

Cardozo Education Campus: Informing School Transformation Strategies with Family and Community Feedback

Introduction & Methodology

Introduction

This project was undertaken with the purpose of collecting parent and community feedback to inform Langley Elementary School's *School Transformation Plan*. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), introduced in 2015, requires all states and DC to develop new accountability systems and provide targeted support to under-performing schools. In accordance with ESSA, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has created a framework to identify Comprehensive Support Schools, or schools that fall in the lowest five percent. These schools are eligible for additional resources to plan and implement a tailored School Transformation Plan to improve outcomes for all students. In order to ensure that community voice informed the creation of the School Transformation Plan, DC Public Schools (DCPS) held open forums and administered surveys to collect feedback from the broader school community, including teachers, staff, families, and students regarding the following priority areas:

- Shared leadership
- Engagement
- Culture of Achievement
- Academics
- Equity

Group Discussion Methodology

In order to get robust feedback from the Cardozo Education Campus community, DCPS and PAVE (Parents Amplifying Voices in Education) partnered to conduct a community feedback session in which participants were part of a group discussion to share their thoughts and hopes for Cardozo Education Campus. During the community feedback session, **40 participants (19 teachers, eight school staff, two students, one family member, and 10 participants who did not disclose their relationship to the school)** shared their ideas and priorities for how they'd like to see the school improve. The group discussion was centered around a set of guiding discussion questions that was developed in partnership with DCPS, PAVE, and the school principal. The discussion questions can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Methodology

A total of **32 surveys** were collected from the Cardozo Education Campus community between January 28, 2019 and February 15, 2019. Surveys were administered at the community feedback session and also administered through other various channels, including email and school outreach. Fourteen surveys were collected at the in-person community feedback session. The school distributed and collected another 10 at a school coffee chat, and eight were collected online. Respondents included family members, teachers, school staff, community organizations, and community members (Figure A). In addition, respondents were associated with students across a variety of grade levels (Figure B). The survey can be found in Appendix B.

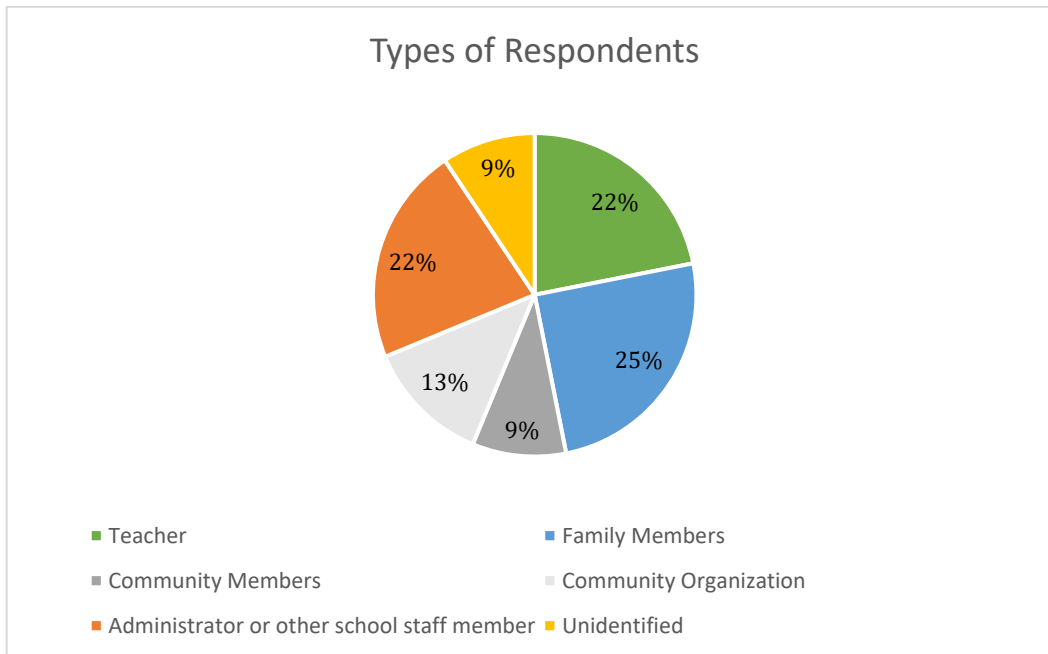


Figure A. Types of stakeholders that took Cardozo Education Campus' survey.

