



WELL-BEING AND BELONGING INQUIRY TEAM BRIEFING REPORT

JUNE 2024



WELL-BEING AND BELONGING - BRIEFING REPORT

RATIONALE

The well-being of students and staff is fundamental to the success of any educational institution. As the backbone of a thriving learning environment, the physical, emotional, and mental health of students and staff significantly impacts academic performance, school culture, and overall community well-being. Prioritizing well-being is not just a compassionate choice but a necessary one for sustainable success. Additionally, the comprehensive equity audit conducted in the district during the fall of 2023 highlighted specific areas of opportunity for growth in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging practices, all of which have direct implications on student and staff well-being.

Student well-being is closely linked to academic success. Research consistently shows that students who feel supported and safe are more likely to attend school regularly, engage in class, and achieve higher academic outcomes. For instance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlights that promoting mental health and providing a supportive school environment improves academic performance and reduces risky behaviors among students (CDC, 2020).

When students feel valued, respected, and cared for, it creates a sense of community and belonging. This supportive atmosphere can also reduce incidences of bullying, promote inclusivity, and encourage positive interactions among students (Espelage et al., 2019). Programs that address social-emotional learning (SEL) help students develop critical skills such as communication, empathy, resilience, responsibility, and balance, which are also outlined in our district's Profile of an Engaged Learner. These skills not only improve interpersonal relationships but also prepare students for future success. Staff who are trained in SEL are better equipped to model these behaviors, integrate them into their pedagogy, and create a nurturing learning environment (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Investing in the well-being of students has long-term benefits that extend beyond the school walls. Students who receive comprehensive well-being support are more likely to develop into well-rounded adults who contribute positively to society. They are better prepared for the workforce, higher education, and civic engagement (Jones et al., 2019).

The increasing use of technology in the workplace also underscores the need for social and emotional skills and balance. According to the World Economic Forum's Skills Outlook (2023), there is a growing need for emotional intelligence, leadership, and social influence skills in the workplace. Essential skills such as resilience, flexibility, agility, motivation, self-awareness, and lifelong learning are critical as workers adapt to rapidly changing work environments. Empathy, active listening, and leadership are



among the top skills for 2023, indicating that social-emotional skills are paramount (World Economic Forum, 2023) to our students' future success.

Generation Alpha, born 2010-2024 (our students through grade 9), will live longer and will be more culturally diverse compared to the former generations. "Their technology makes them the most globally connected generation ever. They are deemed social, global and mobile as they will work, study and travel between different countries and multiple careers" (McCrindle, 2020, p.7). Gen Alpha, along with Gen Z face unique challenges due to their constant exposure to technology. This exposure can lead to both positive outcomes and challenges, such as shorter attention spans and impaired social formation (McCrindle, 2020). Understanding and addressing these challenges, such as intentionally monitoring the degree of technology used for learning, is crucial for their healthy development and solidifies why a focus on student well-being is imperative within the strategic plan.

The well-being of staff directly influences their ability to teach effectively. Educators experiencing high levels of stress or burnout are less likely to perform at their best, which can negatively impact student learning. Ensuring staff well-being through adequate support systems, professional development, and a positive work environment enhances their capacity to deliver quality education, thereby benefiting students directly (Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Teachers need additional support and professional learning resources not only to accelerate student achievement but also to feel more valued and effective in their professional roles. Amid a shrinking teacher pipeline, employee burnout, and high turnover, districts are turning their attention to helping teachers stay engaged, motivated, and connected. Research indicates that increasing teachers' job satisfaction through autonomy, agency, and voice can lead to better educational outcomes and higher retention rates (Trends in K-12 Education, 2024; McCrindle, 2023). Supporting teachers' well-being by involving them in key school decisions and providing strong leadership support correlates with higher retention and a more positive educational environment. Schools that prioritize these aspects tend to embrace innovation and focus more on centering student needs (McCrindle, 2020).

Today's students and educators face unique challenges, including the impacts of technology, social media, and global events. These factors can contribute to stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. A strategic focus on well-being equips schools to address these challenges proactively. Initiatives such as mental health resources, mindfulness programs, and physical activity opportunities can mitigate the adverse effects of these contemporary issues (American Psychological Association, 2019).

Prioritizing student and staff well-being is essential for fostering a healthy, productive, and supportive educational environment. The benefits of this investment are manifold: enhanced academic performance, a positive school culture, long-term community well-being, and resilience in the face of contemporary challenges. By committing to the well-being of all its members, the Upper Arlington Schools not only ensures the immediate success of its students and staff but also lays the foundation for a thriving future. It reflects a commitment to holistic education, recognizing that academic excellence, innovation, and personal well-being are intrinsically linked. This strategic priority will ultimately lead to a more effective, inclusive, and resilient educational system.



