

**Antioch Unified School District
Culture, Climate, and Safety Study**

Phase I Interim Report

Listening Tour Findings

Prepared for:

Superintendent and Board of Education
Antioch Unified School District
Antioch, California

Prepared by:

University of Southern California
Rossier School of Education

Lead Researcher

Kendrick B. Davis, Ph.D.
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

Date:

March 11, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Phase I Interim Report.....	1
Executive Summary.....	3
Section III: Phase 1 Data Sources and Analytic Approach.....	8
Section IV: Phase I Listening Tour Findings.....	9
Elementary Students.....	9
Middle School Students.....	11
High School Students.....	13
Elementary School Teachers.....	15
Secondary School Teachers.....	18
Synopsis of Survey Responses (Elementary and Secondary).....	20
Principals/Site Leaders.....	22
Assistant Principals.....	25
District Staff.....	27
Classified Staff.....	30
Parents and Families.....	32
Community (Writ-Large).....	35
Purpose and Context.....	35
Purpose and Context.....	37
Faith-Based Partners.....	40
City Officials.....	42
Purpose and Context.....	42
Board Members.....	43
Closing Reflections and Next Steps in Study.....	46

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Study

Antioch Unified School District commissioned this Culture, Climate, and Safety Study to better understand how students, educators, families, and community partners experience the district's learning environments. The study is intended to provide district leadership with a clearer understanding of the conditions shaping student learning, school climate, safety, and community trust across Antioch schools.

This report presents findings from Phase I of the study, which focused on a structured listening tour designed to document stakeholder perspectives across the district. The purpose of this phase was not to evaluate programs or make recommendations. Instead, Phase I was designed to surface recurring themes related to culture, climate, safety, instructional conditions, and district-community relationships that may warrant deeper measurement in subsequent phases of the study.

The listening process occurred during a period of heightened public attention to district conditions, including academic performance, student safety, and district finances. While this report does not evaluate operational or fiscal decisions, these broader conditions formed part of the environment in which many community conversations about schools and district leadership were taking place.

Phase I Listening Tour

Phase I included a four-day listening tour conducted between January 6 and January 9, 2026, facilitated by the USC research team. Listening sessions were held primarily in person in Antioch, with some sessions conducted virtually to support accessibility.

The listening tour engaged a broad cross-section of district and community stakeholders, including:

- Elementary, middle, and high school students
- Elementary and secondary teachers
- Principals and assistant principals
- District administrators and classified staff
- Parents and caregivers
- Community and business partners
- Faith-based organizations
- City officials and civic partners
- Members of the Antioch Board of Education

Across the four days of engagement, the listening tour documented more than 1,000 participant interactions, including large educator sessions involving over 700 teachers and multiple student, family, and community engagement activities.

Listening sessions were conducted as confidential, non-attributable discussions designed to allow participants to share their experiences, concerns, and observations openly. Data sources included facilitated listening activities, participant exit surveys, researcher observations, and contextual discussions with district leaders. These qualitative data sources were reviewed to identify recurring patterns across stakeholder groups.

Consistent with the purpose of Phase I, analysis focused on documenting stakeholder perspectives rather than evaluating district programs or personnel.

Cross-Cutting Themes Across Stakeholder Groups

Although each stakeholder group raised distinct experiences and priorities, several themes appeared consistently across listening sessions.

Relationships and School Climate

Across students, educators, and community members, participants emphasized the importance of relationships between students and adults as a defining feature of positive school environments. Students frequently described school in relational terms—through friendships, supportive teachers, and programs that create connection—while educators and families similarly emphasized the role of strong relationships in fostering belonging and engagement.

At the same time, participants described variation in school climate across campuses, suggesting that students' experiences of belonging, respect, and support may differ depending on school context.

Safety and Supervision

Safety emerged as a recurring theme across stakeholder groups, though the specific concerns varied by role. Students described concerns related to fights, supervision gaps, and facility conditions. Educators and staff emphasized the importance of consistent behavioral systems, supervision structures, and emergency procedures. Families and community members similarly discussed campus safety, student behavior, and the adequacy of supervision.

Across discussions, safety was often described as both a physical condition and a relational one, shaped by adult presence, behavioral expectations, and school culture.

Communication and Trust

Communication and transparency were frequently discussed as central to trust between the district and its stakeholders. Participants across groups described the importance of clear, consistent communication between district leadership, school staff, families, and community partners. In many cases, stakeholder experiences with the district were described as dependent on individual relationships rather than predictable systems.

These conversations reflected a broader interest in greater clarity regarding decision-making processes, expectations, and follow-through.

Instructional Conditions and Student Support

Educators, students, and families described a range of instructional challenges related to academic gaps, classroom conditions, staffing capacity, and access to supports. Teachers described wide variation in student academic readiness and the instructional strain created by large ability ranges within classrooms. Students discussed workload stress and uneven instructional clarity in some courses, while families expressed concern about academic performance and access to enrichment opportunities.

Participants also highlighted areas of strength, including counseling supports, collaborative teacher teams, extracurricular programs, and targeted student support initiatives.

Partnerships and Community Engagement

Community partners, faith-based organizations, and civic leaders emphasized the importance of strong school-community partnerships in supporting students and families. Participants described existing collaborative efforts while also noting barriers related to coordination, communication, and access to partnership opportunities.

Across conversations, stakeholders expressed interest in stronger alignment among schools, families, community organizations, and local government to address student needs.

Next Phase of the Study

The findings presented in this report provide an initial qualitative portrait of stakeholder perspectives across Antioch Unified School District. These themes reflect patterns that emerged during the Phase I listening process and should be understood as descriptions of stakeholder experiences rather than evaluative conclusions.

In Phase II of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study, these findings will inform the development of districtwide survey instruments for students, educators, families, and community members. The purpose of the survey phase will be to gather broader participation and measure how widely the themes identified during the listening tour are experienced across the district.

Together, the listening and survey phases will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions shaping learning, safety, and belonging across Antioch Unified School District. The results will help inform subsequent stages of analysis and district planning.

Section I: AUSD Background and Performance Context

Antioch Unified School District serves approximately 15,000 students across grades kindergarten through twelve. The district reflects substantial racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity. Latino students comprise approximately 51 percent of district enrollment, followed by African American students at approximately 23 percent. White students represent roughly 10 percent of enrollment, while Asian and Filipino students combined account for approximately 10 percent. Pacific Islander students comprise approximately 2 percent of the student population. Approximately 80 percent of students are identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged, and nearly 20 percent are English Learners.

District academic performance data from the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) provide important context for understanding stakeholder perspectives. In English Language Arts, approximately 27 percent of students met or exceeded standards in the 2024–25 administration, while approximately 48 percent fell in the Standard Not Met category. In Mathematics, approximately 14 percent of students met or exceeded standards, and approximately 64 percent fell in the Standard Not Met category.

Across both subjects and across tested grade levels, the largest proportion of students consistently falls in the lowest performance category. This pattern provides important context for concerns raised during the listening tour related to instructional conditions, student engagement, and academic support systems.

Approximately 17 percent of students in Antioch Unified School District receive special education services, a proportion higher than county and statewide averages. Publicly available data indicate that students with disabilities in the district are less likely to spend the majority of the school day in general education settings and more likely to receive services in partially or fully separate settings. These patterns raise important considerations related to inclusion, instructional capacity, and school climate that will be examined more closely in subsequent phases of the study.

The data presented in this section are provided for background and context only and are not evaluative.

Section II: Phase I Listening Tour Overview

Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study included a listening tour conducted between **January 6 and January 9, 2026**. Listening sessions were held primarily in person in Antioch, California, with a limited number of sessions conducted virtually to support accessibility and participation.

Sessions were facilitated by the USC research team and conducted as confidential, non-attributable discussions. While findings are not attributed to individual participants, schools, or specific sites, references to district departments or stakeholder groups may be included where relevant to accurately reflect system-level context.

Stakeholder Engagement

During the Phase I Listening Tour, the USC research team engaged a broad cross-section of district and community stakeholders within Antioch Unified School District and the City of Antioch. Engagement was intentionally structured to include governance leadership, district administrators, school-based staff, students across grade levels, families, and community partners. **Table 1** presents daily participation totals across the four-day listening tour. These totals reflect documented attendance by date.

Table 1: Phase I Listening Tour Participation by Date	
Date	Participant Count
January 6, 2026	803
January 7, 2026	74
January 8, 2026	79
January 9, 2026	98
Total	1,054

Participation totals reflect documented attendance by date. Because listening sessions were organized by stakeholder type and scheduled across multiple days, totals are reported by date rather than disaggregated by stakeholder group.

Stakeholder groups engaged during Phase I included more than 700 elementary and secondary teachers; site leaders (principals and assistant principals); district and school classified staff; Members of the Board of Education; city officials and key city employees; students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; student leaders; parents and community members participating in virtual and in-person sessions; and representatives from faith-based organizations.

The breadth of participation provided perspectives across instructional, operational, leadership, student, and community contexts. The findings presented in subsequent sections are grounded in this cross-sectional engagement.

Section III: Phase 1 Data Sources and Analytic Approach

Prior to Phase I, the USC research team completed a targeted review of district documents and publicly available data to inform engagement and ensure alignment with ongoing district work. Materials reviewed included:

- District performance and enrollment data from the California Department of Education
- A district climate and equity review conducted by the National Center for Urban School Transformation in 2024
- The 2025–26 Local Control and Accountability Plan
- The 2025 Superintendent’s Entry Plan

These materials were reviewed for contextual understanding and alignment purposes only and were not reanalyzed or evaluated as part of this interim report. Phase I findings presented in this report draw on multiple qualitative data sources collected during the listening tour. These sources included:

- Facilitated, interactive listening sessions with stakeholders
- Exit survey administered at the conclusion of selected sessions
- Researcher observations and field notes recorded throughout the engagement period
- Ad hoc meetings with district leaders during the week to clarify context and emerging themes

Data from listening sessions and exit surveys were qualitatively reviewed and thematically organized to identify recurring patterns across stakeholder groups. Analysis focused on self-reported experiences related to barriers, challenges, and stressors, as well as perceived strengths, bright spots, and areas of resilience. Attention was also given to themes related to safety, belonging, instructional conditions, communication, and support systems.

