



## **Strategic Planning**

### **Fall 2018 Climate Survey Baseline**

#### **Introduction**

In the fall of 2018, the Hunterdon Central Regional High School District administered a version of the [New Jersey School Climate Survey](#) to provide baseline measurements for our strategic planning project. We administered the survey to students, parents, and staff and mapped each question across our four strategic planning focus areas of Wellness, Powerful Learning, Active Partnerships, and Service. After an analysis of survey responses, we identified planning priorities in each focus area.

This report describes the survey project and the analysis methodology. We also discuss planning priorities that the analysis helped to uncover.

#### **Methodology**

The New Jersey Department of Education developed the School Climate Survey in cooperation with Rutgers University. Hunterdon Central has not used this survey in recent years. Examination of the survey revealed that its instruments would align well to our strategic planning focus areas. We noted, however, that the questions on the staff instrument would not be relevant to non-certificated staff. For that reason, we edited the staff survey to provide an additional instrument that would be more relevant to Hunterdon Central's non-certificated staff members.

The survey, as designed, provides summary measurements across domains identified by the New Jersey Department of Education. Rather than use those domains, we remapped each prompt to align to our strategic planning focus areas. (See Table 1.) Many prompts mapped across multiple focus areas.

We administered the survey through Google Forms. Survey responses were anonymous. We invited parents to complete the survey via email, collecting responses throughout the month of November. Students completed the survey on November 7. Certificated staff completed the survey during department meetings in the last days of November. Non-certificated staff received emailed invitations to take the survey during that same time period. See Table 2 for the number of responses.

*Table 1: Number of Survey Items Across Strategic Planning Focus Areas*

Survey Instrument	Wellness	Powerful Learning	Active Partnerships	Service
Parent	29	30	27	9
Student	42	26	18	11
Certificated Staff	40	30	38	16
Non-certificated Staff	40	30	38	16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>52</b>

*Table 2: Number of Responses*

Survey Instrument	# Responses
Parent	429
Student	2,588
Certificated Staff	243
Non-certificated Staff	70
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,330</b>

Analysis took place in December. Each survey prompt provided four choices (e.g., “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, “Strongly Disagree”). Respondents could skip any prompt about which they had no opinion. We coded all responses as: Strongly Positive (++). Positive (+-), Negative (-+), and Strongly Negative (--).

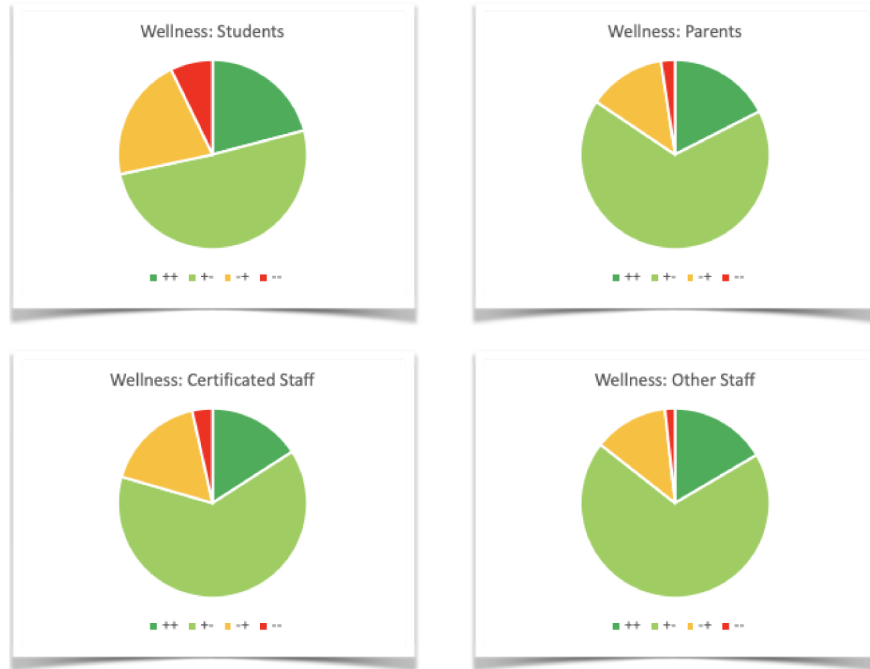
We then assigned points across this scale, with 4 being the most (++) and 1 being the least (--). We determined a mean score for each prompt in each instrument. We determined the mean score levels at which 25% and 50% of respondents were reacting negatively, and isolated the prompts at these levels to guide us in the development of planning priorities.

## Findings and Planning Priorities

Wellness

Figure 1 shows the percentage of positive (green) and negative (yellow and red) reactions across all four survey instruments.

Figure 1: Wellness Responses



The prompts receiving the most negative responses focused on several topics. Among these, a need to include students in the coordination and development of wellness initiatives became clear. Indeed, the prompt that received the most negative response from students asked them to consider whether or not they have a role in making decisions. We note that there are many wellness initiatives in progress across multiple clubs, classes, and other organizations. However, we worry that the lack of common goals and metrics is stunting efforts to bring impacts to scale. We believe that students can and should take the lead in that coordination, and that we can provide structures and support for them to lead.

