SUPERINTENDENT DR. ALEX MARRERO'S
Listening and Learning Tour
The first 100 days
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Dr. Marrero began his tenure as superintendent with a deliberate plan to meet with as many family and community members, students and staff as possible in the first 100 days.

**During this time, the superintendent:**
- Visited 68 schools
- Held over 100 meetings, virtually and in person, in every region of the city

34 of these meetings were official “Listening and Learning” meetings, in which Dr. Marrero asked three standard questions:

- What is going well in Denver Public Schools?
- What needs improvement in Denver Public Schools?
- What advice do you have for me?

Listening and Learning meetings captured feedback from around 2,000 individual community and family members, students and staff.

In addition, family, students and staff were invited to submit responses to the questions via survey and over 10,000 individuals participated in the Listening and Learning Tour that way.

This report covers the aggregated feedback from both the Listening and Learning meetings and the survey responses.
LISTEN AND LEARN EVENTS

Equity in Data Collection, Analysis and Representation

Dr. Marrero’s Listening and Learning Tour strategically engaged members of historically marginalized communities in order to ensure that the voices he heard were representative of the community overall. A large majority of the organized events targeted underrepresented groups, including:

• Speakers of languages other than English, multilingual learners, newcomers, refugees, and immigrant families and students
• LGBTQIA+ staff, students, and families
• Black and African American families and students
• Students/families in federal programs, including those eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch, experiencing homelessness, in foster care or serving in the military.
• Students/families with disabilities
• Native American students and families
• Hispanic/Latinx students and families
• Asian American/Pacific Islander students and families
• Students in elementary, middle and high school

Whenever possible without compromising anonymity, summaries of these conversations with underrepresented groups are included as stand-alone documents. In addition, this report elevates subgroup themes.

SURVEYS

Surveys were distributed to DPS students in grades three through 12, and all DPS families and staff. Some demographic groups are underrepresented in the raw survey results, due to lower response rates. (See tables in appendix.)

The themes analysis in this report uses a stratified sampling method to ensure that voices from each race and region are represented proportionally to DPS enrollment.

However, even this approach is limited because it can still mask feedback from groups that make up a very small part of enrollment, like our Native American students. Whenever possible, we share disaggregated data to ensure that all voices are heard.
Meetings by the numbers

OVER 2,000 INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED IN LISTENING AND LEARNING MEETINGS

34 Listening and Learning meetings
76% of Listening and Learning events focused on historically underrepresented demographic groups
50% More than half of the events were citywide

27 have individual summaries
21 racial/ethnic groups
9 youth
6 languages
4 lower income
4 LGBTQIA+
3 students/families with disabilities
2 experiencing homelessness, in foster care or the military, including veterans
16 events were regional, covering the Southwest, Northwest, Central, Northeast and Southeast areas of the city.
SURVEYS BY THE NUMBERS

11,660 RESPONSES

3,724 from students
Survey responses in seven different languages
688 elementary school students
1,482 middle school students
1,553 high school students

5,487 from families
Survey responses in six languages
Families for 214 schools represented

2,449 from staff
1,218 teachers and specialized service providers (SSPs)
562 central-support staff
218 school-based support staff
200 operational support staff
132 school leaders
119 other staff
What is going well in DPS?
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?

Summary

The top theme that emerged across all stakeholders was a deep appreciation for the hard work and quality of Denver’s teachers and staff. In surveys, Spanish-speaking and Black families named this more frequently than other families, suggesting that teacher supports are most visible to, effective for, or appreciated by these communities.

Praise for teachers was frequently mentioned in the same sentence with another common theme across all audiences: non-academic supports. Families, community members and students were grateful for the focus on students’ well-being (addressing physical, mental and/or social-emotional needs). These findings from the Listening and Learning events reinforce the importance that families place on schools attending to the both academic needs of students as well as supporting the whole child. This was also a common theme for school-based educators, who identified these supports as critical for students who have experienced trauma and are still recovering from the pandemic.

Across all audiences, many named DPS’ focus on equity as something going well in the district. DPS staff, as well as community and family members, expressed support for equity policies or initiatives, while students more commonly pointed to welcoming, inclusive and diverse school communities. Families in all demographic groups were similarly likely to name the equity focus as something going well.

Students, staff and families all named the COVID precautions and the ability to be at school in person this year as something going well.

Some themes were only common within specific subgroups:

When students were asked what was going well, the most common response was the category “everything/almost everything.” This suggests that a substantial group of students are generally satisfied with their educational experience.

At the same time, a subset of both staff and students said nothing is going well (with staff were more likely than students to say this). Families could typically see something positive from their more removed vantage point; this was not a top ten theme for families.

Students and some families named learning as going well, but staff (with expertise in learning and instruction) were notably silent on this theme.

Both staff and students brought up Student Voice and Engagement as something going well, but this was not a common theme with families, who might not have as much visibility into this.
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?

Student Listening and Learning Events:

In the student-led conversations with the superintendent about what’s going well, students discussed many personal and school-related topics that contribute to exceptional learning experiences in DPS. The top five themes that emerged are:

• **FOCUS ON EQUITY:** Students expressed that while there is still room for growth, DPS has made significant strides in improving the educational experience for its diverse student population. Some examples include increasing LGBTQIA+ supportive environments, addressing racial/ethnic educational disparities and increasing inclusive practices to support students with disabilities.

• **TEACHERS:** Students in elementary and secondary schools highlighted their teachers’ hard work and dedication, especially during these difficult times. Notably, many of the supports mentioned go well beyond academic support, such as teachers being understanding, respectful, open and fun.

• **POST-SECONDARY READINESS:** Students expressed finding value in college classes, internships and other opportunities that prepare them for life after high school.

• **STUDENT LEARNING:** Students mentioned that having access to challenging/rigorous work was another positive attribute of the current DPS learning environment.

• **STUDENT VOICE AND ENGAGEMENT:** Students mentioned that having their voices heard and providing feedback was going well in DPS. Some students cited the Listening and Learning tour as an example of student voice.

The themes of equity, teachers/teaching and student learning are also reflected in the survey responses detailed on page 10.
Themes less frequently mentioned include: Supportive adults (4%); Classroom instruction (2%); Extracurriculars (2%); Curriculum (1%); School schedule (1%)
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?
Student Survey

EVERYTHING/ALMOST EVERYTHING

12.7% of non-blank open responses expressed that “everything” or “most things” were going well in DPS.

Current Multilingual Learners were more likely to respond in this category (19%), as were Black students (20%). White students’ were less likely to comment in this category (7%).

I think that everything is working well.”
“Yo creo que todo funciona bien.”

TEACHERS/TEACHING

“\My teachers are kind and they are very patient when someone doesn’t understand something.”

12.6% of non-blank open responses expressed that their teachers and the instruction they experienced in DPS classrooms were going well. These comments describe teachers as hard working, enthusiastic and/or good at their jobs. In these comments, teachers are often described as respectful, nice, kind and patient.

Elementary students were more likely to respond in this category (21%).
STUDENT LEARNING

11% of students responding to this question indicated that their learning or that of their peers was progressing well in DPS.

Elementary students were more likely to respond in this category (17%), while high school students' were less likely to comment in this category (7%).

“What is going well is people are having fun and learning at school.”

Fifth grader in southeast region

SCHOOL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

“People are kind and sometimes help if you need it.”

Fifth grader in near northeast region

9.6% of students responding to this question indicated that their school’s culture and community was a positive element of their DPS experience. Many described their school community as welcoming, kind, nice, caring and/or respectful. Many of these comments also reference adults’ roles in creating a safe and supportive environment at their school.

Elementary students were more likely to respond in this category (16%).
8.0% of students responding to this question indicated that their classes or a particular class they were taking was going well. In these comments, students often describe how they “like,” “love,” or “enjoy” one or more of their classes.

Elementary students were more likely to respond in this category (12%).

**CLASSES/A SPECIFIC CLASS**

“Language arts and art class.”

—

Seventh grader

IN SOUTHWEST REGION

6.7% of students responding to this question indicated that attending school in-person, as opposed to virtually, should be looked at as a success. These comments often point out the benefits of being able to continue seeing teachers and other students in person and getting “back to normal” by participating in school events and activities that may have been postponed in the previous school year.

White students and high school students were more likely to respond in this category (12%, 10%), while Latinx, lower-income, Black students and elementary students provided responses less likely to fall into this category (5%, 4%, 3%, 1%).

**BEING IN-PERSON**

“We are still in-person, so that is good.”

—

Ninth grader

IN NEAR NORTHEAST REGION
6.3% of students responding to this question affirmed that DPS has been doing a good job of implementing COVID safety measures at their school. These comments often cite masking policies specifically.

Lower income students were less likely to mention COVID safety measures (5%) compared to their non lower income counterparts (8%).

5.9% of students responding to this question indicated that appreciation of diversity and inclusion of all kinds of students was something their school or DPS was doing well. These comments often mentioned different kinds of students feeling welcomed, accepted, supported and involved. Students often expressed appreciation for the discussion of diversity issues in their schools.

Redesignated English learners (those who have transitioned out of Multilingual Education as they gained proficiency in English), students not qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch and students identifying as female were more likely to respond in this category, (9%, 8%, 7%), while students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, students identifying as male and English learners currently receiving services were less likely to respond in this category (4%, 3%, 2%).
SOCIALIZING/FRIENDS

4.8% of students responding to this question indicated that their friendships, socializing and/or social life was a positive aspect of their experience at their school and DPS.

