

JEFFCO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THRIVING SCHOOLS

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

[Listening & Learning to Inform District Supports & Strategy](#)

In August of 2022, in response to directions from the Board of Education, leaders of Jefferson County Public Schools presented a recommendation to the Board for the closure and consolidation of under-enrolled and under-utilized elementary schools. Following the presentation of the recommendation, Jeffco leaders, in partnership with the Keystone Policy Center, convened a series of meetings to hear directly from families, students, educators, staff and stakeholders about the path forward to ensure all affected understood the process and felt supported during the transition if the Board voted to act on the recommendation.

*October 28, 2022 Report from the Community
Conversations regarding Phase I Regional
Opportunities for Thriving Schools recommendations
and accompanying online survey.*

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Introduction & Report Overview

On August 25, 2022, following Board of Education direction to provide recommendations for potential school consolidations in response to shifting enrollment across the district and the decline in the school age population, leaders of Jefferson County Public Schools (“Jeffco”) presented their findings and recommendations to the Board. Based on their examination of current enrollment, building capacity, historic enrollment trends and in accordance with FCB-R of the Facilities Planning and Development section of District Regulations, Jeffco’s leaders presented a recommendation to the Board to close a number of elementary schools. After reviewing available data, the District established the following criteria to determine which schools would be recommended for closure:

An elementary school would be included in the set of schools recommended for closure if, as of August 15 the school:

1. Had an enrollment of less than 220 K-2, K-5, K-6 students OR
2. Is utilizing 45% or less of the capacity of its facility **AND**
3. There is an elementary school or schools less than 3.5 miles away that can serve the students from the closing school in the current articulation area.

Based on the above criteria, Jeffco leaders recommended to the Board the closure of 16 elementary schools across 12 articulation areas. The recommendation was that all schools identified be closed and consolidated into neighboring schools and that the Board vote on the recommendation as a package rather than inviting debate on a school by school basis. In making the recommendation, District leaders shared with the Board their intention to engage in a multi-faceted community engagement effort to provide affected families, staff and community members the opportunity to help shape the future

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school communities that would come together if the Board voted in favor of the recommendation. In receiving the recommendation, Board members each shared their regret that the District was facing such difficult conditions, emphasized the importance of hearing from the community and ultimately expressed their intent to vote on the recommendation as a full package on November 10, 2022.

To add capacity to what would be a robust engagement initiative and, in an effort to foster a forum of neutrality for soliciting community input, Jeffco issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a third party facilitator and, following a

competitive bid process, engaged the Keystone Policy Center (Keystone) to facilitate the community conversations. Founded in 1975, Keystone is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization that has helped leaders across the country engage stakeholders to find common ground on some of society’s most complex issues. Keystone’s Center for Education Policy and its team members have led a wide variety of initiatives for state and district leaders in Colorado and across the country on issues ranging from the lessons learned during COVID’s interruption of our education system, the appropriate use of federal funds, strategies to elevate the teaching profession and innovations in instructional delivery to a wide range of district and system specific initiatives including school safety, family engagement strategies and reimagining the educator workforce. Among the projects the team has supported have

been school closures, consolidations and facility repurposing in districts ranging from large urban and major exo-urban districts to smaller rural and mid-size suburban districts.

This Report

This report is a summary of the process undertaken, the dynamic of conversations and a high level summary of ideas generated during Community Conversations and the online survey. The report does not attempt to score or conduct any assessment of individual ideas. To the extent possible, this report does offer the perspective of the independent team who facilitated the sessions on the dominant themes, ideas offered and hopes for Jeffco's students, staff and the school communities. It also asserts some universal best practices and approaches the District should consider going forward based both on the process underway and the feedback gathered to date during the outreach following the recommendations of August 25.

The Process

Shortly after engaging Keystone, Jeffco leaders and Keystone began developing an aggressive schedule of community conversations to maximize the opportunities for affected families, staff and stakeholders to share their perspectives and raise both questions and concerns. The partners agreed to hold two sets of conversations with each school community beginning with a conversation held at each school recommended for closure followed several weeks later by a conversation that anticipated bringing the closing and new boundary school communities together. Between the two sets of conversations, it was agreed that an online survey would expand the reach of the engagement effort to allow more participants to share their thoughts and to allow even those able to attend in-person meetings to offer more thoughts through the survey. In parallel to the community conversations, the District and Board established a calendar of public hearings at which school community members would be able to engage directly with Board of Education members about the vote and underlying process.

Keystone and Jeffco hoped that while the public hearings would afford stakeholders the opportunity to weigh in on the recommendation itself with the Board who would ultimately vote on the recommendation, that the community conversations could be an opportunity to explain the process, address clarifying questions and begin to solicit input from families about their concerns, needs and aspirational vision for the future. An agenda was developed for the first phase of community conversations with that forward looking framework as its foundation. Jeffco leaders and Keystone's team recognized that if the Board did vote in favor of the closures in November, there would be an already shortening window ahead to both bring school communities together and to prepare to provide families the supports they sought. Accordingly, the intent, at the time, was to separate families' views on the vote itself from what families believed would help their child feel welcome and supported if the vote was cast to close all 16 schools. As is described in more detail below, that strategy had to be quickly adjusted when many families were not yet ready to engage in a conversation about the future as they were still digesting and reacting to the process that led to the recommendations and to their school's inclusion on the list of schools proposed for closure.

Community conversations were scheduled at each school recommended for closure beginning on September 6th and concluding on September 19th. The initial agenda for each meeting called for the first third of the meeting to be used for District representatives to share information about the process and address questions about the recommendation itself followed by facilitators from Keystone providing an overview of the community input sessions and opportunities. The intent was to then use the remaining

time to solicit input from the participants about their vision for thriving schools in their community and to discuss the type of supports or resources they would want to see available to make that vision a reality at a future, consolidated school community.

The Community Conversations

While the above initial structure was generally successful and welcomed by attendees at the very first meeting held at Peiffer Elementary School, as word got out about the process and communities began to react to the recommendations, maintaining that approach became challenging and quickly, counter-productive. The recommendations and conversations were, in many cases, also affected by the history of actual and potential school closures in the District. A number of the schools in Wheat Ridge as well as several others have previously been impacted by either the proposed closure of the school or of neighboring schools. In some cases, organized activism and action in communities had been credited with schools once proposed for closure remaining open which may have influenced how some stakeholders and family members approached the current recommendations and listening process.

