

School Board Study Session  
Agenda  
10/21/24

2 – 4 p.m.

Equity Training

4 – 4:15 p.m.

Break

4:15 – 6:15 p.m.

Board Strategic Governance Training

6:15 - 7 p.m.

Dinner Break Before Board Meeting

# Richfield Public Schools Board Retreat

Dr. Natalie Rasmussen

October 21, 2024

# Agenda

Welcome

CCAR Protocol

Harkness

Whiteness

Asset vs Deficit Thinking

Hidden Curriculum

Small Group Work

# The Courageous Conversations About Race (CCAR) Protocol

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## THE COMPASS



## THE AGREEMENTS

- Stay engaged
- Speak your truth
- Experience discomfort
- Expect and accept non-closure

## THE CONDITIONS

1. Focus on what is personal, local and immediate
2. Isolate race
3. Normalize social construction and multiple perspectives
4. Monitor agreements and conditions. Establish parameters
5. Use a "working definition" for race
6. Examine the presence and role of "Whiteness."

What if we treated educators like professional athletes?



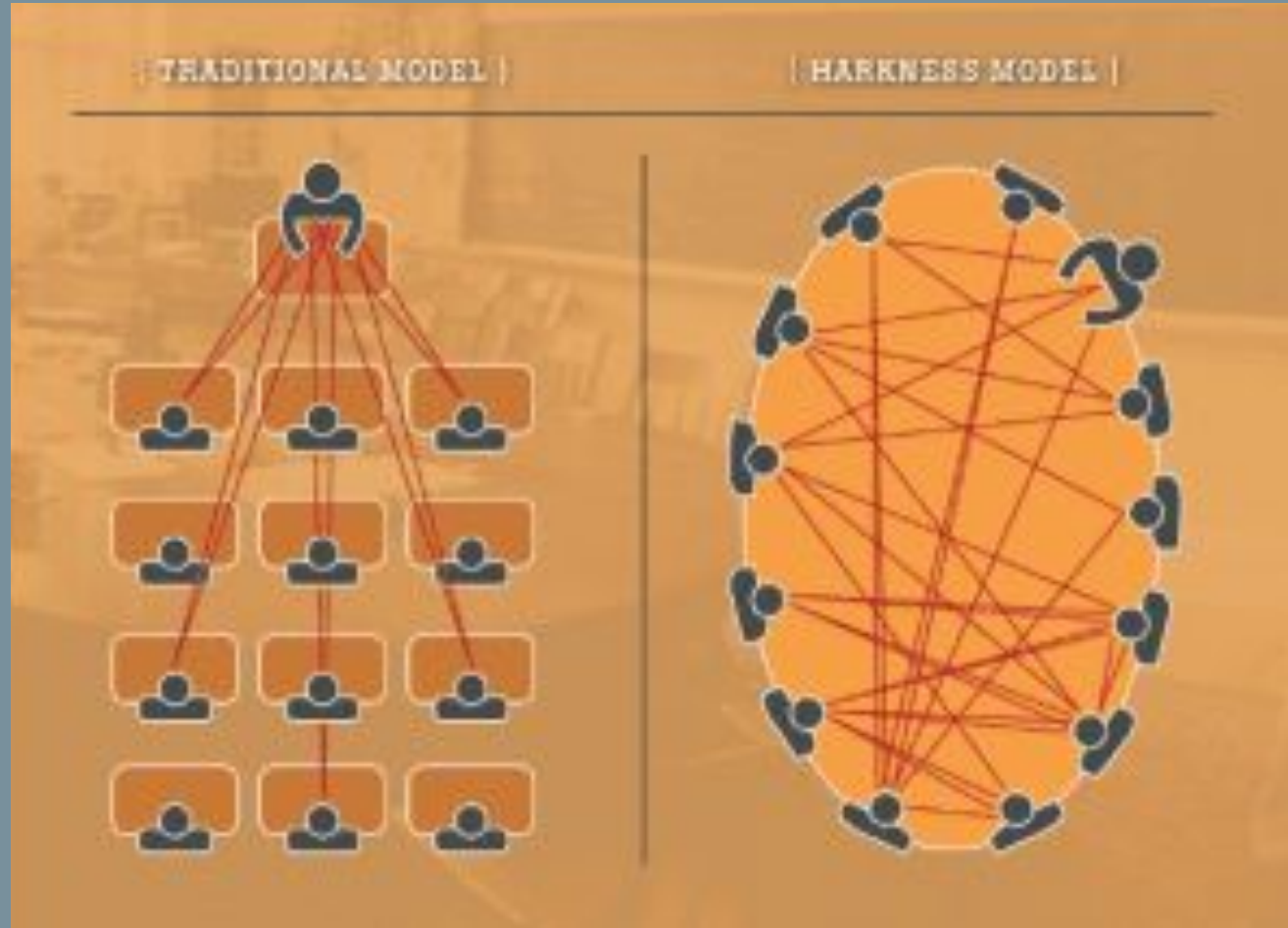
Powerful people  
empower people




What is  
Harkness?



# The Harkness Method



## The 5 *Whys* Problem Solving Process



**Ohno** encouraged his team to use the **5 why's** to dig into each problem

## The 5 Whys Group Activity:

What is the **Root Cause**?

Since the beginnings of American society, there has been an unspoken link between race and perceived intelligence.

In small groups, discuss this issue using the *5 Whys* to see if you can uncover a root cause for this common understanding.

# What is a “Good School”?

What are the  
Characteristics of  
a *Good School*?

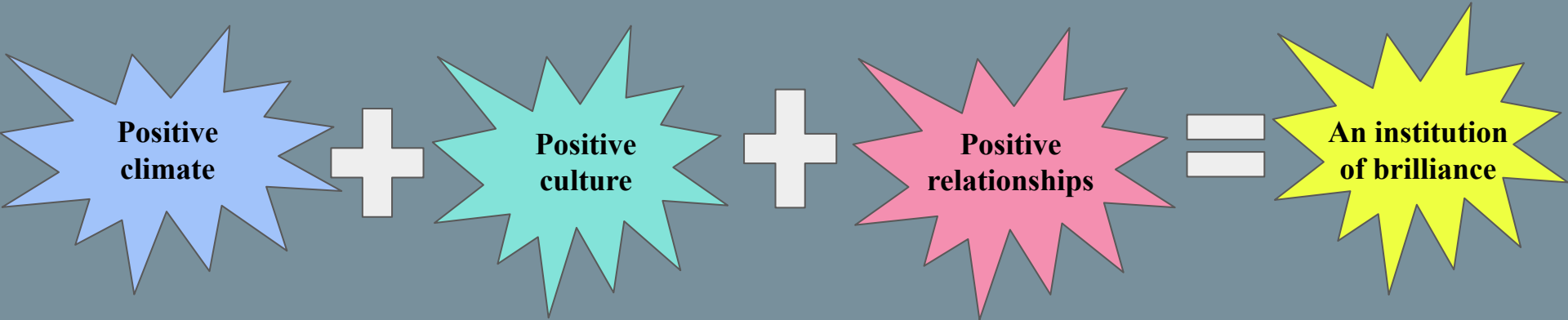


How do YOU frame or define academic success?

