

Strategic Plan Survey

Results and Analysis

October 2010



Overview

Beverly Public Schools is embarking on the important process of developing a strategic plan. The strategic plan serves as a road map; it outlines the goals that the school district strives to achieve and the steps to reaching those goals. To accomplish this task, a Strategic Planning Committee has been established that includes parents, school staff, administrators, alumni, high school students, business, and community representatives.

To be as inclusive as possible, the district has reached out to everyone in the community via the Strategic Plan Survey. This survey was conducted from September 27 to October 18, 2010 to gain an understanding of the community's opinions about items of importance that should be addressed in the plan. The survey was open to all community members, school staff, and secondary students.

The findings are described in this report.

Executive Summary of Findings

3,015 community residents, staff members, and students provided input as to the school district's effectiveness in providing services and the importance of those services. Survey items covered the areas of student achievement, academic programs, school operations, student support, and school culture. Items identified as most critical for the strategic plan include:

- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Math and Science Proficiency
- Teacher Recruitment and Retention
- Professional Development for Teachers
- Class Size
- Extra Help for Students Who Have Difficulty with Schoolwork
- Diversity Awareness and Appreciation

In addition, students suggested:

- Curriculum and Programs that are interesting and relevant
- High Expectations for Teaching and Learning

Community Characteristics

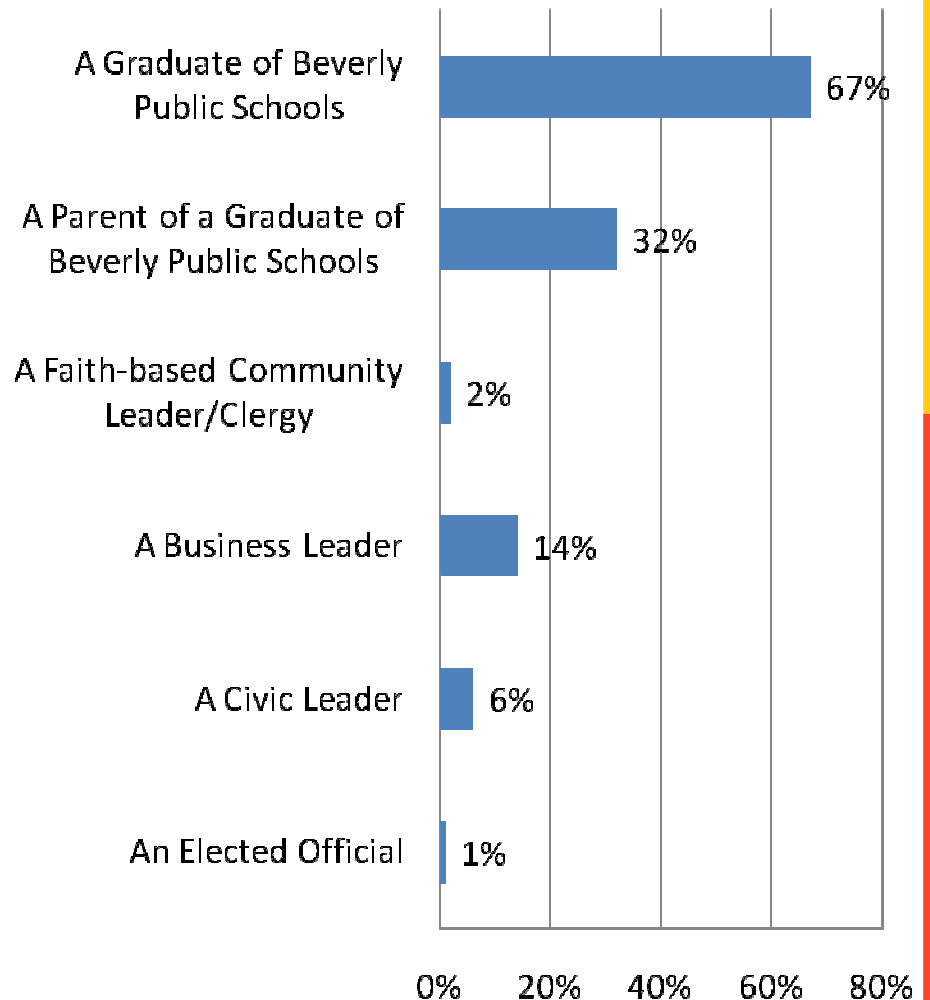
A total of 1,005 community members responded to the survey.

