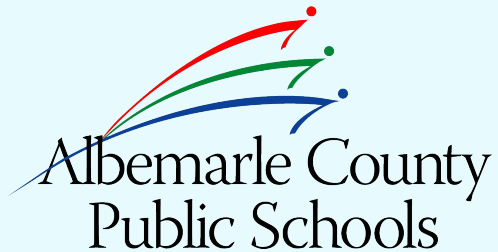


Student Senate

Empowering students to improve our schools



May 22nd, 2025

Agenda

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Vision & Mission

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Impact on Students and Schools



Strategic Plan: Learning for All

VISION

Our learners are engaged in authentic, challenging, and relevant learning experiences, becoming lifelong contributors and leaders in our dynamic and diverse society.

MISSION

Working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through high-quality teaching and learning for all. We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds.

We will know every student.

VALUES

Equity
Excellence
Family and Community
Wellness

GOALS



Thriving Students



Affirming and Empowering Communities



Equitable, Transformative Resources

What is the Student Senate?

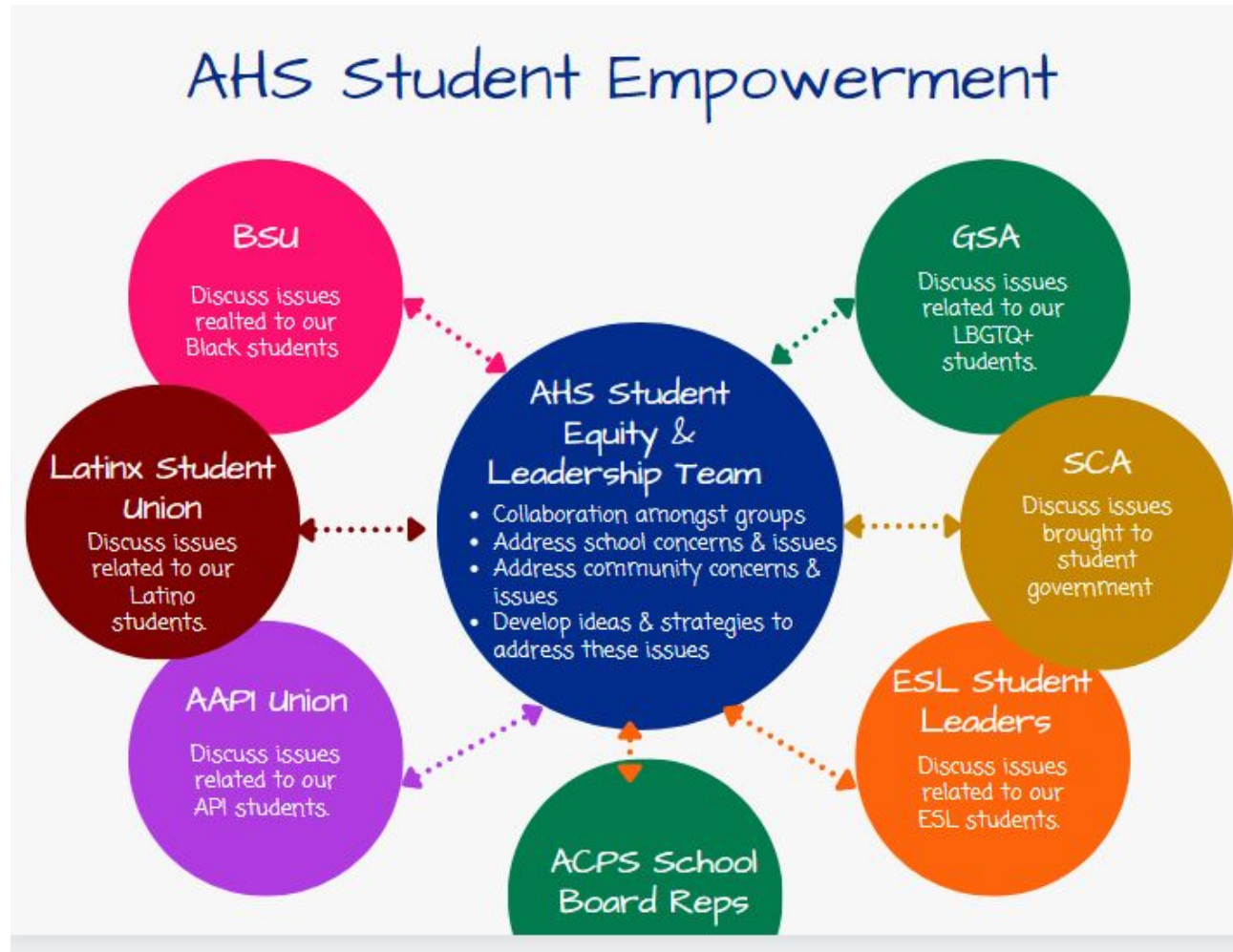


What is the Student Senate?

The Student Senate is a student-led leadership body designed to **amplify student voice**—particularly from historically marginalized groups—across Albemarle County Public Schools.

It unifies existing student voice initiatives into one cohesive structure, allowing students to advise on school policy, **promote equity, and develop leadership skills**. Through monthly affinity group meetings, leadership summits, and direct engagement with division leadership, the Senate empowers students to **shape decisions that impact their schools and communities**.

Student Senate Structure



The “Why?”



