



CULTURE AND CLIMATE SURVEY CAPSTONE

June 2026 | Joliet Township High School District 204



INTRODUCTION

Joliet Township High School District 204 (JTHSD 204) partnered with Hanover Research (Hanover) to assess stakeholder perceptions of district climate and culture. Through a districtwide survey of students and staff, Hanover examined strengths and opportunities across key domains, including school climate, cultural responsiveness, academic experiences, social relationships, and leadership. Hanover's analysis found that stakeholders generally report positive experiences across many aspects of the district while also identifying opportunities to strengthen consistency, accountability, and implementation. To provide JTHS with a comprehensive overview of these findings, Hanover presents the following Capstone Report, which aggregates findings from across the evaluation.

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METHODOLOGY

Hanover Research supported Joliet Township High School District 204 with an evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of district climate and culture through a mixed-methods survey approach:



Administration of Climate and Culture Survey

April and May 2026

Hanover administered surveys to students and staff members to assess perceptions of district climate and culture across multiple domains, including cultural responsiveness, school climate, academic experiences, social environment, and leadership.



Quantitative Analysis of Climate and Culture Survey Data

June 2026

Hanover conducted a quantitative analysis of the close-ended survey items to identify strengths, challenges, and trends in stakeholder perceptions. Analysis examined response patterns across survey domains and, where applicable, over time.



Qualitative Analysis of Climate and Culture Survey Data*

June 2026

Hanover reviewed, coded, and analyzed open-ended survey responses to identify recurring themes, contextualize quantitative findings, and better understand stakeholder perspectives regarding district climate, culture, and leadership.

OVERALL CLIMATE FINDINGS

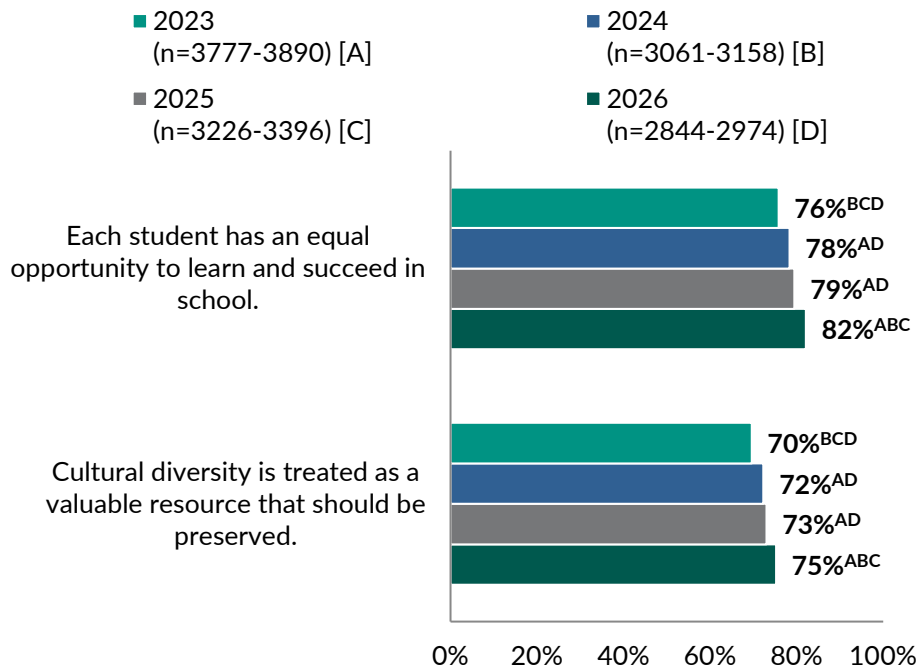


POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS CONTINUE

Respondents express increasingly positive perceptions of cultural responsiveness across the district. Agreement in this area is high on many positive statements and improved across multiple items in 2026. In particular, stakeholders this year are more likely to feel that students have equal opportunities to succeed and that diversity is valued. Open-ended feedback frequently highlights the district's diverse community and staff commitment to supporting all students.

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements regarding the climate at JTHSD.

% Agree + % Strongly Agree



“Cultural Responsiveness is highly encouraged and promoted within the district. A great majority of educators and school personnel have been trained in cultural responsive teaching. It was probably one of the best PDs I've ever taken.”