The respondents were overwhelmingly parents with 95% reporting one or more children attending Beverly Public Schools. This finding indicates that approximately 21% of Beverly's parents participated during the survey.

As only 5% of respondents did not have children in the schools, the survey results primarily reflect the views of parents. This finding also suggests an opportunity to further engage the community with the strategic planning process.

Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they were themselves graduates of the district. This finding highlights the fact that student engagement does not end with graduation; rather engaged students tend to be engaged adults.

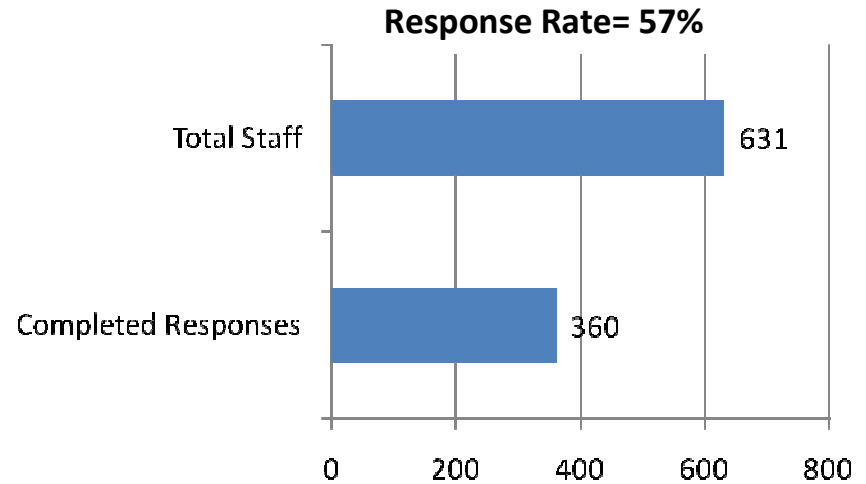
Which of the following describes you?



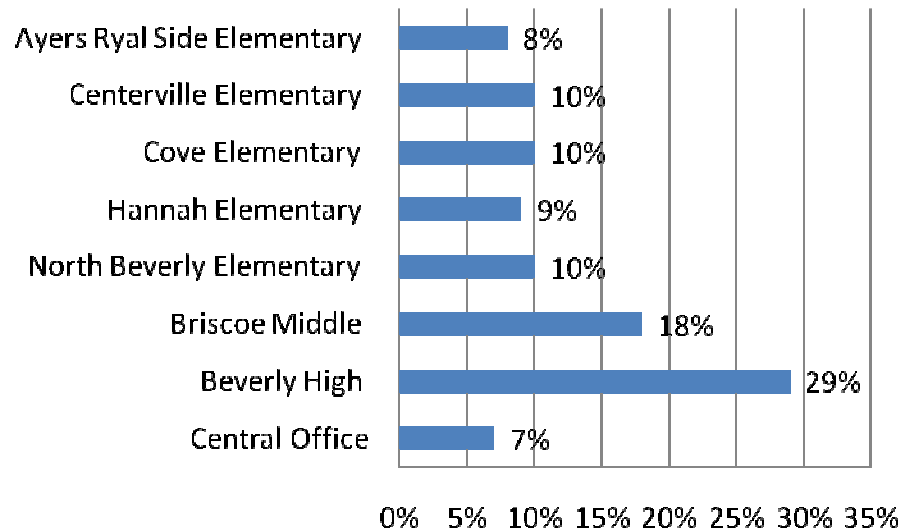
Staff Characteristics

A total of 360 out of 631 staff members responded to the survey, resulting in a 57% response rate. This response rate tends towards the lower range of participation for an all-inclusive staff survey.

