



Midland Public Schools
Inspiring Excellence

MPS Strategic Planning Final Environmental Scan Report External Snapshot & Stakeholder Feedback Analysis January 2026

*Lee Ann Keller Rouse, CEO and Chief Strategy Consultant
Michele Toyras, COO and Senior Consultant
Tamara McGovern, CFO and Chief Data Strategist*



Prepared by
OMNI TECH
STRATEGIC SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	Page 3
Executive Summary and Key Findings	Page 4
<u>APPENDIX</u>	Page 11
Student Dataset	Page 18
Section 1: Student Survey Results	Page 19
Section 2: Student Focus Groups & Videos	Page 30
Community and Parent Dataset	Page 40
Section 1: Community Survey	Page 42
Section 2: Community Focus Groups/Interviews	Page 48
Employee/Union Dataset	Page 61
Section 1: Employee Survey	Page 63
Section 2: Employee Focus Groups	Page 69



Acknowledgements

Strategic planning is only meaningful when it reflects the voices of the people it serves, and this work would not be possible without the time, insight, and honest feedback from our entire community.

Thank
You!

- To **students and families**—thank you for sharing your experiences and aspirations.
- To **teachers, staff, and school leaders**—thank you for collecting and sharing feedback, and your thoughtful engagement throughout this process.
- To **community members, partners and leaders**—thank you for helping us understand the broader needs of the community we serve.
- To the **Planning Team** for your time, analysis, thoughtful debate, and commitment to moving this forward.
- To the **members of the Board**—thank you for your leadership, your guidance, and your dedication to ensuring that every decision truly supports student success.

Thank you for your partnership and for your belief in what can be achieved together.

Executive Summary & Methodology

Introduction

In Fall 2025, Midland Public Schools (MPS) contracted with Omni Tech to create a strategic plan for the district. As part of the strategic planning process, consultants engaged with students, parents, staff, and community members to gather meaningful input into future priorities for the district. The feedback was collected through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and community forums to ensure that the strategy encompasses a broad representation of priorities. The following summary highlights the methodology and key themes collected from this data. This will guide decision-making and help align goals with the needs and aspirations of the broader school community. By incorporating voices from all stakeholder groups, the aim is to create a strategic plan that meets the needs of all stakeholders.

Methodology

To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process, input was gathered from a wide range of stakeholders using multiple methods:

- **Surveys:** Distributed to students, staff, and community members to capture broad perspectives on priorities, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Focus Groups:** Conducted with students, parents, staff, and community members to allow for deeper discussion and exploration of key themes.
- **Individual Interviews:** Held with key community stakeholders and board members to gain insight into strategic issues, partnerships, and long-term vision.
- **Student Videos:** Created by students explaining their vision of the “dream school” or changes they would like to see.

This mixed-method approach provided a broad range of feedback opportunities, ensuring that the strategic plan reflects the voices and needs of all groups within the MPS community.

Overall Findings

Many questions were asked stakeholders, with the overall number of questions dependent upon the collection method and length of engagement. There was a high degree of consistency in how stakeholders answered questions, and many stakeholders repeated the same themes/answers, even when asked different questions. The following is a high-level summary of themes common to ALL stakeholders.

Major SOAR Themes (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)

STRENGTHS

- Highly dedicated, collaborative staff that form strong relationships and connections with students, helping to create a welcoming culture and student-centered environments
- The breadth and depth of academic offerings and extra-curricular opportunities (including AP, IB, STEM, arts, athletics, and numerous clubs/activities) which contribute to well-rounded and prepared students
- Effective communication systems and active parent and community involvement through PTOs and volunteer efforts, which help reinforce connection and engagement across the district
- A school system with a strong reputation and high achievement scores; seen as an asset to enhance attraction and growth in the community. A sense of pride for the community
- Financial discipline and a stable cash position

Executive Summary, cont.

Major SOAR Themes (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results), cont.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Strengthen Student Experience, Wellbeing, and Daily Balance**

- Create a healthier daily cadence with manageable homework, balanced schedules, and time for academic support
- Improve school climate with a more inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment
- Address behavioral and mental-health needs; improve consistency in expectations across classrooms and schools
- Enhance food quality, safety, and overall student comfort

- **Equitable Access and Achievement Gaps**

- Ensure consistent access to programs, supports, enrichment, and technology across all schools
- Expand early learning supports and address readiness gaps
- Strengthen literacy, elementary foundations, and middle-school performance; close achievement gaps
- Focus on stronger interventions, and equitable access to tutoring, after-school supports, and holistic services

- **Extracurricular Access and Alignment With Student Interests**

- Broaden inclusive, interest-based extracurricular opportunities across all ages
- Expand participation-based sports, creative clubs, STEM clubs, esports, identity-based groups, and service activities
- Increase supports so all students can engage equitably

- **Modern, Future-Ready Learning Environments and Facilities**

- Address aging buildings, inconsistent conditions, and the need for long-term, transparent facility planning
- Improve space, layout, natural light, safety upgrades, and specialized instructional spaces (labs, CTE, STEM, arts)
- Modernize secondary schools; planning and communication on options
- Ensure equitable facility quality across the district and align buildings with future academic pathways
- Continue updating elementary spaces as part of long-range planning

- **Purposeful and Responsible Use of Technology**

- Expand student opportunities to use technology and AI for problem-solving and future-readiness
- Ensure ethical, age-appropriate, and balanced use of technology (address screen use for younger students)
- Provide consistent access to devices, digital tools, and emerging technologies across all schools

- **Relevant, Engaging, Future-Ready Learning Pathways**

- Grow offerings in CTE, STEM, technical fields, real-world life skills, world languages, cultural studies, arts, and advanced academics
- Increase flexible course options, student agency, and experiential learning such as internships
- Ensure pathways are coherent, clearly communicated, and aligned to future careers, community expectations, and modern skill needs—including ethical use of AI

Executive Summary, cont.

Major SOAR Themes, cont.

OPPORTUNITIES, cont.

- **Deepen Community Engagement and Partnerships**
 - Build stronger partnerships with families, community leaders, local businesses, and nonprofits
 - Increase volunteering, feedback mechanisms, and collaborative problem-solving
 - Position schools as central community hubs that build identity and belonging
 - Expand community-based learning, internships, and shared use of school spaces
- **Improve Communication, Transparency, and Trust**
 - Strengthen internal and external communication; standardize and modernize communication practices across the district and community
 - Provide more transparent decision-making, clearer rationale, and better long-term planning communication
 - Create meaningful feedback loops showing how stakeholder input influences decisions
- **Build Organizational Capacity and Long-Term Sustainability**
 - Enhance staff recruitment, retention, competitiveness and mental health/well-being supports
 - Align financial planning, staffing, and strategic goals for long-term sustainability
 - Promote innovation in teaching and learning across the system

ASPIRATIONS/VISION

- A vibrant, well-rounded school experience with rich extracurricular, leadership, arts, and skilled-trades opportunities as essential to a “destination district”
- Whole-child experience and strong relationships: belonging, safety, wellbeing, and supportive relationships that are foundational to a successful school experience
- Engaging, relevant, and empowering learning: learning that is hands-on, real-world, future-focused, and gives students more choice, agency, and personalized pathways
- Modern, future-ready learning environments and facilities: well-maintained, flexible facilities that match modern instructional needs and reflect district pride
- Multiple pathways to postsecondary success: students prepared for college, careers, trades, and civic life through rigorous academics, applied learning, and coherent, clearly communicated pathways
- Equity, consistency, and excellence for all students: a district that closes gaps, sets high expectations, and ensures fair access to opportunities, programs, and high-quality experiences
- Deep community connection and shared identity: MPS is a community hub, strengthened by partnerships with businesses and organizations, with robust communication, civic engagement, and a shared pride in the district

Executive Summary, cont.

Major SOAR Themes, cont.

RESULTS

- A broader definition of student success: metrics that extend beyond test scores to include student engagement, wellbeing, belonging, and readiness for life after graduation
- Postsecondary and career outcomes: graduation outcomes, postsecondary enrollment, career credentials, and long-term alumni success
- Academic growth, not just achievement: standardized test scores in addition to growth-focused measures that present a more complete academic picture
- Equity and access: equitable access to programs as well as transparent, timely reporting that builds trust and supports improvement
- Supportive school and community climate: teacher/staff satisfaction, support indicators, and metrics that capture the quality and visibility of community partnerships



Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities

Specific Feedback Mechanisms and Touchpoints



Student Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Strengths: What Students Like Best

Relationships, especially friends and favorite teachers, are the strongest positive anchors in students' school experience. Teachers and connection are core strengths of MPS, with academic rigor and choice playing a key role in the classroom and extracurricular activities.



Opportunities: Changes to Make School Better

Students primarily want a healthier daily cadence (time, homework, exams), a friendly and inclusive climate, better food/facilities/tech and safety, richer and more flexible course options, and broader, well-supported access to clubs and sports.



Opportunities: Subject/Topics to Learn More About

Students want more real-world life skills, expanded CTE, STEM and technical courses, diverse language and cultural studies, creative arts opportunities, and advanced academic topics.



Opportunities: Making School More Enjoyable

Students want school to be less stressful and more enjoyable through better balance, engaging learning environments, upgraded facilities, and an inclusive, respectful culture. They also asked for more time during the school day for homework support and greater consistency across schools and classrooms.

Student Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Opportunities: Infrastructure

Students want more space and better layout, improved athletic and recreational facilities, more comfortable environments with natural light, practical safety and storage upgrades, and modernized specialized spaces.



Opportunities: Technology

Students expressed a strong desire for expanded opportunities to use technology for problem-solving, with particular emphasis on the responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI). They want to be prepared for future careers and voiced concern about falling behind in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.