— Staff, West Campus

“Our school makes a point to celebrate the cultures represented in our student population.”

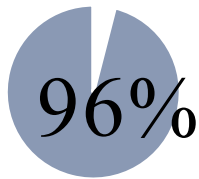
— Staff, Pathways



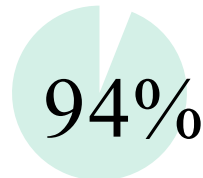
Note: Statistically significant differences (at the 95% confidence level) between groups are noted with bracketed letters (e.g., [A], [B], and [C]).

EDUCATORS REPORT OVERALL STRONG CULTURAL COMPETENCE

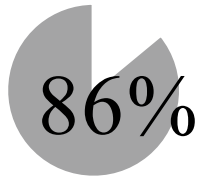
Staff members are confident in their ability to support students from diverse backgrounds. Staff overwhelmingly agree with all statements about their own cultural competence. However, while some open-ended responses describe staff and schools as inclusive and welcoming, others identify areas for improvement.



are confident in their relationships with students and their families.



consider themselves to be culturally sensitive educators

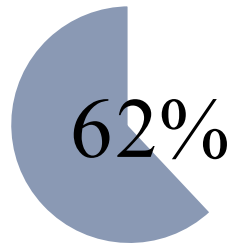


incorporate culturally relevant material and practices into their work.

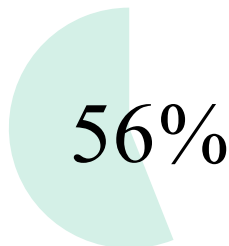
Respondents indicate that the district has a strong foundation for culturally responsive teaching and learning. Looking ahead, staff identify opportunities to strengthen curriculum alignment and review processes to ensure culturally diverse materials and perspectives are embedded consistently across programs and responsive to the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

PERCEPTIONS OF BELONGING AND SAFETY CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

Stakeholders report improving perceptions of belonging and safety at school. Most students and school staff agree that students at their school feel welcome and like they belong at school, and agreement is higher than in prior years. Perceptions of safety have also improved in recent years, with respondents in 2026 more likely to report that schools provide safe learning environments.



agree that students feel welcome at school.



agree that students feel like they belong at school.

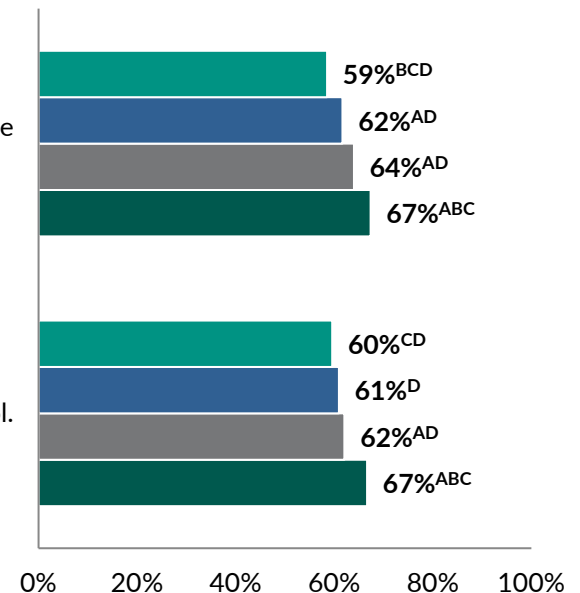
Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements.

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

■ 2023 (n=3867-3869) [A] ■ 2024 (n=3143-3156) [B] ■ 2025 (n=3284) [C] ■ 2026 (n=2950-2963) [D]

My school provides a safe learning space for students.

I feel safe at school.