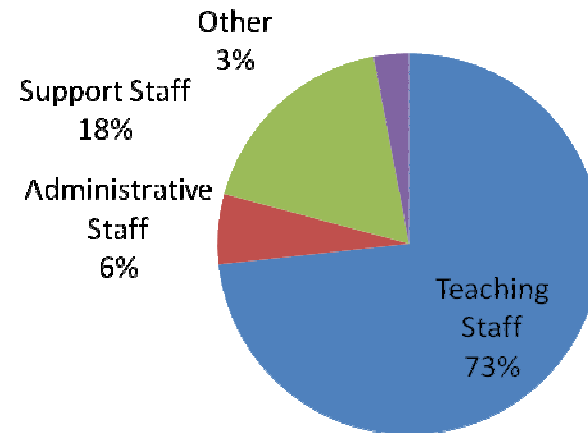
Nearly three-quarters of the responding staff were teachers; however, administrative, support, and staff with other classifications were also represented. Staff represented all work locations.



What is your work location?



I am a member of the...

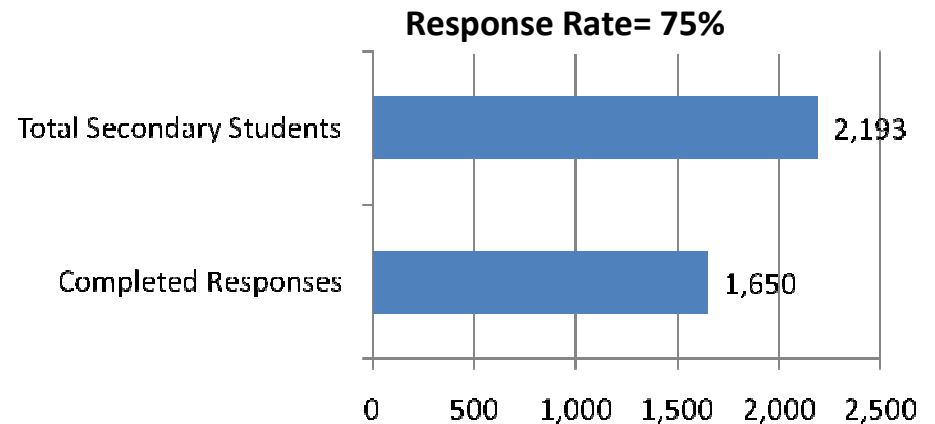


Student Characteristics

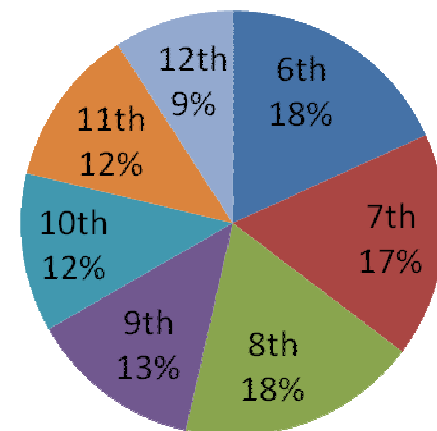
A total of 1,650 out of 2,193 students secondary students completed the survey for a strong 75% response rate.

These students represented grades 6 to 8 at Briscoe Middle School and 9 to 12 at Beverly High School. There were more respondents at the middle school grade levels, and the fewest in 12th grade.

Nearly one-quarter (22%) of the respondents were free or reduced price lunch eligible. Slightly more girls (53%) than boys participated.