Opportunities: Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular preferences varied by grade level. Elementary students favored play-based sports and creative or STEM-focused clubs, while middle and high school students prioritized inclusive, participation-based sports and clubs centered on gaming and esports, identity or interest-based groups, and service activities.



Aspirations: Ideal or Dream School

Students defined a “dream school” less by academics and more by supportive relationships, engaging learning, and a positive daily experience. Inclusion, belonging, and safety mattered across all grades, with older students placing greater emphasis on modern facilities and school culture. Students have a vision for more choice and agency in curriculum and daily life.

Community Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Strengths

Community members consistently highlight strong relationships with teachers and staff, noting a welcoming culture and student-centered environments. They value the breadth of academic offerings, including AP, IB, STEM, arts, athletics, and numerous extracurricular activities which they see as contributing to well-rounded and prepared students. Families also appreciate effective communication systems and active parent involvement through PTOs and volunteer efforts, which help reinforce connection and engagement across the district. Community leaders/businesses appreciate having a school system with a strong reputation as an asset to enhance attraction and growth.



Opportunities: Student Learning and Equitable Access

Stakeholders prioritize equitable access to programs and opportunities across all schools, so students have comparable experiences regardless of building, including consistent access to technology and emerging tools such as AI. They also call for consistent academic expectations paired with strong student supports to address achievement gaps (e.g., literacy). Parents express strong interest in smaller class sizes and improved behavioral/mental-health resources.



Opportunities: Technology

Community members want intentional, ethical, and age-appropriate use of technology and AI to enhance learning, strengthen critical thinking, and support real-world application without replacing foundational skills or human relationships. Elementary school parents are concerned with maintaining the right balance of “screens”, focusing on using technology with purposeful intent.

Community Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Opportunities: Community Engagement

Parents and community members want a higher level of engagement with MPS and stronger alignment between schools and the community. They cite the desire for more volunteer opportunities and ability to provide helpful feedback. Community leaders want to have a strong partnership with MPS and work together on problem solving across the community and within MPS.



Opportunities: Clear and Consistent Communication

Stakeholders emphasize the need for clearer, more transparent decision-making and better communication practices to build trust and ensure community members feel informed and included.



Opportunities: Facilities and Infrastructure

The community identifies aging facilities, inconsistent building conditions, and the need for long-term, transparent planning as future opportunities. They want safe, modern, and well-maintained facilities guided by a clear and transparent long-term plan.



Aspirations

Community members want modern, well-maintained, future-ready facilities that provide a sense of pride and align with the strong reputation MPS holds. They want MPS to provide coherent and clearly communicated pathways that prepare students for college, careers, trades, and life beyond high school. They see a district that prioritizes the whole child and works hard to close learning gaps. They envision increased real-world learning, stronger partnerships with businesses and community organizations, and a district that strengthens civic engagement and contributes to Midland's long-term vitality. A strong sense of shared purpose, rooted in collaboration, clarity, and community connection emerges as a defining aspiration.

Employee Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Strengths

Employees consistently describe staff as highly dedicated, collaborative, and student-centered. Strong relationships among staff, students, and families are viewed as foundational to success. A broad range of academic programs, extracurricular activities, and whole-child supports are seen as core strengths of the district. Schools are perceived as welcoming, relationship-driven environments that foster community pride.



Opportunities: Consistent Access/Closing Achievement Gaps

Employees want to see consistent access to programs and supports across schools. There is a strong call for equity in opportunities and systems that close achievement and resource gaps.



Opportunities: Infrastructure and Facilities

Safe, reliable, and well-maintained facilities are a top priority. Employees call for modernized buildings, improved climate control, continued focus on safety, and spaces that support collaboration and technology integration. Equity in facility quality across schools is emphasized, along with transparent, data-driven planning for future models. Concerns include aging buildings and a need to upgrade to meet current student and learning needs.



Opportunities: Communication & Trust

Staff want to have clear, consistent communication about decisions, priorities, and implications. Transparency in rationale, financial implications, and long-term planning are essential to building trust. Employees value meaningful opportunities for input and visible feedback loops that show how their voices inform outcomes. They want to see alignment of decisions with educational priorities.

Employee Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Opportunities: Other

Priorities include long-term financial sustainability, staff recruitment and retention, innovation in teaching and learning, and alignment between strategic goals and expectations at all levels. Employees cite the need for mental health and well being supports to maintain work-life balance. Employees also stress the importance of experiential learning, internships, and opportunities for choice and voice in education.



Aspirations

Employees envision graduates who are prepared for college, career, and civic life through rigorous academics, applied learning, and multiple pathways to success. They want schools to serve as hubs of community engagement, with facilities and programs aligned to modern instructional needs and workforce expectations. Equity, consistency, and high expectations for all students are central to this vision.



Results: Measures of Success

Employees want metrics that go beyond test scores to include indicators of engagement, wellbeing, and readiness for life after graduation. Suggested measures include graduation outcomes, post-secondary enrollment, career certifications, and equitable access to programs. Transparency and timely reporting are viewed as essential for trust and improvement.

Board Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Strengths

Board members value strong staff commitment and dedication to students resulting in a caring culture. Broad student pathways (college, career, trades) and strong educational offerings (with emphasis on the high-school level) prepare students well for post-secondary opportunities. MPS provides inclusive environments for diverse learners and high-quality special education services and supportive elementary communities. Operationally, strengths also include financial discipline and a stable cash position.



Opportunities: Equity and Access to Close Achievement Gaps

Socioeconomic gaps (especially for ALICE families) affect readiness and access and there is a need for better support for early learners—many kindergarteners lack preschool exposure. There is uneven access to supports, enrichment, and communication across buildings. Need to expand access to after-school supports, tutoring, and holistic student services. Desire to close achievement gaps by third grade and improve overall academic achievement, especially elementary literacy and middle school performance.



Opportunities: Communication & Trust

Some board members want to continue to build on internal communication between board and leadership, ensuring that communications are timely and thorough. They also want to continue to build community trust and understand that there needs to be new communication methods beyond email to reach broader constituencies. There is a need to modernize and standardize communication expectations internally at the building level.



Opportunities: Talent Recruitment

Improve talent recruitment and competitiveness in attracting educators.

Board Feedback: Summary of Key Findings

Summary of Key Findings



Opportunities: Infrastructure and Facilities

Board members feel there is an urgent need for secondary building modernization - middle schools and high schools. There is interest in exploring a single high school model to expand opportunities and reduce duplication. They want to see updated labs, STEM spaces, art spaces, and flexible learning environments. Some elementary schools need continued updates so long-term planning may need to include additional elementary construction. Buildings must align with future academic pathways and community expectations.



Opportunities: Community and Partnerships

MPS should be a central hub—identity, gathering space, and community connector. Partnerships with local businesses, non-profits and other community organizations will expand opportunities. Staff visibility in the community enhances trust and district reputation. Community collaboration is essential to support academic and operational goals.



Aspirations

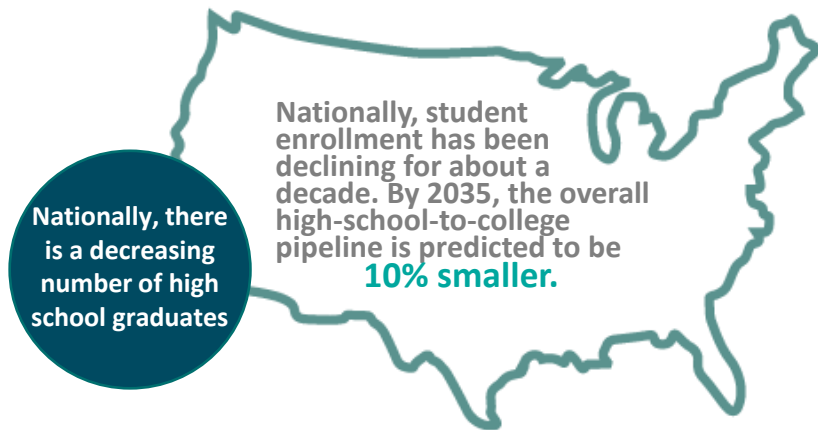
The board vision includes the following: being a destination district known for innovation and whole-child excellence, having a world-class high school offering robust academic, arts, and skilled-trades programs, a stronger sense of belonging for every student, and rich extracurricular and leadership opportunities. Additional aspirations include a deep community identity centered around public education and shared pride in MPS and being regionally recognized as a top academic district offering personalized learning pathways.



Results: Measures of Success

Board members want metrics that include standardized test scores (though not the only measure), academic growth measures beyond absolute achievement, and postsecondary success and alumni outcomes data. They would also like to see measures on student belonging, well-being, and engagement metrics. Teacher/staff satisfaction and support indicators are important as well as community partnership metrics (participation, satisfaction, visibility).

External Trends



High school graduates will peak in 2025 at ~**3.9MM** and **DECLINE** steadily through 2041 due to lower birth rates post Great-Recession.

Students from low-income families face barriers like needing to work, caregiving responsibilities, or housing instability. These factors disproportionately affect graduation rates among marginalized groups.