APPROACH

During the Phase 1 of the Strategic Planning Process (Autumn 2023), a wide range of stakeholders were engaged to identify the priority areas and inform the design of the strategic planning process. Current stakeholder insight was learned through Dr. Hunt's UAdventure Listening Tour (607 questionnaire responses and 538 focus group participants over 4 months) and the Insight Education Equity Audit (4,730 survey responses and 180 focus group participants over 3 months). Additional foundational data sets that informed the strategic planning approach and the work of the inquiry teams were the Listen Learn Lead community engagement experiences during the spring of 2022 and 2023. Two common themes that appeared throughout these data sets were the UA community's value of **excellence and innovation**. Engaged Learning, Well-being and Belonging, and Connection and Communication, emerged as the three priority areas.

According to the voices of the UA Schools' community (UAdventure, 2023), striving for excellence and innovation in **Well-Being and Belonging** means supporting well-being as a critical component of the academic achievement of students and the ability of staff members to challenge and support every student every step of the way. By building on our existing foundation that supports the well-being of our students and staff and embraces the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion, UA Schools will underscore the importance of a holistic approach to well-being and foster a sense of safety and belonging where everyone feels valued and connected.

To explore the priority area of Well-Being and Belonging, and to develop strategy recommendations, twenty representative members of the school community conducted an inquiry from February through May of 2024. This inquiry team, composed of staff, students, parents, and administrators, was co-led by a community member, Dr. John Ackerman of Nationwide Children's Hospital, who has expertise in the field of well-being. The strategic planning inquiry process was designed and facilitated in partnership with Coach to Lead, led by Dr. Denise Snowden. This section of the report outlines the inquiry process and learnings. Additional details can be found in the appendix.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

Primary Inquiry Question

- What must Upper Arlington Schools do to strengthen student and staff well-being, foster belonging, and ensure a safe and supportive learning environment?

Secondary Inquiry Questions

- How can we develop **a supportive working environment and culture that fosters belonging** where every staff member (teaching, support, administration, etc) can be seen, heard and actively engaged in their school community?
- How can we develop **a supportive learning environment and system of school-level resources that foster belonging** where every student can be seen, heard and actively engaged in their school community?



OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Term / Concept	Definition
Belonging	A person's feeling of safety [and connectedness] where they can be authentic, supported by an inclusive culture that intentionally promotes relationships, builds trust and celebrates individuals (UA inquiry team, 2018).
Staff	All paid members of the organization, classified, certified, administrative and exempt (part-time and full-time).
Social-Emotional Learning	CASEL defines social and emotional learning (SEL) as an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. Ohio's K-12 Social and Emotional Learning Standards are provided by grade bands (kindergarten-grade 3, grades 3-5, middle grades and high school) and provide a continuum of development across five competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision-Making.
Engagement	George Kuh, director of the National Survey of Student Engagement, expanded the definition to assert that engagement isn't the responsibility of students alone, but rather is reciprocal, including "both the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and the effort institutions devote to using effective educational performance" (quoted in Axelson & Flick, 2010, p. 41). Gallup, which regularly surveys student engagement, has pointed out that teachers who feel engaged with their work will have an easier time helping students feel engaged with school (Reckmeyer, 2019). Fredricks et al. (2004) identify three types of engagement: • Behavioral engagement, which includes students observing community norms and participating in activities. • Emotional engagement, which includes students' feelings of interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety. • Cognitive engagement, which is closely related to motivation and involves students' desire and ability to engage in a variety of strategies to self-directed learning.
Culture	According to Fullan (2007) school culture can be defined as the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates. 'School culture' can be used to encompass all the attitudes, expected behaviors and values that impact how the school operates.



Term / Concept	Definition
Equity in Education	According to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce Development , equity in education is defined as each child having access to relevant and challenging academic experiences and the educational resources necessary for success across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background and/or income.
Staff Wellness	The district approaches staff wellness through programming and resources available to all staff, that provides opportunities for everyone to have the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to feel valued, energized, and supported in their roles.
Equality	Equality is defined by this team as everyone having the same thing or are approached as if their needs are the same.
Equity	Equity is defined by this team as providing access to the resources, opportunities, and supports individually needed to take advantage of educational opportunities, and to develop full academic and social-emotional potential.
Inequity	Inequity is defined by this team as not providing access to the resources, opportunities, and supports individually needed to take advantage of educational opportunities, and to develop full academic and social-emotional potential.
Identity Characteristics	This team defines identity characteristics as lived aspects of an individual's humanity, such as, but not limited to race, gender, ability, economic status, English language learning status, LGBTQIA+, and others.
Underrepresented Populations	The team uses the National Science Foundation (NSF) definition such that underrepresented populations as "groups of individuals who, historically, have been denied access to or excluded from the full participation in the educational, economic, and societal opportunities that are available to other groups." (National Science Foundation, 2019).
Well-being	Well-being in UACS (from the 2019-2024 strategic plan) focuses on two fundamental aspects. The first is belonging - a person's feeling of safety and connectedness where they can be authentic, supported by an inclusive culture that intentionally promotes relationships, builds trust and celebrates individuals. The second is balance - a person's feeling of harmony between school and personal time that allows for satisfaction in all areas of life. Belonging and balance both require a comprehensive approach that includes the continuous improvement of staff and student support services.



