

PAUSD Strategic Plan Survey

Survey Comment Analysis Comments of Parents, Teachers and Students

May 5, 2008

Terry Godfrey
Michelle Donovan
Leslie Dorosin
Jennifer Landesmann

Methodology

- Data set
 - Survey Respondents
 - >3200 parents
 - >400 teachers
 - >500 students
 - Comments included up to 3 strengths, 3 areas of improvement and 1 open-ended comment from each respondent
 - Not all commented
- Methodology
 - Coded a random sample of 1/3 of parents, 1/2 of the teacher and 1/2 of student responses
 - Reviewed all parent and student open-ended comments to create a separate “Kudos and Concerns” file for the superintendent of all comments that seemed to require his attention
 - File = “survey open ended comments - concerns kudos final.xls”

Parents

Parent Comments Summary

Strengths

- PAUSD's strengths include:
 - High quality, caring teachers
 - A history of high standards and expectations
 - Engaged parents who can contribute time, money and encouragement
- 46% of the “strengths” comments referred to teaching quality, academic standards or parent involvement

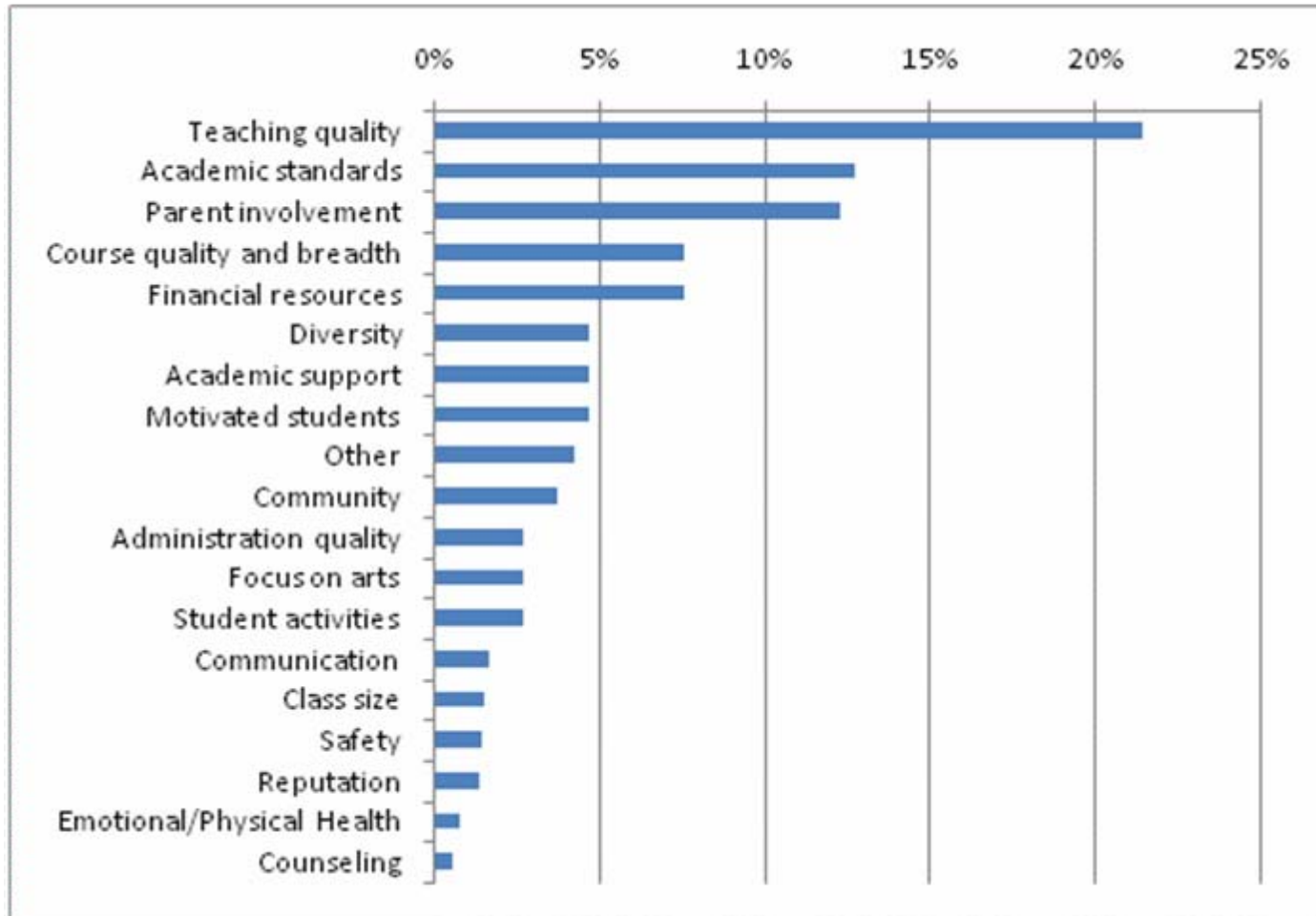
Parent Comments Summary

Improvements

- PAUSD's areas of improvement include:
 - Perception that students are not getting enough differentiated learning
 - High achievers aren't challenged enough
 - Special Education and under achieving students need more support
 - Kids in the middle seem ignored
 - Inconsistency in teaching quality and inability of students and parents to give meaningful input
 - Perception that schools are teaching to the tests, expect too much, expect too little, are not keeping up with other districts
 - Facilities need improvement. [Note coded as "financial resources"]
 - Middle schools cited as the "weak link" in the system
 - A need for more focus on P.E., social skills and foreign language
 - A need for more and better counseling in the high schools