Need for Student Voice in Decisions

- ACPS Strategic Plan
- Bellwether Report
 - Recommendation 5
- Student Experience Survey Data (secondary schools)
 - Valuing School
 - Sense of Belonging



Student Senate was created to consolidate efforts

GOAL 2: AFFIRMING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

ACPS commits to developing a culturally-responsive environment that will respect and champion the diversity of life experiences of all stakeholders and supports the physical and mental health of our students, staff, and families so they are actively empowered to engage in our school community.

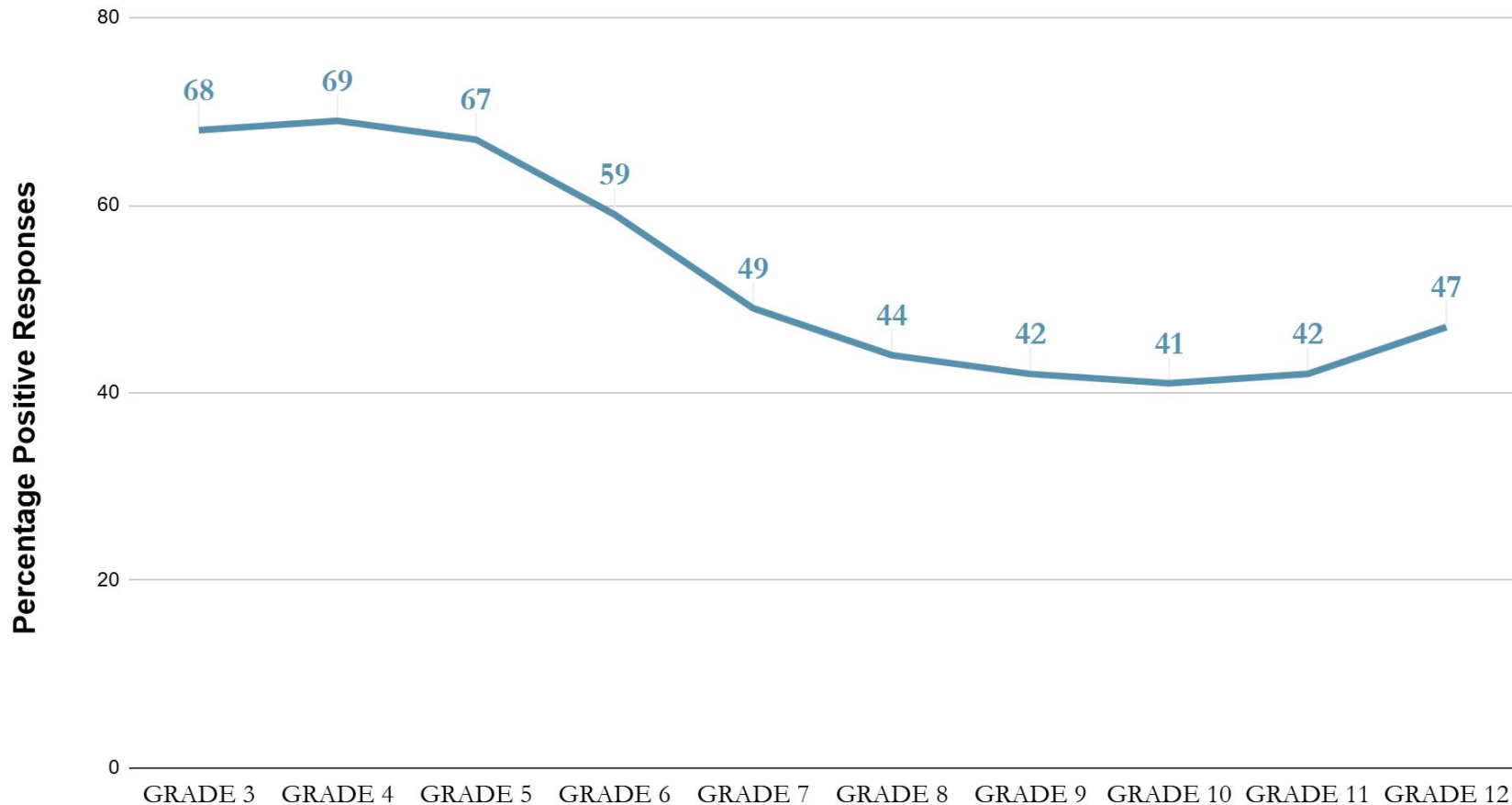
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Stakeholder Engagement

