



THE LOWER DAUPHIN SCHOOL DISTRICT PHASE I EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING DATA COLLECTION RESULTS

**A Report by Natural Inclusion LLC
by
Founder and Chief Visionary Officer
Amber M. Sessoms, EdD, NCSP**

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Dear Lower Dauphin School District Board of Directors and Administrators,

The findings in this report represent a brief but fruitful journey over the past 10 weeks that created an opportunity to amplify the voices of our youth and families and view their lived experiences and pain from a position of humility to embrace the wisdom therein. This wisdom could only be collected from holding space for not only our students and families, but for your teachers, specialists, support staff, and administrators. The rich, thick descriptive data I was able to collect from the 222 qualitative survey respondents and the subsequent listening sessions with students in grades sixth through 12th who self-identified as wanting to be a part of the change. These participants, along with the parents/caregivers and staff from all eight (8) school buildings and two (2) district level teams, gave me the perspective I needed as a System Level Strategist and Alignment Specialist to begin to make meaning from the opportunities they identified. As such, this report details the findings that emerged from the survey respondents, listening sessions, and a review of district quantitative data.

Furthermore, this report serves as the capstone of my Phase I Data Analysis as stated in my deliverables. The findings inform my recommendations for creating a pathway forward that honors the inherent dignity of everyone within this school community. Ultimately, what is outlined supports your ESSER Strategy #2 for Local Strategies to address the mental health and social emotional needs of our students through the proactive and preventative frameworks of MTSS and PBIS, as well as the methodology of RtI to determine student growth and performance. Together, we can build the capacity needed to implement dignity-affirming practices, processes, procedures, and programs that will positively impact the climate and culture of the entire educational ecosystem.

This report is structured into four chapters: (Chapter 1) an overview of the purpose, process, and design; (Chapter 2) the participant selection, multiple sources of data collection, and thematic analysis; (Chapter 3) the emerging findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis; and (Chapter 4) recommendations and resources informed by the findings. I invite you to read through this report, especially the insightful responses and notice what comes up for you. How are you feeling about what our community has shared? Where does that rest in your body? What lingering questions do you have? So much of this work is about emotional intelligence and introspection, and the engagement of your vested partners provides opportunities to build the capacity of these skills.

As we move forward together in creating safe and inclusive spaces for this community, we must remain vigilant to providing safety for the various historically devalued and invisible groups within our community who have been muted and made to feel invisible. Centering these voices in dignity-affirming ways helps us continue to build the capacity of this district to ensure inclusive and equitable systems co-constructed and built on a shared vision grounded in cultural humility and a willingness to listen, learn, and commit to doing the necessary work to do better.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to support you on this liberatory journey. As a parent in this district since 2008, it is one of my greatest honors to support the community I call home into alignment with your vision, mission, and values.

Naturally,

Amber M. Sessoms, EdD, NCSP
Founder and Chief Visionary Officer
Natural Inclination LLC

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	1
BACKGROUND.....	1
Natural Inclination LLC Deliverables	1
Purpose	4
Overview of Process and Design.....	4
Definitions of Terms.....	5
CHAPTER 2	6
DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	6
Participant Selection	6
Data Collection.....	7
CHAPTER 3	14
FINDINGS.....	14
Summary of Survey Participant Demographics	14
Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Analysis.....	17
General Equity Practices	27
Self-Awareness.....	35
Data Practices	41
Family/Community Engagement	44
Academic Equity.....	45
Discipline Equity.....	47
Aligning Qualitative Data with Quantitative Data	50
CHAPTER 4	59
DISCUSSION.....	59
Question-Posing with the Equity Pillars of Practice.....	60
Truncated Recommendations and Resources	78
APPENDIX A.....	83
SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	83
APPENDIX B.....	87
SOAR ANALYSES	87

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

The work may not be easy, to change the perspective that is out there right now, but now is the time to put in the work, to change that. There is an opportunity for us to decide what way we want to go as a district and I think the majority of our staff are committed to doing what we need to do to get back to the "Falcon Pride" that people feel when talking about this district.

--District Employee

In response to March 2023 reports of one Lower Dauphin family's accounts of racial intimidation and what they professed to be a lack of urgency in the administrative response, numerous families and students kept the momentum going and initiated a chorus of voices to state that they too were experiencing harm. Harm that targeted many students for their racial and ethnic identities, their primary language, their body size, their religion, and their gender identity. Harm that cut through multiple intersections and left students questioning their sense of belonging and worth. Student narratives spoke to how harmful it is to be the relentless target of racism, harassment, discrimination, and bullying. The impact for some was grave with expressions of suicidal ideation and a sense of hopelessness that things would never get better because some kids are mean and what these mean kids laugh off as "jokes" have deleterious effects on the mental wellbeing of our young people. The silencing had been normalized, but now the bravery of speaking their truth led to a community that believed them, wanted to protect them, and had renewed hope that their experiences could lead to wholeness. Those on the receiving end, the Lower Dauphin School District Board of Directors and the former superintendent, Dr. Robert Schultz, centered the youth and parent/caregiver voices and put a plan into motion to request information from consultants and organizations specializing in "educational diversity, equity, and inclusion consultation and training." The request for information stated, "It is our goal to create a more equitable and inclusive school organization. We endeavor to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment that is supportive of all students and staff." In response to this request, Dr. Amber Sessoms, founder and chief visionary officer of Natural Inclination LLC, proposed a plan that would amplify the voices within the community to uncover the root cause of inequities and the ways in which the current climate and culture were violating the dignities of students and staff. The following deliverables were board approved on April 25, 2023:

Natural Inclination LLC Deliverables

PHASE I: Data Collection and Analysis (April 25, 2023 - June 30, 2023)

- **Develop introductory video** to set intentions and discuss Phase I goals
- **Facilitate six (6), 45-minute Secondary-level Student Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings** (a total of three per building)
- **Disseminate and assess a pre-survey** with purpose of SAC to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results, relationships, and personal strengths to support a problem-solving model and reimagining of Falcon PRIDE (e.g., students co-construct acronym)
 - **Facilitate problem-posing** around a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) model to identify most urgent needs
 - **Ensure group is representative** of school community (e.g., regional)
- **Facilitate two (2), 90-minute Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings**
 - **Disseminate and assess a pre-survey** with purpose of PAC to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results, resources, and personal strengths to support a problem-solving model
 - **Facilitate problem-posing** around a SOAR model to identify most urgent needs

- **Ensure group is representative** of district community (e.g., regional)
- **Facilitate ten (10), 60-minute listening sessions** (i.e., District and building administrators, Pupil Services, LDHS, LDMS, Conewago, East Hanover, Londonderry, Nye, South Hanover, Price)
 - **Disseminate and assess a pre-survey** to identify SOAR, tiered resources, relationships, and personal strengths to support a problem-solving model and leverage support and build a “coalition of the willing”
 - **Facilitate problem-posing** around a SOAR model to identify most urgent needs
- **Maintain a continuous feedback loop through meeting minutes** with board, (interim) superintendent, student advisory, parent advisory, department, and building-level staff to make meaning from emerging themes from the SOAR model to promote transparency, trust, and co-construction of needs across all vested partners (i.e., facilitative administration)
- **Facilitate two (2), 60-minute Relationship Mapping session, one (1) at each secondary building** to support school staff in identifying students who do not currently have positive connections with school adults and provide targeted interventions (e.g., pairing with supportive school adult mentor)
- **Organize a resource map inventory** of available interventions and potential external partner resources
- **Analyze PA School Climate Survey and Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) quantitative data with SAC, PAC, listening session, and other qualitative data** through cross sections and disaggregation to identify needs through root cause analysis (RCA). Data-informed recommendations will be presented to the board and administration to support the development of sustainable solutions in Phase II.

PHASE II: Initial Capacity Building (July 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024)

- **Coordinate Implementation Teams** from existing or repurposed/expanded team to ensure fidelity and sustain capacity with Implementation Drivers that build knowledge, skills, abilities, and systematize using innovative practices. Team collaborative and/or mind mapping software will be utilized to support team innovation
 - **Identify eight (8) building-level teams** consisting of building or district administration, teachers, and support staff. Teams should be between three (3) to 12 people with a team lead or co-leads.
 - **Conduct two (2) accountability check-ins**, two (2) per building-level team
 - **Facilitate monthly, 90-minute meetings with district-level team** consisting of team lead/co-leads, building administration, and district administration to identify internal barriers, promote effective solutions, and celebrate successes to stay focused on achieving the desired outcomes
 - **Facilitate a four-hour training prior to start of 2023-2024 school year** to develop team-building, problem analysis, value alignment, common definitions, and innovative practices
- **Develop Implementation Drivers** for competency and organization
 - **Collaborate with Human Resources** to ensure hiring, onboarding, retention, and accountability measures are aligned with vision, mission, and values
 - **Develop an Implementation Calendar** for identified staff and student trainings to develop, improve, and sustain ability to implement identified programs, practices, and external resources as intended. Based on needs and ESSER narratives, trainings are needed for “social emotional health” (e.g., QPR, Teen Mental Health First Aid, More Than Sad, Threat Assessment, Crisis Response) and therefore will most likely require additional funding.
 - **Collaborate with external partners** to secure the resources needed to sustain the practices (i.e., systems intervention)

- **Create Implementation Scorecards within PDE's six (6) Equity Pillars of Practice** to coordinate the quality and timeliness of the capacity-building work needed and support the Implementation Team's leaders in their problem-solving challenges through RCA, precise problem statements, and SMARTIE goal development
- **Coordinate coaching and/or leadership development training** for district and building administration (i.e., PIL Equitable Education for All Students: Why Leadership Matters)
- **Facilitate 36, 45-minute, bimonthly Secondary-level SAC meetings** (a total of 18 bimonthly meetings per building) to identify impact of implemented programs and practices on student well-being and maintain continuous improvement and sustainability of Falcon PRIDE and the SPIRIT program
- **Facilitate ten (10), 60-minute monthly PAC meetings** to identify impact of implemented programs and practices on student well-being and maintain continuous improvement
- **Facilitate ten (10), 60-minute monthly Insight Conversations** with the (interim) superintendent to maintain communication and support of system-wide culture change by identifying the emerging issues that arise from engagement. An accompanying **Leadership and Learning Reflection Guide** will be updated continuously to reflect on takeaways.
- **Maintain a continuous feedback loop through meeting minutes (where applicable) and monthly direct communication** with board, (interim) superintendent, student, parent, building, district, regional, and state-level teams to ensure fidelity (i.e., facilitative administration)
- **Analyze PA School Climate Survey and Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) quantitative data with SAC, PAC, and other qualitative data** through cross sections and disaggregation to identify needs through RCA

PHASE III: Road Map/Strategic Plan Implementation (May 1, 2024 - May 1, 2025)

- **Develop Road Map** that creates a three to five-year strategic plan and Implementation Calendar (e.g., Wisconsin Rtl Center Implementation Calendar) focused on district-wide self-awareness, culture work, and RCA all aligned with co-constructed core values
- **Coordinate/facilitate 1:1 leadership coaching** for district and building administration
- **Facilitate 45-minute, bimonthly Secondary-level SAC meetings** to identify impact of implemented programs and practices on student well-being and maintain continuous improvement and sustainability of Falcon PRIDE and the SPIRIT program
- **Facilitate 60-minute monthly PAC meetings** to identify impact of implemented programs and practices on student well-being and maintain continuous improvement
- **Facilitate 12, 60-minute monthly Insight Conversations** with the (interim) superintendent to maintain communication and support of system-wide culture change by identifying the emerging issues that arise from engagement. An accompanying **Leadership and Learning Reflection Guide** will be updated continuously to reflect on takeaways.
- **Maintain a continuous feedback loop through meeting minutes (where applicable) and monthly direct communication** with board, (interim) superintendent, student, parent, building, district, regional, and state-level teams to ensure fidelity (i.e., facilitative administration)
- **Analyze PA School Climate Survey and Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) quantitative data with SAC, PAC, and other qualitative data** through cross sections and disaggregation to identify needs through RCA
- **Coordinate a 2024 Youth Summit/Convening** by leveraging partnerships with PAC, community, and external partners to support student well-being, leadership development, innovation, and community-building

Purpose

As noted in the deliverables outlined above, the purpose of this report is to provide a detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data to determine root cause, and thereby provide data-informed recommendations to the board of directors and district administration on leading with strategic intention during the 2023-2024 school year to meet the needs of the educational ecosystem.

Overview of Process and Design

Qualitative survey respondents were solicited via the Lower Dauphin School District (LDS) website under headlines. A total of 13 Google Form surveys were created and disseminated throughout May 2023 to gather rich, thick descriptions on the perceptions of students, parents, caregivers, administrators, teachers, specialists, and support staff. To provide context and set intentions, Dr. Sessoms created introductory videos to explain her role and the purpose of the surveys. The survey data was analyzed to decipher the respondents' perceptions of LDS's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR) to begin to develop strategic goals for each committee or building-level teams to implement during the 2023-2024 school year. Lastly, listening sessions were conducted and facilitated by Dr. Sessoms to review the SOAR analyses and garner feedback and additional clarity.

Introductory Videos

To provide clarity and mitigate any speculation over the purpose of this work, Dr. Sessoms created introductory videos for PAC and building-level members who expressed an interest in working collaboratively in teams to strategize meaningful ways forward. The videos provided a brief overview of Dr. Sessoms' role as LDS's Systems Level Strategist and Alignment Specialist and how the survey responses would be used to develop strategic intentions. An introductory video was not created for students due to their surveys being disseminated through Canvas.

Student, Parent/Caregivers, Administration, Faculty, and Staff Surveys

There was a total of 222 respondents (34 parents/caregivers, 35 high schoolers, 46 middle schoolers, 107 admin, teachers, specialists, support staff) to the respective electronic surveys disseminated in May 2023. The survey questions can be found under Appendix A.

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Analysis

Each committee and building-level survey was analyzed to determine LDS's strengths, the opportunities for improvements, aspirations grounded in core values, and the results of what LDS will look and feel like when the necessary changes are accomplished. The finished product was a SOAR analysis. Each committee and building-level SOAR can be found under Appendix B. Please note that the Safe and Supportive Schools & Mental Health Committee have an additional analysis of their capacity to work effectively as a team, since this was already a pre-established committee.

Listening Sessions

The final phase of data collection was meeting with each committee or building-level team to review the results of the SOAR analysis. These sessions were facilitated by Dr. Sessoms to gain a deeper sense of what findings resonated most with the group, while also providing members the opportunity to respond to an anonymous electronic poll using the Poll Everywhere technology to gain consensus on the results each building would like to prioritize. It is important to note that not every building accessed the technology due to small group size or time constraints.

Definitions of Terms

1. **Equity:** every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income.
2. **Inclusion:** engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging
3. **Belonging:** experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment

Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Pennsylvania:

↳ Perceptions and Clarity ‹

Educational communities are seeking clarity around the purpose, intention, and need for equity, inclusion, and belonging in educational spaces. This information is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help address perceptions and offer clarity on equitable practices in education.

	Perception	Clarity
<p>① Equity</p> <p>Equity in education is defined as every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income. (adapted from www.ccsso.org)</p>	<p>Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only for urban educational spaces with diverse populations.</p>	<p>Equity, inclusion, and belonging helps create access, opportunity, and a healthy learning environment for ALL learners, regardless of demographic (urban, rural, suburban). Educational communities include people of varying lived experiences who have diverse needs and a variety of strengths.</p>
<p>② Inclusion</p> <p>Inclusion is defined as engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)</p>	<p>Equity, inclusion, and belonging is another way of promoting Critical Race Theory.</p>	<p>Critical Race Theory is not part of or taught in any state required curriculum. Equity, inclusion, and belonging in education helps create spaces for ALL learners and staff to be their authentic selves. Discussions about cultures and identities in education are important to ensure equitable access for ALL learners.</p>
<p>③ Belonging</p> <p>Belonging is defined as experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)</p>	<p>Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only about funding.</p>	<p>Equitable funding is an important consideration to ensure fair access and opportunity for students across Pennsylvania. Funding is one part of the process to create healthy learning environments - but it cannot shift systems in isolation.</p>
	<p>Equity, inclusion, and belonging suggests that I am not a good person or that my education system is bad.</p>	<p>It is important to understand who we are as we interact with others. Self-Awareness, one of the PDE equity pillars of practice, invites people to explore and reflect upon their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Self-awareness supports how to engage in healthy relationships with people of diverse backgrounds—but it is not intended to encourage guilt, shame, or hopelessness. Discussing equity, inclusion, and belonging may be uncomfortable, however, it is important to ensure we can engage with individuals, families, and communities who are different from us.</p>
	<p>Equity, inclusion, and belonging does not allow for diverse viewpoints.</p>	<p>Diverse viewpoints are an important part of our democracy and help our nation thrive. Equity, inclusion, and belonging help create the conditions for civil dialogues to occur. Equity in voice, inclusion of different perspectives, and honoring the lived experiences of others is a vital part of preparing youth for global citizenship, as well as a global workforce and marketplace.</p>

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Figure 1-1. Pennsylvania Department of Education Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Pennsylvania Perceptions and Clarity chart. ([direct link](#))

CHAPTER 2

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In an earnest attempt to identify the root cause of issues reported by the community, Dr. Sessoms explored the qualitative and quantitative data from surveys and adhered to a content analysis schedule to identify emerging themes. The examiner made further meaning from this data by synthesizing the emerging themes into the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) Equity Pillars of Practice. This chapter will provide an overview of the process and the data used for analysis.

Participant Selection

Lower Dauphin School District (LDS) solicited participants from those interested in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and the Secondary Level Student Advisory Council (SAC) via a Google Form survey to garner interest in convenings. LDS administration, teachers, specialists, and support staff were selected from pre-existing teams or identified by building-level principals. Respondents to the interest surveys were then emailed surveys to gain perspectives from each vested partner to inform future strategizing.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Selection Criteria

As a result of the parent interest survey the district disseminated in March 2023, Dr. Sessoms determined, from the 189 respondents, that 70.37% agreed that evenings were the best time to meet. Therefore, a second survey was sent out by the district in early May 2023 to solicit parent interest and contact information for evening meetings. To date, 74 parents and caregivers have signed up to participate in the PAC meetings, which are facilitated monthly by Dr. Sessoms.

Student Advisory Council (SAC) Selection Criteria

As a result of the student interest survey the district disseminated in March 2023, Dr. Sessoms coordinated with both secondary-level head principals to identify dates and times for SAC meetings. Due to the high number of respondents (117 middle and 134 high), it was decided that three (3) separate, 45-minute groups at each building would be best to facilitate engagement and connectedness. A total of six (6) meetings (three per building) were facilitated by Dr. Sessoms.

Lower Dauphin School District Administration, Faculty, and Staff Selection Criteria

To set intentions for Phase I of this work, Dr. Sessoms conducted one-on-one meetings with Dr. Doug Winner, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and coordinator of the district's Safe and Supportive Schools and Mental Health Committee (SSSMHC), as well as each of the eight (8) building principals to coordinate dates for 60-minute listening sessions with current teams/committees or representative staff members who are committed to positive school climate. The goal is these individuals will form Implementation Teams to build knowledge, skills, abilities, and systems using innovative practices beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

Survey Question Selection Criteria

To gain anonymous insights to help identify district strengths, opportunities for growth, alignment with aspirations, and the results they wish to see, Dr. Sessoms created and disseminated surveys for each respective group. Additional survey questions focus on community resource mapping, staff morale,

effective collaboration among teams, staff core values, and the personal strengths they will bring to the Implementation Team or Advisory Council. Respondents were also asked to include demographic information, such as current grade level, years lived in the district, current grade of student(s), and age of respondent. Demographics related to race, ethnicity, gender, and other self-reported salient identities gave respondents the option to not answer; however, the purpose was to identify any themes among respondents of similar backgrounds. Respondents were also asked to identify the elementary building they attended to help ensure respondents were representative of each district region. A complete list of survey questions for each respective group can be found under Appendix A.

Data Collection

Since qualitative research is used to gather in-depth information from participants through their lived experiences, data collection procedures that will ensure rich, thick descriptive data are the focus of this section. Open-ended survey responses, observations, and interviews are all considered major sources of qualitative data. This data, in conjunction with the quantitative data from the PA School Climate Survey (PSCS) and Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) will provide robust information to determine the lived experiences of the LDS community. Additionally, the PSCS and PAYS provided additional methods to triangulate the data to confirm the findings by ensuring interpretations were independent of the researcher. With this in mind, Dr. Sessoms utilized a two-pronged approach that relied on qualitative and quantitative data further analyzed within a content analysis schedule (Table 1-1) to develop the data that emerged from the qualitative surveys, listening sessions, PSCS, and PAYS.

Student, Parent/Caregiver, Administration, Faculty, and Staff Surveys

Open-ended survey responses are the primary means of data collection for this study, since qualitative data seeks to understand the multiple ways people make meaning from their lived experiences. This rich, thick descriptive data will be a valuable tool to humanize the PSCS and PAYS quantitative data. To analyze the survey responses, Dr. Sessoms developed codes and then transformed these codes into themes to uncover similar phrases, patterns, and disparities.

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Analysis

Initial meaning making from the survey responses was supported through the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Analysis strategic planning tool to support each Implementation Team or Council in building and visioning their perceived weaknesses and threats into opportunities. Each team's individual SOAR Analyses can be found under Appendix B.

Strengths

Survey respondents were asked, *"What does LDS (or your specific building) do well that makes us unique?"* or *"What do you like about LDS (or your specific building)?"* to help identify the district's human assets, innovative abilities, skills, resources, connections, and achievements. The goal was to help respondents brainstorm strengths that set LDS apart from other neighboring districts.

Opportunities

To gain a better sense of how LDS can better meet the needs of its vested partners, parents/caregivers were asked, *"What do we need to do to better support your student(s)?"* and students were asked, *"What do we need to do to better support you?"* Additionally, district staff were asked, *"Based on data and anecdotal observations, what are our students and community asking of us?"* These questions were used to help respondents reframe perceived barriers and challenges into opportunities for growth and creativity.

Aspirations

All respondents were asked, *“What values/beliefs are most important to you?”* and they were prompted to use the [Dare to Lead List of Values](#) resource to identify their perceived core values. Identifying core values provided an invitation to think more deeply about the behaviors needed to support aspirational goals of how the vested partners imagine LDSD could be.

Results

Adult respondents were asked, *“What are the outcomes you would like to see?”* while students were asked, *“What do we need to continue to do or start to do to help you feel like you belong at [your school]?”* to brainstorm the practical solutions they hope to achieve.

Student, Parent/Caregiver, Administration, Faculty, and Staff Listening Sessions

Follow-up listening sessions were conducted by Dr. Sessoms to review the initial findings with each participant group to ensure their perceptions were consistent and accurate with her interpretation of findings. Additionally, Dr. Sessoms relied on Poll Everywhere technology during the SAC, LDHS Implementation Team, LDMS Implementation Team, and SSSMHC listening sessions to provide participants an anonymous way to gain consensus on the results each group would like to prioritize. Additional insights were added to the respective SOAR Analysis, if needed. Please note that other teams did not utilize this technology due to group size or time constraints.

Pennsylvania Youth Survey

The district-specific 2021 [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) provides quantitative insights into the perceptions of 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade LDSD students with regard to their attitudes and beliefs about substance abuse and protective factors that help guard against harmful behaviors related to alcohol, tobacco, other drug (ATOD) use, and violence. Regarding this report, particular emphasis was given to data on Community and School Climate and Safety (i.e., commitment to school; involvement in pro-social activities; violence/drugs on school property; bullying and internet safety) and Social and Emotional Health (i.e., mental health concerns and suicide risk; depression and substance use). This report provides comparisons to 2017 and 2019 district data, as well as the 2021 state average. The 2021 PAYS was administered during the fall of 2021.

Demographic information shows a participation rate of 81.5%, meaning 949 students participated in the survey out of a total participant pool of 1,164 students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12. Half of the participants identified as male, while 46.7% identified as female, and 3.3% identified as “other.” Most students surveyed identified as White or Caucasian (79.1%), 9.7% identified as Black or African-American, 6.2% identified as Multi-racial, 6.0% identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, 6.7% did not identify a race category, and 9.8% identified as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. A limitation of this study is that it does not disaggregate for racial categories; however, it does make distinctions by grade level.

PA School Climate Survey

For the first time, the district participated in the 2021 PA School Climate Survey (PSCS). This free online survey was open from December 2, 2021, to February 28, 2022, which allowed the district to solicit participation from parents/caregivers, students (grades 3-12), administrators, teachers, and staff. A total of 812 high school students responded to the survey (74.8% White/Caucasian, 7.4% Hispanic, 4.8% Asian, 3.7% Black/African American, 3.2% Multi-Racial, 1.0% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 1.8% Declined), 844 middle schoolers responded (66.0% White/Caucasian, 7.9% Multi-Racial,

4.1% Hispanic, 3.7% Black/African American, 3.6% Asian, 0.6% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 9.7% Declined), 812 high schoolers responded, 407 parents/caregivers responded (90.1% White/Caucasian, 1.9% Asian, 1.4% Hispanic, 1.4% Black/African American, 1.2% Multi-Racial, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 2.9% Declined), 253 district employees responded (2 administrators, 160 classroom teachers, 42 other certified staff, 40 classified staff, and 9 staff identified “other”) with 139 identifying as elementary staff, 63 identifying as middle school staff, and 70 identifying as high school staff. Most staff identified as White/Caucasian (242), four (4) identified as Hispanic, two (2) identified as Asian, one (1) identified as Black/African American, one (1) identified as Multi-Racial, and five (5) declined to identify their racial group. The PSCS allows users to disaggregate based on race to gain a deeper understanding of how particular groups are experiencing the school learning environment. However, subgroups are not reported if the number of respondents in that subgroup is less than ten. This protects the anonymity of the respondent.

According to the [Pennsylvania Department of Education](#), the PSCS measures positive school climate and sub-scores in the following three domains:

1. **Student Engagement and Support:** The Student Support and Engagement scale measures the extent to which students are listened to, cared about, and helped by teachers and other adults in the school to realize behavioral and academic goals.
2. **Social Emotional Learning:** The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) scale measures staff or student perceptions of how well they relate to and support each other.
3. **Safe and Respectful Climate:** The Safe and Respectful School Climate scale measures how physically safe students or staff perceive the school to be and how emotionally safe students perceive the school to be.

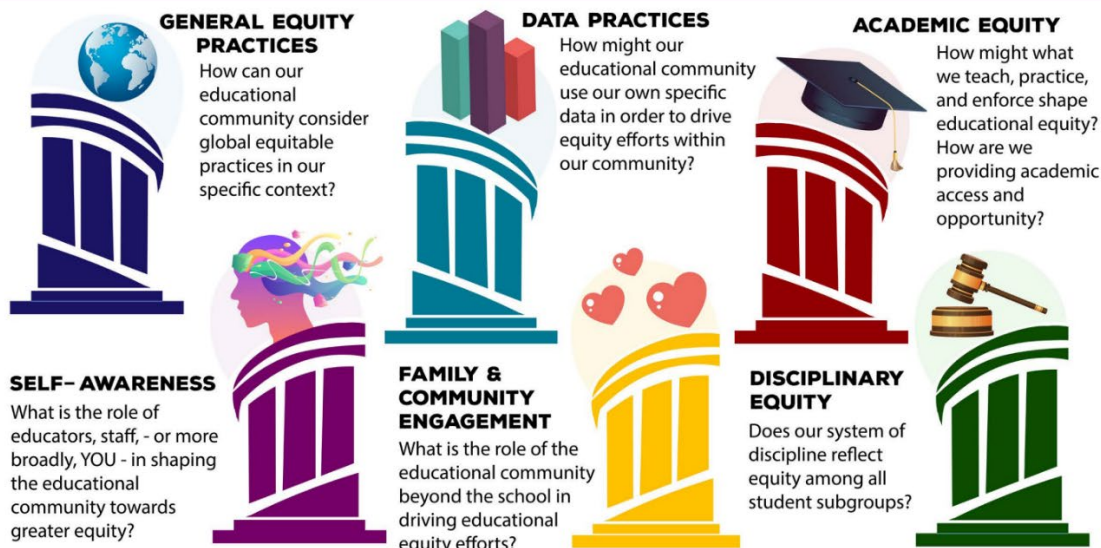
Themes Grounded in the Equity Pillars of Practice

To bring greater focus to the data and make meaning, Dr. Sessoms relied on the [Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Six Equity Pillars of Practice](#) to: (a) recognize and respond to opportunity gaps with *General Equity Practices*; (b) support administration, educator, staff, students, and families learning journey through *Self-Awareness* learning tools and practices; (c) employ *Data Practices* to make data-driven decisions to inform more equitable practices, processes, and systems; (d) center *Family/Community Engagement* through conversations to build partnerships and strategies; (e) utilize culturally responsive and sustainable practices to ensure *Academic Equity*; and (d) mitigate inequitable disciplinary practices to ensure *Disciplinary Equity*. These Pillars of Practice were used to organize the findings from the qualitative survey analysis to mitigate any cognitive changes that the examiner may have experienced during the analysis. Such structure limits bias and increases reliability, as each Pillar helped organize and define the nine (9) themes that emerged from the data: (a) mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employees through capacity-building; (b) comprehensive mental health professionals and systems; (c) practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging; (d) developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving; (e) fostering a community of learners; (f) communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to model transparency and consistency; (g) leveraging external partnerships; (h) implementing tiered levels of support; and (i) accountability through clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures. The six Equity Pillars of Practice, which are based on best practices employed within the educational system to identify existing opportunity gaps and establish meaningful systemic change, are as follows:

EQUITABLE PRACTICES HUB

To do their best, students must feel safe at school. A healthy and safe environment can help students thrive, and every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression should be provided the opportunity to learn - free from discrimination, fear, or harassment.

EQUITY PILLARS



SCHOOL

CLASSROOM

INDIVIDUAL

EQUITY SPHERES

In what way can the school district or an individual school become more equitable across their systems?

What can teachers do, in manners of curriculum, discipline, pedagogy, and classroom culture in order to become better proponents of equity?

What can an individual, be it a teacher, administrator, student services professional, caregiver, or student, do to promote equity in their educational community?



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

www.education.pa.gov/EquityHub

Figure 2-1. Pennsylvania Department of Education Equity Pillars infographic. ([direct link](#))

General Equity Practices

Positive outcomes in student learning are the utmost priority of any educational system. However, due to many precedents both historic and lasting, our educational systems host inherent barriers to this outcome for many students. Students of color, students from low income families, students who are differently-abled, and other marginalized or under-resourced groups may face discrimination or lack of specific consideration and as a result, educational outcomes may suffer.

