needs and concerns;
- ✦ A **Defining Direction** phase to shape District direction by solidifying vision, mission, and values; and
- ✦ A **Plan to Action** phase in which the School District will develop the details to ensure the direction gets implemented.

The process will continue with the development of more specific implementation details, including specific multi-year plans.

The discovery phase was an intensive community engagement effort. This phase engaged participation through:

- ✦ A web-based survey with 2,821 participants.
- ✦ Listening sessions with Somali, Latino, Asian parents, and families from other groups who traditionally don’t participate actively in District affairs. (More meetings are scheduled for January.)
- ✦ Focus groups with specifically invited participants, including students, administrators, staff, parents and community leaders.

This report is a preliminary summary of the information gathered during the discovery phase and is prepared specifically to support the Vision and Planning Council’s review and input into the planning process. The results of the discussion at the January 13 meeting of the Council will be incorporated into a final report that will be distributed to the School Board prior to its retreat discussion on January 26.

The Faces of the District

To understand the needs and issues facing the School District we look at the people whose stories are the soul of the District. These stories give voice to what is important to people in the District, and capture the key opportunities and challenges at the heart of this strategic planning process.

- ✦ A Somali mother believes her son is doing well in school, and hopes desperately that his time at the local middle and high schools will open the doors to college. For her, nothing is more important than making sure her child is able to succeed far beyond the limited opportunities she has had.
- ✦ A father feels real appreciation for the teachers who work hard to teach his daughters, but has a nagging feeling that mediocrity is permeating the District. He wants to see coordination of learning, accountability toward specific benchmarks and more opportunities for his girls to excel.
- ✦ A teacher loves his job and the kids, and he knows in his heart, the kids love him. He feels lucky to work in a district that supports professional development. But every fall, as the school year starts, he worries about achievement and the clear gap that exists among students. He looks out at the faces of his new class and knows what he will find. There are kids who read with their parents every night and kids who don't have any books in their houses. There are kids whose pre-schools and kindergartens prepared them well for starting school, and kids who are three steps behind before they even start. There are kids who struggle with English as their second language, and kids who are well-grounded in English and eligible for the Talented and Gifted program. The challenge of meeting the needs of each child in his classroom is daunting. He knows that if he does not bridge the achievement gaps among his students, he may be contributing to educational handicaps that will last throughout their lives.
- ✦ A local business woman understands how important good schools are to her business and her community. She wants to know that schools are preparing students to succeed in jobs like her company can offer, knowing that employment success requires both the hard skills like mathematics and use of technology, and the soft skills like personal respect and punctuality. She's not sure students are getting those skills.
- ✦ A principal struggles to make all the pieces work, with 10-year-old computers, a building that needs some help and no funding to update or fix either of them. She wants to know how his school can help students get the real-life experiences that they crave and the skills they increasingly need to be successful after high school. She wants to connect to families and help make the school a safe and supportive environment. She believes that the District is serious about providing opportunities for every child, but she worries every day that kids are slipping through the cracks.
- ✦ A student artist is enrolled in the Options Program and thriving. He loves school and especially loves his teachers. He appreciates the choices he has, looks forward to the challenge and hates the lunch menu. Above all, he wishes his good friend felt the same way he did. He's concerned that his friend – as smart as he is and as funny as can be – is struggling. The friend's parents are fighting, his family is a mess, and he's likely to drop out.

These vignettes illustrate a variety of concerns and needs identified by those who have participated in the process to date. They are also indicative of the diversity that the District enjoys.

Beaverton is a diverse community and becoming more diverse every day. The simple statistic of 92 languages illustrates this point. But District diversity is much more than just culture and ethnicity. There also is socio-economic diversity, diversity in mental and physical abilities, as well as diversity of opinion. The District honors diversity as a value, and praises it as a strength of the community.

At the same time, such diversity creates new burdens that must be addressed. Diversity, by definition, brings together different needs, interests, and expectations. It requires the District to do more, even if it has less.

As the School Board and administration seek to "Shape District Excellence," the District must learn to make the best of its diversity as an advantage and not just a challenge. It must find a way to use such rich diversity as a uniting force rather than a dividing one. This is especially difficult in a period of diminishing resources. Deep pockets make it easier to meet everyone's needs. As money becomes tighter, it becomes more difficult to meet everyone's needs and different groups become more protective of their piece of the pie.

While this process has identified many different needs and concerns, it has also uncovered astounding similarities in what people want for students in the District. It will be important to capitalize on those similarities in order to foster an atmosphere of unity throughout this process and beyond.

The Power of Common Ground

The information gathered in the community engagement process to date identified a wealth of data related to the various stakeholder communities of the Beaverton School District. The feedback identified high-level values as well as specific recommendations for educational strategies. From this information, some very important common ground on key questions facing the district can be found.

