



Strategic Framework Engagement – Final Research Report on the Listening & Learning Phase

Key Findings

1. During the Listening & Learning phase, 1,143 staff, students, parents, and community members have participated in over 50 hours of discussion.
2. Generally, participants believed that *focusing on curriculum and instruction; building family, youth, and community partnerships; and providing staff support and talent development* will propel the district forward in the future.
3. Participants of color spoke to similar issues, but with important distinctions (e.g., having curricula reflect students' cultures/histories).
4. Students placed a premium on *building family, youth, and community partnerships; enhancing curriculum and instruction; and investing in specific programs and strategies*, and much of what they discussed highlighted inclusivity and preparation for their future.
5. Of the areas proposed by the Superintendent, participants supported all ideas, with especially high results for *Family, Youth, and Community Partnership* and *Culturally Responsive Teaching*.

Background

Engagement plays a critical role in the development of the new Strategic Framework. It brings in community voice to guide the decision making process, ensuring that the decisions are not made in a vacuum and reflect our community's priorities and values. It also helps us pressure test our preliminary ideas and emerging themes.

The Strategic Framework Engagement Calendar consists of four phases:

1. **Listening & Learning** (Oct 2017 – Jan 2018) – Sharing our best thinking with stakeholders; gathering input in a rigorous way to analyze trends across groups; giving the Board preliminary updates on findings via individual Board briefings and Nov Regular Board Meeting
2. **Reflection** (Feb-April 2018) – Reflecting on what we have learned; providing the Board with a final summary of findings at Feb Board Retreat; reporting back to the community on themes in early April; developing protocols for next phase of engagement
3. **Planning** (April-Jun 2018) – Planning for the next version of the Framework with a planning group that consists of educators across the district; engaging in review of a near final Framework at June Board Retreat
4. **Final Strategic Framework** (Aug-Sep 2018) – Present final version to the Board; release to public

To help facilitate the creation of our next Strategic Framework, the Superintendent asked Research & Program Evaluation Office staff to design, execute, and analyze a process for capturing the ideas of our community and solicit feedback on her emerging ideas to drive the district. This report outlines the first phase of this work.

Design Principles

Several key principles guided our research design for this project. They include:

- **Using a process grounded in qualitative research design** – The qualitative research process provides a rigorous way to decipher trends to ensure that the data drive the findings. Drawing from this research area, we will use strategies like iterative design, representative feedback, and maximizing input.
- **Elevating voices of those not typically heard** – We plan to intentionally engage more people of color and other historically marginalized groups. The parent listening tour specifically will be designed to engage those who typically have not been heard; by analyzing their data separately, we will ensure their opinions are used for decision-making.



- **Engaging through existing venues** – We want to leverage the power of existing groups and keep our staff, students, and families focused on their important work by keeping the process running in the background.
- **Intentionally build on what’s working** – We will draw on the principles of appreciative inquiry, choosing to focus on the positive that we want to build on, rather than the deficits we want to fix. We will look for what has worked in the district thus far and what we collectively believe could work moving forward.
- **Increase ownership and commitment to district strategy** – By engaging our community early in the process, we affirm that change comes bottom up as opposed to top down.
- **Asking questions that will lead to actionable answers** – Input only matters if we use it; as such, we want to be sure the questions we ask will lead to actionable information in time for decisions and products.

The engagement process draws on design concepts from [Appreciative Inquiry](#), a model for engaging stakeholders in self-determined change. This approach moves away from traditional problem solving modes of inquiry and instead seeks to refocus attention on what works, leveraging the positive aspects of an organization, and what people really care about to bring about organizational change. We use the principles of Appreciative Inquiry to guide how our protocol design.

Data Collection

This phase represents the most robust collection of input and jumpstarts the Framework rewrite. As such, it was critical to engage as many groups as possible and collect consistent, reliable data. To do so, we used focus groups as our primary data collection mechanism. First, focus groups started with a presentation from the Superintendent on district progress to date. Secondly, participants brainstormed in small groups using the prompt: *Imagine a time in the future when we are celebrating our progress – with dramatically more students on track to graduate college, career, and community ready. Imagine the actions we took to get there.* Thirdly, participants were asked to individually record answers to three questions on side A of the feedback form, two which are universal to all groups and one that is tailored to the particular participant group:

1. *Where did we build on our previous success?*
2. *Where did we make bold moves?*
3. *How did we best support you as staff? (Staff Question) OR How did we best collaborate with the community? (Community Question) OR How did we best partner with parents and families to support their children? (Parent/Family Question) OR How did we create strong relationships with students? (Student Question)*

Fourthly, the Superintendent presented her thinking on potential ideas to guide the next Strategic Framework. Finally, participants completed side B of the feedback form, then engaged in either a small or large group discussion (depending on session length and number of participants) about which ideas seem most promising and which ideas they were most curious about. Conversations were recorded during this time, and sessions concluded with a share out to the room (if time allowed). *Appendix A* shows the feedback form participants used to record their individual input. These sessions were designed to maximize input and minimize presentation time, with the goal of collecting as much information from stakeholders as possible during our limited time together.

In addition to these sessions led by the Superintendent, we utilized other methods of gathering input. One such mechanism was a parent listening tour. The family listening tour was facilitated by a consultant (Annette Miller from [EQT by Design](#)) and designed with different protocols for building new relationships and lasting engagement. The family listening tour consisted of four meetings per group among four distinct groups. One was conducted in Spanish and one was conducted in Hmong. The Superintendent attended the third session for each group and followed the same protocols as outlined above. In addition, we provided a [web-based feedback form](#), available to anyone for submitting input throughout the process. In total, 17 submissions were completed via the website. These data were included in the information analyzed here.

RPEO designed the input process to be as standardized as possible to allow for consistent data collection and analysis. Input sessions followed a set structure, based on session type. Long sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes, and included a PowerPoint presentation and time for idea generation and discussion individually, in small groups, and in the



large group setting. We used this protocol for 19 sessions, including meetings with community groups and parent listening tour sessions. Short sessions lasted approximately 45-60 minutes, did not have a PowerPoint, and included time for individual idea generation and large group discussion. We used this protocol for 33 sessions, including school staff meetings, student sessions, and other meetings where time was limited. Despite variations in content delivery, both protocols relied on the same set of standard resources (e.g., informational handout and feedback form) and collected data in the same way (e.g. via individual feedback forms and recorders transcribing the large group conversation).

To ensure consistency across the variety of meetings, RPEO developed a standard notes protocol, modified by meeting type, along with a process description document to help train recorders from outside the RPEO office (such as Human Resources staff, Family & Community Engagement staff, and Secondary staff). *Appendix B: Tips for Recorders* includes the training document for recorders. RPEO staff transcribed individual feedback forms and incorporated them directly into the notes protocol for that session. These mechanisms created a consistent approach to data collection.

