

EVIDENT CHANGE

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MILWAUKEE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE 2023-24 SURVEY RESULTS

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2023-24 Culture and Climate Report

Introduction

Evident Change conducts biennial school culture and climate surveys. These surveys provide a platform to understand the experience and perspective of the school community (including students, parents, teachers, staff, school leadership and board members) to determine areas of improvement. The survey highlights strengths and opportunities for growth based on five elements that support school improvement.

Survey Participation

Students, parents, staff, and school leaders were invited to participate in the survey (Table 1). Evident Change staff visited all schools to explain and proctor surveys to students in sixth through twelfth grades. Each school designated a survey coordinator to work with Evident Change staff to create a distribution schedule. Twice a week for three months, the school shared the survey link and/or QR code to families via text messages, newsletters, flyers, postcards, and emails. The school also set up a survey station equipped with Chromebooks for parents to participate in the survey onsite during parent-teacher conferences. Teachers, support staff, board members, and school leaders were invited to participate through email.

Five Indicators of Improvement

The School Climate and Culture survey is loosely based on the 5Essentials framework created by the Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago.¹ This survey measured school culture and climate by aligning multiple choice and open-ended questions with five indicators of school improvement.

- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction
- Collaborative Staff
- Effective Leadership
- Involved Families

Strong scores on the multiple-choice questions in these five areas lead to improved outcomes for all students, including improved attendance and larger test score gains. Research indicates that students enrolled in schools that are strong in at least three of these indicators were up to 10 times more likely to increase their math and reading scores than students in schools that are weak in three or more indicators.²

Survey Results

The comprehensive scores (Table 2) are based on climate and culture questions organized by the five indicators of school improvement. Schools are considered in a strong position for school improvement if the school community has a positive sentiment score of 60 or higher in three or more indicators of success.

¹ [5Essentials](#)

² [Supporting Schools](#)

TABLE 1				
RESPONSE RATE				
STUDENTS	CERTIFIED STAFF	SUPPORT STAFF	LEADERSHIP	PARENTS
76.0%	43.0%	6.6%	45.4%	43.1%

TABLE 2						
POSITIVE SENTIMENT SCORES						
INDICATOR OF IMPROVEMENT	SURVEY					OVERALL
	Certified Staff	Supportive Staff	Leadership	Parents	Students	
Supportive Environment	71.1	58.3	N/A	69.6	67.2	66.5
Ambitious Instruction	75.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	84.8	80.4
Collaborative Staff	70.8	73.9	N/A	70.4	N/A	71.7
Effective Leadership	53.6	84.7	86.4	86.0	87.0	79.5
Involved Families	60.3	95.0	N/A	N/A	N/A	77.6
Overall Rating	66.3	78.0	86.4	75.3	79.6	75.1

Note: N/A indicates that the questions related to the listed indicator did not apply to the specific subgroup.

Thematic Analysis

This report presents a thematic analysis of feedback collected from open-ended questions in the 2023-2024 Milwaukee Academy of Science School Culture and Climate survey. The analysis focuses on key indicators of school improvement, identifying common themes that emerged from the responses. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement within the school, based on the perspectives of various stakeholders. By examining these themes, the report seeks to inform efforts to enhance the overall school environment and support ongoing improvement initiatives.

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Parent Survey: Themes Identified

Supportive Environment: School Community

Positive Aspects:

- **Well-Rounded Education:** Parents appreciate the comprehensive approach to education at MAS, including opportunities for academic enrichment and exposure to different career fields.
- **Strong Faculty Relationships:** The staff is seen as supportive and protective, fostering a family-like atmosphere that contributes positively to students' development.
- **Community Engagement:** MAS includes parents in the educational process and creates a sense of community.

Challenges:

- **Limited Sports Options:** There is a desire for more sports opportunities for students.
- **Behavioral Issues and Safety Concerns:** Reports of disrespectful behavior by staff, including racial slurs and unprofessional conduct, and inadequate communication about incidents affecting students.
- **Busing Issues:** Complaints about the reliability and organization of the busing service, affecting student punctuality and attendance.

Recommendations:

- **Expand Extracurricular Programs:** Increase the variety of sports and other extracurricular activities available to students.
- **Enhance Monitoring and Accountability:** Implement stricter policies and monitoring to address and prevent unprofessional behavior by staff.
- **Improve Communication and Transportation:** Collaborate with the busing company to address punctuality and safety issues. Improve communication channels between the school and parents regarding incidents and student safety.