Observational notes and leadership conversations were used to contextualize stakeholder input and inform interpretation of emerging themes. Consistent with the purpose of Phase I, analysis was descriptive rather than evaluative. Findings presented in this report reflect stakeholder perspectives shared during the listening tour and are intended to inform subsequent phases of the study.

The remaining phases will build on Phase I findings through a districtwide survey, synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data, and development of evidence-informed options to support district planning and improvement efforts. **This report documents Phase I only.**

Section IV: Phase I Listening Tour Findings

This section presents the major patterns that emerged across the Phase I Listening Tour, beginning with students and then moving through the educator, staff, community, faith-based, and civic leadership groups whose perspectives shaped this body of findings.

Elementary Students

Purpose and Context

The following findings summarize themes emerging from Phase I listening with elementary students through structured poster activities. Students were asked to identify what they like, dislike, what makes them feel safe, and what they are learning. These findings are descriptive rather than evaluative and reflect recurring patterns in student language across posters. They are intended to inform Phase II survey design and subsequent analysis.

A. Students experience school primarily through relationships and recess.

Across posters, students most consistently identified friends, teachers, and recess as positive aspects of school. Friends and playing with friends appear repeatedly under “Likes,” as do teachers. Recess, free time, soccer, and playground references are frequent and prominently placed. While academic subjects are named, relational and recreational elements appear more consistently and centrally in students’ descriptions of what they enjoy. Students also referenced books, art, homework, birthdays, family, and personal identity, suggesting that daily connection and routine shape their perception of a positive school experience.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey items should measure peer belonging, teacher connection, enjoyment of recess/free time, and the relative contribution of relational versus academic factors to overall school satisfaction.

Outstanding Questions: Are relational factors more predictive of overall school enjoyment than academic subjects? Does the importance of recess vary by grade level?

B. Lunch and cafeteria conditions represent the most consistent shared dissatisfaction.

Lunch, cafeteria food, and lunch menu appear across nearly all posters under “Dislikes,” often emphasized through repetition, rewriting, or visual markers. Cafeteria chairs are also mentioned. In one case, “School” is crossed out and replaced with “Lunch,” indicating specificity in dissatisfaction. Compared to academic complaints, lunch-related concerns are more consistently shared across posters, suggesting that the lunchtime experience is a salient and common point of frustration in the school day.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should quantify student satisfaction with lunch quality, cafeteria environment, seating, and the extent to which lunch influences overall perception of the school day.

Outstanding Questions: Is dissatisfaction driven primarily by food quality, physical environment, social dynamics during lunch, or a combination of these factors? Are lunch perceptions consistent across grades?

C. Students define safety through trusted adults and contained classroom spaces.

Under “Safety,” students repeatedly named teachers, “my teacher,” classrooms, yard duty, and the wellness room as sources of safety. Statements such as “I feel safe in the classroom” and “what makes me safe is my teacher” appear across posters. Safety is described relationally, through proximity to trusted adults, and spatially, through the classroom as a contained and structured environment. A small number of posters reference “more cameras” and concerns about individuals outside the gate, indicating awareness of campus perimeter safety.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey items should differentiate safety perceptions by location (classroom, playground, cafeteria, arrival/dismissal) and measure access to and trust in specific adults.

Outstanding Questions: Do students feel equally safe in unstructured settings such as recess and lunch? How consistently can students identify at least one adult who makes them feel safe?

D. Peer relationships simultaneously represent belonging and conflict.

Friends are among the most frequently listed positives, yet students also reference “bully,” “bad friends,” “fake people,” and “haters” under “Dislikes.” In some cases, these terms are repeated or emphasized. This coexistence suggests that peer dynamics are central to students’ daily experience, shaping both positive feelings of belonging and negative experiences of exclusion or harm. Peer interaction appears to influence school climate perception as strongly as adult relationships.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure peer inclusion, bullying, relational conflict, and perceptions of fairness in social interactions across different school settings.

Outstanding Questions: Are peer conflicts concentrated in particular parts of the day (e.g., recess or lunch)? How do students perceive adult response to bullying or social conflict?

E. Academic experiences are subject-specific and emotionally mixed.

Math appears most frequently under “Learning” and “Likes,” yet also appears under “Dislikes,” sometimes with strong emphasis. Reading similarly appears in both positive and negative categories. Students list multiplication, division, writing, algebra, science, Spanish, history, and social studies as learning areas. The presence of the same subjects in both positive and negative categories suggests that students distinguish between learning content and their emotional experience of that content, rather than expressing uniform attitudes toward academics.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey measures should distinguish between perceived learning and enjoyment by subject area and allow for variation in intensity of feeling.

Outstanding Questions: What factors influence whether a subject is experienced positively or negatively? How do academic attitudes relate to teacher connection, peer dynamics, or perceived safety?

Middle School Students

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize recurring patterns from Phase I middle school student focus groups facilitated as part of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study. This phase emphasized structured listening and documentation rather than evaluation or recommendations. The themes below reflect consistent student-reported experiences and are intended to inform Phase II survey design and further analysis.

A. Adult responsiveness is experienced as uneven across classrooms.

Students described both positive and inconsistent interactions with adults. While some teachers were identified as caring, respectful, and clear in their instruction, other experiences included perceptions of differential treatment based on academic ability or behavior. Students reported that not all concerns are taken seriously and raised questions about counselor confidentiality. These patterns suggest variability in how adult support and responsiveness are experienced across settings.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure student perceptions of teacher fairness, respect, responsiveness to concerns, and trust in school-based adults, including counselors.

Outstanding Questions: How widespread are perceptions of differential treatment? How do perceptions vary by grade level or student subgroup? What factors most influence student trust in adults?

B. Behavioral disruption and safety concerns shape daily school experience.

Students reported frequent fights, including physical altercations resulting from conflicts and crowding. Concerns extended to threats involving weapons, aggressive language, and reports of students being followed home. Students suggested expanding the site safety team and referenced interest in additional safety measures. Safety concerns were not limited to major incidents but were described as part of the broader school climate.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess students' sense of physical safety, frequency of observed fights, exposure to threats, confidence in supervision, and perceptions of preventive versus reactive safety systems.

Outstanding Questions: How consistent are safety perceptions across campus locations and times of day? How do students differentiate between feeling unsafe and feeling unsupported? What is the relationship between supervision visibility and student safety perceptions?

C. Discipline is viewed as inconsistently effective in changing behavior.

Students questioned automatic suspensions and described exclusionary discipline as ineffective in resolving conflict. Some reported that on-campus suspension does not deter behavior. Students emphasized the importance of understanding underlying causes of fights and suggested counseling, facilitated dialogue, and alternative consequences. These comments indicate student awareness of both accountability and restoration dynamics.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure student perceptions of fairness in discipline, perceived effectiveness of consequences, and awareness of restorative or alternative disciplinary approaches.

Outstanding Questions: How do students perceive fairness across disciplinary decisions? What outcomes do students associate with suspension versus alternative interventions? Are there patterns in how discipline impacts school climate perceptions?

D. Facilities and infrastructure conditions influence perceptions of safety and dignity.

Students described bathroom and locker room conditions including missing doors, broken mirrors, foul odors, and limited stall access. Locked restrooms and insufficient facilities were also noted. These concerns were connected to broader discussions about supervision, safety, and overall school environment.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess student perceptions of restroom access, cleanliness, privacy, supervision, and overall facility conditions.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent do facility conditions influence students' sense of safety and belonging? Are concerns concentrated in specific grade-level areas or buildings?

E. Instructional stability and classroom management affect learning climate.

Students referenced classroom management challenges and noted an extended teacher vacancy in one grade level. Positive instructional experiences were associated with clear explanations and respectful engagement. Variability in classroom stability and instructional consistency emerged as a pattern influencing student experience.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure perceptions of classroom management, instructional clarity, teacher availability, and impact of staffing gaps on learning.

Outstanding Questions: How do staffing stability and classroom management practices correlate with student engagement and behavior patterns? Where are students reporting the greatest variability in instructional experience?

High School Students

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize what the District is learning from high school students through Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study. This phase focused on structured listening and documentation rather than evaluation or recommendations. Findings reflect recurring patterns across student focus groups and engagement activities and are intended to inform the design and prioritization of Phase II data collection.

A. Targeted programs and relational supports function as meaningful bright spots for participating students.

Students consistently identified leadership classes (including financial literacy), the Peer Advocates program, athletics, and the wellness room as positive aspects of their high school experience. Peer Advocates was described as a space for conflict mediation and peer support, including when challenges arise at home. The wellness room was referenced as helpful for managing anxiety, depression, and sleep-related stress. Students described feeling most engaged when teachers are supportive, when instruction includes discussion or participation, and when they feel known by peers and staff. These strengths were typically described as program-specific rather than schoolwide.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure student participation in structured support programs, perceived accessibility of wellness and peer support resources, and the extent to which relational connection extends beyond specific programs.

Outstanding Questions: How broadly distributed are these positive experiences across the student body? Are certain student groups more likely to access or benefit from these supports? To what extent do students experience consistent relational support across classrooms?

B. College and career guidance is described as uneven in access, clarity, and frequency.

Students reported variable experiences with college and career counseling. Some described receiving limited or generalized advice, insufficient FAFSA guidance, and unclear information regarding financial aid and postsecondary preparation. Only a small portion of one focus group indicated feeling adequately supported in college and career planning. Students referenced limited counselor availability and described greater access to support for students enrolled in selective programs. Students expressed interest in clearer communication about deadlines and more practical information related to financing college.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess frequency of counselor contact, clarity of college and financial aid guidance, student awareness of available counseling resources, and differences in perceived access across grade levels and programs.

