

Listen **UP:**

OUR VOICE, OUR COMMUNITY

STAKEHOLDERS REPORT: ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024

Prepared by

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Prepared for

**Columbus City Schools
Stakeholders**



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Letter From Lee

04



**Lee
Cole**

Executive Director of Community
Engagement and Partnerships

Dear Columbus City Schools Community,

I want to express my gratitude for your commitment to our vision to deliver a model of public education that equips all students to realize their full potential.

I am excited to share the result of an important initiative, Columbus City Schools (CCS), conducted in partnership with our students, faculty, and stakeholders. As the Executive Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships, I am honored to present the findings of "Listen Up!" a student and community conversation created to ask a question - "Does school and community sulfured and climate impact student achievement? The report summarizes insights gathered from focus groups of CCS students from nine high schools in our District.

The main goal of this initiative was to understand better students' perceptions of the culture and environment within our schools. By directly involving students, we aimed to collect valuable insights into their experiences, difficulties, and suggestions for improvement. Based on the Panorama Data, we identified the top nine schools as priorities for further research and action.

The insights collected from these focus groups shed light on various aspects of school culture and environment, including diversity, academic support, student engagement, facility maintenance, community involvement, student recognition, teacher-student relationships, and equity and inclusion. Our students have shown high engagement and willingness to provide valuable feedback and recommendations that will inform our efforts to transform the culture and environment across Columbus City Schools to better cater to their needs.



As we progress in developing an action plan, it is crucial to involve all stakeholders identified by students, including faculty, staff, parents, and community members.

Through collaborative work, we can implement significant changes and establish a more inclusive, supportive, and enriching educational environment for all students.

The following pages present a detailed overview of the Listen Up! The Stakeholders Report includes a comprehensive summary of the insights gathered from the focus groups.

I encourage you to review the report and consider how we can collectively address the identified priorities within your school community.

I am eager to work closely with you and your team to implement the necessary strategies and initiatives outlined in the report.

Together, we can positively impact our students' lives and ensure that Columbus City Schools continue to flourish as centers of excellence and opportunity.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our students' success. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me.

Lee Cole

**Executive Director of Community
Engagement and Partnerships**



Executive Summary

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The Columbus City Schools Listen Up!: Our Voice, Our Community initiative is a student-driven community conversation series. The importance of having discussions with students and the community is to provide an opportunity for the youth to uplift their schools and community to affect change from the inside out.

GOALS OF THE CONVERSATIONS:

1

Provide a platform for students and community members to listen and share the concerns and issues affecting teens.

2

Empower student voices to speak up and share their concerns with the adults.

3

Create opportunities for teens to engage with community leaders.

4

Create a student-driven contract or action plan for the community.

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONS

1. What specific factors do you believe contribute to the perceived low climate and culture in our school?
2. What suggestions do you have for improvement?
3. How can both students and staff collaborate to strengthen the sense of belonging in our schools?
Furthermore, what initiatives or adjustments would you propose to enhance this sense of belonging?
4. As a student, how should the community better support you?
5. What additional topics, discussions, or facts would you like to bring into the conversation about your school's climate and culture?

Key Themes

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Diversity and Inclusion: Most schools emphasize the need for greater cultural awareness, diversity among staff, and inclusion of all student groups in activities and decision-making processes.



Academic and Career Support: There is a call for more robust academic support, including tutoring, access to career pathways, internships, and real-world learning opportunities.



Mental Health and Safety: The importance of mental health support, anti-bullying initiatives, and safe, welcoming school environments.



Teacher-Student Relationships: Emphasizing the importance of respectful, supportive relationships between staff and students, with calls for teacher training in diversity and inclusion, and strategies for improving classroom management and engagement.



Student Engagement and Empowerment: Suggestions across schools include increasing extracurricular activities, clubs, sports, and opportunities for student leadership and voice in school matters.



School and Community Relationship: Enhancing the relationship between schools and their surrounding communities is seen as vital. Suggestions include community involvement in schools, improved communication, and partnerships with local businesses and organizations.



Infrastructure and Resources: Students and staff call for improvements in school facilities, access to technology, and better resources for both learning and extracurricular activities.

Methodology

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STUDY GOAL:

To explore how school and community culture and climate impacts student achievement.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Primary: Students
- Secondary: Community Members

Students were selected by building staff and included all student groups representing the diversity of the school building. We maintained a student to adult ratio of at least 4:1.



Participating Schools

Linden-McKinley STEM
Briggs
Columbus Scioto
South
Beechcroft
CAHS
Walnut Ridge
CAEC
Columbus North International
(ESL Location)

DATA COLLECTION APPROACH:

- Nine in-school sessions
- Mix of students, staff and community members at each table.
- Students and the facilitator lead the discussion with four probing questions
- One language-specific session

CONVERSATION THEMES:

Reaffirming
Belonging

Restoring Spirit
of Community

Celebrating
Diversity

2023-2024

October

School/Community Sessions

January February

School/Community Sessions

March

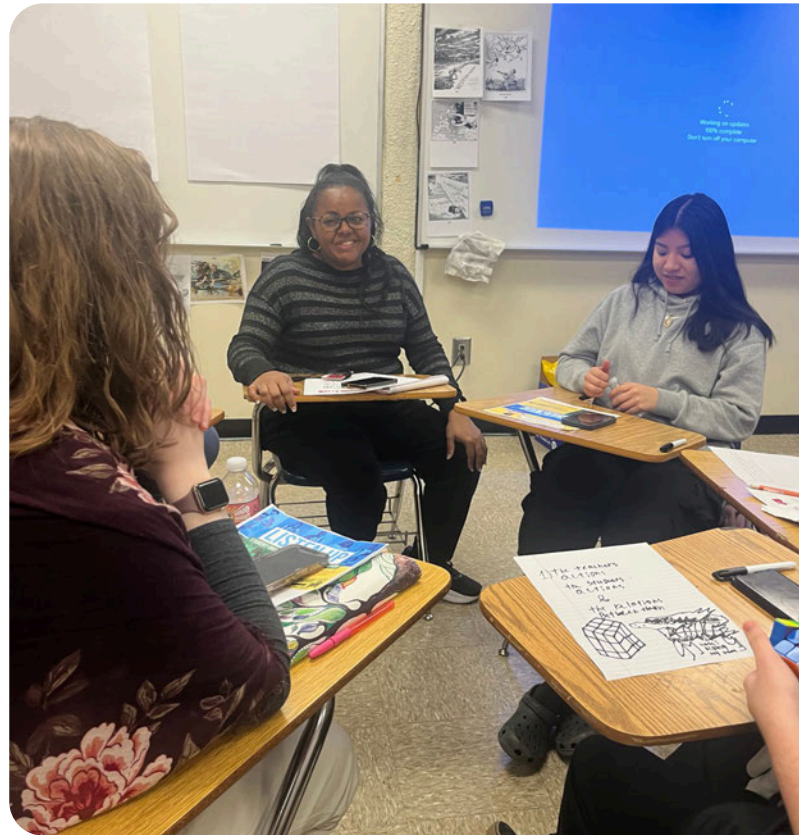
Data Analysis

April

Internal Review of Report

May

Report out to stakeholders



Student Voices

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2023-2024

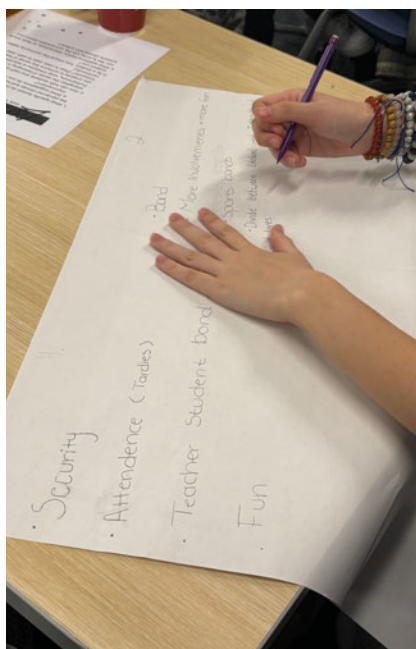
At Columbus City Schools, we recognize the profound importance of listening to and learning from our students.