What does education look like in what is perceived to be a “good school”?

How would you lead differently if you your schools were comprised entirely of “gifted”, “advanced”, or “privileged” children?

# An Equation For School Success



# White Supremacy and Whiteness: Definitions

Dr. Rosemarie Allen  
Professor,  
Metropolitan State  
University, Denver



There is nothing inherently wrong with whiteness.

White



Whiteness only becomes a problem when it is seen as the *only* way.

Is whiteness embedded in the hidden curriculum?

Is whiteness embedded in the district policies?

## % Body vs. % Mind

Where do we focus our time, resources, policies, and procedures?



**“In nature there are neither  
rewards nor punishments;  
there are consequences.”**

**– Robert Green Ingersoll**



# The Impact of Deficit Thinking

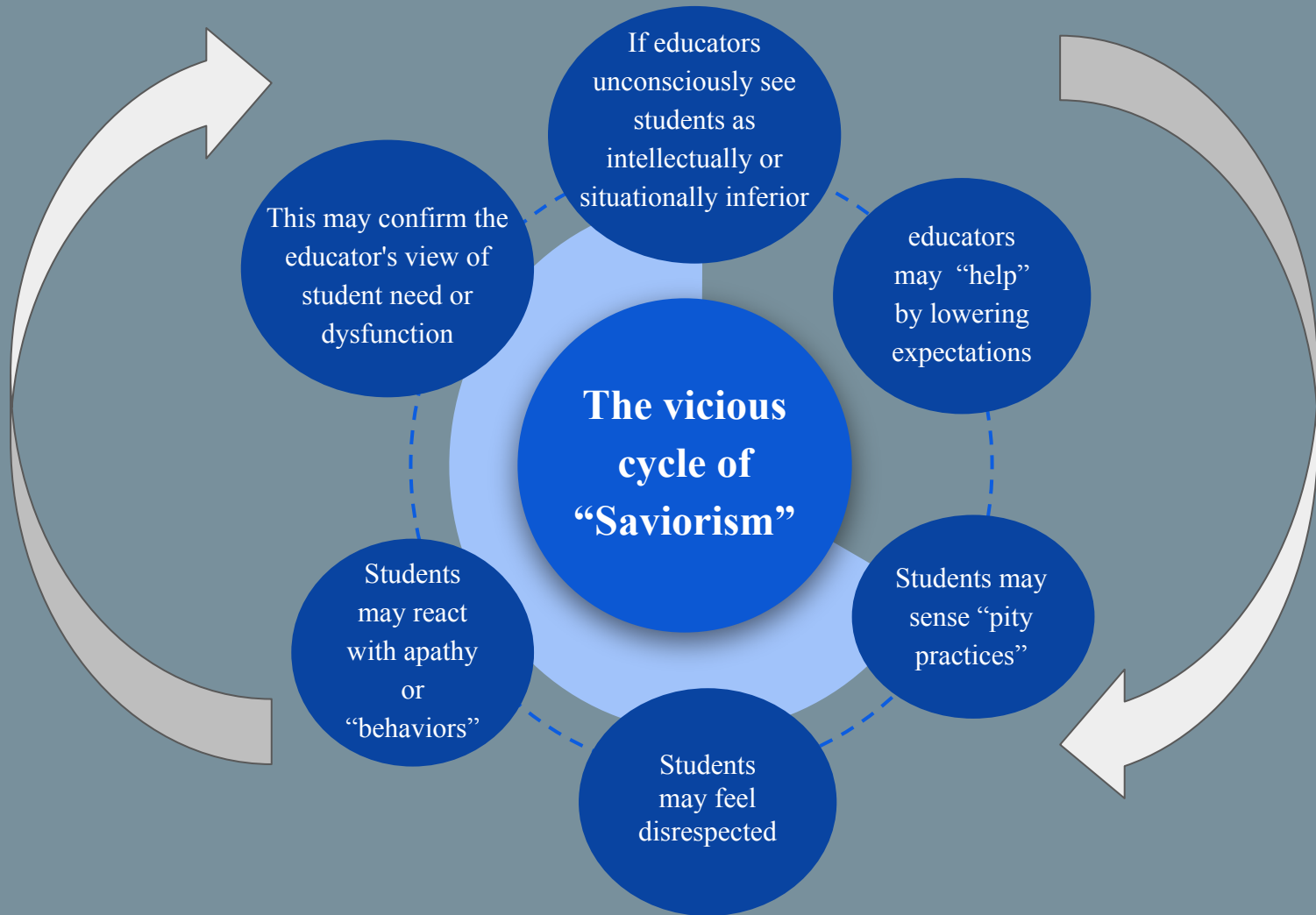
Deficit thinking in education can be seen as having lower expectations for students who do not fit in with the traditional context of the school system.

By practicing deficit thinking, what educators believe might help “fix” the student will only further alienate and marginalize the students.

Common examples of deficit thinking are:

- Assuming children who come from low-income families are more difficult to teach
- Teaching “lower-level” classes are a form of paying dues or punishment

(Simone, 2012)



Being Underestimated  
or  
Pity-Based Education

One flavor of  
microaggression

Governor Wes Moore,  
Maryland (D)