Supportive Environment: Quality of Facilities

Positive Aspects:

- **Clean and Welcoming Environment:** The school is generally perceived as clean and well-maintained, with a friendly atmosphere from the staff.
- **Positive Interactions:** Parents appreciate the courteousness of the staff and the overall environment of the school.

Challenges:

- **Facilities Maintenance:** Concerns have been raised regarding the cleanliness of the bathrooms, foyer, front desk area, and outdoor spaces, along with the need for improvements in food quality and parking facilities.
- **Lack of Technology and Play Areas:** There is a desire for improved technology options and play areas for younger students.

Recommendations:

- **Enhance Facilities Maintenance:** Improve the cleanliness of foyer, front desk area, and outdoor spaces, and consider regular maintenance to address these issues.
- **Upgrade Facilities and Amenities:** Invest in better parking solutions, enhanced play areas, and updated technology resources to improve the overall school environment.

Supportive Environment: School Safety

Positive Aspects:

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- **Prevention Methods:** The school is acknowledged for its efforts in safety prevention and prompt communication about safety issues.
- **Community Assurance:** Many parents feel reassured that their children are cared for and that their education is valued.

Challenges:

- **Need for Increased Security:** There is a call for enhanced security measures, including better supervision and separation of different school levels on buses.
- **Bullying and Safety Concerns:** Issues with bullying and the effectiveness of the school's response are highlighted, along with general dissatisfaction with current safety measures.

Recommendations:

- **Increase Security Measures:** Consider enhancing safety protocols specifically in the high school, including better management of student behavior and stricter enforcement of safety policies.
- **Address Bullying More Effectively:** Strengthen the bullying policy and ensure consistent enforcement to create a safer environment for all students.

Collaborative Teachers: Parent-Teacher Partnership

Positive Aspects:

- **Effective Communication:** Many parents value communication with teachers and appreciate the use of platforms like PowerSchool for updates.
- **Positive Teacher Interactions:** Several parents have expressed satisfaction with the respect and care provided by teachers.

Challenges:

- **Inconsistent Teacher Availability:** Concerns about teacher absences and the need for better support for students with special needs are reported.
- **Unprofessional Behavior:** Instances of unprofessional conduct by some teachers, including the use of inappropriate language, have been highlighted.

Recommendations:

- **Ensure Consistent Teacher Presence:** Address the issue of teacher absences and ensure that substitute teachers are properly vetted and trained.
- **Promote Professional Conduct:** Reinforce professional behavior standards for teachers and provide training on effective communication and handling of student needs.

Effective Leadership: Parent-Leadership Partnership

Positive Aspects:

- **Accessible Leadership:** Some parents appreciate the availability and responsiveness of certain leadership members, noting their engagement with the school community.

Challenges:

- **Communication Issues:** There are reports of difficulty in reaching school administrators and a lack of follow-up on important issues.
- **Visibility of Leadership:** Concerns about the visibility and responsiveness of the leadership team are noted.

Recommendations:

- **Improve Administrator Availability:** Enhance communication channels and ensure timely responses to parent concerns. Consider regular meetings or updates to keep parents informed.

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- Increase Leadership Visibility: Ensure that all leadership members are accessible and actively involved in addressing school-wide issues.

Likes:

- Positive relationships and community
- Academic and career preparation
- Curriculum and teaching
- Uniforms and structure
- Athletic and extracurricular programs
- Support of diverse needs

Dislikes:

- Lack of adequate social/emotional support
- Absence of on-site nurse
- Staffing challenges
- Poor communication
- Rude front desk staff
- Transportation issues
- Bullying and effective action against physical altercations are prominent
- Security and supervision
- Sports program: needs better management
- Homework and academic projects outside of school hours

Improvement Suggestions

- Resource Allocation- On site nurse, upgrading gym
- Community and Parent engagement: Desire for stronger community ties
- Staff and Program Enhancements: Improve staff professionalism
- Operational Efficiency: Improved communication between parents, along with improved front office organization
- Transportation Solutions: Bus system issues