The "Listen Up!" initiative underscores our commitment to hearing and actively engaging with the diverse voices of our student body.

By inviting students to participate in open forums and discussions about the culture and climate of their school, we empower them to co-create a vision that truly reflects their needs and aspirations.

This initiative is about improving our schools and teaching a vital lesson our students will carry throughout their lives.

"Listen Up!" provided students with the unique opportunity to experience firsthand the power of their voices and the impact they can make. It is a lesson in civic engagement, responsibility, and the importance of contributing to the community.



"Korean class is losing students because they feel they can't learn fast enough and are learning fairly complex sentences. Korean is a top 2 requested language at CNIS.
A strong, full time Korean teacher is needed."
-Student at International

*Partner with Liberian Services Center, Care Coalition, Adelphi Bank, Saraga."
-Students at Walnut Ridge*

"ADVOCACY FOR FAIR TREATMENT OF ALL STUDENTS AND
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INDIVIDUAL
CHALLENGES."
-STUDENT AT BEECHCROFT

"Be more accepting and understandable towards each other"
-Student at CAEC

"Support mental health groups for men"
- Student at Briggs

School by School

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The following pages share the insights gathered at each school during their Listen Up! session. Please note that while there are many similar and related themes shared across schools, there are also insights that are particularly impactful given the context of that specific school.

"Address relationship drama and provide opportunities for healthy relationships."
-Student at South

"Establish fundraising initiatives to support students in need, such as for formal events or yearbooks." - Student at CAHS

"Explore alternative approaches to homework and provide support for struggling students."
- Student at CAHS

Linden-McKinley STEM Academy



More than 75 students and community members attended. The gathering provided an invaluable opportunity for stakeholders and leaders to share their perspectives.

Academic Concerns

1. **Resource Availability:** Students repeatedly mention the lack of tools like Chromebooks and Wi-Fi, which are essential for modern education.
2. **Support from Staff:** Concerns include insufficient support from school staff, particularly due to their commitments outside of school hours.
3. **Teaching Approaches:** Issues such as teacher burnout, the need for culturally responsive teaching, and general attitudes of teachers towards students are prominent.
4. **Student Engagement and Behavior:** Distractions from social media, behavioral issues, and violence in school were noted as significant barriers to learning.
5. **Environmental and Social Issues:** The impact of community violence and the need for safe, supportive environments are called out by students.

Community Impact

1. **Resource Accessibility:** A lack of awareness and accessibility to resources, particularly for diverse cultural backgrounds, is a major concern.
2. **Safety and Violence:** Concerns over safety, both in terms of violence and the need for education on issues like gun usage, are repeatedly mentioned.
3. **Engagement and Advocacy:** The need for proactive community engagement and advocacy rather than reactive measures is emphasized.
4. **Inclusivity and Equity:** There is a clear call for more inclusive and equitable distribution of resources and recognition within the community.

Student Solutions

1. **Educational and Community Programs:** Suggestions include more engaging programming, collaboration between schools and community partners, and increasing internship and vocational opportunities.
2. **Communication and Collaboration:** Enhancing communication between parents, teachers, and students, and fostering better relationships within the community are seen as vital.
3. **Mental and Emotional Support:** Addressing mental health issues, creating safe spaces, and ensuring students feel respected and heard are critical.
4. **Resource Development:** Curating more resources and opportunities for young people, particularly in terms of jobs and technical training, is advocated.

Student Voices

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What are the greatest issue(s) impacting your academic success?

Distractions - social media

Community violence

Desensitized - to community activities (negative)

Friendships/socialization

Violence/fights in school/community

* Relationships with Teacher us/them
No tutoring or assistance

No equality in response to discipline within school

“
Lack of family/community support (in response to greatest issue impacting academics)
”

“
Community programs for kids to have positive things to do
”



Greatest issue impacting academics

- lack of tools
 - Chromebooks, WiFi
- lack of support from school staff
- lack of family/community support
 - working jobs in the evenings
- teacher burn out
- safety
- teachers using culturally responsive teaching
- male figures
- life skills courses, change start time, investing, job search vocational pathways, field trips

Greatest issue impacting community

- lack of awareness of resources
 - ↳ ability to get to resources
- reactive vs. proactive
 - ↳ advocate for your stance
- safety (violence)
- food scarcity (education or nutrients)
 - ag. or class of growing food

- trained on gun usage
- access to guns

- * Create opportunity to come together
 - ↳ social events for youth

- * Advocate
 - ↳ time during the school day / @ conferences

What's the greatest issue impacting your ...

Community

- Mr. Carter
- social media
- sports
- Black parties, parades + other events
- crime
 - gang violence
 - killings
 - drugs
 - social media
 - conflict
 - "good" kids not being recognized

Academic Success

- scholarships
- military enrollment
- sports (extracurricular)
- good relationships w/ teachers
- Buy friends (other relationships)
- Drama/fights
- Lack incentives (after school activities)
- Behaviors (kids are bad/disrespectful)
- Teachers over whelmed to home parent care
- Parents
- "Good" kids not being recognized

What are some things you (students) wish the community knew @ you?

- Kids are working and going (invested in school).

What could you or have you done to address issues?

- Community Programs for kids to have positive things to do.
 - Kids engage in these programs.
 - Renaming narrative w/ these programs thru leaders
- Meeting @ churches
- service/volunteer opportunities - doing team.
- Community walks for causes.
- Conference for community on violence and other issues...
- Comm. Partners Working together for two years cause (L.A. and)
- Party w/ a purpose
- Incorporating more Pub speaking/communication into curriculum

Briggs HS



Thirty sophomores and juniors participated in the gathering, supported by the school counselor, two teachers, the Department of Engagement, and a Social Emotional Learning Practitioner from the Office of Whole Child Supports. Students from Briggs High School indicated a profound need for transformative changes within the school to foster a culture of respect, understanding, and equity.

School Culture & Climate

1. **Respect and Understanding:** The need for mutual respect among students and staff is highlighted, alongside the need for better understanding and acceptance of diverse backgrounds and beliefs.
2. **Inclusivity and Equity:** Students articulated concerns about selective community and school support (e.g., for athletes or academically strong students) and the need for more inclusive practices that cater to all students equally. Additionally students called out the need for equal government support for all students.
3. **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Prioritizing mental health initiatives and creating supportive environments for discussions about mental health, particularly for men, is stressed.