*Elementary school students and students not qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch were more likely to submit responses in this category (9%, 6%). Responses from students in high school and students qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch were less likely to be in this category (3%, 4%).*

“
I like being able to see friends again and the people in my classes are nice. I also enjoy being able to socialize with everyone, including the teachers.”

---

Eighth grader
IN CENTRAL REGION

NOTHING/VERY LITTLE

“I would like to argue that not a lot is going well in DPS.”

---

10th grader
IN SOUTHWEST REGION

4.5% of students responding to this question indicated that nothing or very little was going well in their experience at their school and/or with DPS.

*High school students’ responses were most likely to be in this category (6%), especially compared to elementary students (2%).*
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?

Family and Community Listening and Learning Events:

In the family and community conversations, participants mentioned many things that are going well in DPS and the broader Denver community. The top five themes that emerged from these conversations are closely related to DPS’ work.

- **FOCUS ON EQUITY**: Similar to student responses, families and community members highlighted the district’s equity efforts. Some examples given of where the district has made strides include Indigenous land acknowledgment, a more supportive environment for LGBTQIA+ students and families, more inclusive curricula, efforts to be more inclusive of students with disabilities and students feeling safe to express themselves.

- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**: Participants expressed satisfaction with the different ways DPS engages the community. Some examples mentioned include partnerships with external organizations to support the community, providing venues for engagement (e.g., the Learning and Listening Tour) and specific school events and activities.

- **TEACHERS AND STAFF**: Parents expressed appreciation for the dedication and hard work of teachers and school-based staff. Families praised teachers’ hard work in supporting their children’s needs during the pandemic and the transition to in-person learning.

- **HEALTH SUPPORTS**: Participants praised programs and services that address student mental and physical health. Some examples include school-based clinics (physical and mental health services), vaccination clinics and partnerships with Denver Health to increase access to health services.

- **COMMUNICATIONS**: Participants indicated that communications from schools, teachers and the district have been helpful. Families expressed the value in receiving clear communication, especially around issues of COVID safety and their children’s academic and social-emotional well-being.

The focus on equity and the appreciation for teachers’ hard work are also reflected in the Family Survey responses. Both groups also agree that the focus on students’ well-being (addressing physical, mental and/or social-emotional needs) is going well. These findings from the Listening and Learning events reinforce the importance that families place on schools attending not only to the academic needs of students, but to the whole child.
Other less frequently mentioned themes include: Provision of breakfast and lunch (3%), “Students First” philosophy (3%), Supports for family (2%), School schedule (2%) and Providing 1:1 technology (e.g., Chromebooks) (1%).
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?
Family and Community Survey

TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATION AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

30.9% of families responding to this question indicated that teachers are a strength of DPS. Comments in this category described dedicated and hard-working teachers and administrators whose efforts are appreciated by families. Responses often noted that students enjoy learning and are excited to attend school.

Families responding to the survey in Spanish and families self-identifying as Black were more likely to submit responses in this category (45%, 42%). Families responding to the survey in English (27%) and self-identifying as White (non-Hispanic) or “Prefer not to answer” were less likely to have responses in this category (27%, 24%, 22%).

“The school, teachers and admin are very supportive and engaging. We transferred to this school and have been impressed each step of the way. Keep doing so amazing!”

— Family of a fifth grader in Near Northeast Region
17.2% of families responding to this question indicated that COVID precautions are going well in DPS. These commenters expressed approval for the mask mandates for schools, as well as for vaccination for adults in schools.

Families’ frequency of mentioning this theme was statistically different by grade level, region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity. Families of students in elementary school were more likely to refer to COVID precautions (20%) than were families of students in high school (12%). Families from the Southeast were more likely to mention this theme (25%) than families in the Far Northeast (8%). Families taking the survey in English were more likely to mention this theme (21%) than families taking the survey in a language other than English (2%). Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) were more likely to respond in this category (31%) than were families identifying as Latinx, Black, or those who selected “Prefer not to answer” (13%, 9%, 11%).

“I like how DPS has handled COVID. I like that all adults are vaccinated and kids are in masks.”

Family of a fifth grader in northwest region
15.4% of families responding to this question indicated that the fact that schools are currently in-person during the pandemic is something that is going well in DPS. Responders within this category expressed relief that students were able to learn in person and spend time with their peers.

Families’ frequency of mentioning this theme was statistically different by region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity. Families from the Southeast and Near Northeast were more likely to mention this theme (21%, 21%) than families in the Southwest and Far Northeast (11%, 8%). Families taking the survey in English were more likely to mention this theme (19%) than families taking the survey in a language other than English (<1%). Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) or selecting “Prefer not to answer” to the survey question about race/ethnicity were more likely to respond in this category (27%, 24%) than were families identifying as Black or Latinx (10%, 9%).

“Students are happy to have the opportunity to attend school in person and participate in athletics and activities.”

—

Family of a ninth grader in Near Northeast Region
COMMUNICATION

13.4% of families responding to this question indicated that communications from their school and/or DPS as a whole are going well. Responses described communication as strong, constant and relevant.

Families taking the survey in a language other than English were more likely to cite communication as going well in the district (21%), compared to families taking the survey in English (11%).

What works well is that they try to communicate with families about what is going on in the schools and in the district.”

“Lo que funciona bien es que tratan de comunicarse con las familias acerca de lo que está pasando en las escuelas y en el distrito”.

ACADEMIC WORK

7.7% of families responding to this question indicated that their student’s academic work is going well in DPS. Responses in this category describe challenging academic work that is the right level for students, as well as teachers that are supportive and effective. Some families described specific resources and opportunities that their school provides to support students.

Families with a self-reported race/ethnicity of Black or White (non-Hispanic) were most likely to answer in this category (12%, 9%). Families with a self-reported race/ethnicity of “Prefer not to answer” or “Other” were least likely to give responses in this category (4%, 2%).

“Our child is very engaged in school and it is challenging him appropriately.”

Family of a Kindergartner
IN CENTRAL REGION
FOCUS ON EQUITY

5.7% of families responding to this question indicated that the focus on equity occurring at their school and/or the district at large is going well. They expressed an appreciation for the way the district honors diversity, includes families of different cultures and shares information in multiple languages.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity).

“Strong culture of inclusion and valuing diversity. Multiple languages used to share information with families. School staff are kind and caring at my child’s school.”

Family of an ECE Student
IN NORTHWEST REGION

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

“We love the online elementary school, Denver Online Middle and Denver Online High School. Our kids are very happy learning online with their teachers. Please keep all of the schools into the future.”

Family of a fourth grader
IN CENTRAL REGION

5.2% of families responding to this question indicated that educational options available within DPS were a strength of the district. Responses in this category described different school models, such as online, dual language, or Spanish immersion and their benefit to DPS students and families.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in response frequency between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity).
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING SUPPORTS

4.5% of families responding to this question indicated social-emotional learning supports are going well in DPS. They expressed an appreciation for the focus currently placed on social-emotional learning and the opportunities that their students had to build stronger social skills.

Responses from families self-identifying as White (non-Hispanic) were more likely to be in this category (7%). Families who chose “Prefer not to answer” in response to the race/ethnicity question were least likely to respond in this category (1%).

“Taking care of the student on a physical and social level, they listen and are attentive to their needs.”

“El cuidado con el estudiante a nivel físico y social, oyen y están atentos a sus necesidades”.

EXTRACURRICULARS OR FIELD TRIPS

“I truly appreciate the before and after school support from discovery link. My son loves going and he always has good feedback.”

3.9% of families responding to this question indicated that extracurricular activities or field trips were going well in DPS. They were thankful for after school clubs and activities as well as events held at their schools.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity).
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?

Team DPS Listening and Learning Events:

During the conversations with DPS employees from different divisions and departments, the superintendent heard about employees’ unique experiences across the district. The top themes mentioned include:

- **FOCUS ON EQUITY:** Similar to other stakeholders, DPS employees see the efforts around equity as a strength. Employees gave examples of things going well, such as increased support for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, learning communities for Native American students, work around inclusion and language supports.

- **TEACHERS AND STAFF:** Team DPS members, like other stakeholders, praise teachers and staff who have exceeded expectations in supporting students, families and colleagues.

- **COLLABORATION/CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION:** Employees mentioned specific examples where cross-departmental collaboration was going well, without affirming collaboration was successful across all departments.

- **STUDENT VOICE/ENGAGEMENT:** Opportunities for students to voice their opinions and lead others were mentioned as an area where DPS is doing well.
Other themes mentioned less frequently include: General contentment/overall good working environment (4%), General resources and supports (3%), Flexibility in work environment, including remote options (3%), Academic curriculum and supports (3%), Professional learning (2%), Adult well-being (2%), Openness to change and feedback from the staff (1%), Parents and families (1%).
WHAT IS GOING WELL IN DPS?

Student Survey

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

18.4% of team members responding to this question highlighted the focus on equity and social justice. Team members indicated that the district feels united around its core values to support staff and students by focusing on equity. They also named specific initiatives, such as the Black Excellence Resolution, daily social-emotional learning and the Equity Modules, as helping the district support all students and combat inequities.

School Leaders, Central Office Support staff and Teachers and SSPs tended to mention this theme more frequently (36%, 27% and 24%). Operational Support staff tended to mention this theme less frequently (2%).

“I feel like we’re a well focused district on social justice issues. When I speak to my friends in another state, it seems like DPS is actually making moves to assist and uplift disenfranchised students. I think it’s awesome how much we support our trans students.”