Outstanding Questions: How consistently do students report receiving individualized college and career guidance? Are there differences in perceived access among student groups or programs? At what point in high school do students feel guidance is most needed?

C. Academic workload and instructional clarity contribute to reported stress, particularly in mathematics.

Students described feeling overwhelmed by the volume of homework and assignments, including work assigned during scheduled breaks or periods of illness. In mathematics courses, students reported rapid pacing, substantial nightly homework expectations, confusion between textbook material and classroom instruction, and grading structures in which homework represents a significant portion of the final grade. Some students referenced limited opportunities for retakes and difficulty aligning what was taught in class with what was assessed. These instructional conditions were described as contributing to stress and confusion.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceived workload volume, clarity of instructional expectations, alignment between instruction and assessment, grading practices, and the relationship between academic demands and student stress.

Outstanding Questions: Are workload concerns concentrated within particular subjects or grade levels? How consistently do students report clarity in instructional expectations? How do grading practices influence perceptions of academic pressure?

D. Safety perceptions are influenced by supervision gaps, event security, and responses to reported concerns.

Students described concerns regarding security presence at athletic events, including incidents involving fights and a reported weapon at a basketball game. In some instances, students indicated that teachers intervened when security personnel were not present. Students also referenced concerns about inappropriate comments or conduct by staff that they perceived as not fully addressed. Restroom conditions were raised as a recurring concern, including cleanliness, availability of supplies, and student behavior such as smoking. Students referenced the size of the campus in relation to supervision and visibility.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of safety across campus locations and events, confidence in reporting mechanisms, perceptions of follow-through when concerns are raised, and adequacy of supervision coverage.

Outstanding Questions: How consistently do students report feeling safe in different campus settings? Do students perceive reporting systems as accessible and responsive? Are safety concerns concentrated in particular locations or times?

E. Students describe uneven access to programs, course pathways, and extracurricular opportunities.

Students referenced disparities in funding across sports, arts, and music programs and described limited availability of certain courses. Interest was expressed in expanded vocational and career-oriented pathways, including law, medical, and mechanics programs, as well as additional arts and writing classes. Some students described barriers related to language access and participation in teams or programs. Students also referenced limited flexibility in meeting academic requirements and access to certain classes.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of funding distribution across programs, access to desired courses and pathways, inclusion in extracurricular activities, and flexibility in scheduling and course availability.

Outstanding Questions: Do students perceive resources and opportunities as equitably distributed? Which student groups report barriers to accessing courses, programs, or teams? How does access to vocational or career-oriented pathways influence engagement?

F. School unity and collective identity are described as limited.

Students described school unity and spirit as low, referencing limited participation in schoolwide events and low turnout for activities such as dances. While some students described connection through specific programs or teams, broader schoolwide cohesion was described as uneven.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of school pride, participation in schoolwide events, sense of belonging, and variation in experiences of unity across grade levels and programs.

Outstanding Questions: How do students across different grade levels describe their sense of belonging? Is participation in schoolwide events concentrated among particular groups? What factors influence perceptions of school unity?

Elementary School Teachers

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize what the District is learning so far from elementary educators through Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study. This phase focused on listening and documentation, not evaluation or recommendations. Findings reflect recurring patterns across sites and roles and are intended to inform subsequent phases of analysis and planning.

A. Safety and behavior systems function unevenly across classrooms and sites.

Elementary educators report variation in how behavioral expectations, safety procedures, and consequences are implemented and supported. While many teachers describe feeling safe within their own classrooms, safety concerns increase in shared and unstructured spaces such as recess, lunch, cafeterias, and transitional periods. Teachers describe repetitive disruptive behaviors, inconsistent consequences, students returning to class quickly after unsafe behavior,

and limited follow-through or monitoring in problem areas. Some educators report frequent intervention in physical altercations and describe operating in a constant state of heightened vigilance. Vague or inconsistent safety plans, limited playground visibility, insufficient communication tools, and lack of clarity around procedures contribute to uncertainty.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Clarify the frequency, location, and severity of safety concerns; assess consistency of behavioral response across sites; examine staff perceptions of follow-through and administrative responsiveness; identify variation between classroom and shared-space safety experiences.

Outstanding Questions: Where are safety gaps most concentrated? How consistently are consequences applied? What systems exist for monitoring repeat incidents? What differentiates classrooms or sites that report higher safety confidence?

B. Academic growth and strong classroom communities coexist with significant instructional strain.

Teachers consistently identify collaborative staff cultures, strong grade-level teams, visible and supportive administrators, and positive staff relationships as strengths. Many report structured environments, morning meetings, hands-on activities, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), student celebrations, house teams, reading intervention, iReady growth, wellness rooms, counseling support, and care teams as bright spots. Students are described as motivated and excited about learning in well-supported environments.

At the same time, educators report large gaps in academic ability, difficulty with student retention and application of learning, chronic absenteeism, inappropriate student placement, mainstreaming of special education students without adequate support, lack of consistent behavioral support, and inequitable home involvement. Instructional time is affected by constant interruptions, missed prep periods, rigid scheduling, district mandates without site-level flexibility, and time spent in redundant professional development. Unequal technology access and inequitable funding across schools also emerge as concerns.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Quantify instructional time lost to interruptions; examine alignment between placement decisions and available supports; assess staff capacity to meet wide academic ranges; measure variation in access to technology and instructional resources.

Outstanding Questions: How are placement decisions made and supported? How much instructional time is lost weekly to behavioral or structural interruptions? Where are resource inequities most pronounced?

C. Staffing, workload, and resource constraints directly shape classroom conditions.

Teachers describe inconsistent staffing, difficulty maintaining staff, too many responsibilities across instructional and service roles, and inadequate numbers of instructional aides,

particularly in special education. Educators express concern about cutting special education aides due to safety implications. Many report needing smaller class sizes, more space for services (physical therapy, adaptive physical education, counseling), additional academic and social-emotional interventions, faster intervention responses, clearer rubrics and expectations, updated curriculum, flexible seating, movement-based strategies, and reliable technology.

Language barriers, lack of adopted curriculum for English learners and newcomers, limited access to Spanish books, and need for stronger bilingual program coordination also emerge as themes. Teachers request clearer information sharing and more parent training around attendance and supporting learning.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Identify staffing ratios and aide coverage patterns; assess adequacy of space and materials; evaluate support structures for English learners and special education students; examine teacher workload distribution across sites.

Outstanding Questions: Where are staffing shortages most acute? How do aide allocations correlate with safety or behavior reports? What are the most pressing unmet instructional resource needs?

D. External factors significantly influence classroom climate and student readiness.

Educators report attendance and chronic absenteeism as major barriers, alongside inequitable home support, parent education gaps, language barriers, family trauma, socioeconomic stressors, student hunger, and unstable home environments. Teachers note inequitable funding between schools and unequal access to technology. These factors intersect with student behavior, engagement, and accountability.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Disaggregate attendance patterns by site and grade; assess educator perceptions of family engagement capacity; examine resource distribution across schools; explore the relationship between home factors and classroom disruption.

Outstanding Questions: How do attendance and home factors vary by site? What family engagement supports are currently in place and where are gaps? How do socioeconomic pressures intersect with behavior patterns?

E. Psychological safety and belonging are foundational to success.

Educators report that success comes from a strong sense of belonging among students and staff. Strong classroom community, supportive administrators, collaborative teams, and visible leadership contribute to positive environments. At the same time, some report psychological safety concerns in staff meetings and inconsistent communication across programs. Teachers note that students enjoy structured environments and respond positively to recognition systems, but that belonging is fragile when consequences and expectations are unclear.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Measure perceptions of staff psychological safety; assess consistency of communication and expectations; examine the relationship between belonging and behavior outcomes.

Outstanding Questions: How does staff psychological safety vary across sites? What communication structures build trust? What conditions most strongly correlate with reported belonging?

Secondary School Teachers

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize recurring themes from Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study based on listening sessions with secondary educators. This phase focused on documentation and pattern recognition rather than evaluation or recommendations. The findings below synthesize documented input to identify cross-cutting themes that can inform deeper inquiry and measurement in subsequent phases.

A. Discipline Systems Are Viewed as Inconsistent and Insufficiently Supported

Across sessions, secondary teachers described variability in how discipline policies are implemented and how consequences are applied. Participants referenced students “getting away with too much,” inconsistent follow-through, reduced consequences, and limited adherence to MTSS structures. There were repeated concerns about lack of administrative support with disruptive behavior, insufficient communication regarding discipline outcomes, and patterns of students returning to class without clear intervention. Teachers also noted that serious behaviors, including fighting and classroom disruption, affect instructional continuity.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived consistency of discipline systems across sites, clarity of consequence protocols, confidence in MTSS implementation, and levels of administrative follow-through.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent do discipline practices vary across secondary sites? How aligned are staff perceptions of consistency with administrative data on interventions and consequences?

B. Attendance and Engagement Challenges Are Affecting Instructional Coherence

Chronic absenteeism, cutting class, and inconsistent attendance were frequently cited as instructional barriers. Teachers noted that attendance issues often intersect with socio-economic pressures, home life responsibilities, employment, and student apathy. Academic gaps—particularly in literacy and vocabulary—were described as limiting access to grade-level content, with some educators reporting that students require intervention before engaging in

standard coursework. Social promotion and disengagement were also mentioned as contributing factors.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should quantify the frequency and instructional impact of absenteeism, measure perceived root causes, and assess how attendance patterns affect pacing and curriculum delivery.

Outstanding Questions: How do attendance patterns differ across programs and grade levels? What proportion of instructional time is affected by re-teaching or remediation due to absenteeism?