Student-Staff Relationships

1. **Behavior and Enforcement:** Issues with the inconsistent enforcement of rules by teachers and the perceived impatience and assumptions made by staff about students were a significant call-out by students.
2. **Engagement and Interaction:** Students advocated for the importance of staff taking the time to know students personally and engaging more actively with them. This also includes encouraging hands-on activities and discussions to enhance camaraderie as well as help to discourage assumptions by staff and the stereotypes that lead to inequitable treatment.
3. **Active Listening & Respect:** Students identified the need for staff to listen to student feedback and take action while also being willing to acknowledge faults on both sides between students and teachers.

Student Solutions:

1. **Stronger Educational Practices:** Students offered implementing more group assignments, promoting cultural relevance in education, and using motivational rewards to enhance student engagement.
2. **Community and Safety:** Addressing school safety with better trained police presence and infrastructure improvements like well-maintained sidewalks and clear street lights.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Providing additional technology resources and advocating for local business support for schools.
4. **Policy & Procedures:** Students recommended unlocking bathrooms between classes, addressing bullying more effectively, and eliminating sexist practices and double standards (dress codes, bathrooms, gender assumptions, etc)

Student Voices

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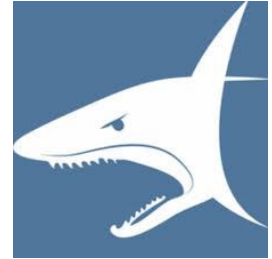
“
Advocate for no double
standards based on sex
or gender
”

“
Encourage local businesses to
support CCS schools, such as
displaying schedules
”



Scioto HS

Columbus Scioto High School represents a distinctive environment, designed to meet the needs of emotionally challenged students. Students are brought together in an atmosphere of educational stimulation that is emotionally calming for the student population. In attendance were **six Scioto students, three community partners/parents, and four support staff and district leaders**. Students at Columbus Scioto expressed a pressing desire to have a more typical educational experience, akin to that of students in conventional schools.



School Culture & Climate

1. **Limited Recreational and Social Opportunities:** Students expressed a lack of engaging activities such as sports and social events like prom, which are common in other schools.
2. **Academic Challenges:** The academic work is perceived as not sufficiently challenging, with students feeling that the content is too simplistic and does not respect their capabilities.
3. **Broader Social Issues:** Students spoke about religion in the school context, normalization of diverse identities, and the inclusion of broader health and social resources like Planned Parenthood, suggesting a need for a more inclusive and supportive school climate.

Support & Engagement

1. **Community and School Support:** Students expressed that there is a notable absence of a strong community identity and adequate support systems within the school. This includes a lack of effective communication channels and appropriate supports for students with behavioral challenges.
2. **Need for More Engaging and Interactive Activities:** Students' feedback encouraged both students and teachers to engage in more interactive activities and team-building exercises to foster stronger relationships and a sense of belonging.

Student Solutions:

1. **Enhancing Educational and Social Experiences:** Student participants proposed hosting school events like homecoming dances, implementing more challenging curriculum materials, and introducing more practical skill training such as trade certifications.
2. **Improving Physical and Mental Health Supports:** Students called for regular health service visits, partnerships with behavioral health services, and better food quality further highlighting the need for comprehensive support systems within the school.
3. **Job Opportunities and Community Involvement:** Students were passionate about better job outreach and community activities that keep students engaged, especially during the summer.
4. **Parental Involvement:** Increasing the involvement of parents and guardians through regular meetings and ensuring they are held accountable for supporting the educational environment.

Student Voices

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*If they normalize LGBT (sic)
they can normalize religion*



*The work the students have to
complete is not challenging
enough ("3rd grade work, 5th
grade work, they treat us like kids")*



*Do more team building within
the classroom to build relationships
with peers and teachers*



*Introduce the kids to more trades
at every level. Earn certification
in trades*

South High School was opened in the 1900s as Columbus City Schools fourth high school. South High School prioritizes interaction with its 9th-grade students; however, there has been a noticeable decline in senior year enrollment numbers over the years. **Approximately 20 students participated in the conversation**, with the aim of voicing their concerns about the climate and culture at South High School.



School Environment & Infrastructure

1. **Curriculum Relevance and Engagement:** Students advocated for a curriculum that incorporates gamification and real-world connections to make learning more engaging and relevant.
2. **Expanded Activities and Clubs:** There was a call for more clubs, increased sponsorship for sports, and vocational offerings, indicating a demand for diverse opportunities that cater to various student interests and career paths.
3. **Facilities Upgrades:** Participants noted the need for remodeling bathrooms and establishing a school merchandise store similar to those found in colleges to overall improve the physical space and deepen school pride.
4. **Safety and Security:** Students identified the need for better security measures and consistent enforcement of disciplinary actions to ensure student safety.

Student Well-being & Development

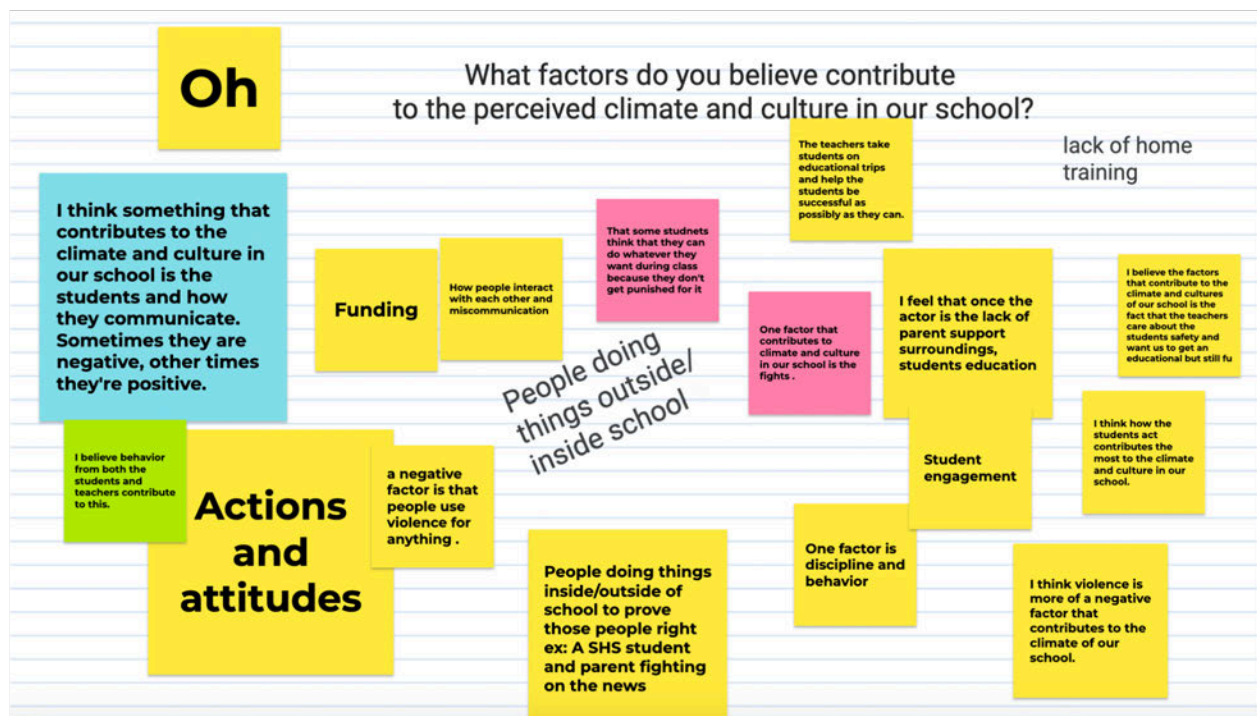
1. **Behavioral and Relationship Issues:** Addressing concerns like lack of self-control, fights, weapon incidents, and relationship drama is seen as essential for maintaining a conducive learning environment.
2. **Recognition and Motivation:** Implementing systems to recognize positive behavior, such as PBIS awards and offering more scholarship opportunities, is noted as a way to promote good conduct and academic excellence.
3. **Student Leadership and Accountability:** Promoting student leadership through extracurricular activities and establishing student reporting mechanisms with accountability contracts are suggested to enhance student responsibility and involvement.
4. **Safe Spaces and Support:** Creating designated safe spaces for students and providing education on important life skills like taxes and income management are considered important for supporting student well-being.