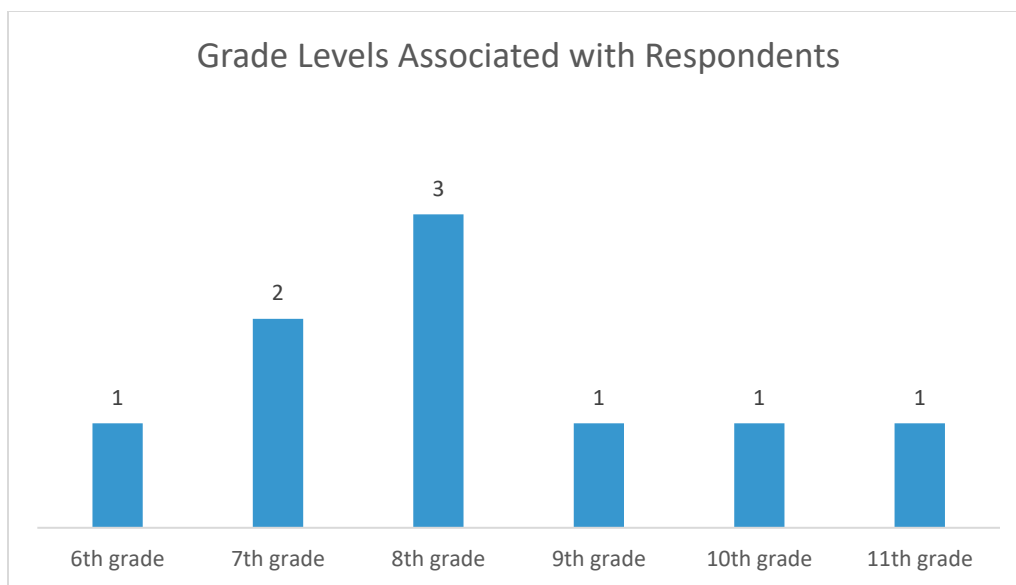


Figure B. Student grade levels associated with survey respondents.

Report Note

More information about survey responses and data trends can be found in Appendix C. Quotes under the Community Voices section are direct quotes from the group discussion or response from the open-ended questions on the survey.

Key Findings

At Cardozo Education Campus, engagement was a top priority. Stakeholders felt positively about existing engagement and shared leadership opportunities but would like more options to get involved. Importantly, responses on those focus areas varied across different types of stakeholders, such as staff and families. Stakeholders would like to see more regular opportunities to provide feedback, particularly opportunities for parents to provide feedback.

Culture of achievement was among the top priority areas for the school. Stakeholders noted that the school would benefit from incorporating more social-emotional learning as well as trauma-informed training for staff. In addition, stakeholders believed that students could benefit from flexible scheduling and late-start options.

Survey and Group Discussion Detailed Findings

Shared Leadership:

Survey Responses (n=32)

- Responses regarding shared leadership at Cardozo Education Campus varied across the board. Particularly, when comparing the responses of families and school staff/teachers
- 45.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school leaders ask for their opinion regarding school decisions. Yet, more than a third (35.5%) of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. (Figure C).
- When looking solely at staff and teacher responses, 69.2% agreed, and only 15.4% strongly disagreed that school leaders asked for their opinion regarding school decisions (Figure C).
- In contrast, when looking at the responses of family members, only 25% agreed or strongly agreed that school leaders asked for their opinion regarding school decisions (Figure C).