C. Teaching and Learning Conditions Reflect Resource and Structural Constraints

Secondary teachers described large or imbalanced class sizes, limited planning and collaboration time, outdated or insufficient technology, and lack of instructional materials. Participants referenced a desire for smaller, balanced class sizes and protected planning time. There were repeated mentions of outdated equipment, inadequate bandwidth, lack of 1:1 technology in some settings, and facilities constraints including classroom space, science labs, PE space, and storage. Some educators noted misalignment between SPED and general education curriculum and limited access to aides or language support within general education classrooms.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived adequacy of instructional resources, class size balance, access to technology, alignment between SPED and general education curriculum, and sufficiency of collaboration time.

Outstanding Questions: How do resource conditions vary across secondary sites and programs? To what degree do facilities and technology constraints directly limit instructional delivery?

D. Staff Support, Communication, and Decision-Making Transparency Influence Climate

Educators referenced open-door policies and collaborative cultures at some sites, but also described inconsistent communication, lack of staff voice in decision-making, and unclear district-wide policies (e.g., phone policies). Participants noted high staff turnover in some contexts and limited structured support for new teachers. Some described feeling unsupported in day-to-day implementation, including limited response to radio calls or delayed communication regarding safety issues.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of administrative responsiveness, clarity of district-wide policies, opportunities for teacher voice in decision-making, and adequacy of onboarding and support for new staff.

Outstanding Questions: How do perceptions of support and communication differ across sites? What structural factors contribute to variation in staff experience?

E. Safety and Belonging Are Experienced Unevenly Across Contexts

Secondary educators described both strengths and concerns related to safety and climate. Strengths included small campus environments, strong peer relationships, extracurricular programs (athletics, leadership, CTE, clubs), and student-teacher connections. At the same time, participants noted concerns about fighting culture, verbal conflict, inconsistent supervision, and inadequate emergency communication. Some described campus environments as generally safe but dependent on consistent adult presence and clear norms.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived safety across settings (classroom, hallways, extracurricular spaces), clarity of behavioral expectations, and confidence in emergency communication systems.

Outstanding Questions: How do student and staff perceptions of safety compare across sites? What contextual factors influence variability in climate experiences?

F. Structural and System-Level Factors Shape Secondary Instructional Experience

Participants referenced mandates (testing, scripted programs), district-level priorities perceived as non-academic, and workload pressures that limit instructional flexibility. There were mentions of limited prep time due to meetings and shifting priorities, concerns about placement decisions not aligned to skill level, and desire for clearer district coherence in instructional expectations. Several educators noted that balancing compliance requirements with differentiated instruction presents ongoing tension.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess the perceived impact of mandates on instructional autonomy, clarity of district instructional policies, adequacy of prep time, and alignment between student placement and skill level.

Outstanding Questions: How do district-level policies translate into classroom-level implementation? Where do educators experience misalignment between expectations and operational realities?

These findings reflect recurring patterns across documented secondary listening sessions and are intended to inform the design, calibration, and prioritization of Phase II data collection.

Synopsis of Survey Responses (Elementary and Secondary)

In addition to facilitated listening sessions, teachers were invited to complete an exit survey following Phase I engagement. Responses from both elementary and secondary educators were reviewed for recurring patterns across sites and grade levels. The synthesis below reflects themes that appeared with frequency and consistency across responses. As with all Phase I

findings, this section documents stakeholder perspectives and does not evaluate programs, individuals, or decisions.

Across survey responses, **four themes emerged** most prominently: 1) Discipline consistency 2) Special education capacity 3) Workload strain and 4) Trust and communication. These patterns mirror themes documented in listening sessions and suggest that concerns are not isolated to individual classrooms or sites. At the same time, responses reflect continued professional commitment and identifiable strengths that can inform subsequent phases of analysis and planning.

Discipline and Safety Systems

The most prevalent theme across survey responses concerned student behavior and the perceived inconsistency of discipline systems. Teachers described uneven application of consequences, limited communication following office referrals, and students returning to class without clear resolution. Several respondents expressed concern that repeated disruptive or unsafe behaviors undermine instructional continuity and classroom stability. Concerns extended beyond individual incidents to broader questions about whether behavioral expectations, enforcement, and follow-through are consistently implemented across sites. This pattern reinforces themes raised during listening sessions and suggests system-level variability rather than isolated classroom concerns.

Special Education Capacity and Process Integrity

A second dominant theme involved special education identification, placement, and support structures. Teachers described students with significant academic and behavioral needs remaining in general education classrooms without sufficient aide coverage or specialized support. Several responses referenced concern about alignment between student needs and available placements, as well as limited transparency in decision-making processes. Educators frequently framed this issue as one affecting overall classroom conditions and safety, not solely individual students. These comments reflect structural concern regarding capacity and process integrity rather than opposition to inclusive practices.

Workload, Time Allocation, and Initiative Coherence

Teachers consistently referenced limited unstructured planning time, frequent meetings, competing mandates, and expanding instructional expectations. Respondents described difficulty balancing compliance requirements, assessment schedules, and differentiated instruction within available time. Several comments reflected fatigue related to ongoing change without clear rationale or visible follow-through. While collaboration and professional dialogue were valued when purposeful, many educators expressed a desire for greater coherence, protected planning time, and stability in district priorities.

Trust, Communication, and Responsiveness

Survey responses reflect mixed perceptions regarding communication and responsiveness at the district level. While many teachers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be heard,

others conveyed skepticism about whether input would translate into visible action. Concerns centered on transparency in decision-making, clarity of expectations, and consistency between stated priorities and enacted practices. This theme emphasizes alignment and follow-through rather than disagreement with any single initiative.

Resource and Infrastructure Constraints

Though less dominant than the themes above, teachers referenced uneven access to technology, instructional aides, and safety personnel. Some respondents connected implementation challenges directly to resource availability, particularly within the context of fiscal constraints. These comments suggest that operational expectations are sometimes experienced as misaligned with available capacity.

Commitment to Students and Site-Level Strengths

Despite recurring concerns, many responses reflected strong commitment to students and pride in school communities. Educators cited effective counseling supports, collaborative teams, structured classroom environments, and positive student relationships as meaningful strengths. Teachers consistently emphasized that students thrive when expectations are clear and supports are aligned.

Principals/Site Leaders

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize recurring themes from Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study based on listening sessions with site leaders/principals. This phase focused on documentation and pattern recognition rather than evaluation or recommendations. The findings below synthesize documented input to identify cross-cutting themes that can inform deeper inquiry and measurement in subsequent phases.

A. Operational Systems Are Experienced as Inconsistently Defined and Implemented

Across sessions, principals described variability in how district systems are defined, communicated, and operationalized across sites. Participants referenced inconsistent policies, lack of clearly standardized procedures, and uneven implementation related to safety protocols, administrative placement, enrollment processes, and student transfers. Some sites were described as having well-established procedures, while others were not. There were recurring references to confusion regarding system ownership and uncertainty about how policies are created, communicated, and enforced. Conversations were described as occurring without clearly defined outcomes, contributing to variation in practice across school levels and locations.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceptions of clarity, consistency, and districtwide standardization of operational systems, including safety, discipline, enrollment, and transfer processes. It should assess whether variability differs by school level or role.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent do principals perceive district systems as clearly defined and consistently implemented? Where does variability most frequently occur, and how aligned are site-level interpretations of policy expectations?

B. Safety Infrastructure Is Improving but Perceived as Unevenly Institutionalized

Safety and emergency protocols were central areas of discussion. Principals acknowledged improvements in safety response, including deployment of external security support, and noted appreciation for coordinated efforts during incidents. At the same time, participants referenced inconsistent understanding of emergency procedures, questions regarding compliance with required documentation, and the need for improved communication with affected parties during incidents. Some sites were described as having clear procedures, while others were not. The recurring theme reflects recognition of progress alongside uneven clarity and standardization.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess principals' confidence in the clarity of emergency protocols, perceived consistency in compliance across classrooms, and satisfaction with incident communication processes.

Outstanding Questions: How consistently are safety procedures understood across sites? Where do principals perceive gaps in documentation, communication, or compliance? Do perceptions differ by school level?

C. Discipline and Administrative Placement Processes Vary Across School Levels

Principals described variability in administrative placement and discipline practices across elementary, middle, and high school settings. Experiences at the elementary level were reported as inconsistent, with most elementary assistant principals not aligning with one positive example of guidance discussed during the session. Middle school experiences were described as mixed, while high schools were characterized as relatively stronger, though variability remained. Participants referenced physical altercations leading to administrative placement decisions and expressed the need for clearer, consistent district policy and protocols. The theme reflects cross-level misalignment rather than rejection of discipline systems.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceptions of clarity, consistency, and alignment of administrative placement and discipline processes across school levels, including documentation requirements and district guidance.

Outstanding Questions: How aligned are discipline practices across elementary, middle, and high schools? Where do site leaders experience the greatest ambiguity in administrative placement guidance?

D. Governance Clarity and Policy Ownership Are Not Uniformly Understood

Participants referenced inconsistent policies, unclear system ownership at the district level, and uncertainty about responsibility for creating and enforcing procedures. There were descriptions of conversations occurring without clearly defined outcomes and confusion regarding how

decisions translate into implementation. The theme centers on perceived ambiguity in authority structures and accountability pathways rather than absence of effort or activity. This ambiguity contributes to uneven application of policies across sites.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess principals' understanding of district-level authority structures, clarity of policy ownership, perceptions of follow-through after discussions or directives, and consistency of policy enforcement.

Outstanding Questions: Do principals share a common understanding of who owns specific operational systems? How clearly do site leaders perceive the relationship between district direction and site-level implementation?

E. Administrative Capacity Is Constrained by Documentation and Compliance Demands

Assistant principals reported that writing incident statements requires significant time, taking away from other responsibilities. This concern was framed as workload impact rather than resistance to compliance expectations. The recurring theme reflects perceived strain associated with documentation requirements and administrative processing. While the specific tasks displaced were not detailed, the discussion suggests that compliance-related duties occupy substantial administrative attention.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived documentation burden, time allocation across administrative responsibilities, and the impact of compliance requirements on planning, instructional leadership, and staff support.