In total, the Listening & Learning phase data analyzed here included 52 meetings, 1,143 participants, over 50 hours of conversation, and generated over 130,000 words analyzed. The most common participants were white, female, and staff members. This tendency reflects the demographics of our staff overall. When we analyzed responses from participants of color, we analyzed 14 sessions with 268 participants. Sessions included in this group were either specifically targeted to participants of color or had a group of participants where half or more were participants of color. When we analyzed responses from students, we analyzed 8 sessions with 92 students. *Appendix C* shows the calendar of all sessions.

We received 690 submitted responses to the feedback form (not all sessions used this form and not all sessions had time to fill out the form), and of the 690 responses where participants identified their connection to the school district, approximately 72% from staff, 20% from parents/family members, 17% from community members, and 5% from students who identified themselves as such. The total does not equal 100% because participants could select more than one category, and some did not indicate their connection to the district. Note that participants were able to skip sections of the feedback form if they did not wish to respond.

Analysis Methods

After feedback sessions were completed, the notes and feedback forms were collected by MMSD staff and sent to RPEO. Analysts then transcribed participant responses to the *Imagine* prompt into the notes file taken by a recorder, and also entered responses to the feedback form into Qualtrics, a web-based survey platform, to make analysis more efficient. We analyzed quantitative data from the feedback forms directly in Qualtrics after entry and exported the qualitative data to analyze in another platform.

We analyzed the qualitative data using NVivo, a software program designed for qualitative analysis. We used coding, a way of organizing and sorting qualitative data that involves assigning labels, or codes, to each comment or response, which makes it easier to draw themes from and summarize the data. Responses from all venues were aggregated together to find overall trends across groups and disaggregated by participant and meeting type, when possible, to find themes that were unique to specific groups.

Qualitative coding, especially coding using elements of grounded theory, is an iterative process – as such, code names and definitions shifted throughout the coding process based on participant responses. Further, given the scope of this project, coding happened on a rolling basis, so as notes and data became available, they were gathered into a master data base. The process of coding and analyzing the data was the same throughout the process and for each meeting. First, we applied structural coding to all comments to indicate which guiding question had prompted the response. Then, responses to each question were read multiple times for word frequencies, patterns, and other trends that emerged organically in participant responses. Once identified, these patterns became the base code list and working definition to work from moving forward. As new data were introduced, we used the constant comparative method to continue to check our extant descriptive code list and definitions to ensure accuracy and authenticity as the project evolved. Throughout the process, the code list and definitions were refined multiple times.



After analyzing all participant responses to the questions, we targeted our analysis on two groups of interest: (1) participants of color, and (2) students. We used the existing codes generated across all participants and then looked for a different ordering of the codes with the specific group of interest. Finally, we looked to see if there were different details within those existing themes for the particular group. We did a comparative analysis by evaluating the dominant themes and trends identified within each of those groups to the universal themes and trends identified in the larger dataset. Again, responses were read repeatedly and work frequencies were calculated to determine similarities and differences between subgroups and the total sample. This method of analysis came with limitations. Using the existing codes generated from the analysis of all participants meant that the demographic groups who were the most frequent participants (white, female, staff) had the largest influence in creating the initial codes. Time and capacity necessitated this approach; future versions of this work could repeat this grounded theory process with subsets of data, such as participants of color and students, to generate new codes specific to those groups.

When percentages of coded comments are provided, note that *Other*, *Unrelated*, and *Unclear* codes have been removed from this code list and are not counted in the % of coded comments. In situations where the percent of coded comments is not provided, it is because there are a smaller number of total comments for that group or only one dominant theme to report on. The most common themes for all of our reported findings are in *Appendix D*.

While we sought a high level of rigor and consistency, the ultimate goal of this project was not to create a methodologically complex research report; instead, the goal was to engage our community in a process that created a sense of investment in the district and meaningful input into its future direction. This means that we made conscious tradeoffs in complexity to improve communication and inclusiveness. It also means that the list of proposed strategies and priority areas for the Framework will not align exactly to the coding frequency presented in *Appendix D*. This analysis method highlights the most common themes in responses, which do not necessarily represent the most actionable and highest-leverage ideas presented; instead, they are simply those that were stated most often. The creation of the Strategic Framework is an iterative process. It is not a list of the most common themes in a series of conversations as reported here, but rather the product of reflecting on those common themes, discussing what they mean for our work, and turning them into a Framework that reflects our shared values, as well as the direction of the District. What we learned follows.

A previous version of this report was shared with the Board of Education in mid-February 2018, but due to timing did not include the last of the Listening & Learning sessions that had not occurred at the time of release. This report includes all sessions from the Listening & Learning phase; while much of the report is reflective of the earlier version, there are some changes due to the addition of new data. For example, instead of having the separate codes “Emphasized Mental Health & Wellness” and “Effectively Managed Behavior & Safety,” those codes were combined into “Created Safe, Supportive Environments.”

Findings – *Imagine Prompt*

Participants first reflected individually, then in small groups on the following prompt: *Imagine a time in the future when we are celebrating our progress – with dramatically more students on track to graduate college, career, and community ready. Imagine the actions we took to get there.* Participants recorded answers to three questions, two which are universal to all groups and one that is tailored to the particular participant group. Below we report on the three most discussed universal themes across participants in their responses to the *Imagine* prompt, and we provide a targeted analysis for sessions with participants of color and students in order to better elevate voices that historically have not typically been heard. Further details on the coding scheme may be found in *Appendix D*.

Universal Themes – Imagine Prompt

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of themes for the *Imagine* prompt across participants.



Participants believed that the actions we took to reach a time where we are celebrating our progress included enhancing curriculum and instruction, or further developing our teaching and learning, with a commitment to skill development (both academic, social emotional, and otherwise), engagement, and culturally responsive practices (mentioned in 24% of coded comments).

Participants described wanting more focus on literacy, reading, and math curricula and interventions for those three areas. A bold move for one participant was simply, “More intervention in reading & math.” “Hopefully we see improvements of reading and math skills as students come to secondary school with consistent and planful instructions and interventions,” another participant suggested.

