



Delano Public Schools
Stakeholder Engagement Report
School Climate & Belonging

March 2023

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01 | Executive Summary •

In December 2022, Delano Public Schools (Delano) contracted with CESO Communications (CESO) to facilitate a series of stakeholder engagements around the topic of creating a learning environment that is collaborative, safe and inclusive for all students. In addition to exploring the issues surrounding the “Safe Space for Everyone” signs in some high school classrooms, the engagement conversations probed more deeply into the student climate in Delano Public Schools, in particular at Delano High School (DHS).

The goal of the engagements was to provide insight that the district could use as it plans for the future and explores additional practices and activities to enhance a culture of communication and engagement throughout the district. By focusing on the broader issue of belonging, engagements provided a safe space for all voices, especially students.

Key Findings

While details and findings can be found later in this report, in general, insights from students, parents, families, teachers and community members centered around three key themes – *Belonging, Engagement, School Climate and Leadership*.

BELONGING

- **Everyone belongs in Delano** - All students, no matter their background (i.e., race, gender identity, religion, ability), have a right to be welcomed into the Delano community, feel like they belong at Delano High School, and feel assured that school is a place where they can be their authentic selves.
- **Everyone has a right to feel safe and included** - Everyone, especially students, has the right to feel safe and included in Delano – including not just physical safety, but also emotional and mental safety.
- **Focus on the needs of each and every student** - Delano Public Schools should focus on the individual needs of each student. There is a perception that the school is just focusing on the views of the majority or on certain groups of students.

ENGAGEMENT

- **Elevate student voices** - The district should make it a practice and a priority to include developmentally appropriate ways to engage students in complex discussions and decisions that impact them.



- **Engage all stakeholders in the work of the schools** - It is important for the district to do more to communicate with and engage stakeholders, especially teachers and parents.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

- **Ensure all perspectives have the opportunity to be heard** – Delano Public Schools has the opportunity to model what honoring and hearing all voices really looks like – teaching students as well as adults in the community that hearing and honoring perspectives different from their own does not mean you have to give up your own values or beliefs.
- **Address and correct negative behavior** - Stakeholders are looking for more adherence to the student handbooks and addressing of negative behaviors with real consequences, to include some sort of restorative practices into disciplinary actions, noting the importance for students to understand what they did wrong, the harm that was caused, and how to move forward from the mistake.
- **Allow students to have challenging discussions** - Provide developmentally appropriate spaces and opportunities where students can have conversations about potentially controversial issues – either in class, small groups or one-on-one – so that they can learn how to respectfully discuss such topics and be prepared for the larger world.

LEADERSHIP

- **Increase transparency** - Many cited the concern about the lack of transparency in district/school communications and decisions. Create a culture of transparency – showing challenges and successes – as well as a culture of stakeholder engagement to rebuild trust and enhance collaboration throughout the community.
- **Speak for the whole of the community** - No matter which side of the political spectrum, which religion you practice, or what your race/ethnicity or gender is, many participants in the recent engagements cited a concern that their views are not being fairly represented or they are not representative of the Delano community. It is important for the district to engage all voices and focus on building trust and engagement with all sectors of the Delano community.

Recommendations

The primary purpose of the engagements was to provide an opportunity for members of the Delano Public Schools community to share their concerns about and ideas for improving the student experience and overall school climate. The role of CESO Communications was to facilitate these conversations and identify key themes.



Yet, it became evident during the analysis that we can and should share some of our thoughts as school communication/engagement experts on ways the district can move forward together. Again, details on these recommendations are available later in this report (Section 4), but in summary, the following concepts of communication and transparency, continued engagement and core values highlight key actions and recommendations that would serve the district well as it plans for its future.

Strategic Communication Plan

We encourage the district to develop a comprehensive communication plan that not only includes key tactics (e.g. newsletters, website, social media), but also considers ways to increase opportunities for engagement and, in turn, understanding of district operations, decisions and instructional philosophies. The plan will allow the district to be more proactive in accurately telling the Delano Public Schools story, rather than defending against false claims of misinformation about what is and is not being taught in the classroom. Additionally, a strong communications plan will help build trust in district decisions and enhance the district's brand.

Continued Engagement

We strongly encourage the district to develop an engagement plan that identifies regular opportunities for members of the district community to come together and discuss issues of interest, with a focus as much on listening to one another as having your own voice heard. Key to this effort is clarity around how information will be collected and used, and how it will inform decisions. By closing the engagement loop with clear participant expectations and building a culture of engagement the district can lessen the misperceptions and rumors that seem to be prevalent in the community.

Core Values

Well-articulated organizational core values – developed in partnership with the community – help the district express what it stands for, what it believes in, and what is closest to its heart. The development of these values is not about identifying a few terms, but in defining what those terms mean for Delano Public Schools and then highlighting those values in action through effective communication and storytelling. We encourage the district to embark on a community engagement process to develop core values for the district that will serve as the foundation for the district's mission and vision, supporting actions and decisions that are in the best interest of all current and future Delano students.

Conclusion

It should be noted that many comments at the community conversation, as well as in student and staff focus groups, identified challenges during the 2021-2022 school year at Delano High School that have lessened in 2022-2023. It is clear there remains division about the classroom signs, but the broader issues of belonging, engagement and school climate are where progress is being and will continue to be made.



In closing, we recommend that the data, findings and recommendations included in this report be considered as part of a comprehensive strategic planning effort focused on the future of Delano Public Schools. It is evident that the community of Delano is interested in continuing to address what has happened in the past and to work together to create a more welcoming and inclusive school environment where all students are able to thrive.

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02 | Stakeholder Engagements •

Stakeholder engagements included a variety of activities to ensure a variety of voices were heard. Engagements were well attended, and participants offered significant insights into how the district can move forward together.

Engagements included:

- Discussion groups with students in grades 7-12 as well as with Delano High School teachers
- An online student survey with Delano High School students (grades 7-12)
- A large-group community conversation open to students, parents, staff and community members

2A | STUDENT ENGAGEMENT •

There was an intentional effort to include student voices in the process in order to understand their current experience and how recent decisions may be impacting them. A representative group of SHD students, recommended by teachers and counselors, were selected to participate in focus groups. In addition, all DHS students were provided time in December to complete a brief climate survey.

Focus Groups

Participation

Three student focus groups were conducted at Delano High School on Jan. 23, 2023.

- FOCUS GROUPS - one group each with grades 7-8, grades 9-10 and grades 11-12
- TOTAL PARTICIPANTS - 35 students
- PARTICIPANT SELECTION -
 - Teachers and counselors were encouraged to recommend students for the focus groups
 - School counselors worked to ensure a broad representation of students were included in each focus group
- DURATION - 60 minutes per focus group

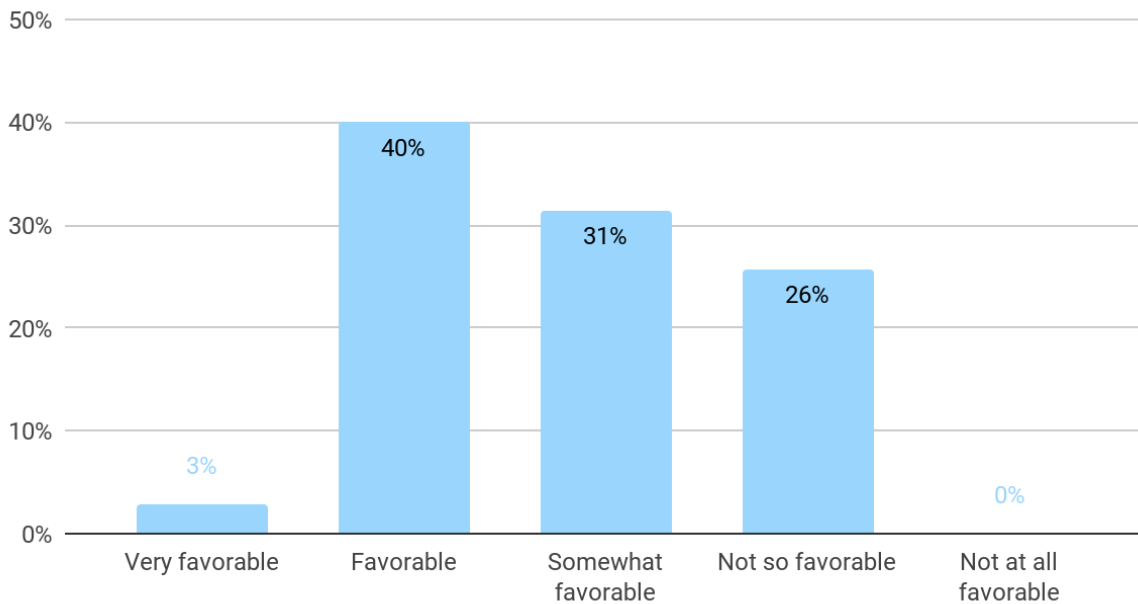
With no administrators or staff in the room, students were encouraged to respond openly and honestly to a number of questions focused on their experience at DHS. Topics centered around belonging, school climate, and ways that climate can be improved to encourage safe and supportive environments for all students. Students offered insights about what teachers and staff members can do, as well as what students can do to improve the climate at their schools.



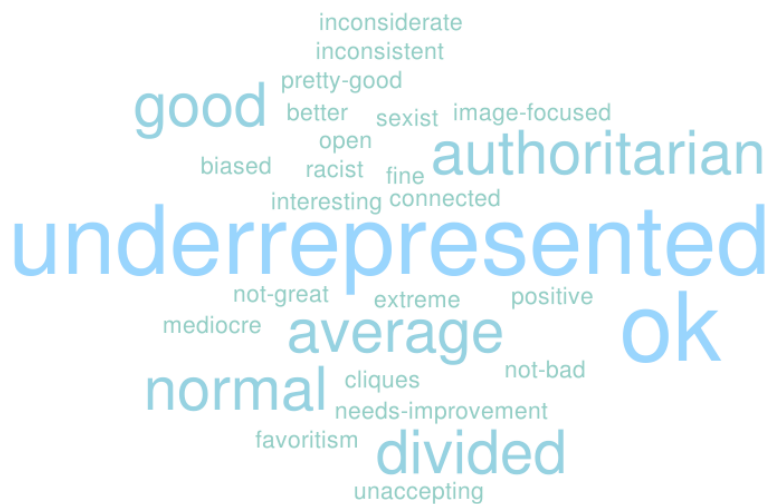
Climate Rating at DHS

First, students were asked to rate — on scale from one to five, with one being not all favorable to five being very favorable — the climate at their school this year. After noting that the climate this year was much better than last year, ratings ranged from not so favorable to very favorable. The highest favorability was with students in grades 7-8, followed by students in grades 11-12. Students in grades 9-10 were least favorable toward the climate at DHS.

DHS Climate (students)



Students next identified one or two words that came to mind when they thought about the climate at their school. The following word cloud is a combination of all of the students' responses.





When asked to expand on why they offered the words they did, students in all groups cited that the current climate is to be expected in a small town, especially one in which diversity is limited. Students seem genuinely concerned about the school climate. Some spoke of feeling like outsiders, while others who did feel included noted that they knew of peers who did not feel the same.

There is a perception among some students, particularly those in upper grades, that DHS seems more concerned about the image of DHS rather than addressing what is actually happening in the building. There were suggestions made that stories are changed when shared with parents so that “things don’t sound so bad.”

Belonging

Discussion then turned to how the students define belonging and what they think adults, both inside and outside the school, mean when they talk about belonging. Many students talked favorably about the teachers and staff, feeling that most try to really listen and support student needs.

Students were very reflective when sharing what it felt to belong. None of the students failed to respond to this question, and their answers came quickly. Students seemed to genuinely have examples and experiences to pull from in which they felt they belonged, and when they did not.

The following is a sampling of direct quotes from students when asked how they know if they belong:

- Students not favoring anyone
- Being able to talk to any student or teacher without worrying they will say something negative about me
- I am not alone (especially at lunch)
- Everyone feels safe
- Being able to walk into school and not feeling like I have to be on alert
- Less cliques
- Feeling like you can be who you are without being judged
- No passive aggressiveness
- Having friends in multiple groups, yet all feeling connected
- Everyone feels heard and valued
- Can disagree, but still get along
- All students are treated fairly, especially by teachers and administration

When asked what they think adults mean when they talk about belonging and climate in Delano Public Schools, students were less quick to respond. Many responses were similar to their own definitions, although some students noted that some adults may not really understand what it is like to be a student today, both in general and specifically at DHS. As one student said, “What they experienced in school is nothing like school today.” Another explained,



“How grown ups deal with situations is not that same as how we deal with them. Asking us to be like them is not realistic.”

Several students commented about the impact of COVID on their school experience, which likely added to the tensions and challenges last year. “Everyone was stressed and tense about returning to school after being home alone for so long,” shared a student. “It greatly impacted the climate, as teachers expected everything to be normal, but it wasn’t. And us students felt it.”

Students also talked about how the small town feel of Delano impacts how welcome one feels. Some liken it to perceived traditions and resistance to change. Others commented about the lack of diversity in Delano – be it racial, religious, gender, etc. – and so there is a perception that the majority voice is more important.

Finally, participants noted that many teachers in Delano understand what students are going through, but feel that more of the misunderstanding comes from adults outside of school. Related to the comment about school leaders caring more about image than reality, several students shared how their voice was listened to more than the opinion of a few loud parents or adults in the community. As one student said, “Some parents are so focused on making their child’s experience what it was when they were in school. It’s *our* life and our voice and opinion should matter more.”

Benefits and Challenges of being a student at Delano High School

BENEFITS

As for the best part about being a Delano student, the majority of students commented on the small town feel and appreciating that everyone knows each other (although this was also cited as a challenge.) The small town atmosphere is especially appreciated around athletic events. “The whole town turns out for Homecoming,” said one student. “As an athlete, it feels good to have that support and hear everyone cheering.”

Several students noted the many opportunities available for students – courses, athletics, activities – especially in grades 9-12.

CHALLENGES

When asked about the challenges of being a student in Delano, student responses returned to the conflict of being a small town. Students often cited the cliques within the school and among parent groups. Several talked about the difficulty in being seen as different – whether that is because of race, religion, gender, interests. Students said that there is also a rift between students and administration. Said one student, “It is hard to build trust between students and administration when the teachers who were our advocates left our school.” Whatever the reason for staff departures last school year, the perception among some focus group participants is that it is because they spoke up about climate issues and they were “forced out.”



These comments then led to a discussion among older students about the difficulty in getting things to change at DHS. Some students reiterated the departure of teachers, while others cited that a small group of vocal parents seem to have the strongest voice and therefore student voices are not valued.

Younger students tended to focus on fears about safety, threats at the school, and bullying. “There is a lot of chaos in the hallways,” added one student. “People are pushing other students into lockers and just generally being rude.”

Separate from relational challenges, all three groups talked about the change in the daily schedule planned for next year. Concerns ranged from limited course options and choice, to more fears of even more crowded halls and issues because all grades would be in the hallway at the same time.

Improving School Climate

TEACHER/STAFF ACTIONS

Students offered several actions administrators, teachers and other school staff could take to help create a more safe and supportive school climate for all students at Delano High School. Comments focused on the understanding that students spend a lot of time at school and every student should be able to feel safe and not be judged for who they are or what they believe.

Specifically, they suggested that adults in the building should:

- Think more about the kids in the school and less about the reputation of the school
- Don't pick favorites based on first impressions
- Treat all kids fairly, regardless of who their parents are
- Be more present, especially in the hallways, and supervise student behavior
- Hold confidentiality (i.e., if a student confides in you, don't share that don't share with other staff unless necessary)
- Stop yelling at me, it only makes me feel less safe
- Address students who disrupt class / learning, don't ignore
- Don't punish the majority of students for the bad actions of a few (e.g. limited bathroom passes)
- Stop running the school like a business – When leaders care more about what parents want than what students want, it signals that it's about what is profitable for school rather than the well-being of students
- Ensure that respect is reciprocal between teachers and students.
- Role model TIGER Way, don't just preach about it

STUDENT ACTIONS

When asked about what they and other students can do to improve the school climate, focus group participants talked about how all students need to pause and really see each other as



individuals. They also said it was important to respect different perspectives and understand each student has a unique life outside of school.

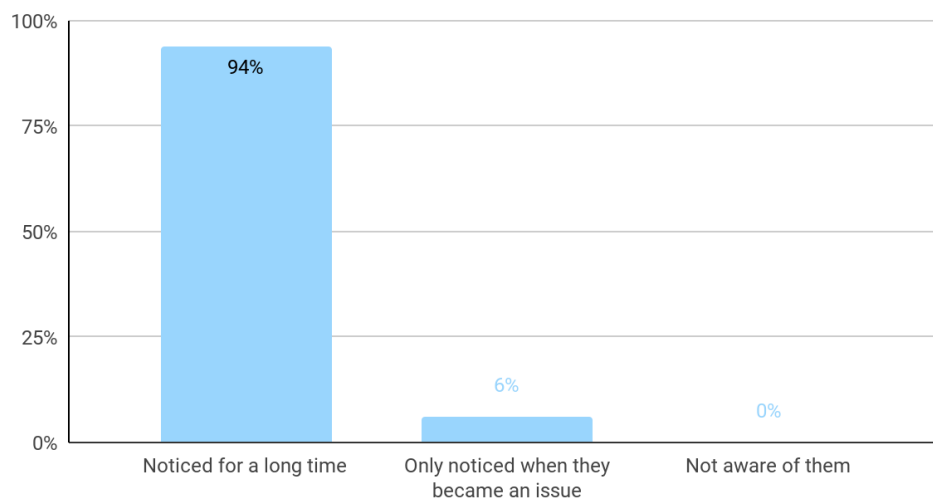
Specifically, students offered the following suggestions that could help improve school climate:

- Talk to students you don't normally talk to
- Notice if students are sitting alone and befriend them
- Be open to letting new students into your group, don't operate in closed cliques
- Be respectful of everyone
- Stop being disruptive in class
- Accept others for who they are, don't judge
- Be more genuine and show interest in others
- Support the interests and activities of others (beyond sports)
- Recognize we are all different, but we are all going through similar things as DHS students

Safe Space Signs

Next, students were asked to reflect on the "Safe Space for Everyone" signs at DHS. First they were asked about their awareness of the signs, and then they were asked to comment how they felt about the signs. Most students were aware of the signs, sharing they had been aware of them for a long time (even before they became an issue in the community).

Sign Awareness (students)



As awareness of the signs among focus group participants was high, the majority of students in the focus groups said they appreciated them. Several students noted that it helped them feel like they belonged and were comfortable talking about personal issues with staff whose rooms included the stickers. Other students shared that even if they felt the stickers did not apply to them, they understood that for some students the stickers were important and therefore felt



they should be allowed to remain for fear that if they came down some students might feel unsafe. As one student said, "I know they are not there for me personally, so I am not impacted, but I know they mean something to my friends." This was echoed by a student in another group who said, "The signs are there for who they are there for. If it's not about you, leave them alone." There was a small number of students who said they did not appreciate the stickers and wished they would come down.