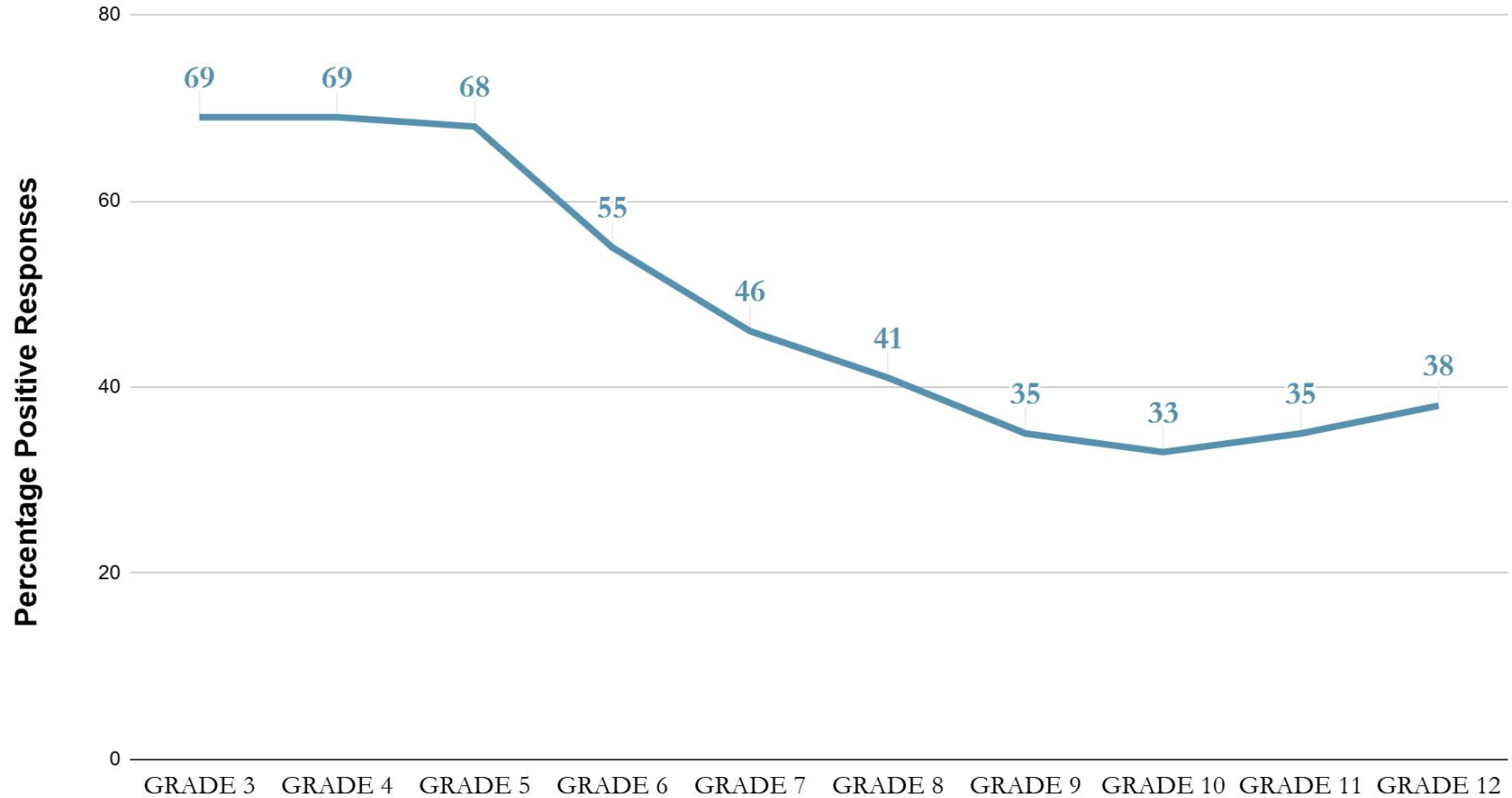
Internal and external stakeholders do not experience engagement in ways that meet their needs and center them as valued contributors to the solution.

Strengthen systems for input and feedback, and processes for communicating decisions at all levels to ensure full spectrum of stakeholders across ACPS are authentically engaged, including students, families, teachers, school leaders, central office staff, and community members.

Valuing of School: Fall 2024 ACPS Panorama Survey



Belonging in School: Fall 2024 ACPS Panorama Survey



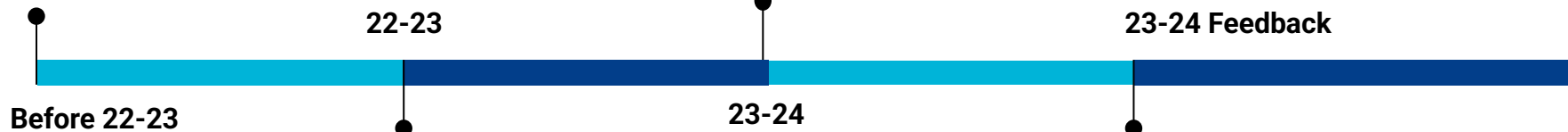
Timeline of Student Senate

Student Leadership has always been a priority.

- Student Government
- Summer Leadership Program
- Student School Board Representatives
- School Hosted Annual Student Leadership Retreats

Building Cross-County Community

- Fall & Spring Senate Meeting
- Supporting School Senates at MHS, WAHS & Community Lab
- Updates the Student School Board Representative Process
- Introduced Student Voice Fund



Pilot of SEAT @ AHS

- Elevate student voice around identity, belonging & school climate
- Supported by school-based equity team
- Students advocated for greater involvement in decision-making
- Became the model for expansion

Students informed changes.

- More opportunities to collaborate
- Funding support early in the year
- Connection with local leaders
- Leadership skill development
- Speaking directly with ACPS leaders

Where Are We Now?