Term / Concept	Definition
Onboarding	Our districts' definition of onboarding includes both employees and students. Onboarding is the process of integrating a new employee and/or student into the district/school/classroom environment or familiarizing a new student/family with the district/school/classroom environment, support resources, systems and the welcoming aspect of providing invitations to participation in a trusted environment.
Retention	Our districts' definition of retention includes both employees and students. Employee and student/family retention is defined as an organization or community's ability to hold on to or retain its employees or families. It refers to the strategies an organization or community develops to mitigate turnover risks and the processes it puts in place to increase retention.
Invitational Approach to Designing for Belonging	Suzie Wise, from the Stanford d.school, in her Book <i>Design for Belonging</i> , explains that belonging begins with an invitation into a space. How the invitation comes matters. Invitations can make you feel special or it can leave feelings of confusion or doubt. The invitation to join a community should exemplify your values and define the authentic purpose for inclusion into the space so that people feel wanted and valued.
Agency	This team defines agency as student proactive and transformative participation in classroom activities (Mameli et al., 2021 ; Reeve, 2013).
Climate	The National School Climate Center defines school climate as the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life; it also reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

At the end of each inquiry team meeting (after the initial launch on February 20), members of the team developed a high-level summary to represent their progress, process, and direction. This section outlines the process and timeline for this inquiry team through the lens of their summaries.

On February 20, 2024, the inquiry team was launched to research our priority area to formulate strategy recommendations for the strategic plan. We refined our team charter that will guide our work, unpacked our priority area, set direction, learned about factors that impact our students' future, and engaged in preliminary analysis. We will reconvene next week to develop our inquiry plan and start our data collection.

On February 26, 2024, facilitator, Dr. Denise Snowden reviewed the content, objectives and timelines of



the initial Strategic Planning Initiative. We also participated in a broader conversation around what cultivating curiosity looks like before breaking out into separate strategic inquiry team meetings. The Wellness & Belonging team reviewed the four areas of focus the group had identified at the Feb. 20 session (Staff Wellbeing; Student Wellbeing; Fostering Belonging; and Providing a Safe & Supportive Environment). We then divided the team into four subgroups around those areas to explore and develop secondary inquiry questions, thoughts and insights.

On March 18, 2024, the inquiry teams gathered together for a brief review of the strategic process and timelines, setting the course for our charge that evening - *solidifying our secondary inquiry questions & sub groups*. The three primary inquiry teams then convened separately for discussion and development of their Inquiry Plan. The Well-being and Belonging inquiry team leaders shared the finalized secondary inquiry questions, which were condensed from the four questions the team had previously proposed to two questions, centered on: Staff Well-Being & Belonging, and Student Well-Being and Belonging. Team members were assigned to one of the two sub groups and then used the remainder of the evening to share learning so far, as well as to identify groups, methods and questions to ask for insight on their specific secondary inquiry area.

On April 1 and 2, 2024, each of our subgroups met virtually to check-in with our progress gathering information from a variety of sources and to assign team members to review and summarize existing data and literature relevant to our inquiry area.

On April 4, 2024, members of our team, along with members from the other two inquiry teams met with the district's Teaching and Learning Team (TLT), a group of 65 people representing every school in the district to conduct focus group discussions. We spent 2 hours divided into 7 focus groups soliciting input based on questions generated from all inquiry teams.

On April 15, 2024, the inquiry teams gathered together for a brief review of the strategic process and timelines, setting the course for our charge that evening - progress updates, data analysis & summaries, and noting action steps. The three primary inquiry teams then convened separately for discussion and development of their inquiry plan. After distributing data analysis assignments for the primary and secondary research we had gathered, members of the team used the remainder of the evening to summarize key take-aways and potential action steps from each of the research initiatives.

On April 22, 2024, the inquiry teams gathered together for a brief review of the strategic process and timelines. The charge for the evening was to formulate the findings/feedback from our research into well-supported strategy recommendations. The group was reminded to think like a researcher with a focus on our students as the beneficiaries of any recommendations we make. The three inquiry teams then convened separately for discussion and development of their Strategy Recommendations. Well Being & Belong team members initially took time to individually and in small groups digest research outcomes and begin crafting targeted recommendations supported with rationale tied to research findings. Denise Lutz then moderated a group conversation around common strategic Well-Being and Belonging themes that were evolving from the recommendations being offered.

On May 9, 2024, members of our inquiry team presented our draft strategy recommendations at the Listen Learn Lead community engagement panel. We solicited feedback from the community using a questionnaire using a Likert scale as well as open-ended input for each draft strategy. We responded to



questions from the participants as well.

On May 22, 2024, we spent a significant amount of time reviewing the feedback from the BOE, the community and then reviewed the Q&As from the LLL event. We made several changes to our original 6 recommendations based on this feedback. Including combining two of the recommendations due to their similarities. We identified new vocabulary that needed to be defined and drafted the current state, future state and celebration areas for our inquiry area.

SYNTHESIS OF LEARNINGS

Throughout the inquiry process, learnings were summarized and documented in a “Summary of Learnings” table. This included existing data sets, acquired data sets (focus groups, interviews, etc.), and related literature. This table is included in Appendix A for reference and as an educational resource.