Parent Comments - Strengths

% of Sample



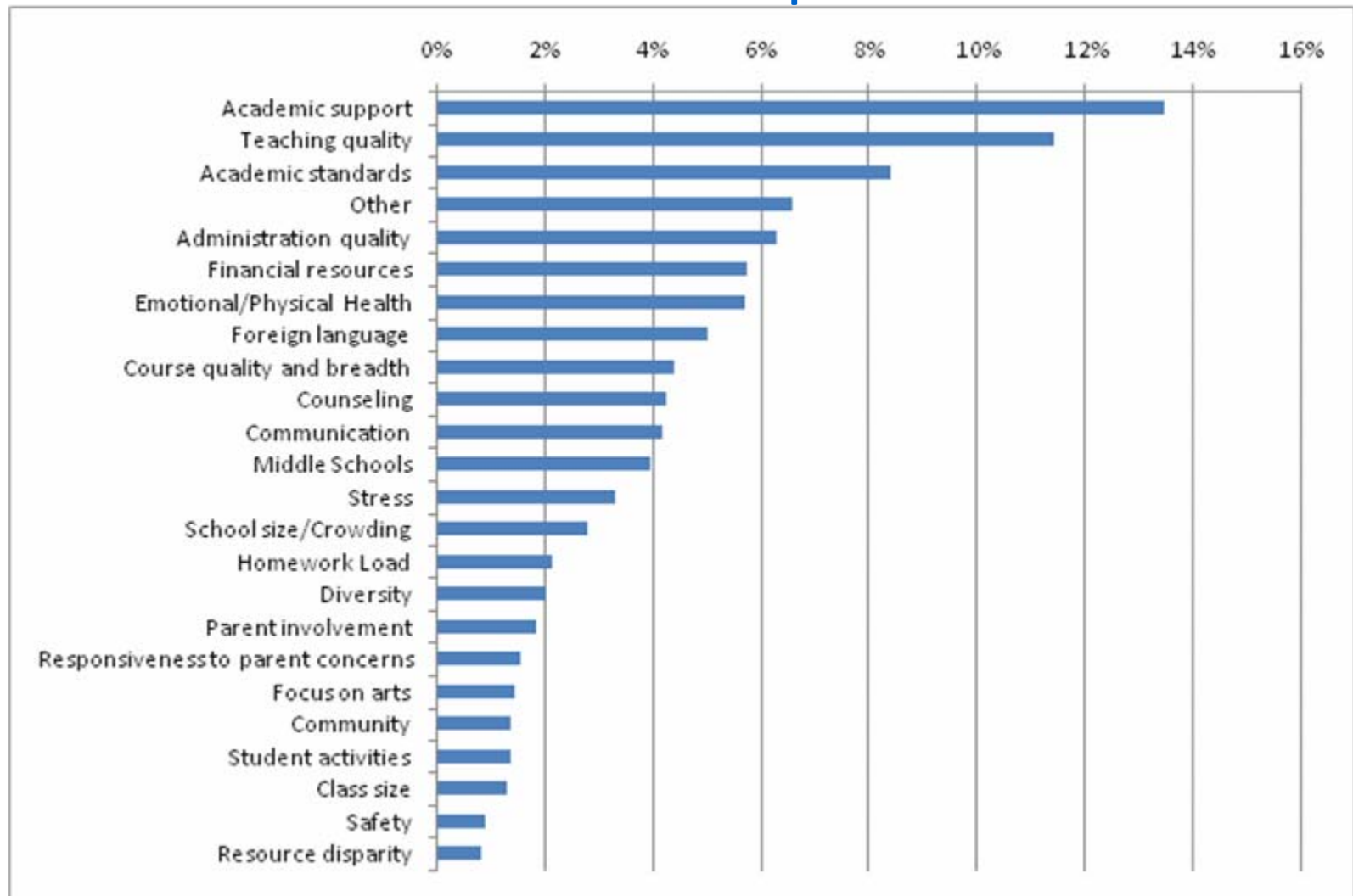
Parent Comments - Strengths

Examples

- **Teaching quality (21%)**
 - The teachers love to teach and work to help their students succeed.
 - The teachers: they do a great job of educational development.
 - There are more excellent teachers than not, especially at the elementary level.
 - Truly amazing educators
 - Very engaged and hardworking teachers
- **Academic standards (13%)**
 - Performance expectations are high both from parents and the district
 - Tradition of excellence - schools have been good for generations and this translates into a continuity from K-12
 - Academic excellence, in anticipation of college attendance, is expected from all students from day one
- **Parent involvement (12%)**
 - Strong parent support in terms of hours in the classroom, PTA, and donations.
 - Engaged parent community with very high expectations and ability to volunteer

Parent Comments – Improvements

% of Sample



Parent Comments - Improvements

Examples (Page 1 of 2)

- Academic support (13%)
 - The merely above average student is undervalued
 - The PAUSD has been talking about addressing underachieving students for years w/o an effective plan.
 - There is not enough academic differentiation at the middle school level. The students need more tracking or "laning." My gifted son was not challenged in 6th grade and his only challenging class in 7th grade is accelerated pre-algebra.
 - There is nothing offered for children who aren't focused on Ivy League schools
- Teaching quality (11%)
 - More consistency [is needed] in quality of teachers, especially at middle school level, somewhat at high school level - I do not believe in "tenure" system
 - Maintain quality teaching by awarding good teachers and finding ways to discipline bad teachers.
 - Some teachers need to improve their subject matter knowledge and quality of teaching
 - While most teachers are excellent, a few are just putting in time and students need a risk free way to let the administration know.

Parent Comments - Improvements

Examples (Page 2 of 2)

- Academic standards (8%)
 - Unrealistically high expectations for all students (not every kid is a genius in everything)
 - Way behind in global vision -- no longer a leader or an innovator as other districts across the country.
 - We felt that the elementary school, at least for the one my child went to needs improvements academically
 - Weak expectations and oversight of teachers work load not optimized for quality, e.g. too much emphasis on form (pretty reports), less on content (what the child learns from it)
 - Too much focus on worksheets and testing rather than teaching kids to think.
- Other (7%)
 - Too much restriction for transfer of courses taken outside of the PA school district.
 - Shorter school day than other school districts
 - If they need more teaching time, try the all block model. It works well for private schools. Give more teaching time and dedicate time for communication.
 - Many implicit assumptions that the children have at least one stay-at-home parent

Parent Comments

Open-Ended Comments

Positive/Neutral

- Many commented on Dr. Skelly's open style of communication and thanked the administration for the opportunity to give input
- Many comments praising teaching quality and experiences at specific schools including intervention programs (e.g. Reading Recovery)

Parent Comments

Open-Ended Comments

Negative/ Suggestions (Page 1 of 2)

- As in the “improvements” section there are many comments related to “ignoring” the different student types (e.g. GATE kids, learning styles, Special Ed). Examples are below.
 - I do not have any children who have special needs but feel this is a weakness of this system. It seems there is pressure by parents to provide GATE education but not enough to ensure that children who are behind academically and socially "catch up". ...
 - Fascinating how little in the survey is geared towards academically advanced kids. Lots of questions about 'closing the achievement gap' while the top students are mostly ignored. My 7th grader is going to great lengths within and outside school to maintain challenges. ...
 - I am disappointed in the schools ability to meet the learning needs of my oldest child, who does not fit into a regular learning environment and therefore not able to excel. However my younger child, who happens to be more flexible in her learning style is easier to manage in the classroom, and does better "grade wise." ... topic we discuss on a regular basis. How large institutions struggle to meet individual needs. We know it is difficult, but I don't feel that PAUSD really understands how many wonderful students they are NOT reaching because of their inability to be flexible around this issue. I think that you should take your mission statement more seriously. (At least the one that is posted in the meeting room at Gunn where I sat with my son and some of the Gunn academic staff.)

