

**BRENTWOOD SCHOOL REVIEW
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE and CLIMATE**

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Abstract

A school's climate is its atmosphere for learning and as such includes the feelings people have about school and whether it fosters learning. A positive climate creates a school place where staff, students and parents want to spend a substantial portion of their time. It is a good and healthy place to be. Whenever educators or parents visit a school for the first time it is common to hear remarks about its organization and climate. Typical statements or observations might include, "This school has good atmosphere," or "This school has a good feeling." The health of an organization is shaped and influenced by the integration of a number of interconnected and complex variables.

The purpose of this project, a school review, was to translate those variables and feelings into specific factors that determine the organizational structure and climate of Brentwood School. The areas of school organization, planning, communication, staff development, philosophy, programs, student behavior, and school climate were reviewed.

Commendations and recommendations were presented for further attention by the staff.

The study consisted of two questionnaires and one open ended interview that asked teachers to rate their views of the school. Parents were sent a series of open ended questions to comment on their views of the school. The questionnaires and open ended questions were administered in the spring of 2000 and the data was compiled and analyzed in July and August of 2000. The goal of this review was the improvement of the school climate at Brentwood School. Ultimately, improvement of productivity and satisfaction for students, teachers, other staff members, the administration, and the parents were sought.

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Introduction

Healthy workplaces and healthy people are two essential building blocks of the foundation that provides educational experiences for all students and staff. It's the partnership between people and their workplace that makes good things happen in a school system. Directly or indirectly, individual and collective contributions of staff influence educational outcomes. Healthier workplaces and healthier workers foster a better educational climate.

Stop for a moment and think back to your own childhood. Think about your experiences of school, positively or negatively, that were especially memorable. What factors contributed to the differences? In all likelihood you responded more positively and learned best when the environment and climate was nurturing; when you felt teachers and other staff cared about you and when you had a sense of belonging.

Purpose of the Study

If one is interested in strengthening the health and climate of an organization, it is important to confirm the current status of the school. Getting a sense of the strengths and limitations helps one focus energies in the right direction. The purpose of this school review was to paint a picture of Brentwood School in regards to its organizational health and climate.

Through this review it was hoped we would attain:

- a clear understanding of the concept of organizational health and its impact for staff and students;
- an ability to identify the principal's role as a leader in creating and sustaining a healthy school climate;

- a comparison of how parents and staff view current educational issues and the effect these issues have on the health and climate of the school;
- an ability to identify norms and values that operate in our work environment that contribute to or detract from the climate of the school;
- an evaluation of the administration, programs, and school climate with an emphasis on improvement of specific defined events, conditions, and outcomes which are expected products of the environment; and
- an evaluation of the administration, programs and climate levels of the school with emphasis upon improvement of levels of satisfaction and levels of productivity among the staff.

School Profile

Brentwood School opened its doors in 1980 as a grade one to six school with 213 students and 12 teachers. The school has experienced consistent growth and has developed many excellent programs for students along with a strong parent volunteer program.

At the time of this review Brentwood had approximately 425 E.C.S. to grade four students. The staff consisted of a principal, associate principal, 19 teachers and eight support staff.

Brentwood, one of two elementary schools in Strathmore, serves town students who reside in a designated attendance area. During the latter part of this review Brentwood staff members were involved in a school reorganization for the 2001 school term. Due to the new Roman Catholic board taking over one of the schools in the town, Brentwood staff were considering the possibility of becoming a kindergarten through

grade six school. These deliberations and possible changes were handled professionally but it was unsettling for staff to consider losing colleagues to another school in the system. The teacher questionnaires were completed at the same time these deliberations were taking place.

Review of the Literature

The field of education lacks a clear and consistent definition of “school climate.” The term has been used synonymously with a variety of concepts including “culture,” “ethos,” and “saga” (Deal, 1993). The concept of climate came to education from the corporate workplace with the notion that it would provide for a more efficient and stable learning environment.

Scholars have argued about the meaning of climate for many years. Noted anthropologist Geertz (1973) has made a large contribution to our current understanding of the term. A review of the literature on school climate reveals much of Geertz’s perspective. Deal and Peterson (1990) note that the definition of climate includes deep patterns of values, beliefs and traditions that have been formed over the course of the school’s history. Heckman (1993) reminds us that school climate lies in the commonly held beliefs of teachers, parents, students, and principals. These definitions go beyond the business of creating an efficient learning environment. They focus more on the core values necessary to teach and influence young minds.

School climate can be defined as the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths understood (maybe in varying degrees) by members of the school community (Stolp & Smith, 1994). This system of meaning often shapes what people think and how they act.

School climate, an elusive but encompassing component of education, is gaining new recognition. Not only is it essential to good student achievement, but it is important for positive student, teacher and parent attitudes. A favorable school climate provides the framework within which students, teachers, administrators and parents function cooperatively and productively. A beneficial school climate does not happen by accident

While it takes much planning, work and leadership, the results can produce better learning as well as more positive feelings all around. Building and evaluating a positive climate should have a high priority in the schools of today. A positive climate includes focusing on school goals and student outcomes simultaneously with focus on personal relationships and salutary feelings. The ideal school climate should enthusiastically engage everyone to achieve the individual and group goals at hand. Joyce (1986) proposes that schools be joyful places that utilize the best practices in the field, have the capacity to be self-renewing, and have closely linked policy and practice. In pursuit of how we get there, Joyce describes society's growing expectations from teachers as well as the constraints teachers face within the system. Very little time is built in for planning or studying either academic content or the instructional process. No time is allocated for collaborative work, curriculum articulation, or mutual problem solving. Joyce has a strong belief that change will not occur in schools unless it involves teachers in a significant way.

Through a national study, Bacharach (1986) attempts to identify the problems teachers have with working conditions in schools. Using four principles of organizational effectiveness to survey teachers, Bacharach found that school organizations do not normally provide the conditions and resources necessary for teachers to do their jobs well. Resources are usually too limited and communication within organizations seldom takes place in a way that would assure common goals and objectives. This causes increased stress levels and reduced productivity among members of the organization.

All human beings exist in a natural environment and social environments, each one having a climate formed by the conditions present. Judgements regarding the components of a "good" or a "bad" climate in a social environment are based on how

well it meets the expectations of those who live in, work in, are influenced by, or are familiar with that particular environment. Schools are social environments. Educators and administrators must attend to the levels of satisfaction and to the levels of productivity which are the outcomes of those environments. At any particular time, the most pressing concerns might be with the morale of the students, the morale of the staff, the job satisfaction of staff members, or the extent to which parents and patrons approve of the school and its programs.

Individuals and groups differ in their values and perceptions of what is valuable and meaningful. They also differ in their descriptions of what school climate conditions or outcomes are most important. Consequently, one of the first steps in organizing for assessment of climate in a school environment is to identify the expectations of those people who have a legitimate interest in the conditions which exist and the outcomes which occur.

Careful assessment of school climate should precede the adoption and implementation of plans for the improvement of the school. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to see practices adopted and innovations implemented with no formal assessment of the current state of the school organization and the school climate (Lezotte, 1980). Strong leadership by administration is an important factor in improving school organization and school climate (Brookover & Lezotte, 1997; Lezotte, 1980). The most commonly held notion of climate according to Lezotte (1980) is the organizational climate or social climate in which emphasis is on the affective satisfaction-based adult relationships. Thus, a concern for staff morale in school settings is often accompanied by an assumption that this will lead to increased productivity by staff and to increase satisfaction and achievement by students (Lezotte, 1980; Walberg, 1979; ERIC, 1978).

Researchers have compiled some impressive information correlations on school climate. Healthy and sound school climates correlate strongly with increased student achievement and motivation, and with teacher productivity and teacher satisfaction.

Fyans, Jr. and Meehr (1990) looked at the effects of five dimensions of school climate: academic challenges, comparative achievement, recognition for achievement, school community, and perceptions of school goals. In a survey of 16,310 fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth-grade students from 820 public schools in Illinois, they found support for the proposition that students are more motivated to learn in schools with strong climates.

In a project directed at improving elementary student test scores, Thacker and McInerney (1992) looked at the effects of school climate on student achievement. The project focused on creating a new mission statement, goal based outcomes for students, curriculum alignment corresponding with those goals, staff development, and building level decision-making. Their results are consistent with other findings that suggest school climate and the implementation of a clear mission statement, shared vision, and school-wide goals promote student achievement along with teacher productivity and staff job satisfaction.

School climate also correlates with teachers' attitudes toward their work. In a study that profiled effective and ineffective organizational cultures, Cheng (1993) found good school culture (climate) had better motivated teachers. In an environment with strong organizational ideology, shared participation, charismatic leadership, and intimacy, teachers experienced higher job satisfaction and increased productivity. Administrators who are interested in changing their schools' climate should first try to understand the existing climate. Climate change by definition alters a wide variety of relationships. These relationships are at the very core of institutional stability. Lieberman

and Rosenholtz (1987) indicated that the major organizational dilemma and the greatest barrier to school improvement is how change is controlled while ensuring participants autonomy and job satisfaction. Understanding how schools change their climates is very difficult because of longstanding norms of collegial interaction. The most effective schools are those which are constantly in a state of “becoming” more effective and which do that by building bridges toward a more professional culture/climate. Lieberman and Rosenholtz (1987) describes several examples of enhanced professional cultures/climates in schools that break down the barriers to improvement. One example would be the evaluation of the present culture/climate (Lieberman & Rosenholtz, 1987). Reforms should be approached with dialogue, concern for others, and with some hesitation.

One strategy for logical changes was outlined by Furtwengler and Micich (1991). In a retreat setting students, teachers, and administrators from five schools were encouraged to draw visible representations of how they felt about their school climate. The idea was to “make thought visible” and highlight positive and negative aspects of their respective school climates. Teachers, parents, students, and administrators were able to identify several areas that would benefit from change. Attention to such items, before changing them, provided valuable insights into how school climate functions and operates.

A coherent vision specifies the particular values and beliefs that will guide policy and practice within a school. The creation of a vision must change as the school climate changes. At any one point there will be a particular image of the future that is predominant, but that image will evolve. The administrator who is able to adapt a vision to new challenges will be more successful in building a strong school climate. The role of school leaders in the crafting of cultures is pervasive. Their words, their nonverbal

messages, their actions, and their accomplishments all shape culture. They are the models, potters, poets, actors, and healers. They are historians and anthropologists. They are visionaries and dreamers. Without the attention of leaders, school cultures can become toxic and unproductive. By paying fervent attention to the symbolic side of their schools, leaders can help develop the foundation for change and success (Deal & Peterson, 1994). A vision for creating a healthy school climate should be a collaborative activity among teachers, parents, staff and the administration. Fullan (1992) writes, “Whose vision is it?” “Principals,” he says, “are blinded by their own vision when they must manipulate the teachers and the school culture to conform to it (p. 20).” A more useful approach is to create a shared vision that allows for a collaborative school climate.

Deal and Peterson (1990) suggest that administration work to develop shared vision of school climate, rooted in history, values and beliefs. Stolp and Smith (1994) suggest to build positive school climate, administrators should recognize team building, putting their agendas second, and learn from the parents and staff. Principals must have some tools to evaluate and nurture the traditions, ceremonies, rituals and symbols that express school climate.

Sirotnik (1987) suggests that school improvement must be conducted by the people in the schools. In order to gain an appropriate perspective for school renewal, Sirotnik distinguishes among information, knowledge, and evaluation and suggests a method of continuous renewal through a process of critical inquiry. He further stresses that the process of inquiry recognizes that change occurs slowly and it should be a continuous activity by and for the people who work in schools. As a result, inquiry stresses collegiality and reflection in the midst of practice, thus fostering the kinds of dynamics that lead people to constant renewal and improvement. Planning for climate

development is essential. In fact it is often better to do nothing than to proceed without careful planning and evaluation (Sirotnik, 1987).