Outstanding Questions: How do assistant principals distribute time between compliance-related duties and other leadership functions? Do perceptions of documentation burden vary across school levels?

F. Planning Stability and Initiative Coordination Influence Implementation Coherence

Principals referenced mid-year calendar changes, instability in professional development scheduling, and lack of protected time for principal collaboration. Participants expressed urgency around front-loading planning for the upcoming year and beginning next-year planning immediately. Multiple active committees and task forces were identified, including behavior, math instruction, ELA, discipline, culture and climate, and common assessment. While these efforts reflect active work, principals described a need for clearer sequencing, coordination, and stable planning structures to support coherent implementation.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of calendar stability, adequacy of protected planning time, clarity of initiative sequencing, and alignment among committees and district priorities.

Outstanding Questions: How do principals experience the pacing and coordination of district initiatives? To what extent does planning instability affect implementation consistency across sites?

These findings reflect recurring patterns across documented principal listening sessions and are intended to inform the design, calibration, and prioritization of Phase II data collection.

Assistant Principals

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize recurring themes from Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study based on listening sessions with assistant principals and input from survey responses.. This phase focused on documentation and pattern recognition rather than evaluation or recommendations. The findings below synthesize documented input to identify cross-cutting operational and structural themes that can inform deeper inquiry and measurement in subsequent phases.

A. Safety Protocols Are Viewed as Inconsistently Operationalized

Assistant principals described variability in how emergency procedures are communicated and implemented across sites. Participants referenced gaps in staff notification during serious incidents, lack of clarity regarding lockdown decision-making, and inconsistencies between written protocols and enacted practices. There were repeated concerns about role clarity during emergencies and uneven training prior to the school year.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived clarity of emergency protocols, consistency of implementation across sites, staff confidence in crisis response systems, and adequacy of safety training.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent do emergency response practices vary across schools? How aligned are staff perceptions of safety protocol clarity with district-level documentation and training records?

B. Student Transfer Systems Lack Standardization and Predictability

Across sessions, assistant principals described inconsistent communication regarding student transfers, particularly in cases involving behavioral or safety concerns. Participants referenced reliance on informal networks rather than formal district-wide systems and variability in documentation review processes. Differences between elementary and secondary practices were noted.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of consistency in transfer communication, clarity of documentation procedures, and confidence in district-level guidance during administrative placements.

Outstanding Questions: What formal processes currently govern student transfers across sites? How consistently are behavioral histories communicated and reviewed?

C. Behavior Management Systems Create Operational Strain

Assistant principals reported significant time devoted to behavior documentation, incident response, and parent communications. Participants described duplicated work across sites, lack of centralized templates, and variability in discipline implementation. There were references to reactive systems that require substantial administrative time and limit proactive planning.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived consistency of behavior systems, clarity of discipline protocols, adequacy of district support, and administrative workload related to behavior management.

Outstanding Questions: How does time allocation for behavior management affect instructional leadership capacity? Where do inconsistencies in consequence systems most frequently occur?

D. District-to-Site Communication and Role Clarity Influence Operational Stability

Participants described variability in communication from district offices during both routine operations and crisis situations. Assistant principals referenced unclear expectations, uneven guidance from departments, and difficulty identifying decision-making authority. Communication breakdowns were described as contributing to inefficiencies and frustration at the site level.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of district responsiveness, clarity of roles and responsibilities, predictability of communication systems, and alignment between central office direction and site implementation.

Outstanding Questions: How do perceptions of communication clarity differ across leadership tiers? What structural factors contribute to breakdowns between district offices and school sites?

E. Onboarding and Leadership Preparation Affect Site Coherence

Assistant principals emphasized the need for structured onboarding processes, particularly when multiple members of a leadership team are new. Participants described limited pre-year training, insufficient system orientation, and challenges in operational continuity when leadership turnover occurs. Consideration was given to extending the administrative calendar or adding dedicated onboarding days.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceptions of onboarding adequacy, preparedness for role responsibilities, access to district systems training, and availability of structured leadership development.

Outstanding Questions: How does leadership turnover correlate with operational stability and climate indicators? What onboarding structures currently exist, and how consistently are they implemented?

F. Fiscal Instability Shapes Operational Decision-Making

Assistant principals acknowledged the district's significant budget deficit and described fiscal uncertainty as an ongoing contextual factor. Participants referenced the need for clarity regarding budget reductions, participation in forums, and structured communication about fiscal planning. Operational challenges were described as occurring within this broader financial constraint environment.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceptions of fiscal transparency, communication regarding budget decisions, and the perceived impact of financial constraints on staffing, safety, and operations.

Outstanding Questions: How do fiscal conditions affect site-level leadership capacity? What trade-offs are being experienced across schools as budget reductions are implemented?

These findings reflect recurring patterns across documented assistant principal listening sessions and are intended to inform the design, calibration, and prioritization of Phase II data collection.

District Staff

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize what the District is learning from district employees through Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study, incorporating both listening session input and survey responses. Phase I focused on documentation and pattern identification, not evaluation or recommendations. The findings below reflect recurring themes across district-level operational roles and are intended to inform Phase II survey refinement and deeper quantitative analysis.

A. Internal collaboration is strengthening, but cross-functional alignment remains uneven.

District employees described higher levels of collaboration and strengthened relationships across teams and departments, with particular affirmation of leadership and communication within Human Resources and Special Education. Progress was noted in SPED coordination

with sites and other departments. At the same time, recurring references to administrative burden, pushback from other departments, lack of accountability, and ineffective partnerships suggest that collaboration is not uniformly experienced across functions. The absence of consistent SPED-principal meetings and interaction challenges with site leaders further reflect variability in cross-functional alignment.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure perceptions of cross-departmental collaboration, clarity of roles and responsibilities, partnership effectiveness with site leadership, and consistency of systems implementation across departments.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent are collaborative gains department-specific versus system-wide? How consistently are shared practices implemented across sites and departments?

B. Special Education functions as a central hub of service delivery but reports capacity strain.

Special Education was repeatedly described as collaborative and strongly led; however, staff also reported being required to provide a comprehensive suite of services without adequate support. SPED interacts with accounting, nutrition services, transportation, site leaders, and students, resulting in significant administrative load. Challenges included staffing shortages, transportation impacts, difficulty separating behavioral and developmental issues, and lack of structured principal engagement. These patterns suggest that SPED operates as a central coordinating function while managing high operational complexity.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should quantify perceived workload demands, adequacy of staffing, transportation reliability for specialized services, and clarity of responsibility boundaries between SPED and other departments.

Outstanding Questions: How do staffing levels and administrative demands compare to service requirements? Where do staff perceive misalignment between responsibility and authority?

C. Safety improvements are visible, yet perceptions of vulnerability and communication gaps persist.

District employees acknowledged visible safety upgrades, including cameras, sensors, and alarm systems, and some reported never feeling unsafe. Others referenced break-ins, unauthorized campus entry, transportation yard intrusions, and unsafe drop-off and pick-up conditions. The loss of school resource officers and local law enforcement staffing reductions were noted as contextual factors. Communication during safety incidents emerged as a recurring concern, as did questions regarding how district staff intervene during altercations. Survey responses also raised specific operational safety concerns, including the transport of large amounts of cash without a contracted courier service.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure perceptions of physical safety across work locations, clarity of safety communication protocols, adequacy of personnel presence, and role clarity during incidents. Operational safety concerns, including cash handling and transportation procedures, should also be assessed.

Outstanding Questions: How consistent are safety communication practices across sites? Which safety concerns are infrastructure-based versus procedural? How do perceptions vary by department or physical work environment?

D. Communication is a system-wide theme, with infrastructure present but implementation inconsistent.

Communication was identified repeatedly as a central issue. Staff referenced the need for district-wide communication protocols, proactive communication, responsiveness, and improved translation and coordination between departments. Technology infrastructure exists, including speakers, clocks, and text-capable phones, yet staff reported inconsistent use of communication systems. Survey responses indicated that previously implemented systems may no longer be consistently followed. Communication gaps were also noted in relation to board reporting processes and personnel commission structures.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess clarity, frequency, and reliability of communication from district leadership; consistency of system implementation; translation accessibility; and staff understanding of decision-making structures.

Outstanding Questions: Where are communication breakdowns occurring most frequently—between district and site, between departments, or within departments? Are inconsistencies due to protocol design, training, resource constraints, or enforcement?

E. Growing student and family needs are increasing operational complexity.

District employees referenced increased free and reduced lunch rates, the need for bilingual support, delays in processing applications tied to funding timelines, SUN Bucks application requirements, and the potential role of parent liaisons. Requests for expanded wraparound services, social workers, after-school programs, and community safety programs reflect awareness of broader socioeconomic pressures affecting students and families. Survey responses emphasized the importance of prioritizing student-centered decision-making and maintaining confidence among parents that students are safe on campuses.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should quantify perceived adequacy of student and family supports, translation capacity, application processing timelines, and staff perceptions of how community conditions impact district operations.

Outstanding Questions: How are increased poverty indicators affecting workload and service delivery? Where are gaps most acute—staffing, funding flow, coordination, or communication with families?

Classified Staff

The following findings summarize themes emerging from Phase I Listening Tour data, including facilitated classified staff sessions and. These findings are descriptive rather than evaluative and reflect recurring patterns, emphasized concerns, and structural conditions documented across both discussion and written input. The purpose of this synthesis is to identify cross-cutting themes to inform the design and focus of Phase II survey instruments and subsequent analytic work. No recommendations are offered in this section.

A. Restorative Practices Are Identified as the Primary Source of Positive Climate and Student Support

Across both sessions and exit survey reflections, restorative practices were described as the strongest and most consistently cited bright spot, with restorative facilitation, care team participation, and relationship-building linked to student belonging and empowerment. Participants referenced onsite restorative facilitation, integration into care team meetings, and collaboration with counselors and teachers as stabilizing structures. Restorative practice was described as “the only bright spot” in some comments, suggesting both strong support for the model and contrast with other areas of concern. Collaboration through PLCs and strengthened relationships among staff were also associated with environments where restorative structures were active.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II instruments should measure the visibility, consistency, and perceived impact of restorative practices across sites, including staff understanding of facilitator roles and integration into student support systems.

