



Student Belonging Framework & Action Plan

Commitment

The New Albany-Plain Local School District (NAPLS) is committed to creating a positive and welcoming culture to create a deep sense of belonging for each student. We will work intentionally to build strong relationships with students so they feel welcomed, listened to, and respected at school. We are committed to inspiring our school community to be accepting and willing to learn from and to build connections with individuals with various backgrounds and viewpoints. We recognize this work is not a sprint, rather; it is a marathon. We embrace the ongoing commitment required to reach our vision. Our district motto “Students First” and our statement of purpose adopted in 2016 codify that each and every student matters: To create a culture of accountability that achieves the best academic and developmental outcomes for each student.

Vision

We will develop a culture of belonging that builds trusting relationships with all students and their families; encourages and supports awareness, knowledge, and skills; and creates opportunities for connectedness that lead to inspirational learning experiences that encourage and motivate all students and staff to achieve their best academic and developmental outcomes.

Definitions

Culture is what we believe, how we behave and the experience our behavior produces for others.

Belonging engages the full potential of the individual - where views, beliefs and values are respected.

Well-being is defined as being healthy both mentally and physically.

History

Since 2018, the R-Factor Program has been used by students, staff, parents and administrators in classroom lessons and activities, parent meetings and disciplinary issues to help all of us make good decisions. The “**R**” stands for “response”; how each of us responds to the “**E**” (events) in our daily lives, which produces an “**O**” (outcome).

Based upon information shared by current or former students during summer 2020, the administration developed a Culture and Climate Plan to present to the Board of Education and our learning community. The plan identified lead staff and measures of progress for each component in order to strengthen our efforts to meet the needs of all of our students. This plan became the foundation for the Building an Inclusive Campus Culture Framework in 2021, which was revised as the Student Belonging Framework in 2025.

STUDENT BELONGING GOALS

Goal 1:	Each student will have a strong sense of belonging at school.		
Identified Need	<p>Research shows that when children have strong relationships with caring adults, they are more likely to be engaged at school and more motivated to succeed academically. This is embedded in Benchmark 5 of our Continuous Improvement Plan.</p> <p>The district belonging survey administered during September 2021 to students in grades 4-12 demonstrated that when asked, “Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at school?” 66% of respondents answered as belonging “quite a bit” or “completely belonging.”</p> <p>In November 2024, the district belonging survey administered to students in grades 1-12 demonstrated that when asked, “Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at school?” 67% of respondents answered as belonging “quite a bit” or “completely.”</p> <p>Overall participation rates on this survey have declined over this timeframe from 3852 respondents in grades 3 - 12 in 2021 to 3168 respondents in grades 1- 12 in 2024.</p>		
Measures of Success	<p>Annually, all students have at least one adult that they may approach for help or support at any time while at school.</p> <p>The number of students in grades 1 - 12 completing the belonging survey each year will have participation rates of 75% or above by 2027.</p> <p>The number of students in grades 4-12 responding “belong quite a bit” or “completely belong” in this survey will increase to 90% or more of respondents or above by 2027.</p> <p>The Sources of Strength program will continue to be offered in grades 4 - 12 to support a positive sense of belonging for all students and staff in these buildings.</p>		
Goal 1 Action Steps		Who?	When?
Needs Assessment	<p>Continue to conduct age appropriate needs assessment surveys of students to determine the level of student belonging or the lack thereof felt by students. The results obtained will inform specific action steps for improvement for each successive school year.</p> <p>Partner with PTOs to survey parents/guardians to obtain their perceptions of student belonging</p>	Administrators	Annually