In any social environment the perceived “leader,” by virtue of ascribed or earned role, is the major determiner of the climate. Thus, a teacher’s actions will be the single most important determinant of the climate in a classroom. Likewise, the administrative team has a comparable role in influencing the overall climate in the school building. Administrators can and do have a major role in setting and fulfilling the conditions which enhance or impede the development of positive school and classroom climates.

Although educational researchers and practitioners don’t always agree on how to solve specific problems, they do agree that some school climates are good and some are bad and efforts to access and improve school organization and school climate are important projects to be addressed (ERIC, 1978).

The healthy school is a pleasant place. It is protected from unwarranted intrusions. Teachers like the school, the students, and each other. They see the principal as their ally in the improvement of instruction; the principal is approachable and supportive, yet establishes high standards of teacher performance. The healthy school climate has no need to coerce cooperation; it is given freely by professionals who are in basic agreement about the task at hand.

Design of the Study

Overview and Timelines

There are many ways in which information can be gathered and the choice of research traditions, strategies and techniques is varied. The selection of a chosen methodology takes into account many outside influences and is based on the problems confronting the researcher because of the particular type of information he/she is seeking.

Research must be formal and systematic and it must include four distinct steps as identified by Gay (1987):

1. Selection and definition of problem.
2. Execution of research procedures.
3. Analysis of data.
4. Drawing and stating conclusions.

Gay sees research and development research as necessary to develop effective products for use in schools. Action research is necessary to solve classroom problems through application of the scientific method. These types of research are very good at dealing with general problems in an educational setting.

The main purpose of this research is to gather information with a view to allowing the researcher to find answers to problems. Two methods of gathering information is to survey and interview. Survey and interview research has different characteristics but the overall purpose is to secure information about a group of people.

School climate was reviewed and summarized in the process of this project. The surveys and interviews were conducted in the spring of 2000. Parent questionnaires were sent out randomly to 100 parents. Thirty teachers and support staff volunteered for the school review. The data was collected, analyzed and compiled during July of 2000. The

results were tabulated and the report prepared, with the commendations and recommendations, in August 2000.

Description of the Study

Through a process of meetings with myself, Dr. G. McKinnon (superintendent of schools) and Mrs. L. Huntley (principal of the school) the content of the questionnaires and interview questions was developed. Previous questionnaires the district had developed for school evaluations guided our initial deliberations. We also looked at a formal and well tested instrument for approaching the review of climate and cultural change in the school: The NASSP'S Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments and Information Management System (Comprehensive Assessment of School Environments [CASE], 1987). This instrument focuses on leadership styles, organizational structuring, beliefs and values, classroom satisfaction and staff productivity. This instrument offered help in guiding the formation of our final questionnaire and interview questions.

Ultimately three questionnaires and an open ended interview protocol were developed that focused on the following key areas: school organization, planning, communication, staff development, programs, student behavior, and school climate.

Feedback from all the staff was gathered using questionnaires on administration, school programs, and school climate (Appendices A and B). Teachers were asked to use a five point scale to indicate their agreement with a range of questions related to administration and school programs on the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix A). Scale values ranged from 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree" to 5, representing "Strongly Agree" with a mid-point of 3, being "Neutral". For the purposes of reporting the data collected a neutral response will be treated as being below the mean.

On the teacher questionnaire “School Climate” (Appendix B) teachers were asked to use an eight-point scale to indicate their agreement with a range of questions related to the state of the school climate. Scale values ranged from 1 indicating “Rarely” to 8, representing “Very Frequently”.

A questionnaire package was sent out to 30 staff members in June of 2000. Completed questionnaires were received from all 30 staff members resulting in a participation rate of 100%. After the questionnaires were returned, interviews were conducted with those teachers that indicated a desire to be interviewed. Twenty staff members choose not to be interviewed. Of the ten teachers that indicated a desire to be interviewed the interviews were conducted using a predetermined set of questions (Appendix C).

Feedback from parents was gathered using a questionnaire (Appendix D). The questionnaire was sent to 100 parents. Completed questionnaires were received from 79 parents resulting in a participation rate of 79%.

Provisions were made to inform the participants of the purpose of the study and that all information collected and compiled for the study is confidential (Appendices E and F). Neither names or other identifying information were used in the questionnaires. All individuals had the right to participate and they had the right to withdraw at any time during the study. Upon completion of the study a copy of the project will be made available for all participants to look over and comment on. Careful planning for assessment of climate and for climate development projects is imperative. Without careful planning, efforts are likely to be random, i.e., no matter how well intended the results could be ineffectual, counterproductive, or lacking in satisfaction for all who are effected. The overall purpose of this review is to find out what teachers and parents think

and to provide the school staff and administration with data and feedback to enable them to further enhance the climate and working conditions of Brentwood Elementary School.

Results

As a result of my interest in the development of a positive school climate and workplace for teachers and students, I was able to gather data pertinent to the purpose of this study: To find out what teachers and parents think and to provide the school staff and administration with data and feedback to enable them to further enhance the climate and working conditions of Brentwood Elementary School.

The results from the questionnaires and interview questions were collected, analyzed and organized around eight sections: School Organization, Planning, Communication, Staff Development, Philosophy, Programs, Student Behavior, and School Climate. The comments for each section include overall feeling of the staff and parents, specific comments important to the section and commendations and recommendations. Raw results are included in the appendices.

School Organization

Mild satisfaction was expressed for the manner in which organizational functions were handled by the school administration. Teachers particularly have appreciated the new staff meeting format and the opportunity to deal with philosophical issues and issues related directly to teaching. In response to the question, “Is decision making based on the exploration of carefully considered alternatives” (question #2 School Climate Survey). Sixteen of the teachers (53%) responses were “Frequently”, eleven teachers (36%) “Very Frequently” and three teachers (11%) responded “Occasionally.” The mean average for this question was 6.0 on a scale of 1-8. One teacher commented, “Everyone gets a chance to have their say. Most good discussions come from staff consensus.” Teachers noted that the staff meetings do provide an opportunity for useful exchange of ideas (questions #4 and #9 teacher questionnaire). Eleven teachers (37%) responded “Frequently”, ten

teachers (33%) “Very Frequently”, and nine teachers (30%) responded with “Occasionally.” The mean average in response to this question was 5.5 on a scale of 1-8. Some of the teachers indicated that the opportunity exists for their input; whether individuals opt to use it is another thing. Still other teachers felt that the staff meeting agendas were so long to begin with that they hesitated to speak thus lengthening the meetings. Therefore attention needs to be given to allow for adequate time during staff meetings for teacher input regarding discussion and decision-making.

School staff members and parents gave accolades to the school administration for attending to the efficient handling of the school, as well as the human needs within the school (question #3 teacher questionnaire). Twenty-two of the teachers (73%) “Agree” and eight teachers (27%) “Strongly Agree” that the administrative team treated them as a professional worker. The mean average response to this question was 4.2 on a scale of 1-5. Some positive comments from teachers were as follows:

- My personal experience has been very positive. Both of the administrators respect the human element. They work well together and are caring toward both staff and children. They are also well organized and the school runs smoothly. It is excellent leadership as it should be.
- I feel very fortunate to have our administrative team. They are very human, supportive, and capable in all areas. They are responsive to the needs of the staff, parents, and students. I appreciate their honest and open feedback.
- The administrators are open, caring and helpful to those who go to them with a problem.

Planning

The organization of Brentwood School has been guided by the administrative team with input from staff members. School goals are set annually. Most staff members felt that the goals were achievable but they noted the importance of keeping them ever present before the staff throughout the course of the school year (question #10 school climate). Thirteen teachers (43%) responded with “Considerable”, ten teachers (33%) “Very Great”, six teachers (20%) “Some” and one teacher (4%) “Very Little.” The mean average response in this area was 5.9 on a scale of 1-8. Although the majority of teachers indicated that they felt involved in setting the school goals, some teachers would have liked to be more involved. Further suggestions indicated that the goal setting procedure would have been enhanced through having an ongoing process where a there is continual review of the goals and related plans could occur. Representative are the following comments in regard to the decision making process:

- Amazingly often, given the size of the staff, most decisions are still reached through consensus and compromise.
- Most school-wide decisions are made at staff meetings. I feel comfortable with the chance I have to share my opinion and share in the decision making.
- We need to review the goals more frequently.

Although the staff wanted to be involved in the decisions that would have a significant impact on them (in particular those decisions that directly influence students), it was noted that some decisions are not important enough to call all staff together to develop a consensus especially when the demands on teacher time are considered. A few comments from teachers were:

- There have been times when I have not been informed of the after school use of the school and my classroom.
- Many times student discipline contracts are not available.

Teachers appreciated the approach that was taken in making decisions about the 2001 school year and the changes to Brentwood School with regards to becoming a K through six school. They felt that everyone had an opportunity to provide input and there was a feeling that decisions to be implemented had been generated through staff input. While teachers felt that sometimes decisions were mandated bureaucratically, it was generally agreed that the decision making process was participatory and that at times it was preferable that administration provide some specific direction rather than utilize a consultative approach. Twenty-four teachers (80%) “Agree”, one teacher (4%) “Strongly Agree” and five teachers (16%) “Neutral” felt that the administrative team encourages them to discuss ideas (question #4 teacher questionnaire). Mean average response to this question was 3.9 on a scale of 1-5.

Staff members saw themselves as generally flexible and open minded (question #27 school climate). Sixteen teachers (53%) view the staff as being open and flexible some of the time and fourteen teachers (47%) view the staff as generally open and flexible, willing to consider many viewpoints. Teacher comments are:

- Even teachers who are inflexible in their own beliefs, are willing to tolerate others’ style and difference of opinion.
- The teachers are open to new trends and ideas.

The staff was split in regards to the question, “Do opportunities exist for cooperative planning (question #18 teacher questionnaire)?” Five staff members (18%) indicated that they “Strongly Agree”, eight (29%) expressed “Agree”, six (21%) were

neutral, eight (29%) expressed “Disagree” and one (3%) indicated “Strongly Disagree” with the statement. The mean average was 3.1 out of a scale value of 4. The teachers expressed a concern with the fact that they have to organize their own time for cooperatively planning rather than being provided with structured opportunities to get together. It would seem that more formal as well as informal opportunities for multi-grade level planning, and single-grade planning, would be beneficial (question #18 and 19 teacher questionnaire). One teacher (3%) “Strongly Agreed”, twelve teachers (43%) “Agree”, six teacher (21%) were neutral, eight (30%) “Disagree” and one teacher (3%) with the question regarding cooperative and multi-level grade planning. Common statement were:

- Cooperative planning is done on own time.
- Very difficult to find time. However, time must be allocated.
- There should be time set aside for more grade-level planning. There is not enough time in the day to do this with all the other planning.

Communication

Closely related to the whole area of planning and decision-making is communication (question #1 school climate). Eighteen teachers (60%) indicated that they believe there is a multi-directional flow of information between the administration team and teachers, eight teachers (27%) felt that there is two-way communication between the administration team and teachers and four teachers (13%) described the primary communication flow as one-way, from the administrative team to teachers. Generally, all staff members perceived themselves to be well informed. Mean average was 6.4 on a scale of 1-8.

In terms of the extent of communication between and among teachers to keep each other informed about what is going on in their respective classrooms (question #26 school climate). Eight teachers (27%) felt that the extent of communication was a “Great Deal”, thirteen teachers (43%) felt “Considerable”, six teachers (20%) felt “Some” and three teachers (10%) felt “Very Little.” Mean average 5.2 on a scale of 1-8. The comment, “I don’t know what else is happening in my grade level in other classes” was representative of the responses. Time was noted as a significant factor in finding adequate opportunities to communicate in this way. Teachers that want this type of interaction seem to have made time on their own. The administration should take note of the concern and need for teacher interactions and make attempts to allow for this type of teacher interactions on a more formal basis.