Outstanding Questions: How consistently are restorative practices implemented across campuses? Do perceptions of effectiveness vary by role or site?

B. Instructional Capacity and Specialized Service Alignment Are Experienced as Structural Constraints

Participants described large class sizes, wide variation in student ability levels within classrooms, staffing shortages, and difficulty differentiating instruction as ongoing systemic challenges. Exit survey responses expanded on these concerns by highlighting limitations in Special Education placement capacity, including campuses without SDC services and difficulty fully meeting IEP accommodations. Participants described students working hard yet continuing to struggle academically, with academic challenges sometimes presenting as behavioral concerns. Staffing limitations, time constraints, and security capacity were also referenced as limiting the ability to respond effectively to student needs. These descriptions reflect capacity-related constraints rather than isolated classroom-level issues.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey items should quantify perceptions of instructional capacity, staffing adequacy, and alignment between student needs and available Special Education services. Clarification is needed regarding variation across campuses.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent do staffing and service capacity differ by site? How frequently do staff report difficulty meeting student needs due to structural limitations?

C. Safety Is Framed as a Layered Experience Shaped by Community Context and On-Campus Conditions

Safety concerns were described as influenced by both external community conditions and internal campus systems. Participants referenced gun and gang violence in the community as affecting students' daily experiences traveling to and from school. On campus, concerns included exterior lighting, geographic isolation in certain areas, parking lot congestion during drop-off and pick-up, and limited security capacity to patrol interior and exterior spaces. Participants also described uneven implementation of safety expectations and inconsistent consequences for actions. Communication during incidents was noted as an area requiring greater clarity. These findings reflect safety as both environmental and procedural in nature.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey instruments should disaggregate safety into environmental conditions, supervision capacity, procedural clarity, and consistency of discipline. Variation across sites and roles should be measured.

Outstanding Questions

Are safety concerns concentrated in specific geographic areas or campuses? How consistently do staff perceive discipline expectations and consequences to be applied?

D. Cultural Climate Includes Concerns About Bias, Professional Respect, and Role-Based Divisions

Participants described unintended bias, generational expectations, and the need for culturally sensitive or sensitivity training as recurring concerns. Exit survey responses further referenced workplace climate dynamics, including a perceived "us vs. them" mentality between certificated and classified staff and concerns about unprofessional commentary related to personal appearance. Participants acknowledged outdated language or assumptions and expressed interest in training to strengthen relationships and cultural responsiveness. These data reflect climate dynamics that include both student-facing and adult-facing interactions.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure perceptions of professional respect across role groups, experiences of bias, and the prevalence of perceived divisions between classified and certificated staff.

Outstanding Questions: How widespread are perceptions of role-based division? Do staff across classifications report similar or differing experiences of inclusion and professional respect?

E. Communication Systems and Operational Coordination Are Present but Experienced as Uneven in Practice

Participants noted the presence of communication tools such as clocks, speakers, and text-capable phones, while also describing a need for clearer communication during incidents. Exit survey comments also referenced operational coordination challenges, including data system alignment related to student food allergy documentation. These observations suggest that infrastructure exists, but clarity, coordination, and consistency of implementation may vary across departments or sites.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey items should assess clarity, timeliness, and coordination of communication systems, as well as ease of cross-departmental data alignment.

Outstanding Questions: Are communication gaps primarily procedural, technological, or relational? How do different departments experience system coordination?

Parents and Families

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize what the District is learning from parents and families through Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study. Phase I focused on facilitated listening sessions and exit survey responses. The findings below are descriptive, not evaluative, and are intended to inform the design and focus of subsequent phases, including survey development and deeper analysis. Themes reflect recurring patterns across documented input.

A. Family experiences are shaped by strong individual relationships but uneven system-level consistency.

Parents described meaningful relationships with teachers, administrators, counselors, security staff, and coaches, and expressed appreciation for responsive leadership at specific sites. Positive experiences included music and athletic programs, college counseling, and supportive elementary environments. At the same time, other parents reported difficulty reaching school or district personnel, unreturned calls or emails, and communication breakdowns between district and school sites. Experiences were described as highly variable, often dependent on individual educators rather than predictable systems.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey measures may need to distinguish between satisfaction with individual staff relationships and confidence in districtwide communication and responsiveness systems.

Outstanding Questions: To what extent do communication experiences vary by school site or grade level? How consistently do families receive timely responses from both site and district personnel?

B. Academic concerns center on math performance, resource capacity, and access to enrichment.

Recurring concerns included high math failure rates at middle and high school levels, large gaps in academic performance, and parents enrolling students in outside programs to address skill deficits. Families referenced large class sizes, insufficient working computers, and enrollment growth perceived as outpacing infrastructure capacity. Limited enrichment opportunities beyond sports, lack of clubs, and requests for expanded academic events were also noted. Some parents expressed concern about classroom placement decisions and the need for clearer college preparation timelines and internship resources.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey may need to assess perceptions of academic rigor, access to academic support, class size impacts, technology availability, and availability of enrichment opportunities.

Outstanding Questions: How widespread are concerns regarding math performance across grade levels? How do families perceive the adequacy of academic support relative to student needs?

C. Special education services are described as inconsistent in communication, staffing stability, and service continuity.

Parents reported perceptions that special education services are inconsistent or insufficient, including lack of stable aides and therapists and students falling behind due to unestablished rapport. Communication challenges were described for nonverbal students, and some families characterized themselves as “fighting” for services viewed as necessary. Concerns were also raised about policies affecting AAC devices and transportation delays without adequate notification. Several comments reflected a perception that special education concerns are not prioritized relative to other areas.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey items may need to separately measure satisfaction with special education communication, staffing stability, service delivery consistency, and transportation reliability.

Outstanding Questions: How prevalent are concerns regarding staffing continuity in special education programs? Do families of students with intensive needs report different communication patterns than families in general education?

D. Safety concerns encompass student behavior, campus supervision, and broader environmental conditions.

Parents referenced bullying, fights, sexual harassment, pepper spray incidents, and concerns about weapons on campus. Some described perceptions that restorative practices allow issues to escalate before intervention. Concerns about campus access, limited ability to secure classrooms from the inside, restroom supervision challenges, and insufficient site safety staffing were raised. Facilities conditions, including cleanliness, pest control, and restroom access limitations, were linked to perceptions of campus climate. Survey responses reinforced safety as a central concern, including experiences of bullying and dissatisfaction with how incidents were addressed.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey may need to distinguish between perceptions of student behavior management, supervision capacity, campus access control, facility conditions, and overall physical safety.

Outstanding Questions: Are safety perceptions concentrated at particular school levels or sites? Do families feel there are clear and appropriate consequences for serious misconduct?

E. Trust is influenced by communication transparency, representation, and perceived responsiveness.

Parents expressed concern that Spanish-speaking families are not equally served and described being placed in informal translator roles. Questions were raised regarding staff diversity relative to student demographics. Some comments referenced broader systemic issues, including perceptions that responses are constrained by union agreements or rooted in longstanding inequities. Trust appeared closely tied to whether concerns are acknowledged and addressed, including references to prior district leadership responses not meeting expectations.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Survey measures may need to assess perceptions of language access, staff representation, cultural responsiveness, and trust in district leadership.

Outstanding Questions: How do perceptions of representation and language access vary across school communities? What specific experiences most strongly shape family trust in district leadership?

F. Families articulate a desire for shared responsibility and stronger community partnership.

Across sessions and survey responses, parents expressed interest in stronger volunteer structures, more inclusive school events, and expanded partnerships with local businesses and community organizations. Some emphasized shared responsibility between families and the district, particularly in the context of budget constraints and staffing shortages. Calls for a district vision centered on safety, cleanliness, inclusivity, and student-centered decision-making reflected aspirations for renewed community pride and collaboration.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey may need to assess parent interest in volunteer engagement, perceptions of partnership opportunities, and willingness to participate in school-based initiatives.

Outstanding Questions: What forms of engagement are most accessible and meaningful to families? How do families define shared responsibility between home, school, and community?

Community (Writ-Large)

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize Phase I listening data from community partners. They are descriptive (not evaluative) and are intended to inform next phases by clarifying recurring patterns in partner perceptions of district strengths, barriers to improvement, partnership conditions, and student opportunity pathways.

A. Partners located the district’s most visible strengths in supportive relationships, responsive support structures, and career-connected opportunities.

Participants repeatedly described strength as most apparent where students and families experience consistent adult care, responsiveness, and follow-through. Several comments emphasized that educators care deeply about students and that strong student–adult relationships exist across roles. Partners also pointed to specific areas of district support that feel accessible and helpful, and described these points of responsiveness as shaping whether families feel supported in navigating needs and opportunities. Career-connected learning, including CTE-linked programming, was described as a concrete bright spot, with structured opportunities that connect students to next steps. Some participants also described how direct engagement with schools can counter negative perceptions when interactions are attentive and supportive.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure perceived responsiveness and follow-through across district and site levels, the consistency of relationship-based support that partners observe, and awareness and perceived reach of career-connected opportunities. It should also assess whether and how direct engagement with schools shifts partner perceptions over time.

Outstanding Questions: Where do partners experience the most consistent responsiveness, and where do they experience delays or gaps? Which supports are experienced as predictable versus dependent on individuals? How do partners define “follow-through,” and what concrete examples do they associate with it?

B. Partners described persistent strain and cyclical frustration alongside gatekeeping and cultural disconnect as conditions that shape trust, access, and participation.