Seeing the shifting dynamics from families, particularly at some schools where vocal, upset school community members and families weren't interested in talking about the future at that time and very much wanted to engage about the process and recommendation for closure, a reassessment and regrouping became immediately necessary.

District leaders and Keystone staff quickly agreed to modify the agenda to:

1. Empower school leaders to provide substantive input about where their community was along a continuum of needing to express their opinions or have questions answered vs. being ready to talk about the future;
2. To meet communities where they were along that continuum;
3. To allow opportunities for those ready to talk about the future to do so and to allow those not yet ready to ask questions of or express their opinions to District representatives.

In addition to the shifts in format, in response to the level of contentiousness at certain schools and principal requests, Keystone and Jeffco agreed to adjust approaches to certain meetings, including bringing in additional facilitators or changing the meeting format (e.g., second meetings in Wheat Ridge were held as smaller focus groups to ensure more voices were heard)

The modification to the agenda did help to get to more productive conversations but many participants – at some schools, the vast majority – had very limited interest in discussing the future during the initial set of meetings in September. By the second set of meetings which carried into October, the dynamic had markedly shifted and more participants spent the majority of the conversations looking forward with ideas for the future. Throughout, in addition to strong and passionate feelings about each school and about the limits on community engagement in the development of the criteria for and list of schools recommended for closure, there was a significant amount of misinformation and partial information about the process and underlying facts that facilitators and district representatives confronted. The data driven approach taken was called into question by some families and other stakeholders with some questioning or disagreeing with the criteria and others having perception of data that was at odds with things like actual population trends and projections.

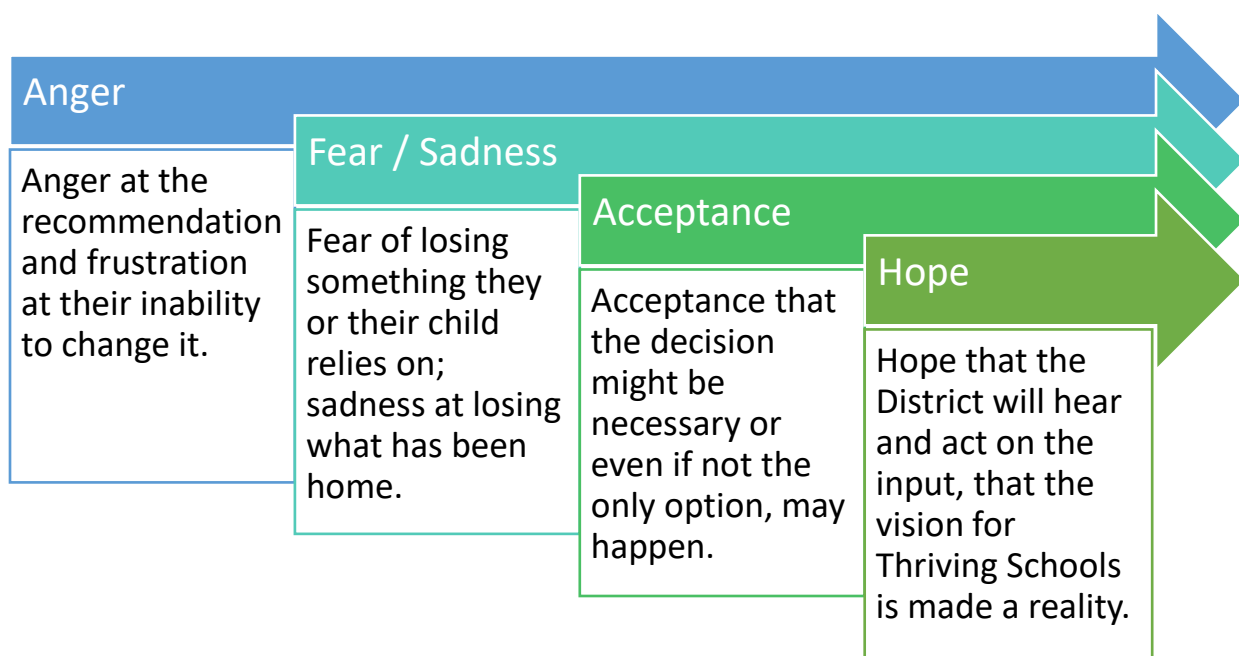
Despite the at times tense nature of the meetings, the passionate objections to the recommendations by some and the strong feelings that there were better alternatives or a process that would have felt more inclusive, there was in fact substantive and productive input provided to guide District actions if the Board votes in favor of the recommendation presented to close the identified schools.

In assessing the input received as well as the dynamics during the community conversations individually and as a process, it is important to both separate the two to understand them and to view each through the lens of the other. As just one example, a passionate plea or demand to preserve a school because of a particular program at that school has an authentic emotion that should be honored *and* the underlying interest in that program provides valuable insight for District leaders to consider in reviewing program offerings at the consolidated school if that family's current school is ultimately closed.

...the angered demand to preserve a school because of a particular program has an authentic emotion that should be honored while also providing insight into the considerations for how to best serve families if that school is ultimately closed.

Meeting Dynamics

The dynamics at each community conversation were unique to the school, the families, staff and community members who were able to attend, the history of the community and the relationships within that community. Each meeting had its own dynamic with some being largely productive and respectful conversations about the future, others were dominated by passionate objection to the conversation, much less the recommendation to close. Every meeting had at least some participants at each point along that spectrum. Moreover, it is accurate and appropriate to recognize and name the emotions, themes and dynamics that dominated all of the meetings.



These feelings and dynamics are very much to be expected in a process such as this in which something that is so personal for many is suddenly changing and they do not feel either that they were involved in the decision or that their views were considered. It is a quite natural spectrum of reactions seen in almost every major process of change and, in our extensive and national experience, is almost always the case with school closures. We have also found, in every community where we have supported leaders engaging communities in difficult decisions that the shared desire to ensure the future ultimately prevails as communities rally around their school even when that is a school new to them. It is critical to keep in mind going forward that trust will be best earned and maintained through collaboration and responsiveness to community needs. While the District will not be able to meet every request of every family or stakeholder, decisive and affirmative steps to take action on issues specifically raised during these types of sessions can lay foundations for trust and for shared action going forward.