Participants also wanted more emphasis on the arts:

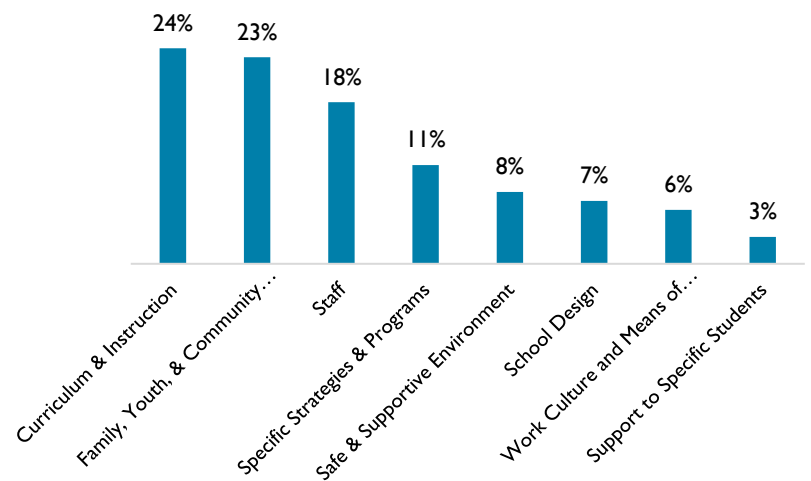
“...I think standardizing has its benefits but I feel like our kids are becoming less creative. The arts and music are more important now and those skills are still what they need.” Beyond those academic abilities, participants wanted students to develop other skills, especially social emotional skills as well as other foundational aptitudes necessary for success: “Academics and behavior and social emotional learning became fully integrated – district level, schools, and classroom!” Engaging students was a priority, with one participant lamenting the “...we’re so rigorous in our curriculum. Teachers are working hard we forget to have fun and lean into creativity.” Others thought more about the application of lessons and how that may influence engagement: “Teach a relevant and engaging curriculum that has real world application.”

Developing family, youth, and community partnerships and relationships to promote feelings of inclusivity, community, and support was another frequently discussed topic (23%). One participant suggested, “We focused on relationships with students & families, giving teachers time & resources to develop those relationships. We built our schools as community-centered, where all families felt included & part of the team.” Participants wanted students to feel supported, cared for, and that they had a “voice.” Generally, there was an emphasis on developing and maintaining relationships or partnerships among stakeholders and a desire to provide supports to families: “...supporting parents to support their kids.” Participants wanted there to be more engagement, connection, and communication, especially with families and the community, and there was a specific call for more “cultural competence” and continued equity work. “Restorative justice practices” were also emphasized. “Relationships relationships relationships!” iterated one participant. “Facilitating strong and sincere connections with families and the community.”

Many participants also focused on supporting staff and developing talent in these conversations, emphasizing giving staff resources and support (e.g., time, opportunities for collaboration) to succeed and develop, while also focusing on attracting and retaining a quality and diverse staff (18%). Part of this meant providing staff with more time to accomplish their tasks: “Offer more prep time in a week where teachers have real time to study student work to determine next steps, sifting through all the resources for remedial, ELL, & advanced learners to create a solid system of developmental instruction that can be responsive to the ebb and flow of student understanding.” Participants also desired more staff training, sometimes of particular types (e.g., GLAD, diversity, trauma), and participants called for more professional development opportunities. “We really invested in training for teachers,” one participant suggested, “both pedagogically and in terms of developing a social/racial consciousness.” Hiring was also critical in terms of hiring high quality and diverse staff: “Hiring more people of color, staff and leadership that reflect the student and family identities.” They also valued collaboration and teaming.

Throughout this process, we have learned a great deal about the work our community would like us to engage in. We have also learned something on how the community thinks the work should be done. **When considering the Imagine prompt, participants discussed how to get the work done, not just what the work should be moving**

Figure 1: Universal Themes for Imagine prompt





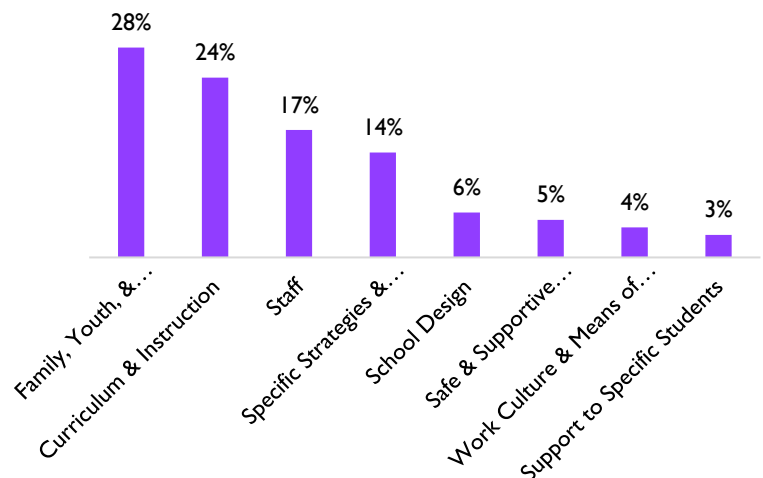
forward. Participants noted that a shift in work culture and means of working could get the right work done the right way. Such shifts involved a specific call for flexibility and freedom for innovation. “Don’t be afraid of innovation,” one participant offered. Another participant indicated that “risk taking and innovation” should be “rewarded.” Along with that, participants encouraged an eye to accountability, systems, and data use. “School Improvement Plans holding leadership & teachers accountable to meeting goals within a school year” a participant advised. Additionally, participants called for attention to goals, continuing “our strategic plan,” and a laser-like focus on our “vision” to propel the district forward.

Targeted Themes: Participants of Color – Imagine Prompt

Below we discuss how our targeted groups, participants of color and students, differed from the universal themes. While we used the same code list generated across all participants to analyze our targeted groups, we look at the ordering of the codes and then take a closer look at the details if they differ from the universal themes. The rank ordering of what topics participants of color discussed most frequently was very similar to participants overall, with the notable differences that participants of color emphasized family, youth, and community partnerships more than curriculum and instruction, and participants of color emphasized different aspects of safe and supportive environments compared to participants overall (see Figure 2).

For participants of color, family, youth, and community partnerships and relationships, specifically opening up engagement opportunities and lines of communication to ensure stakeholders felt connected, supported, and part of a community, was critical for future success. One participant asked, “Do our families feel safe? Welcome in conversation with the school? Many families feel disconnected,” and another opined, “One thing we could do – we always talk about parent engagement. If we’re looking 5 years from now, we’d be able to say more parents, a lot of parents, most parents became engaged. Working with teachers more, tag-teaming with teachers, making sure students are doing homework...” Beyond engagement and connecting, participants talked about communication: “What I want to be improved is united among everybody and communication.” Participants praised “support systems”: “Have more support systems for different groups of people.”

Figure 2: Themes for Imagine Prompt (Participants of Color)



In addition, participants of color discussed the importance of curriculum and instruction on future success however, the feedback often focused on ensuring the curriculum reflected the students, making teaching culturally responsive, and that teaching and learning took into account student needs and provided them with skills for their future. The suggestion of “diversify[ing] the curriculum” was especially pronounced in history: “The thing we’re known for is our diversity,” one participant stated, “but we have history textbooks full of white faces.” “Implementation of culturally responsive teaching where every student and family can see themselves in the curriculum. By this I mean, in areas of math and calculus students are exposed to mathematical of all cultures. In reading courses students are exposed to books and authors of all cultures in an intentional way throughout the semester.” Teaching about culture and culturally responsive teaching was also important – specifically “taking it from a buzzword we love to use to what it means.”