Policy/Accountability Trends: Rethinking Graduation Requirements, Postsecondary Success Metrics, Equity-Focused Interventions, and Alternative Pathways/Credit Recovery

Forces Impacting Public Education

- Declining Birth Rates
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Mental Health & Student Well-Being
- Economic Pressures (Funding Instability)

SNAPSHOT

PUBLIC EDUCATION TRENDS TO WATCH:

- **Student Academic Achievement and Readiness for Postsecondary Success**
 - Renewed emphasis on Literacy
 - Need for academic knowledge/skills, holistic and durable skills, and CTE
- **Artificial Intelligence in Education**
 - AI is being used for personalized learning, administrative efficiency, instructional support and interventions for at-risk students.
 - Districts are exploring AI tools for tutoring, grading, and curriculum design.
- **Hybrid and Flexible Learning Models**
 - Online and blended learning are now permanent fixtures, especially in high school and post-secondary prep; can also earn college credits and credentials.
 - Opportunities include infrastructure, teacher training, and equitable access.
- **Chronic Absenteeism**
 - Many districts report high levels of absenteeism, impacting achievement and funding. Nearly 28% of public school students in Michigan were chronically absent in 2025, missing nearly 18 days of learning.
 - Opportunities include attendance interventions and community engagement strategies.
- **Student Well-being and Mental Health**
 - Increased focus on social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health services, and trauma-informed practices.
 - Opportunities include hiring counselors, SEL curriculum, and wellness programs.
- **Equity and Inclusion**
 - Addressing disparities in access, outcomes, and representation is a top priority.
- **Teacher Retention, Attraction, and Development**
 - Staffing shortages and burnout are widespread.
 - Opportunities include professional development, leadership pipelines, and retention incentives.

APPENDIX

- STUDENT DATASET
- COMMUNITY/PARENT DATASET
- EMPLOYEES/UNION DATASET



STUDENT DATASET



Student Dataset Overview

Student Dataset Overview

As part of Midland Public Schools' strategic planning process, comprehensive feedback was gathered from students across the district to ensure their voices help shape the future. This dataset reflects input from multiple engagement methods designed to capture diverse perspectives and ideas:

- **Student Survey:** Broad participation from K–12 students provided insights into priorities, challenges, and aspirations.
- **Elementary Classroom Visioning Sessions:** Interactive sessions where younger learners shared their vision for an ideal school environment.
- **Superintendent Student Leadership Focus Group:** A focused dialogue with a diverse student leader group (high school) to explore strategic issues.
- **High School Focus Groups:** In-depth discussions with students from Dow and Midland High Schools to understand their experiences and expectations.
- **Student Video Submissions:** Creative expressions of students' "dream school" concepts, offering a unique lens into their hopes for the future.

Together, these sources provide a rich blend of feedback, ensuring that the strategic plan reflects authentic student voices and fosters an educational experience aligned with their needs and aspirations.

The summary of student feedback is divided into two sections:

1

Student Survey Results

2

Interactive Engagements





STUDENT SURVEY



Student Survey Overview

442

Number of Student Survey
Responses

Survey Questions:

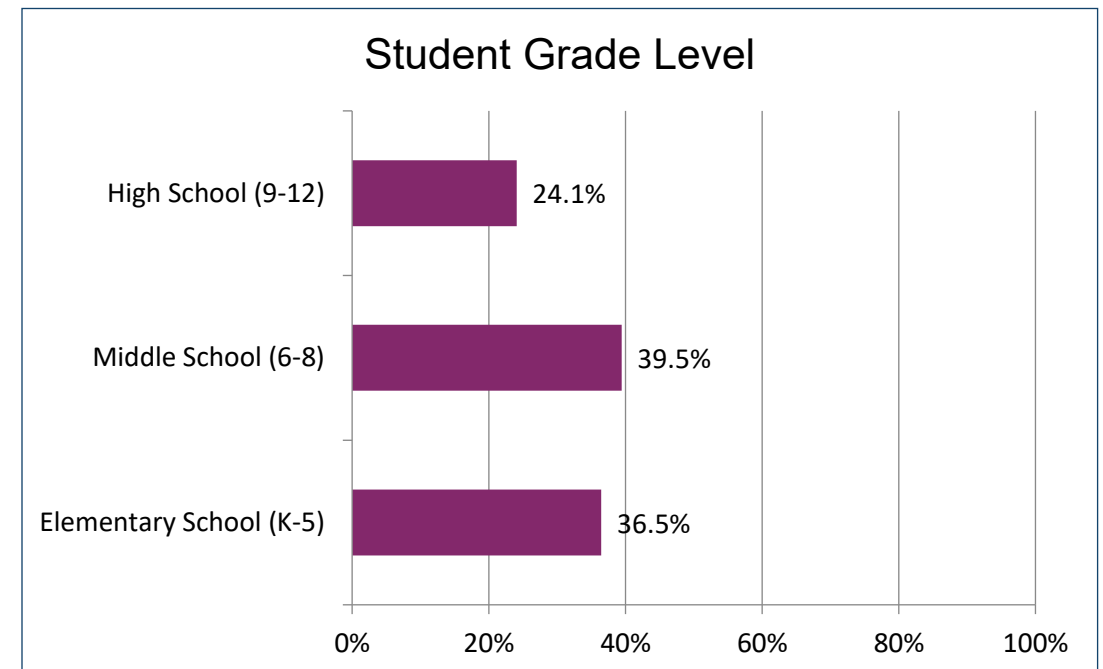
1. What is your vision for the ideal or dream school?
2. What do you like best about MPS?
3. What would you change to make it better?
4. What subjects or topics do you wish you could learn more about?
5. What would make school more enjoyable for you?
6. If you could change one thing about your school building, what would it be?
7. What kinds of clubs, sports, or after-school activities/experiences would you like to have?

This survey was designed and distributed online via email and through other internal communications. Surveys were collected October – December 2025.

Student Demographics

Feedback reflects perspectives from the full K–12 continuum.

- Responses skew slightly toward middle school students with 172 responses.
- There were 159 elementary school responses.
- High school voices were less represented with 105 responses.



Student Survey

What is your vision for the ideal or dream school?



Engaging Learning

- Hands-on activities, projects, and real-world learning
- More creativity and choice vs. busy work
- Learning methods that are most effective for the individual
- Many classes to choose from
- Teachers that make learning as fun as possible



Supportive & Kind Environment

- Feeling safe, respected, and cared about
- Teachers who listen, help, and treat students fairly
- A place where mental wellbeing is a priority
- Anti-bullying is enforced



Facilities & Resources

- Clean, modern campuses that have appropriate spaces for learning
- Outdoor recreation and equipment
- Access to technology, art, music, and sports
- Healthy and broad food choices in the cafeterias



Fun & Enjoyment

- School that is enjoyable, not stressful
- Balance between learning and fun, games in class
- Less homework and more time with family and friends
- Later school start time for high school students
- Broad selection and opportunity for extracurriculars



Student Survey

What do you like most about your school?



Teachers & Staff

- Kind, supportive, and helpful
- Patient and understanding
- Make learning enjoyable
- Eager to make the school a better place
- Collaborative



Friends and Social Connections

- Interacting with friends
- Feeling safe and valued
- Welcoming and supportive culture
- Diversity and kindness are promoted
- School spirit, pep rallies, and events that foster a sense of belonging



Special Classes

- Wide selection of electives
- Ability to take classes at another location
- AP/IB/Honors Classes
- Early Middle College
- Dual enrollment
- Foreign languages
- Music and arts
- Access to challenging opportunities



Extracurricular Activities

- Abundance of extracurricular opportunities to choose from
- Clubs - debate, art, robotics, tech, history, astronomy, theater, chess, etc.
- STEM
- Sports



Student Survey

What would you change to make it better?



Time & Workload Balance

- Later high school start time
- Less homework
- Longer lunch time
- Longer time between classes
- Reduced exam stress, exam exemptions
- Built in study periods



School Climate

- More responsive teaching
- Consistent grading and phone policies
- Consistent discipline, stronger anti-bullying enforcement
- More student voice
- More inclusive supports



Facilities & Tech

- Healthier and broader food choices in the cafeterias
- Enhanced climate control
- Enhanced cleanliness
- Continuous focus on safe and clear security processes
- Upgrade tech, Wi-Fi, and Chromebooks
- Misc. upgrades such as bathrooms, lockers, parking lot, tracks, pool, playgrounds, auditorium, and labs



Classes & Real-World Prep

- More electives, career and life skills options such as trades, finance, law, coding, public speaking, ASL, cooking, etc.
- More language choices
- Flexible/hybrid schedules to align learning and post-secondary goals



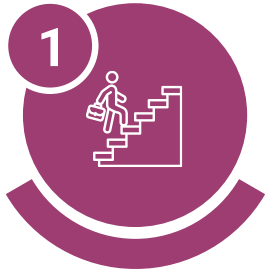
Extracurricular Access & Equity

- Better-funded clubs and expanded sports options, including earlier access to soccer, hockey, and swimming; Arts and theater support
- Transportation for high school and middle schoolers
- Considerations for 7th-hour students (transportation, etc.)



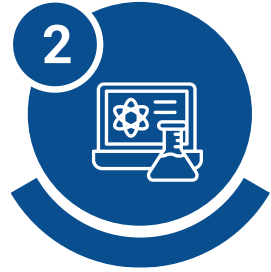
Student Survey

What subjects or topics do you wish you could learn more about?



Career & Life Skills

- Personal finance, taxes, insurance, investing
- Job readiness
- Real-world skills like cooking and life management



STEM & Technical

- Coding, programming
- Computer science
- Robotics
- Engineering
- 3D printing
- Medical science



Languages & Culture

- More language options such as ASL, Korean, and Japanese
- Cultural arts, literature, and traditions
- Language learning tied to cultural context
- Understanding global perspectives



Arts & Creative Expression

- Art
- Music theory
- Drama/theater
- Fashion design
- Creative writing



Advanced/Specialized Topics

- Astronomy and space science
- Psychology
- Law
- Government
- History
- Biology



Student Survey

What would make school more enjoyable for you?