Conclusion

The parent survey highlights both strengths and areas for improvement within the school community. Parents are generally pleased with the well-rounded education, strong faculty relationships, and community engagement that MAS provides. However, they have identified several challenges, including the need for more sports opportunities, improved communication, and enhanced safety measures. Concerns about the cleanliness and maintenance of facilities, the reliability of the busing service, and instances of unprofessional behavior by staff are also prominent. To address these challenges, the school should consider expanding extracurricular programs, improving facilities and technology, enhancing security protocols, and fostering better communication between parents and the school administration. Additionally, a focus on maintaining a supportive and respectful environment, both in terms of physical space and staff behavior, will be crucial in ensuring that the school continues to meet the needs of its students and their families. By implementing these recommendations, the school can build on its strengths and address the concerns raised, ultimately fostering a more positive and effective educational environment.

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Student Survey

Ambitious Instruction - Academic Personalism

Positive Aspects:

- Some teachers are actively engaged in students' progress and communicate with parents when necessary.
- A few teachers effectively address student needs and provide appropriate support.
- Students feel that certain teachers are doing a good job and are appreciative of their efforts.

Challenges:

- Inconsistent support from teachers; some do not effectively address students' needs or understand their perspectives.
- Frequent turnover of teachers disrupts continuity in learning.
- Reports of unfair grading practices and classroom management issues, including a specific complaint about grading based on behavior rather than academic performance.

Recommendations:

- Implement a system to ensure all teachers consistently support students and address their needs.
- Address and resolve specific complaints about grading practices through appropriate channels and training.
- Increase efforts to stabilize the teaching staff to reduce disruptions in students' learning experiences.

Supportive Environment - Peer Support for Academic Work

Positive Aspects:

- Some students are serious about their education and strive to make good grades.
- There is a recognition that all students have room for improvement and can grow.

Challenges:

- Many students lack motivation and focus on personal issues rather than academic work.
- Perceptions of the school's quality and food offerings contribute to a negative view of the school environment.
- A lack of recognition for students' achievements and motivational support affects overall student engagement.

Recommendations:

- Develop programs and incentives to boost student motivation and engagement in academics.
- Improve the quality of food and allow more flexibility regarding food policies to address student dissatisfaction.
- Implement strategies to recognize and celebrate student achievements to foster a more positive school culture.

Supportive Environment - Student-Teacher/Leadership Trust

Positive Aspects:

- Some students feel that the principals are understanding and approachable.
- There is a sense of trust with certain staff members who provide specific help when needed.

Challenges:

- Distrust towards some teachers and administrative staff, particularly due to perceived racism and favoritism.
- Several comments about a middle school teacher using a racial slur yet still employed hindering student/teacher trust.
- Reports of favoritism and lack of understanding from the principals and some teachers create feelings of unfair treatment.

Recommendations:

- Address issues of racism and favoritism by implementing sensitivity training and ensuring fair treatment of all students.

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- Implement a no tolerance policy on teacher usage of racial slurs.
- Strengthen relationships between students and leadership through increased communication and engagement efforts.
- Ensure that all staff members, including the principal, are consistent in their support and feedback to students.

Supportive Environment - Preparation for Life After High School

Positive Aspects:

- The school helps students plan and make choices regarding their future, particularly for college preparation.

Challenges:

- Perceived lack of practical life skills training and preparation for life outside of college.
- Some students feel that the focus on college preparation comes at the expense of other important life skills.

Recommendations:

- Introduce additional programs and classes that focus on practical life skills and career readiness beyond college preparation.
- Ensure that students are aware of and have access to resources that support various post-graduation paths.

Supportive Environment - Quality of Facilities

Positive Aspects:

- Some students feel that the cleanliness of the school is generally acceptable, though there is room for improvement.

Challenges:

- Poor conditions in bathrooms and dissatisfaction with the quality of food.
- Lack of facilities such as a field and track, and restrictions on personal items like phones and outside food.

Recommendations:

- Improve the cleanliness and maintenance of school facilities, particularly bathrooms.
- Consider expanding food options and revising policies to allow for outside food to improve student satisfaction.
- Explore a partnership for shared track and field facilities to enhance the overall school experience.

Ambitious Instruction - Academic Press

Positive Aspects:

- There are no specific positive aspects mentioned regarding academic press in the data.

Challenges:

- No detailed challenges were reported concerning academic press.

Recommendations:

- As no specific challenges or positive aspects were detailed, further investigation may be needed to address potential issues related to academic press. Ensuring a rigorous academic environment with appropriate support could be beneficial.