DPS Front office support
TEAM MEMBER
COVID PRECAUTIONS

14.3% of team members responding to this question indicated that the COVID precautions are going well. Team members indicated that the district’s response to the pandemic felt appropriate, noting that they appreciated masks and vaccination mandates to help schools stay open safely.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.

“I feel much safer with some of the DPS Covid-19 policies in place than I would if I worked in many of the other schools/districts across the country.”

DPS Teacher

BEING IN-PERSON FOR LEARNING

“

What is going well in DPS is that our students are very happy to be back in the building and are excited about school.”

DPS Facilities

TEAM MEMBER

12.3% of team members responding to this question indicated that something that is going well in DPS is the return to in-person learning. Team members liked getting to see their students in person and felt that this was valuable for students’ learning and mental health.

School-based support and School Leaders tended to mention this theme more frequently (17%, 17%). Staff in Operational Support and Central Support staff tended to mention this theme less frequently (8%, 6%).
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE STAFF

12.3% of team members responding to this question indicated that the people they work with are supportive and strong. They described their colleagues as passionate, caring and/or hardworking, as well as dedicated to doing what’s best for students.

*There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.*

“
The passion that DPS employees have for their students is palpable. Most all the employees have the students’ best interests at heart and continue to want to put them in the best situation to allow them to be successful.”

—

DPS Central support
TEAM MEMBER

NOTHING/NOT MUCH

“Honestly this is my 15th year and I am looking into leaving the profession. I can’t continue to do this job, without sufficient supports for teachers. We are being used up.”

—

DPS Teacher

9.7% of team members responding to this question reported that nothing is going well, or instead responded with criticism. Many responses mentioned staffing shortages, a lack of support and low pay as major concerns.

*Responses from Operational Support and School-based Support staff tended to fall into this category more frequently (18%, 11%). Responses from School Leaders and Central Support staff tended to fall in this category less frequently (4%, 4%).*
8.8% of team members responding to this question indicated that something that is going well in DPS is the focus on students and putting students first. They often referenced the prioritization of equity and student health and well-being. Many respondents also demonstrated this Students First philosophy by saying that students are a strength of the district.

Responses from Central Support staff, School Leaders and Teachers and SSPs tended to be in this category more frequently (12%, 11%, 11%). Responses from School-based Support and Operational Support staff tended to be in this category less frequently (6%, 3%).

“We are focusing on a narrow set of priorities as a district and our priorities are the right ones. We continue to keep students first in all we do.”

DPS Teacher Leader
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

4.4% of team members responding to this question indicated that something that is going well in DPS is the focus on providing social-emotional supports to students. Team members appreciated the priority placed on student mental health and well-being through required professional learning, specialized service providers (SSPs) and the focus on daily social-emotional learning. Some employees perceived DPS to be ahead of other districts in the state in these efforts and that the need for social emotional learning is important both for students who have experienced trauma, as well as for those still adjusting to the uncertainties experienced during the pandemic.

Responses from School Leaders and Teachers and SSPs tended to fall into this category more frequently (8%, 7%). Responses from Operational Support staff tended to fall in this category less frequently (1%).

COMMUNICATION

“The open communication and accurate information sent out via emails to District employees.”

DPS Central support

TEAM MEMBER

4.3% of team members responding to this question indicated that communication is going well in DPS, either within teams or across the district as a whole. Team members described communications as relevant, open and accurate.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.

“Social emotional learning is a named priority and schools are beginning to have the resources necessary to do that work with their communities.”

DPS Principal
EMPLOYMENT (INCLUDING BENEFITS, PAY)

4.0% of team members responding to this question cited their job as something going well in DPS, such as the specific benefits or pay compared to other districts. Many team members were relieved to have a job and job security during the pandemic.

Operational Support staff tended to mention this theme most frequently (12%). School Leaders tended to mention this theme less frequently (1%).

“I am grateful to DPS to have continued to receive my pay and benefits during the critical onset months of the COVID pandemic. Though there was (and still is) risk of the contagion and heightened stress levels while working, it is reassuring to be with DPS.”

DEDICATED TEACHERS

3.8% of team members responding to this question indicated that something that is going well in DPS is how hardworking teachers are. They described teachers, as well as administrators and specialized service providers, as being dedicated to their schools and their students.

School Leaders tended to mention this theme most frequently (9%). Operational Support staff tended to mention this theme less frequently (1%).

“I am seeing teachers step in and fill roles they never had to before. They are not doing it for DPS or even the school but for the sake of the kids and their colleagues.”

DPS School Leader
What Needs to Improve in DPS?
WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN DPS

Summary

Across all meetings and surveys, the most common broad category for improvements stems from constrained resources. For families and students, school schedules (dictated by transportation constraints) are a major pain point. Families and students also call for facilities improvements, most notably, air conditioning. Staff, on the other hand, most frequently cite staffing shortages resulting in unsustainable workloads and burnout. Allocation of resources is a minor theme in this area. School-based staff call for a narrowed focus and reallocation of central office staff to schools. Families and students cite the need for equitable allocation of funds across schools.

At the Listening and Learning events, equity-related improvement areas dominated the conversations. This is not surprising given that engagement efforts targeted subgroups historically marginalized by DPS structures and systems. Additionally, the synergy created by discussions during in-person meetings prompted participants to think about their own experiences and how they felt when they heard someone share a similar traumatic experience. Family, staff and students all mentioned a need for more inclusive curricula. Staff, community and family members see an opportunity to dismantle institutional racism and create a reflective workforce through improved HR policies and mitigation of predominant culture. Students and families see the persisting segregation across schools as an area for improvement. Relatedly, they would like to see more equitable access to programs and funding.

Although families and students mentioned learning as something going well in DPS, both groups bring up specific areas of academic success as areas of improvement. Families and students both ask for improved course offerings and instruction. In addition, families and students asked for improvement in support of students with disabilities.

A fourth general area that surfaced among adults was the need for better communications. Families often wanted improved communication with their students’ schools and teachers, and staff expressed a desire for better central communication and communication between departments.

From the family and student surveys, it is important to note that one of the most frequent responses to the question about need for improvements was “nothing/everything is fine/generally content.” This may be interpreted as evidence that a substantial proportion of families and students responding to the survey are generally satisfied with their current experience in DPS.
WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN DPS
Student Survey

While discussing what needs to be improved in the district with the superintendent, students focused on two areas: equity and amplifying student voice.

• **EQUITY**: Over half of the responses addressed issues of equity. Some areas for improvement include:
  
  • **LGBTQIA+ CONCERNS**: Not all teachers respect preferred pronouns, not enough education is provided around LGBTQIA+ issues, gender-neutral bathrooms (e.g., not enough, they are locked, hygiene issues), students being outed without their permission.
  
  • **RACIAL/ETHNIC CONCERNS**: Curricula do not include all cultures and ethnic groups, racial segregation within and across DPS.
  
  • **INCOME FACTORS**: Unequal school funding and income-based segregation were cited as major areas of concern.
  
  • **STUDENTS WITH AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**: Students shared personal experiences of teachers not knowing and/or following their students’ IEPs.

• **AMPLIFYING VOICE**: Students mentioned the lack of opportunities for students to be heard at all levels of the DPS structure. Students noted that while there are some venues, such as the Student Board of Education, the same students often get the opportunity to speak repeatedly. They would like to see more options for students who are not usually engaged to be more active.
Less frequently mentioned themes include: Well-being support (2%); Racial bias/Discrimination (2%); Extracurriculars (2%); Bathroom issues (1%); Mentions of Tay Anderson (1%); Student voice (1%); Gender bias/Sexual orientation (1%)
18.3% of students responding to this question indicated that nothing or very little needed to be improved at their school or at DPS.

English learners currently receiving services responded in ways that were most likely to fall in this category (26%).

“In truth, I don’t know what I could say. For me, it doesn’t need improvement, it’s good as is.”

“La verdad, no sé que podría decir, para mí no necesita mejorar. Para mí así está bien”.

10th grader
IN FAR NORTHEAST REGION
Translated from the original Spanish
7.3% of students responding to this question indicated that their school schedule needed improvement. Many of these comments indicated that school was starting too early or ending too late in the day. Other comments asked for longer lunches, recesses, or passing periods.

Students in the Near Northeast, White students and students not qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunch were mostly likely to call for improvements to school schedules (12%, 12% and 10%). Students in schools in the Central and Far Northeast regions, along with redesignated English learners, were less likely to cite their school’s schedule as needing improvement (4%, 2%, 4%)

“
They are overworking the kids and the bell schedule needs to change. Going to school at 7:30-3:00 is not reasonable or ethical and it’s damaging many student’s mental health. Not to mention the 99 minute classes are too overwhelming and tiring. It’s just overall exhausting and making school start at 7:30 in the morning is far too early. How are we supposed to focus when we’re so tired?”

10th grader in Far Northeast Region
SCHOOL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

5.6% of students responding to this question indicated that their school culture needed improvement. A large number of these comments referenced issues with bullying and called for greater kindness and respect between students.

Black students and students in elementary schools were most likely to cite school culture and community as something in need of improvement (10%, 9%). High school students were less likely to mention school culture and community in response to this question (3%).

CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

“...I feel like problems between students (drama, fights and more) should be focused on as I see them everyday...”

— Sixth grader
IN SOUTHEAST REGION

“...We do a lot of PDFs and a lot of copying things, but not understanding why things are the way they are...”