Stakeholder Engagement & Survey Themes

During both the community dialogues and throughout the survey, there were clear areas of interest, concern and focus for stakeholders. While the specifics were unique for each school, the topics were largely consistent across schools and across all phases of input. For example, transportation was a consistent area of interest and of concern. In some schools, that presented as a concern about walking along or crossing a busy street while in other schools, availability/reliability of bussing, bus fees, or the schedule of siblings at nearby middle and high schools were noted. Similarly, many attendees spoke about unique attributes of their schools' programs that serves unique populations with specific needs while others expressed a strong desire for their students to continue having access to specific curriculum or instructional approaches.

What We Heard

The dominant themes and ideas heard in the listening tour sessions are captured below. It is important to note that this report *does not* list or contain an inventory of the many passionate, almost always driven from a deep and authentic place of concern or frustration, comments shared informally during or after school based community conversation. Those have been heard by District representatives and Board members who attended most sessions. Instead, this report attempts to elevate the themes heard throughout the formal process and to identify the areas for potential action by the District to meet the needs and aspirations of the community and to address their concerns.

The majority of participants do not want to see their school closed and a significant number believe there are alternatives with some believing they have been treated unfairly or inequitably. Many object to what they view as their limited opportunity to have influenced or weighed in on the recommendations. All of that said and recognized, in even the most contentious meetings and in the remarks of even the most angry, sad or frustrated participant, there were clear messages of what matters to them about their school and their child's learning environment.

The majority of participants do not want to see their school closed and a significant number not only believe there are alternatives, they believe they have been treated unfairly or inequitably. Many object to the process that led to recommendations for closure and in particular, to what they view as their limited opportunity to have influenced or weighed in on the recommendations.

Community conversations surfaced two types of discussions:

1. Questions from families and stakeholders for which they sought answers to better understand the process to date and as it could play out based on a Board vote;
2. Specific ideas, topics or issues that participants in the conversations want District leaders to consider or address if or as schools are consolidated.

Among the many questions, there were a number of requests for specific data, plans or answers to a issues relating to enrollment, transportation, building use and the underlying process. The response to these was included in the October 2022 ROFTS Update [available here](#).

Responding as best possible to each school community's unique dynamics, history and engagement in the process, adjustments were made whenever practical to provide input and discussion opportunities that met those conditions and stakeholder needs. For some communities like Wheat Ridge, this involved focus groups with families or staff. In some communities, in response to input from families, school leaders and district leaders, the second phase of community conversations brought together both the closing and receiving schools. In other communities, it was determined that it was more appropriate to not yet invite the consolidation partners to shared conversations based on current dynamics or need for further site-specific conversations.

In parallel to the Community Conversations, there are committees of stakeholders from each school that was recommended for closure who are documenting challenges and opportunities associated with consolidation. These FCB Committees, required by Jeffco Board regulation FCB-R, are composed of stakeholders directly associated with the consolidating schools.

The following page provides a high-level summary of the dominant themes that were consistent across all schools and across each phase of the community conversations as well as the focus groups. Detailed school and meeting level notes that capture family or classroom specific ideas and concerns have been shared with the FCB Committees to inform their school-specific FCB reports. This report is an effort to provide the best possible insights for District leaders on overall, District-wide themes, ideas and concerns.

Dominant Themes from Community Conversations

Process

Consolidation Process & Decisions

- Confusion, opposition and frustration with the Board vote structure and the rationale for voting on the recommendation as a package rather than school by school;
- Discrepancy between anecdotal experience of families seeing other families moving into the neighborhood and new housing developments compared with data shared about school age children;
- Frustration over the criteria used, what was felt was left out (including academic performance);
- Specific concern that District did not adequately examine issues of equity and disproportionate impacts on specific geographic communities;
- Concern that COVID interruption finally over and now District is disrupting environments for students just as they return to previous "normal";
- Many questions about future facility use including desire to see facility serve community and concerns about prematurely disposing of valuable real estate assets.

Belonging

School Identity & Community

- Desire to preserve the small class sizes and close personal relationships with teachers that students/families feel and believe is critical to their student's success;
- Fears that students and families from potentially closing school won't get to inform/shape the identity in the receiving school; desire for a real "merger" instead;
- Concerns that receiving school community will either not be welcoming or will force their culture or style and ways onto students from closing school rather than merging and melding.

People

School Staff

- Strong attachment to the leadership, teachers, and staff at the potential closing school and desire to see them all come over to the receiving school without going through additional procedures (ie, interviews);
- Fear of the stress created for the teachers and how that might trickle down to students;
- Specific concern about trauma this could cause and District's ability to adequately support students' mental health and social-emotional needs.

Learning

Instructional & Specialized Programs

- Significant concern about loss, reduced quality or access to specific or special needs instruction and that, even if offered, disruption to students who have done well in current school;
- Questions about curriculum continuity or quality and about specific instructional models and programs such as Classical Education, International Baccalaureate and others.

Practical

Transportation & Safety

- Ensuring all families have access to bussing as needed free of cost, even if it's within a 1 mile radius, because of major roadways;
- Alternative options (changes to traffic patterns, pedestrian bridges, crossing guards, etc.) for major roadways that students/families will now cross;
- Desire for District to consider transportation holistically including impact of start times on families who share transportation or where a high school sibling provides transportation;
- Some anxiety about the traffic patterns and safety particularly around pick-up and drop off.

What We Read

To complement the listening tour and to encourage more families, staff and stakeholders to offer their thoughts and allow additional input from community conversation attendees, an online survey was created and links shared via the district website, social media and other communications.

During the October 3 – 14 period during which the survey was open, over 2,400 teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders offered their thoughts on the following questions:

1. What do you value most about your school?
2. What additional elements make your current school community unique?
3. When you think about a potential closure of your school, which considerations matter most to you and your family?
4. When you think about the potential of welcoming another school's students and families into your school community, which considerations matter most to you and your family?
5. What concerns do you have regarding a potential consolidation with another school community?
6. What are you hopeful or optimistic about regarding a potential consolidation with another school community?
7. What does your student(s) need to thrive in school?
8. If the consolidation is approved by the Board of Education on November 10, 2022, how would you like to see the consolidating communities you are a part of (closing and receiving schools) come together prior to the 2023-2024 school year?
9. What other ideas do you have for the consolidating communities you are a part of to come together prior to the 2023-24 school year?