Likes

• Supportive Community and Environment:

- The sense of community and family-like atmosphere within the school is frequently appreciated. Many students value the long-term relationships they build with staff and peers.

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- The supportive nature of the staff and their efforts to listen to student feedback are seen positively. The opportunity to have their voices heard and the supportive nature of the staff contribute to a feeling of belonging and support.
- **Extracurricular and Academic Opportunities:**
 - Students enjoy the range of extracurricular activities, such as athletics, which include successful basketball, track, and football teams. These opportunities for involvement are highly valued.
 - Assemblies and field trips are appreciated for providing variety and a break from the routine. The history class and other educational opportunities are also noted as positive aspects of the school experience.

Dislikes

- **Racial Issues and Unfair Practices:**
 - Instances of racial slurs and perceived racism among staff are significant concerns. This issue affects students' sense of safety and trust in the school environment.
 - Unfair practices, such as discrepancies in grading and favoritism, contribute to dissatisfaction and a feeling of inequity.
- **Facilities and Policies:**
 - Complaints about the quality of school facilities, such as messy bathrooms and uncomfortable auditorium chairs, impact the daily school experience negatively.
 - Restrictions on food, technology use, and other policies are seen as overly strict and contribute to frustration among students.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Food Quality:** Multiple suggestions focus on improving the quality of school lunches, highlighting dissatisfaction with the current food offerings.
- **Cleanliness and Comfort:** There is a recurring concern about the cleanliness of bathrooms and the condition of auditorium seats. Improved cleaning regimens and upgrades to these facilities are recommended.
- **Allowing Personal Items:** Students have suggested allowing the use of headphones and other personal items, indicating a desire for more flexibility in school policies.
- **Reducing Strictness:** Many students feel that some rules are overly strict and should be relaxed. This includes suggestions to cut down on unnecessary rules and to avoid penalizing minor infractions.
- **Uniform and Behavior Standards:** There are calls for a more balanced approach to uniform policies and behavior expectations. Students believe that stricter enforcement of basic standards and improved consistency could prevent future problems.
- **Teacher and Counseling Support:** Recommendations include hiring more teachers who are genuinely invested in students' success and providing additional counseling support for personal issues. This indicates a need for more empathetic and supportive staff members.
- **Academic Support:** Suggestions to be more open about special education classes and tutoring, especially for younger students, point to a desire for greater transparency and support in academic interventions.
- **Technology Use:** Students suggest updating technology policies, which allows students to use technology for recreational purposes at certain times, is recommended to balance educational and personal needs.

Conclusion

The student survey reveals a complex picture of the school's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. On the positive side, students appreciate the supportive community, including the family-like atmosphere and the

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commitment of some teachers to their students' success. Extracurricular activities and opportunities, such as sports and field trips, also receive favorable feedback. However, significant challenges persist, notably concerning racial issues, inconsistent support from teachers, and dissatisfaction with school facilities and policies. The recurring themes in students' suggestions for improvement highlight a strong desire for better food quality, improved cleanliness and comfort in facilities, more flexible policies regarding personal items and technology use, and enhanced support for both academic and personal needs. Addressing these issues through targeted actions—such as improving facilities, revising strict rules, increasing support resources, and fostering a more inclusive and fair environment—will be crucial in enhancing the overall school experience and addressing students' concerns.

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Certified Staff Survey

Ambitious Instruction - Quality of Student Discussion

Positive Aspects:

- **Active Listening:** Students demonstrate active listening and can build on peers' ideas when prompted.
- **Interest in Academics:** A few students exhibit a strong interest in academics and participate actively in discussions.

Challenges:

- **Behavior Management:** Managing student behavior is a significant challenge, impacting the ability to have meaningful discussions.
- **Lack of Participation:** Many students are disengaged and do not find ungraded discussions valuable, leading to limited participation.
- **Distractions:** Hidden cell phones and non-academic conversations detract from discussions.
- **Confidence Issues:** Students show uncertainty and a fear of being wrong, affecting their willingness to engage in discussions.
- **Inconsistent Participation:** Participation varies greatly depending on the classroom environment and the teacher's approach.