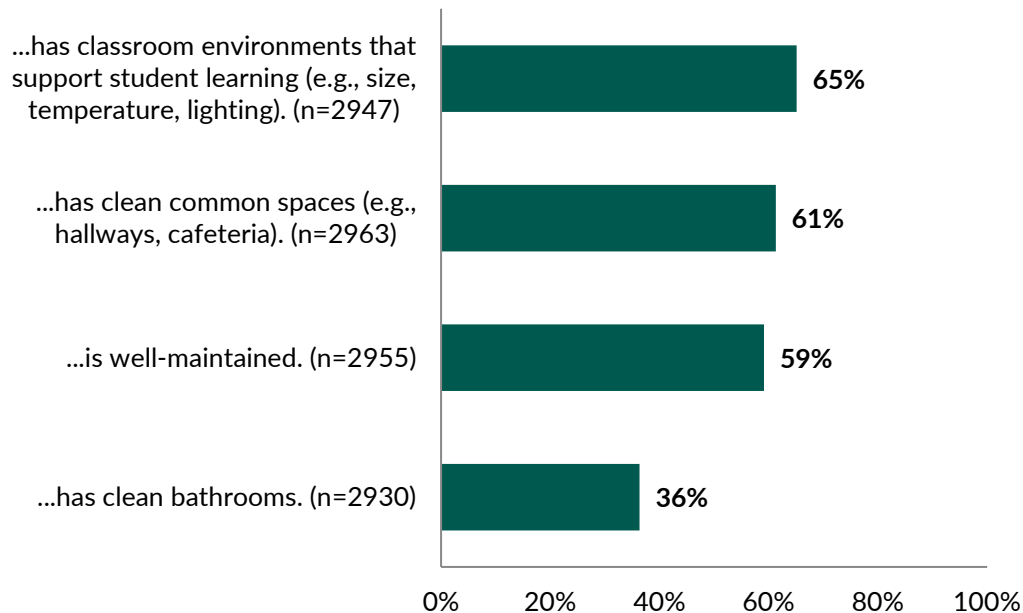


SCHOOL FACILITIES SHAPE DAILY EXPERIENCES

The physical environment in schools affect day-to-day experiences across the district. While most respondents report positive perceptions of classroom conditions and maintenance, perceptions of cleanliness vary across school facilities. Concerns about cleanliness, maintenance, and facility conditions emerge as the most common theme in open-ended feedback on school climate and environment. Respondents frequently identify opportunities related to restroom cleanliness, building upkeep, and temperature control.

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements. My school...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree



Staff recognize the hard work of maintenance and custodial team. Feedback points to opportunities to further enhance facility cleanliness, restroom functionality, and temperature consistency across learning spaces.

PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT REMAIN POSITIVE

Students and staff members continued to report positive perceptions of the district's instructional climate and learning resources. Large majorities agree that students have access to what they need to learn and that schools and teachers are committed to supporting student success. While overall perceptions are generally favorable, open-ended responses highlight opportunities to strengthen academic expectations and accountability.



85%

agree schools provide enough technology resources to support student learning.



85%

agree teachers want students to succeed.



85%

agree teachers expect students to do their best in school.



84%

agree schools want students to succeed.



78%

agree schools provide enough material resources to support student learning.

"We offer a lot of AP classes and Special Education classes, so there is a variety of classes for a variety of students."

— Staff, Central Campus

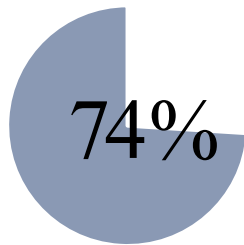
"All of my teachers are very nice and help me out with anything and everything."

— Student, West Campus

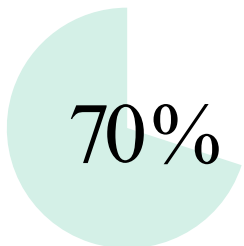
Respondents indicate that strengthening academic expectations and fostering greater student accountability could further support the development of resilience, self-management, and other skills that contribute to long-term success.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SCHOOL CLIMATE

Respondents continue to describe strong relationships between students and adults across the district. Sizable majorities agree that school staff care about and respect students. Perceptions of student relationships with their peers another have improved in recent years, with respondents in 2026 more likely to agree than those in prior years.