A few students said they felt the signs were a good idea, but they were not executed well, noting that there needed to be education about what the signs meant and why they were important. Finally, some students shared that the stickers represented a false sense of security or were perceived as being hypocritical. As one student said, "actions speak louder than words."

The topic of these signs led to a discussion about other signs in the building. All three groups mentioned recent vandalism to some signs, especially those for the Trevor Project that hang in the bathrooms. Given the purpose of the [Trevor Project](#), students felt vandalism of these signs went beyond disrespect to homophobia. Students also talked about how the decision about which signs are approved seems to be inconsistent.

Additional Considerations

Finally, students were given the opportunity to offer any additional suggestions for changes needed at Delano High School or other thoughts they wanted to share. Responses were varied, and included:

- A lot of discussion, confusion and concern about the new schedule
- Again, concerns were shared about how crowded the hallways are, making it hard to get to their locker or to class on time; many students are worried it will get worse next year with the schedule change
- Rethink the limitations on bathroom passes, especially with some teachers giving extra credit if you don't use your pass that semester; it seems like the wrong solution to a behavior problem
- Focus negative consequences on the few students who are actually causing the problems rather than implementing extreme consequences for all students; and apply consequences fairly to all students, regardless of who their parents are or what sport they play
- Enhance communication directly with students rather than only contacting parents, especially about how to access social workers, counselors and other mental health supports
- Have high expectations for us and trust us to live up to them
- Younger students expressed a desire to be able to carry backpacks (apparently, older students are allowed to have backpacks)
- Allow for deeper discussions with students, especially on issues of diversity and equity (race, religion, gender)



- As one student said, “It is important that we can talk to people about these issues since a lot of grown ups don’t.”
- In each focus group students of all genders shared concerns about what they determine to be sexist policies and practices, including dress code, a feeling that there is less support for girls activities, and feeling that concerns raised by girls are not taken seriously

Finally, students asked that the school and district be transparent about what is learned from the focus groups and the student survey. “Please don’t just sweep it under the rug,” said one student.

Student Survey

A student survey was administered to all DHS students. Students were originally scheduled to take the survey during their advisory period on Dec. 14, 2022. However, due to a winter storm, the district called a delayed start to the day, which resulted in a modified schedule with no advisory period. Nonetheless, the survey was pushed out to students, resulting in approximately 67% of the student body participating in the survey.

The survey asked students to rate their level of agreement with statements about the learner experience, belonging, empathy and the school environment. The survey also asked students to share their level of awareness of, as well as their attitudes about, the Safe Space for Everyone stickers.

What follows is a detailed analysis of that student survey. Note that the word “students” is used interchangeably with “respondents” throughout this analysis but is only intended to represent the students who answered any given question.

Participation

The survey had strong participation, especially given the weather challenges and time of year (close to winter break).

- RESPONSES - 803 total responses
- COMPLETION RATE - 85%
- AVERAGE COMPLETION TIME - 5:39 minutes

Demographics

Demographic analyses of groups (grade, race/ethnicity and gender) were recorded for the purpose of analysis only. All responses were anonymous. Overall demographics of survey respondents are included below. Additional analysis by subgroup is included throughout this

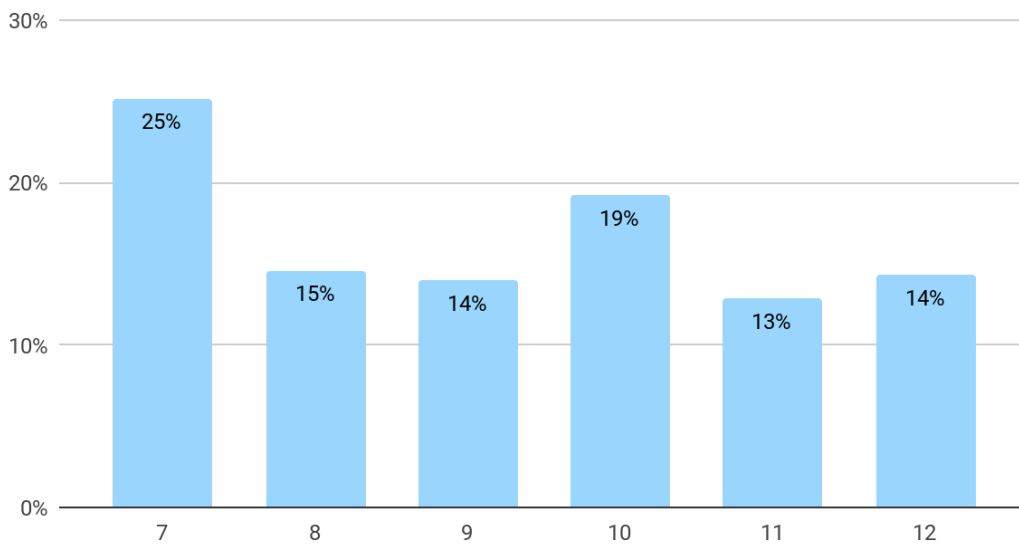


section of the report when data showed noticeable differences. Groups and categories not noted in this report showed no significant difference when compared to the overall survey results.

GRADE

Students were asked to voluntarily identify their grade. The majority (n=202) of respondents were in 7th grade, with a fairly even distribution among the remaining grades. Every grade had at least 100 student responses.

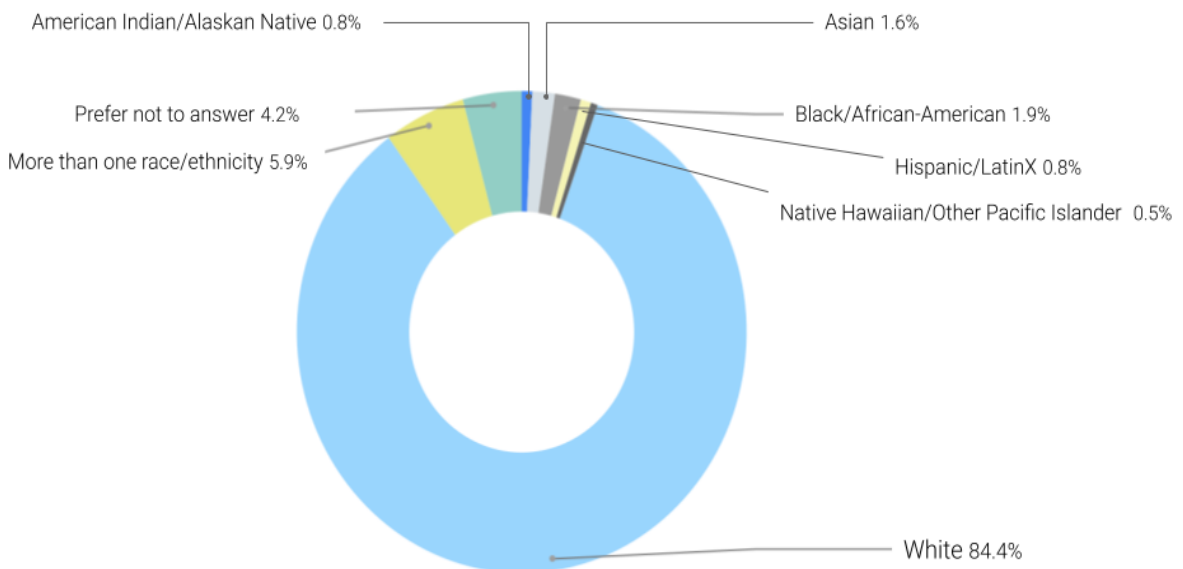
Grade



RACE/ETHNICITY

Students were asked to voluntarily identify their race/ethnicity. Students identifying as white represented the vast majority (84.5%) of all respondents. The next largest group was students who identified as more than one race/ethnicity at 6%, followed by those opting not to answer at 4%. The following represents the full race/ethnicity distribution of all respondents.

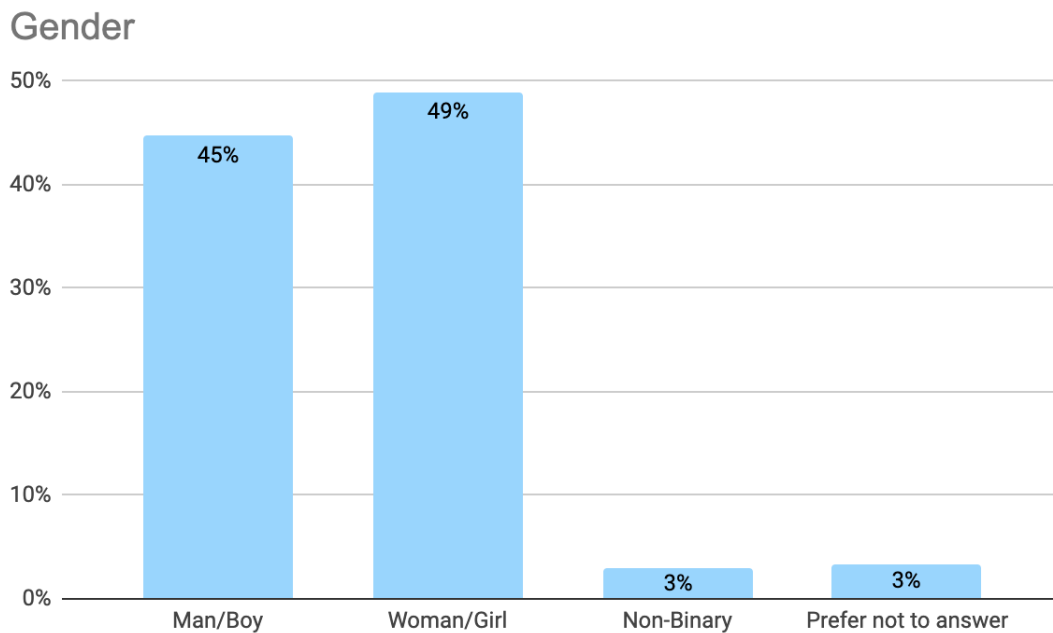
Race/Ethnicity





GENDER

Students were next asked to voluntarily identify their gender. Just under half (49%) of all respondents self-identified as a girl, with 45% of respondents identifying as a boy. Nearly 25 students identified as non-binary and 27 students opted not to answer. The following represents the full gender identity distribution of all student respondents.



ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

When analyzing the data by more than one demographic category, the number of respondents identifying as students of color were insufficient to inform meaningful analysis and, if included, may have resulted in identifiable information. Therefore no combined demographic categories that included race/ethnicity was included.

However, data were significant enough to allow us to look at responses by both grade and gender. While breakdowns by grade and gender were to be as expected – with approximately half respondents self-identifying as boys, and half as girls – students identifying as non-binary or opting not to identify their gender varied by grade level.

- Students identifying as non-binary were represented in all grades except grade 12, including 9% of students in grade 11 and 3% of students in grade 8.
- The largest percentage of students opting not to identify their gender were in grades 12 (7%) and grade 11 (5%)



Learner Experience

Among questions about learner experience, students were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. I enjoy learning – it is fun, engaging, worthwhile and relevant
2. I like coming to my school every day
3. I am greeted by name at my school by my teacher(s)
4. I am confident at school – I feel I can do things
5. I am resilient – I can deal with challenges at school
6. I feel supported at school – I receive help when I need it
7. At school I feel as if I have to be careful about what I say and how I say it
8. At school I feel hesitant to share my ideas with others

Overall, 95% (n=762) of respondents answered questions about their experience as a learner. For the purposes of analysis, we have assessed results to indicate either overall agreement (strongly agree/agree) or overall disagreement (disagree/strongly disagree). Where statistically significant, we have identified areas of intensity – strongly agree or strongly disagree – in responses.

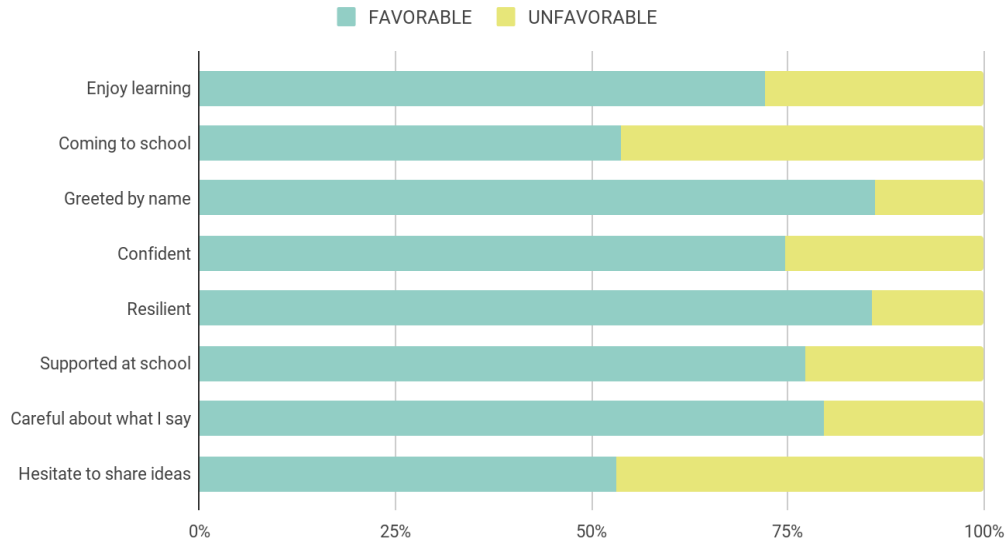
Learner Experience (all students)

When looking at the overall learning experience for students,

- Approximately 72% of all respondents report enjoying learning, with 13% strongly agreeing with the statement.
- Only 54% of students said they liked coming to school every day, with 35% of respondents disagreeing with the statement.
- A strong majority of students (86%) reported being greeted with their name by teachers
- About three-fourths of students reported feeling confident at school
- More than 85% of students saw themselves as resilient
- Approximately 77% of students reported feeling supported at school
- Nearly 80% of students felt they had to be careful about what they say at school
 - *NOTE:* Depending on how one wishes to interpret the data, this response can be seen as positive or negative – either students are carefully considering what they say at school so as not to offend others (positive) or students are cautious fearful about what they share with others out of fear of pushback (negative)
- Just over half (53%) of all students reported feeling hesitant to share their ideas with others



Learner Experience



Learner Experience Responses by Grade

When the data are looked at by respondent grade level, some key data trends emerged.

1. **Learning enjoyment** – In regard to enjoying learning, students in grades 7, 11 and 12 reported the highest favorability, with agreement rates of 76%, 75% and 79% respectively. Seniors were particularly favorable, with 23% of students strongly agreeing with the statement. Students in 10th grade had the lowest level of satisfaction, with 63% agreeing with the statement.
2. **Like coming to school** – As for coming to school every day, students in grades 7 were the most favorable, with 63% of respondents agreeing with the statement, followed by student grade 9 (55%), and students in grade 12 (53%). Less than half of students in each grade 9 and grade 10 agreed with the statement.
3. **Greeted by name** – As noted above, the vast majority of students said they were greeted by name by their teachers. The highest level of agreement was with students in grade 7 in which 93% agreed with the statement. At least 80% of all other grades agreed with the statement, with the exception of grade 10 which had 79% agreement.
4. **Confidence at school** – Again, data show that students in grade 7 had the highest agreement with this statement at 84%, followed by grade 9 students (81%). Agreement dropped considerably with the next group of students – grades 12 (77%) and 8 (71%) and 9 (70%). Only 63% of students in grade 10 agreed with the statement.
5. **Resilience at school** – As noted above the majority of students feel they can deal with challenges at school. Students feeling most resilient were in grades 7 (94%), followed



by grade 12 (86%) and 9 (85%). Students in grade 8 indicated the least level of agreement at 78%.

6. **Feel supported at school** – Students in grade 7 again gave this statement the highest level of support, with 87% agreeing with the statement. Nearly 80% of students in grade 9 also agreed with the statement, followed by 75% each for grades 8 and 12. Only 69% of students in grade 11 agreed with the statement, along with 70% of students in grade 10.
7. **Careful about what is said** – As shared earlier, nearly 80% of all students indicated that they feel they need to be careful about what they say and how they say it. When looking at responses by grade, the data show that this is most true in grades 11 and 12 where 84% of each group agreed with the statement, followed by 82% of students in grade 8.
8. **Hesitant to share ideas** – While a little over half of all respondents agreed with the statement, the strongest level of agreement was with students in grade 11 (63%). Only 41% of students in grade 7 agreed.

Learner Experience Responses by Race/Ethnicity

In some cases, the number of respondents for a race/ethnicity category were insufficient to inform meaningful analysis and, if included, may have resulted in identifiable information. Therefore, when analyzing learner experience by race/ethnicity, we chose to compare white student responses (84%) with a combined group of students of color (12%). Students who opted not to identify their race/ethnicity are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

While the number of students of color was small, the data did show that white students agreed with the statements at a higher rate than students of color. In many cases the difference was 10 percentage points or more.

1. **Learning enjoyment** – In regard to enjoying learning, 68% of students of color agreed with the statement compared to 72% of white students.
2. **Like coming to school** – As for coming to school every day, the majority of white students (55%) agreed with the statement, but only 48% of students of color agreed.
3. **Greeted by name** – As noted above, the vast majority of students said they were greeted by name by their teachers. This was true for both students of color (82%) and white students (87%).
4. **Confidence at school** – White students were significantly more in agreement with this statement (76%) compared to students of color (62%)
5. **Resilience at school** – As noted above the majority of students felt they could deal with challenges at school, which was true when factoring for race. However, white students



again were significantly more favorable toward the statement (87%) compared to 79% of students of color.

6. **Feel supported at school** – Again, white students were significantly more in agreement with this statement (79%) than students of color (65%).
7. **Careful about what is said** – As noted above, nearly 80% of all students indicated that they feel they need to be careful about what they say and how they say it when at DHS. When looking at responses by race, 84% of students of color agreed with the statement, while 79% of white students felt the same.
8. **Hesitant to share ideas** – As with total respondents, a little more than half (52%) of white students agreed with this statement compared to 61% of students of color.

Learner Experience Responses by Gender

While 94% of respondents indicated their gender as either boy/girl, we do include the small percentage of students who identify as non-binary. Students who opted not to identify their gender are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

While often the level of agreement from boys and girls were similar, non-binary students were significantly less agreeable to statements about their learning experience.

1. **Learning enjoyment** – Girls were more apt to agree with this statement (75%) compared to 70% of boys, and only 58% of non-binary students.
2. **Like coming to school** – As for coming to school every day, data from boys and girls were similar in their agreement with the statement at 57% and 54% respectively. The data are in sharp contrast to only 32% of non-binary students indicating they like coming to school every day.
3. **Greeted by name** – As noted above, the vast majority of students said they were greeted by name by their teachers. For both boys and girls, agreement was 86%. Only 74% of non-binary students felt the same.
4. **Confidence at school** – Boys indicated feeling confident at school (83%) at a significantly higher rate than students identifying as girls (69%) and non-binary students (74%).
5. **Resilience at school** – Similarly, boys felt they could deal with challenges at school (91%) more than girls (81%). Both indicated feeling significantly more resilient than non-binary students (58%).