— Ninth grader
IN CENTRAL REGION

5.1% of students responding to this question indicated that classroom instruction needed improvement. Many of these responses asked for classes to be made more interesting and fun. Some comments suggested changes to workload, pacing and grading policies.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between students of different grade levels, regions, or race/ethnicity, or free- or reduced-price lunch status.
SCHOOL MEALS

5.1% of students responding to this question indicated that school meals needed improvement. Some of these comments included suggestions for specific food items to be included more often (e.g., pizza, coffee, cheese crackers) or suggested that the students be able to choose from a greater number of meal options.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between students of different grade levels, regions, or race/ethnicity, or free- or reduced price lunch status.

“
When it is lunch, the food isn’t even good so I have to go hungry all day and eat until I get home.”

— Seventh grader
IN NEAR NORTHEAST REGION

DRESS CODE

“I am a strong believer on no dress-code, as it is pressed on females more than males, as males are allowed to wear things that show their shoulders, shorts above the knee while women on the other hand aren’t even allowed to have rips above the knee on their jeans. It’s a country-wide issue and many students have this concern but never dare to address it.”

— 10th grader
IN SOUTHWEST REGION

3.1% of students responding to this question indicated that their school’s dress code needed improvement. Many comments called for the dress code to be abolished, or expressed dislike for the school uniform. A number of comments also expressed concern that the dress code was not being enforced fairly, especially between students of different genders.

Middle school students were more likely to mention the dress code when responding to this question (5%), compared to elementary or high school students (2%, 2%).
SCHOOL RULES

2.7% of students responding to this question indicated that their school’s rules needed improvement. Many of these comments called for clearer or more fair implementation of school rules. Some students asked for stricter rules, including those around bullying and swearing.

*Black students and middle school students were more likely to discuss school rules when responding to this question (6%, 4%). Latinx students and high school students were less likely to mention school rules (2%).*

COVID PRECAUTIONS

*The rules are extremely unfair at my school, the students do not want to show up because of them.*

—

*Eighth grader*

IN SOUTHWEST REGION

“Be more strict about the safety of wearing masks and washing hands or even staying at home if you feel sick or have symptoms of COVID.”

—

*11th grader*

IN NORTHWEST REGION

2.7% of students responding to this question indicated that COVID precautions needed improvement. These comments mostly urged more strict adherence to correct masking procedures at school, but sometimes also referenced a need for more thorough sanitizing, more social distancing and student vaccinations.
COURSE OFFERINGS

2.7% of students responding to this question indicated that their course offerings needed improvement. Many of these comments mentioned a desire for classes with practical skills (personal finance, home economics); while others asked for more STEM classes or arts and other electives.

In response to this survey question, high school students were most likely to discuss course offerings (5%), while middle school students were least likely (1%).

"Students should be taught about subjects like taxes and how to save money."

— 10th grader

IN SOUTHWEST REGION

FACILITIES

"Many schools need to be fixed"

"Muchas escuelas necesitan reparación."

— Seventh grader

IN NORTHWEST REGION

2.5% of students responding to this question indicated that their school building needed improvement. Air conditioning was most frequently mentioned in these responses, but conditions in restrooms, hallways and classrooms were also mentioned.

Students in the Southeast and Southwest regions were most likely to mention facilities (5%, 5%), while students in the Central, Near Northeast and Northwest regions were least likely to mention facilities (1%, 1%, 1%).
WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN DPS?

Family and Community Listening and Learning Events:

When answering what needs to improve in DPS, like the responses from students, participants overwhelmingly focused on equity and academic concerns.

- **EQUITY**: When addressing what needs to improve in DPS, most conversations centered on equity issues. Participants indicated that DPS needs to create a more equitable school district that supports diverse students, families and team members. Some specific areas mentioned include:
  - Provide access to high-quality education for Black and Brown students, including access to extracurricular activities and arts programming
  - Equitable school funding
  - Provide a more supportive environment for DPS’ diverse student population (e.g., LGBTQIA+, students with disabilities, twice-exceptional students, refugees, ethnic/racial groups, students receiving free- or reduced-price lunch)
  - Offer more language supports and culturally appropriate translations services
  - Provide culturally appropriate curricula and assessments
  - Address racial segregation within schools and across schools
  - More support for Black Excellence Plans
  - Address HR policies that hurt people of color

- **OVERALL ACADEMIC SUCCESS**: Families mentioned that not all students are thriving academically and the district needs to do more to ensure students are learning what is required for each grade.

- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**: Participants mentioned that the district needs to make more efforts to listen to more families and not just the loudest families. Participants also indicated that organizations face too many barriers in partnering with DPS to better serve families and the community.

- **COMMUNICATION**: Participants stated that improvements in communications are needed across schools and central office. Some parents said that DPS uses outdated modes of communication.

- **REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE**: Participants identified the need for the demographics of DPS’ workforce
Other themes mentioned less frequently include: School funding/allocation of funds (5.5%), Extracurricular opportunities/field trips/sports (5%), Better COVID protections and communication (5%), General communications (5%), Equity and inclusion of diverse identities (5%), School food quality/options (4%), Supports for students with disabilities (4%), Fewer COVID restrictions (4%), School-specific improvements (4%), Community and family voice (3%), Disagreement with curriculum (3%), Class size (3%), More staff needed (2%), Inequities between schools and neighborhoods (2%), Faculty and staff that do not represent students and community (2%), “Everything” (1%), Enrollment and choice process (1%), Parent portal (1%), Over-emphasis on equity and inclusion (1%).
WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN DPS?

Family and Community Events:

COMMUNICATION FROM SCHOOLS/TEACHERS

14.6% of families responding to this question indicated that communication from schools and teachers needs improvement in DPS. Comments focused on a lack of communication from school leaders or teachers on how their student was performing in the classroom. There were several comments (specific to students with disabilities) where clearer communication could help improve overall relationships with parents.

Responses from families taking the survey in English were more likely to indicate that communication from schools and teachers needed improvement (16%) compared to families taking the survey in languages other than English (9%).

“More communication from classroom teacher on a weekly or bi-weekly on progress or things going well and what we can do at home to help my child at home.”

Family of a sixth grader
IN SOUTHEAST REGION
10.5% of families responding to this question indicated that nothing or not much needs improvement in DPS, or that they are generally content with their school and DPS.

Families’ frequency of mentioning this theme was statistically different by region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity. Parents from the Far Northeast were more likely to mention this theme (16%) than parents in the Southeast and Near Northeast (4%, 4%). Families taking the survey in a language other than English were more likely to mention this theme (14%) than families taking the survey in English (7%). Families identifying as Latinx or Black were more likely to respond in this category (16%, 13%) than were families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) or selecting “Prefer not to answer” to the survey question about race/ethnicity (3%, 2%).

“So far I do not know what improvements can be made, it is my daughter’s first year and right now I am satisfied.”

“Hasta el momento no se que mejoras se puede hacer es el primer año de mi hija y hasta ahorita estoy satisfecha.”

---

Family of an ECE Student in Southwest Region

Translated from the original Spanish
SAFETY, BEHAVIOR AND BULLYING

9.8% of families responding to this question indicated that safety, behavior and bullying needs improvement in DPS. Participants mentioned that safety in and around the schools is a significant concern. Specific areas of concern cited include bullying, cruelty, fighting, stealing, shootings, reckless driving in school parking lots, drug use, teachers’ inability or unwillingness to discipline students, and students not being held accountable for their behavior.

Families’ frequency of mentioning this theme was statistically different by region, grade level, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity. Parents from the Southwest were more likely to mention this theme (19%) than parents in the Northwest and Near Northeast (6%, 6%). Families of students in middle school were most likely to mention this theme (19%), especially compared to families of students in elementary school (7%). Families taking the survey in a language other than English were more likely to mention this theme (17%) than families taking the survey in English (8%). Families identifying as Latinx were more likely to respond in this category (14%) than were families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) or Black (5%, 6%).

“Principal and staff need to care more for the students there. Bullying needs to be taken more serious and there should be consequences for kids who bully and physically hurt another student. Principal needs to take more action actually care for the students and engage more with parents instead of brushing everything underneath the rug.”

Family of a fourth grader in Southwest region
CLASSES AND OVERALL ACADEMIC SUCCESS

9.4% of families responding to this question indicated that classes and overall academics need improvement in DPS. Themes in this category ranged from making up lost learning time, improving access to AP/Gifted classes for Black and Brown students and providing more challenging work/homework to students.

Families identifying as white (non-Hispanic) or who selected “Prefer not to answer” were more likely to submit responses characterized by this theme (14%, 13%). Families identifying as Latinx and families taking the survey in languages other than English were less likely to submit responses in this category (5%, 4%).

“The 7:30am elementary start times are not healthy and the reasoning behind them with transportation is flawed. Equity is important. Making young children who need to ride the bus get up even earlier is also damaging.”

—

Family of a first grader in Central Region
6.3% of families responding to this question indicated that school facilities need improvement in DPS. The majority of these comments mentioned the need to provide air conditioning in schools that still lacked it. Some comments mentioned a need for better air filtration, student lockers, more parking, or a need for more classrooms and learning spaces. Other comments mentioned improving the grounds outside the schools (i.e., removing dead trees, improving drainage, improving playing fields and playground equipment).

For this theme, families’ frequency of mentioning school facilities was statistically different by region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity. Families of students in schools in the Southeast were more likely to refer to school facilities (10%) than were families of students in the Far Northeast (1%). Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) were more likely to mention this theme (12%), while families taking the survey in a language other than English were less likely to mention this theme (2%).

