

## Student Belonging and Adult Support

<b>Priority 1</b>	Ensuring Equity and Excellence	<b>Short Initiative:</b>	All students have a supportive relationship with at least one adult at school, are engaged in their learning, and feel that they belong in the school community.
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### Overarching Goal

What is the outcome this initiative seeks to achieve in five years?	To ensure that all students feel a deep sense of belonging, APS will prioritize ensuring that school-building cultures are centered on the premise that the success and belonging of all children are everyone's responsibility. While APS has a dedicated staff, there is an opportunity to be more systematic about ensuring that all students are seen and supported through specific adult relationships and engagement activities.
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<b>Responsible Department</b>	Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice (DEIBJ)
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### Summary

A summary of what we are trying to accomplish and why

Just as we focus on instruction and student support, a crucial element of our work is sustaining a welcoming community so that students feel a strong sense of belonging, which facilitates inclusion and the systems and structures required to sustain it (equity). Not all students feel known in school, and this is particularly the case for students in the focal groups identified in the Needs Assessment for Priority Area 1, as evidenced on Panorama surveys, in data collected for the APS Equity Audit (2022), and in focus groups and interviews.

APS will develop practices that allow us to create a coherent and consistent understanding of what “equity and inclusion” mean and look like in our schools. Because this area is focused on student belonging, all of these ideas are tentative, with an expectation that direct engagement with targeted focal groups of students will significantly shape adult understanding of needs and the solutions to create learning environments that best meet those needs. These practices will be aligned with our instructional vision (1.1) and will inform the development of our MTSS (1.3). Following are initial ideas about some of the work required to facilitate this work:

**Establishing strong relationships with adults:**

- Review and evaluate the structure, content, and impact of middle and high school advisory groups on students’ sense of belonging.
- Facilitate connections between students and adults so that every student is connected to an adult, feels known, and has regular access to their adult advocate. (e.g., “primary person” model)
- As children transition through grades and schools, create practices to support the continuity of relationships and connection.
- Build the capacity of adults to identify and challenge their own biases, mindsets, and assumptions individually and collectively, in order to maintain high expectations for all students, in collaboration with Departments of DEIBJ and Teaching and Learning and in alignment with Initiative 2.2.
- Study and deploy strategies that rely less on high-level aggregate data and more on connecting with students to understand the student experience (e.g., focus groups, empathy interviews). Establish routines and norms for collection and analysis of these data to use alongside aggregate data and to inform action steps.

**Promoting student engagement and empowerment:**

- Each secondary school prioritizes a climate of student engagement, empowerment, and agency, such as: student leadership opportunities, student council, student-initiated organizations and activities, and school-based enrichment activities.
- Communicate engagement strategies for individual students and key information about student sense of belonging between staff from grade level to grade level.
- Continue to identify and remove barriers to students participating in electives, clubs, and other aspects of life at the school to build a sense of belonging and engagement, paying attention to findings in elementary, middle, and high school settings, respectively.

While this initiative is specifically focused on student belonging and inclusion, it is complemented by others. In particular, initiative 1.1 and the focus on an instructional vision are designed to increase student engagement by ensuring that pedagogy across the district encourages students’ sense of connection to academics.

## Major Milestones

These are the highest priority, most meaningful deliverables, and actions we must achieve to successfully arrive at the desired outcome from our current state.

Financial Impact provides amounts for the community to use as estimates in understanding the cost of undertaking these crucial initiatives. Figures represent the estimated amount that this work would cost in a given year. Annual budgets will implement this plan, which will at times lead to other services being changed and eliminated as we develop aligned budgets that account for the initiatives in this plan.

Major Milestones	<u>Year 1:</u> <u>2023-24</u>	<u>Year 2:</u> <u>2024-25</u>	<u>Year 3:</u> <u>2025-26</u>	<u>Year 4:</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Year 5:</u> <u>2027-28</u>
<b>Study and deploy strategies that allow APS to deeply understand the student experience</b>	In collaboration with Deeper Learning Team (Initiative 1.1), pilot and begin to implement practices that bring established systems closer to the student experience. For example, establish routines for focus group and empathy interviews; assess adult meeting structures to suggest and implement student-centered protocols, etc.		Integrate practices from DLT studies into MTSS structures; adjust based on findings and feedback.		Continue to refine practices and implement new approaches.  Triangulate systematically-collected qualitative data with aggregated quantitative data in plans and communications, such as school improvement plans.
<b>Financial Impact</b>	See Initiative 1.1				
<b>To Fund</b>	Costs associated with this strand are aligned with and reflected in Initiative 1.1				
<b>Build capacity of Department of Diversity, Equity,</b>	Fill existing budgeted role for DEIBJ Specialist, add additional DEIBJ Specialist, to	Continue to build the capacity of the office of DEIBJ with administrative support	Establish 1.0 specialist for each grade-level band for targeted support: Elementary, Middle,	Expand supports for DEIBJ and family engagement work through expansion of shared Family and Community Liaisons (in partnership with Family Welcome Center; see Initiative 4.2)	

<b>Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice</b>	partner with schools and ILTs and provide professional learning and consultation services to staff		High School	
<b>Financial Impact</b>	\$140,000	\$25,000	\$70,000	See Initiative 4.2
<b>To Fund</b>	2.0 DEIBJ Specialists	.5 DEIBJ Administrative Assistant	1.0 DEIBJ Specialist	Establish and implement Family and Community Liaisons in partnership with Family Welcome Center

### Key Metrics

These are metrics that can serve as strong indicators of performance and are directly representative of successful execution of the initiative.

*Outcome metrics are the indicators that will be tracked, whereas targets are the specific benchmarks to be achieved by specific deadlines.*

Major Milestones	<u>Year 1:</u> <u>2023-24</u>	<u>Year 2:</u> <u>2024-25</u>	<u>Year 3:</u> <u>2025-26</u>	<u>Year 4:</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Year 5:</u> <u>2027-28</u>
Outcome Metric 1	Improve outcomes across student experience indicators where gaps exist between focal and reference groups as measured by Culture and Climate surveys, particularly for the following focal groups, categories, and grade levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sense of belonging” for all Black/AA students (Gap: 10% Grades 3-5, 9% Grades 6-12) and Hispanic/Latino Students (Gap: 16% Grades 3-5, 3% Grades 6-12)</li> <li>• “Sense of belonging” for all students who prefer to self-describe their gender (Gap: 28% Grades 3-5, 20% Grades 6-12)</li> <li>• “School Safety” for elementary students with IEPs (Gap: 7% Grades 3-5)</li> <li>• “Rigorous Expectations” for all multilingual learners (Gap: 7% Grades 3-5, 9% Grades 6-12)</li> </ul>				

Annual Benchmark	Improve outcomes for identified focal groups in designated categories where significant gaps exist, identified above, by 3% annually. Improve outcomes for identified focal groups in all categories by 1% annually at schools based on areas of focus identified in school improvement plans.		
Outcome Metric 2	Demonstrate improvement in qualitative experiences of families as measured by analyses of qualitative interviews, focus groups, and feedback data, triangulated against outcomes described above.		
Annual Benchmark	Establish routines for collection of qualitative data	Incorporate qualitative accounts into plans and presentations at the school- and district-level	Triangulate qualitative accounts from focal groups into analysis of progress towards outcomes at the school- and district-level.