

Vision Survey, Fall 2025

Strengths

Student	Parent	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I know how to use technology safely and responsibly. ○ I understand what success looks like in my classes ○ I work on projects or group work with other students ○ My teachers care about me as a person ○ My teachers treat me with respect and help me when I need it ○ My school spaces make it easy to work alone, in small groups, and as a whole class. ○ I feel proud and successful about my learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The district’s safety and security efforts help students feel protected and supported. ○ I know how well my student is performing in school. ○ Overall, I would give the district a grade of A or B. ○ The district provides a distinctive, high-quality educational experience for students. ○ The district prioritizes students’ academic growth, social-emotional learning, character development, and life skills. ○ I am satisfied with communication and relationships with my student’s teachers. ○ My student is being prepared with the technological skills needed for success in a global, digital world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I know how to use technology safely and responsibly. ○ Our district fosters a collaborative, creative, and innovative learning environment. ○ The district takes a proactive approach to safety and security. ○ My students are prepared technologically to be future global workers and citizens. ○ I have the resources I need to do my job well, ○ I am satisfied with the relationship I have with grade level or department personnel. ○ My team is collaborative and productive

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Opportunities

Student	Parent	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ My teachers listen to me and notice when something is bothering me. ○ I have a say in what or how I learn ○ I have learning experiences outside the classroom. ○ I get to work on real-world problems or projects that make a difference ○ Students in my classes care about and respect each other. ○ My teachers help me see how much I've grown as a learner ○ I feel I'm being prepared for high school, college, and my future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ My teachers listen to me and notice when something is bothering me. ○ The district is transparent and accountable in managing taxpayer resources. ○ The district connects classroom instruction with real-world learning experiences. ○ Students have opportunities to learn beyond the classroom, both virtually and through community or outdoor experiences. ○ The district effectively addresses bullying concerns and ensures students feel safe at school. ○ Homework reinforces learning, encourages independent thinking, and feels meaningful rather than excessive. ○ Students should learn how to use artificial intelligence (AI) to prepare for future success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I am satisfied with the way the district measures student success. ○ The current Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) effectively meets my students' needs. ○ Professional development opportunities are meaningful and help me improve my instructional practice ○ My school schedule provides adequate time for effective collaboration ○ Salaries and benefits in our district are competitive ○ Students should learn how to use artificial intelligence (AI) to be successful in their future work ○ Our district prioritizes applied learning by connecting teaching methods to real-life experiences.

What did we learn from middle school students about their VISION for LEARNING?

Overall: Students learn best when instruction balances clear teaching, active engagement, and collaborative learning, while allowing for student choice and different learning preferences.

Overall: Students feel most cared for when adults notice them, listen to them, help them when they struggle, and treat them with kindness, patience, and respect — both academically and personally.

Overall: Students want learning that is less stressful, more engaging, better paced, and more flexible, with stronger connections to real life, clearer instruction, balanced technology use, and greater attention to student well-being.

Overall, students are most proud of their progress, effort, and new knowledge, with math and ELA being the most frequently celebrated areas of growth,

Middle school students overwhelmingly reported learning best through group or partner projects, especially in small groups and when they can choose who they work with. Students value collaboration because it allows them to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from peers.

Students also strongly prefer hands-on, interactive lessons such as labs, STEM projects, art-based work, games, and real-world applications. These experiences were frequently described as more engaging and memorable than lectures or textbooks alone

Across responses, students emphasized the importance of clear, step-by-step teacher instruction before independent work, including guided notes and modeling. Many noted that learning is harder when lessons move too quickly or expectations are unclear.

Finally, students expressed a desire for choice and flexibility, including options for individual or group work, varied project formats, self-paced learning, and opportunities to use technology and visual supports.

Students shared a wide range of accomplishments across academics and personal growth. Students also highlighted personal achievements and growth, such as learning about friendship, time management, responsibility, creative arts, STEM projects, and developing study habits. A number of students reflected on grades and academic improvement, noting success in tests, quizzes, and maintaining high GPAs. A few responses emphasized learning practical skills that extend beyond the classroom, like real-life problem solving, labs, coding, and project-based activities.

What did we learn from staff about their VISION for TEACHING AND LEARNING by 2030?

Staff hope that by 2030 the district will provide a learning environment that balances academic rigor with creativity, hands-on experiences, and social-emotional development; ensures equitable support for all students, including those with high or atypical needs; promotes consistent behavior management; maintains reasonable technology use; and values teachers through competitive

compensation, professional autonomy, and meaningful collaboration. The overarching vision is a district where students are well-prepared academically, socially, and emotionally, and staff feel respected, supported, and able to thrive in their roles.

Overall, while staff appreciate the dedication, collaboration, and expertise of colleagues and take pride in serving students, they see opportunities to better support learners through timely interventions, improve curriculum implementation and professional development, strengthen behavior management and accountability, provide competitive compensation and manageable workloads, and enhance communication and transparency between staff and district leadership.

