



# OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE ANALYSIS

Prepared for Addison Central Unified School District

August 2022

# OVERVIEW

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# INTRODUCTION

Addison Central Unified School District (ACSD) plans to create a strategic plan that uses an equity lens to inform the development of the strategic planning process, components, and distribution. In the following report, Hanover Research (Hanover) presents findings from a community survey designed and administered by ACSD. The goal of this survey was to collect feedback from stakeholders regarding their perceptions of equity and inclusion at the district. The findings from this report will help inform future equity and inclusion work within the district.

**This report provides a digestible summary of responses to the survey's four (4) open-ended questions. Each survey respondent answered the following open-ended prompts:**

## OPEN-ENDED PROMPTS

1. How do students and families experience ACSD? Is the district welcoming, inclusive and supportive of all students? Examples of what is working?
2. How can the district improve and/or remove barriers or end practices that negatively impact marginalized students? Examples of what is not working?
3. What is your vision for the district/future students? What priorities should the district consider in the new strategic plan? What should be deemphasized and what should be emphasized?
4. Anything else?

# METHODOLOGY (1/3)

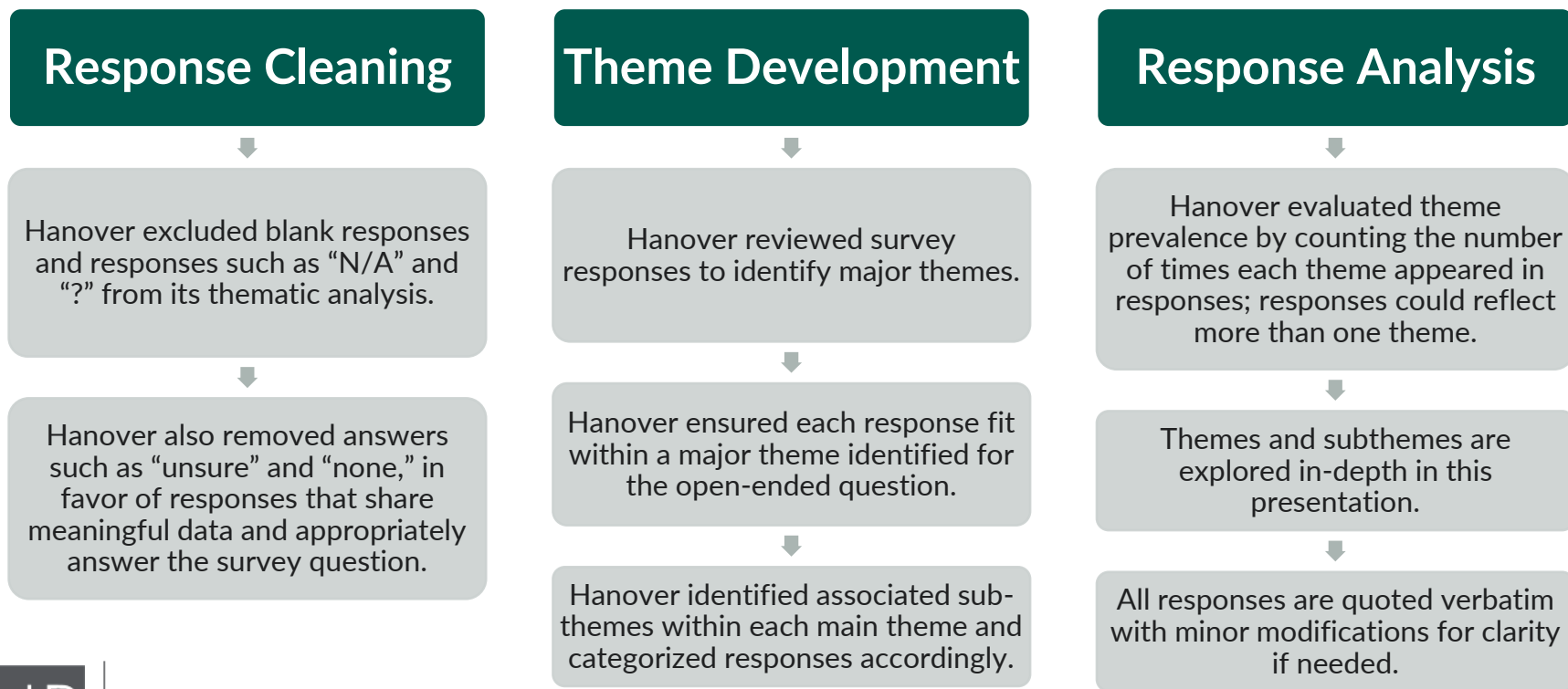
Open-ended responses require a comprehensive, qualitative approach that seeks to provide depth of understanding to a particular question or topic rather than statistical significance or generalizable conclusions.

Before analyzing the open-ended responses, Hanover removed blank, irrelevant, or repeated open-ended responses during data cleaning. Hanover also removed answers such as “unsure” and “none,” in favor of responses that share meaningful data and appropriately answer the survey question. Themes are then developed using cleaned, relevant response content, only. **The below figure details the total survey responses and the total coding sample for the analysis.**

SURVEY QUESTION	TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES	TOTAL CLEANED RESPONSES
Q1	82	72
Q2	82	73
Q3	82	74
Q4	82	53

# METHODOLOGY (2/3)

After cleaning responses for inclusion in the study, Hanover analyzed the coding sample of open-ended responses by first coding responses based on core themes that emerged within the data and refining those themes, or codes, as analysis progressed. Hanover totaled the number of responses within each sub-theme that emerged in the main themes. Hanover also separated and analyzed the data by each survey question and by respondent self-identified stakeholder groups (e.g., parent/caregiver, staff). **The below figure illustrates Hanover’s qualitative methodology for its open-ended response analysis.**



# METHODOLOGY (3/3)

In total, 82 individuals participated in ACSD's community survey. These individuals self-identified into various stakeholder groups. However, some of these respondents self-identified in more than one stakeholder group, such as "Parent/Caregiver, Staff." Therefore, in Hanover's stakeholder analysis, a single individual's response could be counted and analyzed in multiple stakeholder groups. **The figure below details the total survey responses and the total coding sample by each stakeholder group for the open-ended analysis.**

ROLE IN ACSD COMMUNITY	TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES	TOTAL CLEANED RESPONSES
Parent/Caregiver	241	210
Staff*	79	71
Community Member	61	53
Student	34	23
Total	415	357

## RECOMMENDATIONS & KEY FINDINGS

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, Hanover recommends that ACSD:

**Work to build community trust by including stakeholders in the decision-making process.** Some stakeholders remark on feeling more marginalized by the district. For instance, some school communities outside the central hub of Middlebury feel left behind due to lack of resources and general focus. Hanover can support ACSD in this endeavor through qualitative research (e.g., co-design and administering of stakeholder surveys), community-facing infographics (e.g., single page, multi-lingual), and community presentations.

**Further explore perceptions of upper-level courses and programs to promote stakeholder buy-in (e.g., of the IB program).** For instance, many stakeholders consistently list the new IB Program as causing more exclusion and inequity among the student body, while creating a culture of hyper-achievement. Introducing alternative pathways (e.g., AP, career courses) towards student success may also improve the district's culture of inclusivity. Hanover recommends that ACSD explore whether it is feasible to offer these alternative options, as informed by research.

**Commit to monitoring the perceptions and success of training programs and other equity-oriented initiatives.** ACSD is exploring and initiating a strong variety of programming to support equity in the district. To ensure that these programs and training opportunities are and continue to be of value, Hanover can assist ACSD through its on-demand Educator Learning Center resources, program monitoring strategies (e.g., program evaluation survey and educator in-depth interviews), and direct community engagement, such as through ACSD-Hanover co-presentations.



# KEY FINDINGS (1/3)



Nearly 40 percent of all stakeholders hold mixed perceptions of the district and whether it is “welcoming, inclusive, and supportive” of all students. One-third of respondents hold generally positive views of the district, while 28 percent of stakeholders believe the opposite. Stakeholders provide the following examples of what they believe is and is not working to promote inclusion at the district:



## Examples of What Is Working:

- Student supports and resources (e.g., counseling)
- Positive relationships and communication with teachers
- Some community-building efforts (e.g., events, activities that encourage collaboration)



## Examples of What Is *Not* Working:

- Inclusive of some students, but exclusive of others
- The IB Diploma Program
- Climate and culture issues (e.g., teacher support, student discipline, loss of community “voice”)

# KEY FINDINGS (2/3)



Respondents from all stakeholder groups consistently advocate for a more inclusive, supportive academic environment at ACSD; nearly two-thirds of all respondents highlight academic supports as an area of future emphasis for the district. For example, much of the discussion across survey questions revolves around the idea that the IB Diploma Program has unintentionally marginalized most of the student population and created a negative culture of hyper-achievement.

In this way, stakeholders urge the district to expand educational options outside the IB Program, such as reintroducing AP classes or encouraging career-focused classes. ACSD could strengthen a variety of additional academic student supports, including special education, early intervention, speech therapy, and gifted education services.