Self-Awareness

Administrators, teachers, and other staff are the backbone of any educational environment, as they are the main line of student-system interaction. As such, educational staff hold a great deal of impact within their school communities, impact that comes with inherent responsibilities. These resources provide a base of best practices, enabling teachers and other staff to self-review and determine their present state, their strengths, and their areas of need as they relate to equity.

Data Practices

Within educational environments at large, data-driven decision making has gained a rightful place at the center of policy and planning. Boots-on-the-ground data provide us with an empirical, grounded, and measurable framework from which many valuable insights and guidance can be gleaned. However, data on its own is not enough. Education providers must employ clear data-based goals and best practices in order to properly drive the desired outcomes.

Family & Community Engagement

As an educational community seeks to examine its strengths and weaknesses as they pertain to equity throughout, it is critical to involve the family and the local community. The student body is representative and a part of the surrounding community, and thus their families and communities have direct interest in the practices of their children's school.

Academic Equity

Academic equity is a cornerstone of providing students with what they need in order to be successful in their educational experience. The key terms access and opportunity are critical for this to be attained in every classroom in an educational system. Methods to ensure classrooms utilize culturally relevant and sustainable practices are paramount.

Disciplinary Equity

An educational community is reflective of the community in which it resides. Issues of bias, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other inequities may extend their reach even through school doors. Particularly critical as it relates is the notion of disciplinary equity in which an educational community may examine its disciplinary practices for disproportionality; that is, is there any one or more subgroup of students that is disciplined at a disproportional rate versus others for similar offenses? If so, why does this occur? How might the issues of discrimination mentioned above impact this reality?

With these Equity Pillars as a frame of reference, Dr. Sessoms utilized a content analysis schedule (Table 1-1) to develop content that emerged from the qualitative survey responses, which were initially coded: (a) wellness; (b) resources; (c) skill-building; and (d) leadership development. This process was primarily inductive since the researcher reviewed survey data to cluster them into themes.

Table 2-1. Example of Content Analysis Coding Schedule

Meaning Unit	Pillar of Practice	Code	Theme
<p>We are trying to do more with the same amount of people. That creates burnout and apathy. Staff members talk constantly about when they can retire or how they might leave to do something else</p> <p>budgetary constraints to provide the staff we need and increase the pay of support staff to retain the excellent team we currently have.</p> <p>Our facilities were not well-maintained</p>	General Equity Practices	Wellness	Mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employees through capacity building
<p>More trained staff, particularly with regard to Social Worker, School Psychologists, Behavior Specialists. Special ed should not be the only solution for students and families, but increasingly, there are more concerns related to mental health, which impedes an individual's ability to learn and function in the school setting.</p> <p>Additional school-based therapy</p>	General Equity Practices	Wellness	Comprehensive mental health professionals and systems
<p>I would like to see more diverse staff/leadership (District Office, especially)</p> <p>More diverse staff hiring that aren't necessarily Lower Dauphin graduates</p>	General Equity Practices	Resources	Practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging
<p>Teachers need to become more comfortable with feelings.</p> <p>I would love to see every student get involved in a club or activity</p> <p>have a positive relationship with a caring adult during the day</p> <p>I want time to meet and collaborate with my peers and administration.</p>	Self-Awareness	Wellness	Developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving
<p>Training (especially on diversity, equity and inclusion) - both for admin and our teachers.</p>	Self-Awareness	Skill-Building	Fostering a community of learners

Our understanding of trauma and how it affects students (and our ability to reach them).			
<p>We have not had a real sense of direction in a long time.</p> <p>Better communication between district and community and between administration and staff</p> <p>swift and appropriate actions by staff, accountable consequences for staff and students</p> <p>We will have large initiatives, but it is rare that we follow things through to fruition.</p>	Data Practices	Leadership Development	Communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to model transparency and consistency
<p>Community events & trainings</p> <p>Exploration of grant funding to support our students</p>	Family/Community Engagement	Resources	Leveraging external partnerships
<p>Participation in an MTSS/RtII process across the district-formally, not what we consider it now-to help address ALL areas-academic, social, emotional, behavioral.</p> <p>We need a research-based, easy to use, and staff supported SEL program K-12.</p>	Academic Equity	Resources	Implementing multi-tiered systems of support within inclusive instruction
<p>less disruptive behavior from students</p> <p>inconsistency in following rules and expectations</p> <p>There are members of the faculty that believe these issues (racism and intolerance) have been here for a long time and have been brought to admins attention, but nothing has been done.</p>	Disciplinary Equity	Leadership Development	Accountability through clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

The previous chapter focused on the types of data that will be analyzed and the process for making meaning. This chapter will present the findings from both the qualitative data and the relevant findings from the quantitative data from the PA School Climate Survey and the Pennsylvania Youth Survey. All findings will be organized through the content analysis schedule on the preceding page.

Summary of Survey Participant Demographics

According to the May 2023 Request for Information and Interest document that sought “information and interest for consultation on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” LDSD is comprised of the following:

The Lower Dauphin School District is made up of five municipalities - the Borough of Hummelstown, and the Townships of Conewago, East Hanover, Londonderry and South Hanover. Lower Dauphin covers close to 90-square miles and is home to 25,623 residents.

The Lower Dauphin School District is home to five K-5 neighborhood elementary schools, a middle school (grades 6-8) and a high school (grades 9-12). There is an elementary school building in each of the district's four townships. Hummelstown Borough is home to our fifth elementary building, our middle school, our high school and our District Administration Center.

About 3,500 young people attend our schools; about 1,600 at the elementary level, 850 in the Middle School and 1,100 in the High School. Our enrollment by race/ethnicity is 81.5% white, 9.1% Hispanic, 5% two or more races, 2.5% Asian and 1.8% Black. Close to 25% of our students are classified as economically disadvantaged; 17.6% receive some special education services and 2.2% are English Language Learners.

The education of our students lies in the care of more than 300 educational professionals; over half of those hold master's degrees or a master's equivalent.

Table 3-2 provides a summary of the demographic information of all 222 respondents, including years they have lived or worked in the district, the elementary building they attended, their race and ethnicity, and their gender. Table 3-3 provides a summary of all 13 groups who participated in their respective surveys. The information includes number of respondents, years lived or worked in the district, elementary building attended (if applicable), age (if applicable), race and ethnicity, and gender.

Table 3-1. Survey Respondent Demographic Information, All Participants (n = 222)

Years Lived (Worked) in District	Elementary Building Attended*	Race/Ethnicity	District Race/Ethnicity	Gender
12.2% 0-3 9.9% 4-6 19.4% 7-10 54.1% 10+	34.8% SH 20.9% EH 20.9% Nye 8.7% Conewago 12.2% Londonderry	83.8% White 5.4% Asian 5.0% Black 2.7% Middle Eastern/ North African	81.5% White 2.5% Asian 1.8% Black	65.3% Female 29.7% Male 0.5% Trans. Fem. 0.5% Trans. Male 0.9% Nonbinary

	16.5% Other	0.9% Amer. Indian 7.2% PNTA** 72.5% Not Hispanic/ Latino 16.7% Hispanic/ Latino 9.0% PNTA	5% Two or more races 9.1% Hispanic/ Latino	3.2% PNTA
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* Average based on *n* of 115 to account for PAC and SAC respondents only

**PNTA = Prefer not to answer

Table 3-2. Survey Respondent Demographic Information Based on Group

Group	Years Lived (or Worked) in District	Elementary Building Building Attended	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Gender
PAC <i>n</i> = 34	58.8% 10+ 23.5% 7-10 8.8% 4-6 8.8% 0-3	55.9% SH 20.6% EH 17.6% Nye 5.9% Conewago 2.9% Londonderry 5.9% Other	55.9% 40-49 26.5% 50-59 14.7% 30-39	88.2% White 5.9% Black 2.9% Amer. Indian 5.9% PNTA 91.2% Not Hispanic or Latino 2.9% Hispanic or Latino 5.9% PNTA	73.5% Female 23.5% Male 2.9% PNTA
LDSD Admin <i>n</i> =10	30% 0-3 20% 4-6 20% 16-20 10% 21+ 10% 7-10 10% 10-15		66.1% 40-49 22.2% 50-59 11.1% PTNA	90% White 10% PNTA 90% Not Hispanic 10% PNTA	60% Male 20% Female 20% PNTA
SSS + MH* <i>n</i> =23	43.5% 10+ 26.1% 7-10 13% 4-6 13% 0-3		43.5% 40-49 34.8% 30-39 21.7% 50-59	95.7% White 1% Middle Eastern/North African 100% Not Hispanic	60.9% Female 39.1% Male
Price <i>n</i> =3	66.7% 4-6 33.3% 10+		66.7% 40-49 33.3% 30-39	100% White 100% Not Hispanic	66.7% Male 33.3% Female
LDHS SAC <i>n</i> =35	62.9% 10+ 22.9% 7-10 11.4% 0-3	31.4% SH 20% EH 17.1% Londonderry		82.9% White 14.3% Asian 2.9% Black 2.9% Middle	60% Female 25.7% male 5.7%

		17.1% Nye 2.9% Conewago 22.9% Other		Eastern/North African 2.9% Native Hawaiian 2.9% Amer. Indian 5.7% PNTA 77.1% Not Hispanic or Latino 8.6% Hispanic or Latino 14.3% PNTA	Nonbinary 2.9% Trans Male 5.7% PNTA
LDHS Staff <i>n</i> =17	70.6% 10+ 11.8% 0-3 11.8% 7-10		41.5% 40-49 35.3% 50-59 23.5% 30-39	100% White 100% Not Hispanic	70.6% Female 29.4% Male
LDMS SAC <i>n</i> =46	45.7% 10+ 26.1% 7-10 19.6% 0-3 87% 4-6	26.1% Nye 21.7% EH 21.7% SH 15.2% Conewago 15.2% Londonderry 19.6% Other		56.5% White 15.2% Black 13% Asian 6.5% Amer. Indian 4.3% Middle Eastern 2.2% Native Hawaiian 21.7% PNTA 63% Not Hispanic or Latino 15.2% Hispanic or Latino 21.7% PNTA	52.2% Female 43.5% Male 2.2% Trans Female 2.2% PNTA
LDMS Staff <i>n</i> =16	81.3% 10+ 1.8% 7-10		37.5% 40-49 25% 30-39 18.8% 50-59 12.5% 60+	87.5% White 6.3% Black 6.2% PNTA 93.8% Not Hispanic or Latino 6.3% PNTA	87.5% Female 6.3% Male 6.3% PNTA
SH <i>n</i> =10	40% 4-6 30% 7-10 30% 10+		50% 40-49 20% 50-59 20% 20-29 10% 30-39	100% White 10% Middle Eastern/North African 100% Not Hispanic or Latino	90% Female 10% Male
Conewago <i>n</i> = 6	50% 7-10 33.3% 10+		66.7% 50-59 16.7% 40-49	100% White	66/7% Female

	16.7% 4-6		16.7% 30-39	100% Not Hispanic or Latino	33.3% Male
EH n = 8	50% 0-3 25% 10+ 25% 4-6		37.5% 30-39 25% 40-49 25% 20-29 12.5% 60+	100% White 12.5% Hispanic or Latino	87.5% Female 12.5% Male
Londonderry n =5	40% 7-10 20% 10+ 20% 4-6 20% 7-10		40% 50-59 40% 20-29 20% 40-49	100% White 80% Not Hispanic or Latino 20% Hispanic or Latino	80% Female 20% Male
Nye n =9	55.6% 10+ 22.2% 7-10 11.1% 0-3 11.1% 4-6		33.3% 40-49 33.3% 50-59 22.2% 30-39 11.1% 20-29	77.8% White 11.1% Middle Eastern/North African 11.1% Asian 100% Not Hispanic or Latino	88.9% Female 11.1% Male

*SSS + MH = Safe and Supportive School & Mental Health Committee

Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Analysis

Initial meaning making from the 13 surveys and the subsequent 222 responses were supported through the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis strategic planning tool to support each Implementation Team or council in building and visioning their perceived weaknesses and threats into opportunities for growth. All 13 SOAR Analyses can be found under Appendix B.

Strengths

Adult respondents were asked, "What does LDSD (or your specific building) do well that makes us unique?" while students and parents/caregivers were asked "What do you like about LDSD (or your specific building)?" (see Appendix A) to help identify what makes LDSD unique and set about from neighboring districts. Based on the 13 committee- or building-specific surveys, a typical response identified the staff as empathic; however, most districts would probably agree that they too have an empathic staff. Therefore, this was not considered a standout strength or uniqueness to the organization. With the purpose to identify inherent advantages within LDSD, Dr. Sessoms identified the following unique resources and assets, as indicated by the survey responses:

- Staff control over half of their own professional development hours; Educator choice for professional development
- Elementary given relative freedom to teach the way they choose; Teaching style and curriculum freedom
- Teachers are trusted to not turn in lesson plans
- School center of community; Close-knit community; Strong sense of district community
- True community school; Small-town school feel while providing benefits of larger districts

- School pride; Sense of pride and loyalty
- Graduates move back to raise families; Generational families and administration/faculty/staff that were former students; Many who work here live here
- Administration, faculty, and staff have kids or graduates within the district
- Long-term administration who served in multiple roles throughout career in district
- Communities that Care
- Club Ophelia
- "Be Kind" posters and tee shirts
- Full inclusion of special education students in elementary classrooms
- Conewago houses three major CAIU programs (Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Intensive Autistic Support, Early Childhood Preschool)
- Price School: District-run full-time emotional support program with full-time social worker and Adventure-Based Education
- Economically diverse population (rural to suburban)
- Multiple levels of core courses (General & Career Prep, Tech Prep, College Prep)
- Work tirelessly with limited resources

Opportunities

Administration, teacher, specialist, and support staff respondents were asked, *"Based on data and anecdotal observations, what are our students and community asking of us?"* to encourage them to center those they serve and not make assumptions about what they need. As such, district staff indicated the following:

- Honesty; Accountability; Respect; Acceptance; Love
- More welcoming to "outsiders;" Better connected families; Show care and concern for students and families; Assess culture of student body; Sense of belonging in and outside of school; Treat everyone fairly; Be respectful of differences and choices students make in their lives; Diversity celebrated; Look at equality of race and gender; Recognize that differences do not make anyone less valuable
- Better class and club offerings; Programs beyond academic subjects
- Job-ready skills to sustain employment
- Lower class sizes
- Better connection to school (Tech Prep, ELL); Loved and cared for by at least one caring adult; Be more aware of students who are not happy and don't feel sense of belonging
- Taught by teachers rather than computer; Staff invested in whole child and not just curriculum; Wholistic educational experience that supports successful post-secondary transitions
- Physical and psychological safety, especially in "unstructured areas" to mitigate race-based speech, bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Transparency and consistency with school policies, procedures, and best practices; Communication and follow through; Zero tolerance of discrimination; Effective and consistent consequences/corrective action issued to aggressors; Better communication and consistency in handling discipline; Empathy/perspective-taking of harmful behaviors; No class disruptions
- Listen to all voices and take all voices into consideration; Take action on what they are telling us; Be able to talk/share concerns; When concerns are raised, act on as soon as possible
- Staff diversity; Educate and change perspectives on diversity; Educate staff and students on harmful discourse and actions; Learn how to have difficult conversations; Multi-cultural awareness; Curriculum that reflects lived experiences and prepares to interact with diverse people; Awareness of equity, microaggressions, and implicit bias; Recognize, address, and educate on racism and unconscious biases; Restorative practices; Place to practice dealing with challenges/problem solving opportunities in safe spaces

- Support them socially and emotionally to manage emotions (SEL, mental health foundational); Understanding of the whole child; Opportunities for appropriate social interactions and appropriate relationships
- "Be Kid" motto becomes shared value; Accomplish our vision and mission; Common language
- Improved leadership; Effective leadership through uncertainty within district (communication, vision, collaboration across all levels); Understanding of why and how we are making changes
- Include elementary in implementation and programming
- Do not have pity or low expectations; Positive perceptions of families
- Shift from "keeping the status quo"
- Price students have access to same opportunities as remainder of students within district
- Awareness of classroom happenings; Involvement in school community

In comparison, parents/caregivers were asked, "What do we need to do to better support your student(s)?" and students were asked, "What do we need to do to better support you?" to gain a better sense of how LDSD can better meet their needs. These questions provide a student- and family-centered lens into what the community needs.

The PAC respondents indicated the following:

- Remove cell phones from school day
- Assess and cultivate needs to create belonging; Bridge building between different social groups; Supports to increase LGBTQ+ and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students belonging; Celebrating student diversity; Strength-based approach to identify student qualities; Cultivate stronger student-staff relationships/mentorship; Teach students not content
- Career and Vo Tech support
- Additional clubs and informational sessions to increase membership; More club opportunities for non-athletes (chess, robotics, coding, science, LGBTQ, neurodivergence)
- Build resilience; Harm reduction resources
- Student-led team-building and solution-building; Centering representative student voice to identify needs and school values
- Education and open conversations on social issues and conflict resolution; Listen and believe students when they speak of harm; Restorative practices and justice
- Adults modeling inclusive behaviors (no misogyny)
- Representative staff
- Learn Spanish in elementary school
- Consistent, proactive processes and procedures to ensure staff and student accountability for use of race-based speech, harassment, (cyber)bullying, and discrimination; Ensuring reporting policies protect the victims; Decrease disruptive behaviors
- Professional development (conflict; equity, inclusion, and belonging, mental health, trauma)
- Think beyond "tradition" to adopt new ways of problem-solving; Inventory other districts that addressed similar concerns; External partnerships; PHRC; Law enforcement

Students from the high school identified the following needs:

- Trust; Honesty
- Greater presence from adults during lunchtime and other unstructured times to mitigate bullying, racism, etc.
- A clear and consistent disciplinary and reporting process to hold students and staff accountable for toxicity, disrespect, harassment, discrimination, race-based speech (in school and on the bus)

- Ensure Student Code of Conduct is equitable; Restorative practices and justice; Support for students who speak up (snitches get stitches)
- Professional development and learning opportunities to address toxicity (belonging, social cliques, rape culture, rigid stereotypes, (cyber) bullying, racial slurs, perspective-taking, drug abuse/vaping, relational aggression, empathy, active listening skills, lower SES, trauma)
- More supportive and consistent organizations, clubs, and programs (e.g., different faiths, Gay-Student Alliance); Advertise clubs to increase membership; More extracurricular activities
- Foundational curriculum to educate on the power of words; Peer conflict resolution
- Compassionate staff who connect students to needed mental health services; Mental health education
- Community-building activities to support belonging
- Recognize that success is more than test and quiz scores; Compassion over late work when life stressors arise
- A prayer room for Muslims
- Gender neutral bathrooms
- Better quality lunch food
- Hire more educators and staff from outside of LD “bubble”
- Hiring compassionate coaches; Neutral teachers that don’t favor some students over others
- Sprucing up hallways (murals)
- Considerations given for bathroom rules with menstruating female students

Students from the middle school identified the following needs:

- Recognize, address, and eliminate (cyber)bullying; More authority from teachers on addressing issues; Discipline/monitoring to prevent peers from getting “touchy” changing in Phys. Ed.; Monitor students in the halls for harm
- Make sure staff and students know the rules (don’t just talk about it one day); Proper punishment for rude/disrespectful behavior toward teachers, staff, and peers; Stricter dress code
- More in-school certified therapists; Accountability for negative ways staff treat students with mental health issues; More compassionate staff
- Effective and consistent discipline for racist “jokes” and microaggressions and protection for targeted students (race, ethnicity, SES, religion, body size, etc.)
- Place for Muslim students to pray
- Push back the schedule by 20-30 minutes
- Help students make positive peer connections and coping skills; Placing students in classes with peers they can get along with; Ability to choose seats in class
- Fix AC and heat throughout building
- Organize special meetings; Make school fun; Ability to skip pep rallies
- Give students a change to explain their side of the story
- Check for student academic understanding
- Make the lunch rows fair on who goes first and last; Less people at lunch tables
- Teacher expectations to use phones that don’t embarrass students who don’t have phones
- More days to help clean the school
- Better communication during emergencies
- Period products in bathrooms
- Transgender locker room and bathroom

Based on the respondents, and paying particular attention to the identified needs of the students and families, Dr. Sessoms utilized the same coding system to group emerging themes into the ways LSDS can meet the needs of its students and families:

Table 3-3. Opportunities Content Analysis Coding Schedule

Opportunities	Pillar of Practice	Code	Theme
Fix AC and heat throughout building; More days to help clean the school; Sprucing up hallways (murals)	General Equity Practices	Mental Health	Mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employee through capacity building
Compassionate staff who connect students to needed mental health services; Mental health education; More in-school certified therapists; Accountability for negative ways staff treat students with mental health issues; Harm reduction resources	General Equity Practices	Mental Health	Comprehensive mental health professionals and systems
Hire more educators and staff from outside of LD "bubble;" Representative staff; Assess and cultivate needs to create belonging; Bridge building between different social groups; Supports to increase LGBTQ+ and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students belonging; Celebrating student diversity; A prayer room for Muslims; Place for Muslim students to pray; Gender neutral bathrooms; Period products in bathrooms; Considerations given for bathroom rules with menstruating female students; Transgender locker room and bathroom	General Equity Practices	Resources	Practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging
Neutral teachers that don't favor some students over others; Hiring compassionate coaches; More compassionate staff; Build resilience; Adults modeling inclusive behaviors (no misogyny); Help students make positive peer connections and coping skills; Education and open conversations on social issues and conflict resolution; Peer conflict resolution; Give students a chance to explain their side of the story; Foundational curriculum to educate on the power of words; Strength-based approach to identify student qualities; Cultivate stronger student-staff relationships/mentorship; Teach students not content; Student-led team-building and solution-building; Centering representative student voice to identify needs and school values; Career and Vo	Self-Awareness	Mental Health	Developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving

<p>Tech support; Better quality lunch food; Check for student academic understanding; Make the lunch rows fair on who goes first and last; Less people at lunch tables; Teacher expectations to use phones that don't embarrass students who don't have phones; Organize special meetings; Make school fun; Ability to skip pep rallies; Push back the schedule by 20-30 minutes; Recognize that success is more than test and quiz scores; Compassion over late work when life stressors arise; Placing students in classes with peers they can get along with; Ability to choose seats in class; Listen and believe students when they speak of harm</p>			
<p>More supportive and consistent organizations, clubs, and programs (e.g., different faiths, Gay-Student Alliance); More extracurricular activities; Advertise clubs to increase membership; Additional clubs and informational sessions to increase membership; More club opportunities for non-athletes (chess, robotics, coding, science, LGBTQ, neurodivergence); Professional development and learning opportunities to address toxicity (belonging, social cliques, rape culture, rigid stereotypes, (cyber) bullying, racial slurs, perspective-taking, drug abuse/vaping, relational aggression, empathy, active listening skills, lower SES, trauma); Professional development (equity, inclusion, and belonging, mental health, trauma)</p>	Self-Awareness	Skill-Building	Fostering a community of learners
<p>Think beyond "tradition" to adopt new ways of problem-solving; Better communication during emergencies</p>	Data Practices	Leadership Development	Communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to model transparency and consistency
<p>Community-building activities to support belonging; Inventory other districts that addressed similar concerns; External partnerships; PHRC; Law enforcement</p>	Family/Community Engagement	Resources	Leveraging external partnerships
<p>Learn Spanish in elementary school</p>	Academic Equity	Resources	Implementing multi-tiered systems of support within inclusive instruction

<p>Recognize, address, and eliminate (cyber)bullying; A clear and consistent disciplinary and reporting process to hold students and staff accountable for toxicity, disrespect, harassment, discrimination, race-based speech (in school and on the bus); Ensure Student Code of Conduct is equitable; Support for students who speak up (snitches get stitches); Consistent, proactive processes and procedures to ensure staff and student accountability for use of race-based speech, harassment, (cyber)bullying, and discrimination; Ensuring reporting policies protect the victims; Decrease disruptive behaviors; Restorative practices and justice; More authority from teachers on addressing issues; Discipline/monitoring to prevent peers from getting “touchy” changing in Phys. Ed.; Monitor students in the halls for harm; Effective and consistent discipline for racist “jokes” and microaggressions and protection for targeted students (race, ethnicity, SES, religion, body size, etc.); Make sure staff and students know the rules (don’t just talk about it one day); Proper punishment for rude/disrespectful behavior toward teachers, staff, and peers; Stricter dress code; Greater presence from adults during lunchtime and other unstructured times to mitigate bullying, racism, etc.; Remove cell phones from school day</p>	<p>Disciplinary Equity</p>	<p>Leadership Development</p>	<p>Accountability through clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures</p>
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Aspirations

All respondents were asked, “What values/beliefs are most important to you?” (see Appendix A) and they were prompted to use the [Dare to Lead List of Values](#) resource to identify their perceived core values. Identifying core values provided an invitation to think more deeply about the behaviors needed to support aspirational goals of how the vested partners imagine LDS D could be. Additionally, respondents were asked, “What strengths do you bring to this committee (or school)?” and they were prompted to use either the [VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths](#) of the [VIA Youth 24 Character Strengths](#) tool to help them identify their perceived strengths. The emerging core values were Honesty, Kindness, Accountability, Respect, Fairness, and Teamwork. It should be noted that Accountability was not an option for either tool; however, it was a salient theme from respondents.

Table 3-4. Emerging Core Values Data Display

Value	LDSD	PAC	SAC	Avg.	Strength	LDSD %	PAC %	SAC % (HS, MS)	Avg. %
Honesty	31	4	7	43.30	Teamwork	67	21	65.7, --	61.30
Kindness	22	9	8	40.20	Honesty	65	27	77.1, 76.1	61.05
Accountability	24	6	6	37.11	Kindness	63	22	68.6, 69.6	55.80
Respect	11	6	14	31.96	Fairness	47	12	85.7, 69.6	53.58
Integrity	13	13	4	31.93	Humor	55	21	57.1, 50.0	45.78
Fairness	11	6	--	18.56	Creativity	44	16	54.3, 76.1	47.60
Teamwork	12	--	--	12.37	Social Intelligence	39	16	60.0, 60.9	43.98

Although Integrity was a salient value, it was determined to not be a core value, but the “fabric of every core value” and “what makes the brand you name believable, authentic and real,” as described by [Forbes \(2021\)](#). In her book, *The Way of Integrity: Finding the Path to Your True Self*, Martha Beck (2021) describes integrity in this way:

The word integrity has taken on a slightly prim, judgmental nuance in modern English, but the word comes from the Latin integer, which simply means “intact.” To be in integrity is to be one thing, whole and undivided. (p. xiv)

Therefore, integrity is how we practice and model our core values—not simply writing them down into a strategic plan or professing them. As such, the following core values, as defined by the [VIA Institute on Character](#), with the exception of Accountability that is defined by Brené Brown’s work [Dare to Lead](#), provide a foundation for operationalizing these words into meaningful action. The emerging core values are defined as follows:

- **Honesty:** Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one’s feelings and actions
- **Kindness:** Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
- **Accountability:** Owning your mistakes, apologizing, and making amends
- **Teamwork:** Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one’s share
- **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance
- **Respect:** Treating all people with appreciation and dignity; showing humility, sensitivity, honesty, and integrity, and being cooperative and considerate for the feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions of others

Results

Adult respondents were asked, “What are the outcomes you would like to see?” while students were asked, “What do we need to continue to do or start to do to help you feel like you belong at [your school] (i.e., program, clubs, people, videos, curriculum, organizations, etc.)?” to brainstorm the practical solutions they hope to achieve. These results will be discussed in the following section.

Analysis Summary and Data Display of Survey Responses

The design and methodology for this study was discussed in Chapter Two. Based on the methodological approach, the same nine (9) themes were organized into the six Equity Pillars of Practice, as defined in Chapter Two. These emerging themes are outlined in Table 3-4. The following section will provide a discussion of each theme in relation to its respective Pillar of Practice.

Table 3-5. Qualitative Survey Data Display

Pillar of Practice	Themes	Examples
General Equity Practices	Mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employees through capacity building	<p>Negative media coverage impacting morale, school pride, and causing angst</p> <p>Celebrating strengths and recognizing staff and students</p> <p>Need competitive wages to retain staff and prevent burnout from having “full plates” due to staff and substitute shortages and increasing work demands</p> <p>Apprehensions with implementing new initiatives due to current time constraints and not having dedicated time to plan during the school day</p>
	Comprehensive mental health professionals and systems	<p>Need for more school-based mental health professionals to provide direct mental health support due to time constraints of counselors</p> <p>Teachers do not feel equipped to manage student emotions and conflicts and need additional training and resources to effectively collaborate and support wellness</p> <p>Staff wellness needs to be prioritized too</p>
	Practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging	<p>Celebrating differences to eliminate microaggressions, misogyny, racial slurs, and racist “jokes”</p> <p>Lack of staff cultural humility/responsiveness and limited experience and proximity to the various dimensions of diversity both in addressing discrimination and providing curriculum representative of our diverse world</p> <p>“Be Kind” and “Not in Our Nest” initiatives not implemented with an equity, inclusion, and belonging mindset</p> <p>Diversified teacher staff with race and non-LD graduates</p>

Self-Awareness	<p>Developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving</p> <p>Fostering a community of learners</p>	<p>Students exhibit negative behaviors that perpetuate drama and bullying that perpetuates “violent speech”</p> <p>Build staff and student empathy (put selves into others’ shoes) of lived experiences; Leadership development; Whole-group in-service days; Trauma-informed care; Host family workshops; Train teachers on how to address social and emotional needs; Need for dedicated time for team building across departments and grade-levels</p> <p>Need for SEL relationship-building and conflict resolution skills to effectively navigate courageous conversations and mitigate retaliation and hostility for addressing concerns</p> <p>Convening of committees feels like the district is just “checking a box” as it does not lead to collaborative problem-solving and perpetuates the status quo</p> <p>Ensure each student is a member of a (student led) club that meets during the school day</p> <p>Humanize the student experience through narrative storytelling that allows others to develop empathy and put themselves in another person’s shoes</p> <p>Lack of faculty engagement during in-service trainings and the need to effectively train staff to utilize new processes with fidelity</p>
Data Practices	Communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to maintain transparency and consistency	<p>The need for accessible and visionary leadership that “invests purposefully in this work...as an opportunity to strengthen our district and grow together”</p> <p>Operationalizing Falcon Pride, “Be Kind,” and “Not in Our Nest”</p> <p>Establishing a clear vision through effective and consistent communication to facilitate transparency. Improve morale, and provide insight into new directions</p>
Family & Community Engagement	Leveraging external partnerships	<p>Utilize the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to build strong family-school-community partnerships to support belonging</p> <p>Create community events and trainings</p>

Academic Equity	Implementing tiered levels of support	<p>Revision Falcon PRIDE to align with PBIS/MTSS and leverage student voice to make it meaningful</p> <p>Strengthen Tier 1 classroom-based interventions and rely on data-based decision making to inform decisions for special education services</p> <p>Stronger collaboration between special and regular education staff to develop effective intervention processes</p> <p>Developing or purchasing a comprehensive K-12 curriculum for social studies at the elementary level</p>
Disciplinary Equity	Accountability through clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures	<p>Inconsistency in following and addressing rules and expectations for both staff and students</p> <p>Need for more assertive administration and clear guidelines on what constitutes hateful actions and speech to hold all accountable</p> <p>Take appropriate action and develop necessary skills to effectively address hateful actions and speech</p>

General Equity Practices

"We need to make educators, parents, and students feel valued and appreciated in real authentic ways (not superficial Band-Aids)."