A major concern is support for students with diverse learning needs. Teachers report that students who struggle academically, behaviorally, or with executive function often do not receive timely or sufficient interventions. Issues include delays in special education eligibility, limited access to interventionists, and insufficient differentiation in the general education classroom.

Many staff members feel that new programs, particularly the HMH reading curriculum, have been rolled out with inadequate training, preparation time, and support. Teachers report feeling overwhelmed by multiple initiatives, insufficient planning time, and the expectation to “learn on the fly” while teaching, which impacts their ability to provide high-quality instruction.

Staff shared concerns about inconsistent consequences for disruptive or unsafe behavior and a lack of administrative follow-through, which negatively affects classroom learning and staff morale. Clear, consistent district-wide behavior policies and stronger support for teachers in managing challenging behaviors were suggested.

Teachers noted that salaries are not competitive with neighboring districts, which may affect retention, particularly for special services staff. Excessive workload, including curriculum creation, committee responsibilities, and additional initiatives without relief or compensation, contributes to stress and burnout. Staff emphasized the need for recognition, fair compensation, and time to focus on instruction and collaboration.

Staff expressed a desire for district leaders to better understand classroom realities, involve teachers in decision-making, and ensure consistent follow-through on initiatives, supports, and reporting systems.

What did we learn from staff that they hoped would be different compared to what it is today?

Student learning and curriculum: Many staff hope for more hands-on, creative, and constructive learning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate and connected to real-world experiences. There is a desire for curriculum that is cohesive, rigorous, and aligned across grade levels, with a greater focus on science, technology, engineering, math (STEM/STEAM), digital literacy, executive functioning skills, life skills, and social-emotional learning (SEL). Several responses emphasized providing more advanced learning opportunities and addressing the needs of students between the 20th–50th percentile, as well as better support for students with diverse or atypical needs.

Behavior and social-emotional support: Staff consistently raised concerns about student behavior, discipline, and social-emotional well-being. They hope for a more consistent district-wide approach to behavior management, with clear consequences, proactive strategies, and sufficient staff support, particularly for students with high needs. Prioritizing mental health, stress management, resilience, and SEL across all grade levels was frequently mentioned.

Technology use: Many responses called for a more balanced approach to technology, especially in primary grades, emphasizing less screen time and more face-to-face interactions, play-based learning, and hands-on activities. Staff expressed interest in teaching students responsible and effective technology use while avoiding overreliance on devices for instruction.

Teacher support and collaboration: Staff hope for increased support, both in staffing and professional development, to manage growing student needs and workloads. They desire more planning and collaboration time, clear communication from administrators, and meaningful inclusion in decision-making processes. Adequate staffing for special education, intervention, and advanced learning programs was highlighted as critical to supporting both students and teachers.

Compensation and workload: Competitive salaries, benefits, and respect for teachers' time were frequently cited as top priorities. Staff hope for pay that reflects experience, credentials, and cost-of-living increases, as well as recognition of additional responsibilities and the increasing demands placed on educators. School environment and logistics: Responses included hopes for less overcrowding, more equitable resource allocation, safer schools, improved scheduling (including more recess and flexible interventions), and attention to building conditions and accessibility. Staff also emphasized supporting positive parent relationships, reducing administrative micromanagement, and fostering a culture of respect and collaboration.

What did we learn from parents about their VISION for the school district by 2030?

Overall, parents feel that Arlington Heights School District 25 demonstrates a strong commitment to student success, staff support, and family engagement, with communication, high-quality teachers, and a focus on the whole child being the most widely recognized strengths. While families appreciate the district's dedication and positive learning environment, they see opportunities to better challenge advanced learners, reduce screen time, strengthen discipline and safety measures, enhance communication and transparency, and expand hands-on, real-world learning opportunities to ensure all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Parents overwhelmingly appreciate the district's communication and transparency. Many noted that teachers, administrators, and the district regularly provide updates on student progress, classroom activities, and district events, which helps families feel informed and engaged.

Parents consistently mentioned that educators are caring, responsive, and attentive to individual student needs. Teachers are recognized for fostering strong relationships, proactively supporting students with IEPs, 504 plans, or other learning needs, and going above and beyond to ensure students thrive academically and socially.

Parents also pointed to the district's focus on the whole child, emphasizing social- emotional learning, inclusivity, and diversity. Programs and initiatives that create a positive, supportive environment help students feel safe, valued, and motivated to learn. Families appreciate the proactive support during transitions between grade levels and schools, as well as events like book A major concern is academic differentiation and rigor. Many parents feel that advanced, gifted, or twice-exceptional students are not consistently challenged to reach their full potential. Curriculum is sometimes described as repetitive, overly screen-based, or insufficiently developmentally appropriate, and enrichment opportunities are limited in some subjects, particularly advanced reading, writing, STEM, and critical thinking. Parents reported that incidents, especially at recess, are sometimes unreported or poorly addressed, leaving students feeling unsafe. Many noted a lack of consistent consequences for misbehavior and a need to empower teachers and administrators to enforce discipline effectively.