Participants of color also championed supporting staff and developing talent in terms of giving staff more training and additional support, while also continuing to hire more staff of color. “Ongoing diversity training” said one participant. “We added SEA training to all new folks hired to ensure that quality people were coming into our buildings,” said another. Participants of color called for additional staff and the “support that was necessary to go the extra mile” while also calling for “more teachers of color.”



Investing in **specific strategies and programs**, especially involving students in programs or opportunities (during or after school) to explore college and career opportunities, with an eye towards key transition points was another popular topic of conversation for participants of color. For example, one participant encouraged “Integrating college and career oriented programs into school & academic curriculum” in order to expose students to opportunities post-high school. Participants of color called out programs such as AVID and Pathways: “Expanded Pathways programming to enhance ‘school to work’...preparing students for careers – college is not for everyone.” The transition points that participants of color also focused on besides those post-high school were elementary to middle and middle to high school.

Concerns around **safe & supportive environments** included a specific emphasis on behavior, bullying, suspensions, with some discussions around students of color. One participant suggested, “We revisited our discipline plan. While recognizing that many students come to school with many burdens from home which negatively impacts behavior, and we tried our best to address these...” Another participant recommended, “Bullying – teachers should be on the lookout for that because those being bullied don’t want to talk about it.” Although participants overall highlighted safe and supportive environments, they focused slightly more on mental health more than behavior, while participants of color emphasized behavior-related aspects, with little attention explicitly paid to mental health.

Targeted Themes: Students – Imagine Prompt

Unlike the findings across participants, students in particular heavily discussed the importance of family, youth, and community partnership (see Figure 3). Students also talked a lot about investing in specific strategies and programs – they recommended this more than the overall participants did. They talked less about staff, perhaps because they were focused more on their role as a student.

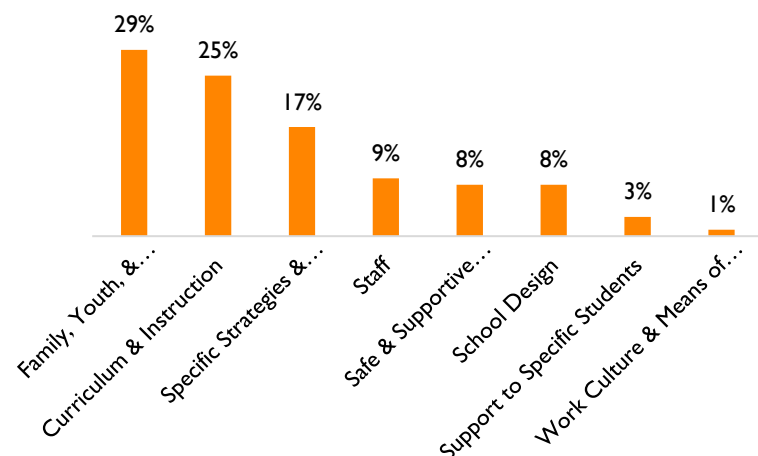
Unlike the universal themes across participants, **students believed family, youth, and community partnerships and relationships were the best way to move the district forward - they wanted support, support systems, and meaningful relationships with staff** (“focused on student-teacher relationships”). In addition to more family engagement and work with the community, **they specifically wanted more conversations around race and racism:** “We had conversations about systematic and internalized racism, what was going on, and what needed to be done.”

Students also discussed curriculum and instruction,

but they focused on different aspects of curriculum and instruction than other participant groups. For example, **students discussed their classes, expressing that they should prepare them for college and they wanted advanced/honors classes to be more inclusive:** “Open up honor class – so that it doesn’t seem like only a few kids can do it” and “Encouraging students of color to take advanced placement classes and lessened the ratio of blacks to white students in an advanced placement class.” **Students wanted their learning styles taken into account, and they called for more representative content in their courses,** “history from different point of view” – “changing curriculum for history, adding more content outside of European material.”

Contrasting to participants overall, students emphasized the district investing in specific strategies and programs, specifically those centered on their life after high school. Students wanted opportunities to help them in their future after high school, which may include college or career. There was some discomfort around the dominance of college as the next step. One student suggested, “Don’t make high school only about going to college. In school they touch on other things besides school, but not very long. Tell students about their options.” Another participant thought the district should build on its previous success with “Career planning – ACP.” **Programs that helped students were**

Figure 3: Themes for Imagine Prompt (Students)





desired, especially tutoring, AVID and Pathways: *“I said having those programs like Pathways and AVID – so you succeed and when you graduate you know what you can do and are ready.”*

Findings – *Imagine* Sub-Prompts

After answering the first two universal *Imagine* prompts, participant groups answered a question that was tailored specifically to their group. Thematic findings from their responses to those questions are below. We do not report the percentages of coded comments in these sub-sections because the total number of comments by group varies considerably. Furthermore, for some groups, there was only one dominant code to report on.

Staff: How did we best support you as staff?

There were three main aspects staff needed to be better supported: additional resources and support, more opportunities for professional development and learning, and improved communication and relationships. To be better supported, staff wanted additional resources and support, which included more staff, more time, and increased benefits and salary. Teachers focused on supporting new teachers: *“Effort to make new educators feel welcome by being warm and providing guidance with the systems in place.”* Teachers wanted more time for *“collaborative planning,” “planning,”* and *“opportunities for mental health/relaxation time.”* Professional development and learning was another area that staff mentioned – they wanted more choice and more opportunities, such as: *“More freedom for schools to design their PD days to align w/SIP needs, equity, and school contextual needs.”* One staff member stated, *“Continued opportunities for growth.”* Staff also asked for training on specific topics, such as culturally responsive teaching. Staff also desired improved communication and relationships both within the district and with stakeholders outside of the district. For example, staff wanted to provide *“input”* and have a *“democratic voice in decisions.”* *“Collaboration”* was important to them, as were *“better systems of communication within schools.”*

Parents/Families: How did we best partner with parents and families to support their children?

Parents/Families felt that the district could better partner with them to support their children by communicating and providing engagement opportunities. Appropriate and accessible communication was key to families: *“Change the way we partner to align with families’ cultural practices,”* one participant said, *“instead of the district always expecting families to change their cultural practices to fit into norms of an educational system.”* Having communication be *“coordinated”* and *“consistent”* was also important. In addition, families wanted more opportunities for engagement: *“All parents had opportunities and understand how [the] ‘system’ works and how to connect at any level,”* and *“more workshops (e.g., IEPs, math, literacy, bilingual education).”* There was a clear desire for improved lines of communication and opportunities to interact.

