



# Equity Audit

Report prepared for Livingston Public Schools

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# Executive Summary

Livingston Public Schools is a good school system. Overall, students fare well on academic and co-curricular standards, behave as expected, and succeed in completing their schooling and progressing to college and career. The district does not have any significant areas of disproportionality, and most faculty and staff see it as a good place to live and work, contributing to high levels of staff retention in most instructional and support services areas. Changing demographics have created some tensions and the district has responded by increasing its attention on matters of diversity, equity and inclusion. There are challenges and occasional incidents that are addressed, but outcomes are good.

This is both the challenge and the opportunity faced by Livingston Public Schools: to remain good, or to become great. If this were a failing school system, where there are obvious disparities and failures, it would be easy to figure out how to focus energy. The situation in Livingston, however, is more complicated and thus provides a greater opportunity to make a huge difference - to really be the model for how to take what are largely privileged groups of students, families, and educators and unpack the intersectional and historical dilemmas that matter, helping to build the capacity of graduates to be real change makers and leaders in a diverse, global, 21st century world, aligning nicely with the multiple elements of [the Portrait of a Graduate](#).

Livingston has the opportunity to be a national model for this work - leaning into the challenge of how to prepare students at the next level and to address the covert, rather than the overt. The combination of the changing demographics within the district AND family interest and support creates an ideal climate to take on these conversations and to engage with the questions, “How do we support all of our students to be engaged members of a diverse, global community? How can we be a model space in which everyone can be their whole and complete self, and feel welcomed, included, and valued, as they are? How do we address, rather than ignore, the global

*Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great— John D. Rockefeller.*

*Don't settle for average. Bring your best to the moment. Then, whether it fails or succeeds, at least you know you gave all you had. We need to live the best that's in us. —Angela Bassett*

*Defining a bold goal changes the game, leading to different decisions that set us on a new trajectory, which ultimately leads to greater impact<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/when\\_good\\_is\\_not\\_good\\_enough](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/when_good_is_not_good_enough)

and political conflicts that divide and polarize our communities, leaning into the hard conversations?”

## How to “Read” this Report

What follows is a succinct description of our overall recommendations, followed by details of our approach, processes, and frameworks. We have also provided, separately, the specific analysis of each level of data that informed those recommendations- a kind of “backup” for each set of analysis. It is important to note that we talked with a large number, and diverse array, of people, and reviewed a copious amount of data. These recommendations are based on both the “hard” data of existing documents, policies, surveys, and resources AND the “soft” data of the perceptions and understandings of people. In general, we find that the district has developed many of the right pieces- clear plans, articulated goals, resources, policies, and structures. We also find that the perception of many people is that they are unclear, non-existent, or performative- this is the tension, and the focus of our district level recommendations.

So a few reminders as you read:

1. There are a lot of people doing good work in Livingston. There is nothing in this report that points to specific individuals as the problem- it’s ALL about the systems that let us grow, learn, and be our best. We also acknowledge that when we talk about specific roles, some people have been in the role for a long time, and some are newer. Context will matter.
2. In equity work, we focus on the 5%, not the 95%. What this means is that if 95% of students say they feel like they can be successful, we ask “Who are the 5% that don’t? Why do they feel that way? Is there a demographic pattern or commonality of experience we should be aware of?” The purpose of the equity audit is to find what’s happening for the marginalized, not the majority.
3. This is a snapshot in time- our review took nearly three months, from May 2023 to July 2023, but you have been doing this work for years.
4. We don’t claim to have the “truth”, but to share perspectives. Truth is often at the center of a range of perspectives.
5. You may read a section and think it feels overly critical, or negative. Keep in mind that we are sharing what we saw or heard. We may have missed something. You may have the thing we are saying is missing. If we indicate that a program or plan is lacking, and you are aware that it exists, wonder why it wasn’t evident to us or others, rather than focusing on its existence alone.
6. While we offered the opportunity to complete the survey or sign up for focus groups to the whole community, and spoke with a lot of people, we can only report on those who did participate- which may, at times, skew towards folks who have concerns to raise.

## Recommendations: District Level

The single biggest challenge for the district is to create the organizational structures and supports that allow the students, faculty and staff, and community members to engage with and implement the recommendations in their interpersonal interactions, classroom, building, and team settings.

In order to do so:

- The district should develop a clear ***theory of action*** - if we do these things, this is what we believe will happen. The district has developed an [equity team with a clear goal](#), the [LivED 100%'s](#), and the [Portrait of a graduate](#), along with [a strategic plan](#), but would benefit from creating a clear, easy to follow, visual that demonstrates how these initiatives complement each other and integrates those elements into a theory of action.
- The district needs a consistent structure for ongoing ***evaluation of the impact of DEI*** at the individual, classroom, school, district, and community levels. This should include annual surveys, but also articulated evaluation activities for each initiative, professional development opportunity, and work group or team.
- The districts should develop a clear blueprint for how to ***balance individual school autonomy with the district vision***, and a strategy to address- head on -some of underlying tensions we heard across groups within the district. This could take the form of a communication plan that articulates how things get done, how decisions are made, and how influential voices are addressed, paying particular attention to:
  - the fear of retribution/retaliation,
  - the belief that connections help you get what you want, and
  - the idea that the district controls the narrative.
- The district should ***expand the District level DEI team*** to include key district leaders, building level equity coordinators and administrators, and key community leaders to meet quarterly to provide oversight and direction to all DEI initiatives.
- The district should continue to lead ***curricular changes*** that:
  - shift from the focus from “celebrate diversity” to deeper conversations about power, privilege, and social action; and
  - bridge the gap between elementary, middle, and high school conversations and content for students.
- The district should take up the opportunity to work closely with the community on an ongoing basis, rather than as a response to incidents, by intentionally ***partnering with community/cultural organizations***, to build solidarity and understanding.
- The district should create an intentional structure for ***sharing power and voice with students***, by developing authentic youth/adult partnerships such that young people have input into the policy, evaluation, and decision-making processes.

## Recommendations: By Domain

In this section, we make recommendations for specific action across five domains: General DEI, Climate & Culture, Academics & Co-curricular Programs, Communication, and Family/Community Engagement. Details are included in the Qualitative Summary, appendix A.

### General DEI

- Continue to define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the adults involved in the DEI work- while the equity coach position is new, it is important for the coaches to spend time figuring out their roles, how they can have impact, how they work with their building administrators, and what time is dedicated to their work. Spending adequate time on these steps now, and including equity coaches and district- and building-level administrators, will improve results moving forward.. Finally, when interviewing consultants to support the work, it is important to consider their ability to support both the content and the structural side of change.
- Develop a set of clearly defined and measurable goals for each equity team to help the district evaluate its progress over time and begin to break down the perception that the work being done is performative in nature.
- Develop a clear plan for rolling out DEI work in a structured, somewhat uniform manner across the district, beginning with foundational equity work focused on developing equity literacy. Establishing common understandings and vocabulary is critical.
- Begin DEI work with the adults, expanding the work to include much deeper levels of reflection that should, over time, aid in the development of an “equity mindset,” a mindset through which all decisions can be made.
- Be sure to include non-certificated staff in this work.

### Climate & Culture

#### Students:

- Commit to increasing transparency behind the decision-making process and elevating student voice.
- Through the establishment of common understandings and vocabulary, increase staff comfort with and confidence in discussing issues of diversity and social justice, leading to more meaningful conversations in classrooms, particularly *Community*.
- Attention should be paid to adult responses to student behavior issues, with intentional focus on bullying or perceived bullying, an issue raised by both students and parents. This should help restore trust between students and adults in the district.
- Work should be put into ensuring that students understand that their words have weight and words can hurt others.

#### Staff:

- Intentional work must be done to overcome the “retaliatory culture” and “favoritism” that staff perceives is present in the district. Whether real or imagined, this culture inhibits risk-taking, silences important student-teacher conversations, and decreases staff retention. There is no greater threat to the potential to grow and improve in pedagogy, curriculum, or DEI work than a compromised professional culture.
- Aligned with the student recommendation above, increase consistency of response to student misbehavior. While confidentiality plays a significant role in matters of student discipline, it is also important for staff to understand the administrative philosophy behind student discipline and see that philosophy applied consistently.

## Academics

- Review guidelines for and increase communication around how and when new and returning students can enroll in honors, AP, or other advanced level classes and programs. Include staff, students, and families in this process.
- Make use of those educators who are committed to and passionate about DEI work to lead the way in the area of professional learning, curriculum development, and data review and analysis.
- Continue to intentionally increase representation of the student body in textbooks, media centers, and other classroom and school materials and resources.
- Close the gap between the reality that the district has developed a comprehensive, age-appropriate multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) with the resources necessary to provide students with three tiers of intervention, and the fact that many of the family and staff didn’t know it, couldn’t articulate it, and aren’t sure what to do with it. Clarity about who is responsible, what is the criteria for each level, how to determine curriculum gaps or gaps in learning vs learning disabilities were noted concerns from staff. Many families have the perception that you are either in or out of special education, and don’t seem to have an understanding of the levels of intervention.

## Communication and Family/Community Collaboration

- Be intentional when building teams to address school or district concerns; include participants from different backgrounds to ensure diversity of voice.
- Provide time and space for building leaders to better understand DEI concepts and mindsets and collaborate about strategies they are using in their buildings to advance DEI efforts.
- Closely monitor responses to incidents targeting any minority group in the district to ensure a consistent level of response.
- Develop systems to share appropriate information with students and families when serious incidents impact the school or community.
- Provide parent associations and the PT Council with development work to ensure the engagement of diversity within their group.



- Reach out to community partners representing residents from diverse backgrounds to encourage their involvement in school activities. In the absence of a staff that is representative of student demographics, this helps to provide a more diverse group of role models with whom students can interact.
- Investigate or develop a mechanism to track family involvement in school activities to ensure the involvement of families of all backgrounds.

## Introduction to the Equity Audit

Livingston Public Schools has been engaged in a range of equity focused activities over the past several years, and sought an external organization to conduct an equity audit of the district, to identify areas of success, and areas of focus. After interviewing several potential organizations, the district hired a2z equity coaching to conduct a mixed methods inquiry which included 1) a review of existing data, provided by the Livingston Public Schools administration, 2) collection of stakeholder perception of the district climate and culture, via a survey on the experiences and perceptions of students, faculty/staff, families, and the local community, 3) onsite visits for classroom and building level observations, and 4) focus groups and interviews with selected stakeholders. This report and recommendations will be used to assist district leadership to continue to meet equity goals, with data-driven decision-making.

## What is an Equity Audit?

An equity audit specifically looks at policies, programs, and practices that directly or indirectly impact students or staff relative to their race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, color, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or other socio-culturally significant factors (MAEC.org). In our work, we focus on three elements- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion.

**Diversity** is a fact. Anytime a group of humans gathers, diversity is present. Diversity includes the psychological, physical, and social differences, and includes race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, body type, learning styles, personality, political beliefs, and any other social or cultural characteristics that we value.

**Inclusion** is a practice. It is the intentional act of creating an environment in which any and all individuals and groups are welcomed, valued, respected, and can fully participate and be their full and authentic self. A truly inclusive space is one where everyone feels they belong.

**Equity** is an outcome. We look at the experiences and perceptions of all participants (students, staff, families, and community members), along with data about opportunities

and outcomes, to ensure that the needs and interests of all stakeholders are heard and understood, and that equitable opportunities to participate and succeed are available for all.

## Theoretical Foundations of our Work

In our current political context in the United States, where school districts are grappling with a 25 percent increase in incidents of racism, discrimination and hate, schools struggle to create learning environments where marginalized students experience dignity, belonging, and engagement. We organize our work to focus on creating a school climate and culture that supports all students, particularly with regard to connection and belonging, discipline practices, student-teacher relationships, and instruction (National Research Council, 2004). We define school culture as the beliefs, values and assumptions shared in a school, with school climate focusing on the way the school “feels” to students **and** adults through their interactions, how diversity is represented and respected, and how relationships are created and maintained (Pickeral et al., 2009). We focus on discipline as restorative, not punitive, with a goal of developing student capacity to navigate school, and life as informed, thoughtful, and productive individuals and citizens. We acknowledge the importance of developing the knowledge and skills of adults, as well as students, to understand the impact of culture on our values, beliefs, and behaviors, and to engage in respectful interactions across differences.

## Systems Focus

Our approach to this work utilizes systems design frameworks, which “enable designers to transcend the existing system, establish boundaries of design inquiry, and create some major design options of a desired future system” (Banathy, 1996, p 63). These frameworks are based in a critique of reform efforts that focus on small technical changes; systems approaches respond to the fact that our educational systems, designed in the 19th century, need radical changes to meet current needs and achieve equity for our most marginalized students. This work is complicated by the challenges inherent in creating large-scale change, as both humans and systems resist change, and equity-focused change confronts not just technical barriers, but also normative and political ones (Renee et al., 2010). In systems design work, instead of taking the current system for granted, we focus on what the function and purpose of the system ought to be - and this begins with the radical notion that students should be centered in decision making about policy and practices in their school settings. Further, building on the work of Reigeluth (1992) and more recent calls for human-centered design (Peterson et al., 2016), we build our interventions around a conceptual framework for successful systemic change, in which partners focus on:

1. Building broad stakeholder ownership (with students as central stakeholders),
2. Committing to becoming learning organizations with an evolving mindset about what education systems can and should be, and

3. Developing an understanding of systems design and change processes in education settings.

Reigluth (2018) has shown the effectiveness of this model in whole school change, along with other researchers who have applied the model to specific subjects, such as literacy (Paine & McCann, 2009) and special education (Sailor, 2015).

Our approach to collaborative design between stakeholder groups within and across multiple sites is to emphasize shared values and principles rather than standardized prescriptions. Multiple studies point to the problems that follow from an overly standardized or scripted version of fidelity. The first problem is it is just not realistic. For decades, policy researchers have noted the unpredictable and varied ways that local actors interpret and enact policy research in context (LeMahieu, 2011; McLaughlin, 1998). But it is also unwise from the standpoint that sustainability and ownership require people to have the opportunity to make meaning, adapt, and remix resources. From this point of view, rather than being told to implement a set of *procedures*, educators need to understand the core *principles* of an innovation, which they can then adapt and apply to their local context.

## Student Centered

We attend specifically to the power of engaging youth as co-creators of positive school climate, which promote students' social emotional development, engagement with school, and academic achievement (Elias, 2010). We utilize the standards developed by the National School Climate Council to frame our approach to climate and culture work, including the development of shared vision, policies that promote holistic youth development, an emphasis on engagement, community, and inclusion ([www.schoolclimate.org](http://www.schoolclimate.org)). Within this broader systems-design approach, the signature innovation we bring is transformative student voice (TSV), which refers to sustained and systemic opportunities for students to inquire about the root causes of problems in their schools and take action to address them by working with adults to develop and implement better policies and practices (Kirshner, Zion, & Hipolito-Delgado, 2016). Key goals of TSV work focus on supporting the development of practices to engage youth with adults in authentic partnerships that prioritize student voice and develop students' critical consciousness, academic learning, and civic engagement. Such partnerships seek to impact school and community reform initiatives to shape future decision making at the classroom, school and community level (Mitra, 2008).

Our own work over the past ten years, with students from grades 4-12, has generated promising evidence that TSV can contribute to improvements at multiple levels: for students, for teachers, and for schools overall. Students who participated in the Critical Civic Inquiry (CCI) classroom project showed increases in academic achievement, efficacy, and engagement along with the development of an identity as a member of a larger community committed to social justice (Hipolito Delgado & Zion, 2017). Teachers participating in CCI improved their capacity to share power, facilitate participatory action research, and take on leadership in their schools

(Zion, York, & Stickney, 2017; Zion, Allen & Jean, 2015); Although rarer, we have seen examples where schools and school districts that sustain systems for student participation lead to more socially just and developmentally responsive school cultures (Zion & Petty, 2013).

To use TSV and systems design frames in the work of culture and climate, we emphasize core values that include:

- 1) “communication as dialogue” where there is trust, openness, and collaboration;
- 2) including all voices, especially those who have been historically “silenced” or are considered “critical or conflicting” to dominant ways of communicating;
- 3) recognizing that power relations are unequal and hence, attention must be paid to which students are listened to and how they are listened to; and
- 4) acknowledging that change is possible through acting on the contributions of students as change agents (Robinson & Taylor, p 8, 2007)

In addition to these core values, we ask schools to ensure that 1) there is dedicated time and space for students (in the classroom, and on leadership teams) to learn together, do research, develop policy proposals, and share their work with school and district personnel, 2) student participants are reflective of the diversity of each school community, with priority given to recruiting and retaining students who are struggling or least-served by the current system, 3) stakeholders are committed to “leaning in” to critical conversations about power and privilege, identity, and systems of oppression, and 4) students and teachers participate in learning and skill development in three areas: youth-adult partnerships, educational equity, and participatory action research.

## Culturally Responsive

It is well acknowledged that teacher preparation programs have not adequately prepared teachers to work with diverse students (Garcia et al 2010; Brownell and Skrtic 2005; Ford 2004). Irvine (2009) maintains that while many teachers have a cursory understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy and a desire to see it succeed in their classrooms, their efforts to meaningfully bridge cultural gaps falls short (Banks, 1988). This raises serious concerns about the quality of services these teachers are then able to provide to students with diverse needs and from diverse backgrounds. Demographic changes are evident worldwide and nowhere are those changes experienced more profoundly than in today’s classrooms (Wink 2011). The trend toward an increasingly diverse U.S. K-12 student population is projected to continue well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (National Center for Educational Statistics 2009). Indeed, preparing current and future teachers to teach students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse academic needs is one of the most compelling challenges facing teachers today (Gargiulo and Metcalf 2010; Garcia et.al, 2010; Gay 2010; Hollins and Guzman 2005; Nieto and Bode 2008). Skillful teaching that affirms students, regardless of their academic abilities or linguistic, ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds is a daunting task for the teacher who is inadequately prepared for the student

diversity that exists in today's schools. In our work, we utilize the Hammer model of Intercultural Development (<https://www.idiinventory.com/>) to guide our professional development work, and the Banks (1998) Multicultural Curriculum model to guide curriculum and pedagogy.

## Restorative Practices

Restorative practices (RP) are a relational approach to building school climate and supporting student and adult behavior that is grounded in three principles: repairing harm, involving stakeholders, and transforming community relationship. RP is focused on understanding and addressing underlying issues of misbehavior and conflict and addressing conflict and preventing further problems through relationship and skill building, and repairing relationships so that all members of school and classroom community are supported and engaged.

## Our approach to Equity work

It is our position that the goal of public schools is to support an inclusive school culture where every person belongs by affirming the dignity of each member of the school community and embracing diversity as a source of strength. That includes commitments to:

- Eliminate institutional beliefs, policies, practices, and teaching strategies that perpetuate disparities in opportunities and achievement across subsets of students;
- Increase the achievement of all students while eliminating the predictability of success based on race, socioeconomic factors, and other identities;
- Ensure that students see themselves and their cultures represented in their daily experiences throughout our public schools;
- Engage in an ongoing journey to confront and unlearn bias both personally and collectively so we can become a more equitable, anti-bias school system.

We will accomplish these goals by:

- Reviewing and revising/removing, in a deliberate manner, policies and practices that serve as barriers to access and opportunity for students belonging to certain identity groups;
- Allocating resources so that every student gets what they need;
- Including, in curriculum resources and visuals, opportunities for students to see their cultures valued, integrated, and represented (mirror) and the cultures of others valued, integrated, and represented (window);
- Building an anti-biased, inclusive system that promotes academic and civic excellence
- Providing anti-biased, inclusive learning opportunities for staff, students, families, and the community.
- Building positive, purposeful relationships with every student, family, and staff member;

- Recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse staff that more closely reflects the school community;
- Providing a welcoming environment for all students and family members;
- Providing a restorative approach to discipline that educates students to make appropriate choices and reduces exclusionary discipline practices;
- Elevating student voice on policy recommendations.

## Audit Plan and Procedure

Mixed Methods Research (MMR) was used to explore the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders in Livingston Public Schools. The process of this MMR project included:

- 1) Review of existing data provided by Livingston Public Schools (see appendix B for the list of data provided)
- 2) Review of publicly available data, from the district website, local news outlets, and social media
- 3) Administration of a climate survey that included versions for
  - a) students in grades 4-6,
  - b) Students in grades 7-12,
  - c) faculty and staff, and
  - d) families/community members
- 4) Site Visits to each school (6 full days), during which we observed
  - a) drop-off, pick-up, lunch, recess, and equity council meetings
  - b) toured the building,
  - c) observed classrooms, and
  - d) met with school leaders, groups of students and groups of teachers
- 5) Interviews and Focus Groups, in addition to the groups we met with during our school site visits, by zoom and during a visit to the district in July
  - a) Affinity groups of families
  - b) Affinity groups of students
  - c) Affinity groups of teachers
  - d) Groups of staff by role- Supervisors, Directors, Tech, Secretaries, HR, Building/Grounds
  - e) Key district leaders
  - f) Great Schools Partners

In our analysis, we used an iterative process, by which each set of data informed the next- we refined questions as we progressed through the four months of data collection, and continued to conduct interviews and focus groups until we reached saturation- the point at which the same themes are repeating, and no new themes are appearing. This does require that the sample is representative, see Table 1 (Miles et al 2013).