Recommendations:

- **Behavior Management Training:** Provide additional professional development on managing classroom behavior to create a conducive environment for discussions.
- **Engagement Strategies:** Develop strategies to increase student buy-in for discussions, such as integrating more interactive and relevant topics.
- **Confidence Building:** Implement activities and strategies to build student confidence in sharing their ideas without fear of being wrong.
- **Feedback Modeling:** Offer more professional development focused on how to model and provide effective feedback to enhance discussions.

Effective Leadership - Instructional Leadership

Positive Aspects:

- **Supportive Administration:** Some leadership teams and academic coaches are noted for their supportiveness and helpfulness.
- **Improved Performance:** Some educators feel that instructional coaching has significantly improved their teaching performance.

Challenges:

- **Disorganization:** Leadership appears disorganized, with mixed messages and a lack of visibility in classrooms.
- **Ineffective Coaching:** Coaching often feels like a formality rather than substantive support.
- **Limited Safe Spaces:** There is a lack of safe spaces for teachers to reflect on their practice and set goals.

Recommendations:

- **Enhanced Coaching:** Ensure that coaching is meaningful and provides actionable feedback rather than just checking off boxes.
- **Leadership Visibility:** Increase the visibility of principals and other leadership figures in classrooms and school activities to better understand and support teachers.
- **Safe Reflection Spaces:** Create designated opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and receive validation and support for their goals.

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Effective Leadership - Program Coherence

Positive Aspects:

- **Program Support:** In some areas, there is strong support for and follow-through with programs and curricula.

Challenges:

- **Inconsistency:** There is a lack of consistency in implementing and following through with programs and standards across different grade levels and schools.
- **Misalignment:** Discipline strategies and communication between administration and parents are inconsistent.
- **Limited Accountability:** There is a need for better accountability and follow-through with programs and curricular standards.

Recommendations:

- **Consistent Implementation:** Develop and enforce consistent standards and procedures across all grade levels and schools.
- **Improve Communication:** Enhance communication between administration, parents, and teachers regarding discipline and program expectations.
- **Increased Accountability:** Increase accountability measures to ensure adherence to program standards and curricula.

Effective Leadership: Teacher Influence

Positive Aspects:

- **Curriculum Freedom:** Teachers appreciate having the freedom to influence their classroom content and instructional materials.
- **Library Influence:** Some teachers have significant influence over resources like library books, positively impacting their classroom.

Challenges:

- **Limited Influence:** Teachers feel they have limited influence over broader curriculum decisions and instructional materials.
- **Administrative Disconnect:** There is a lack of alignment between what teachers are doing and the curriculum expectations set by administration.

Recommendations:

- **Increased Teacher Input:** Involve teachers more in curriculum planning and decision-making processes to leverage their expertise.
- **Clear Curriculum Guidelines:** Provide clear guidelines and support for aligning classroom instruction with broader curriculum goals.

Effective Leadership: Teacher-Leadership Trust

Positive Aspects:

- **Positive Relationships:** Some teachers have strong, supportive relationships with their administration.
- **Support from Administration:** Some leadership teams are seen as approachable and helpful.

Challenges:

- **Trust Issues:** There is a significant disconnect and lack of trust between some teachers and leadership, impacting overall morale.
- **Inconsistent Treatment:** Variability in how teachers are treated by leadership, including issues of bias and favoritism.

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Recommendations:

- **Build Trust:** Foster trust between leadership and teachers through transparent communication and consistent, fair treatment.
- **Professional Development:** Provide leadership with training on building positive relationships and managing biases.

Collaborative Teachers: Collaborative Practices

Positive Aspects:

- **Supportive Instructional Coaches:** Instructional coaches are seen as helpful and supportive.
- **Personal Initiative:** Some teachers actively seek collaboration and professional growth opportunities.

Challenges:

- **Limited Collaboration Time:** There is insufficient time allocated for meaningful collaborative practices among teachers.
- **Professional Development Quality:** Professional development sessions are often seen as ineffective and lacking in practical application.

Recommendations:

- **Allocate More Time:** Provide more time for teachers to collaborate and plan effectively, especially across intervention, special education, and regular education.
- **Improve PD Quality:** Revamp professional development to be more data-informed, actionable, and relevant to teachers' needs.

Collaborative Teachers: Collective Responsibility

Positive Aspects:

- **Hardworking Staff:** Teachers are committed and work hard despite challenges, showing dedication to their students.