These questions were developed based on:

- A. The questions originally developed for the community conversations which in some cases were set aside or not given sufficient time for full conversation as a result of meetings being restructured to meet the community where they were in the cycle of engaging about the process vs. about the future;
- B. Input provided by attendees and others about what they most wanted to share their views or perspectives on with Jeffco leaders;
- C. District desire to understand family perspectives and needs to feel supported and to maximize student success in their new school community.

The online survey, available in English and 20 additional languages, received a total of 2,408 responses. This included 1,953 parent, guardian, family member or guardian responses, 316 responses from educators or licensed staff, 119 from education support professionals and 68 other school staff. Most schools had between 50-100 responses from stakeholders associated with their school while a small number had slightly fewer. Over 100 responses were received from stakeholders associated with five schools. Non-English language responses included 14 Spanish, 1 Vietnamese and one Simplified Chinese. Details of responses are contained in the following section.

Themes from Survey

While there was certainly variation across school communities, trends and themes did emerge from the survey data, much of it in alignment with the community conversations that took place in September and October. In most cases, both potentially closing and receiving schools were focused on similar issues, namely:

- The size of their school and classrooms;
- The small and welcoming community, close relationships, and 1:1 attention their students currently experience;
- The quality of their educators, support staff, and school leader;
- The specialized programs and services that their school provides to support specific student needs and interests;
- The walkability and safety of multi-mode transportation to school.

Whether they phrased their response as a fear of losing these aspects or a hope for what would continue in a new environment, these themes were prevalent throughout survey responses. Additionally, a large area of concern/hope was around how best to bring two communities together. There was concern from both potentially closing and receiving schools of an “us vs. them” dynamic and the process feeling like more of an “acquisition” than a “merger”; however, respondents did generate substantive recommendations on strategies that could be implemented to mitigate these dynamics and positively support students, families, and staff through a transition in the event of a consolidation. Lastly, many respondents expressed strong feelings regarding the consolidation recommendation and process through various portions of the survey, which was also in alignment with feedback received through the community conversations.

On the whole, the input gathered through the survey complemented and affirmed the data and feedback collected through other avenues. What follows in this report is a breakdown by question of themes and trends in responses across all respondents.

Notes on Methodology of Survey Synthesis

*Not all respondents answered every question. For each survey question, the number of respondents is provided by indicating “n = ____”

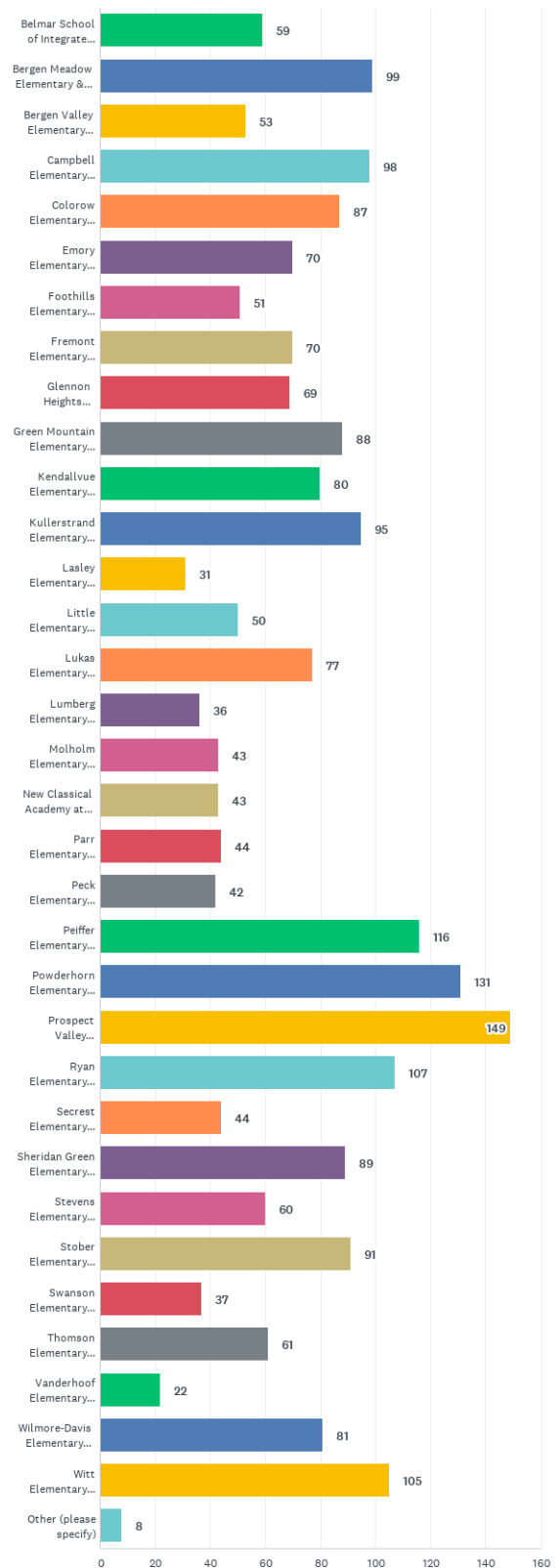
**Ranked choice (top four responses) to questions 4, 6, and 7 were not designed to generate a statistical score. Respondents were asked to rank their top four choices and a weighting was assigned accordingly. Those weighted scores were used to generate a graphical representation for this report.

***Open ended responses to questions 5, 8, 9, 10, and 12 were not designed to be statistically analyzed. The themes synthesized for these questions emerged from responses as a whole based upon the survey team’s extensive time reviewing responses. Additional detail and variance across school communities is available through individual survey summary reports.