6. **Feel supported at school** – In regard to feeling supported at school, again, boys were more in agreement with the statement (84%) compared to girls (75%) and non-binary students (42%).
7. **Careful about what is said** – There was no significant difference between genders when asked if they had to be careful about what they said and how they said it, with 80% of boys, 79% of girls and 74% of non-binary students saying they agreed with the statement.
8. **Hesitant to share ideas** – Here non-binary students and girls agreed with the statement at 58% and 56% respectively. Less than half of boys (48%) agreed with the statement.

Belonging

Among questions about belonging, students were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. I feel accepted for who I am at my school
2. I am cared for and liked at my school
3. I have friends at school
4. I feel my perspective is valued and respected at school
5. I am comfortable sharing my ideas and opinions with others at my school
6. I feel that others around me at my school are accepted and welcomed
7. I feel pressure to conform in order to feel accepted at my school
8. I feel as if I just don't fit in with the other people in my classes

In addition, students were asked to share at what point during the school year – immediately, by the end of September, by the end of first quarter, or not at all – they felt accepted in the DHS community.

Overall, 92% (n=736) of respondents answered questions about the sense of belonging at DHS. For the purposes of analysis, we have assessed results to indicate either overall agreement (strongly agree/agree) or overall disagreement (disagree/strongly disagree). Where statistically significant, we have identified areas of intensity – strongly agree or strongly disagree – in responses.

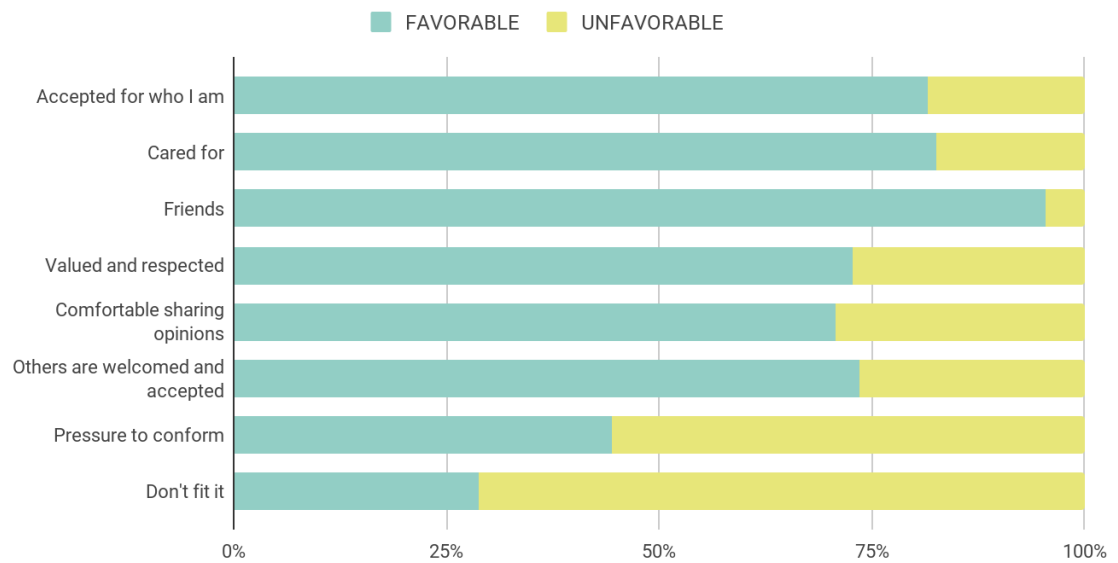
Belonging (all students)

- 82% of all respondents felt accepted for who they are at school
- 83% of students agreed they are “cared for and liked” at their school
- Almost all (95%) students reported having friends at school
- Approximately 73% of respondents felt their perspective is valued and respected at school

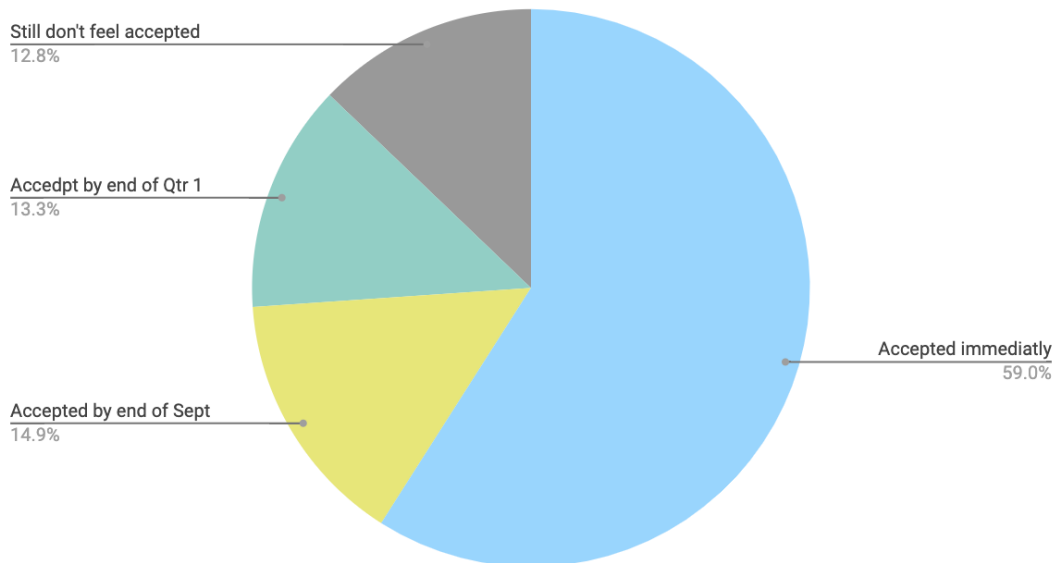


- Just 70% of students said they are comfortable sharing ideas and opinions with others at school
- Nearly three-fourths of students (74%) agreed with the statement, “I feel that others around me at my school are accepted and welcomed.”
- 44% of students reported feeling pressure to conform in order to feel accepted at school
- 29% of students reported they just don't fit in with the other people in their classes

Belonging



Time to feel accepted





Belonging Responses by Grade

When the data are looked at by respondent grade level, some key data trends emerged.

1. **Accepted for who they are** – Younger students reported feeling accepted more than older students. Students in grade 7 reported feeling most accepted, with 90% agreeing with the statement, followed by students in grades 9 (84%) and 8 (82%) and 10 (80%). Less than three-quarters of students in grades 11 (71%) and 12 (74%) felt the same.
2. **Cared for and liked** – While 82% of all students reported feeling cared for and liked at DHS, responses varied significantly by grade. Again, students in grade 7 had the highest level of agreement at 91%, compared to only 73% of students in grade 11.
3. **Have friends** – All grade levels showed very high levels of agreement when asked about having friends at school, with at least 93% of students in each grade saying they agreed with the statement.
4. **Perspective is valued and respected** – As students got older, agreement with this statement decreased. Just over 85% of students in grade 7 agreed, compared to 61% in grade 11 and 63% in grade 12.
5. **Comfortable sharing ideas and opinions** – Similar to the previous statement, agreement was lowest in the upper grades – 63% in grade 10, 61% in grade 11 and 63% in grade 12. Students in grade 7 had the highest level of agreement at 83%.
6. **Others are accepted and welcomed** – Here again, the variability by grade was significant. Compared to 86% agreement for students in grade 7 and 80% for students in grade 9, less than 59% of students in grade 11 agreed with the statement.
7. **Pressure to conform** – Similar to the positive sense of belonging seen in younger students above, only 35% of students in grade 7 felt pressure to conform. But that number jumps to 47% in grade 8, 48% in grade 11 and over half of students in grade 12 (55%) all reporting that they agreed with the statement.
8. **Don't fit in** – Nearly 40% of students in grade 11 and 12 reported that they just don't fit in at DHS, compared to only 16% of students in grade 7.

Feeling Accepted

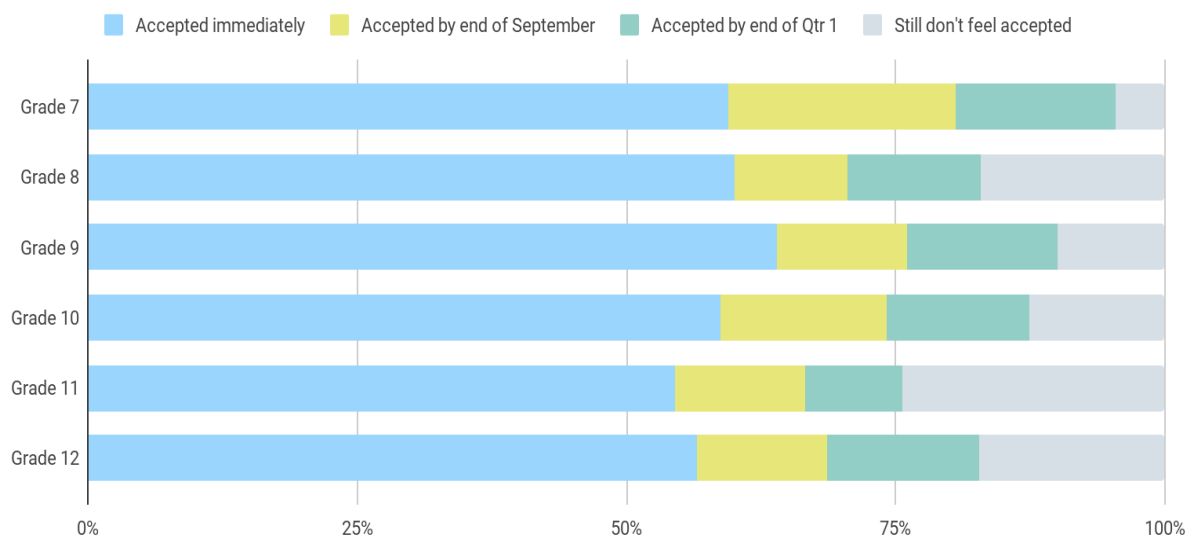
When reviewing by grade the length of time for students to feel accepted into the DHS community, the following key data points emerged:

- **Immediately feeling accepted** – As noted above, 59% of all respondents reported feeling accepted immediately at DHS. Responses by grade vary from 64% of students in grade 9 reporting they felt accepted immediately, compared to only 54% of students in grade 11.



- **Accepted by the end of first quarter** – Overall, 87% of students reported feeling accepted by the end of first quarter. Responses by grade ranged from 95% of students in grades 7 to only 76% of students in grade 11.
- **Still not feeling accepted** – At the time of the survey, 13% of all students said they still did not feel accepted into the DHS community. By grade, nearly one-quarter of students in grade 11 (24%) agreed with this statement, as well as 17% each for students in grade 8 and 12. Only 5% of students in grade 7 reported that they still did not feel accepted.

Accepted at DHS (by grade)



Belonging Responses by Race

In some cases, the number of respondents for a race/ethnicity category were insufficient to inform meaningful analysis and, if included, may have resulted in identifiable information. Therefore, when analyzing learner experience by race/ethnicity, we chose to compare white student responses (84%) with a combined group of students of color (12%). Students who opted not to identify their race/ethnicity are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

While the number of students of color was small, the data did show that white students agreed with the statements at a higher rate than students of color. In many cases the difference was 10 percentage points or more.

1. **Accepted for who they are** – Over 83% of white students reported feeling accepted for they are, compared to 74% of students of color.



2. **Cared for and liked** – While 84% of all students reported feeling cared for and liked at DHS, only 73% of students of color felt the same.
3. **Have friends** – Friendships were reported strongly by all students, including 91% of students of color and 96% of white students.
4. **Perspective is valued and respected** – Nearly 74% of white students reported that their perspective was valued and respected, compared to only 63% of students of color.
5. **Comfortable sharing ideas and opinions** – Agreement here was again stronger for students identifying as white (72%) compared to 66% of students of color.
6. **Others are accepted and welcomed** – Nearly three-quarters of white students (74%) agreed with the statement, compared to students of color at 64%.
7. **Pressure to conform** – The pressure to conform was less influenced by students' race, with 48% of students of color and 44% of white students agreeing with the statement.
8. **Don't fit in** – Race was a significant factor for students reporting if they felt they fit in, with nearly 44% of students of color agreeing with the statement, compared to only 27% of white students.

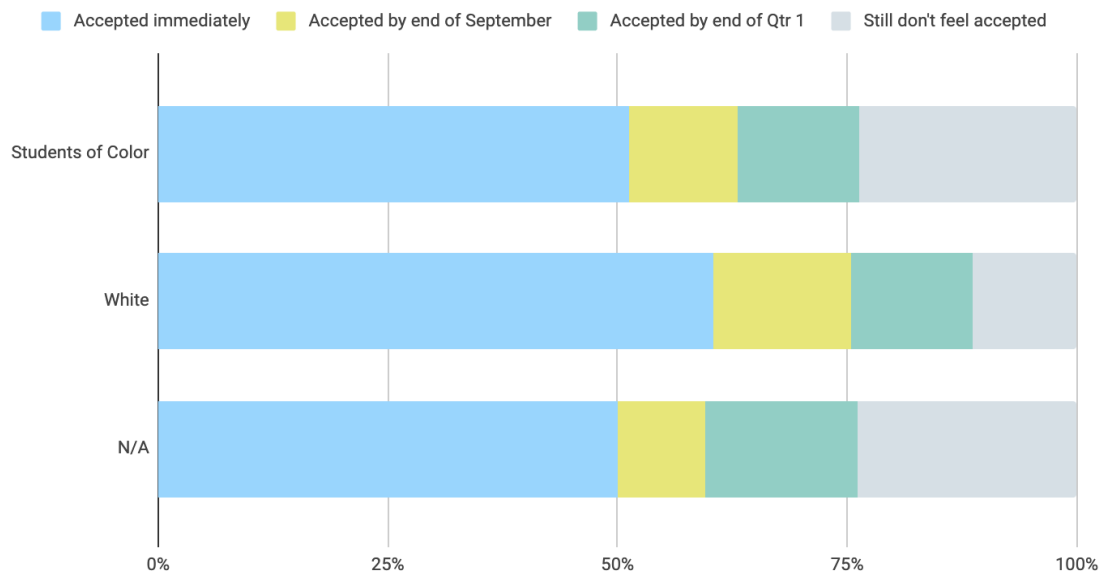
Feeling Accepted

When reviewing by race the length of time for students to feel accepted into the DHS community, the following key data points emerged:

- **Immediately feeling accepted** – As noted above, 59% of all respondents reported feeling accepted immediately at DHS. Approximately 61% of white students felt accepted immediately, compared to 51% of students of color.
- **Accepted by the end of first quarter** – Overall, 87% of students reported feeling accepted by the end of first quarter. This was reported by 89% of white students compared to only 76% of students of color.
- **Still not feeling accepted** – At the time of the survey, 13% of all students said they still did not feel accepted into the DHS community. When factoring for race, only 11% of white students agreed with this statement, compared to nearly one-quarter (24%) of students of color.



Accepted at DHS (by race/ethnicity)



Belonging Responses by Gender

While 94% of respondents indicated their gender as either boy/girl, we do include the small percentage of students who identify as non-binary. Students who opted not to identify their gender are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

For many of the belonging statements, boys were often more favorable than girls, and both were significantly more agreeable with the statements than non-binary students.

1. **Accepted for who they are** – In regard to feeling accepted for who they are, 89% of boys reported agreement with the statement, compared to 78% of girls and 59% of non-binary students.
2. **Cared for and liked** – The vast majority of boys and girls reported feeling cared for and liked at DHS, 86% and 82% respectively, compared to only a little more than half of non-binary students (53%).
3. **Have friends** – Friendships were reported strongly by both boys and girls, with 96% of each group reporting having friends at school. This was also true for 76% of non-binary students.
4. **Perspective is valued and respected** – Boys agreed with the statement at a higher rate (78%) compared to 70% of girls and 59% of non-binary students.



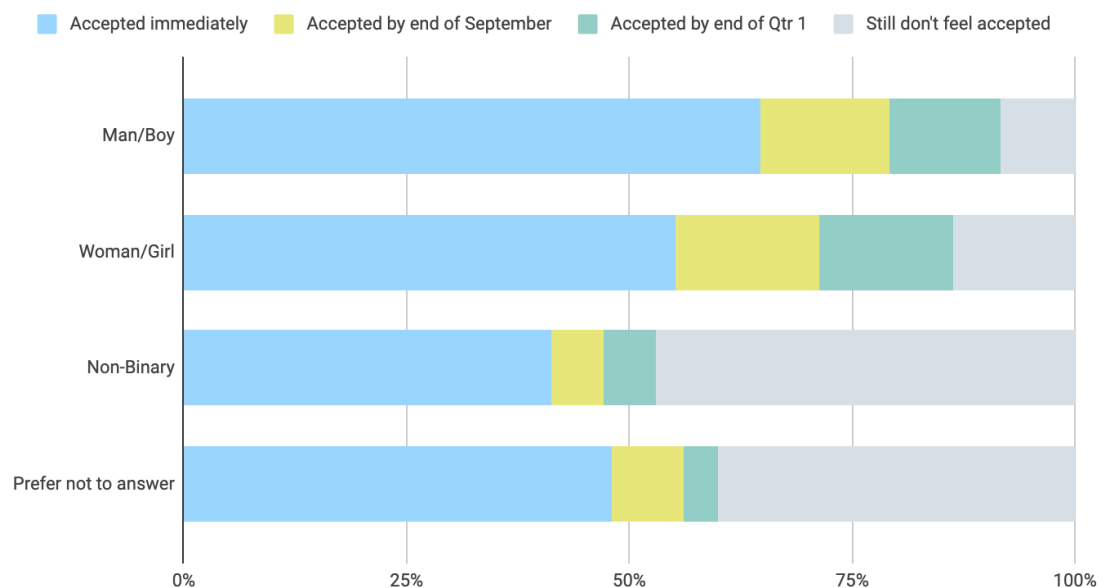
5. **Comfortable sharing ideas and opinions** – Again, a majority of boys agreed with the statement (79%) compared to only 66% of girls and 53% of non-binary students.
6. **Others are accepted and welcomed** – The feeling that others are accepted and welcomed at school was significantly higher for boys (83%). The statement did not resonate as much for girls (67%) or non-binary students (59%).
7. **Pressure to conform** – The pressure to conform was reported by girls (49%) and non-binary (53%) far more than boys (38%).
8. **Don't fit in** – Most boys and girls reported fitting in at DHS. Only 26% of boys and 30% of girls reported not fitting in. This was in sharp contrast to 59% of non-binary students reporting they did not fit in.

Feeling Accepted

When reviewing by gender the length of time for students to feel accepted into the DHS community, the following key data points emerged:

- **Immediately feeling accepted** – While, 59% of all respondents reported feeling accepted immediately at DHS, this was most often true for boys (65%), followed by 55% of girls. Only 41% of non-binary students agreed with the statement.
- **Accepted by the end of first quarter** – As noted above, 87% of students reported feeling accepted by the end of first quarter, including 92% of boys and 86% of girls. Just a little more than half of non-binary students (53%) reported feeling accepted by that time.
- **Still not feeling accepted** – At the time of the survey, 13% of all students said they still did not feel accepted into the DHS community. When analyzing for gender, only 8% of boys and 14% of girls agreed with the statement, compared to nearly half (47%) of non-binary students.