Challenges:

- **Lack of Accountability:** There is a perceived lack of accountability and consistency in collective responsibilities among staff.
- **Communication Gaps:** Poor communication about expectations and school events affects collective responsibility.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen Accountability:** Develop clear mechanisms for holding all staff accountable for collective responsibilities.
- **Improve Communication:** Enhance communication channels to ensure all staff are informed and aligned with school expectations.

Supportive Environment: Professional Development

Positive Aspects:

- **Support from Peers:** There is appreciation for peer support and some positive experiences with professional development.

Challenges:

- **Ineffective PD:** Professional development sessions are often criticized for lacking clear expectations, action steps, and practical application.
- **Insufficient Time:** Teachers feel there is not enough time allocated for professional development and planning.

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Recommendations:

- **Revise PD Structure:** Redesign professional development to be more relevant, actionable, and data-informed.
- **Allocate Planning Time:** Increase time for teachers to collaborate and plan effectively, both during and outside of professional development sessions.

Involved Families: Family Involvement and Community Ties

Positive Aspects:

- **Supportive Social Workers:** Social workers play a role in connecting families to the school.

Challenges:

- **Lack of Effective Communication:** There is a perception that family involvement and communication are not well-aligned with the school's mission.
- **Limited Parent Engagement:** Some parents are not engaged or responsive to communication from the school.

Recommendations:

- **Enhance Family Communication:** Develop more effective strategies for engaging with families and ensuring they understand academic expectations.
- **Increase Parent Involvement:** Implement initiatives to better involve parents in their children's education and school activities.

Likes

- **Extracurricular Opportunities and Resources:**
 - The diversity of extracurricular activities such as the Stem Lab, Recording Studio, Bike Repair Shop, and various sports is highly appreciated. This variety provides students with rich learning experiences beyond the classroom.
 - The addition of resources like Notes 4 Notes, BGC, and I Have a Dream offers additional support to students and their families.
- **Supportive Environment:**
 - The supportive and nurturing relationships between staff and students are frequently mentioned. Staff members are noted for their dedication and willingness to go the extra mile to ensure student success.
 - There is a strong sense of community and camaraderie among staff, which contributes to a positive work environment. The K-12 structure fosters ongoing relationships with students and families, enhancing continuity of support.
- **Organizational Strengths:**
 - The school's organization and adaptability to special needs and situations are seen as strengths. The freedom given to teachers to tailor their approaches to best meet student needs is valued.
- **Professional and Personal Fulfillment:**
 - Many staff members find satisfaction in the professional development opportunities and the ability to make a tangible difference in students' lives. The supportive culture among colleagues and the positive impact on the community are also highlighted.

Dislikes

- **Communication and Consistency Issues:**

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- There are concerns about disorganization and inconsistent communication, which lead to mixed messages and difficulties in upholding expectations. The lack of cohesive planning across different academies also affects overall effectiveness.
- **Professional Development and Support:**
 - The frequency and content of professional development sessions are criticized for being overwhelming and repetitive. There is a need for better pacing and more relevant feedback.
 - Teachers often feel unsupported when dealing with student behavior issues, with inconsistent consequences and inadequate support from the culture team or administration.
- **Infrastructure and Resources:**
 - Physical aspects such as the lack of windows in the building and high student absenteeism are noted as areas of concern. Additionally, there is a shortage of paraprofessional support and SPED staff, which impacts the effectiveness of classroom management and student support.
- **Accountability and Leadership:**
 - Issues with accountability, both for staff and students, are prevalent. Inconsistent leadership and a lack of clear standards for operation and behavior management are problematic. The high turnover of staff and perceived disrespect among teachers also contribute to a negative atmosphere.

Improvement Suggestions

- **Enhancing Professional Development:**
 - Develop a more strategic approach to professional development, including longer intervals between sessions and incorporating feedback to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Consider visiting well-functioning charter schools for ideas on improving practices.
- **Improving Communication and Cohesion:**
 - Implement more effective communication strategies to ensure consistent messaging across all levels. Establish clearer standards and protocols for leadership transitions and behavior management.
- **Addressing Resource and Support Needs:**
 - Increase the number of teaching assistants and special education staff to better support classroom needs. Explore ways to improve the physical environment and resources available to staff and students.
- **Strengthening Accountability and Leadership:**
 - Focus on building a more cohesive and experienced leadership team that upholds high expectations and provides adequate support. Ensure that all staff and stakeholders are held accountable for their roles in student achievement and school improvement.
- **Balancing Work and Well-being:**
 - Reevaluate staff leave policies to provide more flexibility for mental health and personal needs. Consider adding more TA support and providing additional resources to manage student behavior effectively.