Parent Comments

Open-Ended Comments

Negative/ Suggestions (Page 2 of 2)

- Many comments about specific teachers and the inconsistency among teachers
- A few dozen comments requesting more focus on foreign language (e.g. FLES), P.E., healthier food, social/emotional well-being
- More than a dozen comments on the middle schools including:
 - Our middle schools have been the weakest link in terms of academics. They seemed to focus more on the social and emotional growth in adolescents but neglected to challenge them in academics...
 - Overall we have been very happy with the education our children have received in Palo Alto schools. Middle school has been a relative weak spot, especially with respect to math. ...
 - Palo Alto has a stronger Elementary and High School program than Middle School. Kids lose interest in learning in Middle school and it is not all related to their age, i think we don't have strong leadership in administration and teaching staff at that level.

Teachers

Teacher Comments Summary

Strengths

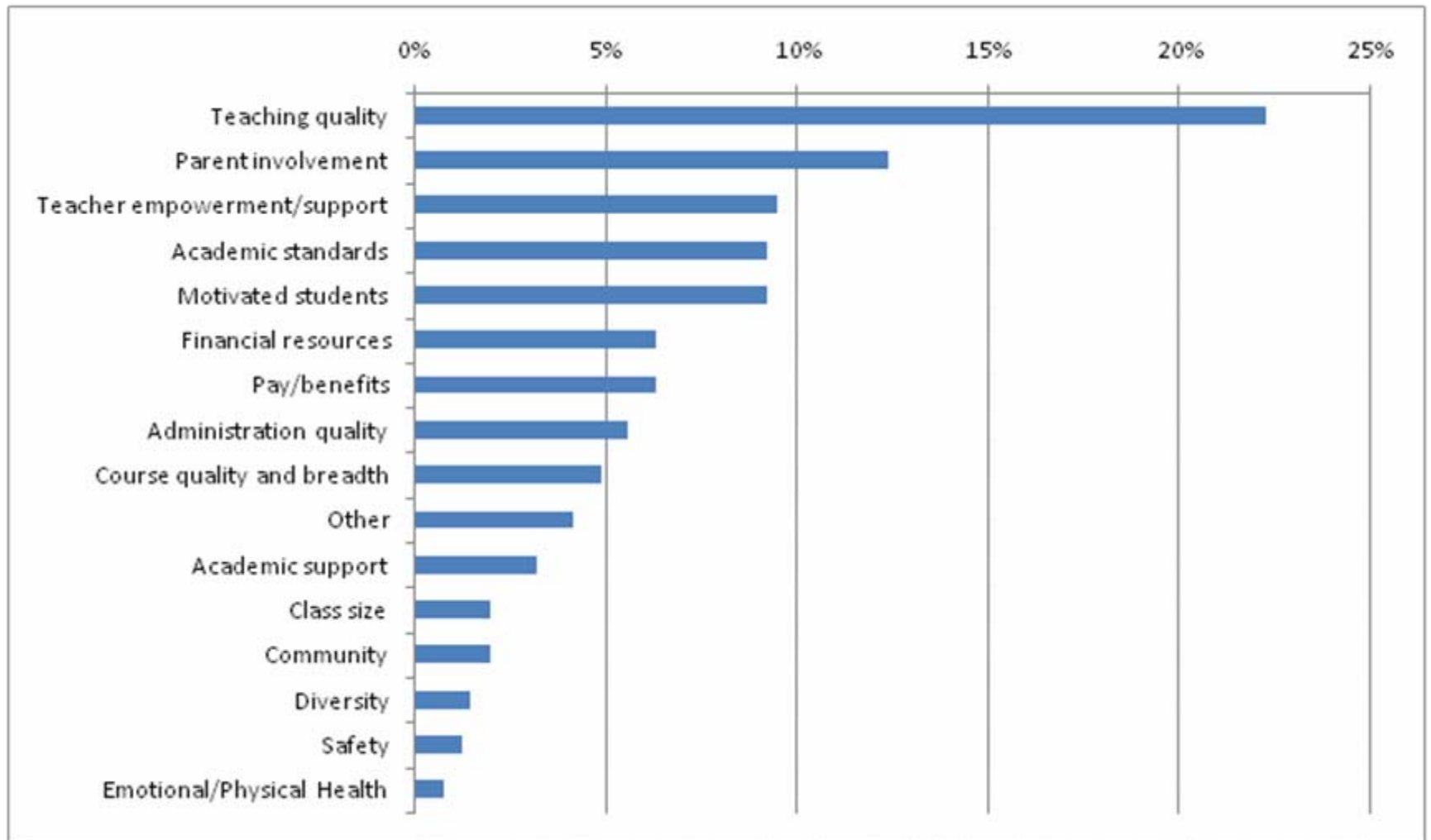
- PAUSD's strengths include:
 - High quality, caring teachers who are empowered to do their jobs
 - Involved parents who support the schools and encourage their students
 - A focus on academics and high expectations for students
 - Excellent students

Teacher Comments Summary Improvements

- PAUSD's areas of improvement include:
 - A need for more staff development and more time for teachers to teach, collaborate and plan
 - Much like the parents, the teachers express a need to meet the needs of all students but teachers focused on the lower-achieving students including ELL, Special Ed and those not on the college track
 - » Plus specifically citing the Achievement Gap as needing improvement
 - A need for improved vision, decision making, and innovation from the administration

Teacher Comments - Strengths

% of Sample



Teacher Comments - Strengths

Examples (Page 1 of 2)

- Teaching quality (22%)
 - Dedicated teachers who pursue excellence in teaching and assume leadership roles across the curricula.
 - A professional teaching staff that develops curriculum to support student learning.
 - Strong, competent and caring teachers who always give their best
 - Teachers who are leaders in their fields
- Parent Involvement (12%)
 - Active Parent Population
 - Supportive, Highly Educated, motivated parent community
 - Supportive, active parent community
 - Actively involved and supportive parents