The Upper Arlington Schools have much to celebrate and opportunities for growth within the priority area of Well-Being and Belonging. Based on the team’s learnings, here is a synthesis of the current state celebrations, current state challenges, and the desired future. While these descriptions are not comprehensive, they do provide a glimpse into what the team learned at a high level.

Current State Celebrations

Aligned with the district's commitment to nurturing the development of every student, the strategic plan has consistently emphasized the need to support well-being, belonging and balance. With the inception of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, the Board of Education called for the development of an Equity Advisory Board whose task was to advance diversity, equity and inclusion priorities for the district. As outlined in the UAdventures report and the Insight Education Equity Audit report our stakeholders indicated that UACS has a strong sense of community, parent involvement, supportive and caring teachers, and strong student-teacher relationships. Other current celebrations in the area of well-being include a commitment of dedicated staff, partnerships and resources to support the social and emotional needs of students. Additionally, students have access to a variety of diverse educational and co-curricular opportunities in this well supported community.

Current State Challenges

The current state challenges of well-being in the district point toward over and under representation of specific groups in areas that do not fulfill the spirit of the Profile of an Engaged Learner and the mission and vision of the district. There are areas in need of specific attention to increase well-being, inclusivity and sense of belonging for staff and students alike, especially families and staff that are new to the district. Representation of minority voices is not uniformly or systematically collected so that all voices can be included. Inclusive curriculum and teaching practices are beneficial to all educators and learners, and need to be reviewed so that all students and divergent perspectives are represented and able to participate through an equitable learning environment. Deep learning, retention, attention, and self or emotional regulation can be negatively impacted by extended device use in the learning context and is impacting the well-being of our students. Finally data points regarding student and staff well-being that need to be identified, tracked, acted upon, and shared transparently in order to develop stronger trusting



relationships and inclusivity.

Desired Future

The desired future of Well-Being and Belonging, our vision, is guided by a core belief that the school operates as the heartbeat of the community and exemplifies the opportunities and values of the community without question, qualification, or exception. We can achieve this only when all students and staff are engaged, feel valued and are authentic contributors to the school community. Additionally, when we are able to provide all students with equitable opportunities and access to high-quality educational experiences, we will be able to fulfill the expectations of the Profile of an Engaged Learner and our students will be prepared to Serve, Lead and Succeed.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Well-Being and Belonging Inquiry Team has developed five recommended strategies for consideration in the strategic plan to address the current state challenges and to move us toward the desired future for our students' well-being.

STRATEGY 1 - EQUITY IN VOICE

To ensure all groups of students and staff are heard, valued, and have input on decision-making, we recommend **cultivating intentional structures and systems for representation using an inclusive approach**. Research shows that when students and staff feel valued and possess agency, they have a stronger sense of belonging and increased well-being.

STRATEGY 2 - ONBOARDING AND WELCOMING

To increase a sense of belonging and connection, we recommend **designing and implementing consistent, evidence-based onboarding and retention approaches, including entrance and exit feedback, for new residents, students, and staff**. Research on increasing community belonging demonstrates that the use of an invitational approach for entering into a new community can lead to active participation in that community.

STRATEGY 3 - BALANCED TECHNOLOGY USE

To create a balanced learning environment that facilitates innovation and excellence while prioritizing student well being, we recommend **developing a technology use framework informed by key stakeholders involving student, staff, and family voices**. We know from research that deep learning, retention, and attention are negatively impacted by phone or extended device use in the learning context.

STRATEGY 4 - SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

To gather authentic feedback regarding areas that will provide insight into how to increase staff voice, choice and agency, we recommend **developing, implementing, and applying the results of a workplace assessment tool**. Research shows that assessment tools are valuable for gathering feedback from staff to understand their experiences and perspectives. This data can inform initiatives and professional learning aimed at improving well-being.

STRATEGY 5 - EQUITABLE ACCESS

To ensure equitable access to academic and co-curricular programs, we recommend **refining policies and addressing disparities in resources, curriculum offerings and school participation**. An inclusive curriculum in addition to culturally informed teaching practices are beneficial to both educators and learners. An equitable learning environment provides the culture, climate, and content needed to enable all students to thrive in a global world.



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APPENDIX A - SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS

This table represents the inquiry team's learnings throughout the inquiry process through the lens of their strategic priority area - Well-Being and Belonging. This table is included to expand understanding and increase transparency. It includes the foundational data sets from Phase 1 of the strategic planning process, existing data sets, new data sets, and relevant literature.

