



Initial Community Input Survey

Final Report

January 2018

*Developed and Analyzed by the Belmont High School Building
Committee, Communications Sub Committee*

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BHS Building Committee Overview

The Belmont High School Building Committee (BHSBC) is an independent committee appointed by the Town Moderator and approved by the Town of Belmont at the February 2016 Town Meeting. The Committee is a requirement of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

The BHSBC Communications Sub-committee is tasked with establishing a reliable and professional communications infrastructure and engaging the community in thoughtful dialog, encouraging community participation, and giving people a voice in this process. This survey represents one tool that the BHSBC Communications Sub-committee has implemented to achieve this goal.

Survey Objectives

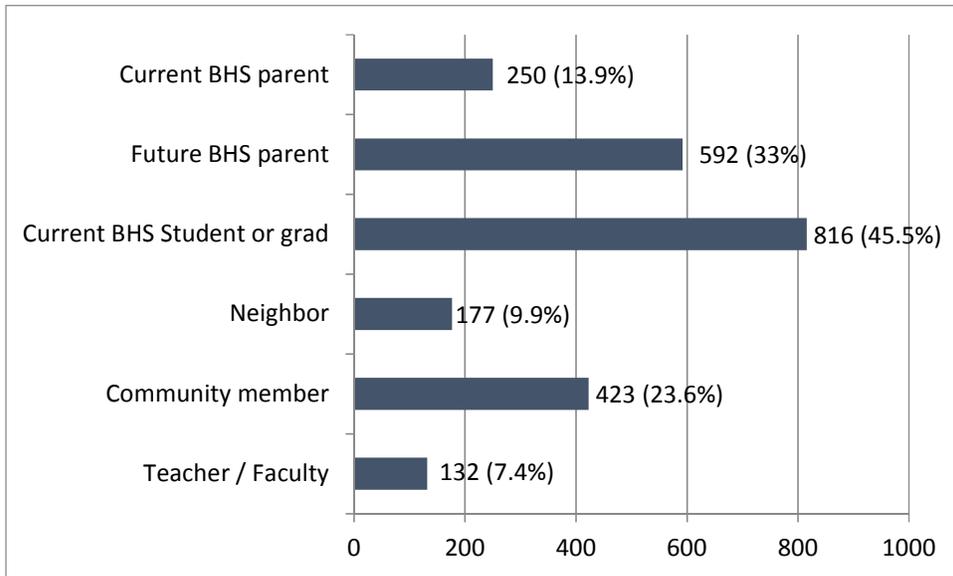
- Identify the community's biggest concerns about the current high school
- Identify the community's hopes and expectations for the future high school
- Identify the community's top priorities regarding the future facility
- Identify the community's top priorities regarding the design and construction process

Methodology

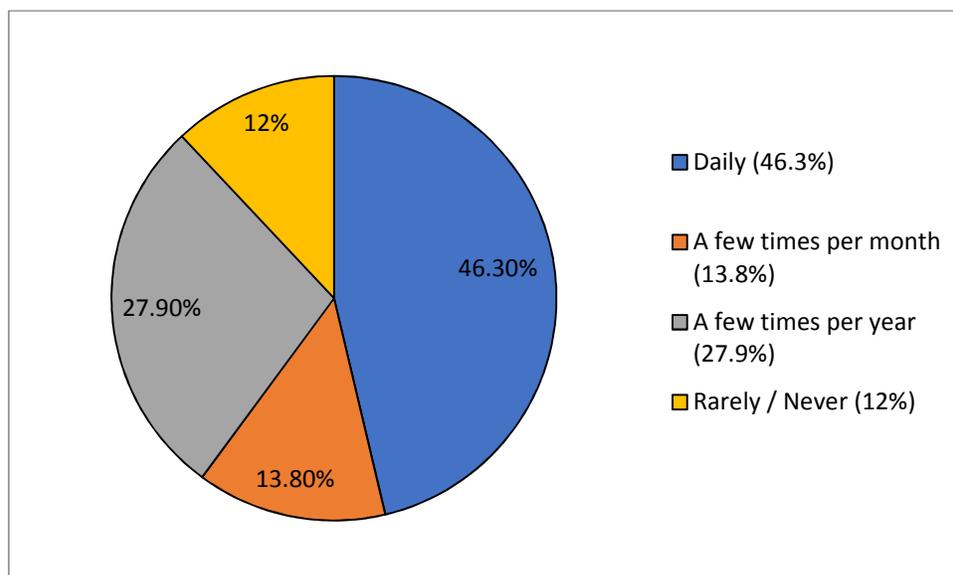
- Questionnaire was designed by the BHSBC Communications Sub-committee and approved by the BHSBC
- Survey was conducted online via the BHSBC website from 10/7/17 - 12/8/17
- Survey was publicized at numerous BHSBC meetings and public forums, at other town events such as Meet Belmont, Back to School nights, PTO/PTA meetings and school concerts, via local media, Town listservs, social media, email distribution, banners, and on the Town and Project websites
- Data from 1,794 respondents were collected and analyzed for this report