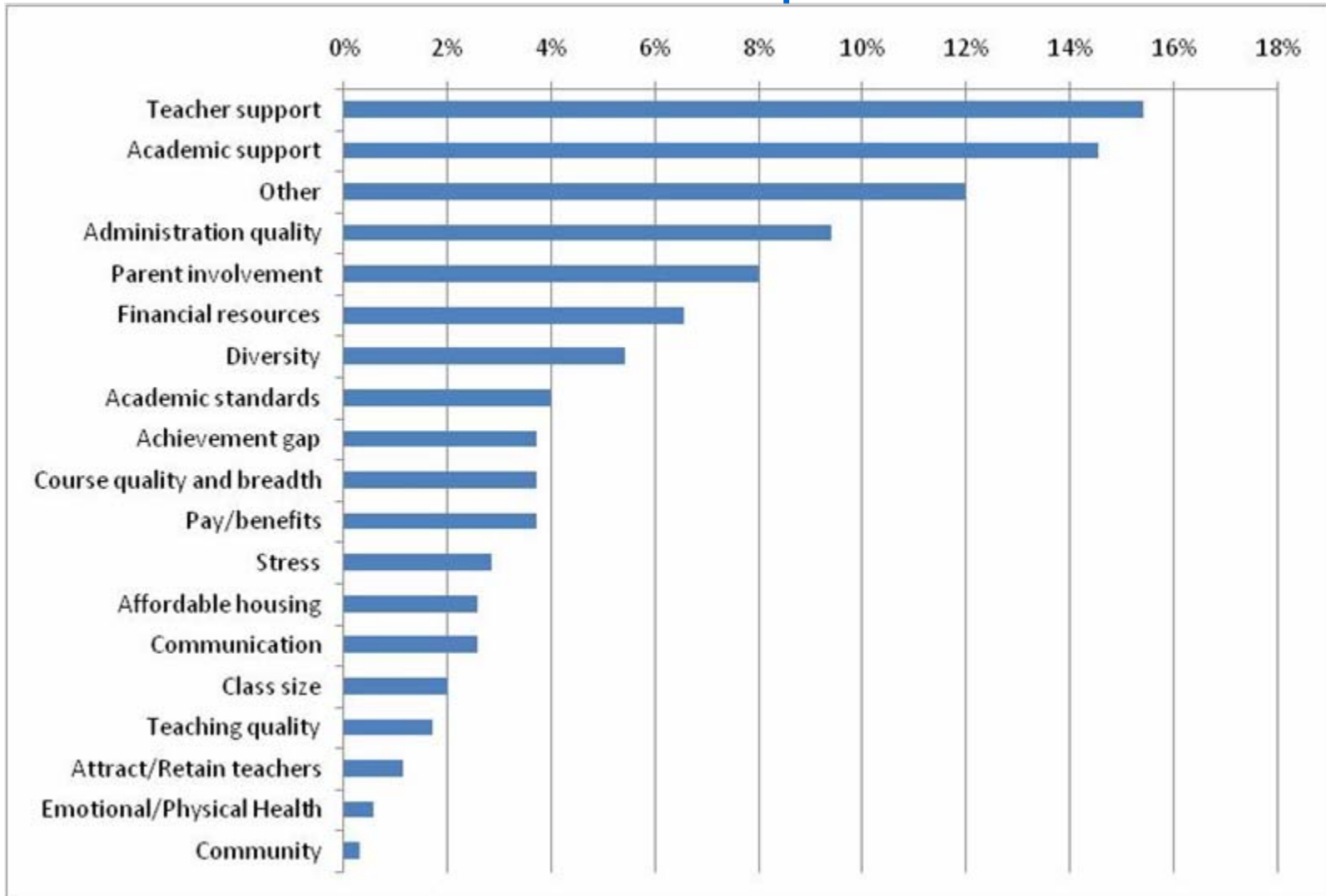
Teacher Comments - Strengths

Examples (Page 2 of 2)

- Teacher empowerment and support (9%)
 - Teachers given professional courtesy - freedom in how we teach
 - An atmosphere of collegial support and integrity
 - PAUSD respects the teachers and all people involved with the education process.
 - Freedom for teachers to teach with "best practices" in mind and not from a prescribed doctrine
- Academic standards (9%)
 - High expectations for academic excellence for all students
 - Academic rigor academically motivated community high expectations for students & teachers
- Motivated students (9%)
 - Students who are ready and willing to learn
 - Diverse, educated student community
 - Fantastic Student Population
 - Outstanding student population

Teacher Comments – Improvements

% of Sample



Teacher Comments - Improvements

Examples (Page 1 of 2)

- **Teacher support (15%)**
 - Give all teachers the opportunity to be coached to grow and expand skills
 - Understanding of teacher time - Adding too much to our plates
 - Not enough continuing ed opportunities that push staff to look to the future of education
 - Poor staff development, poorly conceived and completely undifferentiated for staff differences
 - Provide time for teachers to create good programs and get more parent involvement
- **Academic support (15%)**
 - An effort to create a system for differentiation that would allow easier and more resource rich learning for underachieving, challenged, and gifted students.
 - Not providing for the students who need less than AP curriculum to succeed
 - Not enough resources to provide support for underachieving students
 - Lower performing students still not succeeding
 - Few alternatives for struggling students or non-traditional students
 - Serious lack of attention to lower lane: students of color/and special ed population

Teacher Comments - Improvements

Examples (Page 2 of 2)

- Administration quality (9%)
 - Decisions made in PAUSD effecting [sic] elementary, middle, and high schools differently, but blanket decisions are made
 - District level administration doesn't listen to and involve staff at site levels - top down model
 - Unclear vision of what quality education looks like a clear vision of what students need to function effectively in the 21st century
 - Lack of innovative thinking in some administrators
- Parent involvement (8%)
 - District that fails to stand up to parents in support of local school admin
 - Giving in to parent pressure
 - Some parents need to have more trust in educators
 - Parents wanting to dictate curriculum

Teacher Comments

Open-Ended Comments

- Many comments generally praising the quality of the district, including “You have to work in other school districts to realize just how very special this one is!”
- Very specific recommendations about giving teachers more time, encouraging more collaboration, supporting the ELL and struggling kids, and funding for libraries, reading support etc.