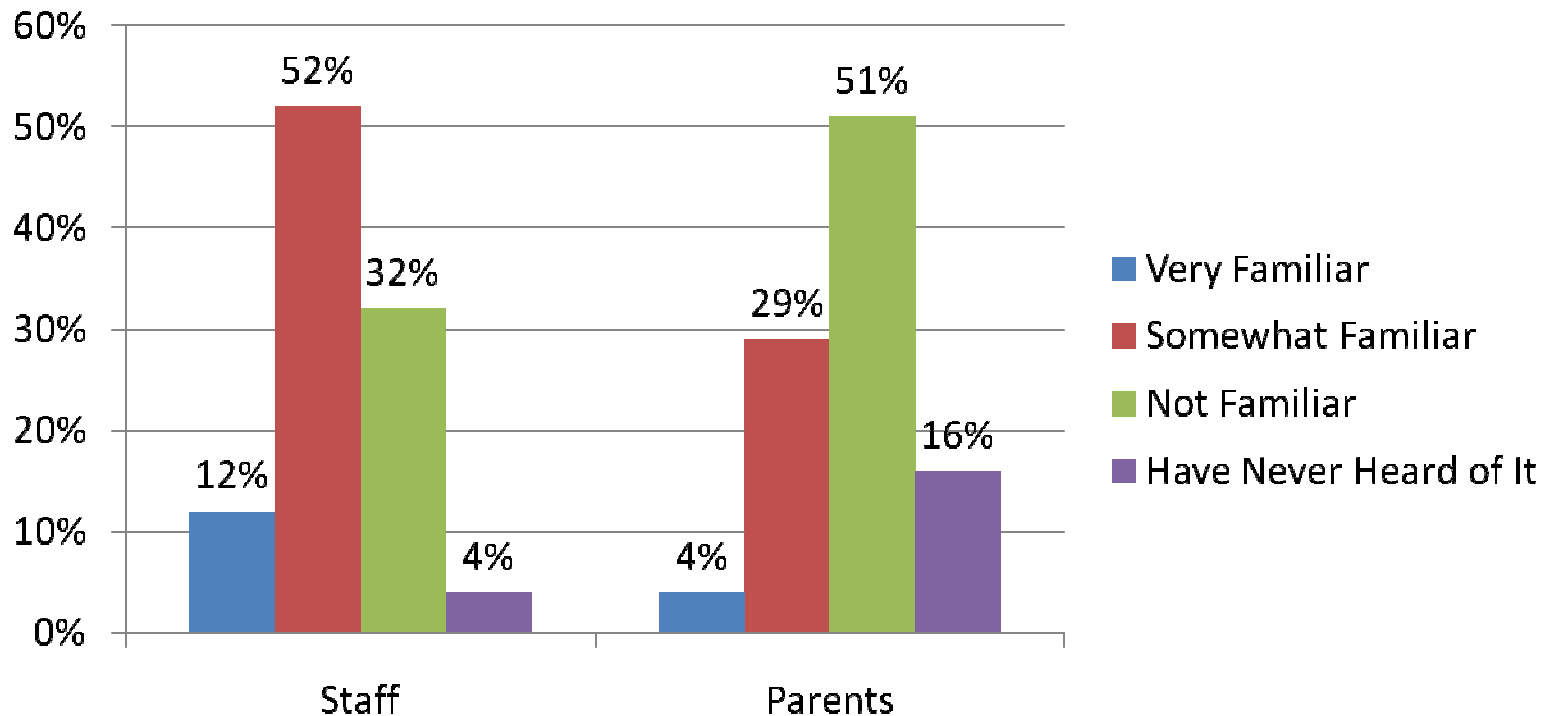


Grade Level



Awareness of Strategic Planning Process

To assess awareness, staff and parents were asked about their familiarity with the strategic planning process that is currently underway. A greater proportion of staff (64%) compared to parents (33%) said they were familiar with the process. In addition, nearly half (48%) of students said they were aware that the planning process was currently underway. In all three groups, large numbers of individuals indicated a lack of awareness, indicating a need for further communication and outreach.



Analysis Strategy

The main portion of the survey consisted of a series of items describing school district services and functions. These items addressed student achievement, academic programs, school operations, student support, and school culture. The survey items were identical for the community and staff. The student version contained fewer items and they were stated to be student appropriate. The community and staff version of the items are presented in this report.

For each item, the respondents made two ratings:

- How effective is the District on this issue?
{Scale: *Extremely Ineffective, Ineffective, Effective, Extremely Effective*}
- How important is this issue to you?
{Scale: *Not Important, Relatively Unimportant, Moderately Important, Highly Important*}

Analysis Strategy (Continued)

Effectiveness scores are reported as the percent of respondents selecting *Effective* or *Extremely Effective*. Importance score are reported as the percent of respondents selecting *Highly Important*. Median effectiveness and importance scores were computed across all items, separately for parents, staff, and students. While all three groups provided similar overall effectiveness ratings, substantial differences were revealed in opinions concerning importance. Specifically, students gave much lower ratings of importance for any school service or function than did parents and staff.