--District Employee

The data gathered from the qualitative data and listening sessions speak to the lived experiences and perceptions of LDSO vested partners and the barriers they encounter. Based on observations and analysis, the following three (3) themes of General Equity Practices emerged: (a) mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employees through capacity building; (b) comprehensive mental health professionals and systems; and (c) practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Mitigating Burnout and Cultivating Sustainable Employees through Capacity Building

The [Pennsylvania Department of Education](#) defines belonging as "experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment." Belonging is foundational to supporting equitable and inclusive learning environments. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the barriers and the opportunities they present to help cultivate a dignity-affirming environment.

Based on the survey, several respondents spoke to current morale within the district, especially in light of the recent media coverage, as one parent stated, "What the school has been through in the past month is a lot so I feel people are still trying to understand the whole situation and you can definitely [sic] feel that among the students." One staff member feels the added pressure because the district is "under a microscope" due to recent media coverage. Additionally, a staff member stated, "We are obviously in a transition period and we've been beat up in the papers. We need to rely on our leaders (both formal and informal) to lift up our staff and celebrate our strengths." District employees

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appreciate verbal recognition, while also acknowledging “personal conversations” that acknowledge the value of a staff member is meaningful and needed. The middle school has tried to remedy this issue with “staff accolades” during faculty meetings; however, “not many people fill them out because of time or [they] forget.” As a result, this employee stated:

So, some people get recognized but not many. I know that we are doing our job but just like kids—sometimes it’s nice to feel valued. That’s why I love working at LD. I felt valued when I was hired but not so much anymore. I stay because I love kids and I love my colleagues. The Staff needs more. I don’t know how to accomplish that.

The need to feel valued within a positive workplace was a shared perspective, as a respondent stated:

I do think that our staff overall has tried to stay as positive as they could this year, but ultimately are just tired. Knowing their voices are heard, admin is handling things and that as a district we aren’t constantly getting pounded in the papers, will go a long way to helping morale!

Staff positivity tends to focus on the district being a “wonderful place” with a “reputation for being a nice place to work” to focus on “all the positive aspects and work to strengthen those instead of looking at the negatives” to support positive morale. Yet, the district’s reputation is being challenged:

Other schools around us seem to be doing better than us and we used to be one of the region’s leaders. We need to spend money on aides, paraprofessionals, substitutes and faculty salaries to be competitive again. People are no longer interested in coming here because of our reputation.

Another staff member stated:

[W]hen I think about my attitude and morale being an LDS employee overall, I can honestly say that my feelings have declined in the last couple years. I don’t feel genuinely appreciated by LDS as whole. There are things I hear about happening in our district that make me feel very sad, angry, and sometimes even embarrassed that they are happening in a district that I have built my career.

Budget constraints was a salient theme, as some identified that the “facilities are not well-maintained” and that funding needs to be allotted to “fixing up” and adding a handrail for a student with a physical disability at the Price School. During the listening sessions, Dr. Sessoms did observe temperature extremes in the Lower Dauphin Middle School library and the cafetorium, as one student stated in the survey, “MAKE IT WARM IN THE BUILDING!!! Please,” while another student stated that LDS needed to fix the air conditioning and heat throughout the building. To boost morale, students at both the middle and high schools suggested “sprucing up [the] hallways,” while a middle schooler suggested that the students dedicate “more days to help clean the school.”

Additionally, “staff often says [sic] they are overworked and underpaid.” One employee suggested, “At the next contract negotiation, I would love for the district to consider financial compensation to compete with neighboring districts to maintain quality employees, which will benefit the type of instruction we provide to our students.” Another employee suggested comparing the salaries at LDS to neighboring districts and other comparable districts in Pennsylvania, which may ward off negative feelings, such as: “None of us went into public education to make a ton of money, but it is discouraging and disheartening to know that other neighboring districts demonstrate value of their employees by paying them more than what LDS is/does.” It was noted by one employee that “so many teachers leave for higher paying jobs in Lancaster County. Its [sic] a crisis!” The competitive

salaries appear to be impacting support staff to since “non teachers, cost of living salary increases don’t really exist.” However, staffing shortages are also paramount in mitigating burnout.

Some staff members suggested a tax increase stating, “Increasing pay means increasing taxes, attempting to keep things the way that they are can be viewed as trying to avoid changing for the good,” while another declared:

We need to open the purse strings to hire and maintain quality employees. It's wonderful that this community has not had its taxes raised in over 10 years, but is that sustainable? If I lived in the district, I would start a petition of fellow community-member employees who are open to having taxes raised, and present that petition to the school board. This idea stems from the number of employees who reside in the district who have openly said they would be willing to have their taxes raised.

Numerous staff indicate that the district needs more staff to support their educational environment. Namely, “budgetary constraints to provide the staff we need and increase the pay of support staff to retain the excellent team we currently have.” Respondents advocated for more substitutes, paraprofessionals, and aides, as “compensation of support staff is a growing issue and the district simply does not seem to value the importance this team provides in the day to day running of the school and classroom.” One employee reflected on the issues with substitute shortages:

The greatest challenge I see in the staffing issue is money. The best example of this in the 2022-23 school year was our lack of a reliable substitute pool. I am aware that the pay for substitutes in LDSO is not competitive with neighboring districts. While a safe, supportive work environment is at the top of the list for a salaried teacher, a substitute is really much more motivated by the pay. They are not emotionally invested in the culture of the school and so do not enjoy the benefits of it. They really just need to be adequately compensated to do the work.

Another staff member reflected on the impact of these shortages:

Our staffing situation is dire. We have 3-5 teachers or aides out every day, and have insufficient numbers of subs to cover them. This results in classes being doubled up or split, supports like Title I being cancelled, specials being cancelled, or aides being reassigned in order to provide coverage. This results in lost instruction time and creates an uncomfortable environment for our students. In particular, our neurodivergent and behaviorally challenged kids are negatively impacted by these last minute changes. This year they happened almost daily in one or more rooms in the building.

These budgetary constraints, coupled with the toxic stress of COVID-19 and the divide in the community over curricular lessons that have become politicized, have hurt morale, as one staff member stated, “The majority of my colleagues love their job, love the school, but we are exhausted. This has been a very difficult year for a lot of us and we are feeling drained. We need hope!” One educator described this moment as follows:

We are living in a time where teachers open their email each day with feelings of anxiety wondering who will be verbally attacking them next. We are being asked to do more than ever before and it is emotionally exhausting, not because we don't want to work hard, but because those who truly care live in a state of self-doubt and disappointment. We hate that we feel like we are dropping balls left and right and not doing everything that is expected of us in order to do everything we can to support our students and each other.

Feelings of overexertion extended to administration, as there being “a lot on our principal's plate. They are the go to for everything. Time is the enemy for that-there is only so much one person can accomplish in the hours we have!” This leads to issue with follow through, but, as one staff member said, “It’s tricky because we understand that sometimes those who need to check in on things have a VERY full plate.” One suggestion from a respondent was to hire a dean of students for the high school. However, teachers and paraprofessionals also feel the strain as:

The demands on the day to day teachers and paras continue to increase. The pace feels escalated and we keep getting more to do and nothing is taken off our plate when it comes to responsibility. That level of workload paired with the lack of respect is a really challenging juxtaposition. We are trusted with a ton of work, yet not trusted. It is also hard to know what is a priority when the messaging is so rushed and vague. It feels overwhelming to hold up all the responsibilities and initiatives we get handed and if all things are important than nothing is actually a priority.

Time constraints seem to go hand-in-hand with added responsibilities, and thus concern employees about new initiatives that may form from the district’s response to the issues the public has amplified. Staff reflected on current initiatives, planning time, and the apprehensions of adding additional efforts. Currently, many planning committees meet after school, and as one employee stated:

It's hard to meet at the end of the day after school when we are all tired and anxious to get home to our families. I can't be consistent in attending due to the fact I have young children. I am more productive when we can set aside PD time on full day (not after school).

There is evidence that new initiatives are not sustainable with the current roles and responsibilities, and staff will need “more assistance with tasks/responsibilities already assigned in order for any new initiative or process to be successful.” Another staff member provided some context:

Most staff feel like they give their "all" already, so some will be resistant, but without constant support and respect they will burn out or "quit" mid-process. Please know I am hopeful, but we all have areas to learn that we are reluctant to "see" or accept. Also, our schedules are very tight which limits regular interactions with colleagues, so this will take time to work into our daily, weekly routines.

As such, it is very plausible that staff “may feel resistant to having something new added to their plates” and how it will “impact all of the other issues surrounding the day.” A compensatory factor will be how to ensure there is adequate “time to work on [SEL] skills in the class, instead of worrying about meeting the next standard of common core instruction.”

Comprehensive Mental Health Professionals and Systems

Governor Josh Shapiro has proposed significant investments in mental health staffing, community partnerships, and programs in his [2023 budget](#). Namely, the School-Based Mental Health Supports Block Grant will provide \$100 million to support students and staff with mental health services. With these budget line items and the enduring impact of COVID-19, it is no surprise that comprehensive mental health professionals and systems emerged as a theme, as one staff member stated:

[We need] more trained staff, particularly with regard to Social Worker, School Psychologists, Behavior Specialists. Special ed should not be the only solution for students and families, but increasingly, there are more concerns related to mental health, which impedes an individual's ability to learn and function in the school setting.

However, it is just as important to support the well-being of the staff, as one stated:

We care so much about our students and about each other that we are consistently absorbing everyone's pain and trauma. Our students need more help than we are qualified and capable of giving yet we continue to give and are rarely emotionally replenished. We are beaten down by increasing expectations and less and less time in which to fulfill those expectations. For many the work-life balance is in a state of disequilibrium, much to the detriment of our own mental and physical [sic] health.

There is also a sense that teachers neither have the capacity nor time to support the mental health of students, as a high school student addressed the need for "more compassionate staff who connect the students to needed mental health services," while another indicated there needs to be "accountability for the negative ways staff treat students with mental health issues." Several respondents spoke to the need for more "mental health education" and "more in-school certified therapists." Moreover, one staff member stated:

New staff with appropriate training need to be hired if we are going to implement something new. Throwing a couple days of training at our staff is not going to be enough. Teachers are trained to be teachers, not peer mediators and anti-bullying experts. We need professionally trained staff.

While staff are asking for more mental health professionals, additional training and resources need to be proactive and not just reactive, as one staff member stated:

Respectfully, the guidance counselor position has tremendous impact on the well-being of staff and students. The lack of consistency, support, collaboration, initiative, and follow-through has drastically impacted the climate and culture of the building. There is negative talk regarding outreach to families and supportive initiatives (Christmas gifts, clothes drive, school-based therapy, etc). There is little preventative approach through supportive counseling, class lessons, etc.

A middle schooler stated, "We need in-school therapists so kids don't have to drive far away to get help. We have counselors, though they are not certified to be therapists. We need mental health care..." An aspirational goal from one staff member is to "help foster strong mental health in students and other members of students' families" by having "the school be a clearinghouse of social services to strength [sic] the family unit." This would include "training and resources for families and staff." However, burn out, as discussed in the previous section, leaves current mental health professionals spread thin. One suggestion was to remove duties from these staff members to allow them the time needed to provide direct mental health support to students. Additionally, the impact of insufficient mental health staff was elucidated in the following statement:

We are in desperate need of social emotional support for our students. We have a Learning Support teacher and other staff that are taking-on additional responsibilities that are not being addressed through guidance. As a colleague, this is a difficult position to navigate; however, the impact on our families and students is inexcusable.

Mental health needs are a universal need, as one staff member suggested, "We need to have more mental health professionals to help us develop curriculum to help educate the whole child." Additionally, a graduating senior recommended "more attentiveness" from all staff members because:

If someone comes to a person of authority and asks for help of any kind, try to help them. Get them connected, talk with who they're having problems with, sign them up to meet with a

mental health professional. This would be better than ignoring the problems or pushing them off to the next person. People need to take initiative.

However, mental health issues are not just an issue at the secondary level, as elementary staff members want to be included since “elementary staff are often excluded because of the assumption that the students are too young.” However, elementary staff are “seeing more and more 5th graders struggle with mental health issues, including suicide and gender identity.” Another staff member stated:

We need more staffing to address the emotional and mental health needs of students. I have several students, as second graders, who are having their first in person school experience. This “extra” time at home was not necessarily in the most stable environment. Social skills often learned in preschool and kindergarten are lacking with this group.

A parent/caregiver suggested partnering with counselors and psychologists within the community who are supporting the district students to help provide better continuum of care within the school building. Additionally, a middle schooler suggested starting a mental health club in her school.

Practicing Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Equity, inclusion, and belonging (EIB) is about ensuring we cultivate environments that allow people to be their full authentic selves in dignity-affirming spaces. As one staff member stated:

I think that we could do a better job of celebrating our differences. Whether that be race, religion, ethnicity, etc..., I feel that it is our job as educators to help our students develop and strengthen their own mindsight so that they can connect and form relationships with others despite belonging to different groups.

A caregiver/parent described it as “differences being highlighted instead of muted or concealed, not only across racial or religious lines.” Another parent identified that there needs to be a “change in language and attitude of student in the school.” This parent continued:

Representation of students across a number of extracurricular activities (for example, do students of color have an “equal opportunity” to be cast in productions, in roles, that have “traditionally” been held by Whites? Fewer microaggressions that students have to face throughout the day. For example, my daughters being looked at every time a teacher makes a comment about African Americans or Asians, including looks from the staff and the students. This is just one example of many daily microaggressions.

While microaggressions are usually nuanced and subtle, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students are also experiencing blatant harm by being called the n-word and “monkey.” During the middle school listening sessions, a Black male student talked about a “whipping app” his White peers use to make their phones make a whipping noise. These peers will “whip” their phones towards BIPOC peers and taunt them by saying, “Get back monkey!” along with other racial slurs. What was most devastating was that the student spoke of this experience with a smile on his face. The incongruent facial expression was a telltale sign of a coping mechanism so many minoritized people use to “grin and bear” the brunt of countless dehumanizing experiences. His painful smile is often met with “humor” at the “racist jokes.” A high school student who is Muslim stated that she is taunted at lunch during Ramadan by students “jokingly” eating food in her face and saying, “You must be hungry!” Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (typically March or April) when Muslims fast, pray, and reflect on their faith. A high school and middle school respondent both suggested a “prayer room for Muslims” as an added layer of safety.

In terms of what some consider jokes, a high school respondent stated:

It should be blatantly obvious which one is the "joke" here. While administration says "Its not ok to make jokes on these things," joking about these topics with others is one way that members of these marginalized groups can help cope with the situation that everyone hates them. (Obviously it is a case by case basis, I don't agree with using slurs in ANY regard.) But too often it seems like teachers brush off the actual hateful ones and only punish the ones that really didn't mean anything.

Another high school student survey respondent stated, "The students are the issue...we still have a lot of discrimination from students that make it a difficult place to be. Many students have called me personally slurs even if I don't know them." A parent/caregiver respondent stated, "Currently many students are simply really mean to each other and are way too ok with calling each other racial slurs." As such, numerous respondents are calling for additional supports to increase a sense of belonging for historically minoritized groups. Suggestions included: ample period products in the girls' bathrooms; consideration given when enforcing bathroom rules that unintentionally punish girls who are menstruating and need more time; gender neutral bathrooms; and a transgender locker room and bathroom. An aspiring ally and parent echoed some of these stated needs:

I take my cues from my middle school daughter, who attends the school every day. She's concerned for her LGBTQ+ and BIPOC friends. She's concerned about blatant and quiet forms of misogyny in both teachers and staff. She doesn't feel that the culture of the school supports everyone, and as a cis white female that bothers her. Inclusivity. Understanding. A sense that the administration takes her concerns for OTHERS seriously.

Harmful actions like these are subtle and nuanced, which is why it is imperative to provide learning opportunities for staff to ensure "ALL students and staff feel heard, valued, and safe." As such, one staff member identified an issue with the "lack of cultural competency, teachers thinking that there isn't room to grow," while another staff member, stated:

LD is a WONDERFUL community but some need to change/ be willing to listen to ideas and cultures that might not fit into the their personal narrative and be willing to do the work ... we all just need to listen and value each other.

Moreover, initiatives that support inclusive schools are helpful, but they must be executed with equity, inclusion, and belonging in mind, as one staff member stated:

We struggle with diversity as our student population, community, and staff have limited experience with areas of diversity. We do struggle sincerely accepting as judgment may unintentionally sneak in from people's past experiences. We struggle with "real issues" that often get passed by with a "Be Kind" or a 'Not In Our Nest" campaign that seems nice on the surface but does not change our mindset or perspective due to the lack of tough learning opportunities. The students see it too.

Initiatives like these often promote peer mediation as a form of restorative practices. This is a necessary part of EIB since "reconciliation—allowing this to be a productive struggle, where there is forward progress that is about learning and growth and doing better, rather than revenge and retribution." Here are some additional parent/caregiver goals presented in the surveys:

- "[T]eachers and the administration are trained well to address incidents (discriminatory remarks, bullying, etc.) as they occur and there is appropriate discipline for the children

treating others poorly. Students feel comfortable to stand up for their classmates and against discriminatory behavior.”

- “I’d like to see healthy discussions around curiosity and learning instead of punishing and separating when there are problems, more preventative and learning opportunities for togetherness. I’d like to see the LDSD leadership have a more listening/learning posture.”
- “Safe space to express grievances”
- “I would like to see all teachers being required to take conflict resolution training and for them to be educated on all the racial slurs slang that exists today.”

Furthermore, respondents indicated a need for more diverse and representative staff and administration. Some staff perceive the lack of diversity as a barrier to “student’s awareness of the real world and ability to connect with” staff, as one staff member stated:

I feel that diversity is limited in our district. This lack of diversity leads [sic] a lack of representation for individuals who work and learn in our community. Students should feel represented when they are looking at our faculty and staff. Students should also feel comfortable to talk to faculty and staff about serious issues. I am concerned about students feeling comfortable to do so if they feel like those around them may not understand or empathize with them.

However, diversity also encompasses regions, as staff identified a need to hire more employees who are from outside of this area to “balance with those that are originally from LD.” Additionally, belonging would include:

To more warmly welcome with open arms those who move into the district, those who are hired to work here without having graduated from here, and for those who do not look like the historically white middle class families that have attended the district.

Respondents suggested “processes for welcoming new students and staff,” while acknowledging that some “families are not connected and if the student does not find a ‘place,’ they may feel lost or outside of those connections.”

In terms of curriculum, one staff member stated:

In regards to being supportive, I think it's important to represent all races and cultures in our curriculum, but not just during a special month. For example, if you're teaching about inventors, people from all races and gender should be included at the time it is taught so it becomes natural for students to appreciate all contributions throughout the year. In other words, don't just teach about Black inventors during February.

One staff member suggested, “The district needs to seriously inventory the needs of their population. There are very different experiences for students depending on their race, SES, politics, who their parents are etc.” For example, the district needs for more inclusive practices for English Language Learners was identified to ensure “they are getting what is needed and understand the daily announcements and conversations and nuances of a building and day.” Moreover, a strengths-based approach needs to take place, as one educator stated:

I want the students to be comfortable with themselves and to recognize their differences as strengths. For example, whenever I tell an ELL how amazing it is that they are bilingual, they look like they've never heard that before. I would like teachers, myself included, to be

prepared to address questions that students have about their classmates' differences in a way that empowers and affirms all children.

This strengths-based approach is needed over a deficit mindset that sets “low expectations or pity becomes the norm” for students and families who “do not generally fit the mold” instead of focusing on the “mold” created by society that sorts who belongs and who does not. One staff member stated:

Ideas about our school's families are a result of what people see on the educational end - unanswered messages, unattended concerts, incomplete homework, unbrushed hair, hungry kids. It is easy to make assumptions, but it is much more challenging to confront the flaws in the systems that have brought us here. These changes can feel so impossible that people give up. Perhaps there is a way to educate staff or help to build those relationships though, to keep people from assuming the worst.

Moreover, a staff member expressed concern that the “population of students with special needs (emotional, autistic, physically /mentally challenged) within the classroom is increasing, and the demands to be met can be exhausting.” Thus, culturally responsive practices are needed to determine how the current system supports and hinders meaningful progress for historically minoritized students.

Self-Awareness

“I would like us to learn how to respect each other and be kind to each other. I would like us to learn how to have difficult conversations. I would like us to learn that we can care about each and work towards a mutual goal even if we don't always agree. I would like us to trust each other that all of our intentions is to do what is best for kids. We all make mistakes, I would like us need to learn how to accept responsibility for them and then work harder to improve.”

--District Employee

What emerged from the survey data and listening sessions spoke to the skills and factors needed to support student-system interactions that encourage everyone in the educational ecosystem to thrive. Two (2) representative themes of Self-Awareness emerged: (a) developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving and (b) fostering a community of learners.

Developing Effective Social Emotional Skills to Support Positive Relationships and Collaborative Problem-Solving

Numerous student survey respondents indicated their peers exhibit negative behaviors that force students to “hide themselves from who the [sic] are” due to “constant hostility and negativity” that are counterproductive to a safe learning environment:

The teachers are generally really positive. Most of them care about everyone and try to help students. The students are the more negative. There is a lot of drama and bullying when it comes to students that are not super popular or known throughout the school. Even then those students have many struggles themselves. There is language used in the school that should be avoided and actions that never get disciplined.

In terms of bullying, a parent/caregiver stated:

We've got to get the bullying under control in the middle and high schools. We've got to make kids understand that saying unkind things is just wrong. It does nothing but hurt other people, and that should never be the goal. Everyone is a human who deserves respect and dignity. You don't have to like everyone - you just have to NOT harm them.

One high school respondent spoke to the behaviors of her peers, stating:

People are cruel to each other. Very cruel. People in this school think that they can say whatever they want to whomever they want, and they get away with it too. We have rigid stereotypes and people are unable to see beyond these stereotypes. People are judged for everything simply because the bullies are unable to think highly of themselves and so bring others down to bring themselves up. Social media is a huge issue here, and kids take photos of other people without their permission all the time, and bully through that platform. I think a lot of of [sic] the kids here are entitled, and do not appreciate the things that they have and so make comments without thinking that can negatively impact kids who do not have the average amount of wealth her [sic] at lower dauphin or those who have difficult backgrounds.

Students spoke to the "backtalk/attitude" their peers give to teachers and how "kids are extremely disrespectful" to peers, friends, and teachers by using "violent speech." One high schooler stated:

It's not really an adult thing. It starts with parenting and then translates into kids today. The kids are what's really making LD a non-inviting place, and also bringing that energy into other areas, such as making fun of Milton Hershey kids or CD East kids at sporting events simply because they were black. Parents also do not make the kids take any responsibility for their actions, and so this worsens things.

Another salient theme among respondents was the need for conflict resolution skills, as some staff members indicate that "people do not speak what is on their mind in fear of judgement" while also feeling that "staff members may have a difficult time knowing how to address certain issues that may arise." This lack of confidence with addressing concerns is leading students to feel that staff members are not taking their "concerns seriously" as staff report "[p]eople will need to engage in difficult conversations. We do not do that well." This is especially true of some members of the district level administrative team, who some staff identify as being "averse to confrontation." However, a respondent indicated, "Our former superintendent was frequently unwilling to have discussions about complex issues;" therefore, new ways to engage and collaborate are needed to support better collaboration between district administration and the building level staff. One staff member stated that a goal should be "continuity of working through different issues that may arise. Also having more communication from higher administration to allow us to be transparent and be able to be more cohesive as a LD school/community." Additionally, a staff member stated that "leaders need to be approachable and open to the different perspectives in the district."

One staff member came to this resolve: "We need to recognize that our organization is not 'the best' and that change is needed. We also need to be careful not to be defensive as we discuss our flaws." Moreover, there are concerns of retaliation for speaking up, as one staff member proclaimed:

Workers need a safe way to come forward with concerns. Many people do not feel comfortable coming forward with issues because of a fear of retaliation. I'm sure that became apparent when everyone asked for emails to not be on this survey. Even now, I know that the IT department can track every key stroke I make on this computer, but what is at stake is too important and I am too fed up to be scared anymore.

Another staff member stated:

Administrators need to be trustworthy, moral, and ethical people. We need to have honest conversations and bring our challenges out in a state of vulnerability and transparency. If staff come forward to voice concerns about decisions or actions they need to be supported by HR. Many people feel like there is no safe place to turn so a lot of stories are kept quiet for a [sic] fear or [sic] retaliation or punishment.

This perception of retaliation or punishment hinders collaboration, as some one respondent indicated that certain convenings of committees feel like "the district's way of 'checking a box.'" Additionally, a SSSMHC member stated:

There are many conversations that we have had multiple times. I...have given countless resources or ideas and they are never initiated. The conversation feels stale and rehearsed. the [sic] meeting is meant to check a box and not used for any major systemic change or larger conversation. If someone does exhibit a certain amount of professional bravery or integrity it is often met with discomfort and no movement.

A member of the Superintendent Advisory Council (SAC) reported:

Collaboration depends on the district level administrator that is leading their portion of SAC. Some are willing to listen and collaborate. Others become defensive and dismissive. At times we don't talk about topics because we know how particular people will respond, which leads to no positive change or improvement occurring. [sic]

A strengths-based approach focused on collaborative problem-solving was identified as a need:

I feel I bring many strengths and abilities to my position at LD, but at times these are squelched because decisions are already being determined and no one wants to change course. Or, they know what direction they want to go with a decision and they don't want input from someone who doesn't "go along to get along". I think teachers identifying their strengths and being allowed to volunteer to participate in different aspects of bettering our school could make a dramatic difference in the direction of our school and with improving morale.

Barriers to collaboration come in many forms, as one staff employee stated:

There are times when we really are working together as a team and other staff members are supportive. However, there are some staff members that are unkind and not team players. This weighs heavy when you're working with kids all day and trying to help them regulate their emotions and feelings-while regulating your own!

Issues related to the status quo were a recurring theme, as one staff member stated:

I think it's time that the district no longer "rests on it's [sic] laurels" relying on the historic success of it's students (i.e., graduation rate). This district has seemingly "stayed the course" and not always changed with the times-from an educational as well as a social and cultural standpoint. Maybe this is because the surrounding areas have continually been populated by primarily white, middle-class families.

This resistance to change has been described as "popping a bubble," as one staff member stated:

Some administrators, staff, and faculty do not want change to occur. I genuinely feel that the "bubble" that LDSD has been in for however many years has popped, and people do not like the fact that a microscope is on the district.

Additionally, a parent/caregiver stated, "The school community is a closed community with a secret passcode that only some parents have access to. This clique culture among the adults is what is manifesting in the children." A high schooler concurred, stating "I do feel that parents greatly impact our students [sic] attitudes and out [sic] faculty has to deal with the results of that every day."

Although respondents named barriers to safe and supportive schools, they also identified opportunities. Namely, a "financial and emotional investment" into a "research-based, easy to use, and staff supported SEL program K-12." Respondents also identified the following needs:

- Help students make positive peer connections and develop appropriate coping skills
- Peer conflict resolution
- Give students a chance to explain their side of the story
- Listen and believe students when they speak of the harm they are experiencing
- Foundational curriculum to educate students on the power of words
- Dedicate time to developing student-led team-building and solution-building
- Organize special meetings to center representative student voice to identify needs values
- Have middle school students at lunch tables and make the lunch rows fair by alternating which rows go first and last to purchase their food

To this end, one staff member identified the need for space to practice social emotional skills, stating:

I think the kids need a place to practice being humans and dealing with challenges / problem solving opportunities in safe spaces. After pandemic teaching and social distancing they crave social interaction and also need a lot of help in that area to cultivate healthy, happy, appropriate relationships.

However, there is a perceived barrier with staff resilience and teachers feeling like professional development is "irrelevant" to adequately preparing them to "address growing social and emotional needs," as one staff member stated:

I think that having all staff invested in growing the students as people, instead of being so focused on their curriculum. We have a unique opportunity to help mentor and teach these kids so many "life skills/lessons", as well as how to treat others, show respect, be good leaders, etc, but we have quite a few staff members that don't buy into the importance of that and when we try to do things, their attitude comes across to the students, who in turn don't get out of it what we hoped they would. There is so much more to working with this age group than teaching them content and curriculum stuff, if we could get buy in from the staff on the "why" and the importance of it.

All-in-all, the burnout discussed above is not lost on colleagues, as one staff member stated:

I think the one thing that could be improved is the ability to be more consistent with our compassion for colleagues. We seem to naturally have unlimited compassion for our students, but I have noticed that we can struggle to have compassion for our colleagues. It is easy when the challenges they are experiencing are known, but we often don't take the time to step back and give the benefit of the doubt. We don't know what everyone is struggling with.

