EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Better school climate has been shown to improve academic performance and positive development, as well as increased engagement in the classroom, and assessing student climate in APS should be considered the first step of a performance management strategy.

- For the current year, overall participation rates were lower than that of previous years (e.g., 63.4% vs 67.8% for 2017-18). Nevertheless, most schools in the district did have similar participation rates – the overall decrease can be attributed to a couple of schools.

- For Black/African American students, the verified (though Infinite Campus) participation rate was at 15.4% -- over 10% under-representation regarding the survey participation.

- Regarding overall student-reported school climate, an increase in school climate in elementary school grades and a decrease in high school grades were identified, comparing the current and previous school years.
  - Most likely, there are multiple factors that account for these differences (which were not significant)

- Rates of subscale agreement generally decline from 5th to 12th grade
  - Social Emotional Learning saw the steepest grade-level decline in agreement
  - Across all grades, over 75% of students agreed or strongly agreed to items on the High Expectations subscale
  - Student Support was high for elementary and K-8 schools, but was lower for middle and high schools.
  - About two-thirds of students agree that they are safe (emotionally and physically) in school.

- Students reported very few differences between the current and previous years regarding APS 2020 Strategic plan implementation.
  - When asked to respond to the statement “I am on track to earn at least one credential that I need to pursue my plan for the future”, there was a 4% increase in the number of students who disagreed (17% vs 13% from the 2017-18 school year).
  - The number of students who responded with “I don’t know” when asked about their plans following high school decreased from 16% in 2017-18 to less than 1% this year, indicating that the strategic plan may be helping students to be thinking more about their career plans.
**Introduction**

Most research studies suggest that school climate is positively correlated with academic achievement – that is, aspects of school climate related to safety, teaching and learning, relationship-building capacity, and school environment have been shown to foster greater student achievement when properly cultivated (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). School climate can even be a protective factor for students with less than ideal family environments, moderating the relationship between possible negative burdens the students have and their academics (O’Malley, Voight, Renshaw, & Eklund, 2014), and although it may be perceived differently from one student to the next, climate has been argued to be “a measure of community that is thus reflected in the collective experience of students and their interactions with peers and school adults … [and] ought to be researched at the school level” (i.e., in a multi-level model research design) (Wang et al., 2014).

The American Institutes for Research developed the student climate survey that is currently used by Aurora Public Schools (APS). In their report, Osher, Kendziora, and Chinen (2008) state:

- “Enhancing students’ connection to school, their commitment to achieve, and their social, emotional, and civic competencies improves their academic performance and positive development (Greenberg et al., 2003; McNeeley, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Osher et al., in press; Zins et al., 2004).

- Many students experience individual-level barriers to learning (such as social, economic, or health challenges), and the provision of high-quality instruction alone will not improve these students’ performance (Adelman & Taylor, 2000; Osher, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2004).

- Students who attend safe schools are more likely to be academically engaged and are less likely to exhibit problem behaviors such as drug use or violence. Students are less likely to drop out of safe schools (Bekuis, 1995; Bryk & Thum, 1989; Greenberg, Skidmore, & Rhodes, 2004; Osher, Dwyer, & Jimerson, 2005).

- Many barriers, including disinterest, lack of knowledge, and lack of resources, prevent educators from addressing students’ social and emotional factors as part of school reform efforts.

- What gets assessed gets addressed; measurement of social and emotional development in schools, whether as part of a performance management strategy or not, will tend to increase educators’ attention to the role these factors play.” (p. 4)

In short, survey measurement and analysis is the beginning of a change process. The safety, challenge, support, and social emotional learning aspects of the survey reported within this paper should be used to provide a meaningful start of a performance management strategy in APS schools.
Administration of the Survey

This year marked the 10th iteration of the Student Climate Survey, which has traditionally been administered in the spring. Starting in 2015, APS adopted an instrument that was developed by the American Institutes for Research, the Conditions for Learning Survey (CLS; see Osher et al., 2008, for information on the scale properties and its development). The CLS assesses four core constructs within schools that have been identified as having a positive impact toward students’ academic achievement:

- The **Safe & Respectful Climate** subscale measures how physically and emotionally safe students feel.
- The **High Expectations/Academic Rigor/Challenge** subscale measures how much students perceive that teachers and other adults in the school encourage them to think, work hard, do their best, and connect what they are learning in school to life outside of school.
- The **Student Support** subscale measures how much students feel listened to, cared about, and helped by teachers and other adults in the school.
- The **Social and Emotional Learning** subscale measures students’ perception of their peers’ social and problem-solving skills.

Last year (2017-18), APS incorporated four new questions to the Grade 9-12 survey which assess student planning (consistent with goals of the APS 2020 Strategic Plan). These were:

1. How often this school year have you talked to an adult at school about your future beyond high school?
2. How often this school year have you talked to your family about your future beyond high school?
3. My plan for the future after high school is (check all that apply): Trade or technical school; 2-year College/Community College; 4-year College; Get a Job; Join the Military; Take a year off and then go to college; Other; I don’t know.
4. I am on track to earn at least one credential (e.g., Advanced Placement (AP) Classes, International Baccalaureate (IB), Digital Badges, Workforce Certificate, College Credit, Internship) that I need to pursue my plan for the future.

Last year, in an effort to provide data that can make more meaningful change, it was decided to change the survey window from the spring to the fall. In doing so, results from the climate survey can be utilized to enact changes within the same school year in which the data was collected. For the current year, no changes were made to the survey in order to provide stable comparison data from both 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.
The Conditions for Learning Survey was administered online to all APS students in grades 5-12 (including Pickens) from November to December of 2018. In addition, the survey was available in both English and Spanish to provide equity across the two most common languages in the district.

**Student Characteristics**

During the survey window, 19,727 students were enrolled in APS schools in grades 5-12 and Pickens Technical College. Of those students, 12,501 students attempted the survey, for a response rate of 63.4%. This represents a decrease of 4.4% in the response rate, compared to the 2017-18 school year. However, two schools in particular had low response rates that account for this difference: Aurora Hills had zero participation and Gateway High School had a 40% response rate. Excluding these schools, the response rate increases to 68.3%. Thus, for the remaining 47 schools, the response rate, on average, was higher than the rate for the 2017-18 school year. Nevertheless, the overall response rate is included in the historical comparisons in Table 1 below.

### Table 1

**Historical Response Rates for the Student Climate Survey for all Grade Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Attempt</th>
<th># Enrolled</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13,772</td>
<td>20,318</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>12,501</td>
<td>19,727</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>12,501</td>
<td>19,727</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>12,501</td>
<td>19,727</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>12,501</td>
<td>19,727</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>12,501</td>
<td>19,727</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>12,501</td>
<td>19,727</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Yr. Chg.</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Yr. Chg.</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response rates of race/ethnicity distinctions were also assessed (see Table 2). As in previous years, marginal over/under-representation differences were noted within surveys taken by students who self-reported as Native American, Asian, Black, White, and Native Hawaiian, compared to official district percentages from October Count. The most significant difference (as has also been reported in previous years) is that there is an over-representation of students who completed the survey and identified as two or more races, and an under-representation of students who completed the survey and identified as Hispanic/Latino. However, after further investigation and assigning the federally-defined race/ethnicity distinctions (from Infinite Campus data) to students who supplied correct Student IDs \(n = 12,407;\) or 99% of the sample), the difference between students who took the survey and the official October Count percentages of race/ethnicity distinctions becomes negligible. When compared this way, the highest difference is that of a slight under-representation of Black / African American students (15.4% completed the survey vs. 17.2% of enrolled students). In addition, the large under-representation of Hispanic students that is suggested by self-reported race/ethnicity on the survey—compared to official enrollment numbers—actually
disappears, and there is a slight over-representation of this group. Thus, for this year (and presumably, for previous years as well), the reported over/under-representation of the race/ethnicity groups appears to simply be an artifact of how students are reporting their race/ethnicity—mainly, it appears that students who are officially classified as Hispanic/Latino classify themselves (i.e., self-report) as multi-racial.