Question 1: Please indicate the school about which you are completing this survey

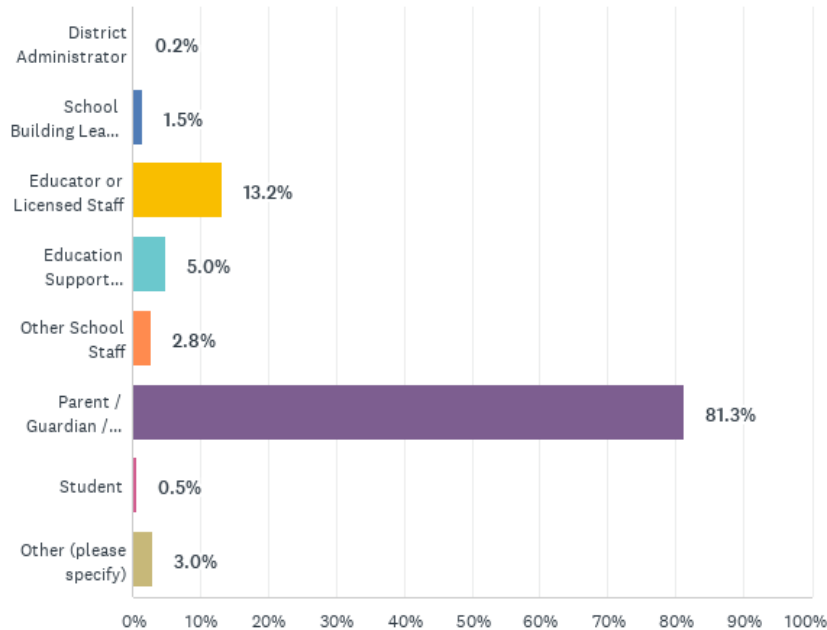
n = 2,386 ; skipped = 22

School	Count	School	Count
<i>Belmar</i>	59	<i>NCA @ Vivian</i>	43
<i>Bergen Meadow</i>	99	<i>Parr</i>	44
<i>Bergen Valley</i>	53	<i>Peck</i>	42
<i>Campbell</i>	98	<i>Peiffer</i>	116
<i>Colorow</i>	87	<i>Powderhorn</i>	131
<i>Emory</i>	70	<i>Prospect Valley</i>	149
<i>Foothills</i>	51	<i>Ryan</i>	107
<i>Fremont</i>	70	<i>Secrest</i>	44
<i>Glennon Heights</i>	69	<i>Sheridan Green</i>	89
<i>Green Mountain</i>	88	<i>Stevens</i>	60
<i>Kendallvue</i>	80	<i>Stober</i>	91
<i>Kullerstrand</i>	95	<i>Swanson</i>	37
<i>Lasley</i>	31	<i>Thomson</i>	61
<i>Little</i>	50	<i>Vanderhoof</i>	22
<i>Lukas</i>	77	<i>Wilmore-Davis</i>	81
<i>Lumberg</i>	36	<i>Witt</i>	105
<i>Molholm</i>	43	<i>Other</i>	8



Question 2: Which of the following best describes you or your role?

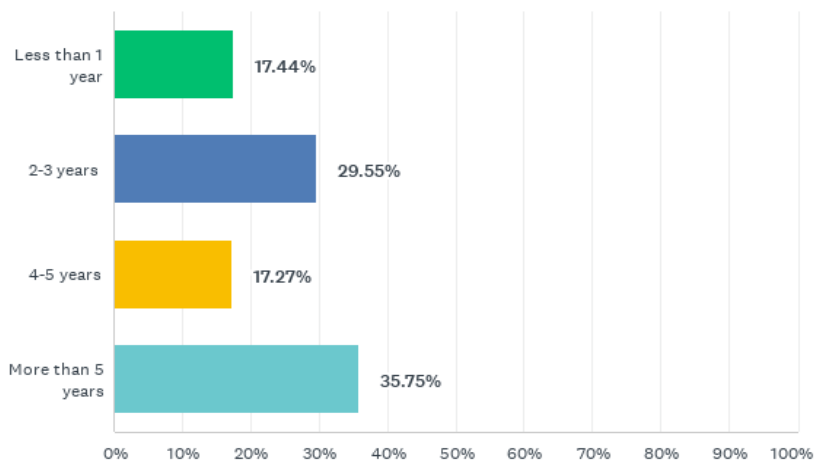
*n = 2,403 ; skipped = 5 **respondents were able to select more than one role for this question*



Role	Count
<i>District Administrator</i>	5
<i>School Building Leader or Leadership</i>	37
<i>Educator or Licensed Staff</i>	316
<i>Education Support Professional</i>	119
<i>Other School Staff</i>	68
<i>Parent / Guardian / Family Member or Grandparent</i>	1,953
<i>Student</i>	13
<i>Other</i>	71

Question 3: How long have you been part of your school community?