Data Set	Description	Learnings
UAdventure Summary (p. 3-9)	Fall 2023 - Dr. Hunt's Listening Tour	The primary strengths of UA include a strong sense of community and inclusivity, significant parent involvement and support, caring and supportive teachers, and strong student-teacher relationships. Secondary strengths encompass SEL learning and diverse educational opportunities. Areas identified for improvement or strengthening are inclusivity and representation of minority voices, fostering a sense of belonging for all staff and students, addressing staff workload and technology concerns, enhancing flexibility in school schedules, and promoting transparent, collaborative, and inclusive leadership. Additionally, DEI in hiring and retention practices, support during transitions, and recognizing and addressing divergent perspectives are noted for improvement. For future preparedness, UA aims to provide a holistic education that integrates academic, practical, and SEL components, preparing students for diverse career paths and real-world challenges.
Equity Audit (summary)	Jan 2024 - Equity Audit Summary	Domain 1 • Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for students through operations, finance, and organizational structure to establish clear and direct link between student achievement and access to materials (ie. funding allocation, teachers, high-quality instructional materials, academic rigor). • Develop a plan to ensure common understanding of equity across the district and community so as to address such deficiencies in funding, financial accessibility for extracurricular activities. • Establish SMART Goals for equity in student outcomes, resource allocation, staff diversity, and overall school culture. Domain 2 • Deepen the equity audit by: analyzing disciplinary practices, assessing support programs, and addressing challenges for diverse student groups. • Invest in leadership development for equity with a K-12 model, diverse leadership cohorts, new staff on boarding, essential training, and staff skills for inclusivity and bias awareness. • Challenge exclusive practices and power dynamics. Evaluate and amend policies to eliminate unintentional biases, improve transparency, and ensure diverse representation. • Address power dynamics, advocate for equal voices,



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		establish resources for newcomers, and employ inclusive communication strategies through both virtual and in-person channels, including exit interviews for departing staff, families or students • Further develop Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) structures across all grade levels for academics and well-being. And monitor progress and success. Domain 3 Research highlights the positive impact teachers of diverse backgrounds have on all students -academic achievement, long-term life outcomes. • Diverse educator workforce reflects a district's commitment to providing equitable access to educational opportunities and dedication to eliminating barriers and ensuring equitable career advancement opportunities for educators of minority groups. • Teachers of color experience higher turnover rates than white teachers, driven by factors such as school culture, unfavorable work conditions, lack of agency, feeling undervalued, among others. • There is a noticeable disparity between UA staff demographics and student demographics. • District's commitment to fostering workforce diversity is evidenced by recent changes in staffing procedures. • Data findings specific to Equity in the Educator Workforce: • Stakeholders express concerns about paraprofessionals hired for students with disabilities. • Disparities in English Language teaching resources highlight the ongoing need for equitable resource allocation. • Develop a comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Plan • Data Collection and Analysis • Develop the Office of Excellence and Engagement • Enhancing Workforce Development and Support for Student Success Domain 4 We often focus on inclusive topics like race, culture, etc. with students, but we often forget to include educators which can bring unintentional bias. • Prioritizing educators' active learning within diverse topics will give them the necessary resources and knowledge to create inclusive solutions and strategies • Giving educators a more active role in developing educational plans creates personalized teaching and is linked to better learning performances. • Ongoing efforts in MTSS-related development within staffing • Building equity-based and focused leadership • Evaluate the effectiveness of committees and leadership groups to ensure inclusive outcome • Accessible



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		- Strengthening communication and collaboration across departments - Bridging academic and social and emotional learning Domain 5 - Feedback from stakeholders indicate a perceived gap that the district prioritizes catering to students planning to attend college. Diversify Pathways and Celebrate Multiple Success - Showcase student achievements in various domains, not just academics. Infuse Diversity and Equity into Curriculum Instruction - Implement DEI curriculum evaluation protocol consistently and transparently - Integrate service learning opportunities with a focus on social justice and community engagement - Provide teachers with ongoing PD on culturally responsive pedagogy and equity-oriented instruction Address Data Disparities and Foster Transparency - Identify disparities related to academic achievement, disciplinary actions and access to gifted programs across demographic groups and implement targeted interventions to close achievement gaps. Ensure Equitable Access to Gifted Programs - Improve communication and transparency regarding gifted education identification; create a shared understanding of equity principles and implement them consistently. - Provide PD for general education teachers to differentiate within the classroom for students who do not qualify for gifted services.
Teacher and Admin Focus Groups	The Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) is a representative team of teachers and administrators from every school in the district that meets regularly to provide input on district-wide initiatives and strategic planning. Meeting held on April 4, 2024.	Relationships Student/Teacher TLT evidence suggests there is a major emphasis on the value and vital importance of teacher/student relationships. Stronger and deeper connections, provide students with a safe space where they feel their voices and ideas can be heard. Their overall sense of belonging improves, and a connection exists between the students and the overall culture of their school. Staff relationships among each other are as vital as teacher/student relationships. There is a desire to see/feel the impact of a cohesive staff, that loves and supports each other, and finds great joy in coming to work because of the job they do and who they do it with. Students know if teachers get along and love what they do, and this directly impacts students' sense of belonging. Promoting student wellness TLT responses reflect a strong emphasis on student connections with each other and with staff. There continues to be an emphasis on balancing academic goals, social connection, and technology. Finding ways to enhance personal relationships and belongingness is a priority. Professional development for staff and speakers for families around wellbeing and mental health was suggested.