At the most overarching value is the greatest agreement: the very strong and common value of commitment to student achievement. Broad support emerged for the high-level value that states:

- *Support all students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers.*

From the focus groups, web survey, listening sessions, and other conversations, there was very strong agreement with this value. Its nearly universal support may reflect that it is a very broad statement that can encompass multiple values. However, it clearly is a statement that resonated with those who participated in the process.

Several supporting values that had strong support were more exacting. These suggest a desire to identify and provide specific opportunities through curriculum, special programs and other extra-curricular activities.

- *Prepare students to be contributing members of society.*
- *Inspire a lifelong love of learning.*
- *Prepare students to succeed in further education.*

These value statements along with the overarching value above suggest an overall direction that the community seeks in the pursuit of educational excellence.

The general nature of the highest-level value seemingly asks the impossible: help every student achieve their potential regardless of barriers. It may be easy to dismiss this as an un-grantable wish. But examples of teachers who have made it work – made a difference in every one of their student's lives – can be found throughout the District and elsewhere. To instill this value completely, the District must find the equation that will ensure the implementation of this value is real, and not just talk.

Several areas of learning also emerged as particularly important to most of the people who participated in the process and may be part of what it takes to achieve the desired values. One area in particular was defined as a dominant priority and an area where the District received overall very good grades:

- *Quality teachers, principals and support staff.*

Other educational priorities include:

- *Civility and respect in schools*
- *Curriculum flexibility and choices*
- *Professional development*
- *Academic rigor*

These identified priorities are supporting elements that may help to fulfill the values statements. Other learning strategies may complement these priorities in support of the ultimate values for the District.

Voices on Education and the Beaverton School District

From the many opportunities we had to hear people share their ideas, several important topic areas emerged – sometimes quietly and sometimes loudly.

On building a strong community:

"If we can teach our kids to live together, we have done a great thing for the community."

"We are here for the children. They are the future and should be developed as contributing members of society."

"We want schools to address values, such as politeness, discipline, and honesty."

On academic rigor:

"Improve learning goals and cater to a broader set of interests. More subjects should be offered. Education should be more well-rounded."

"'Shaping District Excellence' boils my blood. I see mediocrity everywhere."

"Differentiated education is not just in the classroom, it needs to be adopted district wide and have curriculum universally designed for learning."

On life-long learning:

"I want Beaverton students to love learning and be able to apply what they learn – not strive for A's and be able to test successfully."

On professional preparedness:

"Push and encourage college readiness, but vocational programs will reach more students."

"Students need to leave, as graduating seniors, prepared for life outside of the school building, whether it is for college or work."

On choices:

"We like the options available to us here. Choice is important."

On equity:

"All our kids must be learning. End of story."

"Widen your conception of success beyond test scores. Track outputs that will allow you to measure success of inclusion."

On teachers and other employees:

"The teachers are great here! Staff gives us opportunities for the future. My teacher helped me understand, always encouraging."

"Please continue to strive for excellence in your staff by providing support, encourage decisions to be based on good research. Be truly transparent and honest."

The Challenges of the Next Five Years

The question is fundamentally simple: how can we help all students succeed? The answer is a bit more elusive. The District has made steps over the years to meet this challenge. But there are potentially deep and wide changes that will be required to both close the achievement gap and raise the bar of success for all students.

The challenges facing the School District in the next five years may be different from those faced in the past. Decreasing enrollment in the District has had a real impact on the choices made to support quality education. Uncertain enrollment figures coupled with Oregon's unique and mercurial approach to school funding means serious financing issues that show no immediate sign of improvement.

In addition, one of Beaverton's strengths defines the District's biggest challenge: how can our differences – different needs, different expectations, and different opportunities – serve to unite us rather than divide us? The District's most important priority is to work against all the forces that work to pull it apart. It must find unity, cohesion and common ground in a way that underscores the enormous benefits that come with a diverse, but strongly connected, community.

The District stands prepared to meet its challenges. Investments have been made to help achieve the educational priorities described by community participants. The District has developed a peer-based mentoring/quality improvement program designed and embraced by the teachers who stand to benefit from it. It has successfully forged partnerships with professional associations whose members are seen by the community as the District's greatest assets. Commitment to student achievement can be found everywhere.

The District must address three major challenges in the development of the strategic plan:

- ✦ Increase academic achievement for all
- ✦ Respond effectively to decreased resources
- ✦ Embrace diversity as a positive benefit and not a dividing obstacle

The strategic planning process seeks to understand what *new and sustained* investments and decisions will be needed to respond to these challenges for the next five years.