Once all qualitative data was collected, a team of three people with a qualitative background reviewed our notes and transcripts from site visits, focus groups, and interviews to identify patterns and themes using an open coding model (Miles et al 2013). At the same time, a team of three people with quantitative expertise analyzed the survey data. For each core question in the equity survey, we calculated the percentage of respondents that selected strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, we created a stacked bar chart to present survey results by topic area and question.

For quantitative findings, we identified survey questions with the most and least favorable responses within each topic area with the intention to highlight strengths and opportunities. From there, we examined the selected questions for demographic differences based on statistical and practical significance. One example of practical significance would be disproportionality- if answers are different across demographic groups. For example, if 90% of all survey takers agree that they feel safe at school, but the 10% that do not include most of the survey takers who identify as LGBTQ, this represents an area of concern. Even though MOST people feel safe, a specific population is disproportionately represented in the unsafe category, and thus must be addressed.

We studied the open-ended responses for each topic area by focusing specifically on explanatory responses. Such responses helped us to understand why some participants may have selected the responses they did. To begin, we excluded non-responses and short responses with no substantive meaning. Then we organized and coded each response to identify the most common themes. Taken together, we identified both qualitative and quantitative findings from the equity surveys.

Further, multiple team members took on the task of reviewing the extant data provided by the district, to identify items of interest. We used the model of triangulation, specific to mixed methods design, to compare the results of each of the three sets of analysis to best understand and make sense of the context and issues (Creswell et al, 2003). Finally, we pulled the report together, integrating the themes and patterns from the extant data review, the qualitative coding, and the survey data analysis.

## Data Collection Activities, by Participant

Table 1

Activity	Frequency	Participants <i>Note that our classification by demographic group is based on either self-identification or our best estimation based on how the individual presented during the session.</i>
Classroom observations	In addition to principal led tours of all schools, we did full observations of 44 total classrooms across the 9 schools	454 total students in those classrooms, with an approximate representation of 47% white, 20% East Asian, 16% SE Asian, 8% Black, 3% other

Affinity Focus Groups, including the District Equity Advisory Group	19 groups	258 adult participants, 43% white, 14% East Asian, 19% SE Asian, 19% Black , 2% other, 19% male
Staff teams (Supervisors, Directors, Tech, Secretaries, HR, Building/Grounds)	6 groups	62 adult participants, with the most racial diversity in Building and Grounds, (about half present as white and half as POC). Across the other groups, approximately 83% white and 17% POC. Both grounds and tech are heavily male, secretaries exclusively female, and supervisors/directors/human resources included 11 female, 2 male.
Adults in schools	10 groups	101 participants, 85% white and 94% female
Students (grades 4-12)	21 groups	247 participants, 29% white, 28% SE Asian, 20% East Asian, 9% Black, 4% other, 35% male.  There are 4,561 students in this grade range, so we spoke with nearly 10% of the student body. Boys are somewhat underrepresented in the sample.
Survey: Students 4-6	1,323 responses	1,482 was the total number of possible participants, our response rate is 89%. Specific demographic information is available in Appendix C
Survey: Students 7-12	2,582 responses, 2404 after removing suspect ones	3,079 was the total number of possible participants, our response rate is 78%. Specific demographic information is available in Appendix C
Survey: Family/Community	572 responses collected	8,24 emails were sent, and 7,596 were delivered. Specific demographic information is available in Appendix C
Survey: Staff	761 responses collected	1,053 was the total number of possible participants, our response rate is 72%. Specific demographic information is available in Appendix C



## Appendix A: Qualitative Summary

In this section, we provide the overview of our analysis of our site visits and focus groups, organized by the same domains and providing clear examples, often including direct quotes, representative of themes, to support our recommendations. It is important to understand that the data collected through surveys and group and individual interviews is **perception** data. School policy and actual practice may differ, but students, staff, and families, in these cases, are left with the following perceptions.

### Participants included in Qualitative Analysis

Affinity Focus Groups, including the District Equity Advisory Group	19 groups	258 adult participants, 43% white, 14% East Asian, 19% SE Asian, 19% Black , 2% other, 19% male
Staff teams (Supervisors, Directors, Tech, Secretaries, HR, Building/Grounds)	6 groups	62 adult participants, with the most racial diversity in Building and Grounds, (about half present as white and half as POC). Across the other groups, approximately 83% white and 17% POC. Both grounds and tech are heavily male, secretaries exclusively female, and supervisors/directors/human resources included 11 female, 2 male.
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Students (grades 4-12)	21 groups	247 participants, 29% white, 28% SE Asian, 20% East Asian, 9% Black, 4% other, 35% male.  There are 4,561 students in this grade range, so we spoke with nearly 10% of the student body. Boys are somewhat underrepresented in the sample.

### Site Visits and Focus Groups

In the following section, we will organize our findings around five key categories- 1) General DEI Issues, Structures, and Commitment; 2) Academic and Co-Curricular Programs, 3) Climate & Culture 4) Family and Community Engagement; and 5) Communication, including Student, Staff, and Family Voice. In each category, we identify and describe specific themes, present our findings related to those themes by identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement, and end with recommendations for the future.

## General DEI Issues, including the Structure and Commitment Necessary to Address Inequities

We believe this area impacts every other area of the audit, as the structures in place and the commitment of the district to identify and address inequities will serve to drive change in each of the remaining areas.

### Establishing the Need

Finding: The rapid change in demographics in the Livingston School District presents an opportunity to establish the clear need for a deeper understanding of the DEI issues that impact student success and belonging.

The changing student demographics within the school district allowed educators from across the district to see the need for work in the area of DEI.

#### Strengths:

- Just about every professional staff member and family member with whom we spoke acknowledged that Livingston has changed somewhat rapidly and is much more diverse today than it was even 5 or 10 years ago. The acknowledgement of the need for a focus on DEI and lack of evident resistance is a strength. Perhaps due to these factors, few staff members openly expressed any resistance to learning about issues of DEI at a deeper level.
- The district as a whole seems to be doing a good job of recognizing the diversity that exists in the community it serves. Celebrations, recognition of holidays, and the existence of clubs and activities are plentiful.

#### Challenges:

- The acknowledgement of the need for DEI work and the willingness to change as a result of that need can be quite different. Keeping in mind that many teachers, predominantly white, met with a reasonable amount of success when they were in school and, as a result, may struggle to understand how others, with the appropriate amount of work, do not meet with that same level of success. While hard work doesn't often impede success, it also does not guarantee it.
- The work around celebrations, holidays, and heroes is an important first step, but it is only a first step. Work that focuses on these celebrations does not substantively change the system and, hence, does little to change outcomes. Work that is focused outward, celebrating others like the students or families of the "diverse" population, rather than inward, focused on ourselves, our identities, and how we understand our own positioning in the world, will do little to change the

educational system. Staff members must understand their own identities, positionality, and perspectives if they hope to be effective at changing systems that create privilege for some, and not for others.

- While emphasis on inclusion and belonging are evident at the elementary level, with school wide initiatives and common language in many places, there needs to be a greater focus on inclusion, belonging, and justice at the middle and high school levels. At these levels, students begin to develop greater awareness of their multiple identities and it is important to build understanding that difference is natural and one identity is not more or less superior than another.

## Dedicated Resources and Prioritization

Finding: While resources have been dedicated to DEI work in the district, the lack of clarity surrounding roles and responsibilities of Equity Coaches, building leaders, and Great Schools Partnership staff is negatively impacting forward progress.

### Strengths:

- It is obvious that the district has dedicated resources to concerns surrounding DEI in the school district - a strength that has the potential to help move DEI work forward. These resources include the identification of personnel to serve as Equity Coaches and the establishment of a partnership to help lead the DEI work across the district.

### Challenges:

- The specific roles the Equity Coaches, building leaders, and Great Schools Partnership (GSP) staff play in this initiative are unclear to many involved, including some of the equity Coaches and building leaders themselves. Supporting the Equity Coaches by spending adequate time defining roles for each group, including how they will work together, will improve results moving forward. The structure of DEI work across the district varies from school to school and from coach to coach, with schools making inconsistent use of GSP.
- Without a consistent structure surrounding the roles that each member of the equity team plays, as well as an evaluation structure in place to measure the impact of the DEI work in classrooms, across schools, and throughout the community, there is a perception that the work being done is performative in nature, equivalent to “checking boxes,” to make the district appear to be committed to the work. The word “performative” to describe district and school efforts was used multiple times by family members, staff members, and high school students. High school students spoke of “prioritizing the school’s

reputation” over the quality and occasional “messiness” of the work and expressed that their interest in getting involved in the equity audit interviews was “just to see if the school will do anything” with their feedback. Staff members echoed, the DEI work “seems performative, making us look good over real change or action; there’s never really any action.” Additionally, another staff member shared a common perception, “My concern always is why are you doing this and trying to create this work? Because now it's a state mandated thing? Are we just checking boxes or is it truly out of, ‘We want this for our staff (and) we want this for our students because it’s what’s best?’ Honestly, it never comes across as the latter.”

## Professional Learning

Finding: The perceived lack of a clear plan for professional learning in the area of DEI, including goals, benchmarks, common language, and dedicated time is hindering efforts to advance the work across the district.

### Strengths:

- The commitment of resources aimed at increasing understanding around DEI issues is evident in the district. There are Equity Coaches taking the lead in each school and the coaches meet monthly to discuss progress, challenges, and ideas. These meetings include some form of professional learning provided by GSP staff.

### Challenges:

- Despite the resources afforded this work, there is inconsistency in how the equity coaches are used, how professional learning is scheduled in terms of time, topic, and priority, and how goals are established in each school. For example, some Equity Coaches make extensive use of the GSP staff, while other coaches and school leaders indicated that they had little to no contact with GSP during the 2022-2023 school year. When asked, many teachers could not name a single DEI-specific topic they learned about during the last two school years. Those who did respond with specifics mentioned either a session on LGBTQIA+ concerns or an “identity” activity that, “was not well received by their colleagues,” and left them guessing as to its purpose.
- There appeared to be no district wide DEI goals or benchmarks in place and, hence, little ability to measure progress. The balance between establishing broad district goals and allowing building leaders the autonomy they desire to meet the needs of their own students is a challenge as each leader may prioritize DEI work differently.

- There appears to be a lack of professional learning time dedicated to DEI work throughout the district. As stated previously, consistency of offerings and content also appear to be lacking. We heard from some schools that used faculty meeting time to focus on DEI activities and accompanying discussions. Other schools reported they used little to no faculty meeting time for this purpose. Even among those schools where the work is happening during faculty meeting time, staff indicated, “when it comes to time, having an hour after the school day to discuss heavy topics can be challenging. After spending so much energy on the kids all day, it takes a moment for me to transition and let my guard down. Then, just as I’m getting into it, it feels like time to go.” A school leader questioned, “how (we) will fit equity work into the other professional learning that needs to take place, like in the area of academics?” Similarly, another school leader asked, “Is equity a priority among a sea of other priorities? How do we create space and time for staff to deeply understand equity and how it can be applied to every decision?”
- Because many staff members lack a deep understanding of issues of DEI and their historical roots, students and staff repeatedly struggled to identify areas where DEI issues are present throughout the school and community. As a result, there exists a lack of ability to identify systems that perpetuate these inequities. When asked how they sought to advance a deeper understanding of issues of DEI in their schools, several school and district leaders struggled to identify exactly what “it” would look like, meaning exactly what “it” we’re addressing - race, special needs, language diversity, or a host of other identities.
- Without clear goals, content, time, or processes in place, it is difficult to measure progress. At the classroom educator level, many teachers with whom we spoke were clear that they do not feel equipped to plan, implement, and take risks in the DEI space without additional professional learning and support from administration. One staff member stated, “I don’t feel like the staff has a full grasp of what this is really about and how it might change their classroom practices or their relationships with students. I also feel like to some extent we talk about it a lot in terms of the students, which of course, is important, but we haven’t really dealt with equity amongst the staff.” This comment was representative of the many comments we heard in this area.

Some of the issues raised above are most evident in discussions surrounding “community” or “advisory” time. While most students agreed this time was valuable and can lead to opportunities to “build community,” several students and educators pointed to this time being underutilized because staff members were not confident, prepared, or well-versed enough to lead critical discussions. From one student, “There are people in this building who still need to be taught the community lessons that we’re doing before they present.” A staff member concurred, “They don’t spend enough time really training us to be comfortable in these situations.” Students report this

results in situations where “teachers don't really engage the students; we are sitting there while most people are just on their phones, not paying attention as (the teacher) just reads off the screen.”

Two other areas of concern related to professional learning identified are:

- Confusion around the “target” of the DEI work, meaning is the goal to develop teachers to better understand issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion or to develop students to understand and respond to those issues? While each has its merits, clarity around the focus would assist educators in better understanding their roles, i.e. “should I understand DEI issues to effect change in school and classroom practices or simply to deliver DEI-related content to students?” It is our belief that to be effective, the latter must be preceded by the former.

Supporting this concern, one teacher asserted, *“I feel like we're very much in the beginning stages here trying to just get students to understand very basic concepts of equity like what is your identity? What is bias? What are your experiences? We're just very much in that basic groundwork era of it. And we do try to push that out through our advisory students' home base lessons. And I mean, we're working really hard on these lessons. And I do think students, depending on the students, and depending on the environment they're in, engage with it. But I also think there's a breakdown in how we're pushing this out to the students because there are some teachers that are uncomfortable with having these equity conversations.”* This was a common theme with both teachers and students.

- A lack of the existence of any type of professional development for support staff members such as custodians, maintenance staff, and secretaries - groups that interact with students and families on a daily basis and most often include the largest percentage of the staff of color. Many members of these groups had little to no understanding of the term “DEI” or “equity,” did not see how these issues related to their roles in the district, and did not indicate any understanding of how they could impact DEI efforts in the district.

Recommendations:

- Continue to develop a better delineation of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the adults involved in the DEI work would provide the opportunity for Equity Coaches and school leaders to make better use of GSP and advance DEI work in their schools. Discussions and decisions around a collaborative districtwide vision for DEI work as it intersects with building and principal autonomy would prove beneficial and may be a productive step to advance DEI work districtwide.

- A set of clearly defined goals would help the district measure its progress over time and begin to break down the perception that the work being done is performative in nature.
- Develop a clear plan for rolling out DEI work in a structured, somewhat uniform manner across the district, beginning with foundational equity work focused on developing equity literacy. While it may be unreasonable to expect academics-based professional learning and mandatory “training” to be put on hold, some structured time must be carved out to allow for continuity of equity work. Dedicated time, delineated topics, and a means to evaluate the outcomes of professional learning, while allowing space for principal autonomy, are important to demonstrate commitment to the work and show growth moving forward.
- Begin DEI work with the adults, expanding the work to include much deeper levels of reflection that should, over time, aid in the development of an “equity mindset,” a mindset through which all decisions can be made. Without the competence and confidence that comes with deep professional learning in this space, many adults will struggle to introduce these topics to and hold safe conversations with students. Equity work is rarely comfortable and never easy. It requires that the adults increase their comfort level holding uncomfortable conversations while they develop an equity mindset. This takes time and practice. The alternative is to address issues of equity in a piecemeal, single issue-based approach as opposed to a comprehensive approach. Generating deeper understandings will allow the educators to transfer their knowledge to multiple situations and decision-making opportunities.
- Be sure to include non-certificated staff in this work. It is important that all members of the school community who interact with students and their families engage in this work as many times those are the staff members who students and families engage with first when entering the school. If not included, these staff members can unknowingly “undo” any good work and progress made by the school community as a whole.

## Academic and Co-Curricular Programs

We identified areas of strength and several areas of concern associated with academic and co-curricular programs. Each of the following areas contribute to inequities that exist in one or more parts of the school district.

### DEI and Heroes and Holidays

Finding: While the “heroes and holidays” approach to DEI work is a great starting point, it does not go far enough in that it does not change the systems under which teachers work and students

learn.

#### Strengths:

- There is clear acknowledgement of the need to appreciate the strengths of members of diverse groups within the school community and recognize their celebrations. Many of the schools have celebrations, classroom lessons and visits, and family events scheduled throughout the year.

#### Challenges:

- These “heroes and holidays” celebrations are often seen as “enough,” leaving people with the impression that no additional work in DEI is needed. As stated by an active parent, “I think the intentions are always very good. And I don't think it's a malicious thing, but there is an absence of the ‘hard questions’ and ‘deeper level discussions.’” This statement was supported by a staff member in saying the “ball gets dropped in terms of staff development around DEI, because of more ‘urgent’ things.”

## DEI and General Education Programs

#### Strengths:

- The media centers include an increasing number of diverse texts written by diverse authors. The media specialists indicate that they work well together to continue to diversify the resources available to students and staff. Several media specialists actively teach students how to search for texts that align with specific DEI areas of their choosing. Others have vetted lists available for students. Many feature areas of their media centers where students can see themselves in the texts they are perusing or reading. Several of the media specialists also reject the idea of only featuring these works during the dedicated months of recognition or celebration, pointing instead to the importance of highlighting these texts throughout the school year.
- Courses within the core curriculum are being revised to add more inclusive content. In some cases, this is being done in a manner that includes student voice and with the assistance of outside resources.
- Staff members indicate they understand the need for and importance of “community building.”

#### Challenges:

- Parents and students expressed concerns around opportunity and access to some areas of the curriculum. High school student interviews indicated that students do not have a clear understanding of how they choose advanced classes. Are there “gatekeeping” criteria or not? In all advanced classes, some, or none? What grades are being considered? If the student makes a mistake choosing a class in the spring, can it be corrected in the fall?



And, are there in-course criteria needed to remain in the advanced class once enrolled? This entire topic proved confusing for the students we interviewed.

- Both students and parents indicated it can be difficult to get into AP and honors classes if arriving late to the district or if a student's initial schedule is inappropriate as (s)he has taken the course previously. Both students and parents indicate that there is quite a bit of confusion at the high school level when it comes to the timing of new students requesting classes. This can have a negative impact on a student's academic progress. These same students frequently indicated that the counselors were "not really helpful," while others indicated "there is a lot you have to figure out yourself; they won't tell you what you need to know." This type of comment was common among the students with whom we spoke.
- We heard from several staff members that there existed insufficient support for students who enrolled from neighboring districts. Because Livingston is a higher-performing district, students transferring from other local suburban and urban settings often had gaps in their learning when compared to existing Livingston students (based on rigor, pacing, or both). According to general education and special education staff, this frequently led to the child, previously an average or above average student, being referred to the child study team for evaluation.

## DEI and Special Populations

### Strengths:

- (Special Education) The district has demonstrated a commitment to educating its students with special needs in the least restrictive environment by adding ABA and 18-21 year old programs. While these programs are still relatively young, the dedication to offering these services to students is a positive step.

### Challenges:

- (Students new to the country) Students transferring into the district from other countries indicate the counselors have a difficult time evaluating their transcripts and placing them in appropriate classes. Both students and parents indicated it can be difficult to get into AP and honors classes if arriving late to the district. Furthermore, there seemed to be quite a bit of confusion at the high school level when it comes to the timing of new student course requests. This can have a negative impact on a student's academic progress.
- (Students new to the country) Several first-generation students indicated that, upon scheduling meetings with school personnel, they were left with the perception that AP

classes were too demanding for them to experience success. When those students who did further investigation realized the course was manageable and asked to have a schedule change, they were told they missed the “application deadline” and could not be enrolled in the course.

- (Students with Special Needs) Parents indicated that students with special needs requiring in-class support were limited in which electives they could enroll because the support called for in their IEPs was not available in several higher level or specialized elective classes. As an example, one parent claimed "in order for my child to be in the Honors Program that he's recommended for by his teachers, I need to sign off that he no longer gets the support required by his IEP." The parent believed that while it's great that he's recommended for this course, his child is being shortchanged as a student with a disability because “apparently you can't be an honor student and have an IEP; you have to be an honor student OR have an IEP because honor students should be able to perform at a higher level independently.” This concern was shared by several parents of students with disabilities.
- (Students with Special Needs) Additional parents expanded on the prior concern by pointing out that while their requests to add in-class support sections in these (higher level or non-graduation requirement) courses were denied, AP and Honors courses and sections were added. These perceived actions gave the parents the perception that their children and their concerns were less valued.