Community and Parental Involvement

1. **Increased Community Engagement:** Students expressed a desire for more church involvement and community events, as well as enhanced parental communication and involvement.
2. **Support for Extracurricular Activities:** There is a need for more fundraising activities to support school sports, clubs, and other student interests like art, volleyball, science, and reading clubs.

Student Voices

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“Clear vision about school norms, goals, and expectations that help us be more open to emotion, beliefs, morals about one another.”

“Lack of sleep due to a variety of factors. Staying up, jobs, homelessness, and work isn't engaging.”

School Clubs

- Clear Vision about school norms, goals and expectations that help us be more open to emotion, beliefs, morals about one another
- Engage with teachers and staff, involve other peers
- Having good personal relationships with one another
- Teachers letting scholars know their core about them and letting them know school is important
- Building trust with one another
- Celebrating ones successes
- Teacher don't have favorites or not having favorites
- Playground
- Developing a sense of community within classes

3 major factors of the school

extra activities that involve student leadership

Churches

- Volunteering to pick up trash etc
- Community events
- Fundraisers - school starts, school equipment
- Have more money such as ~~money~~
- Getting more acknowledged
- Remodel bathrooms
- Merch Store, like a collage (like HU)
- South Day
- Consistency
- Some kids are afraid to be open about beliefs, religion due to pride is something other than spent
- Communication
- Parent involvement

Fights

- Lack of self control
- Miscommunication
- Smoking
- Conforming
- Weapons
- Lack of psychological safety

Teachers

- Lack of engagement
- Curriculum isn't fun
- Prep makes every quarter
- Lack of attendance
- Relationship drama
- Lack of opportunities
- Why kids skip class?
- How to date?

Family factors

- Lack of sleep due to a variety of factors: staying up, jobs, homelessness and have not engaging

Q1:

- Having subjects that students want to learn about
- Trying subjects to more relevant events
- Student leadership
- More after school activities
- More chance to communicate
- Opportunities for students to lead the class
- More field trips (w/ the school, but outside school)

Q2:

- During student red lunches
- Jobs/memberships/internships
- Create safe spaces where students can vent
- Picking up trash to make us feel good
- Offer more vocational schools like welding, coding, IT etc programs
- Provide opportunities to be mentored
- Teaching business adequate
- Provide opportunities for scholarship

Bullsharks

Beechcroft HS

The Beechcroft session convened in the library, **drawing 30 students**. Together, they engaged in meaningful conversations. The focal point of discussion was the exploration of reasons behind certain school dynamics, coupled with the encouragement for students to openly express their thoughts, desires, and questions regarding the school's culture and climate.



School Culture & Climate

1. **Increased Activities:** There is a strong call for more school activities like dances, pep rallies, and field trips, which are seen as essential for a vibrant school experience.
2. **Community Engagement:** Students suggested social events and community clean-ups to enhance student involvement in their local communities.
3. **Inclusivity and Empowerment:** Issues of exclusion and the need for staff to treat students as individuals are addressed alongside the establishment of student mediation groups to handle conflicts.
4. **Celebration of Achievements:** There is a focus on recognizing academic successes and enhancing school pride through various themed events and activities.
5. **Student Representation:** The establishment of platforms for student voice, such as small group discussions and involvement in student government, is emphasized.
6. **Security and Kindness:** Improved security measures coupled with a school-wide emphasis on kindness and acceptance are seen as essential for a safe and supportive school environment.
7. **Facility Enhancements:** Students have emphasized the need for improved school facilities, including better lighting, updated bathroom facilities, and new classroom furniture to create a more comfortable and conducive learning environment.

Academic and Career Support

1. **Counseling and Mentorship:** The availability of counselors for emotional support and teachers who create a positive learning environment is crucial.
2. **Career Preparation:** Enhanced access to career centers, internship opportunities, and job placements is a recurring request, indicating students' desire for practical and forward-looking education approaches.
3. **Equal Opportunities:** Ensuring fair treatment for all students and equitable access to resources and activities is a significant concern.
4. **Engagement Initiatives:** Introducing more interactive class projects and school-wide activities to foster a sense of community and engagement among students.

Community & Parental Engagement

1. Advocacy for more parent involvement and PTA support.
2. Seeking community sponsorships and donations for school events.
3. Participation in fundraisers to improve school facilities and resources.

Student Voices

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— Teachers add LED lights to room ~ make us more comfortable
 — We have counselors - have a safe place for us to say how we feel

— Teachers we can trust —

- Good opportunities
- Career center
- AMP program
- College fest
- Internships

improvements

- better lunch tables
- new chairs
- bigger classroom
- school makeover
- better food
- Cleaner bathrooms
- doors have locks
- mirrors
- new toilets
- better stall doors
- bathrooms unlocked at certain times

4:

- Lunch
- more space
- Renovation
- New lockers
- new chairs/desk

More school activities

- more dances
- more pep rallies
- more field trips

MAKE STUDENTS MORE INVOLVE

2. More 1 on 1 talks

- Less drama
- teachers learn to listen to us students
- Communication
- social events that involve the school together

3.

- more job opportunities for us
- library could give us programs/opportunities
- Donate to our school
- ~ food places
- ~ Nike

1. People energy/Teacher energy/Bringing Change

- Not getting rid of pep rallies/Better event - more events
- Participation/Getting students more involved/Positive environment
- Bullies/ETC.... Better Kindness

2. — Students should push positive things instead of the Bull...Crab. / push change

↑ Participation

- Basket Ball Game Students vs Staff
- Teachers Being more understandable with students.
- More Gym time/Free time only
- More tutors

3. — Not being so Judge Mental. / Accept change - ignore ignorance.

EveryBody

- Being More clean / If you see something on the floor pick it up.
- More funds toward the school / More field trips - Pool
- Donate Better food.
- Kill People With Kindness / Solve - Try to solve the Problem Before it get out of hand.

4. Change People don't like to accept the good in people when they was once bad - Not saying let you - guard down.

Social More / Being outside your circle.

RJ Malik Srisan
 Sean

Siyan Malik Robert

“
 WE WON'T FEEL HEARD
 UNLESS THERE IS
 CHANGE!
 ”

“
 Kill people with kindness [sic]
 Try to solve the problem
 before it gets out of hand
 ”

“
 Don't get rid of pep
 rallies that lift the school
 spirit
 ”



Columbus Alternative HS



The CAHS session convened in the Senior Lounge and consisted of **6 adults and 19 students**, members from the Office of Engagement, the CAHS family ambassador, and a representative from Columbus Metropolitan Library. CAHS is a magnet school for college bound students offering both AP and IB.