Acceptance at DHS (by gender)





Empathy

Among questions about empathy, students were asked how frequently – never/rarely, some of the time, most of the time, all of the time – they were able to do the following during this year at DHS:

1. Carefully listen to other people's points of view
2. Care about other people's feelings
3. Get along with students who are different from me
4. Remain calm, even when someone was bothering me or saying bad things
5. Allow others to speak without interruption
6. Respectful of the views of others when they disagreed with me
7. Disagree with others without starting an argument
8. Stand up for myself without putting others down

Generally, higher degrees of empathy correlate with individuals being able to do the above with more frequency. However, it should not be concluded that such individuals are more empathetic overall. Factors such as feelings of safety, belonging and connections all influence how empathetic someone is able to feel in a particular environment.

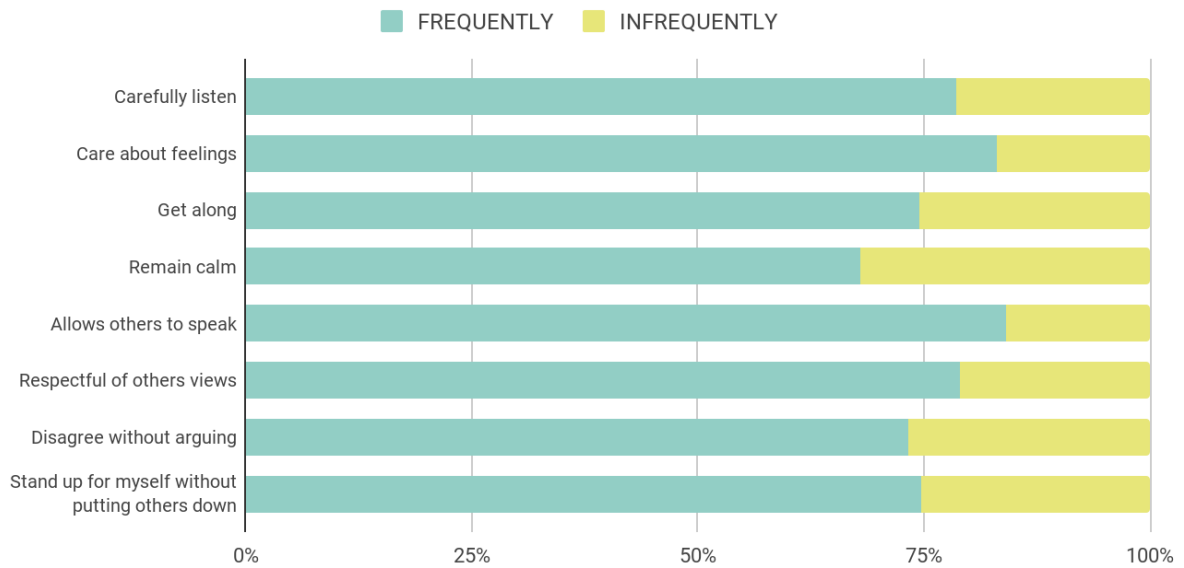
Overall, 87% (n=708) of respondents answered questions about their level of empathy. For the purposes of analysis, we have assessed results to indicate either frequently (most of the time, all of the time) or infrequently (never/rarely, some of the time). Where statistically significant, we have identified areas of intensity – never/rarely, some of the time, most of the time, all of the time – in responses.

Empathy (all students)

- More than 78% of students reported carefully listening to other people's points of view most or all of the time
- Over 83% of students reported they frequently cared about other people's feelings
- About three-fourths of students said they frequently got along with students who were different from them
- Approximately 68% of students said they were frequently able to remain calm, even when someone was bothering them or saying bad things
- Over 84% of students reported they allowed others to speak without interruption most or all of the time
- 79% of students felt they were respectful of the views of others even if they disagreed with them
- Approximately 73% of respondents reported being able to disagree with others without starting an argument most or all of the time
- Nearly 75% of students felt they could stand up for themselves without putting others down most or all of the time



Empathy



Empathy Responses by Grade

When the data are looked at by respondent grade level, some key data trends emerged.

1. **Carefully listen to other points of view** – Those who said they carefully listened to other points of view most or all of the time were students in grade 12 (85%) and grade 7 (83%). Those who were least in agreement with the statement were in grade 10 (71%).
2. **Care about others' feelings** – While 83% of all students reported frequently caring about the feelings of others, responses varied significantly by grade – with 91% of students in grade 7 in agreement most or all of the time compared to 77% of students in grade 10 and 78% of students in grade 8. Over 80% of students in grades 9, 11 and 12 said they frequently cared about the feelings of others.
3. **Get along with students who are different from them** – Over 70% of students in all grade levels reported frequently getting along with students who were different from them, with the highest level of agreement in grade 7 at 81%.
4. **Remain calm, even when someone is bothering them or saying bad things** – Approximately two-thirds of all students felt they frequently remained calm, even when someone was bothering them or saying bad things. Variance by grade was minimal,



with the highest level of agreement in grade 9 at 73% and the lowest in grade 10 at 62%.

5. **Allow others to speak without interruption** – Over 80% of students in each grade level reported frequently allowing others to speak with interruption, although only 78% of students in grade 10 reported as such.
6. **Respectful of views even if they disagreed** – Students reporting they frequently respected the views of others, even if they disagreed, ranged from 72% of students in grade 10 to 85% of students in grade 11.
7. **Disagree without starting an argument** – Here responses varied more significantly, with only 65% of students in grade 10 and 71% of students in grade 10 reporting they were able to disagree without starting an argument most or all of the time, compared to 78% of students in grade 11 and 81% of students in grade 12.
8. **Stand up for self without putting others down** – Nearly three-quarters of all students reported frequently being able to stand up for themselves without putting others down. The variance by grade was not significant, ranging from 74% to 79%. The exception was students in grade 10 where only 66% of students reported frequently being able to do so.

Empathy Responses by Race

As previously noted, the number of respondents for a race/ethnicity category were insufficient to inform meaningful analysis and, if included, may have resulted in identifiable information. Therefore, when analyzing learner experience by race/ethnicity, we chose to compare white student responses (84%) with a combined group of students of color (12%). Students who opted not to identify their race/ethnicity are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

While the number of students of color was small, the data did show that white students reported feelings of empathy more frequently than students of color. In some cases the difference was 10 percentage points or more.

1. **Carefully listen to other points of view** – Over 80% of white students reported frequently listening to other points of view, compared to only 63% of students of color.
2. **Care about others' feelings** – Nearly 74% of students of color reported frequently caring about the feelings of others; 84% of white students reported the same.
3. **Get along with students who are different from them** – Race was not as significant a factor. Nearly 75% of white students and 70% of students of color reported frequently getting along with students who were different from them.



4. **Remain calm, even when someone is bothering them or saying bad things** – Approximately 69% of white students and 62% of students of color reported frequently remaining calm even when someone was bothering them or saying bad things.
5. **Allow others to speak without interruption** – Nearly 85% of white students reported frequently allowing others to speak without interruption, compared to 75% of students of color.
6. **Respectful of views even if they disagreed** – Nearly 80% of white students reported frequently being respectful of views even if they disagreed, compared to 72% of students of color.
7. **Disagree without starting an argument** – Here responses varied more significantly, with only 75% of white students reporting they were able to disagree without starting an argument most or all of the time, compared to 61% of students of color.
8. **Stand up for self without putting others down** – Nearly three-quarters of all students reported frequently being able to stand up for themselves without putting others down. The variance by race was again significant, ranging from 61% for students of color to 77% of white students.

Empathy Responses by Gender

While 94% of respondents indicated their gender as either boy/girl, we do include the small percentage of students who identify as non-binary. Students who opted not to identify their gender are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

Responses to empathy statements varied greatly from students who identified as boys to those identifying as girls to non-binary students.

1. **Carefully listen to other points of view** – Nearly 44% of non-binary students reported frequently listening to other points of view, compared to only 30% of boys and 13% of girls.
2. **Care about others' feelings** – Over 37% of non-binary students reported frequently caring about the feelings of others; 23% of boys reported the same compared to only 10% of girls.
3. **Get along with students who are different from them** – Over 62% of non-binary students reported getting along with students different from them, whereas 27% of boys and 22% of girls reported the same.
4. **Remain calm, even when someone is bothering them or saying bad things** – Only 28% of girls and 34% of boys reported frequently remaining calm even when someone was



bothering them or saying bad things; 56% of non-binary students reported frequently being able to remain calm in similar situations.

- 5. **Allow others to speak without interruption** – This statement was more challenging for all genders, with only 31% of non-binary students, 20% of boys and 11% of girls reporting they allowed others to speak without interruption most or all of the time.
- 6. **Respectful of views even if they disagreed** – Nearly 44% of non-binary students reported frequently being respectful of views even if they disagreed, compared to 26% of boys and 16% of girls.
- 7. **Disagree without starting an argument** – Here responses again varied significantly, with 50% of non-binary students reporting they were able to disagree without starting an argument most or all of the time, compared to 34% of boys and 18% of girls.
- 8. **Stand up for self without putting others down** – Nearly three-quarters of all students reported frequently being able to stand up for themselves without putting others down. However the responses varied significantly, when analyzed by gender, with 44% of non-binary students, 30% of boys and 20% of girls reporting they were able to do this most or all of the time.

School Environment

Questions in this area included two sections – questions about how they personally feel about the environment at DHS and their feelings about how the DHS environment affects other students. As with previous questions, students were asked to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements:

ENVIRONMENT’S IMPACT ON THEM PERSONALLY

- 1. At DHS, I attend a school environment that is safe (physically and emotionally)
- 2. At Delano High School, I am valued regardless of my academic abilities.
- 3. At Delano High School, I am valued regardless of my physical abilities.
- 4. At Delano High School, I feel that policies and procedures are enforced fairly regardless of gender.
- 5. At Delano High School, I feel that policies and procedures are enforced fairly regardless of race or ethnicity.
- 6. At Delano High School, I feel like I have an equal opportunity to be a contributing member of the community.

ENVIRONMENT’S IMPACT ON OTHER STUDENTS

- 7. Delano High School values people with learning differences.
- 8. Delano High School values people with physical differences.



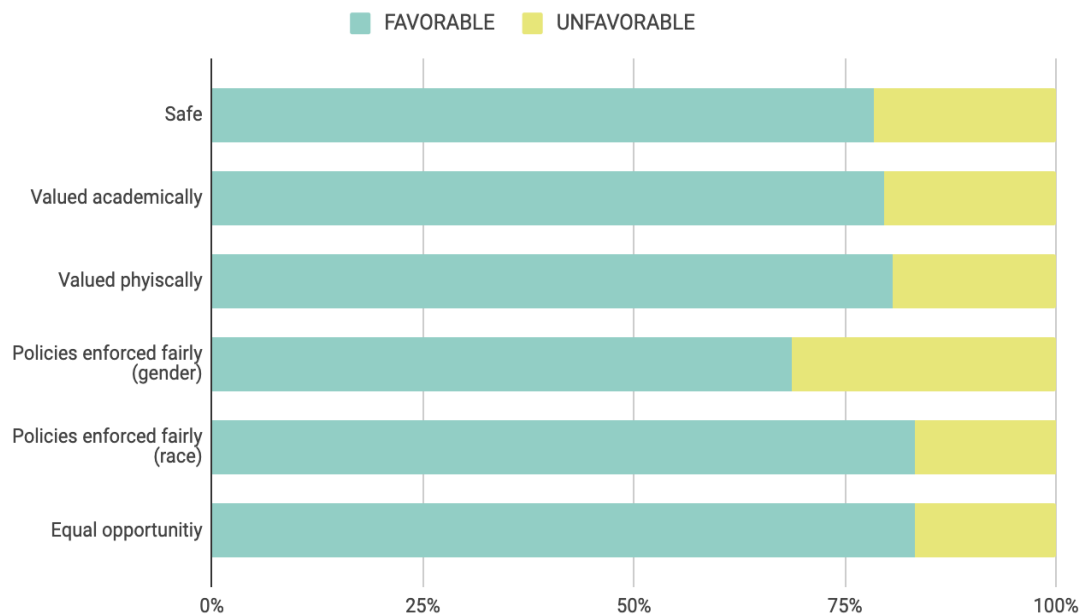
9. At Delano High School, the contributions of a person are equally valued, regardless of gender.
10. At Delano High School, the contributions of a person are equally valued, regardless of race or ethnicity.
11. At Delano High School, people from all backgrounds can be successful.

Overall, 85% (n=682) of respondents answered questions about the school environment at DHS. For the purposes of analysis, we have assessed results to indicate either overall agreement (strongly agree/agree) or overall disagreement (disagree/strongly disagree). Where statistically significant, we have identified areas of intensity – strongly agree or strongly disagree – in responses.

School Environment (all students)

- **How the environment impacts them personally**
 - More than 78% of students reported feeling physically and emotionally safe at school
 - Nearly 80% of students reported feeling valued for their academic abilities
 - Approximately 81% of students reported feeling valued for their physical abilities
 - Approximately 69% of students said they felt policies and procedures were applied fairly across genders, compared to 83% saying they were applied fairly across race/ethnicity
 - 83% of students reported they had an equal opportunity to be a contributing member of the community

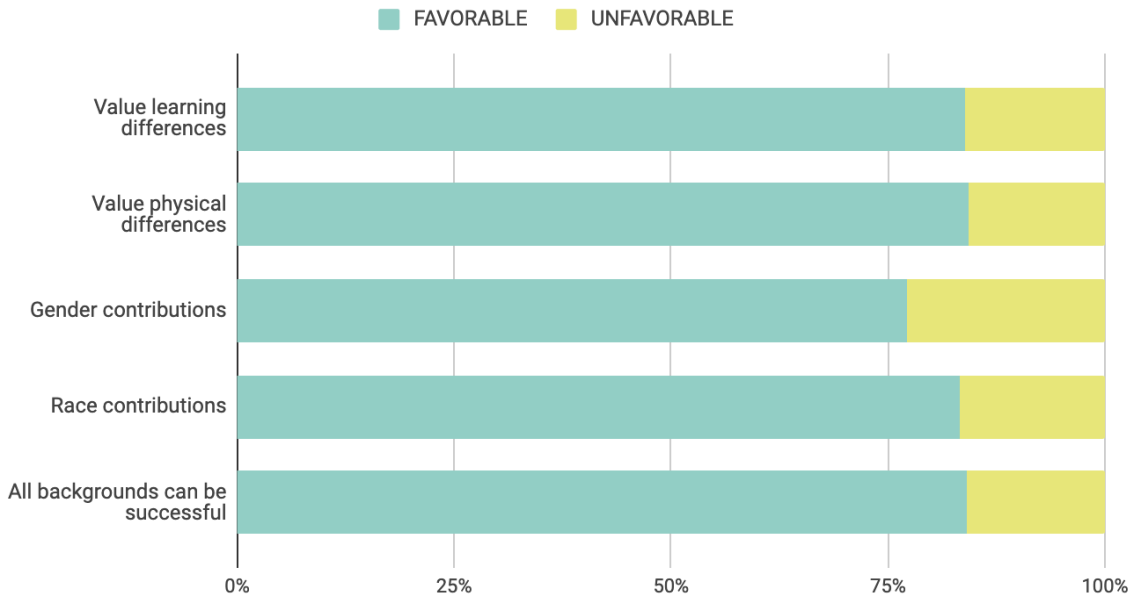
Impact of school environment on students personally





- *How the environment impacts other students*
 - 84% of students said DHS values people with learning differences, as well as people with physical differences
 - 77% of students said DHS values the contributions of each person, regardless of gender, whereas 83% said DHS values the contributions of each person, regardless of race/ethnicity
 - 84% of all students said people from all backgrounds can be successful at DHS

Impact of school environment on other students



School Environment Responses by Grade

When the data are looked at by respondent grade level, some key data trends emerged.

How the environment impacts them personally

1. **Physical and emotional safety** – Students in grade 7 were most likely (87%) to report feeling safe at school. Approximately 75% of students in grade 8, 10 and 12 agreed with the statement. Less than 70% of students in grade 11 felt the same.
2. **Valued for academic abilities** – While 79% of all students reported feeling valued regardless of their academic abilities, support for the statement was lowest in grades 11 (71%) and 12 (65%). Those most likely to agree with the statement were in grades 7(89%) and 9 (84%).



3. **Valued for physical abilities** – In regard to feeling valued for their physical abilities, again responses varied widely by grade. Over 93% of students in grade 7 agreed with the statement; compared to only 67% in grade 11.
4. **Policies enforced equally (gender)** – Agreement with this statement decreased dramatically with age, with 80% of students in grade 7 reporting they believe policies are enforced equally regardless of gender, dropping to 55% in grade 11 and 57% in grade 12.
5. **Policies enforced equally (race)** – In regard to policies being enforced equally regardless of race, there was not a lot of variance by grade. In the younger grades agreement ranged from 82% to 89%, whereas grade 11 agreement was only 61% . Approximately three-quarters of students in grades 10 and 12 agreed with the statement.
6. **Equal opportunity to be a contributing member of community** – Nearly three-quarters or more of students in each grade agreed they had an equal opportunity to be contributing members of the community. The strongest level of agreement was in grade 7 (95%), followed by grade 8 (83%) and grade 9 (81%). Agreement drops significantly in grades 11 (73%) and grade 12 (75%).

How the environment impacts other students

7. **Values learning differences** – Here agreement was again strong, ranging from 72% in grade 11 and 75% in grade 12 to 88% in grade 9 and 96% in grade 7.
8. **Values physical differences** – Agreement was similar for this statement as it was for learning differences. Grade 7 students agreed at a rate of 98%, compared to 73% of students in grade 11.
9. **Contributions equally valued (gender)** – When looking at contributions being valued by gender, students in grade 11 and 12 were least supportive of the statement, with 67% and 69% agreement respectively. The most supportive was again students in grade 7 at 84%.
10. **Contributions equally valued (race)** – Over 93% of students in grade 7 and 87% of students in grade 9 agreed with the statement, with students in grade 11 again showing the least amount of agreement at 69%.
11. **Everyone can be successful** – Approximately three-quarters of students in grades 11 and 12 agreed with the statement, compared to agreement levels of 93% in grade 7 and 88% in grade 9. Only 66% of students in grade 10 reported frequently being able to do so.



School Environment Responses by Race

As previously noted, the number of respondents for a race/ethnicity category were insufficient to inform meaningful analysis and, if included, may have resulted in identifiable information. Therefore, when analyzing learner experience by race/ethnicity, we chose to compare white student responses (84%) with a combined group of students of color (12%). Students who opted not to identify their race/ethnicity are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

While the number of students of color was small, the data indicated that white students reported feeling positive about the impact of the school environment at a rate that was more than 10 percentage points or more higher than students of color.