**Over one-quarter of respondents call for a collaborative, community-centric school system that includes stakeholders in decision-making.** Several respondents identify the need for the district to improve transparency, communication, and collaboration with its stakeholders—particularly to underscore ACSD’s dedication to equity and inclusion. Many respondents perceive the district to have made several major decisions without involving its stakeholders, such as moving sixth-grade students from local elementary schools to Middlebury Union Middle School (MUMS). In this way, stakeholders express greater satisfaction with the current efforts to gather feedback, such as this survey.

# KEY FINDINGS (3/3)



**Half of all stakeholder respondents believe the district can improve by focusing on the culture, climate, and social environment of ACSD school communities.** Respondents regularly suggest providing more support and training for teachers, for example. Additional training on trauma-informed practices and hiring more paraprofessionals may better support teachers in their interactions with students, particularly around managing student behavior and discipline.



**Two distinct approaches to creating an inclusive district arise from small factions of stakeholders.** Around 12 percent of respondents—mostly *parent/caregivers* and *staff*—advise the district to continue its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to remove barriers for marginalized students. On the other hand, an average of 6 percent of stakeholders—exclusively *parent/caregivers*—perceive the current efforts to further marginalize students and spread division through the district through specifically naming student subgroups. Moving forward, 19 percent of respondents believe the district should revisit its current definitions of equity to relate better to the unique ACSD community needs.

# **QUESTION 1:**

**HOW DO STUDENTS AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCE  
ACSD?**

**IS THE DISTRICT WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE, AND  
SUPPORTIVE OF ALL STUDENTS?**

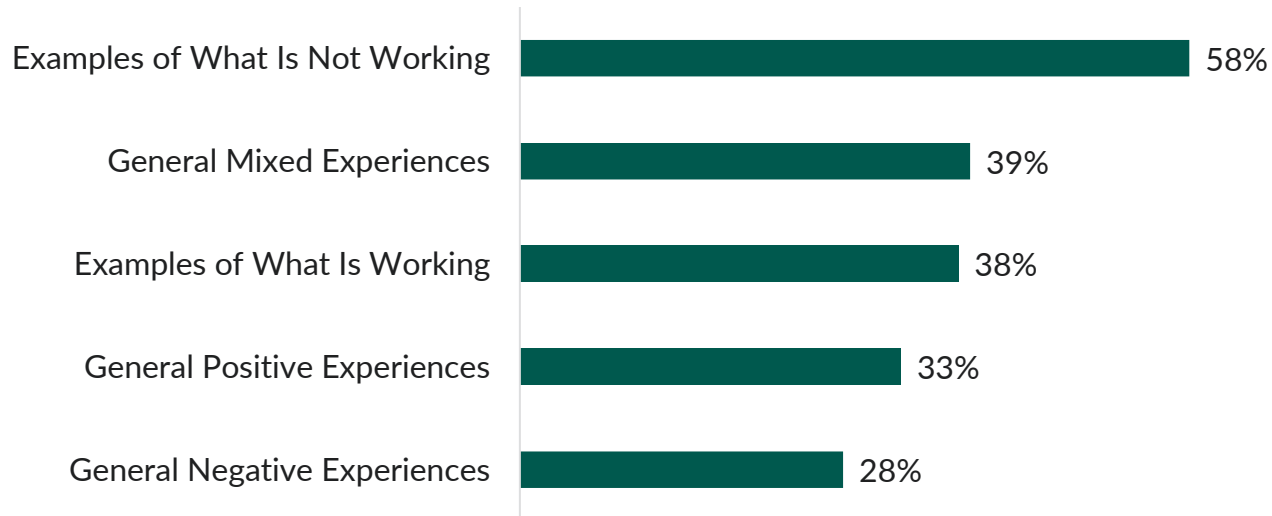
**EXAMPLES OF WHAT IS WORKING?**

Note: Responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small for Hanover to consider it a theme. Dark green reflects major theme, light green sub-theme.

# SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES

Though the first survey question asked respondents what *was* working in the district (38%), 58 percent of stakeholders responded with examples of what was *not* working instead. **Most of these stakeholders hold mixed perceptions of the district's inclusion efforts, meaning that they identify both negative and positive aspects of the district.** In sum, 33 percent of stakeholders hold generally positive views of the district and believe it to be welcoming, inclusive, and supportive, while 28 percent of stakeholders believe the opposite. Hanover explores all themes and subthemes in the following slides.

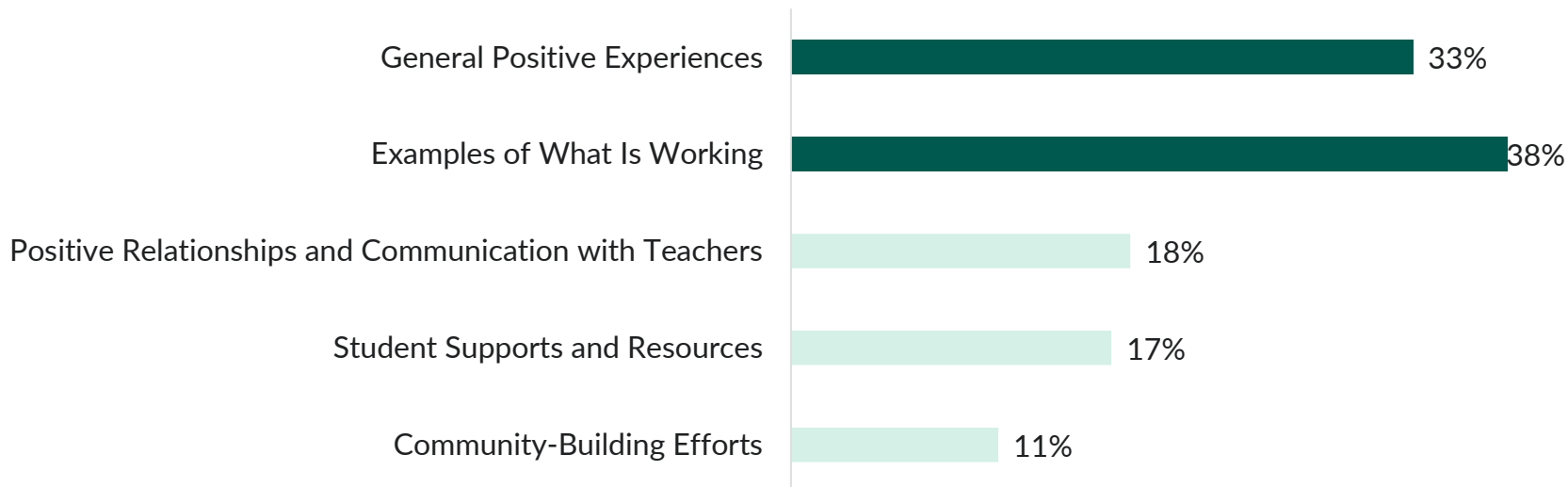
## Major Themes and Respondent Rates



# POSITIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS WORKING”

Approximately 33 percent of stakeholders have generally positive experiences with ACSD. Stakeholders provide multiple examples of what they perceive to be “working” at the district to create a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment (39%). **Three main categories of positive examples include: Student Supports and Resources, Positive Relationships and Communication with Teachers, and Community-Building Efforts**, which comprise of events, activities, and opportunities to build community and collaboration within the district. *Staff* respondents tend to highlight the first sub-theme, Student Supports and Resources, particularly counseling. *Parent/Caregivers*, on the other hand, mostly highlight the latter two sub-themes. Notably, nearly all *Student* respondents refrain from offering examples of what is working.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# POSITIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS WORKING” (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Positive Experiences & Perceptions	25	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Shoreham welcomes our son and supports him in his needs very well.” –Parent/Caregiver</li> <li>▪ “Yes. This district is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of most students. Students are very confident in their abilities and achieve great things.” –Parent/Caregiver</li> </ul>
Examples of What Is Working	28	39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “One thing that is working is that there has been invitation for feedback like this.” – Parent/Caregiver</li> </ul>
Positive Relationships and Communication with Teachers	13	18%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “She has a class of good kids and some very wonderful and dedicated teachers that do a great job. It is the people, not the facilities that are making her experience successful so far.” –Parent/Caregiver</li> <li>▪ “I believe the district is welcoming for most. District teachers and staff work hard to support and care for all students, and there are strong relationships among all community members. When students receive the counseling and academic support they need, they can be productive community members.” –Staff, Community Member</li> </ul>

# POSITIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS WORKING” (CONTINUED)

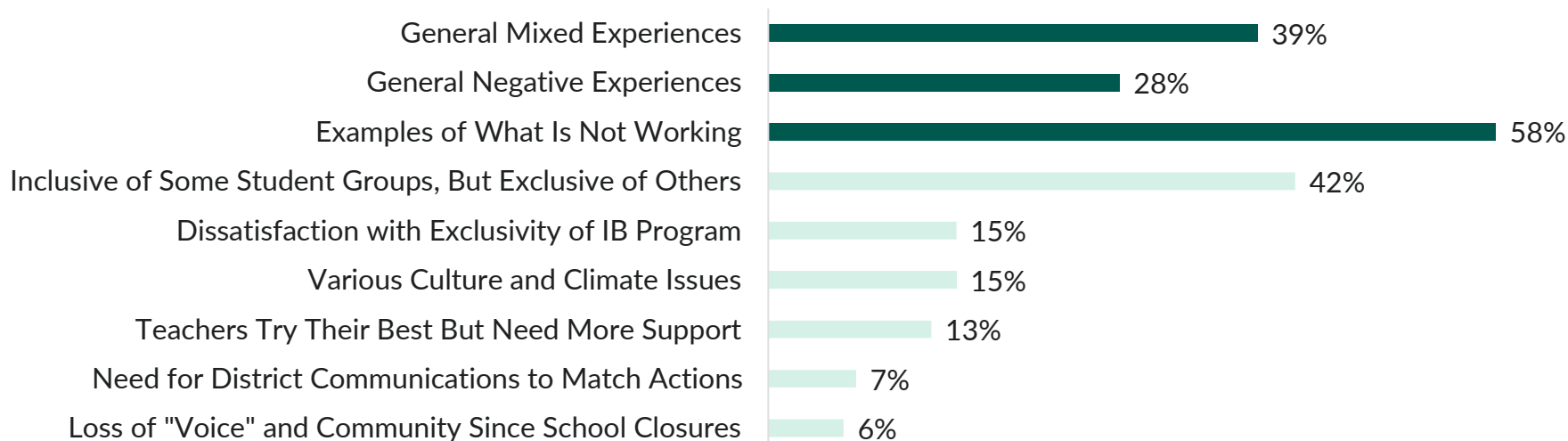
THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Student Supports and Resources	12	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Time is spent on transitioning students from elementary to middle to HS. This has been a positive experience.” – <i>Staff</i></li> <li>“The school councilors in the high school do an impressive job of understanding the needs of 1/3 of the school population and advocating for students to give them the best program of studies available. ” –<i>Staff, Parent/Guardian</i></li> </ul>
Community-Building Efforts	8	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“There was a program at MUHS/PHCC for students with disabilities called Diversified Occupations (DO). They had a thing called "DO Dinners", where families came in for a sit down dinner prepared by the students in DO's pre-tech culinary class. Teachers/case managers went around and sat with families to check in, make plans, clear up confusion and explain any needed info. There was one each Fall and Spring. It's a pretty specific model, but it really got to the missing communication referenced in the update. I miss it, and wish we could find a way to make those meaningful connections again!” – <i>Staff</i></li> <li>“What is working: the freshman visitation day to MUHS organized by the peer leaders created a lot of positive energy in the fall OF 2021. Unified basketball connected students from different social groups and carried over into classrooms: particularly Individuals and Society..” – <i>Substitute Teacher MUHS</i></li> </ul>



# MIXED AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS *NOT* WORKING”

Just under 40 percent of stakeholders have generally mixed views of ACSD, meaning they find the district to be *sometimes* welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of students, while 28 percent of respondents describe negative perceptions. Within the main theme of examples of what is not working (58%), a significant percentage of stakeholders (42%) highlight that the district is inclusive and supportive of some students, but exclusive of others. Not only does this trend apply to marginalized student groups, such as students of color, students with disabilities, or LGBTQ+ students, but also applies to students of different academic abilities. For instance, many stakeholders find the IB Program to exclude and alienate most of the student population because the program only meets the needs of high-achieving students.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# MIXED AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS *NOT* WORKING”

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Mixed Experiences & Perceptions	28	39%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I think we are a very divided district. Some students require intensive support and some students who have less obvious needs are lost in the shuffle. Kids are tolerant of each other and most understand that we all have different needs. I think teachers work hard to meet all students' needs, but would like smaller groups of children so they can connect better with the kids.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Negative Experiences & Perceptions	20	28%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The district is not inclusive and supportive of all students. I have heard many parents voice concern over their students not receiving IEP and other services they should be. I think 2nd grade in Shoreham still doesn't have reading intervention support. Not all schools have after school or pre-k.” - <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> <li>“While MUHS claims to be welcoming to LGBTQ students, our kids have not found that to be the case. There is rampant anti-queer behavior among students beneath the surface, and there is little done to actively support queer visibility and engagement.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Examples of What Is Not Working	42	58%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“This district is an exclusive district that really only focuses on those that are able to do DP and want to go to 4 years of post secondary. The diploma program is one of the most exclusive things ever that comes with a toxic stigma. I am a very intelligent person but have opted out of doing full DP in order to explore dual enrollment. I got really nasty comments from teachers and others about how if I'm smart I should do DP. It is entirely incorrect and stereotypical.” - <i>Student</i></li> </ul>

# MIXED AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS *NOT* WORKING” (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Inclusive of Some Students, But Not Others	30	42%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I grew up here, so have no perspective, we also have white normative kids without any learning challenges so it's pretty easy to be inclusive for them. I'd say a pit fall I've noticed is that when you have well behaved, average/above average kids, they get left behind. The don't demand attention by acting out or by being academically exceptional so they just coast without anyone challenging them in the classroom. ” - Parent/Caregiver</li> <li>“My experience is that some students experience racism and bullying. BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students get treated poorly by some of their peers. This is an invisible problem in our district. Some students feel welcome and are experiencing success. ” -Staff, Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</li> </ul>
Dissatisfaction with Exclusivity of IB Program	11	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Both kids have positive things to say about the high school, especially about their teachers and the overall atmosphere, which is open, respectful, and tolerant. Neither kid has had anything good to say about the implementation of the IB Program, however. Yet they are united in their sense of IB as a weaker academic program than the old AP system.” - Parent/Caregiver</li> <li>“At the high school level, I think that we focus on the DP program too much and support those students who want pursue that challenge. However, I don't know that the students in the middle feel like they are supported. I think some kiddos in the middle get frustrated seeing all the supports that certain classmates get and feel lost (forgotten) in terms of teacher attention and support. ” -Staff, Parent/Caregiver</li> </ul>

# MIXED AND NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES: EXAMPLES OF “WHAT IS *NOT* WORKING” (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Various Culture and Climate Issues	11	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“When a kid is falling through the cracks socially or academically, I am not sure if people really do anything about it. I have a daughter like this and it worries me that she completely flies under the radar, has no social life at all, and nobody seems to ask her if she is ok or if they can include her in anything.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“At MUMS we dismantled our student discipline system and got rid of programs to help various struggling populations. This year hasn't been very welcoming because of discipline and overcrowding, but historically I think it was a place where students felt very safe and welcomed.” –<i>Staff</i></li> </ul>
Teachers Try Their Best But Need More Support	9	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I think that families believe that teachers are trying their best to support students but don't have adequate resources to do this. Some teachers are very communicative with families about what kids are learning at school, how parents can help, and asking for input from families.” –<i>Staff</i></li> </ul>
Need for District Communication to Match Actions	5	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The rhetoric of external communication strives to be inclusive, supportive, and welcoming but the actions of board and administrators don't always align, which is a sign of disconnect.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Loss of “Voice” and Community Since School Closure	4	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The school system stopped being inclusive and supporting when the local school boards were dissolved and when decisions about our students and their needs were taken away. When we were TOLD that our 6th graders were going to MUMS instead of letting them stay with the family of teachers they know and respond to while continuing learn and mature enabling the transition to Jr High to be a bit less stressful.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>

## **QUESTION 2:**

**HOW CAN THE DISTRICT IMPROVE AND/OR REMOVE  
BARRIERS OR END PRACTICES THAT NEGATIVELY  
IMPACT MARGINALIZED STUDENTS?**

**EXAMPLES OF WHAT IS NOT WORKING?**

Note: Responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small for Hanover to consider it a theme. Dark green reflects major theme, light green sub-theme.



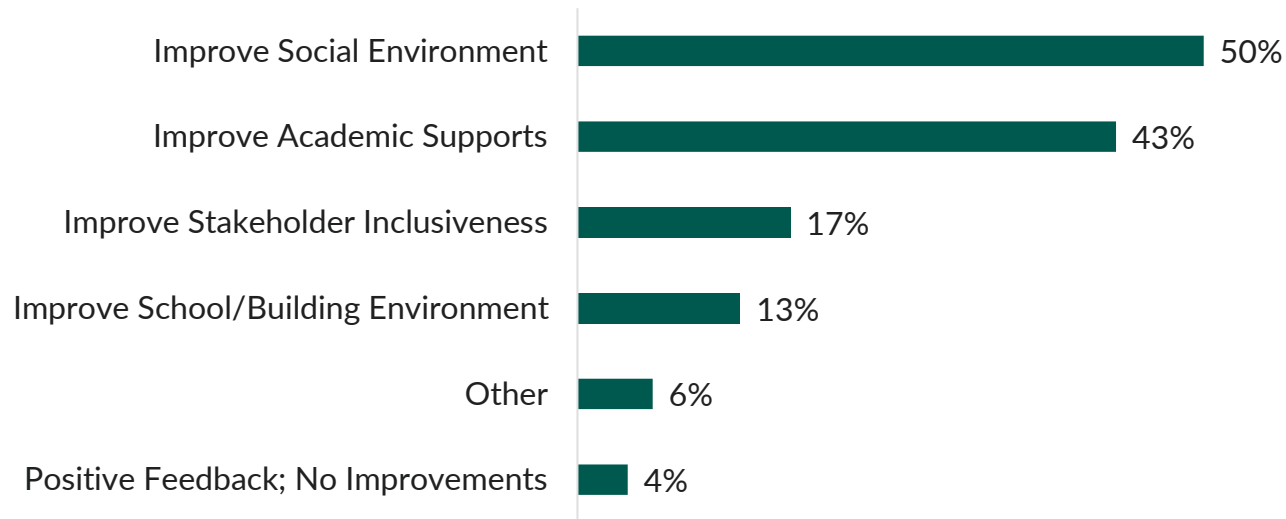
I think the school focuses a lot of its attention and resources on IB, and the majority of students in this school are not DP candidates. It seems like IB has taken over the school's priorities, likely because of the fact that it requires so much of a time investment and monetary investment to properly instate. This lets the rest of the school down.