Participants described ongoing workload strain, burnout, and turnover as persistent constraints on stability and improvement, and several framed district change efforts as cyclical, with repeated initiatives but limited perceived progress over time. Gatekeeping emerged as a direct frame for how access and opportunity are structured, including who is permitted entry into advanced coursework, programs, or pathway-linked opportunities and who is perceived to be

kept out. Participants also described adult culture dynamics that can intensify conflict or stigma, including contexts where stronger voices overshadow others and where fear or blame shapes interactions. Mental health concerns were described as significant and insufficiently supported, alongside references to bullying, toxic masculinity, and serious safety-related harms in the broader community context. Participants additionally named cultural disconnect and race- and power-related dynamics, including barriers tied to the recruitment and retention of Black educators and perceived institutional consequences experienced by educators of color.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should quantify perceived levels of workload strain, burnout, and turnover impacts, and measure confidence that feedback leads to meaningful change. It should assess where gatekeeping is perceived to occur (courses, programs, staffing, partnerships), how partners experience adult culture and voice dynamics, and the prevalence and perceived adequacy of mental health supports. Items should also measure perceptions of cultural disconnect and whether race- and power-related dynamics are perceived to shape access and participation.

Outstanding Questions: What forms of gatekeeping are most commonly described, and in which contexts do partners perceive it most strongly? How do perceptions of cultural disconnect vary by school level, site, or student group? Which aspects of strain (capacity, turnover, role overload) are most directly linked to inconsistency in support and engagement?

C. Partners framed collaboration as necessary yet uneven, shaped by process barriers, variable coordination, and differential access to influence.

Participants described partnerships as important for student opportunity and community support, while also emphasizing that collaboration can be difficult to sustain consistently. Process barriers were described as limiting ease of engagement, including “red tape” and constraints related to funding or administrative requirements that can deter organizations from involvement. Participants also described uneven coordination across institutions and raised concerns about the reliability of cross-system collaboration, including among public-facing systems. In addition, partners expressed concerns about uneven access to programs and decision-making spaces, including perceptions that some groups are underrepresented in certain opportunities and that inclusion can be shaped by who is present, heard, or positioned to open doors.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure clarity and navigability of partnership processes, where partners experience bottlenecks, and how consistently points of contact are maintained. It should assess perceived coordination across institutions and perceived equity in access to programs and partnership influence, including whether partners see consistent pathways for community voices to be included in decisions.

Outstanding Questions: At what stages do partners most frequently encounter barriers (entry, approvals, communication, implementation)? How do partners describe effective coordination across institutions, and what indicators do they use to judge whether coordination is

functioning? Which partners perceive the greatest access barriers to program participation or decision-making, and what patterns do they attribute that to?

D. Partners emphasized earlier pathway exposure and clearer trajectories, alongside trust-building through consistency and cross-system unity.

Participants described opportunities for growth through clearer and earlier exposure to pathways, including stronger middle-grade awareness of options and more deliberate identification of student interests and potential. Partners emphasized supporting multiple postsecondary trajectories while maintaining expectations tied to readiness and opportunity. Rebuilding trust surfaced as a stated priority, connected to consistency, transparency, and visible follow-through rather than isolated initiatives. Participants also described the need for stronger unity and collaboration across systems that shape student experiences, suggesting that coherence across institutions is part of what partners associate with sustained progress.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure when and how students are exposed to pathway options, how clearly pathways are understood by students and families, and whether encouragement and access are perceived as consistent across groups and settings. It should also quantify trust-related perceptions tied to consistency and follow-through and assess perceptions of alignment and unity across institutions that partners interact with.

Outstanding Questions: When do students first encounter pathways in ways that feel actionable, and how does that vary across settings? Which pathways are perceived as most visible and accessible, and to whom? What do partners identify as the clearest signals that trust is increasing over time?

Community and Business Partners

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize Phase I listening data from a Community/Business partner focus group. They are descriptive (not evaluative) and are intended to inform next phases by clarifying recurring patterns in partner experiences of district collaboration, student opportunity pathways, and barriers to consistent implementation.

A. Partners consistently described district-level partnership as responsive and relationship-driven.

Participants repeatedly characterized district staff as accessible, willing to take meetings, and responsive to emails, describing these dynamics as enabling stronger working relationships and supporting the launch or expansion of partner opportunities. Several comments suggested that when district-level relationships are strong, partners are better positioned to coordinate programs, problem-solve implementation challenges, and sustain engagement over time.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess partner perceptions of responsiveness and follow-through, clarity of points of contact, ease of scheduling, and the extent to which partners experience consistent engagement across district and site levels.

Outstanding Questions: Where do partners experience the most consistent responsiveness (district office, principals, counselors/coordinators)? What types of requests receive timely follow-up versus delayed action? How do partner experiences differ by school site or program type?

B. Partners emphasize concrete student opportunity pathways, with dual enrollment and career-connected learning as central anchors.

Partners highlighted sustained growth in dual enrollment and described continued expansion in course sections and student participation. Partners also referenced Career and Technical Education (CTE)-linked initiatives and exposure experiences that increase pathway visibility and create structured career exploration opportunities, including for students in alternative education settings.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure student and family awareness of dual enrollment and CTE opportunities, perceived accessibility of pathways, participation levels by school and subgroup, and partner perceptions of what enables growth and sustained recruitment.

Outstanding Questions: How evenly are pathway opportunities distributed across campuses and alternative settings? Which student groups perceive the greatest barriers to entry? What conditions most influence whether pathway opportunities reach scale?

C. Partners describe postsecondary readiness and transition barriers that persist even when students show strong academic standing.

Partners described patterns where students with strong GPAs still fall short of key readiness thresholds, including ELA-related requirements, and raised concerns about alignment between graduation requirements and college readiness expectations. Partners also described constraints on providing FAFSA outreach and supports, noting limited access to students for presentations and reduced “face time” as factors that may suppress completion outcomes.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess the prevalence of readiness barriers among academically successful students (including course/eligibility requirements), perceptions of alignment between graduation requirements and college readiness expectations, and student access to FAFSA and application support touchpoints.

Outstanding Questions: Where do students most commonly fall short of eligibility despite strong grades (which requirements, when, and why)? What school-level conditions most influence FAFSA outreach access and completion? How do students and families describe college-going supports across high school sites?

D. Partners describe implementation consistency as uneven, shaped by site-level conditions, communication pathways, and coordination capacity.

Partners distinguished strong district-level collaboration from more variable site-level conditions, especially during leadership transitions that introduce learning curves and disrupt continuity. Partners also noted that awareness of partner offerings is not always consistent across schools, and described capacity strain and concern about overburdening limited staff, suggesting sustainability depends on predictable coordination and clear communication routines.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure variability in site-level conditions affecting partnership implementation (leadership continuity, staff coordination capacity, perceived buy-in), as well as the effectiveness of communication channels for activating partner offerings and the extent to which capacity constraints create bottlenecks.

Outstanding Questions: How do leadership transitions affect partner coordination, student recruitment, and continuity of programming? What communication pathways do partners rely on to reach schools, students, and families—and where do breakdowns occur? Which coordination functions are most likely to bottleneck implementation and sustainability?

E. Partners describe capacity and communication constraints that affect how offerings are activated and sustained.

Participants described valuable partner programming (e.g., financial literacy supports, prevention/awareness programming, career exposure), while also noting communication challenges in ensuring schools and the district are aware of what partners can offer. Partners additionally expressed concern about overburdening a small district team that is perceived as working hard with limited staffing, suggesting that even strong relationships may be strained by coordination bandwidth and unclear communication routines.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess partner awareness of existing offerings across the ecosystem, perceived effectiveness of communication pathways into schools, and perceived coordination capacity (including where partner efforts encounter bottlenecks).

Outstanding Questions: How do partners currently communicate offerings to schools, and what happens when communication does not convert into implementation? Where do partners perceive the main capacity constraints—district coordination, site coordination, or partner staffing—and how do those constraints show up in practice?

F. Partners express interest in deeper partnership models that integrate parent engagement, prevention priorities, and applied skill-building.

Partners raised interest in the community schools initiative as a potential platform for deeper collaboration and emphasized the need for engagement not only from district and school leadership but also from parents. Participants also named vulnerable populations (e.g., human trafficking) as an area where improved partnering could strengthen programming, and they described applied models—such as construction-related learning (e.g., ADU-building)—that

intentionally integrate technical skill development with “soft skills” such as SEL, critical thinking, and productive dialogue.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure partner understanding of community schools efforts, partner readiness to contribute within that frame, and partner perceptions of priority needs (including prevention/vulnerability supports and applied learning models that blend technical and developmental skills).

Outstanding Questions: What do partners believe a community schools approach would concretely include, and what roles do they see for themselves? Which prevention/vulnerability areas are most urgent in partner experience, and what types of programming are partners already positioned to support?

Faith-Based Partners

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize recurring themes from Phase I of the Culture, Climate, and Safety Study based on the listening session documented as the Community (Faith-Based) Focus Group. This phase focused on documentation and pattern recognition rather than evaluation or recommendations.

A. Parent trust, access, and engagement emerged as foundational concerns.

Participants emphasized the need to rebuild trust with families and described barriers that limit meaningful parent and community involvement. The discussion pointed to unclear entry points, concerns about exclusion from decision-making processes, and the need for stronger structures that help families participate, stay informed, and advocate for their children. Across the conversation, parent engagement was framed not as a peripheral issue, but as a central condition for stronger school-community relationships.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess family perceptions of trust, clarity of access points, inclusion in decision-making, and the usefulness of current parent engagement structures.

Outstanding Questions: Where do families perceive the greatest barriers to meaningful engagement? How consistently do parents across school communities feel informed, welcomed, and included?

B. Participants framed student support as requiring stronger coordination among schools, families, and community-based efforts.

A recurring theme in the discussion was that student needs are best addressed through coordinated partnership rather than isolated programs. Participants highlighted the importance of stronger alignment among schools, parents, and community-based supports, including efforts that address family stability and broader household needs. The discussion also suggested that

community involvement can play an important role in strengthening communication, extending support, and addressing misunderstandings that affect school relationships.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should measure awareness of school-community partnerships, confidence in cross-sector coordination, and stakeholder perceptions of which supports are most visible, accessible, and useful.