Students: How did we create strong relationships with students?

In order to create stronger relationships with them, students wanted relationship-building opportunities for staff to get to know them, they wanted to feel supported, they wanted the district to focus more on staff hiring, training, and evaluation, and they wanted staff with qualities such as relatability. In terms of relationship-building opportunities, *“time”* was an important factor – one student indicated *“time to just talk.”* Moreover, students wanted *“meetings”* or someone to *“check in”* with them about things they share in common, understanding how classes are going, or what they like to learn about. One student suggested, *“create free periods for students and staff to meet.”* They also wanted more support, such as *“by creating support groups, letting kids know that the adults in the building want them to have success.”* *“Safe spaces”* and students feeling *“comfortable”* were also important, likely tied with *“culturally responsive practices.”* Students also wanted motivated and diverse teachers to be hired and provided training on how to appropriately connect with students. One participant suggested *“providing a better lineup of staff that is not only more diverse, but more motivated to [do] their job.”* A few others wanted the opportunity to review their teachers as well. Further, students wanted the district to ensure their staff are high quality in terms of being *“relatable,”* and *“open-minded”* towards students – *“Teachers should be open-minded to different cultures/perspectives,”* one student suggested, *“Thus, students could build strong relationships with their teachers.”*



Community: How did we best collaborate with the community?

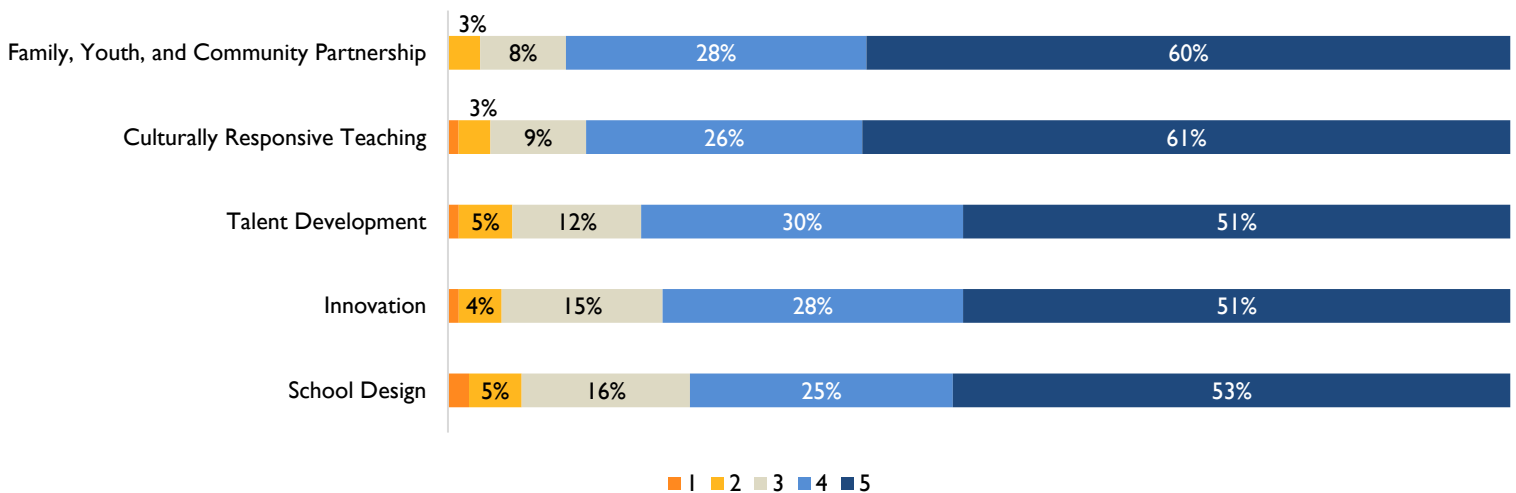
Community members believed that great collaboration meant sharing information, coordinating resources, and working together. To them, working together meant “*sharing info/resources/data*” that impact students and their families. For example, “*more coordination with community and social service system to stabilize families.*” With more effective partnerships in place, the district need not try to accomplish everything on their own. One participant said the district should understand “*the strengths of community partners, to create programs that are effective and the schools didn’t try to do everything.*” “*Collaborative*” or “*shared*” professional development was another way to share resources and information, as was sharing space for meetings or parent teacher conferences – “*ease of access for parents.*”

Findings – Reactions to Superintendent’s Preliminary Ideas

After the Superintendent presented her thinking on potential ideas to guide the next Strategic Framework, participants completed a short feedback form scoring each idea based on the prompt, *I like where you are headed with this idea* (1 = not at all, 5= completely), identifying places in MMSD where these ideas were done well, and writing in additional ideas to consider. Participants then discussed the ideas they felt were most promising, the ones they were most curious about and why.

Participants liked the ideas related to Family, Youth, and Community Partnership and Culturally Responsive Teaching the most (88% and 87% rated it a 4 or a 5, respectively). *Innovation* and *School Design* were lower, but they still had strong support from participants (79% and 78% respectively). These two ideas were the new ones, which may explain why they ranked slightly lower – participants may not have fully understood these topics or how they would manifest. The distribution of responses and themes are below in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Percentage of Responses in Each Category (Descending Order by Percengage of 4s & 5s)



When asked for places in MMSD where topics were done well, participants were generally able to identify pockets of success. For *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, participants identified 29 different schools, as well as departments/initiatives within Curriculum & Instruction (e.g., culturally responsive practices, equity, literacy), AVID programs, and restorative practices as promising. Participants recognized 30 specific schools, community schools, Family, Youth, and Community Engagement initiatives, MSCR and other programs for places where the district was successful with *Family, Youth, and Community Partnership*. For *Talent Development*, participants celebrated 13 different school sites, MMSD’s Department of Human Resources, Personalized Pathways, and other programs. Participants acknowledged 18 schools, community schools, and Pathways when looking at *School Design*. Finally, participants identified 19 schools and other areas of success so varied we do not report on themes for places where the district was doing *Innovation* well.



In their subsequent conversations, when discussing the specific ideas presented, participants most often discussed aspects of **Innovation and School Design** (17% and 15% of coded comments respectively), followed by *Family, Youth, and Community Partnership* (10%), *Talent Development* (9%), and *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (7%). That participants most often discussed aspects of *Innovation and School Design* is unsurprising as these were the “new” and more unfamiliar ideas to participants.

Participants were given the opportunity to share other ideas that the district should consider moving forward. The results of those analyses are presented below. Notably, even when using grounded theory to analyze responses and allowing participant themes to organically emerge, many of the ideas perceived as “other” by the participant aligned with the ideas presented. See Figure 5 for a distribution of other categories of ideas participants suggested and see *Appendix D* for more details on the coding.