**– Student**

# SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES

Respondents from all stakeholder groups recommend that the district should mostly focus on two aspects of school climate, “Improving Social Environments” (50%) and “Improving Academic Supports” (43%). Two prominent sub-themes reference supporting teacher training and boosting student support services. Approximately 17 percent of stakeholders, mostly *parents/caregivers* and *staff*, also identify “**Improving Stakeholder Inclusiveness**” as an area of improvement. Finally, some *parents/caregivers* and *community members* suggest “**Improving School/Building Environment**” (13%). Hanover explores the four most prominent themes and subsequent subthemes in the following slides.

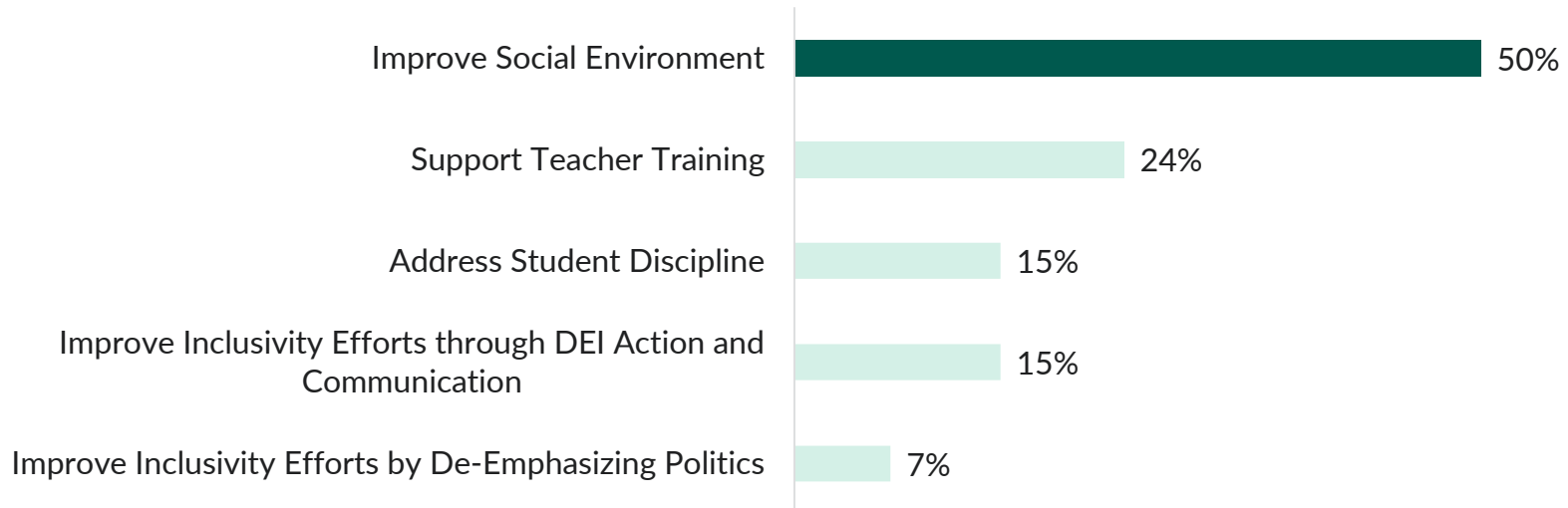
## Major Themes and Respondent Rates



# IMPROVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The “**Improve Social Environment**” theme contains four sub-themes. The most highly referenced sub-theme comments on **supporting teacher training** (24%). Stakeholders call for more direct student-teacher interaction, as well as future trainings on trauma-informed practices and managing student behavior. Indeed, another sub-theme stakeholders identify is **addressing student discipline and engagement** (15%), particularly around the use of cell phones and overall student motivation. Finally, two sub-themes suggest different approaches for improving inclusivity at ACSD: one approach is to **continue diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts** to remove barriers for marginalized students, and the other approach is to **take a less “political,” more holistic view** of improving the district without specifically calling out student sub-groups.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates





# IMPROVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Improve Social Environment	36	50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Trauma training. Developmental trainings. How to teach students with behavioral issues, different strategies rather than just being frustrated and sending to the office ” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Support Teacher Training, Retention, and Additional Resources	17	24%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The teachers, though well intentioned, may not have enough experience with working positively with marginalized students to provide a positive experience for them. The teachers may not understand their role in perpetuating a system that marginalizes some students. They may not understand how to concretely counter those issues.” -<i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Address Student Discipline	11	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Create a stable supportive environment for teachers who then can hold students accountable for their behavior.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> <li>▪ “This year, especially, students with behavioral problems are walking all over the teachers and helpers. Often times causing a violent atmosphere, and causing damage to facilities in the school. These students have little to know repercussion, and can cause a lot of distraction to kids who are there to learn.” -<i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>

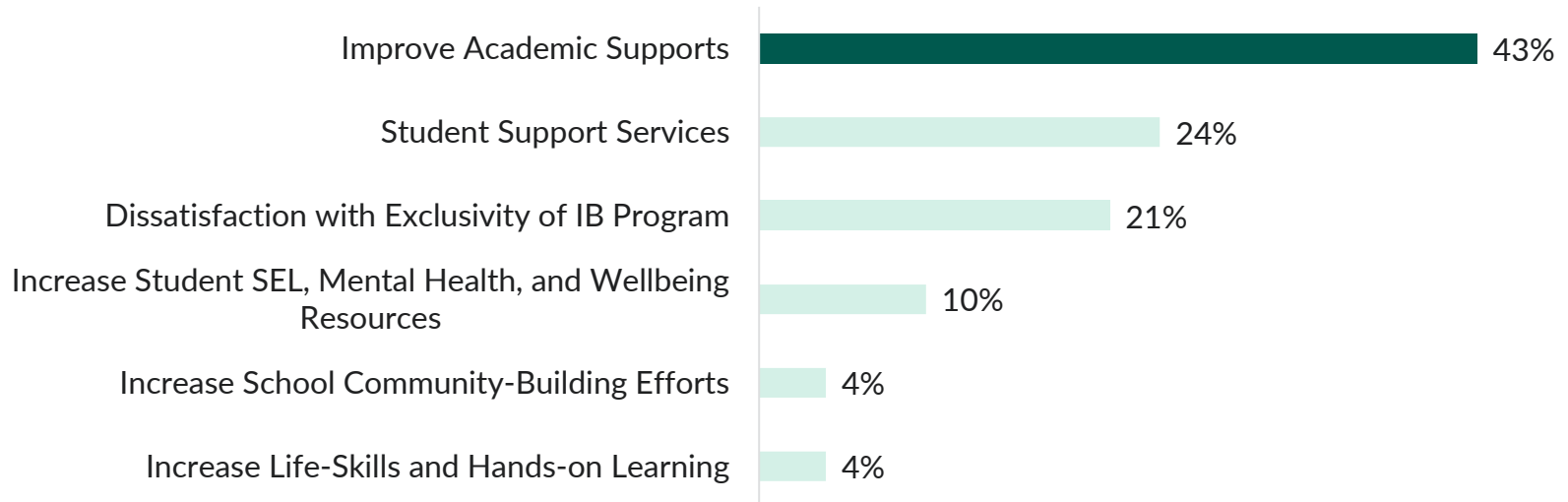
# IMPROVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Improve Inclusivity Efforts through DEI Action and Communication	11	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The district MUST both listen and ACT on the needs of marginalized students. All that's happening right now is tokenism and unfulfilled promises.” -<i>Student, Teacher</i></li> <li>“There used to be advisory discussions about various topics such as race, these discussions were not working well, but now no effort seems to be being made to still have these conversations in schools. whether or not a student gets these discussion opportunities is based on what classes they take. ” -<i>Student</i></li> </ul>
Improve Inclusivity Efforts by De-Emphasizing Politics	5	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Quit trying to help them. You make it worse. Just teach people to be nice to everyone and show by example. I don't need my daughter crying at home because your "thinks she's helping" teacher makes her feel bad because she is a minority. Yes, she thought she was helping. That is the problem” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“This is your problem right here. Why is this your only focus? You need to focus on culture in general. You need to realize that the in your actions, you are creating new marginalized groups. Not OK. How about getting off this track and just working on general culture.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

# IMPROVE ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Nearly 45 percent of stakeholders believe ACSD should focus its inclusivity efforts on improving academic supports. The “Student Support Services” sub-theme (24%) refers to a variety of academic supports ACSD could strengthen, including special education, early intervention, speech therapy, and gifted education services. Notably, 21 percent of stakeholders find the district’s **IB Diploma Program to be exclusive** to most of the student population for its extreme rigor and narrow educational pathways. Other sub-themes include increasing **student mental health resources** (10%), **community-building efforts** (4%), and **life skills learning opportunities** (4%).