School Culture & Climate

1. **Enhancing Extracurricular Activities:** Increasing the diversity of clubs and activities, including more ethnic-related activities and celebrations such as Black History Month, to cater to a diverse student body.
2. **Promotion of Cultural Awareness:** Initiatives like a student-led culture fair to promote understanding and appreciation of various cultures within the school.
3. **Accessibility of Resources:** Enhanced access to scholarships, tutoring, and college preparation programs from earlier years is deemed essential.
4. **Better Food and More Field Trips:** Improvement in the quality of food options available to students and sponsorship of more educational field trips to enhance learning experiences.

Educational Quality, Engagement, and Environment

1. **Improvement of Academic Support:** Students expressed the need for better explanations and details in their coursework to improve understanding and performance.
2. **Revamping Teaching Methods:** There is a significant call to revise teaching methods to boost student engagement and make learning more interactive and fulfilling.
3. **Improving School Facilities:** Requests include better building cleanliness, conditions, and more functional lunch spaces, alongside addressing maintenance issues like pest control.
4. **Creating Safe and Supportive Spaces:** Students highlighted the importance of having safe spaces and support networks, including improved access to school counselors and mental health support.

Student Communication and Engagement with Community and School

1. **Enhancing Communication:** Students explicitly called for better publicity efforts, transparency in student council activities, and clearer communication about security measures and academic expectations.
2. **Security and Discipline:** Addressing concerns about the attitude of security personnel and establishing clear disciplinary guidelines that are consistently applied.
3. **Strengthening Community Connections:** Emphasizing the need for more community projects and events that foster a sense of belonging and school pride.
4. **Improving Student-Staff Relationships:** Advocating for nicer interactions between teachers and students, smaller class sizes, and non-academic bonding activities to build trust and rapport.

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- 1. Teacher and student Relationships.
 - How students are supposed to interact with another.
 - Outside assumptions about CAHS.
 - a. More peer interactions.
 - encouraging mutual respect between Teachers and students.
 - 2. Smaller class sizes.
 - Teachers involved in extracurriculars.
 - Consistent Clubs.
 - More ~~enrichment~~ involvement in music and art.
 - More Community Projects.
 - Better Lunch spaces.
 - 3. More community Events.
 - More Information being spread around about CAHS.
 - More Funraising School wide.
 - Locally
- Education about Security Measures (social education / shared)
 - More publicity / communication with student leadership (student senate / senior leadership)
 - More schoolwide communication & group collaboration

Walnut Ridge HS



The Far East community and alumni are eager to be supportive and are looking for opportunities to reengage with the school. For the Walnut Ridge event, **39 people attended, 15 of whom were students and 24 adults.**

School Environment, Culture & Climate

1. **Improving School Facilities and Services:** Students voiced the need for improving the quality of food in the school and enhancing the overall school environment to make it more conducive to learning and student well-being.
2. **Student and Alumni Involvement:** Encouraging students to step out of their comfort zones by engaging in performances and active participation in community events can help build confidence and skills.
3. **Promoting Cultural Diversity:** There is a strong emphasis on incorporating multicultural events, cultural diversity days, and partnerships with local cultural organizations to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the diverse student body.
4. **Celebration of Heritage and Community:** Initiatives like a fashion show or other events that celebrate the cultural heritage of the students and the local community were suggested to strengthen community ties and school spirit.

Academic & Career Development

1. **Enhancement of Educational Opportunities:** Students expressed a need for more internship opportunities and real-world experiences, particularly in fields like real estate and entrepreneurship.
2. **Development of New Clubs and Programs:** There is a call for the creation of new clubs that focus on professional development, career clubs, shadowing opportunities, and other academic competitions to enhance student engagement and preparation for future careers.
3. **Supportive Initiatives for Students:** Providing more comprehensive support through career pathways, internships, and resources for starting careers in areas like real estate were noted as important for student success.

Community Support & Engagement

1. **Strengthening Community Relationships:** Partnering with local businesses and organization to provide practical experiences and support. Students specifically called out wanting to partner with **Liberian Services Center, Adelphi Bank, Care Coalition, and Saraga Grocery Store.**
2. **Creating Shared Visions and Goals:** Developing a quarterly newsletter to highlight student achievements and ongoing activities can help keep the community informed and engaged.
3. **Regular Stakeholder Interaction:** Hosting regular forums and events where stakeholders, including alumni, can interact and collaborate with students was recommended to advance their educational and career prospects.

Student Voices

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Partner with **Liberian Services Center, Adelphi Bank, Care Coalition, and Saraga Grocery Store.**



More clubs:

Professional Development/Career Club
Shadowing Opportunities
Help to begin careers in real estate
Real world experience

- Enhancing school culture:
Partner for your multicultural events (dinners/fashion show, etc)

1. Liberians in Columbus Inc. (LICI)

Alpha Tonger, Executive Director

- Internship Opportunities

2. The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital

Kelly Harrier, Sponsored Projects officers Kelly.Harrier@nationwidechildrens.org
annual internships @ Nationwide Children's Hospital 614-506-1177

- New Clubs

3. St. Charles Preparatory High School

- Capital Club - investing
- Robotics Club - planning/design of robots.

- Guidance Office
Contact Mrs. Dickerson
380-209-2226

Community Involvement

- help raise #

• Cultural diversity → how to engage & connect?
- partner w/ local orgs for dinners & cultural night
↳ LICI
↳ CRTS
↳ Harlan Community Network
↳ Saraga

- Month: Spring → not clashing w/ other cultural celebrations

Internships, Internships, Clubs

Already have Girl Scouts, I know I can
All THAT, TRIO, CIS

• other career path options → to further interest & explore new opportunity
• Real Estate
• Entrepreneurship

• Huntington to connect to Matt Flannery

*Workshop series

Community Engagement

create shared vision & goals (short term & long term)
whelp partners identify how/where they fit

Africentric Early College HS



There were **30 students** who participated in the Listen Up session at Columbus Africentric along with the school principal, family ambassador, librarian, and the Office of Engagement. Columbus Africentric pursues high achievement and early college while affirming the positive leadership of African Americans.

School Culture & Climate

1. **Respect and Support:** Students articulated the need for respect among students and staff equally, but also among the student body, with the school enabling an open, supportive and respectful environment to reduce bullying.
2. **Mental Health & Openness:** Students specifically called out the need for more ways to cope, along with peer-to-peer solutions, and access to counseling and therapy.

Student-Staff Relationships

1. **Communication & Patience:** Students advocated for increased and better organized communication between teachers and students with an emphasis on patience and compassion.
2. **Engagement and Interaction:** Students noted a desire to have more authentic relationships with teachers, recognizing that every students is coming from a variety of backgrounds, and each needs to be offered positive ways to cope, and a safe place to do so.

Community Engagement & Support

1. **Fundraising and Partnerships:** Students identified Churches, fundraisers, and community service opportunities as ways to deepen engagement with their local community.
2. **Increase Community School Spirit:** Students called out finding ways to connect with the community with pride beyond just sports, by offering community events and a college style "merch" store as creative ideas.