Students

Student Comments Summary

Strengths

- PAUSD's strengths include:
 - High quality and caring teachers
 - A wide variety of high quality classes from which to choose, a lot of electives, and many challenging classes
 - A focus on academics and high expectations for students
- 43% of “strengths” responses addressed teaching quality, course quality and breadth or academic standards

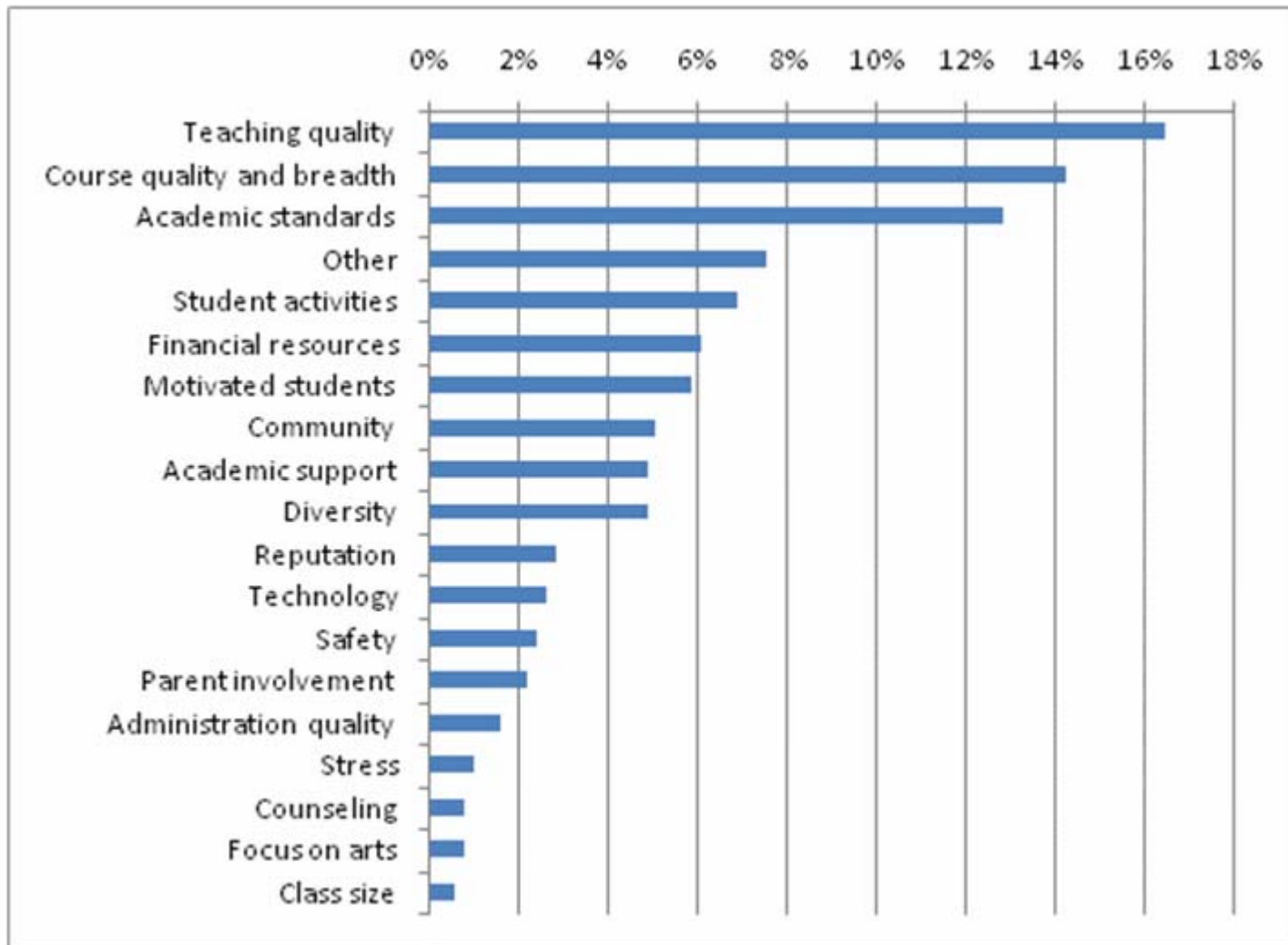
Student Comments Summary

Improvements

- PAUSD's areas of improvement include:
 - Stress: the most commonly cited weakness (18%) by students was stress including homework load, expectations and competition
 - A perception that teaching quality including homework load and expectations is inconsistent, some teachers have tenure who shouldn't, and that some are harsh, uncaring and unsupportive
 - Unlike parents, students didn't comment much on wanting input into their teachers' evaluations
 - A need for more and better counseling