Universal Themes – Other Ideas to Consider

Participants mostly had additional ideas around hiring, supporting, and training staff (27% of coded comments). They discussed support for new staff, professional development, as well as additional time for staff to do their work. As one participant specified: “Providing more teacher planning time that is flexible to them.” Participants also desired that the district hire more diverse staff.

Another category of other ideas to consider included aspects of curriculum & instruction

(19%) – specifically prioritizing social-emotional learning, with one staff member suggesting, “Placing a greater importance on social emotional learning and a strong support on student services staff so they can continue to do this work.” Focusing on early education, improving curricular materials and instructional practices, and increasing student engagement were other aspects of curriculum and instruction participants recommended for consideration.

Relationship-building (19%) was another common theme, with participants wishing for more collaboration, community-building, and engagement opportunities between stakeholders - an “emphasis on community/parent engagement.” Participants also described focusing intently on equity.

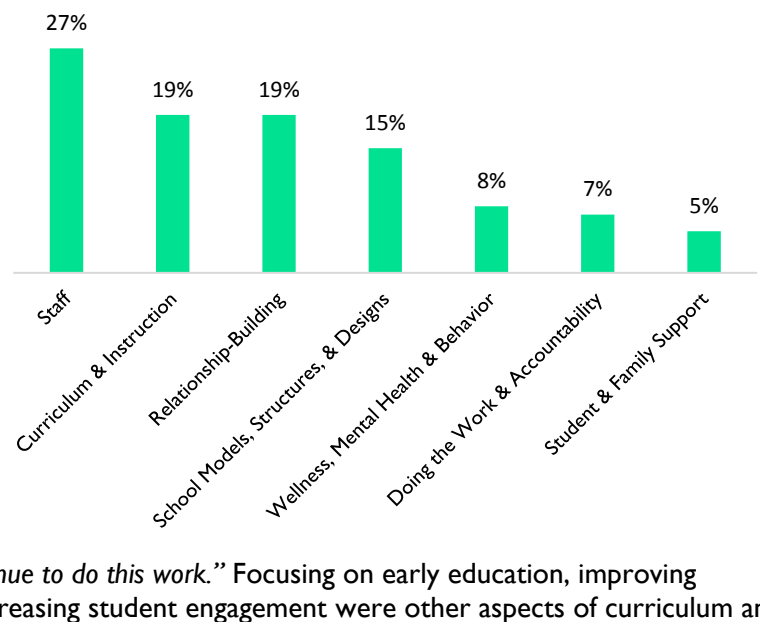
Finally, participants proposed that **aspects of school models, structures, and designs** (15%) also be considered, specifically changing the school schedule (e.g., year round school), adding more community schools, working on summer school, creatively using spaces, etc.

While many of the ideas provided by participants are aligned with the ideas presented, they went into a greater level of detail.

Targeted Themes: Participants of Color – Other Ideas to Consider

Below we describe how participants of color differed from participants overall in the other ideas they offered. Similar to our earlier targeted analysis, we use the same code list generated across all participants and investigate the ordering of those codes, as well as any differences in how these themes manifested. Similar to participants overall, participants of color offered additional ideas on relationship-building and supporting and developing staff (see Figure 6). Conversely, participants of color talked more about school models, structures, and designs than curriculum and instruction.

Figure 5: Other Ideas to Consider

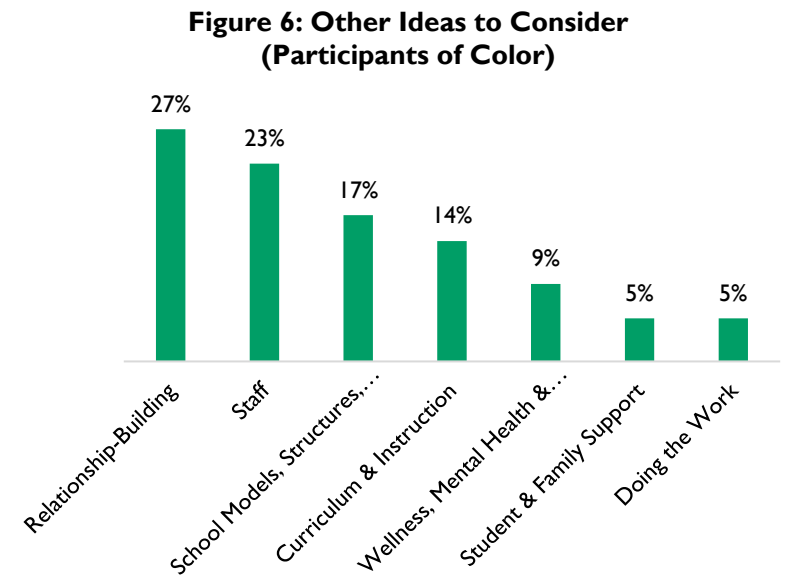


Unlike all participants, participants of color offered more additional ideas in the area of relationship-building. There were a variety of meanings to this, but it mostly revolved around collaboration and engagement with stakeholders: *“Have community between staff, teachers, and students so they have an open relationship to discuss happenings in school such as bullying and problems between students and teachers.”*

Participants of color also emphasized professional development for staff and hiring a more diverse staff, but they also recommended pathways for teachers to become leaders. *“Teacher Leadership,”* one participant suggested, *“Teachers should have a route to build, leadership at a school and district level with autonomy to impart change without the influence/predetermination of administration. We have amazing teachers in our district.”*

Where participants of color differed from the universal themes was in their emphasis on other school models, structures, and designs. They mentioned ideas in this area more than curriculum and instruction, advocating for *“K-8 community schools,”* childcare in the schools, and adapted school facilities/schedules/calendars (e.g., *“year round school”*).

Given that many student groups did not reach this part of the session, the number of comments students left were very small (11 total), so *no additional sub-analysis* is included.



Next Steps

Throughout February, March, and early April, we move into the Reflection Phase of the Strategic Framework Engagement, which involves reflecting on what we have learned and reporting back to our community and stakeholders. This is a critical part of the process as we begin to pressure test ideas for what the next Strategic Framework should look like based on our findings and critical thinking on what these findings mean for our district moving forward. The protocols for this phase of the work have been shared with the Board as part of the revised research plan.



Appendix A: Feedback Form for Data Collection

(Side A of feedback form)

Imagine a time in the future when we are celebrating our progress – with dramatically more students on track to graduate college, career, and community ready. Imagine the actions we took to get there.