	throughout our school campus and input on how to create a strong sense of belonging at school for all students.		
Relationship Building	<p>Build relationships through research-based instructional practices such as Nest, mentoring, student clubs, and other peer to peer programs to create an environment of trust between students and staff as well as between students and their peers.</p> <p>Implement a House system in grades K-12 to foster a sense of belonging, community and positive relationships among students and staff.</p>	Administrators, School Counselors, House Deans	Ongoing
Create programming for staff to support the work on campus	Continue to expand professional development opportunities that support networking, foster professional growth and inspire innovative ideas among all staff members.	Administrators, Student Belonging Facilitators	Ongoing
Student classroom lessons	Implement lessons aligned to school counselor standards and state requirements to support student belonging and positive relationships among students and staff.	Administrators, School Counselors, Wellness Instructors, House Deans, Student Belonging Facilitators	Annually
R-Factor Programming	<p>Cultivate a culture of accountability to support student belonging and assist students in making good decisions.</p> <p>Include R-Factor disciplines and Values, Behaviors and Outcomes into House Program.</p>	Administrators, Dean of Students, Building R-factor Committees, Student Belonging Facilitators	Ongoing

Goal 2:	Recruit, hire, and retain high quality staff.
Identified Need	<p>Employees are in search of positions and organizations that ignite their sense of purpose, offer true spaces of belonging, and encourage them to connect with others.</p> <p>Annual staff climate surveys illustrate staff perception of increased efforts by the district to attract and retain highly effective teachers; however, retention rates have started to decline for a number of reasons. A focus on student belonging inherently can support employee belonging and impact retention. Recent studies have found that when employees feel like they belong, employers see as much as 56% improved job performance, 50% lower turnover risk and 75% fewer employee sick days.</p> <p>Outside factors are also in play including a highly competitive compensation market in central Ohio districts, changing STRS retirement eligibility and the opportunities for workplace flexibility outside of the education profession.</p> <p>Leadership opportunities for teachers and staff can support retention but are somewhat limited in a mid-sized district. However, teacher leaders fill the gaps in school systems by stepping into various roles to further support school and student success while also having a voice in school-wide decisions, leading to more engagement, motivation and satisfaction with their careers.</p> <p>A Root Cause Analysis on recruitment strategies conducted by administrators in 2021 found that we need to do better at marketing and talking to candidates at job fairs and in interviews about the high quality education and the wide variety of diversity in our learning community.</p> <p>83.4% of respondents on the 2025 staff climate survey answered “agree” or “strongly agree” that they feel like they belong at their school/building.</p> <p>82% of respondents plan to remain in teaching “for the foreseeable future” and 79% see themselves still teaching at NAPLS in three to five years.</p>
Measures of Success	<p>Continue to support the Educators Rising Chapter at NAHS started during the 2021-22 school year to increase the number of students at NAHS pursuing a degree to become a teacher.</p> <p>Foster interest of non-teaching school district employees to pursue their degree in education via a tuition reimbursement program in which staff apply annually in the fall for courses taken the previous school year and summer.</p>

	<p>Continue to include questions on staff climate surveys regarding a sense of belonging.</p> <p>Introduce a monthly check-in survey for all staff to identify timely opportunities to address areas of stress or gaps that exist throughout the school year and address them more quickly.</p> <p>Continue to provide a mentoring program for all teachers new to the district including local training opportunities for professional growth in mentoring.</p> <p>Integrate staff belonging activities in student belonging planning.</p>		
Goal 2 Action Steps		Who?	When?
Support Educators Rising (ER) Chapter at NAHS	The teacher advisor will market the chapter, recruit students interested in pursuing a career in teaching and work with university partners and chapter advisors from surrounding districts to develop activities, curriculum and field experiences on our campus that help students prepare for their future profession and understand the skills and dispositions required in our field.	Teachers, Advisor, Principals	Annually
Attract a strong candidate pool for every vacancy	<p>Annually update marketing materials for career fairs.</p> <p>Provide “talking points” about the district for all administrators attending career fairs.</p> <p>Attend job fairs in the region for non-teaching positions and around the state for teaching positions.</p> <p>Monitor the candidate spreadsheet with data from career fairs for promising candidates.</p> <p>Use HR colleagues in other districts and businesses for referrals.</p>	Assistant Supts, Directors, Principals, HR Specialists	Ongoing