Median Scores

	Effectiveness	Importance
Parents	82%	68%
Staff	86%	72%
Students	81%	44%

Gap analyses were conducted separately for parent, staff, and student groups. Using the median scores, each item was identified as high or low in effectiveness and high or low in importance so that each item is classified according to one of four categories:

		Effectiveness	
		Low	High
Importance	High		
	Low		

Analysis Strategy (Continued)

Those items identified as low in effectiveness and high in importance (red) are identified as primary areas of concern for the strategic plan. Items identified as low in effectiveness and low in importance (yellow) are secondary areas of concern. As shown in the table below, parents identified 5 items for primary concern, while staff and students each identified 6. In addition, parents and staff each identified 9 secondary items of concern and students identified 8.

		Parents		Staff		Students	
		Effectiveness		Effectiveness		Effectiveness	
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Importance	High	5	9	6	9	6	5
	Low	9	4	9	3	8	4

The following pages display the items in each of the surveyed areas, along with the classifications from the gap analysis for each group.

Student Achievement

The gap analysis revealed three primary areas concerning student achievement: (1) Closing the Achievement Gap, (2) Math Proficiency, and (3) Science Proficiency. Comparatively low importance ratings about students suggests that they do not see the relevance of these academic standards.

		Effectiveness	
		Low	High
Importance	High	Red	Green
	Low	Yellow	Blue

	Parents		Staff		Students	
	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance
(a) Closing the Achievement Gap (Ensure that all students learn regardless of their background.)	81%	66%	81%	81%	75%	48%
(b) English-Language Arts Proficiency (Ensure that students meet minimum standards for English language skills.)	90%	88%	96%	82%	87%	32%
(c) Math Proficiency (Ensure that students meet minimum standards for math skills.)	81%	90%	86%	79%	82%	41%
(d) Science Proficiency (Ensure that students meet minimum standards for science knowledge and skills.)	81%	79%	80%	57%	83%	30%
(e) Writing Proficiency (Ensure that students meet minimum standards for writing ability.)	85%	90%	90%	84%	81%	29%

Academic Programs

Students identified Curriculum and Programs that are interesting and relevant as items of primary concern. A number of areas were identified as areas of secondary concern and may warrant consideration.

		Effectiveness	
		Low	High
Importance	High	Red	Green
	Low	Yellow	Blue

	Parents		Staff		Students	
	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance
(a) Arts and Fine Arts Education (Including music, drama, dance, etc.)	76%	60%	91%	57%	77%	32%
(b) Gifted and Talented Education/Elementary Enrichment Centers/Honors/Advanced Placement (Challenging opportunities for advanced students.)	74%	53%	87%	36%		
(c) Sports and Extra-Curricular Programs	79%	48%	92%	38%	82%	38%
(d) Curriculum and Programs that are interesting (Ensure that high school courses are of interest to students.)	84%	63%	86%	54%	69%	50%
(e) Curriculum and Programs that are relevant (Ensure that students are prepared for college and career.)	84%	83%	92%	79%	79%	54%
(f) Open Enrollment (Parents of elementary students have the opportunity to select school that child attends.)	70%	34%	83%	13%		

School Operations

A number of primary issues were identified concerning school operations: Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Professional Development for Teachers, and Class Size. In addition, Clean, Well-Maintained School Buildings were identified as an additional area by students.

		Effectiveness	
		Low	High
Importance	High		
	Low		

	Parents		Staff		Students	
	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance
(a) Safety (Children are safe in school building, on school grounds, and on the school bus.)	91%	93%	95%	93%	81%	58%
(b) Clean, Well-Maintained School Buildings	87%	69%	74%	71%	50%	44%
(c) Teacher Recruitment and Retention (Ability to hire and keep high-quality teachers.)	81%	82%	81%	77%		
(d) Professional Development for Teachers (Training opportunities for teachers to become more effective.)	87%	66%	62%	72%		
(e) Technology (Use of up-to-date computers and the Internet in instruction.)	89%	68%	74%	67%	73%	29%
(f) Class Size (A manageable number of students in the classroom.)	58%	85%	48%	83%	46%	18%

Student Support

Extra help for students who have difficulty with schoolwork was identified as a primary concern by both parents and staff. Equity was viewed as a secondary area of concern for all three groups.