Just as we need the “whole story to understand the whole child” we need to whole story of the staff member and provide the necessary supports to have them “become more comfortable with feelings.” When teachers are not well, they cannot show up for our students in meaningful ways, as one high school respondent stated, “LDHS should start making sure the teachers they hire are more open to being patient” so students are comfortable talking to and being understood by teachers. Other respondents identified needs for more compassionate coaches and staff that center the whole child and “recognize that success is more than test and quiz scores” and that staff should “teach students, not content”

Additionally, respondents indicated a need for “more teamwork and trust built” across teams with dedicated time devoted to “relationships building.” Several respondents indicated the physical barriers to team-building, as grade levels and departments are split throughout the various buildings. At the secondary level, Encore teachers indicate they often feel excluded from a collaborative process because they do not teach core classes. To try to build connection, some school teams have created social committees to help boost morale through before and after school activities, such as morning yoga, breakfast, coffee, Hershey Bears games, outdoor hiking, cardio drumming, and pickleball. Staff also appreciate “frequent dress-down days and teacher-led events, which, while minor, do help.”

Along the same lines, respondents also stressed the importance of each adult mentorship by each student having a “positive relationship with a caring adult during the day.” To accommodate this need, one staff member suggested the following:

I would like to see a time where we could do more mentoring with students. I know we used to do a Flex Time and an activity time in years past. A few years ago we had an after school intramural sports activity a few times a week. It was cut to a very few hours and then covid came. I think fun, after school activities might be helpful in developing relationships.

Fostering a Community of Learners

Learning communities provide space and structure for people to collaborate and connect around shared aspirations. Based on the opportunities presented in survey responses, a salient theme was ensuring all students have access to consistent club offerings to cultivate belonging, as some students (i.e., Tech Prep, non-athletes, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, neurodivergent) have limited opportunities to engage in extracurricular activities that affirm their identities. Moreover, students and parents/caregivers alike suggested information sessions to increase club membership. To support this endeavor, a middle school respondent stated, “I feel like I belong, but a system where students are able to make their own clubs would be nice if they get approval from the administration.” Additional club ideas generated from the respondents included:

- Art
- Photography
- Astronomy
- Cheerleading
- American Sign Language
- Gay Student Alliance (GSA)
- Diversity
- Dance
- Musicals
- Engineering
- Religion
- Chess

- Robotics
- Coding
- Science
- Spanish

To demonstrate the power of clubs, one high schooler wrote:

We need to continue to have clubs like diversity club and mental health club, they are two really great clubs that inspire LD students to "be the change" they want to see in the world and be mindful of how their actions impact others. These clubs provide meaningful activities, like in-depth discussions about hate-speech, food potlucks where students can express their culture by making a food dish to share, and field trips to the Gammut [sic] Theater, that educates and encourages students to make a positive difference in their lives. These activities should remain here at LD high school because they serve as unique opportunities that will help students feel like they belong and teach us how to make others feel like they belong as well.

Reflections like these humanize the student experience and the power of belonging. To this end, and to align with EIB, one staff member stated:

I also think we need an educational component for the staff and students. In my opinion, being able to actually see how an act or statement truly effects a person is the best way to make change. The overwhelming majority of students and staff do not want to hurt anyone with their words or actions.

Another respondent echoed similar reflections, stating:

We've sat through a lot of trainings, and I'm wondering if there is some sort of activity or resource that we could do together as a staff that would help us put ourselves in someone else's [sic] shoes and maybe this would get us all out of our comfort zone while we do it.

These responses speak to the lack of engagement respondents identify among staff during professional development, as one respondent stated:

There are a few teachers that will not buy into you working with us. They will, if we break into our groups, not participate and be on their phones. I've seen it happen at building days, where we are supposed to be working together as a building towards whatever goal was established for that day.

A recurring issue in the survey responses was the dedicated time needed to train and support staff in new promising practices to ensure sustainability and meaningful impact, as one staff member stated, "Whatever resources we choose to use, we need proper training for all staff." LDSD has a robust professional development schedule, but there is limited time devoted to district-wide in-service days or more "consistency in professional development and core instruction." However, the respondent suggested potential learning experiences for all vested partners, as follows:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion to address racial slurs
- Equitable and inclusive instruction
- Mental health awareness
- Implicit bias (ELL, lower SES, BIPOC, disabilities)
- Microaggressions and deficit ideology (justifies outcome inequities by pointing to supposed deficiencies among historically minoritized groups)

- “How to Discuss race/gender/ability With Your Child”
- Drug abuse and vaping
- Relational aggression and social cliques
- Trauma-informed practices
- Trauma and brain development
- Restorative practices and justice
- Active listening, empathy, and perspective-taking
- Cyberbullying and the effects of social media on mental health
- Social Emotional Learning
- Emotional intelligence and social awareness
- Rape and sexual assault

Data Practices

“If we don't have a commitment to values, ethics, morals nothing else matters. There is a dangerous amount of group think that protects the status quo here. We must prioritize, on every level, a commitment to values, ethics, and morals that promote a healthy and safe learning environment for our students and also for our staff. A strong redefining of principles needs to bring out an iron-clad level of messaging to the staff and to the public. Bigotry, discrimination, and all the other depraved things that come along with sweeping problems under the rug need to be called out and not tolerated. People who cannot uphold basic ethical values should not be in education. the work is too important. the safety of the kids is too important.”

--District Employee

The perceptual data provided from the survey respondents provides insight into beliefs about the quality of the education students and the school environment in which they navigate. Additionally, PDE identifies four (4) types of measures, based on the work of Victoria Bernhardt (1998):

- **Student learning data**, according to Bernhardt, usually refers to "standardized test results, grade point averages, standards assessments, and authentic assessments."
- **School process data** informs the community about structures and routines, such as courses to offer, scope and sequence of delivery, annual teacher turnover rates, and typical class sizes. School processes include curriculum, instructional, and assessment practices.
- **Perceptual data** illustrates student impressions about teacher instruction, family beliefs about the quality of education and other dimensions of school life, and other beliefs of stakeholders that are usually gathered by conducting surveys or holding conversations.
- **Demographic data** is manifested in school variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status of families, English language proficiency, and attendance turnover, and is driven by local factors such as employment rates, migration patterns, population density, and local political decisions.

With this in mind, the data revealed one (1) theme of Data Practices: communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to model transparency and accountability.

Communicating a Shared Mission, Vision, and Values to Model Transparency and Consistency

The values that emerged from this survey provide a compass for how this district can lead with intention and use qualitative and quantitative data to make informed decisions. The findings of this report and the accompanying recommendations will be a good starting point to help LDSD “be brave and willing to invest purposefully in this work...as an opportunity to strengthen our district and grow

together.” Such growth requires visionary leadership. However, leadership is not just reserved for administration, as a high school student stated the following:

We need a way to bring everyone at LDHS together. The best way to do that is a common goal that everyone wants to help achieve. Whether it is the community [sic] or at the school I'm not sure but it needs to be something we can all get behind and come together.

Deciding on a pathway forward requires thinking “beyond that which has ‘always been done’” and recognize the “resistance to change,” as one staff member stated:

We've done things mostly the same way for 25 years. We've spent a lot of time refining our organization to be perfect at getting the results we get. There's a lot of 'if it ain't broke' mentality among staff - especially the admin team.

Respondents spoke to the perceived community rigidity, stating “People's attitudes and viewpoints are deeply-seated and not easily changed. It takes a lot of time, education, and willingness, which might not be present.” Another respondent stated, “I have a feeling that some staff and community members alike will have a difficult time ‘accepting’ that there are changes that NEED to be made.” However, the “world has changed and we cannot keep doing the same thing the same way.” This resistance speaks to the metaphorical “bubble” that has “popped” within LDSD. That has brought racism, discrimination, harassment, and bullying to the forefront. Such exposure should be viewed as an opportunity for growth and innovation, as a staff member stated:

Our desire to do the same over and over without looking to improve places some of the neediest schools and students at risk. We should spend more time thinking of how we can be at the start of something rather than being the last to do something.

And although the “work may not be easy,” as one respondent stated:

...to change the perspective that is out there right now, but now is the time to put in the work, to change that. There is an opportunity for us to decide what way we want to go as a district and I think the majority of our staff are committed to doing what we need to do to get back to the “Falcon Pride” that people feel when talking about this district.

Falcon Pride, along with “Be Kind,” needs to be operationalized, as a teacher and alum stated:

I want to know that when I walk into school every day, there is going to be leadership from the top down that we all buy into, we all believe in and we can all fall back on when things get hard. We say “Falcon Pride” in this district, but no one knows what that means. As an alum, I know how proud I am to say that I went to LD, what it did for me as a student, person and now what it is doing for me as a teacher, but I don't think that most people know what Falcon Pride means to them, or to us as a whole. I just want to see us be a place where we are allowed to not be perfect, to learn, to grow and to be proud of what we are doing because at the end of the day, this district and LDMS is still a great place to be.

The pride mentioned here is a strength within this community; however, perceptions recorded in these surveys seem to challenge what many knew to be true. Such pride did not need to be named by the generations of families who have made LDSD home; however, more emphasis needs to be placed on its true and inclusive meaning, as a staff member stated:

There is a lack of vision/mission...so we know what is important and can guide us in making decisions both globally and day to day. We are expected to have Falcon Pride, it's “said” but

not felt, because of a lack of leadership direction. Many teachers and staff attended LD, so their pride comes naturally, but those of us who did not graduate from LD or live in the community don't have the standards to lean on as we are new to the concept.

Establishing a clear vision and mission, especially with so much anxiety over recent changes generates many questions, such as "Why are we improving things? Why are we doing what we are doing? Why/how this will help our students and staff? What does this process look like? A staff member summed up the needs in this moment: "communication, vision, and collaboration" to lead in this time of uncertainty. However, this uncertainty and angst is also felt within a school culture that must always consider the threats of school violence, as one parent made the following reflection:

I think being mindful of the reality that a safe school also should consider the trauma students are experiencing from school shooting scares. I was deeply disappointed in the middle schools handling of a gas leak that led to an evacuation, which took place hours after parents were warned of a threat made against the school. The social media post by LDMS that followed was unacceptable, making light of the evacuation, "It was an exciting start to the day..." I think a little more tact and awareness of the moment might be in order. If the administration would like to read the texts between my daughter and I during that time I would be happy to share. But it seems rather tone deaf for admin to know a threat was made, notify parents, and then evacuate students, and then post something like that. I think we need to be aware of the myriad of ways our students do not feel safe at school and how good leadership can truly make a difference.

Overall, the need for more effective communication was a salient theme in the data:

- "[T]here is not communication had about decisions. Things are typically found out "through the grapevine". I don't believe that is intentional, I think everyone is very busy and moves on to the next thing and forgets to communicate back to the team."
- "More transparency between school and community with regular communication about school activities, events, awards/recognitions (both staff and students)."
- "The district has not been directly responding to concerns. This has left the community confused and understanding only limited perspectives."
- "Development of regular electronic district wide communication not done quarterly but perhaps weekly so giving staff time and resources to develop that communication."
- "I think more consistent communication within the building and from the district could improve morale considerably. Both in terms of letting us know what direction the district is heading and to answer questions and address concerns in a timely way."
- "Better communication between school and parents/community as to not only issues that we are addressing but general PR as to all the positives that students and staff are doing on a regular basis. I feel that gets lost."
- "I'd also like to see an improved social media presence, I follow other districts who know how to highlight students, teachers and schools in a way that makes me wish I worked there. LD has virtually no social media presence other than general announcements."

Communication must be deliberate and systematic to ensure "timely feedback," as one staff member noted, "Certain people will not get answers to emails, for weeks, and then when board members are copied on the email they get a response within 5 minutes. These things make teachers feel undervalued in the district." To this end, a building-level administrator stated, "As for leadership within the building, there are probably ways in which some of us can step up and be better communicators, but some of that must also come from administration." This is critical as the district is

coming out from under a leadership style that did not have a “real sense of direction” and inaccessible, so now that administration is entering a time for planning for the 2023-2024 school year, there is still so many unknowns, as an administrator reflected:

The great unknown right now is the direction of the district. We have a new superintendent starting that we do not know and have not met. We are not certain what her role will be and what changes will be coming. We have been hearing bits and pieces about initiatives and meetings that will be held related to the diversity and belonging work and other potential changes coming for next year, but there has not been a clear plan communicated for how we are moving forward. As we head into the summer - which is our primary time to plan for next year - there is so much uncertainty that it makes it tough to be strategic in our planning and preparation for next school year.

Planning for new initiatives is futile without follow through, as several respondents stated programs are “implemented, but not completed or used consistently” or plans “fallen by the wayside.”

Family/Community Engagement

“It take a village and everyone coming together to get through tough times. Our district is lucky to have a great village/community supporting us and wanting to see us do what is best for all kids.”

--District Employee

The family and local community are important vested partners when assessing district strengths and needs, as such, one (1) theme of Family and Community Engagement emerged: leveraging external partnerships.

Leveraging External Partnerships

Based on the strengths identified by respondents, the community is a unique asset reported by many. As such, a staff employee stated, “include the families as well...we have a lot of community pride...they should also be a part of the solution,” which some respondents envision has “community events & trainings.” Based on the current deliverables, Dr. Sessoms will continue to meet with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) monthly to ensure “a council like this [exists] at all times, not only when there is a ‘problem to be solved.’” The working mission and vision of PAC is:

Mission

The LDS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) amplifies family voice through its collective of parents and caregivers who meaningfully engage in school, family, and community partnerships that contribute to each student's and staff's sense of belonging and overall success

Vision

The LDS Parent Advisory Council's vision is to be exemplars of family-school-community partnerships that achieve schools and communities where every student and staff member feels seen, heard, and valued by collectively demonstrating

- **Honesty** by speaking the truth;
- **Kindness** by taking care of our children, ourselves, and each another;
- **Accountability** by owning our mistakes, apologizing; and making amends for harm caused;

- **Teamwork** by working well as a group;
- **Fairness** by not letting our personal feelings bias our decisions about others; and
- **Respect** by treating all people with appreciation and dignity

This PAC may be the medium to forge stronger school and home partnerships, while also finding ways to “make a community initiative without putting the pressure solely on teachers and faculty to be responsible for making the change.” Moreover, a parent/caregiver stated:

I think that the parents in the community need to come together to help create this shift. Kids are coming into the schools saying homophobic, racist, misogynistic things - is it because they're hearing these things at home? The only way we can create long-lasting change is to get the whole community involved.

Although a PAC can help maintain effective family-school-community partnerships, one parent/caregiver suggested bringing in “law enforcement and municipal governments. Without them I do not think the solution will be sustainable.” Another parent/caregiver identified that trust still must be attended to with this community, stating:

I'd like to see phrc [sic] investigate and legally mandate the diversity plan being consulted. From my understanding while the district can follow the guidelines set forth by the consultant, there is no legal obligation to implement. For instance just like Covid shutting everything down and the diversity initiative was scrapped. We need the district to be required.

Thus, leveraging external partnerships must include partnerships that speak to the emerging core value of accountability and how this can be exemplified through this teamwork approach between the district and families. As such, one parent/caregiver recognized the need to envision new ways of viewing this partnership, as she stated:

I think this issue is so big and the negative culture has become so pervasive that it is going to take a new approach, such as having parents from this advisory board who are willing to be present in the school buildings, in the hallways, in the classrooms so that the negative talk can be more easily caught and those students educated and held accountable.

Academic Equity

“Pride in the school - teachers, staff, and students. Better the PRIDE program that is in existence - ask ourselves - are we focusing on the right words, are we teaching kids what these words/concepts are....it was originally developed to highlight students who are not athletes, scholars, etc. who don't already get recognition - it has gone a different direction.”

--District Employee

Methods to ensure classrooms utilize culturally responsive and sustainable practices to meet the needs of every student is the cornerstone of Academic Equity. To this end, one (1) theme emerged: implementing tiered levels of support.

Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support within Inclusive Instruction

According to the [Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network \(PaTTAN\)](http://www.aninclination.com), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is “a standards-aligned, comprehensive school improvement FRAMEWORK for enhancing academic, behavioral and social-emotional outcomes for ALL students.” Through a teams approach at the district, school, grade, and individual levels, a continuum of supports and

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services within tiered levels of support is developed and sustained to provide every student with what they need. Thus, this framework can support a revisioning of Falcon Pride, as one staff member stated:

Pride in the school - teachers, staff, and students. Better the PRIDE program that is in existence - ask ourselves - are we focusing on the right words, are we teaching kids what these words/concepts are....it was originally developed to highlight students who are not athletes, scholars, etc. who don't already get recognition - it has gone a different direction.

These questions can be mapped out through a team approach, which includes student voice. However, the district needs to have a strong Tier 1, as a staff member pointed out:

From a pedagogical standpoint, I think Tier 1/classroom-based interventions should be strengthened. In general (mostly at the elementary level), the district utilizes very little data when making decisions related to providing interventions, special education services, etc.

A strong Tier 1 would help address this critical observation by an educator to ensure special education evaluations and placements are not the sole means by which students get the supports they need, such as "additional RtII support for small group support." Strong tiers of support, from universal small groups to targeted individualized intervention provide an educational support system that, when implemented with fidelity, provides most students with the supports they need to make the rates of improvement to demonstrate they do not need a more restrictive placement:

At this unique time in our society, our children carry with them the baggage of the pandemic. They come into a grade level classroom, faced with grade level expectations and standards that must be met, but without the social experience they need to get that job done. Not all children were affected the same way during the pandemic. Their home experiences were wildly diverse - from safe, enriched virtual learning environments to households with one or more unemployed parents, emotional turmoil, food insecurity and social isolation. While it is true that having them all back full time is the best scenario for their leaning, it does not fully address all the needs they have. Due to insufficient evaluation of these deficits when we first returned to school, many of our kids who were red-flagged in grade 1 for evaluation were not actually evaluated until 3rd grade, and began receiving services in 4th grade. Being this far behind their peers is an additional burden for them. Our students and their families are asking us to see them where they are and help them come forward. They want to succeed and they work very hard to do so. Sadly, we are not always setting them up for success in classes that are too large, with insufficient resources to identify and address the wide range of deficits they are carrying.

This reflection also speaks to the need for stronger collaboration between regular education and special education teachers, as reflected here:

Generally speaking, collaboration between non-classroom teachers and classroom teachers, has not always been positive and is not always well received. Intervention team meetings are generally problem-driven from general education teachers and when their ideas for solutions or "fixes" is not met, they are left feeling frustrated, that they are not being heard, and with very little interest/support of any sort of intervention process. This is not true of all of our teachers, but I know many general education teachers feel that they are not being heard, validated, or supported by administration, special education staff/intervention staff. There is also a disconnect between what all team members view as a "true need". Across the board, we have a staff that is very performance driven versus growth/progress driven so if students are

regularly "underperforming", teachers are left feeling frustrated and unsupported. We do have large class sizes and we ask so much of our classroom teachers that they already feel stretched thin. We also have many students with parents who put a lot of pressure on classroom teachers regarding their child's performance. As needs continue to grow, we have to figure out better ways to support our classroom teachers with students who have varying levels of need including students who are and who are not identified to receive special education services.

A strong Tier 1 also means looking at "a possible adjustment to the curriculum so that it is inclusive to all backgrounds," which may include a "comprehensive K-12 program that is not developed 'in house.'" One educator reflects:

Curriculum can also be improved. There are some things that are extremely outdated. There is NO social studies curriculum at the elementary level and social studies is arguably one of the most important subjects that teach students critical thinking, inclusion, anti-racism, inclusion, etc. Servicing diverse student populations and ensuring our curriculum is reflective of that are huge improvements that must be made to move LD in the right direction.

In terms of inclusive instruction, students, parents/caregivers, and staff identified the following needs:

- "building levels of support for students who may not need special education, but need support in other ways"
- "lack of program in STEM in elementary schools"
- "Learn Spanish in elementary school"
- "opening up the curriculum to history of different races"
- "I think there should be more education and more teaching about not just the african american [sic] community but also, girls, LGBTQ and Hispanics and Indians, and Arabs... because they also get made fun of. And maybe teaching a lot more about how this affects people."

Discipline Equity

"They need to communicate clear guidelines on what constitutes hateful actions and speech and hold all accountable. Get community buy-in: until students and adults are held accountable, then the climate will not change."

--Parent/Caregiver

Educational institutions are a microcosm of the community in which they reside. It is imperative for the district to examine its disciplinary practices for consistency and disproportionality to mitigate inequitable disciplinary practices and ensure accountability. With this in mind, one (1) theme emerged: accountability through clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures.

Accountability through Clear and Consistent Disciplinary Policies, Practices, and Procedures

The term accountability was frequently used throughout the survey responses that it emerged as a core value among respondents. Accountability, as defined by Brené Brown's work [Dare to Lead](#), is "owning your mistakes, apologizing, and making amends." Another word for making amends is reconciliation. In this moment the students, parents/caregivers, and staff are asking for a resolution to the issues that were often hidden, which can be jarring, as one staff member stated, "I think that most teachers and students were happy with LD before learning about some of the issues that were going on around the school. I think the problems are hidden and only are seen by some." Another staff member stated, "There are members of the faculty that believe these issues (racism and intolerance)

have been here for a long time and have been brought to admins attention, but nothing has been done." These perceptions breed distrust, as one parent/caregiver proclaimed:

One of the biggest issues is that Lower Dauphin refuses to tell victims or the victims family how the person who has been verbally attacking the student is being held accountable. THAT MUST CHANGE. The school MUST be transparent!

A staff member spoke of transparency in the following way: "I would like transparency and I would like consequences for staff/leadership who behave inappropriately." Based on the data, consequences for staff appeared in the form of accountability, as a staff member stated, "I would like people to be held accountable for their job/responsibilities," which require "school staff to be held accountable to appropriate expectations." Respondents are asking for "swift and appropriate actions by staff" and "accountability to policies that already exist." The danger to not upholding policies is illustrated by a parent/caregiver as follows:

Uncomfortable or difficult subjects (racial or really any type of inequality, for example) gets pushed aside, minimized, covered up, forgotten. For years, they (collectively) have been unwilling to address these issues or /hold perpetrators accountable. We need to educate the educators/ administrators, teach them how to address the difficulties that our students face, and how to hold students accountable for their actions. Inaction, coupled with growing political unrest, has emboldened students to spew hate without consequence. Our students need to see that hateful actions and speech will not be tolerated.

Another parent/caregiver's comments align with this reflection, as the respondent stated:

I would like to see LDSD hold kids/teachers/staff who violate anyones [sic] right to feel safe, accountable for their actions. Too many things are swept under the rug or teachers 'don't want to get involved' instead of doing what is right. There should be zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, and discrimination in the district. Not just on paper, but through actions.

Such action, as stated by a staff member, require students to "be held to a higher standard of respect for teachers, staff, and each other." Yet, it also requires that "[t]eachers and staff should not look the other way or feel it's not their job to hold students to a higher standard of accountability for their behaviors." Accountability that can be described as having consistent, proactive processes and procedures for those who violate the dress code or use race-based speech, harassment, (cyber)bullying, and discrimination, or as a student stated, "actual tangible repercussions for when people do horrendous things." Taking such action adds a level of safety, as another student reflected:

Properly discipline those who have been reported, with evidence. Properly acknowledge what is happening at the school, and let the students know that they can feel safe again by taking action and punish those who need to be.

One high school student reflected on his experience, stating the following:

[T]here are some really amazing individuals who are kind and respectful to others, while there are also extremely inconsiderate and disrespectful individuals who purposefully want [sic] bring others down. Most times the majority of students are fine, but it seems to me that all it takes is one really bad apple to spoil the bunch. For example, I personally witnessed a student shout the "N" word four or five times in the lunchroom at the beginning of the year and I reported it to a teacher right away. It made me sick that such an abhorrent slang term was shouted out like that, and this one individual person caused all of the other students in the small cafeteria to feel very uncomfortable and annoyed. Similarly, another lunch table also

threw food at a table consisting of mainly Spanish-speaking students and continued to do so for weeks. One time a tater tot even landed in the middle of my table. Once in a while a teacher would approach the disruptive students, but most other times teachers on lunch duty either overlooked what was happening or were not aware of what was happening. Either way, I think that there needs to be a change so that teachers are more adept at intervening in these types of scenarios and, most importantly, take action to prevent it in the future. Whenever I witness situations like these I tell a teacher, but I think that it would be most beneficial if both teachers and students do their best to try to maintain a positive environment here at LD.

Other student respondents spoke to increased visibility from staff during unstructured times, such as lunch, Physical Education locker rooms, and the hallways, to help mitigate harmful behavior. However, when Dr. Sessoms asked students if harmful acts only occur during unstructured times, students reported that their peers also target students in the classroom when their teachers walk to other areas of the classroom. Students at both the middle school and high school discussed their desire to speak up and protect their peers, but they risk retaliation, as one student described it as “anything from death stares to ruining your life on social media,” while another student stated they are often laughed at and told they are being “too sensitive” when they confront issues of harmful language. Some students still take the chance to protect their peers, but one middle school student admitted that standing up for her peer could mean that that peer becomes even more of a target. Overall, respondents called for increased protective measures, such as anonymity, to support students who speak up because “snitches get stitches,” while also ensuring reporting policies protect the victims from retaliation. In particular, one middle school parent who spoke at the first PAC meeting stated her concern with how the middle school administration handled an issue with her son who was called racial slurs. The well-meaning administrator attempted to use restorative practices to mediate the situation with peer mediators. However, this practice was ineffective as the student who caused the harm was not interested in taking accountability and the student who was harmed was left feeling unsafe in this situation. This experience demonstrates the need for clarity on planning and leadership needed to effectively respond to harm through conversations and restorative conferences.

Incidents like these have also left staff frustrated with “how discipline is being handled and feeling [like] students aren’t really [held] accountable for things that they are doing, or don’t care about the punishment given because it doesn’t matter.” This perception that discipline has no impact of stopping the behavior was also stated by a student:

Punish the people who commit heinous acts or statements of hate against others instead of making excuses, and have the people who catch these things think about the actions for more than 5 seconds before making a decision.

However, potentially ineffective discipline is met with the challenges of staff addressing problem behaviors, as a middle school student stated, “Its almost very positive but the amount of bullying going on that adults don't notice so it cant [sic] really be taken care of so I feel adults should really look out for bullying a lot more.” Responding to the harm is necessary, as one staff member suggests that teachers “keep reporting anything that might be considered racist to the administration. This will help administration see if there are any trends.” Collecting data to recognize patterns of behavior and disciplinary actions taken ensures equitable practices. In order for this to occur, there needs to be a clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures.

Yet, it is perceived that inconsistency shows up in “following rules and expectations,” particularly in responding to discipline issues. One staff member identified a need for “Strong leaders who set and adhere to consistent expectations for all professionals and students and hold those accountable who

are not meeting those expectations.” Additionally, there is a need for “consistency among [secondary] buildings with regards to accountability for student behavior” through clear, consistent, and effective policies, practices, and procedures that everyone understands and executes when warranted.

Aligning Qualitative Data with Quantitative Data

As previously discussed, the Equity Pillars of Practice helped organize and define the eight (8) themes that emerged from the qualitative data: (a) mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employees through capacity-building; (b) comprehensive mental health professionals and systems; (c) practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging; (d) developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving; (e) fostering a community of learners; (f) communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to model transparency and consistency; (g) leveraging external partnerships; and (h) implementing tiered levels of support within inclusive instruction; and (i) Accountability through clear and consistent discipline policies, practices, and procedures. With this frame of reference, the quantitative results from the PAYS and PSCS will be analyzed to determine where the results align with the quantitative data.

Pennsylvania Youth Survey

The district-specific 2021 [Pennsylvania Youth Survey \(PAYS\)](#) provides quantitative insights into the perceptions of 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade LDS students with regard to their attitudes and beliefs about substance abuse and protective factors. Particular emphasis was given to Community and School Climate and Safety (i.e., commitment to school; involvement in pro-social activities; violence/drugs on school property; bullying and internet safety) and Social and Emotional Health (i.e., mental health concerns and suicide risk). The 2021 PAYS was administered during the fall of 2021.

Commitment to School

According to the PAYS, a commitment to school indicates an increased likelihood to forge meaningful connections and adopt school standards of behavior (e.g., Falcon Pride, “Not in Our Nest,” Be Kind). Based on the results, 42.6% of students viewed the topics they are learning in school as going to be important later in life (compared to 41.8% at the state level). School work was viewed as meaningful and important by 32.7% of students (state: 32.4%) and 40.1% enjoyed being in school during the past year (state: 37.6%). A feeling of safety was reported by 89.8% of the students, compared to 82.0% at the state level. In terms of connection and engagement, 79.1% of students reported opportunities to talk with a teacher one-on-one (state: 78.5%) and 87.7% reported chances to be part of class discussions or activities (state rate: 86.5%). Lastly, 46.5% of students reported that teachers praise them when they work hard in school (state: 51.8%) with 10th graders accounting for only 31.6%.

Involvement in Pro-Social Activities

Engaging in pro-social activities (i.e., organized community activities, family supported activities, faith-based activities, jobs, volunteerism) provides opportunities for bonding with adult mentors. Based on the PAYS, 86.8% of students reported participating in at least one pro-social activity, compared to 84.3% at the state level. Students most frequently participated in school sponsored activities (61.3% of students) with 6th graders participating the least at 49.3%. The second and third most frequent pro-social activities were family supported activities or hobbies (50.7%) and job or employment (30.5%).

Violence/Drugs on School Property

Reflecting over the time period from the fall of 2020 to 2021, 14.6% of students reported being threatened with violent behavior on school property (compared to 16.7% at the state level) with 8th

graders reporting 20% and 10th graders reporting 19.9%. Both of these trends have increased. Actual physical violence was reported, as 5.4% of students reported having actually been attacked on school property (1.3% reported being attacked with weapons). Moreover, 2.6% of students reported they had been threatened by someone with a weapon, compared to a state rate of 3.5%. Lastly, only 0.8% of students had brought a weapon to school in the past 30 days (state rate: 0.8%).

Bullying and Internet Safety

The qualitative data was replete with issues of bullying, especially that it either goes undetected or is ineffectively addressed. However, on the PAYS, 57.6% of students reported that adults stop bullying when they see it, hear it, or a student tells them about it. The 10th grade class reported 45.8% while 12th graders reported 49.7%, which is a positive increase of 13.7% from the 2017 reporting year. Moreover, students reported bullying through texting or social media at a rate lower than the state average, with the exception of 10th graders who reported 14.6% and the state average being 13.7%. Moreover, 77.9% of overall students report that they did not experience any bullying in the past 12 months.