Table 2
Distribution of Survey Responses by Ethnicity, Compared to Official October Count Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 5-8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-R Survey %</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October Count</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference:</td>
<td>+1.6%</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
<td>-3.9%</td>
<td>-13.1%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>+16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-R Survey %</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October Count</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference:</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
<td>-10.4%</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>-0.7%</td>
<td>+14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 5-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-R Survey %</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified % *</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October Count</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference **</td>
<td>+0.1%</td>
<td>+1.0%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>+1.3%</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td>+0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data come from Federally-defined race/ethnicity student demographics for students who supplied a correct Student ID (n = 12,407). ** Difference score calculated from Student and October Count rows.
Survey Results

Results from the Student Climate survey are broken into three sections based on the level of detail of the analysis. First, district-level data are provided with overall results. Second, data was analyzed for Learning Communities (LCs) with analyses conducted both within and among the LCs. Finally, school-level analyses are provided. Also, please note that negatively-worded items were reverse-coded for all analyses.

District (Overall) Results

For each school type, overall agreement was calculated—for items anchored by an agreement scale. Figure 1 shows the overall agreement percentages for both the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Notably, although there are slight differences between the two school years, these are not significant (all $\chi^2$ $p$s > .05). Analyses were also conducted to see which school types varied from the Total Percentage in Agreement (67%) for the 2018-19 school year. Elementary Schools (72%), K8 Schools (72%), and Pickens (72%) were all significantly higher in comparison (all $p$s < .01). Middle and High Schools did not significantly vary from the Total at the $p = .01$ level (decreased from .05 due to the large sample size).

![Figure 1. Overall Agreement by School Type and Year](image)

Overall Agreement was also assessed per grade level. In past years, a slight 'U' shaped curve was noted to occur across the 5th to 12th grade spectrum—in other words, students' perceived climate is the lowest from 8th through 10th grade, with a momentary increase at the 9th grade level. This was unchanged for the current year, with the highest level of agreement in 5th grade, decreasing until a slight bump in agreement rates in 9th grade (see Figure 2). There are two noticeable trends, comparing the two
school years. First, on average, students in the elementary grades had slightly higher agreement rates this year compared to last year (this was not significant in the previous analysis). Second, and not apparent in the previous analysis, is a negative trend of decreasing agreement rates from 9th through 12th grade, comparing the two years of data. In other words, 9th grade students had similar agreement rates for both years, but by 12th grade, agreement rates were 4% lower than the previous year. It is unclear in the data if this is a cohort effect or if the data suggest a difference in Student Climate in the high school grades for the current year. If it is the latter, the publisher of the Climate Survey offers a resource for improving student climate (see https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about). Also, although it is not illustrated in this report, these trends were most apparent in two subscales of the survey: Safe & Respectful School Climate and Social Emotional Learning.

![Figure 2. Overall Agreement by Grade Level and Year](image)

Investigating further into the subscales of the survey, data for the current school year assessed students’ (1) Safe & Respectful School Climate, (2) High Expectations / Academic Rigor / Challenge, (3) Student Support, and (4) Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The following two figures show variations in subscale agreement within (Figure 3) and across (Figure 4) each school type. The data are the same, but graphed differently to illustrate these differences. For elementary schools, Safe & Respectful and SEL subscales have lower agreement than High Expectations and Student Support (see Figure 3). This was the same for K8 and Middle schools. However, for High Schools, only SEL was lower than the other three subscales. Pickens had high agreement for all subscales. Figure 4, on the other hand, shows subscale agreement
trends across each school type. Safe & Respectful varies, but generally stays within a similar range (between 60% and 70%, excluding Pickens). However, for the other three subscales, there is a decline in agreement from the Elementary School to High School that ranges from an 8% decrease (High Expectations) to a 19% decrease (SEL)—with Student Support decreasing 11%. Figure 5 further differentiates this data at the grade level, in which there is a slight increase in Safe & Respectful agreement from 5th to 12th grade, and decreases in agreement from 5th to 11th grades for the other subscales (and a subsequent increase at the 12th grade level). Additionally, the sharp, negative trend of SEL agreement is very apparent across grade levels.