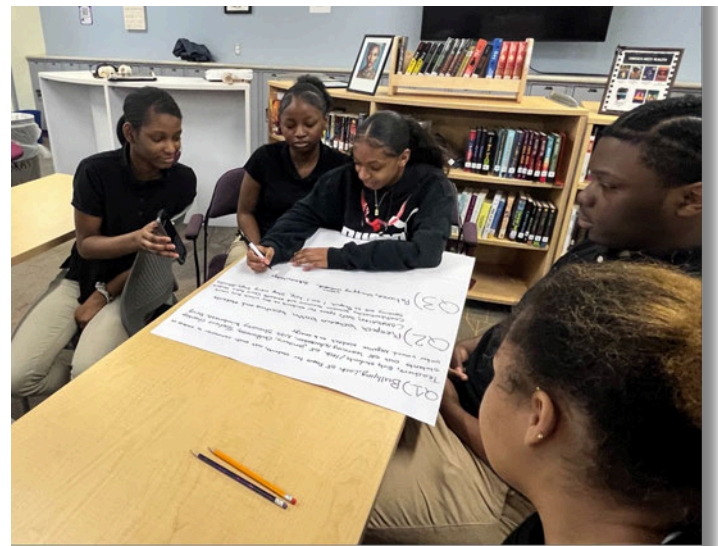
Student Voices

27

- 1) Not enough fun activities that make everyone excited about learning.
 - Athletics and coaches motivate students to stay on top of academics.
 - Students who come from bad environments bring it into the school, but aren't offered ways to cope positively.
- 2) Teachers building + creating relationships with students to get to know them outside academics.
 - Being more patient with students + understanding not everyone learns at the same pace.
- 3) Giving new ways to cope and allowing more ~~the~~ student time to engage in peer-to-peer time.
 - Allowing more access to counseling + therapy as well as normalizing the use of therapy rather than letting it be known as something normal.
- 4) Be more accepting + understandable towards each other.

- CAEC
- Q1) Bullying, Lack of focus for students, not much connection to students to Teachers, Dirty students / lack of janitors, Childishness, Teachers cheating students out of learning/education, Not showing kindness, Being under valued. Negative mindset and energy
 - Q2) Respect between both teachers and students.
 - Connection, safe space for student to say what they want.
 - Confidentiality between teachers and students. Don't take students speaking out as respect, 1 on 1 help, stop using drugs, Attitudes.
 - Q3) Patience, stopping ^{violence} ~~violence~~, acknowledge - like acknowledging teachers more cause they ^{are} ~~are~~ trying to help you out, but you might not understand that, cause you might not know what their going through.

- CAEC
1. I+ Can be Unorganized and a ~~lack~~ lack of Communication between Staff and Students
 - Suggestions:
 - Event calendar around the school
 - Announce ahead of time the events
 - utilize the T.V's
 - Letting Student Council have a say
 2. The teachers/principle ~~the~~ School Spirit in terms of pep rallies, ~~and~~ merchandise, and more ways to be social with each other.
 - There should be more of a welcoming environment from staff.
 - Staff can be more attentive to the students mental health
 - FUNraising (Homecoming, Senior activities, field trips, prom, school dances)
 3. Support each other
 - Have more field trips that interact with the community (community service)
 - Have more discussions like this. ~~Be~~ Hear what everyone has to say not just selective students
 - include other schools where student councils come together
 4. Have ~~a~~ a principle that is willing to listen and compromise with student/being emotionally there
 - We know that all of the things are not easy but ~~the~~ Putting in effort will help.



“ More freedom. If there's more freedom there is less to combat against. ”

“ Instead of book work, more engaging work ”

Columbus North International HS



Columbus International has a strong relationship with Columbus Global, sharing a building and resources. Many Columbus Global students enroll in Columbus North when they have completed the programming at Global. During their gathering, **12 adults, 2 administrators, several representatives from the Office of Engagement, and 20 students were in attendance.**

School Culture & Climate

1. **Recognition Programs:** Implementing more recognition initiatives for academic success, attendance, and good behavior to motivate students.
2. **Student Council and Representation:** The formation of a student council to facilitate a better dialogue between students and the administration was suggested.
3. **Curriculum Development:** Suggestions include involving students in the planning of curriculum and real-world applications of their studies to increase engagement and relevance.
4. **Expanded Academic Offerings:** Students requested more high-level classes and specific courses like home economics and band to broaden their learning opportunities.
5. **Improved Academic Support Systems:** There is a need for a better grading system and additional support to help students catch up and excel in their studies.
6. **Improved School Facilities:** Students are looking for upgrades in school facilities such as working water fountains, heating and cooling systems, and more accessible bathrooms.
7. **Security and Accessibility:** Concerns about security procedures that cause delays and affect students' punctuality were highlighted along with the need for better school marketing.

Cultural Inclusivity & Support for ESL Students

1. **Behavior and Enforcement:** Issues with the inconsistent enforcement of rules by teachers and the perceived impatience and assumptions made by staff about students are significant points of discussion.
2. **Engagement and Interaction:** The importance of staff taking the time to know students personally and engaging more actively with them is advocated. This also includes encouraging hands-on activities and discussions to enhance camaraderie.

Community Engagement & External Relations

1. **Strengthening Community Links:** Enhancing partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to offer students real-world job and career opportunities.
2. **Fundraising and Resource Allocation:** Establishing a PTA/Booster group to improve fundraising efforts and increase financial support for student activities.
3. **Sports and Activities:** Students expressed a desire for more sports teams, including a football team, and equality in athletic opportunities and equipment between boys and girls.
4. **More Clubs and Activities:** Calls for more clubs, including those that cater to students with disabilities and various cultural backgrounds, to foster a sense of community and belonging.

Student Voices

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*Bringing real-world perspectives
and examples into the classroom.*

*Hire others to help people from
Global or kids who are ESL.*

*Divide between Global and International students.
Need for greater cultural sensitivity and recognition
of diversity and culture. Respect and value everyone*



Insights from CCS Community Members

We also met with and surveyed a number of community members that represented students, community leaders, parents and family members, as well as educators.

Community members shared similar concerns that students brought forward. The responses by community members in the exit interview highlight a community deeply engaged in and concerned about the academic success and well-being of its students.

There's a clear demand for addressing safety, bullying, and inclusivity more effectively, alongside a desire for greater community engagement and responsiveness from educational institutions.

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Exit Surveys
Completed

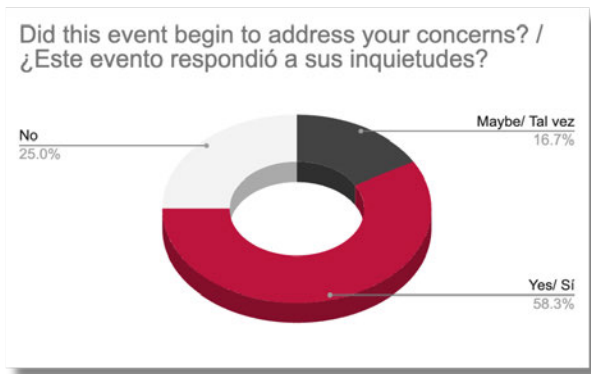
We Asked:

- 1) Did this event begin to address your concerns?
- 2) Is there another consideration that CCS should prioritize or consider?
- 3) What's the greatest concern that is impacting academic success?
- 4) As a result of your table discussion, what do you/your organization commit to?

