

McLean County Unit District No. 5
1809 West Hovey Avenue
Normal, Illinois 61761-4339



TO: Board of Education

FROM: Darrin Cooper, Director of Assessment and Accountability

DATE: May 1, 2026

SUBJECT: Panorama Surveys for District-Wide Climate and SEL Surveys

The district has begun exploring the use of Panorama Education for student, staff, and family surveys. This would replace the 5 Essentials Survey administered every February/March as required by ISBE. The 5 Essentials provide individual school results, which are generally available in June. Benchmark ratings are based on percentile ranks in five categories:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environments
- Ambitious Instruction

Panorama is one of three ISBE-approved alternate surveys that can replace the 5 Essentials. In exploring these three tools, Panorama is the only option which will ensure full ISBE compliance while allowing Unit 5 the flexibility to add local questions tailored to meet our needs.

While there is a cost associated with Panorama, we believe the benefits provided by their survey platform which encompasses school climate, SEL, and customization for feedback in other areas are worth the investment.

Timely and Actionable Data

Panorama provides approximately 80% of their survey results immediately after the administration window closes. Remaining results and data are available within 5 business days. These results are tied to the Panorama Playbook, a library of research-backed interventions and classroom strategies. This allows teachers and administrators to move from identifying a challenge to implementing a solution. Additionally, the district could look at administering the same survey in the fall and spring to identify opportunities, implement strategies, and track growth.

Integration

Panorama syncs directly with Infinite Campus, allowing for easy administration and the ability to view data at multiple levels. Unlike the 5 Essentials, we will have the ability to view data at a district level in addition to individual schools. Data can be viewed by all respondents or individually by each student, staff, and family group. At each level and grouping, you can disaggregate survey results by student groups (e.g., IEP, EL, ethnicity, grade level) to identify and address specific opportunity gaps and examine trend data after multiple surveys have been given. Results are available at multiple levels based on permissions and can be exported to be shared with the Board, the community, or made publicly available on our website.

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Customization & Benchmarking

Panorama provides a bank of over 800 pre-validated questions across over 90 topics. These questions are compared against a national benchmark of thousands of schools. Additionally, results can be compared to districts and schools that share similar demographic and geographic characteristics, providing a more accurate comparison than the state's general data. As opposed to only a benchmark score like the 5 Essentials, questions can be analyzed to review the percentage of favorable responses to identify areas of strength and the percentage of responses that were not favorable for areas of growth opportunities. Unlike the 5Essentials, which is a "one-size-fits-all" instrument, Panorama allows the district or individual schools to add custom questions. This ensures we can gather data on local initiatives, specific school improvements, or strategic plan areas and goals. While these questions will not be benchmarked, we can track, analyze, and disaggregate results to monitor progress within one system and administration to minimize survey fatigue of our stakeholders.

Investing in this platform will allow us to move from measuring school climate to actively improving it through integrated data and actionable resources. While we are still in the exploration and research phase, the platform has received positive feedback and high interest from the district administrator group that has reviewed it thus far. Our next steps are to seek additional feedback from other districts using Panorama, as well as additional Unit 5 groups.

Note: We are also exploring a more systematic approach to monitor our graduation on track metrics for the high schools. While the Illinois Report Card will no longer report 9th Grade on Track, our schools have utilized this and other metrics as they work towards improving their graduation rates. These factors have surfaced the need for a system that can provide real-time data to help us better track these metrics and identify students and areas needing support. Panorama offers a Pathways product and is one of several companies we are currently exploring in this area. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Darrin Cooper

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