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		TECH Time iPad/Cellphones TLT evidence suggests there will need to be increased intentionality to how and when students use screen time. Staff have noticed that there can be overuse of technology that does not support engaged learning or emotion regulation. Technology should always be a tool to enhance learning with an understanding that overuse has consequences. This is critical at all ages but even moreso in ES. Balance learning for Families Screen time. We need to better define what screen time and measure consumption vs. creation. Could we consider elementary students leaving their Ipads at school? This might help students learn that the Ipad is just one tool for learning. We have many existing programs to support students. We need to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and explore change and growth to ensure we meet the needs of students. Welcoming TLT strongly suggests a more organized and consistent onboarding approach to new families/students/teachers joining the Upper Arlington Family (with special regard to EL families). Cultural Concerns TLT suggests that with the ever changing cultural landscape of Upper Arlington, specific training to help teachers better be able to navigate not only student cultural differences, but also their colleagues. This should not be limited to just religious, or ethnic differences, but also social economic differences. Staff Supportive Environment Staff requires support to increase cohesion, reducing burnout, and feeling like the district is investing in their development long-term.
Paras/Support Staff/Classified	Approximately 30 paraprofessionals and classified staff provided feedback to questions via a Google form and submitted their responses before April 5, 2024.	• Among the greatest frustrations of paras is not feeling heard and/or validated; many expressed a desire for more regular check-ins with teachers/administrators; being included in meetings to collaborate about the students they support; included in building staff meetings; and more generally being considered a part of the larger staff and their student's support team; • Paras would like more support in their work (ie: training and continuing education); several expressed a desire for more staff development and potential job growth in the district; • Paras feel as if much of the feedback they receive is negative; would appreciate positive feedback about good things they're doing, appreciation for their work and some regular recognition



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		- Many paras feel under appreciated and under compensated, with little flexibility ... would like more hours; options for benefits, paid holidays, paid leave or even paid time to consult with teachers about students - believe these issues lead to more rapid turnover; - Onboarding and information sharing at hire and when starting could be more consistent and insightful (clearer job description; initial training; a building tour; introduction to staff; etc) - Some buildings seem to have better para culture and inclusivity than others
Counselor Questionnaire	Elementary, Middle and High School counselors collaboratively provided feedback to questions via a Google form and submitted their responses before April 5, 2024. They submitted responses while convening in their grade level meeting.	- A growing increase in anxiety/stress seems to be the most prevalent issue for students at all grade levels; - Contributors to anxiety/stress include: student workload, social media, cliques, and stressors spilling over from home; - Excessive caseloads beyond best practice recommendations as well as growing 504s and added clerical tasks consume an increasing amount of counselor time - leaving less time for SEL initiatives and relationship building; - Windermere has some positive initiatives from which other UA elementaries could build; - SEL initiatives are not vertically aligned throughout the district; - Counselors are encouraged to see more active learning in classes and not just sit and get with iPads in front of students. - Elementary counselors are collaborating with media specialists to provide digital citizenship lessons multiple times a year - Addition of OSU clinicians at the HS has provided needed support for students who need more intensive support that the school counselors are able to provide. Specifically around anxiety and stress. - Discussions are held surrounding transition years and how staff can aid students in those unique years.
Student Focus Groups	Student affinity groups Over 55 students from various student groups provided feedback to questions via a Google form and submitted their responses before April 5, 2024.	Sense of seen, heard, actively engaged - As members of affinity groups, students feel a sense of belonging - Connections to faculty Representation (Belonging) - In affinity groups, and at times in the larger school community, the students feel represented (race, gender, identity, ethnicity) Knowledge of well-being resources and culturally responsive "aware" of support services through the counselors, lack knowledge of specific resources or how to access them - No knowledge of culturally specific resources Benefits of phone accessibility - Safety



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		- accessing for academic needs when Ipads fall short (wifi access, note-taking, multiple screens needed) - Listening to music - Club/extracurricular communication - Recognize addictive nature, isolating
Central Ohio Well-Being Coordinators Questionnaire	Four Central Ohio Well-being Directors provided feedback about strategies used in their districts via a Google form prior to April 5, 2024.	Area districts provided the following feedback Tech balance feedback - The Instructional Tech department is creating and implementing digital citizenship and wellbeing guidance for the district. - Policing student cell phone use is difficult. We have expectations that they are put away during the day. - We spend a lot of time in our SEL and suicide prevention programs talking about safe use of technology. Students learn how to manage their interactions and what to do if something unsafe/unwanted happens. We also spend time talking about limiting use and healthy boundaries. Students, especially those in secondary grades, show greater understanding and effort associated with more balanced technology use. There are also conversations around parental monitoring and setting boundaries for student use. We don't find a lot of strong data to suggest these interventions are making large impacts based on behavior data, discipline related to online/device usage, etc. Staff/Student Relationship Building - Middle schools have community building days built in every week during the Advisory period. - Our district supports Equity and Inclusion efforts, PBIS, restorative practices, and responsive classroom/trauma informed care approaches to teaching and learning. - Second Step, 7 mindsets), Sources of Strength and Panorama are programs we use What makes the most difference in building a positive district culture - Our superintendent drives it. He is fair, visible and consistent and understands that relationships and wellness are at the core of our business. - A larger focus on transparency, communication and opportunities for feedback with stakeholders - Building improvement plans and purposeful focus on culture - Awards and recognition Staff Wellness supports Employee EAP programs K12 SEL Supports - Character Strong, Wayfinder, Hope Squad, ROX, See Kids Dream, 42 Mental Health Specialists and over 50 School Counselors. - Focus on Portrait of a Learner in our district