#### Recommendations:

- Review guidelines for how and when new and returning students can enroll in honors, AP, or other advanced level classes and programs. To be equitable, clarity is important, as is ensuring the default is to allow the student to enroll rather than providing gatekeeping mechanisms to keep students out of these programs. Once this review has occurred with input from staff, students, and families, provide clarification on these guidelines to students and those staff members supporting students.
- Make use of those educators who are committed to and passionate about DEI work to lead the way in the area of professional learning, curriculum development, and data review and analysis. For example, several of the media specialists have conducted extensive research on diverse, age-appropriate texts to be included in the media centers. Can these same professionals lend their expertise to the curriculum development process by identifying and suggesting resources that can be used in classrooms during the teaching and learning process?
- Continue to develop and communicate the importance of a comprehensive, age-appropriate multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) with the resources necessary to

provide students with three tiers of intervention, depending on their needs. This type of system, if implemented appropriately, can help to accelerate student learning for those students - new and existing - who demonstrate gaps in their learning and struggle to keep pace with the Livingston curriculum.

## Climate and Culture

Climate and Culture are two areas critical to driving school improvement and DEI efforts. If the school climate is not one characterized by trust and care for each individual - adult and student - change initiatives will struggle to take hold. Climate and culture can be positive or negative and exist in every classroom, hallway, and shared space within a school, contributing to the overall climate and culture of the building. Threats to school climate and culture can undermine any change initiative within a school or district.

### School Culture (student)

#### Strengths:

- The elementary schools are doing a good job with both diversity and belonging, as students experience age-appropriate lessons about difference and kindness through their character education work, the existence of common school values, and activities like school wide book reads. Common language around expectations is important and, in many schools, this is in place, as evidenced by elementary school students reciting the school values and mottos
- At the high school level, students can self-assign to the reflection room (or ISS room) to give themselves time to process stress, anxiety, or challenges and avoid disciplinary issues.
- As students age through the elementary schools, many are given more autonomy in terms of seating arrangements and “freedom.” Although each school seems to have a slightly different approach, this practice allows students time to navigate the space that can prove most stressful at the middle and high school levels.

#### Challenges:

- Teachers, students, and administrators expressed frustration around inconsistencies with student discipline, lack of follow-through, and changes to decisions previously settled based on community connections or aggressive parental behavior. This concern came up across the board, with adults and students grades 7 and up recognizing that not all students receive equitable consequences for their actions. Time and time again, we heard stories of how discipline determinations were overturned by someone who was not involved in the initial investigation or decision.

- While much emphasis seems to be placed on the district “Portrait of a Graduate” and “One-Hundred Percents,” these two district documents are not seen by adults or students as interconnected, with few students able to articulate that they are connected to DEI work.
- There exist some significant issues in the district surrounding offensive language, especially as students move through the middle and high schools. Students do not have the language or skill to call out offensive language when they encounter it. Furthermore, there exists a fear of social isolation if a student does call out this language. Through many student interviews, it appears this inappropriate and offensive student language is normalized, with students referring to phrases such as “the n-word pass, curry eaters, JAPs, JewBros, monkeys, and chinks.” While most students indicated they knew these were slurs - and inappropriate - they also indicated it is widely used within and across races and cultures.
- When it comes to making all students feel included in school, kids speak a lot about their awareness of the different neighborhoods and the diversity that exists within the district, but often make judgements about those who are different from them. Kids routinely use the words of inclusion, but then self-segregate in common spaces (cafeteria, recess), indicating that they know what inclusion is and how it should look, but do not practice it.
- In another threat to the feeling of being included in school, some staff members reported hearing colleagues express the sentiment “here, we speak English,” directly to students for whom English is not their first language. During our interviews, teachers also demonstrated a lack of understanding of cultural values that may be different than their own. For example, several teachers expressed frustration with students returning to their home countries for extended periods during the school year, indicating a difference in cultural norms. In some cultures, extended holidays are the norm, with children “learning” from those experiences. Lack of awareness of the importance of holiday observances often leads to teachers not modifying due dates and school expectations around these dates. Actions and statements such as these indicate a deficit mindset when it comes to students from other cultures, threatening the sense of belonging in school for those students.
- As might be expected, we heard a lot about lunch and recess at the elementary level. In addition to the concerns listed above, many of which occurred during lunch or recess, students expressed concern that the food served in the cafeteria rarely or never represents their cultures.
- Finally, while the family survey produced positive aggregated results, these results vary when disaggregated based on factors like race and whether parents report having students with disabilities. For instance, Latino families were more inclined to disagree about the creation of a safe space and respectful treatment by adults, while Black families disagreed about adults communicating with warmth and free of bias. Families of students with disabilities were the most critical group, almost twice as likely to disagree that a safe

space is created and that their children are treated with respect by peers.

## Professional Culture

### Strengths:

- With few exceptions, teachers indicated a professional culture that was collegial in nature toward their colleagues. Attitudes between staff and superiors were less consistent, but there were plenty of teachers who expressed appreciation and admiration toward their immediate supervisor - the administrator with whom they came into contact most often.

### Concerns:

- Trust was an issue that arose time and time again among staff members. We heard from numerous teachers who are long tenured in the district that “there exist trust issues all the way up to the highest levels of the chain of command.” For example, while the staff survey that was administered district wide included no identifying information, we heard from several staff members who reported that their colleagues would not complete the survey because they feared their responses might be traced back to them. Furthermore, many teachers reported that despite repeated requests from administrators to bring concerns to their attention, if they do so, there will be retaliation. While we did not witness any specific examples of this issue and understand that these concerns may be based on past or current experiences, they need to be reported as they are certainly a perception. People who've been in the district a long time repeatedly reported the belief that, tenured or not, if they speak up, their “lives will be made miserable.” Related concerns include:
  - The fear of failure and that mistakes will lead professional staff to being called before the Board of Education or featured in newspapers with little support from administration.
  - Lack of comfort among teachers who are asked to talk to students about certain topics because they fear pushback from parents and further fear not being supported by leadership.
  - The perception that everything in the district is a 5-alarm fire, including an expectation that staff is on call 24/7 with people being made to feel “less than” because they are unavailable or made a mistake.
- There exists a perception among some professional staff that certain employees are “hand-selected” for positions of informal leadership, despite previous work or qualification. While this was most evident when the discussion centered on the selection of Equity Coaches, regular reference was made to the impact “being connected” had on your selection to certain positions.

- Despite the change in student demographics over the last decade, teacher diversity in the district has not changed much, leaving some students without many professional role models who look like them or share common backgrounds and experiences. We sampled several job postings and found no mentions of a DEI focus or encouragement for candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply. While there is a lack of diversity among the certificated staff, diversity does exist more widely at the non-certificated staff level. While there are benefits to diversity in general, this specific situation can send mixed messages to students about which jobs may be most appropriate for them in the future.

#### Recommendations:

- There is no greater threat to the potential to grow and improve in pedagogy, curriculum, or DEI work than a compromised professional culture. It is important that the administration, supported by the Board of Education, are intentional about overcoming these threats to professional culture. As increased numbers of teachers leave the profession or transfer to new districts with few in line to take their places, the professional culture must be addressed. If not, any progress made will be diminished each time a staff member chooses to leave the district.

## Family and Community Engagement

Engaging families and members of the community provides a means of better understanding cultural norms and educating staff about their increasingly diverse student population.

### Family and Community Participation

#### Strengths:

- As mentioned previously, the involvement of families, particularly at the elementary level, helps students appreciate the strengths of members of diverse groups within the school community. Many of the schools have celebrations, classroom lessons and visits, and family events scheduled throughout the year.
- Change begins with awareness and many of the school leaders were keenly aware that participation from families is not as diverse as they'd like.
- In the absence of a staff that reflects the student population, opportunities exist to engage community partners around DEI work to broaden the impact on students.

#### Challenges:

- There exists a perception by some family members who are new to the district that school-family groups (PTA, PTO, HSA) are "hard to break into" as a diverse or new

member of the community. Multiple caregivers described these groups as "very cliquish" with one indicating, "We hear people saying we can't get anyone to volunteer, but as soon as someone like this woman who was new to the town volunteered, she was shut out. It's very unwelcoming."

- The district has no mechanism for tracking family involvement making it more difficult to be intentional about diversifying voices.
- Parents across many groups indicated that there exists an unspoken divide in the community when it comes to differences between children. Whether those differences are based upon ability, ethnicity, race, religion, or socio-economic status, children are being segregated before they reach school through community celebrations. This provides additional challenges as young children reach school age.

#### Recommendations:

- Some school leaders indicated that they are intentionally recruiting parents from diverse backgrounds to be more involved in parent groups, with the support of their existing parent associations. This strategy should be replicated across all schools.
- Provide parent associations and the PT Council with development work to aid in better understanding the need for and benefits of diversity within their group.
- Reach out to community partners representing residents from diverse backgrounds to encourage their involvement in school activities. This helps to provide a more diverse group of role models with whom students can interact.
- Investigate or develop a mechanism to track family involvement in school activities.

## Communication and Student, Staff, and Family Voice

Diversity of thought and ideas is central to driving DEI conversations in the district.

Communicating openly and including the voices of those members of the school community most directly impacted by decision-making is key to ensure that the district is meeting the needs of the students, staff, families, and community.

#### Strengths:

- The district has included parents and some students on its building-based equity teams.
- Several principals acknowledge the need to diversify parent groups, working intentionally to ensure a greater diversity of voices in decision-making.
- The district has publicly responded to some race-, religious-, or ethnic-based incidents occurring in or near school grounds, sending the message that such behavior will not be tolerated in the schools.

- There are plenty of students who have a strong passion for studying issues related to DEI and equity and want to improve their schools and school community.

#### Concerns:

- While the district does have a practice of publicly responding to incidents targeting one or more subgroups within the community, several staff and family members indicated those responses were disproportionate depending on the group being targeted and their perceived influence within the community.
- Students indicated that they are often “out of the loop” regarding incidents that occur within their schools. While they express their understanding of the need for confidentiality, they feel that significant incidents warrant little to no communication resulting in students making up their own facts. This adds to the perception that some students are “well-protected” and not all rules apply to everyone. Some students also expressed that they feel less safe at school when significant issues are never addressed with the student body.
- Many of the parents with whom we spoke were aware that “DEI” or “equity” was a topic being addressed by the district, but few could provide details as to what that looked like or what it meant for their children. This included parents who were active on their school equity teams.
- Intradistrict communication also appeared to be a concern. Principals were unaware of expectations around DEI work for their schools and indicated they would benefit from additional guidance. Quotes from Principal/AP meeting include
  - Principal 1: “Need to develop a concrete plan to help define the IT. We don’t know what IT looks like.” (IT, meaning equity.)
  - Principal 2: “I don’t know that we’ve defined equity.”
  - Principal 3: “We need a plan. Right now, I don’t think any of us know the plan.” (heads nodding)
  - Principal 4: “I’m not sure about the role of the equity coach and how we’re supposed to use that person.”
- Despite student interest in DEI and equity topics, there exist few formal structures for students to transform their schools. It is important that leadership and staff understand the difference between transformative student voice, where students research and solve their own problems, and student input, where students provide adults with feedback on how the adult can address the problem.

#### Recommendations:

- Be intentional when building teams to address school or district concerns; include participants from different backgrounds to ensure diversity of voice.
- Provide time and space for building leaders to better understand DEI concepts and mindsets and collaborate about strategies they are using in their buildings to advance DEI efforts. Sharing knowledge can only benefit each building leader.



- Closely monitor responses to incidents targeting any minority group in the district to ensure a consistent level of response.
- Develop systems to share appropriate information with students and families when serious incidents impact the school or community. Again, acknowledging that confidentiality is important, it is also important that students have agency - the sense that they have control over their own surroundings and decision-making. Constructing a feedback loop to ensure consistent communication and adequate response would benefit both building and district leaders.

## Appendix B: Extant Data Analysis

In this section, we provide the overview of our analysis of existing data, starting with the list of data we requested, then providing a summary of key observations and recommendations for each. Note that all of this was utilized in the development of the key recommendations, but presented in this format allows for a more narrow focus on each item, especially when a small change would improve the item under review.

### Data Request

- One complete district enrollment spreadsheet with following headers
  - Student Number
  - School (name makes it easier than a school number)
  - Grade
  - Gender
  - Race (are race and ethnicity collected separately?)
  - ELL (Y/N)
  - Economically Disadvantaged (FR Lunch Status)
  - Classification (we will assume blank is not classified)<sup>2</sup>
- Discipline Data - Sep 1, 2022 - Apr 30, 2023
  - Discipline Type/Description (i.e., disrespect, fighting, etc)
  - Consequence Assigned (i.e., detention, suspension)
  - Reporting Teacher/Staff member
  - (Any other discipline related data that may be collected - location, time of day, etc)
- Staff Data
  - Staff ID number
  - Job Title
  - Gender
  - Race
  - School/Location
  - (Any other pertinent staff data you may have like certificated/non-certificated, hire date)
- Attendance Data - Sep 1, 2022 - Apr 30, 2023
  - Excused Absences
  - Unexcused Absences
  - Tardy

---

<sup>2</sup> All of the following data was also organized around the above demographic variables

- Academic Data
  - Students in G&T (typically elementary)
  - Student in Honors Programs (MS/HS)
  - Students in AP/IB Programs (HS)
  - Graduation Data for last 3 years
  - Graduation plans, if captured in SIS
  - Special Education Programming
  - Intervention Programming (non-classified students)
    - Intervention Program Code
- Other Data
  - Participation in co-curricular activities (athletics, arts, clubs)
  - If you do not track these, we could use yearbook or club photos to gather some data.

#### Other Data

For some of the data below (\*\*), information may be found in a Course of Studies book or Student Handbook - providing a copy of those is fine

\*\*Description of academic programs and tracks and criteria for placement in specialized programs (GT, Honors, AP/IB, Intervention)

- How do you get in?
- How do you get out?
- \*\*Code of Conduct
- Human Resources
- Job Descriptions (sample)
- Mentoring/Support plans for new staff
- Recruitment plan (if exists) (HBCU, CJ PRIDE)
- Interview questions
- Interview process (description)
- Evaluation tool
- Organizational chart for the district
- Social media accounts (Twitter, FB, IG)
- Recent news articles
- Meeting notes from affinity groups, parent advisory group, the equity team monthly group?
- Training agendas and materials from Great Schools
- Information on what special programs and initiatives exist at each school\*\*
- Restorative Practices, Leader in Me, SEL programs
- Family engagement strategies and any information/data on who participates
- Samples of communication home
- Communication strategies
- Opportunities for student voice
- Opportunities for staff voice
- Community partnerships (school and/or district level) including purpose or scope of work
- Official partnerships (like PD, university agreements)

## Livingston Context & Commitments

We've reviewed the strategic plan, equity goals, LivED 100%'s, and Portrait of a Graduate. These documents, taken together, indicate the clear efforts the district has put into this work, and, taken together, support all of the recommendations we've made in this report. HOWEVER, we also note that they can feel disconnected- to us as outsiders, and to district stakeholders we spoke with. Our first recommendation is to devise a theory of action that clearly articulates the relationship between these, and sets a blueprint for district and school action. We also note that the equity goal is not part of the strategic plan, and wonder why it is separate.

### The Strategic Plan

Livingston engaged in a strategic planning process to create a plan to guide work from 2022 through 2027w, With the following mission and vision adopted:

Mission: Empowering all to learn, create, contribute, and grow

#### Vision Statement:

##### Safety & Wellness:

- Decision making that reflects empathy, respect, cultural awareness, kindness, and inclusiveness.
- All stakeholders take responsibility to encourage each other to take advantage of available resources and supports, and to ensure that these connections are visible and easily accessible.
- Members of the community are provided with the knowledge and skills to create a healthy school environment.

##### Teaching & Learning:

- Students engage in open, reflective dialogue with teachers, advisors, and coaches in safe, welcoming spaces to promote collaboration and problem solving.
- Educators working with students, and students working with each other to create connections and foster interests in order to understand rigorous content and demonstrate individual growth.
- Students learn social-emotional skills and apply them across learning experiences to contribute to a diverse global community.
- Teachers collaborate with each other through meaningful professional development opportunities and are empowered to use their knowledge, skills, and experiences to personalize student learning for all.

##### Leadership & Governance:

- Leaders collaborate, listen, and actively seek out and learn from the input of others.
- Leadership is accomplished as a shared task and with an understanding of the impact of decisions on all.

- Leaders lead from a position of strength by modeling the behaviors and attitudes they want to instill in others.
- Leaders communicate in a timely, open, and transparent manner.
- Current leaders cultivate future leaders, and focus on the professional growth of others.

#### Community & Culture:

- Promotes global citizenship, community involvement, and multiculturalism, with students participating in a variety of learning opportunities including extracurricular activities, field trips, internships, and community service.
- Encourages students to play an active role in fostering global citizenship through real-world skills.
- Ensures opportunities for communicating, collaborating, and celebrating cultural diversity.

#### Finance & Facilities:

- Supports safe, flexible learning environments that promote collaboration, innovation, technology infusion, hands-on, and independent learning.
- Models exemplary environmental practice while planning future-ready facilities that strengthen instruction and the greater community.
- Includes a financial process focused on instructional needs where we utilize data to determine the impact of current programming, and where future resources should be allocated.

#### Areas of Focus:

1. Investigate and implement a district-wide instructional model with emphasis on common language of instruction, authentic assessment, and a real-world context to foster student growth
2. Collaborate as a school community to provide students with the tools to build skills necessary to develop healthy habits for a well-balanced life
3. Involve key stakeholders in the decision-making, planning, and implementation of programming and budgets
4. Foster an environment in which people of all different backgrounds have the freedom to express themselves without fear of judgment or bias
5. Create flexible, innovative educational spaces that meet the needs of a growing and changing student population who have diverse learning needs and interests

## Livingston Public Schools' Equity Goal

Livingston Public Schools' Equity Goal seeks to improve the culture and community with LPS by enhancing inclusiveness, cultural awareness, anti-racism, and acceptance of individual differences through mandated curricular programming, extracurricular programming, and district operations. We are in the very early stages of our work and

with each day we realize how much more we need to do in ensuring each of our students know they belong and are sure they are valued in our schools.

In response to this goal, LPS created District and Building Equity Teams to put **“equity into action”** at every level across the school community through:

- Data analysis and planning
  - Coaching educators on equity, anti-racism and inclusion in the classroom.
  - Planning and facilitating community conversations
- The Equity Teams continue to work with teachers to make instruction more responsive to diversity, and inclusive of various cultures. The teams also work to strategically implement professional development and school-based programming focused on diversity, anti-racism, and cultural inclusivity in teaching and learning in order to create a common language and set of expectations for the school community.

What are the goals of the Equity Teams?

The Equity Teams continue to work with teachers to make instruction more responsive to diversity, and inclusive of various cultures. The teams also work to strategically implement professional development and school-based programming focused on diversity, anti-racism, and cultural inclusivity in teaching and learning in order to create a common language and set of expectations for the school community.

Two Key Equity Initiatives:

These two initiatives provide a clear framework for the day to day behavioral expectations of adults and students (the LivED 100%’s) and for the longer term outcomes for who students are (Portrait of a Graduate). The Challenge? Ensuring that all students and staff understand and use them daily!

## The LivED 100 Percents

**LPS Students and Staff will ALWAYS**


Work to ensure that everyone feels welcome here.

Take steps to make someone feel better if we hurt them, even if we did not mean to hurt them. If you broke it, you fix it.

Ask people how they are feeling. We ask each other questions to learn more about one another.

Will think about how our words will make other people feel, because we know that everyone is different and has their own gifts.

Use kind words.



**LivED**  
LIVINGSTON  
EQUITY & DIVERSITY

**In Livingston Public Schools, 100% of the time:**  
Between January 2021 and March 2022, Livingston Public School staff, students, and family members worked to create these commitments to equity. These statements express our expectations at the secondary school level.

**LPS Students and Staff will ALWAYS**

Work to ensure that Livingston Public Schools are free of bias, and that when incidents of bias occur we address them.


Acknowledge the difference between impact and intent.

Ask clarifying questions and seek to understand one another.

Respect differences.

Acknowledge the "oops".

Use kind words.



**LPS Staff will ALWAYS**


Build each other up and ask for help from colleagues or administration when needed.

Consult the Livingston guidebook/repository for resources.

Take advantage of the opportunity to engage in courageous conversations.

Create and reinforce a BRAVE space in the classroom.

Communicate the 100%'s to our students.