		Effectiveness	
		Low	High
Importance	High	Red	Green
	Low	Yellow	Blue

	Parents		Staff		Students	
	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance
(a) Effective, Accessible School Counseling (Helping students with academic and career planning; helping students address personal issues.)	82%	65%	90%	72%	81%	43%
(b) Equity (A similar level of resources is available across school sites.)	80%	59%	78%	68%	73%	21%
(c) Student Health and Well-Being (Presence of nurse at school to address health issues.)	95%	67%	97%	74%	83%	46%
(d) Extra help for students who have difficulty with schoolwork.	75%	74%	76%	75%	84%	46%

School Culture

Diversity Awareness and Appreciation was identified as a primary concern by students and a secondary concern by parents and staff. Students also identified High Expectations for Teaching and Learning as a concern.

		Effectiveness	
		Low	High
Importance	High		
	Low		

	Parents		Staff		Students	
	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance	Effectiveness	Importance
(a) High Expectations for Teaching and Learning (Teachers and principal expect that all students will succeed at school.)	86%	81%	95%	87%	79%	45%
(b) Diversity Awareness and Appreciation (Helping students understand and appreciate their different backgrounds.)	76%	51%	79%	63%	81%	44%
(c) Effective Teachers (Teachers who meet the needs of diverse students with different needs and learning styles.)	84%	81%	93%	89%	83%	57%
(d) Effective Principals (Strong leaders who motivate and inspire students and staff, connect their school to the neighborhood.)	86%	78%	88%	86%	88%	47%
(e) Parent Engagement/Outreach (Increasing parent involvement at school.)	84%	53%	80%	58%	64%	19%
(f) Partnerships with Community Organizations (Cooperation with local businesses, civic groups, police departments, etc.)	79%	40%	72%	46%		

Open Responses

All respondents had the opportunity to share any additional ideas to help Beverly Public Schools develop the new strategic plan. A sampling of some input from parents includes:

Academics

- Increasing challenges for high-achieving and advanced students
- Increase emphasis on the arts, math, and science
- Too much emphasis on computers and technology instead of on the core subjects
- Instruction is too narrowly focused on passing the MCAS

Accessibility

- Expansion of Pre-school/Kindergarten program to more school locations
- Greater flexibility in committee meeting times so that working parents can participate
- Concerns about re-districting and frequent moving students to different schools

Accountability for teachers and principals

- Bullying policies and programs, particularly at the middle and high school

Communication

- Improved/more coordinated communication between school and home
- Information about how parents can help students improve their MCAS scores

Diversity instruction needed at the middle school level

Fees for programs and activities; high cost of full-day kindergarten

Guidance counselor support for students in career planning and college selection

Open Responses

Some input from the staff includes:

Academics

Math and science curriculums are in need of updating at the elementary school level

Need a strategy to help “all students”

Need to find time in the day to let students learn about things they are interested in

Social studies and foreign languages needs to be addressed as part of preparing students for the 21st century

Increase challenges for gifted and higher performing students

Building maintenance needs to be regular and ongoing to protect recent renovations

High School

Need to provide more support for students who are transitioning into high school; particularly those on an IEP

Align counseling program with national standards

Middle School

Good programs and positive events at the middle school are overlooked due to the condition of the building

Professional Development

Quality professional development for the paraprofessionals

More professional development; particularly with regard to latest instructional tools

Staff Support

Need more administrative support; teacher facilitators are ineffective due to their own course loads

Allow teachers more input for school decision making

Increase cooperation among staff to promote a safe environment for students

Technology

Needs to be a district alignment as to the proper use of technology for instruction

Need more technology support; long waiting time for computers/laptops to be serviced

Technology needs to be upgraded; computers unable to run current curriculum software

Open Responses

Some input from the students includes:

Academics

- More art programs
- More hands-on instructional activities
- Homework load is heavy for some classes
- Spend more time in the computer lab

Class Size

- Reduce the class sizes at the high school

Communication

- Explain to students how fees (for parking, sports, etc.) are being used

Diversity

- Better promotion of respect for others regardless of background

Facilities

- Improve maintenance and upkeep of bathrooms and classrooms.

Guidance

- Provide more opportunities for students to meet with guidance counselors
- Have students meet the guidance counselors earlier in the freshman year
- Better supports for students who have emotional issues

Relations with Teachers

- Needs to be more trust between teachers and students
- Need teachers to provide more help when students are having difficulty
- Teachers should refrain from showing favoritism towards any particular students
- More positive feedback/encouragement for students

Safety

- More/better enforcement of rules concerning bullying