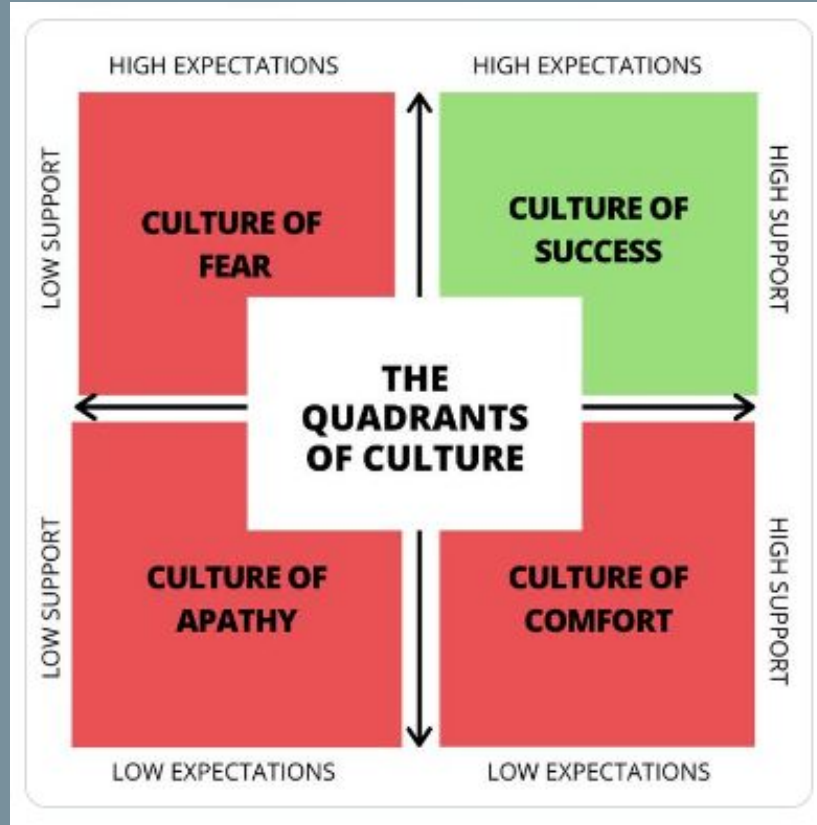
# What educators say & what kids hear

T: If it's late, it's 50% deduction. No retakes or revisions. You should have been prepared the first time.

S: Why bother? If I make a mistake, I'll fail.

T: Do this word find worksheet and try not to be too noisy.

S: Why bother? They think I'm stupid.



T: You're almost there!  
Please revise this part of your work to show your new understanding.

S: They want me to be excellent. I will step up.

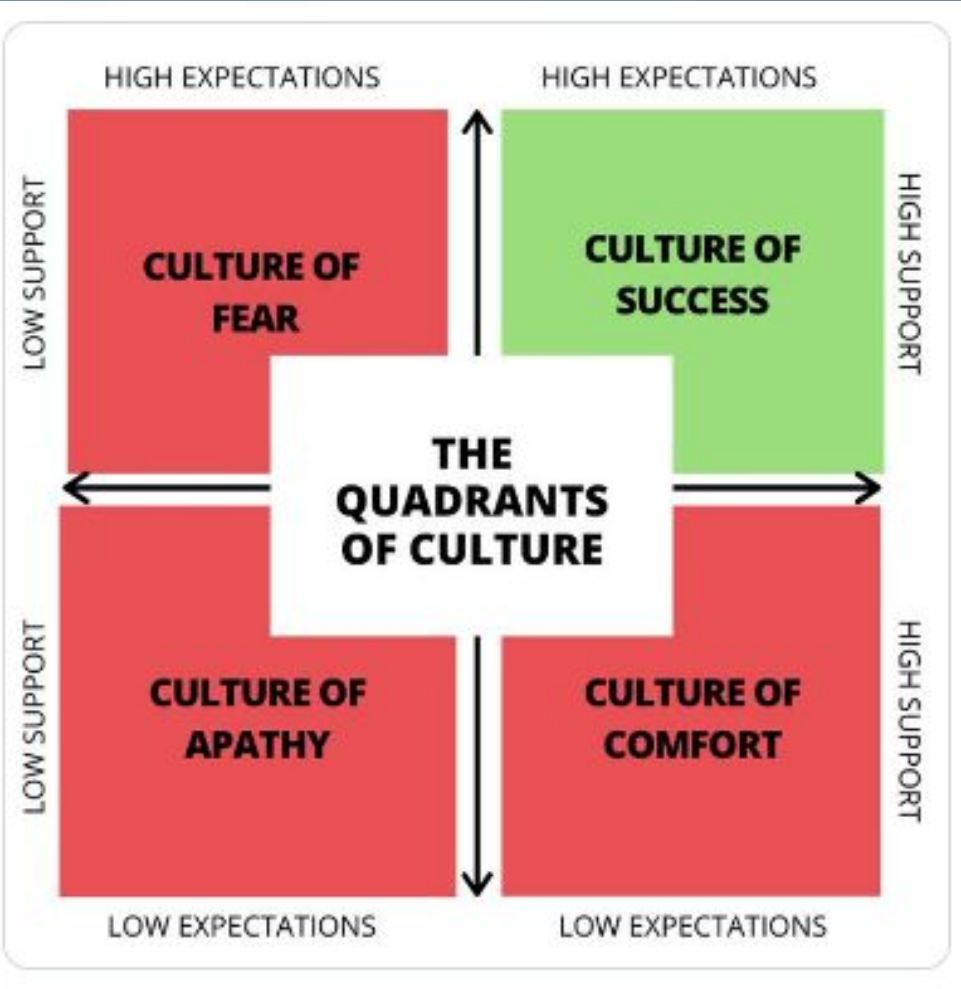
T: I see your trauma and that life has been too hard for you. I'm just glad you made it to class.

S: Why bother? They think I'm broken.

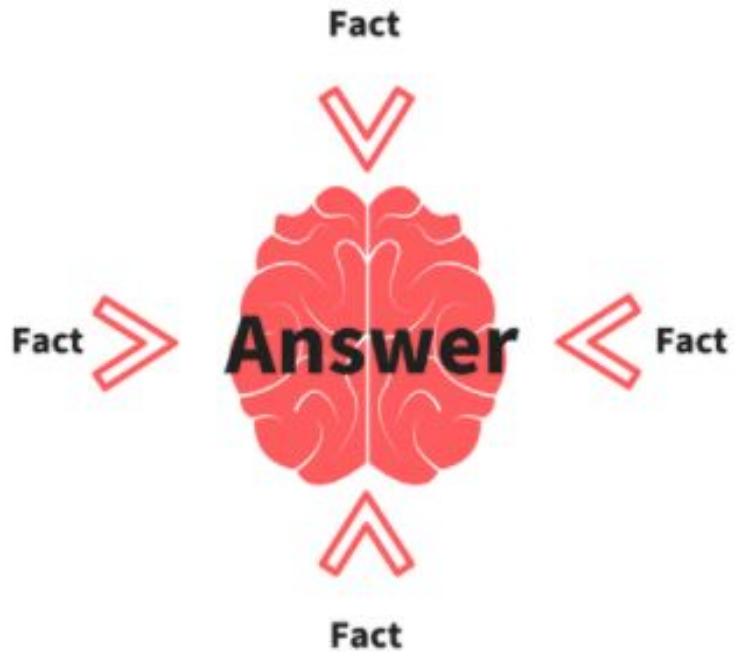
# The Culture of Success

What would this look like in your schools?