Outstanding Questions: Which existing partnerships are most visible to families and staff? Where do stakeholders perceive the strongest gaps in coordination between schools and community-based supports?

C. Attendance and disengagement were understood as connected to broader social, family, and school conditions.

Participants described truancy, absenteeism, and weak engagement as concerns that cannot be separated from wider challenges affecting students and families. The discussion connected attendance issues to parent involvement, home conditions, poverty, and violence, while also suggesting that some students may mask academic struggle through disruptive behavior. Taken together, these comments reflect a view that attendance, behavior, and classroom engagement are interrelated and shaped by both in-school and out-of-school conditions.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should assess perceived causes of absenteeism, the relationship between engagement and academic struggle, and how stakeholders understand the influence of home and community conditions on school participation.

Outstanding Questions: What factors do students, families, and staff identify as the most significant contributors to absenteeism and disengagement? To what extent are attendance concerns experienced alongside academic, behavioral, or social-emotional challenges?

D. Academic support, representation, and instructional responsiveness were raised as important conditions for student success.

Participants discussed student learning needs in terms of both academic disparity and relational connection. The conversation highlighted concern about students falling significantly behind academically, the ways some students may respond to that struggle behaviorally, and the need for more responsive approaches for learners who are not currently meeting grade-level expectations. Participants also pointed to the lack of African American male teachers as a meaningful concern, suggesting that representation and cultural connection matter alongside instructional support.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: The survey should examine perceptions of belonging, adult representation, instructional responsiveness, and whether students feel adequately supported when they are behind academically.

Outstanding Questions: How do students and families perceive the relationship between representation, belonging, and academic engagement? Where do stakeholders see the greatest need for differentiated academic support?

City Officials

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize recurring themes from the Phase I listening session involving city officials and related city-facing partners. The findings are descriptive rather than evaluative and are intended to identify documented patterns that may inform subsequent phases of the culture, climate, and safety study.

A. Student safety, learning conditions, and school climate were discussed as interconnected concerns.

Participants described student learning, physical safety, and social well-being as closely related issues rather than separate domains. The discussion reflected attention to school climate, special education, and the overall conditions students experience in school. Participants also noted the importance of city-school communication, collaboration, and resource sharing, suggesting that student outcomes were often understood in connection with broader interagency relationships.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II could help distinguish how concerns about learning, safety, climate, and student support are experienced across settings and whether these are perceived as separate or overlapping issues.

Outstanding Questions: How consistently are concerns about learning, safety, and climate experienced across schools? To what extent are partnership improvements visible at the student and family level?

B. Student trafficking and online vulnerability surfaced as a distinct safety concern.

Participants raised concern about student trafficking and recruitment on school campuses and emphasized the need for broader awareness among students, families, and staff. The discussion highlighted social media use, online interactions, and grooming tactics as areas requiring greater attention. This theme stood out as a specific dimension of student safety, framed as requiring both awareness and coordinated education.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II could assess awareness of trafficking-related risks, confidence in prevention education, and perceptions of preparedness among students, staff, and families.

Outstanding Questions: How widely understood are trafficking-related and online safety risks across stakeholder groups? Where are the largest gaps in awareness, communication, or preparedness?

C. Student disengagement, truancy, and barriers to connection were described as persistent challenges.

Participants discussed chronic absenteeism, truancy, and students who are physically present on campus but not attending class as ongoing concerns. They described these issues as difficult to address through existing approaches alone and pointed to the challenge of connecting students who remain disengaged from school. This discussion positioned disengagement as both a student support issue and a systems issue affecting the district's ability to maintain connection to learning.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II could clarify how disengagement is experienced across schools, including absenteeism, class avoidance, and broader disconnection from instruction. Survey items could also examine perceptions of the effectiveness of current intervention strategies.

Outstanding Questions: What forms of disengagement are most prevalent across settings? Which barriers appear most associated with students who are present on campus but disconnected from instruction?

D. Community engagement, role boundaries, and support capacity were discussed as ongoing structural concerns.

Participants described school-community engagement as important, while also raising questions about discipline, cultural competency, and communication strategies. The discussion included how staff build connections with students through shared spaces and common experiences, but also reflected uncertainty about the district's role and where boundaries should be drawn regarding staff involvement in students' personal lives. Participants also connected student voice, behavior, life skills, after-school programming, and shared facility use to a broader support framework, while noting constraints related to funding and space.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II could assess perceptions of district responsiveness, cultural competency, role clarity, student voice, and access to partnership-based supports and opportunities.

Outstanding Questions: How do stakeholders understand the district's responsibilities relative to those of families, community organizations, and city agencies? To what extent do funding and space constraints limit support structures that stakeholders view as important?

Board Members

Purpose and Context

These findings summarize themes that emerged from the Phase I listening process with board members. They are descriptive rather than evaluative and are intended to document recurring

perspectives, concerns, and priorities raised during the listening tour in order to inform subsequent phases of the study

A. Board members described signs of district progress, while also emphasizing that improvement remains in transition.

Board member discussion reflected a view that the district is no longer standing still. Participants pointed to progress in reading, literacy, attendance focus, and communication, and described stakeholders as increasingly ready for change. At the same time, this progress was framed as early and still dependent on leadership stability, stronger staffing, and more coherent systems. The overall pattern was not one of settled confidence, but of cautious movement in a more promising direction.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should assess whether students, staff, families, and community members perceive district progress in similar ways and whether those perceptions vary by school, role, or issue area.

Outstanding Questions: Where do stakeholders see the clearest improvement? Which signs of progress appear districtwide, and which seem more limited or uneven?

B. Trust was framed as dependent on transparency, consistency, and communication that reflects community realities.

Board members repeatedly connected trust to whether families and community members understand what the district is doing and how decisions are being made. Transparency was described as important in restoring confidence, but participants also suggested that trust depends on consistency over time, not just access to information in isolated moments. The discussion also reflected awareness that engagement is shaped by local conditions, including work schedules, commuting patterns, and uneven participation across family groups. Communication, in this sense, was described not simply as information delivery, but as a central part of relationship-building and public legitimacy.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure perceptions of transparency, clarity of communication, responsiveness, access to information, and barriers to engagement across different family and community groups.

Outstanding Questions: How do different stakeholder groups currently receive district information? Which groups feel adequately informed and engaged, and which continue to face barriers?

C. School climate, belonging, and the experience of welcome were described as inconsistent across campuses.

Board member discussion suggested that school climate is not experienced uniformly across the district. Some schools were described as more welcoming than others, and participants raised concern about whether students, families, and visitors encounter the same tone, expectations, and relational climate from site to site. Concerns about violence, behavior,

campus environment, and low expectations were intertwined with broader questions about whether students feel known, respected, and supported. Participants also suggested that complaint patterns alone do not provide a sufficient understanding of belonging, and that the district may lack strong enough tools to capture these experiences more fully.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should assess perceptions of safety, belonging, respect, welcoming climate, and consistency of school experience across sites.

Outstanding Questions: How do students, families, and staff describe belonging at different schools? Where do perceptions of climate differ most sharply across campuses or stakeholder groups?

D. Board members raised concern about the gap between district priorities and consistent implementation.

A recurring theme in the board member discussion was uncertainty about how clearly board goals are translating into daily practice. Participants questioned whether systems are in place to monitor progress, whether instructional structures are producing clear outcomes, and whether educators are receiving the support needed to respond effectively to academic and behavioral needs. The discussion suggested that district direction may be more visible at the level of intention than at the level of consistent site-based implementation. Concerns about professional learning, behavioral response, and leadership capacity all pointed to the importance of stronger internal coherence.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should measure perceptions of goal clarity, implementation consistency, staff support, professional learning, and confidence in the district's ability to monitor progress toward stated priorities.

Outstanding Questions: How clearly do educators understand district expectations? Where do staff and leaders perceive the greatest gaps between district priorities and school-level practice?

E. Board members linked long-term improvement to stronger governance coherence, clearer accountability, and a more student-centered district direction.

Board members described positive movement in governance relationships and some progress toward clearer shared values, training, and role understanding. At the same time, they emphasized that improvement depends on more than board alignment alone. Participants called attention to the need for better monitoring tools, stronger internal accountability, and a more disciplined use of existing data and district information. Their longer-term aspirations centered on schools where students feel proud, valued, and capable, and where academic direction, instructional leadership, and adult expectations are strong enough to support high levels of learning.

Implications for Phase II Survey Design: Phase II should assess perceptions of governance coherence, district direction, accountability, instructional leadership, and whether students experience schools as places of support, belonging, and high expectations.

Outstanding Questions: What forms of accountability do different stakeholder groups believe are currently in place, and which do they see as missing? How do students, families, and staff define a school culture in which students feel both supported and expected to succeed?

Closing Reflections and Next Steps in Study

The Phase I listening process provided an opportunity for students, educators, families, community members, and civic partners to share their perspectives on culture, climate, and safety across Antioch Unified School District. Across stakeholder groups, participants reflected on their experiences within schools, described areas of progress, and raised questions and concerns related to student well-being, learning conditions, communication, and trust within the broader school community.

The findings presented in this report summarize patterns that emerged across those conversations. They are intended to document recurring perspectives shared during the listening process rather than to evaluate specific individuals, schools, or programs. As such, the themes presented here represent an initial qualitative understanding of how different stakeholders experience the district's culture and climate.

These insights will inform the next phase of the Culture and Climate Assessment. In Phase II, the themes identified during the listening process will be used to develop districtwide survey instruments for students, families, educators, and community members. The goal of this next phase is to gather broader participation across the district and to better understand the prevalence, distribution, and variation of the themes identified during the listening sessions.

Together, these phases will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions that shape learning, safety, and belonging across Antioch Unified School District and will inform subsequent stages of analysis and strategic planning