

Fremont Union High School District

Wellness Council

December 3, 2025

Attendees (28)

Students

- Cupertino: Avani Bheemaiah, Holly Harrison
- Fremont: McKayla Hsu
- Homestead: Naveen Badrinath, Kat Heller, Ranya Zhang
- Lynbrook: Jaclyn Chiu, Aahaan Jain, Shelby Kim, Alessandra Wong

Parents

- Cupertino: Jenna Clarke, Rachel Wei
- Homestead: Nicole Basler, Maia Elder Kadar, Cathy Rohloff
- Lynbrook: Monique Anderson

Staff

- Cupertino High School: Andrew Suarez (Wellness Space Support Specialist)
- Fremont: Alejandra Flores (Wellness Space Support Specialist), Erik Medeiros (School Counselor)
- Homestead: Julio Llerenas (Wellness Space Support Specialist)
- Lynbrook: Jena Rajabally (Attendance Technician)
- Monta Vista: Doreen Bonde (Wellness Space Support Specialist), Lora Lerner (Teacher)

Planning Team: Brooke Chan (Coordinator of Data and Assessment), Trudy Gross (Associate Superintendent, Teaching and Learning), Leila Lurie (Social Emotional Learning Curriculum Lead), Karen Moos (Program Specialist, Mental Health Services), Dina Rogers (Executive Assistant, Teaching and Learning)

AGENDA

The meeting opened at 5:32 p.m.

Welcome and review of the agenda by **Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Trudy Gross**. (slides 1-2).

Executive Assistant for Teaching and Learning Dina Rogers provided the opening activity (slide 3).

Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum Lead Leila Lurie reviewed the Community Agreements (slide 4).

Trudy provided an overview of the CA Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and the focus areas for the FUHSD (slides 5-9). Students are administered the survey in a closed tutorial. Parents are

provided information on the survey and the opt-out process. At the beginning of the administration students are told that participation is voluntary and they do not have to answer a question if it causes them concern. They are reminded of adults on campus with whom they can check-in. Following clarifying questions, table groups engaged in an activity (slide 10).

Activity 1

Purpose = meaningful participation	Belonging = school connectedness
At school/When I participate in school: • I do interesting activities. • I help decide things like class activities or rules. • I do things that make a difference. • I have a say in how things work. • I help decide school activities or rules.	• I feel close to people at/from this school. • I am happy with/to be at this school. • I feel like I am part of this school. • The teachers at this school treat students fairly. • I feel safe in my school.

Categorized responses from table group input re: “What do you see at school that supports the upward trend in the data?”

Student Voice, Agency, and Classroom Practices: This category focuses on student input, their ability to influence their learning environment, and how teachers are adapting their methods.

- Teachers seem to be more open to hear opinions of students, some of the rigidity of teachers’ practices seem to be reducing
- Teachers seem more open to hearing from others or lead activities, will ask others who dominate conversations to allow space for others to contribute, inclusivity of others being heard seems to be helping
- Anecdotal feedback from LHS students that some of the questions are hard to answer, specifically, do students feel they have a say?
- Decision making on campus vs. the classroom
- A few teachers give surveys at the end of class asking students what they liked/didn’t like in the class.
- Working in groups, can choose the type or content of project
- Departments should be consistent in how they run the classroom when it comes to giving students a voice and grading. For example, are all students at xxx high school having the same APUSH experience?
- Classroom environments can influence massive change within a student and affect their future

Sense of Belonging and Community Connection: This category includes direct reflections on how students feel connected to the school, their peers, and adults on campus.

- Student asking another student, “do you feel like you belong?”
- No, because it is difficult, didn’t go to a feeder middle school, difficult transition
- Kind of, not a strong sense of belonging, in ASB, goes to events, but not really part of it, ASB feels like work, not a family, being a part of it didn’t connect me to the school

- Welcoming environment and students very involved in starting and participating in clubs which helps the sense of belonging.
- More than just one trusted adult on campus means a lot
- Emphasis on SEL. Teachers are intentional about making a connection with students. School culture embedded wellness, connection, belonging.
- A teacher showing interest in a student's interest helps build that connection.
- Seniors have a higher % of purpose & belonging. Freshman are adjusting to the new environment. A student is more willing to participate depending on how connected and comfortable they are with their environment.
- Students are getting better at socializing moving away from COVID

Academic Pressure, Stress, and Well-being: This category groups responses related to the impact of high academic expectations, competition, and the balance with mental health.