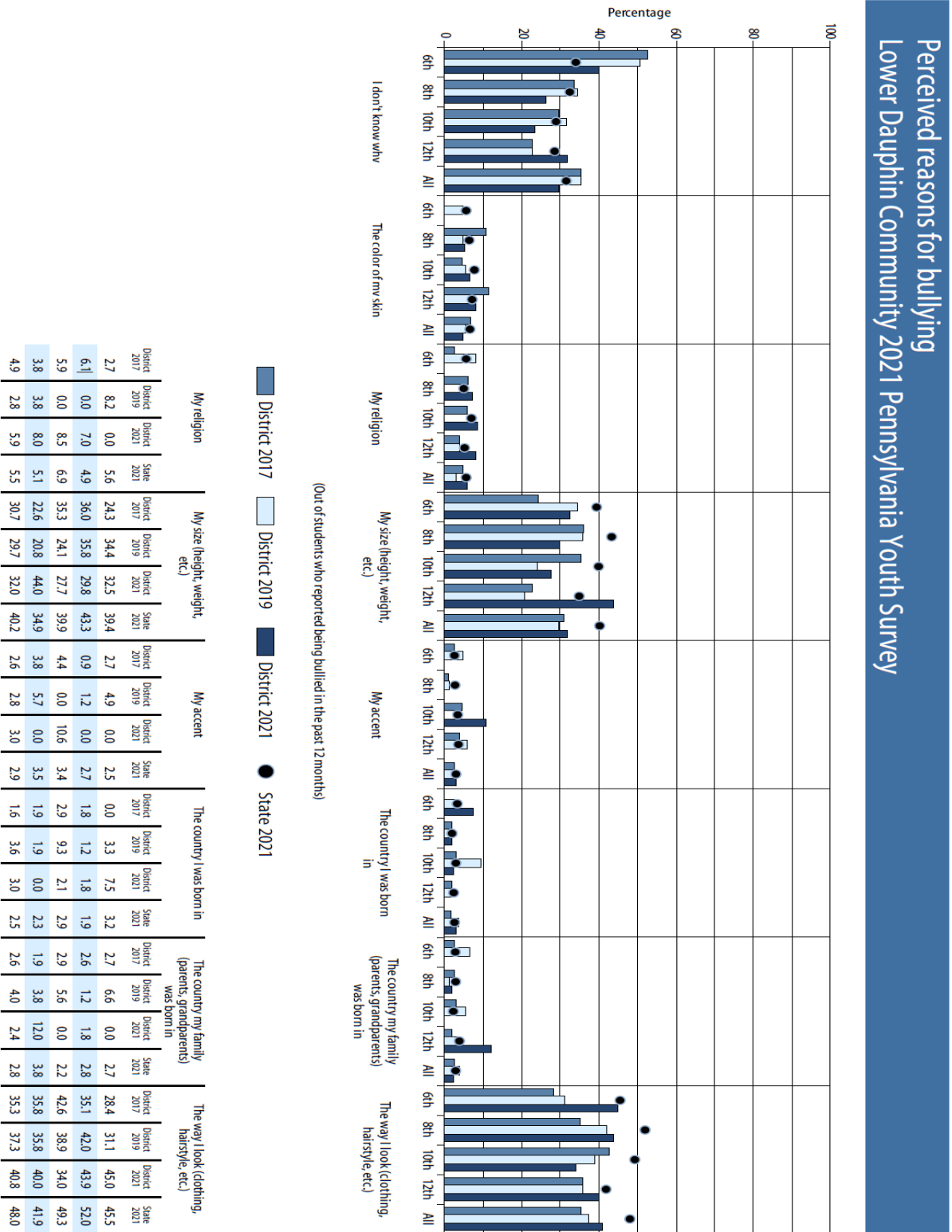
Overall, 22.1% of students indicated experiencing bullying from fall 2020 to fall 2021 (compared to 23.2% of students at the state level). Students who indicated experiencing bullying from this period reported “the way I look [clothing, hairstyle, etc.]” (40.8%), “some other reason” (37.3%), and “my size [height, weight, etc.]” (32.0%) were the most frequent reasons they were bullied.

Although the PAYS does not disaggregate for race, it does ask students if they perceive the bullying they experienced as a result of the color of their skin. Overall, 4.7% reported yes, with 8.0% of 12th graders, 6.4% of 10th graders, 5.3% of 8th graders, and 0% of 6th graders. Additionally, 10.6% of 10th graders reported bullying because of their accent, while 7.5% of 6th graders reported bullying because of their country of origin and 12% of 12th graders reported bullying because of the country of origin of their parents or grandparents. Reports of bullying for sexual-orientation are less than the state average, while those who have physical or learning disabilities report bullying above the state average, with the exception of 10th graders. In terms of social economic status, 10.7% of students perceive they are bullied because of how much money their family has or does not have, while 14.9% of 10th graders report higher than the state average of 7.4% and 12th graders report 12.0% (10.8% state). Overall, 17.2% of students report being bullied for their social standing, while 40.0% of 12th graders report this at nearly twice the state average of 23.7%.

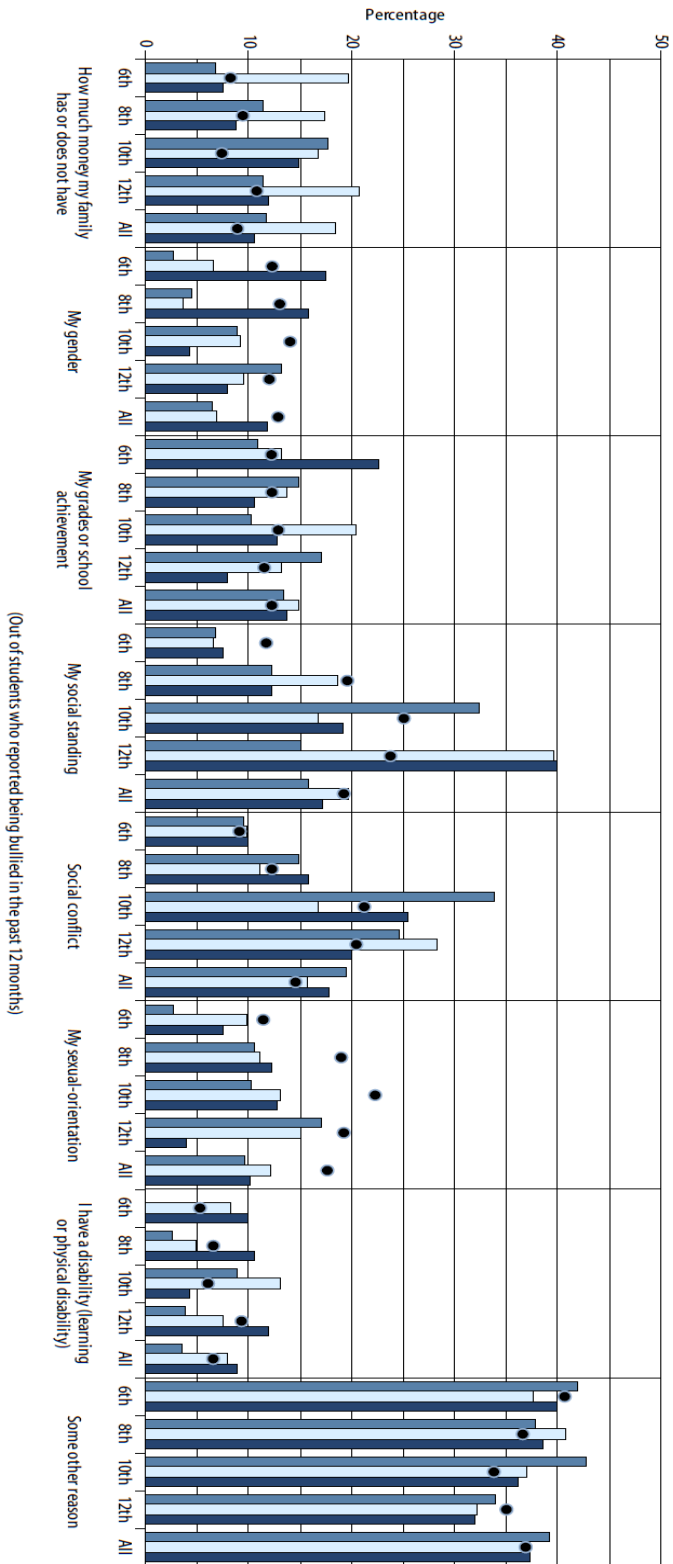
When asked how they were hurt or abused, 75.8% of students reported emotional abuse, insults, or name-calling which is above the state average of 68.1%. The 12th graders reported rates at 86% with 10th graders reporting 82.1%, 8th graders reporting 81.7%, and 6th graders reporting 51.8%.

Mental health concerns and suicide risk. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24. Based on the PAYS, the most common depressed thought was “at times I think I am no good at all,” reported by 36.7% of students, with 9th graders reporting 45.6% (state average 41.6%) and 12th graders reporting 42.4% (state average 41.0%). Additionally, 37.4% of students reported they felt sad or depressed MOST days in the past 12 months, with 10th graders reporting 47.9% (state: 43.8%) and 12th graders reporting 43.7% (state: 43.7%). Overall, 17.1% of students had seriously considered attempting suicide, compared to 18.6% of students at the state level. The 10th graders reported seriously considering attempting suicide at 23.6% which is higher than the state average of 21.4%. This grade also reports the highest percentage of those who planned suicide (20.3% and state at 17.1%) and those who have made one or more attempt of suicide (12.7% and state at 12.2%). All these trends for 10th graders are increasing. Seniors reported a decrease of 5.4% from the 2019 year with 21.6% currently reporting seriously considering suicide.

Figure 3-1. Perceived reasons for bullying: Lower Dauphin Community 2021 PAYS



Perceived reasons for bullying (cont'd)
Lower Dauphin Community 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey



Grade	How much money my family has or does not have			My gender			My grades or school achievement			My social standing			Social conflict			My sexual-orientation			I have a disability (learning or physical disability)			Some other reason										
	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2017	District 2019	District 2021	District 2021							
6th	6.8	19.7	7.5	8.2	2.7	6.6	17.5	12.3	14.0	10.3	20.4	12.8	12.9	6.8	6.6	7.5	11.7	9.5	9.8	10.0	9.1	2.7	0.0	8.2	10.0	5.3	41.9	37.7	40.7	40.0	40.6	
8th	11.4	17.3	8.8	9.4	4.4	3.7	15.8	13.0	14.0	10.3	20.4	12.8	12.9	6.8	6.6	7.5	11.7	9.5	9.8	10.0	9.1	2.7	0.0	8.2	10.0	5.3	41.9	37.7	40.7	40.0	40.6	
10th	17.6	16.7	14.9	7.4	8.8	9.3	4.3	14.0	10.3	20.4	12.8	12.9	32.4	16.7	19.1	25.0	33.8	16.7	25.5	21.2	10.3	13.0	12.8	22.3	8.8	13.0	4.3	6.0	42.6	37.0	36.2	33.8
12th	11.3	20.8	12.0	10.8	13.2	9.4	8.0	12.0	17.0	13.2	8.0	11.5	15.1	39.6	40.0	23.7	24.5	28.3	20.0	20.4	17.0	15.1	4.0	19.2	3.8	7.5	12.0	9.3	34.0	32.1	32.0	35.0
All	11.7	18.5	10.7	8.9	6.5	6.8	11.8	12.9	13.3	14.9	13.6	12.2	15.9	19.7	17.2	19.2	19.4	15.7	17.8	14.5	9.7	12.0	10.1	17.6	3.6	8.0	8.9	6.5	39.2	37.3	37.3	36.9

Overall Risk and Protective Factors

As reported by the 2021 PAYS:

Students in Lower Dauphin Community reported the three highest overall (all grades combined) scores for the following risk factor scales: Low Commitment Toward School (52.9% of students at risk), Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior (48.8% at risk), and Perceived Risk of Drug Use (45.4% at risk). The three lowest overall scale scores were Gang Involvement (1.4% at risk), Interaction With Antisocial Peers (12.0% at risk), and Friend's Use of Drugs (19.0% at risk).

Of the eight protective factor scales, the highest scores in the overall sample of students in this district were reported for Family Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (62.6% of students with protection), Family Attachment (59.4% with protection) and Family Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (58.1% with protection). The lowest protective factor scales in the overall sample were Religiosity (37.1% with protection), Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement (40.2% with protection) and School Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (42.6% with protection).

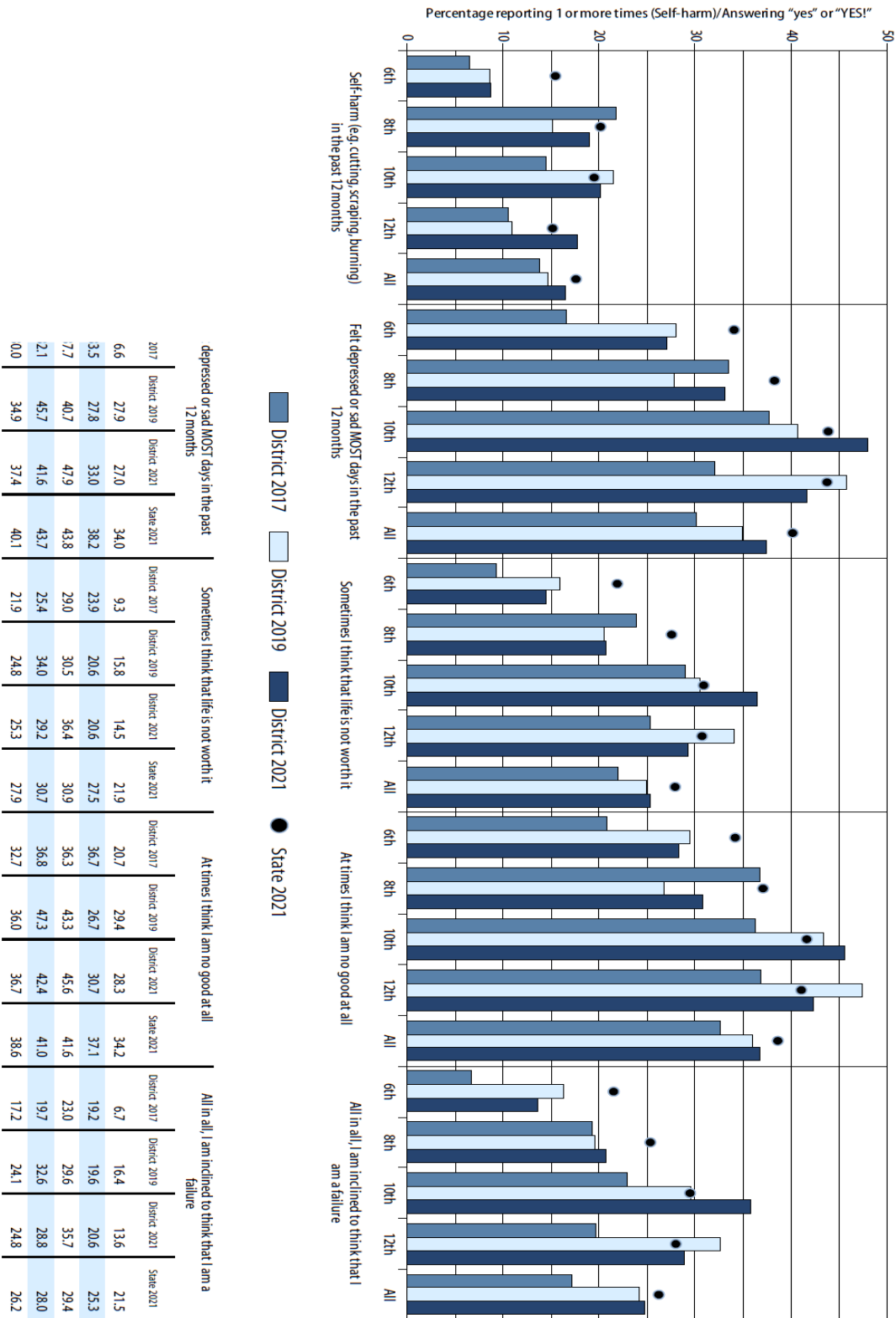
Based on grade level perceptions, 6th graders reported the highest risk factors in Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Drug Use; Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior; and Academic Failure. The protective factors that may need intervention include: Rewards for Prosocial Involvement, Family Attachment; Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement; and Belief in the Moral Order.

Risk factors for 8th grade that should be considered for prevention planning include: Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior; Academic Failure; Low Commitment Toward School; and Perceived Risk of Drug Use. In terms of protective factors, areas of intervention include: Rewards for Prosocial Involvement, and Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement.

The district's 10th graders perceptions indicate the greatest areas of need in the following risk factors: Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Drug Use; Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior; Low Commitment Toward School; Attitudes Favorable Toward Drug Use; Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior; and Depressive Symptoms. Protective factors that could use intervention include: Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement and Belief in the Moral Order.

Lastly, 12th graders reported the highest risk factors in Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior and Depressive Symptoms. Protective factors that need support include: Family Attachment and Rewards for Prosocial Involvement.

Mental Health Concerns Lower Dauphin Community 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey



PA School Climate Survey

According to the [Pennsylvania Department of Education](#), the PSCS measures positive school climate and sub-scores in the following three domains:

1. **Student Engagement and Support:** The Student Support and Engagement scale measures the extent to which students are listened to, cared about, and helped by teachers and other adults in the school to realize behavioral and academic goals.
2. **Social Emotional Learning:** The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) scale measures staff or student perceptions of how well they relate to and support each other.
3. **Safe and Respectful Climate:** The Safe and Respectful School Climate scale measures how physically safe students or staff perceive the school to be and how emotionally safe students perceive the school to be.

What follows are salient data points that indicate where respondents' perceptions and lived experiences relate to the district cultivating safe and supportive schools. Scores 3.40 and above are indicative of agreeable or favorable perceptions; whereas, scores 2.5 and below are indicative of contradictions or unfavorable perceptions.

Lower Dauphin High School

Regardless of gender or race, high school students reported unfavorable perceptions of social emotional learning (2.47). Notably, students who identify as American Indian ($n = 30$) reported the lowest score for SEL (2.19) and Student Support (2.35). Black students ($n = 34$) reported an SEL average of 2.37, Hispanic students ($n = 69$) reported an SEL average of 2.42, Multi-Racial students ($n = 30$) reported an SEL average of 2.23 (Student Support score of 2.43), White students ($n = 696$) reported an SEL average of 2.47, Asian students ($n = 45$) reported an SEL average of 2.28. The SEL average was only favorable for 9th grade (2.51).

Student engagement and support. Overall, students reported they are "usually bored" in classes (Multi-racial 1.87; Asian 1.96; Black 2.03, Hispanic 2.09; American Indian 2.10; White 2.16).

Social emotional learning. Overall, the Social Emotional Learning Average Domain Score of 2.47 indicates an area where intervention is needed. While the majority of this school is White, their average domain of 2.47 is still unfavorable for social emotional learning. Moreover, BIPOC students reported a lower Domain Score of 2.39 (Black 2.37; American Indian 2.19; Asian 2.28; Hispanic/Latino 2.42; Multiracial 2.3). Black students reported unfavorably that "adults in this school apply the same rules to all students equally" (Overall 2.32; American Indian 1.87; Multi-racial 2.13; Black 2.32; Hispanic 2.33; BIPOC 2.34; Asian 2.53; White 2.55;)

Overall, students reported unfavorable perceptions of the following: "Stop and think before doing anything when they get angry;" "Get into arguments when they disagree with people;" "Do all their homework;" "Say mean things to other students when they think the other students deserve it;" "Try to work out their disagreements with other students by talking to them;" "Think it's OK to cheat if other students are cheating."

Safe and respectful climate. High schoolers reported that "Students at this school are often teased or picked on" (2.45). Additionally, Black students reported that students often getting "bullied because of certain characteristics" like race, religion, or weight (2.50). Overall, the students did not report that they every stay home school due to not feeling safe at school.

Lower Dauphin Middle School

Overall, the middle school respondents were neutral in their domain scores. However, Black students rated the Student Support Domain unfavorably (2.40). Below provides more information related to particular responses based on the domain.

Student engagement and support. Overall, students reported unfavorably that “a counselor at this school has helped me plan for life after high school” (Overall 2.33; Black 1.97; White 2.31; Asian 2.33; American Indian/Pacific Islander 2.38; Multi-racial 2.44; Hispanic 2.54) as well as “I am usually bored in my classes.” (Overall 2.30; American Indian/Pacific Islander 2.00; Black 2.03; American Indian/Pacific Islander 2.10; Hispanic 2.16; Multi-racial 2.31; White 2.32; Asian 2.48). Additionally, American Indian/Pacific Islander ($n = 40$) students do not believe “adults in this school apply the same rules to all students equally” (2.45) while Black students ($n = 34$) share the same belief (2.38). Notably, Black students are the only subgroup that rated unfavorably that their teachers “really care” about them (2.26), while American Indian/Pacific Islander students believe teachers “treat some students better than other” (2.35).

Social emotional learning. Overall, students reported that their peers do not “stop and think before doing anything when they get angry” (2.50).

Safe and respectful climate. Middle schoolers reported “Students at this school are often teased or picked on” (2.49). Moreover, Black students were the only subgroup to rate that students do not treat one another with respect (2.47). Overall, the students reported that they feel safe in school and in their classes.

Lower Dauphin Elementary Schools

Overall, the elementary school respondents rated the SEL domain favorably (3.45).

Student engagement and support. Overall, students reported a neutral rating.

Social emotional learning. Students rated SEL favorably, with females (3.54) having a higher rating than males (3.38). Most racial groups, with the exception of Black and Asian who were neutral, rated the SEL domain as favorable. This domain score of 3.45 is above the state average of 3.35.

Safe and respectful climate. Elementary students reported a neutral rating.

Lower Dauphin School District Staff

Overall, staff respondents ($n = 253$) rated all domains neutral. More information is provided below.

Student engagement and support. Overall, staff view their teaching favorably, indicating that they encourage students to share ideas, prepare all students for transitions, really care about their students; help students make up work after an excused absence; provide feedback on assignments to help improve their work; provide accommodations; and believe all students can do challenging work.

Social emotional learning. All responses were neutral.

Safe and respectful climate. Overall, staff rated the safety and welcoming environment of the district buildings favorably.

Lower Dauphin School District Parents/Caregivers

Overall, the LDSD parent/caregiver respondents ($n = 407$) had a total domain score that was neutral. Due to racial subgroups being less than 10, disaggregation of the data cannot be analyzed. Therefore, it is critical to compare this data with the disaggregated student data. Overall, favorable responses were given to the following items:

- My child's school is supportive and inviting place for students
- My child is safe at school
- I feel welcomed at this school
- My child is getting a good education at this school
- My child is treated fairly at school
- My child likes his/her teachers
- I would recommend my child's school to others

Table 3-6. Comparison Across Survey Groups, PA School Climate Survey

Respondent	Student Engagement and Support	Social Emotional Learning	Safe and Respectful Climate	Total Average
LDHS	2.70	2.47	2.94	2.71
LDMS	2.85	2.75	3.09	2.90
Elementary Schools	3.29	3.45	3.20	3.36
Staff	3.19	2.76	3.34	3.13
Parents/Caregivers				3.37

Green = Agreeable to...

Red = contradiction to...

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

I'd love to see adults working together to actively grow as individuals and staff members. I'd love to see people be receptive to the change we need to be a better community to support our students and families.

--District employee

Nine (9) core themes emerged from the data (a) mitigating burnout and cultivating sustainable employees through capacity building; (b) comprehensive mental health professionals and systems; (c) practicing equity, inclusion, and belonging; (d) developing effective social emotional skills to support positive relationships and collaborative problem-solving; (e) fostering a community of learners; (f) communicating a shared mission, vision, and values to model transparency and consistency; (g) leveraging external partnerships; (h) implementing multi-tiered systems of support within inclusive instruction; and (i) accountability through clear and consistent disciplinary policies, practices, and procedures. These themes were organized with a content analysis schedule to further develop the emerging content within the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Equity Pillars of Practice framework, as detailed in Chapter Two. In order to make meaning from the findings, this section will focus on question-posing to generate potential solutions to support safe and supportive schools.

A salient theme in the qualitative data is staff burnout, and in order to effectively address it, there are three conversations that LDSO must simultaneously engage in to consider a pathway forward that honors people's inherent dignity and cultivates resilience in dignity-affirming spaces. The three conversations, according to Aguilar (2018), are as follows:

1. **Individual Resilience:** Attending to our resilience (i.e., thought processes, emotionality, daily actions) to improve our overall wellbeing and prevent burnout.
2. **Organizational Conditions:** Focusing on individual resilience without addressing the workplace culture and conditions that perpetuate burnout is harmful. Administration, faculty, and staff have identified several conditions within this organization that do not foster wellbeing (i.e., current wages and budgetary constraints; staff turnover; racism, discrimination, harassment, and bullying; administrator defensiveness, toxicity, negative media coverage, lack of vision and strategic direction). As Aguilar states, "To address burnout and turnover, leaders in organizations must take responsibility for substantially improving the conditions in which people work. Until then, we'll still see teachers leaving in droves—even those with high levels of individual resilience" (p. 6).
3. **Systemic Conditions:** This educational system is a microcosm of the larger society, and it is not immune to the political and economic context of education. The ongoing anti-CRT, book ban, transgender, and school funding political debates create additional layers of stress to the educational environment. This is all within the context of Pennsylvania being among the worst in the country for persistent unequal access to educational opportunities across racial and income groups. [Research for Action researchers](#), Justis Freeman and David Bamat (2022), state "While troubling disparities in access to educational opportunities by race and income exist in most states, the size and pervasiveness of PA's gaps are among the most severe in the

country” (p. 2). Based on the findings of this report, structural and systemic issues of racism, ethnocentrism, classism, sexism, and ableism are dehumanizing groups of people in the district and community. These issues must be addressed because the resilience and wellbeing of everyone within the educational ecosystem is deeply connected.

Figure 4-1. Three Conversations We Need to Have to Transform Schools (as seen in *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* by Elena Aguilar (2018)



Question-Posing with the Equity Pillars of Practice

Each **Equity Pillar of Practice** has a corresponding question. Each of these questions will be considered in light of the findings to generate solutions to support further strategic intervention.

General Equity Practices
How can our educational community consider global equitable practices in our specific context?

Mitigating Burnout and Cultivating Sustainable Employees through Capacity Building

1. Mitigating staff burnout requires all three levels of conversation previously addressed. The aftermath of COVID-19, coupled with political debates within public education have led to the Great Resignation, which has significantly impacted staff turnover and shortages. To this end, one of the main issues district employees, from teachers, support staff, specialists, and administrators, has been the need for competitive wages, despite the general perception that district employees receive a higher share of their compensation as fringe benefits from

retirement plans and health insurance. While increases in pay do not guarantee greater job satisfaction, **studies indicate** that when staff earnings increase, school districts benefit from improved staff retention, gains in student performance, strengthening the teacher pipeline, and increasing the quality of the future workforce. And although average starting teacher pay in Pennsylvania is **ranked as 11th in the nation** at \$47,827, this statistic neither accounts for regional differences in pay nor pay for support staff or specialists, the latter of which are typically under a teacher contract that often does not account for their advanced training. Moreover, high inflation and the high cost of living are driving employees to **expect more compensation**, especially when more responsibilities have been added to their plates due to staffing shortages and increasing demands within the field. (Particular to this district, respondents identified needing additional mental health professionals, paraprofessionals, aides, a high school dean, and a Special Education Director.) With this in mind, it is recommended that the district conduct a compensation analysis with a realistic time frame, to identify and reduce the risk of regional wage gaps by: (a) examining existing pay practices and pay philosophy regarding what is deemed adequate compensation and benefits, differentiating base pay and fringe benefits; (b) research current compensation trends and positions/organizational structure from neighboring and comparable districts; (c) conduct a job analysis for each position to identify the responsibilities and experience required to perform the role (up-to-date job descriptions are needed through surveying positions to gain clarity on current job responsibilities and the sustainability of their current roles); (d) examine race and gender variables to identify disproportionality, especially in administrative positions; (e) examine pay for support staff in comparison with Pennsylvania's minimum wage of \$7.25 and **recently passed \$15 minimum wage bill to take affect by 2026**; (f) examine exit interview and resignation trends to determine reasons and future employer trends for employee departures; (g) finalize recommendations and the effective start dates for each current position and recommended new positions; and (h) clearly communicate the employee compensation plan, policies, and practices to ensure the wages, fringe benefits, the new positions needed are sustainable. The Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center's Head Start **"Wage Comparability: A Guide for Conducting a Wage and Fringe Benefits Comparability Survey"** step-by-step guidelines may prove to be a useful tool for this analysis.

2. The data indicated a need for "better communication and understanding of everyone's role" in the district. "Administrators, teachers, secretaries, aides, staff, custodians, and students." The compensation analysis above, part (c) will also provide an opportunity to update and communicate district roles and responsibilities.
3. This compensation analysis can also address respondents' requests for a "tax increase" for sustainability of wage increases and facilities improvements
4. Respondents spoke about issues of morale across the district, and a significant concern is a perceived devaluation among the staff and students. An emerging theme was the need to take a strengths-based approach to recognizing student and staff successes. Students and staff alike spoke to the need for both public and private praise. In particular, the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) indicated that students during the 2021-2022 school year, received less praise from staff than the state average. This was even more apparent for the 10th grade class. One-on-one messages or handwritten notes, as well as internal building and district-wide announcements or shout-outs for key accomplishments or milestones at district-wide events or building-level team meetings (e.g., staff accolades and Falcon PRIDE) for both employees and students. Shout-outs on accomplishments can also be used as a teaching tool for exemplary or innovative work that can inspire others within the community to learn new skills and try new things that support the overall belonging within the district. Additional recognition ideas include enamel pins that exemplify the district values, gift cards, food truck days, dress down

days, and a banquet event to honor building-level Staff of the Year Awards. Implementing a recognition program must include consideration of the frequency of the accolades and how those recognized align with the district's core values. Further emphasis to core values alignment can be found under recommendations for Data Practices.