Data Set	Description	Learnings																				
		We have curriculums for K-12. There are annual professional development opportunities, coaching, and supports that focus on building staff ownership, expectations, and implementation to best meet student needs. Our K-8 is very much oriented towards classroom culture/community building through whole group conversations and building areas of focus on a Tier 1; whereas the high school is a large group student-led initiative where peer leaders are providing content and campaigns to address skill development and information sharing among their peers. They are also showing leadership by taking these SEL centered conversations to other buildings PK-8.																				
Current Supports in Place for Students	Tier 2 and Tier 3 Wellbeing Supports Currently in Place via District Partners	Tier 1 (all students) - Safe supportive and inclusive learning environment, programming and staff professional development that develops engaged learners, prevention education surrounding drug/alcohol abuse, suicide, mental health, physical health, and wellness. SCHOOL COUNSELORS, HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, NURSES, CLINIC AIDS, SRO'S, PARENT/CAREGIVER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS. Tier 2 (some students) - Short term/brief targeted interventions, small group programming, linkage with community agencies, wrap around support. SCHOOL COUNSELORS, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS, INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS, GIFTED SPECIALISTS, SCHOOL NURSES, COMMUNITY AGENCIES. Tier 3 (few students) - Individualized and intense mental health evaluation and supports, linkage with community agencies, wrap around support. BEHAVIOR SPECIALISTS, MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS.																				
Staff Matrix (Employee Assistance Program/EAP) -	Aggregate data about types of mental health support accessed by school year	Majority of employee counseling sessions through the UACS EAP are from professionals (teachers), are self referrals as opposed to work referred, and they are seen offsite with some visits being telehealth.																				
Panorama Data	Fall 2023 Student Data by School	Sense of Belonging is an area that we need to work on as a district. We will be receiving updated data by the end of May 2024 and buildings will be reviewing that data for next year's planning. <table><tr><th>Fall 2023 Secondary School Data</th><th colspan="3">Percentage of Favorable Responses</th></tr><tr><th>School</th><th>Social Awareness</th><th>Emotional Regulation</th><th>Sense of Belonging</th></tr><tr><td>Hastings MS</td><td>72%</td><td>55%</td><td>59%</td></tr><tr><td>Jones MS</td><td>75%</td><td>64%</td><td>64%</td></tr><tr><td>UAHS</td><td>77%</td><td>67%</td><td>59%</td></tr></table>	Fall 2023 Secondary School Data	Percentage of Favorable Responses			School	Social Awareness	Emotional Regulation	Sense of Belonging	Hastings MS	72%	55%	59%	Jones MS	75%	64%	64%	UAHS	77%	67%	59%
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Signs of Suicide (SOS) Survey Data	Summary of Fall 2023 Assessment Results	An evidence-based suicide prevention program (Signs of Suicide) is delivered annually to 10th graders at UAHS, and 8th graders at																				



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		Hastings and Jones MS. During the 2023-24 academic year a total of 872 students received two class periods of interactive content aimed at increased understanding of depression and suicide and empowers students to reach out to a trusted adult for themselves or a peer. Universal screening for depression and suicide risk happened concurrently to support early identification of risk and prompt linkage with mental health care. Across all grades, 13-16% of students screened positive for depression or suicide risk and all received follow-up. Nine students were identified as needing a comprehensive suicide risk assessment and safety planning with trained staff. These data suggest that ongoing mental health promotion and suicide prevention programming has strong value and likely reduces future student suicidal behavior. The SOS program has replicated research findings showing a 40-64% reductions in student reported suicide attempts and as this is a growing issue ongoing efforts are warranted.
OHYes! Data	This State of Ohio survey is administered every other year. It offers a deeper look into the experiences of youth in different communities and environments across Ohio. We can learn where thriving and build on what works. This data can also enable schools to track changes in student health and safety over time. We reviewed the district's 2023 data.	• Our students feel safe at school at a higher rate than other county areas schools. • We have slightly higher rates of bullying than county area schools (4-5% higher) • Our students have higher rates of accessing healthy food at home than in the county • Our students see the dr and dentist at slightly higher rates than the county • We have slightly higher rates of students who have considered attempting suicide than the county • We have lower rates of alcohol use than county schools. • We have lower rates of smoking and vaping than county wide schools • Other areas our reporting percentage rates are on par with the county
Quality Profile (2024)	District's Annual Progress Report	• WB focus on belonging (safety, connectedness) & balance • Morning meetings ↑ community, relationships • Tiered MH services, small group & individual support • Staff WB - Wellbeats, regular ops for 4 dimensions of wellness • Biannual Panorama - slight improvement over 2023 in belonging, & trusted adult • hUmAn ConnectionFestival expanded to 2 days • New Family Welcome Series • Beartique for no-cost essentials • Equity Audit to to inform programming and practices r/t DEIB, PD & recruitment/retention • Safety grant - equipment upgrades(↑ walkies & cameras on buses) • UA Safety Week (safety at home, school, online, & on roads)