![Figure 3. Agreement by School Type and Subscale]

![Figure 4. Agreement by Subscale and School Type]
In previous years, mostly marginal non-significant differences were found comparing each item between the current and previous school year, and thus, a detailed item analysis was removed from this year's report. It adds an unnecessary level of granularity—and one that does not produce an actionable results. However, in line with last year’s results, the two subscales that had the lowest overall levels of agreement were Safe & Respectful Climate and SEL. The item analysis focuses on these areas of concern.

As there were some differences in how elementary and high school students responded, the analysis below differentiates between those groups. Because the Safe & Respectful Climate subscale contains items related to safety, the percentage of students who answered strongly and negatively—indicating perceived safety concerns—are included in Figure 6, below. Of note, elementary students have a much greater perceived threat of bullying, crime, and violence in their schools than high school students.
Figure 6. Percentage of Students who marked "Strongly Disagree" (or "Strongly Agree" for reverse-coded items - denoted by ***) for Safe & Respectful Climate subscale items.

Whereas the above figure focused on safety characteristics in the schools, Figure 7, below, contains items from the SEL subscale—items of which the majority have a positive connotation. Thus, the percentage of students who marked “Strongly Agree” to the positively-worded items and “Strongly Disagree” to the reverse-coded items is presented. For each of the items on the SEL subscale, they generally decrease throughout elementary and middle school, and then plateau around 9th grade. It should be noted that because these items deal with virtues, older students may have a more nuanced view of morality (e.g., see Kohlberg, 1971) and therefore, may tend to answer less to the extreme. Nevertheless, for the SEL subscale, elementary students overwhelmingly responded more strongly towards each of the items (e.g., strongly disagreed with cheating and arguing; strongly agreed with persistence and integrity).
Figure 7. Percentage of Students who marked "Strongly Agree" (or "Strongly Disagree" for reverse-coded items - denoted by *** for SEL subscale items.

Another aspect of the Safe & Respectful School Climate subscale is an item that asks: “How safe do you feel [Outside the school, In the hallways and bathrooms of the school, & In your classes]?” Because this refers to students’ perceived safety, the percentage of responses to “Not Safe” and “Somewhat Safe” are provided in Figure 8 below. Although there is either no difference or a slight decline in the percentage of students who do not feel safe in and out of the schools over the past 5 years, the percentage of students who feel only somewhat safe has not changed in the schools. Yet outside of their school, students are reporting decreased perceived safety. Additionally, overall, the percentage of students who feel either not safe or only somewhat safe is the highest it has been in the past 5 years.
A final set of items asks students about their future plans—in line with the APS 2020 Strategic Plan. When asked how often they have “Talked to an adult at school about [their] future beyond high school”, the reported percentages varied little from the previous year, and 35% reported having talked 1 or 2 times, 15% reported 3 or 4 times, and 8% reported 5 or more times. The total percentage of students who reported talking to an adult at the school was 57%, down from 58% in 2017-18. Students also reported similar rates of having “Talked to [their] family about [their] future beyond high school”, with 84% reporting having talked at least once to their family (the rate was 84% in 2017-18 as well). The percentage of students who disagreed with “I am on track to earn at least one credential that I need to pursue my plan for the future” increased from 13% in 2017-18 to 17% during the current school year. However, the percentage of students who responded “Don’t Know” decreased from 23% to 21%.
The last item asked students of their plans following high school. Notably, less than 1% of students this year responded to the item with “I don’t know” – compared to 16% from the previous year. Figure 9 illustrates their responses for the two years. The percentages across all other items varied little from last year. Also, it is worth noting that response percentages for college and technical schools steadily increased from 9th to 12 grade, with Military plans remaining steady around 10% throughout high school and students planning to get a job straight out of school steadily decreasing.