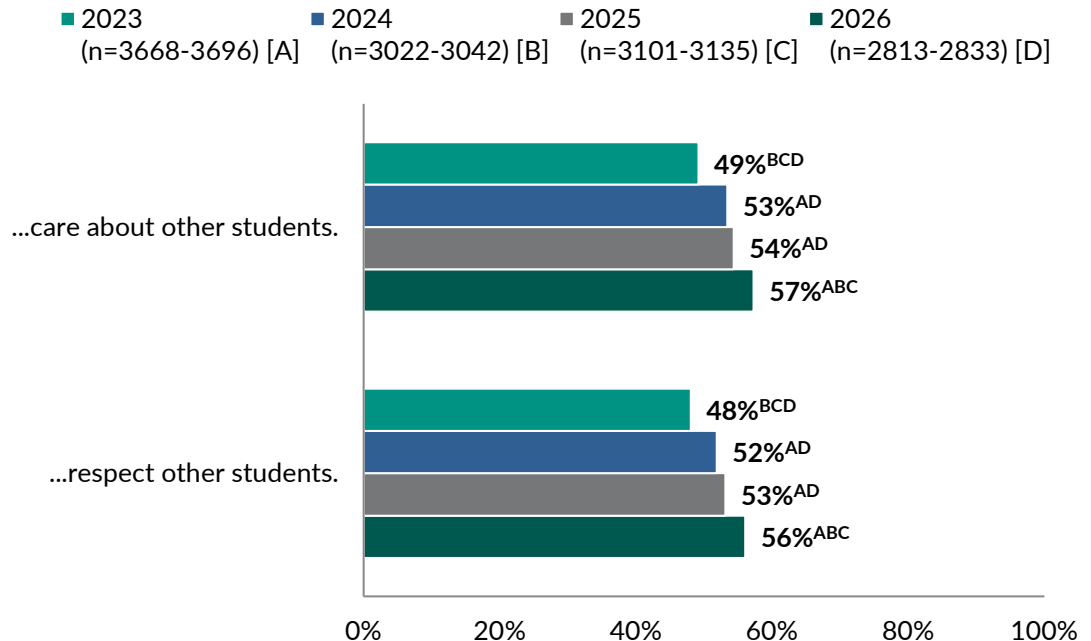
agree that adults at school care about students.



agree that adults at school respect students.

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements. Students at my school...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

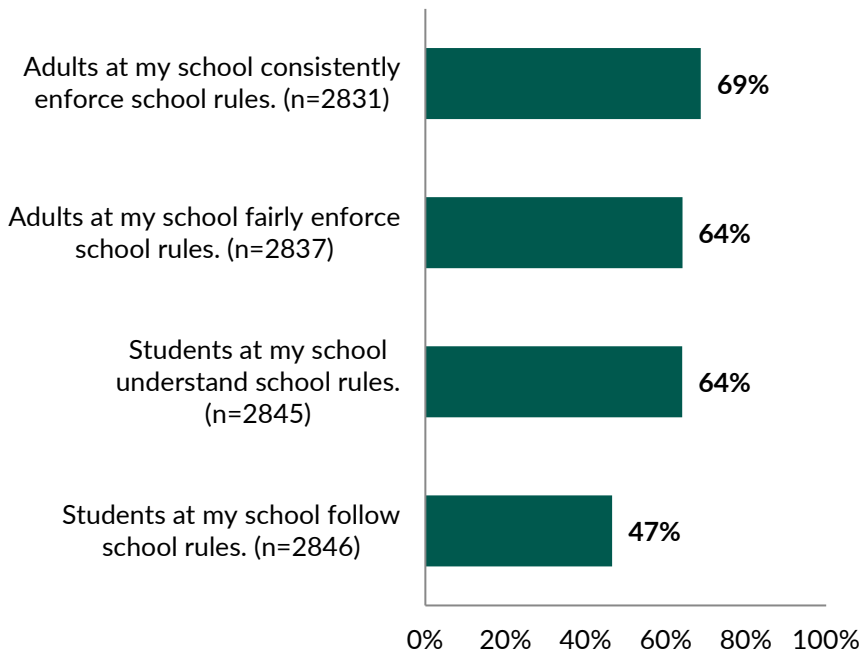


CONSISTENT EXPECTATIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Students largely understand school rules, but respondents identify opportunities to improve behavior and strengthen **consistency**. Most students and staff members believe that students understand school rules, but fewer report that students follow those rules. While a majority agree that adults consistently enforce rules, open-ended feedback highlights that consistency in expectations and accountability remains an important area for growth.

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree
with the following statements.