Recruitment of non-teaching employees into the teaching profession	Our non-teaching employee tuition reimbursement program provides more equitable opportunities for employees to move into professional occupations such as teachers, related service providers and administrators through partial tuition reimbursement for their education and licensure programs, which is already available to all licensed employees.	Assistant Supts, Directors, Principals, HR Specialists	Annually
Maintain strong retention rates	Continue to provide high quality, trained mentors for teachers new to the district. Conduct exit surveys upon notice of resignations to monitor and respond when possible to the reasons staff are leaving NAPLS.	Assistant Supts, Directors, Principals, HR Specialists, Lead mentors	Ongoing

Goal 3:	Increase awareness, knowledge and skills of all students, teachers, administrators, and staff for student belonging.		
Identified Need	<p>High quality professional learning can cultivate teacher and staff strengths and help to address the needs of each student they serve and create an environment, where we appreciate the unique contributions of each student and colleague.</p> <p>A district survey administered during September 2021 to students in grades 3-12 demonstrated that when asked, “How well do people at school understand you as a person?” Only 57% of respondents answered as “understand quite a bit” or “completely understand.”</p> <p>In November 2024, the district belonging survey administered to students in grades 4-12 demonstrated that when asked, “How well do people at school understand you as a person?” 59% of respondents answered as understand “quite a bit” or “completely.”</p>		
Measures of Success	<p>The number of students responding “understand quite a bit” or “completely understand” on this survey will increase 70% of respondents or above by 2027.</p> <p>Use monthly check-in survey data to identify professional development opportunities for staff in this area and get buy-in and ownership among staff.</p>		

Goal 3 Action Steps		Who?	When?
Messaging	<p>Create a clear, positive and uplifting messaging campaign to increase empathy and belonging.</p> <p>Introduce short videos of staff and students answering the question, “What does sense of belonging mean to you?”</p>	<p>Administrators, Student Belonging Facilitators, Communications, PTOs</p> <p>Administrators, Student Belonging Facilitators, Communications</p>	Ongoing
Recognize cultural dates	<p>The Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education and principals will provide an approved resource list to all school administrators and staff about various cultural and commemorative dates to incorporate into age appropriate curricular opportunities.</p> <p>The English Learner Coordinator share information regarding the various cultures with Principals</p> <p>All event calendars will be developed with recognition of the cultural calendar of events to the extent possible.</p>	<p>Directors Student Belonging Facilitators</p> <p>EL Coordinator, Director of Special Education</p> <p>Superintendent, Calendar Committee, Athletic Director</p>	Annually
Team Building	<p>Leverage PD days to learn more about each other and backgrounds.</p> <p>Seek organizations that will come into PD to support and share with other building/dept. leadership.</p> <p>Use House Leadership meetings, and House meetings to help students learn about one another and staff review data.</p>	<p>Directors, Principals, Coordinators</p>	

Represent our diverse student body.	Literature representing students from all backgrounds in the classroom and library. Student art work and projects are visible throughout the buildings and represent a wide variety of students.	Directors, Principals, Student Belonging Facilitators	
Focus on how we welcome, orient, support and connect over time with every student new to our district.	Educate about cultural projects. Introduce new students and families to our belonging initiatives. Establish a student ambassador program for students who are new to our district. Monitor progress in Leadership Team and Student Belonging Facilitator meetings.	Principals, Student Belonging Facilitators, House Deans, PTOs Administrators	Ongoing

Goal 4:	Increase student engagement and learning opportunities to emphasize the value and importance of student participation in all curricular and extracurricular activities to contribute to a sense of belonging.
Identified Need	Research supports that students who engage in curricular and extracurricular activities are more likely to display a positive attitude about school, increase academic achievement, and strengthen school pride. On the district student belonging survey, just 76% of students in 2021 and 78% of students in 2024 in grades 4 - 12 responded that they participate in one or more school activities.
Measures of Success	90% or more of students in grades 9 - 12 will agree by 2027 that they have access to effective college and career support to meet their goals. Middle School students will have access to college and career support through the Career Connections classes offered. Elementary School students will have access to career exploration in developmentally appropriate ways at each building such as Junior Achievement Biz Town and Touch a