Questions to Guide our Discussion

Key questions must be addressed as part of this process, including:

1. The impact of diversity within the community– especially in more difficult financial times – can be to create a scarcity mentality. This can lead to an “us vs. them” perspective that divides the community by differences, rather than uniting it toward a common goal. How can the District combine strong agreement on key values with diversity to create a unified School District rather than a divided one?
2. Given the broad and far-reaching nature of the first value (“*Support all students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers.*”), how can the District meet the challenge of educational excellence across the full spectrum of the student body?
3. Three other high-rated values suggest more specific directions for the School District. How do these next-tier values related to civic responsibility, personal development and academic preparation suggest opportunities and priorities for the District?
4. What are the major shifts in the thinking and practices of students, staff, administrators and parents that need to happen to truly appreciate the diversity that is increasing in our District?
5. What does a more rigorous education look like? What are the investments and decisions that would be needed to create greater rigor in the school curriculum? How can this be accomplished in a curriculum of individualized instruction and while facing the challenge of a growing achievement gap?
6. How can flexible and creative curriculum choices best meet the diverse needs of students? What are the impacts of these programs on traditional schools?
7. How does the District support the top-rated educational strategy – *quality teachers, principals and support staff*? What are the practical implications of this commitment?
8. What happens when best educational practices and demonstrated experience suggests an approach to educational excellence that conflicts with long-standing traditions and perceived needs for a quality education?
9. What other key messages from the Discovery Phase that the Board should consider?



Major Findings

Background

The following summary has been gleaned from information that was gathered between October and December 2008 as part of the Community Engagement Phase of the Beaverton School District's Strategic Planning Process. The information was drawn from the following sources:

- ✦ A **community web survey** that was completed by 2,574 respondents (as of 12/17/08). Some of the relevant demographics of the survey include:
 - Live within District = 85%
 - White = 81%
 - Women = 72%
 - Work for BSD = 32%
 - Parent of BSD student = 61%
- ✦ Three **listening sessions** were held in November and December 2008 to gain input from parents who typically are not very involved in school district conversations, including Somali, Latino and Asian parents. (Additional sessions have been scheduled in January for African-American parents and parents whose children attend Title I schools.) The Decisions Decisions team and the ESL Department of BSD worked closely together to construct the process and conduct the sessions. Listening Sessions were designed to connect with parents of ESL students, focusing on those who were not usually involved in school district issues beyond direct contact regarding their own children.

The participation in the meetings was as follows:

- Somali meeting: 11 women participated.
- Latino meeting: 92 parents participated.
- Multi-lingual meeting: 42 parents participated. (Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Russian and eight additional languages)

The listening session format emphasized personal contact with the families and as much use of native language material as possible. Written materials, including a summary version of the web-survey, were translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Russian. Invitations in native languages were mailed to invitees' homes. The invitations went to all ESL families in the District, except for the session with Latino parents. For that meeting, parents of children attending schools in Area 3 were invited.

After the invitations were mailed, follow-up reminder phone calls were made by District interpreters who knew the families. In the case of Somali families, the interpreters went to

the primary apartment complex where many of the families live, and knocked on the doors of the Somali families to invite them personally to the session that evening.

The sites for the sessions were located conveniently to where most of the families lived. Child care and food were provided. During the sessions, the interpreters actively assisted with the small table discussions and translated the answers given on the completed written surveys.

- ◆ **Focus group interviews** conducted with specifically invited audiences. These sessions followed a similar format to the Listening Sessions, including questions about values, strategies, and how the District is doing. The focus group sessions also provided more opportunity for open feedback on other issues of interest to participants. The length of the sessions varied from one hour to two hours, with most taking about 90 minutes.

The focus groups included:

- Forty-nine middle school students and 40 high school students in eleven focus groups, representing the following schools: Five Oaks Middle School, Mountain View Middle School, Aloha-Huber Park Middle School, Raleigh Hills K-8, Beaverton High School, Health and Science High School, Arts and Communication Magnet Academy, Early College High School at PCC, International School of Beaverton, Merlo Park High School, and Westview High School. Focus groups were conducted by Maureen Wheeler of the Beaverton School District with Sho Shigeoka, a certified staff member of Beaverton School District and member of the Strategic Planning Committee. The groups usually met between 30-45 minutes.
- Eleven parents of current and former District students, all of whom have actively connected or engaged in school activities. In all cases, these parents had previously raised concerns about their child's education and how the District was supporting them.
- Twenty staff members, including classified staff and teachers.
- Thirty-five elementary, middle and high school principals, participating in two separate meetings.
- Thirteen community leaders, all of whom had, have or will have students in the District. All of the leaders were identified as having some connection beyond their parental status to the School District, including business leader, elected official, and nonprofit organizational partner.

Feedback on Values and Education

In the web survey, participants were asked to rate their top values from among 11 value statements. The process also invited them to identify their own priorities if they did not see them on the list. From the responses, very strong alignment was found in one value, with a next-tier of three other value statements also rated very high.

The top value was *Support all students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers*, with 53 percent of all respondents in the survey listing this as one of the top three values, and more than a quarter describing it as their number one value.