- Academic pressure affects the ability to build community because no time to attend football games and other “fun” activities
- How do teachers balance the high pressure of the area we live in, the deadline to cover all the curriculum and well-being?
- Competition/pressure coming from peers is not overt. Ex: students not being honest about what class or internship they are taking during the summer
- Juniors stayed more stable with percentage which may show that Junior year is very stressful and Juniors may need more support due to stress of the year.
- Lynbrook doesn't have wellness center but has many supportive adults and wellness activities.
- Hard work being most important part of getting higher grades... students showed that it is the hard work and effort that students put in that will help them be successful.
- Highlighting influence/barrier of what school can do vs family culture and narrative around importance of academics vs activities and the students' ability to take advantage of school activities.
- Excelling vs happiness (academic success / mental health)

Extracurricular Activities, Purpose, and Meaning: These responses focus on student involvement outside of the core curriculum and the search for personal relevance and purpose.

- Believes most students will only endorse “interesting activities.”
- Only a few kids decide activities (ASB)
- Correlation between interesting activities and belonging
- Passion for and involvement in extracurricular activities brings value to school to many students and encourages them to keep coming to school and can support student's social/emotional learning
- Less and less students are finding meaning in extracurricular activities and do them more to put on college application
- Variety of activities to promote belonging and purpose.
- Purpose vs belonging – purpose is like you being able to contribute vs belonging how others respond to you.
- A lot to be involved with on campus (after school activities, clubs, etc)
- Most popular clubs are often the ones that are most academic and it is rare to have clubs that are not academically based at some sites while it is more common at other sites.
- Collaborative study sessions

Data Interpretation and Context: This category contains comments related to the survey results themselves, including surprising findings, trend analysis, and comparative questions.

- Students surprised by the results
- Numbers went up as we moved away from the pandemic. And could be related to the introduction of SEL in classrooms.
- Curious to know how we compare to other districts.
- How do our schools compare to each other?
- How to find a question that hits the mark for purpose - might be better to ask “is what you are learning valuable to your future?”

Categorized responses from table group input re: “What would help to build the sense of purpose and belonging at school?”

School Environment and Physical Space: This category focuses on the impact of the school's physical design and administrative access on the sense of belonging.

- Set up of admin area at Fremont making for busy area with lots of students and a sense of belonging. Front office is comfortable place where students can hang out and feel welcome while other sites have very limited student access in front office which leads to a very different feeling. Creating welcoming environment that is inviting to others in the office makes for students feeling welcome and comfortable. Making office a space where students can run into staff and find other resources creates connections between students and staff.
- Campus layout plays a huge role on sense of belonging starting with front office and what is there and accessible.

Peer Relationships and Social Dynamics: These responses deal with how students interact with each other, including issues of inclusion, judgment, and where they find their closest connections.

- Students who are not on ASB feel disconnected from ASB and ASB is very selective. Students often feel their voices are not heard if they are not on ASB.
- What would make it better? Less judgement from people, when you focus on arts, you can be judged, you are not doing CS, FHS can be socially judgmental, not as much academic pressure, what class are you in.
- Sense of belonging comes from the people you are closest to, not necessarily entire school
- Priorities and interests may not be similar to others

Teacher-Student Connections and Support: This category highlights the crucial role teachers play in fostering belonging, providing support, and communicating effectively.

- Teachers play a huge role on whether students feel belonging - even if they do have friends.
- Kids don't feel like they belong unless they are connected to a teacher.
- Tutorial helps students connect with teachers.
- Teachers actually answering questions instead of just “getting angry” or disregarding them; just one moment can destroy a students motivation to ask for help
- Staff required to actively follow and maintain IEP/504 accommodations

Student Development and Future Orientation: These responses touch on age-related maturity, future plans, and making personal choices versus meeting expectations.

- Looking forward to college

- Age plays a factor, what is developmentally appropriate, college age people seem more mature
- Choosing things that interest you vs things that are expected

Systemic Communication and Targeted Programs: This category includes suggestions for school-wide strategies to improve connection and support access.

- To build communication - find different ways to reach students to communicate what is going on - things that they can get involved in
- Home room
- Being creative about what a student might need. Targeted support groups. Acknowledging their situation / environment.
- Belonging questions are pretty good, according to the HHS student.

Trudy introduced Wellness Council member and Homestead High School (HHS) Senior Ranya Zhang. Ranya reviewed and provided input on the statistical analysis she conducted focused on, “What factors lead to higher grades?” (slides 11-22). Following clarifying questions, table groups engaged in an activity (slide 23).

Activity 2

Data Study Conclusions

- Students’ grades are highly correlated with their participation at school
 - Activities
 - Not missing school
- Hard work is the most important factor in predicting higher grades.
- A teacher or adult who checks on me is the 4th most important factor

Categorized responses from table group input re: “What within these conclusions stands out to or resonates with you?”

Correlation Between Behavior and Outcomes: This category focuses on the relationships observed between different student factors, such as attendance, belonging, hard work, and grades.