**LPS Students and Staff will NEVER**


Use, say, or read out loud racial, ethnic, or other slurs, even if they are in a text, song, or work of art. When a text or source that contains a slur is used educationally, that slur will never be read out loud by the students or the teacher.

Ask another person to represent their entire cultural group, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other group.

Express assumptions or generalizations based on cultural group, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other group.

Assume the impact that something might have on another person.

Ignore the "ouch".



## The Portrait of a Graduate

**Livingston Public Schools  
Portrait of a Graduate**



- Conscientious Friend**
  - Igalls others with kindness
  - Listens with intention
  - Turns empathy into action
  - Invests in community
  - Respects all other people, the environment, and society
- Independent Thinker**
  - Practices self-reflection and self-advocacy
  - Asks probing questions
  - Embraces innovation
  - Understands the past and envisions the future
  - Values on own values and beliefs in decision making and civic participation
- Balanced Individual**
  - Cares for self and pursues personal passions
  - Finds humor and joy in life
  - Persists in the face of adversity
  - Appreciates beauty and creative expression
  - Makes choices that promote social, mental, and physical wellbeing
- Thoughtful Communicator**
  - Listens to and amplifies quieter voices
  - Communicates with clarity and purpose
  - Uses language to promote inclusivity and unity
  - Respects the power of influence and uses feedback to uplift others
  - Persuades and promotes truth
- Collaborative Leader**
  - Knows when to observe, when to support, and when to initiate
  - Recognizes strengths in difference
  - Models honesty, humility, and accountability
  - Advocates for justice and acts through a global lens
  - Believes in the possibilities that come with change, and overcomes obstacles
- Motivated Learner**
  - Sees challenges as opportunities
  - Persists in making connections and finding solutions through trial and error
  - Initiates curiosity, often when no clear outcome is apparent
  - Successfully identifies reliable sources of information
  - Relates with self

## Analysis of Extant Data

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>LPS Student Feedback</b>	District wide, 92% students feel that adults create a safe environment. However, Hispanic and Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander students are more likely than other racial groups to not feel welcomed. Although it could be an issue of adults being disrespectful, that is not likely according to these subgroups' responses to adults being warm and caring. It is more likely associated with negative peer-peer interactions. For instance, 30% of NH/PI students felt disrespected by other students. Similarly, about 20% of Black students reported feeling disrespected by other peers. We can't say whether this is racially motivated, but we do know that white and Asian students make up the majority of the student body and they are the least likely to report peer disrespect. That said, white students were the group most likely to feel unfairly assessed and to perceive teachers as warm and caring.	Adults create a safe environment	Improve peer to peer interactions and possibly discuss a sense of privilege as it relates to perceptions of grading and teacher warmth
<b>CST Referral</b>	Largest number of CST referrals is for white students (107) followed by Asian (50). Parents are 2x as likely to refer their children than school team. Also, parent referrals are more likely to be ineligible when compared to school referrals.	Referrals do not seem to be disproportionately targeting students of color	Investigate parent referral requests



	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>Conduct by Race</b>	Out of a total of 50 (16 F) out of school suspensions, the largest number are white students - 31 (12 F). The most common reason is being under the influence (9) followed by possession of an actual or perceived weapon (4). The next largest number are mixed race students (8), and then Black students (5) and Hispanic and Asian students are 3 each. Overall, the most common cause is being under the influence (9) followed by student conflict (6) and then possession of an actual or perceived weapon (5). The suspensions are representative of the student demographic.	W-62%, M- 16%, B - 10%, A- 6%,H- 6%	Address issues of substance use and inter-student conflict
<b>Attendance by Race</b>	For a total of 288 chronically absent students, 166 are White students, 76 are Asian, 20 are Hispanic, 12 are Black, 11 are multiple categories, 2 are American Indian or Alaskan Native and 1 is Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Absenteeism rates are reflective of student demographics.	W- 58%, A-26%, B- 4%, H - 7%, M -4%	N/A
<b>EEO</b>	Based on the 2022 EEO numbers, 90% of teachers in the Livingston school district are white. Hispanic teachers come next with 5%, followed by Asian at 4% and Black at 1.5%. 80% of administrators/principals are white. The next largest percentage of administrators/principals are Hispanic and Latino at 8.6%, followed by Black at 5.7%. Administrators/principals of Asian, and of two or more races are 2.9%. Since 2012, teachers of color have increased from 3.9% to 10.4 %, and staff of color have increased from 3.7% to 5.9%.	Positive trend over the past 5 years in hiring more diverse staff	Continue to increase diversity among staff and teachers

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>Data trends from equity survey</b>	This compilation includes 8 positive and 9 negative data trends from a student equity survey. It is unclear what year this is from and from which group of students provided this data. However, the positive themes suggest that participants value the community, culture, diversity of clubs, teaching and learning. Among the negative themes, students named peer to peer interactions, lack of mental health and cultural awareness, and a need for everyone to be more action oriented.	LPS appears to be making improvements in diversity and inclusion. When given an opportunity, students provide ideas for further enhancing the work happening at LPS.	Students infer that more action be taken to address the negative issues they name, such as peer-peer interactions, mental health, and cultural awareness. Student voice/led projects could be one possibility for generating meaningful solutions. Additionally, these projects can empower students to take ownership and encourage them to be more civically engaged.

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>LPS Family Feedback</b>	<p>We reviewed the 2022 Family Feedback survey and found that most family members agree that LPS provides a space where their children are safe, respected, welcomed, assessed fairly, and treated with warmth and caring by adults. Despite these mostly favorable outcomes, the degree to which family respondents agreed varied by race and by whether parents had students with disabilities. For instance, compared to the full sample of family respondents (1,559), Latino family respondents (62) were 50% more likely to disagree that adults create a safe space and treat their children with respect. Additionally, they were also 50% more likely to disagree that other students treat their children with respect. We also found that Black family respondents (52) were 50% more likely to disagree that adults speak to their children with warmth, caring and free of bias. Relatedly, they were also 50% more likely to agree that their children feel welcomed and included. Finally, white family respondents (768) were about 25% more likely to disagree that the system for assessing students at Livingston is fair. The remaining racial subgroups were more agreeable with all survey items than the average response from the total group. Despite these observations across racial group differences, the least favorable family respondent outcomes came from those who have children with disabilities (262). This subgroup was almost twice as likely to disagree that Livingston adults create a safe space for their children and that their children are treated with respect by other students. They also were 50% more likely than the total family respondent group to disagree with all survey items. Finally, white families and families of</p>	<p>Most family members agree that LPS provides a space where their children are safe, respected, welcomed, assessed fairly, and treated with warmth and caring by adults.</p>	<p>Taken together, these data points suggest that Latino and Black family respondents may like to see more explicit attempts or confirmation about what Livingston does to help children feel safe, welcomed, and respected by adults and other students across racial groups. Moreover, for families of students with disabilities, it would be advantageous to listen and better understand what the needs might be. In other words, learning about why this subgroup of families had the most disagreement could be helpful to improving their children's experiences at Livingston.</p>

Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
students with disabilities at Livingston were the most likely to disagree that the system for assessing students is fair.		

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>LPS Uniflow/Mount Pleasant Middle School Planner 2022-23</b>	The LPS Uniflow/Mount Pleasant Middle school planner has guidelines and codes of conduct regarding attendance, dress code, home & school communication, grading, student services and discipline policies as well as other related topics. Most appeared to be standard policies. Noteworthy was the absence of any information regarding free or reduced lunches for eligible students. The discipline policies used a language of support rather than of punishment but continued reliance on detention as a punitive measure.	Discipline policies use a language of support	A need to shift to more restorative practices model for behaviors
<b>LHS Student and Parent Guide 2022-23</b>	The LHS Student & Parent Guide is a short guide covering topics such as transportation, lunch protocols, student and parent portals, and student attendance. This guide does not give details on the policies regarding lunch protocols or attendance but simply information on how to access the lunch portal and record attendance on the school's website. Noteworthy were the Lancer Time and LHS community initiatives. Lancer Time is once a week and allows students time to work on school work or meet with teachers. LHS Community is a once a month time period dedicated to groups of students meeting with faculty facilitators to discuss any challenges they are facing. They also provide contact information for assistant principals for student and family support.	Lancer Time and LHS Community are initiatives that are student-centered. Also, contact information for assistant principals to reach for student and family support.	N/A

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>Newsletter</b>	<p>The Livingston Newsletter is published twice a year (fall/spring) by the Department of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Inspiration. Each newsletter is easy to read and has just a few pages. They open up with a brief highlight or focus. Then, the authors offer some helpful resources to external links for topics such as social emotional learning, representation in books, or parent development workshops. The newsletter seems to explicitly focus on equity issues, which is great for parents already familiar. On the other hand, equity and justice can be trigger words for others and may need to be more strategically introduced for a wider range of readers.</p>	<p>The equity topics offered in short readable chunks are beneficial for quick reading and using in conversation with colleagues and families.</p>	<p>One thing to consider in these formats is how the school may position it as the "expert," particularly on issues of parenting. Families often bring valuable insight into the learning spaces around these topics. Thus, future newsletter publications might include some input from students and their families.</p>

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>AMW 6.23</b>	<p>This is a video clip of what seems to be a student led talk show. Two white students (a boy and a girl) begin by sharing announcements about school events. Then, the show transitions to sports, which is led by 2 white boys who discuss various school scores. In this order, they discuss boys tennis, boys volleyball, golf, girls lacrosse, boys lacrosse, baseball, softball. They send back to the first hosts to pick up school announcements. Following this scene, hosts transition to an infomercial with one of the boys from the sports show. This parody infomercial highlights the tissue box and a white girl plays a “real life” actor using the tissue box. When this ends, the show transitions to two different white boys carrying on announcements. Of interest are a few clubs, such as the Brits of LHS. The boys then transition to the teacher highlight spot, which shows an interview of a white male teacher of marketing and business named Mr. Rembecky. There is footage of him teaching. The show then transitions to a white boy named Sam, the host of Office Hours LTV. Sam has a special guest from Kazakhstan named Borat Sagdiev. The guest is a white student wearing a fake mustache and curly-haired wig. He is also eating a banana as he comes out on set. Borat has a fake accent. He is asked to discuss his hometown, school, and family.</p> <p>The show continues to highlight several other kids doing short entertaining clips.</p>	<p>Tech resources can be great for building students' experiences.</p>	<p>Be careful how students are reproducing stereotypes and other forms of subtle messaging. Also, LHS might consider representing more student groups across race, culture, gender, and ability for instance.</p>

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>Cross-analyses Feedback</b>	After comparing family and student responses to the same Livingston Feedback survey, we found that multi-racial students were far more likely than multi-racial families to disagree with items related to safety (7%), respect (10%), and adult caring (11%); multi-racial families disagreed no more than 1% of the time. We also observed that Latino families (20%) were almost twice as likely as Latino children (11%) to disagree that other students treat their children (them) with respect. Additionally, Black families (17%), when compared to Black children (7%) were more likely to disagree that the system for assessing students (them) is fair. Black families (12%) were also twice as likely than Black children (6%) to believe their children (they) feel welcome and included.	This cross analysis suggests that multi-racial students may feel less connected to adults and the culture of the school than their parents may believe. The perceptions Black and Latino families have of the children's experience seem to be more negative than their kids report.	Perhaps, the school could enhance communication with parents and create opportunities to see how students interact across identity lines and provide more transparency with assessment structures.
<b>LPS Code of Conduct</b>	The expectations of students and families (p. 5) seem to favor school actors over students and families. Indeed, this approach might be more consistent with an affinity toward hard, classroom management where discipline is strict and exclusionary. Also, LPS code of conduct does not reflect their value on school-family partnerships. There are also no mentions of restorative practices, which can be useful for fostering and repairing community.	LPS cares about maintaining a safe learning environment that encourages students to have ownership in their learning and contributions to the LPS community	Pursue restorative practices and seek partnerships with families and community to enhance LPS goals
<b>Equity &amp; Social Justice Resources</b>	This webpage provides a variety of resources, articles, activities, movies, and books. These resources seem to have been chosen around the time of George Floyd's murder, and focus on racism towards Black people.	These are powerful resources that explicitly address anti Black racism	The title of the page is Equity & Social Justice Resources, but the content is about addressing anti-Black racism. It would be a stronger resource if it included other categories- what is there is a good start on understanding ABR, but does not address hatred and



	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
			prejudice towards other groups of people, and as such does not show a commitment to equity and social justice for all races, ethnicities, and identities.
<b>Observations on Job Postings</b>	We sampled several job postings and found no mentions of DEI focus or encouragement to diversify using language such as “candidates from marginalized/underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply”	LPS is growing and continues to have openings for new positions	Revise job postings, interview protocols, and evaluations to specifically address district equity goals and commitments.
<b>Equity Audit 23-24 (EEO)</b>	In 2022-23, there were a total of 1107 staff in the Livingston school district. Of these, 899 were White, 74 were Black, 66 were Asian, 63 were Latino/Hispanic, 3 were Native American and 2 were Pacific Islander. There were 528 teachers, of which 89% were White, 5% were Latino/Hispanic, and 4% each were Asian and Black. There were 24 principals, assistant principals and superintendents and assistant superintendents, of which only 1 each of Black, Asian and Latino/Hispanic.	The majority of the entire staff -81% - are White. Among the teachers, that number goes up to 89% and for administrators, that number is 88%. This does not represent the growing diversity in the student population.	Continue addressing representation of diverse staff, especially among the teaching and administrative staff.
<a href="#">Equity Activities</a> 2022-2023	This presentation provides an overview of all the equity focused activities in the district during the 2022-23 school year, in the areas of planning, curriculum, and professional development, along with some data highlights. It includes goals for future work, and resources.	It is clear that the district, and schools, are engaged in a range of activities that help move them towards equity and justice.	Per our primary recommendation, figuring out how to make all of these activities coherent, connected, and clear to all stakeholders will be the challenge!

	Write-up	Success	Needs Improvement
<b>Analysis of News Reports</b>	We reviewed all articles on <a href="http://www.tapinto.net">www.tapinto.net</a> that featured Livingston Public Schools during the 2022-23 school year. These included articles included celebrations of various holidays and community events, along with recognition of students participating in plays, music, chess club, robotics club, honor societies, sports, service projects, charitable events, and other activities. Also included were articles that addressed more controversial or equity focused topics, and board presentations on relevant topics. Included were articles that included presentations of data trends.	Celebrations and activities covered seem to represent a very broad range of cultures, and activities.	We noted that in the presentations to the board, data is not disaggregated by demographic subsets. <a href="#">sample 1</a> , <a href="#">sample 2</a> , <a href="#">sample 3</a> A commitment to equity and justice suggests that transparency about who is impacted in what ways is important.

## Appendix C: Climate Surveys

In this section, we share the full analysis of each of the four stakeholder surveys. These results also informed our overall recommendations.

**How to read the survey data:** As you review the survey reports, it is best to attend to the numbers for the full report. You will see the number that completed the survey (in the “staff” survey that follows, that was 761), then, the breakdown of responses to each question (the percentage of the 761 that agreed, or disagreed, with the question).

Following each section, you’ll also see an analysis of open-ended comments, including the number of people who left a comment, followed by a description of the pattern of those comments, and then a quote or two that is an example of that pattern. For example, in question 19, of the 761 staff who completed the survey, 166 left a comment and 71 of those comments were about student respect for each other. The quote that is included is representative of those 71 comments.

### Staff

#### **Equity Survey - Staff Report Livingston School District (2023)**

The Livingston Equity Survey - Staff was administered on June 5, 2023 to Livingston School District staff. At the time the survey was closed, there were a total of 761 responses collected. The following report describes our methodology, preliminary results, and our next steps.

#### **Demographics**

School	Responses	Count
Mt. Pleasant Elementary	6.7%	51
Harrison Elementary	7.1%	54
Collins Elementary	8.2%	62
Hillside Elementary	7.4%	56
Burnet Elementary	10.8%	82
Riker Hill Elementary	6.5%	49

Mt. Pleasant Middle	7.1%	54
Heritage Middle	13.6%	103
Livingston High	29.4%	223
Transportation Department	0.5%	4
Maintenance Department	0.3%	2
District Office	2.4%	18

Primary Role	Responses	Count
Gen Ed Teacher	45.3%	343
SPED Teacher	10.6%	80
Counselor	6.3%	48
Paraprofessional/Support Staff	16.9%	128
Secretary/Support Staff	5.0%	38
Administrator	2.8%	21
Other Certificated Staff	10.6%	80
Other Non-certificated Staff	1.5%	11
Transportation Staff	0.7%	5
Maintenance Staff	0.4%	3

Grade Span	Responses	Count
Early Childhood (PK-3)	28.6%	211
Upper Elementary (4-5)	17.1%	126
Middle School (6-8)	21.4%	158
High School (9-12)	30.5%	225
Pre-k-12	2.6%	19

Race	Responses	Count
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%	6
Asian	6.8%	51
Black/African American	3.0%	22
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	0.3%	2
White	91.2%	681

Gender	Responses	Count
Male	17.9%	136
Female	79.1%	601
Transgender	0.1%	1
Non-binary	0.1%	1
Prefer to not disclose	2.8%	21

## Methodology

For core survey questions, we calculated the percentage of respondents that selected strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, we created a stacked bar chart to present survey results by topic area.

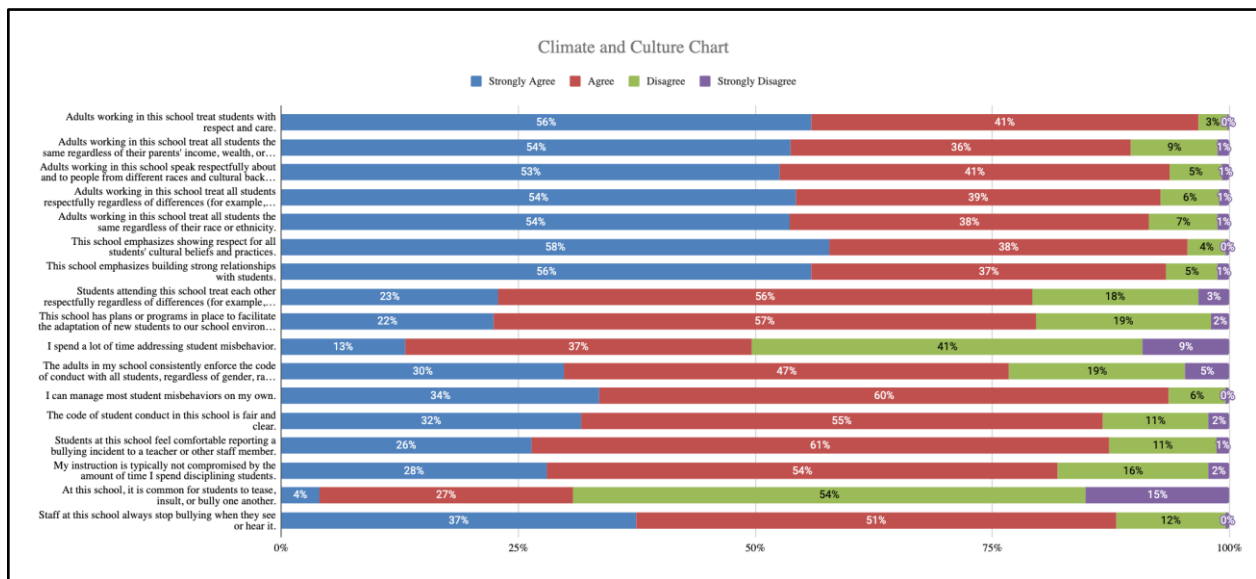
## Findings

For findings, we identified survey items with the most and least favorable responses within each topic area. The stacked bar charts below show a more detailed breakdown by topic area. Enlarged charts can be found [here](#). Furthermore, we studied the open-ended responses for each topical area below, focusing specifically on explanatory responses. Such responses helped us to understand why some participants may have selected the responses they did. To begin, we excluded non-responses and short responses with no substantive meaning. Below, the total number of eligible open-ended responses is stated within the paragraph and the number shown in the parentheses represents the total number of responses that support the identified theme. Selected quotes are italicized and representative of the identified theme.