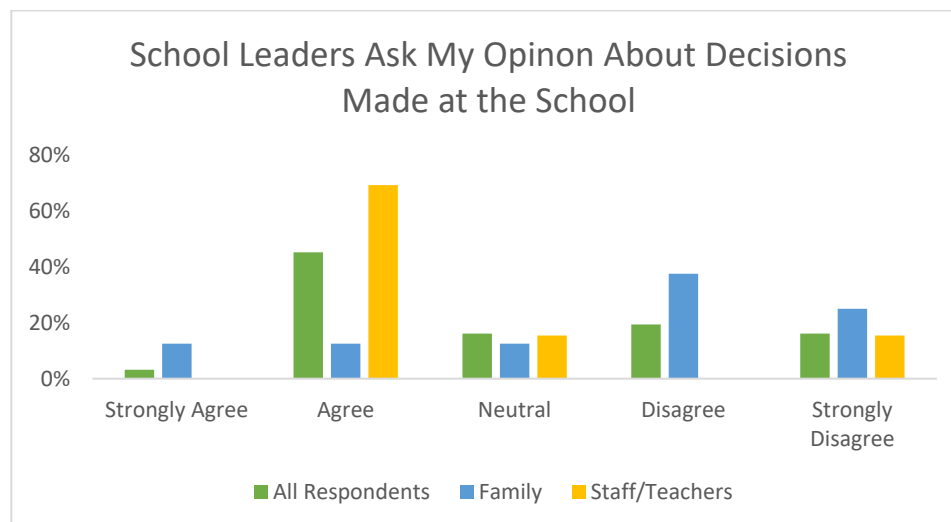


Figure C. Responses regarding shared leadership at Cardozo Education Campus.

Group Discussion Responses

- There is a need for open forums so that students, staff, and families can voice their opinions.
- Staff feel as though there is a lot of responsibility placed on their shoulders for students to succeed, which can feel overwhelming when there is little flexibility due to OSSE mandates.
- Teachers want better communication between upper-level staff and teachers and more venues to be engaged in the decision-making process.

Community Voices

"We need more student voice. How often are students given the opportunity to voice their opinions?...Lunch would be a great opportunity for this." -Cardozo Teacher

"We need to find a better way to get parent feedback." -Cardozo Teacher

Engagement:

Survey Responses (n=32)

- Responses regarding engagement at Cardozo Education Campus varied greatly.
- 54.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cardozo Education Campus made them feel welcomed and connected to the school community (Figure D).
- Yet, when comparing the responses of family members and staff/teachers, only 37.5% of family members said they felt welcomed by the school, where as 69.2% of staff/teachers said they felt welcomed (Figure D).
- A little over a third (36.6%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Cardozo Education Campus engaged regularly with all members of its community.