Figure 9. Student plans following high school.
Learning Community Results

Student Climate subscales had some variation—accounting for overall agreement among all subscale items—across the Learning Communities (LCs). Figure 10 illustrates the percent of agreement across the subscales for each of the LCs. In general, the most variation occurred within the Safe & Respectful subscale, followed by Student Support and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) subscales, and with the least amount of variation in the High Expectations subscale.

Because of the variation in percentage rates observed within the Safe & Respectful subscale, a further analysis by grade and item follows (see Figure 11). Much of the variation within this subscale seems to come from LC-A, particularly for grades 8 and 9. Distinguishing among the items comprising the subscale, the four which had the most variation among the LCs are presented in Figure 12. The percentage rates correspond to students who agreed or strongly agreed to these four items. This is in contrast to the previous figure which shows positive responses to the subscales (e.g., the item "Most students don’t get along together very well" is reverse-coded), and thus, higher scores are better. Figure 12 shows the opposite response—that is, lower scores are better. In addition, these figures roughly correspond to student responses regarding how safe they feel inside and outside of their schools, for each of their respective LCs, with students in LC-A feeling the least safe and students in LC-L feeling the safest.
Figure 11. Safe and Respectful subscale agreement percentages by grade level and LC.

Figure 12. Safe and Respectful items with the most variation among the LCs.

The final set of items on the student survey pertained to the APS 2020 Strategic Plan and students' plans following high school. Only high school students responded to
these items. There is one item that is worth mentioning. When asked if they “Talked to an adult at school about [their] future beyond high school” during the current school year, about 40% of students in S, E, and L LCs, as well as the Zone, responded with “Never”, but this percentage was higher in the LC-P, at 53%.
School Results

The rankings of the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed to the subscales is provided below. For comparison, the percentages of agreement across all schools is as follows: Safe & Respectful School Climate (65%), High Expectations (76%), Student Support (70%), and Social Emotional Learning (54%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safe &amp; Respectful School Climate</th>
<th>High Expectations / Academic Rigor / Challenge</th>
<th>Student Support</th>
<th>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pickens</td>
<td>Kenton ES 87%</td>
<td>Kenton ES 88%</td>
<td>Pickens 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Smith</td>
<td>Peoria ES 87%</td>
<td>Pickens 86%</td>
<td>Dartmouth ES 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmouth ES</td>
<td>Sixth Ave ES 87%</td>
<td>William Smith 86%</td>
<td>Montview 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Quest</td>
<td>Arkansas ES 87%</td>
<td>Dartmouth ES 85%</td>
<td>Lansing ES 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy Creek</td>
<td>Crawford ES 86%</td>
<td>Sixth Ave ES 83%</td>
<td>Paris ES 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurora Frontier</td>
<td>Fulton 86%</td>
<td>Arkansas ES 83%</td>
<td>William Smith 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris ES</td>
<td>William Smith 85%</td>
<td>Wheeling ES 81%</td>
<td>Fletcher 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montview</td>
<td>Vaughn ES 85%</td>
<td>Montview 80%</td>
<td>Wheeling ES 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeling ES</td>
<td>Montview 84%</td>
<td>Peoria ES 80%</td>
<td>Fulton 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>Aurora Quest 84%</td>
<td>Murphy Creek 79%</td>
<td>Kenton ES 71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools were also ranked according to strategic plan agreement. Only high school students completed items related to the strategic plan. For comparison, the district average agreement was 79%.