## Culture and Climate

Within the topic area of culture and climate:

- 97% of the staff strongly agree/agree with the statement - *Adults working in this school treat students with respect and care.*
- 50% of the staff strongly agree/agree with the statement - *I spend a lot of time addressing student misbehavior.*



## Open Ended Responses for Question 19

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 166 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that staff mostly expressed concerns about student to student relationships and their experiences with how students treat each other. (71)

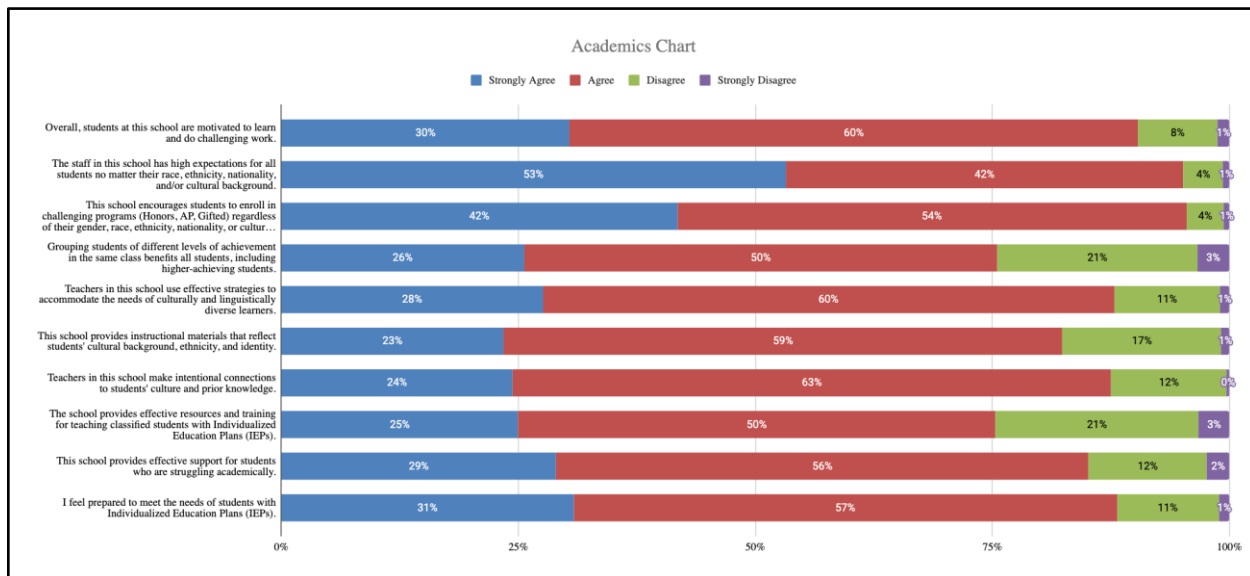
- *Quote: I think students struggle to treat their peers with respect in general. They often display a lack of kindness and empathy for one another and for adults as evident through their interactions in the classrooms, hallways and cafeteria.*

## Academics

Within the topic area of academics:

- 95% of the staff strongly agree/agree with the statement - *The staff in this school has high expectations for all students no matter their race, ethnicity, nationality, and/or cultural background.*
- 95% of the staff strongly agree/agree with the statement - *This school encourages students to enroll in challenging programs (Honors, AP, Gifted) regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, or cultural background.*

- 24% of the staff strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *Grouping students of different levels of achievement in the same class benefits all students, including higher-achieving students.*



### Open Ended Responses for Question 31

Within the this open-ended question, we analyzed 63 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, a few themes were identified within the responses:

- Overall expectations have been lowered for students, particularly for students with IEPs and students of color (16)
  - *Quote: Expectations have been on a sharp decline over the course of the past few years. Watered down curriculum, lack of unit tests, midterms, final exams, etc.*
  - *Quote: Depending on the students who are classified or not. Some with classifications (IEP/ 504) are NOT allowed to fail despite the student not pulling their weight or showing effort towards their work. We as educators are pressured to change grades which then do not accurately portray the aptitude of the students*
- Student misbehavior causes loss of instructional time (5)
  - *Quote: Staff cannot hold students accountable for their behavior. This impacts the ability to teach, culture, and classroom dynamics.*
- Students are unmotivated (14)
  - *Quote: The students are not motivated to learn or complete challenging work. Students are not motivated to learn for intrinsic purposes, but only try to find "easy" or fast solutions.*

## Open Ended Responses for Question 33

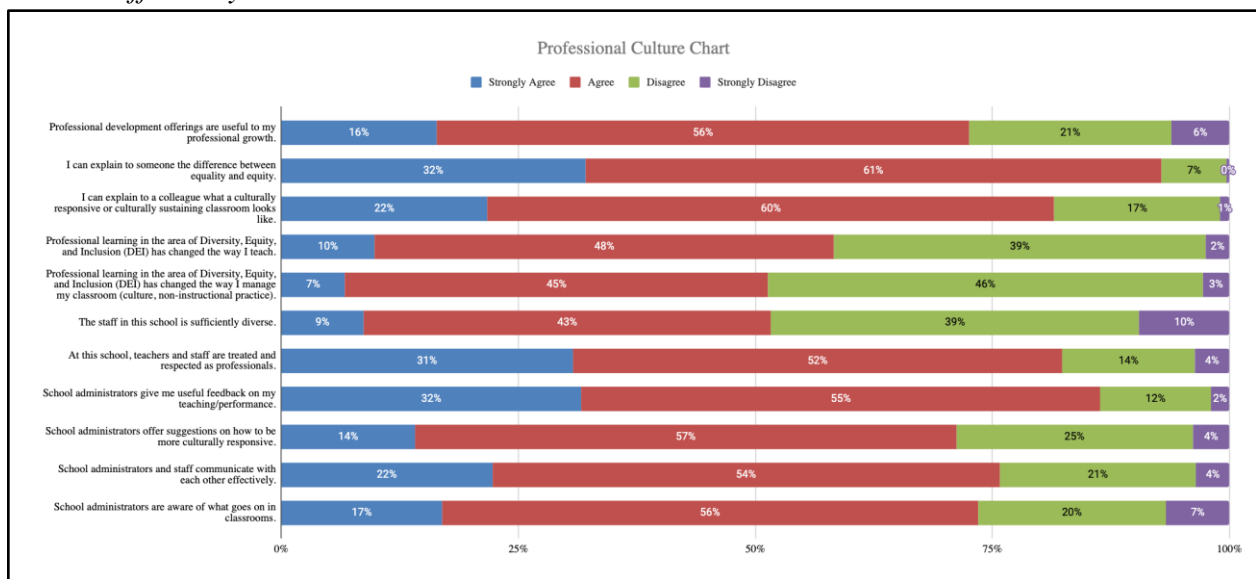
Within the this open-ended question, we analyzed 33 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, two common themes identified within the responses is that students are not encouraged to take advanced courses due to open enrollment and students must be qualified (11). Additionally, students of color are not encouraged to take advanced courses. (4)

- *Quote: Students have to qualify. They cannot be encouraged.*
- *Quote: We have open enrollment*
- *Quote: Students of color are HIGHLY underrepresented in honors classes, and seeing as how easy our honors classes are and how low our students in these levels are, recommendations can't possibly be based on any academic merit. There has to be something else going on.*

## Professional Culture

Within the topic area of professional culture:

- 95% of staff strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I can explain to someone the difference between equality and equity.*
- 48% of staff strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *The staff in this school is sufficiently diverse.*



## Open Ended Responses for Question 45

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 216 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, a few common themes identified within the responses are:

- Increased awareness of the diversity of the community and valuing diverse experiences (71)



- *Quote: When lesson planning, I have been more cognizant of the students' backgrounds and personal experiences in hopes to enrich the lesson.*
- Incorporating diverse texts and materials to align with student diversity (35)
  - *Quote: As an English teacher, I have found there are naturally many opportunities to make my students feel connected to content through the literature we engage with. I believe it is important for students to see themselves represented in the literature, but to also view literature as a "window" into a perspective / environment that differs from their own. DEI is something that had been embedded in my college teacher preparation program, and has shaped the way that I teach.*

### Open Ended Responses for Question 47

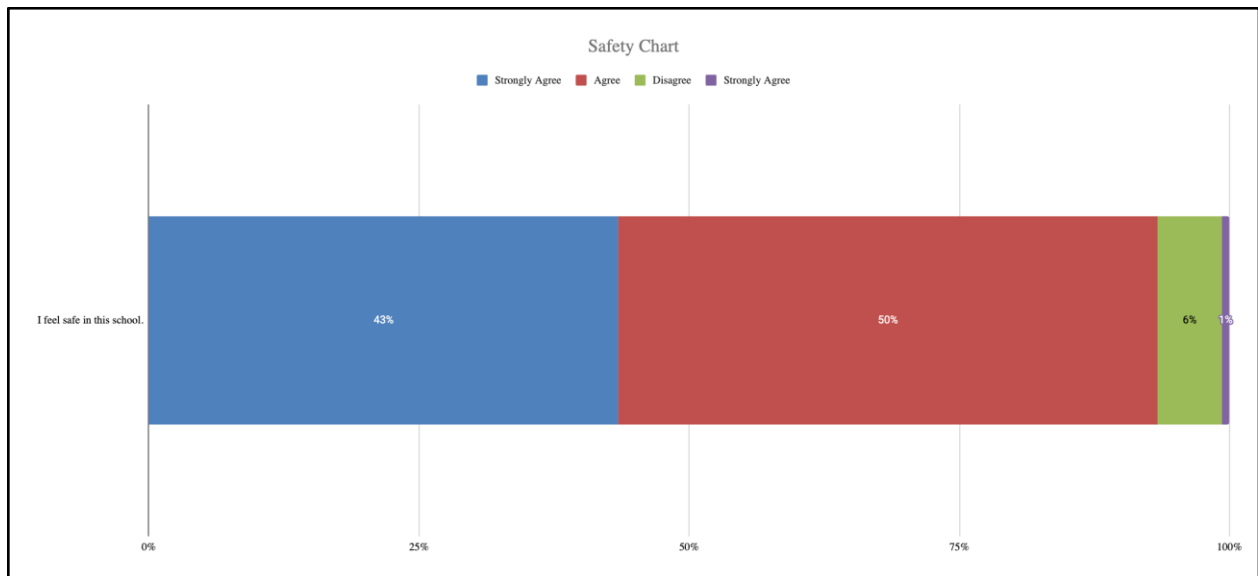
Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 158 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is, again, that staff have an increased awareness of student diversity (64).

- *Quote: I think I'm just more aware of the different experiences students bring to the classroom and I'm more open-minded and empathetic. I try to create opportunities for students to share their experiences and cultures with their peers and with me.*

### Safety

Within the topic area of safety:

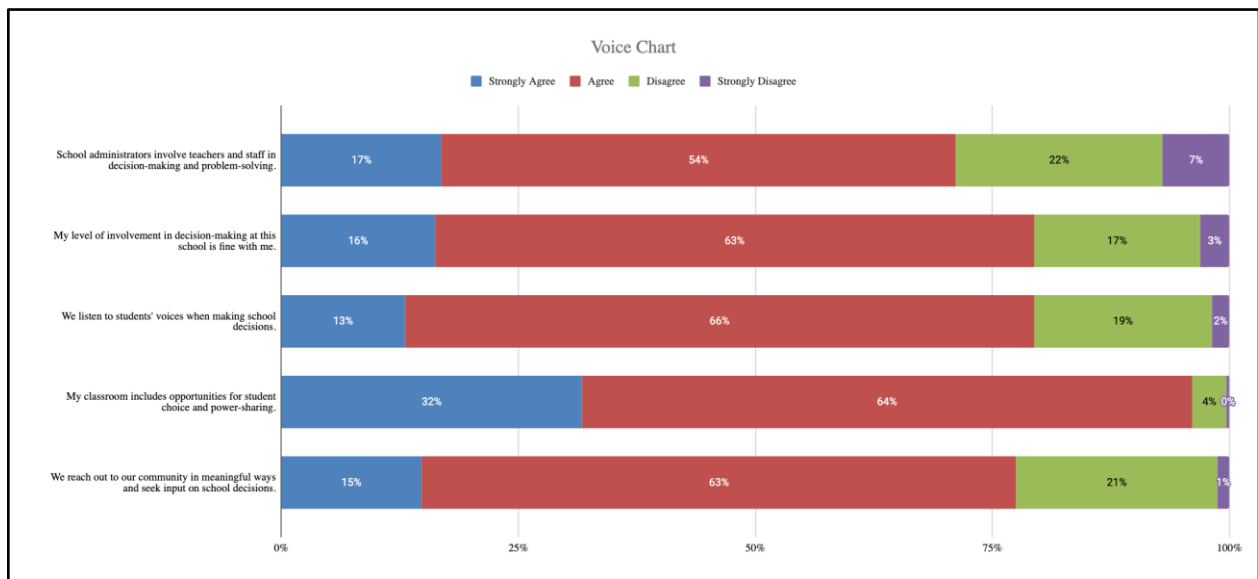
- 93% of staff strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I feel safe in this school.*



## Voice

Within the topic area of voice:

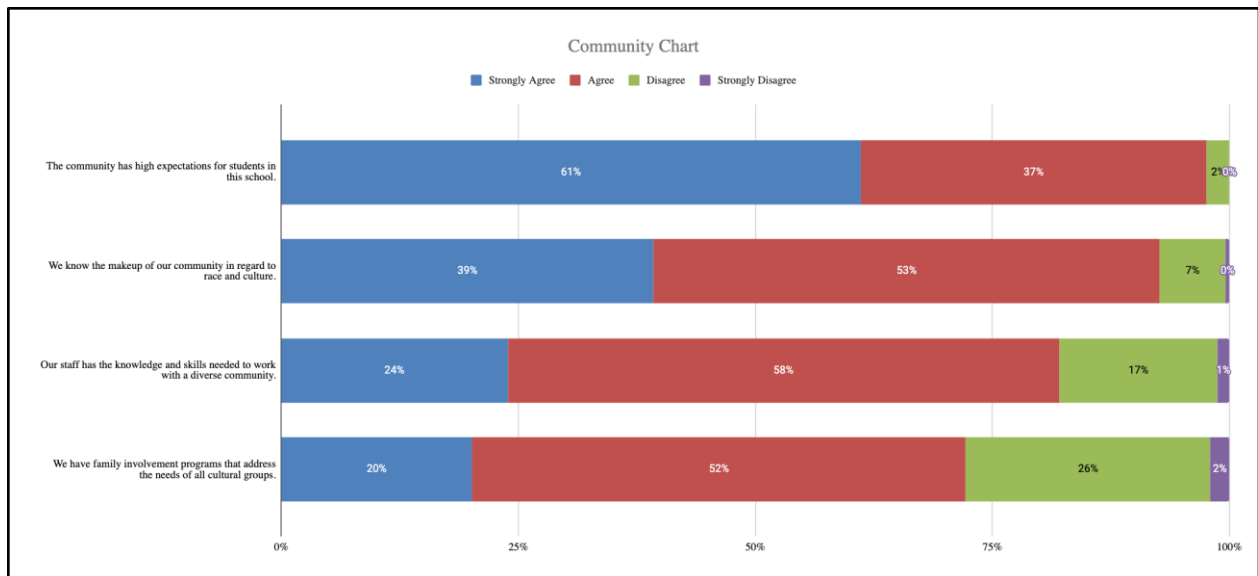
- 96% of staff strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *My classroom includes opportunities for student choice and power-sharing.*
- 29% of staff strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *School administrators involve teachers and staff in decision-making and problem-solving.*



## Community

Within the topic area of community:

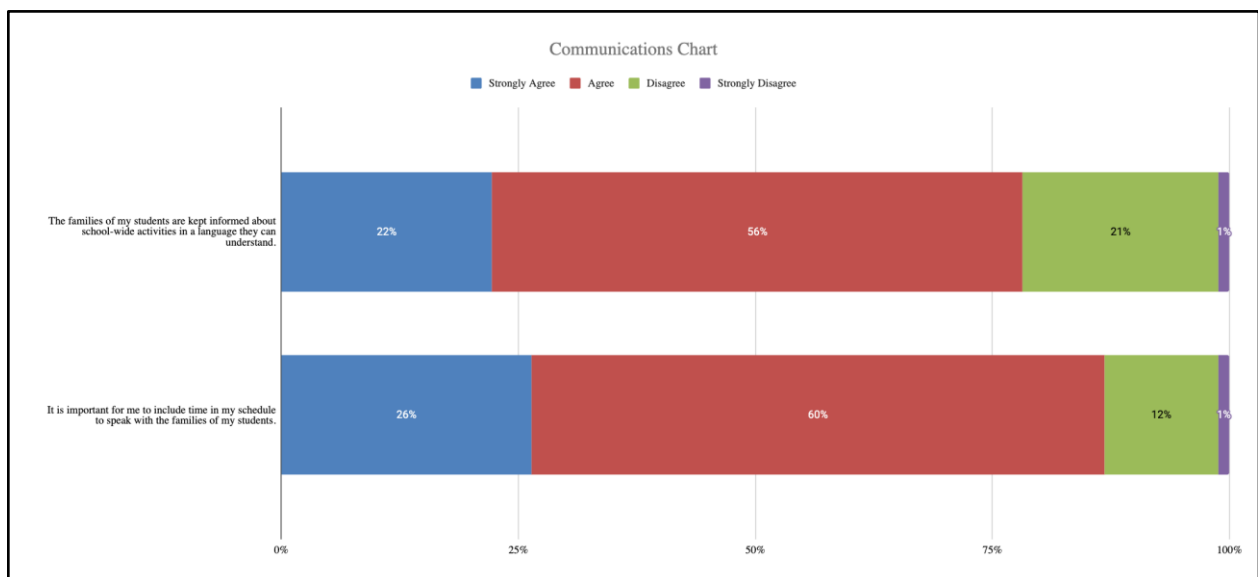
- 93% of staff strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *We know the makeup of our community in regard to race and culture.*
- 28% of staff strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *We have family involvement programs that address the needs of all cultural groups.*



## Communications

Within the topic area of communications:

- 87% of staff strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *It is important for me to include time in my schedule to speak with the families of my students.*
- 22% of staff strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *The families of my students are kept informed about school-wide activities in a language they can understand.*

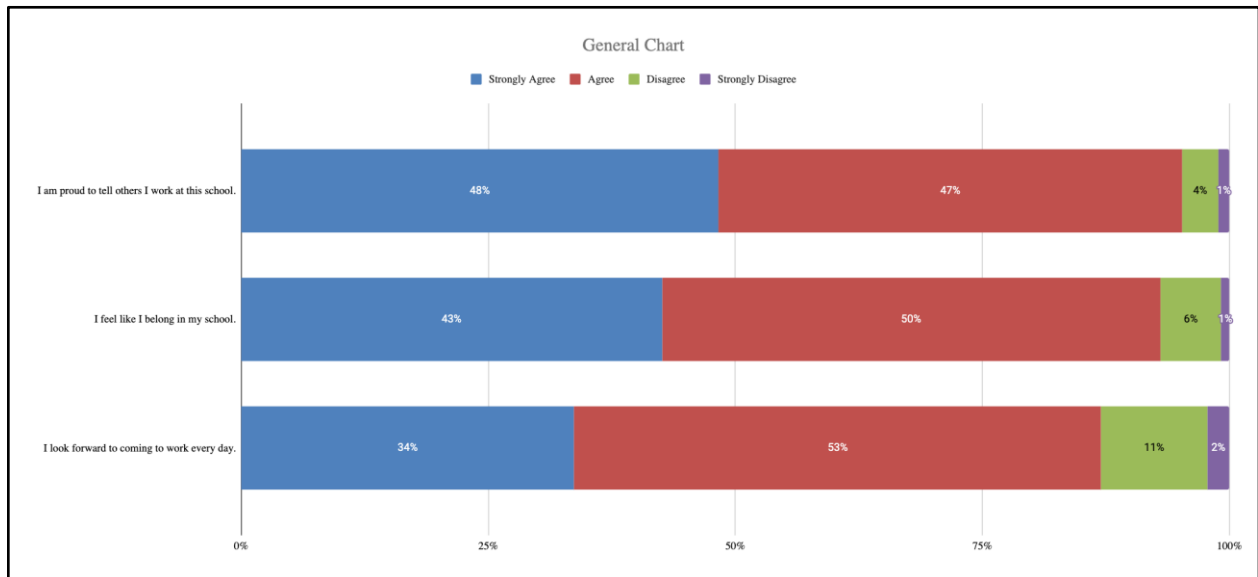


## General

Within the topic area of general:

- 95% of staff strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I am proud to tell others I work at this school.*

- 13% of staff strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to work every day.*



## Students 4-6

### Equity Survey - Students (Gr. 4 - 6) Report Livingston School District (2023)

The Livingston Equity Survey - Students (Gr. 4-6) was administered on June 9, 2023 to Livingston School District students. At the time the survey was closed, there were a total of 1,323 responses collected. The following report describes our methodology, preliminary results, and our next steps.