The second tier values were:

- ◆ *Prepare students to be contributing members of society.* (48% listed this in their top three values and 17% listed it as their number one value.)
- ◆ *Inspire a lifelong love of learning.* (44% listed this in their top three values and 18% listed it as their number one value)
- ◆ *Prepare students to succeed in further education.* (41% listed this in their top three values and 16% listed it as their number one value)

There was consensus across the board – including gender, ethnicity, and employees – that these were the highest values. However, it is worth noting that these statements are quite broad and may be interpreted as multiple values.

The values of District employees closely mirrored the overall rankings. Employees overwhelmingly supported these values, with 61 percent ranking the highest-rated value as their top one and two. The third value of *inspiring a lifelong love of learning* was among the top-rated values for 47% of employees.

Both men and women were quite similar in their ranking of values and few differences emerged by gender. The only areas of significant variations between genders were that females more fully valued supporting all students to achieve their highest potential (56%) and inspiring a lifelong love of learning (46%) – roughly 10 points higher than men on both values. Men on the other hand valued preparing students for the workforce more than women (30% versus 22%).

Respondents of Asian heritage more strongly valued preparing students to succeed in further education (58%, at least 15 points higher than non-Asian respondents), and Hispanic respondents gave higher value to embracing diversity of students and families (29%, at least 16 points higher than non-Hispanic respondents).

The feedback on values from the focus groups and listening sessions strongly mirrored the results on the survey. In nearly all conversations, the focus on student achievement and helping

students achieve their potential was primary. For example, here are the top values from several responding groups, with their priority values:

♦ **Elementary principals focus group:**

- *Support students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers*
- *Prepare students to be contributing members of society*
- *Inspire a life-long love of learning*
- *Spend education dollars efficiently, ethically and carefully*
- *Provide physically safe learning environments*

♦ **Middle and high school principals focus group:**

- *Support students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers*
- *Prepare students to be contributing members of society*
- *Prepare students to succeed in further education*
- *Spend education dollars efficiently, ethically and carefully*
- *Inspire a life-long love of learning*

♦ **Staff and teachers focus group:**

- *Support all students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers*
- *Inspire lifelong love of learning*
- *Prepare students to be contributing members of society*

♦ **Ethnic families listening session:**

- *To help students be successful in America*
- *Bridge to our children's future*
- *To be prepared for college*
- *Prepare students to succeed in the workforce*
- *Prepare students to be contributing members of society*

Below are the complete web survey results for questions related to values.

Response Category	Combined Mentions	1st Highest Value	2nd Highest Value	3rd Highest Value
Support all students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers	53%	26%	16%	11%
Prepare students to be contributing members of society	48%	17%	16%	15%
Inspire a lifelong love of learning	44%	18%	14%	12%
Prepare students to succeed in further education	41%	16%	16%	9%
Prepare students to succeed in the workforce	24%	5%	10%	10%
Spend education dollars efficiently, ethically, and carefully	24%	5%	7%	11%
Provide physically safe learning environments	18%	6%	5%	7%
Instill an appreciation of art, music, and a well-rounded life	18%	1%	5%	11%
Teach students to work well with others	13%	1%	5%	7%
Embrace the diversity of students and families	8%	1%	3%	4%
Make schools an integral part of their neighborhoods	4%	0%	1%	2%
Other	3%	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%

Some of the quotes provided by the listening session and focus group participants on values include the following:

Principals

"If we teach our kids to live together, we've done a great, great thing for the community."

"We need to remain fiscally responsible. Fortunately we do this well."

"We need to provide creativity and opportunity for all kids."

"Spend money wisely. Frustrated facing budget cuts and yet rolling out new math curriculum when our current one isn't that old."

"I feel a real sense of urgency. All our kids must be learning, end of story. If they aren't, what do we need to do so they do learn? In thinking about what we choose to fund, the primary question must be 'Does this directly impact student learning?' "

"If a child is not feeling safe they cannot learn to their full potential."

Staff and Teachers

"We need to support all students to achieve their highest potential. If we are doing this, we have embraced 'the diversity of students and families,' as student success is achieving social justice for all of our students."

"I want Beaverton students to love learning and be able to apply what they learn NOT strive for A's and be able to take a test successfully. Students need to feel proud of real life skills learned".

"Our kids/students have a lot of strikes against them in life. Our job should be to do anything in our power to help our students succeed in life. We can use our time better and work smarter to allow students to be successful in life whether that is college, a trade, military or other life paths."

"Beaverton students need to leave, as graduating seniors, prepared for life outside of the school building whether it is for college, work, etc. Possibly bringing back Home Ec, Auto Shop and Welding. High academics are so important but so are Life Skills –for each student that may not be getting these things at home or in the community."

Parents

"Benchmarks for each grade should be clearly written for each subject and posted on the district's website, for parents and others to see. The benchmarks should be measureable, by output and outcome."

"Learn about sustainability concepts and begin integrating sustainability throughout the district. This is the best basis for long range planning that there is. It includes managing resources and operations as well as possible cost savings."

"School is important because 'education is the best tool against ignorance' "

"School is important for our children to better themselves and become good citizens and leaders."