n = 2,403 ; skipped = 5

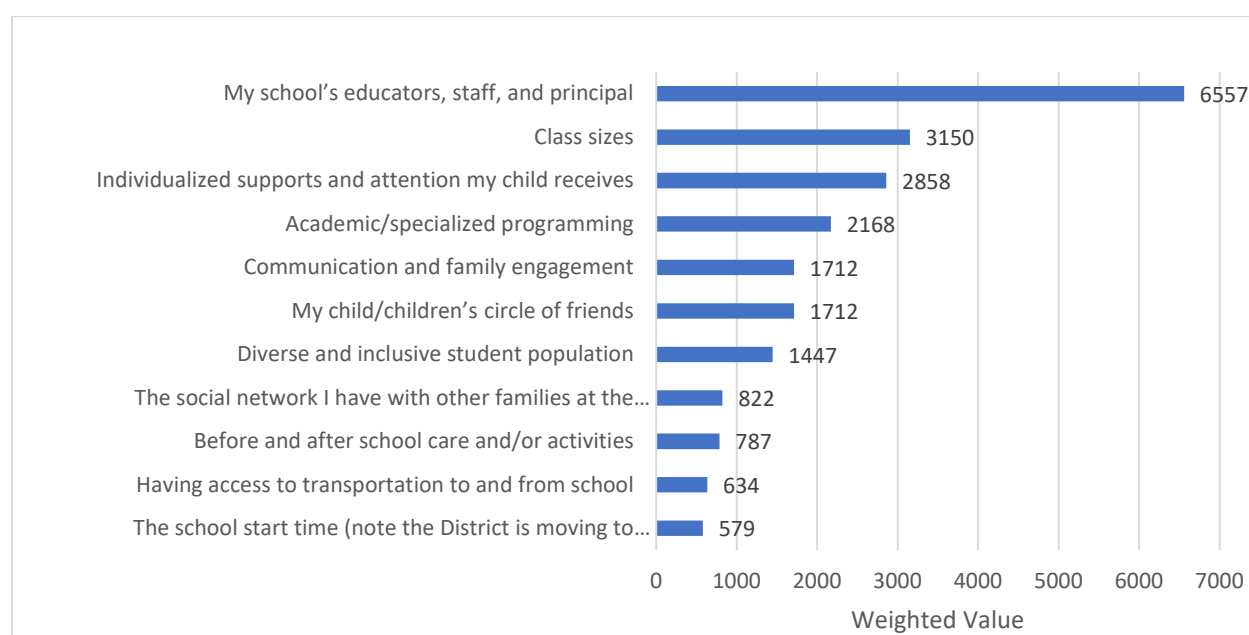


Length of Time	Count
<i>Less than 1 year</i>	419
<i>2-3 years</i>	710
<i>4-5 years</i>	415
<i>More than 5 years</i>	859

Question 4: What do you value most about your school? Please rank your top 4 responses:

n = 2,383 ; skipped = 25

Top 4 Responses Across All Respondents (in order)	1. <i>My school's educators, staff, and principal</i> 2. <i>Class sizes</i> 3. <i>Individualized supports and attention my child receives</i> 4. <i>Academic / specialized programming</i>
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Response Choices	Weighted Value
<i>The school start time (note the District is moving to more consistent start times for each level – elementary, K-8, middle, and high school – in the 2023-24 school year)</i>	579
<i>Having access to transportation to and from school</i>	634
<i>Before and after school care and/or activities</i>	787
<i>The social network I have with other families at the school</i>	822
<i>Diverse and inclusive student population</i>	1447
<i>My child/children's circle of friends</i>	1712
<i>Communication and family engagement</i>	1712
<i>Academic/specialized programming</i>	2168
<i>Individualized supports and attention my child receives</i>	2858
<i>Class sizes</i>	3150
<i>My school's educators, staff, and principal</i>	6557

Question 5: What additional elements make your current school community unique?

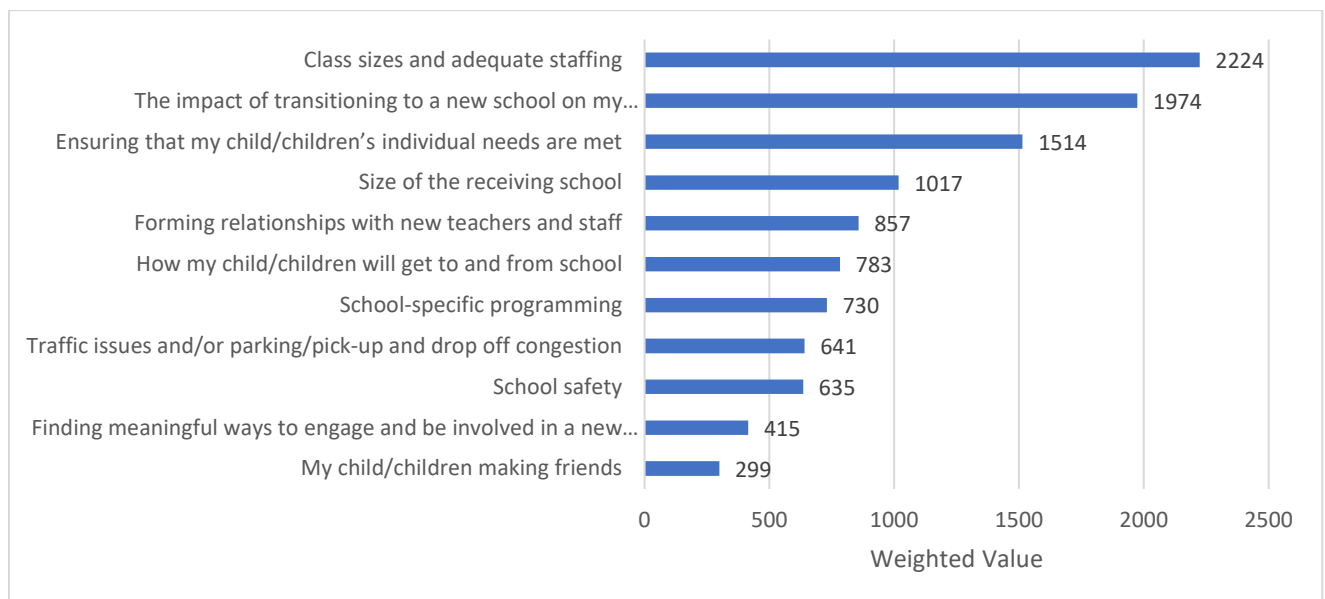
n = 1,390 ; skipped = 1,018

Most Common Response Themes Across All Respondents (not in order)	• <i>Small, tight-knit community</i> • <i>Neighborhood school within walking distance</i> • <i>Supportive, caring, and engaged educators, staff, and principal</i> • <i>Diverse and inclusive student population</i> • <i>Communication and family engagement</i> • <i>Specialized programs and supports (ASD, SEL, STEM, AMP)</i>
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Question 6: When you think about a potential closure of your school, which considerations matter most to you and your family? Please rank your top 4 responses (question directed only to respondents who answered Q1 with a potentially closing school)