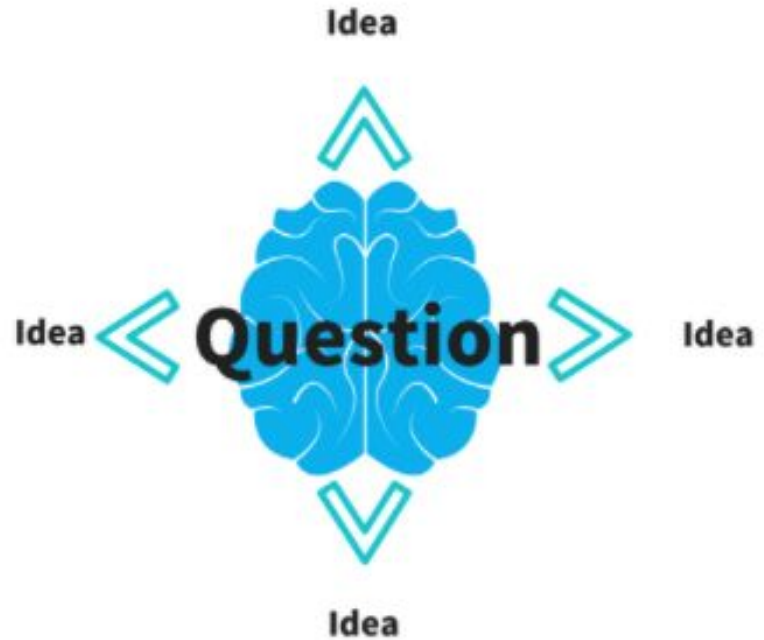
- Lesson Delivery & Instruction
- Classwork
- Activities
- Homework
- Assessment
- Grading Policy



# CONVERGENT THINKING



# DIVERGENT THINKING



Learning is more than just getting the right answer: Fostering deep understanding and the application of learning.



How can we empower  
students to unleash their  
academic brilliance?

“Consistent exposure to strengths reframes how we view our learners and the work they do.”

- *Katie White*

*Teacher, in Education Week*



List everyday examples of student brilliance that you can see, hear, or look for.

*Change the way you look at things,  
and the things you look at change.*

Wayne Dyer



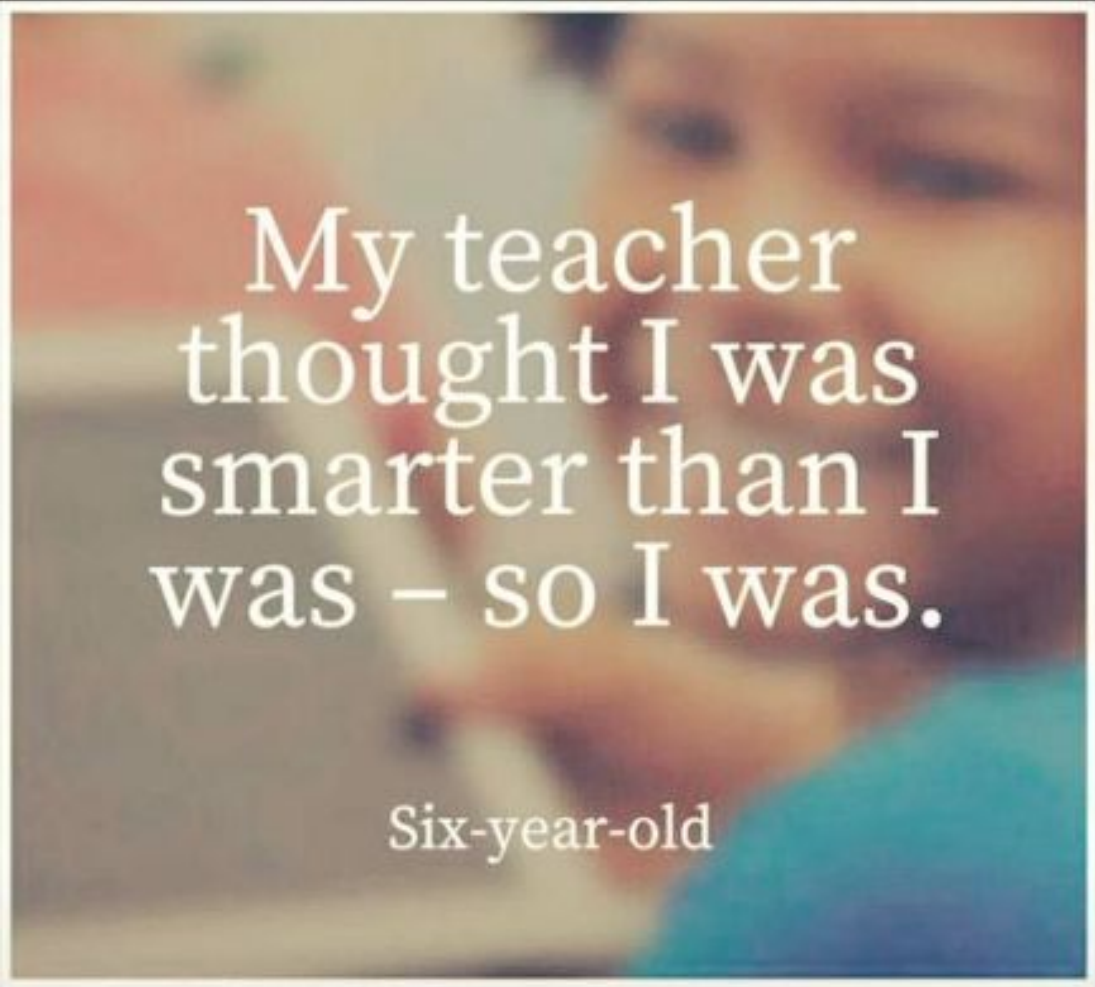
What do you think  
are the underlying  
assumptions about  
these elementary  
students'  
intelligence and  
capabilities?

Why?



while collaborating and communicating with their teacher and peers.

What type of asset-based thinking do you suppose was happening in this six-year old's class?

A blurred photograph of a young child's face, likely a six-year-old, with text overlaid. The child's eyes are looking slightly to the right, and their expression is neutral. The background is out of focus, showing warm tones of orange and red.

My teacher  
thought I was  
smarter than I  
was – so I was.

Six-year-old

Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, III  
President Emeritus of UMBC

“Why don’t you have an A?”





Harvard  
University



Yale University



Princeton  
University



Cornell  
University



Columbia  
University



University of  
Pennsylvania



Dartmouth  
College

# Richfield Public Schools

The New Ivy League Feeder?