1. Where did we build on our success?
2. Where did we make bold moves?
3. How did we best support you as staff? (Staff Question) OR How did we best collaborate with the community? (Community Question) OR How did we best partner with parents and families to support their children? (Parent/Family Question) OR How did we create strong relationships with students? (Student Question)

(Side B of feedback form)

1. Today's Date:
2. Time of Day (*circle one*): **AM** **PM**
3. What is your connection to the district? (*circle all that apply*)

Parent/Family Member Student Staff Community Member

4. We would love your feedback on the ideas presented today.

	I like where you are headed with this idea. <i>Circle your score 1-5, 1=not at all, 3=neutral, 5=completely</i>	I know a place in MMSD that's doing this well. <i>Write in the box below</i>
Culturally Responsive Teaching <i>Strengthen relationships between teachers and students to gain insight that allows for deeper learning</i>	1 2 3 4 5	
Family, Youth, and Community Partnership <i>Strengthen partnerships with families, community, and youth, with a focus on people of color</i>	1 2 3 4 5	
Talent Development <i>Work on placement, development, and retention of a diverse workforce</i>	1 2 3 4 5	
School Design <i>Be nimble and responsive in our use of money, people, programs, and time to foster stronger learning communities</i>	1 2 3 4 5	
Innovation <i>Identify problems and try out solutions on behalf of our students at every level: classroom, school, district, and city</i>	1 2 3 4 5	

5. What other things should we think about doing that you haven't shared yet today? (*write below*)



Appendix B: Tips for Recorders and Notes Template

Each session has a recorder to take notes about the conversations – thanks for agreeing to help us with this important job!

What does the recorder do before arriving at the session?

- Get familiar with the note taking template
- Organize training with Beth Vaade or Amanda Jeppson, if needed
- Secure a laptop for the session, but also bring paper and a pen in case of technology failure
- Coordinate with the staff lead to acquire all handouts and hard copies of feedback forms – you may need to bring these to the session (same for the slide deck, if appropriate)

What does the recorder do right before the session begins?

- Set up laptop near an outlet (if power is needed)
- Complete as many sections of the notetaking protocol ahead of time as you can (e.g., meeting date, time, etc.)
- Save template somewhere with a new file name that lists the location, type of meeting, date, and the recorder's initials (e.g., Strategic Framework Engagement Principals Meeting 9.20.17 BV)
- Sit in a place to hear the conversation but not impose on flow

What does the recorder do during the session?

- Take notes on all large group share outs and conversations, and for one small group
- Save frequently – every three comments is a good rule of thumb
- Capture as much of the spoken conversation as possible, but if you cannot type comments word-for-word, then focus on including as much relevant detail as possible
- Do not stop to correct typos and do not record participants' names
- Separate different speakers into different bullets
- If someone has a particularly good quote and you can capture it word-for-word, put it in quotation marks
- Capture group responses to conversation (e.g., nodding/shaking heads, applause, laughter) in [brackets]
- If someone's response is entirely off topic (e.g., a story about their cat), make a note in *Italics* that it happened, but do not worry about capturing the comment
- If you must leave the room, note in *Italics* how long you were gone (e.g., *missed recording 5 min*)
- Record facilitator comments in **Bold**
- Before the meeting ends, record the total number of people in the room and how many small groups participated
- When the meeting ends, capture the end time, recount the participants, and SAVE

What does the recorder do after the session?

- Record impressions of the overall tone of the meeting and engagement of participants (e.g., agreeable, confrontational, engaged, etc.)
- Reread notes for accuracy and correct typos, misspellings, or unclear statements
- If anyone mentioned a person's name during the focus group, redact the name with bracketed ellipses [...]
- If unsure of what a comment was referring to, or the language is not clear, make a note in *italics*
- **SEND NOTES TO [BETH VAADE](#)**
 - Indicate in subject line the session location and date

Who can be contacted with questions?

- Beth Vaade, Qualitative Research Supervisor, 608-204-7801, envaade@madison.k12.wi.us
- Amanda Jeppson, Qualitative Analyst, 608-442-2158, akjeppson@madison.k12.wi.us



Strategic Framework Engagement – Notes from [Insert Session Name]

Basic Information

Meeting Date: [recorder: type here]

Meeting Start Time: [recorder: type here]

Meeting End Time: [recorder: type here]

Approximate Number of Attendees: [recorder: type here]

Group Characteristics: [recorder: type here]

Post-Meeting Impressions

Overall Tone of Meeting and Engagement of Participants: [recorder: type here]

Responses to Prompts

*Record participant comments in regular type; facilitator comments in **Bold**; group observations in [brackets]; and notetaker comments in *italics*

Prompt: Where did we double down on success? Where did we make bold moves?

- [recorder: type large group discussion here]

Small Group Notes

- [recorder: type small group discussion here]

Prompt: Which idea seems the most promising? Why? Which idea are you most curious about? Why?

- [recorder: type large group discussion here]

Small Group Notes

- [recorder: type small group discussion here]



Appendix C: Calendar of Input Sessions

Strategic Framework Engagement Calendar

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Sep	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20 xl	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29 xl	30
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12 xl	13	14
	15	16	17 xl	18 xl	19 xl xl	20	21
	22	23 xl	24	25 xl	26	27	28
	29	30	31				
Nov				1 xl xl	2	3	4
	5	6	7 xl	8 xl	9 xl	10 xl	11
	12	13	14	15	16 x2 xl	17 xl	18 xl
	19	20 xl	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28 xl xl	29	30		
Dec						1	2
	3	4	5 xl	6 xl	7 xl	8 xl	9
	10	11 xl	12	13	14 xl xl	15	16
	17	18	19 xl	20 xl xl xl	21 xl	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						
Jan		1	2	3	4 xl xl	5	6
	7	8	9	10 xl	11 xl	12 xl	13
	14	15	16 xl xl	17	18 xl	19	20
	21	22 xl	23	24 xl	25 xl xl	26 xl xl	27
	28	29	30 xl	31 xl xl			

BoE Community Parents Staff

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
Feb					1 xl	2	3
	4	5	6	7 xl xl	8 xl xl	9	10 xl
	11	12	13	14	15 xl xl	16 xl	17
	18	19	20	21 x2	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28			
Mar					1 xl	2	3
	4	5	6	7 xl	8	9 xl	10
	11	12	13 xl	14	15 xl	16	17
	18	19	20	21 xl	22 xl	23 xl	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Apr	1	2	3	4 x3	5 xl	6	7
	8	9	10	11 xl	12 xl xl	13	14
	15	16	17	18 xl	19 xl xl	20 xl	21
	22	23 xl	24	25 xl	26 xl	27	28
	29	30					
May			1	2 xl xl	3 xl	4	5
	6	7	8	9 xl	10 xl	11	12
	13	14	15	16 xl	17 xl	18 xl	19
	20	21	22	23 xl	24 xl	25 xl	26
	27	28	29 xl	30 xl	31		
Jun						1 xl	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21 xl	22	23