### Demographics

School	Responses	Count
Mt. Pleasant Elementary	12.9%	170
Harrison Elementary	13.3%	176
Collins Elementary	11.6%	153
Hillside Elementary	11.0%	145
Burnet Hill Elementary	6.8%	89
Riker Hill Elementary	10.5%	139

Mt. Pleasant Middle	33.7%	444
Heritage Middle	0.2%	2
Other/Out of District	0.1%	1

Grade	Responses	Count
4	33.3%	440
5	30.9%	408
6	35.8%	473

Race	Responses	Count
American Indian/Alaska Native	5.9%	76
Asian	36.5%	473
Black/African American	5.4%	70
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	0.2%	3
Two or more races	13.5%	175
White	38.5%	499

Gender	Responses	Count
Male	50.6%	668
Female	46.6%	615
Other	0.6%	8
Prefer not to disclose	2.1%	28

## Methodology

For core survey questions, we calculated the percentage of respondents that selected strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, we created a stacked bar chart to present survey results by topic area.

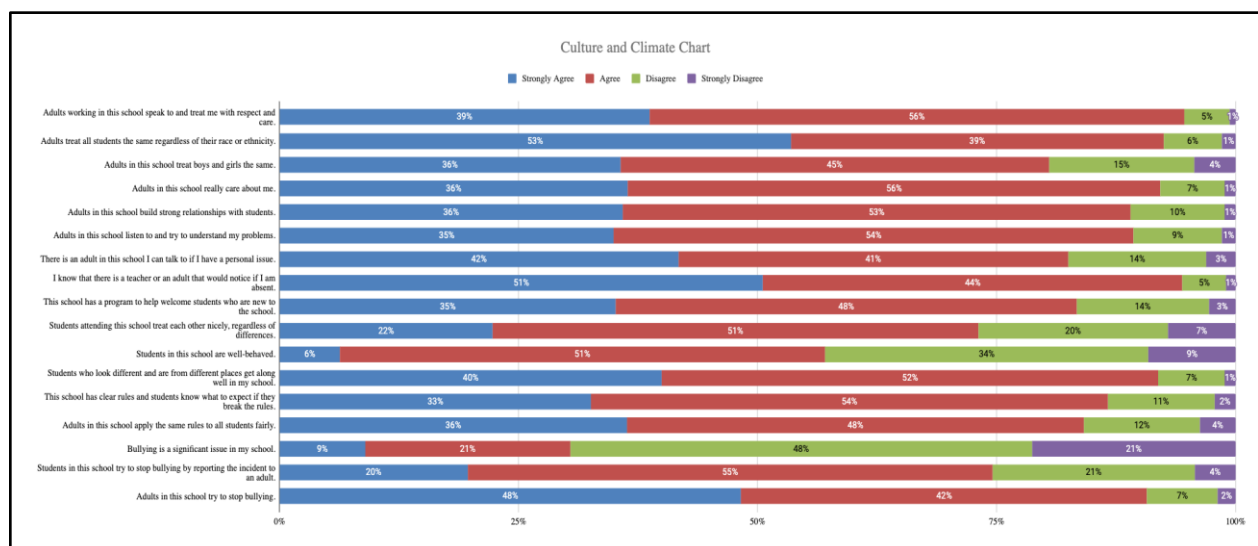
## Findings

For findings, we identified survey items with the most and least favorable responses within each topic area. The stacked bar charts below show a more detailed breakdown by topic area. Furthermore, we studied the open-ended responses for each topical area below, focusing specifically on explanatory responses. Such responses helped us to understand why some participants may have selected the responses they did. To begin, we excluded non-responses and short responses with no substantive meaning. Below, the total number of eligible open-ended responses is stated within the paragraph and the number shown in the parentheses represents the total number of responses that support the identified theme. Selected quotes are italicized and representative of the identified theme.

### Culture and Climate

Within the topic area of culture and climate:

- 95% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *Adults working in this school speak to and treat me with respect and care.*
- 43% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Students in this school are well-behaved.*
  - 60% of students at Mt. Pleasant Middle strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Students in this school are well-behaved.*



### Open Ended Responses for Question 11

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 363 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students mostly experienced teacher bias based on gender. Students mostly frequently

commented on their experiences with the enforcement of the dress code and during physical education class. (203)

- *Quote: When it comes to dress codes for boys and girls, there are some differences that are worth noting. Generally speaking, boys have more leeway when it comes to what they can wear to school or other events. They can wear shorts, pants, t-shirts, and other casual clothing without too much scrutiny. Girls, on the other hand, are often subject to more strict dress codes, especially when it comes to showing too much skin. This can be frustrating for many girls who just want to wear comfortable and cute clothing without worrying about being judged or penalized.*

### **Open Ended Responses for Question 23**

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 581 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students expressed their experiences related to questions 18 and 19. For example, students provided examples of negative experiences related to student to student relationships. Relatedly, students commented that student misbehavior occurred during less structured times such as lunch, recess, and in student bathrooms. (366)

- *Quote: For question 18 I chose strongly disagree because as someone who has been here since kindergarten, I get made fun of a lot by my friends so I don't agree that kids in this school treat others nicely even if they have differences or just in general*
- *Quote: I said strongly disagree on question 18 because I used to play at recess with certain people at recess and they were mean to me. I didn't even do anything, I just made a mistake or something, it's like they only care about winning. A good example is in handball. Once I threw the ball to another person not on my team by accident they said something really mean to me after, so I was really upset. Then there is plenty of other stuff students are mean about.*

### **Academics**

Within the topic area of academics:

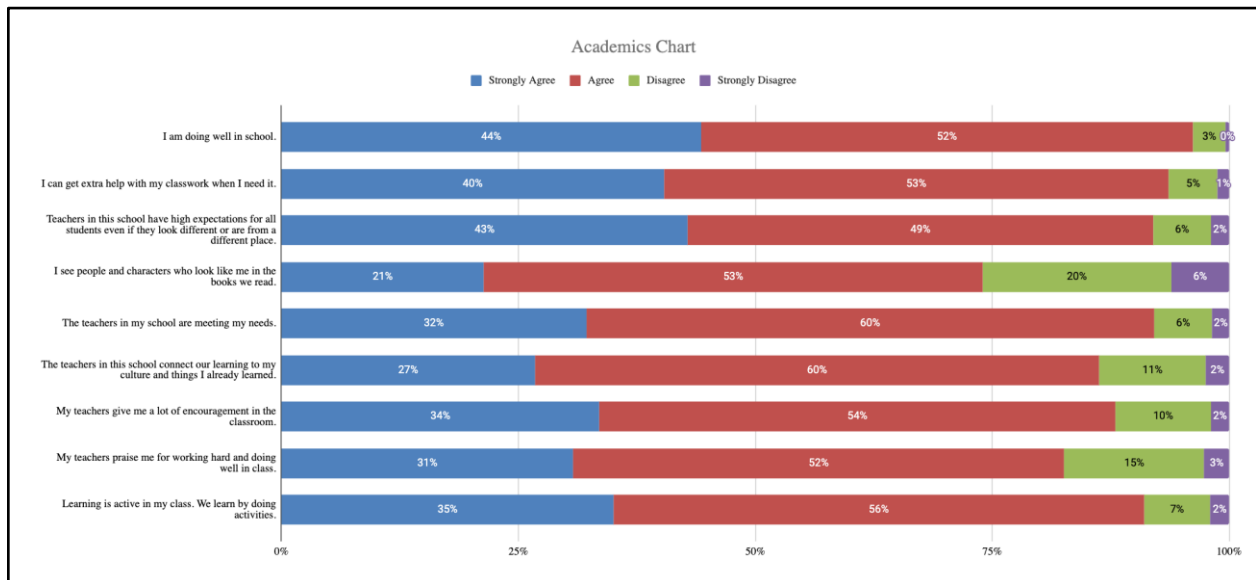
- 96% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I am doing well in school.*
- 26% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I see people and characters who look like me in the books we read.*
  - 34% of American Indian/Native Alaskan students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I see people and characters who look like me in the books we read.*

- 31% of Black/African American students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I see people and characters who look like me in the books we read.*

### Open Ended Responses for Question 33

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 341 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students experienced people and characters who did not look like them in the books they read. Additionally, students most frequently mentioned a lack of representation of Asian culture. (160)

- *Quote: I strongly disagree with question 30 because I never feel very much represented, when we learn about different cultures or books that are in the library. For example, in Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, I was questioning whether I am Asian because I never felt represented in the presentation or morning announcements.*

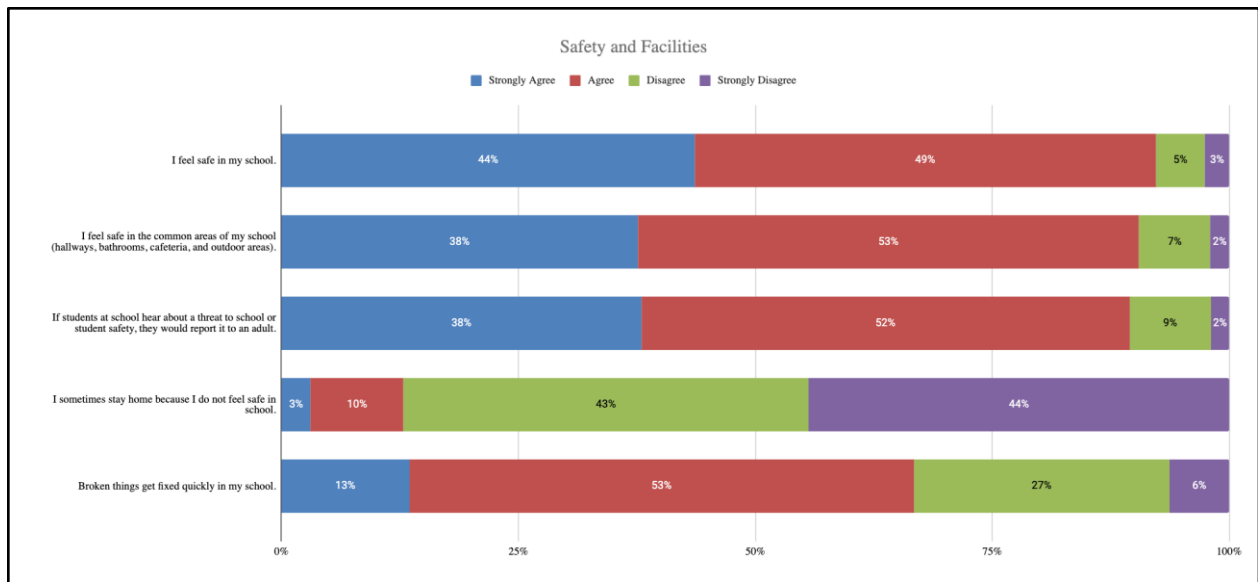


### Safety and Facilities

Within the topic area of safety and facilities:

- 92% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I feel safe in my school.*
- 33% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Broken things get fixed quickly in my school.*

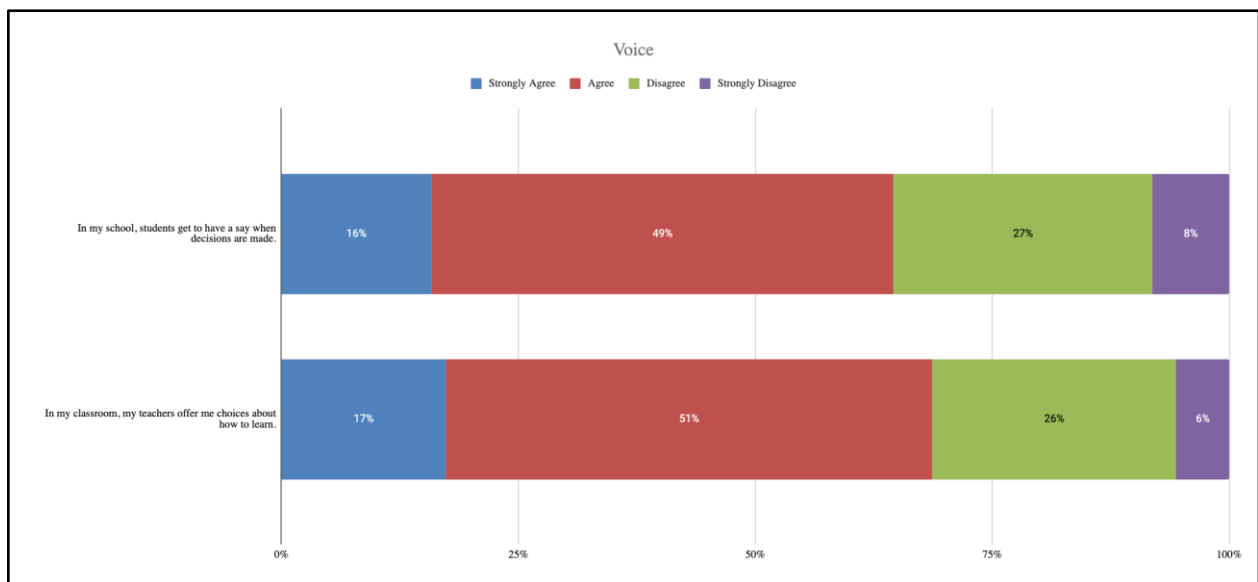




## Voice

Within the topic area of voice:

- 69% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *In my classroom, my teachers offer me choices about how to learn.*
- 35% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *In my school, students get to have a say when decisions are made.*

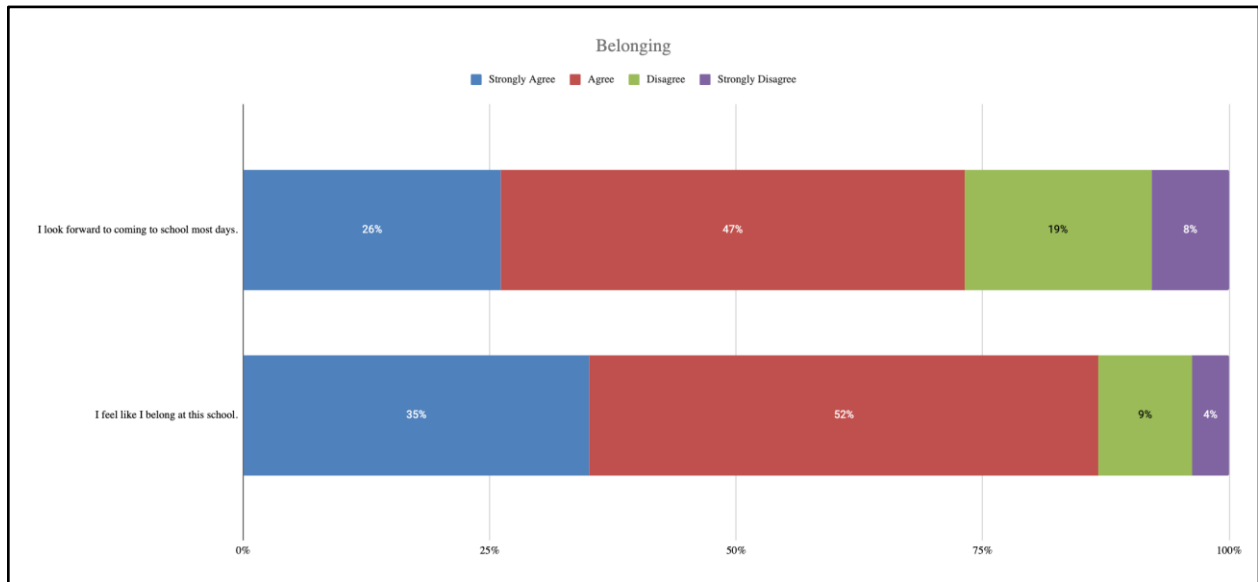


## Belonging

Within the topic area of belonging:

- 87% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I feel like I belong at this school.*

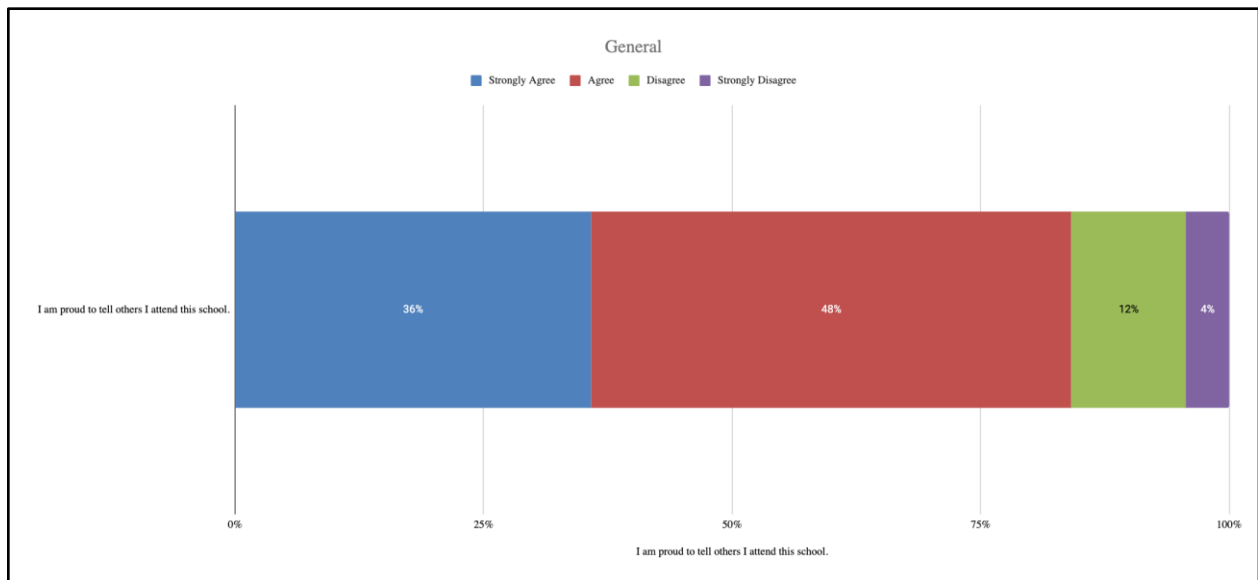
- 27% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*
  - 30% of Harrison Elementary students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*



## General

Within the topic area of general:

- 76% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I am proud to tell others I attend this school.*





## Students 7-12

### **Equity Survey - Students (Gr. 7 - 12) Report Livingston School District (2023)**

The Livingston Equity Survey - Students (Gr. 7-12) was administered on June 9, 2023 to Livingston School District students. At the time the survey was closed, there were a total of 2,582 responses collected. We omitted 178 cases due to completion time in less than 3 minutes (estimated time to complete survey is 10 minutes) and incomplete surveys (none of the questions were answered). After omission, our analysis included 2,404 responses. The following report describes our methodology, preliminary results, and our next steps.

#### **Demographics**

School	Responses	Count
Heritage Middle	37.0%	889
Livingston High	62.6%	1505
Other/Out of District	0.4%	10

Grade	Responses	Count
7	19.8%	474
8	17.3%	414
9	19.1%	458
10	18.1%	434
11	15.0%	360
12	10.8%	259

Race	Responses	Count
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.8%	42
Asian	34.7%	829
Black/African American	5.1%	121
Pacific Islander/Native	0.8%	18

Hawaiian		
Two or more races	7.7%	183
White	50.1%	1196

Gender	Responses	Count
Male	51.6%	1238
Female	44.4%	1065
Transgender	0.8%	20
Non-Binary	0.9%	22
Prefer not to disclose	2.3%	54

## Methodology

For core survey questions, we calculated the percentage of respondents that selected strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, we created a stacked bar chart to present survey results by topic area.

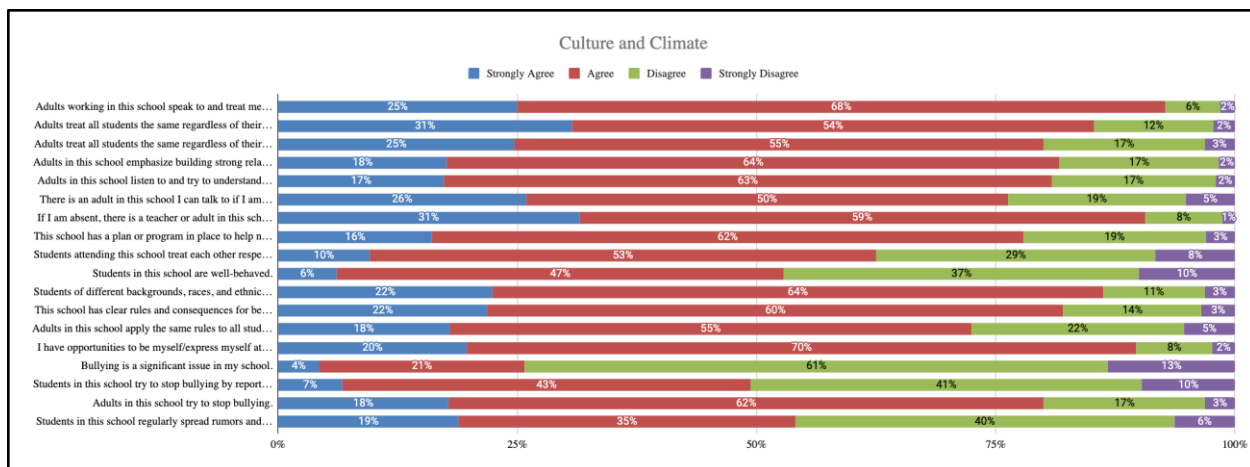
## Findings

For findings, we identified survey items with the most and least favorable responses within each topic area. The stacked bar charts below show a more detailed breakdown by topic area. Enlarged charts can be found [here](#). Furthermore, we studied the open-ended responses for each topical area below, focusing specifically on explanatory responses. Such responses helped us to understand why some participants may have selected the responses they did. To begin, we excluded non-responses and short responses with no substantive meaning. Below, the total number of eligible open-ended responses is stated within the paragraph and the number shown in the parentheses represents the total number of responses that support the identified theme. Selected quotes are italicized and representative of the identified theme.