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# IMPROVE ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Improve Academic Supports	31	43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We need to focus on building a continuum and creating supportive systems that catch kids before they’re ten feet underground. Examples: students at MUMS are “fully included” in classes that are not universally designed. When kids “fail,” or more truthfully, when kids cannot access (because of our own broken systems), we remove them from classes.” –<i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Student Support Services	17	24%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “One of the challenges that I can name is that students who need specialized support (reading intervention, special education services, speech, counseling, etc.) often need more than one kind of support. This pulls them out of the classroom more frequently than their peers, meaning they're missing standardized instruction, as well as opportunities to build community with their classmates. I'm not saying those students are marginalized in our community, but it's a structural problem that I notice. – <i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver Community Member</i></li> </ul>

# IMPROVE ACADEMIC SUPPORTS (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Dissatisfaction with Exclusivity of IB Program	15	21%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“IB is too hard for most people. It is only good for the very few, who would already do great and go to good colleges anyway.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>All these changes harm the entire student body for the sake of only about 20 students who are doing the DP program. In this way, the school is marginalizing 90% of the school and signaling that these students and their priorities don't matter.” – <i>Student</i></li> <li>“Eliminate IB. IB is very elitist and leaves struggling students behind.” –<i>Staff</i></li> </ul>
Increase Student SEL, Mental Health, and Wellbeing Resources	7	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Increase support for those that are not high needs but have some risk. This effects their mental health to feel like they are always having to play catch up to others.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“Added support for children struggling emotionally, socially, behaviorally, and academically.” –<i>Staff</i></li> </ul>

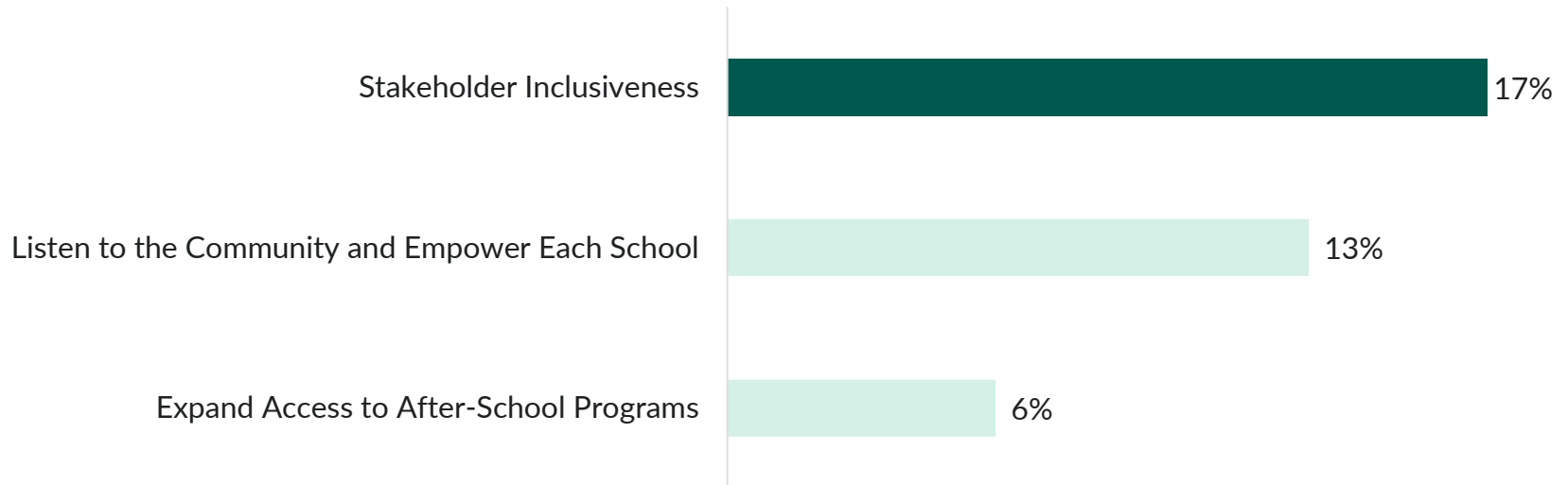
# IMPROVE ACADEMIC SUPPORTS (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Increase School Community-Building Efforts	3	4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Sport booster clubs and fundraising could support all athletic teams and clubs instead of individual. Fun non-traveling after school sports alternative.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “Have teams at MUMS – MUHS; more inclusive activities.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Increase Life Skills and Hands-On Learning	3	4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I am convinced that there is much more need for learning useful skills and jobs, as well as more generalized (but good) education for the kids, just not so hard, so that that kids who are not so academic have a great chance at learning useful things at school and enjoying school. MUHS used to have a perfect balance for all the kids.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

# IMPROVE STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVENESS

Just under 20 percent of respondents have several suggestions for barriers that ACSD could remove to make stakeholders feel more included. According to 13 percent of stakeholders, ACSD can begin improving their inclusivity efforts by **listening to the community and respecting each school's unique culture**. Some stakeholders perceive their school community to be less valued by the district than others. A lower proportion (6 percent of stakeholders—mostly *parent/caregivers*) request an **expansion of after-school programs**.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVENESS

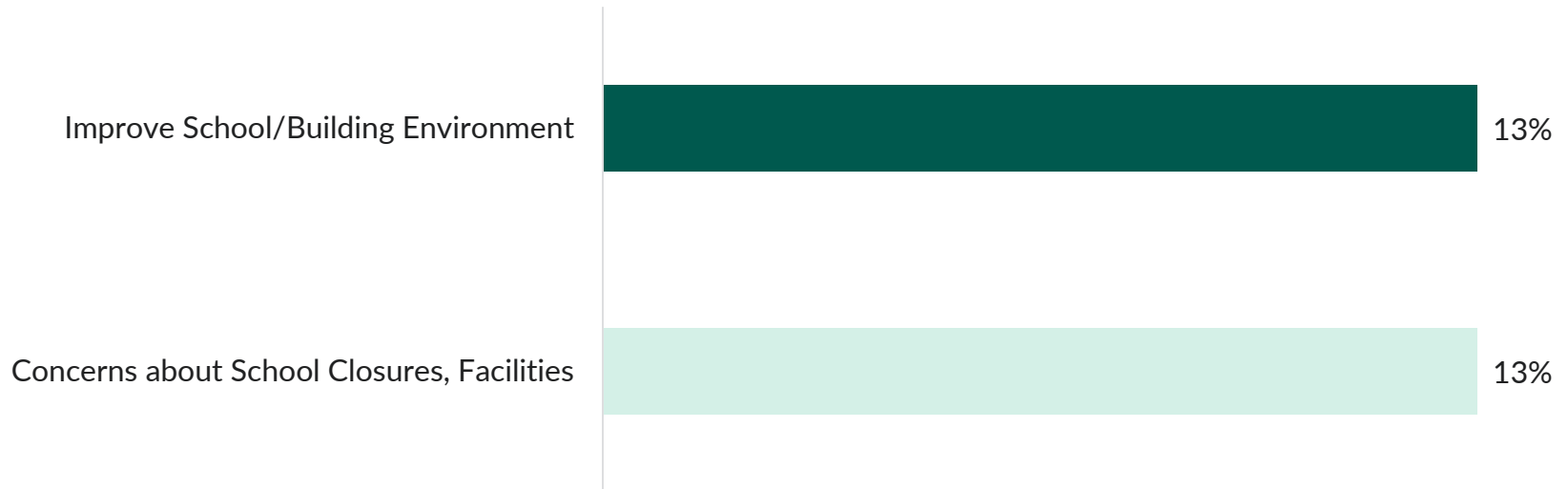
THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Improve Stakeholder Inclusiveness	12	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Wish there was more support for schools outside of Middlebury as they seem to take precedence. Also not sure where we are with the board trying to close schools but feel Shoreham has a large number of students and should remain open.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Listen to the Community and Empower Each School	9	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “We are one district- do not ignore communities or parents concerns. Assuming knowledge is the worse answer a teacher, principle, board member and superintendent could make.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “.. Not sure where we are with the board trying to close schools but feel Shoreham has a large number of students and should remain open.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Expand Access to After-School Programs	4	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “After school programs that go to 6:00. Even at smaller schools.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “Afterschool programming is not equal in all schools and many families have to travel to Middlebury for these programs which makes it so that some families can not participate.” –<i>Staff</i></li> </ul>



# IMPROVE SCHOOL/BUILDING ENVIRONMENTS

Most responses for “Improving School/Building Environment” relate to school closures and consolidations. *Parent/caregivers, staff, and community members* express dissatisfaction with the recent change to move all district sixth-graders to Middlebury Union Middle School (MUMS). Additionally, some stakeholders express concern over **potential school closures**, particularly because they prefer to keep their neighborhood schools open.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# IMPROVE SCHOOL/BUILDING ENVIRONMENT

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Improve School Building Environment	9	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I would love to hear that our district is committed to serving all of our students by embracing our collection of diverse schools and striving to improve them. There is no greater commitment to equity than making that statement. The most vulnerable/marginalized students will be the most negatively affected by school closure. To ignore that is to seriously disserve those students.” –<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Concerns about School Closure, Facilities	9	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Sending 6th grade to MUMS was a big mistake. So many students at MUMS are bullies, disrespectful of their teachers. People are sending their children to private schools because of the conditions at MUMS. This is not fair for the parents that cannot afford private schools!” –<i>Community Member</i></li> <li>“Towns that remove themselves from the district negatively impact ALL marginalized students, both within ACSD and in the independent towns. The “normal” kids will be fine, but the kids on the fringe will be further marginalized and left with fewer resources.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

# **QUESTION 3:**

**WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE DISTRICT/FUTURE STUDENTS?**

**WHAT PRIORITIES SHOULD THE DISTRICT CONSIDER IN THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN?**

**WHAT SHOULD BE DEEMPHASIZED AND WHAT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED?**

Note: Responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small for Hanover to consider it a theme. Dark green reflects major theme, light green sub-theme.