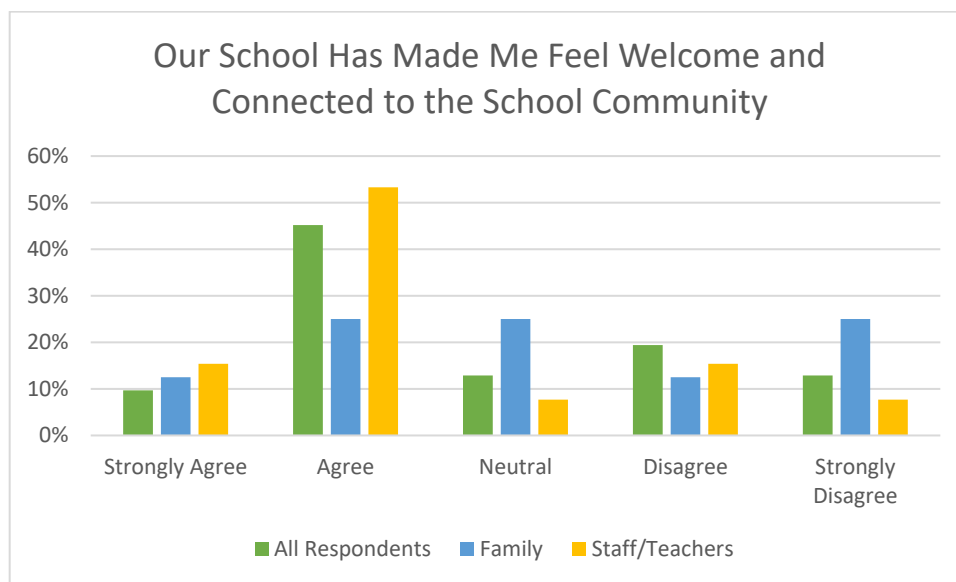


Figure D. Responses regarding engagement at Cardozo Education Campus.

Group Discussion Responses

- There are some efforts for engagement, but more needs to be done so that teachers and administrators can effectively reach students and parents.

Community Voices

"We should hold events in students' neighborhoods to increase family and parent engagement."-Cardozo Teacher

"I would love to have more engagement with teachers. Some are better than others." - Cardozo Teacher

Culture of Achievement:

Survey Responses (n=32)

- The responses regarding Cardozo Education Campus' culture of achievement varied. Overall, a little over a third of respondents felt positively about the school's culture of achievement.
- 22.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students, families, and staff felt proud of their school. In contrast, almost half (45.2%) disagreed (Figure E).
- 38.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students and staff have strong relationships at the school. Almost a third (29.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

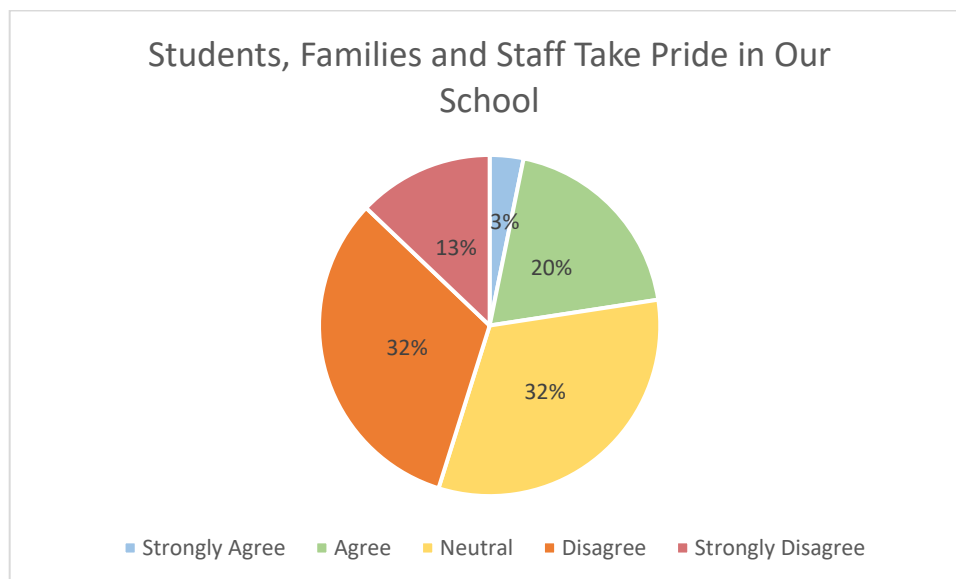


Figure E. Responses regarding culture of achievement at Cardozo Education Campus.

Group Discussion Responses

- Teachers feel overloaded, with large numbers of students and little peer or administrative support, which can be overwhelming.
- An advisory period and flexible scheduling would greatly benefit students and teachers. Students would benefit by being able to finish homework, and students that work jobs at night would be able to come to school on time. For teachers, an advisory period would give them time to prepare for class and do more cross-curricular planning.
- Teachers and staff feel as though they have strong relationships with students.