How the environment impacts them personally

1. **Physical and emotional safety** – Nearly 80% of white students agreed that the school environment at DHS was safe, compared to only 67% of students of color.
2. **Valued for academic abilities** – Over 81% of white students felt valued for their academic abilities, compared to just 68% of students of color.
3. **Valued for physical abilities** – Nearly 82% of white students felt valued for their physical abilities, whereas 71% of students of color felt the same.
4. **Policies enforced equally (gender)** – Approximately 70% of white students felt policies were enforced equally regardless of gender, compared to 60% of students of color.
5. **Policies enforced equally (race)** – The disparity in agreement was similar in regard to policies enforced equally regardless of race, although support was higher for both groups, with 81% of white students agreeing with the statement and 73% of students of color agreeing.
6. **Equal opportunity to be a contributing member of community** – The largest gap in agreement was displayed when students were asked whether they had equal opportunity to be contributing members of the community. less than 70% of students of color agreed with the statement, compared to 85% of white students.

How the environment impacts other students

7. **Values learning differences** – Over 85% of white students agreed with the statement, compared to 73% of students of color.
8. **Values physical differences** – Again, 85% of white students agreed with this statement, whereas 76% of students of color agreed.



9. **Contributions equally valued (gender)** – When considering whether contributions are valued equally regardless of gender, students of color agreed at 66%, compared to 79% of white students.
10. **Contributions equally valued (race)** – Not surprisingly, the gap was significant when considering whether contributions are valued equally regardless of race, with 86% of white students agreeing, compared to only 66% of students of color.
11. **Everyone can be successful** – Nearly 86% of white students said that people of all backgrounds can be successful at DHS, compared to 75% of students of color saying the same.

School Environment Responses by Gender

While 94% of respondents indicated their gender as either boy/girl, we do include the small percentage of students who identify as non-binary. Students who opted not to identify their gender are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

Responses to statements about the school environment varied significantly based on a student's identified gender.

How the environment impacts them personally

1. **Physical and emotional safety** – Over 83% of boys said they felt DHS is a safe environment, compared to 76% of girls and only 62% of non-binary students.
2. **Valued for academic abilities** – The vast majority of boys (85%) felt valued for their academic abilities, whereas only 76% of girls and 69% of non-binary students felt the same
3. **Valued for physical abilities** – Similarly, 87% of boys felt valued for their physical abilities, compared to 77% of girls and 67% of non-binary students.
4. **Policies enforced equally (gender)** – Just over half of non-binary students (56%) agreed that policies are enforced equally regardless of gender, compared to 68% of girls and 72% of boys.
5. **Policies enforced equally (race)** – Boys and girls both generally agreed that policies are enforced equally regardless of race (82% and 81% respectively), compared to 69% of non-binary students.
6. **Equal opportunity to be a contributing member of community** – Nearly 90% of boys felt they had an equal opportunity to be contributing members of the community. Just over 80% of girls felt the same, compared to only 56% of non-binary students.



How the environment impacts other students

- 7. **Values learning differences** – Over 87% of boys and nearly 82% of girls felt that DHS values people with learning differences, compared to only 56% of non-binary students.
- 8. **Values physical differences** – Similarly, 88% of boys and 82% of girls felt that DHS values people with physical differences, compared to only 62% of non-binary students
- 9. **Contributions equally valued (gender)** – While 82% of boys agreed that contributions are valued equally regardless of gender, only about 76% of girls and 56% of non-binary students agreed with the statement.
- 10. **Contributions equally valued (race)** – Nearly 87% of boys and 82% of girls agreed that contributions are valued equally regardless of race, whereas only 63% of non-binary students felt the same.
- 11. **Everyone can be successful** – Nearly 89% of boys and 82% of girls agreed that people from all backgrounds can be successful at DHS, compared to only 63% of non-binary students.

Safe Space Signs

As with the student focus groups, the student survey also included two questions about the “Safe Space for Everyone” stickers at DHS. First they were asked about their awareness of the stickers, and then they were asked to comment how they felt about the stickers.

Overall, 85% (n=683) of respondents answered questions about the signs at DHS. For the purposes of analysis, we have assessed results to indicate either overall agreement (strongly agree/agree) or overall disagreement (disagree/strongly disagree). Where statistically significant, we have identified areas of intensity – strongly agree or strongly disagree – in responses.

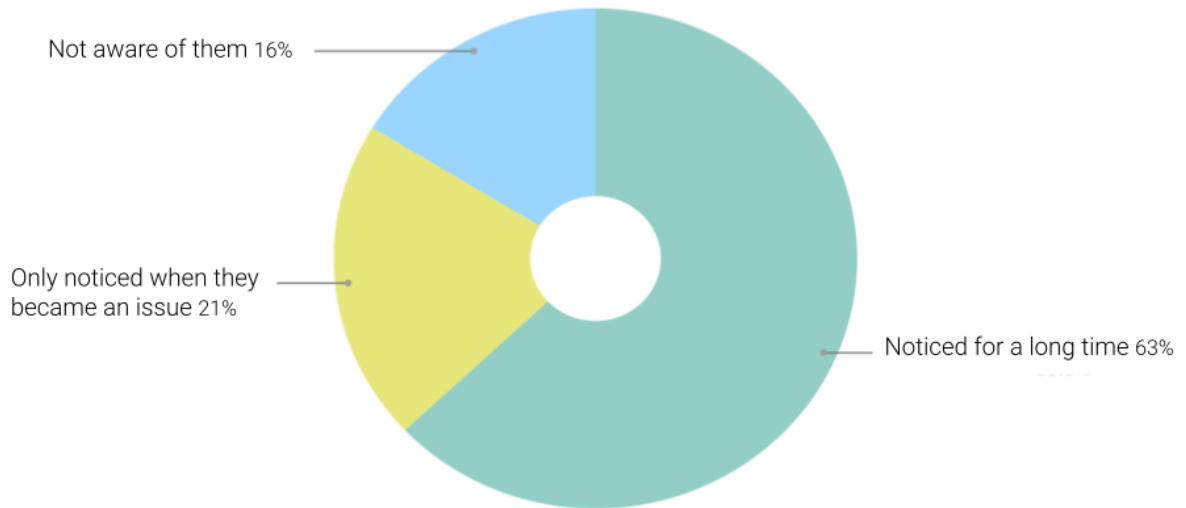
SIGN AWARENESS

All Students

The majority of students (63%) indicated that they had been aware of the signs for a long time. Less than one-quarter of students (21%) said they only became aware of the signs when they became an issue in the community, and approximately 16% of students said they were not aware of the signs.



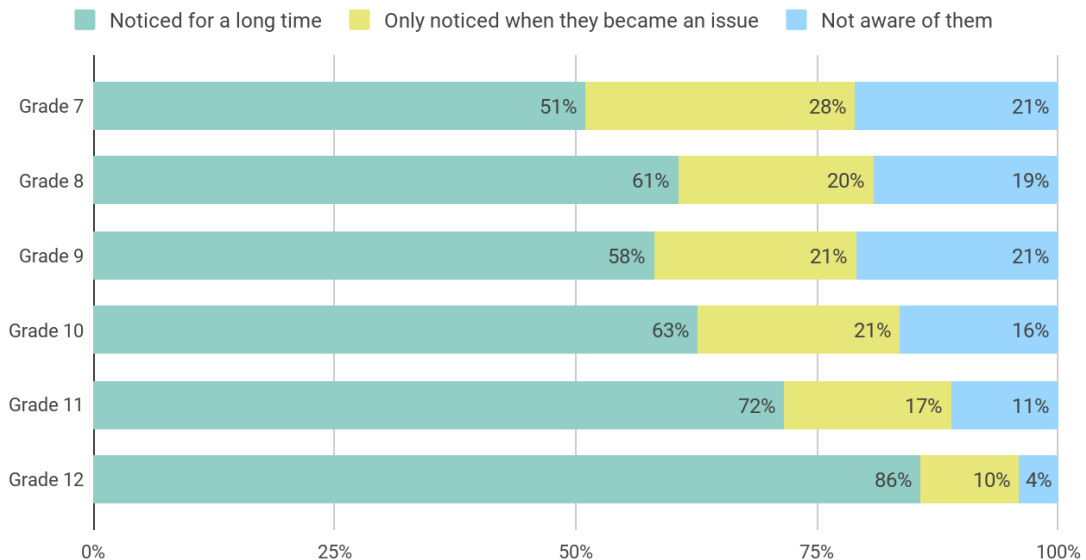
Sign awareness (overall)



Awareness by Grade

Not surprisingly, older students indicated stronger awareness of the signs than their younger peers, with 86% students in grade 12 and 72% of students in grade 11 saying they have noticed the signs for a long time, compared to only 51% of students in grade 7 indicating the same. About one-fifth of students in grades 7-10 indicated they only became available of the signs after they became an issue in the community.

Sign Awareness (by grade)



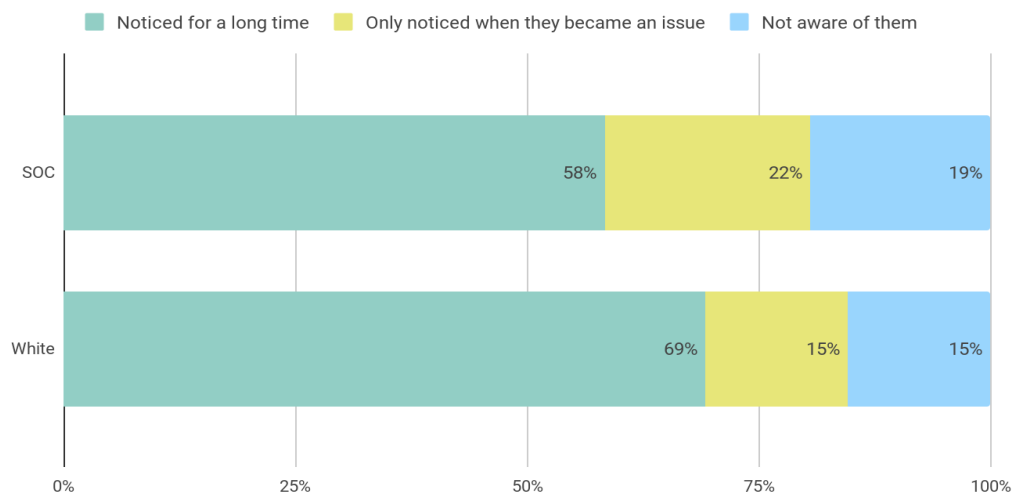


Awareness by Race

Again, as noted above, the number of respondents for a race/ethnicity category were insufficient to inform meaningful analysis and, if included, may have resulted in identifiable information. Therefore, when analyzing learner experience by race/ethnicity, we chose to compare white student responses (84%) with a combined group of students of color (12%). Students who opted not to identify their race/ethnicity are not factored into the disaggregated findings below.

When looking at the race/ethnicity of students, 69% of white students and 58% of students of color said they had noticed the signs for a long time.

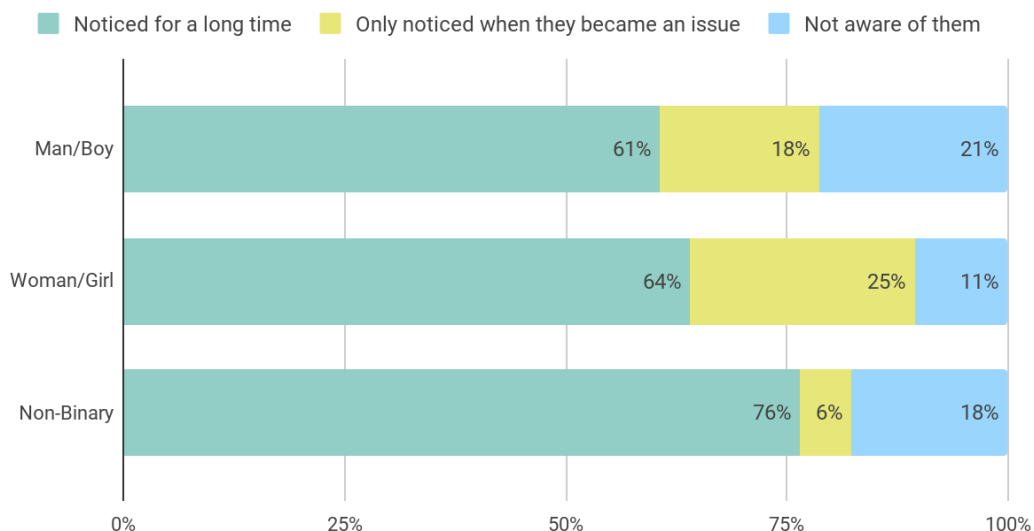
Sign Awareness (by race)



Awareness by Gender

When analyzing sign awareness by gender, over three-quarters of students who identify as non-binary said they had noticed the signs for a long time, compared to 64% of girls and 61% of boys. One-quarter of girls said they only noticed the signs after they became an issue in the community, and 21% of boys said they are not aware of them.

Sign Awareness (by gender)

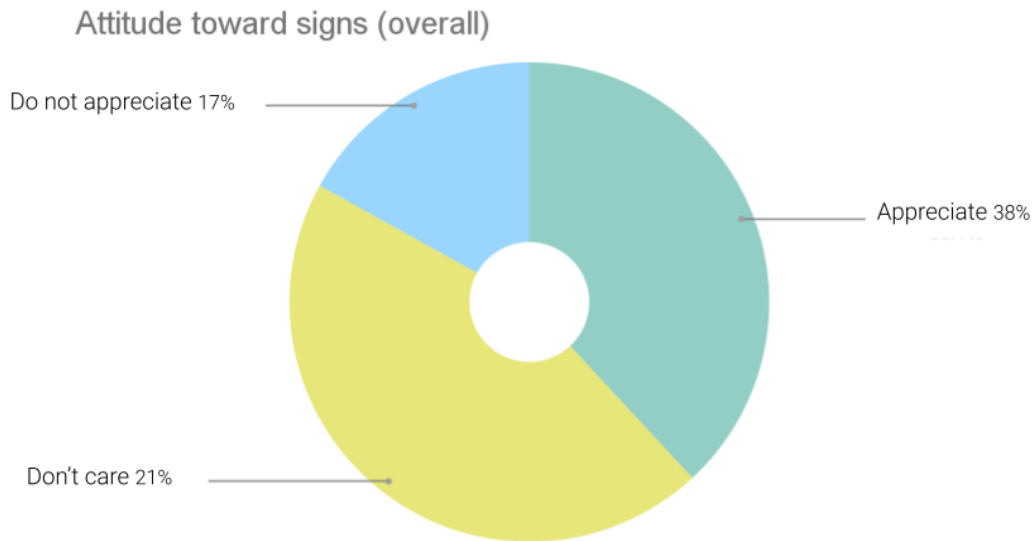




ATTITUDE TOWARD SIGNS

All Students

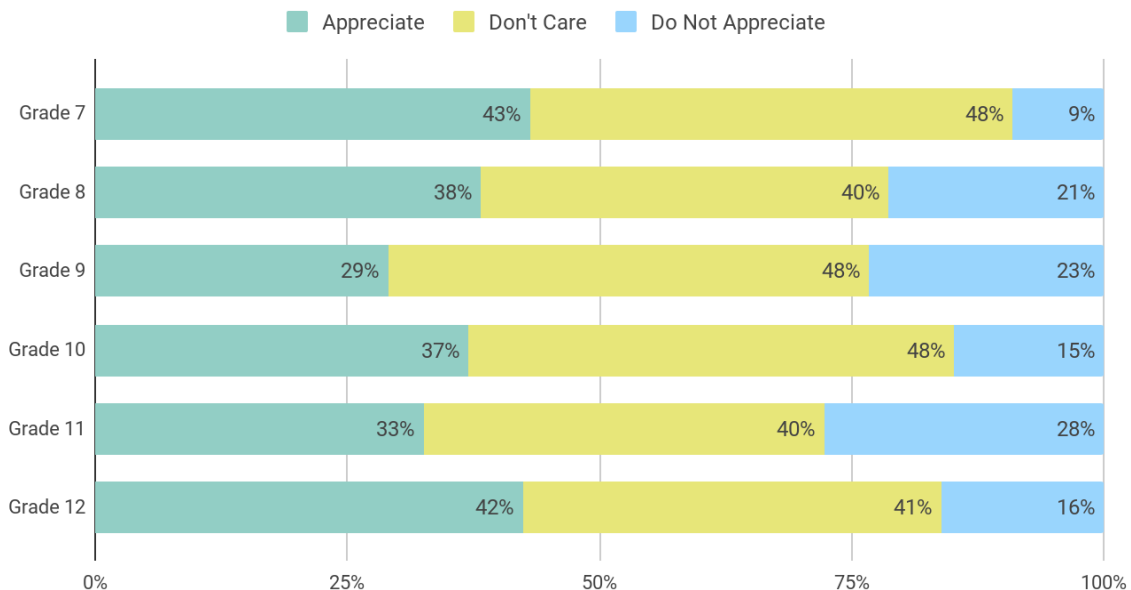
The majority of students (45%) indicated that they don't care about the signs, while 38% said they appreciate them and 17% of students do not appreciate the signs.



Attitude Toward Signs by Grade

When asked about their attitude toward the signs, the majority of each grade of students said they didn't care about the signs – with 48% of students in grades 7, 9 and 10 all saying they don't care about the signs. The grade of students with the highest percentage saying they appreciated the signs was grade 7 at 43% followed by grade 12 at 42%, compared to only 29% of students in grade 9. As for students who said they did not appreciate the signs, the largest group of students was in grade 11 (28%), followed by 21% of students in grades 7 and 9.

Attitude toward signs (by grade)

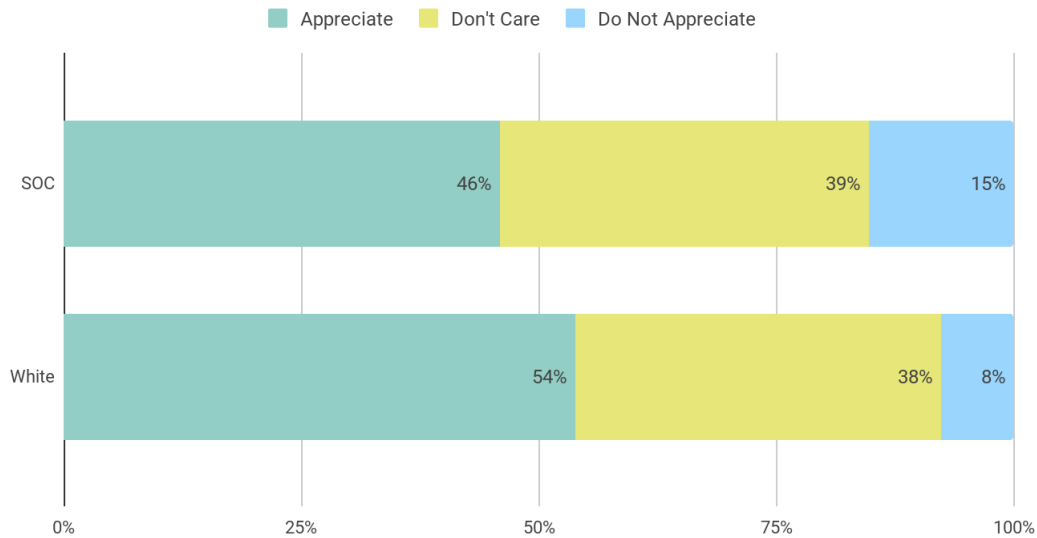




Attitude Toward Signs by Race

When asked about their attitude toward the signs, the majority of white students (54%) said they appreciate the signs, compared to 46% of students of color. There was little difference in race when it came to students who said they don't care about the signs. A larger percentage of students of color (15%) said they did not appreciate the signs compared to 8% of white students.