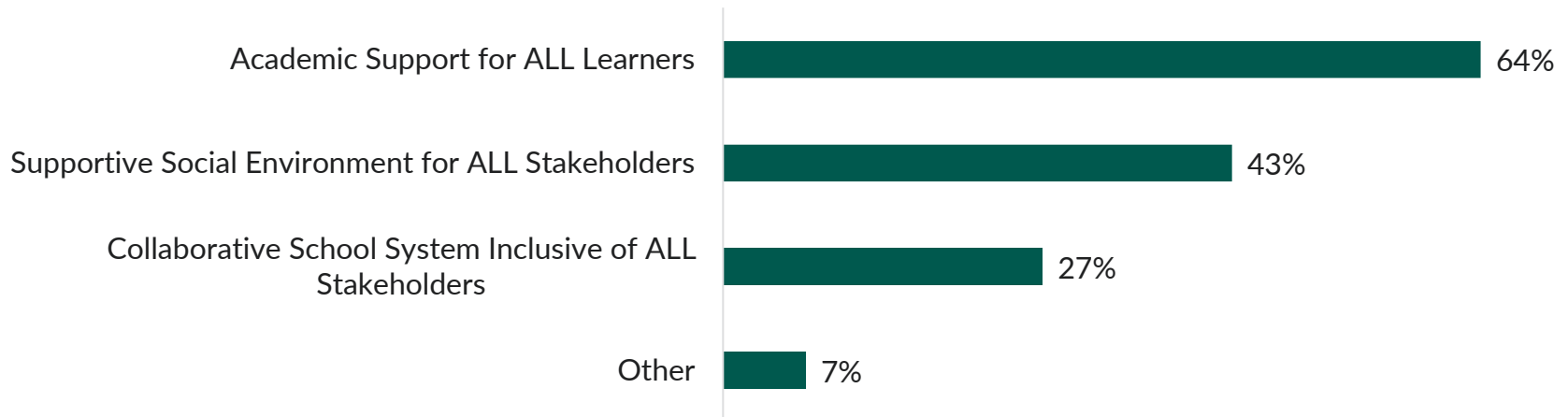
Create a vision that's in the best interest of students without using the IB guardrails. If the vision doesn't fit exactly within the IB requirements, then we can ask for an exemption.

**– Parent/Caregiver**

# SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES

The most highly referenced theme regarding future strategic priorities is “**Academic Support for All Learners.**” Approximately 64 percent of respondents from all stakeholder groups provided comments related to this theme. These comments include four sub-themes/topics ranging from de-emphasizing the IB Diploma Program to increasing emphasis on diverse learning resources (e.g., student support services, career center). The next most referenced theme is “**Supportive Social Environment for All Stakeholders,**” in which respondents from all stakeholder groups most often suggest a renewed focus on teacher training and support. Finally, 27 percent of respondents reference a “**Collaborative School System Inclusive of All Stakeholders.**” Hanover explores the three most prominent themes and subsequent sub-themes in the following slides.

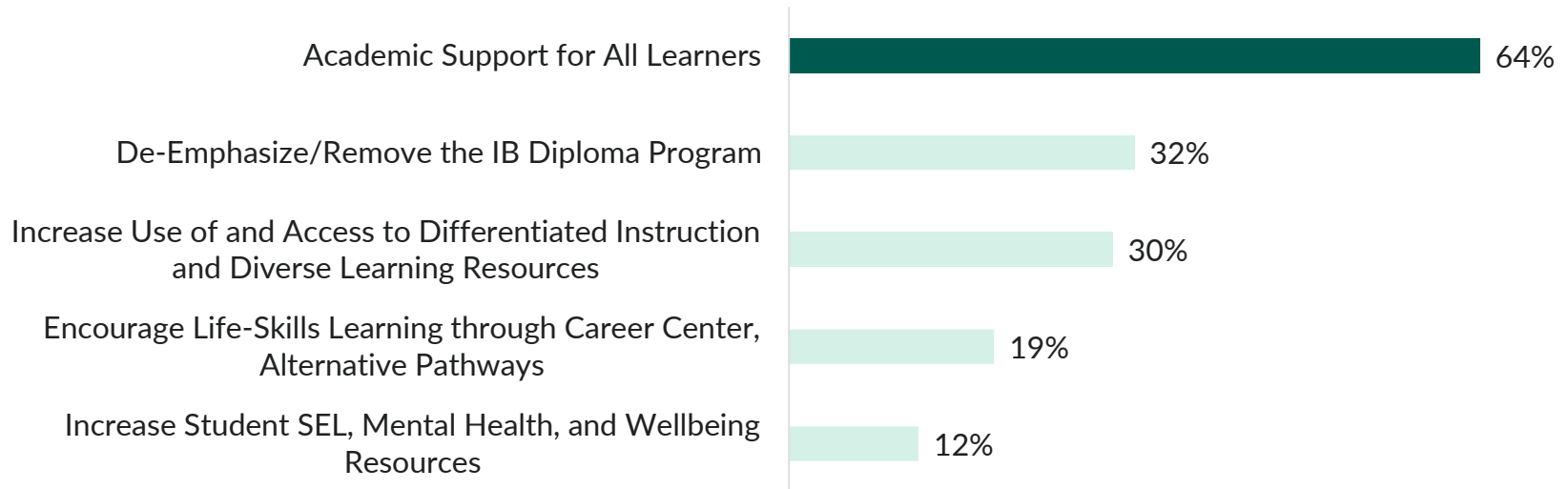
## Major Themes and Respondent Rates



# ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS

Nearly two-thirds of all respondents (64%) highlight “Academic Supports” as an area of future emphasis for the district. Much of the discussion across sub-themes revolves around the idea that the IB Diploma Program has unintentionally marginalized most of the student population and created a negative culture of hyper-achievement (32%). In this way, stakeholders urge the district to expand educational options outside the IB Program (30%), such as reintroducing AP classes or encouraging career-focused classes (19%). Additionally, stakeholders believe the district should continue its efforts towards improving student mental health resources (12%).

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Academic Support for ALL Learners	47	64%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Put more emphasis on the IB certificate and less on the IB diploma program.” –<i>Substitute Teacher</i></li> </ul>
De-Emphasize/Remove the IB Diploma Program	24	32%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The expectations of “IB for all” need to be clarified. A major selling point of IB was that it would provide a more inclusive experience for our students. Academically, this may be true in 11th and 12th grade with the prevalence of DP classes and the variety of students that take them. Few options are available in the 9th and 10th grade academic offerings, and the class sizes are large. This can lead to difficulties for teachers to actively support their students, especially marginalized students.” – <i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “Those who are not in the DP program feel forced into taking IB classes, because there aren't any others available, and those who are in the DP program are only taking part because they feel that it's the only option available at the school to demonstrate high achievement in their college applications. This is a really unhealthy situation. I think the district needs to make a real effort to connect with its students about their high school experiences.” –<i>Student</i></li> </ul>

# ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
<p>Increase Use of and Access to Differentiated Instruction and Diverse Learning Resources</p> <p>("students learn differently and need different resources")</p>	22	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "In the future I feel you should emphasize that all students are different and they all succeed differently. You recognize students that exceed in the high end curriculum. You do not recognize students who succeed and have successes that are not grade based. I understand the career center is separate but those are still your high school students who I feel don't get recognized in the high school." -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ "I wish ALL students could feel that their learning paths are okay. It's okay for students to take dual enrollment classes or early college instead of the DP track. I would like all students to feel academically challenged and supported by teachers." -<i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ "The district needs to communicate and work with the community to give diverse opportunities to students who want more than just the DP program OR career center. The district should put less emphasis on strict guidelines and more on helping students connect with their community and follow their passions." -<i>Student, Teacher</i></li> </ul>