% Agree + % Strongly Agree



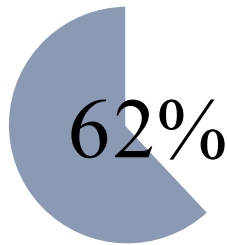
Building on the district's strong curriculum and dedicated staff, respondents identify opportunities to strengthen the consistency of behavioral expectations by clarifying processes and collaboration between teachers and administrators. Many believe that maintaining high standards, coupled with consistent accountability, can foster a more positive school culture and support student success.

LEADERSHIP FINDINGS

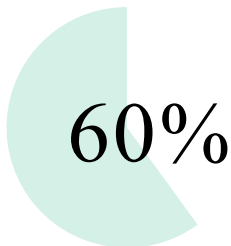


DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PROVIDES STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Staff respondents identify strategic direction and resource management as relative strengths of district leadership. A majority agree that district leaders manage the district budget responsibly and communicate a strong vision for the district. Additionally, most also agree that the district attracts and retains staff members from diverse backgrounds and high-quality teachers.



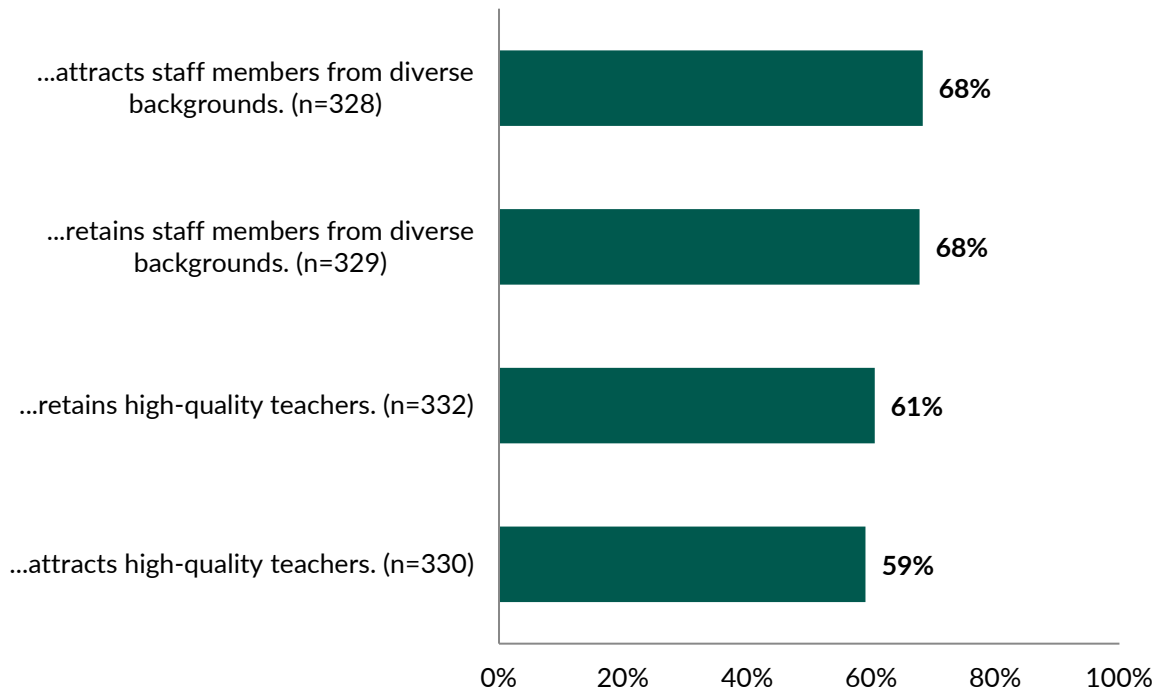
agree that district leaders
manage the budget responsibly.



agree that district leaders
communicate a strong vision for
the district.