Community Voices

"When I was in school, I had study period. I couldn't study after school because I was working, just like many of our kids. This would give our students the opportunity to finish [school] work and still take care of other needs."
-Cardozo Teacher

Academics:

Survey Responses (n=32)

- Responses regarding academics at Cardozo Education Campus varied greatly.
- 33.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students have appropriate supports for learning. Whereas 36.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure F).
- Only 20% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that students at Cardozo Education Campus were excited about learning. Half disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 30% felt neutral.

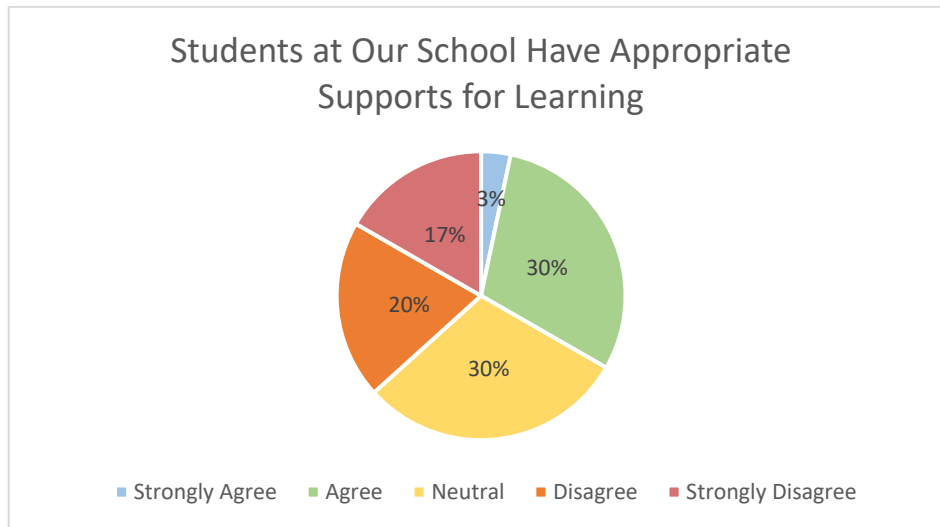


Figure F. Responses regarding academics at Cardozo Education Campus.

Group Discussion Responses

- There needs to be a higher standard for students, specifically students of color, regarding reading and participation in educational activities.
- Students are excited and engaged in extra-curricular activities, but often academic achievement is a barrier for participation which disengages students all together.
- More one-on-one supports are needed for students who are below grade level in order to ensure they succeed.
- Teachers want a social-emotional curriculum to better allow students to navigate conflict and complex situations.

Community Voices

“Cardozo has sports and cheerleading, which really engage students but needing to have the grades to participate is a barrier.” -Cardozo Teacher

“If our high schoolers can’t read, and don’t do well in class, they misbehave. They cannot be sent home after misbehaving daily, they need to be taking small group reading classes. If you can’t read well, every day is going to be traumatic. There has got to be enough money to hire enough teachers [to help students] who are not good at reading yet. To teach these kids to be prepared when they graduate.” -Cardozo Teacher

Equity:

Survey Responses (n=32)

- Responses regarding equity at Cardozo Education Campus varied.
- Overall, many of respondents (46.4%) reported that they felt neutral about the school preparing all students for success later in life (Figure G).
- Yet, there was variation between the responses of families and staff. No staff agreed or strongly agreed that the school was preparing students for success later in life, whereas over a third (37.5%) of family members agreed or strongly agreed (Figure G).