"I want students to learn skills – accounting, carpentry, plumbing, professions."

"School is important because it connects to the community, country, and other countries."

"All parents love Beaverton School District because it is safe and well cared for. Parents are happy with school safety and environment."

Students

"This school feels like home."

"All Hispanic students do have a dream, but some adults don't think Hispanic students have potential. Adults need to really listen and understand the experience of Hispanic students – their struggles, their stories, and their successes."

"My education is important because I will be the first in my family to go to college."

"SST is a great option program. It is challenging, makes me want to come to school. Research science is helping me to have a better idea of what I want to do."

Feedback on Key Areas of Importance

The community engagement process also asked community members to share their thoughts on other key questions related to educational approaches. In addition, the process asked people to rate the District compared to some of these approaches. The result is an interesting understanding of how the District might best achieve the values described in the previous section.

In the web survey, respondents ranked each of 19 different areas in importance. Respondents indicated that all areas were considered important and ranked each above the average of 5.5 on the 1-10 scale, with the lowest mean of 6.2. It is difficult to distinguish the importance of one area from another when mean scores were relatively close. Asking respondents to choose their top three most important areas provided a way to narrow priorities.

While all areas were important to respondents, the most important area was *quality teachers, principals, and staff*. This has a mean score of 9.4 with 67% saying this was critical (giving it a score of 10), and 26% who say this was most important to them. The only other area that comes close to this priority was *preparing students for a range of educational and career options after graduation*. This area has a mean of 8.7 with 44% saying it was critical and 20% ranking it as most important. These were the top two priorities identified by all subgroups, including District employees.

A third priority worth noting is *students and staff treating each other with respect*. It has a high mean of 8.8 with 44% ranking it as critical, but only 4% saying this was most important to them.

This was seen as a priority across all subgroups with little variation, but women and District employees gave it a higher priority.

As with the overall value statement, there was a clear priority among respondents about the most important educational elements and a very clear second choice.

Several other responses are worthy of note:

- ♦ *Well-rounded education including the arts, wellness, and extra-curricular activities* does extremely well in both mean (8.1) and top three (top three 25% / most important 5%). It would be interesting to see how these numbers might have increased had the statement included explicit mention of "sports," "athletics," "physical education," or "fitness."
- ♦ *Pre-kindergarten and full day kindergarten* was lowest in mean rating, but it seems to be very important to some people. This might be due to the particular needs of a specific group of parents anticipating the educational options for their pre-school children.
- ♦ *Small classes* really emerges when people were forced to choose. This may be a very important issue for discussion as it was a strongly perceived indicator of effective education.
- ♦ *Engaging the broader community* was a lot less important to the broad range of respondents than was expected.
- ♦ *Embracing cultural diversity* also rates lower for overall respondents than it does for "insiders." However, it's related statement *Equal access to highest quality learning opportunities for minority and low-income students* does much better overall.

In the focus groups and listening sessions, the importance of staff members was also highlighted. In particular, people responded to the great work of their particular teacher, with statements such as:

"I appreciate the teachers. They care and are trying to give our children the best education."

"My first grader's teacher is terrific."

"Teachers have been deeply caring toward my children. One time when my child was sick, the teacher came to the hospital to visit."

For principals, teachers and other staff, this same recognition of the importance of people to education came through, with many comments specifically about valuing employees and giving them the resources to be successful. Some of their comments include:

"How can the district fund, recruit, retain life changing teachers. This is much more important than crowding."

"We are trying to individualize instruction. We need more instruction there – need aides and other help."

"Dear School Board: Listen to your teachers...Let them vent...Let them share their successes...Support and trust the teachers and say thank you to them often."

"Please consider the thoughts, opinions, and expertise of those people that exist in 'the trenches' with our most valuable resources, the students."

"I believe that the district needs to back away from decentralized decision-making for 'business' decisions. Allowing best practices, standardization and economies of scale helps save district funds, but it doesn't let schools concentrate on teaching kids."

"Please continue to strive for excellence in your staff by providing support, encouraging decisions to be based on good research, being truly transparent and honest, supporting all aspects of our children's well-being, communicating how and why decisions are made and know that you're appreciated!"

Students also chimed in on this issue:

"Having good teachers matters. "

"Really good teachers can make a big difference in having a good school experience."

Grading the District

There was important good news in the survey results. The element ranked the most important was also the one that was graded the highest. *Quality teachers, principals, and support staff* received an A grade from 25% of respondents, and a B from 51%. Two conclusions can be drawn from this information.

- ✦ This was an affirmation and a great building block for the future.
- ✦ This was also an important thing to promote as a district.

Given the large number of District employees who completed the survey, this might have been a potential point of bias. However, both its level of importance and the District's grade were consistent across all people who responded. In fact, district employees and community members gave very similar grades to the District in all 19 areas.

Other good news: *Students and staff treating each other with respect* was highly valued and its grade was high. This is especially important in an era when civility and respect are often thought to be lacking.