- Attendance correlation was interesting
- They are connected, attendance and belonging, admits that she struggles to perform well in school
- Which way is the direction of the causation?
- Students that talk to their teacher tend to do better, according to students.
- Attendance correlation to good grade makes sense
- Doesn’t surprise me that hard work is associated with good grades
- Relation does not always equal causation

Motivation and Engagement in Learning: These statements address what drives students to attend and perform well in school, and the challenges of being absent.

- When not doing interesting activities in the classroom, the student feels unmotivated to go to school.
- Work hard, play hard
- Hard to make up the learning when absent

Teacher Flexibility and Connection (Support): This category highlights specific actions teachers take (or should take) to support students, especially when they are struggling or absent.

- Flexibility with teachers if students are sick is very helpful
- Taking a moment to quickly check in with a student and ask if they are okay

Data Validity and Interpretation: These responses question the reliability and scope of the survey data, including non-respondents and the wording of the questions.

- The students who did not take the survey - what do they think and feel?
- Questions can be very broad and can be interpreted in different ways / different cultural influences
- Not sure of the honesty of the answers

Categorized responses from table group input re: “What’s one small action you could take in the next month to build belonging?”

Teacher Strategies for Building Connection: This category focuses on specific, actionable steps teachers can take to connect with students and make them feel seen.

- If you greet kids by their names, you build relationships with students. Don’t see HS teachers greeting students at the door.
- During work time, teachers could ask questions about them personally. Doesn’t have to be about the work.
- Each teacher takes 1-2 minutes in each class to connect with students every day.
- Talking to those who don’t speak up in class, overshadowed or overlooked in class, introduce yourself to a new person (Teacher-initiated outreach).
- Some teachers may avoid getting personal with kids to avoid grade bias. (A noted barrier to connection).

Peer and Social Interaction: These responses highlight the role of students in creating a welcoming environment and the importance of social bonding.

- Talking to those who don’t speak up in class, overshadowed or overlooked in class, introduce yourself to a new person (Student-initiated action).
- Students feel if everyone takes the time to recognize who is around them in class or elsewhere, that would increase belonging.
- Taking time to share stories / experiences with other students.
- Social component is very important and impacts belonging and can be all encompassing.

Communication and School-Wide Initiatives: This category includes suggestions for formal programs, advertising, and open forums that impact the entire campus.

- Advertise the opening of LHS wellness center.
- Open forum for students to share ideas and engage in open discussion for building a more inclusive environment on campus.
- Encouragement of extracurricular engagement.

Categorized responses from table group input re: “What long-term change could strengthen belonging in your school?”

Addressing Cultural Norms and Academic Pressure: This category focuses on the high-stakes environment, societal pressures, and the need to normalize diverse paths to success.

- Social media is such a big issue - larger societal issue
- Only certain kinds of career paths are considered good/acceptable. Leads to kids to have less joy

- How do you shift the entire culture in the community away from getting into the “right” college or following the “right” career path? How do we make it acceptable to pursue your true interests?
- Students don’t think outside of CS/beyond STEM careers. How do we expose students more to other options?

Strategies for Building Connection and Community: This category includes specific, actionable ideas for fostering relationships among students and between students and adults.

- More group projects
- Teachers promote community within the class but how to expand beyond that
- Community building and connection between students.
- Teacher or one adult makes a huge difference
- Having people you can reach out to
- Having staff “force” kids to exchange numbers with a few kids - normalize it and help students make connections with their peers
- Encourage freshman to sign up for at least one club
- Mentor program paired with folks with common interests

Communication and Program Implementation: These responses address the use of specific programs (like Wayfinder) and the necessity of transparent, two-way communication within the school.

- Wayfinder activities can help, one student does a question of the day
- Needs to be two ways - teacher and student
- Transparency on all levels; being open when things may not be able to change but suggestions for alternatives; sharing what work has been done or what work is in progress; open spaces for sharing and listening

Nuances of Adult-Student Interaction: This category highlights the subtleties and boundaries involved in teachers connecting personally with students.

- Thin line between what adults share/being vulnerable and sharing too much
- Struggle for an answer (Implies difficulty in finding the right balance/solution)

Trudy reviewed the role of Wellness Council members are representatives (slide 24). There will be opportunities in the future for members to share feedback and insights they have gathered. Wellness Council member and HHS Junior Kat Heller provided information about the IntraDistrict Council collaboration with the City of Sunnyvale Parks & Recreation and NOVA to incorporate wellness resources into the 2nd annual Teen Resource Fair. The event will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2026 from 12-3 p.m. at Sunnyvale City Hall.

Program Specialist for Mental Health Services Karen Moos led a closure activity focused on the data and findings that were presented (slide 25)).