Most staff members indicated that they felt quite free to talk to fellow teachers with regards to school problems, but only eleven felt that they were frequently accessed or sought out by other teachers to share information or ideas. One teacher noted that other schools contacted her more than teachers within her own school. Several teachers noted that experienced teachers have a great deal to share and that they are not being accessed to an optimum degree.

Although it was generally agreed that teachers were kept adequately informed in regard to most school functions and issues, increased communication about student discipline was desired in some cases. The latter was viewed as particularly important when a contract for student behavior was being developed or when decisions were being made about students in a particular homeroom. There was conflicting data responses that the administration team provided staff members with adequate evaluation and feedback

in regard to their personal performance (question #1 teacher questionnaire). Seven of the teachers (23%) “Strongly Agreed”, thirteen teachers (43%) “Agreed”, and ten teachers (34%) were “Neutral” in regards to the administration team providing them with adequate evaluation and feedback on their performance. Mean average was 3.9 on a scale of 1-4.

Some comments on teacher performance and feedback are:

- I would like to have more feedback earlier in the year.
- I would like to have the administrators visit my room or area of the school more often in a supportive role.
- Helpful and individual, sincere feedback and support.

The primary communication need identified was for discussions about what Brentwood School stands for and how programs could be coordinated within the school. Many teachers wanted an opportunity to describe their basic beliefs and priorities. Teacher comments which indicated the need to share information and collaborate in order to provide better links between programs were:

- There needs to be more communication between grade levels in regard to programs that have been implemented in different years and better coordination of programs.
- We never seem to sit down and talk about where we are at and where we are going.
- We really need to sit down and coordinate such programs as science, physical education, and art from E.C.S. to grade four.

Communication and involvement of parents was a very strong point for Brentwood School as identified in the review. Parents expressed great appreciation for

the opportunities they were given to be involved in the school. They spoke highly of the volunteer program. They indicated that they felt welcome to come into the school or to phone to discuss issues about their children. They reported that they found the school administration and teachers to be very cooperative and that the school support staff members made them feel very welcome at the school. Typical was the comment, “There is excellent two-way communication.” Parents noted that there were teachers who sent them information on an on-going basis, through the use of the daytimer and interm report cards, about how their child was progressing in addition to report cards. Parents expressed appreciation for the school newsletter and the daytimer. One parent noted, “The daytimer really helps me keep on top of what is going on.” A few parents indicated that they would like to have more information on the academic program that their child is following so that they could provide more help at home for their child.

There was positive response from parents to the question, “Do you feel welcome and comfortable as a parent at Brentwood School (question #8 parent questionnaire)?” Fifty-eight of seventy-nine (73%) of the responses were “yes” or “absolutely”. They saw the support staff and teaching staff as friendly and welcoming and they felt good about the positive atmosphere that had been developed in the school.

A key component of the parent-teacher communication process was the parent-teacher interviews (question #12 and #21 teacher questionnaire). Seven teachers (25%) “Strongly Agreed”, fifteen teachers (54%) “Agree”, two teachers (7%) “Neutral” and four teachers (14%) “Disagree” that the process for parent-teacher interviews is satisfactory. Mean average 3.6 on a scale of 1-4. Parents and teachers recognized that there were situations in which there was a need for more interview time. There were

several statements of support for involving students along with parents in the process. One teacher said, “Student involvement is key to making the interviews meaningful.” It was noted however, that when students were involved, teachers needed more time scheduled for each interview. It was further suggested that teachers organize interviews with their students several times throughout the year to review the progress of the student.

Staff Development

Brentwood teachers and support staff members were committed to professional growth and the enhancement of their own skills. Frequently their expertise has been sought out by other schools in the system and by other school systems. Appreciation was shown for the early literacy group that was initiated by the school staff. It was noted that the program provided an opportunity for staff to learn about this program as well as to communicate with teachers about ideas for implementing the program into the curriculum.

The primary needs suggested for further school based staff development in order of priority were: Language Arts, Science, and Technology. Six teachers (21%) indicated “Agree”, six teachers (21%) “Neutral”, ten teachers (37%) “Disagree” and six teachers (21%) “Strongly Disagree” with the statement that provisions for helping teachers with technology and the implementation of technology into the curriculum are satisfactory (question #20 teacher questionnaire). Clearly teachers were calling for more assistance when it comes to technology. Mean average 2.3 on a scale of 5. Teachers and support staff members also indicated a need for further training in assisting children with social-emotional and behavioral problems. Support staff members were particularly interested

in learning more about students diagnosed with A.D.D. as well as learning new technology programs related to the operation of the office.

Philosophy

Although there were many positive comments shared about what some staff members believed was representative of the philosophy of Brentwood School, there was not a clear consensus on what the school represented. Some thoughts on the topic included:

- Most teachers care and are knowledgeable about curriculum and most are cognizant of the fact that new programs and ideas fit only with what they believe to be good learning.
- It is a place to come and learn for teachers and students.
- Brentwood School looks at the child as a whole person (question #7 school climate). Sixteen teachers (53%) felt that the school had “Quite High” goals for the social emotional development of the child and thirteen teachers (43%) felt that the school had “Very High” goals for the social emotional development of the child.
- We involve the community to a high degree.

It was felt that it would be beneficial for staff members to spend some time developing a consensus about what the school represented so that we can operate in a system of shared beliefs.

Opportunities for ventures such as multi-age group learning experiences for some activities, were viewed as positive. There was a hope that the grade four students would become increasingly responsible as student leaders in the school. There was also a

suggestion that the E.C.S. programs could become more closely aligned to the school through participation in numerous activities. Staff members emphasized the need to come together to talk about philosophy and what the school should represent, but they further noted that this should take place not as a one shot deal but on a continual basis throughout the school year.

Teachers generally felt that the teaching approaches utilized in their classrooms represented their personal beliefs about how students learn. Some acknowledged that clarifying one's belief and modifying one's practice to fit with those beliefs is an ongoing process change. It was also indicated that it was possible that some of the beliefs held by individual teachers might not always reflect current pedagogy. Some teachers indicated that they enjoyed the curriculum and its recent changes. In regard to this one teacher said, "This is the best and most interesting of all the years that I have taught."

Programs

Curricular.

Parents felt that students in Brentwood School were getting a good education (question #3 parent questionnaire). Forty-two parents (54%) responded with the comment that they felt their child was receiving good to excellent instruction and were very pleased with the instruction that their child is received. Alberta Learning curriculum expectations are adhered to and in addition, teachers go beyond the basic level of the curriculum in developing their programs. Teachers themselves were spending time in becoming acquainted with new approaches especially in language arts and math and were thoughtfully developing these approaches in their classroom in a way consistent with their own beliefs about learning and teaching. Some of the parent comments were:

- Teachers are perceptive.

- Teachers are very willing to work with parents, all my children seem to be learning well.
- I feel strongly that they are being met.
- High standards of academics.

When stating their view of a good education parents described the importance of meaningful learning experiences, the importance of opportunities to obtain good marks, and the significance of a solid academic foundation. In essence, parents felt that their children were experiencing success and gaining the background knowledge necessary to provide them with the ability to do well later in life. They enjoyed the variety of learning experiences offered by teachers (especially the hands-on learning experiences).

Recognition and experiencing success were of vital importance to students. They appreciated all that was being done by the teachers to recognize a job well done in order to give students opportunities for successful experience.

Parents were strongly supportive of the Brentwood School program. One parent commented that their children came home happy and they believed that this spoke volumes about what happened at school. Generally parents said that they were impressed with what teachers were doing and they were confident that their children's academic needs were being met. Most parents believed that teachers were doing their very best for students and that all staff members were going out of their way to meet the needs of children. Parents appreciated the various approaches teachers had taken when working with students as well as the fact that when there was a problem the teacher contacted the parent. One parent noted that when their child missed key concepts in a subject such as mathematics, they were unable to keep up in the classroom. This created some long term problems for their child. This parent appreciated the efforts of the teachers to ensure that

the student developed a good foundation in the basic skills and they appreciated the attempts to offer extra assistance when it was appropriate. The following comment was typical, “I really appreciate what is happening in Brentwood School, academically. When my child was in another school system, they seemed to be working very slowly and having difficulty. However, the Brentwood School staff make sure that my child gets finished and that all his work is done.”

A few of the parents indicated that they were struggling as they tried to help their children with homework. These parents were uncertain about what to do to help their children and that they felt that sometimes assignments needed to be more carefully explained so that parents could reinforce what teachers are trying to do.

Teachers were also confident that students were receiving a good education at Brentwood School and they felt that the programs provided by the school were diverse and successful at meeting a wide variety of student needs (question #6 school climate questionnaire). This view was reflected in the following comment, “I feel students are very fortunate to be able to attend Brentwood School because they are given many opportunities and varied experiences.” Twenty teachers (70%) felt that the school goal for academic achievement were “Quite High”, eight teachers (27%) felt the school goals for academic achievement was “Very High”, and only one teacher (3%) felt it was “Low.”

Generally, it was felt that there was good access to needed learning resources. It was noted however that an area of need was an increased access to computer technology (question #20 teacher questionnaire). Teachers felt there should be more computers in the classrooms and the library for their use and student use, and that all computers

should be well maintained. Six teachers (21%) “Agree” that technology support in the classroom was satisfactory, six teachers (21%) were “Neutral”, ten teachers (37%) stated “Disagree” and six teachers (21%) “Strongly Disagree” with the amount of technology support. Some of the comments were:

- Only some classrooms have computers.
- More computers and teacher inservices are needed.
- More software to enhance school programs is needed.

This is one area that needed more attention and perhaps immediate action. The mean average was 2.3 on a scale of 1-5.

Extra-curricular.

There was strong agreement that Brentwood School was providing a well-rounded extra curricular program for students. There was strong support for the music program and an appreciation for the varied opportunities made available to students. It was noted however, that care must be taken to avoid predominance of any one particular activity to the detriment of a well-rounded, variety of programs for students.

Special needs.

Brentwood School staff members, with their focus on the development of the whole child, and desire to meet each child’s individual needs, have done much to establish formalized programs as well as informal ways of assisting each student in developing to his or her own potential. Twelve teacher (43%) responded that they “Agree” with the special needs program (question #15 teacher questionnaire), four teachers (14%) “Strongly Agree”, five teachers (18%) were “Neutral” and seven teachers (25%) “Disagreed. Teachers recognized that it was difficult to keep pace with the needs for all students. They were committed to giving their time and attention to the increasing

numbers of students with special needs. While recognizing that the severity of those needs are increasing. Teachers, as expressed in the following comments, felt that the school would benefit from discussions about students needs and special education:

- We need to focus on making classroom programs meet a variety of levels and needs.
- In regards to special education, we need to develop a staff philosophy.
- We should reflect in practice what we believe should be happening in regard to meeting special needs students and challenging all students.
- The staff should develop an understanding of what Brentwood School stands for in regard to special education and then take steps to implement the philosophy so it is reflected in practice.

Several teachers expressed the view that consideration should be given to discontinuing pull-out programs. They suggested modifying these programs and having special education teachers work with students within the context of the regular classroom. These teachers suggested that this could be accomplished with the resource room teacher's assistance in the development of individualized program plans.

In addition, a number of teachers commented on the need to explore what is being done to challenge students with special talents and abilities. Several teachers expressed the belief that activities could be modified in a regular classroom setting so that those students were challenged. Some teachers cautioned that this could be difficult because of time management issues. Fifteen teachers (54%) either were neutral or disagreed with what was being done to provide opportunities for the exceptional student, while thirteen teachers (46%) felt that there was enough being done to challenge the exceptional student (question #16 teacher questionnaire). One teacher commented as follows, "I try to

provide for the varied needs of my students in my learning centers but I don't feel I have enough time to do it as well as I should." Teachers also indicated they would like to have more resources as well as opportunities to share ideas and approaches to working with students with exceptional ability. Parents expressed appreciation for the efforts that the staff made to provide students with extra learning challenges in the classroom. Other parents indicated that they would like to see a pull-out program for gifted students.