Parents feel that excessive screen time can interfere with engagement, focus, and hands-on learning. Many suggested a better balance of technology use with traditional instruction, physical activity, and creative learning opportunities. Parents also emphasized the importance of communication and transparency, particularly regarding grading systems, advanced programs, student progress, and district decisions. A centralized communication platform, clear explanations of curriculum and advanced learning pathways, and more accessible information on strategic planning and budgeting were recommended.

Additional areas for improvement include school safety and logistics, smaller class sizes, healthier lunch options, earlier language instruction, more enrichment opportunities, and life skills education such as personal finance, digital literacy, and responsible AI use.

A Shared Vision for Teaching and Learning by 2030

Grounded in Student, Staff, and Family Voice

What We Learned Across All Stakeholder Groups

Despite different perspectives, **students, staff, and parents are remarkably aligned** in what they want school to feel like and accomplish by 2030:

- Learning should be **engaging, relevant, hands-on, and connected to real life**
 - Students need to feel **known, heard, safe, and supported**
 - Instruction must balance **strong foundational skills with creativity, collaboration, and choice**
 - Schools must support the **whole child**—academically, socially, emotionally
 - Teachers need **time, trust, training, and fair compensation** to do this work well
 - The district must be **transparent, consistent, and accountable**
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What Middle School Students Told Us About Their Vision for Learning

Students Learn Best When...

- Instruction blends **clear teacher guidance** with **active, hands-on learning**
- Learning includes **group or partner work**, especially small-group collaboration
- Lessons connect to **real-world problems**, projects, and experiences beyond the classroom
- Teachers clearly explain expectations and provide **step-by-step instruction**
- They have **choices** in how they learn, show understanding, and use technology
- Technology is used purposefully—not excessively

Students Feel Most Cared For When...

- Adults **notice them, listen to them, and respond when something is wrong**
- Teachers treat them with **patience, kindness, and respect**
- Classmates respect one another and learning environments feel safe

Students Want Learning That Is...

- Less stressful and better paced
- More engaging and interactive
- Flexible and responsive to different learning styles
- Connected to life beyond school and preparation for high school, college, careers, and the future

What Students Are Proud Of

- Their **growth over time**, effort, and new knowledge
 - Academic progress, especially in **math and ELA**
 - Development of life skills such as time management, responsibility, collaboration, creativity, STEM skills, coding, labs, and project-based learning
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What Staff Shared About Their Vision for Teaching and Learning by 2030

Staff Envision a District That:

- Balances **academic rigor with creativity, hands-on learning, and SEL**
- Provides **equitable and timely supports** for students with diverse and high needs
- Maintains **consistent expectations and behavior supports**
- Uses technology **intentionally and appropriately**
- Values educators through **professional respect, collaboration, compensation, and autonomy**

Key Needs Identified by Staff

1. Stronger Support for Diverse Learners

- Faster and more effective interventions
- Adequate staffing for special education, intervention, and advanced learners
- Better differentiation within general education classrooms

2. Improved Curriculum Implementation

- Cohesive, aligned, rigorous curriculum across grade levels
- Adequate training and preparation time for new programs
- Fewer competing initiatives and clearer priorities

3. Consistent Behavior Systems

- Clear, district-wide behavior expectations and consequences
- Administrative follow-through
- Proactive supports for students with high needs

4. Teacher Sustainability

- Competitive salaries and benefits
 - Reasonable workloads and protected planning/collaboration time
 - Meaningful professional development
 - Teacher voice in decision-making
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What Staff Hope Will Be Different by 2030

- More **hands-on, real-world, and developmentally appropriate learning**
 - Increased focus on **STEM/STEAM, digital literacy, executive functioning, life skills, and SEL**
 - Stronger systems for **advanced learners and students in the middle range**
 - Balanced technology use, especially in earlier grades
 - Safer schools with consistent discipline and adequate staffing
 - A culture of **trust, respect, collaboration, and shared responsibility**
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What Parents Shared About Their Vision for the District by 2030

What Parents Value Most

- **Caring, dedicated, high-quality teachers**
- Strong communication and transparency

- A focus on the **whole child**
- Inclusive, supportive school environments
- Support during transitions between schools and grade levels

Areas for Growth Identified by Parents

- Greater **academic differentiation and rigor**, especially for advanced and twice-exceptional learners
 - More **hands-on, project-based, real-world learning**
 - Reduced reliance on screens
 - Clearer, more consistent **discipline and safety practices**
 - Continued transparency in how success is measured and resources are used
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A Unified Vision for the District by 2030

By 2030, our district will be a place where every student is known, challenged, supported, and prepared for the future. Learning will be engaging, meaningful, and connected to the real world. Students will develop strong academic foundations alongside creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills. Teachers will be empowered, trusted professionals with the time, resources, and support needed to meet the diverse needs of learners. Families and staff will partner with the district through transparent communication, consistent expectations, and shared accountability to ensure safe, inclusive, and high-performing schools.

What This Vision Calls Us to Do

- Design **learning experiences that matter**
- Strengthen **systems of support and accountability**
- Balance **innovation with clarity and consistency**
- Invest in **people—students, staff, and families**
- Use data not just to measure outcomes, but to **improve experiences**