Conclusion

While the certified staff highlight several commendable strengths, such as a diverse range of extracurricular opportunities, supportive staff relationships, and an adaptable organizational structure, there are notable areas for improvement. The challenges identified—ranging from communication issues and inconsistent professional development to gaps in behavior management and resource allocation—underscore the need for a more cohesive and strategic approach. By addressing these challenges through targeted professional development, enhanced

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communication, and a focus on increasing accountability, the school can better support both students and staff. Implementing recommendations such as improving engagement strategies, providing additional support for teachers, and fostering a more cohesive leadership team will be crucial in creating a more effective and supportive educational environment. Overall, a commitment to refining these aspects will help ensure that the school continues to build on its positive attributes while addressing areas needing attention.

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Support Staff Survey

Collaborative Teachers - Collective Responsibility

Data Availability:

- No data found.

Collaborative Teachers - School Commitment

Data Availability:

- No data found.

Supportive Environment - Teacher-Support Staff Trust

Positive Aspects:

- The school environment is described as being "more like FAMILY," indicating a strong sense of camaraderie and trust among teachers and support staff. This suggests a close-knit, supportive atmosphere that enhances collaboration.

Challenges:

- No data implying challenges.

Recommendations:

- Conduct more in-depth surveys or discussions to explore specific aspects of teacher-support staff relationships that contribute to or detract from this "family" feeling. This could help identify areas for targeted improvements while maintaining the positive atmosphere.

Supportive Environment: College Enrollment/Career Development

- **Interest in Support for Attaining a Teacher License:** The data indicates a general lack of enthusiasm or clarity regarding support for attaining a teacher license among the surveyed individuals. Notably, no respondents have expressed a definitive interest ("Yes") in receiving support for obtaining a teaching license. This suggests that the current support options may not be perceived as necessary or relevant by the majority of support staff.

Effective Leadership - Program Coherence

Data Availability:

- No data found.

Effective Leadership - Leadership-Staff Trust

Data Availability:

- No data found.

Involved Families - Parent Involvement

Positive Aspects:

- There is a recognition of the need for cultural education and sensitivity training, particularly for white teachers. This reflects an awareness of the diverse backgrounds of students and a desire to improve understanding and interactions between teachers and students.

Challenges:

- The current lack of cultural education and sensitivity programs may be hindering the effectiveness of teacher-student interactions, particularly in understanding and responding to the behaviors of students from different cultural backgrounds.

Recommendations:

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- Implement a comprehensive cultural education and sensitivity program tailored to the specific needs of the school's diverse population. This program should include training for teachers on cultural awareness, understanding the struggles faced by students from different backgrounds, and strategies for building more empathetic and supportive relationships with students.

Likes

Key Themes:

- **Supportive Environment:** There is a strong appreciation for the support provided to both staff and families. The sense of support extends to the scholars, who feel positively impacted by the school and often return to visit, demonstrating lasting connections.
- **Workplace Atmosphere:** The ability to get along well with coworkers, along with the family-like atmosphere, contributes to a positive and collaborative work environment. The feeling of being in a "safe place to work" is also highly valued.
- **Leadership and Empowerment:** The school's leadership is well-regarded, with support staff members feeling that they can approach supervisors when needed. There is a sense of trust and empowerment among the staff, which enhances job satisfaction and autonomy.

Dislikes

Key Themes:

- **Communication Issues:** Miscommunication and the lack of sharing necessary information are significant concerns. These issues can create confusion and hinder the efficiency of operations within the school.
- **Inconsistent Expectations:** Specifically in the high school setting, there are concerns about inconsistent expectations, which may lead to confusion and frustration among both staff and students.

Suggestions for Improvement

Key Themes:

- **Expansion:** One suggestion is to open more locations, which could broaden the school's reach and impact on the community.
- **Improved Communication:** Enhancing communication within the school is a recurring suggestion. Addressing miscommunication and ensuring that necessary information is consistently shared would likely improve overall efficiency and satisfaction.
- **Accountability:** There is a call for increased accountability, particularly in ensuring that adults are holding students accountable. This could help in maintaining consistency and discipline across the school environment.