Strategic Plan
Pickens 87%
William Smith HS 86%
Aurora West 84%
Hinkley HS 81%
Vista Peak Prep 79%
Aurora Central HS 79%
Rangeview HS 77%
Gateway HS 76%
**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Better school climate has been shown to improve academic performance and positive development, as well as increased engagement in the classroom, and assessing student climate in APS should be considered the first step of a performance management strategy. The data presented in this report, although detailed, are mostly aggregated at the district level, and analysis at the school level, necessary for improvement strategy implementation, is not provided. Indeed, one of the limitations of this report is that an in-depth analysis for each of the schools in APS would be too exhaustive for its purposes. However, we would be happy to provide further analysis for individual schools upon request. Nevertheless, these results do provide meaningful benchmarks for the district.

For the current year, overall participation rates were lower than that of previous years (e.g., 63.4% vs 67.8% for 2017-18). Nevertheless, most schools in the district did have similar participation rates – the overall decrease can be attributed to a couple of schools. In addition, rates of participation by race/ethnicity were assessed. In previous years, self-reported classifications of race/ethnicity were compared to official October Count data, and an over-representation of students who are 2+ races and an under-representation of Hispanic students has been continually reported. This was also present in the current year’s data; however, for this year, student information was verified in Infinite Campus (possible because they supply their Student IDs on the survey), and the over- and under-representation of those two race/ethnicity classifications became marginal, at best. However, for Black/African American students, the verified (though Infinite Campus) participation rate was at 15.4%, almost 2% lower than their enrollment rate within APS. This calculates to over 10% under-representation regarding the survey within these students. In the future, Black/African American students should be especially encouraged to take the survey in order to get a better representation of their perceptions of student climate.

Regarding overall student-reported school climate, an increase in school climate in elementary school grades and a decrease in high school grades were identified, comparing the current and previous school years. Most likely, there are multiple factors that account for these differences (which were not significant), and these differences are not part of the survey data. In addition, because these differences are not part of a longer, longitudinal trend, it is hard to interpret whether or not they are the start of a longitudinal trend or if they are a momentary ‘blip’ in the data. If they are part of a longitudinal trend, though, it is recommended to be proactive with these results and provide schools with resources that will help to improve school climate. Resources are provided here: [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about). Other guides are also available (see [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/training-technical-assistance/training-products-tools/guides-training-products](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/training-technical-assistance/training-products-tools/guides-training-products)).

Investigating further into the subscales, rates of agreement generally decline from 5th to 12th grade, and the **Social Emotional Learning** subscale saw the steepest
decline. Across all grades, over 75% of students agreed or strongly agreed to items on the High Expectations subscale, implying that they think they are highly encouraged to do well. In addition, Student Support was high for elementary and K-8 schools, but was lower for middle and high schools. These are based on student perceptions, but in general, the results indicate that older students do not feel that they are listened to, cared for, and helped by teachers as much as students in lower grade levels. About two-thirds of students agree that they are safe (emotionally and physically) in school. Additional items on the Safe & Respectful subscale indicated that elementary students have a greater perceived threat of bullying, crime, and violence than high school students. Furthermore, students report higher levels of safety inside their classrooms, followed by in school hallways and bathrooms, and lower levels of safety outside of school.

APS 2020 Strategic Plan results were also reported. In general, students reported very few differences between the current and previous years. However, when asked to respond to the statement “I am on track to earn at least one credential that I need to pursue my plan for the future”, there was a 4% increase in the number of students who disagreed (17% vs 13% from the 2017-18 school year). This indicates that the students know of their plan, but have not pursued it yet. Schools may consider increased implementation strategies for students regarding this aspect of the APS 2020 Strategic Plan. Finally, the number of students who responded with “I don’t know” when asked about their plans following high school decreased from 16% in 2017-18 to less than 1% this year, indicating that the strategic plan may be helping students to be thinking more about their career plans.
References