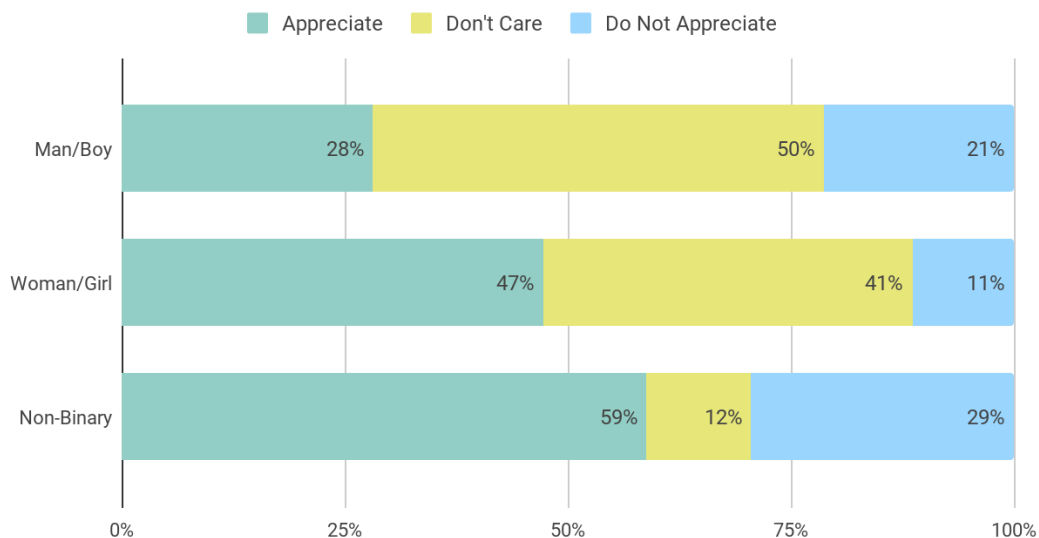
Attitude toward signs (by race)



Attitude Toward Signs by Gender

When looking at students by self-identified gender, 59% of non-binary students said they appreciated the signs, compared to 47% of girls and 28% of boys. Half of boys indicated they didn't care about the signs, as well as 41% of girls and 12% of non-binary students. Nearly 30% of non-binary said they do not appreciate the stickers, compared to 21% of boys and 11% of girls.

Attitude toward signs (gender)





ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Students were presented with the open-ended question, “Is there anything else you wish to share about your experience at Delano High School that will help us improve the climate and culture for future students?”

While there were many responses (n=403) answered to the open-ended question, over 58% of them said there was nothing else to say. The remainder of comments, some with quite detailed responses and others with a very direct answer. Responses were coded for themes identified within the data set and then frequencies were calculated for each theme.

Themes receiving five or more responses are noted below:

Theme	Freq.
Administration	13
Bullying	21
Concerns about staff (general and specific staff members)	22
Dislike for the school	18
Favoritism for some groups	20
LGBTQ issues/concerns	20
Race/racism	6
Respect for and listening to students	12
Safe Space signs (for/against, change the colors)	10
School structure/rules – hall passes, backpacks, temperature, daily schedule	40

SURVEY FINDINGS & TRENDS

While additional findings of all engagements are included later in this report, we want to provide a few key takeaways from the student survey.

- **Grade level trends** – Frequently the data showed that younger students, in particular students in grade 7 and 9 tended to be more positive about issues of school climate compared to their older peers. Students in grade 12 showed more intensity in their



agreement or disagreement with posed statements. And students in grade 11 tended to have the most negative responses to the climate statements.

- **Trends by race** – While the number of students identifying as non-white were small in number, even when grouped together as students of color, their responses were still significantly lower in agreement with the statement than their white peers.
- **Trends by gender** – In all questions, boys tended to have the most positive data. Again, while not large in number, experiences by non-binary students were significantly less positive than boys. Depending on the statement, sometimes students identifying as girls aligned with the boys, but other times they were more distinct and closer to non-binary peers.

The survey data highlight several areas that are ripe for improvement, while also affirming that many students are having a strong, beneficial experience at DHS.



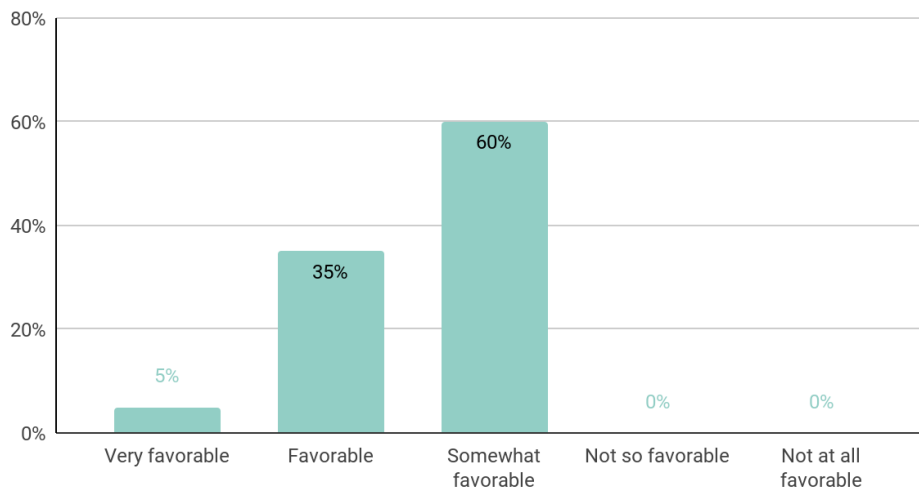
2B | STAFF ENGAGEMENT •

Focus Groups

A representative group of DHS teachers and staff members were invited to participate in insight sessions. Two focus groups were held on Jan. 16, 2023. One group included faculty who teach or work with grades 7-9, the other with those who teach or work with grades 10-12. In total, 22 staff members participated in the discussions. As with students, no administrators were present for the discussions. Staff provided candid and thoughtful responses to questions about their own experience as employees in Delano Public Schools, and about their observations of students' experiences and the overall climate in their school. Staff provided numerous suggestions and strategies about what could be done to improve the climate and learning environment and to ensure each Delano student feels that they are welcomed and have a sense of belonging.

As with students, staff were asked to rate — on scale from one to five, with one being not all favorable to five being very favorable — the climate at their school this year. After noting that the climate this year was better than last year, the majority of staff identified said that the climate remained only somewhat favorable. Staff in the first group (those serving grades 7-9) tended to skew slightly more favorable than their colleagues in grades 10-12.

DHS Climate (staff)



Staff next identified one or two words that came to mind when they thought about the climate for students at their school. The following word cloud is a combination of participants in both focus groups.



Belonging

Discussion then turned to how they describe what it means for a student to feel that they belong. Staff shared that it is very evident when students feel like they belong, and when they are struggling.

The following is a sampling of direct quotes from staff about how they define student belonging:

- Students can be who they want to be throughout the school, not just in certain groups or certain classrooms; they can be authentically themselves in the hallway, lunchroom, on the bus
- Within the classroom environment, a student believes that their voice is going to be heard; that they can have a unique perspective that will be valued
- When an issue arises, student concerns are addressed and consequences are applied
- Being noticed – if a kid is having a bad day, staff should ask what is wrong
- All staff are connecting with students
- Students are truly known by adults, we inquire about their life, existence, hopes and dreams
- Students feel safe to be themselves
- They don't have to hide their personality
- They can be who they are and don't have to change for other students or teachers
- Genuine inclusion for each student
- Feeling safe in classes, hallways (free of bullying, physical altercations)
- Accepted for who they are and not what others think they should bring to the table
- There are adults they can connect with, trust
- There is no one way to be a student at DHS
- They have a purpose/role in the school that is valued



When asked what they think *other adults in the community mean* when they talk about the importance of belonging and climate in Delano Public Schools, their answers were significantly different, and tended to be more negative. Responses focused on how they feel many adults in the community seem to have one definition of what it is like to be a student and what is needed for students to belong. Several staff members added that many parents seem to focus only on what their child needs and have difficulty thinking about other students in the school. Several participants commented that there is a “traditional” view about students in Delano without recognition that students are diverse in their backgrounds, beliefs, abilities and identities.

Comments were also made about how the national debates and rhetoric about what is or is not happening in schools is reflected within the Delano community. While staff seemed to agree that it seemed more hostile last year, there remain adults in the community who continue to raise questions about critical race theory and issues of gender identity being taught in the school, as well as perceptions that school staff are indoctrinating students.

Benefits and Challenges of being a student in Delano Public Schools

BENEFITS

As for the best part about being a Delano student, staff frequently mentioned the breadth of opportunities – advanced classes, extra curricular, clubs – available to students. They added that at DHS, students can get a great education and there is good academic learning. Staff also noted that their colleagues genuinely care about the students, and the school is big enough that each student should be able to find at least one teacher in the building they can connect with.

Staff said that for the most part, the school is safe, especially compared to what they hear is happening in Twin Cities metro schools. Some staff who were newer to DHS also commented that the climate at DHS is better than other schools they’ve worked at.

Finally, faculty talked about the benefits (and challenges) of being in a small town like Delano. There is a lot of school pride that is pervasive throughout the community. And teachers talk to one another, especially when it comes to how to help individual students.

CHALLENGES

Much like the students, staff members noted the challenges of being a small town. There were several comments about how multiple generations of families have lived in Delano. And while for some that is a good thing, it makes it very hard for those perceived as outsiders. This translates to students who have not spent their entire educational career in Delano. It is hard for them to make friends or find the right peer group because those groups are well established.

Staff noted that there is a perception by some in the community that Delano is a homogeneous group of people who all come from the same background and believe the same things. Staff said that this is especially true for some loud voices in the community who seem resistant to



change and make it very hard for students and families who do not have the same experiences as they did.

Comments were also made about how because Delano is a small town, those kids who do not align with the traditional activities and opportunities at DHS, who get perceived as weird or different, struggle to fit in. If they are not in sports or some of the bigger activities, they do not feel like they are really part of the DHS community.

Improving School Climate

Staff offered several actions that students could do, as well as what they could do, to create a more safe and supportive school climate for all students.

STUDENT ACTIONS

Teachers suggested leveraging the grade span in the building, utilizing older students as mentors for younger students. Similarly they stressed the importance of mentors or buddies for students new to the school. For example, current DHS students could volunteer to serve as mentors, helping the new student to make social connections, get them more acclimated to the school and help them discover opportunities to be involved. Several comments were made about the student ambassador program, appreciating the intent but encouraging it to be more robust and available for each grade. It was noted, however, that all of these programs should not just be created and facilitated by adults. Students should be part of the creation and implementation of these activities if they are going to be successful.

Relatedly, positive comments were made about the buddy advisory classes in which classes of older students pair up with classes of younger students. Having this and more opportunities for students to connect with each other while also developing leadership skills are seen to be ways to create more long-term, positive impacts on student climate.

On the other side, teachers also talked about the need for individual students to be more open-minded and learn how to disagree with another person's beliefs without being disrespectful or rude. As was noted earlier when talking about some of the adults in the community, several teachers offered that the disrespect often comes from their lack of experience and exposure to people who are different from them. Thus, it is important for students to know that diverse perspectives are critical to their learning and preparation life after graduation.

TEACHER/STAFF ACTIONS

As for what they or their colleagues could do to help improve school climate, staff said that there needs to be safe classrooms and spaces for students to go and have safe conversations. They encouraged their colleagues to celebrate differences more.

Staff also said there needs to be more consistent actions by staff to address disruptions and bad behaviors by students. But it needs to go beyond just interrupting negative behaviors, there needs to be follow-up conversations to help students take ownership of their actions, and there



needs to be follow through by administration. They noted it was important for staff to model the behavior they want to see in their students, and to not show favoritism to one group of students or another.

It was also suggested that teachers work to make relationships with students beyond those in their primary classes – be present in the halls, in the lunchroom, at school events, in their advisory classes. They said all adults should make a concerted effort to build relationships with students, to really learn about each student they interact with.

Finally, many teachers talked about the amazing students at DHS and how their role is to create the conditions for each student to shine and be who they are. As one focus group participant said. “The kids will be the ones to help us grow. They come up with the best ideas, we just need to stop putting up roadblocks in front of them.”

Additional considerations

Finally, participants were given the opportunity to offer any additional suggestions for changes needed at Delano High School or other thoughts they wanted to share. Responses were varied and included:

- Being consistent in dealing with behavior – at the classroom and administrative level.
- Exploring a different approach to discipline such as restorative practices over detention that help student understand the harm they have caused and what they need to do reconcile that harm
- Encourage appropriate relationships between adults and students; focus on their role model, mentor and guide, not their friend
- Restore funding for LINK/WEB to help build a better climate across grade levels
- Target resources for students who are falling between the cracks
- Seek ways to continue engaging parents and community members to better understand different perspectives, model and encourage a growth mindset rather than trying to retain tradition



2C | PARENT/FAMILY & COMMUNITY MEMBER ENGAGEMENT •

Community Conversation

A community conversation was held on Monday, January 30. The session was open to all members of the Delano Public Schools community – students, parents/families, staff and community members. While only about 76 people pre-registered to attend, it is estimated that approximately 115 were in attendance for the event on January 30.

Format

The structure of the Delano Public Schools community conversation was adapted from a national facilitated conversation format¹. At the beginning of the event, an overview of the agenda was shared with all participants, as were the communication agreements (see appendix) that would be followed by all participants in the discussion. These agreements were offered as drafts, allowing for clarification and discussion by participants.

After gaining consensus of participants, the discussion was turned over to the small groups. Participants voluntarily selected a small group at which to sit. Each table sat six to seven people, with each table including a trained table facilitator, composed of administrators, teachers or district staff. The primary role of the table facilitator was to listen and scribe the conversations. Additionally, they were responsible for leading the group through the agenda, managing time, ensuring that communication agreements were followed, and taking notes on key points shared during the conversation. They were not there to answer questions about actions taken by the district or to speak on behalf of the district.

Conversations were structured in a facilitated dialogue format. A facilitated dialogue is a conversation in which the participants' primary goal is to pursue mutual understanding rather than agreement or immediate solutions. In this dialogue, participants are able to:

- Listen and be listened to with care
- Speak and be spoken to in a respectful manner
- Share airtime so that all speakers can be heard
- Learn about the perspectives of others
- Reflect on their own views

Each table started with brief introductions, and a couple of grounding questions intended to help build connections between participants at the table and model the structure of the conversation (i.e., one person speaking at a time for a limited amount of time). The grounding questions also allowed for participants to share their hopes and expectations for the evening. Following these grounding conversations, the discussion shifted to questions about belonging and school climate, and why individuals hold the opinions and beliefs that they do. In so doing, participants were able to dig deeper into their own values while also understanding what is behind the views of others. The conversation finished with an opportunity for participants to

¹ Fostering Dialogue Across Divides, Essential Partners, 2018



ask questions about the responses of others at the table, with the expectation that they are seeking understanding or clarification and not seeking to debate or argue (see appendix for communication pathways). This format allowed participants to deepen their understanding of what had been shared and heard.

Table Conversations

Belonging

First, participants were asked to explain what the term “belonging” meant to them. Additionally they were asked to share about how the recent conflicts in Delano about belonging and school climate had personally affected them.

Responses about what belonging means was similar to the response from the student and staff focus groups. In general, participants talked about feeling safe, a place in which one feels heard, all are welcome (in all capacities), and everyone feels included. Feeling that one belongs means there is no judgment about who a person is or what they believe, that beliefs are respected even if they are different from one’s own beliefs, that there is someone in the organization or group with which one can align and honestly engage, and that one’s feelings and beliefs are respected and valued. For one participant, a sense of belonging was defined as when “people miss me when I’m gone.”

Heart of the Matter

Participants were then asked to reflect on perspectives and values they hold about belonging and to dig into what is at the root of these beliefs. The goal of this question is that others at the table better understand what is driving certain beliefs and why they are important.

Responses about what drove individual definitions of belonging were varied. For some, the heart of the matter was more personal, rooted in faith/religion, upbringing and family values. For others it was more about concerns over what was happening at school – concerns about mental health of students, miscommunication between the school and home, fear that the sticker incident is just the “tip of the iceberg” that will lead to other divisive issues (e.g. Critical Race Theory, religion in schools, etc.). Many participants cited that safety was at the heart of the matter – ensuring that every student feels safe at school and in the community. Some table groups talked about how recent events had damaged the reputation of the school district and community, and impacted school spirit. While other conversations focused more on the issue that the community is changing and not every student or family needs the same thing. Most responses to this question centered about the notion of relationships, and the importance of every student having positive relationships with a group of peers and at least one adult at school.



Connected Conversations

During the less structured format portion of the conversation, participants were able to more directly engage with one another to respectfully seek understanding and clarification. These conversations were wide ranging depending on the individuals at the table.

For many tables, discussions were focused on the stickers and the directive by the school board to have the stickers removed. With regard to the school board, many asked questions about why the board made the decision they did about the stickers, why there was no engagement of teachers, students or families prior to the decision, and why there has been no comments from the board since the decision. Other discussions focused on how teachers felt and what will be the long term consequences of the action (i.e., lose teachers, have trouble recruiting staff, lose families).

Data

Full documentation of the table conversations is included in the Appendix. Insights from the conversation are integrated into the overall themes and findings later in this report.

Outcomes

Overall, feedback from participants about the structure of the format was positive, with many commenting that they appreciated the ability to share their views and respectfully hear from others. Comments were also positive about the diversity of views and people at the table – students, parents, teachers, community members. Tables in which there was a student present were quick to appreciate hearing their perspective of what life is “really like” at Delano High School.

The most common concern shared by participants was in regard to how the insights collected at the conversation will be shared (i.e., transparency) and what, if any, action will come from it.

Some also commented about the lack of understanding about how the meeting would be structured. Despite the description of the meeting as a dialogue and table conversations, a perception among many was that there was going to be some kind of presentation or open forum. Nonetheless, there seems to be a common thread of distrust that anything will change, despite many comments of hope for continued community engagement.

Many participants noted the desire to continue to have these kinds of conversations in the future, whether about this same topic or other issues. Comments about how they appreciated just having face-to-face conversations with fellow community members was something that is needed.