Concern was expressed about students with social-emotional behavior problems. The concern was not only about helping the students who were having problems but also indicated a need to deal with the disruptive effect that those students could have on other students. It was indicated that there was need for all teachers to develop their skills in dealing with these students. As well teachers identified a need for increased availability of counselling. At the same time there was appreciation for the counselling that exists. There was appreciation for what is already being done to meet students' social-emotional and behavior needs. A very high percentage of parents (73%) indicated positive feelings regarding how their children's general social-emotional needs were being met (question #4 parent questionnaire). They noted three specific programs in place at Brentwood School that built on the affective and social needs of children. This included the high quality of counselling available at the school, the extra curricular opportunities provided and the work of teachers and administrators in following up on students' problems with parents. Typical comments by parents are as follows:

- There seems to be a really good focus on building self-esteem. My child was involved in a self-esteem program which worked very well and I felt that the training program for the parents that was offered was also excellent.

- When my child was having difficulty with a death in the family, the school was very helpful, both to the child in counselling as well as to us as parents in providing material to help us react to the situation.

Parents also expressed appreciation for the help they received in dealing with their child's personal and academic programs. Parents indicated that their children felt comfortable going to their regular class teachers, their resource room teacher, and their friends when they were having problems. Frequent mention was made of the important role classroom teachers assumed as front line counsellors in the school setting. Although, the majority of staff felt the goals for helping students develop socially and emotionally were excellent, there was, as already noted, concern with the amount of assistance some students needed. One teacher commented in this regard, "There needs to be much more counselling for traumatic experiences and for behavior and anger management and dealing with stress."

Beyond what is being done in general to enhance student self concept and providing students a feeling of self-worth, it was noted that a lot of energy has gone into extra curricular programs and school incentive programs such as the "Class Act Award" and the Quest program.

Mild support was indicated by the teachers for the resource room and other special education programs in the school as well as for the efforts that all teachers and the school administrators were making to help students with academic and personal difficulties. With reference to the question, "I believe there is adequate provision for meeting the special needs of students (question #14 teacher questionnaire)", eight teachers (28%) "Strongly Agree", twelve teachers (43%) "Agree", one teacher (4%) "Neutral" and seven (25%) "Disagree." Mean average 3.3 on a scale of 1-5. The resource

team was seen as helpful in coordinating programs for students demonstrating special needs but a suggestion was made that more opportunities for sharing information and establishing stronger lines of communication among classroom and resource teachers as well as support staff needed to become a priority. One representative teacher comment was, "I feel that the homeroom teacher and the resource teacher need to work more closely together for the benefit of all students."

Student evaluation.

It was indicated that goals and expectations for student achievement and behavior were appropriate for the community in which the school operated. The majority of staff members as well as parents felt that high academic standards for students were expected. Teachers realized that students would ultimately have to compete for post secondary institution entrance or in the open job market and felt that they were attempting to give students the very best education possible. Most teachers agreed that the student evaluation process in the school was well coordinated and understood by students and parents. Teachers agreed that there were many means used to assess student progress, which include involving students in a self-evaluation process.

In general parents perceived that the monitoring of student progress was very well done. All seven-nine parents (100%) responded with a positive comment with regards to how well they were kept informed of the progress of their child (question #6 parent questionnaire). Appreciation for daytimers and parent-teacher interviews in addition to report cards was expressed. Teachers noted that they too appreciated the parent-teacher interviews and the open door policy which encouraged parents to be in the school and maintain open communication. Several teachers did indicated that they saw portfolios as

beneficial in reviewing student progress, and that they would like parent-teacher interviews to be extended in length in order to facilitate the involvement of students in the interviews.

Student Behavior

Generally, it was felt that student behavior is fairly good (question #11 teacher questionnaire). Twenty teachers (71%) “Agree”, three teachers (11%) “Strongly Agree”, 4 teachers “Disagree” and 3 teachers (10%) “Strongly Disagree” that the discipline code promotes student learning. One of the concerns was the issue of overcrowding. This was apparent both in the hallways and on the school playground, and seemed to escalate the frequency of an additional problem—that of older students bullying younger students. This latter problem seemed to be focused around a few repeat offenders rather than on the general student population. During the past few months, a clip board approach was suggested by one of the teachers for monitoring student behavior. This was implemented and it provided a method for holding students accountable for their behavior. Teachers felt that the playground situation had improved upon implementation of the clipboard approach.

Parents were generally satisfied with the student behavior in the school (question #5 parent questionnaire). Thirty-seven parents (47%) responded with the comment, “No problem.” Sixteen parents (20%) had no problem with discipline in the classroom but they had concerns with the playground behavior. Parents noted that misdemeanors did happen at times and they really appreciated when they were contacted about these situations and were invited to become involved in encouraging their child to behave more appropriately in school. Typical was the parent comment, “I like the process that teachers use in handling discipline. The students know what is expected of them and they feel

responsible for their actions.” Parents also noted the need for consequences appropriate to the misdemeanor and generally felt that discipline was appropriate. They indicated that when they had brought discipline concerns or issues to the school, there had been follow-up. Parents also noted the problem of some of the older students bullying younger students. This was countered by older students who indicated that they were sometimes singled out for blame. They did not feel that they were solely responsible for these problems.

Teachers noted that it was difficult to find logical consequences that were meaningful to students who misbehaved, particularly with students who continually displayed inappropriate behavior. It was noted that sometimes the consequences the school invoked did not have much affect on students. It was noted through the school review process that there was a high degree of student involvement in various activities and the students were seen as being polite and friendly.

School Climate

The physical environment of the school was viewed as welcoming and positive. The school is bright and cheerful and kept very clean by the caretakers. The needs in terms of the physical facility were primarily associated with the growing population and space needs including storage space such as book selves, better utilization of the janitors room, and space for another computer lab. It was suggested that carpeting would make the school quieter and that it would be very nice to have an art room and a science room so that materials could be readily accessible for these subjects.

The school climate at Brentwood School was seen as being positive. Support staff members were appreciated by the parents and teachers for the way they created the first

line of welcome to visitors Fifty-eight (73%) of the parents responded that they feel very welcome as a parent in Brentwood School (question #8 parent questionnaire). The atmosphere in the school encouraged cooperation and a sense of belonging for staff members. Staff members got together to support such things as the Green School Project, the Quest program, the Intramural program, the school choir, and many other projects too numerous to mention. These activities were all sighted as being useful in helping to further establish a strong and positive school climate. The cooperation of students, staff and parents in working together to create a positive school climate was identified as a highlight of the school. Quite a number of teachers felt that others took an interest in what they did although there was mention that sometimes when a colleague is getting too much recognition for achievement there is the possibility for resentment and jealousy. In response to the question to what extent the teachers were interested in the professional achievements of other staff members (question #13 school climate questionnaire) fourteen staff members (47%) responded with "Considerable", six (20%) responded with "Great Deal" and ten (33%) responded "Some." Generally, teachers felt that they could look to their colleagues for help and they felt that all staff members significantly contributed to the school. Seventeen of the teachers (57%) responded that they feel "Very Free", eleven staff (37%) responded that they feel "Quite Free" and two staff members (6%) feel "Slightly Free" to talk and ask for help from other staff members (question #17 school climate questionnaire). Staff members felt that all staff in the school approached their job with a strong work ethic and it was noted that teachers approached their teaching with vigor. Although there was a feeling that there was a high degree of dedication and commitment, it was noted that there must be a balance maintained in the work load as there are many demands on staff members professionally and personally. It was

suggested that the priorities must be established by teachers in order that there is not “event overload.” Nineteen (63%) responded with “Frequently” and nine (30%) responded with “Very Frequently” to the question regarding if teachers approach their work with vigor and enthusiasm (question #28 school climate questionnaire).

It was suggested that the school staff take more opportunities to celebrate all the excellent things that they are doing and it was further proposed that the school climate committee could plan some special events and activities for the staff as well as for the students. Appreciation for the extras things that staff members do such as bringing in cakes and goodies was given.

The climate of Brentwood School is one which displayed a caring, supportive and mutually respectful environment. First impressions of the school are of a warm, friendly, bright and physically attractive building. Numerous displays of student artwork, attractive bulletin boards and a general sense of purposeful orderliness contribute to a strong sense of pride in the school. In response to the question regarding the morale of the staff at Brentwood School (question #29 school climate questionnaire) nine teachers (30%) felt that it was “Very High”, nineteen (63%) felt it was “Moderate” and four teachers felt it was “Low.” The mean average response to this question was 6.1 on a scale of 1-8.

The teachers exhibited pride in speaking about their school and were comfortable in the various learning environments. Conversations with staff members revealed confidence in the school, in the administrative team and in their own professional roles. As one teacher commented, “The staff here are committed and professional”. Parental involvement is high and welcomed as an important supportive component of learning. Brentwood Elementary School exudes a strong prevalent feeling of “community.”

Summary

Based on feedback Brentwood School staff seem to have implemented an appropriate school climate for good instruction and learning. A supportive environment exists that lets teachers use the methods best suited to them and their students. Good school work and effort are appreciated and recognized by the administrators and the staff. Praise is given whenever possible, rather than concentrating on weaknesses.

Communication between teachers is admirable; there is a willingness to share ideas and materials. Much of the communication between teachers is informal although there are activities such as staff meetings and social functions which contribute to teacher interaction. Teachers that have been in other schools indicate that Brentwood School has the “best” communication of any school in which they have taught.

There appears to be good communication between the school and the parents. The school tries to encourage an “open door” policy. Parent volunteers are used in most classrooms; this practice seems to greatly enhance the communication between staff, other parents, and the community.

There is no doubt that the Brentwood School staff are dedicated to the process of learning. They accept suggestions for improvement in a cooperative spirit and they are generally diligent and conscientious in their work. They take their school and community responsibilities seriously, and handle themselves with maturity, grace, and good humor. There is a high level of professional collegiality among staff members.

Commendations

Commendations for consideration by the Brentwood School staff are as follows:

- An efficiently run school which sets a high priority on being a caring school for students, parents, and staff members.

- The high degree of staff professionalism and commitment to students.
- The professional leadership which provides for an effective organizational structure including: A new staff meeting format and opportunity for teacher input into decisions; Adequate evaluation and feedback in regards to personal performance; Responsiveness to parent and teacher concerns; A positive team model for learning and teaching.
- The abilities, innovations, open mindedness and flexibility of all staff members.
- Their willingness to discuss problems and ideas with fellow staff members.
- The high educational standards and school goals which have been identified.
- The enhancement of learning and teaching through initiatives such as student involvement in parent-teacher interviews.
- The high degree of parental involvement which is encouraged.
- The excellent communication with parents ensured through: The school newsletter; Report cards and parent teacher interviews; The use of daytimers; Phone calls and letters from teachers to parents; The responsiveness of staff to parent concerns.
- The emphasis all teachers put on the enhancement of students' sense of self worth and school success.
- The close contact maintained with parents.
- The incorporation of new approaches and curricular ideas.
- The development of a strong foundation in basic skills.

- Meaningful student assessment and good formal, as well as, informal communication with parents in regards to student progress.
- The establishment of a positive climate of mutual respect among students and staff members.
- Responding to behavioral problems by establishing an effective monitoring system and consequences for inappropriate school behavior.
- The excellent resources available.
- The high degree of cooperation between the adults and students in the school.
- A high staff work ethic.
- The atmosphere among teachers of caring for one another and caring for students.
- The implementation of programs that build a sense of belonging such as Quest, Intramurals, and Climate Committee.
- The welcome extended to parents and visitors. The support staff members who provide a warm welcome through the school office and who assist the good organization and smooth operation of the school were consistently expressed by parents, other visiting professionals, and teachers.