In addition to these areas of strength, there were some less positive grades that emerge from the data and point to District challenges.

- ✦ *Preparing students for a range of educational and career options after high school* was very important, but its grade was middling (5% A and 29% B).

- ♦ *Small classes* was one of the most important elements to participants, but its grade was fairly low (11% A and 4% B).
- ♦ *Responsible financial management by the District* was also important, and its grade too was middling (5% A and 11% B).

In the focus groups and listening sessions, there was a tremendous amount of feedback about what the District does well, as well as where it needs to improve. In fact, this was an area where people spent a great deal of time. Its tangible nature and the specific experiences people have tend to focus them into this area. Below is a collection of comments organized by key areas of concern. These comments are identified by their source.

On building a strong community and instilling values:

"This is a very caring community. Emphasize community more. With 2,600 students, encourage students and staff to mix it up." (Student)

"We do service learning—but want it to be more hands-on in the community, something bigger. Right now we read to ESL students." (Student)

"Focus more on discipline and teaching respect/politeness toward elders and teachers." (Parent)

"Children are too free here. They have no respect for other children, adults or elders or anybody. In USA, kids rule the world." (Parent)

On academic rigor:

"Have longer school hours and more instruction days throughout the year." (Parent)

"'Shaping District Excellence' boils my blood. I see mediocrity everywhere." (Parent)

"Improve learning goals and cater to a broader set of interests. More subjects should be offered. Education should be more well-rounded." (Parent)

"Differentiated education is not just in the classroom, it needs to be adopted district wide and have curriculum universally designed for learning." (Parent)

"You do a pretty good job providing our kids with babysitting services. Education? Excellence? That is a different matter – not at our schools." (Parent)

"There should be longer school hours and more instruction days throughout the year." (Parent)

"I hate proficiency-based grading in Math and Science. If you make a mistake, you have to redo it. It is very stressful. It's harsh. It is very subjective. There is not a uniform model. Put more emphasis on homework." (Student)

"Proficiency-based assessment system has not been standardized. It is confusing to students. Teachers need training in the new system. Start it at middle school, not in the middle of high school when there are two systems for some students. Let colleges know about the new grading system." (Student)

On life-long learning:

"I want Beaverton students to love learning and be able to apply what they learn – not strive for A's and be able to test successfully."

"Critical thinking skills are paramount to establishing a successful life. There needs to be more focus on how to solve problems other than equations and concepts. Quantitative and qualitative skills must be taught in unison, such as applying reading, math, and social studies in a setting like personal finance." (Parent)

"Sustainability and considerations for every activity and department must also drive the curriculum so that students are driven to learn because it's all very relevant and have skills needed to succeed in life." (Parent)

On professional preparedness:

"Push and encourage college readiness, but vocational programs will reach more students." (Teacher)

"Students need to leave, as graduating seniors, prepared for life outside of the school building, whether it is for college or work." (Teacher)

"The relevancy of curriculum and instruction matters, such as the application of classroom knowledge to 'real life' situations." (Parent)

"Schools help prepare the students for a professional future." (Parent)

"Prepare students for the future. Make sure they are better prepared for future life." (Parent)

On choices:

"We like the options available to us here. Choice is important." (Student)

"Don't want Spanish language class to be mandatory. I already know Spanish; can I learn another language like Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, or French, or take art?" (Student)

"I want more choices. Right now I only have band or choir. I want more electives. Focus on what students want." (Student).

"Allow students to find other ways to satisfy the graduation requirements for PE and Health, so they can take other more challenging courses." (Student)

"Give us more choices; more electives- like cooking, home ec., art, and sewing. Give us a choice to learn other languages." (Student)

"Offer sport teams like track, volleyball, and football to improve student morale." (Middle school student)

"I don't miss high school – the drama and cliques. I am treated as an adult here (at PCC)." (Student)

"We don't want the lottery for admission to this school. There are students who do not want to be here. There should be more requirements for admission to the options schools." (Student)

"Students have different learning styles, provide more opportunities." (Student)

"Please design the elementary curriculum to encompass differentiated learning. Coach teachers in this. Let's inspire low, medium and high learners and meet them where they are. Then take them to the next level." (Parent)

On equity:

"All our kids must be learning, end of story." (Teacher)

"Widen your conception of success beyond test scores. Track outputs that will allow you to measure the success of inclusion." (Parent)

"We have not experienced discrimination here at BHS. Perspectives Week (diversity) was amazing." (Student)

"Why do you have a TAG project team, but no similar project team for Special Ed? The stakes are so high for Special Ed students. Widen your conception of success beyond test scores. Track outputs that will allow you to measure the success of inclusion." (Parent)

"Any 'bad' decisions Hispanic students make are attributed to their Hispanic culture, whereas when the same situation occurs to White students, it is regarded as 'individual' decision rather than representing the White group." (Student)

"Opportunities for all students to attend college regardless of race and color." (Parent)