### *Culture and Climate*

Within the topic area of culture and climate:

- 93% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *Adults working in this school speak to and treat me with respect and care.*
- 54% of students strongly agreed/agreed with the statement - *Students in this school regularly spread rumors and lies on social media.*



### Open Ended Responses for Question 13

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 519 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students mostly experienced teacher bias based on gender. (240)

- *I disagree with the one about gender because usually male athletes are prioritized and given the benefit of the doubt. In other words, there is a lot of favoritism and it usually results in boys who play sports or are popular being treated with more leverages than the rest of the class.*
- *I feel like some of my teachers are more strict(in small ways) with male students, and are less lenient towards female students. They do it in small ways like letting them "play dumb" or disregarding small passive-aggressive language. Or teachers would change their tone of voice to be more "bubbly" towards female students.*

### Open Ended Responses for Question 25

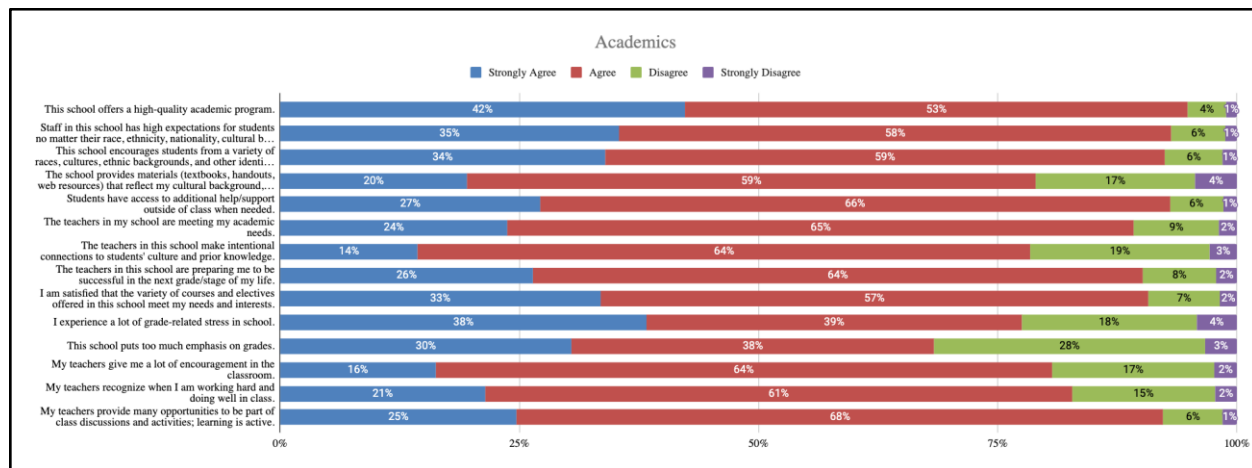
Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 699 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students did not believe that there were clear rules and consequences for behavior or applied fairly to all students. (rules and consequences (192), student behaviors (192))

- *Some adults "look the other way" for some students while strictly enforcing the rules for other students based on gender.*
- *Some people are given a free pass, while others (usually with a history of infractions) are given little chances to share their side before disciplinary action is given.*

### Academics

Within the topic area of academics:

- 95% of students strongly agreed/agreed with the statement - *This school offers a high-quality academic program.*
- 68% of students strongly agreed/agreed with the statement - *This school puts too much emphasis on grades.*



### Open Ended Responses for Question 34

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 374 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students identified cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities that they believed were not reflected in materials. (relating to need for diversity in curriculum, 170)).

- *Quote: As an Asian-Indian girl I disagree because I don't really see my culture fully represented as much as others - I find that sometimes I've heard or been subject to microaggressions. (170)*
- *Quote: Resources we use talk about things black people have suffered through but don't focus on things we succeeded in for example, very smart black individuals and things they may have invented. .*

### Open Ended Responses for Question 38

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 294 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students did not believe their academic needs were being met for a variety of reasons such as not receiving support when requested, mismatches between teaching and student learning styles, and/or lack of connection to cultural identity or prior knowledge. (163)

- *Quote: I always feel like I am trying harder to connect new concepts to previously learned information, because not all teachers have access to or knowledge of past*

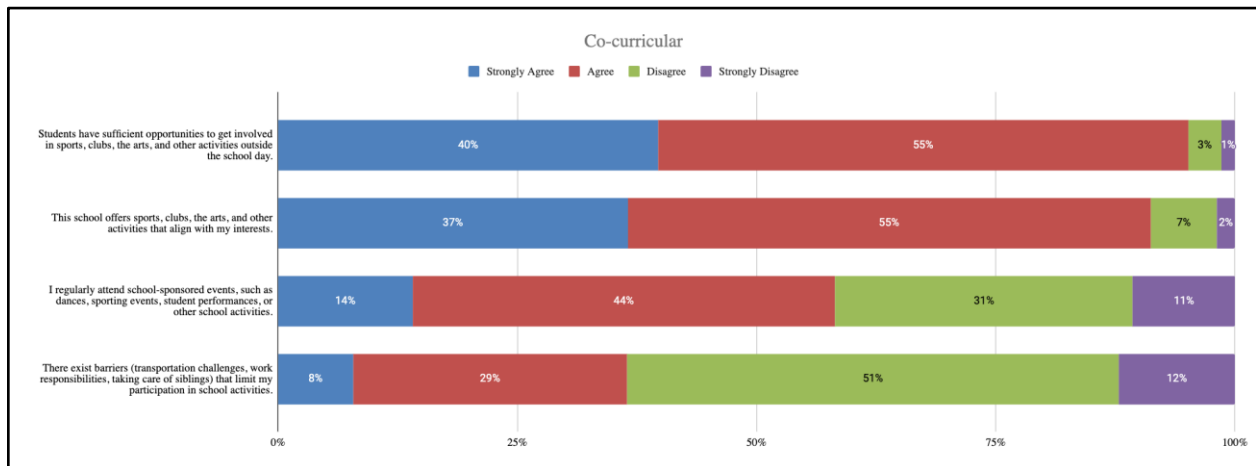
*curricula and the classes which students take. It is also one-size-fits-all so you get the sense that individualized educational opportunities are discouraged, and the class will keep chugging along (or leave you behind) if you do not put in more effort than the teacher does to stay with it.*

- *Quote: I don't see many teachers connecting to students' culture. It seems more like they are trying to assimilate students into their own culture.*

## Co-curriculars

Within the topic area of co-curriculars:

- 95% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *Students have sufficient opportunities to get involved in sports, clubs, the arts, and other activities outside the school day.*
- 42% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I regularly attend school-sponsored events, such as dances, sporting events, student performances, or other school activities.*



## Open Ended Responses for Question 50

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 477 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that students did not participate in after-school activities due to transportation or conflicting outside activities. (transportation issues (63), time issue (55), other issues (187))

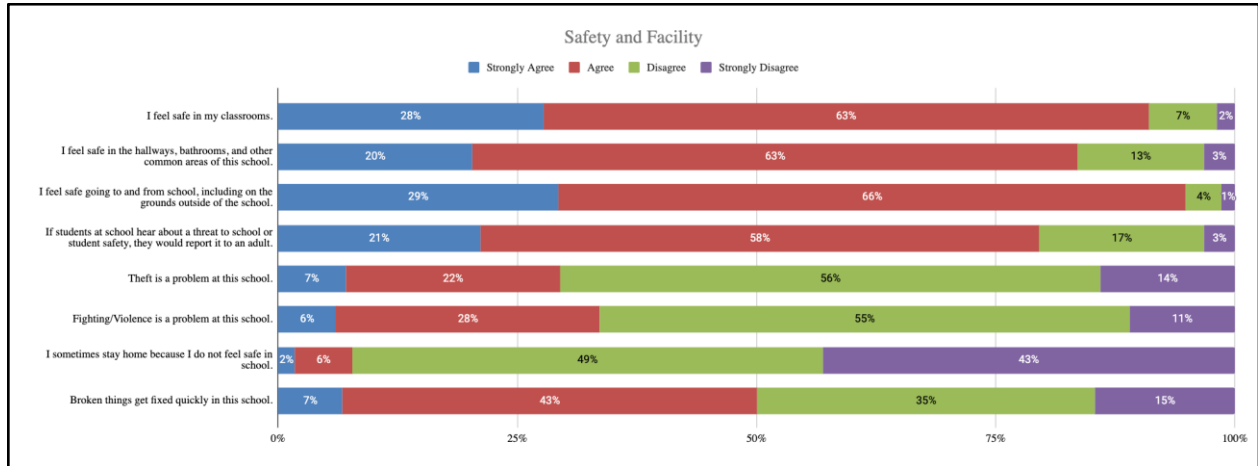
- *Quote: Transportation to different sports and extracurriculars is hard.*
- *Quote: living far away from the school sucks because I can't do any sports because the late bus is not sufficient and my parents are too busy to pick me up so it sucks.*
- *Quote: Working a job allows for little time to stay after school for a club meeting.*

## Safety and Facilities



Within the topic area of safety and facilities:

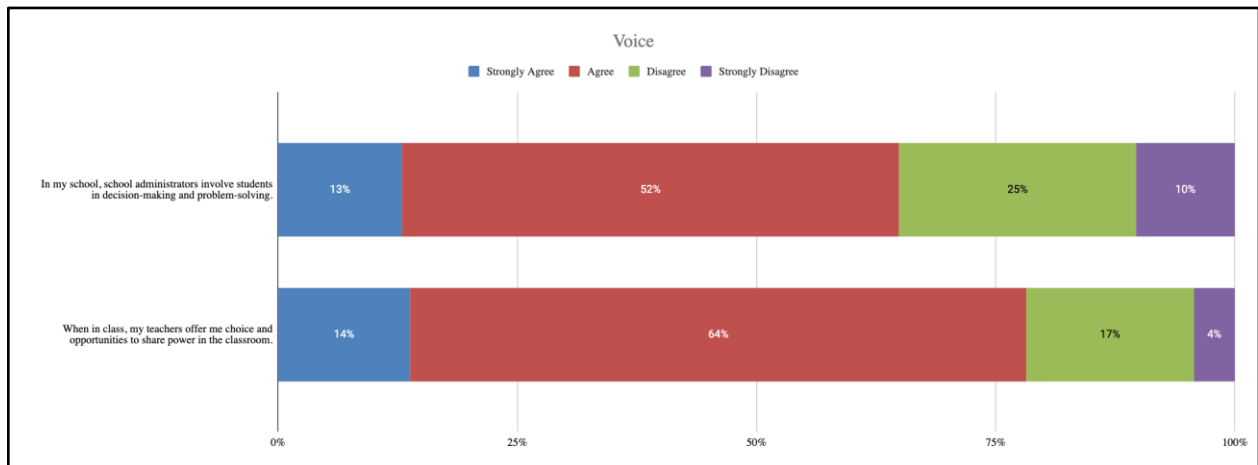
- 95% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I feel safe going to and from school, including on the grounds outside of the school.*
- 50% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Broken things get fixed quickly in this school.*



## Voice

Within the topic area of voice:

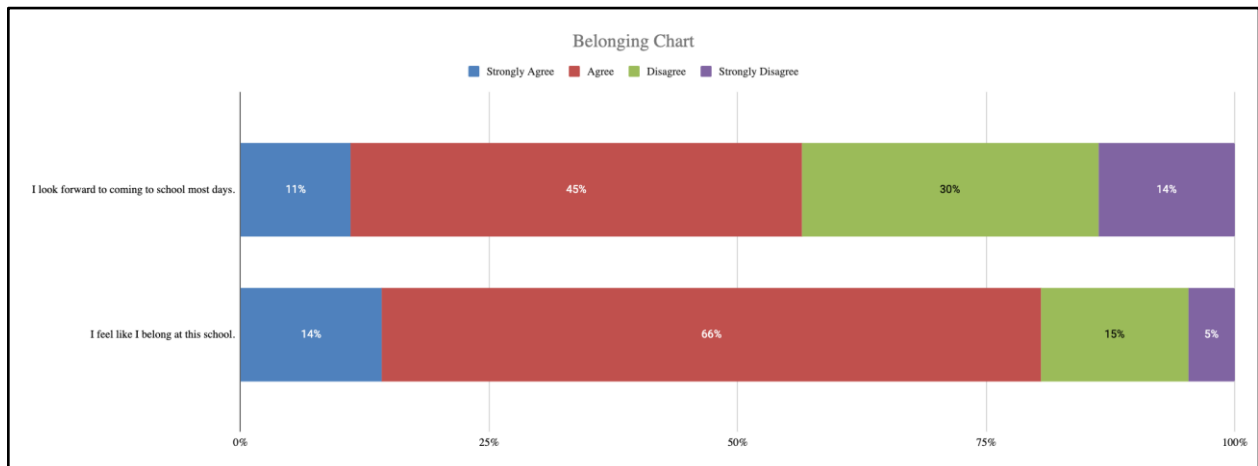
- 78% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *When in class, my teachers offer me choice and opportunities to share power in the classroom.*
- 35% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *In my school, school administrators involve students in decision-making and problem-solving.*



## Belonging

Within the topic area of belonging:

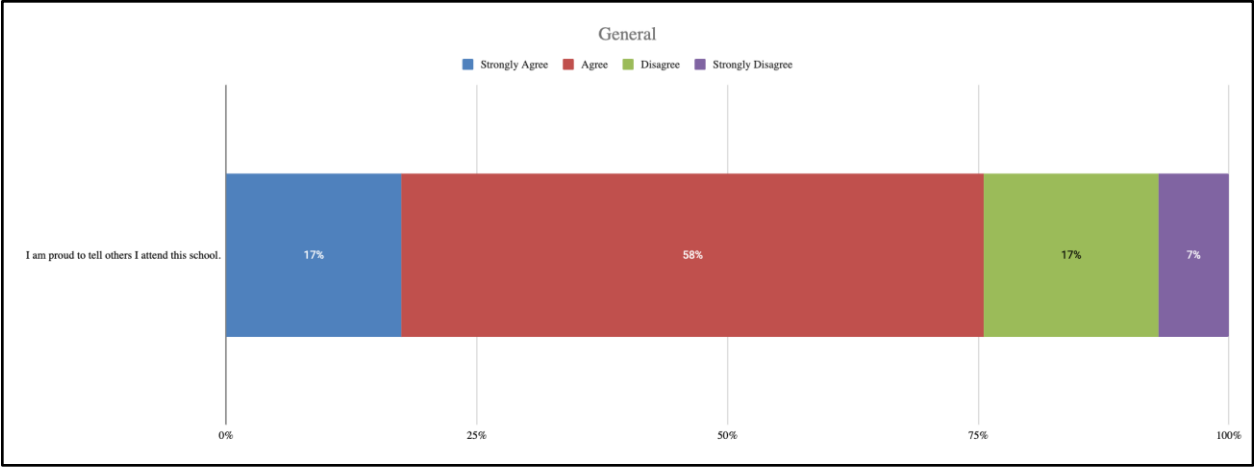
- 80% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I feel like I belong at this school.*
- 44% of students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*
  - 55% of students who identify with the LGBTQIA+ community strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*
  - 52% of multi-racial students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*
  - 39% of Asian students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*
  - 38% of Black/African American students strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I look forward to coming to school most days.*



## General

Within the topic area of general:

- 76% of students strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I am proud to tell others I attend this school.*



## Family/Community

### **Equity Survey - Family Report Livingston School District (2023)**

The Livingston Equity Survey - Family was administered from June 20, 2023 to July 9, 2023 to Livingston School District families. At the time the survey was closed, there were a total of 572 responses collected. The following report includes the survey demographics, our methodology, and preliminary results.

#### Demographics

School	Responses	Count
Mt. Pleasant Elementary	7.7%	44
Harrison Elementary	9.1%	52
Collins Elementary	9.0%	51
Hillside Elementary	8.1%	46
Burnet Elementary	7.4%	42
Riker Hill Elementary	8.6%	49
Mt. Pleasant Middle	7.5%	43
Heritage Middle	12.5%	71
Livingston High	29.5%	168
Other/Out of the District	0.7%	4

Race	Responses	Count
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.5%	3
Asian	41.5%	235
Black/African American	3.1%	18
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	0.2%	1
White	45.7%	259

Two or More Races	9.0%	51
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Ethnicity (Hispanic or Latinx)	Responses	Count
Yes	7.6%	43
No	92.4%	524

Child's Gender	Responses	Count
Male	51.2%	291
Female	44.7%	254
Transgender	0.0%	0
Non-Binary	0.2%	1
Prefer to not disclose	3.9%	22

Child's Program	Responses	Count
Free/Reduced Lunch	2.3%	7
Special Education	25.2%	76
504 Plan	11.6%	35
English Language Learners	4.0%	12
Honors/AP Program	33.6%	101
Gifted and Talented	27.9%	84
Monmouth Court	0.7%	2
Other	12.3%	37

## Methodology

For core survey questions, we calculated the percentage of respondents that selected strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, we created a stacked bar chart to present survey results by topic area.

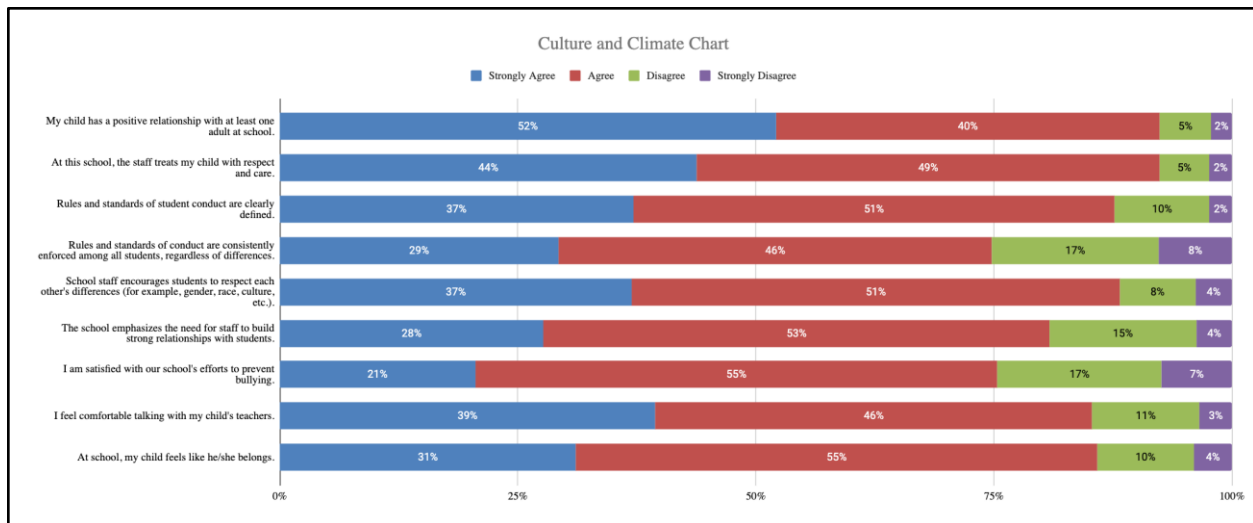
## Findings

For findings, we identified survey items with the most and least favorable responses within each topic area. The stacked bar charts below show a more detailed breakdown by topic area. Enlarged charts can be found [here](#). Furthermore, we studied the open-ended responses for each topical area below, focusing specifically on explanatory responses. Such responses helped us to understand why some participants may have selected the responses they did. To begin, we excluded non-responses and short responses with no substantive meaning. Below, the total number of eligible open-ended responses is stated within the paragraph and the number shown in the parentheses represents the total number of responses that support the identified theme. Selected quotes are italicized and representative of the identified theme.