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		• WB focus on belonging (safety, connectedness) & balance • Via MTSS K-5, 6-8 (academics, behavioral & SEL), K-8 skill development (responsibility, empathy and perseverance), DEI focus • Biannual Panorama for student voice • Weekly advisories and periodic multi-grade level family/buddy groups ↑ belonging/connectedness, trusted adult • Athletic, extra-& co-curricular opportunities • Summer Academy learning enrichment • Partnerships with OSU Behavioral Health, Syntero, OSU Sports Medicine, NCH Center for Suicide Prevention → promotes overall wellness and WB, staff fitness activities, student-athlete nutrition and health summits • Access to school-based behavioral, mental health and athletic training services • SOS program - Gr 8 & 10 • District WB Committee with focus on communication, student voice & eval of programs
Listen Learn Lead 2022 - Student and Staff Culture section only	Summary of roundtable discussions, focus groups, and a questionnaire to reflect on celebrations, the strategic priority areas (learning experience and culture), communications, and fiscal responsibility.	Two related prompts: 1) How are we doing currently (2022) at providing belonging and balance for our students and staff? What can we do better? 2) What ideas do you have to help us stretch and grow? The topic of Student and Staff Culture generated congruence around the importance of teacher-student and student-student relationships as well as providing a psychologically safe learning environment free from bullying and exclusionary practices. As the district has worked to become more inclusive, there is a group of families and students who have begun to feel more excluded. A strong desire for unification and harmony was present in many responses. Providing a more personalized approach where all students and staff feel heard, respected and valued is a good place to start. Families desire to be more involved and have the opportunity to leverage the supports and experiences they feel are best for their students.
OECD Report on Teacher Stress 2023	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's report on teacher stress	Stress from classroom discipline has a significant negative relationship with teachers' job satisfaction and their desire to remain in the profession in the majority of countries and territories. There is a clear need for policy makers to consider ways to improve support systems for teachers that are focused on reducing stress from classroom discipline. The provision of relevant training and professional development are both significant predictors of teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management.
Trends in K-12 Education (2024)	Hanover Research study on the current trends in education.\	In the face of funding reductions, shrinking enrollments, academic achievement concerns, external criticism, and internal pressures, schools and districts need to champion systematic approaches to data collection, analysis, and organizational best practices. Education leaders are also leaning into new and improved ways to do their work, by leveraging improved practices in marketing,



Data Set	Description	Learnings
		program evaluation, community engagement, change management, meaningful professional learning, and AI technology integration to improve school climate and create quality learning experiences for all students. • Research indicates that encouraging teachers' sense of autonomy, agency, and voice increases job satisfaction. • Communicating clearly, regularly, and transparently with employees and other community members about challenging situations and providing the "why" behind a change helps more people accept it. • Family involvement is essential to student success. • Inclusive district policies and practices combined with quality SEL learning can help students feel more rooted to their schools, regulate their emotions and stress, express their identities more fully, and be ready to learn in all academic subjects. • Climate and community surveys, listening tours, or home visits are important ways to learn what's most important to communities.
The Future of Education (Part 2 - Evolving How we Teach and Learn) P. 5-22 - Making learning personal	Google for Education collaborated with research partner Canvas8 to conduct a study across 24 countries on the future of education. The result is a three-part global report highlighting insights from around the world. Global nonprofit American Institutes for Research (AIR) served as an advisor and consultant to this research.	The report details three key trends shaping the future of education: Making learning personal, Reimagining learning design, and Elevating the teacher. Advancements in AI and adaptive technologies are enabling personalized learning experiences that cater to individual student needs. New technologies like AR, VR, and gaming are transforming learning design, offering immersive and engaging experiences. Teachers are evolving from being knowledge gatekeepers to learning choreographers, fostering student-centered approaches. The report emphasizes the importance of supporting teachers through technology to enhance teaching methods and save time, ultimately elevating the educational experience.
Ohio School Wellness Initiative	The Ohio School Wellness Initiative framework (OSWI) was designed to explore, implement, and sustain a full continuum of care including prevention, early intervention, and treatment practices for K-12 students within local districts. We reviewed the framework and resources available on this site.	• Importance of Student Assistance Program/PBIS model that is culturally responsive, timely, relies on family/school/community partnerships • Staff Wellness Model with individualized, school-wide, and district-wide programming • Importance that these are Systematic, Equitable, Collaborative, and Sustainable • Infuse wellness competencies and dimension elements into staff meetings, newsletters, social media, etc. to help staff and administrators understand wellness improvement benefits. • Wellness assessments and wellness audits