Brown  
University

# Why Are Ivy League **Schools** So Prestigious?

1. Long-Standing Tradition of Excellence
2. Rigorous Academic Programs
3. Selective Admissions
4. Robust Research Opportunities
5. Extensive Alumni Networks
6. Diverse Extracurricular Offerings



# What Qualities Sets Ivy League Students Apart?

1. Academic Excellence
2. Intellectual Curiosity
3. Resilience and Grit
4. Leadership and Initiative
5. Pursuit of Excellence in All Areas
6. Collaboration and Teamwork
7. Humility and Open-Mindedness



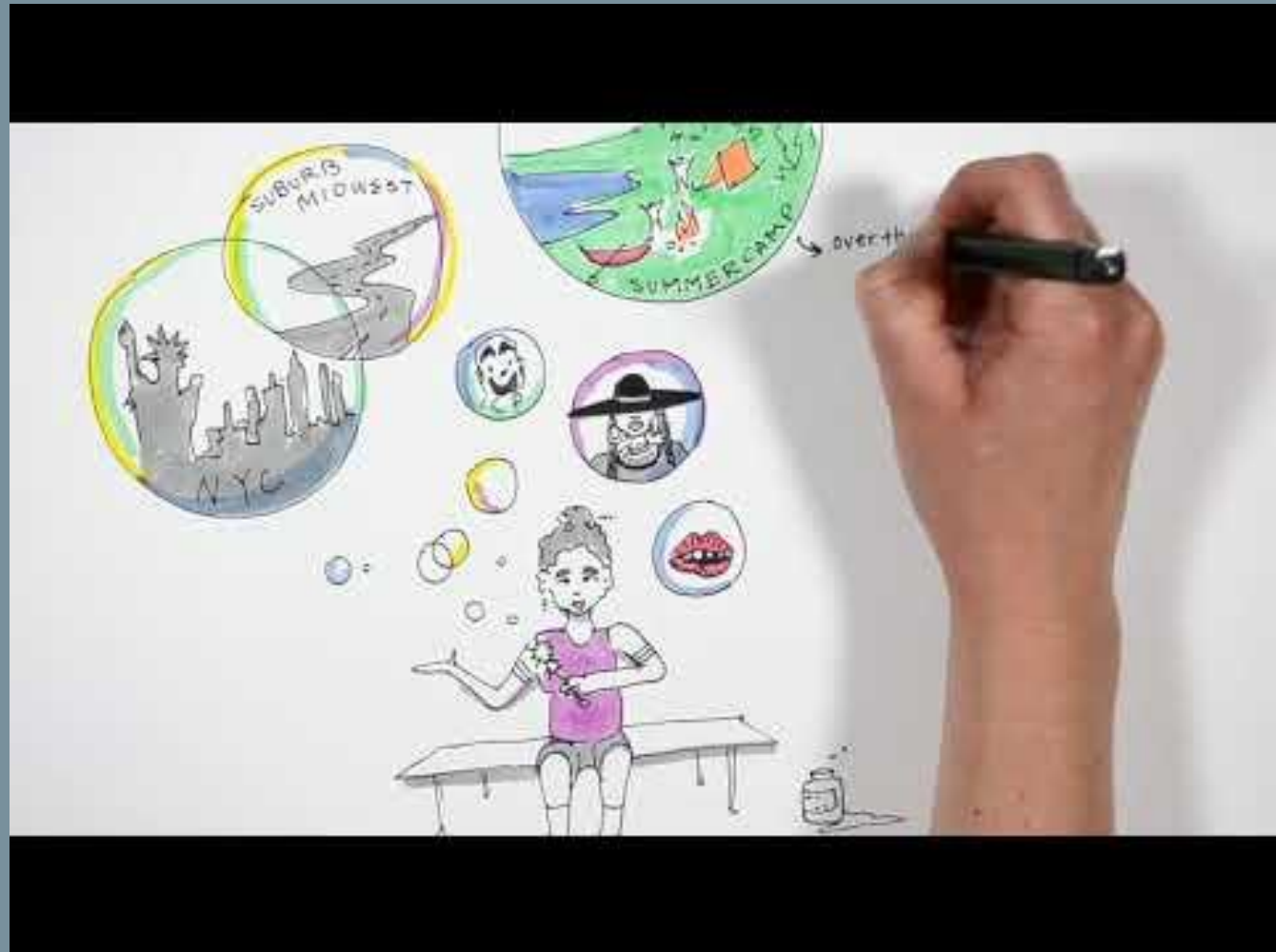
# The Hidden Curriculum: Positive and Negative Results

The “unintended” curriculum. It consists of learning experiences—both positive and negative—that are not part of the explicit curriculum but results in changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and values of students.

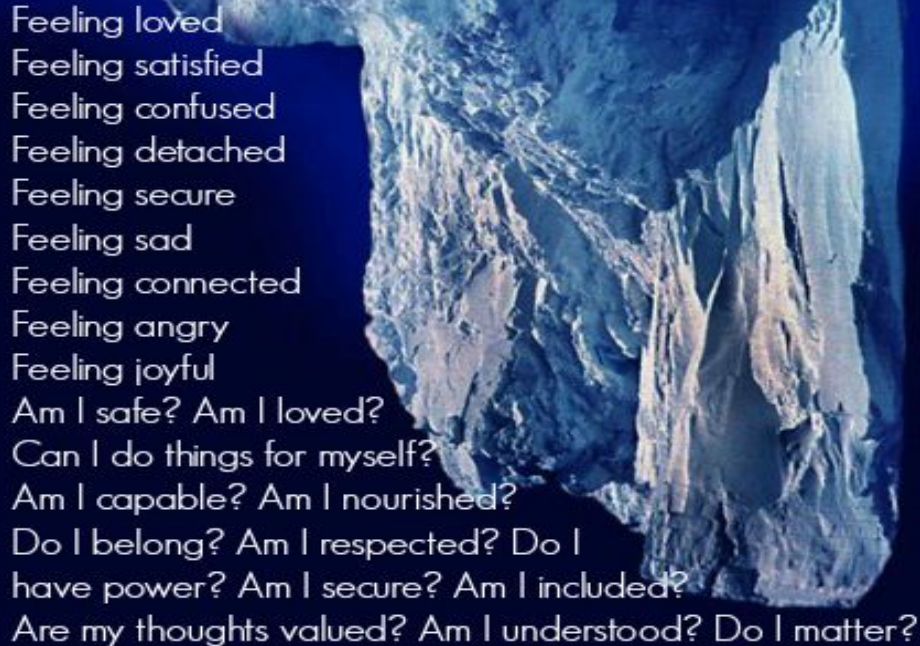
A collection of values, norms, and behaviors that are learned in school but are not explicitly taught. It can include unspoken expectations, unwritten rules, and implicit messages that students learn through social interactions and the classroom environment.