Conclusion

The support staff survey reveals a generally positive environment at the school, characterized by a strong sense of camaraderie and trust among staff, as well as effective leadership and a supportive atmosphere that is appreciated by both staff and students. However, challenges such as communication issues, inconsistent expectations, and the lack of cultural education programs need to be addressed. To build on the existing strengths and address the areas of concern, it is recommended to enhance communication channels, implement comprehensive cultural sensitivity training, and consider expanding the school's presence. Additionally, increasing accountability measures can help maintain consistency and improve the overall school environment. These steps will contribute to further strengthening the positive aspects of the school while effectively tackling the identified challenges.

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Board/Leadership Survey

Expertise Needs for New Board Members

Themes Identified:

- **Education:** There is a need for board members with expertise in education. This suggests a focus on enhancing educational strategies and outcomes within the school.
- **Engagement and Advisory Roles:** The board seeks members who are not only engaged but also capable of offering advice and expertise to address the school's issues effectively. This indicates a desire for proactive and solution-oriented involvement.
- **Fundraising:** Expertise in fundraising is highlighted as a critical need. This reflects a focus on improving financial resources and support for the school.
- **Strategic Planning:** The need for skills in strategic planning is noted, suggesting a focus on long-term vision and goal setting for the school.
- **Human Development and Leadership:** There is a need for expertise in human development, leadership development, college/career pathways, and student/family engagement. This points to a comprehensive approach to enhancing both personal and academic growth for students and staff.
- **Legal and Financial Expertise:** Skills in legal and financial areas are also mentioned, indicating a need for guidance in compliance, risk management, and financial oversight.
- **Diverse Connections:** The board values candidates with ties to higher education, community organizations, businesses, and philanthropic entities to bring diverse perspectives and resources.

Effectiveness of School's Leadership and Board

Themes Identified:

- **Engaged and Effective Leadership:** The school's leadership is praised for being engaged and effective, particularly highlighting the outstanding performance of CEO Mr. McHenry and the dedicated Board of Directors. This reflects a positive view of the current leadership and their impact on the school.
- **Improvement in Facilities and Student Outcomes:** There is recognition of significant improvements in the school's facilities and student outcomes over the past decade. This indicates successful long-term planning and execution.
- **Positive Growth Prospects:** The potential for improved academic outcomes and post-secondary successes is noted, contingent on successful fundraising and growth planning. This points to optimism about the school's future.
- **Challenges in Board Engagement:** While the board is effective, there is an acknowledgment of challenges in engaging all board members fully. This reflects a need for greater involvement from all members.
- **Visibility and Response Challenges:** There is a suggestion for more visibility for school administration roles, which may help in improving responses to surveys and other feedback mechanisms.
- **Empowerment and Culture:** The school is recognized as a beacon of leadership and culture, particularly in supporting economically disadvantaged families and ensuring that no student is left behind.

Conclusion

The Leadership/Board survey highlights the need for new board members with a broad range of expertise, including education, strategic planning, human development, fundraising, and legal/financial matters. The board values engaged and solution-oriented individuals with diverse connections. The current leadership is praised for its effectiveness and the positive impact on the school, with some room for improvement in board engagement and administrative visibility.

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Overall, the school is viewed positively for its leadership, growth prospects, and commitment to supporting students and families.

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Key Insights and Recommendations

The thematic analysis of the 2023-2024 Milwaukee Academy of Science School Culture and Climate survey provides a comprehensive overview of the school's strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement as perceived by various stakeholders. While the school is commended for its supportive community, strong faculty relationships, diverse extracurricular opportunities, and effective leadership, there are several critical areas needing attention. Key challenges include communication issues, inconsistent support and professional development for staff, behavioral management concerns, and the need for improved facilities and resources. Additionally, students and parents have expressed a desire for better food quality, enhanced safety measures, and more inclusive policies.

To address these challenges, the school should focus on enhancing communication channels, increasing accountability, expanding extracurricular programs, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for both students and staff. By implementing targeted professional development, improving facilities, and ensuring that leadership remains engaged and visible, the school can continue to build on its strengths while effectively addressing the areas of concern. A commitment to these improvements will be crucial in creating a more positive, effective, and equitable educational environment that meets the needs of all members of the school community.