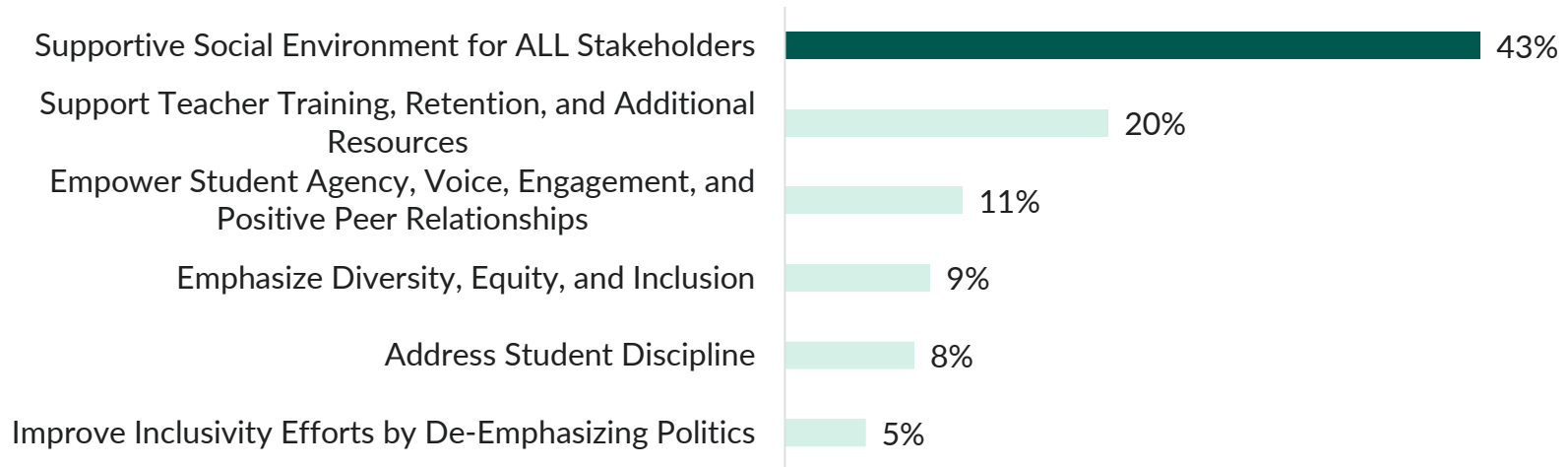
# ACADEMIC SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Encourage Life Skills Learning through Career Center, Alternative Pathways	14	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“MUHS does a decent job of encouraging experiences outside of its classrooms like internships and career center classes. I'd like to see even more emphasis on the value of these experiences.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“Emphasize encouraging students to lean into their strengths and deemphasize the message that college is the only path to success. Treat the trades as a respectable direction for students to pursue. Foster a stronger collaboration with the career center.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Increase Student SEL, Mental Health, and Wellbeing Resources	9	12%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The most important thing is that students have opportunities for meaningful connection with trusted adults who have the energy to be there for them. If the teachers are overworked by bureaucracy and reporting, and classroom management due to understaffing, they will not have the energy to attend to the needs of marginalized students who may need a bit more attention or effort in having them feel safe and welcome in the school environment.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“We are too small of a school to mount a full DP program and it prioritizes inappropriate pedagogy and markers of achievement (like high-stakes tests and externally-marked projects). This is a costly program that creates huge challenges for student mental health with poor outcomes, reduces flexibility and excludes the majority of kids..” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>

# SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Respondents identify several areas of improvements within ACSD's social environment. As seen in Question 2, *parent/caregivers* and *staff* hope the district begins to **prioritize its teachers** more; 20 percent of respondents suggest additional training and paraprofessionals may better support teachers in their interactions with students, particularly around managing student behavior and discipline (8%). About 11 percent of stakeholders also emphasize the need to **empower student voice and encourage positive peer relationships**. Finally, **two distinct approaches to creating an inclusive district** again arise; 9 percent of people (mostly *staff* and *parent/caregivers*) want the district to continue its DEI efforts, while 5 percent (all *parent/caregivers*) find these efforts to further marginalize student and spread division through the district.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Supportive Social Environment for ALL Stakeholders	32	43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Student mental health and more events such as the recent dance. This gave students a chance to let off some steam have fun, and simply be kids!” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Support Teacher Training, Retention, and Additional Resources	15	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Supporting classroom teachers and other direct student contact positions in every way possible. Emphasis on classroom teacher positions, paras, and other direct student contact positions over bloated administration.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> <li>▪ “I also think that professional development, curricular and school climate professional development needs to include the lens of equity. We also need to help all staff begin to explore and understand their own biases.” – <i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Empower Student Agency, Voice, Engagement, and Positive Peer Relationships	8	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The district's new strategic plan should be to remember the purpose of schools: to serve and educate students. I think it's incredibly important that students have a voice in how their school functions, and in my four years at this school, all I've seen is students being ignored and forced into the administration's priorities....Strive to give students more freedom wherever possible, for instance by giving underclassmen free blocks or by allowing students outside the building, etc.” – <i>Student</i></li> </ul>

# SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Emphasize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	7	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “For students of color to see (and be taught by) educators and administrators of color that look like them at their school. For non BIPOC students to see (and be taught by) educators and administrators of color that don't look like they do.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “Building school cultures that are inclusive of all students should be prioritized.” – <i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Address Student Discipline	6	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I would be very careful about getting rid of para-professionals as Dr. Burrows has previously proposed. If you visit a classroom even briefly you will see the greatest challenge is keeping a handle on the small number of kids who are not prepared to be in the classroom and are acting in disruptive ways. The key to success is finding ways to teach and manage these students so they can learn while not dragging down an entire class and demoralizing teachers.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “Where conflicts develop, active and immediate applications of restorative practices should support healthy engagement in and movement through conflict.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

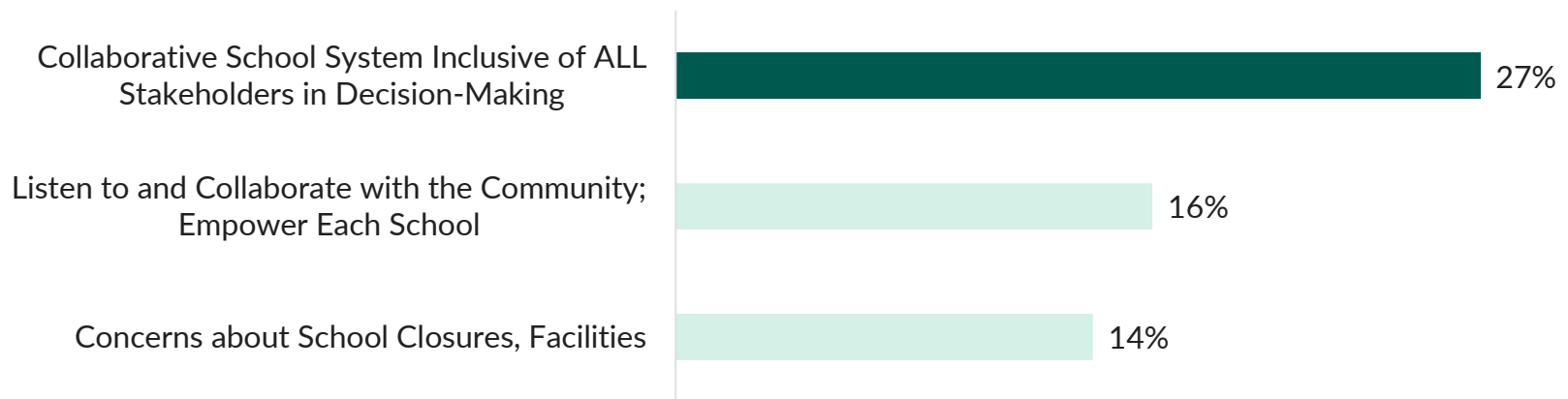
# SUPPORTIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Improve Inclusivity Efforts by De-Emphasizing Politics	4	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “The school, the teachers, need to check their bias and political opinions at the door and get back to teaching academics. We have been considering a law suit based on some of the treatment our kids have sustained in the school. Unacceptable.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “I think that it is important to recognize that some families are religious. I have found that this district does not have tolerance for religion. I think that it is important for educators to support students who are religious and not to impose their beliefs.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

# COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Just less than 30 percent of respondents call for a collaborative, community-centric school system that includes stakeholders in decision-making. Respondents from all stakeholder groups cite various improvements to current district decision-making and priorities. Of the 14 percent of respondents who mention **school consolidations**, nearly all oppose the concept; these respondents perceive the closures as anti-community. Similarly, 16 percent of stakeholders hope the district takes more steps to **include perspectives and respect wishes of the smaller communities outside Middlebury in future district decision-making**. Much of the discontent highlighted in these responses stems from a general feeling of exclusion or underappreciation. Respondents seem to desire a district system that not only includes, but empowers, each town and school community.