The hidden curriculum can impact a student's academic achievement and success in school. It can also help students develop social and emotional learning skills, and prepare them for the workforce.

What is the  
Hidden  
Curriculum?



What you see:



Feeling loved  
Feeling satisfied  
Feeling confused  
Feeling detached  
Feeling secure  
Feeling sad  
Feeling connected  
Feeling angry  
Feeling joyful  
Am I safe? Am I loved?  
Can I do things for myself?  
Am I capable? Am I nourished?  
Do I belong? Am I respected? Do I  
have power? Am I secure? Am I included?  
Are my thoughts valued? Am I understood? Do I matter?

# ***BEHAVIORS***

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Thoughts & Feelings

**Rather than refuting the existence of white supremacy, educators are acknowledging how it is embedded into the fiber of our nation and our schools.**

## Small Group Work

Name 3 places where “hidden curriculum” might contain white supremacy messages.

What might those messages be?

How might students respond upon receiving those messages?

# Small Group Work

## Circumstances of hidden curriculum

No hats in school.  
Hat is taken away  
from wearer.

## White supremacy message given

If you're a student  
of color wearing a  
hat, you're a  
gangbanger.

## Possible student response or behavior

Feels disrespected  
therefore, acts  
disrespectfully to  
retaliate.

--  
*Example*

# Allow Yourself to Dream



Imagine having the  
BEST school year  
of your life.

What would YOU  
do differently?

# The 5 Whys of Backsliding to Old Habits

Even when the research and data about education says one thing about academic success for all students, why do we often revert to old practices?

Ask the 5 Whys



**Richfield School Board  
Professional  
Development Session:**

**October 21, 2024**

**TEAMWORKS**

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP SOLUTIONS



# Today's Agenda

**Welcome & Inclusion Activity**

**School Board Survey Results**

**Common School Board Challenges**

**Overview of Education Leadership System  
and the Role of Governance**

**Characteristics of High-performing,  
Governance-focused School Boards**

**Closing Activities**

# Welcome & Inclusion Activity: What is this?

## *Improving Team Dynamics and Cognitive Flexibility*

- In teams of 3, within the allotted time, identify as many things that your designated item could be. (Write them on Post its as quickly as you identify them.)
- Show your item, share out the # of things you identified and some examples of what your group identified.



# Board Survey Results

*Fall 2024*



# Why Members Joined the Board

- I wanted to ensure that all students were seen, heard and valued and that policy was reflective of that.
- I wanted representation on the board and I wanted to help advocate for those who don't have a voice.
- To help achieve education equity among BIPOC students. To help review school policies under the lens of an English learner, immigrant, low SES, and parent of a child with special needs.
- To provide access and accountability for current parents in the district to decision making
- I wanted to be able to use my diverse educational, international, and leadership experience to help guide an already diverse and forward thinking district!!
- Found we needed to advocate hard for our own kids. Don't want that to be true for everyone.





# Least Looking Forward To

- The possibility of nothing actually changing.
- Worrying about if we will have quorum.
- The push back that inevitably comes from families who disagree on measures that are best for the majority of students. Such is the case of some families in the minority and their advocacy for programs like theater or sports like hockey.
- No concerns. The job is the job.
- I'm still learning about the financial intricacies of running a school district. This, to me, is the hardest part of helping to run a school district.
- My glasses are still too rose colored to be negative.

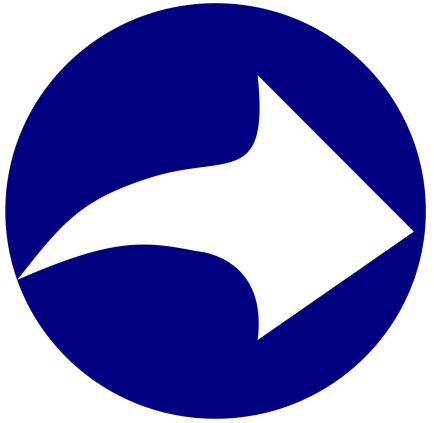


# Most Looking Forward To

- Ensuring that policy is more than just words, but living principles that guide every day actions in the classroom and around the school buildings.
- Getting a super booster running.
- Continue to improve academic achievement outcomes for BIPOC students.
- Improving in the areas of need. Reading curriculum launch and culture/environment of middle.
- Working on establishing policy that benefits both the students academically, but also recognizes the needs, both professionally and personally, of the teachers and staff.
- Still learning, always what to be able to ask good questions and challenge the status quo. We get better as a district if we are willing to be challenged.

# Your Turn:

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**What are some board challenges that you have experienced here or observed elsewhere?**