Student Senate 2024-2025

School Level	District Level
<p><i>Objective:</i> Empower student leadership within school, work on school initiatives, & build strong community across differing affinity groups.</p> <p>Monthly meetings, organized by school leaders & sponsors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student leaders from affinity groups ● Administrator Engagement ● Food 	<p><i>Objectives:</i> Creating a space for leadership development, cross-county collaboration & community</p> <p>3 District-Wide Meetings, organized by OCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fall, Winter, Spring ● YPAR Workshop ● Leadership Panels ● Sessions with District Leadership ● Food & Transportation



STUDENT SENATE FALL CONFERENCE

"LEADERSHIP IN ACTION"

SPEAKERS



Brennan Gould
CEO of CACF



Susan Kruse
CEO Charlottesville Climate Collaborative



Harold Foley
Civil & Racial Justice Organizer, Legal Aid Justice Center



Frank Valdez & Katherine Flores
Youth Justice Organizer, Legal Aid Justice Center



Katherine Flores
Co-president of Central Americans for Empowerment, UVA

AGENDA

Morning Session (9:30)

- Welcome
- ACPS Director's Updates

Breakout Sessions (10:15)

- YPAR Leadership Lessons
- Leadership in Action Community Panel

Afternoon Session (12:15)

- Lunch
- Closing Remarks
- Cross-county Affinity Meetings



401 McIntire Rd
18 October 2025
9:30 am - 1:30 pm



The Black Student Experience in Academic Settings

- Problem: Students of color, specifically black students, feel uncomfortable or have the confidence to speak up
 - ↳ They aren't encouraged to pursue honors/hard classes and don't feel welcome in those spaces.
- Current Research:
 - ↳ High % of students of color drop out of PVEC/don't get a degree
 - ↳ "The Experience of Black and Brown Students in AP Courses": Dr. I's research project → 55% of Black students drop out of AP/Dual classes after freshman honors classes
 - ↳ increase
- Goal/Accomplishment: A program where high school students go into middle schools and instill confidence in young students, encourage them to challenge themselves, and share their experiences
 - ↳ A mini movie/documentary filled with the experiences of students → meant to relay that no one is alone and inspire hope.
 - ↳ Before and after surveys to determine the impact of the program
- Needs/Resources:
 - ↳ Support from community: teachers, school board, families
 - ↳ Transportation for students to the middle schools
 - ↳ Opportunity to speak with school board and at the Equity Conference to gain even more support
 - ↳ More research about honors classes/why students of color don't take honors

Love This!
Tina



Challenges & Next Steps

Students & sponsors have asked for:

- More time together
- Opportunities to connect with community leaders
- Richer supports at schools
- Easier & quicker project funding process
- Tools for building group membership, hosting successful events, & gathering feedback from peers

Challenges:

- Transportation
- Project funding

Based on student & sponsor feedback:

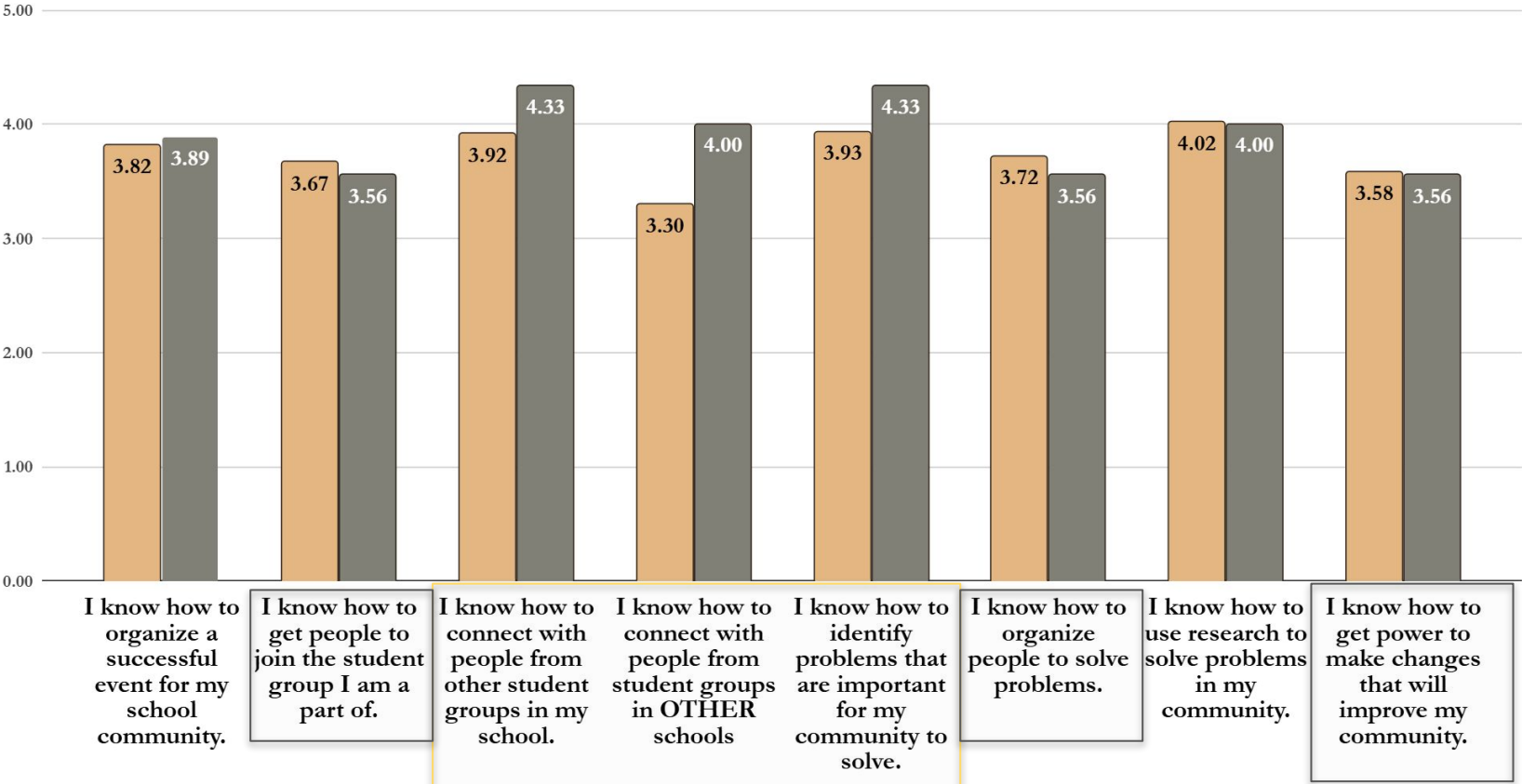
- Continue to host 3 countywide conferences & explore additional opportunities
- Continue to incorporate leadership panels, workshops, information session & collaboration time Senate meetings
- Better utilize SchoolLinks
- Build a toolkit and support structure for school groups
- Work with finance on funding solution