Recommendations

Recommendations for consideration of Brentwood School staff were as follows:

- Increase the staff member's sense of involvement in school goal setting and maintain the goals which are set as a focus throughout the year.

- Assist staff members in organizing structured opportunities for communication and collaboration through: Grade level planning; Multi grade level planning; Specific subject area planning across the grade.
- Maintain opportunities for ongoing open communication and collaborative decision making.
- Increase the time for parent teacher interviews and continue to increase student involvement in the interviews.
- Increase opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas and share their areas of expertise.
- Develop a school-based staff development plan based on the priorities and needs of the staff members.
- Establish a shared philosophy about Brentwood School.
- Provide for further program enhancement through joint teacher planning.
- Continue to work collaboratively in sharing ideas and developing a plan for dealing with behavior problems, as well as, to determine what follow-up steps are needed.
- Continue to purchase and upgrade the computers and software in the school.
- Explore methods to assist teachers with the implementation of technology into their curriculum.
- Consider ways to increase the teacher and student uses of computers and technology.
- Continue with the School Climate Committee and have them plan some special events and activities for staff, as well as, students.

- Act upon teachers ideas and continue to foster the idea that it is O.K. to experiment with professional growth and climate within the school.
- Review the role of the resource team in meeting the needs of the gifted students.

Reviewer's Reflections

In general, Brentwood School is a good school serving its students, parents, and teachers well. Some objectives of the school are being met more successfully than others. The staff is aware of the areas where improvement is needed.

The staff of Brentwood School is placing appropriate emphasis on the basics of good education. The academic expectations of teachers are reasonable and the students respond to these expectations favorably. Teachers and students are developing the desirable personal characteristics, and are being prepared successfully for the technological world. Individual needs of the students and teachers are generally met successfully. The condition and climate of the building meets students and teachers intellectual, social, and physical needs.

Effective communication networks have been established and are being maintained. These communication networks are resulting in positive attitudes both within the building and outside in the community.

Teachers, parents, and students exhibit a sense of pride in their school. Parents generally demonstrate a positive attitude to the efforts of the staff and a sense of satisfaction with the school's program delivery. The attitude of the school staff is one of very high morale and is very much appreciated and positive.

Generally, teachers agree that:

- Their job is important.

- There is support for change in the school.
- They are willing to participate in school improvement.
- They are providing students with a good education
- They know their students and staff well.
- The community is generally satisfied with the school
- The school is well organized.

Most teachers report that:

- There is a lot of team spirit.
- They would rather be at this school than at another.
- They respected and have the opportunity to participate.
- New ideas are well received.
- Parents are interested generally in the school's programs.

The aspects of the school that teachers like best are the school ethos, staff loyalty, staff team spirit, and the desire to make Brentwood School the best place possible for themselves, students, and parents. (For more detailed information and summary of teacher and parent feedback please refer to Appendices G, H, I, and J)

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Appendix A
Brentwood Elementary School Review – 2000
Teacher Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your feedback in regards to the effectiveness of the Brentwood School administration and how they have been performing their roles and the effectiveness of the programs offered at Brentwood School.

Throughout the questionnaire, you find descriptors which you are asked to respond to. If you strongly agree with the statement, circle “Strongly Agree”; if you strongly disagree circle “Strongly Disagree”.

After each descriptor, space has been provided for comments. I encourage you to include any comments which would help me better understand your feelings about the effectiveness of the school administration and programs offered.

Administration

1. The administrative team has provided me with adequate evaluation and feedback in regard to my personal performance in Brentwood School.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. If I am ever in need of assistance, it is available

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. The administrative team treats me as a professional worker.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. The administrative team encourages me to discuss ideas.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. The administrative team treats all staff members equally.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. The administrative team keeps me well informed.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. The administrative team is consistent in their application of school policies and procedures.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. I am satisfied with how funding is allocated at the school level and the procedures for purchasing from the funds that have been allocated.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. The administrative facilitates conferences and meetings in a organized fashion.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. The administrative team involves the school staff in developing philosophy and in goal setting.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. The administrative team maintains a discipline code that promotes student learning.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. The administrative team encourages parent/community involvement in the work of the school.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. Are there any additional comments you would like to make in regards to the administrative team at Brentwood School.

School Programs

14. I believe there is adequate provision for meeting the special needs of students which I feel cannot be met in my classroom.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. I am satisfied with the approach that is being used in providing special education services to our students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

16. I believe that I am adequately providing for the needs of students with exceptional ability or talents.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

17. Provision for enhancing students self-concept and feelings of worth exist at Brentwood School.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

18. Opportunities exist for cooperative planning.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

19. The coordination of programs with those of preceding and succeeding grades or levels, is satisfactory.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

20. Provisions for helping teachers with technology and the implementation of technology into the curriculum are satisfactory.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

21. Parent-teacher interviews are satisfactory.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

22. Are there any additional opinions that you would like to express in regard to school programs at Brentwood School?

Appendix B

Brentwood School Review – 2000

School Climate

Each item of the questionnaire has a response scale with eight possible choices for you to record your perception. These choices are grouped into four pairs and accompanied by descriptive terms.

Sample Item

How often do you go to the movie theatre?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

If your answer to the question was “virtually never”, it would be appropriate to circle number one. If, however, you attend the movies more often than “virtually never”, but not as occasionally, circle number two.

1. What is the direction of information flow in your school? (select one and add any comments you feel necessary.)
 - a. One way, from administration team to teachers.
 - b. Mostly one way, from administration team to teachers.
 - c. Two ways, between administration team and teachers.
 - d. Multidirectional, administration team to teachers, teachers to administration team.
2. Is decision-making in your school based on the exploration of carefully considered alternatives?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

3. To what extent are group decisions in your school reached by consensus?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

4. How well do staff members settle conflict when it occurs? (select one and add any comments you feel necessary.)

- a. Poorly, conflict is usually ignored.
- b. Weak attempts are made but success is minimal.
- c. Sometimes deals with conflict successfully, other times not.
- d. Skillfully deals with conflict, turns it into constructive discussion.

5. How often do you feel staff meetings provide an opportunity for teachers to have a useful exchange of ideas?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

6. How high are the school's goals for academic achievement?

Very Low	Low	Quite High	Very High
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

7. How high are the school's goals for social emotional development of the child?

Very Low	Low	Quite High	Very High
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

8. Do you feel there is a high work ethic in Brentwood School?

Very Low	Low	Quite High	Very High
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

9. Are the expectations of the school appropriate for the community?

Very Low	Low	Quite High	Very High
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

10. What influence do you have on the goals and expectations that are established for Brentwood School?

Very Little	Some	Considerable	Very Great
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

11. How often do you see the behavior of the other teachers in your school as being supportive?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

12. How much confidence and trust do the teachers of your school have in each other?

Very Little	Some	Considerable	Great Deal
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

13. To what extent are the teachers in Brentwood School interested in your professional achievements.

Very Little	Some	Considerable	Great Deal
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

14. To what extent do teachers in Brentwood School try to help each other with their problems?

Very Little	Some	Considerable	Great Deal
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

15. How often do fellow teachers commend you for doing a good job?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

16. How often do other teachers in Brentwood School do things that make it pleasant to be on staff?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

17. How free do you feel to talk to your fellow teachers about school problems?

Not Free	Slightly Free	Quite Free	Very Free
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

18. How often are your ideas about teaching sought by other teachers in your school?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

19. How free do you feel to talk to other teachers about personal issues?

Not Free	Slightly Free	Quite Free	Very Free
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

20. To what extent do teachers in Brentwood School keep each other informed about what is going on in their respective classrooms?

Very Little	Some	Considerable	Great Deal
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

21. How flexible and open-minded are the teachers of Brentwood School? (select one and add any comments you feel necessary.)

- a. Mostly closed, set opinions, inflexible.
- b. Fairly closed and inflexible.
- c. Open and flexible some of the time.
- d. Generally open and flexible, willing to consider many viewpoints.

22. How often do you feel that teachers at Brentwood School approach their work with vigor and enthusiasm?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

23. How high is the morale of the staff at Brentwood School?

Very Low	Low	Moderate	Very High
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

Appendix C

Brentwood School Review – 2000

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What is there about Brentwood School that causes you to believe that it is a very good school?
2. What ideas do you have for improving the school?
3. Do students in Brentwood School get a good education? (what is a good education?)
4. Are you satisfied with how the Special Education needs of the students in the school are being met?
5. What do you feel about the existing system for communicating with parents about student progress? (report cards, parent/teacher interviews, etc.)
6. How do you feel about the behavior of the students?
7. How do you feel about the school's physical climate?
8. Does the school climate provide an atmosphere which encourages cooperation, a sense of belonging, and a sense of pursuing a common goal?
9. Is there more that can be done to improve the school's learning climate?
10. Is there more that can be done to help in terms of technology and learning resources?
11. Is there a need for further in-services? If yes in what areas?
12. What would you say Brentwood School represents?
13. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make to assist me in this review process?

Appendix D

Brentwood Elementary School Review - 2000

Parent Questions

1. What would you describe as the strengths of Brentwood School?
2. What suggestions for improvement of Brentwood School do you have to offer?
3. How well do you feel that your child's academic needs are being met in Brentwood School?
4. How well do you feel that your child's social/emotional needs are being met in Brentwood School?
5. How do you feel about the discipline in the school?

Appendix E

Teacher Consent

Dear Colleague:

I am conducting a review of Brentwood Elementary School. The purpose of this review is to celebrate the school's achievements and to provide the school staff and administration with feedback to enable us to further enhance Brentwood Elementary School. I anticipate that your students and you will benefit from you participating in this study by completing the attached questionnaire.

Please note that all information will be handled in a confidential manner. When responses are released, they will be reported in summary form only. Further, all names, locations, and any other identifying information will not be included in any discussion results. You also have the right to withdraw from the study without prejudice at any time.

If you choose to do so, please indicate your willingness to participate by signing this letter in the space provided below, and return the letter to the office.

I very much appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to talk to me. If you have further questions regarding the project please feel free to contact one of the individuals listed below.

Project Supervisor

Dr. R. Mrazek
University of Lethbridge
1-403-329-2452

Ethics Committee Chairperson

Dr. R. Butt
University of Lethbridge
1-403-392-2434

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. G. McKinnon
G.H.S.D. #15
1-403-934-5121

Sincerely

Lavern Lein
Brentwood Elementary School

(please detach and forward the signed portion)
Brentwood Elementary School Review

I agree to participate in this study(please check)

☐

I would also like to be involved in the interviews(please check)

☐

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F

Parent Consent

Dear Parent:

I am conducting a review of Brentwood Elementary School. The purpose of this review is to celebrate the school's achievements and to provide the school staff and administration with feedback to enable us to further enhance Brentwood Elementary School. I anticipate that your child and others will benefit from you participating in this study by completing the attached questionnaire.

Please note that all information will be handled in a confidential manner. When responses are released, they will be reported in summary form only. Further, all names, locations, and any other identifying information will not be included in any discussion results. You also have the right to withdraw from the study without prejudice at any time.

If you choose to do so, please indicate your willingness to participate by signing this letter in the space provided below, and return the letter to the school with your child.

I very much appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 934-5013. If you have further questions regarding this project please feel free to call one of the individuals listed below:

Project Supervisor	Ethics Committee Chairperson	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. R. Mrazek University of Lethbridge 1-403-329-2452	Dr. R. Butt University of Lethbridge 1-403-329-2434	Dr. G. McKinnon G.H.S.D. #15 1-403-934-5121

Sincerely

Lavern Lein
Brentwood Elementary School

(please detach and forward the signed portion)
Brentwood Elementary School Review

I agree to participate in this study (please check) ☐

I wish not to participate in this study (please check) ☐

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G

School Climate

Brentwood School Review – May, 2000

(30 questionnaires sent out – 30 questionnaires returned)

Summary of responses

Each item of the questionnaire has a response scale with eight possible choices for you to record your perception. These choices are grouped into four pairs and accompanied by descriptive terms.