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the
following statements. The district...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree

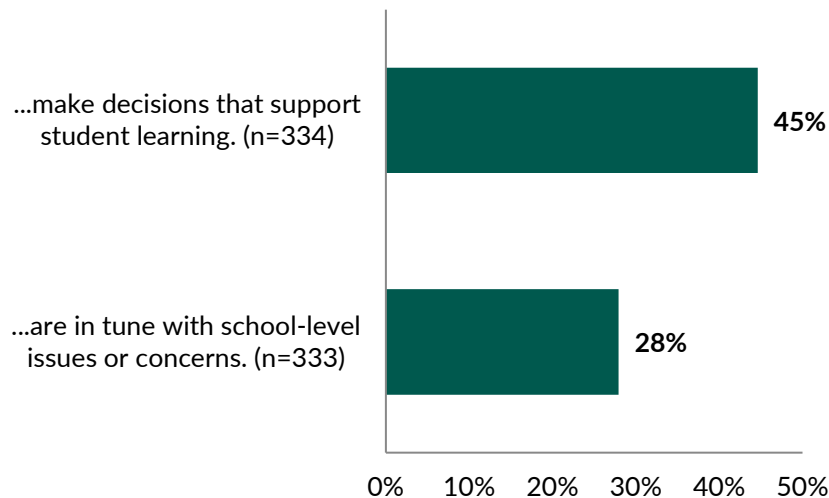


STAFF PERCEIVE LACK OF ALIGNMENT BETWEEN DISTRICT DECISIONS AND SCHOOL NEEDS

While staff have positive perceptions of district leadership's strategic direction, fewer believe district decisions and school-level needs are strongly aligned. Less than half of staff members agree that district leaders make decisions that support student learning or that district leaders are in tune with school-level issues or concerns. Many open-ended responses emphasize the importance of incorporating school staff members' perspectives into district decision-making, strengthening communication, and improving the relationship between school staff and district leaders.

Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements. District leaders...

% Agree + % Strongly Agree



Respondents highlight opportunities to strengthen communication, mutual trust, and collaboration between staff and district leadership by ensuring employee perspectives are heard, valued, and considered in decision-making processes.

SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERSHIP OFTEN VIEWED AS CLOSER TO DAILY SCHOOL NEEDS

Open-ended feedback suggests that many staff members experience school and district leadership differently. School administrators are often described as more visible, responsive, and connected to the day-to-day experiences of student and staff. At the same time, experiences vary across schools and leadership roles, with some respondents identifying opportunities to strengthen communication consistency, and support at the school-level.



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

“The principal and assistant principals, as well as some academy coordinators, are responsive to staff concerns and needs. They are professional, kind, and seem to have a strong understanding of the building and belief in the abilities and professionalism of staff. These administrators are visible, approachable, and know their staff by name.”

— Staff, West Campus

Staff value Central administrators’ openness to feedback. Looking forward, staff identify opportunities to strengthen responsiveness and action on employee input at the district level.



VARIED EXPERIENCES AT DIFFERENT SCHOOLS

Respondents express appreciation for the strengths of building-level leadership while identifying opportunities to improve transparency, communication, and consistency across school and district leadership levels. They note that sustained follow-through and proactive attention to ongoing concerns could strengthen confidence in leadership and support a positive climate and culture.

STAFF EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENCY IN EXPECTATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Respondents frequently describe consistency as an important factor in shaping the climate and culture at district schools. Across topics, including academics, student behavior, and leadership, open-ended comments emphasize the importance of clear expectations, consistent implementation, and follow-through. Many respondents connect these issues to broader perceptions of leadership effectiveness.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Staff express a need for consistent district-wide expectations that foster student accountability through high standards and aligned attendance, grading, and academic support practices.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

Staff recognize the district's investment in restorative practices and emphasize the importance of balancing restorative approaches with clear accountability. Looking ahead, staff highlight opportunities to further enhance consistent implementation of discipline policies, clear expectations, and supportive accountability measures.

LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

Staff express a desire for greater consistency in leadership communication and decision-making, with clear points of contact and transparent processes that demonstrate how staff input informs district initiatives and policies.



SURVEY METHODOLOGY NOTE

The Climate and Culture survey administration this year omitted staff questions about school leadership in error. This occurred because staff roles were updated for this year's survey to provide more nuance. As part of that update, new answer options for some staff were not fully connected to the school-level leadership question intended for all school-level staff. However, this year's survey did include several options to respond to open-ended questions, which Hanover has analyzed in the preceding report. In addition, all questions regarding district leadership were presented to the same groups as previous years of survey administration.

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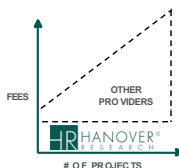
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