Time & Workload Balance

- Later high school start time
- Shorter or 4-day weeks
- Less homework
- Longer lunch and time between classes
- Built in study periods



Learning & Classroom Experience

- More engaging, hand-on learning
- Option for using headphones while working
- Friend-based or flexible seating
- Positive teacher interactions
- Clearer alignment of assignments and testing to what is taught



Facilities & Tech

- Healthier and broader food choices in the cafeterias
- Climate control
- Cleanliness of bathrooms
- Bigger lockers
- Windows and natural light
- Fewer device restrictions
- Improved parking & outdoor space
- Bike racks
- Better Wi-Fi and Chromebooks



Climate, Inclusion, & Fairness

- Strong anti-bullying enforcement
- Consistent and fair policies
- Inclusive supports such as gender-neutral bathrooms
- Considerations for absences
- Student voices are heard
- Kinder atmosphere



Extracurricular Access & Variety

- Easier access, scheduling with 7th-hour students
- Transportation for middle schoolers
- More spirit weeks, dances, and events
- Better funded arts & clubs
- More options including hockey, soccer, swimming, debate, chess, astronomy, arts, and theater



Student Survey

If you could change one thing about your school building, what would it be?



Spaces & Layout

- Dedicated elementary art and music spaces
- Upgrade auditorium
- Bigger classrooms
- Less crowding, better flow, including wider hallways and additional floors if needed



Athletics & Recreation

- Pools
- Track
- Football and soccer fields
- Larger gymnasiums
- Weight rooms
- Updated playgrounds



Facilities & Comfort

- Cleaner bathrooms, more bathrooms
- Climate control
- Windows and natural light
- Improve cafeteria space



Safety

- Continue to focus on door security and entry procedures
- Improve screening
- Improve pedestrian safety in parking lots
- Sheltered bike racks
- Fence in playground boundaries



Technology

- Modernized technology that includes Wi-Fi, Chromebooks, PA system



Student Survey

What kinds of clubs, sports, or after-school activities/experiences would you like to have?



Sports

- Basketball
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Hockey
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Gymnastics
- Dance
- Baseball & softball
- Football for 6th grade



Arts & Performance

- Band
- Choir
- Orchestra
- Drama/theater
- Fashion design



Academic & Career

- Debate
- Coding/programming
- Robotics
- Math & science
- Astronomy
- Career prep such as finance, law, medical, engineering



Creative & Hobby-based

- Art
- Crafting
- Baking/cooking
- Jewelry-making
- Gaming & Esports
- Reading





STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS/VIDEOS



Student Focus Groups & Videos Overview

Focus Group Question Examples:

- What is your VISION for the ideal/dream school?
- What do you like best about MPS? What do you think we are doing well?
- What would you change to make it better?
- What subjects or topics do you wish you could learn more about?
- What would make school more enjoyable for you?
- If you could change one thing about your school building, what would it be?
- What kinds of clubs, sports, or after-school activities/experiences would you like to have?
- What kinds of food would you like to see in the cafeteria?
- What helps you feel safe and happy at school?
- What's one idea you have that could make school better for everyone?
- Profile of a graduate - what skills, knowledge, dispositions do you think we should prioritize for all graduates?

Background

Students were given the opportunity to provide feedback during focus groups held at each school, with some schools offering multiple opportunities. Not all questions were asked at each session due to time constraints. There was intentional focus on ideal/dream school, what students like best or what could make school more enjoyable, and what changes could improve student experience.

Students were given the opportunity to participate in individual video sessions to express their thoughts for an ideal/dream school or what could be changed to improve student experience.

Student Focus Groups

What is your vision for the ideal dream school?

What's one idea you have that could make school better for everyone?



Inclusive and Safe

- Inclusive to all students
- A sense of belonging
- Prioritize wellbeing alongside academics
- Physical, emotional, and personal safety



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Modern and welcoming facilities showing care for students
- Upgraded common spaces & library
- More natural light in schools
- Better heating & cooling
- New athletic facilities



Academics & Culture

- Built-in time to work, practice and get help during the school day
- Time to think rather than rush through content
- Learning connected to real life, future careers, and adult skills
- Clear, consistent expectations and experiences regardless of school/classroom
- More open time—recess, time between classes, lunch



Student Focus Groups

What do you like most about your school?

What helps you feel safe and happy at school?



Teachers & Staff

- Teachers care about students' education and future
- Principals and assistant principals are helpful
- Supportive staff that engage with students
- Teachers are willing to stay after school to help



Social Connection

- Clubs, sports and activities are critical in making friends and feeling included
- Strong sense of school pride, cross-town rivalry seen as fun and community-building
- Many students feel accepted for who they are, but opportunities remain for broader inclusivity



Academics & Curriculum

- Students believe MPS prepares them well for college and future pathways
- Students value the wide range of courses and pathways, including AP, IB CTE, dual enrollment and co-op.
- Students feel their hard work matters, and their achievements are respected



Extracurricular Activities

- Sports yes, but there's also a wide range of clubs, music, arts, and leadership opportunities
- Students feel there is something for everyone
- Co-curricular activities allow students to connect with community partners and real-world experiences



Student Focus Groups

What would you change to make it better?

What's one idea you have that could make school better for everyone?



Time & Workload Balance

- High schoolers report homework overload and little time during the day for completing work or asking for help during school hours
- Middle school students are adjusting to more rigid schedules and, like elementary students, would like more movement & play



Academics & Culture

- Secondary students and elementary students alike emphasize strong relationships with teachers, but inconsistent expectations between classrooms
- Middle school students, particularly, express an emerging fragility in their sense of belonging



Facilities & Infrastructure

- High school and middle school students describe buildings as outdated, drab, and institutional
- Comfort becomes inconsistent as students reach middle school, with top concerns including climate control
- More selection and quality of food was a consistent ask
- There is a theme around lack of common or multi-use space and underused areas



Technology

- Students feel confident in technology provided, but there are calls for AI literacy and more modern tools
- Students call for tech that supports learning, not just assignments



Extracurricular Access & Equity

- There is a broad theme from K-12 that participation depends heavily on schedules and transportation
- Students also note gaps emerging based upon support and resources that are tied to fees and fundraising



Student Focus Groups

What subjects or topics do you wish you could learn more about?

Profile of a graduate - what skills, knowledge, dispositions do you think we should prioritize for all graduates?



Career Exploration

- Elementary students are curious about “what people do”, while middle schoolers are starting to explore their identities and interests
- High school students want more help in developing concrete pathways, placements, and decision support

Student Quote:
“We want clear, honest information about all pathways, not just college.”



Life Skills

- Practical life skills emerge as a theme in secondary students, with skill and confidence building being the focus in middle school
- High school students speak to a wide range of subjects such as financial literacy, cooking, and job readiness as life skills they would like to acquire before they graduate

Student Quote:
“Not everyone learns life skills at home. School is where everyone should have access to that knowledge.”



Technology, AI & Digital Literacy

- Students want to learn more about how to use technology as a problem-solving tool, not just a way to complete an assignment. They want to be prepared for a fast-changing digital world, and fear falling behind
- AI is a big theme in students wanting to understand how to use it effectively and ethically as a problem-solving tool

Student Quote:
“We need to learn how to use AI ethically and responsibly, not just be told not to use it.”



Student Focus Groups

What would make school more enjoyable for you?



Elementary School

- Elementary students want to feel safe, cared for, and supported
- They want predictability and hands-on learning, with attentive, caring teachers
- Recess and movement are critical to their enjoyment
- While stress is comparatively low at this level, disruptions are a factor in their wellbeing

Key Theme: School is more fun when we feel safe, our teachers are kind, and we get time to move and play.



Middle School

- Students in middle school want belonging and acceptance among peers and teachers
- As children reach middle school, there is an emerging desire for having a say in their days
- Spaces start to feel more confined and generic
- There is a desire for more consistency in rules

Key Theme: School is better when we feel like we belong and aren't embarrassed for being ourselves or making mistakes.



High School

- High school students want more flexibility in the school day, with later start times
- They also expressed a need for more time and space to connect, along with movement and breaks during the day
- Students also highlighted a desire for less stress and pressure, and want more agency/choice as young adults

Key Theme: School would be more enjoyable if we had more flexibility, were trusted more, and felt like the system was designed for real people.



Student Focus Groups

If you could change one thing about your school building, what would it be?



Elementary School

- Students in elementary want basic comfort and cleanliness
- Bathroom cleanliness, availability of soap and paper towels are important to them
- Outdoor and play spaces are highly valued

Key Theme: Clean, comfortable spaces help elementary students feel safe and ready to learn.



Middle School

- Students in middle school want common gathering spaces, less institutional-like
- They also desire bathroom cleanliness, and expressed a desire for more autonomy and flexibility in accessing restrooms during class times
- Students would like less crowding with more hallway space during passing time

Key Theme: Middle school students want more access and independence, with buildings that feel more open and welcoming.



High School

- Students want buildings that feel modern and functional, with more light and a campus-like feel
- They spoke to needing more collaboration, social, and study places
- High school students also represented a strong voice for fieldhouses, practice space and auditoriums

Key Theme: School should represent that we matter and are preparing for our adult life.



Student Focus Groups

What kinds of clubs, sports, or after-school activities/experiences would you like to have?



Elementary School

- Students in elementary want low-pressure activities that focus on play
- Soccer, basketball and playground or recess-style sports were some examples of sports desired
- In clubs, students share a desire for arts & crafts, STEM, Legos, music and drama

Student Quote:
"I like clubs because we get to do fun things and be with our friends."



Middle School

- Students in middle school want interest-based clubs and low-pressure sports, with a mix of competitive and recreational options
- Many of the traditional sports were highlighted but with a focus on participation, not pressure
- Gaming, creative clubs and identity-based groups were also desired

Student Quote:
"I want to be able to try things without worrying about messing up or being judged."



High School

- High school students also expressed a strong desire for varsity and non-competitive/open play options
- In clubs, esports, content creation, diversity clubs and service clubs were highlighted
- Students also expressed a strong desire for tutoring, study spaces and academic support

Student Quote:
"Open gym time where students could work out or play a game just for fun and health."



