

Engaging the school community through meaningful stakeholder reviews

In the face of increasing scrutiny of a schools' performance, rising stakeholders' expectations and demands on resources, the need for schools to constantly review their value propositions is greater than ever.

Engaging stakeholders through a process of meaningful reviews will assist schools in this process and ensure the continued support of students, staff, parents, alumni and the interest of prospective parents and staff who may be seeking new appointments.

The views of students and their parents of a school's performance in areas such as, drivers of choice and expectations met, academic, pastoral, co-curricular and spiritual domains will assist the value proposition review process. The views of staff relating to their welfare and professional development and those of alumni relating to interest in the school's life, involvement in alumni activities and advocacy will assist also. Stakeholders should be provided with opportunities to express their views by responding to comprehensive, searching quantitative and qualitative questions.

Engagement with stakeholders commences when they are invited to contribute their views through the review process. It strengthens when stakeholders see their views being taken into account in school planning such as strategic and operational planning. It is consolidated and built on when additional feedback from the school occurs and stakeholders' views are sought again as part of a constant review process.

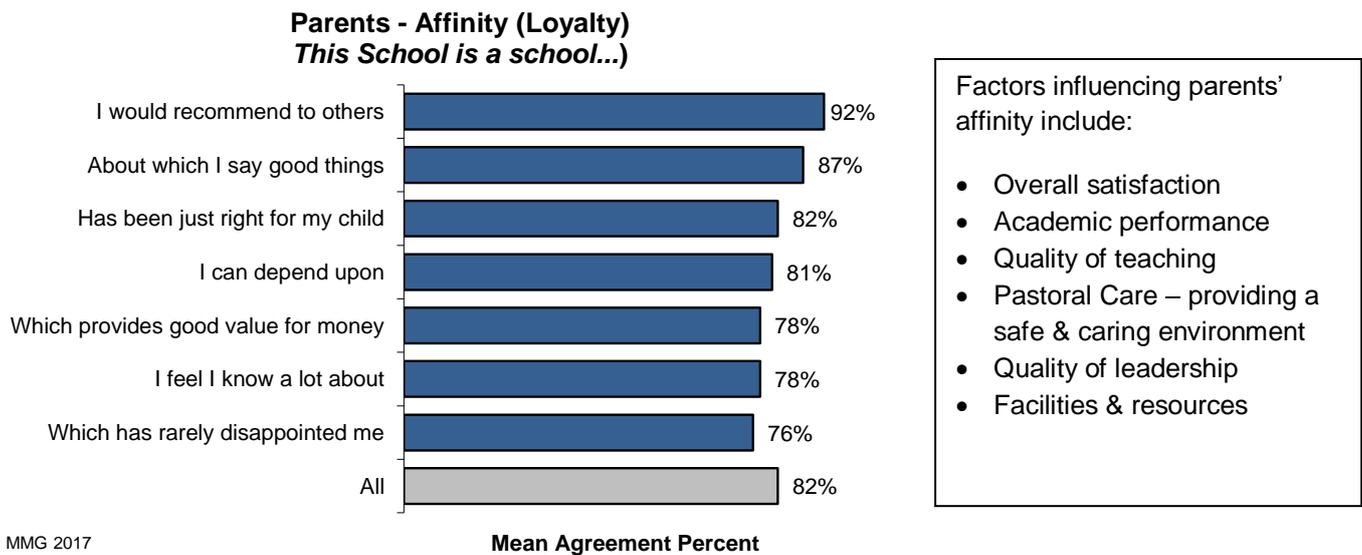
Contributions gathered from stakeholders in this fashion enable:

- The Principal and Board to gather informed comprehensive feedback upon which strategies and priorities can be assessed, developed and fine tuned.
- Stakeholders to express their views of key areas of the school's operations.
- The school to demonstrate to stakeholders such as parents, staff, students and alumni that it is keen to listen and willing to respond where appropriate.
- Decisions to be made by Principal and Board to be informed by objective feedback.
- The school to identify any misalignment in views or perceptions of stakeholders to be identified for remedial action.
- The growth of alumni interest in the school and the identification of opportunities for alumni relations activities.
- The school to enhance the success in development activities such as capital appeals and annual giving programs by encouraging school 'ownership' and confidence in the school's leadership

How does a school measure the extent to which its community has become engaged?

MMG experience suggests that an affinity (loyalty) measure provides a useful measure. MMG's data indicates a close alignment between measures of satisfaction with key areas of a school community's life and the extent to which that community acts as advocates.

The following is an example of a parent affinity chart of a high performing school. Similar measure of affinity for students, staff and alumni can be developed through reviews of those stakeholders.



MMG 2017

Parents recorded a 'very high' (82%) level of affinity including a 'very high' (92%) advocacy measure.

This suggests that the school has effectively engaged its high school parent body in the life of the school, a view supported by their responses to other quantitative and qualitative questions in the survey.

Summary

The process of seeking the views of stakeholders through a process of meaningful review provides the foundations upon which to build stakeholder engagement. Acknowledgement of the contribution stakeholders are making to the life of a school through effective communications, strategic and operational responsiveness and further review will strengthen and build on these foundations.