Respondent Characteristics

What is your connection with the high school? Select all that may apply. 1,794 responses



How frequently are you in the current high school building?
1,794 responses



Survey Results by Question

Question 1

- Question: What are your biggest concerns about the current high school?
- Response format: open-ended
- Most frequent themes (in no particular order):
 - **Physical Plant:** Run down, infrastructure, bad lighting, HVAC not working (some rooms are very hot, some rooms are very cold), terrible bathrooms, ceiling tiles falling down, building falling apart, inconvenient to go outside to get to mods, broken, dirty, rats, asbestos, decrepit
 - **Space Issues:** Not big enough, not enough space, enrollment, class sizes, overcrowding
 - **Inflexibility/aesthetics of current space:** Insufficient library space, not enough flex spaces, no place to go during frees, too many frees, need more books in the library, need more quiet spaces, uninspiring, outdated
 - **Safety and security**
 - **Bad traffic,** safe routes to school

Survey Results by Question

Question 2

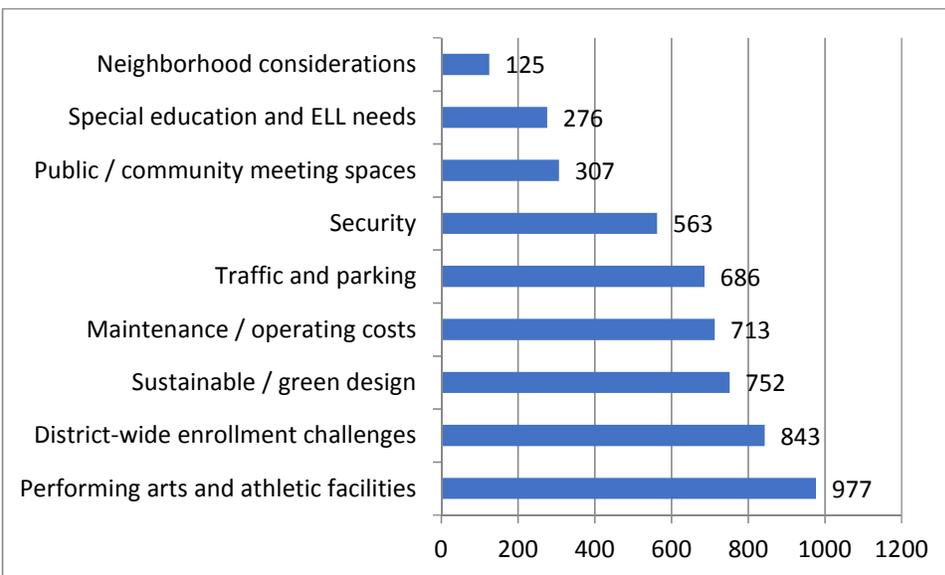
- Question: What are your hopes or expectations for the future high school?
- Response format: open-ended

- Most frequent themes (in no particular order):
 - **Size:** Big enough, addresses overcrowding, addresses enrollment challenges
 - **Sustainability:** Sustainable design, operating costs, life cycle costs, zero net energy, use of daylight
 - **Flexible/inspiring spaces**
 - **Cost-Effective:** Not too extravagant, practical
 - **Traffic:** Improved traffic patterns, encourage biking / walking
 - **Community Use:** Incorporate public spaces in building, multi-purpose uses
 - More books