Impact on Students and Schools



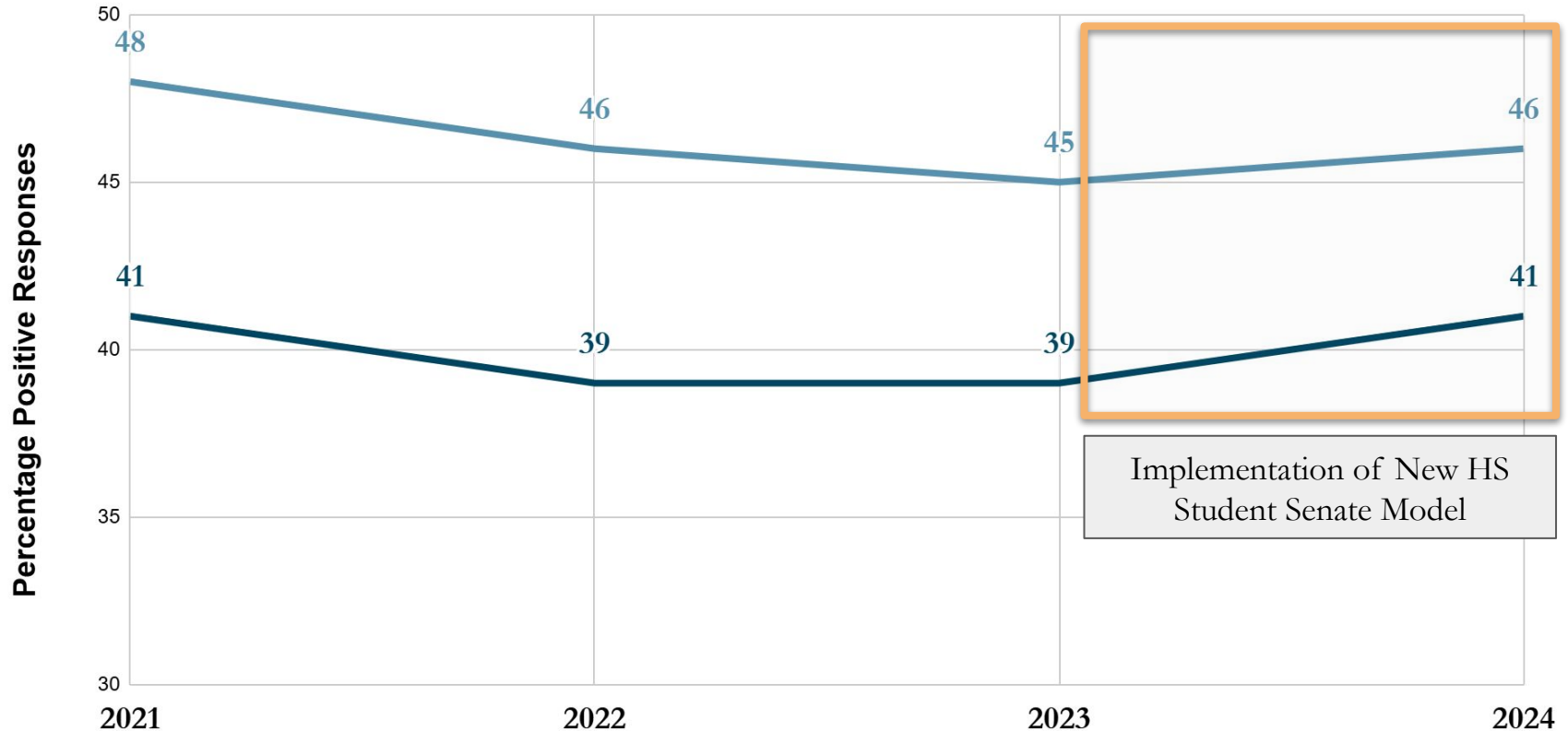
Student Senate Organizing Change Self-Efficacy Survey

Pre_survey Post_survey



Fall ACPS Panorama Survey

— ACPS Valuing of School — ACPS Belonging in School



Impact on Schools

- ▷ Examples of Projects
 - ▷ Communication with Families / Parent Portal / Remind
 - ▷ WAHS Better Together
 - ▷ Mental Health First Aid
 - ▷ Student Support for CRE Professional Learning
 - ▷ Revising the ACPS Student School Board Representation Policy
 - ▷ Bystander Awareness



From the ACPS Latinx Student Senate, SY2324

“One **barrier** for our families is **Powerschool and Parent Portal**. It is very hard for my family to understand how to use it, how grades work in the US education system, and how the system works here in general.”