03 | Key Themes •

In reviewing the feedback from all of the stakeholder engagements, the following themes emerged:

BELONGING

- **Everyone belongs in Delano** - It was clear from all engagements that there is agreement on the need for all students (and staff and families) to feel that they belong in Delano Public Schools. There was a consensus on ensuring that all students, no matter their background (i.e., race, gender identity, religion, ability) have a right to be welcomed into the Delano community and assured a place where they can be their authentic selves.

Many comments, especially from students, felt that there was too much emphasis on adhering to a certain ideal of what Delano students have been traditionally, and an expectation in parts of the community of what a Delano student should be, and not enough on allowing peers to be who they are. There were also comments that much of that pressure seems to come from certain parent groups in the community, and the school is acquiescing to the loud voices rather than really listening to what the students want and need. Several students and staff commented that for some students, school may be the only place where they can truly be themselves.

Several comments, from students, teachers and parents, noted that Delano has grown and changed over the years, but some segments of the community are resistant to change. As such, several comments focused on the need for a broader understanding of who the students and families are in the community.

- **Everyone has a right to feel safe and included** - By far the most frequent comment and point of agreement was about the right for everyone, especially students, to feel safe and included in Delano. That definition of safety extends beyond physical safety in the schools to that of emotional and mental safety. There is great concern among stakeholders that students are not feeling safe as a result of their religious beliefs, race, gender, ability, etc. Many participants reported that while not everyone has to agree with each other, there needs to be a clear understanding that differences are respected, not judged, and that diversity is celebrated, not discouraged. Empathy and kindness were common words used by people from all sides of the issue, representing at least one point of agreement and shared desire for Delano Public Schools. .
- **Focus on the needs of each and every student** - The majority of those who participated commented on the need to focus on the individual needs of each student, rather than just focusing on the majority, or on certain groups of students. When adults are able to



address each student as an individual, students feel valued. Similarly, other students see adults recognizing the uniqueness of each student, which in turn lessens the tendency to judge and ridicule peers who are perceived as “different.” In looking at each student as their own person, the pressure to assimilate, especially to a “traditional” view of Delano students, is reduced.

ENGAGEMENT

- **Elevate student voices** - Both students and teachers/staff noted the need to elevate student voices in school and district decisions. The district should make it a practice to include developmentally appropriate ways to engage students in complex discussions and decisions that impact them. While there are many effective ways to gather input, such engagement needs to go beyond surveys and student leadership groups to targeted focus groups and inclusion of student voices in community conversations. Having student voices at many of the table conversations on January 30 was cited as a positive by participants, allowing them to hear first-hand about what it is like to be a student in Delano today.
- **Engage stakeholders in the work of the schools** - Similarly, there were many who felt that the district needed to do more in general to communicate with and engage stakeholders, especially parents. While discussion during this round of engagement focused around the issue of belonging, there was a desire for more conversations and engagements like the one held on January 30, and continued discussions about what is being taught in school. Additionally, teachers frequently commented about how too often administration does not seek their input when considering changes. Particularly, comments about catering to the loudest parent voices and instituting changes to maintain the school's reputation seem to be common among students and staff members.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

- **Ensure all perspectives have the opportunity to be heard** – The idea that everyone's perspective has a right to be heard was common across stakeholder groups. Critical thinking and understanding differing views are essential skills students must learn to be successful in life. Yet the rhetoric we often hear today from our state and national leaders seems to showcase the opposite. Delano Public Schools has the opportunity to model what honoring and hearing all voices really looks like – teaching students as well as adults in the community that hearing and honoring perspectives different from their own does not mean you have to give up your own values or beliefs.
- **Address negative behavior** - Students and teachers both commented on the need for more adherence to the student handbooks and addressing negative behaviors with real



consequences. There was a desire among both students and faculty to implement some sort of restorative practices into disciplinary actions, noting the importance for students to understand what they did wrong, the harm that was caused, and how to move forward from the mistake. It was also important to students that they understand that their concerns were taken seriously and that something is being done about it. Even though data privacy prevents sharing of specific punishments and consequences, students and teachers felt that if restorative practices are included as part of the process, they would feel that their concerns were validated.

- **Allow for students conversations and discussions** - Many students and teachers felt that given comments shared by parents at board meetings, as well as the general tenor of divided rhetoric around the country, that they are not allowed to have conversations about potentially controversial issues in class or with individual students. Students especially said they would like the opportunity to engage in such discussions in age appropriate ways and in the safety of their classroom so that they could learn how to discuss such topics and be prepared for the larger world. Currently, whether explicitly stated or inferred, there is a fear that such discussions are not allowable and could lead to negative consequences. Given the common concept of neutrality used by many at the community conversation, it is clear that there needs to be further discussion about when and how such issues can be discussed at school.
- **Provide training and support for adults** - Training on and conversation about issues of diversity and inclusion was suggested by some teachers and parents. However there were many parents at the community conversation that felt that there was too much emphasis on diversity and inclusion in school. As such, there exists an opportunity to have more facilitated discussions to help all adults in the school community learn and understand different perspectives, all under the umbrella of supporting and serving the unique needs of students.

LEADERSHIP

- **Increase transparency** - Many cited the concern about the lack of transparency in district/school communications and decisions. Whether about new schedules, rainbow stickers, curriculum or books in the library, there is a perception among students, teachers and parents that the district is hiding something, or at a minimum, is afraid to share anything that isn't positive. By creating a culture of transparency, showing challenges as well as successes, as well as a culture of stakeholder engagement, the members of Delano will again become more trusting of the decisions and actions of its leaders, which in turn will lead to a more collaborative and welcoming community.
- **Speak for the whole of the community** - No matter which side of the political spectrum, which religion you practice, or what your race/ethnicity or gender is, many participants in the recent engagements cited a concern that their views are not being fairly



represented or they are not representative of the Delano community. Such a perception mirrors the larger attitude and growing division in communities across the country. Comments from teachers and many participants at the community conversation noted that it appears leaders are only listening to a few, loud voices in the community that are not representative of the majority of residents. Whether or not this is true, the reputation of the district is at stake and there is a need to repair trust and engagement of all sectors of the Delano community.

04 | Findings and Recommendations •

The primary purpose of the engagements was to provide an opportunity for members of the Delano Public Schools community to share their concerns about and ideas for improving the student experience and overall school climate. The role of CESO Communications was to facilitate these conversations and identify key themes.

Yet, it became evident during the analysis that we can and should share some of our thoughts as school communication experts on ways the district can move forward together.

Communication & Transparency

The district has an opportunity to enhance its communications efforts in ways that will help to build trust and transparency. There exists a perception among members of the school community that the district is afraid to share the bad news or challenges within the schools. Many students cited the perception of administration caring more about the reputation of the school than what is really happening inside the walls. This is not uncommon in districts that have traditionally had a strong reputation.

However, it is our experience that members of a community like Delano actually want and need to understand all that is happening. In sharing your challenges as well as your successes, teachers, parents and community members tend to step up and want to help solve issues. It may seem counterintuitive, but it is actually a way to bring your community together, build trust and in turn enhance your district brand.

Therefore we encourage the district to develop a comprehensive communication plan that not only includes key tactics (e.g. newsletters, website, social media), but also considers ways to increase opportunities for engagement and, in turn, understanding of district operations, decisions and instructional philosophies. The plan will allow the district to be more proactive in accurately telling the Delano Public Schools story, rather than defending against false claims of misinformation about what is and is not being taught in the classroom.



Continued Engagement

As evident from the participant and table facilitator feedback forms after the January 30 meeting, many are interested in continuing dialogues and conversations about the schools and district. Clearly the topic of inclusion is one that people want to continue, but there are other topics identified in the feedback forms that would lend themselves well to stakeholder engagement (e.g., new schedules, grading, etc.). Not all topics require a structured dialogue format. But we do strongly encourage the district to develop an engagement plan that identifies regular opportunities for members of the district community to come together and discuss issues of interest, with a focus as much on listening to one another as having your own voice heard.

Key to this effort is clarity around how information will be collected and used, and how it will inform decisions. By closing the engagement loop with clear participant expectations and building a culture of engagement the district can lessen the misperceptions and rumors that seem to be prevalent in the community.

Core Values

The word “neutrality” was often heard during the engagements, especially from many at the January 30 conversation. Yet, like many terms that are used in institutions like education, varying interpretations or definitions of a word is most often where conflicts arise. Even the term neutrality can be interpreted in varying ways.

Given the recent challenges in Delano around the issue of gender identity and inclusion, we encourage the district to consider developing core values for the district. In reviewing the discussion of the recent engagements, some participants point to the Tiger Way as core values, others focus on the Golden Rule, and still others lean on their family values or religious beliefs. Each of these examples are valid value propositions, but they are not uniformly accepted core values.

We believe organizational core values clearly express what the district stands for, what it believes in, and what is closest to the district’s heart. The development of these values is not about identifying a few terms, but in defining what those terms mean for Delano Public Schools and then highlighting those values in action through effective communication and storytelling.

05 | Final Thoughts •

We applaud the district for taking on this comprehensive stakeholder engagement effort and considering actions to move the district forward. Despite the many weather delays and rescheduling of events, it appears that a diverse representation of the Delano Public Schools



community was included. There is clearly a genuine interest on behalf of the Delano community to repair what has been broken and move toward a more inclusive and supportive school community where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to thrive.

In addition, we strongly encourage the district to share the report with members of the community. Given the many comments in the engagements that nothing will actually be done with the information collected, as well as comments at the community conversation wanting to see the data, we strongly encourage the district to share this report with the community. Transparency is an issue in many school communities, especially ones like Delano in which there have been strong opinions and tensions expressed. Sharing back the information with those who participated is critical to building trust and support among all members of the Delano Public Schools community.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with you and your willingness to explore ways to move forward as a connected and welcoming school community. We also appreciate your commitment as a district to improving communications and engagement going forward. CESO Communications stands ready to assist Delano Public Schools as it continues its strategic improvement efforts.



APPENDIX

Community Conversation Files

Delano Public Schools

A Community Conversation about School Climate



Ensuring a Welcoming School Community where Everyone Belongs

*A Community Dialogue to improve school climate and the student experience in
Delano Public Schools*

Monday, January 30, 2023
6:30-8 p.m.
Tiger Den
Delano High School



RSVP

To help us plan for the community conversation, participants are asked to please RSVP via [this online form](#) or scan the QR code.

How can the Delano Public Schools community work together to improve school climate and support all students?

In an effort to continually improve the climate in Delano Public Schools, the district is hosting a Community Conversation to engage district students, parents and staff on Monday, January 30, 2023. The goal of this dialogue is to provide a safe environment in which participants can both share their own experiences, perceptions and concerns, and listen to those of others in the room.

The hope is that this conversation will move beyond a one-time listening session to ongoing efforts that build community, encourage people to seek common solutions, and improve the school climate at all Delano Public Schools so that every student can reach their full potential.

This facilitated, structured conversation will bring together the students, parents and staff members of our Delano Public Schools community to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints and develop solutions. Unlike a debate or an open forum, this structured dialogue will focus on actively listening, deepening understanding and discovering shared values.

Questions

For questions about this event, please contact **Matt Schoen**, superintendent, at (763) 972- 3365 or matt.schoen@delanoschools.org.



Delano Public Schools

A Community Conversation about School Climate

Jan. 30, 2023

AGENDA

Gathering and Welcome (Superintendent Schoen)
Orientation & Communication Agreements
Table Introductions & Grounding
Structured Opening Questions (<i>Go-Round format</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none">3 minutes per person As we think about the school climate in Delano Public Schools, what does the term “belonging” mean to you? How have recent challenges (from the 2021-22 or 2022-23 school year) and public conversations in Delano about belonging and school climate affected you personally?2 minutes per person As you think about the general perspectives you hold about belonging and school climate in Delano, what is at the heart of the matter for you? What is most important that people understand about your perspective?
Connected Conversation <i>Four Pathways to a Connected Conversation</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Ask a question. Is there something that you’d like to understand better? <i>If you ask a question, be sure it reflects genuine curiosity and is not a challenge in disguise.</i>Note a point of learning. Have you heard something that stirred fresh thoughts or feelings?Pick up and weave a thread. Has an interesting theme or idea emerged that you’d like to add to?Clarify differences. Have you heard something that you disagreed with? <i>If so, first check to see if you understood it correctly. Then say what was unsettling to you about what you heard and why.</i>
Parting Words <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comment on what the experience has been like for you; <i>OR</i>• One idea, feeling, commitment or question that you are taking with you; <i>OR</i>• Something about what came up for you here that you want to share with a friend, family member, co-worker – or take out into your life in some other way.
Personal Reflections / Feedback Forms Please complete the individual feedback forms provided by your table facilitator and leave them at the table when you are finished



Communication Agreements

Regarding the spirit of our speaking and listening:

- We will speak for ourselves, and allow others to speak for themselves, with no pressure to represent or explain a whole group.
- We will not criticize the views of others or attempt to persuade them.
- We will listen with resilience, “hanging in” when something is hard for us to hear.
- If tempted to make attributions about the beliefs of others (e.g. “You just believe that because ...”), we will instead consider asking a question to check out the assumption we are making (e.g., “Do you believe that because...?” or “What leads you to that belief?”).

Regarding the form of speaking and listening:

- We will share airtime and participate within the time-frames suggested by facilitators.
- We will not interrupt except to indicate that we cannot or did not hear a speaker.
- We may “pass” or “pass for now” if we are not ready or willing to respond to a question.

Regarding confidentiality:

- When we discuss our experiences in the dialogue with people who are not present, we will not attach names or other identifying information to particular comments unless we have explicit permission to do so.
- We will not personally identify the experiences shared at the table discussions with those not present at the meeting.



Delano Public Schools

A Community Conversation about School Climate

Jan. 30, 2023

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

NAME (optional):

1. What was most satisfying, enriching or valuable about your experience in this dialogue?
2. What was less than satisfying, or was frustrating or disappointing?
3. What are you taking away from this experience?
4. What advice or suggestions can you offer about school climate as the district plans for the next school year?
5. Other comments?



Delano Public Schools

A Community Conversation about School Climate

Jan. 30, 2023

TABLE FACILITATOR FEEDBACK FORM

NAME:

TABLE #:

1. How did your table conversation go? What went well? What was difficult?
2. What did you sense that participants valued about the conversation?
3. What do you think they found difficult or disappointing?
4. What suggestions do you have on the issue of school climate and belonging?
5. Other comments?



Delano Public Schools

A Community Conversation about School Climate

January 30, 2023

Table Discussion Notes

The following has been transcribed verbatim from the notes taken at each table discussion. Table designations are random.

Table A

Go Round #1

- Feeling it is a responsibility of students to include all, when that is not realistic
- Belonging should not feel forced
- Neutral – Learning
- Certain signs may cause division
- The hyper-focus of belonging can divide or take focus away from The Golden Rule & Being KIND
- How do we decide who gets protected or is more of a priority? Different standards for different groups
- Accountability across district for all students and situations
- See the Tiger Way in action across the district

Go Round #2

- Better prepared for life after HS in regard to academics and education
- Content over opinions
- Show a high level of respect for everyone and keep academics at the heart of school
- Lack of focus on academics
- Action plans that are concrete
- Teachers have a lot to balance
- Resources \$\$ – education, GT, What will help our students as they move past HS?
- Bring faith back into the school
- Both sides are important - valued and concerned in all perspectives
- Understand all perspectives
- Learning about what the school climate(s) are PreK-12
- Focus more on education vs. climate
- Preparing students for college with strong academic foundations
- Students may wonder if they are ready or prepared in the academic sense
- Be kind



Questions/Comments

- Will feedback (chart comments) be shared?
 - What does “climate” mean?
 - Why the change with grades? Grade equivalents 3, 2, 1 transfer to traditional A, B, C, D?
 - Focus on education vs. sides against each other
 - Results from meetings, forums, conversations, Action Oriented!
 - Is it realistic to always feel you belong? Is it the job of the school?
-

Table B

Go Round #1

- Feeling safe – Don't need to hold stuff inside
 - Bullying, especial about disabilities, needs to change
- Want to feel like belong – can speak freely
- Belonging is a right
- How we fit in is a foundation of our behaviors
- Making rules to force people to believe in things we don't
- Fitting in
- Never felt accepted as a kid. I learned how to deal with it.
- Maybe kids will figure it out w/out school “mandates”
- Respect keeps coming up – How do we manage behaviors?
- Belonging is familiarity – yet lots of subgroups
- Can get along w/respect
- New culture doesn't feel respectful of religious beliefs
- Don't feel my opinions are respected
- Don't feel welcomed by school, esp. because of religious beliefs, ergo PSEO
- Focus on safe and welcome – learn in safety
- Left Delano b/c didn't feel safe
- Attn. resulted in no action
- 10 females left for same reasons
 - Women tx in HS is trickling down to ES
 - Concern for tx of dtr.
- Respect for everyone
- Teachers say rude comments re: religion
- Home is for values
- My kids are labeled for religious beliefs
- Respect as a person

Go Round #2

- Neutrality



- I don't want to know others' beliefs and I don't want school to teach outside of math, reading, science – school not place for other stuff
- Safe – treated fairly, laws followed
- Treated equally and respectfully
- Neutrality – focusing on certain groups makes others feel left out (colors – rainbow)
- Focus on core – leave parenting to parents
- Can relate to not feeling safe at school
- No consequences to bullying. Want brother to come back to school
- Want to feel safe in school. Respect must be reciprocated.
- Golden Rule needs to come back
- How we react can help or hinder results
- Political/climate in world should stay out of schools
- Admin not good at enforcing rules
- Staff leaving because Admin not enforcing rules or listening to staff

Questions

- Q) Religious bullying?
 - Question homelife and teachers
 - Kids are secretive about bullying
- Q) Are most places supervised?
 - Cafeteria, teachers just walking around but don't say anything
- Q) I want to understand why a rainbow sign is offensive
 - Rainbow is an LGBTQ symbol in the U.S.
 - I don't want my kids to see rainbows all over
- Q) Do you feel LGBTQ needs more protection?
 - All equally protected – don't single out 1 group
- Q) Double standard – some are allowed to be offended and others can't. Why do we push something? Neutral.
 - LGBTQ is a protected class
 - But so is religion, gender
 - Is LGBTQ against your religion?
 - Not what asking for. Want neutrality like black and orange so all can belong as a tiger. Rainbow is not inclusive.
 - Would it be ok with you to have us put up a person that acccomp that was LGBTQ?
 - Yes! FIne they are human
- I used rainbow for inclusiveness. I now see how it could be divisive.
- Trickle down to male students and they feel they can do it cuz admin does it too
- Q) Will anything change after tonight?
 - Change takes time is common answer – but it takes action. I don't see that
- Q) How will we teach respect?
- Q) How will we regain our culture?
- Q) Will we start putting consequences in place?