"I appreciate that schools always provide an interpreter when meeting with parents." (Parent)

"Create newcomer programs so new parents will receive information regarding the school system." (Parent)

"Students make fun of ESL students, call them names and tease and joke about ESL students. ESL students come home crying..." (Parent)

"I appreciate the ESL program where all students are welcome regardless of their English proficiency." (Parent)

"Language barriers make it difficult for parents to communicate with the schools." (Parent)

On teachers and other employees:

"Teachers have patience with our children and take time to explain to them." (Parent)

"There needs to be better training and salaries for supporting educators." (Parent)

"I appreciate the teachers. They care and are trying to give our children the best education." (Parent)

"The teachers are great here! Staff gives us opportunities for the future. My teacher helped me understand, always encouraging." (Student)

"It is hard to get in to see your counselor. Hard to get an appointment. Separate counselors for schedules vs. other needs. In middle school, I knew my counselor better. I feel rushed when I see my counselor now." (Student)

"It is hard to get hold of teachers for extra help. Hard to stay after school. Study hall helps, but not all teachers are available at the time. Have to use a hall pass to seek out teachers." (Student)

"The teachers are great here and they care about us. We have more teachers and more opportunities." (Student)

"Faculty support has been great. Staff is helpful and they motivate us. Staff is willing to meet and help you here, although it can be difficult to find them. Teachers encourage you to excel. Teachers are into school spirit, they are excited to be here. Football coaches are supportive of students, providing a 45 minute study hall prior to practice." (Student)

On class size:

"Class size is an issue here. Not intimate enough with teachers. Most classes are 35-40 students. Small classes help you be known. Helps eliminate communication issues." (Student)

On other areas:

"Longer time for lunch time. Kids do not have enough time to eat and they throw food away." (Student)

"There should be tougher dress codes." (Parent)

"Students take responsibility early-on for their school's . . . like cleaning them." (Parent)

"A major change in food offered at school: unhealthy diet creates heart disease at an early age. (Parent)

"All parents love Beaverton School District because it is safe and well cared for." (Parent)

"There is no need for change. Things in the District are very good." (Parent)

"Thank you for letting us participate in this decision." (Parent)

"We need a time and a place for our middle and high school children to pray 2-3 times per day." (Parent)

Below are the web survey results for areas of importance, organized by top mean scores.

Response Category	Mean (Scale 1-10)	Most Important	Grade A	Grade B
Quality teachers, principals, and support staff	9.4	26%	25%	51%
Students and staff treating each other with respect	8.8	4%	21%	47%
Preparing students for a range of educational and career options after high school	8.7	20%	5%	29%
Responsible financial management by the District	8.7	5%	9%	28%
Well rounded education including the arts, wellness, and extra-curricular activities	8.1	5%	11%	38%
Small classes	8.1	11%	4%	19%
Support for students who need extra help	8.1	3%	11%	35%
Education in new technologies	8.0	2%	6%	36%
Range of options to meet different learning needs	7.9	5%	11%	33%
Well-maintained school facilities	7.9	1%	19%	49%
Maximizing graduation rate	7.8	2%	4%	26%
Equal access to highest quality learning opportunities for minority and low-income students	7.8	4%	14%	30%
Involving families	7.7	2%	16%	41%
Maximizing the number of instructional hours	7.5	3%	8%	30%
Student responsibility for setting their own ambitious learning goals	7.0	2%	4%	26%
Embracing cultural diversity	7.0	1%	20%	43%
Hands-on learning opportunities in the community	6.8	0%	3%	16%
Engaging the broader community	6.2	0%	5%	27%
Pre-kindergarten and full day kindergarten	6.2	2%	5%	10%
Other	---	2%	6%	3%
Don't know	---	1%		

Appendix

Survey Results

Below are the summary results of the web survey question, including demographic data.

In your opinion, what are highest values of public schools? Please check your top 3 by selecting a 1 for your first and highest value, 2 for second, and 3 for third. **Only rank your three most important values.**

Response Category	Combined Mentions	1st Highest Value	2nd Highest Value	3rd Highest Value
Support all students to achieve their highest potential, regardless of barriers	53%	26%	16%	11%
Prepare students to be contributing members of society	48%	17%	16%	15%
Inspire a lifelong love of learning	44%	18%	14%	12%
Prepare students to succeed in further education	41%	16%	16%	9%
Prepare students to succeed in the workforce	24%	5%	10%	10%
Spend education dollars efficiently, ethically, and carefully	24%	5%	7%	11%
Provide physically safe learning environments	18%	6%	5%	7%
Instill an appreciation of art, music, and a well-rounded life	18%	1%	5%	11%
Teach students to work well with others	13%	1%	5%	7%
Embrace the diversity of students and families	8%	1%	3%	4%
Make schools an integral part of their neighborhoods	4%	0%	1%	2%
Other	3%	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%

How important should each of the following areas be to the Beaverton School District? (On a scale of 1-10.)