Students



Appendix D: Coding Structure

Table 1: Imagine Prompt Codes Created for All Responses

Code	Description	Examples	% of Coded Comments
Enhanced Curriculum & Instruction	Further developed our teaching, learning, and assessing in service of our students, especially working on cultural responsiveness	"students became fully engaged in curriculum" "valuing SEL as a core subject" "culturally responsive teaching" "Creativity encouraged again..." "High expectations (academic, behavioral) for all"	24%
Developed Family, Youth, & Community Partnerships	Developed and nurtured relationships with all stakeholders and improved feelings of community and inclusivity in schools/classrooms between staff, students, and families	"More parent involvement" "Closer ties to community resources and organizations" "Confront bias" "Equity" "Family/Community/youth voice/engagement" "Restorative justice practices" "Home visits" "We created environments where every student felt a sense of belonging"	23%
Support Staff and Developed Talent	Gave staff resources and support to be successful and develop and focused attention on attracting and retaining staff	"School based/individual professional development" "Need lots more teachers of color" "Supporting staff" "Respecting the profession" "Teacher retention" "More time for planning" "Pay benefits living wage"	18%
Invested in Specific Strategies & Programs	Implemented/expanded on specific strategies and programs to accelerate progress	"More community schools" "Emphasizing careers and community ready, in addition to college" "Increase pathways" "More universal AVID type strategies across all schools" "Wrap around care for 4K"	11%
Created Safe & Supportive Environments	Offered additional mental health and wellness resources to staff, families, and students; improved behavior education and discipline practices and made our schools safer and more supportive	"More mental health initiatives"; "Improve our wellness environ. For both students & adults - the 'whole individual' nutrition, activity, family involvement"; "Mindfulness practice (district-level)"; "Introduce students/staff to healthy food"; "Relation-based management of behavior"; "Double down on behavior education"; "Discipline practices are equitable"; "Anti-bullying"; "Address issues that make schools feel unsafe to students" "More wrap around services"	8%
Leveraged High Quality School Design	Improved our learning spaces and how and when our spaces are used to be more responsive to stakeholder needs and best practice	"Use of technology" "Year round schooling" "Schools open after hours (w/limited staff) for community use" "Smaller class sizes" "Equitable investment in upgrading building facilities for student comfort"	7%
Improved Work Culture and Means of Working	Focused on how to get the work done in a quality work environment, which includes innovative ways of working	"Sticking to Strategic Framework" "Via SIP having specific, measurable goals - a space to monitor our progress - to justify..." "Schools as the center" "More autonomy to schools" "Structures that support innovation"	6%
Directed Support to Specific Students	Focused supports and resources on specific groups of students demonstrating need	"Special Education and service delivery" "We continued to provide extra support to ELL learners and other groups that haven't tested as well and for whom the achievement gap is the largest" "Specific actions around students of color" "more support for students who come from trauma"	3%

*Note that *Other*, *Unrelated*, and *Unclear* codes have been removed from this code list and are not counted in the % of coded comments.



Table 2: Imagine Prompt Codes Created for Sub-Questions

Staff Sub-Question: How did we best support you as staff?		
Code	Description	Examples
Resources	Provided staff with resources (e.g., time, support, benefits/pay)	"Adding more staff!" "Increasing pay" "More time to collaborate with colleagues" "Time to plan and reflect are so extremely helpful" "Staff wellness" "Technology in the classroom"
Professional Development & Learning	Gave staff more choice and opportunities for professional development and professional growth	"Choice/differentiation in professional development (either at as a school or as individual educators)" "Professional development based on school/teacher need" "Continued opportunities for growth" "Trauma-informed training for teachers"
Communication & Relationships	Improved communication and relationships within and outside of the schools/district	"A say in what matters and an ear to listen" "More opportunities for collaboration" "we began to involve teachers in building-level decision making again" "Ongoing quarterly listening sessions with staff of color"
Family/Parent Sub-Question: How did we best partner with parents and families to support their children?		
Code	Description	Examples
Communication & Engagement Opportunities	Communicated with families in a culturally and accessible way, while also providing opportunities for engagement (e.g., workshops)	"Communication accessible to the families" "We facilitated regular training & feedback sessions with parents as their children moved through schools - including home visits" "Community outreach (transportation, food, other incentives)"
Student Sub-Question: How did we create strong relationships with students?		
Code	Description	Examples
Relationship-Building Opportunities	Provided space and time for teachers and students to develop a relationship	"Increased talking to one another" "Implementing relationship building activities" "Smaller class sizes" "Do activities after school with students and staff" "Had a teacher that checks in with us daily" "More community involvement"
Support Students	Supported students and made them feel comfortable and safe	"Supporting students" "Making the student comfortable" "Culturally responsive practices" "Creating safe spaces" "We feel comfortable with talking about anything we built the amazing bond"
Quality Staff	Made sure staff were relatable and open-minded	"More relatable teachers" "Building trust" "Teachers should be open-minded to different cultures/perspectives. Thus, students could build strong relationships with their teachers" "Teachers that care about kids"
Teacher Hiring, Training, and Review	Hired diverse staff, trained them on diversity and connecting with students, and allowed students a voice in their review	"Diversification of staff" "Training on sensitivity and student staff relations (the importance in and out of the classroom especially for students of color)" "By giving students more opportunity to analyze and review their teachers"
Community Sub-Question: How did we best collaborate with the community?		
Code	Description	Examples
Worked Together	Partnered with the community and shared information and resources	"Sharing info/resources/data" "Shared professional development trainings" "Outreach to community based agencies to provide resources to families" "Transparency and more of it!" "Go to the community" "Sharing school plans with community/parents"

*We do not report percentages here as the number of total comments by groups varies considerably; in addition, for some groups (e.g., Family/Parent), there was only one dominant code to report on.



Table 3: Reactions to Superintendent’s Preliminary Ideas - Other Ideas

Code	Examples	% of Coded Comments
Hiring, Supporting, and Training Staff	<p>"We need more teachers of color" "All staff should spend time in schools to foster a feeling of unity and responsibility"</p> <p>"Create me scaffolding for new teachers and leaders"</p> <p>"Leadership Pathways Teacher -> School leader"</p>	27%
Curriculum & Instruction	<p>"Focus on instruction & effective teaching practice" "SEL! Prioritize @ all levels! ""Curriculum consistency" "Focusing more on the youth and elementary education"</p>	19%
Relationship-Building	<p>"Relationships and trust starts with each other in our district and buildings - then we can build them with students and families and community" "Partnerships w/parents and staff-relationships" "Parent-ground involvement in classrooms"</p>	19%
School Models, Structures, and Designs	<p>"Year round school" "Starting younger - 3K" "K-8 community schools" "Summer school" "Community schools models" "Our school buildings must be updated & redesigned to create flexible spaces & learning that promotes collaboration & innovation!"</p>	15%