	<p>Truck.</p> <p>Continue to offer an annual Fall Fest at the High School during which all clubs and activities available to high school students host a table to provide information and ability to sign up to participate.</p> <p>Continue to provide <i>Coach Beyond</i> programming in collaboration with The Ohio State University to contribute to a sense of belonging in athletic programs and encourage participation.</p> <p>Provide opportunities during House Meetings to learn about clubs, activities and athletics to all students.</p>
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Goal 4 Action Steps	Who?	When?
Broaden Opportunities	Administrators, Student Belonging Facilitators, Athletic Director, House Deans	Ongoing
Student Engagement	Administrators, School Counselors	Annually
Career and College Planning	Administrators, School Counselors, Classroom Teachers	Ongoing

Goal 5:	Increase community and parental engagement.		
Identified Need	Feedback from parents and community groups have indicated the need to continue to improve how we engage with the community. Research demonstrates that strong relationships between schools, families, and community members can positively affect student achievement and outcomes.		
Measures of Success	<p>Implement at least three strategies during each school year to increase school district awareness and engagement of senior citizens, adults without children enrolled, and Plain Township residents.</p> <p>Increase the number of print materials and social engagements (reactions, clicks, etc.) that illustrate the student learning community.</p>		
Goal 5 Action Steps		Who?	When?
Communication	Continue to promote and encourage the use of a variety of electronic and printed materials that illustrate the student learning community, i.e. RFactor banners on campus, social media, direct mailers.	Communications	Ongoing
New Family Resources	<p>Share information about school and community resources to assist families who are new to our district.</p> <p>Connect new families with PTO, SOAR, boosters, etc.</p> <p>Provide information about House, R -Factor and other well-being initiatives.</p>	Registrar, Principals, School Counselors, Student Belonging Facilitators	Ongoing
Community Service	Provide opportunities for the community and parents to assist with internships, mentoring, senior seminar, community service hours, or charitable collections and involvement.	Administrators, School Counselors	Ongoing

	Continue to partner with the NA Food Pantry, Neighborhood Bridges to provide service opportunities for students and families that benefit the broader community.		
Celebrations	Engage students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and community in educational opportunities and celebrations which highlight all the members of our learning community.	Administrators	Ongoing
Community Engagement	<p>Work to increase opportunities for parents and community members to be more involved in schools.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for parent and community dialogue surrounding school culture.</p> <p>Create postcard(s) for all district families highlighting events and opportunities.</p> <p>Invite senior citizens to extracurricular events. Highlight a Golden Eagle card to seniors for athletics.</p> <p>Invite community members to Veterans Day events, Homecoming parade and other Athletics "Nights."</p>	Administrators, Athletic Director, Parents, Community	Ongoing
Community Outreach	Collaborate with school and community partners including; but not limited to, PTOs, SOAR, Eagle Backers, Neighborhood Bridges New Albany, the New Albany Food Pantry, Healthy New Albany, the New Albany Community Foundation, the New Albany Chamber of Commerce, the City of New Albany, Plain Township and other school or community organizations to foster and continuously build a strong sense of belonging for students and their voices beyond our learning campus.	Board Members, Administrators, Staff, School/ Community Partners	Ongoing
Community Forums	Host Community Forums throughout the school year to engage in open dialogue or learn with parents and community members on	Administrators, Partners	Ongoing (3 - 5 events each school)

	<p>“just-in-time” topics that increase our ability to meet the academic and developmental needs of our students in an environment where all students are safe, supported, and connected.</p>		<p>year)</p>
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Conclusion

Our ability to create an environment that meets the academic and developmental needs of all of our students is a marathon, not a sprint. Our commitment to creating measurable action steps annually with public accountability for our progress will permit us to create a school culture and sense of belonging where all students are safe, supported and connected. The well-being of our students directly impacts their success in the classroom and on the field, court, or stage during their educational journey towards college or career. We will continue to incorporate the disciplines of the R-Factor into our daily school culture to create the positive outcomes our students deserve.