Survey Results by Question

Question 3

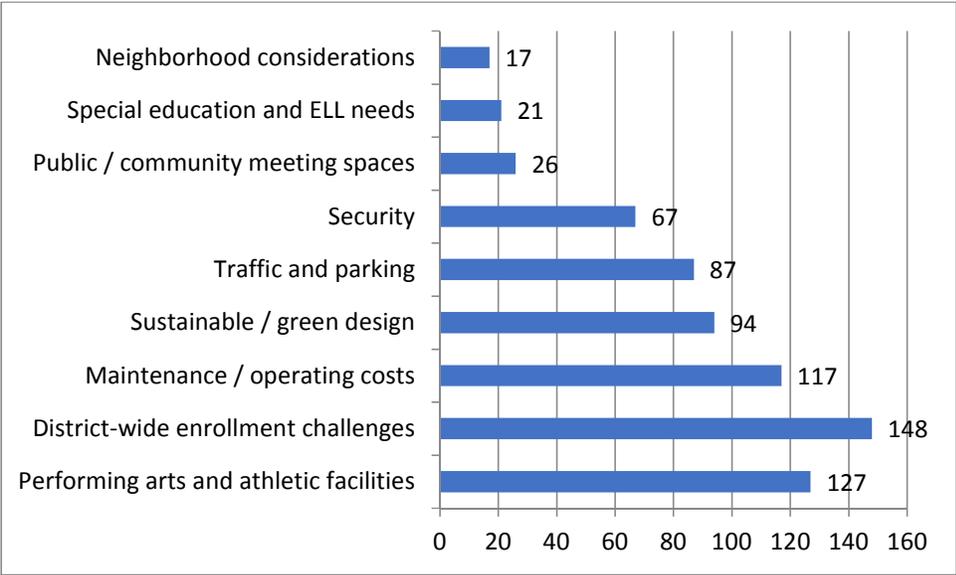
- Question: What are your top priorities regarding the future facility?
- Response format: select three



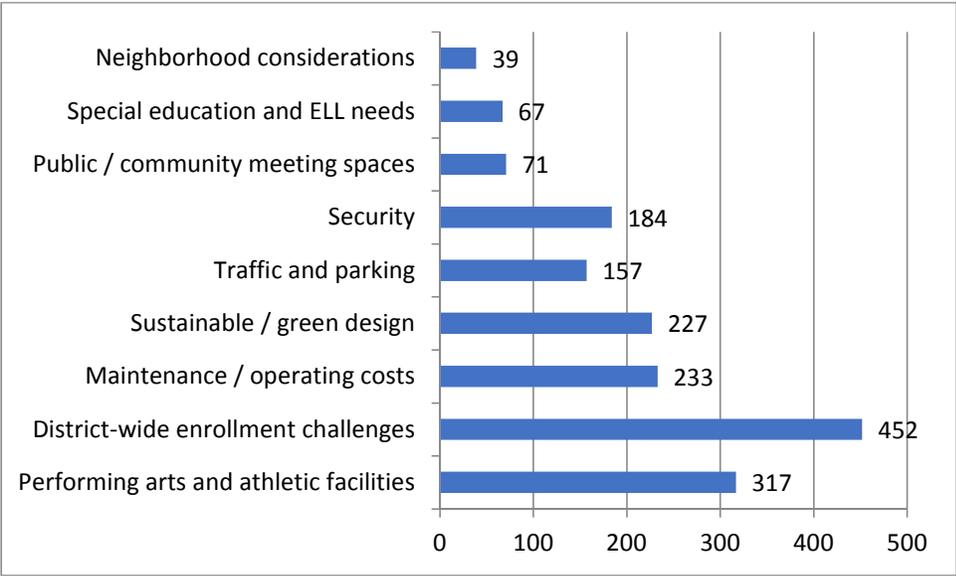
Due to significant variations in responses based on respondent characteristics, the charts on the next several pages show these same categories further broken down by the following respondent characteristics:

- Current BHS Parents
- Future BHS Parents
- BHS Students
- Neighbors
- Community members
- Teachers / Faculty