Student Comments - Strengths

% of Sample



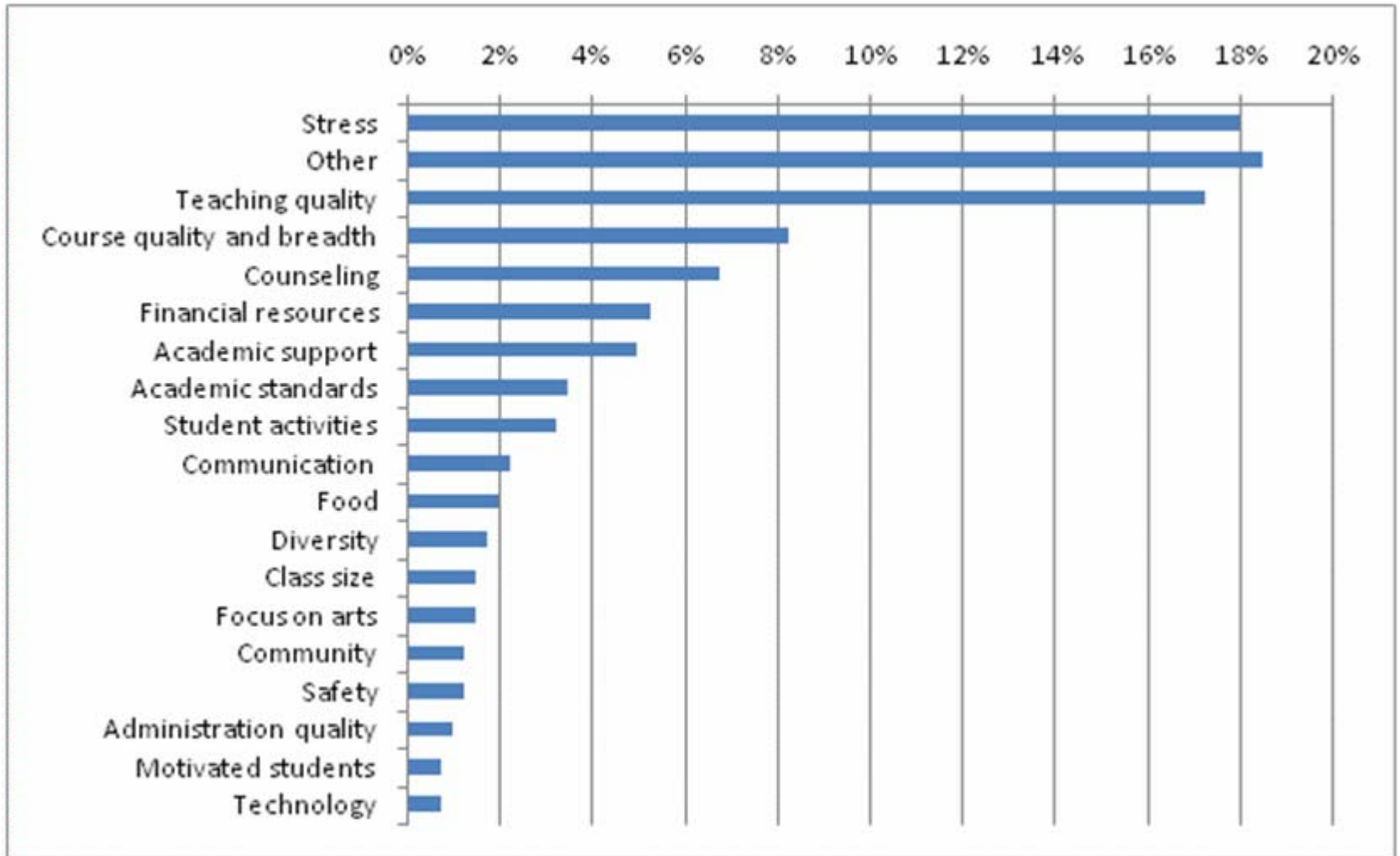
Student Comments - Strengths

Examples

- Teaching quality (16%)
 - Teachers really want to help the students out. I've never seen teachers so dedicated to helping their students.
 - Teachers that really care about what they are teaching who pass their enthusiasm on to their students.
- Course quality and breadth (14%)
 - Wide range of activities/class courses
 - Variety of classes, including many AP and honors classes
 - Exceptional electives.
 - There are a lot of electives to choose from; it really spices up our time at school.
- Academic Standards (13%)
 - Education is valued and presented in a way that I learned to value too
 - high academic standards and challenging curriculum
 - Focus on succeeding academically

Student Comments – Improvements

% of Sample



Student Comments - Improvements

Examples (Page 1 of 2)

- Stress (18%)
 - Too much pressure is connected with the need to do well on tests to maintain a grade
 - Too much homework in middle and high school
 - Very high expectations - results in student stress
 - There is a strong push for perfection that many students cannot handle.
 - Less pressure on students (less homework)
 - Expectations of students are too high
- Teaching quality (17%)
 - I need teachers that care about what I say, and take it into consideration. If teachers did that, I think we would all be a lot happier to be at school every Monday. AND. I need teachers who are willing to help, and know what they are talking about.
 - I would really recommend revising the tenure system.
 - High school teachers seem so pressured, have too many students, lack personal connection and caring
 - The teachers don't teach that well and what they don't teach, they give it to you for homework, resulting in a lot of homework

Student Comments - Improvements

Examples (Page 2 of 2)

- **Course quality and breadth (8%)**
 - Offering classes students have an interest in, but that have small enrollment (ex: French 5AP)
 - English department lack of fundamental writing and grammar [sic] skills
 - There are not enough lanes for subjects- there is usually a "high" lane and a "low" lane.. the high lane is ridiculously difficult...but if you are in the low lane the school treats you as if you are dumb.
- **Counseling (7%)**
 - Students should not have to hire college counselors to tell them how to prepare for college. The schools should do a better job of telling students where they are and where they need to be to get into various colleges.
 - The counseling system at XXXXXX is terrible and needs to be changed. MY counselor does not even know my name, and has offered me NO good advice on course selection or college preparation.
 - The counseling system at XXXXXX is horrible and has to be changed. I know some people who are suffering a lot now because of some "advice" that was given to them by their counselors

Student Comments

Open-Ended Comments

- Many comments generally praising the quality of the district, quality of teachers and/or the respondent's school
- Advice on rebalancing the curriculum (from core to electives) and reducing stress, homework and competition
- Comments on start times, facilities, and a desire for more field trips and better food
- A few comments on drinking and drugs
- Plenty of humor, e.g. "we all just wanna be big rockstars.... "

Top 5-6 Strengths Comparison

Strengths	Parents	Teachers	Students
High quality, caring teachers	21%	22%	16%
Parents	12%	12%	Not in Top 5 to 6
High expectations	13%	9%	13%
Curriculum, choices & student activities	11%	Not in Top 5 to 6	21%
Teacher empowerment	Not in Top 5 to 6	9%	Not in Top 5 to 6
Motivated students	5%	9%	6%
Financial resources	8%	Not in Top 5 to 6	6%

Top 3-4 Improvements Comparison

Improvements	Parents	Teachers	Students
Academic support	13% (for all segments)	15% (mostly for lower-achievers)	Not in Top 3 to 4
Teaching quality consistency	11%	Not in Top 3 to 4	17%
Academic standards	8%	Not in Top 3 to 4	Not in Top 3 to 4
Student stress	Not in Top 3 to 4	Not in Top 3 to 4	18%
Teacher support	Not in Top 3 to 4	15%	Not in Top 3 to 4
Course quality and breadth	Not in Top 3 to 4	Not in Top 3 to 4	8%
Counseling	Not in Top 3 to 4	Not in Top 3 to 4	7%
Administration	Not in Top 3 to 4	9%	Not in Top 3 to 4
Inappropriate parent intrusion/needs	Not in Top 3 to 4	8%	Not in Top 3 to 4

Appendix

Parent Comments

Strengths and Improvements

of Comments in Sample and % of Comments
(Sorted by alpha)