“Schools need more investment in their facilities and their staff.”

Family of a seventh grader
IN NORTHWEST REGION
BOARD OF EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

6.3% of families responding to this question indicated that governance needs improvement in DPS. Families indicated they want improved board practices including listening to families’ needs and improving school and teacher supports.

Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) were most likely to mention this theme (11%), with families identifying as Black or Latinx less likely to mention this theme (4%, 4%). Families taking the survey in languages other than English were also less likely to mention this theme (1%).

“
The school board has become too political and dramatic. We need strong leadership that puts kids first and we need a strategic plan with goals to help you be successful as a superintendent.”

Family of a first grader
IN SOUTHEAST REGION

TRANSPORTATION

“Transportation is unreliable, regularly late and unavailable for many students.”

Family of a sixth grader
IN NEAR NORTHEAST REGION

6.3% of families responding to this question indicated that transportation needs improvement in DPS. Families cited a need for improved transportation options including providing more equitable transportation options for families/students in need.

Families of students in middle school were more likely to mention transportation (10%) when responding to this question, compared to families of students in elementary school (5%).
FOCUS ON STUDENTS/ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

5.9% of families responding to this question indicated that DPS needs to improve by focusing on students and by providing additional supports for students needing extra help. Families mentioned needing additional support for struggling students, special education students and multilingual learners and additional academic programming options including Gifted and Talented (GT) and afterschool options.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity).

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORTS

5.6% of families responding to this question indicated that social-emotional learning and supports need improvement in DPS. Families cited a need for social-emotional supports for both students and school staff. Families also expressed that more supports are needed to address trauma, anxiety, insecurity, discipline issues and violence. Participants also expressed a desire to see stronger student/teacher relationships to help students during these trying times.

Families taking the survey in English were more likely to mention social-emotional learning and support (6%), while families taking the survey in languages other than English were less likely (3%).

“More attention to kids with special needs like GT identification and 504 plans and formal testing.”

—

Family of an eighth grader
in central region

“More attention to social/emotional learning and mental health needs. Teachers need training/guidance on working with students who have all experienced some form of trauma and adjust classroom expectations accordingly.”

—

Family of a second grader
in southeast region
WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN DPS?
Team DPS Listening and Learning Events:

During the conversations with Team DPS members about the improvements needed in the district, themes that emerged were similar to other stakeholders. Unsurprisingly, top themes also include areas specific to their roles. Major themes are:

- **EQUITY**: When addressing issues of equity, employees mentioned general issues with ongoing systemic and structural racism. Other topics mentioned included:
  - Better support for LGBTQIA+ students, families and staff
  - More inclusive curricula
  - Predominant culture silencing BIPOC staff

- **WORKING CONDITIONS**: Some employees mentioned issues with their working conditions, such as lack of professionalism from some school-based staff, disrespect from colleagues in other departments, burnout due to staffing shortages and unclear expectations.

- **REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE**: Employees mentioned that the current lack of representation in the DPS workforce of demographic groups that reflect the communities served by the district must be addressed through hiring and retention practices. Some employees mentioned that the DPS culture is particularly hostile to teachers and leaders of color.

- **EXTRACURRICULAR/ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES**: Employees mentioned the lack of proper facilities and access to resources for students to engage in sports and other extracurricular activities.

- **COMMUNICATIONS**: Employees mentioned that communications, in general, need to be improved.
WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE IN DPS?
Team DPS Survey

Other themes mentioned less frequently include: Student Discipline, Safety and Behavior [4%], Stronger Commitment to and Action on Equity [4%], Facilities [4%], Special education [4%], Vision/Strategy/Long-term planning [4%], General student support [4%], Curriculum and assessment [4%], Equity between schools [3%], Remote work [3%], Nothing/no improvement needed [2%], Staff culture and morale [2%], Transportation [2%], Small school issues [2%], School start times [2%], School leadership [2%], Equity for students with disabilities [1%], Family engagement/school-family relationships [1%], DPS being too political [1%], Community voice [1%] and Neighborhood schools [1%].
16.2% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that pay, benefits and work conditions need improvement in DPS. In these comments, Team DPS members often described the need for increased pay particularly for school based staff. Also, they indicated that health insurance is very expensive and part time employees do not receive benefits.

School-based Support and Operational Support staff tended to mention this theme more frequently (24%, 22%). School Leaders and Teachers and SSPs tended to mention this theme less frequently (10%, 11%).

"Better the salaries of Food, Paras, Transportation, Custodial, Restorative Justice, Clerical, etc. We need to be able to support our schools and we face challenges of hiring for these positions because salaries are very low and don't value these employees."

— DPS School Leader
STAFFING SHORTAGE

15.9% of Team DPS members responding to this question named staffing shortages in DPS. In these comments, Team DPS members often described how the staffing shortages have led to overworked staff and an inability to properly serve students.

School Leaders, Operational Support staff and Teachers and SSPs tended to mention this theme more frequently (20%, 20%, 18%). Central Support staff tended to mention this theme less frequently (7%).

“Support staff needs to be acknowledged and supported, especially through this difficult time of staff shortages and COVID protocols. Morale is low because staff that are working are expected to do more with less to the point of exhaustion and being overwhelmed. Upper management is expecting Business as Usual with very few resources to make Business as usual viable.”

DPS Food Services Worker
Operational Support Staff
TEACHER AND STAFF WORKLOAD

9.2% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that workloads need improvement in DPS. In these comments, Team DPS members described the need to identify and focus on critical work, and reduce some of the other requirements that are not essential right now.

Teachers and SSPs tended to mention this theme most frequently (19%). For all other employee role groups, frequency of mentioning this theme was much lower, ranging from 3% to 6%.

“Tasks should be reduced to what is really necessary. Valuing quality instruction and equitable outcomes.”

— DPS Teacher

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND THE DISTRICT

“I would like the district to find solutions to the divide between operations and schools. We are a team and I feel we all contribute to the educational process for our students.”

— DPS Transportation

9.0% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that relationships between schools and the district need improvement in DPS. In these comments, Team DPS members expressed how they thought their role was valued less than other roles. Also, school-based staff shared that they felt that initiatives were sent from the central office to implement without consideration of the existing demands on staff, implementation strategies, required resources, feasibility and benefit of the initiatives.

School Leaders were most likely to mention this theme (28%). School-based support, Operational Support and Central Support staff were least likely to mention this theme (6%, 6%, 5%).
RESOURCES AND BUDGET (OTHER THAN STAFFING)

10.0% of Team DPS members responding to this question mentioned inadequate resources. In these comments, Team DPS members often referred to school-based resources such as funding for infrastructure such as air conditioning and technology (devices and platforms/applications). They also indicated a need for better funding for programs such as special education, gifted and talented education and bilingual education. In addition they indicated a need to increase funding for non-academic/extracurricular programs such as sports, theater, arts and after school care.

School Leaders tended to mention this theme more frequently (16%). School-based Support and Central Support staff tended to mention this theme less frequently (5%, 3%).

COMMUNICATION IN THE DISTRICT

"More technology equitably split among schools, AC in ALL buildings (equity issue), funds to get curriculum and materials needed to teach.”

DPS Teacher

6.6% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that communication in the district needs improvement. In these comments, Team DPS members described the need for timely, clear and transparent communication. They also expressed a need for better communication between departments and for stakeholders’ voices to be heard.

Operational Support Staff tended to mention this theme more frequently (12%). School-based Support Staff and Teachers and SSPs tended to mention this theme less frequently (5%, 5%).

“
The right hand needs to talk to the left! Far too often, it seems like one department has no idea what another department is doing.”

DPS School Leader
**EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND MENTAL HEALTH**

6.2% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that support of employee mental health needs improvement in DPS. In these comments, Team DPS members described employees as feeling burned out and at the breaking point due to the conflicting demands placed on them during the pandemic. Therefore their mental health is a priority for retaining employees.

*There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.*

**TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*“Prioritizing teachers’ mental health, NOT through a million district programs but through the balance of expectations in our jobs.”*

**DPS Teacher**

4.9% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that training and professional development (PD) needs improvement in DPS. In these comments, Team DPS members often described the need for training/PD on behavior management, culturally responsive education, equity issues and technology use.

*There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.*

**DPS Teacher**
4.9% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that staff appreciation in DPS needs improvement. This sentiment was seen across various roles, such as food service, transportation, central office departments, paraprofessionals, teachers and specialized service providers (SSPs). Team members expressed feeling taken for granted and a need for actions showing they are valued.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.

**STAFF APPRECIATION**

“To recognize food service worker. Not look at us as the help. We are part of the team too.”

**DPS Food Services Team Member**

4.9% of Team DPS members responding to this question indicated that COVID precautions in DPS need improvement. Most of these respondents expressed concerns about the ongoing pandemic, better enforcement of safety protocols and clearer COVID safety guidelines. Fewer than 25% of those respondents who cited COVID precautions as an area for improvement had very different concerns from the rest of the respondents. These focused on losing staff due to the vaccine mandate, wasted resources spent on vaccine and mask mandates and general loss of freedom.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.

**COVID PRECAUTIONS**

“Research shows the Delta variant is more contagious than the original strain of Covid. However, there are far less safety protocols in place this year. One classroom at my school has had two positive cases. The only parents notified were ones of the students at that one table. This does nothing to consider improper mask usage, shared materials, etc.”