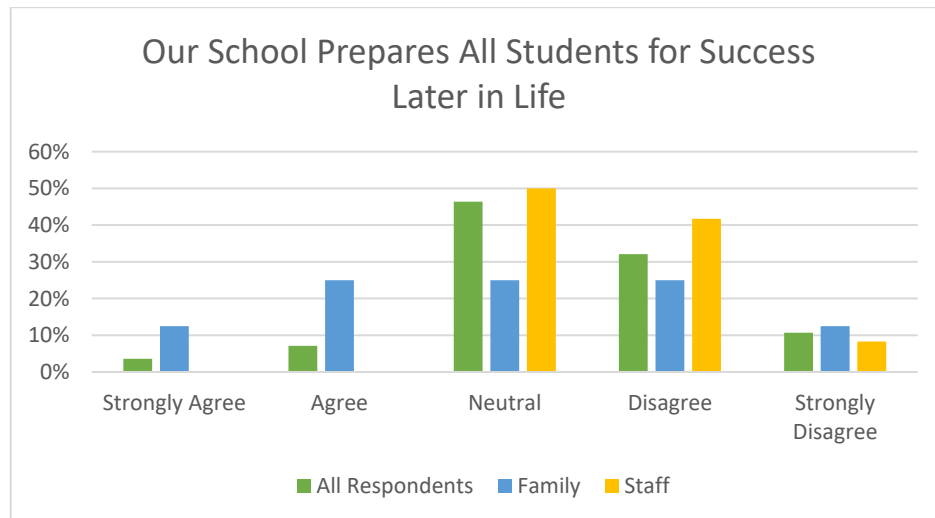


Figure G. Responses regarding equity at Cardozo Education Campus.

Group Discussion Responses

- There is a need to address chronic absenteeism and to develop strategies that support students who may have family responsibilities or personal issues that prevent them from getting to school each day.
- Traditional education does not support our students and does not account for students who do not have time for homework, need to work to support families, and other barriers that impact a student's ability to learn.
- Many students at the school have faced a lot of trauma. Teachers need support in order to help their students, and students need more professional support to navigate their own trauma.

Community Voices

"We need to allocate resources where students are put where they need to be [when experiencing trauma] so that they can reflect and cope, that's what makes restorative practices actually restorative, not just saying we're not suspending students." -Cardozo Teacher

Appendix A

Cardozo Education Campus Community Feedback Session Discussion Questions

Directions: The questions below are intended to start a conversation and to help us get input on the five focus areas of school transformation. There are no right or wrong answers - we want to know what you believe will move us forward as a school community!

- **Shared Leadership:**
 - How has your school asked for your thoughts or opinions about school decisions? What came out of that conversation? How was your input included?
 - When do you feel most heard? Who do you trust to listen to and act on your concerns?
 - How would you like to be engaged in decision-making at the school as we work together to make changes?
- **Engagement:**
 - When do you feel most welcomed or connected to the school?
 - What does strong engagement between the parents and teachers look like to you?
 - What partnerships or programs at the school are successful?
- **Culture of Achievement:**
 - When is your child most excited about or proud of the school? Why?
 - What improvements in school culture would you like to see?
 - Are there opportunities, programs, or initiatives that are successful? What others would you like us to consider?
- **Academics:**
 - When was your child most successful at school? When was your child most excited about school?
 - How would you describe the supports for learning at school?
 - What do you like about instruction at our school? What else what would you like to see?
- **Equity**
 - How is your child being set up for success later in life? Why or why not?
 - How are your child's unique needs being met?
 - Are there ways we could better support students from all backgrounds, including students with special needs, students of different racial backgrounds, students who are English Language Learners, etc?
- **Overall**
 - Which of the 5 focus areas (shared leadership, engagement, school culture, academics, equity) would you say is currently the most successful at the school?
 - All of these areas are important. Which do you think is the MOST important to prioritize? Which focus area do you think will allow your school to see the biggest gains?

Appendix B

Community Feedback Session Survey

School: _____

Rank the following improvement focus areas from most important to you to least important to you (**1—most important, 5—least important**).

____ Shared Leadership ____ Engagement ____ Culture of Achievement ____ Academics ____ Equity

Please choose the best answer for each of the following questions.