Sample Item

How often do you go to the movie theatre?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4	5 6	7 8

If your answer to the question was “virtually never”, it would be appropriate to circle number one. If, however, you attend the movies more often than “virtually never”, but not as occasionally, circle number two.

1. What is the direction of information flow in your school? (select one and add any comments you feel necessary.)
 - a. One way, from administration team to teachers.
 - b. Mostly one way, from administration team to teachers. (4)
 - c. Two ways, between administration team and teachers. (8)
 - d. Multidirectional, administration team to teachers, teachers to administration team. (18)

Mean Average 6.4

- There is often a breakdown in the flow of communication i.e. 15 minute notice that a student is transferring out of your classroom.

- Some teachers provide constant feedback to administrators, some rarely say anything.
- The importance of the decision influences the communication. Sometimes teachers have little input if administration has strong feelings.
- Although mostly administration to teachers, as is often necessary. I feel I am well-enough informed on matters I need to know.
- Memo's

2 Is decision-making in your school based on the exploration of carefully considered alternatives?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3(3) 4	5(4) 6(12)	7(8) 8(3)

Mean Average 6.0

- Staff meeting discussions are often very thought provoking and insightful
- At times central office overrules what we consider as best alternative.
- Yes, very frequently, the example of the catholic board is a good example.
- Everyone gets a chance to have their say. Most good discussions come from staff consensus.
- At time we are told the decision and other times we go around and around and I wish a decision would be made.
- Attempts are made to gather all information before impulsively reacting.

3. To what extent are group decisions in your school reached by consensus?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3(4) 4(5)	5(7) 6(7)	7(6) 8(1)

Mean Average 5.3

- Some decisions are not important enough to call all staff together for consensus. It would be a waste of time.

- Time constraints mean usually majority rules, otherwise to time consuming.
 - Voting is often carried out when a new idea is proposed.
 - Amazingly often given the size of the staff. Consensus reached by compromise predominates.
 - Most school wide decisions are made at staff meetings. I feel comfortable with the chance I have to share my opinion, and share in the decision making.
4. How well do staff members settle conflict when it occurs? (select one and add any comments you feel necessary.)
- a. Poorly, conflict is usually ignored. (1)
 - b. Weak attempts are made but success is minimal. (7)
 - c. Sometimes deals with conflict successfully, other times not. (17)
 - d. Skillfully deals with conflict, turns it into constructive discussion. (5)

Mean Average 5.2

- Some teachers have allowed disputes to go “underground” but coexist to get the job done.
- Time constraints do not favor working through staff conflicts.
- Conflict is at times ignored.
- I am honestly not aware of a lot of conflict. It doesn’t seem to reach those proportions.
- Varies with personnel, some are excellent in this area, others not so adept.
- Conflict arises because of poor communication.
- I feel we have conflicts at times but it gets swept under the rug.
- Not many conflicts, but some take to back-stabbing when it occurs. Most conflicts are ignored until forgotten.

5. How often do you feel staff meetings provide an opportunity for teachers to have a useful exchange of ideas?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3(3) 4(6)	5(8) 6(3)	7(6) 8(4)

Mean Average 5.5

- Very frequently since the new format.
- More and more time is being recognized as valuable.
- Sometimes discussions are not encouraged.
- There are times when some staff members are reprimanded for daring to question how things are done.
- Often there is not enough time, but this year we have tried to set aside more time for this.
- The opportunity is always there, whether individuals opt to use it is another thing.
- We have deliberately tried to set aside time at our staff meeting for teacher talk. It seems to be working well.
- Time is always a factor.
- Agendas are so long that teachers are hesitant to speak and lengthen the meeting.
- People resent time to do this when there are so many other things to do.

6. How high are the school's goals for academic achievement?

Very Low	Low	Quite High	Very High
1 2	3 4(1)	5(7) 6(14)	7(7) 8(1)

Mean Average 6.0

- I think there is reasonable balance between academic, social, and emotional needs, with a somewhat larger stress on academic growth.
- School also puts a high value on extra curricular.

- I think we all want achievement in our classrooms but at times it is difficult with students.
- Vary from class to class not all goals are academics.

7. How high are the school's goals for social emotional development of the child?

Very Low		Low		Quite High		Very High	
1	2	3	(1)	5	(4)	6	(12)
						7	(7)
						8	(6)

Mean Average 6.4

- The goals are high – resources and personnel and time are low, limited effectiveness.
- Depending on each staff member.
- I am not convinced these are being dealt with as best they could. (I honestly am not sure what else should be done)
- There needs to much more counseling time.
- I think we all want this but I don't recall ever talking/discussing it.

8. Do you feel there is a high work ethic in Brentwood School?

Very Low		Low		Quite High		Very High	
1	2	3	4	5	(3)	6	(4)
						7	(12)
						8	(11)

Mean Average 7.0

- Becoming more balanced.
- Staff is committed and professional.
- I like the staff.
- Most teachers put in MEGA hours.
- There's a genuine atmosphere of caring.
- Have to look around at the classrooms, the student work, hallways, teacher workroom. Check out how late teachers stay and how many come in on weekends.

- To the detriment of the mental health of some staff, there is always a pressure feeling among staff to take on more and more for the benefit of the child but jobs are seldom dropped.
- Teacher yes; student low.

9. Are the expectations of the school appropriate for the community?

Very Low		Low		Quite High		Very High	
1	2	3	4	5(5)	6(4)	7(14)	8(7)

Mean Average 6.8

- I am not comfortable making a statement on this.
- I think we try our best.
- Decisions are reached by high indication of parent supports.
- The parents seem to be satisfied on the whole.

10. What influence do you have on the goals and expectations that are established for Brentwood School?

Very Little		Some		Considerable		Very Great	
1	2(1)	3	4(6)	5(1)	6(12)	7(6)	8(4)

Mean Average 5.9

- I don't recall getting to involved with our goals and I think we need to be reminded what they are.
- As much as other teachers.
- This year I missed the goal setting meeting so I can't say.
- Staff sets the goals together.
- We need to review the goals more frequently.

11. How often do you see the behavior of the other teachers in your school as being supportive?

Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Very Frequently	
1	2	3	4(1)	5(6)	6(10)	7(9)	8(4)

Mean Average 6.3

- Teacher genuinely care about each other.
- There's many different philosophies, but teachers are very accommodating
- Sometimes I feel this school has everybody in "little groups" and I feel left out.

12. How much confidence and trust do the teachers of your school have in each other?

Very Little		Some		Considerable		Great Deal	
1	2	3(1)	4(3)	5(5)	6(10)	7(9)	8(2)

Mean Average 5.9

- I would like to think so.
- Some personality conflicts – which are probable normal for this size of staff.
- I feel very confident in talking with the administration and other teachers.

13. To what extent are the teachers in Brentwood School interested in your professional achievements.

Very Little		Some		Considerable		Great Deal	
1	2	3(3)	4(7)	5(5)	6(9)	7(4)	8(2)

Mean Average 5.2

- Only close teaching friends have ever discussed this with me.
- There is some resentment and jealousy when one teacher seems to gain recognition/achievement.
- We seldom have time to discuss this type of matter.

14. To what extent do teachers in Brentwood School try to help each other with their problems?

Very Little		Some		Considerable		Great Deal	
1	2	3	4(3)	5(4)	6(9)	7(9)	8(5)

Mean Average 6.3

- All teacher contribute – some are just great.
- Compassion yes – help?
- Teachers and administration are great.
- I think we go to our own persona, teaching friends – even from other schools.

15. How often do fellow teachers commend you for doing a good job?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2(2)	3 4(5)	5(7) 6(15)	7(1) 8

Mean Average 5.2

- Perhaps more opportunities to meet and share ideas/strategies would remedy this problem.
- I am doing some great things but I've heard I am intimidating to my grade peers. Does this mean I quit?
- I don't think any of us take enough time to celebrate all the good things that happen.

16. How often do other teachers in Brentwood School do things that make it pleasant to be on staff?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3(1) 4(3)	5(9) 6(6)	7(9) 8(2)

Mean Average 6.5

- I would like to see the climate committee plan special events/activities for staff as well as for students.
- Social committee work well, but they need more participation.
- Cakes are nice.
- Staff duty free lunches and buffets are nice.

17. How free do you feel to talk to your fellow teachers about school problems?

Not Free	Slightly Free	Quite Free	Very Free
1 2	3(2) 4	5(3) 6(8)	7(10) 8(7)

Mean Average 6.5

- I would only go to a close personal friend.
- When I have brought up problems at staff meetings I only offended others. So now I have learned not to talk so much.
- Free to discuss general problems.
- Depends on the problem and with whom.
- Very comfortable in discussing all matters of education.

18 How often are your ideas about teaching sought by other teachers in your school?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2(1)	3 4(8)	5(8) 6(8)	7(4) 8(1)

Mean Average 5.3

- Never at my grade level but others have asked – other schools contact me a lot.
- Experienced teachers have a lot to offer.
- I would like to see more time set aside for this type of communication.

19. How free do you feel to talk to other teachers about personal issues?

Not Free	Slightly Free	Quite Free	Very Free
1(1) 2	3(1) 4(5)	5(6) 6(6)	7(8) 8(3)

Mean Average 5.7

- I don't feel close to anyone and I really feel lost at times.
- I try to separate my personal and work issues.
- Most staff members are caring and supportive.

20. To what extent do teachers in Brentwood School keep each other informed about what is going on in their respective classrooms?

Very Little	Some	Considerable	Great Deal
1 2(3)	3(1) 4(5)	5(6) 6(7)	7(8) 8

Mean Average 5.2

- don't know anything about anything happening in my grade level and I feel really lost and disappointed – a 3rd wheel.
- Passing comment in staff room – again time constraints see little teacher interaction.
- I have seen a great deal more sharing in my time here both within and between grade levels
- Grade level teachers often share ideas, plan together, and get their classes together for special events.
- More time has to allocated for grade level sharing.

21. How flexible and open-minded are the teachers of Brentwood School? (select one and add any comments you feel necessary.)

- a. Mostly closed, set opinions, inflexible.
- b. Fairly closed and inflexible.
- c. Open and flexible some of the time. (16)
- d. Generally open and flexible, willing to consider many viewpoints. (14)

Mean Average 6.4

- Very different for different staff members.
- The teachers are open to new trends and ideas.
- Even teachers who are inflexible in their own beliefs, are willing to tolerate others' style and difference of opinion.

22. How often do you feel that teachers at Brentwood School approach their work with vigor and enthusiasm?

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1 2	3 4(2)	5(9) 6(10)	7(5) 8(4)

Mean Average 6.0

- Some days are more disappointing than others.
- Some more than others.
- A lot of teachers are tired. Many of our staff work full time and run a home and family as well.
- Most staff are very professional and this is evident in the amount of work they do.
- I enjoy working here and I enjoy the time I spend working here.

23. How high is the morale of the staff at Brentwood School?

Very Low		Low		Moderate		Very High	
1	2	3(1)	4(3)	5(1)	6(15)	7(6)	8(4)

Mean Average 6.1

- I think teachers feel good about being at Brentwood School. There never seems to be a shortage of people who apply for positions here.
- General feeling: after a feeling that teachers are spending so much time after hours but always more is expected – extra efforts not always appreciated.
- Getting lower as this year progresses. Perhaps catholic issue, late spring break, etc.
- With the future/impending break up of staff, it is very difficult
- Growing lack of respect of students and some parents. Discipline of students also contributes to the problem.

Appendix H

Teacher Questionnaire

Brentwood Elementary School Review – 2000

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain your feedback in regards to the effectiveness of the Brentwood School administration and how they have been performing their roles and the effectiveness of the programs offered at Brentwood School.

