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## Prioritize community outreach and access

*Pittsburgh*

is a community deeply committed to the success of its public schools. The city is rich with resources, including a strong foundation community, local nonprofits, cultural institutions and service providers, all of which play a vital role in supporting education. The community not only recognizes this wealth of resources but also actively engages in efforts to enhance the educational landscape.

However, yearly declines in enrollment, coupled with population shifts, present significant challenges to providing equitable, excellent, and efficient educational opportunities. These demographic changes strain the District's ability to meet the diverse needs of all students. For example, some schools may face difficulties maintaining diverse program offerings or retaining specialized staff as student populations fluctuate.

In recent parent focus groups, **approximately 23% of responses** highlighted the importance of community support for mental and emotional well-being as a top priority, while **18% emphasized** the need for after-school support and enrichment programs.

These responses reflect a growing awareness of the critical role holistic support plays in student success. For instance, many parents expressed a desire for expanded access to mental health support within schools and the establishment of wellness centers that provide a safe space for students to address their emotional needs. Additionally, after-school programs, such as tutoring, arts, and sports, were frequently mentioned as essential for student development beyond the classroom.