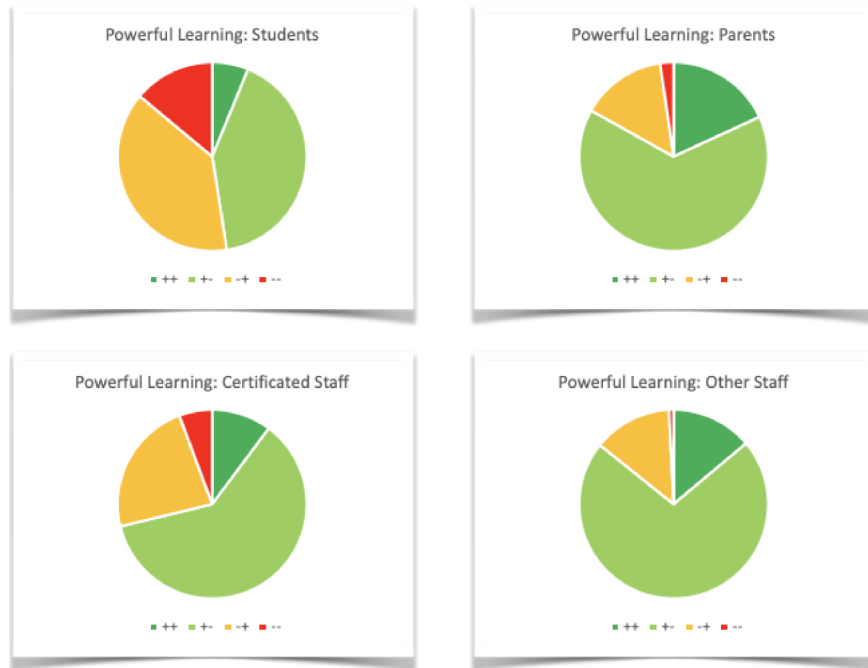
There is also a need to provide additional staff training and tools for de-escalation, self-regulation, and other elements of students' emotional readiness to learn. In expanding this expertise, we hope to foster a culture that is focused more squarely on relationships and is more attuned to stress, anxiety, and other issues among adolescents.

Finally, we see a need to provide more explicit transition activities as students make the jump from middle school to high school and as they leave high school. In our survey, time management surfaced as a central topic of these activities.

*Powerful Learning*

Figure 2 shows the percentage of positive (green) and negative (yellow and red) reactions across all four survey instruments.

*Figure 2: Powerful Learning Responses*



The student response in this focus area represented the largest negative response in the entire survey project. Many negative responses from students came from prompts asking them to consider relevance of and enjoyment in their studies. One of the prompts that elicited the most negative response from students, for example, asked them to consider whether or not their schoolwork was meaningful. For that reason, we see a great need for exploring deeper personalization of education so that schoolwork connects to student strengths and passions.

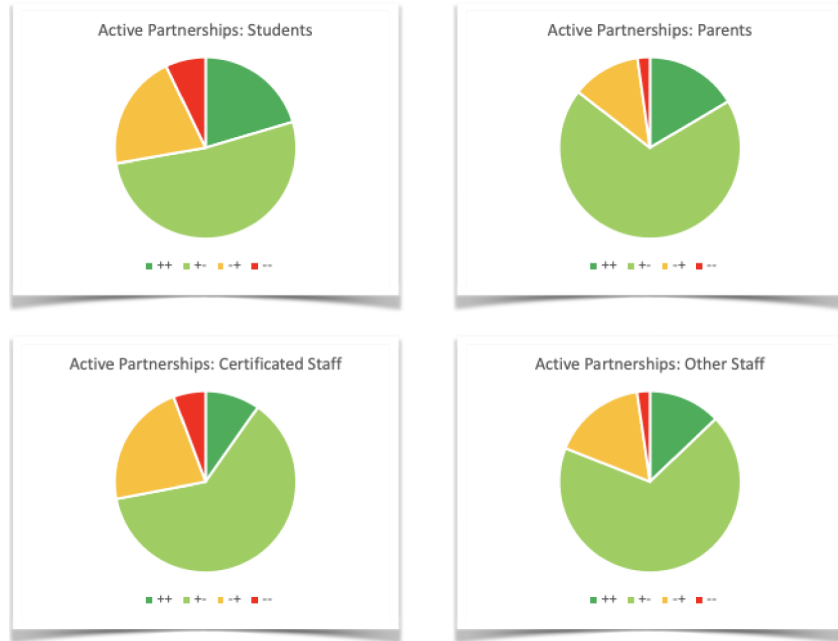
Negative response also spoke to a perceived lack of consistency across classes, and a lack of motivation among some students to do the best work possible. We therefore must examine our expectations for students, and ensure that they are consistent across classrooms and aligned to goals that engage students.

Negative response from certificated staff focused on time and support for collaborative work. In this, we see a need to provide more structure and space for this work, particularly the most innovative risk-taking that we hope to bring to scale across all classrooms.

*Active Partnerships*

Figure 3 shows the percentage of positive (green) and negative (yellow and red) reactions across all four survey instruments.

*Figure 3: Active Partnership Responses*



Negative responses across all four survey instruments focused primarily on communication and consultation. We see the need for broader outreach and invitation to ensure that parents, students, staff, and community-members have full opportunity to understand and provide feedback on initiatives and decisions.

With this comes the need to reinvent our communications platform, expanding further into presenting media and opportunities to connect across multiple channels and networks.

*Service*

Figure 4 shows the percentage of positive (green) and negative (yellow and red) reactions across all four survey instruments.

*Figure 4: Service Responses*



As in Wellness, responses signalled the desire for student-led activities designed to bring coordination and district-wide focus.

In addition, we note that organized service activities occur primarily through clubs and other extracurricular organizations. We see a need to provide more explicit service learning in classes and student organizations alike. That learning should be aligned to student strengths and interests, and teach the links to occupations to which students aspire.

As in Active Partnerships, the survey results reveal a need to expand invitation and outreach. Indeed, these two focus areas--Active Partnerships and Service--present many opportunities for work that fulfills goals in both, particularly those goals focused on connection and communication.