Response Category	Mean
Quality teachers, principals, and support staff	9.4
Students and staff treating each other with respect	8.8
Preparing students for a range of educational and career options after high school	8.7
Responsible financial management by the District	8.7
Well rounded education including the arts, wellness, and extra-curricular activities	8.1
Small classes	8.1
Support for students who need extra help	8.1
Education in new technologies	8.0
Range of options to meet different learning needs	7.9
Well-maintained school facilities	7.9
Maximizing graduation rate	7.8
Equal access to highest quality learning opportunities for minority and low-income students	7.8
Involving families	7.7
Maximizing the number of instructional hours	7.5
Student responsibility for setting their own ambitious learning goals	7.0
Embracing cultural diversity	7.0
Hands-on learning opportunities in the community	6.8
Engaging the broader community	6.2
Pre-kindergarten and full day kindergarten	6.2

Check the 3 areas you consider to be most important. Only rank your three most important areas.

Response Category	Combined Mentions	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important
Quality teachers, principals, and support staff	58%	26%	19%	13%
Preparing students for a range of educational and career options after high school	42%	20%	12%	9%

Small classes	27%	11%	9%	7%
Well-rounded education including the arts, wellness, and extra-curricular activities	25%	5%	9%	11%
Responsible financial management by the District	20%	5%	6%	9%
Range of options to meet different learning needs	18%	5%	8%	6%
Students and staff treating each other with respect	15%	4%	5%	6%
Equal access to highest quality learning opportunities for minority and low-income students	13%	4%	5%	4%
Support for students who need extra help	12%	3%	5%	4%
Maximizing the number of instructional hours	11%	3%	4%	4%
Education in new technologies	11%	2%	4%	5%
Pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten	8%	2%	2%	4%
Involving families	7%	2%	2%	3%
Student responsibility for setting their own ambitious learning goals	7%	2%	2%	3%
Maximizing graduation rate	5%	2%	2%	2%
Well-maintained school facilities	5%	1%	1%	3%
Embracing cultural diversity	4%	1%	2%	2%
Hands-on learning opportunities in the community	3%	0%	1%	2%
Engaging the broader community	1%	0%	0%	0%
Other	4%	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%

What grade would you give the District for its **current** performance in these areas?

Response Category	A	B	C	D	F	Mean
Quality teachers, principals, and support staff	25%	51%	15%	3%	1%	3.0
Students and staff treating each other with respect	21%	47%	19%	4%	1%	2.9
Embracing cultural diversity	20%	43%	19%	4%	1%	2.9
Well-maintained school facilities	19%	49%	20%	6%	2%	2.8
Involving families	16%	41%	26%	7%	2%	2.7
Equal access to highest quality learning opportunities for minority and low-income students	14%	30%	19%	7%	3%	2.6
Support for students who need extra help	11%	35%	24%	8%	4%	2.5
Maximizing graduation rate	4%	26%	22%	5%	1%	2.5

Range of options to meet different learning needs	11%	33%	27%	9%	4%	2.5
Responsible financial management by the District	9%	28%	22%	9%	4%	2.4
Preparing students for a range of educational and career options after high school	5%	29%	24%	8%	3%	2.4
Well-rounded education including the arts, wellness, and extra-curricular activities	11%	38%	28%	12%	4%	2.4
Education in new technologies	6%	36%	29%	8%	3%	2.4
Student responsibility for setting their own ambitious learning goals	4%	26%	31%	9%	2%	2.3
Maximizing the number of instructional hours	8%	30%	28%	12%	4%	2.3
Engaging the broader community	5%	27%	31%	9%	1%	2.3
Hands-on learning opportunities in the community	3%	16%	28%	13%	3%	2.0
Small classes	4%	19%	36%	22%	12%	1.8
Pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten	5%	10%	14%	15%	19%	1.5
Other	6%	3%	9%	18%	41%	0.9

Which of the following best describes you?

Response Category	
I do not work for the Beaverton School District	68%
I work for the district (combined categories)	32%
I work for the Beaverton School District as a Teacher	18%
I work in the Beaverton School District in another certified position	5%
I work for the Beaverton School District as a classified staff member	7%
I work for the Beaverton School District in building administration	1%
I work for the Beaverton School District in district administration	1%

Please check all of the following that apply to you:

Response Category	
I live within the boundaries of the Beaverton School District	85%
I am a parent of one or more students in the Beaverton School District	61%
I am actively involved in my community	45%
I work within the boundaries of the Beaverton School District	43%
I am the parent of one or more pre-school age children	16%
I consider myself to be a business leader	11%
I am a student in the Beaverton School District	2%

What is your gender?

Response Category	
Female	72%
Male	25%
Refused	3%

Do you consider your ethnicity to be:

Response Category	
Latino/Latino	3%
Black/African American	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%
Asian	7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%
White	81%
Other	3%
Refused	5%