Strengths		
Academic standards	258	13%
Academic support	95	5%
Administration quality	56	3%
Class size	31	2%
Communication	35	2%
Community	76	4%
Counseling	12	1%
Course quality and breadth	154	8%
Diversity	96	5%
Emotional/Physical Health	17	1%
Financial resources	154	8%
Focus on arts	56	3%
Foreign language	0	0%
Homework Load	0	0%
Middle Schools	0	0%
Motivated students	95	5%
Other	87	4%
Parent involvement	250	12%
Reputation	29	1%
Resource disparity	0	0%
Responsiveness to parent concerns	5	0%
Safety	30	1%
School Size/Crowding	2	0%
Stress	4	0%
Student activities	56	3%
Teaching quality	435	21%
Total	2033	100%

Improvements		
Academic standards	143	8%
Academic support	230	13%
Administration quality	107	6%
Class size	22	1%
Communication	71	4%
Community	23	1%
Counseling	72	4%
Course quality and breadth	75	4%
Diversity	34	2%
Emotional/Physical Health	97	6%
Financial resources	98	6%
Focus on arts	24	1%
Foreign language	85	5%
Homework Load	36	2%
Middle Schools	67	4%
Motivated students	5	0%
Other	112	7%
Parent involvement	31	2%
Reputation	0	0%
Resource disparity	14	1%
Responsiveness to parent concerns	26	2%
Safety	15	1%
School size/Crowding	47	3%
Stress	56	3%
Student activities	23	1%
Teaching quality	195	11%
Total	1708	100%

Parent Comments

Strengths and Improvements

of Comments in Sample and % of Comments
(Sorted highest to lowest)

Strengths		
Teaching quality	435	21%
Academic standards	258	13%
Parent involvement	250	12%
Course quality and breadth	154	8%
Financial resources	154	8%
Diversity	96	5%
Academic support	95	5%
Motivated students	95	5%
Other	87	4%
Community	76	4%
Administration quality	56	3%
Focus on arts	56	3%
Student activities	56	3%
Communication	35	2%
Class size	31	2%
Safety	30	1%
Reputation	29	1%
Emotional/Physical Health	17	1%
Counseling	12	1%
Responsiveness to parent concerns	5	0%
Stress	4	0%
School Size/Crowding	2	0%
Foreign language	0	0%
Homework Load	0	0%
Middle Schools	0	0%
Resource disparity	0	0%
Total	2033	100%

Improvements		
Academic support	230	13%
Teaching quality	195	11%
Academic standards	143	8%
Other	112	7%
Administration quality	107	6%
Financial resources	98	6%
Emotional/Physical Health	97	6%
Foreign language	85	5%
Course quality and breadth	75	4%
Counseling	72	4%
Communication	71	4%
Middle Schools	67	4%
Stress	56	3%
School size/Crowding	47	3%
Homework Load	36	2%
Diversity	34	2%
Parent involvement	31	2%
Responsiveness to parent concerns	26	2%
Focus on arts	24	1%
Community	23	1%
Student activities	23	1%
Class size	22	1%
Safety	15	1%
Resource disparity	14	1%
Motivated students	5	0%
Reputation	0	0%
Total	1708	100%

Parent Comment Categories

ID	Topic	Description
1	Academic standards	Comments related to how demanding the school is, academic excellence, expectations of students
2	Academic support	Comments related to different learning styles, choice programs, GATE, tutoring, etc
3	Administration quality	Comments related to principals and above
4	Class size	Comments related to school or class size
5	Communication	Comments related to communication from teachers or administration to the parents, or vice-versa including InClass usage
6	Community	Comments related to feeling part of a community
7	Counseling	Comments related to personal counseling or college guidance
8	Course quality and breadth	Comments related to the type and quality of material taught, expectations are addressed in "Academic standards", above
9	Diversity	Comments related to ethnic diversity, including diversity issues and intergroup relations
10	Emotional/Physical Health	Comments related to physical and emotional health including healthy lunch, bullying and PE.
11	Financial resources	Comments related to financial standing, facilities or other financial matters
12	Focus on arts	Comments related to the role of arts (music, theatre, etc) in education
13	Foreign Language	Comments related to foreign language (mostly the lack of it earlier and some about quality in mid/high school)
14	Homework Load	Comments related to middle school
15	Middle Schools	Comments related to homework (mostly that there is too much)
16	Motivated students	Comments related to student's intrinsic motivation and achievement
17	Parent involvement	Comments related to the involvement (or overinvolvement) of parents with teachers/schools
18	Reputation	Comments related to the district's reputation
19	Resource disparity	Comments related to disparities in resources among the different schools in the system
20	Responsiveness to parent concerns	Comments related to responsiveness of teachers/administrators to parent's concerns
21	Safety	Comments related to crowding and school size
22	School size/Crowding	Comments related to gangs, drugs or other issues of student's personal safety
23	Stress	Comments related to stress level and pressure on students
24	Student activities	Comments related to extracurricular student activities, such as sports
25	Teaching quality	Comments related to teacher's skill and attitudes
26	Other	Any other comments which do not fit into a topic above

Teacher Comments

Strengths and Improvements

of Comments in Sample and % of Comments
(Sorted by alpha)

Strengths		
Academic standards	38	9%
Academic support	13	3%
Achievement gap	0	0%
Administration quality	23	6%
Affordable housing	0	0%
Attract/Retain teachers	0	0%
Class size	8	2%
Communication	0	0%
Community	8	2%
Course quality and breadth	20	5%
Diversity	6	1%
Emotional/Physical Health	3	1%
Financial resources	26	6%
Motivated students	38	9%
Other	17	4%
Parent involvement	51	12%
Pay/benefits	26	6%
Safety	5	1%
Stress	0	0%
Teacher empowerment/supp	39	9%
Teaching quality	92	22%
Total	413	100%

Improvements		
Academic standards	14	4%
Academic support	51	15%
Achievement gap	13	4%
Administration quality	33	9%
Affordable housing	9	3%
Attract/Retain teachers	4	1%
Class size	7	2%
Communication	9	3%
Community	1	0%
Course quality and breadth	13	4%
Diversity	19	5%
Emotional/Physical Health	2	1%
Financial resources	23	7%
Motivated students	0	0%
Other	42	12%
Parent involvement	28	8%
Pay/benefits	13	4%
Safety	0	0%
Stress	10	3%
Teacher empowerment/supp	54	15%
Teaching quality	6	2%
Total	351	100%

Teacher Comments

Strengths and Improvements

of Comments in Sample and % of Comments
(Sorted highest to lowest)