— DPS Teacher
What advice do you have for Dr. Marrero?
WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR DR. MARRERO?

Summary

The most prevalent response to this question was to continue engaging with students, community and family members and teachers. Dr. Marrero was encouraged to visit schools frequently and actively engage those with opposing viewpoints. Two notable sub-topics were understanding the experiences of teachers of color and understanding all viewpoints on school closure.

All audiences encouraged Dr. Marrero to focus on equity, though the equity emphasis varied by group. Students drew the connection between an equity focus and personal well-being. Families and community members urged Dr. Marrero to challenge White privilege, embrace Culturally Responsive Teaching and fight hate against Asians. Staff were more likely to raise policy and enrollment equity issues created by boundaries, school choice and transportation.

All audiences encouraged Dr. Marrero to keep students centered in his focus and not be distracted by political divisiveness. Specifically, they encouraged him to spend lots of time in schools and put himself in students’ shoes as often as possible.

Other notable themes, not raised by all audiences were:

Personnel and structural issues: Family and Community members mentioned problems with the current leadership at all levels of the DPS system. Most of the responses included an individual’s experience with a DPS team member, organization, department, or school. Responses mentioned the need to support teachers and address staffing shortages.

Family members and staff advised Dr. Marrero to focus on his personal communication.

Students recommend that he work to be a good role model.
WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR DR. MARRERO?

Student Survey

Students gave varied advice to the superintendent and four main themes emerged:

- **AMPLIFY STUDENT VOICE**: Students expressed the importance of creating venues to express their views about important decisions in the district. Students also encouraged the superintendent to listen to diverse points of view, highlighting each student’s unique experiences.

- **EQUITY**: Students advised the superintendent to continue focusing on equity work, which directly impacts their overall well-being.

- **STUDENTS FIRST**: Students asked the superintendent to empathize with their experiences and situations and to continue prioritizing their needs so they can be safe and healthy.

- **VISIT SCHOOLS**: Students encouraged the superintendent to visit schools and continue checking up and engaging with students.
WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR DR. MARRERO?

Student Survey

Themes less frequently mentioned include: Improve school safety (general) (1%)
9.4% of students responded to this question with general words of encouragement for Dr. Marrero. These responses congratulated Dr. Marrero on his accomplishments so far, wished him luck and expressed confidence in his abilities.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language and self-identified race/ethnicity).
LISTEN TO, ENGAGE WITH, BOND WITH STUDENTS

4.6% of students responding to this question encouraged Dr. Marrero to listen to and engage with students. They noted that students have ideas that are worth implementing, and that students want to contribute to decision making.

Student groups with responses more likely to fall in this category include: White (non-Hispanic) students (9%); students in the Near Northeast (8%); students not eligible for free- or reduced-priced lunch (8%); high school students (7%); and students identifying as female (6%). Student groups with responses less likely to fall in this category include: Latinx students (3%), students eligible for free- or reduced-priced lunch (2%); middle school students (3%); elementary school students (2%); students identifying as male (2%); students in the schools in the Far Northeast region (2%); and English learners currently receiving services. (<1%).

“Form close relationships with students. Be present, don’t just be in the background. Be approachable. Revolutionize this district with the students.”

—

DPS School Leader
3.6% of students responding to this question recommended that Dr. Marrero put students first and support each student. These responses encouraged prioritizing students’ safety, feelings, happiness, desires and general welfare.

High school students and students not eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch were most likely to respond in this category (5%, 5%). Responses from elementary school students, students eligible for free- or reduced-priced lunch, and Multilingual learners currently receiving services were less likely to fall into this category (2%, 2%, 1%).

“I would say to listen to the students’ plight and put students first. While I recognize that there are a lot of pressures as Superintendent of a major education district, it would mean so much to me if the administration and Dr. Marrero did their best to consider the voices of students. Everyone is doing they’re best right now but what I truly hope is that real change, to improve the lives of all students will occur.”

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3.0% of students responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to be a kind and good person. These responses stressed the importance of being nice, kind, patient, open-minded and a good role model, especially when dealing with students.

Elementary school students responded in ways that were most likely to fall in this category (6%).
2.1% of students responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero focus on equity in DPS. These comments highlighted fairness and equity by continuing discussions and education about historically marginalized groups and enforcing rules for their safe inclusion in the community.

Black students and White (non-Hispanic) students’ responses were more likely to be in this category (4%, 4%). Latinx students’ responses were less likely to be in this category (1%).

“Pay attention to your students of color. FUND BLACK STUDENT ALLIANCES OR GROUPS FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR. Reach out to the students for help if you need it.”

11th grader
IN SOUTHEAST REGION
THINGS ARE GOING WELL

When asked to give advice, 1.8% of students responding to this question indicated that things are generally going well in DPS. These comments expressed that things were going well in the responding student’s school or in DPS as a whole, and/or that only minor changes are needed.

*Students in schools in the Southeast were more likely to respond in this category (5%). Responses from students in the Near Northeast and Southwest were less likely to be in this category (1%, <1%).

LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY

*My advice to Dr. Marrero is that he should make good, thoughtful decisions, make sure staff members, and even students, are aware of what’s going on, and lastly, just get to know the community and people he’s working with. Knowing your audience helps determine which way to approach certain things.”* — 10th grader in Northwest region

1.1% of students responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero listen to the community. These responses encouraged gathering feedback, ideas and opinions regularly from a variety of stakeholders.

*Responses from redesignated English learners were more likely to be in this category (3%). Responses from Multilingual learners currently receiving services were least likely to be in this category (<1%).

“DPS is one strong community that most of us have been part of since we were little kids. With time, we want to add better things, but we are really connected in many ways.” — 11th grader in Central region
WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR DR. MARRERO?

Family and Community Listening and Learning Events:

Families and other community members advised the superintendent on various issues, from addressing serious district issues to food and travel recommendations. The top two themes that emerged were community engagement and focus on equity:

- **ENGAGEMENT**: Participants encouraged the superintendent to get out of the administrative building in order to truly understand the Denver community’s opportunities and challenges. They advise him to:
  - Communicate and engage with families
  - Listen to students; they know what their needs are and have great ideas about solving problems
  - Listen to teachers; in particular, spend time with Brown and Black teachers to have a better understanding of the challenges they face
  - Visit every school to learn more about the great work that is being done and see areas that need to be improved

- **FOCUS ON EQUITY**: Participants advised the superintendent to continue equity work and expand the district’s efforts in this area. Specific examples that were mentioned include:
  - Acknowledge that a genuine focus on equity will likely entail changes to the ways the most historically privileged groups have experienced education in DPS.
  - Address systemic and institutional racism
  - Address the rise in Asian hate crimes
Other themes mentioned less frequently include: School-specific issues (car line, parking, air conditioning/heat, schedules, budgets, meals, class ratios, school closures) [6%], Human resource policies [6%], Listen to students [5%], Curriculum-related advice [5%], Listen to teachers [5%], Hire high-quality, caring teachers [2%], Improve school safety and security services (including drug abuse issues, gangs, and firearms) [2%], Improve mental health services [2%], Improve specials and extra curricular activities [2%], Do more to address bullying and violence [2%], Require teachers to communicate better with families [2%], and Improve services for students with special needs/students with disabilities [1%].
16.7% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to engage with communities and schools. Respondents advised Dr. Marrero to go to all schools to understand community, student and school needs. Families underscored the importance of learning and understanding Denver’s historical context and current conditions to serve students better.

Families self-identifying as White (non-Hispanic) were mostly likely to write about engaging with community and schools (21%), with families self-identifying as Black or who selected “Prefer not to answer” were least likely to mention this topic (13%, 12%).

I know that it may be difficult because there are many schools, but I would like you to take a little time to visit each and every one, to get to know the students and people of the school and they could let you know in person their concerns.”

“Yo se que quizá es difícil porque son muchas escuelas pero me gustaría que se tomara un poquito de tiempo para visitar todas y cada una de ellas, conocer a los alumnos y miembros de la escuela y ellos puedan hacerle saber en persona las inquietudes que tengan”.

Family of an ECE student
IN SOUTHWEST REGION
Translated from the original Spanish
FOCUS ON EQUITY/ FIGHT DISCRIMINATION

13.8% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to focus on equity and fight discrimination. Their advice on equity issues covered a wide range of topics, such as academic inequities, historical trauma caused by racist systems, continued marginalization of students and families of color, unequal funding, underrepresentation of students of color in Gifted and Talented programs, staff mistreatment of Latino and Spanish-speaking families, and inadequate supports for students with disabilities.

“Families taking the survey in English were more likely to write about focusing on equity and fighting discrimination (16%) than families taking the survey in a language other than English (7%).”

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND SUPPORTS

“Nothing comes easy so just be patient with the kids, parents, and teachers and all his hard work will pay off at the end of the day. Keep up the great work.”

— Family of a third grader

IN SOUTHWEST REGION

10.4% of families responding to this question used this opportunity for their appreciation of Dr. Marrero’s efforts thus far. Generally, the responses for the category expressed gratitude toward the superintendent for his “good” and “hard” work. Families also encouraged the superintendent to keep working hard for the students, families, and community members. Some comments reminded him to take care of the most vulnerable individuals in DPS.

“Families taking the survey in languages other than English were more likely to express appreciation for Dr. Marrero’s efforts thus far (16%) than families taking the survey in English (9%).”