n = 1,168 ; skipped = 1,240

Top 4 Responses Across All Respondents (in order)	1. <i>Class sizes and adequate staffing</i> 2. <i>The impact of transitioning to a new school on my child/children</i> 3. <i>Ensuring that my child/children's individual needs are met</i> 4. <i>Size of the receiving school</i>
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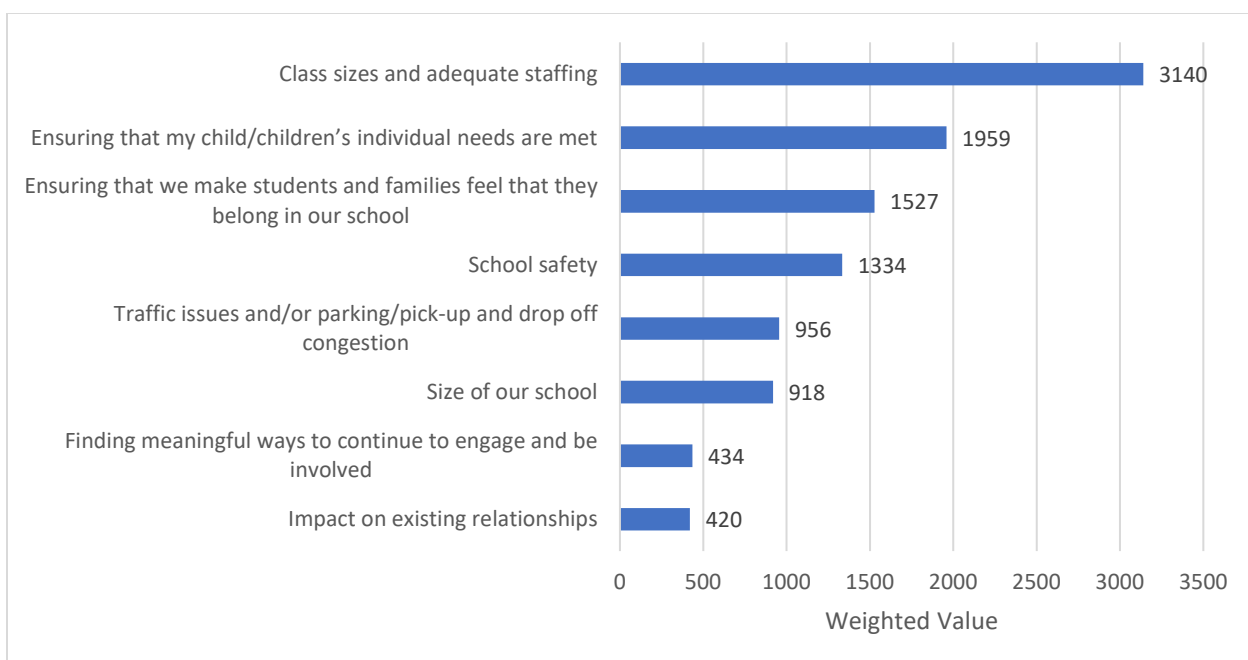


Response Choices	Weighted Value
<i>My child/children making friends</i>	299
<i>Finding meaningful ways to engage and be involved in a new community</i>	415
<i>School safety</i>	635
<i>Traffic issues and/or parking/pick-up and drop off congestion</i>	641
<i>School-specific programming</i>	730
<i>How my child/children will get to and from school</i>	783
<i>Forming relationships with new teachers and staff</i>	857
<i>Size of the receiving school</i>	1017
<i>Ensuring that my child/children's individual needs are met</i>	1514
<i>The impact of transitioning to a new school on my child/children</i>	1974
<i>Class sizes and adequate staffing</i>	2224

Question 7: When you think about the potential of welcoming another school's students and families into your school community, which considerations matter most to you and your family? Please rank your top 4 responses (question directed only to respondents who answered Q1 with a potentially receiving school)

n = 1,106 ; skipped = 1,302

Top 4 Responses Across All Respondents (in order)	<i>Class sizes and adequate staffing</i> <i>Ensuring that my child/children's individual needs are met</i> <i>Ensuring that we make students and families feel that they belong in our school</i> <i>School safety</i>
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Response Choices	Weighted Value
<i>Impact on existing relationships</i>	420
<i>Finding meaningful ways to continue to engage and be involved</i>	434
<i>Size of our school</i>	918
<i>Traffic issues and/or parking/pick-up and drop off congestion</i>	956
<i>School safety</i>	1334
<i>Ensuring that we make students and families feel that they belong in our school</i>	1527
<i>Ensuring that my child/children's individual needs are met</i>	1959
<i>Class sizes and adequate staffing</i>	3140

Question 8: What concerns do you have regarding a potential consolidation with another school community?

n = 1,872 ; skipped = 536

Most Common Response Themes Across All Respondents (not in order)	• <i>Increase in class size and lack of individual attention</i> • <i>Adequate physical building space</i> • <i>Impact of transition on students</i> • <i>Transition of staff and job security guarantees</i> • <i>Transportation and traffic safety concerns</i> • <i>Loss/interruption of crucial and/or specialized programs and services</i> • <i>Us vs. them dynamics between the school communities</i>
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Question 9: What are you hopeful or optimistic about regarding a potential consolidation with another school community?

n = 1,658 ; skipped = 750

Most Common Response Themes Across All Respondents (not in order)	• <i>New friends, teachers and community</i> • <i>Increased funding for more resources and programs (including enrichment)</i> • <i>Increased diversity</i> • <i>Larger, stronger family engagement</i> • <i>Funds for more, full-time support staff (especially mental health team, special education, paras, nurse, etc)</i>
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Question 10: What does your student(s) need to thrive in school?