## Major Themes, Sub-Themes, and Respondent Rates



# COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Supportive Social Environment for ALL Stakeholders	20	27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I hope we can come to embrace more of the "spoke and wheel" model that respects that our district is comprised of different-sized puzzle pieces that are all valuable to the whole. That foundation is crucial to the strategic plan.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Listen to and Collaborate with the Community; Empower Each School	12	16%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “I believe that as a DP candidate, the program should have been well-indicated in the high school before juniors decided whether or not to join this program. The expectations of the program were not made clear and many people felt pressured into this program without clarity of the goals.” – <i>Student</i></li> <li>▪ “There is a duality that exists within ACSD- small and large schools- that cannot be sustained/allowed to thrive with the exact same systems.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Concerns about School Closures, Facilities	10	14%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “De emphasize consolidation. Elementary schools need to all be open, and include our sixth graders.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>▪ “Go back to a real Middle School model with smaller team sizes. Bring back programs like Tiger, Core 5, and Encore.” – <i>Staff</i></li> </ul>

# QUESTION 4:

## ANYTHING ELSE?

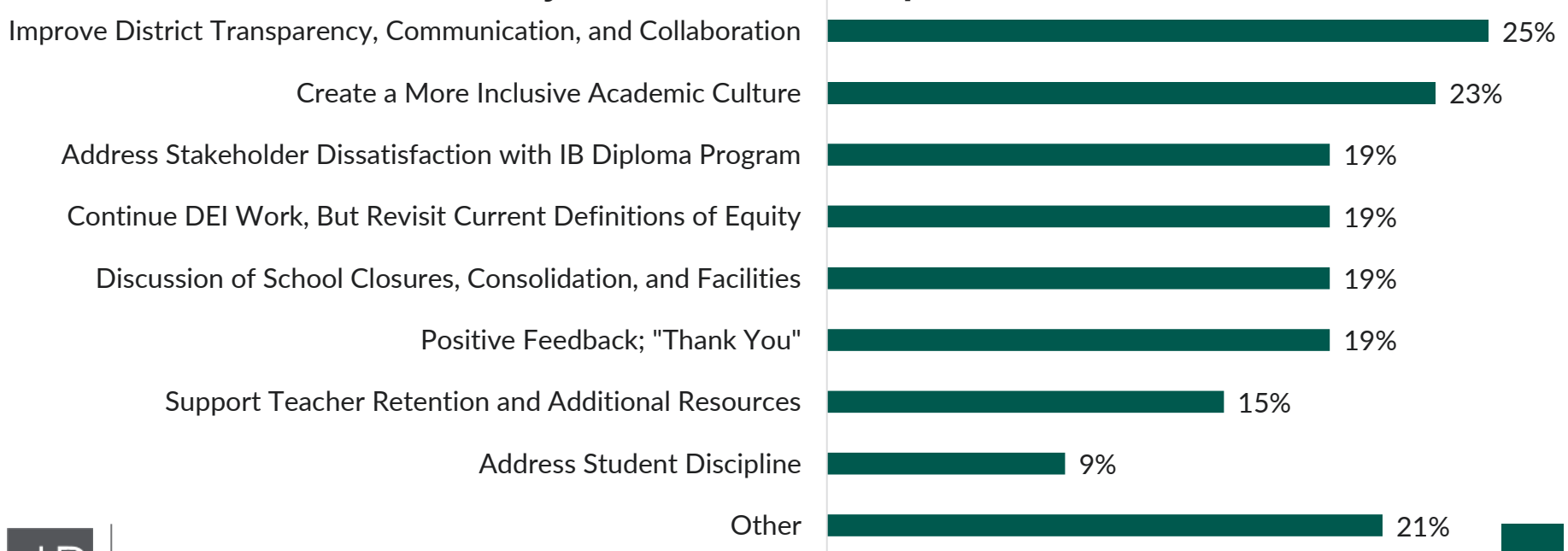
Note: Responses do not sum to 100% because one response could fit into multiple themes or pertain to a topic too small for Hanover to consider it a theme. Dark green reflects major theme, light green sub-theme.



# SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES

In the final open-ended survey question, 25 percent of stakeholders advise ACSD to **“Improve District Transparency, Communication, and Collaboration with Stakeholders.”** Many responses indicate that the district has made several major decisions without including its stakeholders; some **stakeholders express hope that ACSD will continue surveys like this to gather feedback.** Another major focus for stakeholders is **“Creating a More Inclusive Academic Culture”** (23%) for students of all abilities, which also relates to general dissatisfaction with the **exclusivity of the IB Diploma Program** (19%). Hanover explores the most prominent themes in the following slides.

## Major Themes and Respondent Rates



# THEMES: “ANYTHING ELSE?”

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
<b>Improve District Transparency, Communication, and Collaboration with Stakeholders</b> (e.g., gather and respond to feedback, about decision-making, strategic plan, school consolidation)	13	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The ACSD board needs to engage parents and students through conversations, not just surveys, to assess our IB program overall and focus on student well-being.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> <li>“Your small towns don't trust you to actually listen when we fill out these forms. You never have before, why will you now?” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
<b>Create a More Inclusive Academic Culture</b> <i>Meet Individual Student Academic Needs by Encouraging Various Educational Pathways, Providing Student Supports</i> (e.g., special education, career education)	12	23%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The emphasis on IB diploma is fascinating to many in our district - especially since only 20 current seniors are fully enrolled. We all understand that there are ‘multiple pathways’ but there have always been ‘multiple pathways.’ Could our resources be used in a more inclusive way that impacts even larger subsets of students overall? Our most academic oriented students have always done well at MUHS. We should be targeting the larger % of students in the middle - the ones not interested in the diploma program. We should be offering more varied courses and coursework— with options for AP, Honors as well as regular credits.” – <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“The students who are not college bound should have more of a selection to prepare them for the work force.” – <i>Staff</i></li> </ul>

# THEMES: “ANYTHING ELSE?” (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Address Stakeholder Dissatisfaction with IB Diploma Program	10	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I feel that Peter Burrows and the IB program are not suited for Middlebury. I don’t like the changes that I’ve seen in the school since the IB program has come into affect. I don’t feel that it encompasses all of our students equally. I think when the program was being sold to us it was made to sound like it would incorporate all students and all ways of learning. I have not seen that with my children.” <i>-Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“IB is not a barrier to excellent schools, but our district needs to re-think the way that we’re ‘doing’ IB. It should be a way to help us move towards excellence, not a barrier or a burden. In order to fix this, we need more support for teachers in the classroom (paraprofessionals, district-level people co-teaching, specials teachers co-teaching, etc.)” <i>-Staff, Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Discussion of School Closures, Consolidation, and Facilities (e.g., opponents vs. supporters, MUMS)	10	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“The district needs to realize people don’t want to close the rural schools.” <i>-Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“I think there should be a conversation started about combining Mt. Abe, Vergennes and Middlebury districts, have all Addison County town send to a single Middle and High school. The academic, extra curricular and sports opportunities would be greatly increased. ” <i>- Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

# THEMES: “ANYTHING ELSE?” (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Continue DEI Work, But Revisit Current Definitions of Equity in ACSD Community	10	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I would like to see the district shift its current arguments against town schools and, instead, more heavily support them; one definition of equity would be that every student has a school nearby, not that they are bused to a large, suburban organized central campus.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“My main advice is that members of your committee should each substitute-teach for a couple of days and then think more about what equity at ACSD means. Until you have experienced the classrooms firsthand it is hard to think seriously about solutions and strategy. I believe equity is about providing each group of students with the support and education they need. Equity does not mean lowering the quality of education to meet the needs of the weakest students. It does not mean cramming kids into larger classes and taking away human teaching resources. This is a recipe for a failed school system in which the stronger students flee the system and it becomes more difficult to attract quality teachers.” -<i>Stakeholder</i></li> </ul>
Positive Feedback; "Thank You!"	10	19%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Thank you for this survey. I have so much more to say. Open-ended surveys are both helpful and difficult. I hope you'll provide more opportunities for feedback and conversation through other mechanisms.” - <i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>

# THEMES: “ANYTHING ELSE?” (CONTINUED)

THEME	RESPONSE COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	SAMPLE QUOTES
Support Teacher Retention and Additional Resources	8	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I am glad that ACSd is re-considering the way they treat their students and staff through educational equity and I hope serious actions are taken in this direction.” -<i>Student</i></li> <li>“I think teachers have also been overloaded by the IB responsibilities and have too much paperwork and analysis to do instead of just doing their thing and teaching what they love.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> </ul>
Address Student Discipline (e.g., student accountability)	5	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Kids need to really not get away with as much as they have been.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“The behavioral issues seem a little out of control. My son is an 8th grader, and has yet to have most/all the boys bathrooms open due to vandalism. It seemed to have started with the 6th graders merging...” -<i>Staff, Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>
Other (e.g., mental health, curriculum suggestions)	11	21%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I would like staff and the district to think about injecting hope into their syllabus. Our world is a stressful place right now and I am concerned that our teenagers are getting buried under the weight of the world's challenges. Please consider a study in happiness and sharing hopeful stories from around the world....” -<i>Parent/Caregiver</i></li> <li>“Teach more history. Children need to have a solid foundation in history in order to better understand our current society and world. We do these kids a huge disservice when we only teach modern geopolitical events.” -<i>Parent/Caregiver, Community Member</i></li> </ul>



Thank you.

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