Student Focus Groups

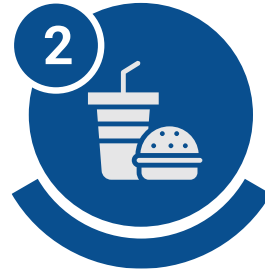
What kinds of food would you like to see in the cafeteria?



Elementary School

- Students in elementary want food that feels familiar and comfortable
- They want food that looks appealing and tastes good, with simple favorites they recognize
- They also asked for more fruit and easy-to-eat options

*Key Theme:
Food equals
comfort and care
to elementary
students.*



Middle School

- Students in middle school also want better tasting food, mentioning they want their hot food to be warm
- Students are sensitive to food repetition, quality inconsistency, and mealtimes that feel rushed
- They also want a lunch experience that feels equitable to all peers with equal time, equal food choices/portions, etc.

*Key Theme:
Good food
means quality
and fairness to
middle
schoolers.*



High School

- High school students want more options and choice, asking for fresher, high-quality food
- Students speak to challenges with food access as it relates to long school days and after school activities
- Cafeteria experiences have been described as chaotic, lacking flow, and they want to be treated as young adults by staff

*Key Theme:
Food
equates to
respect and
readiness for
adult
expectations
to high
school
students.*



COMMUNITY DATASET

(COMMUNITY/PUBLIC/PARENTS)



Community Dataset Overview

Community Dataset Overview

As part of Midland Public Schools' strategic planning process, a broad range of community voices were engaged to ensure the plan reflects shared priorities and aspirations. This feedback was gathered through multiple methods designed to capture diverse perspectives and ideas:

- **Community Survey:** Wide participation from families, residents, and stakeholders provided insights into strengths, challenges, and future opportunities.
- **Community Focus Groups:** In-depth discussions with community members to explore expectations and identify key priorities.
- **Parent Focus Groups:** Targeted sessions with parents to understand their experiences and hopes for student success.
- **Special Interest Focus Groups:** Conversations with highly engaged individuals who expressed strong interest in shaping the district's future.
- **Community Leader & Stakeholder Interviews:** One-on-one interviews with local leaders and influential stakeholders to gather strategic insights.
- **MBA Board Session:** Collaborative dialogue with the Midland Business Alliance Board to align educational goals and graduate profiles with workforce and economic development objectives.
- **GMCA Midland Stakeholder Interviews:** Engagement with Greater Michigan Construction Academy stakeholders to strengthen partnerships and community alignment.

Together, these sources provide a rich blend of feedback, ensuring that the strategic plan reflects authentic community voices and fosters an educational experience aligned with shared values and aspirations.

The summary of community feedback is divided into two sections:

1

Community Survey Results

2

Interactive Engagements





COMMUNITY SURVEY



Community Survey Overview

722

Number of Community Survey Responses

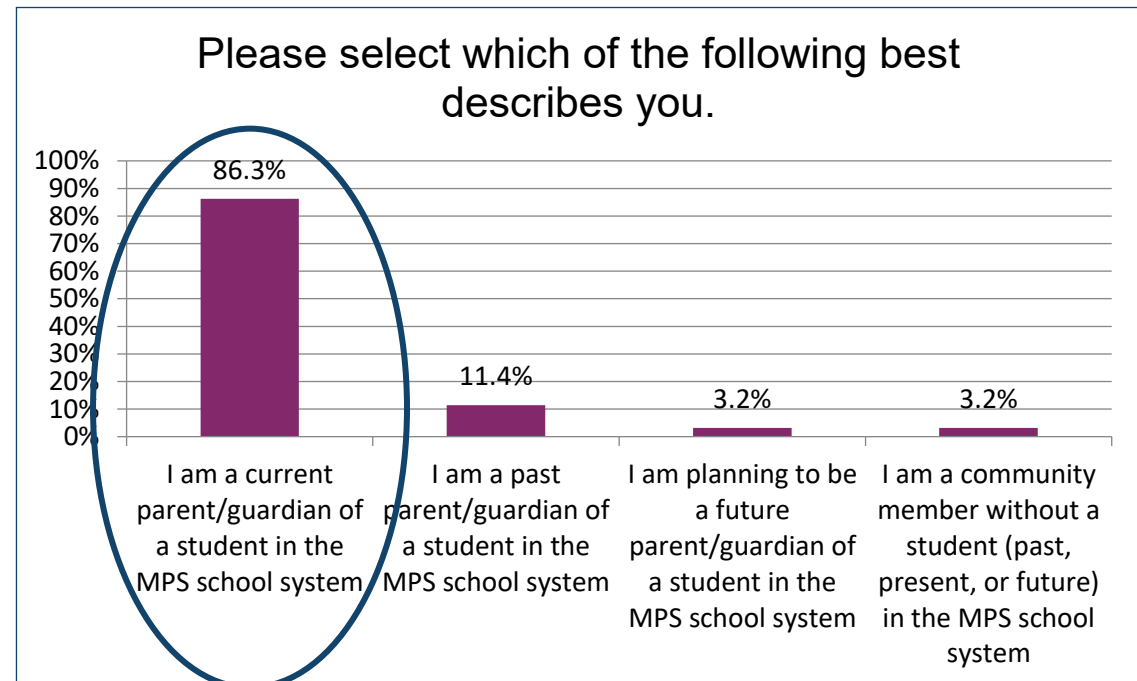
Survey Questions:

1. What is working well in our school system right now?
2. What can we improve in our school system? In other words, what opportunities or challenges should we address?
3. If you could change or add one thing to make our school system better, what would it be?
4. What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure? If it is in the best interest of students to support it and it is the most financially viable, would you support a one campus high school? Why/Why not?

The surveys were designed and distributed online and through external communications. Surveys were collected October – December 2025.

Community Demographics

The majority of survey participants are current parents or guardians of students in MPS, with a smaller portion being past or future parents, and community members without direct student involvement.



Community Survey

What is working well in our school system right now?



Quality & Dedication of Teachers & Staff

- Teachers and staff are widely recognized as caring, motivated, and attentive
- They provide strong support to students, including those with special needs
- Teachers are seen as the heart of the school system, fostering positive relationships with students



Academic Excellence & Curriculum

- The district offers a high-quality education with good preparation for college.
- There is a variety of academic programs including advanced placement, IB, STEM, and balanced arts and sports
- Curriculum is viewed as consistent and challenging, supporting student growth



Extracurricular Activities & Student Engagement

- A broad range of extracurricular options is available, including sports, music, arts, robotics, and clubs
- These activities are valued for promoting student involvement, skill-building, and community
- Smaller schools help students be known and engaged in multiple activities



Communication & Parent Involvement

- Communication between schools, teachers, and parents is effective and appreciated
- Tools like ParentVue and regular emails help keep parents informed
- Parent involvement through PTOs and volunteerism strengthens the school community



School Environment

- Schools provide safe, inclusive, and supportive environments
- The sense of community and school pride is strong and valued
- Facilities and resources, including technology, contribute positively to the learning environment



Community Survey

What can we improve in our school system? In other words, what opportunities or challenges should we address?



Class Size & Student Support

- Larger class sizes and/or overcrowded classes (especially elementary) impact individual attention/learning and classroom management
- More paraprofessionals for support, especially with behavioral challenges



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Upgraded buildings and athletic facilities
- Specific needs include replacing or renovating Northeast Middle School, improving pools for swim teams, and updating HVAC and safety systems
- Transparency in infrastructure planning including maintenance, planning and follow-up



Curriculum & Instruction

- Concerns about inconsistent curriculum quality, especially reading programs and advanced course offerings
- Desire for more hands-on, real-world learning, including trades education and life skills like financial literacy
- More focus on core academics and less on social or political issues



Safety & Mental Health

- Bullying is a widespread concern, with calls for stronger policies, better enforcement, and more support for victims
- Need for improved mental health services, including more counselors and social-emotional learning
- Requests for better discipline approaches and support for students with behavioral challenges



Communication & Community Engagement

- Many parents want improved communication including clearer, more consistent updates
- Concerns about transparency in decision-making and responsiveness to parent feedback
- Desire for more equitable access to programs and extracurricular activities across schools



Community Survey

If you could change or add one thing to make our school system better, what would it be?



Academic and Curriculum Improvements

- Better academic rigor, including more advanced courses and better preparation for college and careers
- More hands-on, real-world learning opportunities such as trades and life skills
- Reduce student load, improve study habits, and balance homework expectations



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Want updated, well-maintained, and safe school buildings and athletic facilities
- Replacing or renovating aging schools, improving pools, and transparency in infrastructure planning (including maintenance, planning and follow-up)
- Reduce overcrowding and the impact on learning environments



Student Support & Well-being

- More mental health resources, counseling, and social-emotional learning programs
- Better support for students with special needs and behavioral challenges
- Improved bullying prevention and discipline policies



Communication & Community Engagement

- Improve communication between schools, teachers, and families with clearer, more consistent updates
- Increase transparency and responsiveness to parent and community feedback
- Encourage greater parent involvement and collaboration



School Structure & Culture

- Maintain or improve school culture, including school pride, rivalry, and inclusivity
- Improve consistency of leadership, accountability, and staff support
- Reduce Chromebook and screen time in classrooms
- Restrict cell phone use during school hours to improve focus



Community Survey

What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure? If it is in the best interest of students to support it and it is the most financially viable, would you support a one campus high school?