Dr. Marrero and his leadership should mandate anti-racism training for ALL of DPS. Current approaches to racism are antiquated and from the viewpoint of the privileged majority. Students of color should feel as welcome as their white peers at their school, which is something that does not occur too frequently.”

—

Family of a third grader

IN NEAR NORTHEAST REGION
10.1% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to address issues with district and school leadership. Participants mentioned that there are problems with the current leadership at all levels of the DPS system. Most of the responses focused on an individual’s experience with a DPS team member, organization, department, or school.

For this theme, families’ frequency of mentioning this theme was statistically different by region, survey language, and self-identified race/ethnicity. Families from the Southeast and Near Northeast were more likely to mention this theme (15%, 13%) than parents in the Far Northeast (8%). Families taking the survey in English were more likely to mention this theme (12%) than families taking the survey in a language other than English (4%). Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) or selecting “Prefer not to answer” were more likely to respond in this category (14%, 14%) than were families identifying as Latinx or Black (7%, 7%).

“Look more into better principals and assistant principals. Borderline racist people do not belong in a diversified school.”

Family of a fifth grader
IN FAR NORTHEAST REGION
9.8% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to put students first. Respondents in this category reminded Dr. Marrero that although there are competing interests and political divisiveness, he must focus on student interests and needs above everything else. Many respondents expanded on this by advising on specific areas he needs to focus on, such as students’ academic and mental well-being, better funding for schools, supporting teachers so they can effectively teach students, and providing resources for students who need additional help.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language, and self-identified race/ethnicity).

LISTEN TO AND ENGAGE WITH FAMILIES

9.3% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to listen to families. Families advised the superintendent to listen more and ensure he hears from all families, even those who disagree with him, to get a feel for what families truly need. Respondents recommended that Dr. Marrero listen to families about specific issues families care about, such as bell schedules, school closures, and health and safety. The topic of school closure was mentioned more than any other topic, and families expressed a desire to be involved in these conversations.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language, and self-identified race/ethnicity).
CONTINUE COVID SAFETY MEASURES

8.7% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to continue COVID safety measures. Families praised the district for the safety measures put in place to protect students, staff, and families. However, many respondents indicated that there are areas for growth. While there were some complaints about safety measures (mainly mask use and vaccine mandates), the overwhelming majority of responses supported stricter policies to keep everyone safe. Some cited examples where safety rules are not being followed and advised the district to adhere to more stringent regulations and guidelines to keep students safe and avoid school closures.

For this theme, families’ frequency of mentioning this theme was statistically different by grade level, survey language, and self-identified race/ethnicity. Families of students in elementary school were more likely to mention COVID precautions (11%) than were families of students in high school (6%). Families taking the survey in English were more likely to mention this theme (10%) than families taking the survey in a language other than English (3%). Families identifying as “Prefer not to answer” were more likely to respond in this category (16%), with families self-identifying as Black less likely to answer in this category (5%).

“Please continue strong policies to protect kids from COVID-19. Please continue to communicate about what is going on in the district.”

Family of a ninth grader
IN CENTRAL REGION
6.8% of families responding to this question provided Dr. Marrero with words of general encouragement. General words of encouragement were varied, but the overall sentiment centered on sharing words that will give Dr. Marrero the strength to face the many challenges DPS is facing.

For this theme, there were no statistically significant differences in frequency of response between the subgroups analyzed (i.e., students’ grade level, school region, survey language, and self-identified race/ethnicity).

“Good luck, I wish the best but you have a lot of work in front of you and unfortunately not much support.”
— Family of a seventh grader in Northwest region

6.5% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to support teachers. Families expressed concern about the challenges many teachers face and advised the superintendent to increase overall support for teachers. Some specific areas of concern included teacher burnout, understaffing, pandemic-specific challenges and inadequate incentives to keep high-quality teachers in the district.

“Support the teachers. I think they are balancing so many demands and from everything I’ve seen and heard they are doing an impressive job.”
— Family of an ECE student in Southeast region

Families with students in the Northwest and Southeast were more likely to mention this theme (10%, 9%) than the Central and Far Northeast regions (4%, 2%). Families taking the survey in English were more likely to mention this theme (8%) than families taking the survey in a language other than English (2%).
6.5% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to communicate with families. Families advised Dr. Marrero and schools to communicate with families, especially about any decisions that affect students and families. Families also ask for the district to be more open and transparent in order to build trust. In the category “Listen to and Engage with Families,” responses focused on advising Dr. Marrero on how to continuously engage with families, especially before he makes any decisions. In the communication section, the responses focused on direct communication from teachers, schools and the district on things that directly affect their students such as their student’s academic progress, weather updates, or school-specific changes.

Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) were more likely to respond in this category (10%) than were families identifying as Latinx or Black (5%, 4%).

“Communication with parents is key to any student’s success during their academic career.”

Family of a sixth grader in Far Northeast Region
6.5% of families responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to promote academic success. Some families mentioned the long-term impacts of the pandemic on student learning and asked the superintendent for increases in resources and support for schools and teachers to help all students reach their academic potential.

Families from the Southeast and Near Northeast were more likely to mention this theme (10%, 10%) than parents in the Northwest or Southwest (4%, 3%). Families identifying as White (non-Hispanic) or who selected “Prefer not to answer” were more likely to respond in this category (9%, 13%) than were families identifying as Latinx or Black (5%, 3%).

“Equity should include bringing kids who are lagging up to grade level, and should ensure that kids who are ahead have the opportunity to keep learning. Gifted learners whose educational needs are not met are more likely to drop out of school or end up in prison. Gifted learners from underrepresented populations are more likely to not be identified and not have their needs met. Cluster based GT programs have been shown to best meet the needs of GT learners. Please do not cut GT cluster programs.”

Family of a third grader
IN NEAR NORTHEAST REGION
WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR DR. MARRERO?

Team DPS Listening and Learning Events:

During the listening and learning discussions, Team DPS members did not provide a lot of advice to the superintendent. The two areas in which employees gave advice include communicating with staff and doing a safety ride-along.

Less frequently mentioned themes include: Address teacher/staff burnout/workloads (3%), Fight for better pay for all staff (3%), Address central/school divide (3%), Retain flexible/remote work for central staff (3%), Support all employees (3%), Engage with families and the community, be visible/accessible/open (3%), Improve communication (general) (3%), Engage students (3%), Address special education (2%), prioritize student wellbeing (2%), Promote adult wellbeing (2%), Address COVID issues (e.g., safety, communication) (2%), Have central office staff support schools (2%), Increase teacher pay (2%), Fight for equitable school funding (1%), Ensure transparency (1%), and Fire/reorganize central office staff (1%).
12.3% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero take time to regularly visit and get to know the district and its schools. They indicated the need for him to visit every school and spend an extended amount of time there to really get to know what is going on, such as by shadowing a student and/or teacher for a full day.

School Leaders were more likely to mention this theme (27%). Operational Support staff were least likely to mention this theme (5%).

“Get to know the nuances of what is happening in the different school buildings. Each building has priorities and needs that are specific to their population.”

DPS program specialist
GENERAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

10.1% of Team DPS members responding to this question shared general words of encouragement with Dr. Marrero. In these comments, they often encouraged Dr. Marrero to take one day at a time and know that there will always be challenging situations and areas for improvement.

School-based Support Staff were more likely to mention this theme (17%). Teachers & SSPs were least likely to mention this theme (6%).

“Breathe. Breathe deep and remain grateful. Remember how impactful kindness and compassion is, and pursue the opportunity to love others.”

DPS afterschool staff

LISTEN TO TEACHERS

“Listen to your teachers. We know what is working and what isn’t. Trust our work, we care so much about our students’ futures.”

9.6% of Team DPS members responding to this question advised Dr. Marrero to listen to teachers. They also suggested that he spend time talking to teachers without administrators present, so teachers can freely express their perspectives.

Teachers & SSPs were most likely to mention this theme (16%).

DPS teacher
LISTEN TO STAFF

7.2% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero listen to staff and emphasize listening to more than just teachers and administrators, but also the other staff that serve our students.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.

“Listen to the guys on the bottom (custodians, paras, cso [campus security officers], food).”

—

DPS security
TEAM MEMBER

ADDRESS STAFF SHORTAGES

“Think about WHY teachers are fleeing, why few want to teach in DPS, why few want to sub in DPS...”

—

DPS teacher

4.6% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero immediately address the overwhelming staff shortages and also explore why those shortages exist, including workload and salaries.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.
PUT A FOCUS ON EQUITY

4.6% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero focus on equity. In these comments, they referenced inequities that they perceive in the district, including school choice, boundary lines, transportation, funding and resources. They encourage taking into account each individual’s combination of social identities (like gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, religion, etc.) rather than considering each identity separately.

School Leaders were most likely to provide advice on this theme (16%). All other employee role groups tended to give advice on this theme in approximately 3% of their responses.

“Remember your roots and everything you have been through to get to where you are, to be able to help students of color and the teachers of color too.”

“Recuerda tus raíces y todo lo pasaste para llegar donde estás para poder ayudar a los estudiantes de color y los/las maestros/as de color también”.

DPS teacher leader
Translated from the original Spanish

SUPPORT TEACHERS

“Continue to support teachers and find ways to ensure they have the supports and the time needed to do their job well.”

DPS teacher

4.2% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero support teachers with planning time, professional development, curriculum, teacher self-care, and classroom materials.

Teachers & SSPs were most likely to provide this kind of advice (8%).
PUT STUDENTS FIRST

3.9% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero put students first. In these comments, most responded that a student’s well being and academic success should be put above the initiatives, assessments and data that the district utilizes.