5. Through direct observation by Dr. Sessoms and anecdotal reports through listening sessions and survey responses, issues related to facility maintenance should also be prioritized. Namely, ongoing and persistent roof and plumbing leaks in numerous buildings as well as timely repairs for wear, tear, and accidents (e.g., holes in the drywall, AC and heating). According to various staff members, the district has a long history of making repairs through "patchwork" to temporarily fix the symptom of the issue without fixing the root cause, such as patching leaks instead of fixing the underlying roofing structure that is causing the persistent leaks. It is not uncommon to walk through the high school and see trash cans in the hallway to collect water from plumbing leaks or to see sandbags near exit doors to prevent flooding. What is most striking to this examiner is the normalization of these practices, notwithstanding technology issues with "substandard" equipment. (Please note that issues to address Wi-Fi connectivity issues and plumbing/roofing leaks are beginning to be addressed during the summer of 2023.) One notable issue is the Price School facility. Students at this school are often deemed outcasts due to their behavior disorders, while staff do not feel connected to the larger district community. Therefore, inhabiting a building that is "not very inviting to anyone" and one that "needs many improvements" perpetuates feelings of isolation. While facilitating a listening session at Price School, a staff member pointed out the dismantled radiator directly behind Dr. Sessoms, which is being used for "spare parts" to fix other heating registers through the district. Identified areas of facility improvements include: new builds that work, concealing the space between the door jams and the walls, installing a handrail up the front walk way to accommodate a student with a physical disability).
6. To promote a positive school climate, the district can contact Irene Reedy, Capital IU 15 School Climate Regional Coordinator (SCRC) at ireedy@caiu.org or 717-732-8400 x8069 for additional support in implementing a five-stage school climate improvement process. One valuable resource to help the district develop a detailed plan is [WestEd's School Climate Improvement Toolkit](#). Additional school climate resources can be found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's [School Climate](#) landing page.

Comprehensive Mental Health Professionals and Systems

1. The 2021 PAYS results determined that the most common depressed thought was "at times I think I am no good at all" was above the state average for both 9th and 12th graders, with 12th graders having a significant risk factor for depressive symptoms. Additionally, 10th and 12th graders were above the state average for feeling sad or depressed most days during the 12-month period from the fall of 2020 to 2021. Lastly, 10th graders reported seriously considering attempting suicide, planning for suicide, and making one or more suicide attempts all higher than the state average. This trend has increased throughout the years of the PAYS participation in this district. It may be easy to say that these results are skewed due to the effects of COVID-19, but the reality is that the impact of this pandemic has created persistent traumatic stressors that have greatly [impacted the mental wellbeing of our youth](#). This is especially prevalent among our Black, Asian, and LGBTQ youth who have not only had to navigate COVID-19 but also the direct threats to their identities. Thus, school connectedness is a protective factor that mitigates the severity of mental health crises.

It is also worth noting that the impact of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on school staff. Their mental wellness must also be prioritized, as student respondents speak to compassion fatigue among staff members who struggle with frequent exposure to the emotionality of students. It is highly likely that the above average state rate of depressive symptoms and suicidality indicated on the PAYS survey and the low 2022-2023 Student Assistance Program (SAP) mental health assessments (40 total with 20 that accessed treatment) data are incongruent due to students not feeling confident that current staff have the emotional capacity to meet their needs, as one staff stated, "Our students need more help than we are qualified and capable of giving yet we continue to give and are rarely emotionally replenished." This may also speak to limited amount of students who participated in the Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET) program. The question remains, Do students perceived the staff as supportive and able to help address their mental health needs? The PAYS survey indicates that while student engagement and connection with teachers is higher than the state average, all grades (with the exception of 6th grade) have a low commitment to school. Moreover, the PA School Climate Survey (PSCS) results indicate that American Indian, Multi-racial, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students report low levels of being listened to, cared about, and helped by school staff. Black middle school students reported the same, while also reporting teachers as not caring. Lastly, middle school students reported that they do not believe their counselors have helped them plan for a life after high school, Black and Asian students reporting a lack of help to a more significant degree (Hispanic students were the only subgroup to report a positive perception). These results show a need for more culturally responsive practices, which will be addressed below under "Promoting Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging." These findings may also be attributed to these specialists reporting that having adding responsibilities of lunch and other duties limit their access to students. This data speaks to a perceived level of disconnect with staff.

Based on the significance of the PAYS survey and the qualitative findings, it is recommended that a financial investment be made into adding additional in-school mental health professionals to provide direct support to students who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges through a Tier 2 level of support. [Effective School Solutions](#) (ESS) partners with districts to "implement culturally inclusive mental health and behavioral support programs that have been proven to improve care, strengthen academics, address trauma, and maintain students in-district." There is even potential for ESS to provide much-needed mental health training for staff and support the current mental health professionals for solution-building for students who require additional levels of support. [Laurel Life](#) School-Based Services may be another viable option to provide students with much-needed support.

2. The district does not currently have a district-wide social worker, who typically functions as the mental health liaison for families to support insurance and provider availability issues. One person can support this function, but ideally, the district should create a plan to have an in-house Student Support Team to function as the "clearinghouse of social services" to develop proactive and not simply reactive solutions to district mental health needs. To support this effort in the meantime, [Care Solace](#) is recommended as a viable additional level of support to increase much-needed staff capacity to reduce the wait times students are currently experiencing with getting connected to services and providing a better continuum of care. As reported by a district administrator, some of these issues are due to lack of follow through by parents/caregivers with insurance or staff having issues managing the referral process.

Practicing Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging


1. As previously reported, the PSCS indicates that American Indian, Multi-racial, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students report low levels of being listened to, cared about, and helped by school staff. Black middle school students reported the same, while also reporting teachers as not caring. Additionally, middle school students reported that they do not believe their counselors have helped them plan for a life after high school, Black and Asian students reporting a lack of help to a more significant degree (Hispanic students were the only subgroup to report a positive perception). American Indian middle school students reported that they believe some staff treat some students better than others, while Black students reported higher awareness of bullying and students not respecting one another. Both of these groups report that adults in school unequally apply rules to fellow students (Black students believe the same at the high school), while American Indian/Pacific Islander students believe teachers “treat some students better than others.” Moreover, students with physical and learning disabilities report rates of bullying higher than the state average. This was true of all grades except for 10th. Students in 10th and 12th grade also reported higher than state average rates of bullying based on socioeconomic status. Additional Differences, as numerous respondents stated are often met with a deficit mindset and stereotypes that perpetuate differences as inherent and not systemic. Often, groups that are “othered” are hidden in the curriculum or distilled down to tropes. The impact of these beliefs and subsequent actions often create internalized feelings of inferiority and a decreased sense of belonging among historically minoritized groups.

To promote equity, inclusion, and belonging at LDS, the superintendent and district administrators are encouraged to use the resource, [***Time to Act: How School Superintendents Keep Equity at the Center of Their Leadership***](#) to support the following functions:

- a. Function 1: Engaging local school boards in prioritizing equity throughout the district
 - b. Function 2: Using disaggregated data to inform all decisions
 - c. Function 3: Developing and implementing goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion
 - d. Function 4: Allocating resources
 - e. Function 5: Recruiting and hiring administrators and teachers for assignment in specific district roles or schools
 - f. Function 6: Mentoring and inducting, supervising, and evaluating administrators and teachers
 - g. Function 7: Assigning student placement
 - h. Function 8: Requiring and engaging in professional learning
 - i. Function 9: Sharing responsibility for learning, including instruction, curriculum, and assessment
 - j. Function 10: Engaging students
 - k. Function 11: Creating positive school climate and discipline
 - l. Function 12: Engaging parents and caregivers
 - m. Function 13: Engaging the community
2. The [***Colorado Equity Toolkit for Administrators***](#) Self-Assessment for District Administrators (pp. 23- 27) and Self-Assessment for Teachers (pp. 28-31) should be use for “self reflection and

creation of more culturally responsive practices.” Additional questions that can support safe and supportive schools can be found on pages 21-22.

3. The Equity Literacy Institute’s [***Equity Literacy for Educators: Definitions and Abilities***](#) is a helpful framework to attend to various dimensions of diversity in the district to “reject deficit views that outcome inequalities (like test score disparities) are the result of the cultures or mindsets or students of color, students experiencing poverty, or other marginalized-identity students.” The [***Ten Commitments for Equity-Literate Educators***](#) is a helpful tool to guide staff in sustaining equity literacy.
4. Direct and swift action must occur to protect students from violence in schools caused by race-based speech, racism, discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The current Safe2Say and Student Concern Form must be audited to determine if it is accomplishing what it was established to do. A clear and more direct process for responding to violence against students of “protected classes” must be developed, reviewed with all vested partners, and enforced. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [***Complaints and Concerns About Discrimination***](#) landing page provides a viable [***process***](#) that this district could modify to its needs. To support this process, a culturally responsive staff member should oversee complaints similar to how Washington relies upon a district civil rights coordinator. To support student wellbeing, safety, and belonging, a trusted staff member (identified by the student) should be a part of the investigation process to ensure the student feels seen, heard, and valued. It is imperative that a staff member is present that is culturally responsive and has effective listening skills. (If such a staff member does not exist, the district must invest in ensuring such a supportive adult is readily available to meet student needs.) Additional measures to ensure student safety should be addressed at this time. Lastly, all responses to complaints should include a written response, as indicated in the links above.
5. To support student wellbeing and safety, each building should have a collective of staff members who students identify as trusted. (Part of this information was gathered from students and parents/caregivers during the qualitative survey. The identified teachers will be inventoried and invited to be members of each building Implementation Team.)
6. The consultant will support each building-level team and district administration team into Implementation Teams that will make data-informed decisions to promote and sustain school environments that are equitable, inclusive, and dignity affirming.
7. The consultant, Dr. Sessoms, will meet with the HR director to establish priorities for recruiting, hiring, and retaining culturally responsive, compassionate, and diverse educators and staff.
8. Partner with Communities that Care to develop a district [***welcoming and inclusive process***](#) for families who move into the district
9. Each building should have an [***inclusive process for welcoming new students***](#) to their buildings. Partnering with Communities that Care and the [***building-level PTO***](#) can support this process.

 **PDE Resources: [***General Equity Practices \(pa.gov\)***](#)**

Self-Awareness
What is the role of educators, staff, - or more broadly, YOU - in shaping the educational community towards greater equity?

Developing Effective Social Emotional Skills to Support Positive Relationships and Collaborative Problem-Solving

1. The PSCS demonstrated that student engagement and connection with teachers is overall higher than the state average; however, every secondary grade administered, with the exception of 9th grade, reported low levels of social emotional learning (i.e., how well students relate to and support each other). All elementary scores indicate higher than state average social emotional learning (SEL) skills, with the exception of Black and Asian students indicating a neutral response. Based on respondents, the PSCS identifies intervention needed for emotional reactivity, conflict resolution, bullying, and harassment.
 To respond effectively to students who may be bullied, the district must oversee an antibullying process that aligns with their Bullying Prevention Policy, and if the investigation reveals that “one-sided bullying or harassment may be occurring, individual interventions for both the target of bullying and the student who may be bullying others should be implemented. Utilizing [“A School Guide to Developing an Action Plan for Students Who May be Bullied”](#) will support the development of a Tier 3 action plan to help ensure safety for the student being bullied and interventions for the student who may be bullying. Special emphasis should be added to students with disabilities, as they reported increased rates of bullying on the PSCS.
2. The high school [SPIRIT program](#), supported by Michelle Nutter, Education and Outreach Specialist for the Attorney General, will officially begin in the fall of 2023. This committed group of emerging youth leaders will combine with the high school Student Advisory Council (SAC), facilitated by Dr. Sessoms to recognize students are the experts in addressing school climate concerns. These meetings will occur twice per month. A middle school SAC will also meet twice month. These groups will provide solutions and feedback on new district practices and processes. A solution already derived by the middle school is to rotate which rows get to purchase their food during lunch so that the same rows do not always go first and last.
3. [PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center](#) provides additional resources for the entire school ecosystem. Additional publications can be found on the PACER Center [“Bullying Prevention”](#) page.
4. The Pennsylvania Department of Education’s [“Bullying Prevention”](#) landing page has additional resources.
5. Various vested partners speak highly of the [Club Ophelia](#) program; however, the benefits begin to wane in middle school, which may be due to a decreased emphasis in higher grades. It is recommended that Miss O, which extends to grade 8, be more intentionally supported to provide another protective factor and connection point to the school. Additionally, [Breaking the Boy Code](#) should be established in each building to support boys in developing effective SEL skills.

6. The [Harvard Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common Project](#) provides additional resources to support educators in modeling and facilitating effective SEL skills
7. Students and staff should start the year taking their respective [VIA Institute on Character Survey to](#) identify their top five strengths. The district should register for the free [VIA Pro Dashboard](#) to streamline results for individuals or groups. These results will support a strengths-based approach to increase engagement, connection, motivation, wellbeing, teamwork, and resilience.
8. Various respondents identified time constraints toward effective implementation, team-building, and space to "take a breather" during the school day. Therefore, each building needs to dedicate meaningful time (e.g., "Flex Time") at a minimum of once per cycle to plan and develop social emotional learning skills (i.e., relationship building, conflict resolution, core values alignment). The relationship mapping activity completed by the middle and high school staff will help inform students who need adult mentorship. (A supportive accountability process should be implemented for staff who may need additional support to model and implement SEL practices with fidelity.) PDE's "[Career Ready Skill Implementation](#)" landing page can support implementation.
9. District administrators should create a Listening Session/Visibility Calendar to be more intentional about engaging with each building level. The format should follow the individualized SOAR analyses to provide staff with dedicated time to address concerns and look for opportunities to move forward together effectively. Staff who have opportunities to be heard feel more supported.
10. Committee and team meetings should follow team agreements to mitigate defensiveness and power hoarding in order to effectively work collaboratively. Team should meet regularly to set action items and evaluate progress. Tools, such as the [DARCI Accountability Grid](#), The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) [Implementation Team](#) concept, and the Prosci [ADKAR Model](#) can help support the organizational change and collaborative process needed. Each Implementation Team should review each theme and develop goals accordingly. Their individual SOAR analyses (see Appendix B) will also help drive efforts.
11. The district's Safe and Supportive Schools & Mental Health Committee (SSSMHC) should be the primary facilitators of district-wide SEL implementation planning. A calendar with dedicated planning and strategizing time, along with a budget, should be provided to support the necessary efforts, as identified in the district strategic plan. PDE's "[SEL Best Practice Resources](#)" should be references to help the SSSMHC team develop best practices for SEL programs, curricula, and supplemental materials. Special emphasis should be on [utilizing SEL to advance equity](#) as a [lever for equity and excellence](#).
12. One particular approach toward ensuring SEL within a framework of equity, inclusion, and belonging could be to rely on the expertise in the SSSMHC to organize a Calendar of Learning that emphasizes "The Habits and Dispositions of Emotionally Resilient Educators" (Aguilar, 2018).

Table 4-1. The Habits and Dispositions of Emotionally Resilient Educators (Aguilar, 2018)

Habit	Month
Know Yourself	June: When you know yourself well—when you understand your emotions, social identities, core values, and personality—you gain clarity on your purpose in life and in work. Being anchored in purpose makes you able to deal with setbacks and challenges.
Understand Emotions	July: Understanding emotions—accepting them and having strategies to respond to them—is essential to cultivate resilience. With an understanding of emotions, you can accept their existence, recognize where you can influence a situation, and let go of what is outside your control.
Tell Empowering Stories	August: How you interpret and make sense of events is a juncture point where emotional resilience increases or depletes. You make the choice about what story to tell. When you tell empowering stories, your optimism may expand, and optimism is a key trait of resilient people.
Build Community	September: We are social beings, and we need each other to thrive. A strong, health community can bolster us through challenging moments and bring joy to our lives. When we build community, we can build empathy for each other; and building empathy for each other helps us build community.
Be Here Now	October: Learning to be in the present moment, without judging it, boosts our resilience. It can allow us to feel accepting and clearheaded about our options for response. When we're fully present, we're more likely to find appropriate levity in moments of challenge and to relieve stress by finding humor in a situation.
Take Care of Yourself	November: Physical self-care and well-being are foundational for many other habits. When your body is cared for, you're better able to deal with emotions. Resilient people have a healthy self-perception, are committed to taking care of themselves, and accept themselves more or less as they are.
Focus on the Bright Spots	December: We can hone our attention to focus on our strengths, assets, and skills. This helps us generally feel better and enables us to respond to challenges more effectively. Focusing on strengths also boosts our levels of self-efficacy, and we feel more empowered to influence our surroundings.
Cultivate Compassion	January: Compassion for ourselves, as well as for others, helps us deal with the interpersonal challenges we face on a daily basis. Perspective allows us to recognize the complexity of a situation. Perspective allows us to empathize with others, see the long view, extricate ourselves from the drama of a moment, and identify a wider range of responses to an event.
Be a Learner	February: If we see challenges as opportunities for learning, if we engage our curiosity whenever we're presented with an obstacle, we're more likely to find solutions. This habit and disposition helps us not just survive adversity but thrive in the aftermath.

Play and Create	March: Creativity and play unlock inner resources for dealing with stress, solving problems, and enjoying life. When we are creative, we are resourceful, and we problem-solve in new and original ways, which fuels our courage. Our thinking expands, and our connection with ourselves and others deepens.
Ride the Waves of Change	April: Change is one thing we can count on, and when we encounter it, we can harness our physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energies, and direct them where they will make the biggest difference. Perseverance, patience, and courage help us manage change.
Celebrate and Appreciate	May: Individual and collective celebrations, as well as the practice of gratitude, is the capstone to [all the habits.] Even during hard moments, if we can shift into a stance of appreciation, we'll build our resilience. Appreciation cultivates our trust in ourselves, in a process, and perhaps in something greater, which helps us respond to the inevitable challenges of life.

Fostering a Community of Learners

1. The need for conflict resolution and restorative practices was a salient need. It is recommended that the district partner with [Advoz](#) to provide "conflict mediation, restorative practices, and education to transform personal and structural conflicts into constructive actions and resilient relationships." Partnering with Advoz and their team of trained facilitators will create district-wide, sustainable change to address longstanding issues.
2. To support educator effectiveness and equity-centered leadership skills, it is recommended that district and building-level administrators enroll in the 12 week [Equitable Education for All Students: Why Leadership Matters](#) hybrid PA Inspired Leadership course. There may be a potential for the PA Department of Education to provide specialized training for LDSD to be its on cohort. This cohort could further be supported by individualized leadership coaching to support each district and building-level administrator in their skill development. Each administrator would have a personalized professional development plan informed by personality assessments and staff feedback through the use of a supportive of a coach.
3. A more in-depth hands-on district-wide in-service is needed to adequately provide all staff with the tools for suicide prevention. The QPR Institute is an evidenced-based suicide prevention training that has nearly 100 trainers across the Commonwealth. Dr. Sessoms is a trainer and was able to coordinate the training of nearly 1,600 staff at Central Dauphin School District with the help of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) State Project Director for the Safe School and Health Students State Partnership and [Dr. Perri Rosen](#), Project Director for the Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant. Partnering with Dr. Rosen will be beneficial to accessing and determining the necessary trainings for the community, all staff, and additional training for mental health professionals.
4. Currently, the high school has a Mental Health Club with Ms. Ava Bottiglia as the advisor. Middle schoolers have requested a similar club. To support the growth of Mental Health clubs,

it is recommended that the district creates **Avedium** clubs in each building, including the elementary buildings. (A K-12 approach will help address elementary staff identifying inclusion in mental health programming since they are observing elementary students with mental health concerns.) Avedium provides a free one-day workshop to help students and staff launch the club in their schools to help provide prevention efforts for mental health and suicidality by helping students and staff develop “cultures of care, kindness, and advocacy through Avedium’s ‘I’ve got your back’ model). Additionally, students are requesting mental health training to support their peers. To address more direct student training, viable options would be **More Than Sad: Teen Depression** for high school students and **Teen Mental Health First Aid** for grades 10-12.

5. The dedicated time per cycle for community building and adult mentorship can support the addition of new clubs or the revisiting of previous clubs that were not sustainable because they had to meet before or after school. Clubs that students and parents/caregivers identified as needs are as follows: art, photography, astronomy, Cheerleading, American Sign Language, Gay Student Alliance (GSA), Diversity, Dance, Musicals, Engineering, Religion, Chess, Robotics, Coding, Science, Spanish. Inventorying staff to identify not only their strengths but their passions and hobbies can generate viable options for invested club advisors. Students should also be surveyed on additional club interests and matched with their interests. (This time will have to be carefully organized to allow for any direct instruction or dialogue in SEL skills. Another consideration is to embed the SEL skills into each club or provide more frequent flex time, as in twice per cycle.)
6. The data identified a need to support staff cultural humility/responsiveness due to their limited experience and proximity to the various dimensions of diversity both in addressing discrimination. Respondents suggested findings ways to put themselves in “some else’s shoes.” An impactful solution would be to humanize the student experience through narrative storytelling by having students write down their lived experiences and then building learning opportunities around the storytelling to learn to center student voice and use their wisdom as opportunities to build solutions that create dignity-affirming schools. Those who recall the narratives read at the April 2023 board meeting can attest to the power of the story in awakening people to an issue that needs resolved, as one administrator stated reflected upon hearing the stories, stating that everyone in the district needed to hear the stories because once you hear them, you can’t deny that district practices need to change. Dr. Sessoms helped to facilitate a larger scale training with 1,600 staff to hear student narratives as community-based theater and then having trained facilitators guide small group discussions with staff to discuss inclusive practices that recognize everyone’s inherent dignity. Partnership with Advoz’s trained facilitators and local community-based theater professionals from **Teatro Paloma** and **Disrupt Theatre Company** can support students in cultivating the narratives into dialogues in culturally responsive ways to support student development and emerging feelings.
7. Respondents spoke to the “limited time devoted to district-side in service days;” therefore, revisiting the current professional development calendar to provide more balanced learning opportunities will be key. Creating criteria for professional development based within the emerging themes from this report, as framed within the Equity Pillars of Practice can ensure individualized training aligns with the district vision, mission, and core values



PDE Resources: [Self-Awareness \(pa.gov\)](#)

Data Practices

How might our educational community use our own specific data in order to drive equity efforts within our community?

Communicating a Shared Mission, Vision, and Values to Maintain Transparency and Consistency

1. The district is fortunate enough to have qualitative and quantitative data to help make data-informed decisions about climate and culture. The qualitative survey respondents were prompted to identify their core values, what emerged were six core values that the district should survey the staff and students district-wide for consensus and adoption. The final core values should be used as an internal compass to know when individuals within the district are in and out of alignment with their policies, practices, and procedures. These core values can help inform the new strategic plan to be adopted this fall of 2023, while also helping the staff with decision-making by developing an *LDS Strategy Screen/Equity Impact Assessment* to ensure every decision made aligns with the mission, vision, and core values:
 - a. **Honesty:** Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions
 - b. **Kindness:** Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them
 - c. **Accountability:** Owning your mistakes, apologizing, and making amends
 - d. **Teamwork:** Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share
 - e. **Fairness:** Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance
 - f. **Respect:** Treating all people with appreciation and dignity; showing humility, sensitivity, honesty, and integrity, and being cooperative and considerate for the feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions of others
2. Victoria Bernhardt's (1998) four (4) types of data: (1) *student learning* via test results, GPA, standards assessments; (2) *school process* via course offerings, scope and sequence, teacher turnover rates, class sizes, curriculum, instruction, assessment practices; (3) *perceptual data* of student impressions, family satisfaction, and other beliefs gathered from surveys; and (4) *demographic data* on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and attendance to assess progress through multiple measures
3. A clear and consistent process for collecting data on the number of threat assessments completed should be identified to make data-informed decisions about school safety needs. The district needs to audit their **Threat Assessment** process to ensure it is being implemented with fidelity and all staff know the process. Mental health professionals should be included in this process (i.e., members of the Safe and Supportive School & Mental Health Committee). Best practice considerations for K-12 schools include the following: **Behavior Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM)**; **The Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG)**; and the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) School Safety and Security Committee Model K-12 Threat Assessment**

Procedures and Guidelines. Developing a flow chart/decision tree to ensure this process is clearly understood by each staff member is vital to it being carried out with fidelity. Informational materials should also be made available to students and staff regarding recognizing threatening or at-risk behavior. This process should be reviewed annually with the team to identify gaps and additional training needed. Students, staff, and parent/caregivers should also be informed of this process annually and information related to this process should be posted on the district website. The school board of directors should also be provided with an annual report outlining the district's approach to threat assessment. Further guidelines can be found in [Article XIII-E](#).

4. A clear and consistent process for collecting data on the number of suicide risk screenings completed should be identified to make data-informed decisions about student suicidality needs. The district needs to audit their January 9, 2020, [Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy](#) to ensure it is being implemented with fidelity and all staff know the process. Mental health professionals should be included in this process (i.e., members of the Safe and Supportive School & Mental Health Committee). Utilizing the [Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention: Model Language, Commentary, and Resources](#) document can help to ensure prevention, intervention, notification, re-entry, and postvention procedures model best practices. Each staff member and parent/caretaker should be informed of the district's policy, and it should be publicly accessible on the district website. A model youth suicide prevention curriculum can be supported by the district's SSSMHC and High School Mental Health Club. Further guidelines can be found in [Act 71](#).
5. Effective communication was a salient theme in the data. It is recommended that the district maintain a minimum of monthly communication in the form of a newsletter to better inform the community of district happenings. Respondents also recommended an increased social media presence for "general PR as to all the positives that students and staff are doing on a regular basis." To build capacity, partnering with a branding and marketing agency can be helpful to identify effective communication. [Twothirty Media](#) may be a viable partner. Continue to use the district's [Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging webpage](#) to keep the public informed.
6. Accessible and visionary leadership also emerged in the data with respondents asking for a clear vision through effective and consistent communication to facilitate transparency and provide insight into new directions. The data identifies what respondents want in a new superintendent. These characteristics, along with the findings of this report should be assessed during the search process:
 - a. "Ability to servant lead and bring people together"
 - b. Be "vulnerable enough to self-critique"
 - c. "Acknowledgement/ownership" of "mistakes [that] have been made"
 - d. "Think beyond "tradition" to adopt new ways of problem-solving"
 - e. "Our next superintendent should be someone who has experienced education from the group up - someone courageous and open to the views, ideas and needs of others"
 - f. "A clear cut plan on moving forward with various initiations along with follow up as benchmarks are reached"
7. The respondents also requested greater visibility from the Board of Directors. Since the district staff have been told by previous administration to attend the board meetings or read the board minutes, it is recommended that the board livestream and record their public meetings to provide more transparency and accessibility for staff and community members who find it

challenging to attend in person. Consultation with Central Dauphin’s Director of Information Technology, Matt Sinopoli, can provide insight into the capacity needed to livestream and store video files online. Additionally, the board of directors could respond to the request for greater visibility by rotating their board meetings to every district building where students reside. This would give the board an opportunity to view the facilities (and potential repairs needed) and have greater access to the respective community.

8. The PAC identified a need for further transparency, and suggested an equity, inclusion, and belonging dashboard as an accountability measure to spot trends and track growth. Data should be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, English Learners, and should include data related to district composition, suspension, expulsions, test scores, school climate results, etc. [ProPublica’s Miseducation site](#) provides an example of this district’s trends, as reported to the US Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection. The most recent information from the 2017 survey year can be found on the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) site. Additionally, it is recommended that the district create an annual Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EIB) Transparency report to communicate their commitment to EIB and goal progress.
9. An elementary administrator provided the following “ideal scenario” to support student growth: “[Elementary schools] would have a vice principal, a second counselor or school psychologist, double the special ed staff, and class sizes capped at 20. I believe this could be monitored and reevaluated as the class that is in kindergarten now passes through the education system. Students younger than this did not suffer the same deficit of experience during the pandemic because they were 2-3 years old. As these kids “age up”, their supports could likely be scaled back to normal. With these changes in place, the school would become safer, less emotionally charged, and more conducive to authentic experience. It would give us the time to really see our children, to know them and connect with them and their families. It would give us the space to celebrate our children and their many gifts, to explore our uniqueness and create the feeling of a loving community that children absolutely require to become healthy, compassionate adults. We need to embrace and experience each school year, not survive it.
10. Administrator and staff observations should be tied to individualized skill development and the district vision, mission, and values.

PDE Resources: [Data Practices \(pa.gov\)](#)



Family & Community Engagement
What is the role of the educational community beyond the school in driving educational equity efforts?

Leveraging External Partnerships

1. Respondents identified the need for community-building and educational opportunities to support belonging and student behavior that models district values. Moreover, the PAYS identified district strengths in prosocial activities with family supported activities and family attachment as a protective factor. However, a risk factor for all grades, with the exception of 8th

and 12th grade is Parental Attitudes Favorable for Antisocial Behavior. School sponsored community events can help support these factors. The PAC can be leveraged for support.

2. **Youth Mental Health First Aid** is recommended for parents, family members, caregivers, and the community abroad.
3. **iMPACTFUL** provides a series of mental health film for schools that focus on (a) raising awareness about anxiety; (b) the addictiveness to social media; (c) the power of connection and resilience to end bullying; and (d) the impact of race and racism on mental health. Each film includes toolkits and character education programs to "support safety, mental wellbeing, personal agency, and community growth." The district can partner with iMPACTFUL to bring these films to the district with a panel of experts for a Q&A with the audience. Gillian Byerly, Executive Director of Girls on the Run Midstate brought each of these films to the area and would be a great resource. Dr. Sessoms was also a featured panelist and moderator.
4. PAC members have indicated a desire to be more engaged with the schools to support positive school climate. School-based parent participation may lead to improved school safety and belonging. Parent volunteers can also help alleviate teacher burnout if clear expectations and communication are established. Working with building staff to determine needs that can be addressed through volunteering can provide another avenue of support.
5. Engagement with the PAC and secondary SACs will continue throughout the 2023-2024 school year to build strong family-school-community partnerships and inform district solutions. These councils should also help inform the upcoming district strategic plan which is slated for adoption in the fall of 2023.
6. The **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)** should be reviewed to determine funding streams that will support community-based organizations partnering with the district to address the emerging themes in this report.
7. **Communities that Care** was identified as a strength within this community. Identify ways that they can support the emerging themes would be beneficial.



PDE Resources: [Family/Community Engagement \(pa.gov\)](https://www.padeb.state.pa.us/family-community-engagement)

Academic Equity
How might what we teach, practice, and enforce shape educational equity? How are we providing academic access and opportunity?

Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) within Inclusive Instruction

1. The PAYS identified the sixth-grade class needs protective factors for rewards and opportunities for prosocial involvement and belief in the moral order. Although staff overall reported higher than average ratings for their pedagogical skills on the PSCS, students reported being bored, with Multi-racial and Asian students reporting the lowest levels at the high school and American Indian and Black students reporting the lowest levels in the middle

school. Although this is one item on the survey to inform the Student Support Domain, it is worth mentioning due to the pervasiveness of students reporting unfavorable responses. Further insight into [student engagement](#) is warranted to determine what constitutes feelings of being bored. Insight from the SACs can bring clarity to this area.