Opposition to One Campus High School

- Many respondents prefer two high schools due to concerns about overcrowding, loss of opportunities in sports and extracurriculars, and preserving school culture and rivalry
- Concerns about increased number of students per grade level and the potential for larger class sizes, students getting lost, and reduced personal attention
- Worries about increased traffic, longer commutes, and safety issues



Support for One Campus High School

- Some respondents support one campus for financial efficiency, better resource allocation, and expanded academic and extracurricular opportunities
- A single campus could provide equal access to programs and reduce duplication of administrative roles
- Support for a well-planned, modern facility with adequate space
- Need for clear communication and community involvement in planning



Infrastructure Priorities

- Urgent need to update or replace aging buildings, especially Northeast Middle School
- Improve athletic facilities, including pools, stadiums, and gyms
- Enhance safety measures, including secure entrances and better traffic flow
- Maintain and improve existing buildings with a focus on long-term sustainability.



Financial Concerns

- Worries about tax increases and the financial burden on the community and residents
- Need for prudent spending, avoiding waste, and focusing on essential needs
- Skepticism about the timing and scale of proposed infrastructure projects given economic and political landscape





COMMUNITY AND PARENT FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS



Community & Parent Focus Groups Overview

Focus Group/Interview Question Examples:

- What do you see are the key STRENGTHS of Midland Public Schools (MPS)?
- What OPPORTUNITIES or ISSUES should MPS address to help reach its vision?
- What are your ASPIRATIONS or VISION for MPS? What are your hopes for the future?
- How should MPS track RESULTS? What measurements or indicators should be reported?
- What skills and qualities should graduates of MPS possess? (Profile of a Successful Graduate)
- How should MPS prepare students for life beyond graduation (college, career, citizenship)?
- What role should MPS play in the broader community?
- What should be the top priorities for MPS over the next 3–5 years and beyond?
- Are there any other issues, opportunities, or ideas that should be addressed in strategic planning?
- What are your top priorities (and concerns) regarding school infrastructure?
- Are there equity gaps you observe in access, achievement or support activities?
- How well does current student programming, curriculum, and course offerings meet the needs of all students?

Background

Community members/leaders and parents were given the opportunity to provide feedback during focus groups held during varied times and at multiple locations. In addition, interviews were conducted with community leaders and other stakeholders unable to attend planned sessions. Not all questions were asked at each session due to time constraints. There was intentional focus on strengths, opportunities, vision, profile of a successful graduate, equity, and infrastructure.

Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

*What do you see are the key **STRENGTHS** of Midland Public Schools (MPS)?*



Teachers & Staff

- Teachers and staff are consistently described as high quality, committed, student-centered, and willing to go above and beyond
- They are seen as approachable, supportive, and invested in knowing students as individuals
- Staff is perceived as knowledgeable, skilled and capable of delivering strong academic experiences
- Leadership and administration are seen as open and transparent and key to a positive culture



Community & Relationships

- Many members expressed a shared sense of pride and ownership in the district and its role in the broader community
- Parents and community members described opportunities to engage with schools through events, activities, and partnerships
- Teacher relationships were highlighted as foundational in student engagement and success
- Many see the school as an anchor of the community
- MPS is perceived as welcoming and supportive of diverse learners, fostering a positive environment



Academics & Activities

- Participants noted strong core academic offerings, speaking to a variety of advanced and enrichment opportunities. Advanced Placement and College Readiness stand out
- Stakeholders also value opportunities and multiple pathways for student success—not a one-size fits all model
- Activities outside the classroom were seen as critical to building relationships, confidence, and a sense of belonging for students



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

What OPPORTUNITIES or ISSUES should MPS address to help reach its vision?



Infrastructure & Sustainability

- Participants expressed concern about aging buildings, updates, and the need for clear, transparent planning around future facility models and financial viability
- Uneven quality of facilities across the districts were noted, and the connection between facilities and overall student experience
- Responsible use of taxpayer resources is foundational
- Discussion around a one-campus high school highlighted benefits, challenges and financial implications. There are proponents of both



Community Transparency & Trust

- Many members expressed a desire for more proactive and consistent communication
- Participants expressed uncertainty about how major decisions are made and who is involved, leading to confusion and speculation. There is a strong call for clear, accessible information about budgets, facility costs, and long-term financial implications
- Stakeholders want meaningful opportunities to provide input and see how their feedback influences outcomes



Student Experience

- Participants noted that students' access to academic offerings, extracurriculars, and supports can vary depending on school or program
- They also raised concerns on differences in staffing and student support across the district
- Stakeholders want a comparable educational experience regardless of building or pathway for students
- Clear criteria for program placement, course access, and participation were seen as essential to building trust and equity



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

*What are your **ASPIRATIONS** or **VISION** for MPS? What are your hopes for the future?*



Learning Opportunities

- Stakeholders want rigorous instruction and learning standards that are consistent for all students, regardless of school or program
- They want equitable access to courses, programs, and enrichment, and instruction that meets every student's needs
- Participants emphasized the importance of coherent curriculum and instructional practices to ensure comparable learning experiences and want the district to use data and feedback to ensure effectiveness



Community & MPS

- Stakeholders want MPS to move forward with shared goals that align decision-making and provide long-term stability
- Communication, leadership, and follow-through are seen as essential to strengthening trust and unity
- The future vision includes MPS being recognized for excellence, collaboration, and readiness to meet changing student and community needs



Life Preparedness

- Stakeholders want clear, intentional pathways that prepare students for college, skilled trades, military service, and the workforce.
- Emphasis on internships, work-based learning, career exploration, and hands-on experiences that connect learning to life after high school
- Community and business partnerships were viewed as critical to providing authentic experiences and smooth transitions after graduation
- Participants also want student exposure to careers and pathways before high school



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

How should MPS measure success and track results?



Measures & Reporting

- Metrics should be easy to interpret and clearly tied to district goals and priorities. They should be tracked regularly to show progress and trends
- Data and reporting should be transparent, with results shared in ways that are understandable to parents, staff and the broader community



Measurements Beyond Test Scores

- Stakeholders want student wellbeing, sense of belonging, and perceptions of safety and support tracked
- Graduation rates, college enrollment, career certifications, and successful transitions after graduation were highlighted
- Data should show whether all students have equitable access to programs, supports, and opportunities
- Feedback from parents and community members was seen as an important measure as well



Improvement Over Compliance

- Measures should clearly inform priorities, resource allocation, and strategy at both the district and building levels
- Data should be available quickly enough to make informed decisions and adjustments during the school year
- Stakeholders want to see how data leads to action and how changes improve outcomes over time



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

What skills, knowledge, and qualities should graduates of MPS possess?

How should MPS prepare students for life beyond graduation?



Academic & Critical Thinking Skills

- Graduates should have strong literacy, numeracy, and foundational knowledge across key subject areas
- Students should be able to apply learning to new and complex situations, demonstrating a depth of understanding, not just test performance



Workforce & Technology

- Graduates should be ready for college, skilled trades, military service, entrepreneurship, or direct entry into the workforce
- Technology and AI skills should be embedded in workforce preparation, with graduates fluent in digital tools, problem-solving and adaptive skills
- Technology-enabled, real-world learning should be connected to internships and project-based learning, with a focus on purposeful, ethical usage



Citizenship & Character

- Graduates should understand their role as active, informed citizens and contribute positively to their community
- Skills such as self-awareness, resilience, and managing emotions were viewed as critical for personal and social success
- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of treating others with respect and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences



Communication & Collaboration

- Graduates should be able to clearly express ideas, listen actively, and communicate appropriately with diverse audiences
- They must be able to work with others, contribute positively to group efforts, and respect others' perspectives
- Graduates should be comfortable stepping into unfamiliar environments and adjusting as circumstances change



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

What role should Midland Public Schools (MPS) play in the broader community?



MPS as a Community Anchor

- Strong schools support economic vitality, attract families, and prepare future community leaders
- MPS serves as a stable, reliable presence and a source of pride for Midland
- MPS should bring families and the broader community together through shared spaces, events, and experiences



Local Partnerships

- Schools and community partners should be seen as working together to support student learning, workforce development, and community wellbeing
- Stakeholders want MPS to be welcoming and proactive in engaging families and community members
- Collaboration should result in real benefits for students, including learning experiences, career exposure, and community connections



Regional Impact

- High-quality schools are viewed as essential to Midland's long-term desirability and stability
- MPS should be preparing students with the skills and experiences needed to support regional employers and economic growth
- Graduates should be contributing to civic life and the sustained health of the community



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

What should be the TOP THREE PRIORITIES for MPS over the next 3–5 years?



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Address aging buildings, deferred maintenance, and inconsistencies across facilities to support student learning and wellbeing
- Provide transparent options, timelines, and cost implications to support informed decision-making and sustainability
- Align facility decisions with educational goals, operational efficiency, and community use



Communication & Transparency

- Ensure stakeholders understand what decisions are being made, why they matter, and what comes next
- Share data, rationale, and trade-offs openly to build confidence and understanding
- Create meaningful opportunities for input and demonstrate how feedback informs actions and outcomes



Core Outcomes

- Consistent academic performance and growth across all grade levels and subjects; emphasis on literacy
- Curriculum alignment and instructional coherence
- Equitable access to programs and opportunities
- Student engagement and belonging, student surveys on engagement, support, and school climate



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure?



Long Term Planning

- Develop a transparent, data driven long-term facilities plan, including costs, timelines, and trade-offs to support decision making
- Provide clarity and predictability for the community, providing a roadmap that builds confidence in the direction
- Ensure facility decisions balance educational needs, operating costs, and long-term fiscal responsibility



Aging Facilities & Maintenance

- Prioritize repairs and upgrades that ensure safe, functional learning environments for students and staff
- Clearly identify needs, timelines, and funding approaches to support accountability and public confidence
- Reduce deferred maintenance to protect facilities, investing strategically to extend useful life



Environmental Equity & Consistency

- Students should have safe, high-quality facilities regardless of what school they attend
- Environments should consistently support modern teaching, learning, and student wellbeing
- Address disparities in building conditions and resources. Facility investments should reduce inequities caused by aging infrastructure or uneven upgrades



Educational & Community Needs

- Schools should function as community assets that support activities, partnerships, and lifelong learning
- Design facilities to support modern teaching and learning. Spaces should enable collaboration, technology integration, safety, and flexible instructional models



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

How well does current student programming, curriculum, and course offerings meet the needs of all students? Are there equity gaps you observe in access, achievement or support activities?