Comments

- *Theme:* Admin has dropped the ball and is dismissive of raised concerns. May be a key to fixing culture
 - *Theme:* Everyone wants respect – all staff, students and parents
 - RN - many feel disrespected
 - I can't get a 504 plan approved
-

Table C

Go Round #1

- All are welcome
- Doesn't matter who you are personally
- Atypical students feel Delano isn't place for them
- Inclusion activities are sometimes concerning
- Because of personal views, not feeling welcome by people on other side of spectrum
- Environment where someone can be who they are in a sway way
- Valued, people actually process what you say by actually listening
- Sometimes students don't feel valued because when they report something, nothing happens
- Taking the time to listen and make changes according to the situation
- Making people feel heard by changing and taking that to heart
- Environment that is open to conflict, addressed, worked through, discussed
- New student process could be improved
- Human need to be connected
- If school can provide that would be great
- Shared values between students important for everyone included
- Have people to support
- Politics get in the way
- Everybody has a need to belong
- If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all
- Valued, gives a sense of belonging
- Adult can model this
- Trusted adult to go to
- Teaching multiple perspectives

Go Round #2

- So much out of control
- Not just staff issue
- Make the choice to be inclusive
- Every voice matters



- Teachers/families left district because of climate
 - now this trickles down to students
 - What happened to cause this?
- Feel safe and welcome
- We all are difference because of world views and experience
- We can be who we are and not have to agree with others
- Stick to the basics and not politics
- Everybody belongs
- Having conflict is good, willing to address it
- Not pressured into differing perspective
- Have the safe environment to address conflict
- All students feel like they have a safe space
- We all have different lives life experiences
- In an environment to thrive
- Space free of judgments
- Teach kindness and empathy
- Know that school cares
 - Not just images
 - Say took action, not changing for better
- Not actually want to protect students
 - Ex. lockdown last week
- Environment safe to express opinions
- Creating environment to discuss politics without feeling need to change others

Pathways/Questions

- About the kids experiences
- Having a safe space
- Focus on core values
- Focus on taking action
- Having a wide variety represented

Table D

Go Round #1

- Acceptance of all beliefs
- Respect when you disagree
- Everyone has a place and someone to go to
- Support for all people
- Curiosity – seeking to understand
- Wanted - “we want you”
- Positive conversation w/in school; Negative in community
- No fear of judgment/retribution



- Easing the hard
- “Belong whether you want or not”
- Respect, teamwork, communication
- Feeling safe
- Politics stay out of school
- Comfortable to learn
- Get on the same page and be welcoming
- Truly be able to be authentic selves
- Support teachers who support students who are different and need them
- Creating environments to support difference and learning
- Taking the power out of the hands of the bullies
- Masked – students safe too
- All teachers support too (gender-based)

Go Round #2

- There is no right answer; negativity and judgment ... how can we turn things positive and build?
- People don't understand
- Lack of structure
- People repeat what they hear/know
- Getting back to what is important at school
- Lack of respect for one another
- Needs to come from top-down
- Clear expectations from top and support enforcers
- Open minds to the different or unknown
- Teachers don't have to, but should be able to
- Psychological safety – so we can grow
- Safe environments for kids AND allies
- Who are/what are my resources? Direct students
- Clarity of boundaries/roles/resources available

Table E

Go Round #1

- Create an environment where everyone is able to be heard
- Life experiences
 - Administration has three years of experience = takes time
- Looking for an environment that kids are safe and belong = be who they are and belong
- A place you want your kids to go
- Not having a fear
- No kids are the same
- Not having kids spirit be broken



- Demonstrate now we want our students to act
 - Provide consistency
 - Need to identify to offer solutions
- Have space to be & feel safe
- Have resources available
- Belonging = some students have a feeling of not belonging
- Improve current resources available to students

Go Round #2

- Every kid can be themselves
- Are we putting action to our words
- All viewpoints are welcome
- Outside school can be big and in discord, but at school they kids need to feel safe and comfortable
- Need to have standards within
- Safe haven at school
- Listen to student voices
- Teachers voices need be heard
- Listening w/ intent and solutioning
- Resources take affect too late or when things get bad
- Need more preventative and proactive

Table F

Go Round #1

- Have not heard about conflicts
- Everyone feels safe, quality education for all
- Children have faced incredible issues because of belonging
- Want kids to have a sense of belonging
- Can be yourself
- Everyone is on the same playing field
- Everyone belongs
- Not affected because of it
- Greater than parts
- Academic excellence for all
- Team mentality to create a sense of belonging
- Felt unvalued, voice not heard despite commitment
- Treated respectful, acting respectfully
- You have to want to belong
- In recent past heard very negative comments at school board about child
- Athletics in HS gave a strong sense of school pride
- In different HS groups but a strong sense of school pride



- Here that there are a lot of challenges in the community
- Facts and beliefs are skewed

Go Round #2

- Showing up and communication are important
- Find things that rally us together
- Public schools with many types of people and learning about other types of people.
- Be ready to interact with others in the word
- Want what is best but what we think is best is different
- Teaching straying from facts. Present both side without secret things to change opinion
- How do we equip children for a multicultural world, what to know about others
- Hold all perspectives at equal value
- Something we can all rally behind
- Real issue with kindness. Don't have to accept but have to be kind and respectful
- Teaching how to think, not what to think. Very indirect currently
- Education. Kindness. Respect. Critical Thinkers.

Pathways/Questions

- Example of unifying?
 - We are all tigers. Tiger belonging. Learning. Being ok. Have a respectful conversation
- What does NOT unify?
 - What others don't know. Are you equipped?
 - Do you have others backing you?
 - Fostering conversation – and other learning.
 - Facilitating
 - We hold viewpoints and we show kids to be respectful of other viewpoints
 - Things that exclude
 - Unfair discipline
 - Special treatment
 - Playing favorites
- How do we objectively expose kids without underlying tones?
 - Primary sources are brought in
 - Multiple sources
 - Opposing viewpoints on topics

Closing Comments

- FEELINGS ABOUT CONVERSATION
 - More conflict that I was aware of
 - Wanting to belong is important (Equal treatment instead of preferred treatment)
 - People are concerned about the kids and showing up
 - Representation at the top. I don't see people of color in our school. Racial more me, but could lead into other



- Hiring practices of school district. Are there practices to counter that? Has to be a goal.
 - Encouraged. Way less combative. How will further discussions go?
 - Good to hear the desire to unify
 - Same goal at heart. Caught up in division
 - Education excellence for all.
 - How will the community continue to foster feeling of respect and unity?
 - Resolution
 - HOPE/CONCERNS
 - Will all of this info go somewhere to die?
 - More transparency (x2)
-

Table G

Go Round #1 & #2 (combined)

- Not allowing politics to play a role
- Back to basics in teaching
- Feel a part of the school district – political/religious views can divide and create side groups
- Keeping “non school” things out of the school
- Belonging – found a connection with other that allow them to remain who they are
 - Elementary age – feels comfortable in school, involved
- Special interests have been brought in – doesn’t jive with all beliefs
- “Christmas Curriculum” – surprised by the amount of this in schools
- What someone sees as politica is subject to interpretation
 - Example: Flag could be political or an expression of self
- Perspective from the middle – less aware of the extremes
- Does not want to have kids “un-learn” something that should not be taught in schools
- Conflicts make parents consider a new/different environment
- Some student populations have great challenges to belonging in schools
- Concerns that the “needle is tipping” one direction more than another
- Examples of how a person feels welcomed, is friendly to, etc. This makes them feel welcome and makes them want to do the same for others. This helps people feel like they belong.
- Don’t want to force people to be part of a “homogenous” group. Embrace differences and allow those to be who they are
- Some groups need an extra show of support so others feel welcome.
- Why would different groups/special interests need or receive extra attention?
- Belief/political
- How are the groups defined?
- Common definitions



- Viewpoints that I don't agree with, forced upon my children/me
 - These are pushed in school – certain kids/groups are catered to ... no group should be catered to
 - One student's ability to be themselves in school does not have to take away another student's ability to do the same – to hold their own beliefs and be who they are
 - Sensitive to what his child is absorbing, would like there to continue to have room for traditional/core disciplines to exist.
 - Understand desire to keep traditional, also important to not silence other groups and perspectives. Education/home perspective continues to evolve. We need to evolve with it.
 - Make sure ALL have access to support, etc.
 - Some may define LGBTQ as special interest – views are forced upon others
 - Teachers expressing views/political perspective that are not in line with their student
 - Student perspective does not believe/has not experienced this
 - Greater amount of separation in Delano vs. previous district.
 - Those with different views are separated (both sides - perspectives)
 - Rainbow = Connection to LGBTQ
-

Table H

Go Round #1

- Being a Tiger – All one
 - Gone away from Tiger Way.
 - New belonging breaks people apart into groups
 - Admin breaking kids into groups instead
- We're all Tigers.
 - Oldest son liked Delano
 - Someone said there should be a Fin Holocaust and told parents this; parents told admin
- Treat everyone equal – focusing on one group made the problem worse
- Too much focus on certain groups. Everyone should be kind
- Student body is not going to all belong to same group. Student should have options.
 - Volleyball Finals - great event
 - Grouping everyone is a problem
 - Student got in trouble for not agreeing with their teachers
- Be kind to all. Does not mean all agree. Respect needs to go both ways.
- School should prepare kids for "real life" – school should not accommodate every request

Go Round #2

- Want kids to come to school to learn to read, write, etc. Does not want kids learning special constructs or personal opinions of teachers.



- More transparency – communicate when controversial topics are taught
- Politics in schools. Teachers being political in schools. Admin not doing anything about it. Wokeness of our schools. Politically neutral
- Education needs to be north star. Stop driving wedge between staff and students. Would lead to better climate.
- Teachers neutral with politics. Teachers wearing things that show how they stand. Don't just teach one side. Signs around school.
- Don't take classes because a teacher will be too opinionated
- Human perspective, personal beliefs should not matter. =

Connected Conversation

- Focus on education, be kind. Simple things will last because they are hard to forget.
- Things were very simple 20 years ago. Had low budget years ago. As budget was increased feels the level of education has gone down.
- Delano got older son into gifted program. Feels that is not happening today.
- Are teachers being supported? External influences are huge.
- Allowing outside influencers to impact schools
- Admin move in path of least resistance. Admin has community support
- Could get in trouble for calling someone the wrong gender. School has to deal with MEA & EdMN – not focused on education
- Everything feels very different now - came in 2006
- Schools around the state are dealing with the same outside influencers
- Wants teachers to not feel pressure to teach certain viewpoints
- Delano has an advantage in testing. Young students perform really well.
- Students are underperforming at the intermediate and high school
- Should be focused on test scores and student performance. Students have every opportunity to retake, no consequences. People will rise to standards
- No standard in school, "no chance to fail"
- Need to teach coping skills – how to deal with hard situations
- Kids will rise or fall to whatever expectations you set for them. Son struggled one semester, made him stay home. Has started this semester strong.
- Society is making kids too soft.
- Kids should say hi to everyone. Be nice to everyone
- What can parents do? What power do parents have? Take control of board. Hire leaders who stand up to union. Parents want to be active.
- Make issues public – what is happening in classroom? how you show the public?
- Need a board who's goal is education. How you tear down MDE?

Closing

- Should have spread out
- Should have known not to sit with spouse
- Nice to hear similar opinions; the other side gets so loud
- Wants to make sure the board see what was said at this meeting



Table I

Go Round #1

- Elementary perspective: If they hear things at school they believe it. Even if it is an opinion it is a fact. Need to be careful.
- Safe and accepted; not being censored; be myself
- Every family has different values. We want what is best for our kids.
- Family dynamics help kids flourish
- Bullying concerns, especially on the bus
- Hard to get benefits of school if you don't feel safe
- Feeling like you are a Tiger
- Need to give kids the opportunities for social issue conversations
- It is ok to have different viewpoints
- Teaching respect & kindness
- Adding Inclusive to Tiger Way made a push into social issues, away from learning

Go Round #2

- "Finns" are grouped together. Not trying to push agenda
- Respect and get along with people that are different
- Threats and fight notifications
- Social issues and how they are addressed in school
- Kids are there to learn academics
- Rainbow flags are the biggest issue
- Don't want my kids exposed to it
- Why was Rainbow Flag and not Tiger Colors?
- Like being able to learn from different sides
- Concern about books being introduced at a young age – creates confusion
- Concern for a bias system or teacher
- Viewpoint/opinion being labeled as truth is concern
- Dialogue over Agenda – concern for how kids talk to other kids at school
- School needs to communicate about what is being taught to allow for parent conversation
- Concerns about conversation surrounding George Floyd in 3rd grade – list of topics would be nice

Connected Conversation

- Respect others views
- I will not push views and do not want them pushed on me
- Teach school at school, social at home
- Kids see and experience at school, talk about it at home
- Don't pressure to do things a certain way
- Kids have the ability to figure it out themselves



- Managing different generational and cultural differences
- Give people the change to make a mistake
- Left/Right does not matter ... we are here for kids
- Parents are very disconnected
- Peers force discussions before they might be needed

Closing

- Thought it would be informative
 - Education, not social issues
 - Want to know more about climate – what are the concerns?
 - Want to listen and learn – not what they were expecting
 - It has changed from when older kids came through
 - Concerns
 - Rainbow flags are a concern
 - Books in elementary school libraries
 - School is for learning
 - Respect, reading, writing, math – not social issues
 - Love the district, don't want to leave, want to understand direction
 - Better understanding about district communication with parents
 - As a senior leaving ... what is the ultimate direction?
 - Why is there so much turnover at the HS?
-

Table J

Go Round #1

- All students and staff need allies
- Safe = authentic = belonging = cared about
- Respect – to self, to others
- School to learn – want to come
- Difference = gift, not threat
- Value - strengths
- Empathy - personal stories ... “you don't know what you don't know”
- Objective teaching = apolitical
- Caring

Go Round #2

- No politics
- Respect – race, gender, differences
- Welcome diversity
- School not equal to community
- Neutral
- Love – differences, respect, discuss



- Home is where “it” is taught (“it” = mutual respect, communication)
- Schools should focus on academics and skills

Connected Conversation

- Bullying is wrong
 - Academics is a commonality
 - Ethics questions – what values do we have in common?
 - Community + Kids
-

Table K

Check-in Question #2

- What are the concerns people have when taking kids out of school (homeschool, private school)?

Go Round #1 & #2 (combined)

- Accepted for a variety of reasons
 - Any kid, any color, any sexual orientation, etc.
 - School is an area where kids can learn no matter what value at home
 - Differences don’t disrupt their learning
 - Parents feel like they belong as well
 - Even student that are not necessarily at school (homeschooled) feel they belong as well
 - Diversity – youth don’t need it pushed on them from the state
 - Even though need to feel like they belong no matter what
 - Fear would be that politics about LGBTQ would go against our family values
 - Appropriateness at age levels
 - May not agree with everyone, but we should be kind to them!
 - Belonging doesn’t have to mean affirming
 - School should be an open book. Don’t hide anything. Keep us in the loop.
-

Table L

Go Round #1

- Treated as individuals, not groups
- No bullying of anyone
- Non exclusive advertising
- Don’t show preferential treatment to groups
- Clear communication about what is being taught in school
- Every student should know they are walking into a safe space
- Give respect to get respect. Everyone feels welcomed



- Same rules for all
- Great concern about speaking beliefs. People feel attacked for sharing values
- Everyone valued (loved)
- Safe

Go Round #2

- Every child is a “Tiger” Pride of the community
- Frustration about ability to question things
- Neutrality is necessary for belonging
- Teamwork – having your group of people you are connected to
- Belonging requires everyone to be respectful
- Focus on one specific thing or group can be decisive
- Belonging - accepting of differences, uniqueness, all talents and gifts

Closing thoughts

- Is it fair for all?
 - Keep transparency
 - Teach process to handle mistakes
-

Table M

Go Round #1

- Belonging : Image-Mirror – seen and known for who they are
- Surrounded by people who increased capacity diff – helps me grow
- Treat everyone equal
- Neutral
- Treat everyone kind
- Some people feel forced in a box and as a result they do not feel they belong
- All students feel comfortable
- Safe
- Accepted
-

Go Round #2

- Signs have caused division
- Teased about one group
- Focus more on Tiger school
- We are here for school/learning
- Treat everyone nice/kindness
- Bring self to school, feel comfortable
- Student walk in, safe, accepted learn they will be taking care by friends and staff
- Delance embrace world as it changes



- Conversations/Dialogue important
- Belonging - be part of group of people, school is the connection based on purpose
- Battle of Books List - questionable books on list, don't 4th grade
- Shared exp Delnato Teachers from late 90's - not agenda driven. Feels like we don't need agenda pushed on us
 - Focus on Ed – reading, writing
- Accept people for who they are; stop labeling and push people apart
- Gender shouldn't become a distraction. Be accepting and learn
- More aspects than gender – religion, disabilities, race

Connected Conversations

- Social media
- Concerns about too many options
- Be willing to accept people to be seen as they are
- Treat everyone equal – KINDNESS
- Bus impact behavior on students – language, conversations; exposed to language & conversations that they aren't ready for
- What is the school's role in these conversations?
- Can't let people pushing agenda take over the schools
- Teacher should be neutral
- As a community, we support everyone
- Some student feel they should fit into a box
- Pins/posters lead to division
- Must start at home – acceptance

Closing

- Encourage kindness without promoting ideology
- District to move forward with conversations
- Addressing mental health needs
- Appreciate honesty, openness
- Who would be against being neutral?

Table N

Check in question #2

- What is the conflict? Not sure what the conflict is?

Go Round #1

- Being on a team, feeling important (art, choir, sports)
- What is valuable about you?
- I'm sad that some kids feel that way
- It's opened my eyes to wanting to know. My kids do, why don't other kids?



- Coming into a space and feeling my value system is welcome as well as everyone else
- A lot of things are being pushed on my kids that goes against our values
- Be part of something, they are heard, given opportunities to succeed
- Team atmosphere in the classroom, want to hear from parents in the trenches
- Genuine relationships happening, learning is personalized and there is a partnership between parents and teachers. Want my children to be a part of a school that feels connected
- They are going to be missed when they are not in the building
- Upset because my kids are conservative and are picked on for that, then the next day they are upset because the kids have defended a LGBTQ because they are being picked on
- Safe, secured, wanted – when you walk in the door, people care
- Have seen a change the past year – kids have found a way to figure it out, why not the adults?
- We've expected our kids to be mistreated because we are Finnish. We want them to be kind to others and treat others the way we want to be treated. It should be ok for my kids to be conservative, but it isn't. It should be neutral here.
- Common courtesy and respect for everyone

Go Round #2

- Students feeling safe will be successful
- To understand that person's point of view, you don't have to agree, just listen and respect
- Let's value all kids, not just one group
- Valuing everyone
- More neutral, everyone feels safe
- Same conversation in Watertown
- Raising our children to recognize there are other ways to look at things
- We are a better world because of the many perspectives
- Working with our children to develop empathy
- We need to teach our kids to be empathetic (both parents and teachers)
- Get beyond feeling safe – how can encourage kids to grow and flourish?
- Equip our kids to succeed
- A neutral place for all kids to come and learn
- I think it is not the school's problem, but rather our issue as parents
- It's not bad if someone is different