2. Implementing MTSS within inclusive instruction is paramount to appropriate response to intervention. The district needs to partner with [PaTTAN MTSS consultants](#) to help support Implementation Teams in their problem-solving processes to “integrate evidence-based academic, behavioral and social-emotional practices matched to student needs and with fidelity of implementation.” Implementing with fidelity is key. The [Culturally and Linguistically Responsive \(CLR\)–Response to Intervention \(RTI\) Fidelity Rubric](#) poses guided questions to support teams. This can also address the opportunity that emerged for stronger collaboration between special education and regular education staff. School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SWPBIS) [Regional Facilitators](#) can further support implementation [fidelity](#).
3. The [Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered \(Ci3T\)](#) model of prevention is a framework that the district can use to take inventory of the district’s evidence-based practices in academics, SEL, and PBIS through all three tiers of support.
4. Collaboration with the SAC and larger student body can support a revision or revamp of Falcon PRIDE into new school-wide expectations that align with the core values above.
5. Staff identified evaluating supports needed for English Learners. [TNTP’s framework for Supporting Multilingual Learners during the 2020-2021 School Year](#) still provides helpful high-priority practices for ensuring equitable practices. [R&D Center to Improve Secondary Education for English Learners](#) also has resources to support equitable practices.
6. STEM in elementary school was identified as a need. [IMSTEM’s STEM Equity Program Evaluation Rubric](#) provides a tool for evaluating factors that influence access and success for historically minoritized groups in STEM education.
7. Adults identified a need for culturally responsive pedagogy for equitable and inclusive curriculum. Ensuring that historically minoritized students not only see themselves represented but that all students are exposed to the multiple dimensions of diversity. Steinhardt’s [2023 Culturally Responsive English Language Arts Curriculum Scorecard](#) poses questions to assess the degree of representation and diversity of authors. There is also a tool for [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining STEAM](#). These tools are designed for parents/caregivers, teachers, administrators, students, and community members. [The Great Lakes Equity Center’s Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](#) tool provides guidance in reviewing standards and curricular materials to ensure inclusive instruction. Tredyffrin Easttown School District provides a helpful tool on [Curricular Inquiry Process](#) to understand personal values, historical context, societal context, and multiple perspectives. The Bechdel Test for gender representation and the DuVernay Test for racial diversity are helpful tools. Namely, (1) there must be at least two Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) or female who (2) talk to each other (3) about something besides race or a man.

8. Inventorying neighboring and comparable districts to identify the comprehensive K-12 curriculums they use can provide examples of what it would look like to not have the district curriculum be “developed in house.”
9. The [IRIS Center](#) and IES’s [What Works Clearinghouse](#) provide inventories of evidence-based practices.
10. [Evidence for PA Resource Center](#) provides evidence-based strategies for Future Ready PA Indicators, academics, learning environments, and educators/staff.
11. Utilize “[A Multi-Tiered Approach to Bullying Prevention](#)” to establish universal strategies as a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention

➔ **PDE Resources:** [Academic Equity \(pa.gov\)](#)

Disciplinary Equity

Does our system of discipline reflect equity among all student subgroups?

Accountability through Clear and Consistent Discipline Policies, Practices, and Procedures

1. The district’s 2017 [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) report (most recent), indicates that Multi-racial and Hispanic students are overrepresented in in-school (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions (OSS). Students protected under IDEA for disabilities are also overrepresented for OSS and referrals to law enforcement. Thus, if you are Hispanic and have a disability, you are more susceptible to receiving ISS and OSS. Black, Multi-racial, and Hispanic students with disabilities are receive higher instances of OSS. Hispanic students are also referred to law enforcement at a disproportionate rate. This data did not emerge from any other data point reviewed, but it does indicate direct intervention in disciplinary equity. A formulized reporting mechanism and action plan must be developed to [address the root cause of these disparities](#). Using [data \(and data systems\) to address discipline disproportionality](#) must be a top priority.
2. Based on this data, the district must evaluate the impact of its policies and practices on these students to drive changes in policies, procedures, and practices. The findings from the Levin Legal Group independent investigation should shed light on the current policies, practices, and procedures to address harassment and discrimination concerns and complaints brought forth to the district. This information should detail the fidelity of current reporting and how it leads to data-informed decision-making to address climate and culture. Furthermore, it will be imperative to establish clear roles for school resource officers to ensure they comply with Federal civil rights laws and do not involve themselves in student discipline that can be addressed by trained school staff and mental health professionals.
3. The discipline data, coupled with the PSCS, identifies BIPOC students experiences more significant issues with school connection, which leads to truancy. It is recommended that the district partner with [PaTTAN State Systemic Improvement Plan \(SSIP\)](#) to implement [Check & Connect](#) in their schools to support some of their most vulnerable students through

mentorship, systematic check ins, school connection interventions, and family engagement. A culturally responsive high school dean of students can support more positive and responsive discipline; however, Check & Connect can help with this capacity building.

4. Greater intervention is needed to develop policies with accountability for disciplinary equity. PBIS's ***5-Point Intervention Approach for Enhancing Equity in School Discipline*** can help reduce discipline disproportionality: (1) collect, use, and report disaggregated discipline data; (2) implement a behavior framework that is preventive, multi-tiered and culturally responsive; (3) use engaging instruction to reduce the opportunity gap; (4) develop policies with accountability for disciplinary equity; and (5) teach strategies for neutralizing implicit bias in discipline decisions.
5. Moreover, parents/caregivers continue to name transparency as an issue, and therefore, have requested to know what discipline measures students receive for racism, harassment, discrimination, or bullying against their child. A viable option a district parent indicated provided added support and peace of mind in her former district was sending Student Code of Conduct letters home to the family of the victim. The letter would identify the level of the offense of the student who caused the harm and outline the Code of Conduct processes that the district adheres to. This letter was also used for data collection purposes. A similar system could be put in place at this district. Rather than simply telling the parents the general consequences for an offense (e.g., a Level 3 offense received this type of discipline), the district can put it in writing.
6. Implementing a behavior framework grounded in equity and SEL and framed through PBIS, as indicated above, will provide the data-driven, problem-solving framework needed to improve student outcomes with tiered levels of support. This framework and interventions are foundational to sustaining a safe and supportive school climate that is intentional about routines expectations by consistency reinforcing prosocial behavior and tiered levels of support to address problem behavior.
7. A tracking system for identifying potential bullying across settings and active supervision in bullying "hot spots" and on-the-spot intervention when bullying is suspected will support a safe and supportive school climate.
8. The US Department of Education's ***Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates*** Principle 5 addresses the need to expand policies to include positive actions and high expectations, along with requiring the use of a continuum of supports to increase student success" and "view fairness in implementation...through practices that ensure each student's needs are proactively met within the educational environment" (p. 15).

 **PDE Resources: [Disciplinary Equity \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/education/disciplinary-equity)**

Truncated Recommendations and Resources

The findings, recommendations, and results lay the foundation for Phase II of this work (July 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024), which will focus on (a) coordinating building and district-level Implementation Teams with monthly district-level team meetings; (b) facilitating a four-hour training to level set team foundational understandings and goal setting; (c) collaborate with Human resources on hiring practices; (d) develop an Implementation Calendar for identified staff and student trainings; (e) collaborate with external partners; (f) create Implementation Scorecards aligned with the Equity Pillars of Practice to support accountability in implementation plans; (g) coordinating coaching and/or leadership development for administration; (h) facilitate bimonthly SAC meetings; (i) facilitate monthly PAC meetings; (j) facilitate monthly Insight Conversations with the (acting) superintendent; (k) maintain a continuous feedback loop with the board, (acting) superintendent, PAC, SAC, and Implementation Team; and (l) analyze quantitative and qualitative data.

General Equity Practices Pillar

Mitigating Burnout and Cultivating Sustainable Employees through Capacity Building

1. Conduct a compensation analysis with a job analysis of each position and update job descriptions to reflect the actual work those respective positions accomplish.
2. Develop a staff and student recognition process that aligns with the emerging core values
3. Prioritize Price School facility repairs and maintenance
4. Contact Irene Reedy, Capital IU 15 School Climate Regional Coordinator (SCRC) at ireedy@caiu.org or 717-732-8400 x8069 for support implementing a five-stage school climate improvement process

Comprehensive Mental Health Professionals and Systems

1. Invest finances in additional in-school mental health professionals. Invite secondary mental health professionals to scheduled consultations with [Effective School Solutions](#), [Laurel Life](#), and [Care Solace](#) to determine how each provider can address building-level needs and how soon they can be implemented

Practicing Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

1. Utilize the following resources to guide administration and staff in sustaining equity: [Time to Act: How School Superintendents keep Equity at the Center of Their Leadership](#), [Colorado Equity Toolkit for Administrators](#), [Equity Literacy for Educators: Definitions and Abilities](#), and [Ten Commitments for Equity-Literate Educators](#), and [General Equity Practices \(pa.gov\)](#)
2. Utilize the findings of the independent investigate to inform the gaps in providing direct and swift action for addressing racism, discrimination, harassment, and bullying. The current process can be improved by modeling after the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction "[Complaints and Concerns About Discrimination](#)" and [process](#) to include a trusted staff member the student identifies and a written response to the findings of the compliant

3. Inventory the list of trusted staff members from survey responses and invite each member to be on their respective building-level team
4. Consult with Dr. Sessoms to establish priorities for recruiting, hiring, and retaining culturally responsive, compassionate, and diverse educators and staff.
5. Partner with Communities that Care, building level PTOs, and staff to develop a district and building level new family inclusive welcoming process

Self-Awareness Pillar

Developing Effective Social Emotional Skills to Support Positive Relationships and Collaborative Problem-Solving

1. Utilize [**"A School Guide to Developing an Action Plan for Students Who May be Bullied"**](#) to support the development of a Tier 3 action plan to help ensure safety for the student being bullied and interventions for the student who may be bullying
2. Combine the high school [**SPiRiT program**](#) with the high school SAC
3. Partner with Communities that Care to assess the needs and impact of Club Ophelia, Ms. O, and Breaking the Boy Code
4. Have each student and staff member start the year taking their respective [**VIA Institute on Character Survey to**](#) identify their top five strengths. The district should register for the free [**VIA Pro Dashboard**](#) to streamline results for individuals or groups.
5. Develop an effective meeting process to facilitate collaboration and mitigate defensiveness and stalled work by relying on tools, such as the [**DARCI Accountability Grid**](#), The NIRN and SISEP [**Implementation Team**](#) concept, and the Prosci [**ADKAR Model**](#)
6. Create a Listening Sessions/Visibility Calendar to be intentional about district level administrators engaging with each building
7. The SSSMHC should be the primary facilitators of district-wide SEL implementation planning. A calendar with dedicated planning and strategizing time, along with a budget, should be provided to support the necessary efforts, as identified in the district strategic plan.
8. Rely on the expertise in the SSSMHC to organize a Calendar of Learning that emphasizes "The Habits and Dispositions of Emotionally Resilient Educators" (Aguilar, 2018).
9. The following resources can support this emerging theme: [**SEL Best Practice Resources**](#), [**SEL to Advance Equity**](#), [**SEL as a Lever for Equity**](#), [**PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center**](#), [**Harvard Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common Project**](#), and [**Career Ready Skill Implementation**](#), and [**Self-Awareness \(pa.gov\)**](#)

Fostering a Community of Learners

1. Partner with [**Advoz**](#) to support the district in conflict resolution and restorative practices

2. District and building-level administrators enroll in the 12 week [Equitable Education for All Students: Why Leadership Matters](#) hybrid PA Inspired Leadership course as a cohort
3. Consult with [Dr. Perri Rosen](#), Project Director for the Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant to plan for district-wide QPR Institute training
4. Create [Avedium](#) clubs at every school building and train high school mental health ambassadors in [More Than Sad: Teen Depression](#) and/or [Teen Mental Health First Aid](#)
5. Partner with Advoz's trained facilitators, [Teatro Paloma](#), and [Disrupt Theatre Company](#) to humanize the student experience and engage staff in facilitated dialog
6. Revisit the current PD calendar to provide more balanced learning opportunities (i.e., district-wide in-services and aligning with strategic direction)
7. Each building should dedicate time per cycle for relationship building, SEL skill development, and adult mentorship (i.e., Flex Time)
8. PDE provides additional resources for [Self-Awareness \(pa.gov\)](#)

Data Practices Pillar

Communicating a Shared Mission, Vision, and Values to Maintain Transparency and Consistency

1. Gain district-wide consensus on the emerging core values of honesty, kindness, accountability, teamwork, fairness, and respect
2. Collect four (4) types of data: student learning, school process, perceptual, and demographic data to assess progress with multiple measures
3. Audit the district [Threat Assessment](#) process and develop a clear and consistent process that everyone knows. The following resources can help: [Behavior Threat Assessment and Management \(BTAM\)](#); [The Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines \(CSTAG\)](#); and the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency \(PCCD\) School Safety and Security Committee Model K-12 Threat Assessment Procedures and Guidelines](#), and [Article XIII-E](#)
4. Audit the district [Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy](#) and develop a clear and consistent process that everyone knows. The following resources can help: [Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention: Model Language, Commentary, and Resources](#), and [Act 71](#)
5. Maintain a minimum of monthly newsletter communication and consult with a branding and marketing agency like [Twothirty Media](#) to build capacity for communication needs. Continue to use the district's [Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging webpage](#) to keep the public informed
6. Utilize the findings and recommendations of this report to identify characteristics needed in the next superintendent and ensure the search process identifies these needed characteristics

7. Livestream and save board meetings and rotate board meetings through every building where students reside
8. Create an equity, inclusion, and belonging (EIB) dashboard and annual EIB Transparency reports. These resources provide data on disproportionality: [ProPublica's Miseducation site](#) and [Civil Rights Data Collection](#)
9. Build staff capacity in the elementary schools to support student growth and mitigate learning loss and increased emotionality during COVID-19
10. Tie administrator and staff observations to the district, vision, mission, and values
11. PDE provides additional resources for [Data Practices \(pa.gov\)](#)

Family & Community Engagement Pillar

Leveraging External Partnerships

1. Leverage PAC to develop school-sponsored community events for [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) and [IMPACTFUL](#) mental health film for schools
2. Partner with PAC to support school-based parent participation
3. Engage PAC and SAC in the upcoming district strategic planning process
4. Apply for grants from [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency \(PCCD\)](#) to fund partnerships with community-based organizations
5. Partner with [Communities that Care](#) to determine how their work supports these findings
6. PDE provides additional resources for [Family/Community Engagement \(pa.gov\)](#)

Academic Equity Pillar

Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) within Inclusive Instruction

1. Rely on the SACs to gain further insight into the pervasiveness of students being bored in the classroom to support [student engagement](#)
2. Partner with [PaTTAN MTSS consultants](#) and SWPBIS [Regional Facilitators](#) to support Implementation Teams. The [Culturally and Linguistically Responsive \(CLR\)–Response to Intervention \(RTI\) Fidelity Rubric](#) can support teams
3. The [Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered \(Ci3T\)](#) model of prevention helps inventory the district's evidence-based practices in academics, SEL, and PBIS through all three tiers of support
4. Collaborate with the SACS to revision Falcon PRIDE or revamp into a new school-wide expectation based on the emerging core values

5. Support English Learners by evaluating current practices. These resources can also support the work: [TNTP's framework for Supporting Multilingual Learners during the 2020-2021 School Year](#) and [R&D Center to Improve Secondary Education for English Learners](#)
6. Utilize [IMSTEM's STEM Equity Program Evaluation Rubric](#)
7. Utilize Steinhardt's [2023 Culturally Responsive English Language Arts Curriculum Scorecard](#), [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining STEAM](#), [The Great Lakes Equity Center's Assessing Bias in Standards and Curricular Materials](#), Tredyffrin Easttown School District's [Curricular Inquiry Process](#), and the Bechdel Test for gender representation and the DuVernay Test for racial diversity to ensure representation in literature
8. Inventory neighboring and comparable districts to identify the comprehensive K-12 curriculums they use can help staff feel more confident in their curriculum not being "developed in house."
9. The following resources can support this pillar: [IRIS Center](#), [What Works Clearinghouse](#), [Evidence for PA Resource Center](#), [A Multi-Tiered Approach to Bullying Prevention](#), and [Academic Equity \(pa.gov\)](#)

Disciplinary Equity Pillar

Accountability through Clear and Consistent Discipline Policies, Practices, and Procedures

1. Formulate a reporting mechanism and action plan to [address the root cause of disproportionality](#) using [data \(and data systems\) to address discipline disproportionality](#)
2. Analyze the findings of the independent investigation to inform the fidelity of current reporting practices and processes and if it leads to data-informed decision-making
3. Establish clear roles for school resource officers
4. Partner with [PaTTAN State Systemic Improvement Plan \(SSIP\)](#) to implement [Check & Connect](#)
5. Utilize PBIS's [5-Point Intervention Approach for Enhancing Equity in School Discipline](#) to reduce discipline disproportionality
6. Send Code of Conduct letters to the family of victims to clearly communicate the general consequences of action of students (e.g., a Level 3 offense received this type of discipline)
7. Implement a behavior framework grounded in equity and SEL and framed through PBIS
8. Develop a tracking system to identify potential bullying across settings and active supervision in bullying "hot spots"
9. Utilize the [Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates](#) and [Disciplinary Equity \(pa.gov\)](#) to support this pillar.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS

LDSD Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Survey

1. How many years have you lived in the district?
2. What elementary building did/do(es) your child(ren) attend?
3. What is/are the current grade(s) of your children?
4. What is your age?*
5. What is your race?*
6. What is your ethnicity?*
7. What is your gender?*
8. What other identities do you think about most often (i.e., color, education level, geographic location, immigration status, income and socioeconomic status, language, occupation, parental status, political beliefs, physical and mental ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.)?
9. What values/beliefs are most important to you?
10. What strengths do you bring to this advisory council?
11. What is it that you like about LDSD?
12. What do we need to do to better support your student(s) sense of belonging?
13. What are the outcomes you would like to see?
14. Who and/or what do you recommend to improve our commitment to safe and supportive schools (i.e., professionals, clubs, organizations, resources)?
15. With which staff member(s) do(es) your student(s) have the most positive relationship?
16. Is there anything else you would like us to know to be more intentional about cultivating safe and supportive schools?

Secondary-Level Student Advisory Council (SAC) Survey

1. What is your current grade?
2. How many years have you lived in the district?
3. What elementary building did you attend?
4. What is your race?*
5. What is your ethnicity?*
6. What is your gender?*
7. What other identities do you think about most often (i.e., color, education level, geographic location, immigration status, income and socioeconomic status, language, occupation, parental status, political beliefs, physical and mental ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.)?
8. What values/beliefs are most important to you?
9. What strengths do you bring to this advisory council?
10. What is it that you like about [your school]?
11. How positive or negative is the energy at [your school]?
12. Please explain any rating of 1 or 5 to help identify challenges and/or increase current efforts to create positive energy at [your school].
13. Overall, how much do you feel like belong (feel understood, connected, respected, matter) at [your school]?
14. What do we need to continue to do or start to do to help you feel like you belong at [your school] (i.e., program, clubs, people, videos, curriculum, organizations, etc.)?
15. With which staff member do you have the most positive relationship? Who can you be completely yourself around?
16. Is there anything else you would like us to know about how we can improve [your school]?

Elementary-Level Educator Leader Survey

1. What grade level do you serve?
2. How many years have you worked in the district?
3. What is your age?*
4. What is your race?*
5. What is your ethnicity?*
6. What is your gender?*
7. What other identities do you think about most often (i.e., color, education level, geographic location, immigration status, income and socioeconomic status, language, occupation, parental status, political beliefs, physical and mental ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.)?
8. What values/beliefs are most important to you?
9. What strengths do you bring to [your school]?
10. My input is solicited and valued when decisions are being made.
11. Your insight is invaluable. Please expand on any rating of 1 or 5 to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster effective collaboration.
12. What does [your school] do well that makes us unique?
13. What can be improved?
14. Based on data and anecdotal observations, what are our students and community asking of us?
15. What are the challenges you foresee in addressing the needs you identified in the previous two questions?
16. The current morale among staff in our building is:
17. Please expand on any rating of Very Low to Very High to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster high morale.
18. What are the outcomes you would like to see?
19. Who and/or what do you recommend to improve our commitment to safe and supportive schools (i.e., professionals, clubs, organizations, resources)?
20. Is there anything else you would like us to know about how we can improve our commitment to a safe and supportive school?

Secondary-Level Educator Leader Survey

1. What department do you serve?
2. How many years have you worked in the district?
3. What is your age?*
4. What is your race?*
5. What is your ethnicity?*
6. What is your gender?*
7. What other identities do you think about most often (i.e., color, education level, geographic location, immigration status, income and socioeconomic status, language, occupation, parental status, political beliefs, physical and mental ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.)?
8. What values/beliefs are most important to you?
9. What strengths do you bring to [your school]?
10. My input is solicited and valued when decisions are being made.
11. Your insight is invaluable. Please expand on any rating of 1 or 5 to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster effective collaboration.
12. What does [your school] do well that makes us unique?
13. What can be improved?
14. Based on data and anecdotal observations, what are our students and community asking of us?

15. What are the challenges you foresee in addressing the needs you identified in the previous two questions?
16. The current morale among staff in our building is:
17. Please expand on any rating of Very Low to Very High to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster high morale.
18. What are the outcomes you would like to see?
19. Who and/or what do you recommend to improve our commitment to safe and supportive schools (i.e., professionals, clubs, organizations, resources)?
20. Is there anything else you would like us to know about how we can improve our commitment to a safe and supportive school?

LDSD Safe and Supportive & Mental Health Committee Survey

1. How many years have you worked in the district?
2. What is your age?*
3. What buildings do you primarily serve?
4. What is your race?*
5. What is your ethnicity?*
6. What is your gender?*
7. What other identities do you think about most often (i.e., color, education level, geographic location, immigration status, income and socioeconomic status, language, occupation, parental status, political beliefs, physical and mental ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.)?
8. What values/beliefs are most important to you?
9. What strengths do you bring to this committee?
10. My input is solicited and valued when decisions are being made on this committee.
11. Your insight is invaluable. Please expand on any rating of 1 or 5 to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster effective collaboration.
12. What does LDSD do well that makes us unique?
13. What can be improved?
14. Based on data and anecdotal observations, what are our students and community asking of us?
15. What are the challenges you foresee in addressing the needs you identified in the previous two questions?
16. The current morale among staff in my primary building is:
17. Please expand on any rating of Very Low to Very High to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster high morale.
18. What are the outcomes you would like to see?
19. Who and/or what do you recommend to improve our commitment to safe and supportive schools (i.e., professionals, clubs, organizations, resources)?
20. Is there anything else you would like us to know about how we can improve our commitment to a safe and supportive school?

LDSD Superintendent Advisory Council Survey

1. What level administrator are you?
2. How many years have you worked in the district?
3. What is your age?*
4. What is your race?*
5. What is your ethnicity?*
6. What is your gender?*
7. What other identities do you think about most often (i.e., color, education level, geographic location, immigration status, income and socioeconomic status, language, occupation,

parental status, political beliefs, physical and mental ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.)?

8. What values/beliefs are most important to you?
9. What strengths do you bring to this committee?
10. My input is solicited and valued when decisions are being made on this committee.
11. Your insight is invaluable. Please expand on any rating of 1 or 5 to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster effective collaboration.
12. What does LDSD as a whole do well that makes us unique?
13. What can be improved?
14. Based on data and anecdotal observations, what are our students and community asking of us?
15. What are the challenges you foresee in addressing the needs you identified in the previous two questions?
16. The current morale among staff is:
17. Please expand on any rating of Very Low to Very High to help identify challenges and/or build on existing efforts that foster high morale.
18. What are the outcomes you would like to see?
19. Who and/or what do you recommend to improve our commitment to safe and supportive schools (i.e., professionals, clubs, organizations, resources)?
20. Is there anything else you would like us to know about how we can improve our commitment to safe and supportive schools?

* "Prefer not to answer" was an available response

APPENDIX B

SOAR ANALYSES

1. Safe and Supportive Schools and Mental Health Committee (SSS + MH)
2. Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
3. LDHS Student Advisory Council (LDHS SAC)
4. LDHS Admin, Faculty, and Staff (LDHS)
5. LDMS Student Advisory Council (LDMS SAC)
6. LDMS Admin, Faculty, and Staff (LDMS)
7. Conewago Elementary
8. East Hanover Elementary (EH)
9. Londonderry Elementary
10. Nye Elementary
11. Price School
12. South Hanover Elementary (SH)
13. LSDSD Superintendent's Advisory Council (LSDSD SAC)

Strengths: What do we do well that makes us unique?

Empathetic staff; Staff control over half of own PD hours; Elementary given relative freedom to teach; Teachers trusted to not turn in lesson plans; Strong sense of district community; Focus on whole child and not just academics; Staff support one another; Offer supports to meet the needs of every student; Great relationship with community/community support/school center of community; Sense of pride and loyalty; Graduates move back to raise families; Superior academic, co/extracurriculars; Teacher talent, potential, and perseverance; Striving for better; Available district resources to support students

Opportunities: What are our clients & community asking for?

More welcoming to "outsiders;" Sense of belonging both in and outside of school; Better connection to school (tech track, ELL); Inclusion; Respect; Physical and psychological safety, especially in "unstructured areas;" To be heard, feel valued/validated/respected, cared for/supported, celebrated, and loved; Honesty; Accountability; Transparency and consistency with school policies, procedures, and best practices; Zero tolerance of discrimination; Effective and consistent consequences/corrective action issued to aggressors; Better communication and consistency in handling discipline; Empathy/perspective-taking of harmful behaviors; Listen to all voices and take all voices into consideration; Educate and change perspectives on diversity; "Be Kind" motto become shared value; Educate staff and students on harmful discourse and actions; Take action on what they are telling us; Wholistic educational experience that supports successful post-secondary transitions; Accomplish our mission and vision; Place to practice dealing with challenges/problem solving opportunities in safe spaces; Opportunities for appropriate social interactions and appropriate relationships; Loved and cared for by at least one caring adult; Common language; More proactive instead of reactive; Fresh leadership perspectives from outside; Better class and club offerings; Multi-cultural awareness; Diversity celebrated; Diversity, inclusion, SEL, MH foundational; Quality education to learn and succeed; Improved leadership; Restorative practices; Include elementary in implementation and programming

SSS + MH
SOAR
 $n = 23$

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Honesty, Accountability, Community, Respect, Caring, Fairness, Kindness, Balance, Responsibility, Integrity, Teamwork, Making a Difference, Justice, Equality, Stability, Humor, Courage, Understanding

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

Better communication/top-down transparency; Admin, principals, supers, board members more visible; Clear vision and communication from SSS/MH committee and district to mitigate angst of changes and unknowns; Staff/admin/community "buy-in;" Change group-think/status quo; Financial resources allocated; Regular (positive) PR on students and staff; Fair media coverage; Regain trust of community; Strong family relationships; Students get involved in clubs/activities; Positive relationship with one caring adult; More diverse staff/leadership (especially in DAC); Data-based decision-making; Strong Tier 1; District-wide MH/SEL/PBIS/MTSS/RtII/TiC/anti-bullying program implemented with fidelity checks; Staff trainings to support SSS/MH initiatives with correct materials; More MH pros; All staff and students to feel heard, acknowledged, valued, safe, and supported; Positive, trusting, balanced work environment; Clear, safe HR processes to address issues (no retaliation); Develop effective listening /comm skills; Learn how to deal with adversity appropriately; Staff feel comfortable handling issues/take student concerns seriously; Staff more empathetic/accepting of differences; Decrease turnover; Create work environment to support positive staff and student MH/emotional regulation; Valued and respected staff; Teachers, staff, and admin working collaboratively; Co-constructed plan with needs assessment and accountability; Competitive wages to maintain quality employees, appropriate class sizes, workload, and minimize shortages; Clarity on current processes to address student needs; District-level resource mapping; Integrity, trust, fairness; Students comfortable talking to staff about issues; Honest conversations



Forming: Anxious, curious; Unsure of purpose; Looking for direction

Very few members give feedback or ask questions; Need more direction in what trying to accomplish; Important for committee to choose direction and work collaboratively to implement across all levels; People not speaking due to fear of judgement; People may not contribute to conversation because they want to get away from work and get home; Some quiet and thoughtful but others recognize value in what is said; Committee very open and many share their thoughts; Have students join committee

Storming: Conflict or friction; Tensions; Frustrated by lack of progress

Group too large; Loudest voices heard; More of a group that listens to admin and relegated to report back to peers; Mostly just an overview of agenda of what is going to happen; One way communication of reporting out what is happening; Decisions already being made and group input not used to make decisions; Decisions do not match input given; More of an information committee; Lack of collaboration; Not much for group to do/haven't done much this year; Not much input requested; Given resources that are not initiated; Meetings meant to "check a box" and not used for systemic change or larger conversations; "Professional bravery" is often met with discomfort or no movement; Made little forward progress on decisions; Lack of progress due to infrequency of meetings; Staff "check out" by time of day of meetings; "Just another thing to do"/Staff roadblock to how SEL fits and what would have to be "cut out" of other academic areas; Have done small group work in the past

TEAM WORK

Norming: Appreciate individual strengths; Commitment to team's goal

Honesty, Teamwork, Judgement/Critical Thinker, Humor, Creativity, Curiosity, Perseverance, Hope, Gratitude, Kindness, Love, Perspective/Big Picture Thinker, Social Intelligence, Leadership, Self-Regulation, Fairness, Love of Learning, Forgiveness, Prudence, Bravery, Humility, Appreciative of Beauty and Excellence, Zest, Spirituality

Performing: Structured process; Working collaboratively



Strengths: What do we like about LDS?

Close-knit community; Family-oriented community; Community sports; Neighborhoods; True community school; Dedicated staff; Supportive and caring staff; Academic offerings (Music, Art); Quality of education; Challenging academics; Varied extracurricular activities; School pride; Middle school to high school transition; Special Education department and supports for neurodiversity, learning and behavioral needs; Club Ophelia; Girls on the Run

Opportunities: What do we need to do to better support belonging?