### ***Culture and Climate***

Within the topic area of culture and climate:

- 92% of the families strongly agree/agree with the statement - *My child has a positive relationship with at least one adult at school.*
- 92% of families strongly agree/agree with the statement - *At this school, the staff treats my child with respect and care.*
- 25% of families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *Rules and standards of conduct are consistently enforced among all students, regardless of differences.*
  - 34% of multiracial families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *Rules and standards of conduct are consistently enforced among all students, regardless of differences.*
  - 33% of Black/African American families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *Rules and standards of conduct are consistently enforced among all students, regardless of differences.*
- 25% of families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *I am satisfied with our school's efforts to prevent bullying.*
  - 31% of families with a child that identifies as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community strongly disagree/disagree with the above statement
  - 30% of multiracial families strongly disagree/disagree with the above statement



## Open Ended Responses for Question 14

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 110 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, a few common themes identified within the responses are:

- Concern about the exclusion and bullying of specific student groups (16)
  - *Quote: I have experienced and witnessed children in gen ed classrooms labeling and bullying other children who are in special ed programs. School can do a better job educating children about different learning needs and being respectful to those who learn differently. Schools are so focused on academics that there is no effort made to engage children in activities where they can learn about each other outside of their classrooms and in structured learning environments. Social skills program is only for children who have IEPs, it should be for all children so special children are not constantly being singled out and labeled.*
- School and staff attitude towards students (24)
- Explicit bias or discrimination based on race, culture, or socioeconomic status (21)
- Differences in the enforcement of rules and standards for marginalized students (27)
  - *Quote: Handling of harassment/bullying or even minor digressions from the code of conduct are not equitably handled across races. There are very clear racial undertones in the district's handling of such issues. Incidents of anti-semitism are taken much more seriously. Communication from the schools on such incidents are unequivocal in their condemnation as opposed to racial slurs or harassment/bullying that impact other racial groups. Often, those incidents seem to be stuck in prolonged investigations with no clear outcomes or consequences*

## Open Ended Responses for Question 17

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 115 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that families expressed that not enough is being done to address incidents of bullying (15), racist/discriminatory treatment (18), or generally related to bullying (15).

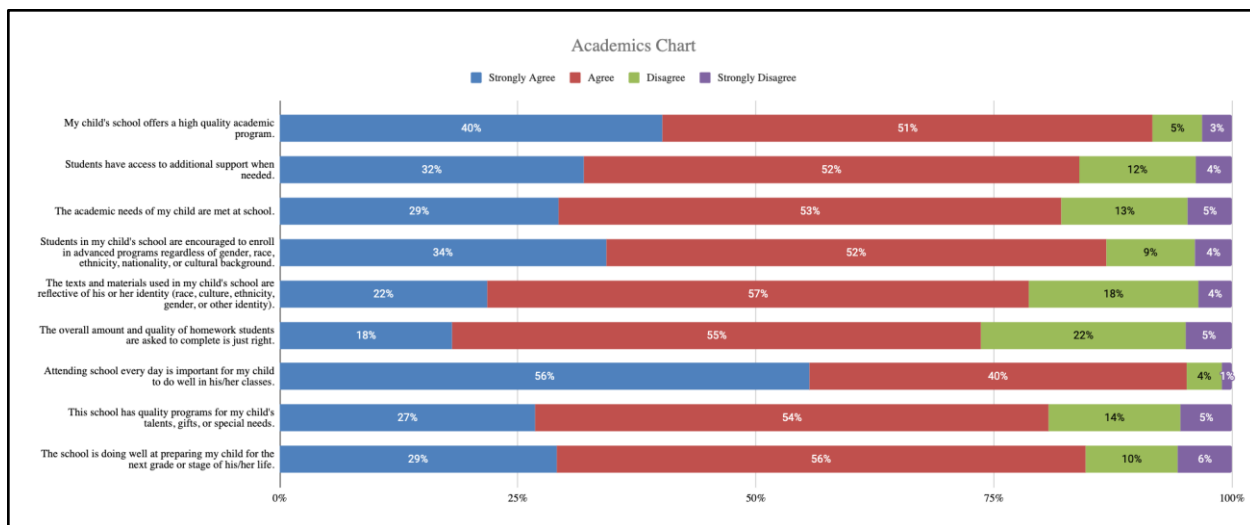
- *Quote: The school spends the first HSA meeting always talking about the definition of bullying and how it takes a lot to elevate it to bullying. I feel like bullying may not be taken seriously, only to see if it fits into the legal definition (with a lot of emphasize to NOT define it as bullying to avoid paperwork and hassle).*
- *Quote: As the only kid from certain origin, my daughter often came home with strange and sometimes offensive questions about her culture of origin. The school could have done a better job together with parents in educating children to be respectful of different culture.*

### ***Academics***

Within the topic area of academics:

- 95% of the families strongly agree/agree with the statement - *Attending school every day is important for my child to do well in his/her classes.*
- 26% of the families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *The overall amount and quality of homework students are asked to complete is just right.*
  - 26% of Asian families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *The overall amount and quality of homework students are asked to complete is just right.*
  - 39% of multi-racial families strongly disagree/disagree with the statement - *The overall amount and quality of homework students are asked to complete is just right.*





## Open Ended Responses for Question 25

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 98 eligible responses. Below are a few prominent themes and some representative examples:

- Families would like to see texts and materials better reflect their child's identity (47)
- Families are unfamiliar with the process and/or criteria for advanced placement and gifted and talented programs (11).
  - *Quote: As a person of color, the school never gave us any information on gifted and talented programs at the school. When we asked they basically said THEY will select the students in G+T. There is no clarity on the process. Also, I'm not sure that the curriculum encourages perspectives from marginalized communities - I know the district is doing things at the social studies classes in upper grades, and the media specialist at RH has made a great effort to diversify the books in the library. Still, I don't see coursework changing much to be more inclusive.*
  - *There is a lack of transparency on how these advanced programs are conducted and how certain kids make it to these programs while others don't. Too much is left to the teacher's perception about the kids than just numbers.*

## Open Ended Responses for Question 29

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 102 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, a few common themes identified within the responses are:

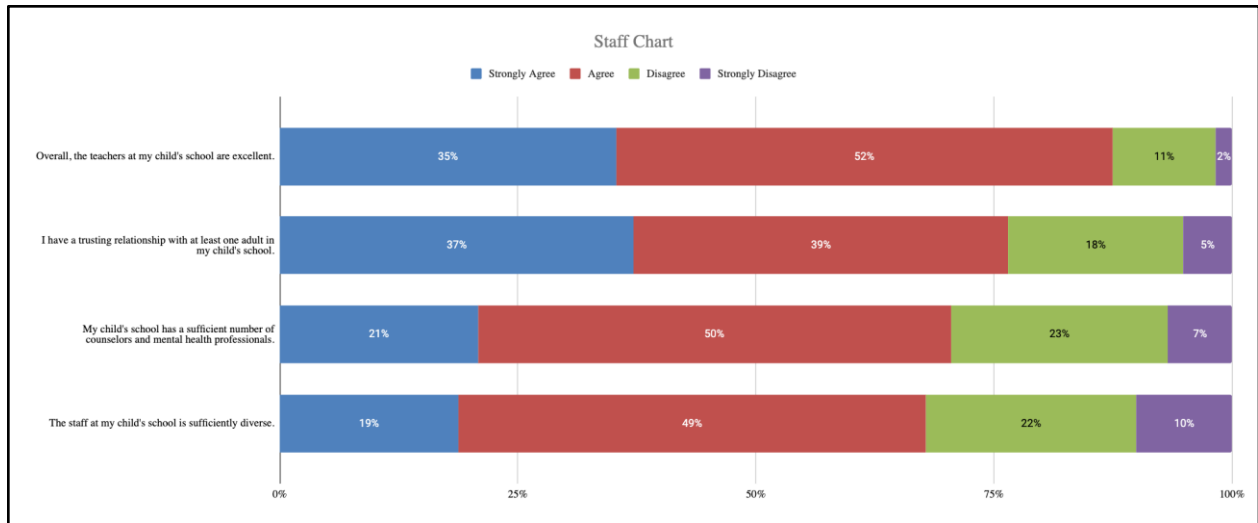
- Academic programs are not challenging enough for students (19)

- *Speaking of the low bar, the homework and assignments are very rudimentary, seems to have been designed at the lowest minimum needed to pass the grade. And rarely any programs aimed at identifying and building my child's talents or gifts.*
- There is a need to better address the needs of students with IEPs (11)
  - *The Special Education programming in this district has been more than disappointing. We need to do better and provide the children struggling with learning disabilities, dyslexia, etc.... more services catered to their individual IEP's. Telling parents that their child is doing wonderful while reading two grades below grade level and having staff tell you when your child is in 3rd that "college isn't for everyone," is beyond unprofessional and missing the mark on what should be happening in a school system such as Livingston. We are a school system that should be able to provide individual academic services with Wilson/OG trained (trained meaning more than a one or two hour class) teachers/staff. Children are not all the SAME, whether it by race, gender, OR learning disabilities, and it's time LPS starts doing something about what is happening with the Reading program. So many children are suffering and made to leave Livingston to go to other schools because LPS cannot get it together. Disappointing to know that other towns can accomplish this and LPS cannot.*
  - *Very few programs for special needs students. Unlike other nearby schools, NO after school clubs or programs with included supports for special needs students. VERY FEW LIFE SKILLS programs offered. Bottom line, LHS does the least amount possible to comply with the law for special needs students.*

## **Staff**

Within the topic area of staff:

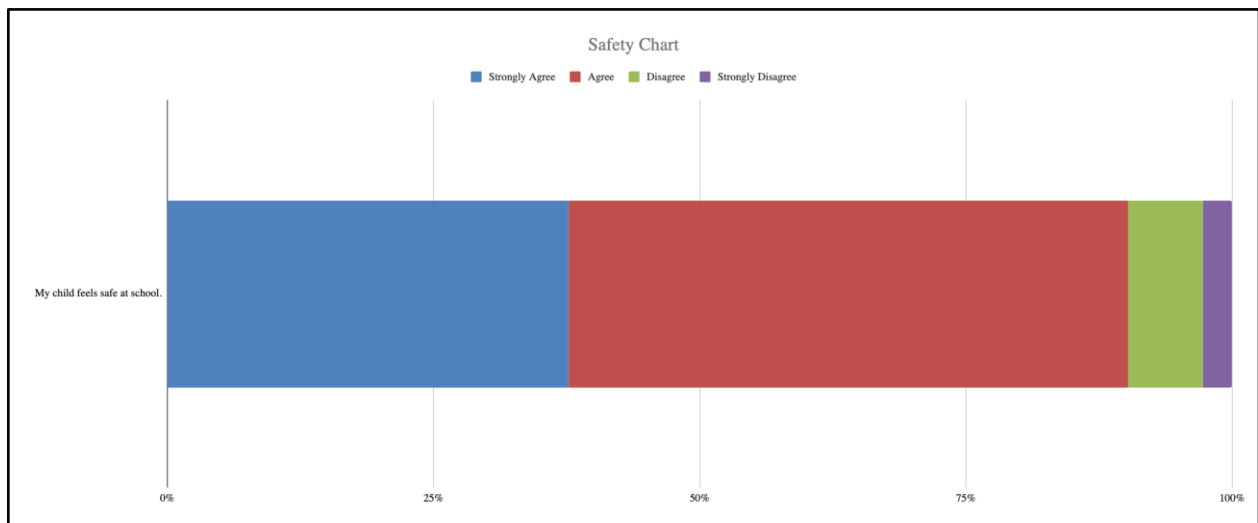
- 87% of families strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *Overall, the teachers at my child's school are excellent.*
- 32% of families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *The staff at my child's school is sufficiently diverse.*
  - 76% of Black/African American families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *The staff at my child's school is sufficiently diverse.*
  - 38% of Asian families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *The staff at my child's school is sufficiently diverse.*
  - 42% of multi-racial families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *The staff at my child's school is sufficiently diverse.*



## Safety

Within the topic area of safety:

- 90% of families strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *My child feels safe at school.*

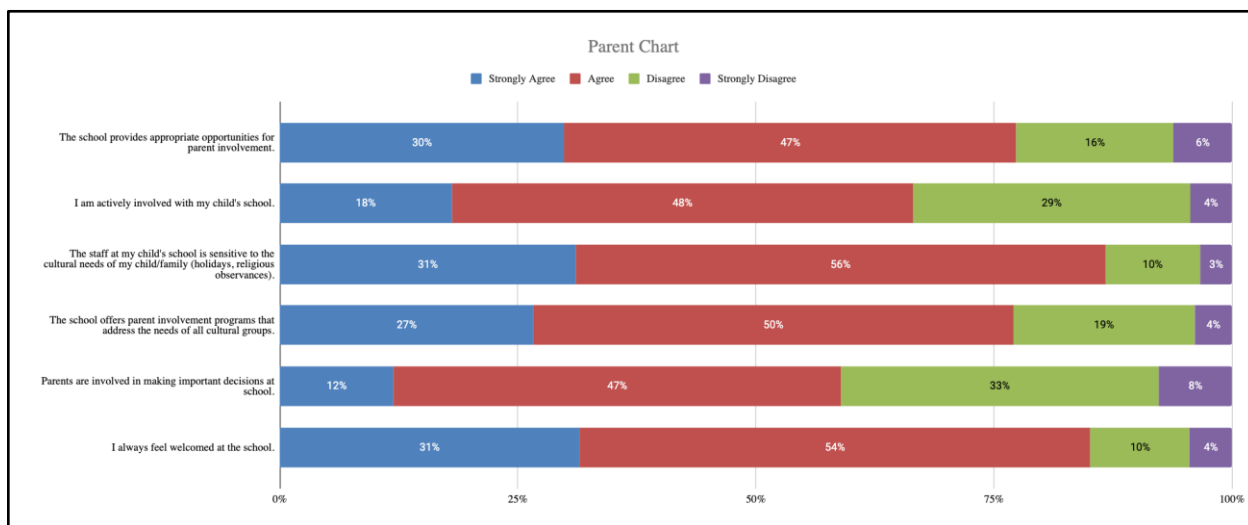


## Parent

Within the topic area of parent:

- 87% of families strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *The staff at my child's school is sensitive to the cultural needs of my child/family (holidays, religious observances).*
- 41% of families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Parents are involved in making important decisions at school.*
  - 44% of Asian families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Parents are involved in making important decisions at school.*

- 36% of White families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *Parents are involved in making important decisions at school.*



## Open Ended Responses for Question 40

Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 96 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, a few common themes identified within the responses are:

- There are not many opportunities for parent involvement (25)
  - *There is not outreach from the schools for parent involvement. Parents involvement is predicated on parents taking the initiative*
- Asian and Black/African American holidays are not recognized by the school district (11)
  - *As a black person living in Livingston, it's challenging to say that black history is included as part of the curriculum. My son's school had their 5th grade moving up ceremony on Juneteenth and no one noticed. I did bring it to the attention of the principal and she apologized and said they will never have it on that day in the future. But it shows that that date was not important enough to even be recognized. Juneteenth is a very important day for blacks in America and it should be taught in the schools just like anything else. I understand the black population is small in Livingston but that is not an excuse why black history shouldn't be taught; and I don't mean slavery. Schools love to discuss slavery but Africans were soooo much more than that. I would love to see a curriculum about blacks in America and their real journey they had building this country for free. And everything can be age appropriate. We know the harsh reality of slavery but it's real history that the board of education (every where not*

*just Livingston)waters down or doesn't mention until February. That is a huge issue for me.*

- *Livingston school District does not celebrate Lunar New Year and won't make it as a holiday for those who celebrate. If the family wants to celebrate, child will miss the school. Hope this will change in the future to make the kids understand the culture and feel proud to celebrate instead of feeling scared to be absent from school! Thanks*

### **Open Ended Responses for Question 43**

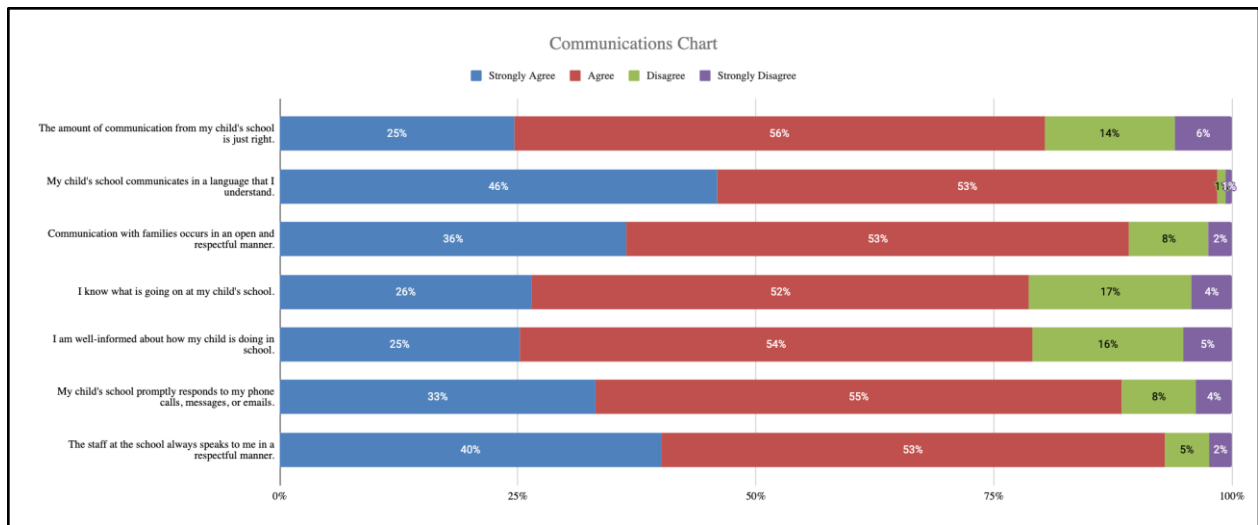
Within this open-ended question, we analyzed 61 eligible responses. To further expand on the above Open Ended Responses, one common theme identified within the responses is that families do not feel welcomed because they are unable to enter the school buildings (11) and feelings of their input not being heard or sought (46).

- *Quote: Many times, you can't even get into the lobby. They say to drop whatever off in the container outside of the front door. When you do get inside, it is like visiting a jail.*

### ***Communications***

Within the topic area of communications:

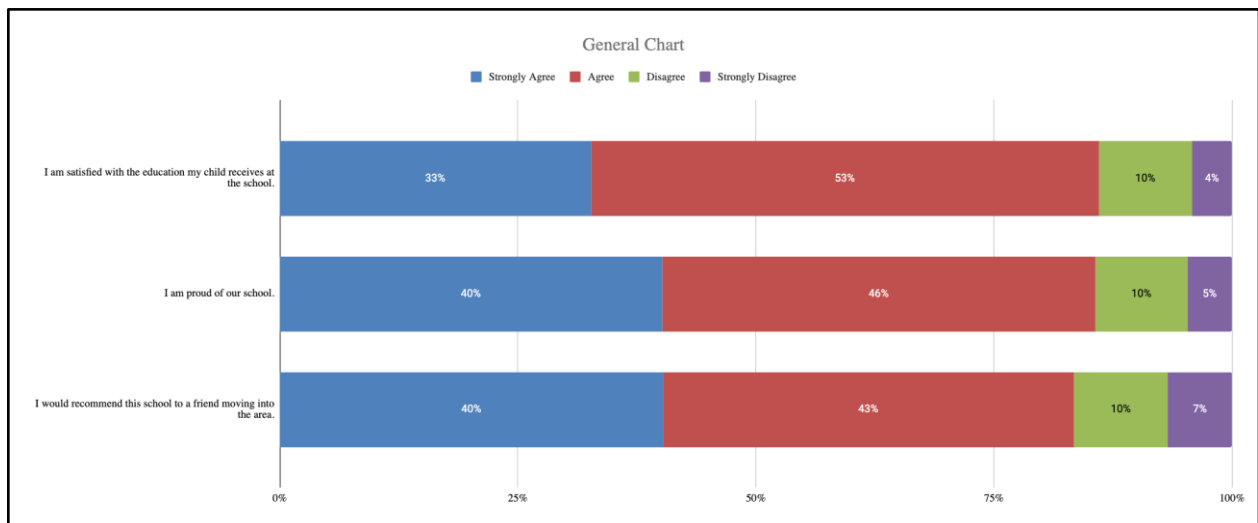
- 98% of families strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *My child's school communicates in a language that I understand.*
- 21% of families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I know what is going on at my child's school.*
- 21% of families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I am well-informed about how my child is doing in school.*
- Families indicated email notifications (71%) and conversations/email with teachers (53%) are the 2 most preferred methods of receiving general information.



## General

Within the topic area of general:

- 86% of families strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I am satisfied with the education my child receives at the school.*
- 86% of families strongly agreed/agree with the statement - *I am proud of our school..*
- 17% of families strongly disagreed/disagreed with the statement - *I would recommend this school to a friend moving into the area.*



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