-Student from WAHS

“Since I was in fourth grade, **I have felt alone in making education work for me**, not because my mom doesn’t want to help me, but because she doesn’t know how.”

-Student from MOHS

“A big part of the differences in achievement is the experience of **families**. They **need more connection** to school.”

-Student from AHS

Problem Identified → Solution Implemented

Language barriers to Parent Portal Access and Teacher Communication

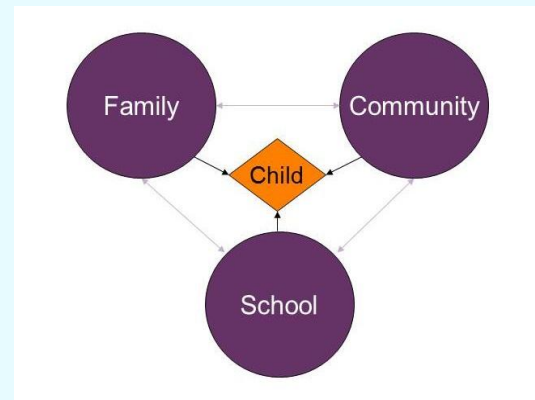
Multimedia, district-wide translation and interpretation of Parent Portal resources in five most common languages, adoption of Remind.

Technological support for Parent Portal Sign up

Learning Technology Integrator support for families at engagement events

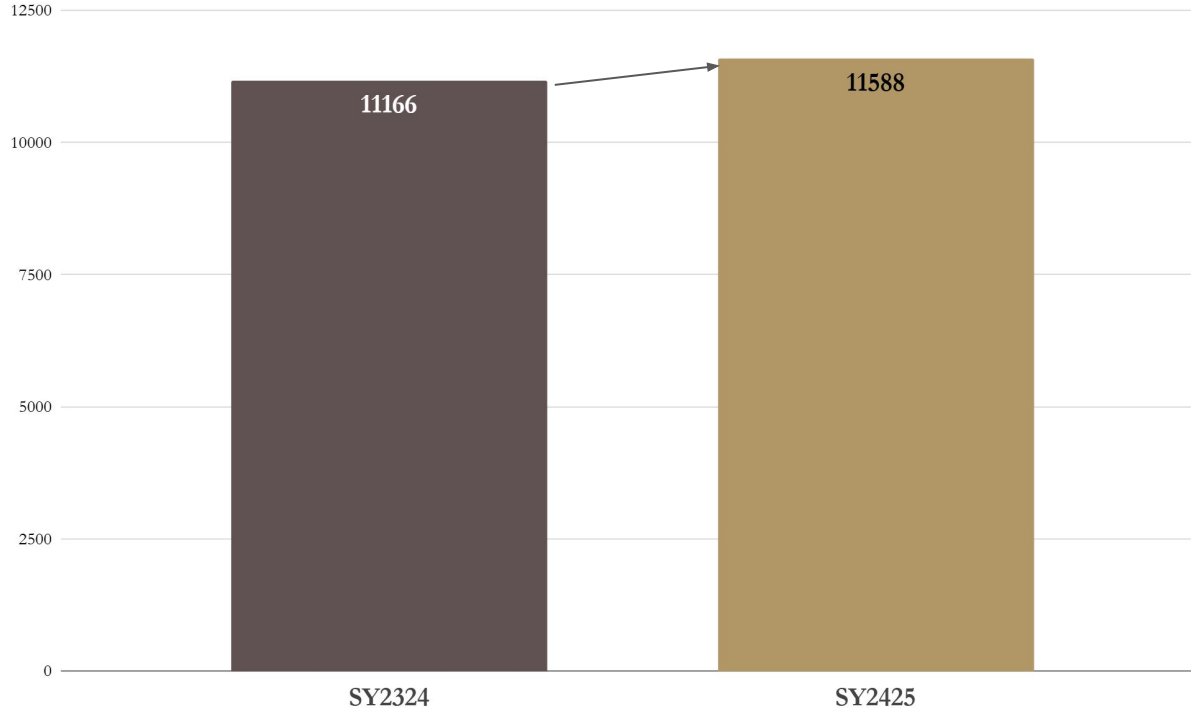
Need for paper-based solutions and increased awareness of paper opt-in

Updated caregiver registration form to include paper opt-in and communicated to school leaders about using this option



