

Drivers of school choice & measures of expectations met

More than ever school Principals and governing bodies are facing the challenges associated with ensuring that their schools' value proposition meets their stakeholder's expectations.

Parents are expecting more from schools partly as a result of increasing fees and their wish to see 'value for money', as well as their requirement that the education provided to their children is of a standard that best prepares them for the challenges that lie ahead.

School Principals are tasked with ensuring their operational and strategic plans address parent expectations and that processes are in place to be able to monitor and fine tune effectiveness.

Schools need to constantly review their value propositions to ensure that they are addressing the needs of their stakeholders. Reviews of schools' value propositions must be informed by objective and well researched data gathered from key stakeholders in such areas as:

- Academic, teaching and learning
- Student wellbeing and management
- Co-curricular sport and non-sport programs
- Leadership and administration of the school
- Effectiveness of the Board and the quality and clarity of strategic planning processes
- School communication
- Facilities and resources
- The school's reputation
- Affinity ('loyalty' measure)

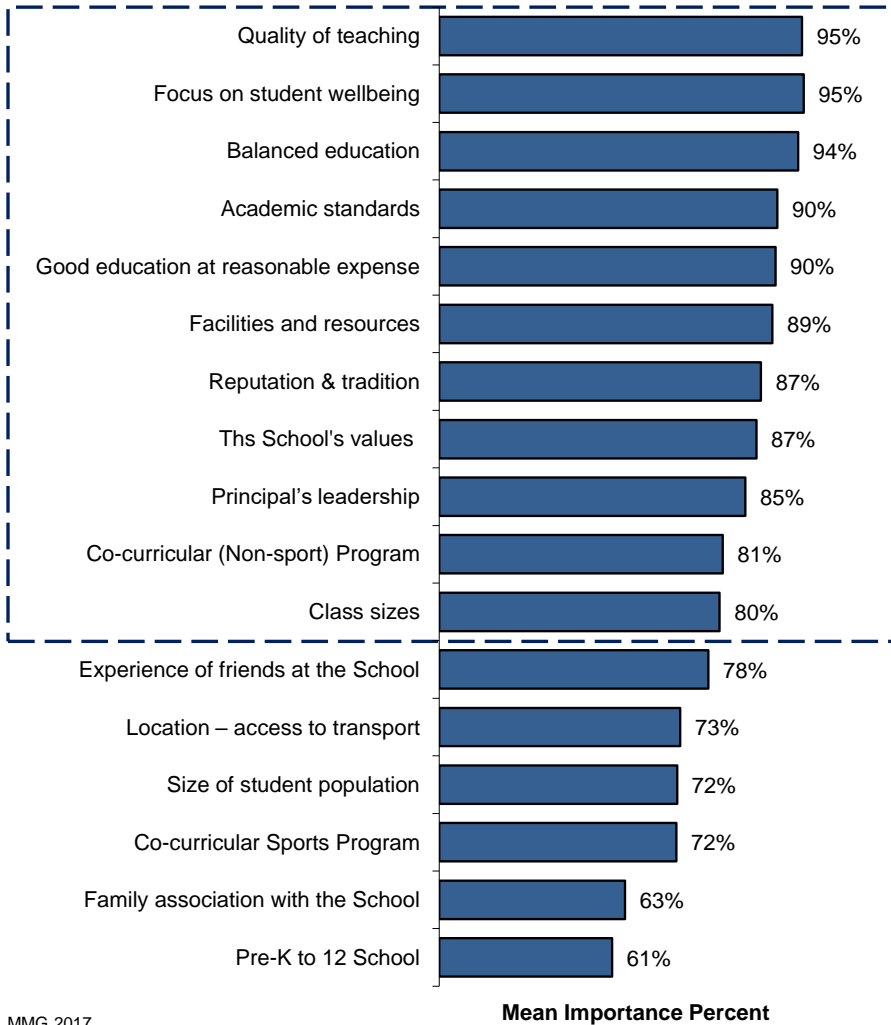
What assumptions are made in your school strategic review process about parents' reasons for the choice of a school? How well informed are they? What information has been used to review the school's value proposition?

To effectively monitor how the school's value proposition meets stakeholder expectations, one effective process analyses parents' responses to these questions:

- What importance do stakeholders place on a number of reasons for school choice?
- How well does the school's value proposition meet stakeholder's expectations for these drivers of choice?

The chart below utilises data collected from MMG Educations' Benchmark Database relating to parents' importance placed reasons of choice of schools for their children.

Parents - Reasons for School Choice



Note those reasons for choice with 80%+ scores.

To what extent can this data inform a review of a school's value proposition? Do parents' responses challenge assumptions underlying resource allocation? Curriculum design? Communications including marketing collateral? Operational planning? Strategic direction?