Strong Offerings but Inconsistent Access

- Participants acknowledged solid academic and extracurricular programs, while noting that access can vary by school, program, or student group
- Stakeholders seek innovation and future-ready learning



Equity Gaps in Supports and Opportunities

- Concerns were raised about differences in academic supports, intervention services, and enrichment opportunities for certain students (e.g., at risk, economically disadvantaged)



Greater Consistency and Alignment

- Stakeholders want more uniform expectations, course availability, and instructional quality across the district



Diverse Learner Needs

- Stakeholders emphasized the need for programming that supports students with varying academic, social-emotional, and learning needs



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

What challenges or constraints do you see limiting MPS's ability to fulfill its mission or maximize its impact? How do facilities and infrastructure affect MPS's ability to deliver high-quality programming and partnerships?



Structural Inefficiency Limits Strategic Flexibility

- Participants described current structures as limiting MPS's ability to adapt and innovate
- Programs and services across multiple facilities reduces flexibility, increases operating complexity, and limits impact



Facilities and Modern Educational Delivery

- Stakeholders identified a misalignment between physical spaces and today's instructional expectations
- Outdated building layouts and infrastructure restrict the expansion of applied learning, career-connected programs, and collaborative models



Long-Term Sustainability

- Postponing or narrowing facilities decisions increases future risk
- Aligning facilities planning with instructional priorities, equity goals, and partnership opportunities was seen as essential to ensuring the district's ability to deliver high-quality education over time



Opportunity Cost

- Stakeholders noted that aging and inefficient facilities limit resources and even take them away from instruction and innovation
- Maintaining outdated buildings limits MPS's ability to invest in high-impact programs



Community & Parent Focus Groups/Interviews

How could MPS strengthen partnerships with the community and higher education (non-collegiate) to better support students? What would the ideal partnership look like in the future?



Partnerships Designed Around Outcomes

- Participants described the most effective partnerships as defined by outcomes
- Joint focus on readiness and transition beyond high school are critical drivers, ensuring purpose and impact for both students and community



Early, Sustained Alignment

- Engaging earlier in student's educational pathways was highlighted as essential
- Sustained alignment through middle school, high school and post-secondary transitions help students understand expectations, build confidence and develop skills over time



Real-World Learning

- Applied, real-world learning is the most powerful way partnerships can support students
- Dual enrollment, internships, and work-based learning develop transferable skills in communication, time management, adaptability and self-advocacy



Shared Accountability

- Stakeholders desire partnerships that provide clear feedback loops and transparent impact evaluation of student outcomes
- Partners want to understand how collaboration improves students' readiness and success
- Sustained community engagement beyond the strategic planning process



EMPLOYEES AND UNION DATASET



Employee Dataset Overview

Employee Dataset Overview

As part of Midland Public Schools' strategic planning process, feedback from employees across the district was gathered to ensure the plan reflects staff perspectives and priorities. This feedback was gathered through multiple methods designed to capture diverse perspectives and ideas:

Employee Survey: Broad participation from staff provided valuable data on strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

School-Based Focus Groups: In-depth discussions were held at *every school* to explore staff experiences, expectations, and key priorities.

MCEA Focus Group: Targeted engagement with Midland City Education Association members offered insights into educator needs and aspirations.

Together, these sources provide a rich blend of feedback, ensuring that the strategic plan reflects staff voices and fosters a supportive, collaborative environment aligned with shared values and goals.

The summary of community feedback is divided into two sections:

1

Employee Survey Results

2

Interactive Engagements





EMPLOYEE SURVEY



Employee Survey Overview

491

Number of Employee Survey
Responses

Survey Questions:

1. What is working well in our school system right now?
2. What can we improve in our school system? In other words, what opportunities or challenges should we address?
3. If you could change or add one thing to make our school system better, what would it be?
4. What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure ? What improvements would you like to see?

The surveys were designed and distributed online via email and through internal communications. Surveys were collected October – December 2025.



Employee Survey

What is working well in our school system right now?



Dedicated & Collaborative Staff

- Staff are highly committed and go beyond their roles to support students and colleagues
- Strong teamwork and mutual respect create a positive work environment
- Collaboration across grade levels and departments is frequent and effective



Communication & Leadership

- Leadership, especially the superintendent, is seen as present, transparent, and supportive
- Regular updates and clear communication improve trust and staff morale
- Staff feel their voices are increasingly heard and valued



Student-Centered Programs and Supports

- Diverse academic and extracurricular programs meet varied student needs
- Mental health and social-emotional learning supports positively impact students
- Title One and special education supports are recognized as strengths



School Culture and Climate

- Schools foster respectful, inclusive, and supportive environments
- Staff and students feel safe, valued, and motivated
- Autonomy in classrooms and strong community connections enhance engagement



Resources and Facilities

- Access to technology and safety systems supports teaching and learning
- Some facility improvements contribute to a better environment, though needs remain
- Resources like media centers and drinking fountains are appreciated



Employee Survey

What can we improve in our school system? In other words, what opportunities or challenges should we address?



Student Behavior & Discipline

- Staff are concerned about disruptive, unsafe, and defiant student behaviors impacting learning and staff wellbeing
- Inconsistent consequences and lack of accountability for students and parents
- Need for more behavioral support staff, clear discipline policies, and timely interventions



Class Size & Staffing Challenges

- Overcrowded classrooms, especially in elementary and co-taught classes, hinder individualized instruction
- Insufficient paraprofessional, counselor, and interventionist support contributes to staff burnout
- Need smaller class sizes and sustainable staffing models to better meet student needs



Curriculum Consistency & Teacher Support

- Frustration with frequent curriculum changes and lack of alignment across buildings
- Teachers feel overwhelmed by workload and insufficient planning or professional development time
- Desire for research-based, stable curricula and more teacher input in decision-making



Communication & Leadership

- Need for more transparent communication between administration and staff
- Some staff report feeling undervalued, micromanaged, and disconnected from decision-making
- Desire for leadership that listens, respects staff, and fosters a positive work culture



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Many buildings are aging, overcrowded, or in disrepair, affecting safety and learning environments
- Updated technology
- Climate Control
- Safer playgrounds
- Adequate spaces for interventions
- Functional classrooms including updated furniture, staff workspaces, and secure, accessible facilities



Employee Survey

If you could change or add one thing to make our school system better, what would it be?



Class Size & Support

- Smaller class sizes to improve individualized instruction and classroom management
- Need for more paraprofessionals, counselors, and behavioral specialists to support diverse student needs and behavioral issues and reduce teacher burnout.



Curriculum Stability & Support

- Calls to stop frequent curriculum changes and allow teachers time to master and effectively implement programs
- Research-based curricula aligned with student needs
- More professional development time



Discipline & Accountability

- Clear, consistent behavior policies with real consequences for students and accountability for parents
- More behavioral support and intervention programs to maintain safe learning environments



Facilities & Resources

- Modernized buildings
- Updated technology
- More functional learning spaces
- Upgraded classroom furniture
- Adequate space for small groups
- Improved athletic and arts facilities



Communication

- Transparent, two-way communication between administration and staff
- Genuine opportunities for staff input in decision-making
- Stronger connections between leadership and teachers



Employee Survey

What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure? What improvements would you like to see?



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Many buildings are aging, overcrowded, in need of upgrades
- Need for a long-term plan for rebuilding or renovating, especially middle and elementary schools
- New schools or additions to alleviate overcrowding and better meet population needs
- Updated technology including smart boards, computers, charging stations, and Wi-Fi
- More private, functional spaces for special education, counseling, sensory needs, and staff work areas
- Additional staff bathrooms, lounges, and storage to improve daily operations and comfort



Classrooms & Common Space

- Updated, ergonomic furniture
- More classrooms to support small group instruction and reduce crowding
- Dedicated spaces for specials (music, art, PE) rather than teaching on carts



Safety & Security

- Secure entrances with locked doors, badge access, and visitor buzzers
- Fencing around playgrounds.
- Improved surveillance
- Better emergency communication systems





EMPLOYEE FOCUS GROUPS



Employee Focus Groups Overview

- **Focus Group Question Examples:**

- What do you see are the key STRENGTHS of Midland Public Schools (MPS)? What does MPS do really well?
- What OPPORTUNITIES/ISSUES do you think MPS should address over the next 3-5+ years? In other words, what critical issues or obstacles should we address to help reach our vision? What new opportunities and innovations should we focus on?
- What are your ASPIRATIONS or VISION for MPS? What are your hopes for the future of education in our community?
- How should we track RESULTS? As we continue to develop a framework to measure and track success and outcomes – are there any specific measurements that you would like to see reported?
- What skills and qualities should graduates of MPS possess? In other words, what is the profile of a successful graduate?
- What role should MPS play in the broader community?
- What do you believe should be the TOP THREE PRIORITIES for MPS over the next 3-5 years and beyond?
- Are there any other issues, opportunities, ideas you think should be addressed in the strategic planning process?
- What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure? If it is in the best interest of students to support it and it is the most financially viable, would you support a one campus high school?
- Are there equity gaps you observe in access, achievement, or support services? (Geographic imbalance)
- How effective is communication between district leadership and staff?
- What would improve transparency and trust across the district?
- What innovations or changes would you like to see in teaching, learning, or operations?
- How well does current student programming, curriculum, and course offerings meet the needs of all students?