School-based Support staff and Teachers & SSPs were more likely to provide advice in this category (5%, 6%).

“Keep students first by protecting and advocating for students.”

—

DPS teacher leader

LISTEN TO SCHOOL LEADERS

“Take the time to hear from schools and school leaders. This is going to be the best way to really get a sense of what is going on in the district and what really should be the focus of his work moving forward.”

—

DPS principal

3.7% of Team DPS members responding to this question recommended that Dr. Marrero listen to school leaders, as the current situation in schools is very different from previous years.

School leaders were most likely to mention this theme (24%).
CONTINUE TO LISTEN AND ENGAGE

3.8% of Team DPS members responding to this question suggested that Dr. Marrero should continue to visit and have a presence in schools and the community. Respondents also asked that he continue to solicit and consider feedback from educators, families and the community.

There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency that this theme was mentioned between employees of different role groups.

“I like the way he is making his presence known in a personal way (visiting schools and work places; communicating with people directly, and so on). I think he should continue this practice so everyone feels like he “knows” them and he will listen to them.”

—

DPS front office/administrative staff
Day 101 and Beyond
After 100 days of listening, Dr. Marrero had collected mountains of data describing needs and opportunities for his superintendency. But he’d also developed an emotional connection with stakeholders who were willing to share their stories and their hopes. This report would be incomplete without his personal reflection on the Listening and Learning Tour.

In his own words

It was an amazing gift to hear from so many voices across Denver, and not just those who know how to navigate the system and get an appointment with me. Those are the voices that are always going to be heard, no matter what. With the Listening and Learning tour, I got to hear in depth from groups who aren’t often the loudest voices, like people experiencing homelessness and members of the LGBTQIA+ communities. There are still so many more I’d like to hear from, and I will by no means stop engaging just because the first 100 days are over.

I had some very profound moments during the tour. The things that have stuck most closely with me are things I never expected to hear, like painful stories of Native American students being tokenized— even incented to cut their hair! I heard about LGBTQIA+ educators leaving the district so they can have spousal benefits. These cases made me think “Where is the equity, the tolerance, the acceptance?”

There were things I expected to hear, before I arrived in Denver. I thought I’d hear a lot about charter schools and school choice. I thought I’d hear about school safety. But these things came up in my conversations much less than I expected. The difference between what gets covered in the media and what people actually care about was frankly, quite startling.
LISTEN AND LEARNING TOUR
Day 101 and Beyond

General Response Patterns
In meetings, less time was spent discussing what is working well and more time was spent discussing what can be improved. There’s likely a participation bias in which community members who are satisfied or somewhat satisfied with DPS were less motivated to attend the sessions. Survey responses were a little more balanced, with 5-10% more responses to the improvement question from families and staff, and 10% more responses to the “what’s going well” question from students.

In that same vein, most in-person responses to the last question on what advice participants have for him were a general request for him to solve the issues identified in the sessions rather than actual advice. Surveys tended to offer more disconnected advice, like general words of encouragement.

Other Notable Takeaways
Many topics that have dominated the political landscape in recent years were conspicuously absent or not rising to the top during this engagement. Some of these:

• Accountability systems at the school or educator level
• School choice
• Autonomous schools and portfolio strategies

Some unexpected topics that came up during the tour included:

• How we fund our schools
• School consolidation and/or closure
• Divisions between school governance types

Transition Team
Now that the Listening and Learning Tour is complete, Superintendent Marrero will begin to collaborate directly with community members and staff to plan for the future of DPS. The second phase of the transition begins with the Superintendent’s Transition Advisory Team, which is a diverse group of community members and DPS staff who are charged with creating recommendations that guide the development of our next multi-year strategic plan.

The recommendations from the Transition Team will build the foundation for the next phase of work, the Superintendent’s New Strategic Plan Advisory Team, which will directly support the development of a new multi-year strategic plan.

Continued Engagement
Dr. Marrero will continue to engage deeply and frequently with the community. He already has many school visits and community meetings on his calendar.
Student Survey Responses

The three Superintendent Listening & Learning Tour questions were asked on the “Your Voice/Tu Voz” Student Survey. This survey was sent to all students in third through 12th grade in district-managed schools. Three charter schools opted into the survey, out of sixty charter schools in the district. As a result, the student survey results and analysis can be thought of as being representative of students in district-run schools. We are not able to draw any conclusions from these results about how students in DPS charter schools may have answered these questions. The three charter schools opting in and participating in the survey were: Rocky Mountain Prep (RMP) Berkeley, RMP Creekside, and Denver Justice High School.

When comparing the demographics of students who were invited to take the survey with students who actually took the survey, White students were overrepresented in the survey responses, and Hispanic/Latinx students were underrepresented. In terms of region, students from the Near Northeast region were most overrepresented in the survey responses, with students in the Southwest most underrepresented.
Student Survey Sampling Methodology for Qualitative Analysis

In order to address this over- and under-representation in our qualitative analysis of the Superintendent Listening and Learning Tour questions, DPS analysts used a technique called stratified random sampling. Here, strata were defined by the combination of (a) the region of each student’s school and (b) students’ race/ethnicity. For the purposes of constructing a stratified random sample, the four smallest categories of student race/ethnicity (i.e., American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races), which together make up a total of 8.3% of the DPS student population, were combined into a single category. Over 1,000 non-blank responses to each of the Learning and Listening tour questions were randomly sampled from each or the 24 strata in order to construct samples for analysis that were representative of the student population in terms of the six district regions and the four race/ethnicity categories used for this survey analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening &amp; Learning Tour Question</th>
<th>Stakeholder Survey</th>
<th>Number of Comments included in Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is going well in DPS?</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What needs to be improved in DPS?</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What advice do you have for Dr. Marrero?</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1,085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Survey Responses

The three Superintendent Listening and Learning Tour questions were asked on the “Your Voice/Tu Voz” Family Survey. This survey received 9,052 responses, although not all families taking the survey responded to any or all of the Listening and Learning Tour questions. Because schools was higher than in the student survey, though charter schools are were still underrepresented in the family survey. Because families could access the survey through social media and other forms of sharing, charter families were able to access the survey even if their schools didn’t actively opt into the survey. This means that charter representation is much stronger in the family survey than in the student survey.
Families were asked to self-identify their race and ethnicity, presented with a "select all that apply" option which included: African American, Afro-Caribbean, or Black, Arab American or Middle Eastern, Asian American or East Asian (not South Asian), Caucasian, Euro-American, White, Hispanic American, Chicana/o/x, Latina/o/x, Indian American or South Asian, Alaska Native, American Indian, First Nations, Indigenous, Native, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Prefer not to answer, and Other. These were collapsed into the five categories (treated as mutually exclusive), in the graphic below.

Using this approach, there is some evidence that families self-identifying as white were overrepresented in the survey sample, with Black and Latinx families underrepresented.

Comparing the family survey respondents’ region of self-reported attended school to the DPS surveyed student population, we see similar (if less dramatic) evidence of overrepresentation in the least economically disadvantaged regions [Near Northeast and Southeast], with underrepresentation in the most economically disadvantaged regions [Far Northeast and Southwest].
Family Survey Sampling Methodology for Qualitative Analysis

The sampling strategy for the family survey followed a similar random stratified sampling approach as the student survey above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening &amp; Learning Tour Question</th>
<th>Stakeholder Survey</th>
<th>Number of Comments included in Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>What is going well in DPS?</td>
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<td>What needs to be improved in DPS?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What advice do you have for Dr. Marrero?</td>
<td>Family</td>
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Team DPS Survey Sampling Methodology for Qualitative Analysis

There were 2,449 non-blank responses to the Superintendent Listening and Learning Tour questions from the Team DPS survey. Some groups were overrepresented in their response rate (teachers and SSPs and central support staff), while other groups were underrepresented (especially operational and school-based support staff). Furthermore, about 5% of survey respondents replied with their job title, and not their role group as described in the survey. For the purposes of selecting a representative subsample of survey responses for analysis, some of those respondents who responded with job title instead of role group were randomly selected and manually re-coded. Given the over-/under-representation in the Team DPS survey response, the average overall frequencies for each theme to the three questions was estimated by using a weighted average of the within-group frequencies. The weight for each group was calculated by using the comprehensive Team DPS Employment Roster (e.g., Teachers & SSPs given a weighting of 46%, as below, in green).
### Team DPS Survey Sampling Methodology for Qualitative Analysis

#### Bar Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All Team DPS Employee Roster</th>
<th>Team DPS Survey, non-blank responses to Supt. L&amp;L questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers &amp; SSPs</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central office support staff</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based support staff</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational support staff</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leaders</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff (responded with job title and not role group during the survey)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>

### Listening & Learning Tour Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is going well in DPS?</td>
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<td>What needs to be improved in DPS?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What advice do you have for Dr. Marrero?</td>
<td>Team DPS</td>
<td>1,003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Margin of Error

The standard error of a proportion is $\sqrt{p(1-p)/n}$, where $n$ is the sample size, $p$ is the observed proportion. Applied to these data, where $n=1000$, $p=0.5$ (to provide the most conservative estimate of the standard error), the standard error of the proportion would be approximately 0.0158.

The margin of error where Type I error rate (alpha) = 0.10, the two-sided normal critical values = 1.6449. Therefore, for these data, an appropriate margin of error could be calculated to be $0.0158 \times 1.6449 \approx 0.0260$, or approximately 2.6%.