*(Please write them on a large Post It note.)*



# School Board Common Problems



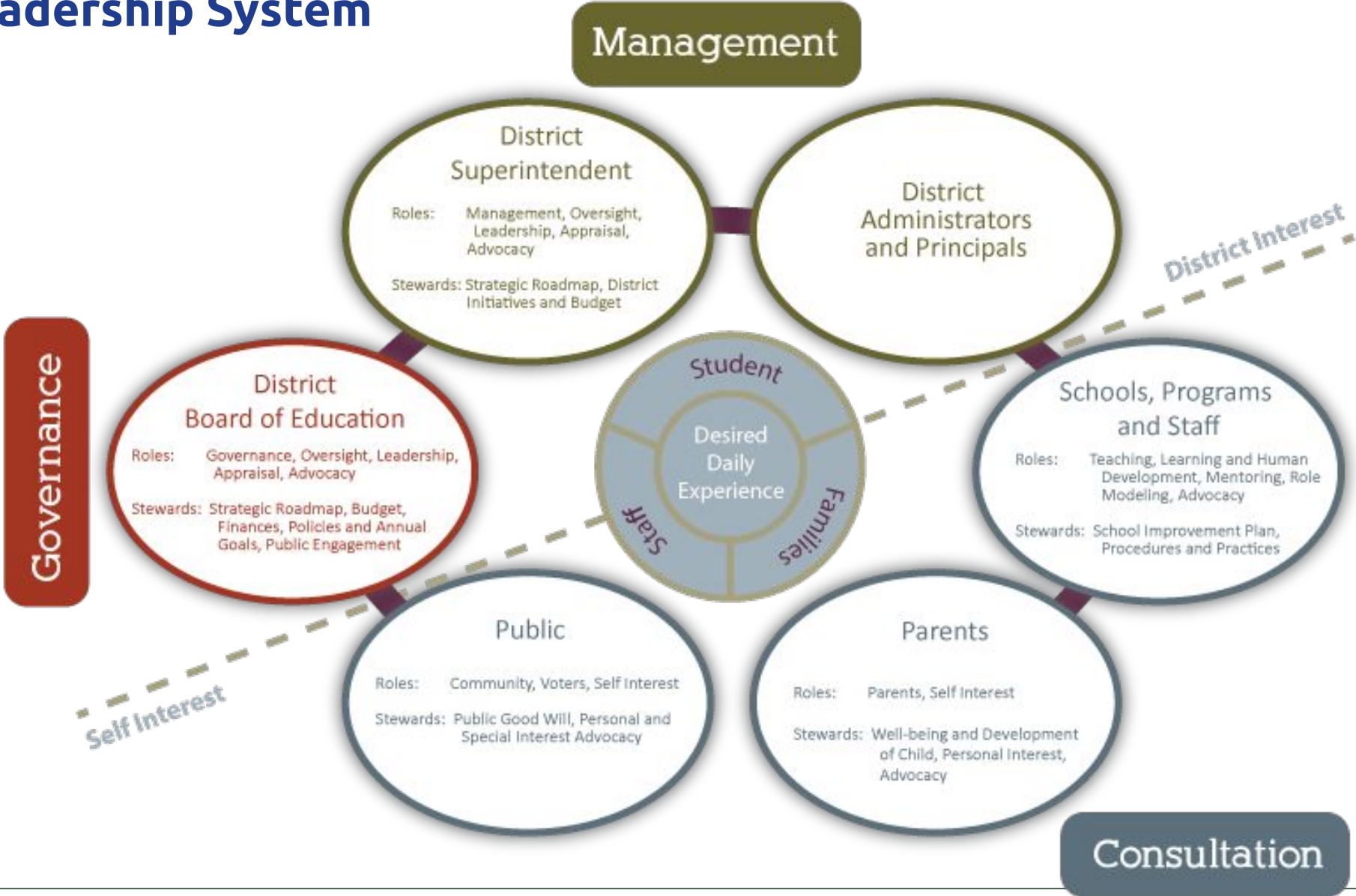
1. Board and Public Misperception of Board Role
2. Board Members Who Engage in Management
3. Members Who Are Unclear on Roles and Responsibilities or Know Them But Don't Apply Them
4. Board Members Who Politicize Their Role

# Common Communication Challenges for Board Members



- Wanting to respond to each communication directly and personally, particularly if they have a relationship with the person contacting them.
- Concerned that the request/complaint will fall through the cracks if passed onto the Executive Director or Board Chair.
- Balancing role as Board Member & parent/staff member.
- Not clear about protocols/practices.
- Has expertise in work life & expects that expertise to carry over to the Board table.
- Hesitant to ask for help.

# Education Leadership System



# Education Leadership System

- Six groups of adults affiliated with the school district
- Operating in three different authorities – Governance, Management, Consultation/Engagement
- Two levels of interest – District, Self
- Different and specific roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Partnership across six groups through tools, processes, language, and images to increase trust, competences, transparency and interdependency

# Board Survey Results

*Fall 2024*



# To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the role of the school board?

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE STRONGLY	I'M NOT SURE	TOTAL
Schools board members and city council members have the same individual authority	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
Board members can "turn off" and "turn on" board status	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	6
Board members represent a portion of the community, or a specific political orientation/party	16.67% 1	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	6
One of a school board's primary responsibilities is district policy	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
One of a school board's primary responsibilities is district operational oversight and long-term planning	50.00% 3	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
One of a school board's primary responsibilities is self-governance and self-evaluation	16.67% 1	66.67% 4	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
One of a school board's primary responsibilities is superintendent relations	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
One of a school board's primary responsibilities is public engagement	50.00% 3	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
The superintendent is the only employee that the school board supervises	100.00% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
School board members should mediate individual concerns between parents and school leaders	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	6
Ours is a high-functioning school board that mostly operates within our governance role	33.33% 2	66.67% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6

# To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding **your participation on the school board?**

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE STRONGLY	I'M NOT SURE	TOTAL
I actively participate in making/seconding motions and in discussions.	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6
I review the materials well in advance (do not leave it to a day or two before the meeting.)	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
I send questions/concerns to the board chair or superintendent so that questions/concerns can be addressed prior to the meeting and avoid taking up meeting time.	16.67% 1	33.33% 2	33.33% 2	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	6
I am clear about the lines between what is the board's responsibility and what is the administration's responsibility.	83.33% 5	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6
I work collaboratively with my board colleagues toward being a high-functioning school board.	0.00% 0	66.67% 4	16.67% 1	0.00% 0	16.67% 1	6
I am able to think and act independently, even when being advocated by constituents.	50.00% 3	50.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6