Strengths

Teaching quality	92	22%
Parent involvement	51	12%
Teacher empowerment/supp	39	9%
Academic standards	38	9%
Motivated students	38	9%
Financial resources	26	6%
Pay/benefits	26	6%
Administration quality	23	6%
Course quality and breadth	20	5%
Other	17	4%
Academic support	13	3%
Class size	8	2%
Community	8	2%
Diversity	6	1%
Safety	5	1%
Emotional/Physical Health	3	1%
Achievement gap	0	0%
Affordable housing	0	0%
Attract/Retain teachers	0	0%
Communication	0	0%
Stress	0	0%
Total	413	100%

Improvements

Teacher empowerment/supp	54	15%
Academic support	51	15%
Other	42	12%
Administration quality	33	9%
Parent involvement	28	8%
Financial resources	23	7%
Diversity	19	5%
Academic standards	14	4%
Achievement gap	13	4%
Course quality and breadth	13	4%
Pay/benefits	13	4%
Stress	10	3%
Affordable housing	9	3%
Communication	9	3%
Class size	7	2%
Teaching quality	6	2%
Attract/Retain teachers	4	1%
Emotional/Physical Health	2	1%
Community	1	0%
Motivated students	0	0%
Safety	0	0%
Total	351	100%

Teacher Comment Categories

ID	Topic	Description
1	Academic standards	Comments related to how demanding the school is, academic excellence, expectations of students
2	Academic support	Comments related to different learning styles, alternative schools, tutoring, etc
3	Achievement gap	Comments related to the achievement gap (mostly the lack of progress)
4	Administration quality	Comments related to principals and above
5	Affordable housing	Comments related to the price of housing in the area and teacher's (or other) ability to purchase
6	Attract/Retain teachers	Comments related to the need to attract and retain the best teachers
7	Class size	Comments related to school or class size
8	Communication	Comments related to communication from teachers or administration to the parents, or vice-versa (including inCl
9	Community	Comments related to feeling part of a community
10	Course quality and breadth	Comments related to the type and quality of material taught, expectations are addressed in "Academic standards"
11	Diversity	Comments related to ethnic diversity, including diversity issues and intergroup relations
12	Emotional/Physical Health	Comments related to physical and emotional health including healthy lunch, bullying and PE.
13	Financial resources	Comments related to financial standing, facilities or other financial matters
14	Motivated students	Comments related to student's intrinsic motivation and achievement
15	Parent involvement	Comments related to the involvement (or overinvolvement) of parents with teachers/schools
16	Pay/benefits	Comments related to the pay and/or benefits for teachers
17	Safety	Comments related to gangs, drugs or other issues of student's personal safety
18	Stress	Comments related to stress level and pressure on students
19	Teaching quality	Comments related to teacher's skill and attitudes
20	Teacher empowerment/support	Comments related to the support and empowerment of teachers
21	Other	Any other comments which do not fit into a topic above

Student Comments

Strengths and Improvements

of Comments in Sample and % of Comments
(Sorted by alpha)

	Strengths		Improvements	
Academic standards	63	13%	14	3%
Academic support	24	5%	20	5%
Administration quality	8	2%	4	1%
Class size	3	1%	6	1%
Communication	1	0%	9	2%
Community	25	5%	5	1%
Counseling	4	1%	27	7%
Course quality and breadth	70	14%	33	8%
Diversity	24	5%	7	2%
Financial resources	30	6%	21	5%
Focus on arts	4	1%	6	1%
Food	0	0%	8	2%
Motivated students	29	6%	3	1%
Other	37	8%	74	18%
Parent involvement	11	2%	1	0%
Reputation	14	3%	0	0%
Resource disparity	0	0%	1	0%
Safety	12	2%	5	1%
Stress	5	1%	72	18%
Student activities	34	7%	13	3%
Teaching quality	81	16%	69	17%
Technology	13	3%	3	1%
Total	492	100%	401	100%

Student Comments

Strengths and Improvements

of Comments in Sample and % of Comments
(Sorted highest to lowest)

Strengths		
Teaching quality	81	16%
Course quality and breadth	70	14%
Academic standards	63	13%
Other	37	8%
Student activities	34	7%
Financial resources	30	6%
Motivated students	29	6%
Community	25	5%
Academic support	24	5%
Diversity	24	5%
Reputation	14	3%
Technology	13	3%
Safety	12	2%
Parent involvement	11	2%
Administration quality	8	2%
Stress	5	1%
Counseling	4	1%
Focus on arts	4	1%
Class size	3	1%
Communication	1	0%
Food	0	0%
Resource disparity	0	0%
Total	492	100%

Improvements		
Other	74	18%
Stress	72	18%
Teaching quality	69	17%
Course quality and breadth	33	8%
Counseling	27	7%
Financial resources	21	5%
Academic support	20	5%
Academic standards	14	3%
Student activities	13	3%
Communication	9	2%
Food	8	2%
Diversity	7	2%
Class size	6	1%
Focus on arts	6	1%
Community	5	1%
Safety	5	1%
Administration quality	4	1%
Motivated students	3	1%
Technology	3	1%
Parent involvement	1	0%
Resource disparity	1	0%
Reputation	0	0%
Total	401	100%

Student Comment Categories

ID	Topic	Description
1	Academic standards	Comments related to how demanding the school is, academic excellence, expectations of students
2	Academic support	Comments related to different learning styles, alternative schools, choice programs, tutoring, etc
3	Administration quality	Comments related to principals and above
4	Class size	Comments related to school or class size
5	Communication	Comments related to communication from teachers or administration to the parents, or vice-versa including inClas
6	Community	Comments related to feeling part of a community
7	Counseling	Comments related to personal counseling or college guidance
8	Course quality and breadth	Comments related to the type and quality of material taught, expectations are addressed in "Academic standards"
9	Diversity	Comments related to ethnic diversity, including diversity issues and intergroup relations
10	Financial resources	Comments related to financial standing, facilities or other financial matters
11	Focus on arts	Comments related to the role of arts (music, theatre, etc) in education
12	Food	Comments related to food, lunch.
13	Motivated students	Comments related to student's intrinsic motivation and achievement
14	Parent involvement	Comments related to the involvement (or overinvolvement) of parents with teachers/schools
15	Reputation	Comments related specifically to the district's reputation
16	Resource disparity	Comments related to disparities in resources among the different schools in the system
17	Safety	Comments related to gangs, drugs or other issues of student's personal safety
18	Stress	Comments related to stress level and pressure on students
19	Student activities	Comments related to extracurricular student activities, such as sports
20	Teaching quality	Comments related to teacher's skill and attitudes
21	Technology	Comments related to technology available to the students
22	Other	Any other comments which do not fit into a topic above