Throughout the questionnaire, you find descriptors which you are asked to respond to. If you strongly agree with the statement, circle “Strongly Agree”; if you strongly disagree circle “Strongly Disagree”.

After each descriptor, space has been provided for comments. I encourage you to include any comments which would help me better understand your feelings about the effectiveness of the school administration and programs offered.

(30 questionnaires sent out to staff and all 30 questionnaires returned.)

(office staff did not complete the section on school programs)

Summary of results:

Administration

1. The administrative team has provided me with adequate evaluation and feedback in regard to my personal performance in Brentwood School.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
		10	13	7

Mean Average 3.9

- I would like to have more feedback earlier in the year.

- Personal contact as well as written.
 - I would like to have the administrators visit my room or area of the school more often in a supportive role.
 - It would be nice to have more feedback.
 - Helpful and individual, sincere feedback and support.
2. If I am ever in need of assistance, it is available.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
			22	8

Mean Average 4.2

- Both administrators recognize the importance of offering assistance.
 - Very helpful.
 - Helped me through some rough times.
 - Assistance could be quicker.
 - No problems.
3. The administrative team treats me as a professional worker.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
		2	23	5

Mean Average 4.1

- Both administrators deal with most issues and individuals in a professional manner.
 - Because of the way they deal with issues I have a great deal of respect for the administrative team.
 - Certain issues are responded to as unimportant.
4. The administrative team encourages me to discuss ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
		5	24	1

Mean Average 3.9

- The new staff meeting format encourages individuals to express their ideas.
- Input is often sought out if time permits.
- They do their best, it is a large staff.
- More information and input on budgeting.
- Very difficult to find the time we are both free to sit and talk

5. The administrative team treats all staff members equally.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
		3	26	1

Mean Average 3.9

- For the most part the administration sits and listens to everyone and tries to gather information from all staff members equally.
- No one seems to be favored.
- From my observations the staff are treated equally.
- Not always consistent when dealing with staff members. I feel some are favored.

6. The administrative team keeps me well informed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	16	11

Mean Average 4.2

- They do their best.
- Through memos, blackboard in staff room.
- In some areas yes, others no – perhaps because we've become too big.
- Many times student discipline and contracts are not available.
- There have been times when I have not been informed of the after school use of my classroom.

7. The administrative team is consistent in their application of school policies and procedures.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
			23	7

Mean Average 4.2

- Policies and procedures are discussed as a staff and the administrative team makes every attempt to follow the guidelines.
- Not at all times.
- Some rules need to broken to help speed up results, but for the most part very consistent.

8. I am satisfied with how funding is allocated at the school level and the procedures for purchasing from the funds that have been allocated.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	27	

Mean Average 3.9

- With the limited funds they are doing well.
- Administration keeps a close watch on the budget.
- More money should be allocated for professional development.
- If I ever need something for the instruction of students I have never been turned down.
- We need to be more informed when it comes to allocation of funds for technology.

9. The administrative team facilitates conferences and meetings in an organized fashion.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	3		22	5

Mean Average 4.0

- Staff meetings are at times too long.
- I like the new format of the staff meeting and everyone gets a chance to be heard.
- At times meetings do become unproductive and a waste of time.
- Very pleased on how meetings and conferences are handled.

10. The administrative team involves the school staff in developing philosophy and in goal setting.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
			24	5

Mean Average 4.2

- More time needs to spent on setting goals.
- We need to re-visit the goals on a regular basis.
- Time should be allowed at staff meeting to review the goals.
- All staff members have the opportunity to set the goals and objectives every year.

11. The administrative team maintains a discipline code that promotes student learning.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3	4		20	3

Mean Average 3.5

- Keep the rules the same for every student, enough last chances.
- The consequences for inappropriate behavior do not seem to be “threatening”
- I hope to see strict discipline continue through the office.
- Too soft – by the time they get sent to the office – they’ve had many chances and we want action.
- I feel I have the support of the office when dealing with discipline issues.

12. The administrative team encourages parent/community involvement in the work of the school.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

27

3

Mean Average 4.1

- All comments referred to the fact that Brentwood School encourages and tries to foster parental involvement at all levels. The administration encourages the involvement of parents and volunteers.

13. Are there any additional comments you would like to make in regards to the administrative team at Brentwood School.

- I feel they try their best with the resources to do the best for us. I wish I felt more comfortable with approaching the administration.
- My personal experiences here have been positive. Both administrators respect the human element, they work well together and are caring towards both staff and children. They are well organized and the school runs smoothly.
- Feel very fortunate to have our administrative team.
- Work as a team.
- I find Laurie very responsive to my needs. Lavern perhaps a little less so. This administration is definitely the most supportive of my program I've ever had.
- Less time in office -- more time in the halls with students.
- They are very positive.
- I have always had strong support.
- Basically very good -- but not always consistent in being receptive to staff ideas.

School Programs

14. I believe there is adequate provision for meeting the special needs of students which I feel cannot be met in my classroom.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	7	1	12	8

Mean Average 3.3

- More and more the regular classroom teacher is expected to deal with special students. I don't feel some of the testing procedures are adequate.
- Need more counselling time.
- Resource room teacher time is not available to all grades.
- Maybe we should stop pull-out programs, and have special ed. Help within the classrooms.
- Great resource room and LAC programs.

15. I am satisfied with the approach that is being used in providing special education services to our students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	7	5	12	4

Mean Average 3.0

- Resource team is working well.
- I would like to see resource teachers working in the classroom.
- Room for improvement.
- Grade 1 resource time is needed.
- Resource team meetings should deal more with ideas for dealing with special needs in the classroom. (sharing)
- I feel there is very little being done for the very bright students.

16. I believe that I am adequately providing for the needs of students with exceptional ability or talents.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	7	7	13	

Mean Average 3.1

- This year I am but there have been other years when I feel weak in this area
- I don't know if these needs are being met.
- I would like to have more resources/ideas for this.
- Most gifted students are not adequately challenged.
- Time management.
- An area I have personally identified as a goal for next year. I would like time to meet with other teachers who feel the same.

17. Provision for enhancing students self-concept and feelings of worth exist at Brentwood School.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
		3	15	10

Mean Average 4.3

- Lots of energy goes into this with extra-curricular programs and school incentive programs.
- Excellent Quest program and climate committee.

18. Opportunities exist for cooperative planning.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	8	6	8	5

Mean Average 3.3

- Sometimes time is provided but usually we do it on our own time.
- There should be time set aside for more grade-level planning. There is not enough time in the day to do this with all the other planning.
- Cooperative planning is done on our own time.
- Very difficult to find the time. However, time must be allocated.

19. The coordination of programs with those of preceding and succeeding grades or levels, is satisfactory.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	8	6	12	1

Mean Average 3.1

- More work could be done in sharing information.
- There is not always enough time to do as much as we would like.
- Need to do more here.
- We don't coordinate. This year for the first time we sat down with the teachers before and after our grade to get to know the other students.

20. Provisions for helping teachers with technology and the implementation of technology into the curriculum are satisfactory.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	10	6	6	

Mean Average 2.4

- More computers are needed
- More computer instruction and in-servicing.
- Only some classrooms have computers.
- Not enough programs.
- Lavern is doing an excellent job at handling the hardware installations and problems that arise.

- Software to enhance the programs.

21. Parent-teacher interviews are satisfactory.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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4	2	15	7
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Mean Average 3.9

- Having students participate is beneficial.
- I like the idea of including students.
- Student involvement is the key to making them meaningful.
- Time is a factor. There isn't enough.

22. Are there any additional opinions that you would like to express in regard to school programs at Brentwood School?

- We need to focus on making classroom programs meet a wider variety of levels or needs.
- I feel students are very fortunate that attend Brentwood School as they have many opportunities and varied experiences.
- We need to build time into a teaching day for planning and sharing information.
- More continuity between the grades for student benefit.
- We need to look at a way to provide more counseling time and services.
- I like working here. I am proud I teach here.

Appendix I

Brentwood Elementary School Review - 2000

Summary of Parent Questions

(100 questionnaires sent out 79 questionnaires returned)

Summary of results: Responses follow each question from the survey

1. What would you describe as the strengths of Brentwood School?

- The teaching staff. (15 response similar)
- How they work together.
- Teacher sharing involvement with the kids and their concerns
- A generally positive place.
- Open school policy (10 responses very similar)
- Staff makes you feel welcome.
- Sincere interest in students.
- Openness. Parents always welcome to come talk or see what happens.
- “Putting it in a nutshell we love this school” and so do the children.
- The family atmosphere; family involvement – doors open – opportunity for family involvement – volunteer program good and a really good way to get one on one with teachers and see what is happening in the classroom.
- Staff is innovative, energetic, very cooperative; administration teamwork and complementary approachable staff. Teachers work as a team for the child; excellent teachers; really impressed; open-minded for parent comments.
- Teachers really care about the students and the family and watch over the students very well.
- Good communication between administration and students.
- Like the many programs offered.
- School spirit is excellent.
- Excellent communication.

- Pleased with the staff for the most part.
- Volunteer program. (15 responses very similar)
- Sense cooperation teacher/student relationships.
- Sense of community.
- Appreciate friendly staff.
- Format for parent teacher interviews.
- Teachers are more than happy to have us come in.
- An open door policy that I appreciate.
- Lots of communication between parents and teachers.
- Teachers phone when a student is new and introduce themselves. The tour of the school given to new students and parents.
- I like the openness of the staff, they are willing to talk, approachable.
- The school is open to community use a lot, the community gets no hassles when they ask for the use of the school, I like that.
- The great newsletters.
- The discipline is fair and the students know the rules.
- If there is a problem a team of teachers is appointed to look at the problem and find a solution, the school is very proactive in this regard.
- The friendliness of the staff.
- Everything in the school seems to be well organized all the time.
- I like the opportunity that the children have to be creative in such programs as drama, the Christmas music performance, and the grade four musical.
- I like the open-door policy in the school. If there are any concerns they are treated as very important.
- Variety and scope of activities as well as basic education.
- Parents are made to feel welcome and useful.
- The ability of the administration to take a special interest in the kids.

2. What suggestions for improvement of Brentwood School do you have to offer?

- Lessen paper work coming home, but it is getting better.

- Dislike the “math-a-thon”. Not everyone participates so not equal. Would rather see an additional fee be added to school fee then equal for all. I realize the extra money is needed to help programs.
- More computers for student access. (15 similar responses)
- To crowded; need more room (20 similar responses)
- Better supervision on the playground at recess. (10 similar responses)
- Male/female staff ratio needs to be addressed.
- Bigger kids pick on younger ones – set up playground for different grade levels.
- More information of staff professional development.
- Music program should be less. Elitist!!
- No need for change. Everything seems to be running smoothly. Keep up the great work. (15 similar responses)
- Pupil teacher ratio should be reduced.
- I am not sure that it is fair if a detention is given to a student and they are not required to get a parents signature on a document.
- I feel the instructional time in the school could be used more effectively as there seems to be a lot of special events, and things that take away from the amount of instructional time at the school.
- Heightened interest in building computer skills.

3. How well do you feel that your child’s academic needs are being met in Brentwood School?

- Not sure.
- Good to excellent (20 responses very similar)
- Very pleased (10 responses very similar)
- Academic needs are met completely.
- Really pleased; teachers are doing their best.
- The school goes out of the way to meet the needs of their children – special needs have been met for all children.
- Teachers are perceptive.

- Extra activities, Christmas concert etc. appreciated.
- A lot of work put into everything.
- Would like to see a program for the gifted kids to challenge the better students.
(11 responses very similar)
- Daughter got lost in math – had problems – not recognized – she is in grade 4 – steps missed in math – never caught up.
- Very impressed with how teachers handle kids.
- Would like more information.
- Teachers are very willing to work with parents, all my children seem to be learning well.
- There is lots of good resource room help which is a real strength in the school.
- I feel they are being met, but sometimes my son brings things home that I am not exactly sure what to do to help him. The assignments need to be more well explained so that I can give him assistance.
- I do feel that my child's academic needs are being met, but I wonder if he could be challenged more as he finds things fairly easy.
- High standards of academics. (12 responses very similar)
- I feel strongly that they are being met.