Remove cell phones from school day; Supports to increase LGBTQ+ and BIPOC students belonging; Build resilience; Education and open conversations on social issues and conflict resolution; Decrease disruptive behaviors; Strength-based approach to identify student qualities; Assess and cultivate needs to create belonging; Restorative practices and justice; Listen and believe students when they speak of harm; Student-led team-building and solution-building; Centering representative student voice to identify needs and school values; Bridge building between different social groups; Representative staff; Learn Spanish in elementary; Consistent, proactive processes and procedures to ensure staff and student accountability for use of race-based speech, harassment, (cyber) bullying, and discrimination; Professional development (conflict, EIB, mental health, trauma); Servant leadership; Parent trainings (kindness, inclusion, social media, mental health); Ensure reporting policies protect the victims; Additional clubs and informational sessions to increase membership; More club opportunities for non-athletes (chess, robotics, coding, science, LGBTQ, neurodivergence); Think beyond "tradition" to adopt new ways of problem-solving; Cultivate stronger student-staff relationships/mentorship; Teach students not content; Adults modeling inclusive behaviors (no misogyny); Celebrating student diversity; Inventory other districts that addressed similar concerns; District must become vulnerable enough for self-critique; External partnerships; PHRC; Law enforcement; Career and Vo Tech support; Harm reduction resources

PAC
SOAR

n = 34

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Integrity/Trust/Honesty; Safety/Dignity/Inclusion/Justice/Equality/Equity/Diversity; Kindness/Respect/Community/Empathy/Compassion/Understanding; Authenticity; Courage

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

School environments that help every child feel seen, heard, and valued regardless of their identities; Improved student discipline procedures; Students can identify and access trusted staff; Belonging and positive peer group interactions; Community "believe-in" and not "buy-in"; Community events and trainings; More collaboration between parents and community at large; Better surveillance/awareness of bullying hot spots; Student resilience workshops; Elementary adoption of shared language for acceptance and kindness; Valuing all dimensions of student diversity; Students among different social groups building meaningful connections; District follows specific, measurable suggestions to improve culture (discipline, accountability, process); Staff and students have courage to address/speak up when they witness racism, exclusion, discrimination, etc.; Representation of students across extracurricular activities (students of color cast in "traditionally" White roles); Decrease in microaggressions; Reconciliation and restorative practices/justices when harm occurs; Attract and hire representative teachers; Healthy discussions around curiosity and learning instead of punishing and separating when issues arise; Leadership develops more of a listening/learning posture; Stronger, more engaged leadership; Safe spaces to express grievances; Swift and appropriate action from staff; Clubs and resources for LDMS; One unified Booster Club; PRIDE recognition that doesn't exclude less recognized students; PAC members in school buildings to support change; Sufficient access to mental health professionals; Peer mentoring



5/22/2023

Strengths: What do we like about LDHS?

Course offerings (Sciences, Band, Woodshop, Art); Club offerings (Diversity Club); Extracurricular activities; Sports; Majority of teachers and staff; Smaller communities within school and the surrounding community; Friendships within school; Have a voice; Listening staff; Opportunities for belonging (pronoun usage, low-income); Positive staff who make student connections; Therapy dogs; Friends; Water refill stations; PowerSchool and Canvas; Communication from teachers

Opportunities: What do we need from LDHS?

Greater presence from adults during lunchtime and other unstructured times to mitigate bullying, racism, etc.; A clear and consistent disciplinary and reporting process to hold students and staff accountable for toxicity, disrespect, harassment, discrimination, race-based speech (in school and on the bus); Ensure Student Code of Conduct is equitable; Restorative practices and justice; PD and learning opportunities to address toxicity (belonging, social cliques, rape culture, rigid stereotypes, (cyber) bullying, racial slurs, perspective-taking, drug abuse/vaping, relational aggression, empathy, active listening skills, lower SES; trauma); More supportive and consistent organizations, clubs, and programs (e.g., different faiths, GSA); Advertise clubs to increase membership; Foundational curriculum to educate on the power of words; Peer conflict resolution; Compassionate staff who connect students to needed mental health services; Mental health education; Community-building activities to support belonging; More extracurricular activities; Recognize that success is more than test and quiz scores; A prayer room for Muslims; Gender neutral bathrooms; Better quality lunch food; Hire more educators and staff from outside of LD "bubble;" Hiring compassionate coaches; Sprucing up hallways (murals); Considerations given for thorough rules with menstruating female students; Neutral teachers that don't favor some students over others; Compassion over late work when life stressors; Trust, honesty; Support for students who speak up (Snitches get Stitches);

LDHS SAC SOAR

n = 35

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Honesty; Respect; Knowledge; Accountability /Reliability; Compassion/Kindness, Creativity/Uniqueness/Self-expression; Religion/Spirituality; Equality/Fairness/Justice/Inclusion/Diversity; Integrity/Trust

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

_____ Educators and staff more present to recognize changes in student behavior or body language and help them accessing support; Increased empathy; Students learn to accept differences not as bad but as something to value; Students held accountable for their actions; A school climate that fosters belonging and community; Teachers showing respect to students; More classes that help students learn the work skills needed to enter workforce and provide exposure to fields never before considered; School events that get students excited about participating; Better cafeteria food (keep buffalo chicken wrap) or free lunches; Classes or curriculum that provide opportunities to learn about the various dimensions of diversity (LGBTQ, people of color); Queer and neurodivergent students thriving and not only surviving; Students and staff having conversations about dignity and belonging; More teaches with mental health crisis training; More focus on the whole child (self and social) rather than just academics; Students feeling safe to open up to teachers; Students prepared for the real world (better guidance); Positive energy; More pep rallies; Equality and kindness advertised across the school; Mutual respect between teachers and students; Better parent awareness of mental health needs;



5/31/2023

Strengths: What does LDHS do well that makes us unique?

Building level admin makes time and space to hear problems and look for solutions; Admin strong partners in implementing ELD program changes; Pride in our community and school; Life skills students included and valued; Relationships with students; Connections with families; Opportunities for students to work together outside of school (sports, clubs); Friendly and welcoming teachers; Building community that genuinely cares about one another; Neighborhood communities; Celebrate all good things (academics, sports, music/theatre, Special Olympics, Mini-Thon); Building admin visible; Educator choice for PD; Multiple levels of core courses; Transition and Co-op coordinator support; Small class sizes; Teaching style and curriculum freedom; Highly educated and "real word" experienced staff; Generational families and staff that were former students

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

To be heard, feel safe, and be able to talk/share concerns; Treat everyone fairly; Be consistent; Be more intentional and aware of students who are not happy and don't feel sense of belonging; Look at equality of race and gender; Do/be better; Safe and supportive academic community; Educate and "be their parent" (be good person, instill character traits not modeled at home); Deeper connections with students and staff; Support all students to achieve their highest potential; Recognize, address, and educate on racism and unconscious biases; Assess culture of student body; Acceptance and tolerance of all; Accountability and follow through; Understood and accepted for personal decisions; Recognize that differences does not make anyone less valuable; Be transparent; Communication and follow through; Better connected families; Staff diversity;

LDHS SOAR

n = 17

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Accountability/Integrity/Honesty/Reliability;
Diversity/Equality/Inclusion/Belonging/Justice/Fairness; Kindness;

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

More women and diversity in decision-making/admin; Weekly or monthly communication; District decisions informed by building-level staff; LGBTQ needs not viewed as political; Improved communication; Recognize strengths and leadership in all teachers and staff; Valuing input of younger and newer teachers; Improved morale; Be more introspective and proactive than reactive; Tiered discipline system implementation (takes too long); Family ownership of child's behavior; Processes for welcoming new students and staff; Educating English Learners; Using asset based approach to scheduling for all learners; Technology; Admin teacher support for parent/student issues; Fewer students in halls; Coping skills; Foster uniqueness; Provide needed resources (budget constraints); Celebrating differences; Help students develop better peer connections; Eliminate social media; Changing the status quo; Cultural competence and growth mindset/learning among staff; More time and money to sustain changes; Students learn skills to transition into world not afraid to form diverse relationships; Understand what is happening with media attention; Leadership team move from reactive to proactive to help facilitate "school family" and connection with staff; Finally addressing racism and intolerance in the building; Expediency with decision-making; Staff feels supported from community and admin; More engaged students; Clear vision/mission; Proper compensation; Clear plan and benchmarks for implementation plans; Improved report incident process; Training; Positive social media presence to highlight; Hire non-LD grads; Lessons on what a safe and supportive school looks like; Cameras to monitor uncovered areas; Trusted



Strengths: What does LDMS do well that makes us unique?

Sports; Extracurriculars (Art Club, summer camp); Social time with friends; Great adults to talk to for guidance; Most teachers are nice and understanding; Most people get along; School projects; Fun and funny; Get to move to different classes; The freedom (get to pick who associate with); Teachers provide multiple ways of learning; Easy to find things around the school; Feelings of safety, understanding, and belonging; Almost feels like home; Teachers that try to help with "raced" comments; Lunch; "Be Kind;" Club Ophelia; When we do school outside; Diverse studies

Opportunities: What do we need from LDMS?

Recognize, Address, and eliminate (cyber) bullying; Clear rules; Effective and consistent discipline for racist "jokes" and microaggressions and protection for targeted students (race, ethnicity, SES, religion, body size, etc.); Place for Muslim students to pray; Push back the schedule by 20-30 min; Decrease amount of going up and down the stairs (8th grade stairs); Proper punishment for rude/disrespectful behavior toward teachers, staff, and peers; More authority from teachers on addressing issues; Make sure staff and students know the rules (don't just talk about it one day); Accountability for negative ways staff treat students with mental health issues; Discipline/monitoring to prevent peers from getting "touchy" changing in Phys. Ed.; Make school fun; More in-school certified therapists; More compassionate staff; Help students make positive peer connections and coping skills; Placing students in classes with peers they can get along with; Fix AC and heat throughout building; Ability to skip pep rallies; Organize special meetings; Give students a chance to explain their side of the story; Check for student academic understanding; Make the lunch rows fair on who goes first and last; Teacher expectation to use phones that don't embarrass students who don't have phones; Stricter dress code; Monitor students in the halls for harm; More days to help clean the school; Less people at lunch tables; Ensure kids don't kick kids off of "their" tables; Teachers check for understanding; Better communication during emergencies; Period products in bathrooms; Transgender locker room and bathroom; Ability to choose seats in class

LDMS
SAC SOAR

n = 46

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Christianity/Religion; Family/Friends; Respect; Equality; Kindness; Understanding

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

More clubs (engineering, diversity, sport cards, Club Ophelia, mental health, cheerleading, American Sign Language); Late buses come everyday to support more clubs; More after school sports for 6th grade; Advertisement of clubs; More performing arts (dance, musicals, chorus); More curriculum (race, gender, cultures, religion, identities, LGBTQ, wellness); Ability to take breaks or sit outside the classroom (mitigate stress); More understanding of students' personal lives; More emotional support (mental health support); Partner with community-based organizations; More community events; Students being respectful of each other, even with differences; Accept all people so they don't have to hide from who they are; Race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation inclusivity; Have students make positive posters to hang in hallways (be yourself); Educate students on differences as good and create opportunities to bring understanding; Less congestion and play in the hallways; Respectfulness in stairwells; More time on assignments; More/longer recess and recess in 7th and 8th grade; People taking time to help other people; People express who they are and enjoy themselves; More time for 7th and 8th grade to get books from library; More teachers from diverse backgrounds (regions, etc.); Restorative justice and practices; Make dress code fair for girls; Club like Club Ophelia for boys; Let other lunch rows go first; More comfortable chairs; Longer lunches; Smaller classroom sizes; More diversity; More SAC meetings; 7th and 8th grade lunch split; More time for homework in 11th period; Middle of the day study hall; Have phones at lunch



5/31/2023

Strengths: What does LDMS do well that makes us unique?

Students work well with students with disabilities; Strong sense of community; Put kids first in decision-making; Create ideas to support a Falcon Family; Students express that teachers are nice; Students love counselors; Support from community and families; Building admin communicate with staff honesty, directly, appropriately; Staff are hard workers; Collegial staff support; Empathetic staff; Pride and district loyalty from LD grads that are now staff members; Resources available to students; Using PRIDE to recognize students typically not recognized; School-wide activities to celebrate winter break, sports, music, musical, fun dress weeks

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

More transparency and communication; Sticking to state standards of curriculum; Being consistent in how respond to situations; Show care and concern for students and families; Quality education; Programs beyond academic subjects; Acceptance; Love; Support, guide, grow students; Safe and inclusive learning environment; Be respectful of differences and choices students make in their lives; Fair educators; Know teachers care; Taught by teacher rather than computer; To be heard; When concerns raised, act on as soon as possible; Responsibility/accountability for students involved in situations; Maintain homogenized ideals and beliefs of White community; Struggling to keep divided community happy to prevent families from leaving; No class disruptions; Sense of belonging in and outside of school; Safety in classroom and unstructured locations; Certain speech will not be tolerated; Understanding on why and how we are making changes; Learn how to have difficult conversations ; Awareness and meaningful intervention with "real issues" related to harassment, discrimination, race-based speech; Better admin communication with student discipline; Consistency in procedures and consequences; All students feel accepted and safe; Awareness of implicit biases; Staff invested in whole child and not just curriculum; "Believe in" vs. "buy in" from staff on wellness and change

LDMS
SOAR
n = 16

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Accountability; Equality; Fairness; Respect; Family; Health; Environment; Kindness; Compassion; Balance; Love; Appreciation; Trust; Faith; Family; Financial Stability; Honesty; Independence; Integrity; Loyalty; Reliability; Responsibility; Creativity; Teamwork; Humor; Caring; Giving Back; Achievement; Contentment; Efficiency; Fairness; Gratitude; Home; Parenting; Patience; Safety; Travel; Wisdom; Humanity; Learning; Ethics; Harmony; Peace; Honesty; Perseverance; Understanding; Truth; Security; Community; Connection; Openness; Patience; Pride;

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

Value support staff; Teacher trust; Staff and students accepting of one another; Staff aware of different student needs; Equality among staff members (responsibilities, schedule, homerooms); Encore teachers included with the whole school team; Grade-level teams building comradery and collaboration; More staff; Supports to help students struggling at home; Better supports for ELL community; More time for teams to meet and plan (other buildings given more time); Whole and healthy staff with coping skills to manage vicarious trauma and burnout; More time to mentor students (Flex Time); Better teacher-student interactions; Grade-level, fun assemblies; Fun, after-school activities to develop relationships; Opportunities to learn and practice appropriate social situations; Less paperwork and more time to put into lesson plans and grading; Actions to minimize student and staff apathy; Collaboration with home and school to change challenging behaviors; Money (paying staff, late busses); Substitute availability; Decreased student to teacher ratio; Similar expectations across MS and HS; Improve staff retention; Respectful students and decreased entitlement; Admin more present (not just for problems); Staff feel valued (Staff Accolades); Teachers feel safe and trusted to do their jobs; Representative curriculum—not just during special months; Support from external partners to develop and revise goals; Small group discussions with students, parents, teachers; Inventory exemplar districts; Professionally trained staff (teachers not peer mediators, anti-bullying experts); Get rid of square dancing (more culturally appropriate); Divest from "addiction to frenzy"



Strengths: What does Conewago do well that makes us unique?

Small school with three major CAIU programs (Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Intensive Autistic Support, Early Childhood Preschool); Caring, loving, empathetic for both students and staff; Staff get along and work as a team; Staff supports each other when challenges arise; Know how to have fun; Great leader

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

All students are accepted, heard from both peers and adults; Meet the needs of each student, regardless of parental involvement or neighborhood; 100% effort to make building positive place to learn

Conewago SOAR

$n = 6$

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Honesty/Trust/Truth; Parenting; Humor; Generosity/Kindness/Empathy; Spirituality/Religion; Teamwork/Collaboration; Reliability/Perseverance/Hardworking

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

School culture of kindness, acceptance, open communication; 100% inclusive environment; Happy teachers and happy kids; More SEL; More whole family learning; Students held to higher standard of respect for teachers, staff, and peers; Teachers and staff more committed to holding students accountable for their behaviors; Clear processes and procedures for risk assessment, threat assessment; Building levels of support for students who may not need special ed (RtI, MTSS, PBIS); Meaningful, differentiated interventions based on diverse needs of students and families; Ample substitutes; Time to implement effective interventions to address safe and supportive schools; Support staff schedules amenable to student needs (preventative and reactive); More mental health staff to help develop curriculum to educate the whole child; Wellness education for families; Time for teachers to work on wellness skills in the classroom; Teachers and staff listen to student concerns and help them find resources or solutions/answers; Trust, value, and support the roles and strengths of all staff; Open communication that demonstrates healthy conflict resolution and problem-solving; Better home-school collaboration and accountability to address student issues; Parents/guardians develop more respect for school staff and not consider them enemies; Competitive wages; Valued by district office to mitigate burnout and feelings of exploitation; More approachable leaders who are open to different perspectives; Better communication and understanding of everyone's roles in district; Better district communication and collaborative as a whole; Guest speakers



Strengths: What does EH do well that makes us unique?

Staff keenly aware to needs and struggles of students; Staff speak the truth; Staff energetic and creative; Economically diverse population; Tight-knit group of teachers and staff that support one another; Small community; Students willing to embrace and accept everyone; Staff go extra lengths to support kids; Staff value social-emotional areas as much as academic areas; Active and generous PTO; Weekly pickleball after school; Principal does not micromanage; Frequent dress down days; Frequent teacher-led events; Staff friends in and outside of school; Communities that Care

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

To see them where they are and help them succeed; To be fair; Be aware of and celebrate differences to affirm and empower students; Foster students who are respectful, kind, and accountable; Equity, accountability, lower class sizes; Support them socially and emotionally to manage emotions; Know they are cared for, supported, respected; Teach students to best of ability (emotionally, socially, academically); To be heard and cared for; Attention and acceptance

EH SOAR

$n = 8$

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Accountability/Responsibility/Ethics; Authenticity/Honesty/Openness/Trust/Truth, Connection/Compassion/Kindness/Friendship/Community/Teamwork

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

More time for difficult, open, honest, conversations; Effective listening, communication, and conflict resolution; Shared ownership and decision-making on district level and input not solicited just to "check a box;" Unity on effective programing with proper training, accountability, and fidelity checks; Provided resources align with requests; Accessible, DAC; Feeling heard/valued by DAC admin and transparency in steps taken to address issues; Admin/staff willingness to change; Building issues (heat, A/C, toilets) fixed in timely fashion; Sufficient substitute pool and aides to avoid last minute staff reassignments and extra coverages; Team building opportunities; Trust and community respect; Improved leadership and accountability to fulfill roles; Improved morale; Increased support for SEL to address COVID impact; Improved staff resilience; Additional mental health resources/staff; Improved school safety (secure doors); Consistent whole-group PD (core instruction, SEL, mental health); Culturally responsive pedagogy/practices; Smaller class sizes; Sufficient resources to address wide range of deficits to address opportunity gaps; Increased budget for resources and staff issues; Competitive wages (staff, para, aides, subs); District admin connected to buildings and community; Clear and consist responses to student behavior; Recognition of implicit biases; More proactive approaches (supportive counseling, class lessons); Mitigate long-term absences; New initiatives not viewed as adding more to already full plates; Hope; Remember our why; VP, second counselor of school psych in each elementary; Double SPED staff; Class sizes capped at 20; Rtl; Grant funding; Parent workshops on how to respond; Community initiative;



Strengths: What does Londonderry do well that makes us unique?

Meeting students where they are; Students cry before break rather than cheer; Make students feel seen and valued; Low SES; Less-than-ideal family involvement; Diverse school

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

Do not have pity or low expectations; Positive perceptions of families; Communication and transparency; Celebrate student success; Provide students with safe and supportive learning environment; Love and care; Acceptance; To feel heard and supported

Londonderry **SOAR**

n = 5

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Authenticity/Accountability/Honesty/Trust; Belonging/Connection/Community; Love/Kindness/Grace; Empathy/Compassion/Understanding

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

Follow through on ideas and initiatives; True collaboration and shared ownership in decision-making; Clear rules and responsibilities for staff; Strong leadership and accountability to set firm decisions; Welcoming to students with autism; More welcoming environment for students who "do not fit the mold;" Better conflict resolution among staff; Positive staff-parent engagement (PTO, volunteers); Trauma-informed practices training and resources (trauma on brain development); Address deficit ideologies (to focus on system and not individual); Improved morale; Consistent, positive, supportive actions from all staff; Collaboration, trust, and accountability; Recognizing the work and value of staff; Improved communication with all teams; Restore Community Outreach committee and Faculty Advisory Committee; More substitutes and paraprofessionals; Capacity building for special education to mitigate safety and service concerns; PD on relationship-building and strengths-based approaches to avoid assuming the worst from student circumstance; Trust; Money to address needs; Staff wellness; Staff listened to by admin and evidence that solutions are derived; Staff feel supported by building-admin to address needs to district admin; Minimize negativity and complaining; Minimize burnout; More awareness of differences; More empathy for families served; Shared positivity and common language when working with challenging situations; Transportation for parents to attend events; Competitive wages; Organizational support to help address diverse cultural needs; Address equity, inclusion, and belonging issues that don't spotlight few BIPOC students;



Strengths: What does Nye do well that makes us unique?

Teachers and staff have a say; Work collaboratively; Input valued, appreciated, and heard; Work well as a team; Main phrase: "Is this what is best for kids?;" Small close and close family feel; Staff comradery; Community connection (invested in community outreach); Many who work here live here; Student body diversity and languages;

Principal is great communicator; Communicate with families well through Dojo; Majority of students are drop off/pick up, which makes for easy rapport, witnessing family dynamics, and quick problem solving; Good core teachers; A lot of love in students; Acceptance of others; All here for the same goal; Morale boost with new principal

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

All students are accepted, heard from both peers and adults; Meet the needs of each student, regardless of parental involvement or neighborhood; 100% effort to make building positive place to learn; That staff about their students; Acknowledgement/ownership of issues; Awareness of equity and microaggressions; Equitable education that prepares students for the real world; Curriculum that reflects lived experiences and prepares to interact with diverse people; To be fair, consistent, caring, hardworking staff; To be safe at school; Classrooms that don't have disruptive behaviors; Foster a sense of belonging; Transparency; Follow through with discipline; Consistent and more frequent communication; Collaboration among parents, students, teachers, administration; Shift from "keeping the status quo;"

Nye
SOAR
 $n = 9$

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Trust/Authenticity/Reliability; Teamwork/Community; Kindness; Diversity/Equality/Fairness/Justice; Making a difference;

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

valued, respected, heard on district level; More shared ownership and collaboration so all staff voices are heard (not favoring a small group in building); Better building layout; Stronger school and home partnership; Be more consistent with compassion for colleagues (don't know what everyone is struggling with); More LS/SLS support; Smaller class sizes and caseloads; Education and positive attitudes for ELL and learning support students, lower SES, diverse students (learning support, autistic support, etc.); Better supports for students with special and diverse needs; Special ed admin and coaches develop better collaboration with teachers to support placement and learning support; Improved accountability and teamwork; Improved curriculum (social studies) reflective of student population; Equity across the board; Improved communication (between grades and admin); All students given same opportunity for growth regardless of parental involvement; Admin willing to change and make necessary changes; More staff; More programs/materials, training; More staffing to address emotional and mental health needs of students; School be mental health clearinghouse of social services to strengthen family unit; Social skills curriculum; More learning support classrooms; Timely feedback; District and admin following up with employees and getting out to classrooms; Diversifying committees to make choices in the building; Decisions made building-wide or at faculty meetings (instead with leadership committee); All staff activities (morning yoga, breakfast, coffee); Staff feeling valued and appreciated; Address academic and social learning loss of COVID; Support for Choose Love curriculum for "tough" conversations; Resources; Speakers



Strengths: What does Price do well that makes us unique?

Adapt and accommodate most students needs; Staff works well together; Support each other and help get through tough situations; Able to build very strong relationships with students and families; Meet every student where they are emotionally, socially, academically, behaviorally, etc.; Put kids' health, safety, mental state above academics; Feeling like "in it together;" Great teamwork

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

Safe and supportive school environment; Access to the same opportunities as remainder of students within district; Maturation; Job upon graduation; Job skills to sustain employment

Price SOAR

$n = 3$

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Compassion; Empathy; Relationships

Family; Peace; Harmony; Simplicity; Fun; Grace; Serenity; Faith; Patience

Kindness; Responsibility; Respect

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

Shared ownership and decision-making; More inviting building; Building improvements (new blinds, door frames); Student connection to larger district (not included in building activities); Improved communication between admin and staff; More notice and improved onboarding to support transition into program; Better support transitioning students back to the building (or even one class); Setting boundaries on how far our program is willing to be flexible to make a student fit; Clearer path for how students from middle school and high school are sent full-time to Price; Allow social worker (18 years) to give input into whether or not students are a good fit; Considered equal within the district; Utilizing resources for building improvements and needed resources; More support from outside of the building; Student social and emotional growth; Students graduate; Program inclusivity; Hand rail for student with physical disability to safely walk up the steps



Strengths: What does SH do well that makes us unique?

Principal values input/perspective; Principal approachable; School pride; Compassionate, open-minded, and committed educators and staff; Want to see students succeed; Supportive, highly involved families; Interest in learning about diverse cultures; Rapidly growing diverse population; Supportive rigor for high-achieving students; Community activities build connections; Veteran teachers; Teachers who live in SH; Student leaders; Repeat families; Small-town school feel; Majority of staff love their jobs; Staff attend student sporting events; Staff work as a team; Staff value each other's abilities; Full inclusion; Smaller school leads to greater connections; Staff social events to build morale (Hershey Bears, outdoor hike, cardo drumming, pickleball); Able to provide extra resources to students and families in need; Develop the whole child; Having fun while learning; Social Committee

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

To understand our social responsibility to ensure all students feel heard, valued, accepted, celebrated for who they are; Know that their children are loved by staff; Treated fairly; Awareness of classroom happenings; Involvement in school community; Feel connected to the learning process; Curriculum fosters individual growth of each child; Continue strong academic tradition of SH; Provide variety of rich opportunities; Increased acceptance for students with needs; Stronger connection/immersion of every student and family in general education classroom community; Exceptions for child's behavior and not to be treated like everyone else; Understanding of the whole child

SH
SOAR
 $n = 10$

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Compassion; Kindness; Love; Accountability; Trust; Honesty; Reliability; Perseverance; Integrity; Hard Work; Competence; Efficiency; Responsibility; Loyalty; Equality; Dignity; Acceptance; Joy; Making a Difference; Beauty; Hunting; Altruism; Belonging; Connection; Community; Order; Collaboration; Cooperation; Forgiveness; Balance; Understanding; Caring; Friendship; Giving Back; Hope; Learning; Patience; Self-discipline; Service; Growth; Humor

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

DAC solicits and values building-level input; More support from DAC daily operations; Input and suggestions valued and respected; Stronger leadership presence with students; More consistent /assertive admin; Improved district-wide comms and transparency; Support staff input valued; Shared ownership of initiatives so they don't fall on a few; Improved building-wide comms to ensure programs implemented with fidelity; Teacher aides; Greater family involvement; Staff recognize/acknowledge/respect/celebrate diversity; Support for teachers to feel more confident supporting students with different needs; Staff move from being solely performance-driven to growth/progress-driven; Greater connection with staff across grade levels; Dedicated time to build connections during the school day; High, sustained morale; Valuing all voices and not just those with strongest personalities; Consistent discipline and consequences; Better collaboration/team approach between classroom and support staff; District willingness to change; District budget teachers expanded to support and retain support staff; Greater consensus among building and not just grade-levels; Mitigation of burn out; Disrupting resentment and score-keeping throughout building and across other elementary buildings; District-wide SEL program; Consequences for (other) leadership/staff who behave inappropriately; Comprehensive K-12 curriculum not developed in house; More staff to support 1:1 learning in younger grades; External partnerships; Teacher "believe in" instead of "buy in;" Improved staff emotional intelligence; Including multicultural info in morning announcements; Greater staff-student connections



Strengths: What does LDSO as a whole do well that makes us unique?

Dedicated staff; Community connection; Long-term admin who served in multiple roles throughout career; Several admin live in district; Admin have kids within district or graduates; Small town feel while providing benefits of larger districts; Work tirelessly with limited resources; Long history of caring for high-need and behavioral students in-house

SAC Strengths

Curiosity (60%); Teamwork (50%); Leadership (50%); Humor (40%); Creativity (40%); Judgment/Critical Thinker (40%); Perspective/Big Picture Thinker (40%); Honesty (40%)

Opportunities: What are our students and community asking of us?

Inclusion for all students; Understand all students; Cultivate schools where all students belong (feel safe, heard, valued); Provide best education possible for every student to succeed; More transparency; Curriculum and activities representative of cultures and identities of our students, staff, and community; Effective leadership through uncertainty within district (communication, vision, collaboration across all levels); Continue to provide the experience that made people move here in the first place and choose to come back to district; Love students and support beyond school walls; Serve all their needs and not those we traditionally have served; Transparency; Fairness; Acknowledgement; Clear direction from district; Rapid response to problems without waiting for thought processes to play out;

LDSO SAC SOAR

n = 10

Aspirations: What do we care deeply about (i.e., values)?

Honesty (70%); Accountability (50%); Compassion (40%); Integrity (40%); Respect (40%)

Results: What are the outcomes we would like to see?

Transparency and stronger communication from DAC and BOD; DAC improve willingness to listen/collaborate and minimize defensiveness /dismissiveness; Increased emotional intelligence and social awareness; Vision and strategic direction (absent for a long time) to move forward meaningfully and mitigate current uncertainty; Decision-making aligned with shared mission; Student-centered climate; Pursuit of equity; Equity agenda; Courageous, open convos for perspective-taking; More planning time over report outs and disseminating info; Openness to new methods; Clear expectations and accountability; Clear direction from DAC to support buildings; Team-building (relationships) and trust-building throughout year and not just during admin week; Capacity building (increase admin staff); Competitive wages for retention/recruitment of aides, paras, subs, faculty (cannot fill positions); Better response/agency to inaccurate accusations; Stronger appreciation for perspectives of minoritized students; Disrupt desire to do the same thing over and over again; Target improvements and interventions to neediest schools and students; Dedicate time to innovate (and not last to do something); Well-maintained facilities; Improved equipment and technology; Fiscal responsibility to address pressing needs underbudgeted or neglected; Increasing taxes; More staff time for paperwork and collaboration (only 45 min); Improved student pride; Time and money to pay staff to create curriculum/lessons; DEIB training; Dean of students at LDHS; More admin support for SpEd; Common definitions for safe and supportive; Cultivate agency; Preventative discipline; Restorative practices



06/13/2023