All Schools

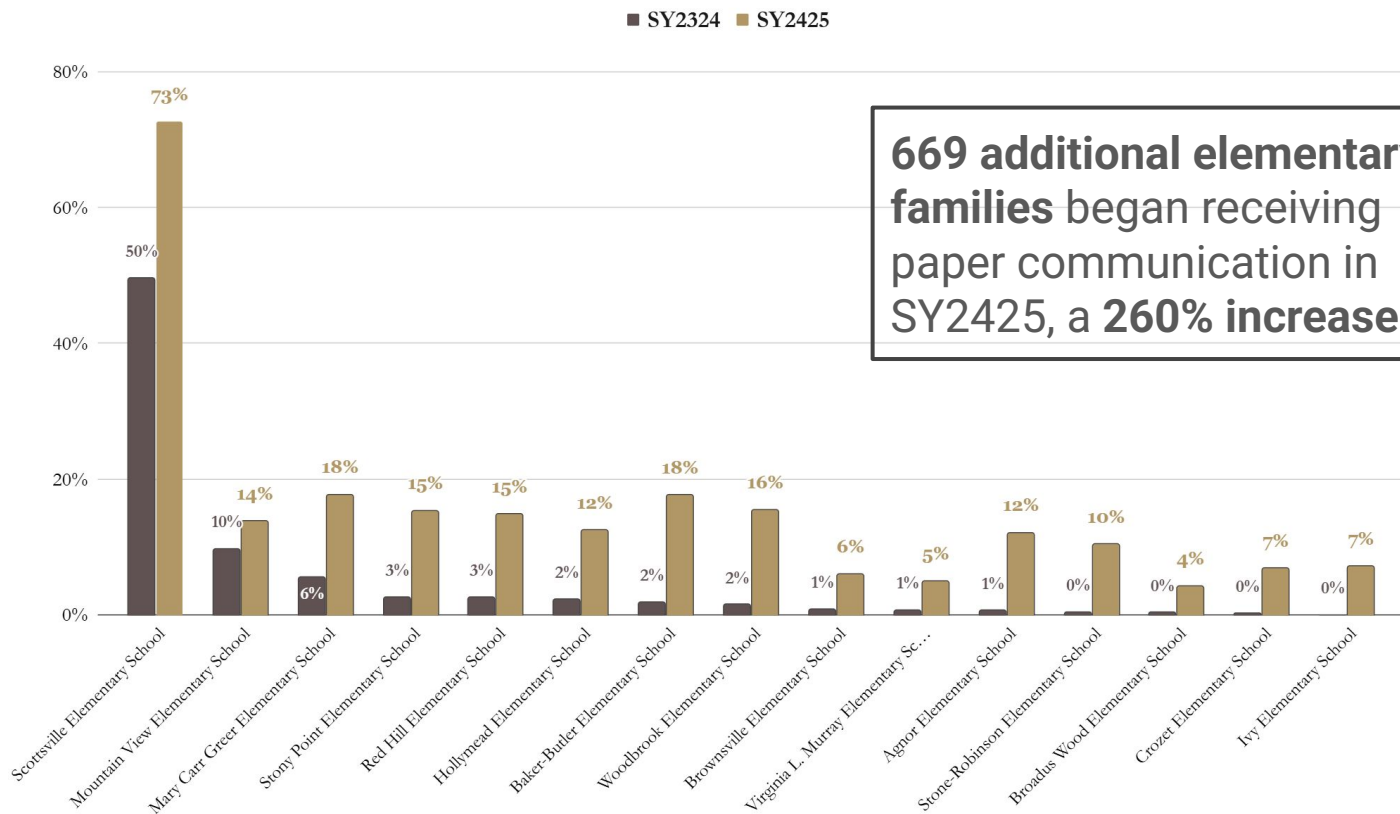
Increase in Parent Portal Accounts



**422 more
caregivers signed
up for a Parent
Portal account in
SY 2425.**

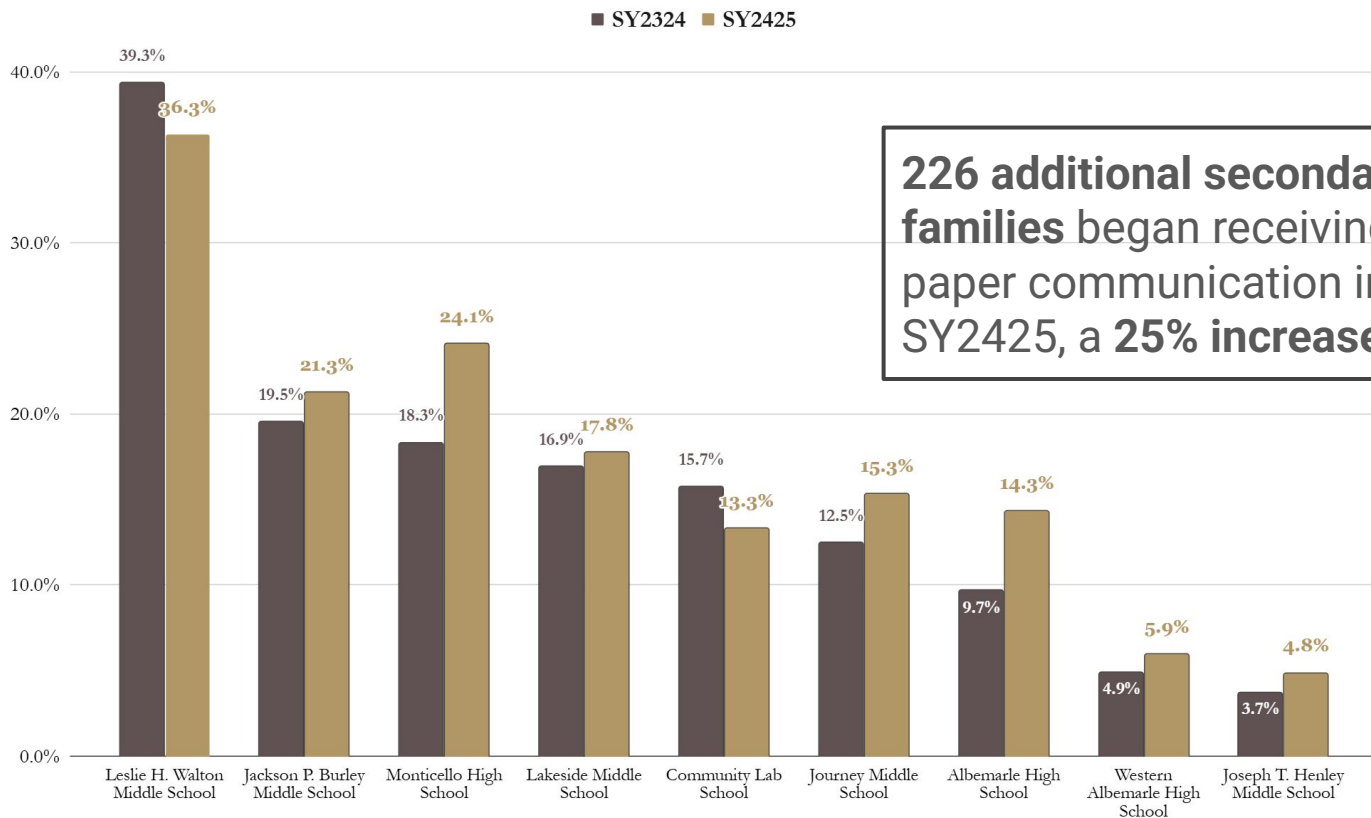
Elementary Schools

Increase in Paper Opt-in after Student Senate Campaign



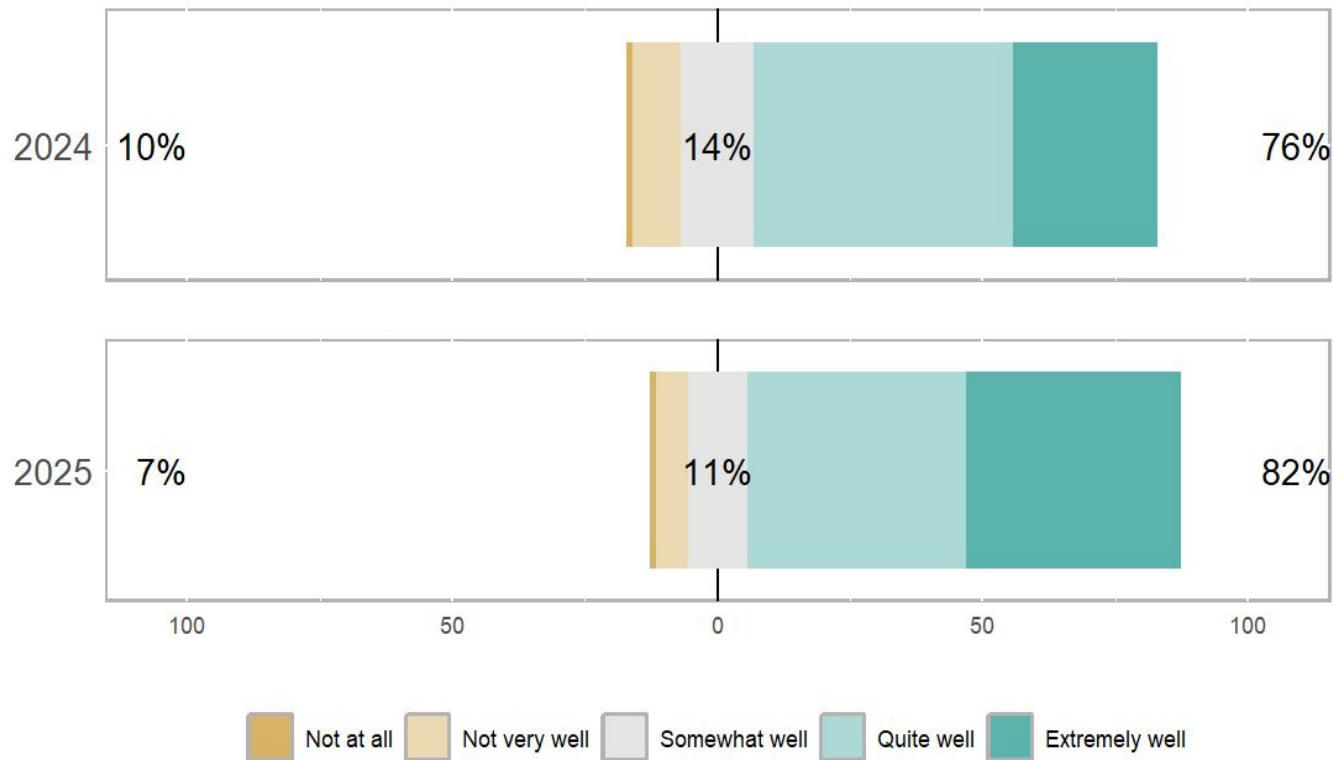
Secondary Schools

Increase in Paper Opt-in after Student Senate Campaign



ACPS Family Survey

How well does your student's school communicate with you in your native language?



Perceptions among caregivers requiring interpretation and translation showed **improvement in schools communicating across languages** this year.

Student Perspectives

Student Voice Roundtable Discussions

School Board Members divide into 2 groups: Group 1 into 235, Group 2 stay in Lane Auditorium. Student groups will rotate between Lane Auditorium and and Room 235 (15 minutes)

Students starting in Lane Auditorium

- Gabriel Guerra Serpas
- Margaret Lee
- Isabella Lhazie

Students starting in room 235

- Isabelle Wang
- Maxwell Keys, AHS Junior, Black Student Union & Men of Color, Honor and Ambition



Student Voice Sharing Session

- ▶ How did you get involved in the Student Senate?
- ▶ What do you value about your experience in the Student Senate?
- ▶ How has your experience in the Student Senate changed you?
- ▶ How have you seen the work of the Student Senate impact students at your school and across the division?

Board Share & Discussion