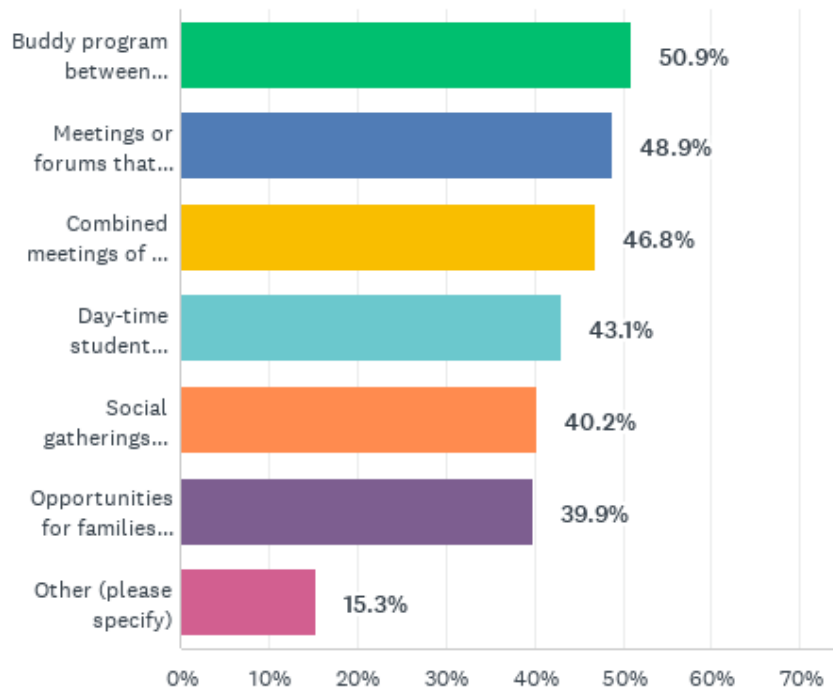
n = 1,721 ; skipped = 687

Most Common Response Themes Across All Respondents (not in order)	• <i>Small class sizes and individualized attention</i> • <i>Close, positive relationship with staff and students</i> • <i>High quality teachers and staff</i> • <i>Adequate resources</i> • <i>Peaceful, structured, consistent, happy environment</i> • <i>Challenging and engaging curriculum</i> • <i>To feel safe, heard, and included; social-emotional support</i> • <i>Continued specialized services and supports (DHH, AN, ASD, etc.)</i>
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Question 11: If the consolidation is approved by the Board of Education on November 10, 2022, how would you like to see the consolidating communities you are a part of (closing and receiving schools) come together prior to the 2023-2024 school year? Please check all that apply

n = 1,911 ; skipped = 497

Supports	% Responses
<i>Buddy program between students from the two schools</i>	50.9%
<i>Meetings or forums that focus on academic programming and/or student experiences</i>	48.9%
<i>Combined meetings of the parent groups (PTA, PTO, SAC) from the two schools for planning for the 2023-24 school year</i>	46.8%
<i>Day-time student shadowing or tour experiences at the receiving school</i>	43.1%
<i>Social gatherings between students/families outside of school hours</i>	40.2%
<i>Opportunities for families at consolidating schools to attend events at one another's schools for the remainder of the 2022-23 school year</i>	39.9%
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	15.3%



Question 12: What other ideas do you have for the consolidating communities you are a part of to come together prior to the 2023-24 school year?

n = 728 ; skipped = 1,680

Most Common Response Themes Across All Respondents (not in order)	• <i>Combined school events/open house</i> • <i>Help students with 504 or IEPs to get prepared earlier with transition</i> • <i>Additional SEL supports for students and educators this year and through transition</i> • <i>Rebranding of mascot/school name</i> • <i>Buddy program/shadowing</i> • <i>Proactive communication throughout the process</i> • <i>Traffic and transportation plan</i> • <i>Ceremonies and celebrations at the close of the current school year</i> • <i>Create new shared artifacts between schools (ie, murals, photo albums)</i>
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Who Engaged

To respect privacy and foster an environment of open communication, no personally identifying information was collected nor was attendance logged by formal means. Approximate attendance was tracked for each meeting and information voluntarily collected during the survey. The following table lists the approximate number of attendees by school for each meeting, the respondents to the survey (as self-identified) and the number of guardians listed on file with the District. Guardians may include both parents, caregivers, emergency person, grandparent, guardian, sibling, stepparent, unrelated or other.

School	Meeting 1	Meeting 2 *	Survey	Enrollment	Guardians
Bergen	15	30	99	244	500
Campbell	15	40	98	215	412
Colorow	40	40	87	194	362
Emory	50	36	70	382	700
Glennon Heights	30	40	69	136	250
Green Mountain	80	50	88	202	370
Kullerstrand	50	**	95	197	378
Molholm	90	60	43	229	374
Vivian	40	17*	43	157	293
Parr	20	35	44	187	328
Peck	16	25	42	152	282
Peiffer	40	65	116	215	438
Sheridan Green	40	45	89	250	478
Thomson	40	15	61	186	344
Wilmore-Davis	50	**	81	228	433
Witt	50	30	105	239	487

* Meeting 2 included the closing school and receiving school(s).

** Certain schools held focus groups in lieu of school based meetings.

Going Forward

There are no easy paths for district or school leaders when shifting enrollments or other issues necessitate school closures and consolidations. It is very rare that a family or community member wants to see their neighborhood school close. Even when it is understood as necessary, the change can be difficult. As is true with any form of major change, the personal journey will be different for every family, student, staff member, building leader and community member. That path will also not likely be a straight line as one question is answered and another raised or when optimism for the future is momentarily stalled as a result of practical limitations. For every Jeffco school community impacted – closing schools and receiving schools – the path will be different and it will be important to respect, honor and respond to those differences. There are also some universal best practices and approaches the District would be well served to incorporate going forward based both on the process underway and the feedback gathered to date during the outreach following the recommendations of August 25.

High-Touch Support: Every staff member, school leader, student, parent, guardian and community member will experience the closure and consolidation differently. What is comfortable for some may be a struggle for others and there will be new questions raised over the coming year as recommendations turn to decisions and decisions turn to actions. Jeffco leaders would be well served to establish regular and personalized touchpoints with all affected stakeholders.

Intentional Efforts to Bring Communities Together: School closures raise passionate responses and can create unnecessary divides. These divides may be within a school, across schools, between families, or among neighbors. Intentional efforts should be undertaken to bringing the consolidating school communities together including parents, students, and neighbors. The District would also be well served to take steps to find common ground through shared desired for the future with those internally and externally who opposed either the recommendations or the process.

Transparent, Honest Communications: One of the biggest contributors to anger at an institution or a loss of trust is when families or stakeholders do not feel there was full, timely or transparent communication. Even if the Board or District posted and otherwise distributed information about the enrollment shifts and potential implications, some stakeholders may not have been aware either of the availability of information or the seriousness of the situation. Establishing a regular pattern of actions like annually updating and communicating FCB reports that share data on enrollment and population shifts and persistently communicating about potential actions will help establish predictability and potentially foster trust with families, staff and community members.

Responsive Action: The most important action District leaders can take is to be responsive to input received. Where possible, taking action that directly addresses concerns raised or requests made will underscore the District's commitment to families. Similarly, the District should be direct about where it can take action and where it can not. Being transparent about the actions to be taken, the timeline for doing so and where relevant, the limits on action, will be equally important. In establishing priorities, resources and timelines for action, it would also be appropriate to examine actions that can most help any communities or groups that may be disproportionately affected and those actions that can have the broadest impact. These should include both short term and long term actions that will directly impact families and student experiences.