Background

Employees were given the opportunity to provide feedback during focus groups held at each school, with some schools offering multiple opportunities. Not all questions were asked at each session due to time constraints. There was intentional focus on strengths, opportunities, vision, profile of a successful graduate, equity, and infrastructure.

Employee Focus Groups

*What do you see are the key **STRENGTHS** of Midland Public Schools (MPS)?*



Dedicated & Caring Staff

- Highly committed educators and staff who consistently prioritize student success and wellbeing
- Strong culture of professionalism, collaboration, and service beyond job descriptions
- Deep experience and institutional knowledge that supports stability and continuity
- Staff widely viewed as a defining strength of MPS



Community & Relationships

- Strong, trust-based relationships among students, families, staff, and the broader community
- Schools function as welcoming, relationship-centered environments where students feel known and supported
- MPS is viewed as a cornerstone institution and source of community pride
- Community partners demonstrate a willingness to engage and support student success



Academics & Activities

- There is a broad range of academic programs, pathways, and course offerings to meet diverse student needs
- Strong extracurricular, arts, and athletic programs that enhance student engagement and belonging
- There is a focus on development of the whole-child, with opportunities inside and outside the classroom contributing to well-rounded student outcomes



Employee Focus Groups

What OPPORTUNITIES or ISSUES should MPS address to help reach its vision?



Infrastructure & Sustainability

- Participants expressed concern about aging buildings, updates, and maintenance
- Buildings are not aligned to modern educational needs or equity expectations
- There is an opportunity to better align facilities with educational programming and community use
- Long-term facilities planning is viewed as critical to district sustainability



Communication, Trust & Strategic Clarity

- Opportunities exist to improve transparency, consistency, and two-way communication
- Desire for clearer articulation of district priorities, decision-making, and long-term direction
- Improved communication seen as essential to trust, alignment, and community confidence
- Stakeholders want to understand the “why” behind major decisions



Academics & Equity

- There is a desire to strengthen career pathways, applied learning, and real-world experiences for all students
- Stakeholders see a need for greater consistency in expectations and opportunities while preserving local strengths
- Emphasis on preparing students for multiple futures—college, career, and community engagement
- Equity was defined as a system design responsibility, not dependent on individual schools or programs



Employee Focus Groups

*What are your **ASPIRATIONS** or **VISION** for MPS? What are your hopes for the future?*



Future-Ready Graduates

- Graduates are prepared for college, career, and civic life, with multiple pathways to success to meet all student needs
- Strong emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, and lifelong learning
- Balanced development of academic, technical, social, and emotional skills
- MPS employees share a clear, shared vision of what it means to be a successful MPS graduate



MPS as a Community Anchor

- Schools that function as hubs of learning, belonging, and community engagement
- Facilities and programs aligned to support both student learning and community use
- Deep and lasting partnerships with families, local organizations, and employers
- Participants want MPS to be viewed as a source of pride and long-term investment in Midland's future



Equitable Student Excellence

- Participants expressed a desire for high expectations and high-quality learning experiences for all students, regardless of school or background
- They want to see consistent access to programs, supports, and opportunities across the district
- There was also a desire expressed for instructional systems that are designed to close opportunity and achievement gaps



Employee Focus Groups

How should MPS track results and success over time?



Post-Secondary Readiness & Long-Term Outcomes

- Track indicators tied to college, career, and life readiness
- Include participation and success in career pathways, certifications, and applied learning
- Monitor graduation outcomes, post-secondary enrollment, and persistence
- Measure alignment between student experiences and future workforce expectations



Measurements Beyond Test Scores

- Stakeholders want measures of student engagement, wellbeing, belonging and readiness
- There should be a dashboard of indicators that extends beyond standardized assessments
- Balance academic outcomes with social-emotional and whole-child indicators
- Emphasis on growth over time, not single-point performance



Equity, Access & Consistency

- Disaggregate data to identify and address equity gaps across student groups and schools
- Monitor access to programs, supports, and enrichment opportunities district-wide
- Track consistency in student experiences and outcomes across buildings
- Use data to inform system-level improvement and resource alignment



Employee Focus Groups

What skills, knowledge, and qualities should graduates of MPS possess?

How should MPS prepare students for life beyond graduation?



Academic & Critical Thinking Skills

- Graduates should have strong literacy, numeracy, and content knowledge across disciplines
- Students should be able to critically think, problem solve and apply learning in new or complex situations
- High expectations should be paired with the appropriate academic support



Workforce & Life Skills

- Graduates should have exposure to multiple career pathways and post-secondary options
- There should be opportunities for hands-on, experiential, and project-based learning with access to internships and work-based experiences
- An emphasis on resilience, adaptability, and self-management was highlighted
- Development of communication, collaboration and interpersonal skills are also key



Agency, Purpose & Personal Pathways

- Students need to be supported in identifying interests, strengths, and goals
- There should be opportunities for choice, voice and personalized learning pathways
- Encouraging independence, confidence, and self-advocacy are critical
- Graduates should be prepared to navigate change and make informed decisions



Employee Focus Groups

How well does current student programming, curriculum, and course offerings meet the needs of all students?



Academic Programming

- Core academic programming is viewed as generally strong and effective, but not consistently uniform
- Student access to advanced, elective, or specialized courses can vary by school
- Inconsistency creates perceived inequities in opportunity



Equity of Access & Support

- Gaps were observed in access to programming and enrichment opportunities for students
- Support services and academic pathways are not always evenly distributed, with a need for clearer systems to ensure all students can access appropriate supports
- Equity was framed as a district-wide responsibility rather than a building-level issue



Student Choice & Pathways

- There is a desire for increased career-focused, applied, and experiential learning options
- Interest in expanded electives, pathways, and flexible course offerings were also defined
- A need was expressed to better align curriculum with real-world skills and post-secondary expectations



Diverse Learner Needs

- Programming does not always fully meet the needs of all learners (advanced, struggling, special education, and nontraditional learners)
- There is an opportunity to expand differentiated instruction and personalized learning approaches
- An emphasis on meeting students where they are while maintaining high expectations was highlighted



Employee Focus Groups

What role should Midland Public Schools (MPS) play in the broader community?



MPS as a Community Anchor

- Schools serve as welcoming hubs for community connection, learning, and engagement
- Facilities should be used beyond the school day for community events, recreation, and services
- Schools are viewed as shared assets that strengthen neighborhood and community vitality



Local Partnerships

- Strong partnerships with local employers, higher education, and community organizations are important to school employees
- Expanded internships, mentorships, and applied learning opportunities for students were a key theme
- Schools contribute to regional workforce development and economic sustainability, which creates a two-way value between schools and community partners



Community Pride & Civic Leadership

- MPS seen as a visible, trusted leader within the community
- Transparent communication and engagement strengthens public confidence
- Schools foster civic responsibility, service, and community pride among students
- MPS reflects and reinforces Midland's values and long-term aspirations



Employee Focus Groups

What should be the TOP THREE PRIORITIES for MPS over the next 3–5 years?



Facilities & Infrastructure

- Address aging facilities, updates, and maintenance through long-term planning
- Align buildings and learning environments with modern instructional needs
- Ensure facilities support equity, safety, and community use
- Make strategic, financially sustainable decisions about future facility models



Trust, Communication & Alignment

- Improve transparency and consistency in communication and decision-making
- Clearly articulate district priorities, progress, and rationale (“the why”)
- Build trust through engagement with staff, families, and the community
- Align leadership, resources, and systems around shared strategic goals



Ensure Equitable, Future-Ready Learning for All

- Deliver consistent, high-quality academic experiences across all schools
- Expand career pathways, applied learning, and post-secondary readiness
- Align curriculum to future workforce, college, and life expectations
- Ensure equitable access to programs, supports, and opportunities district-wide



Employee Focus Groups

What are your top priorities regarding school infrastructure?

If financially viable, would you support a one-campus high school model?



Safe, Reliable & Well-Maintained Facilities

- Address aging buildings, updates, and maintenance to ensure safety and reliability
- Prioritize HVAC, roofing, accessibility, and core building systems
- Maintain learning environments that support student and staff wellbeing
- Focus on preventative maintenance to reduce long-term risk and cost



Align Facilities to Learning & Equity

- Align building design and conditions with modern instructional needs
- Ensure equitable quality of facilities across schools and neighborhoods
- Support flexible, collaborative, and technology-enabled learning spaces
- Design facilities that adapt to evolving educational models



Educational & Community Needs

- Maximize shared community use of school facilities
- Align infrastructure decisions with enrollment trends and long-term demographics
- Balance educational needs with financial sustainability
- Consider facilities as long-term community assets



One-Campus High School Model

- A strong desire for transparent analysis was expressed, asking for financial clarity and community engagement before decisions
- Viewed by some as an opportunity for expanded programming and shared resources, with benefits including efficiency, equity of access and unified identity
- Concerns noted around student experience, transportation and community impact



Employee Focus Groups

What would improve transparency, communication, and trust across the district?



Decision Making Transparency & Rationale

- Clearly explain the “why” behind major decisions and trade-offs
- Share data, assumptions, and constraints that inform decisions
- Be upfront about challenges, limitations, and financial realities
- Provide visibility into long-term planning and progress



Transparent Communication

- Communicate priorities, decisions, and changes clearly and consistently
- Reduce mixed messages across schools and departments
- Provide timely updates before decisions are finalized, not after
- Use plain language and multiple channels to reach all stakeholders



Engagement & Relationship Building

- Create meaningful opportunities for staff, families, and community input
- Ensure feedback loops are visible—how input was considered and used
- Build trust through listening, responsiveness, and follow-through
- Foster a culture of respect, inclusion, and shared responsibility