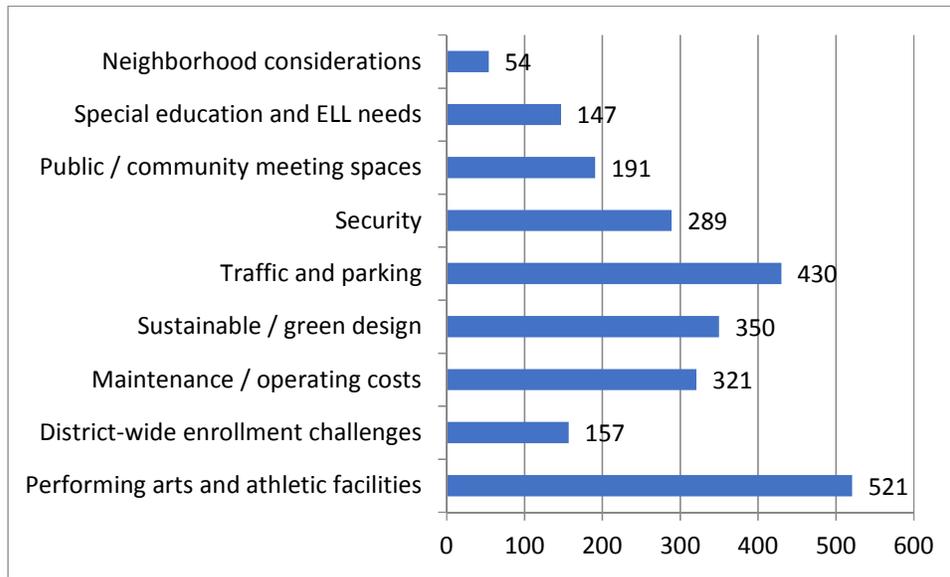
Current BHS parents:



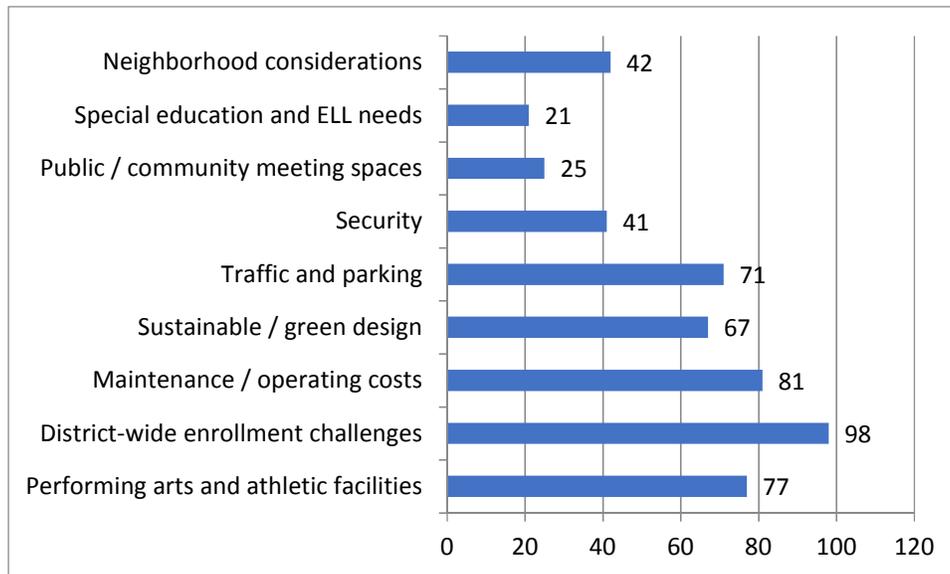
Future BHS parents:



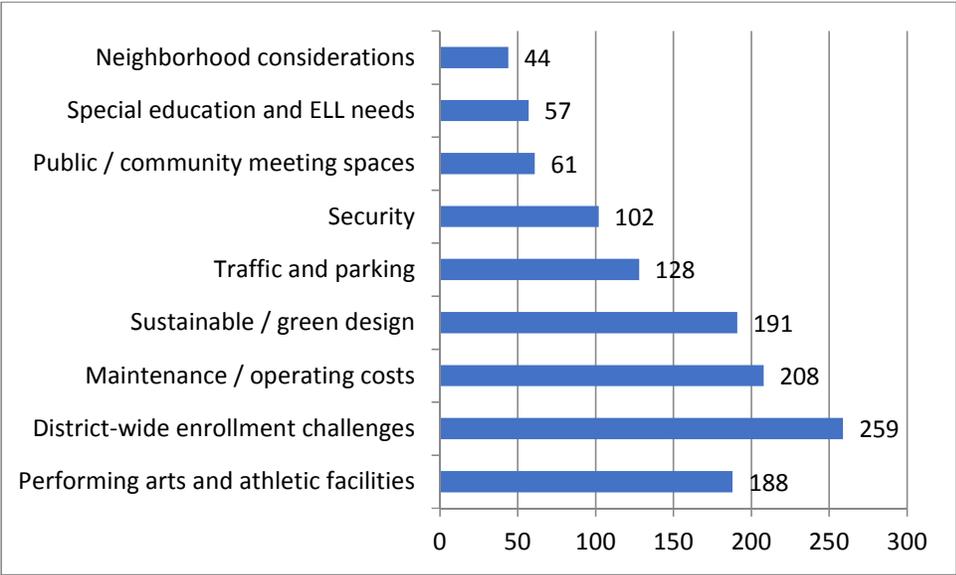
BHS students:



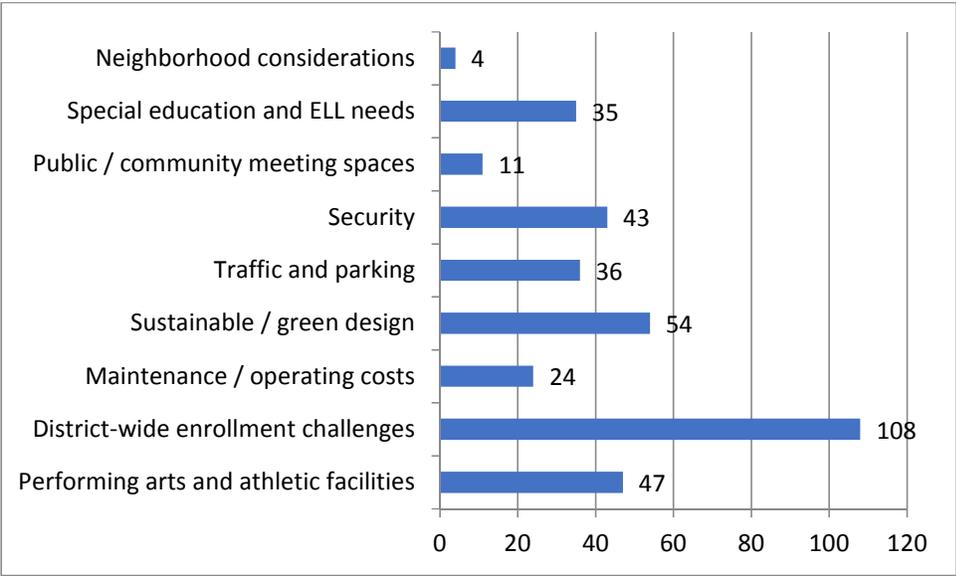
Neighbors:



Community members:



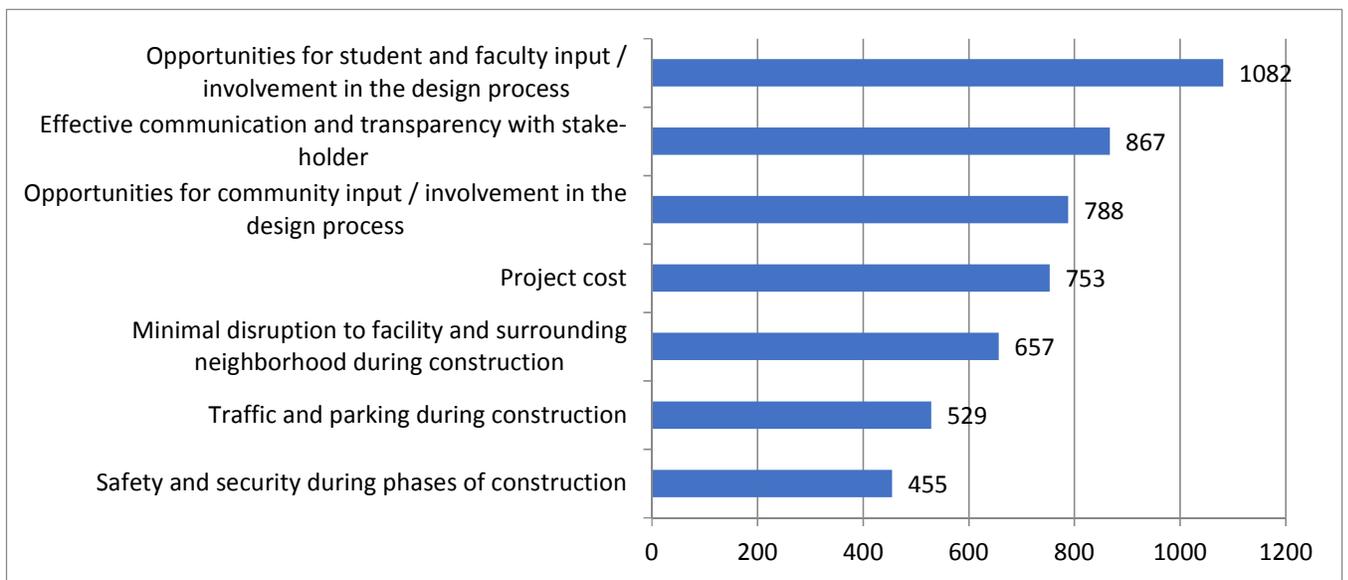
Teachers / Faculty:



Survey Results by Question

Question 4

- Question: What are your top priorities regarding the design phase and construction process?
- Response format: select three



Conclusions

Over the course of eight weeks during the Fall of 2017, the BHSBC surveyed the Belmont community to assess their concerns, hopes, and expectations regarding the High School Building facility and also their priorities regarding the design and construction process. The survey consisted of two questions to establish respondent characteristics (their relationship to the building and the frequency of their use of the building), two open-ended questions and two multiple choice questions. The survey was available online through the BHSBC website, and was publicized through many different channels.

A total of 1,794 people responded to the survey. The largest group of respondents was current BHS students or graduates (45.5%), followed by future BHS parents (33%) and community members (23.6%). 46.3% of the respondents reported using the building on a daily basis indicating an intimate familiarity with the building, followed by 27.9% who reported only using the building a few times per year.

In both the open-ended and the multiple choice questions, the respondents consistently expressed a strong emphasis on district-wide enrollment challenges, sustainable / green design, maintenance and operating costs, traffic and parking, and security as priorities for the new facility. Performing arts and athletic facilities received the most responses in the multiple choice question (Q3), but were not significantly

represented in the open-ended question (Q2). Intangible / aesthetic desires such as inspiring, modern, light, bright spaces were a consistent theme in the open-ended responses (Q2) but were not offered as a pre-determined option in the multiple choice question (Q3).

Due to significant variations in responses to top priorities regarding the future facility (Q3) based on respondent characteristics, the data were further analyzed and broken down by respondent characteristics. This revealed several noteworthy trends:

1. While performing arts and athletic facilities was the number one overall priority, it was only the number one priority for the BHS Student subgroup (64% of students), which was the largest group of respondents (comprising 45.5% of all respondents). **All of the other subgroups (current parents, future BHS parents, neighbors, community members, teachers / faculty) identified district-wide enrollment challenges as the number one priority, with two of those groups identifying it as a significant priority – 76% of future BHS parents and 82% of teachers / faculty.**
2. Traffic and parking emerged as the second priority for the BHS Student subgroup (53%), but much less of a priority for the other subgroups.
3. Sustainable / green design represented the third priority overall and this trend remained more or less

consistent over all subgroups with 42% of all respondents identifying it as a priority.

Most of the major themes that arose in the two questions regarding the future facility (Q2 and Q3) were also expressed as consistent concerns regarding the current facility (Q1).

Regarding the design and construction process (Q4), most respondents identified opportunities for involvement in the design process as a top priority. Other top priorities included effective communication and transparency with stakeholders and project cost.

The findings from the survey will be used to inform the BHSBC and their design team as they embark on the design process. The BHSBC will continue to actively pursue additional opportunities for members of the community to participate in the design process.