4. How well do you feel that your child's social/emotional needs are being met in Brentwood School?

- Very well (43 responses very similar)
- School offers lots of opportunity for students.
- Needs are well taken care of.
- Lots of positive reinforcement.
- No problems. (12 responses very similar)
- Some older kids in school yard picking on younger ones – pushing little kids.
- Not too heavy handed – not too lenient.
- There seems to be adequate counseling and opportunities for assessment.
- No concerns (10 responses very similar)

- There seems to be a really big focus here as my child was involved in a self esteem program which worked very well and I felt that the training program for parents that was offered was excellent, the school was very supportive in this area.
- When my child was having problems with a death in the family the school was very helpful both to the child in counseling as well as to us as parents in providing material to help us react to the situation.
- In this area I feel the school is lacking as they need to listen to children more so that the children are protected from the actions of other children, especially on the playground.

5. How do you feel about the discipline in the school?

- Think it is good.
- No problem (32 responses very similar)
- Like the way it is handled; I am confident and feel included in issues.
- No problem for us and as a volunteer I don't see problems. My feeling is that there is generally respect for one another.
- Very good as a whole, but there are always the same repeat trouble makers.
- In the school is good – playground discipline could be monitored better. (16 very similar responses)
- Good control in school – teachers are not sympathetic when approached on playground by a child with a problem – child is afraid to come to school because of incident at recess.
- Handled effectively.
- The students don't get away with much.
- I feel that there are some very hard cases coming into the school and feel that at times there needs to be much more discipline for those harder cases or another alternative.
- I like the way teachers talk to kids about taking care of the school.
- If there is a problem I get called right away.

- There seems to be a higher rate of discipline here than in other elementary schools.
- I like the process that teachers use in handling the discipline and the administration in that the students know what is expected by them and they feel responsible for their actions. The kids are brought into the discipline process.
- I am concern about the discipline at recess. I have heard that there were some incidents of students bullying other students.

6. Do you feel that you are being kept well informed and involved in the education of your son/daughter? Is there good two-way communication? (you may want to comment specifically on the following: school newsletter, report cards, parent/teacher interviews)

- Yes well informed. (33 responses very similar)
- Like the news letter. (18 responses very similar)
- Like the new format for parent/teacher interviews. (10 responses very similar)
- Like the report cards.
- Impressed with the daytimers. Keeps parents in touch with their child and their progress.
- Like the open door policy.
- Teacher good about phoning.
- Appreciate explanations on the report card.
- I really like the parent teacher interviews and the newsletter.
- I am getting really good communication with the teachers on a daily basis.
- Glad to see kids coming into parent/teacher interviews.
- I like the openness with which I can talk to teachers and the administration.
- I volunteer every week and I am very well informed, I like to be able to sign the information that comes home.

7. How do you feel about the opportunities for parental involvement in Brentwood School?

- Excellent (22 very similar responses)

- Great deal of opportunity. It is there if you want it. (16 very similar responses)
- Like it because you get to know what your kids are doing and should be doing.
Our kids look forwards to mom coming in.
- Very open (9 very similar responses)
- Teachers and administration are very cooperative.
- Would like to volunteer.
- Working parents have no time.
- I feel there is lots of opportunity but feel sad that I can't help.
- Parents and students feel very welcome and the children love to come.
- My child's grandmother felt very welcome with the event where she was to report to the Social Studies class and was very impressed with the school.
- I appreciate the opportunity that I can help with materials although I do it at home.
- Any parent can be involved, I work for a teacher at home.
- If I had more time I'd be in even more.

8. Do you feel welcome and comfortable as a parent in Brentwood School?

- Yes. (58 very similar responses)
- Absolutely.
- Parents feel very welcome, and very appreciated.
- Entire staff goes out of the way to make you feel welcome.
- Teachers are friendly.
- Good atmosphere.
- Secretary makes me feel welcome. (5 very similar responses)
- Very comfortable.
- They know my face.
- Atmosphere makes it more comfortable to communicate.

9. Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

- It is a good school. Teachers are excellent.

- Very pleased with the school and how it is run.
- “I don’t have a problem at all.”
- On the whole the school is a good place for kids. Happy kids.
- Really impressed with the school. (34 similar responses)
- Pleased with the school.
- Would like to have some parent/teacher interviews during the day so those working shift work could attend.
- Brentwood staff should be proud of their school.
- More personal than city schools where my child started.
- 15 minute interviews.
- The focus here is for the benefit of the students; comments are always well received whether good or critical, and action taken.
- School is being run very professionally.
- Quite pleased with how my child is doing.
- Brentwood is a great school. (14 very similar responses)
- I think my child is getting a good education.
- Good school, they care about the student.
- The atmosphere is really good.
- Janitors have been excellent.
- Support staff makes you feel welcome.
- A great experience having kids here.

Appendix J

Teacher Interview Questions

(10 teachers interviewed)

Summary of Responses

1. What is there about Brentwood School that causes you to believe that it is a very good school?

- Supportive administration (they get along well with teachers and there is a good understanding)
- Teachers and students enjoy being here.
- There is a good atmosphere and it is a nice place to come everyday.
- Good school and good public relations in the community.
- I am impressed with parent volunteers as we get great involvement from them.
- I feel the students get a good education at Brentwood School.
- Everyone is very cooperative, friendly and there is a very positive atmosphere.
- There is good communication between staff and parents.
- The staff like working together.
- There is a very positive attitude between the staff and administration.

2. What ideas do you have for improving the school?

- I feel that the number of students have caused some problems on the playground and sometimes in the hallways.
- There are too many students and too many staff members, because sometimes you get in “clicks”.
- It would be nice to have an art room and a lunch room, without rugs on the floor for certain activities.
- It would be nice to be able to meet some of the school board members in the school so we can get to know them.

- We need an EXCEL program.
- We need more computers.
- With computers, the bright students could be able to do other projects when they are finished their class work.
- We need more playground equipment.
- More time for grade level meetings and multi-grade level meetings.

3. Do students in Brentwood School get a good education? (what is a good education?)

- Yes (4 responses similar)
- I feel we are more academic than most elementary schools.
- I feel the students in Brentwood School get a really rounded education with music, physical education, extra curricular as well as the three “R’s”.
- The teachers are very concerned about students and we have lots of meetings over student progress, we emphasis both the academics and the self-worth of the students in the school.
- I feel the students get a good foundation in reading, writing, and math.
- There is lots of resource help and we deal with students as individuals.

4. Are you satisfied with how the Special Education needs of the students in the school are being met?

- There needs to be more resource time made available, the number of students in LAC is getting too large.
- I like the way that special education is set up now with the students going out for help.
- I am a little worried if the resource teacher has to come into the classroom that she may be spread too thin and not be able to get to the number of special needs students that we are able to.
- Yes, I feel we are.
- We need resource in Grade 1.
- It would be nice to have a gifted program.

- The LAC is getting really full, some of these students may need to be put back into the classroom.
- We need to look seriously at a pull out program versus an inclusion program.
- I feel we are not meeting the needs of the gifted child.

5. What do you feel about the existing system for communicating with parents about student progress? (report cards, parent/teacher interviews, etc.)

- Daytimers have really helped, I like the present report card as is, very concise.
- I like the open door policy where parents can come to the school anytime or phone.
- A letter sent out with the report card is very valuable and I feel that everything is covered very well, I also like the newsletter.
- I know we communicate a lot with the parents.
- The newsletter is very informative and I like the idea of getting the signed and returned. In doing this we know they are getting home.
- Our open door policy is great.

6. How do you feel about the behavior of the students?

- There seems to be a problem with repeat offenders but generally with the number of students we have it is very good.
- The use of clipboards on the playground have made students more accountable for what they are doing.
- Over crowding has caused problems.
- I feel that it is good that disciplinary actions are laid out with detentions or other carefully laid out consequences.
- I really don't feel there is a problem, it looks pretty natural when you get 430 student together, the issues are being dealt with.
- We need less students, but generally it is very good.
- Have had some problems but on the whole it is improving.
- I feel that in the school it is very positive however, the playground is a problem. The number of students is the problem.

- The playground is a problem as there is not enough things for the students to do.
- There is lots of cooperation from administration for students with behavior problems.

7. How do you feel about the school's physical climate?

- Everyone takes pride in their classrooms, the caretakers are doing an excellent job.
- I would like more windows.
- Having grade levels together in the same part of the building is a good idea
- I feel it is good and clean.
- Space is a bit of a problem as we are very crowded, we don't seem to have enough room for storage.
- It would be nice to have an art room and lunch room but I realize space is a problem.
- The janitors need to be commended for the excellent work they are doing.
- I feel it is fine.
- More storage is needed in the core building and classrooms.

8. Does the school climate provide an atmosphere which encourages cooperation, a sense of belonging, and a sense of pursuing a common goal?

- Everybody responded in the positive.
- There is a good working relationship among the staff.
- The staff meetings are friendly and you can get involved.
- Everyone is very cooperative, the administration is very supportive.
- Everyone is cooperative and you can borrow from each other.
- Administration is very approachable.
- Through our Quest program and other programs it has helped in the area of cooperation, they have given the school a sense of belonging.
- I like working here, I enjoy coming to work.

9. Is there more that can be done to improve the school's learning climate?

- We are very open to different kinds of programs and we are willing to share ideas.
- The class sizes should be kept smaller.
- We are always working on this, the teachers are very interested in school climate and it's improvement.
- We need more teacher assistant time in the classroom.
- It would be nice to have more grade level meetings.
- It would be nice to put all the materials that I have developed in a pool so that they can be shared with others in the school.
- We need more resource room and space.

10. Is there more that can be done to help in terms of technology and learning resources?

- No problems that I can see.
- The library is great, the IMC is good, most teachers are very good at sharing.
- Maybe we should compare other schools to see what is required for technology improvements.
- I feel that we are on top of the technology and acquiring the hardware. But we still need more computers in the classroom.
- Software for classroom assistance needs to be addressed.
- We seem to have a good literature collection.
- More in-servicing on the integration of technology into the classroom.

11. Is there a need for further in-services? If yes in what areas?

- I like what is happening in the school.
- What is happening is good, more P.D. money needs to be available as the costs of outside in-services is really gone up.
- More in-services is needed when new programs come on stream: such as technology, language arts, math.
- I enjoy in-services and I feel that they are beneficial.

- I really like what is happening in the system to meet the requirements of teachers.

12. What would you say Brentwood School represents?

- A lot of teachers who care and know about curriculum.
- Cooperation, parent involvement, well rounded extra curricular activities, positive school, discipline dealt with in a positive way, teachers teaching in a positive way.
- There is a good learning climate and we teach how to be better citizens
- A place to come and learn for teachers and students.
- A community school, we do the best we can for kids in the community, school is a focal point for some students.
- Cooperative, genuine concern for students.
- Caring teachers for kids, warm open atmosphere.
- Has a good image in the community, a place where a lot of learning is going on.
- Looking at the child as a whole person, I have never been so aware of students as individuals as I am now, self-esteem and self-worth are very important.
- A place where students, parents, and teachers have a chance to get involved in lots of things.

13. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make to assist me in this review process?

- Great place to work.
- I really enjoy being here.
- Teachers with negative attitudes tends to spread to other people which is a bit of a problem, if people become burnt out or tired then there needs to be some way for them to get help or relief.
- Continue to build on the development of the climate committee. It has a lot to offer.
- I like teaching, I enjoy working here, there is a good balance between home and school.

- Continue to work on keeping open lines of communication between teachers, administration and home. We are doing a good job in these areas but we could always find room for improvement.