# Characteristics of High-performing Governance-focused School Boards

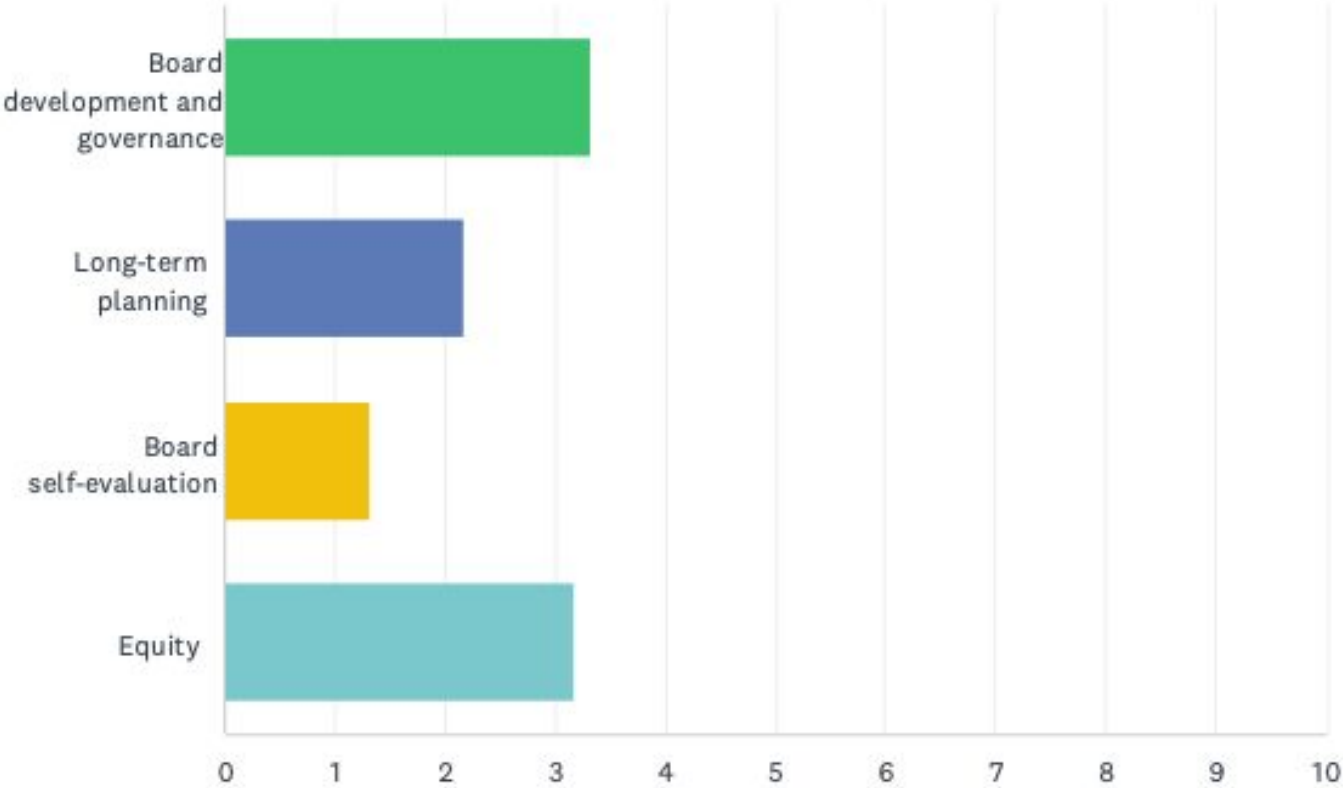


- Operate as a team/governs together.
- Have protocols, practices and structures in place to support Excellence in Governance. (Reviews these periodically to ensure the board is on track.)
- Know the difference between Governance and Management and stay within the Governance role.
- Act and make decisions in the district's interest. (Know the difference between district interest and self interest.)
- Continue to seek individual and collective board development.
- Reduce dissonance in the school community by being professional and respectful in meetings and when interacting with the school community.
- Encourage respectful differences and debate in meetings leading up to decisions.
- Has engagement practices in place to include representative input/feedback of students, staff and families to inform big decisions.

# Board Survey Results Fall 2024

Q7 Please rank the following items in terms of what you would like the school board to work on in 2024-25.

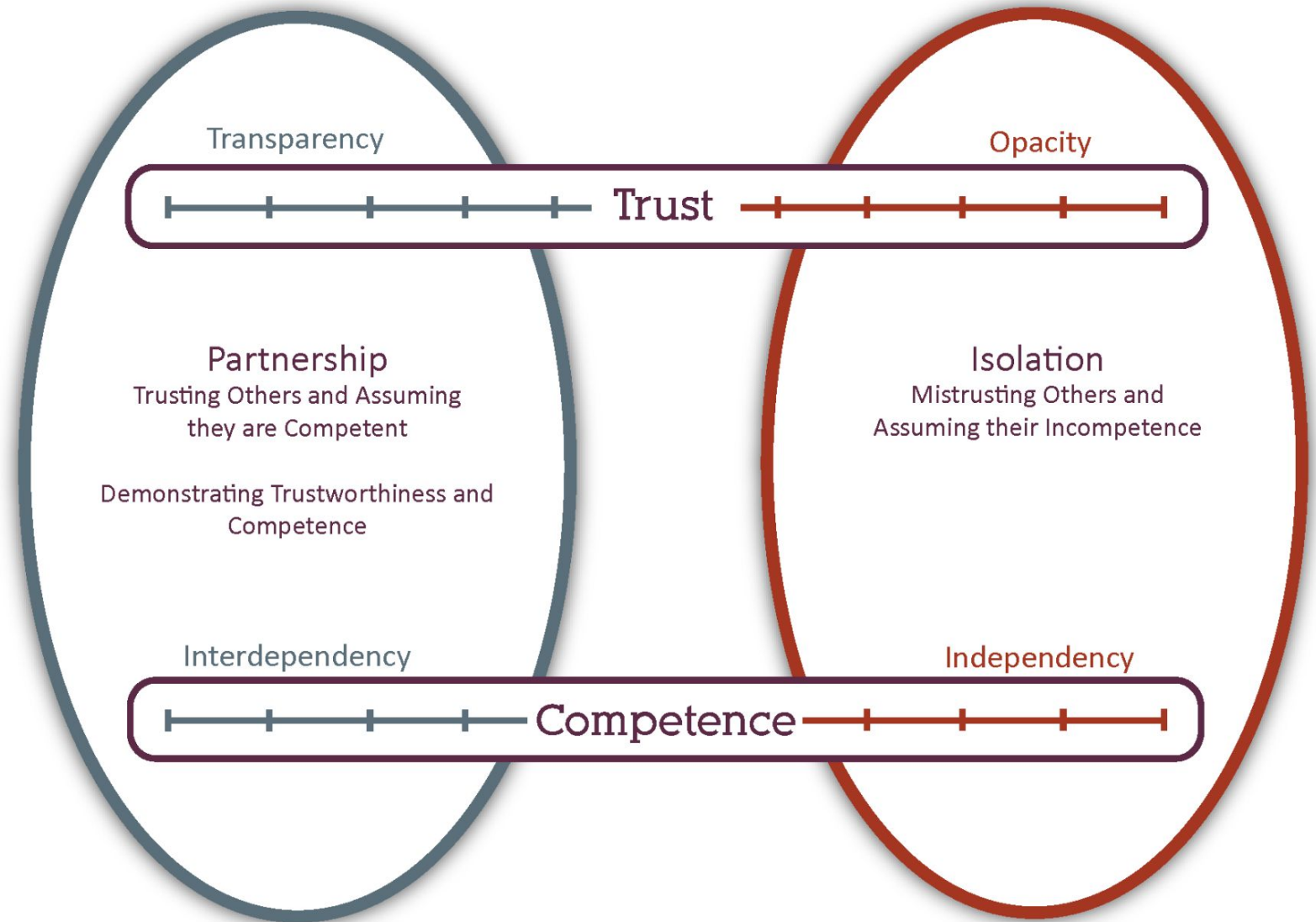
Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



# Reflecting on 2023-24 Board Partnership

*applying*

## ***The Leadership Choices Framework***



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*I Like ...*

*I Wish ...*

*I'm Going To ...*

# Contact Information

Christine Wroblewski  
christine@teamworks4ed.com  
612-414-7463