Shared Leadership:

Our school includes the voices of students, families, teachers, and other staff in their decision-making.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

School leaders ask my opinion about decisions made at the school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about how our school **shares leadership** and decision-making?

Engagement

Our school has made me feel welcome and connected to our school community.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Our school engages regularly with all members of its community, including staff, students, and families.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about **engagement** at our school?

Culture of Achievement:

Students and staff have strong relationships at our school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Students, families, and staff take pride in our school.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about our **Culture of Achievement**?

Please choose the best answer for each of the following questions.

Academics:

Students at our school have appropriate supports for learning.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Students at our school are regularly challenged.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Students at our school are excited about learning.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please indicate anything else you'd like us to know about **academics** at our school.

Equity:

Our school prepares all of our students for success later in life, in both college and careers.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Our school prioritizes the students that are farthest from opportunities.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please indicate anything else you'd like us to know about **equity** at our school.

Is there anything else we should consider for **our school transformation plan**?

What is the best way for our school to communicate with you?

To provide updates and information (**check all that apply**):

☐ Email ☐ Call ☐ Text ☐ Paper Flyer ☐ Other

To provide feedback (**check all that apply**):

☐ Online survey ☐ Paper survey ☐ Focus group/meeting

Are you a:

☐ Parent or Guardian ☐ Grandparent or other family member ☐ Administrator or other school staff member ☐ Community Organization
☐ Student ☐ Teacher ☐ Community Member

If you are/have a student at the school, what grade are you/they in? Check all that apply.

☐ PreK 3 ☐ First Grade ☐ Fourth Grade ☐ Seventh Grade ☐ Tenth Grade
☐ PreK 4 ☐ Second Grade ☐ Fifth Grade ☐ Eighth Grade ☐ Eleventh Grade
☐ Kindergarten ☐ Third Grade ☐ Sixth Grade ☐ Ninth Grade ☐ Twelfth Grade

Appendix C

Rank the following improvement focus areas from most important to least important. <i>Respondents ranked 1-5 (1=high, 5=low).</i>					
Topic	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Shared Leadership	15.78%	15.79%	5.26%	15.79%	47.37%
Engagement	36.84%	10.53%	31.58%	10.53%	10.53%
Culture of Achievement	26.32%	36.84%	26.32%	0%	10.53%
Academics	0%	26.32%	31.58%	31.58%	10.53%
Equity	21.05%	10.53%	5.26%	42.11%	21.05%

Community Satisfaction					
SHARED LEADERSHIP: STATEMENTS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our school includes the voices of students, families, teachers, and other staff in their decision making.	6.5%	19.4%	32.3%	25.8%	16.1%
School leaders ask my opinion about decisions made at the school.	3.2%	45.2%	16.1%	19.4%	16.1%
ENGAGEMENT: STATEMENTS					
Our school has made me feel welcome and connected to our school community.	9.7%	45.2%	12.9%	19.4%	12.9%
Our school engages regularly with all members of its community including staff, students, and families.	3.3%	33.3%	25.7%	30%	6.7%
CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT: STATEMENTS					
Students and staff have strong relationships at our school.	3.2%	35.5%	32.3%	22.6%	6.5%
Students, families, and staff take pride in our school.	3.2%	19.4%	32.3%	32.3%	12.9%
ACADEMICS: STATEMENTS					
Students at our school have appropriate supports for learning.	3.3%	30.00%	30.00%	20.00%	16.7%
Students at our school are regularly challenged.	10.00%	13.3%	33.3%	33.3%	10.00%
Students at our school are excited about learning.	3.3%	16.7%	30.00%	33.3%	16.7%
EQUITY: STATEMENTS					
Our school prepares all of our students for success later in life, in both college and careers.	3.6%	7.1%	46.1%	32.1%	10.7%
Our school prioritizes the students that are the furthest from opportunities.	3.7%	11.1%	48.1%	25.9%	11.1%