Concerns and Priorities:

- **Safety Needs and Bullying:** A significant number of responses highlighted concerns related to safety and bullying, indicating these are major issues impacting the community's sense of security and, consequently, students' ability to succeed academically.
- **Need for City, Community, and School Collaboration:** There's a strong call for more engagement between schools, students, community leaders, and educators. This includes listening to students' voices more often, combating negativity on social media, and increasing community engagement through activities such as trash clean-up and being more present in the community.
- **Technology Accessibility and Cultural Responsiveness:** Some responses pointed out the necessity for better technology accessibility and culturally responsive teaching practices, suggesting these are areas that can significantly influence academic success.

In order to build a stronger community, students, parents, district, and community members must come together and create an actionable plan instead of just talking.



Effectiveness of Community Engagement Study:

A mixed response was observed regarding the effectiveness of the event in addressing concerns. While many said "Yes," indicating the event began to address their concerns, there were also responses of "Maybe" and "No," suggesting that for some participants, the event did not fully meet their expectations or address their main concerns.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- **Enhanced Communication and Engagement:** Suggestions for improvement include more programs for diverse backgrounds, more events to bring the community together, and initiatives to increase awareness about culture and diversity.
- **Addressing Specific Concerns:** Participants suggested specific areas that need attention, such as combating social media negativity, addressing food insecurity, improving relationships with school staff, and focusing on the mental health and wellbeing of students through programs about healthy relationships.

Partnering with other community organizations to do the work. We're stronger together.

How to combat the negativity on Social Media. Going to look into the food security within the Linden Community.

Students need chrome books, and they need to have classes about healthy relationships. That is the source of most conflict.

Taking Action!

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The insights gathered in the Listen Up! Stakeholders report provides a comprehensive understanding of student perceptions of culture and climate within Columbus City Schools. Through direct engagement with our students, we have gained valuable insights into their experiences, challenges, and aspirations for their educational environment. Our students are deeply invested in creating a school culture that is inclusive, supportive, and enriching for all.

“My thought is let’s get realistic about what we need to do to change the culture, do an inventory from all aspects and the ones who are in charge to make change should be a part of this as well.

ACTUALLY implement the suggestions for change.”

-Survey Respondent

Number of Participants

270

Approximately 270 students, administrators, and community members

Exit Survey Responses

86 Responses

Recommendations

33



Implement Student-Led Initiatives:

Prioritize initiatives that are driven by student input, including student-led planning of curriculum and extracurricular activities that reflect student interests and real-world perspectives. By empowering students to take an active role in shaping their educational experience, we can foster a sense of ownership and engagement within the school community.



Enhancing Academic Support and Rigor:

Based on student feedback, there should be a focus on improving academic support for English-language learners (ESL) and implementing a more inclusive grading system. Additionally, students are looking for their schools to expand high-level class offerings and provide resources to help struggling students catch up on classwork.



Promoting Diversity and Inclusion:

CCS should prove their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion within the district's schools by recruiting culturally diverse teachers and staff and fostering greater cultural sensitivity and understanding among students. CCS should also work to bridge the divide between Global and International students and ensure that all students feel valued and respected.



Strengthening Community Engagement:

Collaboration with all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, parents, and community members, will be key to our success. We will establish channels for open communication and collaboration to ensure that everyone has a voice in shaping the culture and climate of our schools. Additionally, we will explore opportunities for community partnerships and engagement to enrich the educational experience for our students.



Continued Conversations & Action:

We must continue to collect qualitative data and Panorama Data to identify additional areas for improvement and develop action plans to address them. By monitoring progress and regularly soliciting feedback from students and stakeholders, we can ensure that our efforts are making a meaningful impact on the culture and climate of Columbus City Schools.

Thank You

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Our Why

The impact of student conversations cannot be overstated; they serve as a powerful catalyst for change, amplifying voices that often go unheard and shaping the future trajectory of this school district. Listen Up! is just the first step in a longer journey towards building the school district of the future, and this will not be the last.

Appendices



Appendix A

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Session Questions & Materials

AGENDA

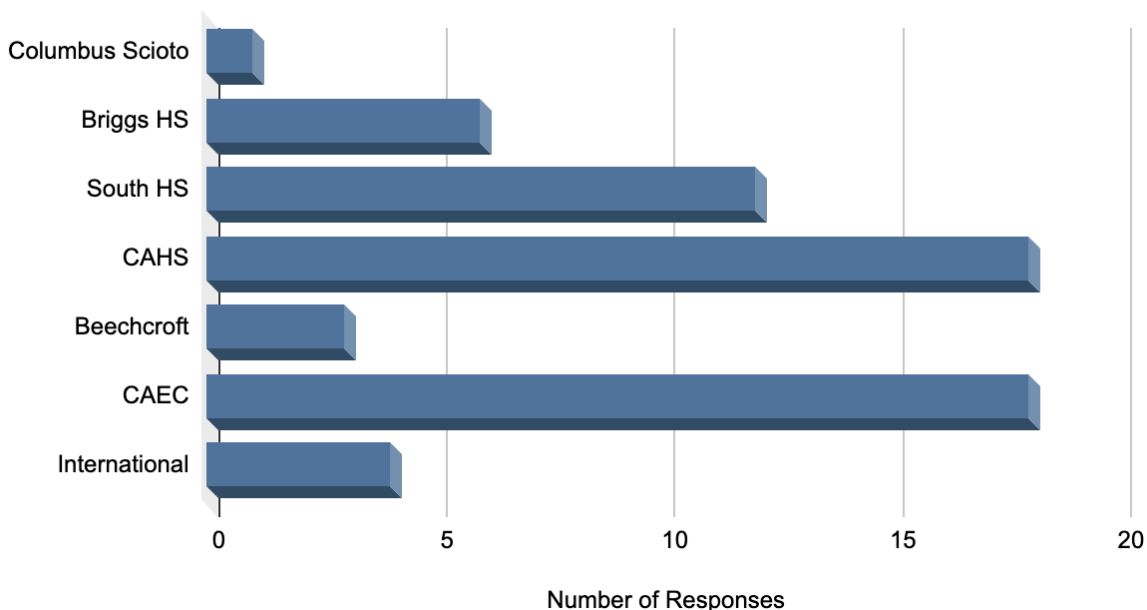
- WELCOME: Principal McCorry
 - Welcome guest, state the incident that necessitated the conversation, purpose of discussion
 - Introduce Superintendent Dr. Chapman
 - Give bio and summary
- Superintendent/CEO Dr. Chapman
 - Welcome
 - Goal, listening, and empowering student voice to challenge adult behavior
 - Introduce moderator
 - Bio, name
- Moderator or Co-Moderators
 - Share format, review the norms and expectations
 - Launch table discussions
 - Begin the discussion
- Moderator
 - Thank you for attending
 - Exit Survey

Exit Survey Questions

- Affiliation to Columbus City Schools. Afiliación a Columbus City Schools
- Did this event begin to address your concerns? / ¿Este evento respondió a sus inquietudes?
- Based on conversations is there another consideration that should be prioritized or considered? / Según las conversaciones, ¿hay alguna otra consideración que deba priorizarse o considerarse?
- What's the greatest concern that is impacting academic success? / ¿Cuál es la mayor preocupación que está impactando el éxito académico de su estudiante?
- As the result of the table discussion, I/ my organization commits to: / Como resultado de la discusión en mi mesa, yo/mi organización nos comprometemos a:

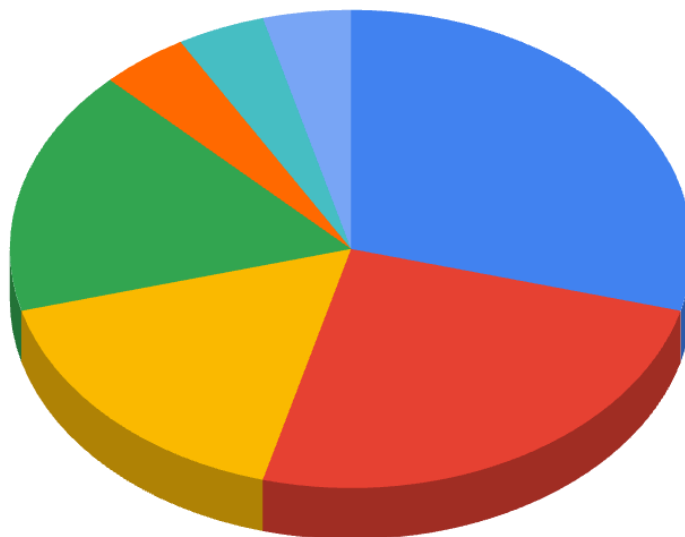
Quantitative Data from Exit Surveys

Exit Interview Responses By School



Affiliation to Columbus City Schools

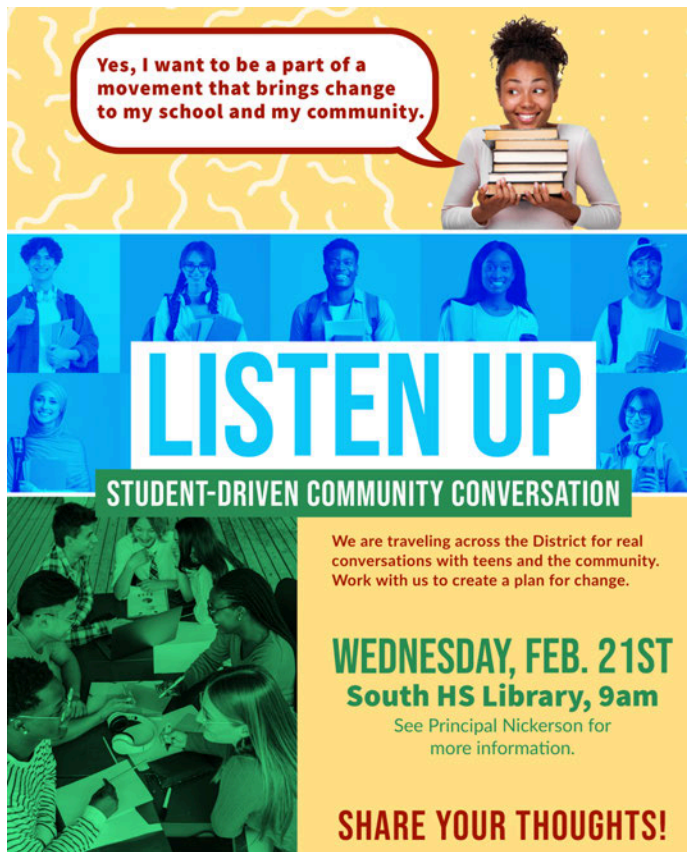
- Community leader/ Líder comunitario
- Educator/ Educador
- Student/ Estudiante
- Concerned citizen/ Ciudadano preocupado
- Family Ambassador
- Parent/ Guardian/ Padre/Tutor
- Community Partner



Appendix C

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Examples of Listen Up! Marketing Outreach



Yes, I want to be a part of a movement that brings change to my school and my community.

LISTEN UP

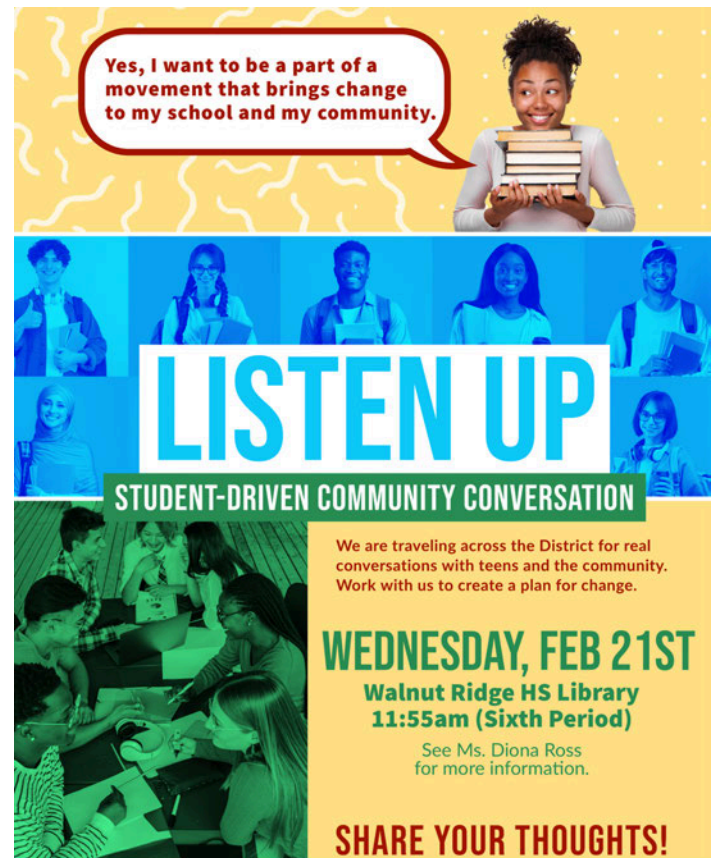
STUDENT-DRIVEN COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

We are traveling across the District for real conversations with teens and the community. Work with us to create a plan for change.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21ST
South HS Library, 9am
See Principal Nickerson for more information.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

 **COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS** Brought to you by Columbus City Schools' Department of Engagement



Yes, I want to be a part of a movement that brings change to my school and my community.

LISTEN UP

STUDENT-DRIVEN COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

We are traveling across the District for real conversations with teens and the community. Work with us to create a plan for change.

WEDNESDAY, FEB 21ST
Walnut Ridge HS Library
11:55am (Sixth Period)
See Ms. Diona Ross for more information.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

 **COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS** Brought to you by Columbus City Schools' Department of Engagement

Listen UP - Our Voice, Our Community

A Student-Driven Community Conversation Series with Columbus City Schools

Columbus City Schools is launching the *Listen Up: Our Voice, Our Community* student-driven community conversation series to provide an opportunity to work with the community to uplift and empower teens to affect change in Columbus. The regional monthly series launches at Linden-McKinley High School, 1320 Duxberry Avenue on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

The impacts of violence, mental health concerns and societal pressures among young people is on the rise. The importance of having discussions with students and the community is to provide an opportunity for the youth to uplift their schools and affect change from the inside out.

Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Location: Linden-McKinley High School, 1320 Duxberry Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/NxR5Bpb5uuxD9ecA7>



Listen **UP:** OUR VOICE, OUR COMMUNITY

Prepared by

Sky Nile Consulting

Prepared for

**Columbus City Schools
Stakeholders**