Do the aspirations and hopes of the Board, as set out in the school's vision, mission and values ("VMV") align with the reality of delivering quality educational services as desired to those who pay the fees on behalf of their children?

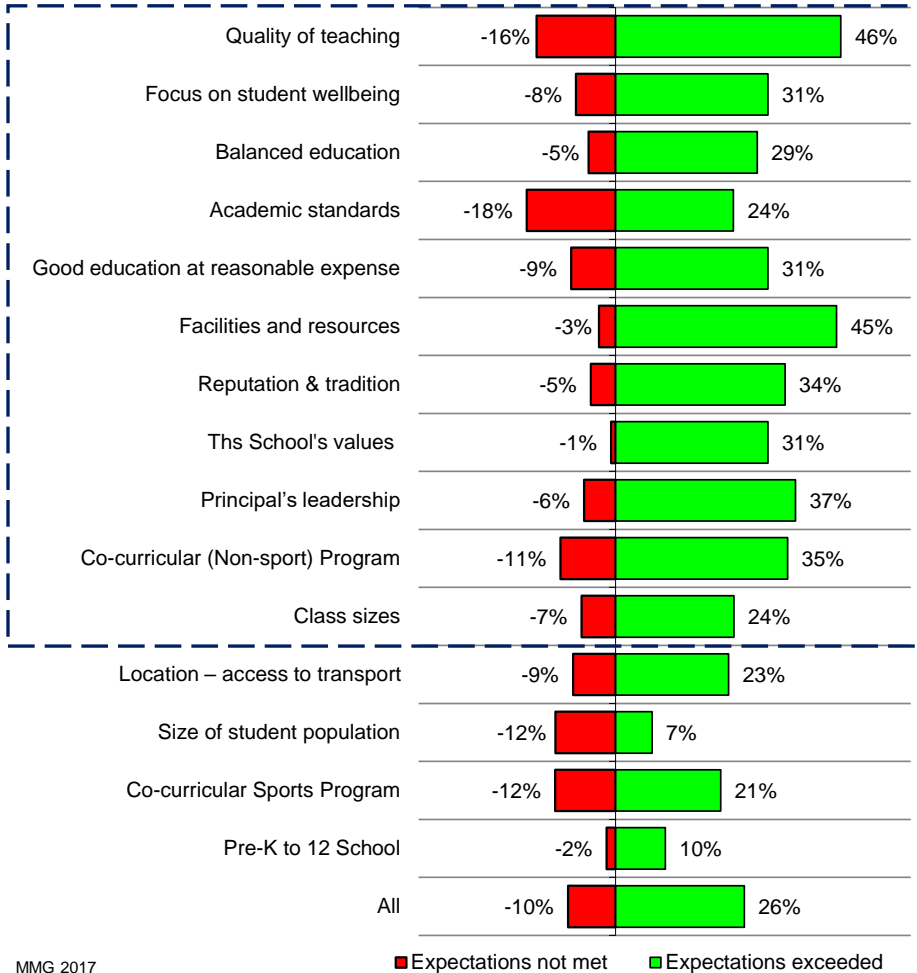
Schools armed with this research data are well placed to review strategic and operational activities.

MMG 2017

Having asked parents to rank the importance of their reasons for choice of this school, they were then asked to note the extent to which their expectations in these areas had been met.

Ranked in order of choice, this chart details the extent to parents' expectations of each area having been unmet (red bar) or exceeded (green bar).

Parents - Expectations Not Met Vs. Expectations Exceeded



Note the extent to which parents' have reported expectations being exceeded in the 80%+ reasons for choice.

It is likely that this school is 'underselling' itself in these areas. It needs to review its communications (newsletters, Public presentations, marketing collateral, etc) and implement required changes.

Note the divergence of views for 'Quality of Teaching'.

- Why have 16% of parents reported expectations not being met? Does this reflect performance issues? Or do these parents have unrealistic and, possibly, misinformed expectations?
- Is there a particular academic area or year group that is then the focus of this unhappiness?
- Why have 46% of parents reported expectations of quality teaching being exceeded?

MMG 2017

A review by this school of the extensive data contained in its report enabled them to identify and address those aspects of its teaching, student welfare and academic standards where parents noted expectations unmet.

A review of those areas where expectations were exceeded significantly enabled the school to revise its communication strategies to better inform the current and prospective parent bodies of what the school had to offer; it no longer 'hides its lights under bushels!'.

When reviewing strategy, Principals and governing bodies need to have well informed understandings of their stakeholders' (parents, staff, students, alumni, etc.) view of their schools.

Understanding reasons for school choice and the extent to which expectations have been met are examples of a number of areas where effective and meaningful research can assist schools to monitor and refine their operational and strategic planning.